

# Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 678  
2 December 1983

20p

## TUC MUST CALL.....

# 24 Hour GENERAL STRIKE NOW!

**NO TRADE union is now safe: It is clear that the newspaper employers are out to crush the life out of the National Graphical Association.**

Every other employer is waiting to rush into the breach if the NGA go down.

All NGA funds have now been sequestered in order to strangle the union. Even the union Benevolent Fund, from which death duties and pensioners' Christmas bonuses are paid, has been frozen by the courts.

**By Chris Newis**

(NGA National Council, personal capacity)

The full strength of the trade union and labour movement must now be brought to bear in support of the NGA and against the Tories' anti-union laws. The print workers are fighting on behalf of the whole trade union movement.

If the Tories and the bosses can use scab labour to undermine trade union conditions, and then using the Courts to tie up and bankrupt one union, they will soon do the same with all the rest. The issue is fundamental for the whole movement—whether or not trade unions are to be allowed to function effectively in their members' interests.

The TUC must prepare now a 24-hour general strike using the full strength of the 10 million-plus trade unionists. The TUC must demonstrate the enormous power at its disposal.

A 24-hour strike, with meetings, rallies and demonstrations should be the start of a massive campaign, to force the Tories and the bosses to retreat over

the *Messenger*, the courts, and the fines.

If the TUC General Council are not prepared to call for such a campaign, the trade union leaders that have expressed their support must come out and fight themselves—the membership of TGWU, ASLEF, NUM and other industrial unions would respond to a lead from the top in support of

the NGA. Others would respond in other unions and industries.

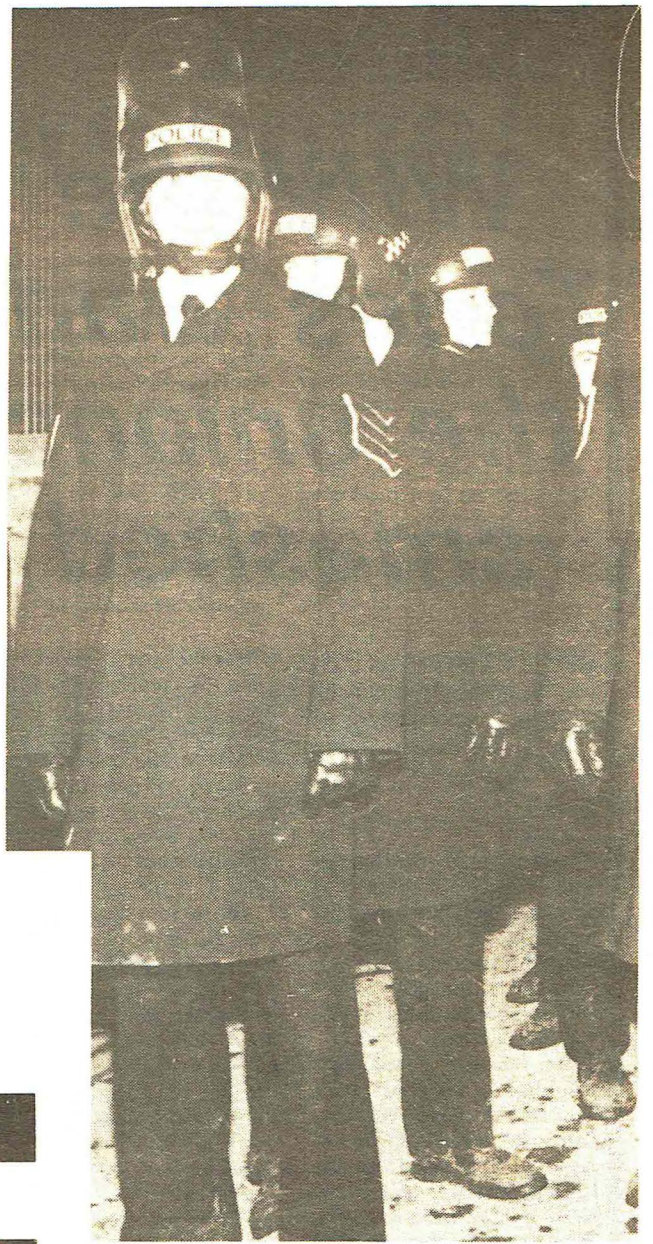
Joe Wade General Secretary of the NGA should call for support from other trade unions—miners, engineers, dockers, etc—for an organised and massive labour movement picket.

An all-out strike must be organised in the printing industry, with the full backing of the TUC. The Newspaper Publishers Association, one of the most rabid sections of the ruling class and the one most enthusiastic for anti-

union laws in the first place—are out to smash the NGA, in order to bring in new technology and push thousands onto the dole.

The NPA action to sue the

CONTINUED ON  
BACK PAGE



Riot police brutally attacked peaceful pickets at the *Messenger* works at Warrington. The Tories are defending cowboy bosses like Shah, who wants to destroy the unions so he can pay staff way below union rates. See back page.

## The bosses laws

THE LABOUR movement cannot accept the Tories' anti-union laws.

Workers must judge laws, not in the abstract, but by which class interest they are designed to serve. The Tories' anti-union legislation upholds exclusively the interests of Big Business.

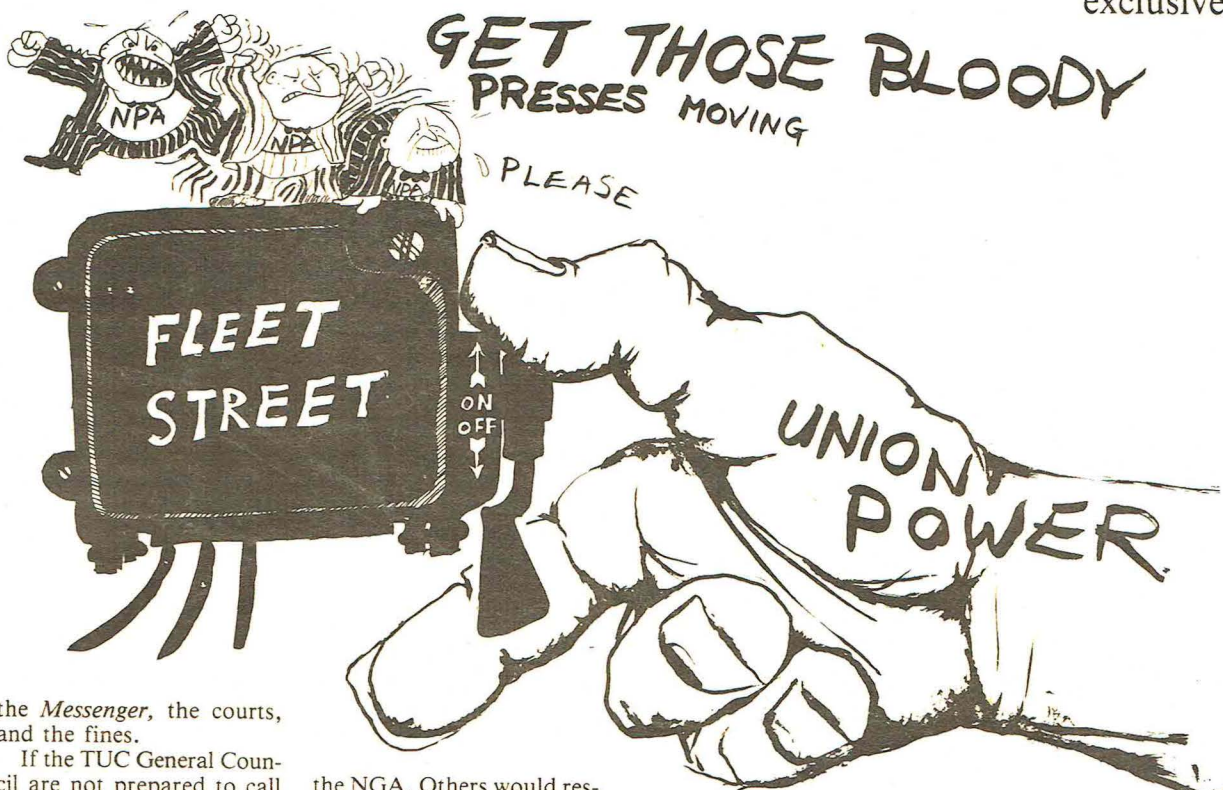
They have condescended to let unions remain legal; but they are trying to outlaw any effective trade union action.

The Tories are determined to cripple the power of the trade unions which are the only firm line of defence against the government's attempts to slash living standards. Thatcher, Tebbit and Co. and their echoes in the Fleet Street editorial offices show a sickening hypocrisy towards "law".

Even where laws in the interests of workers are on the statute book such as health and safety rules, the Tories turn a blind eye to help their friends in the business board rooms. In other words *there is one law for trade unions and workers, and another law for the bosses.*

About a decade ago, the working class made mincemeat of the Heath government's Industrial Relations Act (see pages 6-7). Because of that bitter experience, the Tories have been more circumspect but they have nevertheless built

Continued on page two



# Militant

## Why the Tories want the unions smashed

**RIGHT FROM** its first day in office in 1979 the Tory government declared a vicious class war against the trade unions.

This resulted not from any "doctrinaire" prejudices by Thatcher and her gang. By attacking the unions the Tory government were better able to savagely reduce the living standards of the working class.

But this in turn was not a product of "unreasonable" Thatcherism (as even some Labour leaders have argued). It arose from the terrifying crisis which faced British capitalism when Thatcher came to power and which has been enormously aggravated in the four and a half years since.

We have detailed the catastrophic decline of British capitalism many times in the pages of *Militant*. This was once again underlined in a very penetrating speech—ignored by the capitalist media—made by the Labour MP for Coventry South East, Dave Nellist, a *Militant* supporter, in the House of Commons on the 24 November.

He pointed out, "Britain has gone from being the second country in Europe and the fifth in the world in *per capita* output to being 19th out of the 20 OECD countries. From having 25% of world trade 25 years ago Britain it has about 6% or 7% now!"

"A few years ago," he continued, "the National Westminster Bank, hardly a socialist institution, published a paper demonstrating that there was a £100 billion gap in manufacturing investment in Britain as compared with Japan and Germany. That was the difference in the mid-1970s. If we allow for inflation that gap has now increased to £200 billion."

"The difference between the economies of Germany and Japan and backward Britain is rather like giving one worker a spade and another a tractor, asking them to dig a field, and berating the one with a spade for taking two days because the one with the tractor took two hours. The gap in investment and manufacturing has reached horrendous proportions."

He went on to detail the "spare capacity" in a whole series of industries. During the recent recession, industry was working at only 70% capacity. During "upswings" there is "excess capacity" of something like 20%. Thus 20% of industry is compelled to lie idle, mothballed even during the present "boom" in order to maintain the profits of the capitalists.

It is these facts which explain the frenzied attack on the trade unions by this Tory government. Even if the Tories were to reach the target of 3% growth in output or a 4% growth in investment every year British industry would still lag way behind its nearest rivals.

The intention of the Thatcher government in coming to power in 1979 was to arrest the decline of British capitalism and restore the profitability of big business at the expense of working people. Despite the flannel of the so-called economic experts, profits come from the unpaid labour of the working class.

*"... the motions and the decisions that you have taken taken illustrate your opposition to the government's economic policies and to its blinkered determination to press on with its anti-union legislation. But they show something else which to me is equally and even more important—your determination to defend yourselves. That is as it should and must be, but it does not mean that we are just going on to the defensive. As your general secretary spells out in his introduction to the report, the greater the external threat the greater the need for solidarity within and between affiliated unions..."*

—Len Murray, speaking at NGA conference, 1982.

However, this is not possible without weakening the power of trade union organisation. The trade unions are a massive barrier on the road to savagely cutting the living standards of the working class.

Prior and Tebbit have sought to make inroads into the trade union and democratic rights of working people. Trade union organisation, the closed shop, have been denounced as "despotic", imposed by militant minorities on protesting workers.

Thatcher and Tebbit pose as champions of "trade union democracy" but the rights of the working class: the right to strike, freedom of assembly, the right to organise and vote have not been granted by a benevolent ruling class.

All these rights have been conquered by the working class in the teeth of the persecution and even the transportation of the pioneers who attempted to organise the trade unions and the blacklisting of shop stewards.

It is shameful that Bill Sirs and Terry Duffy can advise the National Graphical Association to bend the knee to Tebbit's legislation on the alleged grounds of "remaining within the law". If such advice had been heeded by the pioneers of the movement, there would be no trade union movement as we know it today.

It must be categorically stated that the labour movement must not hesitate to break unjust anti-working class laws. The history of the

labour movement is the history of struggle against attempts to impose legal fetters on the trade union movement.

Once the power of the working class is unleashed no amount of laws can hold the trade unions in check. What is written with working class organisation and struggle cannot be erased by the stroke of the legislative pen at Westminster, whether it is wielded by Heath in 1971, or by Tebbit, Prior or King today.

The impotence of the employers once the working class is on the move was shown by the reaction of the Fleet Street barons to the actions of the NGA members who walked out. They threatened the workers with dismissal. They declared that no NGA member would be able to return to work without a "binding undertaking" to work "normally". Yet two days after the walk-out and after they had lost an estimated £20 million the employers accepted the NGA printers back without any "undertaking".

Even Shah himself, according to the *Financial Times*, was prepared to give up on Sunday night after the closure of Fleet Street. Shah is a 'maverick' who could easily be brought to heel by the NGA if it used its full strength.



WE'RE RIGHT BEHIND YOU SON  
SO LONG AS YOU DON'T BREAK THE LAW



In a well-drilled, military style occupation, the police at Warrington attacked and dispersed the mass trade union picket.

Photo: Militant

### Bosses' laws

(FROM FRONT PAGE)

up a new web of legislation to try to paralyse union action.

They want to stop any effective picketing. So-called "secondary picketing" is outlawed. If these Tory laws were obeyed, only works directly involved in a strike could be picketed. In effect, union solidarity, built up over centuries, would be banned.

In the *Stockport Messenger* dispute, workers are only "legally" entitled to picket the original plant which was closed down, not the Warrington plant where Eddie Shah's scabs were working. It is the Tory equivalent of the offside trap! Every time workers get near goal, the bosses blow the whistle.

Only workers directly involved are "legally" entitled to picket, and the narrow definition of 'direct' involvement would outlaw sym-

pathy strikes. Strikes against cuts in public spending, against incomes policies are "illegal" because such disputes are not directly with the employer. Workers have been incensed and have broken these Tory laws because obedience would make union action practically powerless.

If the laws don't stop "illegal" strikes, the laws will try to bankrupt the unions as the Court's fines and sequestrations of NGA show. The law puts no limit to the number of findings of contempt in any strike. Union assets can be seized and trade unionists jailed.

The Tories want tame company unions. A victory for the NGA in this dispute will be a victory against all the plans of the Tories and their rich backers.

The trade unions must show that they are not prepared to accept the class laws and the class morality of the Tory Party.

Last year, hundreds of thousands of workers were involved in 'secondary' action in support of the National Health Service workers. The sheer size of the movement made it impossible for the Tories to prosecute, although these workers and their unions were technically in breach of the law.

There must be enough support, moral, financial and physical, from the labour movement to ensure that these new Tory anti-union laws are consigned to the same dust-bin as were the last lot. There simply aren't enough jails-despite the Tories enthusiasm for building new ones, and packing the old ones—to hold the entire trade union movement.

If the Tory laws are allowed to be effective, trade unions will be bankrupted and broken. The Tories must be broken before that is allowed to happen.



# Why they want to break the NGA

## The hidden cost of freesheets

THE STOCKPORT *Messenger*, at the centre of the present dispute is a free newspaper, or 'freesheet'. Like its other sister papers, it is distributed free from door to door, with all its revenue coming from advertising.

Outside central London the proprietors of the older established 'paid-for' provincial papers are coming under increasing commercial pressure from the freesheets.

The freesheets increased their advertising revenue fourfold in the last few years, from £35 million to £136 million. In contrast, the 'paid-for' papers increased their income from ads by only a third, to £198 million. They will be overtaken by the end of the year.

Whereas most freesheets at first contained largely adverts, they have increasingly carried editorial material, in order to hold their readership. There are some 'free' groups with as many as 50 journalists on the staff. The *Messenger* group itself already has nearly 50% editorial content in its freesheets.

The injection of freesheets has destabilised the provincial newspaper industry. Get-rich-quick cowboys rush onto the scene with four or five freesheets, only a couple of which may survive—but enough for a boss to carve out a market for himself while driving down his opposition.

With this instability in the printing trade, ruthless bosses such as Shah can undermine the print unions, cutting back on pay and conditions like the closed shop. They play on the workers' fear of redundancy or closure.

Similarly they can lessen resistance to new technology which slices off more jobs with every new development. This is currently being car-



A mass picket outside the notorious *Nottingham Evening Post* in 1979. After a two month provincial journalists strike the NEP's owner, Pole-Carew, sacked 28 journalists who took strike action thus destroying the NUJ chapel at the paper,

having already undermined the NGA and SOGAT. This was a typical example of a ruthless provincial proprietor securing non-union labour. This must not be allowed to happen at Warrington. Photo: Militant.

THE TIMING of the Fleet Street bosses' attempt to take on the NGA was no accident. They have been continuously plotting ways in which to break the NGA and push through new technology.

Many print workers expected a crunch-battle towards the end of this year, as Reuters—the extremely profitable news agency—comes up for sale. All the Fleet Street newspaper groups are set to grab a piece of Reuters, which is worth a staggering £1 billion.

## Fleet Streets' plans

As the *Financial Times* stated (October 15), a "Reuters windfall gives national newspapers the capital which could finance a revolution in its production processes through the introduction of new technology."

Also, the print bosses are in the process of constructing new print works which they hope will break the NGA, through closure of Fleet Street print shops leaving the bosses to recruit as they choose for the new sites. Rupert Murdoch's News International has just completed its new factory in the

free enterprise zone on the Isle of Dogs; the *Telegraph* group has a site for such a works, and Robert Maxwell's corporation is negotiating for a site.

### Project Breakthrough

In addition, the press barons are pinning their hopes on 'Project Breakthrough'. With support from Fleet Street bosses, proprietors in the provincial field are carrying out 'Project Breakthrough' to try and bully the weaker NGA provincial chapels in-

to allowing the introduction of new technology. As the *Financial Times* blandly commented, "success here would leave the national newspaper chapels in a far more isolated position."

However, as the present dispute shows—with the National Proprietors Association at sixes and sevens and the NGA national membership's solidarity with the six victimised members in Warrington—the designs of the press barons can be thwarted.

By Bob Wade  
(North London NUJ)

## WARRINGTON THREAT

THE DISPUTE at the *Stockport Messenger* began last July when the manager of the group sacked six members of the National Graphical Association after a strike to back up a previous closed shop agreement.

The *Stockport* typesetting plant had a closed shop for a number of years but when the management began to expand with new titles and two new plants—typesetting at Bury and printing at Warrington—steps were taken to undermine the position of the union. The agreement that the *Stockport* closed shop would be extended to the other plants was torn up and the owner of the *Messenger* group, Eddie Shah, began to recruit non-union labour.

With over three million unemployed, the six sacked workers were determined to get their jobs back: "We cannot settle for anything less," they said. Although only entitled by the Tory anti-union laws to picket their own workplace, it would be ludicrous for the sacked NGA members to picket *Stockport* and ignore the other two plants in Bury

and Warrington.

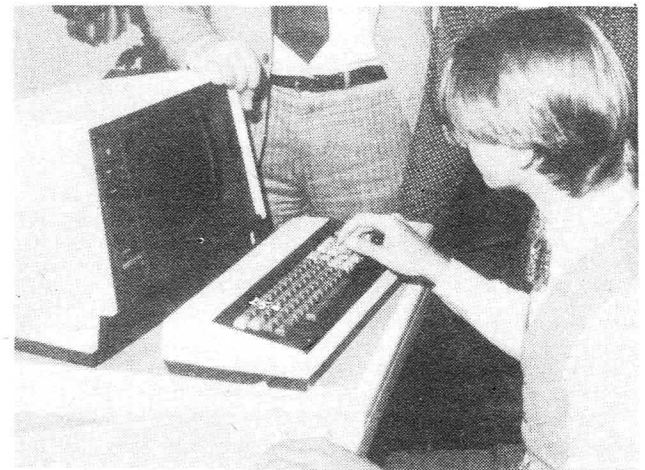
Quite correctly, the NGA have realised that if Shah is allowed to get away with it, he would be able to use the new plants to undermine the wages, conditions and jobs at *Stockport*, and in the region. The *Messenger* issue, therefore, has a direct bearing on the conditions of print workers in the whole of the North West and nationally.

By John Pickard  
(North London NUJ)

## NEW TECHNOLOGY

THE NATIONAL newspaper bosses want to break the NGA so they can implement new technology.

Systems are available for the computerised composition of a newspaper. Called 'single-keystroking' it would allow journalists and advertising staff to type directly into a computer system, cutting out the tasks normally carried out by NGA members that currently come between the editorial and printing process.



A Visual Display Unit. This 'direct input' technology can undermine NGA jobs.

duction, but only with the agreement of the NGA who maintain control over the process. Hence the press barons' continuous whine about 'overmanning'.

But the bosses have little to complain about. Even with the present systems, they are still making massive profits—last year's pre-tax profits for the *Sun* were £22 million, the *Mirror* £8.1 million, the *Express* group £2.9 million etc. Printworkers are not prepared to sacrifice their jobs just to boost the already overlaid bank balances of the bosses class.

Circulation of morning regional papers in England and Wales:

1973: 910,000                      1982: 750,000

Circulation of evening regional papers in UK:

1978: 6,088,000                      1982: 5,487,000

Circulation of local paid-for weeklies in UK:

10,700,000

Circulation of local free newspapers:

24,000,000

# London Labour Women's Conference Class issues avoided

**THE RECENT London Labour Women's Conference should have concentrated on the attacks on the rights and living standards of working class women.**

More than ever before we are facing penny-pinching measures from the Tories. In my borough Newham, it is proposed that some wards in the local hospital will change to a five-day week. They are talking about increased "community care", which is shorthand for women being forced to stay at home to look after the sick and old. Unfortunately these issues were largely ignored at the London conference on 19-20 November. We had to fight to get the only resolution which took up the need for a socialist programme to be actually debated. It was moved, seconded and passed, but no time was allowed for discussion.

Instead conference concentrated on issues which arise from women's oppres-

sion within society, but without linking them to a class struggle to change society. Organisational short-cuts were proposed which it was utopianly asserted would remove discrimination.

When Janet Toms, from Bermondsey Women's Section, argued against this short-sighted approach, she was heckled and barracked. Janet called for practical measures to ensure women played a full role in the labour movement: for union meetings to be held in work's time, for proper baby-sitting and transport to be arranged, for democracy and accountability of union representatives.

Instead of this approach conference passed an amendment which altered the whole purpose of the resolution: it stated that positive discrimination was essential to bring women into the labour movement. Conference was told that *Militant* was against democracy.

Louise Churcher (Bermondsey) refuted these charges pointing to the unsurpassed record of *Militant* supporters and LPYS members of winning working class women to the Labour Party. Over half of

those attending this year's LPYS conference were women.

Later a split emerged on whether to boycott this weekend's 'National Conference—cum—Rally'. Many women's sections have protested that this replacement for the cancelled June conference is limited to one day and will have no resolutions before it. But it is now

the only opportunity this year to meet and discuss with other women from the Labour Party and trade unions. London Labour Women voted by 47 to 37, with 20 abstentions to boycott the National Conference.

However *Militant* supporters Sandra Mitchell and myself were chosen to go on the Regional Women's Com-

mittee and we will press for the London Women's Organisation to take up the real issues facing working class women and their families; in the next few months that means campaigning to defend the GLC, its jobs and services from Tory attacks.

By Jen Pickard  
(Newham NE CLP)



Protesting health workers give Thatcher a Christmas message. The Labour party Women's section must take up issues facing working class women. Photo: Militant



## British justice

The National Graphical Association has been fined £175,000 by the courts for secondary picketing, with a threat that if it continues then all the union's funds will be seized. Some weeks ago on Tyneside four men died in the belly of a ship because their employer knowingly ignored safety regulations. He was fined £1,000. So the next time someone tells you about British justice . . .

## From the horse's mouth

During a recent debate on education cuts, held at North Staffs Polytechnic, a Tory councillor made the following statement: "People are leaving schools nowadays and they can't read, write or add up and that's how we want to keep it".

## Simply years behind

The electronics firm Phillips may be heading for the next century but its name-sake, Phillips the auctioneers, are somewhat different. This month they revived a practice from fifty years ago.

In the depression of the 1930s, desperate unemployed couples would enter marathon dancing contests for prize money. The grimness of this "dance till they drop" was well captured in the film, *They shoot horses don't they?*

This month Phillips the auctioneers got fifty unemployed pianists to perform and show that the pianos they had for auction were up to scratch. The pianos were valued at up to £8,000; the pianists got £5 each.

## Backing invasion of Grenada

A full page ad in the *New York Times* recently, headed: "United States action

in Grenada heartens Europeans", was signed by 107 politicians, academics, trade unionists, writers and journalists, some of whom belong to the "Committee for the Free World", a right wing organisation which publicises Reagan's ideas on Central America.

The signatories included those well known friends of the working class, John Biggs-Davison, Lord Chalfont, Lord George Brown, James Goldsmith, General Sir John Hackett, Paul Johnson, Enoch Powell's biographer T.E. Utley, Peregrine Worsthorne, Woodrow Wyatt and Frank Chapple.

## What a load of Beaujolais

An article in a certain journal gives us tips on buying wine for Christmas. The author, Edmund Penning-Roswell, rambles on about the wonders of Chardonnay, Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape or Mâcon Villages and how 'cheap' they really are, although he adds we should "buy as high as can be afforded".

Mr Penning-Roswell certainly knows his stuff. He's the wine correspondent for the *Financial Times*, and (according to *The Guardian*) has a personal wine cellar of 2,000 cases. But what was the certain journal this whole-page article appeared in? Why, none other than the so-called 'theoretical' journal of the Communist Party, *Marxism Today*.

## And pigs can fly!

Fleet Street's coverage of their dispute with the NGA has been hilarious. Gone is the usual style of industrial coverage—no "bully boy picket" stories, no "unions holding country to ransom" hysteria. For once in their lives, the dailies are having to report an industrial dispute in almost fair and accurate terms. For obvious reasons.

A typical example was the rabid *Daily Express* (23 November). Its editorial attacked Ford workers for rejecting a pay offer in its usual foaming-at-the-mouth fashion. On the same page, they carried a small two column inch factual report about the NGA. The *Sun* however went even further. They described all those workers carrying out 'illegal' picketing in Warrington as "Defiant print men", who had "challenged the government".

## Fascists attack LPYS members

LAST FRIDAY, the chairman and secretary of Bermondsey LPYS, Gill Abbot and Mark Harding, were attacked in broad daylight in the 'Blue' market in South London.

One thug approached them and asked about the Labour Party. The next thing they knew, two others jumped Mark, forcing him to the ground. They all began kicking him so badly that Gill had to throw herself over his body to try and protect him, taking a number of kicks on her back.

A swastika on a chain was produced, with the thugs saying this was what 'they believed in'.

After a quarter of an hour wait for an ambulance, Mark, who works for the steel workers union, the ISTC, was taken to hospital.

The LPYS will not be intimidated by these fascist thugs. On Saturday, December 3, at the Southwark Park Road market place (the Blue), they will be out on the streets with leaflets and papers.

## Health vigil

OUR YOUNG Socialist branch in Poole recently protested against the health cuts with an all-night vigil outside the local general hospital.

We wanted to highlight the proposed Tory cuts of £500 million in the NHS and the dire consequences this would mean for working people.

We began at 6 pm. We received overwhelming support—people queued to sign our petition. After reading about our proposed vigil on the front page of the local paper a nurse joined us for the whole of the night.

At 3 am, when we were shivering with the cold, a porter brought us out jugs of hot chocolate. Several doctors joined us to show their concern over the cuts. In all, about 40 people attended the vigil at one stage or another, representing 11 different unions.

Our LPYS branch

secretary was interviewed on the local radio, although press coverage was not so good, as Miss World who had just won her crown came from Poole—we were shifted onto the back page. However, judging from the great response we received, people took our protest far more seriously.

By Julie Harris  
(Youth Officer,  
Poole CLP)

**Young Workers' Assembly**  
**December 10,**  
**Manchester.**  
**Free Trade Hall**  
**(for details see page 9)**

## Labour's youth in action

A LABOUR Club has been set up at the Dorset Institute of Higher Education. At its inaugural meeting, 27 students attended to hear Cathy Wilson, Labour Parliamentary candidate at the Isle of Wight during the general election.

BASILDON LPYS in Essex had a good response when they campaigned outside a local YTS centre. Leaflets were given out and ten papers sold. When the LPYS made a second visit to the centre, they were invited into the rest room by the trainees for a discussion; only to be ejected by the management who threatened to call the police. Basildon LPYS are now organising a public meeting on YTS.

SUPPORT IS growing in Eastern Region for the Young Workers' Assembly. Health workers will be attending the assembly from Colchester, as well as five young members of the TGWU on strike at Sevenage. Coaches and mini-buses will also be travelling up to Manchester from Ipswich, Norwich, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Essex.

LPYS NATIONAL Committee member John Hird took part in a public debate with a Young Conservative, County Councillor Martin Callanan, before an audience of 80. The Tory wasn't impressed with John Hird's condemnation of Thatcher and capitalism. The Tory declared, "The future for youth is, indeed, very bright under the Thatcher government." The audience didn't think so. They voted 54-13 in favour of the LPYS.

THE RHONDDA branch of the LPYS held a successful recruiting drive recently. Basing a campaign around the Youth Training Swindle they visited local schools and colleges. Despite the opposition of local headmasters and the area Education Committee, the campaign was an enormous success with six new members from the local FE college alone. After involving the new members in the campaign to support the 22 October CND march, work has already begun for the Young Workers Assembly, and so far the local NALGO branch are sending five delegates.

WHILE THE incompetence and corruption of the capitalist class is covered over by a boom, crisis throws into sharp relief the fact that swindling is an inherent feature of the capitalist system.

The biggest theft in the world currently under investigation is not the Great Bullion Robbery or the Hatton Garden jewellery break-in. The details are buried away in the columns of the serious press—the case of Drysdale securities. *The Guardian* (24 May, 1982) explained the background:

"The market in which this minnow was caught up is worth some \$638 billion, a sum worth more than twice the total wealth of the British economy. Each trading day the turnover in 'repos'—and 'reverse repos' the game

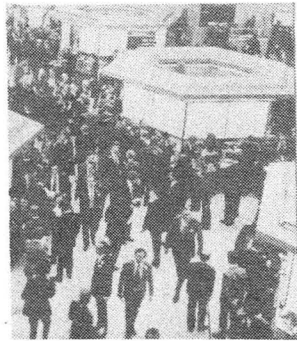
which Drysdale was playing—is an estimated \$60 million."

"Reverse repos" sounds to workers like something out of the Kama Sutra. Though details are technical, the principles are straightforward.

If you don't have any money (which Drysdale didn't) you get someone to lend you some. You then gamble.

If the gamble wins of course, you can pay back the loan and put the rest of your winnings in your hip pocket. But if you don't...

## Lies murder and deceit in the world of Casino economics



The London Stock Exchange.

But it wasn't just them who lost out. Though they had only been in existence for four months, Drysdale

*"IF THE crisis demonstrates the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive force, the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint stock companies trusts and state property shows how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions*

*of the capitalists are now performed by salaried employees.*

*"The capitalist has no further social function than that of pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons and gambling on the Stock Exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital."* (Frederick Engels, *Anti-Duhring*)

succeeded in conning \$250 million out of Chase Manhattan Bank (the third biggest bank in the USA and

a citadel of financial rectitude). This sum is equal to the entire sum of the Tanzanian economy.

Still, this story has a happy ending as the fraud squad have begun to round up Drysdale's leading executives.

In the periods of capitalist prosperity financiers can do nothing wrong. They develop the most fantastic misconceptions as to the nature of their system. Shortly before the 1929 Wall Street crash a speculator was asked the secret of their prosperity:

"One investor buys General Motors" (he means shares in General Motors) "at \$100. Sells it to another at \$150 who sells it to another at \$150 who sells it to a third at \$200. Everyone makes money" (Galbraith—*The Great Crash, 1929.*)

Hong Kong today is a striking example of this belief, engendered by boom, that capitalists can walk on water, and of the subsequent outbreak of mass drownings. Hong Kong is a regular temple of Mammon said to be run by the Hong Kong Bank, the Jockey Club and the firm Jardine Matheson (who got their start by selling opium to the Chinese).

### Speculators force prices up

As one of the most densely populated places in the world, Hong Kong boasted some of the highest property prices. Speculators bid the prices up to the sky.

This dizzy spiral came to

a halt when the future of the colony came into question. Some properties lost nine tenths of their value.

Speculators caught a cold. It was the end of the road for the web of companies such as 'Smartmoney Ltd', 'Edgar Earnings Ltd' and 'Extra Dollars Ltd' built around Carrian Investments by its colourful founder George Ian, the proud possessor of three passports—from Paraguay, Singapore and Tonga. Ian is now under arrest, but with debts of \$1.2 million this collapse promises to the drag down big chunks of the financial establishment.

An interesting aspect of this scandal is that the BMF Bank in Malaysia is owed \$500 million. This is surprising because Malaysia's financial affairs have long been cornered by the ethnic Chinese and BMF was specifically set up by the Malaysian government to bring into existence a Malaysian capitalist class.

### MARKET LEADER

The most wanted shares recently have not been those of a car firm, a computer manufacturer or any industrial firm at all. No, the Stock Exchange has other social priorities. The shares they have all been chasing have been Aspinalls, the gambling firm for the very rich.

The shares were oversubscribed 56 times. On their first day of trading recently they made millions for their owners. Without lifting a finger in work, shareholders found their shares rise from 115p to a peak of 170p. This company, an appropriate popular leader of Thatcher's casino economics, is now worth £83m.

So what were BMF doing lending \$500 million in unsound speculation to Chinese millionaires in Hong Kong? An auditor was sent to Hong Kong to find out. He was found strangled by a karate belt—an interesting parallel to the mystery of Roberto Calvi, found hanging under London's Blackfriars Bridge in the wake of the Banco Ambrosiana scandal.

In the famous words of John Stonehouse: "not every Tom, Dick and Harry can run industry". When they tell you workers can't run industry, remember these cases. It's impossible that we can do worse than the capitalist class.

By Mick Brooks

## Secrets of the Mosley files

**MULTI-millionaire German industrialist Fritz Thyssen showed the role German big business played in the rise of the Nazi party. He called his autobiography: *I paid Hitler.***

Now the recently declassified Home Office files on Mosley and the British Union of Fascists (BUF) show British capitalists had the same idea. Supporters who contributed included: Lord Nuffield (motor manufacturer), Lord Inchcape (shipping magnate) and Sir A V Roe (aircraft manufacturer).

### Daily Mail

The owner of the *Daily Mail*, Lord Rothermere, was (according to a file dated 18 June 1935) one of the "principal personages behind Mosley". Indeed Mosley's "Chief of Staff", Ian Hope Dundas, was sent to Rome as the *Mail's* so-called "Rome Correspondent". Through this liaison Mussolini syphoned £36,000 a year to the BUF.

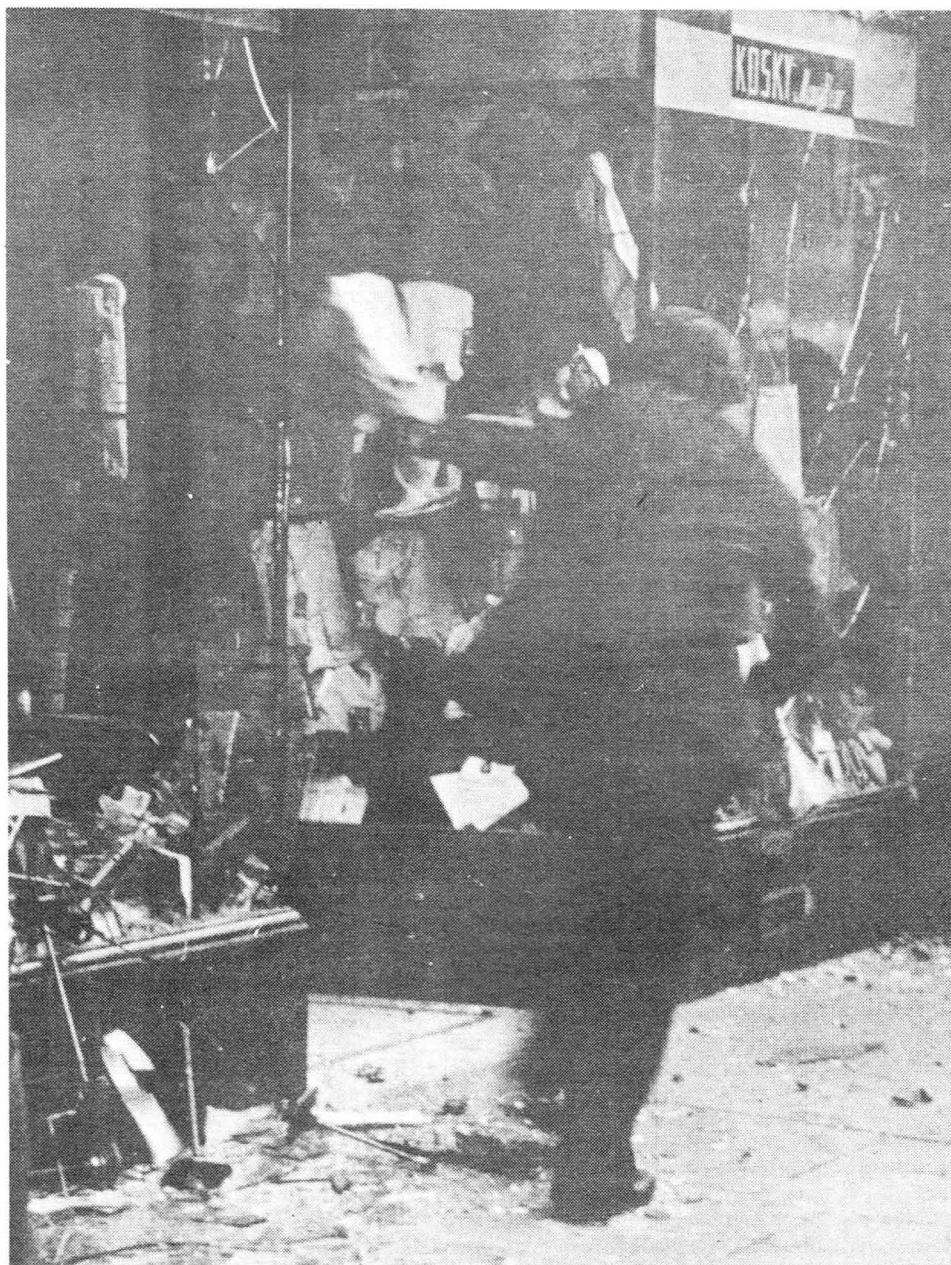
Support did not stop there. It ran as far as the "highest in the land". The documents show that Mosley wanted to replace King George VI with his exiled brother, ex-King Edward VIII, because of the latter's pro-fascist views.

Edward, as Duke of Windsor, visited Hitler in 1937. Fascist, Unity Mitford, said when Edward VIII abdicated in 1936: "Oh Hitler will be terribly unhappy about this, he wanted Edward to stay King" ('Unity Mitford' by David Pryce-Jones, p.193).

Hitler himself said, "If Mr Baldwin had not turned out King Edward VIII, I might have been receiving him today instead of Mussolini."

The Mosley files released this month were originally not going to be made public until 2010. Even now some of the 'most sensitive' files are not being released. In an almost unprecedented ruling they will not be available for a hundred years after they were taken.

Who is the ruling class so



Fascist thugs smash up a Jewish shop in London's East End in the 1930s.

carefully protecting? Could it be the Queen's uncle, Edward VIII?

So far the modern *Daily Mail* has not told its readers one word about what has been revealed in the Mosley files. But whilst the *Mail* tries to cover up its past, the rest of Fleet Street has lavished praise on the successful monitoring of the BUF by "our vigilant" intelligence service.

### M15 infiltration

There is no evidence to suggest that the M15 infiltration of the BUF was merely to prevent its influence growing; it would be more logical that they were keeping a watching brief, until, and if, the BUF was needed. Sir Winston Churchill's

admiration for Hitler and Mussolini is a matter of historical fact. He was not alone.

Sir Thomas Moore MP, wrote in the *Daily Mail*, 25 August 1934, "Surely there cannot be any fundamental differences of outlook between Blackshirts (BUF) and their parents, the Conservatives."

*The Times* wrote, 15 August 1934, "Rarely do we read... anything of the social, educational or even moral achievements of the Hitler administration... Hitler may even have been guilty, either personally or through his followers, of what may seem to us, without lack of knowledge, crimes against his own people, and he is responsible to them, not to us." The year

before, the concentration camps Dachau and Buchenwald had been established.

The financing of the BUF was not an aberration of the eccentricities of British society—indeed it was the most

### The real threat

sober representatives of capital that saw the real potential for a fascist movement. *The Times*, 9 November, comments: "The Home Office thought the BUF could take off if industrialists, alarmed by the prospect of a Labour government with a big nationalisation programme, stepped up by their funding to Mosley". The capitalists "fear" related to a socialist government rather

than increased funding to the BUF.

With historical hindsight the press try to portray Britain as being specially placed to "avoid" the continental pestilence of fascism. The truth is somewhat different. In his pamphlet *The Menace of Fascism*, Ted Grant points out:

"The world slump of 1929 - 33 saw the emergence of the Mosley fascist movement as a serious force for the first time in this country. The capitalist class of Britain recognised in the Mosley movement a militant and extra-parliamentary weapon which they could utilise against the working class in a period of social upheaval, in times of crisis and slump.

"Only the fact that the British capitalists succeeded

in emerging from these critical years without the need for direct action against the workers determined their limited use of fascists at that time. Nevertheless, they kept the fascist movement in being as an 'insurance' against the future."

The British ruling class, who originally supported the rise to power of Hitler and Mussolini, were prepared if necessary to unleash fascism on the British working class. The lesson for the labour movement is clear; when you are being lectured on capitalism and democracy and the "British way of doing things"—just ask them, who paid Mosley?

By Mike Waddington

In the summer of 1972 the trade unions faced as big a challenge as they do today. Dockworkers were imprisoned under the Tories' so-called Industrial Relations act.

This article reprinted from Militant in July 1982 shows how the working class were able to organise to make the Heath government's anti-union legislation a worthless piece of paper.

By Wayne Jones



Ted Heath, ill-fated Tory Prime Minister 1970-74.

EDWARD HEATH came to office in the 1970 General Election after fraudulent promises of "a better tomorrow". In reality, Heath was determined to attack the living standards of workers, and one of the main weapons in his armoury was a new anti-trade union Bill.

Heath could not avoid an attempt to take on the unions. The long post-war boom of capitalism was coming to an end. Profits were being squeezed. Concessions gained by the trade unions in the 50s and 60s could no longer be tolerated by the bosses and the increase in wage levels, spending on social services etc would have to be curtailed.

Thus the power of the trade unions, that had fought and secured the increased living standards of the earlier period, would have to be dealt with. The trade union leaders alone could not be relied upon by Heath to police their members. The state would have to be used.

The Tories laid down plans for a complex network of legal constraints on the trade union movement, (the Industrial Relations Act) which if accepted and fully implemented, would have left the working class defenceless against an onslaught on living standards.

Yet, within three and a half years, every major plank of this structure had been smashed, the Tory government lay in ruins and Ted Heath was ingloriously booted out of office. This was achieved by the active protracted and often unofficial, resistance of the massed ranks of the labour and trade union movement.

The incoming 1974 Labour government merely swept away the ashes of the corpse of the Industrial Relations Act killed stone dead by the industrial muscle of the trade union rank and file.

But above all the momentous battles against this legislation, the most damaging body blow was the struggle around the "Pentonville five" when five dockers were jailed in July 1972. This battle was the culmination of two years of unrelenting pressure and activity by the trade union rank and file against the IR Act, including numerous strikes.

This whole stormy period saw the government proclaim a State of Emergency 5 times in 3½ years. In four years from July 1970 more than 5.6m working days were lost in protest, avowedly political, strikes against the Industrial Relations Act, and the government's counter-inflationary policy. 1972 saw 23.9m days lost in strike action—the highest since 1926!

In December 1970 the Tories issued their Industrial Relations Bill under the supervision of Robert Carr the Secretary of State for Employment.

The Bill was a bosses' charter, designed to strip away long

established trade union rights and to put the trade unions at the mercy of a Special Court, the National Industrial Relations Court, headed by Sir John Donaldson, which had the powers of the High Court.

Trade unions were obliged to register with a special government appointed Registrar of Trade Unions. Failure to comply (register) with the government's rules for 'good behaviour', enshrined in the Registrar, would deprive the unions of immunities protecting the right to strike.

The Bill further prescribed a series of 'unfair' industrial practices such as 'blacking' and sympathetic action in support of other workers, for which the unions could be legally penalised. Penal sanctions included heavy fines and imprisonment.

The majority of collective bargaining agreements would be legally binding and legal protection was given to non-unionism. The closed shop was outlawed and strike action was to be discouraged by instituting compulsory strike ballots and a 60 day 'cooling off' period.

### A period of class conflict

Even before the Bill was published the trade union rank and file were mobilising to resist its implementation. On Dec 8 1970 over 600,000 workers stopped work, unofficially, for the day and over a million were involved in the Day of Action, in protest against the Bill coming to parliament. No national newspapers were printed yet Vic Feather, TUC General Secretary, denounced this stoppage.

**The TUC at this stage rejected proposals to sponsor strikes against the Bill on the grounds that it would harden anti-trade union attitudes.**

On 1 January, 1971, over 45,000 Midlands workers struck and marched against the Bill.

The TUC finally organised a demonstration for February 21 in London. Over 200,000 took part to "kill the Bill", the biggest demonstration since the Chartist movement of the 1840's.

The movement amongst the organised working class against the government's policies grew. Marches and strikes broke out all over the country. In 1971 over 13 million days were lost through strike action and the temperature of the class was still rising!

**By the end of February 1972, after two months of struggle, the miners had avenged the defeat of 1926 by a united national strike that left Heath's Incomes Policy in tatters. Weeks later the railway unions were to deal the Tories and the IR Act another heavy blow.**

They were forced to have a secret ballot after an enforced cooling off

# When workers

period of 14 days in order to test the backing for their wage claim which was well above the government's 8% norm. But the railworkers crushingly supported their claim and their leadership by a vote of over 5 to 1. The government were forced to back down, conceding an increase of nearly 14%.

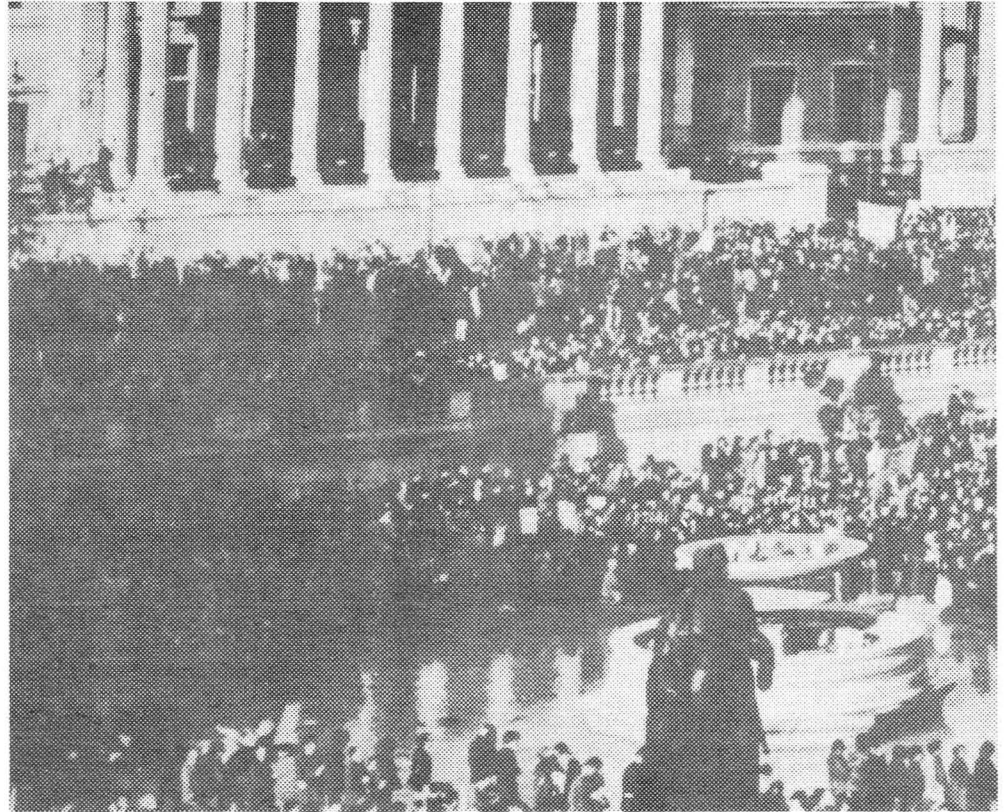
In the meantime, however, a dispute was brewing in the docks.

From 81,000 in 1951, the number of registered dockers had slumped to just over 43,000 in 1971. The decline of British industry and the introduction of containerisation and other changes designed to improve productivity meant that most ports had a surplus labour problem.

Dockers were concerned about their future. The Temporary Unattached Register introduced to decasualise the industry and give a measure of stability to dockland was becoming more of a pool of permanently unemployed dockers on fall back pay of £20, under half the dockers' weekly wage.

At the same time, previously traditional dock work of loading and unloading cargoes was being done off the docks in groupage container depots by firms not employing registered dockers, in other words at lower rates of pay and worse conditions. There was also a proliferation of non-registered docks and wharves springing up as employers avoided their legal obligations to the registered ports and employed cheap labour.

Impatient at the failure of the union leadership to address themselves to this problem, the unofficial but powerful and well organised National Ports Shop Stewards Committee decided to carry out a campaign of 'blacking' of containers from off-the-dock depots. Containers were transported by lorry to and from the docks, so the lorries were blacked.



Part of the 200,000 strong demonstration in London, 21 February, 1971 against the Tory Industrial Relations Act.



Bernie Steer (under the banner), one of the Pentonville five addresses a meeting in London.

In Liverpool the dockers 'black-ed' Heaton's Transport, setting up pickets at the Dock gates to stop the lorries. Heaton's appealed to the NIRC against this 'unfair practice'. The court fined the Transport and General Workers Union £5,000 and then another £50,000 when the union refused, in line with TUC and TGWU national policy, to pay up and to attend the Court.

By this time blacking had also begun in Hull, London and Manchester.

After a narrow decision the TGWU Executive on the advice of the TUC, began to retreat and attended the Court, claiming that the union had no jurisdiction over the stewards who continued to 'black'.

In Hull, Walter Cunningham, the Hull Shop Stewards' leader, was named in a court order to lift the blacking. He refused. Faced with imprisonment and heavy fines solidarity flooded in from all over the country.

In June the spotlight shifted to London after the failure to intimidate Walter Cunningham or break the solidarity of the Hull dockers. On the 12th the NIRC ordered dockers to stop picketing Chobham Farm Cold Storage Depot or else face the wrath of the law, including imprisonment.

Warrants were issued for their arrest on the 15th and within one day the docks were out all over the country. 35,000 were on strike.

But this proved merely to be a

dress rehearsal for the real thing one month later. The three indicted dockers, Bernie Steer, Vic Turner and Alan Williams, were rescued by the timely intervention of the hitherto unheard-of 'Official Solicitor'.

However, picketing continued around the country against the transport firms on the 'Cherry Blossom List'. Once again, writs were served on Steer and Vic Turner, the leaders of the National Shop Stewards Committee, plus five other dockers who were picketing the Midland Cold Storage Depot in Stratford, East London.

The Tories calculated that this inter-sectional dispute within the TGWU, between the dockers and the lorry drivers, both of whom felt their livelihoods threatened, would cut across solidarity action.

But rather than crushing the power of the working class, that power was revealed more vividly than ever and it was the Tories who received a hammering by spontaneous strike action on a scale not seen for decades.

Having failed to comply with the requests of the Courts the arrests were set in motion, five dockers being named: Benie Steer, Vic Turner, Tony Merrick, Cornelius Clancy and Derek Watkins. The jailings took place on Friday 21 July.

"Just before 5pm Chief Superintendent Alec Robertson, Commander of Hackney Division



Industrial Relations Bill.

# 's stopped Tory laws



appeared with a Sergeant Major's baton and a pair of brown gloves. A bulky man, he walked with such apparent coolness that the dockers shouted 'here comes John Wayne'. He was accompanied by two inspectors. The dockers began chanting Sieg Heil and lifting their arms in a Hitler like salute.' (*The Times* 22 July 1972).

The dockers formed a protective cordon around those to be jailed but the dockers' shop stewards appealed for the arrest to be orderly and peaceful. Immediately they were arrested a second line of leaders had been prepared in advance of the court action, just as militant as the first, and ready to step into the shoes of the pickets.

Two hours earlier Hull dockers and others from all over Humber-side had already walked off the jobs after a phone call from London informing them of the imminent arrest. Buses were organised immediately to take pickets to London to picket the jail.

By nightfall over 26,000 dockers were out. Vic Turner had not yet been found. In London the dockers immediately organised solidarity action.

Ian Olley (TGWU activist at the time) who still works on the London docks today takes up the story: "We walked off the job straight away, not even stopping to make safe the ships ready to sail which was the usual practice when a strike was called. We stopped every Tate and Lyle lorry at the refinery on the docks."

"We got to the Charrington Brewery just as they were clocking on, gave out leaflets we'd had hastily printed up. They agreed to hold a meeting and they came out later."

"From there we went to Whitechapel Main Postal Sorting Office. The Security man tried to stop us entering but we just brushed him aside and appealed to the

workers.

"The meat market at Smithfield was next. We arrived there about 11 pm. As we were travelling round news was coming in all the time of more and more workers coming out.

"At 3 am Saturday morning we arrived at Covent Garden. The shop steward called the workers together at 6am when most of the workers had arrived for work and we appealed for support. We didn't need to take a vote, the feeling was unanimous—they just put their barrows away and went home. By this time we had been up for about 48 hours but the response everywhere was tremendous."

"The lorry drivers who had earlier been picketing against the dockers immediately withdrew their picket lines on hearing of the arrests and promised support to the dockers. The same evening hundreds of pickets had descended on Pentonville prison where the men had been taken."

The response of the Shadow Secretary for Employment, then Labour MP Reg Prentice, was not so sympathetic, "they were wrong to organise picketing and blacking against the policy of their union. They were even more wrong to defy the court. The IR Act is a bad law but it is the law and nobody can claim to be above it."

"Trade unionists should not rally round these men as though they are latter day Tolpuddle Martyrs. They are just not worth it."

Fortunately his advice was ignored by trade unionists everywhere who continued on Saturday to down tools and picket the prison.

## Sympathy action

In Fleet Street electricians turned off power to the presses and no national newspapers appeared after the Saturday edition as the print workers followed their lead.

Writing in his diary, Sunday 23 July, Terry Turner, a Hull docker, noted that the "support for the Pentonville five has been truly tremendous—not because they are dockers but because they are trade unionists. As well as all Britain's ports being idle, newspaper workers, miners, car workers, lorry drivers and many other workers from various industries have come out in sympathy with the five jailed men."

By this time the missing Vic Turner was found wearing a

picket's armband outside Pentonville nick! On Sunday Vic Feather went to Downing Street but the government remained adamant.

By Monday morning all the docks and half the fishing ports were at a standstill and stoppages had taken place in the building industry. Several provincial papers were also hit.

The joint executive committees of the AUEW, four sections representing nearly 2 million workers, had met and decided to press the General Council of the TUC for a one day general strike. They also decided to call out the AUEW members on Monday July 31 whatever the TUC decision if the men were still in prison.

On Tuesday 25 Terry Turner noted that "hour by hour support for the five men is growing. Dockers and other trade unionists from diverse sections of industry had a big procession in London today. There was a rally at Tower Hill and then the five men's army of supporters marched through London to Pentonville Prison."

"Some industries, are having token one or two day stoppages in support of the five dockers. Other more militant workers are coming out indefinitely. Now the jailed dockers' support includes that of dustmen, engineers, factory workers, fish dock workers and many others."

"All are out on strike, or threatening to strike to show their solidarity as trade unionists."

At Pentonville the 24 hour picket of hundreds remained with all the roads blocked off and a 'picket village' grew up made of makeshift wood and tarpaulin huts with hundreds of banners lining the wall opposite the prison gates.

**Buses were stopped and the drivers, having pledged their support, were lifted bodily from the cabs and carried from the vehicles to the accompaniment of cheers. The buses remained in the road, immobilised, later to be towed away.**

On Wednesday the 26th the TUC General Council met and under enormous pressure from mounting rank and file action decided by eighteen votes to seven to call a one-day General Strike the following Monday the 31st.

The strike was moved by Hugh Scanlon of the Engineers and seconded by Jack Jones of TGWU. David Basnett and Frank Chapple voted against. There were 6 abstentions.

But even before the TUC's formal decision, it was clear that this threat was enough for the Tories to cave in, and they released the five, again by the intervention of the mysterious but useful Official Solicitor. Donaldson denied that the Official Solicitor was a "political or industrial fairy god-mother!", but workers saw him as a face-saver for the government's retreat.

## A government without power

Meanwhile back in the real world, London buses had been halted, railworkers at Waterloo voted to come out, action by groundstaff at Heathrow had cancelled all of BEA and BOAC flights, steelworkers and aircraft workers had come out and in Hull at a meeting of over 300 shop stewards from Hull's industries a decision was made to grind the whole of the city to a halt until the five were released.

French, American, West German, Dutch, Indian and Italian dockers offered support to 'black' British ships and the International Transport Federation representing 6 million workers called on their affiliates to support the British dockers.

Upon their release, the five made short speeches of thanks, after being carried out shoulder high and joining in with the crowds singing a verse and chorus of the 'Internationale'.

**"The government were inept, powerless, immobilised and impotent, politically and morally bankrupt in this situation"**, Harold Wilson, correctly for once, stated in the House of Commons. The IR Act had been, effectively, broken.

By such action in 1972, the working class showed the ruling class that democratic rights won over centuries of struggle cannot be swept away with the stroke of a lawyer's pen. It was the mass class action both nationally and internationally by tens of thousands that brought the release of the dockers.

Today the situation for capitalism is more critical than ever. Despite the defeat of the early 70s the Tories are compelled to try to emasculate the trade unions. Hence the battery of new anti-trade union laws either on the statute books or in the pipeline.

Yet the Tories have not dared to use these sanctions (*as at July 1982 —eds*) against the working class for

## Stand up to the Tories!

*"ALL THE indications are that a very similar situation is developing now as it did in 1972. The difference then was that the Tories created a special court, the Industrial Relations Court, to deal with the trades unions. Now they just use the courts."*

*"This is a basic attack on trade unionism. We must not allow the NGA to become isolated as the AUEW was to a certain extent in 1972. The whole trade union movement must back the NGA. The challenge is quite clear; if we have any sense of value we have to stand up against the Tories."*

*"For two centuries they have used their laws against us. There will be some of our own trade union leaders who say we must obey the law. The trade union movement has won all it has despite the bitter opposition of the Tories. The whole trade union movement must stand behind the NGA."*

**Bob Wright**  
(AUEW, Assistant General Secretary)

fear of the explosive consequences. Thousands of workers openly defied Prior's "Employment Act" by picketing alongside health service workers.

Despite mass unemployment and a fall in membership in some unions the trade union movement is even more powerful today than ten years ago. A strong and determined opposition by the trade unions, and especially the TUC leadership, would push to one side all the anti-trade union legislation of the Tories including the draconian proposals of Tebbit.

The accumulated hatred of the Tory government would be vented if the bosses or Tories attempted to move decisively against the organisations of the working class.

Now as then, the mighty labour movement will not tolerate Tory anti-union laws.



## USDAW witch-hunt

Dear Militant,  
As readers will be aware USDAW's Executive Council—in clear breach of union policy—has decided to extend the witch-hunt against *Militant* into the union, by banning the sale of *Militant* on union premises.

At a recent union weekend school, the President and Labour Party NEC member Syd Tierney was asked why the union had taken this course of action, he replied that it was in the spirit of Party unity! Several members pressed him further on the matter, and he had to admit that it seemed to have gone too far.

At the same time it was revealed that the union's Deputy General Secretary, John Flood, had put his name to a document issued by the Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding, entitled 'Peace through NATO'. Other signatories were Frank Chapple, Terry Duffy, Kate Losinska, and a host of other extreme right

wingers. The document argued the Tory case for the deployment of nuclear weapons, which not only was totally opposed to Labour Party policy, it was also against USDAW policy which is for Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament.  
Yours fraternally  
Jeff Price  
Newcastle

## Victorian values—Victorian wages

Dear Comrades,  
I work for Glasgow District Council Cleansing Department as a dustman. We are faced with a proposed cutback which will amount to a 29% reduction in services throughout Glasgow. Three depots are in jeopardy.

In the Govan area, the disposal works and workshop and transport department may be relocated. Two incineration plants may be closed. One at Dawsholm, Maryhill and another (at a fairly recent cost of £7 million to build)—comes yet again from Govan (who loves you Govan?).

The most visible of these outrageous cuts will be in the street cleansing service. 120 jobs will be lost. Bins will only be emptied three times per fortnight. This is a downright attack on our jobs in preparation for privatisation.

We must organise a day of action by the trade union movement and the Labour Party where our anger can be expressed in support of our jobs.

If we can't be heard and these proposals are implemented we will be swept back in time to Thatcher's Victorian values and Victorian wages of less than £57 per week. Whatever happened to the city motto of "Keep Glasgow Tidy", Mrs Thatcher?

Yours fraternally  
K Brown  
GMBATU  
DP Shop Steward



Tory cuts and privatisation threaten industries, jobs, wages and work conditions.

## Poland

Dear Comrades,  
I would like to reply to the points raised by EM Portbeck in *Militant* (issue 676).

Comrade Portbeck points out quite rightly that Thatcher and Reagan claimed to support Polish Solidarity. But this was hypocritical support because at the same time they were extending loan repayment schedules to rescue the Polish bureaucracy from defaulting on payments, which would have led to massive problems for the Stalinist countries in the Eastern bloc.

If Comrade Portbeck is trying to say Solidarnosc was not a genuine movement of workers he/she should look at the facts. However well organised the CIA are in their efforts to destabilise regimes America is opposed to, even they would not be able to mobilise 10 million workers (which included nearly one million members of the Polish CP).

To finish on one point; if Polish Solidarity was a CIA plot as some 'socialists' say, because Thatcher, Reagan etc 'supported' it, what does that make the Polish bureaucracy who were not only given support in words but in money, with loans etc and a quick lifting of sanctions?

Yours fraternally  
S Lawlor  
Nottingham North CLP

## Alienation

Dear Comrades,  
At a recent meeting of Loughborough University Labour Club, one member of the club committee put forward a revolutionary, new idea to gain mass support for Labour and sweep us into power. What we have to do is to lie! As he put it, "The SDP do it, the Tories do it, so why shouldn't we?" You see, ordinary workers, unlike certain more enlightened university students, are 'alienated' by radical socialist demands.

However, this idea isn't entirely new to the Labour Party. Under Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan there was a distinguished record of broken promises. Denis Healey in 1974 talked of "squeezing the rich till the pips squeek", and ended up implementing monetarist policies which left the rich still rich and the average family £10 worse off. And this didn't win the election in 1979.

But workers weren't 'alienated' in Liverpool Broadgreen or Coventry South East where the candidates showed their commitment to changing society and were elected on that basis, with nothing to hide.

The Tories and the SDP lie to preserve their capitalist system—the Labour Party should instead commit itself

to abolish it.  
Yours fraternally  
Eleanor Donne  
Loughborough University  
Labour Club

## NALGO

Dear Comrades,  
I am a NALGO worker and live with three people who are involved in the residential workers dispute.

Although I support the strike wholeheartedly, I feel, as indeed the people who are involved in this dispute, ashamed at the lack of leadership and organisation in this action. This situation is causing a lack of credibility in the union and dissolving the militancy of the workers involved.

What is even more disconcerting, is that we live in a Labour controlled area but the so-called Labour councillors are in the main against the strike action.

What is even more worrying is that NALGO members are facing disciplinary action by the top brass of the social services, who are also NALGO members.

This situation is a classic example that coalition with the bosses does not work, and proves that you cannot wear two caps.

Yours faithfully  
W Brown  
Rotherham

## New members

Dear Comrades,  
During a paper sale at one of the pits in Kent, a young miner confronted me and asked if the Labour Party was "taking any new members". As I scratched my head in amazement, he went on to say he had applied to join and had been waiting three months for someone to call on him. He thought there must be a waiting list!

After having a chat to him I sold him a paper and got his address. Now I will make sure someone visits him. It just goes to show it's not the *Militant* supporters who are apathetic about recruiting workers to the Labour Party.

Yours fraternally  
Tom Seddon  
Sittingbourne

## Chains to lose

Dear Comrades,  
What lessons can be drawn from the developments in Argentina? One at least—it is one thing for the generals to start a reign of terror, but what happens when people realise they can now go out on the street and protest without joining the 40,000 people already murdered?

Now that this is happening in Argentina, it cannot be long before it happens in Chile to the west or Uruguay to the north. The workers of Latin America will not be slow to realise that they have nothing to lose but their chains.

Yours fraternally  
Ian Malcolm  
Finchley CLP

## The truth

Mr and Mrs Rouse from Tunbridge Wells have written the following letter to the secretary of Gillingham Labour Party:

Dear Secretary,  
We are members of the Tunbridge Wells Constituency Labour Party and we are most shocked and disappointed to hear of the suspension of Bob Hurley from the Gillingham CLP after thirty years of loyal service to the Labour Party, and all for selling the paper *Militant* at meetings.

Have you ever actually seen any copies of *Militant*? We suggest that you do as you will find nothing in it merits any objection. As far as we are concerned it publishes the truth, and exposes the dreadful injustice and exploitation that is going on in our midst. You hear nothing of this from the capitalist press and many people are completely ignorant of such matters.

In our view any person who objects to the publication of *Militant* really has no place in the Labour Party committed to socialism, and should join the SDP or the Conservative Party.

The suspension of Mr Hurley should be lifted immediately. In any case, no one is forced to buy or read *Militant* and it should not be banned from sale.

## Waiting list

Dear Comrades,  
The letter from the NUPE comrade in the NHS (issue 674) reminded me of an incident described by a woman I work with.

On visiting a consultant at her local hospital she was told that she would have six months to wait at the very least for a complicated and necessary operation to her jaw.

When the consultant discovered that she was included in a compulsory BUPA policy (via her husband's workplace) he told her that the operation could be done in two weeks!

He went on to say that she shouldn't have her operation at that hospital—"medical-

ly" he wouldn't recommend it. Instead he "recommended" a private clinic—run by himself!

How appalling that certain individuals in these positions have the freedom to use the NHS to drum up business for themselves in the private sector.

The running of such a basic service for the working class cannot be the preserve of people like this. They are aiding the Tories in the destruction of the NHS and rapidly converting health into a commodity which can be bought and sold like anything else.

Yours fraternally  
Janice Ross  
Wood Green CLP  
London

## Liverpool University day of action

Dear Comrades,  
As part of the campaign in Merseyside for the 'Save the City Council' demonstration, *Militant* supporters in Liverpool University organised a highly successful day of action.

We stood outside the union steps selling papers and handing out leaflets. With a loudhailer we pointed out to students that the Tories were singling out Liverpool's Labour council for attack. This was because it was determined to implement the policies upon which it was elected.

As far as the Tories were concerned, we said, they would like to see education given only to those who come from the right background and had enough money to pay.

As part of this day of action we also leafleted all the campus workers and got many promises to go to the demo.

By the end of the day we had sold 45 *Militants* and had signed up four people for the LPYS.

Yours fraternally  
Liverpool Militant reader

## Iskra?

Dear Comrades,  
In Norwich we have been selling *Militant* outside the telephone exchange for three weeks now and have secured a regular sale. But it is interesting to note the reaction to the paper by the workers.

It was reported to us by our regular sale that when he arrived at his office on the first day he found a

number of workers crowded around a desk. Wondering what was so interesting he went to find out. On the desk was an opened copy of the *Militant*.

I ask myself, are we going back to the days when the Russian workers jostled and clamoured for a copy of *Pravda* or *Iskra*!

Yours fraternally  
Mark Dyball  
Norwich LPYS

## Martin Luther

Dear Comrades,  
The article concerning Martin Luther and the revolutionary changes which he unwittingly set in motion reminded me of the battles Marx confronted, between religious ideologies and ideals of his time and Marx's application of scientific dialectical materialism.

The truest statement about religion is that it signifies the cry of the oppressed. Hence the link concerning countries where both poverty and religious beliefs have a great hold.

People who suffer a vicious cycle of poverty and hardship desperately require something extra-ordinary to believe in, something which promises a solution to their social and personal crisis. And often, if people are held in apolitical naivety, and retain superstition, they will settle for faith in whatever the hereafter can offer them.

Many comrades will know I used to be religious myself. Therefore I can understand the psychological hold of a 'Jam Tomorrow' theology

where a commitment to fundamental Christianity holds inner peace, while ensuring a passive compliance with the real material evils of capitalism.

Which is why religions and profoundly reactionary politics are often wedded together. As Marxists we are able to fight those superstitious elements with science and dialectics, knowing the facts and the sciences that can bear us out.

We know the Tories would love to use religion against us if they could, just as they currently aim to marshal the forces of reaction to halt the confidence and forward march of the working class.

A woman's right to choose abortion, state provided nurseries and the need for the state to be separate from religion etc are campaigning aspects socialists need to promote and defend as part of the struggle for socialism.

Fraternally yours  
Alex Warner  
Tameside



# Your money or their lies

**THIS WEEK:  
£1,821**

**WHOSE SIDE of the story do you read in the daily papers? A handful of monopolies decide what kind of news we get.**

"If you want to know the truth look in the *Mirror*" is the advertising claim of the supposedly "Labour" *Mirror* Group. But when the chips are down, their management act in the interests of Reed International's profits against the trade union movement.

As for the *Sun* ("If you want to go blind look at the *Sun*"), the *Express*, *Mail* etc these are openly Tory rags with no sympathy for the struggles workers are facing. They are run by millionaires to put millionaires' views across to the rest of us.

*Militant* is different. We

have no multinationals behind us, no wealthy backers. We get no "Moscow gold" as we are totally opposed to the horrific dictatorships which stifle the working class in Russia, China and Eastern Europe. We get our money from ordinary workers who make sacrifices to make sure the truth is published in support of the working class. And we need your support more than ever.

We appeal to all our readers, whether you are reading your first issue of *Militant* or your 600th. Make sure *Militant* can keep the truth rolling out and show the Fleet Street bosses for what they are—a viciously anti-trade union body who will lie, distort and suppress the truth to defend their profits.

And we want to be able to combat the Fleet Street bosses' lies more regularly. Your pounds and pennies,

tenners and tanners, are all welcome to reach our target of £100,000 for the half year. So far we have reached just under £54,000.

Some of our supporters walk miles to trade union and Labour Party meetings to send us money they save on fares. Others give large donations. This week Roy Robinson, an ASTMS member from Leeds gave £18. Ian Mc Ewan and Ian Smith (USDAW members in Dundee) £8.75, Bob Brown POEU branch secretary Bournemouth £5 Chris Poole unemployed of Milton Keynes gave £2. BIFU members gave an excellent £12 and Hindles strike committee from Bradford gave £5.

**You can help.** Send in cash now to get a workers' daily as soon as possible. It's no longer a luxury. For all workers, an antidote to the Fleet Street bosses' poison is an absolute necessity.

**BASILDON:** Monday 5 December, 8 pm Basildon Unemployed Workers' Centre (near Town Centre).

**OXFORD:** Tuesday 8 December at 8 pm. East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street (off Cowley Road). Speaker: Ian Warrick (Oxon and Bucks NGA, personal capacity)

**BRADFORD:** Monday 12 December, 7.30pm. Room 1, Bradford Central Library. Speakers from labour movement including printworkers.

**OTHER MEETINGS** on the print dispute throughout the country. See your local *Militant* seller for details.

## HEAR MILITANT'S IDEAS. JOIN OUR FIGHT

**NOTTINGHAM:** Speaker: Chris Ridge. Friday 2 December at 7.00 pm. Albert Hall, Nottingham.

**WATFORD:** Monday 5 December 8.00pm Labour Club (upstairs), Clarendon Rd. (By Watford Junction).

**BIRMINGHAM:** Sunday 4 December, 7.30 pm at Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. Speakers: Chris Newis (NGA National Council member, personal capacity), Dave Nellist MP.

**BRISTOL:** Militant Readers Meeting Sunday 4 December, 7.30pm. Hear Chris Dobrocynski (Wessex Branch Committee NGA, personal capacity.) and Bryan Beckingham (NUJ). Chair: Matt Reed (LPYS NC). Venue: The Swan, Stokescofe, Bristol.

**POOLE:** Wednesday 7 December, 7.30 pm. Hear: Peter Taaffe, Editor of *Militant* at Poole College of Further Education conference room.

# ads

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

**GET YOUR XMAS ORDERS IN NOW!**  
Posters: Marx, Trotsky, Connolly 80p each or £1.00 p&p.  
Pens: *Militant* biro. 20p each.  
Badges: *Militant* enamel,

metal stud badge. 75p each or £1.00 p&p.  
Ideal Xmas presents! Get your order in quick! Cash or cheque with order made payable to *Militant*. Send to *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London, E8 3PN.

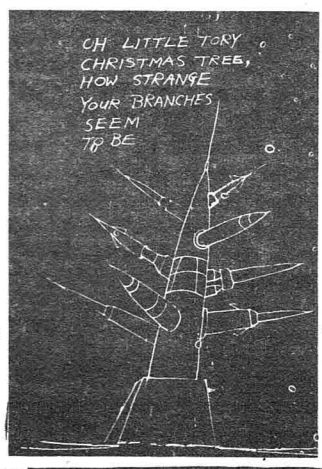
**NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS, SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR MARXIST IDEAS**

£4.00 for 3 column centimetres  
£6.00 for 6 column centimetres  
£10.00 for 1/16 of a page  
£20.00 for 1/8 of a page  
£40.00 for 1/4 of a page

Deadline Monday 19th December 1983  
Send to *Militant* Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

## CHRISTMAS CARDS NOW AVAILABLE

from 'Revolution Graphics'  
Set of five different cards (plus envelopes) for only £1.20, post paid.  
Bulk orders 10 sets or more are available 65p per set (incl p&p)  
All cheques/POs to be made payable to Revolution Graphics'.  
Order from : Eddie MacParland, Revolution Graphics, 81 Troughton Road, London SE7.



41 entrance  
**VAUXHALL Militant**  
**XMAS PARTY**  
Jubilee Tavern, 74 York Road, SE1 (Opposite County Hall)  
**SAT. 17th DEC.**  
Starts 7.30pm  
sounds by ★ **KING TUBBY**

### WINTER DRAW TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE.

**1st prize:** £500 Holiday in resort of your choice.  
**2nd prize:** Video equipment worth £300.  
**3rd prize:** £100 Portable TV.  
**4th prize:** Five individual prizes of £20 worth of socialist books.  
Tickets 10p each. Available in books of 10. Apply to: *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London, E8 3PN.  
To be drawn January 7th 1984.

# Young workers are organising

**IN DISPUTE** after dispute recently young workers have taken the lead in fighting for jobs, wages, conditions and in particular for trade union rights.

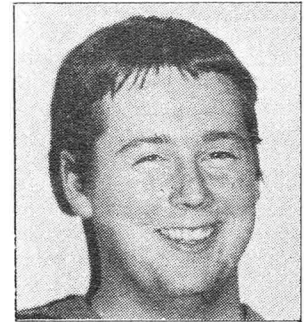
At **Carousel Wafers** in Glasgow, young workers have been fighting for union recognition since July. In South Wales, young, mainly women workers at **Lefray Toys**, Aberbeeg have been fighting for a union despite vicious attacks from both scabs and police.

At **Eccles** just outside Manchester twelve young workers at **Beauty Care Warehouse**, some earning about 60p an hour, are fighting for recognition of the Transport and General Workers Union.

And it's in Manchester that young workers have a chance to get together on 10 December in the Young Workers' Assembly. Organised by the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign and fully backed by the Labour Party Young

Socialists, it is a chance for youth in the factories, in the print industry, the warehouses, offices, on YTS schemes and the dole to discuss how to get a better deal.

Dave Monks is an apprentice welder at Massey Ferguson in Trafford Park. His year were the last lot of apprentices to be taken on. Now the company hires YTS workers.



Dave Monks

"They're obviously abused, used as slave labour," said Dave "and our place is better than most. They're all in the union and they do get trained."

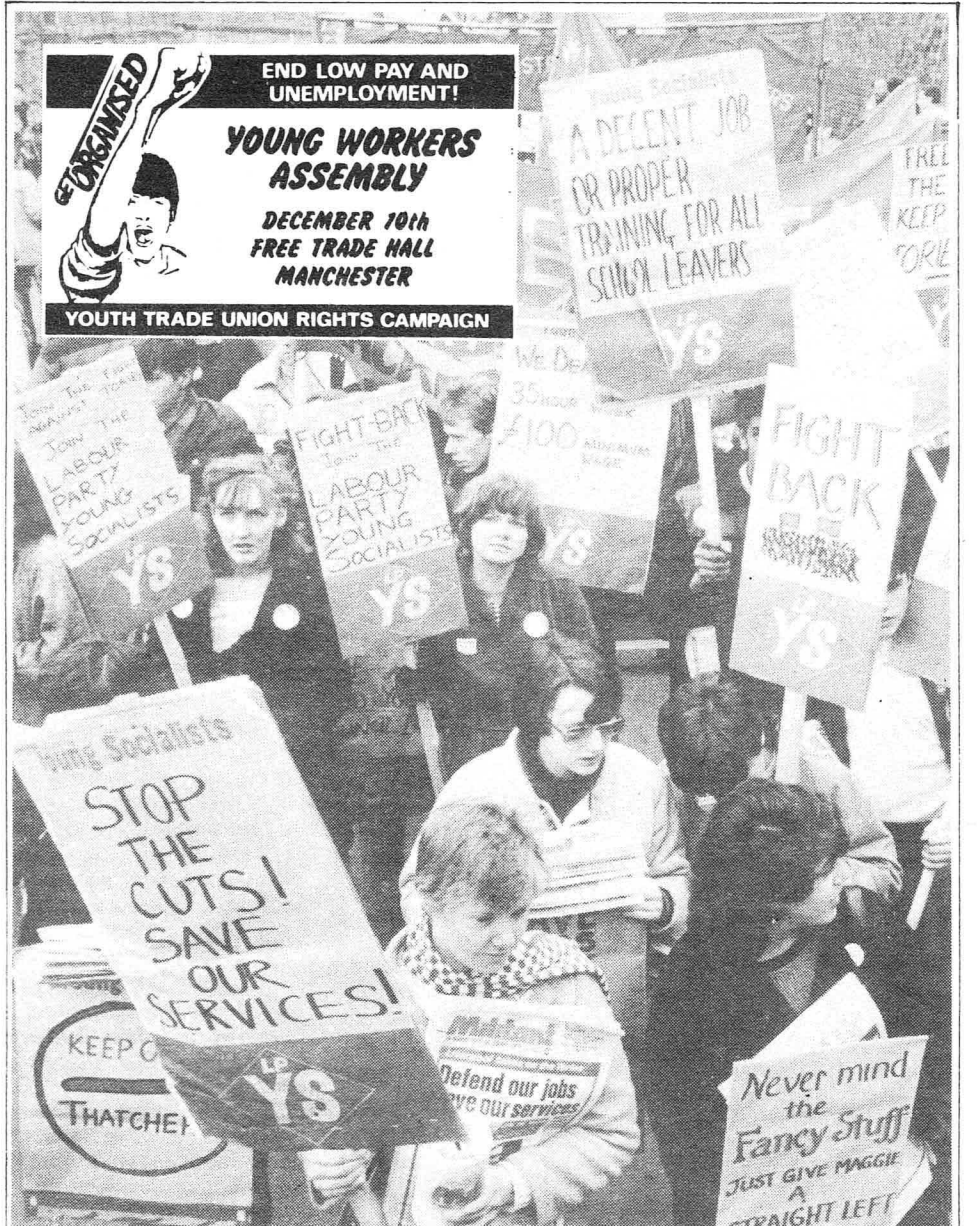
Massey Ferguson has in fact kept the YTS workers on longer than a year, and

the company, not the MSC is paying them: but they're still on £25 a week. Dave went with other members of Davyhulme LPYS to get delegates to the Young Workers' Assembly from the Gas Board and other work places.

"The Gas Board reckons their training scheme is wonderful and they're doing the trainees a real favour. But it's obviously rubbish," he said. "It should be really good on 10 December. I'm looking forward to sharing experiences with other young workers and discussing youth training and rates of pay."

Dave's friend, Lee Goulden is also going to the rally. "I'm unemployed," he said, "when you're not in a union you feel you don't really have any power to change things. You're on your own."

"But I got a leaflet through my door about the LPYS and went along with my mate. I agreed with what they were saying so I decided to join. The LPYS are really fighting to change things."



LPYS members on the demonstration to save Liverpool council from Tory attacks. When workers fight for their jobs, their living standards, their union rights the Young Socialists are the most active section of the Labour Party in support.

Photo: Militant

HACKNEY NORTH LPYS have so far raised an excellent £80 to send young workers to the Assembly on 10 December. Half of that was raised by a new member—after only his second LPYS meeting—who held a sponsored swim. He also gave £14 out of his own pocket, enough to send two people to the event! Another £17 was raised by a collection at a

Labour Party ward meeting.

IN HULL, all local trade union branches have been circulated with letters urging them to send youth delegates to the assembly. This has been followed up by visits where shop stewards have given the LPYS a sympathetic hearing. A survey on conditions

has been carried out, and the results will be used by the LPYS to produce a local *Charter for Young Workers*. A special Post Office bulletin has also been produced. The LPYS ended the build up to the assembly with a local Young Workers' Rally on November 20.

# What happened at Monktonhall?

**CHRIS HERRIOT, a young miner who played an active role in the recent strike of Monktonhall pit in Scotland explains what happened and the lessons to be learned.**

MINERS ARE engaged in a national overtime ban. They reject the paltry pay offer and the threat of wholesale pit closures.

National Coal Board chairman Ian MacGregor has declared his desire to close all pits producing coal at a cost of over £60 per tonne. This would result in the immediate closure of forty four pits.

The recent strike at Monktonhall pit in Scotland which ended after eight weeks, should be an inspiration to every British miner. The Monktonhall campaign holds many important lessons for the struggle against MacGregor and the Tories.

For six weeks leading up to the strike our colliery suffered attack after attack on working practices, working conditions, incentive payments and trade union representation. This culminated in the halting of development of the pit and the abandoning of consultative and conciliation procedures.

The final straw came when 150 men were locked out for being a few minutes late in presenting themselves at the pit-head after a union meeting to discuss management attacks and 300 redundancies.



Arthur Scargill.

We immediately took over the colliery administration corridor, sat down and refused to budge. The rest of the lads on the day shift came back up to join the sit-in. This reflected the depth of feeling that had been building up over weeks.

A mass meeting was held on the arrival of the 'Ham and Egg' (maintenance) shift. We unanimously agreed to call a 24-hour stoppage and a special meeting the next day.

A dispute which started as a simple protest at management's provocation exploded into a battle for the future of the pit.

Over 700 men voted virtually unanimously (20 against) for an all-out indefinite strike until such time as the NCB agreed to restart development of the pit and to return to full consultation and conciliation procedures.

The craftsmen's union SCEBTA and later COSA linked with the NUM branch and formed a joint strike committee to organise the campaign. The first step was the establishment of some

sixteen strike committees at local level in miners clubs throughout the Lothians in order to involve every rank and file member.

The closure of Monktonhall would have a devastating effect on the local community. After the war there were nineteen working pits in East Lothian. By 1951 there were twelve. Now there is only Monktonhall—which lies between East and Mid Lothian.

## Wide support

In Mid Lothian twelve pits existed in 1965. Now only Bilston Glen remains. Other industries have been similarly hit. A paper mill which once employed 2,500 people is now down to 115. For every forty people unemployed there is one vacancy. The community had to aid our fight.

Cash was collected from pubs, betting shops, supermarkets, corner shops and traders. Fund raising activities were organised in the clubs. Easthouses miners club donated £670. The newly formed, (but as yet unofficial) Mid Lothian Labour Party Women's Section assisted by making up food parcels. The LPYS organised meetings and collected money for the strike fund. Donations came from factories throughout the Lothians. The workers at Torness power station gave £157.

This show of solidarity clearly illustrates how a local dispute can involve the whole population.

We recognised the necessity of spreading the strike, first to Scotland then to the rest of the British coalfield.

The Scottish NUM called for the dispute to be made official and later for a 24-hour stoppage and a £2 levy. Many branch officials were apprehensive about the possible outcome of the 24-hour stoppage. They underestimated the depth of feeling.

## Looking south

At Francis Colliery, Fife, any doubts about support for the stoppage or the need for the levy were dispelled as soon as miners heard the arguments. All shifts unanimously agreed to the action. If the NCB can close a nineteen year-old super-pit they can close any pit.

Even miners at the Blinkbonny private mine struck—under threat of not having jobs the next day. The support in Scotland was solid. We began to look south.

Rank and file members as well as branch officials from the joint unions addressed meetings at pit-heads,

delegate conferences and area executives. Leaflets were distributed and appeals made for financial support. The response was tremendous. Area after area pledged support in one form or another. The Doncaster Panel (delegate conference) voted to take industrial action as soon as the Scottish Area took action in support of Monktonhall. Many other individual pits also pledged strike action in our support. In the north-western area, traditionally considered right wing, we got a tremendous response.

There can be no doubt that a national miners' strike was looming—over the Monktonhall issue in particular and pit closures in general.



Mick McGahey.

At the June NUM national conference a resolution to fight pit closures was passed unanimously. From that point the whole of the union machine should have been thrown into the battle. Regular tours should have been mounted by national speakers, along with miners from the threatened pits, explaining the case for a fight-back.

## Defeat out of victory

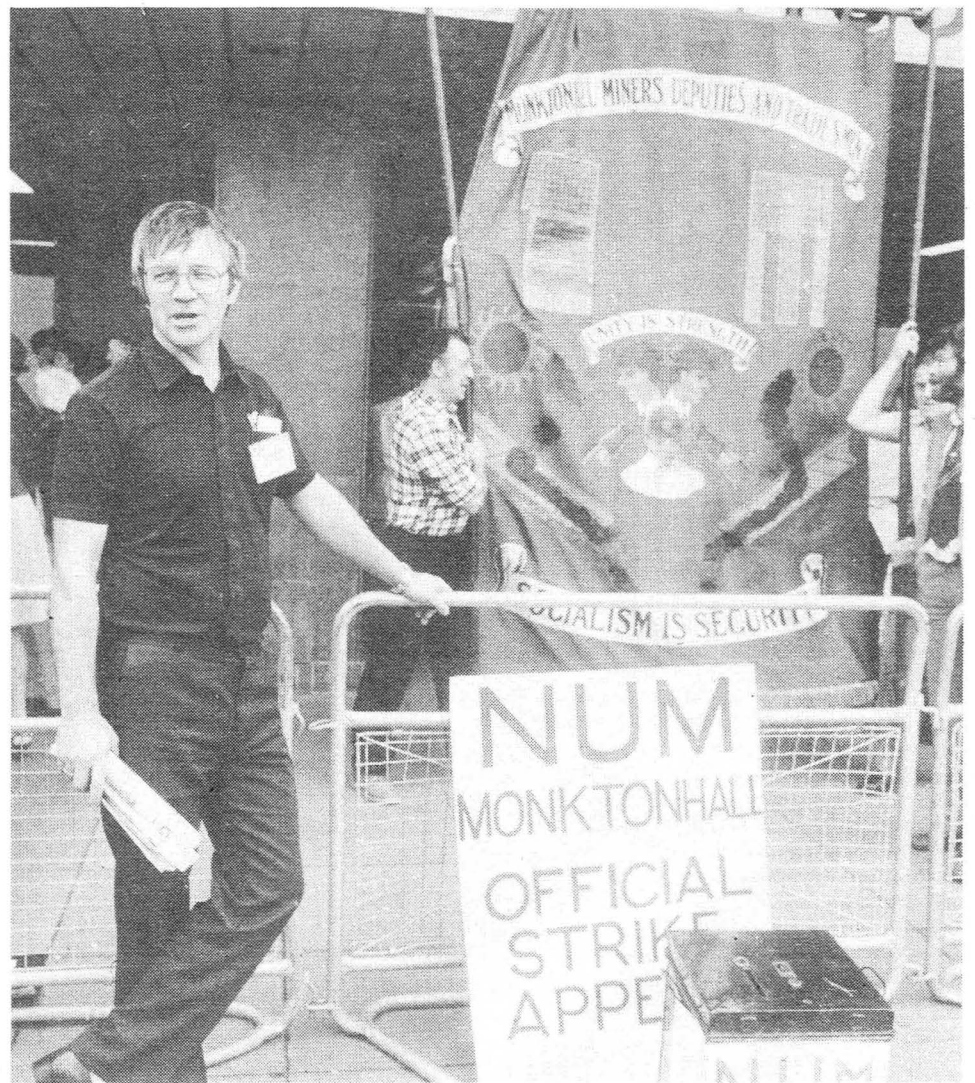
A poster and leaflet campaign should have been launched, for distribution not only to the miners but to the local communities and trade unionists.

It was evident during the speaking tours that morale was lifted. A decisive lead was essential.

*By the sixth or seventh week of the strike the ground had been laid for spreading the dispute. Miners were prepared for escalation of the dispute, firstly by stopping Scotland and then moving south. Astonishingly, however, elements of the Scottish NUM leadership began to argue that we should return to work in order to participate in the national overtime ban.*

This was decisively rejected by a SCEBTA mass meeting. At no time did the area or national leadership discuss with the Monktonhall men a strategy for linking the strike to the national overtime ban.

The mood of our workforce was of supreme confidence. Attention had shifted from anger at the antics of local management to the need to stop MacGregor and even take on the Tory government.



Monktonhall miners lobbying Labour Party conference.

Photo: Militant

## A socialist strategy for mineworkers

**MONKTONHALL has shown that solidarity and struggle are possible given a lead on the right issue.**

This magnificent show of strength answers the sceptics who say the miners are not willing to take united action again.

Our dispute, the recent strike of 13,000 men in Barnsley and the numerous small disputes show the simmering mood in the industry. Our campaign would be nothing compared to the success possible if the whole union took up the battle.

Above all, the NUM must be a campaigning union all year round. The NEC must draw up a plan which demands guarantees for the pits and the necessary financing to maintain and expand local production.

The task now is to build a truly democratic, rank and file Broad Left. An open and democratic Broad Left such as already exists in some areas, could make a decisive difference. It would arm us with facts, figures, arguments and cohesion, building the campaign for fighting, socialist policies in the NUM.

The union leadership, with the support of the Broad Left, could campaign effectively to expose NCB propaganda, taking the campaign to every single rank and file miner. During the pay ballot campaign Arthur Scargill spoke to and enthused about 10% of NUM members. Most of this 10 per cent, and many other miners, could be organised into a permanent, campaigning Broad Left.

The Tory government has declared war on the working class. The choice that faces the NUM and the rest of the labour move-

ment is either to help prop up capitalism or make a clean break.

Mining is in crisis because of the crisis in the capitalist economy of which the mining industry is an integral part.

Our industry is run in the interests of the bosses' system. The banks and finance houses creamed off £340 million in interest payments from the NCB last year. The old mine owners are fat on compensation and profits from the equipment supply industry. This must be ended.

Apart from introducing workers' control and management we must nationalise the banks, insurance companies, and the 200 monopolies which control 85% of the economy, with compensation on the basis of proven need.

To avoid the present inefficiency of the nationalised industries, workers' control on the ground floor and a totally new, class conception of management boards must be introduced to run the industry in the interests of the working class.

To ensure democratic management and integration of coal into a plan for the whole economy the board should be made up of a third elected from the unions in the industry, a third elected by the TUC and a third appointed by the government.

Clearly the struggle to save the coal industry is linked to the need for a Labour government. That government must be armed with a programme and determination to carry through the socialist transformation of society.

Join *Militant* in this fight. Stop MacGregor and the Tories.

A bombshell was then dropped by the Scottish area leadership. They recommended a return to work. The picket that was lobbying the meeting exploded when they learnt the executive's recommendation had been decided without discussion or a vote being allowed.

It was stated the NCB had climbed down and conceded a return to the laid down consultative and conciliation procedure. A representative of the Scottish NCB, on the other hand, appeared on TV and stated there was no change in their position. This

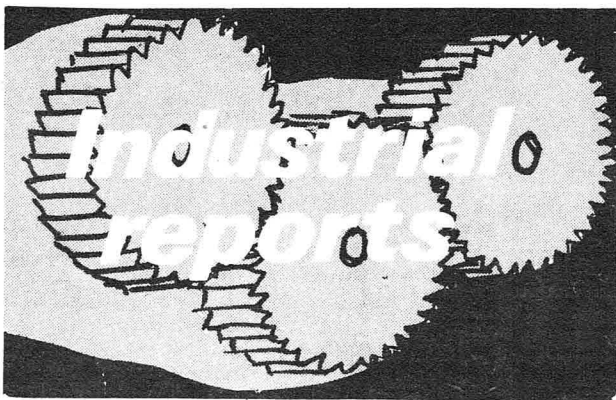
produced anger and confusion among our members. Many were demanding guarantees before any return to work.

But it became clear that escalation of our dispute within the Scottish area was out of the question. We were left with no alternative but to accept the offer and immediately return to work.

Nevertheless, the SCEBTA branch voted to remain on strike by a 2-1 majority and the NUM branch voted only narrowly to go back. The craftsmen then had no alternative but to recall their

meeting a few days later and agree a return to work, emphasising that as far as they were concerned it didn't mean the end of the dispute.

The NCB will possibly restart some development of the pit, but they will come back later with another attack. If they don't close Monktonhall then another pit will close in its place. We must be prepared to fight for other pits. Cronton in Lancaster is to close shortly. If MacGregor gets his way then pit closures will proceed at an ever-increasing pace.



## FOR THE FULL FORD CLAIM

### Halewood

ON NOVEMBER 27 Ford workers at the Halewood plant on Merseyside voted at least 2 to 1 for all-out strike action from January 3 next year.

One worker who has been at Fords for 21 years said to me afterwards, "At one time I'd have voted against strike action but now it's different. If the company can make massive profits, then there's no reason to deny workers further wage increases. Their offer of 7½% was a disgrace. I reckon the vote

today was more like 3 to 1 and not 2 to 1 as some union leaders have said.

"I can't afford much more on my wages, not even the gas and electricity bills—and I see Thatcher is putting up those as well. The government are trying to drive down workers' living standards and weaken the unions. It's all take and no give... I worked on the docks for years and now it's another wasteland—just like the whole of Merseyside... Today proved that we'll see this fight through to the end."

By Teresa Carr

### Swansea

ON SATURDAY Ford workers at the Swansea plant voted for rejection of the bosses' pay offer. The meeting spent a long time debating striking from 3 January.

The 7.5% offer would have been accepted if the company had conceded on other demands—better pensions, parity with staff on sickness and lay-off pay, seven days holidays and a weekly supplement consolidated on to the hourly pay.

We want these demands in full and are not prepared to see reforms taken away as soon as they are won. When working people make gains they will fight to defend them. Ford workers are prepared to take on the bosses over the issue of better pensions—where the bosses have admitted they are "doing us" and extra holidays which would create jobs.

On the strike issue, one question from the floor to the convenor was whether the dockers would be asked to block Ford imported cars during a strike. The convenor replied that we would have the support of the dockers in picketing the docks. He was interrupted by someone saying that picketing was against the law. This point was clarified by another worker who said: "F... the law"—and no one was in disagreement. The signs are that the Ford workers are accepting union recommendations and are prepared for battle in the near future.

By David Llewellyn-Davies

(Shop steward, Ford Swansea plant, Personal capacity)

### Dagenham

ON TUESDAY 29 November Fords Foundry workers voted two to one for industrial action from the 3 January.

The Foundry convenor correctly pointed out that over the past years many aspects of the claim have never been met.

The mood of the meeting was that enough is enough. Now is the time to take action.

The assembly plant day shift also voted for a fight, by a four to one majority. The body and engine plants voted to accept the offer.

At time of writing nine plants

today was more like 3 to 1 and not 2 to 1 as some union leaders have said.

"I can't afford much more on my wages, not even the gas and electricity bills—and I see Thatcher is putting up those as well. The government are trying to drive down workers' living standards and weaken the unions. It's all take and no give... I worked on the docks for years and now it's another wasteland—just like the whole of Merseyside... Today proved that we'll see this fight through to the end."

By Teresa Carr

have voted against the offer, nine to accept.

Chief negotiator Ron Todd has said that the decision will be based on "the number of plants voting for or against".

It looks as though there will be a majority of plants voting against and a total vote of around 23,000 against, 21,500 for.

Let's hope that the NJNC, under Ron Todd, gives a real lead to Ford workers.

By Colin Adams  
(Foundry, AUEW Dagenham)

### Bridgend

WORKERS AT the Ford plant in Bridgend, Wales, were among the first to vote on the company's 7.5% offer and gave a magnificent lead to other plants in the UK—rejecting the offer by 6-1.

Our members are incensed at the wage offer and that the Ford Motor Company have totally ignored our claim for improved holidays and a better deal on pensions. Contributions by our members into the pension scheme have gone up by 100% over the last three years while the company's share has not gone up by even 50%.

There is so much in the pension fund (£316 million) that Ford started the Sierra project on the interest alone. Our members pay the bulk into the fund and deserve a far better deal.

On wages, we have made the profits and we want our share! Ford can easily afford our 15% claim—especially if you compare the operating profits of Ford UK to Ford in other countries. From 1978-82 Ford Europe made £103 million, Ford USA made nothing, while during the same period Ford UK made a massive £980 million profit.

The message from the Bridgend plant is clear. If there is no substantial change in our pay and conditions over the next few weeks we'll be out on strike on 3 January.

By Frank O'Connors  
(Shop steward, Ford, Bridgend, South Wales, personal capacity)

# Print workers unite!

## NGA strategy

NGA REPRESENTATIVES from big employers in the general trade met at Conway Hall in London last Tuesday to hear a report on the current situation and debate the next step for the union.

General secretary, Joe Wade, opened up the meeting, bringing out a number of important points. In 1980 we won the 37½ hour week and a minimum wage, a major breakthrough for

the trade union movement. In 1978/89 we won a long and bitter struggle at *The Times*. The NGA has shown its strength and will fight this dispute even without the support of the TUC.

He said the TUC must stand by the 1982 Wembley conference decision to fight the Tebbit laws. They must have known then that it would mean taking illegal action. They called on us to support the 22 September stoppage in support of the health workers. If what we are doing now is illegal then that was illegal.

He attacked the position taken by Bill Sirs and Terry Duffy but added that the NGA is proud to have their members on our picket lines. The task of the TUC now is to co-ordinate industry-wide action, and that will be illegal too.

In the discussion there were many contributions pledging support for the action. Ray Williams, Liverpool branch secretary, moved the following resolution: "This conference calls on the national council to call an all-out strike of all NGA

members from Monday of next week."

In replying Joe Wade asked Ray Williams to remit the resolution. He said he agreed with the sentiments of the resolution but asked for the working out of strategy to be left in the hands of the NC.

Ray refused, saying he wanted an indication of the feeling of the meeting, whereupon Joe asked him to at least delete the specific date for action. That was agreed and the motion passed.

## London Press branch EETPU

THE ELEVENTH HOUR decision by the print union SOGAT 82's NEC has halted the union's expulsion from the TUC. They have accepted that London Press branch electricians must remain members of the EETPU.

The position of the London Machine Branch (SOGAT), who accepted the breakaway electricians into membership is still in doubt. They held a meeting of over 400 recently at Conway Hall.

After hearing John Mitchell the London Machine Branch secretary, they adopted a position of defiance and voted overwhelmingly to stay in SOGAT despite the NEC's vote and the TUC's position.

Earlier, on the *Union World* TV programme Sean Geraghty spoke of challenging the EETPU negotiated agreements on Fleet Street by industrial action, of going it alone with the Machine Branch, and taking the issue to the Brussels court of human rights.

The *Daily Express* (SOGAT) chapel, the largest on the Street, have voted 61 to 48 to rejoin the EETPU however. Hopefully this signals the beginning of the end of this unfortunate breakaway.

But reports from certain houses of threats to the presses if the EETPU branch



Park Royal workers thank John Mitchell, SOGAT London Machine branch secretary for voting to extend the dispute with Robert Maxwell's BPCC. Following an injunction being granted to Maxwell against SOGAT's blocking of distribution of BPCC magazines that action was dropped. The print unions have faced a hail of legal threats and injunctions over the last few weeks. On Tuesday the NUJ lost an appeal against an injunction ordering it to call off a strike by journalists in Richmond employed by TV personality David Dimbleby. The dispute arose out of Dimbleby's decision to switch printing to the anti-union Nottingham firm T. Bailey Foreman. Judge Sir John Donaldson popped his head up again to rule that despite the NUJ's long-running dispute with TBF (over the *Nottingham Evening Post*) this fell foul of the Tebbit laws. The NUJ's executive will be meeting shortly to decide what action to take next.

officers step in, and threats to stop an EETPU chapel meeting taking place, reveal the bitter feelings that still exist.

The worst possible option for the SOGAT electricians would be for them and the Machine Branch to attempt UDI. Going it alone would inevitably bring an open clash with all the print unions on the Street. Indeed it would take them out of the recognised trade union movement. It would put wages, conditions and the closed shop in danger.

The London Press Branch had made its position clear. The 'ex' members are welcome back despite all

## RESOLUTION (London Press Branch EETPU)

" This branch gives full support to the NGA in its opposition to the Tory Employment Act. The £50,000 fine levied by the courts has shown the

vicious nature of this anti-trade union legislation and shows the urgent need for the TUC to give a real lead in supporting the NGA by mobilising the labour and trade union movement in opposition to this Act. "

that's happened. The EETPU NEC is supporting this. What is not accepted by our branch is the NEC's claim that it was a Communist Party attempt to break up the Press Branch.

The real enemy is now rearing its head Maxwell's attempted vandalism of the Park Royal Waterlows Plant has been met by a united work force sit-in. With the

NGA at the sharp end of the Tories' employment legislation, the urgent need is for all print workers to unite. The last thing we need is a continuation of this internal battle between the EETPU and SOGAT.

By Bob Faulkes

(EETPU, London Press Branch, personal capacity)

## POEU Exec step back

THE POEU fight against privatisation is carrying on with the international branches continuing to take action.

The picket lines have remained solid, and the wider membership prepared to pay an increased levy and take action should the call be made.

Unfortunately the POEU NEC at its meeting on Tuesday decided to send back to work 1,100 members on strike. 1,600 International branch members remain out.

The POEU leaders, after protracted talks with BT management, have agreed to send back into work some members under different working conditions than those in existence when they originally came out. The London City branch is consistently resisting the introduction of computerisation. In other London areas members are to be re-deployed.

NEC members Bill Fry, Dave Ward, Phil Holt and Donald McDonald did not support the NEC's decisions and argued against acceptance of this agreement and for escalation of the

action. This position received no support from the rest of the executive.

Such decisions, they argued, make future selective strike action more difficult if members cannot be guaranteed a satisfactory return to work.

By Wayne Jones

## Hull Post Office

THE POST Office in Hull came to a standstill on Monday when up to 500 UCW members walked out on a 24-hour strike starting at 5.20 am.

Management disciplined a young postman for shunting a van a few yards. He was taken off driving for one year and stands to lose £500. It was seen as yet another heavy handed and cavalier decision by management.

Other Post Office workers have been given formal written warnings and even 12 months in the black book (in which time any further incidents result in the sack) for trivial offences.

What incensed the workforce and finally led to the spontaneous action was management's misuse of Post Office

vehicles themselves.

Two Post Office drivers were recently sent to Howden (a 60-mile round trip) to pick up peat manure for the gardens of top managers, dropped off at their homes. What really angered the men was the fact that this "grubby" job was paid out of their bonus.

Several of the members are now offering their services on the picket line at the *Stockport Messenger* following discussions with Labour Party Young Socialists who brought a *YS Post Office* bulletin advertising the Young Workers' Assembly. The UCW in Hull have recently shown their solidarity with the POEU by donating £500 to their campaign funds.

By a UCW member

## No Land Registered

502 LAND REGISTRY workers have been on strike for up to three weeks following the receipt of suspension notices. The notices followed refusal to agree to the downgrading of work and the arbitrary introduction of new work procedures. Talks between civil service unions and management are now taking place.

A lobby by 200 of the strikers

took place at LR Headquarters in London on Thursday 24 November to show support for the strike committee, who were there for talks at management's invitation.

The strike committee attended only after it was agreed that management would meet the full committee, there would be no secret talks, that the strike committee would listen to an opening statement from the management and then adjourn to decide if talks should proceed, and that a new offer would be on the table.

Meetings of the strikers continue to be addressed weekly by a strike committee member. The strikers' morale is high and support for the strikers and unions amongst members at work, in jobs not directly affected by the work changes, is also very good. Supporting action is taking place in the offices and collection of a levy to help fund the strike is proceeding.

The strike, directly aimed at LR management, is having a serious effect. Bottlenecks are arising in every office and output is declining sharply. In many of the work sections at the end of the registration process, work has dried up completely.

By Chris Baugh  
(Chairman, Trade Union Side in a personal capacity)

# Call all-out print strike Organise mass picket

● Young women workers were prominent amongst the mass picket. However, police did not discriminate when they charged the picket line, indiscriminately lashing out with their clubs and making arrests. One of the young women badly beaten by police was LPYS member Louise James.

Crash-helmeted, visored, baton-wielding, para-military police kicking and clubbing workers fighting for trade union rights.

Is it Gdansk? Szczecin? Polish Solidarity fighting for free trade unions?

Is Mrs Thatcher putting the full weight of the British government behind this struggle?

No! The riot shields, armoured Landrovers charging at demonstrators, the snatch squads bruising their way to selected individuals to be dragged away or beaten up on the spot—this is the British police in the age of Thatcherism.

In new economic conditions the bosses are adopting methods not seen in Britain for many decades—methods already tried and tested under the nose of the British labour movement in Northern Ireland.

They are throwing the full support of the law and police behind one cowboy company established and run by a self appointed Shah of small businessmen, a new George Ward.

● "After what we've seen tonight the TUC have no excuse not to call a 24-hour general strike." Times SOGAT member.

● After five months the Stockport Messenger picket line at Winnick Quay industrial estate in Warrington has become a focus for the enormous tensions and conflicts building up in British society.

Print workers and trade unionists from all over the country gathered last Tuesday night to stop the distribution of the Messenger Group newspapers. They were there to

By Peter Jarvis  
(London NGA)

save the jobs of six NGA members and defend their own jobs and conditions which are under threat if the Tory laws prevail.

Never have I seen such calculated viciousness and brutality on a picket line. The police set out to teach the entire labour movement a painful lesson.

They are supposed to be upholding the law, yet they attacked and smashed up property of the NGA—a caravan which was essential to maintaining an orderly picket. They failed to reply to union requests aimed at avoiding the risk of violence.

Just before the papers came out at about five in the morning they attacked the pickets from one side with three or four waves of police, batons and boots flying. From the other side two Landrovers came tearing round the corner. I honestly thought someone was going to get killed.

They attacked women and youngsters indiscriminately. They picked their time to make the most vicious assaults. When the picket was big they just pushed and shoved to hold the line. When people started to drift away to work or catch buses going home the police really set about the remaining



Scenes from the Warrington picket on Tuesday night. With the aid of police the scab papers got out. The photo right shows the NGA caravan which police smashed up.

pickets, even chasing people down the road and across fields.

There were people lying around injured all over the place. The ambulance moved around constantly.

One of the buildings nearby appears to be their headquarters. As they stood there in rows, decked out in riot gear, glistening as the light occasionally hit them: the message was clear.

This was a deliberate provocation. A challenge to the labour movement.

Shah must be stopped if we are to preserve our ability to fight the employers' assaults on jobs, living stan-

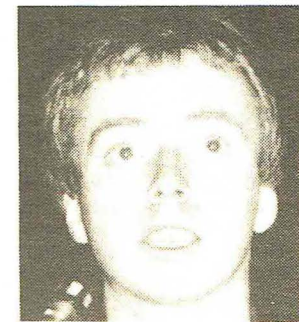
dards and working conditions.

The challenge must be taken up by the organised labour movement. It must not be left to isolated groups or individual adventures. Engineering workers from Manchester and the north west, the miners, the whole trade union movement must mount a mass response to this challenge.

The picket must be stewarded and marshalled with the discipline of the organised working class. That is the way to stop Shah. That is the sharp warning we must issue to Thatcher.

Terry Fields MP on the picket line on Tuesday evening.

● I'm horrified at the level of police brutality and provocation I've seen here tonight. Young people and old, standing there doing absolutely nothing, charged by the police, some of them injured. And the final nail in the coffin of course was when they stormed the NGA's caravan ripping out all the electrical equipment and savagely, I can only express it that way, pulling members of the NGA executive out from the back of it. One of the lads, a middle-aged fellow was thrown to the floor. Absolutely disgraceful. More Labour MPs should be up here to see what's going on. If it goes on like this there's going to be bloodshed up here and only the police will be to blame for it.



Leading LPYS member John Hunt is in hospital after he was badly beaten during a police baton charge. John a member of the LPYS National Committee for the North West region, has head injuries and a bruised retina.  
Photo: John Smith (IFL)

● "I've never seen anything like this. Lewisham was nothing compared to this. We spent the whole night being chased back and forth by the police. The only way to stop them is by getting at least 15,000 disciplined workers down here." London NGA member.

● IN RESPONSE to the Tory attacks on the trade unions, Militant will be printed more frequently for the next period. The next issue may be printed at the weekend.

## Call 24-hour general strike

Continued from front page

union for damages could cost literally millions of pounds—it would destroy the union completely. For the NGA, this struggle is a matter of life or death.

Other unions would go under if the NGA were destroyed. The National Union of Journalists is facing a similar fine itself. Who would be next? Which other union will have all its assets seized and its activities

frozen?

The print unions must be given the maximum possible support. Every union would be weakened by an NGA defeat, and by the same token, every union will gain by their victory.

The Labour Party leadership must come out openly on the side of the NGA and the sacked workers at Messenger. The fence-straddling and equivocation

must end.

There must be no more "ifs" and "buts" from the Labour leadership. There must be wholehearted support for the fight against a class-based and wholly unacceptable anti-union law.

If the Labour Party were to explain the issues properly and thoroughly, pointing out the basis of the Tories' laws, their motives in crippling the unions in order to cut

living standards and the welfare state, then millions of workers would support them. Even many who may have voted Tory in the last election, would rally to the call.

That call must be kick the Tories out! Return a Labour government pledged to repeal anti-union laws and implement socialist policies in the interests of working people!



If you are interested in the Militant and would like more information about our activities and meetings, please fill in the form below.

Special offer: 5 issues for £1

from: Circulation Department, (address below—cheques payable to Militant)

Name .....

Address .....

Please send:

Next 5 issues  More information

Rush to Militant,

1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Photo: Denis Doran

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)