

### Three trials for selling Militant

IN A snub to the democratic processes of the Labour Party, the right wing are again backing the expulsion of Young Socialist Brychan Davies from the Rhondda CLP.

Brychan Davies was expelled from Rhondda Labour Party for the crime of selling *Militant*. When his expulsion came up before the full National Executive Committee last November, it was referred back to the party's Appeals and Mediation Committee. That should have been the end of the matter, yet at the 7 January meeting of this committee, Roy Hattersley again moved the expulsion be upheld.

Clearly the right wing want Brychan tried, re-tried and tried again until found guilty. Brychan's expulsion will again come before the NEC at the 27 January meeting. The right wing must not be allowed to get away with their determined efforts to drive a wedge into the unity of the Labour Party.

Young Socialists, Labour Party members and trade unionists should join the lobby of the NEC on 23 January at the party headquarters in Walworth Road, London, starting at 8.45am.

Pressure on the right wing must be kept up. At the same meeting they suffered a further set-back for their plans for a generalised attack on *Militant* supporters—see page two.

### "Common Struggle"

ON PAGE 11 this week, Roy Jones, a striking miner from Staffordshire, writes of his recent visit to South Africa where he met many members of the National Union of Mineworkers, a fast-growing union representing over 100,000 black workers.

Not only did Roy get 500 Rands (about £220, the largest sum this cash-starved union can donate without a conference decision) for the strikers, but started to building firm links between the two groups of class fighters.

In the first of two articles this week, Roy tells of police harassment in the recent South African strike and of conditions in the mines. Roy can be contacted to speak at labour movement meetings through the Southern African Labour Education Project. For details see page 11.

## Solidarity the key

# The Tories' power gamble

THE COAL Board's latest "back to work" drive has clearly failed. The government and the NCB are now pushing their luck.

By Pete Dickinson

The decision by rail unions to strike against victimisation has given a boost to the striking miners (see below). But power supplies are the important question in the success of the strike.

The very cold spell has encouraged the miners. The crucial period in the dispute which was delayed by the exceptionally mild weather of December is fast approaching. There have already been some small power cuts and more are likely if the cold continues.

With a very small return to work, the Tories could be forced to act within a few weeks to move coal stocks into power stations outside the working coalfields.

Usually the weather doesn't have a big impact on coal consumption, only plus or minus 5% either way. Because of the strike, however, the effect of cold weather, causing stocks to fall at individual power stations, can be dramatic.

In normal times, because oil is very expensive, oil fired stations are the last to be turned on as demand rises. During the strike the CEBG have arranged, as far as they can, that the power stations which are most vulnerable to the effects of the dispute are switched on last.

The vulnerable stations are the coal fired ones in areas where the strike is strong, like Drax in Yorkshire.

As demand reaches a peak in the present cold spell these stations are working at a very high capacity, which, if the cold persists, will cause coal to run out in two or three weeks. Drax is already working at a minimum of



60% capacity. If this happens at Drax, plus other big coal fired stations, power cuts would occur, as explained in *Militant* last week.

The particular sensitivity of big coal fired stations to the effects of the weather explains why the mild December affected projections made in October and November for when coal stocks would run out.

### Breakdowns

The analyses at that time in *Militant* predicting that the Tories would face a power crisis in mid-January were based on average weather in December, as we explained then. This timetable has effectively been put back a month, assuming there is not another abnormally mild period.

Walker's unqualified "guarantee" that there will be no power cuts in 1985 is

bluff. The Tories can escape the choice of power cuts or a large scale strike-breaking movement of coal only in exceptional circumstances—no breakdowns in hard pressed oil fired stations and unusually mild weather for a long period.

The Tories will be making every effort to smash the strike. The obliteration of industry has left a high level of overall coal stocks and the Tories will go to any lengths to move coal into the stations which are low when it becomes necessary.

They must be stopped. Solidarity action at these vital stations is the key. Solidarity from transport workers following NUR and ASLEF's lead and solidarity of power workers in boycotting fuels. Fraternal links must be set up between miners, transport workers and power workers to ensure the strike gains in strength.

## Rail workers' strike

RAIL UNIONS NUR and ASLEF have called a 24-hour strike in the London Midlands and Eastern regions on 17 January against harassment of their members at the Coalville depot for solidarity action in support of the miners.

Rank and file railworkers around the country have bravely resisted harassment and intimidation by British Rail management for blacking coal movements. This initiative by the rail union leaderships will be welcomed by railworkers around the country.

BRB have forced this action on to rail workers and there must be no backing down, whatever concessions they now offer. A show of strength is needed. There must also be no obscuring

the fact that this is part and parcel of the miners' fight. 80% of coal moves by rail. Pit closures mean rail jobs lost. A defeat for the miners will embolden BR management.

### Campaign

The national leadership must mount a real campaign amongst the members to win support for this strike. That campaign must also be extended to ensure that all coal movements, particularly those into the Ratcliffe power station are blacked, along with the movement of waste from power stations, including flasks from nuclear stations for British Nuclear Fuels.

# Militant

## A lead from top is needed

THE TUC General Council meeting on January 23 could have a decisive bearing on the miners' strike. The Broad Left Organising Committee has already called for a lobby of the meeting and that initiative should be followed by other trade union organisations, to put pressure on the TUC. Solidarity action, especially in transport and power, is the key to winning this ten-month old dispute.

As *Militant* has explained, the issues go far wider than the fight for jobs. The Tories have prepared for a long time to take on the miners. They understand what would be the significance of a defeat for the NUM, the "Brigade of Guards" of organised labour. It would weaken the whole of the trade union movement and facilitate the Tories' plans to cut living standards and the social wage. The trade unions are the only barrier to the Tories' attempt to create a low-wage economy.

For ten months, therefore, the Tories have tried everything to isolate and crush the miners. New legislation has been wheeled out, creating a flood of anti-trade union judgements, injunctions and sequestrations. The police and local magistrates have similarly acted as unofficial arms of the NCB. Hundreds of millions of pounds worth of free propaganda has been given to the NCB, through the conscious lies and distortions of the Press, Radio and TV.

The Tories have been prepared to face a £5 billion bill in direct and indirect costs. That fact alone speaks volumes about the political significance of this strike to the ruling class.

Neil Kinnock—like the voice of a boy in a howling gale—dismisses any comparisons with the Tolpuddle martyrs, calling instead for the strike to be judged in its "modern context". This only shows his gross underestimation of the importance of the strike and of the crisis facing British capitalism and the labour movement.

If the TUC General Council were prepared to give the same lead to 'their' class as Thatcher and her Cabinet have given to the ruling class, a general strike would have been called by now, especially at the time of the freezing of the NUM funds. It is a habit of right wing trade union leaders to blame the members for lack of action, but the most important missing ingredient now is a lead from above.

The official trade union leadership has enormous authority in the eyes of the rank and file. If the full resources of the trade unions—full-time officers, union facilities, publications, union meetings, special mass meetings and delegate meetings—were used in a serious campaign of explanation and mobilisation, there could be a huge response to calls for solidarity. The industrial unions alone—especially the TGWU and GMBATU, with members in the power industry—could help the miners win in weeks if not days.

Renewed pressure must therefore be put on the TUC tops, and especially the left leaders of the General Council. In the first instance, the January 23 meeting should be the focus of lobbying, resolutions, and calls for action.

The railway unions have already given a magnificent lead in their one-day strike in the Eastern and Midland regions. But solidarity action must become generalised. A 24-hour general strike must be the immediate call.

This must not be a limp and half-hearted 'Day of Action', grudgingly supported and ill-prepared from the top. It must mean a bold and specific call for *strike* action for all workers, with the sole exception of emergency services. It must be accompanied by a day of rallies, meetings and demonstrations around the twin slogans of 'Support for the Miners' and 'Defend Fundamental Trade Union Rights'.

Such a day of solidarity action would be a warning even the Tories would find hard to ignore. It would be a springboard for increased solidarity in transport and the all-important power industry and it would be a preparation for wider general strike action if the Tories did not back off.

The Tories are engaged in a big gamble over the strike and, more specifically, over coal stocks and power supplies. The stakes for them are high, including their strategic aim to break the power of the trade union movement as a whole. But the leaders of the TUC have all the high cards in their hands in the enormous untapped power of the labour movement. The ranks of the labour movement must exert every possible pressure to make sure these winning cards are played.

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# Setback for witch-hunt plans

THE LABOUR Party right wing's campaign to launch an investigation into *Militant* supporters received a further set-back at the National Executive Organisational Sub-committee on Monday 7 January.

The right wing's plans for an investigation were first knocked back at December's NEC, when it was agreed instead to set up a working party to "examine the nature and extent of *Militant* influence" and set out the principles of democratic socialism in a document. This motion was backed by Neil Kinnock.

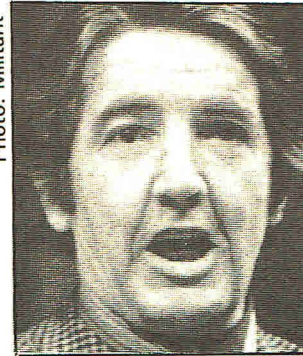
However the right wing received a further blow on Monday when although a move by Dennis Skinner to drop the whole issue was defeated 9-4, a resolution from David Blunkett removing any mention of *Militant* was passed 9-6.

The motion said: "Noting the diversity of opinions within the party the NEC resolved to set up a working party to produce a document setting out the principles of democratic socialism which will promote and develop the values based on the principles outlined in the party constitution."

*Militant* supporters welcome open political debate within the Labour Party—indeed, given the actions and statements of right wingers, it is vital that the party reiterates its commitment to socialist policies. However, Labour Party members must be on their guard that the right wing do not use this issue to again attack the left of the party and sow disunity within the movement.

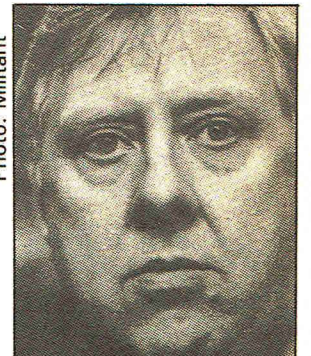
● Attempts in Livingston Labour Party in Scotland to stop the sale of *Militant* have been set back by a tide of opposition from the local labour move-

Photo: Militant



Dennis Skinner—unsuccessful move to drop the whole issue

Photo: Militant



Roy Hattersley—still pressing for witch-hunt.

ment, especially the miners.

Over half a dozen strike committees including the local Whitburn committee, Newtongrange, Musselburgh and Lochgelly have passed resolutions against any ban.

Newtongrange and Lochgelly both said they saw nothing wrong with selling *Militant* while collecting for the miners because of *Militant*'s support for the strike.

Over 250 miners have signed a petition. Indeed

during a recent LPYS visit to Musselburgh strike centre money raised by the local YS for the miners was totalled at £550.

Local union branches and shop stewards and the Tweedale Ettrick and Lauderdale Labour Party have also shown their opposition to an attack together with councillors from Strathclyde, Glasgow District, Edinburgh District and Lothian Region.

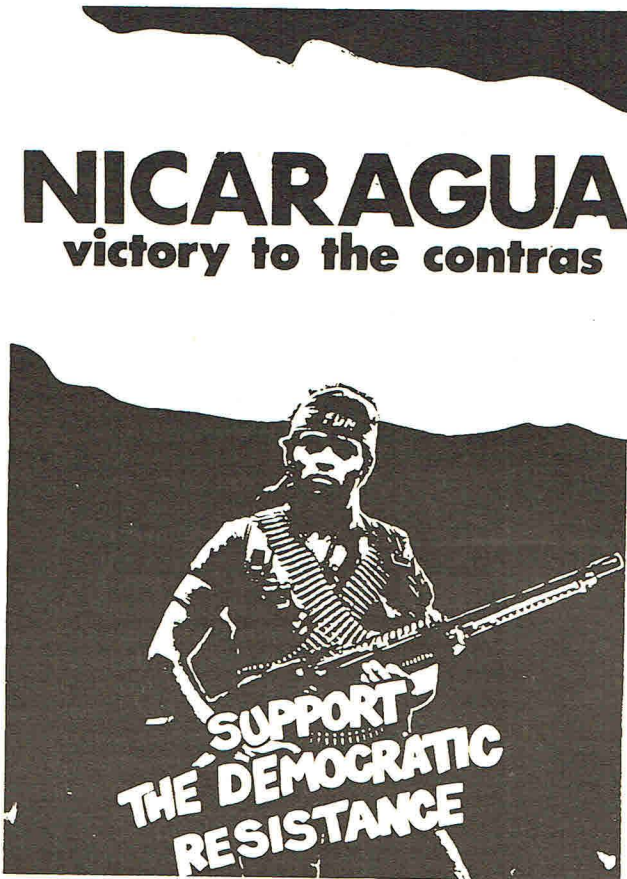
## Tory students back terrorists

THROUGHOUT THE miners' strike the Tory leadership have been demanding condemnations of violence from all and sundry.

Yet they have remained silent about the Tories' student section which is openly backing the Contras, the right-wing terrorist group in Nicaragua.

At the NUS conference recently, the Federation of Conservative Students displayed 'Victory to the Contras' posters. FCS vice-chair David Saunders said (reported *Labour Weekly*): "We support the Contras wholeheartedly" and that the Contras were the "only true democratic force" in Nicaragua.

Far from being a 'democratic force', the Contras were formed from the remnants of the former dictator Somosa's National Guard after the murderous dictatorship was overthrown in 1979. Backed by the CIA, they are carrying out terror attacks against Nicaraguan peasants in the rural areas, in US-backed attempts to destabilise the new popular government.



Federation of Conservative Students' poster supporting the right-wing terrorist contras in Nicaragua.

## Student leaders attack Militant

THE FIRST meeting of the students' union (NUS) Further Education National Committee made it clear that a witch-hunt of *Militant* supporters is being prepared by the so-called 'Democratic Left' in the NOLS leadership of NUS.

The committee, responsible for Further Education college students, voted to expel Lesleigh Woodburn (the FE Labour Students' member on the union's FENC). Her crime was to move a motion calling for NUS to commission a survey in the FE sector, covering questions such as the number of nursery facilities available in the FE sector, how many FE colleges have a sabbatical Student Union Officer etc.

Lesley Smith, an NUS executive member then moved to expel Lesleigh Woodburn for 'constant interruption' ie asking awkward questions! Lesleigh Woodburn refused to leave pointing out that it was unconstitutional for FENC members to be expelled. Lesley Smith then adjourned the meeting.

If the conditions faced in the FE colleges were released it would expose the failure of the NOLS leadership of NUS to win any reform for FE students during its 2½ years of leadership.

Lesleigh Woodburn was even threatened by Alan Smart, NOLS chair of NUS Scotland. Significantly a committee has been set up to investigate the 'intimidation' at NUS conference. But this committee will not deal with the disruption by the right wing lunatics of the Federation of Conservative Students, but *Militant* and rank and file students questioning the leadership of NUS.

Resolutions must be sent from Student Unions and Labour Clubs to NUS and Labour MP Jo Richardson (Trustee of NUS) condemning Lesleigh's expulsion.

## Support miners—lobby TUC

THE NATIONAL Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC), is organising a National Lobby of the TUC General Council meeting on 23 January.

Norman Willis and the TUC leaders have a heavy moral responsibility to use every weapon to build up solidarity action with the miners. The General Council meeting should be laying down plans for a massive campaign to step up action, beginning by calling a 24 hour General Strike. This would not only be a warning to Thatcher to back down, but would also start to mobilise the millions of working people who support the miners to take, if necessary, all-out general strike action until victory is achieved.

Every battle workers now face would suffer a severe blow if the miners were defeated—for example

railworkers fighting closures, healthworkers fighting the cancer of privatisation, local authority workers battling with rate-capping and the abolition of the Met Counties.

Low paid local authority workers and the teachers and civil servants who are preparing to fight over pay must also now be ready to fight alongside the NUM. Every struggle must be linked to the miners—victory for them means victory for us all.

We call on every shop steward and union militant to come to Congress House and tell the TUC leaders to get off their knees and fight. There is much to do yet to achieve a miners' victory and we cannot rely on the weather—solidarity action and finance are the key and must be stepped up. We also urge all our supporters to back the solidarity conference of the Mineworkers

Defence Committee on 9 February.

A recent opinion poll showed that 35% of trade unionists would take some form of action to back the miners. That's after practically no campaign from the TUC leaders. If the TUC were to lift its little finger and campaign for solidarity action with the miners there would be a tremendous response from working people.

Lobby your district, regional and executive committee members—send motions and letters to your union head office, and come to London on 23 January. Let's build a fire under the backsides of the TUC leaders and get action for a miners' victory.

By Phil Holt  
 BLOC Secretary

★ For details—see page 13.

## Miners' dispute

# Back to work campaign fizzles out

THE NCB and the government were confident that the New Year would see a massive collapse of the miners' strike. But again the determination and solidarity of the miners has checked the NCB and media back to work campaign. Pickets were out in force in many areas and miners all over the country are striving to build the solidarity links vital for victory.

## Derbyshire

THE MUCH vaunted 'surge back to work' in Derbyshire failed to materialise. Monday morning saw a good turnout of pickets at most pits. At Markham, near Bolsover, pickets were joined by women from action groups, who led the singing.

Whilst Arthur Scargill stated that there is no new strategy, many rank and file miners have held meetings to develop new tactics to bring about a victory.

At the last rank and file meeting at Clay Cross on Tuesday, a programme was put together including a day of action in Derbyshire on Friday 8 February, to correspond with the one in Yorkshire.

It was decided to produce leaflets aimed at workers in the area. Twinning between pits and factories was encouraged. Solidarity committees were to be formed, and other unionists asked to move resolutions backing the general strategy.

It was decided that for the next meeting council workers facing attack from government rate capping legislation and local bus workers who will be hit by de-regulation would be invited to speak.

The local Labour Party and Trades Council will be asked to join in the campaign.

Pickets from Renishaw Park gave everybody a shot in the arm by telling how Drax power station had to use three extra burners to cope with the cold weather, rapidly using up what little coal stocks remained.

● Over the weekend well-attended meetings were held at Worksop and Staveley. Arthur Scargill explained that at the last meeting with the Board in October the NUM had given more ground than before in an effort to reach a settlement. At the Staveley meeting Tony Benn told how Chesterfield Labour Party members were asked to go onto the same footing as during the by-election, with door to door canvassing to ensure a miners' victory.

## South Wales

THE BACK to work movement has failed completely to make any inroads into the strike in South Wales.

Before the Christmas break, the National Coal Board were claiming 130 miners in work in South Wales. On Monday 7 January they claim the 'surgeback' has meant that 141 are now working. However, the real figure calculated by the NUM is still 126 out of 20,000.

Almost all working miners are concentrated in just two pits, Cynheidre and Celynen, out of 27. Only one coke man is working out of thousands in South Wales.

However, many miners are concerned that the NUM leadership appears to be staying to its folded arms approach and simply asking members to sit tight.

Picketing money is short and men are getting frustrated. While the picketing must be maintained, new initiatives are needed, particularly in the Trent

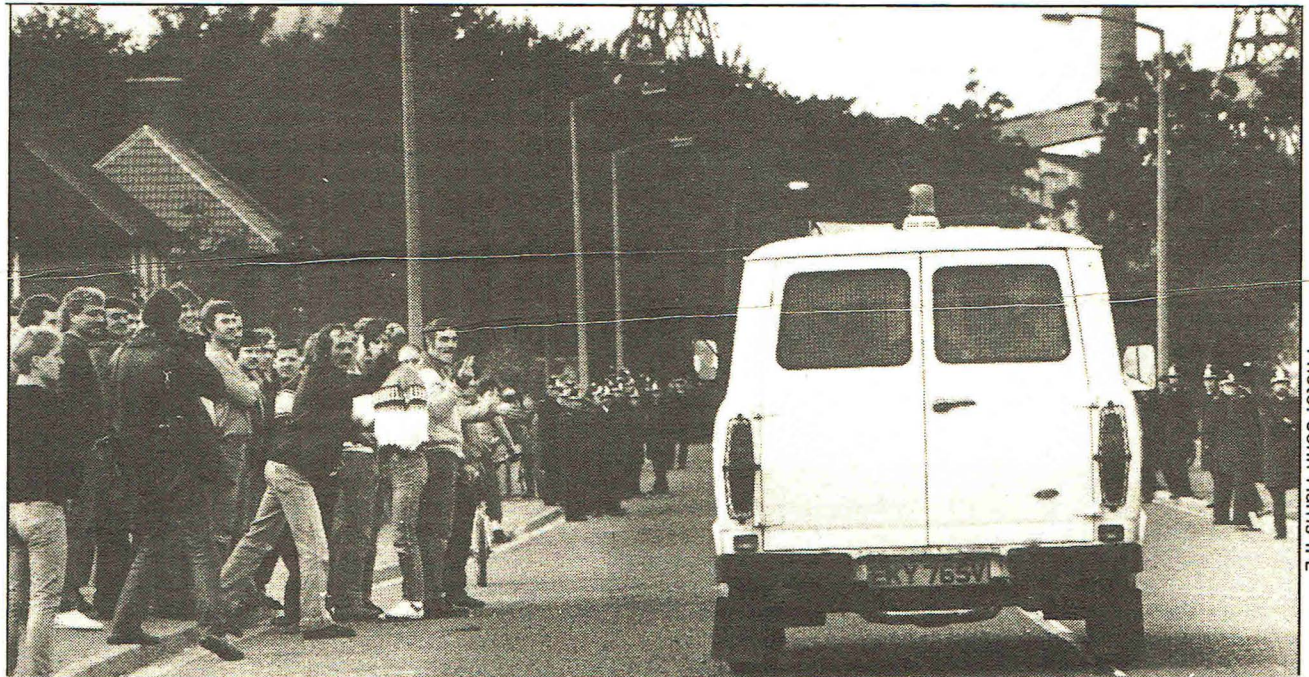


Photo: John Harris JFL

Pickets at Rossington pit show what they think about police vans going to pick up working miners.

Valley Power Station area, to help seal a victory.

## Scotland

"LET'S MAKE it a good new year together". So runs the festive message from the front page of *Coal News*, the Coal Board's paper in Scotland, received in the post at the weekend.

But even going by the Board's own distorted figures of 210 new faces, mainly in Ayrshire, there is no significant boom in the number of men returning to work in Scotland.

At Polkemmet pit—where the management are actually involved in planning the recovery programme, or rather non-recovery programme, of a pit flooded not by scabs but rather because of them—a total of 88 went in on the day shift this morning; a thundering 6.2% of the colliery workforce.

In Monktonhall the report is that the number of scabs is less today than before the holiday. Ian MacGregor and the Scottish Area Director, Albert Wheeler can continue to beat their empty heads against the brick wall of solidarity amongst the miners. Their heads will be the first to crack.

## Lancashire

LANCASHIRE MINERS picketing power stations discovered that coal from Lancashire is being transported to Staffordshire. Coal wagons from Bold have been transporting coal to Meaford Power station in Staffs.

At Meaford pickets found lorries going into the plant every minute; even small Ford tipper trucks loaded up with coal—clearly the NCB are employing every Tom,

Dick and Harry in the road haulage business to shift coal.

The miners are currently investigating why so much coal should be shifted to Staffordshire, which is already supplied from the county's working pits.

The Lancs miners began to effectively picket these supplies until police arrived and escorted them out of the county, back into Lancs.

Earlier in the week misfortune hit one scab coal driver. As he stopped off at Sandbach service station his tail gate mysteriously opened, leaving a large deposit on the ground.

● Bold NUM have called a solidarity conference for power, transport and other workers on Saturday 12 January.

## Yorkshire

IN YORKSHIRE the new year has begun as the old one

ended—the vast majority of miners solidly behind the strike.

The back to work drive by the NCB has been a flop. At the three main pits at Hemsworth, only a handful of scabs went in. At Kinsley Drift there is the grand total of one scab, while at South Kirby and Ferrymore Riddings, including the pits' joint washing plant, only two transit vans went in—and they weren't full.

A mass picket at Frickley colliery pushed back police who tried to get two scabs into the pit. The police only succeeded after reinforcements were drafted in. Tempers flared when a women picket was struck by police. The mood in Yorkshire is as determined as ever.

Reports from Willie Lane, Frank Cuthbert, Joe Owens, Jon Ingham and Gerry Lerner.

## Daily Mail... Red Shadow shock

EVEN THOUGH it is only a couple of weeks into 1985, the piece of nonsense that appeared in the *Daily Mail* on 4 January will take some beating this year.

The headline on the full-page article screamed: "The man we have to thank for Scargill". Who could it be you ask? Ian MacGregor perhaps, for provoking the longest strike in British industrial history? Or Mr Heath, for letting himself lose to Yorkshire's flying pickets in the 1970s?

But no, read on. The *Daily Mail* reports: "Revealed—the red shadow who made his pupil Arthur what he is today..." According to the *Mail* the trouble didn't start last March with the beginning of the strike, or even in 1981 when in the ballot for NUM president Arthur Scargill received 100,000 votes more than his nearest rival.

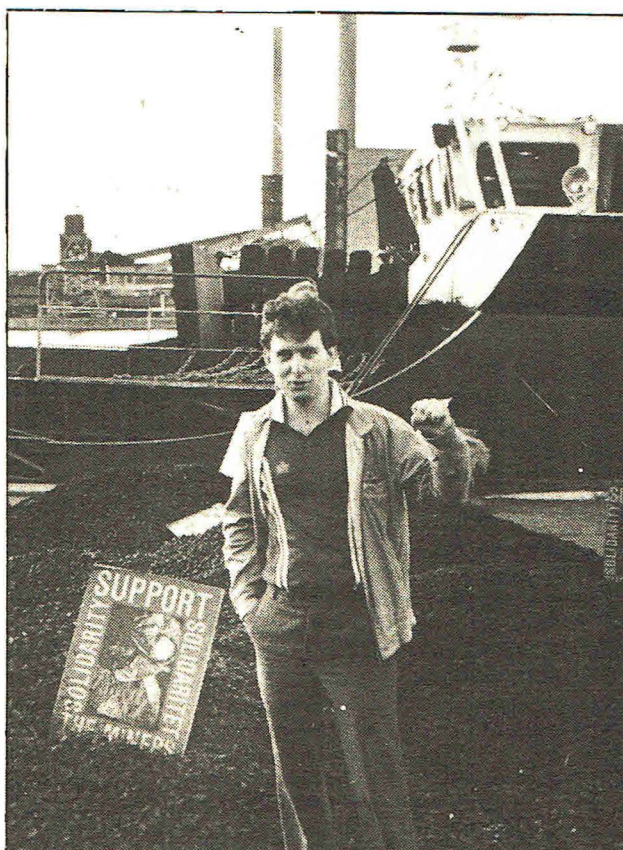
No, it all began 31 years ago in 1953! The problems

started with "...the arrival in Barnsley in October 1953 of a 32 year-old Scot named Frank Watters". Frank, says the *Mail*, was sent by the Communist Party to organise the Yorkshire coalfield and got Arthur into the Young Communist League. It was all downhill from there, moans the *Mail*. Just think, if it hadn't been for Frank, Arthur Scargill would probably have remained an ordinary rank and file miner, the NUM would still have a right wing leadership and there wouldn't have been a strike.

This marvellous piece of investigative journalism by the *Mail* consisted of reading the new book on Arthur Scargill by Michael Crick (yes, he's at it again). Next week it would be no surprise if the *Daily Mail* exclusively reveals: "The woman we have to thank for Scargill". Arthur's mother reveals how she really wanted a girl.

By Bob Wade

## Danish dockers support



Chris Herriot, Montonhall NUM, in Aarhus, Denmark, where dockers have given tremendous support to British miners.

Photo: Mediearbejderne Foto Og Aarkiv

## Scabs under stress

EXTRA DOCTORS have been appointed by the NCB to treat strike-breakers suffering from mental stress, Durham miners believe.

Harry Dinning, Chairman of Wearmouth Lodge NUM (Durham Area) told *Militant* that information received by the lodge shows that 12 doctors have been appointed by the Coal Board to counsel scabs at their place of work.

As an example of the pressures on scabs Brother Dinning quoted the 'confession' of one of his members who returned to work for four days before rejoining the strike: "Everything is fine on the bus until the

police get on board. Then you realise what you are doing.

"As the bus approaches the picket line and you hear the roaring of your mates, 'scab, scab, scab' you go all cold. The chants keep ringing in your ears all the time you're at work.

"You can't concentrate on what you're supposed to be doing. No-one talks at work. They must all be thinking the same thing. At night I can't sleep, I still hear the chants, 'scab, scab'. I have no peace. I'm glad I re-joined the strike."

By Bob Stothard

## TUC must act—Skinner

DENNIS SKINNER MP has urged the TUC to call industrial action in support of the miners.

In a New Year letter to Norman Willis, TUC General Secretary, he said: "In 1972 when a previous Tory administration was threatening the trade union movement, the TUC summoned up enough courage to call for a general strike in support of the five jailed dockers. What do you intend

to do now against this much more savage attack on all trade unions and the NUM in particular by the government? What other purpose does the TUC serve than to use co-ordinated action in support of one of its affiliates?"

Dennis Skinner has also written to Neil Kinnock calling on him to join in contributing the recently announced MPs' pay increase to the miners' funds.

## Miners' dispute

# The balance of power

Despite Energy Minister Walker's blasé 'guarantee' of no power cuts in '85, the Electricity Board (CEGB) felt it necessary to bombard the media last Tuesday with press releases boasting their survival of the highest demand ever made on the national grid. Clearly they are not as confident as Walker pretends to be and wished to maintain the propaganda offensive against the miners.

VIVIEN SEAL explains the state of coal stocks and power supply. She explains the factors which determine whether power cuts take place and the variables which affect such projections.

IF ONLY six big power stations are put out of action due to breakdowns or lack of coal, major power cuts could occur.

The power supply does not depend on total stocks of coal at power stations reaching zero. Minimum levels of coal in just one region would also produce power cuts.

Since the beginning of the miners' strike, the government has been extremely selective about the information on electricity supplies and possible power cuts. The Department of Energy has refused to answer any specific parliamentary questions for example about the National Grid's yellow alert on 5 November (see *Militant*, 9 November) or about power cuts that have already happened.

But information leaked to *Militant* is that the Department of Energy had forecast power cuts by the end of January to be highly probable.

Consumers of electricity, in collusion with the Tories and in exchange for cheaper tariffs, have agreed to voluntary power cuts on a rota basis. Reports of these voluntary cuts have come in from Doncaster, Wrexham and Ellesmere Port so far, while the whole of South Wales industry is "energy saving" between the peak hours of 4-7pm, several firms having been warned that their tariffs will go up if they do not comply. British Steel Corporation are reported to be running some plants on a 3-day week and Ford Motor Company are 'energy saving'.

## Squeezing the juice

THE NATIONAL Grid was intended to allow electricity to be generated near coalfields, oil terminals and other sources of fuel and sent wherever in the country it is required. It is cheaper to transport energy than fuel. However, the grid is not infinitely flexible, and there is a limit to how far electricity can be sent and how much of it can be sent from one region to another. For example, no more than 9GW can be sent from the Midlands and North via the Midlands-South inter-connectors. A secure winter maximum of only 1GW can be relied on from Scotland to England and the same amount from the power stations on the Thames Estuary. (1GW is the output of a medium-sized power station).

During the miners' strike, *Militant* has therefore been analysing the availability of electricity and of coal for generating electricity on a regional basis. Although the CEGB has large stockpiles of coal, more than half the total in England and Wales is in one region, the Midlands, where power stations have continued to receive coal from working pits. Even if there are increases in the total stockpiled, this does not mean that electricity supplies in other regions are secure.

Electricity must be generated as it is required. That means some power stations working all the time (on base-load) and others coming on-stream and supplying electricity when demand increases. The Electricity Supply Industry (ESI) operates a merit order, the order in which power stations come on-stream as demand increases to peak load. When there is no miners' strike the merit order is the order of efficiency of available power stations or the cost of generating a given amount of electricity at them.

In this case the coal-fired

power stations usually meet base-load requirements as they are much cheaper to run than oil-fired power stations. Oil-fired power stations come on-stream only when needed for peak demand. In fact, since the mid-1970s, the cost of oil-fired generation of electricity has been so high that several of the oil stations built in the late 1960s/early 1970s have been mothballed and only brought into use during this strike.

During the strike, oil-fired power stations have been meeting base-load requirements together with the hydro-electric and nuclear power stations. Midlands coal-fired stations have been next in merit order, while non-Midlands coal-fired stations have been trying to conserve coal by coming on

stream only at times of peak demand. Some of the largest and most efficient ones, eg Drax, Ferrybridge, Aberthaw and Fiddlers Ferry, are also those which are well organised. The workers have refused to accept new supplies of coal, and these power stations have been used as little as possible. West Thurrock on the Thames Estuary came off the grid altogether in November as a result of solidarity action.

However, at periods of peak demand, when the temperature is below 7 or 8°C in the late afternoon, plant and machinery is working, lights and heating systems are working and people are beginning to cook evening meals, then all these power stations will be working flat out.

## How it adds up

Maximum demand for electricity last year was 48.1GW. It is generous to to the CEGB to assume that power stations produce at about 80% of capacity, taking into account unplanned and planned closures.

Coal-fired plants can produce 22GW of a required 48GW this year. Midlands power stations can produce 9.8GW, which leaves 12.2GW to come from non-Midlands coal-fired

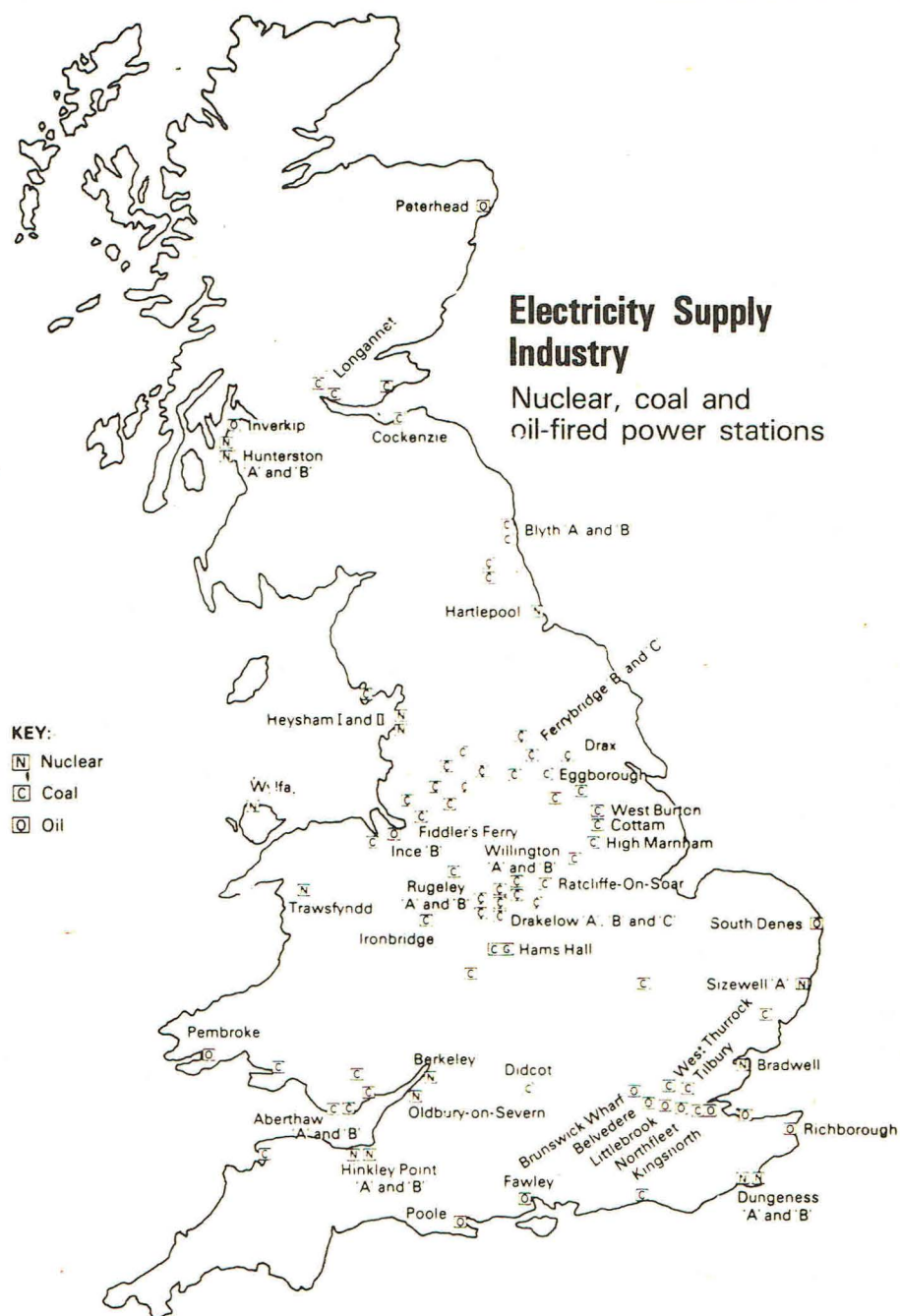
stations.

Continuing the assumption of 80% availability this amount of electricity would take up 15.3GW capacity of the non-Midland coal-fired capacity of 24.9GW. The difference, under 10GW, is the capacity which would have to be put out of action to bring about power cuts. That amounts to about six large power stations (see table below).

Power station	Capacity (GWSO)
West Thurrock	1.24
Fiddler's Ferry	1.88
Aberthaw A + B	1.71
Eggborough	1.72
Ferrybridge B + C	2.21
Drax A + B	2.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.26</b>



Scots miners leaflet power workers at Longannet power station. Effective solidarity action by power workers would quickly lead to power cuts. Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)



Picket of Didcot power station last year. Photo: John Harris (IFL)



Picket of West Thurrock power station still off the National Grid due to solidarity action. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

# Slow burn to power cuts

A CEBG document leaked to *New Scientist* in October gave a regional breakdown of power station coal stocks, (see table 1) and shows that coal stocks in regions outside the Midlands are low, and could reach minimum levels by the end of the January.

The rate at which coal

been exhausted by December. Little coal has been moved from striking pits.

3. Imports. So far all imports have gone to steelworks and consumers other than the Electricity Supply Industry (ESI).

4. Open-cast sites. Pro-

ing to power stations in the North West.

7. The availability of generating capacity. A power station cannot run flat-out 24-hours a day. It has to shut down for regular inspection and maintenance and in addition may shut down as a result of breakdowns and technical faults. We have assumed 80% availability. However, to bend over backwards to be "fair" to Walker, we can assume for this argument that nuclear power stations are operating at 85% availability, except for Hartlepool, Heysham and Dungeness B, while hydro-electric generation is operating at 90% capacity.

With the above assumption, and also assuming that no coal is delivered to and used at power stations outside the Midlands, the stockpiles at non-Midlands power stations reduce as follows (see table 2 below):

	Coal used by non-Midlands coal-fired power stations in tonnes/wk	Coal stocks Million tonnes
August	-	8.1
September	0.017	8.1
October	0.272	8.0
November	0.317	6.9
December	0.557	5.3
January	0.557	3.08
February	0.415	0.84
March	0.0002	-

NB: These figures underestimate the rate of coal burn because the non-Midlands coal-fired power stations were running before October and oil-fired power stations not running at maximum availability.

The minimum required for secure supplies of electricity is 2.46 million tonnes (mt), a figure reached by the end of January. This was the original forecast.

If, however, coal has been delivered to non-Midlands power stations from December, and used, then the figures go down as follows (see table 3 below):

	Million tonnes	
	A	B
August	8.1	8.1
September	8.1	8.1
October	8.0	8.0
November	6.9	6.9
December	5.8	6.3
January	4.0	4.9
February	2.1	3.4
March	0.6	2.4

A: If 100,000 tonnes/week delivered to power stations outside Midlands.

B: If 200,000 tonnes/week delivered to power stations outside Midlands.

Minimum levels (below 2.6 mt) are still reached in both cases this winter. In case A during February and in Case B during March.

In all these cases, coal stocks are forecast to run out this winter. These calculations are based on assumptions very generous to the CEBG and the government, for example, that nuclear power stations are available at 85% capacity (apart from Heysham, Hartlepool and Dungeness B).

However, in some regions coal stocks may well reach minimum levels sooner, and at some individual power stations coal should already be at a minimum. Given the difficulty of moving electricity around the country at will this could lead to earlier power cuts in some areas. In order to avert such threats the Tories are organising reductions in electricity use and are prepared to move strikebound coal.

TABLE 1

Region	Stocks at power stations (million tonnes)	Coal-fired capacity (GWSO)	Minimum stock levels to ensure security of electricity supplies (million tonnes)
Midlands	7.4	12.2	1.2
North East	3.6	10.5	1.0
North West	1.5	3.0	0.3
South East	1.2	3.1	0.4
Scotland	1.1	3.9	0.4
South West	0.7	4.3	0.4
TOTAL	15.5	8.1	3.8

stocks at power stations become depleted, or the amount of coal available to power stations, depends on a number of factors.

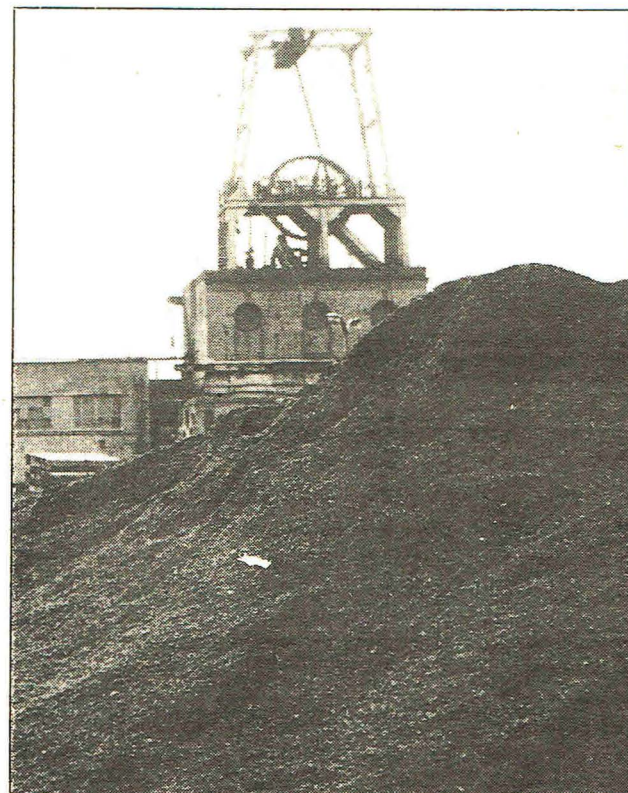
1. Amount of coal produced from deep mines. By mid-December, at the peak of the "drift back to work" it had only gone up to 600,000 tonnes/week, from 430,000 tonnes/week in May.

2. Reduction of stockpiles at pits. At the rate of moving coal from stocks at pit-heads where the pits are working, these should have

duction has been running at 250,000-300,000 tonnes/week with 100,000 tonnes/week being stockpiled and that rest going to consumers other than the ESI.

5. Demand for electricity. For the purpose of this calculation we assume demand to be the same as last year. Unusually severe or mild winters increase or decrease demand by about 5%.

6. Movement of coal. The coal going to power stations has mostly gone to those in the Midlands with some go-



# Fight the cancer of racism

**IN A recent speech to the Liverpool City Labour Group, Sam Bond, the new head of the city's Race Relations Unit, outlined how he saw the council's anti-racist policy should be developed:**

Black people continue to be treated with contempt. They are still condemned to the greatest misery and deprivation. And let us be frank, the labour movement must accept its share of responsibility in allowing the cancer of racism to spread and develop in this society.

Whether you like it or not, the record of Labour governments on the issue of race has been appalling. The labour movement in Liverpool has failed in the past to seriously address itself to the plight of blacks and other minorities. But now you must seize the opportunity to seriously take up the issue. You must declare war on racism.

## Unemployment

It was reported that a fascist organisation is planning to stage a conference in Liverpool. Such an event would be an insult to the black population and the labour movement. The council must make it clear that fascists are not welcome in this city.

In presiding over a programme of mass unemployment, the present govern-

By a *Militant* reporter

ment is in effect packing dynamite into the foundations of our inner cities. The council must therefore make no apology for vigorously challenging the policies of this present government as a central part of its anti-racist strategy.

We must work in partnership with the trade unions to ensure that our objective of achieving racial equality is realised within a measurable period of time. I am confident that we will be able to mobilise rank and file trade union support for the council's anti-racist strategy.

Much has been said about adopting a strategy of positive action and ethnic monitoring. I do not wish to dwell on these issues tonight, but for the record, I want to make it clear that I have never been opposed to these measures. But it would be a mistake to think that such action alone can solve the problem of racism.

Many Labour councils in London, and even some Conservative councils already make extensive use of positive action and



Black and white youth march against police harassment following the Toxteth riots of 1981. The labour movement must grasp the opportunity to oppose discrimination against black workers, Sam Bond told Liverpool councillors. Photo: Militant

monitoring. While these policies may have benefitted a handful of blacks, they have made very little impact in improving the conditions of the majority of unemployed blacks.

Positive action has been in operation for nearly ten years, yet in that time, unemployment amongst black people has risen by over 400%. Therefore, while I am not opposed to positive

action and monitoring, it is clear in Liverpool we need to go much further.

This council must distinguish itself by doing more than simply carrying out surveys, or providing jobs for a few weeks. Instead the council must show that it is prepared to carry out policies that can offer real hope for the thousands of blacks who desperately seek an end to the misery of

permanent unemployment.

I don't believe that you can tackle racism and at the same time carry out cuts in jobs and services. The battle against racism must be linked to the struggle to improve conditions for all working people.

## Scapegoat

Finally, may I say that it seems that I am being used

as a scapegoat for what is in reality a more general attack on the stand taken by the City Council. There are many who would like to see this council go down. But I am sure that you will continue to stand firm. You have declared a commitment to fighting against racism, and you must see that fight through to the very end.

## NALGO vote: Militant replies

**MILITANT HAS received the following letter from Peter Cresswell, branch secretary of the City of Liverpool NALGO branch:**

Dear Editor,  
Militant's coverage of the Liverpool City Council Race Relations Unit dispute has been full of so many lies and distortions about this Branch, that it is neither possible nor useful to try to correct them all in one letter. But you persist in claiming

that the boycott of the Unit is supported only by 'some NALGO officials'. Could you please therefore note that the boycott has now been supported by:

1. The Annual General Meeting of the Liverpool Branch of NALGO (with only 10 votes against)
2. The AGM of NALGO members in the City Solicitors Department, which is the Department where the Unit would be situated (with 6 votes against).

3. Liverpool City Council Joint Stewards Committee (at its biggest ever meeting).
4. Regional Councils of GMBATU and TGWU.
5. Liverpool Trades Council.

6. Many other TU and LP branches, which are too numerous to mention.

In other words, more than 'a few NALGO officials'. Please print these facts and call off your campaign of lies and vilification against the 6,000 members of this Branch.

**THE MILITANT editorial staff reply:**

We reject Peter's accusation that we have printed 'lies and distortions' about Liverpool NALGO, and we also reject the accusation that we have used 'lies and vilification' against 6,000 Liverpool branch NALGO members.

Our coverage of the dispute surrounding the appointment of Sam Bond has not been as extensive as we would have wished. We have attempted though to provide a political analysis to explain the real issues that lay behind this controversy.

## One-sided

We accept that the AGM of Liverpool branch NALGO did overwhelmingly pass a resolution to boycott work attached to the Race Adviser post—albeit with fewer than 150 members present. We also accept the points made in relation to support other bodies have given. It is true though that this support has generally been given on the

basis of only hearing one side of the story. However, it is also true that many Labour Party wards, constituencies and trade union branches have indicated their support for Sam Bond's appointment.

The fact remains that little concrete support exists for the efforts of the Black Caucus to remove Sam Bond, in particular from the black community itself. Only 100 or so black people attended the recent well publicised demonstration to oppose his appointment. When you consider that the Black Caucus claims the support of 38 project type groups it can be seen that support for their campaign from local people has been less than enthusiastic.

It is not and never has been the deliberate intention of this paper to print inaccurate reports. Where we do so we readily admit it. However, having seen the material provided by Liverpool NALGO and the Black Caucus, it is clear that the charges of 'lies and distortions' should in fact be levelled at them.

## Asian support for Sam Bond

**LEADERS OF Liverpool's Asian community have said they will work with Sam Bond. Syed Safiruddin, chairman of the Merseyside Asian Social and Cultural Organisation and president of the local Pakistan Association told the Asian Herald (31 December):**

'We feel that if the person—whether for political or whatever reasons—has been elected or chosen by a majority then he should be ac-

cepted. If he is wrong for the job and things get worse then we will be among the first to demand that he should not be in the job—but we think he should be given a chance.'

Sam Bond is now also receiving a flood of letters

from black workers requesting help and advice, including a plea from a woman who has been petrol-bombed by racists. Unfortunately, however, the NALGO boycott is seriously hindering action being taken to help in these cases.

## Support Portsmouth Poly: 23 January

**A NATIONAL demonstration in support of struggle at Portsmouth Polytechnic has been called for 23 January. The call for this march comes as support is growing for the Portsmouth students.**

We are demanding no rises in hall fees above the increase in grants and no extra charges levied on equipment essential for various courses. An occupation of the Poly was carried out, which had the support of 66% of students balloted in a cross campus poll. Despite this support, the governors brought in the law courts and the union was fined £20,000, twice the cost of meeting our demands.

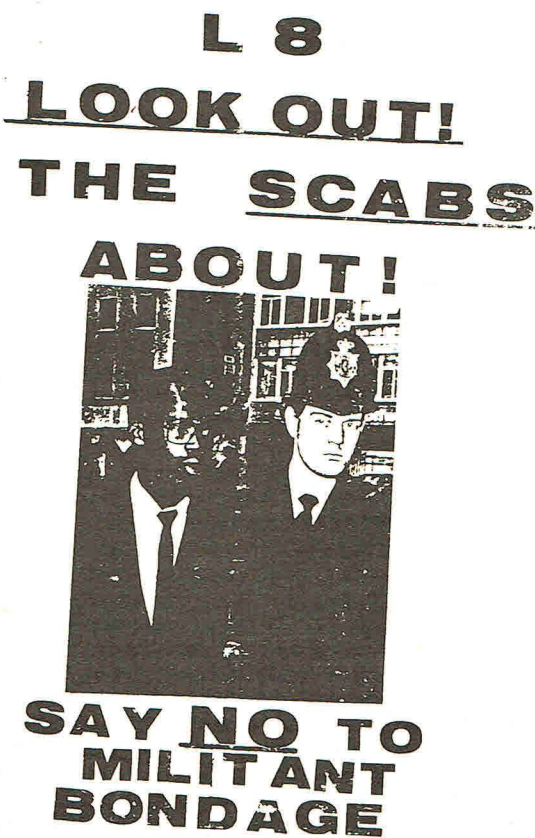
We took our case to the NUS conference in December, where the national demonstration was called, with a target attendance of 15,000. The NUS nationally is organising free coaches to the march.

Following the NUS conference the occupation was ended peacefully, when the bailiffs arrived. The students marched out behind the student union banner, to the applause of caretakers and cleaners at the site.

The student union is building support for the 23rd, preparing for a rent strike in the halls of residence for the spring term, and calling on the poly's Joint Trade Union Committee to hold a one-day strike on the day. Members of the poly Labour Club took our case to the local Labour Party, which unanimously supported our action, and backed the 24-hour strike call and the demonstration.

It is becoming clear to students and staff alike that the present attack by the authorities over our relatively small demands will pale into insignificance when we attempt to protect services, our grants and campus jobs which face cutbacks. We recently discovered the poly governors are preparing to restructure the poly to turn it into a university, with of course less places and less jobs. It is vital that unity is achieved between the students and the public sector unions to fightback, not only at Portsmouth Poly but nationally, to defend public sector jobs and services.

By Heiko Khoo  
(Portsmouth Poly Labour Club)



One of the scurrilous leaflets put out by opponents of Sam Bond in Liverpool. This is the sort of 'lies and vilification' Sam Bond is having to struggle against in his anti-racist work in the city.

# Can local Councils default on debt?

**YOUR LOCAL council is up to its ears in debt. In 1980 local authorities in England and Wales owed over £32,000m — £659 for every man, woman or child ie 20% of the Gross Domestic Product. How did they get themselves in this position?**

Local government is not allowed to borrow to pay for current spending on wages and services. The vast bulk of debt is built up by long-term borrowing for housing. These loans stretch out for 60 years. So councils are still paying for houses built in 1925—houses which may have been knocked down by now. Likewise debts contracted for housing this year will still be outstanding in 2045.

## Poorest hit hardest

Councils are at the mercy of market fluctuations in interest rates. In 1979-80 local councils coughed up a grand total of £3,649 million—not to provide any service to the public or even to pay off part of their debt, but merely to pay the debt interest.

Naturally this problem hits hardest the poorest boroughs with the worst social problems and most

run-down housing stock. Hackney, England's poorest borough, has to put aside nearly one third of its revenue just to appease the money lenders. This represents a massive subsidy by the have-nots to the rich and powerful.

Who gains? Over one third of local authority borrowing comes from central government. Here the state acts as a transmission mechanism, raising the cash either by taxing us or by borrowing and adding to the burden of central government interest payments—which again we pay.

Loans from the government give the Tories leverage over Labour councils, as they control the purse strings, how much you can spend and what on.

The majority of the rest comes from the banks. Since no local authority has gone bust for donkey's years they sit securely gathering the profits from local hardship. If Labour local councils, their workers and the local community are to fight the cuts and work to improve local services they must squarely face up to the crippling burden of local authority debt.

Some councillors have talked about 'rescheduling' debts like Argentina and Mexico, to get more favourable repayment terms.

The problems can be seen on the

arena of international debt. The *Financial Times* survey of the World Economy, September 1984, pointed out:

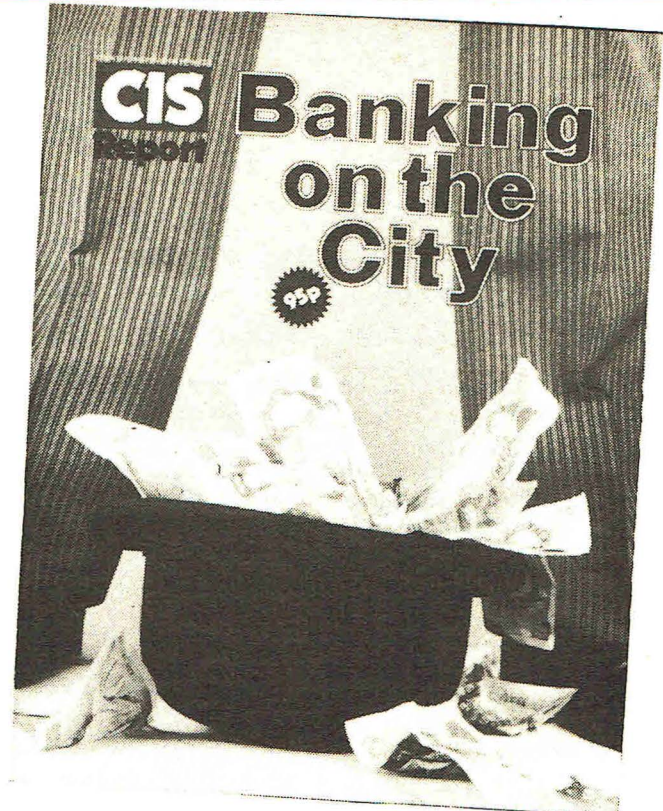
"The dozens of proposals which have been put forward in the last two years for 'solving' the Third World debt crisis have one thing in common: they involve someone, somewhere, acknowledging a loss..."

## Rescheduling option

"It appears unlikely therefore that banks...will think seriously about any longer term solution to the debt crisis unless the borrowing countries persuade them that such a solution would actually be less expensive than the current arrangements. There seems to be only one reason why the industrialised world should believe this; if it became convinced that the probable outcome of present arrangements will be default."

The article goes on to show how Western creditors use "divide and rule" to isolate countries which raise objections to IMF austerity while favouring those that perform well on their IMF programmes.

If a country like Brazil with 130 million people and immense natural wealth finds it impossible to avoid being manipulated by its creditors, what chance would an



CIS report: *Banking in the City* details the workings of the city. Available from World Socialist Books, 3 - 13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Price £1.20 (incl p+p).

isolated Labour council have? In fact even the threat of asking to reschedule would push interest rates up now—and make things worse. The Tories could also think about cutting government loans as a punishment.

Rescheduling can only be done if it is in the interests of the creditors—which it obviously is not.

The other option being canvassed in local Labour Parties is to default. This means an all out fight. We have to understand that and not drift into confrontation unprepared.

The debt burden is monstrous and impossible, but if an individual

council decided not to pay, the Tories would probably send in a receiver, whose instructions are the interest payments come first—before wages or services.

## Mass movement

The only way a policy of default would be viable, is to build a mass movement capable of defying the Tories, the banks and the courts. Default is not a soft option. The only way to win the fight is by the mass mobilisation of local unions and people with the broad sympathy and support of the national labour movement.

# How the banks rob you

**Workers need money. They never get enough. During their lives they need to put money by for all sorts of purposes and they need to safeguard their savings against inflation.**

Your money ends up in the hands of the big banks and other financial institutions. Employers are trying to get more and more workers to open accounts to accept payment by cheque. The big four banks (Barclay's, Lloyds, Nat West, and the Midland) have the lion's share of high street banking. For the chore of monopolising the handling of money, they award themselves enormous profits (£1,100 million 1983/4).

All the financial commentators have noted the big increases in provision for bad debt, an obvious way for them to conceal the even bigger profits they really made. As a result they pay lower tax than the average UK resident! The banks, apart from charging you for the privilege of borrowing your money, lend it out again at a high rate of interest—mainly to big business. In so doing they turn money into capital, to be used to squeeze more out of working people.

Building societies, insurance companies and pension funds also wield enormous economic power. Insurance companies have two main jobs. First they underwrite—that is they work out what chance your house has of burning down, and charge you accordingly. A socialist society would also have a reserve or contingency fund.

Secondly they act as investment trusts, speculating with your money. Currently

they own 20% of all shares quoted on the London Stock Exchange. The homely 'Pru' has a share capital of £121m but investments of £13,000m, a hundred and ten times as much. As with the banks huge sums flow out to the shareholders.

Pension funds have also boomed in the last 20 years with 12 million people driven by the rundown of the state pension into occupational schemes. The funds control £100 billion investment capital, a quarter of all UK shares.

## Used against you

The CIS pamphlet "Banking in the city" uses the example of the BICC scheme. "A male factory process worker will have to live to the age of 75 just to recover the capital sum of his contributions. Only by living longer will he receive any benefit from the capital gains, interest and dividends which should have been accruing for 40 years. The average life expectancy of a man in this country is 70 years, and less of an industrial worker."

In effect your money is used to make other people's fortune for up to 50 years, and most people never get it all back, nor are pension fund managers particularly adroit investors. According to the *Financial Times* "A five-year old who picks stocks by throwing darts at the back pages of the *Finan-*



Selling gold and money on the financial futures market.

*cial Times* would on average do just as well."

Where does our money end up? Not all of it is invested in this country. In 1983 £6.25 billion went out of the country as 'portfolio' investments (buying shares abroad); this is apart from direct investment abroad by British multinationals.

Not all of it is invested in manufacturing anywhere. A lot goes to buy government securities—loans to the Tories so they can spend more on nuclear weapons and 'flying picket—busters' for the coalfields (The Public Sector Borrowing Requirement stood last year at over

£8,000 million—3% of Gross Domestic Product).

## Write-off debts

All our money goes completely out of our control, and is used against us. The big financial institutions are part and parcel of the capitalist establishment. Through their control over the availability of loans they can dictate to big manufacturing firms and attempt to impose discipline on the anarchy of the system.

When socialists raise the need to take over the banks, write off the debts to local



Bank cards have seen a great expansion of credit, from which banks profit.

authorities and grant interest-free loans to build up necessary services, the question is raised "what about our deposits?"

Trotsky's transitional programme answers, "The expropriation of the banks in no case implies the expropriation of bank deposits. On the contrary, the single state bank will be able to create much more favourable conditions for the small depositor than could the private banks".

What we want to do away is the way in which the financial edifice perpetuates the division of society into haves and have nots. Because it has such enormous power, because it attempts to impose order even on capitalist anarchy, the banking system will be a major lever of a

planned economy.

This should be done in conjunction with taking over the major monopolies. In 1981 the remaining private French banks were taken into state ownership by President Mitterand. But this has not meant socialism. Over the last four years French workers have suffered cuts in their wages and their social wages.

## Nationalise banks

The labour movement in France as in Britain needs to go forward to take over the commanding heights of manufacturing industry. But the nationalisation of the banks will be a mighty step forward towards a socialist future.

# Bloody Sunday 19

**EIGHTY YEARS ago the giant Russian Empire was shaken to its foundations. When the Tsar's troops on 'Bloody Sunday' January 9 1905 fired on an unarmed, defenceless demonstration they provoked over the next twelve months, the largest revolutionary working-class struggle in the world.**

Armed only with religious icons, 140,000 men, women and children, filled with naive hopes and illusions, marched to the Winter Palace to implore the Tsar to intercede on their behalf against the capitalists and landlords. "Sire", their petition pleaded, "we workers, our children and wives, the helpless old people who are our parents, we have come to you, Sire, to seek justice and protection." With a terrible foreboding it concluded, "if you fail to hear our plea, we shall die here, in this square in front of your palace."

1,000 did perish and over 2,000 were injured. But the first volley-shot shattered the workers faith in Tsarism for ever.

What was Russia like at the turn of the century? Much of it was still locked in medieval backwardness. 61% of the labour force still tilled the land in 500,000 scattered villages. One third did not even own a horse to pull their plough.

The majority of Russians were illiterate and impoverished peasants. Crowning this remnant of feudalism within modern capitalist Europe, sat the Tsarist autocracy with its one million troops, its secret police and political prisoners.

## Modern factories

But sleepy old Russia was being rudely awakened. Foreign capital pushed its way in and forced through the first phases of industrialisation that weak Russian capitalism was incapable of generating itself. So industry did not grow up gradually as in Britain, for instance. Mass production arrived in Russia ready-made, on the end of a pound note or a dollar bill.

These huge modern factories transplanted from Western Europe were then filled with raw peasant labour. All this meant that the Russian workers were not so set in their ways or conventional, but more able to respond with revolutionary action. By 1905 the Russian workers were 10 million strong, 3 million of them in factories.

It was against this background that Russian Socialists had to develop their perspectives for the coming revolution. The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party had only really been formed in the years leading up to 1905 and within all its factions and groups there was a general understanding that revolution would take place. The form of revolution, however, was open to debate.

Its Menshevik wing, dogmatically following what they saw as the letter of Marxism, declared the coming revolution to be a classical "bourgeois democratic" or capitalist revolution. Under the leadership of the liberal capitalists absolutism and landlordism would be cast out, land would be redistributed to the peasants and a modern, capitalist, Parliamentary democracy ushered in.

Lenin and Trotsky, however, using the method of Marxism and applying it to Russian conditions, ac-

## By Jeremy Birch

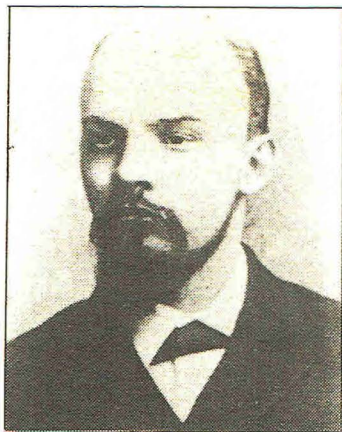
cepted that the country still waited on the tasks of the democratic revolution, but believed that only the workers and peasants could complete them.

European capitalism may have had its progressive period in 1789 or 1848, they argued, but there was nothing progressive about the Russian capitalists. They were too feeble compared to the strength of the Tsarist state. They had not even developed Russian industry. Now, with a growing working class, they were petrified of instigating any radical movement against the Tsar for fear, as Lenin explained, that the workers would "turn against the bourgeoisie the guns which the bourgeois revolution will place in their hands."

Lenin saw the looming revolution leading to a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry," which would carry through the democratic revolution, instead of the capitalists. He anticipated that the revolution would directly inspire socialist revolutions in the more developed countries of Europe, which would then help the Russian workers to move on to socialist planning of industry.

Trotsky's perspective was yet more precise. The working class he felt were the only consistently revolutionary force, and it must draw the peasants behind it in the struggle for power. But once having completed the democratic revolution, there could be no time gap before the implementation of socialist tasks.

The workers could never be satisfied with stopping at establishing democratic capitalism, they would immediately move on by the very methods of struggle and their conditions to expropriate big business.



Lenin, the main theoretical force behind the Bolshevik faction of the RSDLP, later the Bolshevik Party.

But of course weak Russian socialism could only be consolidated and sustained by international socialism and the assistance of industrially advanced socialist countries in Western Europe. Hence the revolution, for Trotsky, would be a continuous, permanent revolution.

1905 put every theory to the test. The revolution received its inspira-



Painting of 1905 by Soviet artist Valentin Serov. "Soldiers, soldiers, heroes every one..."

tion with Tsarism fatally weakened by the debacle of the Russo-Japanese War. The two states had clashed in the imperialist scramble for China.

But in Russia's defeat all the rottenness and corruption of the autocracy and its generals had been exposed. In the final rout at Mukden in 1904, Russia lost 120,000 dead, wounded or captured. As with the Argentinian dictatorship's defeat in the Falklands, the opposition was given the confidence to raise its head.

1904 closed with a campaign of banquets, petitions and resolutions by the liberal capitalists, and of more radical demonstrations by the students.

By January 3 1905 the massive Putilov metal works in St Petersburg was on strike over the sacking of four members of the Assembly of Russian workers, trade union. Within a few days a city-wide general strike was in progress. It lasted a week, with 'Bloody Sunday' falling in the middle.

The priest Father Gapon who led the march to the Winter Palace had set up the union and for want of any other organisation the workers had joined. In fact it was one of several police inspired unions, set up to trap militants.

Yet the Marxists felt compelled to join these unions, to win the workers within. Due to their influence and the mood of the masses, once the storm broke the union was out of the control of the state, and Gapon—an accidental leader—was carried along on the tide.

In January 1905 in the wake of Bloody Sunday 444,000 workers struck, more than in the whole of the previous decade. All the main cities were affected. Throughout the early part of the year disconnected strikes continued.

In May 200,000 struck. 70,000 workers stayed on strike from May to August to Ivanova-Voznesk, organised by the Bolshevik's Northern Committee. Barricades appeared in a general strike and 3 day battle with the police in Lodz, according to Lenin the Russian workers' first armed action.

As the struggle spread, so Trotsky noted "every day brought new strata of the population to their feet and gave birth to new possibilities. Workers' strikes, incessant meetings, street processions, wreckings of country estates, strikes of policemen and janitors and finally unrest and mutiny among the soldiers and sailors."

The peasants after a summer of revolt, held their first congress of peasant representatives in August. Disturbances in the armed forces broke out, particularly in the Black Sea fleet, for example on the battleship Potemkin. In June it was moored at Odessa which was engulfed in a general strike. The crew mutinied and tried to rouse the rest of the fleet, but finally surrendered at a Rumanian port.

In the face of the broad sweep of the revolution the Tsar's Interior Minister Bulygin, in August offered an elected assembly (Duma), but only with the power to suggest laws. Before this phoney concession could be convened, it was cut across by the even more dramatic

events of the Autumn.

Moscow printers struck towards the end of September, and other Moscow workers came out in sympathy. The railways began to stop. By early October 750,000 were involved in an all Russia rail strike, paralysing the country. Their demands? An 8 hour day, civil liberties, an amnesty for political prisoners and a genuine constituent assembly.

## The Soviet of Workers' Deputies

This was a directly political battle. By October 10 Moscow was under a general strike, by the 13th so was St Petersburg. Within a week nearly every major city was out. Even the dancers from the imperial ballet participated.

To organise the strike in St Petersburg a meeting was called of delegates from the various workplace strike committees. Thus the Petersburg Council (Soviet) of Workers' Deputies was born, and its model was copied in many strikebound cities.

The key Petersburg Soviet had one delegate for every 500 workers and an Executive of 22 worker delegates and 3 from each of the workers' parties—Social Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and Bolsheviks.

The Bolsheviks, like the other parties, at first failed to grasp the importance of this workers' assembly and insisted that it accept the Marxist programme or disband. Hence the Mensheviks may have held a numerical superiority, but in the main Bolshevik policies



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The leaders of the Petrograd Soviet on trial in 1906. Trotsky, President of the Soviet, is standing left of centre, holding papers.

proved strong enough to overthrow the Tsar, Witte's concession proved to be the means by which he won over the liberals to help in resisting the revolution, with the state forces of Tsarism intact.

The manifesto was followed by the unleashing of the forces of black reaction. The fascist Black Hundred gangs were let loose, with police connivance, on the Jews and on worker activists. In the worst pogrom 300 Jews were killed in Odessa in October. Throughout Russia 4,000 died in a hundred cities. At the same time General Trepove issued the order "spare no bullets".

But the workers and the Soviet were not done yet. They pushed ahead with their own workers' demands, distancing themselves further from the liberals. The Petersburg Soviet took over the leadership of the 8 hour campaign, successfully instructing workers to leave work after 8 hours, in defiance of contracts etc.

In November the workers struck back against the onset of reaction, in particular the imposition of martial law in Poland and Tambov province and the sentencing to death of sailors from the Kronstadt mutiny of late October.

sky, and to dissolve the Soviet with troops. The Soviet leaders may have wanted to postpone the decisive clash, but now they could not avoid it. Even at the risk of serious defeat, they could not allow this open challenge to go unanswered.

### Strike crumbled

The Petersburg Soviet called the workers to action once more. A general strike had already broken out in Moscow and was spreading to other towns. But after a year of leading the revolution of strikes and demonstrations, the Petersburg workers were tired. Their greater experience told them this time it was all or nothing. Not confident of victory they backed away. The strike there began to crumble after four days.

Moscow was the centre of the December events. The general strike went over to barricades and five days of all out armed struggle.

The Bolsheviks had been instrumental in establishing and arming workers' defence forces for this inevitable clash. They had hoped to neutralise the Moscow garrison, but failed. Indeed troops from every corner descended on

haunting skirmishes. Marxism lacked the decisive authority that is needed, to bring together all the workers' reserves of energy and courage on the same day, behind the same organisation.

"Unfortunately", said Lenin "the peasants were too scattered, too isolated from each other in their actions, they were not organised enough." In fact many peasants had illusions in the Duma solving the land problem.

And in the end the army stood firm. Mutinies were rife "but what they lacked", continued Lenin, "was persistence, a clear perception of aim." Often the soldiers' inexperience led to them releasing the reactionary officers they had just arrested.

But during 1905 the future course of 1917 was sketched out, and the clarity of the permanent revolution theory demonstrated. Liberal capitalism in 1905 had betrayed the revolution, and its own declared aims. Nothing more could be expected of it. The working class proved by their willingness to struggle and their ability to organise, especially in the Soviets, that they alone could lead a successful revolution.

However, the 8-hour struggle

posed the October 1917 Revolution, which Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks led.

To Lenin 1905 was "the prologue to the coming European revolution." 1905 was a decisive turning point in the political preparation of the Russian working class for 1917. Without the experience of the first revolution, the October revolution of 1917 would not have taken place.

Many of the army regiments used to crush the earlier revolution were to be in the forefront of the second revolution. The workers were hardened and tempered like steel in the forge of the 1905 events.

### 1905 a preparation for 1917

Probably the most valuable lesson of all—one the workers were to apply with such a decisive influence twelve years later—was the organisation of workers councils, or Soviets. The Soviets in 1905 and in 1917 were living organs of workers' struggle. The Soviet deputies were ordinary workers, on the wage of the workers and subject to immediate recall.

The Soviet functioned as the only authority to which the workers would respond, so that in the course of 1917 especially when soldiers and peasants participated in the Soviet it became the foundation of a mass struggle against Tsarism, capitalism and landlordism.

Workers in Britain need to study the experiences and struggles of workers internationally. 1905 was a defeat, but it proved to be a vital part of the political preparation for 1917.

Political developments in Britain will not follow the same course as in Russia seventy or eighty years ago. But British workers are now going through experiences that are unprecedented in fifty years. Even the spokesmen of capitalism have admitted that after the miners' strike, "things will never be the same". But it is important that workers today see their struggles in the context of the inevitable movement of society towards greater class struggle. Capitalism can offer no future to workers today, the miners' strike in Britain may prove to be as important a watershed for the modern labour movement as 1905 was for Russian workers.

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Again the workers responded to the Soviet's call for a general strike. At this stage "if anything still restrained the onslaught of reaction, it was only the fear of the revolution's inevitable response," commented Trotsky. The government announced there would be no executions and martial law would be lifted. The strike ended.

But a final settlement could not be far off. "The inexorable trend of the Russian Revolution," wrote Lenin, "was towards an armed, decisive battle between the Tsarist Government and the vanguard, the class conscious proletariat."

The autocracy felt strong enough by December to arrest the Petersburg Soviet Executive including its president, Leon Trot-

sky, including the Semenov regiment from Petersburg where the workers were now inert. 1,000 died as the Moscow workers were defeated. On December 19 the city Soviet had to call the strike off.

The December defeat really marked the end of the revolution, although strikes continued through 1906 and even into 1907. Tsarism had the confidence to dissolve the liberal dominated Duma soon after it first met, and to restrict its successors still more.

The 1905 revolution was a mighty movement of the working-class, a dress rehearsal for the 1917 socialist revolution, but temporarily Tsarism escaped. The workers rose many times, but in too many unco-ordinated and ultimately ex-

proved that the battle for democracy, important as it was, would not be enough for them. Once roused to action they would naturally pursue their own demands, including revolutionary socialist demands.

All that the Menshevik Plekhanov with his dread of frightening the liberals could say of the December rising—"they should not have taken to arms."

"On the contrary", Lenin retorted "we should have taken to arms more resolutely, energetically and aggressively; we should have explained to the masses that it was impossible to confine ourselves to a peaceful strike and that a fearless and relentless armed fight was indispensable." The Mensheviks op-

predominated.

Even as the general strike finished, the Soviet was displaying the early characteristics of an alternative government. It was the only authority the workers obeyed. The Petersburg Soviet declared that no paper should be printed whose owner submitted it to the state censorship committees. The printers implemented this to the letter. So temporarily, in the sphere of censorship at least, the Soviet, not the Tsar, ruled.

"The Soviet," wrote Trotsky "won the freedom of the press. It organised regular street patrols to ensure the safety of citizens. To a greater or lesser extent, it took the postal and telegraph services and railways into its hands."

In this atmosphere of relative freedom Lenin was able to return from exile. He appreciated at once the significance of the Soviet. He accepted the Petersburg workers' own description of it as a "workers' government".

The liberal capitalists also understood the Soviet threat. Here was the means by which the workers would go far beyond the struggle for democracy, and could challenge the rule of Tsarism, capitalism and all. For Russian liberalism the revolution had gone far enough.

On October 17, on behalf of the Tsar, Count Witte unveiled a constitutional manifesto promising a legislative Duma with a wider franchise. "The sacred crown of the Tsar's absolutism bears forever the trace of the proletariat's boot," said Trotsky.

But as the workers had still not

## Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Singapore

# Divide and rule - or workers' unity

**NOVEMBER and December saw a bloody intensification of the Tamil national question in Sri Lanka. In this period, according to the Sunday Times well over 500 people, innocent Tamil and Sinhala civilians, government security forces and policemen and Tamil guerrillas were killed.**

By N Moorthy  
(NSSP UK)

Further the military repression, day and night curfews, bomb scares and permanent insecurity in the Jaffna peninsula for many years has now begun to spread to the rest of the island.

The blame lies with the chauvinist policies of the ruling right-wing United National Party (UNP) regime and previous capitalist governments who have continued the practice of British imperialism, using racialism and chauvinism to "divide and rule".

In 7½ years of UNP government there have been four major anti-Tamil pogroms killing thousands of Tamil civilians, with thousands of homes destroyed and millions of pounds worth of belongings lost. The Tamil province is effectively under military rule, occupied by a predominantly Sinhala-speaking Sri Lankan army. Their "anti-terrorist" activities consist of harassment of women, children and old folk, arbitrary arrest and torture of Tamil youth and generally terrorising the civilian population.

All TULF MPs, democratically elected by the Tamils in 1977, have been suspended from parliament and parliamentary elections postponed from 1983 till 1989.

## Persecution

Since May 1982 the whole island has been under Emergency conditions allowing arbitrary arrests, press censorship and proscription of leftist parties such as the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) and the JVP.

In December the army went on a shooting spree in Mannar killing over 100 civilians and arresting 725 young Tamils during a 61 hour curfew. The government's ban on fishing has denied 25,000 Tamils their income. Food, medical supplies and other goods are increasingly scarce. Up to 80,000 Tamils have fled abroad to escape the repression.

These policies combined with racial persecution, discrimination in education, bleak employment prospects, constant military persecution for being "suspected Tigers", and the daily misery and instability of life have driven Tamil youth into violent opposition.

Military repression has in-



The Jayawardene government depends more and more on military backing.

creased their determination to fight back. The Tamil guerrillas launched a campaign of bombings in the south.

The tempo increased in early December when guerrillas threatened a seaborne invasion of northern Sri Lanka and attacked two fishing villages in the North East and two Sinhalese settlement farms in North Central province. For the first time some 100 Sinhalese civilians were shamefully massacred by the guerrillas.

Despite the undoubted heroism of the young guerrillas the last two months again revealed the futility of

100-300% salary increases awarded to Ministers and MPs. But the further development of this opposition is cut across by such atrocities which only serve to reinforce the divide and rule strategy of the ruling class.

## Colonisation

The NSSP has always opposed the government's forced racial colonisation of the Tamil provinces. However Sinhalese settlers are in no way responsible for government policies or repression. The massacres of civilians at these settlement farms was a conscious attempt by a section of the guerrillas to pro-

rapidly evaporates in the heat of economic and national disintegration an invasion of Sri Lanka would temporarily boost popularity just as the Bangladesh invasion was used by Indira Gandhi in 1971.

An invasion would divide the island not along the presently-projected boundaries of Tamil Eelam (northern and eastern provinces) but would have to include the Tamil-populated tea-growing central and southern regions to give economic viability. The Indian government could not ignore the plantation Tamils (of recent Indian origin) living in these areas also populated by Sinhalese.

A bloody civil war, huge population movements, devastation of the economy and two military dictatorships in the north and south of the island, (after the annihilation of all opposition from workers and marxists in the south and left-wing Tamil guerrillas in the north) would result.

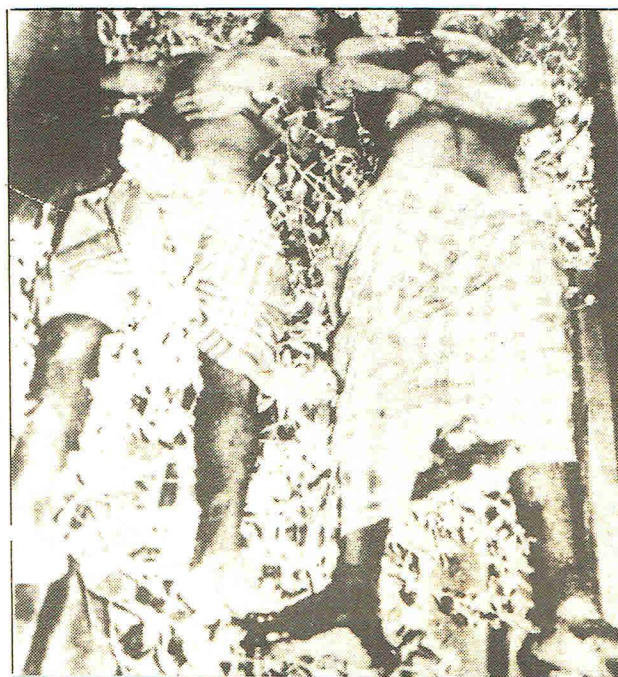
## Reactionary

The Tamil state would be in reality a province of India (just as northern Cyprus is economically and militarily dependent and controlled by Turkey). Tamil Eelam would be ruled centrally from Delhi with a dominant Hindi language, facing arbitrary overthrow of state governments as in Andhra Pradesh, semi-military rule and denial of elections as in Punjab and Assam etc. From every angle an Indian invasion would have totally reactionary consequences.

The NSSP would oppose military intervention from any capitalist power, be they US Imperialism or Israel in support of the government or an Indian military invasion. The NSSP calls for the establishment of workers and peasants committees and militias to defend all Tamils from racist attacks, to defend workers' rights from Sinhalese fascist gangs and prepare to fight any foreign invasions.

This would be coupled to a class appeal to Indian soldiers to turn their arms against their own reactionary oppressors—the Indian capitalists—and to join with their Sinhala and Tamil class brothers.

To be continued in future issues.



Atrocities against Tamils were committed by UNP racists soon after Jayawardene's election in 1977.

guerrillaism and individual terrorism.

The bombing campaign in Colombo, which resulted in the deaths of innocent Sinhalese workers and shanty-dwellers, far from bringing down the UNP regime, actually helped strengthen Jayawardene's position.

They drove the Sinhala masses into supporting the government and allowed Jayawardene to lay the blame for the crisis on the Tamils and try to whip up Sinhala nationalist hysteria. These attacks also tend to cut across opposition struggles and strikes of the workers and peasants.

The seething class discontent of Sinhala workers was demonstrated by the recent island-wide hospital workers strike.

Workers are furious at the

voke a Sinhala chauvinist backlash in the south and a 1983-style pogrom.

They hoped this would increase pressure on Rajiv Gandhi to send Indian troops into Sri Lanka to help defend the Tamils and establish a separate state. The attempted seaborne invasion by the guerrillas coincided with these attacks.

An Indian invasion cannot be ruled out after Gandhi's warning of 11 December of "grave concern" over the situation referring to "Tamils of Indian origin". The continuing repression will inevitably put pressure on the Indian government to "act". But an Indian invasion would only serve the interests of Indian capitalism or be used to crush the threat of socialist revolution.

After the euphoria of Gandhi's election victory



Tamils march in protest in London at the 1983 pogrom.

## International notes

### Bangladesh

THE MILITARY dictatorship of General Ershad in Bangladesh is responding violently to increased popular pressure. The regime promised parliamentary elections and freed some political prisoners after previous mass movements, particularly the national general strike last March.

But martial law is still in operation and most opposition forces are sceptical of Ershad's proclaimed "goodwill" in holding elections under such circumstances. 22 political parties and a group of trade

unions called a further general strike on 22/23 December to demand the end of military rule and restoration of trade union rights. A new powerful working class movement is being welded by events.

The government responded by banning all political activity over the strike weekend and troops and paramilitary forces were moved in to back up the police. Shops, factories, schools and much transport were paralysed by the strike. Two people were killed and dozens injured by the bullets, batons and tear gas of the security forces. Up to a thousand demonstrators were arrested.

### Pakistan

AT THE same time as India's election, Pakistan's General Zia held a referendum on "Islamisation" of the country's laws. It was mainly an attempt to drape a holy shroud around Zia's military regime, as he took the result as an endorsement of his presidency. The government claimed a

98% victory on a 64% poll but the banned opposition parties had called a boycott and claimed a very low turnout of about 15% and widespread stuffing of ballot boxes. Many opponents of the referendum were arrested.

Zia has promised "Islamic elections" later this year. This will probably again mean no political parties will be allowed to participate.

### Singapore

IN THE elections in Singapore on 22 December Lee Kuan Yew who has been Prime Minister since 1959 won 77 seats out of 79. Lee, one of Thatcher's favourite politicians, regards this as a setback. In the 1980 election he won all the seats.

The ruling People's Action Party (PAP) slipped from 75% of the vote to 63% and opposition parties like the Workers Party did well in the seats where they stood. Lee's near dictatorial monetarist policies have succeeded in making many rich—the island has the second highest living standards in Asia—but inequalities are high.

It has grown from an economy centred around the massive port to include manufacturing, oil refining and tourism. It encourages foreign capital through tax incentives, free repatriation of profits and capital. There are few social services, Victorian self help is Lee's solution.

The unions are tame, seeing their job as selling government policy to their members. "If

we had British-style unions we would be bankrupt" says Lee. Opposition has grown to many government policies. One of these is encouraging the "intelligent" to have more children by promising access to the best schools while advocating sterilisation for the poor who, to Mr. Lee, are obviously "unintelligent". Keith Joseph would love Singapore.

The decline of fortunes came despite a media like putty in the PAP's hands, a well organised party machine and threats from Lee that any area electing an opposition MP would have its housing and public works budget cut!

After the election the Prime Minister admitted that the electorate wanted the government to change its policies, to be "more generous and less austere" but then followed up by making threats against "one person one vote" elections as threatening "decline or disintegration".

Singapore is a rich island in a poor Asia. It has been rated more stable than Switzerland or Japan. But capitalism is not stable anywhere and the ruling class will face much worse shocks than this in future.

## South Africa

**Militant Exclusive**

First of two articles

**Common enemy,  
common struggle**

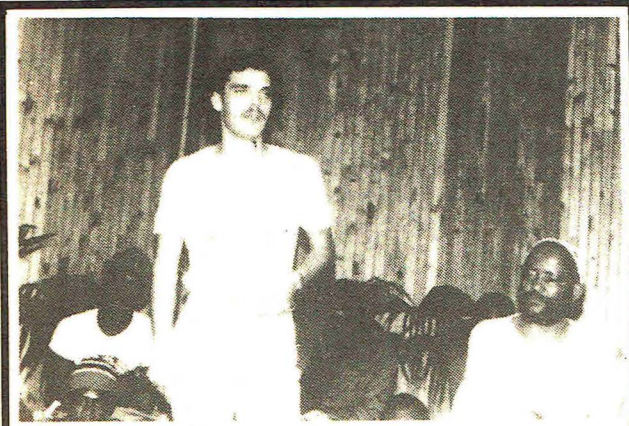
Roy's trip was very successful in raising finance (£220 immediately with a promise of more) from a very poor union, and in spreading information about the strike.

But the tour also made clear the desperate poverty, the lack of safety provision and the repression faced by black workers under apartheid.

Roy is determined to ensure no British miner is enticed by the offer of work in South African mines, thus propping up the system and the regime. He is also

convinced of the need for direct links with the South African NUM. It is a fast growing union, expanding from nothing five years ago to 100,000 in the autumn with the aim of 200,000 by the January congress.

The miners' unions in both countries tend to face the same enemy given the enormous British investments in South Africa's low wage economy. The unions want and need our solidarity.



Roy Jones speaking at a meeting.

**Roy Jones, a striking miner from North Staffordshire spent a month in South Africa recently at the invitation of the South African National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).**

**Roy's visit was to build more direct links between the British miners and this fast growing non-racial union in South Africa. He became in fact the first white member of the union.**

**Police's brutal attacks**

**In the middle of 1984 the South African National Union of Mineworkers declared a dispute with a number of mining companies over wages. A legal strike was due to start on Monday 17 September.**

The previous day, after concessions by Anglo-American Corporation, the NUM negotiating committee agreed to settle the dispute, subject to the agreement of the affected members.

Just to contact these was no easy job for the NUM, as was admitted even by Mr EP Gush, chairman of Anglo's gold and uranium division: "at noon on Sunday and with only a few hours in hand, details of the renegotiated offer had to be conveyed and clarified to

some 75,000 workers at 23 different shafts and in 22 separate hostels hundreds of kilometres apart."

Despite this, the Anglo-American Corporation called in police against black mineworkers on at least two Free State mines on 17 September. We print below just one report amongst many of the police violence.

**Rubber bullet**

"At about 9pm whilst I was sleeping in my room, someone opened the door. Thereafter 4 policemen in camouflage uniforms entered the house. (3 were whites and the other was black). One white policeman came towards me and hit me with a pick-handle. The other three policemen were also carrying pick handles.

"The white policeman hit me on my back. The other one who was also white hit me on my right thigh with

the pickhandle he was carrying. I did not know why they were hitting me but they kept saying that we should get to work. I am not doing night-shift. I am working day-shift.

"I had not gone to work on that day because it was a day when all the mines were on an official legal strike. We were then waiting only for a word from our union shaft stewards to tell us when to go to work. I never expected an order from the police to tell us that we should go back to work.

"I did get out of the house while I was ordered to whilst I tried to explain that I have never been on night-duty. My explanations were all in vain. On my way out of the room I met with another policeman who was standing just outside the door.

"He was also clad in camouflage uniform and carrying a sjambok; he hit me on my right eye badly



Members of the Strike Committee. Strikers faced a furious police onslaught in September for safeguarding their rights.

damaging it. I tried to run very hard to save my life but I was (hit) by a rubber bullet on my stomach. This bullet was shot at me by another white policeman also in camouflage uniform.

"I then realised that there were many police and they meant to kill us. When the rubber bullet hit me I fell

down. Another policeman then hit me all over my body with a pick-handle whilst I was lying down. I stood up and ran down the stairs.

Another policeman was standing on my way to the medical station...He was holding a dog and ordered me to raise my hands. I did raise my hands as I was

ordered to...At the hospital my right eye was removed...I sustained multiple injuries all over my body..."

In all, at least 11 miners were killed and hundreds injured in a brave fight for a living wage and the right to run an affective union.

**'Used, abused and discarded'**

**I VISITED Free State Geduld No 5, a gold mine, and a coal mine in Witbank. On the gold mine, (where the black, not the white, miners work) I've never seen such disgusting working conditions in my life.**

These mines are the deepest in the world. The maximum height is usually 3 feet. In Britain, we are used to hydraulic props and roof supports, but there are none in South Africa.

Every 5 metres there will be a stick of wood, although if the union is not represented, management will abuse the 5-metre rule and have a stick every 6 or 7 metres. By the way, I would guess one stick of wood would make 4 boxes of matches, they are so weak and pathetic.

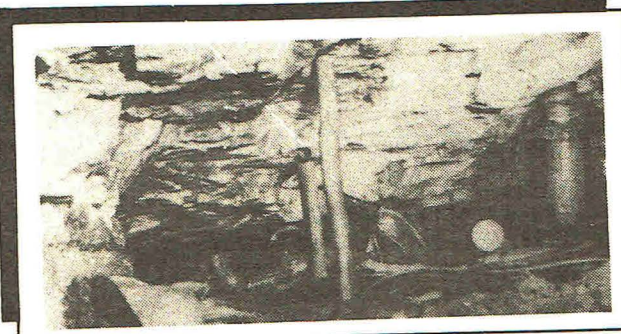
The white miners seem to be employed to kick and order the black workers about. When they go down the mine, they throw stones into the blackness to indicate what is to be a black mineworker's working place for the day. The black miners do all the drilling,

and the charges are set. The white miners play no role whatever. I bet their main illness is haemorrhoids from sitting down so long.

The heat is unbelievable. The bosses organisation, the Chamber of Mines, claim not to have the technology for the safe and adequate ventilation of the mines. This is absolute garbage. Even more than elsewhere capitalists put profit before people especially black workers, they will not invest in the necessary equipment.

Instead, they have a heat-acclimatisation programme, a totally inhuman and degrading form of exercise, for new and fresh miners (like those who've been on holiday). They enter a chamber where they are given Vitamin C tablets. This is quite pathetic, given the serious illnesses miners are likely to be suffering from.

They will then be forced to perform step-up exercises 24 a minutes which are rhythmically beaten out by an overseer. It is reminiscent of galley slaves rowing for the Romans. Temperatures are up to 38 degrees centigrade with 100% humidity. They perform these exercises for 4



In the mines safety is a very low priority.

hours five days a week non-stop.

The mine doctors scientifically determine, seemingly to the nth degree, the height of the step-up according to each man's weight, height and general fitness. It is like a film of a Nazi concentration camp.

The bosses' organisation, the Chamber of Mines, say there are no deaths underground from heat-related illnesses. (These range from heat rashes through to heat strokes.) Many mineworkers die each year from heat stroke, although management refuse to acknowledge it. Instead, they put it down to TB which they say the miners contracted before entering the

mine.

There are black miners dying each week of heat-related diseases. Many of them have what we call prickly disease in Britain. They should not be working underground, but because they fear being on surface work at the very minimum pay which is well below poverty level, they do not report it.

Skin rash develops, sometimes, into heat exhaustion, and finally, heat stroke which is the killer. Bonuses are available for miners with the best safety record. All the time, therefore, the incentive is not to report illnesses, but wait until the miners are on the surface and blame it on TB.

The white shift boss can

**Roy Jones is willing to speak at labour movement meetings. Contact him through South African Labour Education Project, 28 Martello St. London E8. SALEP have also produced a fuller report of Roy's visit. Price 20p (+15p post + package)**

be awarded R4 000 (over £2000) a month for an accident-free record. For blacks, it is a coke and 10 Lexington cigarettes. At the hospitals, the treatment is diabolical. Basically they remain until their conditions has stabilised before being shunted back to the hostel or back down the mine.

There is a 5-star rating system on the mines—five stars to the mine with one million fatality-free shifts. The only section of the SA mines I've seen which could possibly obtain this standard is the office where the clerks work. After all, have you seen a clerk battered to death by a typewriter or a coffee-machine?

Management offices, in all the mines I visited, displayed on the walls notices of deaths this week, deaths last week. Rockburst here, rockburst there. One miner killed there, four killed here. The rating system is just a publicity ploy which all the black miners have seen through.

Evidence of the bosses'

real attitude to safety is shown by their method of holding back rockbursts. Wire mesh and roof bolts are put through, which they claim are safe.

The method in Britain of arches and roof supports (won through union pressure) is second to none in the world. It is unknown in SA, where the bosses refuse even to use a little of their billions of Rands of profit to make the mines safer.

A representative of the Chamber of Mines told me that ear muffs, which are necessary to shut-out the terrible noise underground, are rejected by the black workers as "an affront to their manhood".

One black miner told me, however, that the Chamber just does not want to spend the money on earmuffs. There is such a huge reservoir of labour in the Bantustans, and deaf mineworkers are not their concern. They will just use them, abuse them, and discard them.

# LETTERS

Militant welcomes letters from readers. Send us your views, comments or criticisms. Write to *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London. E9 5HB

## One rule for scabs

Dear Comrades,

On December 19, four striking miners, and one scab, were bound over for 12 months at Hanley Crown Court in North Staffs. It took the judge just ten minutes to administer a £50 bind over, after assault charges against all five had been dropped.

The alleged assaults took place when the lads on strike—Brian McKean, Keith Boulton, Stan Edwards and David Aleys—were on picket duty in North

Staffs. Whilst this courtroom farce has added four more class fighters to the list of "instant criminals" who have been sacked by the NCB, the scab, George Ormston, has since been rewarded with a redundancy payment of £20,000.

The NCB have since stated that they do not intend to reinstate the men sacked. The NUM leadership must demand that all strikers sacked during the dispute must be reinstated before any kind of return to work takes place.

Yours fraternally  
Andy Bertley  
UCATT

## Free speech?

Dear Comrades,

Since we have started regular paper sales and collecting for the miners outside of the local Tesco's store, we have encountered a great deal of opposition from the Tesco management.

The first incident occurred when a Tesco official came out. He asked if we had a permit and was disappointed when we produced one. Then he asked for a sealed collecting tin and we didn't have one, so he threatened to call the police if we didn't move on.

The following week outside Tesco's two different officials emerged, one flexing a stick in a threatening way. They told us to move and when didn't they went back into the shop.

If that was not enough the following Saturday, when the YS was having a food collection for the miners, the manager of the Shopping Centre came out. He told us to leave on the grounds that we didn't have permission from the owners of the Shopping Centre to collect. He added that if we did apply he would not let us collect for the miners because no political activity was allowed on the privately owned Shopping Centre. Again the police were threatened if we did not move.

On top of this we have found out that if the trolley boys, working for Tesco, speak to us they get the sack.

Yours fraternally  
Ben Mitchell and Phil Mitchell  
Northavon LPYS  
Bristol

## VAT sting

Dear Comrades,

Hundreds of thousands of people have responded to the famine in Ethiopia by handing over their hard-earned cash to various appeals. The most widely-publicised was the record produced by Band Aid which currently tops the charts.

How has Thatcher responded? Those who bought the record, thinking they were helping to buy food for the starving, will be delighted to learn that a hefty 18% of their money has

gone to Thatcher, Heseltine and Brittan to buy missiles, riot shields, handcuffs and the other apparatus of democracy.

Meanwhile the EEC continues to sit on its mountains of butter (from which they have an excellent view over the wine lake).

Obviously charity is not enough. A socialist society would not need to squander its resources on arms and massive police operations. Capitalism cannot do otherwise.

Yours fraternally,  
Derek McMillan  
West Sussex



Trade union day of action in support of miners in Newcastle last summer. Photo: John Smith (IFL)

## Tories out to smash trade unionism

Dear Comrades,

It is obvious, the British working class are becoming more class conscious, not because they want to, but because they cannot help themselves: they see what the government are doing to the miners, the same kind of policies will be used against them.

Whatever the mass media does to weaken the miners' struggle, the movement in support of the miners is growing day by day. They are fighting for job security. We have 3½ million

unemployed in Britain and there are 35 million people registered unemployed in the industrial capitalist world. This is equal to the populations of the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Ireland altogether, simply because the driving force of capitalist society in which they live depends on private profit.

In spite of Mrs Thatcher's challenge in her manifesto 1983, (the idea of 'Peoples Capitalism', trying to make everybody 'Capitalist minded') the vast majority of peo-

ple realise that there is no future in capitalism, only insecurity, mass unemployment, compulsion and force.

Despite the weakness of the Labour Party leadership and the TUC the rank and file trade unionist and the general population are continuously giving tremendous help to the miners, because it is becoming much more clear, that if the miners lose, they will all lose.

So, please Mr. Kinnock and Mr. Hattersley, forget about the ideas of 'reforming capitalism', it has gone

beyond that stage. We are in a 'class war' against monopoly capitalist laws, used to smash democracy and trade unionism in Britain. Persons and organisations who believe in socialism, can no longer sit on the fence. Today the miners and the whole of the labour movement are really facing the 'challenge of our times'.

Yours sincerely,  
Tom Hopkins  
Retired miner, Caerphilly

## Black spot

Dear Comrades,

Last Sunday I came off my motor bike, when I suddenly hit some black ice. A lady who came to help me said there had been a few accidents in the last few days there due to the ice.

I decided to phone the council to see when they will be gritting the roads. The reply was that only main roads are gritted—not even all those, as the highway budget has been cut by half.

My complaint was taken down but I was told there would probably have to be an inquest before anything was done.

I was advised to go to the town hall to get a leaflet about which roads are gritted. They didn't have one, and never had. But to top the lot, one of the people there said I should carry some salt or sand round with me when its icy!

Yours fraternally  
Gill Buchanan  
Mansfield

## Which side are you on?

Jim Christie reviews "Which Side Are You On?" Channel Four, 9 January.



A scene from the film—Durham miners with the Chopwell Lodge banner. Photo: LWT

ANYONE who was fortunate enough to watch Ken Loach's film "Which Side Are You on", could see why it was banned by LWT's South Bank Show.

The programme had been commissioned for the South Bank Show, and although they admitted it was just the sort of programme they had requested, poems and songs of the miners' dispute, it had one fatal flaw—it was too committed.

They were right. Loach's film does not pretend any false objectivity. It lets striking miners tell their own stories, their own experiences in their own words. And what words.

This strike has unlocked the imagination. In organisation, activity and ideas people have found themselves doing things they would have thought unimaginable before the dispute.

Confidence in themselves and their class has broken down old barriers. With humour, anger and determination miners and their wives have spoken, in song and poem, of their own ex-

periences with freshness and sharpness.

All of this came across in Loach's film. No leaders were interviewed. It was a film of ordinary miners.

Virtually every song, statement or poem cries out for quotation and publication. Shot in just five days, mainly in Wearmouth and South Yorkshire, and using excellent new film on battles such as Orgreave, it spoke of scabs and police, and of the determination of mining communities not to be broken.

In a short review like this only one example can suffice to give a flavour of the film—a new version of the Laughing Policeman. The song lists all the virtues of this peerless 'man in blue', his anti-racism, his lack of bias, his willingness to help strikers, his assisting old ladies across the road...and it pauses...and ever so slowly the laughter builds up.

It is a marvellous, inspiring film. At times you just want to burst out clapping. Hopefully video copies have been made all over the country for anyone who missed it.

## LEFT and RIGHT

### For Sale: des. Cruis. Mis.

Some people have a funny sense of value. Mr and Mrs Scull are outraged that their home at Greenham Common—valued at £90,000—is having to be sold for only £68,000, the price they paid for it four years ago. According to the Sculls (and backed up by the *Daily Mail*) potential buyers were put off by a women's peace camp opposite their home. And not of course, because it is next door to one of the country's main nuclear arsenals, will be the first site to be targeted in a nuclear attack, has mobile Cruise convoys thundering in and out and Air Force jets screaming over head.

### Monarchy privatised?

The *Mexico City News*, a US owned newspaper for English speaking people in Mexico City, reported in November that the Queen was to abdicate, and Mrs Thatcher was to take over the role of monarch. Perhaps they know something we don't.

### Conspiracy of the year

Tory MPs are perplexed that Arthur Scargill has won the Radio 4 *Today* programme's 'Man Of The Year' competition. Could it be that Arthur Scargill is popular with ordinary working people? But no, Tory MP John Carlisle knows a conspiracy when he sees one: "I suspect the NUM got all their people together to sign for Arthur Scargill" he told the *Daily Mirror* (January 3).

### Blue in the face

The Police Federation are upset over descriptive reports of police brutality at Orgreave which appeared in a miners' factsheet last summer. The September issue of their magazine, *Police*, describes the factsheet as "straight from the tradition of Julius Streicher, the jew-baiting editor of *Der Sturmer*." Elsewhere in the factsheet, they complain, "the anti-police theme is taken up by a 'miners daughter' who spouts Militant Tendency slogans." What annoyed them most of all though was that it was produced by the Civil and Public Services Association, which has many police civilian staff amongst its members. The CPSA they report, is "presently controlled by a bunch of fanatics—elected by the rank and file!" You can't trust anybody these days.

# FIIGHTING FUND

This week: £3,090

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	968		2900
East Midlands	816		3550
Humberside	855		1850
London East	958		3200
London West	1168		2150
London South East	278		1950
London South West	575		1650
Lancashire	425		1950
Manchester	777		2200
Merseyside	520		6100
Northern	1766		4400
Scotland East	299		2950
Scotland West	689		3650
Southern	1267		5100
South West	549		2150
Wales East	410		2550
Wales West	845		2050
West Midlands	1245		4300
Yorkshire	1272		5350
Others	2067		5000
<b>Total received</b>	<b>17751</b>		<b>65000</b>

## £16,000 needed every week

**THIS WEEK £3,090 was raised; taking the total to £17,751. There is still £47,000 to raise enough though so every effort now is going to be vital if we are reach the target—there is only three weeks to go.**

We have had magnificent achievements in the past. We can do the same again, especially if we follow the example of sacrifice made by this miner who made a donation of over £1 for the FF: "Forward to a daily newspaper. I am a striking miner with two of a family fighting for a future, for the survival of the labour and trade union movement. The courts, the DHSS, the media, and the police will never beat us. As the 1985

calendar says 'no surrender'.

"Yours in the struggle, Comradely Alan Ramsey, West Lothian."

This letter shows the support we are getting from striking miners. It also shows the miners clearly see the need of donating to our FF to ensure our campaign for a daily to defend all workers' interests. This far into the strike with the many hardships miners are facing this represents a tremendous sacrifice.

The amazing example given by West Glamorgan last week with their magnificent £405 raised from workplaces and readers is yet to be repeated. We appeal to all other areas to follow this example.

The profit from the raffle will be shown in next week's figures but will give the FF a further much-needed push. The record of £18,000 raised

in one week still stands. If we can match that effort now in the next three weeks we will sail over the target. Help us make this possible.

By Kim Waddington

**DONATIONS THIS week include:**

Edith Leonard, Strathclyde £20; workers at British Gas, Easington, Hull £10.34; Colin Longhurst, Tunbridge Wells CPSA £5; Councillor Margaret Ainsworth, Manchester City Council £5; members Hull AUEW no 12 branch £4; STC Greenwich collection for the FF £2.44; Steve Woodrow, Poole UCATT £2.25; Reading LPYS collection for the FF £2; NW Leeds Labour Party Young Socialists £2; Ralph Martin, Milton Keynes, EETPU £2; R Fishwick, Gedling TGWU retired £2; T Walker, Gedling TGWU £1; M Grausgraper, Huchnell unemployed £1; J Dobson, Nottingham Labour Party 75p.

### Lobby TUC General Council.

**Wednesday 23 January  
9.00 am Onwards**

**Congress House, Great Russell Street, (Tottenham Court Road Tube station)**

- ★ TUC must act—with a 24 hour General Strike
- ★ A massive campaign to implement Congress policies.
- ★ Don't cross NUM picket lines.
- ★ Don't handle or transport blacked coal, oil or coke.
- ★ Link up every struggle with the miners strike.

### Coal play

A PLAY about the strike in the Kent coalfield begins a national tour. It is produced by the 7:84 Theatre Group and called *The Garden of Eden*:

- 29 January, Sheffield
- 31 January, Newcastle.
- 1 February, Manchester Free Hall.
- 2 February, Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham.
- 3 February, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall.
- 4 February, Chesterfield.
- 8 February, Treorchy, South Wales.
- 10 February, Granville Hall, Kent.
- 17 February-2 March, Shaw Theatre, London.



**BLOC Conference.  
23rd March 1985.**

**Manchester Free Trade Hall. Speakers include K. Livingstone, D. Hatton, Johnie Tocher AUEW. Each TU organisation can send up to 4 delegates. £3 per delegate. Send to BLOC c/o G. Williamson, 11 Sutton Place, London E9 6EH.**

## ads

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

Diaries 60p, address books 60p, plastic paper sleeves 20p, bookmarks 40p. Sew on badges 50p. 10 or more half price for resale FF to 10 Rodney Ct, Anson Drive, Sholing, So'ton S02 8RU.

## Militant

### Meetings

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

**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.

**HULL** Militant public meeting. Victory to the Miners, socialist policies for Labour. Hear: Pat Wall (President Bradford Trades Council) On: Friday 8 February 7.30pm. At: Trades and Labour Club, Beverly Road.

Miss them at Wembley & FELS? Wembley Conference badge '84 only 65 left, red fist "better to break the law than the poor". Labour logo "Militant Labour Liverpool" New design "black & white unite LPYS" with red militant logo. 25p each + minimum 25p p&p.

Payable to P. Cooper, 31, Balmoral Rd, Fairfield, Liverpool 6 8NB.

**LENIN** and Trotsky on the National Question. 5 articles in a 9 page duplicated pamphlet 20p (plus 15p postage) 5 or more copies post free. Send to Box E, 3/13 Hepscott Rd London E9. (Make Cheques Payable to Militant)

**NORTHERN IRELAND**—a Marxist analysis. A 32 page analysis published by Militant Irish Monthly. 75p (plus 15p postage) 5 or more post free. Order from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscott Rd, London E9.

**HACKNEY & Tower Hamlets** Militant New Year's Disco. Saturday, 12 January, 8 till late, Rose and Crown, Mare Street Hackney E8.

Room to let—Oval/Kennington in a comrades flat—must be working—(01)-735-9945 Late/early.

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

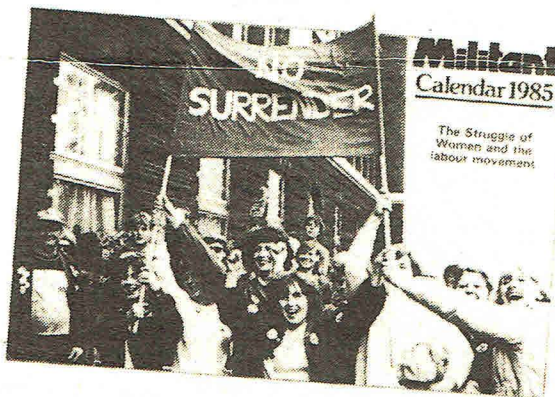
Now available on cassette: all centre page articles from issue 693-721. Send either seven blank C-90 cassettes or £6.30 payable to *Militant* Tapes, 18 Blandford Grove, Woodhouse, Leeds 2. Phone: (0532) 455936.

**BADGES**—1" button badge with 20th anniversary slogan 20p each (10p each for orders over 20)—1" button badge—"Militant" on coloured background (white/yellow/green/blue) 20p each. Enamel stud badges—"Militant for Labour and Youth" 75p each. All orders for badges must be accompanied with minimum 25p for p&p.

Cash with order. Cheques made payable to 'Militant' send to 3-13 Hepscott Road, London. E9 5HB

**INQABA YA BASEBENZI** the journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress. Issue number 15 contains a supplement: "South Africa, how close to revolution?" and the second part of "Southern Africa after the Nkomati accord" plus articles on Zimbabwe, Botswana and Malawi. Send payment with orders (75p including postage and packing) to BM Box 1719, London WC1 3XX.

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### Militant Winter Draw Prize winners

- | Prize  | Name   |
|--|--|
| 1st Video Equipment (£400)   | P Dick 041-427 4114 (Ticket no 078978)   |
| 2nd Stacking hi-fi (£300)  | J Masters Pool 674621 (Ticket no 018403)   |
| 3rd Portable TV (£100)   | Mark Green 5 Birkland Street, Mansfield, Nottingham (Ticket no 054230)                         |
| 4th Personal stereo (£50)  | L Strathdee Flat 16, Augustus Court, 1 Augustus Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham (Ticket no 056930) |
| 5th Socialist books (£25)  | Valier Clement, Nurses Home, St Andrews Hospital, London E3. (Ticket no 068072)                |
| Mc Ewan Yapton 551155 (Ticket no 016056)                             | H Gallagher 18 Moreland Road, Whiteleas Est. (Ticket no 040392)                                |
| B Huses 10 Duke Street, Biddulph, Staffs (Ticket no 064441)          |  |
| P Maniscalco, Leicester 825586 (Ticket no 057798)                    |  |
| Special prize—bound copies of the first six years of <i>Militant</i> | J Malcolm (0642) 672780 (Ticket no 041762)   |

All claims must be sent with winning tick to 'Militant Winter Draw', 3-13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

Scottish BLOC delegate Conference solidarity with the miners. (Note new venue).

Venue: Caley Cinema, Lothian Rd. Edinburgh. Date: Sat 19 January 1985. Speakers include: Terry Fields MP, Ian Isaac (S. Wales NUM Executive, personal capacity) and other NUM and leading TU speakers.

Delegations on basis of 5 per Miners strike cttee/Miners' wives support group/Union branch/s/s committee/combine committee/regional, district committee etc £1 per delegate (free for miners/miners wives)

For credential details phone 031-665 5431.

### Solidarity Conference of Mineworkers Defence Committee. (Sec. K. Livingstone) on Saturday 9th February, Octagon Centre, Sheffield.

Speakers include: Peter Heathfield NUM, Betty Heathfield WAPC, Tony Benn MP, Johnie Tocher AUEW Presidential candidate, Phil Holt BLOC..

Each TU body can send 2 delegates, each Labour Party/OTHER organisation £3 per delegate. Send to Mineworkers Defence Committee, 31 Cranwich Road, London N16.

Name .....

Address .....

TU/Organisation .....

No. Delegates .....

## INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

## Solidarity win for Ghanaian seamen

**THE OCCUPATION of the Ghanaian ship the 'MV Maiseni' is now over. The ship had been occupied in Birkenhead's Vittoria docks since its arrival on 20 September, 1984.**

By Julie Martin and Jerry McKinley  
(Birkenhead CLP)

The 21 Ghanaian crew refused to off-load the cargo and told the Dutch Captain they were not going to leave the ship until they had been paid for their last nine months' work. A total of £48,000 was owing to them.

Birkenhead LPYS branch and local *Militant* supporters 'adopted' the crew, giving advice and financial assistance. Terry Fields MP contacted the

ship's agents 'TRANSIMEX', in Rotterdam, demanding that the crew be paid their back wages.

The ITF (International Transport Federation), the crew's 'official' representatives advised them to go home to Ghana, saying that they would pay for their air fare home plus they would give each crew member £100 to 'tide them over'!!

Their families back home in Ghana had not received any money to feed themselves for the past nine months (there is no State Social Security in Ghana). The crew obviously rejected this 'offer' out of hand, explaining that it would be better to go home with nothing than to accept this pittance.

The ITF was bombarded with phone calls (so much so that their local rep complained that their switchboard was

becoming jammed) from people demanding that they should fight for the crew's wages instead of accepting the 'fact' that nothing could be done about it.

The pressure was beginning to build up when the ITF's local representative suddenly offered the crew one third of their wages if only they would go home! After lengthy discussion on board the ship the crew agreed—it was a partial victory and with Xmas approaching, the need to see their families became overwhelming.

It should be noted that the ITF's policy is to give seamen in similar circumstances no more than £100 each plus "repatriation to their home countries".

The crew wished it to be reported in *Militant* that this victory which would be impossible without the help of the

LPYS and *Militant*. In a letter of thanks to Terry Fields they said: "We will never forget you."

These brother workers from Ghana will never be forgotten by us—they showed their

solidarity to all striking miners, their wives and children, by donating most of the ship's remaining food supplies to the strikers from Point of Ayr Colliery.

## French ferrymen

A CABLE stretched across Dunkirk Western Docks by striking French seamen brought ferry sailings to a standstill last week. The strike action was in protest at plans by the shipping division of the French Railways (SNCF) to phase out passenger sailings and axe 50 jobs there.

400 jobs are threatened in all channel ports. The strike spread to Calais, Boulogne and Dieppe. At Dunkirk the seamen on the St Germain passenger ferries tried to stop the Sally Line boat *Viking* which had just ber-

thed, moving. They resorted to the cable when the ship started to move.

A blockade was staged by three SNCF ships at Calais and Dieppe to stop all Sealink ferries sailing. It was broken at Boulogne by French riot police who cleared the blockade with tear gas, removing seamen occupying ramps and guaranteeing facilities to P&O. Seamen threw stones and bottles at police. Despite the police action all sailings are still affected.

## Organising the big sites

JIM GREER, an Edinburgh electrician, concludes his account of life in the construction engineering industry with a look at the problems of union organisation.

**Because of the worsening conditions in the mid-70s, I began to play an active part in the union, becoming a shop steward. I was working at the BP oil refinery at Grangemouth. It was a well-organised site with a joint shop stewards' committee from the different contractors and unions.**

The shop stewards were more or less full-time, involved in almost continuous negotiations with management over conditions. They had provision for an official weekly paid meeting, but unofficially they could call mass meetings if they were not getting a satisfactory answer from the employers.

There has been a weakening of trade union organisation in the recession. Good organisation depends on the calibre of the shop stewards. Given the casual nature of the industry, once a contract ends you are looking for other work; if a shop steward has been carrying out his duties reasonably well, then he finds difficulty in getting employment—the black list comes into operation.

## Black-listing

I have been affected by it on numerous occasions. You get your name circulated by all the contractors. Your only hope then is that the workers on the contract from which you have been blacklisted will take action to obtain employment for their victimised shop steward. On one contract, we were press-

ing for a severance agreement—a sum of money for having worked a length of time on that contract. To cut across that, the employers created redundancies, and paid off a hundred workers in order to get rid of shop stewards.

Within a week they were beginning to bring them back, but in the order that they wanted, and that obviously excluded me, being the shop steward. The workforce declared that if they didn't start me they would go on strike. So the company were forced to bring me back.

## Shop stewards

There are good rank-and-file members who would do a good job as shop stewards, but are reluctant to take it on against the background of blacklisting. There are some shop stewards who will do it for a certain period of time, then someone else will take over from them and they will keep rotating it. Then you get another variation where someone may take it on only as a spokesman and not as a shop steward with credentials. This only happens in a small part of the industry; in the main it is still shop

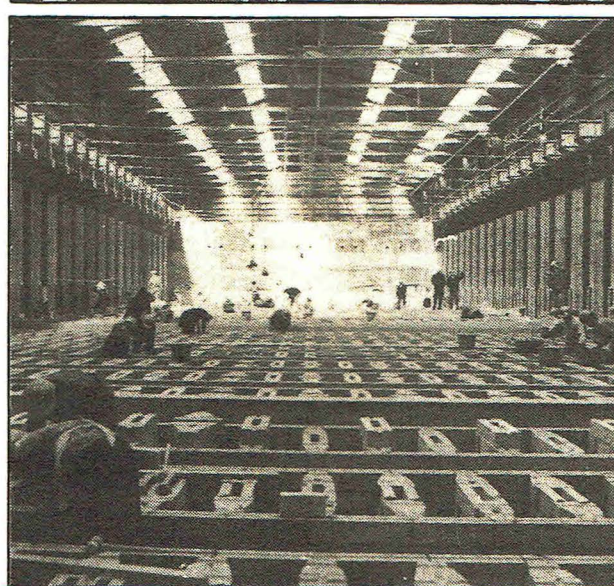
stewards with credentials.

At shop floor level the organisation is cohesive, but the local full-time officials are sometimes more of an obstacle than a help. In general they are reluctant to give support to the struggles on the shop floor. They are often more intent on trying to reach agreement with the management, sometimes behind the back of the rank-and-file and the shop stewards.

There is a change in the industry now that there is one agreement, the National Agreement for Engineering Construction (see *Militant* issue 627), which was signed with opposition from a large number of workers. The rank-and-file are still involved, but organisation on many of the large sites now is more difficult because of the introduction, about 2 years ago, of double-day shifts, which means that although you are all working on the same contract, you are virtually two separate workforces who never meet each other. It makes it much more difficult to organise a joint stewards' meeting on the site.

This allows the employer to play one shift off against the other, and allows a lot more room for manoeuvre by the full-time officials. There is only one meeting a month officially paid for by the employer, to report back from the different stages of the procedure.

There is informal com-



munication between different sites and attempts have been made to establish a national stewards' committee, but the union leadership won't recognise either the local or national JSSCs. I think it was deliberate on the part of the leadership that when the agreement was introduced there was no provision for stewards' committees. If they existed, the officials would find it difficult not to take up some of the struggles that are going to take place.

## Union officials

Even the rawest rank-and-file members recognise that they are fighting with one hand tied behind their back, that they are getting minimal

support from either their local officials or their national leadership. Agreements for the industry are being signed without any consultation with the members who have actually got to work under them.

Officials should be under our control, elected and subject to recall within their period of office and only having the average wage of the membership, plus any necessary expenses. This would put them in the same financial position as us and make them more willing to struggle for better living standards and conditions.

This idea needs to be continually raised whenever the question arises of the lack of accountability of full-time officials, at mass meetings

and so on. Many men live away from home, making it difficult for them to get to their union branch meeting. So when the opportunity arises, such as a policy conference or a review of that union's rules, they are missing from the meeting and unable to contribute their experience.

This opens up the question of workplace branches of the unions so that for the duration of each contract the members are allowed to form a branch and elected office bearers. None of the unions have these at present.

## One union

An idea that is gaining ground among the rank-and-file is one union for the industry. They recognise that with different crafts and traditions, the employers can divide and rule. They see a united workforce in one union as a means of giving greater effectiveness to their industrial struggles. Given the vested interests of the leaderships of most of the unions, they would be opposed to it. But if the genuine voice of the rank-and-file were decisive within each of the organisations, it would come about.

# Tories plan to bust the buses

**THE TORY government's White Paper 'Buses' proposes opening up all bus routes outside London to competition from 'cowboy' operators and privatisation of the state-owned National Bus Company.**

It is the most serious attack on bus workers since the Tories came to power in 1979. Massive redundancies, wage cuts, longer working hours, and worsening health and safety standards will be the order of the day if the White Paper is allowed to become law.

The response from the leadership of the T&GWU, the National Passenger Trade Group Committee, has been to call on all bus branches to fight a joint campaign with their respective managements. During the recent TUC National Transport Week of Action this strategy fell flat on its face because of the bosses' insistence of fighting a campaign strictly on their own terms and only under their guidance.

What the T&GWU leadership fail to understand is that if the government were to remove the worst excesses in the White Paper, and guarantee that the various bosses in the National Bus Co., the Passenger Transport Executives and the Municipal undertakings are able to hang on to their well paid jobs, then the bosses would immediately become firm supporters of the Tory government.

The highlights of the Transport Week of Action were supposed to be the National Fare Free Day (Monday 26 November '84) and the Bus Lobby of Parliament (Tuesday 27 November). For the Fare Free Day, the union issued firm instructions to all the branches that if manage-

ment insisted fares be collected, then we should consider ourselves 'locked out' and refuse to provide services.

The managements (who are affiliated to the Federation of Public Passenger Transport Employers) then sank the 'joint campaign' by insisting that fares be collected. Some bus branches were threatened by their bosses that if they refused to take fares they would be locked out and their buses for the lobby of Parliament would be withdrawn.

Only three branches in the country were reported to have backed the union, Southampton, Preston and Thamesdown.

## Bus lobby

The Bus Lobby of Parliament was supported by the bosses, with the exception of the National Bus Company, because they believe that if enough pressure is exerted on some Tory MPs then they will water down the White Paper. They argued that this was a better way of protesting than having a fare free day which would have the effect of infuriating the Tories. They also argued that a large convoy of buses travelling through the heart of London would receive massive national media coverage. They were proved wrong on both counts.

There is now an urgent need for all bus branches to form local co-ordinating committees to bring together bus workers from the NBC, PTEs and Municipals, to thrash out the details of local campaigning work, and to draw up agreements not to take each other's work in the event of the White Paper becoming law. The bosses will have to be shown that nothing less than the total

scrapping of the Tory proposals will suffice, and that we will not run campaigns just to save their necks.

Workers employed by the PTEs and Municipals controlled by Labour Councillors must approach these Councillors to discuss co-operation, and ensure that the campaign against the White Paper is a political campaign against the Tories and their system. The current policy of the T&GWU leadership of broad alliances with all interested parties, including 'progressive elements' within the Tory Party is sure to lead to more confusion amongst T&G members and to certain defeat.

The fight against privatisation must be taken on by an alliance made up of the unions (including workers in bus manufacturing), the Labour Party, and the working class, who rely on the provision of regular, safe bus services.

Bus workers in the T&GWU must ensure that the leadership of the Union is kept in close contact with the realities of life 'on the road', by demanding that the National Passenger Trade Group Committee representative on the General Executive Council are subject to election by the membership in the branches in the same way that the GEC Territorial Representatives are elected.

We must also demand that the National Secretary of the Passenger Trade Group and indeed all full-time officers be elected rather than appointed and subject to re-election every two years in the same way that T&GWU shop stewards are elected.

**By Tony Hindle**  
(T&GWU E/53 Branch Secretary, personal capacity)

# Postal workers suspended for defending service

**ON THE 12 and 13 December, 180 postal workers were suspended without pay for refusing to work with non-union labour in Acton and Hammersmith.**

They were concerned about extra pressures placed upon them and Xmas mail not being delivered on time, due to management's decision to cut overtime levels and the amount of temporary staff employed.

In an effort to force management to make adequate provisions, workers decided only to cover voluntary overtime at a sufficient level to ensure all Xmas mail being delivered on time.

On Wednesday morning, management demanded they would have to work with non-union part time labour,

although the usual necessary agreement had not been reached. On refusing to do this they were suspended without pay.

Pickets were immediately set up and with the case explained to the non-union part time workers, a large proportion refused to cross picket lines and supported our stand by not working.

The following day the UCW NEC intervened, instructing local union members at the two offices to return to work on management terms, or else lose all union cover. Reluctantly workers had no alternative but to go back to work, as refusal would leave them open to victimisation and sackings.

The tactics of management in this dispute have become clearer with the

emergence of a report published by the Union on the future of the Post Office. This includes the introduction of part-time labour on short term contracts through the whole year, the introduction of a bonus scheme in all offices and many other controversial proposals affecting conditions, hours and pay.

This dispute has shown the inability of the present UCW leadership to defend the interests of its members. A fighting leadership and a more democratic union can only be achieved by UCW members organising themselves in the Broad Left. To this end the Broad Left should hold meetings in every area to gain support for its ideas and policies.

**By a West London UCW Militant reporter**



Tory proposals are bad news for busworkers, passengers and public transport.

# Conference 'fudge' on Lairds

**THE NATIONAL Delegate Conference for British Shipbuilders was held on the 12 December at Whitley Bay.**

There were several remarks to the effect that this was the last ever such conference. This idea was rebuked by the chairman in summing up but left a feeling of unease in the assembly.

There were two resolutions on the agenda. They opposed privatisation and enforced redundancies. But when it came to the existing problems in Cammell

Lairds, Birkenhead, there was a great deal of fudging. After a prolonged debate involving working and striking Lairds men, as well as contributions from all over the industry, we were told "to sort yourselves out."

The membership were blamed by the leadership for not putting pressure on the leadership to fight. The divisions in the Birkenhead yard were dismissed as something unique to the Mersey. Events will prove this theory wrong.

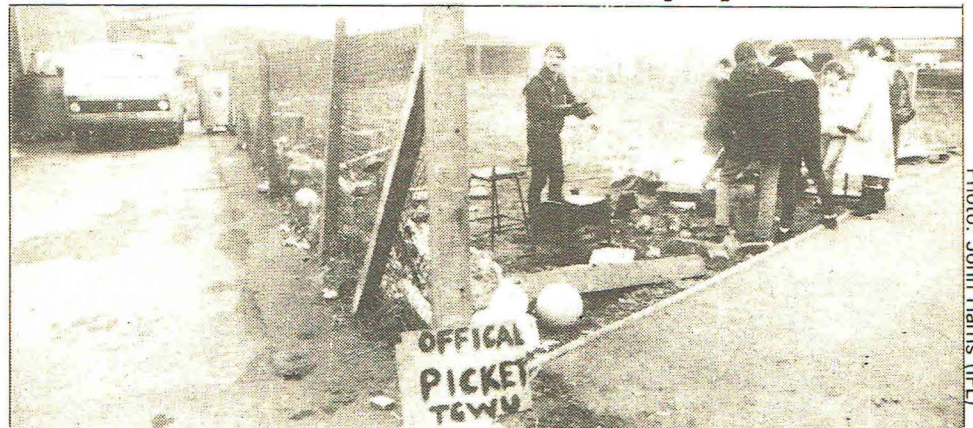
The great lesson of the Lairds occupations is the need to win the membership

to support the union. Playing Pontius Pilate will not succeed. Accountability of officials and full involvement of the membership are not just nice ideas but important weapons in struggle.

The shipbuilding industry is essential to the economy. If ships aren't built steelworks and close. Not to mention the services suppliers and shop-keepers who rely indirectly on our success.

**By J Shepherd**  
(GMBATU, Cammell Laird)

# Vanderhoff strike over low pay



Picket line at Vanderhoff Communications, Nuneaton. 150 TGWU workers are on strike for an increase in a 6% pay offer. 70% are women workers on an average of only £75 a week.

# Skill Centres set to close

**THE MANPOWER Services Commission's announcement that it is to be asked to approve the closure of 29 Skill Centres (SCs) is a major blow for the workers and the unemployed who use their training facilities.**

Attacks on SCs are nothing new. With thousands of skilled workers seeking jobs, over 80 government-funded training centres have long been considered an embarrassment by MSC management.

SCs have been subjected to a whole series of cutbacks and changes supposedly aimed at improving "efficiency" and "cost effectiveness", but in reality totally undermining their future viability.

The establishment of the Skill Centre Training Agen-

cy in April 1983 paved the way for further attacks by isolating SC's from the rest of the MSC, but also forced them to operate a trading account. This meant that SC's were no longer treated as an integral part of the MSC's Training Opportunities Programme and were forced to try and sell their training courses in competition with all the other training providers.

The consequences were disastrous. 7,000 training places were lost, and staffing fell from 4,700 in June 83 to 3,900 in December 84.

Now even worse cuts are on the way and a further 1,050 jobs are threatened. Labourers, clerical staff, instructors and even Skill Centre managers are at risk from these cuts.

So it is essential that all six Skill Centre unions (CPSA, SCPS, CSU, IPCS, TGWU and GMBATU) work together to fight these proposals.

A joint union campaign has already been launched and members will be working hard to win public support for the threatened centres. Many of these centres are situated in towns like Llanelli, Manchester and Liverpool which have already lost vast numbers of jobs and training opportunities.

**By Amanda Lane**  
(Member of the CPSA Dept of Employment Section Executive Committee - personal capacity)

# Militant

**1905 Russian revolution**  
—Centre pages

## No to teenage workhouse

1985 has been named "International Year of Youth" by the United Nations. The organisers want all political parties to be involved in furthering the cause of youth.

The Tories announced their first contribution just before Christmas when Lord Young (former Chairman MSC) made public his view that 16 to 17 year olds should no longer be allowed to claim Supplementary Benefit.

Four working parties will report to Norman Fowler, the Social Security minister who will report to Parliament by the end of March for legislation in the autumn.

Lord Young and the Tories propose that 16 and 17 year olds unable to find jobs be offered a place on a YTS scheme. If they refuse they will not be entitled to supplementary benefit. This is nothing less than industrial conscription. Having failed to entice the majority of young people onto their cheap labour dead-end schemes the bosses are now getting the whips out.

### Degradation

Many had to suffer the degradation of the workhouse at the turn of the century. If these Tory proposals come law YTS will become a 'teenage workhouse' satisfying Thatcher's desire for a return of Victorian values.

Figures released in Oc-

By John Hird,  
(National Chairman LPYS)

tober 1984 showed that 234,000 16 and 17-year olds claim supplementary benefit of £17.30 a week. A careers service analysis also showed that 63% of 1984's school leavers did not find jobs.

Unemployed students at tech colleges using the "under-21 hours rule" will be forced to leave, creating a division in the FEs between those whose parents can afford to finance them through tech college and those forced onto schemes they do not want to be on because of lack of money.

Tory ministers admit that stopping teenagers' social security will not save money. In fact to switch 234,000 school leavers from the dole to a scheme will cost an estimated £350m, about £140 million more than leaving them on the dole.

In the next few months Tory ministers will be claiming that the problem with the young unemployed is that they are not trained, hence compulsion on YTS. If they were trained then surely industry could find a place for them?

This is far from the truth, most YTS trainees never find a proper job after completing their course. Fewer than a third of the people involved in the community programme, the special measure designed to help the long term unemployed are able to find a job at the end of the 12 month work programme. Then why are the Tories proposing these measures

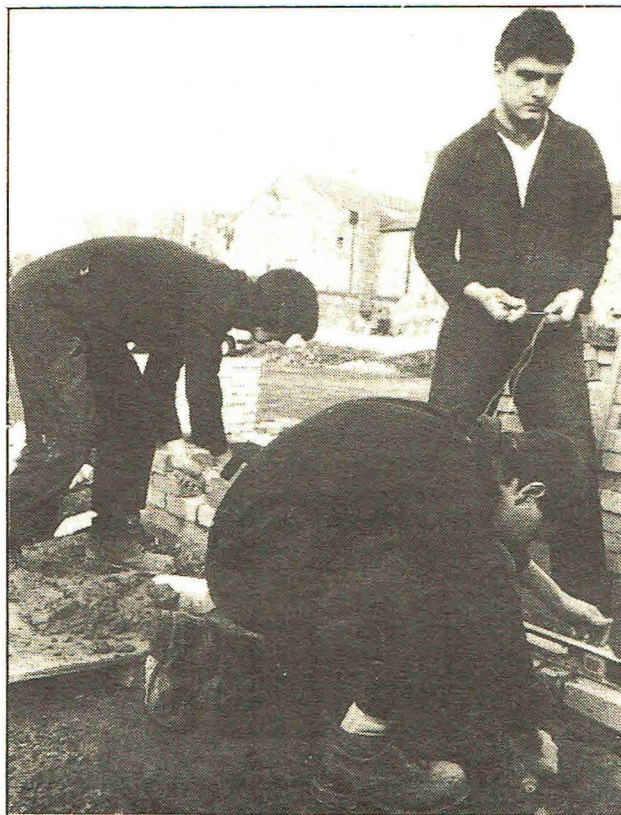
### Dole figures

The answer is three fold. Firstly, the Tories need to massage and disguise the unemployment figures. In reality dole figures stand at over 4 million and two more years of rising unemployment could see official figures at over 5m unless they are hidden by YTS.

Secondly, millions of young people on a cheap labour scheme would be a major weapon in the bosses' strategy to drive down wages and living standards of all working people—starting with the young.

The Tories' plan is to phase out the indentured apprentice system and replace it with a million strong pool of poorly-paid young people to use as a battering ram against the conditions of organised workers.

Furthermore, many people fear that once the dole has been abolished for 16



The YTS—no training and no job

★ No to industrial conscription. For the right of all 16 and 17 year olds to claim supplementary benefit.

★ Full trade union rights and rates of pay on YTS.

★ A grant of £30 a week for all 16 and 17 year olds at school or in further education.

★ A guaranteed job for all trainees, school and college leavers.

and 17 year olds, they will reduce the training allowance of £26.25 down to dole level to pay for £140 million expansion of YTS.

Thirdly the Tories feel they can get away with such measures. They have been emboldened by the weak stance of the TUC during the miners' strike. Each time the miners' fundamental union rights have been attacked the TUC has just stood by and watched.

### Fight back!

Just contrast the furious reaction of middle class parents when Keith Joseph announced a grants cut to the TUC's ritual denunciation of Lord Young's proposals, not backed up by any action whatsoever. The cuts in student grants would have taken away from the richest families about £750 a year, but Lord Young's cuts will take £900 a year away from some of the poorest in the

country. The TUC should fight for the youth of our class as hard as the parents of the rich fight for theirs.

The Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) are launching a mass campaign to stop these proposals becoming law, starting with a petition which will be taken to schools, FE colleges, YTS schemes and workplaces. Further details will be announced at a press conference next week.

The opening of the International Youth Year at Coventry Cathedral at which Prince Charles was to have presided was cancelled because the organisers feared demonstrations from unemployed youth. YTURC make a pledge that at every IYY event, demonstrations of young people will take place protesting at these government plans.

Don't wait for the cuts—fight back with the YTURC now!

## Help us fight for socialism

THE MILITANT Fighting Fund for this quarter has now reached £20,500. We need £44,500 to reach our target by 31 January.

We fully understand that our supporters have been second to none in finance for the miners and many readers are still recovering from the cost of Christmas and the New Year. But with your cash we can improve your paper's coverage and move towards producing a more frequent *Militant*.

### Money needed

We have no rich backers. When it comes to money, you, our readers, are our Murdochs and Maxwells. Don't let us down. Help us reach our target. We won't let you down in the fight for socialism.

## Michelin, Stoke

THE LARGEST single employer in Stoke on Trent, Michelin Tyre Company has announced 2,400 redundancies out of a total workforce of 5,700 at the Stoke site with a further 200 going at the Burnley factory. Production will be cut by almost a half.

### Promises

Ruth Campbell spoke to Michelin shop steward Chris Simpson. "The blokes are pig sick. They reluctantly accepted the new shift agreement a year ago after they promised jobs until the year 2,000. Management have sold us right down the River Trent.

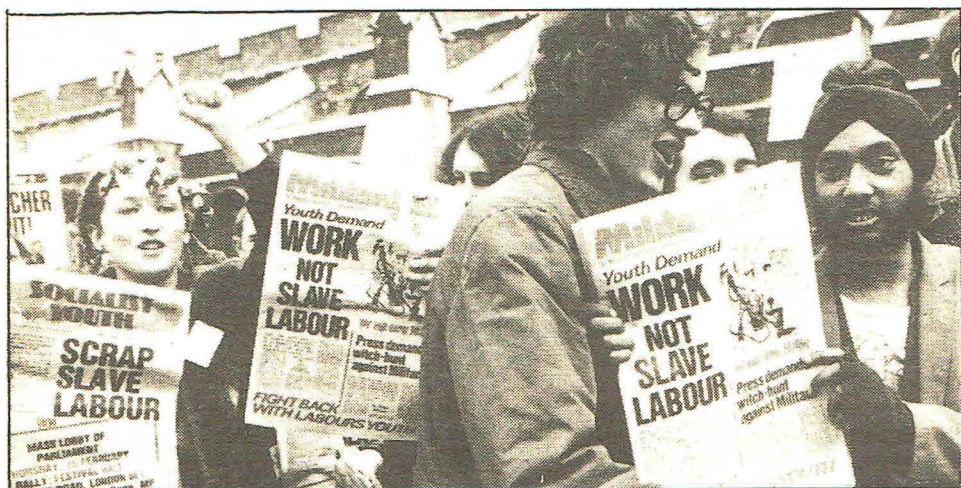
"The Joint Shop Stewards Committee is meeting on 9 January to decide what action to take. Management is trying to frighten us by threatening to withdraw redundancy payments if their is any disruption." A fuller report next week.

Demonstration against Tamil repression in Sri Lanka

Saturday 12 January

Speakers: Dave Nellist MP, NUM speaker

Militant sellers assemble at 11.15 am, Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park.



The Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) lobby of Parliament in 1982.



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