

General Strike needed to Defend Union rights

Militant

THE WORKING class now faces its most serious challenge since 1926. If, as has been reported, the TUC leaders refuse the support requested by the NUM, then the left trade union leaders—and especially the leaders of the mineworkers themselves—must make an independent call for industrial action.

It would be absolutely fatal for the left union leaders to hide behind the indecision of the TUC right wing to do nothing. The mineworkers' leaders themselves must call, over the heads of other union leaders, if necessary, for a 24-hour general strike, as a means of forcing the TUC into wider action.

The miners' struggle is no longer an issue of pit closures. What is now at stake is the right of any trade union to take effective industrial action. To let the Tory judges bury the NUM in an avalanche of writs, injunctions and financial penalties would mean the TUC leaders letting union rights be pushed back decades, or even centuries.

It would be an absolute disgrace, an act of unparalleled cowardice, for the TUC leaders, including the lefts, to bow the knee. Norman Willis has time to go about Congress House showing parties of school children his exhibition on the Tolpuddle Martyrs. But this is mere sentimentality unless the TUC leadership face up to the present-day struggle which has no less an historic significance.

Every constituent body of the labour movement, from shop stewards' committees and union branches to union executives and the General Council of the TUC, should be meeting urgently to draw out all the necessary conclusions for action.

Hesitation could have disastrous consequences. The ruling class are waging naked

class war. Organised workers must meet fire with fire.

Jobs, living standards and conditions of employment are nothing without viable trade unions. Lord Wedderburn the Labour lawyer, has said that the trade unions are now being dragged back to the time of the Combination Acts in the 18th Century.

Tory judges are virtually writing the law themselves, making up new laws almost daily. There is a stark choice in front of the labour movement: capitulate or fight back! There is no middle road. Inactivity at every stage only further fuels the aggression of the capitalist class.

If this attack succeeds, Tory judges will be empowered to decide trade union tactics. As in this strike, every serious trade union mobilisation for action will face a judicial veto with vicious penalties for unions for simply operating within their own constitution.

Once again, to their credit, the National Union of Mineworkers have stood firm. Their stand over the last nine months has been an inspiration. They are now refusing to comply with the Tory judges. They are upholding the decisions of the TUC and continuing their principled opposition to collaboration with Tory courts.

MacGregor masterminds legal campaign

The answer of the ruling class has been the legal robbery of all the funds, assets and resources of the union. This move is the culmination of a carefully orchestrated strategy to break the miners' strike.

The Daily Telegraph has revealed that the mastermind behind the legal activities of the 'working miners' is none other than Ian MacGregor. These 'working miners' are simply the stooges of MacGregor, Thatcher and the ruling class.

It was MacGregor who supplied both the lawyers and the contacts with businessmen willing to give the funds to drag the NUM

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Labour's ranks must fight new witch-hunt

THE RANK and file of the Labour Party must protest with the utmost vigour against a new witch-hunt being planned by the right wing of the National Executive Committee, at a crucial stage in the miners' strike.

On the recommendation of the Appeals and Mediation subcommittee, the NEC is being invited to begin a new generalised investigation into *Militant*, which could lead to a more far-reaching purge than anything that has taken place in the last three years.

By John Pickard

This was agreed at a 30 minute meeting with three (right wing) members present, without there having been any notices or minutes distributed in advance.

Infuriated

Rank and file party members will be no less infuriated by the refusal of the sub-committee to reinstate Brychan Davies. Last week's NEC decided by 14 votes to 13 to refer back the minute of the Appeals sub-

Committee upholding his expulsion. In the past, this would automatically have led to his reinstatement. But the sub-committee appears to have adopted the policy of "retrial until found guilty" and has asked for further "information" from the Welsh Regional Office who held the initial inquiry.

The right-wing, smarting from this defeat last week (see report page 6), resurrected the possibility of an all-out witch-hunt of *Militant* supporters, after a letter from Cyril Ambler of

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Defend Union rights

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through the courts. The Official Receiver nominated by the working miners was no doubt also recommended by MacGregor.

Far from being the neutral agents of an independent legal process as they cynically claim, this Receiver, Brewer, is actually a functioning official of the Tory party. Never was the blatant class bias of the law courts more glaringly revealed.

The ruling class have thrown down the gauntlet, and not just to the miners. This is a political challenge to the whole labour movement. The Tories intend, if they can, to smash the miners today to pave the way for a merciless attack on all other workers tomorrow. All workers must fight shoulder to shoulder with the NUM.

The NUM issued a call for an emergency meeting of the General Council and asked that the General Council "mobilises industrial action to stop this most vicious threat in our history, to the freedom and independence of British trade unions".

Soon the judges could move to personally bankrupt the NUM national leaders, as they have already started to do with certain area officials.

Historic responsibilities of TUC leaders

Throughout the whole dispute the TUC have failed abysmally to face up to their historic responsibilities. Yet as the leaders of the 10 million-strong army of British trade unionists potentially, they have an unmatched authority among working people.

To live up to its basic class duty, the Trade Union General Council must make a stand. An emergency meeting should be called as requested by the NUM. That meeting should urgently organise a conference of trade union executives to organise industrial action as the NUM are demanding.

But what action should a conference of trade union executives initiate? There is only one serious answer. With the massive qualitative turn in the scale of the attack from the ruling class, only an all-out general strike meets the situation with which we are now faced. Only a massive industrial stoppage will stop the Tory laws—as in 1972.

The cowardly myth that there is no mood to fight among rank and file trade unionists must be laid to rest. It is not the ranks who are unprepared to fight. The miners, the car workers, and workers throughout industry have answered that lie. It is the leaders who have been unwilling to lead.

A call to action from the TUC would cut across any uncertainty or doubt. Workers everywhere would lift their heads. The feeling universally would be, "At last we are fighting back". Workers who perhaps do not yet even feel strong enough to fight for their own separate demands, would instinctively rally to the call for a general fightback.

Stewards' committees, branch committees, and district committees in all unions should meet and demand emergency sessions of their union executive to put pressure on the TUC General Council to organise the necessary action.

Right wing refuse solidarity

However, the issue is too serious merely to leave matters to the TUC General Council. Throughout the nine months of this strike the right wing trade union leaders in particular singularly refused to build solidarity with the miners. Rather than fighting Tory laws many of these so-called 'leaders' are preparing to capitulate.

Gavin Laird, the AUEW General Secretary has said that it would be 'criminal' not to take the Tory Judas money for union elections. The EETPU Executive Council has unanimously voted in favour of taking this money and the ASTMS is also pressing for the TUC to drop its stand against this money

and allow all unions to bite this Tory bait.

If sufficient pressure is exerted throughout the labour movement upon these union barons, then it is not ruled out that they may yet be forced to face their responsibilities and fight. But the onus for organising action must lie particularly on the shoulders of the left trade union leaders. They must not be allowed to hide behind the inactivity and open strike-breaking of the right wing leaders.

The TGWU in particular must give a lead. With its weight throughout industry it could crush the anti-trade union legislation merely by lifting its little finger. The T&G is facing its own legal attack in the courts with a £200,000 fine hanging over its head and the possibility of the sequestration of its entire funds.

T&G members must be given a clear, positive, precise call for action. Legalistic manoeuvring will only create confusion among the rank and file and lead to a passive attitude which would encourage the Tories and the courts simply to wait for a favourable opportunity to carry their attack through to a conclusion.

The Transport and General Workers Union should call a Special Emergency Biennial Delegate Conference to issue a call for all-out strike action throughout their entire membership alongside the National Union of Mineworkers.

So far however, the T&G leaders are limiting themselves to a folded-arms defiance of the law and to legal pleading. No call for action to the rank and file at this stage is being proposed. Pressure throughout the ranks of the T&G is therefore urgently required.

But even if both the TUC and the TGWU fail to give the necessary call for action the matter is not lost. The NUM now has enormous authority in the eyes of rank and file workers. The NUM should give the lead, call for a one-day solidarity General Strike throughout the trade unions, and name the date, for example, on 13 December, when the NUM next go to court.

Campaign of rallies and meetings

Such a lead would receive a huge response if accompanied by a campaign of rallies, meetings and explanation of the significance of the struggle. It would reveal the true support that exists everywhere for the NUM, and would show the enormous accumulated strength of the organised labour and trade union movement. It would unleash an avalanche of pressure upon the trade union barons for they themselves to give a lead.

Such a one-day strike should be thoroughly prepared for by the NUM with teams of miners canvassing support systematically throughout the unions, especially power and transport workers. In each town mass solidarity conferences should be organised by the NUM of stewards and union activists. These conferences should be followed up by mass meetings, factory gate meetings and stewards' meetings addressed by miners and miners' wives.

Now is the hour for action. If a serious lead is given to the ranks of the labour and trade union movement, the Tories and the NCB and the ruling class at large will begin rapidly to step back.

The Tories' strength is illusory, based only on the passivity of the trade union leaders. As this strike has gone on more and more splits, open hostility, tensions, and bitter feuding has been revealed at every level within the Tory party and the cabinet.

If the necessary lead is given for action, then these divisions will become a chasm, the ruling class can be sent scurrying in disarray into retreat and the way can be prepared for an historic victory of the British working class.



Labour's ranks must fight new witch-hunt

From page one

COHSE which quoted John Evan's remarks at last NEC about the need for a further investigation. A five-month old letter from Jack Straw, attacking the LPYS summer camp, was also dug out of the files. The suggestion that the NEC order a new investigation be set up was then formally moved by Roy Hattersley.

Miners, trade unionists and party members up and down the country will be angered and dismayed that on the same day that the Tory courts threw their full force against the miners, Labour's deputy leader has opened up new divisions in the party which will divert attention and effort from gathering money and support for the miners. Rather than calling for a witch-hunt the cry should have gone out for full support for the miners!

Attack on LPYS

A new enquiry into *Militant* would be much more far-reaching than the previous one and could include a serious attack on the finances and organisation of the LPYS. It would be linked to attempts to save right-wing MPs from reselection and to spearhead a general witch-hunt of the left.

The moves against supporters of *Militant* are also related to new attempts by the right wing to dilute the socialist aims of the Labour Party and push it far to the right.

Last week the *New Statesman* reported on a confidential plan, mapped out by the 'Campaign Strategy Committee', chaired by Neil Kinnock, to drag the Labour Party away from conference commitments. The plan recommended that "anger" should not be used to campaign against mass



Kinnock—chairs the Campaign Strategy Committee which is believed to be discussing plans to abandon conference commitments.



Hattersley—formally moved that a new "investigation" into *Militant* be set up.

unemployment—in other words not to treat it as an urgent question! It recommended that Labour should drop its promise of full employment and that it should even cultivate links with private industry, approaching companies for political donations!

Labour's grass roots would be appalled at these plans, and it is in order to forestall the whirlwind of opposition and deflect criticism from themselves that the right wing are now preparing a new witch-hunt against Marxists. Some of the right wing would sooner smash the party altogether than see it adopt socialist policies.

The Appeals and Mediation sub-committee has a stacked right-wing majority. It could be used by the Right to take organisational measures to suppress political ideas, regardless of the democratic traditions and practices of the labour movement.

Apart from the new "investigations" that could be launched nationally, the sub-committee could be used to endorse any local witch-hunt, like in Blackburn or Rhondda initiated by the right wing.

Thus in Vauxhall, the Labour Party has voted to ban the sale of *Militant* where collections are being taken for miners, even though the miners themselves have raised no objections and, indeed,

have been full of praise for the way the paper reports their strike and argues their case. In Livingston, Scotland, the Labour Party Executive is calling for an investigation into *Militant* and a ban on members from selling the paper altogether.

Resolutions to NEC

For the ranks of the Labour Party, there could not have been a worse time to spend time and effort discussing a new witch-hunt. The miners' strike is the key activity. That is especially true for LPYS members and *Militant* supporters.

But the right wing have chosen this time to launch an attack and it must be repulsed.

Branches and CLPs of the Party, LPYS and Womens Sections, trade union branches and committees must urgently pass resolutions for the next December 12 NEC meeting, or the first in the New Year:

★ Demanding the reinstatement of Brychan Davies to Rhondda CLP
★ Demanding that the NEC turn down the suggested investigation into *Militant*.

★ Demanding that the NEC allow the free exchange of ideas and socialist publications within the Party.

★ Demanding that the NEC concentrate its full attention to gaining a victory for the miners.

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Miners' dispute

Rally depllores Wales death

TWO YOUNG miners face charges of murder following the killing of South Wales taxi driver David Wilkie as he ferried a scab to work in a police convoy on Friday.

NUM president Arthur Scargill told a packed Labour Party rally in Stoke-on-Trent last week that the NUM were "deeply shocked" at the death and that "the NUM dissociates itself from any acts of this kind".

He went on to lambast the hypocrisy of Thatcher and the Tories who had said the miners should now end the strike. He said: "We don't need lessons in morality from Mrs Thatcher who is spending millions on Cruise missiles". The strike should have ended when "David

Jones died on the picket line in April", referring to the young striking miner killed in a picket line battle at the outset of the strike at Oller-ton colliery.

The hypocrisy of the Tories and the state is obvious. Following the death of the taxi driver police were rushed into the area and two miners were arrested within a day. The killer of David Jones has never been found.

Pickets killed

The press have given massive coverage to the incident, yet the deaths for example of striking miner Joe Green, killed on the picket line in Yorkshire, or the two youths killed in the Doncaster area while digging for

coal, received only a passing mention.

The violence in the coal field is the direct result of the Tories' attempts to break the NUM and destroy the once peaceful mining communities. They are now reaping their own whirlwind, brought to a head by their attempts to force miners back to work, pushing miners to the limits.

As South Wales NUM spokesman Kim Howells told the *Daily Mirror* (1 December): "No-one can feel anything but extreme sorrow... The men have been disciplined up to now but something always breaks. The NCB took a gamble and it has tragically failed."

Meanwhile, the press ig-

nores the increasing level of attacks on striking miners:

● In South Wales, miners are having to vet food parcels from the Midlands after death threats and claims that some food has been injected with acid.

● On 1 December, petrol was poured over a pickets' hut in Faversham, Kent and set ablaze. Fortunately the two miners inside managed to escape, although one of them, Ted Settersfield, received burns to his hands.

● At Cannock Unemployed Workers' Centre in Staffordshire, thugs broke in and destroyed sweets and toys for miners' kids at Christmas.

(Attacks—see page 4)

Power 'break-downs' spread

DESPITE THE brave face being put on by the Tories, power cuts are being reported from various parts of the country.

The Electricity Board have in each case claimed they were caused by a 'break-down, nothing to do with the strike' But it is extraordinary that they all occurred at around the same time—the late afternoon period of peak demand for electricity, during the week 19-23 November.

Worsley Mains, near Wigan, had a power cut on 21 November for a couple of hours. Other cuts were reported from St Helens and Haydock in Lancashire, while reports of voltage reduction have been widespread.

In Wales, a different area of Cwmbran had no electricity each day, for 3-4 hours peak time during that week. Similarly Llanwern near Newport had power cuts.

Several areas around Chesterfield including Clay Cross and Ecklington reported 2-3 hour cuts on the 23 November.

In Doncaster employers are voluntarily shutting off power for two hours at times of peak demand, while at Ford Halewood in Merseyside power is switched off during shift changes.

The Tories' determination to keep power supplies going using oil is also having damaging consequences for the environment. The increased oil burn has led to an 18% increase in sulphur dioxide in the atmosphere, which causes 'acid rain'.

Clearly the Tories are under increasing pressure. A final all-out push by the trade union movement would secure victory for the miners.

By Vivian Seal



President of the NUM Arthur Scargill addresses the Stoke-on-Trent rally.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Horror stories in Derbyshire

THE MUCH publicised incident in Derbyshire on Monday where a 'spike' was allegedly thrown at an NCB van carrying explosives has been dubbed by local miners as the 'NCB's Christmas pantomime'.

According to the press the 'spike' was thrown at the van, sticking into the cab roof as it ferried explosives to Renshaw Park colliery. But miners are dubious about the allegations given the conflicting reports in the press.

The van was said to be a 'powder wagon' carrying "100lbs of explosive". But local miners point out that as far as they are aware, explosives are transported by their suppliers, ICI.

The 'spike' thrown, was according to *The Times*, "deliberately sharpened". Yet in the next paragraph *The Times* says: "The spike failed to get further (through the cab roof) because it was stopped by a bolt screwed on the end". Meanwhile the *Daily Express* said it hit the van "blunt end first".

The *Daily Star* hysterically proclaimed the two anonymous drivers had "missed death by half an inch". You might have thought they would have noticed such a close call, but as the *Sun* reported: "They did not notice the rod until they had started unloading the explosives at nearby Renshaw Park colliery". Yes, apparently they drove all the way to the pit with a metal rod sticking out the top and no-one noticed.

Although the two men "didn't notice" until they got to the colliery, the rod—or spike or spear as the press are now calling it—was declared to have been thrown at them from the Slitting Mill rail bridge. Police and press descended on the bridge and TV reports were soon showing a "collection of missiles". These included masonry, sleepers and bits of metal—typical railside debris. As one miner commented to *Militant*: "Luckily a train didn't go by or they'd have said that would have been thrown as well."

Liverpool solidarity conference

"IN THE nine months of strike we've had magnificent support from the rank and file but we're browned off with officials telling us everything is fine. If it is, why haven't we won by now?"

So Colin Lenton, treasurer of Bold NUM introduced the Solidarity conference held in Liverpool on November 24.

Representatives from the NUM, power stations, oil

workers, seamen, lorry drivers and the TGWU Region No.5 Monitoring Committee attended the meeting.

It was reported that Bold power station was lying idle, with the Fiddlers Ferry station having to use coal that was 10 years old. A power worker from Fiddlers Ferry station said: "I know this is a liberty coming from someone working, but hold on, you're nearly there."

North West womens demo

LABOUR WOMEN in the North-West are organising a miners' support demonstration in Manchester for Saturday 19 January. This is thought to be the first Labour Women's regional demo since the war.

Court witness bound over

AN OUTRAGEOUS precedent was set in Rotherham magistrates court on Monday.

Two miners were charged with threatening behaviour and obstruction at a mass picket at Kiveton Park colliery. Following evidence from the defence witness, miner Kevin McVann, the two were acquitted.

Yet despite being found not guilty, the two miners plus the defence witness Kevin McVann were bound over to keep the peace for the sum of £250!

The reason given was that they all admitted in court that they went to the picket intending to use the word "scab". This is a blatant attempt by the court to intimidate defence witnesses from taking the stand.

However, the courts can be very understanding towards some miners. In Cardiff a miner from Nantgarw colliery is charged with threatening to kill his former wife. However, the stipendiary magistrate there agreed on 28 November to release the man on bail—because he said he wanted to return to work!

The price of going back

BILSTON GLEN colliery, Midlothian, is once again the scene of some of the bitterest battles of the miners' strike.

Some of those who returned to work have come straight out on strike again. The men were being treated like dirt by the management, with police escorts to work, photographers, security guards and identity checks at each door. Management are saying that the union will never operate there again and have drawn up a blacklist of some strikers.

There are rumours of

fighters underground, between three hostile categories of scabs; 'super scabs' (who have worked throughout the strike), 'intermediate scabs' (who have drifted back in dribs and drabs), and 'Santa-Claus scabs' (who have gone for their Christmas bonus and don't regard themselves as scabs at all).

Contractors previously working with the union are now moving the concessionary coal for management, having been assured that their contracts are safe. Scabs now get their coal

first, and deliveries to some pensioners and families with children under 5, formerly arranged by the union, have been stopped.

Monktonhall management are following their neighbour's example. The manager has even warned one scab that he could be the first man in history to be sacked for absenteeism—in the middle of a strike!

By Jimmy McCaffery
(Bilston Glen NUM)

& Gordon Scott
(Monktonhall NUM)

Midlands rank and file campaign

NUM BRANCHES and strike committees in Staffordshire and Warwickshire organised a Solidarity conference in Stafford on 1 December.

Militant supporters and striking miners visited dozens of oil depots, power stations, road haulage depots and T&G lorry drivers' representatives in a bid to go directly to the rank and file of the supportive unions.

In general it has been the rank and file, such as railway

workers, who have carried the campaign. Mick Ather-ton, President of West Midlands NUR reported on the magnificent solidarity action of NUR and ASLEF members.

John Connon, Hem Heath NUM chairman, explained how bus drivers in Stoke-on-Trent had refused to cross picket lines. Now up to 40 jobs were threatened by scab coach firms. The same story came from Charrington Fuels drivers, whose work had been taken over by

scab drivers. The conference demanded the T&G defend these drivers. By campaigning amongst all its members a blow could be struck in support of the NUM and T&G workers whose jobs are under threat.

Even though the conference was organised at short notice, it was a successful start. It also agreed to organise a lobby of the TGWU Executive Council when it meets this week.

By Bill Mullins

Miners' dispute

What the Tory press won't print

AN AVALANCHE of lies, half truths and distortions has poured out of the pages of the national daily press on the miners' strike. They have consciously played the role of chief propagandists of the Thatcher government and the National Coal Board. Below *Militant* reporters Bob Wade, Lesley Holt and John Fahey answer some of the main thrusts of the Tory propaganda campaign, typified by extracts from the *Sun* and the *News of the World*, owned by the multi-millionaire Rupert Murdoch.

Police violence

"Mob violence has been Dictator Scargill's chief weapon"—*News of the World*, November 25.

Rather it has been the Thatcher government which has unleashed a reign of 'organised violence', in the form of the state machine. The police has been transformed into a paramilitary force with arbitrary powers and equipped with riot gear to try and break the will of the miners. They have been backed up by the courts who have meted out 'super-market justice', imprisoning miners or imposing stifling bail conditions which leave many miners under a virtual curfew.

Since the strike began over

8,000 miners have been arrested. Over 3,000 have been injured in battles with the police on the picket line.

Simon Duerden of the LPYS in Yorkshire spoke to a Barrow NUM member who has received a battering from police over the past 8 months. He was first injured in June when his foot was trodden on by a police horse, crushing his toe. In August at a picket of Babbington colliery he was bitten in his calf by a police dog. He was sent to hospital and was left with a limp for the next three weeks.

Then nine weeks ago at Kiveton Park colliery he was again hospitalised after mounted police charged the pickets: "As we were trying to get away I turned and saw a mounted policeman charging at me. He hit me with his truncheon and allowed his horse to trample over me. According to other pickets I was pushed down a bank into a river, from which I was dragged unconscious." He was taken to hospital with one broken and two cracked ribs: "The same evening the TV news reported that at the picket there were 'no injuries'. I was forced to watch this from my hospital bed, knowing the truth was somewhat different. I was in hospital six nights and I'm still coughing blood today."

Strikers attacked

"The truth is that from the very outset of this long and tragic strike, Brother Scargill has been ready and willing to profit from the massive intimidation carried out by his fearless band in the safety of numbers"—*Sun*, November 27.

The Tory press only highlight the occasions where scabs have been allegedly attacked by striking miners. They have remained silent about the many cases of striking miners and their families who have been attacked by scabs.

It took the Paul Foot column in the *Daily Mirror* (November 29) to report the case of striking miner's wife Brenda Stout in Lancashire, albeit a month after the incident. Brenda, who is confined to a wheelchair suffering from osteo-arthritis, was attacked in her home by

three masked men. She was beaten, slashed with a knife and a noose put around her neck. The thugs told her they were doing it because she was "giving publicity to the striking miners."

Other Lancashire striking miners have been victims of attacks. Last week strikers from Bold NUM were attacked in their van by working miners. The windscreen was smashed, the driver and the passenger taken out and beaten, the keys thrown away and then the van was turned over.

Bold miners' homes have

been attacked too. The Bold NUM treasurer's windows have been smashed by bricks, as have those of two other pickets. One of the wives told *Militant*: "At 5.15am we were in bed. We heard a smash and there was a brick on the end of the bed. It came through double glazing and venetian blinds."

They have also received threatening letters—one to the treasurer said: "We are more determined to kill you... You better start worrying about yourself. You're a dead man!" On the back of the letter it warned: "Your (sic) not the only one with a wife and kids. Watch it Sandra"—referring to his wife.

After one of the attacks Granada TV reporters were invited to film the damage, but they did not turn up.



Photo: John Harris (FL) II

A story from Thoresby colliery that didn't make the front page of the *Sun*—during two minutes silence for the death of miner David Jones, police broke an agreement and rushed scabs into the pit, injuring this picket.

Back on strike

"Communist miners' chief George Rees desperately tried to block the snowballing return to work yesterday as another 816 strikers went back nationwide."—*Sun*, November 23.

The above was a typical report during the NCB's return to work drive in November, in this case referring to South Wales. So enthusiastic were the hacks in Fleet Street for the NCB campaign that they vied with each other as to who could report the highest figures. The *Sun* claimed 61,000 miners had returned to work, while the *Sunday Express* topped it up to 65,000. But by the NCB's own estimates the figure is 51,372. And given NCB management's exotic style of

counting 'new faces' at the pits, especially in North Derbyshire, these are a gross exaggeration.

And of course the Tory press never blast out from their front pages that at the very least over 140,000 miners are still on strike.

Now the 'back to work' drive is falling away, the press start relegating the reports of the dwindling numbers returning to work to small paragraphs tucked away at the bottom of the page.

But also the press haven't

reported the number of miners who have come back out on strike, when they have seen how colliery management behaves when the union is away.

Just a few examples. Last week in South Yorkshire (reported Radio Sheffield), a hundred miners came back out. At Whitwell colliery in Derbyshire, one miner came back out again telling the pickets: "It's just like the Gestapo down there, the pressure they're putting on."

At Bold pit in Lancashire, nine men came back out after a list of demands was put to them from management, which included a 'no strike' agreement! Meanwhile at Snowdown colliery in Kent, the number of scabs was down last week from 13 to eight.

Elected 'dictator'?

"Scargill 'the tyrant who hates democracy' " — *Sun*, November 27.

The spearhead of the media's campaign against the miners has been an unrelenting personal attack on Arthur Scargill. They

paint a picture of Scargill being an unrepresentative demagogue who foisted himself upon the leadership of the union.

Yet Arthur Scargill was elected NUM President in a democratic secret ballot in December 1981. Campaigning against pit closures he won a landslide victory—in an 80% turnout for the pithead ballot he received 70.3% of the votes, 100,000 ahead of his nearest rival. That's one secret ballot the press keep very quiet about.

Mass support

"We are sure that by now the public have reached the end of the line in swallowing his (Scargill's) humbug and double talk"—*Sun*, November 26.

Rather the 'public' have donated thousands of pounds in support of the miners, and despite the length of the dispute, this support shows no sign of letting up. Last week at Dover members of the National Union of Seamen met to discuss the 50p a week levy to the miners. It was agreed by 165-5 to keep the levy.

Up and down the country

Militant supporters along with many in the labour movement have been raising enormous amounts of cash, food and holding public meetings and demonstrations in support of the NUM. It's not only in places like Stockton, Teesside, where a stall manned by Stockton LPYS branches has raised nearly £6,000 during the dispute, but even in

Tory strongholds like Eastbourne in Sussex, where support is strong. There, the miners' action group has raised hundreds of pounds and equivalent amounts of food, and held a party for the children of Welsh miners.

The main brake on this enthusiastic support from the mass of working people has not been the Fleet Street horror stories about Arthur Scargill, but the equivocation and hesitancy of the labour and trade union leadership in giving clear support and carrying out solidarity action.



Hundreds of thousands of people have marched and rallied with the miners during the dispute—above Mansfield rally in May. Photo: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)

Double standards

"... Reds £1m aid to strikers"—*News of the World*, November 25."

One of the greatest acts of hypocrisy by the press has been their mock horror at the donations for the miners from overseas. They whipped themselves into a frenzy over money from Libya, despite big business and NCB links with the Gadaffi regime (see *Militant*, issue 723).

More double standards have come over the donations from the USSR. They

are scandalised that money should be donated from a so-called 'socialist' country.

Yet one of the main exporters of coal the Thatcher government has relied upon to try and break the strike has been the 'socialist' regime in Poland. Coal imports in Britain from Poland in the past seven months have risen by 217.7% to 772,000 tonnes. Such is the desperation of the Polish

regime to export coal for foreign currency—to pay off the massive loans they owe to Western bankers—that their strike breaking export drive will leave them expecting power cuts this winter through coal shortages!

This action by the Polish 'socialist' government speaks volumes about the nature of the regime. But it exposes the hypocrisy of the Tories and their press. Polish 'communist' coal to break the strike is acceptable. Russian 'communist' donations to the miners is a conspiracy to bring down the Tories.

'When did you last see your ex-husband?'

WHEN I lost my job I had to claim social security as well as dole. In due course I was summoned for an interview. I thought I was psychologically prepared for anything they might ask, but I was in for a shock.

I was interviewed privately in a small cell. The first thing she asked me after my name, was had I claimed supplementary benefit before?

Well, she could see I hadn't been there before because I tried to move my chair up to the table, I couldn't. It was nailed to the floor. It didn't look like a very promising sign.

Despite all the stories I'd heard, she was actually very pleasant and helpful. She was also an active member of the union (I thought it would be a good idea to establish that early on). But I wasn't prepared for the

questions she was obliged to ask me. She apologised for having to ask them, but it was obvious her boss would give her a hard time if she didn't.

She said that under section something-or-other of the Social Security Act my child's father was obliged to support him (if not me) and that meant that she was obliged to ask various questions that would make it easy to find him and get the cash. It was like being cautioned by the police.

No independence

Well, I could hardly say I didn't know who he was because I'd been married to him for 13 years. And I'd just had to show my divorce papers, so I couldn't say I had no address either.

But still she went on to ask me for a complete physical description of him. Like how tall was he, what build, what colour hair, what hairstyle,

what colour eyes, any distinguishing features like tattoos, any moustache, beard, glasses, where did he work, what did he do, where did we last live together, when did I last see him or speak to him. I couldn't believe it.

Have you seen that picture *When did you last see your father?*, about the Civil War? Well, it was like that. I wondered whether they were going to rip his shirt off looking for tattoos, when they tracked him down.

I explained that I was claiming benefit because I'd lost my job, not because the marriage had broken down. He was still liable to pay. I showed her the court order declaring us well and truly divorced and instructing him to pay no more than a nominal maintenance (5p a week). He was still liable to pay.

I established that there was no way, other than killing him off, that I could ever be independent of him

while I had a child under 16 and needed to claim benefit.

Such is the position of women in our society. The state deems us all "dependents" unless we've never been married, have no children and know no man who could remotely be thought to be a boyfriend, even when we think we've made ourselves legally independent and have been the family breadwinner for years. Claiming social is clearly designed to be a degrading and humiliating experience.

Worse if separated

It's even worse if you're only separated, not divorced: that's a clear case of fraud until you can prove your innocence. In the end I only got about £2 a week from the social—the rest came from dole, child benefit and housing benefit.

I was relatively lucky. I just think what it would have



Protest outside Islington DHSS.

Photo: Militant

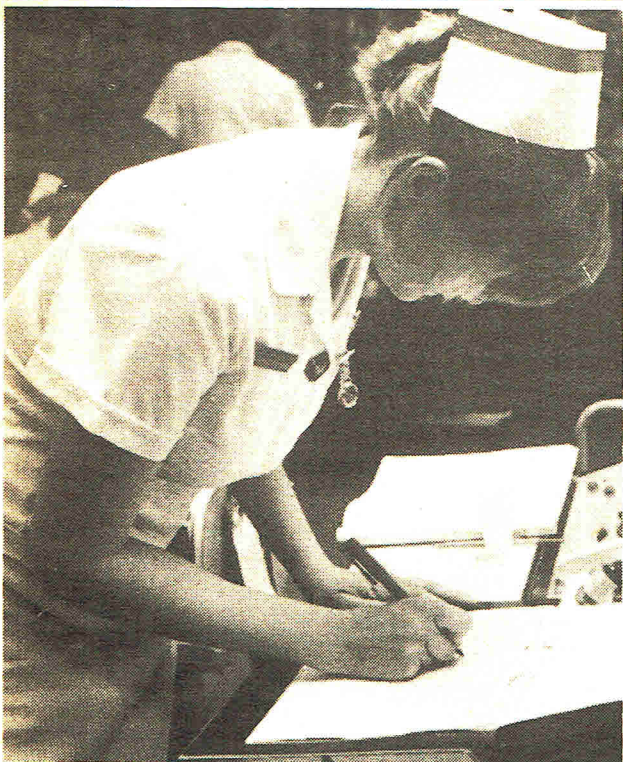
been like if I'd been a miner. Or a woman harassed by a long wait, three or four children, several unpaid bills at home and the bailiffs on the doorstep. Or if the social security officer was suffering from a short temper as a result of overwork caused by the cuts: or if she treated all

the claimants like scroungers and fiddlers.

Feelings obviously run high down at the DHSS. No wonder they nail the chairs to the floor.

By a single mother

Death is only a "side effect."



Drug companies make vast profits from NHS. Photo: Militant

DEATH TOLL—7 dead, over a hundred seriously injured!—A tidal wave? a hurricane?, airline crash?—no the result of a side effects from a heart drug!—Cordarone X.

Yet even after all this, the drug is still on the market! It may well be a valuable aid to doctors but surely there is more than just cause for concern!

The drug's makers, SANOFI (part of the Elf-Aquitaine Group) have denied its harmful effects. The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) to which complaints were made about misleading adverts which claimed "minimal side effects", initially denied that their code of advertising had been broken.

Mr Ronald Wing may have felt a clash of interests. He is not only head of the ABPI, but also Managing Director of SANOFI UK. Subsequently however, the adverts have been withdrawn and SANOFI censured by the ABPI codes sub-committee.

The ABPI and the Committee for the Safety of Medicines are dominated by the multinationals themselves. Unless the whole industry, in all its aspects; research, safety testing, manufacturing and distribution is brought under democratic control by workers, safety cannot be guaranteed.

By Fred Cole
(ASTMS 507 Leeds)

Class divides army wives

SOME OF our gin sodden generals in the 'great' British Army—will tell us (between burps) that women married to ordinary rank and file soldiers face no problems and have nothing to worry about whatsoever.

This is not the case for wives of ordinary servicemen. They often come across the same difficulties faced by other working class women, and more besides.

Problems with the heating system, rising damp and generally poor accommodation are a common factor in areas surrounding the old Victorian type of bases. On the other hand in the relatively modern garrison towns, such as Catterick on the North Yorkshire moors, a feeling of isolation together with poor transport and shopping facilities adds to the pressures. It's particularly hard on those who are young and newly married.

Loneliness and worry

On top of all this families of servicemen also have to be mentally prepared to move to a different part of the country (and indeed the world) at any given time when a battalion has been issued with its orders to pull out. This makes it very difficult to build up a community feeling and disrupts the education of young children.

When a battalion is away on exercise or some other duty many women, because of the loneliness, find themselves slipping into a state of depression especially during the Christmas. In these cases their husbands can be away for up to six months, as on the standard UN tour of Cyprus. Below is a list of dates of



Upper class inspection of Household Cavalry.

Photo: P.A.P.

my own battalion's activities from 1975 to 1979 in which our married comrades found themselves separated from their wives and families:

Christmas 1975/6—Derry, Northern Ireland.

Throughout 1976—Many two-week exercises in Germany, Otterburn, Salisbury Plain, etc.

November 1976—Guarding Edinburgh Castle.

March 1977—Two weeks Northern Ireland training.

June/November 1977—Belfast, Northern Ireland.

November/January 1977—Forced scabbing against the firemen, North East England.

February/March 1978—Six weeks exercise, Kenyan jungle.

March/October 1978—Many exercises including two weeks at Otterburn.

October/March 1978/9—Six months UN tour of Cyprus.

One of the most worrying and nerve wracking times for a soldier's wife is when her husband's battalion is away

on a four-month tour of duty in Northern Ireland. Every knock at the door and news bulletin on the TV becomes a nightmare. Every time some solemn faced newsreader with a map of Ireland behind them says, "... names are not yet being released until the next of kin have been informed..." makes a minute seem like a day, an hour like a month.

Family officer

Today practically every battalion has a family officer (usually a major) who supposedly understands all the difficulties arising from "the married quarters". In truth, these officers live on a higher income, dwell in much better accommodation and are rarely separated from their families. During the six week exercise in Kenya, for example, higher ranking officers lived with their wives and children in posh hotels in Nairobi and Mombassa. They are in a different class altogether.

The only way to better the conditions of the ordinary

servicemen/women and their families would be the immediate introduction of trade union rights, together with the election of working class officers subject to recall. It is absolutely disgraceful that whilst some officers are connected with extreme right wing groups such as the Monday Club, rank and file soldiers can be harassed because their wives are either in the labour movement or have attended Young Socialist and Militant rallies.

The ruling class have got the audacity to tell us that the 'Great British Army' is there to protect liberties, democracy and freedom. I say it's about time the army was democratised and the rank and file squaddies brought closer towards their brothers and sisters in 'civi street' so the working class can go forward as one.

By Bob Harker
(Gateshead East Labour Party)

Rhondda expulsion-setback for right

THE LABOUR Party's National Executive at its meeting on 28 November prevented Brychan Davies' expulsion from the party by 14 votes to 13.

For many on the right who support a witch-hunt, his expulsion had been seen as an important test case. This decision appeared to block the road to a generalised witch-hunt, at least for the time being.

Brychan had been expelled from his constituency party for selling *Militant* and giving donations to the paper's fighting fund. If this criteria was to be used then 10,000 Young Socialists would be eligible for expulsion.

Hundreds of letters and resolutions condemning Brychan's expulsion were sent to Jim Mortimer. Dur-

By a *Militant* reporter

ing the NEC meeting Tony Benn reminded the executive of those in the party such as Frank Field who had advocated alliances with the SDP but still remained a party member. He also reminded Neil Kinnock of the 1983 Labour Party conference where he had chaired a fringe meeting with Professor Hobsbawm of the Communist Party on the platform.

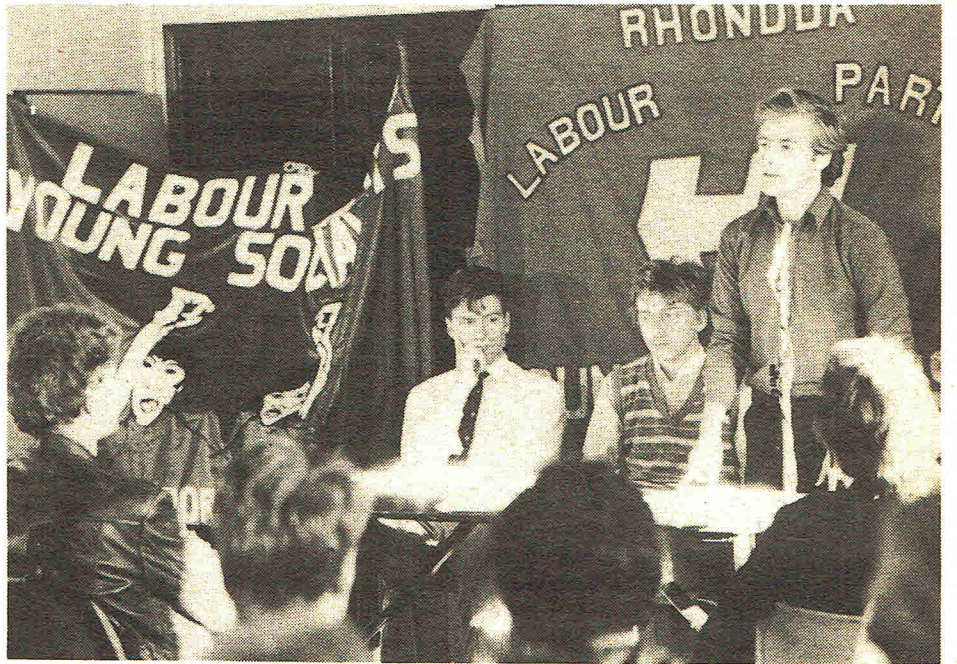
Alex Kitson, whose union has the threat of sequestration hanging over his head broke away from his usual pattern of voting with Neil

Kinnock and Hattersley, and instead came out against the expulsions.

John Evans, MP for St Helens, whilst stating his opposition to *Militant* also voted against the expulsion, saying he did not think this was the way to deal with *Militant*. These two unexpected votes was enough to prevent Brychan's expulsion.

However, the voting was close, and the left was weakened when Doug Hoyle left the meeting before this item was discussed.

This is the first major defeat suffered by Kinnock, Hattersley and the rest of the right wing for over a year. At last a glimmer of recognition has reached some of the party that working people are staging a fightback against Thatcher, and that our priority is to be united in that fight.



Brychan Davies addresses the meeting following the lobby of the NEC last week. A hundred Young Socialists and *Militant* supporters joined the lobby of the NEC, which voted down Brychan's expulsion. Photo: Craig Stennett

Students fight back

TWELVE busloads of university and polytechnic students from Leicester went to the Chancellor Nigel Lawson's Leicestershire home on November 21. We intended to surround it to publicise our grants campaign.

A funeral for student living standards was held. Police though blocked the way and there was one arrest in the pushing and shoving as we tried to reach Nigel's 'bedsit'.

Police then made the bus drivers move on, so many students returned to the coaches for fear of being stranded. Those students remaining, mainly from the university, were angry at those who left. But for the Poly side things had been badly organised.

30,000 march

This demonstration was part of the student union campaign, which included last week's massive 30,000 strong march through London and the protest outside the House of Commons.

The latest attacks affect the whole movement. The grant cuts plus the compulsory payment of fees for allegedly 'better off' parents will mean hardship for many students; some may be forced to drop out while 16-18 year olds will be unable to enter Higher Education if their parents can't or won't pay up.

While marches and protests are a good way to publicise our campaign, the leadership of the Student Union both locally and nationally must do more than just hold marches. The key must be to link up our campaign with the labour movement. The Tories can be defeated over this issue. However the movement of students against Lawson's

proposals (which involved over 100,000 in some form of action on 21 November) must be used as a springboard to win the NUS 'New Deal for students' and to force the government to retreat on its plans for education.

Labour links

This can only be achieved by a concerted campaign by the Labour leadership of NUS to forge links with other sections of the labour movement, particularly rank and file workers in the Broad Lefts and in the public sector trade unions. An alliance of miners, nurses, education and local authority workers, together with students fighting on a common programme of opposition to all cuts and for a common wage/grant claim could force the government to retreat.

Yet in some areas and nationally the leadership appears reluctant to do this. Indeed our Poly has not backed the miners or the NGA, and was reticent over GCHQ.

'Here we go'

However, the government's attack is raising the consciousness of students. This process has been helped by the attitude of the police who are increasingly being used to control and break up our marches. At the Westminster protest last week, 180 students were arrested. Those who have been disinterested with politics over the past few years are now coming out with comments such as 'lets get the miners down here to show us how to organise', along with chants of 'here we go' on the marches.

By **Olwen Davies**
(Leicester Poly)



One of the 180 arrests during the student demo last week in Westminster. Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Anfield anti-NF success

THE FASCISTS in Walton suffered a resounding defeat at the hands of the local LPYS. On 26 November, over 80 people turned out to our public meeting against the activities of the National Front in the area.

The LPYS has been canvassing and leafleting the area around Anfield football ground where the NF have got a foothold. Tensions were heightened when the fascists began counter-leafleting with their racist muck against the Liverpool City Council.

On the day the local press and radio broadcast that a controversial meeting would take place that night. We expected a lively meeting. In the event, such was the mood and the turnout from local people, the fascists didn't dare say "boo".

At the meeting LPYS member Emi Anura, pointed

out that the real enemy was the Tories and showed the links between the right wing of the Tory party and the fascists.

Derek Hatton, the Deputy leader of the Liverpool City Council, concentrated on the council's fight against racism and for all oppressed people. He explained that the Liverpool victory wasn't through persuading the Tories over the table but because of the weight of the working class support there was in Liverpool for the council.

Derek explained the arguments between the District Labour Party and members of the Black Caucus on how to fight racism, and gave a drubbing to those who have disgustingly exploited those differences to attempt to portray Derek as a racist.

Firstly he explained what the council had achieved: trade union representatives on all interview panels for jobs; monitoring of all jobs to ensure no discrimination; a council award of £150,000

Hammering the Tories

Harlow

HARLOW YOUNG Tories finally turned up to debate the miners dispute with the YS last week, after months of 'negotiations' and having backed out of one debate.

The YC speaker, who 'works' in the City of London, informed the meeting that he wouldn't be speaking for his full 20 minutes, drawing some really hurtful comments from the audience about him having nothing to say.

Colin Adams, a Ford worker at Dagenham, speaking for the YS, pointed to the deliberate provocation of the dispute by the Tories and how they had prepared for it since 1978.

About 30 people showed an interest in joining the YS, out of the hundred who had packed into Harlow unemployed centre (which is itself a 'monument' to Tory policies). The motion to support the miners was passed

by 58 votes to 32, with most of those against being Young Tories bussed in from outside Harlow.

By **Steve Edwards**
(Harlow LPYS)

Leytonstone

AT A debate between Leyton YS and Young Tories in Leytonstone, East London 75 people, including nearly 30 local sixth formers new to a YS meeting, turned up to give the Tories a hard time.

Joe Clarke (Notts NUM) and a local YS member spoke in support of the miners and a resolution supporting them was passed by 48 votes to 10.

The most enlightening part of the debate was when a young Tory was heard to say that Joe 'lived in a different world' to him!

By **Chris Huggings**
(Chair, Leyton LPYS)

Pompey youth on the march

POMPEY YOUTH took to the streets on the 17 November to join the LPYS march called under the slogan "Support the miners, give youth a future". More than 200 demonstrated through Portsmouth.

The march was followed by a rally with speakers Emlyn Williams, South Wales NUM, and John Hird, national chairman of LPYS. £65 was collected for

the miners.

During the campaign leading up to the march many young people became involved in the YS. We are now producing a video of the campaign and the march which other YS branchers can hire, to give them ideas for similar campaigns.

By **Anna Wellington**
(Portsmouth LPYS)

Council jobs and services under attack

ILEA hedges its bets

THE INNER London Education Authority, the first rate-capped local authority to present a budget has voted to spend £957m—£57m above the government's limit.

This decision represents a move towards a 'no cuts' position. This has largely been achieved by the campaign of the Inner London Teachers Association (ILTA) in the schools and wider trade union movement, combined with pressure from within the Labour party (including *Militant* supporters on the Greater London Labour Party Executive).

The budget crisis facing ILEA has been brought about solely by government policy. Rate capping plus five years of Tory government refusal to provide block grants, has forced the authority to come to a clear choice, either confront the government and the law, or preside over the dismantling of the service.

Unfortunately ILEA's stance has not been as unambiguous as the situation demands. The proposed Budget includes "Selected savings" in the order of some £4 million. This will result in a scattering and closing down of services.

It will mean some redundancies in areas such as school maintenance, gardening, special schools etc. Moreover, the budget as it stands does not meet ILTA's policy of no job losses in schools;

it accepts the need to lose around 400 teaching jobs in secondary schools to meet falling roles.

As "creative accounting" has further managed to secure a £74m contingency fund, there is further suspicion that this money will be offered up to fill the financial gap between ILEA's budget and government demands. This would be at the expense of more job losses.

The only way to defeat the government's attacks on London's education is to build a campaign with the support of ILEA's workforce and parents.

Unfortunately ILEA has been dogged by poor relations with its own workforce e.g. on 27 June, when the SE Region of the TUC called on 'the widest possible support' for the Miners Solidarity Day teachers were angered to get disciplinary letters from Molly Hattersley telling them to take no action.

'Supply' jobs

NUT members are particularly angry that the authority is currently engaged in disciplinary action against teachers involved in "no cover" action i.e. not covering the lessons of absent teachers in order to defend the jobs of supply teachers, specifically employed for such work. Supply teachers' future job security is especially uncertain with the current Budget proposals.

What happens next over rate-capping is somewhat unclear. The



Students demand increased educational expenditure

Photo: Militant

proposed ILEA budget is not yet illegal, as the statutory instrument for rate-capping has not yet gone through Parliament.

The individual boroughs collect ILEA's rate (precept). It is quite clear many Tory boroughs and indeed some Labour boroughs might not be prepared to collect ILEA's budget precepts.

Further the budget still has to be ratified by the authority and the GLC at a later stage and it is quite clear that many Labour members on the ILEA are unhappy with adopting what in January would be an illegal stance. It is quite clear that a decisive, bold lead needs to be offered by the ILEA leadership.

The absence of a mass campaign has led to concern that the ILEA leadership is not gearing itself up for a fight. Such an attitude would be extremely short-sighted. Even if

they use the £74m in the contingency fund to escape the Tories financial net, the government will catch them in other ways.

Priorities

At a parents' rally in May Sir Keith Joseph promised that ILEA would be free to decide its priorities and allocate resources. But in the new Metropolitan Authorities Bill, clauses specifically state that ILEA would be unable to decide staffing levels, management or organisation. The Secretary of State would have sweeping powers to control ILEA's education priorities.

Some authority leaders suggest that a campaign based on an illegal budget can only be waged as long as public opinion remains behind the authority. This is a recipe for disaster. Public support does not

exist in the abstract, but has to be won and maintained through active campaigning involving teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and the wider union movement in London.

Such a campaign should be linked to the struggles of other Labour councils facing rate-capping. As in Liverpool it would need to be broadened to include workers in private industry.

Under pressure from unions, the labour movement and the workforce, the ILEA leadership has begun to move in the right direction. But it falls considerably short of the 'no cuts' position that the leadership is claiming. There is still a considerable way to go if the struggle is to prove successful.

By Bob Sulatycki

(West London NUT, ILTA, personal capacity)

Jenkin breaks pledge on Liverpool housing

PATRICK JENKIN and the Tory government got a bloody nose earlier this year from Liverpool City Council. At the time Councillor Tony Mulhearn, President of Liverpool District Labour Party, predicted the Tories would regroup and attack. This is now happening.

The Tories are breaking agreements given in July. At a recent committee of Liverpool City Council it was reported that Jenkin is reneging on the agreement upon which the 1984/85 budget was based: £110 million for housing investment next year will no longer be forthcoming.

Commitments

But this will not stop the council's determination to improve conditions for Liverpool people. The council has restated its commitment to its socialist policies upon which it was elected to power: to defend all existing council jobs and services, create additional jobs, improve services, build council houses for rent, end the threat of privatisation of City Council services and not

impose increases in rents, rates and charges to compensate for government cuts.

The council demanded the return of resources stolen by the Tory government from Liverpool: £170 million in Rate Support Grants, £18 million in Further Education, £69 million in housing subsidy and £59 million Housing Investment Programme.

Vicious cuts

As long as the Tory government remains in office the Tories will try and make vicious cuts in public services and jobs. Many Tory MPs and ministers want to first defeat the miners and then unleash their energy against Labour councils such as Liverpool who are prepared to resist.

It is clear that many Labour councils and local authorities support Liverpool's course of action. If Labour councils join together in a national co-ordinated campaign, building from Liverpool's victory earlier this year, they will win tremendous support from local authority workers and the working class all over the country. Liverpool Labour Council is totally committed to conducting the same mass campaign as it

waged this year.

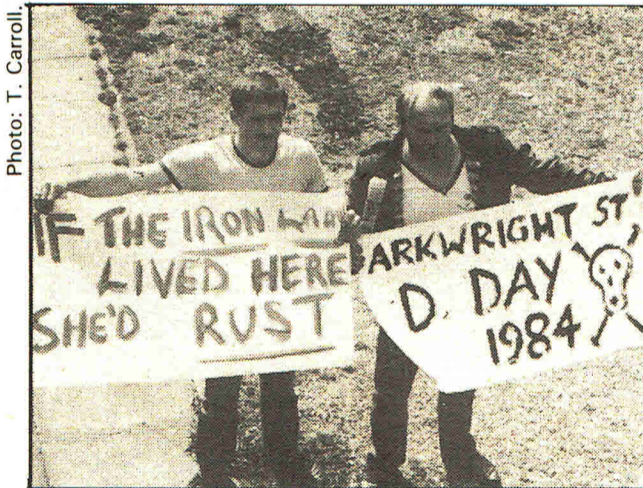
The choice facing us is clear. Because of the money stolen from the city, to balance the books would mean either a 240% rate increase or 6,000 job losses in the local authority workforce.

Neither is acceptable. Defence of jobs and services is of paramount importance to an area decimated by Tory/Liberal cuts.

The working class of Liverpool showed enormous support for the policies of the council over the last year resulting in a record turnout of support in the May local elections. A campaign is beginning now to explain to every shop steward, every local authority worker and worker in private industry, to the youth in the schools and the tech colleges and families on the estates the necessity to stand up and fight the Tory government.

We must ensure that agreements to provide extra cash are kept to. If we link up with other Labour councils and the miners we can win and remove the Tory government from office.

By Josie Aitman
(Liverpool DLP Executive, personal capacity)



Tenants greet Jenkin visit to Liverpool, 7 July.

Action wins play grant

AT THE playgroup my little boy attends, parents decided on a campaign to persuade the Council to give us a grant to employ two workers. We lobbied ward and Social Services councillors, officials, sub-committees, passed a resolution through the Labour Party and wrote several times to the Hackney Gazette our local paper.

By Lynne Faulkes
(Hackney South CLP)

They refused to print our letter, claiming if they did, they would have "50 million other groups" wanting the same publicity for their claims!

Finally, after six months, we've just heard the Council has found some money for us.

But, though relieved, we're not complacent. There

are 14,000 under-5s in Hackney and only places for 2-3000. We know our future is insecure and that is why after our victory we issued the following statement:

"We don't want to feel we get the money and others don't. Who is to say we need the money more than other groups, the handicapped, meals on wheels, home helps etc? It's hard living in Hackney and we all need all the help we can get..."

"That's why we back the Council's fight against the Tories' attempt to make us pay for their economic crisis. But we want to see them come out of the Town Hall and onto the streets, getting the support of groups like ours, organising like they did in Liverpool, to get everybody, in the factories, offices, shops, housing estates etc, behind them. Maybe then we can begin to enjoy living in Hackney."

Dudley defies Tories

AT ITS first ever policy Conference, Dudley Labour Party overwhelmingly voted for the Council to adopt a deficit budget and begin a campaign to get back the money taken from the district in recent years. We have no choice but to fight.

We have inherited a district with the worst services in the country. Now, in order just to balance the books (which still means we stay bottom of the list), we either have to cut spending by over £3m or put the rates up by 40%.

At the Conference a resolution calling upon the Council not to set a rate was defeated. Unfortunately another resolution, which stressed the need for a mass campaign but also included a call for no rate, was narrowly passed. But there could be little doubt that delegates favoured the option of putting forward a deficit budget.

We have reached a watershed in Dudley and if the rest of the Labour camp show the fighting resolve of Councillor Les Millard, whose call for action roused Conference then the battle can be won.

By Mick Murphy
(Sedgley Borough Labour Party)

They shall not starve



Kath Johnson (left) and Edna Dinning in Gateshead Labour Party rooms—everyday is spent on the miners' 'hotline'.



Miners' wife Betty Crozier—chief tea and soup maker—one of the many unsung heroines of the dispute.

THE OLD miners' hall of the aptly named "Wind once industrial and now c Gateshead.

Inside the hall, now headquarters of Gateshead East Labour Party, Edna Dinning, chairperson of the local Miners' Dependents Support Group, checks the list of miners who have already registered for a food parcel and waits patiently by the phone for "late-comers".

It's all part of a routine that Edna and other members of the group have been involved in the past nine months since the miners decided to strike in defence of their jobs.

By the far wall, the words "They shall not starve" bring back many stories of the "big strike in '26" my grandfather often talked about. Kathleen Johnson and Christine Dick, miners' wives on the group's committee, store what seems a countless number of plastic shopping bags in readiness for Friday night's food distribution.

Side by side

Edna says: "There was a conscious decision from the start by the committee to work side by side with the men. I mean, after all" she laughs, "we weren't going to hump all those parcels down to Heworth Miners' Hall every Friday night whilst they 'lazed' around".

Tremendous ar

"I DECIDED to come along to the support group to see if I could help in any way and now I'm fully involved.

"The group has helped my family a great deal, so I thought it only fair to get involved and since going I have realised the tremendous amount of work and effort put in by everyone concerned in order that families such as mine don't go

Pensioner's support

COMMENTS FROM a lady who lives on a pension and who has been donating £2 a week to the miners since the strike began:

"The reason I help the miners is because this government is quite adamant in breaking the unions. Any concessions that working people have, regardless whether they acknowledge it or not, have been gained through the suffering of people who have gone before, my father, grandfather and thousands like them. Therefore I don't want to see the unions broken. The miners are the most powerful union in the country and if they are broken, she (Margaret Thatcher) is going to have a cakewalk with the rest of us.

"I think that the labour movement should replace Kinnock with somebody with a little bit of backbone, because as far as I'm concerned he's an opportunist of the first order! He has not proved himself to be a Labour man at all."

Police army attacks women

"WE WENT to Philadelphia workshops as a peaceful picket, and that's exactly what it was like until the police came on the go.

"The scabs were waiting at the bottom end trying to get in but we kept them out for about an hour. When they decided to make their way in, the police just rammed themselves into us and knocked us flying. There were people knocked to the ground where they were hit in the ribs and the face. The police just couldn't care less and you imagine the size of those lads, six foot odd, compared to the size of the women; it was just disgusting.

"The second time we went picketing at Philadelphia Workshops we had the same harassment to put up with again from the police. This time there was one girl arrested but they had

to let her off eventually because the policewoman involved had made a false statement; it was all lies.

Disgraceful police

"It's just disgraceful the way police treat pickets. I mean there were only 36 of us women down there compared to an army of burly policemen; it was unbelievable. We had heard a lot about what has happened to the lads outside the pits especially in Notts, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire. When you listen to the tales they tell you you think well its disgraceful, but when you go and see for yourself and you are amongst it, you know, its absolutely terrifying.

"We decided to go to Philadelphia because we thought that putting women on the picket lines might have shown women

scabs that we were behind our men, and we thought at the time that with women picketing women they might have shown a bit of heart and come onto our side.

"There was one fellow, a scab, who grabbed one of our girls by the scruff of the neck and pulled her to the ground. When we pickets, "the petticoat pickets" as we've been nicknamed, saw this, we set upon him, but he got away with it and he's never even been charged or anything by the police. In fact it was a police inspector who came across and rammed himself straight into us. Another boy blue grabbed one girl who is a councillor; well she got furious and demanded his name but got nothing but abuse.

"The action of the police won't stop us picketing. We'd do it time and time again until those scabs who are mostly women get



Edna Dinning.

themselves out. These women are in the COSA union and its their policy not to cross picket lines so all we're doing is asking them to abide by their own union rules."

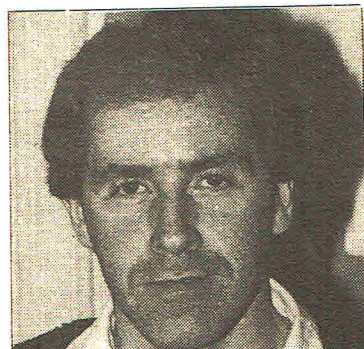
Edna Dinning
Chairperson Gateshead Miners' Dependents Support Group.

Can't go back

"THE HELP for me being a single person is great. The parcel helps out a lot because with getting nothing off the state my mam and dad have still got to pay my rent which is deducted from my father's invalidity benefit every week.

"Without the support group's help I might have been one of the first ones going back, being in a position of no money and no food. But it's kept me from even thinking about going over.

"We've got men coming to the meetings to pick up their parcels every Friday and they sometimes say: "We'll have to go back", but when they pick a food parcel up,



Derek Wilson.

they know that the last thing they can do is actually go back because it would mean that all these women's work would have been in vain. They realise that the work that's been done here is part and parcel to keep them out on strike until the NUM secures a famous victory."

Derek Wilson
Wearmouth Lodge NUM

These marvellous wo

"THE MAIN role the LPYS have played in helping the support group is our regular collections throughout the area. On one Saturday we collected £150 and more recently £180, mostly from pensioners, housewives, factory workers and unemployed youngsters.

Xmas coming

"With Xmas coming on, we've decided to step up our activities, collecting toys and games for the bairns as well as raising more money to help alleviate the hard-

ship. We are now on the streets everyday, sometimes twice a day, with our rattling tins.

"On August bank holiday, our YS branch held a festival in the Leam Lane Park which raised over £100 for the miners. On top of this it was a grand day out for everyone, especially the miners' kids and the unemployed youngsters. There was all the usual stuff you would find at a festival—stalls, games and even our own YS pop group, which had everyone laughing (one of our comrades, Jim Moffat, found it hard to finish off one of Eric Clapton's

numbers and ended up shooting some poor sheriff about 50 times!—Bob Harker).

Home parties

"There's also been a lot of house parties organised by individual members of our YS which in a sense plays two important roles. The first is that once again it gives us an opportunity to raise a little money for the support group. The other, which is just as important, is that it helps to relax and take the strain off the miners and their wives.

the cold swept banks "Nook" overlooks the devastated heartland of

A feature by
Bob Harker

Kathleen and Christine now sit down around the gas fire sipping coffee. "Nine months into the strike and our morale is as high as ever" says Kathleen. "That's right" adds Christine, "McNasty (MacGregor) has got no chance against us lot. We care about our bairns, their needs and their futures and we know that they understand this. Oh yes, our bairns won't starve."

And then as if to emphasise their high morale they suddenly burst into one of their songs: "Bless them all, bless them all, Scargill, McGahey and all; Bless all the miners and their families too; Bless the support groups for seeing us through. We're saying goodbye to them all, Thatcher, MacGregor must fall. You'll get no enjoyment from mass unemployment, so cheer up me lads bless them all."

"We've been singing on stage in the local clubs" says Edna. "We go and collect money for the group then sing our songs and now Alan Hull of the Lindisfarne pop group, who's a good socialist and supporter of the miners, wants to get us on record."

Amount of work

hungry.

"I think the Gateshead support group do a marvellous job. Parcels are now being distributed every Friday to about 350 families at the public meetings, with a further 150 to 200 being sent out to the outlying families by van, which the Labour council has lent us for the duration of the strike."

—Betty Crozier, miner's wife

The phone rings and Edna finds herself once again registering another miner for a food parcel, "single... Westoe Lodge... the meeting and distribution of the parcels will be on Friday night 7.30 at Heworth Welfare Hall..."

Christine says: "We always make sure to have some meat in the parcels. This week it's steak, but other weeks it's been chicken or pork."

The girls then run through a list of what the parcels have contained; 5lbs potatoes, 2lbs carrots, six eggs, 2lbs sugar, three tins of beans, luncheon meat, meatballs, weetabix, margarine, ¼lb of sausage...

Kind people

"Three Co-op shops in the area have basket collections for us which always help" says Kathleen. "People are very kind and always donate something, like a bag of tomatoes for example."

I ask them about social activities and they all seemed to answer at once. "We had a pie and pea supper at the Wealcroft Club" said Edna, putting down the 'phone, "It raised £250".

"That disco we had the other night at Pelaw brought in £120" adds Christine. "And then we raised £224.78 at a charity show in Sunnyside. That's where Alan Hull told us about his idea of getting us on record".

"The bairns have had days out as well" says Edna, "two trips to the coast, a fun day..." "And not forgetting" interrupts Kathleen; "that festival at the Leam Lane Park organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists. It was really good, that was."

"The *Militant* have been great" adds Christine. "All this publicity in the paper like that Wearmouth spread the other week and now this article you are doing about our support group; it's really appreciated."

I tell them that I have a *Militant* photographer at my disposal and wish to get all their photographs. "Oh well then" they laugh, "we'll have to get our hair done and look our best." Kathleen jokes with Edna: "With your Harry (Wearmouth Lodge chairman) in the paper one week and you the next, it is going to be like the Dinning family album."

"They are doing a great job, Bobby" says Derek Wilson, an unmarried miner from Wearmouth, "and now with this news that Arthur (Scargill) came out with on TV about the North East pits being wiped out these women are more determined than ever."

I ask them about Friday's meeting. "A lad called Thomas from Zimbabwe is speaking about the conditions which the African workers have to put up with" says Kathleen handing out the coffee, "and Dave Cotterill is also going to speak about the strike and the NCB lies".

"Aye" says Derek, "we are going to get the ball rolling this week for the bairns' Xmas party. The Labour Party, especially the council and the Young Socialists, are already collecting toys and games."

"Metro radio also has a party every year and the council have bought tickets for all the miners' kids" adds Edna. "But as far as the meeting goes we'll have about 360 people there."

"You know, we always make sure we have a trade union speaker each week" chips in Christine, "and we've had tremendous donations from various unions; the NGA, NUPE, TGWU".

As a final question I ask them if the miners are going to win. "Of course, wee aye, no problem..." they answer, then once again burst into song. As I say my farewell the phone jumps into life again. Edna picks up the receiver. "Married... Wearmouth Lodge... this Friday 7.30 pm."

Boost to morale

"MILITANT SUPPORTERS have proved to be a great help by either boosting our morale with their down-to-earth political answers to the fancy worded manoeuvres of the NCB and the Tories, to simply countering the lies of Fleet Street with their non-stop coverage of the strike in the paper, such as that centre-page article about Wearmouth Lodge the other week."

"With the women folk actively involved, any of our lads, worried for their families, who might believe it would be better to go back are met with the same reply: 'Don't you dare think about it!' I think this takes a lot of pressure off the lads and boost their morale."

"I only wish every miner's wife and girlfriend would say the same"



thing and support this strike to the full."

Christine Dick,
Committee member

Get yourselves involved



Alf Ward,
Monkton Washery NUM

"IF WE hadn't had the support group, I think some of the lads might have went back to work. The work that the group does is absolutely fantastic—street collections, socials, food parcels and everything. It's just tremendous and I would just like to add that the *Militant* supporters' involvement, especially in our area, is really appreciated."

"The *Militant* up here have never faltered in their support for us miners and it's not just me saying this but all the lads, even those who might disagree or don't really understand what the *Militant* stands for have had to agree that the *Militant* lads and lasses have worked non-stop to help us. It's something we'll never forget. Honestly we've got to thank the *Militant* because over a third of the money coming in comes from them."

"Take the *Militant* newspaper for instance. Every week since the

strike started there have been articles in support of us lot, whether it be about the coal stocks, NCB lies, picketing and of course the support groups. Now you never find that sort of thing in the national press!

"This is one of the best support groups, because I know lads of other support groups who've been getting food parcels once a month, in some areas only three parcels throughout the dispute. Here we've been getting them once a fortnight and now once a week. I don't want to sound as though I'm knocking those other groups who've obviously come across many problems; all I want to say is a big thank you to the Gateshead group who've put in a hell of a lot of work. If we keep going the way we are, we'll be having food parcels every day soon; it's great."

Single lads

"We got our first food parcel on the second week of the strike and they've always been good. Of course when the group first started the main concern was for the bairns, but it wasn't long before the single lads, who themselves were in a bad situation, were being fed also."

"Now I would just like to say this to those miners who are sitting at home. You know the types of support you have been getting, the marvellous work by the support groups all over the country and by people who aren't even miners like those lads and lasses in the LPYS—get yourselves involved and get out there to the factories and do some collecting!"



Kath Cotterill.

work if we have anything to do with it.

"There is a spirit of togetherness now because we've learnt a lot, we've been through a lot and we're going to stick it out 'till the end."

Kath Cotterill,
Committee member



Miners' wives, their children and supporters march in Gateshead. Their enthusiasm and confidence has been a feature of the many marches and rallies throughout the country.
Photo: David Pearson

men

"Gateshead East LPYS branch has also sent a letter to the GMC and indeed to every ward in the area to ask members to collect as many toys as possible with the intention of holding a toy fair near Xmas for all the miners' bairns."

"One of the main things that the Labour Party isn't doing is getting the miners' message across on the TV and the papers. The opportunities that the leadership have had to condemn the actions of the police which haven't been taken up has been one of the big failures of the Labour Party nationally."

"They should be saying all the

time that they wholeheartedly support the NUM instead of worrying about whether they are going to get in at the next election or not."

"I think the women with the support group do a fantastic job. I only wish that more women would get involved and give them a break. As far as we, the LPYS, are concerned, we'll support the group until as long as it takes, and if that means collecting twice a day for the next six months, though we'll win long before then, so be it. The NCB are onto a loser; they've got no hope against these marvellous women!"

Jackie Payne,
Gateshead East Labour Party
Young Socialists

Lives transformed by activity

"THE EFFECTS on the women involved with the support group over these past months have been amazing. Perhaps they can't see it themselves but if they were able to stand back and look at themselves, they'd really notice that things they wouldn't have dreamed about doing seven or eight months ago, they do now without batting an eyelid."

"Raising thousands of pounds, getting involved with street collections, organising the food parcels, organising socials, speaking at public meetings, going on demonstrations, singing in public for which they've now become

famous with their socialist songs, all these activities now come naturally. What it proves to me is that a lot of women are wasted in their homes."

Abilities and strengths

"These women have got great backbone and there is one thing certain—they've learnt a lot about their own abilities and their qualities, their own strengths, and they are going to continue fighting! As far as we are concerned the miners are going to win. They are not going to be starved back to

Latin America

Workers face up to repression

El Salvador

JUAN VARGAS, an El Salvadorean trade unionist spoke at a London meeting, organised by Labour MPs Terry Fields and Dave Nellist.

Juan, aged 26, is one of six children of a coffee worker, and the only one to receive a secondary education (the country has a 64% illiteracy rate). He worked as a maintenance engineer in a print factory.

He has led five strikes. In 1979 the army came to arrest him but were foiled when none of the workers would identify him. He participated in the uprisings of 1980-81. He refused to leave the towns to become a member of the FMLN but as he could no longer work in the factory, he became a full-time union official in 1979. He has not been able to see his family for three years because of the extreme danger.

Tortured

Juan is on the executive of the trade union Federacion Sindical Revolucionaria, FSR, and is responsible for external relations with the other union bodies in El Salvador and abroad. He was arrested at the last FSR congress in January and was in prison for six months, kept blindfolded for long periods, beaten and tortured. He told the audience:

THE EL Salvadorean government are working to destroy the trade union movement. We had to be released but many comrades are still in jail.

There has been no change politically since Duarte came into office. Since then there has been a strike of post office workers and a rising

movement especially during the May Day period. In September, though, after a workers' mobilisation the government became angry and did not permit any trade union activity.

This is despite Duarte's democratic words. The country still faces repression through the Death Squads. We have to find a way to work particularly as we may face an invasion by US troops.

Death squads

El Salvador is a very violent society; many people have been killed by the death squads. Some of our premises have been bombed; we have to meet in places not identified with our union like shops.

We have difficulty because of the terrible poverty and repression in getting even a minimum union subscription at times which made it difficult to fight the arrests. But we do our best and we appeal for international solidarity. After our next conference which we are now preparing for, we hope to be in a healthier situation.

Many industries are closing, despite Duarte's promise to create new jobs. Any aid goes to the armed forces not to solve problems like that. Unemployment is nearly 40%. Oil prices are rising which will force other costs up. But wages even for those in work are about about \$3 or \$4 per day for a whole family.

There is no health service and medicine is in the hands of the armed forces, while housing is run by the government. The price is so high that many people, the unemployed particularly, can't afford a mortgage. But the trade union struggle is not just an economic struggle. The union has not yet



Civilian killed by death squads, election day, 1982

Photo: P. Gigli (IFL)

got any direct political links but we favour socialism.

We welcome what has happened in Nicaragua. Workers there will have to complete the revolution to fully participate in society. We're training people politically, we want a leadership but not an elite. We don't let our representatives leave El Salvador for more than three months at a time so they stay in touch with what is going on.

The workers are a majority in El Salvador and they must play the leading part in liberating the country. We had most participation in the period 1979-80 but because it was not organised, it was here and there. We didn't sit down and think how to gain power. We have to work out what went wrong then.

We aren't just fighting for El Salvador but for the international working class. Thatcher wants to have an embassy in San Salvador so we hope for solidarity from the British working class for our struggle.

We want peace in our



Refugee camp for children.

Photo: P. Gigli (IFL)

country but that doesn't just mean an end to fighting. British miners are not at war but they are not at peace. Peace means fighting for all the needs of the people so workers can participate in

the future. If there is hunger, death, unemployment, a lack of medicine and housing, if there is not the minimum respect for human rights, we are not at peace. ♪

Uruguay's 'guided democracy'

JULIO SANGUINETTI, leader of the conservative Colorado Party, won the presidential elections in Uruguay on 25 November. The country's military rulers took the precaution of preventing his main rivals from standing.

The centre Blanco party and the Broad Front, an amalgamation of socialists, Communists and liberals were allowed to contest the elections but without their leaders. Wilson Ferreira Aldunate of the Blancos was arrested for alleged "subversion" and General Liber Seregni of the Broad Front, who was released from jail only this year after a decade of imprisonment, was banned.

Missing votes

The country's electoral officer admitted that in many areas votes for the Broad Front and Blancos had mysteriously not found their way onto the final tally. But this election was not denounced by Washington, no

By Roger Shrivs

US aircraft buzzed Montevideo, no scare stories appeared about MiG fighters. "Democracy" had returned to Uruguay but of a type which Reagan could tolerate.

Since 1973 the country has been ruled by a military junta. At one stage out of a population of 3 million, over 4,000 were political prisoners. Uruguay's real rulers were the torturers whose well chronicled atrocities maintained a state of fear for many years. About a third of the population emigrated in the last 11 years. Factories were placed under the military control during the regime's rule, and workers subjected to military

discipline.

But in the last year in particular the pressure on the ruling class and the military became unbearable. The military were hated. Massive rallies organised by opposition parties last November attracted 400,000, over a third of Montevideo's population. There were riots over government harassment. A 24 hour general strike in January was followed by one in June protesting at economic policies, demanding elections and the release of political prisoners.

Economy insecure

The elections came through massive working class pressure but they were held largely on the military's terms. They call it "guided democracy". Apart from the bans, they stipulated that the military council should carry on in power for a year after Sanguinetti took office in March.

They want to negotiate a final division of power to give themselves the veto in matters of "internal security" (a suitably vague definition). They are obviously against prosecution of the junta torturers and against release of political prisoners. Sanguinetti was their favourite candidate.

Class clashes seem likely. One in six are out of work officially. Their foreign debt of \$4.6 billion is the second highest per person in Latin America. The economy has had no secure basis since the market for beef and wool which kept Uruguay stable collapsed.

Agriculture is in a terrible condition, there is little industrial investment and speculation by the dominant foreign companies has left the country nearly destitute, a position made worse by huge military consumption. Capitalist observers want Uruguay to become even more of a low wage economy than now. (Real wages are

already 50% down since 1973).

There is pressure for a government of "national unity" involving opposition politicians and trade unionists. But the interests of workers and capitalists can not be reconciled on the economic questions, or on political prisoners and the role of the military.

Workers movement

Workers will expect results from the lifting of the worst shadow of repression and they have already shown their strength. If the needs of the working class are to be met and the threat of a new military regime is to be avoided, a vigilant and independent workers' movement will be essential.

Bolivia

IN BOLIVIA the same week the highly combative working class again took to the streets to protest at government economic policies in a general strike which led to street barricades.

The President, Siles Zuazo, took to his bed complaining of "strong back pains". He feels powerless though the military have again been threatening to take action against "disruption of public order."

Peru

PRESIDENT BELAUNDE of Peru has declared a month long state of emergency after a 24 hour general strike against government austerity measures and abuses of human rights.

Around 90% of organised workers joined the stoppage which closed ports, mines and most factories and farms on 29 November. 250 protesters were reported arrested and two students received gunshot wounds after an exchange with police.

The unions want the government to freeze petrol prices and subsidise food as inflation has gone over 100% and workers' purchasing power down by a third.

International backing for miners

IN THE course of the miners' strike, many NUM members have spoken at meetings, gaining support and finance for their heroic opposition to redundancies. Their courage has won admiration and backing throughout the world. Many miners and members of their families are new to political activity. But their own experiences have shown how rapidly workers' understanding and confidence grows. As reports below show, Militant supporters have helped organise a number of international visits and support through other Marxists in other countries.

Sri Lanka

MARK THORNTON, who toured Sri Lanka met leaders and members of the Marxist party, the NSSP. "They are totally committed to the struggle" said Mark. "The main thing that struck me was how advanced the mass of workers are politically. There were 500 in Hatton in a street meeting listening to us. You cannot explain to them why the TUC have not called a day of action, why it is not supporting us physically.

More forthright

"They cannot understand why Kinnock and the Labour Party is not being more forthright on our side. Many people were asking why is it that the party of the workers can stand back and not take an active part in it. "A bloke from the Sri Lankan Special Branch and another from the British Embassy were following me around," Mark said. The ruling class are clearly worried about the impact of international solidarity with the miners.

Spain

THE BRITISH miner who toured Spain, Adrian Bird, also from Notts, got massive publicity in the media, see right. In Seville, Adrian spoke to 200 workers from the Aznacollar mines and in Cadiz to a meeting of 150 sponsored by the shipyard committee. In Gijon, currently the

scene of violent conflict in the shipyards, and a general strike which lead to the death of a young man during barricade fighting not so long ago, he spoke to a meeting of 120 workers. In El Ferrol a mass meeting of 200 shipyard workers from Astanio ship yards listened attentively to Adrian's experiences.

After the meeting one worker said: "I have learned more about the strike in 20 minutes of one miner speaking, than in 3 months of trying to follow the articles in the capitalist press." Adrian explained to the Spanish workers why the British miners had the capacity to fight for so long. He pointed to some tremendous examples of international solidarity, such as the workers of New Zealand sending a shipload of lamb for the British miners.

Sweden

ONE MINER, Ian Shaw, visited Sweden in October, only two weeks after making his first public speech. He spoke to a demonstration organised by the Marxist paper *Offensiv* and sixteen branches of the Young Socialists. The tour gave Swedish workers a glimpse of their own future.

Ian spoke about Britain's dock strikes to dock workers in Stockholm and Gothenburg. He described how the ruling class had used the weakness of the second dock strike to try and beat the miners back, but failed. The Swedish dock workers pledged as much support as they could give and welcomed the fact that at last they were

hearing the truth about the miners strike. "You have to get rid of Thatcher," one concluded.

The visit was also very valuable for the Swedish labour movement, raising the level of understanding. In mobilising for the youth demonstration, Ian visited five different schools, a further education college, and four youth clubs, meeting a total of about 700 young people. Collections from his visit and that of Roy Jones in August came to about £3,500.

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**MOBILISE WORLD SUPPORT FOR
 BRITISH MINER'S STRIKE**

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SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

Section of Sri Lankan poster advertising miners meeting, organised by United Federation of Labour.

SOLIDARIDAD CON LOS MINEROS BRITANICOS

7 MESES DE HUELGA POR:
 ¡Ningún despido!



¡No al cierre de pozos!
 ¡Abajo el gobierno Thatcher!

MITIN

INTERVENDRAN:

PEPE BLANES (Comité de Redacción de Nuevo Claridad)
 JOSE ANTONIO BARROSO (Alcalde de Puerto Real)
 UN MIEMBRO DEL COMITE DE EMPRESA DE AESA
 ADRIAN BIRD (Minero británico del NUM)

ORGANIZA:
 Nuevo Claridad
 Excelentísimo Ayuntamiento de Puerto Real
 Comité de Empresa de AESA

DIA: Domingo 21 de octubre
 HORA: 12 mañana
 LUGAR: Biblioteca municipal

Leaflet advertising British Miners Meeting, Spain, organised by *Nuevo Claridad*.

Solidarity from Spain

I TRAVELLED over 5,000 miles in my five-week stay in Spain with 35 or so public meetings.

I was on six different regional TV channels and one national news programme which covered a meeting I spoke at. I was on local and national radio 30 times and was interviewed by leading national and local papers.

Great response

The response of rank and file trade unionists was overwhelming and at many meetings dozens of questions were asked, not only about the miners' strike but about the political situation in Britain and my own opinion of the industrial action being taken by sections of Spain's labour movement against the so-called "Socialist" government.

Certain sections of the hierarchy of the Socialist affiliated union UGT ac-

tively worked against the trip but the rank and file promised to raise the miners' strike at their factories and workplaces and organise a solidarity fund. In certain regions too the Workers' Commissions' (CCOO) leaders were not very helpful but the CCOO ranks in areas like El Ferrol and Cadiz shipyards and Madrid were active in their support.

Many workers were pleased at the chance to ask questions. We felt there is too little contact between workers of different countries. News and information is in effect censored by the ruling classes of the world so we do not have a picture of the unrest building up. United class action which ignores national frontiers is vital for all of us.

By Adrian Bird
 (Bentnck NUM, South Notts)

World boom keeps Hawke in office — just

AGAINST all opinion poll forecasts, the Australian Labor Party saw its majority cut in half at last weekend's election. The vote for Labor fell by 1.7%.

Every leading capitalist newspaper had backed Labor, but Hawke's right wing policies were unable to whip up great enthusiasm amongst workers. Some were worried about the future, and the opposition's claim that tax rises were on the way.

The Labor government has been very fortunate since it won in March 1983. The world boom has had spin-off effects on the Australian economy. Unemployment has fallen from 11% in 1982 to 8.5% now, while inflation has been reduced over the same period from 11.5% to 6.5%.

Labor's economic policy is based on borrowing money to create jobs in the public sector and to "encourage" the private sector to follow suit. But big business have failed to be great-

ly encouraged. They have less faith in the permanence of the boom.

Unlike its OECD partners, Australia's economy is based on the export of food and products of the huge mineral resources. Australia's puny manufacturing industry—long protected by high tariffs—can in no way compete with the world economic giants.

Even during the current boom there has been no significant investment in this sector. Instead big business has put its money into property speculation, precious metals etc.

Capital is slowly being moved out of Australia and into South East Asia attracted by cheap labour and lower taxes. Hawke, acting on behalf of big business is trying to reduce tariffs to lower the price of imports, which will have devastating effects for Australian industry.

The start was an agreement to end the quota system on imported cars. In the words of car



Australian premier Bob Hawke

union leader Joe Thompson this will "not save the industry, it will kill it". Manufacturing industry, which capitalism seems intent on destroying, employs along with service industries 6 million out a total workforce of 6½ million.

Class battles are on their way as the bosses are forced to attack jobs and the high living standards Australian workers

rightly regard as their due. This will spell disaster for the current truce between unions and employers.

The Hawke-inspired wages and prices accord between Government, unions and business has led to a huge reduction in industrial action over the last year. But while unions have stuck faithfully to this accord by restricting wages, the companies have tried every means possible to raise prices.

Union leaders have been able to dampen rank and file discontent during the election campaign. But even they have been warning that they cannot do so forever. In the words of the *Financial Times* "Hawke's honeymoon with the unions is coming to an end".

Hawke has used his current popularity (up to 70% of all voters) to strengthen the hold of the right wing on the ALP. He has ruthlessly removed all left wingers from leading positions in the Party.

However the rank and file

are still solidly on the side of the left. A recent attempt by the right-wing bureaucracy in New South Wales to end re-selection of Federal MP's was met by swift action. One thousand rank and file Sydney ALP's attended an angry meeting addressed by leading lefts in the Party.

The policies of the notoriously corrupt right wing do not attract young people, many of whom are looking towards the new Nuclear Disarmament Party as an alternative to the pro-capitalist policies of the Hawke administration.

Nonetheless, the impending battles in Australia will start in the trade unions and workers will be looking to the Labor Party for a political lead. The place for all socialists is in the ALP campaigning for socialist policies and a fighting leadership. They will be needed.

By Sally West

LETTERS

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

Ghost scabs

Dear Comrades,
North Gawber Colliery has remained solid during the long drawn out strike which is something to be proud of. Well that was not correct according to the local gutter press—the Yorkshire Evening Post—who have started to print the numbers of scabs working at different pits.
On Monday 13 November they printed: North Gawber; new starters one; total working one; up one. On the Tuesday they printed: North Gawber; new starters three; total working six, up six (?) What happened to Tuesday's three scabs? On Thurs-

day they must have been too embarrassed to print the figures. Friday they printed: North Gawber; total working nil; new starters nil; down nil.
The truth is one man went into North Gawber on the Thursday but the branch secretary went in and talked him out. It's not pickets on the pit gates we want but a priest to exorcise these ghost-scabs.

The NCB has got the public wondering how many millions of miners this country has. All I can say is go on BBC, ITV, Sun, Post etc do your worst.

Garry Rayner
NUM Wakefield

Protect miners' cash

Dear Comrades,
I read with interest the report in the *Militant* about the manager in Lancashire who jumped the gun and stopped the Bold NUM's local funds.

An identical situation arose in Northumberland which affected the funds of every lodge in the area.

Apparently a bank manager at the regional office in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne had been watching *Newsnight* on Television and the next morning blocked all withdrawals from NUM accounts.

Whether or not he is a Tory, or perhaps he had been drinking too much and didn't understand the sequestration order, we will never know. But the union sorted it out within a couple

of hours with his superiors at the bank.

However the incident brought home dramatically the effect it would have if our local funds are sequestered.

To give just one small example. Every Saturday we send four collectors to London. For a couple of hours it looked as if we wouldn't be able to send the minibuses down to relieve the four lads who had been there for a week, and replace them with another four.

With the possibility of sequestration of local assets, NUM areas and branches must take steps to keep their funds fluid, and renew their appeal for finance to the wider trade union movement.

Yours fraternally
J Cunningham (Jnr)
Striking miner
Ashington

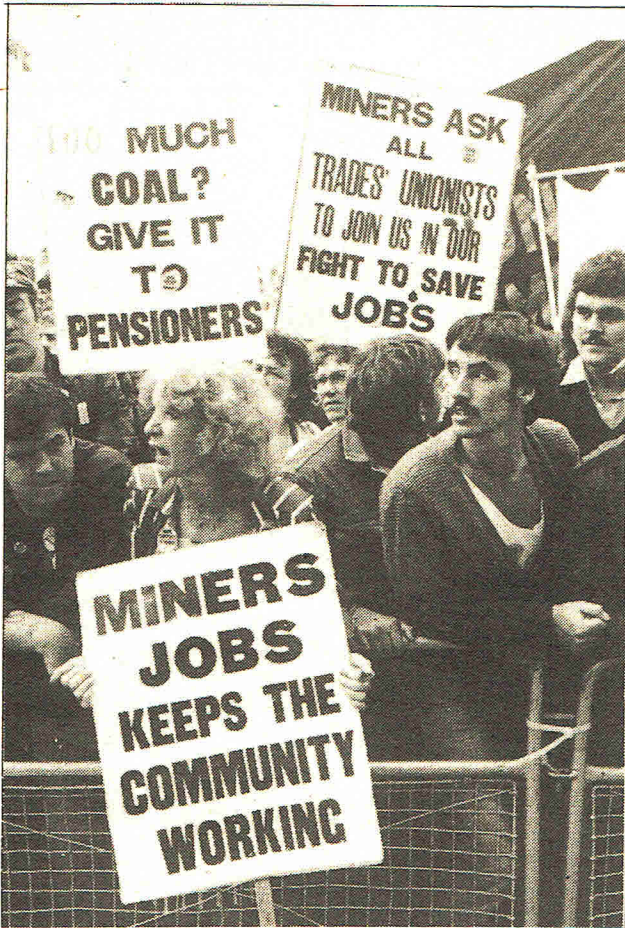


Photo: Dave Sinclair

Support for the miners at this year's TUC conference in Brighton.

Miners fight for your future

Dear *Militant*,

As a striking miner's wife I feel I must express my views about the miners dispute. There has been a lot of biased publicity about the violence on picket lines. I have used the term biased because I have yet to see pickets wearing riot gear, on horseback, charging with batons raised into the police.

As for the working miners being called martyrs there is only one thing I can say. I hope we never have a war while we have got people like them around. They have not even got the guts to fight for their own jobs. So what chance has this country got with those sort of people?

I cannot foretell the outcome of this dispute but I know that this government is out to destroy unions by weakening the NUM. Thatcher and MacGregor do not want this dispute solved.

They are hoping for a drift back to work by starving the miners and families. In some

cases a few strikers are taking the bait. I hope that the working class people will have the good sense to see what this government is trying to do.

Have you any idea what it will mean to this country without unions?

Without unions it will be cap-in-hand jobs. Also those miners who are being escorted to work by the police will be dragged to work whether they want to go or not if the miners lose this fight.

This country will become like the early Thirties if this government is allowed to destroy the NUM. Every working class person should be supporting the miners because they are fighting for your future. Remember, if the miners are defeated it could be your job next! Who will fight for you?

Jean Mabley
Littleton Miners Wives
Support committee

Hayhoe's cock-up theory

Dear Comrades,
The local LPYS recently paid a visit to the best club in London, the House of Commons, to visit our local Tory MP Barney Hayhoe. His view of politics was very profound, informing us that "the cock-up theory is the best theory in politics." Therefore we can all assume the Belgrano incident, the closure of Cortonwood pit and the ensuing

Tory policy—unemployment

Dear Comrades,
Mass unemployment is the road to social, political and economic ruin, so say the press. What most people won't or don't understand is that this is a deliberate policy created by a right wing Tory government, the Tories want it this way.

Social—yes, it hits the working class.

Political—no, it didn't stop Thatcher's landslide victory at the last election.

Economic—no, we know that the only way to rid this country of mass unemployment is to invest, and who controls the money that needs to be invested?—big business and the supporters

Sick society

Dear *Militant*,
What a sick society we live in thanks to Thatcher and her company—starving miners and their wives and children; polluting the earth by nuclear waste with Cruise and Trident missiles; putting politics first before starving Ethiopians.

All Mr Kinnock can say is that he abhors violence. So do we all, but what does he call this. This is all violence, nothing more than international government terrorism.

Thank God we still have some intelligent people who speak the truth and care for others, like Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn and Eric Heffer.

I am writing to you because I no longer purchase Tory biased papers. Next to

miners' strike, and all the other miseries that the Tories have inflicted on working people over the last five years have just been one big cock-up.

I don't agree with the theory but at least we can agree that the Tories are the live embodiment of this profound piece of thinking.

Yours
Ian Sellens
Hounslow

and friends of the Tory Party.

We the working class will have to wait another two years before we see a move in this situation.

The run up to the next election will be crucial for the Tory party. There can't be many more lies left to tell, so they will start to invest again. How many ordinary people have bought shares in British Telecom? We the people who already own it are being asked to buy it again.

My hope is that when Labour win the next election, everything that has been stolen from us by this Tory government will be given back without compensation.

Yours fraternally
Brian McKeon
Secretary Waverley Ward
Dulwich CLP



Photo: Militant

Thatcher—upholder of a sick society.

go will be my television. I don't intend struggling to pay my license fee to listen to Tory biased newsreaders. They are just the same as the gutter press journalists. Your paper tells the truth.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs M E Guest
Blackpool

LEFT and RIGHT

Suckling pig

THE TORY press highlights injuries the police have received during the miners strike. But they missed two incidents last week which left two officers nursing damaged jaws. At Tilmanstone in Kent police charged the picket line and one officer took a swipe at a miner—the miner ducked and the officer gave a colleague a resounding crack on the jaw, putting him in hospital. (*Morning Star* November 28). Meanwhile in Rotherham (reports the *Daily Mirror*, November 29) a police officer dislocated his jaw after he bet his colleague he could put a whole orange in his mouth. He could, but he had to be rushed to Rotherham General Hospital for staff to get it out again.

Garden Pests No. 4—The Termite

At the recent ASTMS conference, Clive Jenkins coined the phrase "Trotskyist Termites". What is a termite we ask ourselves?

The termite is often described as a white ant. In fact, the two species are not very closely related but termites do have some similarities to the social insects (hymenoptera) which include ants, wasps and bees. Both the termite and the hymenoptera live in colonies and can be divided into three classes. These are Workers, the Queen and Drones, which are called Kings in the case of termites.

Workers perform all the tasks of the colony. They collect all the food, effect repairs and defend it from attack. The Queen just lazes around producing offspring and the Drones just laze around.

The definition of Workers, does sound like the class from which *Militant* supporters are drawn. Well spotted Mr. Jenkins! As for the Queen, need I say more? Unfortunately, this only leaves one role for poor old Clive Jenkins to play. Just keep on droning Clive.

(Thanks to Nick Steven, our Resident Red Under The Rose Bed)

Review

Classic mining novel

Germinal

By Emile Zola

The struggle of British miners this year has reawakened interest in past struggles of miners in Britain and abroad.

A book well worth reading is the classic novel *Germinal* by the French author Emile Zola. Written in 1884, it is loosely-based on historical events, and gives a vivid picture of the terrible conditions in which the miners and their families lived.

It tells the story of Etienne Lantier, who arrives at the mining village of Montsou in the midst of a deep industrial crisis. He is 'lucky' enough to find a job in the pit 'Le Voreux', a name which suggests that it eats the miners who work inside it.

Women worked pushing tubs of coal along narrow underground passages. Children were sent

underground at an early age, doing the most menial of jobs.

One day the company puts up notices announcing that the pay rates are to be cut. The miners at first send a humble delegation which is treated with scorn. The miners decide to go on strike, and Etienne becomes the leader.

The mine owners resort to all the dirty tactics which British miners have become familiar with. Scabs are brought in; potential strike breakers are treated with charity; and the army is drafted in, putting Montsou under a reign of terror.

The miners learn quickly during the strike, and realise that they must bring all the other pits out on strike. Most of the other pits join, but at one scab pit the miners at-

tack it and destroy the winding gear.

Political ideas are put to the test. Ex-miner Rassenieur, who now owns a pub, had a socialist reputation before the strike, but he deserts the miners when they turn to more militant tactics.

International

The miners invite a representative of the Workers International to speak, and the miners join the International as a body. This incident is based on a real event when 10,000 workers joined the International during a strike in North East France. The representative who addresses the miners, Pluchart, is a careerist despite his Marxist pretensions.

He arrives in a stage coach, wearing a top hat and tails. After giving the miners one donation of money, the International plays no further part in the strike, as it too is taken up with its own factional disputes with the anarchists.

The inability of the Inter-

national to play a decisive role in workers struggles because of factionalism was the main reason why Marx and Engels reluctantly decided to disband the International, before its name and principles were dragged through the mud.

In *Germinal*, the strike is eventually defeated after the army fires on the miners at the picket line. The book does not end on a pessimistic note, however. The massacre of the Montsou miners sent shock waves through French society.

Zola realised that the miners would be forced to move into action again and again by the conditions of their existence: "Men were springing up, a black vengeful army was germinating slowly in the furrows, growing for the harvests of the next century, and whose germination would soon crack open the Earth."

Matt Miller
(Colchester LPYS)

FIHTING FUND

This week **£1,782**

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	422		2900
East Midlands	407		3550
Humberside	339		1850
London East	465		3200
London West	506		2150
London South East	57		1950
London South West	322		1650
Lancashire	173		1950
Manchester	439		2200
Merseyside	492		6100
Northern	568		4400
Scotland East	141		2950
Scotland West	110		3650
Southern	556		5100
South West	119		2150
Wales East	182		2550
Wales West	59		2050
West Midlands	679		4300
Yorkshire	784		5350
Others	1846		5000
Total received	8666		65000

£1782 in this week. But that means we need £7,000 each week to reach our £65,000 target by the end of January. We need every reader in every area to change to top gear over the Christmas and New Year period so that we see huge amounts pouring in over the next two months.

Make sure you don't forget the *Militant* over the holidays. We want to benefit from that festive spirit as well. With the aim of going twice-weekly we need new machinery and staff which will cost us a fortune. It is you, the reader, who can raise that fortune.

In Portsmouth things are well planned with a sponsored event, a massive party to celebrate a reader's 21st (and raise money at the same time), collections from trade unions and the LPYS. They also plan to go out around the pubs with the collecting tins asking for some Christmas generosity for the

By Nick Wrack
best workers' paper available. That's mixing pleasure with serious business. They are asking every person who buys the paper to make a Christmas donation and will also be selling the raffle tickets.

Portsmouth example
Every area should be organising like Portsmouth. By getting things sorted out now raising the money will be easy. As you can see,

fund raising can be quite enjoyable, especially over the holiday.

Many readers and their workmates will be given Christmas bonus with their pay. Don't forget the needs of the paper. Why not give *Militant* a bonus.

Think what it will mean in terms 1985. A better, more frequent service for the working class. Just remember, don't be afraid to ask your mates. When you explain our need they will respond.

Donations this week include: T Oram, East Ham, £26; Coventry worker, £10; Clive Mason, Disabled reader, York CLP, £10; Carl Wiper, NALGO, Newcastle £3; Ray, Newcastle, £2; Julie, Brentwood LPYS, .85p; Zoe Cannon (aged 10) Manchester, .25p; J Hennen, Lacashire, £1.

Pit village orders 50 weekly

FOLLOWING THE excellent pieces last week from miners who sell *Militant* we hear from our sellers in the construction industry that our full page feature on the industry has gone down well.

At Drax power station site 61 papers were sold as the article evoked a good response. At the POEU and NGA conferences excellent sales were reported with over 100 being sold at the NGA conference. Aylesham pit village (in

Kent) now has its own order of 50 per week which must be the highest ratio of papers to population in the country! New orders have also arrived from Shrewsbury and Barnet. Our Isle of Wight sellers are organising a sales drive to ensure we have a bumper start to the New Year. New areas to sell the paper are being thought up all the time and our sellers in Leytonstone now have regular sales inside their local hospital where the patients

buy their daily papers. All our sellers are now 'hitting the high streets and shopping centres' with *Militant* to catch the increased Xmas shoppers.

Make sure you make it a Red Marxmas with bumper sales to the shoppers. To become a seller contact 'Militant Circulation', 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HP or phone 01-533-3311.

Cash not coming fast enough

MANY THANKS to the members of Hull AUEW No 12 branch who this week sent us a donation of £20. Keeping up the fine tradition of workers on Humberside in supporting the ideas of Marxism they realise the immense value of having a daily Marxist paper. Such a step forward will be a great aid to workers throughout Britain.

and to Iain Campbell, Carlisle, £25. Any other readers who have not yet contributed should follow their example and send us a donation.

However, the money is not coming fast enough to pay the bills that we have already incurred. We need the support of all the trade union, Labour Party and Young Socialist branches up and down the country to help us. Think of all the civil service workers, rail

workers, dockers, fire fighters, local authority workers, hospital workers and millions of others who will benefit from our fund. They will contribute if we ask them.

Make sure the fund is raised at your next branch meeting and join the Hull workers in the fight for socialism.

Workers donations

Donations from groups of workers are the best way of showing the Tories just where our strength lies—amongst the organised working class where it counts. Individual donations are also still coming in. Thanks to I Sellens, West London, £30

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, Mallet St, London WC1. Tuesday 11 December, 7.30 pm.

ads

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CASSETTE TAPES with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year.

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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.

Scottish BLOC delegate Conference solidarity with the miners.

Venue: The Nite Club (The Playhouse), 20 Greenside Place, Edinburgh. Date: Sat 19th January 1985. Speakers include: Terry Fields MP, Ian Isaac (S. Wales NUM Executive, personal capacity) and other NUM and leading TU speakers.

Delegations of basis of 5 per Miners strike cttee/Miners wives support group/Union branch/s/s committee/combine committee/regional, district committee etc. £1 per delegate (free for miners/miners wives)

Credentials from: Gordon McKinley 18 Delta Drive, Musselburgh, Edinburgh. Cheques payable to BLOC.

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

I would like to speak to any comrades in the London area who are artists and would like to be involved in producing political material. Contact: Richard Finnigan, 28, Casella Rd, New Cross, London SE14 5QL, phone 635-8362.

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.

Thursday December 13th 7.30 pm Granville Theatre, Ramsgate. Kent Miners Support Rally. Speakers: Tony Benn, Frances Curran (NEC), Nick Bradley (Kent NUPE), Malcolm Pitt (President Kent NUM), Barry Lewis (Thanet Support Group Secretary). All welcome.

LPYS/NUM Support the Miners March and Rally. Saturday 8 December Eckington, Sheffield. Starts 10.30 pm from corner of Dronfield Rd/Chesterfield Rd. Speakers: Dennis Skinner MP, Austin Fairest (Pres Derbyshire NUM), Tom Doyle (NUR Branch Sec Tinsley), Guy Bennett (LPYS and NUM)

Miss them at Wembley & FELS? Wembley Conference badge '84 only 65 left, red fist 'better to break the law than the poor'. Labour logo 'Militant Labour Liverpool' New design 'black & white unite LPYS' with red militant logo. 25p each + minimum 25p p&p. Payable to P. Cooper, 31, Balmoral Rd, Fairfield, Liverpool 6 8NB.



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Civil service pay, hours and jobs

THE CPSA's special Pay Conference on Thursday 7 December convenes against a background of renewed Tory cuts in civil servants' living standards and jobs. The National Executive Committee is arguing for separate battles on pay, hours and leave. Militant supporters reject this view.

SINCE 1979, living standards have been cut by about 20%. Even before the unions have drawn up and submitted pay claims, the Tory government has set a pay limit. From 14% in 1980-81 it is set at 3% this year and again in '85-86.

Since the last comparability-based pay settlement in 1980, average earnings in the UK up to 1984 have increased by 48%; the retail price index by 37%, but the pay of civil servants by 19.4% only. The average 4½% in-

By Steve Dunk
(Inland Revenue personal capacity) and
Doreen Purvis
(DHSS personal capacity)

crease this year did nothing to solve the plight of CPSA's low paid membership. There are well over 100,000 civil servants on so-called "adult" pay rates below the commonly accepted poverty line figure of £100 pw. Most of them are in the lower grade ranks of the CPSA. This is in contrast to the

position of some of Britain's company directors. The Labour Research Department (LRD) recently reported that the highest 20 paid Directors each received as much as 722 average manual workers put together. The head of British Oxygen received £521,500 annually. Three members of the Sainsbury family had combined earnings of £9.5 million. That's the face of worsening Tory Britain.

Jobs front

On the jobs front, the Tories have cut over 100,000 civil service jobs since 1979 and a further 40,000 are under the Tory axe up to 1988.

The CPSA's National Executive Committee, with its emerging re-alignment of Alistair Graham, the right-

wing and the so-called Broad Left '84 Group (the Communist Party and friends who walked out of the real Broad Left conference) argue that we should have separate struggles on pay, hours and leave. Militant supporters reject this view.

The issues before the conference are:-

1. Whether the 1985 pay claim should be about wages alone or the defence of living standards and jobs by means of reduced hours and more leave.
2. Whether CPSA should pursue an all-out strike and on its own.
3. In the event of an all-out strike, should the union offer to run emergency benefit paying centres for the unemployed, pensioners and those in need?

The construction of the conference agenda does not provide for discussion on these questions. Attempts will be made at the conference to allow for full discussion on the issues before votes are taken.

There is general agreement in the Union of the need for a £15 pw cash increase in pay and the Executive's own motion includes this figure. Militant supporters' argument on the Executive for a £100 minimum wage, in line with CPSA conference policy, was rejected by Communist Party members and others on the NEC, but last minute changes were made to include this demand when membership opinion in their own branches showed how out of touch they were.

Their view, however, supported by Graham and the right-wing, that we should fight on pay and then separately on hours and



Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Alistair Graham and Norman Willis. The TUC failed to back the GCHQ dispute; will they back civil servants on pay and conditions?

leave, is a joke. Given the attacks on members' jobs, the long-standing conference policy in favour of a 35 hour week and 6 weeks leave is vital right now. Waiting for "a better time" is nonsense. The argument of a section of the executive that pay is the priority is a smokescreen for their steadily rightward moving views.

Carry out policy

EC member and Broad Left splitter Mike Duggan said at the October Executive: "We should not include hours and leave, they only raise problems at the settlement stage and they are unachievable demands." So

much for conference policy! The pay conference should insist that annual conference policy is implemented and that the 1985 claim includes:-

- ★ £15 pw flat rate
- ★ 35 hour week
- ★ 6 weeks' annual leave.

Composite motion 216 and in particular motions 217 (Inland Revenue HQ), 218 (DHSS Newcastle Central Office) and 226 (DHSS North Fylde) put forward these demands. To debate them conference will need to support a "reference-back" to move them up the agenda and then to defeat the Executive's composite motion! which omits these key demands.



Photo: Militant

CPSA members picket VAT Computer Centre in Southend in 1981. Only industrial action can ensure a decent settlement for 1985.

United fight for a united claim

WORKERS' UNITY in the pay battle is vital. The executive's analysis in composite motion 234 that an all-out strike is likely to be necessary is correct. However, their view that CPSA should fight an all-out strike on its own is infantile.

To date the other civil service unions have refused to accept a £15pw flat rate claim. For the SCPS, this would represent 9.2% for their EOs and 7.3% for their HEOs. As the SCPS say: "These amounts are unlikely to be acceptable to Society members as the basis for a 1985 claim."

Other unions

The CSU, who have many low-paid members in their ranks have not yet decided their position, but their general secretary has said: "I am not able however to say with such certainty that the CSU cannot support a flat rate pay claim in 1985." IRSF conference policy is in favour of flat rate pay claim.

The suggestion from the executive that you can take

united industrial action on different pay claims is incredible. Whilst common action could be helpful it is no substitute for a united fight behind a united claim. Our whole experience is that if the supervisor goes out the door, our members are more likely to go, and vice versa.

The executive's position is totally unrelated to the union's experience. CPSA conference should agree to the claim it would like to see, but in the words of motion 217: "Conference also recognises that for a campaign to be successful in 1985 the maximum unity between civil service unions will be essential. The interests of low paid civil servants must be paramount in any joint claim or campaign. The above demands must therefore be retained fully and form the basis of any agreed claim and campaign with the other civil service unions." The search must go on after the unions have held their individual conferences to try and agree a joint claim—one which embraces the CPSA position.



Photo: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)

CPSA conference this year. Conference decisions on pay, hours and leave must be implemented.

Emergency procedures must be used

IN MOTION 234, the Executive Committee opposes non-co-operation with emergency procedures or payment centres during an all-out strike. This is in line with existing conference policy. Militant supporters will argue the position set out by Liverpool Customs and Excise in motion 268—if it is heard. Militant supporters here always defended the right of all workers to strike—something the BL '84 group do not support for workers in DHSS Reading and Livingstone computer centres.

In an all-out civil service strike, we cannot rule out the possibility that the Tories will set up emergency payment centres to pay the unemployed, pensions, child benefit, sickness benefit etc. It is in the strikers' best interests that they are not seen as callous, that we do not cut ourselves off from the rest of the working class and that large numbers of our own members do not turn against us. Even after nine months on strike, the miners are still providing an emergency service to hospitals and old-age pensioners etc.

Motion 234 has the romantic hope that faced with an all-out strike, the Tories will quickly give in. Does anybody really believe that? The 1985 pay campaign will require sacrifice, endurance, determination and courage. We should voluntarily offer to staff emergency payments centres, with union-only labour, under union control and payments to be based on need. Such an offer will disarm the Tories and will provide a basis for crucial unity with other public sector unions.

CPSA can't go alone

ALISTAIR GRAHAM has referred in the 1984 pay campaign to being in favour of "a bit of anarchy with unions doing their own thing". That and his apparent support for the CPSA going it alone would be madness if acted upon. What is Graham really up to?

If such a strategy is defeated, he will use it in his 1986 election campaign to discredit the left, for re-election on the back of a 1985 pay defeat and then to settle a Megaw-type pay system which would be used to kill off pay conferences. It would result in institutionalised low pay and no rank and file control.

Ex-Broad Left members are linked with this strategy. Once again they are throwing Graham his lifeline. CPSA conference must not make the same mistake.

Motion 1 therefore must be defeated on the grounds that it does not include hours and leave; it prevents civil service union and workers' unity; it is based on CPSA going it alone against Thatcher.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

A victory at GEC

"WE HAVE won this one but the battle continues—our next wage claim goes in in January." So declared convenor Ray Robinson to the 200-strong jubilant strike meeting at GEC Traction, Manchester.

The six-week long strike has ended in a major defeat for management, who have been forced to up their offer to the workers by an average of £2 a week and to concede a £9 a week increase to the lowest paid. The £100 minimum rate target has been all but achieved. In addition, the employers conceded abolition of the current piece-work system and of waiting time, while dropping their insistence on redundancies and a cut in the number of shop stewards.

Strike strategy

GEC management's offensive of wage cutbacks, redundancies and attacks on union organisation has suffered a serious blow. GEC, with 150,000 workers, is the Goliath of private industry. They have been slain by a

David—with implications for the big sites—especially when GEC has £1,500 million in the bank and power engineering made £59 per week per employee last year.

Mark Stuart, a member of the strikers' negotiating committee explained why the Traction workers won the first local strike action for 22 years: "We won because we stayed solid and determined to win. We held weekly mass meetings, tried to maximise picketing attendance and involvement and never wavered even when sacked.

"We also had tremendous solidarity from the Trafford Park site, from GEC plants and from other workers in Manchester and the North West. We picketed everything going on site—which meant all divisions on the 16,000 strong site were affected. We said, 'This isn't just a Traction dispute, we are in dispute with GEC Power Engineering as a whole.'

"Work piled up outside and we beat management's game of de-centralisation—which means divide and rule

of the different so-called companies. Management were astonished by our level of organisation. We had been a very moderate workforce but they pushed us so far into a corner we had to hit back.

"One of the main lessons is the need for a strong national combine committee and to re-establish a site organisation to pull the unions together. Now we'll be giving the GEC combine committee every support as should shop stewards at GEC's other 140 sites. The management must have been shaken by the threat of supportive action from other plants in Manchester.

"We'd like to thank the LPYS and the Labour Party for their support and other unions, especially the miners, who inspired us when they visited the picket line. We are marching back together on Monday—and we'll be marching with our heads held high."

By Phil Frampton

Sacked shop steward questions Sheffield council

AT HILLSBOROUGH Labour Party GMC on Friday 30 November leaders of Sheffield council dealt a blow to the local trade union movement. The issue was trade union rights at a building firm called Gleasons, where in September, fifteen of the workforce went on strike against of four redundancies, one being myself, the TGWU shop steward.

The strike lasted one month and ended when the council refused to take Gleasons off their official tender list. 90% of Gleasons work is with local government. The reason given was that there was insufficient evidence of victimisation, even though the shop steward was not allowed into the building for union

meetings and to put the workers case.

At Hillsborough GMC I demanded and got an emergency resolution put to the meeting condemning Sheffield council for their actions in recently allowing Gleasons £2 million worth of contract and also demanding the right to put the workers case to Sheffield Labour Group, a right so far denied to the workers and yet allowed to Gleasons.

Councillor Helen Jackson opposed the resolution which was lost by three votes. This was the second time in three months the socialist council have refused to support the workers at Gleasons.

After the debate the leader of Sheffield City Council,

David Blunkett, in a fit of pique because a mere shop steward had the nerve to criticise Sheffield Council said: "I suggest the next time the proposer puts a resolution, he gets his facts right."

When asked what he meant he said that at no time had Gleasons addressed the Labour Group. This is true only in the sense that they didn't address the full Labour Group, they spoke to the officers of the Labour Group. At no time were the workers allowed to put their case to any member of the Labour Group. I must now ask on whose side Sheffield City Council stand.

By Pete Woodward
(ex-TGWU shop steward,
Gleasons, Sheffield)

LT builders—jobs and miners

LONDON TRANSPORT building workers held a special mass meeting on December 4 at Hammersmith Town Hall, with over 600 in attendance to discuss redundancies.

An emergency resolution was passed calling for the delegate body of the London Transport Trade Union Group to meet to determine ways of assisting the TGWU and NUM, including a one day stoppage. It also called for all the trade union executives

represented in LT to convene a special meeting of the executive to organise a national stoppage in response to the call by the President of the NUM earlier this year for industrial action.

By Jim McGuinness
(UCATT shop steward, LT,
personal capacity)

A new company union?

MANY TRADE unionists now regard the EETPU leadership as a sick joke.

The individual secret ballot for all power supply workers (not just those members working in the generating stations) was heavily loaded against any support for the miners. The TUC guidelines were tagged on almost as a postscript against a shameful diatribe of propaganda saying why the miners shouldn't be supported. Even then the result was counted by EETPU officials and not the Electoral Reform Society.

Not content with stabbing the miners in the back, we now witness the leadership becoming the first to break the ranks and accept money from the Tories to conduct secret ballots under their anti-TU Act, the law first being used against the electricians in Austin Rovers to force them back to work, again breaking the TUC guidelines.

If all this wasn't bad enough, the movement was witness to the spectacle of the General Secretary (Hammond) selling his "no strike"

agreement at the CBI's annual conference, addressing meetings and, it seems, generally feeling at home to such an extent that he is now actively pushing that the EETPU affiliate to the CBI! No wonder the Tory press were jubilant. A trade union asking to join its arch enemy!

Eric Hammond may be the toast of Fleet St., but this reactionary nonsense will cut no ice with the members. The door has for the moment been shut. The CBI like the EETPU policies, but are not that keen on a union in their ranks. After all, things (leaders) change.

All these attempts by the leadership to turn the EETPU into a virtual company union, will not be lost on the vast majority of our members, who support the miners to the hilt and will not accept these reactionary measures. The Broad Left has a responsibility to channel the growing discontent within the EETPU into a determined fightback, to change it into a real fighting union.

By London Press Branch
member, EETPU



THE TORY Government White Paper 'Buses' has provoked anger and a will to fight back among all sections of bus workers, who are members of the T&GWU Passenger Trade Group. The White Paper will open all bus routes outside London to competition from 'cowboy' operators and proposes to privatise the National Bus Company.

This represents a massive threat to bus workers' living standards, rights and conditions. Unfortunately this determination to defend bus services and jobs hasn't been matched by the Passenger Group leadership.

A recent National Transport Week of Action, with a bus lobby of Parliament, fell flat because the union engaged in a joint campaign with management. The fight against privatisation must be taken on by an alliance of the unions concerned and the Labour Party, and not with management and so-called 'progressive' Tories. By Tony Hindle (TGWU 6/53, personal capacity)

St Helens council strike is now over

THE St Helens council (Lancs) NALGO strike against reorganisation of staff without consultation with the unions is over. LESLEY HOLT talked to leading trade unionists involved.

Lillian Summerskill NUPE APTC:

"The dispute has been settled with a phased return to work. We are still concerned that a District Labour Party meeting was not recalled after our vote last week to settle. We are also concerned that locks have been changed on public buildings, with no keys left. Staff last night had to leave buildings open."

Pat Williams, NALGO publicity officer:

"Letters were sent out to senior managers in NALGO asking them to return to work last Wednesday at 9 am, before our vote was taken to go back, so we organised a mass picket for

Monday, to show we were still solid until an agreement had been signed."

Lillian: "The dispute has brought NALGO and NUPE together, NALGO members have given us financial support. We have also given a cheque to the assistant town hall keeper in appreciation of him not crossing picket lines.

"We need a Broad Left now to keep us together, and overcome some of the problems we have faced in this dispute."

Jo Harvey NALGO branch chair: "At the first NALGO/NUPE Broad Left meeting held the day before the strike was settled, this Thursday, it was explained that if more NALGO members had been active in the Labour Party, then the case for NALGO could have been put. NALGO and NUPE members must now join the Labour Party and campaign for NALGO to affiliate. We must campaign

with the rest of the labour movement, to fight rate-capping or cuts.

"Links with the unions must also be built, as many miners and other trade unionists had not understood NALGO's action. If we are to fight government cuts in St Helens, then we'll need the

miners, just as they need local government services.

"This strike has shown the determination of white collar workers. It is just the first step to transforming the union, and building a Broad Left which will speed the process of changing the union, St Helens and society".

Not so lawful

THE SHAPING of the POEU into a fighting force continued at the Rules Revision Conference in Bourne-mouth.

By a majority of 2-1, delegates removed the word "lawfully" from a paragraph in the rule book setting out the objects of the union which previously allowed only lawful action to secure the interests of the members.

The other important change was to add a rule

stating that: "Members must not cross official picket lines of either the POEU or other unions". This was passed against the advice of the National Executive Committee.

Attempts by the right wing to introduce ballots which would effectively undermine active democratic participation at the branch meetings and give more scope to hostile media interference were decisively rejected.

By Wayne Jones

BEACON

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Miners, power workers—the need for unity

Before Thatcher's '79 victory the Tories drew up a strategy via Nicholas Ridley MP to defeat the trade unions. Starting with steel, civil servants etc. This article further demonstrates the Tory conspiracy with the CEBR and NCB to defeat the miners.

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Militant

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CPSA—unite for a fighting union

TWO important meetings for civil servants and the future of their trade unions take place this week.

By Bill Boyle

The largest civil service union, CPSA, holds a special pay conference on Thursday 6 December to discuss its 1985 pay claim and campaign strategy following years of Tory wage 'limits' (cuts in other words), and massive job losses. Two days later, on Saturday, the CPSA Broad Left holds its reconvened conference following a damaging split.

Civil servants have suffered the brunt of Tory attacks on public expenditure. There is no sign of any let up in the government assault. As our article on page 14 explains there is an urgent necessity for a campaigning strategy to unite all civil servants in defence of jobs, wages and conditions.

It is a tragedy that at a time when unity around a fighting programme and leadership is vital for all trade unionists one of the most successful Broad Lefts should be split in this way. The walk-out at the 3

November Broad Left conference was led by leading Communist Party member Ray Alderson. He took 95 Broad Left members out of a conference of 450. They left even before all sides of the argument had been heard, on the grounds of 'Militant' domination.

Their departure has been heralded by right wing general secretary Alistair Graham as "a hopeful sign." In the pages of the *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Financial Times*, and letter pages of the union journal the verdict is the same—the union faces the election of a right wing leadership in 1985 because of these divisions.

Why split

If that happens the 1985 pay campaign, and a whole range of conference policies dismissed as "extremist clap trap" by Alistair Graham, will go right out of the window.

The action of these comrades was prompted by two considerations. Firstly, a number who have been

elected to office through the efforts of rank and file Broad Left members were unwilling to answer to those members for their record on the NEC. There is considerable anger over a number of issues: the abysmal 1984 pay 'campaign'; the Central Office dispute; their vote against a £10,000 donation to the miners; their refusal to remove leading right winger Graham; their manoeuvring to put Alderson on to the TUC General Council with no reference to the Broad Left or union rank and file.

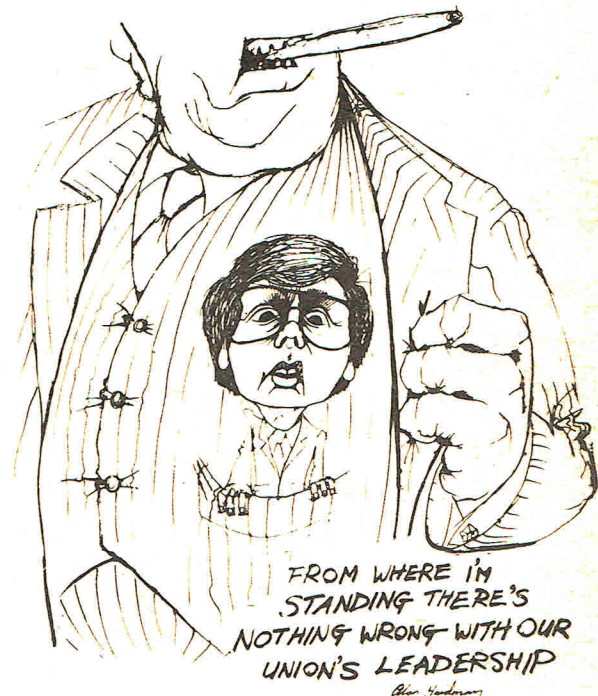
Secondly, they have lost the political arguments within the Broad Left. The Communist Party, in particular, is desperate to halt the growth of support for *Militant* at a time when its union strength is in terminal decline and it is wracked by internal disputes. It is therefore pursuing a policy of sniping against *Militant* in the unions and Liverpool regardless of the interests of the working class.

It is not widely known that this action in CPSA is mere-

ly a repeat performance of a split by members of the Communist Party of Ireland from the Broad Left of the Northern Ireland Public Services Alliance. They walked out of the NIPSA Broad Left in June 1983 on the eve of the union's conference because: "We disagree with *Militant* on peace, on women, on international solidarity, on election of full time officials (they were against-BB), on their plans to establish a 'Labour Party'." The result was a big swing to the right wing.

Right wing drift

The split in Britain is a re-run of that in Northern Ireland and just as unprincipled and divisive. The CP in NIPSA complained of the "rigid structure" of the Broad Left, where "all decisions are taken by majority vote." Yet the CP in CPSA, at the founding conference of the Broad Left in 1977, proposed a rigid system of Stalinist discipline which would have bound members to BL policy hand and foot



Alistair Graham's role on the TUC during the NGA dispute showed the damage he can do—the left must not give him a chance of a repeat performance.

—on pain of expulsion by a committee on which the accused had no vote!

A worrying feature of the situation we now face is that the logic of the course upon which these comrades are set has an inherent right wing drift. Apart from the mistakes made and battles abandoned over the last year, they have now aligned with the right wing on the 1985 pay campaign (see page 14). There is no future for the Broad Left and the membership in this direction.

Unity against the Tory assault is more vital than ever. We appeal to all CPSA

members to join the Broad Left and those who walked out to return. It must be recognised that time is short. The Broad Left must stand a full slate of candidates to defeat the right wing in the coming elections. All divisions must be overcome now. The proposed new organisation, which: "specifically excludes *Militant*", is in danger of falling into the witch-hunting right wing camp and should be rejected.

All efforts to build a fighting leadership for CPSA and ensure a miners' victory must be redoubled.

Defend Fitzwilliam nine

DESPITE THE wind and rain, 300 supporters of the 'Fitzwilliam 9' gathered outside the magistrates court in Castleford, Yorkshire last Monday to protest at their trial.

The Fitzwilliam 9—members of the NUM and LPYS—were arrested after a police riot in their village in the summer.

The turnout was marvellous, considering that unfortunately the NUM had refused to give the lobby any backing, despite a letter from the '9' asking for their support. Also the local Constituency Labour Party announced that "any Labour Party member taking part did so on their own initiative", despite the Fitzwilliam 9 having the full sup-



Supporters of arrested Fitzwilliam youth protest in Castleford last Monday.

port of the District Labour Party and regional LPYS.

The demonstration was noisy from start to finish, with Mike Higgins from Leeds University Labour Club leading the singing. The lobby lasted an hour but there wasn't a quiet moment. Various people addressed the

lobby including, Kevin Mullins from the COHSE national executive, Terry Fields MP and Nigel Pearce, a striking miner from Denby Grange colliery. But the greatest applause was given when one of the accused, Brendon Conway, addressed the crowd.

Photo: Richard Clarkson

From the lobby, supporters marched through the centre of Castleford to the Trades and Labour club. Leading the march was the Upton jazz band ('Coffee and Cream'), followed by the banner that had been specially made for the day. The National LPYS 'Save the Pits' banners came next followed by the LPYS contingent from the region.

The case has now been adjourned, but it appears fresh charges are to be brought against some of the nine. But the police and the courts can be sure that their tactics of intimidation will be fought all the way.

By *Militant's* North Yorkshire reporter

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