

# 'THATCHER WILL NOT DESTROY OUR LIVES'

## Miners fight for jobs

Feature  
on Centre  
Pages

The South Wales coalfield is being systematically run down by the Board and the Tories who are pulling the strings behind the scenes.

We are being starved of vital investment needed to secure our livelihoods. The area has been promised £31 million next year for investment, at a time when at least £500 million is required to open new pits and to keep our remaining pits operational.

The NCB have learnt a few lessons on pit closures. They realise that if they pick off pits individually the members will rally around to prevent closure.

So the Board have changed their tactics, and they're slowly turning off pits by withholding investment so that at some future date they can prove the pits are uneconomical. By using this back door method of closing pits the Board hope to prevent any action by our union.

But in the same way as we fought against the hatchet our members will stand and fight against death by starvation. The South Wales area has voted overwhelmingly to come out on strike on January 17, if the board refuses the £500 million investment we need.

There is no alternative but to fight. This mood is reflected in the fact that on-

By Tyrone  
O'Sullivan

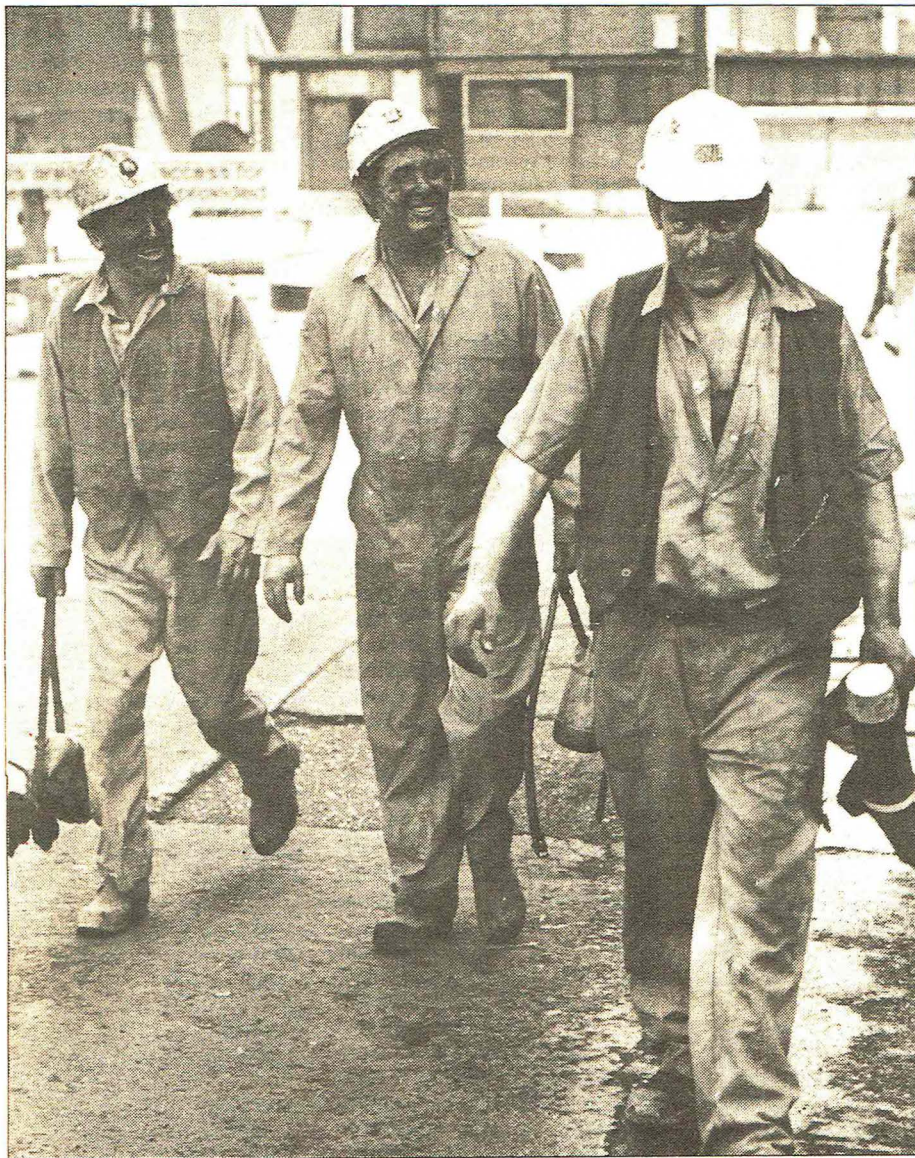
Lodge Secretary Tower  
Colliery, South Wales  
NUM  
and Meirion  
Evans

Brynlliw Lodge, South  
Wales NUM (personal  
capacity)

ly about four men at Brynlliw voted against the strike call. This is one battle that must be won, because the future of every miner in South Wales depends on a successful outcome—one which we are confident we can gain.

In Tower Colliery there was a 99% majority in favour of strike action, and the men are absolutely determined not to let our coalfield and their futures be destroyed. The Coal Board always portrays South Wales as big loss makers. But a closer look at the books shows that South Wales could very rapidly be paying its own way.

After the 1981 strike the  
(CONTINUED ON  
BACK PAGE)



## NEC SET TO BEGIN PURGE

In a disgraceful decision on Wednesday the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party by 18 votes to 9 took the first step to the expulsion of the five members of the *Militant* Editorial Board.

When Labour Party members learn of the nature of the "hearing" at the NEC they will draw the inevitable conclusion that it was a kangaroo court. Before the EB members were allowed into the meeting Audrey Wise commented that it was "like building the gallows before the trial".

Jim Mortimer had explained to the NEC that on the basis of legal advice it would be better for the NEC members not to ask questions of the EB members. Commenting on the so-called "black box" reported to contain evidence against *Militant* Audrey Wise made an enquiry about its contents. In reply David Hughes, National Agent, admitted that in the last week the evidence had been

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## The Ghost of Christmas past

Colin Avey, from Brighton, was a 17-year-old Ordinary Seaman serving on board HMS Scarborough in 1958 when the British government were testing nuclear devices on Christmas Island.

In December 1982 he was watching *Nationwide* on TV and heard an appeal from

By Margaret  
Pracy  
(Brighton Kemp-  
town Labour Party)

two ex-soldiers for other personnel on the island in 1958 to come forward. The ex-soldiers are both suffering from leukaemia, believed to have been caused by the effects of radiation during the tests.

He then read in the local paper a similar appeal from

Ron Tarrent who served as a civilian on Christmas Island at that time and who is also suffering from leukaemia. Colin was particularly interested in these appeals because he and his family are anxiously awaiting results to show the type and degree of his leukaemia.

When he contacted Ron Tarrent, they talked about what happened at Christmas

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BACK PAGE)

# Court decision does not effect campaign

Militant took legal action as a last resort when it became clear that the right-wing majority on the NEC were determined to bend the constitution and twist conference decisions in order to impose a political ban on *Militant* and expel its Editorial Board.

Ironically, in the High Court on Wednesday morning Mr Justice Nourse refused to grant a temporary injunction to restrain the NEC from going ahead on the grounds that we should have taken action much sooner.

He agreed in his judgement, which followed a three-hour hearing on Tuesday afternoon, that we would have had a strong case if we had gone to court when the Hayward-Hughes Report had first been published in August.

The Report, the judge said, contained only conclusions, or in other words assertions. A fair hearing, he said, would have entailed the five editors being all given the evidence, or sufficient details of the evidences, in order so we could have commented on the evidence or answered or refuted it.

However, the right to natural justice—which the NEC's counsel agreed the NEC had an obligation to give the EB members—could be "abandoned" by not taking action at the right time. On this point the judge ruled that we should have gone to the court to demand a fair hearing before the Party conference at the end of September.

Once we had accepted that it was to be discussed by conference, in spite of the fact that we had no details of the evidence on which the serious allegations were based, the court could not intervene.

He also took up our counsel's argument that the NEC moving on the motion to be discussed at the NEC on 15 December was not simply the implementation of the Conference decisions but the first stage of disciplinary proceedings to expel five *Militant* EB members.

The judge accepted this. But, on this point too, he said that we were too late. Abstractly, we might have a right to natural justice at these disciplinary pro-

By Lynn Walsh

ceedings. But the court was not prepared, under the circumstances of this case, to intervene in political decisions.

At one point Mr Justice Nourse commented that, even if we had been given all the evidence before the Conference, it probably would have made no difference to the outcome. This, clearly, was his opinion.

But as our counsel had replied to the NEC's argument, the motions put to conference and accepted had not included proposals to proscribe *Militant* or expel its editors or supporters.

These points, however, were not really argued out in court. We had applied for an interim injunction on the specific point of the NEC providing us with details of the evidence before deciding on the motion to declare *Militant* "ineligible for affiliation".

In our opinion, however, it would have made all the difference if the Conference had been aware of the spurious character of the so-called "evidence" and had realised the real implications of the measures being proposed.

Conference agreed on a Register. There were assurances from Jim Mortimer, Michael Foot and others that there would be no political witch-hunt, there would be no return to bans, proscriptions and expulsions

After the Conference it became clear to the movement that the Register was simply a device for a purge against the *Militant*.

Our application to the Register has never been considered. Instead, the NEC has adopted the course we warned it would take. It has returned to the old system of bans and proscriptions, which will mean inquisitions and expulsions, the notorious system which was formally abolished by the 1973 Conference.

This is clearly not the end of the battle.

We will continue the political struggle in the labour movement, which is the main battle. But we will also be taking further legal advice.

The fact that we did not get an interim injunction on one limited issue involved does not preclude action on the wider issues or further disciplinary steps which the NEC may try to take.

## NEC 'HEARING'- NO QUESTIONS ASKED- NO QUESTIONS ALLOWED

We attended a meeting of the NEC under the impression that we would be allowed to discuss with the NEC the motion which dealt with the ineligibility of *Militant's* affiliation to the Labour Party.

### Impression of the NEC by the Militant Editorial Board

However, right from the outset it was clear that the meeting was a farce. The five EB members were asked by Jim Mortimer, General Secretary, to comment on the motion. We asked for the NEC to state their position and particularly to outline any alleged evidence which was to prove their contention that *Militant* was a separate organisation or party.

We were astonished and outraged to then discover that no such statement would be forthcoming from the NEC. In fact one NEC member stated that NEC members were even to be prevented from asking us questions, which was confirmed by the chairman Sam McCluskie.

We protested about the procedure for the discussion and it was then decided that the NEC would have to re-discuss the question and the *Militant* Editorial Board then withdrew into another room.

We were called back into the meeting a little later to be then informed by Sam McCluskie, of the NEC that Jim Mortimer would make a statement on the motion. This merely amounted to Jim Mortimer reading out an extract from his speech to the Labour Party conference on the issue and part of a letter which he had sent to our solicitors five days before.

There was absolutely nothing new in this material. There was no evidence to substantiate the claim that *Militant* was a separate party or organisation or was an alleged "Trotskyist entrists" group in the Labour Party.

The Editorial Board members protested once more at the procedure which was being followed by the meeting as did other National Executive Committee members. At one stage Dennis Skinner declared that this was merely a "kangaroo court", a claim which was substantiated by the proceedings which followed.

The NEC chairman then once again asked us if we were prepared to comment on the motion.

vote against the register. The full-time officials, however, recommended the delegation to vote in favour, and this was carried on the votes of the full-time officials although, it was reported, the majority of the lay members on the delegation were against the register.

During a heated debate at the Executive this month many members argued that if the Executive makes a policy, then any executive

Dennis Skinner withdrew from the meeting after Lynn Walsh had asked the chairman Sam McCluskie and the general secretary Jim Mortimer to state what changes they required us to make in the alleged structure of the *Militant* newspaper.

He pointed out that in the discussions that were held with David Hughes and Ron Hayward, the previous general secretary, one objection to the structure of *Militant* was that we held a national rally which was restricted to supporters of the *Militant*.

We had subsequently given an undertaking to open those meetings up to the rank and file of the party and even to the media. He therefore stressed again that the NEC should indicate what changes they would want us to make in the alleged structure of *Militant*.

This request was met with a stony silence. Sam McCluskie then insisted that we comment on the motion. We stated that we would do so but only under protest.

It was at this stage that Dennis Skinner withdrew from the meeting, loudly stating that it was a scandal the way the procedures were conducted and that the NEC was not prepared to indicate what changes the *Militant* was required to make to conform with the constitution.

The five Editorial Board members then proceeded to outline our opposition to the claims made in the motion. Peter Taaffe, the editor of *Militant*, stated that *Militant* was not a separate organisation or party and the NEC had furnished no evidence to substantiate its claim.

Moreover, it was now quite clear that the register was discredited and that the NEC was going back to the reintroduction of bans and proscriptions. If they had proposed the return to the proscribed list which was thrown out by the conference in 1973 then they would never have got that

General Executive Council acting on its behalf should not speak against that policy whatever their own personal view.

In future, where there is a clear policy on an issue, the GEC will mandate its officers and not just simply 'recommend'. It was even suggested (although no formal decision taken) that if officers failed to support the Executive's policy they should be expected to hand in their resignations. The



Militant Editorial Board members leaving the NEC meeting.

decision through the last Labour Party conference.

"Militant Tendency" is merely a shorthand to describe supporters of the Marxist ideas within the Labour Party, just as "Solidarity Tendency" indicates those who support the ideas of the right wing or the "Tribune Tendency" those who support the ideas of *Tribune* or for that matter the "CIA Tendency", most of whose supporters are nameless and not known to members of the Labour Party.

He also pointed out that *Militant* does not have membership cards, unlike Solidarity, and that the idea that we are entrists into the Labour Party is nonsense because four members of the Editorial Board, Peter Taaffe, Clare Doyle, Lynn Walsh, Keith Dickinson joined the Labour Party first and then through their experience were won to the ideas of Marxism.

Ted Grant then spoke against the motion and pointed out that the National Executive Committee are making a fundamental error if they think that this would end debate on the issue.

There will be no "midnight stabbing". The Labour Party rank and file are opposed as are the membership within the trade unions to the measures which are being proposed by the NEC.

The Party should be uniting to fight the Tories, Liberal/SDP Alliance. This is an attempt, said Ted Grant, to return the movement to the period of the 1950s and '60s of witch-hunts, bans, proscriptions, expulsions.

However, the right wing will have to learn that this is not the 1950s. The rank and file of the Party is against them. The decision to expel us will haunt them.

We will continue to fight to get back into the party, whether it takes one year,

two years, or three years, does not make any fundamental difference.

Clare Doyle then spoke about her experiences in joining the Labour Party in 1964. She also pointed out that if this motion was passed it would not be restricted to the five Editorial Board members but the system of enquiries, inquisitions, etc. would follow, which is totally alien to the movement.

She also pointed out that she was a member of the General and Municipal Workers Union which passed a resolution against the witch-hunt at her union conference.

Keith Dickinson then spoke about his experiences in the movement. He had been a member of the Labour Party for 25 years, longer than many members of the National Executive Committee who were sitting in judgement on him at the present time.

He stated that they were living in a dream world, that they don't have the rank and file of the party with them and that any attempt to expel will be fought by him and others like him within the rank and file of the movement.

Lynn Walsh, in his submission, asked of the NEC once again whether they were prepared to state what changes they required *Militant* to make in the alleged structure of the paper.

He made it clear that we commented on the motion under protest. This in no way prejudiced our future position and we would not hesitate to take legal action on the wider questions of the unconstitutional nature of expulsions if we decided that this would be necessary. He appealed to the Executive Committee to use political debate and not political repression.

We then withdrew to let the NEC discuss the motion.

## TGWU "Stand by union policy"

At a meeting of the General Executive of the Transport and General Workers Union earlier this

was passed calling on full-time officials to defend and vote for official policy as determined by the General Executive, in between the biennial conference.

This issue arose out of the confusion at this year's Labour Party conference where the General Executive recommended to the con-

GEC will also be recommending to the biennial conference that the delegations to conferences will be increased to give the lay members a majority.

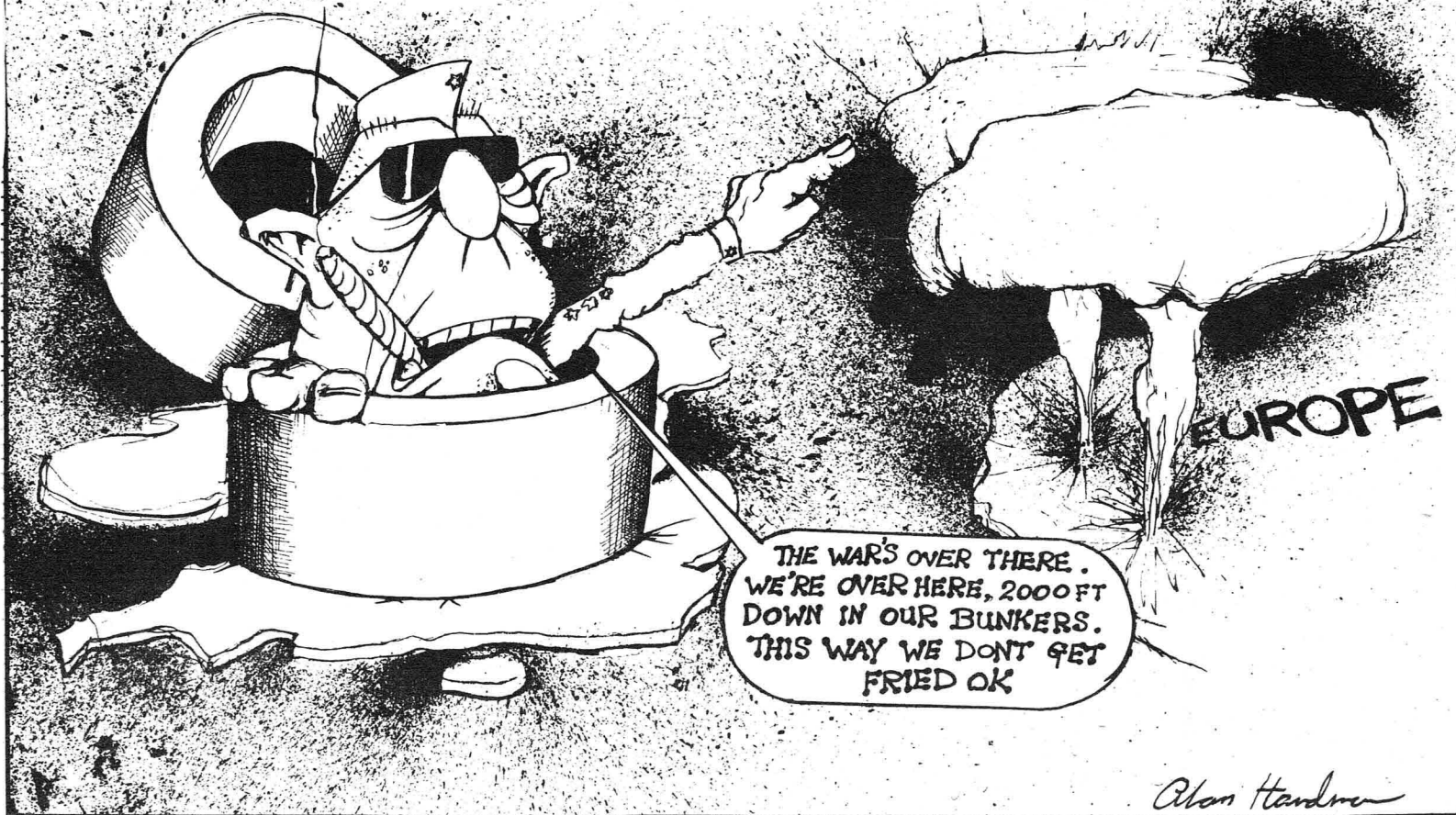
The General Executive reaffirmed its opposition to bans and proscriptions although, it was reported, Alex Kitson and Moss Evans were in favour of the expulsion of the Militant Tendency. The Executive agreed with the need to uphold the constitution of the Labour

Party.

The Left wing of the GEC were appalled that the NEC did not see fit to give the LPYS any campaign fund for 1983 even though it would probably be an election year. Feelings were running so high that it was ever suggested at one stage that the TGWU donate £9,000 direct to the LPYS to compensate for the budget reduction decreed by the NEC.

# ALTERNATIVE U.S. NUCLEAR HEADQUARTERS:

'It is necessary for the Americans to explain with the utmost sensitivity and care precisely what their thinking is.' *The Times* Editorial, 13 December.



## Right try to gag Tribune

By Roger Shrives

"A classic capitalist putsch in the boardroom of a left wing paper on the part of a leading politician always eager to proclaim his allegiance to the left within his own party."

That was the Observer on 12 December, sneering at the problems facing the left wing Labour journal *Tribune* following a boardroom coup by Labour MP John Silkin and ex Labour MP Lord Bruce of Donnington which removed two worker-directors from the board and threatened the job of the paper's editor Chris Mullin.

It was one more sign that the witch-hunt would not stop at attacks on *Militant*, for the attack was blatantly political in its intentions. "I would much prefer it to have a different line" explained John Silkin. He wanted to turn it into a "sensible left wing paper".

Silkin and Bruce clearly want less criticism of the Labour Party leadership



The three wise men, Silkin, Kerr and Bruce arrive for their coup.

from *Tribune*. Since Chris Mullin became editor in May, the paper has tried to revert to something like the campaigning style of the 1950s *Tribune* (ironically then under Michael Foot's editorship) and away from the "cosy relationship" about which the present editor justly complained under the previous editor Richard Clements. This, it seems, is too much for the likes of Silkin.

Some of the old editorial group have attacked the new editors as "Johnny-come-latelies". Certainly no such charge could be laid against *Tribune's* shareholders.

Most of them are dead. It is this fact which allowed the coup.

Of the shareholders still alive, Lord Bruce had 60 shares, as had Michael Foot while former TGWU leader Jack Jones and ex MP Russell Kerr had 10 apiece. Anuerin Bevan's widow Jennie Lee had 60 shares but as she was in poor health she had made Silkin her proxy who could vote in her stead. The 130 votes controlled by Silkin, Bruce and Kerr were therefore enough to outweigh any opposition.

They used their votes to remove two worker directors, one of them editor

Mullin from the board, despite a 1969 agreement to have half the board from the workforce. Although they claimed staff had nothing to fear, Silkin is reported to have said that a new editor "might be necessary".

Trade union chapels (branches) at *Tribune* are irate and have written to John Silkin and Lord Bruce demanding assurances that jobs, workers participation in management, editorial freedom and plans for a new controlling friendly society would not be threatened.

The staff say the tactics they used were "unworthy of the City of London". In-

stead of trying to force out editorial staff, they could have bought shares in the new friendly society and stood for election to the committee of management" What they should not do, as socialists, is secretly manipulate moribund shareholdings like city sharks."

Silkin and Bruce have tried to disguise their intentions. Bruce has complained that there have been no regular meeting of shareholders (supposed to be held annually) for about ten years. But it was Bruce himself as company secretary for part of the time between 1973 and 1981 whose responsibility it was to convene these meetings!

Silkin and Bruce claim the paper's finances are a cause of concern but the present editorship have made clear in (*Tribune* 10 December) the huge efforts put in since May to lift the journal from the brink of collapse. Under the previous editorship readers had deserted the paper in droves and sales had dropped 12% in one year, while the financial crisis Mullin inherited included debts of up to £40,000.

Party members will see through the thin excuses of the organisers of this boardroom coup. The real reasons are of course political. Can there be clearer proof that the witch hunting atmosphere built up against *Militant* is now being turned against all left-wing opposition to the policies and control of the right?

## Witch-Hunt

From page one

sorted and distributed around the building. Dennis Skinner said "it's been doctored for the courts!"

Asked by left wing members to state precisely the nature of the charges against the Editorial Board, Jim Mortimer replied that the charges had been made in his speech to conference and in his letter to the solicitors of the EB a few days earlier.

John Golding suggested that the EB members had not answered the charges. Later Dennis Howell, quoting from documents allegedly originating with *Militant* also complained that "not one person was prepared to deal with it" (ie the evidence).

It does not seem to have occurred to these gentlemen that no evidence was made available to the EB, least of all in the meeting itself.

Also in the discussion, Alex Kitson, of the TGWU, made what he described as a "personal decision", in supporting the moves against *Militant*. He repeated the allegations of a party within a party and he said that although the TGWU would not be going along with him, he was not there to represent them but the trade unions who voted for him at conference.

"Don't let anyone accuse me of being a traitor", he said. Members of the TGWU will draw their own conclusions about Alex Kitson's support for the witch-hunt.

Motions by Audrey Wise and Tony Benn, both calling for the witch-hunt to be dropped, were defeated by 18 votes to 9. The motion to declare *Militant* ineligible for affiliation was passed by the same margin with the same members on each side of the line.

Those voting against the witch-hunt were Judith Hart, Tony Benn, Laurence Coates, Frank Allaun, Dennis Skinner, Tom Sawyer, Jo Richardson, Audrey Wise, and Eric Heffer. Other motions on the agenda which dealt with the witch-hunt were dropped or referred to future sub-committees.

At a time when the Labour Party should be gearing up for a Spring Election, and declaring its full support for the miners' fight for jobs, it is a scandal that the NEC by this sham procedure should begin the expulsion of good socialists from the Party.

The rank and file will not tolerate a return to inquisitions, bans and proscriptions. Even John Golding admitted during the course of the NEC meeting that *Militant* has far more support now than it once had.

## STOP THE WITCH-HUNT

Resolutions on the Agenda of the NEC on 15 December showed that the campaign against the witch-hunt is gaining ground.

The National Union of Seamen, in a resolution to the NEC called for the Labour Party "to recognise the rights of individuals to hold whatever views they may so desire" and whilst agreeing with action being taken against the Editorial Board, did not support action "against all supporters of *Militant*".

An accompanying letter

stated that the NUS executive had discussed the issues, and... "the clear consensus of those present was that the Labour Party NEC was going beyond what most delegates and affiliated organisations at this year's annual conference thought would be the consequence of establishing a register of approved groups."

It seems that the actions of

the right wing NEC, have caused such alarm amongst the membership of the labour movement that this has reflected itself in discussions on some union executives, who may now urge the NEC to back down.

Tony Benn has sent a similar letter to the NEC outlining the reasons why the campaign against the *Militant* should be dropped.

"...the attacks upon the *Militant* and other socialists," he says "is widely believed by individual

members of the party from left, right and centre to be a mere cover for the abandonment of conference policies...the motion to introduce a proscribed list of organisations is in itself a clear breach of the party constitution since the 1973 conference approved the ending of proscribed lists and this decision has never been rescinded by conference.

"...The threat of expulsion of employees of a newspaper, unless they give up their paid employment, constitutes a breach of human rights, an attack on the freedom of the press and would not apply to the

employees, readers, contributors or supporters of newspapers which oppose the Labour Party."

A further resolution submitted by Laurence Coates, Eric Heffer and Audrey Wise also called on the NEC to affirm "that it will take no action which is unconstitutional or which goes against the 1973 Conference decision and therefore the NEC agrees that there will be no proscription or expulsion of *Militant* supporters or other socialists from the Labour Party."

A resolution submitted by Shirley Summerskill to the same meeting asked that,

"selected evidence received concerning the activities of *Militant* should be published, excluding evidence submitted in confidence and/or which could be libellous" (our emphasis).

This motion would seem to confirm what *Militant* has said all along: that a large proportion of the evidence submitted is merely based on unsubstantiated allegations, scurrilous gossip and petty tit-for-tat.

At no time was evidence ever collected in *Militant's* favour. Party members can draw their conclusions about the 'fairness' of the whole witch-hunting procedure.

# ads

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SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.  
All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY.

## MILITANT READERS MEETINGS 'WHAT WE STAND FOR'

**ROTHERHAM:** 'What future for South Yorkshire'. Speaker: Martin Elvin, and local trade unionists. 7.30pm. Sunday 19 December WEA rooms (above Ratcliffes Printers), Corporation Street, Rotherham.

**Huddersfield Marxist Discussion Group:**  
Wednesday 5 January: 'The State'  
Wednesday 19 January: 'Ireland'  
All meetings start at 7.30pm at Huddersfield Library, Children's section.

**NORWICH:** 7.45 pm  
Wednesday 12 January.  
Speaker: Steve Glennon (Stevenage CLP) at the Duke St Centre, Norwich.

**NORTH EAST Marxist Discussion Groups:**  
**FOREST HALL:** Details Dave Metcalfe, 0632 665277  
**NEWCASTLE WEST:** Every Sunday. Contact: Rob Lowther, 0632 775636.  
**NEWCASTLE NORTH:** Every Sunday. Contact Karen Walker, 0632 732959.  
**GOSFORTH:** Every Sunday. Contact Rob Dennison, 0632 844918.  
**SANDIFORD:** Every Sunday. Contact Gavin Dudley, 0632 652906.  
**GATESHEAD:** Every Sunday. Contact Tom McGuinness, 18 Lumley Gardens, Gateshead (Gateshead 783262).  
**WASHINGTON:** Details, Washington 478424.

### CLASSIFIED

**LABOUR AND TRADE UNION DAY SCHOOL** called by Cambridge LPYS. Saturday 29 January. Trade unions in the area are invited to sponsor this school. Contact Chris Ballad: (0223) 211229

Help yourself by helping us. We need organisers/fund-raisers in all parts of the country. Write now to: National Association of Disabled Writers, 18 Spring Grove, Harrogate, Yorks HG1 2HS.

## Militant Supporters Association

Registered Promoter: D Smith, 73 Armond Rd, Witham, Essex.

### WINTER HOLIDAY DRAW

Tickets are now available for our annual draw, where you can win a £500 holiday, to be taken where and when you like, for the ridiculous price of 10p!

We're also giving away a VIDEO, and there are other prizes of electrical goods and books! Will you make a donation to your favourite good cause and have the holiday of a lifetime? Contact your Militant seller for details, or write to 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

### NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS ADVERTISE IN MILITANT

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Find out what the bosses and their media, and the right wing of the labour movement are so scared of. Only 30p, post-free, from Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target Jan 8th.
Eastern	1232		2700
East Midlands	604		2850
Hants & Dorset	652		2000
Humberside	378		1650
London East	1605		3300
London West	579		1650
London South	1595		2700
Manchester & Lancs	1190		3000
Merseyside	1205		3100
Northern	1061		3900
Scotland East	501		2000
Scotland West	989		3000
Southern	1454		2500
South West	298		1500
Wales East	210		1500
Wales West	330		2000
West Midlands	729		2800
Yorkshire	1013		3850
Others	2898		4000
<b>Total received</b>	<b>18523</b>		<b>50000</b>

# £31,500 needed by 8 January

A comrade who this week promised £500 from his redundancy money to our Fighting Fund knows that under the capitalist system the chances of his getting another permanent job are virtually nil.

By Steve Cawley

## THIS WEEK: £2,728

Other supporters in the north when they heard about this donation put their hands in their pockets to the tune of well over £200!

Donations from redundancy money represents a heroic sacrifice on the part of the comrades concerned, to see that the paltry sums (relative to profits) given as "bait" to sell jobs, are used for the benefit of our class, particularly our children and their future.

Trade Unions to send us money included ASTMS Dagenham Branch for £25, Health Service supporters £10, £5.70 from Swindon ASTMS members', expenses from comrades in APEX and NUM delegates to Scottish TUC Youth Committee, (a collection of £10 was also taken there), and from a speaker at Milton Keynes Trades Council.

LPYS members to support us included this week: a South-West weekend school (collection £26), Newham South LPYS, and £10s from Moss Side LPYS and St Pancras LPYS, and a fiver from Gosforth LPYS. Thanks also to Provan and Altringham and Sale members.

Militant meetings and discussion groups in Poole, Southampton, East Ham, Wigan, Durham, Birkenhead, Manchester, and Bedlington raised £198 for us this after expenses. Thanks to all our supporters who contributed, and to those who conducted the appeals. Without their wit and wisdom our readers would feel it was their loss rather than our gain!

Individual donations this week included £25 from Bristol CPSA member K Derrek, £20 from M Holmes (Billericay), £15 from P Crack (Bristol SE CLP) and



Section of the audience at last weekend's successful Bristol conference against the witch-hunt.

tenners from J McGuinness (London), B Bevan (Southport), M Murray (Kilmarnock UCW), S Fraser (Strathclyde NALGO), N Price (Brighton), J Kaur (Brighouse LPYS), a Taunton reader, and J Hephlethwaite (Leeds ASTMS). A special thanks to two retired comrades for donating their £10 Christmas bonuses to our Fighting Fund—as in many other ways an example to younger generations.

Sums of between £5 and £10 came from amongst others I Purnell (Bristol), F & B Kidd (S London), M Reeve (Basildon), N Simpson (Kent NUM), H Gunn (retired, Sheffield), M Fallow (Teeside), a

Motherwell LPYS supporter, Birmingham reader R Hackett, and J Harris (retired, Croydon).

Many of our readers send us regular donations but these are too numerous to mention every one. As "proxies", thanks to Basildon GMBATU members, Strathclyde NALGO supporters, NUPE readers in Gateshead, J Cunningham (Cathcart), J Rushton (Eccles), G Webb (Hayes ASTMS), and D Lincoln (Yeovil).

At this time of year, particularly, unfortunately we can't mention everyone. So we hope you won't take any lack of mention in this column as an indication we don't appreciate what you've given us. If we had to send

receipts for each donation, it would cost us probably over £100 per week in extra postage alone. But if you need one, perhaps to show work-mates who've put into a collection, we are more than willing to send one on request.

We've got a lot of catching up to do on our target of £50,000—in fact we need another £31,500 at the time of writing, but we're also taking a Christmas break at the Militant offices, which means you'll have three times as long as usual to make up the amount!

Our edition on 7 January won't show the final figure, because we have to add in the cash from the final week and the profit on the Winter Holiday Draw. But make sure all the lines on our chart are within striking distance of the right-hand margin!

However, it's up to you, our readers, to each set yourself a figure you can either donate yourself, or raise from your family or friends over the holidays. For example, if 6,000 of our readers raised £5 each for us, we'd be within £1500 of £50,000! We've seen what the gang of four have done this year—let's see what a gang of 6,000 can do this Christmas.

## Sue Beckingham

Already £186 has been given to Bryan Beckingham for Militant's Fighting Fund in memory of his wife Sue. She was a long-standing Militant supporter and fighter for socialism (see obituary last week).

Their sons—Simon (aged 10) and Shaun (aged 6) each gave four weeks' pocket money. Simon wrote "This

is £2 to help get socialism and to remind us of how well mummy fought for it," Shaun: "For Mummy's fighting fund".

Other donations to commemorate Sue's struggle should be made out to Militant and sent to Bryan Beckingham, 62, Haverstock Road, Bristol, BS4 2BZ.

Photo: Dave Brown

# 30,000 PROTEST AGAINST CRUISE



Last Sunday 30,000 women formed a human chain around the proposed base for Cruise at Greenham Common. The next day police moved in to stop a blockade of the base (above). Photo: A Wiard (Report)

## WINNING YOUNG WORKERS TO LABOUR

Winning the youth vote for Labour and young workers for the Labour Party has always been a high priority for the LPYS. In order to offer a clear socialist alternative to the dismal prospects of young workers in Fords, the LPYS branches in East London have produced the first issue of an **LPYS Fords Bulletin**.

Amongst the articles included are those on: apprentices in Fords, poor tools and training in the plants, low pay, management perks, and no new jobs being created. And most important the need for young workers to organise with the LPYS to fight back against the Tories and their system. The bulletin has been well received by a number of union branches in Fords, and shop stewards in the Engine and Body Plants have taken copies to give to their young members.

4 December saw **Yorkshire LPYS** hold their 1982 **Young Workers Conference**. It was attended by over 70 young trade unionists, including a 30-strong delegation from the miners union. One of the main speakers was Mike Clapham from the Yorkshire NUM Executive. He pointed out the lessons to be learnt from the battles in the early 1970's against the Industrial Relations Act, and how they should be applied today to defeat the Thatcher government.

Chris Weldon (Tinsley No. 2 Steelworks) moved a resolution opposing the run-down of the steel industry. And Ron Brown, Labour MP for Leith, spoke of the need for a Labour government to rebuild industry and restore services slashed by Thatcher and Co, the axe-happy representatives of big business. All in all, the conference provided an excellent launching pad for building the LPYS and giving young workers a chance to fight for a better future.

**Reports by  
Colin Adams  
(Foundry worker,  
Fords)  
and Gordon  
Nardell  
(Yorks LPYS  
Regional  
Committee)**

## AFTER STUDENTS' CONFERENCE -determined campaign needed

The December National Union of Students Conference was the first since the crushing victory of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) candidates in the NUS Executive elections.

That victory was based on the hope of many student activists that NOLS could provide the links with the Labour movement necessary to defend and improve students' conditions.

However, the record so far of the NOLS NUS leaders puts this into doubt. This month's Conference found itself having to discuss a dispute which had arisen

between the NUS management and its own staff. The dispute had arisen out of an attempt to impose new job conditions on two members of staff.

**By Clive  
Heemskerck**

The staff had gone on strike for 9 days and picketed the NUS HQ. Scandalously, NUS Executive members, including NOLS members of the Executive, crossed the staff picket lines. While *Militant* supporters opposed an SDP-sponsored move to dismiss Alan Watson (the NOLS Treasurer of NUS), the NOLS leaders totally rejected our proposal that they accept they were mistaken and should be censured for breaking a fundamental law of the labour movement in crossing the staff picket line.

NOLS' leadership attitude to this staff dispute, plus the opposition of NOLS NUS President Neil Stewart to a national 24 hour occupation against education cuts, led to some disquiet amongst Labour student activists.

However, there was also a mood to defend NOLS, in its leading position on the NUS Executive against the SDP and Liberal/Communist 'Left Alliance'. This mood was typified by Steve Morgan, Deputy President of NUS Wales, who argued at the NOLS caucus against censuring NOLS NUS Executive members, who crossed picket lines, on the grounds that this would strengthen the SDP and the Tories.

This attitude is similar to that of many sincere activists who, out of loyalty to the last Labour government, muted their criticisms of the disastrous policies of massive cuts and wage restraint. They mistakenly hoped that the Labour movement could

defeat the Tories as long as it was united at any cost. But the policies of the right wing Labour leadership, presiding over rising unemployment, led to disillusionment with the Labour government and the election of Thatcher.

### Link with labour movement

The December NUS Conference showed that the SDP and the 'Left Alliance' are waiting in the wings as a 'radical but realistic' alternative to NOLS. They can only be defeated by the NOLS NUS leaders launching a determined campaign to defeat the cuts and win students a decent grant.

This means building on the vote at the NUS Conference for a 24 hour occupation in the Unions involved in education, to organise a strike action by campus workers.

Student occupation should be part of a united and effective 24 Hour national shutdown of all Universities, Polytechnics and FE Colleges. This should be the first step by NUS leaders to campaign within the trade unions and the Labour Party for these organisations to convene a 'Public Sector Alliance' Conference of public sector workers and students, to defeat the Tory attacks.

But the lesson of the NUS Conference is that in the forthcoming Labour Clubs' delegate elections to NOLS Conference, every Labour student who wants to see a fighting NUS should vote for *Militant* supporters. Only a socialist leadership of NOLS can guarantee a Labour leadership of NUS, linking students with the labour movement and fighting for socialist policies to defeat the Tory cuts and secure a living grant for all students.

## LPYS CONFERENCE -RAISE CASH NOW

Fund raising for next Easter's LPYS conference needs to be organised now. Finance is particularly important this year with the increase in unemployed, YOPsters and school students in our ranks. No unwaged comrade should be unable to go through lack of finance.

In the South West region we have drawn up plans based on past year's successes. This week every union office will be circulated with the national letters (available from Andy Bevan at Labour Party headquarters).

The following week unemployed comrades will visit the union offices, during the day time, armed with wads of the national letters and local ones as well, asking for sponsorship and in-

cluding trade unions to send their young members to the conference. Most union officials are prepared to circulate this material to branches.

In the coming weeks it is vital that every LPYS member attends their union branch to raise the matter under correspondence. It is also worthwhile for local conference organisers to draft a model letter for each comrade to use to send to

their regional or divisional committees asking for support.

As well as the trade unions, all Constituency Labour Parties should be sent correspondence. In the South West, we circulate all ward branches in constituencies where there is a LPYS branch.

LPYS members themselves need to start saving now. If every comrade pays a regular sum once a week

from the start of the new year then there is no last minute dash to get money. Also local fund-raising events such as sponsored events and jumble sales should be slotted into the calendar now.

Having forged the tradition in the South West of raising money it becomes relatively easier every year. It is possible to build up good links with trade union branches as well. Through good

report-backs and prompt issue of receipts trade unionists are increasingly impressed with the seriousness of our ideas and organisation.

**By Mick Whale  
(LPYS National  
Committee)**



# XMAS QUIZ

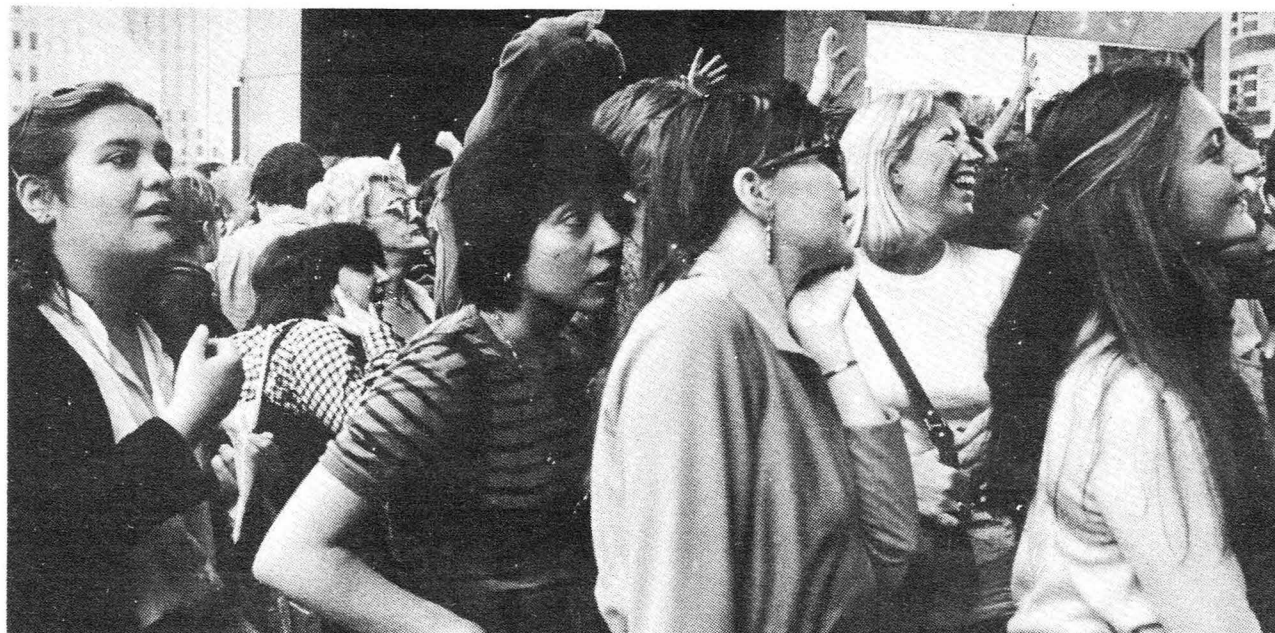
WHO SAID...IN '82?

How closely do you read your paper? Most of the following quotes appeared in 'Militant' during the year. Answers p. 7.



## General

1. "Liberals are wet, woolly and windy—uncertain about what they are doing and where they are going"
2. "The evidence of a start of a recovery is all about us and not even the most blinkered pessimist could fail to see it"
3. "The Sun today is to journalism what Dr Josef Goebbels was to truth"
4. "It's the job of the fortunate to provide for those who aren't"
5. "It is time, high time, to cry halt to increases in unemployment and time to reverse present trends"
6. "In every urban area there's a large minority of people who are not fit to salvage. The only way in which police can protect society is quite frankly by harassing these people"
7. "Disolve the SDP in a gallon of warm water... avoid prolonged contact. Keep away from children"
8. "I will help school-leavers to set up their own businesses"
9. "You can't have freedom without free enterprise and that is the case that has to be put in the schools"
10. "This (school-vouchers) is a crackpot scheme by those who think they can sell education with vouchers like canned spuds in a supermarket"
11. "Health Service workers have enjoyed unique job security over the last three years and manning has been increased"
12. Who described the hold of monetarism over Tory thinking as like 'the brainwashing used by the Moonies when they ensnare their young victims'
13. Which philanthropic defector to the SDP told his local Labour Party that he would not resign because: "It would cost the local party a lot of money to fight and lose a by-election."
14. "If they are hanging about the streets, what else can you expect but an increase in crime? It happens with blacks and whites; this is part of the breakdown of society under the stress of unemployment"
15. What on earth was the 'Daily Telegraph' talking about when it said: "It was the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, the first day of the new moon, a planetary cusp and the child will be a double Cancerian with both the moon and the sun in the sign of the crab"
16. Who was describing what: "For a split second a whole choked nation held the breath for which ..... was fighting. This morning we breath again"
17. Who wants you to read: "The smallest mass party in the world"



## Labour Movement

18. "Sometimes it's very boring being in the Labour Party at present attending General Management Committees where routine resolutions are put forward. I appreciate that you don't want to be bored and would prefer going to the theatre, opera, football, strip shows, but you will have to forgo these for a time to gain the price of tolerance. Have to sit out these terrible meetings to the end"
19. "Unfortunately before I could associate myself with Campaign for Labour Victory (CLV) it packed up. Because its leaders went to the SDP. So I never had the privilege of being a member of CLV. Much as I supported what it was trying to do when it was working within the party"
20. "Forecasts should not be viewed with the certainty expected from a railway timetable."
21. "Unilateralists have no concern for the utility of negotiation and they weaken the concept of collective security...A future Labour government would find it an impossible policy"
22. "I would no longer touch the British Atlantic Committee with a barge-pole"
23. "Policy needs purging too"
24. "Sidney Weighell's resignation is a great loss to the railway industry which he has served as a dedicated and wise trade union leader"
25. "Let us have the truth for a change"
26. Who said about whom: "Their latent power remains the most formidable in the country"
27. "It would be nice to keep re-selection as it is, provided we don't mind more recruits to the SDP. It would be even nicer to allow constituency parties the untrammelled right to select. Yet if a small minority insist on choosing people as acts of ideological defiance rather than to actually win seats we finish up with a clutch of kamikaze candidates alongside whom some of us are not prepared to fight"
28. "Let Tony Benn lead his own party, stand on his own two feet and not contaminate the rest of us"
29. Who was describing what: "..... lends itself to guerillarism. In Vietnam the American army was tied down for years by guerrilla armies and in the Boer War the British Army was tied down by guerilla armies."

## Falklands

30. "After what I've seen out here I feel like joining CND"
31. Who said and what were they talking about: "This is a word that has been used extensively by everyone. From time to time I am reminded of it, but it has never altered what I was trying to achieve and that was the right price"
32. "We went to bed on Thursday in 1982 and woke up on Friday in 1882"
33. "This war is worth dying for"
34. "Gotcha"
35. "We simply cannot conceive the mentality of a man who would simply find pleasure in the loss of human life, friend or foe"
36. "You must have been told you couldn't report the bad news...You were expected to do a 1940 propaganda job"

## Militant

45. Who said to whom: "Tell me—why are you in Britain allowing the Trotskyists to take over the Labour Party?"
46. "The last thing we want before a General Election is a purge within the party"
47. "The Militant Marxists who control Liverpool Labour Party want to abolish the Queen. They call for civil war and bloodshed on the streets...As the Liverpool Echo recently reported 'They want to ban religion in favour of Militant Atheism' That means the closure of local churches and church schools"
48. "I'm not saying that Militant is the only section of the Party engaged in this kind of activity—other groups may have to be looked at"
49. "If we are to work together we must be able to do so in an atmosphere of comradeship and trust. That means we want no purges, no ideological inquisitions, no hit-lists. The party does encompass a wide range of political attitudes. That can be a source of strength"
50. "It is painful but true, that in a good proportion of the local parties they (i.e. Militant supporters) are the most influential. Also they bloody seriously think that the Labour Party has to change from an attractive party of (an) all-social-strata-broad-church to a radical socialist organisation, which not only wants to defeat the Tories, but has definite policies."



## Photo quiz

Three photos about the "higher powers" in life, one spiritual, one worldly, one financial. What's happening in each? Answers p. 7. (All photos by D Doran)



## International

37. "The Chilean economic experience is very similar to what we are developing here...In the case of Chile it was possible to impose a policy and regulate its implications but this isn't possible in our country. Here we have to work with the consent of the majority so we have to procede with more caution"
38. "The idea that the Common Agriculture Policy contributes to the economic development of the community calls for some explanation"
39. "The American economy is in one hell of a mess"
40. "You could say I was an autocrat"
41. "We acknowledge that there is a 'Hungarian road' and that it may be possible to learn something from it. But we also acknowledge the possibility that if anyone else follows it they may go bankrupt"
42. Who said about whom: "You have the good fortune to have produced a left-wing leader inclined slightly towards the right"
43. Who said about what: "This is the best thing. At east we'll get some of our money back"
44. About which country did one newspaper report "They (the leaders of the country) see the possibility of revolution behind the glazed, dumbfounded sand-bagged looks of thousands of hungry people who need to be fed"

# This show can't go on

With Xmas fast approaching, comrades will doubtless be bombarded with publicity from local theatres advertising their latest epic Xmas show or pantomime.

To those having enjoyed an evening's entertainment it may seem a bright and exciting life, treading the boards or working backstage, in what is thought of as a glamorous profession. The truth is far from that.

In a profession where at least 70% are out of work at one time, the all exalted job that finally comes, offers a minimum wage of £84.50 for a 48 hour week for members of British Actors Equity. It's £59.20 for a 40 hour week for members of my own union, the National Association of Theatrical, TV, and Kine Employees. (NATKE).

Most managements offer the minimum to the majority of their workers who gladly accept because of the fierceness of competition for jobs. Most contracts are short-term; in stage management a year's contract seems like a miracle.

Because of this, managements have little trouble spotting and removing 'troublemakers' who might happen to think this system is ludicrous. I know of several theatres where stage workers' dedication is called into play to get them to work unpaid overtime in order to have a show ready for "opening night", when the undermanned team is clocking up its 48 hours in the first three days of a week!

When you complain, the question is asked by managements "Why do you stay in it, when you know the conditions", and the age old quotation, "It's more than a job, it's a vocation".

Nurses have heard this nonsense too. Is it too much to ask to be allowed to do the work we have talent for, that we do well, that gives us a job satisfaction, without having to give up all our

By Stephen Spence

(NATKE, Theatre Section, personal capacity, and East Belfast YS)

rights? Of course we have those rights; not privileges —rights!

Under Thatcher, the Arts generally have been cut to pieces. Companies go under every day, especially small companies who are more radical in the work they do. Sadly, under past Labour governments the picture was not rosier; the corpse could perhaps decay at a slower rate, but die it still would.

The problem for the Arts is the problems of all industries: capitalism. Capitalism cannot fund a healthy, lively, modern theatre industry. Only under a properly planned economy with adequate provisions for professional theatre, controlled by those who work in the business, can we who work in theatre throw off these perpetual problems.

And while we're on the subject of the stage, the next time Michael Foot pays a visit to a theatre he should resolve to lift the curtain from his own mind revealing the drama of witch-hunts in the dim, distant past, aimed against him and how he fought them bravely and with courage, and remembering, take up the sword today, against the witch-hunt of ideas of the *Militant*.

A pantomime's place is in the theatre, not in the Labour Party. Healey and Shore should be fraternally reminded that, in my experience, the ugly sisters never win in the end. They haven't the right ideas, you see.



Immigrant families were the workers in Sinclair's novel

## The Jungle

"And then will begin the rush that will never be checked, the tide that will never turn till it has reached its flood."

Upton Sinclair's book 'The Jungle' is about life in the stockyards of Chicago at the turn of the century (available from World Socialist Books, price £2.25 incl. p&p).

It describes in painful detail the degradation, the despair and eventual defiance of an immigrant family from Lithuania.

From the day of their arrival in the USA where their English vocabulary could only stretch to one word... "Stockyards"... their lives are spent experiencing a catalogue of human misery.

Sinclair's book caused such a furor that the food laws were changed within 6 months of its publication.

Sinclair builds his argument for social change around the central character Jurgis.

At the outset he is a fit healthy labourer but in the

course of the book he experiences the callousness of a system dependant upon ignorance, little union organisation and corruption.

Jurgis is taught several harsh lessons in the school of adversity. Injured at work, forced into poverty and eventually evicted from their home, family life becomes a downward spiral that leads to prostitution, drunkenness and death.

However, Jurgis stumbles upon a meeting where he hears for the first time that... "he is a man whose soul has been murdered, whose hand ceased to hope and to struggle who had made terms with degradation and despair, and now suddenly in one awful conclusion the bleak and hideous fact was made plain to him".

The book marks the early beginnings of the socialist movement in the USA and despite the painfully depressing picture of life, it has an optimism about it, an optimism based on the experiences of the working class.

## QUIZ ANSWERS

### GENERAL

1. Association of Liberal Councillors; 2. Treasury Minister, Leon Brittain, in May; 3. Daily Mirror; 4. Margaret Thatcher, Interview, Woman, November; 5. Chairman of the Tory back-bench Committee, Edward du Cann, in July; 6. Inspector Griffiths, Deputy Chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, speaking in Brighton in October; 7. Sorry about this one. But this advert for a 'cleaner and steriliser in winemaking' clearly has wider implications; 8. Chancellor Howe in this year's Budget; 9. Tory Education (or Propaganda?) Minister, the Mad Monk himself, Sir Keith Joseph in March, at Institute of Directors' Annual Conference; 10. Ted Heath, Daily Mirror, 2 November; 11. Health Minister, Kenneth Clarke; 12. Former Tory Cabinet Minister, Sir Ian Gilmour, London Review of Books; 13. Philosophising, Bryan Magee, MP; 14. Ted Heath, 18, March; 15. It was its scientific astrological forecast for Prince William, Henry, George, etc, etc.

16. Jean Rook, one of Fleet Street's

most highly paid journalists on the day the Queen Mother choked on a bone, Daily Express, 24 November; 17. The Socialist Workers Party: it's the title of one of their recruiting pamphlets.

### LABOUR MOVEMENT

18. Gerald Kaufmann, voted top of the poll by the Parliamentary Party, speaking at a private Solidarity meeting, 16 February; 19. Witch-hunt fanatic, Lord Underhill, Labour Weekly, 24 September; 20. Peter Shore on his economic proposals for the next Labour government; 21. Jim Callaghan, 18 November; 22. Roland Moyle, Labour Front-Bench spokesman on Foreign Affairs; 23. Times Editorial after Labour Party conference; 24. BR Chief, Sir Peter Parker; 25. Sid Weighell, Labour Weekly, 30 July; 26. Financial Times, 29 March, about the TUC; 27. Austin Mitchell, Labour Weekly, January; 28. Sid Weighell, June; 29. Albert Spanswick, leader of health service union COHSE, explaining his strategy for winning the health dispute, 23 November.

### FALKLANDS

30. Prince Andrew, after checking

that reporter Kim Sabido's tape recorder was switched off, City Limits, 16 July; 31. Lord Matthews on patriotism, 29 July. He was explaining that although the Express newspapers were always exhorting people to 'back Britain' he could not afford to have the replacement for the sunk Atlantic Conveyor built in Britain; 32. Labour MP Nigel Spearing on the day after the Argentine invasion; 33. Sunday Mirror columnist Woodrow Wyatt, writing from London, 9 May; 34. The Sun's front page headline after the sinking of the Argentinian cruiser, the General Belgrano; 35. The Sun again, this time after the sinking of HMS Sheffield; 36. Minister of Defence official to journalists with the Task Force.

### INTERNATIONAL

37. Tory Party Chairman, Cecil Parkinson; 38. EEC Commission; 39. President Reagan when he thought the microphone was switched off; 40. Lot of competition for this one. But the dictator who actually said it was President Zia of Pakistan, Financial Times, 30 November; 41. Janos Berce, editor of the Hungarian Communist Party newspaper and member of its Central Committee; 42. Austria's

Socialist Chancellor, Bruno Keisky, about Felipe Gonzalez, Spain's new Socialist Prime Minister; 43. American banker about the crushing of Solidarity in Poland; 44. No 'Third World' country this. The statement comes from the Boston Globe, 23 May, about poverty in the USA.

### MILITANT

45. Cuban Ambassador to Grenada to Labour MP Allan Roberts, Sun, 28 October; 46. Labour Party General Secretary Jim Mortimer to the Party's Organisation Committee, 13 September; 47. Liverpool Liberals' leaflet in May election; 48. Michael Foot, June meeting of Labour's National Executive; 49. Michael Foot, 1982 New Year Message to the Labour Party; 50. Hungarian Communist Party magazine, Magyar-rozsgag.

### PHOTO

Top: Crowds gather for the Pope's visit. Left: American TV drama-documentary re-writes last year's love affair, by having Princess Di meet Charles on Westminster Bridge. Right: LSO Wind Ensemble play sound sterling notes in concert for Stock Exchange.

COURT CIRCULAR



## Christmas message

My husband and I wish you all a very merry Christmas and in so doing may I apologise for the non appearance of this column for so long. But I have been to those fair, far islands in the Atlantic, to join the struggle. The struggle with the tax man that is—I'm talking about the tax haven of the Cayman Islands; where were you thinking of?

But while I'm in this region of the pink painted globe, I cannot pass on without paying tribute to our dashing latter-day Prince Rupert, Bonny Prince Andrew, who led the defence of the Empire, lending his hand to give Johnny Turk a good biffing. No matter what the Huns threw at him he...what's that? It was the Argies this time? Well whoever, the Prince braved all, flying his helicopter, luring the devilish Frenchie Exocets away from the Queen's ships.

I must admit, I thought Bonny Prince Andrew flew Sea King helicopters, which I thought were used for submarine hunting not aerial decoys, which Wasp helicopters are usually used for. Still, I don't see why that should spoil a good story.

And now he's doing a spell with Military Intelligence (sic). Well let's face it, he's probably the only type one can trust these days. I mean he's not likely to go touting business with the Russkies after what happened to Cousin Romanov, is he? And as for blackmail, well it doesn't matter what dirty deeds he gets up to (à la 'Koo what a Starker') because it only ends up plastered across the Sun for all the world to see anyway.

On the subject of the press, they have been doing a grand job keeping the mobs' mind off tedious issues such as unemployment and so on. It hasn't been easy since VF day, so we'll forgive them for presenting the trials and tribulation of the humble lives of us Royals in minute detail. We Royals get a bit uppety now and again, but December 10's presentations were more like it.

Whole front pages on the essential and vital news that our gal Di had shed a tear or two through the showing of 'ET'. (Mind you I cried all the way through it too. It was bloody awful). Top of the poll was of course the Sun with a front page and 128 column inches on the heart rending story. The Daily Star, the thinking man's Sun, managed a good 90". Of course, that red rag the Mirror could only muster a miserly 17".

On the subject of Di, I must say she's learning the Royal act of extravagance rather well. She's now spending about £1,500 a week on clothes. That's the stuff. Don't want any of this nambly pambly nonsense about upsetting the plebs, even though she spends more on clothes than the money spent paying the Royal couple's own staff's annual salaries.

She's having a good effect on the Chosen One. Charles has had this annoying liberal notion that he should only draw out half of 'his' annual income from the Duchy of Cornwall—a meagre £412,000 last year. He thinks it will make the plebs think he pays tax. Well this year he's drawing out the lot. He's going to need it.

They're going to move out of that tip, Highgrove, in the

new year. Like any young couple today, they've had to move around and slum it. After they married they mixed in with Princess Margaret, Prince and Princess Michael of Kent and the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, at Kensington Palace. They had their apartment refurbished for £750,000 of course, and as we Royals always get all our goods at wholesale prices unlike you plebs, they managed to make the hovel habitable.

Then they moved to Highgrove which at a cost of £1 million could only boast nine bedrooms and 348 acres.

But their new home will be my fellow tax exile Lord Brownlow's pad—26 bedrooms and 600 acres. Well you need a bit of space if you're going to start a family.

And I hope Di is pepping up the Chosen One's fashion tastes. Did you know he only buys two suits a year, at £400 each? Not much, is it? It'll still be too much for the moaners, of course. You know, the type who keep chirping up such statistics as 'Did you know the Royal family has spent more on personal possessions than was spent on supplementary allowance for workers on the poverty line between 1955 and 1980?'. Huh, anybody would think it was their money.

Well, I'm off to settle down for Christmas with a good book. It's a verbatim report of the outstanding speech made by Prince Philip titled 'One Aspect of Human Conflict', made in 1980 at Windsor Castle. He takes up that boulder Marx and puts him in his place.

Talking about Marx's analysis of those great days during the industrial revolution (sigh) he explains that "Marx picked on the nastiest features of industrial life." Well, Marx would, wouldn't he—that damn Marx was obviously a communist.

Phil goes on to really put the boot in; "At least in pre-Marxist days the idea of sin was fairly well understood and evil was personified in the devil and those individuals who behaved in a patently evil way were possessed of the devil and invited to repent. Today, ever since Marx's generalisations, evil is embodied into certain classes, in institutions, corporations, general groups or simply in vague concepts such as capitalism, imperialism or colonialism". Our Phil is quite obviously a great intellect.

He concludes, "There is one thing we must all learn from Marx. It is now more important than ever that we learn and understand the guiding principles of our own system if we are to make it fulfill our ambition to live in freedom, in harmony, in prosperity and injustice..." (whoops, sorry I mean) "...in justice".

Phil better watch out with all that talking about 'learning from Marx', otherwise he might get a one-way invitation from Labour's NEC. But I think when Phil talks about 'freedom and prosperity', he means for us. You plebs can carry on with mass unemployment, low wages and chronic housing.

And don't be getting 'vague concepts' about the nature of capitalism, imperialism or colonialism.

By Beatrice Windsor  
(no relation)

# MINERS FIGHT

## THE WAY TO WIN

The way to win.

★ A campaign should be launched by the NUM national leadership to prepare the entire union for a national struggle beginning the 17th January. Meetings should take place at all pits, addressed by leading national speakers and South Wales miners, to spell out the issues and weld the necessary unity.

★ If the new investment is not forthcoming and if South Wales miners are forced to take strike action then pickets should be sent into every NUM area and every pit.

★ The call should then go out to the wider labour movement: stop all movement of coal. To help bring this about, pickets should be sent, as in 1972 and 1973/4, to coal stocks at power stations and depots and also to ports and wharfs to stop incoming coal.

★ Every effort should be made to keep all miners fully informed of all developments by regular bulletins, special editions of 'The Miner' and by regular mass meetings.

★ The NUM should invoke the Triple Alliance. NUM members, steel workers and rail workers are all involved in a common struggle against the run down of the basic industries. Steel workers and Rail workers would respond if their leaders called for a joint campaign alongside the miners for fresh investment and proper financing throughout the nationalised industries.

★ Triple Alliance action committees involving the unions from all three industries should be formed at national, regional and local levels to cement unity and take the struggle forward.

★ The TUC should be called upon to organise the fullest possible support for the struggle, including a one-day strike of the entire trade union movement.

★ The Labour Party must give its full support, locally, regionally and nationally, as well as in Parliament, to the struggle of the miners for jobs.

## North East Pits at Risk

Out of twenty pits in the Northumberland and Durham coalfield only one is making a profit, according to the NCB. Not one pit is safe from closure.

At a special meeting of the NUM Area Committee last week it was agreed that the Executive should go to the NCB to ask for the investment plans for the Durham area. If no information is forthcoming, then Durham will ask for permission to hold an area ballot to endorse industrial action to fight pit closures.

Even if the NCB do provide information it will be necessary to underline the point that major investment plans are necessary if jobs and pits are to be saved. In South Wales the NUM has asked for £500 million for area investment and the NCB has offered £30 million.

At the Area Committee the opinion was voiced that we don't want other areas coming up here to ask us out, we'll do it on our own.

If a pit-head ballot is to be held we'll have to have the biggest campaign ever. What will have to be explained is literally that you are either voting to close your own pit or fighting to keep it open.

The NCB of course will try to speak over the head of the union on redundancy payments. The way to counter that is to campaign for men to retire at 55 with the money they would have got, had they been made redundant. But the job remains. There's plenty on the dole in this area who will take the job.

A few years ago Yorkshire had a ballot on closures and they got approximately 80% of votes in favour of strike action to defend jobs. Since then there has been major investment in that area. That shows what can be done when you fight for your rights.

By Stan Pearce  
(Monkwearmouth NUM,  
Durham area)

## Big Business profits from

The leaders of the bosses' organisation, the Confederation of British Industry, have joined in the orchestrated campaign to discredit miners and to back up the government and the NCB in their programme to shut down pits.

The NCB have produced spurious figures to try to prove that certain pits and certain areas are 'uneconomic', in order to justify closures. In reality, the social costs in terms of unemployment and hardships would be far greater. But the very tangible costs of putting thousands of men on the dole and the costs of the devastation of communities are not presented on Norman Siddall's balance sheets.

The mining industry has been devastated over the years and miners are not prepared to see it whittled away to nothing. In 1960 there were 700 pits employing 600,000 miners. Today there are only 197 with only just over 200,000 employed.

The National Coal Board claim, that certain areas and pits make losses, can be shown to be completely groundless, when the financing and the accounts are examined more closely.

In the 1981-82 Annual Report and Accounts of the Board, the General Director of Finance explained the "broad picture represented in the accounts showed that the beneficial effects of considerable productivity gains and increased sales had been offset by the industry's inability to raise prices in line with costs, with the result that a trading loss of £84 million had been made compared with a trading profit the previous year of £69 million."

In other words, contrary to the remarks of the CBI spokesmen, big business is already getting its coal on the cheap, at the expense of miners' jobs and wages. It is a fact that the total cost of wages, including pensions, NI etc., amount to only 42% of the NCB costs whereas they were 70% ten years ago.

Furthermore, the recorded trading loss would have been wiped out several times over, but for the massive interest charges. The annual report also points out that interest charges have gone up by £85 million this year to the sum of £341 million.

In just two years, therefore, the NCB has paid the staggering sum of £597 million in interest charges to the moneylenders of the City of London. Against this, the South Wales demand for an average of £40m investment a year is very modest indeed.

The CBI have a cheek to complain about the costs of coal when they are leeching

By Ian Isaacs  
St John's Colliery  
South Wales

profits out of the sweat of the miners. The supply industries also make a tidy profit on the NCB.

The Dowty Group, for example, showed a 12 per cent increase in turnover in its mining division last year, along with a 25 per cent increase in trading profits and a 64 per cent increase in its order book.

According to a recent survey in *The Times* (November 3 1982) the suppliers of mining equipment are an "elite band of manufacturers which appears to have a sparkling future." A sparkling future indeed!—taking a guaranteed profit from the £1 billion invested every year by the NCB.

How much of the money that has gone into the Plan for Coal, miners will ask, actually went in profits to these private-sector mining suppliers?

The National Union of Miners must make it clear that they do not for a moment accept the economic arguments of the Board. The interest charges, the purchase of privately supplied equipment and the strict limitation of prices have all ensured that the profits made by miners have been whistled away to the coffers of big business. The union must campaign for an end to these interest charges and for the nationalisation of the supply industries and their integration into the mining industry itself.

But the fight for miners' jobs is a political one in another sense. The industrial policy of the Tory government has led to a collapse in British manufacturing down to a 15 year low. Key industries like steel and engineering have been devastated by the Tories, with the result that demand for coal has slipped.

Although there was a big increase in exports last year, to over 9 million tonnes, Tory industrial policy has led directly to a cut in domestic demand of 11 million tonnes.

It is also a scandal that in the climate of recession and falling demand, the Central Electricity Generating Board, another nationalised industry, has been able to

point a gun at the head of the NCB and demand price cuts.

The NUM must campaign for an end to the Tory government and their policy of recession in industry; but they must also fight for the proper integration of the nationalised industries. The NCB, the CEGB, the BRB and so on, should not be run as wholly separate and competing concerns like capitalist businesses, but should be fully integrated and harmonised one to another, through workers' control and management of the industries.

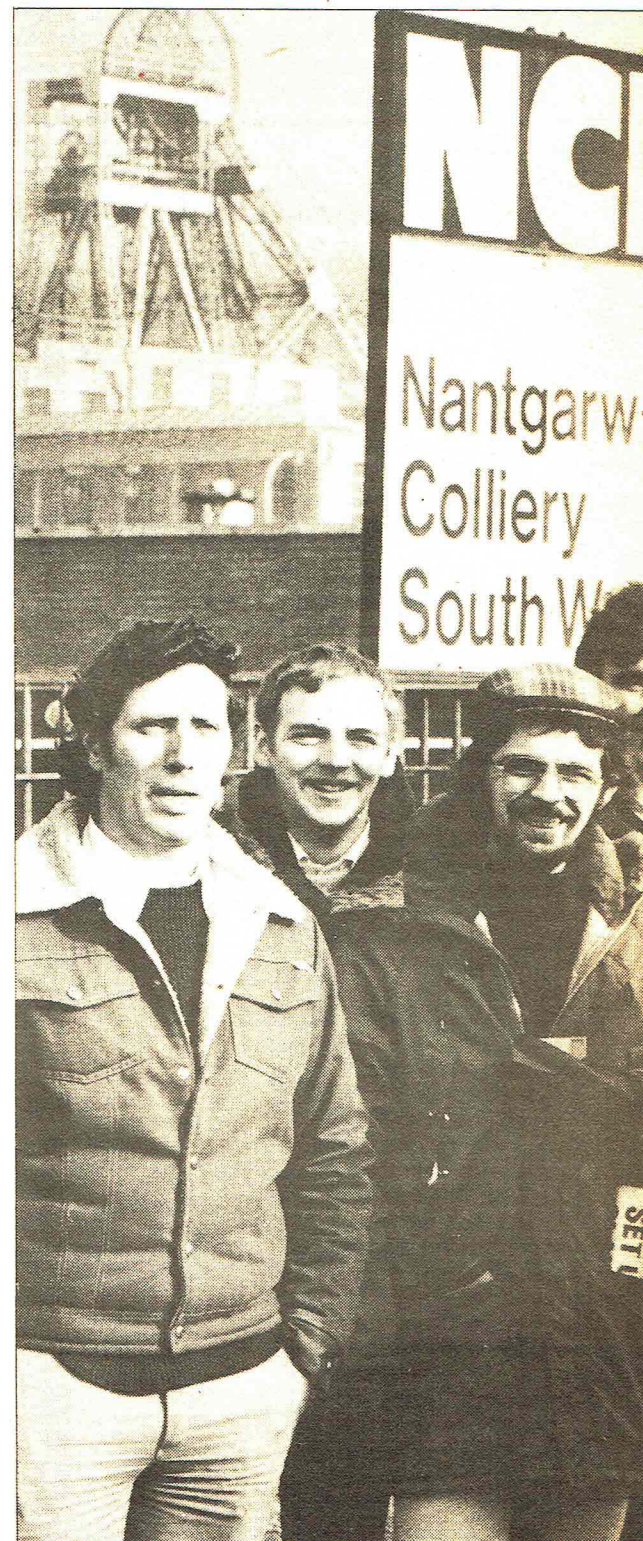
Even this measure, although an enormous advance, would not solve the problems of British industry as long as the majority of the industry and finance sector are in private hands. The NUM must fight through the

Labour Party for a policy of nationalisation, under workers' control and management, of the top 200 monopolies that dominate industry, along with the banks and insurance companies, in order to lay the basis for a socialist plan of production.

The miners have got a just case to protect their jobs and their conditions. They work in one of the most dangerous industries. Hardly a day goes by without two or three accidents serious enough for a miner to be given morphine. On average, a miner has been killed in some British colliery once every ten or twelve days this year. Miners deserve better than the contemptuous treatment of the NCB and the Tories.

The money is there to invest in and develop a thriving industry in Britain. But

South Wales Miners Pickets in February 1981.





Display this poster on your union notice-board

# IT FOR JOBS

## NCB

the bosses prefer to salt it away elsewhere. The flow of investment funds out of the country is accelerating, according to recent reports. In the last quarter alone, British companies, many, no doubt, sucking profits out of the NCB, spent over £1 billion in the stocks and shares of companies overseas. **British capitalists are the last people to preach to miners about jobs and investment.**

Socialist policies for the mining industry and a socialist plan of production for the economy would guarantee the jobs and livelihoods of all miners—and millions of other workers and their families as well. The struggle around 17 January is vital for the whole industry. The miners' fight for jobs is a fight that all workers must actively support.

Photo: Militant



## Interview with Emlyn Williams

**What are the demands of the South Wales miners?**

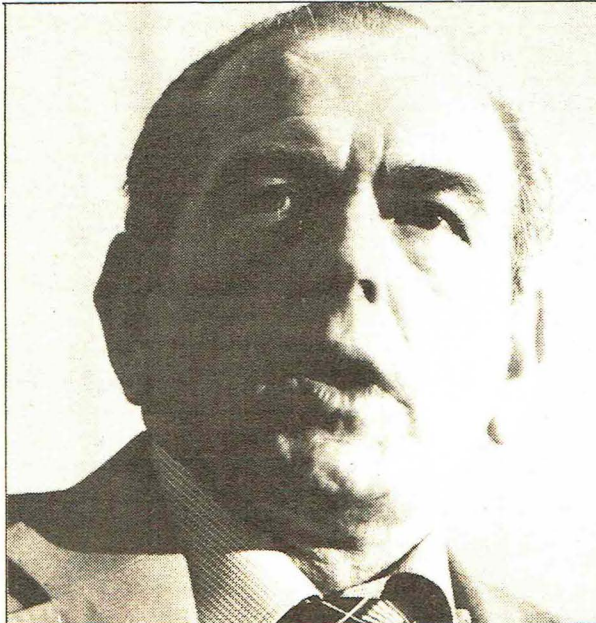
Our demands are clear. We require capital for development and replacement capital.

We also need day to day capital investment for each pit. More importantly we need recruitment or the industry will die. Manpower has been cut to the absolute minimum. This is a life or death fight as far as we are concerned.

**Why is the support of the men so solid on this issue when only a narrow majority supported the strike call a few weeks ago?**

The press and media did a massive campaign against Arthur Scargill. They managed to make some of the men think, 'is this just a try-on by Arthur?'

However, after the ballot, the NCB document to the Monopolies Commission, with its list of threatened pits, made them realise that Arthur was not lying. Eight pits in South Wales would go quickly as they had been denied capital and recruitment. The men realised there was substance in our argument.



Emlyn Williams South Wales NUM President

**If the strike goes ahead, will it spread to other areas?**

The strike must spread or we will perish. Areas like Northumberland, Durham, Kent, and even the Midlands face pit closures. If necessary we will send pickets to other areas.

**What will happen if the Tories and the NCB do**

**not cave in, as they did in 1981?**

The strike would go on. In 1981 the money we were promised never came. No capital investment took place in South Wales. We were on a hiding to nothing. This time we must win.

**By Frank Cuthbert**

## SOCIALIST STRATEGY

★ No pit closures; No selling jobs; No redundancies; For a fight to protect every single mining job.

★ A living basic wage for every miner and an end to the divisive incentive scheme

★ Full and adequate financing of the Coal industry to ensure the necessary investment in all coal fields, decent wages and a realistic pricing policy.

★ An end to the miners subsidising the bankers. Cancel all debts to the banks and finance houses.

★ An end to the profiteering of the supply and distribution companies at the expense of the NCB and the miners. For the nationalisation and integration into the NCB of all the mining supply and distribution monopolies.

★ For workers' control and management of the NCB with one third of the board elected by mine workers through the unions, one third elected through the TUC to represent the interests of the working class as a whole and one third appointed by a socialist Labour government

★ An end to the insane situation where nationalised industries compete with one another. For a rational integrated plan incorporating all nationalised industries geared to the needs of working people, and under democratic workers' control and management

★ For the nationalisation of the top 200 or so monopolies which together control about 85% of the national economy, under democratic workers' control and management

★ For a democratic socialist plan of production aimed at meeting the needs of ordinary working people

## Other areas under threat

### Derbyshire

**The announcement in the papers that Whitwell colliery was included in the list of pits to be closed came like a bolt from the blue.**

On the Monday morning there was a general feeling of shock and disbelief. Men could be heard saying, "Scargill was right after all. If only I had known before the vote," and many more similar comments.

There are at present over 200 men in the 55 to 60 years age group at Whitwell. Most of them have worked over 30 years underground. These men have earned every benefit of early retirement that can be negotiated. But I am sure that none of these men are prepared to sell their jobs by taking redundancies, which would help in the closure of the pits.

Any redundancies taken must be on the understanding of a job being given to one of the scores of youngsters on the waiting list. My own son has been waiting for over twelve months. Instructions have

been received that no apprentices are to be employed in 1983 at all. This in itself spells out the beginning of the end of Whitwell.

In my own 29 years at Whitwell manpower has been reduced from over 1,000 to under 800 underground workers. Coalface teams used to number 24 but now teams of 15 are not uncommon.

We have accepted every new machine brought into the pits. Every bit of new technology has been welcomed, in the hope of lessening the hours of drudgery.

Now, we find that instead of shorter hours, fewer working days, early retirement and all the other benefits demanded in the last pay claim, we are finished with fewer men having to keep up with faster machines with greater pressure on the coal face workers, especially, and the added thought of the divisive bonus scheme at the back of workers' minds.

Already one colliery next underground to Whitwell has closed, or "merged" using the Coal Board's terms, although only two seams have been worked. Ireland and Arkwright collieries in North Derbyshire area are on the list with the intention

of the remaining coal being mined by the larger Markham pit.

It is obvious to miners at Whitwell that coal can be mined by Cresswell and High Moor collieries. Of course pits do close. Coal seams become exhausted. Every miner realises this as a fact of life.

But when the Coal Board gives reasons for closures such as "uneconomic" or "no longer practicable" then a closer look must be taken at the present and future policy of the NCB towards pits. All miners are realising the demand of Arthur Scargill for the immediate resignation of the Coal Board is a just and correct one.

The confidence of all miners in the Board's policies has been shattered. The demand of participation in the running of our industry of one-third workers, one third unions and one third government on the representatives on the management must be justified.

**By Ian Whyles**  
(Whitwell Colliery, North Derbyshire)

### Scotland

**The grass roots ordinary miners in Scotland really want everybody to go together. Solidarity is the key. That's what they want.**

Miners wouldn't cross nurses' picket lines so I can't see them crossing miners' pickets.

They know that the day any miner crosses a picket put up by other miners then that's the day he shortens the life of his own job, because that's the day he shows the board that there are division among miners that can be exploited.

It's the future of the industry that is now at stake. Our pit is not on the hit list, but we are not a "long life" pit either. Monktonhall had a Musselburgh project under the Forth, a complete new area that was started and then stopped. They had begun to open a road and then they abandoned the plan. All the NCB are interested in is developing a few super pits, and to hell with the rest, whether there is coal there or not.

The coal board has wasted investment and reneged on agreements they have made.

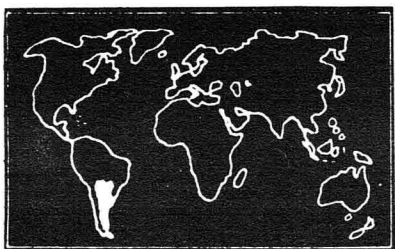
Take Kinneil pit. Reports estimate that over three quarters of the development work has been done, and yet now they want to close it with no justification whatsoever.

A pit nearby was closed with union agreement on the understanding that the reserves would be taken by Kinneil. They haven't even reached those reserves. Agreements count for nothing with the NCB. Somebody in an office somewhere decides to close you and that's that.

Any miner thinking of not crossing picket lines because of some promise from management in his own pit should remember the promises to miners in the past. We were promised that there would be no hit list!

You can't trust the NCB. They have gone from "natural exhaustion" as a reason for closure to so-called "uneconomic" pits. In some European countries where there is a far better financing policy, all these would be considered to be extremely "economical".

**By Ken Summerskill**  
(Monkton Hall Colliery, Scottish Area)



# Workers' strike-force threatens Argentinian Junta

**Even Argentina's Minister of the Interior, General Raston, was forced to acknowledge the truth about last week's General Strike: "Everything stopped" he complained.**

**In a country where officially any strike is illegal, the military felt powerless to intervene in case they provoked an uprising.**

The blue and white flags which festooned the streets of Buenos Aires last April after the capture of the Falklands, have long since vanished. Bitterness and hostility against the military is now the prevailing passion.

The weekend before the strike, hundreds of conscripts who fought in the Falklands shouted anti-government slogans at an official commemoration meeting for the war-dead. They booed the head of the First Army Corps and one senior officer drew a gun to protect himself, threatening to shoot any protesters.

Discontent is widespread in society. In November even the property owners of Buenos Aires took to the streets to complain about 'punitive taxation'. All they got in return was tear gas.

Last week the military also broke up a 24-hour vigil by relatives of the 30,000 people who have 'disappeared' since the military coup six years ago. Strikes are planned in all sections of the Argentine economy.

Since the Falklands debacle, the military have made concessions in a desperate attempt to stave off retribution. As one leading politician told the *Sunday Times*, 5 December: "The military are afraid that if they go, there will eventually be an investigation and they will be punished. We say that if they don't go, the people will hang them from the lamp-posts without an investigation."

## Nothing moved without the permission of the union leaders

Faced by this rather unappealing prospect, the military butchers have tried to fix up a deal with the leaders of the main civilian parties, the Peronists (supported by most workers) and the middle-class Radicals. They have offered a fifteen point plan whereby the transition to civilian rule was 'assured' in return for a promise that there would be no subsequent investigation into the Falklands war, human rights violations and economic mismanagement during the military's period in power.

But such is the hatred towards the military that every civilian politician was forced to turn the deal down flat. And the military last week decided they had better quickly bring forward the date for the return to civilian rule to 1983 anyway.

**By Colin Barber**

If any military waverers needed convincing, the General Strike should have proved conclusive. Virtually all production stopped, there was no trading in the whole of the banking system, all public transport came to a standstill. Nothing moved without the permission of the union leaders.

Trade unions which had seen their leaders murdered and their offices occupied by the military for six years, showed their power. The military chiefs knew that they could not count upon the loyalty of their troops if it came to a conflict with the workers. As the Buenos Aires newspaper, *Clarion*, commented: "(military rule) was manifestly weak in its twilight."

And the devastation to which they have helped bring the economy, lies all around them. Foreign debt has risen from \$8 billion in 1975, to over \$40 billion this year i.e. 60% of the Gross Domestic Product. With a population 10 million fewer than even bankrupt Poland, Argentina owes \$10,000 million more in debt.

## Argentina faces economic collapse

Even before the Falklands war it was going to take 78% of this year's exports just to pay off 1982's interest charges of \$7,800 million.

To try to help to stave off business collapse, more money has been released upon the market. But all this has meant is that existing inflation threatens to take off into hyper-inflation.

In July, for example, Ford and Renault, the country's two largest vehicle manufacturers, refused to sign any new agreement with the state owned steel plant, because the price of sheet steel had gone up 23% in the previous week.

The *Latin American Newsletter* described the government's latest economic proposals (26 November) as an attempt to "Avert a Financial Hiroshima". In the last eighteen months, the Argentine currency has all but collapsed.

**"We will try to keep inflation down to 160% next year"**

In August last year it stood at 8,000 pesos for one dollar. By the end of the Falklands war, which was meant to provide a distraction from the economic situation, it had fallen to 14,000 to the dollar. One month later, in July, the

black market rate was 57,000 pesos to the dollar, and in November, in a desperate attempt to restore some sense of stability there was an official devaluation to 40,000 pesos to the dollar.

This means that a casual labourer in Buenos Aires is now paid half a million pesos a week, only to find that half of that will probably be gobbled up in fares. Last month the Economics Minister promised he would try to keep inflation down to 160% next year.

## Falklands War made matters worse

All the economic statistics only point one way—down to deeper recession. Last year investment was down 22%, industrial output down 14% and Gross National Product down 6%. The Falklands war will only have made matters worse.

Over 1 million people are unemployed, in a workforce of about 8,500,000. In the last seven years the purchasing power of wages has fallen by 75%. Even meat consumption, in cattle-rich Argentina, is down this year 50%.

Faced by the rising tide of workers' discontent, the military asked the employers to concede some wage rise in August. The employers agreed in principle, but only if: there was a moratorium on tax debts (the twentieth since 1954!) and there was an amnesty on all funds acquired illegally.

Clearly Argentine capitalism is in no position to take the country forward, even when the yoke of military rule is lifted.

But the tragedy of the situation is that the leaders of the workers movement, especially the Peronists, are not prepared to mobilise the enormous power of the workers against capitalism and the military. The potential is there. 82% of Argentina's population live in the cities.

Power is ebbing away from the military. But the workers leaders are scared to take it. It took mass pressure from the rank and file for last week's General Strike to be called.

The leaders of section of Argentina's TUC, the CGT-Brasil (nothing to do with the country) and the CGT-Azopardo, were worried that the other is out flanking them. But they are also quite prepared to come to arrangements with sections of the military.

The crisis of leadership is seen in the Peronist movement. Historically this movement has had the greatest support amongst Argentine workers.

In the late 1940's the military autocrat Peron was able to grant reforms to Argentine workers as money flowed in from a war-torn Western Europe desperate for Argentine beef. And a

take-over of British economic interests helped sections of the Argentine capitalist class.

By this balancing act Peron was able to appeal to rival classes for a limited period. To many Argentinians, Peron's rule, which lasted until his overthrow in a military coup in the mid-1950's, seemed to be a golden age.

But when Peron returned in 1973, after another military junta collapsed, it was to a different Argentina. The crisis of the economy had polarised the class divisions within the Peronist movement.

One million people assembled to greet Peron on his return. He never saw them because gunfights broke out between the left and right Peronists. Peron died one year later, and by the time of his widow's overthrow in 1976, the Peronist movement was in almost total disarray.

## Last week's General Strike shows alternative

As political activity now returns to the open stage, the Peronist movement remains divided and the economic situation is even more desperate than before.

A Peronist rally on 18 October this year was the first public political meeting allowed since the 1976 coup. The hold of the Peronist movement upon the Argentine workers could be seen by the size of the meeting—30,000. But the rally ended in violence as one speaker attacked the left. Fighting broke out, and the left Peronists and the Young Peronists withdrew.

The latter groups (together with the more left wing trade union group CGT-Brasil) hold the key to the situation in Argentina. In the past, frustrated with the right-wing, some of them turned to the blind alley of bombings, assassination and sabotage. If they and others, now turned to the direction of Marxism, and campaigned on a clear socialist programme of action to end military dictatorship and capitalist rule, they could transform the situation. This would require the nationalisation of the land and all major companies and banks.

Failure to do so, will inevitably mean that Argentina will not break out of its continual cycle of mass discontent followed by military repression. Last time the military were prepared to wade through the blood of over 30,000 people to 'restore stability'. Next time the barbarism could be even more horrific.

Last week's magnificent General Strike shows the alternative. The strength of the workers' movement must not be left to isolated acts of protest—its power should be harnessed to change society.



**Above: Despite attempted repression by the military and police, the Peronist movement continues to grow, although the movement remains deeply split between right and left.**

**Below: The Falklands War used as in Britain, to bolster patriotic feeling, has caused more problems than it solved.**



## SOUTH

At a special conference, in Limerick on Sunday, December 12th, the Irish Labour Party decided to enter coalition government with the right-wing, big-business backed Fine Gael party.

The vote was 846 for the coalition 'package', 522 against. This decision on coalition, the third of its kind since 1973, is a set-back for the labour movement in Ireland.

It halts temporarily the steady move to the left in the Labour Party, reflected clearly in the mood and programme passed at the Annual conference, six weeks ago, in Galway.

The coalition arose from the recent General Election in the south of Ireland which gave Fianna Fail, the biggest capitalist party, 75 seats, Fine Gael 70, Labour 16 and others 5—leaving Labour holding the balance of power in parliamentary terms.

At the special conference a big majority of the most active members of the Labour Party, the members of Labour Youth and all the major unions voted against coalition. Unfortunately, the decision to vote against by the Irish Transport & General Workers Union and the Federated Workers Union of Ireland—the largest unions in the country—came six weeks too late. At Annual Conference at that time, they cast their votes against a motion that would have ruled out coalition, opting for a compromise of postponing a final decision to the special conference to "preserve the unity of the Labour Party."

If the 80 votes which they command, (the trade unions do not have a block vote in the Irish Labour Party) had been committed to an anti-coalition motion, that motion would have won and set the Labour Party free from the shackles of involvement in a capitalist government. Vacillation by trade union leaders always exacts a high price from their members.

Only the Marxist speakers at the conference hammered out forcefully a real alternative strategy for Labour. Supporters of *Militant Irish Monthly* advocated 'no support' for Fianna Fail, or Fine Gael in the Dail (Parliament) which re-convened on December 14th.

Instead, they argued, the Labour deputies should, in a blaze of publicity, declare that the policies of both right-wing parties would prove disastrous for the working class people and they should spell out Labour's alternative socialist policies as the only solution.

This would have allowed the working class, the trade union movement and the youth to see clearly that the two capitalist parties were two sides of the same coin. Those parties would then be put in a position of resolving the formation of government since they have, unfortunately, a Parliamentary majority.

Labour would enter a principled socialist opposition, as a base to build the Party, to prepare the way for an undoubted landslide in forthcoming elections as the



By Joe Higgins  
(Irish Labour Party  
Administrative Council)  
personal capacity

crisis of the capitalist system exposed the bankruptcy of the right-wing parties.

While very many delegates who voted for coalition saw the strength of this argument they felt that they had no real choice on this occasion. This was strengthened by the fact that no member of the Parliamentary Labour Party was prepared to support this strategy.

Marxist speakers pointed out that Labour's modest gains in the election were due to the semi-independent stand compared to past campaigns. Moreover, no leader or group of ministers in a right-wing dominated government (Labour will have 4 out of 15 ministries in cabinet), no matter how well intentioned can rise above and reverse the economic catastrophe facing Irish capitalism.

Growth is stagnant in the Irish economy. Inflation is among the highest in the Common Market. A figure equal to the entire Gross National Product is owed to foreign and native money lenders and speculators. The interest alone on this loan is an enormous strain on the Irish economy. The Central Bank admits in a recent report that real wages and living standards have fallen well behind inflation both in 1981 and 1982.

To attempt to ease the borrowing crisis and cut public spending a whole series of vicious cuts have been carried out in services like health, social welfare and education. The incoming coalition government will continue to implement savage Thatcherite measures.

Among those planned are the slashing of free school transport for 91,000 secondary school students in rural areas, taxation of the dole and disability benefits, massive rises in transport costs and cutbacks in the housing programme. These measures will now be implemented by a cabinet with Labour ministers.

### Confrontation with the unions

But it will be on the issue of wage rises in particular that the real confrontation will develop between the coalition government and the working class organised in the trade union movement. Public service workers are to be offered derisory wage increases (or not at all) in 1983 against a forecast inflation rate of 13%. They have already been cheated of wage rises due to them this year and are in no mood to be walked over again.

There will be no 'honeymoon' for this coalition. The consequences for the Labour

# IRELAND

## TORY GOVERNMENT-LABOUR PRISONERS



"The rich always betray the poor," says the Irish Labour Youth banner. They fought to avoid Labour being dragged into coalition with Fine Gael, the party of the rich. Photo: Derek Spiers (IFL) (II)

## NORTH Trades Council fights repression & sectarianism

Over the past week, the Derry Trade Union Council has issued two press statements to show the organised working class' response to the attempts to stir up sectarian divisions between workers in Northern Ireland.

Workers can only condemn the actions both of paramilitary groups such as the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) in the Ballykelly bombing and the vicious response of the police force the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) which has led to six brutal killings in the past month.

The organised working class are the only force which can overcome any of the problem of Northern Ireland, whether social issues such as the 20% unemployment, and slum housing or the foul sectarianism bequeathed by British imperialism or the repressive measures of the police and Army which threaten every worker in the North.

Labour movement organisations such as Derry Trade Council are taking a courageous stand. They are following the tradition of the trades councils built in the period following the end of

1975 who stood firm against sectarianism.

The first statement on Thursday 9 December pointed out that the massacre in Ballykelly on 6 December could only sow divisions between catholic and protestant workers.



"It is no accident that the INLA have carried out the present attack at a time when the organised working class is developing in Northern Ireland to fight the reactionary policies of Thatcher and her government.

"During the past two months we have witnessed a return to the vile sectarian atrocities that were the hallmark of the period 1971 to 1975. These atrocities are a serious warning to the trade union and labour movement and the unemployed. We call for no retaliation. The working class must stand together in opposition to the sectarian

madmen.

"All workers, Catholic and Protestant must denounce through their organisations, the trade unions, tenants associations, community groups and voluntary groups all these individuals and organisations prepared to carry out such savage acts. Only a united working class led by the trade union and labour movement can halt the sectarian atrocities, as was begun in December 1975.

"Trade union leaders and the rank and file must give a clear warning to the enemies of the working class; we will not stand idly by and close our eyes to your barbarous methods. By your savage acts you are consciously attempting to inject the poison of sectarianism into the ranks of the working class.

"Be warned. You are pushing us to the brink. If these atrocities carry on we will mobilise and call on the entire labour movement to isolate you within the working class communities."

The second statement was issued on Tuesday 14 December.

"The Derry Trade Union Council over the past three years has been outspoken on the question of repressive methods used by the state and its armed forces. For example in July this year the Irish Congress of Trade Unions overwhelmingly supported a resolution from this Trades Council with the call for the banning of the use of plastic bullets on the streets of Northern Ireland.

"This Council has dissociated itself from the campaigns and methods of paramilitary groups on both sides of the divide. Our main concern has been and will remain the upholding of the unity and interests of the working class throughout the North..."

"We also condemn, without reservation, the wanton killings by the RUC of six Catholics in Armagh over the past four weeks. The summary execution of these individuals by an RUC hit squad is also a serious threat to working class unity.

"The trade union movement in Northern Ireland must demand that the so-called cornerstone of British democracy, that a person or persons are innocent until proved guilty be upheld at all times."

Party will be shattering. The name will turn into ashes in the mouths of working people and the youth as they see the party of Connolly and Larkin, the great socialist founders of Labour, inflicting cruel measures on their lives and living standards to

pay for the crisis in a system they neither own nor control.

In the coming year or two, Labour in coalition will find itself in the eye of a tornado of opposition from the trade union movement and within its own ranks. The pressure

can become so intense that it could not be ruled out that for the first time in Irish history a coalition government may be brought down from within by the Labour element.

Labour must campaign for the ending of this

disastrous move, which is likely to do enormous electoral damage to the Party, with the so-called Workers Party gaining on the left. The fight will go on for a socialist Labour Party campaigning for real change in Irish society.

# Letters

VIEW? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?  
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO

MILITANT, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

## Women workers —a force to be reckoned with

Dear Comrades,

I'm a young woman worker for a catering service, a subsidiary of Trusthouse Forte which owns many big hotels up and down the country. I am employed to work in the canteen located in Weir Pumps Ltd, one of the main engineering factories in Glasgow.

Recently myself and 22 fellow workers were offered our 6% annual pay rise—seems fair enough, but it means I'll lose up to £11.00 because my working time will be cut by 9 hours a week. My take home pay will be £28, which is hardly worth working for.

This happened due to the decline in heavy engineering in the West of Scotland. Weirs Pumps Ltd wanted a cheaper firm to do its

catering—our catering service seemingly paid the highest wages! So they've cut our hours and asked for redundancies. One woman commented "You can't take us back to the 30's, you're expecting us to do more work in less time, with less staff for less money."

After we received written confirmation of our firm's intended actions we held a meeting where we unanimously decided on strike action although it was against practised procedure. The staff walked out on a half-day strike just before the meals were due to be served.

We mounted an unofficial picket on the gates and we received comradely support from the industrial workers on the shop floor, who, if they had been informed earlier would have blacked the canteen. As it was, there was no one to man the tills—so it was free meals for

the workers time. The firm lost an estimated £100.

On getting wind of this strike the personnel manager scurried up from Manchester to enter into negotiations—which earlier didn't seem possible. Our strike forced the bosses to retreat and negotiate our hours and the workers are prepared to enter into further struggles to get what they are rightly entitled to.

We will show them that women workers are a tangible force to be reckoned with and we will fight to defend our living standards.

For too long women workers have been used by this system. It is time workers both men and women said enough is enough and to fight together to end this rotten system that means poverty, misery and suffering for our people.

Yours fraternally,  
Isobel Stewart,  
AUEW.



The Falklands war this year. The Tories don't care about the problems of servicemen at war or at peace.

Photo: PA (11)

## Soldiers' rights

Dear Comrade,

"Those brave young men. We shall never forget them." Thus the words of Margaret Thatcher speaking about the Falklands crisis on a recent TV programme. But for one young soldier who was not involved in the Falkland fiasco (being discharged earlier due to medical reasons following a stint of duty in Northern Ireland) these words will seem—at the very least—most hypocritical.

After complaining about his disability pension being so low and believing that this government owed him more for the service he had given, he deliberately fiddled his allowance in order to attract attention to this fact. He is now serving a 2 month sentence in one of Her Majesty's prisons.

From my own experience—being a soldier once myself—I have also discovered how much this government really "cares" about rank and file servicemen. After leaving the army I was automatically

transferred on to the reserves (you have no choice about this matter) this means that until 1988 I can be called up at any time, for any reason.

It also means that on reporting to barracks for one day a year for training, in which you are ordered to, I receive a grant of £100 less tax of £30. But if you are unemployed we are told we can claim for the £30. After being on the reserves for 3 years, two of which I have spent on the dole, and after countless letters and visits to the tax offices, I have yet to receive a single penny.

Margaret Thatcher and her kind would not hesitate to use ordinary servicemen and women when it suits them. But when it comes to paying out money—that's a different matter. One young ex-soldier who I was talking to, and who had been disqualified from receiving any money at all, said to me that "if we had trade union backing we could hammer this government because at the moment they are just getting away with murder."

Thinking about those

young lads who were killed during the firemen's dispute when an ancient Green Goddess they were overturned and those other servicemen who had lost their lives or been injured so that those who were lucky enough to return could come home to 'this land fit for heroes'—the scrap-heap of the dole, poverty, miseries, etc, etc.—I could only agree with him.

Militant's campaign for trade union rights for the armed forces is being constructive because the majority of servicemen and women are just ordinary working class people who join up to escape from the miseries of the dole queues, and they need a body to defend their rights.

Yours fraternally,  
Bob Harker,  
Gateshead East LPYS.

P.S. Any ex-service men or women in the Tyneside area interested in finding out more information about the LPYS and the campaign for trade union rights for armed forces please ring me on (0632) 382636.

area where I was seemed more concerned about normal everyday problems such as trying to get their homes repaired than fighting against each other—or us.

My friends just cannot seem to understand that everyone (that is everyone who is working class) has the same problems in Northern Ireland and sometimes join together in working class unity.

My friends think that the protestants are always fighting the catholics and the catholics are always fighting the army. But this is not so (at least it wasn't when I was there). However your article about the Young Socialist march has at last convinced them. So once again thank you.

Yours faithfully,  
A. Fox,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

## Class unity does exist

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank you for the article you published recently about workers unity in Northern Ireland.

I have been to Northern Ireland myself when I was in the army and I used to tell my friends that the catholic and protestant people in the

could let me know where I can obtain the Militant paper. Glad to see Labour was returned in Scotland. I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely,  
Maud Churchland (Mrs),  
Bournemouth.

## What makes the headlines

Dear Comrades,

The unjust priorities of the capitalist press were brought home recently with the hysterical fuss over the Queen Mother and the fish bone in her throat on every Fleet Street front page.

In the same week a 51 year old miner tragically killed, crushed by a fall of rock, received only a few lines in the local evening paper. This is made even more ironic when you think how the media were tripping over themselves recently to give "headline" reasons why the miners were not worth a decent wage rise.

Yours fraternally,  
John Owen,  
Rugby.

## Builders—not destroyers

Dear Militant,

We had been eager to join our local Labour Party for some time and actively fight the Tories. However our ward is right-wing dominated and totally uninterested in recruiting new members.

We had almost given up trying to find the party secretary when my husband attended a "What Militant stands for" meeting in Coventry. We both felt *Mili-*

*tant* had the right policies and we were heartened to find them so actively fighting against Thatcher and so we became enthusiastic supporters.

It was *Militant* supporters who gave us the name and address of the secretary who now has our applications. It is ironic that *Militant* is accused of trying to destroy the party when it is the most active in recruiting new party members.

Incidentally we are now selling 10 papers a week in Atherstone and received an unsolicited fighting fund donation from a lady who said she didn't support *Militant* "but I'm just sickened by what the right wing are trying to do."

Fraternally,  
Chris and Max  
Bullingham,  
Atherstone.

## The big 'but'

Dear Comrades,

The local women's council organised a debate between *Militant* and *Solidarity* recently. The 'Solidarity' speaker said he wasn't a 'Solidarity' speaker but as he was an hour late anyway, it didn't make much difference. Nine *Militants* and four regular orders were obtained out of a meeting of 20 in a *Solidarity* heartland.

The 'non-Solidarity' speaker argued that you couldn't nationalise 200 companies as it took Labour years just to take over steel. Rolls Royce was quoted to refute this. An older constituency member said he could spot a socialist by their use of the word 'but'. Right wingers always say "I believe in Clause 4 BUT" and I'm in favour of ending low pay BUT".

Yours fraternally,  
Chris Edwards,  
Northwich.

## 'Opportunity' knocks no more

Dear Comrade,

A recent article in a local paper exploded any illusion that the new 'Youth training scheme' would be an improvement on YOPs; it pointed out that last year 10,000 young people in Nottinghamshire had been on YOP's schemes but that only 1,980 places would be available in 1983 in Nottinghamshire and only 6,000 in the whole of the East Midlands!

The only good thing about this is that it will mean even more young people will realise that all the Tories can offer is no jobs, no hope and no future.

Yours fraternally,  
J Slattery,  
West Nottingham LPYS.

## Facing the press

Dear Mr Taaffe,

I would like to tell you how much I admired and enjoyed your interview, Sunday 28th November with the Anthony Howard team. (Channel 4, "Face the Press")

We need younger men and new ideas. This country and its laws are years behind the times, when you see women going to jail against the suffragettes.

As you see I live in Bournemouth but I come from Wales and it is still a distressed area. After fifty odd years you realise what I think of the Conservatives. I have tried to buy the *Militant* paper but have so far been unlucky. Most of the newspaper agents sell all rubbish but not the *Militant*. I would appreciate if you

# The Burston revolution

**It is traditional at Christmas time for the telling of stories, folk-lore, legends and ballads. But the labour movement has only to look at its own class history to find tales that can put even such great storytellers as Dickens and company into the pale.**

**One such tale is that of the Burston school strike, the story of how a small Norfolk village took on the Tory establishment—and won.**

Burston, a few miles from the town of Diss, was the epitome of rural England at the turn of the century. For year upon year the village had rested on the Tory traditions of British rural society. The agricultural labourers lived in squalor and worked for a pittance, to be ruled over by their 'betters' on the Parish Council; the local farm-owners and the High Church of England. The head of the Parish Council, and so the veritable ruler of the village, was the Vicar of Burston, the Rev. Charles Tucker Eland.

The Rev. Eland believed strongly in the 'British way of life' and was a firm supporter of the Church of England's pious paternalism.

## The farm workers lived in squalor

While the average weekly wage for a farm labourer was 12 shillings, Rev. Eland's annual salary was £495. The worker's homes were tumble-down hovels: one man, his wife and six children had a cottage with only two bedrooms; another worker with a wife and four children, had only one bedroom. The Vicarage had 20 rooms.

Rev. Eland was a sporting type too, often seen around the village in his hunting cap and a rifle slung over his shoulder. But on Sunday, from the pulpit, he led the singing of 'All creatures great and small', and preached the evils of poaching.

However, the Rev. Eland's cosy world, and with it the Tory establishment, was about to be turned upside down.

In 1911, two teachers arrived at the village to teach at the local school, Mrs A. Higdon and her husband Tom. Both were ardent social reformers, and, although both teachers, had been active in the farm labourers' unions, which at the time were springing up around the country.

They were soon to clash with Rev. Eland. It was bad enough that they joined forces with a local 'trouble maker', 60 year old trade unionist John Potter, and started recruiting the villagers into a union. What angered Rev. Eland was their 'disrespectfulness' for the

**By Bob Wade**

village hierarchy and for his position. Not only was Tom outspoken with his native Somerset plain speaking, but Mrs Higdon was even less respectful, expressing her radical opinions, when after all, she was only a woman—a working woman at that!

Although upset by these continual snipings at his authority, the real crunch for the Vicar came in 1913 with the Parish Council elections.

Organised around the local farm labourers' union, Tom Higdon and other workers stood for election. They swept the board, clearing out the farmers and Rev. Eland's band of loyal church wardens. Indeed, while Tom came top of the poll, the Rev. Eland came bottom! To add insult to injury, the Vicar's former privileged post as Council chairman was given to a farm labourer, John Potter's son.

This victory sent shock waves right through the Norfolk land-owners and rulers. The local newspaper greeted the workers' advance with the screaming headline: 'The Burston Revolution!'

The new workers' council began battling with the Local Government Board to get new houses built for the labourers. They managed to secure four new homes (annulled by the outbreak of World War One). But as they struggled on this new political level, they did not have time to notice Rev. Eland's manoeuvrings for revenge.

## The Vicar's revenge

The Vicar's second line of defence was the school's Management Committee, made up of himself, his wife, a farmer who rented land from Eland, and the Rector of Shrimpling. Needless to say, the committee was safely in Eland's pocket. They supported his demand that Mrs Higdon be sacked.

The excuse was the spurious accusation that Mrs Higdon had caned one of the Barnardo children who attended the school. This allegation was of course denied. The village noted the irony of the Education Committee's sudden concern over the ragged, poor waifs from the Barnardo home, who for years had lived out their lives crammed into a damp, low-roofed slum in the village. It was also a 'surprise' that the Vicar was against caning.

Despite an intervention by

the National Union of Teachers, the Higdons were to be dismissed on April 1, 1914. But when that day came the April Fool was on the authorities.

As the Higdons got ready to leave, it was their pupils who took up the fight. One young girl called Violet Potter (of good 'trouble-making' stock!) walked to the front of the 60 strong class and wrote on the blackboard, "WE WILL GO ON STRIKE."

With this the children swarmed out on to the Village Green, laughing and shouting their defiance. When the Vicar heard of this mutiny, he summoned the forces of the state, in this instance the village's four policemen. But they were powerless to intervene—or was it reluctance, the red-faced Vicar noted?

The children's demonstration, led by placards demanding, "We want our teachers back," sparked the parents into action. They decided the children should be kept from school until the Higdons were reinstated.

The next morning the school bell rang loudly; the children formed up, march-

in, a blind old carpenter named Sandy came to the rescue. He gave up his workshop to the school, which became known as the 'Strike School'.

Desperate to to discredit this new movement, County Councillors, school inspectors, attendance officers etc, were soon queueing up outside to find something wrong with the Strike School, but to no avail.

## The labour movement comes to the rescue

A further blow came to the Vicar when a preacher arrived in the village. Sunday Schools were held in the Strike School, and he even carried out baptisms. Empty pews met the Vicar's pompous sermons—Rev Eland could not even lecture his flock from the pulpit!

Despite attempts by Rev Eland to evict Sandy (one of his many tenants), eventually driving the carpenter from the village, the story of the Burston school strike had began to spread across the land.

London brought another brass band and hundreds of railwaymen, who had taken the cause of Burston to heart.

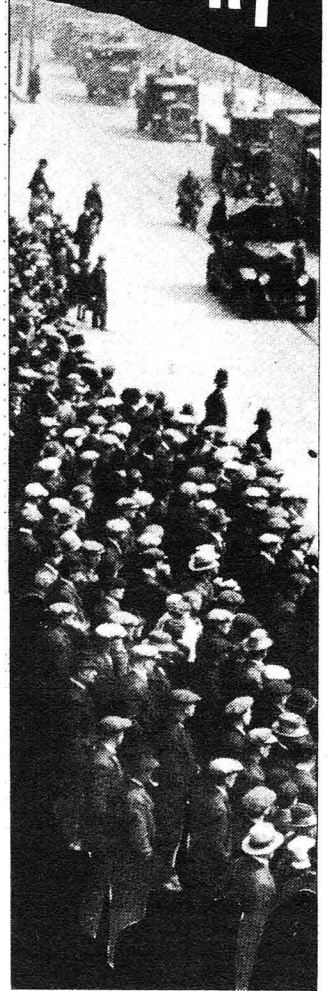
Burston was now becoming a national issue. The struggle now was not just for re-instatement of the teachers, but a full pitch battle against the 'old order'.

As the campaign grew, as solidarity action reached every corner of the movement, a sad note came with the death of John Potter. But his funeral was another show of strength to the authorities, with a trade union procession and funeral service held in the school. A Baptist minister from Diss took the service, much to the annoyance of the C of E Vicar of Burston.

With increasing support and funds coming in, victory was in sight. By 1917, a new school building was opened, paid for by the labour movement and run by the Higdons. After three years of struggle they had shown that the working class was quite capable—and still was—of educating its children.

It was a victory, the villagers had won. They had

## LABOUR HISTORY



Norfolk farm workers cheer their union banner in 1922. The 'Burston Revolution' spurred on the unionisation of farm labourers in Norfolk.

ed to the school—and ther away again! Never again did they enter that school building.

The strike action was on day after day, the children, along with their parents carried out a series of demonstrations often led by Violet Potter on her red painted bike.

Parents were repeatedly summoned before the courts, each time being fined for not sending their children to school. Eighteen mothers were summoned on the first occasion. Joined by others, and led by the children carrying a big red banner with the proclamation "We want justice" inscribed on it, they marched the three miles to the court. Every time the mothers were fined, the villagers responded by collecting the amount of money needed.

The children were being schooled, however. In the summer, the Higdons held classes on the Village Green. But with the nights drawing

The labour movement came to the village's aid. The Higdons received victimisation pay from the NUT. Resolutions of support and donations came flooding in—£165 from the railway unions, £300 from the miners, £1,000 from ILP and Co-op branches. A national defence committee was formed, including amongst its leaders, George Lansbury and FO Roberts.

Meetings were held on the Green with top socialist speakers coming up from London to address the village.

## Mass demonstration held in village

The turning point came on July 15, 1914, when a great demonstration was held. A brass band came up from Norwich, 18 trade union banners ringed the Green, and a special train from

taken on the Vicar, the village hierarchy, the law, the courts, indeed the whole Tory establishment. All had been forced into retreat. The

## Victory! The villagers win

school was eventually recognised by the Education Authorities, and so recognising the new social force in society. It served the village right up to the mid '30s.

The Strike School still stands in Burston today, with the legend 'Burston Strike School, 1917' carved into the brickwork. It stands as a monument to the struggle of the Higdons, the villagers and the labour movement.

But the struggle is not over. Despite the gains of the labour movement, the 'Vicar of Burston' and his ilk still run and control society, and are trying to push us all back

The story of the Burston school strike is taken from Reg Grove's excellent book 'Sharpen the Sickle—the history of the farm workers' union' Available from World Socialist Books, price £2.40 (+ 35p p&p) 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN

# Industrial Reports

## COHSE pay conference

The majority of delegates greeted the NEC's proposal for an all out-strike without emergency cover with either anger or bemusement at the special conference on Tuesday.

"Don't believe this", Chris Brais, said. "It's the biggest con the trade union movement has seen in years."

One delegate explained "we cannot put at risk the lives of workers and their families who have supported us during this dispute."

The general secretary, in his opening remarks, had put forward the idea that a stark choice faced us. Either accepting the claim, with the fall in living standards that would result, or support the NEC's proposal that would mean, amongst other things, nurses being struck off the register for leaving their patients. In response to this Peter Howarth, Oxford branch, received a standing ovation when he explained that his nursing members were not going to accept the idea of a choice between lower wages or leaving patients to die and the sack.

Whatever the motives behind the decision of the NEC, the conference rejected the call for all-out strike, either with or without emergency cover. However, it also rejected the idea of a 2-year pay deal or differential settlements for different groups of workers.

In moving the resolution on the 2-year pay deal the delegate explained that next year we would be in a much stronger position because the Tories would be concerned at taking on 1 million health service workers together with other sections of workers who may well be in dispute at that time, around the period of an election. With the different NHS unions, arriving at different decisions on the pay claim, there is a great danger now of divisions spreading out—possible with the call for ancillary workers to continue their struggle alone.

The TUC Health Services Committee must build on the unity that has already been created out of this struggle. By continuing the campaign for one pay increase for all NHS workers, and sticking to the principle of one out—all out, the basis can be laid nationally, as it has been locally, not only to settle this year, but for the battle of next year on pay and also against privatisation, closures and redundancies.

By Colin Piper  
(Leeds 257 Branch)

### BLACK FREEMAN'S CHICKENS

Strikers at Freeman's poultry processors are still determined to bring their strike to a satisfactory conclusion, even after they've been run down and poisoned by formaldehyde.

Pearl Hughes, steward, told us, "Readers of Militant could help us by blacking Freeman's chickens, especially in this Christmas period. We need to step up blacking especially with Dewhursts and Baxters butchers and Sutcliffe caterers, all of whom are still handling Freeman's chickens."

On 10 December two of the strikers visited Bristol speaking to Mike Hulin con-

venor of TGWU members at Cadbury Schweppes, and Jimmy Cheek, full time secretary of the TGWU Bristol Busmen's branch. The LPYS in the district is going to organise a mass picket of Freeman's either on Monday or Tuesday of next week, and anyone who could come along to that would be very welcome.

The strikers feel they should have had more support from the TGWU as most of the blacking has had to be done by themselves. Financial support is still urgently needed as well as support on the picket line, especially in the next week as this is Freeman's busiest period.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: Pearl Hughes, 19 Knights Way, Newent, Glos.

### AIR INDIA

A successful picket was held on 6 December of about 20-30 Air India and other workers including 6 LPYS and Militant supporters. It was held in conjunction with blacking by fuellers of Air India flights.

It was followed up by another picket on 13 December. These gave a tremendous boost to Air India strikers who have been out now for many months.

A number of fuellers refused to cross the picket

lines putting the wind up management who feared the potential unity of workers on Heathrow. Unfortunately because of the lack of a positive lead nationally from the trade union movement, this support has been dissipated and the Air India workers have been left to fight on their own again.

They are determined to carry on the struggle, however, and the union leaders should match the determination of these valiant workers.

By Brian Blake  
(Ealing N. Labour Party)



Union members on 22 September demonstration showed the determination and unity of hospital workers to fight for their pay claim. The same unity and determination is vital for future struggles. Photo: Militant

### Emergency cover— Response to Peter Doyle's article

Dear Comrades,

Last week's interview with NUPE organiser Peter Doyle, on the vexed question of emergency cover in industrial disputes, is the sort of item activists in the labour movement are thirsting for answers to.

During the "Winter of Discontent" four years ago, one of the most protracted issues debated in the Rotherham Joint Shop Stewards Committee (composed of 35 shop stewards from 3 unions covering 2,500

workers in 10 hospitals) was the application of emergency cover. This became particularly acute when because of the bureaucratic mentality which pervaded the application of selective action, there were calls for all-out action (in some cases, with no emergency cover at all!)

From the outset of the dispute it was management's motto that "If an inch is given, then take a mile." They were out to exploit the sensitivity of health workers to patients during industrial action.

The bulk of the workers I represented, supported cover of some kind. On January 22, the day of action, however, the emergency cover "agreed to" in the kitchens of the area's District

General Hospital amounted to a manning level much higher than we had on several occasions (owing to sickness or staff shortages). The irony did not go unnoticed: "We've got more on the day of the strike than usually!" was the frequent comment. Looked at another way, it was an open admission by management that the normal manning levels did not even match what they would interpret as an emergency!

The emergency cover agreed to was done over the heads of the shops stewards and shop floor by branch officials remote from those whom it affected and best placed to judge what level was an "emergency".

The lessons we drew from

this were the need for accountability over our officials and emergency cover under trade union control. In the months which followed emergency cover became one more battle in the war for workers' control over the shop floor.

"Industrial Features" is already proving an excellent innovation by providing a forum for key issues in the movement. Activists should flood the page with their experiences and then organise discussions at work around the weekly topics among their members and fellow shop stewards.

Yours fraternally,  
Leon Kaplan,  
Former COHSE shop steward.

## Tameside busses - Determined action wins disputes

Last week, 250 bus workers in the Transport and General Workers Union took strike action in Tameside over the sacking of their union secretary, John Barnet.

The situation arose at the Wibbitacie when some of the workers attended the funeral of a colleague. Whilst at the funeral the men left their ticket boxes in a room with inspectorial supervision, instead of putting them in lockers. At nearby Ashton and Hyde bus station, there were no security facilities at all. The workers had been demanding lockers at these stations for the past four months with no results.

However, when John Barnet returned from the funeral and refused to put his box away at the protest at the lack of security at the station he was first suspended,

then sacked with the recommendation reduced to a final written warning for gross misconduct. Several of the drivers were given no proper warning. The heavy handed attitude of the management feeling more secure in a climate of 4 million unemployed had already led to bad industrial relations and the workers now felt compelled to fight back.

Immediate strike action was taken and all but special school and hospital buses were called off the roads. Union membership gave unanimous backing to their union secretary and refused to accept anything less than total withdrawal of all disciplinary action and the immediate installation of proper security facilities at the bus garage. During an afternoon of discussion with the union representatives, management, realising the solidarity of the previous non-militant workforce,

were forced to accept the conditions laid down and the drivers went back to work.

This issue has caused an increasing anger and awareness in the bus garage at Tameside. As one driver said, "Look at my wage slip. I'm taking home £131 this week but to get this I've had to work 62 hours. I've hardly seen my kids for weeks and the hours I've had to put in to bring home a decent wage don't do your marriage or your health any good. At the moment they're offering us 4% plus 3% productivity. That means about £3.29 a week to me. It's not good enough."

Another worker spoke of the cuts in services: "They never consult us about cuts in services and we are the ones who know the route. We're not able to provide a public service any more. They're bringing cheap fares into Manchester at Christmas time so all the big shops can make more profits

but we want to see cheap fares on local routes all year round."

The conditions they are working on—the low pay, the difficult hours and the high incidents of stress and stress-related illnesses is a disruption to family life coupled with the imposition of cuts in services and higher fares have made the busworkers of Tameside increasingly aware of the need to defend public transport. They want reduced fares, improved services, decent wages and working conditions in order to provide a good public service. Only by workers' management and control can a fully comprehensive public transport service be provided.

Down with the Tories!  
Fight for the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

By Teresa Dunn



## NUR Presidential Elections Broad Left campaign for Bro. Knapp

The crisis in the railway industry was discussed at the rally of the Broad Left for Railway Workers on 11 December.

It was called to bring together activists to debate our effect against the vicious McCarthy proposals now forced upon our union.

Naturally enough, the discussion at this large meeting where NUR members were the overwhelming majority, representing all areas and grades in the country, became dominated by the forthcoming election of the NUR general secretary.

Two leading NUR activists, one an EC member, described the tumultuous year that is now drawing to a close. Who would have said that so many different sections of the NUR would have seen strike action in 1982? Who would have thought that our General Secretary would have been so decisively rejected in October after the Plymouth AGM in June, where a resolution calling for Weighell's resignation failed to get a seconder?

Both speakers welcomed the general secretary election and the opportunity to deal a blow to the right wing domination of the union, but it was pointed out that a new General Secretary was not in itself the solution to our problems. Only the ideas of the Broad Left taken up by the membership could save us from the lion's den that the right wing had guided us into.

One of the main platform speakers said that taken as a whole, railway workers' wages were now worth approximately one quarter less than when Sid Weighell took office as general secretary. Now the right-wing leaders were saying, "Let's exploit McCarthy". Exploiting McCarthy he explained was like panning for gold in the Thames.

The second speaker from the platform explained that the impressive success of Knapp so far, in winning nominations from branches was making the right-wing leadership very desperate. Already ways are being investigated of invalidating Knapp's support and he warned all to be on their guard. Summing up the fears of all those present, the brother, now a sitting EC member, explained that Knapp's defeat would bring

the full force of a witch-hunt against the Broad Left and other activists.

In the discussion, the name of Geoff Hensby was put forward by some as the best candidate of the left. There was unanimous agreement that Bro. Hensby had a fine record as an NUR member. Basing himself on the needs of the membership, he and openly fought productivity deals such as flexible rostering. Bro. Hensby's support for the programme of the Broad Left had even resulted in him being featured prominently as a witch-hunted left winger.

However, quite correctly, the majority felt that in this election Knapp was the best candidate to support for whilst Knapp's individual record does not compare with that for Hensby, a victory for Knapp would be a tremendous defeat for the stone age right wing of the NUR. Geoff Hensby, on the other hand, stands not the remotest chance of victory. It is Knapp who is recognised by the most advanced sections of the NUR as the left-wing candidate with a serious chance of winning. Support is strong for Knapp from those sections who want a change.

A campaign for Hensby by some of the left could cut right across the Knapp campaign. While Knapp's campaign is rolling ahead well, his victory, still is not assured. Nothing could deal a bigger blow to the rank and file than Broad Left supporters allowing such a type as Turnock or Dodds to slip in, due to a tactical mistake. That mistake would not be forgiven by the best elements who are already supporting Knapp and would lead to a long period of isolation for the Broad Left. Thus the feeling of the meeting was that Knapp has become the candidate that should receive the first vote and that second votes should go to Hensby.

Supporters of the Broad Left went away determined to campaign again for the ideas of the Broad Left and for a new leadership. It was amusing to reflect that after 18 months of its existence and of continuous witch-hunting, the Broad Left was well on its way—and that Sid Weighell was well on his way, too!

By Richard Sheppard  
Bristol No 4 Branch NUR  
(personal capacity)



The NUR presidential election give NUR members the opportunity to vote for a leader who will fight to defend jobs and services

Photo: Militant

## LUCAS AEROSPACE

Lucas Aerospace workers in Burnley face the prospect of further mass redundancies. The aerospace group intend to axe another 99 jobs. This follows the announcement, in February of this year, of the loss of 1,050 jobs of which 823 have already been achieved through voluntary redundancies and early retirement.

Undoubtedly these would have to be achieved by compulsory redundancies and any attempt of this kind would force the unions into industrial action as senior stewards will have a mandate from a mass meeting at Turfmoor football ground (see *Militant* 590) to fight compulsory job losses.

Terry Moran, chairman of the Lucas joint shop stewards' committee, said, "The loss of 1,149 jobs within 12 months, over 35%

## USDAW

At the USDAW North West Divisional Conference the USDAW Broad Left held a meeting to campaign for the forthcoming elections. The main speaker was Jeff Price, the Broad Left presidential candidate.

Jeff spoke about the need for USDAW to have a fighting leadership and put forward the Broad Left position of:

- ★ £90 minimum wage
- ★ 35-hour week
- ★ total opposition to the new Sunday Trading legislation
- ★ defence of the working week.

By Mick Wainwright

## GEC OSRAM

The dispute at Osram GEC in Shaw (see issue 628) is over. The women settled for £4.75 across the board, and improvements on sick pay. Although the workers were disappointed with the settlement, they felt that they would have faced a long struggle to achieve the £6.00 they were claiming, and although the factory has recently restarted a shift which had been laid-off,

they still feared redundancies.

However, they felt they had taught the management a lesson. One of the reasons for the week-long strike had been the threat to send home one department if they didn't drop the work to rule, which gained them the improved offer of £4.75. The strike had been an expression of solidarity and a warning to GEC that attempts at disciplinary action for trade union action will be met with resistance.

By Margaret Creear

## Water workers pay claim

The union and management side met on 11/11/82. The management offered 4% and one day's extra holiday for those with more than eight years service. They would not discuss the water-workers claim to be paid enough to put them in the upper quartile of the earnings league.

There is confusion amongst the workers on emergency cover. The management sent everyone an individual letter and have held meetings on this issue. If we strike the union will maintain emergency cover but there are no hard and fast rules on its application.

The management are resolving the right to direct men to emergencies and have a list of three points which would make going on strike meaningless, ie any incident which would be construed as being detrimental to public health—yet that could mean a toilet that hasn't been

flushed for three days. I believe we should have a rota, with a crew on stand-by all round the clock and responsible to the strike committee.

The management are reserving the right to call out private contractors and troops. If they do, we should withdraw everyone. The troops are not trained to do the job. They'd do more harm than good. There'd be plenty of overtime afterwards putting things right. Severn-Trent have threatened to use staff to supervise other people if we withdraw emergency cover. This will have to be watched.

A Severn-Trent Water Authority GMWU member spoke to Gary Freeman

## IRISH NEWS

Glenn Simpson interviewed Una Murphy, Mother of Chapel (shop steward), NUJ, Irish News.

What was the reason for your dismissal?

I was accused of gross misconduct of practice because during a union

meeting I asked the switch board to direct NUJ calls to the meeting. When the management sacked me, we were all surprised because we were all within standard union practice.

Did the fact that you were

sacked during pay negotiations suggest to you the management had ulterior motives?

Yes. We had put in a pay claim and a call for a house agreement (better conditions). By sacking me, management was attempting to strangle the issues but it underestimated the determination of our chapel (union branch) and all the

journalists came out on strike to demand my reinstatement.

Was the strike a success?

The strike lasted from 26 November to 1 December and for part of that time the Irish News was not printed in full. The management quickly realised that the journalists would not return to work until their shop steward was reinstated. I was

reinstated by 1 December and this was admission that I was wrongly dismissed in the first place.

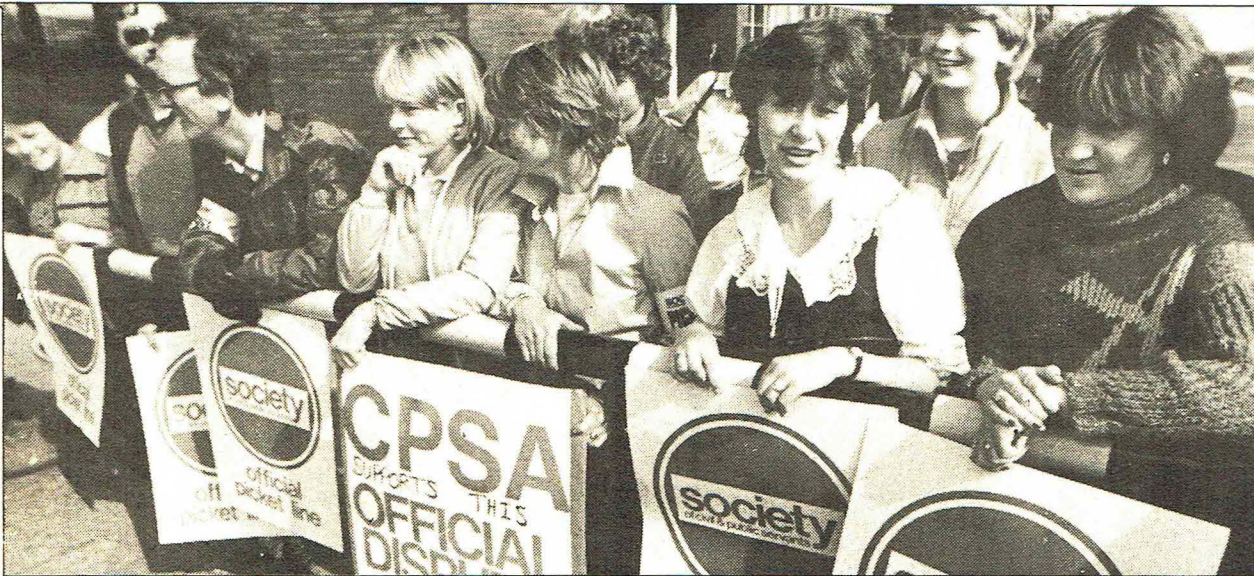
What kind of support did you receive and what lessons did you learn from the strike?

We received support from the NGA who only allowed death notices to go through to the paper and fraternal support from NW Belfast

Joint Shop Stewards' Committee (Health Workers). We also received the support of the N Belfast Young Socialists who joined us on the picket line.

I have learnt the need for determined trade union and political action against the bosses. In this dispute management have learnt that they can't intimidate the unions.

## Birmingham DHSS



Throughout the country DHSS workers face Tory attacks. Above: Bury DHSS workers strike over government 'Time and Motion' team sent in to prepare redundancies. Photo: J Smith (IFL)

# ALL OUT STRIKE TO WIN DISPUTE

By Gill Tromans & Roger Castle  
 (CPSA NEC and DHSS EC members, personal capacity)

**As the strikes in Birmingham and Oxford enter the 14th week, the resolve of the strikers remains determined.**

The will to win a settlement which provides proper staffing levels has not weakened. The CPSA National Executive Committee, by a unanimous decision has committed itself totally to an all-out strike policy in DHSS local offices, as the only way to win the dispute. The NEC has recognised that selective strikes are no longer sufficient and will not shift this Tory government.

The need to work for a positive vote for all-out strike action was also backed by a large majority of DHSS delegates at a special meeting convened at the end of the union's pay conference on 9 December.

An alternative strategy put

forward by the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) for a rolling programme of regional strikes, was rejected by the delegates and the NEC. The lessons to be learnt from the NHS dispute where largely the same strategy was used have been ignored by the SCPS. Strikers in Birmingham had some reservations about the NEC's commitment to an all-out strike. Reservations mainly brought about because of extreme financial hardship experienced by members on strike for 14 weeks, and also because they doubted the union's ability to produce support for an all-out strike.

Between now and 12

January 1983 CPSA will consult its members in the workplace on the question of all-out strike. During this time the full resources of the union will be committed to enable strikers from Birmingham and Oxford to address meetings. NEC members, DHSS EC members will also be campaigning at meetings to convince the membership of the need to deliver a 'yes' vote for all-out strike action.

If a majority for an all-out strike was achieved, special financial provisions would have to be made to those members in Birmingham and Oxford who have been on strike for three months.

There will be a meeting of DHSS delegates from all branches on 12 January. The results of the consultation exercise will then be known, and delegates will be man-

dated on the question of all-out strike. Members in Birmingham and Oxford must stand firm until the results of the consultative exercise are known. An all-out strike is now the only way to shift this government.

We call on all CPSA members to:

- ★ Support the call for all-out strike.
- ★ Attend your local office meetings.
- ★ Demonstrate to the Tories that CPSA members in DHSS are not prepared to tolerate further cuts in staff. Neither are they prepared to tolerate insufficient staffing levels any longer.

Messages of support and financial donations should be sent to:

Richard Horton, Room 337, DHSS, Fiveways House, Islington Row, Birmingham.

crease in man-power over the last year of a hundred or so men, mainly transferred from closed mines. But, as was explained to the men in the pit-head meetings, the position in many pits is that they have not recruited for two years or more.

In the last 12 months 1,200 jobs have been lost in the area and recruitment is almost non-existent with only around 200 men taken on in the same period.

All miners know that every pit needs at least two faces, otherwise a problem on one face could mean the premature closing of a pit. But the Board is attempting to make all South Wales pits one-face pits.

Although South Wales is the largest producer per head of top-grade anthracite we have been the hardest hit in

the British coalfields. It is little wonder our members feel that it is a deliberate policy by the Board, especially when you consider that Yorkshire had £1,600 million worth of investment last year, and one pit in Barnsley received £59,000,000, twice as much as the whole South Wales area has been offered. The Tory strategy is clear to all our members. They want to run down the coal industry in the same way as they decimated the steel industry.

### Vultures waiting

All the "peripheral" areas—Wales, Scotland, Kent and the North East, will be starved of investment and allowed to die if the Board get their way.

Furthermore, if they manage to get away with it in South Wales you can be sure that in the next 10 years private enterprise vultures will swoop in to pick up the rich pickings, in their own private mines. That's the real intention of the Tories. To run down our industry—so that private enterprise can step in.

But the South Wales miners will not stand idly by and let their industry be destroyed. If investment is not forthcoming we will be out on the 17th and we are confident that support will be immediate from every other coalfield in the country.

Thatcher and her crowd have ruined the lives of millions of workers and their families. They will not destroy our lives, our communities nor our industry.

## CHRISTMAS GHOST

(Continued from page 1)

Island, how, for example, they were never told about the possible effects of nuclear testing either in the short or long term.

According to *Nationwide*, Colin Avey and Ron Tarrant are only two of a vast number of people coming forward with identical symptoms. When confronted, a government spokesman, wary about being committed to admit the use of Services personnel as guinea-pigs, astounded these four with statements which they knew to be absolutely false.

"Protective clothing," he said, "was worn by all concerned." Colin says no protective clothing was either issued or worn at any time during the testing.

So casually was the whole affair handled that the burns some suffered from the heat of the blast were referred to as sun tans. And they joked amongst themselves that next time they would sit on deck in the nude to get a 'quick all-over tan.'

"All personnel were given vigorous medical check-ups after the testing." A quick shower, and ointment for his burns was the extent of his 'vigorous' check-up, says Colin.

"Special radiation monitors were worn by all personnel to measure the extent of their exposure." Colin says, "These must be a figment of the spokesmen's imagination." The only device he saw anywhere near this description was a gadget used to his knowledge by only six officers. It measured X-rays as used by radiographers in hospitals; it had nothing to do with gauging the lethal radiation.

"The islands were

uninhabited. Colin Avey, personally spoke to inhabitants of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands as they were being evacuated shortly before the blast. The islands were most definitely inhabited.

"No one was allowed within 15 miles' radius of the islands during testing." HMS Scarborough with over 200 personnel on board was consistently in a five-mile radius of the blasts. Unbelievably, at one stage she actually sailed through the base of a nuclear cloud!

"The radiation exposure to the services was no more than the acceptable level, experienced in normal life." The lunacy of this statement according to Colin speaks for itself.

Colin Avey wants anyone who was serving in Christmas Island in 1958 to come forward with details to add to the mass of information being gathered to get a complete picture of what went on there and the subsequent effects.

It seems this government is preparing itself for yet another cover-up operation as to the effects of nuclear tests, with ignorant statements and a callous indifference to the interest of the working class people charged to carry them out, to the eventual detriment of their health.

Colin Avey asks, "is the same deceit being used now with regard to accidents in nuclear power stations?" Rod Fitch, PPC for Brighton Kempton has taken up the case and has written to Michael Foot, asking him to meet a deputation of the men and to demand a full enquiry into the events surrounding nuclear tests at Christmas Islands. Any information please contact Colin Avey, 156 Swanborough Place, Brighton, Sussex.

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