

Miners can win

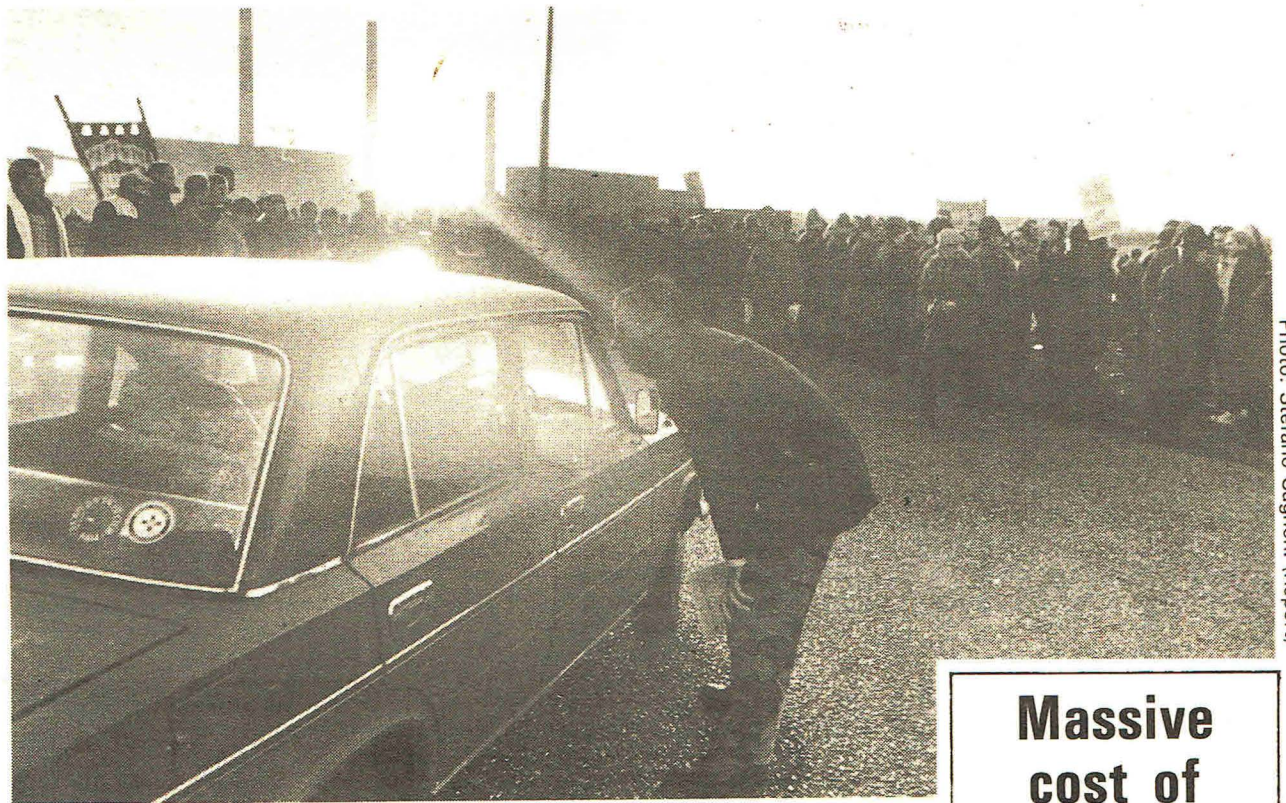


Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

Mass picket at Tilbury power station in December last year. Power solidarity is still the key to winning the strike.

THE BEGINNING of the New Year finds the miners as determined as ever in the longest national strike of any union in British history.

By John Pikcard

With the magnificent qualities of the miners, the support of their families and communities, with the solidarity of the labour movement, Thatcher can be given a 'good hiding'.

The Tories kicked off the New Year with confidence as false and as limp as the tinsel on a Christmas Tree. All Peter Walker's huffing and puffing cannot hide the huge element of bluff in his assertion that there will be "no power cuts". As our report shows (see back page) the miners could easily tip the scales against Peter Walker and Thatcher.

The Tories are deeply worried about the prospects for the New Year:

★ The strike has already cost £5 billion and the equivalent of 77 million tonnes of coal production, and could yet cost a lot more. (see panel right).

★ Sections of the Tory party are increasingly con-

cerned about the class tensions created by unemployment and the social chasms opened up, particularly in the mining areas. Class consciousness has been developed and intensified in these areas on a scale not seen since the 1920s and 1930s.

★ The mood among young unemployed, and young people on government cheap labour "training" schemes—is becoming explosive. The Tories have plans this year to introduce industrial conscription, by the abolition of unemployment benefit for those school leavers who refuse the dead-end jobs of the Youth Training Schemes.

The Tories fear a repeat of the inner-city riots of 1981.

★ Strikes and struggles of other workers will inevitably

break out in 1985. In the local authorities, 75,000 jobs are at risk because of the rate-capping cuts imposed by the Tory government. A struggle around these jobs could develop very quickly in the New Year. In private industry the expected modest recovery of profits and production will increase the willingness of workers to fight to restore wages and conditions.

The Tories have always tried to fight on one front at a time. But one or all of these potentially explosive social contradictions could coalesce with the miners'

strike even in the first few months of 1985.

But the miners' strike is no longer simply a struggle around mining jobs. It is a struggle for the right of existence and the right to function of the trade union movement.

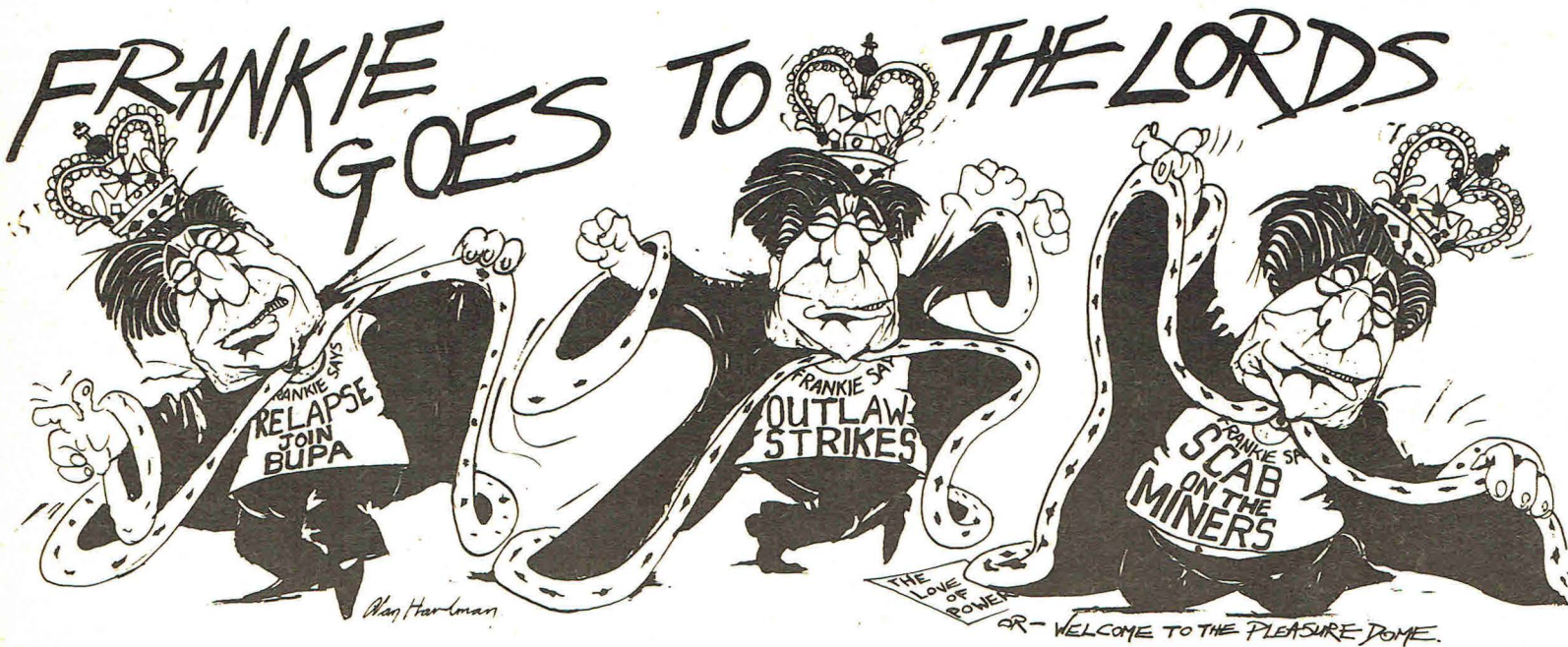
The TUC must be urged by the ranks of the labour movement to emulate ASLEF and the NUR, whose members have blacked the movement of coal for the last ten months. Transport and power workers generally must black the transportation and use of all coal and oil.

The power stations are still the key. Fraternal links must be established on a permanent basis, between miners, transport and power workers. These liaisons must ensure that all coal and oil is boycotted.

The labour movement can ensure the miners of the victory they so richly deserve. 1984 was the year the Tories opened up a general offensive on the miners and on trade unionism. 1985 must be the year that the trade unions give their reply. The miners must win. The trade union movement will not be choked by Tory laws.

Massive cost of strike

THE MINERS' strike is now costing the government at least £85 million a week. The switch from oil to coal in the power stations is costing the power industry an extra £40 million a week, twice that of last September. The increased oil imports have cost £350 million; the value of the pound has dropped 20% since the strike began. Added to this is the £200 million cost to British Rail, caused by solidarity action by rail workers. The total cost of the strike since last March is estimated by the NUM to be £5 billion



Don't let up on Fighting Fund

THE NEW Year has seen a £2,827 increase in the Fighting Fund, raised over Christmas, taking the total to over £17,000.

There's still £48,000 to raise, in four weeks. So follow the example of West Glamorgan which raised £405 by asking readers, organisations and work-places for donations!

Many of our supporters made excellent sacrifices last year, and enabled us to make a big step forward with a new premises. Your efforts have been marvellous but there is no time to pause for reflection. The Tories' onslaught continues and we must continue to raise our funds to guarantee our onslaught against their anti-trade union laws.

Militant

A strategy for miners' victory

NO ONE can fail to be impressed by the willpower and resilience of the miners. These qualities have carried the strike for 10 months against the Tories and the NCB, using the greatest-ever propaganda campaign, and an unprecedented use of the police and the judiciary.

The solidarity in the mining areas even prompted Sir Anthony Meyer, Tory MP for Clwyd North West—to the annoyance of all his Honourable Friends—to commend the miners' tenacity. "Maybe they have something to teach us all about solidarity," he said.

But for all the miners' will power, that alone is not enough to win this strike. It is not enough simply to call for the miners to stay out longer and yet longer. A clear plan, a clear strategy for victory must be worked out and presented to these workers who have carried the fight for so long and so far.

The TUC leadership have played a disgraceful rôle throughout. The Tories' policy has been to fight on only one front at a time. The right-wing of the TUC have dutifully obliged the Government in this. While Thatcher has been prepared to mobilise all the resources of the press, the state and the courts—making up new laws and old ones to suit—the TUC leaders have whimpered about "legality" and have largely paralysed the solidarity action that workers would be prepared to offer if a lead was given from above.

Two of the most prominent right-wing leaders, Len Murray, architect of the TUC's "new realism" and extreme right-wing leader Frank Chapple of the EETPU, have been rewarded for services rendered to the ruling class. Other right-wingers like Terry Duffy of the AUEW and Bill Sirs of ISTC await their turn. Whatever the Honourable member for Clwyd North-West may say, the Thatcher cabinet have shown a far greater degree of solidarity to the class they represent than the TUC leaders ever have to the workers they are supposed to represent.

But the TUC lefts must not be allowed to hide behind the indecision or open strike-breaking of the right-wing. Too much is at stake, in relation to miners' jobs and the fundamental liberties of the trade union movement, for the TUC lefts to simply "sit out" the strike. The leaders of the left unions and the National Union of Mineworkers must push for the greatest possible solidarity action from the trade union movement.

The power industry holds the immediate key, whatever may be the longer term costs to the economy as a whole. However Peter Walker may bluff about coal stocks, he knows that the power grid is still extremely vulnerable.

The "key to the key" must therefore be rank and file miners' committees making fraternal approaches to power station workers. With the full public authority and assistance of the NUM leadership, the strike committees must link up with workplace delegates of transport and power station workers to co-ordinate action to black all oil and coal.

Mass meetings of miners must be organised to hammer out the tactics and strategy of the struggle. Every striking miner must be involved in the fight—Picketing, but also collecting cash, canvassing door to door and leafletting for public support, and approaching other trade unionists. The greater the involvement of miners in the struggle, the greater will be their solidarity.

If it were only a question of their courage, the miners would have won this strike long ago. But it needs more than that. The miners need a worked-out, co-ordinated plan to channel their energies and the energies of the labour movement.

There is no doubt as to the capacity of the miners to struggle and the willingness of other workers to aid them in their fight. With the addition of the most essential ingredient—a worked out strategy for victory—the miners can deliver a long-overdue defeat to the Tory government.

Editor: Peter Taaffe
Militant, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB
Phone: 01-533 3311

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Lords day for Chapple

MRS THATCHER has made Frank Chapple an offer he can't refuse by making him a Lord in the New Year Honours List. Len Murray, former TUC general secretary gets an ermine coat as well.

You don't need Sherlock Holmes to tell you why they've been honoured. Murray was one of the architects of the TUC's "new realism". And as for Chapple, what hasn't he done to harm the labour movement?

He has attacked Thatcher's Public Enemy Number One, the NUM in its strike, calling for stiff penalties for NUM pickets and describing Arthur Scargill as a "big mouth and raving egomaniac".

Chapple left the Communist Party in the 1950s and became EETPU general secretary in 1966. His union became notorious for its lack of democracy. As Chapple moved more and more to the right, he was prepared to closed down branches and take disciplinary action against recalcitrant union members.

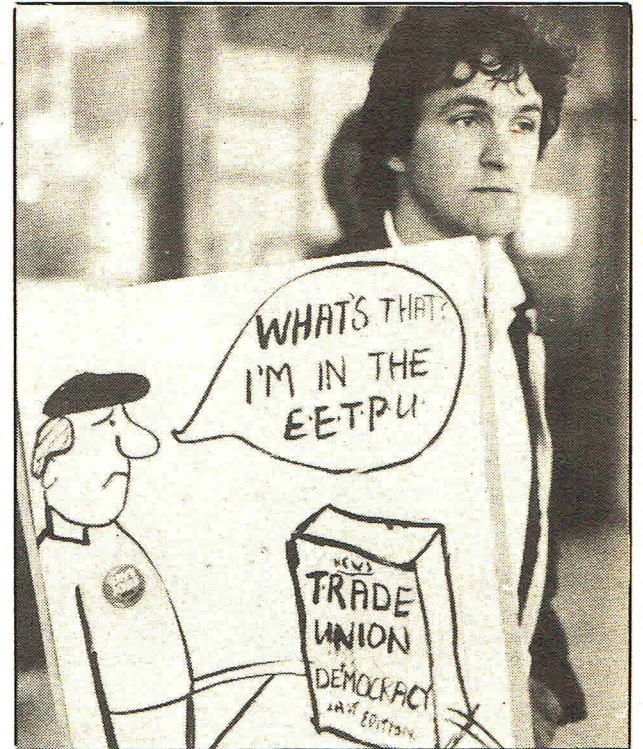
Chapple has pleased the Tories no end with his "creative" ideas, such as calling for postal ballots on strikes. The EETPU has been negotiating "no strike"

deals not only with Japanese firms in Britain like Hitachi, Toshiba and Sanyo but with firms like Inmos and Thorn-EMI. The electricians union alone gets bargaining rights while workers have their official right to strike signed away in favour of compulsory arbitration including the "pendulum" approach where unions may have to accept entirely the employers' demands. This new "realism" on the union's part didn't stop 500 redundancies being announced recently at Hitachi's plant in South Wales.

"False colours"

Chapple models himself on some American union leaders who may get you a good deal if your capitalist employer is doing well but are likely to throw you to the wolves if they are not. Chapple was of course also infamous for his support of private health schemes like BUPA. His successor and protégé Hammond, even applied for membership of the bosses club, the CBI. He was turned down.

Lord Chapple has not stopped stabbing the movement in the back. He says he will not take the Labour whip in the Lords, but will start his new life as a



The policies of Chapple and his successor Hammond have been opposed by many EETPU members. Photo: Militant

crossbencher. He is said to be voting with the Tories on the abolition of the GLC and says he will oppose Labour policy on the Tory anti-union laws, nuclear disarmament, incomes policy and the Common Market. "I do not intend to fly under false colours by taking the Labour whip," he says.

The Labour Party Na-

tional Executive should now be asking whether his Lordship deserves to be in the Labour Party at all. Perhaps he could hold a postal ballot in the Lords, and join the majority party where he belongs.

By Roger Shrivess

Tory rate rebellion fizzles out

THATCHER HAD to spend her Christmas Day lunch persuading Ian Gow, her Housing Minister, not to resign.

It was an indication of the battleground which local government politics has become. Gow, formerly one of the Prime Minister's greatest sycophants, was angry that £1 billion had been cut from the next housing budget.

For the moment Gow has agreed to continue. But this only eased one immediate worry. The first half of 1985 is likely to see major battles open up as Council Workers and Councils defend their jobs and services.

Workers will fight

In the week before Christmas the government announced three measures which will hit local government. First they ordered 12 local authorities to cut their rates, regardless of the loss of services or jobs. Leicester is the worst affected, being forced to cut its rates by 57%, but the crucial battles will probably be fought in London, where seven boroughs, and the Inner London Education Authority are affected.

The government's attacks are not limited to those Councils facing rate-capping. Their second pre-Christmas announcement was a cut in the total amount going to local authorities from central government of £650m in real terms for 1985/6. Since coming to office the Tories have slashed the proportion of cash going to local authorities from 60% of councils budget in 1979 to 49% the coming financial year. In all, £8 billion has been taken. If Islington, one of the rate-capped boroughs, was getting the same proportions from central government as it did five years ago, it would be able to maintain services

and cut the rates by 40%.

This latest cut in the Rate Support Grant will mean that even some Tory shire counties will be hit, with some such as West Sussex having to raise rates by 70% to maintain services.

The current unease among Tory backbenchers about the effect of government policy could swell into revolt if the opposition spreads to the shires. The hostility to Joseph's educational grants cut could be the face of politics to come.

On top of this came the third government announcement, the cut in the housing budget. According to the construction industry the £1 billion cut will mean that less than half of the new houses required will be started this year and 225,000 new jobs lost.

Gow's threatened resignation was an indication of the battles ahead. He had been Thatcher's Parliamentary Private Secretary from 1979-83. No-one was more inflexible in supporting the Prime Minister. But he felt his career was now threatened by her policies and he fought back.

Why do they think it will be any different for Council Workers and working-class people. They will also fight, but not for Ministerial perks. They will do so to defend their livelihoods, and to stop the services they depend upon, being smashed before their eyes.

By Jim Chrystie



Part of a demonstration against education cuts in Glasgow in November. Union opposition to cuts will grow.

Cardiff BLOC

A SUCCESSFUL meeting of the Broad Left Organising Committee was held in Cardiff before Christmas. A wide range of trade unionists attended to discuss means of establishing solidarity action with the miners.

Kim Howells, NUM Research Officer and a leading spokesman for the South Wales miners, explained the importance of building up alliances within the trade union movement. He said that if the common cause of all workers involved was thoroughly explained to the rank and file, then alliances would be forged.

Alec Thraves, President of Swansea AUEW, pointed to

the refusal of TUC leaders to take the initiative, and argued that we should turn to the left unions for support. If their leaders would not give active support, then we should take the campaign to the rank and file.

It was the rank and file who had forced their leaders to take action over the Pentonville Five in 1972, he said, and they were capable of playing a similar role now.

Contributions from the floor included members of the TGWU, ISTC and NUR. A collection was taken for the miners, and the solidarity campaign will be further developed.

Miners' dispute

Miners step up solidarity campaigning



THERE ARE FLOWERS TO SMELL AND TREES TO LOOK AT... Alan Handman

Gedling get-together

ON FRIDAY 21 December striking miners from Gedling Colliery, with their wives and girlfriends, held a Christmas get-together at the local welfare. There was a sense of victory and a realisation of greater support from the wider labour movement. One of the striking miners summed up the changes 10 months of strike had made: "When the nurses were going through industrial action in 1982 I might have dropped 50p in their collecting tin. In future I wouldn't think twice about putting £10 or £20 in."

Generous Geordies

NEWCASTLE Militant supporters and members of Epleton Lodge NUM held a street collection on Christmas Eve and raised an excellent £671 in Newcastle City Centre.

Irish collections

A COLLECTION in the streets of Dublin for the miners in December raised over £1,600 in one day. The collection, organised jointly by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions and Labour Youth, brought over 70 members of Labour Youth out rattling tins. All reported an overwhelming response.

One of the collectors, a shop steward at Guinness, raised £55 in only two hours outside a shopping complex. A young miner from South Wales, Gwyn Lewis, tells of a man coming up to him and stuffing £14 into his tin.

At the following meeting of the trades council the president promised that he would make a further special Christmas appeal to unions, and he paid special tribute to Labour Youth for their work. The Irish Post Office Engineering Union also pledged a further £3,500 to the strike fund. So far over £80,000 has been sent to the South Wales area from the South. (By Pat Smyth)

LIMERICK Labour Youth continue their successful fund raising for the miners. Cash from pubs, trade unions and a donation from their local Labour MP raised over £300. A street collection in December for cash for miners' kids had a great response. Despite repeated attempts by the police to stop us (even though we had a permit) we raised £406 (by Ambie Malone).

Christmas in the coalfields



Christmas was made as enjoyable as possible for hundreds of miners' children in the Rhymney Valley in South Wales. Above, two Dutch marxists, Corry Maas Senior and Junior, bring sweets and toys for the children. Christmas parties were held in Bedwas, Caerphilly, Penyrheol, Abertridwr and Ystrad Mynach. Toys and sweets flooded in, some in huge consignments from France and Belgium, others from collections like the £400 raised at a local factory. Christmas food hampers were provided for every family.



Hemsworth Miners' Support Group pulled out all the stops to give their children a great Christmas. The NGA chapels at the Sun and the Daily Mirror worked together in raising thousands of pounds for the parties. Over 500 took part in two separate parties one for the under-eights and one for the over-eights.

Shamed miner rejoins strike

THE NEW Year has brought a new offensive by the Coal Board trying to con striking miners into a return to work now after ten months on strike.

But a short article in the *Wigan Observer* before Christmas shows what awaits any returning miner. Andrew Birchall, the son of a working NACODS member returned for just one shift at Parkside colliery in Lancashire after living on absolutely nothing since the strike began.

He told the local paper that on 25 November "I decided because of what the papers and TV had published, that the miners' strike was cracking and everyone was drifting back to work, that I would start back the next day."

That Monday he describes as "the most downgrading and unforgettable day of my life". At the pit entrance all

the coach's lights were turned off so no one on the picket could see who was working. When he crossed the picket line for the first and only time, "I got a sickly feeling inside which is very hard to describe". But having made up his mind he went in, changed and was sent down to the Rescue Room for a safety test where the pit officials took him past the union cabin twice. "I dropped my head in shame".

The Personnel Manager spoke to the returnees about finance. "They are not giving anything away at all" Andrew Birchall said, "only what are due in holiday payments." He felt they were being drawn in, only to be cut off later.

He met a friend from before the strike. "I asked him if he was working and he replied 'No Andy, they can't buy me with 30 pieces of silver'" Even the working

miners sympathised with the union but could see no way forward. Not one of the working miners totally condemned the union. The pro-MacGregor working miners are a very small minority.

Andrew Birchall asked at the end of the shift if he could work in an area of the pit where he liked the men. He was told no, "beggars can't be choosers". "This made me realise what it would really be like without any trade union representation." He then decided, "I would never work another day until the dispute was solved officially."

"That day I did not have a proud bone in my body. My Grandad gave five years of his life fighting for freedom justice and liberty for all. He would turn in his grave if he could see what is happening to the future generations he fought for."

By Roger Shrivess

NUM BRANCHES and members in Yorkshire and North Derbyshire were busy making solidarity preparations in the run up to Christmas.

★ In the Barnsley area Phil Jones from South Kirby pit and other NUM members visited about twenty road haulage firms to encourage them to send delegates to the BLOC conference in Rotherham.

This was called specifically to bring together power, transport and mineworkers to ensure the blacking of coal and other solidarity action.

Vital work

Many of the haulage firms were small father and son or one-man businesses. The best response was at British Road Services, a TGWU organised national firm. Nevertheless visiting road haulage and transport companies is long but vital work.

It is these sort of firms elsewhere which have been used to move scab coal. Miners must get to them first in Yorkshire and other striking coalfields and win their support.

In Yorkshire, Phil and others will next be approaching the TGWU Regional Organiser to locate the organised haulage firms and lorry drivers TGWU branches.

★ At Renishaw Park, North Derbyshire, the NUM branch passed a resolution calling upon the NUM leadership to demand that the TUC organise a general strike to defend the labour movement against legal attacks. Mineworkers from Renishaw Park have also visited about 12 large factories, engineering plants and steelworks in the Sheffield area.

Shop floor

They are grateful for the money and food they've received during these visits. But above all they are keen to talk not only to the shop stewards but also the wider membership on the shop floor, to get the message across. Unfortunately some of the shop stewards have lacked the confidence to allow NUM members to do this. But there is no doubt that massive support exists on the shop floor, waiting to be tapped.

Miners will therefore be making fresh attempts at the factory gates with meetings and leaflets etc, to win their backing for strike action to defend the miners and their own interests.

★ Askern pit near Doncaster agreed at their last meeting to make approaches to all other unions, workplaces and workers in the area to win their support. As Mark Thornton Askern NUM explained: "We want their physical support, we

want them to support us with their feet, by taking strike action or blacking action, which would itself lead to strike action if there was any victimisation.

Askern are now producing their own newsheet. The first one came out in mid-December, and already number three is being written.

At Askern the NCB are absolutely desperate. The number of scabs going in on the heavily defended coach peaked at seven. It is now down to two or three. One morning therefore the police were astonished to see the picket line break up in laughter as the scab coach arrived and pickets realised that the "scabs" on the bus were in fact what appeared to be cardboard cut-outs! One striker later confessed that he'd been able to get into the ptyard, and put a stack of plywood figures next to the NCB coach!

★ At Treeton colliery, South Yorkshire, branch committee members agreed financial assistance for campaigning work by right and file miners. Members will be provided with a signed letter from the branch to present to shop stewards to help build solidarity.

Rail support

★ A packed meeting of Darfield NUM members gave a warm reception to Geoff Bright of Tinsley NUR. Geoff explained how, despite victimisation and sacking threats, the vast majority of railworkers remained resolved to give solidarity to the miners and black all coal movements. The visit followed a similar one by Darfield miners to the NUR branch at Healey Mills near Wakefield. At the same meeting a resolution calling for the TUC to organise a general strike was overwhelmingly carried.

★ Martin Elvin, a *Militant* industrial correspondent, was invited to address the Area Council of North Derbyshire NUM, speaking about coal stocks and the power supply industry. The discussion centred on the need to prepare for the Tories' attempts to move coal stocks into the power stations.

Watford picket

STRIKING NOTTS miners from Cotgrave, with help from Watford Miners' Support Group, have begun picketing Watford's Cardiff Road Power Station after scab oil has started to be delivered by lorry drivers.

All normal supplies have been blacked by the NUR. It's a sign of desperation when a small booster station, normally only used at peak times, is being run 18 hours a day by the CEGB. On the second day of picketing the first oil tanker bringing supplies from Dagenham was turned back.

Miners' dispute

Fitzwilliam 9 - Young Socialists on trial

AT THE end of a bitter trial, 7 of the Fitzwilliam 9, arrested after police ram-paged in this Yorkshire mining village last summer, have been found guilty, with one young miner sent to jail for six months.

A long campaign by the LPYS has raised support in the community and caused the court to pull back from jailing more of the nine as the police would have wished.

In passing sentence the stipendiary magistrate said he was not influenced by any one belonging to a particular society, yet the whole prosecution case was based on the political credibility of witnesses.

The police were given all the credibility because of their blue uniforms, even though their case was not supported by one single civilian witness. The defendants on the other hand were given a political grilling. "Are you a member of the Young Socialists?" "Are you a member of the NUM?" "Have you ever been to Orgreave?" "Are you an official of the Young Socialists?" "Have you been to any Young Socialist Public meetings in Fitzwilliam?"

Political questioning

At one stage Brendon Conway was asked by the prosecution "How many attended Young Socialist meetings?" "three to four said Brendon" "three to four?" "Yes," said Brendon "three to four hundred". Even the defence witnesses were quizzed about their attendance at meetings.

The police on the other hand were seen in a better light. 'A proper police operation'. Yet how can it be a proper police operation for 50 riot police and 25 riot police to charge from two different sides and attack people drinking on a private forecourt of a pub? The police inspector claimed it was just an exercise to disperse people from the area but what right do they have to clear private property? Further evidence came

By John Ingham

out that two empty transit vans had been brought up prior to the attack for the purpose of taking prisoners.

The local 'community constable' gave evidence of staffing three people in the crowd. Another constable explained how he gave one defendant a crack with his staff. Even by the prosecution's evidence three policemen inflicted seven truncheon blows simultaneously to Peter Doodey while he was on the floor. The other 15 to his back remained unexplained by the police evidence. What is clear from this case is that the police do not have to prove you guilty. You have to prove them to be liars. And as every magistrate knows—the police never lie, do they?

Fitzwilliam has been forced to witness terrifying scenes, the village has seen its citizens arrested, handcuffed to lampposts, beaten and hospitalised.

Militant supporters have maintained all along that the police operation was to break the morale of this pit village. But the police have failed.

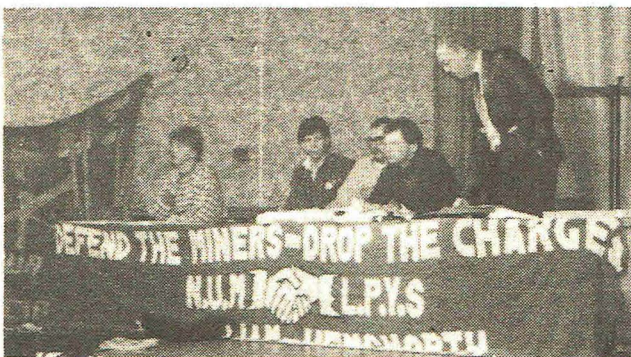
In the campaign to have the charges dropped the LPYS held a whole series of public meetings despite objections from the Regional Labour Party, and sadly the Regional NUM.

These ended in an eve of lobby meeting of over 200 in the Kingsley Hotel, and demonstration and rally on the first day of the trial of over 400.

Brendon Conway addressed the crowd the moment before the trial started and marched into court singing "we will win, we will win" with everybody in the crowd joining in the song. After a fortnight's trial, three have come away with suspended sentences and Peter Hurst, with another case taken into account, was tragically sent



Above—mass lobby of the court when the case started. Left—Terry Fields MP speaks at the lobby support meeting. Below—LPYS banner on the lobby.



Brian Linley: Miner, not guilty of threatening behaviour and breach of the peace.

Dennis Doodey: Mining contractor, not guilty of threatening behaviour and breach of the peace.

Joanne Worth, unemployed 18 years old, **Lee Morris,** miner 18 years old, **Mary Baum,** housewife, 21 years old: Guilty as charged of threatening behaviour and breach of the peace. Held over for 4 weeks for social services reports.

Peter Doodey: Mining contractor, found guilty of threatening behaviour and breach of the peace—4 months suspended for 2 years.

Alan Hurst: Miner, found guilty of threatening behaviour and breach of the peace and assaulting a police officer—4 months suspended for 2 years.

Brendon Conway—Miner, found guilty of threatening behaviour and breach of the peace and assaulting a police officer—3 months sentence suspended for 2 years.

Peter Hurst—unemployed builder found guilty of threatening behaviour and breach of the peace—found guilty of assault charges on two different police officers, pleaded guilty to one other case separate to this incident. 6 months jail sentence. n Almy jail.

They will all return to Fitzwilliam not as criminals with a record but in the eyes of the local mining community they remain victims of a police attack with a proud class record.

Disgraceful decision

EVEN THOUGH the court case has gone against us I thought the LPYS campaign and demonstration was a tremendous success.

Through this working people know our case. Even though the Tory magistrates gave Peter Hurst a six-month sentence the campaign has highlighted that there is no justice for ordinary people. Peter's

sentence will be felt back in Fitzwilliam. His sentence was a disgraceful decision by the court. However, the decision of the local LPYS branches to campaign on our behalf was the best decision and one which we welcome.

*Yours
Brendon Conway
Fitzwilliam LPYS,
and Fitzwilliam 9*

Single striking miners can still claim benefit

DURING THE week when the *Daily Express* (11 December, 1984) advertised Britain as "The purest tax haven in the world", the daily struggle of the miners, the unemployed and the low-paid to claim their rightful benefits under the law continued.

It had been established that strikers (and many other people on low incomes) who live with their parents and pay for board and lodgings can claim a rebate on the 'rent' that they have to pay. But the Tories changed this law on 18 December.

Strikers will have to be quick to get their claim in. The law change will disqualify anyone claiming allowance if their 'landlord' is a close relative. However, it is understood that it may take between 20 to 40 days for such a change to take

effect and that claims may be allowed to be backdated from 18 December.

In a document produced by Notts and Derbyshire coalfields' Law Centre and the local council the main points were:

1) That payments of board were "payments in respect of a licence or permission to occupy a dwelling." A dwelling need not be a whole house but one or two rooms only ie a bedroom/bedsit.

2. That adults living in their families' houses—on condition that they pay this board—were licencees.

3) That as far as Housing Benefits' regulations were concerned, such payments by licencees should be classed as "rent".

4) Therefore there could be

no objection for a claim for a rent allowance (rebate) in these circumstances.

When a copy of the counsel's opinion was shown to the local District Council the council took further advice from the DHSS and then accepted that it was correct.

For the purpose of filling the rebate form the single striker becomes a tenant. The 'landlord' could be the parents or relatives of a striker and the striker is claiming a rent allowance.

Rent agreement

The striker would have to show that a formal agreement to pay rent in order to occupy a room had existed for some time. Ideally it should have existed since 1982, which would

be prior to the current housing benefits regulations.

Otherwise the local council could 'disqualify' the application on the grounds that the tenancy was contrived to take advantage of the rebate scheme. Also the striker would have to show that payments did not include a substantial amount for meals—if they did it might not be classed as 'rent' under Housing Benefit regulations. Basically, a letter from the landlord (ie. the parents) confirming the following points should clarify the situation.

1) That the striker stayed at their address for the payment of a weekly rent.

2) The approximate date from which the agreement has existed.

3) The current amount of rent and how it was made up.

Given the current DHSS deductions which are made from parents' housing benefits for non dependents the following rent charge broken down as below would seem to be reasonable:

Rent £6.60; Rates £2.20; Heating up to £6.25; Hot water 75p; Cooking 75p; Lighting 50p; **Total £17.05 per week**, excluding food and meals (figures taken from Child Poverty Action Group National Welfare Benefits Handbook). Provided these figures are not exceeded there should be no deduction from parents' benefit as they would not be deemed to be making a profit from these figures.

By Nigel Wheatly (ASTMS)

North East strikers speak

RECENTLY THE Northumberland Area was targeted by the NCB as "vulnerable" to the "back-to-work" movement. Betrayals, such as the scabbing by the lodge secretary of Ellington NUM seemed to underline this.

Coupled with this were demands from a number of branches for ballots, so long as assurances were given that the men sacked in the area were reinstated. *Militant* issue 729 described the successful rank and file campaign to combat this development. Below, NUM members speak to Bob Harker for their view of the strike.

Bill Smith, Branch Secretary, Ashington NUM:

The NCB are refusing to give the old age pensioners their entitled allowance of coal and yet at the same time one of the perks of those lads returning to work is that they are told to get a load of coal from the merchants and return their receipts to the Coal Board where their money is reimbursed.

We are trying to alleviate the hardship concerning the coal allowance for the pensioners and are trying to get open cast stuff distributed but the board keeps intervening.

Throughout the nine months the press have projected and pushed forward the government's side of the dispute.

When we ask for fair representation from the media we get nothing. They splice their tapes and edit the films which results in a blatant anti-strike coverage on the news.

An NUM gardener at Ashington Miners' Welfare:

There is one copper on the picket lines, number 656, who just lashes out at everyone when the scab buses turn up. The nearest ones to him just get punched and pushed back for no reason at all because the lines are peaceful except for the usual shouting at blacklegs.

The press are biased against the pickets as in the case when that bloke got acid in his face. This bloke says that pickets did it and it was spread all over the national news. Now it looks as though he's done it himself and the police are not looking for anyone.

The media aren't interested. It's only just come out, the actual truth that is, in the local news. The North East knows that he did it to himself but the rest of the country still thinks it was done by three pickets.

The local support group, which is mostly women, were at Ashington pit one morning when an inspector wearing a flat cap drove by then stopped his car. He wound his window down, stuck his two fingers up to them and said: "You are nothing but sluts, your husbands ought to get themselves back to work". Over a hundred of us pickets witnessed this but of course the national press and media did not. They were nowhere to be seen.

We've been on strike now for nine months in which our bairns have had to put up with a hell of a lot of suffering. We should all support each other whether we be miners, steelworkers, or power workers because through solidarity action we'll win and all our bairns will be happy with a secure future in front of them.

A Northumberland miner from Ellington Lodge:

One of my brothers is on £25 a week on one of those YTS schemes

and he's classed as a wage earner in the family so we only get around £6 allowance. They tell us that £25 a week is enough to keep the whole lot of us, it's just ridiculous, we can hardly live!

I have to thank the local women's group who've helped us out tremendously. They've given us meals and raised money to alleviate our hardship which has helped in keeping our morale high.

What we would like to see from the power workers is the acceptance of the TUC guidelines. Don't use any scab coal or oil. That's all we ask.

Bill Straker, Ashington Workshops NUM:

The press are obviously primed to cover the strike with a view and sympathy towards the ruling class. They've never covered anything from our side and towards the working class. They've never really pointed out what it's going to be like if the pits are closed, the hardship and total devastation of our communities which would be the result.

We've had fantastic help from the public and from the trade unions. People from all walks of life are rallying in support of us miners and our families because they know that if we go down they will almost certainly follow suit.

John Kull, Ellington Lodge NUM:

The drift back to work has been a right shambles so the press are once again blaming this on the pickets—intimidation against the working miners and all the rest of it. But I've seen no real trouble. There have been a few incidents where pickets have been attacked. Houses have been stoned; the chairman of our branch has had his car burnt out; another lad has had his vehicle covered with paint. One bloke even had his car stolen and driven into a river. The very same lad has had his windows smashed two nights in a row.

Every picket line that I've been on throughout the country the police have pointed me out as the man who grabbed MacGregor. One sergeant actually told me that he had informed every single copper to keep a special eye on me, and you know what that means. If I was to say boo, I'd be inside.

I go collecting in London every other week, the people there have been marvellous. We average about £7,000 per week and on top of this we're getting clothes, toys and food for the bairns at Christmas from all the London support groups, it's just really great.

Keneth Morn, Ellington Lodge NUM:

A lot of power workers are very sympathetic because the power station in this area has only got about eight years to go, the same as the pits. I think that a lot of them realise that if the pits stay open the coal fired power stations will stay open as well.

The only thing of value that we've got left now is my wife's wedding ring and that looks like going.

We've got nothing left at all, nothing to lose now. All we do have is a future to look forward to. Over these past months we've seen in a way what it would be like if we were on the dole and that's where we'll end up if we are beaten.



Womens' support groups—vital to the strike—demonstrating in Cardiff last month. Photo: Martin Shakeshaft

The 'Here We Go' song.

A song written for Bold miners' wives, Lancashire

We are women, we are strong, we are fighting for our lives
Side by side with the men who work the Nation's mines,
United by the struggle, united by the past,
And it's here we go, here we go for the women of the
working class

We don't need government approval for anything we do,
We don't need their permission to have a point of view,
Don't need anyone to tell us what to think or say,
We've strength enough and wisdom of our own to go
our own way.

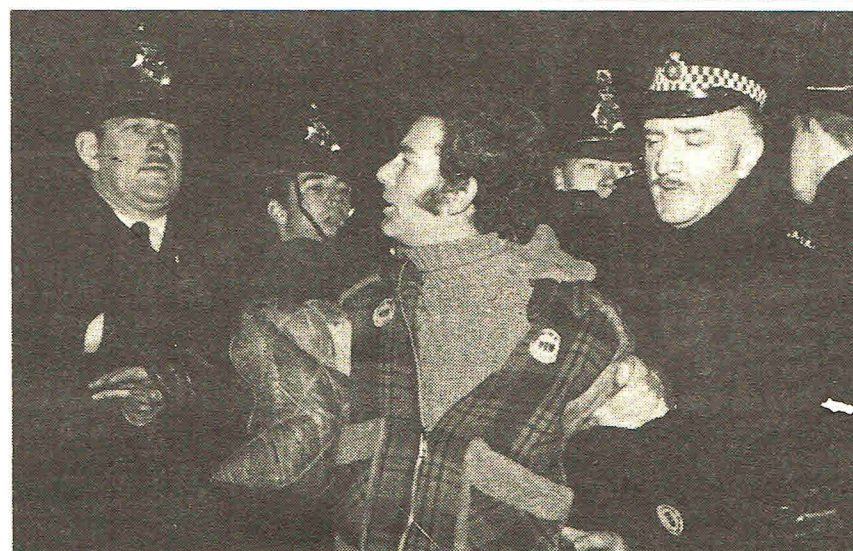
Chorus

They talk about statistics, about the price of coal,
The cost is our community, is dying on the dole.
In fighting for our future we've found ways to organise
Where women's liberation failed to move, this strike
has mobilised.

Chorus

Our's is a unity that threats can never breach,
Our's an education books or schools could never teach.
We face the taunts and the violence of Thatcher's thugs
in blue,
When we're fighting for survival we've nothing left to lose.

Chorus



Arrest at Marine Colliery, Cwm, in S. Wales. Huge police operations help a few scabs get to work. Photo: Martin Shakeshaft

Who's being intimidated?

I AM sick to death hearing the working scabs and their wives belly-aching about intimidation. What about the intimidation we receive? That's £15 off our social security—£15 worth of food less for our children or winter clothing.

Intimidation from the Yorkshire Electricity Board not satisfied with £2 or £3 a week out of the family allowance, but in some cases £10 a week.

Intimidation from the Gas Board demanding the same rates of payment.

Intimidation from Telecom for a bill to be paid in full in one payment. Intimidation when we take our kids for their £6.33 of clothing for an 11-year old child.

Intimidation from finance companies, rental companies, building societies, TV licences, the whole media in general.

Intimidation from the police, our wonderful men in blue, not only satisfied with beating our men up but also asking our children on the street: "Where's your dad? Is he a striking miner?"

Intimidation from judges in the court. Pickets are punished twice. They're free as long as they do what they're told, "Don't go to this pit or that pit again". Then when the

Never give in now

WHILST COUNTING out tea bags for the food parcels, Isobel Knight, wife of a striking miner in Cynheidre pit, described some of the effects of the strike: "It is now getting hard, the worst part is trying to keep my family warm—we have only had one lot of coal since the strike started. So every Saturday we spend most of the day scavenging for wood. There isn't one dead tree left in our area, we've had the lot.

"The struggle has brought our family very close together. The kids understand the need to economise in everything. They don't refuse to help with the scavenging and the older boys are always ready to help their father doing support work.

"Christmas is not the same this year, but I managed to save 50p a week for a turkey and presents for the younger children. Dick (her husband, a winder) has said 'no way will I wind for scabs'. I fully support him, we will never give in now to the scabs or the Coal Board."

By Muriel Browning
(Chairman,
Cynheidre Support
Group)

By Margaret Coulson
(Frickley Miner's Wife,
Upton Support Group)

Planning for nuclear or civil war?

THE SYSTEMS for dealing with wartime and peacetime 'contingency plans' are now inextricably linked.

By Derek Seely
(Wansbeck CND)

The revised arrangements for emergency government in a pre-nuclear attack phase, stem directly from measures developed to deal with the industrial unrest that took place during the '70s.

The 1972 miners' strike had a far reaching impact on state contingency planning, resulting in the setting up of the Civil Contingency Unit in the Cabinet Office. This took ultimate responsibility for 'civil emergency planning' away from the Home Office.

The chief official of the CCU is the Cabinet Office Department Secretary. This person is also responsible for the Defence Secretariat within the Cabinet Office, which deals with centralised

planning for war measures. The CCU convenes in COBRA (Cabinet Office Briefing Room) and has direct communications with police and military operation centres, with the power to mobilise troops for civil use.

In an exercise thought to be scheduled for next February codenamed WINTEX, leading civil servants and military personnel will rehearse the 'civil defence' system, which includes plans to suppress civil unrest, strikes and other disruption to military plans for the transition to war.

Past WINTEX exercises have included plans for press censorship and the preparation of lists of individuals and organisations selected for internment at pre-selected sites throughout the country. Plans from military sources make it clear that NATO authorities have prepared thoroughly to deal with members of the Peace Movements in a time of 'international tension'. Some 20,000 people are thought to be on the arrest list kept by the



Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

It was revealed before Christmas that soldiers guarding nuclear sites are entitled to shoot anti-nuclear protestors if they 'threaten' security. If a British soldier shot dead an unarmed protestor he could be charged with murder, but if he followed the 'rules of engagement' on the pink card he carries, he would be found not guilty. However, there is not even this flimsy jurisdiction over US troops, like those above at Greenham Common, who are answerable only to the US military.

authorities.

It is not known what internment sites have been pre-selected but Emergency Powers legislation is expected to provide for the release of almost all the peace time prisoners. In addition, army camps could be turned into prisons for internees.

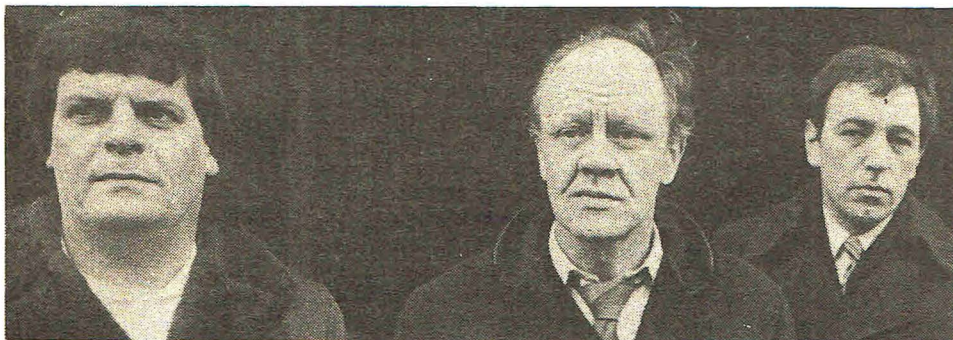
Home Defence

Home Defence in Britain was set up after the Russian Revolution. In 1920, fear of a revolution and insurrection caused the Government to create 16 District Commissioners

who had devolved power of Civil Government, (later becoming the Civil Contingency Unit). That the paramount feature of all such planning organisations is to protect the authority of the government, and to suppress all dissenting groups, is very clear from the wording of the many Home Office circulars on the subject. Almost without exception, these place as their priorities; Internal threat, Subversion, and even 'Adverse reaction to Government policies', in the Training Manual for Scientific Advisers, 1977.

This blatant mis-use of power by

faceless and unaccountable people negates the very idea of the 'democracy' they claim to hold in reverence. As to the people who believe that we live in such a stable society that dictatorial powers would prove an impossibility, a remark from an exile from Pinochet's Chile may serve as a warning: "Britain is now beginning to look like Chile after the downfall of Allende. You should be worried. It can happen anywhere, and very quickly."



Nuclear veteran Colin Avey (left) with fellow member John Tungay and the 1983 Labour PPC for Brighton Kemptown, Rod Fitch. Photo: Militant

Tories dismiss 'nuclear disease' link campaign

Two years after Britain's 'nuclear veterans' began their campaign for compensation for illnesses they believe were caused when they took part in nuclear bomb tests in the 1950's and 60's, the government has at last given an official answer.

The Minister of Defence, Adam Butler, has announced that an 'independent inquiry' is taking place—the results to be published in October 1986.

The 'independent' nature of the inquiry can be judged by the fact that it has been commissioned by the Ministry of Defence. Butler's announcement of the inquiry, circulated to MPs, was accompanied by a document from the MOD, dismissing the nuclear veterans' case—and this before the findings of the 'independent inquiry'!

The MOD document uses little scientific evidence, instead relying on bland statements. The document states: "The government has confidence that the safety precautions taken (during

the nuclear bomb tests)...were effective."

In reality, safety precautions ranged from pathetic to non-existent. In *Militant*, 17 December 1982, Colin Avey of the newly formed Sussex Nuclear Veterans Group described how he served on HMS Scarborough during the Christmas Island atom bomb tests in 1958. He and fellow member Ron Tarrent told how they were not informed of the possible dangers of radiation, were given no protective clothing and after the tests were only given a shower and ointment for their burns resulting from the tests. Their ship was sailing five miles from the blast, not the required 15 miles. Colin and Ron both suffer from leukaemia.

MOD document

The MOD document glibly dismisses the illnesses suffered by nuclear veterans, saying that the number of veterans suffering from cancer is not out of proportion for the normal rate of people suffering from the disease in ordinary life.

To give this statement a scientific gloss, it reports two

studies, including one by the Birmingham University Group, which "concluded that the groups studied did not suffer health significantly different from that of non-participants." Yet as *Militant* (6 May, 1983) reported, Dr Steward of Birmingham University in preliminary tests on 'nuclear veteran' cases found that the number of deaths from cancer related illnesses was 80-100 times the national average.

The document sent out by Butler will no doubt set the tone of the findings of the inquiry. As the nuclear veterans believe, the cover up by the government and the military will continue. It's not just that the state doesn't want to pay out compensation to victims of the tests, or that it would expose the lack of safety precautions used. If the truth got out the public outcry would centre people's attention on the horror of nuclear weaponry, and bring into question the whole Tory policy of building up Britain's nuclear arsenal.

By Dave Nellist MP

Children's fears for the future

The full impact of the effect of the threat of nuclear war on the mass of society has new meaning from the results of a recent survey.

School children, 561 of them, between the ages of 11 and 15, were asked questions about their attitude to nuclear war. More of a condemnation could not be imagined. No 'Starwars' fantasy, or immature imaginings from these children. 91% thought they would not survive a holocaust, and 31% expected nuclear war in their life time.

The next generation waiting for the end of life before they have begun! Especially when 21% thought that nuclear war could happen at any time. 45% of the children said that thoughts about the nuclear

threat affected their feelings on marriage and job prospects. 80% of the children thought the government were not doing enough to remove the threat of nuclear war.

Suicide

One 11 year old summed up the fearful facts: "To survive a nuclear war would be horrible, nearly all your friends and relations would be dead. You would probably end up killing yourself."

The Bristol school where the children were surveyed has peace studies on its curriculum as a result of Avon Labour County Council policy.

By Steve Amor



Children march with CND, April 1982. Photo: Militant

Big brother listens in on CND

CND ACTIVISTS have protested to the government that their phones have been tapped and their mail opened.

These tactics are to be expected from the Tories as their nuclear arms' policies become more unpopular with every day. The latest MORI poll, carried out just before Christmas, estimates a massive 45% of the population are in favour of nuclear disarmament.

'Paranoia' claim

Predictably the Tories have dismissed CND's protests. Backed up by the Tory press they try to portray CND as 'paranoid', and that the strange happenings on their phones and the delays in mail arriving—often clearly tampered with—are just normal problems of the

postal and telecom systems.

Believe that and you'll believe anything, especially as the European Court of Human Rights has just forced the Tories to change the wide rules governing the use of phone tapping.

Indeed, *Militant* has had first hand experience of the secret services tampering with our mail. The most glaring example was in October 1979 (see *Militant* 473). A *Militant* supporter in Germany sent some books to our offices. When the parcel arrived it had clearly been opened (resealed by a PO sticky label). One of the books—*Lenin on Britain*—was missing. However, in its place was a book on *The Arab Secret Service*. Inside the sleeve was a docket from the Ministry of Defence Library!

NEC: setback for right wing

IT IS clear that at the December 12 Labour Party National Executive meeting the right-wing were attempting a mass purge of *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party.

By a *Militant* reporter

Prior to the Executive meeting the press and media had been informed that a committee of inquiry into *Militant's* activities was being set up. In fact one newspaper actually published a list of the members of the committee.

Since the Executive there have been varying reports in the press and media about what was decided. Every Party member should be clear. What the right-wing wanted and what they got were two different things.

There was a proposal from Roy Hattersley calling for a full scale investigation into *Militant*. But this was unanimously defeated, even Hattersley voting against his own proposal. They knew the party was in no mood for a witch-hunt.

The priority for all members is to defeat the fundamental attacks being made on the trade unions by the Tories. Obviously for some of the right-wing this penny



Terry Fields MP speaks in defence of Brychan Davies (sitting next to Terry Fields) after the NEC meeting on November 28.

has dropped, as a result of the barrage of letters and resolutions opposing any new witch-hunts which flooded into Walworth Road in their hundreds.

Ideology

Ken Cure, chair of the Appeals Committee then moved that a working party be set up to wage an 'ideological struggle' against *Militant* and to draw up a document outlining the principles of Democratic

Socialism. This prompted one left winger to comment: "If it is the Appeals Committee which is to wage this ideological struggle I suggest that we seriously re-consider the membership of that committee."

This proposal was not at the NEC; however it will come back to the January meeting. A document outlining the principles of Democratic Socialism may be just what the party needs to reassert the socialist programme of the party.

Militant has nothing to fear from a clash of ideas. We welcome debate on how the workers can achieve socialism. But do the right-wing?

Traditions

Already there are indicators that the leadership want to move away from the socialist traditions of the Labour Party. One example is the fact that proposals have been accepted advocating the Labour Party

should "contact all the Tory company donations and ask them for money on the "Support a healthy democracy—fund both sides" argument". (Jobs and Industry Campaign—to be launched in March).

For the time being a mass witch-hunt has been thwarted—but we must be on our guard. The right-wing will want mass expulsions and will try and use the 'ideological struggle' to lay the basis for a witch-hunt.

Tory Law pledge

TRADE UNIONS fined under the Tories' anti-trade union laws may be reimbursed under the next Labour government.

This follows a resolution moved by LPYS representative Frances Curran at the NEC on 12 December:

"This NEC reaffirms its total opposition to the anti-trade union laws of the present Tory government.

Repeal acts

"We therefore call on the next Labour government to repeal the following legislation; the Employment Act 1980, Employment Act 1982 and the Trade Union Act 1984. And reimburse in full any trade union fined under these laws.

"This NEC is also opposed to the interference by the courts in the running of democratic trade unions. We therefore also call on a future Labour government to reimburse in full trade unions fined in this way."

The resolution was referred to the Labour Party Home Policy Committee.

By a *Militant* reporter

South Wales NUM support

NO DOUBT the avalanche of protest letters and resolutions from the labour movement put pressure on the right wing of the NEC not to press for a wide-scale witch-hunt.

Typical of these protests was the letter from the South Wales NUM executive, signed by the President Emlyn Williams, condemning the expulsion of Young

Socialist Brychan Davies from Rhondda CLP:

"As you may well have been informed, my Executive Council wrote a personal appeal to the Rhondda Constituency Labour Party against their decision on behalf of the above named member.

"Brychan is very well known for his support of the miners and his dedication to

a true socialist society and we feel he has done nothing to impinge upon the rules of the party that we all cherish.

"We are therefore asking that the National Executive Committee do not uphold the decision of the Constituency Party. This was the unanimous decision of the South Wales Area Executive Council."



Emlyn Williams.

Party ranks speak out

THE LATEST threatened purge against *Militant* supporters by the right wing provoked wide-scale anger amongst Labour Party rank and file members.

The inaction of the Labour leadership in the current miners' strike alongside their continual attacks and snipings at the left of the party—in particular the Young Socialists and *Militant* supporters—has raised questions in many members' minds.

The thoughts put in a letter to *Militant* on 10 December from a new reader in the Isle of Wight is typical of the mood of many ordinary Labour Party members up and down the country:

As a Labour Party member for nearly 40 years, having been ward and constituency secretary during which time I fought against the Militants, also secretary of the Cowes and Isle of Wight County Association of Trades Councils, I have now had to change my views.

Inaction

The government declared war against the trade union movement. They passed the so-called Employment Bills and approved their strategy

before 1978, they planned, prepared and caused the miners' strike.

What I cannot understand is why the leaders of the Labour Party are not telling the people that the government is to blame for the strike. They speak against violence on the picket lines; they must know, if the government is to continue to starve the miners or anyone else, they will fight.

I wrote to the *Labour Weekly* asking why they do not publish the fact that the government is to blame, but my letters do not get published.

Neil Kinnock has never blamed the government, and I fear he will be throwing away any chance of the Labour Party winning the next election.

Left-wing

The miners still working will be too chicken-hearted to vote Labour—they will go Alliance. The miners with the guts to stay out will only vote for someone prepared to fight—that, it seems to me, will be the left wing or *Militant* candidates.

I never thought I would ever write a letter like this, nor put in an order for the *Militant*, but the weak-hearted leaders we now have has forced me to do it.

Yours sincerely,
E Maxted
Cowes
Isle of Wight

Ken Cure's bad company

THERE IS an old saying—by your friends you shall be known.

Ken Cure, Executive member of the AUEW and member of the Labour Party National Executive Committee, has recently been prominent in supporting calls for enquiries into *Militant* and its supporters in the Labour Party.

However, Ken Cure keeps some very strange friends indeed. He rubs shoulders with men like Charles Keen, a director of Barclays Merchant Bank, well known for his sympathies to the working class. Let's take another

of his friends, the Rt Hon Lord Grimond. Or Martin Smith, a partner of Phoenix Securities Ltd. Just where does 'our Ken' meet all these people?

Well, they are all members of the board of Job Ownership Ltd ("politically neutral"). This philanthropic body was set up to encourage the growth of "worker owned businesses". As their brochure clearly states JOL "believes that when nationalised and local authority undertakings face 'privatisation' workforce buy-outs offer an attractive 'third way'."

Just what does this mean? It means that local authority workers should tender for their own jobs, competing with private contractors, by cutting their own jobs, wages and conditions. Hardly a socialist concept!

Kent council

All this has led JOL to have discussions with Kent County Council about selling off their old people's homes. JOL and its director Robert Oakeshott has met leading members of Kent County Council. This council is, of course, one of the most 'progressive' in the

country. The first to break a national agreement for school meals workers—cutting their pay by 12%. And who have displayed their concern for their workers and their services by sacking 3,000 school cleaners and handing the work over to private contractors.

So, Ken, before you start criticising the commitment and activities of socialists in the Labour Party just what on earth are you up to with Job Ownership Ltd?

By Nick Bradley
(NUPE Area Officer, Kent, personal capacity)

LSE Labour victory

IN A by-election for the full-time post of General Secretary, students at the London School of Economics have elected by a massive majority Labour candidate David Jackson.

The main issue of the election was whether LSE students union should make a payment of £4,000 to the families of striking miners. In a storm of controversy,

Ed Lucas, the previous General Secretary, resigned because he felt unable to follow the policy of the Union and make the payment.

The election saw an unprecedented level of political activity, attracting the largest recorded turn out for a by-election.

On a platform shared by striking miners from Fer-

rymoor Riddings Colliery, Yorkshire, David Jackson declared in his victory speech:

"We've won this election after one week's campaigning, these miners have been fighting for their jobs for eight months—now we can give them the support we voted for and they deserve..."

Special offer

Two *Militant* pamphlets for £1.50 (includes post):

The State and Capitalist Crisis—Tribune's Alternative Strategy by Andrew Glyn.

From World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5BH.

DAVE COTTERILL looks back on the main event of 1984—the miners' strike—which has left a permanent mark on society and the labour movement.

1984 WILL always be known as the year of the Miners' Strike. Almost every other event has faded into the background in comparison. The miners struggle has dominated and influenced the daily developments of British society.

The year began with the overtures of the NGA dispute at Warrington and the disgraceful decision of the TUC leadership to refuse to face up to the Tories. Their inability to tackle the issue temporarily demoralised some of the activists in the movement and the Tories saw it as a green light to develop their offensive against the trade union movement.

This they did with the banning of the trade unions at the GCHQ centre at Cheltenham. This blatantly dictatorial measure provoked even the TUC leaders into calling national action in protest. Despite only giving a couple of days notice, millions of workers took strike action and hundreds of thousands took part in demonstrations.

But all of this seems more like a decade ago since the miners' strike began on March 5. Many sceptics in the labour movement had begun to believe their own propaganda that the workers would not struggle.

The inability of the trade union leaders to give a lead fuelled the cynicism of those pessimists in the movement whose rightful place would be in the "league of abandoned hopes". They even believed that "foreign holidays, videos, cars and home ownership" would forever prevent a national strike by the miners.

There is no doubt that the Tories were also taken in by this reasoning. Their careful, cold, calculated plan, worked out over the last decade to exact revenge on the miners for 1972 and 1974, was based on the assumption that the strike would only last 6-10 weeks and then the miners would be driven back to work.

The announcement of the closure of Cortonwood was a deliberate attempt to provoke a confrontation. The Yorkshire coalfield had voted in 1981 by an 80% majority to fight the closure of any pit. Cortonwood had been given assurances that it would remain open for at least another five years.

'Industrial Falklands'

The calculation of the NCB and the Tories was that spring was the best time for an offensive and with record coal stocks and summer approaching, they probably felt supremely confident. Thatcher undoubtedly viewed this struggle as her "industrial Falklands"—as a chance to smash what she regards as the 'enemy within'. A defeat for the miners, she calculated, would open the way to an attack on the jobs and conditions of all trade unionists.

But they didn't reckon with the iron determination of the miners and particularly the zeal and enthusiasm of the youth. The Tories prepared for the conflict in a military fashion. They see the NUM as the back-bone of the British trade union movement. Break this and it prepared the way for the introduction of privatisation, cutting wages, attacking social and welfare benefits and breaking up the education and health services. In other words, transferring the burden of the crisis of British

capitalism onto the shoulders of the working class.

The first stage of the strategy had been prepared years ago in terms of stockpiling coal, of preparing oil-fired power stations, and making them more immune to picketing, and by beefing up the police force. The conflict of Warrington, during the NGA dispute, showed quite clearly how events have changed in Britain. There has been a fundamental departure from the old consensus politics.

Northern Ireland methods

For the first time the working class was subject to the same measures which have been common place, and were perfected, in Northern Ireland. Riot shields, batons, dogs and mounted cavalry have been the norm. Only plastic bullets have still to be used.

In the first few weeks the miners' strike seemed precarious. One week seemed to bring the prospect of an all-out strike, combined with support from other workers. The following week seemed to bring the possibility of the strike collapsing.

The tactic of the Tories was to bring every pressure to bear, all forces at the point of attack. The media barrage was relentless, the attempts to split, divide and isolate the miners multiplied. Incessant propaganda was waged on the issue of holding a ballot.

But the Tories did not remain within the realm of pure propaganda. Police were mobilised in a centralised manner and poured in by their thousands to Nottingham to ensure the 'right to work'. What stinking hypocrisy from a government which presides over a system which condemns over four million to a life on the dole!

Miners were unable to move from one to another part of the country or even from county to county. Ancient laws from the 1300's were invoked. Pit villages were turned into mini-police states.

Every resource of the police, courts and laws were and still are being used against the miners. Bail conditions and restrictions of movement are reminiscent of South Africa's pass law, police operations were more akin to Latin America, or the smashing of the Solidarity trade union organisations by the Polish bureaucrats, and yet there was not a whimper from the Tories about "democracy and freedom". Only the freedom to scab mattered in Britain in 1984.

Even ex-chief constable, James Alderson had to admit that the police force has been turned into a para-military force. And the effect of this?—Simply to bring out more pickets, to increase the miners' resolve and determination, and to bring forward the youth with their football slogans and enthusiasm.

The organisations of miners' wives and families has added even more backbone, grit and determination and has brought the strike to a new level. Who will forget the mass rallies, meetings and demonstrations which lifted the spirits, opened new horizons, inspired and enthused other sections



Arthur Scargill, the miners' president unremoved from his position of defending jobs.

Photo: Militant



Pickets' barricade at Cortonwood in November last year, the pit where stay open for another five years.

Year of



Policeman beating a picket at Orgreave. The press has remained silent about police violence.

Photo: John Harris (FLM)

of workers with the belief that at last the Tories were being taken on and would be given a drubbing? Who will forget, either, the scenes of men on horseback with dogs, truncheons, riot gear and protective clothing lashing at men in T-shirts, jeans and canvass shoes.

In June and July the British ruling class were undoubtedly beginning to panic. Every attempt had been made to settle with groups of workers such as the rail-workers, in order to isolate the NUM. Solidarity support was already forthcoming from railworkers and seamen.

The strike action of the dockers immediately conjured up the image of general solidarity which, if pursued, would have led to an early defeat of the Tories. However,

because the trade union leaders did not openly and clearly link the dockers' fight to the miners' strike, the Tories were able to settle with the dockers.

Unable to spread the strike, the miners were forced into the hostile terrain of August, the height of the summer holidays, when the labour movement normally moves into lower gear. Finding that their previous tactics were insufficient, the Tories and the NCB opened up another front. They began to attempt a "back to work" movement.

In some cases thousands of police were used to escort a single scab into work. Pit villages in Yorkshire, Durham, Scotland and Wales experienced the full brunt of

the state machine. The number of pickets arrested to keep them away from the picket lines reached the thousands.

Yet an insignificant number went back into work. The attempts to go back to work spurred the miners into action. Thousands of new faces appeared on the picket lines, sometimes for the first time—some of them immediately arrested and banned from picketing. But the strike had passed the test and gone on to a new level, forcing the Tories to move to a new tactic.

Attack through courts

For the first time court action was used. The South Wales NUM was fined £50,000 and, on refusing to pay, had its funds sequestered for contempt of court. The response was immediate. Miners, workers and the Labour Party Young Socialists occupied and surrounded the union building and the South Wales Area called for a one-day General Strike. Since the summer the Tories have continued along the same track. The courts have become a key instrument in their attempt to smash the union.

The appointment of a receiver, an official of the Tory party, represented the most serious threat ever presented to the existence of trade unions. The Tories realised that cash is essential to the continuing of any struggle and in effect they are trying to stop all money to the NUM.

By settling with the pit deputies (NACODS) they have continued their tactic of isolating the NUM. The surrender of NACODS was undoubtedly a psychological blow to the miners. Seizing on this advantage the NCB have dangled a financial carrot and attempted to bribe men back to work, offering holiday pay to which striking miners should have been entitled anyway.

Using every possible issue they have relentlessly pursued the leaders of the NUM. Violence against working miners is given massive media coverage, but the much more widespread violence against striking miners is totally ignored. The death of the South Wales taxi driver was given massive

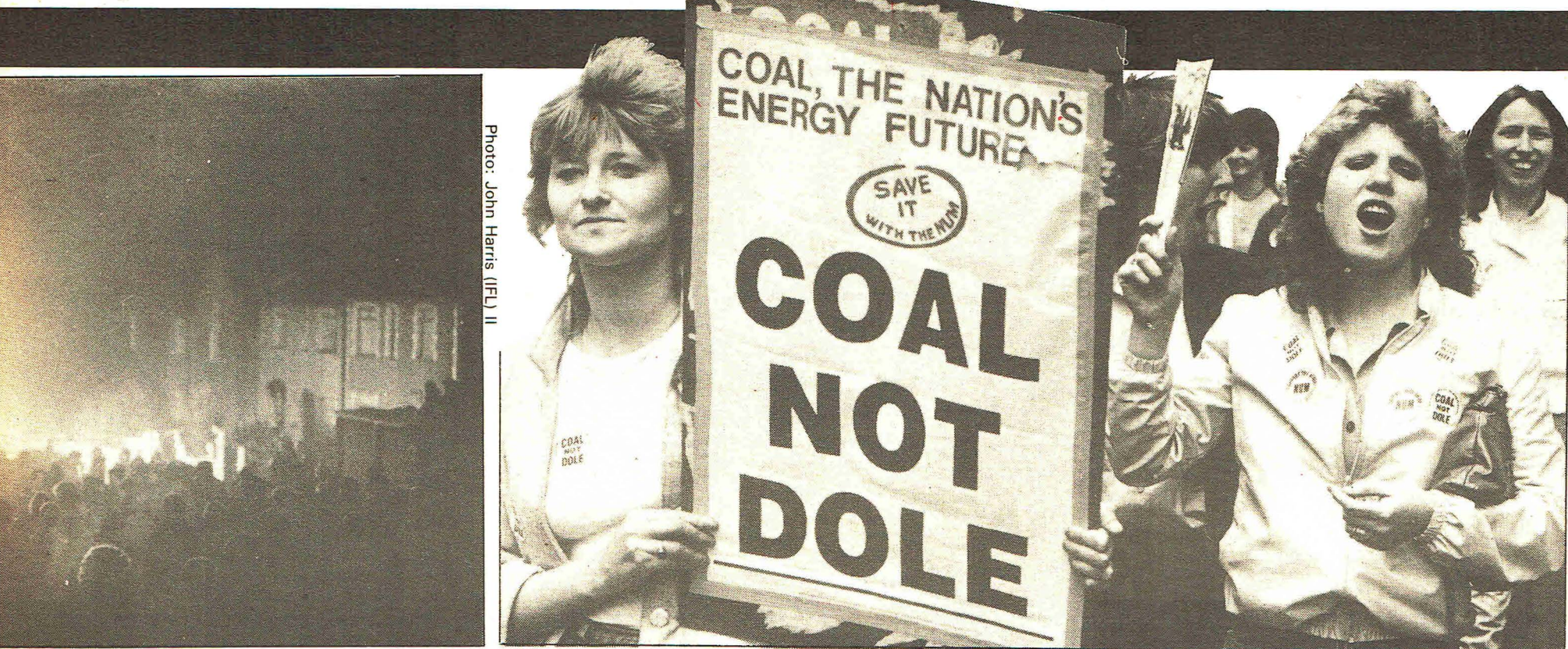


Photo: John Harris (IFL) II

Photo: John Smith (FL) II

the strike began. Assurances had been given that the pit would

National miners' wives demo in Barnsley in May. Womens' support groups have helped weld communities behind the strike.

the miners

publicity and his alleged attackers were charged within hours. But what of the deaths of striking miners on picket lines?—no charges have yet been laid.

Law in Britain in 1984 is naked class law, used in the interests of the Tories and big business. Rank hypocrisy does not concern the Tories and the hyenas of the press. For an NUM official to meet with Libya's Colonel Gaddafi is almost a treasonable offence, but for big business to trade with Libya is... business. Yet still the strike goes on.

The miners have had iron driven into their souls. Their loyalty to the strike and to the NUM still remains firm, together with their determination to win.

This struggle has become a beacon to the working class even to an international plain. As *Militant* has reported, striking miners, generally rank and file NUM members, have taken part in many international speaking tours, collecting tens of thousands of pounds. Workers internationally have been and still are looking towards Britain and holding their breath—hoping for a miners' victory over the detested Thatcher government.

The Tories proclaimed that the miners have no support in Britain, yet the collections of over £1 million a week flatly contradicts this. There is even greater support still untapped but the lack of a lead from the trade union tops has prevented this from being turned into active support.

Behind all the activities of the miners, acting as a back-bone to them, have been the support groups. Women roused to a trade union and political activity, sometimes for the first time, have become an inspiration to millions. They have done more for changing and improving the position of women in the labour movement and in society than millions of pamphlets and speeches.

No section of society has been left untouched by this strike. The political involvement of miners and their families has led even the bishops of the North East to comment on the interest now shown in "revolutionary ideas".



Photo: Tina Carroll

Liverpool Council has given consistent support to the miners. The Tories were forced to make major concessions to Liverpool for fear of opening a 'second front'.

Every trade union conference has been dominated by the strike. The leftward shift reflected in the trade unions is attributable mainly to the miners. At the CPSA conference 300 motions of censure on Alistair Graham and the right-wing appeared—Alistair Graham has now been removed from the TUC General Council.

The USDAW executive was overturned 11 times at its annual Conference. The NUR conference passed resolutions in favour of a 35 hour week, £100 minimum wage and the nationalisation of the top 200 companies. The UCATT conference attacked the executive and the General Secretary for not supporting union policy.

The TUC and the Labour Party conferences were totally dominated by the miners strike. But the enthusiastic support for the miners among delegates has not been matched by the leaders. The TUC leadership have seemed oblivious to the serious threat posed to trade union rights in general. Rather than acting, as they have so often done, as "statesmen" and "arbiters", they should have rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in to helping the miners. The TUC should have called a general strike to protest at

the appointment of a receiver to handle NUM funds.

Labour's leadership has been little short of disgraceful. Neil Kinnock's fence-sitting—whenever he's come off it, it has only been to hammer the miners—has done him irreparable damage in the eyes of miners and workers in general.

Yet, other movements have also taken place, although all of them have been dwarfed by the enormity of the miners' struggle. In the background there has been a wave of strikes, particularly in small enterprises, often unorganised.

Hindle's of Bradford, Morris and sons in Wigan, Beauty Care in Eccles, Barking Hospital cleaners, Phillips Rubber. Civil Servants in DHSS Longbenton, were out for over six months.

Liverpool victory

As Leon Trotsky explained in 1925, the Tories may be destroying the old conservative industries, but with it they are destroying the old conservative ideas.

The only struggle not completely dwarfed by the miners has been the victory gained by Liverpool City Council. According to Labour's right-wing, Marxism is an "elec-

toral liability" and is "unpractical". Yet the campaigning by the City Council, largely inspired and guided by supporters of the *Militant*, has proved the very opposite.

Mobilising thousands of workers and standing up to the Tories created an historic victory. Over months of campaigning, most of Liverpool's labour and trade union organisations were drawn into battle, culminating in a City-wide general strike on March 29 which saw between 50 and 60,000 workers demonstrating on the streets of Liverpool.

In the face of such opposition the Tories were forced to make concessions which were in effect a 90% victory for the City. Yet the advice of the Labour leaders had been to remain within the law, cut jobs and to institute a rate increase of 60%!

According to the *Daily Express* it was "a shoddy and cowardly deal—Mr Jenkins has shown that defiance pays." But for the working class of Liverpool it was "leadership at last". Liverpool and its victory stand as a concrete testimony to the validity of Marxist ideas, tactics and strategy.

1984 was thus a fitting year for the celebration of the 20th Anniver-

sary of the *Militant*—a baptism of fire. Throughout the miners' strike, *Militant* and its supporters have been in the forefront of the struggle. The support given by miners to the paper reflects this. What other newspaper can report the fact that miners coming to its meetings have emptied their few remaining coins into the collection—and have done so in a conscious and enthusiastic manner?

The convening of the March Conference of the Broad Left Organising Committee, with well over 3,000 delegates and the magnificent September BLOC lobby of the TUC shows that the vacuum created in the trade union movement by the lack of leadership at the top can and will be filled.

The hysteria and attacks of the press signify the coming of age of Marxist ideas. Above all, the miners' strike shows that the consciousness of workers is beginning to catch up with the objective situation and workers are coming quickly to the conclusion that there is no way forward on a capitalist basis. The ruling class has created a chasm between the classes. British society will never be the same again.

The editorials of the capitalist press have talked of "civil war without bullets", of "the enemy within"—all of which indicate how seriously they view this class war. Whatever the outcome of the strike, the Tories have now built into the base of British society all the combustible material which in later years will shatter the foundations of capitalism.

For Marxists going now into 1985, all the hardships, difficulties and struggles of 1984 are a milestone. The lack of any future for youth, the disillusionment of workers in the 'old' politics, the irreversible decay and decline of British capitalism—all these things are easily documented and proven. But 1984 was a year in which the sceptics were confounded and the view of Marxists confirmed—that when they think they are right, working class people will move heaven and earth to fight for their future. That fight will go on in 1985, and later, and until socialism becomes a reality.

S Africa New Caledonia,

Australia's militant tradition

THE INDUSTRIAL Workers of the World, known as the Wobblies, was formed originally in the United States in 1905. They also had an organisation in Australia.

The IWW split in 1908 between a faction following De Leon based in Detroit and another faction in Chicago and it was mainly the Chicago faction's ideas which spread to Australia. They recognised the class war. The pre-ambles to their constitution stated—"The working class and the employing class have nothing in common".

A simple point but a crucially important one, that these workers didn't need to go to university to learn. Yet a point that Bob Hawke, Oxford scholar, seems totally unable to grasp, some three-quarters of a century later!

A solidly working class organisation, the Wobblies believed that only "direct action"—direct confrontation between the workers and the boss at the point of production—would achieve any results in the class war. They believed in sabotage, not smashing machines but "the conscious withdrawal of industrial efficiency." As

By Craig Bowen

they proclaimed—"A bad day's work for a bad day's pay!", or...

"When you feel like working shorter hours and you think you've really done enough, Use sabotage that's all, Don't strike or arbitrate or anything so rude or rough, Use sabotage that's all..."

"S-A-B-O-T-A-G-E spells sabotage, All the frightened bosses say it's awful Taking profits from them is unlawful Sabotage that's all Take a hunch, you silly bunch Use the weapon with a knockout punch Sabotage that's all!"

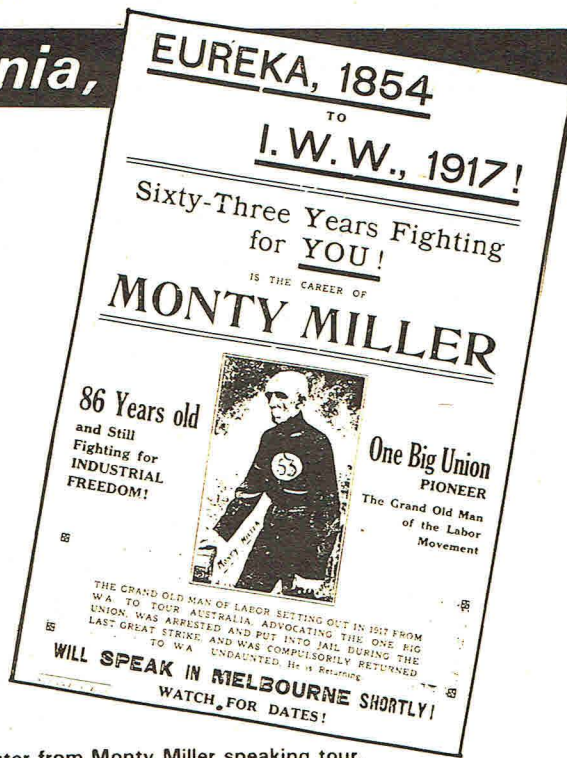
They had campaigns during which they plastered Sydney with stickers proclaiming—"Fast workers die young!" and "The hours are long the pay is small, so take your time and... 'em all!" The trouble was, by the tactic of the "go-slow" they often antagonised their own work-mates, who would have to work harder to make up for them.

The IWW were "syndicalists". Having observed the negligible results the

Labor Party had achieved through Parliament, despite a considerable presence there, the Wobblies came to the conclusion that Parliament was of no use to workers in the class struggle.

They were openly contemptuous of Labor's Parliamentary representatives—"The Australian working class has been shamefully betrayed by the very men whom it lifted out of obscurity into the padded seats and lazy competency of professional parliamentarism", their paper *Direct Action* declared, and a song about Labor politicians (to the tune of Yankee Doodle) was a favourite at their meetings:

"Come listen all kinds of friends mine I want to move a motion To make an Eldorado here I've got a bonzer notion. Bump me into Parliament bounce me anyway. Bang me into Parliament On next election day Some very wealthy friends I know Declare I am most clever While some may talk for an hour or so Why I can talk forever."



Poster from Monty Miller speaking tour.

Tom Barker, editor of IWW paper, *Direct Action*, was charged with "prejudicing recruiting" for producing this poster in 1915. The defense counsel argued that, far from prejudicing recruiting, the poster would encourage it if the advice was followed. The prosecution didn't agree—he got a £50 fine or six months.

They were hated by the bosses, the press and the right wing of the Labor Party but there was a grudging admiration for them. The right wing *Bulletin* magazine commented at the time—"Misguided they are, of course and all that: but how the enthusiasm of these IWW people shames Liberals and Laborites". And a not-too-sympathetic historian said of their paper, *Direct Action*—"The dedication and devotion of those responsible is beyond doubt. Most worked as labourers during the day and spent the night setting type, printing, proof-reading, bundling and addressing".

The Wobblies' major impact was during the wartime anti-conscription battles which split the Labor Party as bitterly as the MacDonald betrayal did in Britain 15 years later. So effective were

the IWW in the anti-conscription campaign that the Prime Minister (ex-Labor) had an act passed that made it punishable by six months imprisonment merely to belong to the IWW.

This was after 12 Wobblies (including Jim Larkin's brother) were charged on the eve of the conscription referendum with "conspiracy to commit arson and sedition" for which they received jail sentences of five to 15 years. After a concerted campaign from other sections of the labour movement they were released in 1920, but by that time the continued rounds of raids and arrests had effectively smashed the organisation.

By that time as well, the Russian revolution had had a tremendous impact in Australia as it did everywhere else. Tom

To Arms!
Capitalists. Parsons. Politicians.
Landlords. Newspaper Editors and
Other Stay-At-Home Patriots.

your country needs YOU
in the trenches!!

WORKERS
Follow your Masters

Barker, an IWW worker, wrote "I'd never heard of Lenin or Trotsky but I organised meetings in Sydney in support of the February revolution". By the time the shock waves of the October revolution had begun to settle, many of the remaining Wobblies, who hadn't been burnt out by the struggle, turned towards the infant Communist Party. They had seen that industrial struggles alone were not enough, political action was needed as well.

The tremendous verve, humour and enthusiasm with which the Wobblies went about their political work, despite all the difficulties they encountered, is an example to us all. That's a spirit that runs right through the history of the Australian working class (not that you'd think it looking at some of the Whining Wallys and Moaning Melbas who are too common in the Australian "left"), and is a spirit that will ensure for Australian workers their ultimate victory.

A colony in revolt

By Keith Whitehead

NEW CALEDONIA has a population smaller than most London boroughs. But in recent months, thousands of French troops have been sent to this island a thousand miles off Australia.

Large areas of the island have been under the control of rebel guerillas, the native Melanesians (in the FLNKS coalition) boycotted recent elections and ten Melanesians were murdered by European and mixed race islanders.

New Caledonia is still a French colony as it has been since 1853. It might have gained independence before had it not suddenly acquired economic importance with finds of nickel, the biggest export and the second largest supply of cobalt in the world. The Melanesians (known locally as Kanaks) became a minority as Europeans and other immigrants increased in numbers. The best land, previously owned communally was taken away by ranchers and Melanesians were herded into reserves.

As much land is owned by 2500 Europeans as by 24,000 Melanesians. The end of the nickel boom has left tens of thousands out of work and those in jobs are subject to severe anti-strike laws. The demand for immediate independence from France had been growing in support for

some time, particularly after the Mitterrand government, widely backed by Melanesians in 1981, failed to honour campaign promises on independence and land reform.

Demands for militant action started in the unions in the nickel mines and amongst the rural poor with talk of occupying the ranchers' land. The nickel towns were barricaded during the elections. But the class basis of the movement has been partially obscured by racial tensions. The independence moves have less appeal to Polynesian, Indonesian and other immigrant groups on the island and have been opposed by most Europeans.

The white settlers' reaction was spearheaded by rich racists like Jacques Lafleur who made his fortune in nickel. He claims that even a proposed referendum on independence would be a calamity. "Most Melanesians don't want to work" he says showing his fear that independent Melanesians wouldn't want to work for his profits. He is now an assembly member for the RPCR party, linked to Chirac's Gaullist party in France. They "won"

November's elections which were largely boycotted by the Melanesians.

But the European population are not homogenous. Apart from the repressive machinery of colonial rule, police, judiciary, civil service etc and the large ranchers and capitalists, some sections see themselves as Caledonians, poor small farmers who could be separated from the Lafleurs by class politics as could the other immigrant groups.

Capitalist politics can not guarantee any future for areas like New Caledonia. The whole Pacific area is of great tactical importance to large capitalist powers, particularly USA and Japan, and it is a nuclear test ground for France. This region is a South Sea paradise only to the capitalists who take out the vast wealth of some of the islands and return at best only the trashier outpourings of civilisation, making the Pacific Islands little more than a market for junk foods, alcohol and *Dallas*.

Independence and self determination is a just demand, but the small weak islands can only survive united in a socialist federation. A fight for such an objective is the one realistic alternative to colonial rule and super-exploitation.



Black mineworkers in the goldfields.

S. African miners' solidarity

THE SOUTH African National Union of Mineworkers has donated R500 (around £220) to Britain's striking miners after a month-long visit by Roy Jones an NUM member in North Staffordshire.

This is reportedly the first time donations have come from South African workers to a union in a major industrial country. The donation represents about three months wages for a black mineworker.

Roy echoed the appeal by the non-racial union that British miners should not be taken in by the attempts to get them to emigrate and become part of the system of racial privilege and oppression.

At a press conference organised by Dave Nellist MP on 17 December, Roy outlined the police's murderous treatment of miners in their strike in September 1984, the horrific safety record and the terrible conditions. Most importantly, he showed the enormous growth of the union despite the brutality of the apartheid state and the very small resources available.

Next week, exclusively in *Militant*, we will publish Roy Jones' own report of his visit. Roy had the honour to be made the first white member of the 100,000-strong union. He will explain why British unions need to forge direct links with these workers in their heroic struggle.

India West Germany

For a workers' opposition

THE INDIAN elections which produced Rajiv Gandhi's victory were mainly contested between capitalist parties and coalitions.

The Campaign for a Workers' Front, a group of worker activists in the industrial city of Bangalore have issued the following appeal to workers' organisations throughout India to build an independent working class leadership fighting for the interests of the vast majority of Indian society.

INDIA HAS been shaken over the last six months by one shock after another, the military storming of the Golden Temple, communal riots in Bombay, dismissal of elected state governments in Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh, the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the butchery of thousands of Sikhs in Delhi and other Northern cities.

The assassination exposed the demoralisation and panic at the highest levels of the state machine. 100,000 troops are tied down in Punjab. Sikhs in Delhi, Muslims in Bombay, Hindus in Punjab, Bengalis in Assam, Tamils in Bangalore, all live in fear. The anti-Sikh pogroms in Delhi were led by Congress (I) municipal councillors, MPs and even a cabinet minister.

One commentator (in a fulsome tribute to Mrs Gandhi!) wrote: "The political institutions which once held the party together are in a shambles. The sharks have taken over the state and the economy. The bureaucracy and the police are now peopled by inefficient, corrupt mercenaries, mostly available on hire to the highest bidder. And the ruling party has become the headquarters of gangsters, rioters and killers; the largest single faction within it today consists of criminals."

In 1977, when the Emergency regime collapsed, Mrs Gandhi held frantic discussions with the generals to see whether the election results could be suppressed through an Army coup. In 1984, against a background of threats to impose a "presidential constitution", the ruling clique tested its strength with a trial coup in Andhra Pradesh.

Brink of disaster

The Congress (I) has tried to suppress democratic rights. It has led India to the brink of disaster, bringing into question its very survival. This election is a golden opportunity to get rid of it. So it is disturbing that the opposition parties have, once again, failed to present a convincing alternative. In most states negotiations between them have broken down over seat adjustments, worse still, they offer no coherent alternative policies. In one seat even the workers' parties, CPI and CPI(M) with identical policies are pitting candidates against each other.

Opposition leaders' comments to the effect that "India's problems are so great that no one party can have all the solutions", that "Rajiv would still be an airline pilot but for accidents of birth", even their criticisms of "dynastic rule", will repel many voters, because they

seem to express nothing but resentment that Congress (I) has unfairly grabbed all the plum jobs.

However, it is not only a greedy scramble for seats that has damned attempts to unite the opposition: these parties represent incompatible class interests and programmes. One party voices the aspirations of the kulaks; another the prejudices of Hindu shopkeepers; another the demands of the money lenders. Some of them are rejects from Congress (I) who discovered the evils of "authoritarianism" only after the 1977 electoral defeat of their party.

This sterility and disarray means Congress (I) could well be returned by default. But even if Rajiv Gandhi loses, will the new coalition government have any more solution to unemployment, homelessness, poverty or communal violence than did the Janata government or its short-lived successor in 1977-79?

We fought long and hard to overthrow imperialist rule, we resisted the dictatorial Emergency regime and threw it out. The vote is a precious right for which the Indian people sacrificed life and liberty. So we regard the bogus choice facing the people in this and many past elections an abuse of democratic rights.

Capitalist alliances

In the first Lok Sabha elections in 1952, the Socialists were the main opposition party—a workers' party justly challenged Congress—the party of big business. They abandoned their historic role by dissolving themselves into rival capitalist parties—some into Congress, some into alliances with precursors of the present opposition.

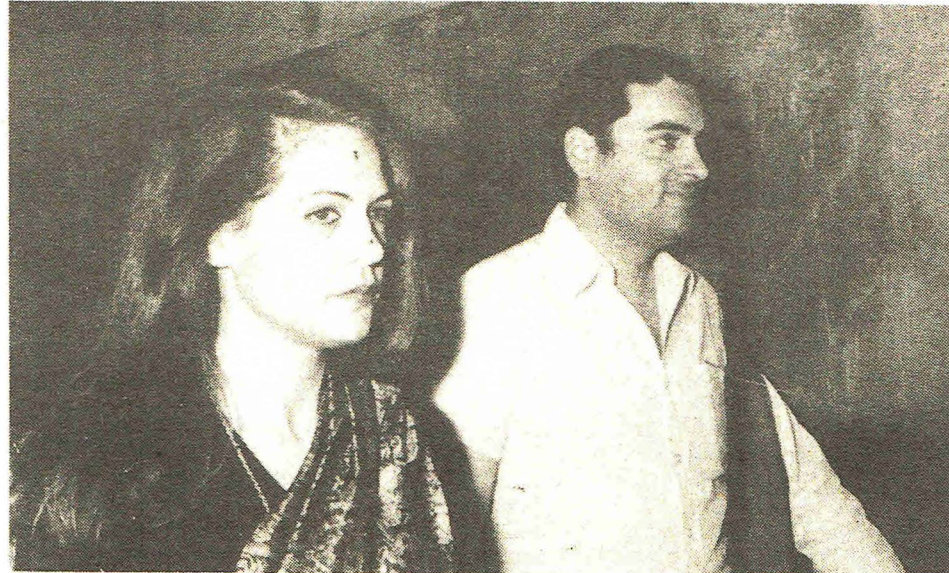
Other major workers' parties repeated these mistakes. The "Communist" CPI attached itself to Congress (even during the hated Emergency) and the CPI(M) to the reactionary Janata coalition which even included the communal bigots of Jana Sangh.

The workers' parties have nothing in common with the so-called opposition parties with their record of bloody repression. No fewer striking workers were shot dead by police under the Janata regime than under Congress. Only the working class can offer a way forward because it is the only class with a future. The reactionary opposition parties merely squabble over seat adjustments because they have no perspective, they represent doomed classes that can only look backwards.

For all the endless intrigues about "opposition



Mrs. Gandhi with the former Russian leader Brezhnev. The USSR's diplomatic alliances have tied the CPI to Congress(I), and the CPI(M) has attached itself to capitalist opposition coalitions.



Rajiv Gandhi. The dynasty continues, and so do the problems.

unity", the only real opposition since 1980 has come from the all-India Trade Union Alliance, the Campaign Committee which organised the historic *bandh* of 19 January, 1982 (involving 12 million workers) and whose threat of another *bandh* forced the government to restore to power the elected government of Andhra Pradesh.

The political decline of the workers' parties to mere marginal footnotes in electoral terms in no way reflects a decline in militant activity by the working class. On the contrary. The Indian working class has proved the most combative in the world.

In the years 1977-82, for every 1,000 Indian workers, 11,662 working days were lost in strikes. This figure is the highest in the world, as is shown by comparisons with such countries as Spain (5,274), Italy (4,911), Canada (4,042), UK (3,109), France (713) and Germany (198). These figures are even more remarkable in that they exclude political and solidarity strikes, and do not reflect the particular degree of sacrifice and heroism demanded of striking workers in India who face starvation, jail, lifelong blacklisting and even death.

The workers' political representatives have failed to match their courage and initiative.

The workers' parties must break their suicidal alliance with all capitalist parties. They must fight for a Workers' Front to put forward a clear socialist programme to unite the working class and rally behind its banner the oppressed and toiling masses of town and country.

We will work flat-out for the defeat of Congress(I) candidates at all costs. They are the main political agents of big business. But the workers' organisations have made a grave mistake in persisting in worthless alliances while diluting their own policies until they are unrecognisable.

The CP(M) has defined its electoral objectives to "defeat Congress(I), to defeat communalism, and to strengthen the left and democratic forces". What will this mean to workers fighting for a living wage, poor peasants and landless labourers trying to feed their children, to the unemployed, the slum-dwellers, the dalits, the bonded labourers, the victims of communal lynch-mobs?

The allocation of Lok

Sabha seats between rival cliques of hypocritical phrasemongers is of no interest to them. Elections in the past used to be competitions to see who could make the prettiest speeches about poverty. Now they are not even that! They are a bewildering and boring tug-of-war between abstractions: "authoritarianism", "secularism", "secessionism", "dynasticism", etc., etc. . .

The workers' parties must

have a programme to solve the real and unbearable problems that afflict the masses. Otherwise they will bear the responsibility for terrible suffering and bloody defeats. They must harness the inexhaustible energies of the workers and peasants to the overthrow of landlordism and capitalism.

All the objective conditions for revolution exist in India—demoralisation, splits and dithering by the ruling class, a heroic willingness to fight on the part of the working class, a profound disenchantment with the existing order on the part of the peasants and other non-proletarian strata. All that is missing is a mass revolutionary party with the clarity of perspective, the confidence and audacity to give central leadership to the existing mass movement.

We will work unstintingly in this election to defeat Congress(I). Above all we will campaign for those candidates representing workers' parties or having a genuine trade union base. But we believe it is high time to launch a Campaign for a Workers' Front, to chart a new and positive course for the future.

German Jusos support miners' struggle

FULL SUPPORT for the British miners' strike was expressed at the annual regional conference of the German Jusos (Young Socialists) in Northrhine-Westphalia (NRW), which includes the major West German coalfields in the Ruhr, on December 1st.

A resolution moved by Marxist delegate Hans-Gerd Öfinger was carried unanimously. An NUM victory would be "a first major breakthrough for the international labour movement in

the struggle against the capitalist crisis and reactionary governments like Thatcher's", the resolution points out.

Brother Terry Harrison from Kent NUM was given a warm welcome when he spoke. A collection raised well over 1,100 DM (£275) which include 20 DM from NRW prime minister and national SPD deputy leader Johannes Rau. Further solidarity action is already being carried out at rank and file level.

LETTERS

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

Scotland's exodus

Dear comrades,

A report from the Registrar General for Scotland reckons that workers will continue to flood out of Scotland at the rate of 15,000 a year.

Thousands of Scotland's most valuable assets, its workers, are being forced to leave to look for work elsewhere.

The report goes on to say that the population will fall by 500,000 to just over 4½ million by the year 2023. This will be the lowest since 1907.

Lesson working miners will learn

Dear Comrades,

Leicester is an area which has a reputation for moderation. This is shown by only thirty miners out of 2,500 deciding to strike.

Despite this when *Militant* sellers decided to sell papers in Coalville, in the heart of

Unfortunately the crisis is not Scottish but international, as reports in *Militant* show. Workers leaving Scotland will find the exact same attacks on wages, living standards and jobs in England, Canada or Australia.

Throughout the world society is run by a ruling class which places profit before anything else. There can be no Scottish or British solution to the crisis, only an international one. And the solution is socialism.

Yours fraternally
Steve Smellie
East Kilbride LPYS

the local mining region, people came up and congratulated us.

Most of these were older people who have come to realise that the workers can gain nothing with rotten leadership. In the future today's working miners will learn the same lesson.

Yours comradesly
Mick Pullin
Leicester South LPYS

The cost of Sunday shopping

Dear Comrades,

The prospect of legalised Sunday opening is a threat to more than just the shopworkers (see *Militant* 727). Even some of the big names like John Lewis recognise that, as there is only a certain amount of money available, Sunday opening would just mean it being spread over 7 days instead of 6, which in turn would inevitably lead to higher prices, loss of jobs and facilities.

Small shopkeepers, unable to compete with the big chains, would be forced to close. How many of us are dependent on the corner shop, especially on a Sunday? For pensioners, families with young children, the handicapped. It would soon be almost impossible to shop without a car, as hypermarkets out of town would certainly spread.

Then, having got rid of all

local opposition, the big chains would be able to dictate their own times, prices and conditions of work.

More workers would suffer the disadvantages of part-time shift work—no paid holidays, insurance or other benefits. For one-parent families, who would look after the children at weekends? Not to mention the difficulties of travelling to work at all hours. And of course there's the inevitable stress of shift-working which affects all the family.

While the thought of being able to shop on Sundays instead of having to rush around in the lunch hour, might appeal initially to some, would they still be so eager if it meant paying so much for privilege?

Yours fraternally,
Lynne Faulkes
Hackney

We need action

Dear Comrades,

The so-called drift back has slowed. Not that it increased. What we see in the media is just a distortion of the true facts. Thatcher knows she's got to break the miners' resolve in the weeks up to Christmas. But the miners resolve isn't cracking. It's hardening.

In the coming months the government can look forward to power cuts which they reckon will be next spring. But I believe they'll come much sooner, probably in January. Thatcher's attempt to starve the miners back to work has failed.

The government in this strike have tried every dirty trick conceivable. They tell us about the scabs that return to work each day. But what about the majority that are on strike? You hear nothing.

The same can be said about the policing of the strike. What you hear is what they want you to believe, not what actually happens.

Take the case in Yorkshire



Yorkshire and Notts miners in a defiant mood outside the Cotgrave colliery in South Nottinghamshire at the beginning of the strike.

for example where a policeman from the Met. waved a £20 note in front of a massed miners picket. Clearly a blatant case of intimidation, but ignored by the news teams who don't even give it a mention.

If Thatcher and MacGregor have their way there will be a decimation of

some areas, leaving thousands on the dole.

If the miners fail to win this long and arduous battle against this capitalist dictatorship we might all just as well lay there and wait to be slaughtered. It must be said that the TUC are taking a back seat. Promises are not enough. What we want is ac-

tion. Namely a succession of 1 day solidarity general strikes. The miners are at the forefront of the working class. They will win this dispute. History is on their side.

Yours fraternally
A Pullen
Cwm Colliery NUM and Pontypridd LPYS

Life is cheap under the Tories

Comrades,

In today's capitalist world we see all too often how cheap life and death has become, not just in Ethiopia but in Thatcher's Britain.

Just one example of the price workers have to pay in the coal strike is where people, in an attempt to heat their homes, dig for tip coal and pay the Tories' price in deaths and serious injuries.

Fraternally
Mike King
Southampton

Coventry cuts

Dear Comrades,

Contrary to all the myths spread in the media the miners' strike is having an effect upon coal stocks—or rather the lack of them. Even with all the Tories' preparations leading up to the dispute, they failed to take into account the determination and willingness of the miners and their families.

In one particular area of Coventry there have been power cuts every day.

Although at present only lasting between a few minutes to an hour, it has not been reported, even in the local press.

I think most people will by now have experienced lights flickering as a sign of power failing, but if you use an electric alarm clock—beware; some workmates have been getting up an hour late in the morning!

Yours fraternally
Ruth Hargreaves
Binley & Willenhall LP
Coventry SE

Unwelcome banner

In South Derbyshire where only about 17 men are out on strike, the NUM leadership have had a banner made, at an estimated cost of over £3,000. Their slogan is ironic: "The past we inherit, the future we build for ourselves."

The banner was then blessed at a church with about 500 guests including the mayor. Transport was laid on followed by a sit-down meal with wine for an estimated cost of over £2-3,000. The new banner then, has cost about £6-7,000 but due to the failure of the South Derbyshire leadership and most of its members to back the strike it will be unwelcome in almost every mining town in Britain.

(Thanks Kevin Machin, South Derbyshire NUM)

Truth hijacked

The "NCB" News at 6 o'clock on BBC1 is reaching new depths. A recent edition featured the usual attacks, mainly on "picket violence". To show how unbiased the programme was, the reporter spent some 20 seconds reading a NUM statement. In the background, however, during the statement, was a massive picture of a bolt, one of the "weapons" supposedly used. The programme on 6 December, however, featured an even more ridiculous "mistake". The reporter was covering an item on Iranian hijackers. During this report, the screen behind featured a miner, complete with pit helmet, and pit winding gear. "Take the plane to Bilston Glen?"

(Peter Gillan)

Harassment

Dear Comrades,

Yet again our wonderful police force has found nothing better to do than harass activists collecting for the miners.

Myself and other YS and Support Group members were collecting recently on Salford Precinct. One policewoman and two officers turned up and informed us that we were obstructing the pavement. She informed us that we should be 100 yards apart! We corrected her on this, it is 25

yards—but we were then told not to shout slogans or rattle buckets.

Apart from the fact that two collections for Cancer Research were standing in the doorway of Marks and Sparks about 5 yards apart, this is a continuation of the second front against the miners; i.e.—when you can't bash 'em back to work, stop the money and food. What Price Waterhouse can't do, the Salford police have set their hearts on doing.

Yours fraternally
Mike McKenna & Co
Salford East CLP.

Christmas spirit

Dear Comrades,

Havant LPYS did two collections outside local Further Education colleges last week—for the Xmas NUM Appeal.

The response was generally really good with people stopping in cars to hand over money and many people digging into their dinner money

or giving away all the money they had. People without money gave us support.

We also held a "bring a toy party" which means I now have a bedroom full of cuddly toys and a large number of toy spiders. This will all be handed over during a trip to one of the mining areas shortly.

Yours fraternally
Delia Hazrati
Havant LPYS

Police assault

Dear Sir,

Provocation and intimidation are words that feature widely in the press and media nowadays. We have seen, over recent months, miners accused of each on and off the picket lines. This has become the accepted norm, a norm which is becoming dangerously inaccurate.

My fast diminishing respect for the police finally lost its recognition on November 28. 30,000 students converged on London to protest at Education cuts. On this day, 30,000 students were stunned by the action taken by the Metropolitan Police Force in "containing" what the *Daily Mail* referred to as a "near riot". If so, then such action was wholly sparked off by the unnecessarily provocative methods employed by the police on Westminster Bridge.

There is little protection any individual can employ

against an aggressive cordon of police officers hitting totally defenseless men and women in the face. I know this is the case, as I was punched twice, with a black eye resulting.

When faced with this sort of action, is it any wonder students acted in the way they did? There was no original aim to bring London to a halt. Police intimidation and provocation caused this to be the only means of effective demonstration.

I was proud to be a part of it but I was not proud to witness the extent to which the British Police Force has lowered itself in so called protection of Law and Order. The police say we betrayed their trust. To betray a trust that was never vested in us, seems paradoxical and utterly farcical.

Yours fraternally
G.M. Stevenson,
Vice-President, Students Union
Brunswick Campus,
Gloucester

LEFT and RIGHT

Scales of Justice?

Dave Hopper, Secretary of Wearmouth Lodge (Durham area) NUM recently had windows smashed on two separate occasions at his home near the colliery. The alleged culprit was dealt with by Sunderland magistrates who adjourned the case allowing the defendant unconditional bail. The same magistrates imposed stringent bail conditions on strikers unfortunate enough to come before them, but we're all equal in the eyes of the law, aren't we?

Driven to drink

The fate of the Patent Shaft steel works in Wednesbury graphically illustrates the economic devastation and havoc the Tories' policies are reaping. The works was a large modern complex employing thousands of local workers. Shut down under the first Thatcher administration, the machinery was moved out and the plant demolished—with the exception of the social club. The club has now been brought by a trendy entrepreneur who converted it into a wine bar. It is called "Shafts".

FIIGHTING FUND

Since last issue:
£6,000

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	724		2900
East Midlands	634		3550
Humberside	830		1850
London East	747		3200
London West	909		2150
London South East	192		1950
London South West	473		1650
Lancashire	291		1950
Manchester	560		2200
Merseyside	520		6100
Northern	1592		4400
Scotland East	230		2950
Scotland West	612		3650
Southern	951		5100
South West	481		2150
Wales East	353		2550
Wales West	409		2050
West Midlands	1049		4300
Yorkshire	1058		5350
Others	2046		5000
Total received	14660		65000

One month to raise target

Even during the Christmas break our readers remembered the urgent need for cash and remained busy raising money for the Fighting Fund. Over £6,000 has been raised since our last issue, although only £3,200 is able to be reflected in the chart above.

The holiday period was obviously turned to our advantage with parties, discos, meals and video nights organised for the *Militant*. No doubt to the accompaniment of liquid refreshment.

The Revolution Graphics Christmas cards were a good money maker as are the calendars (still available) and the Winter Draw tickets. One reader in the Drax B power station sold over £46 worth. Money was raised through collections in the pub and at work.

The best example of what can be done came from the comrades in West Glamorgan. They went round the workplaces, readers and friends and raised £405! If every area were

to follow their example we would soon reach the target.

Despite the many hardships already faced by the miners and their families, many of them recognise the importance of increasing the support for *Militant's* ideas and see how much that depends on finance. Bazer, a striking miner in Cannock, sent in £5 and Killoch NUM sent £20.

£48,000 needed

We now need the same determination from all our readers. There are four weeks left to reach the target which should be easy if every reader remembers to ask their workmates, friends and relations for a contribution to the *Militant*. What have working class people to look forward to in 1985?

1984 saw a record year for the Stock Market, but for ordinary people things were a bit different. UK living standards are now the worst in the industrialised world, according to the OECD. Even for the people the

Tories supposedly represent, 1984 was a disaster. Company liquidations and individual bankruptcies in England and Wales were higher than ever.

Make a New Year's resolution for 1985. Make sure *Militant* raises the money it needs to campaign for the ideas of Marxism to put aside the horrors of life under Thatcher and the Tories. See in the New Year by meeting our target by the end of this month.

By Nick Wrack

Mrs Cottam, Stevenage £60; D English, GMBATU Wandsworth £60; R Chadwick, Algeria £20; I Williams, Manchester CPSA £20; N Davies, Range Rover Car Worker Birmingham £5; Blackpool Readers' Meeting £90.54; A Boyd, Dartford £6; M Ainsworth, Manchester City Cllr £5; E Lennon, Rutherglen NGA £2.50; J Mullen, Cambuslang OAP, £2; R Palin, Gedling NUPE £1; T Pegg, (Unemployed) 55p and A. Pope 50p (Both Leicester).

North and Central LP £10. There are thousands more donations waiting to be asked for. A daily Marxist paper will be a giant step forward for everyone in the labour movement so ask them to help us to produce it.

Individuals are still sending us donations with £96 coming from Victor Hopwood in Canada and £85 from Delia Hazrati in Havant. If you have not yet donated to our fund and agree with the idea of a daily Marxist paper then join the others of our readers who have given and send us a large amount.

Party branch to make a donation. Merseyside is leading the way with the highest number of organisations having contributed so far. Warbreck ward LP sent £10 and Valley ward, £25 to add to the list.

Ask for donations

Other organisations to have contributed include Swansea and District Trades Council, £10 and Radcliffe

Families Support Groups" at the address below.

North Durham Support Groups put out up to 700 food parcels a week. They are only able to do this by tremendous effort from miners' wives, miners and Labour Party members, but in an area of mass unemployment already it is getting harder and harder to raise the money, week in week out, to maintain this support.

So I am sure your readers will welcome this chance to experience part of *Militant's* past and read what Peter

Taaffe, Keith Dickinson and many other Marxists were saying twenty years ago, and at the same time give help to the grass roots of the miners' struggle.

Send cheques to North Durham Miners' Families Support Groups, "Militant offer", Labour Club, Station Master's House, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham DH3 3EE.

All cheques received after the *Militant's* have been dispatched will be returned.

Yours fraternally
David O'Brien

ads

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

"To all workers in Britain from Anton Nilson and Swedish workers: 'Happy New Year, Victory to the miners and forward to socialism'"

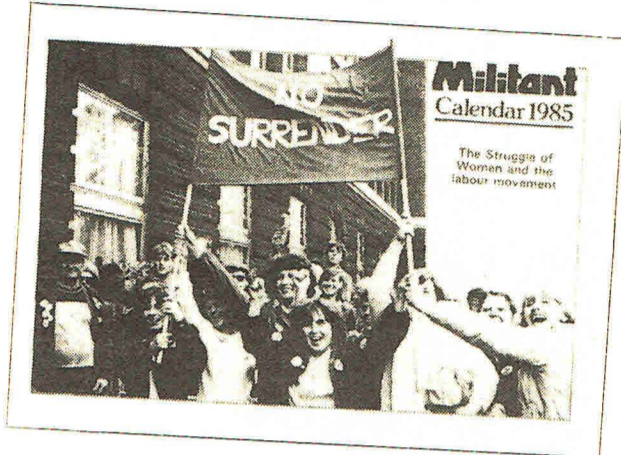
Scottish BLOC delegate Conference solidarity with the miners. (Note new venue).

Venue: Caley Cinema, Lothian Rd. Edinburgh. Date: Sat 19 January 1985. Speakers include: Terry Fields MP, Ian Isaac (S. Wales NUM Executive, personal capacity) and other NUM and leading TU speakers.

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

For credential details phone 031-665 5431.

OUT NOW!



£1.50 (+25p postage + packing)

Available from Militant, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

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.

Diaries 60p, address books 60p, plastic paper sleeves 20p, bookmarks 40p. Sew on badges 50p. 10 or more half price for resale FF to 10 Rodney Ct, Anson Drive, Sholing, So'ton S02 8RU.

HACKNEY & Tower Hamlets Militant New Year's Disco. Saturday, 12 January, 8 till late, Rose and Crown, Mare Street Hackney E8.

Socialists' sacrifice built workers' press

PAST ISSUES of *Militant* have touched on the history of the workers' press in Britain featuring the early socialist press such as the *Daily Herald* and the *Clarion*. But it was not just in England that such heroic efforts were made.

In Ireland, James Connolly and James Larkin, those giants of the world labour movement, saw as their main responsibility propaganda through workers' newspapers. Connolly attempted to produce a paper on his own! He decided to be a 'printers' devil' again, and spent some time procuring a small hand press, a case or two of type, an imposing surface and a few accessories.

One-man band

He was the editor, contributor, composing room staff, and except when he could get help, machine room staff as well. Each new issue would appear only when its predecessor had sold out.

Leaflets and pamphlets were produced in the same size and worked off with a topical outer sheet. A pound or two was scraped together to keep him going. He wittily summarised the two systems of publication; the first series was "so weekly that it almost died" and the second appeared "whenever it was strong enough to get out".

This paper was called the *Workers' Republic*, one Christmas he brought home 2 shillings, the family had no Christmas dinner and no

By Dave Farrar

presents. Yet under these difficulties Connolly continued his work of combatting reformism. Connolly sold his papers at street meetings and on speaking tours.

In the great Dublin lockout of 1913 James Larkin brought out 90,000 copies a week of the *Irish Worker*: it was described as "raucous, sensational, even hysterical at times, it was a

a stentorian voice of the people'. In December 1916 the *Irish Worker* was banned by the British authorities who feared the influence of the paper. The *Workers Republic* even had the temerity to produce a weekly series on its back page on the analysis of an insurrection!

We can learn a lot not just from the writings of these great socialists but also from their activities. We should follow in their example and build a workers' paper in Britain able to lead working people forward to socialism.

Sick of the Tories' propaganda war

IN ONE housing scheme called Tannooside whilst leafletting for a *Militant* Readers' Meeting in Bellshill we ran out of papers. We had already sold 30 in 45 minutes between two of us, and we'd only done four maisonettes (ie blocks of about 25 houses) by the time we'd ran out.

One retired mineworker, in what is a predominately steelworking area, said on buying a paper, that "at last a paper which tells it like it's happening. I'm sick and tired

of that rubbish Sue 'I'm your unbiased newsreader' Lawley put out at 6 o'clock. Blatant propaganda for the bloody Tories, that's all that is'".

Many millions of other workers are feeling the same way as this old man and it's vital we keep them in the picture by getting to their doors. We have nothing to fear by so doing.

By Colin Brown
(Motherwell North LPYS)

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.

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.

SEE THE *Militant* 20th Anniversary rally! VHS Video—1 hour highlights, plus all the main speeches in full!—3 hours total. Only £10—buy someone a present! (post included). Please send cheques to *Militant* 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

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

Room to let—Oval/Kennington in a comrades flat—must be working—(01)-735-9945 Late/early.

NOW AVAILABLE: Lenin and Trotsky on the national question—A compilation of 5 articles by Lenin and Trotsky. 20p/copy + 15p Postage. Orders over 10 copies post free. Order from WEG Box E, c/o 3/13 Hepscoot Road, E9.

Special offer

Dear Comrades, While clearing out an attic I came across seventeen early issues of *Militant*. These include the first eleven issues complete (October 1964—November 1965) plus *Militant* May Day leaflets for 1965 and 1966 and a *Militant* leaflet for the Durham Miners' Gala 1966.

I am offering these for sale to the first cheque for £20 or over made out to "North Durham Miners

In the xmas pile up spare a thought for the postie



Family life suffers

AT OUR Post Office there has been a dramatic increase in divorce and separation. The main reasons given are "normal", ie the other man or woman. But delve a little deeper and another reason emerges—long unsociable hours.

By a postman's wife

Time and time again we hear: "My partner can't put up with me leaving home at 4.30 am, working straight through, not getting home until 7 or 8 in the evening, eating a meal and falling asleep".

Management know the problem, but what do they say? "Oh surely a little tolerance and understanding is all that's required and don't forget the overtime is voluntary."

Voluntary! What choice for a married man with young children to clothe and fee, and a mortgage to pay, when he takes home under £90 on a basic week? How much tolerance can a young mum give when she's stuck at home all day, often not seeing many people of her own age to talk to. Then when her husband gets home, he's so tired he falls asleep. All it does is build up anger and tension within the partnership.

Can you honestly say as you read this that your partner, at some stage on a Sunday (your one complete day off), hasn't said: "Why can't we go out somewhere?" or "Why don't you help around the

house more?" or "Why don't you mend the washing machine?" etc. This isn't nagging or lack of understanding, it's pure frustration.

I don't work for the Post Office, but I am a postman's wife. We're fairly fortunate I suppose, as I'm at work—not for pin money, for necessities and to attempt to lessen the long hours. Even this has its drawbacks. Due to the shifts and travelling difficulties, we're lucky if we see each other for more than three hours a day. It's not much is it?

Management aren't bothered, providing the work gets done. So what of the UCW nationally and in local branches? At our office I've known of senior union reps moaning: "They should be going to marriage guidance counsellors, not bringing their problems to us, it's nothing to do with work!" But as far as I see things, it's a direct result of working conditions.

Why not invite wives to union meetings? They know about the long hours and low pay, they know how difficult it is to make ends meet, they receive the backlash of bad tempers and mood when a dispute arises. And in later years they know of the sadness when their menfolk are sent home from work with bad chest pains. All due to the incredibly long hours.

Many women may not have been to a union meeting before and not be certain how to behave—that can be overcome in time. The meetings. Equally important are

children. Some postmen have been unable to attend meetings because they have been looking after the children for various reasons. Obviously it would be more difficult for women to attend. I understand that quite a few of the large offices now have social clubs. Why not provide crèche facilities in the rooms for the duration of the meetings?

On to the UCW nationally; what has the union done for my husband? He doesn't work Sundays anymore, unless he's on nights. He takes home on a basic week under £90 for 43 hours. To top that up to a realistic take-home pay, he has to work another 15–25 hours. Not a very good record, is it?

Decent basic wage

In this area, many of the wives agree that they'd love to see their husbands working a 35-hour week with a wage of £120. They find it disgraceful that with so many out of work, often other relatives and friends, there is so much overtime available at this office. Especially when a ban on overtime and an increase in salary could immediately create much needed jobs.

How long will it be before the UCW starts to fight for, and succeed in securing, better conditions, not only for my husband, but for all postmen and their families?

Women could play a great role in reaching this aim. Why not give them a chance?

Long hours and low pay

FOR THE country's postmen, a 35 hour week and a minimum wage of £120 would be a welcome sight. At the moment, a postman's wage, for a 43 hour week, is £96.45.

If we are lucky to work in an office that has some overtime, then for another 15 hours a week, we will bring home just on £100, which we need to survive. Most of us have mortgages or rents to pay, plus a family to feed and clothe. On top of that there is gas, electricity and other bills to pay, so the £100 for a 58 hour week doesn't go very far.

On top of low pay, the long hours take their toll. On an early shift, a postman can start as early as 5 am and finish at 12.30pm. But it can mean coming back from 5-8pm if there is any overtime.

Shifts

When working a late shift, a postman might start at 2.30 and work through until 10.30 or 11 pm, thus reducing his or her social life to absolutely nothing, especially if they have done overtime in the morning, possibly starting as early as 6.30am,

By Andy Scott
Outdoor Section
Secretary, Maidstone
Amalgamated Branch.

which can mean spending as much as 16½ hours at work.

On nights, a postman can start at 10.15pm and finish at 5.45am. If he or she does overtime (if available) they may work until 10.30am, making this a 12½ hr night shift. If sickness is high, night shift workers on overtime may be asked to cover first deliveries, thus making a 73 hour week. That's over 6 days, the only whole day we see our families is on a Sunday, for small take home pay.

The cost of working these long hours can have a serious effect on postman's lives, broken marriages and divorce is all too common in the Post Office. Never seeing one's children grow up, suddenly realising they are getting older while we work

long hours without seeing them. Ill health through working outside in all weathers, and long hours with little rest, and getting up at 4 or 4.30 in the morning. Not only are postmen suffering from problems like these, but also jobs like milkmen, bakers deliveries, bus drivers, nurses and doctors, suffer the effects of long unsociable hours for low pay.

Wages

The leadership of the Union of Communication Workers (UCW) must realise that a wage rise to bring us up to a basic wage of £120 is now essential. Also a reduction in the working week, from 43 hours to 40, or possibly to 35, because there are brothers and sisters who are unemployed.

It's in our interests too because with new technology we also face the prospect of unemployment. The coming of the mechanised letter offices (MLOs) means that the overtime that is left in the offices will soon go, leaving the postman on a bare flat wage.



Labour requirements in the Post Office are determined very much by the heaviest posting times.

Happy Christmas?

CHRISTMAS FOR postal workers is not something to look forward to. Mention Christmas and the first thing we think of is informing people of our change of address (from home to workplace).

Up to fourteen continuous ten hour days is in store on this supposedly joyous occasion. And after these two weeks we are graced with a recovery period of Christmas day and Boxing day so that we can be refreshed for work again on the 27th.

Payment for the overtime is

some small consolations for the pathetic basic wage. But it doesn't make up for the rest of the year.

There are even rumours that management plan to deduct £44 from our income in lieu of tips we are suspected of receiving.

Postal workers have to supplement their wage with overtime just to pay the basic bills. No, I'm afraid I can't say Christmas is something to look forward to.

By a Harlow postman

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

DHSS computer strike let down by Executive

ON MONDAY 17 December, a mass meeting of all those on strike at the Newcastle DHSS Computer Centre voted by 257 votes to 14 to begin an orderly return to work on the unanimous recommendation of the strike committee.

The decision was taken as a result of sabotage by all but nine members of the CPSA National Executive Committee. The NEC decided, at a meeting on Friday 14 December, that escalation of the dispute was not a "viable option".

Without the escalation of the dispute into other civil service computer establishments the strikers saw no hope, as Christmas approached, of a speedy end to a dispute which has dragged on since May of this year. Despite the incredible resolve of the strikers and the determination of their local leadership it was decided to bring the dispute to an end—they could no longer fight on two fronts against both management and their own leadership.

The recent split from the CPSA Broad Left by the Communist Party and its fellow travellers was described by *Militant* supporters as a shift by these people to the right. The Broad Left '84 grouping have confirmed that analysis and showed the kind of leadership they offer CPSA members. In less than one minute they formally moved, formally seconded, pushed to a vote and carried a motion to send the DHSS Newcastle and

Washington strikers back to work—on the basis of management's November offer—which the strikers had already massively rejected.

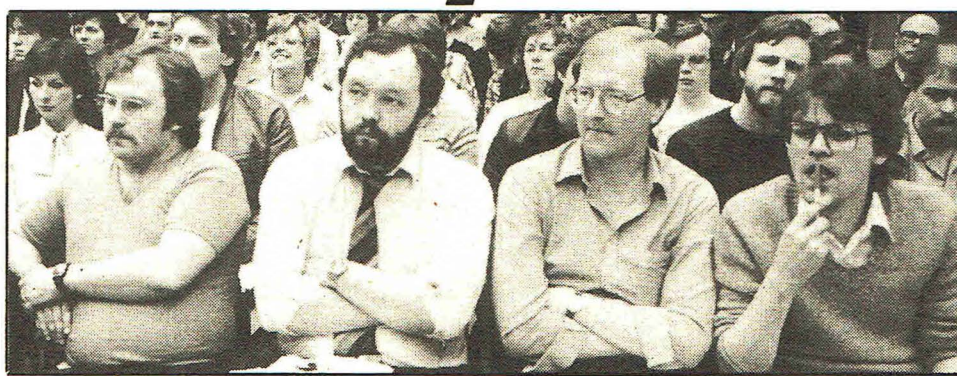
In August the NEC agreed in principle to call out the DHSS computer centres at Reading and Livingstone. However, despite overwhelming votes in favour of solidarity action by these workers the NEC refused to turn the support from Reading and Livingstone into reality.

Escalation

The use of the Reading and Livingstone computers has been raised almost to a point of principle and has been denied to the strikers time and again despite being quite clearly the logical, most effective and immediately available option. Since the initial refusal of the NEC to sanction the use of Livingstone and Reading there has been an abortive attempt to secure joint action between DHSS local offices and Department of Employment local offices in specific localities, an attempt designed more to hide the NEC's lack of support than to win the dispute.

There has also been a consultative exercise in DHSS which while showing support for the dispute voted against escalation into the clerical area in any major way. Indeed, the only real escalation in the dispute was in Newcastle central office itself when clerical workers at Hebburn came out to prevent the transfer of computer related work to their area.

At its meeting on 5 December the NEC had agreed to send a deputation



Newcastle central office leadership at CPSA conference and below.

consisting of the President, General Secretary, and NEC members Geoff Lewtas, Mickie Duggan and Steve Cardownie to Newcastle to discuss the future of the dispute with the strikers and to make a report to the NEC. It was against this background that the NEC met on the 14 December to be presented with a paper from the General Secretary, supported by Geoff Lewtas and Mickie Duggan, arguing for the strike to be brought to an end.

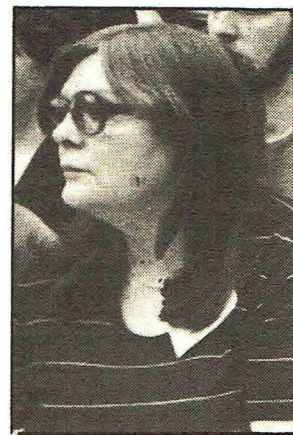
Vice president Ray Alderson, in supporting the General Secretary's recommendation, argued that the strike had already achieved victory (a point hotly disputed by the strikers), and should now be ended. Steve Cardownie, a member of the team which visited Newcastle, opposed the recommendation on the basis that whilst he agreed with the General Secretary's analysis that no escalation would be available in computer centres other than Reading and Livingstone (he is presumably clairvoyant), the strikers had to be allowed to see that for themselves! The vote was taken and the General Secretary's recommendation was defeated.

After the lunch-break

Militant supporter Chris Baugh moved a motion calling for strike action in Reading and Livingstone together with a campaign and consultative exercise to secure action in other civil service computer centres. This, he pointed out, was the logical follow-on to the morning's decision.

Manoeuvres

In a scandalous piece of manoeuvring, Ray Alderson and Steve Cardownie, who had previously tabled amendments to the motion, then withdrew them on the basis that they were unacceptable to the mover. They proceeded to oppose and then voted down the motion. This left the NEC with no policy in the dispute. Mickie Duggan then formally proposed a further motion in almost exactly the same terms as the General Secretary's recommendation which had already been defeated. This was formally seconded by Ray Alderson. Despite protests from *Militant* supporters that the NEC were acting unconstitutionally, it was carried by 12 votes to 6, with Steve Cardownie, Bill Flemming, Peter Coltman, Johnathan Baume and Frank Sullivan changing



Doreen Purves.

their position from the morning session to support the motion.

As a result, members who have been on strike for seven months will now be forced back to work on terms unacceptable to them. This is not because they are unwilling to continue the fight but because the NEC refuse to organise further escalation and because the majority on the NEC are unwilling to support them.

By their actions in this dispute the so-called 'Broad Left '84' have shown their inability to provide CPSA members with a fighting leadership in time of struggle.

The local leaders plan that all of the strikers will be back

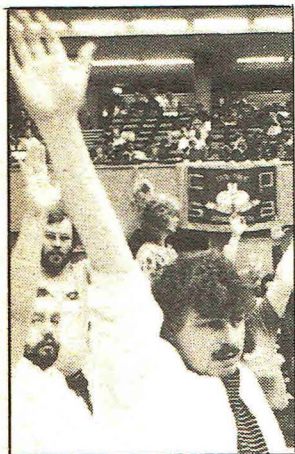
to work by the middle of January. The President of CPSA, Mrs Kate Losinska, was quoted in the *Daily Telegraph* of 15.12.84 as saying that they would be back by January 9. Strikers and members of CPSA will be asking where she got such "inside" information from.

Censure vote

At the mass meeting a vote of censure on the NEC was passed unanimously. The motion was amended by a striker to make sure that it did not include the five *Militant* supporters, and the four non-aligned NEC members, John Ship, Rod Bacon, Eddie Spence and Graham Corbett, all of whom stood by them to the very end. Alistair Graham was only allowed to speak to the meeting to dispel allegations which had appeared in the press that strike pay would be cut off.

The strangulation of this dispute by the NEC will have major and long reaching repercussions. The Tories deliberately took on Newcastle as the biggest, strongest and best organised branch in CPSA. As a result of the bankrupt alliance of the right-wing with the 'Broad Left '84' NEC factionlet the Tories have inflicted a small but dangerous wound upon CPSA.

But it is possible to overcome this defeat if the many CPSA members who are appalled at the NEC's behaviour now join the Broad Left and fight for the election of a determined and accountable socialist leadership for the enormous battles which lie ahead on pay, hours, jobs, leave and new technology.



Sandy Donnachie.

Unquestionably EETPU democracy

EETPU WATCHERS continue to be amazed at the leadership's antics. In the movement they appear to believe that they have a duty to attack any trade unionists prepared to lead a fight to defend workers' interests. Within the union they act as if they were running a minor totalitarian state.

This year alone they have brought discredit upon the labour movement by

amongst other things attempting to woo Japanese bosses with 'no strike' agreements, accepting Tory money for ballots and doing everything to disrupt support for the miners.

Now in a fit of pique the leadership have rounded on EETPU member Chris Hill (see *Militant* 719). At a disciplinary hearing on 13 November, charges were laid claiming that he attempted to disrupt the union's Con-

tracting Conference. This arose from Chris's unsuccessful attempt to question the Executive on their record, something the chairman was clearly determined not to allow.

Branch support

The decision of the disciplinary committee was to ban him from holding all or any office in the union for five years. The viciousness of

this decision cannot be overstated. In reporting back to his branch Chris Hill has called the right wing's version of the events at the conference, a distortion. The branch have pledged their support by electing him to the 1985 policy conference. He also has the support of his workmates, who, typically for electricians, bear total contempt for the EETPU leadership.

Chris Hill will take the case to a TUC Appeals Committee, where he hopes a more democratic attitude will prevail. As was shown with the events around the Edinburgh Lodge (see *Militant* 727) the right can only be defeated, however, through campaigning amongst the membership. The Broad Left have a responsibility to the entire labour movement to change the leadership of the EETPU and re-establish the basic norms of trade union democracy.

By a Militant reporter

Steel solidarity!

THE LEADERSHIP of the steel union ISTC are really pulling out all the stops on the miners' strike. Unfortunately their efforts seem to be in the opposite direction to the rest of the labour movement.

The Executive have recently dismissed the chairman of their Templeborough branch from his post and banned him from office until 1986.

Disciplined

What is Tommy Cassidy's crime? He has consistently spoken out in support of the miners within the ISTC and

at Rotherham Trades Council and helped organise collections and food. More significantly, he has revealed that some BSC plants are working a three-day week to save energy, which amounts to scabbing on the miners.

Whilst the miners and families battle heroically for their jobs and future the ISTC leadership find one of their own members guilty of "bringing the Confederation into disrepute" for trying to aid that struggle.

By a Militant reporter

USDAW's Scargill?

AT MY last union branch meeting we considered nominations for our presidential election.

I moved Jeff Price, the USDAW Broad Left candidate, and explained what Jeff and the BL stood for. Many of those present were fairly new to union activity and there followed a lively discussion on who exactly Jeff Price was and the

policies he represented.

At first, many were hesitant about nominating someone they did not know about. Then an experienced member of the branch spoke against nominating Jeff. She had heard him many times at union conferences and although he was a good speaker he was a bit too left wing. Worse than that, she said, he "might end up

another Arthur Scargill".

This swung the vote. One young female steward said that's exactly what USDAW needs. The branch agreed to nominate Jeff by eight votes to two.

By Stephen Wright
(USDAW, Scotland
Fine Fare branch,
personal capacity)

Cold Turkey

THE ROD Mill at the Cardiff Allied Steel and wire site broke their weekly production record for week ending 2.12.84. Their reward for this was a turkey for all 340 employees accompanied by a threat from management to reduce from 3 shift manning

to two shifts if the union won't sign a flexibility agreement before Xmas and to be laid off for the week before Xmas.

By an ISTC member
Allied Steel and wire,
Cardiff

Militant

Inside: Miners news,
pages 2,3,4,5
Labour right wing p.7

Tory bluff on power

THE TORIES' desperate propaganda war continued this week with Energy Minister Peter Walker 'guaranteeing' there will be no power cuts in 1985.

The government and media have tried over and over again to drown this strike in wave after wave of eyewash. From the early days they have exaggerated and lied in their attempts to underplay the strength of the miners. The collapse of the 'back to work' campaign in December got little media attention after weeks of falsified figures and starring roles for solitary scabs.

They have thrown figures about with gay abandon, whether it be for the cost of producing coal to 'prove' pits uneconomic, to 'prove' British coal more expensive than its competitors, to 'prove' that miners were returning to work and the strike would soon collapse.

They have happily announced and 'leaked' figures for the movement of coal by road when that increased dramatically whilst earlier suppressing the fact that rail movements had been cut dramatically.

Quiet on facts

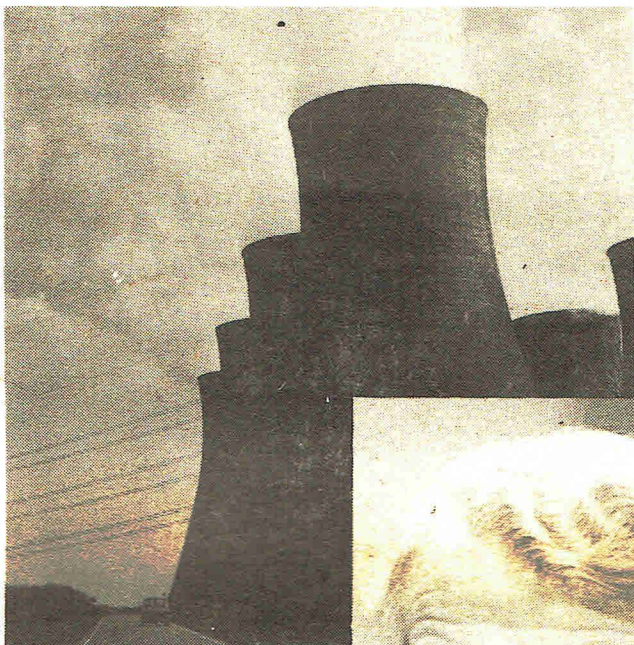
It is therefore especially interesting that the government and CEBG have been very quiet on facts about power supply for weeks before Christmas and facts to support Peter Walker's claims.

The Tories know that the decisive arena in this struggle is power supply. They have shown over and over again that they are playing a deadly game of brinkmanship, a war of nerves against the leaders of the NUM, seeking out and stabbing at any potential weakness. Walker's statements are no exception.

This is a deliberate and carefully-timed ploy to destroy the morale of the miners and undermine their leaders in the difficult post-Xmas period. It is a sign of the Tories' desperation to end the strike at a time when they are beset with crises and internal divisions.

By Vivien Seal
and
Pete Dickinson

The truth is that any Energy minister who purports to guarantee no power cuts—even without a miners' strike—is tempting fate. Events like breakdowns and exceptional demand can cause power cuts in normal conditions. Will Walker 'guarantee' to resign if cuts take place?



A combination of colder weather, solidarity action and/or breakdowns could well force Mr Walker to eat his words. It is the duty of the labour movement to ensure that happens as soon as possible.

Arithmetic of supplies

THE SIMPLE arithmetic of power supply illustrates the weakness of the Tories. Maximum demand last year was 48.1 GW over the whole country. It is reasonable to assume a peak demand figure of 48 GW this winter too. Non-coal power stations have a total of 32.5 GW capacity. Of this, 80% or 26 GW is likely to be available.

This is a generous estimate of the normal level of availability due to unplanned closures and is assumed in the figures whilst follow.

Midlands coal-powered stations have a capacity of 12.2 GW, of which 9.8 GW (80%) is likely to be available. (This cannot all be moved via the National Grid to where it is needed,

so this analysis is actually favourable to the Tories.) that leaves a minimum 12.2 GW to be supplied by non-Midlands coal-fired power stations. Their capacity is 24.9 GW. 12.2 GW will have to be supplied by generating sets with at least 15.3 GW combined capacity (80%). Deduct 15.3 GW from 24.9 GW and it can be seen that if 10 GW of capacity is out of action as a result of industrial action, breakdowns or lack of coal, peak demand could not be met and power cuts would be inevitable. Just six major power stations out of action for any of these reasons could be enough to ensure power cuts (see below).

Power station	Capacity (GWSO)
West Thurrock	1.24
Fiddler's Ferry	1.88
Aberthaw A+B	1.71
Eggborough	1.72
Ferrybridge B+C	2.21
Drax A+B	2.50
Total	11.26

Of these, West Thurrock and Ferrybridge already is already off the grid through solidarity action. Aberthaw and Fiddler's Ferry are almost out of coal



Peter Walker, Tory energy Minister

Coal stocks

WALKER'S CLAIM that the increased use of coal-fired plant shows the strength of the CEBG, is simply misleading. It is in fact a sign of weakness. It has been forced on them by the cold weather and increased demand which means they have to increase coal burn because they cannot use more oil.

In addition, the heavy use of oil fired plant and skimmed or postponed maintenance is causing unplanned closures and therefore increased coal use to compensate.

General figures showing increased coal stocks are meaningless. There has indeed been a large movement of coal into Trent Valley power stations and some deliveries to small ones in the North West from working pits. But as *Militant* has argued previously, the extent to which electricity can be distributed through the National Grid is quite restricted.

Areas supplied with electricity predominantly by coal-fired power stations outside the areas of working pits, despite the partial substitution of oil, are very vulnerable to power cuts as the strike continues.

A fuller analysis of power supply and coal stocks will appear in *Militant* next week.

Industry cuts energy

ALREADY industrial consumers of electricity have agreed to voluntary power cuts on a rota basis in return for cheaper tariffs. Reports of these voluntary cuts—real, existing power cuts, whatever Walker may say—have come in to *Militant* so far from Wrexham, Ellesmere Port and Doncaster.

The British Steel Corporation is reported to be reducing energy use, including a three day week at some plants. The Ford Motor Company is also cutting energy use. The whole of

South Wales industry is 'energy saving' between the peak hours of 4pm and 7pm. Several firms have been warned that they will be put onto a more expensive tariff if they do not comply.

Maintenance problems at heavily used plant are already pushing the CEBG to extreme lengths. Existing plant has been cannibalised to provide spare parts. Legally required shut-downs have been postponed in order to keep nuclear stations running.

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