



Only road
to victory

Mass action for miners

BEHIND THE talk of peace, the Tories are waging war on the miners. The last-ditch attempt to settle the pit deputies' strike at ACAS has been arranged solely to try to isolate and weaken the NUM.

The Tories and the Coal Board are as determined as ever to inflict a defeat on the miners' union. They are using one of the oldest tricks in the bosses' book—divide and rule. They must not be allowed to succeed.

By Pat Craven

There must be no deal worked out behind the miners' backs by the TUC leaders attending the talks. No settlement is acceptable unless it has been endorsed by the miners themselves, with full consultation with the membership.

Any separate agreement between the NCB and NACODS will be worthless to the deputies as well as to the miners unless it can lead to the end of the strike, on the unions' terms, including no pit closures except for exhaustion, no job losses and the reinstatement of all miners sacked during the strike.

To accept less would be a betrayal of both miners and

deputies, and all other workers who have given their active support to the strike.

The TUC leaders must play no role in such a deal. Instead they should be taking emergency action to ensure a miners' victory. Any day now the NUM funds will be seized by the courts. The NCB is getting more, not less, coal into the power stations. More coal is being moved on the railways than previously (see page 4) and lorry

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After the Rally..



Miners wife Jean Margetson speaking at the Rally.

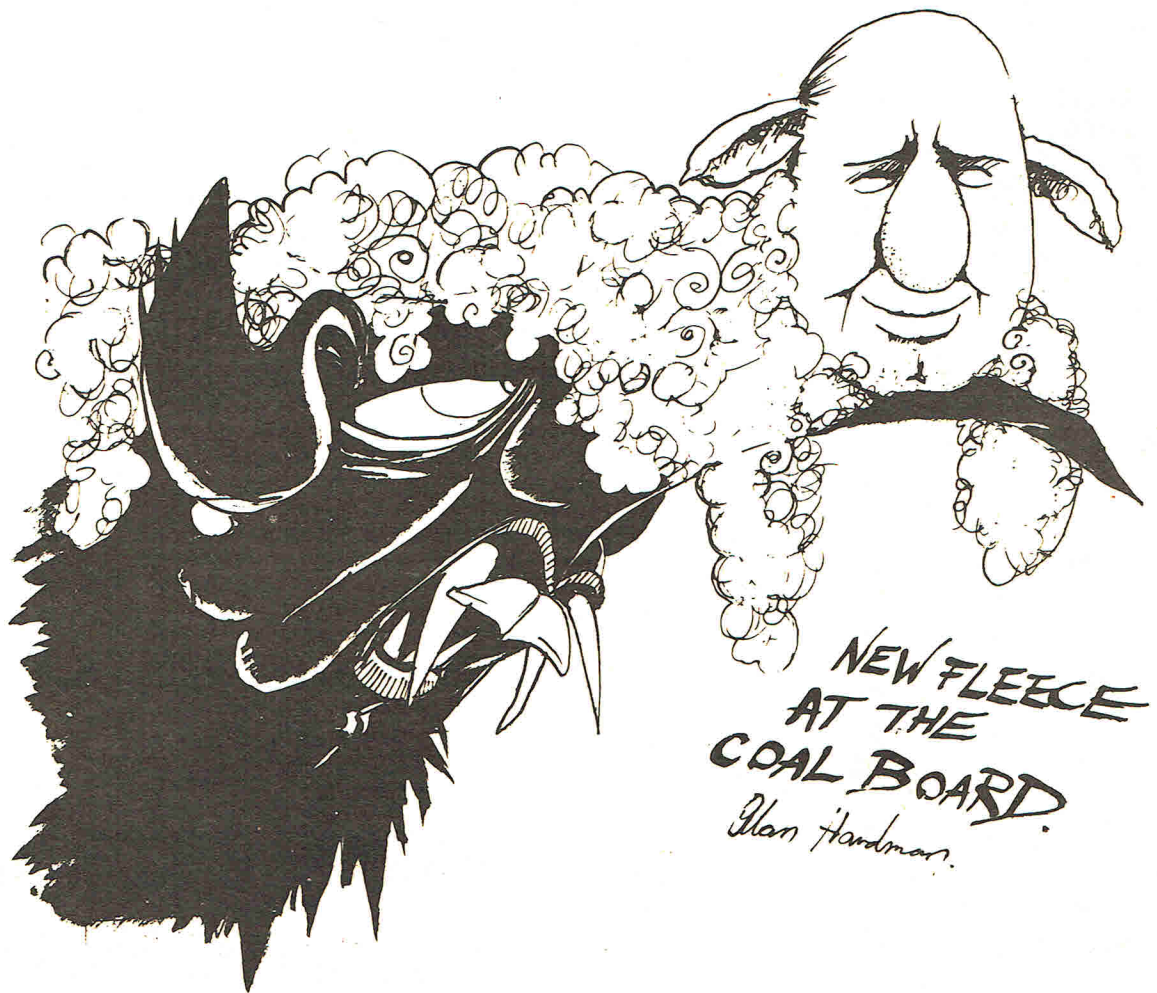
FROM ALL over Britain, coaches converged on Wembley conference centre last Saturday morning, 20 October. Thousands more arrived by train and tube. Some international visitors had travelled for nearly a day.

A total of 3,000 people filled the huge centre to

celebrate twenty years of *Militant's* existence; twenty years of the growth of Marxism.

About £13,000 was collected for the fighting fund at the Rally to make sure the next few years are even more successful than the last two decades. YOU can help ensure a healthy future for *Militant* by making a donation to the fighting fund and by asking everybody who buys the paper for a donation.

If you give us a small donation, even just a fiver, it will be the best investment anybody who isn't a millionaire could ever make. Ask any visitor to the rally. A daily paper is a vital weapon, but it cannot be done on the cheap, your money can bring the daily *Militant* a few steps nearer—and help us celebrate socialism within the next twenty years.



Apartheid terror

THE BLACK townships of Sebokeng, Sharpeville and Boipatong near Johannesburg were invaded on 23 October by up to 10,000 heavily armed South African troops and police.

The apartheid regime are desperate to quell the growing resistance to their rule. Backed by

the huge multinationals who profit from the super-exploitation of the black workforce, the government gave orders for hundreds of arrests, hoping to intimidate all opposition.

Next week's *Militant* will feature developments in South Africa.

Vauxhall strike

Page 15

LUTON LPYS public meeting
"The miners and the
Vauxhall strike"

Tuesday 30 October, 8 pm,
Union Street, Luton.

Speakers from Vauxhall
TGWU, Notts NUM and BLOC

Militant

New face — same policy

MICHAEL EATON'S appointment as MacGregor's personal assistant and "Mr Fixit" will change nothing for the miners. His smiling face will mask the same determination to crush the strike that MacGregor displayed, so blatantly that he was becoming an embarrassment even for the Tory government.

What they hope Eaton will do is drive a wedge between the NUM and NACODS, so as to prevent the total pit shutdown that a NACODS' strike would cause.

The underlying aim of the Tories and the NCB remains exactly as it was as long ago as 1978, when Nicholas Ridley set out plans for defeating the miners. These included building up stocks at the power stations, importing coal, encouraging the recruitment of non-union lorry drivers and cutting off the money supply to the strikers. All these plans have been implemented backed by the full might of the police, the courts, the DHSS and the press.

Further evidence of the Tories' real intentions, not just for the miners, but for all workers, emerged in the course of Nigel Lawson's interview on *Weekend World*, last Sunday.

While weeping tears for "the human suffering of youngsters on the street and middle-aged family men without jobs", he bluntly told them that he could do nothing to help them. Unemployment, he said, was like the crime wave, essentially beyond the powers of government to reduce.

"What we are talking about", he declared, "is not an economic problem but a social problem and a human problem—and these are the sort of problems that do tend to take a long time to put right."

What he meant by "putting right" these problems, however, is a cure more terrible than the disease. Though he grudgingly admits that it could only be done step by step, he wants to see Britain becoming like America, a society of unbridled capitalism, where workers are driven by poverty to take any job under any conditions, where the unions are treated as an enemy to be smashed, the way the United Mineworkers of America was crushed by AMAX, led by its then chairman, Ian MacGregor.

Unemployment, Lawson said, can only be brought down if wages are held, closed shops abolished and trade union power curbed by making agreements with employers legally binding.

A government with this philosophy, which has prepared for six years to put it into effect against the NUM, is not going to give up now—unless they are forced to by solidarity action, especially in the power stations. That is why trade union action by all workers in support of the miners is now so urgent and vital.

The labour and trade union leaders, in contrast to the Tories, have been totally unprepared for this assault. The Tories have already got away with savage measures to cut living standards and restrict workers' rights. The vacillation and retreats of the TUC only encourage them to attack even harder. A victory over the miners would mark a major step towards the "Americanisation" of British society.

That is why this strike is not just for miners' jobs. It is a fight for the future of trade unionism in Britain. Every worker has a stake in seeing the miners win.

It is the responsibility of the trade union leaders, from the shop floor up to the executives to mobilise their members in action to honour the pledges that have been given in words at the TUC and Labour Party conferences, to support the miners, and ensure that it is they who win the victory.

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EETPU ballot won't break unity

THE LEADERSHIP of the EETPU are playing a treacherous role in the miners' dispute. Their latest trick is their use of a ballot which revealed a majority of 20,642 to 3,864 against action to support the miners.

Nearly half of those eligible didn't bother to vote; there was nothing concrete to be gained from it, as it wasn't a question that if you voted against the leadership you were supporting the TUC. It wasn't a ballot solely of workers in the power stations; it included those who install and read meters and so on, who technically come under the "electricity supply industry". It is also unusual that for the first time they conducted their own ballot rather than through the Electoral Reform Society.

Most scandalous, however, is the type of propaganda used to influence the outcome. In an open letter to the members, Fred Franks, National Officer, Electricity Supply Industry, urged opposition to the TUC statement of support for the miners, yet did not state what it said.

Instead, in a diatribe against the miners and the TUC, it listed their reasons for not backing them: — "We did so because it is:

WRONG to ignore picket line

violence and the TUC's own guide for peaceful picketing;

WRONG for you to be used to further the political objectives of some miners' leaders;

WRONG to help the defeat of those miners who, in the absence of a national ballot, have chosen to stay at work;

WRONG to coerce you into industrial action, with an inevitable loss of earnings and even a risk to your job security;

WRONG to expect you to accept hostility and probably aggression from the public if your action leads to serious power cuts which would cripple industry and the essential services."

It refers to "the ugly escalation of picket line bullying". It drags in the NUM's opposition to nuclear power, which would leave coal as the sole fuel for power stations—"a frightening prospect for our distribution members, already facing major problems in competing with gas." It then states that "our Electricity Supply members should not be used as shock troops in someone else's dubious battle."

On the ballot paper itself, the TUC statement was published, but immediately followed by the reply that "THE EETPU OPPOSED THE STATEMENT because:—

—it failed to condemn picket line violence

—did not require the dispute to be conducted in accordance with the TUC's own guide which insists on disciplined peaceful picketing and no blockades or unlawful obstruction."

It repeats the claim that industrial action by its members would cause "fierce public hostility if they support the NUM through the substantial power cuts required to make any action effective."

Such rabid, biased propaganda renders the ballot result meaningless. The sole purpose of the exercise was to stab a knife into the miners' backs. The AUEW, TGWU and GMBATU have had mass meetings on the shop floor and they have been overwhelmingly in support of the TUC. The ballot in effect means nothing, because the unity on the shop floor will mean that the electricians will swing in behind them; they won't break that unity.

I appeal to our members to stand firm with the other unions behind the TUC and don't let divisions open up within our ranks.

By an Electricity Supply member of the EETPU

£200,000 from Liverpool

A MINER received his giro from the DHSS—for just one penny! It was shown to the *Young Miner* public meeting of 40 people, at Thornhill Edge Working Men's Club, Dewsbury, on Monday.

Nigel Pearce (Denby Grange NUM) exposed the Tories' hypocrisy. After seeing miners come in for police violence on the picket-line he joked that the Tories must be peaceful "because it says so in the papers".

Tony Mulhearn (from Liverpool's socialist City Council) gave examples of how Liverpool and its City Council had supported the miners. Around £200,000 had been collected for the miners in Liverpool so far. Councillors attended picket lines daily.

The council had shown how to defeat the Tories in the battle over the budget, with the biggest regional general strike since 1911, and forced the government to back down.

He pointed to the miners' "tremendous example to the working class as a whole". This had encouraged car workers and dockers etc. to achieve settlements.

By John Vasey
(Batley East Labour Party, West Yorkshire)

Real violence

"Miners killed, on life-support machines, skulls fractured, thousands injured—and only a handful of police injured! Where is the real violence?" was the angry comment of Steve Sullivan, Sutton Manor NUM, at a Militant meeting in Bold Miners' Institute last week.

Others spoke of white-collar workers learning from the miners, as in the NALGO dispute with St Helens council, and of Militant's role in aiding the miners. This was proved again when the collection of £130 was divided between the NUM and the Fighting Fund.

The main speech, from Ted Grant inspired young miners to want to learn more about Marxism.



Injured miner in Rossington, knocked over by horse box and then run over by transit van.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Sunderland victory march

ON THE day Thatcher gagged MacGregor, Arthur Scargill led 4,000 in a dress-rehearsal victory march in Sunderland.

Accompanied on the rally platform by folk singer Julie Felix, his speech was punctuated by standing ovations. In recent negotiations MacGregor asked Scargill what he had to offer; Arthur's reply—"a plane ticket to America" drew cheers. "The Tories", he said, "demanded a ballot, yet

Walker now urged NACODS to ignore theirs", and "while scabs had the right to work, 20,000 whose jobs are threatened are denied".

To cheers he said, "the miners have fought too long to compromise, and, in addition to more pay and no closures, would demand reinstatement of all those sacked during the strike before any return to work". "Legal action to seize union assets" he continued,

"should be met by a mass picket of the union headquarters... Solidarity action with power workers is vital and, if Hammond could not deliver, the miners would appeal directly".

When before Saturday's march, the Durham miners' leader Tom Callan was asked in a radio interview where the march was going (meaning which route), he answered "to victory".

By Kevin Gent

Scots youth rally support

The LPYS in the East of Scotland has been setting the pace in rallying support for the miners.

50 attended a meeting in Dundee, called at just a few days notice, and the same number were at a debate organised by East Edinburgh LPYS between Alex Shanks of the NUM and a local police inspector.

Then, after 5,000 leaflets had been given out at local factories and a Style Council concert, 130 turned out to a "Defend the NUM"

rally in Edinburgh. Among the speakers was GMBATU convenor Gordon McKinley who explained what was happening to the jailed Cammell Lairds workers who were fighting to defend their living standards.

£45 was donated to the miners from the collection.

By Andy Clachers
(West Edinburgh LPYS)

Miners get their money back

In June, Gravesend LPYS had £16.25 confiscated by the police during a street collection for the miners. On 17th Oct, at the Magistrates Court, we argued the case for the money going to the miners rather than the police. We were collecting without a permit although we had tried to get one.

(Tory Council!)

However after a brief discussion between our barrister, paid for by the NUM, and the police barrister, the magistrates decided that the money should be returned to the Kent NUM. We won! This case is the first of its kind when money collected for the miners was actually

confiscated. So this should set a precedent. We organised a lobby outside the court, which was well attended and a benefit gig the night before which raised £20.

By Rachel North
(Gravesend LPYS)

Miners' dispute

Grimethorpe under siege

Horrendous conditions

GRIMETHORPE, the second largest pit in Yorkshire, employing 1,750, is a great, ugly sprawling mess in an otherwise peaceful, rural landscape. In the village which grew up around it, 80% of families rely on the pit for work.

At present with the pit not working, the villagers have a respite from the noise, the filth and the fumes—a national survey found it to be one of the most polluted areas of Britain.

The NUM run the kitchen but haven't enough money to feed the women and children, giving food parcels only to single men who receive no money at all from the DHSS. Most families have had nothing to supplement their meagre subsistence for eight months.

The treasurer of the parcel fund committee, a miner's wife, was invited to Poole, and at a public meeting organised by Poole Labour Party, raised over £200. This was followed by a collection amongst the National Union of Seamen in Weymouth and Portsmouth which raised a magnificent £500.

I was invited up to Grimethorpe to see the hardship for myself. I was deeply shocked at the horrendous conditions there. Word soon spread that there was £700 worth of food parcels. In the morning, bits of paper with requests for food parcels had been pushed through the letter box, under cover of darkness, as pride wouldn't let them knock on the door and ask.

Hardship

One couple in their early 50's asked if they could possibly have a food parcel. The wife was now only 5 stone in weight and her husband only 7 stone. They told us that their daughter had a toddler and a 5 month old baby, who had an allergy to milk and needed special expensive food. Obviously it had been impossible for the

By Julie Harris
(Poole Labour Party trade union liaison officer)

family to buy these foods, but within half an hour of hearing of this, a list was prepared for the baby's needs and the mother was assured of future regular food parcels that would include food for the baby.

Cancer victim

One woman of 43 years of age was told at the hospital that she was living on borrowed time, as she had cancer of the throat and lungs. The police searched her coal-bunker and found "riddled" coal—tiny bits of coal which are sieved from the tips. For this she and her daughter were fined £40 each.

Most children from 5-6 years of age upwards go riddling. If their dads are caught "stealing" the coal off the tips, it means instant dismissal from future employment by the NCB and a fine. But as it was pointed out to me, "we walk on coal, we live on coal, we mine the coal, that coal is ours; if they think they are going to freeze us this winter they can think again; there will be riots in the village first."

On impulse I arranged with Ken Hancock, a member of the committee of the local NUM, to bring 15 children to stay with members and supporters of Poole Labour Party the following weekend for a holiday. The local NUM allowed them a mini-bus for the week, and they had a wonderful time. One couple in Poole gave up their own holiday in order to have a miner's child.



13 year old boy being arrested by riot police during the battle of Grimethorpe.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Police chief's apologies

AT A public meeting of Grimethorpe residents last Wednesday, a miner's wife said: "I was going home on Monday night when a police van came round the corner without lights; seven policemen jumped out and started kicking hell out of one lad. I shouted 'get off him'. Do you know what they called me? 'Get home you prostitute—you whore'."

Another miner explained how legally the coal on the slag heaps does not belong to the village, but morally it does—"there's men laid in the cemetery who have died in the pit and they've paid for the coal as far as we are concerned."

South Yorkshire Assistant Chief Constable Gutsell said: "I've listened, and I shudder at some of the things reported at the meeting. I apologise unreservedly." He then went on to ask local people to accept some of the blame, but this is rubbish. The government and NCB are slowly losing control of the strike; they are beginning to get desperate and therefore deliberately provoking mining villages by inundating

them with police.

We can have no faith in Gutsell's promise of an investigation, as the police will merely investigate themselves. Instead, all aspects of the affair should be looked at by the local NUM and labour movement and they should then ensure that the police are withdrawn and that the local community polices itself.

Interestingly, Gutsell represents the so-called "liberal" wing of the ruling

class. Precisely for that reason, a few years ago the Home Office did not approve his candidature for the post of Chief Constable. Obviously he was not hard-line enough for the Tories.

The actions of the NCB have only brought the community even further together. Grimethorpe will continue to support the strike 100% and locals have no intention of stopping "riddling" coal out of their stacks.



Grimethorpe villagers challenge Deputy Chief Constable at public meeting. Police Committee chairman George Moores likened the police to Nazi stormtroopers.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Dogs and truncheons guard slag heaps

ALL AROUND Hetton-le-Hole, in Co Durham, are heaps of coal, but the miners aren't allowed to pick it up. "Spend all our lives digging it out of the ground yet now they stop us burning it."

There are security guards on all the tips. At Hawthorn one was finished for not being strict enough. The two guards at South Hetton are especially mean. As well as dogs, they walk around with 3ft truncheons. They act like they own the coal. They've chased women and bairns off the tips and got two pensioners arrested for picking coal.

On Friday night, 12 October, the anger was such that the guards were attacked. Over the weekend CID were hard at work. They have visited several dozen people in the village.

By chance this was on the same night that *Militant* held an excellent meeting (see report on page 13). The main line of police questioning was about the meeting—who was there? who talked to whom?

and was there incitement? Several were arrested and held for up to 24 hours, even though some had been at home all night.

The police don't let such details worry them. While being held, several were strip-searched (were they suspected of smuggling as well?) Those arrested haven't been charged but are still under suspicion and have to return later.

Among those taken for questioning were the landlord and landlady of the pub where the *Militant* meeting was held. They were asked all about the meeting and it was clear that the main aim was to stop them having future meetings. But as they said, "It's supposed to be a free country." Although they had no complaints and would have more meetings, now the brewery, Whitbreads, have put a stop to any meetings.

Postscript: One of the pickets faces a civil case from the RSPCA for cruelty to a security dog.

By Bill Hopwood

Danes picket coal ship

IN THE Danish port of Aarhus, a picket of 200 members of the local Miners' Support Group was broken up by a squad of riot police, with helmets, boots and dogs. The Danish people made me feel at home—even the police!

By Chris Herriot
(Newtongrange Strike Committee, Midlothian)

I had just addressed the picket, of a ship called *Militance*, which was carrying 13,000 tonnes of coal for Britain, loaded by non-union labour—from a country without a coal mine! The picket received publicity in the press, TV and radio and brought to the attention of Danish workers the importance of the miners' strike in Britain. The ship was held up for five days and it was a victory that they had to use the forces of the state.

The company involved is KFK, grain exporters; any further attempts to move coal by them will be met with retaliatory action by Danish dockers.



Danish dockers gave Scottish miner Chris Herriot a warm welcome. Ib Lund (above), dockers' leader at Aarhus gave a solidarity message at the *Militant* rally.

Photo: Mick Carroll

My trip was organised by Tim Munslow, the son of a Kent miner, who has played a leading role in the Support Committee. I spoke to 17 meetings in three days. At one, 250 shop stewards gave me a standing ovation. I came back with a cheque for £2,000 for the NUM.

Full scale battle

FOR OVER 50 years, we in 'Grimey' have been eating, walking and washing out of our clothes the muck from the local pit tip. As most of the cookers in our village are solid fuel, we have been riddling the muck on the tip for bits of coal; this has been going on for years.

Suddenly last Saturday, 13th October, it became illegal to pick up coal from the slag heap! Everyone, old men and women, had their bags split open to empty out any coal and were removed from the tip.

On Sunday morning about 300 people were on the slag heap as a protest. At about 11.30 the police station window was accidentally broken by some children playing near it. Soon after a massive police convoy was seen approaching on the only road to the village.

Riot gear

Panic set in amongst those on the tip. Then a full-scale battle took place, the police on horseback in full riot gear with dogs, attacking everything and everybody. The whole village was unified against these Met bully boys. Even people who had not supported the strike before were out on the street defending their village.

The police however did not have it all their own way—there is now no police station in Grimethorpe!

My son was arrested during this battle and then taken along with 21 other young men to Barnsley police station. When I managed to get there, I eventually persuaded the police to allow hospital treatment for the boys 3½ hours after they had got to Barnsley.

My son Thomas had extensive head injuries from having his head smashed against a desk and being beaten with a truncheon. All the boys had to have head X-rays in the hospital.

Our village now has a massive Metropolitan police presence, in full riot gear with dogs and horses, patrolling the streets. It is not safe to be out after 7 o'clock as the police will pick you up.

We can keep going without money and without food. We will keep our village and get rid of these uniformed Tories by whatever means.

By Betty Hancock
(Grimethorpe Women's Support Group)

Back to '26?

SOME PEOPLE are profiting out of the coal strike. An enterprising Barnsley auctioneer, seeing the desperate straits of many strikers' families, has opened a pawn shop. This really brings back memories of 1926, as the unscrupulous try to make money out of workers' difficulties.

The idea may not get overwhelming support. One money-grabber tried touring the pubs in nearby Hoyland earlier in the strike, offering cash for rings, bracelets etc. He found himself back in the street quicker than he had thought possible.

Miners' dispute

Hit power & stop coal movement

With the possibility of industrial action by NACODS and TGWU members in open cast mines the Tories are paying increased attention to avoiding power cuts. On this page Pete Dickenson assesses the state of coal stocks and power supplies in the light of new information.

IF ALL-OUT strike action by NACODS takes place the Electricity Board (CEGB) will be deprived of 450,000 tonnes of coal per week.

It would be wrong to assume, however, that in these circumstances power cuts are inevitable by Christmas. Electricity supply will only be disrupted by then if all coal movement is now stopped.

A vital opportunity to hit the power industry was missed in the weeks following the TUC's vote for solidarity action with the miners. During the last month or six weeks the government appears to have moved very large quantities of coal into Midlands power stations.

Statements by Tory ministers should not, of course, be taken at face value. Independent reports indicate, however, that their confident assertions are based on a large and rapid increase in coal movements following the TUC, and NACODS' decision to hold a strike ballot.

Militant has information

that about 200,000 tonnes of coal per week is being moved by rail—a big increase since early September—and that substantial quantities are being shifted from open cast mines into power stations.

Action in these two areas must be top priority for the NUM, NUR and TGWU.

Apart from the 450,000 tonnes a week produced in the working mines, they have moved the remainder of the stockpiles from those pits—about 1½ million tonnes, plus ½ million tonnes from open cast sites—all in the past six weeks. It is also possible that imported coal is being moved from minor East coast ports.

There are now 8 or 9 million tonnes of coal at the Midlands power stations. This will run out after Christmas if there are no more substantial deliveries in the meantime.

This assumes that significant supplies of electricity cannot be moved from the oil fired power stations in the South-East. It can be seen from the map of the national grid that it is organised to



NUM pickets at Eggborough power station in Yorkshire.

move electricity from the Midlands' power stations to an area north of London.

South-East

The links on the grid from stations on the Thames estuary to the North are very limited. This means that a maximum of 1 GW of power could be moved to the Midlands, the equivalent of a medium sized power station.

In normal times the South East imports large quantities of electricity from other areas, mainly the Midlands (see table b). This is done to save money, because though there is nearly enough oil burning capacity to cover de-

mand in the South-East, oil is very expensive compared to coal.

At present, oil fired stations are covering all demand in the area and energy will only have to be imported in a cold spell. Solidarity action by power workers in the South-East, even of a limited nature, would force the CEGB to import energy from the Midlands, leading to a very rapid run down of stocks there.

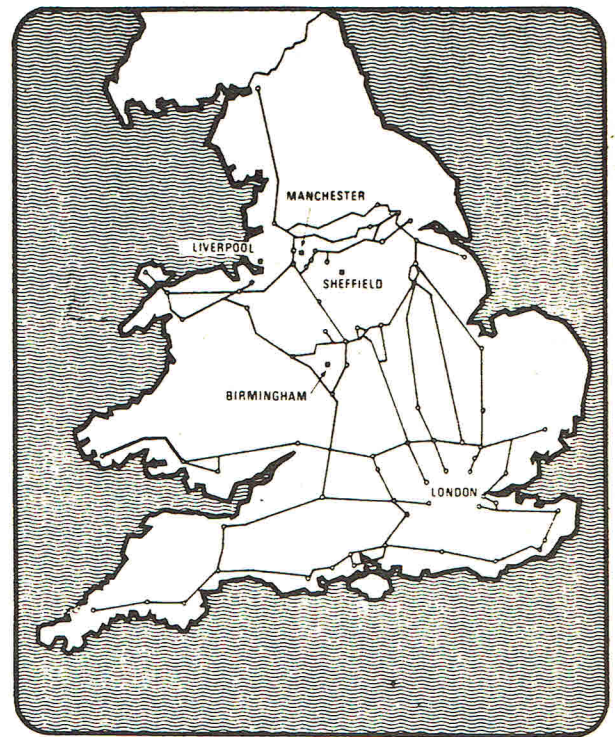
North-East

In the North-East region, which includes Yorkshire, electricity is normally exported to the North-West, and some to the East Midlands. All the power stations in the region are coal fired (table a) and are running at about one-quarter capacity, burning 250,000 tonnes per week out of a total stockpile of 3 million tonnes.

This low level of operation is possible because no energy is being exported to other regions, and some is coming in from the Midlands. At the present rate of burn, Drax, Eggborough, Ferrybridge and Blyth power stations have, on average, three months of coal left, assuming no coal supplies move in.

As demand increases, however, coal burn must go up because it is not possible to move in more electricity from the Midlands—the grid is not designed for this, and there are no oil-burning stations to turn to.

Local demand comprises



400,000 volt transmission lines form the basis of the National Grid. Solidarity action at key power stations in Notts, Derbyshire or Staffs could cause power cuts very quickly.

60% of the North-East's output (table b), so, during the winter, corresponding to the maximum figures in table a, the stations must run at 50% capacity, assuming some power was still supplied from the Midlands, and none exported to the North-West. In these circumstances, the coal would run out in about six weeks.

North-West

In the North-West, supplies are being maintained by two nuclear stations in North Wales, the Ince B oil fired plant near Chester and a couple of small coal-fired stations supplied from working mines and open cast sites.

The giant Fiddlers Ferry coal fired station near Warrington is operating at between a quarter and half capacity. Some power is also moving into the region from the Midlands. This adds up to a generating capacity of 4GW, which at the moment is covering demand.

As consumption increases in the winter, more coal must be burnt at Fiddlers Ferry. 200,000 tonnes a week will then be used in the region as a whole. The present 1.5 million tonnes stockpiled would run out in about eight weeks if no coal moved into the power stations.

South-West

In the South-West the two big oil fired stations at Fawley and Pembroke and the nuclear plant at Hinkley in Somerset, provide 5½ GW of power. In addition some power could move in from the Midlands.

This means that virtually no coal is being burned at the

moment. Coal stocks, however, are very low and, as in the South-East, action at even one of the big oil fired stations would force coal to be burned—at Aberthaw in South Wales or Didcot near Oxford, where supplies would run out very quickly.

Implications

If all coal production stops, the top priority of the Tories will be to move coal from open cast sites into the Midlands power stations.

About 8 million tonnes is stockpiled at open cast mines, and space to store it is rapidly running out. As predicted in Militant 713 the abnormal storage conditions are causing spontaneous combustion making some of the coal useless.

Management, however, is using this as an excuse to move coal out of the mines into power stations. TGWU members involved must force the managers to stock coal in safe places, on open ground near the pit, where they can control its movement in line with existing agreements.

Above all, the lesson of the rapid increase of coal movements following the TUC and NACODS ballot decision must be learnt: the Tories are at war with the miners and within certain limits operate with military style strategy and tactics.

The leadership of the labour movement must respond with its own worked out strategy and a determination which matches that of the rank and file miners and their families.

Table a Electricity Generating Capacity

Area	Maximum demand GW	Generating Capacity GW	
		Coal	Non-coal
North East	6.6	11	
North West	6.6	3.2	2.5
Midlands	7.8	13.5	
South West	8.1	4.4	6
South East	11.4	2.2	9

Table b Electricity supply and Consumption

Area	Electricity consumed in area TWh	Electricity supplied by Power stations in area
		TWh
North East	32	52
North West	30	23
Midlands	35	67
South West	40	37
South East	49	27

Source: Electricity Supply Statistics 1982/83 Electricity Council. Nb. supply figures include energy lost in transmission and distribution process.

Pickets show the way

B SULLIVAN and J JOHNSON, miners who have been picketing Fiddlers Ferry power station near Warrington spoke to Lesley Holt:

'We've had nothing in from day one. The power workers realise we're looking after them. If there's no pits, there's no power station. That's the TGWU, GMBATU and EETPU members—these last ridicule their

own executive. We had 100% backing from these union members, including financial support.

Solidarity essential

We're not trying to stop them working, we let contractors in. All we're doing is stopping coal and oil. If the power station was on full burn, on four units, there'd be six weeks' stocks left. At the moment it's one two units constantly.

If coal is forced through the gate by scabs, the power workers won't handle it. The TGWU and GMBATU members control coal-fired stations—if they don't fill the boilers etc, then the technicians have no power.

Our picket is on 24-hours a day, seven days. We've not only had the support of power workers, but of the public going past. 9

Guide lines for power workers

AS A result of the TUC decision to organise solidarity with the miners, the main manual workers' unions in the power industry have issued the following instructions to their shop stewards:

- Not to engage in, or facilitate, the distribution or delivery of coal to power stations.
- Not to handle new deliveries of coal to power stations, including imported coal.
- Not to handle coal transferred between power stations.
- Not to handle imported coal at Central Electricity Generating Board docks and wharves.
- To continue to handle oil already on

- site and normal deliveries.
- Not to handle additional oil to be used as a substitute for coal.
- Not to withdraw co-operation from management within power stations.
- Any NUM pickets on power stations are not intended to prevent or discourage electricity supply industry members from attending work.
- The pickets should be in accordance with TUC guidelines on picketing.
- The leader of the picket line should be clearly identifiable and any problems raised with him.
- Officials and members are urged to avoid any inter-union conflict arising from different policies.

Shares... Sterling... Oil..

Tory economy in crisis

LAST Wednesday, £6,800 million was wiped off the value of shares. It was the biggest-ever fall in a single day, a drop of 27.9 on the Financial Times index.

By Pat Craven

At the same time the pound was reaching its lowest-ever value against the dollar, and losing value compared to other currencies, whilst the world's oil markets were rocked by price fluctuations of up to 80 cents per barrel within a single hour.

Dramatic fluctuations in share prices and currencies do not always mean that there are serious problems in the economy. In the feverish atmosphere of the Stock Exchange and the money markets of the City of London, incidental events can cause sudden changes. These then are counter-balanced a few days later. In this case the breakdown of talks in the miners' dispute and the Norwegian decision to drop its oil prices were the spark which caused the panic.

There was however already evidence that the British economy is entering a major new crisis. The Tories' "economic recovery" is at an end.

For the four million

unemployed, the 1.3 million households below the poverty line and the 2 million others within 20% of it, the "recovery" never began. Thatcher has brought nothing but poverty and despair to workers.

For others there was indeed a "boom". Profits have been soaring.

They rose by 9% in 1982, 19% in 1983 and the latest estimate for 1984 is 23%. Fortunes have been made; three members of the Sainsbury family between them own shares worth £800 million! Company directors have been helping themselves to vast salaries, like the £522,000 pa, more than £10,000 a week, being paid to Dick Giordano of British Oxygen.

Yet production has only crawled upwards in the same period and has still not got back to the level of 1979. Last year's 3% rise over 1982 is likely to have been the peak of this "recovery". In the second quarter of this year, it was only 2½% higher than a year earlier. 2% is now being forecast for the whole year.

Part of this fall is blamed on the drop in coal production which it is estimated will

cause a 1% drop in Gross Domestic Product this year; though, assuming the strike ends by the beginning of next year, coal production should cause a 1% rise in 1985's figures, which otherwise are thought likely to show no growth at all.

Rate of return

The underlying reason for this slowdown, as it has been for the poor performance of British capitalism since the war, is the lack of investment. Despite the big rise in profits, the rate of return on capital invested, has not risen to the levels of the early sixties. If North Sea Oil is excluded, the rate of return, which fell to only 3½% in 1981, rose to only 6% last year, less than in 1977 and 1978.

Consequently the record amounts of profit have not been used to re-invest in industry. The seed-corn has been consumed in dividends, rather than ploughed back to create jobs and wealth. Even the Bank of England has expressed concern at the high proportion of profits paid out as dividends between 1980 and 1982.

Moreover a declining pro-

portion of what investment there has been is in manufacturing industry. £40,000 million has been invested abroad over four years and the level of investment in services is twice that in manufacturing. Britain is now a net importer of manufactured goods.

Last year, there was a slight improvement in the rate of return, causing a sudden upsurge of investment. Total industrial investment rose by 20% between the third quarter of 1983 and the first quarter of 1984, but the level is still a third lower than in 1979, and the Bank of England predicts that it is bound to fall next year.

Underlying this pessimism is the economy's dependence on North Sea Oil. Since the late seventies, oil has generated a growing proportion of the country's wealth

and profits. If North Sea oil is included, industrial and commercial companies' rate of return in 1983 was 10%, compared to 6% if North Sea oil is excluded; though these profits and the taxes levied on them have not been used to revitalise manufacturing industry, but only to finance dole payments.

Too much oil

The North Sea oil was anyway always liable to run dry; British capitalism was living on borrowed time. Now there is the nightmare possibility that the oil still there will cease to be profitable. This is because there is now a world glut and the OPEC cartel can no longer artificially keep prices up, at \$29 a barrel. World consumption has fallen from 65m barrels a day in 1979 to

56m, of which OPEC's share has fallen from 31m in 1979 to 17.5m.

The "spot" market price for oil bought on the free market at Rotterdam has been falling. In order to sell on the market, first Norway, then Britain brought their prices down by \$1.35, and then Nigeria a member of OPEC by \$2. Some other OPEC countries are already selling oil at a discount. They will try to hold the price; Kuwait's oil minister says a cut is "out of the question" But they may have no alternative but to cut.

If this happens, since the cost of extracting oil from the ocean bed is higher than on land, the market price could fall to a level at which it was still profitable for the middle eastern producers, but at which the North Sea oil could only be sold at a loss! Tax revenue, presently £10m a year, would be slashed.

Workers who have suffered badly enough during the "recovery" would then face further cuts in living standards, higher taxes, more spending cuts on vital services and unemployment soaring to new heights.

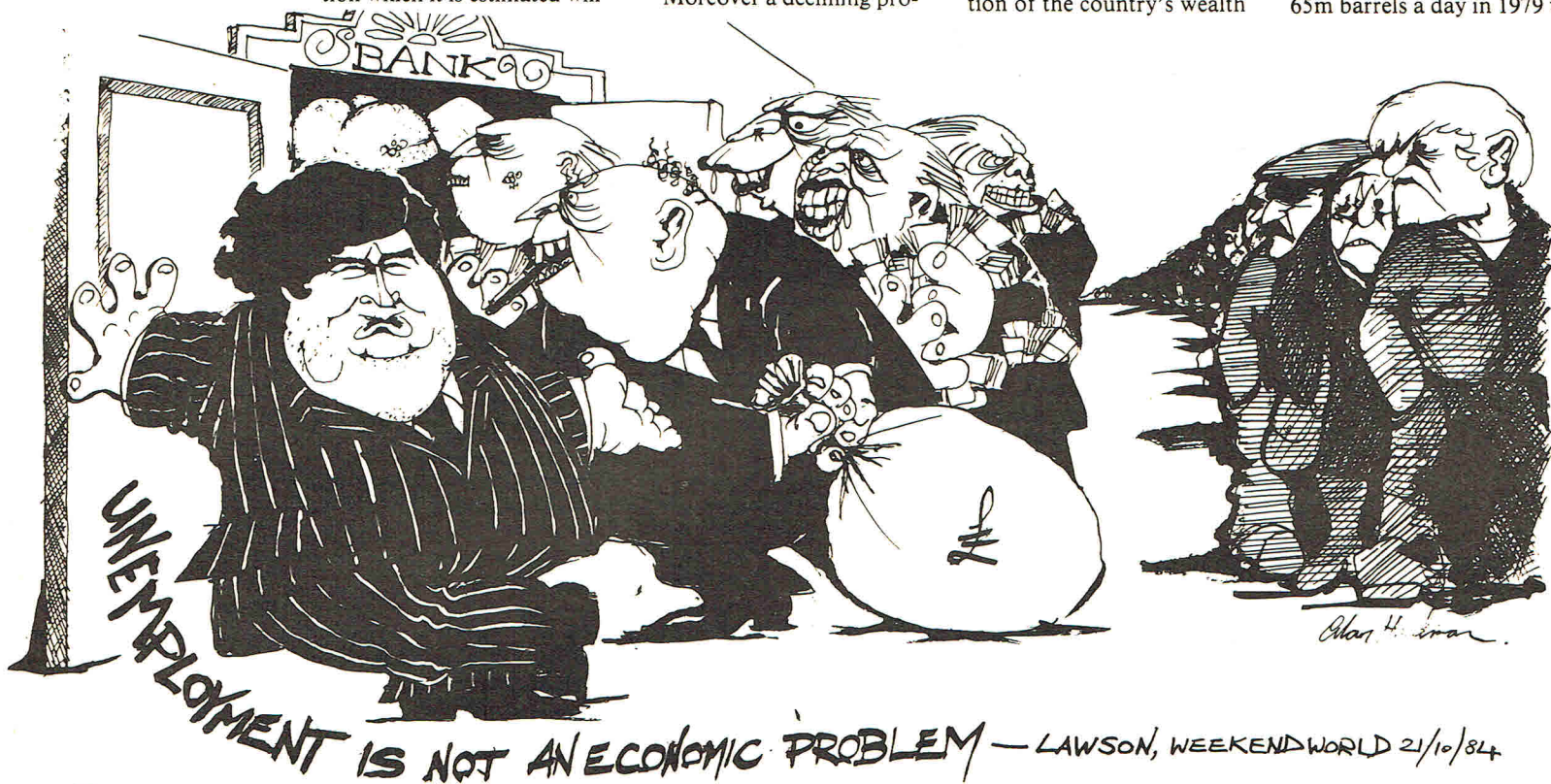
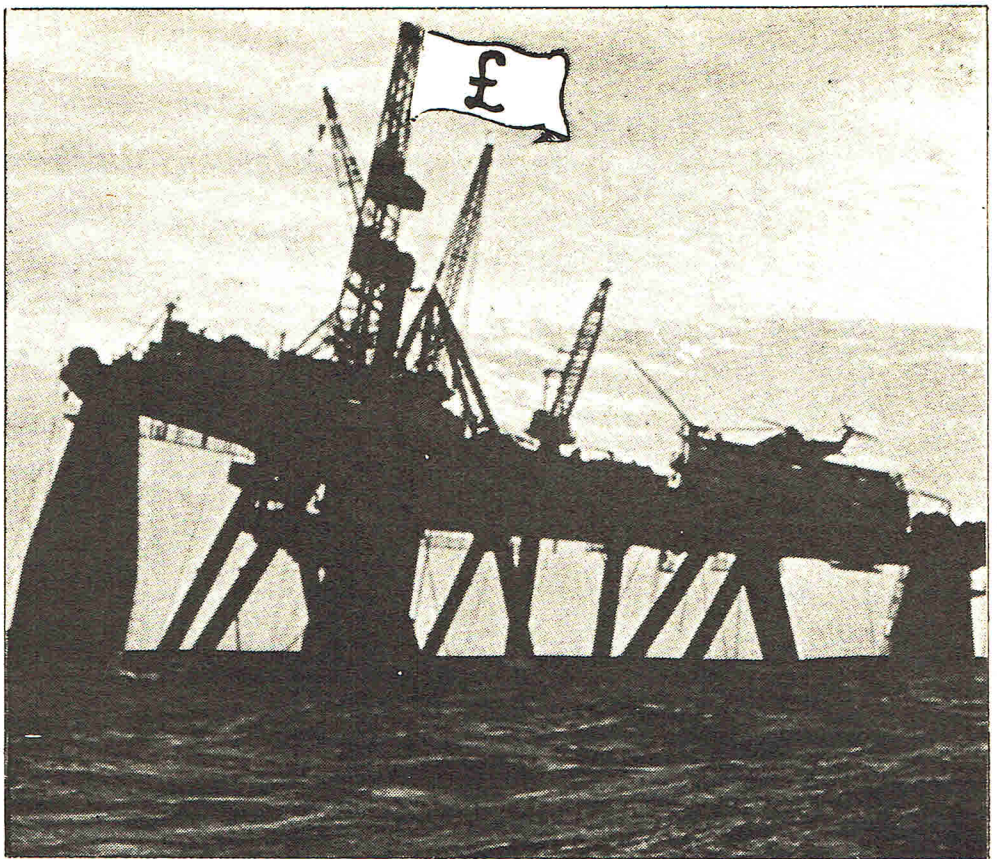
Lower wages

All the Tories offer as a "solution" is lower wages. *The Economist* calculates that a 10-15% cut in real wages would return Britain to full employment. Quite apart from the fact that workers would never agree that they should take home less when their bosses' profits are shooting ahead, this idea is economic bunkum.

Lower wages mean lower spending in the shops, a falling market and consequently fewer jobs in manufacturing. If lower wages was an answer, how is it that those capitalist economies with the highest wages—USA, W Germany, Scandinavia, also have the greatest economic success?

Yet, as the Mitterand government in France has demonstrated, the opposite idea that economic recovery can be promoted by raising living standards through increased state spending is equally false in a capitalist economy.

On a capitalist basis, there is no way out of the crisis; it has nothing to offer Britain's workers. Instead of thinking of new ways to try and reform it, the Labour leaders must urgently adopt and fight for the establishment of a socialist society, by taking over the commanding heights of the economy.



Johnson Matthey Banking Uneconomic bank not to close

THE TORY government has nationalised a bank. That is the reality of the "rescue" of Johnson Matthey Banking by the Bank of England.

After what the *Financial Times* described as "a sorry story of grandiose plans gone awry, poor management, and, ultimately, a reluctance to confront the unpleasant truth until it was too late," the firm faced collapse. It had to write off £250 million of its £700 million worth of loans as "bad debts".

JMB was one of London's big five gold bullion dealers.

Had it gone bust, creditors would have lost hundreds of millions and London's standing as a major centre for bullion trading would have been ruined.

Cynical deal

So at a secret meeting of top bankers in the Bank of England on a Sunday night, a "rescue" deal worth £250

million was cooked up, without even any reference to the bank's shareholders. As part of this cynical deal, Charter Consolidated, a South African based bank, which already owned 28% of JMB's parent company Johnson Matthey PLC, was allowed to buy a further 20% of the shares at half the market price, in return for putting up £25 million.

The JMB crash provides a glimpse of the kind of future catastrophes which will occur if world economic growth slows down further.

As with Continental Illinois in America earlier this year, it is the state which has had to bail out a capitalist failure, and shoulder its losses.

Casino economy

As the *Observer* remarked, on 14 October, "there is just one crumb of comfort for shareholders. City fears that JMB's banking losses will reach £250 million... do not now concern them. For JMB belongs to The Bank (of England)."

As Dennis Skinner MP commented "Coalminers who produce wealth and are part of Britain's diminishing industrial workforce are expected, according to Mrs Thatcher, to 'stand on their own feet', but her friends in the City at Johnson Matthey have been allocated a wet nurse, a nanny and a sugar daddy in a Tory attempt to save a segment of their beloved casino-economy."

By Phil Frampton

Defend the LPYS

THE OCTOBER meeting of the Scottish Executive of the Labour Party took place in the shadow of the possible arrest of Arthur Scargill and the sequestering of NUM funds.

Unfortunately it will not go down as the one at which the SEC raised a nationwide rallying call of "Defend the NUM, Defeat the Tories". The SEC unfurled its standard bearing the motto. "Stop the LPYS, Don't give youth a future".

These may seem to be harsh words but any consideration of the SEC, dominated by members of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, has to lead to that conclusion.

Recruitment

The initial shots, later to become a salvo of criticism, were fired by Joanne Lamont, a leading LCC supporter, when she gave the Organisation Committee's report. She criticised the LPYS in Scotland as pitifully small, demanded that all printed material produced by the LPYS should first be vetted by the SEC and suggested that youth names collected on demonstrations should be given to the Labour Party concerned, "without Regional Committee members of the LPYS being allowed to see them".

Comrade Lamont can speak with great authority on these subjects. A recent meeting of her own LPYS, Hillhead, which is hostile to

the ideas of *Militant*, collected together a mass contingent of three, one of whom was a *Militant* supporter. And in case it may seem that this is only an aberration from better days it should be pointed out that in the past, in the glory days of the Hillhead by-election for example, the Hillhead LPYS could muster a thundering contingent of half a dozen.

Jackie Galbraith, the chairperson of the Scottish LPYS, countered some of these assertions by reference to the fact that despite the poor funding the LPYS was the most active campaigning section of the party. On recent demonstrations for the NUM more than 500 people had signed up to join the LPYS. This is smaller than could be hoped. However, it is still a significant advance, especially when compared to the number recruited by the adult section of the party on the same demonstrations. They never got one.

The LCC supporters believe some of the fables perpetrated about the LPYS by people like Robin Cook MP, who is fond of comparing the performance of the Swedish youth to Labour's youth.

Cook also said at a recent



The main concern of the LPYS is getting the message of socialism onto the streets. Above, the LPYS demonstrate outside Tory Party conference. Photo: Martin Shakeshaft (apologies to Martin for not crediting him last week).

meeting that the Scottish leadership of the LPYS was scared to campaign, lest an influx of new people would break the staunchness of support for *Militant*. But what is really the case? Take Dundee for example, heralded for years as a bastion of support for the LCC. No mass demonstrations here, no general strikes against the Tories like in *Militant*-dominated Liverpool, and until recently an entire city could only boast one small LPYS branch which met infrequently.

There is also the example of the *Tribune* supporting LPYS branch in Stirling which recently declared to the Scottish executive that it had 60 members. Sixty on paper perhaps but only ten eligible to vote at the recent AGM.

Militant supporters have not had secret meetings to

plan sectarian attacks like the recent meeting of Clause IV students, held in secret at Strathclyde University, which plotted about the creation of an anti-*Militant* 'popular front' in student politics. We prefer to try and open out Labour Clubs in the colleges and argue our case.

Militant supporters in Glasgow have not had secret so-called Broad Left meetings to issue calls for action against the LCC either. The same cannot be said for the LCC supporters. Recent-

the LPYS collections for the miners. Despite the fact that the NUM-sponsored member on the SEC acknowledged the work done by the LPYS and said that accusations that the LPYS had stolen money were groundless, the Scottish executive still decided to set up a committee of enquiry. It will require all LPYS branches to provide receipts for monies collected for the miners.

These attacks were led off by Norman Buchan MP. Norman, to use Neil Kin-

explain that at least four public meetings have been held and a major pop concert for the miners which was attended by hundreds can also go down for their record.

This is incidentally much more than has been done by the adult section of the party. In fact the Labour Party meetings held on the miners in Paisley have been at the instigation of *Militant* supporters and it was Tom Williams, a *Militant* supporter, who first raised support for the NUM in the Labour Group on the local district council.

Will the Scottish executive in its enquiries seek to establish how every section of the party has operated during the miners' dispute or will it simply be the LPYS which feels its fevered breath on their necks? Will the SEC demand to know why it took the Women's Committee twenty-one weeks to send out its first circular to support the miners, or how well the NEC decision to collect 50p each week from every member has been implemented on a Scottish basis?

Objectives

The truth is that leading supporters of the LCC in Scotland have set their priorities for the next period as stopping the influence of *Militant* growing. We believe that building the movement as a whole, conducting fraternal debate and sparing no effort to ensure the miners win would be more worthy objectives. But the present SEC seems to prefer to devote its energies to enquiring instead of collecting, and allowing all manner of local suspensions and enquiries to go ahead.

The SEC may decide to continue with its campaign to persecute the LPYS. So be it. But they will be astonished on a number of counts. First by the energy with which *Militant* supporters will defend the case of the LPYS, and the breadth of debate that this will provoke in the labour movement and also by the reservoir of support that there is amongst the rank and file of the Scottish labour movement for the ceaseless struggle of Labour's Scottish youth for socialism.

By Bob Wylie

Resources needed - not threats

One of the executive's main complaints is that the LPYS is 'far too small' compared with our European counterparts, in particular the Swedish Social Democrats' youth section, the SSU. Robin Cook MP raised this issue a year ago in an article in *The Guardian*.

On paper the SSU does have more members than the LPYS. But it also has 150 full-time agents and its own headquarters. The adult party spends 30% of its budget on youth, and the SSU also receives state funding, giving it a budget of over £1 million a year.

The parent party also has good links with the youth, giving help and advice.

But compare this with the situation faced by the LPYS. It has one full-time agent, who works from a small office in Labour Party headquarters, and less than 1% of the party's budget goes to the youth. Our budget of £14,500 pales into insignificance compared to that of the SSU.

The other major difference is the leadership's attitude to the YS. Instead of help and advice the LPYS is



By Eddie Donaghy (LPYS rep on the Scottish Executive Committee)

constantly threatened and has to watch its back all the time because of periodic bureaucratic manoeuvres. At present there are a spate of enquiries into the YS.

If the YS had similar resources to that of the SSU it would be three or four times the size. As it is, with all respect, much of the SSU's membership is a paper membership, compared to the LPYS with the majority of its 10,000 membership being active. At the summer seminar this year of the International Union of Socialist Youth, all the other European youth organisations including the SSU admitted that unlike the LPYS they did little campaigning work and said they were

unable to recruit young workers and youth unemployed, much of their membership being students.

While we are on the subject of the 'Swedish model' let us look at the adult parties. Although Britain has seven times the population of Sweden, Labour Party membership is 295,000 compared to the Swedish Social Democrats' 300,000.

Struggle

But the LPYS does not carp on about this fact, because we feel that the most urgent task for the labour movement is the political struggle against the Tories and their capitalist system. Special committees set up by the Scottish executive would do better furthering this struggle than turning the movement in on itself with internal wrangles.

The LPYS is recognised as one of the most democratic sections of the labour movement. Its National Committee leadership is elected by secret ballot by delegates to regional conference, who in turn are elected by their LPYS branches. The hallmark of the LPYS is its open and democratic debate. The real belly ache of our opponents is that they are incapable of winning the support for their ideas from the young workers in the LPYS.



The LPYS prepare their own 'battle bus' for recruitment work in Glasgow. Photo: Militant

ly they convened a secret meeting addressed by Sandy Meaton, a former secretary to the Glasgow District Labour Party, who quoted extensively from the LCC bible, Crick's book on *Militant*, and issued an uninspiring call for action to stop the tendency.

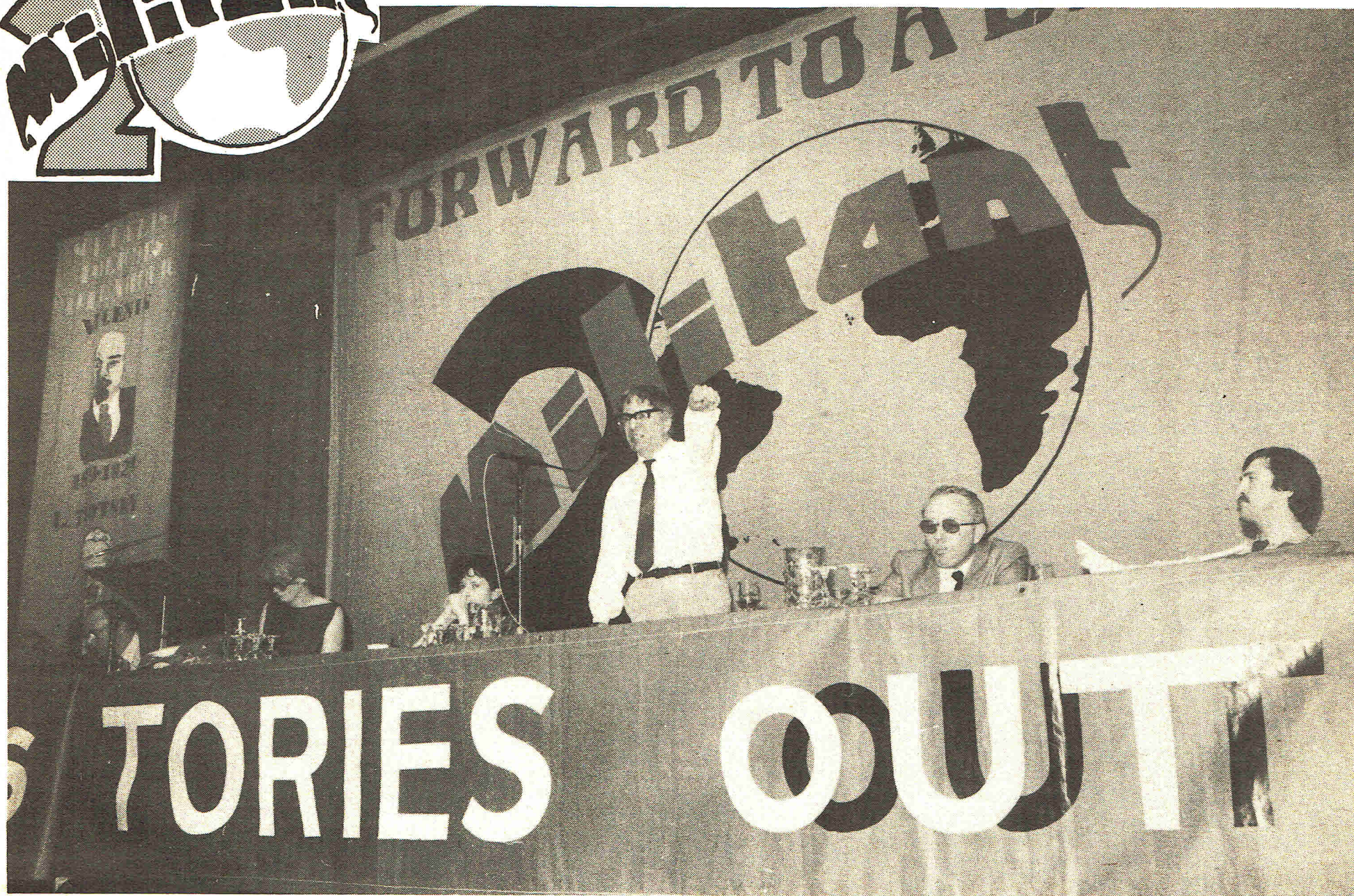
Campaigning

The record of the LPYS in Scotland in campaigning has been created, not in cabals and plots, but on the streets. No more is this clearly the case than during the NUM dispute. The LPYS have worked energetically for the NUM, held hundreds of meetings and collected thousands of pounds for the miners.

Every active Young Socialist will therefore be dismayed to hear that much of the discussion on the SEC was a series of accusations, veiled and otherwise, about

nock's words, suffers from that dangerous disease in the Labour Party, amnesia. Norman it was who went publicly on record praising the LPYS after the last election. He even went as far as saying that the role of the LPYS in getting the youth out to vote was crucial in his victory. For Norman Buchan clearly seventeen months is a long time in politics. Norman said at the SEC: "Money collected was not being properly channelled" and going further to say that the LPYS deserve no money whilst it continued to raise thousands for the *Militant* at the annual LPYS conference.

Perhaps this committee of enquiry will take Norman Buchan's territory of Paisley as a starting point. Perhaps it will ask Norman how many public meetings he has addressed in Paisley in support of the miners. The LPYS can answer any questions without fear. They can



3,000 celebrate at Wembley

"IS ANYONE here for the 'Jobs '84 exhibition?" asked a bewildered steward as hundreds of young workers shuffled by him into the Wembley conference centre on Saturday. All he was getting at the 'other' event at Wembley that day was a few older, better dressed type of person.

"What's it about?" asked a voice from the crowd that was trying to squeeze in the doors under the 'Forward to a Daily Militant' banner. "Oh, it's about getting jobs for youngsters" said the doorman. "So's ours in a way, but on a more permanent basis", came the swift reply.

The workers who had come from all over the country to *Militant's* 20th anniversary rally were not interested in patching up the system, but changing it.

Packed conference centre

Inside people began to take their seats, gazing around at the modern splendour and subdued lighting of the vast hall. Some sang along with the Spanish Civil War songs being played as the rally assembled. Striking miners, young unemployed, older Labour Party members and trade unionists began to file into the hall, which rang with a buzz of expectation. By mid-morning nearly 3,000 had filled into the conference centre.

The lights dimmed and to the strains of the Internationale the curtains drew open to display a massive banner depicting the *Militant's* 20th anniversary logo, and red drapes with the portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. To applause and whistles, the five members of the Militant Editorial Board along with Tony Benn MP

walked to the platform. "It's very dramatic", came a comment from our row. "Yeah well we've got a lot to be proud of" came the reply from behind.

The speeches began, the message of some of them vividly portrayed by slides projected onto a large backdrop. Every contribution, whether from the platform or the floor, was listened to by an attentive audience. The only complaint of the day was that there was not enough time to cram in viewing the many displays on show, without missing some of the speeches.

Display boards showed the development of the *Militant*, the best of Alan Hardman's cartoons, which was very popular, while the hard hitting photographs of the presentations by the South African Labour Education Project on Zimbabwean trade unions and the display titled 'Just a few hotheads' by the Tondy Photographic workshop in conjunction with St. Johns NUM, reminded everyone of the seriousness of the class struggle.

The rally did not just raise the political level though. The Red Choir from Cardiff supplied the entertainment. To believe the arrogant propagandists of the ruling class, workers are only interested in the mindless pap thrown at them everyday by the radio and TV. Nearly 3,000 workers from the hard industrial areas of the country would never sit and listen to choral music, albeit revolutionary songs. But they did, and applauded with genuine enthusiasm, unlike the plastic snobbery at West End concerts. Marxism is not just about speeches and politics, this brief raising of the cultural barrier gave a small taste of what is to be gained from socialism.

As the rally closed to a rousing chorus of the Red Flag and the Internationale, led by the Red Choir, people drifted back to the packed coach park. Such was the mood and humour that passers-by could

have been forgiven for thinking the crowds were returning from a Wembley cup final. Maybe a bit smaller than that at the moment, but we've booked the Albert Hall for next year—3 November.



TED GRANT, Political Editor of *Militant* showed how the paper's ideas had stood the test of time.

“In 1964 we were told the name *Militant* would frighten people and that capitalism had so changed with Keynes that events like the 1926 general strike would never happen again.

Keynesians believed that keeping circulating, worthless pieces of paper (ie more and more money), would solve all problems. And certainly in Western Europe, USA and Japan the growth of world trade in particular did see a big rise in living standards. But the methods used caused raging inflation. In fear the capitalists have now abandoned Keynes and gone back to the old failed monetarist deflationary policies. Now society has the wealth to keep the whole world in comfort, but only 80% of capacity is used even in a boom. We fight alongside every workers' struggle but there are no solutions under capitalism. Labour leaders have

abandoned the “promise of full employment” for the meaningless phrase “full policies on employment”.

But even in France, which is one-third richer than Britain, expansionist policies while keeping capitalism intact have had to be jettisoned for austerity and deflation, worse even than the right formerly produced.

The Tories are desperately trying to smash the unions but they will fail. Enormous wealth is possible through a socialist planned economy by greater investment, the end of the monstrous arms bill and by allowing the millions on the dole to do productive work. But if we don't organise as we should to overthrow capitalism the alternative will be a return to third-world conditions.9



PETER TAAFFE, *Militant's* Editor, told the rally that this was no ordinary meeting:

THIS IS almost like a holiday for comrades who have been battling for the ideas of Marxism for over two decades. Yet when we started the paper in 1964 we had less supporters than the press and TV covering this Rally.

There is almost a cottage industry on the alleged ideas of *Militant*. The paper has been sold in

Coronation Street, it's appeared on *It'll be alright on the night*, in a 'A' level question paper, a *Daily Telegraph* crossword puzzle and jokes by Alexei Sayle.

In 1964 the ideas of Marxism were condemned as being of no more than historical curiosity. We were told that the 30's would never return.

But look at the situation now. We had and have the advantage of a Marxist analysis of society. The right-wing, and even some of the left-wing of the labour movement, do not realise the absolute disastrous long-term position of British capitalism. This impasse of capitalism is why the ruling-class have mounted such an attack upon workers and especially the miners.

The ruling-class prepared for the miners' battle. But they have met the marvellous response of the labour movement, both in Britain and internationally. But it seems that the miners have now got the government by the NACODS.

Whilst the ruling class are acting in the interests of their class, what about some of the Labour leaders? Hammond is an out and out traitor and the equivocation of the labour leadership has only encouraged the ruling-class to take stronger action against the miners.

We must be clear, if they now get troops in to move the coal there must be all-out action by the labour movement. If the TUC leaders don't act, then there must be action from below.

The miners will win, but after they've won the ruling-class will not just roll over; they will retreat and prepare for revenge. We must build a movement to end their power. At the moment Marxism is not a majority. But on the basis of events, it will become a mighty lever for socialism. *Militant* aims to go twice weekly in the spring of next year, and daily by the end of 1985 or 1986.



Militant fights

Rally takes up miners' struggle

THE NUMBER of miners present at the rally bore witness to the work carried out by Militant in the current strike.

Speakers from the platform and the floor urged *Militant* supporters to keep up this work.

Ian Isaac (South Wales NUM executive): "*Militant* has played a decisive role standing alongside the miners, saying 'can we help you' not 'this is what you must do'. *Militant* supporters have sent miners to Greece, Denmark, Germany and the USA. The strike has become an international event partly due to *Militant*."

"The solidarity of miners' families has taken us through the pain barrier. Now like the women, the youth and the militants are knocking on the doors of leadership. 400 to 500 new *Militant* supporters, new sellers and writers have been developed in the pits during the strike.

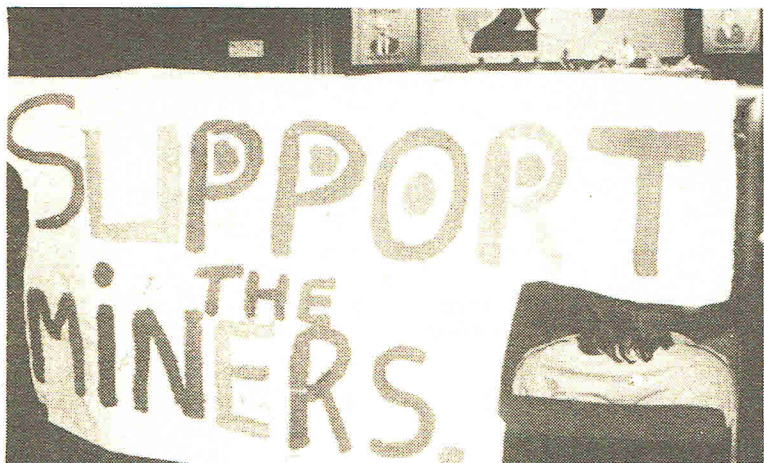
"The NUM is not a savings bank



Ian Isaac, South Wales NUM.

ferent towns. I learned how to speak in public.

"There's great solidarity in the village, we want to stand shoulder to shoulder with the men. It's no longer what washing machines and soap powder to get but what politics. We'll carry on fighting for rights at work and home after the strike, seek political education in our union, and seek to take the



The banner says it all.

but if the courts come for our money we must call a 24 hour general strike. General Winter is mobilising its forces in our favour.

"Prepare to defend the NUM and the whole working class. If they use troops or jail any of our leaders we must get ready for all-out action. Where you've got the roots, don't wait. Call into the power station. The mood is such that a spontaneous strike could develop the length and breadth of the country."

Eileen Carr, Askern Women's Relief Group in South Yorkshire is a member of the NUM as a cook:

"The NUM by its very nature is male dominated. But I lobbied to go on the picket and in Nottinghamshire my eyes were opened by the brute force of the police. We spontaneously set up a support group to show our determination not to be beaten. We raised cash, held collections and jumbles sales. *Militant* gave us contacts in dif-

What the miners thought . . .

BRIAN GREGORY (Easington Colliery, Durham):

I have been reading the paper for a bit now. It's the only paper that supports us with no strings attached. I used to get the *Daily Mirror*, but since Maxwell took over its like the *Sun*. Now I just get *Militant*—I can't read any other. The rally was great—it really raises your moral.

Labour Party back to its militant roots"

Speakers from the floor backed up these points.

Jean Margetson, of Hemsworth Women's Support Group said:

"Miners and their communities have built up an immunity to the disease of Thatcherism. We're fighting for human dignity, and we'll make the iron lady as pliable as putty."

Bob Harker, Gateshead East Labour Party:

"The press have accused workers of building barricades to attack the police. But as any military strategist can tell you, you don't build barricades to attack, but to defend. It is the Tories who are attacking us, and they've used Northern Ireland to test out their weapons, CS gas and plastic bullets."

Benny Morris, a Scottish miner:

"I'm a militant miner. When my backside got kicked, my brains went to my head and I started to think."

OWEN McGUIRE (Easington Colliery, Durham):

The rally is really good. We brought three young lads down with us. The *Militant* is a must for miners. We'll have about 10 sellers at our pit and as more and more working people understand, we'll go from strength to strength.

GARRY IRONMONGER (NUM Cortonwood, Yorkshire):

I have just come back from Germany, on a trip organised by the Juos, raising money, £6,000 in total. It showed *Militant* is arranging solidarity support for the miners.



The packed auditorium at the Wembley Conference Centre. Reports by Jim Chrystie, Roger Shives, Pat Craven, Paul Traynor

Youth in the frontline

FRANCES CURRAN, the LPYS representative on Labour's NEC was only three when *Militant* was first produced.

Addressing the rally, she said: "My parents wouldn't have believed what is happening today to young people. A third of secondary school children have taken drugs, and there are 20 year olds who have never been able to get a job"

Frances showed the change in the YS since *Militant* gained majority support in 1970; changes in size and class composition. "The YS have collected £250,000 to £300,000 that we know of for the miners. They organised the first demo in Notts area in Mansfield and Steve Morgan, the previous YS rep on the NEC, proposed the 50p levy on all party members.

Fighting back

"Imagine all the talents shown by young people in organising the dispute and which is present in all young workers being used to run society. That's what keeps us fighting against all attacks."

Ian Whittle of East Surrey LPYS spoke from the floor describing an example of YS campaigning work: "Geoffrey Howe turned up to a local fête in East Surrey, and LPYS members went to confront him



Frances Curran.

about the problems of youth in his constituency. Special Branch told us we could not go near him with copies of *Militant*.

"But we followed Howe around, his wife started crying, but we were sympathetic. I said: 'What right have you got to cry—miners' wives are suffering all over the country, yet they are having to put up with what your husband is doing'.

"Howe retreated into a caravan. But that did not stop us. We held an impromptu meeting outside."

Michelle O'Neil, Wallsend LPYS, added:

"I work for Tyne and Wear authority, which the Tories are trying to abolish. When Kenneth Baker, the minister responsible came to visit, 300 of us went to

picket him. It was peaceful 'till the police arrived. People were dragged down the streets and one 55-year old woman was taken to hospital with thumb and shoulder injuries. Experiences such as these are changing my union. And that is why last week the NALGO recall conference defeated a right-wing move to stop donations to the miners."

What young workers thought

CIARAN MULHOLLAND, South Belfast Young Socialists:

Events like this rally are very good for us because sometimes in Northern Ireland you can feel a bit isolated from the main struggles. When you have big labour movement battles in Britain we sometimes feel a bit left in the slip stream.

Door collections

In Belfast *Militant* supporters like myself have been collecting money for the miners, along with miners over from the NUM. We have to do door-to-door collections; we started to do street collections but got lifted by the police.

We do both Protestant and Catholic working class areas and get a great response—nine out of ten will give something. The only

for all workers



Bob Wade and Anne McKay. Photos: Mick Carroll, Dave Sinclair, D. Pearson and Dave Buxton.

complaint we get on the door is if the 'broo' (social security payment) has not arrived and then they demand we come back the next day.

THOMAS MANLEY, Yorkshire, aged 12:

I have enjoyed the rally. We first met *Militant* when we came down to London for the CND march this year. I liked Peter Taaffe the best. The way he speaks he really wakes you up—it makes you sit up and think, this person's got something to say.

BEN MITCHELL, North Avon LPYS:

It is really excellent, especially what Nimrod was saying about the South African miners, linking up their struggle. *Militant's* ideas are the only way forward for society; there is just no future for people at school like me.

MARK THORNTON, Askern colliery NUM:

It's been very good, especially the rank and file lads, they were really brilliant. Peter Taaffe made a good speech. It makes you feel something is happening. The lad from the floor (Bob Harker) spoke from his guts, just how miners feel.

MICHAEL McLAUGHLIN, school student, Pentlands LPYS: The speakers have been very inspiring. *Militant's* policies are very good, well thought-out and sound.

View from the audience

LINDA GALLAGHER (Southampton City Councillor):

This is the second *Militant* rally I've been to and it's clear from this that *Militant* is gaining size and support. In Southampton we won the council back from the Tories in May after eight years. Obviously we are beginning moves to fight the Tories, but the council and its campaign is more Sheffield and Islington than Liverpool. Too much tinsel and not enough basics. I think more work needs to be done amongst the trade unions in Southampton.

GINNY SHERWOOD (Tobacco Workers' Union Shop Steward, John Player, Ipswich)

It's great, just feeling that you are not on your own.

JOHN GREEN (Glenrothes):

This is much better than I thought. I've never been to a political meeting before, I just came down with a friend to see what it was like. I voted Tory at the last election, but I'll be voting Labour now. I'm unemployed and get most of my news from the tele, but it's good to listen to the speeches and hear what's going on. I'll be going along to the LPYS now.

ALEX CARSON (Southampton docker, TGWU 228 branch): A little while ago at our docks *Militant* was an anathema, I'd mention *Militant* and it would scare blokes off. But all that's changed, since our two disputes this year. Like the miners, but on a smaller scale, the strikes' politicised us. I sell more papers now and people ask what *Militant* has to say on this or that.

In the last strike we were nearly all out, for the first time being right up behind Liverpool in solid support for the strike. We only had five scabs in the first week, and then only one for the last two weeks. We let the scab know how we felt. At our meeting on Saturday he turned up. Most of us looked straight through him but some lads were going up, examining him, saying: 'I've never seen one so close up before', as though he was a creature from Mars.

WALLACE ROSS (apprentice plater, RGC, Methil):

It was a ten and a half hour journey to get here from Fife, but it's worth it—it's a really brilliant rally. There's over 200 down from Scotland. At my yard we've seen the need for leadership. It's just been taken over by Trafalgar House and they are already trying to alter conditions of work. There's a really good mood at the yard, but we need a leadership that are prepared to fight.

International support for Marxist ideas

THIS WAS not just a rally of British Marxists. **Nimrod Sejake** spoke of the struggles of black South African workers, **Ib Lund** showed the help given to the NUM by Danish workers and **Mickey Duffy** spoke from Belfast. The great collection included contributions from Belgian, Cypriot, German and American Marxists.

Nimrod Sejake told the rally: "My experience in South Africa as a trade union organiser in the 1950s showed me the importance of Karl Marx's idea that surplus value is stolen labour power. It helped me understand where the power lay. We used the strike weapon as an attack upon the bourgeoisie for stealing unpaid labour power, but our grand objective lay in the long-term strategy of social revolution.

"I support the *Militant* up to the hilt, because they support the working class. The ideas they hold are the same as I had in the Transvaal thirty years ago. The youth everywhere on the planet must resist the compromising leadership and fight for their future and their children's future. Forward to socialism!

Mickey Duffy (JSSC secretary Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, who was a leading activist in the 1982 health workers' strike) described the role of the Marxists in Northern Ireland:

"The *Militant Irish Monthly* is growing because of the increased unity of Catholic and Protestant workers in the North and between Northern and Southern workers.

"There have been tremendous collections for the miners.

"We have collected in Andersonstown, the Falls and the Shankhill. On the Falls the shop stewards committee collected £500 including money from pensioners, a 12 year old schoolgirl and a British soldier who sneaked back from his foot patrol to give £1!

"The *Militant Irish Monthly* is growing because of the increased unity of Catholic and Protestant workers in the North and between Northern and Southern workers. present repression has not reached the stage of Northern Ireland with special courts and paid informers". Mickey showed the plastic bullets which are fired through the air at 125 miles an hour and had killed 15 people including 7 children. "They must be withdrawn" he said.

"Such measures have only been allowed to continue because the terror methods of the Provisionals

THE FILM of the Russian Revolution gave a good factual account of the events leading up to the revolution and the civil war itself. It showed Lenin addressing the crowds and the demonstrations that took place before the downfall of the Tsar. Unlike all the films produced by Hollywood or starring Richard Burton the film portrayed accurately the massive struggles of the workers which were going on throughout Europe at the time, instead of romanticising the revolution in Russia making it out to be a struggle peculiar to the Russians or 'caused' by Lenin or Trotsky.

Since the film was largely made up of films taken at the time it brings the events to life, almost like watching TV reports of the miners' dispute.



Nimrod Sejake.

had sown confusion and alienated the Protestant and British workers. Events like the Brighton bombing won't advance the withdrawal of British troops.

"*Militant Irish Monthly* are the inheritors of Connolly. People laughed at us for our consistent stand for workers unity to get rid of British imperialism but we are being shown to be correct. In 1912 Connolly argued in Belfast Trades Council to field candidates in local elections. Now we are planning to do the same in the 1985 elections. And also like Connolly our aims are modest; we only want the earth."

Michel Kestens, a visitor from Brussels and supporter of the Belgian paper *Vonk* told *Militant* "The rally was marvellous. The work of *Militant* supporters is on a far larger scale than we can do but Marxist ideas are beginning to get a foothold in Belgium.

Ib Lund, secretary of Aarhus dockers union sent greetings from Danish workers when he spoke in the afternoon: "When the miners strike started, together with *Socialisten*, the Danish Marxist paper, we arranged a trip round Danish ports. We had had the same experience as the NUM in 1982/83 in a ten week strike with blacklegs, police and the press.

"We need an international movement in opposition to the multinationals. We can look forward to a *Militant* movement in Denmark."

THE RALLY received the following cablegram, in verse, from Denmark:

Happy Birthday dear *Militant*, its your day to day.

The Danish Marxists, are well on their way

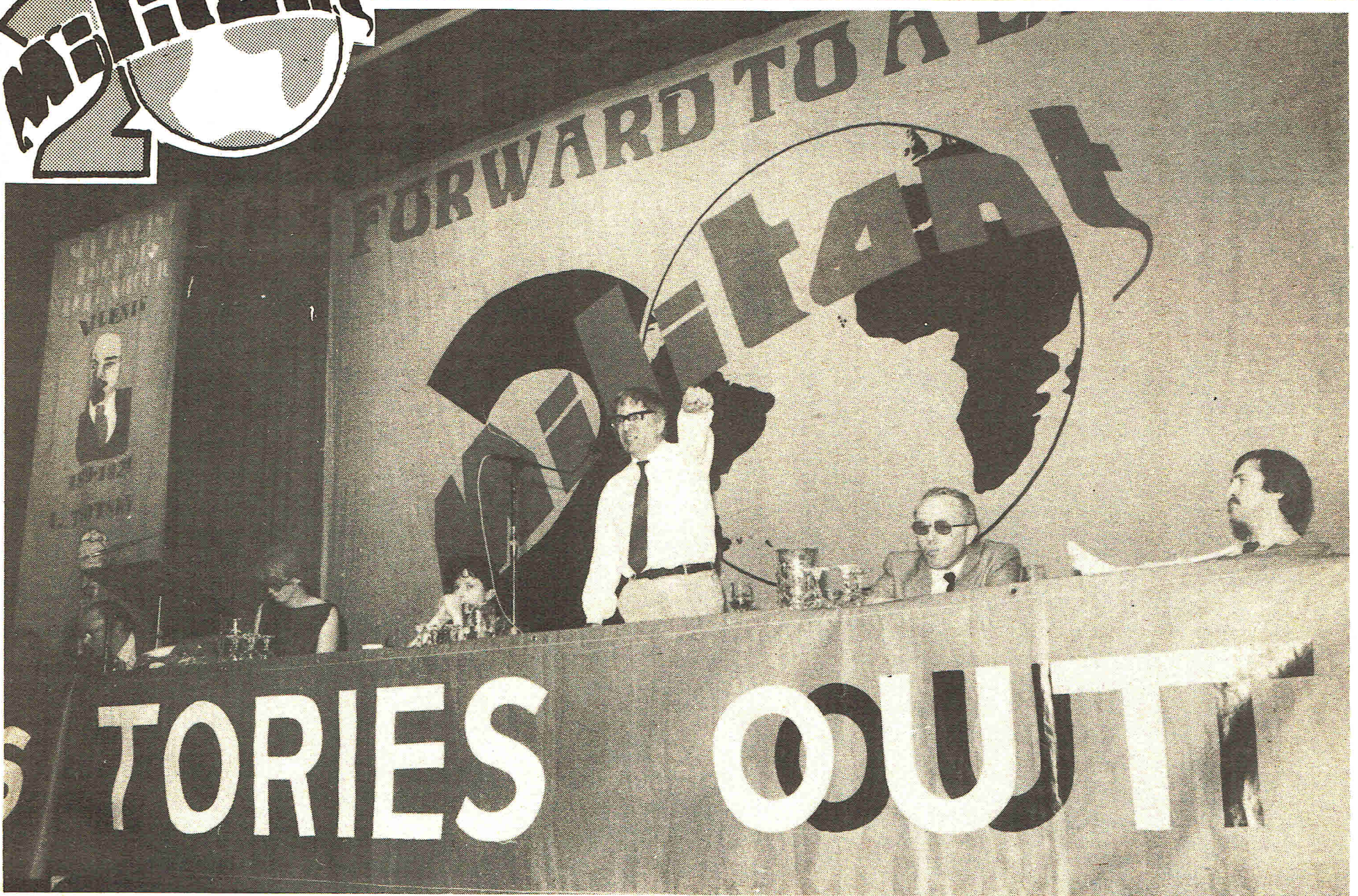
We are not 10,000 we are only a few

But when we become twenty, we will be just as big as you.

Supporters of the Danish Marxist paper *Socialisten*.

IN BIRKENHEAD docks the ship *Maiseni* is being occupied by 21 Ghanaian seamen, who have not been paid since last January. They have carried on working for four voyages but now have no money. The Dutch owner, Ben Schreyer has sent money to pay the Dutch captain and chief engineer, but nothing for the crew. They are fighting through their union the International Transport Federation (ITF), and are being fed by the British Seamen's union.

Three of the seamen were at the rally on Saturday where a collection was held. They all felt the rally was very good. One seaman said he thought the speaker from Northern Ireland was particularly inspiring.



3,000 celebrate at Wembley

"IS ANYONE here for the 'Jobs '84 exhibition?" asked a bewildered steward as hundreds of young workers shuffled by him into the Wembley conference centre on Saturday. All he was getting at the 'other' event at Wembley that day was a few older, better dressed type of person.

"What's it about?" asked a voice from the crowd that was trying to squeeze in the doors under the 'Forward to a Daily Militant' banner. "Oh, it's about getting jobs for youngsters" said the doorman. "So's ours in a way, but on a more permanent basis", came the swift reply.

The workers who had come from all over the country to *Militant's* 20th anniversary rally were not interested in patching up the system, but changing it.

Packed conference centre

Inside people began to take their seats, gazing around at the modern splendour and subdued lighting of the vast hall. Some sang along with the Spanish Civil War songs being played as the rally assembled. Striking miners, young unemployed, older Labour Party members and trade unionists began to file into the hall, which rang with a buzz of expectation. By mid-morning nearly 3,000 had filled into the conference centre.

The lights dimmed and to the strains of the Internationale the curtains drew open to display a massive banner depicting the *Militant's* 20th anniversary logo, and red drapes with the portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. To applause and whistles, the five members of the Militant Editorial Board along with Tony Benn MP

walked to the platform. "It's very dramatic", came a comment from our row. "Yeah well we've got a lot to be proud of" came the reply from behind.

The speeches began, the message of some of them vividly portrayed by slides projected onto a large backdrop. Every contribution, whether from the platform or the floor, was listened to by an attentive audience. The only complaint of the day was that there was not enough time to cram in viewing the many displays on show, without missing some of the speeches.

Display boards showed the development of the Militant, the best of Alan Hardman's cartoons, which was very popular, while the hard hitting photographs of the presentations by the South African Labour Education Project on Zimbabwean trade unions and the display titled 'Just a few hotheads' by the Tondur Photographic workshop in conjunction with St. Johns NUM, reminded everyone of the seriousness of the class struggle.

The rally did not just raise the political level though. The Red Choir from Cardiff supplied the entertainment. To believe the arrogant propagandists of the ruling class, workers are only interested in the mindless pap thrown at them everyday by the radio and TV. Nearly 3,000 workers from the hard industrial areas of the country would never sit and listen of choral music, albeit revolutionary songs. But they did, and applauded with genuine enthusiasm, unlike the plastic snobbery at West End concerts. Marxism is not just about speeches and politics, this brief raising of the cultural barrier gave a small taste of what is to be gained from socialism.

As the rally closed to a rousing chorus of the Red Flag and the Internationale, led by the Red Choir, people drifted back to the packed coach park. Such was the mood and humour that passers-by could

have been forgiven for thinking the crowds were returning from a Wembley cup final. Maybe a bit smaller than that at the moment, but we've booked the Albert Hall for next year—3 November.



TED GRANT, Political Editor of *Militant* showed how the paper's ideas had stood the test of time.

“In 1964 we were told the name *Militant* would frighten people and that capitalism had so changed with Keynes that events like the 1926 general strike would never happen again.

Keynesians believed that keeping circulating, worthless pieces of paper (ie more and more money), would solve all problems. And certainly in Western Europe, USA and Japan the growth of world trade in particular did see a big rise in living standards. But the methods used caused raging inflation. In fear the capitalists have now abandoned Keynes and gone back to the old failed monetarist deflationary policies. Now society has the wealth to keep the whole world in comfort, but only 80% of capacity is used even in a boom. We fight alongside every workers' struggle but there are no solutions under capitalism. Labour leaders have

abandoned the "promise of full employment" for the meaningless phrase "full policies on employment".

But even in France, which is one-third richer than Britain, expansionist policies while keeping capitalism intact have had to be jettisoned for austerity and deflation, worse even than the right formerly produced.

The Tories are desperately trying to smash the unions but they will fail. Enormous wealth is possible through a socialist planned economy by greater investment, the end of the monstrous arms bill and by allowing the millions on the dole to do productive work. But if we don't organise as we should to overthrow capitalism the alternative will be a return to third-world conditions.9



PETER TAAFFE, *Militant's* Editor, told the rally that this was no ordinary meeting:

THIS IS almost like a holiday for comrades who have been battling for the ideas of Marxism for over two decades. Yet when we started the paper in 1964 we had less supporters than the press and TV covering this Rally.

There is almost a cottage industry on the alleged ideas of *Militant*. The paper has been sold in

***Coronation Street*, it's appeared on *It'll be alright on the night*, in a 'A' level question paper, a *Daily Telegraph* crossword puzzle and jokes by Alexei Sayle.**

In 1964 the ideas of Marxism were condemned as being of no more than historical curiosity. We were told that the 30's would never return.

But look at the situation now. We had and have the advantage of a Marxist analysis of society. The right-wing, and even some of the left-wing of the labour movement, do not realise the absolute disastrous long-term position of British capitalism. This impasse of capitalism is why the ruling-class have mounted such an attack upon workers and especially the miners.

The ruling-class prepared for the miners' battle. But they have met the marvellous response of the labour movement, both in Britain and internationally. But it seems that the miners have now got the government by the NACODS.

Whilst the ruling class are acting in the interests of their class, what about some of the Labour leaders? Hammond is an out and out traitor and the equivocation of the labour leadership has only encouraged the ruling-class to take stronger action against the miners.

We must be clear, if they now get troops in to move the coal there must be all-out action by the labour movement. If the TUC leaders don't act, then there must be action from below.

The miners will win, but after they've won the ruling-class will not just roll over; they will retreat and prepare for revenge. We must build a movement to end their power. At the moment Marxism is not a majority. But on the basis of events, it will become a mighty lever for socialism. *Militant* aims to go twice weekly in the spring of next year, and daily by the end of 1985 or 1986.

USA, Spain, Portugal

What's bad for General Motors...

GENERAL MOTORS have got problems. Apart from the strike in Vauxhalls in Britain they have had difficulties with their North American plants.

Shortly after getting a new three-year contract approved by members of the carworkers' union, UAW, in the United States, 36,000 employees in Canada struck against the proposed agreement which traded low wage rises for rather vague promises to maintain jobs. The Canadian strike could effect US plants.

But as John Reimann reports, auto giant's problems reflect the difficulties of US capitalism as a whole.

WORKERS AT 13 General Motors plants in the United States struck on 15 September after their union—the United Auto Workers—was unable to reach agreement with GM.

Shouts of, "Let's go get them" were heard from workers at one plant as they prepared to shut it down.

In many UAW branches members prepared for this contract in recent months by voting out of office many local union presidents who had endorsed concessions several years ago. Even some local presidents who had simply failed to fight vigorously against concessions were voted out.

The union leadership's strategy was to shut down "key" GM plants, rather than call an industry-wide strike. This tended to divide up and demoralise the membership. The leaders failed to take up the rank and file slogan of "restore and more in 84" (in reference to the concessions of the last contract)

In Van Nuys, Calif., workers had walked out, only to be ordered back after a few days. According to reports several hundred refused to go back, and the plant remained shut.

So UAW members were eagerly fighting to defend their interests and restore the concessions made just a few years ago.

Detroit's "Big Three", however, remains determined to make workers pay for the crisis in auto manufacturing—a small part of the growing crisis of the capitalist system itself.

The recession and the constant attacks give the auto

By John Reimann
Carpenters Local 36
Oakland, Ca.)

manufacturers a big club to hold over the workers' heads. Despite massive profits (\$3.1 billion in the second quarter of 1984), the initial demands of Ford and General Motors included a "two tier" wage plan with lower wages for new employees, cuts in health benefits for new employees and concessions in the COLA (cost of living allowance) formula. "It seems like they're trying to get us mad" said Donald Ephlin, a "moderate" United Auto Workers vice president.

The UAW leadership has responded to this increasing

crisis by calling for restrictions in "outsourcing" (manufacture of various parts outside the main plant where they are assembled) in the contract, and restrictions on import controls through legislation.

International trade barriers, however, while they may seem to be a solution to many workers here, are no help. The bosses are contemplating or actually introducing similar actions in every single other advanced capitalist nation, cutting world trade, whose growth was the main factor in the tremendous economic expansion after World War II.

Job security

And even if the US "Big Three" car manufacturers increased their investment in the US industry, this, too, would only make matters worse for the workers. Already, General Motors plans to eliminate up to 120,000 jobs in the next two and a half years through modernisation.

Owen Bieber, President of the UAW has stated that not wages but "job security" (through restrictions in outsourcing) is the principle issue. That is the gist of the



On the dole in the motor city of Detroit.

new contract signed.

But with the massive total profits and with the increase in productivity per worker, workers are increasingly aware that there is no real reason why every employee should not have a decent and increasingly improved standard of living. The slogan of "restore and more in 84" would apply to every worker who has experienced cuts in the last few years. But, of course, the tremendous job

losses such as GM is planning would largely nullify any wage increases if they are allowed to go through as planned.

The fight will go on. The unions should demand a shorter work week at no loss in pay. (In the 1940s, the UAW called for "30 for 40"—thirty hours work for 40 hours pay.) This should be coupled with the demand for elimination of mandatory overtime, along with

the right to refuse to handle non-union made parts.

The UAW should also start building direct ties with car workers in other countries through joint steward committees and the like to discuss common problems and organise an international strategy to increase wages and conditions of all workers (rather than having the conditions of the highest paid driven down to those of the lowest paid).

Finally, the UAW should start calling for a nationally planned system of transportation based on the needs of the masses of American workers rather than the profits of the huge multinationals.

Plan of production

This questions also raises the need for a party of labor, based on the unions as an alternative to the Republicans and Democrats, the terrible twins of the American multinationals. A serious start could only be taken through such a party, not only could transportation be rationally planned, but the banks and the auto industry could be nationalised, under workers' control and management to carry out such a plan.

These are the only realistic steps to resolve the crisis of American auto workers and the working class as a whole.

KARL MARX long ago pointed out the tendency for the rate of profit to fall under capitalism. Profits come from the unpaid labour of the workers, but as capitalists invest more and more in new technology, new machinery, and now even in computers and robots, there is relatively less profit for each dollar invested.

Rate of profit

In the United States, for manufacturing industries, the ratio of total profits to total investment was 2.19 in 1970. In 1980 it declined to 0.94 and by 1982 it was 0.79. For American industry as a whole, the same process of decline took place, but the profit ratio was still approximately double that of the manufacturing industries—

which helps to explain the shift away from heavy industry in the USA.

The American auto industry was no exception to this trend towards increased concentration of investment in "fixed capital" (that spent on machinery, etc.) over "variable capital" (that spent on wages): the ratio of fixed to variable capital went from 6.84 in 1950 to 8.25 in 1970 to 13.84 in 1979. Even at that, US auto makers lagged behind their competitors in such investment: In 1982, the investment per worker in the US car industry was \$2,529, while in Japan it was \$6,124 for Nissan and \$6,507 for Honda.

This is not to say that the auto industry is not making massive profits—close to \$7,500 per worker at General Motors, whose total profits in 1983 were \$3.73 billion.

But rather than use such profits to reinvest in the US auto industry to modernise it, they raised their quarterly dividends by 25% this May while paying \$103 million in bonuses to their managers in 1983.

Wage cuts

The auto industry has responded to this general decline in the rate of profit with the well tried method of attacking wages and conditions of the workers. In 1982, they took away the "paid personal holidays", a 3% annual wage increase, cost of living adjustments and bonus holidays. Of course, this just worsens the second basic contradiction of capitalism—the tendency to overproduction: since workers are just paid a portion of what they produce

(with the rest going to profits), they can't buy it all back.

And with wage cuts, this becomes an increasingly severe problem. In the United States, for example, over the last two decades, the cost of a new car for the average worker has increased from 25 weeks' wages to 34 weeks' wages.

Another, more subtle form of wage cutting is to simply move a plant to a low-wage area or a low-wage country. Both Ford and General Motors, for instance, are increasing investments in Mexico, where workers are paid an average of \$2.00 per hour. Also, presently, GM owns 35% of Isuzu of Japan, 5.3% of Suzuki of Japan and a whopping 50% of Daewoo of South Korea.

GARY HUCK



Cartoon for Solidarity, UAW magazine.

"Socialists" appease big business

"WE HAD the French experience in front of us, we didn't want to repeat their mistakes" said an official of Spain's Socialist Party (PSOE) government recently.

Certainly the Spanish government have avoided the expansionary policies of Mitterrand's first year in office, but they have enthusiastically embraced the present deflationary policies followed by the French administration.

The government promised 800,000 more jobs before the 1982 elections which brought PSOE to power. They have concentrated instead on running a very unhealthy capitalist economy. Unemployment has in fact risen—to nearly 20%.

The ruling class are looking to Prime Minister Felipe Gonzales to get Spain into the EEC, to boost profits and to "slim down" industry. At present, they are

pleased at his success. The government's latest austerity programme has been approved by leaders of the Socialist union UGT though not by the Communist party affiliated Comisiones Obreras.

Jobs destroyed

This aims to keep wage rises well below the rate of inflation in order to get private investment to "create new jobs". Workers are understandably sceptical. Shipyard workers in Bilbao and Gijon have recently demonstrated against massive cutbacks that have been ordered in all state industries.

There is growing disillusionment with the government; workers do not believe that private enterprise will solve the unemployment crisis, and they know that government policies only add to the present one.

IN PORTUGAL last week Lt. Colonel Otelo de Carvalho, one of the main figures in the overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship in 1974 was arrested on charges of 'terrorism'. It is symbolic of the changed situation since the Portuguese revolution.

The Socialist Party-led coalition government of Mario Soares is trying desperately to revive the feeble economy by applying to join the EEC. The country's budget deficit is now seen to be above that required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The IMF have already told the government to cut jobs, causing strikes and protests this month against shipyard closures. The new deficit will increase the likelihood of class conflicts.

LETTERS

Militant welcomes letters from readers. Send us your views, comments or criticism. Write to Militant at 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Bombing— criminal stupidity

Dear Comrades,

What Neil Kinnock should have said about the Brighton bombing, instead of the conventional condolences, was that perhaps the Tory government would now see that the men injured in the Falklands and the widows and children left should have decent pensions.

That they didn't reach for their BUPA cards but were treated by NHS hospitals and staff who they have treated so shabbily. That not one of the Cabinet mentioned the magnificent work of the ambulance staff, firemen and hotel staff. That they paid hundreds of policemen to come to Brighton because they thought there was going to be a miners' demonstration.

Of course we condemn the criminal stupidity of the

IRA, but a lot of good working class fighters have also been killed by their actions, which will not help the problems in Northern Ireland or this country one iota.

The working class in both countries are the only ones who can settle the score with capitalism.

Yours fraternally,
DA Rawling
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

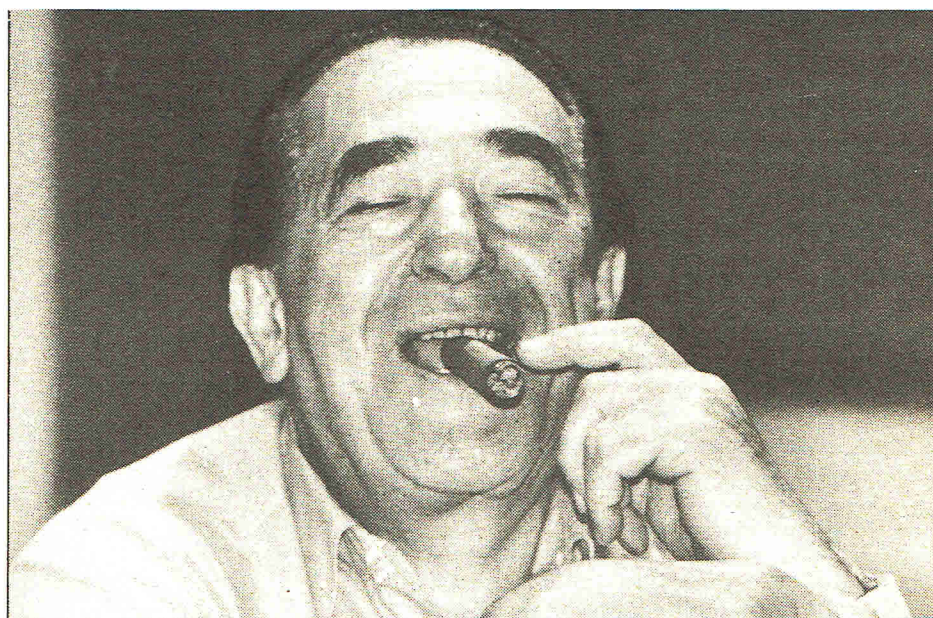


Photo: Andrew Wiaard (Report)

Robert Maxwell, the workers' friend, at the Labour Weekly party conference fringe meeting.

Working illegally

Dear Comrade,

As a Yorkshire striking miner I would like to declare the men going back to work at the Cammell Laird shipyard are acting illegally.

Chris Boswell who works at Cammell Laird received a standing ovation at the recent Tory conference when he outlawed the 37 sit-in men and praised their fellow

workers for voting with their feet and going back to work.

After seven months of voting with our feet in Yorkshire and Derbyshire, Mr Justice Nicholls has declared this to be illegal and our action unofficial. This two-faced hypocrisy only helps strengthen my resolve and hardens my attitude.

Yours fraternally,
D Jones
South Kirkby NUM

Women's hospital occupation

Dear Militant,

The South London Women's Hospital is the last hospital left in the country to be run by women for women. Yet Wandsworth Health Authority decided to close it as part of the cuts demanded by this government in their ruthless, penny-pinching attack on the Health Service.

An occupation of the hospital started on 29 June 1984 and is maintained by a 24 hour a day picket and a nightly women's lie-in. The closure of the hospital means the loss of choice for women patients forever, and is in effect a racist attack, as Moslem women cannot be treated by male doctors. Elsewhere only one hospital consultant in ten is a woman.

We are proposing to make a video tape about the hospital and the campaign to re-open inpatient services. We will be interviewing ex-patients, staff, local residents, women involved in the occupation and officials of the Wandsworth Health Authority. We want to duplicate the tape using voice-overs in several Asian languages.

We aim to distribute the tape to women's groups, health groups, the communi-

Millionaire Maxwell's "generosity"

Dear Comrade,

On Sunday 7 October, the *Sunday Times* printed a list of Britain's top 100 richest people.

Robert Maxwell, owner of the *Daily Mirror* and self-styled "socialist millionaire", was fourth richest, said to be worth £151 million. 1st, 2nd and 5th were three members of the Sainsbury family, apparently worth

£802 million.

On Tuesday, 2 October, Robert Maxwell donated £43,000 to a collection at Labour Party conference. Much was made by the Labour Party right-wingers of his generosity. But how much was it really worth?

A donation of £43,000 by someone with a fortune of £151 million—is a lesser proportion than someone with

savings of £100 giving 3p!!

When I think of all the genuine sacrifices made by pensioners and unemployed workers for collections for the miners or towards a daily *Militant*—it puts Maxwell's publicity-seeking gestures in to perspective.

Yours fraternally,
Dave Nellist
MP, Coventry South East

Heffer and heckling

Dear Comrade,

Brother Frank Clayton of the EETPU Stockport Branch is wrong to say (Issue 720) I accused the delegates of the party conference of being 'a rabble', because some comrades understandably got angry with Eric Hammond, general secretary of the EETPU.

What I said was "We are not a rabble, we are the Labour Party conference" and whether we liked it or not we had to give delegates a fair hearing even if we disagreed with them. I was also concerned lest the TV gave great prominence to Hammond, and accused us of being intolerant, which we are not.

Hammond of course was intolerant. He equated Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn,



Eric Heffer.

Dennis Skinner and myself to Hitler. I believe he showed himself to be out of line with the overwhelming majority of delegates, and therefore exposed himself completely. Also I had no powers to order him out. He was a bona-fide delegate. It is up to members of the EETPU to get active and change the situation in the union.

Yours fraternally,
Eric Heffer
MP—Liverpool Walton

LEFT and RIGHT

Trade union leaders to be hung

Three former trade union leaders have the honour of being selected as the subjects for a portrait to hang in the National Portrait Gallery. This will be the Gallery's first commissioned portrait of trade union leaders. The decision, taken by the board of trustees made up of four professors, a duke and public figures, is described by the *Times* as, "the most significant shift so far from their propensity to acquire portraits of the old establishment and others who fit a traditional view of prominence." The lucky three are Sid Weighell of the NUR, Tom Jackson of the UPW and Lord Gormley of the NUM. Significant shift?

Polish coal, Solidarity and Walesa

The *Daily Tory* newspapers blared the news that Lech Walesa, Polish Solidarity 'leader' supported 'back to work' miners. He is reported to have said: "I am very sympathetic to your movement. My greetings to British miners who are fighting for democracy in their union".

Less prominently featured was the message of Solidarity leaders in Upper Silesia, Poland's main coal producing area, backing the NUM's struggle against pit closures and condemning the export of Polish coal to Britain. Two letters signed by David Jastrzebski, President of the underground provisional co-ordinating committee of Solidarity in Upper Silesia were sent to the NUM.

Tories put their interests first

The total interest paid on debts in the public sector (eg housing) in 1983/4 was £15,000 million. This is more than the total spending on the National Health Service. Recent rises in interest rates will push this figure up even higher, while public spending is further cut back. The Tories are quite happy with this state of affairs. After all we know the Tories are a load of bankers.

Garden pests: No. 1—The maggot

Hello horticultural comrades. This week's column is devoted entirely to the problem of maggots. As there are a great many species of maggot, I will concentrate on the largest and most dangerous: The Maxwell Maggot or Maggotus Capitalis.

This creature is easily identified by its large size and green colouring. Both of these conditions are explained by the presence of large quantities of a substance known as money. (Filthus Luchrus)

The Maxwell Maggot is the only grub which preys on other maggots. It is well known for its attacks on the physically smaller but numerically greater Maggotus Militantis.

The creature also has a habit of leaving large amounts of Filthus Luchrus lying around for other maggots to try to pick up.

If any grubs start to hunt for this bait they are likely to become sick with a disease known as 'capitalism'.

To quote a well known gardening expert, namely God, on this subject, "Love of money is the root of all evil."

So, I suggest that you root out this evil parasite as quickly as possible. A good size dose of socialism should do the trick. (Our thanks to Nick Steven—resident red under the rosebed)

Six men of Dorset



Photo: Mark Risher

7:84 is a left wing theatre company, taking its name from the fact that 7% of the UK population own 84% of the wealth. In an act of political spite, the representatives of the 7% are to withdraw the group's Arts Council funding.

Their latest production, in the 150th anniversary year of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, is a play written and first performed in 1934.

Veronica Patterson saw 'Six men of Dorset' at the Shaw Theatre in London.

The play shows vividly the atrocious conditions of farm labourers in the 1830's and how the Tolpuddle workers struggled to organise themselves to gain even the most basic conditions of life. 'Accepting their lot' in life meant gruelling, long hours of heavy outdoor work and grinding poverty.

When they took their case to the claret swilling farmers, landowners and the local parson they were first abused, then promised concessions and then betrayed.

Their conditions got worse, and they had to join together and organise themselves within the network of the early trade union movement.

However in 1834 just as in 1984, the ruling class were not prepared to allow the organisations of the working class to fight back. The judiciary were ruthlessly used to crush the Tolpuddle workers and the six were transported to Australia.

But the labour movement

took up this challenge to the rights of workers to organise. A huge campaign of petitions, mass demonstrations and strikes was launched. The government were eventually forced to grant a free pardon and free passage home.

The play is a moving account of the early struggles of workers to organise themselves in the trade unions. There are obvious parallels with what is happening today, when the Tory government are again prepared to use the law to crush the organisations of the working class. As in the 1830's our class must mobilize its full strength to ensure that there is no defeat.

In the play's programme Neil Kinnock points out "that representatives of the propertied and money classes ... can never be trusted to give working people a fair deal in a capitalist society." Let's hope he doesn't forget this!

150 years on, capitalism has not changed its spots. The working class has to be as determined as the Tolpuddle martyrs to defend its rights and to struggle for better conditions whatever the capitalists' laws say or do.

Shaw Theatre, Euston Road, London NW1, 17 to 27 October.

FIGHTING FUND

This week: £9,864

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	2009		2900
East Midlands	1757		3550
Humberside	1410		1850
London East	2055		3200
London West	1373		2150
London South East	794		1950
London South West	1247		1650
Lancashire	789		1950
Manchester	1444		2200
Merseyside	2245		6100
Northern	2387		4400
Scotland East	857		2950
Scotland West	1851		3650
Southern	2727		5100
South West	851		2150
Wales East	775		2550
Wales West	1662		2550
West Midlands	1699		4300
Yorkshire	2709		5350
Others	6866		4500
Total received	37509		65000

THE FIGHTING Fund week got off to a very good start. After the excellent collection at the 20th Anniversary Rally, if every supporter raised £5 in the final week to help us meet the target, hitting the bullseye would be easy.

The appeal at the rally raised in total £11,975 (over £13,000 was collected in total included the fighting fund stall and Alan Hardman's Christmas cards). This was a record collection. It was a sign of how much our supporters are prepared to sacrifice, not just for *Militant* but for the defence of all workers in dispute.

Nowhere was that better demonstrated than with the donations of £2 from striking miners, £5 from Wakefield Picket Van and £100 promised by the Hemsworth Miners' Wives Support Group at the end of the dispute. Two supporters gave up a lot to make their major donations—Nigel Bloch of Hackney NUPE sacrificed buying a new bike to give *Militant* £1,000 and

By Kim Waddington

another donation of £1,000 came with the note "I had once considered buying a house but another building has become more important".

There was a good response to our appeal for supporters to donate £1 for every year they'd backed *Militant*. Many LPYS branches, Women's Sections and so on gave generously. Considering the huge amounts spent on train and coach fares to get there, the rally was a financial miracle as well as a political milestone.

The miners did very well too with their collecting buckets at the rally raising over £1,000. Every penny is

worthwhile for the NUM and for the *Militant*. Keep up your support.

We would appeal to all readers; if you were impressed, enthused and encouraged by the rally and by the work of the paper, make a donation—we can't fight for a better future without YOU.

THANKS for the following donations.

Preston MRM £86; Lois Hannay Teacher, Haringey £50; Worsley LPYS (Manchester) £20; P Hannick, Woolwich £10; Mr and Mrs Arnold (Nottingham) £4; Collection at Lanchester Poly, Coventry £2.53; Martha McCartney, Glasgow £3; Jimmy Stevenson, Glasgow £2; Laurence from Tooting £2; Stoke South LPYS £1.75; T Martin, Cotgrave NUM £1.70; Robin and Dave, students from Mile End £1 each; Colin Ashley, Bradford £1; Carline Higgins, Bradford £1; B Saunio, Leicester 55p.



Militant in action in an LPYS demo in February 1971 when we were just a four-page monthly. It's up to you to take us another huge step forward.

Marxist Daily Building Fund

THE BUILDING Fund is still only creeping along after our marvellous achievement in meeting the £175,000 target in August. As every reader will know we desperately need to reach £200,000 by the end of the year.

The total now stands at £177,808, which is a tribute to the enormous sacrifices and efforts of our supporters since the *Militant* Rally last year. Ideal premises have been bought and some workers have already moved in. But there is still work to be done before we can move

in completely.

We need the support of every reader who has not yet contributed to the fund, new readers especially. Join the thousands of others who made the purchase of the new building possible. Some of the jobs which have to be paid for, are: removal of asbestos, replacement of the factory roof, refurbishment of caretaker's flat, installation of security systems and telephones, damp-proofing, some plumbing and electrical work.

As you can see that amounts to quite a lot of ex-

pense. That's where you come in. We need a further £22,000 to pay for it all.

Take the special appeal letters along to your trade union branch, Labour Party, LPYS or shop stewards' committee. Ask for a large donation to help in our campaign for a daily paper. Garston Labour Party joined the large number of Merseyside labour organisations to contribute by giving £50. Why don't you do the same?

By Nick Wrack

ads

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

TEESSIDE BLOC CONFERENCE Saturday 27 October. St Mary's Centre, Middlesbrough. 10 am to 4 pm. Speakers: Dave Nellist MP, Ronnie Campbell (NUM), Jeff Price (USDAW).

WANTED: Back copies of *Militant International Review* numbers 1 to 3, 12 to 14, 16, 17, 21, 23. Copies of numbers 6, 7, 11, 19, 20, 22, 24 available for swap or sale for miners' fund. Contact Mike Kennard: (0634) 683846.

1985 MILITANT pocket diaries 60p. Clear plastic paper sleeves 20p. *Militant* sew-on cloth badges 50p. Please add postage. For Fighting Fund. To Mike King, 10 Rodney Court, Anson Drive, Sholing, Southampton. Telephone (0703) 432480.

FRATERNAL greetings to Mark and Lorraine on your wedding. Best wishes for the coming epoch. From Basingstoke *Militant* supporters and Stassy.

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PAINTING and decorating. Comrade willing to travel. Percentage of fee to Fighting Fund. Telephone: 061-202 1139.

MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW: Autumn 1984
Articles on Nicaragua and the Asturian Commune, 1934.

Miners cheer *Militant*

THE FIRST-ever *Militant* Readers Meeting in South Hetton in the heart of the Durham coalfield was a great success.

An enthusiastic audience of over 70 were mainly miners from the surrounding collieries of Eppleton, Murton, Easington, Horden and Hawthorn cokeworks.

Charlie Bell, a powerloader at Eppleton spoke on the dispute. Ib Lund from Denmark outlined the solidarity action of Aarhus dockers (see pages 3 and 9). Peter Taaffe, editor of *Militant*, praised the determination of the strikers. He pointed out that both now and after the strike, those present should become active in the labour movement as supporters of *Militant*. The fight would not end with the victory of the NUM.

Peter Taaffe was cheered after the speech. Workers are very sympathetic to the ideas of *Militant* now. Sales in the coalfield have never been higher. The collection of £58.50 (which included £3 from the bar staff at the Station Hotel) proved the determination of striking miners and their communities to give all they can to socialism.

By Dave Ridley

Militant

Meetings

UPPER RHONDDA Marxist Discussion Group. Meeting every Sunday at 7.00 pm in the Red Cow, High Street, Treorchy. Phone Steve Brown on Treorchy 773455 for more details.

SUTTON NORTH (Nottingham): *Militant* Readers' Meeting: Sunday 28 October, 7.30 pm. The Golden Diamond. Speakers: Peter Taaffe, John Dunn (Derbyshire NUM) and a Yorkshire Miner's Wife.

ELTHAM MILITANT Marxist Discussion Groups are held every Thursday, at 8.00pm, in the Lionel Road Community Centre, Westhorne Avenue, Eltham.

Below is the programme for November, if you are interested why not come along.

1 Nov.: What does *Militant* stand for? 8 Nov.: The miners, the police, and the state. 15 Nov.: Reform or revolution. 22 Nov.: Violence and terrorism. 29 Nov.: Is Russia socialist?

HULL MILITANT public meeting: Tony Mulhearn, (Liverpool City Councillor, President District Labour Party) on Thursday 29 November, 7.30 pm, at Trades and Labour Club, Beverly Road, Hull.

CASSETTE TAPES with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter. £13 for year.

Now available on cassette: all centre page articles from issue 693-721. Send either seven blank C-90 cassettes or £6.30 payable to *Militant* Tapes, 18 Blandford Grove, Woodhouse, Leeds 2. Phone: (0532) 455936.

MINERS AND LPYS benefit. Bands: Africa Connection, Steaming towards Oslo and Pachicho Wow. With dancers poppers and breakers. Tickets £2 (£1 UB 40) + 50p membership. At Albany Empire, Douglas Way, Deptford, London SE8. (near New Cross LT & BR station). Tuesday 30 October 7.30.

LABOUR LAND CAMPAIGN. 7 November, 8 pm: "High Land Values. How should Labour help new businesses?" Speaker: Clive Jenkins (ASTMS) Chair London Development Enterprises. GLC County Hall, London SE1 1LC. 01-267 2245.



Militant pamphlet. *Kent women fight for socialism*. Articles and interviews by working class women in Kent, in the mining communities and elsewhere. Price 40p + 20p postage and packing. From Robbie Segal, 10 Westbourne Garden Folkestone Kent.

Greetings

20th Anniversary greetings from Bootle *Militant* Supporters Then ('64) as now ('84) Drive out the Tories.

★ ★ ★

Macclesfield *Militant* Supporters. Socialist enthusiasm comes from the heart. Socialist strategy comes from the head. Put them together. You've got *Militant*.

Chester LPYS says: Congratulations on 20 years of fighting and here's hoping for a daily *Militant*. Forward with the red flag flying.

★ ★ ★

'64 to '84 growing strong
Uniting workers with the socialist song
Greetings Brislington (Bristol LPYS)

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Liverpool in the firing line

Tobacco workers occupy

A BRIEF and successful occupation of the British and American Tobacco factory in Liverpool ended on Sunday 14 October when Tobacco Workers Union members voted to return to work after a climb down by management.

A mass meeting had voted 2-1 to strike and it then developed into an occupation. A sizable picket was maintained outside and the jobs of occupying and picketing were rotated so as to involve everybody in the occupation.

The dispute arose when management announced changes in the way redundancies would be made, the battle over job losses having been lost earlier this year.

Redundancies

Locally and nationally the Tobacco Workers Union has adopted a policy of strike action to oppose compulsory redundancies. The company has developed a voluntary redundancy scheme whereby volunteers can take the place of those named for redundancy.

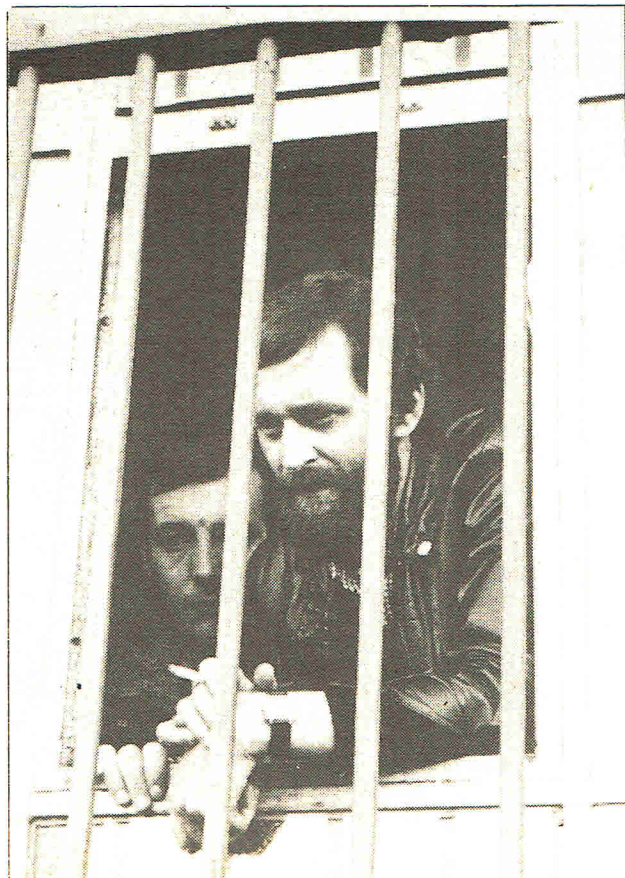
Chris Williams, Convenor of TWU at BAT talked to Jim Hollinshead.

The reason for the strike was that a new scheme was announced which involved:

- 1) Volunteers would have to be acceptable to the management before they would be allowed to take the place of those named;
- 2) All incentives to volunteer were removed.

This amounted to back door compulsory redundancies. The TWU of course would not complain about the making of voluntary redundancy less attractive, even though the reactionary *Liverpool Echo* tried to make this out as the cause of the dispute. The change in redundancy practice was coupled to further changes in working practices which were unacceptable.

Already labour is being cut by 50% while the same volume of work is expected. Many traditionally female jobs have been eliminated with the additional duties thrown on other workers and complete flexibility of



Convenor Chris Williams in the occupation of BAT in Liverpool.

labour has been introduced. All services in the factory have been put out to contractors and break facilities have been reduced.

The essence of the battles taking place currently (there has been more industrial action at Commercial Road in the last year than for years previously), as convenor Chris Williams pointed out at the meeting which voted for the action to continue, is the existence of the union at the BAT factory in Commercial Road: "Management decided to go for the kill because they thought they had destroyed the shop floor organisation. In fact the opposite has been the case. In

previous years we have had the place sewn up and management would rather have come across without struggle than face a lengthy action.

"This led to complacency on the part of many workers over the last few months and management got the feeling that they had the whip hand. The company have misread the situation. Our people are prepared to fight. The mood amongst the membership has been one of elation that something is being done. Our job now is to build up and maintain it. We won a skirmish before the big battle starts in a few months."

National bus sackings

THREE HOSTESSES, (members of the TGWU) at National Travel (National Bus Company) in Liverpool were sacked on 11 October for going on strike.

The strike was sparked off when the bosses sacked two shop stewards, supposedly for financial irregularities, but in fact for opposing cuts.

In June National Travel West was taken over by another National Bus subsidiary, Ribble Motor Services. Almost immediately they began cuts, withdrawing the Liverpool unit from most of the inter-city routes of National Express (the NBC booking firm).

The proposals came forward to cut weekly wages by £22-23 in real terms for all London route drivers and redundancies of about one half of the unit. Drivers on private hire work would have their wages reduced to £84 for a 44 hour week. The union branch had to fight these wage cuts and job cuts.

Government attack

After the sackings for being on strike three weeks, Ribble tried to bring in private coaches to take the work. However thanks to their solidarity in not crossing the picket line at the Skelhorne Street depot this plan failed.

Solidarity has come from all National Bus company and Merseyside transport drivers who are prepared to take industrial action if called upon. The reason this dispute has such widespread support is clear, it is just the beginning of the govern-

ment's attack on buses, involving privatisation and cuts in jobs and services. Ribble alone plan to cut down from 1,000 routes to 350.

Financial juggling

Management has said National Travel drivers are making too many losses, however two facts scotch this myth. First during the summer Ribble gave up profitable routes to the privates (creeping privatisation), and secondly, although last year National Travel made £7 million loss, this is because they were underpaid by National Express (another national bus subsidiary which puts up routes for tender). National Express made £14m profit. In other words National Travel drivers made a profit of £7m—not a loss.

Tony Kelly, the new branch chairman, sums up the dispute: "The issues behind this strike are complicated but it boils down to one thing, 46 people have been sacked for opposing the company's plan". It should be clear to all workers that this is just another McGregor style attack on trade union rights from a management that describes peaceful picketing as "gangster tactics". All National Travel drivers want is their jobs back and decent conditions and wages.

All messages of support and donations to National Travel West 6/696 Branch Fund, c/o Wrennerly, Transport House, Islington, Liverpool L3 8EQ.

St Helens Labour council?

1400 St Helens NALGO members and 200 NUPE white collar members are striking in protest at the actions of St Helens Labour council, who have suspended members and threatened disciplinary action against others for refusing to move from one building to another. They are not against restructuring but the council's method of implementation. The strike was only called after a mass meeting. They have refused to exempt top officers from the action, though they are continuing to make up parcels for miners' children. Manual workers are not crossing picket lines. Strikers only get strike pay if they picket.

The council have offered what they call a "status quo" agreement but that implies a move, and after 28 days, consultation will be finished. Labour councils need unity with their trade unions against the cuts and such actions do not aid that unity. A neighbouring NALGO branch officer expresses the concern of many local trade unionists:

Dear Militant,

As the secretary of a NALGO Branch which borders St Helens, I have followed recent events in the town closely. Moreover, a number of my members, who are residents of St Helens, have approached me since the current strike began in order to express their concern about the situation.

There appears to be no other interpretation of the current strike than that it has been provoked by the behaviour of St Helens Council. NALGO members, like the overwhelming majority of trade unionists, do not embark on an all-out indefinite strike unless they feel the cause is just.

The solidarity within the

ranks of St Helens NALGO is extremely impressive, as in the support of other local authority unions, who are refusing to cross picket lines set up by NALGO.

The whole issue of the restructuring exercise which has resulted in this strike bears all the hall marks of a travesty of good (or even normal) industrial relations practice. St Helens council have attempted a major restructuring exercise, with implications for very many jobs, with virtually no formal negotiation or consultation with the unions representing the employees concerned.

Such behaviour alone is indefensible, but to then stoop to practices including

a 'Moonlight flit' of office furniture and equipment, without the knowledge of the staff involved, and to suspend fourteen of them for refusing to cooperate in this scurrilous procedure is totally reprehensible.

The saddest aspect of the whole story is that this unnecessary situation has developed at a time when the future of the local government has been put at risk by Rate Capping and other measures of a vicious Tory government.

Here on Merseyside we have the excellent example of the Labour council in Liverpool, which united with its workforce and the majority of the population of the city, to successfully defeat government cuts. Will the current leaders of St Helens Labour group be honest enough to state their own plans for opposing cuts or massive rate increases? Will they explain how the unity necessary can be built by a deliberate policy of provoking a strike to 'take on' NALGO, which they apparently prefer to taking on the Tories?

Yours sincerely
Roger Bannister
(Knowsley)
cc St Helens NALGO
c/o NALGO club, Bishop Road, St Helens.

GEC Traction

220 WORKERS at the Traction Section of GEC, Trafford Park, Manchester, are out on strike.

In April of this year the Confed Unions submitted their claim for a 10% pay increase for all, with £100 underpinning minimum for the poorer paid—an average increase of £13 per week.

Seven months later management responded with a derisory offer of £5 for skilled and £3 semi-and unskilled. This resulted in the workers holding a meeting on the 19 October where 90% voted to take strike action on 22 October.

The workers have cooperated with management over the past few years. 200 jobs have gone over 13 months—an almost 50% reduction. The unions have agreed to a piece-work scheme and overtime working, all of which helped GEC to increase productivity and build up their bank balance. The National Minimum Rate at present stands at £91.50, GEC pay these workers just £83 per week.

The anomalies go still further. Comparison of pay rates shows that a skilled worker in Manchester earns less than an unskilled worker or semi-skilled worker at the sister company in Preston.

The workers in the trac-

tion section produce all the equipment which goes inside a train drivers cab. In years gone by GEC cornered the market and sat in splendid isolation reaping the profits. Now the Japanese and others have entered the market. GEC failed to respond and sought to replace the losses by exploiting its workforce.

Jobs and pay

Management imposed yet further restrictions with their offer: more redundancies by March '85, 50% reduction of shop stewards and the pay increase only applied to workers who were on the books as of the 17 October 1984. As the pay date is 1 April, any workers made redundant, retired etc, since

then and up to the 17 October would not receive their back dated pay!

The workers are concerned about their pay and conditions but they are also concerned about job security in the Trafford Park Industrial area.

The Traction section workforce are one of the smallest within the monopoly of GEC. They do not understand the size of the task before them and need the full support of the labour and trade union movement.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to; Ray Robinson, GEC Traction Section Strike Headquarters, AUEW, The Crescent, Salford. Tel. 061 736 5206. Cheques should be made payable to the Joint Shop Stewards Distress Fund.

By Pete Chilton.

Ghana seamen

A GROUP of seamen from Ghana are in their fourth week of occupation on board *MV Maiseni* in Birkenhead (more information on page 8-9). The Dutch owners have not paid their workers for nine months. They are owed about £45,000 in back wages by Transimex in Rotterdam!

The crew are desperate for money to buy food and

medicine. Their families in Ghana have been forced into poverty. One crew member has received a letter from his wife saying their marriage is ended.

Show your international solidarity. Donations and messages of support to Robert E Annani, *MV Maiseni*, Frost Wharf, Victoria Dock, Birkenhead.

Vauxhall

Redundancy fears

A Luton *Militant* supporter spoke to members of the TGWU and AUEW including a leading member of the strike committee as well as rank and file members.

WHILST TALKING, news came through of acceptance of the pay offer by AUEW members in Ellesmere Port which had been recommended by the executive of the EC and shop stewards' committee.

The impression given by the Luton strikers was that they would not accept the wage offer, and more importantly the conditions of employment laid down by management at Ellesmere Port where the new technology had already been introduced.

The 300 workers there had been redeployed on the night shift, therefore there was no loss of jobs. In Luton, however, the fears are of the loss of over 600 jobs due to new technology and also conditions as a result of degrading skilled workers.

It is estimated by leading officials of the T&G that job losses would run into the thousands in the next six years and these would not be through 'natural wastage'. One official told me that there are

many workers at the factory, even those who took voluntary redundancy, who have drawn the same conclusions as the miners on strike; redundancy payments won't last and other jobs are not easy to get.

Such is the despair of workers who took voluntary redundancy that three had jumped off the top of the Arndale shopping centre in the past year.

When asked about surplus labour, management replied at a meeting with the trade union "we

will have to live with them". But the workers have drawn their own, different, conclusions.

It has been repeatedly said by Luton Vauxhall workers that the spending of £100 million on new technology in the paint shop means a loss of jobs, from 280 to 70. The workers will be replaced by robots.

It is obvious that the management see the paint shop workers as an important and militant section which have taken strike action and held up production recently.

★ Much anger has built up recently over new technology. A worker told me about the computerisation of production lines where they are now faced with only 3 minutes to clean up.

★ The canteen block had been closed in AA block resulting in workers having to share the canteen in the factory. After walking and queuing they only have 15 minutes to eat their dinner. The production line only allows 10 minutes flat for tea breaks before the computer restarts.

★ An older AUEW worker: "Over the years we have fallen behind many car workers. We might have accepted the pay in view of the situation around the country, mainly younger men voted for strike action, the older workers were awaiting for redundancy and early retirement. This was in contrast to the T&G's 90% vote for strike action."

★ "Many, with Christmas coming, may accept the pay deal and new conditions but if they do it will mean increased anger against the bosses."

★ We have seen strikers increasingly criticise shop stewards and strike organisers. All shop stewards are due for re-election this December for both unions—AUEW and T&G.



Picket line at Luton's Vauxhall plant.

Luton shut

PICKETING IN Luton is very successful. All 11 gates are covered with about 100 people involved in all the picketing. Timber supplies and food are well organised and a caravan has been set up to organise. Huts have been erected at the gates.

Bosses in trouble

Last Friday a police escort accompanied a lorry carrying paper for the computers and charged through the pickets. The pickets were pushed about. The police were obviously under orders to get the lorry through. We

have had reports that building contractors were seen breaking down the fences to get into work but the police had to stop them.

The management are being affected by the strike action, since the canteen workers are also on strike and even the coffee machines are not being re-stocked. The offices are not being cleaned by an outside company—those workers too are on strike. Toilets also are not being cleaned, and have been closed. The effectiveness of the Luton strike has had repercussions in the Bedford truck section, on Dunstable

and Toddington Spare Parts warehouse. The vast majority of workers in Dunstable have been laid off due to the fact that 200 key truck workers have refused to toe the majority line (the factory voted against strike action) and also partly due to the shortage of parts because production at the Luton plant has been stopped.

Toddington

Some 600 workers laid off last week at the Toddington warehouse have now returned to work after management was able to use non Vauxhall drivers for deliveries and collections.

Imports and profits

EFFECTIVE picketing of the ports has stopped both Vauxhall and Opel cars from Belgium, Spain and Germany. Vauxhall are now claiming a daily loss of £7.5 million a day instead of the previously stated £3.5 million. This indicates the massive profits Vauxhall makes from imported cars

One union official ac-

tually told me that Vauxhall make £1,000 profit per imported car, and that 7,000 Novas are imported from Spain per month. In spite of this Vauxhall have told shop stewards that they made a loss of £50 million last year at the Bedford trucks division in Dunstable, and estimate £52 million lost this year before the strike

at Bedford trucks.

They also claim a £1 million loss in the Luton car plant last year. It was pointed out that Vauxhall have a parent plant in America which organises a tax loss which allows the parent company to claim back from the US government all overseas losses.

IN A reversal of traditional roles Vauxhall workers at Ellesmere Port have voted to accept the company's improved pay offer whilst Luton may stay out. The AUEW stewards will be recommending rejection whilst the TGWU stewards will leave it open. But whatever the decision the issues of demarcation and job flexibility which underlie the determination of Luton workers will not go away.

The mood for a fight over pay in car plants across the country indicates a renewed confidence and determination amongst a powerful section of workers who have suffered setbacks in the past few years. *Militant* reports on the Vauxhall dispute.

View from the picket line

DAVE CONNELL T&G shop steward, Vauxhall, Luton spoke to Malcolm Young and Tom Seddon whilst picketing Vauxhall imports at Sheerness.

WE HAVE had a picket line here since 16 October and we've gained a real good response. No Vauxhall cars are coming in and the T&G lorry drivers have been very good. I think we can win the battle though Ellesmere Port will make a difference.

It's not as it's made out, just a wages battle, we're fighting to regain the conditions lost over the past years. Over the last six or seven years the workforce has been cut by 10,000 and and lines have been speeded up. Now they want a self-inspection system introduced. What that means in reality is that more jobs will go.

Faulty cars

If there's no need for line inspectors to be employed then of course it also means more work for less money and a danger to the public due to faulty cars because of the pressure on workers on

the track. Jobs are definitely going to go in the paint shop.

The workers here have taken smaller and smaller wage rises over the last few years and now we want our share.

Low wages

The average wage here is £85 a week on days and £102 on nights and time and a third plus the bonus. But the highest bonus we've earned is £17 and this makes a ludicrous wage. What we want is a consolidated bonus of £8-£10 per week.

The men are doing overtime now to enable them to earn a living wage, overtime should be a perk, not a part of the wages.

It is the younger shop stewards that are coming to the fore now in the plants, though some of the older ones have seen all this happening before and are showing some of the younger ones the way, but in general it is the younger ones that are coming to the front of the dispute. I think we can win.

Ellesmere Port

Ray McHale reports from Vauxhall at Ellesmere Port: The TGWU at a mass meeting on Tuesday voted overwhelmingly to return to work, following the return of the AUEW. Management dropped some of the conditions they were demanding, along with the two stage pay deal. All workers will get 6% plus two pounds, with some getting an extra 8% now, the remainder getting this in May. In all it will amount to

a rise of 12-14%, depending on grades.

Workers pointed out that many flexible working practices have already been introduced at Ellesmere Port, unlike Luton which has stricter demarcation, so the issues at stake are different for the two plants. After the mass meeting, however, many workers said that if Luton carried on the dispute and pickets Ellesmere Port they would not cross them.

Luton Labour Party Young Socialists Public Meeting

Vauxhall strike.
The miners strike.

Tuesday 30 October, 8 pm
at 3, Union Street, Luton.

Speakers from Vauxhall TGWU, Notts NUM, and the Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC)

Militant

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No to shipyard piracy

MASS MEETINGS last week of all unions from all Tyne shipyards declared full support for the fight against privatisation and compulsory redundancies.

Privatisation would mean a slashing of the workforce. We are working mainly on naval orders which provide more profit, as they are longer jobs, which the government pays for in instalments. Frigates take three years to build. So naval yards will be more profitable to sell off.

Swan Hunter management have actually refused an order for a Swedish bulk carrier, although we had just recently built one. The Swedish com-

By Derek McStea,
EETPU, Swan Hunter,
Wallsend-on-Tyne.

pany was so pleased that they gave £12,000 to the shop stewards' committee to spend as it wished, because we had not received any bonus.

Yet management say they couldn't handle another! Ten years ago we were building super-tankers half a mile long.

The present workload ends in January. Management will be looking

for 2000 redundancies. They hope to get volunteers. They are likely to get them from the outfitting trades, but the general workers are likely to face compulsory redundancies.

The men are prepared to fight, the stewards are prepared to fight. Although we have no faith in the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee, which has let us down so many times, we are prepared to back the stewards fully.

Interview with GMBATU chair, Swan Hunter P.15.

FE students— unite and organise

'Riot police storm college—High Court censures lecturer'. These were the headlines about the Polytechnic of North London (PNL) this summer when Patrick Harrington, the National Front student organiser, attempted to continue his course there.

These scenes will be repeated when he attends PNL again with full police protection and with promises from the Inner London Education Authority—with support from the National Union of Students—to give him individual tuition.

His reward for being a fascist is the lowest pupil/teacher ratio in the country! If ILEA can provide the resources for this one fascist then why can't they improve conditions for colleges like mine where students are turned away because of overcrowding.

My college has a high percentage of black students and there is no doubt in our minds that

there is no room for fascists in the education system. FE colleges are suffering from poor facilities, overcrowding and even closures as a result of the cuts. It can be easy for the NF to sow divisive seeds of racism.

Linked campaign

Black youth in the FE colleges must join with the Further Education Labour Students (FELS) and build a united organisation of black and white FE students to campaign against fascists like Harrington. Link up with the labour and trade union movement to stop the Tory cuts that create the conditions in which racism breeds.

The FE Labour students conference in Liverpool on November 10/11 will take up the situation faced by black youth, and how FELS can campaign against racism and fascism in the colleges.

By Lesleigh Woodburn
(Kingsway Princeton
Labour Club)

Founding conference of the Further Education Labour Students (FELS)—

Saturday 10th November, starts 12 noon: 'Save the FE's—Fight the Cuts'—Speakers include Derek Hatton, Deputy Leader, Liverpool City Council.

Sunday 11th November: Sessions on YTS, Young Workers in FE Colleges, Black Youth, Student Union Rights with speakers including: Terry Fields MP, Harry Smith, Vice-Chair, Liverpool Council Education Committee, Frances Curran, Labour Party NEC, Kevin Williams, Brighton Area NUS Convenor etc.

Venue: Liverpool Polytechnic, James Parsons Building, Byron. Write for credentials to: Louise James, 24 Higgins House, Whitmore Road, Shoreditch, London N1 5RA. The cost of credentials, £5, will cover two hot meals, overnight accommodation, the Saturday night social and the entrance fee.



Lobbying shipyard union leaders last year. The fight against the Tory pirates must begin now.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

drivers in the Midlands are being paid £350 a day to shift coal blacked by the railwaymen.

Police intimidation in mining villages is becoming more intense. The hardship and suffering of the miners' families is becoming desperate.

More than ever it is becoming crucial for the trade unions to bring the strike to a victorious conclusion for the miners. That

means:-

- ★ The TUC to call a 24-hour general strike when the NUM's money is stolen.
- ★ The miners must take steps to black all coal being moved into power stations.
- ★ The rail and transport unions must take solidarity action now.
- ★ A levy on all union members.
- ★ Preparation for an all-out general strike, if troops are used to move coal from the pit-heads.

If the TUC fails to give a lead, then this programme of action must be adopted by the leaders of the left unions, by the shop stewards committees and the leading activists in every workplace. It means calling emergency mass meetings at every level, to explain and fire the workers with enthusiasm for this struggle, in which every one of them has a stake.

Miners and other workers organised a mass picket of Didcot power station in Oxfordshire on 24 October to try to stop oil entering to

supplement depleted coal stocks. Such action, on a systematic national basis would be an enormous boost for the NUM's battle for jobs.

The miners are fighting for all workers. They must not be allowed to be defeated, by starvation or police and legal attack; but above all they must not be defeated because the trade union and labour leaders failed to provide active, concrete support in their moment of greatest need.



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