

Militant

Miners Reports
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The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

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Photo: Jacob Surtou

Miners' victory

By Ian Isaac
(St Johns Lodge
Secretary South Wales
NUM EC, personal
capacity)

ACTIVISTS, pickets and rank and file miners can now smell victory in their nostrils.

We've come too far now to go back on any fudged compromise that the National Coal Board want to foist on us.

We are in the 27th week of the strike. If, as is likely, the NCB maintain their intransigence on pit closures, the whole weight of the TUC should be brought to bear.

The GMBATU, which organises most manual workers in the power stations, can play a key role in preventing any further movement of coal in or out of power stations. Even John Lyons, head of the power engineers' union, contacted the NCB with the message that his members will no longer cooperate in switching from coal to oil if it seems that the NCB is being "unreasonable".

This is an indication that many more layers of workers can now become involved, because of the backing and authority of the TUC.

Miners should now approach shop-stewards committees and regional committees of power

Continued on back page

in sight

Tories demand judicial revenge

The Home Secretary's hysterical 'life sentence' outburst on picketing will give the greenlight for judicial revenge upon mineworkers.

By Bob Wade

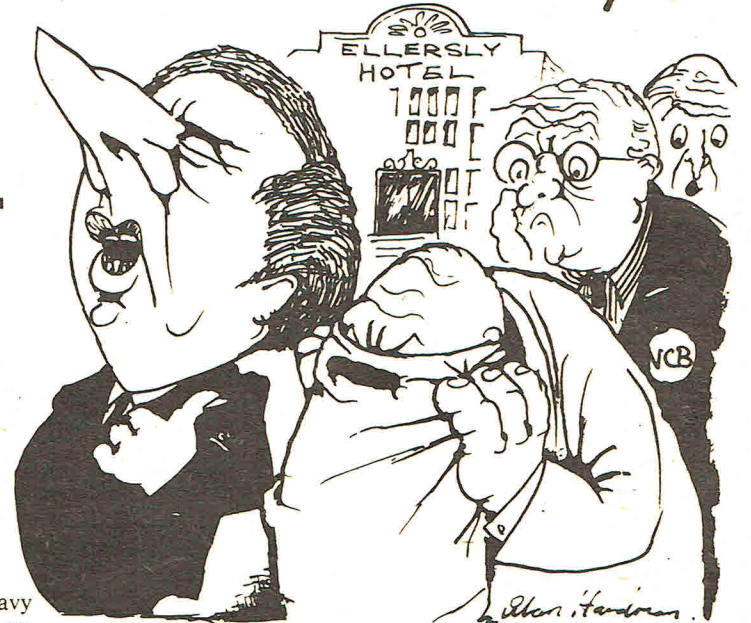
convoys cruise through their villages in the dead of night. Miners are already receiv-

ing disproportionately heavy sentences. In Doncaster on Tuesday seven Yorkshire youths from the Armthorpe area received prison terms of between 3-6 months for relatively minor offences (see page 2).

Throughout the country as a whole, miners are facing draconian bail conditions which place them under virtual 'house arrest'. This is the real intimidation of the miners' strike. Brittan wrings his hands for those working miners who have been 'intimidated', when they have faced the wrath of the communities they have betrayed. But his concern is one sided. On the day the press blasted his shrill denunciations of violence across their front pages, *The Guardian* (September 12) carried a small item about the fate of a striking miner in Wath Upon Dearne. Having just had a major operation on his knee, he went into a pub only to be set upon by working miners. His crutches were taken away and smashed, leaving him to crawl to a telephone to get help. Where were the front page stories of his intimidation? Where were the special squads of police assigned to track

Save Scotland's Pits See Page 5.

TALKS ARE IMPOSSIBLE WHEN HE'S BEEN ON THE GLUE



down his bully boy attackers? In reality, 'intimidation' and 'violence' are not the main concern of the Tories in this strike. For the Tories, the real issue at stake was hinted at by Brittan in his speech. He congratulated the police for "their capacity to uphold the law against attempts to repeat the triumph of the flying pickets at Saltley coke depot in 1972". The Tories are trying to exact their revenge over the labour movement, which brought the then Tory government to its knees in the early '70s. The Tories now think they can break the power of the movement through their anti-trade union laws and by unleashing unprecedented police powers on workers in struggle. They shall fail.

Militant

Responsibility of TUC lefts

THIS YEAR'S TUC Congress produced a slight shift to the left in the elections to the General Council. The right-wing majority, of 31-20 was reduced to 26-24. It is still possible for this new General Council, therefore, to block any effective campaign by the TUC against the policies of the Tory government.

There is, therefore, a big responsibility on the shoulders of the trade union lefts, to lead where the right wing will not. The formal right-wing majority on the General Council would have very little significance if the left were to lead a vigorous campaign, taking the issues to the grass roots of the movement.

Faced with some of the most serious political and industrial challenges since the foundation of the trade unions, it is no time for the lefts to tie themselves hand and foot by the 'good manners' and internal 'protocol' of the General Council. Where the TUC majority stands opposed to putting up a fight against the Tory government, then the left trade union leaders have a responsibility to come together independently of the General Council to launch a campaign. If necessary, they should go over the heads of the TUC to the movement.

Even in the last year, while the TUC right wing bear the main responsibility for the defeats at GCHQ and the *Messenger*, events could have followed a different course if the left leaders had made a stand. Irrespective of the right wing majority decision to abandon the NGA the left industrial unions could have launched their own campaign.

It has also been characteristic of the lefts that they have been far less ruthless in dealing with the right-wing than the right have been in dealing with them. Two years ago there was hardly a murmur against Frank Chapple becoming President of the TUC, despite the disgraceful stand he has taken on many issues.

Yet at Brighton, in the General Council elections for the smaller unions, two well-known left wingers, Ken Cameron of the FBU and Alan Sapper of ACTTS, were unceremoniously dumped. Next year, with APEX joining the same section, the right wing sweep is likely to be more pronounced.

It was a good initiative for the leaders of the transport unions, TGWU, NUR, ASLEF and NUS to come together to co-ordinate joint action in support of the miners. But these trade union leaders and other union lefts could accelerate a miners' victory by taking the message to their rank and file and mobilising for a 24-hour general strike.

No-one would expect any serious campaigns from the right wing TUC leaders, but many workers have the distinct impression, after the calls for a 24-hour strike were shuffled off the TUC agenda, that the left wing themselves lack confidence in the willingness of their rank and file to struggle.

In future years the trade union leaderships will be tested more than ever before. A period of unprecedented class struggle is opening up before the working class.

The Tories are threatening new legislation to break the trade union links to the Labour Party. Tory backwoodsmen and some of the strategists of capitalism are considering even more draconian anti-union laws, perhaps even to outlaw the right to strike.

In the coming period the trade union leaders will have to fight or stand aside. They will not be assessed on the labels they choose to put on themselves, 'left' or otherwise. They will be judged on their programme, policy and on their record in struggle.

What the miners are having to do today, many other groups of workers will be forced to do tomorrow. The union rank and file will therefore expect more of their leaders. They will seek leaders who will fight; who will put themselves on the same standpoint, politically, socially, economically and financially as ordinary workers.

Increasingly, the rank and file will draw a distinction between, on the one hand, those on the 'left' who have no faith in their class and who are not prepared to mobilise for a struggle and, on the other hand those, especially the Marxists, who do have confidence in the capacity of workers to struggle.

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Young Socialists among seven jailed

SEVEN YOUNG workers from Armthorpe in Yorkshire were sent to prison on Tuesday for relatively minor offences.

The five miners and two unemployed—including an LPYS member and a *Militant* supporter—received sentences of between 3—6 months after being charged with causing criminal damage and using insulting words and behaviour.

In what must be a warning for the labour movement, this was one of the first cases to be heard by a stipendiary magistrate. It is clear that these 'flying judges' are being sent out to inflict judicial revenge and vindictiveness on the miners on behalf of the government.

The seven were arrested after an incident in the

village on a Saturday night. While the incident itself cannot be condoned—but the frustration of these young workers well understood—the severity of the sentences must be fought by the labour movement.

The sentences are totally disproportionate to the charges, which usually carry a fine or binding over. The local paper carried a report the day before where the crime was more serious; seven youths called out a police car and then ambushed it. Two of them received £200 fines while the rest were bound over.

Local people believe the severity of the sentences is in revenge for the political activity and successful demonstration in the village following an earlier police



riot there (see page 3). Indeed, while the rest were sent into youth custody and Detention Centres, Guy Bennet, a Markham Main NUM and LPYS member who played a leading part in the protests, and *Militant* supporter and unemployed

miner Mark Camplin, were sent to prison.

However, the movement is beginning to take up the issue. A picket was held at Doncaster magistrates court where the cases were heard, and a protest meeting called for Thursday September 13. Plans for a mass demonstration outside the prison must be drawn up, involving the miners, trade unionists and the LPYS.

It is vital that in any settlement of the miners strike, an amnesty is ensured for all miners who have faced trumped up charges, and their jobs guaranteed whether the offences took place on the picket lines or as the result of police activity in their communities.

By Keith Narey

SDP: drifting right and drifting away

THE SOCIAL Democratic Party have been meeting at the spa town of Buxton. They need all the health cures they can get. Three years after their formation, the "party of the future" has just 50,000 members, a loss of a quarter in two years.

By Roger Shives

Some delegates want a new "softer" image than that of the former Labour Foreign Secretary David Owen. The SDP leader is the hero of the *Express*, *The Mail* and *The Telegraph*. He has become almost more Thatcherite than the Tories.

On the miners' strike, he wants Thatcher to be firmer against the NUM, calling for the use of Tory civil laws such as the "Employment" and Trade Union Acts. He believes Arthur Scargill should be "faced down" and made to accept mass redundancies. He approves of the "necessary slimming down of industry" by Thatcher's government as essential to "end overmanning".

post-war boom.

Owen, Jenkins, Williams and Co moved out after the Labour and trade union rank and file reacted against the anti-working class policies of the last Labour government. The SDP, after its formation, was boosted as a safety net to stop Tory voters coming to a leftward bound Labour Party.

In the present class struggle, the SDP are increasingly irrelevant; Owen's pronouncements are welcomed by the bosses but the battle is now bosses versus unions, Tory against Labour.

There is no long term basis for the SDP. The only way to overcome them in the short term is to challenge Dr Owen's friends still inside Labour's ranks. It is to make the working class-based party, Labour, a class-fighting party, taking up socialist solutions to the problems both workers and the SDP's base in the middle class are facing.

only once daily, sometimes even less.

At our hospital, Pinderfields General in Wakefield, disinfectant has not been used for months because it is cheaper to clean floors with washing up liquid. One of my jobs as a porter is to clean toilets in the morning. Twelve months ago we were given detergent and disinfectant to do the job. Now we are expected to do it with warm water. How can anyone claim that hygiene is not affected when cuts like this are taking place?

The attitude of the Labour controlled health authority has been shameful. They give the impression they are more concerned with saving face than getting to grips

with the problems. How else can they explain their refusal to re-open Wakefield's Snapethorpe Hospital, with its special isolation wards, own grounds and kitchen, an ideal place to contain patients until the virus subsides?

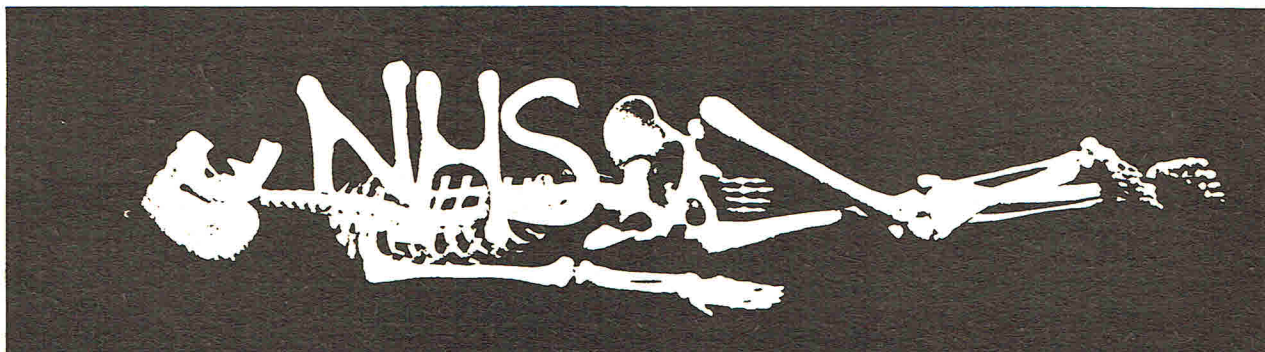
Resignation

Indeed it was scandalously closed by the authority six months ago, despite opposition from the unions and the public. The authority have proved they are unfit to manage the health service in Wakefield. We must demand their resignation and a trade union enquiry into the deaths and hygiene levels in

Wakefield's hospital to ensure this tragedy is not repeated.

Labour Party and trade union members have realised that we must fight to expose the Tories who are responsible for the cuts, but we also have to fight to replace those Labour representatives who carry out these policies, with people who are prepared to fight. Only then will the sick and the aged be able to spend their latter years in dignity, with no risk of disease or neglect.

By Adrian O'Malley
(Chairman, COHSE 285
Pinderfields branch).



Miners' dispute

Fury at Gestapo tactics

ACTION AT the weekend by police in Clay Cross and Whitwell in Derbyshire show the new depths reached in attacking striking miners. We now have the formation of Gestapo type snatch squads, dressed like Starsky and Hutch, who have been given free licence to raid the homes of striking miners at will.

Over 40 men were picked up in the raids, imprisoned in Chesterfield police station and subjected to torturous treatment. In the raid men

were taken from the strike centre, no doubt in the hope that 'conspiracy charges' could be used to implicate the NUM nationally.

In court, the police asked for as many of the men as possible to be remanded—five were in fact remanded. Every other miner in court was given bail conditions of an 8am-10pm curfew. Union men are banned from going to within half a mile of any strike centre.

The local communities

have been particularly horrified at the callous attitude of the police towards the children and babies of those picked up. In Shirebrook a chimney sweep was taken from his van, leaving behind his two year old son who suffers from a hole in the heart.

Toddlers

At Newhoughton, the police arrested a woman walking along the pavement, leaving a toddler to fend for itself. In another incident, four adults were taken from their home in Shirebrook, leaving a two year old toddler to look after a two month old baby.

By Willie Lane
(Bolsover Labour Party)

Walkout at police action

TWENTY SOUTH Yorkshire County Council workers walked out on a 24-hour protest on 6 September at police treatment of three of their workmates earlier in the day.

The three men, Frank Perks, Joe Wallace and Dave Bush, HGV drivers employed by the Council Engineers Department, were in Cantley village, travelling to work along the B1369 at 6.30am.

They must have unwittingly come across a scab miners' pick-up point, for when they turned their car around to continue their journey to the Hatfield depot they were stopped by two full police transit vans.

Swearing

One van pulled in front of their car and one behind. Police jumped out of the vans and started to bang on the windows and the top and sides of the car. They might have thought the men were NUM 'scab spotters'. The police were shouting and swearing, wanting to know who the men were and where they were going.

The three men were instructed to get out of the car or they would get their heads kicked in and pushed through the fence. The police then threatened to turn the car over. This disturbing incident lasted



More and more workers are witnessing first hand the brutality of the police against the miners.

about five minutes and left the men frightened and shaken up.

Identification

They asked the police for their names, ranks and numbers, as no identification was visible on them. They were told it was none of their business.

The police then jumped in their vans and drove off with their back doors open,

laughing and shouting what a set of f***** Yorkshire w***** they were and "We'll fix you proper".

When the drivers arrived at work they reported the incident to their workmates and all twenty men walked out.

By Bert Whittle
(NUM and South Yorks County Councillor personal Capacity)

Photo: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)

Tories' nuclear safety gamble

IT HAS now been confirmed that the CEBG are keeping nuclear power stations running until only a few days before they are legally obliged to close them for maintenance.

Before the miners' strike began, reactors were usually shut down about four months before the legal deadline. (New Scientist 30 August)

In 1982 the CEBG had 2000 MW of capacity withdrawn in the summer for routine maintenance, equivalent to the output of four power stations. The figure for this summer was less than half this due to delayed shutdowns.

Closure

The reactor at Trawsfynydd in North Wales was originally due to close in March but will not now be shut until December.

The time the reactors have been taken out of service has been reduced to a minimum, less than two months, instead of the three months usually taken.

This raises the possibility that the safety margins for the operation of nuclear plants are being seriously eroded, under the pressure to cut corners during maintenance procedures.

The benefit to the Government in terms of reduced coal burn will be short lived, since the main effect of the CEBG action is to move the closures from the Summer to the Autumn. This will have reduced coal burn slightly in July and August but will increase the likelihood of a

breakdown in the National Grid in the Autumn, as nuclear capacity is taken out for maintenance.

Power cuts

More alarm bells are being sounded in the capitalist press about power cuts in the Autumn. Both the *Economist* and the *Guardian* have now cast serious doubt on the Tories' claim that coal stocks at the power stations will last until February. Reports have reached *Militant* that huge sums are being offered to HGV drivers to move coal from the pit head, as Thatcher prepares her next move, which is probably imminent if the present talks break down.

By Pete Dickinson

Derbyshire— NCB fantasies

IN DERBYSHIRE, the Coal board claim '800 miners' are working. This is total fabrication. They can only achieve this figure by including Bolsover colliery in their calculations (which comes under the Notts coalfield) as well as lumping in management, white collar staff and canteen workers with those NUM members working.

Derbyshire NUM point out the true figure is more like 300. Even then they say this is probably overestimated. Scab counts taken on Monday morning at the picket lines at Derbyshire's pits show a very low turnout; Renishaw—10 miners working, Highmoor—one, Arkwright—zero, Ireland—zero, Markham—16, and

Whitwell—five.

At Shirebrook it is thought that 139 miners are working, with 122 at Worsop. But the NUM cannot be sure. At Shirebrook the scabs arrive in four coaches with the windows blocked out by curtains.

This is believed to be an NCB attempt to try and demoralise the pickets. When the television cameras appeared last Tuesday, September 4, hey presto, six coaches appeared with blacked out windows! The next day when the TV cameras had gone, it was back down to four again.



Over 700 pickets turned out and battled with riot police to stop two scabs reporting for work at the Kellingley colliery in Yorkshire on Tuesday.

Photo: John Harris (IFLU)

Leeds rally

A HUNDRED people attended a meeting called by the Leeds Labour Party Miners' Support Group, a good attendance given that the main speaker, Peter Heathfield the NUM general secretary, was called away at the last minute to the talks in Scotland.

There was a great response to the speeches from Nigel Pearce, a young miner from Denby Grange NUM, Derek Fatchett MP, Sharon Walford of the local miners wives committee, and Ken Capstick of the Yorkshire NUM.

Chairing the meeting, Karl Curry, President of Ledstone Luck NUM, described the battles last week when over a thousand pickets tried to stop scabs getting in. Karl was arrested but after the initial battle was over, 600 pickets refused to move until Karl was released, which the police were forced to concede.

Labour Party Young Socialists Young Miners Rally for Victory and Socialism

6 pm Sunday, 30 September, Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool.
Speakers: Tony Benn MP, Dennis Skinner MP

Comrades travelling to Blackpool are urged to support Labour CND march assembling at 1 pm at Cenotaph. Speakers: Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn.

Armthorpe YS protest

FOLLOWING THE horrific scenes of police violence in Armthorpe (see issues 713 and 714) the LPYS organised a protest meeting. After leafletting the entire village, a hundred people turned up to hear Nick Toms of YTURC, and Guy Bennet of Armthorpe LPYS and Markham Main NUM.

The meeting agreed to hold a demonstration the

following Tuesday. Again the village was leafletted and on the Tuesday a thousand people joined the march, led by local MP Harold Walker, Yorkshire NUM vice president Sammy Thompson and county councillor Bert Whittle.

(Armthorpe jailings—see opposite page.)

By Keith Narey

Super-scabs howled down

A SIGNIFICANT development took place at a meeting of working miners at Florence Colliery in Staffordshire on September 7. The meeting in the canteen (witnessed by some striking miners) was called by two self appointed miners who thought they could put themselves at the head of the miners who had gone back to work at the pit.

Previous to this meeting these two super scabs had been to a meeting with MacGregor along with 14 other working miners from North Staffs pits. They

reported that several proposals were made to take back to their pits.

But at the meeting at Florence these two forgot that the mass of men present had gone back after 18 weeks on strike, while these two had never come out.

As the meeting got underway, the two read out several proposals, including the ending of the overtime ban. All hell let loose. There were shouts of: "We know we are doing wrong but we are skint—you're not, you've worked from day one!" Others shouted: "We're still

in the NUM, we won't have nowt to do with breakaway groups."

There were about four to five hundred men at the meeting. When the two super scabs asked for support to continue to speak on behalf of the working miners, only 12 hands went up. The other men howled the two down and walked out of the meeting.

By Kenneth Burgess
(Florence NUM Branch Committee)

The 'other' NCB accounts

A FEATURE BY SEAN MACARTNEY

The Tories constantly appeal to "economic commonsense" and the facts of life, which they maintain are reflected in official documents such as the Coal Board accounts. In reality these are distorting mirrors, and the view they give is governed as much by the outlook, assumptions and policies of those who prepare them as by the facts.

In this case (below) the accounts have been drawn up according to "directives issued by the Secretary of State" (ie the government) so perhaps it isn't surprising that they tell the government what it wants to hear. The alternative profit and loss account (right) shows how different a picture can be produced—solely from information given by the NCB itself.

Official NCB Profit and Loss Account for NCB Account for the year to 31 March, 1984	
	£m
SALES	4,660
Less: Raw material and consumable stores	(947)
Employee and pension costs	(2,430)
Other operating costs etc	(1,641)
OPERATING LOSS	(358)
Less: Interest Charges	(467)
Other items	(50)
TOTAL LOSS	(875)

Alternative NCB Profit and Loss Account for the year ended 31 March, 1984	
	£m
SALES	4,660
Less: Wages and Salaries net of Income Tax and SS contributions	(1,601)
Raw materials and consumable stores	(947)
Machinery and other fixed assets written off	(358)
Other operating costs	(911)
OPERATING PROFIT	843
Reconciled to NCB accounts as follows:	
Less: Redundancy and closure costs etc	(204)
Pensions	(129)
Subsidence damage claims	(245)
Miscellaneous (including non-government interest)	(38)
	227
Government "take" interest	402
Tax and SS (approx)	700
	(1102)
'Loss' for NCB	(875)

'Subsidies'

THE PROGRAMME of pit closures is justified by the government with reference to the financial losses recently sustained by the mining industry, losses due to a minority of high cost "uneconomic pits" which have to be closed to make the others viable.

Without this contraction, they say, the industry will not be competitive and will continue to be a drain on public funds. The National Coal Board's accounts for the year to March 1984, published a few weeks ago and revealing a loss of £875 million appear to lend colour to these assertions.

A careful reading of the NCB accounts completely demolishes these claims and reveals a completely different picture. At first sight it seems quite clear: the NCB's expenses (miners' wages, machinery, etc) are greater than income from selling coal and the difference has to be made up by somebody else (the taxpayer). But it's not that simple. As Andrew Glyn showed in *Militant* last week the government's claim that it subsidises the production of coal does not stand up to detailed examination.

costs" associated with closures (mostly redundancy payments) and a further £189 million was paid directly by the government. So at least £533 million, 40% of all the £1,334 million "subsidy", is not the cost of producing coal at all, but the cost of not producing coal by closing pits. Yet the Tories propose to cut this "subsidy" by closing more pits!

Pensions

Even allowing for these items, however, the NCB accounts show an "operating loss" of £358 million. The meaning of this seems absolutely clear—but again is misleading because many of the so-called operating costs are really nothing of the kind. Included in this category is £130 million paid to former miners (mainly pensions to those retired or made redundant) in no sense a current operating cost.

Another "cost" of producing coal turns out to be £245 million paid out in compensation to those suffering from subsidence caused by mining operations.

Of course, the damage caused by subsidence is real enough, but almost by definition the costs involved are nothing to do with producing coal today, they are the result of past mining operations and would have to be met even if all the pits involved were closed immediately; indeed, it is frequently the closure of a pit, and the consequent decay of the shafts which produces the damage. In many cases the workings causing problems are very old and have been closed for years—before nationalisation in some cases.

Loans as cost

In the first place over half the NCB loss is accounted for by interest payments, of £467 million, mostly due to government loans. Such payments represent, in reality, the return to the government on capital invested in the industry as sole "shareholder" in the NCB, ie profit. Treating the payments as a cost to be deducted in arriving at profit is completely misleading. It is entirely the result of political decisions about funding of the NCB; it has nothing to do with the economic realities of mining coal.

It is equally absurd to treat as a subsidy to coal production the cost of pit closures. Yet the accounts include £344 million in "social

Fiddling the books again

APART FROM the factors considered above, accounts can be manipulated in a more tangible way.

For example, breakdown of coal output reveals considerable variation in productivity: in South Wales, only 1.57 tonnes per worker per shift, compared to a national average of 2.43. Clear evidence of "uneconomic pits"? No, a breakdown of major capital projects currently in progress (this is the only breakdown of investment given in the NCB accounts) shows that of £1,297 million already spent on such projects only £4 million has been spent in the South Wales area, 0.3% of the total, although it produces 6.5% of the coal—twenty times as much.

Small wonder productivity is below average! It is quite likely that the NCB

has simply decided to close down most, if not all the South Wales pits. So the area has been deliberately starved of investment (as the South Wales NUM has protested for several years). The resulting low productivity then "proves" how "uneconomic" the pits are, and how necessary it is to close them.

Much attention in the propaganda war is devoted to the long suffering taxpayer, whose money is, you see, being used to subsidise the miners' high living.

Apart from the fact that the alleged subsidies are fictitious as demonstrated above, this conveniently overlooks the fact that miners are taxpayers too, and rather hefty ones at that, in terms of National Insurance and income tax deductions from wages, which are paid over to the

government.

In theory income tax deducted, for instance, is a tax on income and has nothing to do with the mining industry as such; in practice, it constitutes a government levy on revenue generated in the industry by its workers. Indeed, some accountants have argued for financial statements to be presented in this way, showing social security and income taxes as part of the government's "take" from value added in an industry, rather than as a cost to be deducted in arriving at profit.

The NCB accounts do not give precise figures, but it is probable that over £700 million was paid to the government in the year—an average of £55 per week per employee. So who is subsidising whom?

Scabbing for Britain?

"SCABS" of the world unite" said the *Financial Times* in an article by Samuel Brittan, right wing economist and brother of the Home Secretary, last week.

This normally sober and restrained journal of big business has let the mask slip briefly, to reveal the crude anti-union mentality and class interests of monetarism. Brittan's article provides more good reasons for the TUC's decision to give total support to the miners than many of the speeches at Congress.

In particular it shows this is not just a struggle by the miners to defend their jobs and communities, but a fight on behalf of all workers who are organised in trade

unions. Brittan aims to demonstrate that the defeat of any strike by scabs helps to push down the living standards of workers as a whole. "Scabs" he says, are "people offering themselves for work at below going pay rates, or who will forgo a pay rise for which a union is struggling".

Drag down wages

A victory for scabs therefore means lower wages, and "a net rise in the share of national income going to capital is thus possible"—in other words more money in the pockets of the capitalist class that the Brittan brothers belong to.

This, he maintains, will mean more jobs, since these scabs who "price themselves

into work" will drag wages down to a level at which the capitalists find it profitable to invest by exploiting this cheap labour.

Quite apart from the fact that workers, even the unemployed, are not prepared to work at any price, but rightly demand a decent wage, Brittan's idea is an illusion. It totally ignores the history of British capitalism over a period of decades, when despite wages falling below those in nearly every other country in Western Europe, the bosses have refused to invest their profits back into industry. The extra money gained by the lowering of wages will, as in the past, be used to increase shareholders' dividends or to make even more money for themselves through speculative investment in property or banking.

The last people to gain any benefit would be the unemployed. After all, the capitalists know that without a pool of unemployed they cannot hope to find the scabs to break the unions.

Political economy

Brittan has revealed in a brutally honest way the thinking of the capitalist strategists. They want to see the miners defeated not only to get "uneconomic" pits closed down, but in order to deal a crushing blow to the trade union movement, and a victory for his beloved scabs. As he regretfully admits to himself, "crossing a picket line or breaking a strike still carries a stigma".

That is because every picket line crossed and every strike broken weakens the whole body of the labour movement, and that is why support for the miners, in action as well as in words, is so vital for every worker.

Photo: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)



A whole bus for ONE scab at Markham pit in Derbyshire. Striking miners will not be impressed by Samuel Brittan's glorification of scabbing.

Save Scotland's pits

IF IAN MacGregor and the Tories have their way the Scottish coalfields will be decimated. In the year or so before the present strike the Coal Board forced through the closure of Sorn and Highhouse mines in Ayrshire, Kinneil in Lothians and Cardowan in Lanarkshire. The coal board are determined to impose further closures. At the start of the year they announced the closure of Polmaise mine near Stirling and closed Bogside in Fife due to "flooding". The Polmaise men now on strike for 30 weeks, are even more determined to keep their pit alive than at the beginning of the dispute.

Pit closures have been a disaster for the mining communities of Scotland, unemployment in the Cumnock area of Ayrshire and in the Lothians coalfield area is running at about 20% overall, with youth unemployment much higher. In the area surrounding Polmaise colliery youth unemployment is already well over 40% with little prospect of new jobs.

The Scottish coalfields are situated in some of the worst unemployment blackspots in Britain. The number of pits has been reduced dramatically in the post war period. In Central Region there used to be dozen pits, now only Polmaise remains. The decimation of most of the rest of the Scottish economy means little prospect of alternative work. The only other major employer in the West Lothian area was British Leyland in Bathgate—now faced with closure. Only total victory, a crushing defeat for the Tories, can guarantee the future of the Scottish mining industry. (By Alistair Stewart)

Intimidation in Ayrshire

THE 25th week of the miners' dispute in Ayrshire will become a memory to all of us here as we have witnessed new lows in standards of police conduct.

First there was the arrest of a YOP boy at Hunterston who had not been taking part in the picket at all but was returning from work, mending fences, close by the terminal. After the police had released the 16 year old from custody, he was approached by the NUM to become a witness to wrongful arrest but refused as he "did not want to be involved". Or was it possible that the police had "warned him off".

At our local primary school the police had been preparing for the proficiency cycling test with the aim of the kids taking their test on Friday of that week.

By William Hodge
(Secretary Netherthird
Strike Centre, Cumnock,
Ayrshire)

A real low was reached by those upstanding defenders of law and order in that week. When the children were called forward to receive their tutoring they were asked the following questions:-

Is your dad a striking miner?

And if the answer was yes

Other questions were asked.

Does he go picketing?

Does he use his own car?

How long is he out of the house?

When does he go to meetings?

Does he talk to you about

picketing?

Worst of all, the kids were warned "not to go near the rally that Sunday as there was going to be a lot of trouble at it". A protest has been lodged with the police and our local MP George Foulkes about these incidents. We also complained to the headmistress at the school who was shocked to say the least.

Police tactics

We miners in Ayrshire have always brought our children up in the belief that police were there to help everyone. But now even our kids realise, at a very early age, that police are people to be treated with suspicion.

Not only have police tactics changed but so have those of the NCB. On Tues-



Photo: Rick Matthews (FL)

Scottish NUM on 'Stop the rot' demo in Glasgow, March this year, against the closure of industry in Scotland.

day morning of the 25th week a bus was sent to the village of New Cumnock to pick up 27 men who had decided to return to work at Killoch but when a large turnout of pickets arrived in the village, only 7 turned up for the bus, which then went to Killoch. This Parks of Hamilton bus was driven straight through the picket line at the pit gate and 6 of the 7 men decided to come out of the pit and not go to work because of the way the pickets were being treated at

the gate.

The manager then proceeded to sack 3 of the 6 men who had decided not to return to work. The popular press say: "it is a man's right to go to work", but what about the right of every worker to withdraw his labour without being victimised in this way.

Victimisation?

It now seems that each person appearing at the

picket at Killoch is being filmed by a video camera in the pit offices. Why should this be unless the management want to continue with the victimisation after the strike is won by the NUM?

Get one thing clear—no miner on strike at this moment will return through the pit gates until such time that the men who have been sacked are reinstated with a no victimisation clause drawn up.

Pit safety

By Pat Craven

NCB sabotage

MINERS IN Scotland have been enraged by the cynical tactics of the NCB, who have been prepared to put the future of the entire coalfield at risk, in a deadly game of bluff with striking miners.

The Board has been warning that various pits are on the point of being permanently lost as a result of the NUM withdrawing safety cover. This happened at Bogside (even before the national strike began), Bilston Glen, Castlehill, Frances, Monktonhall and now, most seriously, at Polkemmet.

Safety and scabs

Whereas in the other coalfields, management officials have been sent in to do safety work, the Scottish NCB director, Bert Wheeler, has refused such a course. He has been prepared to sabotage pits, and let them die. It is the union that has had to make sure enough men are going in to keep the pits safe and workable.

When strike-breakers started to cross the picket lines, the union, reflecting the members' outrage, reacted by withdrawing this safety cover, demanding that the scabs be sent home. Each

time this was done, however, management neither sent the scabs away nor provided safety cover themselves. Faced with this, the union has, in each case up to now, agreed to restore the safety cover.

At Bilston Glen the Board now have enough workers not to need the union's co-operation, but in all the other pits it is still the union which is taking responsibility for protection of the pits. At Monktonhall, where the union had withdrawn cover for the day shift only, while scabs were present, but maintained it during the other two shifts, management wrote to say that the pit was in a "holding position", meaning that it is just being kept safe. They added that they were not prepared to let that situation continue and would lock out the union's safety men unless they agreed to restore cover for all three shifts. Given that the NCB have stated for the last year that they are prepared to close Monktonhall anyway, they may be willing to let it die. As NUM delegate Davy Hamilton said "the pit was in serious danger and the NCB were playing a game of brinkmanship." The union agreed to restore the safety men on the day shift.

At Polkemmet the withdrawal of safety cover



Photo: Rick Matthews (FL)

Polmaise miners on picket line at Bilston Glen.

led to a severe build-up of water and gas. The union agreed to restore cover, but even then there was a 12-hour delay before the safety men were allowed in, causing further deterioration. Management now claim that it will take a year before the pit can be brought into production again. Miners regard this as an exaggeration, but accept that the pit has been damaged.

Monktonhall

As at Monktonhall, it seems that management are prepared to see a pit close rather than stop strike-breakers from reporting for work. It has even been suggested that the reason for the Coal Board's much tougher attitude in Scotland is that they would be prepared to see the closure of the entire Scottish coalfield, and can therefore ignore the union when the withdrawal of safety cover is threatened.

NUM response

UNION ACTIVISTS are in a terrible dilemma. If they help management keep pits open at the same time as scabs are being brought in, the Board can reach the stage, as at Bilston Glen, where they can produce coal and provide their own safety cover. The union has then lost one of its best bargaining weapons. The strikers could begin to feel that there was no longer any point in staying out.

The withdrawal of safety cover was an angry and justified response to NCB provocation. To have done nothing would have seemed like giving in to the management.

If, however, each time the Board claim that a pit is in jeopardy, safety cover is restored by the union, the original withdrawal will seem to have achieved nothing. So some union activists are now arguing for

the removal of all safety cover, regardless of the consequences to the pit, so long as scabs are still being brought in. This, it is argued, will force the NCB to back down. It is, however, a massive gamble; if the Board are prepared to let the whole coalfield close, they might still refuse to back down and sit back and let the mines be destroyed, with incalculable consequences for the miners and the Scottish working class in general.

For the union it is a "Catch 22". To keep safety cover on could mean letting the management seize the initiative and organise an accelerating return to work; to take it off could mean the loss of all miners' jobs in Scotland.

But neither course of action is in itself going to win the strike. Even if the Board responded to the withdrawal of safety cover by making

concessions, it would only be a tactical ploy on their part to buy time; it would not mean that they were giving up. The only way for the miners to guarantee victory is to inflict sufficient damage on the economic prospects of big business to force the bosses to put pressure on the Tory government to order the NCB to settle.

This can only be achieved by a combination of the national action by the NUM and supporting action from all sections of the trade union movement. In Scotland because of the more precarious state of the coalfield, a campaign to involve other unions in the fight is vital. It is easier to show these other workers how they are directly affected, since the closure of the whole coalfield would cause job losses over a huge area of the Scottish economy.

Wider campaign

To launch such a wider campaign should be top priority for the area leaders. To see withdrawal of safety cover as some sort of alternative "solution" would be a grave mistake. The situation will have to be carefully weighed up at each pit, when the issue arises. But on balance at this stage it would be better to maintain safety cover where necessary, while, as a matter of great urgency, convening mass meetings of the NUM membership and then the wider movement in order to broaden the struggle and lead the strike to victory.

US?



about



what



Players—mobile advertisements.

New season - higher prices

FANCY GOING to the match on Saturday? If you do it will cost you at least £5 just for a home game. With transport, admission money and—if you want to be really extravagant—a drink or hot-dog at half time, watching your team can be an expensive hobby.

At Arsenal its now £2.50 standing, and that's one of the cheaper grounds. At Chelsea its about £4. With prices like these its not surprising that league attendances are steadily declining with many clubs on the verge of bankruptcy.

Commercial

Football clubs are getting more commercial to recoup their losses. Along with this comes the great football kit rip-off. The club now change their strip nearly every season and the makers rake in the cash as the fans rush to update their shirts. Only a few years ago you could buy replica kits for around £10, but now you'd be lucky to get change from £25.

Shirt sponsorship is also now the norm with players becoming the mobile adverts for big business.

On top of this the fans

have to put up with the hypocrisy of the club directors. We all condemn soccer violence, but when you hear the directors condemning trouble makers as 'animals' when at the same time they're prepared to take their money every week, its sickening.

Fans have no control over the club managements, as they buy their way into the boardrooms. Recently Robert Maxwell's son did just that, to become at 28 the youngest director in the country.

The socialist alternative would see the clubs and their facilities the property of the whole community and used to proper capacity—Highbury for example with a capacity for 60,000, is only used about 30 times a year for first team games. Under social control, the facilities could instead be open for free to the community, involving the players and staff, alongside the bi-weekly game, with an elected panel to oversee the running of the club on a day to day basis.

By John Viner
(Acton LPYS and Arsenal supporter)

'We hate humans'

THE COVER for the new book *We hate Humans* by David Robbins claims: "We Hate Humans is a brilliant, provoking report on youth from the battleground of soccer." Being a life-long Millwall supporter as well as an ex-skinhead who ran with the pack during the late '60s and early '70s, I picked up this book with a great deal of personal interest.

The book gives a potted history of youth cults from the unemployed youth of the '30s, through the Teddy boys, Mods and Rockers and hippy eras, to the different variations of youth cults today. It also looks at the growth and influence of racist groups amongst sections of working class youth, using football as the link to these different cults.

The book illustrates the class divisions amongst youth; Teddy Boys, Skinheads—working class; beat-niks, hippies—middle class, etc.

The book shows how the hippies of the 60s' era for example appeared irrelevant to many

working class youth. It accurately recalls episodes of which I had personal knowledge. With the rise of 'student power' in 1968 the book tells how Chelsea fans at the Shed would insult rival fans with the chant 'Students, students ha! ha! ha!' In fact that was quite popular at all London grounds at the time.

Exploitation

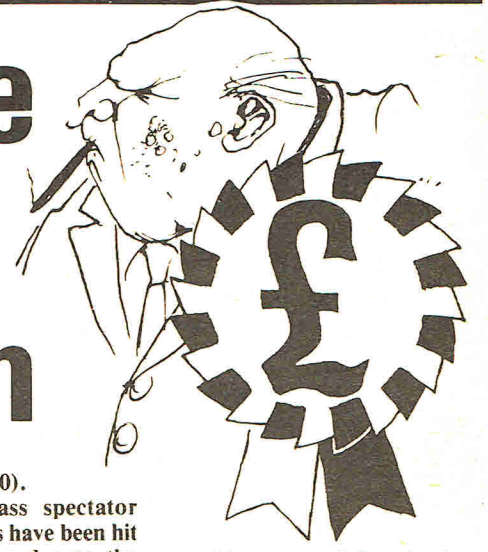
David Robbins also recalls how, when he was a student on the great Vietnam demo in October 1968, "bands of Millwall skinheads could be seen yapping at the heels of the demonstrators." We were doing more than just 'yapping' though, whatever that means.

Robbins hints to the reason for this hostility: "Hippies protested about capitalism and said they could love it away, yet their cult was the most exploited by big business. There wasn't much profit in football gangs.

The book also points out the sheer expense of following your

Bosses football chaos

Clubs face financial relegation



NO AREA of society is free from the class struggle. In Spain professional footballers are taking strike action to secure better contract conditions. As the Spanish clubs are wracked by financial crisis so the players are moving to defend their precarious positions.

With the Spanish stadiums silent, no doubt the press in this country will try to portray the strike as some 'European phenomenon'. Yet British clubs are in a very shaky position and the situation is set to get worst.

The latest report by the Financial Market Research group on English Football Clubs shows the total inability of capitalism to make even one of the nation's most popular sports economically viable.

With the season already underway, only 43 league clubs have so far filed their accounts. Of these half are insolvent. The worst off clubs though have not yet published their figures, including those clubs which last year showed massive deficits: Watford (£1.5 million), Cardiff City (£1.4 million), Millwall (£1.3 million) Brighton and Hove Albion (£848,000) and West

Ham (£839,000).

Being a mass spectator sport, the clubs have been hit by falling gates due to the rise in mass unemployment and falling living standards. The clubs put up gate prices and so the crowds fall even further.

Market economy

Operating in the market economy, the clubs try to recoup their losses. Some have gone for property and advertising deals, which have little concern for the feelings of the fans. Some turn to the leeches of the banks, securing loans with massive interest rates which just further the financial burden on the clubs. At the beginning of the '82-'83 season clubs had borrowed £10 million—by the end of the season this had risen to £43 million!

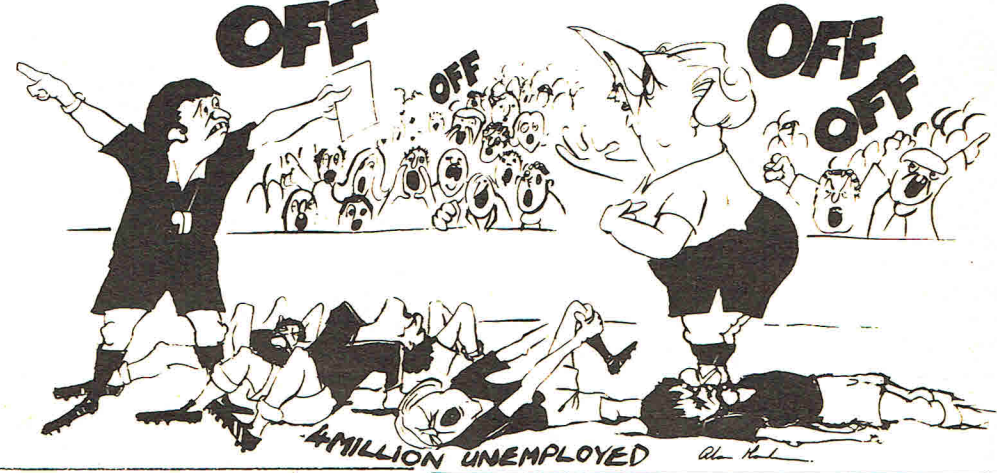
They cannot borrow forever, so the club managements look to other means. As the *Observer* (September 2) put it: "...for many (clubs), when they cannot meet their bills, the sale of a player is necessary." This summer alone £12.5 million exchanged hands in transfer fees as players were sold off, many

to European clubs. Again, with little regard for the fans who are helpless as some of their best players are haggled over like commercial commodities.

There is also another avenue the Club managements are increasingly looking towards to recoup their losses. Salaries for staff and players have fallen by 7.2%. Not all league players share the fame and fortune of the First Division wonder-boys, and for most players in the smaller clubs a drop of over 7% in their wages will make a big dent in their living standards.

So perhaps it will not be long before the picket lines appear at British grounds. And any players that do decide to don the armbands and set up the brazier at the turnstiles can be sure of mass support from the ordinary fans, who are more interested in the game than the bank balances of the fat cats and speculators of the boardrooms who are suffocating the sport.

By Bob Wade



LPYS round up

"I'M PROUD", said striking Leicestershire miner Malcolm Pinniger, "to be associated with *Militant* and the Labour Party Young Socialists". He was addressing a packed meeting along with Dave Nellist MP at the Leicestershire LPYS summer camp over the bank holiday weekend. With over 60 people attending, it was a great success. Besides the many political discussions, we had a play, the 'Trial of Thatcher', a sponsored walk to Foxton Locks (and the pub!), NUM and SALEP videos and the film *Missing* followed by a topical discussion on Chile. (Reports Heather Rawling.)



THE LPYS are sponsoring what is hoped to be the largest meeting of Further Education college students. Called by some Labour Clubs and individual Labour Students the two-day meeting is hoped to attract up to 500 FE students to discuss ways and means of fighting cuts at their colleges, which are in the frontline of the Tories' education cut-backs. The meeting will be held on November 11-12 at Liverpool County Hall, and speakers so far arranged are the MPs Terry Fields and Dave Nellist and deputy leader of Liverpool City Council, Derek Hatton.



By John Bryan
(Southwark councillor and Millwall supporter, personal capacity)

Conference must hear Blackburn appeals

BY A politically dishonest, and completely unconstitutional, slight of hand the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party is trying to prevent this year's annual conference from discussing the expulsion of six Militant supporters from Blackburn Labour Party.

The section of the NEC's 1984 Report on the misnamed "Appeals and Mediation Committee" mentions the case of Wythenshawe CLP, the expulsion of Tariq Ali, and the dispute in the Manchester City Labour Group—but the report makes no mention at all of the Blackburn expulsions.

After the Appeals Committee had upheld the expulsions David Hughes, the National Agent, also wrote to them rejecting their request to be allowed to appeal directly to the conference in October.

Witch-hunt

Last year when—against the opposition of a big majority of CLP delegates—conference expelled five members of the *Militant* Editorial Board, Jim Mortimer assured conference that the NEC was carrying out conference's previous decision to "deal with the leaders... and not to provoke a witch hunt." Yet bas-

ing themselves on the NEC's witch-hunting action the right wing dominated executive of Blackburn CLP forced the expulsions of six *Militant* supporters—and this is now being upheld by the NEC behind the backs of conference.

In justifying their recommendation to the NEC that the appeals should be rejected, the Appeals Committee referred to Labour Party rules and to decisions on *Militant* endorsed by last year's Annual Conference. This completely rules out any suggestion that the expulsions were purely a matter for Blackburn CLP and really have nothing to do with the NEC and Conference.

NEC powers

What's more, the NEC has heard the appeals of the six against their expulsion—the NEC has therefore made itself the final arbiter on the issue.

NEC back council action

IN ORDER to discuss strategy and tactics in the fight against Tory rate-capping proposals, a special meeting was held on August 30 between the NEC Local Government Committee and representatives of local authorities on the government hit-list.

Party members and local authority workers will welcome its decision to reaffirm the fighting stand taken at the party's recent Sheffield Local Government Conference. There will be relief that an option proposed by the officers of the Party to adopt a "Long term strategy" of harrying the government through a series of so-called "bush wars" over the next three years which would therefore avoid a decisive battle next year, was decisively rejected. Such a strategy would undermine efforts to build a united front of local authorities and would disperse the energy of local authority workers through sporadic isolated actions.

The 'bush war' plan was thrown out by the Local Government Committee. They reaffirmed the judgement that there would be no point in attempting to fight over the next three years unless a decisive battle was launched which defeated the Tories next year. The victory of Liverpool proved that if just six councils took a determined stand then the government's plans would be wrecked.

A lead must now be taken by the 18 local authorities on the Tory hit-list with the united backing of their workforces and the broader public, together with other Labour authorities and a Labour Groups.

The next six months are crucial. Massive support has to be built amongst workers and the wider

community along the lines of Liverpool. That means six months of public, factory, workplace and college meetings to explain that the Tories are to blame, and to make clear what the practical effects of their policies would mean for job losses and cuts in services. They must concentrate on demand the return of the £9 billion which the government has stolen from the rate-capped authorities.

Demonstrations

Party members will welcome the decision of the Local Government Committee to accept a motion moved by Steve Morgan (LPYS rep, NEC) that a series of national demonstrations be organised before next March in London, Sheffield and Merseyside, and that the NEC consult with trade unions about calling a national local authority workers strike on Democracy Day next year.

However, there will be dismay to hear that many local authority leaders, including Ted Knight and David Blunkett, are reported to have initially opposed the committee coming out in favour of such

Yet clause nine of the Party's constitution (in part two, paragraph 'C'), which refers to the powers of the NEC, says that one of the duties of the NEC is to "enforce the constitution, standing orders, and rules of the Party and to take any action it deems necessary for such purpose, whether by way of disaffiliation of an organisation or expulsion of an individual, or otherwise. *Any such action shall be reported to the next Annual Party Conference.*"

Protest

Many Constituency Labour Parties will be protesting to the NEC against this manoeuvre on the Blackburn expulsions. The attempt to silently ratify the expulsions behind the back of Conference will undoubtedly be challenged by delegates at the Conference in Blackpool in October.



The Liverpool Labour Party banner.

Photo: Militant

a strike. In the end, both proposals were adopted without opposition. However, David Blunkett is reported to have stated that while supporting the idea of consulting trade union leaders about a one day strike, he would be opposed to an all-out local authority workers strike since he believed this would play into the hands of the Tories.

Party members might expect such utterances from Murray, Sirs or Chapple, but for somebody on the Left to rue out this sort of action in advance is entirely wrong. In fact such statements play into the hands of the Tories by giving the impression of an unwillingness to take all possible measures to defeat their proposals.

Indeed, industrial muscle will be key to the success of the campaign as Liverpool has indicated. Local authority trade unionists and party members will have to maintain pressure on their leaders to ensure that they match up to the tasks of the coming year in the same way as the Liverpool City councillors have done.

By a Militant reporter



Three of the expelled Blackburn Six: Kay Wright, Peter and Rossina Harris.

Photo: Mark Pinder

How the six were expelled

THE SIX members of Blackburn Constituency Labour Party were expelled on the basis of allegations from one Michael Gregory, a political provocateur who claimed to be a *'Militant defector'*. However, the Six's fully documented refutation of his false allegations was not circulated to delegates of the local party's General Management Committee, many of whom had never been seen at the GMC before they turned up to vote for expulsions. The Six were given only a few minutes to answer Gregory's pack of lies.

'Inaccuracies'

Nor were the Six given a fair hearing by the national Party's Appeals and Mediation Committee—who had clearly not studied any of the documents before the hearing. After a disgracefully conducted meeting in Blackburn, this committee described the glaring discrepancies and ludicrous allegations of Gregory as "some inaccuracies", but nevertheless, asserted that Gregory's allegations "rang true"!

It is ironic that while the NEC is resorting to an underhand manoeuvre, Michael Gregory, has

once again stabbed the labour movement in the back. In an attempt to block Blackburn council Labour Group's move to grant up to £32,000 to miners families during the strike, Gregory raised legalistic objections which invite the Tory Minister to intervene against this action to support the miners. This has provoked further indignation in Blackburn Labour Party against Gregory and the right-wingers who have associated with him.

Resignation

Earlier this year, councillor Gregory voted with the Tories and Liberals against Labour's steps to reorganise the council's Direct Labour Organisation, causing the defeat of the Labour Group on the eve of the local elections—in which Labour failed to make any overall gain in Blackburn.

Gregory resigned the Labour whip. Yet so far the right-wing executive of Blackburn Labour Party, which pulled out all the stops to expel six *Militant* supporters of the Party, have taken no action to expel this turncoat.

Reject Coventry enquiry

IN A display of open contempt for the ranks of the Labour Party, the Labour Party NEC has agreed to a request from the Party's West Midlands Regional Organiser for an "enquiry" into the Labour Party in Coventry.

The "enquiry" will cover four points: the conduct of the 1983 General Election campaign in Coventry South-East; withdrawal of the whip from four Labour Councillors; allegations of the operation of a group within the membership of Coventry North-East CLP; and disruption the the Annual Meeting of Coventry District Labour Party in June.

The 1983 General Election campaign in Coventry South-East was successful! Our candidate, Dave Nellist, was elected, despite the media campaign against him. Walworth Road saw fit to give us no money at all. The current Constituency officers have racked their brains to remember what the Regional Office did to help. Nothing has yet been remembered.

We raised close to £5,000 in the campaign, meetings were held in each ward, plus a rally of 2,000 people, and 100 new Party members were recruited. It would be more appropriate to "enquire" as to why the national campaign was so ineffective.

After the 1983 election one member of the Party, who had used the press to call for a vote against the Labour candidate was

expelled by Coventry South-East CLP. This *scab*, (a few weeks ago during a postal strike he was among a tiny handful who continued working), apparently made some allegations about the conduct of the campaign during his appeal against expulsion. The NEC rejected his appeal but still found him useful in conducting a witch-hunt, it seems. These allegations have not yet reached the CLP. Yes, 14 months after the election and 10 months after the appeal hearing we do not know what charges we face!

Smokescreen

There can be no doubt that this "enquiry" is a smokescreen for an attack on Coventry South-East CLP and Dave Nellist MP. It is also a clear attempt to extend the witch-hunt of *Militant* supporters to other left-wing Party members. When the careers of the right-wing are under threat we hear loud appeals for Party unity. We stand for Party unity. But there can be no unity on the basis of a witch-hunt.

Resolutions protesting at this enquiry and calling for it to be dropped should be passed and sent to: Phil Holifield, Coventry South-East CLP, 61, Sunnybank Avenue, Stonehouse Estate, Coventry; or Mrs F Westwood, West Midlands Regional Organiser, The Labour Party, 113 Edmund Street, Birmingham.

By Pete McNally

The Trades Union Congress is an imperfect reflection of the processes at work within the union rank and file. Nevertheless, the 1984 Congress has been the most significant for years, an historic conference, showing the pressure of the changes taking place within society and the working class.

The Congress was dominated by the miners' strike, the single most important industrial struggle since the war. For over six months the miners have shown unparalleled determination and tenacity.

Despite the early failure to bring out the Nottinghamshire miners and some other Midlands pits, the majority have stood firm against everything the Tories have thrown at them.

They have endured terrible hardship, a virtual police state in some mining areas, an unprecedented campaign of media lies and distortions and, most recently, a co-ordinated NCB-police-media attempt to dragoon strikers back to work. In some cases thousands of police—five or ten times the number of officers trying to track down the 'Fox'—have been deployed to get a single scab into a colliery.

The effect has been the opposite to that intended by the Tories. Rather than demoralise the strikers, the sight of these handfuls of scabs, feted by the press and protected by their own mobile police state, has enraged whole mining communities. Where only a few dozen men may have picketed before, now thousands of men, women and even children have turned out to vent their fury at the scabs.

The Tories cannot now break the miners. What is just as important—the miners know it. Their 'pain barrier' has been crossed. As Arthur Scargill put it, "General Winter" is on the way, so why give up now? Despite the Tories' public facade of confidence, there are growing signs that they are worried about the run-down of coal stocks as the winter weather draws on.

Media pressure on TUC

It was with a certain tinge of desperation, therefore, that the Tories and the ruling class looked forward hopefully to a TUC Congress that would rein the miners' back. Enormous media pressure was brought to bear to try to get the NUM leaders to hand the dispute over to the TUC.

That so much hope was placed in the TUC to check the miners, rather than, for example, the police, is itself an indication of the great authority and power that rests in the organised workers' movement.

As the *Economist* (September 8) put it, "The TUC may be an ironic weapon for Mrs Thatcher to wave in the face of union militants. But at present it is the best she has."

The Press argued that the miners were bound to be completely isolated at the Congress, unless the TUC could dictate terms in return for its support—in other words unless the miners agreed to scale down the campaign, stop the mass picketing and drop some of their demands on pit closures.

But in their negotiations with the representatives of the General Council, the miners' leaders stood firm. The striking miners may have been disappointed that the specific commitment to a 10p per head levy was dropped in favour of a more general "concerted campaign to raise money". They may have been equally disappointed by the fact

By John Pickard



that the TUC were not being asked to mobilise for a 24-hour general strike against the Tories and in favour of the miners.

It would also have been far better if the TUC lefts had come together with the NUM to present the issues more clearly and starkly to Congress, and in effect, to the union rank and file, over the heads of the delegates. But nevertheless, the miners' leaders, in extracting the General Council statement of support, at least made sure that the TUC were not going to snatch a defeat from the jaws of victory, as they did over the *Stockport Messenger* and GCHQ.

Even despite the statement, published before the Congress opened, most miners on the lobby on the first day expected very little from the leaders of the TUC, having themselves witnessed the National Graphical Association and civil service unions going down to defeats. But as events turned out, the Congress session on the strike, especially the success of the General Council statement and the miners' own resolution, had the effect of swinging the TUC more firmly into line behind the strike.

No matter what was in the small print—for example the General Council statement said that the practical implementation of the solidarity "will need detailed discussions with the General Council and agreement with the unions who would be directly concerned,"—the majority of miners will interpret the decision as a strong commitment to solidarity action.

The statement made it clear that the TUC aim is now "to make the dispute more effective by:

- a) Not moving coal or coke, or oil substituted for coal or coke, across NUM official picket lines;
- b) Not using oil which is substituted for coal."

It was not the NUM which was isolated in the Congress, therefore, but the right-wing trade union leaders, like Eric Hammond of the EETPU.

The most significant speeches in

TUC and

the session were those by David Basnett of the GMBATU and Gavin Laird of the AUEW (Eng). The best parts of their speeches were not shown on the TV: perhaps the media were still trying to give the impression that the NUM were "ticked off" by conference.

These union leaders, having stood to one side during the strike, were forced to fall into line behind the miners. Gavin Laird tried to explain away the AUEW change of heart by the fact that the NUM had "finally come to the TUC." He did not point out that had the miners gone to the TUC in the very beginning they would probably have suffered the same fate as the NGA or the civil service unions at GCHQ.

Nevertheless, as he put it, the Government had to understand that there was now a "new situation," and he went on to give a clear commitment: "We are at one with the NUM", he said, "and we will resolve this dispute on the basis of a victory for the miners."

Deepened class consciousness

David Basnett, whose union organises the biggest proportion of manual workers in coal-fired power stations, also pledged his union's support. To Eric Hammond, he answered, "Yes, we are against violence no matter where it comes from. Yes, we want to change the government, but only by the ballot box...but No, No, No, we will not see the National Union of Mineworkers destroyed. We will not see the miners starved back to work."

What has to be understood is that these speeches would not have been made but for the pressure of the rank and file of the trade unions. Members of GMBATU and AUEW—NCB employees—are on strike alongside NUM members. But more importantly, there has been a generalised deepening in class consciousness and understanding among millions of workers as a result of Tory

policies and this strike in particular.

Hundreds of railway workers, as Jimmy Knapp explained, are facing intimidation, suspension, and management bullying over their refusal to move coal or coke...yet they are standing fast with the miners. In regional "Days of Action" throughout the country hundreds of thousands more workers have shown their support. Millions have given money to the miners.

Most remarkable of all has been the dock strike. Underlying the dockers' fears for their own jobs and the Dock Labour Scheme is the unmistakable issue of union solidarity with the NUM. It is a pity that the trade union leaders themselves do not go openly to their members and say—as we did from the TUC rostrum—that their support for the miners is *political*, that all the trade unions must stand or fall with the miners and that all workers have a stake in the struggle.

Such an honest campaign, far from weakening the solidarity action, would give it a huge boost. How else can the railway workers' and the dockers' solidarity be understood except as a generalised political understanding, as class consciousness?

Support for the miners is linked to the fact that workers have suffered five years of nightmare under the Tories. Immeasurable violence has been done to jobs, public services, the economy, to the futures of workers' children and, not least, to the democratic rights of trade unions.

In addition, the initial hesitation that some workers felt over the 'messy' start to the miners' strike has now given way to respect and admiration for the strikers and their families who have battled on for the last six months. Workers understand that the longer the strike goes on the higher are the stakes.

There is a growing realisation that the miners can deliver a serious blow to the Tory Government and in so doing strike a blow for all

workers.

Even leaving aside the millions of days lost through the miners' strike, there has been an increase in the frequency of strikes and the numbers of workers involved, reversing the trend of the last four years of Thatcherism. The miners' strike is becoming a *proxy struggle* for all the most advanced layers of the labour movement, and through them of the organised working class as a whole.

Fraternal approaches

It has been these general factors, these social forces, which have filtered through and have been reflected, albeit imperfectly, in the speeches of David Basnett, Gavin Laird and others at the TUC Congress.

The decision to back the miners can now help them in the last big push to victory. Already, as Arthur Scargill reported, several groups of workers at power stations have contacted the NUM offering support. NUM area and local strike committees would undoubtedly get a response if they now made fraternal approaches to power workers' shop stewards, explaining the issues and seeking their support.

The Tories may very soon face the choice of packing it in altogether or being forced to use troops to move coal stocks. But paradoxically, whereas a Labour Government could get away with using troops to scab on the firemen a few years ago—because of its authority among organised workers—a Tory Government could not. If Thatcher tried to use the army to move coal from the pit-heads, she could soon be faced with a general strike. Power workers, transport, newspapers and many sections of industry would walk out.

Thatcher would soon realise that although soldiers can drive lorries, they cannot run power stations or keep the wheels of industry turning. The Ulster Workers Council

and the miners



Photos from left to right:
1. Trade unionists on the TUC lobby. 2. David Basnett. 3. Len Murray. 4. A section of the BLOC lobby. 5. A message from a striking miner.
Photos: Dave Sinclair.

tees, conferences and leaderships will have to be transformed to match the needs of the moment.

The TUC Congress may be years behind the shifts taking place in the consciousness of these most active workers. Most of the individual union delegations, made up largely of full-time trade union officials, do not even reflect the shifts to the left in their own union conferences in the last year.

But for all that, the struggles of the workers will have an echo in the TUC. The miners made an impact this year—and in so doing put down a marker for other workers in the future.

This year's TUC was also an historic occasion on account of the size and the effect of the lobby outside. The groundwork for that rally and demonstration was laid by the Broad Left Organising Committee, which now represents left groupings in all the major trade unions and in which there is a strong Marxist influence. Both literally and metaphorically, the trade union leaders in the Congress had to "look over their shoulders" as they deliberated in the Conference hall.

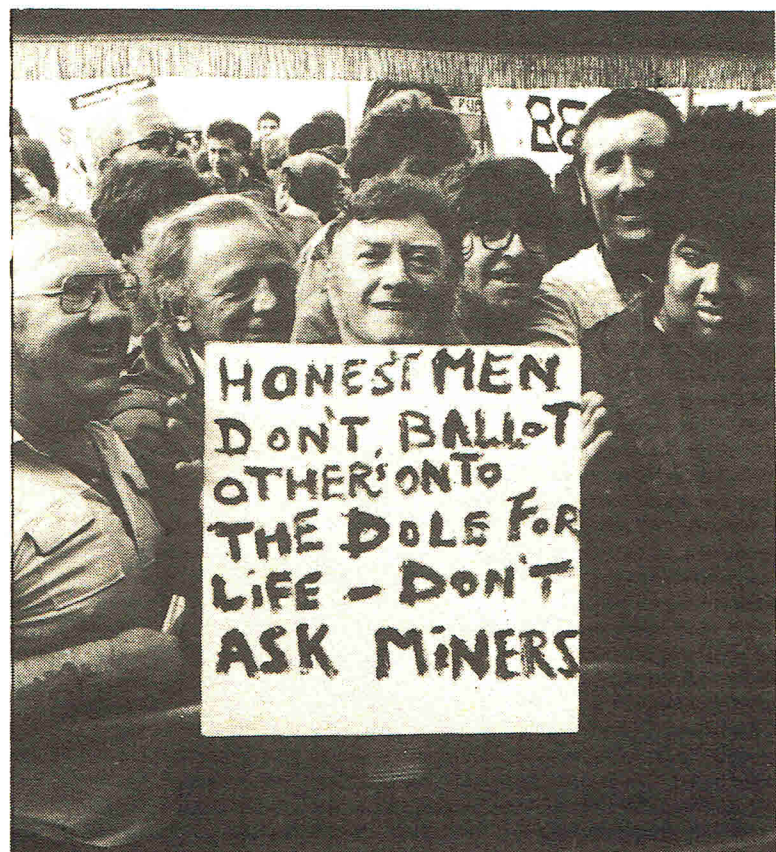
Fundamental social change

The BLOC can have a major impact inside the TUC and in the individual unions in the coming period, as workers increasingly realise that the old methods of the right-wing are discredited. Far from keeping a distance from political issues, the unions will be forced to embrace them. No major trade union issue can now be fought out except as both an industrial and as a political struggle.

The historic link between the trade unions and the Labour Party will need to be strengthened by campaigns for affiliation. The trade unions will increasingly need to turn to a more militant approach industrially, but also to thoroughgoing socialist policies, linking the day-to-day needs of workers to the goal of fundamental social change.

Many hundreds of miners have already turned to the Labour Party, and specifically its Marxist wing around *Militant*, as a result of the experiences they have gone through. They realise that if they are not to have to go through the same battle all over again in three or four years time, they will have to set their sights on fundamental change—on a socialist society in which the needs of working people are the basis of production, not an incidental that can be discarded in 'lean' times.

The message from Brighton is clearly this: that more than ever before, as the trade union rank and file are forced into struggle, the TUC leadership will come under their watchful and critical gaze. The leaders will be carefully scrutinised, tested, pressurised and when necessary, they will be replaced.



strike in Northern Ireland in 1974 was a reactionary stoppage—organised not by the official trade unions but by Protestant paramilitaries. But it still showed the complete incapacity of the army—even under Northern Ireland conditions—to make any dent whatsoever in a mass strike.

MacGregor and Thatcher may well be among the most stupid and short-sighted representatives of the ruling class, but other, more astute advisers may already, for the reasons given, have scotched any idea of using troops.

It is most likely, therefore, that the miners will now gain their victory. The main substance of their demands will be met. The Fleet Street lie factory may try to minimise the damage to the Tories as they did over the victory of Liverpool City Council, by denying the full extent of the Government's and MacGregor's concessions.

But the majority of workers will not be fooled. A miners' victory will be celebrated by the whole labour movement and will greatly enhance the confidence and willingness of other workers to fight for their own special needs. Those other trade union struggles will in their turn put increased demands and pressures on the trade union leaders, just as the miners' strike has done.

NEDC boycott

At this Congress, while the TUC leaders have reflected the grassroots support for the miners, they have also supported many contradictory and conflicting policies. It is ludicrous, for example, after everything that was said about the Tories attacks on trade union rights, that the Congress should vote—although with a substantial opposition—to keep the door open for co-operation with the Tories through the National Economic Development Council (NEDC).

Time after time delegates and General Council members referred

to the Tories' onslaught on democratic rights and living standards. Yet the same David Basnett who derided the Tories attempts to "destroy the NUM" and "starve the miners back" successfully urged delegates to oppose the one resolution that instructed the TUC to keep up its boycott of the NEDC. As if talks and consultations will make any difference to this government!

As the TUC leaders discovered after last year's headlong rush into 'new realism', their weakness will only invite aggression. Despite themselves, the union leaders will be forced to come into conflict with the Tory Government.

The Tories' relentless attacks upon living standards are not due to the personalities of the members of Thatcher's Cabinet. They arise from the crisis of British capitalism. Faced with the irreversible decline of the economy, in comparison to all Britain's major capitalist rivals, the response of Big Business is to shift the whole burden of economic sacrifice onto the shoulders of working people.

The miners' strike, despite its immense significance, is only one indication of the fact that British society is entering a period of intensified class struggle, as workers seek to defend the gains that were hard-won in the post-war years.

No policy will be too 'extreme' for the capitalist class in the future, if it becomes necessary to protect their interests. Rodney Bickerstaffe, General Secretary of NUPE, pointed out in Brighton that there are often hundreds or thousands of police being deployed to escort scabs into work. "How long will it be", he asked, "Before they are being used to escort striking workers back to work?"

The struggles of workers to defend their living standards and rights will have their inevitable reflection inside the trade unions. The most class conscious and advanced workers will draw the necessary conclusions that the union branches, regional commit-

Chile, Canada



PHOTO: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)

Pinochet—all the pomp remains, but support has disappeared.

Brutal last stand of Pinochet

ONCE AGAIN the Chilean working class have shown their heroic determination to overthrow the Pinochet dictatorship.

The protests called for 4 and 5 September witnessed the setting up of barricades in most working class districts of Santiago and the other major cities. Once again the youth have been on the front line; on the barricades in their areas and occupying Universities and schools.

The banging of pots and pans has become traditional in these days of protests and again occurred in residential areas of Santiago while both in the capital and Valparaiso the country's second city, a lorry drivers' strike brought traffic to a standstill. The capital ground to a halt by mid-afternoon with shops closing and buses vanishing off the roads.

Throughout the country, workers and youth marched on the streets defying the curfew imposed by the authorities. Most demos were brutally attacked by riot police and the secret police, the CNI, using dogs, water cannons, tear gas, and truncheons and bullets.

Military lost support

The regime's brutality is a desperate attempt to cling to power in the face of a rising tide of open opposition from the working class. Pinochet and the torturers around him have lost support from all sections of society.

The more isolated they become, the more savage and brutal their methods. However this only reinforces hatred towards the regime and the desire for vengeance towards Pinochet. A major explosion is on the cards.

Pinochet is now talking of "another September" meaning a repeat of 1973's systematic destruction of working class

organisations. But the General is just dreaming. No degree of repression can give new life to this regime.

But Pinochet is doing his worst. One foreign correspondent reported seeing a "grisly pile of blood and black tufts of hair". The police apparently grabbed a demonstrator on a barricade, slashed his back with knives and then scalped him. In another area a boy had been stripped by police and hurled over a burning barricade, a common fate for those arrested.

In two separate incidents, a 35 year old man and a 14 year old boy were shot dead. Official figures claim 49 injured and 340 arrested.

Priest murdered

The murder of the French priest on 5 September sparked off a wave of protests. 10,000 people met outside the Cathedral for Father Andre Jarlan's funeral and marched to the city centre. 11 September promises to be marked by nationwide protests.

The demonstrations were called by two major opposition groups. The Democratic Alliance involves the National Party and the Christian Democrats, the main capitalist parties. The MDP encompasses the Communist Party, most Socialist Party groups and the MIR.

Both opposition groups have concentrated on days of protest like this month's. This was useful at the start of the protest movement in 1983 to mobilise opposition but they have failed to topple the regime in themselves.

The right wing parties are clearly trying to ease Pinochet to one side by trying to modify the constitution which allow

him power until 1989. Their main stumbling block is Pinochet himself. He sees the opposition as "too immature" to be given the reins of power yet. He wants to stay until 1989 or even later.

Chile's bosses fear that the dictator is playing with fire and they are the ones who might get burnt. Any protest could stumble into an uncontrollable insurrection which could devour them as well as Pinochet.

General strike

After over 100 deaths since May 1983, the further return to repression and the limitations of the present protests, the MDP must now adopt a clear independent programme of action. This rules out any alliance with representatives of the bosses' parties especially the Christian Democrats. It means an insurrectionary general strike to overthrow Pinochet.

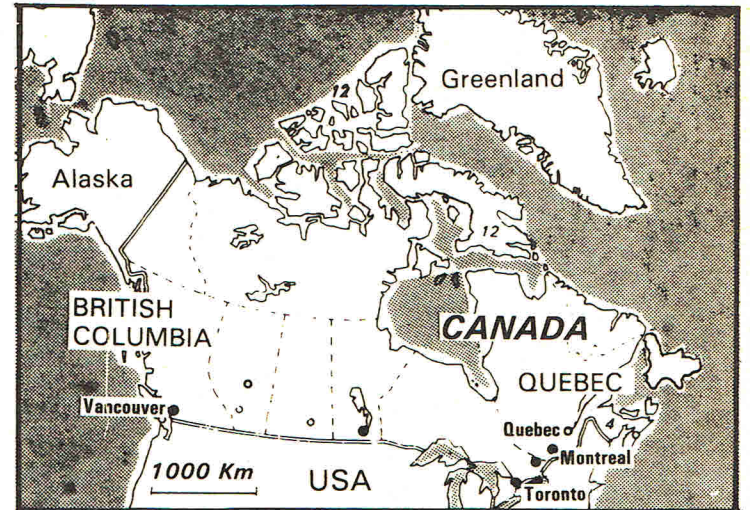
The workers' leaders have only to lift their little fingers by calling for workers to take power through a general strike to end ten years of repression, murder and economic nightmare.

All readers are urged to take up the question of Chile in their Labour Party, LPYS and union branches. The Chile Socialist Defence Campaign (CSDC) bulletin is available from CSDC, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Make this campaign a resounding success by organising meetings in your area. The Chilean workers deserve and need international support. We have a duty to aid them in these battles.

By Lesley Phillips

Tory landslide in Canada



Party	1984	1980
Conservative	211 (50%)	103
Liberal	40 (28%)	147
New Democrats (NDP)	30 (19%)	32
Others	1 (3%)	0

THE DRAMATIC result of the Canadian General Election marks an important change in what was long regarded as one of the most stable countries in the world.

By Bill Hopwood

The Liberals had dominated national politics for decades, being in office, bar a period of just eight months, for 21 years. The Conservative landslide gave them a majority in every province including Quebec, long solidly Liberal, where the Conservatives went from one to 58 MP's.

The leaders of the Liberals and the Conservatives reflect the growing instability of Canada. Mulroney, the new prime minister, was elected leader of his party only 15 months ago. At that time, he was not an MP and had never run for office. Turner was elected Liberal leader only 3 months ago when Trudeau resigned; he too was not an MP.

The slump of the early 1980's was the worst in Canada's post-war history. The Trudeau government's policies of mild monetarism failed to solve the problem. Unemployment remains over 11%, growth is weak and investment is stagnant. The dominating position of the US economy weakened the Canadian dollar and pushed up interest rates. All these problems pushed the Conservatives to victory.

Desire for change

The result showed a desire for change rather than a fundamental shift to the right. Mulroney did not campaign on a clear right-wing platform, preferring to remain vague on policies, just talking about getting Canadians back to work. But there are signs of a new economic slump, so once in government he will reveal his true colours.

Mulroney was described by the *Herald Tribune* as; "a tough corporate labor lawyer" who went on to be president of the US-owned Iron Ore Company of Canada, the country's largest oil producer. He believes in reversing the anti-business image of Canada and opening the economy up to the US.

Mulroney was elected by the right-wing of the party and described by a member as "the Canadian version of Ronald Reagan". A future policy of hard monetarism will open up the class divisions. Already in the last few years there have been major strikes in defence of the public sector and union rights; less than a year ago there was a near General Strike in British Columbia (See *Militant* 3 February) and such movements will occur

as workers fight attacks by national and provincial governments.

The political wing of the labour movement, the New Democratic Party (NDP) contrary to many predictions, held its own in the election. In the past its main support was in the west; now outside of Quebec where they have no base, they are the largest opposition party. The next few years will be the time for the NDP to become the national opposition and then challenge for government.

From radical to conservative

In recent years Quebec has been dominated by the Liberals in national politics and the Parti Quebecois (PQ) at provincial level. The Liberals have had a battering. The PQ gained support originally on a programme of radicalism and Quebec nationalism, but have now turned from radical to conservative policies with attacks on unions and the public sector, higher than average unemployment and aid to big US corporations. Their support has declined.

If the NDP launched a campaign it could win mass support in Quebec which has strong union traditions. The NDP must resist any moves to cooperate with the Liberals.

Class divisions

Already in some recent provincial elections all the parties of big business have united to try and stop the NDP. This division of politics on class lines reveals the real nature of these pro-business parties. Immediately after the elections, Ed Broadbent the NDP leader announced that his party was now the real opposition.

Large majorities in parliament are no guarantee of public support. If, over the next few years, the NDP fights on a socialist policy recognising the rights of Quebec, it will be an ideal opportunity in Quebec and the other provinces, to win the natural majority to its banner. In such a way the Canadian workers, with a long militant tradition, could move towards the first socialist government in North America.

South Africa,

Resistance grows to Botha regime



Brave young fighters against the violence of apartheid on the streets on Sharpeville on 3 September.

THABO SIBEKO was aged 6, **Joyce Nzama** was 9, **Isaac Mbonani** and **Kenneth Mavundla** were both 14. All of them were murdered by the South African police—amongst the first victims in the recent unrest in the East Rand area.

The apartheid regime had resorted to the only answers it has to opposition—bullets and batons. At least 35 people are believed to have died, many of them bystanders like Thabo Sibeko who was deliberately gunned down by two policemen.

The upheavals in the black townships arose from vital economic issues, particularly rises in rents, fares and food together with protests at the apartheid education system. The main protesters were youth whose anger will have been increased rather

By Roger Shriver

than silenced by the police's deadly campaign.

Savage police attacks were seen during the widely boycotted Asian and "coloured" elections. During the polls for the farcical Asian "House of Delegates", one improvised First Aid station in Lenasia in Johannesburg had to treat 300 badly injured people. The turnout in the area was under 10%. The elections were meant to put a clean democratic face on

apartheid's new, even more repressive constitution.

All the guns and teargas in South Africa can not solve the regime's desperate problems. The Asian and coloured communities who the Botha government hoped to use as a buffer between themselves and the black majority have seen the growth of opposition movements with huge election meetings of alliances such as the **United Democratic Front**.

Rent rises

In the black townships big demonstrations took place in Sebokeng, Evaton, Poipatong and Bophelong, about 30 miles south of Johannesburg. Residents had been told of a £3 a

month rent rise, originally due to start in September, plus a £25 one off charge, and increases in other taxes. Even though the increases had been put back until October, no-one had even bothered to tell the people of the townships. The government still insist on charging the low paid black workers more to pay for newly installed "luxuries" of sewers and electricity, even though the puppet local council made 20 million Rand (£10m.) surplus last year!

A meeting of over 2,000 residents in Sharpeville agreed on a one day strike on 3 September and other mass meetings were held in Sebokeng. On 3 September local youth poured onto the streets, while protesters set fire to cars and buildings and

installed road blocks. 93,000 pupils were reported to be boycotting classes in the East Rand townships, and tens of thousands in other parts of South Africa.

Political organisation

The question now arises, what happens next? Everybody can see the anger of blacks, coloureds and Asians in south Africa. The banned African National Congress (ANC) has resumed its bombing campaign. Clearly the Nkomati peace pact between South Africa and Mozambique has not been quite as effective as Botha would have wished in stopping guerilla activities in South Africa.

But to focus attention on a new guerilla campaign

would be a fatal mistake, easily picked off by the state forces. An active campaign to harness the power of the black working class would have enormously greater effect in building a mass movement based on the industrial working class.

The South African economy is in its worst recession since 1945, with high unemployment and raging inflation; it is hard hit by the cost of "defence" ie the subjugation of the majority in South Africa and Namibia.

The miners' strike (see below) and the political ferment give the ideal opportunity to build the core of a class-based opposition movement which could spell the end of apartheid and the capitalist class who thrive on it.

The power of the workers—Nimrod Sejake

NIMROD SEJAKE, a black South African union activist for many years will be speaking at Militant's 20th anniversary rally at Wembley on 20 October (see page 13 for details).

In this article he tells of some of his experiences in the 1950s.

"I was the secretary of the iron and steel union in the Transvaal, in Johannesburg. We faced a vicious law, the Bantu Labour Settlement of Disputes Act which stipulated that if Africans went on strike, the strike was immediately illegal, and their trade union movement not recognised.

"There was no law that we could use as a channel for negotiations with the employers, but we had to face the employers all the time. So we organised workers to strike, not only to improve the terrible wages and conditions, but also in particular to disobey this Act.

Fight for our rights

"We always made it clear to the workers that we should not face the employers from a position of weakness; the law was not on our side. To succeed we had to organise say a section 100% first and then tabulate the demands of the workers, and approach the employer. At one factory, called

African Lamps, where a strike was organised the employers told me that according to the law I had no right to put forward the workers demands.

"I said 'OK, I know there is a law to that effect, but the crux of the matter is that you have entered a contract between management and the workers you employed but who are now members of a union even if you do not recognise it. You have to pay the wages for what they give you in exchange for those wages, which is essentially their labour power.'

"Management felt insulted that I could talk like that to them when I was an African so I said, 'If workers feel that you don't pay them the wages commensary with their labour power they have the right to withhold that labour power'. This infuriated the management even more.

"They threatened to call in the police because I was 'illegally' on the precinct of the factory even though I had gone asking them to have negotiations. After

management had called the police and told their story the police told me, 'Nimrod you are under arrest for trespass'.

"But our workers were properly organised and the law could not stand in their way. The police took me to the charge office and the workers came out on strike.

"While I was trying, despite police opposition, to telephone our lawyer informing her I was arrested, a telephone call arrived from the factory management, asking the police to bring me back to the factory because there was a strike!

Causing a commotion

"'Look Nimrod', they told me, 'you've caused a commotion at the factory!' For some time I said I would not go back to the factory unless I was properly charged but the police begged me to go. At the factory, management begged me to ask the workers to return.

"I spoke to the workers but in their own language, saying they should carry on with the decision they had taken and I would go on with the mandate to negotiate but that I was still under arrest. Management expected workers to meekly return to work but one worker who had been man-

dated to speak told management they would do nothing until my arrest had been explained.

"Already the white workers had been sent home showing that the whole factory depended on the power of the black working class. When they saw the workers were determined to go on striking, the police suddenly discovered there was nothing they could do, they could not arrest me for trespass because I was there for a legal purpose even though the Disputes Act and other laws were on their side! In reality it was because we had used the power of the working class."

Nimrod Sejake will continue the lessons of the African Lamps dispute and others in a future issue.

Class unity at Highveld

AT HIGHVELD Steel, a key metal firm owned by Anglo-American Corporation, South Africa's biggest monopoly, a historic step forward was taken recently when black and white workers voted together to strike in support of a demand for a R2 per hour minimum wage, above the 7-13% offered by management.

The strike ballot was organised jointly by two unions, MAWU (Metal and Allied Workers' Union), a non-racial union with mainly African membership and SA Boilermakers Society (organising mainly white workers).

Seven out of ten of the 5,000 black and white workers voted to strike. In an unofficial poll amongst

members of all-white unions, 401 (45%) voted to strike. This vote would have been higher except for the intimidation by their union leaders who threatened that their rents for their company housing would rise dramatically if they voted in the ballot.

This show of strength forced the bosses to re-open talks with the two unions. The crisis of capitalism is hitting the living standards of white as well as black workers, and eroding white privilege.

White workers will be compelled to struggle. Their only effective way forward is to link up with the powerful black working class in the independent unions, in a joint struggle against the bosses.

Black miners ready for strike

DESPITE months of desperate negotiations by the government, a strike by gold and coal miners in South Africa's National Union of Mineworkers is likely to start on 17 September.

The bosses, the Chamber of Mines, rejected a 25% wage increase for black miners in June (see Militant 6 July) and neither the bosses nor the union have moved. Unions organising black workers have only been "legal" for five years and only about a sixth of the 428,000 miners are actually members of the NUM.

But the bosses fear not only sympathy ac-

tion by non-union miners but the knock-on effect any victory would have on wage rates. A strike would have catastrophic effect on the South African economy and the world gold market. It would also stop any attempts to import scab coal into Britain.

So the regime is likely to use enormous violence against the migrant labourers in the coal and gold fields to try to organise scabbing and smash the strike and the union. Messages of support and solidarity, particularly from striking miners in Britain would be of great significance for the strikers in South Africa.

Letters

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

Buffalo Bill bags a brace

Dear Comrades,

I was extremely upset when I read in a paper that Viscount Whitelaw had accidentally shot two companions when he was out grouse shooting recently. I was upset because only two companions had been shot, only one of them was a millionaire, and not one Tory MP had been hit.

I also read that after the shooting Viscount Whitelaw went to a meeting at 10 Downing Street to discuss the dock strike. I wonder if he took his shotgun with him.

I wish to make it clear that

Just a matter of time

Comrades,

Here's one for the books, our dear local newspaper features Len (too good to hurry) Murray with a pic at the top of page babbling over the state of the ship-building industry (good job there's not a miner's strike on)! And underneath an article entitled '*Militant's* claim more support'. It goes on to mention a public meeting and the opposition by the Labour Party in the area.



Whitelaw—gunning for the top?

I am opposed to the methods and tactics of individual terrorism. However I also believe that accident plays a major role in determining the course of history.

Yours

Hopeful of Newcastle

To top that—cop these quotes from the former mayor now Labour councillor—George Raymond: "I have no time for militants and never had. They will destroy the labour movement in my view". There's more: "I wouldn't think they were gaining support—though we know they are always there". The wine filled whiners must go, it's just a matter of time comrades—just a matter of time.

Yours fraternally

Mike King
Southampton

Pay now, survive later

Dear Comrades,

The Tories often tell us the precautions they have taken to protect us from the effects of nuclear explosion.

But for John Emin a businessman from Balcambe, Sussex, their plans are rather inadequate. Our enterprising Mr Emin has spent £150,000 building a nuclear bunker in his garden, and is now to apply

for planning permission for extra fortifications.

Mr Emin hasn't taken this step as an act of generosity towards his small village community. No, his aim is to make a profit out of his substantial investment.

To qualify for a place in this bunker (it holds 75), will cost you £6,000. The reason for the extra fortifications is to protect the entrances of the bunker from groups of frightened people (who haven't paid £6,000) but want to survive a nuclear

attack.

If all 75 places are taken £300,000 profit would be made. But this isn't all, he also plans to sell his design to hard-pressed local authorities at £300,000 at time. It is clear that, to the capitalists, surviving a nuclear attack isn't a right, but something that has to be paid for, and to make a profit out of.

Clive Walder
Brighton LPYS

Biased teaching

Dear Comrades,

I have had first hand experience of the thinking that lies behind the doctrines of so-called 'economists' of the ruling class.

I was taught by Patrick Minford, an architect of the present government's policies. On one occasion in a lecture he stated that the reason there are so many unemployed is that they are paid so much, and won't go out and look for a job.

On another occasion he said that trade unions are responsible for one million unemployed through their defence of 'high' wages and 'restrictive practices', ie practices to protect jobs. This shows that the real thinking that underlies their policies is an attack on the working class, not any 'technical correctness'.

Also we are constantly being told that socialist teachers indoctrinate students or pupils. Yet we were taught nothing but monetarism for three years. Keynes was only mentioned (briefly) in one sentence in the second year. Marx was not mentioned at all during the three years I was studying. I ask, who is indoctrinating whom?

Yours fraternally
Peter Jennings

Ellesmere Port LPYS

Labour 'members drive' stalled

Dear Comrades,

Special 50p membership cards for an Autumn Labour Party recruitment drive had still not been issued from Walworth Road headquarters, David Skinner Treasurer of Bolsover CLP, revealed at the August General Committee meeting.

The recruitment drive was announced in June, and there are miners crying out to join the party with these cards.

Yet when it came to attacks on the LPYS, Walworth Road staff had letters ready for despatch before the issue was even discussed.

As David Skinner pointed out, it seems Party officers are more interested in attacking the YS than recruiting new members.

Yours Fraternally,
John Dale

Memories of '26

Dear Comrades,

I wish to congratulate comrade L Dowden on his excellent account of the General Strike of 1926, and the betrayal of the miners by Jim Thomas and Co.

The strike was against a wage reduction and an increase in working time, and no way were we going to work longer hours for less pay. Coal face workers were paid ten pence a ton (4½p) for producing coal. The Duke of Northumberland claimed sixpence a ton for all coal which passed over his land on its way to the collier ships.

My brother and I were involved in the strike. With no strike pay, a sick father with 7/6d (37½p), another elder brother earning £1 weekly as shipyard apprentice, and two of the family at school, mother had to contrive meals somehow. Most families were even worse off.

We stuck it out until the late Autumn, but eventually we were starved back to work. My brother and I left the pit in 1929 after being promised work elsewhere, which however did not last. But we were determined never to go back to the pits, nor did we, despite hard times through unemployment.

In 1967 that pit had £1 million worth of new machinery installed and was closed two weeks later, with the machinery still there! It was closed by Alf Robens, a Labour government minister, now a millionaire Director of Vickers, who have since closed Vickers Armstrong engineering works in Newcastle, making thousands redundant with no future.

In 1927 the former Secretary of the Miners



A.J. Cook—a fighter for the miners.

Federation of Great Britain, Frank Hodges, became a steel works Director and died a millionaire. The one good thing he ever did was die.

AJ Cook was an exception. I remember his slogan—'Not a minute off the day, not a penny off the pay'. He was a fighter like Scargill. AJ Cook was assaulted by Cambridge students and received serious injuries to his legs which led to an early death.

I must tell you about the young miners of Cramlington, Northumberland, who in 1926 decided to stop an Edinburgh to London train, driven by student scabs. Two of them took a long walk up the line to stop the train, while the rest at-

tempted to loosen the track. The train was stopped and no one was hurt. But they were betrayed and went to prison.

Most of them outlived their betrayers, and had a large bottle of whisky reserved for them behind the bar of their local. From this they had a celebration drink on the death of each of their betrayers.

Let the scabs take note. Miners are like a large family and never forget friends, nor their enemies. Well done Comrade Downen. You revive memories, and stimulate socialist endeavours.

Yours fraternally
Jack Rawling
East Newcastle CLP

LEFT and RIGHT

Hand to mouth in the hospitals

Recent research (*New Scientist*, 30 August) suggests that for every 1% rise in unemployment, hospital admissions for mental illness rise by 4.6% for men and 2.3% for women. This is one of the few growth areas the Tories can be given full credit for.

But it's not just the health of adults that's under attack. Recently in Hertfordshire a pregnant woman was turned away away from thirteen hospitals. Her local hospital didn't have the facilities to deal with pregnant women, and the others were full. She eventually went to a hospital outside her area, which allowed her in against the rules. The consultant explained, "our budget has been cut by the government and we are existing hand to mouth. But the mother was very ill and the baby would not have survived". Then again, with three million workers on the dole, why should the bosses spend money producing any more?

Government subsidies

The Tories whine about subsidies to the coal industry. But what about the not very poor British farmers? Direct government subsidy to farmers for 1984-85 will amount to £1,000 million. This is the equivalent of about £20,000 per farmer! Furthermore most of this subsidy goes to the biggest farmers which dominate the British "Agribusiness". But which way do they vote?

Sun on the run

SUN reporters were less than happy covering the TUC Congress. *Labour Weekly* (7/9/84) reports that they asked for their conference passes to read 'News International'—the Sun's owners. Why bother to attend at all? There were no scabs around to flatter and fawn over. It would have been far safer for them to follow their normal practice. Stay away and invent the 'news'.

Who are the criminals?

Dear Comrades,

A couple of months ago the shop in which I worked at the time was held up by two men, at least one of whom was carrying a sawn-off shot gun.

These two men got away with less than £300 between them. During the many sleepless nights that followed I asked myself over and over, what drives people to do this? Here are some of the solutions I came up with.

They didn't have enough money to buy their families a decent meal, or a few luxuries or even to kit the kids out for school; another likely answer was that they needed the money to buy heroin.

But what sort of society causes people to be in this position where the only answer they can find to their problems is violent crime?

Yours
Glasgow reader

Review London Gala Week for the miners

FRIDAY 7 SEPTEMBER saw the climax to five nights of the London Miners Gala. The venue was the Royal Festival Hall—the aim of the game to raise £50,000 for the miners' fighting fund.

All week the capital was treated to a wealth of talent from the entertainment world and Friday proved a fitting finale.

Ben Elton, Alexei Sayle, Rik Mayall and Nigel Planer, all stalwarts of the 'Comic Strip' scene, let loose their barbs on the sacred cows of the establishment.

Paul Weller may be going through ever changing musical moods but whatever style he chooses to play he remains fundamentally true to the spirit of 'soul'.

Loudest applause of the evening was reserved for the hero of the hour, Arthur Scargill. A short speech proved a tough act to follow but Working Week leapt into the fray with a warm blanket

of their 'new British jazz', augmented in fine style by a group of young black dancers called Night and Day.

Special mention must go to those much maligned pretty boys of pop, WHAM! The 'P.A.' is an accepted feature of clubland where the artists come and mime to a number of their hits. This provoked a rumble of discontent on Friday, and one wag cracked: 'Money for the Mimers'. But WHAM! brought along their full stage-show and as singer George Michaels said: 'Sorry, but if you just came to see us play live then you missed the whole point of the night'.

All the week's performers did more than just provide some fine entertainment; they made a commitment. It's a lead we can all follow.

By Peter Salmi

FIIGHTING FUND

This week £2673

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	928		2900
East Midlands	734		3550
Humberside	510		1850
London East	806		3200
London West	582		2150
London South East	315		1950
London South West	610		1650
Lancashire	361		1950
Manchester	533		2200
Merseyside	1060		6100
Northern	601		4400
Scotland East	325		2950
Scotland West	854		3650
Southern	1102		5100
South West	242		2150
Wales East	192		2550
Wales West	1312		2550
West Midlands	580		4300
Yorkshire	926		5350
Others	2038		4500
Total received	14609		65000

AT THE Brighton lobby of the TUC Andy Price and myself, each armed with a rattling tin, vowed that we would ask everyone who bought the paper to make a contribution to the Fighting Fund.

Between us we only sold 13 papers (there were millions of sellers!) but every sale was asked and every sale actually contributed to the FF. We collected £4.48 over and above the cost of the

paper which is an average of 34p per paper.

Some time ago our sellers in Newport did exactly the same in a city centre sale and they averaged over 30p per paper sale. This shows the potential and certainly suggests that the whole of the FF target could be achieved with the proper use of rattling tins alone!

The moral is clear. The sellers must all be armed with tins and must be

audacious. Yes, at first it does feel a bit awkward carrying a tin, yes, it is a little bit nerve-wracking asking for contributions but these feelings soon disappear. After all, weren't we all a bit nervous about selling the paper at first? On the other hand I can't tell you how satisfying it is to walk home with a tin full of money.

By Chris Peace (Cardiff)

This weeks contributors

Those who contributed this week include: South Wales Camp; £1014, Darren Moore (Leicester NUM) £10; 83 Year old OAP (Nottingham) £10 'Towards a daily Militant'; A Sheridan (Crookston) £5; S Keetley (Worsley LPYS) £1.50; A O'Malley (Wakefield) £20; Judy Rees (Skegness) £15; A McCulloch (Canterbury LPYS) £5.

The attitude of one of the lads was that to donate £90 you had to be either 'daft or determined'. Well, daft we're not, determined we are! Most workers will respond when supporters of the Militant show what sacrifice they are prepared to make. Included in the £158 is Trevor's £90, £68 from 53 workers including £5 from Steve Jowett of the EETPU in Southport."

Faternally,
John Watt."

"We're not daft, we're determined"

THE FOLLOWING letter has been received from Hull.

Dear Comrades,
Please find enclosed a cheque for the fighting fund which again reflects the tremendous support for the paper from workers at British Gas, Easington. Trevor Crewar worked the Bank Holiday weekend for the fighting fund and donated £90. This was topped up by some of the lads, the idea being to donate 1p for every £1 Trevor donated.

New Militant sales drive!

THE MINERS' dispute has been a great fillip to workers fighting against the bosses. It has also been a boost to our sales with practically every town in the country holding meetings and demos in support of the miners.

Our biggest growth in sales has been in the mining areas themselves as the mining community see the need to link the struggle for jobs with the need to transform society.

To spread the message we are organising a sales campaign during the two weeks of Labour Party conference, a great opportunity to get the ideas of socialism to thousands of workers as the labour movement turns its eyes to political questions.

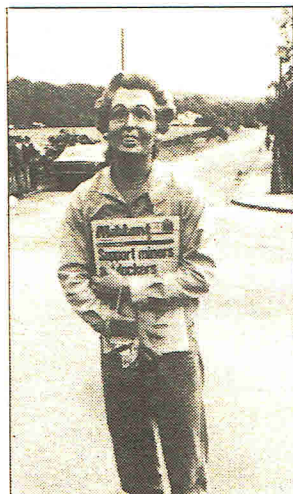
We are suggesting that all our sellers take up sales at factories, on estates, street meetings, dole and college sales during these two weeks. Where sales already exist we should attempt to live them up or try new approaches, ie placards, leafletting, petitions. New areas should be

looked at for sales. This is a great opportunity to build a firm regular readership in your area.

At the TUC lobby our sellers showed great initiative with hundreds of papers being sold. One seller sold 27 by going in and out of cafeterias! Other sellers sold at the railway station, shopping centre and on the front. Well done comrades!

Take a bulk order

Not to be outdone the sellers in Bristol and Glasgow sold well on recent miners demos with 140 and 120 respectively. We have also seen a growth of new sellers taking out orders. In Kirkwall in the Orkneys on the first sale 12 were sold! The



Anybody can sell Militant!

new orders also include Northampton, Ibstock (Leics) and Dunfermline.

On the socialist competition front Hamid from Bradford sold 58 of issue 713, can anybody better that? For more details of the sales campaign or how to get a bulk order please contact Militant Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN or phone 01-986-3828.

ADS

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

NORTH SHIELDS: Marxist Discussion Group every Sunday 11.30 am (Mick Handley) 258 Waterville Road, North Shields. For further details contact, Norman Hogg, North Shields 584485.

"Congratulations to Nottingham's Golden Socialists; Nancy and John Arnold on their Golden Wedding anniversary from Carol Slattery and Simon Lawlor."

The London Militant Readers Meeting on 26 September has been postponed to enable full support to be given to the National 20th Anniversary rally on October 20th. Readers are urged to buy their tickets now!

Flat-share available for student supporter coming to Newcastle Polytechnic (£12 + perweek). Contact: Paul Scullion, 44 Ellesmere Road, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne—or ring: 0632-614-881.

Wanted. Co-op stamps and stamp books. All proceeds to the Fighting Fund. Send to Dave Farrar, c/o 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

WORLD SOCIALIST BOOKS

Special offer! Militant pamphlets on "The General Strike" and "The State" for just £1.20 including post. (Normally £1.70 plus postage). Offer lasts until October.

Vital reading for all trade unionists and socialists. From World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

LONDON Militant Council workers' forum. "Fight rate capping, councils must follow Liverpool." Thursday 13 September 7.45pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC 1. Speakers Derek Hatton (Deputy leader Liverpool council) John Bryan (Southwark councillor) and London local authority workers.

NORTHERN AREA Regional Rally to celebrate Militant's 20th Anniversary. Venue: YMCA Hall, Ellison Place, Newcastle, 11 October, starts 7 pm. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor: Militant), Terry Fields MP (Liverpool Broadgreen), Chris Herriot (NUM). All labour movement and trade union activists welcome.

EDINBURGH LPYS Public Meeting: Wednesday, 19 September 1984, 7.30 pm, Osborne Hotel, York Place, Edinburgh. Speakers include: Ian Isaac (S Wales NUM EC, personal capacity).

WANTED FLAT or bedsit for couple in Greater London. Phone Swansea 297618 after 6 pm or 01-640 2111 between 10 am - 4 pm.

HUMBERSIDE 20th Anniversary Rally with main speaker—Peter Taaffe (Editor: Militant), Friday 21 September, 7.30 pm. Trades and Labour Club, Beverley Road, Hull.

Militant

Meetings

Terry Fields—The Workers MP—Scottish Tour "Victory to the Miners—Stand up and fight."

Monday 17 September Westwood Community Hall, East Kilbride.

Tuesday 18 September AUEW Rooms, West Regent St, Glasgow.

Wednesday 19 September Netherthird Community Centre, Ayrshire (Sponsored by Netherthird Miners Strike Committee)

Thursday 20 September Main League Theatre University Tower Block, Dundee (social afterwards).

All meetings at 7.30pm.

BRADFORD Militant 20th anniversary rally. Speakers: Dave Nellist MP, Pat Wall. Tuesday 25 September 7.30pm. Carlton Bolling School, Undercliffe Lane, Bradford.

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.

BOOKINGS ARE now coming in thick and fast for the Militant Rally on 20 October. Already coaches are being organised and some areas are offering all-in-one coach/rally tickets. Speakers will include Tony Benn, Peter Taaffe, editor of Militant, and Ted Grant.

We can also confirm that Nimrod Sejake, an activist in the South African steelworkers union in the 1950s will be on the platform. We carry an interview with Nimrod this week on page 11. Derek Hatton, deputy leader of Liverpool City Council, and Frances Curran, LPYS representative-elect on the Labour Party NEC will also speak.

Finally Ian Isaac, a member of the EC of the South Wales NUM, and a miner's wife will give their personal reflections on the struggles of the mining community this year.

So order your ticket now to be at the Labour movement event of the year!



1964 Militant 1984

Anniversary Rally Saturday 20 October

10.30am—5.30pm. Wembley Conference Centre
Speakers include: Ted Grant, Peter Taaffe, Tony Benn MP, Terry Fields, Ian Isaac, Frances Curran.

Film "The Wobblies" 5.30-7 pm.
Tickets £2. First Come, First Served!

Booking Form:
We would like tickets and enclose (payable to Militant rally)

Name

Organisation

Address

CRECHE (Please Book Now)

We will be bringing the following children.

Name Age

Address

Please return to Militant Rally, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Docks dispute

Defend union - defend

Strike begins to hit economy

The mood of striking dockers is hardening, as the spread of the dispute to Barry and the Tees, has shown (see below). Nearly half of all dock capacity is now strikebound.

By Mick Brooks

The Port of London Authority is predicting "disaster" if the strike is not ended soon; they claim they are losing £250,000 revenue a week.

Action is clearly starting to bite, but how long before the whole economy begins to snarl up? The Tories argue that they can last out indefinitely as long as the profitable new ports on the east coast not covered by the Dock Labour Scheme stay open.

In fact the old-established ports covered by the scheme are still vital in moving the materials basic to our society. The new ports are just not equipped to deal with the same kind of goods.

It is true that only 7% of roll on roll off traffic is handled by the big scheme ports. But the major registered ports out on strike

ie 12 ports in Scotland, Hull, London, Southampton, Bristol, Cardiff, Swansea and Liverpool, handle 40% of all food and crude materials, half all solid and liquid fuel, and over a quarter of chemical and manufactured goods coming into the country. London docks alone handle almost all trade from Australia and New Zealand, a vital source of foodstuffs.

Vital industries

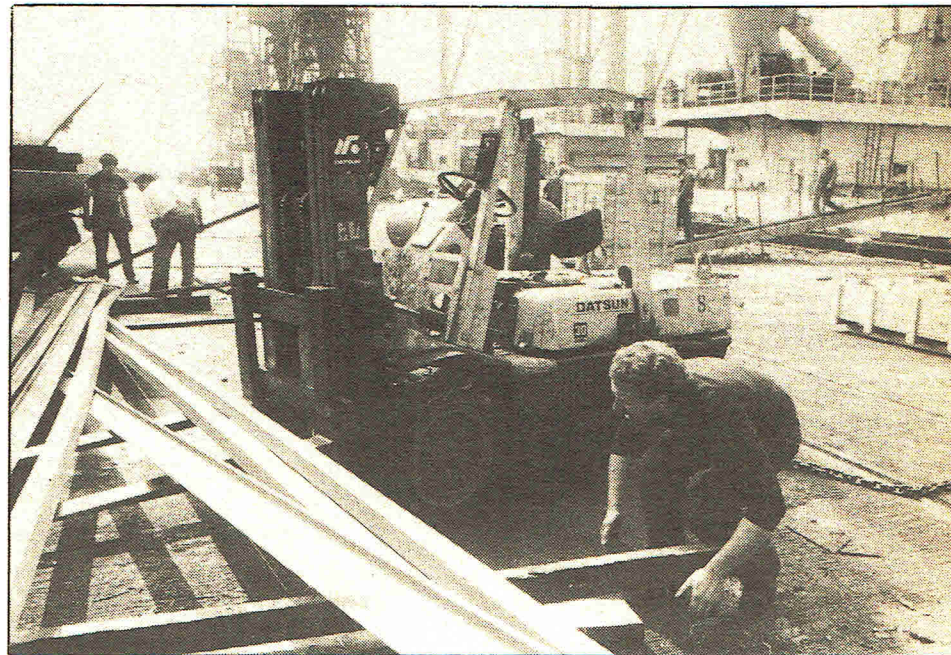
Particularly vital to our industry and ourselves are—grain, paper, textiles, and metal ores, the bulk of which pass through the scheme ports. Even if only a quarter of these are stopped that can snarl up whole industries within a few days. Shortages and rumours of shortages

lead to panic buying, often of substandard materials, at spiralling prices. Manufacturing firms stretched for cash, can't afford to stockpile and they can't afford not to.

In the same way exporters desperately need the money back from goods trapped in strike bound ports to maintain production. This is particularly the case since many exports are funded through letters of credit which can expire during the course of the strike. Many contracts include prohibitive penalty clauses.

Businesses likely to be hit quickly by the dispute are those dependent on short term and seasonal factors. Cadbury's for example need to export chocolates to the Far East for Christmas now or they'll miss the boat. The rag trade depends on the whim of fashion and the need to catch the market for autumn and winter clothing. Export delays can lose a market forever.

Imports are even more important than exports; many,



Tees docks (above) decision to join the strike has meant that over 40% of the country's trade is now being affected.

Photo: Militant

such as cotton yarn and fabric, and farmers feedstuffs, are themselves worked up for re-export.

This country has historically been dependent on imported raw materials. That is why the July strike, which lasted less than two weeks, cost £250 million in exports but £400 million in imports.

Grain is one of the sectors most immediately effected. Most of it moves through Liverpool, Glasgow, London and Southampton. It is difficult to switch as, apart from the skills of the dockers, specialist equipment such as temperature

controlled scales, dust control equipment and special suction hoses are needed to handle it.

Paper is already in short supply. If newspapers can't appear sales are lost forever. Moreover stationery shortages can hamper every kind of business.

Tighten hold

Bulk chemicals are still mainly moved in and out of the old scheme ports, most of these industrial feedstocks, would be far too expensive to come in by plane. Again the "knock on" effect on other industries can be

immediate and severe, textile production is also at risk in the very short term.

There is no doubt that the dock strike can be made effective. The question is how quick? The answer must be to demand the extension of the Dock Labour Scheme and decent working conditions to all dockers and all ports such as Dover and Felixstowe, to get them out in support. The sooner the current dispute is widened and all ports brought out on strike the sooner management will be brought to heel.

THIS WAS the week the employers hoped that they could get a back to work movement going and break the strike. But there are more dockers out on strike now than there were last week.

On Tuesday 11 September the National Association of Port Employers reported that 8,248 dockers were on strike, 1,000 more than the previous Tuesday. 46% of cargo is now strike-bound.

In the last week no new ports have broken the strike and two have joined. The most important of these is the registered port on the Tees, but Barry are also now out.

Tilbury

The employers' biggest hope of breaking the strike was at Tilbury. A ballot was organised and over the weekend the Port of London Authority said they were "hoping hundreds will go back. This could be the turning point in the dispute. Although we did not ask for names (from telephone callers) we are convinced they were from genuine dockers."

They said that there was nothing to stop dockers coming to work. They had laid on a substantial police presence and "we will make sure that all dockers reporting for work are unhindered". In the end it turned into a flop. Only a handful came through the picket line on the Monday, and even less on the Tuesday.

The employers expressed their disappointment and tried to claim it was all due to intimidation. They were considering organising buses to bring in strike breakers. But the message was clear. Whatever reservations Tilbury dockers have had about the way the strike has been handled, both nationally and locally, they will not cross a picket

line.

The traditions of solidarity, forged over the years in battles with the employers have taught bitter lessons. Dockers know that if the union is weakened then all the past gains are put in jeopardy.

Bristol

It was a similar situation at Bristol. Over the weekend a 'back to work' meeting of about a hundred was given great local and national publicity. But on the Monday it was a different story. A picket of about 200 men, the biggest since the dispute started, convinced a number of men to turn back.

According to John Rees (Chairman of the dockers at Avonmouth) about 60 went through the line in convoy. But they were unable to do any work. The media tried of course to distort the situation. They claimed 300 went through the line, but somehow failed to mention that this included over 200 unregistered dockers, who have been going in every day since the strike began.

Fewer strike breakers turned up on Tuesday, although management claimed that they were able to get some unloading done. The strike and back to work movement has polarised the situation. Bristol dockers have said that they will take disciplinary action, under the union rules, against those who are breaking the strike.

They have also been picketing Exmouth along with dockers from Southampton, as Exmouth has been handling cargo normally going to Southampton. The threat by the Docks Director, Scott-Morris, to close the port within the next two weeks, has drawn considerable local criticism. The Chairman of the

Docks Committee, Labour Councillor Wally Jenkins, (the docks are owned by the council) has disassociated himself from the closure threat and his criticisms of Scott-Morris have been backed up by Bristol District Labour Party.

(Report by Roger Thomas)

Southampton

An indication of what the employers have lined up if the

With this threat hanging over dockers' heads management hope that they can demoralise the workforce and force them back to work. So far they have been unsuccessful; the number going into work has fallen to just one, compared to five last week.

(Report by Alex Carson, TGWU 2/228 Southampton Docks Branch, personal capacity)



Tees

The biggest port to join the dispute this week was Tees. By Monday afternoon just one docker was working. The situation had changed after a meeting last Friday. It was explained that the dispute was national and local breaking of the strike would damage the union.

A section came out immediately and began picketing the dock. Work stopped, and by Tuesday both the Tees general dock and the BSC wharf were out on strike.

(Report by Norman Hall)

S. Wales

Barry, the last main port to join the strike in South Wales, came out this week. Dockers there, who had been unloading banana boats, decided to come out until there was a resolution of the Hunterston dispute. This means that all 800 registered dockers in five major ports in South Wales, Cardiff, Barry, Newport, Swansea and Port Talbot, are now out on strike.

What also swung Barry dockers into supporting the strike was a breach of the Dock Labour Scheme at Cardiff. Unregistered dock labour was used to move coal within the docks.

Employers claimed that this was done to "avoid spontaneous combustion".

But this did not convince Barry dockers chairman, Phil Sanders. And as George Wright (TGWU Regional Secretary) pointed out: it was an "outright attack on the scheme by the employers which proves the need for the strike".

Concern about the impact of the strike is already being felt by employers. A grain ship which had lain outside Cardiff for a few days, waiting for the strike to collapse, has sailed off to unload its cargo on the Continent. George Richards, Cardiff manager of Allied Steel and Wire, complained that production had been hit, one order had been lost and another was in jeopardy.

To try and get round this, cargo has been unloaded at other ports. Jo Barlow (National Union of Seamen Officer, West Wales) told Militant that he had seen foreign container ships coming in to Milford Haven where there were fleets of lorries waiting to take away the cargo. In his thirteen years in the area there had on-

ly ever been one container vessel trying to use the port.

(Report by Chris Pearce)

Scotland

In Scotland where the dispute began, the strike remains solid. Last week the East of Scotland Regional Docks Committee (which takes in Aberdeen, Leith, Dundee and Grangemouth) met. They decided to send pickets to Immingham; then they were going to picket Perth and Peterhead.

At Perth the employers were using scab labour to off load cargo whenever it came in. For an eight hour Saturday (8 am-4.30 pm, with just a half hour break) they were paying £15. The employers hope that by using temporary casual labour, just like the 'good old days' before the Docks Labour Scheme, they can break the union and the strike. The events of the last week show it won't be that easy.

In Aberdeen dockers have made some concessions on carrying livestock from Orkneys and Shetland. But it is only slight, as dockers are angry about what happened at Hunterston and don't want to give the impression that they are working.

Under the terms of the new concession it will still take 26 weeks for Orkney livestock to unload and 30 weeks for Shetland. The Farmers Union is so worried about the situation that they have telexed Scottish Secretary George Younger demanding urgent action.

(Report by Gordon McKinley, Works convenor, SA1 Leith docks, personal capacity)

Docks Labour Scheme

No return to casual work

FRANK BEEGAN started work on the Liverpool docks in 1927 and retired in 1973. His memories of the casual labour system on the docks show the importance of the current battle to defend the National Dock Labour Scheme:

6 It was a completely casual system right up until 1941; there were no controls whatsoever. Men would form up in the open outside the dock gates and the foreman would pick men out. At one particular gate the foreman would normally need men for five or six ships; he'd get two or three thousand men lining up for 200 jobs.

'Blue-eye' system

The foreman would know who he was picking out. It was a real 'blue-eye' system—the crawler would get the first pick. I reckon some of them would do anything, like do the boss' garden or take his dog for a walk. The foreman would be on a back-hander of 2s 6d (ie 12½p—one sixteenth of your wage packet) from the men who got work.

The worst thing was that you were only hired for half a day; you had to muster at 7.45 am and 12.45 pm, so if

Interview by Richard Knights.

your face didn't fit you'd only get a morning's or afternoon's work even if there was a month's work on the ship you were unloading. Only the 'cream' got decent work, the majority of us got the crumbs.

A full week's pay was £3 6s (£3.30) but the average was only £2 a week. Sometimes you only got £1 10s (£1.50). In bad times you'd get one day a month in work. Many dockers only bothered to go down to the docks during the seasonal work, ie the summer or at Christmas time.

There were virtually no strikes in the 1920s and '30s. The only one I recall was in 1927 when Joe Byrne took some men off a German boat when the German seamen were on strike. He got black listed for 10 years.

It was very hard work, I remember once stacking logs. They were about 3-4 tons in weight and, we had

to stack them 5 high; there were 20 of us running around like ants. Injuries were frequent but there was no proper sickness benefit.

A change came in 1941 during the war. Men left the docks for work elsewhere. Families were evacuated. The dock workforce began to run down so the government was forced to introduce conscription. Work was guaranteed with full back-pay if none was available.

When the war ended employers tried to bring back the old system but we fought back with strikes. Through the trade unions we put pressure on the Labour government. The result was the 1947 Dock Regulation Act which gave us a guaranteed job and 85% fall-back pay. The employers have been trying to break it ever since.

1947 Act

After the war the men were really rebellious; they'd been fighting for a better Britain, for homes and jobs. We organised an unofficial port workers committee which issued a monthly bulletin—'Port Workers News'. The official union side was not too good, the

T&GWU General Secretary was Arthur Deakin, a dictator like Frank Chapple but not so open. Some men formed a breakaway union, the Blue Union, but we believed in fighting to change the T&G. The result of the Blue Union was widespread non-unionism as people got fed up with both unions.

1967 victory

There was no real steward system until 1967 when casualisation was finally scrapped. Up until then you were still hired by the day. After 1967 we also organised a better bonus system. Prior to that if you wanted more money on a job they'd send in two arbitrators. The employers' man was a bloke with one arm, 'wingy' we used to call him; usually the union went along with him.

In 1967 we were still on £11 basic per week, a lot of lads with families were on Supplementary Benefit. We got up to £17 per week as a pay up to accept the 1967 scheme. That was the period we really increased dockers' pay. When I retired in 1973 we were on £52 per week. We also ended the 'blue-eyes' on overtime.



Merseyside docks today.

Photo: Militant

In the 1930s men used to run the length of the docks trying to find work. That's what the employers are trying to return to, by smashing

the Dock Labour Scheme. Now is the time to fight with the miners. If they lose, the bosses will be back next year to attack the docks scheme."

Industrial reports

British Aerospace

THE DISPUTE involving manual workers at British Aerospace Filton is now in its 7th week with the sides apparently still as far apart as ever.

Aircraft workers last week overwhelmingly rejected management's offer for a return to work and talks later. As one bloke at the mass meeting said: "They want us back now so they can remove our best weapon—we want guarantees now, we want management to start treating us like human beings."

US jets

One of the weapons involved is a number of F111 jets belonging to the US Airforce. Dave Brittan, AUEW senior shop steward told me: "They have discussed these jets with the company and the US Airforce and we have made our position clear. Major Neave of the US Airforce stated he was under pressure from NATO but didn't wish to intervene at this stage. He insisted he wanted the company to get down to negotiating with the men on this issue."

Shem Hogan said: "The mass meeting was a tremendous boost, showing the

enormous support and strength of feeling. Only a handful of men voted to accept the company's offer.

"This dispute is enormously important not just for Filton but for the whole of the British Aerospace. If we lose the company will go for the kill, the conditions here and elsewhere will deteriorate—if we lose everyone will"

Lay-offs

Picketing continues on all gates, involving all manual unions though staff are still going to work at this stage. The resulting chaos in the mornings has caused enormous traffic jams in the area as each car is stopped and asked to turn back. It seems that staff have little work to do once inside and the company may very shortly be forced to lay off even this section of the workforce.

Picketing is also in progress at the Dynamics factory where the mood is determined but the men feel the company is watching and waiting on the situation around the aircraft dispute before they would move to settle the Dynamics dispute.

By Roger Thomas

Teachers' pay arbitration — no way!

THE 5.1% award of the arbitration panel, announced last Tuesday, has come as a bitter disappointment to all teachers. It represents an increase of only 0.6% above the final offer made by the local authorities before they agreed to arbitration.

Yet, as *Militant Teacher* has argued, this should have come as no surprise. Arbitration is not, and will never be a means of securing decent pay levels.

The final award does not, as some have argued, represent a decisive defeat for the teachers. A defeat implies a battle—but, in reality, there was no battle. Indeed teachers are probably now in a more combative mood than ever. This has been reflected in the widescale continuation of withdrawal of goodwill over cover and lunchtime supervision in some metropolitan authorities. Doug McEvoy, quoted

By Bob Sulatyki
(NUT, West London Association)

in the *Guardian*, stated that he would not be surprised to see such action continue.

Against this background, the NUT Executive has been forced to give ground to the feelings of the membership. This explains the radical departure of the Salaries Memorandum before the NUT Special Salaries Conference to be held later this month in order to formulate this year's pay strategy.

The demands include a call for a new unified salary

structure around a basic scale and a £1200 increase for all teachers. This memorandum represents a dramatic and very welcome change of position by the Executive. In particular they have conceded the need for a flat rate increase for all teachers.

How to win

The question remains, however, how is such a claim to be attained? One of the failings of last year's claim was the reluctance of the leadership to fully mobilise the membership. Rather the Executive tinkered with half hearted gestures and selective strike action which dissipated energy and caused frustration.

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Docks Labour Scheme

No return to casual work

FRANK BEEGAN started work on the Liverpool docks in 1927 and retired in 1973. His memories of the casual labour system on the docks show the importance of the current battle to defend the National Dock Labour Scheme:

6 It was a completely casual system right up until 1941; there were no controls whatsoever. Men would form up in the open outside the dock gates and the foreman would pick men out. At one particular gate the foreman would normally need men for five or six ships; he'd get two or three thousand men lining up for 200 jobs.

'Blue-eye' system

The foreman would know who he was picking out. It was a real 'blue-eye' system—the crawler would get the first pick. I reckon some of them would do anything, like do the boss' garden or take his dog for a walk. The foreman would be on a back-hander of 2s 6d (ie 12½p—one sixteenth of your wage packet) from the men who got work.

The worst thing was that you were only hired for half a day; you had to muster at 7.45 am and 12.45 pm, so if

Interview by Richard Knights.

your face didn't fit you'd only get a morning's or afternoon's work even if there was a month's work on the ship you were unloading. Only the 'cream' got decent work, the majority of us got the crumbs.

A full week's pay was £3 6s (£3.30) but the average was only £2 a week. Sometimes you only got £1 10s (£1.50). In bad times you'd get one day a month in work. Many dockers only bothered to go down to the docks during the seasonal work, ie the summer or at Christmas time.

There were virtually no strikes in the 1920s and '30s. The only one I recall was in 1927 when Joe Byrne took some men off a German boat when the German seamen were on strike. He got black listed for 10 years.

It was very hard work, I remember once stacking logs. They were about 3-4 tons in weight and, we had

to stack them 5 high; there were 20 of us running around like ants. Injuries were frequent but there was no proper sickness benefit.

A change came in 1941 during the war. Men left the docks for work elsewhere. Families were evacuated. The dock workforce began to run down so the government was forced to introduce conscription. Work was guaranteed with full back-pay if none was available.

When the war ended employers tried to bring back the old system but we fought back with strikes. Through the trade unions we put pressure on the Labour government. The result was the 1947 Dock Regulation Act which gave us a guaranteed job and 85% fall-back pay. The employers have been trying to break it ever since.

1947 Act

After the war the men were really rebellious; they'd been fighting for a better Britain, for homes and jobs. We organised an unofficial port workers committee which issued a monthly bulletin—'Port Workers News'. The official union side was not too good, the

T&GWU General Secretary was Arthur Deakin, a dictator like Frank Chapple but not so open. Some men formed a breakaway union, the Blue Union, but we believed in fighting to change the T&G. The result of the Blue Union was widespread non-unionism as people got fed up with both unions.

1967 victory

There was no real steward system until 1967 when casualisation was finally scrapped. Up until then you were still hired by the day. After 1967 we also organised a better bonus system. Prior to that if you wanted more money on a job they'd send in two arbitrators. The employers' man was a bloke with one arm, 'wingy' we used to call him; usually the union went along with him.

In 1967 we were still on £11 basic per week, a lot of lads with families were on Supplementary Benefit. We got up to £17 per week as a pay up to accept the 1967 scheme. That was the period we really increased dockers' pay. When I retired in 1973 we were on £52 per week. We also ended the 'blue-eyes' on overtime.



Merseyside docks today.

Photo: Militant

In the 1930s men used to run the length of the docks trying to find work. That's what the employers are trying to return to, by smashing

the Dock Labour Scheme. Now is the time to fight with the miners. If they lose, the bosses will be back next year to attack the docks scheme."

Industrial reports

British Aerospace

THE DISPUTE involving manual workers at British Aerospace Filton is now in its 7th week with the sides apparently still as far apart as ever.

Aircraft workers last week overwhelmingly rejected management's offer for a return to work and talks later. As one bloke at the mass meeting said: "They want us back now so they can remove our best weapon—we want guarantees now, we want management to start treating us like human beings."

US jets

One of the weapons involved is a number of F111 jets belonging to the US Airforce. Dave Brittan, AUEW senior shop steward told me: "They have discussed these jets with the company and the US Airforce and we have made our position clear. Major Neave of the US Airforce stated he was under pressure from NATO but didn't wish to intervene at this stage. He insisted he wanted the company to get down to negotiating with the men on this issue."

Shem Hogan said: "The mass meeting was a tremendous boost, showing the

enormous support and strength of feeling. Only a handful of men voted to accept the company's offer.

"This dispute is enormously important not just for Filton but for the whole of the British Aerospace. If we lose the company will go for the kill, the conditions here and elsewhere will deteriorate—if we lose everyone will".

Lay-offs

Picketing continues on all gates, involving all manual unions though staff are still going to work at this stage. The resulting chaos in the mornings has caused enormous traffic jams in the area as each car is stopped and asked to turn back. It seems that staff have little work to do once inside and the company may very shortly be forced to lay off even this section of the workforce.

Picketing is also in progress at the Dynamics factory where the mood is determined but the men feel the company is watching and waiting on the situation around the aircraft dispute before they would move to settle the Dynamics dispute.

By Roger Thomas

Teachers' pay arbitration — no way!

THE 5.1% award of the arbitration panel, announced last Tuesday, has come as a bitter disappointment to all teachers. It represents an increase of only 0.6% above the final offer made by the local authorities before they agreed to arbitration.

Yet, as *Militant Teacher* has argued, this should have come as no surprise. Arbitration is not, and will never be a means of securing decent pay levels.

The final award does not, as some have argued, represent a decisive defeat for the teachers. A defeat implies a battle—but, in reality, there was no battle. Indeed teachers are probably now in a more combative mood than ever. This has been reflected in the widescale continuation of withdrawal of goodwill over cover and lunchtime supervision in some metropolitan authorities. Doug McEvoy, quoted

By Bob Sulatyki
(NUT, West London Association)

in the *Guardian*, stated that he would not be surprised to see such action continue.

Against this background, the NUT Executive has been forced to give ground to the feelings of the membership. This explains the radical departure of the Salaries Memorandum before the NUT Special Salaries Conference to be held later this month in order to formulate this year's pay strategy.

The demands include a call for a new unified salary

structure around a basic scale and a £1200 increase for all teachers. This memorandum represents a dramatic and very welcome change of position by the Executive. In particular they have conceded the need for a flat rate increase for all teachers.

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The question remains, however, how is such a claim to be attained? One of the failings of last year's claim was the reluctance of the leadership to fully mobilise the membership. Rather the Executive tinkered with half hearted gestures and selective strike action which dissipated energy and caused frustration.

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Militant

Economic effects of the dock strike and local reports see pages 14-15

DOCKS - ALL OUT TO WIN

THE POLICE are using the same tactics in the docks dispute as they've perfected during the miners' strike.

On Wednesday Grimsby was virtually sealed off to stop the docks being picketed. The motorways were blocked, and it was reported that the Met police were drafted in. They are determined to give all the support they can to those who are defying the strike call.

The previous day we had experienced their preparations. Two minibuses carrying eighteen Hull dockers were stopped on the south side of the Humber Bridge as we went to picket Grimsby and Immingham.

They were clearly waiting for us. They used the excuse that there was likely to be 'a breach of the peace.' But I reckon they were worried that we would be too effective.

Last Friday we had gone and picketed Immingham. There was no trouble, but we turned back a lot of motors.

At one stage we got onto the docks. The police came and took our names and addresses and tried to claim we could be had up for trespassing. But they couldn't stop us talking to the drivers. During the four hours we were there, we must have turned away about 30% of the lorries, especially those based in Hull.

On Tuesday, after the police stopped us, we tried to drive the long way round, but we got stopped and turned back. Even when later in the day we explained that we wanted to go to Grimsby for an official union meeting, to be addressed by Ron Todd (TGWU General Secretary elect) and National Docks Officer John Connolly, they still wouldn't let us through.

But even the police's "best intentions" can rebound on them. Our buses ended up in Boston; so we set up a picket line and got 12 of the port's dockers out.

Those that came out are now planning to set up their own picket line. They had

By Paul Spooner

(Hull Docks District Committee and Secretary TGWU 10/105 branch, personal capacity)

not had the issues explained to them properly before. They had the usual clichés that it was all a political manoeuvre, nothing to do with dockers and was just part of the miners' dispute.

The arguments we used were that it was directly to do with dockers. It was the deliberate use of scab labour by employers at Hunterston to attack the union and dockers' working conditions. Employers want to break the Dock Labour Scheme.

Even since this dispute began there have been local attacks on the scheme. At Grimsby employers have used scab labour to defy the scheme and break the fish porters strike. (see Militant last week). At Cardiff they've used non-registered labour to move coal (see page 14).

This dispute is about defending the scheme, stopping scab labour and defending the union. If we lose the union will be weakened. It



Photo: Martin Shakeshaft (IFL)

Tilbury pickets successfully persuade a lorry driver not to cross the picket line.

leadership must push more the fact that it was the use of scab labour which brought about the strike.

It has taken us a while this time to get our act together, but it's getting there. Hull

to take men off the line to go somewhere else, then they'll take our place. The lorry drivers TGWU Hull 10/156 branch have given us a £100 donation, the maximum possible under the rules.

We've got the situation bottled up now at Hull. And our motto is, we'll go anywhere and everywhere. On Monday we went to Teeside to back the call for the strike; they are now solid (see p14).

We've been concentrating on the local ports. Goole dockers are now mostly out. And we are planning to picket other ports.

But it is essential that the picketing is improved. The National Ports Shop Stewards Committee should hold an early meeting to organise and properly co-ordinate the picketing.

We should take a leaf out of the miners' book. They have learnt the hard way that

you can't do everything over the phone. That's especially so for us. We haven't got the numbers the miners have, so we must plan and use our resources properly.

We must also raise the demand for the extension of the scheme to all dock workers and all ports. It's the only way to get the unregistered ports out. The employers are settling down for a long, drawn out dispute. They think they can bleed us to death using Felixstowe and Dover and other smaller, non-registered ports.

They are mistaken. The strike, even of the ports that are not out is having an effect (see page 14). But the involvement of the big non-registered ports would bring the employers to their knees quicker. This strike is decisive for the future of the docks industry.

- ★ Stop all scab labour
- ★ Defend the Docks Labour Scheme. Written guarantees from government and employers of no alterations
- ★ Plan & co-ordinate pickets
- ★ For a National Ports Shop Stewards Committee meeting
- ★ Extend the Scheme

won't be a question of so much of the hierarchy being hit hard, but us on the shop floor. It's our union and the employers will be raring to go, if they defeat this strike.

We've found that once the issues are properly discussed, dockers respond. But the

docks is virtually solid now. After last week's decisive defeat of the 'back to work' movement fewer than 20 people are still going through the lines.

Shoregangriggers, who aren't covered by the scheme have told us that if we want

Victory

(continued from front page)

workers to prepare the way for effectively stopping the movement of coal. Firm liaison committees must be set up, including power workers, transport workers and miners, to guarantee solid support.

The leaders of the NUM have given repeated commitments that any deal agreed with the NCB will only be ratified by a special delegate conference. The media speculation of a ballot has been knocked on the head. Only a special delegate conference can have the authority to ratify any agreement arising from the talks.

But the rank and file must be involved in any decision. Discussions must take place before any final decision to identify the investment needs of each area and pit, especially those under immediate threat.

There must be a secure long-term future guaranteed for those miners and their communities. Guarantees must cover investment in all aspects: pits, workshops and washeries.

The NCB must spell out to the public the means whereby the mining industry will be expanded, how the available technology can be used for the production of oil, gas and chemical feedstocks from coal.

The rank and file are aware that the divisions from area to area in this strike have been created by the incentive bonus scheme. The scheme should be abolished, on the basis of the consolidation of the bonuses into a substantial pay rise. The relative wage losses of the last ten years have got to be corrected.

In addition, part of the programme for the expansion of the industry should be the provision of guaranteed jobs for the children of mineworkers, for the use of technology to introduce a 4-day working week.

We are now on course. The workers expect us to win and they have helped us to win. We will repay them by securing a lasting victory that will be a boost to miners and workers everywhere.

- ★ No closures except on grounds of exhaustion.
- ★ Real investment guarantees, pit by pit, area by area.
- ★ Abolition of incentive Bonus Scheme.
- ★ A 4-day working week.



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