



Miners' band leads LPYS March to Jarrow

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH 3p

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

ISSUE No 93 25 FEBRUARY 1972

MINERS SHOW WORKERS POWER

The miners have gained a victory. Most of their claims have been conceded. This represents a total defeat for the Tory government. The miners have put their boot through Heath's 7.8% limitation of rises. The miners, with fringe benefits, gain a 21% increase in total, with £4.50 for face workers, £5.00 for surface workers and £6.00 for underground workers. (Minimum, £34.50, £23.00 and £25.00 respectively).

Extra concessions over and above the Wilberforce inquiry, extracted from Mr Heath before the miners' National Executive would accept a settlement, were: 5 days extra leave; adult rate - at-18 by 1974; Wilberforce rates for piece and contract workers; consolidation into basic rates of the sixth weekly shift (an overtime shift, this will increase the overtime rates and give more than the extra £1 demanded by the miners); increases for over 40,000 coke workers, clerical, and weekly paid staff; subsidised transport for miners living long distances from the pits, by 1st May; and extended shift payments. Miners' holiday pay will not be cut because of the strike, and rent arrears for Coal Board houses, due to the strike, can be paid over 12 months. There

is to be a review of pay lost by men sent home because of the overtime ban before the strike. Lorry drivers are to receive £23-£24.50 and winding enginemen will be upgraded, receiving 80p extra, in addition to the surface-men's increase of £5.

20 YEARS OF LIES

The miners fought with anger and bitterness because of the pent-up grievances and exasperations accumulated over twenty years of lies and false promises by post-war governments. The miners' standard of living has actually decreased in real terms, during the past decade. Capitalist prosperity has been based on cheating the miners, as well as other sections of workers, of a greater share in the wealth they

produce. The embattled miners, by their sacrifice and solidarity, have brought the Government to its knees.

This result was only obtained by great sacrifice on the part of the miners, their wives and children. It is the elan and determination of the miners and their families which won the day. The stain of the 1926 defeat is wiped out by the new generation of miners, who have partially avenged their forefathers.

They have introduced a new feature into the battles of the working class. The mass picketing of the Coal Board, of pits, and above all, of the power stations, was an important feature of the victory. This mass picketing involved not only the miners, but other sections of the working class.

CLASS SOLIDARITY

The determination of the miners was matched by the class solidarity of all other sections of workers; the power workers, transport workers, railwaymen, engineers, building workers - every section of the trade union movement gave support and solidarity to the miners.

The Labour Party Young Socialists, Labour Parties, many Co-ops, Labour M.P.s and the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, gave support to the miners. In the case of the LPYS and many of the Labour Parties, it was active support, in accommodating and help-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

JARROW MARCH SAYS NO RETURN TO 1930's

Working class contempt for the Tory government and its policies was made clear in no uncertain manner by the support given to the Labour Party Young Socialist march from Sunderland to Jarrow last weekend.

Through shopping centres and housing estates, 500 YS, LP and TU members (including striking miners from three local pits, Wearmouth, Hylton and Boldon) got a ready and enthusiastic response from tenants and bystanders. Many joined the march, some walking miles to Jarrow, others raising their arms in clenched fist salute to the marchers, their chants and bannered slogans.

YS contingents from all areas, adding their voices and placards to the North Easterners, graphically illustrated that Tyneside dole queues were matched elsewhere, that our problems were their problems, that their fight was our fight.

The grisly jobless figure of 100,000 leaves few in this area unmoved. The sale of over 1,000 *Militants* and hundreds of *Lefts* (LPYS paper) indicates the interest shown in the march and the ideas expressed through it.

At the Boldon Colliery, a pit village about 5 miles from Sunderland and no stranger to class struggle, the strident tones of the colliery band began to reverberate through the ranks, provid-

ing additional stimulus and support for the vocal renderings of the marchers.

Headed by the banner which led the historic 1936 Jarrow hunger crusade to London, the march undoubtedly stirred many memories along the route and particularly in Jarrow itself. The mood today, however, is very different from that of the 1930s; demoralisation and disillusion has been replaced by a militant fighting spirit.

The Mayor of Jarrow, in welcoming the demonstration, opened the rally by outlining the problem the area faced, and in recognising the political nature of their solution, applauded the Socialist message of the march and called for a Labour government pledged to Socialist policies.

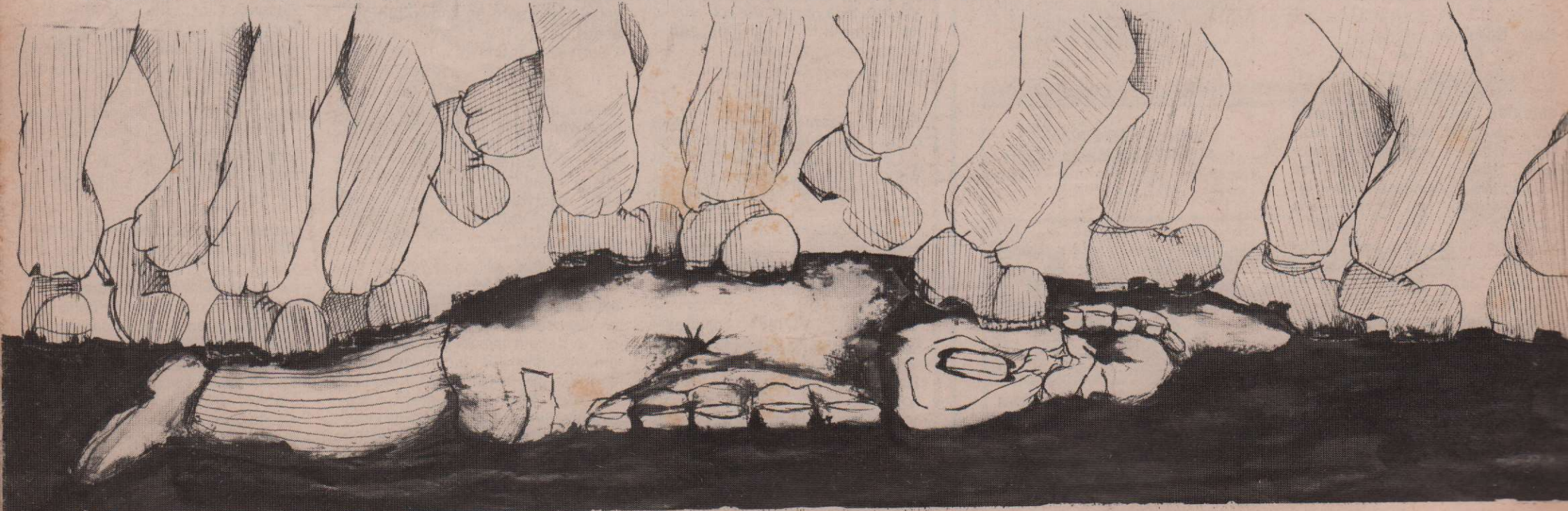
Walking nine miles, far from dampening the atmosphere, contributed to the enthusiasm and vitality of the meeting. Following the contributions of local Labour MPs Gordon Bagier and Ernest Fernyhough, Peter Taaffe (editor, *Militant*), in an electrifying speech, posed the real alternative to Toryism and unemployment catering for the real needs of the Labour movement.

MOBILISE PEOPLE

Outlining the necessity of the Socialist programme of action, with a leadership determined to mobilise the working people behind it, he stressed the role youth in general and particularly the YS, had to play in the struggles of the future. He emphasised the vital importance of the YS, taking its ideas into the LP and TU movement.

Discussion from the floor, reflecting not only local problems but also bringing the experiences of unemployed and YS members from other areas, was accompanied by contributions from "older" Socialists, which paid tribute to the invigorating effect the march of the YS had had on members of the Labour movement in the area.

RICHARD SMITH
(Gateshead LPYS)





A hackneyed joke in Cairo runs: 'President Sadat should pass a decree extending 1971, so as not to let his deadline for the "final" confrontation with Israel run out.' It was the frustration with the 'no war-no peace' situation in the Middle East, which sparked off the recent student demonstrations in Cairo.

This situation reflects the way in which the USSR and USA are using the Arab regimes and Israel respectively as bargaining counters, for their military and economic interests in the area. They have no wish to upset the apple cart when the Stalinist and Imperialist detente on a world scale is going so well. The Stalinist bureaucracy is not embarrassed by supporting the Egyptian regime, where the Communist Party is illegal, which helped in the suppression and execution of members of the Sudanese Labour movement. They have long thrown out the revolutionary internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky and have engaged in all the dirty and farcical manoeuvres of capitalist diplomacy. The height of the farce has been reached by the suggested 'proximity' talks which involves Israeli and Egyptian representatives staying in the same hotel, but not meeting each other. Instead, a US errand boy will be used.

As with Nasser in 1967, it will be domestic and international issues which will determine if Sadat goes to war. From a military point of view, Israeli superiority has been enhanced by the promised

delivery of American Phantom aircraft. This will make him think twice.

The purge by Sadat, in May 1971, of his vice-president, Ali Sabry; Minister of War, Fawzi, and leading members of the Arab Socialist Union, was the first indication of the balancing act which Sadat is trying to play between Moscow and Washington. The recent coolness of Moscow towards him, is motivated by the nightmare thought that one more of their 'progressive' regimes may deliver their gifts of arms into Imperialist hands.

In return for the support of the army, he has released members of the ultra-reactionary Muslim Brotherhood. The beginnings of the embryo of a growing class struggle was glimpsed when supporters of Sabry in the Egyptian Trade Union Federation sent protests to President Numeiry in the Sudan, protesting about his execution of leading members of the Sudanese Labour movement. They were dismissed by Sadat. In summer 1971, there was a strike at the Helwan industrial plant, where several workers were killed and many are still rotting in jail.

The recent student demonstrations

reflected an abstract wish to go to war, as not having any jobs to go to after graduation; the dictatorial political system and the constant attempts to recruit agents for the secret service from amongst the students. It is the fear of a student-worker link which haunts Sadat most. Although it is now quiet in Cairo, discontent still simmers under the surface.

The application of harsh austerity measures, in preparation for war, brings little joy for the millions living in the overcrowded slums of Cairo and Alexandria. It is no consolation to the landless peasants, or the millions subsisting on less than £35 a year. Factors like this will determine if Sadat will turn his demagogy into action.

STRIKE WAVE

On the other side of the coin, the Israeli ruling class is facing an equally difficult problem. The period of peace since 1967, as predicted in earlier articles in *Militant*, has led to a massive increase in the sharpness of the class struggle in Israel. It answers those 'Marxists' who deny that the Israeli working class can ever break from the ruling class.

The 20% devaluation last August, led to price increases in all basic foods and fuels. The needs of defence take up to 70%, directly and indirectly, of the government Budget. The balance of payments' deficit is about £580m, a reflection of the chronic dependence of the economy on gifts from Jews abroad, particularly in the United States. Cuts in building and other services have been called for.

From the point of view of the capitalist class, this could not have come at a worse time. The Black Panthers, representing poor, mainly oriental Jews, have been subject to constant police harassment and brutality, but are still a growing thorn in the side of the government. One in five urban

MIDDLE EAST IMPASSE

By DAVE GALASHAN

families live below, or near, the poverty line, and in jobs and government, the oriental Jews are to be found at the bottom and living in the worst slums.

The wave of unofficial strikes last year, was met with the threat of legislation which would make such strikes illegal. The *Jerusalem Post* quoted Golda Meir, who denounced the strike of airport workers in Lydda as "pure hooliganism" and went on to warn that "radical unrest of the kind that we have been experiencing, has brought fascism to many countries." The defence minister, Dayan, called for labour laws "with teeth". This reactionary nonsense exposes the hollowness of the attempt to dress up Israel as

a Socialist state. It is reminiscent of the "Socialism" of Derek Ezra, who heads the nationalised coal board here.

The Israeli ruling class is in an extremely difficult position. The recession in the economy prior to the six-day war, was transformed into a 'boom' through war production. But it was inevitably accompanied by a massive inflation which, with other grievances, led to the wave of strikes mentioned. The profiteers and land speculators had amassed fortunes out of it, but it is the workers and farmers who suffer. The ruling class must therefore keep up a war fever, while more and more sections of youth are becoming weary of the constant war threat.



LETTERS

Sales Up

Dear Comrade,
At present I am receiving 6 copies of *Militant*. Please increase my order to 24 as we are beginning to establish a good circulation.

Yours Fraternally,
MARTIN DRUMMIGAN
North Armagh Labour Party
Lurgan

40 Sacked

Dear Comrade,
Over the last month, 40 plumbers have been paid off from Swan Hunters' Neptune Shipyard. All of the redundant lads had just come out of their time and were sacked first because Swans can save on the redundancy payments. Many of the plumbers left in the yard are over 65 or else 'dilutees'—men who have had a six months training course and are regarded as fully qualified plumbers on the same wages as lads that have served four years on apprentices' wages.

The chances of fresh employment for these lads are nil—the North-East Development Council reported that there were 441 plumbers chasing 13 jobs last September! What will the figures be now, after the recent spate of redundancies?

And to rub salt into the wound, the remaining plumbers have started working overtime last week. But the point is that most of the shop-stewards did not fight the redundancies and are now allowing the overtime to be worked. If the unions fought for the *Militant* demand for *Work Sharing on Full Pay*, then the responsibility for the layoffs would lie on the shoulders of Sir John Hunter and not lads who have just served their time. We don't want to serve four years and then be thrown on to the dole to join the other million and a half that's there already!

Because I am an apprentice that has not been in the union for very long, please do not print my name in case of difficulties caused by either the bosses or the more backward shop-stewards.

Yours Fraternally
APPRENTICE PLUMBER
(Swan Hunter's Neptune Shipyard, Wallsend)

PS—Year ending 31st Dec. 1970:
Sir John Hunter's Salary - £40,000
(Approximately £770 per week)
Two other directors: more than £20,000
(Over £384 per week)
Average Wage for 24,979 workers
£26 per week

Donations to:
Economic League — £600
Tory Party — £100
North-East Industrialists' Protection Society (Strike Insurance) £3,000

"END THE

This interview was held with a Birmingham ACATT shop steward during the weekend before the Bryant building workers' strike on Wednesday, February 16th.

● *What is the background to the strike?*
On October 5th last year, about 1500 Birmingham building workers—supported by a delegation from UCS—staged a demonstration in the City Centre. This demo officially launched our Charter, which demanded:

£1 an hour; 35-hour week; ban on overtime; 4 weeks' holiday; full pay for sickness and injury; decasualisation (building work declared 'non-seasonal'); ending of the 'lump'; re-opening of training and safety training schemes.

We are taking home about £15 for a 45-hour week at present.

● *Could you briefly explain the 'lump'?*

No tax or insurance is paid by the 'lump' men. Labour is not guaranteed and no wet week's wages paid. There is no pension, no sickness or accident money and no holiday pay. Lump workers may earn £50 a week, but they work 2-3 times as hard for it, and lose in the long run. They are used as a kind of 5th column against the trade unions.

● *What happened next?*
On October 6th, about 160 workers at Bryant's Woodgate Valley site came out on strike for better site conditions and a proper bonus scheme.

● *What conditions were inadequate?*

Mainly sanitary—there were only 3 washbasins and no water (in contravention of the National Working Rule Agreement—a kind of employers' declaration of intent.)

The existing bonus system was virtually inoperative. I sweated blood for 6 months and got an extra 9 shillings!

There were 3 jobs on the Woodgate Valley complex—Bryants Area A, Area B (growing in militancy) and Mowhams. Bryants were building council houses—about 1,200 on Area B.

On October 7th, seeing as the lads were outside the gate, they went for the maximum demands of the charter instead of the minimum of conditions and bonus.

They were out for five weeks and Bryants claimed to know nothing about it.

● *Was this the first struggle?*

There had been one in Manchester and the tradesmen gained the £1 an hour (others got 85-87p); the firm lost £2 million, as they had made a fixed price tender and hadn't allowed for wage increases. But this was the first action in Birmingham. We took Bryants to the Disputes Panel (composed of the B'ham Building Trade Employers). The Director of Bryants did not appear and said he knew nothing about it. The Panel ruled: "Reinstate the men with no time lost, stamps paid and an extra 3/- an hour." Bryants refused. It was the fifth week before the men went back after a meeting. There were 150 scabs inside and 59 outside the gates. The strike was not made official until afterwards. The men were living on solidarity funds and in one week every man only had £1.

So we put it to the men—either all outside on £1 a week, or we could have a picket of 40 on a decent wage. They voted unanimously for the latter and ended up with 59 pickets, although they knew they might eventually get sacked. A number were men who knew they could get jobs elsewhere, or were fed up, or on short time anyway. There was a hard core of 50 and

the rest were guaranteed work by the shop stewards before the strike was won, and therefore afterwards even they returned.

We won a third on the basic rate (50p plus one-third) and talks and reinstatement. The scabs were transferred (a condition for negotiations).

● *What happened after that?*

Site conditions were brought up to standard (the canteen had new insulation for its notice board and heating installed), and toilets were extended.

Demand

In mid-January, three non-union scaffolders were sacked, on the grounds that there was no work for them. Only 14 houses had been handed in instead of 630 before Christmas. At that rate, completion would take more than 100 years. It was not their fault.

● *Why was that?*

Because of the substandard work done by the lump workers. They had a bad bonus system and could only earn money by skimping.

● *It sounds like 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist'!*

Exactly—conditions are just the same as then; it's a brilliant book.

To continue, three men were sacked because, the management claimed, "no brickwork was being done". Two union members were suspended because they refused to work with 'nonners' (non-union) and one union member was laid off.

Immediately, there was a sit-in in the canteen. The men clocked in, sat in the canteen all day, playing cards, and then clocked out at the usual time. They got no pay, but Bryants had headaches trying to work out the time cards.

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population in the territories and Israel present a further threat. It is still a place where no soldier dare walk alone. The war is carried out against the people to help "security" have the flames of hatred against occupying forces. The settlement bases with farms in the territories, destroy the "non-expansionary" Israel. The Minister of Defence, has said Israel will still keep troops on the West Bank of the Jordan, on the terms of any settlement, if the area comes under Jordanian Administration, the settlement will continue. (Jewish Chronicle 17.2.72)

CRISIS OF POWER

By TED GRANT

The Government of Big Business has brought chaos to the industrial and private lives of the workers and the people of Britain. They miscalculated the determination, militancy and solidarity of the miners, and the overwhelming sympathy and support of the Labour and trade union movement.

The power cuts and unemployment, the shivering and the black-outs are the responsibility of the government. The cause of this crisis is the policy of the government of keeping wages down while the cost of living has risen astronomically, 15% in food prices alone during its term of office. The game is given away in an editorial in *The Times* of 15th February which declares that: "The strike was not caused by any technical failure in conciliation but by the real conflict between the demands of the miners and the determination of the government to resist wage inflation" (i.e. increases to match prices and give modest rises in living standards).. "How-

ever one has to recognise that the policy that the government actually pursued depended upon a willingness to face confrontation and that it has been remarkably successful" (!)

Here is the voice of the spokesman of Big Business. The real responsibility of the government for the crisis is made plain in a following paragraph: "Every Prime Minister since Sir Winston Churchill had normally exerted a pressure to settle wage disputes rather than face the consequences of national strikes ... Mr Heath has been working in exactly the opposite way." Then, justifying the policy of Heath and the Tories, declares: "Unpalatable as the view may be, the cost of this coal strike so far and its likely future cost if it is settled as a result of the Wilberforce report is only a fraction of the damage that would have been done if

there had not been a real determination to resist wage inflation. There really is no way of fighting wage inflation without being prepared to face major and damaging strikes."

Thus the naked truth is that the employers, their spokesmen in the press, and their hirelings in the government have declared war on the trade unions and the working class. This is not because of the defects in character of Heath, though he has many, nor his stupidity and inhuman cold calculation which masquerades as determination, but because of the need to defend the interests of the ruling class.

The government and the employers look complacently on the blows to the economy caused by this policy. The state can afford the losses of the Post Office and the Coal Board so long as the profits of private industry are safeguarded. By "confronting" the workers in the state sector and keeping down wages, it helps the employers in the private sector to do the same at relatively little cost.

PROFIT DICTATES POLICY

Pontificates *The Times*, the *Financial Times* and other organs of the press, radio, TV and the CBI in chorus, the economy cannot afford "inflationary wage increases". What they mean is increases to match the real inflation—the increase in prices. The economy can't afford to give a decent standard of living to the miners and other workers, but it can apparently afford 1 million unemployed and the disruption of the economy. From the capitalist point of view, this is perfectly tolerable.

What this really means is that for the government and the ruling class, profit, and profit alone, dictates policy.

"Wage inflation must be contained" That is the parrot-cry. Widows, old age pensioners and people on fixed incomes will then benefit, is the pharisaical excuse. Yet every family in Britain could have had an additional income of £3 per week last year, £6 per week this year and even greater sums next year, if the total unemployed were productively working. This is a conservative estimate of two capitalist Cambridge economists.

Instead, more than £15 million per week has to be paid out to the unemployed in benefits and supplementary income. They are kept in despair and enforced idleness. This amounts to more than £750 million a year, as a consequence of the fact that capitalism cannot use the human and material resources of the country.

At the same time, the productive apparatus of manufacturing industry, machinery, buildings and so on is only used to 60 per cent of capacity at the present time. If used to its

potential increase in living standards instead of this, we have the increase of capital determining the policy of the Tories. Heath, Barber, Maudling, Davies and Carr are determined to keep down the wages of the workers, in order to guarantee and increase the profits of the capitalists. This is because the profits of the capitalists are determined by the amount of unpaid labour they can extract from the labour of the working class. They want to diminish the share of the workers in the national cake, in order to increase the share of the capitalists. This is the real "secret" of the policy of the government and the cause of the crisis with the miners.

The policy of hard-faced Toryism is in ruins. They completely miscalculated the determination of the miners and the solidarity of the industrial workers with their mine brothers. *The Times* and the *Financial Times* have editorialised in panic about the "illegal" picketing of the miners. This forms an example and an inspiration to other trade unionists, who have put in their claim for wage increases. Heath's "determination" will bring even greater determination to the engineers and other trade unionists.

The *Times* complains that Heath is not personally "friendly" with "moderate" trade union leaders, i.e. that he is not in the position to suborn them from their duty to their membership. The working class must fight back with the demand that the trade union and Labour leaders must have no truck with the government of finance capital. Now is the time to mobilise the entire forces of the trade union and Labour movement, in a campaign within the working class.

This government of capitalist perfidy, malice, stupidity, cruelty, incompetence and greed for gain, must be brought down. The workers have been roused by the fight of the miners and the power crisis, as they have not been stirred for decades. Miners, power workers, engineers, dockers have already moved into action. Let the employers and their government bear the cost of the criminal policies of their government. Not a penny off the pay by price inflation!

SOCIALIST PLAN

Let this be the starting point for the Labour and T.U. leaders to wage a joint campaign for a general election. Let the people decide! The programme for the general election must be the exposure of the real interests which the Tory Party represents. Not an incomes policy, which in effect has been operated by Heath, but a Socialist policy to take over the banks, insurance companies and the 250 monopolies, which control the economy.

The working class would be ready and eager to accept Socialist policies at the present time. Only thus can the right to work and the right to decent standards of living for the working class, for the pensioners and the sick be guaranteed by a Socialist plan of production, with industry and the State under workers' control and management.

WORKERS' UNITY

to a certain improvement in wages and employment, the market in Jaffa, where Arab workers are to be selected by Jewish employers, is known locally as the 'market'. The policies of the regimes drive the Israeli workers right into the arms of the ruling class. But the Israeli state is a trap for the Jews. As soon as imperialism finds no further use for it will be left to fend for

it is seen, correctly, by Arab workers and peasants, as a first-line front of imperialist interests in the Middle East against the Arab workers. But the interests of the workers do not lie in following the policies of such as Sadat and his cronies. Only a complete break with imperialism and landlord class Arab states and Israel, and a workers' unity on a Socialist basis for the Socialist transition of the Middle East, can the basis for lasting peace. Only when poverty can be eradicated, when the complex nationalisms, involving not only Palestinians and Jews, but other nationalisms such as Kurds, be solved on a equal and democratic basis.

THE LUMP

On the first day, the two lads who had refused to work with the nonners were reinstated. All the lads were reinstated by about the third day, even the nonners. All except one of the nonners joined the union, and he stuck out for a week. But the lads refused to work until he joined the union or was transferred; they didn't want him to get the sack, but they did want a closed shop.

It was a lovely week, with brilliant sunshine and the management were becoming increas-

were sent home. Next day, again Pete Carter started work. The weather had broken and there was beautiful sunshine. The Managing Director visited the site and approached Pete and said "This is very novel, Mr Carter. We're not going to employ you or your men."

A summons for trespass was taken out against Pete Carter for trespass and for using Bryants' materials for constructing a manhole (which was in the specifications and was correctly constructed). Last weekend, the

● What part has the union played?

The main pressure has come from the rank and file. The officials were right wing, but are moving to the left. They donated £300 for the strike. The Regional Office is fully behind the workers, but they can't give official support because it has got to go to the Executive Committee. There will be no strike pay till afterwards, even if it does become official.

But the lads have learnt from

and Birmingham Building Workers

ingly upset at the lost time. So in the end, they persuaded the guy to join the T&GWU. The management paid his first six-months dues, hoping to use him against the others (they haven't succeeded to date).

At the beginning of February, Wimpey's Newtown site closed, as the job was finished. Pete Carter's brickie gang went without him to apply for work at the Chamberlain Gardens site along the Hagley Road, B'ham. As he was a known militant, they gave a different name for Pete. On the Monday morning it was frosty, so Pete and one other didn't go to work. On the Tuesday, he did arrive at the site, and the man had fits when they realised who he was.

They wouldn't let him start, because of the "inclement weather". He called a meeting of the lads in the canteen and they elected him shop steward. The 50% union became 100% immediately.

Next day, Pete Carter started work and the lads paid his wages. The Company agent, who had previously had the men working in rain and sleet, said "You can't start today; the weatherman suspects high winds and rain." The lads

summons was issued and on the Monday morning, there were 500 pickets outside the Courts in Steelhouse Lane.

They had gone to work, clocked off and marched to the Law Courts. At about 2pm, the case was adjourned and the men marched down to the Saltley coke depot in solidarity with the miners. This shows the rise in militancy amongst building trade workers.

Pete Carter was to appear on Wednesday 16th. At a mass meeting on the 9th, Bryants shop stewards and workers voted unanimously for a strike on the 16th, for the full charter demands and for the dropping of the charges against Pete Carter and his reinstatement. At least 10 sites out of 13-14 were militant and ready to come out. There will probably be 100% support on the 16th. Yet last June, only three sites were organised—now, nearly every one is.

Since then, Bryants have offered a tri-part scheme, back bonus, an extra third on top for tradesmen and the reinstatement of Pete Carter. But the men know Bryants have got the wind up and they will move for the charter and expect to get it.

the five-weeks strike last year, to claim from the Social Security. (It will be better if they are paid strike money afterwards). We have been in contact with the Claimants Union and we organised a sit-in before. Then, we refused to sign the B.1. form, which would have made us available for work (our cards had been posted to us, so it was a lockout). Despite the Bill, anyone can claim (whether on strike or not) under Section 13, as a "case of urgent need". The miners know this too.

The formation of UCATT united brickies, chippies, painters etc, and was a great step forward. Nevertheless, some sites are still under bureaucratic leadership.

Bryants is typical of Victorian capitalism. At the slightest sign of trouble, they sack the militants, or else they offer them promotion. However, they are not succeeding in buying them off.

Lads in London and Liverpool have won £1 an hour, but they have not abolished the lump, which is what we have virtually achieved in Birmingham. This is more important, as otherwise we can always be undermined.

PAULINE JONES (NUT)

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Printed and published by THE CAMBRIDGE HEATH PRESS LTD (TU).

Last Friday (18.2.72) 600 "laggers" were told by their GMWU official that they would be sacked if they did not return to work this Thursday. On Tuesday, every one of them had a letter from their employer, confirming this.

The N.E. thermal insulation workers (laggers) have been on strike for parity with Scotland for 15 weeks (see *Militant* 86), joined more recently by the Hartlepool branch. And still the dispute has not been officially backed by the GMWU.

The local and national officials are doing all the talking in the negotiations with the employers. Not one rank-and-file member is even allowed to attend the joint meetings to discuss the claim. The officials continue to hide behind the fact that the 16½p hourly bonus paid in Scotland is not to be found in any written agreement. The only thing to come out of the meetings so far, as far as the 'laggers' are concerned, is a deepening conviction that the tune their paid officials play is not the one which they themselves call.

Anger flared at the mass meeting last Friday. It looked as if the GM bosses would not be sorry to see this militant section of their union on the stones. At a further mass meeting on Monday, the 'laggers' gave a unanimous NO to a return to work and arrangements for stepping up the fight were made. 300 men went from the meeting to the area headquarters of the GMWU to demonstrate against the union's inactivity. The mood was bitter, indignant and, above all, determined.

The building was stormed and the

of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions. Appeals to the AUEW, TGWU etc for the blacking of all insulation materials, are hampered by the refu-

GMWU SITS BACK

officials "went berserk". The office was only cleared on the promise of immediate talks with the branch committee. The men continued to march around in a circle outside, shouting vehemently and waving placards declaring: "600 Men Sacked - Make Dispute Official" "Who do the Paid Officials Represent, the Bosses or the Workers?" "G&M-Everybody's Friend Except the Rank-and-file's" etc.

ACTION NOT WORDS

Inside, at the meeting, the union's regional secretary, Alderman Cunningham (also Chairman of the North Regional Executive of the Labour Party, also...) phoned to tell Lord Cooper he was taking the dispute out of the national officer's hands. From this end Cooper seemed to be maintaining a rigid attitude towards the strike. Finally, Cunningham's press statement "hinted" at official recognition, but *action and not words* is what the "laggers" need now - active backing from the G&M officials and from all sections of the Labour movement.

100% solid, the "laggers" are organising pickets at supply depots in the N.E. and meetings with shop stewards, GMWU branches, Trades Councils and the Area Confederation

sal of the G&M to make the dispute official. The "laggers" committee is sending telegrams to the Northern group of MPs and is calling for resolutions to bombard the local and national G&M offices, protesting at this scandalous situation.

Recently, there have been numerous appeals for support from sections of workers taking action against both bosses and the government - UCS, miners etc. *But this is a direct appeal* to every TU branch, shop stewards committee, Labour Party and LPYS branch, to support the NE "laggers".

It is a most obscene case of victimisation of a group of workers suffering from the worst health hazards in the country. One fibre of asbestos lodged in the lungs will grow until the body is drowned in its own fluid. 24 men in the Glasgow "laggers" branch died from asbestosis within 3 months last year!

Darlington Insulation are giving yearly medicals, which could be used to inform employers of the degree of asbestosis of every man applying for a job: "They are putting a bell round our necks, like lepers, and the union officials seem prepared to stand back and let it happen." (As nomadic, ie. contract, labour, "laggers" can be left unemployed for long periods at a time).

The anger of the men against the union leadership is 100% justified.

Just as at the Pilkington's glass-works, they have seen the officials fobbed off by the employers. Whole layers of the lowest-paid sections of the working class, organised in the G&M, will be fighting the same battles. The demand for real representation of the rank-and-file - election of all officials, subject to the right of recall; full union democracy; no official to be paid more than the skilled workers' wages - can be spear-headed by this struggle of the "laggers".

The G&M worker in particular and the Labour movement as a whole, cannot allow another Pilkington's situation, where the best militants in the G&M ended up with no jobs.

Already, threats to train men off the dole have been made by insulation employers. In the context of nearly 100,000 unemployed in the North-East, the "laggers" are raising the idea of a 24-hour general strike in the area to fight for their jobs and those of every other worker in the region. Every section of the Labour Movement must actively join in the campaign.

On Saturday March 4th, a meeting of all "laggers'" branch committees is being held to finalise plans for a national stoppage. The same day, they will be picketing the Thermal Insulation Contractors' Association (TICA) headquarters, and Ruxley Towers, the GMWU head office.

The "laggers'" fight is our fight, in the N.E. and throughout the country. Inform the "laggers" of all support given, and send all the money you can raise to:-

The Treasurer,
Bro. James Curry,
267, Eastgarth,
Newbiggin Hall Estate,
Westerhope,
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE



FROM PAGE 1

MINERS

ing the miners in their picketing of the power stations. Students too, to the chagrin of the ruling class, gave practical support - the opposite of the position of the General Strike of 1926, when they blacklegged on the workers. At the bottom of the social scale at any rate, there was total unity in favour of the miners.

This new-found unity has been in response to the policy of confrontation and collision, of the tool of the CBI, Heath and the Conservative government. This victory was not only one for the miners, but for the whole of the working class. The policy of the Tories, to keep wages down in the interests of the bosses' profits, has been defeated. The strategy of the Tory government is in ruins.

The miners have given an example of how to fight in defence of living standards and in order to improve them. Hence the dismay of the capitalist class of the Tory MPs and of the press. Not satisfied with the strike-breaking Industrial Relations Act, they are screaming for the laws against picketing to be tightened up. In order to weaken the unions and frighten the 'moderate' union leaders into capitulating to the government and the employers, they are demanding that the unions must be compelled by law to give strike pay! Only yesterday, they were complaining about strike pay. The idea is to weaken the unions and to starve the workers back to work, in any struggle they may be compelled to wage.

Thus the class struggle is sharpening, and the claws and fangs of capitalism and Toryism are being openly exposed.

Alarmed at this defeat, the Tories wish to strike back against other sections of the working class. They have been scared stiff by the demonstration of the power of the working class when organised and united for struggle.

The lesson is clear. Not a wheel turns, not a light-bulb shines, not a ship moves, not a train or lorry stirs, without the permission and participation of the working class. When they are conscious of their power, as the united and embattled miners became conscious, no power on earth can stand in their way.

All those faint hearts and those of little faith, who have pooh-pooed the possibility of workers' unity, determination, power and action, have been shamed by the miners and the support they have received from the rest of the working class; given a goal and leadership; mobilised for action, there is nothing that the working class cannot achieve.

Salute the miners! They are the advance guard of the Labour movement. They are our shock troops. Tomorrow, all workers will show the same grim determination in the battle for a better world. The Labour and trade union movement, organised according to its constitution and fighting and struggling for a better world, can achieve the ultimate goal, the overthrow of capitalism and the organisation of the Socialist future.

When I Was a Socialist

"Perhaps I was too starry-eyed in my youth, but I really did believe that, when public ownership replaced the old, private coal owner, strikes would be a thing of the past and difference of opinion would be settled in a civilised manner between men and management at every level, around a table. I could not understand why the men did not realise that the only effect of a strike was to lose them wages." (Lord Robens, *Sunday Times* 23/1/72).

Shining Example

In order to conserve electricity during the miners' strike, caretakers in schools in St Helens, heart of the Crompton colliery, were going round turning out the lights. The children, sons and daughters of the striking miners, were following them round - turning them back on again.



Young Socialists and Miners on the road from Sunderland to Jarrow

INTERNMENT

February 9th 1972 marked six months of internment and to stress continued opposition to the repression meted out by the Tory Unionists and the British government with their Special Powers Act, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association called for a day of disruption to stop the process of government and generally disrupt the country. However, although Derry, Strabane and Newry were more or less completely shut down and there was rioting in Belfast and a

handful of other cities, the disruption wasn't as complete as had been desired.

This was mainly due to bad organisation and conflicting statements put out by the SDLP, CRA and Sinn Fein. The SDLP and CRA rejected the call for a strike and Sinn Fein, in Derry at least, supported it. Thus many workers were confused and did not know what to do.

This was also true of the other disruptive tactics. Although there were plenty of ideas for disruption,

eg thousands to go to the Labour Exchange to look for a job, except in Newry, there was no-one to successfully organise anyone to do anything.

The whole exercise was an indication of the cul de sac that the CRA's programme of just democratic reform, aimed at the Catholic workers, has got the Catholic workers into. In the absence of a clear lead on a class programme, from the Labour leaders, there has been a marked lack of Protestant support.

On the same day, Maurice Hayes, chairman of the Community Relations Commission, resigned, because, he said, government policies had alienated the whole Catholic community and made his job impossible.

BY PAUL JONES

LONDON MILITANT READERS MEETING "TORIES MUST GO!"

Lessons of the Miners' strike.
At the Deptford Engineers Club.
(Opposite New Cross Station)
- tube and Southern Region -

7.30pm Friday 3rd March 1972.

All welcome!