

## Organise for miners' victory

# Don't be fooled by Tory lies



Reminder to well known metallurgist Ian MacGregor—

**STEEL HARDENS WHEN REPEATEDLY HAMMERED**

**THE MINEWORKERS' strike is for the winning. After almost nine months of bitter struggle in the face of hardship, suffering and brutality, miners are now nearer to a victory than some of them probably realise.**

As winter draws near, so can victory. Every day takes the strike into terrain more favourable to the working class and hostile to the government and the ruling class.

More than ever before, the question of solidarity action, blacking and other forms of supportive action by the rest of the trade union movement is the key to the swiftest possible victory. To ensure such solidarity however, NUM members, assisted by other trade union activists must go out and actively build it.

The Tories' first priority will be a further campaign to break the miners' resolve and force people back to work. We can already see the personal letters to mineworkers, cynically exploiting Christmas, dangling the poisoned "carrot" of bonus money (which is owed to miners anyway). The £650 bonus is little more than a week's wages for a Met copper on picket duty or

By Martin Elvin

two days pay for a scab lorry driver shifting coal.

What an insult, that after all they've been through, the CEEB expect miners to sell themselves so cheaply. Significantly the Coal Board have singled out what they see as vulnerable or key coalfields, such as North Derbyshire and Staffordshire, and have co-ordinated their campaign with police and media.

### Pit meetings

They selected groups of miners living close to areas of working miners, phoning and visiting their homes. The NUM must counter these tactics. The big rallies around the country, addressed by Arthur Scargill, Peter Heathfield and other labour and trade union leaders (with

the notable exception of Kin-nock) are undoubtedly a great morale booster to the strike's activists.

But this message must get into the homes of all strikers and their families. Rallies addressed by NUM leaders should be held in every pit village and miners' welfare.

The meeting addressed by Scargill at Shirebrook on Friday was the kind of initiative which needs to be repeated everywhere. Pit level meetings should be held regularly to ensure maximum involvement. Shirebrook NUM have recently produced thousands

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### On the move

*Militant* has now moved into the much-publicised new premises. Our new address is 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB; telephone number is (01) 533 3311.

If you write to us it would be helpful if you would put on the envelope which department you need (eg Editorial, Circulation, Fighting Fund).

The move has caused a bit of disruption but we hope to be able to produce a paper next week.

## Ellington: We're staying out

**MINERS IN Northumberland are determined to carry on with the strike until we've saved our jobs and our communities. When the area held a ballot, the majority voted for a strike and the same was true for this pit, Ellington.**

I was really disgusted when my father who is NUM secretary here suddenly hit the headlines last weekend. He told a meeting he was going back to work and tried to get other people to join him.

It is obvious that this speech was planned with the Coal Board. The national media were there to give the maximum publicity

### Victimisation

It didn't have the effect the NCB hoped for though. 2,300 work at Ellington. Now the Coal Board bosses are just like drunken men, they're always seeing double, but even they said just 261 went in on Monday, just over one in ten. A police inspector estimated 206. There were 150 on Friday before the back to work speech. But of course this story had a certain effect as propaganda.

The NCB claim they are being "reasonable" but we can see how vicious they still

By John Cunningham (Junior)

(Ellington NUM)

are. One NUM member at Ellington was arrested recently and accused of assaulting a scab in Ashington. He's not been to court yet but he's been remanded in Durham jail. This Saturday morning his wife got a letter from the Coal Board saying he had been sacked and asking for the keys of their colliery flat back.

The Tories describe themselves as defenders of the family, yet their job destroying tactics and their bribes and punishments are splitting families in all coal areas. Just imagine the pressure families get at Christmas to give the children a good time. That's been the pressure that makes some miners buckle. But

we'll stay firm and work hard to get the fullest support from the rest of our class. We'll win.

### Women back the strike

"I WAS down in London with the women's support group when I heard about John's father's statement. I felt stunned and upset and at first I just wanted to go home but we decided that nothing was going to stop us building support for the miners' fight.

"I would like to have been by my husband's side this morning to show how much I support what he's doing. I feel my father-in-law has left let down his family and his class.

"The Croydon women's section and the parliamentary TGWU held a social for us this weekend, they gave us a cheque for £217 and they'd also raised £576 on our behalf. With support like that we can win."

Brenda Cunningham spoke to *Militant*



Photo: J. Woulfe

Immediately YS members heard of the sequestration of Welsh miners' funds they sent hundreds from the YS camp to the South Wales Miners' headquarters at Pontypridd.

**THE SCOTTISH Executive Committee of the Labour Party at its October meeting launched an inquiry into Scottish LPYS branches, calling for accounts of all money collected for the miners along with receipts.**

**By Tam Connolly**  
(Secretary, Tweedale, Ettrick and Lauderdale LPYS)

It's not a political attack we're told, they just want to make sure no money is stolen—in reality this is a disgusting slur on the LPYS. Throughout Scotland Young Socialists have been out day and night collecting for the miners, and holding public meetings to put over the miners' case. In my constituency, Tweedale, Ettrick and Lauderdale—Liberal leader David Steel's seat—

# Rank and file back Scots YS

Young Socialists have been holding door-to-door and street collections.

One evening, along with four miners, we collected £75 from late night shoppers outside the local supermarket. The police came and took some names and addresses because we "did not have a permit". We managed to get a permit and next week collected £96, topped up to £125 at a public meeting the same night.

On another occasion we filled two sacks with apples and two boxes with vegetables from a woman's

garden—SEC please note, we were invited to do so.

During the many collections we have held, we have been harassed by police. In the past we have been refused permits by the local 'independent' (Liberal) District Council. What we didn't expect was interference from our 'own side', namely the SEC's inquiry.

## CLP support

Our CLP immediately sent a letter informing the SEC of their non-cooperation with the 'inquiry',

and congratulated the LPYS for the work being done, increasing the local Young Socialists' budget.

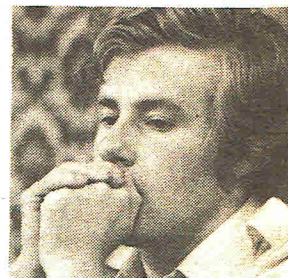
The local TGWU Political Committee has also given overwhelming support to the LPYS and has sent a letter to the SEC. Post Office workers will also be discussing the issue at their next meeting.

The local labour movement here wants to get on with the job of fighting the Tories and supporting the miners, not aiding the SEC in their attacks on the Young Socialists.

# Expelled for selling *Militant*

**ON WEDNESDAY 28 November the NEC of the Labour Party will be considering whether or not to uphold my expulsion from Rhondda Labour Party.**

The only evidence that has been suggested to support my expulsion is that I've sold copies of *Militant* in the streets.



Brychan Davies—expelled by Rhondda CLP. Photo: Militant

**By Brychan Davies**

The Rhondda has a long standing tradition of selling political newspapers on the streets. It goes back over 70 years. In 1912 a paper called the *Miners Next Step* produced by syndicalists in the South Wales Miners Federation was regularly sold on the streets of Tonypandy.

The historical traditions of discussion through education and dissemination of political literature is very strong in the Rhondda. Libraries set up by miners' lodges have in the past been centres of political discussion in the valleys.

Why then does a section of Rhondda Labour party call for my expulsion? The answer is quite simple—they fear the political ideas of Marxism and the drive and enthusiasm of the local LPYS branch.

It is vital that my expulsion does not go unopposed at a national level. On Wednesday 28 November LPYS members and *Militant*

supporters have organised a lobby outside the NEC. At least two coaches have been organised from South Wales to attend.

These attacks have not only taken place in the Rhondda. Recently LPYS membership applications have been refused in Neath constituency because of their support of *Militant*. YS members in Wales have fought a wider campaign to fight these moves and formed a 'Stop attacks on Labour's youth campaign'. (Secretary, David Jones, Landsdowne, Cardiff Road Hawthorne, Pontypridd. Tel: Pontypridd 852568).

We are appealing to all Labour Party and trade union branches in Wales to send a delegation to the lobby, particularly delegations of young miners. *Militant* supporters and LPYS members have been at the forefront of support for the NUM and many young miners will be appalled at the attacks taking place on the LPYS at such a crucial time in the dispute.

# Tory lies

Continued from page 1

of leaflets for distribution in villages around the pit. This example needs to be followed everywhere else. The teams of pickets are a ready-made army that can be turned out on the doorsteps to make sure nobody is being poisoned or demoralised by "Lies at Six".

Having once failed to break the resolve of the mineworkers with this present virulent campaign, the ruling class will then be forced to mount a massive strike-breaking operation to get coal into the big power stations where stocks are low.

## Railworkers

IN ANY such operation, they will try to isolate the mineworkers from the rest of the labour movement. In particular the ruling class will try to break any other section prepared to take solidarity action through a campaign of harassment, victimisation, sham ballots, etc. Members of NUR and ASLEF at Coalville depot have faced suspension, threats of closures and redundancy, police raids and now sackings, in a vain attempt to break morale. The railworkers have steadfastly refused to move coal. This vicious campaign shows rail and powerworkers what they must now prepare to meet, and defeat, in every area of the country.

When they fail to break the resolve of the railworkers, the Tories will undoubtedly try to launch another massive scabbing operation by road haulage, even

bigger than that in the Midlands. They will aim to shift coal to the big coal fired stations from strike-bound pit-head stocks in Yorkshire, South Wales, the North East, etc.

## Powerworkers

DESPITE ALL the government and CEBG statements to the contrary, the ruling class are very seriously concerned about the power stations. Power cuts and the prospect of defeat stares the Tories in the face. As *Militant* has explained, it is not just the level of stocks but where they are situated that really counts.

Throughout the summer, coal burn in the power stations has been kept to a minimum by greatly increasing oil burn, bringing in previously dormant oil-fired stations and running nuclear fuelled stations way above normal levels.

Of the coal fired stations, only the big Midlands ones have been run at anything like normal levels of output, regularly supplied with coal through a huge-scale scabbing operation by road haulage from the working Notts pits. This is where the vast majority of the CEBG's much vaunted huge stockpiles are located.

The Tories provoked this strike at the end of last winter when stocks at many coalfired stations were fairly low, never expecting the strike to last this long and believing they could get through without these power stations.

Now winter is on its way. Those big coalfired stations like Cokenzie and Longannet in Scotland; Ferrybridge, Drax and Eggborough in Yorkshire, Fiddlers Ferry in the North West, Blyth in the North East, Aberthaw in South Wales,

Didcot on the Oxford-Berkshire border and West Thurrock and Tilbury in Essex are vital to maintain the grid and stop power cuts. But all of these are very low on coal and could not last through the winter.

**TGWU Drivers Report**  
Road Haulage Drivers and the Miners —



They will try and move open-cast coal on 'safety' grounds. Stocks of such coal should be identified and pickets put on to ensure that the agreement with the TGWU is not broken by management.

The government will try anything to get coal to some of the more threatened areas.

Given the high stock levels at Midlands power stations, the Tories may shift the whole strike breaking operation from the Notts coalfield to moving coal from Midlands pits or even Midlands power stations up to Yorkshire or other areas' power stations. And no doubt if all these tactics fail or are thwarted, they will be ready to use troops to shift fuel and break the strike.

The Tories' entire economic and industrial strategy is at stake. They have prepared for this for the last decade. Shamefully the TUC have not. But with workers' unity all the Tory plans can be shattered. In every area, clear plans and a strategy to win must be laid without delay by the entire trade union and labour movement.

A drive must be conducted to get

mineworkers, plus women's support group members, into every power station to explain the miners' case from the viewpoint of trade union rights, the interdependence of the two industries, unemployment and future of the communities.

Such an appeal would undoubtedly gain support. A similar drive should be conducted towards rail depots (and oil refineries and docks where relevant) to bolster those who have so steadfastly backed the NUM, and gain the support of those who have so far failed to do so.

## Lorry drivers

PARTICULAR attention should be paid to road transport. Lessons must be drawn from the Midlands area. Here TGWU members, who refused to cross picket lines, have seen their employers lose contracts and themselves thrown out of work while scab operators, cowboys and even other TGWU members, went in and took their work (and that of the railworkers), shifting coal. This deplorable situation would not have developed if Regional T&G leaders had campaigned with sufficient conviction and energy to implement national T&G policy.

Liverpool Drivers Branch of the TGWU have put out a leaflet to be left in cafes and given out to lorry drivers. This great initiative should be copied elsewhere (see above left).

Miners need to conduct a campaign towards every lorry firm and every drivers' branch of the TGWU and mount pressure to win the backing of the road haulage trade group and regional leaderships in every area. If the drivers are taking up the cudgels against the non-union cancer in their own industry it will be that much more difficult to organise scabbing operations.

Solidarity Conferences should be organised with the miners building for those Conferences through a systematic mass campaign throughout industry. Permanent Solidarity Committees should be

established from these Conferences and a particular priority should be placed upon power and railworkers, lorry and tanker drivers (and where relevant oil refinery workers), dockers, seafarers and waterways workers, and all groups of workers in a position to black coal. These will be vital for organising jointly and co-ordinating blacking and other solidarity action, for regulating quotas, for fighting scab operations and, above all, for preventing isolation and countering victimisation.

In Kent, a body involving the NUM, other unions, trades councils, women's groups, etc has been formed, partly to raise money but mainly to get the message of the strike into every factory, to prepare them for action and to get links with the power stations. Such examples will doubtless be followed elsewhere. As its secretary, a NUPE official, said, "the only people who don't support the miners are those who haven't yet heard their case at first hand".

Such activity is essential now to prepare the ground for full-scale immediate general strike action from below if any attempt is made to use the armed forces to strike-break. At national level the left unions who originally pledged their support for the NUM should call a national delegate conference, with representatives of every branch, shop stewards' committee etc, above all to prepare the key unions for a counter offensive against the Tories' planned onslaught on the miners.

This is not the same situation as in 1972 and 1974. The high levels of unemployment, the effects of recession and the bosses' onslaught makes the situation facing many workers very difficult. Despite the policy of the TUC, many union leaderships are unwilling or just incapable of organising solidarity action. The rank and file can fill that gap, provided striking miners and other sympathetic trade unionists organise for victory.

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

## Miners' dispute

# Return to work? The real figures

**THE CLAIM** by the NCB of a "stupendous" return to work is a fallacy. On Thursday 15 November, they claimed 706 "miners" were now working in the Durham and Northumberland areas.

We dispute those figures. The Board deems a man to be working even when he is on the sick—including long-term sick men off work before the strike began.

Even if the figure of 706 were correct we have to be objective; that figure represents a mere 3.06% of the 23,000 workers in the North East Area. If that is stupendous then the NCB is easily pleased.

The significant point is that the new blacklegs are not production workers. There is no coal being produced. Taking my own pit as an example, the reality is this. Total workforce; 2,450, blacklegs (figures disputed by the NUM) 86. Percentage of strike-breakers is therefore

**By Stan Pearce**  
(Wearmouth NUM  
Durham Area)

3.5%.

Of the 86 scabs only 20 are NUM members. Of these 20, only 3 are face workers. The other 17 are bath attendants, local guards and DATAL men etc. The three face workers will have to teach Stakhanov a thing or two if they are to dent our strike.

The other 66 black-legs are a motley collection of COSA, mechanics, and Durham engine men No.2. There are 17 NACODS members working with NUM agreement. The cost to the NCB must be astronomical.

These redundancy-seeking



Stan Pearce.

new champions of 'democracy' are beginning to be treated to 4 hour shifts as they are escorted in and out of the pit by police. The police then have to speed away to conduct the same operation for lamp cabin scabbing elsewhere.

In normal times the NCB would lay them off if production halted rather than

pay them for doing nothing. This exercise is nothing but a huge propaganda jamboree which has failed to produce a scuttle of coal.

## Scabs until they die

Listening to the police radio frequency we find that the black-legs are referred to as "packages". In keeping with this spirit of secret service drama, three scabs at Herrington wear balaclavas to preserve their identity! This is a new twist on the call for the moderates to stand up and be counted.

But, as Arthur Scargill said at the Newcastle rally last Sunday, where by the way, the mood was determined and optimistic: "We won't always be poor, but they'll have to live with the label 'scab' until the day they die."



Northumberland miners marching in the Durham miners' gala.

## MPs support miners

**"THAT THIS** House strongly condemns the appalling police activities during the current miners' dispute, notably in Yorkshire village of Fitzwilliam, in which nine young people were arrested for breaching the peace, and many others manhandled by the police; notes that this incident is unfortunately only one of many in which the police

have behaved provocatively and excessively in mining areas, and in which innocent people have been arrested on trumped-up charges; notes that bail conditions have been severely restrictive, making normal freedom of movement impossible; urges Her Majesty's government to (i) effect an amnesty for those arrested or convicted in the present

strike, (ii) end police occupation of, and withdraw all outside forces from, mining areas, (iii) act to ensure the re-instatement of those sacked through conviction or victimisation, (iv) introduce democratically elected police committees to oversee promotion, discipline, equipment and policing policy."



Terry Fields MP

**AT A meeting of the Campaign Group of Labour MPs on 14 November, Dave Nellist successfully moved a resolution, seconded by Tony Benn, offering new support for the mineworkers.**

It called for a letter to be sent to the NUM suggesting that they organise meetings or rallies in every town or village close to a power station, recognising that the CEBG in the next few weeks will have to begin to move stocks and would consider using troops. Members of the Campaign Group were offered as speakers.

### Large stocks

The resolution pointed out that the police attempts to intimidate small pit communities in Fitzwilliam, Grimethorpe, Armthorpe, etc are linked to the fact that there are large coal stocks at these pits. They want to prepare to move them to the power stations.

Other communities are likely to get the same treatment. The campaign must start now to appeal to other workers not to move stocks and be prepared for the use of troops. The resolution also asked for rank and file speakers from the power stations to be on the platform.

12th November 1984

Dear Home Secretary

I am writing to protest about the activities of the police during the current miners' dispute.

I want to refer in particular to the incidents which occurred in the Yorkshire village of Fitzwilliam, where dozens of riot police literally ran amok through the streets and the local pub. People, young and old, men and women, miners and non-miners, were indiscriminately beaten and altogether nine were arrested. As if this weren't sufficient, stringent bail conditions were imposed on those arrested, which were designed to make it extremely difficult for them to pursue a normal life.

These nine young people are to be tried in Castleford on 3rd December, on

charges of breaching the peace. As far as I am concerned, there was indeed a breach of the peace in Fitzwilliam on 9th July, but it was certainly not committed by those facing charges, but rather by the police.

I would not claim that Fitzwilliam is an isolated incident. On the contrary, I must protest about the constant mass deployment of police for purposes clearly quite different from that police are normally supposed to undertake. One example that particularly shocked me was that on August 20th, 1,500 escorted one working miner to work at Gascoigne Wood pit; while the very same day it was announced that only 500 men nationally had been detailed to hunt for 'The Fox', a perverted individual responsible for the rape of six women and who

was widely presumed at large in Yorkshire.

I am certainly not opposed to the police catching vicious criminals and protecting the community from crime in general. But thousands of miners and families, through their own recent experiences, are now permanently embittered towards the police. This will make the task of fighting crime in mining areas, once the strike is over, much more difficult.

I would therefore urge that you launch an immediate investigation into policing methods used during this strike, in the light of the very disturbing events at Fitzwilliam. I would also request that you direct that all charges against the 'Fitzwilliam 9' be dropped.

Yours sincerely  
Terry Fields M.P.

## Dutch backing

**THIS BRANCH** of the Young Socialists gives its solidarity to the magnificent struggle of the miners against the NCB and the Tory government.

We support the miners in their fight to save the pits,

secure adequate investment, and decent wages. We deplore the Tory governments use of the police against the miners and its implementation of anti-union legislation.

We hope that the miners

will go on to lead the whole Labour movement to overthrow this government, and repeal all anti-trade union legislation.

With fraternal greetings, Alfons Schröder, Almelo Branch Secretary, Young Socialists in the Labour Party, The Netherlands.

## Kicked by police

**19 scabs** went into Bates pit, Northumberland, last Thursday. They only stayed for an hour and had to wait for three hours, a mile away at the police station, guarded by 30 van loads of police mainly from Liverpool.

Police charged the pickets from across the road. They dragged committee-man Jimmy Ogilvie into their lines and kicked him. Branch chairman Ronnie Campbell intervened to help Jimmy but was dragged in and got the same.

One picket, 50 years old with a surgical corset, was kicked about in the mud by the police until his yellow jacket turned black.

An angler passed through the pickets with his bike but the Liverpool law wouldn't let him past, charged, put him on the ground and smashed his bike. They told him to get the money for it from the pickets.

Ronnie Campbell said: "I heard voices saying, 'We've got Campbell!' They tried to

pull me to the ground by the hair and kicked me. They shouted, 'we'll make you into a black and blue martyr'."

After the scabs went in, the apprentices came out to a great welcome.

One man who went in on Thursday later talked to branch officials. When he tried to get off the bus on Friday the police wouldn't let him. Clearly there are only some liberties they protect.

The NUM in the area has been approached by COSA members who have been refused hardship money by their union, and are considering appeal. One of the first arrests from Northumberland was a clerk and his fine was paid by the NUM.

Despite their troubles this week, Northumberland miners collected £500 in Newcastle for the Ethiopian famine.

By Kevin Miles

## POEU solidarity

**AT THE reconvened conference of the Post Office Engineering Union held in Bournemouth, Julie Harris, a local Militant supporter assisted by supporters from the POEU arranged for collections to be taken by 3 South Wales miners picketing power stations in the area.**

No official speakers had been organised for the conference so supporters asked for Mike Andrews, an Abercynon lodge official to address conference.

He received a standing ovation from delegates and thanked them for collections totalling £782. He explained

the miners' case, and was cheered when he stated that the miners' fight was their fight and all trade unionists should unite to defend jobs.

Speaking to Mike afterwards he said that Militant supporters seemed to be the only people totally committed to helping the miners. They had saved them £150 a week by inviting them to stay in their houses.

All three miners joined in on a paper sale the following morning.

By Bernard Roome,  
(Swansea branch POEU,  
personal capacity)

# Midlothian miners out for victory

The miners' strike has brought to the surface old traditions of solidarity and community spirit in hundreds of mining villages. PAT CRAVEN spoke to some of those involved in Midlothian about the effect of the strike in their communities. Photos by ALEX NOON.

**NEWTONGRANGE** in Midlothian is the kind of mining community which is at the heart of the strike.

Coal was being mined in the area as long ago as 1200 by the monks at Newbattle Abbey. "The place is riddled with ancient tunnels", explained Martin Rogan, Treasurer of the Newtongrange Strike Committee.

The lady Victoria pit, opened in 1890 was then in the forefront of technology. Today it is a mining museum.

The long rows of low terraced houses have decayed, many empty and boarded up. But what remains is the community spirit of Newtongrange, forged over a century of hardship and struggle.

It is still very much a mining village, with 300 miners and their dependants still making up a large part of the

population of 4,500.

"If the workshops shut", added Strike Committee Secretary Sandy Coult, "and Monktonhall and possibly Bilston Glen, the village will be decimated as far as jobs are concerned." "It would be either the dole or we'd have to leave", said Martin, "and it's not the sort of place people want to move away from."

The village traditions have proved vital for the success of the strike. "It's an awfully close-knit village", said Sandy. "The kitchen's self-sufficient now. We get a lot of food from SOGAT and from the Dean Tavern, the pub which is owned by the village, through a trust that was set up—we've been getting £100 a fortnight from them, only for the kitchen."

The club in which we were talking is not a miners' welfare, but a community club, emphasising the link between the miners and the

village. "They have been excellent to us, given us the kitchen, the pool table and everything else we need. "We get about £30 a week from the club from the bingo and the raffles," said Martin.

Midlothian District Council, all but one Labour members, have also been helpful. "Most people haven't paid any rent, but they've never had any hassle; they've just scrubbed it altogether until the strike's finished—100% rent rebates. They have also donated £5,000."

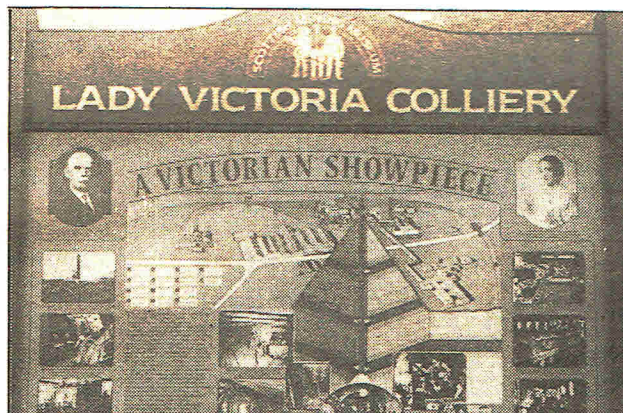
The most surprising evidence of the depth of local community spirit is that "there have been no problems with the police locally. They are in the same boat as us; they have lived here with us for years without any hassle. The know everybody and we know them", said Martin.

Significantly he added: "You hardly ever see a local policeman on the picket lines; they come in from the Borders and Edinburgh."

Given the level of local support the strike leaders are confident that they can last out as long as necessary. "There is a meal provided for anyone who wants it, even if they are not picketing or showing any interest in the strike whatsoever. Nobody is ever turned away," said Martin. "We're totally self-sufficient", added Sandy, "we could go on for ever."



Lunch being served in the Kitchen of Newtongrange strike centre.



Lady Victoria Colliery, Newtongrange, now a mining museum.

## Lessons of the strike

**GEORGE PURCELL**, chairman of the Loanhead Strike Committee, summed up the lessons the strike has taught him: "Your attitude towards the police has definitely changed. Your attitude towards the press and media has changed. The judicial system has been used against us as working people, and a lot of people are just realising that now. You can see the extent that the government will go to crush the trade unions of this country, which they must do to pave the way for their privatisation, which will happen in the Coal Board if they get away with it, and every other industry in the country."

Tam Darby pointed to one very concrete effect of the strike: "The size of

the Labour Party branch has gone up by over 120% since the start of the strike. Most of the recruits have come from the striking miners and the whole of the Women's support Group have joined the Labour Party.

"The good thing about this is that we've now got quite a steered political workforce, so that when the nurses are looking for a bit of aid, if they threaten McTaggart Scott or any other places, they'll be able to come to these people and look at how to set up a local strike committee, how to set up a wives' support group, and this invaluable experience will get passed on to other groups."

## Coal Board campaign at Bilston Glen

"BILSTON GLEN is supposed to be the weak link in the Scottish coalfield," George Purcell said. "It's been a Coal Board campaign since even before the strike, for the last two years. They've divided the two pits, with younger men at Monktonhall, while Bilston Glen has men approaching 60 years old still working there."

"Then you had MacGregor saying that the Monktonhall men were 'second division miners' and that Bilston Glen was a 'super-safe pit' They forget that Wheeler (Scottish NCB director) was out here two years ago and

was going to shut the pit within six weeks!" Only seven of the men who have returned to work have agreed to join the Working Miners' Association, despite a bounty of £200. "We got this from a man who went back to work for a day", George said. "He got sick of everything and went back to work at Bilston Glen."

### Waive your rights

"He worked a day and that was it! He said 'I'll have to get back out' and he came straight to Dalkeith and told

them what was happening. He got a document handed to him—'sign that and waive your rights with the NUM and you'll be given £200 to join the Working Miners' Association.'"

"The Association at The Glen is suiting the management's purpose, but as soon as they get a return to work and he's got 1,700 men standing at the gates saying 'we're not going in there until these men come out', I'm quite sure he'll drop these men and that'll be the end of their association."

## Loanhead rediscovers its mining roots

**LOANHEAD**, a few miles away from Newtongrange, is the nearest village to Bilston Glen colliery.

Yet it has not remained a mining village to the same extent as Newtongrange. Bilston Glen was only opened in 1952; the other local pits are long closed, and there is some more substantial alternative local employment in the form of the McTaggart Scott engineering factory. The housing is more modern and it looks less like the traditional mining community.

Yet the strike has brought to life the old traditions of the mining village it was. "Loanhead is no longer a mining community," explained local Labour councillor Tam Darby, "but our parents were all part of the mining community and that is still entrenched in you yet. The kids that go to school can understand what this is about, because they've heard it from their grandparents, and the village still has that working-class mining culture running through it."

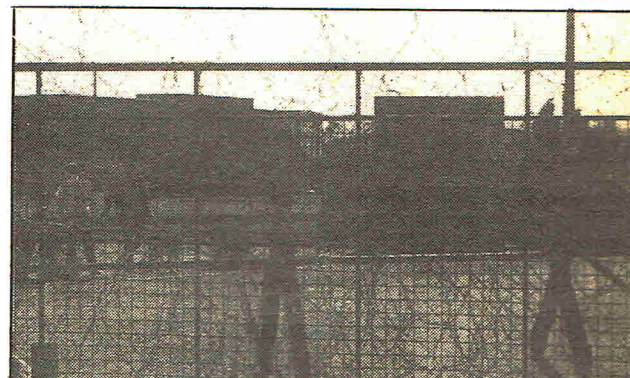
The best example of how Loanhead has rediscovered its mining roots is the part played by the women in the strike. "We were late in starting", admitted Martha Horsburgh. "It was in the middle of June that we approached the men to set up a Women's Support Group. Before I was in the Support Group I was determined that I was

going to send my man back to work. I was at him the whole time to get back to his work. I was selfish. I was thinking of me. But when you get involved with other people you realise you are not alone.

"Now I've got involved in the Support Group, I've become quite militant. I've joined the Labour Party. I enjoy going to the rallies and going up The Glen and having a wee bit of a shout at the scabs who are going in to their work, and I just

had a near riot at the Bilston Glen pit. The local shops, the local pubs, the Community Council, everything has been solid in Loanhead."

Perhaps because of its proximity to Bilston Glen, Loanhead miners have not enjoyed Newtongrange's harmonious relations with the police. "You are only seeing now", said George Purcell, acting Chairman of the Loanhead Strike Committee, "what kind of police force we have got."



Surrounded by barbed wire—Bilston Glen Colliery.

wish I could do something about it.

"I feel we need to get more out to these women who are still sitting in the house that are at their men to go back to work. I feel we could get them into the Support Group."

"Loanhead", explained Tam, "is normally a very conservative moderate Labour community. While it has not gone overboard and waved flags and said it totally supports the miners, in its quiet way has supported the miners' strike, even at a time when we

They are not the friendly bobby standing on the corner now. They're quite liable to take their truncheon out and split your head wide open."

On one point, Loanhead is at one with Newtongrange. As Tam Darby put it: "There's no discussion about when we are going back to work. It's what we are going to do with the kids during the school holidays, what about Christmas presents, chickens and things like that. That's the philosophy of this strike centre."

# Cowley workers talk about life on the track

## 'You're just a number'

A COWLEY worker reports on the mood and experience of fellow strikers:

Austin Rover's attempt to intimidate its workers has completely failed. They won't go back until they've won. Austin Rover workers are increasingly bitter at the way they've been treated and they see this dispute and the unity between Cowley and Longbridge as an opportunity to win back all that was lost since 1979.

Chatting to workers young and old on the picket line I can sense the determination is there to fight to the end.

If that was matched by the leadership of the trade unions then there would be no doubt about the outcome of the dispute.

Four workers whose names I won't mention because of possible victimisation by management talked of the dispute and the conditions facing them in the factory.

## The lifer

One worker who has been at BL for 22 years explained how he feels during this dispute:

"I have worked there all my life and I have never been acknowledged by the management whatsoever. You're just a number to them in this factory. You start your day at 7.15, and you don't leave the line until 4.15 except for a small break.

You get your first break at 8.45 to go to the toilet. You get between twelve and nine minutes and the toilet is four minutes away from the track. I'm lucky because I work at the last track, towards the toilet. But others who work in the middle of the factory on track 4 or 5 have a pretty tight schedule to get there.

### Bottling it up

I've got a mate who works with me who's got a kidney complaint and one day had to go 18 times in one day and often he couldn't make it to the loo so he had to go in a dustbin or a bottle nearby. Others have bottles handy just in case nature calls and you haven't got the chance to have a break.

It might sound funny to some people but I can assure you it's not at the time when you are dying to go. Sometimes you have got to ask your foreman permission to leave the track because if you do leave you are open to

disciplinary action. It's like going back to a nursery the way they treat grown men in that factory.

The whole place is like a prison. I've worked with men who've been inside and they reckon the actual work is easier inside, the only difference is that they let you go home after you have finished.

I remember in the early '70s when the unions in the factory were quite powerful. No worker could be shifted around the way they move us today, without the union's consent. All the jobs were sorted out and if they union didn't agree with the work load then the workers could refuse to do the extra without getting disciplined or sacked.

Shop steward was respected position, a respected job, mainly negotiating better conditions. Of course now it is completely different. To be a shop steward nowadays, you've got to either be a prize heavyweight boxer or a born agitator and fighter, because the conditions are completely different.

It's a whole new ball game. Management are not trained to produce cars and manage the factory in harmony but to sack, discipline, shout at and abuse workers. I'm sure half the disputes wouldn't happen if the foreman just knew how to treat workers like human beings."

## The miners

All the pickets agreed that the miners had given the working class the inspiration to fight back and there have been regular collections for the miners by these workers in dispute themselves.

One worker said:

"It is important to us that the miners win because it would blunt the BL management as well as the NCB management, and show other sections of workers that you can win against this government."

## New starter to class fighter

Another assembly worker, who hasn't worked at BL for very long explained what is like when he first started:

"When I was taken on by BL I was told that it was a fair company and that if you did an honest day's work then you would be rewarded.

### Shocking

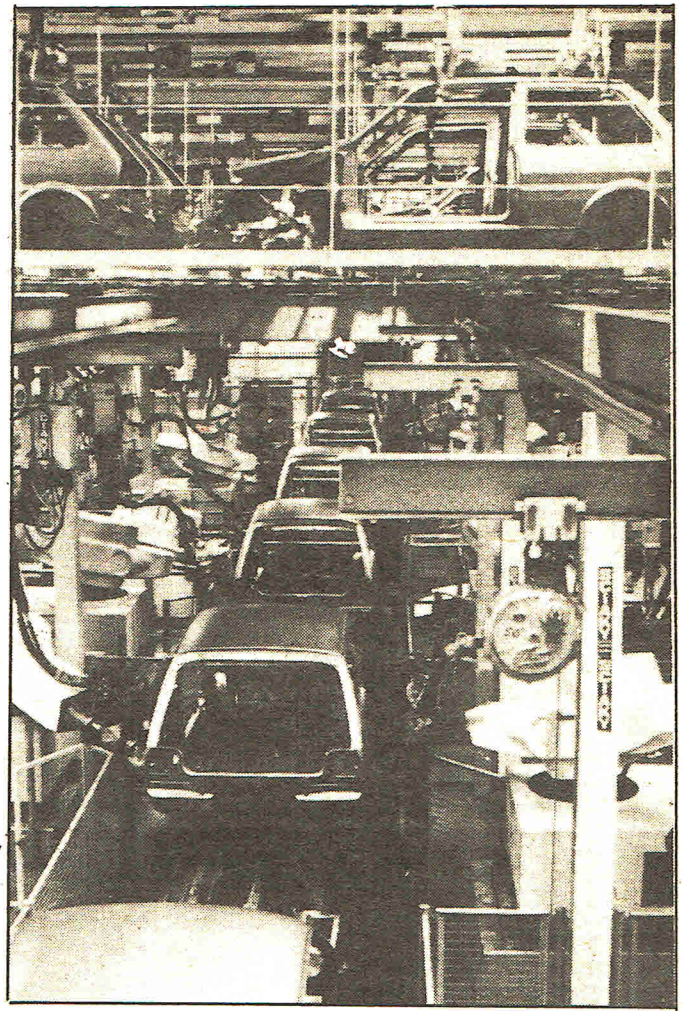
I'd heard different stories from workers talking in my local pub. But I really couldn't believe it when I started working on the track on my first day.

You're given 1.36 minutes to do your job, and if your

job is straightforward then you are OK and you can get by. But some blokes spend all day on their backs fitting some job like steering columns, or bending over fixing seats or other things like battery trays or other jobs like that. Which cricks the neck and back muscles.

As well as going on with the track speed you've got to keep up with the speed of over 36 cars an hour. If you fall behind then you are in trouble and you get a hail of abuse from the foreman.

Some days I leave that factory with my morale so low I feel like a nervous wreck. The tensions build up until you burst and then you and



We'd appreciate up-to-date pictures inside BL from any of our readers.

your mates have a downer which is called 'stop work', to try and sort something out.

### Raw youngsters

They sacked a load of people last year, claiming they were 'moles' and they took on a lot of new staff for the Montego line. They deliberately recruited youngsters straight from the first year of the dole queue, or people with massive mortgages and a lot of kids.

I was raw with no experience of struggle whatsoever. If you'd asked me about going on strike a year ago I wouldn't have wanted

to know but now I'm classed as a trouble maker and a 'mole'.

Loads of new starters, just like me, start with no experience of unions and they are quickly turned into class fighters because they've got no choice but to fight back against these primitive conditions.

### Bitter

Nearly everybody goes in there expecting to do a decent day's work but comes out bitter and angry at the way they've been treated by management."



Cowley workers voting to end the strike last year.

## Off the clock and locked in

A married man in his early 20's talked of the myth that workers have enjoyed working at Cowley:

"Management have always told us that you enjoy working at Cowley but one event that happened to me just knocks that idea into a hat.

It was a dispute in the tyre bay at the end of track 8 where a tyre had broken through the conveyor belt

and had come off and injured a worker.

The workers refused to do any work till Health and Safety was brought down to fix the tyre bracket. The dispute lasted 1½ hours, the management tried to get them back to work but they wouldn't go back until the side tracker had been fixed.

Management then decided to take all workers on the Montego line off the clock.

They didn't tell the workers for 15 minutes that they were going to be sent home. When the workers found out that they were off the clock they were off like a shot.

### Confusion

With all the confusion management had got the tyre bay back to work and the tracks were moving. But when the workers saw the tracks were moving they

didn't go back to their jobs, they continued to run towards the gate.

Management then had to close the doors, lock them and close the gates to keep the workers inside the factory. Many workers escaped by climbing over the barbed wire fences and by hiding in corners and waiting for the gates to reopen again. That's how much workers really enjoy working for BL."

# Liverpool stands firm on race unit

**THE TORY press gleefully reported the disruption of the Liverpool City Council meeting last week which confirmed the appointment of Sampson Bond as head of the city's Race Relations Unit.**

The events at the council meeting on 14 November followed a demonstration called by the 'Black Caucus'. The 'Black Caucus' is opposed to Sampson Bond's appointment by the council, in preference to three Black Caucus members (see *Militant* 721). Sampson was chosen because he had a clear understanding of how the problems of racism can be tackled in an overall social context, rather than by tokenism which is no substitute for a real struggle at grass roots level.

The Black Caucus called the demonstration under the slogan of 'Oppose the appointment of Sampson Bond'. The Black Caucus claims it has the support of black workers in the city, yet it attracted 200 people only half of whom were black. When you consider that the Black Caucus apparently has the support of 38 project type groups, each with three delegates to the Caucus, it can be seen that support for their campaign from local people was less than enthusiastic.

The Black Caucus campaign has picked up all the old adversaries of Liverpool's socialist council, including the Communist and Liberal parties. The Communist Party issued a leaflet on the march titled 'Jobs for the Boys' which said that:



**Sampson Bond: "Combating racism is a key priority."**

"A policy of jobs and housing for all is fine, but it is just that. It does nothing to fight racism or to undermine the systematic discrimination of black people." Creating jobs and building houses is not just 'fine' but vital as it is a real concrete solution to the problems of racism, by ending unemployment and slum housing, the conditions in which racism and desperation breed. The City Council in creating 1,000 new jobs, saving 1,000 more designated for cutbacks and with its extensive council house programme, has begun this task.

The CP leaflet also highlights the lack of black workers on the council workforce. But this situation is the legacy of a decade of rule by the Liberal/Tory alliance—a legacy Labour was left with and is trying

to rectify with its policies of new jobs.

The Liberals now have the gall to jump on the bandwagon in opposition to Sampson Bond and are finding new allies. At the demonstration and disruption of the council meeting, supporters of the Black Caucus actually shouted support for Liberal leader Sir Trevor Jones.

Worst though, was the chanting of 'racist' at Labour councillors, as well as Sampson Bond and Deputy Leader Derek Hatton being called racists. This childish hysteria is an insult to the Labour Party, particularly as many of the Labour activists and councillors present have played an important role in combating racist ideas. Sampson Bond has been active in fighting racism for the past eight years, in the battles against the National Front in the late '70s, fighting against the 'Sus' laws, and in defence work following the Brixton and Southall riots.

Workers will be horrified most of all though by the violence and intimidation at the council meeting. Besides the continual shouting and the banging of tables and chairs, a black LPYS member was elbowed in her face, while Derek Hatton was surrounded and intimidated. Black Caucus spokesman Steve French said afterwards: "The City Council won't be able to put full-time security onto Mr Bond and that is what he is going to need. I'm sorry about the violence today, we'll take the matter back to the community and see what they want to do next."

These threatening tactics are



**Supporters of the Black Caucus disgracefully called Labour councillors 'racist'. Above, Liverpool councillor Pauline Dunlop aids ambulance staff in trying to save the life of David Moore, killed by police in the Toxteth riots of 1981.**

totally alien to the labour movement and are already being rejected by Liverpool workers.

Indeed, it is a mark of Sampson Bond's sincerity that he is still prepared to take this job after the threats of violence against him. In a statement Sampson Bond outlined his aims: "Combating racism and discrimination is a key priority for the city. The council has declared its commitment to equal opportunities. These words must now be translated into deeds.

Liverpool City Council has come to the forefront of the fight of local authorities to defend jobs and protect services. Earlier this year the council made a determined stand to defend the interests of the community. The council must now be prepared to show the same willingness in leading the fight against racism."

**By a Liverpool Council worker**

# Stewards oppose boycott call

**THE PROPOSED boycott of Sampson Bond called by the branch executive of NALGO in Liverpool is finding increasing opposition from council workers.**

On Saturday at the City Council Joint Shop Stewards Committee meeting, a resolution from GMBATU branch 5, calling on the JSSC to withdraw support

for the NALGO boycott until NALGO members have had the opportunity to vote, was overwhelmingly carried.

Earlier on Wednesday afternoon, following the Liverpool City Council meeting, NALGO members attended a Liverpool NALGO *Militant* supporters meeting on 'racism and the Race Relations Unit'. They were angered that the meeting had to be abandoned after only 20 minutes following continuous interruptions and abuse from op-

ponents of Sampson Bond.

On Thursday morning, some 25 rank and file NALGO members in the City Solicitors—the department most affected by Sampson Bond's appointment—attended a meeting at which they were to discuss how to make the Bond boycott effective. However, after 1½ hours it became apparent that hardly anyone wanted to boycott Bond. When one member asked if a vote would be taken, this was ruled 'out of

order' by the chairman, as "not everyone is here, and its not on the agenda that we take a vote."

Many members left the meeting wondering why Sam Bond was being boycotted in the first place, particularly after they had read statements by Sam Bond.

On Monday Labour Party members distributed a statement from Sam Bond and another from the Labour Councillors to NALGO members, in order to give the Labour Party's

and Sam Bond's side of the story.

The response from the NALGO leadership was to accuse them of "MacGregor type tactics". NALGO members in Liverpool, who along with other council workers have seen a whole range of improvements in service conditions, will find this laughable. Even now, while the local NALGO leadership are so energetically mobilising and using all their resources to apply the boycott to Sampson Bond,

the council are currently investigating plans to implement a shorter working week and a minimum wage for council workers.

Workers not just in Liverpool but elsewhere, can therefore only wonder at what the motives are of certain union leaders in Liverpool in their support for the boycott of Sampson Bond and the constant referral to the council as the 'employer'.



**Liverpool council stewards march in support of the council in the fight against Tory cuts this year.**

# 'Lets hear views of rank and file'

**IAN LOWES, a GMBATU convenor and vice-chair of the Liverpool Council Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, explained in a statement why the GMBATU No 5 branch called on the committee to withdraw support for the boycott call and commented on the subsequent resignation of the JSSC secretary:**

"I am disappointed that Peter Cresswell has resigned as secretary of the JSSC. In the recent past GMBATU has not secured the support for what we considered to be vital issues at the JSSC. We stayed though, to fight our corner and convince people of our arguments. The JSSC is not dictating to NALGO

how they should conduct their affairs. NALGO came to us to seek support for their boycott of Sampson Bond.

"We have simply said that before each affiliated union takes that boycott decision to their rank and file, it is common sense that they have an indication from the rank and file of NALGO that they support the boycott. It would be ridiculous if at the end of the day members of the GMBATU boycotted Sam Bond and NALGO members didn't. So until we see such support the JSSC has withdrawn its backing for the boycott of Sam Bond.

"NALGO recently told us they couldn't deliver support

in terms of a one-day strike in defence of the 37 jailed GMBATU members at Cammell Lairds, and would not put the issue to their members. GMBATU shop stewards have already voted overwhelmingly to support Sam Bond's appointment. However, if and when we get an indication that the rank and file of NALGO are prepared to support a boycott of Sam Bond, then we will put that to our members.

## Intimidation

"We do believe that recent events have not helped the NALGO leadership's case. My members cannot understand why they seem to sup-

port the activities of the Black Caucus and their supporters, who have issued all manner of threats and intimidation against Labour councillors who are the elected representatives of the working class in Liverpool. It is these councillors who have stood by and supported not just GMBATU members in opposition to job losses, cuts etc but NALGO members and other trade unions as well.

"We have and will continue to urge NALGO to call off the boycott of Sam Bond and work together with us and the Labour council, in the battle to defeat racism and the financial attacks that the Tory government will soon make on Liverpool."

## Council jobs and services under attack



Housing in Glasgow is amongst the worst in the country, yet the Tories now threaten to cut the housing budget by £19.6 million. (Above) on the Castlemilk estate (below) tenants camp outside housing office, April 1983, when the council refused to rehouse them after a fire.

# Glasgow heads for confrontation

**CONFRONTATION** between Tory Secretary of State George Younger and Labour controlled authorities in Scotland is imminent.

One of the councils most directly in the firing line is Glasgow District. Recently the District Party held a fightback conference as a first step towards co-ordinating a unified campaign. The warm reception given to the first platform speaker, Derek Hatton, indicated the mood of the three hundred plus delegates who attended, representing community groups, tenant organisations, local authority workers, and Labour Party members.

Scottish law being dif-

ferent, Glasgow finds itself in a slightly different situation from authorities south of the border. Next year for example sees the introduction of a statutory Rate Fund Contribution. What this amounts to is a legal limit on the amount of cash which can be raised on the rates in order to spend on council housing. It will mean a shortfall of £19.6 million in Glasgow's housing budget.

cutting the repairs services by two-thirds and sacking 1,350 DLO workers!

Legally the only other option open to the council is raising rents. A minimum increase of 25% would be required, and, taking other factors into consideration, this figure is more likely to be in the region of 35%.

The labour movement in Glasgow must now make a choice: organise as never before to defend the city and its people or concede defeat to the Tory onslaught. A recent meeting of the District Labour Party unanimously passed a resolution calling for the defence of jobs and services; and for resistance to Tory attempts at making working people pay for cuts through massive rent rises. The resolution also faced up to the fact that to carry out these pledges would lead to the breaking of Tory law. The spirit of the motion

must now be turned into the reality of a mass campaign.

Unlike England, Scottish authorities are required to draw up legal budgets by a specific date at the end of the current financial year. This will be impossible if the city is to be defended.

### Millions stolen

The campaign must be taken to Younger in terms of a restoration of grant: millions of pounds have been stolen from the citizens of Glasgow since the Tories came to power. A resolute stance by the council and the city's working class can win the day. Fifty-nine Labour councillors, out of a total of sixty-six, were elected in May of this year to lead such a campaign—not to carry out Tory policy. Enough is enough.

**By Councillor  
Larry Flanagan**  
(GDLP Executive,  
personal capacity)

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### Housing threatened

This would be equivalent to axing all Housing Department staff and services or

## Dudley faces Tory legacy

**DUDLEY**, a district in the West Midlands Metropolitan County, has a population of 300,000. **BILL MULLINS** interviewed **LES MILLARD** (Dudley councillor and Militant supporter):

‘Last May Labour won control from the Tories, with one SDP councillor holding the balance of power. Dudley Tories had a reputation of being amongst the meanest and most enthusiastic Thatcherites in the country. But how mean is only just being revealed as we debate the budget.’

Under Tory rule Dudley employed the lowest number of council workers per head of population of all the metropolitan districts. With 8,000 on the housing waiting list and 2,700 outstanding repairs they came 36th out of the 36 metropolitan districts for council house spending. On education they also came bottom of the league with only £15 per child per year.

### Meanest district

They employed the least number of social workers and were 35th on social services spending. No day nursery provisions and the highest charges for leisure services of any district was another record. The only spending they liked were massive increases for the top council bosses and £880,000 to Price Waterhouse (a firm of accountants) for carrying out an “efficiency exercise” on low paid council workers.

If they had retained power, further massive cuts were in the pipeline. Labour came in on the promise to defend services, but we face government cuts on council spending. The government has set us a target of £90 million.

To meet the government's target would mean 400 job losses, a 3.5% cut in services and £1.75 on rents. And because the Tories are cutting the Rate Support Grant from 39% to 36% the rates would have to go up by 15%.

### Restore grant

At a meeting of Labour Group sub-committee chairmen a number of “options” were floated all of which meant cuts in services, jobs and rent and rate increases. It is clear that the only road we should go down is the “Liverpool option”. Since the Tories came to power, they will have cut the RSG from 62% to 36%. The Tories have robbed the people of Dudley of millions of pounds over the past five years.

Our demands should be:

- No cuts in services.
- No job losses.
- No rent increases.
- No rate increases to compensate for Tory cuts.

A massive Liverpool-type campaign to be launched in Dudley through the Labour Party and trade unions to force the government to give back to the workers of Dudley the millions they have robbed. 9



## Lewisham

**LEWISHAM** Labour Party Local Government Conference on 28 October was united in its opposition to rate-capping. At the same time, it opposed all cuts, rate and rent rises (above inflation) and failure to fill vacancies, and called for a campaign together with the trade unions and the local community. However the specific tactics Lewisham Council should adopt were not finally decided. While motions calling for the Council not to set a rate were defeated by a large majority, a motion calling for an illegal budget to demand the return of the rate support grant was also defeated by only just 1 vote (77-78).

The support for an illegal budget has nonetheless been growing. In order to fight the Tory anti-local government policies, Lewisham Council must improve its relations with the trade unions. At present the wages section of the housing department are on strike. Two miners spoke at the Conference and the collection raised £162.

**By Peter Redfarn**  
(Deptford CLP)

## Hackney votes for deficit budget

**BY A** three to one margin Hackney has voted to introduce a deficit budget next year, and fix a rate no higher than the level of inflation. At a recall Borough Conference on 10 November delegates from both local Labour Parties and members of the Labour Group on the council voted 95 to 36 in favour of a deficit budget and rejected the call not to fix a rate by 88 votes to 39.

They earlier unanimously called for a budget which would not make any cuts in jobs and services and would not raise the rents. They called for a campaign, built around the workforce, “of Liverpool proportions” cen-

tred around the demand that the government restore money taken from Hackney since 1979 in Rate Support Grant and penalties.

### Councillors resign

By a large majority delegates called upon any councillor who was not willing to support the above strategy to resign by Christmas, and it threw out a wrecking amendment by one councillor, Maureen Colquhoun.

The conference ended by unanimously calling upon the Labour Group to discuss

and implement the resolutions at its next meeting. In the past Hackney Labour Group has accepted that the Borough Conference lays down policy. Earlier this year they rubber-stamped a decision of the Borough Conference to vote out Antony Kendall and elect left winger Hilda Kean leader of the council.

It is vital that all the decisions of the Borough Conference are now carried out.

**By Jim Chrystie**  
(Hackney North CLP  
Executive,  
personal capacity)

## Basildon faces both ways

**ABOUT 50** Labour Party members attended Basildon CLP's local government conference on 28 October to discuss rate capping. First on the agenda was whether or not Basildon should fight the cuts. Despite Militant supporters explaining that every other option involved ‘giving in’ to the Tories and implementing cuts which would inevitably affect working people, the motion was lost as an immediate option, although left open to be implemented later if necessary. The main reason for this

was that the councillors feared surcharges and the rest of the party felt that as they had declared themselves against ‘breaking the law’ before they were elected, it was unfair to expect them to fight. Once this option was defeated several of the right wing departed with relief.

Although the ‘left’ voted to keep the ‘Liverpool option’ open, at the same time they supported making cuts. They claim these will be ‘peripheral, but any cuts will affect workers in Basildon, and will only encourage the

Tories to ask for more. That is not the road to win union support.

The district Labour Party at its meeting on 8 November confirmed the decisions of the rate-capping conference and launched a leafletting campaign to explain the issues. It is vital that Basildon's Labour Council does not break the unity of other Labour councils defying the Tory's proposals to cut services.

**By a Militant reporter**



Kronstadt sailors arriving in Petrograd to prevent Kornilov's counter-revolution taking place.

# Russ Revo 1917

By Rob Sewell

## As the world held it's breath

Workers throughout the whole world are watching the titanic clash between the British mineworkers and the Tory Government, because they understand instinctively that it has a profound international significance.

The period opening up in all the advanced capitalist countries will be one of enormous class struggles, a period of unprecedented turmoil and upheaval that will generate many more clashes like that of the 8-month long miners' strike.

Capitalism on a world scale has reached a total impasse and is unable to take society forward. The crisis of the productive forces—industry, science, and technique—hemmed in by the nation state and private ownership, has resulted in social and economic crisis.

There can be no stability or security for any worker on a capitalist basis. The miners' strike therefore has only one of a series of clashes that will take place across many industries and many countries as workers are forced to fight to defend living standards.

In Britain, it has not only been the workers, but also the more far-sighted representatives of the capitalist class who recognise that after the miners' strike, "things will never be the same again."

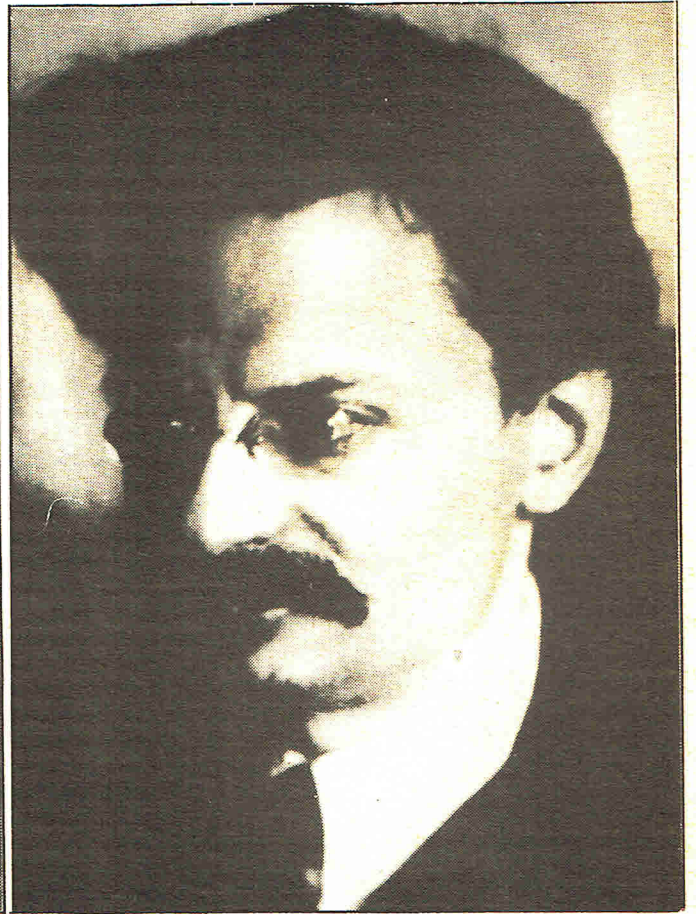
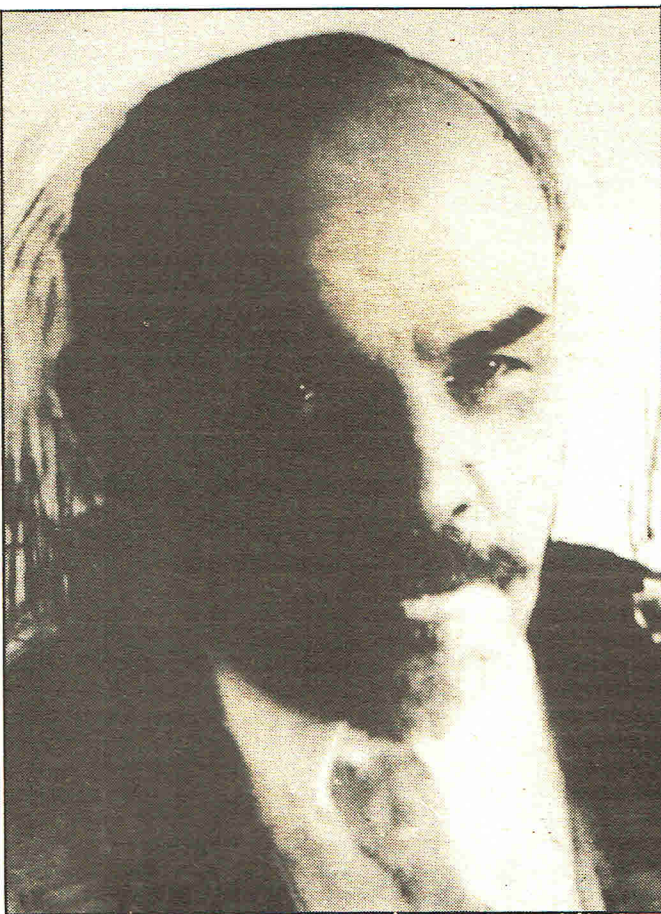
The importance of the struggle has not been lost on the representatives of big business elsewhere. "It is not a conventional strike," the *Washington Post* commented, "but a kind of rebellion, driven by a sense of real despair among the miners." The miners' strike therefore has caught the attention of workers and capitalists internationally, because it anticipates the convulsions and storms that lie ahead.

Sixty-seven years ago this month workers and capitalists around the world held their breath and watched an even greater clash in Russia, between the old and rotten Czarist regime of Nicholas II and a mighty movement of the workers supported by the tens of millions of poor peasants. That clash was to lead to the first ever workers' state.

The working class throughout Europe was covered head to foot in the blood, filth and suffering of the first World War. They desperately hoped for change and gradually prepared themselves in the trenches, the barracks and the factories to fight for it. They looked with eager anticipation to the events unfolding in Russia.

The bankers, capitalists and landlords of Europe, the fathers and grandfathers of today's ruling class, for the most part swollen with the profits of the war, looked on with dread and foreboding.

In one historic twelve month period Russian society was shaken to its foun-



Lenin and Trotsky. Co-leaders of the Russian Revolution.

dations and a revolutionary wave reverberated around the world. In backward Russia, classes, organisations, ministries and the state itself experienced an unprecedented crisis. The consciousness of the masses—one steeped in conservatism and tradition—took astounding leaps at each juncture of the revolution.

"A revolution teaches and teaches fast," Trotsky explained, "In that lies its strength. Every week brings something new to the masses. Every two months creates an epoch."

These words applied to the events of 1917. Elements of this process can even be picked out in developments in Britain today. Although it would be an exaggeration to imply that Britain was experiencing a 1917, the miners' strike, and what it represents, has created its own "revolution" in workers' consciousness, especially in the mining areas. The once august and sober *Times*, mouthpiece of the ruling class, now rants about the "revolutionary" character of this present strike.

In his marvellous *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky explains, "the most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in

historic events...The history of a revolution is for us first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny." Although not a general feature, who can deny that such a situation has arisen in the pit villages of Yorkshire and elsewhere?

As Trotsky pointed out later, a revolution is not a single act, but a process of rapid changes in consciousness amongst the broad masses. These changes reflect the sharp and sudden tempo of events taking place in society. Engels, many years previously, had also explained that there are some periods where twenty years pass almost like a day, so little seems to happen. But there are other times when days seem to encompass 20 years' experience. That is the type of period that has opened up in Britain. The miners have learned more in the last eight months than in the previous eight years or 28 years!

Just as the 1905 general strike in Russia was the "dress rehearsal" for the stormy events of 1917, so also the miners' strike—the longest national dispute in Britain—is a dress-rehearsal for the massive class battles in the future, on a scale not seen for generations.

Even a serious section of the ruling class is drawing these conclusions. The past eight months has seen a profound change in British society. The old 'consensus' has broken down, with class relations being deeply polarised, especially in the mining areas.

*The Observer* editorial on 21 October explained that "the country is sliding swiftly from crisis to chaos." It calls for the government to remain firm: "The social fabric will survive. The government will survive." But even if this was the case, it goes on to consider the social implications: "But so will (survive) soured relations, class bitterness and a sense of lost opportunity..."

The miners, the labour movement and the rest of British society itself will never be the same again. A few months ago *The Guardian* was forced to admit that "in too many respects now, it is like some macabre industrial version of the Gulf war...ripping holes in the fabric of society..." And as Routledge acknowledged in *The Times* in June: "Ironically, the dispute that some politicians hoped would break the power of the NUM has actually created new cadres for the future."



# Russian Revolution



Armed workers during the October revolution.

For socialists, this anniversary of 'October' gives us the opportunity to once again study the lessons of this momentous event. It gives us the ideal occasion to reflect on the greatest event in human history.

The stormy events of the first February revolution turned to dust the 1,000 year-old Czarist monarchy. On 23 February 1917—International Women's Day—90,000 women textile workers in Petrograd, the capital, went on strike in protest at bread shortages.

Within hours the strike spread throughout the capital. Spontaneous demonstrations took place demanding the overthrow of the Czar and an end to the war. The Government sent troops to disperse the crowds. As fighting broke-out with the police, workers successfully fraternised with the soldiers.

As with all revolutions, a section of the ruling class were anxious to grant concessions and sent Czar Nicholas telegrams begging him to grant reforms to save the Monarchy. It was too late for that and he was forced to abdicate. As was the case in 1936 in Spain, and in Iran in 1979, unarmed workers stormed the barracks.

In every district workers formed *soviets* or workers' committees, democratically elected from the workplaces, which assumed the real power in society. But as in Germany in 1918 or Spain 1936, the leaders of the socialist parties gave power back to the capitalists.

In Russia the Social-Revolutionaries (SR's) and Mensheviks, who gained a majority in the workers' committees, gave power to the liberal Cadet Party who constituted themselves as a Provisional Government. A situation of "Dual Power" existed—the soviets and the Provisional Government.

The leaders of the Bolshevik Party were in exile and the party had in effect been caught by surprise by the Revolution. With the return of Kamenev and Stalin from exile, the party moved to the right, giving "critical" support to the new capitalist provisional government. This was nothing more than a policy of Popular Frontism—the support of a capitalist government, "in so far as it fights reaction or counter-revolution". But the reality was that the only important agent of counter-revolution was the Provisional Government itself! Such a capitalist Government would never solve the problems of the working classes: bread, land or peace. Only a socialist government, based on the soviets, prepared to end capitalism, could do that.

Lenin, from exile, attacked Stalin and Kamenev's position mercilessly: "He who says that the workers must support the new government in the interests of the struggle against Czarist reaction... is a traitor to the cause of the proletariat, to the cause of peace and freedom." And went on "I shall even prefer to split with anyone at all in our party rather than yield to social patriotism..."

These were the opening shots of Lenin to change the course of the Bolshevik Party towards a new socialist revolution. Stalin, at the same time, came out for unity of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, despite the latter acting as a "left" cover for the capitalists. Two months later the Menshevik leaders were to disarm and arrest the Bolsheviks!

By the end of April however Lenin had gained a majority of the rank and file for the policy of no support for the provisional government and "all power to the soviets". From February to April the party grew from 8,000 to 79,000. Now the task was to win over the majority of the workers and expose the Social Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders by patiently explaining the programme of the party and how it could be achieved.

The political rearming of the party was only possible with Lenin's intervention, with his necessary authority and firmness. As Trotsky later explained: "As a Marxist, I know that history is made according to the material conditions. But under certain circumstances, men can end up playing a decisive role. Without a

## Down with the ten capitalist ministers! All power to the soviets!

mechanic the machine will not run, and without the plug's spark, the motor will not start—even if every other part is working fine. Lenin was the Russian Revolution's spark."

In April the liberal Foreign Minister Miliukov, announced the government's intention of pursuing the war to a "victorious conclusion". In response, thousands of Petrograd workers, sailors and soldiers demonstrated with banners: "Down with Miliukov!" and "Down with the provisional Government". The masses were growing alarmed at the government's policies.

In the countryside, thousands of peasants were taking unilateral action—unceremoniously occupying and redistributing the land of the big landowners—as the government pleaded for "patience".

The coalition government faced a crisis. A number of liberals were dropped and replaced by Mensheviks and SR leaders, with Kerensky appointed as Minister of war. This changed nothing, but served to discredit the moderate "socialist" leaders who continued to implement the old policies.

Enormous resentment built up in the masses and in order to undermine anti-government demonstrations organised by the Bolsheviks, the executive of the Petrograd Soviet organised its own march in support of its own policies. The whole thing back-fired on them;

400,000 participated, but with banners proclaiming—"Down with the Ten Capitalist Ministers!" "Down with the Offensive" and "All Power to the Soviets!"

The Bolsheviks were gaining influence amongst the Petrograd masses sickened by the inaction of the 'moderate' socialists and the government they supported. In their view the Provisional Government was betraying the ideas of the revolution itself. The "moderates" refused to break with the liberals and create a soviet government. The closer you went to the workers in the factory committees and the workers' districts, the more rapidly the Bolsheviks were gaining influence.

The Bolsheviks had clearly won over a majority in Petrograd, whose masses were becoming very impatient with events. The task of the party now was to restrain the Petrograd workers until a majority could be achieved throughout the country. By early July, pressure became irresistible, despite the Bolsheviks' advice, for a further demonstration.

As in Spain in May 1937 and Portugal in November 1975, the masses felt the power they had won slipping from their hands. Action must be taken to bring the Soviet leaders to their senses. Miliukov relates how "a husky worker shaking his fist in the face of Minister Chernov, shouted furiously 'Take the power you son of a bitch, when they give it to you'."

On July 4th, the Bolsheviks headed a mass demonstration to prevent it moving towards a premature struggle for power. However, the demonstration was fired upon by reactionary officers and police agents attempting to create chaos and the impression that the march was part of an armed uprising. Troops were brought back from the front to suppress the "putsch" as it was labelled by the government.

The government used the situation to outlaw the Bolsheviks and deal a crushing blow to their leaders. Lenin was denounced as a "German agent". Their offices and press were broken up. Arrests followed of leading Bolsheviks. Lenin and Zinoviev went into hiding. Trotsky, Kamenev and other leaders were arrested and placed in solitary confinement. Nevertheless despite the blow to the revolution the main forces were intact.

The temporary set-back gave the opportunity for counter-revolution to raise its head. The capitalists and landlords saw the existence of the Soviets even with their moderate leadership as incompatible with the continuation of their own rule. Kerensky, who had become head of the Provisional government wanted to organise a military coup to "clean-up" the Bolsheviks and the Soviets.

To that end he conspired with General Kornilov—described by another General as "a man with a lion's heart and the brain of a sheep." But the problem was Kornilov wanted to clean up the Pro-

visional government as well! On 28 August he sent troops against Petrograd.

Despite the ruthless measures taken against the Bolsheviks, as soon as the open counter-revolution took action to install a military dictatorship, they immediately offered a united-front to Kerensky against Kornilov.

The Bolsheviks organised committees of defence. Tens of thousands were mobilised to stop Kornilov. When sailors from the battleship Aurora came to seek advice from Trotsky who was still in prison he replied: "Use Kerensky as a gunrest to shoot Kornilov. Afterwards we will settle with Kerensky."

Kornilov's army disintegrated under the propaganda of the revolutionary workers. The counter-revolution melted into thin-air. As Marx himself explained; "the revolution sometimes needs the whip of counter-revolution" to propel it forward. The workers turned to the Bolshevik Party, which out of the experience of the Kornilov adventure, grew to nearly 240,000.

The Provisional Government, desperately trying to hold on to power, attempted to transfer the revolutionary troops to their death at the front. This was openly resisted by the Petrograd Soviet, which on 9 October decided to establish a body to defend the revolution, the Military Revolutionary Committee. It was this body under the chairmanship of Trotsky that organised the transfer of power to the soviets.

## Not an isolated act, but the beginning of the international socialist revolution.

The Bolsheviks waged a relentless propaganda war amongst the masses in favour of Soviet Power. Wider layers were drawn behind the Bolsheviks as they gave a decisive lead in the situation. Complementary to this the MRC took more and more military establishments under its authority and control. Only the immediate transfer of state power to the soviets would guarantee the defence of the revolution and enable the demands of the masses to be satisfied.

As time drew closer to the conquest of power some of the Bolshevik leadership hesitated. Zinoviev and Kamenev, supported by Stalin behind the scenes, openly opposed the seizure of power and publicised the plans in opposition newspapers. Lenin, still underground, denounced them as "strikebreakers". The question of time was not a secondary question. If they did not act immediately, then the mood of expectation of

the masses would subside into apathy.

The Second All-Russian Congress of the Soviets was scheduled for 25 October (7 November in the modern calendar). In order not to forestall the aims of the Congress, at 2 am on 25 October plans were enacted to remove the Provisional Government. Within 24 hours the capital, Petrograd, had been taken bloodlessly. The Soviet congress opened with a clear Bolshevik majority and ratified the transfer of power to itself.

In the words of Trotsky, who addressed the Congress to answer the threats of the Mensheviks: "What has taken place is an insurrection, not a conspiracy. An insurrection of the popular masses needs no justification. We have tempered and hardened the revolutionary energy of the Petrograd workers and soldiers... To those who have gone out, and all who made like proposals, we must say, 'you are pitiful, isolated individuals; you are bankrupts; your role is played out. Go where you belong from now on—into the rubbish bin of history!'"

For the Bolsheviks the October Revolution was seen not as an isolated act, but the beginning of the international socialist revolution. The later Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country" was a complete invention born out of the conservative interests of the growing bureaucratic caste of the mid 1920's. The material basis for socialism in no way existed in backward Russia, but had developed on a world scale. The events of 1917, given the background of a bloody world war, stood out as an enormous attraction to the masses internationally.

The fundamental social gains of the October revolution remain intact to this day. Despite the devastation of two world wars, despite the armed intervention against the young workers' state by every one of the main capitalist powers, above all despite the monstrously wasteful Stalinist bureaucracy which has usurped political control from the workers, the superiority of a state-owned economy stand out.

The advantages of planning have not been written in text-books or theoretical treatises, but in the language of steel, cement, oil and productive capacity. In just over sixty years Russia has grown from being the most backward country in Europe to become the second world power.

All those gains stem from the most important single event in social history, when the mass of the Russian population consciously took their destiny into their own hands, in October 1917. Facing the impasse of Stalinism, it will be to the genuine traditions of October that Russian workers will return. But all workers internationally should pay tribute to and should study the events of 1917, the better to prepare and arm themselves politically for the momentous storms and stress they will inevitably face in their own lifetime.

## India, USA, South Africa

# The two Indias

**A CORRESPONDENT in India has sent us this letter dated 1 November, the day after Indira Gandhi's assassination.**

DELHI is suddenly silent today. The teeming markets, the scooter rickshaws and diesel lorries have disappeared. The sky is black with the smoke of burning shops, cars and huts.

Clusters of human vultures are standing here and there, silently feasting their eyes on the blazing wreckage, awe-struck, enthralled and ashamed all at once, murmuring and smirking, like spectators at a public hanging. (Soon will come the real vultures.)

### State machine crumblines

A couple of policemen emerge. They had politely averted their attention while the crime was committed, winking as they jokingly brandish their 'lackis' and take one or two steps towards them; the crowd laugh and dash backwards in mock fright.

Every four yards is another mob, ransacking and looting a Sikh shop, burning a taxi or running in pursuit of a new quarry. At least 1000 Sikhs have been beaten to death or burned alive. Every train arriving in Delhi carried corpses and whole colonies have been set on fire.

Today is the paupers' carnival. Once again (as in Bombay six months ago) the lumpen rabble are masters of

the streets, in a hideous parody of revolution.

The capitalists, smugglers and black market bandits swill whiskey in their five-star hotels while India burns. Their 37 year orgy of profiteering has left the masses starving, bleeding and wasting away.

The bosses' state machine has crumbled into dust. Indira Gandhi is the world's first leader to be shot down by her own bodyguards. There is a vacuum at the centre (his name is Rajiv Gandhi).

All stabilising social ballast, all 'authority' has gone, and the ruling class can only wait and hope that the masses' fury continues to be dissipated in inter-communal bloodshed. It means the death of a nation. Capitalist India is fatally wounded and will bleed slowly to death.

Another communal nightmare has been added. Until Indira Gandhi herself took major steps to aggravate the problem, there had been hardly a trace of Hindu/Sikh discord. She stoked the fires to be consumed herself in their flames, along with her nation.

The assassin's bullets were a catalyst, like their counterpart in Sarajevo in 1914, accelerating and pinpointing the divisions in society. All the world has seen the breaking into fragments of the world's biggest capitalist country, the collapse of dynastic rule, as all they can clutch at is the flagging legend of Congress and the Nehru family tradition. "The Queen is dead, long

live the King".

But now both the Congress (I) the personalised party of the dead leader—and India itself will be split apart.

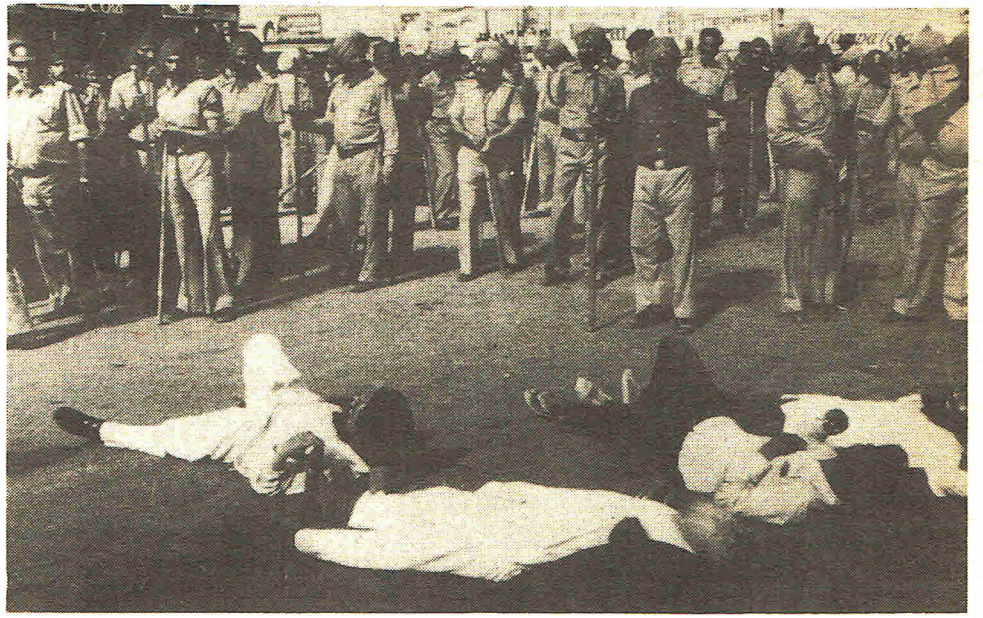
A Khalistan will probably take shape in protracted, bloody convulsions, thanks to the brutality of the Indian ruling clique as well as the cold blooded provocations of Khalistan's reactionary communalist zealots, who are prepared to subject the Sikhs to no matter how much carnage.

### Workers' voice

The lynch mobs outside Punjab and the army iron heel inside are remorselessly putting blood between Sikh and Hindu brothers and sisters in Punjab and throughout India. Khalistan will be a grisly monument to the crime of communal genocide.

The descent of society into the abyss of communal barbarism; the lynch-lust of the lumpen proletariat will last until its fury is exhausted. But the old society will never return. On a capitalist basis, India will go through a hell of pogroms and wars until all that remains are a thousand bleeding fragments.

But there is another India, that of the working class, which has fought long and hard in a struggle uniting workers of all castes, religions, nationalities and languages in the sub-continent. Year after year, Indian workers willingly take their lives in their hands to strike. They consistently lose

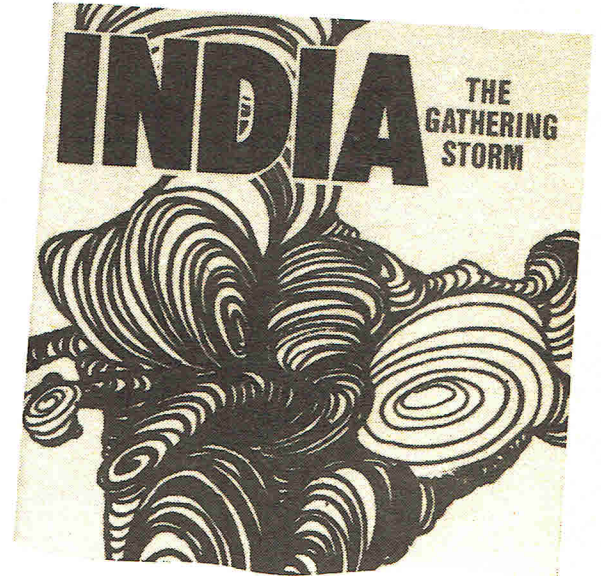


Sikhs killed in Amritsar earlier this year.

for the capitalists at least twice as many worker days in strikes as in any other country in the world.

This year alone has seen strikes of 200,000 jute workers, 300,000 port and dock workers, 700,000 coal miners, four million state employees! In Bihar, India's poorest state, 600,000 state employees struck for 24 days in September. 26,000 were jailed, but the strikers triumphed when the policemen's union publicly "refused any longer to be used to suppress workers' democratic rights." Even the magistrates came out in support of the workers!

The trade unions so far have been shamefully silent in face of the lumpen riots. But the workers' voice will be heard. They cannot see their unity and strength shattered by the lumpen gangs. The capitalist state cannot hold India together. The workers of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, in setting about the task of overthrowing their dictators, taking their destiny into their



India—the Gathering Storm, a Militant pamphlet. Price 60p (+ 15p postage & packing) from Militant, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

own hands, will unite the entire sub-continent in a harmonious socialist federation.

Besides ending the living hell of unemployment, land hunger, homelessness and starvation, this will also end communal discord by guaranteeing self determina-

tion for all nations and the greatest possible degree of autonomy for every community.

The horrors of today's events will help convince the worker-militants of the need to fight for this goal.

# American workers back the miners

AFTER THE re-election of Reagan, the Tory press asked the same questions they did after Thatcher's win in the 1983 election in Britain.

Has there been a major shift to the right by American workers? Do they openly support a capitalist system that is supposedly providing them with videos etc? The obituaries for the British working class came to a grinding halt with the miners' strike.

And as Militant has pointed out, it was the lack of any credible alternative to the policies of Reagan from the capitalist Democratic Party which handed Reagan his landslide success.

The two articles below show the response of US workers to the brave struggle of British miners. Their support shows that the working class, hit hard by capitalist crisis, would respond to clear socialist policies—a real alternative to Reagan.

**MASS LAY offs and mine closures. Deliberate stockpiling of coal. Does that sound a familiar tune?**

I'm not talking about the great struggle our families have had in Britain for the last eight months, I'm talking about the USA less than one week after the private coal companies agreed contracts with the UMW (the American equivalent of the NUM).

I recently spent some time in the United States appealing for solidarity with our strike. Throughout my visit, one message came over loud and clear. Every tactic used against strikers ie. limits to six pickets, mass arrests, police violence and the endless court injunctions have been perfected in the USA and exported over here.

The main architect of these tactics in America was none other than Mr MacGregor, the Godfather of capitalism and workers' exploitation.

My travels took me through Pennsylvania, West



Ian McGregor, enemy of US miners.

Virginia and Kentucky which used to be the heartlands of the steel and mining industries. They have now been decimated as the multinationals redirect their profits into investment in places like Hong Kong and other Far East sweat shops and into the slave labour of South Africa.

### Hospitality

After nearly two weeks in this area I moved over to the West Coast area of Los Angeles and San Francisco where I teamed up with comrades John Reimann, Shersha Smith and Marge Klouser whose hospitality

## Workers' leaders arrested in South Africa

**THE TWO-DAY general strike on 5 and 6 November in Transvaal (South Africa's industrial heartland) by major trade union and youth organisations was the most solid such action ever seen in the country.**

**With up to 90% support from black workers in the major industrial centres, it was called to protest at police and army action in the black townships, demand the release of political detainees, and demonstrate against**

**high rents and taxes.**

This, and the use of troops by the apartheid regime to occupy townships, represents a new stage in the South African revolution. In the wake of the general strike, the government has raided trade union offices and arrested a number of trade union and youth leaders, including the president of FOSATU, the general secretary of CUSA, and a leader of MAWU. This will not intimidate the movement, and the struggle in the

townships and factories continues.

Messages of support and encouragement can be sent to:

Federation of South African Trade Unions, PO Box 18109, Dalbridge 4014, South Africa.

Council of Unions of South Africa, PO Box 10928, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa.

Congress of South African Students (COSAS), c/o FOSATU or CUSA.

and work rate was unbelievable. In just four days we raised in excess of \$4,000 and the money is still coming in.

Sitting waiting for the BA jet back home, I was totally exhausted but I thought how lucky I was to see the generosity of the American workers and particularly the help of John, Shersha and Marge who are fighting for Militant's ideas in California.

**By Jim Robinson**  
(Cotgrave pit, South Notts Strike Committee)

**Militant International Review**  
Issue no 27 now out!  
Price 75p (+ 15p p&P)  
from Militant,  
3/13 Hepscoot Road,  
London E9 5HB.

## San Francisco

**"I MOVE we donate \$500 to the striking British coal miners."**

**"Brother Chairman, I amend the motion to make it \$1,000."**

Thus was a tremendously successful five days concluded by a South Notts coal miner, Jim Robinson, in the San Francisco area. With little over a week to prepare, Jim Robinson found door after door opened wide to him.

At Longshoreman's Local 10 (whose strike set off the famous 1934 San Francisco General Strike), over 200 members gave him a standing ovation and voted \$99.99 per month (the legal limit) for the duration of the strike. From the rank and file to the very highest of-

ficers in the state, the support was overwhelming, including students at UC Berkeley!

### Blow to Reagan

Workers understand the miners' fight is their fight, that reducing the "Iron Lady" to a "heap of scrap metal" will also be a serious blow to Reagan, that a fight for jobs and a hope for the future in Britain is part of the same fight in the US.

American workers and youth "put their money where their mouth is" and well over \$4,000 was raised in that short time!

**By John Reimann**  
(Oakland, California)

## Brazil

# Return to democracy?

**NEXT MARCH a new civilian president will take office in Brazil, ending 21 years of military dictatorship. The president will be elected by electoral college on 15 January.**

There are only two candidates. Paulo Maluf, a millionaire has promised to run the country like a business. He is the candidate of the so-called Democratic Socialist Party (PDS), the official political vehicle of the outgoing military regime.

The other candidate, 74 year old Tancredo Neves, is backed by the Democratic Alliance (The PMDB) a broad alliance of capitalist and workers parties, supported by amongst others the Brazilian Communist Party (BCP).

## Military regime

"Ideology" comments the *Financial Times* (5.11.84) "plays little part in the contest. To date neither man has produced a specific platform." Defim Neto, the current Planning Minister put it more cynically. "They are not much different from each other or from me... there is nothing more similar to government here than the opposition when it gets in government."

The military regime, rack-

ed by economic and political crisis, had planned for an "abertura"; a gradual return to "democracy". However the class struggle which has erupted in Brazil made such an idea a utopia. In November 1983 15,000 people attended a rally in Sao Paulo demanding direct presidential elections.

In April 1984 1 million people took to the streets of Rio de Janeiro and on 16 April around 1½ million demonstrated in Sao Paulo calling for "Diretas Ja!" (direct elections now!). To leave the election of the President to the people under these conditions would threaten capitalism's existence. The election was therefore transformed to the electoral college—which itself had voted for direct elections (but just 22 short of the necessary two thirds majority).

The military government's theory is that they would have an inbuilt majority of at least 30. The college's built-in distortion is obvious. Sao Paulo's 13 million people have the same number of votes as Acre with 115,000 people!

However, the choice of the government candidate, Maluf, split the PDS into 3 factions—with defections to the PMDB, Tancredo now seems to have a majority of about 70!

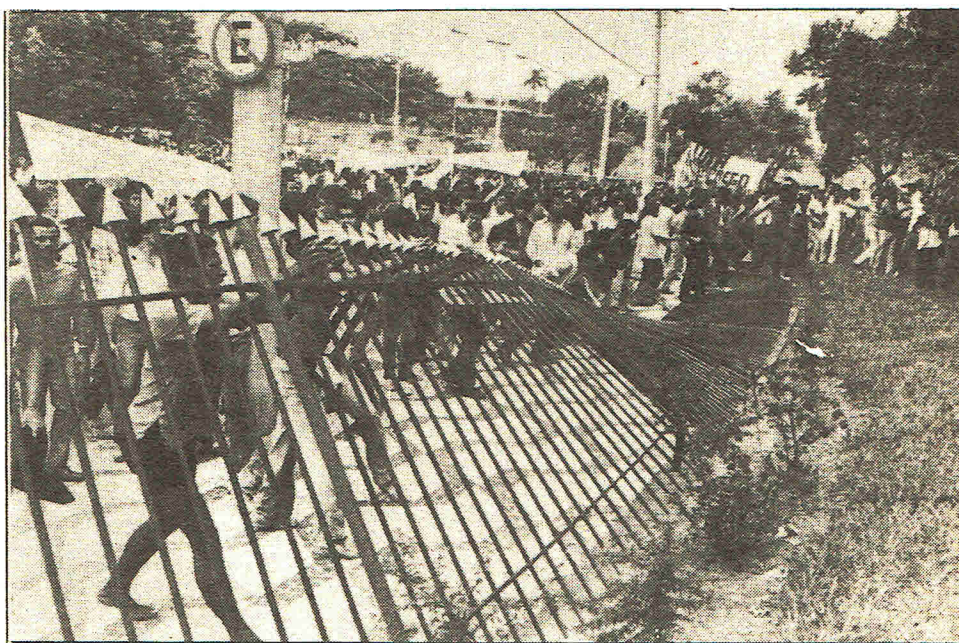
Maluf's record as governor of Sao Paulo where he was involved heavily in repressing the working class,

coupled with his promise to take no action against the military for "human rights" violations makes him seem a very cynical choice. So sections of the capitalist class, have been trying to distance themselves from Maluf's candidacy, led by the vice president of Brazil, Aureliano Chaves who is calling for a vote for Tancredo Neves.

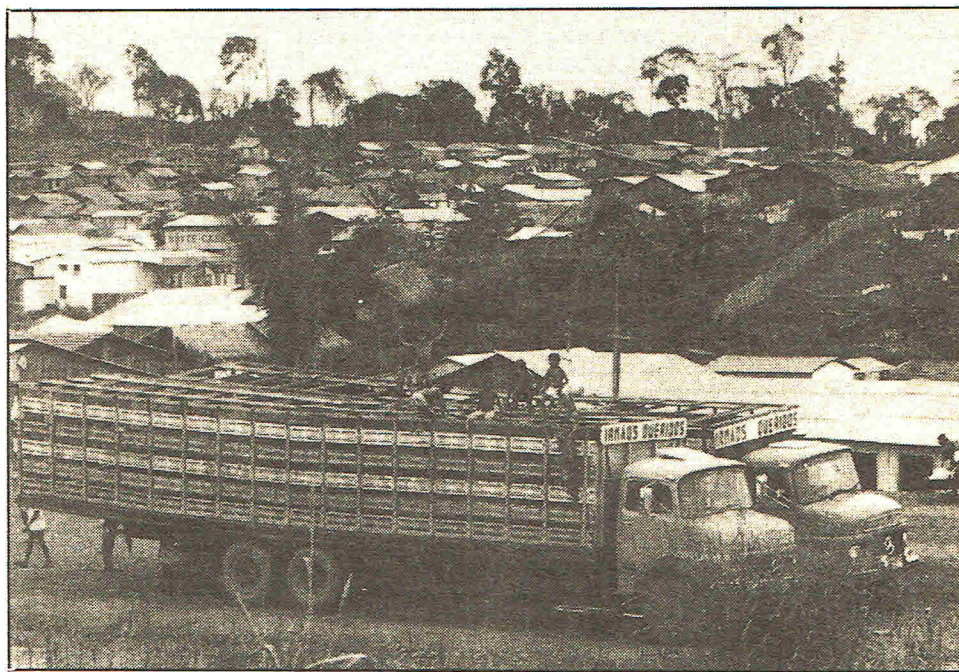
## Capitalist fears

Sections of the military are now alarmed at the growing support for Tancredo and are talking of clamping down against this movement. Indeed President Figueiredo has threatened to sack government ministers who openly support Tancredo. "The betting is still against a coup" said the *Wall Street Journal* "Unlike 1964, when army intervention brought a general sigh of relief from a population fed up with the confusion and instability wrought by a weak and disjointed political structure, most Brazilians believe a coup now would provoke popular fury and civilian disorder... if the army decides to continue in control, literally anything can happen. That is the possibility that should most worry bankers."

Many capitalists with a wary eye to the future appreciate that military rule has to be ditched (at least for a time) to allow capitalism to



Unrest in the urban slums of Sao Paulo



Lorries take away the immense wealth of the Amazon past the rural slums.

continue. These characters have abandoned the PDS and gone over to the PMDB. They include many bankers, industrialists and big landowners.

Tancredo himself has promised that no communists would ever form any part of his government. However the Communist Party is sup-

porting the PMDB and thereby provides rich socialist credentials that Tancredo can play upon now the military openly admit they cannot rule through repression.

## Popular front policies

The Brazilian Communist Party, (BCP), founded in 1922, has a brave history with battles against many military regimes. In fact the prestige lent to the PMDB by the BCP's 86 year old leader, Luis Carlos Prestes, allows Tancredo to bask in the glory of the many battles Prestes fought against the regime.

The only workers' party not supporting Tancredo is the PT (the Workers Party) formed in 1980 as a result of the strikes in April and May of that year. The Workers Party is strongly backed by the trade unions of Sao Paulo.

The capitalist class understand that the military are leaving the stage because of fear of the masses, particularly the working class. Not only have there been the million strong rallies in favour of direct Presidential elections but also an explosion of the class struggle. For instance, the strike by busmen in Sao Paulo or the quarter million sugar cane cutters in Pernambuco demanding an 80% pay increase (which would take their wages from £37 per week to £70 per week).

The blessing of the Brazilian Communist Party ties the workers to Tancredo's capitalist chariot—yet another version of the popular front which has betrayed workers throughout the world in the past.

Tancredo, if elected, will inevitably carry out the IMF's austerity demands, showing the pernicious role of the Brazilian Communist Party in its true light. But particularly as the American economy turns down, or perhaps Washington brings in import controls against such countries as Brazil, the economic recovery will be sent into spectacular reverse sending violent shock waves throughout the country.

"A revolution" says Trotsky "is first of all the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny". Events are preparing, behind the scenes a tumultuous arousing of a mass movement that will provide the working class with its opportunity to build a socialist society, whoever wins the election.

## Mineral wealth

"Brazil is sitting on a goldmine, a vast reserve of mineral wealth. The immense challenge the country confronts is the task of unlocking that rich potential" (FT 5.11.84). But this is not a technological problem as the capitalist press profess it to be. It is a political problem.

The mobilisation of the resources of one of the richest countries of the world lies beyond the reach of capitalism. The working class alone can reach that wealth, and by owning and democratically controlling those resources it will be able to transform Brazil from a dungeon of humanity, to a country with a healthy future for all.

By Mike Waddington

# Slumps and a new boom

**DOMINATING** all these developments in Brazil and providing the "reward" for the successful candidate is the massive economic crisis of Brazil, not least its mega-debt of \$100 billion. In December the country's creditors are discussing re-scheduling a further \$63 billion. What worries the bankers is the pressure that will inevitably be exerted on any civilian president.

"It will be tempting for the winning candidate to indulge in populist measures like lifting real wages and devoting more funds to social security and housing." mourns the *Financial Times*. "But this could prejudice recovery and stimulate inflation further". Economic recovery means a recovery in profits but not in wages.

The Inter-American Development Bank has recently pointed out that Latin America has suffered three years of falling living standards. The 3% decline last year was the "most dramatic set-back since the great depression and brought living standards down to 1977 level".

In Brazil this means that only 17 million out a labour force of 50 million are registered wage earners. The official rate of unemployment excludes people who have been unemployed for over six months and only covers six states. 1% of Brazilians own more wealth than half of the population. According to

a recent church report 80 million of the country's 130 million population have a daily diet below the United Nation's malnutrition threshold.

The official minimum wage is set at \$65 per month but with inflation of 200% any gain is rapidly wiped out. "Proportionately, more Brazilians today earn less than the official minimum wage... than 20 years ago and the buying power of that wage has declined." (FT 5.11.84). Between 1980 and 1983, GNP per capita fell by 11% and industrial production fell by nearly a third.

## Austerity with a smile?

The Inter-American Development Bank say "In the past three years, not only has there been an increase in idle installed plant capacity—it's utilization fell to the level of almost 50% in several countries—and the consequent decrease in productivity, but also the levels of industrial investment in new plant capacity have been accompanied by the disappearance or deterioration of significant portions of the already installed capacity" The *Wall Street Journal* reports that in Sao Paulo alone 30% of industrial capacity lies idle.

Therefore as Brazil emerges from three years of recession the work-

ing class and the peasants are demanding that some of the improvements come their way. The problem is the debt, \$100 billion dollars. "In 1981, 80% of new borrowings were for interest payments alone and now the percentage is closer to 90%." In September 1983, Brazil re-scheduled \$5 billion effectively by borrowing another \$6½ billion! Every 1% rise in US interest rates adds \$700 million to Brazil's debt.

However thanks to the US recovery it is predicted that Brazil's trade surplus in 1984 will be \$12 billion, double 1983's record. Exports of manufactured goods and primary products are up more than 20%. "Much of the credit for the striking improvement in Brazil's trade balance must go to the US recovery. Long Brazil's leading customer, the US this year is expected to record a \$4 billion deficit in its trade with the Latin American countries."

This long awaited upturn will bring the workers onto the streets demanding an improvement in their living standards. That is the problem for the ruling class internationally. How can they appear to give concessions but at the same time implement an austerity policy to ensure capitalism's survival; austerity with a smile!

# LETTERS

Militant welcomes letters from readers. Send us your views, comments or criticism. Write to Militant at 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

## Mail slur answered

Dear Comrades,  
In reply to the *Daily Mail* slur, I feel I must write in support of *Militant*.  
During this strike, miners and their families in Easington Colliery have benefited greatly from help given by Stockton LPYS and *Militant* supporters.  
They have raised over £5,000 in cash and collected food and clothing on market stalls with NUM members.  
Everything that is raised or collected is handed directly over to the miners.  
I feel sure that the strike would have been won long

ago if the same unselfish moral and financial support had been given by the rest of the labour and trade union movement  
Keep up the fight!  
Victory to the miners!  
Forward to a Marxist daily paper!  
Yours fraternally,  
Brian Gregory  
Easington NUM  
Co Durham  
PS. I hope Mr Kinnock's diary is as full as it is now when we hold our victory march at the Durham Miners' Gala next year!

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)



Privatised cleaning means cuts in wages and worse conditions for workers—above Barking hospital cleaners' picket, October 1984.

## Profit or bust

Dear Comrades,  
I feel I should bring to your attention the gross disregard and complete unfeeling the Tories have for ordinary people, in the implementation of their profit or bust policies.  
The local DHSS office, in which I work, used to employ direct labour for cleaning. The cleaners employed were, in effect, Civil Servants.

They had holiday and sick pay rights, an annual leave entitlement, and a certain amount of job security.  
All this changed about 2½ years ago, when the cleaning of the office was given to private contractors. No longer was there any job security; no more sick pay; no more holiday pay. They operated under the maxim of "No work, no pay".  
All this sounds pretty bad. But just when you thought things couldn't get worse—

they did.  
The cleaning contract has once again come up for renewal, and lo and behold, another private cleaning firm has undercut the price of the present one. The workers, sacked from the first firm, are employed by the second under worse conditions.  
Yours fraternally,  
P Brook,  
Chairman, Leeds West YS  
and CPSA

## Kinnock's wretched record

Dear Comrades,  
Considering the record of Neil Kinnock during the course of the miners' strike I wonder whether his constituency party will de-select him?

He has proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is unworthy to be the leader of the LP. Instead of offering forceful and dynamic political leadership to the working class, he has time and again given aid and comfort (through his statements and actions) to the class enemy.

Confronted with this wretched record how will his constituency party react? They will do the party no service by plastering over cracks in the name of unity—and to avoid embarrassing the "leader". If the Labour Party is to advance, the right wing careerists are going to have to be driven out—the sooner the better!

In class solidarity,  
Geoffrey Sharpe  
Reading East CLP

## Married to the army?

Dear *Militant*,  
Since joining my husband and moving to a house provided by the army, I have come to the conclusion that I have also joined the army without basic training or taking my oath to Queen and country.  
We have a monthly newsletter, printed by the wives' club mostly consisting of officers' wives. One issue had a passage which implied that a Colonel in our regiment was a chauvinist pig. On receiving my copy, an hour later I was asked to give it back and received it minus the offending page two days later.  
On having our daughter christened, after the service we were informed that my daughter's christening would be registered with the

Ministry of Defence, for what reason I have yet to find out.  
And now on my husband arriving back from an exercise was informed that I had been at Young Socialist meetings and a *Militant* rally and it had to stop. How they know is beyond me unless, of course, I was followed.  
When my husband tried to further his contract he was told unofficially that I was still going to meetings and until it stopped he would have to stay on an open engagement.  
Could someone please tell me where it is written in this great, free, capitalist country that a wife of a soldier is not allowed to think or do anything herself, or join the Labour Party to fight for socialism.  
Yours,  
A *Militant* supporter in the Great British Army

## Countering propaganda

Dear Comrades,  
While I have been working in the steel industry I have seen the struggle to save jobs. The unfortunate part has been the propaganda that the Tory press have put out.  
These Tory lies had put off the fight to a certain extent. I have found since reading *Militant* and selling the paper on the shop floor, a distinct change in the at-

titudes of the workers. *Militant* is a campaigning paper with the workers' interests at heart.  
The paper has helped me counteract the management and Tory lies by printing the facts in the workers' language. The workers who are in struggle in this country need a daily workers' paper, a paper they can trust, a paper that will print the facts.  
A. Millward  
GMBATU shop steward,  
Sheffield Forgemasters  
(Personal capacity)

## Scottish miner's poem

Listen to their lies, listen!  
Listen to their tear-filled speeches of suffering and democracy—and scream  
In your anger and your pain—scream at those who speak of suffering and know nothing but the cause,  
For their only pain is their conscience—but no, for they have none.  
Scream in your hunger, as they burn the food of life,  
For if it does not fill their pockets with gold it will not be allowed to satisfy the gnawing pain of starvation—burning in your belly  
And scream in pain as they pierce your body with the sword of oppression.  
—But wipe away your tears of blood—for their chains will never hold us or their guns destroy us,  
As we raise our red flag—of suffering and anger,  
let us never see our children suffer through our fear,  
But through our victory living as all should, from poverty and misery—suffering and pain  
Forever freedom.

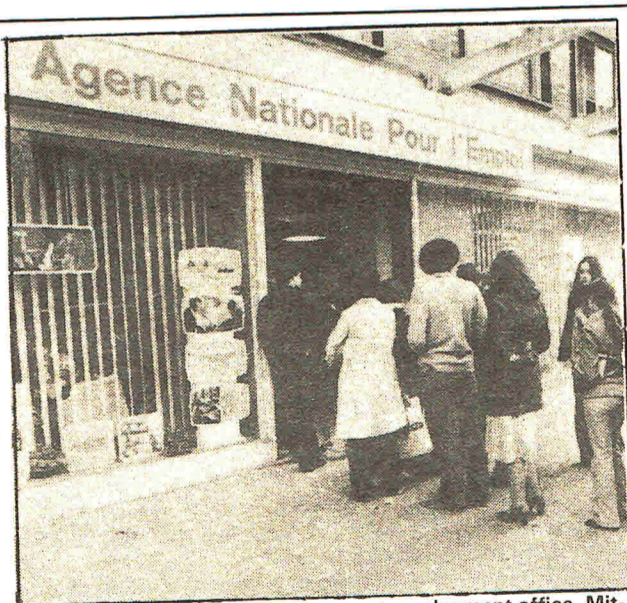
Joe Owens, NUM Polkemmet Colliery

## Mitterrand loosens his belt

Dear Comrades  
I suddenly realised that it must be Christmas. For on the screen appeared the most wondrous Christmas panto I've ever had the misfortune to watch. A mixture of Mother Goose, Aladdin, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White rolled into a horrible mess of pomp and pageantry.  
With men and women dressed in brightly coloured sequinned frocks and some old duffers with bits of tin and ribbon, dressed as Horatio Hornblower and carrying what appeared to be a whittled down snooker cues, walking backwards!

Of course it was a celebration dinner to mark the visit of President Francois Mitterrand of France (he's a socialist you know!).  
As they tucked into a light snack of creamed watercress soup and scampi à la Windsor, etc, among the assembled politicians, dignitaries, boffins and colonel blimps, my mind focused on those lazy, greedy French workers, struggling against their government's austerity measures. I thought what lessons in constraint and self-sacrifice they could learn from such a renowned class fighter as M. Mitterrand.

Yours fraternally,  
Gavin Marsh  
Southampton LPYS



Unemployed French workers queue at employment office. Mitterrand's 'Socialist' government has been forced to backtrack and introduce 'austerity' measures.

## The Dismissal

Dear *Militant*,  
Did any comrade see the series *The Dismissal*? (Channel 4, 11 November).  
It is about the last Labour government in Australia. The series covers the year from November 1974 to November 1975. The oil crisis in 1974 caused a crisis in Australia and all over the world. In Australia inflation grew and unemployment rose.  
The Labour government was working within capitalism, as our last Labour government 1974/9 in this country did. To pay for their programmes the government go for dealings in petrodollars.

First the Labour leadership should have put forward a programme of taking over the commanding heights of the economy, then the money would have gone to all the ministers to carry out their programmes.  
The Labour Party carried on with the capitalist economy. In the last part we will see the Labour Prime Minister Gough Whitlam being dismissed by the Queen's representative, Governor-General Sir John Kerr. The Liberals won the election and the Prime Minister was Malcolm Fraser. The Queen could do that here with a left-wing Labour government.  
Yours fraternally,  
Patrick Westmore  
(Watcher of the box)

## Famine crisis

Dear Comrades,  
Religious primates, government ministers and just about anyone with career furtherance on their minds have visited Ethiopia to view the situation for themselves, and have of course come back "deeply moved".  
We must remember that Ethiopia is only one of many countries in Africa in desperate need, unless something is done now.  
What of the people of popular influence, the pop stars, the film stars, record companies and promoters? It's time these people who have lived as they do because we support them contributed to a much greater degree;

sow a little of their vast financial harvest in areas where it can be used for the benefit of many instead of the few.  
There's more than enough to go round.  
It isn't apathy that prevents most of the British public from helping, it's the feeling that there's nothing we can do, and that the aid often goes astray anyway.  
Those in charge of the aid distribution must convince us that our help is getting through.  
Most important, we must not forget this crisis. It must not continue, and it must not happen again.  
Unity!  
Nige Stone  
Cheshire

## LEFT and RIGHT

### Guilt by (union) association

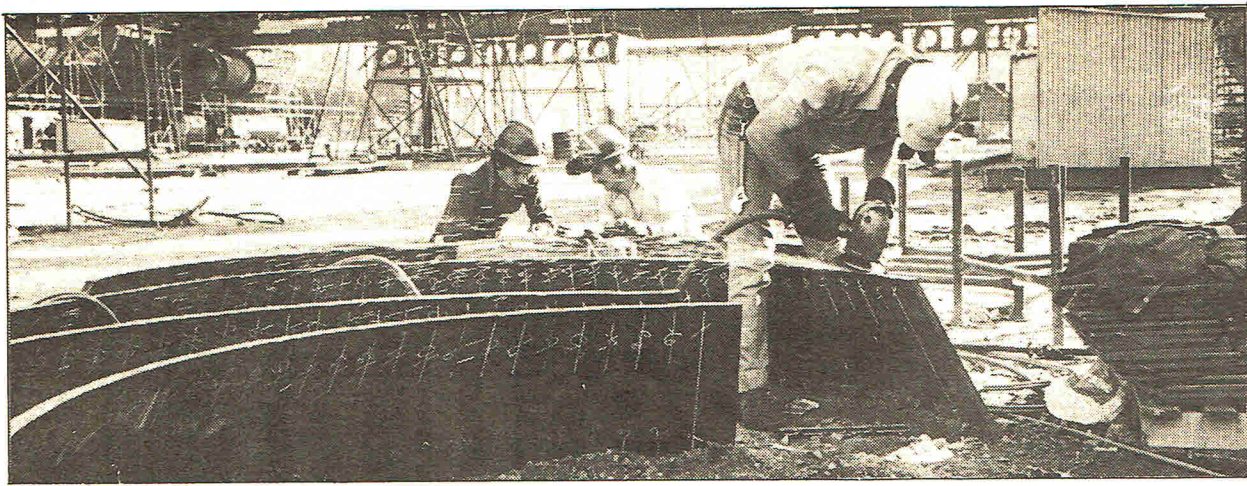
Nicholas Ridley, the Tory Transport Secretary, replying to a question on the vehicle registration scheme at a recent Institute of Directors meeting: "We must be able to check on stolen cars, muggers' cars and pickets' cars."

### Garden pests no 3: The leech

The leech, (*Hirudo Medicinalis*) is well known for its blood-sucking abilities. It clings to its victim drawing sustenance from it, never quite killing it. The most widespread type of leech is *Hirudo Bureaustis*, or bureaucrat leech. They are found almost everywhere, but are most common in Eastern Europe, where they can grow very large and powerful. By releasing a powerful poison known as propaganda into its victim's blood stream, it can gain almost total control of the creature.  
In Britain, however, the most dominant leech is not the bureaucrat. The biggest leech in this country is *Hirudo Majestis*, the royal leech. These have most of the attributes of other leeches, but are more dangerous, as they often attack human beings. A person who is thus infected, gradually loses the use of his mental faculties and is eventually reduced to a state of perpetual flag waving.

(Thanks to Nick Steven, the Resident Red under the Rose Bed)





THE controversial National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI) is almost four years old.

By Dave Platts

(GMBATU shop steward, Drax, personal capacity)

Signed in January 1981 by most major unions involved in construction work, it is hailed by the bosses as the saviour of Britain's reputation in what has been a traditionally turbulent sector, responsible for building power stations, refineries and steelworks.

A report in the *Financial Times*, dated July 24 1984 and entitled 'Suddenly peace breaks out', states that the industry "seems to be enjoying a period of most unusual tranquility." It also goes on to say that since 1981 jobs are being completed on time and within budget, and claims that multiple works agreements between trade unions, which led to industrial disputes, were responsible for delays and over-budgeting in the past.

Ironically the report points the finger at the Isle of Grain where one long industrial dispute was brought to a premature end when John Baldwin OBE, General Secretary of the CEU and

# Engineering. construction's controversial agreement

incorrect plans; late deliveries, etc. Union disputes were often provoked by managements on contracts like the Grain, to shroud their own incompetence and vindicate themselves in the eyes of the CEBG and other big clients.

The supreme body for industrial relations, the National Joint Council (NJC) whose make up consists of 50/50 union and management, acts as the final forum for disputes and also decides the bonus earnings, redundancy payments or finishing bonuses (NONE), and shift patterns on every site up and down the country.

The most contentious

shift starts at 6 am and finishes 2.30 pm, the back shift starts at 3 pm and finishes 12 midnight, neither of which contains a paid meal break. Because of the half hour between shifts, the work-forces are kept apart, making it difficult to organise effective trade unionism.

Starting at 6 am or finishing at twelve midnight is bad enough but when one has a 40 to 50 mile journey to and from work, the shift pattern is even more intolerable.

All the problems endemic to shift working are inherent on these particular projects: overweight, family pro-

The agreement covers every problem that could occur on site and gives the solution—put the matter into procedure. Some disputes go right through the procedural machine up to the NJC and sometimes take months to resolve, without, I hasten to add, much success for the workforce. Stewards, who are becoming increasingly difficult to find, often end up policing the rule book if they carry out their duties according to the wishes of the full time officials.

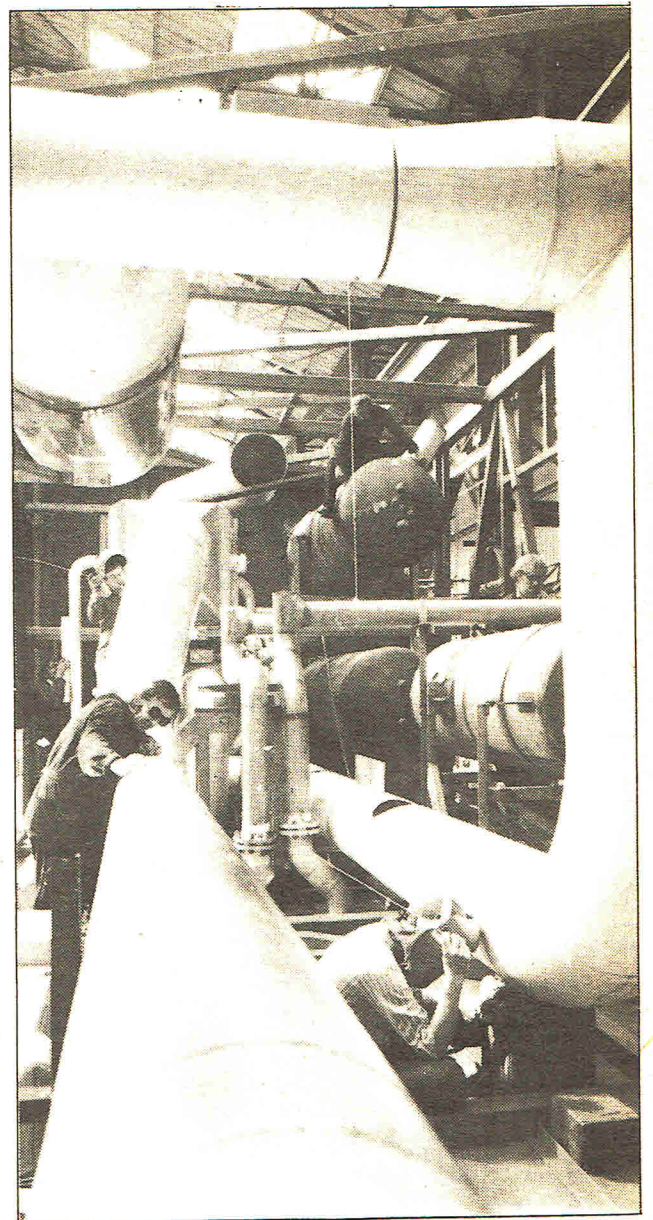
## Fatalities

The latest obnoxious directive from the NJC refers to death on site and implies that only the workers spattered with blood are allowed to leave work. If one doesn't witness the death but sits at the same messing table, one assumes by the directive that the victim's lunch is placed in the bin and one carries on eating as normal.

Construction workers, because of the nature of their industry, are a closely knit body of men, the comradeship is almost unique. When one of their brothers is killed on site or in some cases dies off site, the emotion felt at the tragic loss and the sympathy for the bereaved relatives, is expressed traditionally by a stoppage of work, along with a generous collection.

One outstanding example of this tradition followed in the sad loss of Eddie Marsden, former General Secretary of the CEU, when there was a national stoppage of work as a mark of respect. The lads here on site are incensed with the callous attitude the national full-time officials are adopting over this highly emotive subject, which the directive impassively claims, is damaging to the industry and does nothing to assist the widows or other dependents of the deceased employees, when colleagues cease work as a mark of respect.

The *Financial Times* article indicates to the reader



just how unrepresentative the hierarchy of the unions involved in the NJC are, when it goes on to say: "Full-time officials... can easily overrule the local initiatives and powers of the shop steward," whom the article's writer sees as the source of past difficulties. One unnamed union official scurrilously claims in the article that:— "These guys

(quoted as being £50 million within budget and six months ahead of schedule) Mossmorran, Torness and others will encourage overseas investment. Although they have systematically driven down wages and conditions since NAECI was signed and could probably boast a low waged industry, Britain's still not as lucrative a coun-

**"The National Joint Council recognises that the death of site employees is . . . distressing . . . in incidents where colleagues cease work as a mark of respect, the resulting loss of wages and production is damaging to the industry . . ."**

**National Joint Council for the Engineering Construction Industry communiqué.**

(the stewards) just ran rampant at times on these sites... They often wanted to make a name for themselves with claims that could ruin things for everybody else."

Quotes like the one above are not uncharacteristic from full time officials, far worse than that have been reported. What they fail to consider is that a steward is totally accountable to his or her members and that he or she can do nothing arbitrarily. If the full time officials were accountable or in touch with their members on site they wouldn't be making the statements they are, and the agreement would have been consigned to the dustbin some time since.

## Wages and investment

The "them and us" which is disappearing, according to John Porter of the National Engineering Employers Association, is taking on a new look here on site; them, being the employers and union officials, us, being the workforce.

The employers and union officials naively believe that successful sites like Drax,

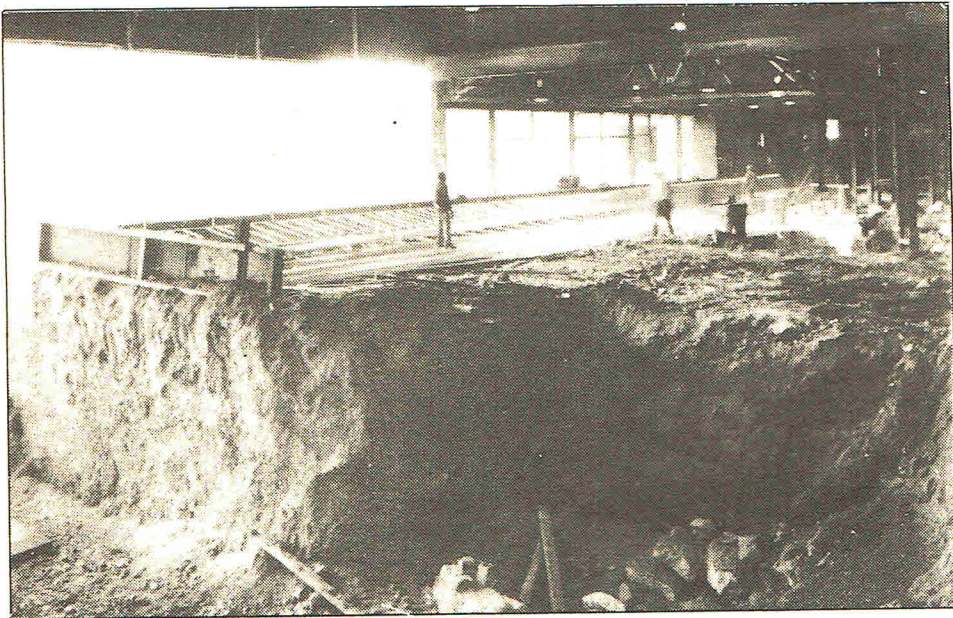
try to invest in as South Africa, Korea and other low waged economies. Nor do they realise that the British capitalists can't utilise the manufacturing or mining capacity they already have, which is 80% productive in boom, 70% in slump, so where would they invest?

Union officials should be fighting this onslaught on their members' living standards. The construction industry is the most dangerous and insecure of all industries. Bonus and redundancy payments should be negotiated at site level, where they were negotiated in the past, to stop further erosions.

Resolutions of this nature should be passed at every union branch which has an interest in the industry if we are going to put our workers where they should be: back at the top of the pay league.

A rank and file campaign for democracy and accountability in our unions and the Confederation of Engineering Unions must be launched by activists in our industry.

*Militant intends to carry further articles on the construction engineering industry in future issues.*



the main signatory to NAECI, drove through a GMB picket line with workers determined to end the strike.

Although the report points out that all the problems were not due solely to the unions, it does not say that the Isle of Grain job was hurriedly given the go-ahead by the Tory government of the day in order to drain some of the venom out of the NUM's sting by the development of oil fired power stations.

The far too early go-ahead given by the Tories, who were still reeling from the 1972 miners' dispute, riddled the contract with insuperable problems; bad or

issue at site level is the imposition of restricted bonus earnings, singled out in the FT report as being the cause of most site disputes. The report comments that: "The cost of the national accord has been a lower level of income for the workforce—now without a high level of bonus payments. Most are earning about what they did four years ago." And goes on—"second-tier payments are now about one third basic rate... before the agreement this figure could be as high as four to five times the basic level."

Another cost to the workforce on some of the bigger sites is double day shift working. The morning

blems, fatigue and a reluctance by the workforce to take part in trade union activities outside of working hours. The full time officials fail to take into account the unsocial hours their members are working. They don't fully understand the social and family life that is lost to a worker through either being at work or too tired to enjoy those things that one can never price too dearly.

## Stewards

"The agreement has taken control away from the shop floor", the FT says. That is probably the biggest understatement in the article.

## INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

# GEC tests Traction workers

**GEC TRACTION strikers met management at ACAS last week but made no progress towards a settlement.**

Convenor Ray Robinson told *Militant* that despite the strikers having been sacked and P45s sent out the fact that management agreed to talks shows they are testing out the strength of the strike and do not intend closing the plant.

The original offer of £5 for skilled and £3 for semi and unskilled was followed by the offer of a £52 lump sum. Management have

**By Diane Ridout  
(CPSA)**

agreed to drop the piecework strings previously attached to that. It represents £2 a week rise until next March but they will not agree to consolidating it into the basic wage, so it would be lost by next year.

The workers are still picketing round the clock and are turning away union

drivers. Scab drivers, however, are now being used. Workers at GEC Turbines, also on the Trafford Park site, have said that they will refuse to work with material delivered by scabs and would join the strike if management try to impose it.

Messages of support and donations to Ray Robinson (convenor), GEC strike centre, AUEW, The Crescent, Salford. Tel. 061-736 52006.

## Coventry trade unionists organise

THE RUTHLESS use of the law against the miners and the threat of the Tories' anti-union laws prompted Coventry *Militant* supporters to organise an "Industrial Forum" on "The Law Vs the Unions" last Tuesday.

About 50 trade unionists and Young Socialists came to hear Jock Orme, convenor of the Self-Changing Gears factory and Terry Fields MP. Jock expressed the indignation of many AUEW members at the lack of a fight from their union's national leadership.

He explained that the legislation is a particular threat to shop stewards, who can be liable for a firm's losses if they lead a strike. "Who's going to sue shop stewards for thousands of pounds?" had been the union solicitor's response when Jock raised this threat. Terry Fields asked if the Tories believed that after the NUM dispute there would be class peace, why do they need CS gas, plastic and rubber bullets and water cannons that are now in police armories.

Miners, gasmen and engineers took part in the discussion and *Militant* supporters in Coventry have resolved to step up the drive along with local miners for a city-wide stewards' conference to unite the miners and other workers in the battle to defend the unions.

## Shopworkers' Broad Left victory

THE USDAW Broad left election campaign was given a boost last week in the union's Eastern Division with the surprise victory of its candidate in a Divisional by-election.

**By Mick Wainwright  
(Broad Left Secretary and  
North West Divisional  
councillor)**

George Williamson, the USDAW Broad Left chairman won the election with 9,731 votes, gaining a majority of 6,524 votes over his nearest rival. He received nearly 53% of the total vote

against five other candidates. This result is the best the Broad Left has had for several years and augurs well for the forthcoming national elections in February.

The nomination period is well underway. The Broad Left is going all-out to secure the maximum number of branch nominations for its presidential candidate Jeff Price. Attend your branch meeting, get it to nominate Jeff. For nomination details or information about the Broad Left phone Jeff on 0632 367000 or Mick Wainwright 0253 693516.



George Williamson speaking at the lobby of the TUC.

## Sheffield NALGO strike 'til Xmas?

THE STRIKE of certain sections of Sheffield NALGO over the council's imposition of new technology now enters its tenth week and is still no nearer an end despite negotiations last week led by councillor David Blunkett, which broke down again on Friday 16 November.

NALGO's concerns are still the traditional concerns of any trade union—the right to determine by negotiation the conditions on which its members will use new equipment before it comes into use. The council, it seems, are still hell bent on removing this basic trade union right.

The union has the support of Sheffield Trades Council, Sheffield Tenants Federation and many local Labour Parties. Despite this the council negotiating team of Billings,

Betts and Wall carry on regardless.

Councillor Blunkett, speaking on Sheffield radio today (19 November) envisaged the strike continuing 'til after Xmas. Statements like this leave little room for optimism that the dispute will be quickly settled.

NALGO have called a special general meeting on Monday 19 November for the membership to decide what further action is necessary to win. Suspensions which took place earlier as a result of solidarity actions have been rescinded, but it is likely that further disciplinary action will take place with the continuation of the dispute.

**By Alan Barrows  
(Sheffield NALGO)**

## Printers' conference debates Warrington



The failure of trade union leaders to mobilise full support for the NGA's defiance of Tory union laws at Warrington has led directly to the current attacks on other unions.

THE MOST important debate at the Biennial Delegate Meeting of the National Graphical Association was on the lessons of the Stockport Messenger dispute.

The conference was nearly unanimous in condemning the role of the right-wing on the TUC General Council. Unusually, Murray was named, in a resolution which branded him a traitor.

### A lead needed

His denunciation of the TUC Employment Policy and Organisation committee's decision to support the NGA was a crucial stage in the dispute. The leadership, rather than go over the head of the right wing and directly appeal to the rank and file, called off the 24-hour general strike.

*Militant* supporters argued that without first showing our own members were will-

ing to strike, wider solidarity would not be forthcoming. What was needed was not hesitation but firm leadership. A resolution to that effect was defeated.

However, the conference ended on a high note when it passed a resolution from Liverpool titled "Campaign for Socialism":

"Conference believes that Labour's defeat in the General Election was caused by the following factors:

- The role of the millionaire press which conducted the most vicious campaign against Labour ever witnessed;
- Failure to highlight the depth of the crisis facing the economy;
- The lack of clarity in presenting Labour's programme;
- The warfare inside the Party provoked by the witch hunt instigated by the right wing against some Party members;

e) The role of leading right wing trade union leaders and Party leaders in their support for enemies of the Party, and in their attacks on Party policy.

Conference calls on the NEC to prepare a programme of reforms which will meet the needs of working people. Conference believes that, if a programme of reform is to be realised, steps would have to be taken to translate Clause IV (4) of the Labour Party Constitution into a reality and that this means taking into public ownership the commanding heights of the economy under workers control and management."

Now we need a leadership prepared to fight for such policies.

**By Peter Jarvis  
(London Region NGA,  
personal capacity)**

## Misleading Liverpool report

LAST WEEK Josie Aitman put the record straight on misreporting of a dispute in Liverpool council by the *Morning Star*. Here she takes up another example of biased coverage of Liverpool.

The *Morning Star* carried a report of an old people's home in Liverpool which is closing and where they state patients are being transferred to a private sector home.

Again accusations and implications have been made which are totally untrue.

All the trade unions involved in this particular case agreed that New Grafton House, the home involved, should be closed down due to its condition. All the elderly patients would be transferred to new City Council residential premises. Despite its name New Grafton House was built during the Napoleonic wars as a fever hospital and should have been closed down years ago.

### New places

Due to cutbacks in the past (eg one home, Croxeth Lodge was closed by the Liberals) a short-fall of places exist for elderly patients.

The Labour council plans to remedy this. First, Croxeth Lodge will reopen by the

beginning of next year, and two new purpose built homes will be built by 1986, making one hundred extra places available.

The Labour council are closing New Grafton House due to its condition. But they are expanding the service by building new purpose-built homes and creating extra places. They are not carrying out cutbacks, which is what the *Morning Star* implies.

### Tory attack

Liverpool Labour council has a proud record in its stand in defending jobs and services for the working class of Liverpool. Its campaign won tremendous support from the local authority trade unions, culminating in the magnificent 50,000 demonstration outside the Town Hall on 29 March and a victory over the Tory government.

Tory minister Patrick Jenkin has now declared war on Liverpool Labour council and the local authority trade unions and has proposed savage new cutbacks for Liverpool.

The support of local authority trade unions will once again be crucial in the continued stand of Liverpool City Council in defence of jobs, services and living standards.

## Ghana ship 'arrested'

THE 21 sailors from Ghana who have been occupying their ship in Birkenhead docks since the start of September have still not received their back wages. A total of £50,000 is owed to the crew, some of whom have not seen their families for over a year.

The MV *Maiseni* has been arrested by the Admiralty who may have the ship scrapped to pay the crew. *Militant* supporters and LPYS members have been to the fore in raising money to keep the occupation solid.

Morale is high, especially with the news that Liverpool City Council and Terry Fields MP have taken up their case. The crew would like to thank the local labour and trade union movement for their support in the struggle. Also the bucket collection at the end of *Militant*'s Wembley Rally raised £215 which has been the biggest single donation so far.

### Aid needed

It is hoped that there will be a speedy end to this dispute which has caused untold suffering to the crew and their families back home in Ghana who do not receive any state benefit.

Donations and messages of support to "MV *Maiseni* crew", c/o G McKinley, 70 Grosvenor Road, Birkenhead.

# Militant

Life at Cowley

—page 5

Engineering construction

—page 14

## Action against Tory laws

### Austin-Rover

**AFTER YEARS of speed-ups, attacks on trade union rights, and low wage increases, Austin Rover workers have been fighting back.**

The two week strike at Longbridge and Cowley is not just about the £22 across the board wage increase, it is a demonstration by track workers especially, that they have had enough of the inhuman conditions on the line.

Not surprisingly, it has been the track workers, nearly all in the TGWU who in the main, have stayed solid throughout the strike. In the smaller plants, where there is not the same intensity of work, union members have unfortunately agreed to the company's offer.

In Longbridge and Cowley the management's much-vaunted back to work movement has been led by maintenance and 'indirects'. The maintenance workers have been under enormous pressure to return to work from their national union leaders.

Austin Rover management ran to the courts to secure a secret ballot and the leaders of the EETPU and AUEW ran for cover. The electricians have been ordered back pending a ballot, as if a strike can be turned off and then on again.

When Robinson was sacked in 1979, the AUEW sent

**AUSTIN ROVER'S court case against the TGWU for contempt has been delayed for a week at the High Court. The company are clearly hoping the strike would be finished by then and any fines or sequestration would not get the response it needs from trade unionists.**

The TGWU can not allow any attacks on its finance or its right to strike without organising opposition. The assault on the unions through the courts has reached a new level.

There is no danger of a

By a Longbridge TGWU steward

members back pending an inquiry. They knew that with the momentum gone, the workers would not come back out again two months later, and they were proved correct.

The AUEW EC have washed their hands of this strike and in reward the court action against them has been dropped. If the strike fails it will be due to the sabotage of these union leaders.

If the bosses' courts could get away so easily with interference in union affairs, no strike would be secure. The TUC policy of opposition to Tory anti-union laws has got to hold. Threats of fines or sequestration have to be answered by firm class action.

If their funds are raided, the TGWU must call an all-out auto-motive strike and approach the NUM whose assets have also been seized to issue the call for a one-day general strike to defend union rights. Even in Austin Rover, workers are waiting for such a lead to cut across the capitulation of others around them.

Whatever the immediate result, car workers are showing that they are back and determined to stand up for themselves and their rights. Management had better be warned.

**run-down in the wig industry; lawyers are working overtime to hit the unions. Two Yorkshire scab miners are still trying to get their area's affairs run by a receiver; just one of the numerous cases brought by "working miners". The High Court have also ruled illegal a levy imposed by the National Union of Seamen in support of striking miners.**

The unions must act now to stop these legal attacks on our rights. Every day's delay only increases the Tories' confidence.



Photo: Gail Clarke Hall (Report) III

A 1970 protest against the Tory Industrial Relations Act. It was class action which stopped the Tories in 1970-74. A similar campaign is needed today.

### Drax — Putting power behind the miners

**CONSTRUCTION and mechanical engineering workers at the Derby firm of Aitons have recently blacked all work on building a pipeline.**

The line was intended to go some 2 miles to allow an uninterrupted flow of oil from vessels on the river Ouse into Drax power station.

After a request from the NUM, all work stopped with only 150 yards built inside the power station fence. Despite management assurances that nobody would lose their jobs and even that some would be taken on if the pipeline was built, still the men have refused to build the line.

That remains the case even though management have now issued 30-day redundancy notices to these workers. Oil is needed at this coal-fired station to light the boilers, and a good supply will enable the CEBG maximum flexibility to light or shut down the boilers and so eke out the depleted coal stocks which are in any case wet and of poor quality.

The organised tanker

drivers are refusing to cross miners' picket lines and management are dependent on two cow-boy tanker drivers. Next to the original part of Drax power station is a site employing over 2,000 construction workers building two massive new 660 megawatt generating sets. When the two scab tankers arrived to supply oil for one of these new generator sets, which is now completed and operating, the men were incensed and threatened to attack the vehicles.

#### Stop coal supplies

Management have been told that if they try to allow them in again, the necessary steps will be taken to prevent this. Feeling is running high here. To bring fresh coal supplies into Drax, lorries would have to use the road crossing the construction site.

We will oppose that, we have supported the miners all through their strike, we have given hot bacon sandwiches and pots of tea to the pickets. We have had a levy

on everyone on the site and they have all been paying it, we have given £15-£16,000 to the NUM since the strike started. The workforce here would be stupid to be paying out money and then allow lorries to come across our site to break the strike.

**Dave Platts**  
(GMBATU steward Drax, personal capacity)

**AT A recent meeting with management of the CEBG, Ron Burbridge, OBE, project manager for the generating board told trade unionists that there were 500 power stations at the time of nationalisation.**

There are now 120 and

they expect this number to drop to 60 in the next few years due to a drop in "demand" for electricity by industry, in other words declining capitalism. Two power stations are due to close in the next year or two, Berkely on the Severn and Bradwell in Essex, both small nuclear stations.

In Yorkshire they have just built a new 660 megawatt generating set and finishing another so they will probably be talking about the closure of power stations like Elland, Skelton Grange and others as well. Halving the number of power stations is a bigger cut than planned in coal, so power station workers need to start planning to fight for their own jobs.

**Lobby NEC to stop expulsions**  
Assemble LP Headquarters, 150 Walworth Road, SE 17. (Tube to Elephant & Castle)  
9.00 am Wednesday 28 November  
Followed by rally—speakers include:  
Brychan Davies, Billy Pye (St Johns NUM),  
Terry Fields MP, Frances Curran (NEC)  
Organised by: Stop Attacks on Labours Youth campaign. See article on Brychan Davies. Page 2.



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