

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

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25p



Back miners with action

WITHIN THE labour movement this week all eyes will be on the Trade Union Congress in the expectation and hope that the leadership will launch a fightback against the onslaught of the Tory government.

The Tories are hell-bent on slashing the living standards of workers and dismantling all the welfare state benefits and services created by the labour movement in the past. If the trade unions dare to stand out in defence of their members' jobs or workers' rights, then the Tories are prepared to use their arsenal of anti-trade union laws to undermine any effective trade union action.

The TUC must call a halt to the Tory attacks. They must:

LISTEN TO THE MINERS IN BRIGHTON

Thousands of miners will be lobbying the TUC. The miners' strike has a special

By Brian Ingham

significance for all workers. Their courage, determination and resilience has carried them through 25 weeks and they deserve the full support of delegates.

But the miners' strike sums up the situation facing all trade unions. They are fighting for all of us. If the Tories are allowed to smash the NUM, with their anti-union laws and their blatantly political use of the courts and the police, then no trade union will be able to defend its members. No job will be safe.

The Tory press are trying to create an atmosphere of panic at Brighton by their disgusting and provocative predictions of a "bloodbath" and references to lobbyists as "mobsters". Workers have traditionally enjoyed the right to lobby conference delegates and miners must be no exception.

The miners must lobby the delegates intensively. Every hotel, pub, club and meeting room must be approached. Every delegation must be approached in the most friendly and fraternal way, with a request to speak to the delegates.

The miners must get over their case. They must talk, discuss with and explain to delegates the issues and the implications of their strike to other unions. Every single delegate in Brighton must be seen.

THE TUC MUST GIVE ACTIVE SUPPORT TO THE MINERS

The trade union movement is not a neutral "arbiter" standing mid-way between the government and the NUM. The TUC must stand full-square behind the miners.

There must be no question of the National Union of Mineworkers paying a "price" for support—in the form of TUC "control" of the strike, ie a run-down in the miners' campaign and in the mass picketing.

The TUC should support the NUM appeal for "total support" and must instruct unions

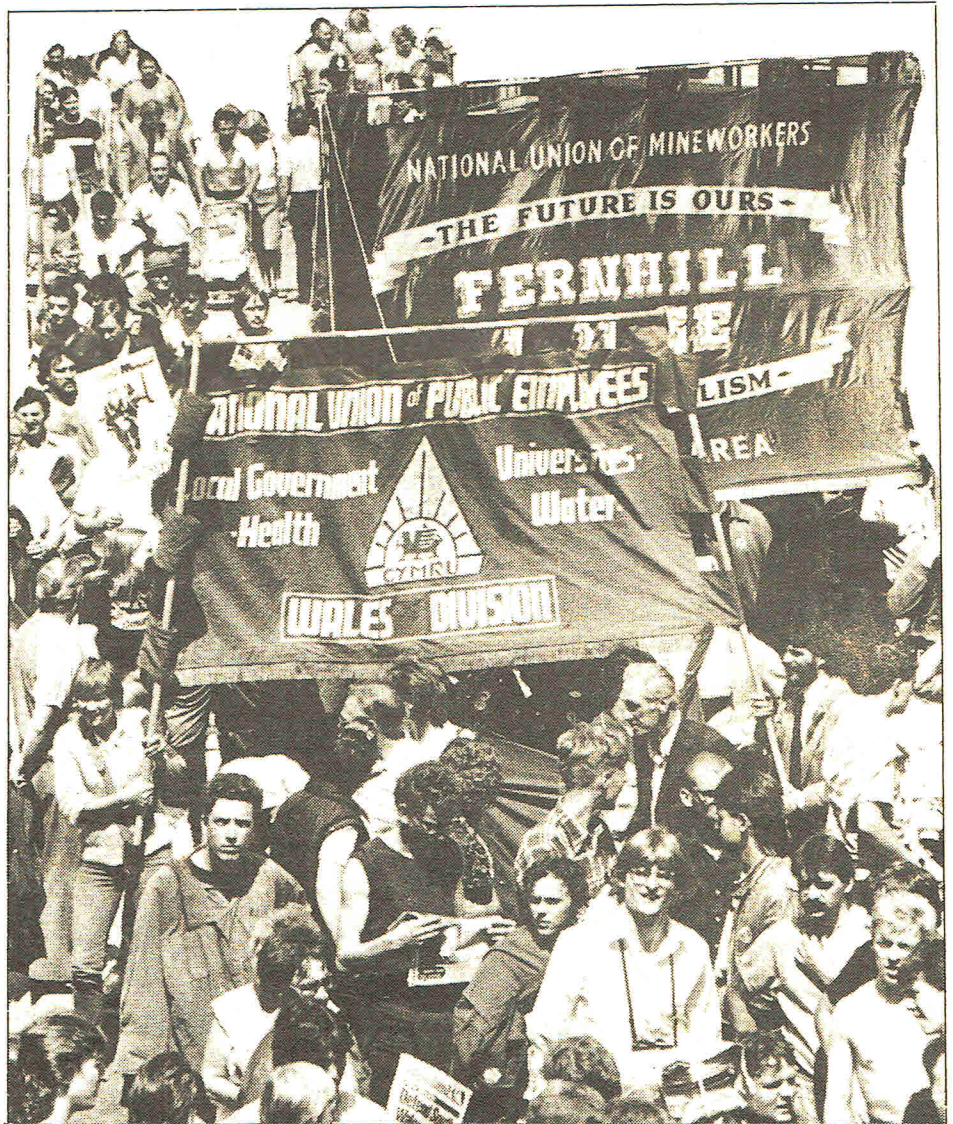


Photo: John Harris IFL

Workers demonstrate outside Wales NUM headquarters after £50,000 fine.

24 hour general strike

**TUC CONGRESS 1984
MILITANT MEETING
Wednesday 5 September
7.00 pm**

Speakers:

Peter Taaffe (Editor, *Militant*)
Derek Hatton
Deputy Leader, Liverpool Council
Ian Isaac
South Wales NUM EC, (persona
capacity)
Salisbury Hotel,
143-145 Kings Road,
Brighton

Turn right out of conference centre 20
yards on right)

Continued on Back Page

Join the march to lobby TUC: organised jointly by the NUM, Broad Left Organising Committee, South East Region of the TUC, SOGAT '82, and Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions. Details on back page.

Militant

Miners must reject TUC 'conditions'

BY THEIR refusal to give resolute and unequivocal backing to the miners, and by trying to place conditions on their support, the right wing of the TUC have placed fresh ammunition in the hands of the capitalist press. Echoing the comments of the right wing, the media has attempted to convey the idea that the miners are refusing to follow the 'instructions' of the TUC and that rifts are opening up in the ranks of the trade union movement.

The ruling class have clearly understood that the "price" of TUC support would be to hand control of the strike over to Len Murray and the General Council who could then negotiate—a defeat. The editorial of *The Times* stated bluntly that: "To be acceptable to the Coal Board any propositions produced by the TUC for settling this dispute must have as their basis the concept that only pits that are economically viable should be kept in operation".

The ruling class fear the repercussions that a miners' victory would mean. Having failed with every other tactic—the massive police operations, sequestering of funds, starving miners and their families, the damp squib of a back to work movement—they are now leaning on the right wing leaders of the TUC to engineer a defeat.

But the rank and file miners are extremely hostile to the idea of giving up control of their strike.

They have correctly seen the need for support from other unions to win a victory. Solidarity action on the part of other workers is vital because the miners' fight to protect pits and jobs is part of the general struggle to defend jobs. A defeat for the miners would allow the Tories to then attack the living standards, jobs and rights of every section of the working class.

But while solidarity action is necessary, the miners are not prepared to allow the control of the strike to be taken over by those who capitulated over the *Stockport Messenger* and GCHQ.

Miners will be disappointed that the NUM leadership have already chosen to oppose the Congress amendment from FTAT calling upon the TUC to organise a "day of solidarity action" to back the strike. Pressure from the TUC leadership must not be allowed to blunt the sharpness of the miners' campaign. The miners must be backed "without strings". That is the surest and speediest way of forcing the NCB into real and meaningful negotiations.

Moreover, any negotiations with the NCB must be made open. At present the "Orme package" seems to be known to MacGregor, the NUM leaders, the TUC leaders, to everyone, that is except the most important party—the striking miners.

Secret negotiations of any kind inevitably become a source of suspicion, confusion and frustration. The only way to overcome this is to bring all the details out into the open. Any final settlement must be placed before colliery mass meetings and area meetings, to be fully discussed and voted upon.

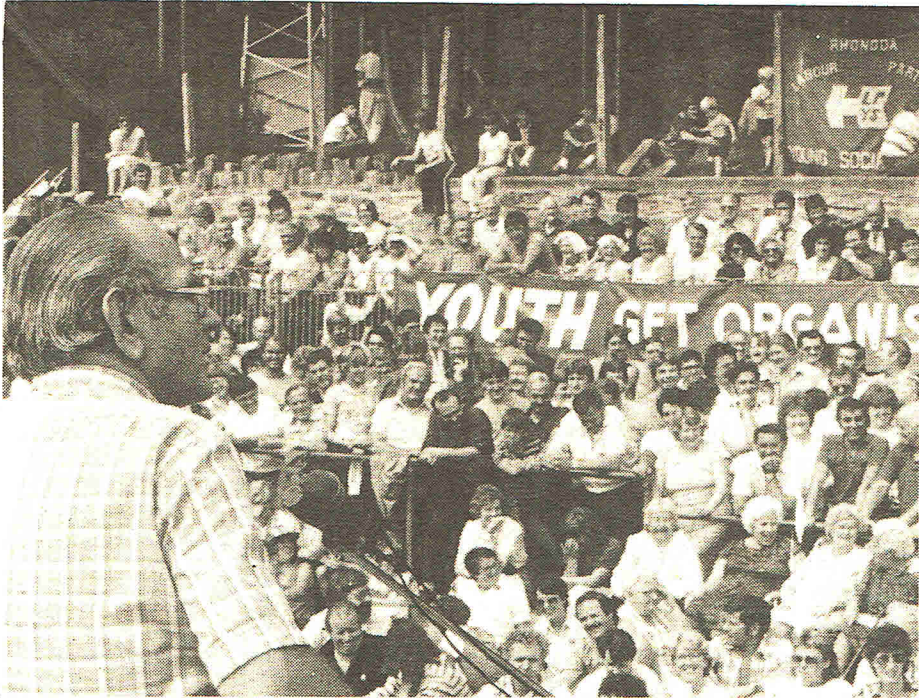
In this way it will be possible for all miners to be involved in identifying the investment needs for their area so that real guarantees are given to protect and expand job opportunities. Miners and their families have had to endure 25 weeks of privations. They are determined to press other legitimate claims like the abolition of the incentive scheme, the four-day week and a decent wage. These issues cannot be forgotten.

What has been won on the picket lines, in the mass demonstrations and the relentless activity of the miners' support groups must not be allowed to slip away in a few hours around the negotiating table, especially through the pressure of the TUC right wing.

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

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Miners rally in Mardy



Emlyn Williams speaks at the Mardy Rally and Gala on 27 August. Mardy, known before the war as 'Little Moscow' because of its militant history, is now the last pit in the Rhondda.

Photo: Martin Shakeshaft (IFL)

Strike leader victimised

FOR 23 hours a day for eight days, Nick Platek was kept locked up in a cell in Winson Green prison, Birmingham, his crime was to be seen by the police attempting to buy a bottle of milk within half a mile of his place of work.

Nick is a striking miner at the Littleton pit, in the South Staffs coalfield. Like thousands of other striking miners, harsh bail conditions arising from the minor charge of obstruction were slapped on him by the Tory magistrates.

Nick, a *Militant* supporter, was responsible with a few others for organising picketing of his own pit which initially brought out the majority of men, whilst area and branch officials were telling the men to cross the picket line. Accordingly his face is well known to the police.

On the eighth day of prison he was brought back to court, where he could have been remanded for another eight days and so on until 18 October. The police asked instead not for custody, but tighter bail conditions, these were: 1) To report every day at 12 noon to Cannock police station. 2) A curfew to be imposed between 10 pm and 7 am each night. 3) Continuation of the half mile restriction. The magistrates granted application and Nick was released. If he had not been then plans were being laid for a campaign of lobbies and demonstrations.

By Bill Mullins

Pakistani socialist detained

MR ALI HASAN NAQUI, joint secretary of the Pakistan People's Party (Belgium), has been detained while travelling to London for a meeting of the workers' steering committee of the PPP. He may now face deportation to Pakistan where his life would be in danger.

He had applied for political asylum in Belgium and was there for 1½ years awaiting a decision. The Belgian authorities have now refused to take him back on the pretext that he had travelled to Britain on a Pakistani passport.

The news has been published in Pakistani papers abroad and this has further increased the danger, if he is sent back, of his prosecution by the regime, for his active participation in the movement for restoration of democracy.

His case has been taken up by Terry Fields MP from Liverpool Broadgreen and a campaign is being launched in the trade unions, Labour Party branches and among MPs for his release and for political asylum in Britain. Letters and resolutions opposing his expulsion to Pakistan should immediately be sent to David Waddington, Minister of State at the Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1 and copies to: Mumtaz Khan, 2 Sandgate House, Pembury road, London E5.

By Militant Reporters

Barricades at Silverwood



Supermarket trolleys, cars and wood form a blazing barricade at the entrance to Silverwood Colliery 22 August.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Cypriot worker—appeal for support

LABOUR AND trade union organisations in Britain have been asked to protest to the Cypriot government over the deportation of a Turkish Cypriot socialist to the Turkish-occupied north of the island, where he may face danger. Our Cypriot correspondent writes:

Musa Mustafa Olur lived for the past seven years in the south of the island in the area controlled by the internationally recognised government of Cyprus. He was an active socialist, campaigning for a free socialist Cyprus and for the unity of the socialist forces of the island—Turkish Cypriots in the north and Greek Cypriots in the south.

He was active in the trade union movement, as a representative of the Turkish Cypriot minority in the south, fighting against nationalism and chauvinism on the island. He campaigned for Turkish Cypriots' rights in the south, against the chauvinist Greek Cypriot police.

Because of his political activity and ideas he was arrested by the Greek Cypriot police on 14 August and handed over to the Denktash regime in the Turkish-occupied north of the island. No warrant was issued and comrade Musa was not

allowed contact with his lawyer or any friends.

He is now in jail in the north waiting to be tried by a military court on the grounds that he avoided military service.

This act of the Cypriot government shows their hypocrisy when they present themselves as champions of "freedom" and "human rights". Denktash and the Turkish occupying forces stationed in the north of the island are bitterly opposed and unrecognised by the Cypriot government. They have no problem, however, in co-operating for the suppression of left-wing ideas and socialist fighters.

The case of Comrade Musa is not the only case of violation of the civil rights of Turkish Cypriots who live in the south. This comrade had escaped from the north because of the terrible economic conditions that prevail there and the semi-military character of the Denktash regime.

Once in the south however, they are treated by the government as second-rate citizens and are continually harassed by the Greek Cypriot police. They live in absolutely inhuman conditions and face the continuous terror of 'disappearing' and the secret police deporting them to the north, straight into jail.

The labour movement must react. The Cypriot government must learn that it cannot violate workers' rights without facing the anger of the labour movement in Cyprus and elsewhere. The deportation of comrade Musa is an attack against the working class because it promotes nationalism and the partition of the island. At the same time the release of the comrade from jail must be demanded.

Messages of protest to: 1) Mr Spyros Kyprianou, President of Republic of Cyprus, and 2) Mr Rauf Denktash, Turkish Cypriot administration, Mersina, Nicosia, Cyprus and copies to ex-Socialist Party MP and lawyer of Musa Mustafa, Patrikiou Pavlou, PO Box 509, Limassol, Cyprus.

Police escalate pit violence

IN WHAT appears to be a concerted campaign, police have stepped up their attacks on mining communities. The pretext of "defending the right to work" for a handful of scabs is used to justify brutal efforts to break miners' resolve. As the articles below show, police terrorism has backfired.

Durham villages under siege

THE USE of riot police for the first time in the Durham coalfield at Easington colliery on Friday 24 August has provoked an angry response from the whole community. Despite laying on buses every day, only one person, Paul Wilkinson, out of 2,000 workers has been attempting to go to work.

NCB management and police, angry at the success of pickets who prevented even this lone scab from breaking the line on the previous four days, resorted to double-dealing and brute force on Friday to provide evidence of a "drift back to work".

Around 1,000 police were drafted in from not only surrounding counties but also Northants and Manchester. The village was totally sealed off to prevent the arrival of extra pickets before the police smuggled the scab into work through an unpicketed back entrance.

This was despite an assurance from the local NCB management that anybody reporting for work would have to enter through the front gate. The response of the 1,000 pickets was immediate, they attempted to cross the pit yard to reach the baths where Wilkinson was hiding, surrounded by police.

NCB strategy—attack militant pits

The strategy of the NCB in collusion with the police seems to be to attack the most militant pits in the Durham coalfield—namely, Easington and Monkwearmouth.

At Monkwearmouth the main response to the back to work call has come from white collar workers, with about a dozen turning up to work. At Easington hundreds of police, many in riot gear with shields, have been on hand to smuggle one scab through the side entrances. (see article)

The police are prepared to go to any lengths to try and break the strike. At Monkwearmouth 900 police held miners back while a van hurtled through at 40 or 50 miles per hour, narrowly missing the official pickets.

The massive police presence and their brutal tactics have resulted in riots in the mining communities. Pit villages such as Murton and Seaham have virtually been sealed off.

They were met by a police charge which was repeated four times before they were driven back, but not before the management were made aware of the anger of the pickets. Windows in the office block and management cars were attacked.

Rather than inspiring other miners to join Wilkinson in scabbing, workers who had previously never been picketing have now joined the lines.

Wilkinson got into work again on Tuesday 27 August. Police again sealed off the village and have been stopping pickets' buses. People walking into the village are stopped and threatened with arrest on "suspicion of causing a breach of the peace". These events have raised the whole temperature of the dispute and redoubled the determination of Easington miners.

By Norman Hall

Miners' leaders in Monkwearmouth have advised against acts of individual violence. Whilst understanding the provocation of the police and the frustration of seeing scabs being escorted into work they have advised that only mass organised and disciplined action will succeed. As a result the local press has reported that once or twice the police have almost been outmanoeuvred on the picket lines.

There is no doubt that the tactics of the NCB and the police will fail. But the brutality has had its effect. The result is that even more miners are now actively involved in picketing.

The lull of the holiday period has now definitely gone, the strike has reached a new level. Two new stages in the North East have been passed through—for the first time in the strike women have been involved in the picketing and for the first time the police have used riot gear.

By Dave Cotterill



Miners' rally and gala at Dalkeith, near Edinburgh—one of many held over the Bank Holiday weekend.

Lively Scottish rally

ABOUT 10,000 miners, their families and supporters marched through Cumnock, Ayrshire on Sunday 26 August in a lively and confident demonstration. The clear messages of the rally were that Tory propaganda that, "the strike is crumbling" and "the miners have no support" are lies.

Thousands lined the streets as the marchers, particularly miners' children, shouted out the various messages of what they would do to MacGregor 'early in the morning' and the other popular chants. Older participants reckoned it was the big-

gest demonstration Cumnock had seen in their lifetime, no mean feat for a town which boasts a bust of Keir Hardie on the main street and also contains his grave.

At the rally there was a tremendous reception for Arthur Scargill and particularly loud applause was reserved for his demand for support from the TUC. "If Frank Chapple used one tenth of the energy he uses attacking the working class, to fight for the class, what a difference it would make", he said.

By Ronnie Stevenson

Gateshead festival

BANK HOLIDAY Monday saw the best and most successful event ever organised by Gateshead YS. A festival organised jointly with the miners support group attracted over 1,000 people.

Over £200 was raised for the miners. The YS signed up 100 people wanting to join the fight—with many getting involved immediately selling stickers and raising money.

(Report by Bill Wake)

Armthorpe's 'martial law'

1,000 police, many in full riot gear, turned the Yorkshire pit village of Armthorpe into a battlefield last week. The trouble started on Tuesday 22 August after a day of confrontation between police and pickets at Markham Main colliery, known as one of the most militant pits in a militant area.

The village had been quiet and trouble free for 24 weeks, until management that day smuggled three unidentified, masked men into the pit. Police vans cruised round the village, made arbitrary arrests, and eventually tried to force their way into the welfare.

The club was full of miners who'd gone there from the picket and they prevented the police from entering. The police eventually left at about 4pm.

24 hour picket

By 6.30pm the welfare was jam packed for a meeting. It was decided to mount a 24 hour picket from then.

Between 6 and 7am pickets arrived from all over Doncaster and a barricade was erected across the pit gates. At 8.30am two convoys of police moved in and boxed off the pit.

A pitched battle ensued. Police ran amok through the streets, truncheons flailing,

arresting anybody, chasing people into gardens and houses.

One young picket was arrested then paraded up and down the streets, covered in blood, for 45 minutes before being given any medical aid.

This open terrorism has backfired in Armthorpe and elsewhere. Pubs and shops have refused to serve police. Signs have gone up saying "No police". Housewives abuse them in the streets. More mass pickets are planned and a newly formed branch of the LPYS is holding meetings and leafletting campaigns in the village.

Latest reports indicate that the police are now using Armthorpe as a base of operations, with dozens of vans in the pit yard, curfews on residents and tapping of telephones. The village is now under virtual martial law. As one Armthorpe miner said: "The village is in effect an open prison. Everyone in it is answerable to these thugs. Our normal police are unable to patrol the village, because of the damage caused by these vandals. The end result will be catastrophic unless we stand up to them—as a whole village—together in the struggle."

By Keith Narey
(Armthorpe correspondent)

Anger at Polkemmet

WEST LOTHIAN miners reacted angrily to the first break in the strike at Polkemmet colliery near Bathgate, West Lothian, last Monday 20 August. Polkemmet employs 1400 men, and is a main supplier of Ravenscraig steel works. Six scabs were taken into the pit at around 8 am after the pickets had gone away to do the open cast, because there seemed to be nothing happening.

The six went back in again on Tuesday; the pit delegates got to speak to them. One said he wouldn't return. The other five said they would. On Wednesday, the police sneaked them in at 4.45 am, about an hour early before pickets had arrived in any numbers.

The union had reacted by withdrawing safety cover at 7.30 on Tuesday morning. Two hours later the underground power was shut off by management and remained off.

Safety cover was restored when it became clear that severe damage was being caused to the workings and the future of the pit might be at stake.

But management stopped NACODS safety men from entering the pit on Sunday night preventing any assessment for 12 hours—a long delay.

At the time of going to press it is unclear whether management will claim that the pit is irretrievably damaged. Management's current claim that it would take a year to get back to production is taken with a pinch of salt by Polkemmet miners.

On Tuesday there were 27 arrests, 26 men from Polkemmet and one from Dalkeith who was arrested for breaking bail conditions. He was picked out by police from Edinburgh. A special squad has been doing the same on the Bilston Glen picket line—picking out anyone they recognise as having been arrested previously.

By Joe Owens
(Polkemmet NUM)

OVER FIFTY workers from staff unions in the House of Commons including CPSA, APEC and the T&GWU heard Barry Smith of Notts NUM and speakers from the Parliamentary Labour Party call for active support. £120 was collected for the strike fund. Even in these cosy corridors of power the Tories can't escape from solidarity! (Reports Steve Collins, House of Commons CPSA, personal capacity)

Miners' dispute Lies and NCB statistics

IN ITS latest Annual Report, the National Coal Board attempts to portray the cost of UK deep-mined steam coal as being way above the cost of foreign competitors—thus presumably demonstrating that British coalminers are inefficient, and justifying the proposed pit closures. On page 5 of their report the NCB presents a chart comparing prices of coal delivered to Western Europe in September 1983.

This chart has already been used by Samuel Brittan in the *Financial Times* (August 23) to back up a series of vicious and distorted arguments against British miners. This article cannot deal with all of Brittan's points but one of them is that if British coal is so expensive, why not just leave it in the ground and do away with deep-mined NCB coal altogether!

But the NCB chart is a total distortion of the true relationship between UK coal and its competitors. Professor Don Barnett of Macquarrie University, Sydney, has provided the most thorough study of

comparative cost structures of various coal industries in recent years. This study was published in the *Financial Times International Coal Report* and it shows a very different picture from that presented to readers of the National Coal Board Annual Report.

By Bob McKee

False claims

In their chart the NCB claim that US coal is sold at around \$49 per tonne once delivered to Rotterdam port.

IT HAS been one excuse another for not using the criminal or the civil against behaviour, which is outside a union context, as its instigators behind bars. It is quick as Ian MacGregor hinted on Tuesday. Originally, there was the need to elicitate members of the National Union of Miners, when a strike ballot still in the offing. Then was the supposed desire to alienate the Nottingham miners (who obviously need to make arrangements to protect their own funds otherwise have no reason behind Arthur Scargill). In all, there is the deep establishment belief that it is union militants as equal anyone else before the law, who would be provocative or martyrs.

Samuel Brittan's vicious article in the *Financial Times*, despite its 'authoritative' style is based on false NCB figures—as Bob McKee shows in this article.

But what the NCB does not tell the reader is that this figure is for the price of open-cast mined coal. The cheapest deep-mined US coal is around \$57 (from non-union mines) and rises to \$69 (unionised mines). There is not nearly enough open-cast coal available to supply European markets so US exports are generally from deep-mining output with prices near to \$60 not \$49 a tonne. In addition if US coal was to compete in British markets to substitute for NCB coal, the extra costs of transport from Rotterdam to the Thames would have to be included, taking the cost of US coal to Britain to a price of between \$67 and \$79.

The NCB says that the price of Australian coal is only \$48 per tonne when delivered to Rotterdam. This

may be the price at which the Australians were attempting to sell their coal last September, but that price is way below the true cost of their coal. The cheapest Australian coal, whether open-cast or deep-mined, really costs \$65 per tonne when delivered to Rotterdam, according to Don Barnett and the FT International Coal Report. Adding transport to Thames ports, Australian costs would reach \$75. Australians are selling their coal in Europe at a heavy loss, as are the US producers.

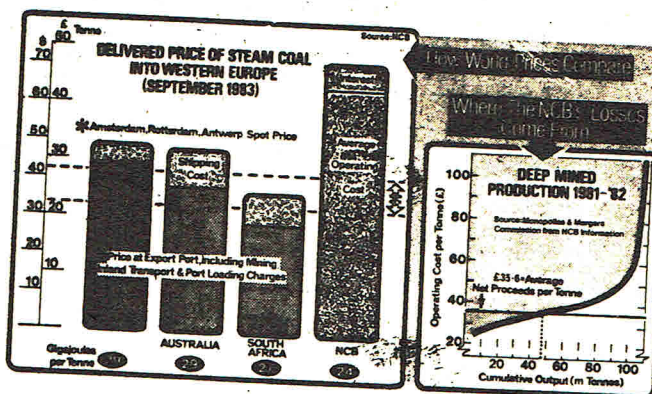
South Africa

The NCB quotes South African coal at \$39 per tonne. It neglects to point

ECONOMIC VIEWPOINT

Time to stop cossetting coal

By Samuel Brittan



losses and £100m from having to export at a discount, ie dump. (See graph.) The Commission estimates that if the level of closures envisaged in a tripartite report approved by the Labour Government in 1974 had been achieved, present capacity would be 10m tonnes less and the position of the industry transformed—I would say made less bad.

foreword to the NCB's 1983-84 Report, the board's programme is "designed to restructure the industry towards a more efficient, high-performance business based on investment in long-life collieries, the construction of new mines, and the closure of those collieries where reserves are either exhausted or no longer realistically workable."

quantities amounting to 70m tonnes. Licensed open cast operations, offending the NUM, profit last year of £211m, a loss on dev coal of £595m—in bo before interest. Mo would undoubtedly co own cast operations wi NUM threat.

The direct electric with France, due to 1986 and officially bui with the peak loads, reduce the CEBG's d on British coal in emergency by the eq two nuclear fired po If the Government p such lifelines it wou further cable lin Continent where the electricity for sale.

The perennial lie of coal strike blackmail

of the strike, but per The fuel oil duty lifted and open of should be freed. N

Coal movements and electricity

THE CEBG reacted quickly to the revelations in *Militant* 713 that the movement of coal by rail has been slashed, and that some coal fired power stations have been mothballed during the miners' strike. They confirmed that some power stations have been shut down, but maintained that deliveries of coal to power stations are running at 600,000 tons per week. Significantly, they did not deny our report that movement of coal by rail had been slashed.

The solidarity of railworkers has put the squeeze on the NCB and CEBG. Their confident predictions that power supplies are safe until February next year or even 1987 is undoubtedly part of the propaganda campaign aimed at undermining the morale of the miners.

It is a major victory that the movement of coal by rail has been cut so dramatical-

ly. In May it was calculated that 1.29 million tonnes of coal was being moved, mainly by rail, mainly out of the Notts coalfield. That figure is now down to around 20,000 tonnes per week according to the most up-to-date information received exclusively by *Militant*.

By Pete Dickinson

We have had reports from the Midlands of large movements of coal into Cannock power station by road. The question as to how much coal is being moved by road is extremely difficult to assess and we would welcome information and comments from readers around the country.

On the most recent official figures (three months old) for coal production and consumption we estimate that only about 160,000 tonnes per week of coal is available from open cast pits and imports to be moved into the power stations. The crucial question this raises for the miners and the trade union movement is if the CEBG is



Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

Rail workers solidarity with miners has cut coal movements massively.

telling the truth, where is the extra 440,000 odd tonnes coming from and how is it being moved?

Road transport

The import of that amount of coal would have to be through relatively large port facilities. Its movement from a port or from stockpiles away from the power stations would be a large scale road transport operation. If the CEBG are telling the truth then these questions have to be taken up by the trade unions involved, particularly the TGWU. A serious campaign

to halt coal movements must be directed to the decisive areas to hit the power industry.

The CEBG's silence over the success of rail solidarity, however, indicates their fear of the miners' campaign. If large scale movement of pit head stockpiles becomes necessary it would be such a massive job that the number of large coal transporters and drivers would be totally inadequate. It would require a massive strike-breaking operation which would arouse the fury of the entire labour movement. This prospect may well be far closer than the CEBG admit.

Nuclear power output to be reduced?

THE CEBG, in a desperate attempt to keep output up from nuclear power stations has deferred shutting down its reactors over the summer for routine maintenance (*New Scientist*, 23 August).

Due to close

The nuclear stations at Sizewell A, Huckley Point, Dungeness, Wylfa and Oldbury were due to close for a total of 80-100 weeks this summer. The CEBG refuse to say whether this has been done.

The giant 1,320 MW

AGR station at Heyshaw has been forced to shut down for technical reasons. This is a blow to the Tories, since their projections of how long coal stocks will last were partly based on the assumption that an increased amount of nuclear generated electricity would be available in the next two months.

In the Autumn the Electricity Board will be required by law to shut down many of their nuclear reactors for maintenance. If they comply with this, it will be another blow to their plans to minimise coal burn.

Another little NCB lie

ON MONDAY and Tuesday this week the media gave massive coverage to the return to work of between 30 and 50 men at Warsop Main colliery. These figures, however, do not stand up to close scrutiny.

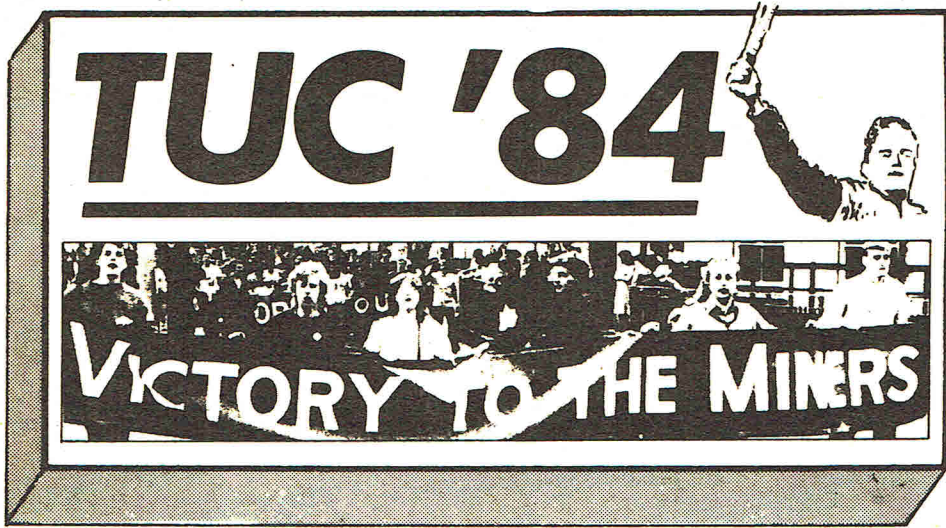
We were informed on Friday that this included 14 men from my own pit Welbeck who should be on holiday. Also included are men from several other pits plus a number of area men.

On being told of this we went to Main to watch them coming up at the end of their shift. We took binoculars

with us so we could identify the Welbeck men. We were informed that it is illegal to use binoculars anywhere near to NCB property.

This will make no difference however, as sympathetic members of Warsop Main NACODS have already confirmed that many of those going into work are complete strangers. Further we have been reliably informed that the same thing is happening at Shirebrook.

By Bill Davies (Welbeck NUM, personal capacity)



Why we need a Broad Left Organising Committee

GEORGE WILLIAMSON, Organising Secretary of BLOC talks to Militant about its new publications and plans:

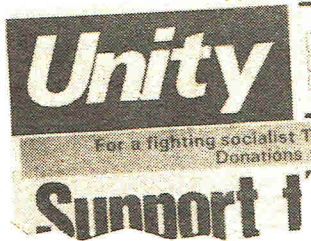
BLOC appeals to all its supporters to rush in their subscriptions to our new journal *Unity*. We will be producing *Unity* quarterly, providing news and comments on what the various Broad Lefts are doing in the unions.

We will also be establishing a monthly newsletter to all our subscribers, keeping our supporters informed about the work of BLOC and the Broad Lefts. We hope to build up a comprehensive mailing list of all the best militants in the trade unions and the Labour Party. This will enable us to communicate quickly with all our supporters, especially when events take a rapid turn, such as the legal attacks made on the miners.

If the miners are attacked again in the next few weeks

then the leaders of the left-wing unions and the thousands of shop stewards and trade union activists who support the miners will have to move quickly to come to the defence of the NUM by calling solidarity action, beginning with a 24 hour General Strike.

BLOC have organised the lobby of the TUC to put to congress this demand. Thousands of trade unionists will put the case for solidarity action to back the miners.



New paper of BLOC details right.

BLOC hopes that our efforts will play a major role in achieving the action the miners now urgently need to win a speedy victory. But once the miners finally achieve victory that won't be the end of the battle against this government. The struggle will continue to achieve the fighting leadership, policies and strategy our movement needs. BLOC and *Unity* hope to play a key part in all these battles, providing a platform and an organising centre for left wing activists, both in the trade unions and the Labour Party.

We urge all trade unionists and Labour Party members to send in individual subscriptions to *Unity* (£5 per annum), and to get their organisation to take out a subscription (£10 per annum).

Send to G. Williamson, 11 Sutton Place, London. Cheques payable to BLOC.

We have done more to put pressure on the executives of the union, and on individual unions that anybody else. That will be demonstrated by the massive turnout on our lobby.

... A final point I'd like to make is this, many unions have been able to make successful settlements of pay disputes and other disputes as a result of the miners' strike. It's up to the leadership of the movement to say that all of those unions and their members owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the miners which should be repaid now by physically taking action in support of them.

THE BROAD Left Organising Committee was formed in 1981 largely as a result of the struggles taking place in the Labour Party over the moves to increase democracy and accountability. It was a crucial time to mobilise opposition against undemocratic use of the trade union block vote at Labour Party conference.

The changing political situation, especially the failure of the trade union leaders to counter Tory attacks showed the need for the left in the unions to organise

a fight back. BLOC was prompted, on the basis of increased support to widen its aims. It now comprises representatives from some twenty individual trade union Broad Lefts.

The first major step forward was taken in October last year. 2,200 visitors and delegates, with 500 people turned away because of lack of space, gathered together in Sheffield in the biggest meeting of rank and file trade union activists since the early 1970s.

The objective of the conference was to provide all the individual Broad Lefts with an opportunity to campaign in their own unions around a common theme, and with a central aim of demonstrating the collective strength of the left in the unions.

BLOC does not aim to impose some outside discipline on union members or affiliated Broad Lefts. The success of the Sheffield conference does, however, show the desire amongst union activists for the opportunity to share ex-

periences and lessons of struggles in their unions and industries.

Above all the disastrous role of the TUC, especially in the ASLEF and NGA disputes shows the need for the left to develop links right across the movement, not as a substitute for the existing organisations but to exert pressure and to supplement them, in the struggle to transform them into democratic and fighting organisations.



DANNY PURTON, Secretary of NALGO Broad Left and Harlow NALGO Branch Secretary.

What preparations have NALGO and the NALGO Broad Left been making for the lobby?

I circulated activists in the branches up and down the country with the BLOC paper *Unity* and other leaflets that have come out. NALGO members are co-operating with other activists in other unions in their own areas to provide coaches and other transport to get people there.

NALGO's vote at the TUC is going to be very impor-

tant, how do you see that going?

What NALGO will vote on will depend on what resolutions come up. NALGO pledged to give its full support to the NUM, its given over £100,000 already and many branches are making very good collections. There is a move by a small minority in the union to try and stop any further money being given or to call a national ballot before any further money can be given but the Broad Left is confident that will be rejected (see article p.14).

There will be opportunity for Broad left members in NALGO to put pressure on the TUC delegation which consists of a large number of elected rank and file members. Hopefully the

mood of the lobby and the mood of the conference will persuade NALGO to go along with giving the fullest support to the miners.

Are you pleased with the role that BLOC is playing in building support for the miners and the lobby?

I think it's been a crucial role that BLOC's played, because there needed to be a unified turn towards the TUC conference. Particularly in the last few weeks as the TUC conference approaches, the miners and other activists in the trade union movement are appreciating the fact that BLOC has hit the nail on the head, capturing the mood if you like, in organising this lobby. There's a tremendous hope that it will have an effect on the decisions.



Ken Gill and Alan Sapper (left), left-wing members of the TUC outside Congress House during the NGA dispute with Eddie Shah. Mick McGahey and Arthur Scargill (right) of the NUM, at Labour Labour conference. The left failed to mobilise the TUC in defence of the NGA, and the NUM is justifiably wary of TUC interference. BLOC is trying to link up the left in the unions to mobilise full support for the miners.



MICK BARWOOD Secretary of Group '81 (the Broad Left in COHSE), and Chief Steward for the rally.

You are preparing the lobby, what have you been doing so far?

Organising all the local trade unionists in Sussex to get them along on the demonstration. There has been tremendous support amongst Sussex trade unionists for the miners since the strike started when we collected over £25,000.

Also its been my job to liaise with the police and make sure that we have the best possible relations on the day to ensure that the

discipline of the trade union movement is sufficient and we don't need the interference of the police in any way.

You are also in the Health Service in Brighton, what kind of support is coming from there?

Very good support from the Health Service. In Brighton we have got a very good relationship with the local trades council and the local Labour Party who have recently given great support to the Health Service unions in our struggle against privatisation. As well as that, the miners have been speaking at Health Service meetings.

What position do you think COHSE will take at the TUC when it comes to the debate about what form of solidari-

ty action it should take with the miners?

It's a difficult situation. The Broad Left succeeded in getting passed through the National Executive Committee the policy of taking 24-hour industrial strike action if any trade union laws were used against the miners. However, it was in a form that was overtaken by conference passing a resolution which could be interpreted as taking no action at all and just work through the TUC General Council.

But we will be pushing for our General Secretary and delegation to ensure that they follow the mandate from the National Executive Committee meeting of supporting 24-hour general strike action.



PHIL HOLT, National Secretary of BLOC and National Executive member, Post Office Engineering Union.

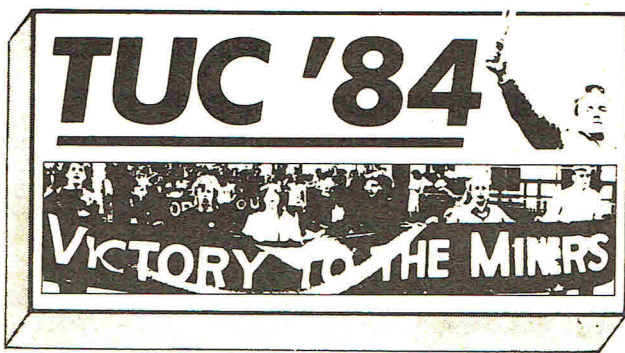
What do you think the position of the POEU is going to be in the TUC debate on support for the miners?

The POEU must come out clearly in support of the miners. We should be committing ourselves to taking the steps that are necessary to give some physical support on behalf of the miners.

We have had a history of the executive meeting to discuss support and encouraging our members to link up with the miners, to raise finance and so on. I think it's now about time that we made a further step forward in conjunction with other unions to take some physical action. The situation has become so important that I feel it is a necessary step.

What's your impression of the role that BLOC has played in mobilising pressure on the TUC to support the miners?

From the point of view of a rank and file organisation we have put pressure through the trade unions and at trades council and na-



For a left Labour executive

LABOUR PARTY members will be hoping the left gain a decisive victory in the National Executive elections at this year's party conference. Many party members and trade unionists have been infuriated by the Labour leadership's equivocation and abdication of responsibility, particularly on the miners' struggle and the battle of Liverpool council.

Neil Kinnock has supported the current attacks on reselection of MPs and lent his weight to attacks on the Young Socialists' budget and expulsion of *Militant* supporters.

Talk of unity is hollow if at the first tests the Labour leadership join in playing up divisions in the labour movement and the working class. That can only weaken the fight to depose the Tory government.

As the Labour leaders

By a *Militant* reporter

presenting a clear, united slate and eliminating any danger of splitting the left vote or allowing the right to gain seats or even a majority.

Aside from the absence of Marxists the Campaign Group slate has other weaknesses. It proposes only four candidates for the five places in the women's section.

Only eleven of the twelve



Jim Callaghan gets some advice from Dennis Skinner at Labour Party conference. Too often the left has won the argument, but not the vote.

seemingly prepare for a sharp shift to the right over incomes policy and nuclear disarmament, the maximum vote for consistent lefts, to win a majority on the NEC, becomes crucial. If the left slate proposed by the Campaign Group of MPs is successful, this will be seen as a decisive advance, increasing the pressure on the leadership.

The left in the constituency section on the NEC have voted consistently in defence of party policy and party democracy. Their re-election, in the present precarious balance of left and right on the NEC, is vital.

Crucial time

Increasing numbers of activists will, of course, be surprised and disappointed that no *Militant* supporter is standing for the NEC. *Militant's* role in Liverpool and the miners' strike and in the battle over expulsions, has won respect and increased authority.

This year, however, priority had to be given to

trade union positions are being contested, leaving a gap through which arch right-winger John Golding might regain his position.

Critical eyes

In fact the slate includes some—such as Sam McCluskie and Alex Kitson whose NEC voting record is often indistinguishable from the right. Both McCluskie and Kitson have voted with the right wing on many political issues, as well as on witch-hunts and expulsions.

Most party members and trade union activists will welcome a victory for the Campaign Group's left slate. However, no-one should think that a 'left' label guarantees uncritical rank and file support. Their actions will be closely monitored by those who vote for them this year.

The job now is to campaign in the constituencies and trade unions for a left victory, and lay the basis for a more satisfactory slate, which includes Marxists, next year.

Political levy - press distortion



David Basnett casts the GMBATU massive vote at Labour Party conference.

The Tories' 1984 Trade Union Act demands that unions hold a ballot at least every ten years on continuation of their political funds. The attempt to break the historical link between trade unions and the Labour Party they largely created is being determinedly opposed by the TUC, who propose to leave it up to individual unions.

The Tories' attack is strengthened by lack of confidence in workers' understanding of the need for their own political party. EILEEN SHORT looks at one example of the potentially self-fulfilling pessimism of many in and around the labour movement.

IF UP to a third of trade union members vote Tory, is affiliation to the Labour Party democratic? A private survey commissioned by Trade Unions for a Labour Victory (TULV) has been quoted by journalists to show that rank and file trade union members are opposed to the unions' political role and affiliation to the Labour Party.

'Brother' John Torode (as he describes himself) wrote a substantial article in *The Guardian* (2.8.84) claiming: "The survey shows that in only three affiliated unions do a majority want to retain the link (with the Labour Party) and the payments that go with it".

Being of a suspicious nature, we thought we should check before accepting Torode's reading of the survey. He doesn't give us facts, figures, questions ask-

ed or the sample size MORI used in their research.

We found Torode was being highly selective in his use of information. The survey results (which have not been publicly released) in fact indicate that a campaign of discussion, explanation and political education could produce a decisive majority in favour of trade union political funds and affiliation to the Labour Party.

Questions

The survey asked four central questions: 1. Are you in favour of the union continuing to have political funds? 2. Are you in favour of affiliation to the Labour Party? 3. Are you in favour of paying up to 5p a week for political purposes? 4. Are you in favour of the union being able to sponsor MPs?

Questions 1 and 3 ask the

same thing in different forms (to find out whether quoting an amount of money made any difference). Results were almost the same for both.

About 43% of all trade unionists asked, said they were in favour of political funds, and of paying for them. 44% said they weren't. 37% were in favour of affiliation to the Labour Party; of sponsoring MPs, 60%.

Breaking down the figures, in key industrial and public sector unions such as the GMBATU, NUPE, AUEW, and NUM there is a majority in favour of political funds. The white collar unions, as might be expected, produced the worst results.

There were some odd findings: UCW members were more solidly in favour of affiliation to the Labour Party than of political funds.

What Torode has done is concentrate on specific unions and their answers to question 2 alone. On this basis he concludes that trade union members object to the "uniquely unpopular" links with the Labour Party.

The MORI poll was conducted in three 'waves', each time asking 1,000 people in the street to identify themselves as union members. The answers reflect the attitudes of individual members concerned with the week's shopping,

catching a bus or enjoying a break from work.

A survey, like a general election, can only give a frozen picture of moods and attitudes at a fixed point in time. Who can doubt that in the midst of the Tories' post-Falklands election victory, the results of such a survey would have been worse?

Changing attitudes

The opposite is also true: the naked face of Toryism and the intentions behind their trade union legislation is increasingly exposed in conflict with the NGA, GCHQ workers, Liverpool Council and now most sharply in the miners' struggle. Through experience trade unionists become more conscious of their class interests.

If the TUC begins a campaign now to reach every member in workplace meetings, special union branch discussions, with leaflets and rallies, workers can be convinced of the need for a political fight. They will see their struggles to keep head above water, to protect the interests of their families, are unavoidably linked to the fight for a Labour Party that serves the interests of the working class.

Liverpool council support miners

LIVERPOOL COUNCILLORS are on a three-line whip for as long as the miners' strike lasts. They are on a rota for Lancashire picket lines. Haulage contractors known to be crossing picket lines are deleted from our contract lists, they will not get work from us again.

Organised solidarity

Defeat of the Tories on the local government front is only part of the campaign for Liverpool's elected representatives. Our mandate is to fight for the working class. Unity with the miners is at the top of our

priorities.

Every effort is being made to aid the miners' struggle. Liverpool's example should be taken up by every Labour authority in the country. Permits are being issued for collections on behalf of the miners throughout the city. Between £2,000 and £3,000 a week is being collected this way. All council offices have collection boxes for the miners. Everywhere you walk in Liverpool city centre you meet people collecting in an organised way for the miners.

On the back of all pay slips is printed an appeal from the Joint Shop Stewards Committee for money for the miners. An

exhibition showing the links between the coal industry and Merseyside is on show in the library.

Advice and aid

Regular meetings are held with Lancashire miners living in Liverpool. The problems of strikers families are being dealt with by council officers through a special unit which has been set up. They are negotiating with local fuel boards and welfare rights organisations to ensure the best deal for miners and their families.

A food parcel is being issued to every family and the chairman of the city council's hospitality fund is

being used to provide holidays for miners' children at a holiday centre in North Wales owned by the council.

Merseyside county council is spending £5,000 per week on food for miners' families and nearby St. Helens council is helping out with food and other support. Labour on Merseyside knows that victory for the miners is a victory for us all. Every Labour council in the country should recognise that fact and act on it.

By **Felicity Dowling**
(Secretary, Liverpool District Labour Party and Liverpool City Councillor)

Stand up for youth

CONCERN AT the abuses of the Youth Training Scheme will be voiced in the TUC Congress debate this week.

YTURC has consistently warned that the government's cheap labour schemes are designed to keep youth off the streets (and the dole figures) and undermine wage levels. Experience has confirmed this—unions which initially supported the schemes have thrown them out to safeguard real jobs and training.

TUC's shift

This pressure is reflected in the document *A Plan for Training*, recently drawn up by the TUC/Labour Party Liaison Committee. This is much more critical of YTS than in the past, and comes out in favour of "a new training scheme". The document proposes:

- two years training
- legal obligation on employers to meet set training standards

- action to prevent sexual and racial discrimination.
- enforced health and safety protection.

The document takes up the YTURC and LPYS call for a maintenance allowance paid to all 16-18 year olds in full-time education.

Major failings

However there are major failings in the document:

- ★ The proposed allowance of £34 for trainees is little better than the present exploitative rates. This will continue to undermine trade union negotiated apprenticeship rates.

- ★ Industry, through the bosses' Confederation of British Industry, will continue to nominate members of the Manpower Services Commission, which it is proposed will retain a 'central' role.

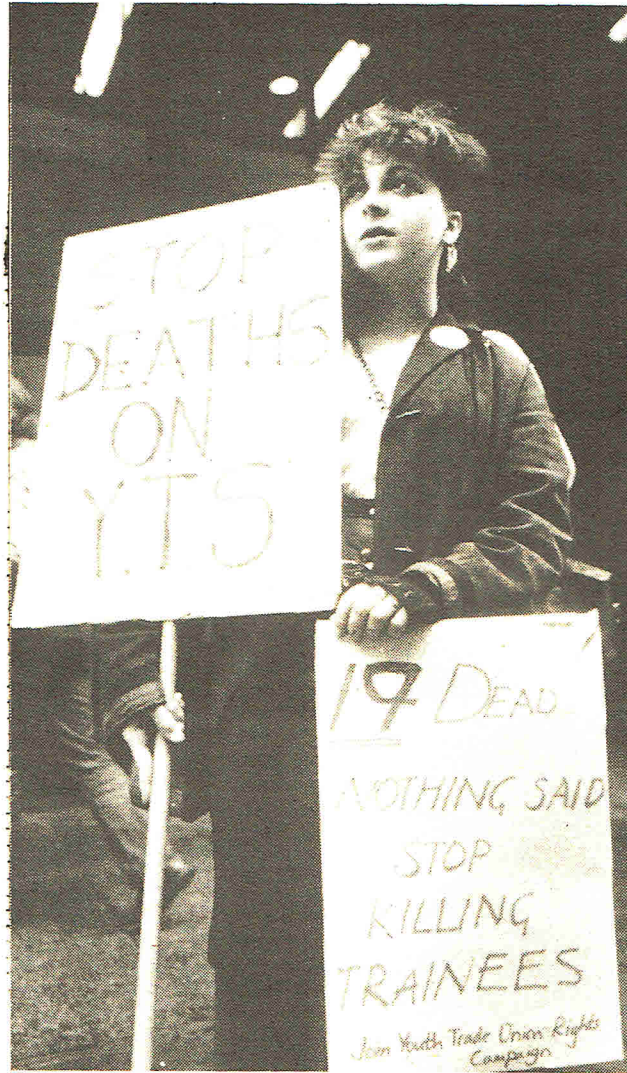
Trade union control and supervision of training is essential. During an economic crisis the owners of industry are interested in

cheaper training and lower wages. Only the trade unions will put health and safety and thorough useful training for the future before corner-cutting; British bosses have no confidence in the future. ★ Perhaps most damning, the document says nothing about what happens when trainees finish their course. Trade unionists and young people do not fight for a bet-

ter deal simply to end up back where they started—on the dole.

This is not a real alternative to YTS. The "new training scheme" is in fact, as the document itself admits, merely a "recast Youth Training Scheme".

By Nick Toms



The campaign on health and safety has forced the Tories to make improvements in YTS.

Organise not ignore

YTS HAS been used by employers and the government as a tool to attack youth wages and trade union organisation. The Youth Trades Union Rights Campaign has squarely opposed YTS since its inception.

But we have also pointed out that the trade union movement cannot simply wash its hands of the matter. The labour movement would be seen as deserting a generation of young people.

In the absence of a clear alternative for the unemployed and school leavers, we have also opposed demands for a total boycott or TUC withdrawal from the Man-

power Services Commission which runs the schemes. The NALGO resolution at Congress threatening TUC withdrawal is well-intentioned but mistaken.

What is needed is a mass campaign among the trainees themselves, for union rights and rates of pay, for five weeks holiday a year, for trade union control and supervision, and above all for a guaranteed job on completion.

Fighting beside trainees to improve conditions and expose the cheap labour schemes, the trade union movement would win the confidence and loyalty of millions of exploited young workers.

A woman's place in the TUC

THE TUC Congress agenda deals with several questions of particular interest to women. But policies need to be translated into action, if the growing numbers of women workers are to be won to the banner of trade unionism.

Given the opportunity, organised women inject a new enthusiasm, energy and dedication into the trade union movement.

Do the present structures encourage women to play a full part? MARGARET CREER writes about the problems and potential of the Women's TUC.

NUMEROUS resolutions and reports were submitted to this year's WTUC, but the growing impatience and anger of women workers rarely surfaced.

Debate

There were some exceptions. In the discussion on low pay Helen Gaskin, an USDAW delegate, spoke of the need to combine legislation with organisation and an energetic campaign to recruit low paid women workers to unions, around the demand for a minimum wage. She contrasted the £100 fine for bosses who illegally underpay their

workers with the thousands of pounds paid out in fines by the NGA for defending workers.

The lack of a discussion on the NGA dispute, in fact the ruling by the Women's Advisory Council, with the backing of the General Council, that such a discussion would be "unconstitutional" showed the weakness of the WTUC.

Other resolutions on organisation, such as the demand for an elected standing orders committee, brought the conference to life.

In other words women are coming up against similar problems in their own all-female organisations—of power concentrated in too few hands—as they are in the labour movement generally.

Undoubtedly these issues will arise again. Unless the Women's Advisory Committee becomes a campaigning leadership, prepared to back struggles which will deliver the goods for women workers, delegates will have every right to criticise them.

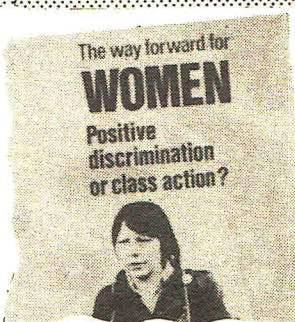


A NATFHE delegate stressed the need to change the make-up of TUC delegations so that more women were included, along with men who were more aware of the specific problems of women and the need to campaign in the unions to overcome the prejudice and insensitivity which leads to insufficiently serious discussion on issues relating particularly to women. There's no alternative, as she put it, to the 'long haul' of positive action in the unions and transforming the unions which make up the TUC.

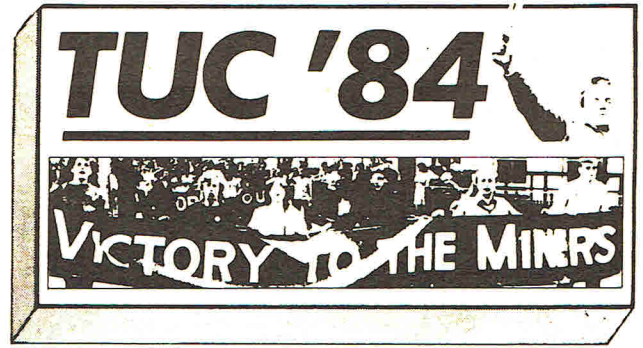
No solutions

This year's WTUC considered many reports and resolutions; only solutions and proposals for militant action were thin on the ground. As the crisis deepens, the WTUC will not

be able to escape from the elementary fact that capitalism is not going to resolve women's problems. The demands of women workers for a fighting leadership, for solutions to their problems, will have to be translated through our organisations, transforming the WTUC along with the unions affiliated to it.



Order from WS Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. 75p + 16p p&p.



YTURC's record

THE YOUTH Trade Union Rights Campaign was formed in 1981 to fight for the rights of youth trainees. During its three year history it has played a big part in securing better conditions for trainees and campaigning to get the labour movement to take up this issue.

Summer 1981: As trainees take part in one-day strikes breaking out in many areas, the Labour Party Young Socialists mounts a campaign to organise YOPsters.

September 1981: The LPYS along with the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment call for the formation of YTURC.

November 1981: YTURC holds its founding conference in Liverpool with 300 delegates present.

February 1982: In response to threats from the then Employment minister, Norman Tebbit, to cut trainees' pay to £15 a week, YTURC calls for a mass lobby of Parliament. 3,000 trainees and YTURC supporters attend the lobby. The Tories later drop plans to cut pay.

October 1982: YTURC, supported by the LPYS, hold a demonstration in Liverpool over YTS conditions. Over 10,000 youth join the march.

July 1983: Union recruitment of trainees begins to take off. The CPSA in the British Airports Authority

gets pay rise and trade union conditions for trainees, as do NALGO in some local authorities.

October 1983: The Labour Party conference, despite the opposition of the National Executive, backs a resolution from East Kilbride CLP which puts the demands of YTURC.

In the same month, the youth schemes claim their 19th victim, killed because of inadequate health and safety measures. President of YTURC, Dave Nellist MP moves a bill in Parliament backed by 80 Labour MPs for the schemes to be brought under the Health and Safety Act. MPs, members of YTURC and the parents of youths killed on the scheme lobby the MSC. Under pressure, the Tories make some improvements on health and safety, though they are still far from satisfactory.

December 1983: YTURC holds the Young Workers' Assembly. With 2,300 young workers in attendance, half of them delegates from their trade union branches, it is the largest meeting of trade union youth ever.

1984: Despite YTURC's work being cut across by the momentous struggle of the miners, local campaigns have continued. YTURC will also be taking a 'health and safety' charter for YTS to the TUC for support.

A talking shop is not good enough

HELEN GASKIN, USDAW delegate (speaking in a personal capacity) told *Militant*:

“The WTUC was a real eye-opener for me. For a start, the union booked our delegation into a posh hotel that cost £24 a night (which even our expenses didn't cover). It felt almost immoral to sit in a huge dining room being waited on by people of my own age, flicking our napkins for us.”

“The whole conference seemed stilted and it was only when women departed

from the speeches that had been written for them and said what they really thought that things livened up.”

In the coffee bar, I was talking to a few women about the miners' strike. They all supported the miners and were telling me of their own experiences on the picket line.

“In fact in private conversation many of the women were militant and full of fight. I think it's a shame that the conference isn't allowed to reflect this.”

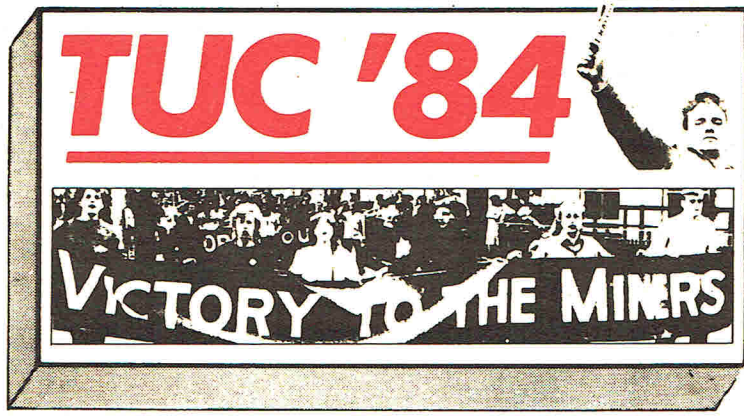
Solidarity action vital to weaker sections

JENNY STEER was an NGA delegate. She spoke to *Militant* in a personal capacity:

“A motion that we submitted was ruled out of order by the WAC and General Council. It called on the General Council to defend affiliated unions that come into conflict with the Tory anti-trade union legislation, as set down by the Wembley Conference. It condemned the fact that the

General Council had not given this support in our dispute with the 'Shah of Warrington'.”

“Apparently the General Council didn't think this motion dealt with the problems of young people and women. Yet because of their position in the public sector and industry, women workers particularly need the solidarity of secondary picketing and backing outlawed by the legislation.”



A miners' \n - for all wo



Photo: Militant



Photo: Militant

Architects of "new realism": Frank Chapple, Terry Duffy.

The 1984 Trade Union Congress will be dominated by the miners' strike, the longest and most important industrial struggle since 1926.

Workers everywhere will want the TUC to use the Congress—watched by millions on TV, as a rallying point for united and unqualified support to the miners.

The question of leadership is vital. It is the paramount task of this Congress—if all the justified demands laid out in the resolutions are to be implemented in the coming year.

The agenda reflects the battle-scarred industrial landscape of the past year. The universal theme of the resolutions is the need not to talk but to *fight* the Tories, in the only way they understand and the only way by which success can be obtained—by industrial action.

New realism dead

What a difference one year makes. The working class, the right wing argued, had lost the will to fight. Solidarity was finished, the industrial and manual unions had been drained of power, the workers cowed and intimidated by unemployment. This was even the view of some of the fainthearts of the left.

Events since have justified *Militant's* view. A series of major national industrial strikes broke out, including the NGA, GCHQ and of course the miners.

The much vaunted 'new realism' of Len Murray and Alistair Graham the leading spokesmen for this policy of capitulation lasted less than two months! The NGA were then thrust to the fore against the government in defence of the closed shop.

Printers up and down the country demanded all-out action. Civil servants struck and marched in tens of thousands to protest against the denial of trade union organisation at GCHQ, Cheltenham. Spontaneous walk-outs broke out all over the country.

Then the miners began their battle to save the pits prompting solidarity from dockers, railway workers, transport workers, seamen and many others. The class struggle of strikes, occupations and mass demonstrations has continued unabated throughout the whole of 1984. Today new realism lies in shatters.

Len Murray is to retire. Or as the *Financial Times* bluntly put it, "packing his bags before he was kicked out". Alistair Graham has been replaced by a left winger as the CPSA representative on the

TUC General Council for next year.

It must be virtually unprecedented for a resolution to come before the delegates at a Congress actually strongly condemning by name the General Secretary of the TUC. Yet Motion 15 from the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfiredoes just this, over his handling of the NGA dispute.

This will be no ordinary TUC.

At Blackpool in 1983 *Militant* supporter Joe Marino (General Secretary, Bakers' Union) moved motion 10 urging Congress "not to co-operate with any section of these laws (Tebbit's anti-trade union laws) and no union pay fines imposed under these laws". In the event of distraint of any union funds, or the arrest of trade unionists under these laws, it argued, "the TUC should call a 24-hour general strike as the first step in solidarity action". He could not even find a seconder for the motion, another member of the Bakers' Union had to second it just to get a hearing at Congress!

Len Murray contemptuously dismissed it! "Motion 10 is not to be taken seriously. I do not have the time to spend on it", and it was defeated!!

The decisions at Brighton must reflect the experience of 1984 and delegates must vote for resolution number 12 from the NUR which recognises that the "only way forward in defence of our class is to mobilise the power of the trade union movement in total opposition to these laws. This was the power that destroyed the Industrial Relations Act 1971".

No funds—no union

"Failure to vigorously defend trade union rights" it goes on, "encourages the government and employers to make further attacks on trade unions, hence the recent decision to ban trade unions at GCHQ, Cheltenham".

In all there are 12 resolutions and eight amendments on the issue of the anti-trade union laws and how to fight them. The Bakers are again demanding the use of "all forms of action to defeat these laws" which would include the demand for a one-day general strike, now supported by the South Wales NUM.

Amendments from APEX, the Engineers, the IRSF and IPCS attempt to defend the majority on the General Council in not supporting the NGA. "A union could not expect support from the TUC for its actions" APEX argues, "irrespective of the circumstances".

Workers may well ask—"What do the circumstances have to be before trade unionists can expect



Len Murray. Photo: Militant

support?"—"Transportation to Australia?" to use the disgusting and contemptible expression of Alistair Graham who led a public campaign against solidarity action and 'defiance of the law' in support of the NGA.

The NGA funds were seized: Money that came from the pockets of working people to sustain their organisation to fight a vicious Tory government and crisis ridden capitalist system led by ruthless and exploitative millionaire press barons.

No funds, no union—this is ABC to the newest apprentice, let alone the national trade union leaders or so it should be!

24-hour general strike

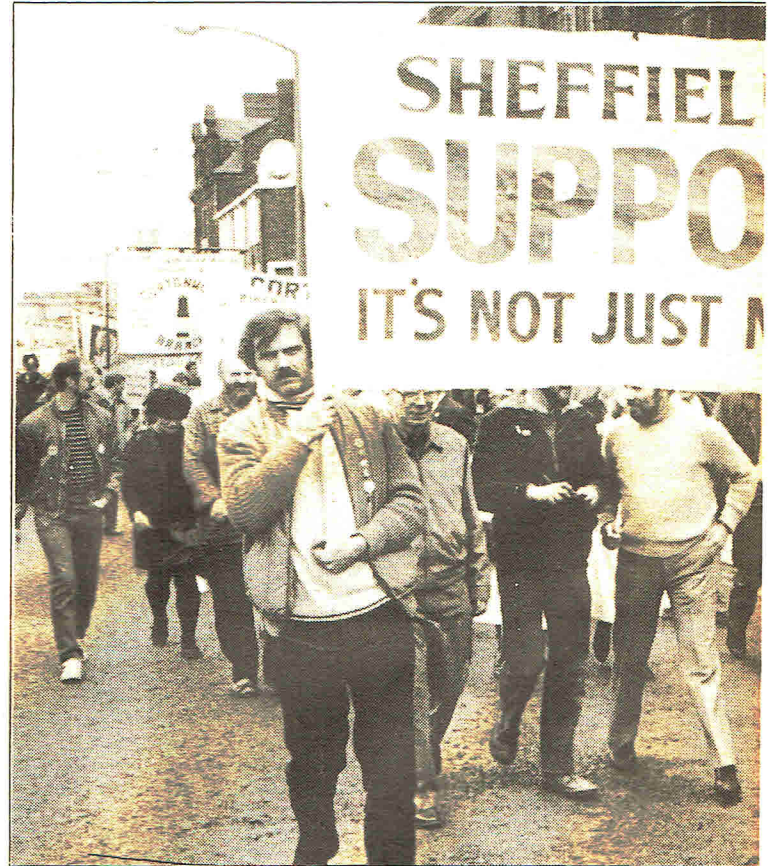
As the NUR resolution states: "it is not enough to say that support will only be for actions that are within the law" because had it not been for working class people acting outside the law, "there would have been no trade union movement".

The TUC leaders must not forget that they represent not a minority but over ten million working people upon whose wages, jobs and conditions another 15 or so million people and their families are directly dependent. The interests of the right to work, the right to free association, education and to live in peace are rights which transcend artificial class biased law designed only to shackle the unions and enrich the employing class and their political puppets in the Tory party.

The greatest number of resolutions, apart from those on anti-trade union laws are those attacking the government over their decision to ban trade unions at GCHQ. But the pious condemnations of the Tories is not enough.

The UCW demands a 24-hour Day of Action if any trade union members who remain are dismissed. But many will see this as 'too little too late'. Only the CPSA resolution gets to grip with the problem, demanding that "the General Council recognise their responsibility to organise a fightback".

The main lesson to be learnt CPSA argues is that "it is impossible to appease this government", so that the TUC must mobilise "the full might of the movement to be organised in action" and to "prepare positively to encourage supportive strike action" such as



Miners' fight for jobs is a fight to defend all jobs.

"a one-day general strike".

Furthermore, the resolution from the CPSA declares that no trade unionist should "agree to sign away rights such as the right to strike or take disruptive action". Such agreements, it says are "a dereliction of duty to the trade union movement".

This is the only opportunity delegates will have to demonstrate their opposition to 'no strike clauses' negotiated by the leaders of the EETPU with Hitachi in Hirwaun in Wales.

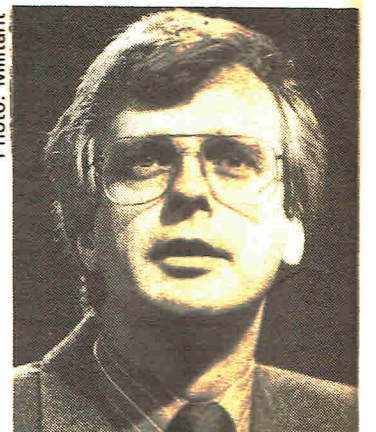
On unemployment the main theme is the need for a shorter working week. The POEU notes "the tremendous efforts made in West Germany to achieve the 35-hour working week" and "instructs the General Council to launch a campaign against unemployment and for a national 35-hour week, with no loss of pay".

This will be warmly welcomed by many trade unionists but this must be coupled with a campaign to ensure not just that a 35-hour week means no loss in pay but that it is accompanied by a minimum wage of at least £100, otherwise massive overtime will continue to be worked to get a living wage.

The best way to fight unemployment is fighting redundancies, closures and the EETPU and others can best look after the employment prospects of their members by making sure that the miners win! The resolution on the economy from the TGWU demands support for the alternative economic strategy of reforms by reflation of the economy. The AUEW add their voices to this programme. More investment, planning and control is the basis of these strategy to find a solution the problems of the economy.

This is to be welcomed, but there is no explanation how this control and planning is to be exercised when the banks, commerce and industry is under private ownership. Only when industry is taken out of the hands of the capitalist class can there be real control and planning.

In modern day terms this would mean the nationalisation of the big banks and major monopolies which dominate the economy. Compensation would be paid on the basis of proven need. With workers control and management—where all officials would be subject to regular elections and no official would be paid more than the average wage of a skilled workers—a democratic socialist plan of production could be organised.

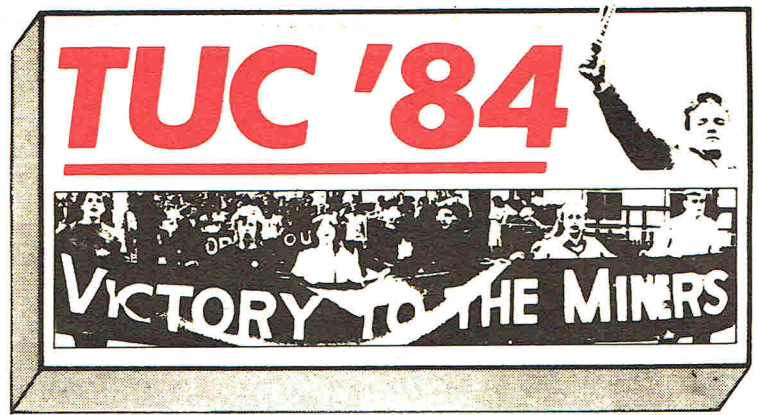


Alistair Graham. Photo: Militant

The capitalist economists admitted that mass unemployment is now a permanent feature of life in capitalist Britain. Structural unemployment is only 'structural' in an economy which wastes the skills and labour power of millions to ensure profits for a handful.

Most of the major issues of the day are taken up in the resolutions: increases in pensions, defence of

Victory Workers



24-hour General Strike

A NUMBER of trade unions have presented resolutions to annual Congress, calling for the TUC to organise a one-day general strike.

Such motions have been presented by, among others, the National Graphical Association and the Civil and Public Servants Association, two unions directly affected, at the *Stockport Messenger* and at GCHQ, by the government's vendetta against the unions.

Many workers will be bitterly disappointed if the TUC does not respond and support such a clear call to action against the Tories. A one-day general strike could have enormous significance in any fight-back against Thatcherism.

By John Pickard

What appear to be hesitations on the part of some workers to back the miners—for example, among some sections of dockers—are in reality an expression of their lack of consultation and involvement in the campaign and their reluctance to fight—unless it is a *serious* fight.

A 24-hour general strike would be the best possible way for the labour movement to stage a

full-time officers could take the message to the membership. Special meetings at workplace, branch and regional level could be held. Mass meetings would be especially important to hammer out any disagreements or doubts in the minds of workers.

The strike call would have to be linked to an explanation of the role of the trade unions and the threat against them posed by the Tories. Miners could be given the opportunity to explain the significance of their strike to every one of the ten million-strong Trade Union Congress members.

On the Day indicated for the one-day general strike there would have to be a clear and unequivocal call for strike action on the part of all workers, with the exception of those emergency services agreed by the trade unions themselves. If such a bold call were given, there would be millions of workers willing to respond.

There would be no better way to carry the miners arguments to the rank and file of the trade union movement. Workers learn more in one day of action than in years of meetings and discussion.

On the day of the strike itself, there would need to be massive demonstrations and rallies organised in every town and city, addressed by union leaders and representatives of the miners. The whole of the labour movement would be lifted a head taller, millions of



Photo: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)



Solidarity action is the key to success.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

The whole experience of the last year has shown that the right-wing TUC strategy of "new realism", of "reasoning" with the Government, became nothing more than a cover for passivity in the face of unprecedented attacks on union rights. The Tories will not respond to "reason". They will only back down if they are faced with a trade union movement prepared to mobilise the power at its disposal, in the form of industrial action.

Back words with action

It is not sufficient that the discussions and the expressions of opposition to the Tories be restricted to the tops of the trade union movement. The enormous grass roots support for the miners and the massive shop-floor opposition to the Tories' policies must be given some scope for expression, through the mobilisation of a one-day general strike.

The issues are important enough. The Tories are not playing games. They have shown the most persistent and single-minded determination to cut living standards.

Moreover, Tory anti-union laws, backed by an anti-union judiciary and a nationally-organised police force mean that, on paper at least, effective trade union resistance is outlawed.

It is not enough, therefore, for the trade union leaders to oppose the Tories in words: the words must be backed by action.

The miners need the support of other trade unions in their fight to save their collieries and their communities. Their strike is important to all trade unionists.



NUM march—London.

Photo: Mick Carroll

massive protest demonstration against the Government, and in support of the miners. Moreover, it could prepare the ground for further campaigns.

A genuine one-day strike would not be like the infamous TUC "Day of Action" on May 14 1980, when hardly any planning, preparation and campaigning was undertaken. At that time, the union leaders refused to call a strike and, expressing the greatest possible public scepticism about the value of the Day of Action, they made sure it had extremely limited success.

An effective one-day general strike would need to be planned and organised properly. If the trade unions were to use the authority of their organisations to call workers out and if they were to mobilise their own trade union apparatus, they could ensure a huge response. Special leaflets, posters and trade union journals could be devoted to the issue.

The thousands of trade union

workers would have learnt the real significance of the miners' strike and the Tories' attacks on the working class.

The ground would have been prepared for a continuing campaign, reaching the stage, if necessary, of an all-out strike to force the Tories out.

The call for a 24-hour general strike should be made by the TUC itself. But if they are not prepared to take up the cudgels, then the Left leaders of the trade unions and the National Union of Mineworkers have the responsibility to issue the call.

The miners' strike is not yet over, and success in a struggle of this kind can never be taken for granted. But the best possible way of guaranteeing a victory, dealing a real body-blow to the Government, and throwing a life-line to every worker struggling under Toryism, would be such a one-day general strike and an effective campaign of union action.

the NHS, restoration of civil liberties eroded by the Tories and many more urgent reforms.

The POEU, fresh from a struggle against privatisation, calls for a greater campaign of explanation, awareness and publicity by "making use of professional advice to influence public opinion". Yet it was not lack of public support that led to the collapse and defeat of the POEU's battle against privatisation in 1982/3. The propaganda and publicity was second to none.

It was the refusal to defy the courts, defy the law and be prepared to mobilise the full power and might of the unions itself that effectively broke the back of the POEU's campaign at that time.

Follow Liverpool's lead

The GMBATU falls into the same trap: "the government is getting away with this regressive policy partly because of the failure of the movement to engage in major efforts of political education amongst our own members in favour of public services and public ownership".

No so. Political education, of course, is important. But in Liverpool, even when under the control of the Liberals, local authority workers were only saved from privatisation by a one-day strike of 20,000 local authority workers on the day it was to be voted on in the council.

It is the same with the demand for a return of a Labour government raised by SOGAT and the NUT&GW who "want all members to work for the creation of a climate that will ensure the election of a Labour government at the earliest opportunity". For millions of workers suffering the brutalities of Tory policies this is

the most urgent demand on the agenda of the TUC.

But to achieve this "at the earliest possible opportunity" means first and foremost that every single nerve and muscle of the movement must strain to ensure the miners are victorious.

Weakness only invites aggression from the government. The lesson of the past year demonstrated by the miners and above all by the campaign and the struggle of the Liverpool Council is that only by a firm stand and a preparedness to fight can "the climate be created" for the return of a Labour government.

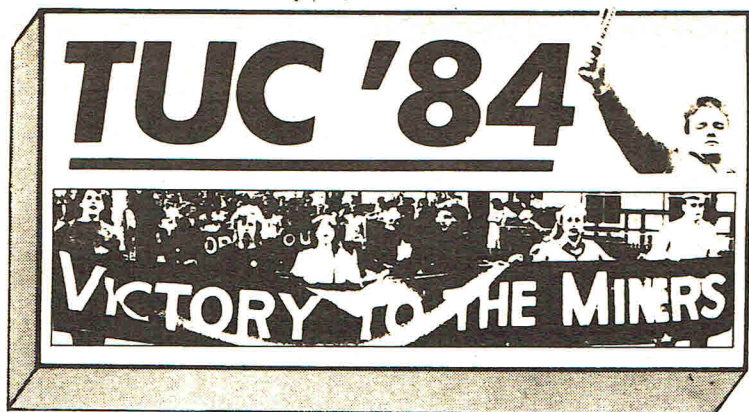
That was the conclusion drawn by workers in 1974 when after four years of Tory attacks and the greatest period of strike action since 1926 a Labour government was elected on the most radical manifesto since 1945. Unfortunately Labour failed to carry out the essential parts of its programme and this led to disillusionment amongst Labour supporters and the election of the Thatcher government.

The trade union movement must not let this happen again. The miners' struggle provides a focus to unite the entire working class against the Tories.

Forge unity

The trade union movement is over ten million strong. If the force of organised labour was united on the basis of fighting socialist policies in support of the miners and for an end to capitalist misery then the Tories and their system would be brushed aside.

The forging of such unity and determination must begin at Brighton.



Two traditions of Notts. miners

TO WRITE about the 1926 General Strike in isolation would be a completely futile exercise. Historians galore have written their versions, mainly compiled from the reports of the mass media scriptwriters. I write as one who at the age of 22 experienced physically, mentally and emotionally what preceded and activated the General Strike itself but also its agonising aftermath.

I was a miner who had scrimped and saved about £50 towards my impending marriage. Then came the coal-owners' lock-out, to impose on the miners longer working hours with shorter pay. The whole British working class rose up and united solidly behind the miners in a General Strike. No pit wheels turning, no trams or trains running, no factory hooters blaring their raucous call for working hands and arms.

Only a skeleton number of transport facilities were operated by those "patriotic, stiff upper-lip, never done a day's work before"—pillars of the establishment.

Workers of Britain were united and stood firm—but their leaders divided and fell. The miners were then left to fight alone. No social benefits then, no lock-out or strike pay. Just a miserly food voucher, picking coal in pit tips by the gracious permission of the benevolent coalowners, and hungry but indomitable guts.

Cook speaks

Week followed week, and month followed soul-destroying month. Then into the miners' resolute wall of resistance a crack appeared—not a crackpot but a jackal named George Spencer. The infamous George was to Notts' miners a name for vomiting for years to come. He it was who capitulated and collaborated with the Notts coalowners to surrender. Notts miners were instructed to "sign on" and start work the following Monday.

The General Secretary of the Miners' Federated Union, AJ Cook rushed to Mansfield to address a mass meeting on the Sunday morning on the Westfield Lane Recreation Ground, in an attempt to arrest the threatened surrender. I had of course read about AJ Cook but this was the first time I had seen or heard of him. A more insignificant figure I had seldom seen before. Slight of build, sandy hair and moustache and blue watery eyes. But what a man, what a dynamic orator.

The thousands gathered to hear his impassioned speech for continued loyalty and "no surrender" cheered him to the echo. Their feelings and reactions were aptly expressed by two brothers with whom I had gone to the meeting. "Jack", said one to the other, "any man who walks down that pit lane in't morning should get a kick straight between his knackers".

I was out next morning with some others picketing at a road junction where any prospective "blackleg" from Mansfield or Mansfield Woodhouse would have to pass. A few appeared and were promptly re-routed anti-pitwise. Then two more were seen approaching with their snap tins tucked under their arms. It can't be, I thought as they got nearer—Oh no, oh bloody hell, it can't be. But it was—my two brother buddies from the Sunday morning meeting. Workers of the world unite I thought cynically and can remember wondering if they were wearing their "jock straps".

By L Downen
(Retired miner, Clipstone Pit, North Notts)

We took away their snap tins and threw their bread and dripping slices over the hedge for the cows to chew. Their next crop of milk must have been right bloody sour. That same afternoon we gathered quietly in the pit lane and sat around awaiting the few men and lads who had either eluded or maybe deluded the early morning pickets. The only "treatment" we inflicted upon them was a few jeers and appeals to come and join us.

We were joined alright—by two or three busloads of seven-foot Manchester cops who had been drafted in to guard the sheep and frighten the rams. They battoned us and chased us and laced us, and ironically I remember reading in our next morning's paper of an American society dame stating, "Oh I do think your English policemen are just wonderful". What I thought is quite unprintable.

The inevitable drift back to the pits accelerated. My dad and I were two of the last in our pit to go back. Intimidated no! Humiliated and frustrated—yes. I shall always remember that first morning as I reached the pit bottom. The under-manager was there and having spotted me charged across and roared, "so you were one of those thugs going around with a big stick, aren't you damned well ashamed of yourself?" "Yes, Mr X", I replied, "ashamed that my big stick wasn't twice as bloody big". He gave me a twisted sort of grin and I never knew whether it was just ironic amusement or smug self-satisfaction which animated it. I suppose I shall never know now. It would be useless writing to ask him, for where he's gone I should need flame proof writing paper.

Spencer Union

With the breakaway of the so called Notts Industrial Union, or as it was more often called "Spencer's Gaffers' Union", every pit yard in Nottinghamshire had its huge posters appropriately coloured yellow and blue—"The Notts Industrial Union—Have you joined yet?"—then a Lord Kitchener like finger pointing at you—"You will!" Well I never did and if there is one thing in my life I am proud of not doing that was it.

It was not until just before the war that this "scab" union was busted, and it was a Yorkshire lad from Haworth pit named Mick Kane who led the demolition lads. Mick did six months in jail for his part in liberating the Notts miners from their industrial straight-jackets.

The stigma emanating from the 1926 General Strike and its weak-kneed betrayal by our so-called "leaders", Ramsey MacDonald, Phillip Snowden, Jimmy Thomas and company made an emotional and mental impact which affected and indeed reflected my later years. I studied both trade unionism and political economy. I served for 20



Above: Miners' pickets during the 1921 dispute. Scab leaders Bevin and Thomas of the dockers and railwaymen, broke the 'Triple Alliance' with the miners—known as 'Black Friday'—and allowed Coal owners to impose wage cuts. **Right:** a new economic crisis in 1925—with the threat of renewed wage cuts and pit closures provoked the lock out in the mines and forced the TUC to call a general strike in May 1926.



years as my pit's union branch secretary. I sincerely hope, indeed I believe, I made a contribution to progressive change. I also hope that contribution however small reflected itself in the miners' strike of 1972.

I had two sons who I am proud to say played their full part in the cold arduous stints in the 1972 picket lines. When that battle was won I can sincerely say "that was my finest hour".

I will remember, as probably the only retired miner, I joined the "victory parade" on that cold windy Saturday morning. The bands playing, the banners swaying. If those seven foot Manchester cops had been beside me they must have looked like dwarfs, I was ten feet

tall. I sang, I laughed and I cheered with the lads, but most of all I cried with joy that 1926 and its sordid memories could at last be cast away. I was asked what the tears were all about and I remember saying "it must be all this bloody wind".

Strike for enlightenment

If I were asked would I like to see another General Strike my answer would be "yes". Not a strike to stop all the industrial wheels turning, but a strike of enlightenment in the minds and hearts of the overwhelming majority of good British working men and

women, to scorn the clichés and platitudes of both political and trade union self-seeking careerists wedded to the present sick social system, against the hypocritical claptrap of the so-called champions of individual freedom, against those financial whizz kids, the vice and porn merchants, the vandals and muggers and most of all against the warmongers.

To strike and strike harder for work for everybody—and I mean everybody. To strike away for ever the parasites and shysters to whatever social class they belong. Idealism—maybe. But if I can glimmer even a little silver lining towards it, then my twilight years will all be golden.

Class unity in Northern Ireland—union support vital

THE LEFT shop stewards and rank and file activists in the 215,000 strong organised trade union movement in Northern Ireland will be carefully watching the outcome of the 1984 TUC annual conference.

The overwhelming majority of organised workers in Northern Ireland—although their unions are affiliated to the 634,000 strong Irish Congress of Trade Unions—belong to unions whose headquarters are in Britain.

They therefore see themselves as a vital and component part of the twin "Giants of Labour" in these islands. Throughout the North of Ireland the left activists in the unions will expect four major decisions to come out of this year's TUC conference. Namely:

1) A declaration of full and unconditional support from the entire Trade Union Congress for the heroic struggle of the striking mineworkers and their families.

2) Total opposition from the General Council to all anti-trade union legislation and the use of repressive laws and methods by the state machine against the organised trade union and labour movement.

3) A fighting programme of socialist demands in relation to mass unemployment, defence of jobs, industries and living standards.

Finally, they will expect a commitment from the 'leaders' of the British trade union movement, to join with the Labour 'leaders' in organising a massive campaign to sweep the Tories from office and return a majority Labour government pledge-bound to introduce socialist measures from day one.

Since 1979 the programme of Thatcher and company has had a devastating effect in Northern Ireland. From an official figure of 64,000 unemployed in May 1979, today over 120,000 (21.5% of the workforce) are on the stones; and 45% of the unemployed have been out of work for over one year.

However, the real figures for unemployment, as worked out by the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, is near to a staggering 200,000. According to a report of the capitalist economists of the

By Bill Webster
(GMBATU, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Labour and Trade Union Group, member of Derry Trades Council)

New Ireland Forum report, official unemployment in Northern Ireland will reach a monstrous 31.5% within the next six years!

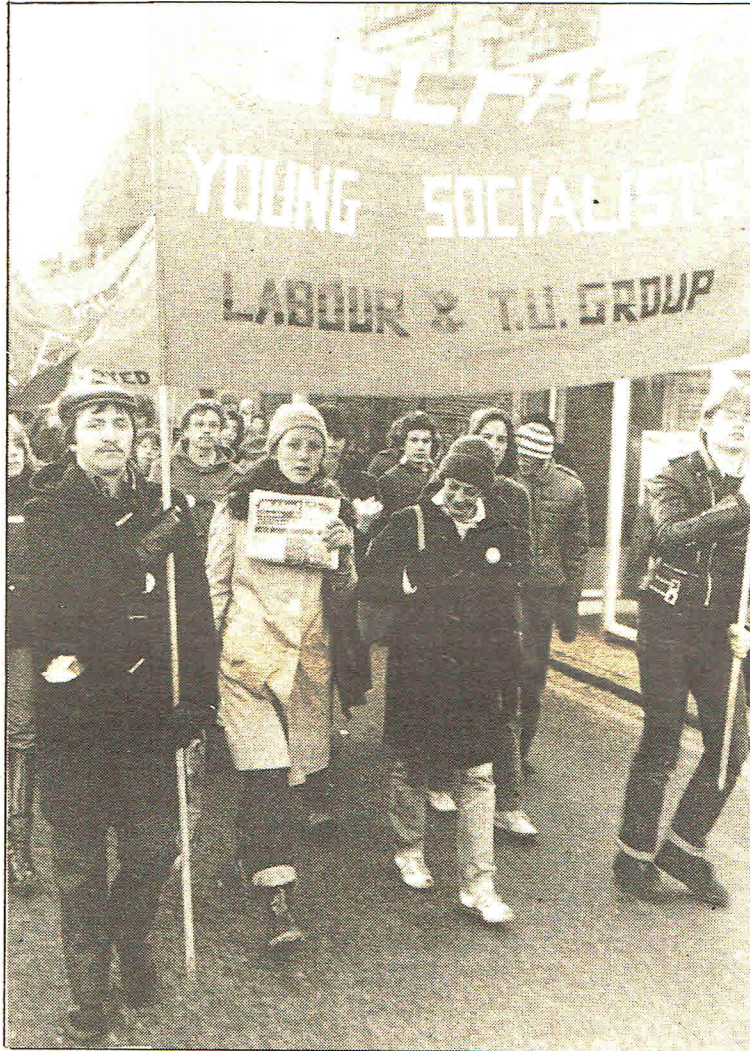
Today only 95,000 are employed in manufacturing industry, whilst a massive 80% of the workforce are engaged in the public and service sectors of the economy. If this situation is not bad enough, Northern Ireland also claims the unenviable title of being the most socially deprived region within the European Economic Community.

It should therefore come as no surprise to the left in the unions in Britain to know that within the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, over the past 15 years, there has been a sharp clash of ideas of the questions of programme, tactics and leadership.

The main participants in this struggle are, on the one side, the so-called "leaders" of the unions and their fellow travellers of the misnamed Workers Party and the Communist Party, and on the other side members of the Labour and Trade Union Group with the supporters of *Militant Irish Monthly*.

The former have argued that the day-to-day problems of the working class, namely economic and state repression, can somehow be resolved on the basis of capitalism. Whilst the latter have argued that not one of these fundamental problems can be solved other than by breaking the back of capitalism in the North and Ireland as a whole—by the political mobilisation of the working class in and through a mass socialist labour party, firmly rooted in the trade unions.

Our ideas have gained an increasing echo inside the movement over these years. Since the 1980 annual conference of NICTU our



Labour and TU Group Young Socialists march against unemployment.

motions calling for a minimum wage and a 35-hour week, the banning of plastic bullets and the use of supergrasses have been passed.

The thread of modern Irish history is one of recurring movements to develop the bond of working class unity from the inception of the civil rights movement in 1968-69, to the development of the "Better Life for All" campaign in 1975-1976 launched by the official trade union movement. Right up to the present, the working class both Catholic and Protestant, have demonstrated time and time again their capacity to struggle together

in a united manner.

The tragedy is that all these movements have been squandered by the trade union leaders in Northern Ireland. Thus the monster of sectarianism—a child of British imperialism—has been allowed to continue to breed, and the sectarian and bigotted politicians from whichever side of the religious divide have been allowed to dominate the political arena of Northern Ireland.

However, the extent to which Northern Irish workers express a class understanding for strong fighting trade union organisations

can be seen from the fact that, since the troubles began in 1969 not one major strike has been broken by sectarianism; and equally important, the ranks of the unions have fought off all attempts to split the Irish Congress of Trade Unions along sectarian lines.

It should be noted that in April 1980 a half-day political general strike was conducted against the anti-working class programme of Thatcher in Northern Ireland. Northern workers have also been forced to stop the wheels of industry on more than one occasion in their class battle against sectarian atrocities; as was the case in December/January 1975 when the trade union movement went on the offensive against the methods of the para-military groupings.

Today the trade union movement in Ireland as a whole is firmly behind the mineworkers. They see that a victory for the NUM over Thatcher and the NCB is a victory for all workers in these islands; a defeat for the miners means that we all go down. This is why over £65,000 has so far been donated by the unions in Ireland.

All over Ireland, north and south, in the main cities and towns, the unions and trades councils have adopted individual pits and areas. In the North the Belfast unions have adopted the Ayreshire miners, in Derry and the North West we have adopted the striking Notts miners. Derry Trades Council now has a sub committee which meets every day to conduct business of fund raising in furtherance of the cause of the mineworkers!

We therefore appeal to the left inside the British trade union and labour movement to solidarise with us in our struggle to defend living standards and to fight against repression, throughout the official trade union movement. What is needed above all is the total, active support of the unions in Britain to assist us in the campaign to establish a conference of labour which will lay the basis for the building of a mass socialist labour party—from below—that will unite Protestant and Catholic workers in the common struggle for socialist polices in Northern Ireland.

Italian miners win concessions

MINERS IN Sardinia (Italy) have shown that with a determined fight the bosses can be beaten. Not only have they defended their jobs but they have forced the government to promise 2,000 new jobs.

550 miners from the Seruci and Nuraxi Figus pits of the Carbosulcis mining company in Sardinia occupied their pits for a month from the middle of May until 14 June. At any one time 150 miners were down the pits. Towards the end of the occupation 50 miners were on hunger strike. The determination of the miners and the solidarity of other workers showed what can be done.

One incident led to clashes with the police. On 1 June a Yugoslavian ship, the "Krgan", docked into Portovesme port with a cargo of

Yugoslavian coal for the local power station. (So much for Yugoslavia being a "socialist" country!)

As soon as the miners' factory council heard about the ship a mass meeting of miners was held and from there they marched to the docks and started tipping into the sea the coal that had already been unloaded.

They were making a slow job of it because they were just using buckets so they decided to commandeer a bulldozer. Then the police arrived. The miners welcomed them with a barrage of lumps of coal. Next the miners cast off the moorings and the ship drifted out to sea for about a hundred yards and started to lean dangerously to one side due to the coal being unloaded only from one side of its hold.

A tugboat brought the ship back in but for about

ten minutes the miners tried to stop the ship from being moored. At this point the dockers held a spontaneous meeting and decided to black the ship.

This fighting spirit has forced the government to cough up the cash needed to develop the mines. The government has committed itself, in words at least, to an investment programme of £200 million over the next ten years. 2,000 miners are to be taken on and special training schemes are to be set up for them.

As the miners' factory council declared, this agreement "has enormous political importance. It is a recognition of what the miners and other workers have been claiming for years... Our coal can be mined and used to great advantage not only for the local economy but also for the energy needs of the

whole country".

However the Factory Council also pointed out that "there are still some major problems to be resolved". The government has not yet said when the programme of investment is to start.

The government has an accumulated public sector deficit of £200 billion which is growing at a rate of £40 billion a year. It has no money of its own to spend. The only long term solution is a socialist plan of production which could use Sardinian coal guaranteeing the miners' jobs.

The government no doubt hopes to calm the miners' down with this promise, but if the miners' demands are not met it will only lead to greater clashes in the future.

By Gianfranco Mignanelli
(Italy)

SMASH PINOCHET!

**Come to a rally for the London labour movement
Tuesday 11 September, Central Hall, Westminster, SW1
8 pm (doors open 7.30 pm)
50p admission**

**Speakers: Tony Benn MP
Terry Fields MP
Ian Isaacs (S Wales NUM Exec)**

AFTER MORE than a decade of monetarism, cuts, and austerity programmes the Chilean economy is in tatters.

There is now 35% unemployment—with no state benefits—and thousands more are "employed" on government work schemes (sweeping roads, making rag dolls) earning a pittance.

The workers in Chile have also to suffer the brutal military repression. Thousands have been murdered, tortured or gone "missing". Political activists are under constant threat of death.

Despite these terrible conditions, the Chilean workers are mounting a magnificent struggle against the Pinochet

regime. Since May 1983 the monthly days of protest have grown larger and lasted longer, with the call going out for a general strike to bring down the regime.

It is vital that the labour movement in Britain and internationally give financial support as well as political solidarity to their comrades in struggle in Chile.

Invite a speaker from the Chilean Socialist Defence Campaign to your Labour Party or trade union meeting. Make a donation to the CSDC. Come to the London rally! For more details contact CSDC, c/o 5 Alverstone House, Kennington Park Road, London SE11.

Letters

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

Action not words

Dear Comrades,

I would like to refer back to a letter published in the *Militant* two weeks ago from Joe Griffiths Branch 5 GMBATU. In his letter he called for a one week strike nationwide to show solidarity to the miners. I say let's not talk about it let's do it. The miners are fighting for a cause, not just their jobs, but for the jobs and lives of every working class man, woman and child in this country.

I along with many others have spent time on the picket lines talking and listening to the miners. I have also had the chance to talk to the wives of these lads and they have explained the hardship and the plight of so many of their brothers and sisters, who are like us, 'human beings' and who are being put down and made to grovel and beg for their rights.

We have a so-called woman running this country

and she has our lives in her hands. Margaret Thatcher is abusing the words woman, mother and wife.

The real women are those who are side by side with their men fighting for their rights and ours. Margaret Thatcher can't hold a candle to these people. She cannot and will not ever match up to the real women no matter how much the media tries to soften her image and make her out to be our Bodecia.

Lastly but not least I would like to express my thanks to the people of Croxteth who have shown tremendous support for the miners' cause by donating food, clothing and money for a recent jumble sale that I held in our Labour Club. Without these ordinary people backing us we could never have achieved the success that we did. Thank you.

Yours fraternally
Kathy Gibson
Gillmoss Ward
Labour Party

Solidarity strike —how long?

Dear Comrades,

On reading Joe Griffiths' letter (*Militant*, issue 711), I have to disagree with the suggestion that a five-day general strike should be called by the TUC.

I feel that a 24-hour general strike would be more suitable as a first step. It would not only give the working class more confidence in their own actions, by seeing that for 24 hours they can bring almost the

whole country to a standstill, but it would also sort out the right wing softies within the TUC leaders (those who are willing to stick their necks out and those who are not).

I do agree however that a general strike should be called in solidarity with the miners, other working class strikers, and in fact all working class people. But we must learn how to walk before we run.

Yours fraternally
S Flint
Lichfield LPYS

Not so soft South

Dear Comrades,

Even in Maidstone, the county town of Kent, the cuts are being felt. My father-in-law is in Preston Hall Hospital. On a recent visit to see him, we saw three wards with empty beds, the doors closed with padlocks and chains through the door handles. This hospital is threatened with closure. If this happens my mother-in-law and family could face a round trip of nearly 150 miles, by public transport, to see my father-in-law in a hospital in London.

Schools are also faced with cuts and closure, with parents already having to pay for books and materials

that their children use at school.

The miners' dispute is a day to day talking point among the postmen/women where I work in Maidstone with collections of nearly £250 already having been made and more to come. A miners' speaker and a miners' wife are to speak at Maidstone UCW Outdoor Section AGM. Regular donations each week have been set up and sent to the miners' strike fund and a trip, to show our support for the miners, has been arranged down to the Kent miners.

Yours fraternally
Andy Scott
Outdoor Section Secretary
UCW, Maidstone
Amalgamated Branch
personal capacity

Thanks for help

Dear Comrades,

On Friday 27 July the ladies of the Whitwell Ladies Miners' Support Group came down to London.

The ladies were welcomed into the homes of local families in London. Saturday morning was spent in a variety of fund raising activities from market stalls to street collection in various parts of North West London.

A social afternoon was laid on by the Hounslow Area Labour Party Women's Section and Saturday night was spent with the Wandsworth branch of NALGO to whom the ladies

were equally indebted by the generosity and hospitality.

Sunday was spent at the GLC TUC Tolpuddle Martyrs festival. The weekend was also helped along by the co-ordination provided by the Hounslow Miners' Support Group. Their work behind the scenes providing accommodation, arranging collections and meetings to raise funds was so professionally done that no praise could be high enough.

It proved to be the most successful weekend both socially and financially to help win the fight of the NUM.

Yours
Ian Whyles
Whitwell NUM



Labour Party Young Socialists join the miners at the South Wales NUM HQ, Pontypridd 1 August. Photo: John Woulfe

Thanks for summer camp

Comrades,

I would like to thank the LPYS for raising funds for me to get to the LPYS summer camp. After being on strike for twenty-two weeks, and on the picket lines daily, the week away was a welcome break.

Apart from it being thoroughly enjoyable it was also a very interesting education with a wide variety of

political meetings and debates—some of which were real eye-openers.

The active participation of comrades in the marvellous rally in Pontypridd must also have been a very good practical education for LPYS members.

Talking to South Wales miners outside the NUM HQ I came away with the feeling that they and myself were

proud to see that at least the youth of the Labour Party are wholeheartedly behind us in our struggle—it was a tremendous morale booster for everyone there.

If we had the active support from the whole working class all over the country we could walk over the capitalist system with ease.

I urge all youth to join the LPYS and also get down to

next year's camp for a great week.

Special thanks to Hillsborough LPYS for the financial support, and I will see you OK next year after our victory.

Yours
Kevin Pass
Yorkshire NUM

Cancer and nuclear power

Dear Comrades,

The centre-page feature in *Militant* issue 712 (10 August, 1984) pointed out the dangers of leukaemia associated with nuclear power, rightly questioning the conclusions of the recent "Black Report".

A local HTV West television programme recently showed that of seven childhood leukaemia "clusters" in Britain, no less than five are located next to nuclear installations, including the well publicised case in West Cumbria. The programme mainly concen-

trated on the "cluster" of leukaemia victims in Lydney, Gloucestershire, which is just across the River Severn from the Berkeley nuclear power station.

The problem is that most of the evidence available to the public provides no direct proof that the cause is nuclear installations. This does not prove, however, that there is no link. It could equally mean that present knowledge and monitoring techniques are inadequate. The risks of proceeding with nuclear power are, therefore, incredibly high.

Of course, as opposition to all other forms of pollution control show, the capitalists are not at all wor-

ried about a few lives—or a few hundred, or a few thousand lives—when profits are involved. Workers cannot depend on the present system to ensure a safe environment but, to the contrary, must ensure that the labour and trade union movement takes up demands for safety from nuclear hazards as part of a socialist programme. After all, only socialism can ensure production for need and not profit, including the need to live without the risk of premature death from nuclear induced cancer.

Yours comradely
Angela Anderson
Bath CLP

Labour must wake up

Comrades,

When you compare two ends of the labour movement in Britain, it is plain to see that the Labour Party must wake up and go one way or the other.

What a contrast between on the one hand MP Dave Nellist sticking to his roots as a socialist, and on the other Eric Hammond, head of the EETPU who has actually signed no-strike agreements.

To quote him: "We do what is pragmatic and what will work. I've always considered strikes a failure. The skill should always be in finding an agreement."

Victory to the miners!
Yours
Mike King
Southampton

Capitalism and the colonial world

Dear Comrades,

I think Rob Sewell's article *From Boom to Crisis* (*Militant*, 3 August), outstanding as it is in some ways, does little to clarify the actual role assigned by capitalism to the underdeveloped countries.

Sewell writes that "the colonial world did not share in the wealth of the West", and readers are further informed (in a caption) that "the post-war boom missed-out the colonial and ex-colonial world". These are, to say the least, gross underestimates.

The plain truth is not that (for some unexplained reason) the colonial world was "missed out", but rather, that the post-war capitalist "boom" in the West (like all other capitalist "booms" before and after it) was made possible by the most ruthless exploitation of the colonial world, that is to say, it was largely achieved at the expense of the underdeveloped countries.

Only by waging a murderous war, by plundering their natural resources and virtually reducing their populations to slave labour, by stifling all conflicts and using them to advantage—in short, only by condemning millions of people to hardship and starvation in other parts of the world (Latin America, South-East Asia, South Africa, India, etc) did capitalism ensure a period of relative prosperity in the West.

To this day, the wealth of the West (a wealth which, needless to say, has become increasingly relative and illusive) is based on the unscrupulous exploitation of the underdeveloped countries and the continuing existence of war and violence throughout the globe.

Apartheid and Palestine, Nicaragua and Sri Lanka—to mention only a few examples—are not areas which were somehow "missed out" by capitalist expansion, but integral parts of a system based on private profit and thriving on exploitation.

Fraternally
A Brown
London SE11

LEFT and RIGHT

Give the (scabs') kids a break?

The *Daily Mirror's* motives for their "Give the kids a break" campaign for miners' children are muddy enough. At least the executive of the EETPU is quite clear where they stand. Sending a donation of £1,000 to the *Mirror's* fund a spokesman for the union said: "We hope the holiday breaks will be extended to the children of all miners—whether they are on strike or not".

Union leaders' pay

While the trade union 'leaders' are deliberating over whether to support the miners their members may be interested to learn that, on average, general secretaries earned over £24,000 last year, (Top Pay Unit, Incomes Data Services). Their deputies earned over £20,000 and senior officials over £16,000. Top of the list came John Daly of NALGO who earned £31,000, while poor old Terry Duffy only earned £14,128.

FIGHTING FUND

Total so far
£10,361

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	773		2900
East Midlands	617		3550
Humberside	276		1850
London East	468		3200
London West	397		2150
London South East	257		1950
London South West	587		1650
Lancashire	262		1950
Manchester	430		2200
Merseyside	935		6100
Northern	473		4400
Scotland East	251		2950
Scotland West	705		3650
Southern	945		5100
South West	127		2150
Wales East	142		2550
Wales West	181		2050
West Midlands	553		4300
Yorkshire	582		5350
Others	1400		5000
Total received	10361		65000

HAS YOUR LPYS branch made a donation to the Fighting Fund recently? The right wing in the Labour Party hope to harm the finances of the Militant by attacking those YS branches such as Blackburn which support Militant financially as well as politically.

They do not understand that the two go hand in hand. They do not understand that such bureaucratic attacks will only provoke more donations from up and down the country. It is only natural for the activists in the LPYS to show their concrete support to this paper.

Since 1970 the LPYS has consistently supported our policies. Since its beginning in 1964, Militant has been the only paper to have given regular coverage of YS events and activities. That is why YS branches will respond to this latest attack on their right to support whichever paper they choose by making sure they give more frequently to the paper that is always there to build the LPYS.

Take a leaf out of Worsley YS' book. they send us a donation every single week.

It may only be 50p or £1 but it helps us tremendously. If every YS branch in the country gave us an amount like that very week we would be getting over £500 from the YS alone.

Regular donations best

All it needs is a small collection to be taken at every meeting and the money soon mounts up. Or make a formal donation out of your funds. But remember, small donations regularly are better than none at all.

We have now passed the half way mark in this quarter. Every area should now ensure that fund raising activities are organised for the rest of the quarter. Is there a party or a disco planned? A video evening or

a meal for the Militant? These events can raise plenty of money for the Fighting Fund.

But the easiest way to raise money is simpler still. Ask! All you have to do is ask the people you meet if they would donate to the Militant. Every time you sell a paper or go to a ward meeting, ask!

To make this easier still we now have official collecting tins. Wherever these have been used we have had reports of record amounts being collected. No paper sale is ever the same again. Make sure you use them next time you go out.

DONATIONS this week include:

Friends in USA \$50, T Collins, Cork, £20, C Cook Walker, £10, Karl Gruner, Hepster W Germany £10, W Kerremans, Ostend £8, rattling tin in Cleethorpes £7.43, rattling tin in Andover £5, D Degurnia and M Manson Sittingbourne £2.25, A Clarke Leicester NGA .75p, M Doyle, unemployed builder Hammersmith, .50p, Kurdish supporter Mile End £5.

£25,000 needed for building

WE MAY have dropped the Building Fund chart but we haven't dropped the campaign. What we need now is for every workplace, trade union branch and Labour Party to be asked for a donation to the Fund.

The premises we have purchased are absolutely ideal but they still need certain things doing to them before we can move in. An asbestos roof has to be replaced and a new telephone system installed along with other general repair work.

To do all this we still need another £25,000. We had hoped to be given a grant by the local authority to enable us to carry out the work. But

in the end they turned us down and, as is usually the case, we have to rely on our own resources.

That is why we are now appealing to the labour and trade union bodies for support. When we have a daily Marxist paper it will be the whole of the labour and trade union movement that will benefit.

We believe there are still

untapped areas of support for our ideas and for our paper. Given our good work especially over the recent events workers will be prepared to support our campaign.

If there are any readers who would like to join the thousands of others and make a donation to the Fund then just send in your contribution. Any amount will help us. We achieved a near miracle in raising the £175,000 needed to purchase the building. Now all we need is the £25,000 to finish the job properly.

MILITANT RALLY SATURDAY 20 OCTOBER

Speakers include: Peter Taaffe, Ted Grant and Tony Benn

Please note the number of tickets is limited and will be issued on a first come, first served basis!

We would like . . . ticket/s and enclose £ (cheques to Militant Rally, tickets £2.00 each).

Name _____

Organisation _____

Address _____

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

ADS

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

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

SE LONDON LABOUR MOVEMENT Miners march & rally. 2pm, Sat 8th September, Abbey Wood Station. Rally, 3.30pm, General Gordon Sq., Woolwich. Speakers: Mick McGahey (NUM), Joan Maynard, MP, Frances Curran (LPYS), John Austin-Walker, and others. Tickets: £1.50 in advance, £2 on door. Unwaged: 75p.

HULL TRANSPORT to BLOC Lobby of TUC Conference. Coach leaves Ferensway, Hull at 11.30 pm, Sunday night, 2 September. Cost: £10 a seat. Contact: Hull BLOC Secretary, Alan Shadforth, 8 Churchill Crescent, Flinton Street, Hull (Tel: 218071).

TUC CONGRESS 1984 Campaign Group of Labour MP's meeting. Saturday 1 September. 7.30 until 9.30pm at Clarence Room, Metropole Hotel, Brighton. Speakers: Mick McGahey, Peter Heathfield, Dennis Skinner MP, Eric Heffer MP, Joan Maynard MP. on 'The Tory Threat'

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

MILITANT sales poster based on Alan Hardman's 'V' cartoon now available from Militant circulation department, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN 25p each or 10 for £2 (post included).

ROOM FOR a female comrade, £25 per week, including bills. Phone: Fiona Winders on 01-219 6332

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

BASILDON BARBEQUE Night, Saturday 8 September, 8 pm. Tickets £1. Proceeds to FF. Ring Anne or John 557258.

GENERAL STRIKE and THE STATE normal price £1.70 plus post until October: £1.20 (post inclusive) from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

BLACKLEY CLP and Manchester Labour Women's Council present: Miners' Benefit. Songs, music and words with: Frankie Armstrong, Roy Bailey, Leon Rosselson. Saturday 8 September, Crumpsall Labour Club, Wilton Road, Crumpsall, 8 pm. £2 waged; £1 unwaged.

Militant Meetings

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

AYLESHAM MILITANT Public Meeting: Welfare Club. Wednesday 12 September, 8 pm. Speakers: Ian Isaac (South Wales NUM Exec, personal capacity); Ray Apps; Nick Bradley (NUPE full-time organiser, North Kent, personal capacity).

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

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

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

COUNCIL EXCHANGE wanted from Swansea to London. Phone as above.

PAPER SELLERS: For clear, dry papers! Clear plastic sleeves 20p each + post. Contact Mike King 10 Rodney Court, Anson Drive, Sholing Soton, SO2 8RU.

"SOCIALIST YOUTH" badges 20p each or 15p each for 10 or more. Available from "Socialist Youth", c/o LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London, SE17 1JT. Cash with orders.

SUMMER SALE at reduced prices of the last of the MILITANT T-shirts. All at £3 each (includes postage and packing). Red motif 'turn left for workers' unity and socialism'. First come, first served return of post.
Small - 2 yellow, (32-34") 1 black.
Medium - 3 navy, (32-34") 1 navy, 2 black.
Extra large - 2 white, (38-40") 1 yellow.
Cheques and PO to R Harris, 2 Dukes Brow, Blackburn. State preferred size and colour. All proceeds to the Fighting Fund.

Greetings in Militant - Labour Party Conference and Militant October Rally

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

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

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

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

SELLING Militant



Photo: Jacob Sutton

The future of this Barnsley miner's son lies with socialism, not millionaire dreamworlds.

THE FRAUD of the daily papers is clearly exposed in the present 'Millionaire Game' madness.

Although Maxwell's Mirror Group papers proclaim that their role is 'Forward with Britain, the voice of the people' their main role is to ensnare workers into the dream world of the bosses. Maxwell was castigating the Express for starting its own 'Millionaire game' when he is the majority shareholder in that paper as well.

All the front pages of these papers as well as the Sun had front pages on this nonsense when the miners' strike and the deaths in Ireland are tucked away in the inside pages. Your chances of winning these sums are slight even with the new guarantees ie. 5 chances to win out of perhaps 12 million readers.

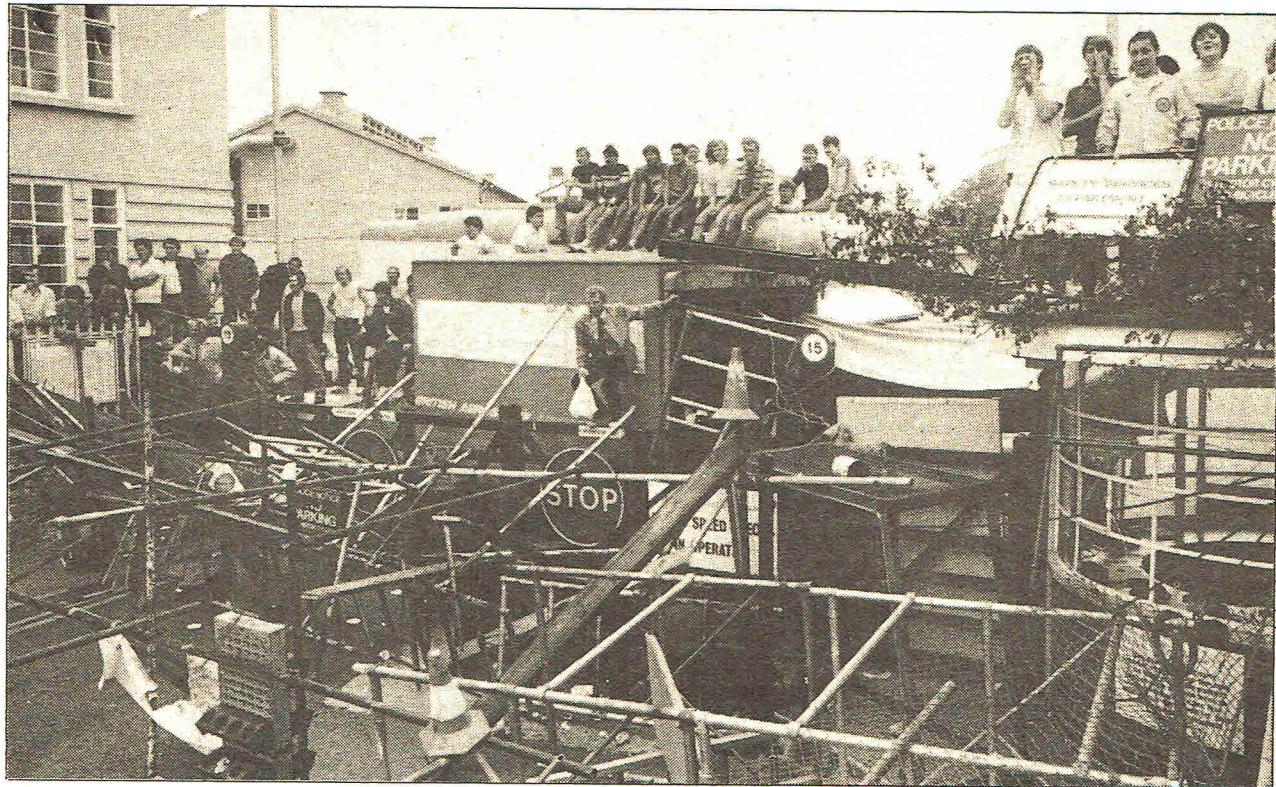
Circus media

Despite Maxwell's socialist pretensions his actions at slashing jobs and

trades union rights show clearly where he stands. Marxists can be clear; we are totally opposed to the Circus/bingo hall mentality of the bosses' press where there is poverty at one end of a newspaper and millionaire dictators at the other. We should not be fighting to get one worker elevated to millionaire status but to build a paper for the multi-millioned masses to do away with the millionaire system for good.

By Dave Farrar

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS



DHSS prolong computer strike

THE MOOD of solidarity amongst striking DHSS computer staff is as strong as ever despite attempts by management to weaken the strike. They clearly wish to smash the strike rather than enter into any meaningful negotiations.

In talks held on the 7 August with departmental management it appeared that a settlement was fairly close at hand. They agreed that if the union could come up with a voluntary shift system that would cover the operational needs of the department there would be an agreement as far as the benefit and pension computers were concerned.

This would have left some 80 members working in another installation where a settlement would still have to be negotiated, but it seemed that there was some cause for optimism so far as the union was concerned. The next day local management claimed there had been a misunderstanding—that they were still refusing to pay 20% shift disturbance allowance for people working the two shift system.

Media coverage of the dispute sank to new depths in a hysterical attack in the *Sun* editorial of 21 August, which condemned the strike as not hurting the employer

but only harming the sick and needy. However it is the management's intransigence and refusal to negotiate that is causing the hardship. At Washington a physical attack was made on two female pickets at Durham House, by thugs from the ACE Van Hire Company who are being employed by management to carry mail into the building. The management have been strangely silent in their condemnation of this violence.

Chaos

Every day this dispute carries on the chaos caused in the social security system increases. CPSA's National Executive Committee has recently agreed to approach their members in Livingstone and Reading computer centres with a view to bringing them out on strike to escalate the dispute. This mood of solidarity amongst shift workers will make sure that this dispute will be won and conditions of service are protected. The management have underestimated the mood of these workers.

Messages of support to CPSA Office, 61 F, Newcastle Central Office, Longbenton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

By Alan Laine

British Aerospace—out but not down

MANAGEMENT AND British Aerospace workers at Filton, Bristol are as far apart as ever. The occupation of manual workers at both the Aircraft and Dynamics factories ended on Friday 17 August when police intervened.

Throughout the dispute a mood of confidence and determination had prevailed and this was reflected even at the time of eviction with several aircraft workers chanting: "we shall win". At a mass meeting the following Monday a vote was taken both to con-

tinue the strike with picketing and for re-occupation. Both votes were overwhelming.

Management then stated that workers would have to cross picket lines if they wished to be paid. The result was that on Thursday 23 about 200 electricians, members of the EETPU, occupied part of the Dynamics building. The position of these workers was clear when they stated "We do not in principle cross picket lines placed by fellow trade unionists." This latest development ended when police

removed pickets from the premises on Saturday morning.

Convenor Chris Evans stated, "we shall continue picketing the site and we shall meet to see how we can step up our action."

The dispute continues with picketing by all manual trade unions, AUEW, TGWU, EETPU at all gates. Morale remains high, the men are determined to see it through to victory.

By Roger Thomas
(Bristol North West LP)

Answer BR propaganda - national strike Sept 12

BRITISH RAIL Board Chairman Bob Reid, life-long Tory and friend of Transport minister Nicholas Ridley, is going all-out to persuade rail workers not to take any industrial action on Sept 12 in defence of their jobs or in support of the miners.

He is arguing that any interruption in business will put the electrification programme at risk and lose freight business permanently. These are empty threats.

Blackmail

The recently announced east coast electrification, while welcome, will not involve any extra government money. It has to be funded internally. The threat that any fall in income would lead the BRB to abandon the project merely highlights the fact that BR is trying to blackmail railworkers. Such a decision would not be forced on it. Neither will electrification mean any extra jobs. It actually poses serious questions about the need for increased investment to link up with existing equipment.

The experience of the NUR/ASLEF strikes in July 1982 blows the argument about lost business sky high. Virtually no freight traffic was lost.

Area managers will be holding local meetings with railworkers as part of the Board's propaganda campaign to undermine the

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR LOCAL MANAGEMENT

- Ask them what the railways have achieved in the last year in the last 10 years
- Ask them about the operating surplus of £200m in 1983 and what the prospects are for the future
- Ask them about plans to improve services to customers
- Ask them about the planned 10% increase in investment levels
- Ask them about the plans to increase staff

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR UNION REPRESENTATIVES

- Ask them about the need to reach 20,000 new people by 1988
- Ask them about the planned investment of £2.5 billion
- Ask them how on earth you can have the customer interrupting services
- Ask them why additional staff is needed now when so much investment has been poured to enable them to produce a rail service second to none

INDUSTRIAL ACTION— DOES IT MAKE SENSE?

IS ANYONE GOING TO BELIEVE IN A RAIL SERVICE THAT DOESN'T RUN?

The customer is the life blood of the railways. If the industry is to achieve more self-reliance, independence, and freedom of action, it must first secure the support of the customer and the taxpayer must fund the bulk of the money. Yet the railways customer has a very real choice. The railways are not indispensable. BR will only retain customers' confidence by providing a quality and reliability of service that they find satisfactory.

Transport destroys both and drives customers into the hands of our competitors. Ask yourself: how much damage would this cause to our livelihood?

IS ANYONE GOING TO BELIEVE A RAIL BOARD THAT CAN'T ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

unions fight for jobs. Here are some suggested questions to put on them.

- ★ Can you name one or more freight or parcel customer that was lost as a result of the NUR/ASLEF strike in 1982?
- ★ If customers were lost in 1982 how do you explain the increase in railfreight tonnage in the year 1983 compared with 1982? (From 142 million tonnes to 145 million)
- ★ Excluding coal, over 50% of railfreight is carried in

privately owned wagons and 95% of that from private sidings with special discharge facilities often paid for with government grants. How many of these customers will give up rail overnight?

- ★ 60% of railfreight is coal. If no support is given by railworkers to the miners and they lose their fight massive pit closures will follow. How will this increase the tonnage of coal moved by rail?

By a railworker

Reject NALGO right-wing sabotage

THOUSANDS OF NALGO members, plus other trade unionists, will be angry to learn about the move by a group of right wing NALGO branches to overturn the decision of Annual Conference in June to give financial support to the NUM during their current strike.

The right-wing have obtained the support of fifty Branches to convene a Special Conference, at which a resolution demanding a national ballot of all NALGO members before any further aid is given to the NUM, will be debated.

This Conference is to be held on 10 October, but already the NEC have indicated that they will suspend further donations to the NUM.

The branches responsible for this move have no record

of struggle in the union, and are largely small district council branches, in shire counties, removed from the main urban areas of industrial struggle. For example the following branches are amongst the leaders, membership in brackets: East Northamptonshire (132), Chorley (276), Bournemouth Electricity (294) and Chichester (284).

The scale of these branches can be gauged by a comparison with the larger branches in industrial areas: Liverpool (5,607), Birmingham (9,048), Strathclyde (20,000 approx). Moreover, the Chichester Branch is the base of one of NALGO's leading Conservative Trade Union activists, so it is hardly surprising that this branch should oppose the miners.

The September issue of

NALGO's journal *Public Service* estimates that the Special Conference will cost a quarter of a million pounds and that a ballot would cost a further quarter of a million pounds. So if the right wing have their way, half a million pounds of NALGO's funds, cash which is dearly needed to fight the Tory attacks on public services, will be wasted.

However, it is extremely doubtful that the resolution will be successful, given the mood of NALGO's rank and file. According to NALGO's rules, a ballot call requires a two third vote of Conference delegates, and the chances of that are slim indeed.

By Roger Bannister
(Secretary Knowsley NALGO)

Gwent council attack education

GWENT COUNTY Council seem to have been taking lessons in industrial relations from the Victorian coal masters. More than 300 Further Education teachers have been sacked for refusing to accept an increased work load for no more money. This means over 50 job losses and cuts in courses. Gwent county council is Labour controlled and is now in official dispute with the teachers' union, NATFHE.

At the start of this year the council decided it had to prune £190,000 from its Further Education service to meet Thatcher's target. To do this it announced that lecturers' contracts would be

changed so that they taught two hours per week longer, this really means that over 50 staff would have to be shed, probably meaning compulsory redundancies. That's bad enough, but they then decided to enforce their will by sacking all staff who refused to agree to the new conditions. In the words of the council leader, Councillor Turnbull: "They (the notices) were issued to ensure that we got a firm understanding from NATFHE...our action is in no way a threat to them". Is this how a Labour council should treat staff—take the cuts or be sacked.

Very few NATFHE members have been bullied

into accepting and a programme of industrial action has started—two one-day strikes, the banning of all voluntary duties and a series of strikes held at short notice. The local Labour Parties in Gwent have responded by condemning the county councillors and both Newport CLP's have instructed county councillors in their areas to withdraw the sackings. The Labour group on Iffwym council have also passed a notice demanding the withdrawal of the dismissals.

By John Carey
(Chair Gwent Liaison Committee, personal capacity)

All out to win docks dispute

Provocation at Hunterston

THE INCIDENT which started the strike was a clear provocation by the employers. Even the local Dock Labour Board (50% employers) found that management's action was not based upon any agreed procedure.

The BSC management at Hunterston got scab labour to tie up the *Ostia* ship, which was carrying coal for the Ravenscraig steelworks. They then unloaded the coal, using ISTC cranes, without dockers in attendance.

This is a clear breach of the agreement reached in the 1970s which allowed Hunterston to open. Directly management's intentions became known TGWU tugboatmen and dockers came out on strike.

BSC had taken the decision to move the *Ostia* with scab labour following a break down in talks between the TGWU and BSC over the amount of coal to be transferred from Hunterston to Ravenscraig. The union had conceded that 18,000 tonnes per week could be moved—a long way from the

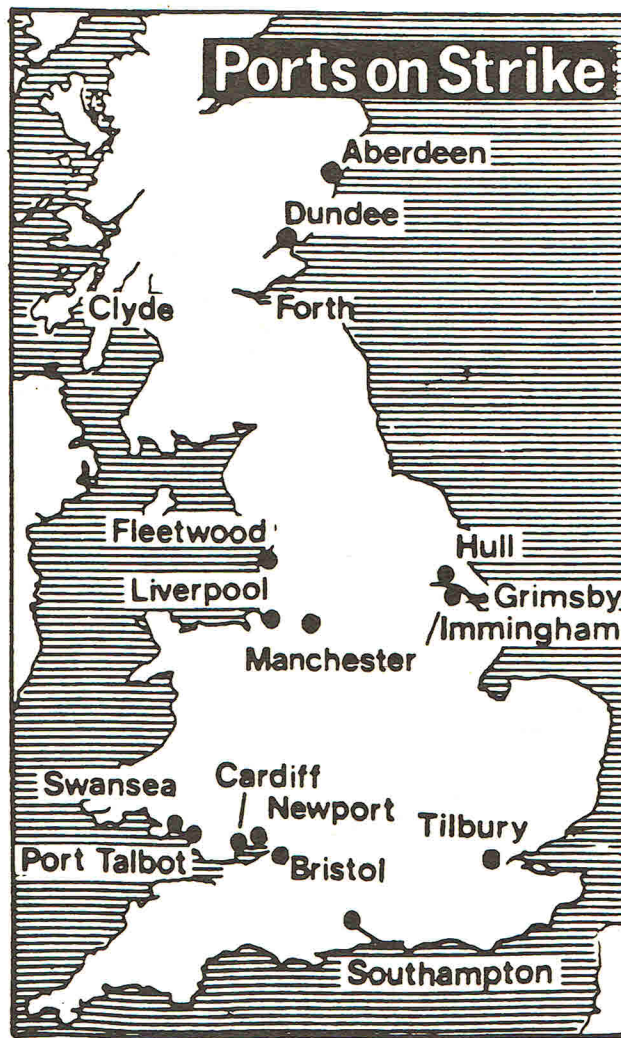
By Ronnie Stevenson

few thousand tonnes of coal required to stop deterioration of the furnaces. BSC demanded 22,400 tonnes which means full production.

BSC confrontation

BSC would not budge during the negotiations and brought in the scabs. They seem hell-bent on confrontation; agreements mean nothing to them. But they have had their answer. All the 12 registered Scottish docks are now out on strike.

And they won't find it so easy to bring other ships in without tugs. The Mega Star, an iron ore carrying ship, had to delay coming in because of choppy seas. Even the weather has turned against the employers.



Tilbury — stop splits, extend the scheme

THE EMPLOYERS and their allies prepared for this strike. At Tilbury two days before the coal ship *Ostia* docked there were leaflets in our canteen saying "Let common sense prevail".

No-one owned up to them. But the message was clear. They wanted to hand over the gains dockers have made and rely on the goodwill of the employers.

We can't allow the employers to dictate what goes on in the docks. We must take the initiative, instead of just responding to attacks. If the employers win this dispute then it will give the green light for a future attack on the Dock Labour Scheme.

They are more likely to be defeated now if the union demands that the Scheme is extended to all unregistered ports and all dock workers are registered ports. That would give unregistered workers, such as in my section, something to fight for. That is the way to stop confusions and splits.

We should have properly organised, regular mass meetings to discuss the dispute. Unfortunately at

Tilbury no-one has been told what exactly the demands are.

That has enabled non-entities like Medlock Bibby, backed up by the media, to step into the vacuum and demagogically denounced the strike. We should be clear. Bibby is no typical docker.

He is a former Independent (ie. Tory) councillor. He works on his own as a waterman. The only reason that so far he has gained the ear of some dockers is that there was been no proper campaign of explanation about the strike.

There is genuine confusion about what the union is trying to achieve. That can and must be rectified. Dockers at Tilbury are loyal to their union. On my shift only 10 out of 400 went into work on Tuesday.

But that loyalty must not be taken for granted. If we are clear what we are fighting to protect, and we involve all ports and dockers in the action, then all the plans and preparations of the employers will come to nothing.

By Roger Gow
(ACTSS, shop steward
Tilbury, personal
capacity)

Tory complacency broken

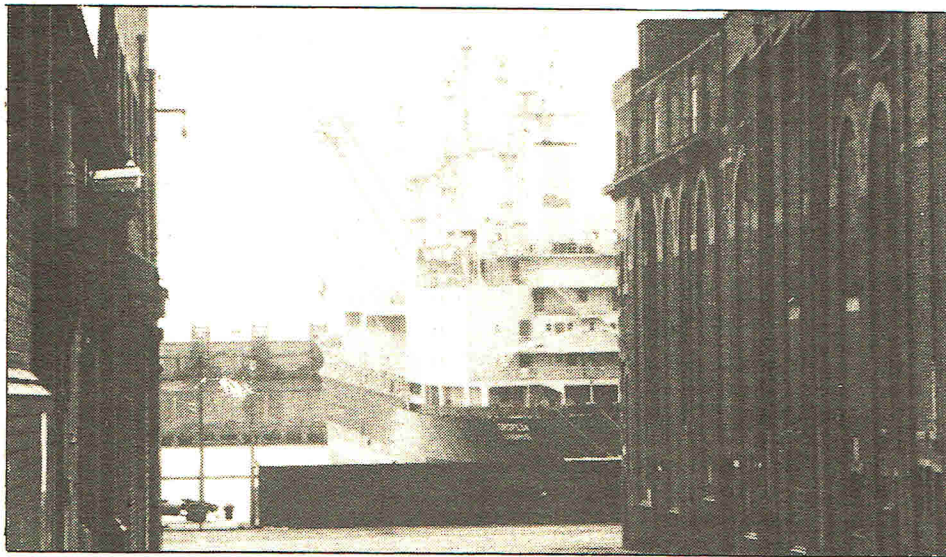
The complacent confidence of the Tories over the weekend that they had the dockers in total disarray was hit hard by dockers' actions this week. Although there were setbacks and confusion in some ports where the background to the dispute had not been fully explained, the loyalty of the vast majority of the dockers in defence of their union was clear.

By Wednesday even according to the employers there were four times the number striking than working at registered ports. Seven of the ten major ports were out, including almost all the registered ports.

At GRIMSBY the earlier smug publicity of the Tory press about the decision not to strike blew up in its face. By Tuesday morning the dockers were out on strike and behind their national leadership. Matters had come to a head on Monday night when Fishdock porters, part of the same T&G branch, voted to join the strike. Throughout the miners dispute these workers had loyally donated hundreds of pounds to the Doncaster miners. Their decision to post pickets at all port entrances placed the commercial dockers in a dilemma about crossing their own picket lines.

On Tuesday morning the dockers turned up for work but refused to cross the fish porters' picket lines. The fish porters were angry about the weekend publicity given to some dockers claiming the strike was political. They recognised that the misguided decision of the commercial dockers only served to play into the hands of the Tories who are hell-bent on destroying the DLS. We may have had our teething problems in Grimsby but the scene is now set for a more determined and united struggle.
(Report by Mike Foster Cleethorpes LP)

At HULL dockers had all walked out at 2.30 pm last Friday, immediately on hearing the deci-



Liverpool docks (above) now at a standstill.

Photo: D Sinclair

sion of the recall dock delegates conference. Ships and lorries were left stranded. No freight cargo was handled on the ferries, but holiday makers and passengers were not affected.

Only a token picket was maintained over the Bank Holiday weekend. However, there has been concern over the slow and divided start to the strike particularly compared with the 100% walkout last month.

Pickets told Militant it was imperative that the demands of the dispute were broadened into a fight not only to maintain the Dock Labour Scheme against scab labour, but to extend the scheme to all unregistered ports and dock workers, in particular Felixstowe and Dover, giving them something to strike for.

Likewise lorry drivers should be called into the action by their trade group, with scab drivers being blacked off the docks in the future. The compromise deal last month had been quickly broken by the bosses and there was no room for compromise this time. The full and united power of the TGWU should be used to secure a permanent and lasting victory.
(Report by Alistair Tice)

At SOUTHAMPTON there was a near punch up over the role played by the BBC TV news team. At the meeting on Tuesday the men had voted two to one to back the strike. This was the view of all the four tellers, including one who was against the strike.

But afterwards the BBC was only concerned with getting the views of those who opposed the strike and trying to muddy the waters about the vote. They went up to people asked them how they voted and then only interviewed those who opposed the strike. Those who had voted for a strike got so incensed that they went over to the crew and the reporter later interviewed one of the tellers.

The decision of Southampton to strike came before the knowledge that Grimsby had changed its mind. Southampton dockers have established a Strike Committee at the local TGWU offices and are expected to send pickets to neighbouring Poole and Portsmouth.
(Report by Nick Brooks)

At POOLE, although dockers are still working, seamen have said they will respect any picket

line and not cross it.

Reports from FELIXSTOWE suggest that even if dockers there vote to go on working (the meeting will be held after we go to press) then that may not ensure normal working. Some workers are angry at the letters of intimidation they have received from their firms saying a strike could lead to the loss of jobs, and if a picket line is established, they may not cross it.

At BRISTOL the strike grew in momentum as the week progressed. By Wednesday only about 50 out of 650 dockers were at work, a fall from the previous day and pickets were mounted on all gates.
(Report by Roger Thomas Bristol NW CLP)

In Wales, Cardiff, Newport and Swansea were out. In addition Liverpool and all the 12 Scottish registered ports were on strike.

Despite some setbacks, the overall message was clear. The strike can be won and this attack by the employers be beaten, if there is a united struggle of all dock workers and a clear leadership given by the union.

Swedish dockers give support

SWEDISH DOCKERS have decided to black all goods to Britain from Monday 3 September. The decision has been taken by the main dockers' union. "The British dockers have supported us, for example in our strike 1980, this is the way that workers' solidarity must be practiced" shop stewards told the Swedish Marxist paper, *Offensiv*.

The decision includes all ships registered in Britain, for example the ELK ferry master with two ships per week to Gothenburg and also ships going to Hong Kong. "We know how to mobilise to make this an effective blockade. And we think it will have an important effect in Britain also."

The blockade will continue as long as the strike in Britain continues. Workers here in general have given

very strong support to the British miners and dockers. And visits by British miners and *Militant* supporters have played an important role in increasing the support of Swedish workers.

Dockers in Gothenburg have been visited twice and at one meeting of 40 dockers £120 was collected for the British miners. In total the Swedish dockers have collected more than £2,500. A meeting at Stockholm harbour is arranged on Friday with Roy Jones from North Staffordshire and Rob Lukaszewicz from Fitzwilliam going to meet the National Chairman of the dockers in Sweden.

Reporters of the Swedish Marxist paper *Offensiv* spoke to union full-timers and shop stewards in Stockholm and Gothenburg.

Left AUEW candidate

THE FORTHCOMING round of elections in September give AUEW members the opportunity of electing a General Secretary not identified with the disastrous policies of the right-wing. LAWRIE SMITH is the Broad Left candidate for this vital position.

The election of LAWRIE SMITH would be a big step forward for AUEW

members and mark the beginning of the end of a right-wing leadership which has presided over the decimation of the engineering industry and the ruination of many AUEW members' livelihoods.

By Ken Armine
(Shop Steward, Mono
and Swansea DC
personal capacity)

Militant

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Docks - no more scab labour

LAST TIME the port employers stumbled into a strike. This time it is a deliberate, conscious attempt to take us on. They want to weaken the strength and confidence which came from the July dispute.

They knew it was a provocation to use scab labour to tie up the *Ostia* coal-carrying ship at Hunterston after TGWU members had refused to do the work. And they've lined up another scab ship, *Mega Star*, off the coast ready to unload iron ore.

Scab labour cannot go unanswered. The national dock strike must be solidly supported.

The bosses, media and the Tories accuse us of starting a political strike. But who is being political? They want to smash the miners and then the Dock Labour Scheme. Theirs is a political attack and must be answered as such.

If the miners are defeated then the port employers would be encouraged to dismantle the scheme. I'd like to see our leadership come out and say we're supporting the miners.

'Apologies' not good enough

This strike is about three things: stopping scab labour, backing the miners and defending the Docks Labour Scheme. If we lose this time, we'll be severely weakened. There must be no compromise this time.

It's no use getting an 'apology' from the employers, as happened to end the July strike. The bosses have soon torn that up. This time they must be decisively beaten.

The bosses and the Tories were confident over the weekend that they had us in disarray and were winning. But by Tuesday the employers had to admit that only 2,570 registered dockers were still working with 10,750 out on strike.

Although the strike is far more solid than the media are portraying, we must answer the doubts and questions some dockers have raised about this dispute, and make it clear what we are fighting for.

We must go on the offen-

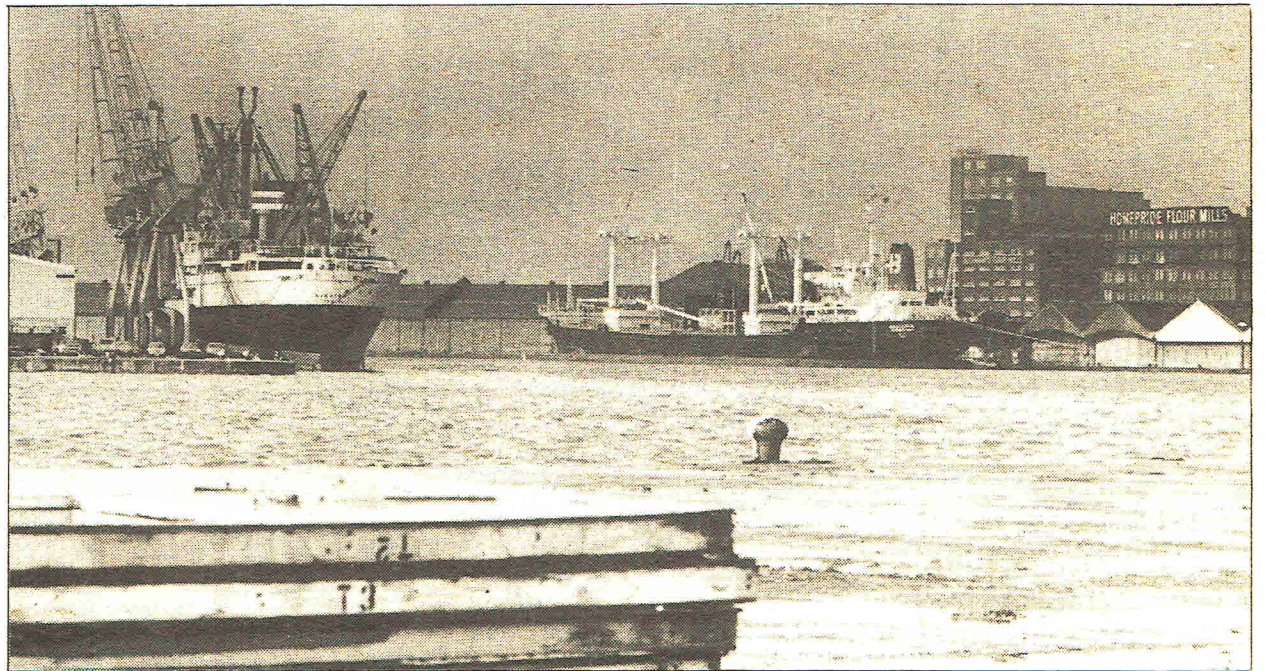
By Paul Spooner
(Hull Docks District Committee and Secretary TGWU 10/105 Branch in personal capacity)

sive with our demands and not just respond to every single attack from the employers. We have got the power. According to preliminary Treasury estimates the 11-day strike in July cost £250m in lost imports and £450m worth of exports.

We must demand the extension of the Docks Labour Scheme to every dock worker at every port in the country. That is the way to win the support from dockers at ports such as Dover and Felixstowe—give them something to gain from joining the strike.

We must win the support of all dock workers—crane drivers, tugboat men and shoregang riggers. We must demand that all of them, every single person handling cargo, should be registered so that they can gain the benefits of the scheme.

A key role in this must be taken by the National Port Shop Stewards Committee, an unofficial body which is open to all ports to send delegates. One of the lessons from the last dispute is that it should take a prominent role to fighting for the extension of the scheme. It can also ensure that all ports set



up strike committees involving all dock workers in the dispute

Mass meetings must be held regularly at every port to involve all dockers. Splits and confusion can be avoided if there is a real campaign to explain what the strike is about. There should be joint meetings with miners.

Picketing must be organised of working and non-scheme ports. Leaflets should explain the issues and counter the Tory press campaign. Picketing is the best inoculation against media propaganda.

Lorry drivers in the TGWU must be instructed not to cross picket lines. Miners should be approached for joint picketing of the unregistered wharves,

especially those handling coal, coke and iron ore.

We must demand:

★ The Docks Labour Scheme is extended to cover all ports and wharves.

★ All dock workers come into the scheme.

★ Employers and government give a written guarantee that it will not attack the scheme in any way.

★ Mass meetings to discuss the strike, organise action and discuss any deal.

★ Docks Delegate Conference makes final decision on any deal.

Back miners

From page one

to respect the miners' picket lines. In backing the miners, the TUC leaders would be fighting, in the longer run, for *all their own* members.

ORGANISE A 24-HOUR GENERAL STRIKE.

The Tories and the National Coal Board have never been prepared to listen to "reason" or argument. The only language this government understands is industrial action.

The TUC must organise a 24-hour general strike in support of the miners and against the Tories' use of laws to cripple union funds.

Without a bold and decisive call for action and a campaign against the government's ruinous policies, the Tories will be prepared to cut even more the democratic freedoms that the unions have so painstakingly built up over the years.

THE TUC LEFT MUST GIVE A LEAD.

Many workers, understandably, will have given up on the right wing of the TUC General Council, many of whom are afraid of any Congress commitment to the miners.

But what about the left-wingers on the council? Why have they not issued a bold call for a day of industrial action and a campaign against Thatcher?

The left leaders of the trade unions—those

who have already declared support for the miners and whose members are backing them—have the responsibility to use their considerable authority and weight to push the TUC into action.

The marvellous support given to the miners by the dockers and railway workers is a sign of the underlying support that exists. It would only need a bold lead from above and a proper campaign for there to be flood of support.

Whichever way the Congress itself goes, the left trade union leaders, or even the leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers themselves, must name a date for a one-day general strike. Then plans must be made, a campaign got underway.

The issues are too important to be left to the protocol and the niceties of internal relations on the General Council.

The leaders of the TUC, and especially the left wing, have a heavy responsibility this week. They will be failing in their elementary duty to trade unionism and the workers' movement if they refuse to organise the necessary campaign of action in support of the miners.

On the other hand, if they do launch such a campaign it will do more in a few short weeks to stop the Tories in their tracks than a lot of talking will do in a year.

- ★ Support the miners' fight for jobs.
- ★ Respect the NUM picket lines.
- ★ For a 24-hour general strike in support of the miners and against Tory anti-union laws.

Lobby TUC conference

Monday 3 September

8 am—Lobby opening conference.

11 am—Assemble at the Level to march for rally outside conference.

Speakers include:

Arthur Scargill, Peter Heathfield (NUM); Ray Buckton (ASLEF), Kevin Roddy (CPSA), Joe Marino (Bakers), Jack Collins (Kent miners) Denis Skinner MP plus a speaker from the Broad Left Organising Committee and Liaison Committee for Defence of Trade Unions.

The decision to hold one, united march was made at a meeting, Wednesday 29 August, of representatives of: NUM, BLOC, SERTUC, SOGAT '82 and LCDTU.



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