

Miners must call on union power

THE NINE-month strike of the miners is a magnificent testimony to the willingness of working people to struggle, when they are sure about the cause for which they are fighting.

The overwhelming majority of the NUM membership have displayed a tenacious loyalty to their union and their class not seen for generations.

The saturation propaganda of the mass media, giving full coverage to the NCB's "Back to work" campaign, has been resisted by the determination to defend pits and communities from the MacGregor plan.

The implementation of the Court's decision to appoint a new receiver, to take over the NUM's day-to-day finances, marks a new turn in the dispute. The NUM is not an insolvent organisation but the Tories are determined to cripple the strike by crippling the union financially.

The situation demands action by the labour movement and not a folded-arms acquiescence to the courts and sequestrators who are now being directly underwritten by government funds. This is a naked attack on trade union rights. It marks a new beginning in the campaign to render trade unions ineffective in their ability to campaign, or withdraw labour in defence of their interests, principles and rights.

Tory gamble

The Tories are playing a gamble, hoping the right wing leaders of the trade unions will do nothing. Yet on the ground, in the workplaces and factories and depots, a mood of discontent is

Ian Isaac

(St John's Lodge Secretary, South Wales NUM EC, personal capacity)

building up. This week has seen rail strikes over cuts in Rhondda and strikes in the National Bus Company over the same issue.

If the TUC were to pull these strands together, there could be a massive response from workers for action to defend the unions and help the miners.

If the TUC doesn't call for a General Strike to defend the trade union movement, it will reap a whirlwind of aggression from the Tory government. Inaction will invite further attacks by the government and courts.

TUC inaction plays into the hands of the Tories who attempt to isolate the miners. But in the ranks of the working class, the miners have millions of friends.

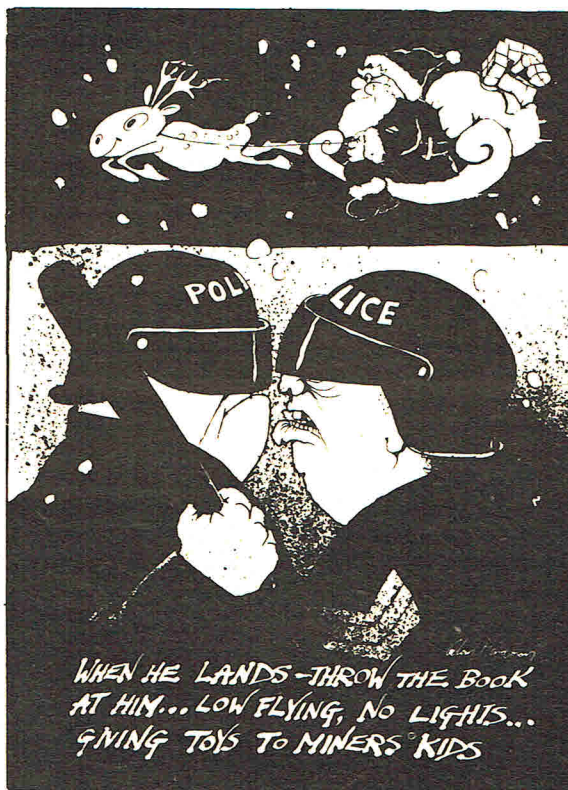
Using the enormous authority the miners' union itself has gained, an immediate appeal should now be launched by the NUM to all trade unionists who have supported it in solidarity action and to those unions that have given donations. The call should be made for these to now pass resolutions, organise lobbies, and send letters and telegrams to the TUC, both regional and national, calling for all-out strike action to be organised by the TUC to help win the miners' strike and as importantly, to defend the future

Continued on back page

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)



Mass picket in support of miners at Tilbury power station, 10 December.



The cartoon above is one of a series of Christmas cards produced by Revolution Graphics. See advert page 13.

Set-back for witch hunt

LABOUR PARTY members will welcome the decision of the National Executive Committee to see sense and pull back for the time being from a new witch hunt.

At what seems like the eleventh hour the committee decided unanimously to refer back all recent recommendations of the Appeals and Mediation subcommittee, including the proposal for a new and more general investigation into *Militant*.

In relation to Brychan Davies, the Young Socialist expelled from Rhondda Labour Party for selling *Militant*, it is the second time

the Appeals sub-committee has been overturned by the full NEC. The national Labour Party officials should now instruct Rhondda CLP to re-instate Brychan.

Since the subcommittee meeting of last week which first made moves towards a new witch-hunt, there have been howls of outrage from the Party ranks. More than 200 letters, telegrams and resolutions arrived at Party headquarters in just over a week, protesting against the proposed investigation.

Letters were sent from people like Jack Collins, Kent NUM President,

Continued on back page

Militant

1984: year of struggle

THE END of the year is a good time for workers to reflect on what has been a momentous twelve month period.

The titanic miners' strike has put its stamp on all political events in the past year. Moreover, it has the germs of future social developments.

The Tories' strategy to break the trade unions has been revealed in all its nakedness during this strike. The government prepared in meticulous detail and have been prepared to spend billions of pounds to defeat the labour movement's "Brigade of Guards", the NUM.

The Tories need a trade union movement cowed into meek submission, and shorn by law of all the powers that would make it effective. The logic of the crisis of British capitalism drives the political representatives of the bosses to push Britain towards a cheap-labour economy and the main obstacles to them are the trade unions.

The miners' strike began with some confusion and serious tactical errors. But nevertheless the determination and tenacity of the miners has aroused enormous support and admiration among other workers. At the beginning of the year there were still those sceptics in the labour movement who doubted that workers were prepared to struggle, especially in the aftermath of the 1983 Tory election victory. But the miners, and especially the young miners have shown a courage and grim determination that has not been seen for generations, and that also is a pointer to future struggles.

The Tories have used the press in an unprecedented and unrelenting campaign of vilification against the miners. The courts and the police have equally been used freely by the Tories. Laws and new precedents seem to have been made up as the strike has gone on. It has seemed at times that it was only necessary for a scab or an employer to visit a judge for his lordship to issue a new writ against the miners. There are now over 20 cases pending against the NUM.

But the experience of these events will leave a lasting mark on hundreds of thousands of miners, their families, and millions of workers who have witnessed these attacks. Having turned South Yorkshire and other coalfields into a virtual police state, with no-go areas for workers in cars, with mass charges under archaic laws, the Tories have ensured that a new generation of young men and women are completely alienated from the capitalist state and the capitalist system. Old Engels often said that an ounce of experience is worth a ton of theory. The strike has done more to politicise workers than reams of theoretical literature could ever have done.

But the heroism of the miners and other workers supporting them in solidarity action has not been matched by leaders of the trade union movement, with the exception of the NUM leaders themselves. The TUC leaders, especially the right wing, who have played an open strike-breaking role, have not matched up to the needs of the moment. Their clinging to "legality" overlooks all the traditions and struggles necessary to build the unions.

Even among the left leaders the seriousness of the miners' struggle and the Tories' assault upon fundamental rights have not been taken up in practical action, despite many fine words.

The role of the Labour leadership has been disgraceful. Neil Kinnock has done himself irrecoverable damage in the mining communities. He will never be forgotten for his unbalanced and damaging criticisms of the miners. In his determination to please the false prophets of the opinion polls, he has given encouragement to the Tories and MacGregor to butcher the mining communities.

The miners' strike is a turning point in British society and in the labour movement. Things will never be the same again.

Trade union activists thinking over the events of these last nine months should re-double their efforts to support the miners and help them win a victory for all workers. But another resolution must be made. In the storms and stresses that will open up in society in the future—including battles just as bitter as the miners' strike—the key question facing the workers movement will be leadership.

The labour movement is the strongest potential force in society but it needs cohesion, direction, purpose, a programme to change society and a leadership to carry it through.

Rank and file workers therefore must become active in their trade unions and in the Labour Party, to fight for ideas and leaders who will fight for the interests of workers with as much determination as Thatcher fights for the bosses. That must be a goal every trade union must set himself in the coming year.

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Phone: 01-533 3311

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Published by Militant; printed by Cambridge Heath Press (TU) Ltd., 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. ISSN 0144-9275



One law for the rich..

DEBENHAM'S, the retail giant intend to trade on the final two Sundays before Christmas.

After months of pious statements on the sanctity of the law during the miners' dispute, we now have big business blatantly breaking the 1950 Shops Act, which protects shopworkers hours and conditions.

There have been no squeals of outrage from Thatcher and co. on this act of law breaking. Instead they

By George Williamson
(USDAW Eastern Divisional Councillor, London Metropolitan branch)

have left it to their minions in Westminster City Council to take the stores to court.

Even then, there will be no squads of riot police patrolling Oxford Street to enforce

the law. Instead the stores will be fined a maximum of £1,000 for each day opening; they probably make that much per minute of trading.

Shopworkers especially are angry at this hypocrisy. It can lead to a serious deterioration in our working conditions and service to the public by hitting small shops.

The bosses have to be confronted. For an effective fightback, shopworkers will

need to equip themselves with a fighting union leadership. They will have that opportunity over the next few months.

Only by voting for Broad Left candidates in the coming USDAW election, Jeff Price for President, and Bill Connor, for General Secretary, can shopworkers get a leadership able and willing to stop the retail bosses trampling over us.

'Enquiry' anger

WITHIN A few days of the Labour Party's Appeals and Mediation Committee disgracefully recommending a new investigation into Militant, scores of letters and resolutions have been sent to the National Executive condemning the action, and demanding the reinstatement of Brychan Davies.

NUM members in particular are up in arms over this threatened attack. Jack Collins, secretary of the Kent NUM sent a letter calling on the NEC to intensify its support for the miners, and "not to create divisions but to unite... the movement so that the historical fight of the miners can be brought to a victorious conclusion."

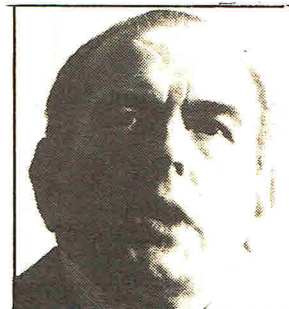
Similarly a letter from Emlyn Williams, president of the South Wales NUM, supports Brychan Davies and deplores a new witch-hunt.

In South Wales, Mardy,

Treforgan, Blaenant, Aberpergwn, St Johns and Penallta NUM Lodges are sending letters of protest.

In Ayrshire, letters and resolutions have been sent from the Netherthorpe, Mossblown and Muirkirk NUM, from Newton Grange in the East, and from the Whittan, Tranent, Wallfield, Stirling, Fallin, Cowie and New Craig Hall NUM strike committees. Similarly the South Notts NUM strike committee has protested.

Protests have been received at Labour Party HQ from leading trade unionists and all sections of the movement. A teletext message has been sent by Len Blood of the AUEW No 28 NE Newton-le-Willows branch—Len Blood nominated John Evans MP for the St Helens constituency. John Evans first raised the idea of a new investigation into Militant. The President of the NUR grades and a National Union of Seamen executive member have protested, as has John



Emlyn Williams—letter of protest. Photo: Militant

Hamilton, leader of Liverpool City Council.

Hundreds of resolutions and letters of protests have been sent, including ones from:

Manchester Women's section, Falkirk CLP, Wallsend CLP, Fords TGWU Bridgend, Yarrow Shipyard JSSC, ASTMS Scottish executive, AUEW Glasgow District Committee, Liverpool DLP, COHSE stewards from Edinburgh to Oxford, Glasgow FBU and Leicester West CLP.

Liverpool race unit

SAMPSON BOND began work this week as the new head of Liverpool's Race Relations Unit. On his arrival at the city hall he was jostled and abused by a small group of 20 or so 'Black Caucus' supporters, supported by a few NALGO officials.

Sampson Bond said: "The abuse and intimidation will not deter my commitment to fight in the interests of black people. The first task will be to help tackle the high levels of unemployment amongst blacks, with a special priority for the problems of unemployed black youth."

When he began work he received many phone calls from black people and organisations wishing to arrange discussions on aspects of council anti-racist policy.

Grants climbdown

THE CLIMB down by the government over proposals for student grants shows the hypocrisy of the Tory party. For all their talk of 'sticking firmly to budgets'—a cry heard ad nauseum during the miners' strike—they are prepared to back down when their policies hit traditional Tory voters.

Education minister Sir Keith Joseph's proposals would have meant payment of tuition fees, hitting many middle and upper class families. Over 200 Tory MPs protested at this, wary of its effect on middle class voters in their constituencies. In turn the government did not want a major split in the party with the present battle in the coalfields, so backed down.

However, the government

climb down leaves little to celebrate, despite the 'victory' speeches of some backbench Tories.

The payment of tuition fees would have meant a cut of £21 million in the overall education budget. The Tories are not giving anything away though. While, in a rare Tory concession £10 million will come from the Treasury, to make up the shortfall there will be an £11 million cut in the budget, including £6 million from the science budget, and £2 million from education research, adult education and the micro electronics programme. The Tories also still intend to abolish the minimum grant.

(NUS and student campaign—see page 6)

TGWU £200,000 fine

THE 1984 Trade Union Act (Part 2) is being used to penalize the giant TGWU.

The quaintly named "Queen's Remembrancer" will now go in to recover the £200,000 fine for contempt of court, after the TGWU to its credit refused to secretly ballot its striking members at Austin-Rover plants last month or call off the strike.

However, it is not enough for the TGWU leaders to effectively fold their arms and say: "take the money, see if we care!"

The Tories are showing no let up in their attacks on the trade unions through the law courts. A full mobilisation

of all sections with appeals to the rank and file of other industrial unions would shake this malevolent Tory government to its roots.

● The post of Queen's Remembrancer dates back to William the Conqueror. One of his tasks is to collect the 'rent' for two plots of land from the City of London. Every October since 1211 they have had to pay him... a blunt bill hook, six horseshoes and 61 nails. If that's good enough for the City, then its all he should get from the TGWU!

By Bob Stothard
(TGWU 8/401)

Miners' dispute

First
Welsh
miner
jailed

A DISGRACEFUL decision by Afan Magistrates Court in Port Talbot sent the first South Wales miner to prison for offences arising from his arrest on the picket line earlier this summer.

Roger Nicholas, a member of St Johns NUM, was sentenced to 6 weeks in prison on the 23rd November for alleged obstruction and assault on a police officer, both of which were completely trumped up charges.

On Monday after his imprisonment, a lobby and picket was set up outside Swansea prison where Roger had been sent. Plans are being made for a mass demonstration outside Swansea jail involving the whole of the South Wales NUM and trade unionists from the Swansea and surrounding areas.

Because of this arbitrary decision it is likely that Roger Nicholas will be subject to automatic dismissal by the NCB.

Letters and messages of support would be appreciated to Roger Nicholas, c/o HM Prison Oystermouth Road, Swansea, West Glamorgan.

Also please send copies to St Johns NUM, Nantyllyon Institute, Bangor Terrace, Maesteg.

Courts
stretch
powers

MAGISTRATES' COURTS continue to stretch their powers to the limit in trying to intimidate striking miners. Paul Fahey, a Lancashire LPYS member and Sutton Manor miner explains what happened to him in court on a charge of breach of the peace:

"The magistrate told me I was acquitted because of the police evidence—there were no grounds for prosecution—but he bound over myself and the two witnesses for 12 months for £250."

As Paul Fahey told *Militant*: "This is just to stop us going on picket lines and to stop other men going on as witnesses, so the police can have a walkover in every case. No tin-pot magistrate is going to stop me fighting for my job".

Correction

Edna Dinning, chairwoman of Gateshead Miners Dependents' Support Group has asked us to point out that the £224 donation from Sunnyside Club which she mentioned in last week's *Militant*, was in fact donated by Alan Hull of Lindisfarne. Edna sends her thanks to Alan and his friends for collecting the cash.

Notts strikers assaulted

SINCE DAY one of the miners' strike we have read, heard or seen so-called examples of violence by striking miners.

The press and media have never been slow to show a policeman with blood on his face or, for example, the working miner who was supposedly attacked in a hospital bed by pickets.

I live in Nottinghamshire where most of the miners are working and daily we hear of attacks on miners who are on strike and their supporters. Obviously these attacks are very rarely, if ever, reported in the press.

● An elderly, retired man from Annesley (I only know his christian name is Sid) was on his way to his sons in Loughborough. As he approached Annesley pit he was stopped by the police and brutally dragged from his car. Sid, who suffers from thrombosis, was forced into handcuffs that were so tight they caused serious bleeding around his wrists. Pickets who had witness-

ed the scene told the police about Sid's wrists were told to **** off. They had to phone for an ambulance and rang Sid's son. When he arrived, the Met, true to form, dragged him from his car and began to rough him up.

I forgot to mention Sid's crime—very serious indeed—he was wearing a 'Coal Not Dole' sticker on his coat and a 'Support the Notts Miners on Strike' badge on his hat.

● At Rufford in North Notts one striker was attacked with a bow-saw by a working miner, who said he was going to cut his head off. He almost succeeded. The striker had to have 160 stitches in his neck and head; there was not a word from the press.

● Mr McGinly, 72 years old from Ollerton, disgusted with his son for strike breaking, disowned him publicly. The following day the windows in his home were bricked. Again, no report in the press.

● Brian Simister (Vice President of Nottingham

Trades Council) went for a night out with his mate to Gedling Miners' Welfare. After an enjoyable Friday evening with striking miners he went out to his car to go home. He and his mate found five car loads of working miners waiting for them.

Brian was punched to the ground and kicked. His mate suffered a cut eye and a burst nose. Brian was so badly beaten that the following Monday he had to attend hospital due to the pain in his neck. This warranted a one-minute report on Radio Trent and nothing from the press.

● Maggotts have been posted through striking miners letter boxes in Hucknall.

● Dave Rowe from Linby Colliery found milk bottles wedged under the back wheels of his car.

● Dave Simpson, a striker from Annesley Colliery was attacked by six thugs in the street while out fund raising in Luton one evening.

In Dave's own words he was 'left for dead'. He suffered broken ribs. Once again none of these incidents were reported.

● Striking miners like Kevin Parkin of Huknall Pit have been charged by the police and sacked by the NCB for fighting with working miners. It takes two to start a fight but only striking miners are penalised. In Kevin's case he hasn't been to court yet but has been prejudged and found guilty by the Colliery Manager. And so the list goes on—and still no reports in the Tory press.

These are just a few local incidents. Nationally there must be a thousands more. The violence and intimidation to striking miners will not weaken them. The one sidedness of the Tory press will only encourage them to stand united.

By Alan Jones
TGWU, volunteer working
at South Notts strike
centre

MacGregor
makes 'sell
pits' call

THE CHURCH intervened in the miners' strike again last week. Speaking at a church in the City of London on "the morality of the creation of wealth" was that expert in creating poverty, Ian MacGregor.

The chairman of the Coal Board was in a nostalgic mood, talking about past technological innovations which had "raised living standards" despite "social disruption". He mentioned the automatic reaper, and going back to his childhood, the invention of bronze by the Phoenicians which had started the Cornish tin mining industry.

Leave country

He talked of British miners emigrating to America: "Miners are an international breed. The most important thing about mining communities is their mobility".

Mineworkers were offered nothing but the chance to leave the country—if they could find work anywhere else. But he had better news for his rich audience. He spoke with approval of privatisation of the mining industry. MacGregor thought it would be "wonderful" if the NUM were to buy "uneconomic pits". As for privatisation of the most modern mines, he felt sure "opportunities will arise as they have done in other industries". Like BT and shortly in British Airways, there are great "opportunities" for ad men, lawyers and speculators to make a fast buck. In the meantime MacGregor wants miners to be sacked and what is left of the industry made 'lean and attractive' to private shareholders.

By Roger Shrivess



Miners' children from North Yorkshire pits enjoy a Christmas Party at Airedale, near Castleford.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Cwm men defiant

THE ONE remaining pit in Ebbw Vale is Marine Colliery, Cwm. The unemployment rate in Ebbw Vale is now officially 20%. Youth unemployment is over four times that.

The loyalty and commitment of the miners to their union and the cause was clear in the good-size picket of 150 or more that turned up on Wednesday, 5 December by 5 am, on what was a typical Ebbw Vale day—it emptied down! The police were there in large numbers too—"ordinary coppers" (is there such a thing?); riot-squad men; numerous flat-hats; dogs in the van; riot-gear clearly visible in another van; "spotters" up on the railway-lines overlooking the pit-gates and many more police in reserve.

The size of the police presence ensured that the three scabs—in a convoy of some 15-20 vehicles—sped in easily.

All this to get three scabs into the pit: men who don't

go underground, who don't produce one ounce of coal between them, but who get paid. The scene was the same—without the rain—on Friday morning. Only this time there was a bit of a shove on—nothing much, but one picket was dragged out unceremoniously by two policemen and taken to one of the nearby vans, arrested presumably for "having his hands in his pockets in an aggressive manner".

The general feeling was that he was nicked because there had been no arrests at Marine for two weeks (since the very violent police attacks three weeks ago) and that therefore "they hadn't got their quota for the month".

Again the scabs were convoyed in at great speed; again the police denied the pickets their legal right to approach and talk to strike-breakers. Cwm is now another community in this strike that has seen the police in their true colours.

The mood on the picket is to stick it out for however

long it takes. The rain that soaked us to the skin on the Wednesday failed to dampen the fire and spirit of the Marine men. But there is more than just jokes on the picket-line, there is a willingness to talk and discuss issues too.

Most of the pickets are very critical of the TUC's rôle and want, in the words of one, some "proper trade union action" from our so-called leaders. And as for Neil Kinnock...this is a family newspaper.

At the Miners' Institute, I talked to Terry Jones, a Marine miner who must be typical of many miners up and down the land: young, married with a family and a mortgage, he has picketed all over the country. For him, there can be no possibility of working with the scabs when the strike is over. Terry's words summed things up: "Once we get through Christmas, we'll be there, we'll win."

By Stuart Winstanley

NCB touts for scabs

THE 'FLOOD' back to work is dwindling to a drip in North Derbyshire. Ken Moses, the NCB Area Director, has had to find alternative employment for members of his senior management staff.

They are travelling around the coalfield visiting the homes of striking miners, making personal appeals for them to return to work. If the economics of their efforts were to be judged by the same standard as that us-

ed by MacGregor for pits, these characters would be in debt for the rest of their lives.

Highlighting that scabbing is a serious ailment is the situation at Warsop Main. 180 scabs have signed on the sick this week. Their only cure is to rejoin the strike and fight for their future and their health.

Alan Alberry
(Bolsover CLP)

Power workers meeting

WORKERS FROM the Drax and Eggborough power stations in Yorkshire met with miners from the Selby coalfield on Tuesday 11 December to build solidarity for the miners among the workers at two of the largest power stations in the country.

Power workers at the meeting expressed whole hearted support for the miners' cause and were determined to black all coal and oil coming across NUM picket lines. The construc-

tion of an oil pipeline at Drax has already been blacked. The meeting decided to arrange workplace meetings at the power stations with speakers from the NUM in order to build solidarity amongst rank and file power workers. Two co-ordinators were appointed to organise the work, one from the NUM and an AUEW member at one of the power stations.

Dave Wood
(York LP)

Miners' dispute

Northumberland pitmen organise

THE PAST few weeks has seen the development of a Pickets Co-ordinating Committee organised by rank and file members of the Northumberland NUM. This has been necessary to combat the barrage of propaganda from the media and local management; to answer the bribery and intimidation; and to organise picketing more effectively and efficiently. RAY PALMER and JOHN MCKENNA of Bates Colliery explained the background to Kevin Miles of *Militant*:

The amount of work involved in the strike and the pressure on the Area and lodge officials required us to involve rank and file members more in the organisation of the strike. It enables us to share the workload and allow new initiatives from the rank and file to be put into practice.

For example, a lot of the lads wanted the chance to talk and put our case to the rank and file members of other unions whose support we need—such as the power workers. Leaders of the power unions claim there is no support for the NUM case but at grass-roots level we know that to be untrue. These lads are friends and neighbours, we are all part of one community. All it takes is for us to explain our case.

Campaign Strategy

We are arranging open meetings with national speakers from the NUM. We want every member of our union there. We hope to reach strikers in our Area who haven't involved themselves and to counteract the vicious media campaigns against us.

We are fly-posting, leafletting and even touring the streets with a loudhailer to make sure everyone knows what's going on. We are making a special effort to contact our members isolated in outlying areas.

We are forming support groups at meeting places to take the case onto the doorsteps. Some of the lads can't afford to travel to picket lines and it's our responsibility to keep them in touch. To this end we are putting out a weekly Bulletin.

In addition to the rally held at Blyth last week we are holding another in Ashington this Friday,

December 14, to demonstrate how the fates of shipyard workers, hospital workers, the unemployed—indeed all the communities in the area—are linked in our fight to defend jobs.

Coal stocks at Blyth power station are at rock bottom—we know that for a fact. It's only been kept going with oil which has damaged the boilers.

We have distributed a series of leaflets to the power station workers, including some written by the power workers themselves, and picketed there hoping to win support for the idea of not handling scab coal and/or oil. We are meeting with their shop stewards and intend to ask them to arrange meetings so we can put our case direct to the lads.

We are now meeting Durham Area miners on a regular basis to co-ordinate picketing activities. We are able to demonstrate the iron will of the majority of the NUM in our Area to win this strike.

In the past few weeks all the lodges discussed the Lynemouth resolution concerning the ballot question at a time when the NCB 'Drift-back' was at its height. As a result of our campaigning the only lodge which voted for a ballot was Lynemouth—representing just 200 men! The other 5 lodges representing thousands of NUM members threw it out.

The support of ordinary workers for our struggle should embarrass the TUC and Labour Party leaders. With decent leadership from those quarters this strike would have been won months ago.

The working class need a daily paper like *Militant*. It has shown—in words and deeds—the sort of commitment needed to defend the working class. Our lads won't forget.

Six day campaign

IN 6 days the rank and file committee achieved the following:

- ★ Production of two bulletins issued to 5,000 of our members.
- ★ Joint lobbies of all the Northumberland NUM branches with the Durham men, who have been marvellous in their support and action.
- ★ An increase in picketing particularly at Bates and Ellington. At Bates pit in Blyth CPSA members from Newcastle Central Office attended the picket line. We now intend to organise mass picketing at all the pits.
- ★ Leafletting of all the social clubs in Ashington on Saturday night by LPYS members. This will now be a regular thing,

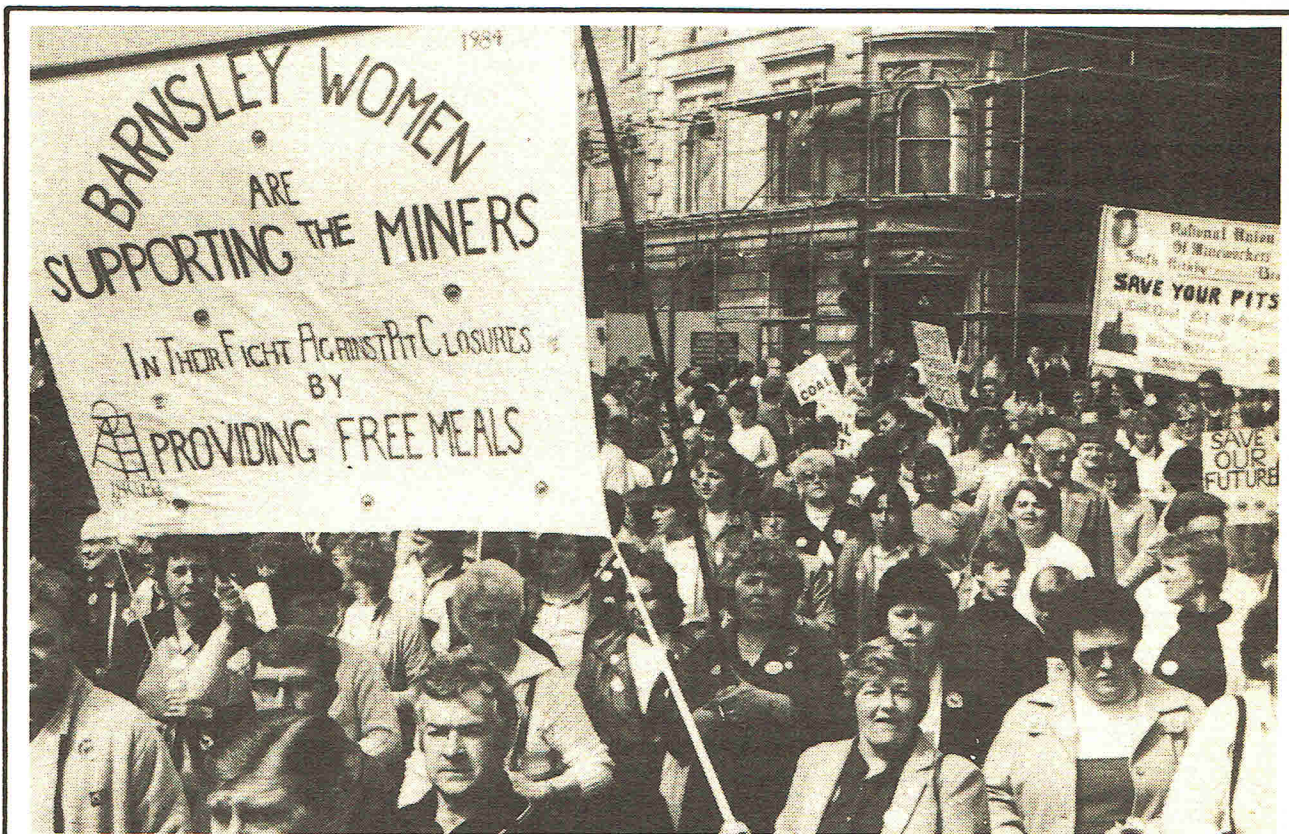
together with collections if we can get permission.

- ★ The organisation of a meeting in Ashington with Eric Clarke, Ray Palmer and Dennis Murphy speaking. Over three hundred attended at two days notice.

The results:

- ★ Ashington branch overwhelmingly voted against the ballot; Whittle branch the same; Blyth branch 500 to 2 against the ballot; Brenkley unanimously against; Lynemouth voted for a ballot but only after the reinstatement of all sacked; Ellington—only seven voted in favour of a ballot about 600 against.

By Dave Cotterill



Yorkshire: women back the miners

YORKSHIRE Regional Women's Conference was dominated by the miners' strike.

The opening debate was on a resolution moved by Jane Hartley from Hull, seconded by TGWU delegate Eunice Dankin, calling for the leadership to get off the fence and to support the miners. The other resolution of the debate, moved by

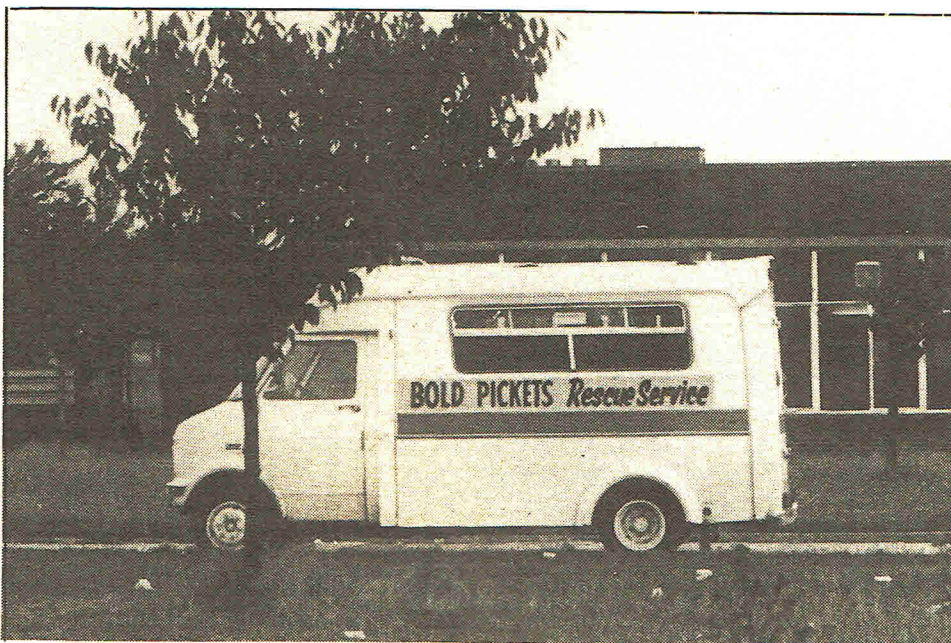
Jane Ingham from Leeds called for a socialist fuel policy.

There was an enthusiastic mood as speakers such as Audrey Gilbert from Kiveton Park Women's Support Group explained how they were doing food parcels and going picketing. Eileen Carr, a member of Camsall Support Group and a member of Askern NUM ex-

plained that after the strike women members of the NUM would be looking for equal rights—not to go down the pit—but for concessionary coal etc. Both resolutions were carried unanimously. About 40 people attended the *Militant* Readers' Meeting—a big increase on previous years. Out of the meeting a petition was circulated condemning

Jack Eccles the TUC chairman for his comments on the miners. There was also a lot of hard feeling about Kinnock's lack of support.

Two *Militant* supporters were elected to the Regional Women's Committee. At its first meeting it agreed to hold a Women's Solidarity Conference with miners in mid-January.



Striking pitmen at Bold Colliery, Lancs, recently took a delivery of an unusual form of transport (picture). It is understood they preferred the ambulance to a surplus "black maria"!

Women against closures

EARLIER IN November at Chesterfield two women from each NUM panel discussed the setting up of a National Organisation for the Women's Action Groups and Support Groups.

These women's groups have played a vital part in the strike's success by raising money, organising food centres and picketing. Nevertheless, there has been a desire for area, regional and national organisation on the lines of the 1926 Miners' Wives Foundation.

There has been a fear of a body imposed from above and some groups have asked for a National Delegate Conference—one per group—and that all appointments be regarded as temporary until elections by national conference.

At Chesterfield it was agreed to hold a national conference after the strike and to call the organisation the National Women Against Pit Closures. Also it was agreed that, after delegates had returned to their areas for discussions and elections, to elect a *pro-tem* National Committee to conduct affairs until conference.

A list of aims were set out for education, social and political activities. Also suggested was infiltration of the Women's Institute but it is thought the mover was not entirely serious!

Step forward for Welsh women

AT THE Welsh Region Women's Conference on November 9, *Militant* supporter Muriel Browning was re-elected onto the Regional Committee. Conference adopted a Marxist resolution from Llanelli Women's Council, congratulating Liverpool City Council on their stand against Tory cuts.

A miners' wife invited to speak had a tremendous response when she said that after the strike she intended joining the Labour Party. This is also the intention of the majority of women in the

Penrhwyber support group. A resolution supporting the miners was carried overwhelmingly.

Influence

A resolution was carried which included: "As a step towards increasing women's influence in the Party, conference demands the right to elect the Women's Division of National Executive Committee." Decisions arrived at by the outgoing Regional Committee were put to conference and overwhelmingly accepted. These included: one of

the women's seats on the NEC should be elected at National Conference; the four women's seats on the Labour Party Wales Executive Committee should be elected at the Welsh Women's conference.

The acceptance of this change will give more authority to the Women's conference and marks a real step forward.

By Muriel Browning
(Sec-Llanelli Women's Council personal capacity)

Uneconomics of pit closures

A recent report by leading accountants which backed the NUM's arguments that the government's calculations of the cost of pit closures vastly underestimates the effect of redundancy pay, dole and lost tax was banned from the pages of the Accountancy magazine and severely embarrassed the government. Ironically one of its main authors is Price Waterhouse professor of accountancy at UMIST. ANDREW GLYN, a leading figure in this debate, returns to the attack:

OPERATING LOSSES certainly do not in themselves justify closure. They do imply that the value of the coal produced is less than the various costs attributed to the pit. But to conclude that the pits should be closed presupposes that the resources which those costs represent would have been used elsewhere to produce something of greater value.

If, on the contrary, those resources (both workers and equipment) would otherwise be idle, there is no real cost to society from their use in producing coal. Society as a whole gains the value of the coal. The miners gain the difference between their take-home pay at work and what they would receive if unemployed. If the value of the coal they produce exceeds what they gain then the rest of society benefits as well (since costs of closure exceed operating subsidies).

Closure costs

Four pits, whose scheduled closure by the NCB precipitated the strike, illustrate the case (the fifth was not producing during the relevant period). Costs of closure can be estimated from the figures for employment, costs and profits in the pits in 1983 prior to the overtime ban (supplied to the NUM by the NCB). Assumptions can be made about the costs to the government of the unemployment generated amongst miners, other NCB employees, workers in supplying industries and in industries affected by reduced spending.

They show that even Snowdown pit, burdened at the time with development work which gave it the lowest sales revenue per miner of all the NCB pits (£103 per week) would cost the government more to close than to keep open. For the other 'uneconomic' pits the net costs of closure are even greater, often much greater.

Economic

On this basis, not only are all the NCB's pits 'economic' in the sense of making a contribution to production. They are all actually so 'economic' that keeping them open benefits the rest of society as well as the workers involved.

This broad conclusion is strengthened by alternative (unfavourable) estimates about the cost of unemployment etc. The two crucial assumptions which are required are that closure would lead to long-term unemployment, and that the output produced by the higher cost pits does in fact have a substantial value (as the NCB accounts themselves assume).

If the unemployment effect of closure was temporary, then the losses of coal output would soon be



Miners at Snowdown pit, Kent, last year. Costs to the government of closing this pit would be more than keeping it open.

Table 1: Losses to government from closure
£ per miner per week

	If colliery was closed cost to govt revenue would be:	Present level of subsidy to keep pit open:	So to close pit means net loss to govt or:
Herrington	281	82	199
Cortonwood	295	74	221
Bullecliffe Wood	467	251	216
Snowdown	260	232	28

Note: The reason that the estimates of costs of closure in column (1) vary between pits is that the higher are costs other than miners' pay, the greater is the impact on other industries and thus the greater the costs of closure per miner affected.

offset by additional output in the industries where new jobs are created. Equally if the coal was really worth no more dug out the ground than left in the pit (because there was no prospective use) then keeping the pits open would simply be a way of subsidising the incomes of those involved (requiring a different justification).

For the unemployment effect to be temporary, it is not enough for those whose jobs are immediately lost by closure to find jobs elsewhere (by transferring to nearby pits for example). If no additional jobs are created such moves must be at the expense of other workers who would otherwise have filled the vacancies. The decisive question is what happens to total employment, not the fate of particular individuals.

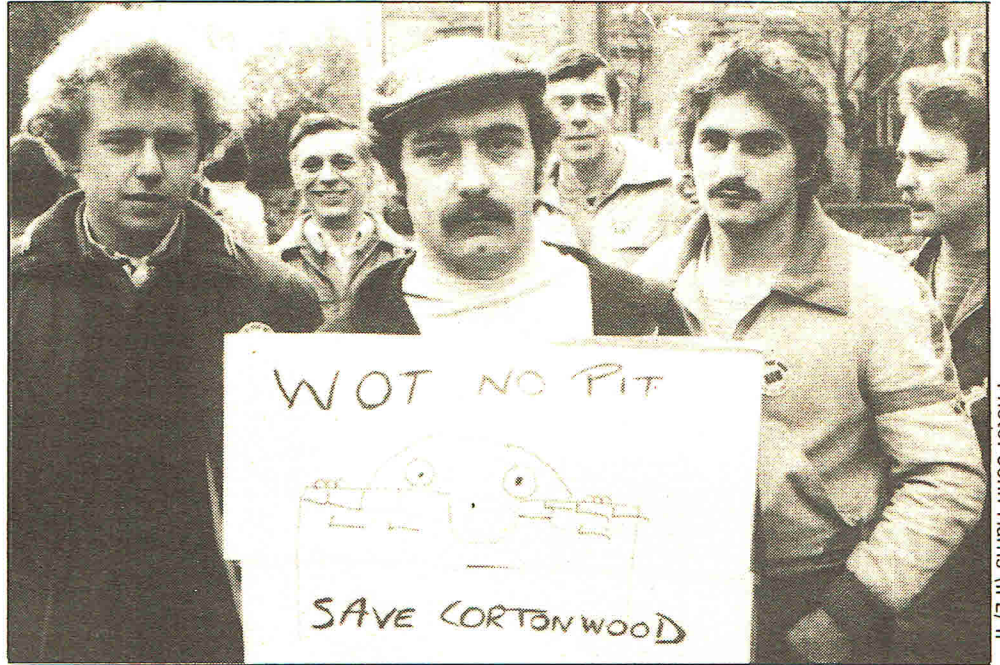
The only argument advanced for the idea that making workers unemployed will of itself generate substitute jobs is the theory that the increase in unemployment will drive down real wages and thereby (somehow) increase employment. But the persistence of mass unemployment discredits this theory. So it is wholly implausible that pit closure will lead to increas-

ed production elsewhere to compensate for less coal produced.

But is the coal from the 'marginal' pits really worth anything, given the piling up of coal stocks in recent years? This stockbuilding, however, just like rising unemployment, reflects the government-induced contraction in the economy. If growth after 1979 had continued even at the slow rate achieved after the first 'oil shock', then production in 1984 would have been some 7% higher and coal use correspondingly increased.

Coal stocks in October last year before the overtime ban would have been under 30 million tonnes, less than before the disputes of 1971 and 1973. So there is no shortage of valuable uses to which the coal from the higher cost pits would be put, just as there is no shortage of valuable jobs which the unemployed could do.

Labelling these pits as 'uneconomic' and casting them out of the NCB's accounts is just the same trick as redefining registered unemployment to reduce reported numbers out of work. Neither can disguise the damage that is being done to the economy by government policies.



Miners protesting against the threatened closure of Cortonwood, the pit that started it all.

Photo: John Harris (IFL) II

Bare-faced legal robbery

THIS LETTER from the accountants appointed to sequestrate (legal word for steal) the National Union of Mineworkers' funds shows the depths to which the ruling class will go to smash this strike.

The law has been used to remove (legally at least) the elected leaders of the miners from control of the union's funds.

Now they want to force other trade unions to stop supporting the miners or to put their money straight into the pockets of the sequestrators!

What bare-faced cheek and hypocrisy! The labour movement must reveal this legal stitch up for what it is—bare faced robbery. Give it the answer it deserves!

Price
Waterhouse

SOUTHMARK TOWERS
32 LONDON BRIDGE STREET
LONDON, SE1 9SR

To the General Secretaries of all Trade Unions

BHL/IMW

3 December 1984

Dear Sir,

TAYLOR AND FOULSTONE -v- NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkers ("THE UNION")

We enclose a copy of the Writ of Sequestration.

It would appear from press reports that a number of Trade Unions, not identified in the reports, have transferred amounts of money to the National Union of Mineworkers since the date of our appointment, 26 October 1984. Please state if you are such a Union, and if so would you kindly supply full particulars of the payments, giving the following specific information:-

- 1 The amount of each payment, stating whether it was in cash and whether by way of loan or gift. If payment(s) have been made by cheque(s) we require sight of, or a copy of, both sides of the paid cheque(s).
- 2 The person or persons to whom payment was made.
- 3 If known the purpose for which the money was used by the Union.
- 4 Whether it is intended to make further payments. If so please give full particulars as above.

If it is intended to make further payments would you kindly note that as Commissioners of Sequestration authorised and commanded by the Court to take into our possession all the assets of the Union, we require you to pay to us all and any sums that are to be paid to the Union.

If the above is not applicable to your Union we require confirmation that no payments have been made or will be made to the Union.

Yours faithfully,

Commissioners of Sequestration

Students prepare for new battles

"We will not be brought off by this half-baked withdrawal." This reaction by NUS President Phil Woolas to Keith Joseph's 'U-turn' on student tuition fees was echoed by delegates to the 7-10 December NUS Conference.

As Lesley Smirke, Central College Liverpool Delegate said in the debate on the NUS 'New Deal' for students: "The Tories' U-Turn, after the cuts from the science budget to pay for it, will only add £11 million to education spending. Our demand for a £30 a week grant will cost the Tories £500 million. A serious strategy of linking students with the labour movement is necessary to achieve the 'New Deal'."

But many conference delegates felt that the NUS Executive had no strategy to defend and expand education. While a National Rent Strike was agreed for the Spring term, a motion of censure on the National Organisation of Labour Students led Executive was passed for their failure "to provide a resolute leadership of the campaign, especially during demonstrative action such as the rally in London on the 28 November."

However, only *Militant* supporters explained how student action, to be effective, must be linked to the strength of the labour movement.

In the debate on North London Poly it was explained that the pressure exerted on ILEA by the labour movement through a move by *Militant* supporters on the London Labour Party Executive to get the NF Student Organiser Patrick Harrington removed from the Polytechnic, had been successful, along with the students action, in causing the 'early retirement' of the Poly's Director.

A motion moved by *Militant* supporters on Harrington was lost only after a count, by 265 to 349. And while other resolutions by *Militant* supporters for a Public Sector Alliance and links with the trade union Broad Lefts were defeated, the ideas of *Militant* received their best ever support at an NUS conference.

At the Sectoral Conference for FE Students, a move to allow Harry Smith, Vice-chair of Liverpool City Council Education Committee to speak was overwhelmingly passed and a Labour majority, including the Further Education Labour Students candidate Lesleigh Woodburn, was elected onto the Further Education National Committee of NUS for the first time ever—a clear sign that students want to link with the power of the labour movement.

By Howard Oakes,
(Huddersfield Tech Delegate)

Occupation at Portsmouth Poly

STUDENTS AT Portsmouth Polytechnic have been in occupation for over two weeks. Occupation committees have been set up in each department.

It has the support of the majority of students, shown by attendances at the three general meetings of over 1,000 students. In a cross-campus ballot endorsing the actions, of the 3,000 students who voted over 2,000 were in support.

We have two demands—departments levying extra charges for equipment essential for the completion of courses return the money to the students; and that a proposed 4½% increase in hall fees be reduced in line with the increase in student grants. This would only cost the authorities £8,000.

The occupation has guaranteed that it would keep departments open but

the governors have tried to close down the poly and blame it on the occupation. This has failed so far—some members of staff say they will climb up a ladder, into the building, to teach the students if necessary.

The local cafe gives discounts to students in occupation, while caretakers and cleaning staff have given food and drinks. They have been disgusted by a writ served on the occupied building.

The Occupation Committee is resolved to call a rent strike of all halls of residence next term, and is asking respective trade unions to hold a 24-hour strike. The staff recognise that if the Students' Union can be removed from occupation over £8,000, and have a huge court fine imposed upon it, (it may be over £20,000 in costs) then what effective action can the staff take when job losses are announced after the rate-capping bill, or



This year has seen a new turn in the student movement towards defending education. Above, campaigning for the NUS's 'New Deal' in March.

180 arrests on London march

THE PROPOSALS to abolish the minimum grant, demand tuition fees, introduce harsher scales of parental contributions and offer a mere 3% grant rise provoked the angry demonstrations by students.

On the London march on November 28, 30,000 of us met in Jubilee Gardens with the idea of peacefully marching to Downing street to deliver over 20,000 letters of indignation.

The day began with a carnival like atmosphere, but as the speakers went on many became restless and the idea

of delivering the letters alone seemed futile.

The mass of the demonstration began to move along the south embankment towards Westminster bridge, which was shut off by police. As traffic began to clog up, students climbed through the GLC building, over the high embankment walls and began sitting in the road. Unprovoked police violence took place as police, some of them mounted, attempted to clear the road. There were 180 arrests.

Soon all traffic was at a

standstill as Westminster and Lambeth bridges were blocked off—although all taxis and ambulances were allowed through. The North Staffordshire LPYS banner was unfurled on Lambeth bridge, despite orders for all banners to be lowered.

By the end of the day Joseph, Lawson and Thatcher had been shown that the students of the country are not going to be kicked around but are prepared to get up and fight for education for all.

By a student



One of the 180 arrests on the London march on 28 November.

Growing awareness of students

THERE HAS been a great increase in the political awareness and activity of students. At my own college last year, to say the least there was a certain amount of apathy.

Not so this year. There has been moral, financial and substantive support for the local miners; the reactionary Tory MP Harvey Proctor was prevented from speaking on the campus by a large picket; much of the college was shut down or else occupied and the local council

picketed in protest against education cuts.

This culminated with the demonstration in London on 28 November, where our college along with many thousands of other students took the NUS leadership at its word and joined in the events to make sure the anger of students was brought to the government's attention.

By CM Ralph
(Coventry 'Lanchester' Polytechnic)

Police attack Glasgow demo

'SCOTLAND'S militant students brought chaos to the centre of Glasgow this afternoon'—so reported the local radio news on November 29 after 6,000 Scottish students took to the streets in protest.

Among the crowd were around a thousand FE students, who though not in the main affected by the Tories' proposals, realised if the proposals went through, they would be next in line.

After the rally students in a largely spontaneous and unorganised action blocked the streets for two hours, but kept one step ahead of the police.

However, there was a violent reaction by the police who charged into the students to disperse them. While young people were being arrested and beaten, it appeared that their representatives, the National Union of Students officials, were side by side with the police calling on the demonstration to disperse. Chants of 'scab', 'traitors' and 'collaborators' were among the insults hurled at them.

A fighting leadership is needed for our union, and moves are already beginning in some colleges to have the present officials taken to task.

By Douglas Blackstock
(Glasgow College of Technology Labour Club)

A catalogue of violence

WE HAD a taste of the police tactics miners have suffered for the past nine months when police tried to break up the student demonstration in Glasgow.

From our rally in the historic George Square—where a mass meeting of Scottish workers led by Willie Gallacher was charged by police in 1919—spontaneous marches set off for the Tory HQ in Wellington Street. The marches were continuously split up by mounted police and transit vans from the Strathclyde Support Unit—Scotland's riot police.

Cavalry charges and vans driving at densely packed crowds were part of the catalogue of police aggression. We saw a Chief Inspector tear up a banner and throw the wooden pole onto dumbfounded students' heads. A young girl from Esk Valley college was punched in the face by a burly policeman after she tried to dissuade him and five other policemen from kicking a student who was on the ground. We saw a terrified girl covering her glasses as she was punched and shoved towards a waiting van.

A student from my college said afterwards: "I'd heard miners blaming police for the violence on the picket lines, but I never believed it. Now I have seen and suffered myself." That was clearly the mood of the 6,000 students who joined the march that day.

By R. White
(Stevenson College)

Common struggle against Tories

ON HEARING the news of Sir Keith Joseph's proposals the rank and file amongst the students organised action against the cuts in grants. On the 21 November, all over the country regional 'days of action' took place. At North Staffordshire Polytechnic we picketed the Education offices.

The cutbacks and the recent events have highlighted the common struggle against the Tories and capitalism. At North Staffordshire Polytechnic, students have stood side by side with miners throughout their fight and during the education cuts protests, miners have greatly supported

students. Reactionary feelings towards students have been changed more realistically to the opinion that a students' fight is a workers' fight, is everyone's fight.

By Gary Davison
(North Staffs Poly Labour Club Secretary)

Photo: Sandra Festman

Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

Coventry enquiry—waste of time



Dave Nellist (right) campaigns for Labour in Coventry during the 1983 general election.

Photo: Militant

NEARLY 50 Labour Party members, including the National Agent, a member of the National Executive Committee, and an MP are to spend a whole Sunday morning enquiring into a successful 1983 General Election campaign.

By Pete Marsden
(Coventry South East
CLP Executive
Committee)

They will apparently be joined by a character who came within 3,000 votes of handing the Coventry South East seat to a Tory candidate. This get together meant the cancellation of plans by one Labour Party ward to distribute 5,000 leaflets appealing for industrial support, money and food for the miners.

Despite the election having taken place 18 months ago the comrades invited to attend were given only 9 days notice of the event. No information as to what is required of us has been received apart from a request for us to bring "relevant minutes and literature issued in the campaign."

This enquiry stems from allegations made by Fred Davis, during his appeal

against expulsion from the party. He was expelled for publicly supporting candidates opposed to the endorsed Labour candidate. We now apparently have the position where an individual can appoint himself as the final selector of Labour candidates—if they don't like the candidate they are at liberty to go to the Tory press to sabotage the labour campaign.

Even if the local party expelled him and this is upheld by the NEC, they are seemingly to be given the assistance of leading members of the NEC, and paid officials of the party in pursuing a political and per-

sonal vendetta against the Party and its candidates.

After the 1983 election campaign, resolutions attacking aspects of the way the campaign was carried out were passed by wards and the Constituency Labour Party. The enquiry is partially based on this. It is safe to say that such resolutions would not receive the same support today, and even at that time were carried by slim majorities without the influence of new members signed up during the campaign.

Preparation

But if the NEC is so concerned to take into account the views of this constituency as expressed in the resolutions, will the same importance be attached to the resolution calling for this enquiry to be dropped, or the same notice be taken that the three wards which have met regularly this year are all opposed to this enquiry?

Clearly what is in preparation is an attempt to extend the witch hunt to more members of the party. It's no coincidence that this enquiry is taking place after some brilliant work on behalf of the movement by the MP Dave Nellist who has shown how Labour MP's should be fighting the Tories.

At a time when the miners require all the support of the labour movement it is a disgrace that this enquiry is taking place and distracting attention from the need to join the struggle of the miners. Coventry South East Labour Party is calling for a lobby of this enquiry at 10 am, Sunday 16 December, at the AUEW Hall, Corporation Street, Coventry.

Whatever the outcome of the enquiry, the movement in Coventry will go from strength to strength and the Marxists and *Militant* supporters will be playing their full part in that struggle.

LPYS miners campaign

While the right-wing of the Labour Party spend their time finding new ways to attack the Labour Party Young Socialists, the LPYS have continued raising cash and building support for the miners.

There are now one or two demonstrations and major rallies called by local LPYS branches every week. Successful demonstrations have been held through the mining areas of Ecklington and Castleford in Yorkshire, while 400 joined the march in Blyth in Northumberland. In Aylesham on November 25 200 attended the demonstration followed by a joint rally with the NUM. At the meeting, a motion con-

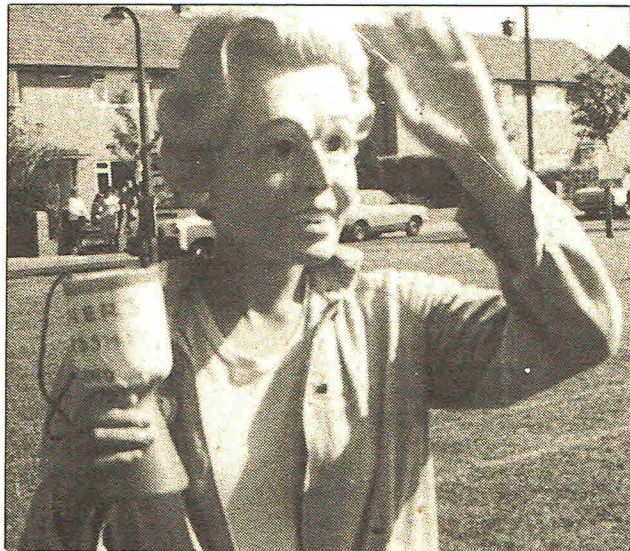
demning the expulsion of Brychan Davies was passed unanimously.

Portsmouth also held a successful demonstration in their town on November 17—the march was three times the size of the town's Labour Party Mayday march.

Christmas toys

The London LPYS branches' Christmas toy appeal has been a great success. They have raised £1,000 cash and £1,000's worth of toys for miners' children, which will be delivered to Northumberland on December 15.

Many other branches have



LPYS branches are finding novel ways to raise cash for the miners. Above, a Thatcher look-a-like in Gateshead.

found novel ways of raising cash for the miners, such as Hove LPYS who had their own Father Christmas collecting in Brighton on Sunday. Bradford LPYS branches held a breakdance competition—250 youth turned up, raising £40 for the

NUM, £40 for the LPYS and £40 to cover costs.

The LPYS nationally has now produced 100,000 'miners' solidarity' leaflets which have been sent out to the regions to build support for future events.

Witch-hunt threat

THE LPYS in Livingston have been to the fore of the campaign to win youth to socialism in the area.

Livingston North YS has 60 members through their campaigning activities—for example at a recent rock concert they organised over 200 people attended and 50 signed up for the YS.

It is against this backdrop that many Labour Party and trade union activists will be dismayed and disgusted that attacks on YS members have taken place recently by the CLP. Many of these attacks are of a personalised nature, in particular against one prominent YS member, Wendy Miller.

The accusations against her include alleged 'misappropriation of funds', after collections to send miners to YS summer camp. Despite receipts and letters of thanks from the two miners who attended the camp, a disciplinary meeting was set up to investigate Wendy's actions.

Reprimanded

At the meeting the committee turned up half an hour late. Wendy was not told what she was accused of. A decision was taken to leave it to the next GMC.

At that particular meeting, on the casting vote of the Chairman, it was decided to send a letter of reprimand to Wendy, whilst still not formally telling her what she was accused of. Wendy later

received a letter which stated that 'we resolved to send you a letter of reprimand, hence the reason for this letter'—still no formal charge or reason given!

Protests

Not content with such activities, the CLP are going a step further in their brave crusade against local, mainly young female *Militant* supporters. Protests have been put forward by sections of the 'left' on the CLP about YS members selling *Militant* on the streets of Livingston. At the last GMC the Constituency chairman said: "You are pushing me too far, if there is a witch-hunt in this constituency, I'll start it and finish it. I will leave the chair at the next CLP to personally move your expulsion," to Wendy Miller after she refused to stop selling *Militant*.

At one CLP meeting the same chairman stated the YS should be banned from selling *Socialist Youth* the official LPYS paper produced by the Labour Party.

But local *Militant* supporters and LPYS members will not be intimidated, and will continue the fight for socialism. Indeed at the last LPYS meeting, 13 new members attended.

The so-called 'lefts' in Livingston will soon discover that ideas and the thirst of youth for socialism cannot be intimidated, banned or witch-hunted from the Labour Party.

Vauxhall ban

ON 30 November Vauxhall Labour Party in South London voted to ban sales of the *Militant* from a Labour Party street collection for the miners. In an attempt to avoid accusations of witch-hunting the motion actually bans sale of any publication, even official Labour Party papers. However, as the only paper being sold was *Militant* the intention is clear.

Militant supporters in Vauxhall have been involved in supporting the miners right from the beginning of the strike, in particular providing accommodation for Kent miners picketing the NCB headquarters for the first 4 months of the strike. We have also organised meetings and collections at work-places, tube stations, and on the estates, as well as helping with Labour Party street collections. While doing this, we have continued to sell *Militant*, and many miners have commented on the excellent coverage provided by the paper.

We expect, and have resisted, harassment by the police, and we intend to continue selling *Militant* and collecting for the miners, despite efforts to the contrary by some members of the Labour Party.

By Derrick McClelland
(Vauxhall Labour Party)

YC's hammered

JUBILANT CHANTS rang out after a public debate recently in Edinburgh between the LPYS and the Young Tories on "What Future for Youth?"

After a campaign of local YS public meetings and visits to schools, colleges and factories, over 250 people crammed into the night club 'Nite'. With the audience made up of everyone from school students to miners, the Tories were outnumbered at least 10 to 1 in an atmosphere which could only be described as 'electric'.

The YS speakers were Andy Clachers, LPYS National Committee and Joe Owens, Polkemmet NUM Youth Delegate, both of whom took the Tories apart bit by bit and received rapturous applause. Joe began by

showing what the majority of miners thought of the thousand pound bribe being offered by the NCB by ripping up the letter sent out to miners.

Any young person who wasn't sure which party to join was more than convinced after listening to the Young Tories. To our surprise we were told that there "wasn't a crisis" of capitalism but indeed a "crisis of socialism around the globe". We were also told that socialism was a "cancer" and that College students should get loans. The success of the debate can be judged by the fact that we got 50 new names for the YS and the possibility of a debate in a local school.

By Susan Riley
(West Edinburgh LPYS)

TUC and the genera

WE ARE at a turning point. Not since 1926 has the British labour movement faced such a test.

A miners' victory is within reach. Two-thirds of the miners remain solid, determined to carry the fight to the end. But victory is not certain unless all the necessary steps are taken by activists throughout the labour movement.

Moreover, the appointment by the courts of a receiver to take complete control of the NUM's resources and finances marks a new stage in the government's assault on the trade unions. This is not merely an attack on the miners' union. It threatens the effectiveness and, ultimately, the viable existence of all trade unions.

What should be the response of the labour leadership? What action in the absence of a clear lead from above, which shamefully appears less likely than ever—should be taken by activists at a rank and file level?

Class conscious workers everywhere are calling out for a lead, for bold action based on a clear strategy and tactics. Answers posed to the questions are urgent. But they must be formulated in the context of a weighing up of the stage reached in the miners' strike.

This is not just another industrial dispute. It is a class battle which has opened up a chasm in British society. The Thatcher leadership has long been preparing a showdown with the strongest section of the working class, biding its time for the right moment. A series of defeats (for which the labour leaders bear heavy responsibility) and also a few timely concessions to the waterworkers, and railworkers cleared the way for Thatcher to provoke a showdown with the miners. A defeat for the miners, the movement's "Brigade of Guards" would open up the door to a devastating assault on the trade unions generally, crippling the organisations which provide the only obstacle to the smashing of workers' rights and the savage driving down of living standards.

The economics of pit closures—in any case, based on phony accounting—are a secondary issue. On behalf of the bosses, the Tories have spent far more on strengthening the police, on building oil and coal stocks and other preparations. So far the strike has cost the government at least £4 billion. Lawson, Tebbit, and other Tories have bluntly stated that it is a "good investment" if the miners are smashed.

Collision course

This collision course raises the spectre of explosive social repercussions for the ruling class. Some of their more far sighted spokesmen have warned that sections of the workers and especially the youth will be profoundly embittered by mass unemployment and the Tories' measures to break the strike. They realise that many will draw the conclusion that there is no way out other than to fight to change the system.

But for Thatcher and her big business backers this desperate battle is a "good investment" because it is part of a desperate strategy to restore the profitability of big business. Given the organic crisis of capitalism in Britain and internationally there is no other way for their class.

Capitalism can no longer afford the reforms and enhanced living standards conceded during the now exhausted post-war upswing. They have no alternative but to drive down living standards. But to do this big business must smash the trade union organisations.

That is why Thatcher is going for broke. It is not merely because of her hatred for organised workers. It is the policy dictated by the logic

By Lynn Walsh

of capitalist crisis.

But the best laid schemes of mice and ministers can go astray! She banked on a quick and easy victory over the miners. Encouraged by the retreat of the labour leaders, the Tories calculated without the class instinct—the magnificent determination and the militant tenacity of the striking miners, especially of the young miners.

A new generation of miners—dismissed by the Tory pundits and even written off by pessimistic Labour leaders as incapable of struggle—have rediscovered all the combative methods of the past. They have learned afresh the methods of class picketing, of class struggle, and demonstrated that they are prepared to make heroic sacrifices. They have stood up to abuse by the police, backed by the courts, on a scale unprecedented since the 1920s and 1930s.

The strike has also drawn miners' families, especially women into active struggle on an unprecedented scale.

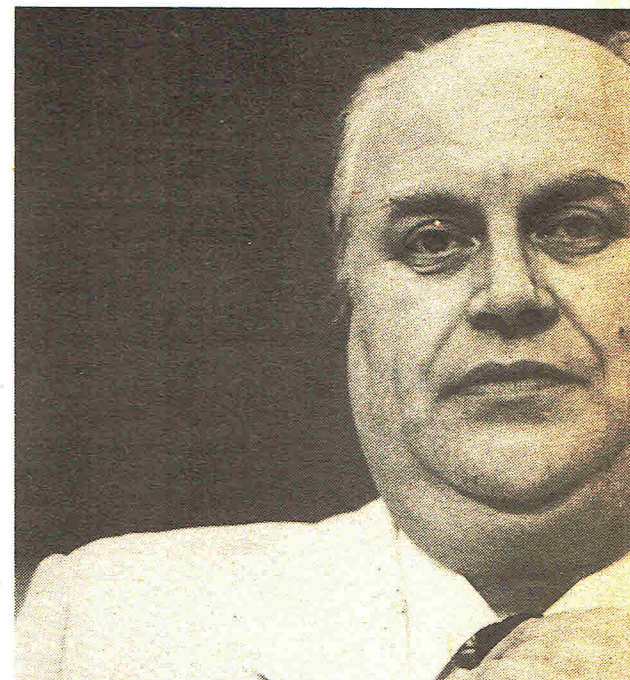
Moreover, the active, conscious miners, together with other advanced workers, have already drawn far reaching conclusions from this battle. They recognise that victory for the miners, the immediate goal, will not in itself solve all the problems. They understand that there are no lasting gains to be made within this rotten system. There are no solutions for the workers today under capitalism. Victory for the miners, for a whole section of active strikers, is a stage in the movement towards a fundamental socialist transformation of society.

Whatever the immediate outcome, the outlook of those miners, their wives and girlfriends, and of the workers who have given them active support, will be irrevocably changed—and this layer will act as a catalyst in transforming the outlook of the whole labour movement in the next period.

This battle is unprecedented in the post-war period, not merely because of its duration but because of the rapid ups and downs, shifting the balance of the parties during the strike. To some extent, it has already taken on features of a general strike situation. The whole strength of the ruling class with the massive forces of the police, the courts, social security, and potentially the army at its disposal, (but not unaffected by deep splits within the Tory party, and inhibited by the danger of a massive political reaction against brutal Thatcherite



Arthur Scargill addresses a Labour Party rally in Stoke.



Norman Willis, new TUC General Secretary is proud of his the miners struggle in the same historic vein.

politics) is pitched against the forces of the whole labour movement (whose enormous strength is crippled by the blindness, class cowardice and political bankruptcy of most of the present leadership).

How many times have the miners' hopes been raised only to be dropped again?

Dockers' strikes

On both occasions when the dockers struck, miners felt that decisive sections were coming out in solidarity. Rank and file dockers instinctively understood that their action was linked to the miners. The T&G leaders, however, scandalously tried to uphold the myth that the dockers' dispute was separate. These mistaken tactics led to defeat for the dockers, and encouraged the government to step up the battle against the miners.

Similarly, the miners' hopes were lifted when, in response to the arrogant provocation of the Coal Board, NACODS members voted overwhelmingly for strike action. The shameful decision of the NACODS leaders not to bring them out, which will rebound on NACODS in the future, was another blow to the miners.

Despite the scepticism of many striking miners, the hopes of miners were raised by the decisions at the TUC conference in September to give support to the miners. But fears that fine promises would not be implemented by the trade union leaders have been borne out.

In spite of such disappointments, however, the government's attempt to undermine the strike by a massive return to work has not succeeded. After the summer break, all the resources of the coal board, the government, the bosses' press and television were concentrated on orchestrating a return. Not only did this fail, but the appearance for the first time of scabs in some pits resulted in many more striking miners becoming involved in the mass picketing.

The more recent attempt to organise a return to work, which still has not succeeded in getting anything like half the miners back to work, has also strengthened the determination of the strikers. New layers of young miners have come to the fore in the recent period. Especially significant have been the

mass meetings and rallies of strikers in areas like Northumberland and Derbyshire, which have prevented a drift back to work and hardened the resolution of the strikers.

At every stage of the strike, events and incidents have had an effect on the mood. MacGregor's blunders, splits in the NCB leadership, splits within Thatcher's cabinet, the successes of some mass pickets in forcing back the police, the sequestration of the South Wales NUM funds,—almost from day to day different incidents have affected the course of the strike. The reaction to the death of the South Wales taxi driver taking a scab to work was a set-back. But within days this was overtaken by the appointment of a receiver, and

prepared to lead.

The effect of single incidents and events underlines the vitally important part played by consciousness in the class struggle. In some cases, it is mistakes of the Labour leaders themselves which had a demoralising effect. In other cases, blunders of the government or the coal board could have been used to expose their lies and completely undermine their position.

Answer the lies

Every lie should be answered with facts. Every attack with arguments to steel the strikers and win wider support. Every offensive of the bosses should be answered with new initiatives from the

Who runs society?

A general strike is required to mobilise the full strength of the class to defend workers' organisations against the Tories' assault. Once the working class moves into a general strike, however, not the survival of the government but the question of power is inevitably posed: Who runs society? The capitalist class or the working class?

The crisis of the system puts this on the agenda. Capitalism cannot continue without attempting to restore profits through clawing back workers' living standards and rights. On the other hands, the gains won by workers' struggles in the past can only be defended by

challenging the rotten framework of capital and fighting for the socialist reorganisation of society.

In the course of a general strike this would be brought home to millions of workers, who would be aroused to action and would become conscious of their enormous latent power. But the existing leadership is inevitably an obstacle. This makes it vital to fight for a clear socialist programme and bold strategy and tactics to crystallise consciously the instinctive class aims of the workers. This is the urgent task now posed before activists striving to galvanise the labour movement into action.

his attempt to seize all the NUM's funds.

These shifts in the course of the strike reflect the underlying contradiction in the situation. The underlying balance of class forces is still overwhelmingly in favour of the workers. But there is a crisis of leadership. In Thatcher, the capitalists have a determined leader who fights ruthlessly to defeat her opponents. On the other hand, while even two or three key trade unions have the power potentially to paralyse the economy and bring down the Tory government, the leaders of these unions are not

workers. Meetings, rallies, and demonstrations backed up with printed material should be used to build solidarity. A campaign of this kind would provide the basis for decisive solidarity action to ensure a victory for the miners.

But clearly this has not been forthcoming.

The leadership of the NUM around Arthur Scargill has stood firm. Despite all the venomous attacks on Scargill in the capitalist media, the sympathy of millions of workers has been strengthened by his unwavering explanation of the miners' case. Yet even the striking

Strike



Photo: Militant

Tolpuddle exhibition but cannot see

miners have not been sufficiently unified around clear cut strategy and tactics linking together all the striking coalfields.

When the receiver was sent in miners instinctively felt the need to hit back decisively. On the front page of *Labour Weekly* (7 December), Arthur Scargill correctly appealed to the whole movement for "industrial action—the most massive industrial action our movement has ever known, and we must have it now." But timing is of the essence. The NUM leadership should have gone further and put a blunt demand to the TUC: prepare an all-out general strike! At the same time, to initiate a generalised mobilisation from below, the NUM should have appealed to the trade union ranks over the heads of the general council and immediately named the day for a 24-hour general strike to set things moving.

Some TUC leaders, like Frank Chapple and Eric Hammond, have treacherously denounced the miners. But even the left leaders have failed to implement the promises of solidarity. All this has emboldened Thatcher. Through the punitive intervention of the courts the Tory government has taken steps against the NUM which, unless they are reversed by united class action, threaten to put the trade unions back to the position they were in at the time of the Combination Acts in the 18th Century.

This is a new situation. It goes beyond the fining of a single union or the sequestration of NGA funds and those of the South Wales NUM. Action has been taken to bankrupt officials of Derbyshire NUM, on the grounds that they have unlawfully used NUM funds in an unofficial strike. Similar steps will undoubtedly be taken against NUM officials in other areas.

The sequestration of NUM funds shows the affects of the Tories' anti-trade union laws, under which fines, contempt proceedings, and sequestration can equally well take place. It means that the assets and finances of any trade union can be seized by the state on behalf of the bosses. No trade union can function effectively under these conditions.

So trade unions now face a stark choice. Either submit to laws which render effective trade union action impossible—or ignore the law and

fight the threat of measures which could smash the unions' apparatus.

At the Wembley conference the TUC came out for a policy of non-co-operation with Tory trade union laws. In recent weeks, however, the TUC leadership has moved more and more openly for a policy of co-operation. Hammond of the EET-PU and Gavin Laird of the AUEW have called openly for a policy of accepting government cash to conduct ballots. There is a pious chorus of trade union leaders wailing that it is wrong to break the law. Norman Willis apparently does not see the irony of his conducting schoolchildren round the Tolpuddle exhibition at Congress House. In the past, apparently, it was right for workers to defy unjust laws in order to establish trade union rights. Today, it is apparently wrong to defy unjust laws in order to defend those very same rights.

The TUC leaders should perhaps note the comments of one of the directors of Debenhams, justifying their decision to open—illegally—on Sundays. He said: "It's a ridiculous law, and it's about to be changed soon anyway." The store bosses have nothing but utter contempt for the £1,000 maximum fine which they may have to pay—when they will rake in hundreds of thousands on a Sunday before Christmas. The TUC leaders should say to the Tories and their judges: "Your trade union laws are unjust, reactionary laws—and we will force you to change them!"

The threat to all trade unions posed by the sequestration of the NUM's assets demands all-out general strike action. Nothing less is required than the mobilisation of all the forces of the trade union and labour movement to defeat this attack.

When the NGA's funds were sequestered it was correct to call for a 24-hour general strike. When the South Wales NUM funds were seized, it was also correct. However, in the summer, when there was the possibility that Scargill and other NUM leaders could be jailed it was necessary to prepare to call for an all-out general strike. The government drew back from this course.

But the court's seizure of NUM funds marked a qualitative change in the situation. It posed the need for an all-out mobilisation of the class.

Threat of troops

Moreover, if over the Christmas holiday the government attempts to bring in troops in an attempt to move coal and smash the strike then there must be an immediate all-out drive to initiate all-out general strike action from below.

Although it goes unreported in the bosses' media, there is local solidarity action in many areas. Railway workers in a number of key-areas are refusing to handle coal. Manual workers in a number of power stations are also refusing to handle blacked coal.

The enormous amount of cash being collected for the miners is an indication of the enormous fund of sympathy that is there, if only it were tapped with a lead from above.

There is an instinctive feeling among wide layers of trade union activists that something more is



Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)



Photo: Militant



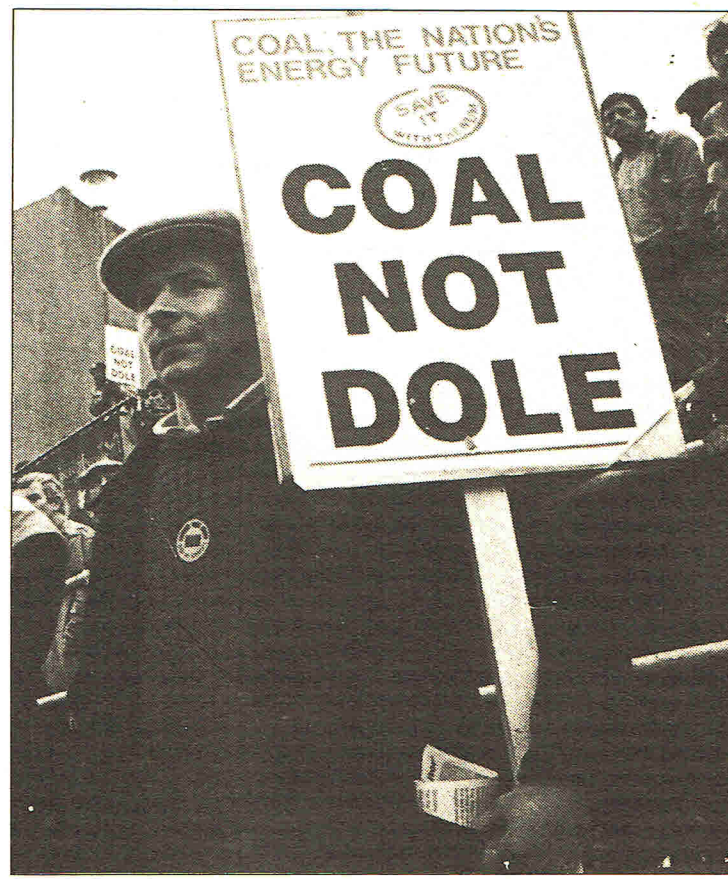
Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

(Top) Chairman Ray Buckton addresses 1984 TUC Conference. (Middle). Miners lobbying outside on the first day were sceptical but nevertheless hoped that the TUC would determine to help the miners more forcefully. (Bottom) Miners lobby of Parliament leads to vicious police behaviour and many arrests.

needed: co-ordinated, national action.

We need a general strike: this is the attitude of class conscious workers, who would prepare and organise the general strike. If the TUC leaders were prepared to use their authority to put the weight of the traditional organisations behind the call for a general strike and if they campaigned and explained the issues there would be an overwhelming response from the working class in Britain.

While pouring scorn on the idea of a general strike, the representatives of the ruling class are nevertheless terrified of the prospect. Last Friday Robert Maxwell's *Daily Mirror* devoted the whole of its front page to a denunciation of the idea of a general strike. They too see that it is the only response demanded in the situation by the working class. They fear the possibility of a general strike which would smash Thatcher's government and pose a challenge to the system. But they also have the measure of the trade union leaders, taking full advantage of the latter's lack of confidence in the rank and file and playing on their fear of mobilising the class.



USA

THE ASSAULT of the bosses against organised labour in America at the present time is clearly shown in the strikes at the Danley Machine Corporation in Chicago, and at the Phelps Dodge Corporation in Texas and Arizona.

Both strikes have taken on national importance as far as the labour movement is concerned. In the words of the rank and file strike leaders the bosses and the Reagan administration are using "tactics not seen since the 1930s in order to cripple the unions". Both these strikes have important lessons for the international labour movement. They are organically bound up with the attempts of the Thatcher government to smash the National Union of Mineworkers.

Feature by George Hardy

Bosses' bare knuckle tactics

IN CHICAGO, the Danley bosses, taking advantage of two years of depression in the machine tool industry, deliberately provoked the strike by demanding concessions it knew the union could not accept. The bosses were after an 'open shop'—a scabs' charter—wage and benefit reductions and sweeping changes in work rules.

Not unnaturally the

United Steel workers of America flatly refused these demands and took strike action on 1 May 1984. The union pointed out to the Danley bosses that despite the depression in the industry, between 1981 and 1984 the company paid no federal taxes on a profit of \$192.5 million!

The bosses have now returned to the 'bare-knuckled' tactics of the

1930s in order to intimidate the 800 steelworkers involved in this strike. Off-duty Chicago policemen have been hired to harass and intimidate pickets whose number has been limited by court order. Union pickets have been arrested for leafletting and they are electronically surveilled as they go about their union duties on the 'line'.

I was invited to address

the steelworkers local in Cicero, Chicago, on the British mineworkers' strike.

Collection for miners

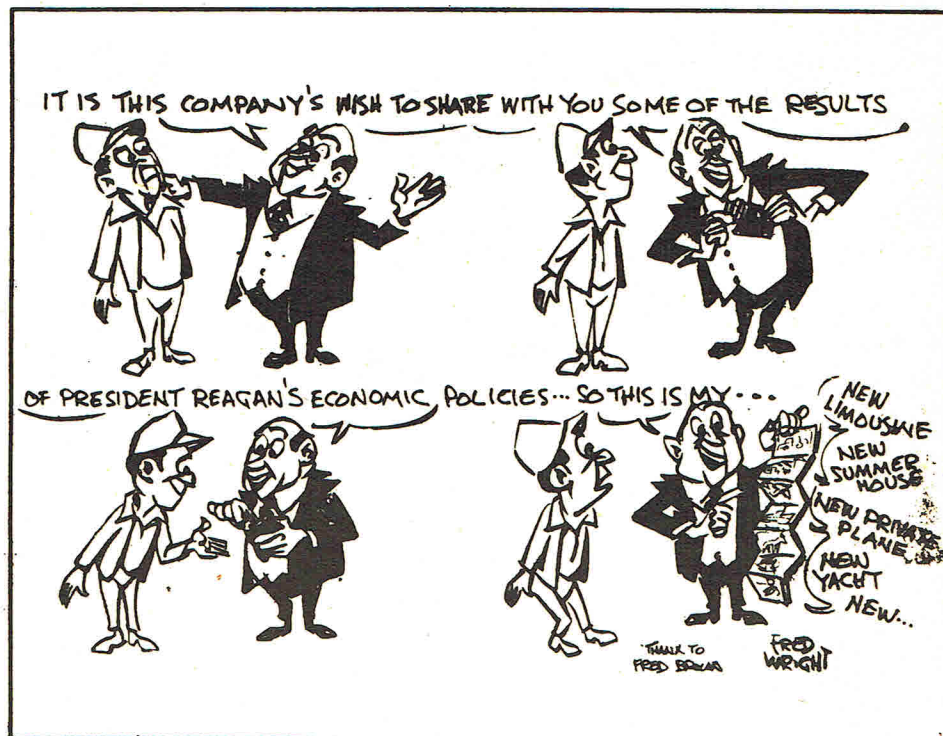
Those workers—with many wives and children present—listened intently as I described the struggle of

the miners and their families.

They clearly saw that their stand in defence of the United Steelworkers of America and the stand of the miners in defence of their union was one and the same struggle. So much so that they contributed to a collection for the NUM and agreed to sponsor a meeting in Chicago in December

miner from Yorkshire, which will be addressed by a

Messages of support for the Danley Strikers should be sent to: Joe Romano, President USWA Local 15271, 1617 S. Lanarsie, Cicero, IL 60650, USA.



Eighteen month copper miners strike



Copper miners and their families have faced jailings, beatings and gassings.

IN TEXAS and Arizona, at the Phelps Dodge copper mines and smelters, a virtual war has been fought since 1 July 1983 between the 1,700 copper workers on the one side, and the bosses and the National Guard on the other.

The strike began, as at Danley after the corporation demanded huge concessions from the 13 unions representing the copper workers. Amongst other things the bosses demanded a **three year wage freeze**, the removal of the cost of living increase and a 10% cut in the starting pay of new employees.

Phelps Dodge wanted to provoke a strike. Their clear intention was to break the unions within the corporation. The bosses gambled, wrongly as it turned out, that desperate miners laid off since 1982 would cross the picket lines.

Biggest conflict in industry

The union leadership unfortunately bent over backwards to accommodate the corporation, even offering them a contract which resembled Phelps Dodge's original demands. The cor-

poration has refused this package!

This strike, involving most Mexican and native workers, is the largest conflict in the long, bloody history of the American copper industry. To date it has cost Phelps \$150 million, which won't go down well among the creditors, who are owed \$600 million.

During the present strike these valiant men and their families have been beaten, gassed and jailed by the misnamed "Arizona Department of Public Safety" and the National Guard. Despite being evicted from their company-owned houses, starved and denied the right to company medical aid, they battle on. Riot police, helicopters, armoured cars and the National Guard cannot break the will of these magnificent trade unionists to defend their unions, jobs and living standards.

In Morenci, Arizona,

Phelps Dodge have ruled supreme up to the present point in time. This is a company-owned town. Straight out of a chapter in US labour history. Every single building is owned by the company—including the bowling alley!

Solidarity

Whilst the unions have spent millions of dollars fighting this corporation no serious attempt has been made to mobilise the mighty US labour movement in solidarity strike action in support of the Phelps Dodge and Danley Strikers. The union tops have launched a "full-scale corporate campaign against Phelps Dodge designed to bring them back to the negotiating table", they have threatened to withdraw some **\$250 million(!)** from Wall Street institutions which are major creditors of the corporation.

In New York on 13 December a demonstration (outside of working hours!) is being held in support of the Phelps Dodge workers. This demonstration is an at-

tempt to put pressure on the company and big business to reopen negotiations with the unions. From this demonstration a national food drive for the striking copper miners and their families will be launched.

The leadership of the unions involved and the AFL/CIO should have used this demonstration to organise a nationwide one-day general strike in support of these strikers and in defence of the US labour movement from the attacks of the corporations, the government and the National Guard. The US labour movement will only be able to protect itself when its tremendous strength and fighting spirit is mobilised in defence of every section that is threatened by the union busting methods of the bosses.

Messages of support for the Phelps Dodge strikers should be sent to: Angel Rodriguez, President USWA Local 616, c/o USWA, 5 Gateway Centre, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15222, USA.

Fighting back against Reagan

"WE AIN'T seen nothing yet" was how Peter Kelly, the leading rank and file left-wing spokesman in the United Automobile Workers' Union (UAW), summed up the election 'victory' of Ronald Reagan. He pointed out to me that the ranks of organised labour in the US would be forced to go on the offensive against Reaganism as the new administration attempted to offload the estimated \$250 billion deficit onto workers' backs in 1985.

Peter Kelly's viewpoint was shared by all the activists that I met during a visit to the US in October/November. These workers—in the main shop stewards and local executive board members from various unions—described in graphic detail what 'Corporate America' actually means to working people.

Official unemployment averaged 8.6% during 1980–84, compared with 6.4% under the Carter administration.

Reagan, has assisted the bosses in smashing one union, the Air Traffic Controllers (PATCO), and is developing the 'Open Shop' to weaken and destroy the 20 million-strong American trade union movement. And when the bosses refuse to concede the just demands of US labor in wage contract negotiations, all they have to do is file bankruptcy, close up their operations and move to the South where huge pockets of non-unionism exist.

However, 1984–88 won't be an easy ride for this administration. Activists like Peter Kelly and others that I met have drawn correct conclusions from their involvement and experience in the

US labor movement. First of all they will fight like hell to maintain the trade union movement despite the compromising attitude of their leaders. They are struggling to defend jobs and living standards. For example, as a result of Peter Kelly's opposition to the 1984 contract between the UAW and General Motors—Kelly is a GM National Negotiator—47% of GM workers voted against the contract. This demonstrates quite clearly that where a lead is given and an alternative posed, the workers will respond accordingly.

Party of labour

On the issue of political representation for the US labor movement—53% of all union households refused to endorse Reagan—important stirrings are beginning to take place within the ranks. In Minneapolis, in March/April 1985, a conference is being organised by labor activists—unconnected with the various sectarian groupings in the US—to promote the need for a US Labor Party. Peter Kelly will be one of the main speakers at this event, together with other prominent activists. The struggle to establish a Labor party won't proceed in a straight line. The union bureaucracy will use every trick in the book to hamper its development. The labor activists are well aware of this. But as one activist remarked to me in Pennsylvania, "We have no choice, we have to fight to establish the Labor Party". In the titanic battles that lie ahead in America, the movement will come of age as it returns to the rich past of the American labor movement.

Chemical companies - profit before safety

THE comments of rescue workers in Bhopal, India, after the world's worst-ever industrial disaster tell their own horrific tale:

"Every house we entered was crammed with bodies. The carnage was such that it appeared that a nuclear bomb had dropped onto the city."

By Ronnie Sookhdeo

Government sources tentatively claim that 2,000 people were killed, 20,000 injured and 200,000 affected by a deadly cocktail of cyanide and phosgene gasses, released after storage tanks at a pesticide plant exploded and turned much of the city into one vast gas-chamber.

The pesticide company—the giant US-owned Union Carbide—sought to minimise the hazards by claiming that the gasses can be neutralised by moisture in the air and that they pose no long-term effects. But what is the truth? And more specifically, what is the safety record of Union Carbide?

It has long been known that trace amounts of methyl isocyanate one of the escaped gasses—causes voluminous emissions from the eyes and irritation to the skin and internal organs. Long-term exposure to infinitesimal quantities has been known to cause infertility amongst women and cancer.

When inhaled in larger amounts it can produce a rapid accumulation of fluid in the lungs—causing drowning. The gas can also remove essential iron from the blood stream leading to malfunction of organs and death.

It is precisely because of the stringent medical tests demanded by the US Environmental Protection Agency that companies like Union

World's worst industrial disaster



Carbide decide to operate in other countries. Once known as 'public enemy number 1', by environmental groups, Union Carbide have established a notorious record of health and safety nationally and internationally. It once held the dubious distinction in the 1960s of operating the 'smokiest factory in the world' in its 'Ever Ready' battery factory in Virginia.

Third World victims

Another factory in Indonesia was found to be emitting huge concentrations of carbon black, con-

taminated with poisonous mercury. Of the 750 workforce a staggering 402 employees were found to be suffering from some kind of kidney disease.

But it has been their operations in the pesticide industry which have produced the biggest controversy and also yielded massive profits. The company, in recent years have exported to developing countries huge amounts of pesticides and herbicides, which are banned or severely restricted as a health hazard in the USA.

This is usually done in conjunction with new seed strains and fertilizers as part

of a "Green Revolution" package—thereby creating a new cycle of dependency and debt. It is estimated that normally 140 lbs of hazardous pesticides are exported to these countries each year.

Capitalist priorities

In 1980 Union Carbide sold in Latin America alone £645m million worth of pesticides making an operating profit of \$122m. This is just one of the 19 multinational corporations that dominate the market in that region. Moreover, if their combined operations in

other products and industries are examined, then the health hazards are enormously magnified.

The callous behaviour of the monopolies can be demonstrated by recent examples of a West German company dismantling its entire asbestos textile factory near Hamburg and transferring it to a site near Cape Town in South Africa. The Swiss Company CIBA-GEIGY was forced to admit that it sprayed Egyptian children deliberately with insecticide to test the children for toxic levels and to establish a link with cancer.

The trade union move-

ment of these countries must be satisfied that the processes for the manufacture of chemicals are safe for workers, for the surrounding community and for the environment as a whole. Catastrophes like the one in Bhopal, environmental pollution and the wholesale poisoning of communities are inevitable because of the inherent drive by big business enterprises for maximum profits, where operations and conditions are governed by the anarchy of the market and competition.

Third of all fresh food contaminated

ONE-THIRD of all the fresh fruit and vegetables we buy in Britain is contaminated by poisonous chemicals, according to a report published this year by the Association of Public Analysts. These chemicals are pesticides supposedly banned under the Pesticide Safety Precaution Scheme, a voluntary agreement between manufacturers and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Pesticides are chemicals used to kill weeds, insects and other pests that destroy food or carry disease. Chemical workers who make them, transport workers who move them, agricultural workers who spray them and everyone who eats food or breathes air that has been sprayed with them, are liable to be poisoned. 99% of vegetables are treated with pesticides, sometimes up to ten times per crop.

Several pesticides which have not been banned are believed to cause birth defects or sterility. Many chemicals absorbed in small amounts over long periods of time cause exhaustion of the body's immune system.

Organo-chlorine pesticides like DDT, Aldrin and Lindane are nerve poisons (originally discovered as a result of war-time nerve gas research) which cause headaches, nausea and convulsions. They have been

banned in the USA because they cause cancer in animal tests. They are supposedly banned here, too, but only by "voluntary" agreement.

DDT was found in 119 out of 132 samples of fruit and vegetables analysed by the Association of Public Analysts. Lindane was found in 19 out of 37 pears and half the sample of strawberries. Aldrin was found on gooseberries.

Chemicals cheaper than wages

The fruit and vegetables were bought randomly in shops around Britain, and 615 different kinds were tested. Some chemical residues were found in almost every sample.

The manufacture of pesticides is highly dangerous—and highly profitable. The big chemical multinationals (like ICI, Shell and Fisons) have made millions out of pesticides. They try to make us believe that pesticides are essential for food production.

There are several more efficient non-chemical methods for keeping pests down—but they mean more jobs for agricultural workers. It is cheaper for farmers to buy chemicals than pay wages.

New Tory act no safeguard

A NEW pesticide bill, the Food and Environment Protection Bill, is going through Parliament. It looks as though the Tories are at last showing some concern for our health. Or does it?

It will become illegal, for the first time, to sell pesticides without first getting safety clearance, or approval that pesticides do what the manufacturers claim. This statutory control replaces the previous voluntary scheme and will set limits for pesticide residues in food.

No improvements are required for the standards of testing set 27 years ago under the old voluntary Pesticide Precaution Scheme.

There will still be no requirement in the act for pesticide labels to give such vital information as: the active ingredients, their toxicity, particular hazards to operators or the environment, the likelihood that the product will drift or vaporise, acceptable levels for residues of the pesticide on crops, or details of known antidotes to accidental poisoning. And there is

still no requirement that employers should provide proper training to the people who are going to spray the poisons.

The main purpose of the new law is a subtle form of import control. UK manufacturers are suffering from competition from cheaper imported pesticides. Under the new law it will be possible to withhold approval from a (cheaper imported) pesticide if an "alternative efficacious" (ie more expensive British) product already exists: without any increased safety requirements over those laid down in the voluntary scheme.

But what can we expect from the Tories? At the height of the Agricultural Workers' Union campaign to get the weedkiller 245T banned, it was revealed that 245T was sold by Chipman Ltd, whose chairman was Denis Thatcher, the prime

minister's husband. The union collected a massive dossier of evidence that linked 245T with cancer, birth deformities and miscarriages, but the government would not ban it.

The key to health and safety at work has always been the strength of the trade union and labour movement. The same is true of protection from poisons in food. The Agricultural Workers' Union has shown how a campaign, with other sections of the labour movement, got 245T banned by over 80 local authorities, British Rail, the CEBG and other employers, even though the government would not make its use illegal.

Safety legislation can provide a lever for workers to use, but this kind of action by the labour movement is the only thing that will really stop agricultural workers from being poisoned by the pesticides currently contaminating our food.

QUIZ OF THE YEAR



1. What are they looking at? (PS—its not a flying picket).

Miners

1. Which was the first power station to be closed down because of industrial action? *Wash Thurns*
2. How many miners have been injured during the dispute: 1,000, 3,000, 5,000? *5,000*
3. How much do miners' families have deducted from their Social Security entitlement? *£10*
4. Which industry gets the biggest subsidy from the taxpayer? *Eden*
5. Which country has doubled its supply of coal to Britain this year?
6. Which press proprietor

declared that a miners victory over Thatcher would be "a bad thing for the country"? *Maxwell*

7. Who took up glue sniffing to escape pressure? *Nobby*
8. Who ordered 12m candles, just in case...? *Tan*
9. Which union leader declared: "We won't see the NUM destroyed. We will not see miners starved back to work. If Thatcher destroys the NUM, she destroys all of us"? *Basnett*
10. What threatens 80% of Notts coal production?
11. How much did the Coal Board pay in interest charges last year: £100m, £250m, £360m? *250*

12. Why did the police seal off Grimsby in September?
13. How much were the South Wales miners fined in August? *250 then*
14. The worst pit disaster in Britain this century happened fifty years ago when 265 miners lost their lives because private owners ignored safety. Where was the pit? *Swales*
15. Which (now dead) Tory leader learnt that: "There are three groups that no British Prime Minister should provoke: the Vatican, the Treasury and the Miners."? *Baldin*

Tories

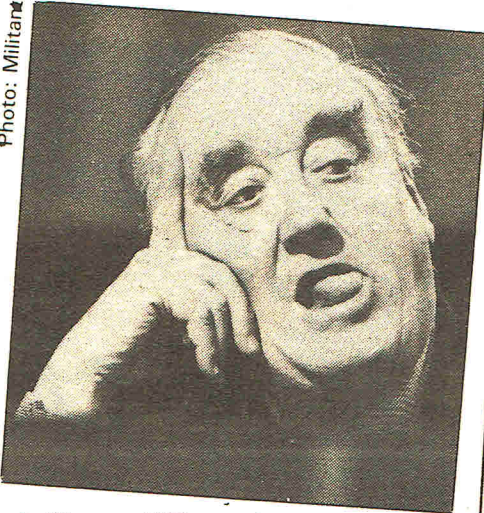
16. Which Tory Cabinet Minister once declared: "Don't underestimate the ability of party politicians to find alibis"? *Peters*
17. How did the government start the New Year with a ban?
18. Which Tory Council banned gays from employment as "homosexuals are responsible for the decline in Christian morality"?
19. Which bank did the

Tories nationalise this year? *Chadwell*

20. Which (dead) Tory leader, much admired by Thatcher, said: "A Conservative government is an organised hypocrisy"? *Chadwell*
21. Who called for a holy war this year against the Bishop of Durham? *Trimmer*
22. Who claimed his 'house was threatened' by Liverpool councillors? *Jordan*
23. Who threatened to take "very serious action" against the BBC, because they did not like *Panorama* revealing that racists were very active inside the Tory

party? *Bier*

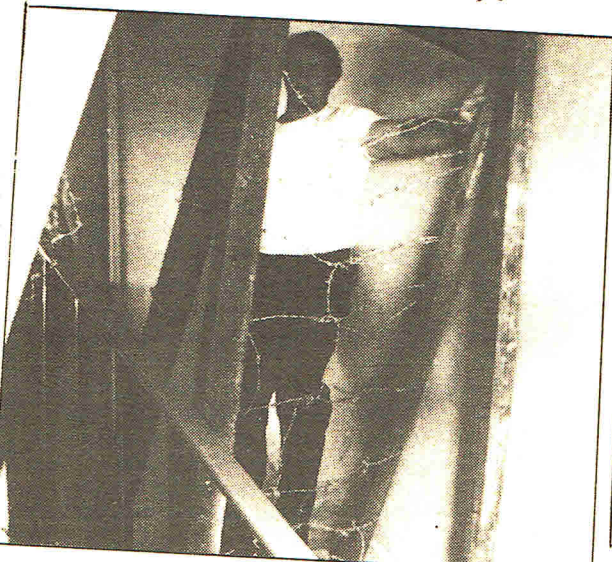
24. Which Cabinet Minister has stated that: "We need inequality in order to eliminate poverty"?
25. Which contemporary analysed the Edwardian Tory party as: "Corruption at home, aggression abroad, sentiment by the bucketful, patriotism by the Imperial pint, the open hand at the public Exchequer and the open door at the public house, dear food for the million, cheap labour for the millionaire". *Ray Hards*



4. Who was Willie gunning for this year? *Gardner*



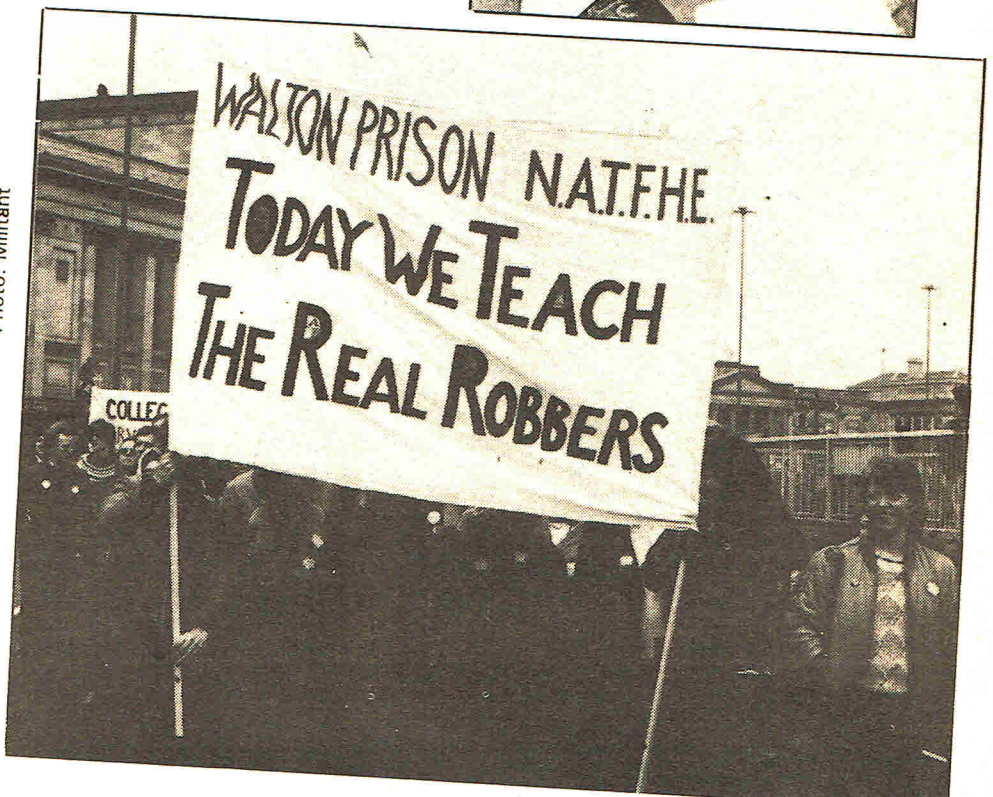
5. Why's Sir Keith Joseph fed up? *Eden*



2. Where is this barricade and who was it designed to keep out?



3. Who's this and who's he impersonating? *Gov. Ghandi*



6. Who are these Prison staff referring to? *Tories*

Photo: Ben Eastop

International

26. Who this year got in a flap over Flick?
27. Who said this year: "Our government has a policy that some people will get rich first and then they will help the other part of the

people get rich also"? *Reagan*

28. Which country saw a victory for the miners after they threatened their first strike in forty years? *S. Afr*
29. What is the respective relationship of the current

Prime Minister of India to his predecessor and the first Indian Prime Minister? *Gov. Ghandi*

30. Who did ex-US President Truman describe: "You don't set a fox to watch the chickens just because he has a lot of experience in the hen house". *Reagan*

General

31. Which manufacturer of plastic bullets also makes fireworks?
32. Who used Tory anti-union laws to sack 5,000 trade unionists and then said he backed Labour?
33. Who this year called for the total abolition of income tax because it taxes the employer?
34. Which party has lost 25% of its membership in the last two years?
35. At which function did *Sun* reporters insist that their identity badges be labelled "News International", because they did not want to admit they worked for such an awful newspaper?
36. Who wanted to affiliate to the CBI?
37. Who said that the best policy for Liverpool Council to adopt was to raise the rates by 60% and cut jobs and services?
38. Which right-wing paper said that Thatcher's govern-

ment was becoming "the most inept since the war".

39. Who said: "People speak to each other with their cars. If you see a bloke in a Volvo wearing a deerstalker and a labrador in the back, chances are he's not a member of the *Militant Tendency*". *Alexander*
40. Who, two weeks before polling day in the Chesterfield by-election, attacked Tony Benn in the *Sun*?
41. Which British socialist was born 150 years ago?
42. What is the current membership of the TUC; 11m, 10m, 9m?
43. Why did the Channel this year nearly become unsafe for swimming (or anything)? *Police*
44. Which two Councils did the Audit Commission praise as being amongst the most efficient in getting value for money?
45. Who suffered from star wars this year?
46. This year the police completed their inquiries into a case where an elderly black couple were beaten up by 17 policemen in their home.

The courts awarded the couple £51,000 in damages. How many of the 17 police involved were charged: *none, one, three, ten, seven-teen*

47. How did £175,000 for one paper prove better value than £2m promised for another? *the paper*
48. Which witch-hunter general failed to get on to Labour's National Executive? *Golding*
49. Which ex-Labour Party leader once declared: "Political toleration is a by-product of the complacency of the ruling class. When that complacency is disturbed there never was a more bloody-minded set of thugs than the British ruling-class"?
50. Which Liberal leader once said of his opponent: "When they circumcised Herbert Samuel they threw away the wrong bit"? *Lloyd George*



7. What can't Heseltine put his finger on?

Photo: Militant

Answers on page 13



FIGHTING FUND

This week: £2,635

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	523		2900
East Midlands	497		3550
Humberside	651		1850
London East	636		3200
London West	579		2150
London South East	177		1950
London South West	327		1650
Lancashire	226		1950
Manchester	479		2200
Merseyside	494		6100
Northern	1231		4400
Scotland East	157		2950
Scotland West	491		3650
Southern	758		5100
South West	307		2150
Wales East	233		2550
Wales West	59		2050
West Midlands	814		4300
Yorkshire	804		5350
Others	1858		5000
Total received	11301		65000

THIS WEEK we received £2,635 at our offices for the fighting fund, but we still have a very long way to go. With seven weeks of the quarter left (it ends on 31 January) we still have 84% of the target to raise!

That means £7,500 a week to go the money we need. It can be done—we've worked wonders before and we can do it again.

This Christmas striking miners and their families are celebrating with the help of donations from other workers, but they are having to give up many of the material comforts and small luxuries of the season. They have no choice, they are fighting to ensure that in future Christmases they have jobs to go to and communities to live in.

A similar spirit is shown by our supporters every year. Despite the lowered living standards and the need to pay for the essentials of the Christmas spirit, donations to *Militant* actually increase over Christmas and the New

Year. This year, our readers are not only helping NUM members to have a good time, but thinking of making a big donation to the fighting fund.

All the sacrifices are much appreciated. They show our readers put *Militant* first. Every week the list of donations shows examples of dedication. This week for instance Sharon McDermott of Sheffield Attercliffe YS has given a £15 Xmas present and we've been getting donations regularly from three OAPs in Bailleston, in Scotland. Young or old, if you want a socialist future, buy, sell and finance *Militant*.

Daily antidote

We want 1985 to be an even better year for *Militant* than 1984. We want to take giant steps forward and with your help, produce a more frequent paper. We want all workers, miners, unemployed, low paid or better off, to enjoy their holiday season. But make sure you put *Militant* on your Christmas or New Year present list.

Make sure that as soon as possible we can work towards a *daily* antidote to the poison belched out by the Tories of Fleet Street. Ask every reader of the paper for a donation, and help make it Christmas every day with a *daily Militant!*

By Kim Waddington

DONATIONS THIS week include: Ann Tanner, teacher Dagenham NUT £50. David Whyte, Woolwich LP £20. Max Neill, Lancaster University £20. Rumney Tech Labour Club £17. Stuart Sloane, Hull £12. Wrekin LPYS, Telford £5. T Higgins, Hammersmith AUEW £5. East Surrey LPYS £3. TGWU 5/826 Birmingham £3. Frank Duff EETPU, Merseyside £3. J Halford, Arnold ASTMS £2. North Tyne LPYS £2. B Leeson, Oxford and M O'Brien, Leicester both £1.75. Pat Betts, Aldridge and John Skillie, Merseyside £1, Ian, Leicester CPSA £1.

A collection at a Hull *Militant* Readers' Meeting this week raised £130. Other collections raised £7.49 at STC Greenwich, £4.30 at Portsmouth Poly. £4.24 at Brunel University, £4 at East Lothian CLP and £2.40 at Portsmouth GMC.

ads

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

MARCH AND rally for the miners, Saturday December 15. Assemble 11am at Waltham Forest Town Hall, Forest Road, London E17 March to rally, at Selborne Park E17. Banners Welcome Organised by Waltham Forest Miners' Support Group.

Scottish BLOC delegate Conference solidarity with the miners.

Venue: The Nite Club (The Playhouse), 20 Greenside Place, Edinburgh. Date: Sat 19th January 1985. Speakers include: Terry Fields MP, Ian Isaac (S. Wales NUM Executive, personal capacity) and other NUM and leading TU speakers.

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

Credentials from: Gordon McKinley 18 Delta Drive, Musselburgh, Edinburgh. Cheques payable to BLOC.

SEE THE Militant 20th Anniversary rally! VHS Video—1 hour highlights, plus all the main speeches in full!—3 hours total. Only £10—buy someone a present! (post included). Please send cheques to *Militant* 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

XMAS BOOK TOKENS to buy books from World Socialist Books. Send cheques for amount wanted (+ 10p) to World Socialist Books, 3 - 13 Hepscoot Road, London E8 5HB.

Miss them at Wembley & FELS? Wembley Conference badge '84 only 65 left, red fist "better to break the law than the poor". Labour logo "Militant Labour Liverpool" New design "black & white unite LPYS" with red militant logo. 25p each + minimum 25p p&p. Payable to P. Cooper, 31, Balmoral Rd, Fairfield, Liverpool 6 8NB.

DIFFERENT DRUMS: A Second Trade Union Annual. A literary collection for 1985 from the labour movement aimed at the uncommitted reader, not just the activist. **SPECIAL MINERS' Benefit Offer.** We will send 50p to the NUM Support Fund for every copy sold at £2.00 post-free. Orders, quoting ref. MBM, with money to: Lancashire Association of Trades Councils, 181 London Rd, Preston PR1 4BA. (Tel 15702)

Thursday December 13th 7.30 pm Granville Theatre, Ramsgate. Kent Miners Support Rally. Speakers: Tony Benn, Frances Curran (NEC), Nick Bradley (Kent NUPE), Malcolm Pitt (President Kent NUM), Barry Lewis (Thanet Support Group Secretary). All welcome.

LEEDS BLOC Public Meetings. Solidarity for the miners on Sunday 16 December 7.30pm. at Leeds Trade Club. Speakers Les Wigglesworth (Alison Bywater NUM) and a powerworker.

DURHAM LIMITED draw winner: No 4 H. James.

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

Militant

Meetings

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

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

ACTON AND Ealing LPYS present their third annual "Cabaret Nite" including a magician, singers and yet again a 'socialist panto'. This year we guarantee you a full evening of fun and entertainment.

Saturday 15 December 7.30pm Ruskin Hall 16 Church Road Acton W3 Tickets £2, £2.50 on door (unwaged half price). Includes food, bar available. Tickets and further information Andy Price (01) 993 2324.

NEWCASTLE XMAS Social. Thursday, 27 December, 7 pm. Manors Social Club. Tickets, £1.00; 50p unwaged. More info contact: 091 276 2736.

BENEFIT FOR the miners. A night of Irish music featuring the Occasional Shamrock Band, Illegal Assembly with dancers, floor-singers. Date: Saturday 15 December 7.30 pm. Caxton House, 129 St. John's Way, N19 (Archway tube), Bar and Food. Entry £2.00/£1.00 concessions, Xmas Toys for Miners' Children Needed.

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

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

QUIZ ANSWERS

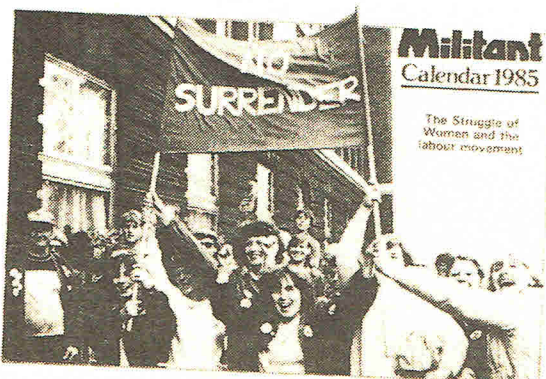
PHOTO ANSWERS:
1. Arthur Scargill, as he addressed miners lobbying the NUM HQ in Sheffield on April 12. 2. South Wales NUM HQ in Pontypridd after the law courts threatened the union's chairman of the Yorkshire NUM, Gummer, Chairman of the Tory parliament demands. 23. John Selwyn Jenkins, before he caved in to the Environment minister Patrick Cathedral. 22. The false allegations came from Mirror. 7. MacGregor. 8. The 4. Agriculture. 5. Poland. 1. West Thurrock. 2. 3,000. 3. 16

MINERS
1. Virtually the whole Tory party. 21. Specifically John Carlisle MP turned that God might put a thunderbolt against Durham Cathedral.
TORIES
16. Heseltine. Such an approach to financial difficulties. 10. Disraeli. 19. Johnson. 20. Thatcher. 21. Rugsby. 22. They banned trade unions at GCHQ. 18. Rugsby. Belgium dispute. 17. They banned Labour logo "Militant Labour Liverpool" New design "black & white unite LPYS" with red militant logo. 25p each + minimum 25p p&p.
Payable to P. Cooper, 31, Balmoral Rd, Fairfield, Liverpool 6 8NB.

INTERNATIONAL
26. West German politicians when they had been giving secret donations to some political leaders. 27. China's leader. Du. 28. South Africa, where black miners won a quera, which sunk the Belgrano.

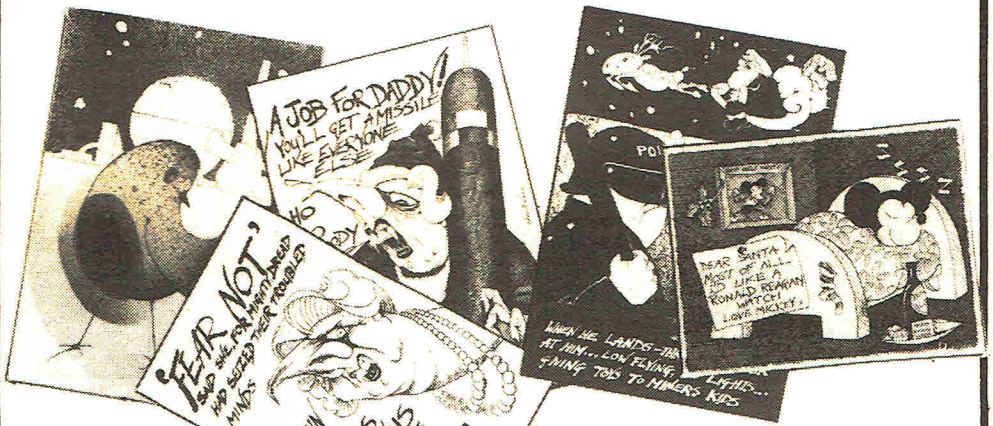
GENERAL
31. Brooks. 32. Robert Maxwell. 33. Duke of Edinburgh. 34. SDP. 35. TTC Conference.
36. The EETPU leadership. But they were turned down, perhaps because they were too right wing? 37. Jack Straw. Labour spokesman on the Environment. 38. The *Economist*. 7 July. 39. Alexei Sayle. 40. Labour MP Austin Mitchell. 41. William Morris. 42. 10,082,157. 43. The French ship. 44. Liver. 45. The Communist Party, as the editors of the *Morning Star* fell out with the leaders of the party.
46. None. (You didn't expect anything else did you?) 47. £175,000 raised for the *Militant* Building Fund has provided us with a new building from which we plan to provide a daily paper. But the TTC, despite promises of £2m from the unions, abandoned their plan for a daily. 48. John Goding. 49. Michael Foot. 50. Lloyd George.

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INDUSTRIAL

In the nationalised interest ?

A RAILWORKER argues that the actions of management in the nationalised industries during the miners' strike have shown that they represent the interests of the profit system, not the working class:

Even under Labour governments the central objective in nationalised industries was to break even or make a profit. They merely paid lip-service to co-ordination with other industries or so-called public service obligations.

There have been a few former workers, really full-time union officials, on the various boards running nationalised industries. For example, in the late 1940s and early '50s former National Union of Railworkers' (NUR) general secretary Sir John Benstead was a member of the old British Transport Commission.

Under the Callaghan Labour government as an introduction to the Bullock proposals for workers' participation in the board rooms, a few trade unions nominees were put on the boards of nationalised industries. The important point was that they were in a minority, with little or no power.

In the nationalised British Railways the management structure is the same as in the old company days. Future managers (with certain exceptions) are trained in the same ways as the then Traffic Apprentices, now known as Management Trainees.

They are a self-perpetuating elite. Ideas of public ownership and public service are totally alien to their training and outlook. Profitability, cost cutting (ie. cutting jobs) are their top priorities.

Tory masters

The miners' strike has also shown that people like MacGregor, chairman of the National Coal Board, and Reid at the British Rail Board are tools of the Tory government. MacGregor has been openly running backwards and forwards between his Tory masters.

Reid was clearly responding to a Tory tug on his reins when he agreed to drop productivity strings as part of the annual pay negotiations in order to avert joint NUR/NUM industrial action.

In July Tory Minister of Transport, Nicholas Ridley, announced government consent to the East Coast main line electrification. But he also threatened that the project would be in jeopardy if rail workers continued to block movements of coal to power stations from the Nottinghamshire coalfield and reduction of costs through improved productivity (ie. job losses).

A closer look at the proposals shows, however, that all Ridley had done was give BR permission to spend its own money. Not a penny of additional government money is to be spent on the project. Further reductions in jobs are confirmed in the recent Corporate Plan for 1984/90; from 155,000 in 1983 to 137,000 in 1989/90.

A new publicity cam-

By a railworker

paigned, with the full backing of the government, has been mounted against railworkers acting in solidarity with the miners.

Contracts for the movement of iron ore to Ravenscraig and Llanwern will be lost to road haulage firms, it is claimed. The CEBG is 'reported' to be considering using road haulage for some movements of coal to power stations after the miners' strike. The truth is that in the 'market', which BR management is so fond of talking about, they could easily retain all iron ore and power station coal movements. Even if all rates were dropped by 50% they would still be profitable to BR.

Workers' control

The idea that appointing people favourable to nationalisation to the tops of the nationalised industries will change things is superficial. The present chairmen and management reflect the needs, pressures and prejudices of the capitalist system just like Labour governments trying to operate within the confines of the system.

The only way these industries can genuinely be public services run by and for the working class is to sweep away the entire management structures, as part of a fundamental reorganisation in ownership and control of the whole economy.

The so-called 'practical' architects of the existing nationalised industries like Herbert Morrison and Manny Shinwell were the real utopians not the Marxists. We always argued that there cannot be islands of socialism within the capitalist system. That impossibility is brought home brutally when capitalism is in crisis.

Nevertheless, the establishment of the nationalised industries is a symptom of the of the bankruptcy of private ownership. The capitalists have been forced, by the weakness of their own system, to lean on public ownership, though in a distorted and undemocratic form. The task of Marxists is to use those contradictions and cracks in the system to extend the strength and power of the working class.

That is why we must fight to defend and extend nationalisation, but also to increase democracy and accountability in the nationalised industries through a programme for workers' control and management and socialist planning. A basic demand we must push is for the nationalised industry boards to be made up of elected representatives of the organised workers in the industry, the TUC and a future Labour government, in equal proportions.



Protest against redundancies in British Rail Engineering—symptomatic of the decline of Britain's basic industries which nationalised industry bureaucrats have presided over.

Photo: John Smith (IFL) II

Workers who build the future

INDUSTRIAL GYPSIES they've been called; a tough breed doing a hard, dirty and dangerous job. The engineering construction industry has a reputation for trade union militancy and high wages. Progress was made through years of hard struggle in difficult conditions, now the recession is threatening to erode workers' hard-won gains. JIM GREER, an EETPU member from Edinburgh, who has worked on many big sites, told Pat Craven about the problems this kind of work presents for workers and their families.

You are working on a large site, in the elements all day. You are not in a factory or office where there is heating and civilised conditions. The industry has one of the highest fatality rates, and due to the recession, as employers try to undermine the standards of health and safety, the figures are rising.

We are continually trying to maintain standards. There are various accidents, from tripping over things because material is left about where it shouldn't be, access being blocked to different places, and badly lit sites, especially in the winter months when it is dark for quite a period of the working hours.

Weather

The most common problem is bad weather—high winds which blow loose material about, and rain which means you can't work unless you are under shelter. In the initial stages of a project, when they are just constructing the plant, there is no shelter, so the workforce lose part of their earnings. In the present period there is absolutely no give and take with the employers. Previously we could come to an arrangement whereby if there was a percentage of the workforce able to work then those who could not work would maintain their full wages. That fight was won over a period of time, but it was an unofficial agreement. It doesn't happen now; there is no agreement with the employer; if you are rained off, that's it.

In a really bad winter you can lose a lot of money. You get measured bonus schemes which are really only

weapons in the hands of the employer. When it is raining or windy, they can stop bonus payment. The pressure is then turned on to work in these conditions; that is what it is designed for. It also puts pressure on the worker, when wages have been cut, to take chances on health and safety.

Health & Safety

We have had some very bitter battles over health and safety. I was involved in one regarding asbestos. We were on strike for four weeks and we won 99% of the points we put forward. In the past you could generally get agreement from the employer when you put him under pressure. If you went on strike two or three times over different issues, the employer soon got the message and was then more willing to concede points that you raised in the future. But now, with the recession, it is more difficult to get any concessions. Really it is a question of defending what you have achieved in the past.

The gains that you make in one contract you have sometimes to fight for all over again on the next, because it is a different employer. Conditions in the industry are getting worse and the periods between contracts are getting longer—you spend more time on the dole now than in the past.

Uncertain income

There are no pension rights. In the mid '70s the average earnings were about 2-3 times the average industrial wage, now they are



Difficult work, dangerous conditions and pressure on bonus produce accidents.

down to about 1 1/2 times. At one time when you were unemployed you had earnings-related benefit, tax rebates and unemployment benefit. Coupled with whatever savings you had made, given the high earnings in the industry, you were cushioned to a certain extent against unemployment and able to maintain a decent standard of living.

There is now none of that. The Tories have abolished earnings-related so that now when you get paid off, it is a struggle right from the start. If you want to buy a car or go in for hire purchase you think about it very seriously, knowing that you are only going to have a year, or if you are fortunate two years, continuous employment. In the past many engineering construction workers obtained a mortgage, which tended to be difficult, given the casual nature of the industry. These workers are now finding it hard to make ends meet. It is a question of working to pay the bills, with little left over.

The 'travelling men', living in digs, working in different part of the country,

were called 'industrial gypsies' at one time. You live away from your home and family, and the only time you get officially to go home is one weekend in every four. On average you are only paid for one day of that weekend and you could work anything up to 300 miles from home.

Being away from your home and family leads to enormous pressures. A lot of workers drink more in these circumstances, having nothing else to do. They are quite isolated, usually near small towns rather than big cities, so there are few facilities for entertainment. The pub is the nearest one and the level of drinking increases because of the monotony and boredom. That in turn leads to strains on the marriage when you go home; there is an above-average number of divorces within the engineering construction industry because of that. It is a very uncivilised existence being separated from your family all that period of time.

In a future article Jim Greer's story continues, taking up the problems of union organisation.

Bumpy ride for Tory bus plans

THE CAMPAIGN against privatisation of public transport is now under way but much more must be done nationally if we are to be successful in defending our jobs and conditions and prevent the clock being turned back 50 years.

A Transport and General Workers Union National delegate conference in September unanimously supported resolutions in defence of union membership agreements (which the National Bus company have now terminated). A determined defence, including strike action, was agreed if non union labour is employed or existing members drop out and a total rejection of the Tories' white paper *Buses* which details plans for privatisation.

Mass meetings have been held up and down the country to report back to the members. The response has been good. However, the national leadership of the T&G must begin to pull things together. It will be a long, hard fight in a fragmented industry.

Already we have seen National Express trying to cut the wages of drivers in Liverpool, Hull and Oxford. But instead of these disputes being linked together by the union nationally, each area was left to sort themselves out.

The Tories' proposals spell disaster for both the workers in the industry and for the travelling public. National Bus is to be broken up and sold off, municipal undertakings to be reorganised into business "companies", ending any direct control of councils.



Licences will be granted to virtually anybody with a bus, all routes must be put out to tender and the lowest tender must be accepted.

Cowboy firms

This opens the floodgates to the cowboys employing non union labour.

In the Hereford + Worcester area cowboy operators have been taken off the road because of defects such as faulty brakes, faulty steering, leaking fuel tanks. Now the government are abolishing the traffic commissioners and putting buses under the same umbrella as road haulage, which has a record like a horror story.

With the ending of subsidies direct from county and local councils, and "cross-subsidy" (profitable routes subsidising loss making routes), thousands of routes will disappear altogether while others will be cut to the bone, running at peak times only.

Timetables will become a thing of the past, bunching of buses waiting and chasing passengers will occur, causing chaos on the roads. Fares in now heavily subsidised

areas will rocket causing hardship for those most dependant on buses—the elderly, school children, young unemployed etc.

The Tories' first step in introducing this legislation is to break the union organised areas within the industry, to drive down wages and conditions to "competitive" levels, (for a 39 hour week working shifts and weekends my average take-home pay = £77)

All attacks must be fought with a national campaign involving all workers in affected industries to prevent areas being picked off.

Where two operators are in existence in the same area Joint Shop Stewards Committees must be set up to co-ordinate the work in the area.

Mass meetings should be called immediately in support of drivers/staff taking industrial action against attacks in other areas. Local literature should be produced to supplement the new "Bus News" produced nationally. Positive national and local leadership will receive an enormous response.

By a T&GWU shop steward



Teachers on the march in Scotland last Wednesday over pay. There is likely to be industrial action in schools around the country in the new year.

New issue of *Unity*

Paper of the Broad Left
Organising Committee

New issue now out—send orders to G. Williamson, 11 Sutton Place, London E9 6EH. 1 copy 20p + 15p p&p. 10p copies £2.00 no charge for p&p. Cheques made payable to 'BLOC'. Why not subscribe and get *Unity* and our monthly newsletters regularly. Annual rates £5 per individual, £10 per organisation. Help us build a fighting socialist leadership in the unions.

Women lead the way in Mersey strikes

Audrey White, TGWU Women National Advisory Committee (personal capacity), and Ann Bannister report on three strikes on Merseyside.

SOGAT staff strike

FOUR WOMEN members of staff at the SOGAT Liverpool office were sacked after they reported certain financial irregularities and other things that were occurring in their office, to their National President Brenda Dean and called for an investigation.

Instead of an external enquiry, or an enquiry by the membership, the National President suggested that the branch executive should investigate itself. The women, members of the union, were then called to put their case to the next branch executive. In the meantime two of the women were demoted.

They called a chapel meeting and voted to strike and picket the offices.

Following the branch executive meeting, four of the women were given dismissal notices and the local branch president was suspended from the union for supporting the women. The four women have been picketing the union offices now and

are also putting their case to the local membership.

In all this time, the woman National President, who they voted for because they thought she would represent their interests better than other candidates, has offered no help or support. Local members, however, showed their support at a mass meeting last week where 500 members representing 45 chapels voted full support for the strikers with only one vote against.

The meeting also voted to withdraw recognition of the existing branch secretary and assistant secretary, and elected a new co-ordination committee. The four women did not want to bring their union into disrepute. Between them they had worked 30 years for SOGAT. They just want the membership to get the help and benefits they were entitled to and for the branch executive to be accountable to the members.

Ford machinists

120 FORD women machinists in Halewood, Liverpool and 130 from Dagenham have been on strike action since 19 November in support of their claim over upgrading. Kathy McGovern, a TGWU shop steward at Halewood, explained that they had been claiming recognition of their skills for 16 years. The machinists have to pass trade tests and have at least two years experience of the work. The company said two years ago

that their skills would be recognised, it has reneged on its promises.

Support for the women is growing. In Dagenham 80 women out of 130 are staging a 24-hour picket and have been successful in getting support from lorry drivers who are refusing to cross the picket line. 7,000 workers are laid off at Halewood and three sections are laid off in Dagenham, a total of 10,000 workers across the country.

It is vital that active sup-

port is given to the tremendous struggle these machinists are taking up on behalf of women. Keeping the wages of any section of workers down only undermines the pay and conditions for every other worker in that industry. While women are used as a source of cheap labour they will be used to divide the trade union movement. These issues and the validity of their case must be explained to all members of the TGWU.

The women were on strike 2½ years ago for a 39 hour week. They were discriminated against by being told to take 10 minutes off each day. Their demands were for a half hour lunch

and to finish at 3.30 on Friday. This was not agreed so they took strike action. They were told by their male trade unionists that they had no chance of winning but within one hour of strike action they had won.

Women are taking the brunt of the recession and the attacks of Thatcher and co. More and more women are forced into industrial action to protect their pay and their jobs. It is important to support these women in their struggle.

Messages of support to Kathy McGovern, TGWU, Transport House, Islington, Liverpool.

Maggie May won't

SEVEN WOMEN bar staff at a new pub in Bootle called the Maggie May, are striking in support of one of the staff, Janet Robson, who was sacked after trying to get people to join the union.

Janet was told by the manager that the reason she was sacked was because she talked to the customers too much. She explained that she had been on a three day training course where they

had told her that to be a good barmaid she had to be friendly to the customers.

At the meeting last week with "Thwaites regional management" and the TGWU, all Janet was offered was £250 in exchange for her job. She refused.

The pub has only been opened six weeks and is on the prime site opposite the national Giro offices in Bootle. But now finds itself emp-

ty, as a result of the Giro unions blacking it.

The girls have been getting tremendous support with unemployed TGWU members helping on the picket line and very few people are crossing the picket line. Even the local taxi drivers have promised to radio to other drivers not to pick up any customers from Maggie May's, and the girls are supplied with free cups of tea from the local book keepers.

Messages of support to Clare Stanley TGWU, Islington, Liverpool.

Northumberland Militant Rally. 'Victory to the miners' at Ashington Leisure Centre, Ashington on Wednesday, December 19 at 7.30 pm. Speakers: Terry Fields MP, Ian Isaac (South Wales NUM), and representatives from LPYS National Committee and Militant. Chairman: John Cunningham (Eilington NUM)

Militant

World's worst industrial disaster Page 11

What kind of nationalisation? Page 14

CPSA pay battle

THE SPECIAL Pay Conference of the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) on 6 December voted to stop the decay in living standards of all civil servants since the Tories came to power in 1979.

The Conference agreed a 1985 claim of a £15 flat rate rise and a £100 a week minimum wage. The resolution adopting the strategy was only adopted with a majority of 74,514 to 64,682 votes. This shows the deep unease of many delegates that hours and leave had

By Bill Boyle

question of hours and leave as important because of low pay".

The National Executive leaned heavily on right wing President Kate Losinska to have its position adopted. She declared Left motions lost when they were carried, and when the Newcastle branch won a change of the stitched up Conference agenda, she tried not to announce it!

NEC motion passed

Not a single NEC member supporting the "Broad Left 84" (the small split off from the Broad Left) raised a murmur of protest at these disgraceful manoeuvres which culminated in Losinska cutting off the main pay debate with four *Militant* supporters at the rostrum waiting to speak.

Even in such a heavily loaded debate the NEC motion only just scraped through.

Nevertheless, most branches present were resolved to unite round the 1985 pay claim with other civil service unions against Tory cash limits and cuts.

Bowing to management pressure, the NEC relegated NUM speaker Betty Heathfield and Central Office speaker Doreen Purvis

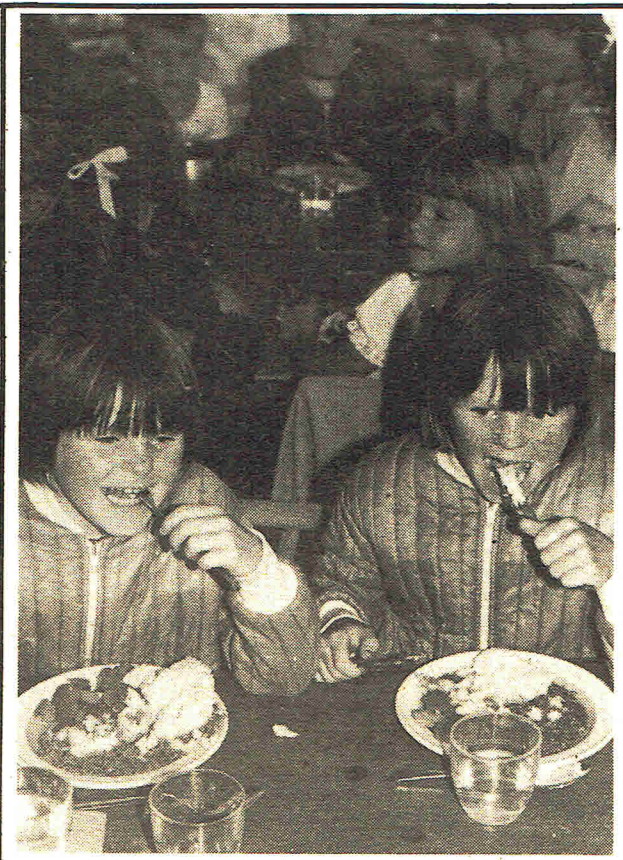
to a lunchtime spot, arguing that management had said they would withdraw facilities if this was not done. An NUM speaker had been heard at the May conference with no such threats. As Doreen pointed out the NEC were "kowtowing to management about what we can and can't discuss."

The NEC delegation will meet the strike committee on 12 December. At the conference, Doreen reiterated the strikers' call for immediate escalation of the

dispute to Livingston and Reading Computer centres as the only way to win. Unless this takes place or the NEC come up with some mystery miracle formula, the seven month long strike will be deadlocked.

The NEC must back the strike with escalation. Anything less would betray the 400 strikers. The strike can be won, but it is up to the NEC to take the decisive step the strikers have been arguing for for months.

Photo: Mark Salmon



Make sure miners' families have a good Christmas. Finance is vital, but solidarity action is even more important.

NUM a campaign is now being conducted to render the area strikes, under rule 41, unlawful, and to personally bankrupt officials.

Also over Christmas the Tory government could well take operational decisions regarding movement of strike-bound coal and fuel into the power stations. The NUM and all the unions that have supported it should now be prepared to intensify pressure on the General Council of the TUC but also to prepare for solidarity action if that happens.

1984 has been a serious test of the capacity of

workers to engage in struggle. The miners and many other sections have passed with flying colours. With the support and solidarity of other workers stepped up, the New Year can see the miners win the victory they so richly deserve, saving their jobs and trade unionism at the same time.

Don't forget. *Militant* Childrens Christmas Party, Saturday 5 January 1985 at 2.00 pm. John Marshall Hall, 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1.

Witch hunt

Continued from page one

Emlyn Williams, South Wales NUM General Secretary as well as from many NUM strike committees and many trade union branches.

Before the NEC meeting on Wednesday a large number of Young Socialists and trade unionists lobbied the NEC to demand an end to witch-hunts and expulsions.

The outrage of the Party grass roots, even in a week, must have had some effect on the NEC members present when the issue came up.

Not only did Roy Hattersley declare his "opposition to expulsions"—although he was the original mover of the resolution from the appeals committee, so also did Neil Kinnock and many others on the right of the NEC. Without dissension the meeting referred back the decisions of the appeals committee.

The NEC did decide to conduct an "ideological

struggle" against *Militant*. This decision, referred to the Home Policy Committee, will be welcomed by supporters of *Militant*. The best traditions of the labour movement are those that permit a clash of ideas through debates, discussions, and meetings.

Militant supporters will continue to wage an ideological struggle against all those seeking to abandon the socialist aims of the Party.

Despite this important NEC vote, Party members should remain vigilant. Some of the right wing will not abandon the idea of a purge and will wait for a more opportune moment.

Earlier on in the same NEC meeting, Frances Curran, NEC representative of the Young Socialists, moved a resolution calling for the next Labour Government to re-imburse the funds taken away from the trade unions by this Tory Government.

The resolution found a lot of support, to the embarrassment of Party leadership and the right wing, but in the end it was also referred to the Home Policy Committee.

For a happy New Year—back Militant

THIS IS the last issue of *Militant* for 1984. The next issue, Number 730 will be on sale on 4 January. *Militant* wishes all readers and supporters and all striking miners and their families a happy Christmas and a victorious New Year.

WITH THREE weeks before the next *Militant* we are appealing to every one of our readers—don't forget the urgent need for cash over the holiday period.

With a festive mood in the air we should see thousands of donations coming in over the holiday. If Christmas is the time for giving don't miss out *Militant*. If every reader gave us a present of a tanner or fiver then we could celebrate the New Year meeting the target and leave

the rest of January to go way beyond.

With plans to go twice weekly and then daily we need to expand our staff, printing equipment and machinery so every pound and penny is important.

Don't forget to ask your friends and especially your workmates to donate to our Funds. Make sure we get a Christmas bonus so that the message of socialism will resound even louder in the New Year.

**Mineworkers' defence committee
Mass Picket: Neasden Power Station,
Taylor's Lane NW10
(Close to North Circular off Brentfield Rd)
Monday December 17th
Be there by 6 am.**

"I will be there, as will be the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, along with several thousand others."

**Ken Livingstone
(Secretary, Mineworkers' Defence Committee)**



CPSA's right wing President Kate Losinska.

been left out of the claim.

Despite huge job losses in the Civil Service resulting from Tory cuts and New Technology, the NEC motion, first on the agenda, specifically excluded hours and leave ignoring even the TUC's exhortations to unions to strive for the 35 hour working week in 1985. NEC speaker Mike Duggan claimed it would divert the union's attention. "Our members do not see the

Union Power

Continued from front page

organisation of the trade unions.

The trade union movement has been painstakingly built up over generations with the blood, sweat and toil of our predecessors. The trade union leaders of today would not have jobs were it not for that work in the past and for trade union pioneers defying anti-union legislation.

At this moment, miners' support groups up and down the country in towns,

villages, cities and pit communities, are conducting marvellous work to provide striking miners with sustenance and support in the form of hampers and hardship provisions over the Christmas period. The tremendous community spirit and solidarity in the mining areas are carrying the miners and their families through.

But the Tories will not regard Christmas as a holiday. They will use the holiday period if necessary, to increase the attack on the unions, through the courts. In the area unions of the



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