

Militant

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The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

ISSUE 721
19 October 1984

25p



1964-84

Now for the
next 20 years

THIS WEEKEND *Militant* is celebrating 20 years of publication with a mass rally at Wembley conference centre. This week we look at the past two decades on pages 7 to 12.

Now we must start planning to become an even bigger, better paper so that in the next decade or two the ideas of Marxism become the ideas of the whole working class. And we should start planning now.

Cash is a first priority for building *Militant* and this is where you come in. There is less than a fortnight to the end of the fighting fund quarter on 31 October. Only days to reach the £65,000 target but we know we can do it!

The week from the 20 to 27 October is Fighting Fund Week! We want all our supporters to collect as much as possible this week—aim to raise £10. If all our readers send a donation this week—whether £50 or 50p, we can have a spectacular effect—a record week to make a record quarter.

Help us by sending a donation NOW. We'll make this a best-ever Fighting Fund quarter and prove that workers are not only prepared to fight for a better future but see *Militant* in the forefront of that campaign.

By Kim Waddington

Feature on the
history of *Militant*

Pages 7-12

Greeting

The NUM, South Wales area, thanks all socialists who have supported the miners and their families during the great strike of 1984.

Emlyn Williams

President

Terry Thomas

Vice President

George Rees

General Secretary

National Union of
Mineworkers, South Wales
Area.

It's a fight to the finish

No coal must move

THE TORY government wants to crush the miners, cripple the trade unions, and wage war on the working class. That is the only explanation for the sabotage of the ACAS talks by MacGregor, on orders from the government, at the weekend.

Bolstered by the Brighton bombing and encouraged by the vacillation of the Labour leaders, they are now going to use every dirty trick to bring the miners to their knees. After seven agonising months of hardship and suffering, the miners and their families now face their greatest challenge.

Plans are in hand for the mobilisation of scab lorries and ultimately troops to move coal from the pitheads to the power stations. The Tories are prepared to face a strike by the pit deputies, and even risk a general strike.

Bosses want showdown

The strategists of capital want a showdown with the working class in order to force down living standards. It is not a "personal" whim of Thatcher but the interests of Big Business which is dictating

Editorial statement

her brutal measures against the miners. The capitalists prepared in 1926. The Tory government prepared and provoked this strike.

But unfortunately the trade union and Labour leaders have been completely unprepared for the onslaught of capital against the miners and the working class.

The NACODS decision to strike is a tremendous boost for the miners and the overwhelming support from Midlands NACODS members shows how effective it could be. But it should be implemented immediately, not giving MacGregor and the Tory press time to manoeuvre splits within their ranks. The overwhelming ballot vote is a crushing answer to the hypocrisy of Walker, who claims to stand for democratic

ballots yet now tries to attack the NACODS men for voting for a strike.

It is now time to mobilise the full power of the trade union movement to fight off this challenge and bring about a crushing victory for the miners. Already the Tories have been able to take advantage of the lack of response to the jailing of Cammell Laird workers and the fines on the NUM. There must be no more vacillation, no hesitation. The miners must not be starved back to work.

Union power

They need cash, in the form of a levy on all trade unionists, they need more international support, but above

all they need solidarity action from other unions. It is time to cash in the promises made at the TUC. Paper pledges will not stop coal being moved. Words will not force the Tories to back down. Action must be taken to ensure that not one tonne of coal leaves the pits.

The mood is there for a positive response from other workers, as the battles in the car industry show. The treachery of "leaders" like Hammond, who has praised the role of the police in the miners' strike, can be countered, if the issue is taken to every worker, and fully explained.

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Trade union action now

Brighton bombing see
page 2



Militant

The Brighton bomb

THE BOMBING of the Grand Hotel in Brighton will have incensed workers in both Britain and Ireland. They are repulsed by this type of action and enraged that the Tories have been handed such an opportunity to counter attack. Workers are desperate to see the end of the Thatcher government, but know that this act will only strengthen it and provide even more weapons to attack those who oppose it on both sides of the Irish sea.

It is the workers who will pay the price. Exploiting the publicity and the sympathy for those bereaved and maimed, the Tories can divert attention from the misery they are causing. As in the Falklands war, they will whip up jingoistic emotion, amongst the middle class and some workers, to bolster support for themselves, just when they were becoming more unpopular and divided.

They will be able to exploit the mood of panic to make more use of the draconian "anti-terrorist" laws, which were passed in the aftermath of earlier bombings. They will be imposed not just on the Provisional IRA, who have claimed responsibility for the act, but against the miners and other workers in struggle. MacGregor was quick to smear the miners with guilt by association—"It's all part of the same syndrome", he said on TV, during talks at ACAS.

Northern Ireland has been used as a testing ground for methods of repression that could not have been used but for workers' revulsion against the assassinations and bombings by sectarian groups. Now some of these methods are being used against the miners.

Acts like this bombing also divert and divide the workers. Sympathy for the genuine grievances of the Catholic workers of Northern Ireland, who have suffered terribly for 15 years, and opposition to the role of the army and the police, becomes that much harder to generate amongst British and Northern Ireland's Protestant workers.

Following a bomb attack in London in 1867 by the Fenians, a nineteenth century Irish nationalist group, Karl Marx wrote: "The London masses, who have shown great sympathy for Ireland, will be made wild by it and driven into the hands of the government party".

But the most serious consequence of the resort to tactics of individual terror by those who claim to represent the workers, is, as Trotsky explained: that "it belittles the role of the masses in their own consciousness". "If it is enough to arm oneself with a pistol in order to achieve one's goal" he wrote, "why the efforts of the class struggle? ... If it makes sense to terrify highly placed personages with the roar of explosions, where is the need for a party? Why meetings, mass agitation and elections if one can so easily take aim at the ministerial bench from the gallery of Parliament?"

Society will never be changed by killing political leaders or bombing their property. They govern not as individuals but as representatives of their class, and it is class interests which determine their policies. Dead leaders can always be replaced, but the policies remain unchanged.

The Tories have undoubtedly engendered bitterness and hatred amongst workers. The Provisionals hoped to capitalise on this by placing and timing the bomb so that only leading Tories, and not hotel staff, would be harmed. But that does not make their methods any less alien to the traditions of the labour movement. By choosing a political target they have highlighted the political stupidity of this kind of action.

It was an act of despair. After 15 years of struggle, they have failed to deliver anything to the Catholic workers they claim to represent. After all the deaths, injuries and jailings, they are further than ever from their goal of a united Ireland.

Yet they still have the ability to inflict enormous damage on the workers' movement in both Britain and Ireland by the use of terror tactics. The greatest danger is that, in future, when workers face defeats, because of a lack of leadership from the top, some of them too, in despair may follow the same road.

That is why it is so necessary to hammer home the difference between this kind of futile and counter-productive gesture in Brighton and the kind of struggle the miners are waging. Only united class action by workers, with thousands actively and consciously participating, can inflict real defeats on the Tories and begin to solve the problems of the British and Irish workers.

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Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Published by Militant; printed by Cambridge Heath Press (TU) Ltd., 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. ISSN 0144-9275

The Grand Hotel bombing:

Tories cash in

THE BRIGHTON bombing has provided the Tory press with a perfect opportunity to try and revive support for their party.

Growing unpopularity and the splits within their ranks are ignored, as the sympathy for the victims of the bomb is exploited to the full.

After past bombings, the media have consciously tried to inflame anti-Irish feelings. This time the Tories' main "enemy" is nearer home. A number of cartoons show Thatcher as a new Churchill. One in the *Sunday Express* showed the Prime Minister standing by a Churchill statue under attack from two dive bombers, one piloted by the IRA dropping bombs, the second by Arthur Scargill dropping bricks. The caption is "Alas in the third war to defend democracy, our

enemies all speak English."

The hysteria is maintained by the editorial headlined "Her finest hour", and an article by Tory MP George Gardiner, which speaks of "thuggery on the picket line," and asks "where is the moral line between the crowbar hurled at policemen and the bomb intended for Mrs Thatcher in the Grand Hotel?"

Hanging

The *Daily Express* even compared the determination of the "Iron Lady" with Ian MacGregor's "wilting" in accepting ACAS talks. But it was MacGregor himself who thought the bombing "a projection of the violence in other parts of the country", that is, in the coalfields.

The press highlights calls to bring back hanging. In the *Sunday Times*, Peter

Shiple, one of Thatcher's former advisers, called for a new anti-terrorist unit with government officials, police and "security agencies". Shiple was the author of a witch-hunting book on *Militant*. He knows all about guilt by association, writing in the *Sunday Times* of "IRA leaders' visits to Bolshevik Russia in the 1920s."

The *Daily Telegraph* took this to its logical conclusion. They quote a pamphlet (from the big business propaganda outfit, Aims of Industry), *Political Violence—the Guilty Men*, which went to press before the Brighton bomb. The book "points the finger at Mr Benn who leads the pack in support of Mr Scargill's attempt to use violence to bring down a lawfully elected government. From Scargillism to bombs and guns is a difference of degree

not of kind." AIMS calls for the government to publish information on the "instigation of public violence", including money and support from left-dominated local authorities.

A cover

The press may weep over the deaths and maimings but for them it has compensations, softening up the public for further attacks not on "terrorists" but on workers' rights. The labour movement's leadership must bring home to workers the real reasons for these moves; the capitalists in their crisis need to attack working class living standards and rights. Acts of terrorism only provide a convenient cover for their motives.

By Roger Shives

Scottish YS attacked

LABOUR PARTY and trade union members will be astonished to see the decision by the Scottish executive of the Labour Party to set up a committee of inquiry into Labour Party Young Socialists' fund-raising for the NUM in Scotland.

Funds for miners

At the executive meeting on 13 October, days after the threat to sequester NUM funds and put Arthur Scargill in jail, much of the business was taken up with an onslaught on YS activity. The meeting decided to set up a committee of inquiry, telling YS branches in Scotland to account for funds raised for the miners in the last eight months. In addition the YS was attacked by leading so-called left-wingers for the editorial stance of the YS national paper *Socialist Youth* and for the size of the active membership in Scotland (though the Scottish ex-



LPYS lobby of the Tory conference in Brighton.

ecutive recently refused to grant funds to the YS.)

On top of this, accusations were made about the work the YS are doing in Further Education colleges to recruit to Labour clubs. It

seems that several leading left wingers have decided that pursuing and restraining young people in the Labour Party in Scotland is their top

priority.

The LPYS will fight these attacks and put its priority as winning young workers to the fight for socialism.

Railwaymen fight threats

Railwaymen at the Mantle Lane depot at Coalville in Leicestershire are still refusing to move coal, despite threats from management.

In a letter to all staff on 28 September, the BR Area Manager claimed that the CEBG had transferred all its contracts for coal to road haulage firms, and that in one week alone, 70,000 tonnes normally carried by rail had been taken by road.

"Your future" he wrote "and the future of the Coalville depot is now in the balance." This threat to the depot was withdrawn, (on a local radio programme!) but

Belvoir jobs

IT NOW seems that full production of coal at the Vale of Belvoir, Leicestershire will be delayed until 1995 instead of next year as originally envisaged.

A mobile caravan toured Leicestershire offering jobs in the new development. Now it is likely that few of the 2,500 Leicestershire miners will be offered these

the Area Manager has approached individuals to try and persuade them to move coal, and hinted that there could be promotion if they did.

The NUR executive has warned management that unless he stops making these individual approaches, there would be industrial action throughout London Midland region. This warning has, for the time being, put a stop to these attempts to go over the heads of the union, and coal movement on the railways stays blacked.

jobs and all four remaining pits in Leicestershire are marked for closure.

Barry Draycott, one of the "Dirty Thirty" Leicestershire strikers explained. "Now only 1100 are due to work in the new development and only 800 of these are NUM jobs."

Only an NUM victory can guarantee jobs and proper development on the Vale of Belvoir.

Coal

(Continued from front page).

On *Panorama* last Monday, there were disturbing signs that this is not being done. Unemployed lorry drivers, members of the TGWU, expressed their willingness to cross picket lines. The responsibility for this rests with the trade union leaders, who have yet to get the message across to all workers, employed and unemployed, that the miners' strike is their fight. Nothing will do more to help the fight for jobs than a miners' victory. Defeat would mean fewer jobs than ever.

This means mass meetings at every workplace and every area, emergency meetings of shop stewards committees, trades councils and local confeds. A 24-hour general strike is now essential to give the workers a sense of their power and warn the Tories of the movement's might.

But if troops are brought in to move coal, or if the miners' leader is jailed, an

all-out indefinite general strike will be the order of the day. And if there is no lead from above, it must come from below, led by the miners. Every shop stewards committee, every union official, every executive, will be judged by their response to such a challenge. That response must consist of deeds, not words.

World in Action on Monday showed how MacGregor broke a strike at AMAX in America. He is being paid to do the same to the miners, if he can get away with it. He and the Tories are prepared for a fight to the finish. A firm commitment to action from the TUC might yet force them to step back.

But any weakness on the part of the workers leaders will be seen as the green light to start an all-out war to grind the working class into the dust. To make sure the workers win that war, action now is vital.

Miners' dispute

Disturbing news on coal stocks

NEW government and CEEGB inspired leaks on the deliveries of coal to power stations have appeared in the press. The Financial Times (5 October), claimed that coal stocks at power stations, up until the first week of October, had risen to 15 million tonnes.

A secret CEEGB document put stocks at 14 million tonnes at the beginning of September, which implies a rise of one million tonnes in the whole month.

The amount of coal burnt last month was about 4½ million tonnes which means, if the press leaks are true, that over one million tonnes of coal a week was moved into power stations in this period.

Until early September deliveries were around 400,000 tonnes a week, so for the leaks to be true, coal deliveries to power stations must have nearly tripled, started in the second week of September.

By Pete Dickinson

The implications of this development, if true, are serious for the NUM and the labour movement. Investigations must be made as to how this huge increase in lorry deliveries was organised to take effect so quickly, and if union members are involved, urgent action taken to stop them. Pressure also needs to be increased to step up the blacking of coal moving by rail.

Virtually all the coal is going into six big power stations in the Midlands, possibly at the rate of 1,500 lorry loads a day into each station.

A significant proportion of this coal is coming from open-cast sites, operated by TGWU members, in contravention of an agreement by the NCB not to move open-cast coal. The NUM and TGWU must force the NCB to honour its agreement.

Even if large amounts

French workers bring support to Kent



Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

Hundreds of French workers, members of the CGT union federation, arrived in Aylesham Kent, with 400 tons of food in a convoy of 35 lorries for striking British miners. A packed and overflowing meeting in the welfare club ended on a tremendous high note when £60,000 was handed over by the CGT General Secretary. The food had been collected by workers in factories, mines and towns throughout France, and it was this theme of workers' internationalism and solidarity which was highlighted by both French trade unionists and Kent NUM speakers.

of coal are moving into the Midlands power stations, stocks are still falling at coal-fired stations in the North and Scotland.

At one of the largest stations in the country, in Yorkshire, coal stocks are at 40% of their normal level. Generating plant in the coal-fired stations is being cannibalised to provide spare parts for the generators in oil-fired plant, which are frequently breaking down due to the enormous pressure they are under.

Strikes—a cry for social justice

I have been asked to summarise the effect of the strike on my family. There are many stories of hardship to the miners' families, that have been published in the local and national newspapers and flash through the TV screen.

My family is no exception to this deprivation. Financially and psychologically I would not venture to project the long term effect. I know it will take years to mend.

Comradeship

However, on the credit side I have found something more which was lacking in my life. Before the strike, I was just a wage earner, wholly wrapped up in the welfare of my own family. Since the strike I have succeeded in getting rid of my own ego. Irrespective of religious belief, creed and colour, I have found togetherness of fellowship and comradeship. I have found a larger family to care

for, to give support to.

I am lucky that my own family has supported me, and through that I have gained strength to stand and bear all the hardship. But I know some of my fellow strikers have not been so lucky. Some of the marriages have broken down. One or two have tried to commit suicide.

Strikes are as old as work itself. There have been strikes by the gladiators, geisha girls, strikes by dustmen, strikes by teachers, doctors, nurses and civil servants.

In a 'democratic' country, the seeds of unrest and strike among the working class people are planted by the oppression of the authority. A strike must not be made to look like a social evil. It is a cry for social justice.

By SD Prasad

(Littleton Colliery, Staffs NUM)

Belgian solidarity

Notts' miners Martin and Terry Allen, went to Ostend last weekend 6/7 October, at the invitation of Belgian Young Socialists and trades unionists:

"We leapt straight off the boat and went to a meeting that had been organised for us, where we were well received. The main question we were asked was why other unions, especially the T&G, were not giving us more help.

"Belgium's dockers are blacking CEEGB stocks there and can't understand why coal is being moved here. We explained that there were a lot of one man and scab outfits.

"We brought back £1,000 including £800 from Ostend, and there's another £1,500 to £2,000 to come. We also collected £200 in Blankenburg.

"People were magnificent. When they saw our stickers they would come up to us and shake our hands and say 'you must beat Margaret Thatcher'."

Democracy—Notts style

WHEN SHERWOOD NUM (Notts) branch secretary John Liptrott took the NUM to court he claimed to be fighting for democracy, but recently he has found that too much democracy is not necessarily a good thing.

Strikers at the Sherwood NUM branch have been in the majority at recent branch meetings. So with an important meeting coming up ultra-democratic John Liptrott wrote letters to most of the pit's 100 strikers expelling them from the NUM for non payment of union dues while they had been on strike.

When the strikers complained to Notts NUM General Secretary Henry Richardson he stopped the expulsions taking place. So John Liptrott, finding he would be in a minority again, cancelled the branch meeting—so much for democracy.

Letter from prison

GUY BENNET, a miner from Armthorpe near Doncaster, was jailed for three months for criminal damage and using insulting words and behaviour. We reprint below extracts from his letter from Rudgate Prison, Wetherby to John Hird, National Chairman of the Labour Party Young Socialists:

I thank you for your letter dated 29 September, it was just the ticket. I must add though that I never doubted the fact that we had support from comrades like yourself, and that, I can assure you, is no small comfort when you are led to believe no one gives a damn about you while you are in here.

I never really understood how people could be against the miners and what they were fighting for, but then I was directly involved and could see for myself how the "free press" twisted the facts until we have become the public enemy no 1, our union leaders have become the "fascist regime", with Mr Scargill starring at President Galtieri.

I find it amazing how anyone who stops thinking of himself for once, and rejects totally the capitalist system is immediately branded a communist. That is the opinion of all the prison officers in here; they go out of their way to point out that the first rule of survival in their, and supposedly my world, is "look after number one", and to hell with everyone else.

One of the lads in this dorm has been unemployed for 4½ years, he says that I



Photo: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)

Thousands of miners have been arrested during the strike, often receiving harsh sentences for trumped-up offences.

should feel "privileged" to have a job, any job. He goes on to say how no one would stop him going to work 'if' he was a miner. He is 22, the same as me. John, we have got our work cut out for us, trying to explain to these people that there is a way out, and that is to learn and understand how and why they/he came to be in such a position.

Birthright

A country that expects you to fight for it in 'times of need', ie when finance is threatened, should bear that in mind when you ask for a job. I believe it is my birthright to have a job. I have chosen the mines, like my father and his father, my brother and my comrades, and no one is going to take that away from me.

The sooner this struggle is

ended the better, on our terms. We will be able to forge a union that will be the vanguard of the working class, then we can set about smashing the 'doomed to failure' capitalist system once and for all.

Anyway John I hope you receive this letter, I thank my comrades for alerting you to my plight. I am out on 9 November (hopefully). I only get four letters a week, so I find it hard to reply to all of the ones I receive, but your letter is one that warrants an immediate reply. I will show it to the other lads in here and introduce them to Mr Marx and Engels. Keep up the good work, thank my comrades from Brookhouse Colliery (Sheffield) for me. Keep in touch please, we will win. Up the miners.

Founding conference of the Further Education Labour Students (FELS)

Support is growing for the founding Conference of the Further Education Labour Students (FELS). Woolwich College Student Union has agreed to book transport to the Conference, a mini-bus has been booked from Birmingham, and Worthing Tech Student Union is also already organising a turnout.

If every LPYS Branch and Labour Club organises in a similar fashion the FELS Conference will undoubtedly be the biggest political gathering of FE Students organised so far!

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

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

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

By Louise James

(Organising Secretary, Further Education Labour Students)

Miners' dispute

DHSS leaves families to starve

IT HAS become more and more obvious—especially to strikers and their families—that the old ideas of the state (and in particular the state's welfare benefit system) as some form of neutral, non-political guarantee of civilised standards are now completely false.

It is now clear—as far as the state is concerned—that miners' children can be left to starve and their dead can be left unburied because the funeral bill can't be paid. No money will come from the DHSS to relieve such hardship and distress.

As a miner at Florence, N Staffs, said to me, "As far as I see the DHSS, it's just another way of forcing me back to work."

In the North & South Staffs areas, Supplementary Benefit claims for strikers are dealt with by special Strike Centres, staffed not by local office staff (who would usually be trade unionists) but by Special Claims (Snooper) Squads, supplied and instructed by Regional Office.

Poverty levels

Since the 1981 Social Security Act, a series of revisions of Social Security law have made the provisions for strikers and their families almost unrecognisable from those for other "normal" (unemployed, long-term sick or pensioners) supplementary benefit claimants. The usual safety nets to prevent deprivation and hardship just do not exist for strikers' families.

Compare the officially acceptable levels of poverty for the various groups of claimants on supplementary benefit:—

Who you are

1. Pensioners, Married Couple
2. Unemployed Married Couple
3. Striking Married Couple

What you get

- £54.55 Long-term Rate**
£43.50 This is the short term rate—doesn't matter how long you've been on dole; it's all you get.
£6.45

This cut from the unemployed rate (2) to strikers' rate (3) is made in 2 stages. Firstly the striker receives no Supplementary Benefit, so £22.05 is deducted from the £43.50, leaving £21.45 for the striker's wife. Only then is the striker's assumed strike pay (£15) deducted from the wife's benefit (£21.45—£15) leaving just £6.45 per week (£37.05 less than an

unemployed couple!).

Strikers families are disqualified from the "normal" heating additions and diet allowances for young children and for the sick. Strikers' families are disqualified from all single payments (for blankets, new babies and pregnant women, dietary additions and payments to avoid danger to life and health etc).

rebate from South Staffs District Council and would normally get 100% rebate, but for his son (who is also on strike at Littleton and with no income from Supplementary Benefit either).

Because the grown up son is classed as "working" ie, not unemployed or receiving benefit, he has to find £8.20 rent & rates contribution per week from a total family income of £10.55! Not surprisingly there are now rent arrears and the local council have a Possession Order in County Court.

Eviction threat

An example of the craziness of the Housing Benefit system is Tom Cartlidge (on strike at Littleton). As a single parent he gets no Supplementary Benefit for himself, but has a daughter at school. However the £13.70 allowance for his daughter is wiped out by the £15 deduction for assumed strike pay, so total income is just child benefit and single parent benefit of £10.55 per week.

Because he gets no Supplementary Benefit from DHSS, Tom claims a rent

No help for sick child

The daughter of Brenda Procter of Florence Womens Support Group has a rare liver disorder which needs a special (more expensive) diet. She should be entitled to an Urgent Needs Payment. Her claim wasn't exactly turned down, just "discouraged"—"Well if you did claim it would probably take about 3 weeks to sort it out and you might not get any

benefit during that period", the DHSS told her.

"I just couldn't afford to take the risk of doing without any money for even a week, so I was forced to stick to the Giro I was already getting regularly rather than claim the extra for a special diet allowance and risk an interruption", was how Brenda Procter explained her predicament.



Staffs miners' wives on picket line.

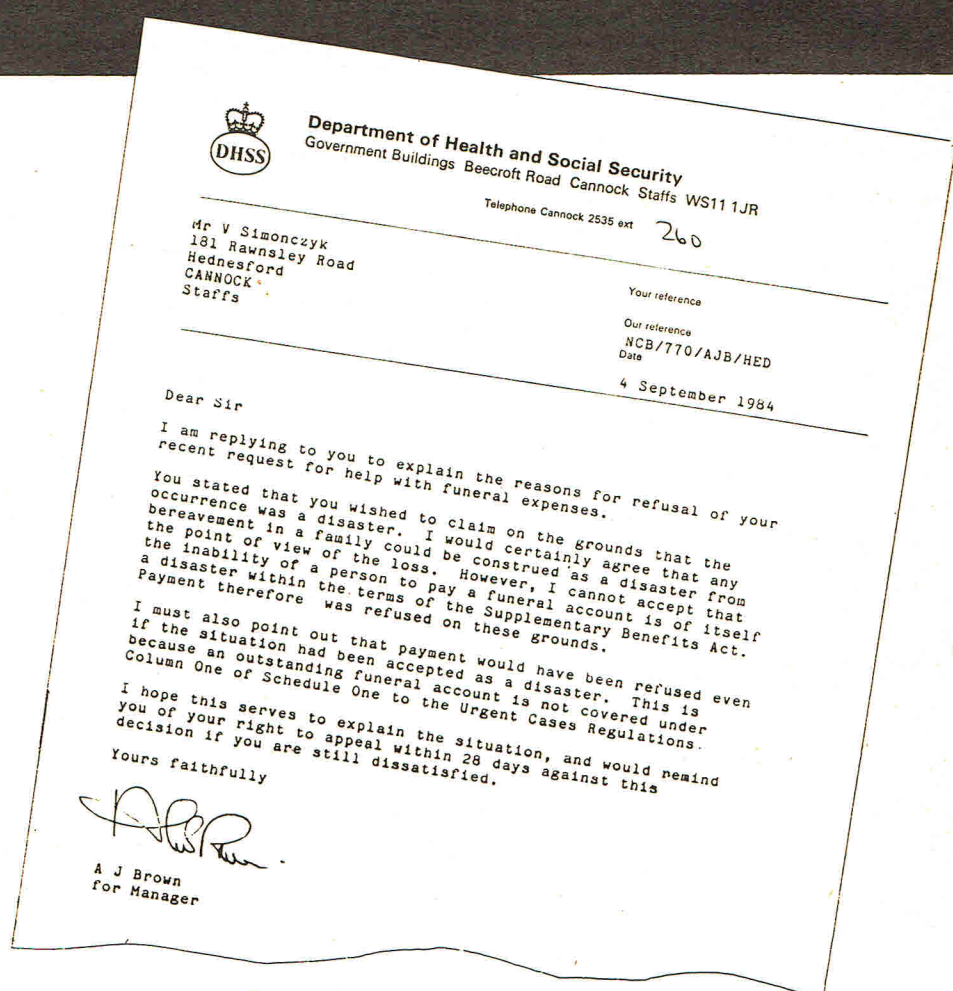
Secret cut

We should not forget that the Tories are not just attacking strikers but the old, the sick and the unemployed too. As from November, when the Supplementary Benefits get their annual increase, pensioners and long-term sick and disabled will get a cut in the allowances paid for heating costs. Because they are on the higher long-term rate (currently £54.55 rather than the £43.50 for the unemployed), it is argued that pensioners don't need the full heating additions that are currently paid. Therefore there will be a £1 cut in the benefit.

Tories ashamed

This has been a secret unpublished cut with none of the usual press releases and circulars that accompany changes in Supplementary Benefit. Even the Tories seem ashamed of themselves this time.

Miners robbed by state



Letter from DHSS refusing funeral grant.

Baby's death—"not a disaster"

Vic Simonczyk's wife gave birth to a baby in August. When the baby was due, Vic (on strike at Littleton) claimed a payment from DHSS for the cost of baby things (nappies, cot clothing etc). He received a visit from DHSS who told him that he couldn't get any help and handed him a leaflet (SB.2) "Supplementary Benefit and Trade Disputes" with the paragraph that said 'no lump sum payments'; marked in biro with an asterisk.

However, when Vic read the leaflet he noticed further paragraphs which gave a list of Urgent Needs Payments. These included new baby things—the very items that he wanted!

When a Citizens Advice Bureau worker contacted DHSS for an explanation he was told that the striker should "go and get credit", and if he really needed these items, "then he could always go back to work, couldn't he!"

Subsequently the Simonczyk's baby died and DHSS refused a claim for funeral expenses. The Urgent Needs Payments allow a payment to cover a disaster but the DHSS didn't consider a death to be a "disaster" and so no payment—an appeal is pending. (STOP PRESS: As a result of publicity of this case, the Tories gave in on Thursday 5/10/84 and are amending the existing rules on payments to strikers for funeral costs).

Feature by Nigel Wheatley (ASTMS and Walsall Welfare Rights Group)

Housing benefit

The Tories' cutbacks and re-organisation of Housing Benefit in '82 and '83 has put partial control of benefit in the hands of local councils. Unfortunately many maverick Tory-controlled District Councils are failing to carry out many of the provisions of the housing benefit regulations. At the beginning of the strike in South Staffs, many Lea Hall miners were turned away by staff at Lichfield District Council and the Treasurer stated that strikers were not entitled to any rebates.

Labour Councils power

Fortunately this was successfully challenged by local Labour councillors led by Bill Warke (himself a striking miner at Lea Hall Pit)—but at South Staffs District Council in which some Littleton miners live, the situation has not been improved.

The power to backdate a rebate for up to 12 months and the discretionary power to increase rebate under exceptional circumstances are being widely ignored, even by many Labour councils—with the exception of Leeds and of Rotherham, who have instructed officers to treat all strikes as exceptional circumstances.

Unwritten rules

As well as the existing rules and regulations which can be read in the Social Security Acts, there are also the unwritten rules which have no basis in law but which the DHSS Strike Centres quite clearly operate. They are as follows:—

1. Strike Centres are staffed by special Claims Squads who are moved on regularly. The result is that it is impossible to talk to the Supplementary Officer (SBO) who has made a decision and maybe get it reviewed. Very few appeals by strikers have yet been heard.

2. All applications for Urgent Needs Payments are refused on the grounds that strikers should get credit or a grant from the trade union.

3. Anyone who is sick, has a doctor's note and has paid National Insurance Stamps should get sickness benefit. This includes strikers and is important because sickness exempts you from the strike disqualifications—ie you get paid Supplementary Benefit at the "normal rate" of

£43.50 per week for a married couple. However all strikers are being referred to a regional medical board—unless they are hospitalised. Consequently payments can be delayed for months—fractured skulls, broken toes, etc, have been ignored despite doctor's notes. A scab with a bad back would have no problem in claiming sickness benefit immediately however!

4. Family Income Supplement should be paid to miners' wives who work 30 hours or more. Like Sickness Benefit there is no mention of disqualification within the rules for strikers. All strikers are being refused FIS purely because of the strike—the husband's income is not assessed upon income since March '84 but (in collusion with NCB) on earnings in October 1983—before the overtime ban began. Many appeals have been lodged but again, mysteriously, only one FIS appeal has been heard in Staffordshire. This was won by the miner's wife and an award of over £20 per week was made—but payments have been blocked by DHSS who have now appealed against the appeal!

Special diet

In South Staffs, baby Clair Griffiths whose father is on strike at Littleton Colliery, Cannock, needs a special diet which her mother estimates costs up to £16 a week. DHSS refused Urgent Needs Payments despite her mother wasting precious money on bus fares to get doctor's notes etc. Conse-

quently without a rich diet, Claire now has to be rushed to hospital every 2/3 weeks—she was born prematurely with partly-formed bowels. Despairing Citizens Advice Bureau workers have contacted "Save the Children Fund" in a last attempt to get some help.

Liverpool race unit-council stands firm

THE MORNING after the appointment of a senior advisor to head Liverpool's new Race Relations Unit, Derek Hatton and other councillors were taken hostage at the council offices and compelled under physical duress to sign a statement agreeing to reopen the post. Apart from calling in the police, they had no other choice. Next day, the District Labour Party condemned intimidatory tactics by an unrepresentative group, and affirmed support for the appointment of the best candidate, Sam Bond.

Labour reaffirms fight against racism

WHY THE furore over the Liverpool council's appointment of a senior advisor to head the City's new Race Relations Unit?

Opponents of the Labour Group, loudly publicised in the reactionary press, have tried to create the impression that the council is acting against the City's black and Asian community. In reality, it is a single, unrepresentative group who are attempting to veto by force the council's moves to implement a socialist policy which will unite black and white workers in the fight against racism, and in a campaign for real conditions of equality.

The Labour Group, which has been on the front line of the fight against Tory cuts, is very conscious of the need to tackle the deep-rooted problems of the black and Asian community.

Ever worsening effects of inner-city decay compounded by years of neglect by previous councils—right wing Labour as well as the Liberal-Tory coalition—make it urgent to

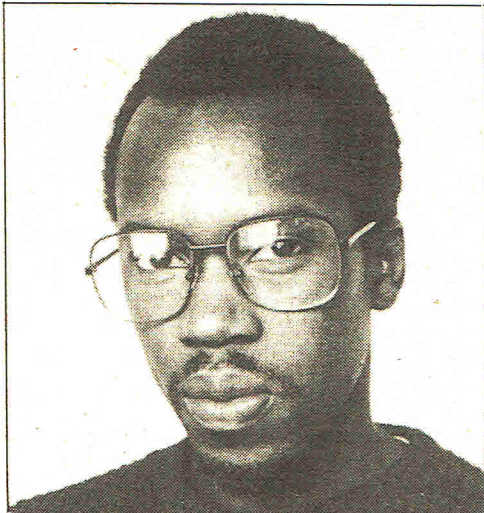
implement an equal opportunities programme and fight for the necessary resources.

On Wednesday 10 October, the panel appointed by the council interviewed six short-listed candidates for the head of the Race Relations Unit (RRU) being established as part of the council's policy.

After lengthy interviews and a long discussion on the panel, conducted according to normal procedure, a majority decided to appoint Sam Bond. Four members of the "Black Caucus", which had been invited by the Labour Group to sit in on appropriate committees, were present.

On the basis of the candidates' response to questions on race-relations policy, all five Labour councillors were sure that Sam Bond was the best person for the job.

As the council had made clear in the original job advert, they were just as interested in the candidate's



Sam Bond, Senior Advisor to Liverpool Council's Race Relations Unit.

record of voluntary campaigning as in professional experience in what has become known as the "race relations industry". Many blacks are understandably cynical about the bodies which appear to provide big salaries for careerists and concentrate on producing lavish publicity material—with little effect on the actual position of the black and Asian community.

The panel was satisfied that Sam Bond has a very good record of grass-roots activity in anti-racist campaigns over many years.

Next morning, however, the Town Hall Annex was occupied by about 30 people associated with the Black Caucus. Some press reports have given the impression that this was just a friendly occupation and that as a result of negotiations Derek Hatton and other councillors agreed to reconsider Bond's appointment and re-advertise the post. The reality is that Derek Hatton, Tony Mulhearn, and other councillors

Photo: Militant

were taken hostage, threatened with physical violence, and had no option but to sign the agreement put in front of them. The statement of NALGO members indicates the kind of abuse and intimidation to which councillors and council workers were subjected.

Under these circumstances, the District Labour Party which met on the following evening quite rightly rejected the statement signed under duress and re-affirmed the appointment of Sam Bond. After a full debate, the DLP, attended by about 150 delegates, voted overwhelmingly for this decision.

The meeting accepted that Bond had been fairly and properly appointed. They rejected the Black Caucus's claim that it was "a political appointment". Bond was selected because the panel believed that he was the best person to implement the DLP's policies. His political stance within the Labour party is not relevant. Since when have candidates for council jobs been asked whether they belong to the Communist Party, read *Tribune*, or support the *Militant*?

The real objection of the Black Caucus is that Bond does not support their policies. This particular group, which does not have the support and agreement of the whole of Liverpool's black and Asian community but which has been given exceptional opportunities recently to participate in council discussions, has not been given—and could not be given—an exclusive say over Race Relations Unit appointments.

The Caucus's candidate did not get the job! That is its only—completely illegitimate—grievance.

All the other objections variously and inconsistently voiced by Black Caucus critics—that Bond was not

born in Liverpool, has no status in the race relations industry, and even (almost incredibly) in some misinformed quarters that he is white—are just a smokescreen for the real gripe.

Party's endorsement

The view of the DLP executive, decisively endorsed in spite of some dissenting voices, was that much more is at stake than the appointment of one individual. Bond was appointed as the best person to implement DLP policy. If the council were to give way on this, elected Labour representatives would be conceding the right, under threat of force, of unrepresentative groups to dictate council policy.

Within the framework of DLP policy councillors frequently have to take decisions, as on appointments. They are still accountable to the DLP. But on the RRU appointment the DLP was clearly convinced that the councillors had taken the correct decision.

DLP delegates recognised that to give in to intimidation on this issue would invite big problems in the future. Next, it could be a group of parents opposed to school reorganisation, or a handful of tenants demanding the sale of council houses, or any group with any grievance against the council—occupying the council offices in an attempt to dictate policy.

For the labour movement, this is totally unacceptable.

The DLP is determined to implement its plans for fighting racialism. But it is equally determined to go ahead on the basis of socialist policies which will be capable of coming to grips with the problems and winning the support of all working people in Liverpool, black and white.

Unions' response

SAM BOND'S appointment and the siege at the Council offices were followed by press reports—completely misleading reports—that Liverpool NALGO and other local authority unions would be boycotting the Race Relations Unit post.

In fact, the call for steps to block the implementation of the council's decision came from just two committees, who took decisions without any consultation with their members.

The finance and general purposes committee of NALGO called for a boycott of Sam Bond's post when other branch officers were in London discussing support for the miners. No official steps have been taken in relation to a boycott, which would need national approval.

This committee accepted the line of the Black Caucus without hearing the views of the Labour councillors involved.

Since the finance committee met there have been three other NALGO departmental shop stewards' meetings. In both Planning and City Solicitor's departments NALGO stewards passed a resolution which condemned the intimidation and backed the District Labour Party's decision.

Several NALGO branches in the North West are now considering resolutions condemning the intimidation.

Officers of Sam Bond's own NALGO branch in Brent, North London, reacted strongly to suggestions that Liverpool NALGO will be boycotting Sam's appointment. They contacted both Liverpool and head office to make it

clear that they would strongly oppose any moves of this kind.

The day after the siege, the Executive of the local authority Joint Shop Stewards' Committee discussed the issue. They were addressed by two members of the Black Caucus. No one was invited to put the Council's point of view. By 6 votes to 3 they passed a resolution deploring the District Labour Party's decision to uphold Bond's appointment and called for a boycott of the post.

The resolution was moved and seconded by the representatives of NUPE and NUT, who both opposed action on 29 March in support of the Council's stand against Thatcher's cuts. At last week's meeting, they opposed a call for a 24-hour strike in protest against the jailing of Laird's workers.

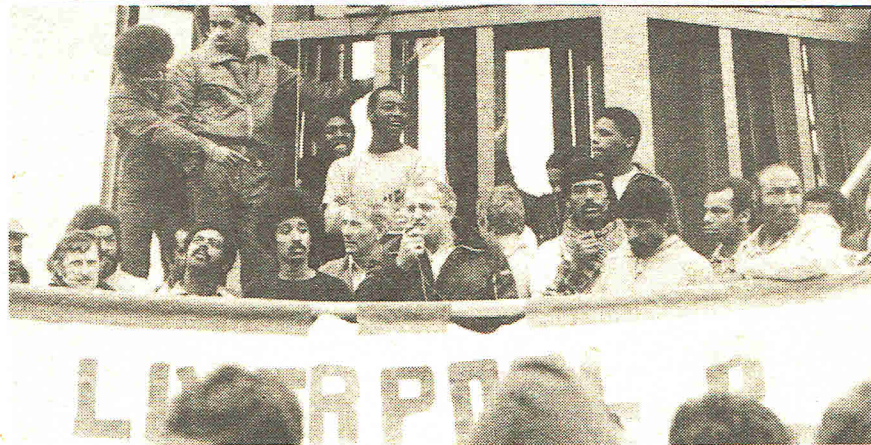
On Tuesday, over 100 GMBATU stewards met, representing the council's biggest union. After hearing both Derek Hatton and a member of the Black Caucus, and after a full discussion, they voted overwhelmingly in support of the Labour group's decision.

On Saturday there will be a full meeting of the JSS at which the RRU appointment will be discussed. There will undoubtedly be strong support for the council's decision to go ahead with its plans for the Race Relations Unit as part of an urgent policy of improving the position of the black community, but at the same time refusing to accept a veto from an unrepresentative group over appointments and policy.



Derek Hatton.

Photo: Militant



Tony Mulhearn President of Liverpool District Labour Party speaking at Liverpool 8 Defence Committee rally in the aftermath of the 1981 riots.

Photo: Militant

NALGO members' statement

NALGO MEMBERS, including black members, were under siege on 10 October as well as councillors. They were extremely angry when a few leading NALGO officers, in their eagerness to champion the sectional claims of one black grouping, brushed aside their complaints about the abuse and intimidation to which they had been subjected. NALGO members in the City Solicitors' Department produced the following (slightly shortened) statement which was circulated widely to NALGO members:

As NALGO members in the City Solicitors' Department we regard the establishment of the Race Relations Unit as vitally important in order to improve the position of the black community in Liverpool and we are keen to see this unit established.

We would wish to bring to the attention of the Branch the disgraceful events that took place on Wednesday 10 October, 1984, following the appointment of the Principal Race Relations Officer.

People associated with or members of the Black Caucus who took part in the outrageous activity detailed below are a group of self-appointed "leaders" elected by nobody and whose views are unrepresentative of the

black community.

They stormed into an office occupied by two NALGO members and then held hostage, under threat of physical violence, several City Councillors and Sampson Bond, a black NALGO member from Brent.

Physical threat

They were told in no uncertain terms that if they attempted to leave the office they would be subjected to physical violence. Extremely obscene and offensive language was used.

A black member working in the Campaign Unit was told amongst other things, "you're a traitor; go away and paint your face white".

A GMBATU member

who appealed for the release of the Councillors in order that they could go to the Council meeting to vote on important issues affecting all the workers of Liverpool including the jailed Cammel Lairds workers was told to "go away or you'll get it".

Having suffered threats of violence and intimidation all day we now find that some members of NALGO are apparently supporting the Black Caucus on the basis of false information by proposing to boycott the post to which Sampson Bond was appointed. We can understand why the Councillors reversed this appointment under threats of physical violence and now understand that the appointment will be re-affirmed following the decision on Thursday 11 October by Liverpool District Labour Party.

We understand that the interviews were conducted in a proper fashion and that no procedural irregularity or other compaint was made by the NALGO steward sitting in at the interviews.

We now have a position whereby NALGO could be supporting almost intimidatory and thuggish activity to reverse appointments...

Some NALGO members are also arguing that the successful candidate was not "qualified" for the job. We would not wish to interfere in the controversial area of appointments and "who is best for the job" but would argue that Sampson Bond does possess formal academic qualifications and, whilst he has not held project-type jobs, he has enormous experience of campaigning against and combatting racism at grassroots level.

On this basis we believe that a strongly worded message of condemnation be sent to the "black caucus" deploring their behaviour towards our members and that the boycotting of the race relations post be lifted in order that the vital work of race relations in the Liverpool community can be developed.

Tories return

BY 1970 there had been a slight improvement in the economy. Faced with the prospect of a victory for the openly anti-union Tory Party led by Heath, support began to swing back to Labour. It was too late, however, and in June 1970, Heath won a majority of 31, on a low turn-out.

Labour's slogan, "Now Britain's strong, let's make it great to live in" summed up the complacency of the leadership. Even George Brown, (now a renegade from the party), was forced to admit after this defeat that, "Any left wing party, any radical party, has got to be a party of idealism, and change. Our failure in 1970 was that we didn't offer enough idealism." Like too many other leaders, however, he also blamed the workers—"We've raised people's standards, we've raised earning capacity, but somehow we haven't persuaded people that all this has to be paid for...Society in Britain nowadays is largely a selfish society."



Ignoring Labour Party activists, Wilson backed the Americans in Vietnam (Above) greeting President Nixon, 1969.

On the contrary, as Peter Taaffe wrote in *Militant* in July 1970, "It is not the working class which is responsible for the victory of the Tories but the false policies of the Labour leaders... The Marxist wing of the labour movement consistently warned that tinkering with the system, attempting to manage capitalism better than the party of the capitalists themselves would inevitably lead to a setback for Labour."

Despite some improvements in housing, education and social security, the stark fact, revealed by academic Peter Townsend, was that the gap between rich and poor was no smaller in 1970 than in 1964. "The pressure of the capitalists" continued Peter Taaffe, "who controlled 80% of the wealth, 90% of the most productive part of the economy, forced one retreat after another. The minimum reform programme of



Incoming Premier, Ted Heath.

the labour leaders remained a dead letter as the capitalists extorted one concession after another."

That is the main lesson for Labour in 1984, but with the vital difference that the economic crisis facing the Wilson government in 1964 will seem as nothing compared to the catastrophe that the

next Labour government will have to deal with. According to *The Economist*, some capitalists described even Wilson's as "this extreme Bolshevik government." Their reaction next time, to even the kind of minor reforms which they tolerated then, will be outright opposition and sabotage. They will make the same demands as Lord Cromer, but much harsher and with far less time to carry them out.

Lessons of '64

The message of 1964 has not changed since the first issue of *Militant* proclaimed that "a socialist policy at home and abroad could gain the support of the overwhelming majority of the British people. It is the only policy which guarantees a future for the labour movement, a Labour government and ultimately all mankind."

In the early days of Militant

Built by young workers



KEITH DICKINSON, one of the members of the *Militant* Editorial Board expelled from the Labour Party last year:

In the Young Socialists in the early sixties, we campaigned around locally produced Marxist journals. When I was in Walton YS in Liverpool I helped produce *Rally*. However, I moved to London joining Paddington North YS. The

Marxists in the YS then used to sell *Youth for Socialism*, produced by Liverpool Garston Young Socialists.

But as support for Marxism grew amongst the youth, it was seen that one journal was needed. So after discussions and raising funds, we combined the other Marxist journals to produce *Militant*. The first issue came out with a big bang, with eight pages. Of course we had our ups and downs, sometimes only producing a four page journal because of cash shortages, but the paper came out consistently.

We aimed the paper not just at youth but at older Labour activists too. Besides its support in YS branches, *Militant* had support in Walton CLP and on Liverpool Trades Council—and this was at the time for the right wing domination of the City by the Braddocks—and also from groups of workers in Tyneside and South Wales, along with a group of building workers in London.

Ideas dismissed as utopian

MURIEL BROWNING, a long standing *Militant* supporter from Llanelli, recalls the first issues of the paper and contrasts it with today:

The arrival of *Militant* made a great difference for Marxists in the Labour Party and unions. It gave us a regular paper, something to work from, to explain ideas in discussions, and to understand ourselves what was happening in Britain and internationally.

Some people may not appreciate how difficult it is to act as a Marxist without a regular paper. Before *Militant* there was *Socialist Fight*—which when I first came across it was duplicated and produced very intermittently.

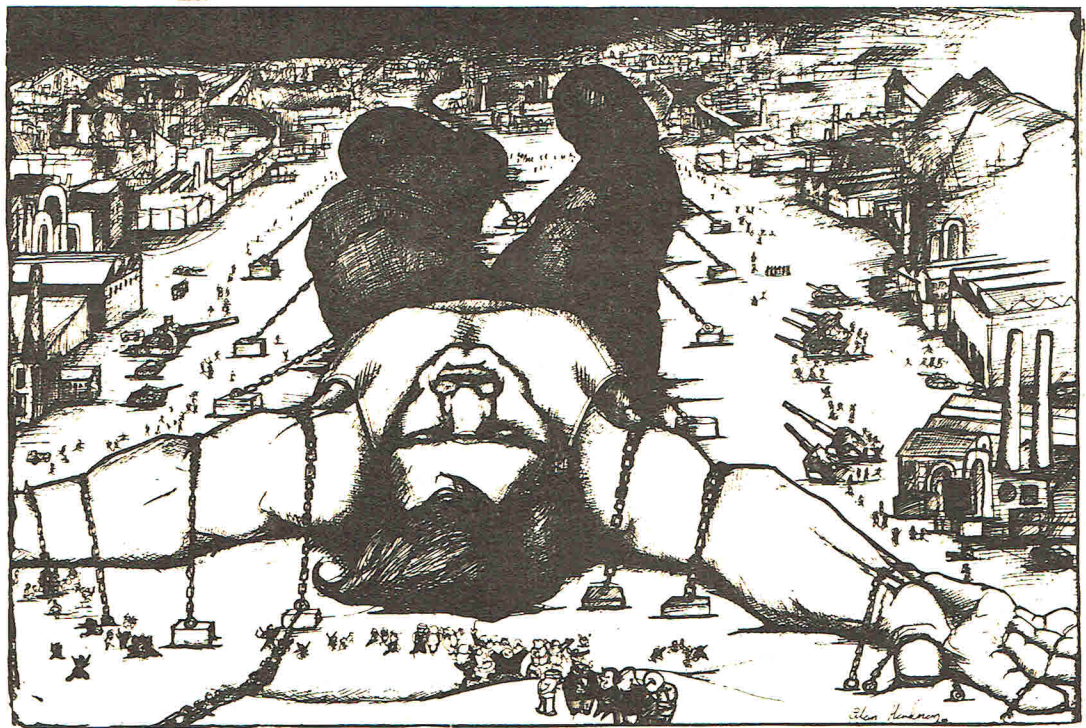
Militant was well received by activists—I used to sell about six each month at my work, British Motor Company. But for big sales we had to rely on occasional mass public meetings.

In the Labour Party many peo-

ple patronised us. I used to sell one or two, but the ideas were dismissed as "utopian". I was told that "revolutionary ideas may be alright for Europeans, but it was not for Britain". The Welsh Labour Party was then totally dominated by the right wing: councillors, MPs, party organisation. There was a left-wing rump—not Marxist, though; often they were teachers, who left once they got their headships.

You can't really compare the paper nowadays with then. At that time the paper had to give all its space over to analysis and explanation—almost every article seemed to end in the same way, with the demand for the nationalisation of (the then) 350 monopolies—it had to.

I think the paper has really come of age during the miners' strike. It's got lots of fresh news and articles by workers. It was always a paper for workers—but I think it's become a real workers' paper now.



An Alan Hardman cartoon from the early 70's.

"IN SPITE OF THEIR EFFORTS, WHEN GULLIVER AWOKE HE SNAPPED THEIR CHAINS WITH EASE."

Printing and cartoons

I JOINED the staff in 1971 as the paper's first printer. Before then the paper had been written in the office and printed outside. I came when we were still monthly.

If you could have moved from what we did then to now, you think you'd arrived in Paradise. I expect though it'll be the same in five years time. But sometimes I wonder how on earth we got the paper out.

We went fortnightly in September 1971. Resources were so strained in the early days that with the best will in the world you were always struggling; sometimes you felt so whacked out that it would take you almost a week to recover. Then when people suggested going weekly I felt it was the end of the world—but we did it in January only four months after going fortnightly.

On the old machines if you wanted red you had to print sheets three times. Printing was a laborious process. You had to feed the sheets in, then fold them and



—interview with Alan Hardman, *Militant's* cartoonist.

then insert them by hand. We had to use that system for six years but we have never missed an issue for production reasons. Getting the web press in 1978 transformed the situation; now it does it all.

I started doing cartoons for the paper fairly early on. I'd had no training in drawing, but I was unhappy that the paper did not have cartoons so I'd thought I'd

have a go. I think they've got better over the years, but it's no easier—every week I look back and see how it could have been done better.

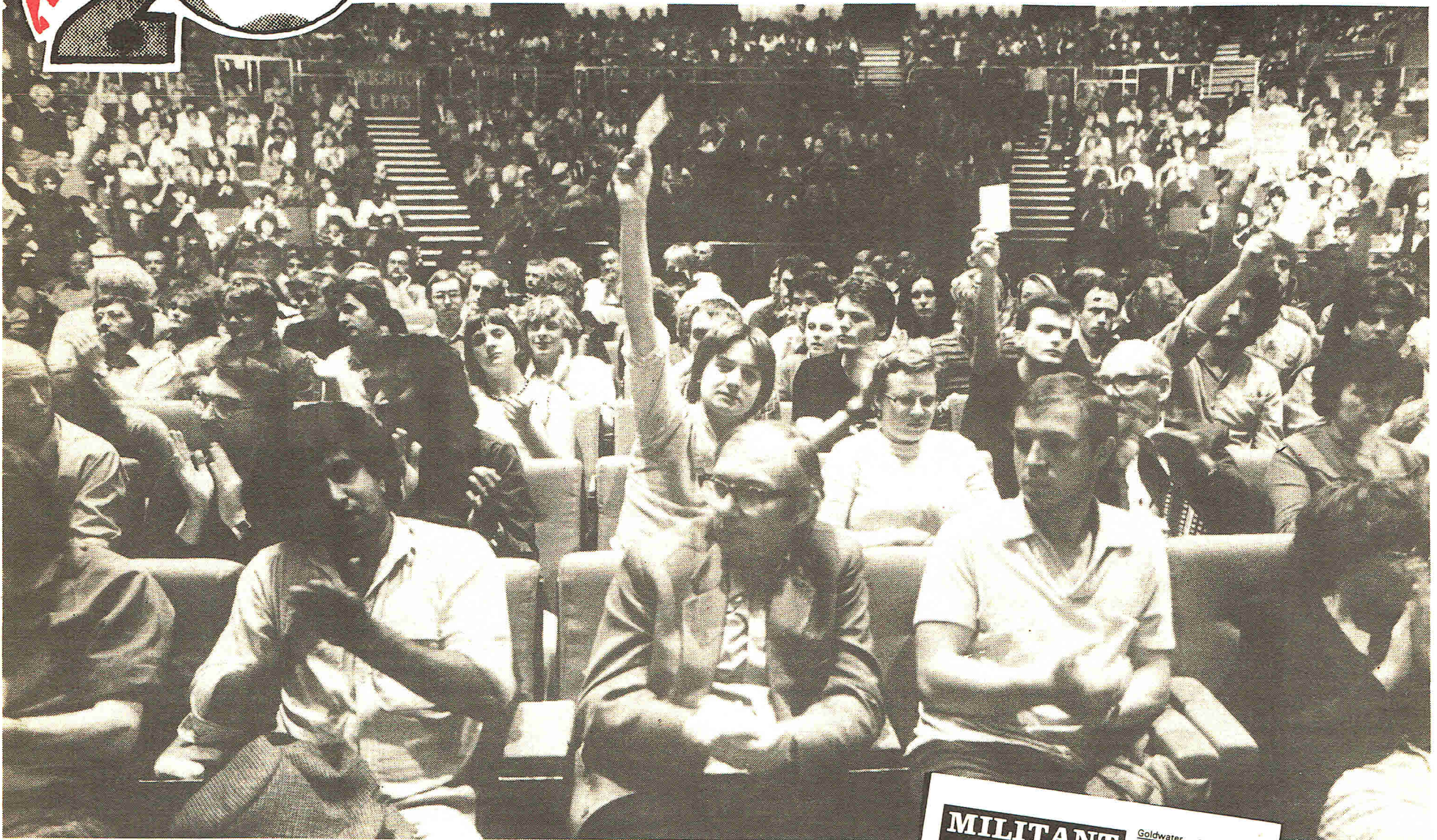
In the early days the drawings were a bit wooden, but I was so pleased to get any vague likeness to the subject, that I wasn't worried. There are three main stages to doing cartoons. First you've got to get the political idea, then think of a graphic way of expressing it and finally drawing the cartoon. You get hooked on creative ideas and you feel great if you've done a good cartoon and "knocked them down".

It's loathing for the system that's really fuelled me over the years. In Barnsley I saw how kids from non-mining families at my junior school got treated better by the teachers. The years since, especially my national service in the army and seeing the officers behave, brought it sharply into focus.

I'm not 'naturally' political but I really hate the system. We're the only people who have a clear and positive intention of replacing it with socialism. I've got some technical skills and working for *Militant* is the best use for them.

Militant 1964-84

In the '60s *Militant* Readers Meetings would only attract a handful of activists and raise a few shillings for the fighting fund—now thousands of workers attend our meetings up and down the country. Below, over 2,000 attended the first *Militant* rally held at Wembley in 1982. Photo: *Militant*.



Twenty years of Militant

TWENTY YEARS ago this month, the *Militant* was launched. Since then we have become a major force within the labour movement. Our supporters can be found today in Parliament, on trade union national executives, on the city councils, and are convenors, shop stewards and in many areas the mainstay of the local Constituency Labour Parties.

Indeed, because of the continual barrage of hate propaganda against us from the Tories, the millionaire press and their echoes within the right wing of the labour movement, today we are even a household name!

But when *Militant* was first produced in the early '60s it was a very humble production supported by just a handful of young workers with little money but a clear perspective of the tasks ahead for the labour movement.

In 1964, with the likely election of a Labour government, a small group of Marxists in the Labour Party decided the time was right for the introduction of a Marxist journal for the movement.

It was essential that a Marxist view of the processes that were taking place in society were heard, and also to warn that unless the then Labour government, and future Labour governments too, carried out audacious socialist policies against capitalism, inevitably that government would fail in

its aspirations.

It was necessary to explain, especially in that 'you've never had it so good' era of the early '60s, that far from solving all of its contradictions, modern capitalism would inevitably move towards crisis. As we see today with four million unemployed and plummeting living standards and with economic disaster on a world scale, this perspective has been borne out.

Workers' paper

It was also essential for Marxists to have a paper which could express the need and interests of the working class, the youth and the labour movement. Therefore the *Militant* was established.

Militant has always stood openly under the banner of the Marxists, including Lenin and Trotsky, as these ideas have been demonstrated as fun-

damentally correct over the past 70 years or so.

From being a tiny handful, *Militant* now has substantial support in the Labour Party, in the trade unions, amongst the youth and industrial working class. Supporters of *Militant* are recognised as amongst the best fighters for socialism in the movement. In the constituencies we work hard in elections for the candidate selected, whether right or left. Wherever the industrial struggle is the hottest, such as the miners' strike, there you will find *Militant* supporters giving their loyal support. *Militant* has gained its support in the Labour Parties and trade unions by putting forward its ideas backed up by facts, figures and argument, and not by personal attacks or manoeuvres.

It is because of this support—that is gaining all the time—that first the ruling class, and then the right wing of the movement under pressure from big business and the media, have attacked *Militant*, reaching heights of hysteria in the late '70s and early '80s, more recently with the tirade in the *Daily Mirror* just before Labour Party conference.

They desperately try to present us as something alien to the labour movement. But they cannot pull the wool over the



Then and now: the first issue of the paper and one 20 years on, urging support for the miners.

eyes of Labour activists. Marxism has always been the property of the working class, it has been one of the main components of the Labour Party from its very conception. Despite all the machinations of the right wing over the decades. Clause IV has remained the bedrock of Labour Party ideology.

You cannot witch-hunt Marxism from the Labour Party, indeed, attempts to do so only increase support for these ideas, as has been seen even in the recent localised witch-hunts in Blackburn and the Rhondda.

Ideas vindicated

Support for the *Militant* will grow even more as our ideas are vindicated by concrete results. The 2½% swing to Labour in Liverpool Broadgreen in the election and

the concessions won from the government by Liverpool City Council, answers our critics on the right wing (unfortunately sometimes echoed by sections of the Tribune left). It has repudiated their argument that bold, socialist policies will not get support from the working class.

But the present support for *Militant* is only the beginning. The ideas of Marxism will become the ideas of the Labour Party. From its first issue in 1964, *Militant* predicted that pressure of events will transform the labour and trade union movement. Indeed, it can clearly be seen that this process has already begun. This transformation will give the necessary basis for the victory of socialism in Britain, which in its turn will prepare the way for the victory of socialism internationally.



The clear pe of

Where we stand

MILITANT IS proud that throughout its twenty year history it has refused to be blown off course by temporary setbacks for the movement, or to accommodate fashionable "new" ideas which only die a death a short while later. *Militant* has remained firm in its programme, only updating its demands to allow for inflation and the growing monopolisation of the capitalist economy. Today, as in 1964, *Militant* stands for:-

★ **The immediate introduction of a 35-hour week without loss of pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.**

New technology could provide jobs, increased wealth, and more time for leisure and education for all. Yet under capitalism, it brings unemployment and poverty.

★ **Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, the health service, public transport and other services.**

Four million are wasted on the dole, yet their labour could transform the lives of all workers if it were used to tackle the massive social problems which still afflict millions of workers.

★ **A minimum wage of £100 per week, for all workers, pensioners, the sick and disabled.**

"Tiny" Rowland of Lonrho gets £5,000 a week, yet the Tories are not only unable to provide a decent standard of living for workers; they want to bring wages down, so as to make industry seem even more profitable for their friends like Rowland. The workers who produce the wealth cannot buy back the goods they make; that is the absurdity of capitalism.

★ **Opposition to anti-trade union and other legislation that restricts workers' democratic rights.**

One group of workers after another have found themselves in the dock under a barrage of legal attacks. Old laws have been dug up, new ones are being passed, in a bid to destroy the democratic gains which our movement has fought for over generations. Such laws are class laws and union leaders are right to defy them.

★ **Opposition to discrimination against women, black and Asian workers and minority groups.**

"United we stand, divided we fall" has always been the workers' answer to the attempts by our enemies to create conflicts within our ranks.

★ **Unilateral nuclear disarmament and massive cuts in arms spending.**

The stark choice facing mankind is no longer "socialism or barbarism", but "socialism or the end of all life on the planet". But the struggle for peace is not a separate moral issue, or one that supercedes all others; it only has any concrete meaning as a struggle for socialism to get rid of the social system that spurns wars.

★ **Workers' control and management in the nationalised industries.**

Many of the bitterest battles which workers are having to fight are in industries which they as taxpayers are supposed to own. Nationalisation of basic industries was a historic leap forward, but these industries have been ruined through being run by businessmen, purely to make profits, with the workers thrown on to the dole as callously as by private employers. Instead, they should be run by boards of elected representatives, a third each for the workers in the industry, the TUC and the government.

★ **Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, including the banks and insurance companies, which control 80 - 85% of the economy, with compensation only on the basis of proven need.**

The Tories are hell-bent in the opposite direction—privatising public industries in which hundreds of thousands of workers have lost their jobs to make them profitable for their new owners, the multi-millionaires. Renationalisation of all these firms is a first task for a Labour government.

★ **A socialist plan of production, in which the enormous resources of the country are democratically planned for the benefit of the whole population.**

Private ownership of the country's resources not only leads to massive inequality and injustice; it cannot even succeed in its own terms. Since the war, Britain's capitalist economy has consistently failed to match any of its competitors. Now it is in deep recession, only saved from total collapse by its luck in finding oil in the North Sea.

It is workers and their families who have paid the price, in unemployment, low wages, declining social services and no future for the next generation to look forward to. Only a socialist plan to exploit the vast riches and the skilled labour which exist in abundance, can provide a decent life for all.

Photo: Militant



The BLOC lobby of the TUC in September. Marxist policies are getting increasing support from trade union activists.

TROTSKY once wrote that the Marxist perspective was the advantage of foresight over astonishment. It is with this method that *Militant* has charted the likely developments within society and formulated its demands in response.

Below are extracts from *Militant* over the past 20 years on the major issues faced by the labour movement. It was not through crystal ball gazing or lucky guesses that *Militant* made these analyses, but by using the scientific processes of Marxism.

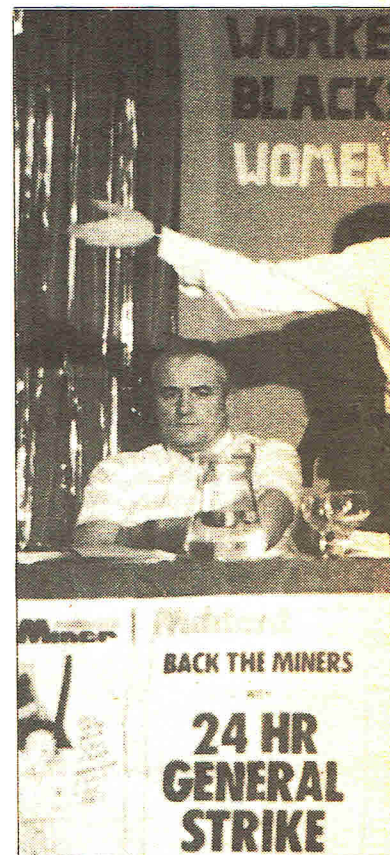
The first issue of *Militant*, published in October 1964, outlined the paper's aims: "For conscious socialists the problem is to make the mighty labour movement aware of the impossibility of solving the national and international problems of our time such as peace and security, prosperity and abundance, without taking decisive measures against capitalism. Only through the most meticulous, scrupulous and patient arguing to convince the mass of the labour movement of the need for international socialism can a way be found to the broader masses of 'ordinary' 'non-political' people... Above all the task is to gather the most conscious elements in the labour movement to patiently explain the need for these (socialist) policies on the basis of experience and events".

Militant, April 1966: on the eve of the Easter CND march the paper published an 'Open letter to a young CNDER':

"CND once proclaimed that peace is indivisible... More true would it be to say that 'peace' is inseparable from politics... Appeals to the goodwill of the ruling classes to 'reason' and 'enlightenment' have always ended in disaster, as the history of the last decades prove. The struggle against war, the struggle against armaments, is the struggle to change society. Only the destruction of capitalism and all privilege can lead mankind to a new epoch. The international solidarity of the working people is the only force stronger than any armaments, including the H Bombs... 'Peaceful co-existence' between classes and nations can only be temporary and uneasy truces, while the causes of war remain."

In the 1960s many sections of the labour movement had written off the capacity of the industrial working class to struggle. They looked to the former colonial world and one issue campaigns as a short-cut to socialism. However, *Militant's* conviction of the ability of the working class to struggle to change society was vindicated in the momentous movement of the French workers in 1968.

Militant, May 1968: "Ten million workers out! Hundreds of factories occupied and controlled by the workers... What a mighty demonstration of the invincible power of the working class when it begins to move... How clear it should be to even the most politic-



Ted Grant, Political Editor of *Militant* month. Support for Marxism has st

ally uneducated workers that their French brothers would be in power today but for the cowardly policies of the French labour and trade union leaders... The French workers will not only have succeeded in bringing about its (Gaullism's) downfall, but also in beginning to undermine all the honeycombed theories of 'social peace' which have proliferated in the Western labour movement in the past twenty years".



LABOUR KEEPS THE BOMB

Rank and file must step up fight for socialist foreign policy

balance is a nuclear bomb dropped on the island...

Issue No.5, 1965. *Militant* has always supported nuclear disarmament.

Militant, September 1968, on the Russian intervention in Czechoslovakia: "The Kremlin boneheads intervened because in today's explosive conditions even the mildest political reforms, even the slightest popular enthusiasm, could leap across the artificial barriers and grow into the full blooded programme for a return to internationalism, workers' democracy and the heritage of the October Revolution in Russia... There is no cause for undue pessimism. This is not 1956, when the bacillus of political revolution could be sealed off at the Hungarian and Polish borders."



perspectives Marxism

Support from the youth

PETER TAAFFE, editor of *Militant* and one of the five members of the Editorial Board expelled from the Labour Party last year, explains the initial response to *Militant*:

The main support for the paper when it was set up in 1964 came from the Marxists in the Young Socialists, mainly from the Merseyside, London, Brighton and Swansea branches.

In Merseyside, where I was involved, the Marxists were in the minority when the YS was first set up. But we campaigned for our ideas around the journals such as *Youth for Socialism* and by 1964, the majority of Merseyside YS branches supported Marxism and the newly founded *Militant*.

There was an influx of young workers into the YS in this period; from the CND—I was

'recruited to the YS following a discussion provoked by my CND badge—and the apprentices' strikes of 1960 and 1964, in which 13,000 young workers were involved in Merseyside alone.

There was a tremendous response to *Militant* from the Young Socialists, and through democratic debate and discussion support was built up nationally amongst a new layer of young workers and the best of the students that came towards our ideas.

Since then of course, the majority of the Labour Party Young Socialists support *Militant* and the strength of the LPYS has grown by leaps and bounds. Marxism is as important for youth today—if not more so—as it was when the first copy of *Militant* was produced.

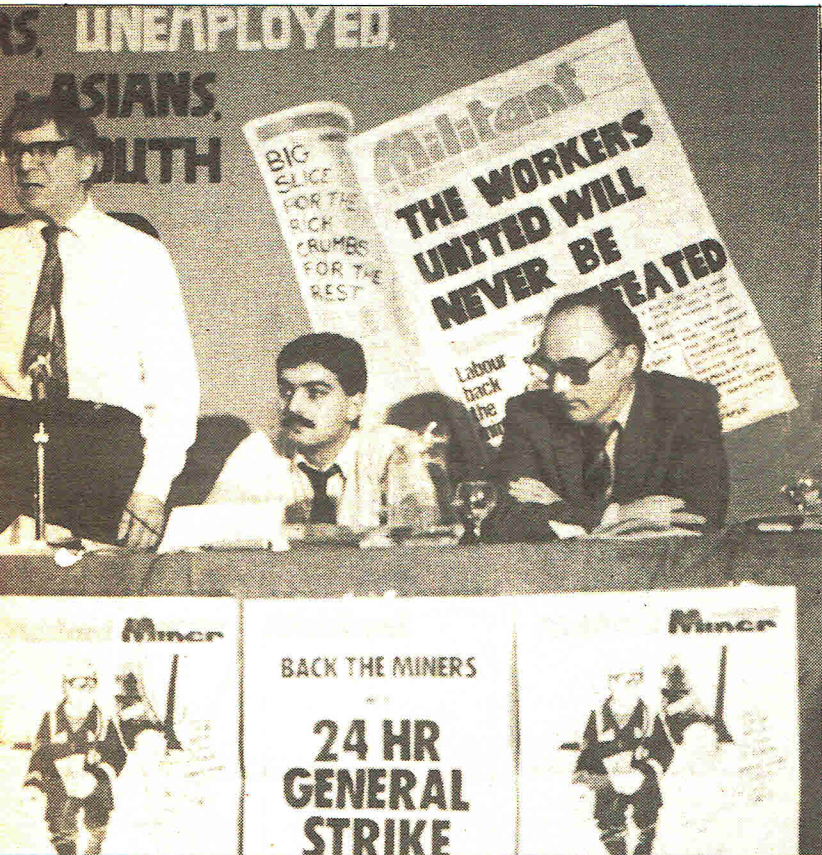


Photo: Militant

addresses the successful readers' meeting at Labour Party conference this rapidly grown within the labour movement.

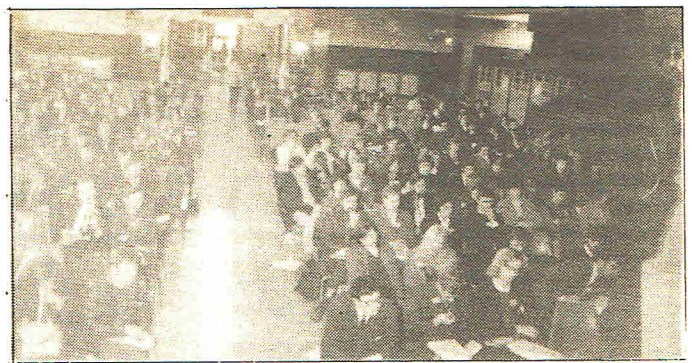
Historical pamphlet

JUST PRODUCED by *Militant* supporters on Merseyside is a collection of leaflets issued by the paper between 1964 and 1970.

Support for the ideas of Marxism in those days was tiny; only a handful of supporters wrote for or sold the paper. Leaflets were typed out and duplicated in great hurry before demonstrations and events; the numbers actually issued were often very few—the cost of duplicating paper meant that only a couple of hundred were produced.

Yet what they lacked in printing quality was made up for by their political clarity and foresight. This pamphlet, bringing together for the first time leaflets on the Labour government, on local authorities, on the mid '60s split in the Young Socialists, on Ireland, May Day and Vietnam, shows this excellently.

Militant supporters on Merseyside have done a service to the movement by producing this pamphlet: copies at 70p (post and package included; bulk orders by arrangement) can be obtained from: 67 Hilberry Avenue, Liverpool, L13 7ET.



The LPYS conference in 1970, the year the Marxists won a majority on the National Committee. Since then the LPYS has built its membership, to over 500 branches at present.

Vietnam: *Militant* backed the struggle of the Vietnamese people against the forces of US imperialism, demanding its unconditional withdrawal. However, there were many romantic notions within the labour movement about the nature of the national liberation forces in Vietnam:

A *Militant* leaflet on the mammoth London demonstration on 27 October 1968, pointed out: "Vietnam becomes significant as one very important step in the fight against world capitalism. (However) without the active involvement of the workers in the West, there is no reason to assume that the new regime in Vietnam will be any different to that of North Vietnam or China today, or for that matter Cuba or present day USSR. Both Castro and Ho Chi Minh supported the Russian intervention in Czechoslovakia.

"This proves how national bureaucracies are more interested in power-politics than in international socialism. While all of these countries have made gigantic strides forward through the abolition of capitalism and the ability to plan the whole economic development, in none of them are there even the vestiges of the original workers' democracy of 1917 Russia.

"But now France and Czechoslovakia have shown that Stalinism is a passing phase: once again Marxism is shown as a practical alternative."

In August 1969, British troops went into Northern Ireland. The September 1969 issue of *Militant* called for the withdrawal of the troops alongside the need for Catholic and Protestant workers to fight for a united socialist Ireland.

It gave a warning to those sections of the movement that welcomed the arrival of the British troops, as well as those who pandered to sectarianism: "The call made for the entry of British troops will turn to vinegar in the mouths of some of the Civil Rights leaders. The troops have been sent in the interests of British and Ulster big business. The Northern Irish workers, both Catholic and Protestant, must rely on their own forces. Only common action through a joint defence committee can begin to defeat the grip of Tory Unionism... Those so-called Marxists who write off the Protestant population as one reactionary mass criminally ignore the vital lessons of history... Any concession to sectarianism will only serve to drive sections of the Protestant and Catholic workers into the arms of reaction."



Militant, 11 February 1972. Then as now it gave full backing to the NUM.

One of our most prophetic, unheeded warnings came in *Militant*, April 1972, more than a year before the military coup against the Allende government in Chile:

"The continued policy of 'Popular Frontism', most criminal and consistently advocated by the theoreticians of the Communist Party, will pave the way for a bloody coup... The only answer is to mobilise and arm the workers and peasants in defence of their gains and for the overthrow of capitalism. There is no time to lose."

Militant, 18 January 1974: Clay Cross councillor David Skinner attacked the equivocation of the Labour leadership during the council's struggle against the Tories' Rent Act:

"The message is clear—the Transport House bureaucrats have opened the window and are preparing to throw Clay Cross out of it. They must not be allowed to. The implications go far wider than Clay Cross. A Labour government that was not prepared to carry out conference decisions regarding Clay Cross would also be a government that would not carry out socialist policies."

Militant, 11 October 1974, on the election of the Wilson/Callaghan government: "If the Labour leaders take the road of trying to compromise with the capitalist system, they will quickly find themselves at the mercy of the monopolies, forced to do their bidding and then to carry the blame for it, thus preparing the way for disappointment in their own ranks and a new Tory victory, with all the horrors that it would mean."

Militant, 29 November 1974, on the Birmingham pub bombings which left 21 dead and over 200 wounded, with the subsequent introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Act:

"Whoever planted them, the fact stands out that the Birmingham bombings can only benefit the enemies of both British and Irish workers... A golden opportunity has been presented to the ruling class to place new repressive legislation on the books... (these powers) will in reality be aimed not at the 'terrorists' but at militant activists in the labour movement... These bombings are crime enough for the murder of young people: they are compounded by the damage done to the working class movement in undermining its unity and posing new obstacles for future struggles."



Militant on the second Thatcher election victory in 1983.

Militant, 23 January 1981 on the Gang of Four split from the Labour Party and the announcement of their plans to set-up the SDP:

"With massive backing from the

press and big business they may achieve some initial successes, and provide a temporary obstacle to Labour. But the policies they uphold are the policies based on the 'mixed economy'—in other words, pro-big business policies based on a diseased capitalist system. A Dustbin Party, even in alliance with those shame-faced Tories, the Liberals, will not stop the development of the Labour Party."

In June, 1983, Labour faced its second defeat when the Thatcher government was re-elected to power. Doom and gloom resounded through the labour movement. It was left to *Militant* to make a sober analysis of the situation and give confidence for the near future: *Militant*, 17 June 1983:

"In the anger and bitterness that workers already have for the government the Tories are building up a huge reservoir of social unrest... But social unrest will not be confined to the inner cities. Many in industry and offices will be forced to take action to defend their jobs and living standards more militantly and forcefully than in the last four years.

"Paradoxically, a weak recovery, albeit a temporary one, will encourage many workers to switch their attentions to the industrial plane after being frustrated in the political plane. There will probably be big struggles... over jobs, for example in the coal industry, in British Telecom, on the railways, in British shipbuilding and struggles will inevitably break out also over wages. Increasing upheaval in industry will inevitably lead to major confrontations between the government and the trade unions, leading, even despite the leadership of the TUC, to the possibility of a general strike."



FOR ELEVEN of the last twenty years there have been Labour governments. They came to office with great hopes amongst working people that fundamental reforms would be achieved. In the following analysis PAT CRAVEN explains why those hopes were thwarted in the 1964-70 government and why it paved the way for the reactionary Tory government led by Ted Heath.

1964 Labour government

Business held gun at Labour's head

TWENTY YEARS ago this month, thirteen years of Tory rule came to an end. Harold Wilson's Labour government was elected.

Those years of the fifties and early sixties are today regarded as the post-war boom. But while it was true that, on the basis of slow economic expansion, there had been a rise in average living standards, for millions of workers the Tory slogans such as "Life's better with the Conservatives—Don't let Labour Ruin it" left a sour taste.

The British "stop-go" economy had expanded slower than any of its economic rivals, grinding to a halt every few years. Massive social problems festered. Some were an outright scandal: slum houses let at extortionate rents by racketeering landlords, poverty wages for women and young workers, and

rising unemployment in large parts of the country.

Tory policies, said Labour's 1964 manifesto "had led to a pervasive atmosphere of irresponsibility; to a selfish get-rich-quick mood in which the public interest is always subordinated to private advantage."

Safe, responsible leaders

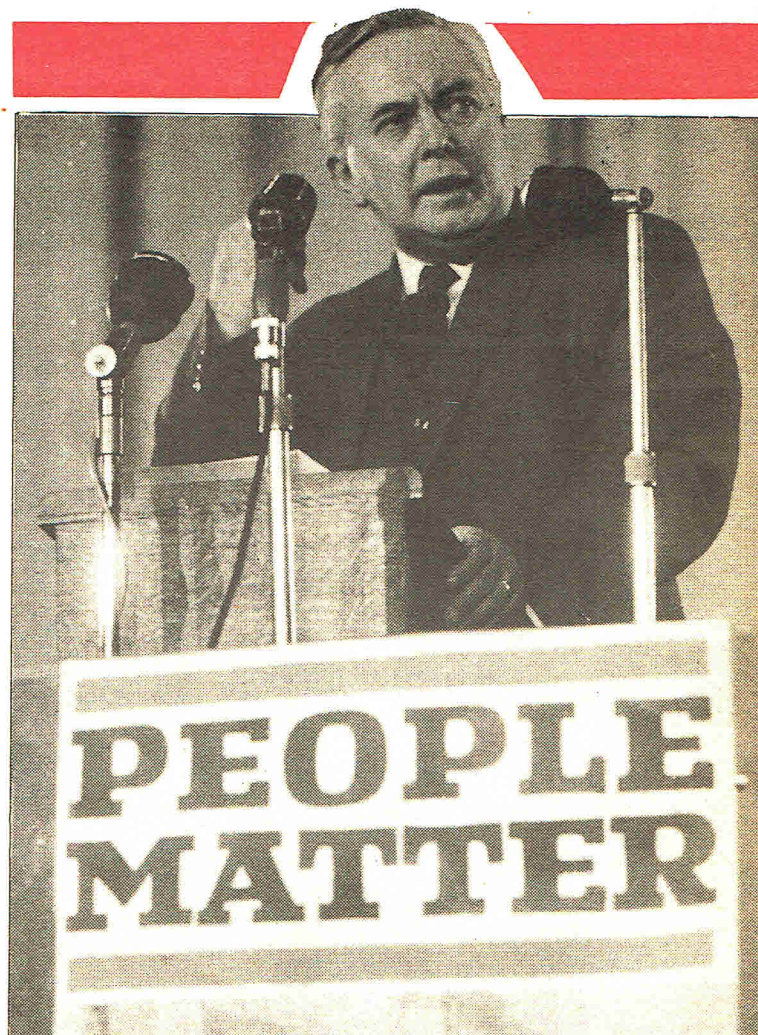
By 1964, there was a burning desire for change, especially amongst the young, many of whom had been involved in the apprentices strikes of 1960 and 1964, and CND, which had attracted mass support in the early sixties.

Yet the mood was not that of 1945, when Labour had a landslide victory. In 1964, the party squeaked home with a majority of only

four. Its vote was actually lower than when it lost the 1959 general election. It was a slump of nearly 2 million in the Tory vote, most of it going to the Liberals, which proved decisive, rather than a positive vote for Labour.

As *Militant* pointed out in its very first issue of October 1964 "The Labour leaders' policy of 'playing it cool' and not launching an offensive against the Tories has had the opposite effect to what they expected. By showing themselves as 'safe' and 'responsible' leaders, not fundamentally different from the Tories, the Labour leaders have played into Home (Tory leader) and Co's hands."

That same article predicted the problems that the new government would face—"Without a fight against big business and the monopolies, high finance would



Wilson's government seemed to offer new hope after the stop-go economy of the Tories.

play cat and mouse with a Labour government... Capitalism, which once played a necessary and progressive role in developing society has now become a monstrous incubus to it and must be replaced if the world is to go forward."

Bank of England dictate terms

Our foresight was proved right within days. The Tory government had been hiding the extent of Britain's balance-of-payments deficit. The new government came under relentless pressure from the representatives of capitalism, notably Lord Cromer, Governor of the Bank of England, to deal with the crisis by abandoning its programme and bringing in savage cuts in public spending.

In his memoirs, Harold Wilson tells of Cromer's regular visits—"we had to listen night after night to demands that there should be immediate cuts in government expenditure, particularly in those parts of government expenditure which related to the social services. It was not long before we were being asked, almost at pistol-point, to cut back on expenditure, even to the point of stopping the road building programme, or schools which were only half-constructed." Wilson claimed that these demands were resisted, but the whole history of this government was of capitulation to the Lord Cromers of the ruling class, as when only a month into office, a promised rise in pensions was postponed, (though MP's salaries were put up without delay).

Workers made to take the blame

ECONOMIC POLICY was the key question. "Labour" declared the manifesto "will set up a Ministry of Economic Affairs with the duty of formulating, with both sides of industry, a national economic plan."

As *Militant* pointed out in July 1965, however, "The attempt to 'plan' capitalism, by its very nature a system where the market dominated and there is a struggle of each against all is completely impractical." So it proved.

The main plank of the government's economic policy soon became wage restraint, disguised as a "prices and incomes" policy. Early in 1966, Wilson declared that "in the months ahead, we shall see whether the British people are prepared to assert the qualities that are needed—qualities of effort and ingenuity, of restraint and self-discipline, of unselfishness, of willingness to surrender sectional self-interest to the call of a greater national and social interest."

"This sort of 'socialism' being advocated by Wilson", wrote Ted Grant in *Militant*, in February 1966 "will undoubtedly gain the wholehearted support of the capitalists and their press... When the workers see that the measures announced will only increase still further the record profits of the capitalists while not solving in any way the fundamental problems of the economy, they will demand an accounting from their leaders. There is nothing remotely resembling 'socialism' in these measures."

Many workers at this stage were nevertheless still prepared to extend

credit to their traditional party's leaders. In the general election of March 1966, Labour increased its majority to 97 and its votes by nearly a million.

The excuse that they only had a small Parliamentary majority had disappeared. Yet the policies remained the same. The government's attitude was typified by its reaction to the seamen's strike later in 1966. Not only did they do everything to defeat the union, proclaiming a State of Emergency, but Wilson sought to vilify the men with the smear that "pressures had been brought to bear on the union by a tightly-knit group of politically motivated men who at the last general election had utterly failed to secure acceptance of their views by the British electorate," a thinly veiled allegation that the strike was a red conspiracy!

Wage restraint

From then on, support for the government amongst workers began to plummet. From wage "restraint", they moved, in August 1966, to a six month "complete freeze on incomes, prices and dividends" This was followed by a restraint of prices and incomes. Unemployment began to rise, to 550,000 by August 1967, the highest figure since the war. Miners, dockers, printers and bakers were becoming involved in disputes over the policy of keeping wages down, while huge subsidies were being handed out to big business in the form of investment

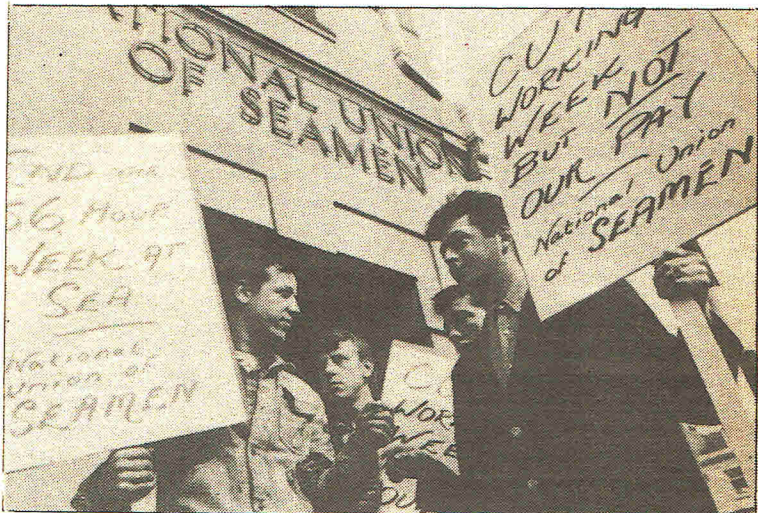
grants and other "incentives" to invest.

Local and Parliamentary by-elections were already beginning to produce massive anti-government swings. Then in November 1967, the devaluation of the pound by 14.3% and a cut of £100 million in public spending, further undermined workers' living standards, with the consequent rise in the prices of essential imported goods. "Now" declared *Militant* (December 1967) "we have inflation and deflation at the same time!"

Even worse was to come in January 1968, when prescription charges were re-introduced, dental charges raised 50%, and free school milk abolished in secondary schools. That year's council elections were a disaster; in London only three out of 32 boroughs remained Labour-controlled, with working-class strongholds like Hackney and Islington going Tory.

By now even members of the government were getting desperate. Richard Crossman, Health and Social Security Minister, confessed in his diary in May 1968, "I can't get away from my depression at our failure to tackle even our narrow economic problems. We have made very little progress."

That year's Labour Party conference finally threw out, by 5-1, the prices and incomes policy. It also gave almost 3 million votes to a resolution putting forward the policies of *Militant*: "only by taking into public ownership the 300 monopolies, private banks, finance houses and insurance companies now dominating the economy, and



The Labour government used every trick in the book to try and smash the 1966 seamen's strike.

by producing a positive national plan anchored to socialist production can the government effectively develop the resources of our country for the benefit of the people."

The culmination of the government's retreats from its programme and its alienation from the ranks of the Party was the attempt to impose laws to restrict the rights of trades unions, set out in the White Paper "In Place of Strife". "Despite the fine phrases and tiny grains of sugar mixed with the vinegar," wrote Keith Dickinson, in *Militant* of February 1969 "the White Paper, if implemented, will add to the considerable array of weapons which the employers have for use against officials and stewards, to prevent or hamper strike action in defence of living standards."

Under ferocious pressure from the ranks of the movement, the TUC fought the proposals and the

government was forced to abandon them, though in return for a "solemn and binding undertaking" by the TUC that it would itself act as policeman of the movement and intervene to prevent strikes.

In other areas of policy, the 1964 Labour government retreated. New laws were brought in to further restrict immigration from Commonwealth countries, Britain's nuclear weapons were retained support was given to the American war against the people of Vietnam and a move was made to join the Common Market, which Wilson had previously opposed.

On all these issues, the party and the unions had become bitterly hostile to the government, reflecting the widespread disillusion of the class as a whole. As *Militant* had consistently warned, the end result would be a defeat at the hands of the Tories.

Tories return

BY 1970 there had been a slight improvement in the economy. Faced with the prospect of a victory for the openly anti-union Tory Party led by Heath, support began to swing back to Labour. It was too late, however, and in June 1970, Heath won a majority of 31, on a low turn-out.

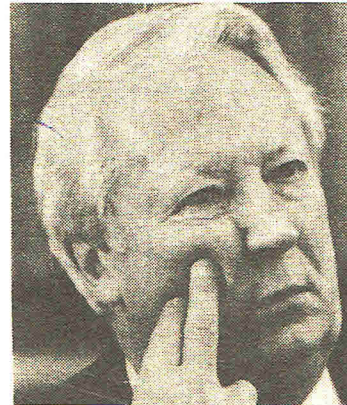
Labour's slogan, "Now Britain's strong, let's make it great to live in" summed up the complacency of the leadership. Even George Brown, (now a renegade from the party), was forced to admit after this defeat that, "Any left wing party, any radical party, has got to be a party of idealism and change. Our failure in 1970 was that we didn't offer enough idealism." Like too many other leaders, however, he also blamed the workers—"We've raised people's standards, we've raised earning capacity, but somehow we haven't persuaded people that all this has to be paid for...Society in Britain nowadays is largely a selfish society."



Ignoring Labour Party activists, Wilson backed the Americans in Vietnam (Above) greeting President Nixon, 1969.

On the contrary, as Peter Taaffe wrote in *Militant* in July 1970, "It is not the working class which is responsible for the victory of the Tories but the false policies of the Labour leaders... The Marxist wing of the labour movement consistently warned that tinkering with the system, attempting to manage capitalism better than the party of the capitalists themselves would inevitably lead to a setback for Labour."

Despite some improvements in housing, education and social security, the stark fact, revealed by academic Peter Townsend, was that the gap between rich and poor was no smaller in 1970 than in 1964. "The pressure of the capitalists" continued Peter Taaffe, "who controlled 80% of the wealth, 90% of the most productive part of the economy, forced one retreat after another. The minimum reform programme of



Incoming Premier, Ted Heath.

the labour leaders remained a dead letter as the capitalists extorted one concession after another."

That is the main lesson for Labour in 1984, but with the vital difference that the economic crisis facing the Wilson government in 1964 will seem as nothing compared to the catastrophe that the

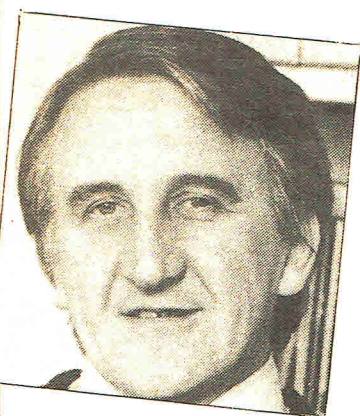
next Labour government will have to deal with. According to *The Economist*, some capitalists described even Wilson's as "this extreme Bolshevik government." Their reaction next time, to even the kind of minor reforms which they tolerated then, will be outright opposition and sabotage. They will make the same demands as Lord Cromer, but much harsher and with far less time to carry them out.

Lessons of '64

The message of 1964 has not changed since the first issue of *Militant* proclaimed that "a socialist policy at home and abroad could gain the support of the overwhelming majority of the British people. It is the only policy which guarantees a future for the labour movement, a Labour government and ultimately all mankind."

In the early days of Militant

Built by young workers



KEITH DICKINSON, one of the members of the Militant Editorial Board expelled from the Labour Party last year:

In the Young Socialists in the early sixties, we campaigned around locally produced Marxist journals. When I was in Walton YS in Liverpool I helped produce *Rally*. However, I moved to London joining Paddington North YS. The

Marxists in the YS then used to sell *Youth for Socialism*, produced by Liverpool Garston Young Socialists.

But as support for Marxism grew amongst the youth, it was seen that one journal was needed. So after discussions and raising funds, we combined the other Marxist journals to produce *Militant*. The first issue came out with a big bang, with eight pages. Of course we had our ups and downs, sometimes only producing a four page journal because of cash shortages, but the paper came out consistently.

We aimed the paper not just at youth but at older Labour activists too. Besides its support in YS branches, *Militant* had support in Walton CLP and on Liverpool Trades Council—and this was at the time for the right wing domination of the City by the Braddocks—and also from groups of workers in Tyneside and South Wales, along with a group of building workers in London.

Ideas dismissed as utopian

MURIEL BROWNING, a long standing Militant supporter from Llanelli, recalls the first issues of the paper and contrasts it with today:

The arrival of *Militant* made a great difference for Marxists in the Labour Party and unions. It gave us a regular paper, something to work from, to explain ideas in discussions, and to understand ourselves what was happening in Britain and internationally.

Some people may not appreciate how difficult it is to act as a Marxist without a regular paper. Before *Militant* there was *Socialist Fight*—which when I first came across it was duplicated and produced very intermittently.

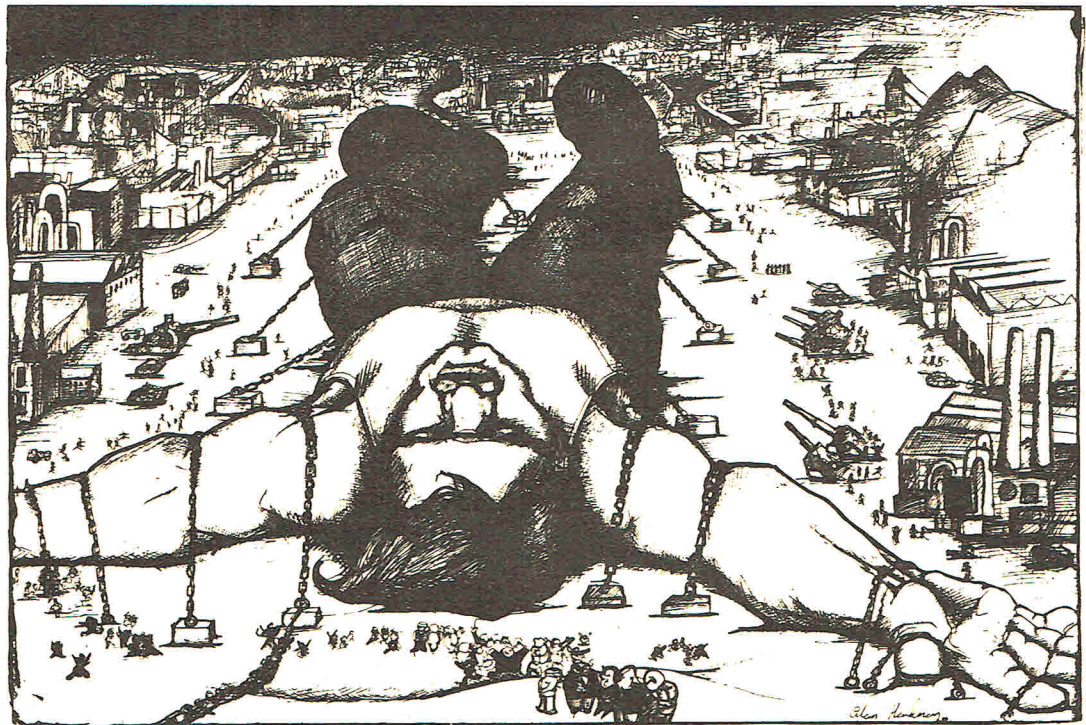
Militant was well received by activists—I used to sell about six each month at my work, British Motor Company. But for big sales we had to rely on occasional mass public meetings.

In the Labour Party many peo-

ple patronised us. I used to sell one or two, but the ideas were dismissed as "utopian". I was told that "revolutionary ideas may be alright for Europeans, but it was not for Britain". The Welsh Labour Party was then totally dominated by the right wing: councillors, MPs, party organisation. There was a left-wing rump—not Marxist, though; often they were teachers, who left once they got their headships.

You can't really compare the paper nowadays with then. At that time the paper had to give all its space over to analysis and explanation—almost every article seemed to end in the same way, with the demand for the nationalisation of (the then) 350 monopolies—it had to.

I think the paper has really come of age during the miners' strike. It's got lots of fresh news and articles by workers. It was always a paper for workers—but I think it's become a real workers' paper now.



An Alan Hardman cartoon from the early 70's.

"IN SPITE OF THEIR EFFORTS, WHEN GULLIVER AWOKE HE SNAPPED THEIR CHAINS WITH EASE."

Printing and cartoons

I JOINED the staff in 1971 as the paper's first printer. Before then the paper had been written in the office and printed outside. I came when we were still monthly.

If you could have moved from what we did then to now, you think you'd arrived in Paradise. I expect though it'll be the same in five years time. But sometimes I wonder how on earth we got the paper out.

We went fortnightly in September 1971. Resources were so strained in the early days that with the best will in the world you were always struggling; sometimes you felt so whacked out that it would take you almost a week to recover. Then when people suggested going weekly I felt it was the end of the world—but we did it in January only four months after going fortnightly.

On the old machines if you wanted red you had to print sheets three times. Printing was a laborious process. You had to feed the sheets in, then fold them and



—interview with Alan Hardman, *Militant's* cartoonist.

then insert them by hand. We had to use that system for six years but we have never missed an issue for production reasons. Getting the web press in 1978 transformed the situation; now it does it all.

I started doing cartoons for the paper fairly early on. I'd had no training in drawing, but I was unhappy that the paper did not have cartoons so I'd thought I'd

have a go. I think they've got better over the years, but it's no easier—every week I look back and see how it could have been done better.

In the early days the drawings were a bit wooden, but I was so pleased to get any vague likeness to the subject, that I wasn't worried. There are three main stages to doing cartoons. First you've got to get the political idea, then think of a graphic way of expressing it and finally drawing the cartoon. You get hooked on creative ideas and you feel great if you've done a good cartoon and "knocked them down".

It's loathing for the system that's really fuelled me over the years. In Barnsley I saw how kids from non-mining families at my junior school got treated better by the teachers. The years since, especially my national service in the army and seeing the officers behave, brought it sharply into focus.

I'm not 'naturally' political but I really hate the system. We're the only people who have a clear and positive intention of replacing it with socialism. I've got some technical skills and working for *Militant* is the best use for them.



1984

-a year of success

'MILITANT RAISES £1m for fighting fund', (*Sunday Times*); 'Militant appeal for daily paper', (*Sunday Telegraph*); 'Daily Paper planned by Militant Tendency', (*Times*).

These are just some of the headlines over the last year. Yet when it came to 'where the money comes from' papers such as the *Mirror* could only come up with the remarkable revelation that the *Militant* raises its money 'from... its supporters'! Yes, we can now lift the veil to show that ordinary working class people actually give money to a Marxist newspaper.

The last year has been the most successful ever. At the 'Marxism in our time' Rally at Wembley last year the Marxist Daily Building Fund was launched with an amazing £38,110 collection towards a target of £150,000.

Over the course of the last twelve months we have passed a number of historic landmarks. In March we had passed £132,000 having raised more than £30,000 in two weeks. 'Added to the weekly fighting fund' the *Sunday Times* commented, 'the building fund's success underlines the Marxist group's remarkable cash-raising achievements'.

We then had to increase the target to £175,000 because we could not get all the help we wanted from the

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	1589		2900
East Midlands	1224		3550
Humberside	1163		1850
London East	1537		3200
London West	1080		2150
London South East	519		1950
London South West	911		1650
Lancashire	578		1950
Manchester	1017		2200
Merseyside	1489		6100
Northern	1136		4400
Scotland East	437		2950
Scotland West	1309		3650
Southern	1903		5100
South West	435		2150
Wales East	346		2550
Wales West	1381		2550
West Midlands	1086		4300
Yorkshire	1867		5350
Others	6639		4500
Total received	27645		65000

FIGHTING FUND This week: **£2,147**

bank. Despite that we were able to announce on 7th August 1984, less than one year after the fund was launched, that we had raised over £175,000.

The total now stands at £177,627 and we aim to reach £200,000 by the end of 1984. Over the same period our readers have collected a magnificent £151,450 for the Fighting Fund making a

total for just over twelve months of £329,077. No wonder the Tory press can only marvel, goggle-eyed, at our ability to finance our work.

Just some of the highlights on the Fighting Fund have been £8,084 collected at LPYS National Conference at Easter, £1,945 at Labour Party Conference this month, over £9,000 collected

in one week in July.

A special success feature this year has been the money collected at the Trade Union conferences. £3,200 collected at CPSA conference in May, £1,090 at NALGO conference in June, £652 at UCW conference are a few examples.

All the money raised, both for the Fighting Fund and for the Building Fund, has been because we are seen by activists in the labour movement as having the policies to change society. That is what our enemies are really frightened of.

By Nick Wrack

£175,000
90%
75%

Marxist Daily Building Fund

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 £2-4 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 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. A fund

for a weekly paper was launched, with a target of £1,000.

1972 Under the pressure of events—Bloody Sunday and the miners' strike—the weekly *Militant* appeared (four pages). By September it had eight pages. The annual fighting fund raised £4,680.

1973 *Militant's* annual Fighting Fund topped £10,000 by £49.

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. In all, £27,378 was raised over the year.

1976 12 page paper and £32,600 raised for the fighting fund.

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 masthead). We were now printing four times the number of copies produced in 1971. Fighting fund—£66,200.

1979 Enlarging the press meant our red masthead was restored and capacity was expanded enormously to enable rapid production of leaflets, posters, pamphlets, etc. Over £80,000 was raised for the fighting fund.

1980, 81 and 82 saw further advances in equipping the typesetting, lay-out and finance departments and taking on additional staff and yet more premises. Collections over these three years raised over £347,000.

1983 *Militant's* successes were 'punished' with expulsions. But despite this, support went from strength to strength. This was measured by a record £151,973 collected for the fighting fund.

Anniversary rallies

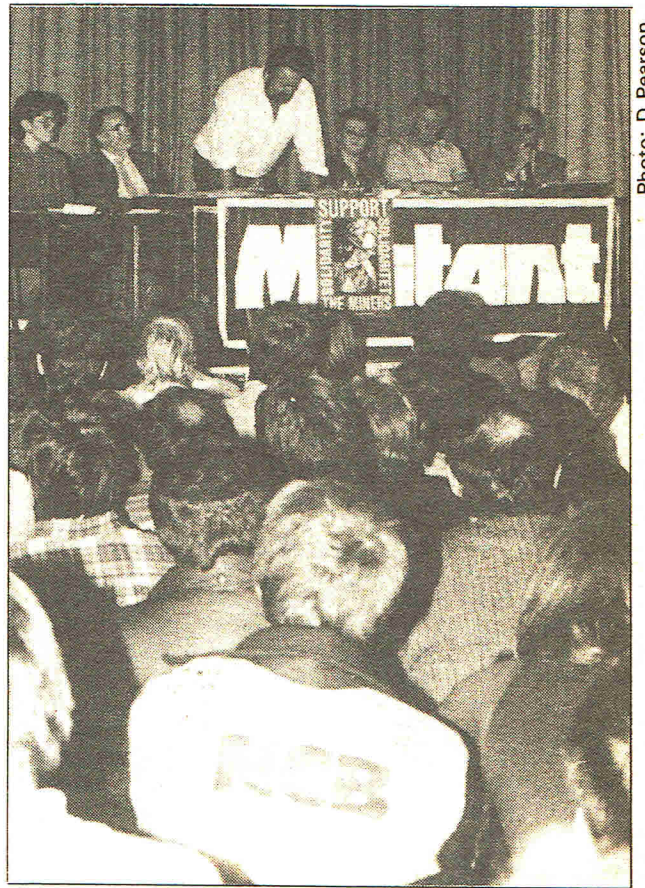


Photo: D Pearson

Ib Lund addresses the Newcastle meeting.

OVER 300 people attended the anniversary Rally in Newcastle. There was a very large turnout of striking miners massed at the front of the hall.

The collection raised a fantastic £800. A reprint of the first issue of *Militant* from October 1964 (autographed by Peter Taaffe) went to a striking miner from Bates Colliery in Northumberland for a £1—dozens of miners then donated 10p, 20ps, and 50 pences.

People were asked to bring food to the rally. This was distributed among five lodges.

The rally was addressed by Ib Lund, secretary of the Port of Aarhus branch of the Dockers Union, in Denmark. Ib outlined the support from his union to the British miners and stressed the importance of internationalism.

By Jackie Payne

Liverpool celebrates

"Twenty years ago the Mersey was crowded with ships. But times have changed." These were the opening words of Terry Harrison chairing Liverpool's 20th Anniversary Rally, remarking on how the city's once great industrial base had been destroyed over the years.

On the platform were two members of the LPYS, Shareen Blackhall and Emmi Anora, representing a new generation of working class youth who were fighting to change society.

Fighting for workers

Next to speak was Harry Smith, a Liverpool City Councillor who explained the role of *Militant* supporters in fighting for workers' interests on the council.

The main contribution of the evening came from Ted Grant, who went into graphic detail to explain how capitalism had reached its

limits and now could be overthrown and replaced by socialism.

The meeting finished with a sailor from Ghana who told us how he and the crew of his ship, which was docked in the Mersey, were in dispute with their employer because they had worked for nine months on the ship without pay. The boss owed them a total of £48,000, so they took strike action. The comrade read out a letter from the wife of one of the crew who told him she had divorced him because he had sent no money for nine months.

The local labour movement is supporting the sailors with donations of food and money.

The speakers pointed out how Marxist ideas had gained widespread support in the movement in Liverpool from the 1960s to the present. Support was proven by the collection of £273 for the Fighting Fund, with £52 sent to the Ghanaian workers occupying the ship.

Liverpool West Derby CLP
Forward to a miners' victory,
a daily *Militant* and socialism



1964-84 GREETING

20th Anniversary:
Forward to a daily
Militant, Maxwell
eat your heart out!
Socialism not
bingo!
Derby *Militant*
supporters

Forward to a
Socialist daily
paper.
East Berks CLP

Forward to
socialism
Greetings from
Batley and Spenn
Militant supporters

Victory to the miners!

★ ★ ★

**A socialist programme for
Labour!**

★ ★ ★

**Forward to a daily *Militant*
and socialism!**

★ ★ ★

**Fraternal greetings from
Terry Fields MP and
Dave Nellist MP**

Bradford Trades Council
Congratulations *Militant*
on two decades of a
socialist paper.
Now for the daily!

**Victory to
the miners
Forward to
a daily *Mili-
tant*. North
Avon LPYS**

Here we go!
Forward to a
daily *Militant*
Forward to
socialism
STEVENAGE
LPYS
BRANCHES

**BEDFORD-
SHIRE MILI-
TANT SUP-
PORTERS** send
greetings and sup-
port to all
socialists in the
fight for an inter-
national socialist
future.

Congratulations on
your 20th anniver-
sary Newcastle
North *Militant*
supporters

Fraternal greetings
to all *Militant* sup-
porters from Shef-
field Heeley Labour
Party Young
Socialists

On behalf of the NUM
Kent Area Officials, and
all Kent miners and their
families, our sincere
thanks and gratitude for
your support.
Victory to the miners

Militant's supporters in Nottingham North CLP
send greetings to *Militant* on its 20th birthday
—Forward to a Daily *Militant*!
—Forward to socialism!

In solidarity with
Blackburn LPYS
Long live *Militant*
Forward to a
Marxist daily!
Preston LPYS

Congratulations on
your 20th
anniversary
Keep the red flag
flying
Wessex Co-
operative Party

Get *Militant* with Tories. Congratu-
lations to all who have struggled over the
past 20 years to write, print and sell
the best paper in the labour movement
Militant '64-84
From *Militant* Supporters in Isle of
Wight CLP & LPYS

Congratulations on
20 years of
Marxism
Gillmoss Labour
Party

★
Congratulations
from Shell *Militant*
supporters. We
can be sure of
socialism.

VALLEY WARD
LABOUR PARTY
sends greetings to
Militant on its
20th Anniversary
and looks forward
to a daily *Militant*.

Congratulations and
best wishes for the
next 20 years from
Knowsley NALGO

Blackburn LPYS
We shall not be
moved!
Forward to a
democratic Labour
Party

“The NGA (1982) Liverpool
Branch congratulates *Militant*
on achieving its 20th anniver-
sary and thanks all those
comrades who by their
sacrificing and commitment
to socialism over the last 20
years have made this great
achievement possible. Long
may you continue to grow
from strength to strength.”

Ray Williams
Branch Secretary

Bassett and
Swaything (Soton)
Militant supporters
look forward with
anticipation to the
production of a
Marxist daily paper.

**Victory to the
miners, for a Labour
Party fighting for
socialist policies.**
Central Branch LP
(Newham NE)

**ASTMS shipping +
Freight Branch 618
Liverpool**

Full support to miners
and dockers!
Nationalise the shipping
industry

Brighton LPYS
Only socialism and
the programme of
Militant offers
youth a future

Maidstone and Mid
Kent LPYS send
fraternal greetings.
Forward to a daily
Militant, Victory to
the miners,
mobilise the labour
movement. Smash
the Tories.

Greetings from
Sholing members
Branch (Southamp-
ton LP). Victory to
Socialism

Greetings on 20 years of keeping the
red flag flying. Teesside *Militant*
supporters.
Forward to a daily
Forward to Socialism

Oxford East
LPYS
sends socialist
greetings to
Militant on
20 years fighting
for socialism

Militant
supporters in
Bristol North
West
We're 20 years
nearer socialism!
Congratulations

If adventure has a name it must be
Woolwich LPYS

Swansea Branch POEU
Fight privatisation!
Teach the Tory pirates a
lesson—with a socialist
Labour Party

Through Fleet Street lies
the bosses have their say
But Liverpool and the miners
have led the way
Now Thatcher and McGregor
will have to pay...
Forward to a *Militant*
Every day!

Fraternal greetings from Watford LPYS

Make CPSA Executive support computer strike

Last week's refusal of the CPSA National Executive Committee to extend the DHSS Newcastle and Washington shift workers' strike to other DHSS computers at Reading and Livingstone, in line with the votes of computer workers at all four installations, came as a bitter disappointment to many civil servants.

Since 14 May the strikers have been firm in their decision to resist management's plans to cut their wages. Changes in shift patterns would mean a pay cut of between £10 and £14 per week for members. That the "Broad Left" majority on the National Executive Committee should refuse to back the shift workers call for escalation is doubly disgusting.

At Newcastle and Washington only twelve shift workers have returned to work since the 14 May. Out of a CPSA workforce of 380 this means that we have had only twenty six blacklegs. Some £¼ million has been spent by the union on strike pay.

But the government have had to pay dearly. They have had to employ an extra 3,800 permanent staff at DHSS local offices to work the social security system without a computer service. Managers in local offices have been given a free hand to use unlimited quantities of overtime and casual labour. To their credit union members in many local offices have taken action to resist this. Last week the Post Office announced that they could not proceed with their plans to close down 1,000 sub post offices for as long as the strike lasts—and the bill will be passed to the government.

For every pension or child

workers at installations like those at the Vehicle Licensing Centre Swansea, Inland Revenue at Worthing and Treasury at Chessington are also threatened.

When it became apparent that the management, undoubtedly acting under ministerial guidance, had decided to resist our strike for as long as possible, we called for escalation of the strike to Reading and Livingstone. These centres which are managed by DHSS, send out Unemployment Benefit Giro Cheques.

Our strategy was not based on hitting the unemployed—but we were concerned to hit the government financially and force them to provide an emergency service in local Unemployment Benefit Offices.

In August the National Executive Committee agreed that escalation could go ahead after "consultation" with staff in Unemployment Benefit Offices, part of the Department of Employment (DE). Striking shift workers and myself visited Reading and Livingstone. Against the gloomy predictions of some of the 'lefts' on the National Executive Committee we won votes for solidarity action.

Unfortunately the DE CPSA leadership (Broad Left-controlled) abused their positions and campaigned to whip up a reaction in the UBO to prevent escalation.

When Reading and Livingstone take strike action members in the UBOs either have to operate emergency procedures or else relax these procedures—and such blacking inevitably leads to suspensions and all out strike action. It was hypocritical to pretend that UBO members,



Kevin Roddy.

who never even received a full explanation from the DE leadership of what our strike is about, would vote for all out strike action.

As expected, UBO staff voted by 8-1 to operate emergency procedures. But they were simultaneously being organised by the DE leadership to protest about the planned escalation. The DE section executive committee, with the honorable exception of *Militant* supporter Amanda Lane, approved the issue of a scandalous all-member circular to DE members by full time official Peter Thomason.

In the words of DHSS management (who used the circular as part of their anti-strike propaganda): "to put it mildly the letter suggests there is no support by D of E members for the present DHSS strike and it seems possible that the computers at Reading and Livingstone may not close down after all."

Excuses

In effect the DE section leadership were seeking to apply a veto on the right to strike of Reading and Livingstone members. They claim, in a defeated manner, that such action will lead to demoralisation and mass resignations from their

union amongst UBO staff. They therefore produced an "alternative strategy" which the majority on the National executive committee subsequently voted for rather than back the demand of shift workers for escalation of the action.

The 'alternative strategy' calls for the blacking of computer programming work by computer programmers (who overwhelming are not in the CPSA but the SCPS); supportive action in clerical areas at DHSS Newcastle Central Office (which has already happened); and indefinite strike action at linked DHSS and Unemployment Benefit local offices in selected inner-city areas, with a ban on emergency payment to claimants.

This last point is by far and away the most serious suggestion, but it will be fraught with difficulties. Firstly, clerical workers who feel sufficiently committed to strike alongside the shift workers would have to be identified by the union and then subject to an intensive period of preparation for strike action. Even the most optimistic shift workers—representatives of whom have spent months touring local offices building support—are finding it difficult to identify suitable inner-city areas.

More seriously it is an illusion to believe that DHSS and DE workers can win by denying claimants benefit. It would backfire against the union if put into practise and it is very unlikely that the union has the power to actually do it.

Even if there were a ban on union labour in emergency payments centres, management will undoubtedly try to run a service using non union members or even casual labour. In such circumstances the union would have to ask social security and other benefits

claimants not to cross their picket lines. Inevitably any such attempt would divide claimants from DHSS and UBO workers. The Tories would have a propaganda bonanza.

In an utterly cynical manner the right-wing 'moderate' group on the National Executive committee voted for this strategy. More predictably, precisely those Broad Left NEC members who refused to oppose Alistair Graham at May's CPSA conference, also supported it. It is hard to resist the conclusion that they are simply providing themselves with a 'left delaying tactic' to justify their refusal to support the shift workers and that they expect demoralisation and collapse of the strike.

Can still win

Given the NEC decision the shift workers and union representatives like myself will have to try to put the "alternative strategy" into practice. In the mean time we are going to have to continue the strike and ensure that full-time officials led by Alistair Graham do not impose a rotten compromise agreement.

If the shift workers continue to stand firm, active members of the union will apply pressure on the NEC to adopt the strategy of action at Reading and Livingstone. The cost of operating emergency procedures—even if confined to Newcastle and Washington—will force management to make concessions.

The shift workers can still win. The point is to oblige the so-called lefts in the CPSA National Executive Committee to fulfill their responsibilities and help win more quickly through the obvious tactic—escalation to Reading and Livingstone.

ads

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

SUPPORT the miners public meeting, Monday October 22, 7.30 pm, Lloyd Park Pavilion, Lloyd Park, Forest Road, London E17. Speakers: Tony Benn MP, Peter Heathfield NUM, Jim Slater NUS. Admission free. Organised by Forest Gate Miners Support Group.

FURTHER EDUCATION Labour Students — new leaflet out now, attacking Tory cuts and advertising the FELS conference on 10/11 November. Order from Louise James, Organising Secretary FELS, 24 Higgins House, Whitmore Road, Shoreditch, London N1.

TEESSIDE BLOC CONFERENCE Saturday 27 October. St Marys Centre, Middlesbrough. 10 am to 4 pm. Speakers: Dave Nellist MP, Chris Herriot NUM, Jeff Price USDAW.

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

MILITANT pocket diaries, 60p, 10 or over 50p each. All cash donated to Fighting Fund. Orders to: Mike King, 10 Rodney Court, Anson Drive, Sholing Soton. SO2 8RU

BAKERS, FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION

Their Fight is Your Fight Victory to the Miners!

BFAWU . . BFAWU . . BFAWU . .

Forward to a daily *Militant* and Socialism. Greetings from South-Ribble *Militant* supporters



Forward to a daily *Militant* from *Militant* supporters
British Gas Construction site
Easington

20th anniversary greetings to all *Militant* supporters from Newcastle North LPYS, Newcastle Central LPYS, Tynebridge LPYS, Newcastle University *Militant* supporters, Newcastle Poly *Militant* supporters.

LPYS MINERS GALA

CALYPSO

SOUL

BEAT

ASSISTANCE

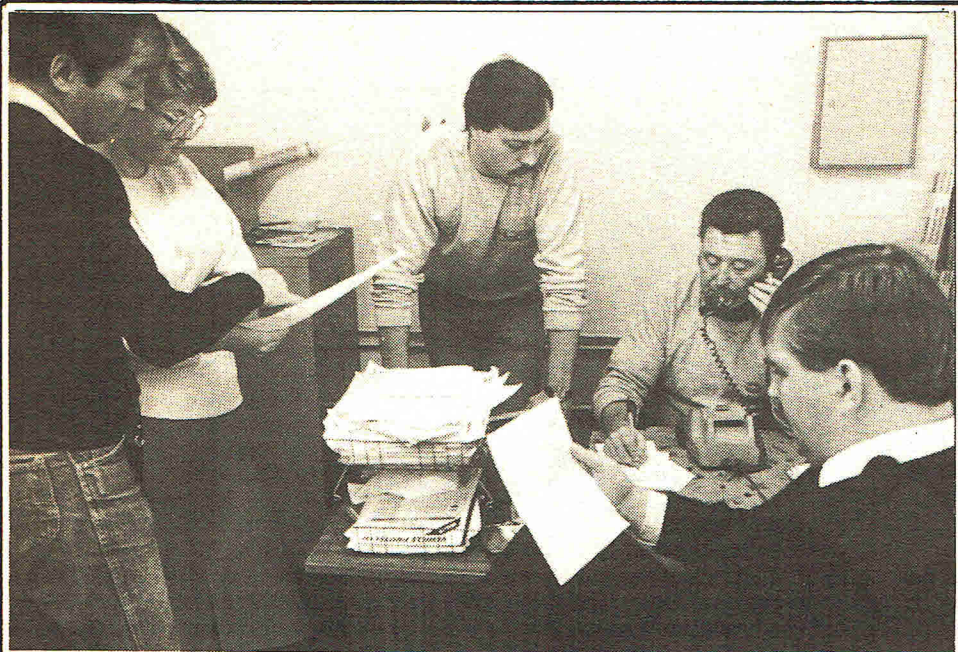
disco

guests

SOUND BY "KING TUBBY"

York gardens community centre, 22, Lavender rd, SW11
Friday 19th Oct. 8.00pm-12.00. £2.50/£1.50u/w

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS



Workers occupy Oyez stationery factory in Kirkby on Merseyside following the company's decision to close the factory on 31 October. Only six of the thirty-one workers were offered alternative work.

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

London council stewards call strike

LONDON BOROUGH shop stewards are calling for a one-day strike in London on November 7.

It has been called by the London Bridge Committee, which was formed from the JSSCs of Boroughs from both north and south London in the realisation that all local authority workers will need to unite against the programme of savage cuts in jobs and services about to be imposed by the government.

London Bridge is composed of shop stewards dedicated to protect the jobs of local authority workers and to safeguard the services of their communities.

Rate-capping is a false argument put up by the government to stem so-called overspending councils. What the government is doing is taking away grants from the most deprived areas. This is to reduce government spending at the expense of our jobs and services.

It has always been recognised that local

Terry North,
(Branch Secretary, Islington Council GMBATU, and organiser, London Bridge Committee, spoke to Militant in a personal capacity)

authorities don't have the means to finance all the services to their residents, but the balance has been made up by central government in the form of Rate Support Grants. The government now set authorities a target and impose a penalty if they are not met.

Cut jobs

The targets, and the penalties for not achieving them are severe. For every pound spent over the government's estimation of the local authority spending level, they take away £2 from the grant they would have given us.

In order to comply with these government spending limits each council would have to cut jobs drastically, and therefore also the services they are able to give to their community.

Some councils already receive no grant from the government which disregards the plight of local people while at the same time gives tax concessions to the rich, and invests £ billions in nuclear weapons, the instruments of death. They refuse to recognise the suffering caused to ordinary people by the blight of employment and the terrible level of service to the most unfortunate amongst us.

The councils' workforces must make a stand on behalf of the people of London and say: enough is enough, we refuse to accept these draconian measures being imposed on us—we'll fight with all the means at our disposal.

The London Bridge Committee is just such a body, it will be in the forefront of the struggle.

Sheffield TGWU steward victimised

FIFTEEN TGWU members are on strike at Gleasons (Sheffield) Ltd, to prevent four men being made redundant at the plant depot. Included in the four is the T&G steward Pete Woodward, who spoke to Militant:

"The trouble began when I was elected steward and told management of this and that the entire shop was 100% union. They argued that as I was on the staff, there would be a conflict of interests. I countered that my allegiance is to the workforce, I have got the full support of the men and I have never been part of management".

This was not accepted by the firm. On Thursday they announced that Pete, Brandide Miller, David Jenkinson and Pete Sweeney (a non-union worker) were being made redundant. There was no prior consultation.

The union meeting was called and immediate strike action was agreed, the management excuse was that they had to save £25,000, yet the firm made £4 million profit last year.

The TGWU gave immediate official backing to the dispute, as the firm has a history of dismissing shop stewards. Pete would the fourth in five years. If they

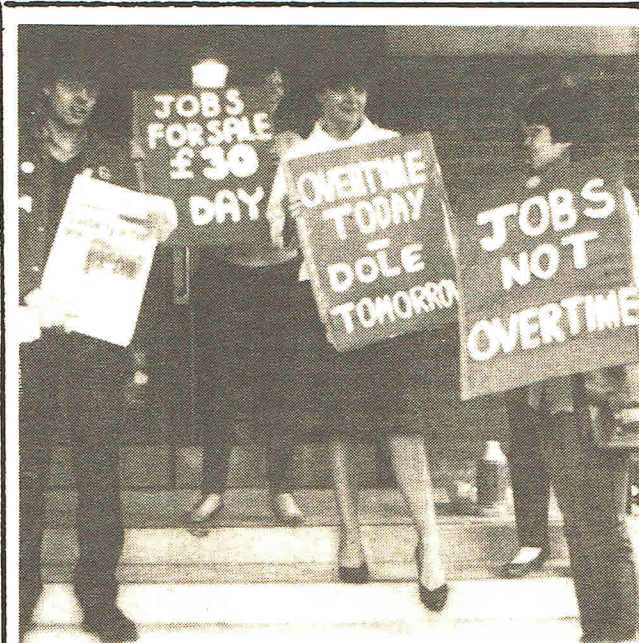
get away with it, as Pete said: "It is a direct attack on trade unionism, they have taken the usual boss class attitude and attacked workers to keep them under the jack boot".

The men have been trying for two months to discuss pay parity with the Gleeson depot in Mitcham, Surrey who receive about 80p per hour more in bonus rates. Average take-home pay in Sheffield for 40 hours is £80.

The strike has at least forced management to hear grievances and accept Pete as the steward. However, the strike is likely to last a while as the "top man" is on holiday.

Pete is confident that the strike can be won. He has been made redundant three times since 1979: "But now I have got the chance to fight back. If we get support from other trade unions, we will win". Join the picket of the new fire station site, behind Forrester's, Division Street, Sheffield and the Gleeson strike depot, Meadow Head, Sheffield.

Messages of support and donations to Pete Woodward, 9 Pine Croft, Chapel Town, Sheffield. Cheques payable to Gleeson Strike Fund.



DSS staff at Plaistow, East London are imposing an overtime ban in protest at increased workload and reduced staffing.

Photo: Peter Wharton

A strategy for the railways

MICK ATHERTON, President of the West Midlands NUR is standing for election to the NUR national executive. He talked to Martin Elvin about the problems facing railworkers.

The situation facing all railway workers is still a very uncertain one. The recent industrial action was called off, but it still remains to be seen what we have got out of it from the British Rail Board.

Corporate plan

To my knowledge they have not actually withdrawn from the Corporate Plan, or the figures for job losses contained within it, which they may have modified a bit.

We have been told all about a new stage in the machinery of consulta-

tion or negotiation when dealing with closures. But that doesn't safeguard jobs, services or fines necessarily, it simply means one can talk about it a bit longer.

The Corporate Plan was not just plucked from thin air. This latest one is taken out of proposals contained in the Serpell Report. Despite all the publicity about electrification schemes and so on, nothing fundamental has changed. The Corporate Plan is a plan for continuing decline in the rail industry, for a continuation of cuts in jobs, and services etc.

The rail industry is still faced with

the economic policies and the financial (?) guidelines of this government. Railworkers face further threats from One Man Operation of trains, the Open Station Concept and other productivity moves.

Productivity

The policy of the NUR as decided at this and last year's AGM is to oppose the further extension of these BRB schemes, or the type of productivity deals which brought them about in the first place. We must ensure that the leadership adhere to this policy.

On my side of the industry, on the Signals and Telecoms and Permanent Wayside, we are being told that there will have to be changes made to the extent and frequency of renewal and overhaul of equipment. This I believe will lead to a drop in

manning levels and safety standards. Side by side with the general decline, where we are seeing new equipment, and the installation of new technology, it threatens to decimate jobs. This is the case in our grades, especially the S&T.

We need to establish clear policies to ensure a better deal for all railworkers, these must include:

- ★ No cuts or closures;
- ★ No further job losses, either through redundancies or so-called natural wastage;
- ★ A shorter working week of 35 hours or less to account for both loss of traffic and new technology;
- ★ Abolition of the Minimum Earnings Level;
- ★ £100 per week minimum basic rate of pay for the lowest grades and pro rata rates for all other grades;
- ★ For a massive programme of investment in an expanding rail industry.

NALGO right beaten but left must organise

THE ATTEMPT to break NALGO's financial support to the NUM suffered defeat at a special conference on October 10. The conference had been called by over 50 (mainly small) branches submitting an identical resolution and putting down the £500 deposit.

The resolution sought a national ballot over whether NALGO should donate any more money to the NUM. NALGO has already given about £40,000 to the national fund. This sum was so excessive to some delegates, that they wanted to spend £250,000 convening this conference and another £250,000 organising a ballot.

In reality the ballot would take months to organise and would therefore effectively stop any further assistance to the NUM during the strike. NALGO's right wing hid behind the ballot issue because they have not got the bottle to argue openly against the miners' case. But in doing so they were caught on the constitutional hook of needing a two-thirds majority.

After a full day's discussion the proposal was defeated. One right wing delegate shouted at the conference: "If we don't pass this proposal then this union is finished!" For him and his ilk, it is. But as many delegates pointed out, if NALGO isn't prepared to fight or help others in the fight in the public sector then indeed it would be finished as a trade union.

The right wing's campaign finally ended in a whimper as the conference, hardly without opposition, voted to give the lost deposit to striking NALGO nursery nurses.

However, the proposal, while falling short of the two-thirds majority needed did obtain over 50% of the votes and there is no room for complacency. In debate the Tories were beaten—especially when their real anti-miner views came out. But a number of delegations who personally support the miners came mandated to vote for the proposal.

It is clear that the NEC and activists in the union have to campaign seriously throughout the branches and districts to explain the issues and win wider support, especially as the NUM may well require more help in the near future.

It is clear that NALGO's right wing is well organised at national level. There should be no doubt in NALGO activists' minds about the need to organise and build the Broad Left in the union. If these two lessons are learned then we can be sure of a thorough defeat of the right wing's ideas within the union.

Militant

DHSS Newcastle strike
Page 14
Liverpool Race Relations
Unit—Page 5



Wives of the imprisoned shipyard workers lead protest on 12 October. They want action to free the Cammell Laird workers.

Photo: John Smith (FL)

Cammell Lairds

Solidarity and mass picket

LIVERPOOL local authority manual workers gave a tremendous example of what class solidarity means when they voted by two to one to take strike action in support of imprisoned Cammell Lairds workers on 17 October.

By a city council
GMBATU steward

The meeting was in response to a resolution adopted by the Liverpool, North Wales and Irish regional council of the GMBATU at a meeting on Friday the 12th, after they were heavily lobbied by workers, mainly from the local authority.

The resolution from the GMBATU city council senior reps. committee called for an official 24 hour strike action of all the union's members in the region to demonstrate our support of the Lairds 37. The meeting was addressed by Councillor Paul Astbury and Ian Lowes, secretary of the senior reps. committee and convenor of the recrea-

tion and open spaces department.

Paul Astbury explained that the battle at Lairds was the same as that of the City Council, a struggle for jobs and security. Next year, he said, Liverpool will be battling against Thatcher and her policies. The City council and corporation workers will then face attacks by the law and Tory judges.

The rights and wrongs of the dispute and of the City council fully supporting the struggle are now secondary, he said. 37 workers are locked up for 23 hours a day in Walton jail for fighting for their jobs. It's up to us to give them our full support.

Trade union rights

Ian Lowes moved a resolution explaining that the regional council had voted to make the action official and calling on all GMB members to support the stoppage. He condemned those Lairds workers crossing picket lines. Regardless of whether or not they had supported the

dispute, the basic rights of trade unions were under attack.

Lack of leadership

Crossing picket lines will not save us jobs at Lairds or anywhere else. The action is not about jobs but about supporting workers prepared to go to jail for fighting for what they believe in. Ian finished by stressing that the TUC should have called national action when the first worker was locked up. They didn't do so, it was now up to the rank and file to implement policy decisions when the leadership will not.

It has to be said that national and local GMB officials have failed to give any fighting lead. When David Basnett and even local official Barry Williams spoke at the demonstration on 12 October they failed to give a positive lead for solidarity action. Women leaving the demo were heard to say: "They've told us what we know but not what to do

next."

The regional secretary of GMBATU, Jim Whelan, instead of fighting for his regional council's policy has openly contradicted it. He sent a circular to all branches claiming the action was unofficial before the executive met on Tuesday night. Even when the union nationally made the action official, the damage had already been done.

The City council stewards had a meeting and condemned Whelan's action. At every point they and Labour councillors like Tony Mulhearn have argued for mobilising the GMB membership for action and to pressurise the union leadership into action. That example must be followed throughout Merseyside and nationally.

There will be no pickets outside Walton Jail as the prison governor threatened the inmates would lose all privileges, and would be banged up for the day. Protesters will be picketing Edge Lane and Lairds.

Vauxhall strike

VAUXHALL Motors have been launching the new Astra car with tons of glossy publicity, ensuring yet more healthy profits for the company and for the advertising agencies.

At the same time most of Vauxhall's 15,000 workers have been on strike for over a week after rejecting a pay deal which would have offered next to nothing for the workers who have been producing Vauxhall's wealth.

Picket lines have been set up at Bristol, Hartlepool and other ports. Workers from Ellesmere Port and Luton factories are determined to cut the company's supply line to its dealers by stopping Vauxhall vehicles made abroad being imported into Britain. The picket lines are biting; persuading many drivers not to aid the employers' strike breaking plans.

Mass meeting

On Monday morning 15 October, mass meetings were held after the management changed their offer slightly. There was a slight improvement in the pay holding out a 7½% pay rise instead of

6% with £2 bonus consolidated into pay. They had slightly amended the conditions on offer but they were still bad, still meaning more intensive work patterns with the ultimate threat to cut jobs.

At Ellesmere Port TGWU members voted overwhelmingly to carry on striking and AUEW members voted to continue by a noticeably larger margin than at the last meeting. The Ellesmere Port factory is still being picketed to ensure backing from ASTMS members.

Huge profits

The parent General Motors company in America have only just succeeded in getting a new contract accepted by the US unions. The company have made huge profits this year. Car manufacturers claim they are "leaner and fitter" but their profits are only fitter by making their workforce leaner.

Austin Rover workers have also rejected a new pay offer. As the car industry is regarded as a pace setter for all industry, the employers will do their worst to stop car workers getting a decent rise but the workers are determined to make the bosses listen.

By Dave Jobber
(Ellesmere Port)



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