



Miners fight for all workers

NO NEGOTIATIONS on job losses, or on the closures of pits with recoverable coal reserves. That is the attitude of striking miners. The Tories thought this strike would be a passing storm. It has gone from strength to strength.

Despite all the hardships of striking miners and their families, the lies and distortions of the media, the threats of MacGregor, and the arrest of hundreds of our pickets, a marvellous mood has developed amongst miners. There is a ferocious will to win.

The Tories' contempt for miners has recoiled in their faces. They thought older miners would sell their jobs and take the lucrative redundancy bribes. They found out: the soul of the NUM is not for sale!

They also thought the

(CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE)

By Ian Isaac
(Secretary, St John's
Colliery and South Wales
NUM)

LABOUR'S NEC passed a resolution on 25 April reaffirming support for the NUM and calling on all constituency parties to raise money for the NUM strike fund "either by a levy of 50p minimum per week or by other means, from party members and the wider public". The resolution was moved by LPYS representative Steve Morgan and seconded by Tony Benn.



Photo: Jacob Sutton

On the miners' rally in Sheffield earlier this month.

LPYS welcomes the strikers

MINERS FROM Yorkshire, Scotland, South Wales, Durham, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Lancashire, Kent, Leicestershire and Derbyshire spent Easter weekend at the LPYS conference.

They were given a warm welcome by the well over 2,000 delegates and visitors and showed their determination to fight for their future and to get rid of the Tories.

Andy Fisher, a miner at Clipstone colliery, Notts, told *Militant*:

"Our pit is supposed to have 20 years' reserves but we know there's no safe pit.

"True, we get better bonuses than many areas, but we have lads on the picket lines now with mortgages and cars. They know they've got to fight to keep their jobs and living standards."

Needed: £35,000

... for a Marxist daily to fight bosses' lies.

THIS WEEK *Militant* has had to add four extra pages to its normal sixteen.

One reason is the sheer number of events to cover: May Day, Local Elections, LPYS Conference, Liverpool council's special meeting, the miners' strike, Labour's National Executive on the Blackburn expulsions, The Libyan Bureau Siege, the union conference season and May Day greetings. But another vital reason is to allow space to reproduce our *special appeal* and to explain what a crucial stage our paper has reached.

Most weeks now, we have enough material for double the number of pages we can print—reports and articles from workers and correspondents in the labour movement in Britain and throughout the world. This week, for example, we could have had

ten pages on the miners strike alone, a full analysis of Portugal 10 years after the revolution, material on Northern Ireland and on the anniversary of the Dublin Easter Rising, to name just a few items of interest to socialists.

Editorial statement

Sixteen pages once a week is inadequate for a paper that gives the only clear and consistent Marxist alternative to the propaganda of the bosses and the Tories. *Militant* aims to keep workers in touch with each others' struggles and up to date with the real developments in the world and in the labour movement, as opposed to those invented and 'elaborated' by the millionaire press, TV and radio.

No other paper has given the same coverage or concrete support

to the miners, with countrywide reports honestly and genuinely reflecting their struggle.

But it is now OVER SIX YEARS since *Militant* underwent any major expansion in its size or frequency (see page two) yet in that time the paper has never ceased to improve in quality of coverage, circulation (which has quadrupled) and in the growth of its influence in the British and international labour movement.

Just look at the achievements of the Fighting Fund... 1978, £66,197; 1979, £80,079; 1980, £93,849; 1981, £105,063; 1982, £148,102—a total of nearly half a million in five years. Since then, in 1983 and 1984, a further £316,000 has been raised from *Militant* supporters for the

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Fighting Fund and for the Marxist Daily Building Fund combined.

Among Labour's Young Socialists the *Militant* is seen, along with their monthly *Socialist Youth*, as the key weapons in the fight against poverty, low pay, dead end jobs and mass unemployment. Witness the magnificent £8,000 given to our funds at this year's LPYS conference!

Militant is bursting at the seams in every way and must now make the necessary giant steps towards a twice weekly and a daily.

The first requirement is a premises of adequate size. At present our staff is split between three buildings. The Marxist Daily Building Fund has been set up to acquire a suitable building and has come within striking distance of achieving its aim. If the immediate financial hurdle can be overcome (see letter opposite) then the building will be secured.

This will enable all our staff and print shop to be housed under one roof again. It would give us ample room for expansion as well as immediately improving coordination and efficiency. The real possibility of an early twice weekly paper would then exist. That is why we cannot afford to lose this

opportunity. Money is time. Only in a new building will we be able to develop the real potential of our paper and move towards the goal of a daily as early as possible in 1985.

Militant readers are not well off; they read the paper for ammunition to use in the struggle against poverty and hardship, against the bosses and the Tories and against those in the labour movement who fail to take a bold stand against the whole capitalist way of running society.

But that's precisely why a paper like ours needs YOUR help. To supply the political ammunition, we have to have the full-time staff, the equipment and the premises to do it. In any struggle, material resources are a decisive factor, however great the cause and however correct the ideas.

We have worked near miracles in the past. At crucial stages we have almost 'willed' the means to overcome difficulties and strains. Don't let us be defeated at this crucial juncture.

If YOU haven't donated to the Marxist Daily Building Fund or don't feel you've given enough, read the letter opposite and make a contribution today!

See also page 17 for the latest figures and examples on the Marxist Daily Building Fund and on our Fighting Fund.

Militant



Emergency appeal!

To all our readers
FROM Peter Taaffe (Editor) and
Ted Grant (Political Editor)

Dear Comrades,

The Thatcher government, in defence of the power and profits of the British ruling class, is attempting to deal a crushing blow to the 'advance guard' of the movement—the miners—and through them, the working class as a whole. They have thrown down the gauntlet! Such action has opened up potentially the most important struggle since the General Strike of 1926.

The situation cries out for a mass circulation daily paper to answer the Tory lies and slanders and point the way ahead for the Labour movement in the struggle for socialism. It is to achieve such an end that the Marxist Daily Building Fund was launched towards the end of 1983. It aimed rapidly to provide suitable premises for such a paper.

And what a magnificent response! The heroic sacrifices of *Militant* readers have achieved the outstanding sum of over £140,000 to date—£30,000 of it in two weeks! What an answer to all the sceptics! Comrades scraped together what they had and gave willingly for their future. Those who had money which they had saved for holidays, furniture, even homes—gave as much as £1,000, even £2,000. Those who had no money collected from others and even sold personal possessions to contribute to this historic step.

Marxism is poised to take a decisive leap forward in Britain. An ideal new premises is within our very grasp. By the end of May the contracts must be signed and money paid over. For this, a bank loan of a further £150,000 was needed.

Unfortunately, on the 16th April news came that the bank would provide only £125,000—£25,000 short!

We are therefore faced with the immediate task of raising the £10,000 to reach the original target plus the £25,000 short fall—a total of £35,000 by the end of May—either that or the chance of these premises falls through and the daily is postponed.

When we launched *Militant* in 1964, a handful of pioneers made colossal sacrifices at a time when few were interested in our ideas. The emancipation of the working class has always meant sacrifice, but at certain critical stages super-human efforts are demanded. Marxism and the labour movement itself at its inception, was based on this willingness to sacrifice—we could do no other, we had no rich backers. Then, as now, we could rely only on the pennies and pounds of our readers and supporters.

Today, at this special crossroads, probably the most important since the paper's foundation, we have no alternative but to make a personal appeal to all our readers to raise this extra £35,000 for the Marxist Daily Building Fund. We have the correct ideas but history demands that we create the means to implement them.

As Trotsky pointed out shortly before his assassination by Stalin, the Marxist movement "gives to every one of us the highest happiness: the consciousness that one participates in the building of a better future, that one carries on his shoulders a particle of the fate of mankind, and that one's life would not have been lived in vain." We have come a long way over the past 20 years and more; there is no way we can afford to go back now. Marxism is not only based on correct ideas, but rests on the will to carry them through. We are confident that the courage and the determination exists to overcome this financial obstacle and go forward to the daily!

Peter Taaffe
Ted Grant

Peter Taaffe

Ted Grant

The rise and rise of Militant

- 1964 *Militant* started as a monthly with a few pennies in the bank, a typewriter, a shared office and no staff! A £500 Fighting Fund was launched in the first issue, which sold all 2,000 copies printed. £150 was raised in the first year.
- 1965 An editor was taken on 'full time' for 2, 3 or £4 a week—dependent on what was available! Two rooms were taken in Kings Cross, and offered for hire to help pay the rent! Two special pamphlets were produced on the need for a Youth Programme and a Socialist Policy for Labour.
- 1969 A special Press Fund launched in 1966 had raised £1,000. Sales had doubled in five years.
- 1970 *Militant* supporters won a majority in Labour's Young Socialists. We began to acquire and rebuild a premises in Bethnal Green. Treasures were sold and hard labour engaged in so that we could move in.
- 1971 We bought a press and a camera for making plates. In September the first fortnightly *Militant* came out.
- 1972 Under the pressure of events—Bloody Sunday and the miners' strike—the weekly *Militant* appeared (four pages). By September it had eight pages.
- 1973 *Militant's* annual Fighting Fund topped £10,000.
- 1974 New premises rented for use as a print shop.
- 1975 A fire destroyed the building, wrecked our press and ruined our new typesetting equipment. The magnificent response of readers to our emergency appeal at that time meant we were back in action within one month! By the end of the year we had taken on our Mentmore Terrace premises.
- 1976 12 page paper.
- 1977 The push for a new press raised nearly £50,000.
- 1978 Production started of the 16 page paper on a Webb Offset press. (Without red mast-head). We were now printing four times the number of copies produced in 1971.
- 1979 Enlarging the press meant our red mast-head was restored and capacity was expanded enormously to enable rapid production of leaflets, posters, pamphlets, etc.
- 1980, 81 and 82 saw further advances in equipping the typesetting, layout and finance departments and taking on additional staff and yet more premises.
- 1983 *Militant's* successes were 'punished' with expulsions. But despite this, support went from strength to strength.
- 1984 will see all fund raising records broken, circulation doubled and support growing more rapidly than ever!
- 1985 Forward to the *Daily Militant*.

In response to your urgent appeal for £35,000 to secure the premises for a Marxist Daily, I enclose £

Name

Address

Rush to Marxist Daily Building Fund, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.
Cheques, PO's to be made out to the "Marxist Daily Building Fund."

Miners' dispute

Mr Big and the flying buckets

THE TIME, 11.30 am, the place, downtown Harlow by the Obelisk. A policeman on routine patrol suddenly spots a suspicious looking object. He moves closer and realises the small plastic bucket is not alone. It has accomplices—a milk crate, a miner's lamp, and some inflammatory posters declaring boldly "save the pits".

He radios for reinforcements. When the squad reaches six-strong they feel confident; they move in and surround the small group of objects which appear almost lifeless. They peer into the bucket and discover the

By Danny Purton
(Harlow NALGO Branch
Secretary,
personal capacity)

awful truth—the bucket is collecting money for the miners' strike fund! His hunch has paid off!

Despite intense questioning the bucket refused to answer, even to divulge its handle. They soon uncover

the reason:— "Made in Hong Kong".

As none of them spoke Cantonese they turned their attentions to a group of scruffs nearby selling *Militant* the well-known, top-selling socialist newspaper. One of them was clutching a used cocoa tin which he occasionally rattled in a strange ritual known only to street paper sellers and thought by experts to improve circulation to the feet.

Missing link

Unfortunately no criminal link could be established between the cocoa tin and the

et. They were getting nowhere when suddenly they had a lucky break—one of the *Militant* sellers coughed! (vernacular for 'talked'—Ed).

A certain Danny Purton admitted that he had helped the bucket up to the Town Centre, even carrying it at one stage, and that the lamp once belonged to his grandfather a self-confessed coal-miner.

He also confirmed that he intended to pass the money on to Harlow TUC Miners' Support Committee, which through a system of contacts nationally was able to get the funds through to Scargill's Resistance Movement

fighting job losses and pit closures.

Man behind the bucket

This Purton was obviously Mr Big, the man behind the bucket. He was cautioned, asked name and address, who he worked for etc. They didn't ask who he voted for in the last election—they had already guessed. They then threw the book at him—he was charged with "Collecting money in the street without a permit". If you think this is just a joke then you'd be wrong. Apart from a bit of artistic licence, it all happened last Saturday.



Addresses for activists

Kent NUM. Miners' Offices, Waterside House, Cherry Tree Avenue, Dover, Kent CT16 1RW. Phone 0304 206661/206271.

Yorkshire NUM. Miners Offices, Barnsley, Yorkshire S70 2LS. Phone 0226 840096.

South Wales NUM. AEU Building, Sardis Road, Pontypridd, Glamorgan CF37 1DU. Phone 0443 404092/5.

NUM HQ., St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield. S Yorks S1 2EX. Donations to: Miners Solidarity Fund, Co-op Bank PLC, 84/86 West Street, Sheffield. Sorting code 08.90.75. A/c no. 30000009.



ORGANISE!

UP AND DOWN Britain trade unionists and Labour Party members and thousands of ordinary working class people are pouring in support for the miners.

A JOINT NUM/Labour Party Young Socialists meeting in Maesteg, South Wales collected over £100, even though two-thirds of the 300-strong audience were striking miners. Unions pledged another £500.

After hearing Terry Fields MP and Ian Isaacs, South Wales NUM Executive, the meeting got down to organising support groups to help with baby-sitting and crèches, food parcels, a 'problems' surgery, and a regular newsletter which local newsagents have promised to distribute.

AT PORT Talbot steel works, nearly 200 young people from local schools and tech colleges joined the mass picket. The headmaster ordered pupils back to school, but as one told the police who tried to bully them, "I'm furthering my education—I'm learning to be a picket 'cos its the only job I'll get round here."

IN HULL the labour movement was quick off the mark. On the docks all coal and coke is blacked, and the shop stewards' committee is organising regular collections. The LPYS has collected over £600 at factories, offices and meetings. Factories are having weekly collections, and magnificent donations have come from low-paid Post Of-

fice and hospital workers, repaying the miners' solidarity in the NHS dispute. Collecting money today lays the basis for solidarity action tomorrow. Everywhere regular collections, levies and donations should be organised.

THE KENT coalfield is one of the smallest, but pickets are covering an enormous area, watching all the ports in the South and South-East.

Local LPYS branches are helping out. Canterbury LPYS held a benefit social in the Snowdown Miners' Welfare Club, winning the praise of local NUM officials. The Kent LPYS pamphlet on the strike were sold as programmes.

IN BRIGHTON the LPYS has joined in the Trades Council effort. Miners have addressed fifty meetings and £2,000 has been collected. The Labour Party HQ has been handed over as a co-ordinating centre, staffed every day.

KENT MINERS told an LPYS public meeting in Brixton, South London, "We must work on our hands and knees but when we come out on strike, we stand up ready to fight. The Tories can't beat us; we'll fight to the end."

LPYS BRANCHES in the Huddersfield area have organised a series of meetings to publicise the miners' case and raise money, and the local AUEW printed leaflets free for a speaking tour.

A message for Neil

ONE CANVASSER for the Labour Party in the Council elections in Stoke was told "I've voted Labour for 50 years. The Labour and TUC leaders

were't prepared to back the miners in 1926 and look what happened then. I won't vote Labour until your leader supports the miners!"



Miners coming off shift at South Celynon pit, South Wales. The spirit of the miners is forged by a life the ruling classes have no comprehension of. They respond with fear, the workers with enthusiastic solidarity.

Liverpool council support

LIVERPOOL CITY Council has been organising collections, with councillors helping out, and an NUM speaker will address the council meeting on 25 April.

Most Liverpool factories are organising collections. The Fire Brigades Union, remembering the support their strike got, are levying members weekly. "If the

miners win then Liverpool will win" is the attitude on Merseyside.

In St Helens, Lancashire, the council has agreed to provide free meals during the school holidays for children whose parents are hard-hit. An SDP councillor (and NUM member) voted against this solidarity!

meeting of Sutton Manor NUM.

Out of these contacts a Liverpool solidarity meeting has been organised on Friday 27 April, 7.30 at Transport House, Islington. This meeting is mainly to build on the magnificent support already shown by transport workers ie. the walkout by NUR men on the Wirral, and the blacking of coal by the NUS.

Transport too

ON MERSEYSIDE local links have been forged with transport unions. Steve Sullivan of Sutton Manor NUM spoke of the NUR Merseyside and North Wales Divisional Council and won their full support. Two days later NUR member Dave Evans spoke to a branch

Wives get picketing

WOMEN FROM the mining areas are organising, not just the crucial back-up of food and money but on the picket lines too. Ann Nettleship told a *Militant* meeting in Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts, how she has set up a wives' support group: "We are not going to see our men or children starve... we're going to make sure we win".

About 100 women from mining communities come to meetings in Elvington, Kent and are meeting weekly.

Women in support of Miners' groups have sprung up all over the Yorkshire coalfield, Jane Hartley reports that "as in the past they organise money, distribution of food parcels, in some areas 'soup kitchens'. But this time, following the Kent women's example, many are involved in picketing and demonstrations."

Yorkshire rally

The Yorkshire Labour Women's Committee have called a rally for Saturday 5 May in Doncaster. Women have been angered by blatant Tory attempts to turn area against area, families against miners. As Jane concludes, "We'll show their attempts to divide the working class are hopeless."

Reports compiled by
Eileen Short

LPYS

LABOUR'S YOUTH and *Militant* supporters have been to the fore in organising support for the miners, with *Militant Miner* posters plastered around many towns and cities.

At a 'first-ever' *Militant* meeting in Rugeley, Staffs., more than twenty miners—all young—turned out. Local power workers, out in support, also attended.

Young miners moving into action often for the first time, have turned out at meetings in Bolsover and Doe Lea in Derbyshire, and at St Helens where the LPYS organised jointly with the NUM and were present in force at the LPYS Easter weekend conference.

Jeff Poulter, of Bolsover NUM, gave "a tremendous thank-you from my branch and members for the support given by people like you".

Miners' dispute



Tories lay their war plans

THE GOVERNMENT claims that the miners' dispute is between the NUM and the Coal Board, and that it has no plans to intervene. In reality it is deeply involved in very specific plans to intervene.

The Cabinet Civil Emergencies Sub-Committee has been looking at various options which the government may have to adopt. (*Daily Telegraph* 18.4.84)

Main pickets

If the present partial strike action continues, it estimates that power supplies can be continued indefinitely, by maximising the use of oil and nuclear energy. The sub-committee assume, however, that there will be a national ballot leading to a national stoppage or continuing area

strikes with mass pickets bringing most coalfields to a standstill.

In that event, they calculate, power stations could continue normal production for "at least 16 to 20 weeks" with the 20 million tonnes which they have stock-piled at the moment.

After this, the more sinister "options" will be brought into operation, "An ultimate option" says the report "would be to employ a 'lorry train' of 30-tonne vehicles normally used by building and civil engineer-

ing contractors, acting at the request of the Coal Board, to shift supplies to the power stations."

"This operation would become even more urgent", it adds, "if unions sympathetic to the miners managed to halt oil supplies or other essentials such as carbon dioxide moving into generating plants."

Three day week

Looking further ahead, the report envisages "a cut-back in industrial production, possibly to a four-day or three-day week, and the use of troops to move coal from either pit yards or from import berths at the docks."



Soldiers with "Green Goddesses" strike break during the firemen's strike in 1977. The Tories are considering using troops to scab in the miners' strike.

Finally the report mentions the one option they are not considering—"a Coal Board climbdown on its programme for a further twenty pit closures and the loss of 23,000 jobs."

These plans are reminiscent of the Ridley report, leaked in 1978 before the Tories even took office, and provide more proof of the

extent to which the Tories are plotting and scheming to crush the miners.

Forewarned

For once the *Telegraph* has done the trade union movement a favour by forewarning it of these plans. Forewarned is

forearmed. The labour movement must be no less resolute and thorough in planning its counter-attack.

Force the Tories to eat their words, to accept the one thing they claim they do not envisage—defeat at the hands of the miners.

By Pat Craven

Life of a miner

Last week, KENNY SUMMERGILL a miner at Monktonhall colliery near Edinburgh described the working conditions down the pit. Now, in the last of three articles, he continues his picture of the life of a miner.

I HAVE described the kind of atmosphere we work in, but there is another kind of "atmosphere", and I've never seen the like of it in my life, especially having worked in light engineering. I have never seen overmen and foremen having so much pressure on them. Obviously the colliery manager is being told what to do; the men at the NCB office are being told by the government what to do. They put the pressure on and it comes down the ladder.

Some of the deputies are too wise for that; they are with the men and wholeheartedly so. But others are running that scared it's "Yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir!" I was threatened that I would be sent up the pit if I didn't work through the overtime ban. They even wanted me to work through my piece time; of course I refused and little did the under-manager realise that in the time spent arguing with me, the piece time was over anyway so it didn't matter. He didn't realise it but the men around did and were laughing about it.

Unbearable

They are doing their best to make life in the pits unbearable for the men. They are being badgered and chased about from one end of the pit to another and told to do this or do that—"if you don't do this you're going up the pit, you're getting sent home"—that seems to be the answer to everything. In a pit that just doesn't work, because the men depend on each other for life and limb in some situations.

There are notices going up about this and that—they are doing their best to stop different wee perks that were always given to the men. A lot of the men are on the edge of saying "I wish this



Miners have been under pressure to increase output—but higher productivity has not stopped closures.

bloody pit was closed so that I could get out, because I'm sick of this nonsense." It literally does get to that.

Self respect

With their attitudes towards the men, some of the deputies and overmen would not last two minutes in any other industry, because in private industry, or any other nationalised industry, the management and work-study groups have recognised that you must give the men their self-respect, treat them as men and discuss things with them. American firms do that; Japan does that more than any other country. But the Coal Board is deliberately doing the reverse.

Political attacks

They are trying to set pits against each other, being nice to one and saying "you're a good wee pit" and to another "you're a bad pit" and they use the media for this. They're harping on that unions should have nothing to do with politics and yet there are political attacks against the unions all the time. At Monktonhall we have been battered from

pillar to post in the last two years.

Do these miners in Nottingham honestly believe that I am sitting here with less than £30 a week in the house because we are afraid to go through the gates to work?—and some people have only got £21 a week to feed themselves; the DHSS give one person more than that to feed themselves in a week—we are doing it because we want jobs for the future. If we don't win this time we are beaten for good—we will have given Thatcher a mandate.

Betrayal

These people in Nottingham amaze me, how they can go to work every day, when miners in the past were shot dead on picket lines to get those conditions that they have now. They are betraying everything that those miners stood for. They are talking about a few weeks' money, a video, a few pints. Why don't they stop listening to the papers, stop being conned and start to think about jobs for the future, because if we lose they're not going to have any jobs either.

'Pickets worse than criminals'

A DURHAM miner on the picket line at Tow Law open cast site last Friday told of his experiences at Sheffield the previous day: "I got arrested down there, for nowt as usual. There were four other lads in the cells, one told the copper to F... off. He was kicked up and down the corridor.

They were trying to provoke me all the time. At first I refused to be photographed, they pulled my head back by my hair, just to get a good pose.

In the yard outside there were lads getting exercise the copper pointed and said, 'There are some good honest criminals, not like you pickets'.

Previous to being arrested I spoke to this copper; he bragged about having 150 hours overtime in ten days. At Sheffield they also were handed a Mars Bar each, to give them energy maybe, or maybe they were adrenalin laced."

By Ray Physick

Open cast mass picket

DEER NESS is an open cast mine near Tow Law, Durham. The site is owned by the NCB but operated by private contractors. Miners are trying to get the site stopped.

On 16 April there was a mass picket of about 250 miners and about the same number of police, who tried to clear a way through for lorries.

After a fence was pushed down, the police started pulling people out at random from the crowd. One picket reportedly had his leg broken and one lad was kicked in the face by a policeman, thought to be an inspector who had no number on his uniform. Pickets pointed out

the dried blood on his boots to cameramen, but the officer was withdrawn rapidly from the picket line.

There were about twenty pickets arrested and taken to Crook police station. About 150-200 pickets followed them down to the police station. The small town looked as if it was occupied with police on every corner.

Bob Clay MP was arrested for trying to intervene against the arbitrary arrests and an area NUM meeting was cancelled to get people on the picket. The concerted effort to get Deer Ness closed will go on even though the contractor is rumoured to be considering an injunction.

London food collection success



Kent miners collect money on the April march in London.

FIVE BOXES of food were collected in two days in the East Ham area to send down to the Kent miners' wives committee.

Members of Newham North-East Women's Section collected among local Labour Party members and trade unionists, there was a good response from teachers and parents in local schools, many of whom were involved in strike action themselves last week over school closures.

Plans are now in hand to broaden out these collections throughout Newham and to give as much practical assistance as possible to the miners' families.

By Carol Bevan
Newham NE Labour Party

Turning profits to loss

THE NCB say only "uneconomic" pits are likely to be closed. But miners know that collieries can be made uneconomic by starving them of investment.

A recent article in *New Statesman*, shows how figures for overall NCB profits and losses can be manoeuvred to prove whatever the government wants.

In 1982/83 the Electricity Council turned a loss of £85 million into a profit of £332 million, even though electricity sales had gone down by 2.6%. They had increased prices by 8.1% while coal, had only gone up 4.7%.

If coal prices had gone up by the same amount, the operating losses of the NCB would virtually have disappeared, and coal prices would still be "competitive" at £49.40 per tonne compared with gas at £60 and heavy oil at £74.

It was only "uneconomical" compared to imported coal, but then so are all British fuels, including, of course, nuclear power stations. Thatcher could massage profit figures to attack the competitiveness of any industry.

A further £366 million loss goes to pay off interest repayments to the blood suckers in private industry who lent money for NCB investment on the open market in the absence of a direct subsidy.

The government are prepared to pay more money for imported fuel just to attack jobs and the union. Pits have closed despite record productivity.

By Roger Shrivess

Miners' dispute



When Saltley gates closed



1. First a lorry tries to force a way through.



2. Thousands of Birmingham workers march on the gates.



3. All Birmingham's police force cannot hold the workers back.



4. Victory. The depot is shut. Only a token picket is now needed.

MINERS ARE now once more in the thick of a fight with the Tories. Twelve years ago, they scored a historic victory over another Tory government, led by Heath. The high point in the 1972 strike was the confrontation at the gates of the Saltley coke depot in Birmingham. We are reprinting BOB MCKEE's eye-witness report of this triumphant moment of trade union history, from issue 92 of *Militant* (18 February, 1972):

AT FIRST there were only ten of us, then twenty, fifty, five hundred and finally ten thousand. That is how the picketing built up outside the Saltley coke depot in Birmingham last week.

It had been in response to a tip-off by members of the local Labour Party Young Socialists that the NUM moved into Birmingham. The Gas Board had stockpiled 150,000 tons of coke, much of which had been there for several years because it was so low-grade that nobody would buy it before the strike! Now they were selling it to all and sundry.

Cowboy drivers

Firms from as far as Aberdeen and Cornwall were sending in droves of lorries to take away what some pickets called "virtual slag" to sell at inflated prices.

Many of the drivers were "cowboys", driving for large back-handers from their employers. They were not interested in simple appeals from a handful of pickets (including myself), those first few days. It became clear that only a show of strength would stop the flow of trucks.

By Sunday 6 February, the number of pickets grew to over 500 and the real struggle began. At first, we were all able to stand in front of the gates of the depot and block any trucks going in. But soon the police arrived in force and shifted us to the side of the road, clearing a passage for the lorries. If a

lorry-driver refused the request to turn back, we would all surge forward to block his entrance.

For a while, we had sufficient strength to succeed despite the police, but finally the police called up sufficient reserves, so that by the Tuesday, they actually outnumbered us. Other tactics were used—of "emptying" a few trucks which left with coal, and of blocking the traffic, but it became increasingly clear that only a massive influx of miners or the combined efforts of the local trade unions, would close the depot and defeat the police tactics.

The miners were very willing to talk to me on the line about their struggle. They came from Scotland, Yorkshire, S. Wales and Staffs. Some had come direct from Colchester to Birmingham and had been on the road for weeks. All were determined not to go back without the full settlement, even those who had voted against the strike originally. They would prefer the pits to close and get another job, rather than go back on the government's terms.

As the police gained the upper hand, the sprinkling of arrests now became a flood. Snatch squads waited in the crowd to grab "trouble makers", pointed out by plain clothes men. The squads picked out non-miners deliberately, particularly students so that they could claim that the miners were being incited by others. The chairman of our local

LPYS and a local LP ward member were arrested on trumped up charges. As the police went for long-haired youths, they actually arrested several young miners from South Wales, much to their surprise! They were obviously not aware of the change in working class fashions.

They were really out to get me by the Wednesday, but the miners followed me around, staying close to me so that I could not be picked out by the police. Many miners gave evidence to support students and others unfairly arrested. The police could not split the solidarity of the picket line by their tactics.



Arthur Scargill came to national prominence during the 1972 strike.

Neither could the press. The local *Birmingham Mail* carried an article arguing that the trouble at the depot was caused by "anarchists and maoists" inciting the miners. All eight questions the local TV interviewer asked the police and miners' representatives over the conflict were concerned with the possibility of "outside political agitation", and whether non-miners should be there. Nothing about the dispute or the real reason for the conflict.

The press propaganda completely failed. The miners continued to ask for

support from any quarter and the response from the Birmingham working class was magnificent. Deputations from SU Carburettors, Rover car works, local building workers were the first there. Women from SU marched to the picket, to a tremendously warm response, and women from the T&GWU handed out free sandwiches and soup each day.

Class action

But victory depended on either more miners or action by the official trade unions locally. For some reasons, more miners could not be raised. But the working class of Birmingham moved into action.

The AUEW decided on a one-day strike for the Thursday (10 February). Sections of the T&GWU, including lorry drivers, pledged support. The police and Gas Board chiefs said they would keep the gates open, whatever, sure that they would call the bluff of the picket leaders. But when they saw phalanx upon phalanx of banner-waving workers marching on the depot, they were astonished.

Men from Dunlops, British Leyland, Rover, Drop Forge, GEC etc were there. Birmingham industry was at a standstill and ten thousand people flooded the square outside the depot, stopping the movement of all traffic. The police closed the gates for the day. Victory was ours. I cannot describe to you the feeling of joy, relief and solidarity that descended over all of us there. Leaflets I brought to hand out were taken out of my hands in bundles by total strangers, who distributed them for me—it was like what Petrograd 1917 must have been!

Officially, the police

claimed they closed the gates "to protect public safety", but they have since admitted that "it was common sense. You don't pick a fight with 10,000 people" This was a different tune from days of cockiness and arrest. There were few arrests that day! The next day an agreement was signed with the Gas Board, that only essential supplies could be moved, supervised by the NUM and driven only by T&GWU members.

Victory had been achieved by the combined efforts

of the trade union movement in action. Saltley had become such a focus of the miners' struggle that the NUM leaders are reported to have been strengthened in their determination to hold out for a big increase in their negotiations with the Coal Board, when they heard the news of the victory at Saltley.

The struggle was won by workers in action, united by the organised leadership of the trade union movement in Birmingham. Such action is necessary on a national scale if the miners are to win.

Same press story last time round

THE MEDIA have done a vicious propaganda job on the miners' strike. Much of this has implied that the miners and the organised working class as a whole no longer have any power.

But this is nothing new. At the beginning of the 1972 miners' strike to restore wages other years of standstill or decline, the press were contemptuous of the miners. They were a spent force, coal was irrelevant they declared.

The *Times* thought that "Coal stocks away from the pits are large enough to withstand a strike for weeks if it does not spread with only marginal disruption to industry and commerce as a whole". But most of all they thought the miners had been seriously weakened. The *Economist* said the miners "cannot stop the country in its tracks as

they once could have done".

Once the miners strike started to spread, the smirks froze on the faces of the press experts. Even by 31 January the *Daily Express* was starting to panic, with headlines calling on the NCB, the NUM and the government to "Get negotiations started! Get the miners back to work!" This was before the magnificent picketing success of Saltley Gates.

After the miners had shown who really produced the wealth of society and had won the support and sympathy from the entire working class, the Tory government were forced to capitulate. They then conceded the NUM's demands which put the miners back in the first division for wages and conditions.

By Bill Doggett



Please send your comments, experiences and views about the strike and the industry to: 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

What the press don't tell you about flying pickets

MY OWN experiences on the picket lines in different areas of the country, contrary to the opinions of the Tory press, and I might add some of the right wing leadership in our union, is one of complete confidence that our strike will win 100% support.

By Tudor Parsons
(South Wales NUM)

Earlier in the strike, on the way up to Nottingham we stopped at a service station along with 20 black marias and 20 mini-buses filled with police from other areas. We decided that the best tactic would be to follow them all the way up to Nottingham as we were not sure of the way. I think the reason we did not get stopped was because they thought that we were part of the 'convoy'—plain clothes section, Special Branch perhaps.

On arriving at the picket line at Bilsthorpe Colliery, Nottingham, we found the true face of Thatcherism—a sea of blue helmets and blue uniforms, 200 in all surrounded us. The police herded us like cattle into one spot, so that it was virtually impossible to do anything. We were not even allowed to approach and talk to the Notts miners. Those Notts miners who did attempt to talk to us, were forcibly prevented from doing so by the police.

Holditch Colliery

We moved on to Holditch Colliery. I can only say that we were absolutely overwhelmed by the support given us by the men. Only 23 men crossed the picket line on the night and day shift.

Young miners say "Now it's our turn"

EDDIE WELLS, (26) Les Winham (27) and Colin Fogg, (20) pickets from Betteshanger pit in Kent, spoke to Nick Wrack in London.

"We have been picketing West Thurrock power station in Grays, Essex. There is no coal moving there by road, rail or sea. We are having about 50% success with other materials. We even turned a beer lorry away the other day!"

"Kent is the smallest pit area with the biggest area to cover for pickets. Most of the pickets are watching the ports from Southampton to Yarmouth. Just think what effect it would have if every area was like ours."

"A lot of our fathers are still at home. They look on

Not only did miners join us on the picket line, but we were given all their snap, tea and just about everything else they could give us.

The next day at 12 o'clock the Holditch miners held a meeting which was addressed by union officials from South Wales. The local union officials from Holditch were adamant that there should be no strike action until after the decision of a national ballot.

Resolution against ballot

The gulf which separates the Midlands miners and the Midlands Area Council was shown by the meeting organised by the Holditch miners addressed by union officials from South Wales. A resolution from that meeting was passed by nine to one "Condemning all calls for a national ballot as a vote for breaking the strike, and support for immediate strike action."

I cannot put into words the feelings of common struggle and comradeship between the South Wales miners and the Holditch miners at the time. We were pulled out of our cars after the meeting and paraded up and down the street like heroes. It is an experience I shall never forget. I only wish that MacGregor and the Tories could have been there to witness it.

it like the war. They are saying they fought last time and now it's our turn. But as they get hungry they'll be out picketing too.

"The response from meetings in London has been tremendous. It's been 'you've got to win for the class.' The people who have supported us and helped us, put us up, won't be forgotten."

"It's a pity the Labour Party Leadership is not following the same line as the ordinary members. Kinnock came down to Kent during the General Election and pledged full support for the future of the mines but where's that support now?"

"Other trade unionists have got to give us their support otherwise it will be their turn next."



Miners outside City Hall, Sheffield after the special conference, 19 April.

Solidarity and fighting leaders needed to win

AT A meeting at Lea Hall colliery in Staffs things looked good as support for amending the 55% needed in a ballot was overwhelming. As the meeting moved towards the end it seemed certain that strike action would be voted for, but then the secretary Tony Morris stood up and said "Well its up to you lads but I'm going in" and on this the Chairman closed the meeting.

Uproar in room

There was uproar as ashtrays flew across the

room and the men shouted in disbelief except for the minority of miners who cheered the secretary.

This action led to 70% of the day shift reporting for work the next day including the chairman and the secretary, who are paid thousands of pounds a year to fight for the interests of their men. This is the second time that the pit leaders have succeeded in stopping the pit being closed by the strike.

Earlier, four flying pickets arrived in South Staffs. The committee had advised their men to cross any picket lines

that appeared. While hundreds of local men picketed the pit some committee men appeared to escort others through the picket line. But within a day the pit had been closed by the young miners on the picket line.

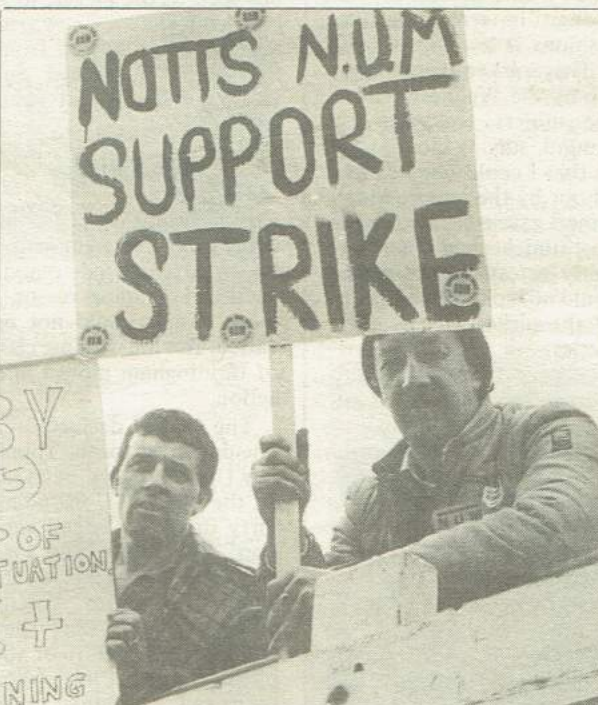
New leadership

At one stage the chairman tried to pull down the official picket sign, but to cheers the lads stopped him. When other miners went to talk to committee men they were told not to mix with them, he confined himself to com-

menting to *The Guardian* reporter, that the pickets were: "Just a bunch of young lads with beer in them".

Miners have the right to expect leadership not scabbing. They must fight for a new leadership which will represent the most determined and conscious miners. The leadership in this whole area has much to answer for but in the minds of the Lea Hall pickets their leadership takes the prize.

Dave Griffiths talked to Lea Hall pickets.



Striking Notts miners at the special conference in Sheffield, 19 April.

Huddersfield backs strike

A HUNDRED people heard Dave Crowther, from Denby Grange colliery, Huddersfield, speak at three meetings in the area. He spoke of his experiences during the strike and the problems they had to overcome to win the battle. It was, he said, a political struggle for a socialist Labour government as well. Two miners from Emley colliery spoke at Birkby Branch Labour Party so well that by the end even the doubters were fully behind the strike.

Jack Taylor, Yorkshire NUM President spoke to 350 at a meeting organised jointly by the Huddersfield Labour Party and Trades Council, £500 was raised for

the lads! He said: "Those calling for a national ballot were using this as a smoke-screen to hide their desire to end the strike." He reflected the determination of the unions to continue convincing Nottingham miners to come out, however long it took.

Everyone should note in their diaries 28 April. On that day, the Huddersfield May Day march will be a tremendous rally in support of the miners. Make it a day Ian MacGregor will not forget!

By David Michael
(Huddersfield Labour Party)

Private mines—more profit less pay

Doe Lea

ALAN WOODLEY a miner from Doe Lea, a private pit in Derbyshire told a Bolsover *Militant* meeting that in the private pits such as his "There are a lot of little tyrants who sit in offices, rich men who want to get richer. If they do privatise pits it will be the same sort of owners who take over as ours. They want more profits by paying us less. We do the same work for less

money." He explained that Doe Lea had been in dispute before the national struggle broke and when the union called for support they all walked out together.

HJ Banks

MINERS IN Durham are angry over the activities of private contractors involved with open-cast mining there.

The firm, H J Banks & Company Ltd, excavate coal from the Inkermen Colliery

in Tow Law. The coal belongs to the NCB yet their workforce face Victorian conditions. Ian Gowling, who got his first job at Banks, told *Militant*: "I got this job but after two weeks they found out I belonged to a union, so they sacked me, giving no reason."

Another former worker at Banks said: "I worked three years for Banks, 7am to 7pm, seven days a week. I was getting awful wages. I asked for a wage rise but they sacked me immediately."

Evidence at his industrial tribunal showed that his wages during the period he worked there from 1977-78, were appalling. He received between £19.07 and £38.19, low by even 1977 standards.

Scab labour

This firm employs non-union labour though the coal mine belongs to the NCB. The firm should be nationalised and any coal mined should be by union members only.

By Ray Physick

**May Day Greetings to
all Socialists from
BOLSOVER
CONSTITUENCY
LABOUR PARTY**

**GARSTON
CLP
LIVERPOOL**

- May Day greetings to all socialists
- Defend jobs and services
- Defend Liverpool City Labour Group, whose fight will serve as a beacon to workers nationally and internationally

**BRENT EAST
LABOUR PARTY
YOUNG
SOCIALISTS**

SAY: This government is the Pits! Support the miners — make 396 Tory MPs redundant.

One organisation that Prince Edward won't be joining in Cambridge sends revolutionary greeting to the workers of the world
Forward to socialism
CAMBRIDGE LPYS

1984's the year to smash Tory law, socialism is knocking at the door, with Maggie Thatcher we will wipe the floor, because the LPYS knows the score!

**Fraternal
Greetings
from**

**WATFORD
LPYS**

Simon Rogers
(Chairman)
Kevin O'Brien
(Secretary)
Declan Kane (Treasurer)

**Forward in
Socialist
unity**

from
Syd Bidwell, Ealing-Southall MP

**VALLEY WARD
LABOUR PARTY**
sends May Day greetings to all fellow socialists and fully supports the Liverpool Labour Group in its fight for jobs and services.

ASTMS
**Shipping and
Freight Branch**
618
Liverpool
**Support Liver-
pool City
Council**
**Defend jobs
and services**

The Rotherham branch of Boilermakers congratulates Tony Benn on his return to parliament and sends greetings to the whole labour movement.
**ROTHERHAM
GMBATU NO.1
(BOILERMAKERS)**

**SWANSEA
POEU branch**
*sends May
Day greetings
to miners in
struggle.*

**SALFORD TRADES
UNION COUNCIL** sends
May Day greetings to all our colleagues in the labour movement in the Tolpuddle year — defend democracy and the National Health Service
Dennis Maginn
President
Vic Booth
Secretary

May Day Greetings
St James' Ward,
Bethnal Green &
Stepney CLP
— Liverpool Today
— Tower Hamlets
Tomorrow

'May Day Greetings to the miners and all workers fighting for their rights'
**BRADFORD
TRADES
COUNCIL**

**CHAPEL GREEN
WARD LABOUR
PARTY**
(SHEFFIELD)
Support Liverpool.
Support the Miners.
Forward to
Socialism.

**BOURNEMOUTH
WEST YOUNG
SOCIALISTS**
Support Liverpool's
Reds! Victory to
the Labour Coun-
cil! No to Tory
cuts!

Fraternal Greetings
from **STEVENAGE
LPYS**

Wishing Thatcher and company a speedy retirement, greetings to all comrades and forward to socialism.
**HERTSMERE
LPYS**

**GILLMOSS
LABOUR PARTY**
stand firm behind
Liverpool City
Council their fight
is the peoples' fight

**STOCKTON
SOUTH LABOUR
PARTY**. Parkfield
branch. Fraternal
Greetings to the
Labour movement
on May Day.

May Day Greetings
from **WORKSOP
TRADES
COUNCIL**

**EAST BERKSHIRE
CLP**
Let's all take Liver-
pool's lead. **UNITE**
the working class.
FIGHT the Tories.

**WORKERS AND
STUDENTS: COM-
MON STRUGGLE!**

May Day greetings to the labour movement from the **WELSH LABOUR STUDENTS REGIONAL COMMITTEE**.
For a campaigning and democratic **NOLS** — with socialist policies!

May Day

For workers' internationalism

AT THIS year's May Day celebrations, British workers will be overwhelmingly pre-occupied with the miners' strike, one which is taking the form of naked class struggle in a sharper way than in any other strike for many years.

But May Day is also the day of workers' internationalism. It had its origins, almost one hundred years ago, in the very first internationally organised workers' demonstrations in favour of the eight-hour working day.

It is fitting, therefore, that workers, even in the midst of their own bitter disputes, should recognise and pay tribute to the heroic struggle of their brothers and sisters overseas, fighting for their own jobs, decent living conditions and democratic freedoms.

The British press has conspired to throw a wall of silence around these shores—to keep workers away from any news about strikes, occupations or demonstrations abroad, in case the example is followed here. Yet there have been, even in the recent period, waves of strikes and workers' struggles in Europe, North America, Africa and Latin America.

In France, for example, there have been huge demonstrations as steelworkers and miners, especially from the North-Eastern Lorraine region, have protested against the threat to tens of thousands of their jobs. The French government, 'socialist' in name, but carrying out a programme to rescue capitalism at the workers' expense, has announced the end of nearly a third of Lorraine's 97,000 steel jobs. Tens of thousands of these workers marched through Paris only two weeks ago, blocking streets and demanding that 'their' government look after their livelihoods.

In Spain also plans by the right wing 'socialist' government to 'restructure' (ie decimate) the basic industries like steel and coal have met with a furious response by the workers. Towards the end of last year protests in the steel town of Sagunto reached general strike proportions as workers erected barricades and fought with police.

In Belgium, real cuts in wages led to a general strike last year, beginning spontaneously in the railway station at Charleroi. Across the border in Holland workers have been forced into taking strike action to defend themselves from cuts in wages.

Workers in Italy, only a month ago, staged the biggest mass demonstration since the war. Around a million workers took to the streets to rally against a government plan to tamper with the *scala mobile*—the index that automatically links wages to price rises.

Further north, German workers are gearing themselves up for the

of workers in struggle in different parts of the world. Drawing the threads of all these movements together, it is clear that society on a world scale is moving in the direction of social upheaval and revolution.

Whether in the most industrial-ly advanced countries or in the most backward, there is no way that society can move forward on a capitalist basis. Despite the development of science and technique, adequate enough to put men on the moon and build laboratories in space, the private ownership of the means of production and the separation of economies by national boundaries pose insurmountable obstacles to the progress of humanity as a whole.

The Eastern European states, despite their planned economies, are increasingly bogged down by waste and mismanagement. They either crawl ahead at a snail's pace or slip backwards, because of the absence of democratic workers' control of the economy and the state.

Eastern European impasse

These Stalinist regimes, military-police dictatorships that masquerade as 'socialist' states, will increasingly face the furious opposition of their own workers to petty restrictions, falling living standards and the lack of workers' democracy—as in Poland a few years ago.

No part of the globe can now be isolated from the struggle of the working class to fight for genuine socialism. The labour movement is entering what will prove to be the most disturbed period in the whole of human history.

One thing clearly shown by all these workers' struggles is the power of the labour movement.

By John Pickard

possibility of big strikes over the demand of their unions for a cut in the working week to 35 hours. Already, newspapers have tasted the power of the workers as the printing union staged a one-day strike to reduce hours.

Across the ocean in Latin America, the labour movement is flexing its power in one country after another to demand democratic rights. 750,000 demonstrated in the Brazilian city of Sao Paulo last week to demand a direct popular election of the new president. Bolivian workers, in the same week, were engaged in a whole series of general strikes and demonstrations to force the government in La Paz to drop austerity measures.

Meanwhile, Chilean workers, struggling against one of the most vicious and brutal regimes on the continent, have continued in the last few weeks their days of protest to campaign for democratic rights. Workers in Peru and Argentina have also been in struggle in recent weeks.

African workers' struggle

South African workers have staggered their bosses by their audacity and willingness to embark on struggles for higher wages. African workers have been building up the strength and cohesion of their unofficial trade union organisations over the years and the ruling class have sought to defuse the movement by granting a few modest concessions. But these have only increased the confidence and the enthusiasm of workers to fight for their rights against the racist apartheid regime.

In backward India, one of the poorest nations of the world, the workers' movement has mobilised hundreds of thousands in huge strikes in almost every industry and state. It seems that as soon as one enormous strike is over there is another somewhere else in the country.

Thousands of Indian dockworkers last week won a magnificent victory, despite the monstrous brutality of the police in one port who were responsible for a massacre of nearly 300 strikers and their families.

There are many, many more examples, far too numerous to mention, of the heroism and endurance



May Day began as an international struggle for the eight hour day. This recent demonstration of German workers in favour of the 35-hour week could be paralleled by a similar one in any of a dozen countries.

Even in the most underdeveloped countries, the workers play a decisive role because of their position in the economy and their methods of struggle.

What is true of the more backward countries is a thousand times more true of the advanced capitalist countries. Properly led and mobilised, there is no power that can stand in the way of the working class fighting to change society, whether that is in Britain, France, USA, Germany, Japan, or any of the capitalist states.

All these workers' struggles have been brought down on their own heads by the actions of the capitalists themselves. In almost every country living standards are under attack in one way or another.

The modest increases in living standards achieved in the period of the post-war boom are now under threat. All the gains of the so-called 'affluent society' are being eroded. The capitalist class have engineered the very conditions that impel workers into a furious resistance, into class struggle.

Workers understand and can see

that possibilities inherent in science and industry leap ahead. There is no 'natural' reason why life should not get better year by year. Yet millions starve, suffer from disease, social decay or unemployment and vast resources are ploughed into monstrous weapons of war.

Throughout the whole period of the post-war boom, it was only the Marxist tendency around *Militant* that explained the inevitability of workers having to struggle to keep the gains they had earned. Every other section of the labour movement, from the extreme right to the ultra-left lost all confidence in the ability of the working class, especially in the West, to embark upon the road of struggle. Events have amply demonstrated the correctness of Marxist perspectives.

The theme of May Day meetings, therefore, whilst giving applause to the struggles of British miners, must also be to salute the movements of the working class internationally, and to look with confidence to the struggle for and the achievement of socialism on an international scale.

... and solidarity

There have always been some within the British labour movement who have sought to erect a wall between the workers' traditions in this country and those elsewhere. British workers, they argued, were not like those on the continent. They would never adopt the methods of radical or revolutionary class politics typical of, say, France or Italy.

These prejudices were reinforced by the Tories' election victory last year. So-called "theoreticians" came forward with the idea that the Labour Party must readjust its policies away from the 'old' class-based politics, towards the new "upwardly-mobile" affluent workers.

The Tories' victory, it was argued, was an indication of an

historic shift to the right. The industrial working class, which had always been the foundation of the Labour Party, was now a small minority and the white-collar workers taking their place were not prepared to struggle.

These ideas found an echo principally among the 'soft left' within the Labour Party, but also in the 'Communist' Party and even among the ultra-left sects, who condemned *Militant* supporters for their 'mis-placed optimism'.

Even in the coalfields, it was said, the young affluent miners, with mortgages and big cars, were not the same breed who took their union to two great national strikes in the early 1970s.

It was only the Marxists in the labour movement who consistent-

ly argued that the election result was a temporary aberration—a single *snapshot* of the mood at a time when politics were still largely influenced by the aftermath of the Falklands war. *Militant* supporters argued that the real underlying mood within the working class was not one of demoralisation but bitterness, anger and a willingness—when the union leadership gave a lead—to fight for their rights.

The miners' strike has completely vindicated this view. The strike has grown in stature, despite a faltering start, and now looks like becoming the most significant industrial battle since 1926, one that will leave a permanent mark on British politics.

(continued on page 12)

CHILE

After the

CHILEAN SOCIETY is on the brink of massive revolutionary upheavals.

The military-police dictatorship which seized power in 1973, supported by the decisive sections of Chilean capitalism and assisted through the intervention of American imperialism, has lost all basis in society.

It has been incapable of solving any of Chile's fundamental problems and is now governing as a decaying, isolated military clique. Despite the bloody repression, workers, youth and sectors of the middle class have moved into opposition to Pinochet.

After more than a decade of horrific tortures, arrests and intimidation the masses are regaining their confidence and willingness to struggle. Today the youth above all, are no longer intimidated by repression. Workers are preparing to decisively enter the arena of battle. The middle class has now swung overwhelmingly against the dictatorship.

50,000 deaths

As the battle unfolds and a new generation takes up the struggle, the nightmare of the last decade must not be forgotten. Indeed the full extent of the torture and killings is only now being counted.

The mass killings in the National Stadium immediately after the coup, the systematic repression by the ruthless state security police, the CNI, the beatings and shootings by other sections of the state have all amounted to 50,000 deaths or disappearances. In Britain it is equivalent to 250,000 being murdered.

As the mass move onto the offensive the processes at work must be fully grasped, the lessons of the past learned, and applied to the future struggle. On that basis the past sacrifices, especially of the youth, will not have been in vain.

Karl Marx once explained that revolution starts at the top, and is reflected in the decay and splits which open up amongst the ruling class. Today in Chile this has developed to an almost unprecedented degree. The ruling class, the Junta itself, is split from top to bottom. This has arisen from the catastrophe which confronts Chilean society in every sphere, and has been aggravated by the monetarist measures so enthusiastically applied in Pinochet's early years.

There has been a wholesale slaughter of Chile's manufacturing industry with disastrous consequences. Always weak and tied to foreign imperial powers, especially the USA in recent years, the Chilean national capitalists have been battered by the recent crisis.

The monetarist measures of the "Chicago boys" have made things even worse. Investment now only accounts for 12% of Gross National Product compared to 20% in the 1960s. The closure of factories has been drastic. The big Sumara textile plant in Vicuna McKenna

By Alan Woods

which employed 10,000 in 1973 now only employs 200.

The industrial working class now accounts for 19% of the total workforce compared with 27% in 1970, with a 32% fall in industrial employment since 1972. The international banks' crippling interest charges on loans, have further aggravated the situation. Chile's foreign debt now stands at US \$21 billion, the highest per head of population in Latin America. National exports for Chile will only cover the servicing of the debt until 1990.

The Chilean capitalist class, tied completely to American imperialism through financial and industrial links, have in effect mortgaged the entire economy. They play no independent or progressive role, acting simply as stock brokers for imperialism. Their parasitic character is shown by the fact that of all loans given to Chile, 30% are invested abroad, a staggering 63% is unaccounted for, with only 7% being invested in the Chilean economy.

This has meant a nightmare for the working and middle classes. Living standards for those in work officially fell by 4.15% between 1982-3. Yet even this figure hides the mass pauperisation. In many of the massive *poblaciones* (shanty towns) around Santiago unemployment can be as high as 90%.

A research document by a group of Christian Democrats, estimated that of the population of 11½ million, eight million are "undernourished". Inflation, according to the UN, stands at 30%, and has eaten into the position of even the upper sections of the middle class, who have also been hit by rising unemployment. 35% of doctors in Santiago are currently unemployed.

Pinochet clings to power

So it is not surprising that the regime is hated by everyone. Couple that with the constant police brutality against political activists and anyone else who happens to be in the way, and any support Pinochet had amongst the middle classes, has melted away.

The regime now has no social basis of support at all. It has desperately tried to win some back by undertaking measures to assist sections of the middle class. Most have had no effect, and some create even more opposition.

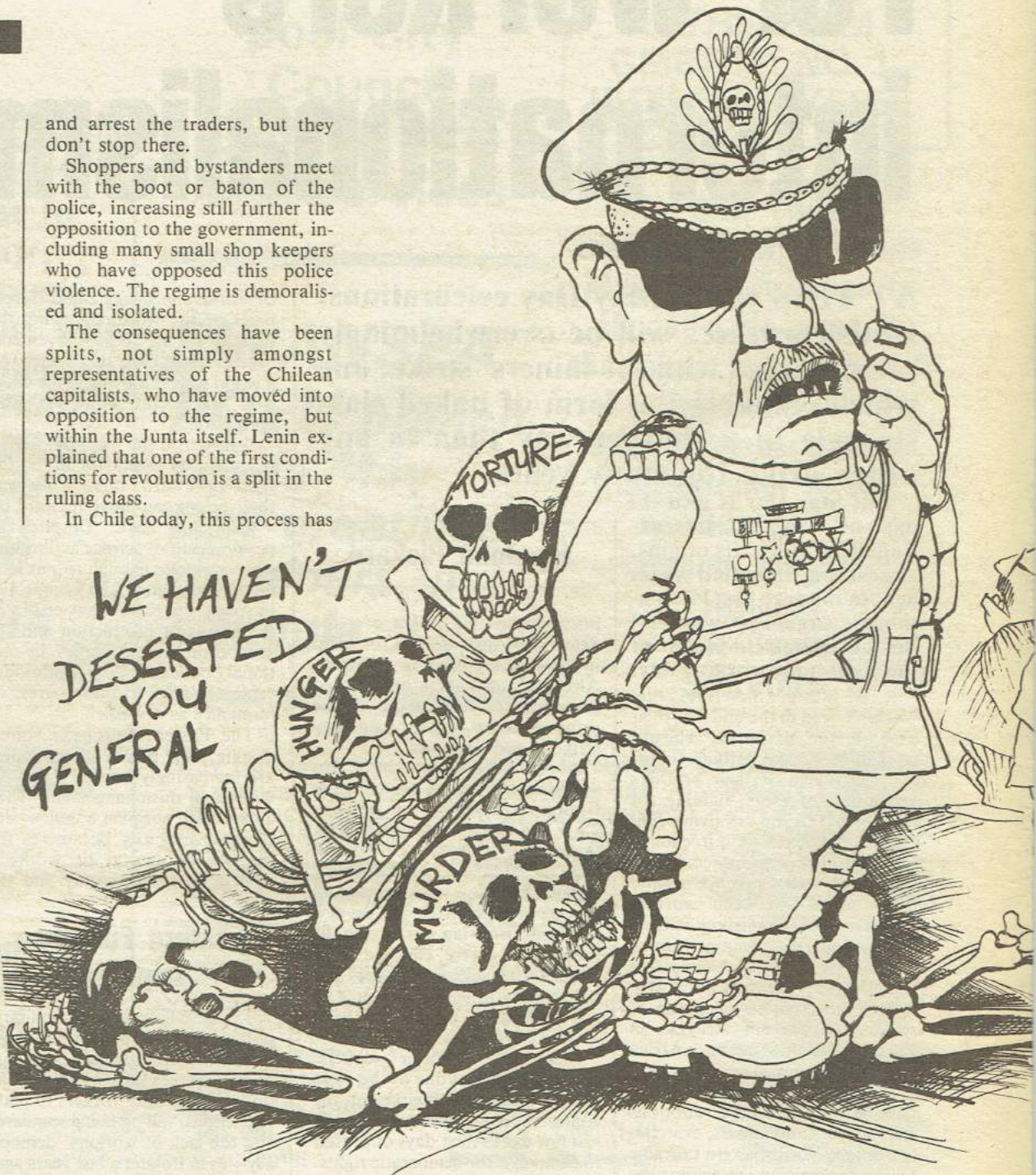
Every day street traders (thousands of unemployed workers from the factories) flood into Santiago centre from the *poblaciones* selling goods for a few pesos, cheaper than the established small shops. To try and win support from the small shop keepers the regime ordered the police to crack down on these traders. Almost every day the police in full riot dress with dogs and batons attack

and arrest the traders, but they don't stop there.

Shoppers and bystanders meet with the boot or baton of the police, increasing still further the opposition to the government, including many small shop keepers who have opposed this police violence. The regime is demoralised and isolated.

The consequences have been splits, not simply amongst representatives of the Chilean capitalists, who have moved into opposition to the regime, but within the Junta itself. Lenin explained that one of the first conditions for revolution is a split in the ruling class.

In Chile today, this process has



reached almost comical proportions. Proclamations are issued one day only to be contradicted the next. Senior government figures speak of a future return to democracy, only to be attacked by other government members.

Pinochet sees his regime continuing until 1989, the official date set for elections. Mattei, head of the air force, has called for the process to be brought forward by two years.

Yet Pinochet clings on to power, even turning to religion to justify continuing his presidency, proclaiming himself to be, "appointed by God to wage a struggle against Marxism". To maintain himself in office he announced, "...what the government requires is a mass base of support. No one however should expect anything in return."

A feeling of despair extends throughout the entire government. Asked recently about the divisions in the Cabinet, Finance Minister, Passicot replied, "I know nothing about what happens in the government and I know nothing about economics".

An indication of the deep crisis was the request by Pinochet of the resignation of a key member of the government, Economics Minister, Cáceres. He agreed to resign even though a mere four months ago Pinochet declared that he would be in the government until the very end! To resolve these problems Pinochet has now appointed a

special Government Department of the Future!

This has been coupled with an increasing willingness to struggle, especially by the youth. Massive pressure is building up which threatens a revolutionary explosion. In the minds of the youth and growing sections of the working class, the need not simply to overthrow the dictatorship, but to carry through the socialist revolution is being understood.

Workers more active

In all the days of protest the youth have been to the forefront. Confronting heavily armed police on the streets they have shown willingness to fight. Many have attempted and some succeeded in arming themselves for this struggle. The working class is showing a growing confidence.

Until recently the traditionally militant and decisive sections of the working class have drawn back from open conflict with the regime. This process has now begun to change as confidence is raised, partly as a result of the struggles of the youth and partly due to the obvious government crisis, and through the experience of workers.

There are widespread discussions on the question of a general strike to defeat Pinochet. An important feature in the March day of protest was the beginning of a movement

among the working class. Previously, the movement had been dominated by the youth and people of the *poblaciones*.

In the main cities 100% of lorry drivers struck along with 80% of public transport and the widespread closure of shops. For the first time mass assemblies of workers were held in the factories on the day of protest.

This delay in the movement of decisive sections of workers has undoubtedly led to a feeling of impatience among many youth. Many have taken inspiration from the movement in Central America and have begun to look for an armed rising of those from the *poblaciones* to defeat Pinochet.

The youth have undoubtedly been the most heroic and determined to struggle. But for the successful development of the Chilean revolution this energy and determination must be directed into the workers' movement. For only the working class, with its social weight, power and cohesion, together with the support of the youth, *pobladores* and sections of the middle class, can ensure success for the Chilean revolution.

Pinochet's tyrannical regime clearly must be fought, arms in hand. But to ensure its success it must be an armed movement of the entire working class.

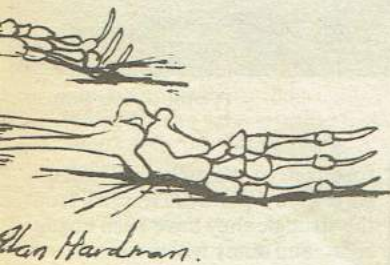
For many Chilean youth there is an instinctive understanding of the crucial necessity of a mass workers'

Junta collapses

movement.

However, during the temporary delay in the movement of the industrial workers, sections of the youth have questioned the role of the working class, some looking to the methods of individual terrorism as a solution. Such a method of struggle, however heroic its participants may be, would not lead to victory for the Chilean masses.

It is impossible to act as a substitute for a mass workers' movement. Any attempt to do so reduces the consciousness of



Alan Hardman

the working class of the need to struggle and provides an excuse for even further repression. Tragically, it often leads to the loss of some of the best working class fighters.

The capitalists' fear of the bitterness of the youth coming together with a conscious movement of the working class now leaves them on the horns of a dilemma.

'Spanish solution'

Because of the massive opposition to Pinochet, they have been forced into opposition to him. Their ideal policy would be the 'Spanish solution' of reform from the top to prevent revolution from below. Fortunately for the Spanish bosses, Franco died. Pinochet, however, is fiercely fighting to maintain his position.

Their dilemma is that ditching the dictator could open the way to an explosion they could not control. Alternatively, to leave him in power risks a massive revolutionary confrontation. In a desperate attempt to overcome this problem they have once more undertaken an initiative to try and establish a "dialogue" of the government and the main parties.

The inherent dangers for them were revealed in the build up to the most recent day of protest. The mood of the youth and *pobladores* was such that had the government tried to crush it they could easily have unleashed a revolt they could

not control, including the immediate development of a general strike.

Due to the intervention of Monsignor Fresno of the Church, and a more far-sighted government member Jarpa, who reportedly walked out of a Cabinet meeting when it seemed that the government was going to adopt a hard line policy, Pinochet drew back and the protest went off relatively peacefully, although extremely successfully from the workers' point of view.

The ruling class can see no immediate solution if the most recent attempt at a dialogue fails. The price of failure, as a section of them are aware, is high. Any break down in dialogue would lead to the Christian Democrats losing credibility, which would be gained by the workers' parties.

This is a development which a section of the Christian Democrats have attempted to overcome by insisting that the Movement of Popular Democracy (MDP), including both the Communist Party and the Almeyda wing of the Socialist Party, be involved in any future dialogue. Although prospects for a further dialogue are unclear this development shows clearly the fears of the strategists of Chilean capital.

Capitalist democracy

The central question before the entire Chilean workers' movement is how the revolution is to proceed, and what is the nature of the revolution. For the majority of the leadership it is portrayed as a "bourgeois democratic revolution", a struggle to overthrow dictatorship and establish a form of capitalist democracy. The idea of socialism is left to the dim and distant future.

The Communist Party leaders and the tops of the main factions of the Socialist Party are demanding a joint platform and struggle between the CD's and all so-called "progressive" and "democratic" wings of the capitalist class and the workers' parties. The MDP is campaigning for agreement with the CD-led Democratic Alliance.

Such a programme, however, ignores the lessons of the history of the Chilean and international working class and the processes at work in the Chilean revolution today. Every section of the Chilean workers now stands in favour of elementary democratic rights to vote, strike, have free assembly, organise political parties, etc. The central question, however, is how these rights are to be won and guaranteed and how they are to solve the other fundamental problems of unemployment and poverty.

The only force in society with the strength to overthrow the dictatorship and establish these democratic rights is the working class on an independent platform to gain the support of the youth, *pobladores*, and middle class. To rely on an alliance with the capitalist parties which backed the coup in 1973 will only open the road to disaster.

What is posed in Chile is not the 'bourgeois democratic' revolution but the socialist revolution, which can only be carried through by the working class. The capitalist class of Chile, weak and totally depen-



Last weekend, the Labour Party Young Socialists' conference launched the Chile Socialist Defence Campaign. At the international rally on Sunday evening, Alan Woods gave an inspiring account of the rebirth of the Chilean workers' movement after the Pinochet coup. The LPYS commitment to internationalism was shown by the marvellous collection. It raised over £2,000 which will go to help dockers in Chile rebuild their union
Photograph: T Carroll

dent on American imperialism, is incapable of performing any progressive role.

The capitalists have only been spurred into any opposition to the regime because of the enormous opposition which has built up and the regime's disastrous economic policies.

Every section of Chilean society knows the days of the Pinochet regime are numbered. The capitalists' hope lies in being able to establish some form of provisional government, involving the Socialist Party, with a view to calling elections.

In this way they hope to be able to contain the revolution. This proposal is being accepted by the leaders of all the main workers' parties, including the CP. The consequence and cost has been to boost the authority of the Christian Democrats.

Socialist conclusions

Should the workers' parties fail to break from this course, it is even possible that the Christian Democrats could emerge from the fall of the dictatorship as the largest party, not because of their social support but because the power was passed to them by the workers' leaders. However, the best laid plans of both the capitalist and workers' leaders can be shaken by the intervention of the masses.

Already Christian Democrats are viewed with suspicion by many. The support they appeared to be establishing over recent months has begun to wane, especially in the light of the collapse of the dialogue last September. The working class movement is rapidly developing. Even before the fall of the dictatorship large sections of Chilean society are looking for a path to take the revolution forward to a socialist conclusion.

At a recent 7,000-8,000 rally organised by the Christian Left a new development was seen. Banners demanding "Democracy" had added to them "and socialism". As though to answer those at the head

of the MDP about the nature of the revolution, and under massive pressure from below, its programme now includes the call for nationalisation of industry.

How this is to be accommodated into an alliance with the Christian Democratic leaders is not explained by the CP leadership. Indeed the leadership has been willing to drop or alter its programme if it is included in any dialogue. It is, however, now possible that the workers parties will emerge as the majority force after Pinochet's downfall. It would be a certainty if the leadership adopted a clear Marxist programme.

The unfolding revolution demands an independent class stand from the workers parties, starting with the calling of an immediate general strike to overthrow the regime. Such a general strike, like any other, would pose the question of power, of which class is to run society. This question must be resolved by the working class.

The establishment of *cordones*, workers councils drawing in the *pobladores* and small businessmen is essential; they are the only organisations which can unify the working class, undertake an effective struggle and establish a workers government.

The *cordones* must take responsibility for defending the workers' districts by establishing an armed workers' militia and above all through an appeal to the ranks of the armed forces to come to the side of the revolution. With a bold approach to convince them, that the regime's overthrow was decisively posed, they would undoubtedly respond and ensure the breaking of the Pinochet regime.

Yet after the overthrow of the regime, the *cordones* must ensure they don't allow the revolution to be handed back to the representatives of capitalism. They must assume the formation of a new government, through the calling of a National Peoples Assembly of the local, city and district *cordones*.

Only such a body can be trusted with the defence of the revolution and the calling of a genuinely

democratic Revolutionary Constituent Assembly. The workers and not the generals must oversee elections.

The support of the middle class could be gained through implementation of a socialist plan based on a nationalised economy run democratically by the working class, and implementing an emergency programme to reduce the working week, provide a minimum wage, begin a massive scheme of public works such as housing and a free national health service. In this way the revolution could be won.

The Chilean revolution has begun

Such a programme will find massive support from Chilean workers and youth. The struggle for its adoption has begun. Clearly any government remaining in the confines of capitalism will stumble from crisis to crisis; there is no solution to Chile's problems under capitalism.

Any future workers' government which fails to take the revolution forward to its socialist conclusion would again raise the prospect of disaster for Chilean workers. If the working class fails to take power, the Chilean capitalists will without doubt move over once more to a programme of out and out reaction.

After the fall of Pinochet, unless the question of the socialist revolution is resolved in say five or seven years the question of another coup will be posed. That is an horrendous prospect and must not be allowed to happen.

In the course of events, the mass of Chilean workers and youth will find a way to the programme of Marxism and the necessary leadership fashioned to fight for its success. The Chilean revolution has begun. Its success will open the way for the working class to win victory throughout Latin America and for a socialist federation throughout the continent.



May Day

Solidarity with miners

(contued from page 9)

The tremendous solidarity offered to the miners shows the real mood of the working class. Overwhelmingly, the active layers of the trade unions have come to the conclusions that "the miners *have* to win—for our sake as well as theirs".

'Moderates' got off their knees

The volatility within society has been shown by the swings of opinion within particular coalfields. Weeks after voting by three to one against a strike, the Notts miners are now at least evenly divided over the issue and up to 12,000 are on strike. Areas like Northumberland and Durham, which were bastions of the right wing in the past, are now solidly on strike.

A militant, as the saying goes, is only a moderate who has got off his knees.

The miners' strike is acting as a catalyst, bringing forward all the discontent and opposition lying under the surface of society. Even the capitalist press have commented that this strike is shaping up as one of class against class.

Thatcher and her wing of the Tory party have had a strategy of taking on the weaker unions first and only then advancing to take on stronger ones like the miners. There can be no doubt that the strike was provoked by MacGregor and the government at a time they thought best suited their own interests.

A section of the Tory party, reflecting the desperation of the British ruling class to cut living standards, is consciously preparing to take Britain along the road of Parliamentary-Bonapartism, that is, towards a greater curtailment of civil and democratic rights. The massive deployment of police in a nationally-coordinated paramilitary operation, already using methods that transcend the actual legal powers they have, is a further indication of this process.

But the deployment of even these large forces of police, and the threat to use the army to move coal stocks, will not break the solidarity of the miners, backed by other workers.

Rights achieved by struggle

MacGregor at least had the sense to realise that had he gone ahead with his High Court action to stop the flying pickets, he would have found himself in a worse position: far from stopping the picketing, he would have increased the solidarity and resolve of the miners to take the fight through to the end.

The Tory laws, as *Militant* has explained, present no fundamental obstacle to the labour movement, mobilised for action. The organisations and the rights established by workers over many generations of struggle cannot be taken away by the stroke of a lawyer's pen.

Neither will workers be intimidated by MacGregor's threat that the strike will go "into next winter". Complete solidarity within the NUM itself and support of other trade unionists will shorten the perspective of the strike considerably, no matter what stocks are claimed by the NCB and the Central Electricity Generating Board.

It is only a matter of time before coal is stopped altogether and supportive action is extended by workers in other industries including the power stations.

Because of the sharpness of the strike and all that flows from it—its effect especially on the morale



Yorkshire miners march through Sheffield after the special NUM conference on April 19.

Photo: Jacob Sutton

of other workers and on their capacity to defend themselves against the Tory government—it carries with it the possibility of a general strike.

A general strike is a movement of the whole working class. It would push the battle unmistakably onto the political plane; and it would leave its mark on British politics for decades. It would probably signal, no matter what the particular result, the beginning of the end of the Thatcher government.

A general strike has very serious implications for workers. It is, to use the military analogy of Trotsky, a "war manoeuvre". It is not a small skirmish, or even a battle: but a decisive movement upon which a whole campaign or war might hinge. Success or failure would stamp itself upon events for a whole period afterwards.

In a general strike, all the class contradictions within society, and the social position of the classes, are laid bare. Workers mobilised in their millions become aware for the first time of their enormous social power: it is their energy, skill and labours around which society revolves.

General Strike— who runs society

Moreover, such a mass movement raises the expectations of workers onto a qualitatively different plane: entering combat on such a scale always raises the hope and expectation that there could be a permanent resolution of all the social and economic problems that workers face—there is automatically a cry, taken up by workers in

their millions, for *change*.

A general strike, in other words, poses the question of power—which class will hold the reins in society: the capitalists or the workers.

In such conditions, if there were Marxist leaders at the head of the labour movement, workers could be offered the programme and perspective of the socialist transformation of society: the planned use of the nation's resources, with democratic workers' control and management of the economy and the state.

The mobilisation of the class could be given goals commensurate with the scale of the struggle and the expectations of the workers. Socialist change in one country would then act as a huge pole of attraction to the hundreds of millions of workers internationally.

But on the other hand, in the absence of a Marxist leadership, a general strike will inevitably lead to a set-back: the workers going back to work, as before, leaving the fundamental problems of society unresolved; a bitter and disappointing anti-climax.

Yet at the same time, such a movement would have a profound effect on the ruling class. It could mean the fall of the government, and the election of a Labour government, opening up a whole new phase of political change.

In any event, even if there were a general strike from which workers returned to work disappointed, the labour movement would rapidly recover.

After the terrible defeat of the 1926 general strike, the attentions of workers were shifted to the political plane with the election of

a Labour government. But in industry, many thousands were blacklisted, and millions experienced an erosion of their working conditions.

It took the best part of a decade before workers in industry were able to re-assert their shop floor rights. The 1927 Trades Dispute Act, introducing 'contracting in' to the political levy instead of 'contracting out' was only reversed in 1945.

But under modern conditions, even after big setbacks, the working class will recover far more quickly. The labour movement is much stronger today than was the case in the past.

Even in the recent recession, the numerical strength of the trade unions has not fallen by anything like the proportion during the recession years of the 1920s.

Trade unions have extended their organisation today into whole new sections of workers like civil servants, teachers, local authority workers, hospital workers, as well as into modern industries like telecommunications and transport. The strategic power of the working class makes it the strongest potential force in society.

It is clear that whatever the immediate outcome, the miners' strike could become a major landmark in the development of British politics.

Growth of Marxist ideas

The workers' experiences of the use of the police in a clear political fashion is something they will not easily forget. Young miners in particular, those who have been in the

forefront of the picketing, will absorb many political lessons from the struggle they have been engaged in, and many will move towards Marxist ideas and conclusions.

The raw human social forces that will move society forward and will bring about the socialist transformation will be found in groups of workers like those young miners—energetic, audacious and above all determined to fight for their rights and for their futures.

All those faint-hearts who wrote off the British working class only a few months ago after the election have now been made to swallow their words. The scholarly professors who lectured workers about the 'moderate' and 'harmonious' traditions of British labour have had a salutary lesson in how traditions and conditions can change.

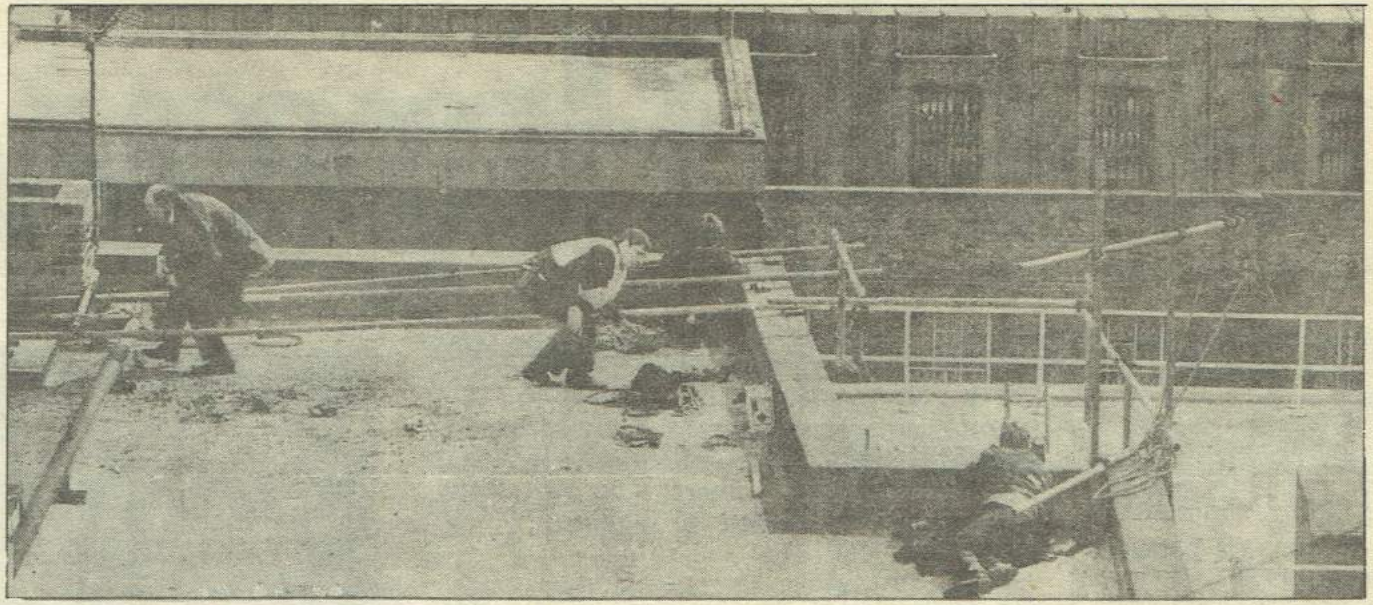
British politics is no longer characterised by slowness and measured change... if it ever was. Its predominant feature now is its volatility.

Capitalism can offer workers nothing in the future: no guarantee of jobs, living conditions, welfare, health or education rights. It is the realisation of this, borne of their own experience, that drives workers towards socialist ideas.

Marxists can draw inspiration and confidence from the miners' struggle. The period now opening up will be one more favourable for the growth of Marxist ideas than any other in history, including the tumultuous years of 1917-21.

It is only in the widespread growth of such socialist ideas that workers will find a future, in Britain and internationally. That must be the message hammered home this May Day.

Qaddafi terror strikes in Britain



Above: police marksmen keep watch over Libya People's Bureau in St James' Square.
Below: Colonel Qaddafi



By Lynn
Walsh

WITH A violent shock, television pictures of the horrifying shooting in St James's Square have brought Libya's political conflicts to the attention of everyone in Britain.

The unprovoked shooting of anti-Qaddafi demonstrators from the embassy, and the killing of a policewoman, have aroused horror and indignation. Even in the context of other violent incidents, what happened outside the Libyan embassy is particularly outrageous.

The police siege, however, with the massive force of armed police and paramilitary equipment, is also on an unprecedented scale. The extension of the Qaddafi regime's violent methods of repression to British soil has provided the authorities with yet another excuse for a display of special powers which potentially pose a threat to the labour movement and our democratic rights.

No doubt the Tory government would like nothing better than to take revenge on Qaddafi's representatives. Qaddafi's use of the oil weapon to push up oil prices; his intervention in Chad; his support for the Palestinians and other guerrilla groups; and his unrelenting propaganda war against imperialism have made Libya's unpredictable ruler a thorn in the flesh for capitalist governments.

8000 Britons in Libya

Given the diplomatic conventions under the Treaty of Vienna, however, the government has no choice but to break off diplomatic relations and expel all the occupants of the "People's Bureau", abandoning any hope of legal action against whoever was responsible for the shooting.

In the past, Britain would have sent the gunboats, and some Tories will still be screaming for punitive retaliation. But violation of diplomatic immunity would open up a Pandora's box of unpredictable repercussions internationally, and not only for future British-Libyan relations. More immediately, Britain's response is constrained by the presence of over 8,000 Britons in Libya, all potential hostages.

President Reagan's announcement last week that

he was sanctioning pre-emptive undercover operations abroad against "terrorist targets"—in other words, officially sponsored US terrorism—underlines the hypocrisy in many of the official denunciations of Qaddafi's policies.

The recent increase in tension between Libya and the West, moreover, is largely the US government's responsibility. Reagan put pressure on US oil companies, now there is a world glut, to pull out of Libya. He also stepped up military provocations against Libya, which reached their height with the shooting down of two Libyan jet fighters in 1981. On the other hand, the US has now admitted that it rebuffed secret approaches from the Libyan government in 1983 to discuss "co-existence".

However, the struggle of the "revolutionary committees" based in Libya's "People's Bureaux" in Britain and other countries has been directed not so much against imperialism as against Qaddafi's exiled opponents. For the last three years there has been systematic terror organised from Tripoli, with the assassination of opposition leaders, and a systematic campaign of bombings and shootings to intimidate all opponents living abroad. The St James's Square shooting is just the latest of a series of bloody incidents in Britain.

Since the shooting, moreover, it has emerged that the anti-Qaddafi demonstration in London was itself prompted by reports of the recent public hanging in Tripoli University of two students who had voiced criticism of the regime. Other public executions of opponents have been carried out over the last three years.

These events, and Qaddafi's attempt to justify them with his own brand of socialism, clearly poses the question: What kind of state is Libya? Is it really socialist?

Most of the economy is undoubtedly controlled by the state. The petroleum industry, the vital source of

Libya's wealth, has been nationalised step by step since Qaddafi seized power in 1969. About 30%, mainly new development, is still owned by foreign oil companies.

Before oil, there was virtually no industrial sector. Manufactures were imported, paid for by agricultural exports but especially by aid from the US and Britain in return for military bases.

Since the oil boom, Libya's modernisation has been through state development plans, financed from oil revenues. This applies to both the infrastructure (ports, roads, electricity, railways, etc) and to new industry (textiles, tanneries,

chemicals, tyres, glass, etc).

Compared to the pre-1969 position, industrialisation has been dramatic though non-oil manufacturing still contributes less than 2% to GNP.

Soon after the coup all commercial banks were nationalised. A decade later all importing was transferred to public corporations. Later, shops were banned from selling imported clothes, electrical goods, etc, and steps were taken to concentrate retail trade into state-administered supermarkets.

Although the regime's plans may not yet be totally effective, it is clear that

agriculture is the only sector where there is any significant private ownership left.

Libyan capitalism, such as it was—never more than a feeble commercial appendage to foreign capital—has clearly been wiped out. These radical changes have undoubtedly been directed from above. However, massive, though very uneven, improvements in living standards have aroused popular support, and the "popular committees" and the more recent "revolutionary committees" have played some role in carrying through social changes.

It is the radical reforms, marking a big advance for most Libyans, which have ensured the regime's

the regime is still moving in a radical direction. A revival of capitalism after a period of rapid modernisation through state intervention, as in Egypt after Nasser or in Algeria after Ben Bella, appears to be ruled out both by the international crisis and by the lack of opportunities or points of support for capitalism within Libya.

But accepting Qaddafi's claim that Libya is socialist, which for Marxists implies the conscious involvement of the working class in the running of society, is quite another matter.

Police state

Libya is officially a "Socialist Arab Jamahiriya" ("state of the masses") based on Qaddafi's "third universal theory", an Islamic alternative to both capitalism and atheistic Communism.

In theory, control is exercised by the masses through popular congresses. In practice, the regime is run as a police state. Discussion at the base is tolerated only insofar as it corresponds with the vision at the top.

Significantly, there are no popular committees in either the petroleum industry or the army, originally the real bases of Qaddafi's power. More recently, however, plots within the officer corps led Qaddafi to form the Islamic revolutionary militia based on universal conscription, including women. The militias draw on enthusiastic support from some sections of youth, but are nevertheless firmly controlled from above.

Qaddafi's regime is in reality a form of bonapartism which has gained exceptional autonomy and dynamism from the mushrooming of Libya's immense oil wealth. Capitalism had nothing to offer, and therefore Qaddafi has attempted to push beyond the limits of capitalism, forcing the pace of change through the brutal power of the state.

To appeal to the workers and labouring poor of Libya and the Arab lands, Qaddafi has fashioned himself exotic socialist clothes. Yet because of the country's paucity of resources, oil aside, and the weakness of the working class (60% of the workforce is drawn from abroad because of the shortage of skills at home), the regime progresses through methods which appear completely barbaric to the workers in countries where the labour movement has won democratic rights.

Ferocious repression, virulent nationalism, and the regime's Islamic complexion rule out any appeal to the working class internationally. This can only accentuate the narrow national limitations and acute contradictions of Libya's position.

Nowhere is this more evi-

dent than in Qaddafi's foreign policy. His fervent pursuit of "Arab unity" with attempted mergers with Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, and others, and his intervention in Morocco, Chad, Sudan, and Uganda (supporting the moslem Amin), have brought him into sharp conflict with most of the Arab states, apart from Syria (whose Soviet arms bills Libya has consistently paid). Other Arab ruler regard Qaddafi as a dangerous maverick who could afford adventurist policies because of oil wealth and indulge in implacable struggle against the Zionism because of his remoteness from Israel's borders.

Only if the workers and labouring poor of the Middle East and North Africa, on the basis of class unity and Marxist ideas, move to transform society and establish a Socialist Federation of States will the grotesque problems created under capitalism be solved. Peculiar, distorted bonapartist regimes like Qaddafi's arise precisely from the delay of socialist change internationally, particularly in those countries where capitalism has laid the material basis for a higher level of development under socialism.

Meanwhile, Qaddafi will almost certainly face sharper opposition in the next period, both at home and among the 100,000 exiles. Inevitably, Qaddafi's measures met with opposition from the old ruling strata, especially from businessmen, merchants and the professions close to them. The recent take-over of the retail trade provoked even more opposition.

Hit squads

Many of the opposition groups now based abroad, undoubtedly represent reactionary interests, and some of them are probably secretly backed by the US. But the ranks of the opposition have been swelled, especially from among students, by the intensification of Qaddafi's repression, with more public hangings and other executions and the continued use of hit-squads abroad to assassinate or intimidate opponents.

Moreover, opposition groups have been emboldened by recent discontent in Libya over shortages and worsening conditions for some sections. This reflects the state's growing economic difficulties as the world oil glut has reduced sales and depressed prices, sharply reducing Libya's oil revenues.

The conflict in St James's Square is just one sign that, from now on, Qaddafi will have much less room for manoeuvre than he enjoyed during the exuberant days of the oil boom.

SPRING ISSUE—MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW—JUST OUT

Articles on: Andropov and after
Lenin's last struggle
1983 Belgian General Strike

Buy it from your Militant seller, 75p or order from
World Socialist Books 90p (incl. p&rp), 1 Mentmore
Terrace, London E8 3PN.

**LPYS
23rd Annual
Conference '84**

Here we go!

YTS trainees fightback

CONFERENCE TOOK up one of the main issues facing young workers today, the industrial conscription of the Youth Training Schemes.

One of the best contributions in the debate came from NUPE shop steward Sheila Hope, who works at the Dragon Enterprises Youth Training Workshops in Durham.

Sheila, at 16 the youngest shop steward in NUPE's Northern Division, has launched a campaign with union backing calling for decent rights for youth trainees (see last week's *Militant*).

Before the conference Sheila talked to Fred Gent, of Northern Region LPYS:

IF I'M a good girl and work hard I've been offered a job at the end for £32 for a six-day week. One lad did day release during his YTS and got some engineering qualification. He's got a job £35 a week—a 'qualified' engineer working 66 hours, 8 am - 7 pm.

Trainees were expected to pay the first £4 travelling expenses out of their £25. Nationally we've managed to negotiate a reduction to £3.

We also call for better hygiene and health and safety facilities on all schemes and 'the right to be treated as respectable adults instead of immature little school children'.

If trainees join NUPE—the reduced rate is 5p a week—then they get backing against the supervisors, the union pays up the six weeks dole the government dock if you're sacked (after 13 weeks paid up subs).

Three trainees were suspended and the union rep is taking up their case. We had a meeting and voted to refuse cleaning the toilets and staff room. These trainees were suspended and threatened with the sack if they involved the union. I go along with trainees with grievances, even those not in the union, to help them put their case.

The management have tried to get rid of me as shop steward. I had a fight with five trainees after management spread the rumour that I was trying to get the scheme stopped. Management called a special union meeting—although they have no right—to elect a new delegate and shop steward. The trainees didn't know who had called it, but one let slip that Rob and Steve (management) wanted me out.

We had an election and I was re-elected by ten votes to five. I called the MSC in and told them what I thought of them: 'Why did you want rid of me—are you afraid of me? What's the matter, do you want somebody to replace me so they can crawl up the MSC's and managers' backsides?' The trainees cheered—they hadn't seen me stand up to the MSC before.

THE NATIONAL conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists is always good. This year it was excellent. The 2,000 plus delegates and visitors who met over the Easter weekend were joined by 200 miners, who visited the conference or attended throughout.

They brought with them the determination and enthusiasm of the miners' strike.

The conference discussed and drew up policies on all the problems facing youth—YTS, nuclear arms, discrimination and many other subjects. The event finished with a rousing chorus of the miners' song "Here we go", after miners from all the coalfields urged continued support for their struggle. Many of them had been won to the ideas of Marxism during the weekend.

The conference captured the readiness of youth to fightback. But it also understood the need to win more and more youth to the struggle for socialism.

The understanding that the ideas of the LPYS—and the confidence that the Tories can be beaten—can save young workers from the despair and demoralisation of Thatcher's Britain was graphically underlined by the experience of 20 year old Dave Young from Bourne-mouth.

From despair

On the Thursday before conference, *Militant* supporters from Dorset found Dave staggering around the fast lane of a major road late at night. It was only luck he hadn't been killed. When he was asked what he was trying to do, he said he had

nothing left to live for.

Dave's story could be that of thousands of youth today. He had joined the RAF but found no way out. He'd got a job in a small garage and got paid a pitiful £39 for a 40 hour week. Disheartened, he began to turn up late and got the sack. Then started the long haul of long-term unemployment, trouble with the police and a series of depressing short term accommodation with extortionate rents.

He said: "You can't explain the boredom of having no money and having to just sit in your single room bed-sit all day. You actually start looking for cracks in the paint, or watching flies crawling up and down."

"On the Thursday night I just cracked up. I got my dole and just blew all the rent money down the Labour Club and got totally rattled. I just blew my top".

To socialism

The comrades who found him told him to come to the conference the next day—the only thing to do is fightback.

Dave said: "The conference has been tremendous. I've learnt more and made more friends here in the past 12 hours than I have in the past 12 years. Instead of despairing we've got to get active. We've got to get out there and get the message across to people like myself."

and our people are now more ready to fight.

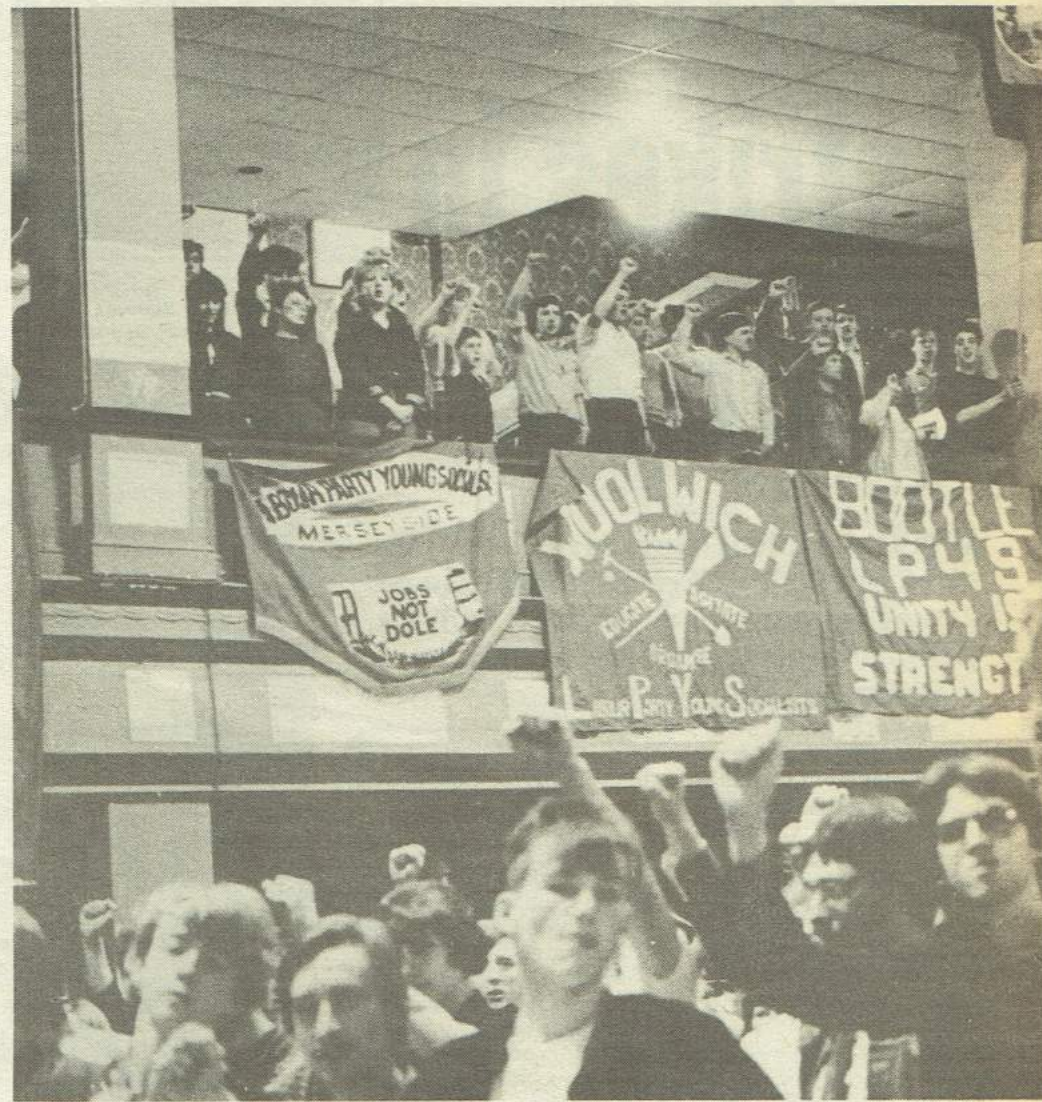
—Josie Clifford (ATGWU, Kent Plastics, Enniskillen and Northern Ireland Young Socialist)

Reports by Ted Grant, Bob Wade, and Roger Shives.

Photos: Mick Carroll, Tina Carroll, Dave Sinclair

"CONFERENCE IS great. I went to the Labour Youth conference in the South of Ireland which was good but this is far bigger. I've only been involved for a short while.

"Our factory went on strike in February for a 10% rise. They offered us 5% which was about £1.50. Other workers gave food, from a bacon factory and shops around town. It lasted three weeks; we got 7½%



Nearly 2,300 Labour Party Young Socialists packed out the Spa Hall in

"THIS IS my first time at LPYS conference. The best bit was the *Militant* rally. It gives you real confidence coming here when we've been fighting to get the Notts lads out".

—Andy Fisher (NUM Clipstone, Notts & Mansfield LPYS)

"WE'RE BEGINNING to get really good support, like donations and food parcels from shops, factories and so on. The solidarity we've got here has been tremendous."

—Terry Davies (Cynheirdre NUM, Llanelli)

"I'VE ENJOYED it. It's opened my eyes to a lot of things. Old people think young people talk out the back of their heads. But when you come here you know they don't."

—Jen Lovell (A single parent from Heath, near Chesterfield)

"WHAT SURPRISED me about conference was the amount of young people active in the LPYS—I mean youth under the age of 20. It shows that the youth are interested in politics. You're not encouraged at school. I've always said they don't encourage you at school to be interested in politics because the government, including the old Labour ones, don't want young people to get active and question the order of things."

—Colin Dady (Newham North East LPYS & Newham NALGO)

"I ACTUALLY joined the LPYS through my Labour Club at Liverpool Poly, a sort of spin-off from the council's fight against the Tories. What convinced me about socialism though and the need to get active with *Militant* was when I went to Nigeria to stay with my mother.

"I was there during the coup. What got me was the poverty. There's people starving on the streets, they wait at the traffic lights and then bang on your car window and beg for money.

"Inflation is running at about 200%, food prices are exorbitant and there's no real figures for unemployment, its ridiculously high. Yet Nigeria is potentially the richest country in Africa with all the oil and other mineral resources its got.

"But the country is bled dry by all the American and British monopolies, which is why we must fight here to nationalise these firms and release such countries from this intolerable burden—socialism has to come from the West."

—Emeka Onvora (Crosby LPYS)

"I'VE ONLY been in Labour Youth for a couple of months. It's great to see so many people, you can

Marxist rally

AT LAST year's LPYS national conference, because of the witch-hunting tactics of Labour's right wing, the traditional *Militant* Readers' Meeting was banned.

But you can't witch-hunt ideas, and with a bit of pre-planning the rally was back this year—and as rally chairman Steve Morgan put it, judging from the calibre of the platform speakers and the struggles they represent "*Militant* is back with a bang."

The first speaker, Ian Isaac, of the South Wales NUM executive, received tremendous applause from the two thousand people

present. He outlined the miners' battle and called for determined support for the NUM from the labour movement leadership.

Liverpool fight

This point was echoed by the second speaker, Derek Hatton, deputy leader of Liverpool City Council. He condemned the backtracking of the Labour leadership over Liverpool and how they had urged the councillors to compromise. He added: "If the national leadership just showed one tenth of hard effort of the Liverpool Labour leaders we'd have had a



Ted Grant.

Labour government by now."

There was a rapturous applause for Ted Grant, political editor of *Militant*, who has been expelled from the Labour Party. Ted explained the reasons for the continuing crisis of world

and British capitalism. He condemned the lunacy of a system that spent £21,000 million to keep people idle, that spent £15,500 million every year to pay off old war debts, accumulated since the Crimean war.

Arms build up

Similar vast sums were squandered on the 'most devilish' weapons of destruction, especially by US imperialism. He added: "Hitler's rearmament programme for Germany was nothing in comparison with the present arms build up by the USA."

But he expressed the confidence of Marxists in the preparedness of the working class to struggle to over-

throw capitalism. He said only a little time ago scepticism greeted his remarks that there would be football-like enthusiasm amongst workers for socialism. Yet that is what we are now seeing in the miners' strike and on the streets of Liverpool.

The enthusiastic response from the audience to these ideas were expressed in the Fighting Fund collection. It raised a fantastic £8,084.

However, the fighting mood of workers today was best expressed by a miner who said during the time for discussion: "The Tories are not going to starve us back. We are not going to lose. If we have to, we'll eat grass." He returned to his seat raising the clenched fist salute to tumultuous applause.

here we go!

LPYS 23rd Annual Conference '84



Bridlington over Easter, Yorkshire, for their 23rd national conference.

MARXIST Frances Curran was elected as LPYS representative on the Labour Party's National Executive Committee. The results were:
Curran—190
Smith—40
Bonner—39
Wilde—30

sometimes feel you're on your own.

"Labour Youth are growing in the South. At the conference a few weeks back *Militant* got its strongest support yet; Marxists won all the officers' positions and two supporters onto the Administrative Council. The YS in Britain is a model of how any socialist group can campaign."

—Paul Kearney
(Dublin North Central Labour Youth)

Young Workers Charter

THE FIRST major session on trade union rights and young workers was obviously dominated by the miners strike.

John Hird (LPYS NC, moving the draft *Charter for Young Workers*) showed how young people were expected to pay for the crisis—11 years at school and all you qualified for was the scrap heap. The *Charter* says "we pay for the crisis no more"; and the miners' fight was saying that in action. The YS wanted, to ensure not only a miners' victory but that young workers got organised.

Joe Owens (Polkemmet NUM Scotland) said socialism was not just a clause in a constitution. The

LPYS were out with the pickets and organising hundreds of meetings.

Richard Clarkson (Prince of Wales NUM) pointed out they had been on strike for six weeks, they didn't need a ballot. While Dean Wood (Penallta NUM) stressed that the press had never demanded a ballot at GCHQ!

Bosses scared

Chris Herriot from Monktonhall showed how Thatcher had lied in 1981 about the security of mining jobs. Midlothian had 22 strike committees set up since the local dispute last September. The bosses were frightened and the miners and their communities were determined to win.

Workers fight Heroin threat

THIS YEAR conference took up the situation of drug abuse which is reaching epidemic proportions as a direct result of mass youth unemployment.

Speakers pointed out there was little concern amongst the capitalist class—they didn't care if whole generations of youth 'destroyed their brains' with heroin instead of fighting back.

Irish epidemic

It is not just in Britain where this scourge is taking place, but in Southern Ireland too. Mick Barry, the fraternal speaker from Labour Youth, the youth section of the Irish Labour Party, described how heroin had taken hold of the youth. But he also told how the workers had fought back.

"In Southern Ireland there's over 200,000

unemployed, a million living in poverty and 90,000 people living in overcrowded conditions. These conditions have set the scene for an explosion of heroin taking. In 1969 there were 350 drug addicts in the whole country. Today there are 4,500 addicted to heroin alone in Dublin."

8 year old addicts

He said in Dublin 14% of young girls were addicts and it was common on some estates to see eight year olds 'chasing the dragon'.

He told how the workers on the St Teresa estate fought back against the pushers. They first approached the police and politicians, but nothing was done. So they acted themselves. They'd hold mass meetings of up to 500 tenants, identify the pushers

and give them a week to get out.

Workers fightback

However, the gangsters tried to intimidate the workers, as the workers' tactics spread to other areas of Dublin. A young man on a tenants' patrol at night was knecapped by these thugs. But the workers did not draw back. They organised a march through the city of nearly 5,000 to show they would not give up the fight.

At the end of the conference, chairman Willie Griffin returned to this subject, telling the LPYS that they had a duty to win youth to socialism, the ideas that would replace the despair that turned youth to all the filth that society threw at them, with hope for the future.

'We must win, we will win'

"THE NUM have always been the backbone of the TUC—if the NUM is crushed then it will be a defeat for the whole of the trade union movement. That is why we must win—that is why we will win."

Applause met this fighting speech by Sue Bence, a miner's wife and member of the Aylesham Women's Strike Action Committee as she spoke at the *Socialist Youth* rally.

The theme of the miners' fight ran throughout the meeting. Sammy Thompson, vice chairman of Yorkshire NUM, was equally well received. He attacked the leadership of the labour movement for allowing the Tories to get the upper hand in the fight to defend jobs and trade union rights.

The Young Socialist audience were horrified when they heard how Labour



Sammy Thompson, vice-chairman Yorkshire NUM.

Leader Neil Kinnock had declined sharing a platform with Sammy Thompson at a public meeting.

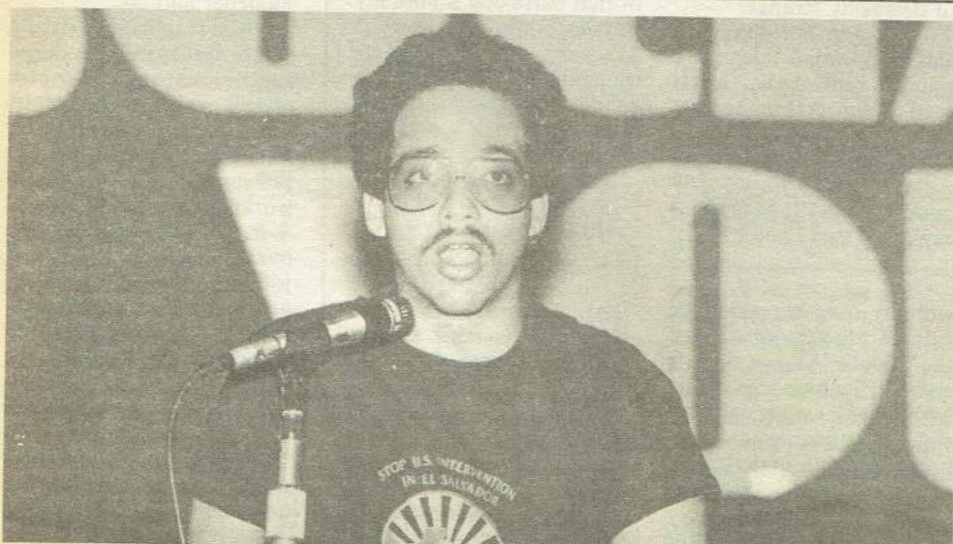
Where's Kinnock?

He added that when Neil Kinnock was standing in the leadership elections he came to the NUM for support, and the NUM indeed supported him. Sammy said: "If Neil Kinnock doesn't get up off his arse and start fighting then he will have to look elsewhere for support."

Chris Herriot, NUM youth delegate at Monktonhall in Scotland gave an excellent contribution in the call for financial support. Hundreds of pounds were collected, half of which went to the NUM, half to *Socialist Youth*.

Chris was cheered when he attacked the hypocrisy of the Tories, who have said—as an excuse for closing pits—they want to give young miners the choice of not having to work in the dangerous conditions of the mines. He said: "Well, what about the young people conscripted onto the YTS schemes by the Tories? More young workers have been killed on YTS schemes than there have been down the mines and they get no choice. So let's have an end to this nonsense from the Tories about choice."

Many miners were present at the rally, including a strong delegation from Bolsover. A bucket collection at conference for the NUM strike fund raised a total of over £1,200.



Lautara Sandino of the Sandinista Youth movement received a standing ovation when he addressed conference. He condemned US intervention in Nicaragua and expressed solidarity with the miners. The theme of Latin America was continued in an evening meeting addressed by Willie Griffin who recently visited Nicaragua and a Chilean socialist. (See centre pages).

"In the discussion on the miners' dispute, to be honest with the exception of the miners who spoke, other people didn't really know what they were talking about. You don't really know what it's like until you've been on the picket lines and see what the police are up to. Every one here should make sure they go to a picket line.

"I thought the conference has been very good. Before all this, when the lads from *Militant* came down to our pit I didn't have much time for them, I'd tell them to eff off, we didn't want you lot around here. But this strike has really turned me.

"The police won't let up. We were outside the conference collecting for miners'

families and along they came and threatened to arrest us for begging on the streets. We explained our case and said it was for the families, and they just said we should go back to work."

—Roy Jones
(Stafford branch NUM)

"The coal board are stepping up their tactics. Firstly they are stopping our Easter holiday pay which was agreed last year. Now they are cancelling bus contracts for firms with TGWU members who are refusing to cross picket lines to bring in the scabs.

"I think the conference has been excellent and we'd all like to thank the LPYS branches in our areas who have given us support and

help, and got us to this conference. Our glass hasn't been empty all weekend."

—Chris Brown
(Cannock NUM)

"We need events like this or the demonstration in Sheffield every fortnight to lift our spirits, because when you're on picket duty every day you can get down hearted as the scabs go by. We're beginning to hit at the Tories. They say the strike is having little effect but look at all the bad publicity we are getting. When they start praising Arthur Scargill and saying how nice the miners are, then we'll know we're doing something wrong."

—Mick Ellis
(Maltby NUM)

Letters

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

Teaching the teacher

Dear Editor,

At the school I attend, the education cuts imposed by Maggie Thatcher and Sir Keith Joseph are beginning to hit hard. But my complaint is about people who ought to know better.

I was talking to the head of the History department about these problems, as one would expect a sympathetic hearing. But when I pointed out that some history text books were older than the

school, she retorted: "Well, you'll just have to purchase your own".

I replied that I couldn't afford them, what with my dad being out of work and the almost total lack of Saturday jobs. She then said: "That's the fault of the socialists. They were running down the nation in the sixties and seventies and it is unfair to put the blame on Margaret".

By the way, this esteemed lady is a local Conservative councillor.

Yours sincerely
Susannah Blount
Leicester

DHSS campaign needed

Dear Comrades,

I am writing in response to the article by Roy Davies in *Militant* (Issue 691) about his encounter with the DHSS. I work in a DHSS office and this kind of story is now, unfortunately, an everyday occurrence.

With the increasing staff cuts within the DHSS/Department of Employment since 1979, the standards of service to the public has got worse. I would urge all CPSA and SCPS branches in benefit offices to work together with the Claimants' Union and discuss the problems which we all experience each side of the counter.

I would personally like to see national, regional and local committees set up of management, civil service unions, representatives of the TUC and Claimants Union to discuss any new proposals or legislation with the social security system.

By doing this we will avoid what I believe will happen in the next few years—benefit offices becoming a battle-ground. It is important that the government should provide a better and fairer social security benefits system for which the people of this country are entitled to.

Yours fraternally
Michael Dolphin
Plymouth

Berufsverbot conference

Dear Editor,

This year has seen GCHQ, Official Secrets trials, suggestions that political activity is incompatible with being a member of the civil service, the vast threat to the basic civil right to follow trades disputes, and the attack on local democracy.

All these issues relate to *Berufsverbot* in one way or another. *Berufsverbot* is the state practice in West Germany where every public employee can expect to be vetted to see if they are loyal to the constitution. To ensure loyalty, the secret police have assembled over three million files on employees which has been used in over one million court hearings.

Over five thousand people have been dismissed from teaching posts, the railways, postal workers and even gardeners and swimming bath attendants.

We are holding a delegate conference in London, 12 May, and Glasgow 19 May, to discuss the wider issues. Speakers in London include a *Berufsverbot* victim, Richard Balfe MEP, author Tony Bunyan and two trade union speakers. May we appeal through your newspaper for branches interested in sending a delegate to contact us at the address below so we can forward the requisite papers and details.

Yours sincerely
Jack Tyrrell
National Campaign
Against Berufsverbot,
265 Jersey Road,
Osterley, Isleworth,
Middlesex TW7 4RF

Soul searching on private health

Dear Comrades,

I have been attending Manor House, the Hospital for Industrial Workers which costs about 50p per week to join. There are many trade unionists here from the West Midlands, South Wales, Yorkshire and Lancashire. Whether it be a car factory components, engineering, transport or oil refineries, they all have tales of woe of factory roundups, closures and of former agreements now scattered like leaves in the wind.

An NCB worker from Humberside attending as an out patient said he would have to wait 6 months for a deafness test in his area.

As things stand this place is streets ahead of anything that is on offer anywhere else. NHS staff in the main do an excellent job, but with drastically shrinking resour-

ces, attention and care is not what it used to be.

Many trade unionists, myself included, have done a lot of soul searching about contributing to such organisations. It was easy to follow the lead of my union and most of my workmates. Much of the equipment and facilities here have been provided by the large blue collar unions.

Perhaps I will be held in contempt by many comrades and fellow trade unionists for my actions, but like many other workers working in industry we are in the front line for illness and it will take more than shadow boxing by the TUC and Labour Party to save our health service.

Yours
Mike Singleton
AUEW



Police roadblock in the Midlands. The massive operation has exposed their political role to millions of workers.

Strike-breaking role of state forces

Dear *Militant*,

The use of the police in the miners' dispute clearly demonstrates that the law is not neutral, and that the capitalist state consists of armed bodies of men, who if necessary will be used by the bosses to defend their private property and profits.

This is why socialists must be wary of Heseltine's real motives in increasing the strength of the Territorial Army. It is intended to be 86,000 by 1990, half the size of the regular army.

In justifying this increase Heseltine says it is necessary for 'national security'. But

whose security has he in mind? Clearly it is that of the bosses who will be able to use the TA as strike breakers to undermine the trade union movement, especially in the public services.

Socialists must campaign for unionisation of both the army and the police. This

will make it impossible for the bosses to use them either as a budgeon with which to beat the working class now or in the future.

Yours fraternally
N Toyn
Southampton CLP

From the picket line...

Dear Comrades,

Thinking back to what Jim Lord, the Lodge secretary at Agecroft colliery in Lancashire, told the news reporters at the last area NUM conference: "All I know is Agecroft is definitely working normally on Monday".

Well, Mally Gregory's (that's our Lodge secretary) flying pickets—that's me, Tommy and Mo from Bold colliery—arrived at Agecroft colliery on the Monday morning at about 4.45 am. We were greeted by 200 foot police, dogs, horses, a tow truck, helicopter and meat wagon. This led one of the five Yorkshire men with us to comment: "Its like fortress Falklands." I agreed with him, adding that it was like a scene from Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

The daily newspapers, the *Sun* etc, claimed that 750 Agecroft men were working that day and these miners

were very brave men for crossing a picket line. From our point of view, there were more sick notes than scabs at Agecroft that morning.

Jim Lord has made his bed and will have to lie in it.

Wish you were here,
Mohammed, Tommy
and Stan
Miners from Bold colliery,
St Helens

Industry affected

Dear Comrades,

So the Tories think the miners' strike isn't affecting industry? The mill where I work is very busy at the moment. About a month ago an economy drive was launched at the mill, to save on excessive heating costs. The air conditioning was switched off until required, thus saving coal.

Since then, the car park has been taken over for stock piling coal—about seven lorry loads have been dumped at one end.

Yours fraternally
Mick Fallon
Halifax



A Kent miner expresses thanks for solidarity shown to the NUM.

Campaign for job offer

Two members of the LPYS recently visited a local school to drum-up support for a demonstration/rally in Chapeltown, under the title of "Give Us A Future", highlighting the atrocities the Tories inflict on young people today.

The headmaster of the second largest school in Sheffield said he thought the campaign was excellent, especially the demand for de-

cent facilities for young people, and expressed genuine sympathy for the masses of unemployed youth.

I explained that my job applications had never even resulted in a single interview. The conversation then turned decidedly strange!

The headmaster asked if I had any special talents, to which I replied that I was keen on sports (I missed out the bit about building a Marxist youth organisation).

"Do you have any qualifications?", he asked. I explained that I had Physics

Anger at media

Dear Comrades,

Over the past few days I have been catching the news on the television so that I can keep up with the events in the miners' strike.

Watching the news I have become increasingly angry at the biased, selective reporting of the facts. At times I thought I was watching a re-run of the Battle of Britain,

with the newsmen taking the side of MacGregor against the miners. All the defeats and difficulties are being highlighted, while all the signs of solidarity and support are being underplayed and conveniently ignored.

The media men are obviously looking for only one kind of news; the kind that demoralises the miners, trying to make them feel that their strike is doomed to failure. It's no wonder then

and maths 'A' levels at which his face lit up and he said: "Would you like to teach one day a week in the physics department—voluntary of course, we are very short staffed?"

Fortunately for the youth of that particular school my physics books were burned 2½ years ago, but unfortunately for them and the headmaster there are too many Tory MP's and not enough teachers!

Andy Holmes
Sheffield
Hillsborough LPYS

that camera crews and reporters received such a hostile response from the miners in Barnsley recently.

What I find particularly annoying is that one of the reasons why I saved up my money to buy a television, was so that I could watch the news!

Yours fraternally
Richard Finnigan
Deptford LPYS

It makes you sick

Dear Colleagues,

I've been off sick from work as a social worker for a month and I came back to find a new dirty trick on the youth of Britain by Margaret Thatcher and co.

If you read today's papers (4 April) they talk about the supplementary benefit review which will give us more problems. Under the housing benefit scheme she has introduced a 'rent' for working class kids.

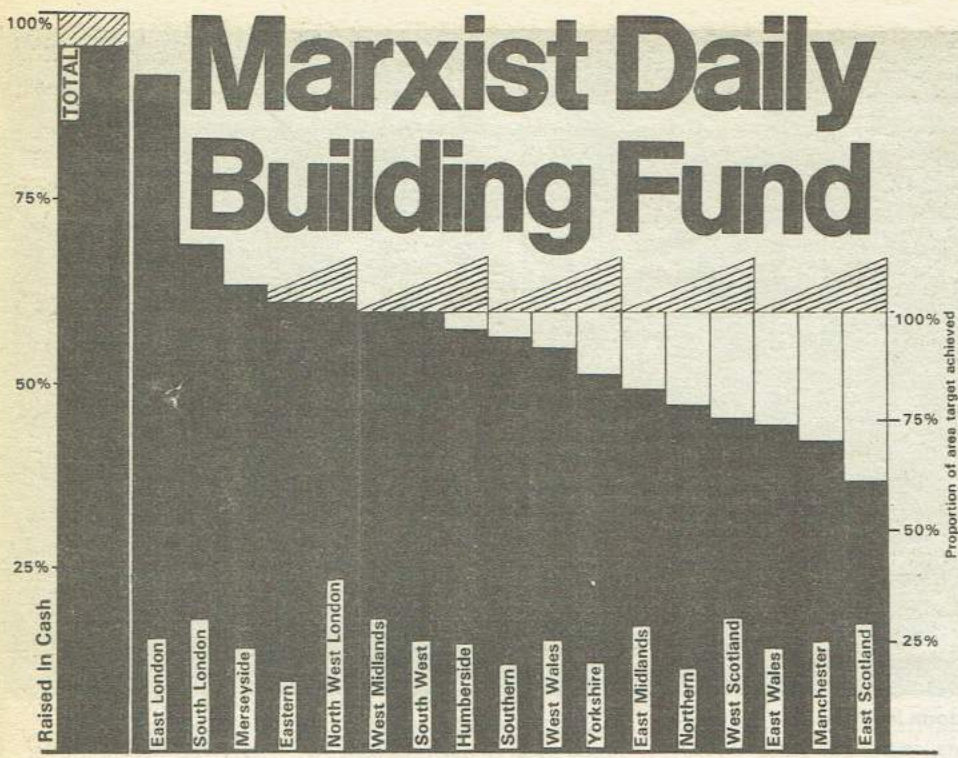
If you are one of the miracle kids who have got a job and live in a council house with your parents, you will have to pay £8.20 on top of your parents' rent.

The prime minister, who professes to be a family person, is encouraging our kids to leave home, because where are they going to find an extra £8.20? If you are over 21, you are still going to have to find an extra £3.10.

Yours in friendship
Betty Bell
Southampton

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Photo: Paul Traynor



MILLIONAIRE Robert Maxwell wants a national Sunday paper so he goes to breakfast at Claridges to buy one off Tiny Roland. Mr Roland has a penny or two.

His company—Lonrho of the 'unacceptable face of capitalism' fame—has rather a lot of 'business links' in Africa—ie opportunities for super-exploitation. So he decides he doesn't want to own a paper that exposes atrocities. Of editor Donald Trelford he says, "I am subsidising *The Observer* and he acts as if he owns and controls it."

Mr Maxwell claims *The Observer*, which he is buying, would be more "left

wing" though he doesn't like the campaign that has been conducted against Thatcher's poor young son!

Rich men buy and sell the bosses' propaganda machines over breakfast. Marxists find things a bit harder!

After raising the magnificent sum of £140,000 to provide a building for a Marxist Daily, we are told by our bank that we can manage with a little less from them! (see letter on page 2). A "little" more to them is another enormous effort for us.

Now, another £35,000 must come in by the end of May when our deal must be completed. Nearly £3,000 has come in in the last week including £50 from Peter Kershaw, £45 from A and T Patterson, £30 from A and M Manning, £20 from Una Graham, Tyneside, Sandy

Turnbull, Lothian and Binley and Willenhall Ward LP, £10 from an Edinburgh IPCS member and Carlos Clarke, Devon and £5 from Tony Cheung, Cardiff. Blackpool shop worker Mick Wainwright sent £40 in spite, of, or perhaps because of, being involved in a fight over the proposed sale of 34 Woolworth stores: Blackpool, where he works being one of them.

Now the emergency appeal letters and special collection sheets must reach every activist in the labour movement. If YOU haven't contributed yet, fill in the form on page 2. If you have, do your utmost to find us some more cash! If we don't get these premises the Marxist daily will be set back for six months or even a year.

ADS

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

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

Also now available on cassette: all centre page articles from issues 668-692. Send either six blank C-90 cassettes or £5.40 payable to 'Militant Tapes', 25 Aston Terrace, Harehills, Leeds 8, or phone: (0532) 493440.

WANTED—Room in shared flat or house near centre of London. Contact Mike, 67 Ness Rd, Burwell Cambridge. Phone Newmarket 741471.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED in South/Central or South East London. Contact 'Militant Circulation'.

"RAISE POLITICS at work! Buy a *Militant* mug." £1.50 + 45p p&P from 56 Hartley Avenue, Leeds LS6 2LP. Cheques payable to: Chris Hill. All proceeds to FF.

"Militant Turn Left for Workers' Unity and Socialism"
T-shirts—£6.75—white, yellow, navy, dark green.
Small 32"–34" chest
Medium 34"–36"
Large 36"–38"
Extra large 40"–42"
All proceeds to *Militant* Fighting Fund. All cheques and postal orders with size and colour preference to R Harris, 2 Dukes Brow, Blackburn, Lancs.

TOLPUDDLE COMMEMORATION MARCH AND RALLY

Saturday, 28 April at 10.30 am, Bradford Town Hall. Rally 12 noon Horsfall Playing Fields. Speakers include: Joan Maynard MP, Bill Keys (TUC Employment Chairman), Norman Willis (TUC Deputy General Secretary), Jim Mortimer (Labour Party General Secretary).

World Socialist Books

BOOKLIST 1984

HUNDREDS OF BOOKS and pamphlets available by Marx, Lenin, Engels, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Connolly, Plekhanov, Grant, Cannon, Gramsci and many others. Writings on economics, philosophy, politics, science, war and peace, nuclear weapons, socialism, women, international developments, etc.
Send for your copy of our new booklist. Available (free) from: World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Meetings

For events in your area contact your local *Militant* seller.

LINCOLN: Marxist Discussion Group. Every Tuesday at the Victoria Pub, Union Road, Lincoln, 7.30 pm. For further details tel: (0522) 27922.

THANET: *Militant* Readers' Meetings are held on alternate Monday evenings. For further details phone (0843) 291293.

HARTLEPOOL: Marxist discussion groups. Held weekly. Ring Malcolm Fallow, Peterlee 867789.

HACKNEY benefit for the Kent miners.

"HARLAN COUNTY USA", (film of miners' strike in Kentucky, 1973-74) at the Rio Cinema, Dalston, London. 2-5.30pm Sunday 29 April. £2 waged £1 unwaged.

Plus "The miners' film", film from the 1974 British miners' strike.

With speakers from:
Kent womens' Strike Support Committee
Hackney South Labour Party
Labour Party Young Socialists

For tickets ring Rio cinema 249-2722 or Chris Morris 254-0833.

Organised by Hackney South Labour Party and Hackney North LPYS.

WOMEN'S MINING PAMPHLET

Militant Miner—"Women Fight to Save the Pits"—printed and published by Aylesham Women. 70p (incl p+p) from Robbie Segal, 10 Westbourne Gardens, Folkestone.

FIIGHTING FUND

This week: £1,621

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	130		2700
East Midlands	34		3050
Humberside	17		1700
London East	59		3500
London West	114		2100
London South	13		2850
Manchester & Lancs	141		3700
Merseyside	301		4800
Northern	186		4050
Scotland East	64		2450
Scotland West	31		3300
Southern	159		4400
South West	55		2050
Wales East	15		2100
Wales West	19		1950
West Midlands	205		3800
Yorkshire	77		4500
Others	2		12000
Total received	1622		65000

MILITANT'S Fighting Fund was experiencing a slow start to the second quarter of this year—£1,622 in two weeks. To reach the £65,000 target by 10 July we needed to be getting £5,000 a week!

Was it the miners' strike? Was it the LPYS conference and the Easter holiday eating deep into our supporters' resources?

It may have been, but look at what happened on Saturday in Bridlington! It was precisely the youth and the young miners in particular who poured money into the collection at *Militant*'s public meeting, where nearly £7,000 (including IOUs) was raised.

Miners were seen emptying their pockets bowled over with enthusiasm for the

paper which has contributed so much already to their fight. This magnificent collection will help us to cover all those extra costs of posters, leaflets, stickers, badges, the cost of sending reporters and supporters to the mining areas and of the extra four pages in this week's *Militant*.

Militant's coverage of the miners' dispute is second to none and involves not just endeavouring to reach every pit and every miner. But we aim to reach every other section of workers too, to assist in the campaign for solidarity action and a real and lasting victory for the miners and the working class as a whole.

Militant supporters everywhere are also keen to see their paper cover and

assist the struggle of the Liverpool workers against the Tories (and their Liberal shadows). *Militant* supporters on the council there gave £100 to the collection in Bridlington. Some readers in Keighley are planning to cycle to Liverpool in June after they have collected hundreds of sponsors to raise cash for *Militant*.

They also plan to collect large sums at *Militant* Readers' Meetings, to raise funds at parties, to sell pon-toon cards, badges and stickers. Supporters everywhere should follow their example...and start now. But above all, tins should be rattled and special appeals should be made to individual buyers.

This week supporters in Stevenage, Tyneside, East



Raising nearly £7,000 at *Militant* Rally at LPYS Conference.

Photo: Tina Carroll

THE COACH carrying LPYS members from Sussex got snarled up in Easter Holiday traffic on their way home from conference. After such an enthusiastic weekend, they weren't going to just sit there in boredom and do nothing.

The front page of *Militant* saying "Rally round the miners" was already up in every window. Car

and bus drivers were giving the thumbs up sign and even holding their own quickly scribbled messages of support.

So a number of comrades decided to have a paper sale at the next motorway cafe. They stood outside the entrance and went round the tables, explaining why the miners were on strike. At least ten papers were sold.

The coach driver, a complete stranger to us before, told me what a great bunch of people the YS were "I've never seen anything like this in my life". At times like this, you can sell *Militant* and talk about politics practically anywhere.

By Stan Nattrass (Littlehampton Labour Party)

Midlands and Sunderland have sent us the proceeds of rattling tins and appeal sheets. This approach must be adopted by all supporters in the local election campaigns as well as on demonstrations, on street paper sales and even on picket lines—as long as *Militant*'s urgent need for cash is carefully and boldly explained.

Les Sweeting, a Kent miner on picket duty in Sussex gave £1 to *Militant*

supporters there. Ian Isaacs (South Wales NUM Executive) gave £5.

Amongst this week's contributors are...—Unemployed, Sunderland £15; Ken Smith, Swansea £10.75; Alan Archer, gas fitter, Scotland £10, M Calherall, Chester, S Parson, Plymouth and A Rosser, Secretary, Poole CLP £10; A Short, Cardiff £6.50, I Everington, Walthamstow, CLP £5; Connie Dixon, OAP,

Thanet £4.80; H Wobey, Dalston and D MacNally, Waterside LP £4; B Gibbs Littlehampton £3.50; J Wilson, Rutherglen £2.25, W Kerd £2.40; V Smith, Walsall, Paul Longden, Birmingham, T Cortesi, Ventnor £2, P Scott, Newcastle, NUPE £1.50. Many thanks to all our contributors.

By Clare Doyle

USDAW conference

Wages, democracy, leadership

THE ISSUES which most concern USDAW members are pay and conditions. Last year, the right wing leadership in the union managed to get conference to reject proposals that union policy be to fight for a £95 minimum wage for a 35 hour week.

The 1982 ADM policy still stands—£90 for 35 hours. To date whole sections of the unions' membership have failed to reach (and frequently are nowhere near) even this low figure.

A series of wage settlements have recently been agreed by the union members, often only because the members involved see no possibility of securing any improvement on the employers' offer. For example, a warehouseman whose rates of pay are governed by the Wholesale Grocery JIC (E&W) has a current basic pay of £73.51. The membership covered by this Joint Industrial Council are currently voting on a settlement which if implemented would raise this to £77.19—and this is before deductions!

There are a number of propositions on the agenda which call on the union

By Jeff Price
(USDAW Broad Left Presidential Candidate)

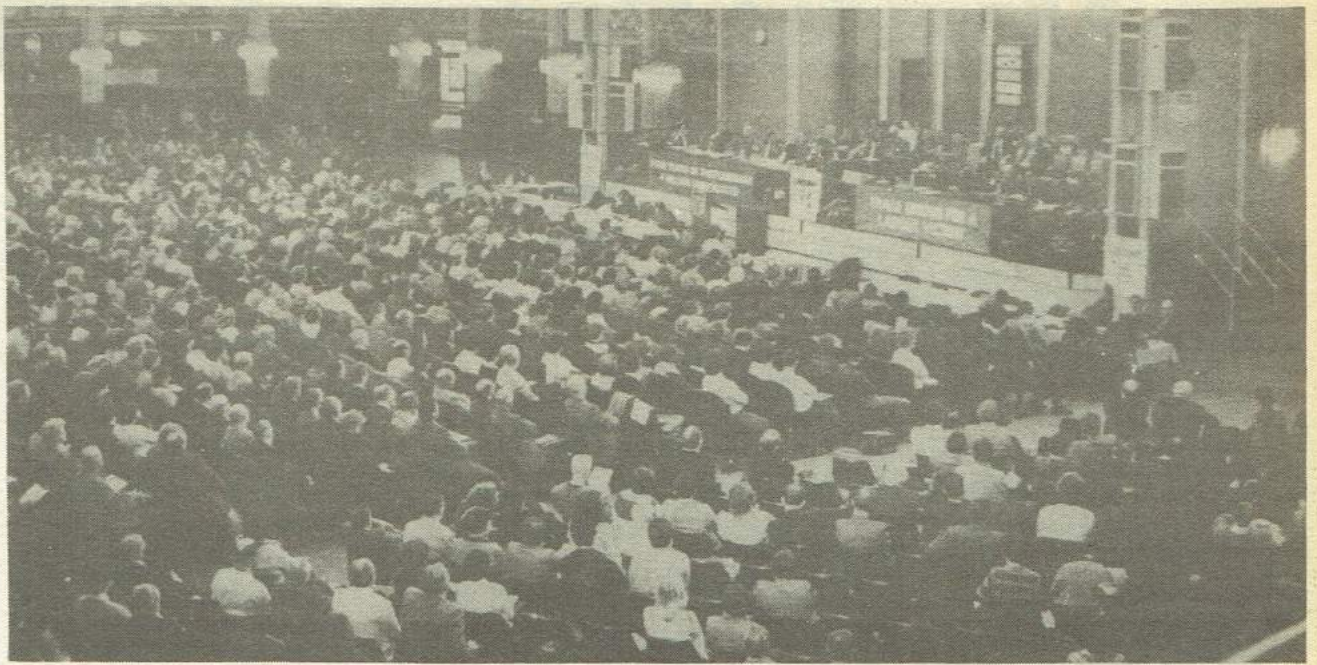


Jeff Price.

leadership to initiate a national campaign throughout the union, involving industrial action if necessary, to fight low pay and to establish a national minimum wage for all USDAW members of £100 per week for 35 hours.

Fighting campaign needed

It is essential that a motion along these lines is carried at the ADM. There is a crying need to mobilise the membership to break out of



USDAW conference hall and platform last year.

the downward spiral of low pay we suffer in retail distribution.

USDAW discusses rules amendments every three years and the 1984 ADM is one of these. There are a number of very important democratic changes on the agenda. Two of these propositions—S14 and S30—concern the election of the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary every four years.

At present the General Secretary is elected once and then remains in office for life. The Deputy General Secretary, who occupies one of the most important positions in the union, is completely unelected. As steps towards accountability of the leadership both these propositions deserve full support.

There are also propositions which seek to democratise the union's delegations. Propositions S26 and S27, if carried by the necessary two thirds majority, would bring about a complete transformation in the nature of all delegations to the TUC and Labour Party Annual Conference. Elected

'The lessons from the NGA dispute must be learned—that the TUC's present course of (in)action will lead to disaster for the whole trade union movement.'

lay members would be in the overwhelming majority on the delegations, instead of having a bare majority as at present. The union's Executive Council would no longer be able to 'swamp' the delegations with their appointees.

For accountable leadership

The delegations would be given power to determine the union's propositions to both the TUC and the Labour Party Annual Conference. In addition, the union's nominees for the TUC General Council and Labour Party NEC would be elected at the ADM rather than by the Executive Council as at present. The election of the TUC General Council representative is especially important since USDAW is

now entitled to automatic representation on the General Council. It is of the utmost importance that some form of accountability is reintroduced over all members of the General Council in the light of recent events.

The lessons of the NGA and GCHQ disputes will be discussed at the ADM. It is scandalous that the USDAW representative on the TUC General Council refused to support the NGA in their fight. A proposition by Stewarts Supermarkets as amended by London Metropolitan (No.92) "recognises that these laws will have to be fought utilising industrial action to make them inoperable". The proposition goes on to call for a 24-hour general strike and "calls on the TUC to prepare a plan of action to fight these

latest proposals...''
It is essential that if the Tories are to be defeated and driven from office that such a motion is overwhelmingly passed and acted upon by the entire union. The lessons from the NGA dispute must be learned—that the TUC's present course of (in)action will lead to disaster for the whole trade union movement.

Support the miners

For our leadership to capitulate with lame excuses about the danger of legal action will only serve to embolden the bosses and the Tories. The opportunity to win a decisive victory must be seized.

We need a clear commitment to real support for the miners. A victory for the labour movement will give the entire working class new hope and confidence. Only such a strategy will give our members the lead and confidence necessary if we are to overcome the many problems that the union's members face.

BAILLIESTON LABOUR PARTY.

Extends fraternal greetings to all comrades and friends on May Day. All for each and each for all. Victory to the Miners.

**Secretary Alex Johnstone
Chairman Charles McDonach.**

Greetings to Militant from E.BERKS LPYS. Congratulations Jac and Paul Mendoza for the newest comrade.

SWAYTHLING (SOUTHAMPTON) SOCIALISTS send fraternal greetings to the international trade union and labour movement.

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INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Fight for Woolworth jobs

ON 30 March workers in thirty-four Woolworth stores were told their stores are to be sold. It includes stores in Blackpool, Lancaster, Leicester, Cardiff, Eastbourne and many in the London area.

In the last few months Woolworths have been attacking working conditions. In most stores throughout the country Woolworth workers face reduced hours and less pay. Pressure is being put on by management to work overtime when they want you to—in some cases at a minute's notice.

34 stores

USDAW members say the union has got to take Woolworths on because the sale of thirty-four stores is just the beginning of a strategy of throwing thousands of USDAW members on the dole.

The campaign to fight Woolworth on store closures has already started in the North West. A campaign is being mounted in the London

By Mick Wainwright
(Woolworth's national joint negotiating committee and Broad Left secretary, personal capacity)

area, Peckham being one of the stores affected.

At the USDAW ADM (annual conference) there will be an Emergency Proposition calling on the Executive Council to give full support to USDAW members if they take action and also to mount a campaign using industrial action if necessary. All we are demanding is a lead from the leadership of USDAW.

Letters of support and donations to: M. Wainwright, 14 Johnson Road, Marton Blackpool, Lancashire.



Mick Wainwright.

Victory for Broad Left

THE USDAW Broad Left has made a major break-through in the North West.

The open and campaigning approach of our most active divisional Broad Left has resulted in a resounding victory for Mick Wainwright in a Divisional Council by-election. He obtained a near 2½ thousand majority in a previously right wing dominated division.

By George Williamson
(Broad Left Chair)

Bus workers

THE IGWU passenger services, National Consultative Conference was held in Digbeth, Birmingham, at the beginning of April.

Driver after driver came to the microphone to explain how the Tories were destroying the bus industry and wrecking bus services.

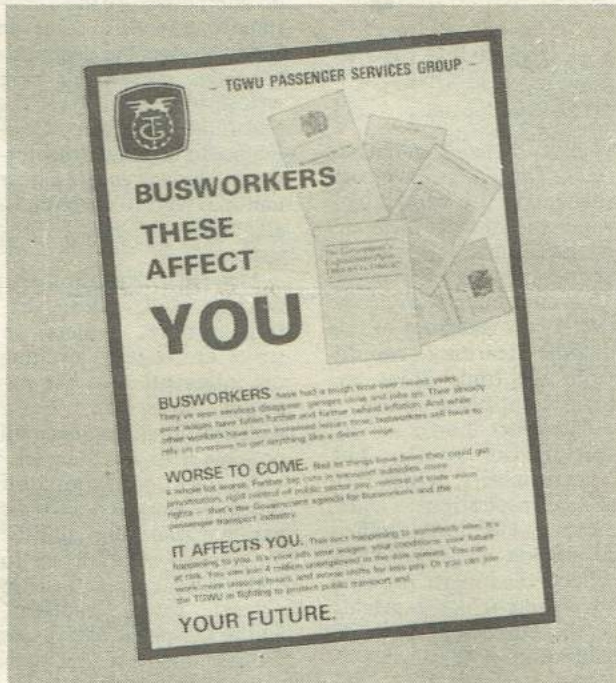
A delegate from Scotland said the Tories were so obsessed with making money, they would privatise their own mothers if it proved profitable.

No joke

In a very humorous contribution a London Transport driver explained how management attacks were constantly eroding working conditions. Faced with threats of garage closures and redundancies, drivers learned how to break speed limits as running times were cut back. Not satisfied management then cut drop back and meal break periods. Drivers then learnt how to break the speed limit with one hand, holding a cup of tea in the other hand.

One person operation and double deck operation see the driver holding the steering wheel with his knees while punching tickets with one hand and drinking tea with the other. At the same time peering through a periscope to see what's causing the sound of splintering glass upstairs, only to see a snotty school kid making faces at him.

The theme of excessive



overtime working to boost low base rates of pay was referred to time and time again. Members addicted to overtime can be seen scanning rota's for weeks ahead searching for drivers on holidays or rest days.

The conference made it plain bus workers can no longer afford to subsidise services with their low wages. If the management asked Shell Oil for half price diesel they would be told where to get off, however they are now threatening the workers with cuts in wages.

Conference was highly critical of the lack of any lead coming from the National Committee. A united fight from all sections of the bus industry was called for. Although the difficulties in uniting workers on so many different agreements were understood, with 4,000 jobs disappearing every year since 1979 it was felt that a major campaign should begin now.

By Simon Heather
(Delegate Liverpool Street Bus Garage, Birmingham)

GEC Whetstone Redundancy threat in Chancellor's constituency

LEICESTER FACES another blow to jobs with the threat of 720 redundancies at the AUEW organised GEC Whetstone operation. It is proposed to move the work to the GEC gas turbine plant at Lincoln.

On the same site two other factories are under threat. Only a couple of weeks ago workers employed by the National Nuclear Corporation

held a one-day strike to protest at their uncertain future. If either or both these plants are run down, leading inevitably to closure, the future of Energy Systems Ltd must also be in doubt.

230 jobs have already gone at GEC Whetstone and there has been no pay rise for two years. The workers have cooperated with short-time working and earlier voluntary

redundancies but are beginning to facing up to the fact that their whole future is at stake.

Ironically this massive threat to jobs comes in the constituency of Tory Chancellor Nigel Lawson. It is hoped to launch a campaign around the slogan of 'Jobs for Leicester' to put pressure on Lawson, prophet of the free market economy, and to mobilise rank and file resistance.

Nick Ramsell, AUEW works convenor talked to John Merrell, Leicester West CLP

Rail workers defeat closure threat

EUSTON STATION railway staff scored a victory on Thursday 12 April by forcing higher management to keep the station emergency medical centre open. It was due to close at the end of April.

NUR and ASLEF Local Departmental Committees at Euston had agreed to call a 24-hour strike on Thursday 14 April (just before one of BR's busiest days of the year). The strike call was

solid, power signalbox, drivers, guards, shunters, there was no question that all trains would have been halted, and management knew it.

Wide support

The chief medical officer thought the closure would be a formality. However the nursing sister refused early retirement and called for support from other workers in the station. A petition

against closure collected 3,000 signatures including office workers and local station management.

This small dispute illustrates how a closure threat can be defeated through united action by the two main rail unions supported by other workers including in this case the postmen at Euston.

By a TSSA member

Two strikes in Wirral

Hard-faced management

WIRRAL IGWU dustmen, employed by Waste Management Ltd following privatisation, have been locked out for several weeks over a claim for improved holiday and sick pay.

Hard lessons

When the service was first privatised the workers did not fight though it meant a wage

reduction of £10 per week. Under the new management, however, conditions and pressure of work have worsened.

Tachographs and radios have been installed in the dustcarts so management can check on them more easily. Previously if all bin bags could not be collected the men were called in on a Saturday; new management insists on all

work being completed in basic working hours. No lockers are provided so some men have to go home on the bus in stinking clothes after a day's work.

A work to rule was started to back up a claim for £50 a week holiday pay and £10 a week sick pay. When the boss insisted on normal working and the men refused he retaliated by locking them out. Wirral Tory council have obligingly lifted the normal 'fine' of 25p for every bin bag not collected.

By Dave Clark

Stone Manganese strike

ONE HUNDRED and fifty workers at Stone Manganese Marine, Wallasey on the Wirral, one of Britain's few remaining marine propeller manufacturers are on strike for a 10% pay rise plus extra holidays. The managing director claims the demand is "irresponsible" and could only

be met as a result of job losses.

ALAN HARWOOD, Branch Secretary, AUEW Foundry Section, commented, "My members would be more likely to believe the company's claims if they hadn't recently bought three more cars for the directors. As was said during negotiations, if the managing

director drove through the gates in a mini instead of Mercedes maybe we'd believe they had no money.

"The take-home pay for some of the lads in the foundry is less than £70 for 39 hours. Even the production manager refused to believe this until we proved it to him."

By Simon Lewis
(EETPU & Wallasey CLP, personal capacity)

Media workers back miners

THE ANNUAL conference of the ACTT (Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians), gave overwhelming support to an emergency motion supporting the miners. Only half a dozen delegates voted against.

Right of reply

Significantly, the motion called on the "incoming executive to approach other media unions with a view to developing joint action to ensure fair representation of the miners' case in the broadest media and the right of

reply for the NUM."

Members were called on not to cross picket lines and to utilise the ACT Films Ltd production unit to counter biased coverage. A collection among the 300 delegates raised £1,234.

The conference passed a motion instructing the incoming General Council to "vigorously" pursue ACTT's policy of achieving a single union for the whole entertainment industry," i.e. move towards amalgamating with the Entertainment Trades Alliance.

The Tories' employment legislation came under fire from

the conference, which called on the TUC to give unconditional support to all workers who, to defend free trade unions, fight these laws.

Labour Party

A motion reaffirming ACTT's affiliation to the Labour Party was overwhelmingly carried. The conference was determined to maintain the trade unions links with the Labour Party.

By Lezli An Barrett
(Conference delegate, personal capacity)

British Gas Board

APPROXIMATELY 50,000 Gas Board staff and senior officers are currently involved in a dispute with British Gas. As from the 24 April, there will be a ban on all new technology by members of NALGO.

The ban is intended to get British Gas to come to the negotiating table over the 1983 service and conditions claims for a shorter working week, more holidays, and earlier retirement. The manual workers in the gas industry are balloting on strike action, after turning down their negotiators' and management's settlement for 4.2% in the 1984 pay claim.

By Robert John
(Departmental Rep, Gas Staffs and Senior Officers, Tooting)

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Militant

Liverpool: now for Labour victory

AFTER A special meeting, called for by the city's Liberal and Tory parties, on 25 April, Liverpool has no budget.

By Terry Harrison

Labour presented once more the budget proposal made on 29 March. Delegations of local authority stewards packed the visitors gallery. They will be reporting back to sectional meetings of the workforce.

Labour proposed a rate increase of 9% to allow for inflation, but refused to increase rates, rents and charges to compensate for cuts in grants imposed by the Tory government. Existing jobs and services will be defended, and additional jobs have been created. A thousand houses are being built for rent and the threat of privatisation has been removed from the council services.

While it answers Liverpool's needs, Labour's budget has been deemed "illegal". The alternative proposal from the Liberals and Tories involves job losses,

cuts in services, and high rate increases. Marginal differences exist between the two, but both serve the same Tory master. Labour would be in exactly the same position if they produced a "legal budget".

Just before the elections, the Tories and Liberals could not agree on a compromise budget. The Tory party, knowing that they are more likely to lose seats than gain them, felt they had nothing to lose by clearly stating the cuts budget; at least it would please Thatcher and co.

Liberals vague

The Liberals are the main opposition party, and have a great deal to lose this year, so their proposals were vague with such items as unallocated cuts amounting to £4.3 million.

Before coming to power in 1983, the city was ruled by a Liberal/Tory Alliance. Paradoxically, at this meeting, when the Tories offered to support the Liberal budget, it was rejected on the question of the formation of an all-party 'cuts committee'.

Job losses

Tory and Liberal proposals would both mean at least 5,000 job losses but the Liberals could not go into an election with the Tories riding on their backs; their so-called "radical" image would be stained.

The Liberal proposal was the first to go down 30 votes to 65 then the Tory vote fell 17 votes to 78. Then Labour's proposals were voted down by 42 to 53 votes.

This defeat was achieved by the six Labour traitors voting with the Tories and Liberals. All eyes are now on the elections on 3 May which will become a referendum on Labour's proposals. Liverpool's working class will pull out all stops for a Labour victory.



Peter Harris, one of the Blackburn Six.

Photo: Mark Pinder

LABOUR'S National Executive Committee meeting on 25 April decided by 14 votes to 12 to support the Appeal Committee's decision to ratify the expulsion of Blackburn Labour Party members, Simon Bush, Peter Harris, Rosina Harris, Des Mulcahy, Mary Orange and Kay Wright.

Left wing members of the NEC moved reference back and Dennis Skinner, Tony Benn, Audrey Wise, Steve Morgan, Joan Maynard and David Blunkett spoke against the expulsions.

But, reportedly, not one of the right wingers was prepared to speak in defence of the expulsions or to answer the points made about the motivation of Michael Gregory whose

"report" led to this local witch-hunt.

Ken Cure at the end only said that the "most damning evidence came from the individuals themselves". The Appeals Committee had said they thought the allegations "rang true", in other words, they had already made up their minds.

Just a few days before the NEC, Michael Gregory, whose allegations have been used to justify expulsions, stabbed Labour in the back,

voting against the whip on Blackburn council and ensuring the defeat of the Labour group. (See report page 7).

The NEC members who voted for expulsions on Gregory's evidence were reportedly Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley, Neville Hough, Alex Kitson, Sam McCluskey, Renee Short, Syd Tierney, Alan Haddon, Roy Evans, John Evans, Gwyneth Dunwoody, Ken Cure, Tony Clarke and Betty Boothroyd.

Tony Benn, David Blunkett, Eric Heffer, Doug Hoyle, Joan Maynard, Michael Meacher, Steve Morgan, Jo Richardson, Tom Sawyer, Dennis Skinner, Albert Booth and Audrey Wise voted against the witch-hunt.

Constituency parties, trade unions and LPYS branches will be angry at these expulsions. The NEC will undoubtedly receive resolutions of protest at the continuation of the witch-hunt.

Miners' fight

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

younger miners would never fight. The Tories have been shaken by the combativity which the younger members have shown and their unswerving loyalty to the union. The young miners have come to the very forefront of this dispute learning rapidly from the trade union experience of older miners.

The older miners are inspiring the youth. The younger miners, in their turn are an inspiration to older miners. The little limited concession of MacGregor reflects the intense pressure which this strike is placing on the Tories and the NCB leadership.

These so-called concessions, however, will not fool miners, or break the aims and aspirations of this strike. We have had NCB promises before. They have turned into dust. This time we want copper-bottom guarantees that the industry will not be decimated further by the Tories and big business.

In each and every pit, workshop and unit, whether in so-called "peripheral" or "safe" areas, investment needs must be identified in detail. Any return to work must be on the basis of these

needs being satisfied. This is a fight for survival. We have no alternative, we must continue to organise to force the Tories to meet our demands.

Miners everywhere have welcomed the decision of the National Delegate Conference to take the strike forward. This will enable a clear national lead to be given in all major aspects of the strike.

In areas with pits still producing coal, like Nottinghamshire, miners on strike are eagerly awaiting the intervention of the national leadership. These workers should be given all possible help and support.

A detailed campaign should be worked out for the national leadership and the progressive area leaders to address the rank and file in villages, towns, canteens, and at the pit heads, to put the case for the strike, man-to-man, to appeal for loyalty to the union, and to call for unity with the vast majority of miners who are on strike, actively fighting to save the mining industry.

In the coalfields still producing coal, the truth is, thousands of miners are already on strike. They have refused to be used any longer to produce strike-breaking coal. There is not a single pit in Nottinghamshire that is working normally. In pits with four or five faces, only one or two are actually on strike.

The government intends savagely to cut back our industry. That is the reality behind this battle. Every single coalfield is at risk. But far more is at stake in this strike, even than the future of the mining industry.

If we are beaten, the Tories will escalate massively their assault on the unemployed, the low paid, the welfare state, and on democratic and trade union rights.

Solidarity

This is why other workers have come forward with magnificent offers of help and solidarity. They know: our fight is their fight. We must build on this support. Nothing must be taken for granted. Mass meetings should be held in every pit each week, to inform all members of the progress of the dispute and to involve the maximum number in picketing and other duties.

We should also continue to address mass meetings of lorry drivers, power station workers, rail workers, dockers, seamen, and all other workers whose help is vital in blacking the movement of coal.

This may be a long and a bitter dispute. It was provoked by MacGregor and the Tories. If we stand firm, we will be the ones to finish it, and we will finish it on our terms.

Photo: Paul Traynor



Part of the lobby of the previous council meeting on 29 March.



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