

South Wales miners' leader says:

'Strike with the miners'

THE SOUTH Wales NUM's defiance of the Tory courts is an inspiration to all trade unionists.

The finances of the Welsh miners have been plundered. Donations collected from the length and breadth of the country have been seized and money to ease the lot of miners' children has been impounded. But the miners will fight on.

We print below an interview which Emlyn Williams, President of South Wales NUM gave to Brian Ingham, industrial editor of *Militant*.

Militant: "What is the answer of the South Wales miners to the £50,000 fine imposed last week?"

Emlyn Williams: "Our answer is there will be no surrender. South Wales miners have been noted for their militancy and for the dedication that they have shown to the decisions of the National Union of Mineworkers and the TUC. "We are quite clear: we will not enter any court where a case is placed against us under the 1982 Employment Act. We will have nothing to do with any anti-trade union legislation. There is no way that we will ever back down.

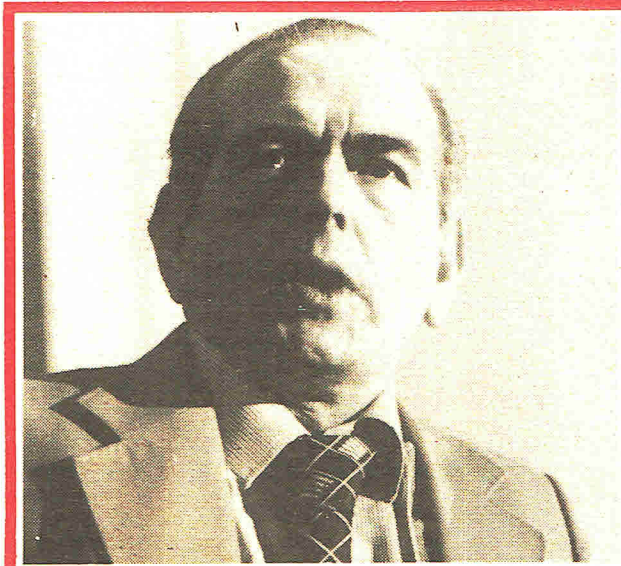
"The sequestration order has now been placed through the courts, the sequestrators

have been appointed. They are now in the process of trying to find out where the money is to try and get their hand upon the money in order to restrict, if not to completely nullify, the strategy of the South Wales area.

Successful picketing

"We picket right from Liverpool down to Plymouth. Our successes have been remarkable. This is the reason for the court order, the sequestration. We will resist it by whatever means we have at our disposal.

"This law is an attempt to turn the clock back a century; we must find ways and means within the trade union



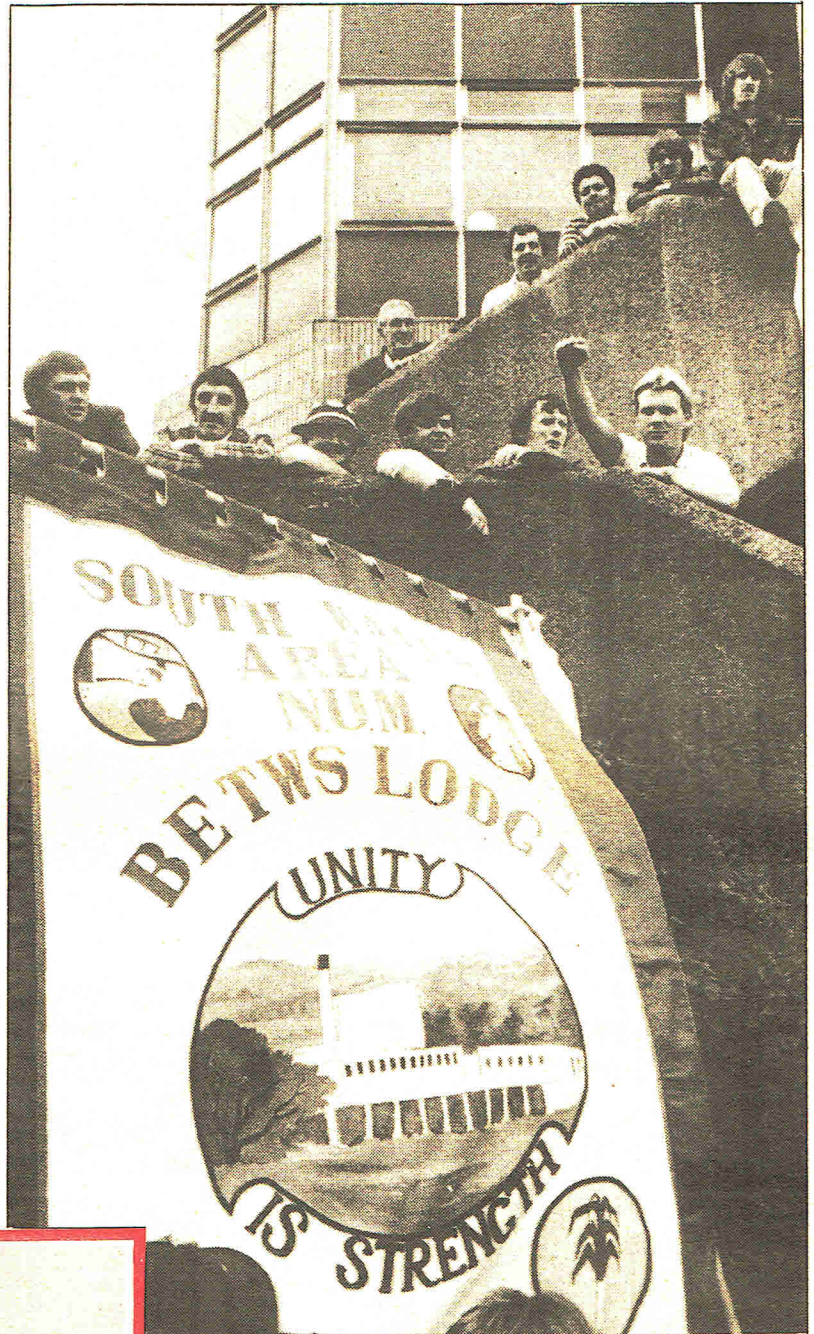
Emlyn Williams, South Wales NUM President speaks to *Militant*.

and political movement of bringing about its defeat. It is no good simply saying that it will be changed with the return of a Labour government. I have had some doubt about the credibility of returns of Labour governments in the past and indeed a Labour government was responsible initially for projecting anti-trade union laws.

"The only answer is with the working people of this country. To them we make our appeal; we live or die by their response."

Militant: "What action would you like to see from the wider labour movement?"

Emlyn Williams: "As the first step we appeal to the
Continued on page two



Miners protest at the sequestration order against the South Wales NUM, Pontypridd 1 August.

Historic week for *Militant*

ANOTHER milestone for *Militant*! Our supporters have now pushed the Marxist Daily Building Fund over the £175,000 mark and in the same historic week, contracts have been exchanged on exactly the building we need.

Even the bosses' press have been anxious to hear when the target was reached. But let them tell the world that a grand total of £320,000 (nearly a third of a million!) has been raised in a year if you add in *Militant's* fighting fund.

The Tory press don't understand what drives Marxists to ever greater sacrifices... or perhaps they do. Perhaps they realise that nothing can stand in the way of Marxist ideas getting more and more of a hold in the minds of workers in Bri-

tain and internationally. After all they are the ones who are responsible!

It is their capitalist system, in its death agony, which is inflicting such suffering on working people. *Militant* simply expresses the aspirations of workers and a way out of the crisis.

Don't stop now!

Our marvellous achievement on funds is a vote of confidence in the prospects for a daily Marxist paper. Celebrate by sending another donation! See page 13 for the details and for the next step in realising all our aims. Many thanks to all who helped us reach this landmark. Don't stop now!

Militant Editorial Board

For a one day general strike

Militant

Name the date for 24-hour general strike

THE SOUTH Wales NUM's refusal to buckle under to Tory class laws has inspired millions of workers. The ferocious attacks on the Welsh miners' finance could escalate even further.

The courts have already sequestered NUM assets and the lorry firms have threatened to return to the courts for yet another injunction. These attacks must get their answer from a united, determined labour and trade union movement.

The NUM conference on 10 August should name a date for a 24-hour general strike to show the Tories they cannot defeat the power of the unions. In our opinion this should be 12 September, one week after TUC conference. When the date is agreed, it should be taken to Trade Union Congress for support.

If a definite date was set, the three weeks up to TUC conference would see an air of keen expectation amongst active trade unionists. Meetings of unions at all levels, branch, shop stewards' committee, even city-wide meetings of shop stewards could be called to show why the strike is necessary and to mobilise full support. Teams of miners and other workers could be organised to explain the issues to every worker through meetings and mass leafletting.

Such a strike would show the Tories, and just as importantly, the working class, the power that workers have in their hands. It would be a demonstration of strength not seen since the 1920s.

This one-day strike would be a watershed in the dispute and for the Tory Government. With mass rallies and demonstrations it would either force the Tories to back down in their use of anti-union laws and their threatened closures or it would lead to an even more generalised response.

The recent moves by left union leaders to give concrete backing to the miners are welcome in overcoming the lack of leadership from the TUC during the 22 weeks of the strike. The reported interest-free loan from the TGWU, the steps to ensure full respect for NUM picket lines and the support for unions who defy Tory anti-trade union legislation will give great heart to striking miners, the pit communities and to all workers who want a real fight against mass unemployment.

The mood is building up in the movement to give the NUM the backing their courageous fight deserves. The leaders of the TUC and Labour Party have the responsibility to lead this fightback.

But Labour leader Neil Kinnock has been reported as opposing all strike action in support of the miners and what is more, saying that the sequestered money would have to be paid. This can only be seen as doing the Tories' dirty work. The leadership must live up to their responsibilities as the general staff of the labour movement.

If the Tories were allowed to get away with sequestration without organising mass opposition, the Labour leaders would be holding the door open for further Tory attacks on the unions. Neil Kinnock should take no heed of Fleet Street "experts" who try to scare workers' leaders with tales that Labour would lose support if it takes a firm stance to defend the working class.

There is widespread backing for the miners. It is the Tories who are losing support and in total disarray. Firm action now in support of the NUM would mean the beginning of the end for the Thatcher government.

Editor: Peter Taaffe
Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN Phone: 01-986 3828

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Two weeks to Militant camp

9th South Wales Militant summer camp.
August Bank Holiday, Friday 24
August - Monday 27 August.

Cost only £12.50 per person (including snacks). £2.50 per child (5 - 16 years) FREE UNDER 5's. Day trippers a minimum of £3 donation per day to the Fighting Fund. For every ten places booked, you get one free. Venue - Horton, Gower, Near Swansea.

Further details from, and cheques made payable to "Swansea Summer Camp" - 181 Hanover Street, Swansea SA1 6BP. Tel: Swansea (0792) 463523. During day phone: Swansea 466631.



Newtongrange - united as ever

RECENTLY THERE has been a lot of publicity in the media about the back-to-work moves in Scotland, in particular around Bilston Glen in Midlothian. Strikers and supporters in the Newtongrange strike committee spoke to Militant.

John Aitkin, chairman of Newtongrange strike committee summed up the mood of the miners and how the strike was going: "It's absolutely solid. We've been out for over 20 weeks and we'll stick it out for another 20 weeks if necessary. We've had tremendous support from all over."

Newtongrange is a traditional mining area where 300 miners live and work in Monktonhall and Bilston Glen. The miners realise that they have to win this fight to save their jobs. If the pits close then unemployment will totally devastate the area which already suffers from high unemployment. John described how his son was

By Eddie Donaghy

leaving school with no chance of a job. The strike was as much for his son's future as his. "Young miners are leading the way. What has also been encouraging is the support from miners' wives as the strike has gone on", John said.

Women involved

Liz Herriot and Joyce Coutts, miners' wives, spoke of their activity in the strike: "We set up a women's support group four weeks into the strike. Recently more women have been getting in-

involved. Many women had doubts to start with but now as the strike has gone on we are really behind the men". Events have clearly made the women more determined such as when the police stopped them in London from going on the tubes during the lobby of Parliament and tried to provoke violence. On Thatcher's comment about the 'enemy within', Liz said: "It's her that's the enemy, she makes me really angry". The wives have been on the picket line to demonstrate their solidarity with the men.

John Aitkin, who was on strike during the last major strike in the '70s, said that one of the big differences between now and then is the active participation of the wives in the dispute. What came through all the time was the determination not to

give in now despite the arrests and hardship.

Rab Smith said: "Her comments will make us more determined than ever. The experience of this strike has changed my outlook. I was down at Orgrave. It was something that I never expected to see in this country."

Clear message

Robert McPhee, a retired miner who used to work in Lingerwood pit that closed nearly 20 years ago said that there was no way they could give in now: "It's a fight for our future".

● Festival and gala day organised jointly by LPYS and Newtongrange Strike Committee. Bands, speakers, stalls, 5-a-side football. Saturday, 18 August, Newtongrange Park, Midlothian, 11 am.

Strike with the miners

(From page one)

grass roots to call for a one day general strike. The ideal situation would be for the TUC and the Labour Party to initiate a one-day general strike. Once we get this action the working class will move forward to the eventual goal of destroying this Act."

Militant: "If the situation becomes too critical and the TUC fail to act, do you think the NUM nationally should name the date for a one day general strike?"

Emlyn Williams: "I believe the National Union of Mine workers should take up the initiative for a one-day general strike. Arthur Scargill has sent out the clarion call already but unless some of these pundits in the TUC declare their support then we could be in a difficult situation calling a general strike. The people who made those eloquent speeches in Wembley and in the Labour Party should

now put their muscle where their mouths are."

Militant: "Will you be putting out propaganda to the South Wales working class explaining the issues at stake and the support that you need?"

Emlyn Williams: "We have already put out a hell of a lot of propaganda. As far as Militant is concerned you people are keeping our people well versed. Today, we will be drafting a positive leaflet and we will be sending out as many as we can afford. Our funds, as you know have been sequestered, but we will find the money somehow even if we have to beg for it."

Militant: "What do you think of the work of Militant in this strike?"

Emlyn Williams: "The work of Militant is to be commended. A lot of people don't like the Militant. It has disagreed with me on occasions. I am not afraid of the

Militant, it says what it thinks. As far as I personally am concerned I congratulate Militant on the help they have given the miners. I would say that we need this kind of paper."

Militant: "Finally, could you comment on the mood and outlook of the miners in the South Wales area?"

Emlyn Williams: "Well, there is not a crack in the armour of the miners. This sequestration has only hardened them; you can go around any of our mining villages and talk to whoever you like. Yes, we've got one or two dissidents but taking the mass of the miners, their families, their children, they are as dedicated now as they were on day one!"

"It warms your heart to go out of this office and address meetings, not of the activists but of the people in the communities; they are concerned about employment, about their security. They recognise the deliberate policy of unemployment that has been carried out by the multinationals and this gov-

ernment.

"I believe that the miners look upon themselves now not only as the vanguard but as people who are going on to help change society. I've noticed particularly when our young lads do an interview, how articulate they are and how knowledgeable.

"Many people were saying that these youngsters wouldn't fight because they had got cars and many had a rich way of life. That bubble burst in the first month. Their cars, their videos, their TVs are gone, they have a new way of life now, a makeshift way of life. Bills don't worry them any more. They are dedicated. They have been taught that the important thing is to read, read and read and understand what society is all about.

"They know the political score and they know the kind of society they want to see. It's the ideals and aspirations of the old socialists that are coming out in the youngsters. I'm very proud of them; they will never be the same."

COSA striker

John Laine, a member of the Colliery Officials and Staff Association (COSA) works at Team Valley, Gateshead, the North-East NCB HQ. Out of 800 workers John is the only striker. He explains why:

"I have worked for five years at Team Valley and in that time there has been a continuous fall in the workforce. Recently the NCB have closed the Whitburn and South Hetton sub offices with yet more job losses.

"I've been on strike for 13 weeks now, also I was picketed out for three days. At our first COSA meeting we said that we wouldn't cross picket-lines; at a second meeting the decision was to carry on regardless.

"COSA members do not realise that a pit closure programme would inevitably affect our jobs on the clerical side.

"Though I have utter contempt for those at work I realise that our leadership are to blame. COSA has been very quiet and have issued no propaganda.

"I'm on strike because the NUM has a valid case. The outcome of this strike will have a direct effect upon my future."

Bosses' gold for Silver Birch

NOT SURPRISINGLY the so-called "Silver Birch" is getting a great deal of publicity from the Tory press for his antics in trying to break the NUM strike.

The *Mail on Sunday* (29 July) gave him massive coverage, describing his journeys to meetings

with other working miners so they can plot against Scargill.

But amidst all the anti-strike propaganda, the Silver Birch spills the beans as to who is really behind the campaign: The reporter asked him where he got the money for his campaign. " 'Individuals'

came the nervous reply. 'Well, to be honest it's from wealthy business people who want the strike to finish and they are giving their financial support.' " By your friends shall you be known.

NCB turn screw on scabs

AT POINT of Ayr pit in North Wales, you can now see what work would be like if the miners did lose the dispute.

There the manager at the pit has told the men who are working that he wants 200 men to work during the annual holiday period to maintain production.

He is not letting all the men have their holidays at the same time. Usually before the holiday there is a list put up and anyone who wants to work during the holiday period puts their name down to work on maintenance etc. Now, however, the manager has ordered men to work during their usual holiday period.

Sacked for illness

Before the strike, if a man was on sick for 12 months, he was sent for a medical examination. This procedure has now been ignored by the manager, and 2 men have been sacked for being on the sick for too long.

The manager has cut the face teams from 12 men to 6 men. Face work is the highest paid and the 6 men who will be put off the face

By Dave Clarke
(North Wales Miners Support Committee, personal capacity)

will go on lower pay.

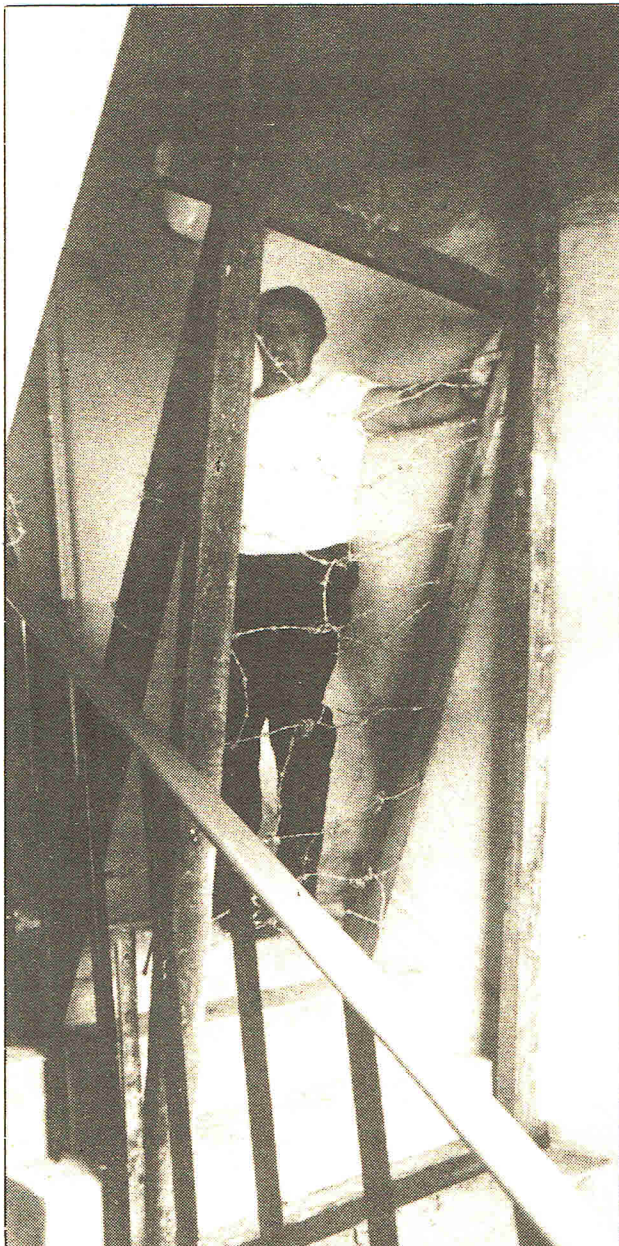
Finally, the bonus schemes are up for re-negotiation. These are usually negotiated by the union, but all the union officials are out on strike.

One man, who is still working, went to see the manager to individually re-negotiate his bonus. When he was offered a lousy deal this man protested so the manager brought 12 men into the office who he said were the 'Liason Committee'.

When the man protested that this committee was nothing to do with the NUM, the manager said that these were the people who he now recognised as the trade union.

The man then went to the house of the NUM lodge secretary (out on strike) and asked him to go in and re-negotiate his bonus!

Photo: John Woulfe/Militant



Barricade inside the South Wales NUM HQ in Pontypridd. The power of the labour movement could stop the 'sequestrators' in their tracks.

Moses sent back up his Bolsover mountain

LAST WEEK the *Derbyshire Times* and the local free weeklies carried quarter-page adverts for "experienced coal face men, underground workers and young men willing to undergo training at Bolsover colliery".

The advert was the handiwork of area director Ken Moses who has recently earned himself the nickname 'Peeping Tom of Bolsover'. His security cameras could look into nearby bedrooms causing local residents some distress.

Not that it would interest Moses who has been hard at

it trying to get a drift back to work in Derbyshire, even going to the lengths of insisting that volunteer NUM men picking up coal for pensioners should clock on just to bolster his paltry figures.

Wanted—scab labour

His latest plan of advertising for scab labour at Bolsover colliery—a pit where there is already a waiting list—backfired on him.

On Friday morning when the scabs got wind of what Moses was up to there was a walk out and a hastily called meeting in the canteen.

Moses was sent for and promptly arrived.

It was put to him straight that the adverts were to be withdrawn and that he had to go on television and explain the situation. If he wasn't prepared to comply with this the scabs would go on strike until he did.

Moses, being the lickspittle that he is, started his backpeddling act without delay. He explained that he couldn't go on television "just like that".

At this juncture the folly of electing a scab branch secretary became transparently clear. With Moses well and truly over the barrel David Taylor, the scab secretary, didn't even have

the nouse to go for a single concession on behalf of his men.

He could have started by scrapping the ridiculous agreement he reached with the management for bonus on 43's, but no, it wasn't to be.

Friday 3rd turned out to be a very black day at Bolsover. Ken Moses backpeddled up the hill to his office, avoiding any other banana skins. For Taylor it was just another day in the life of a management lackey.

By Willie Lane
(Bolsover Labour Party)

Miners arrested in Derry

POLICE HARASSMENT is not confined to the coalfields of the British mainland. On Saturday, July 28 Derry Trades Council organised street collections for the miners. The police swooped, lifting two striking miners from Nottinghamshire (on a fund raising tour) and three Young Socialists.

They were questioned by the police for two hours and all the money they had collected was confiscated. They

now face charges of making an illegal street collection. Two members of the Trades Council were also later held.

These are the first arrests in Northern Ireland due to the miners' strike. It shows once again that the police in the North and throughout Britain will be used against workers in struggle.

However, the incident did not deter the miners or local trade unionists from continuing to raise cash in Derry.

After being released £127 was collected. On the following Monday 30 July, 200 people attended a band and disco night organised by the Young Socialists. It raised over £100-half of this will go to the miners in Nottinghamshire and the other half will be used to send young unemployed workers to the Socialist Summer Camp in the South of Ireland.

By Militant Reporter

Railmen call for strike

THE EXECUTIVE of the West Midlands District Council of the National Union of Railwaymen has called for the NUR to make the action called for September 12 (see page 14) a national rail strike. The executive have also called on the NUR leadership to approach the NUM and other 'left' unions to call sympathy strike action on that day.

Scab lorries attack YS van

MINERS AND Young Socialists narrowly escaped injury last week when scab coal lorries attempted to force our transit van off the road.

We were returning to the LPYS Summer Camp after attending the Pontypridd demonstration in support of the South Wales lads. As we came back along the M4 we spotted a scab coal lorry.

Boxed in

Some of the lads couldn't resist having a go and leaned out the window calling the driver a scab. The driver obviously used his CB radio to inform the rest of the convoy further on and a scab lorry later pulled out in front of us.

Another lorry peeled off

and came in behind us, accelerating all the time. We managed to weave in and out of the lorries, but they were trying to either drive us off the road or into the central crash barrier.

At one point, a scab used a catapult to fire at us. He hit the side of our van with a terrific 'bang'.

Fortunately other drivers came to our aid. Motorists saw what was happening and put their cars in between us and the lorries. A lot of the motorists gave the scab drivers V-signs and abuse.

We managed to turn off at a slip road, but we were all shaken by this. If it hadn't been for the tremendous help given by the other motorists we would have been forced off the road.

By Rab Smith

(Monktonhall NUM)

Driver sacked for blacking coal convoys

HAZELLS IS one of the main road haulage firms involved in the scab convoys of coal and iron ore from Port Talbot to Llanwern steelworks in South Wales. Below, a lorry driver, sacked by Hazells for refusing to drive in the convoys, writes for *Militant*:

ON JULY 9 I was given an ultimatum by Martin Hazell—either carry coal across picket lines or get laid off. This followed three weeks of low wages for declining to join my fellow drivers and so-called trade unionists in the convoy which is being used by people who hate the union and are not past making a very large quick profit, following Thatcher's policies to crush the workers at all costs.

Refused to black-leg

I have now been informed that I will receive no benefits from either the dole or DHSS, even though I have never refused to do my normal work, delivering steel to Llanwern, and where from now on I am on the list of banned personnel. All because I stood by my prin-

ciples and beliefs in not black-legging.

It seems incredible that the workers at Llanwern, and the drivers who claim their only interest is to keep Llanwern open, forgot that it was only weeks before the strike that newspapers were full of the decision whether Llanwern, Ravenscraig or Port Talbot would close. And now they betray the miners who have had the courage to say what should have been said long ago—no more redundancies, no more closures—it's got to stop somewhere, and now is as good a time as any.

Let the drivers look to their conscience and have the courage to say: "I've let them use me long enough". Forget their greed, and stand by the principles of trade unionism. Perhaps it is not too late to vindicate themselves. Thatcher has got to be stopped from breaking our unions and putting us back 60 years. It's every worker's duty to join the fight. Take off the blindfold and look at what she is doing to us. Don't let her divide us.

By Peter Kuck
(T&G lorry driver, Newport)

Mersey stewards

A MEETING of Merseyside shop stewards discussed continued support for the miners' strike just hours after the news of the £50,000 fine of the South Wales NUM.

Over 120 shop stewards representing workplaces throughout Merseyside—dockers, seamen, Cammell Lairds workers currently in occupation, local authority workers, nurses, printers, and many more attended. Invited speakers included Terry Thomas, Vice-President of South Wales NUM, and Councillor Tony Mulhearn, President of Liverpool District Labour Party.

A resolution was unanimously agreed calling on the NUM to link with other unions in a campaign among the trade union rank and file to mobilise widespread industrial action in support of the miners. This to be part of the campaign to organise a 24-hour general strike to force the NCB and government to concede the NUM's demands, and to prepare for an all-out general strike in the event of miners' leaders being imprisoned by Tory anti-union laws, or troops being used to do the jobs of striking workers.

Miners' dispute

Women and the

Feeding 400 people a day



Support group women at Hoyland Kitchens, near Barnsley.

GLYNIS AND Christine are members of a miners' wives' support group working at Hoyland Kitchens near Barnsley.

The two women have given up their jobs because they were too busy working for the strike. They now have a kitchen which provides a mid-day meal 5 days a week for as many as 400 people.

The group doesn't receive any money from the NUM but raises all its own finances. They described how the strike had become a way of life for them:

"Apart from collecting money we have held a pie and tea supper where two music groups gave their services free. We've written to unions, raffled a lamp at the Liverpool conference, travelled to Birmingham and taken a collection at British Rail and Rover.

"A miner's mother aged 93 has sent a donation of £20 and we've also received two donations of \$50 each from a man and his wife who had kept a pub in the village then moved to Australia 60 years ago—he's now 83. A local journalist has also just brought in £100 that he raised on a sponsored walk to provide food for the kitchen."

The women are particularly proud of having defeated Thatcher's tactic of deducting £15 a week from Social Security. The dinners they provide work out as £10 plus in value. They are also proud of providing a good balanced meal.

"The local authority has helped us by providing free school meals in the area and that accounts for nine schools so it's a major contribution to keeping the families fed during the school holidays. The kitchens only have to cope with the under 5's."

The kitchens, as well as the fund-raising activity, are organised so they don't just deal efficiently with providing food for the families, but are also social occasions, where families can get out together. They're partly responsible for the high

By Margaret Crear

morale in the area.

"We've also been involved in picketing, we enjoy it—it's done like a military strategy. We've no fear of the police in spite of their treatment."

The women were particularly impressed by the immediate friendship they struck up with the Nottinghamshire miners which is where they have been a lot of the time: "A man who had been paid a days work for the NUM took us all for a drink and a bag of chips after the picket. The miners told us that we had made a difference to their picket line.

"For the first time some of the miners crossing the picket line had actually stopped to talk to them because of the surprise at seeing women there. We were involved in the women's rally in Barnsley. We've never done anything like this before. You don't have time to study how you feel about it, you just have to do it."

Christine says she has a lot more independence now since the strike's been under way: "We never used to take any notice of politics and government, but we have to now. We've stopped buying newspapers. The Star won't be delivered after they said something like 'Britain doesn't owe the miners a living'. They're so bad we don't even believe the ordinary every day stories any more. We can't go back to the old routine after the strike".

It's important that the donations don't fall away in the summer period when other workers are going on holiday. They need household goods as well as food, like washing up liquid, toilet rolls etc because they take up a lot of the expenses. There are a number of babies being born in the mining areas, and they don't have the money to buy proper baby clothes, prams and so on.

WOMEN HAVE played a crucial role in the miners' struggle. The Times described the role being played by the miners' wives' support groups as "the turning point in the strike".

By Jane Ingham

Women have stood shoulder to shoulder with the miners on the picket lines and marches and have paid the price dearly with the indiscriminate arrests and attacks by the police.

The miners' strike has been a long and bitter battle, with the government and the NCB using every means at their disposal to break the resolve of the union. With every blow, that resolve is hardened. Miners' families have borne much of the burden of a 22 week strike with little money coming in to buy food or meet the bills.

Women get organised

Within the first couple of weeks of the strike the wives, mothers, sisters and daughters of the miners organised themselves along with other women in the mining communities into support groups. At first they organised the provision of hot meals and food parcels for single miners who receive no state money whatsoever.

Events have snowballed to the extent that the support groups are now providing thousands of meals a day, raising money and distributing hundreds of food parcels every week—there's as much involved as in running a medium sized business.

As one of the women in the Fitzwilliam group put it: "We're not running a soup kitchen, it's a five star restaurant!" With the quantities of food and money now being handled some of the women have rapidly become accomplished accountants!

The role being played by the women's support groups in raising money, providing hot meals and distributing food should not be underrated—it is essential. In some cases it is the only food miners and their families can be sure of. It has also shown to the women themselves the tremendous talents of organisation that they have.

But perhaps more important is the role that the women have played in showing the Tories that this strike is solid. "We will fight until we win", said one of the women who spoke at the Barnsley rally after the first 10,000

Major role in building unity

The organisation of kitchens is not a bit like soup kitchens of the past—more like restaurants—and has helped women to use the skills that they already have and develop new skills.

Providing meals to miners and their families has played no small part in strengthening the strike.

Women in Hoyland, Wombwell, Dodworth and Worsbrough organised and opened kitchens within a week. In Wombwell the women asked me across to discuss the setting up of a kitchen. They had no money and no cooker, in fact all they had was plates. We discussed first the

need to organise and campaign for money and to put out a request for equipment. I went away thinking it would take about two weeks and was surprised when a few days later they phoned to say they were ready to open the following Monday having got a cooker from the LPYS and pots and pans

donated by local people. They also had a meeting with the local councillors demanding support from them, and had raised enough money to keep them going for a few weeks by having a local market stall and going round door to door collecting. They do a lot of cam-

paing work raising funds for the continuation of these kitchens. Between them they provide over 1,000 meals a day and have played a major role in bringing back into the community a feeling of solidarity that Thatcher believed wasn't there. There is no doubt that the women have gained enor-

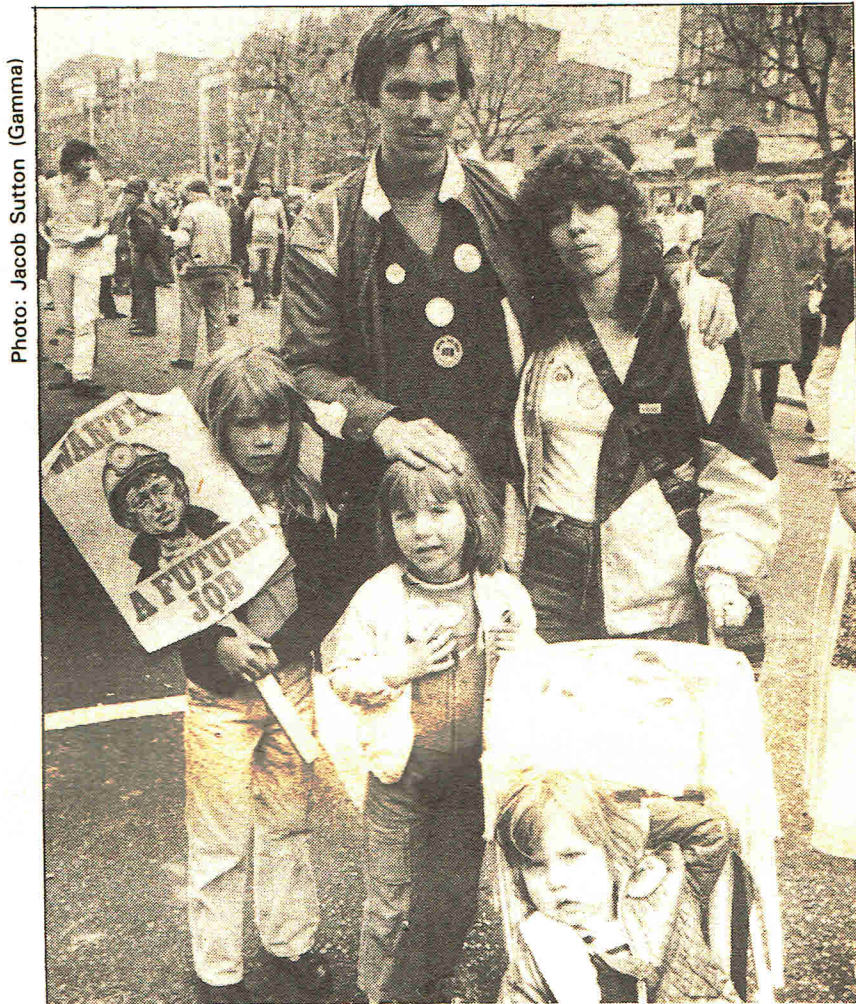


Photo: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)

Striking Kent miner's family on May Day in London. Many families will need clothes when children start back at school—donations will be appreciated.

strong national miners' wives demonstration.

Women aren't just blindly backing their men. In the rallies, on the marches, at the meetings, they have spoken and shown that they understand only too well what they are fighting for and against.

They have gone on the picket line and learned, first hand, whose interests the police are protecting. The women aren't just the wives of the union men they have become a part of the union and labour movement—a key part.

Women lose out with the Tories

Since the Tories came to power in 1979 women have borne the brunt of their inhumane policies. Between 1980 and 1982 female employment fell by 800,000 jobs. In fact, there are now over 800,000 women officially

unemployed—as many again want a job but don't register because they are not entitled to benefit or have given up hope.

The cuts in public spending have seen many jobs mainly done by women, disappear—in the Health Service, school meals, home help service, etc, the cuts have also led to many women in public service jobs having their hours cut and, therefore, their already low wages further reduced. By the government's own standards—of the eight million women at work, five million are low paid!

It's not just in wages and jobs that women have suffered under Tory rule—the attacks on the NHS and social services mean that all the problems that go with caring for the old, the sick, the handicapped and the disabled have been put right back on to women.

Women have fought back—they have fought for their jobs at factories

THROUGHOUT THE miners' strike the press has played its usual role in distorting events. Women's support groups are under no illusions about the coverage they receive.

Even reporters from abroad are treated with suspicion and the women have learned quickly that although they can't stop this distortion they can at least get something out of it. The women at Dodworth in Barnsley, for example, refused to admit a Japanese reporter until he had made a financial donation.

After relieving him of £60 they made sure he didn't just take photographs of the empty dining hall but made him wait until it had filled up with miners and their families.

The interest being shown by the foreign press is not really surprising considering what has been achieved in the mining areas. As one reporter from abroad remarked, workers abroad are watching the strike with great interest and are hungry for news of what the women have been doing.

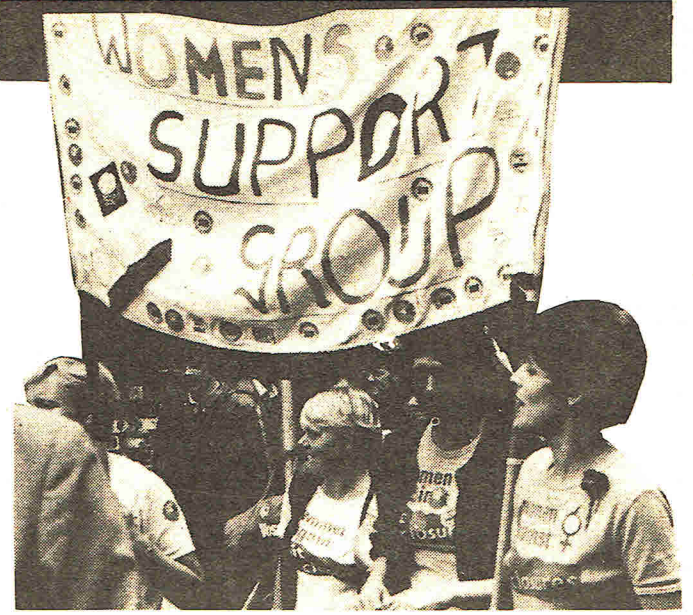
Miners' dispute

pit strike



Miners' wives on the picket line at Florence Colliery, Staffs.

Photo: John Harris (FL)



Wales—a group in every village

WOMEN'S support groups have grown up in every valley, village, town and city in South Wales. The majority of women involved in the groups are miners' wives but many other women have grasped the importance of the dispute and have become involved in the women's groups' activities.

These activities range from picketing to running soup kitchens and raising money and food. My own group, Rhymney Valley Women's Support Group, was established at the end of May after an appeal by lodge officials in the area for women to come together to establish a women's group.

The response was marvellous—over 40 women attended the first meeting and only three days after the initial meeting we participated in a women's picket outside Port Talbot steel works.

Miners' case

We wanted not only to raise money and food but to make sure we took every opportunity to make our voices heard and put the miners' case. Only weeks after becoming our chairman, Hilary Woods spoke to a rally of over 1,000 in Caerphilly something she had never done before.

We have a weekly market stall in Bargoed, a small mining town which had its pit closed down, and now raises a regular income for the food fund. Like other groups we organise fund raising activities—our last disco raised over £100.

We've now been on so many demonstrations, it's hard to keep track of them. Only this week we lobbied the Welsh Office in Cardiff to protest about the £15 kept from the wives' supplementary benefit allowances.

Nottingham

We've been to Nottingham to see for ourselves the conditions striking miners and their families have to suffer.

We took much-welcomed food parcels with us, took part in the picket outside Welbeck colliery and were warmly welcomed by the striking miners and their wives.

Many women now say that when the strike is won—they are confident of victory and determined to stick it out to the end—they wonder what they will do, as they have become so involved with numerous activities.

My message to them is don't waste your talents and abilities to organise and fight the Tories. We need you, the working class needs you. Join the Labour Party and fight with the *Militant* to transform society into a socialist Britain, so we need never again have to fight the Tories and the bosses for what is rightfully ours. Save the pits!

By Lynne Cutbert
(Secretary, Rhymney Valley Women's Support Group)

like Meccano's in Liverpool and Lee Jeans in Greenock, they have fought for their services as in the nurseries' occupations in Wakefield and they have fought for their wage rises as in the NHS in 1979 and 1982.

Things will never be the same again

Now they're fighting for their future and their determination must have put absolute dread into the hearts of Thatcher and her crew (if they've got hearts).

It's not just miners who lose their jobs if the mines close—it's the canteen workers, it's in the offices and the communities. It's the shop workers and those employed in industries connected with the mines. Women don't take to struggle easily but when they do they are an unstoppable force! Their actions in the last four months have won the respect and admiration

from the miners as fellow workers.

In this battle, many women have come to recognise their own potential. However, there can be no doubt that terrible strains and pressures have been put on marriages and family relationships. No matter how sweet the victory, things will never, can never, carry on as before.

More and more, women are coming to realise that even with victory the battle will go on. Until we change the system the ruling class will attack our class again and again.

Take the struggle forward

A wealth of experience and understanding has been gained and must be carried into the wider labour and trade union movement. Women must take their rightful place at the forefront of the trade unions, not just as women, but as leaders prepared to campaign and fight for every job, for

equal pay for work of equal value, for a national minimum wage of £100 a week to wipe out low pay, and a guaranteed job for every woman who wants one.

Women must take their rightful place in the Labour Party, transforming it at every level to fight and campaign against every attack on public services—health, education, housing, social services, etc. We have to play our role in getting the Tories out and getting to power a socialist government that will carry through policies to allow women to play a full role in society.

There has to be involvement at every level to make sure we have a leadership that will fight for our class and for real socialist change.

Thatcher had better be warned—women have joined the fightback and we're just as hell-bent as she is—we've joined with our class in fighting her class. With united action we're sure to win.

Striker's 70 year-old mother tells of police rampage

THE PIT village of Fitzwilliam hit the headlines recently over confrontations between the community and the police.

Members of the LPYS were arrested and placed under curfew (see past issues of *Militant*) after a police attack on their village in Yorkshire—on 9 July.

The mother of one of the young miners arrested, Kathleen Doody, wrote to the chairman of the local County Council strongly condemning the police action. Her letter gives a graphic description of the police attack on July 9:

"I wish to protest very strongly about the police behaviour on 9 July.

Owing to ill health I

haven't been out of my own home for several years and did not know of the trouble in the village until 11.15 that night, when my 57 year old brother came through my front door with his hand dripping with blood.

I asked him what he had done to his hand. He told me a policeman had hit him with a truncheon. He saw his young son Brendan Conway (Chairman of Fitzwilliam LPYS) as he thought stood against a lamp post. He approached him to take him home away from the troubles, but realised that his son was handcuffed to the lamp post.

When he complained about his son being handcuffed the officer said: "F--- off old man, or we will have you next", and lashed him

with the truncheon, causing a deep cut.

At 2.30 am next morning 23 policemen surrounded my house in full riot gear, truncheons drawn. I called through my bedroom window, asking what they wanted.

They said they wanted to speak to my son Dennis Doody. I said why? Dennis hasn't done anything wrong to anyone. He was home at 11.45.

The inspector then ordered his men to break my back door down. I objected to such a thing and asked them to leave my door alone, and I was going to phone for my doctor and a solicitor.

This stayed them off for a few minutes, then the orders were given again to break down the door. I told them

I was now going to phone my doctor. My son made an agreement to go voluntarily to the police station next morning with his solicitor, which he did.

On their way down the path one officer called up to my bedroom window and said: "Get back into bed you old bastard".

Worst brutality

I am nearly 70 years of age, and live in the street where I was born, and I have never seen such brutal bully tactics in all my life, especially in Fitzwilliam. We are a quiet, law-abiding community and don't want this kind of police in our village.

Then to come on top of that terrifying episode, a neighbour came to tell me

my youngest son Peter was badly injured in hospital, with head injuries and a broken shoulder. He had truncheon weals from the nape of his neck to the bottom, which he received from the police whilst he was on the ground after tripping up trying to get his friend, who had been knocked unconscious by police.

I am attending the radiation clinic at Pontefract Infirmary and no way can I stand this kind of arrogant brutal behaviour and have suffered headaches since that night.

As a decent law abiding rate payer I wonder if part of my rate money is paying wages to a force that is treating us like this. I am yours sincerely.

Kathleen Doody

By Pat Reet

No future for the fascists

Behind the statistics

MORA MCLEAN'S letter (20 July) concerning my article ("France—why the left vote collapsed") raises some very important points about the future of the extreme right wing Front National.

In my article I maintained that despite the 11% vote for the FN, this movement lacks any solid basis and will probably lose its support in the next period, especially with the return of a right wing government in 1986.

Comrade McLean

By Philippe Roland
(In Paris)

thought this attitude perhaps underestimated the danger from the extreme right and opened the way to the complacency amongst the labour



Jacques Chirac, leader of the "moderate" right wing opposition. If Chirac wins, the protest vote for the FN would dwindle, but the labour movement must still fight the threat of fascism.

leadership which led to the victory of fascism in the 1920s and '30s.

In the early '30s France's far right could mobilise hundreds of thousands of people. On 6 February 1934 the fascists attempted a coup d'état in Paris. The Socialist and Communist leaders refused to acknowledge the danger. Had it been up to them the fascists would have come to power. Only the massive intervention of the French working class barred their way.

The misfortune for the FN leader Le Pen, and a definite advantage for the left, is that the social classes upon which fascism bases itself have virtually disappeared as a result of post war industrialisation in France.

No room for complacency

Fascism is a mass movement of the peasantry and the urban middle class and small proprietors driven to reaction by the inability of the reformist leaders to lead the way to socialism and solve the crushing problems which bear down on the middle class under capitalism.

Today only 7% of France's active population work on the land; of this small number as much as

85% depend wholly or mainly upon a wage in order to live. Those people are not peasants with an interest in private property but **agricultural proletarians**. Of the remaining handful of real peasants the vast majority are heavily indebted to the big financial institutions such as *Credit Agricole* who are the only real landowners in France.

Likewise in the towns the small independent shopkeepers have been squeezed out by the big supermarket chains. At the same time the power of the working class has increased enormously; with the concentration of modern industry, 40% of all workers work in 0.4% of all enterprises, ie those employing more than 500 people.

In such a situation, the advances made by the FN as a result of the policies of the left government can only be of a temporary character. Certainly workers are sickened by Mitterrand, and Le Pen's reactionary policies have gained an echo on the basis of that antagonism. But workers will be even more sickened by Chirac. If, as is probable, the right regain power in 1986, there will be a new swing to the left and the support for the FN will fade away.

However, this perspective is not a reason to adopt a complacent attitude to the rise of Le Pen as the Communist and Socialist leaders have done. Marxists in France advocate the intervention of the labour movement to prevent all meetings, demos and rallies of the FN, thereby depriving Le Pen of all means of spreading his racist filth. We demand that this action be backed up with a vigorous campaign to defeat racist propaganda with socialist ideas.

Dictatorship threat

Furthermore even though fascism is no longer an option for the ruling class, this is because of the balance of class forces in French society not the ruling class' good nature. If the labour movement fails to do away with capitalism in the decades ahead, reaction will come to power, not with the mass support of a mass fascist party, but in the form of a **military dictatorship**.

In the long term the only alternative to the coming to power of reactionaries like Le Pen and his friends in the "hard" wings of the RPR and the UDF is the socialist transformation of society.

Workers solidarity, officials' blocking



Carworkers at Renault Billancourt demonstrate

WORKERS IN many different parts of the world have shown their support for British miners. Workers in France for example have organised holidays for striking miners' children.

Two miners, Alex Shanks a member of SCEBTA at Monktonhall in Lothian and Gary Knowles from Bold NUM in Lancashire write of their experiences in a visit to French car workers organised by Militant supporters in Paris.

FRENCH car workers are organised in two of the largest French union federations the CGT and CFDT. At the first factory we visited Renault Billancourt, we got a fantastic reception. First

we spoke at a shop stewards meeting in the factory, putting our case over to the workers on loudspeakers.

£500 collections

The reception we got was very good with many workers stopping to look at placards we had prepared showing miners' demos, police brutality and so on. We did the same at Renault Flins and between the two factories we raised around £500.

During the discussions, it became clear that the shop stewards were totally dissatisfied with the performance of the "Communist" Party in the government. Later that week the level of feeling caused such pressure

on the Communist Party that they left the government.

Unfortunately the second meeting was a bit soured by the behaviour of the "Communist" union the CGT who produced a leaflet which correctly asked for donations to our strike from members of the CFDT but concentrated far too much on attacking the other union for not involving themselves in the collection.

This seemed quite common in France where both major unions spend too much time attacking one another. In fact only 1,200 out of 17,000 are organised in the two unions at both Renault factories, even thought the workers are very militant.



"Communist" Party ministers arriving for a government meeting. Pressure has caused them to resign.

We were most disappointed that we couldn't speak to SKF workers. *Militant* supporters in France had arranged a meeting at local level but a Communist Party official in the CGT wanted to know if we were "real miners". Alex phoned home to the chairman of his local trades council, Chris Herriot, who is on the central strike committee who confirmed we were OK to speak after checking with the strike committee chairman David Hamilton.

Stewards disappointed

Chris then phoned the CGT who said that it was

fine but then the bureaucrat rang up and said we needed **national** confirmation from Sheffield. We rang up NUM HQ and the international officer Vernon Jones said it would be all right provided all money collected came back through the correct procedure.

When we got back to the CGT official, he told us he couldn't arrange a meeting that week! By that time the five days our visit were running out. The shop stewards locally were very disappointed by the attitude of the official as of course we were. But the obstruction came only from the official not the French workers who generously backed our strike.

THE MOST publicised fact about Brazil is probably its "megadebt"—\$100 billion, or maybe its 230% inflation.

These figures certainly do illustrate the crisis in Brazil but they cover up the depths to which human existence there has been pushed, if "existence" really describes the conditions.

"Millions of children in Brazil are losing the fight for survival, with a baby dying of hunger every 20 minutes, and an estimated 32 million children abandoned, half of them living on the streets," reported the *Irish Times* on 30 July. 200,000 children in the North East of Brazil are dying every year from gastro-enteritis.

The report from the Brazilian Association of Children's Judges goes on, "According to official figures some eight million children of primary school age never go to school but... the true figure was 10 to 15 million." One of the growing businesses is baby-trafficking—where young mothers are paid up to \$2,000 for their babies for the US and Israeli markets.

There are reports that children as young as ten are put to work in factories in southern Brazil for starvation wages. Another report published by the ILO points out that Brazil's child labourers are not unique. "Underground work in mines is the most flagrant example... there are three million child workers in Colombia, some of them working in coal mines as deep as 9,000 feet underground".

Child labour

The ILO puts the figure of child labourers worldwide at between 75–100 million. The report also relates that "a million Mexican children were employed as seasonal workers in the US in the late 1970s."

The Director-General of the ILO said, "Child labour was only one aspect of poverty and underdevelopment. In most cases, the family income was so meagre that the child's wages became an essential means of the family resources".

Every Latin American country without exception is cutting the living standards of the workers and peasants. Mexico, for example, has seen living standards cut by one-third in the last 18 months.

Here is the cause of the obscenities of starvation alongside the vast grain potential of the pampas. Starvation, child labour and low wages are rooted in capitalism. The socialist revolution is the only hope to solve every one of these problems, and if you ever need reminding, remember that behind every fact, figure and statistic, some worker or peasant is paying somewhere with his or her life.

By Mike Waddington

Nicked: for solidarity

"I SUPPOSE you will call us pigs now and claim police brutality". This quote came when the police decided to drop charges against us after we had been arrested in Chapeltown, Leeds, while collecting for the miners.

We were locked up and then interviewed separately. Questions in both interviews consisted of our views on the miners' strike, what the LPYS stood for (did the police want to join?) and on whose authority we were collecting. We pointed out that Neil Kinnock had—at last—given his support to the miners, so if the police really wanted to go to the top, they should contact Neil. If nothing else, the mention of Neil Kinnock caused several smirks.

More personal questions followed concerning our families and hairstyles. We were also told our actions were worse than begging. You see, the police are impartial in these matters.

In between interviews, when Paul was led back to the cell, a PC accidentally trod on his foot and then said: "If the other one cracks under pressure then we will be back for you". Some of the comments could have come straight from *Sweeney*. Totally unbelievable. Another choice quote was: "These Commies are everywhere".

Having kept us for over two hours we were released when they couldn't find anything to charge us with. But it's all part of the national campaign to harass and intimidate miners and now their supporters.

By Michael Higgins
and Paul Suter
(Chapel Green LPYS)

Defend the LPYS

"IF MILITANT take control of the YS then I will close it down." This was said by the Plymouth Sutton CLP secretary when a YS branch was set up in July 1983.

As reported in issue 702, the Plymouth Sutton LPYS was suspended at the end of May 1984. On 27 July the CLP General Committee decided to re-convene the YS and elect new YS branch officers (until the next AGM).

When we arrived at the meeting the CLP chairman informed us that three members of the YS—Paul Atkins, Michael Dolphin and Rachel Harris—would not be allowed to hold office in the YS, guilty of having held an AGM after suspension of the YS, and getting elected as officers and organising a public meeting against the cuts and job losses in schools and educational services in Plymouth.

We are glad that the YS has been re-started and *Militant* supporters elected to positions of chairperson and secretary. Michael Dolphin is one of the YS delegates to the GMC. The above three will be given the right of appeal at the next GMC and have protested to the Regional Youth Organiser and party general secretary.

By a LPYS member

YS Summer Camp '84

YET ANOTHER successful LPYS summer camp is over for another year. As the camp was "struck" (in sympathy with the miners?) comrades returned to their areas inspired to build a mass LPYS. It was the coming of age for the YS as it discussed how to intervene in such movements as a general strike. Even the agenda was re-arranged to discuss these points in response to events concerning the South Wales NUM.

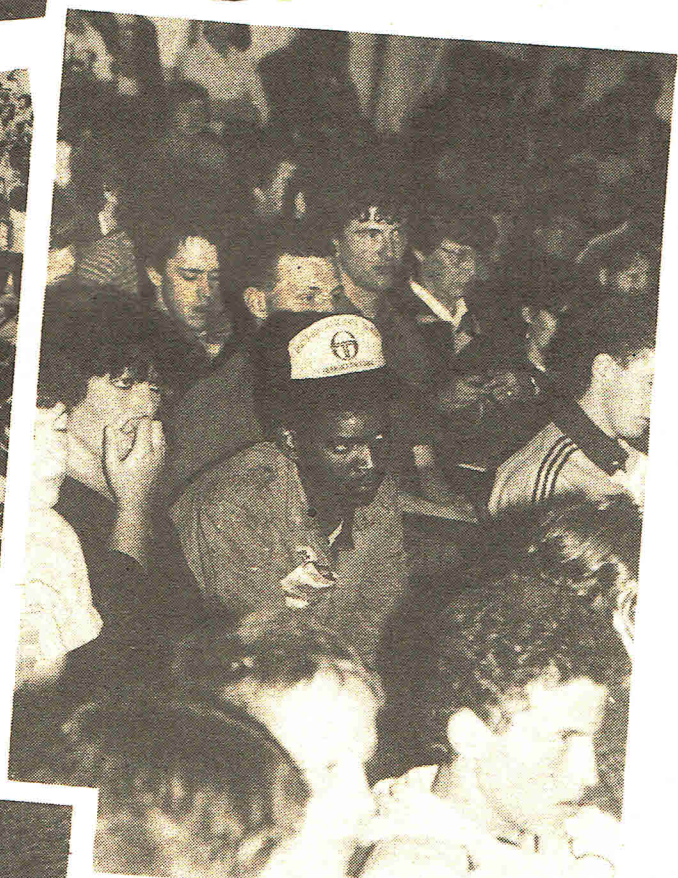
For many it was the most political holiday ever, especially those who got up at 5.30 in the morning to help defend the NUM headquarters on Wednesday. Over 400 Young Socialists in four coaches, mini-buses and cars went to Pontypridd for the demonstration. The football competition was keenly followed and supporters took the competition seriously, chanting songs as good as any at Anfield. It was ironic that the Merseyside team were the losing finalists.

Crèche facilities were excellent, with youngsters organised into the 'Young Pioneers'.

With cider at 50p a pint, what a marvellous way to spend a week's holiday. See you next year?



Photo: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)



Photos by
John Woulfe

Photos, from the top, clockwise: Miner Roy Jones of Staffs NUM contributes to the local government debate; The audience at one of the many debates; The Merseyside team, runners up in the football final; Two scenes from the Pontypridd demonstration.

How Liverpool fought—and won

ONE OF the best discussions of the week was "How should local government fight the cuts" which was debated by Jack Straw, MP for Blackburn and Felicity Dowling on behalf of Liverpool City Council.

After several days of spirited fighting talk from working class youth, the Parliamentary style of Jack Straw jangled like a wrong note. Those youth who had looked forward to an honest and frank exchange of views on policy were disappointed.

Jack Straw put forward nothing. No programme, no policy, no campaign of

action. He claimed the Liverpool victory was due just as much to skillful negotiations as the stand by Liverpool workers. Jack Straw also talked of increasing unity in the party, at the time when his own CLP has recently expelled active members of the Labour Party who support *Militant*.

Felicity Dowling received

a standing ovation when she explained it was the people of Liverpool who were responsible for the victory of the council. She explained how the Liverpool council had won the support of the local authority trade unions in their campaign, which was an essential part of their victory: "We put out propaganda that meant what we said and said what we meant, so that the average punter in Liverpool knows more about tenancies, budgets, council allocations etc, than most councillors

across the country knew a few years ago.

New members

"The LPYS was at the forefront of this campaign. We didn't just persuade the natural Labour voters—the leader of the campaign against our school re-organisation plan was won over to our side and is now a member of the Labour Party."

The discussion from the floor was quite sharp; one young miner thanked Jack

Straw for '15 minutes of waffle' while John Mutton, a Coventry Labour Party councillor agreed with the slogan of Liverpool City Council that it was "better to break the law than break the poor" and wished that the Coventry council would take the same stand.

Reports by
Heather Rawling

Nuclear power. fact and fiction

Twice the cost of coal

A KEY part of the propaganda offensive against the miners is the claim that using coal to generate electricity is more expensive than using nuclear power, but even from the narrow view of capitalist economics, nuclear power doesn't make sense.

Since the nuclear emergency at Three Mile Island in the USA in 1978, no new nuclear plants have been ordered there and 40% of existing orders have been cancelled. The nuclear lobby, backed by multinationals such as Westinghouse, have suffered a serious blow as the ruling class have virtually written off further development of nuclear power, as least in the foreseeable future. One result of this has been the publication of more objective analyses of the true costs involved.

★ The PWR is the reactor which was installed at the Three Mile Island plant in the USA. A nuclear catastrophe was only narrowly averted there in 1977. Many engineers think the design is intrinsically unsafe, and no PWR's have been ordered for use in the States since 1978.

The supporters of nuclear power understate the costs in three main ways: the initial capital costs in building the plant are underestimated, full research and development costs are not included and finally, and most importantly, the operating efficiency of the power station is overestimated by up to 30%. After studying these factors, the authors of a new book in the USA came to the conclusion that, "the full cost for a unit of nuclear energy ordered today for operation in the 1990's would be more than twice that of the same unit from a coal burner". (*The Competitive Economics of Nuclear and Coal Power*, by Caroline and Richard Hellman, Gower Publishing Co, 1984).

The most important consideration when comparing the performance of nuclear and coal stations is the load factor. This is an efficiency rating, being the ratio of actual output from the turbines in a power station to the maximum possible output, expressed as a percentage. The nuclear planners in the USA assumed that all the units built would operate with a load factor of 80%, ie producing 80% of capacity. However, the actual lifetime average is about 55%, with the European light water reactors,

which includes the type the CEBG want to use, operating at about the same level.

★ GEC and the American multinational, Westinghouse stand to make huge profits if the CEBG stick to their plan to produce half of our electricity in the future by nuclear power.

The French government have had the biggest nuclear power station building programme in the world. There are 27 Pressurised Water Reactors (PWR) working at the moment, with five more planned to open this year. The first began producing electricity in 1977 and since then the lifetime load factor has been 52%. The French Electricity Board use the Westinghouse PWR, which is the same reactor the CEBG want to buy. There is also no evidence that the load factor will improve in the future; indeed, when the new 1,300 megawatt stations come on stream fresh problems may crop up, as was found in the USA.

There is evidence from Germany that damage has occurred when nuclear plants have been run too hard to try to improve the load factor. Normally plants are shut down for two months each year for essential maintenance, but if this period is shortened to increase output, problems could begin to occur due to corrosion or vibration. The German Biblis-A and Biblis-B PWRs had lifetime load factors of 60%, but during the peak winter period in 1983 both were out of order.

The OECD report which made coal much more expensive than nuclear power assumed a load factor for nuclear of 75%. If a more realistic figure of 55% is used, the costs of nuclear power rise by 50%.

★ Companies like Babcock and Wilcox and Taylor Woodrow, who are big contributors to Tory funds, stand to gain from a massive expansion of the nuclear programme.

The second major adjustment which must be made when calculating the costs of nuclear power is in capital spending. The capital cost of the French PWR's built between 1976 and 1983 was underestimated by 30%. In Britain, the CEBG uses historic cost accounting, which doesn't allow for the full effects of inflation. As nuclear power is twice as capital intensive as coal, the effects of using historic costs is to 'write down' the cost of nuclear power as compared to coal, since the heaviest price



burden in nuclear generation is incurred in the early years of construction, when prices are lower. Also full interest charges are not always included during construction; this is a particular big omission for a station like Dungeness B which was switched on 12 years late.

Research and development costs are not always fully accounted for. The civil and military nuclear programmes have always been closely linked; the first nuclear power station at Calder Hall was built to supply radioactive material for atomic bombs. It is likely then, that research work for power stations is paid for partly by the Ministry of Defence.

There are other hidden costs for nuclear power which are difficult to quantify. These include unexpected major breakdowns, waste disposal such as the cost of the Sellafield plant and decommissioning costs. This last point is particularly relevant in Britain where the original Magnox reactors are coming to the end of their lives.

The CEBG still claim that electricity produced by nuclear means

will be cheaper than by coal. They plan to increase the amount of electricity produced from nuclear stations to 50%, using the Westinghouse PWR. It is not valid though, to use the past performance of the British nuclear industry as yardstick for future performance. The present workhorses of the nuclear power stations are the ageing Magnox reactors. These are of old fashioned design and of relatively small size which by now are quite reliable and operate with high load factors.

★ A coal fired power station, ordered now, will produce electricity twice as cheaply as the PWR nuclear power plant favoured by the CEBG.

Even so the CEBG have been forced to admit that historically electricity has been produced more cheaply by coal-fired power stations. Projections based on future performance of the Advanced Gas Cooled reactor (AGR) are meaningless, firstly due to its appalling

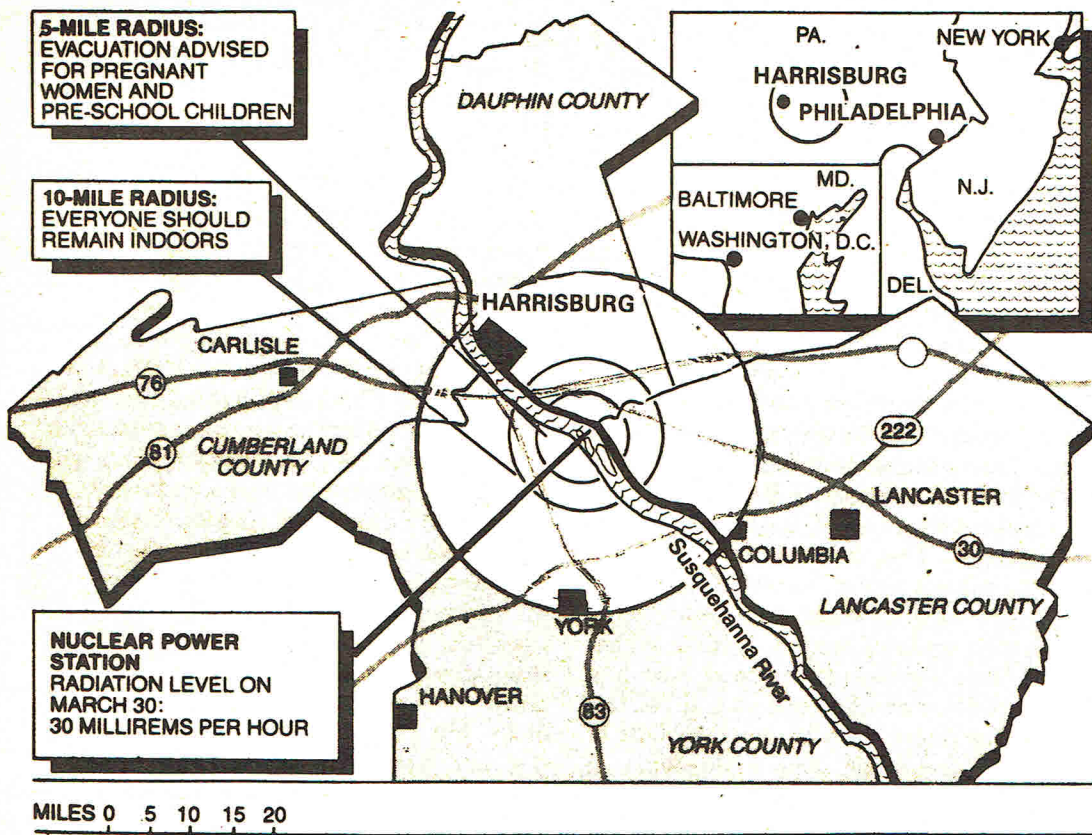
record to date and secondly to the fact that the CEBG intend to use the PWR for its nuclear expansion programme.

★ The true cost of each nuclear power station will probably be more than a billion pounds.

When this is done, and comparisons are made with the PWR's in France and the USA, coal emerges as twice as cheap as nuclear power.

When the economic argument in favour of nuclear power is removed, the reason the Tories want to press ahead with a massive expansion is clear: to smash the power of the miners, so that the labour movement is stripped of its most class conscious fighters. The propaganda in favour of nuclear power is directed to that end.

By Pete Dickinson



The accident they said "could never happen". The above map shows the evacuation and precautions taken after the accident at Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in 1979. At one time it was even envisaged that large parts of the State of Pennsylvania would have to be evacuated. And scientists further feared that the accident could have escalated into the 'melt-down' of the reactor core—the catastrophic disaster popularised in the film 'China Syndrome'.



Notts jobs will go

Pete Dickinson's article in *Militant* 709 rightly pointed out that the Tories planned to run down coal production in favour of nuclear power—regardless of the consequences in terms of danger to human life and chiefly to undermine the Trade Union movement.

What is particularly ironic is that these plans will endanger jobs in the Notts coalfield probably more than in any other. Just after being elected to the NUM NEC, Henry Richardson, now Notts Area General Secretary, was interviewed in *Militant*. In this interview, he explained that there were plans to build a nuclear power station on the Trent that would replace three power stations—West Burton, High Markham and Cottam—which took 80% of Notts coal.

major closures in the area. We can't expect the NCB to drop these plans out of gratitude to the Notts miners who have worked during the current strike. On the contrary, they will be encouraged by the impression that Notts is isolated from the rest of the union.

NCB plans

It's a pity that more was not made of such facts and figures in the month before the strike. If there has been—and demands had been drawn up with which to fight these plans in every area—the situation in Notts today might have been very different.

By Tony Cross

Major life threat

A government report, headed by Sir Douglas Black, into the incidence of childhood cancers in West Cumbria admitted that: "there may be channels of radiation which reach people that we do not know about."

But the Black report refuses to link the nuclear plant at Sellafield with the disease and merely recommends that this "hypotheses should be investigated". This is despite the fact that the report accepts the findings of the Yorkshire TV documentary, 'Windscale, the nuclear laundry', which revealed a dramatic increase in various cancers, especially leukaemia, amongst children in the area.

How big a risk?

The authorities, already under enormous pressure following adverse publicity concerning the leakage of radioactive wastes have issued reassurances on the levels of radiation escaping from the plant and asserting that there was no evidence of general risk to people living in the area.

But what is the truth? First what is nuclear radiation and what are its effects?

Radiation—in the form of ionising particles and rays such as X-rays—are emitted when a nuclear reaction occurs as in the production of nuclear energy. They are virtually impossible to contain.

A chief characteristic of some radiation is their ability to cause mutation of cellular structure of the human body. When this occurs cancers and leukaemia results. Small children and embryos carried by pregnant women are particularly vulnerable.

Recent research has revealed that whereas high levels of radiation often kills the cell, low levels are more dangerous as they injure the cell, leaving them free to reproduce and carry on the damage.

American results

Studies of death certificates of workers at the Hansford nuclear plant in Washington have revealed a disturbingly high incidence of cancer of the pancreas and leukaemia even though workers were exposed to levels well within the agreed "safety" limits. This pattern has now been observed amongst British workers. But the most alarming results have come from a chance discovery.

The overall cancer death rate among civilian nuclear workers at the Navy's Portsmouth shipyard in Kettering, Maine was found to be

more than twice the national average, and well above that of the yard's non-nuclear workers. The figures were calculated by a doctor who filed a law suit under the Freedom of Information Act to get access to the records.

The Navy had good reason for maintaining an iron hold over these records. The results were startling. They showed that the rate of leukaemia was an incredible 450% higher than the general population's. The incidence of lymph gland cancer was 125% higher.

As the workers were exposed to the lowest possible dosage of radiation these studies have conclusively demonstrated that there is no safe level of radiation exposure. Since cancer is a long agonising process the full extent of radiation damage and that due to radioactive substances leaking into the environment are unlikely to be known for a long time.

Unreliable report

The *Black Report* and its so-called assurances must be questioned in the light of available evidence. Moreover *Black's* assertion that the risks associated with nuclear power in comparison with that of coal extraction must also be challenged. It is entirely erroneous to compare the dangers of coal mining with that of nuclear power.

The potential dangers in nuclear fission are much greater. Coal extraction is a danger to the worker in the industry and can be limited by technology. Yet the inherent dangers in nuclear fission can result in a catastrophe as shown by the Harrisburg accident.

It is vitally important that the labour and trade union movement conduct its own thorough-going enquiry. It must mobilise immediately to ensure that health and safety become a key issue in all establishments. As part of the campaign it must insist on the full revelation of all the company's records and studies relating to the poisoning and workers and the community. They must demand stringent medical checks of all workers and of the general population and the results made available.

By Ronnie Sookhdeo

US switches to coal

CINCINNATI GAS and Electric of Ohio announced last week that they are converting their Zimmer nuclear plant to coal because it is far cheaper. The decision to abandon the nuclear plant, despite having spent \$1,700 million on parts, had been made because nuclear power was proving far too expensive and inefficient. In the new coal plant 1,300 mega watts will be produced compared to the planned 840 mw for the nuclear plant.

The Zimmer decision comes shortly after another company, Wabash Valley Power Association, announced that they were planning to convert their nuclear plant at Marble Hill to coal



(Above) Radiation shield, 1919. Although protective equipment has somewhat improved since then, this does not mean nuclear power is safe. As the article far right shows there is no safe level of radiation exposure.

USA,

Iran/Iraq war, India



Reagan—TV "actor"... Posing again.



Reagan: From 'B' movies to H-bombs

"THE PROBLEM with political jokes is that they get elected" said Marx (Groucho, that is). It just about sums up the approach of this book by an American author who claims to be a Marxist (Karl, that is).

The book presents in a quite amusing way the background to what the American media have dubbed the "Reagan Revolution". Our hero's inevitable rags to riches story began amongst humble folk in small town Illinois and ended (but hopefully not for much longer) in the White House.

Friends in high places

It took Reagan to college athlete, local radio sports broadcaster to star of 54 B-movies and marriage to two Hollywood starlets to president of the Screen Actors Guild. The rest, as they say, is history.

While leader of the actors' union, Reagan suddenly become more politically aware—aware that is that he was a fanatical anti-Communist and in 1949, during the McCarthy witch hunt, he helped to blacklist Hollywood radicals by testifying before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

But Reagan had no wider platform until the mid '50s when he hosted the General Electric Company's sponsored TV shows. He spoke at General Electric factories and dinners across America.

In 1962, at the age of 51, Reagan finally joined the Republicans and in the 1964 presidential election campaign he spoke all over California for Barry Goldwater.

Reagan's first speech on national TV (basically the same one he still uses today) was a smash success but didn't prevent the redneck Goldwater being smashed at the polls. But it meant that the hard right in America had hit on a fresh approach with a new soft sell merchant.

A roll-call of wealthy Californian industrialists then formed "The friends of Ronald Reagan".

One of them, Holmes Tuttle, said "After that terrible defeat in 1964 we knew we had to do something... we believed in the free enterprise system. We felt that if it was going to be preserved, instead of going around belly aching about it, we should go out and do something about it. We gathered people around who had a common interest and decided to help Ron."

By a strange coincidence the inner circle of Reagans "friends" were all millionaires—as of course was Ronnie. With the help of sympathetic public relations men and speech writers (the account in the book is hilarious) these self-made men manufactured Reagan into what he is today.

"What do we do now?"

The millionaires foresaw the prospect of ultimately building a White House "Kitchen Cabinet"—"It didn't take a real smart man to know that we had a viable candidate for Governor, and if he did a good job he would be presidential timber."

In 1966 Reagan was elected Governor for California. Since the 1930s Reagan had more or less relied on others to write his lines and old habits die hard. His campaign manager Lynn

Noziger pointed out—"Ronald Reagan... didn't even run his own campaign. his campaign was run by hired people who then walked away and left it. Therefore, when he was elected the big question was, "My God, what do we do now?"

The making of the president

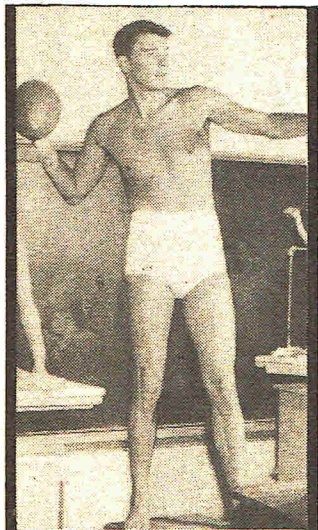
The millionaires supplied an answer. At Reagan's request they nominated people to fill forty staff positions in the Governor's administration, and all but a few of Reagan's major appointments were made in this way.

Reagan was disarmingly candid—"My administration makes no bones about being business orientated." By 1970, Governor Ronald Reagan managed to avoid paying any state income taxes! After two terms in office Reagan decided to seek the Presidency. In 1968 he lost the nomination to Nixon and left office in California in 1974 only to lose the 1976 nomination. Unfortunately he didn't lose in 1980.

This book certainly doesn't give any way to stop Reagan, and doesn't raise the question of a party of labour. *Militant* is where you'll get that! But it's a very amusing book. Good holiday reading—provided you don't scare too easily!

By Julie Morgan

Reagan for beginners by David Smith and Melinda Gebbie. Writers and Readers Documentary Comic Books £2.95.



Indian workers back miners

THE ASSOCIATION of Engineering Workers in Bombay and Maharashtra has sent a letter of support for the British miners' strike to *Militant*.

The union, with around 175,000 members represents amongst others, textile workers in Bombay who were involved in a courageous strike for over a year in 1982-83. We print part of the

letter below.

"On behalf of two and half lakhs (25,000) of Bombay Textile Workers and more than 15 lakhs of other workers from Bombay, and Maharashtra State, I extend my whole-hearted support to the struggle of Coal Mine Workers in England who are on strike for the last 19 weeks against forced unemployment consequent

upon the decision on Mrs. Thatcher's Government to close several coal mines.

"The working class of India is watching the struggle of coal mine workers who have been facing Government repression, with unity, courage and determination..."

"I have no doubt that such a mighty and unified struggle of the working class

of England will come out triumphantly and defeat the offensive of Thatcher's government..."

"I recall with gratitude the fraternal support given by the workers from England and other countries for the Textile Workers, who will not fail to reciprocate and fulfil their international obligation towards the working class of England."

Olympic circus but no bread

THE 23rd Olympic Games in Los Angeles is on TV screens across the globe. An estimated two billion people worldwide will enjoy the athletic achievements.

But big business manages to sour everything. The Olympics were founded with the idea of bringing the people of the world together but they are now being used to bolster nationalist feelings in the competing countries.

Many athletes have complained of the enormously partisan crowds at the games, hissing foreign competitors. Heightened nationalism is very helpful in America's election year for the likes of Reagan.

National prestige

In Ancient Greece during the first Olympics all wars stopped but today Reagan continues the war against the people of El Salvador and Nicaragua. The stockpiling of weapons of war goes on with the US spending about \$300 billion this year.

The United States increasingly resembles another ancient society, Rome, whose leaders exploited a huge part of the world with bread and circuses at home to try and keep the mass of the people happy, although in America there is only the circus today as Reagan has cut the welfare.

Many Americans will enjoy the Olympics and welcome the competitors but

for the ruling class it is only about US prestige and making money. Marxists have explained that capitalism sees all human relations in terms of cash payment, even the "amateur" Olympics is used to make a fast buck.

Perfect image

The MacDonalds' empire probably sums up the image of modern America—they have put money into the Olympics but with the sole aim of boosting their sales to over 40 billion hamburgers. MacDonalds now employ more workers than US Steel, mostly low paid and over-worked and all non-union—they do everything to try and keep it that way.

The Games opened with huge razzamatazz, using a cast of twelve thousand, 20,000 props, a huge video board, no fewer than 84 grand pianos, a choir of a thousand and a full orchestra!

Nothing will be allowed to mar the perfect image. At the Olympics in 1968 as part of the black movement in the US three black athletes gave a black power salute as they received their medals. The authorities were furious and since then have used money and pressure to ensure that US athletes tow the line.

So enjoy your favourite sport at the Olympics but remember what is behind the show.

By Bill Hopwood

Trench warfare in the Gulf

IT IS now seventy years since the start of the First World War, the imperialist blood-bath which destroyed lives throughout Europe. That was declared to be the war to end wars.

Today there is no world war in progress but one of the "small wars", that in the Gulf, threatens to reach the level of bloodshed of 1914-1918. Some independent observers at the front in the Iran-Iraq conflict estimate that Iranian forces may have lost as many as 250,000 dead and the Iraqis 150,000.

The Iranian opposition group, the Mujahedin, in fact claim that half a million Iranians may have died since 1979 from the combination of war and execution of political opponents.

By the start of next year the Iran-Iraq conflict will have lasted as long as the first world war. Already about half of one per cent of Iraq's population have died compared with one per cent of Britain's population in 1914-1918. It is a similar war of attrition to World War 1,

with trench warfare, fighting for a small patch of land and accusations of gas and chemical attacks.

Four years of bloodshed

In the Gulf War, unlike 1914, both sides have antibiotics and blood transfusion, so a greater percentage of deaths come from weaponry. In one of the most publicised horrors of the war, very young Iranian "volunteers" run through minefields with sticks to clear the mines.

There seems little sign of an end to this bloody episode. Obviously the war to end war did no such thing... the only "war" that can end such carnage is the class war to end the rule of despots like Saddam of Iraq and Khomeini in Iran.

When the exploiting classes have gone, the workers and peasants of the Gulf can unite to end the poverty which still afflicts this area, instead of wasting lives and resources in a horrifying war.

No future for the fascists

Behind the statistics

MORA MCLEAN'S letter (20 July) concerning my article ("France—why the left vote collapsed") raises some very important points about the future of the extreme right wing Front National.

In my article I maintained that despite the 11% vote for the FN, this movement lacks any solid basis and will probably lose its support in the next period, especially with the return of a right wing government in 1986.

Comrade McLean

By Philippe Roland
(In Paris)

thought this attitude perhaps underestimated the danger from the extreme right and opened the way to the complacency amongst the labour



Jacques Chirac, leader of the "moderate" right wing opposition. If Chirac wins, the protest vote for the FN would dwindle, but the labour movement must still fight the threat of fascism.

leadership which led to the victory of fascism in the 1920s and '30s.

In the early '30s France's far right could mobilise hundreds of thousands of people. On 6 February 1934 the fascists attempted a coup d'état in Paris. The Socialist and Communist leaders refused to acknowledge the danger. Had it been up to them the fascists would have come to power. Only the massive intervention of the French working class barred their way.

The misfortune for the FN leader Le Pen, and a definite advantage for the left, is that the social classes upon which fascism bases itself have virtually disappeared as a result of post war industrialisation in France.

No room for complacency

Fascism is a mass movement of the peasantry and the urban middle class and small proprietors driven to reaction by the inability of the reformist leaders to lead the way to socialism and solve the crushing problems which bear down on the middle class under capitalism.

Today only 7% of France's active population work on the land; of this small number as much as

85% depend wholly or mainly upon a wage in order to live. Those people are not peasants with an interest in private property but **agricultural proletarians**. Of the remaining handful of real peasants the vast majority are heavily indebted to the big financial institutions such as *Credit Agricole* who are the only real landowners in France.

Likewise in the towns the small independent shopkeepers have been squeezed out by the big supermarket chains. At the same time the power of the working class has increased enormously; with the concentration of modern industry, 40% of all workers work in 0.4% of all enterprises, ie those employing more than 500 people.

In such a situation, the advances made by the FN as a result of the policies of the left government can only be of a temporary character. Certainly workers are sickened by Mitterrand, and Le Pen's reactionary policies have gained an echo on the basis of that antagonism. But workers will be even more sickened by Chirac. If, as is probable, the right regain power in 1986, there will be a new swing to the left and the support for the FN will fade away.

However, this perspective is not a reason to adopt a complacent attitude to the rise of Le Pen as the Communist and Socialist leaders have done. Marxists in France advocate the intervention of the labour movement to prevent all meetings, demos and rallies of the FN, thereby depriving Le Pen of all means of spreading his racist filth. We demand that this action be backed up with a vigorous campaign to defeat racist propaganda with socialist ideas.

Dictatorship threat

Furthermore even though fascism is no longer an option for the ruling class, this is because of the balance of class forces in French society not the ruling class' good nature. If the labour movement fails to do away with capitalism in the decades ahead, reaction will come to power, not with the mass support of a mass fascist party, but in the form of a **military dictatorship**.

In the long term the only alternative to the coming to power of reactionaries like Le Pen and his friends in the "hard" wings of the RPR and the UDF is the socialist transformation of society.

THE MOST publicised fact about Brazil is probably its "mega-debt"—\$100 billion, or maybe its 230% inflation.

These figures certainly do illustrate the crisis in Brazil but they cover up the depths to which human existence there has been pushed, if "existence" really describes the conditions.

"Millions of children in Brazil are losing the fight for survival, with a baby dying of hunger every 20 minutes, and an estimated 32 million children abandoned, half of them living on the streets," reported the *Irish Times* on 30 July. 200,000 children in the North East of Brazil are dying every year from gastro-enteritis.

The report from the Brazilian Association of Children's Judges goes on, "According to official figures some eight million children of primary school age never go to school but... the true figure was 10 to 15 million." One of the growing businesses is baby-trafficking—where young mothers are paid up to \$2,000 for their babies for the US and Israeli markets.

There are reports that children as young as ten are put to work in factories in southern Brazil for starvation wages. Another report published by the ILO points out that Brazil's child labourers are not unique. "Underground work in mines is the most flagrant example... there are three million child workers in Colombia, some of them working in coal mines as deep as 9,000 feet underground".

Child labour

The ILO puts the figure of child labourers worldwide at between 75-100 million. The report also relates that "a million Mexican children were employed as seasonal workers in the US in the late 1970s."

The Director-General of the ILO said, "Child labour was only one aspect of poverty and underdevelopment. In most cases, the family income was so meagre that the child's wages became an essential means of the family resources".

Every Latin American country without exception is cutting the living standards of the workers and peasants. Mexico, for example, has seen living standards cut by one-third in the last 18 months.

Here is the cause of the obscenities of starvation alongside the vast grain potential of the pampas. Starvation, child labour and low wages are rooted in capitalism. The socialist revolution is the only hope to solve every one of these problems, and if you ever need reminding, remember that behind every fact, figure and statistic, some worker or peasant is paying somewhere with his or her life.

By Mike Waddington

Workers solidarity, officials' blocking



Carworkers at Renault Billancourt demonstrate

WORKERS IN many different parts of the world have shown their support for British miners. Workers in France for example have organised holidays for striking miners' children.

Two miners, Alex Shanks a member of SCEBTA at Monktonhall in Lothian and Gary Knowles from Bold NUM in Lancashire write of their experiences in a visit to French car workers organised by Militant supporters in Paris.

FRENCH car workers are organised in two of the largest French union federations the CGT and CFDT. At the first factory we visited Renault Billancourt, we got a fantastic reception. First

we spoke at a shop stewards meeting in the factory, putting our case over to the workers on loudspeakers.

£500 collections

The reception we got was very good with many workers stopping to look at placards we had prepared showing miners' demos, police brutality and so on. We did the same at Renault Flins and between the two factories we raised around £500.

During the discussions, it became clear that the shop stewards were totally dissatisfied with the performance of the "Communist" Party in the government. Later that week the level of feeling caused such pressure

on the Communist Party that they left the government.

Unfortunately the second meeting was a bit soured by the behaviour of the "Communist" union the CGT who produced a leaflet which correctly asked for donations to our strike from members of the CFDT but concentrated far too much on attacking the other union for not involving themselves in the collection.

This seemed quite common in France where both major unions spend too much time attacking one another. In fact only 1,200 out of 17,000 are organised in the two unions at both Renault factories, even thought the workers are very militant.



"Communist" Party ministers arriving for a government meeting. Pressure has caused them to resign.

We were most disappointed that we couldn't speak to SKF workers. Militant supporters in France had arranged a meeting at local level but a Communist Party official in the CGT wanted to know if we were "real miners". Alex phoned home to the chairman of his local trades council, Chris Herriot, who is on the central strike committee who confirmed we were OK to speak after checking with the strike committee chairman David Hamilton.

Stewards disappointed

Chris then phoned the CGT who said that it was

fine but then the bureaucrat rang up and said we needed national confirmation from Sheffield. We rang up NUM HQ and the international officer Vernon Jones said it would be all right provided all money collected came back through the correct procedure.

When we got back to the CGT official, he told us he couldn't arrange a meeting that week! By that time the five days our visit were running out. The shop stewards locally were very disappointed by the attitude of the official as of course we were. But the obstruction came only from the official not the French workers who generously backed our strike.

Letters

Write to *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

DeLorean debacle

Dear Comrades,

The ease with which John DeLorean was able to con £77 million's worth of taxpayers' money out of the Callaghan and Thatcher governments really highlights the sense in *Militant's* demand for workers' control and management. A crook, whose lifestyle included constant use of five star hotels and frequent flights on Concorde should never have been let anywhere near so much money.

DeLorean and his sixteen-man entourage stayed for two days at the hotel I used to work at. During this time they spent over £2,000 on

rooms alone. Add to that their cocktail reception and two large meals with champagne, the grand total was around £3,000.

Showing what free enterprise is really all about he then went to America to secure a massive cocaine deal. After he was caught red-handed on video, he claimed he was 'only doing it for the workers'. His ensuing trial has now become the most costly in American legal history. He can't even be put away without costing the taxpayers money!

Yours fraternally
Alan Beacham
Vauxhall LPYS
London

Poster question

Dear Comrades,

Everywhere I go I see posters urging me to 'save your services', 'support your Leicester City Council'. But I am perplexed. How can I do it?

There are posters in the sports hall where I go to a free keep fit class for the unemployed—the crèche is also free. There are posters in the refuse collection wagons in the housing office, and the community centre. How can I save these services?

What about the playschemes for the children during the summer holidays? All these are under threat from the Tories and their rate capping proposals. The posters tell me nothing; no meeting to attend, no action to take.

Have the unions been approached? What is happening? How can local people get involved?

If our council followed Liverpool's magnificent lead I'd be confident. As it is, well I might not be so fit next year.

Comradely
Heather Rawling
Leicester

LEFT and RIGHT

Truth gets in the way

"Brave singer Lyn stops riot by pitmen", screamed the page two headline in the *Sun* (August 3). The article opened up: "Brave pop singer Lyn Paul stopped a riot yesterday as rampaging miners attacked police answering a 999 false alarm." The impression given by the *Sun* hack was of poor, innocent police being attacked by a "mob" of miners until ex-New Seekers singer Lyn Paul took them to task. But at the end of the article when the *Sun* hack actually bothers to quote Lyn, who was performing at a miners' benefit, you eventually get to the truth. Lyn told the *Sun*: "There was no trouble until the police arrived. All the miners and their wives had been well behaved but the police seemed to over-react. They formed a barricade to stop the coaches leaving and the violence started then."

No room at the top

It's tough being a careerist in the shrivelled up shell of the SDP. As the party dwindles in size and influence, there's just not enough jobs for the boys. Campaigning is currently underway for elections to four places on the SDP National Committee. Amongst those putting their names forward are the party's 13 ex-MPs. Meanwhile it seems some of the candidates are having a hard time motivating the 'rank and file' of the SDP. The following appeared in the small ads column of the *Guardian* recently: "Nominators wanted for National Committee of SDP. Contact..." etc.

Dirty money

Arena Consortium, the group which has just brought Wembley Stadium using money borrowed from the Standard Chartered Bank of South Africa, has a chairman who should know better. He is John Silkin, Labour's defence spokesman. He doesn't see any contradiction in a Labour front bench spokesman taking part in business operations with financial institutions which prop up the horrendous apartheid system, with its brutal suppression of blacks and trade unionists. As he told the *Times*: "You need a bank. Probably all banks have interests out there." Which is a very good reason why frontbenchers like Mr Silkin must campaign for the Labour Party demand to nationalise the banks.



Photo: Dave Sinclair

Collecting food parcels in Gwent shopping centre. In Tory areas councils are refusing to allow miners and their supporters to hold collections.

Tories' attitude — let them starve!

Dear Comrades,

It is hard to relate the feelings expressed by miners, miners' wives and members of the Young Socialists at a recent council meeting in Bradford. From the beginning of the debate—on the right of people to collect money and food for the miners' families—contempt was shown by all those in the public gallery for the Tory majority in the council chamber. We knew that whatever the decision of the council, collections would continue. The meeting was therefore treated as a farce,

which was all it deserved.

Some of the *Daily Telegraph* rhetoric the Tories came out with had to be heard to be believed. At one point the gallery felt it had to accompany one of the Tory's speeches by humming *Land of Hope and Glory*—he seemed to appreciate this.

At the end of the farce the Tories showed their true colours by voting to allow miners' wives and children to starve—nothing new. The vote was tied but the Tory Lord Mayor, Olive Messer, who had been visibly manipulated by the Tory

leader of the council, used her casting vote against collections. The jeering and shouting was so loud at this point that she had to leave the council chamber. The *Internationale* was begun and the council chamber echoed with the song—with many Labour councillors joining in.

The final comment to the Tories can be left to the chant that vibrated the chamber after the *Internationale*—"We will win".

Yours fraternally
Malcolm West
Bradford North CLP

Daily Maxwell

Dear Comrades,

Reading the Scottish daily paper the *Daily Record* last week, confirmed my thoughts on the importance of a daily *Militant*.

The day after Maxwell took charge of the Mirror Group of Newspapers, he spent two pages in the *Record* (and the *Mirror*) that he and the group would support the Labour Party.

The following day he spent another two pages (in

both papers) explaining how the 'lunatic left', as he put it, were destroying the Labour party and had to be got rid of. He obviously forgets that the Labour Party is supposed to be a socialist party.

The sad thing is that a fair percentage of working class people look upon the *Record* and the *Mirror* as alternatives to the *Express*, *Sun*, etc, not realising that the whole of the national press is biased (Maxwell could only get hold of the Mirror group after spending £113 million). These workers put faith and trust in what these

papers print and therefore actually believe that it is the left and not the right wing who are destroying the party.

The only way therefore of getting the whole of the working class to know the truth is to get a true Marxist paper into daily publication. I look forward to this day when this becomes practice, and the *Militant* paper sales soar to the proportion they justly deserve.

Yours fraternally
Ben Rushford
Sauchenford
Labour Party

Get organised

Dear Comrades,

I work in Winchester for a well-known electrical company. The wages are very low, overtime is compulsory and anything the boss says goes.

As Winchester is in a very Tory area the other workers have just sat back and accepted this as if it was acceptable for young people to have this kind of treatment.

There has been no union and no one seemed to mind.

I have been a member of the LPYS and a supporter of *Militant* for just a couple of months. During this time I have talked to various people about unions. I recently decided to try to set up a union in the company and after many arguments and conversations have a majority of the workforce extremely interested in joining a union.

Redundant bosses

Dear Comrades,

The recent announcement of the privatisation of British Shipbuilders warship yards has been hailed by the local Tory MPs on the south coast as a means of safeguarding workers' jobs. However, the bosses' class make such announcements in the knowledge that three of their own members have recently been sacked as directors of BS—one of whom is reported as receiving a golden hand-

shake of £50,000.

If the ruling class deem it necessary to sack three of their own members in order to achieve a 'realistic return' on their capital, what chance have the workers got?

Yours fraternally
Andrew Coles
Eastleigh LPYS

Tory law

Dear Comrades,

Tory laws let bosses sack you at their whim—you have to work for one year to claim

unfair dismissal. If you're sacked, the DHSS put you on 60% of what you're entitled to for six weeks, pending the signing of a form by your ex-boss, who usually refuses to sign it.

You can wait months if ever you get back the arrears due to underpayments. You don't get the money when you need it. Tory laws are used against the working class in all areas of life.

Yours fraternally
Caroline Halpin
Leyton CLP

Curfew

Dear Comrades,

On Saturday I went to the miners' support centre in Leeds where I met Les Wrigglesworth of Allerton NUM who told me about the following incident. A striking miner had just parked his car by the road, two and a half miles from a colliery. He was about to walk across a field when he was arrested, charged with obstruction and thrown into a police van. His original terms of bail were to only picket his own pit and a 7 pm – 11 am curfew.

In the last century you could be deported for trying to form a union. The Tories' new laws are an up to date example of these Victorian values.

Yours fraternally
Simon Truran
Leeds Central LPYS

Scab lesson

Dear Comrades,

While selling *Militant* at Chatham dole office recently, I saw a person going in who scabbed in a local hospital dispute at the beginning of the year. I found out that when they privatised the domestic's jobs at All Saints Hospital in April, they offered her too few hours for it to be worthwhile keeping the job.

So what was the outcome of her scabbing on the strike? She lost both her job and her friends at the hospital. Perhaps there's a lesson there for scabbing miners.

Yours fraternally
Andy Hammond
Gillingham LPYS

Right-wing attack

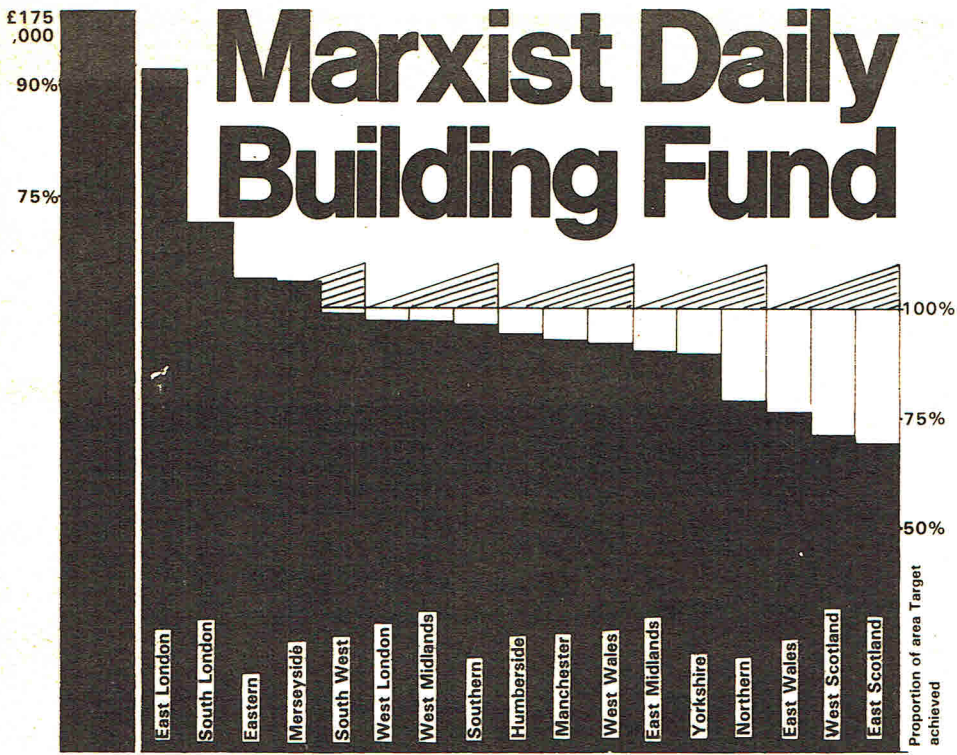
Dear Comrades,

On July 25 the General Management Committee of Gillingham Constituency Labour Party met. One of the items on the agenda was a recommendation from the executive committee that the CLP should reaffirm its commitment to the implementation of the National Executive Committee recommendation that the sales of *Militant* on party premises should be banned.

After the meeting I sold the paper at the door, demonstrating my utter contempt for the GMC's continued attempt to prevent rank and file party members from putting forward their political views on party premises. After facing a torrent of abuse from right wingers leaving the meeting, I was assaulted by one of the more neanderthal right wingers. He proceeded to seize the papers I was holding and tore them into shreds. When I got out another batch he repeated the operation.

Rank and file party members in Gillingham are outraged at this hooligan behaviour and a campaign is now underway to get the next GMC to demand a written apology from this member, as well as payment for the papers he destroyed.

Yours fraternally
David Turner
Gillingham LPYS



We've reached the target

WHO WOULD have believed it? Just a year ago the idea of buying a building big enough to produce a daily paper seemed like the dreams of a handful of *Militant* supporters. Nevertheless a fund was launched at last year's *Militant* Wembley Rally in September and the campaign for pledges and big donations began in earnest towards the end of the year.

Now over £175,000 has been raised. By the time of *Militant*'s twentieth anniversary celebrations in Wembley this October an ideal premises for the production of a daily paper will have been purchased and *Militant* staff, equipment and presses will have moved in!

New building

That is the plan! Thanks to the enormous efforts and sacrifices of thousands of readers of the *Militant* we have raised enough money for the initial down payment and our bank has agreed to a loan of £100,000. Later we must find a further £75,000 which we are confident we can do in the course of 1985 and 1986.

Immediately, however, there is one major hurdle that remains. The building has to be prepared for oc-

cupation by the removal of asbestos, including a large area of factory roof. A new roof will have to be put on and the whole of that area redecorated and a heating system installed.

One or two other minor repairs have to be carried out and the offices, which are in excellent condition, have to be equipped with a new telephone system. All this must be done in the next two months and will cost us further vast sums of money. We have been turned down by the local council for any assistance with the building work... "on commercial grounds". We therefore have no alternative but to appeal to all *Militant* readers to take this campaign deep into the labour movement and raise the necessary £25,000 in as short a time as possible. We can borrow for a while but that costs money too!

Special letters are being

produced for this next leg of campaign and regular reports of progress will be given in this paper. We still call on all individual members of the labour movement who have not given to our Marxist Daily Building Fund to do so as soon as possible, especially those in areas that have not yet reached their target on the chart! We know there are still huge reserves of support amongst *Militant* readers.

This week:

This week, for example, we received £65 from Joe Moore of East London, £50 from Emma Phillips (Poole); £60 was raised in a collection on the last night of the LPYS camp; and £20 each was given by two Manchester school students—Ruth Fisher and Clare Fisher. Dingle Ward Labour Party (Liverpool) donated £10. Last week's credit to "Doug Court" for £50 should have read "Dovecot Labour Party". Very many thanks to all those who have participated in making this giant step towards a Marxist daily paper possible.

SELLING *Militant*

SOUTH WALES' explosion of defiance against the Tories and their courts has been matched with booming sales of *Militant*. We're always known as optimists but we've even passed our own expectations!

Last week we printed an eight-page South Wales special which was exceptionally well received. In Pontypridd, where the miners defended their premises, people were reading it in the cafes, among the bus queues and in the pubs. So far we've received cash for 1,800 copies from Ponty alone—with more to come.

Elsewhere we sold out of specials: 120 in Aberdare, in Maesteg 150 and Rhondda 72. Swansea sold 350 on the housing estates and around the factories. Sales in Aber-tillery in the build up for a *Militant* meeting were 430-plus in one day.

In addition to the special edition, 500 copies of last week's *Militant* were bought in Aberdare on the miners' demonstration on Saturday. We're not just the paper that backs the miners—they support us, too.



Brian Ingham, *Militant*'s Industrial Correspondent, speaking from the platform outside the South Wales miners' headquarters last Wednesday.

By Andy Beadle

ADS

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

MIKE KING is planning a parachute jump in September for the Fighting Fund and would like sponsors. Contact him at 10 Rodney Court, Anson Drive, Sholing, Southampton.

MAIDSTONE LPYS Public Meeting: 'Support the Miners'. Speakers from NUM, TGWU (docks) and LPYS. Shepway Community Hut, Northumberland Ave. 8 pm, Friday 10th August.

SOUVENIR COPIES of 'Special South Wales Miners Militant' are available send 50p each (inc postage) to 'Militant Circulation', 1 Mentmore Tce, London E8 3PN.

'OFFICIAL' *Militant* rattling/collecting tins, 75p each + p&p. Available from Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Money with order please.

YOUNG MINER: issue number 3, out now. Available from Wakefield LPYS 16 Vicarage Street, Wakefield. 10 copies, 1.00 + 30p P&P. Cheques payable to R Clarkson. Articles about; South African miners, Sandinistas supports NUM. Look back at 1926. A must for 'YS branches.

CASSETTE TAPES with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year.
Now available on cassette: all centre page articles from issues 668-692. Send either seven blank C-90 cassettes or £6.30 payable to *Militant Tapes*, 26 Ashton Terrace, Harehills, Leeds 8 or phone: (0532) 493440.

A CORDIAL invite to all readers, to a SOCIAL on Saturday August 11th, from 8 pm at Stanton Social Club, Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry, to celebrate the wedding of Dave Nellist and Jane Warner. Door collection for the miners; raffle for the fighting fund. Music and Dancing—all comrades welcome.

MINERS MARCH and rally 2pm, Sat. 8th September, Abbey Wood Station. Rally, 3.30pm, General Gordon Sq., Woolwich. Organised by Greenwich CLP and S.E. London Labour Movement.

WOMEN'S MINING PAMPHLET *Militant Miner*—"Women Fight to Save the Pits"—printed and published by Aylesham Women. 70p (incl p+p) from Robbie Segal, 10 Westbourne Gardens, Folkestone.

"RAISE POLITICS at work! Buy a *Militant Mug*". £1.50 + 45p p&p from 56 Hartley Avenue, Leeds LS6 2LP. Cheques payable to: Chris Hill. All proceeds to FF.

MILITANT pocket diaries, 60p, 10 or over 50p each. All cash donated to Fighting Fund. Orders to: Mike King, 10 Rodney Court, Anson Drive, Sholing Soton. SO2 8RU

Greetings in *Militant*—Labour Party Conference and *Militant* October Rally

We are offering a discount to organisations that advertise in both issues. The rates are as follows: Please tick box.

	ONE ISSUE	TWO ISSUES
Semi-display 3 column centimetres	£6 <input type="checkbox"/>	£10 <input type="checkbox"/>
6 column centimetres	£10 <input type="checkbox"/>	£15 <input type="checkbox"/>
Display one-sixteenth page	£15 <input type="checkbox"/>	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>
One-eighth	£35 <input type="checkbox"/>	£50 <input type="checkbox"/>
One-quarter	£50 <input type="checkbox"/>	£100 <input type="checkbox"/>

Deadline for Labour Party Conference issue 17 September, 1984 and combined adverts. Deadline for 20th Anniversary adverts 8 October, 1984.

Cash with copy. Cheques payable to *Militant*. Return to Circulation Department, *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

FIGHTING
FUND

This week:
£2,278

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	452		2900
East Midlands	339		3550
Humberside	134		1850
London East	255		3200
London West	277		2150
London South East	163		1950
London South West	228		1650
Lancashire	107		1950
Manchester	363		2200
Merseyside	645		6100
Northern	289		4400
Scotland East	129		2950
Scotland West	407		3650
Southern	508		5100
South West	67		2150
Wales East	90		2550
Wales West	107		2050
West Midlands	329		4300
Yorkshire	358		5350
Others	405		5000
Total received	5651		65000

IT'S MONEY that counts! That's why the courts have gone for the NUM funds.

Money counts for *Militant* too. Without the fighting fund we raise, we would not be in a position to produce the extra material—posters, *Militant* specials, leaflets—that are absolutely key in our assistance to the miners' struggle.

But there are even enemies within the labour movement who wish to cut off our life-line of cash. The right-wing think they can cripple us by ordering the Labour Party Young Socialists not to contribute to our paper.

Attacks on their right to donate to this paper will lead only to more and more demonstrations of support in terms of cash. The best way for any LPYS branch to show its solidarity with Blackburn YS—under threat of suspension for donating to *Militant*—must be an immediate contribution to *Militant*'s Fighting Fund!

Last week at the LPYS summer camp a grand total of £963 was given and raised for the *Militant*. This was

in spite of the constant demands on the limited cash of the youth, particularly in the course of assisting the miners' strike. Many thanks to all who contributed there. Thanks also to Dave Nellist MP who decided to express his solidarity with Blackburn YS by making a further donation of £50 to *Militant*'s Fighting Fund.

Donations

Last week nearly £150 was collected at a *Militant* Readers Meeting on the miners' strike in Boreham Wood and a similar amount was donated by CPSA DHSS Section Executive members. £36.60 was forwarded from a *Militant* day school on "Women and Socialism". £30 was donated by Alex Thraves—his fee for appearing on HTV. £25 was donated by CPSA members on the CAA group (GEC) and nearly £7 from CPSA members at the DNS Glasgow. Workers at British Gas donated over £7 and members of Portsmouth Labour Party GMC contributed to a collection of £6.50.

Selling balloons at a festival and a social in Leeds raised £27.30, a disco in Eccles raised £24.50, proceeds of selling T-shirts in Blackburn amounted to £6.75. Elsewhere tins were rattled, records were sold, lifts in cars were charged for, plants were sold and penny jars were emptied. In spite of the holiday period *Militant* needs cash every week. Help us by making a donation yourself and asking a workmate, friend, relative to follow your example or one of those mentioned below.

Special thanks this week to...
J Atkinson (Hull CLP, ASTMS) £50; K J Bevan (Swansea) £25; J Race (Sunderland) £25; (unemployed, Withenshaw) £20; T Hedley (IRSF Exec, personal) £15; M Shawcroft (Mansfield) £5; Jan Smith (Glasgow) £2.65; S Korley (Leeds) £2.50; from Leicester J Hunter (NGA) £10.25; anon (NGA) £1 and J McLure (FBU) £1.05; T Larkins (Mansfield unemployed) £1; J Felan (Kent miner) £1; G Young (Notts FTATU) 75p; and M Raven (Burton LPYS) £1 with the message "keep up the good work!"

By Clare Doyle

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

British Shipbuilders

Workers can stop Tory axe

SINCE 1979 the Tories have launched a concerted attack upon Britain's traditional industries. In coal and steel combined nearly 200,000 workers have lost their jobs.

At British Shipbuilders the attack has been just as severe. Since 1979 the workforce at BS has declined from over 80,000 to about 45,000 at present.

The message from all the major industries is clear: where the trade unions have failed to stand and fight job decimation has proceeded. This is why the Tories are so determined to defeat the miners. They realise that a victory for the miners would give confidence to other workers in the fight for jobs.

The lessons of the past have to be learnt at British Shipbuilders—particularly by the trade union leaders.

Towards the end of the last year the lay-delegates, backed by mass meetings at each yard, threw out the corporate plan. In fact the industry was set for a national strike from January 6 this year.

The union leaders, however, fearful of leading a struggle gave considerable concessions to BS in return for a £7 across the board pay rise. In return BS chief Day promised no more yard closures. The deal was reluctantly accepted by shipyard workers.



Workers lobby the meeting of the shipyard workers' Negotiating Committee last year.

Since the deal was concluded Scott-Lithgow has been sold-off, Cammell-Laird workers are sitting in to secure the future of their yard; while other yards, such as Austin and Pickersgill in Sunderland are faced with empty order books and possible closure.

Lay-offs

Seemingly BS do not now announce yard closures. Yard order books are allowed to dry up, lay-offs emerge; later yards will be mothballed and may never re-open.

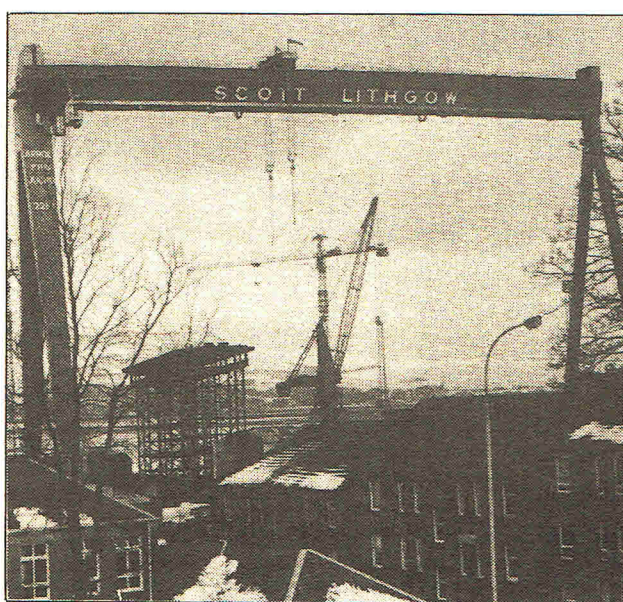
In the fifties, Britain was still the leading builder of merchant ships. Today's great hope at BS is to secure 1.25 per cent of the world market.

Back in 1979 management

and unions agreed that 420,000 compensated gross registered tonnes (crgt—the standard measure of ship orders) was the lowest acceptable level. Last year all BS could achieve was an abysmal 117,000 crgt.

BS blame low productivity for their inability to win orders. But where shipyard workers have the equipment they can match the best foreign yards. Austin and Pickersgill, for example, can match Japan and South Korea for productivity.

Concessions made by shipyard workers are not met by shipowners. Only 26 per cent of British shipowners new orders have been placed at British yards, compared with 87 per cent of French shipowners. Similar figures for Belgium, Germany, Denmark and



The Scott Lithgow yard. Privatisation is a threat to all yards.

Holland can be produced.

Abroad shipping and shipbuilding industries are co-ordinated; in fact British shipowners have no such commitment to British shipbuilding.

Privatisation

The government, backed by the press, are now drumming up support for privatisation. They continually match the profit of the warshipyards to the merchant loss makers. But what is the real situation? Of the £161 million loss £100 million stemmed from the cancellation of two off-shore rigs by private enterprise. Another £19 million was lost

at Austin and Pickersgill by the cancellation of a bulk carrier. Add to this losses stemming from the closing of yards and interest charges payable to the banks, it becomes clear that shipyard workers produced a profit for BS.

Warshipyards privatised or nationalised are not safe. The only safeguard is a change in the economic system. In the meantime shipyard workers have to launch a national struggle to safeguard and extend what they already have.

In 1965 there were over a dozen yards capable of building big naval ships. Today, only five remain and Cammell Laird's future is

uncertain.

British warshipyards rely almost solely on Royal Navy orders. As the Navy is scaling down its surface fleet it is certain that overcapacity will emerge. Further yard closures would be certain unless the battle for jobs is won now.

Demands

As the government is unlikely to guarantee British yards orders prospective buyers may be hard to find. Therefore it is probable that the warship yards will be offered at knock-down prices.

The rump of BS which will be left after privatisation of the warshipyards will be highly vulnerable; highly dependent on state aid and sufficiently small to be sunk without trace. The government has no concern for the future—they are only out to achieve their short-term doctrinaire aims.

The future for British Shipbuilding rest with the workers; a programme of:

- ★ No yards, merchant or warship, to be privatised or closed.
- ★ Implementation of a scrap and build programme.
- ★ No redundancies.
- ★ A substantial wage increase, to rally shipyard workers into a national fight to save their industry.

By Ray Physick

"A COMPLETE transfer to the private sector is attractive but would be a complex process involving the sale of considerable strategic assets. It would also almost certainly provoke a political focus for opposition by the workforce."

Royal Navy

These words are from a secret report for Michael Heseltine compiled by his personal adviser, Peter Levene, about the future of the Royal Navy dockyards. It rejects complete privatisation. It wants to have its cake and eat it, by suggesting the docks stay state-owned whilst contracting work out to the private sector.

"There have been a load of proposals and reviews, but all the others said we couldn't be compared with outside industry," says Jock Penman, Vice-Chairman of the EPTU shop-stewards'

Heseltine's plan

committee at the Rosyth dockyard in Fife, which employs 5,000 industrial and 4,000 white collar workers.

"The difference is that the Levene report tells Heseltine exactly how we can be compared, by separating us from the Treasury and the Navy. That's why I'm taking it very seriously.

"Regardless of whether we stand comparison with other industries, we all know it's Tory policy to privatise us anyway. If we are ten times better than commercial industry, they're still going to privatise us. If it is implemented, I think a lot of stuff like engines, which are common to other industries, will go and a lot of the very specialised stuff will be done by the Navy itself.

"The craftsmen will be

badly hit, but even worse will be the non-craft workers—they will be wiped out completely. Any that are kept on will be kept on at lower wages; we have already had an example of it with the cleaning services. Our cleaners were all paid off, others were brought in and, as soon as they started they had a 50p drop in wages.

MoD meeting

"The alternative job prospects in the area are nil. The mines are in danger of closing. There are some people believing that they will get a job, but they are just as well off believing in Father Christmas.

"We have called, from our shop-stewards' commit-

tee and the area industrial committee, for a special MOD conference on privatisation, to forge links with other MOD establishments and formulate a strategy. The Royal Ordnance factories have put up a great fight, but they've had little support from the other establishments.

"We have never had to be particularly strong, trade union wise. Not that we've got great conditions of service or great wages, but a lot of the lads now, when they hear what the miners are getting, are quite shocked and are saying that we are not too badly off. We've never really had to struggle, but now we're really being thrown into the class war at the deep end."

POEU

THE POST Office Engineering Union in Scotland has decided to impose a total ban on overtime from 18 August unless British Telecom withdraw proposed jobs cuts.

Having lost the battle against the principle of privatisation workers in the industry are beginning to experience the effects of the BT sale. BT's wage offer fails to even match the current 5.2% rate of inflation. However, the main thrust of BT's strategy is the reduction of the workforce, no doubt to make the industry more attractive to

potential speculators.

On 12 July, the Glasgow branch of the POEU held a special meeting on the redundancies. Local area management have demanded a reduction of 85 jobs in addition to a further 60 through natural wastage. At the meeting, attended by 700 workers, it was pointed out that an overtime ban would not be a soft option; retaliation from management would be likely in the form of suspensions. A further meeting was called for on 16 August, to decide what action to take if this happens.

As the threat to jobs affects this industry as a whole, the union's National Executive

must immediately begin to co-ordinate a national campaign, not only restricted to defending jobs but should be linked to the shorter working week.

More and more POEU members believe that the same determination shown by the miners will be needed if we are to avert the complete destruction of our industry. The Broad Left majority on the National Executive must build on this and campaign amongst the membership for a real fightback.

By Ian Cuthbert
(Glasgow POEU
branch committee,
personal capacity)

Merseyside brought to standstill

MERSEYSIDE COUNTY Council's 10,000 strong workforce struck on Tuesday in protest over proposed government plans to abolish the Metropolitan councils and implement rate capping.

Industrial action brought ferries, trains and buses to a halt throughout Merseyside.

Ken Peeney, secretary of TGWU Walton bus garage, said: "The action taken shows the disgust our members feel at the proposed Ridley plan which would mean cuts in services, massive fare increases of between 50-75%, the closing down

of four garages in Liverpool with the loss of between 1,500-2,000 jobs, and the selling off to private firms using non union labour of the profitable routes."

Both Mersey tunnels were closed as the barriers went up at midnight, as were county council offices, museums and art galleries. Liverpool airport was at a standstill and fire services responded to emergency calls only.

By Tommy Carroll
(Liverpool Broadgreen
LPYS)

Correction

THE EDITORIAL staff of *Militant* would like to point out that in the article about Mick Atherton standing for the NUR National Executive, in last week's issue, the 'cross-head' was inserted by the sub-editor. This was done without the knowledge of Mick Atherton, or the article's author Bob Russell. The editorial staff did not realise this misconstrued NUR rules and apologise to all NUR members.

Unity JOURNAL OF THE
BLOC
BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

For a fighting socialist Trade Union leadership
Donations welcome

Support the miners

The BLOC has now launched its own journal *Unity*. It hopes that *Unity* at first will appear quarterly and provide news and comments on what's happening in the trade union movement and what Broad Left supporters in the various unions are doing. To sustain its vital activities and to publish the journal it needs money. We ask every trade unionist to either take out an individual subscription (£5 per annum) or get your organisation to take out an individual subscription (£10 per annum) to subscribe. Send off to G Williamson, 11 Sutton Place, London E9 6EH.

Post bosses beaten back

THE POSTAL strike in the North West followed an accumulation of threats to our conditions following the appointment of the well known hatchetman, Colin Childs, as regional director.

He had done a job on the London area and was the instigator of the productivity scheme. When he left London the union rep there presented him with a tool for blocking off letter boxes as a reminder of his favourite activity. Indeed, one of the first things he said when he got here was that he was prepared to block off every letter box in the North West to get what he wanted.

He got his answer when the Manchester strike rapidly spread through the region. At our office at Oldham, we told management we wouldn't handle mail unless Manchester branch OK'd it. Management said this was unacceptable and ordered a

postman higher grade to do the work. He refused and was suspended.

Then they tried it on a young postman, who is only 18, but he refused as well and was suspended.

In fact the 18 year olds played a very good role in the strike, many of them doing the all-night picketing. 100% of the late shift walked out and set up a picket line to explain what had happened to the night-shift. Only two people went in-and they came back out again.

Picket line

The 24 hour picket line was very successful, everything was turned away. Our branch covers not just the sorting office but also the counter and clerical staff which is one of its strengths. Only 10 out of the 400 in the two branches went in, and they said they would come out if it was made official.

But this was one of the

few problems in the strike. When management suspends workers for carrying out union policy and we take action Mr Tuffin, our General Secretary, says the action is unofficial. Are we supposed to let the men be suspended? This action by the General Secretary caused confusion and gave an excuse to a handful of weaker members not to support us.

But the strike spread to Ashton who came out solidly in support of us along with Altrincham. The management tried a series of diversions but we saw tremendous solidarity at Stockport, Crewe, Sheffield, Carlisle, Liverpool, Leeds and Glasgow—all refused to handle the diverted mail.

A similar fine act of solidarity came from striking miners at Agecroft colliery who gave us £50 to start off our strike fund.

By Eddie Thorpe
(Branch Sec. Oldham UCW, personal capacity)

Stockport

STOCKPORT POSTAL workers said "enough is enough" last Thursday when they walked out in support of one of their members who was suspended for refusing to sort post from Manchester.

Refusal

When Jake Karadi, the

union branch assistant secretary, was told to sort Manchester mail, he refused and was "sent home without pay" by management. Other sorters immediately walked out. Within minutes the union was involved and there was a mass walkout of 280 postal workers, including sorters, postman, cleaners and canteen staff. Management were taken by surprise by this action, as the Stockport postal workers do

not have a history of militancy.

As Jake Karadi summed it all up: "I was amazed at the support from my colleagues. I am absolutely proud. I was at home when I got a phone call to say they had all walked out—100%; I couldn't believe it."

By David Wood
(Heaton Moor Labour Party, personal capacity)

If it can be said, phone instead?

MANAGEMENT OF the Greater Manchester postal services were really on the ball in the dispute. The DHSS became alarmed when hundreds of unemployed, pensioners etc queued outside their offices saying they couldn't cash their giro because some offices were closed by the dispute (usually you have

to cash your giro at a 'named' post office only).

Whoops!

Postal management swung into action however, saying they would inform all post offices that during the dispute, giro could be cashed at any office. All well and good.

But still hundreds of people were returning to the DHSS saying they couldn't cash their giros. Inquires showed that post office management had informed the main offices by telex, but when it came to sub post offices, they had sent out their request... by post!

By Phil Frampton

Save the rail workshops

THE ONE day strike by railway shop-men will mark a new stage in the battle for the future of the railway industry. Not one job in the workshops can be regarded as safe.

For the thousands of young workers in the firing line the only road is the road of struggle. The calling of the one-day strike on Friday, August 10, marks a step forward by the NUR, after the way Shildon and Horwich works, along with thousands of regional shop-men, were abandoned to their fate.

Despite vacillation in the past, the Confed leaders are supporting the strike, no doubt in response to pressure from their rank and file members in the workshops.

Railway workers will want to know if this one day strike is to be the end of the matter. Are we like London Transport to let off steam in the occasional one-day strike and demonstration, and then be left to the butchers' knife? Shopmen are all too well aware that to fight on their own would be a long and difficult battle. After a series of closures that went through with hardly a shot fired in their defence, many wonder what chances they have of winning.

But who is not under attack on the railways or its subsidiary companies? Privatisation, cuts, attacks on conditions of service are our lot throughout the system. London Transport is



NUR members march against BREL closures last year.

under threat, Sealink privatised, train crews victimised for refusal to move coal, while those who scab are encouraged to break every working rule in the book to keep the job going.

Now more than ever we need a clear lead. A campaign must be launched for an all-out struggle to save our livelihoods. The days when one grade or union stood aside with folded arms while management pursued their divide and rule tactics must be ended for good.

The Tories and their press claim that the railway is an 'expensive luxury' to the nation. In fact a united strike of the whole system would soon show them otherwise. All the scab lorries, cars or carrier pigeons they could muster would not suffice.

There must now be a campaign to convince every single

railway worker of the need to fight and of the certainty of victory. Not for nothing have the Tories tried to buy off every other group of workers, including ourselves, to concentrate their fire on the miners. This is only a temporary measure; if they are allowed to do so they will turn on the rest of us with redoubled fury in the future.

If we stand together with our brothers in the coalfield, if we are joined by other workers fighting against decimation of their industry, not least the steelworkers, we will be unconquerable, we will sweep aside the bold-headed government of Thatcher and the economic system they represent.

By Bill Esmond
(NUR, Derby Works).

Sept. 12 must just be start

THE RAIL unions have called a London-wide one-day strike on 12 September on British Rail and London Transport, unless both managements enter into "meaningful talks".

All workers will welcome this as a worthwhile step, but many railworkers were expecting the call for an all-out strike.

Management are determined to enforce 200 jobs cuts in station staff as the first step to the proposed 6,000 job cuts. One person operation is to be imposed in a few months on the Circle and District lines, on top of the Hammersmith and City line. It is quite clear that the LRT board, under the guidance of Nicholas Ridley, are determined that the transport system works to the market economy.

After the break down of talks on 21 July the union executive was expected to call an all-out strike. This will have to be made as management have shown no indication to withdraw the threat.

New mood

The fact that a one-day strike was called shows the union leadership's lack of confidence in the membership, which in turn could be counter-productive as one-day strikes have been held before over fare increases and the imposition of LRT.

The membership are looking for something more, and indeed there is a new mood within the rank and file spurred on by the miners' fight. An example of this was at the branch meeting

of East Ham NUR on 1 August. Over 30 workers were seriously discussing the possibility of sustaining a 21 week long strike including one member who I've only seen at one previous meeting. As these workers put it, we may never recover the money we'd lose if we were out for a long time, but we'd win our jobs back.

It is up to all rank and file rail workers to put pressure on the leadership, and make sure that the one-day strike is a successful springboard from which to launch further more decisive action to force the BR and LRT boards, along with the Tories, to keep their hands off the public transport system.

By Bob Law
(NUR, LT District Council, personal capacity)



A scab is rushed through the mass picket at Barking Hospital on Tuesday 7 August.

Barking Hospital mass picket

STRIKING Domestic workers at Barking Hospital in East London received a boost this week when a mass picket gave scabs a hard time as they tried to cross the picket line, on Tuesday August 7.

The strike by the women workers has been going on as long as the miners' strike. They are among the first victims of privatisation within the National Health Service. The private firm Crothalls Ltd cut their hours and conditions and then brought in scabs to take their jobs when they went on strike.

The mass picket

displayed NUPE and NALGO banners from all over London, and was joined by Labour MPs, as well as Kent miners, who brought their strength and experience in the ensuing struggles with the police. The police had underestimated the size of the picket. As we left the gate and massed at the hospital entrance, the scabs had to be escorted off the coach one by one. It was forcefully put to the scabs what the women strikers—many of whom have worked at the hospital for years—thought of people who take their jobs when they're fighting to defend

working conditions. The coach itself received a battering.

There was even a mini-Olympics event. One cop started chasing a young miner but he just couldn't catch him—they ran the length of the hospital, ran through the gate (to cheers of 'Go for Gold' from the pickets) and were last seen heading up the road towards Plaistow.

The strike continues, and support is needed on the picket line at Barking hospital (next to Upney tube station).

By Bob Wade
(Newham NE CLP)

British Aerospace occupied

AT THE British Aerospace factory in Bristol, 2,000 workers in the aircraft division have ejected management and barricaded themselves in the building.

This follows the employers' refusal to offer a wage settlement and parity with Aerospace workers at other sites, some of whom because of the history of plant bargaining, now earn as much as £16.50 more for doing identical work.

This was a long-running battle which came to a head on 30 July after management provocation. At a mass meeting of

2,000, there was a unanimous vote to take action and immediately the workers padlocked the gates and parked lorries across the plant's entrance.

The national Aerospace management, led by Rear Admiral Sir Francis Lygo, have attempted to break the workforce, appealing to the High Court for an injunction to end the occupation.

Full backing

All the other BA sites have backed the occupation and while

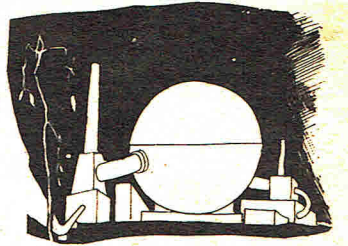
local management attempt to continue their work from nearby hotels and the local Conservative Club, it appears Post Office engineers, members of the POEU, have refused to install new telephones for them at their newly-found 'offices'.

In a separate dispute another 450 workers from the Aerospace Dynamic division based on the same site have likewise occupied the plant. At a mass meeting on Monday, 6 August, the unions voted overwhelmingly to ignore the High Court ban.

By Robin Clapp

Militant

Nuclear power, fact and fiction — centre pages



Lobby the TUC

"I WAS a bit dubious about going to lobby the TUC at first. I thought it was a waste of time going down to wake up someone who was asleep for so long. But I'm going down because this lobby will be crucial.

"Amongst the people I've spoken to about the lobby, even those who've never been involved in any action outside their own workplace the mood is let's get down there and tell them to get their fingers out".

Ian Lowes convenor branch no 5 GMBATU, Liverpool

Leadership needed

These words are being echoed time and time again by Liverpool local authority workers in response to the lobby of the TUC organised by the Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC).

"For all the action we have seen from the TUC just lately they might as well have



Tony Benn speaks at the BLOC rally in March.

Photo: Militant

been a packet of TUC cheese biscuits".

Derek Jones, shop steward, GMBATU.

Joe Griffiths, Liverpool Static Security, also in GMBATU added: "Margaret Thatcher is screwing us into the ground, we need a leadership that will fight back against these ef-

fectively, not bend the knee. We know from experience with the NGA, GCHQ and now the miners' dispute some of these New Realist characters are living in cloud cuckoo land and will do nothing until their tails are twisted. We're going down to Brighton on 3 September to give their tails a bloody

good wrench."

This lobby will bring together activists from all over the country and a whole range of different unions. Mick Begam, deputy convenor, GMBATU branch 5 said: "I can see this as being an excellent opportunity to meet up with people determined to change the TUC

BLOC

BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Monday 3 September, 1984 from 8 am at Conference Centre, Brighton

- ★ Full support for the miners.
- ★ For a fighting, democratic, socialist leadership in the trade unions.

Buses going to lobby

London Central & City £3.50, Dave Crack—689 0970
 London South East £3.50, S McKenzie—310 4082
 London West £3.50, B Blake—575 6120
 Brent LPYS £4.00, J Dolan—452 5305
 Liverpool £10.00, J Hollinshead—051-734 2131
 Birmingham & Wolves £6.00, Bill Murray—021-459 4775

Coaches have been booked in most areas—details to follow.

Rally: 3 September, The Level, Brighton. Speakers include Dennis Skinner MP, Kent miners' leader Jack Collins and Kevin Roddy, CPSA NEC.

and the unions which make it up. They must become fighting bodies with a democratic leadership determined to fight for the member."

Power of the unions

"We need determined action to unite and mobilise the massive power of the trade union movement to push back the bosses' advances against the working class and build for the return of a

socialist Labour government".

Every trade union and Labour activist should go down to Brighton on 3 September and tell the TUC delegates, the leadership and the incoming general secretary what kind of a TUC leadership we want and need.

By Jim Hollinshead (Secretary, GMBATU, branch 5)

WOMEN AGAINST Pit Closures/NUM National Demonstration. Copies of *Militant* and other material available from outside Temple Tube, Saturday 11 August from 11 am. Any copies of *Militant Miners' Wives' Broadsheets* remaining after sales on coaches should be returned to the *Militant Women's* banner near Temple Tube.

LPYS and labour movement demo, Pontypridd: "DEFEND THE NUM, SMASH THE TORIES". Assemble 11.30, Saturday August 11th, Sardis Rd., Pontypridd. March and rally at the "REGENT". Speakers Ian Isaacs (S. Wales NUM EC), Tyrone O'Sullivan (Tower Lodge NUM Secretary), Steven Smith (Mardy NUM, personal capacity), Tony Wedlake (LPYS National Committee Wales).

Post office strike victory

IN AN unprecedented wave of solidarity, Post Office workers in the North West have scored a victory over management.

After the suspension of a shop steward at the Central Manchester sorting office last week, post workers walked out at the office in Newton Street, with action soon spreading to Manchester, Oldham, Stockport, Huddersfield, Ashton-under-Lyne, Altrincham and Bolton, with 8,000 on strike and seven million letters and parcels piled up.

The extent of the support, well beyond the area of the

Manchester branch of the Union of Communications Workers, was a reflection of a long history of anger with management throughout the region. Management have long been unwilling to negotiate issues but there has been an even harder attitude since the Tories came to power.

Dispute spread

The latest dispute blew up on 31 July when Fred Byrne—the only union rep on duty—was suspended after staff were instructed to adopt a new sorting method that had, with agreement on both sides, been abandoned

after a trial four weeks previously. The sorters walked out and the night shift and the Wednesday early shift joined them.

The Post Office tried to divert mail to other areas but the UCW members refused to handle Manchester's mail (see reports—page 15). One by one the other offices came out as the van with Manchester's mail drove into their yard and they refused to unload it. The parcels office joined the strike on Thursday and the cab staff were out on Friday.

Colin Childs, the chairman of the North West Regional Post Board, had said to John Taylor (UCW

National Officer): "I am prepared to smash the postal service in the North West Region rather than give in to the UCW". That was Friday. By Monday 6 August he had given in to the UCW. All suspensions were lifted and the new work method and other outstanding methods of dispute were to be negotiated.

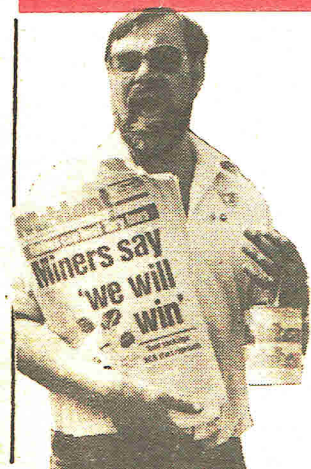
Confidence for future battles

The tremendous solidarity, the reinstatements and return to the *status quo* are seen as a victory by UCW members in the region. However, many members

are saying that the mood was determined enough to have forced management, not just to negotiate, but to agree to the union's demands on all the outstanding issues.

However, what this dispute has shown is a complete break with the idea that the defeat of the postal workers back in 1971 meant they were finished. The new mood of confidence, emboldened by this victory, will provide a firm basis on which to build union strength in preparation for future attacks on the conditions and pay of postal workers.

By Vivien Seal



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