Militant

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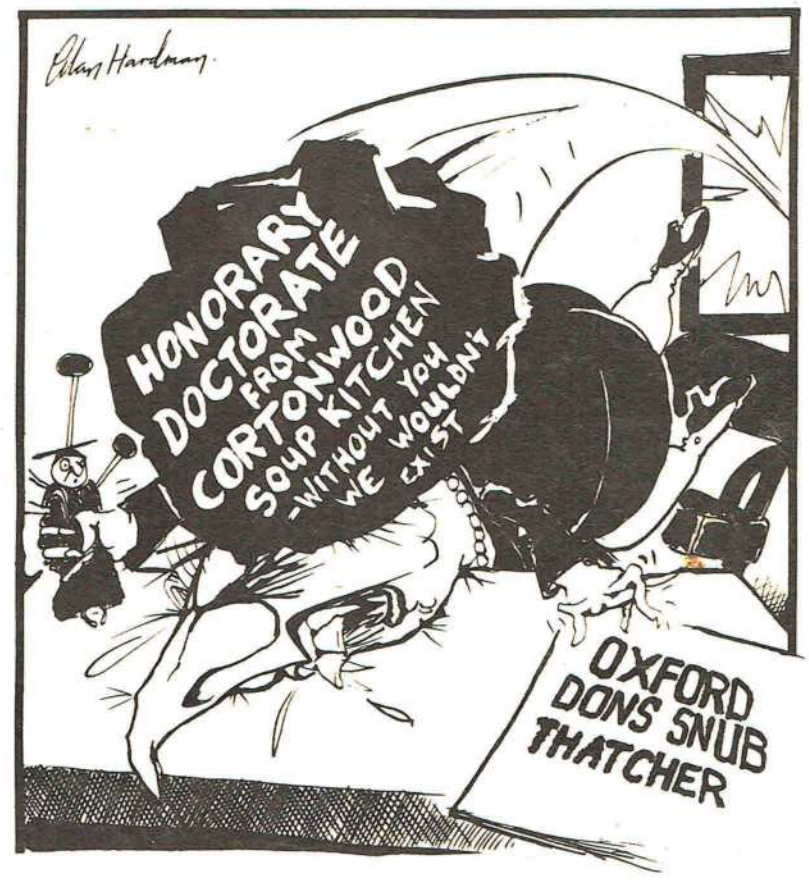
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Miners' message to Thatcher:

We will not be crushed



MINERS WILL not be humiliated by Thatcher. The mood of the activists dramatically hardened after Thatcher's intervention last week. Now it should be clear to everyone that she and MacGregor are out for blood.

By Ian Isaac
(St John's NUM and South Wales NUM EC, personal capacity)

They will not have the blood of the NUM. Our union will never sign a piece of paper agreeing to close pits that are classed as uneconomic according to their distorted accounting methods.

At every level of the union that attitude is absolutely emphatic. Miners who have never been on the picket line are agreeing that the NUM must never sign away jobs.

Total amnesty

The NCB and Thatcher imagine they are playing with us like a cat with a frightened mouse. We are **not** frightened and we are **not** mice.

Yes, miners and their families would like this strike to be over. But they are not prepared to sign away the future of their communities and the rights of those sacked during this dispute.

We will not bargain over the jobs of those who have been sacked. Any return to work must be on the basis of a general amnesty.

Already the board have taken back sacked workers who are now prepared to cross picket lines. The NCB must not be allowed to pick and choose. There must be no victimisation of those whose only crime has been to fight for jobs alongside their fellow miners.

If talks break down because of the attitude of Thatcher and MacGregor, there will be no massive surge back to work. The vast bulk of miners, despite all the hardship will remain as loyal and steadfast as they have been during the last eleven months.

Our union must now appeal directly to NACODS. The guarantees they imagined they had secured on pit closures will be worthless if Thatcher and MacGregor have their way. Maximum strength must be built behind the NUM. Our fate will be the fate of NACODS. The

Continued on page two

All out on 11 February

THE NUM executive committee has re-iterated that it will not sign away jobs. Once again the miners have turned to the TUC. The TUC must live up to its responsibilities. The strength of support for the miners among trade unionists must be demonstrated in action.

The Day of Action on 11 February called by the Yorkshire and Humberside region, now backed by the South East region of the TUC, must be turned by the General Council into a one-day general strike.

But the matter must not be left there. Throughout industry, stewards and union activists should organise and prepare for a one-day general strike. The NUM itself should issue the call to workers everywhere to strike in solidarity with the miners on 11 February.

£10,000 in one week

IN THE last seven days £9,994 has poured into *Militant*'s office. £6,729 in the last three days alone. With all the activity facing the working class there has never been a greater need for cash to finance *Militant*'s work. But our readers are showing the determination to provide it.

Readers in every area have been chasing every possibility to raise money. The result is a deluge of cash with the last week still not over. One reader in Drax B power station showed the power of the collecting tin. He raised £22 from one shift! Other readers have donated a week's income or a day's income to help us.

To those who attack us we say 'look at the support we have'. What better answer to those who try to expel us from the Labour Party than to give a donation to the best fighting fund in the world.

New target

Many LPYS branches are aiming to send us £10, £20 or more. They know what policies offer youth a future, and are prepared to help us fight for them.

We still need your support. If you were trying to raise £50 for example, and didn't quite make it, don't stop! We did well this quarter but we have to continue building our paper. The new quarter starts immediately with a new target. So keep up the campaign to finance *Militant* and the work that only *Militant* can do.

By Clare Doyle

AUEW: give £1 million to miners!

BY A crushing majority of 233,030 to 19,793, the members of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW) have voted to accept Tory government money for carrying out postal ballots. This is in open defiance of the TUC, and a setback in the fight against the Tories' employment laws.

John Tocher, candidate for the Presidency of the AUEW gave *Militant* his reaction:-

"I'm disappointed by the result, but not surprised. As I said on a number of occassions, during the ballot, with all the barrage from the media, and the explanations and recommendation from the Executive Committee, this was being put to the membership as just a straight forward choice of whether to take £1 million or not. Having posed it in that oversimple way, not referring to the inherent dangers, they were bound to get that response.

"Already, we've witnessed state intervention in a most brutal way in the NUM with the courts and the sequestrators etc.

"No Tory government is going to give £1m to our union to make it a more formidable organisation to fight for jobs, wages and conditions on behalf of its members.

"The purpose of this money is as a spring-board for state intervention into the election processes and the affairs of the union. Whoever pays the piper call the tune.

"These points not having been put to the members, they don't necessarily see the risks involved. As someone who is striving to ensure democracy in this union, I have to recognise the outcome of the ballot. But I blame the leaders not the members, for the result.

Democratic rights

"I don't think that members fully appreciate that the EC have ignored two National Committee decisions in conducting this ballot.

"I am campaigning in defence of the constitution, and democratic rights of the members and to restore the pride of the membership in the union. Now that we are committed by the ballot result, the best way that we can extricate ourselves from this and resurrect ourselves in the eyes of the other trade unions is to take the money and give the £1 million to the NUM".

Militant

Tory strategy in ruins

THE TORY government's economic strategy lies in ruins. The latest rise in interest rates has shattered any illusions that there will be a "recovery". With inflation at only 5% a year, the cost of borrowing money at the new rate of 14% is higher in real terms than for at least 150 years!

Home-owners, farmers and small businessmen will be hit hard. British companies are expected to lose £1 billion in extra interest, causing profits to fall by 7%. The prospect of budget tax cuts is disappearing into the mist.

As always, however, it will be the workers and their families who will suffer most, with an inevitable rise in unemployment as firms go bust or abandon plans for expansion, and dearer imports push up prices.

The immediate cause of the crisis is the very thing that was supposed to be the salvation of British capitalism—North Sea oil. Whatever decision is reached by the OPEC ministers in Geneva, the worldwide surplus of oil will tend to force down the unofficial "spot" price. This will force Britain either to reduce its prices further or sell at a loss. It is this fear which lies behind the pound's collapse.

One factor which has delayed this fall slightly has been the oil used in British power stations because of the miners' strike. This has added 1 million barrels a day to world oil demand. An end to the strike could be the trigger for a further oil and sterling crisis.

The cost of the strike, now estimated at around £5 billion, is another reason for the selling of sterling. It cut industrial production last year by 2½% and worsened the balance of payments by £2.5 billion.

Oil has saved the economy from total collapse, but at the price of making the pound, and the rest of the economy, dependent on the fluctuations of the market. As the *Financial Times* (29 January) remarked: "The markets took control".

All oil did was mask the long-term degeneration of the British capitalist economy. "Britain's performance", declares the *Daily Telegraph*, in an "in-depth examination of the problems of unemployment", "with one or two minor exceptions, has been uniquely bad"..."Although unemployment had risen in every major industrialised country during the 1970s, it had risen faster in Britain than anywhere else and had been combined with the worst inflation and productivity performance"(29 January).

Decades of low investment by British capitalists, frittering away profits on speculation in property, banking or service industries, have created an economy with some similarities to those of the "third world". It is a net importer of manufactured goods and heavily dependent on the export of one raw material.

The benefits of North Sea oil have been wasted just like the profits of other sectors of the British economy. Rather than invest them in new technology to create new jobs, they have been used to finance record unemployment of four million. Now that oil itself is in crisis, that figure is bound to rise. The full extent of Britain's industrial collapse is revealed.

For millions of unemployed, any hope of ever getting a secure job has been dashed by this latest crisis. For the employed the prospects are no brighter. The *Daily Telegraph* survey considers the "alternative" solutions offered by the "neo-classical" economists (the monetarists) and the "Keynesians":

"The conclusion of the neo-classical economists is that the cure for unemployment lies in reducing trade union power and easing the disincentives to accepting low-paid work." The Keynesians, on the other hand are "extremely concerned to prevent inflationary wage increases dissipating the benefits of increased demand into the price level rather into output and jobs. Consequently they would seek to secure some form of incomes policy to hold down the growth of real wages."

That is the choice capitalism offers workers—wage restraint or lower wages! There is no real difference between the remedies of these rival sets of capitalist witch-doctors. They are both trying to revive a patient who is beyond any treatment—the capitalist system. If all it can offer is unemployment and low wages, then it is only fit for the scrap-heap.

Instead of making irrelevant criticism of the government's "mismanagement", the Labour leaders should be seizing the opportunity to expose the whole rotten system. Now is the ideal time to hammer home the relevance of. Clause IV of the Labour Party constitution, which demands the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. The nationalisation of the top 200 industrial combines, including the oil companies, the banks and insurance companies, with compensation on the basis of need and workers' control and management, is the only way out of the nightmare.

Then it would be possible to exploit the oil, the workers' skills and the enormous wealth which lies untapped, plan production of all those goods which are so desperately needed and provide jobs and rising wages for all. That is the only real alternative.

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Dirty tricks at Sizewell enquiry

THE MINERS' strike has given far more urgency to the government's push on nuclear energy. They have put their foot down on the nuclear accelerator.

Apart from the possible military spin-offs, the Tories welcome anything which reduces dependence on coal.

Opponents of nuclear power are smeared and portrayed as merely out of touch with the 20th century, or as "subversives".

This week's *Observer* reveals that a private detective agency has been investigating objectors to the new Sizewell B nuclear reactor in Suffolk.

The agency, Zeus Security Consultants, run by former military intelligence officer Peter Hamilton was asked to gather names, addresses and political sympathies of protesters in what a CND official called an "inspector Clouseau type of operation."

Zeus exists "to provide security services to government and other agencies." Hamilton himself is a right winger who has warned of "domestic subversion" in the unions.

He passed the work on to another agency, Contingency Services, who specialise in infliltration. "We have a couple of very good imitation lefties", the owner Vic Norris reportedly told another client. Norris claims to have started three dummy peace groups to get information to "discredit CND".

He claimed that Friends of the Earth shared an office with a number of "extreme left organisations", ordered searches into FoE and Greenpeace finances and labelled another anti-nuclear campaign as a "professional protester".

All the names could have been obtained from the Sizewell enquiry office itself and it may seem just a sideswipe by the pro-nuclear lobby at people who have very reasonable fears about the safety and the cost of the nuclear power programme.

The *Guardian* believes that a foreign company building fast breeder reactors may have commissioned the investigation. The government deny any involvement but they openly regard spying and dirty tricks as justifiable against 'subversion' which could include anti-nuclear protests and effective trade unionism.

Home secretary Leon Brittan has defended the right of the Special Branch to spy on strikers, and on pickets who "may pose a threat to public order".

He claimed he wasn't against "peaceful campaigning" to bring about changes in government policy but against subversive acts threatening the state's safety or "intended to overthrow parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means"—a suitably vague definition.

This meant not just criminal acts but activities of those who want to "harm our democracy" and "who for tactical or other reasons choose to keep within the letter of the law". For the Tories justice is a lot less important than defence of their interests.

By Roger Shrives

One year on at GCHQ

The first anniversary of the GCHQ trade union ban was marked by over 5000 trade unionists marching through Cheltenham on Saturday 26 January (picture right).
Over 100 rallies were held nationwide around the anniversary. The level of support for those GCHQ workers who still refuse to renounce union membership shows the potential for action to defend workers' rights.'



Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Lancs miners back SA comrades

ROY JONES from North Staffs NUM is successfully touring the Lancashire coalfield to report on his visit to the black South African NUM.

As reported previously, Roy is the first white man to have been made a member of the South African NUM.

There was particular interest, from rank and file miners up to branch officials, in the rapid growth of the NUM in South Africa from zero to 200,000 in just two years.

The reports of the battles waged by the black workers in South Africa against their oppression raised the morale of the British miners. The workers' democracy that exists in the South African NUM was seen as a model by many workers and lessons of the two struggles undoubtedly will be drawn.

Roy spoke to miners in Coppull, a mining village near Chorley in Lancashire; at Golborne; to pickets at Bold, and everywhere there has been enthusiasm for the creation of direct links between the rank and file of the British NUM and the South African NUM; in particular support for the recognition of the new South African union by their British brothers.

By Gerry Lerner

DENNIS SKINNER MP has extracted some revealing figures from the Prime Minister, which illustrates the Tories' priorities when they are spending tax-payers' money.

In answer to Parliamentary questions on 17 January, she disclosed that since May 1979, the following amounts have been spent:

£123,611 on entertainment at Chequers and 10 Downing Street.

£1,992,092 by the Prime Minister's office on maintaining her Private Office.

Power workers' jobs threat

POWER STATION workers could be next in line for Tory cuts of "uneconomic capacity".

Current generating capacity in Britain is 66,000 Megawatts (MW). When the current expansion at Drax is completed another 1,300 MW will be added. The new nuclear stations at Dungeness, Hartlepool and Haysham will soon be fully operational, adding a further 5,000 MW to generating capacity, making a total of 72,000 MW.

But peak demand, even in arctic conditions, is about 50,000 MW, an overcapacity of nearly 35 per cent. The Tories deliberately created this situation in preparation for taking on the miners.

Before the strike, big oil-fired stations like Grain in Kent were mothballed and the workers there were expected to be laid off, but since the strike began stations like this have been the Tories' lifeline.

Without them they could not have provoked the strike as they did. Since 1979, over 6,000 MW's of non-coal generating capacity has been commissioned in power stations in England and Wales, at unit fuel cost of between two and ten times that of coal-fired plant.

Some workers in non-coal fired stations think they are safeguarding their jobs by working "normally" through the strike. But if Thatcher thinks she has broken the NUM there will be no reason for the ruling class to keep oil-fired power stations open—they will represent "uneconomic capacity".

The Tories plan to switch over to 50% of electricity generated by nuclear power, which, with prospects of no growth in demand, will mean many of the non-coal fired stations will also face closure.

An integrated planning of energy resources would secure the future of workers in the electricity, oil, gas and coal industries. In a capitalist society no workers are safe.

● Reports reaching *Militant* show that the Tories' public confidence on power supply masks severe strains on the National Grid.

Significantly the Board has used voltage reductions for months-this is not immediately noticeable but shows in electronic timing devices running slow, and dimmer lighting.

A enormously costly and complex logistical operation has been deployed to avoid major power cuts. The media has co-operated in not reporting the many localised power cuts. Throughout the dispute the Tories have refused to answer questions on power supply and cuts, most recently from Jeremy Corbyn MP who listed widespread cuts and breakdowns.

By Pete Dickinson

Miners

From page one

best way to secure a quick dignified victory is for NACODS to join in the fight.

The government, already deep in economic crisis, would have to back down, in the face of the total shutdown of the coalfields through a NACODS strike.

In the main, NACODS members have respected picket lines. They realise their future lies with our strike's success. In a fraternal way, miners in every area should now urgently call upon their fellow mineworkers in NACODS to mount immediate pressure on their EC to act on the mandate of the last ballot.

The NACODS EC should ignore any legal niceties. They should organise an immediate strike to ensure that the negotiations with the NCB end soon with the future of the pits and the mining communities saved from the butchery of Thatcher and MacGregor.

Welsh miners defiant on closures

AT A very well attended general meeting of 350 St Johns Lodge members, a report of the South Wales conference was given by the lodge secretary, Ian Isaac.

He explained why the confernce was adjourned until negotiations had gone through this week and the men accepted that we will again have a general meeting as soon as the conference reconvenes after the talks with the NCB.

What was expressed by South Wales members was that we did not want a sell-out; we did not want our leadership to go ahead and agree to the closure of uneconomic pits when the government has quite clearly stated that is what their intentions are.

What a lot of men felt was that we would go back with our heads up high rather than accept any settlement or negotiation which meant that our pits have got to close. We will not put our signatures down on any pieces of paper where we ourselves will be blamed for closing down our pits.

Agreement

The opinion was expressed that NACODS, even at this very late stage, should join the strike because they had an agreement with the National Coal Board and with ACAS that an independent body would be present when pit closures have to be reviewed. That now has gone straight out of the window with the statement of the prime minister that all uneconomic pits must close.

And when we mean **all** uneconomic pits must close, that means at least 22 in South Wales. That is the devastation that could happen to our coalfield, and we appeal now to NACODS to see sense even at this late stage and to join the strike and the heroic battle put up by the Welsh and the British miners in their fight against pit closures.

● ON WEDNESDAY last week at St John's colliery, Maesteg, 400 police managed to race 17 scabs into work after pickets had left. The operation had been organised by the management at a meeting in the Pied Piper pub, at which the men were bought drinks and promised a ton of free coal.

By Thursday, after the lodge officers and committee men had talked to the strike-breakers and given them the full facts about the strike, we had reduced the number to 12. On Friday the number had gone up again to 17, including five new people, four of whom were canteen women. They had only returned because of a misunderstanding; they tried to walk out again but couldn't get through the police ranks.

With the lodge again working very hard over the weekend, reasoning with the women and the men who had gone into work, the numbers were reduced to eight on Monday and seven on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The lodge operated not through intimidation or any aggravation towards these strike-breakers, but through reasoning with them and giving them the full facts. That is how we have been successful in getting down to seven strike-breakers from a total of 23.

By Phillip White
(Compensation Secretary, St John's NUM)

Talks—'remember the lads who died'

MINERS' UNION General Secretary Peter Heathfield heard rank-and-file reaction to possible settlement talks at a Coventry miners' support rally on Friday 26 January.

Robin Wilson, speaking on behalf of the Coventry colliery strike committee said: "We all want to see a settlement, but a settlement on our terms—not a sell out. There should be no return to work till the jobs of all the miners who've been sacked have been secured—we've got six at Coventry."

Striker's wife Kath Chaplin also addressed the General Secretary: "I hope, Peter, that in the next talks you'll remember the lads who died..."

Commenting on the proposed talks, Peter Heathfield said: "I'm hoping that in the next three or four days there will be light at the end of the tunnel, that will enable the miners to go back as the came out, altogether and not in dribs and drabs. If the labour movement indicates it can't help us anymore, then miners have got to decide themselves how they continue. It won't be Heathfield, Scargill and McGahey who will decide but those who've been fighting the strike."

By Tony Cross

Tragedy miners won't forget

THE MINERS' eleven months of struggle have involved heroism and hardship.

But there have also been tragedies, largely ignored by the press, which bring home the human cost of this historic battle.

The Times (28 January) reported how: "On New Year's day, John Green, a 23 year old fitter at Betteshanger Colliery, Kent, said goodbye to his wife Beverly and their 18 month-old son Barry and drove into the countryside. There he killed himself by inhaling the car's exhaust fumes.

"'My son couldn't see an end' his mother said. 'He was without hope'." Two other miners, James Clay of Stoke-on-Trent and Ian Turner of Peterlee killed themselves shortly after returning to work because of the hardship they were suffering.

Another such tragedy is reported by Mike Burke, a striking miner from the Tower Colliery, South Wales, one of 103 miners facing trial in connection with the Port Talbot crane occupation last summer:

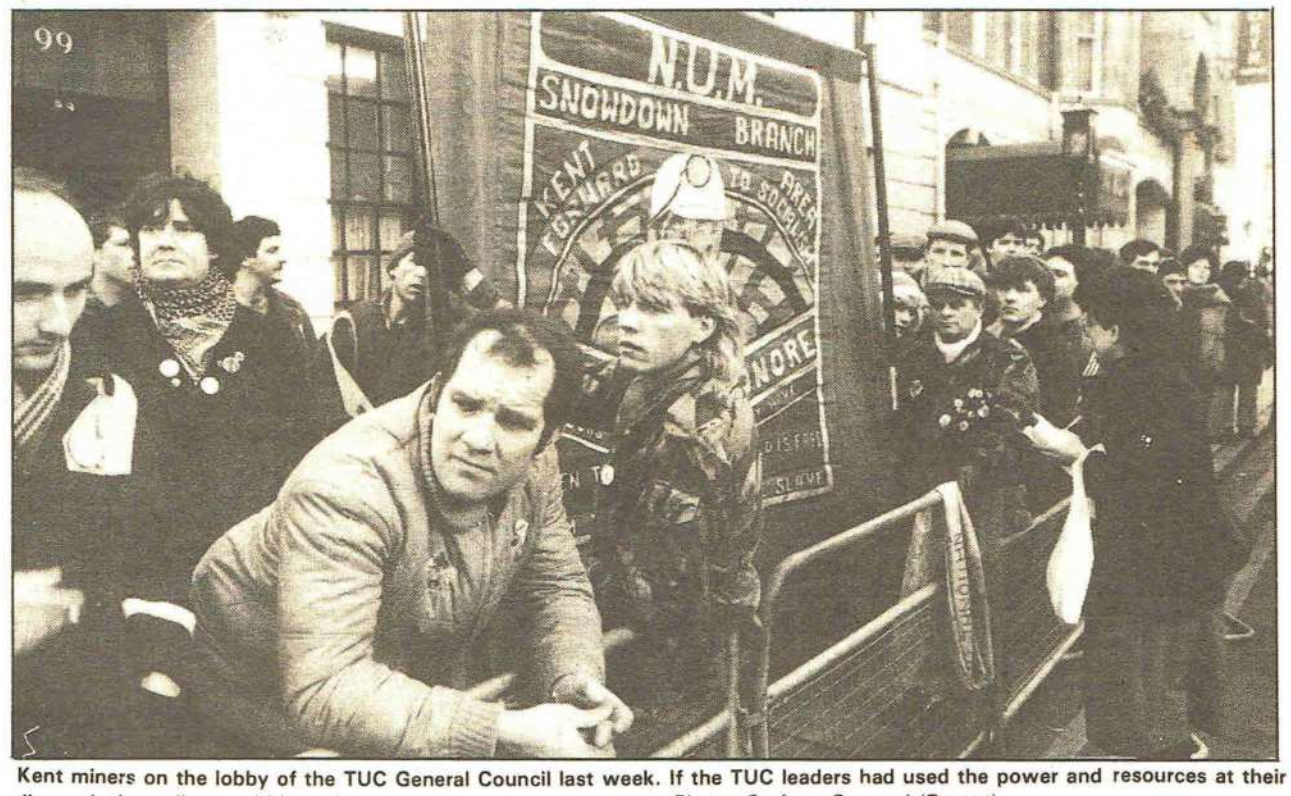
"It was a very sad day on 20 December, as when we came out of the court we had a two-minute silence for David Hughes, a 20 year old miner who had taken his life a few days before our appearance in court. We all (102 of us) went to his funeral immediately after the court appearance as David was with us up the crane.

"Words cannot describe how we felt on that bitterly cold wet afternoon in Gelligaer cemetery.

"The national propaganda machine against the miners (since day one of the strike) did not mention this young brave miner. But the newspapers and TV made sure that the death of a taxi driver (which was unfortunate) was known throughout the whole of Britain.

"I hope people will learn of this and that when she sleeps each night, Thatcher's conscience will get to her for all the suffering she has caused us, our families and our children and every person that has died during the miners' strike.

"We in South Wales remember when Winston Churchill sent the troops and armed police into the Rhondda valleys; we will never forget it".



Kent miners on the lobby of the TUC General Council last week. If the TUC leaders had used the power and resources at their disposal, the strike would have been won long ago. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

Tax allowance transfers will help strikers' wives

WORKING WIVES of striking miners are entitled to substantial tax rebates, providing the husband transfers his unused tax allowances to his wife.

Wives earning over £99.23 a week gross could be entitled to a tax rebate of around £900 immediately. No striker's wife need be paying any income tax on the first £99.23 of weekly earnings.

Striking husbands should transfer all or part of their tax allowances to their wives to boost her tax free earnings. Tax is based on annual income recieved from April to April. Therefore the current tax year is ten months old. It is pointless for a husband to retain his theoretical tax free allowance if he will not be earning that amount in this tax year.

The husband has to instruct his tax office to transfer his tax allowances to his wife. Only on instructions from the husband's tax office will the wife's tax office increase her allowance and pay the rebates due.

Discussions with Inland Revenue workers indicate that once the husband has given his consent, the Inland Revenue has no power to obstruct the transfer of allowances. If there are any problems then the husband should appeal in writing within 28 days to the tax commissioners or contact his MP.

Points to remember:

1. Transferring allowances will only be of use if the wife earns over £38.55 gross per week—income up to this level should already be tax free because of the wife's own allowance.

2. The transfer should take effect within a few weeks and the backdated rebate will be paid to the wife via the wife's employer.

3. Increasing the tax allowance to the wife should not affect the family's entitlement to rent and rate rebates, or Family Income Supplement.

4. If there is a return to work before April and the striker had transferred all allowances then the husband's earnings till April would be taxed in full. A striker whose wife earns less than £99.23 gross may wish to transfer only part of his tax allowance sufficient for his wife to recover her tax. For example a wife earning £80.00 gross per week will earn about £4,000 a year. If £2005 of her husband's tax allowance is transferred and added to her own tax allowance of £2005 she will have a total allowance of £4010 tax free. She would pay little or no tax.

The husband would retain the remainder of his tax free allowance to set against any future earnings or overdue holiday pay in this tax year to April. If the wife earns more than £99.23 a week gross then the couple cannot lose in transferring all the husband's allowance.

5. A wife who is no longer working because of redundancy, sickness etc. may still be able to reclaim any tax paid since April 1984 by transferring sufficient allowance from her husband.

By Nigel Wheatley
(ASTMS 959 Walsall)

Cash flows in from American workers

FOLLOWING A trip to North America in October last year by Jim Robinson ,a member of South Notts Strike Committee, a miners' relief fund was established.

"This has raised between £9,000 and £10,000 so far", said Jim, "but there are two miners over there now and they raised £11,000 in one day. We have had donations from New York to California, and from Quebec and Montreal in Canada.

"They come from many individuals and union locals (branches)". These are a few examples: John S Henning, secretary/treasurer of AFL-CIO California $500 and he has also put an ad in the local paper; Marine firemen's union $500; Painters' union California local/4 $500.

"This morning we received a cheque for $950 for miners' lamps, we have had very good support from the longshoremen and the communications workers. They all have the same message—'Reagan and Thatcher are like eggs in a basket; they want to destroy any opposition whether it's grandmothers in CND, Greenham women or striking miners'. Here you have the real spirit of internationalism. We also had a donation from ex-soldiers who served in South Wales during the war."

Town hall super scab

THE BOLTON labour movement is furious after a super-scab was chosen as the town's next mayor. NUM member and Labour councillor Bill Hardman has continued working throughout the dispute at the NCB's repair shops in Walkden.

Cllr Hardman told the *Worsley Journal* (January 24): "I'm fighting for democracy when I cross the picket line...I have always respected the mayor, no matter who it has been and I would hope other people will do the same."

Bolton Trades Council have already attacked the decision.

Health support

AT THE Southern Area COHSE Annual General Meeting on 21 January Dave Newell, a striking miner from Betteshanger colliery in Kent addressed the meeting. A collection raised over £160.

This follows a public meeting in Redhill, Surrey organised by the local COHSE branch which raised £288, plus £46 collected during workplace visits.



Gordon Bennet writes—

I HAD intended to write something about the first day of televised debate in the House of Lords. Unfortunately after half an hour I fell asleep. The human mogadon responsible for this was a particularly barmy bishop whose speech was incomprehensible until he eventually revealed he thought that the Government were a bunch of pretty good eggs. I understand that their Lordships had earlier discussed the issue of euthanasia, a subject clearly of more than passing interest to many of them.

The advocates of televising the House of Fossils see it as the first stage in the campaign to televise the Commons. Apart from the fact that Austin Mitchell is one of the supporters of the campaign, I can't see anything wrong with the idea (perhaps Austin is just hedging his bets for a future career as a commentator.) On the other hand if we are going to be scrupulously fair to the Tories you'd have to televise the bars as well.

In all the fuss about this 'important democratic breakthrough,' I've hardly heard a voice raised about the credibility of the Lords. The media in this country are so servile that they never question the fact that two thirds of the legislature in Britain is composed of the monarchy and a second chamber stuffed full of the bootlickers of various Prime Ministers (past and present), bishops(!) and the descendants of a motley crew of robber barons, murderers, land grabbers and petty tyrants of every description.

We are bombarded from every angle with propaganda about how the second chamber acts as a "bulwark against an elected dictatorship". This must be code for a landslide Labour government, for the Thatcher Government has not been noticeably "moderated" by the Lords. Even if you accept the argument about the importance of a second chamber (which I don't), it hardly follows that the way to preserve democracy is to ask superannuated aristocrats to look after it !

One of the few arguments I've heard in defence of the Lords is that it contains a 'wealth of experience'. So does Parkhurst, and I wouldn't want that lot making the laws of the land either.

The democratic case against this unelected feudal ragbag is hardly helped when some left wingers seem to think that lobbying the Lords is as important as gaining support among the rank and file of the movement. There's no place for Ruritanian fairy tales in the Labour Party.

Spencer's company coal union

THE THREAT by Nottinghamshire working miners' leaders to form a breakaway union has been eagerly welcomed by all the miners' worst enemies. Two rival unions within the industry would be a massive step backwards for every miner. This can be confirmed by the experience of an earlier such breakaway movement in the same coalfield, when George Spencer MP formed the Nottinghamshire and District Miners' Industrial Union. The damage done by this "company union" lasted for more than a decade.

AFTER THE defeat of the general strike in 1926, the miners gallantly fought on until November when they were starved back to work. The coal owners took their revenge. They had the upper hand; many of the activists never returned to work. The districts were isolated and the owners decided the conditions and wages.

In Nottinghamshire, which was the first area to crack, the employers had the opportunity to smash the influence of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain (MFGB) and its district organisation, the Nottinghamshire Miners' Association (NMA).

George Spencer a right-wing Labour Party MP and witch-hunter of his day was a Nottingham miners' official. He supported the banning of communists at the 1924 party conference at which he declared: "If there was one outstanding fact in world history, it was that nothing substantial had ever been accomplished by revolution".

Local settlement

He vehemently opposed the communists, though the union that sponsored him as MP had elected Arthur J Cook, a declared 'Leninist' as general secretary

Spencer opposed the continuation of the strike in his area, which was one of the more prosperous, and the local owners were willing to settle on favourable terms.

He began to make local settlements and was eventually suspended from the MFGB. The owners, understanding that Spencer would be safe, agreed to give him sole negotiating rights. So the Nottinghamshire and District Miners' Industrial Union was born with the blessing of the coal owners.

Attempts were made to spread the idea to other coalfields, notably South Wales, Northumberland, Durham and Scotland.

In the wake of the General Strike's defeat, the Tories passed the Trades Disputes and Trade Union Act 1927. Sympathy strikes were made illegal, the old offence of intimidation was revived from Victorian days, restrictions were placed on picketing and Labour Party funds from the unions were blocked. Spencer's union reflected the Tories' concept of how a union should act; it was non-political—in other words anti-Labour and had no political fund.

Spencer's Industrial Union often reported collections for the NMA to management. In one dispute at Wellbeck colliery, the management forced all the miners to have contributions to the Industrial Union stopped out of their pay or face the sack. While the dispute was on, Spencer had agreed a reduced price list (amount paid to miners for coal produced). Similarly at Annesley, 200 men were sacked and were only taken back if they joined Spencer's union.

For a company union the Industrial Union's membership was low—between 4,000 to 5,000 in 1927. In the following years it grew, but real support for Spencer's union was shown in the ballot organised by the TUC in May 1928. Despite intimidation, 32,277 voted to support the NMA and only 2,533 voted for Spencer. The owners payed little notice to this ballot result.

The battle lasted 10 years. NMA membership declined from 15,740 in 1928 to 8,500 by 1935. But with the upturn in the economy the NMA began to grow; by the end of 1935 it had increased to 10,000.

The greater demand for coal meant that the MFGB influence began to increase. The national owners agreed to form a "Joint Standing Consultative Committee" which settled many of the outstanding disputes in the industry. The Nottinghamshire owners, because they never recognised the Federation, stood outside such a body.

The conflict between the two unions grew, with Spencer siding more and more with the owners, and came to a head at Harworth. In early 1935 the NMA had only seven members at Harworth out of a total workforce of 2,285. It began to increase. The year ended with 157 members and six later it doubled to 302.

There was much discontent at the pit, especially on dirt deductions. After a number of small disputes, the NMA conducted a ballot asking which union the men wanted to represent them. Despite intimidation they won 1,175 votes against 145 for Spencer's union. The management refused to negotiate with them.

One owner, Captain Muschamp, voiced his view: "We want to adopt the German idea—if the government is to check future trouble it must put its foot down and put its foot down strongly. . . We carried on peaceably with the Industrial Union for ten years."

Spencer's terms

Spencer was forced to negotiate with the MFGB. He would fuse but it had to be on his terms. These included:

i) That Nottinghamshire should be immune from strikes during the current agreement.

ii) That all local officials and collectors of the NMA who were not employed in the industry should be excluded from membership.

iii) That the Industrial Union should be allowed to nominate three full-time officials to the NMA's two.

iv) That the rules of the amalgamated body should provide that political business could only be discussed at specially convened political meetings.

Surprisingly the MFGB accepted this formula as a basis for negotiation. An agreement was signed, but a Special Conference rejected the fusion on the above terms. A national ballot was taken and by an overwhelming majority a call for a national strike was supported. Eventually a formula was found that diverted the strike and the fusion was accepted substantially on Spencer's terms. He was made permanent President until he retired in 1945.

Many men never returned to work at Harworth and many of Spencer's ex-officials supported victimisation of militants.

Did Spencerism die in Nottinghamshire? The answer to that question is no. Certainly it cannot die while we have in our movement men and women who put the interests of their careers before that of the workers.

Class collaborators like Spencer, can be clearly seen in our movement today, calling for witch-hunts and wanting to do deals with the Tories and the bosses and, for the lucky ones, being rewarded by their friends with a peerage. Until they are under the control of the membership and their wages are no more than that of skilled workers, this will continue.

The chief lesson of Spencerism today is that although ultimately the miners in Notts were won back to the national union, enormous damage was done to the conditions of miners, not only in that coalfield but nationally, because of the division within the heart of the industry.

It is vital that the NUM leaders today do everything in their power to persuade the Notts miners, not by threats of expulsion, but by debate and explanation, that their interests are tied up with those of their fellow workers in the other coalfields. A breakaway will be disastrous for all miners, but for none more so than the Notts miners themselves.

By Peter Jarvis

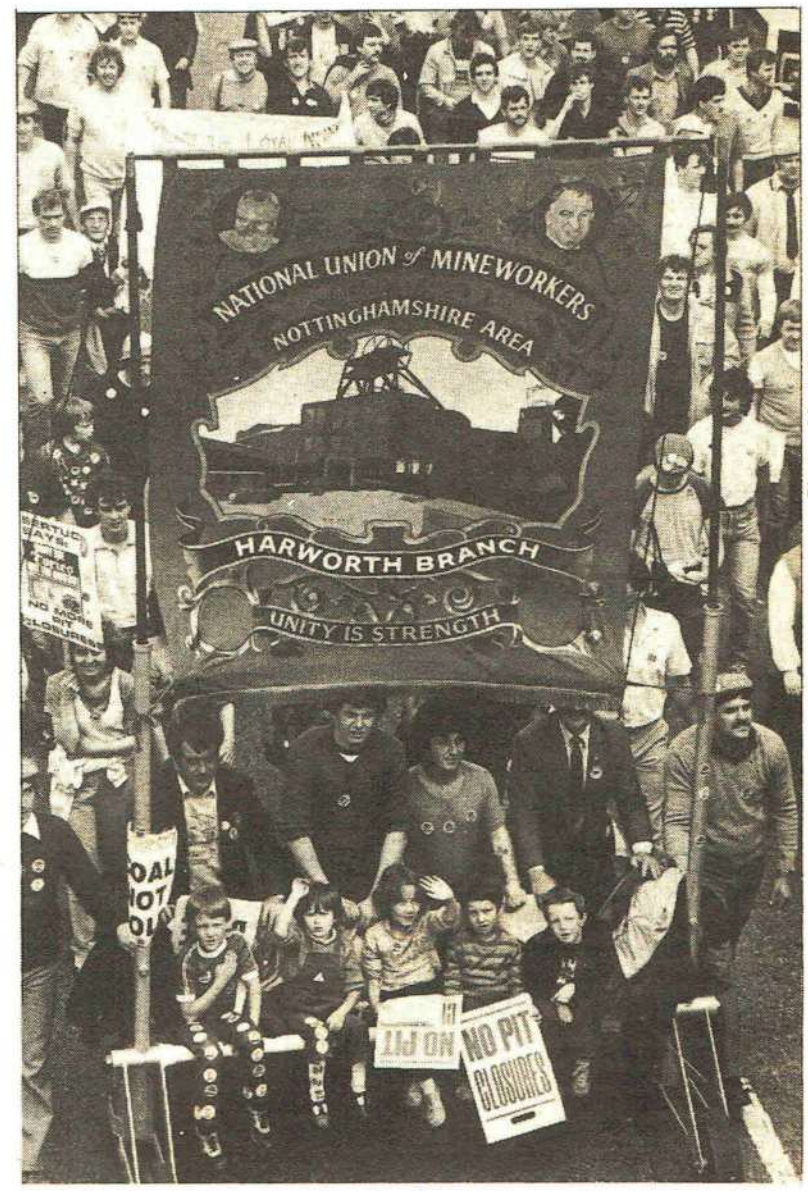


Photo: Mark Pinder

Harworth lodge miners on NUM march in London last summer. Harworth pit was at the centre of the dispute in which Spencers' union was quashed by the Nottingham Miners' Association, in a ballot, a result ignored by the bosses.

Campaign to defeat split

STRIKING MINERS in Nottinghamshire have been quick to respond to the threat to form a breakaway union. *Militant* spoke to Jim Robinson, South Notts Strike Committee:

"We've distributed leaflets at every pit and had a good response, particularly in the North, but also at pits like Cotgrave, one of the bastions of Lynk and Prendergast. The response has been suprisingly favourable. When lads go out, they are approached by working miners about staying in the NUM.

Retired miners in Cotgrave, say a breakaway union is doomed to failure. I don't think we will avoid the split but we have to recruit and keep as many as we can. I think if we got 10% to start with, which is easily attainable, that would be a firm foundation. The indications are we will get more, 50% in some branches.

Recruitment

Lynk and Prendergast are worried by the response. The majority of the strikers see the main thing is to defeat the breakaway; it's amazing how they got down to the task of recruiting new members to the NUM, after fighting on their own for so long.

I don't know why the expulsions were brought forward when they were; personally I think it was ill-timed. A resolution from Northumberland calling for expulsions was on the books six months or more. While we are on strike and the rest are working there's a problem of communication. We'd get a far more favourable response afterwards. And how can you have elections? I think we'll need a transitional period of a couple of months or so when we go back."

'Poison Ivy' isn't spreading

CHRIS BUTCHER—the so-called 'Silver Birch' came to Bates colliery in Northumberland last Friday.

His visit was intercepted by striking miners, and NUM chairman Ronnie Campbell and the secretary, confronted Butcher (dubbed locally 'Poison Ivy') in one of the surface buildings. They asked him where his funds came from. He couldn't answer and his visit ended when an undermanager came up from the pit and had the police escort him away.

Earlier the manager had called all the scabs to the canteen without telling them why. He then put Butcher in front of them and they were told he had come to talk to them about a new union. The majority walked out but not before he was shouted down. Only one scab spoke up for Butcher. And this was on a day when the scabs had been delayed getting into the pit for an hour because police had been pre-occupied with a big picket at nearby Ellington colliery.

These events were reported at a rally of all sections of the union on Saturday, where more men volunteered for picket duty and there was a revitalised mood of confidence and determination.

By a *Militant* reporter

'Warning'—for debating ideas

ANYONE thinking of taking up the Labour NEC's suggestion that there should be a 'debate on ideas' in the Labour Party should beware. The leadership intends to make this a very one sided debate.

If you defend the ideas of the *Militant* you may end up getting a letter from David Hughes, Labour Party National Agent.

Letter

Margaret Creear was recently elected to Labour's National Women's Committee and agreed to participate in a debate in Preston entitled 'Marxism against Reformism'. As a result David Hughes has written a letter to her pointing out that "The *Militant* tendency is a political organisation declared ineligible for affiliation to the Labour Party by the NEC and therefore membership of the *Militant* tendency is incompatible to membership of the Labour Party".

He goes on to say that it may cause confusion that Margaret's name is linked with the *Militant* and with the National Women's Committee. (The fact that it clearly says on a leaflet advertising the event that she was speaking in a personal capacity was, claims David Hughes, "meaningless".)

There is surely no confusion in anyone's mind except his about the ideas on which Margaret Creear stood for the National Women's Committee? No one who is involved in the Women's Organisation really needs their attention drawn to this as Margaret's political views are well known in the North West and nationally.

He goes on to say that speaking in defence of *Militant's* ideas "...raises questions about your own involvement with, and the extent of, your support for the *Militant* tendency."

The Labour Women's Organisation—who overwhelmingly passed a resolution condemning witch-hunts and calling for the reinstatement of the Blackburn Six at their national conference—will be astounded at the effrontery of this attack.

Miners

Whilst the ranks of the labour movement fights alongside the miners, and debates what policies will take Labour towards socialism, it seems some officers at Walworth Road still manage to find time to write offensive letters to long-standing party members, in order to continue the right wing's witch-hunt of Marxist ideas.

By Sheila Woodhead
(Secretary, Rochdale Women's Council)



Dave Nellist addresses the Portsmouth student rally on 23 January.

Students defend Poly

ON WEDNESDAY 23 January over three and a half thousand students demonstrated through the streets of Portsmouth. They marched in defence of Portsmouth Poly's student union after attacks from the Polytechnic's governors. The students have been fined £16,500, following an occupation by the students after their negotiating rights were unilaterally withdrawn.

The march demonstrated the determination of students to defend education. The students were backed up by a coach load of striking miners from St Johns NUM lodge in South Wales.

Students' disappointment with the poor leadership of the National Union of Students on this issue was illustrated when NUS president Phil Woolas was booed and heckled as he rose to speak. There was anger that many colleges only received notification of the demonstration on the day of the march itself, even though the NUS leadership have had since the December NUS conference to prepare for it.

Unite

The best applause of the day went to Dave Nellist MP who urged students to unite with public sector workers in defence of services and fight for socialism in the ranks of the Labour Party and LPYS. Similar support was given to Brian Jenkins, chairman of the Poly's Joint Trade Union Committee, who called on all colleges to form similar committees in the fight against privatisation and cuts in jobs. Lesleigh Woodburn of the NUS's Further Education National Committee had a good reception when she outlined the fight of the FE college students.

The campaign by Portsmouth Poly students continues with a lobby of the Poly's Finance and General Purposes Committee on February 7.

By John Holt
(Portsmouth Poly Labour Club)

Reinstate Brychan Davies

THE LABOUR leadership came to last week's National Executive Committee with the Parliamentary demonstration by left-wing Labour MPs fresh in their minds. However, the meeting itself was a low key affair.

Neil Kinnock agreed to Dennis Skinner's suggestion to hold a party political broadcast in support of the miners. The attempt by the right-wing to open up a wider investigation into *Militant* was defeated at the committee stage and went through the NEC without a mention.

For some on the right the light has finally dawned that witch-hunts and expulsions don't win elections.

However, in an attempt to save face the expulsion of Brychan Davies was bulldozed through. It had taken Neil Kinnock three days to forget the comments made on ITV's *Weekend World*, that to carry out expulsions they needed proof. The price for breaking this rule was legal action against the NEC.

In Brychan's case the 'implicating' letter which was before the meeting could not be classed as 'proof of membership of an organisation'. But, moreover the letter was not written by Brychan. It was a forgery!

Despite protests to this effect by Frances Curran, and that she could prove it, the vote was taken. By 15 votes to 13 Brychan was expelled.

The labour movement must fight for his reinstatement. Even so, attacks by the right-wing will not stop the growth of socialist ideas within the labour movement. The 400 young miners who have joined the Labour Party since the beginning of the strike, and who openly support the ideas of Marxism, are just the beginning.



Youth in the mining communities have been politicised by the strike—above a 13 year-old is arrested by riot police in Grimethorpe. Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Co-op witch-hunt?

THE RIGHT-wing of the Co-operative movement are preparing to conduct a general witch-hunt against *Militant* supporters in the Co-op Party.

Until now, action against *Militant* supporters has been confined to a small number of cases when local Co-op Parties have refused to allow individuals to either join or to renew their existing membership.

But a motion to the movement's national conference in Brighton at Easter from the North Eastern Co-op Party will, if passed, give carte-blanche to local parties to expel *Militant* supporters. It would also allow supporters to be excluded from policy-making bodies such as the annual conference if local parties refuse to implement expulsions. The choice facing *Militant* supporters will thus be between second-class membership or no membership at all.

Carbon-copy

Socialists in the Co-op movement will be outraged by this attempt to stage a 'carbon copy' of the Labour Party right-wing's own witch-hunt, without even the pretence of 'investigations' or 'registers'. Undoubtedly this opposition will be made clear at party meetings up and down the country, and particularly within the North Eastern society itself.

In all other respects, the preliminary agenda for the 1985 conference is the most radical for years, reflecting the determination of ordinary party members to resist and reverse the Tory government's attacks on working people. Whatever the outcome of the *Militant* issue at conference, the growth of genuine socialist ideas in the Co-operative movement will not be stemmed by petty organisational measures.

By Iain Forbes
(South Suburban CWS party committee)

Suspension threat lifted

IN A set-back for the right-wing, the suspension threat against two *Militant* supporters in Gillingham (reported in last week's issue) was thrown out by the local Labour Party at its General Committee last week.

It is hoped this will mark the end of a long running campaign by the right-wing against *Militant* supporters in Gillingham. The paper was originally banned from party premises in August 1983.

At the end of 1984 the party's executive committee decided to initiate disciplinary proceedings against three party members—Tony Baker, Mary Turner and myself—for having sold the paper on party premises after the November GC.

At its January meeting the EC decided to recommend myself and Tony Baker be suspended from party membership for three months, with action to be taken against Mary Turner in February.

When the GMC met on Wednesday 23 January, the EC's recommendation was thrown out by 25 votes to 22, and action against Mary Turner was also dropped. Also, an emergency motion from the LPYS permitting the sale of *Militant* in the car-park outside the Labour Hall, was carried by 25 votes to 20.

Some of our best support came from the trade union delegations, including the NUR, ASLEF, EETPU and AUEW delegates.

By David Turner
(Gillingham LPYS)

Miners take leading LPYS role

THE INFLUX of the young miners into the Labour Party Young Socialists was illustrated at the Yorkshire regional conference last week, when two striking miners were elected to leading positions in the LPYS.

Miners Gary Ironmonger and Nigel Pearce joined the LPYS 10 months ago after the strike began. Gary Ironmonger, of Cortonwood NUM, was elected as the new LPYS National Committee member for the area, while Nigel Pearce was voted onto the Regional Committee.

The conference itself, attended by nearly 200 Young Socialists at the Spa Hall in Bridlington, not only took up the miners' struggle, but discussed how other industries had been decimated by the Tories.

A science graduate described working for British Steel: "The first thing that strikes you when you enter a steelworks is the emptiness." He said that because of the Tories' crazy policies of running the industry down, they were now losing orders because too many foremen had been made redundant.

Health Service

A similar story was to be found in the health service. Adrian O'Mally, a porter at Pinderfields Hospital in Wakefield, described what happened last summer when there was an outbreak of Salmonella disease at the nearby Stanley Royd hospital.

After the conference many delegates returned to the theme of the miners, when a *Militant* readers meeting heard striking miner Roy Jones describe his recent solidarity visit to South Africa.

By Sally Johnson
(Wakefield West LPYS)

● AT 24-hours notice a hundred anti-fascists, including Labour Party and YS members, turned out in Wakefield on Saturday after it was discovered the fascist British National Party was to hold a street meeting, supposedly in support of the NUM. They got a clear reply from the NUM—nearly 50 miners waited in the nearby shopping centre ready to move against the BNP.

As it was, only five or so fascists turned up and were too scared to try and meet.

By Mick Richardson
(Wakefield LPYS)

With Liverpool's crisis worse this year . . .

Shop stewards back united campaign

THE FIGHT for Liverpool's future is on. The Labour council now face a financial crisis worse than last year.

By Josie Aitman

The Tory government has reneged on promised they made to Liverpool Labour Council in July. They are determined to get revenge on the Labour council which forced them into their biggest U-turn.

Jobs threatened

They are now cutting back on cash allocation for the city which means thousands of council workers will be made redundant. To balance the books according to Tory figures would require 6,000 job losses or a 220% rate increase. The only alternative therefore is to fight to secure money back taken by the Tories in Rate Support Grant and penalties since 1979.

Over 500 local authority shop stewards representing 30,000 local authority workers recently attended a special meeting to launch the campaign. Derek Hatton, deputy leader of the Council, pointed out the success of last years' campaign: over 2,000 workers in new jobs; apprentices taken on; over 2,000 council houses have been built or planned.

"We demand the return of the money the Tories have stolen from Liverpool Labour Council—£96 million from the Housing Investment Programme; £96 million from loss of housing subsidies; and £18 million in education."

Many stewards then came in from the floor. At the beginning one or two contributions attacked the council, particularly one prominent Communist Party member, who tried to argue that local authority trade unions should campaign independently from the council and that the stewards should not discuss the council's campaign until every trade union had discussed it separately.

A member of the Socialist Workers Party also tried to discredit the Labour Council's victory and asked how could it be a victory if we are back again this year with another campaign? This individual obviously is not aware that as long as the Tories are in office the fight will always continue.

These comments were followed by several excellent contributions, in particular from Peter Lennard and Bernie Hogan, GMBATU convenors, who stated that they would support the stand of the City Council to the hilt. There was also sharp criticism aimed at leaders of some local authority unions who had appeared to deliberately attack the Labour Council and they said it was time to unite against the common enemy—Thatcher.





Last year's victory meant 2,000 council houses have been built or planned.

Common enemy

Ian Lowes, convenor of GMBATU No 5 branch, won enthusiastic applause when he explained how last year's victory was achieved due to the campaign, and that any talk of an independent battle was absolute nonsense. "If we went into a battle this year with two separate campaigns, one by the council and one by the local authority unions we would be doomed to failure. If we don't stand together we will have to face up to the fact that 6,000 redundancies will occur."

He called for unity behind the council and unity behind the socialist policies of Liverpool Labour Council. The resolution called for support for the Labour council and campaign, building on the excellent campaign and victory of last year.

CP member Jack Kay moved that the resolution be not taken but he only received 5 votes. The vote was then put to the meeting and out of 500 stewards, only 2 voted against including Jack Kay. Liverpool proved last year that a mobilised working class with a Marxist leadership at its head took on the Tories and won a major victory. The battle this year is even more crucial. With a national battle and with the support of local authority unions nationally an even greater defeat can be inflicted on this Tory government.

Labour Party unanimous support

IN THE traditions of Liverpool District Labour Party, an aggregate meeting open to all local Labour Party members was held to explain and discuss the Budget; over 200 attended.

As John Hamilton, leader of the Labour council stated: "We are at the beginning of this year's campaign. We are determined to win. Last year showed it could be done".

Last year Liverpool was on its own—but this year, other authorities are on the Tories' hit list. A joint campaign nationally by other local authorities and the support of the local authority trade unions puts the campaign in a stronger position.

No rate tactic

Liverpool DLP believes that a deficit budget (no cuts, no job losses and no massive rate rise to pay for Tory cuts) would be the best tactic for the City. But most of the other local authorities under attack have chosen not to fix a rate at all on 7 March. In the interests of unity, Liverpool have decided, at this stage, to go along with this tactic, without giving up our basic demands.

We believe that there should be maximum unity. With the support of the local authority workforce both in Liverpool and nationally together with the labour and trade union movement and working class in Liverpool, we believe that we will win. Workers nationally are looking to Liverpool's campaign for a lead. Already there is a programme of public meetings, rallies, depot meetings planned.

Enthusiasm

There was an enthusiastic response from Labour Party members and activists from the floor. Peter Ferguson, city councillor, mentioned the effect of the campaign and victory last year—with hundreds of young people in Liverpool taken off the dole and given jobs with the council.

Terry Fields MP, Broadgreen, received an excellent response when he castigated the attitude of some of the Labour leadership in condeming Liverpool's campaign and reminded them of the Labour Party's national conference decision to back those Labour councils who are forced to break the law by the effect of Tory policies.

The response from Liverpool's LP membership was proved when the statement putting Liverpool's case and the basis of campaign was passed unanimously.

Local paper smears unions

IN A deliberate attempt to divert public attention away from the Council campaign to get more money from the government, the local paper the *Liverpool Echo*, has launched an attack upon the trade unions and the way the Council fills job vacancies. Last week they devoted four pages to attacking "Hatton's private army", hinting it was all a *Militant* plot.

A key figure accused was Ian Lowes, GMBATU convenor. He handed a letter of protest into the Echo, part of which we reprint below:

It was suggested that I, as the convenor of GMBATU branch 5, am in a position to hand-pick those people who will be employed in a security force. This ridiculous suggestion clearly demonstrates Mr Phelps' total lack of understanding of how our nomination procedure is applied, or indeed how a trade union operates.



Ian Lowes.

Unemployed register

The GMBATU in common with many other trade unions operates an unemployed register. Unlike most unions however, we do not confine our register for GMBATU members only...

Any unemployed people who write to us have the opportunity of applying to be included on the unemployed register. There are three main criteria that we lay down:

1) Firstly people who apply must be unemployed.

2) People who apply must not have sold previous jobs through acceptance of voluntary redundancy.

3) people who apply must be willing to join the union if they are successful in securing employment with the council.


CAUSE FOR CONCERN
An occasional Echo investigative series
ROW OVER 'HATTON'S PRIVATE ARMY'
Anger over 'sham'
It's a fix, say race
Fury grows over top city securit
I got my job in good faith, security chief
Militant for jobs
How the Left Wing have the last word on who does what
By Peter Phelps Local Government Editor
Turn to next page

Liverpool Echo attack last week.

Application forms are sent out and the completed application form is considered by a committee of 11 people. All those applications which are successful are placed on an unemployed register. When vacancies arrive vacancies are taken from that register.

All trade union nominations are interviewed by management. The decision as to who is ultimately appointed lies with management and not with the union.

My involvement therefore is extremely limited simply as one person on a committee of 11. To suggest otherwise is a complete distortion of the truth.

Ending discrimination

My union along with most others within the city council believes that nominating rights are essential if the discrimination that took placein the past is to be eradicated. Historical evidence clearly shows that in the days of the last administration of the Liberals and Tories far less opportunities existed for ethnic minorities, women, disabled, trade unionists etc than now exist due to the trade union nomination rights. In fact far less job opportunities for anyone existed under the last administration who got rid of 5,000 jobs.

We aim through our nomination rights to ensure that equal opportunities prevail and we will not be deflected from that task by smears, innuendo, or unsubstantiated allegations in articles like that written by Peter Phelps.

Your newspaper (the *Liverpool Echo*) which claims to speak out for the people of Liverpool could serve the people better by joining in with the city council campaign to secure more resources for Liverpool from Thatcher's government rather than attack the people who are campaigning for all our people.

Yours faithfully,
Ian Lowes
Convenor
GMBATU branch 5

Rate-capping threatens jobs and services

'Southwark will not comply'—interview with council leader

TONY RITCHIE (right) was elected leader of Southwark Council in May 1984. He has been on the Council for seven years.

In this interview with *Militant* Tony Ritchie explains the crisis facing Southwark and the councils response.



Q. What is the effect of rate-capping going to be on Southwark?
A. We are not going to allow any effect because we are not going to comply. If we were to comply it would be quite devastating.

You would have to make cuts in the region of 20–25% in our services. We are not prepared to close old people's homes, stop meals on wheels services, reduce our housing maintenence programme to a level that is virtually non-existent.

The discrepancy between what the government says and what we need is in actual fact £22 million but we have some balances and we have now gone through all the creative accountancy that we can and the discrepancy is £12 million out of a required budget of £130 million.

Of that £130m, £40m will be debt charges. £130m is what we want to spend next year; the cap is £108.5m.

Q. What is Southwark going to do?
A. We are not going to comply, that's the first thing. The second thing is that we believe in maintaining the unity of the hitlist authorities. We believe that the only way you can tackle this government is by all the local authorities not complying with the government's legislation.

I take the view, that if we get to the stage where councillors are being disqualified or surcharged or put in prison, the battle is lost.

Our strategy is to force the government into recognising that there will be a crisis in local goverment that is entirely their responsibility and that they will have to absolve that responsibility by restoring the money that's been taken away from Southwark and the other hit-list authorities and also the heavily penalised authorities of course.

Q. Is the scenario that Soutwark will not set a rate on 7 March?
A. Yes. In line with the other authorities, we won't make a rate.

Q. And then concerted negotiation?
A. We will not negotiate alone or come to any independent agreement, leaving other authorities to sink. We will be demanding that we negotiate with the government, not on the basis of increasing rates, but on the basis of returning the money that has been taken away from us.

Q. How realistic is it to expect the government to come up with the cash?
A. I think that a Tory government, the same as anyone else is responsive to pressure. I think, that in all probability is that if it's just the 16 authorities on their own then perhaps that's unrealistic.

I think if that can be built up into a major campaign so that the government can see that the people of the hit-list authorities and the labour movement is determined to back the hit-list authorities then I believe we can put pressure on them.

Q. You say that there is going to be mass pressure which will cause some kind of change by the government; how has the campaign gone so far in Southwark?
A. I think it's going well. We have worked very closely with the other three hit-list authorities in South London (Lewisham, Greenwich and Lambeth). We have a joint campaign; we are reaching a much wider area, a million people in one campaign, rather than four fragmented campaigns that reaches just a quarter million people each.

We have total support from the trade union movement in this town hall. I think some of them are sceptical, and in Southwark's case they are entitled to be sceptical, because the history of the old right-wing administration has been one of compromise and sell-out over the years. So I understand that scepticism. But nevertheless they have said, you do what you say you are doing and you have our total support in doing it.

We have got total support of the voluntary sector; we are talking to wide sections this month, the tenants' movement, the pensioners, etc. We have support from the church, particularly the non-conformist and black churches.

My one concern at the moment is that the parties themselves don't seem to realise the importance of actually campaigning. I think that they think if the council's throwing money into a campaign, that absolves them of any responsibilty of participating.

You can spend all the money you like on putting posters up and press advertising. It gets the message across but it doesn't confirm the message and I think that the thing we are going to have to do in the weeks ahead is actually get out into the community to explain to the people what is happening and arrange that personal contact. Time is short.

Q. How do you see the future?
A. Firstly, we will not reach any agreement or any settlement, other than a settlement that preserves the present budget that we have and there will be no loss of jobs or services. We are committed to the unity of the hit-list authorities.

If we went now and talked to Jenkin, we would be offered crumbs because we would be responding to his timetable and that's why I am not in favour of talking to Jenkin now. I believe that we should talk to Jenkin from a position of strength after the 7 March when we have shown him that we are determined and we are not going to back down and we will be fixing the timetable, and the demands.

I think the Tories are on the run. If we look back at what has taken place since July, not one of the Labour hit-list authorities went for derogation—back-door efforts were made, a number of feelers and carrots were put out to them, but none of them bit because they realised at the time that if they reached a deal that would hurt the rest.

I think Jenkin is desperate for a local authority to break ranks and go to him. I believe that if one authority was to do that they'd get a marvellous deal, but the other 15 would be absolutely left up the river without an oar. They are not prepared to do that.

That is something very new for Labour local authorities because they have always tended to be little-Southwarkers, or little-Lewishamers, or little-Lambethers, etc before now—parochial, not standing outside their own patch and very often corrupt within their own patch I might say. But that has not happened on this occasion and that is a marvellous advancement for the labour movement in local government.





(Top) Last week's occupation at threatened Post Office in Southwark; (story p.14). Photo: Paul Traynor
(Below)A Tory election poster, suitably amended to make it accurate.

Any cut will be fought

STANDING TOGETHER

Joint statement by Southwark Unions

The Southwark Trade Union Joint Co-ordinating Committee representing all Council unions, declares its absolute determination to resist and defy the government's rate-capping plans, and to fight all attempts to cut Council jobs and services.

The TUJCC demands that Southwark Council commits itself publicly and unequivocally to:

1. A policy of non-compliance with the rate-capping legislation and;

2. Not reach any agreement with the Secretary of State on expenditure levels lower than those necessary to maintain all jobs and services.

We will give full support to any Councillors who are penalised for following this policy.

No Council union will co-operate with any attempts, whether by Southwark Council or by the government, to cut jobs and services. If the government tries to impose Commissioners, we will resist their introduction, withdraw all co-operation, and make it impossible for them to run the Borough.

In addition, we will defy any government legislation intended to compel Chief Officers to introduce cuts, produce a balanced budget, or set a rate in the face of non compliance by Southwark Council. We will not co-operate with any Chief Officer who complies with such legislation, and expect the Council to take firm action against any Chief Officer who acts in this fashion.

The TUJCC is strongly recommending to all Southwark Council unions to commit themselves, through their normal democratic procedures, to the following joint undertaking:

That if any member of any of our unions is made redundant, or threatened with redundancy, or is penalised for complying with our jointly agreed policy on rate-capping, then all unions represented on the TUJCC will respond collectively in a united and forceful manner, if necessary by all-out industrial action, using our joint industrial strength to resist such attacks.

Letter to Councillors

10 January, 1985

To All Labour Councillors

Dear Councillor,

Rate-capping, the Council and the unions.

We are writing to urge you to give full support for a policy of non-compliance with the Government's rate-capping legislation. The Town Hall trade union believe that rate-capping poses the most serious threat ever to jobs and services in Southwark, and are united in our determination to resist and defy it.

We are not campaigning to allow the Council to raise its rates through the roof. We believe that the people of Southwark already pay too much for inadequate services...

We recognise, however, that some Councillors will not feel able to face the risk of surcharge and disqualification. We ask them to resign now in order to make room for someone who is prepared to face up to that possibility. Such a resignation at this stage would not be regarded on our part as dishonourable. We pledge full support to Councillors who refuse to comply with the legislation...

We believe that a united stand by the Council and the trade unions will inflict a defeat on a Tory Government hell-bent on destroying local democracy and wrecking services which the people of Southwark elected you to provide.

Yours sincerely,
J.D Bryant (ACTTS)
R. Smart (GMBATU)
J.A. Mulrenan (NALGO)
F. Coombes (NUPE Bermondsey General)
C. Cowan (EETPU)
M. Bryant (NUPE Camberwell General)
M. Bennett (NUPE Southwark General)
G. Taylor (NUPE, Officers)
A. Legge (TGWU)
A. O'Brien (UCATT)

Pinochet regime in crisis

Revolution in

1984 SAW the struggle against the Pinochet dictatorship taken to a new level. The heroism especially of the youth, is a brilliant illustration of Marx's saying that nothing can break the determination of the working class to change society.

By a correspondent in Chile

Facing brutal repression and a collapse in living standards, the Chilean workers have returned again and again to the struggle, taking up the gauntlet thrown down by the state apparatus. 1984 saw the largest May Day demonstration under the dictatorship and the first general strike against the regime.

Monthly protests involved hundreds of thousands, mainly youth, who came onto the streets, building barricades, facing police and armed with tear gas, water cannon and machine guns, with little more than stones, Molotovs and frequently only their bare hands.

For many these struggles have resulted in the ultimate sacrifice the workers' movement can ask for, often in the most horrific circumstances. Some youth captured during battles are stripped and forced to lie over burning barricades. In the September protests youth in one *poblacion* (shanty town) were scalped by the sadistic squads which make up sections of the hated riot police.

However, faced with this ruthless repression the determination to overthrow the hated dictatorship has grown. The regime has carried through a ruthless repression of the working class movement, which is horrendous even by the standards of the Latin American generals, who turned the entire continent into one enormous concentration camp in the 1970's.

The Pinochet dictatorship has murdered over 50,000 out of a population of 11 million. It compares with "only" 30,000 in Argentina with a population of approximately 30 million. However heroism and willingness to struggle, although crucial, do not in themselves make a revolution. A programme, analysis and above all perspective are essential, if the working class of Chile are to gain a decisive victory resulting in the abolition of capitalism and exploitation.

Regime with no support

Despite an apparent show of strength in the last three or four months, 1984 signified an unprecedented crisis and the underlying weakness of the dictatorship which all point to its likely collapse. The regime's state apparatus lacks any social basis whatsoever, steaming full speed towards a social explosion of insurrectionary proportions.

Every section of Chilean society now stands opposed to the dictatorship, including those sections of the middle class such as the small truck owners who initially welcomed it, imagining that it would solve their problems. Even the bourgeois who brought the dictator to power have gained nothing but a worsening crisis.

Whenever the dictatorship finally departs it will have totally failed in its declared intentions of "obliterating Marxism from the country.".

Still a larger force than the industrial proletariat in Russia prior to the revolution, the working class is the decisive force for the socialist revolution. Social misery and despair have reached unprecedented proportions for the Chilean working class.

After the slump of 1981/2 unemployment soared to 35%, according to the United Nations. (16% according to the Government's official figures). In the shanty towns it reaches anything up to 90%. One estimate put youth unemployment at around 70%. The unemployed receive no income whatsoever.

Large sections of the middle class have been affected. Unemployed teachers are frequently seen on the buses singing to obtain some income. In the capital, 35% of doctors are estimated unemployed. Poor diet has resulted in a massive rise in health problems.

The bourgeois Christian Democrats estimated that 5 million people, or nearly 50% of the population are undernourished. Milk is virtually unknown in the workers' districts and shanty towns. Mothers speak of children who don't start talking until the age of six, due to the effect of poor diet.

These conditions, coupled with the repression are giving rise to an explosive situation. The three objective conditions Lenin described for revolution now exist in Chile. The ruling class is split. The middle class is active in opposition to the dictatorship, and a willingness to struggle reaching heroic proportions exists among the working class.

The bourgeois look to the future with trepidation. Without doubt the majority now favour ending the dictatorship and the transition to a form of bourgeois democracy, as in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. By reform from the top they hope to prevent a revolution from below.

They have however a fundamental problem, which didn't confront the other bourgeois where such transitions have been carried through. Chile has powerful parties of the working class, in the Socialist and Communist parties. A fear of them taking over in elections and unleashing a movement which they would not be able to control has held back the bourgeois from acting decisively.

As a result a massive polarisation is taking place. In addition to this they face a dictator determined to hang onto power until the very end unlike other regimes throughout the continent (or in Spain where Franco conveniently died.)

Under the pressure of the masses, therefore, the bourgeois has split with no clear strategy as to how to resolve the crisis. The most right wing of the bourgeois represented in the National Party is divided into at least three different factions. All favour a transition but only with the agreement of Pinochet.

The other major force of the Chilean bourgeois, the Christian Democracy, is also divided. One wing led by Valdes favour a programme of social mobilisation to put pressure on the regime to stand aside, and more recently if this fails to look to the armed forces to remove Pinochet. The other wing more cautiously want to keep the Communist Party and one wing of the Socialist Party out of the main capitalist opposition alliance, the Democratic Alliance (DA).

With every attempt at a transition collapsing, the divided Chilean bourgeois show every sign of demoralisation. As Jarpa, a right wing NP member taken into the government in September 1983 to carry through a transition said in his recent resignation which was rejected by Pinochet, "...I have tried everything and everything I have tried has failed".

Every attempt at dialogue has collapsed. Most recently, in December the letter from the DA asking for a fresh attempt at dialogue, was in the words of one member "...simply thrown into the waste bin".

The Chilean bourgeois have completely lost control of the state apparatus. A military bonapartist regime, it has risen above society, defending private property but without direct control by the bourgeois themselves. The process began immediately after the coup in 1973. For the main wing of Chilean capitalism the original intention was to have a *golpe blanco*, a "white coup" a military regime for about a year to "clear up the mess" and afterwards fresh elections.

However Pinochet had very different ideas. Having seized power he had no intention of surrendering it. Proclaiming himself to be "appointed by God to fight Marxism", comparing himself with a "Roman emperor" he intends to stay in power until his constitutional term expires in 1989, "at least". That is to say, revolution permitting.

Thus the Chilean capitalist class squats on the horns of a dilemma they have been incapable of resolving. What was an advantage has become a disadvantage, having brought the dictatorship to power to defend their interests, it has now become one of the major obstacles that they face.

Pinochet sticks in power

The divisions within the bourgeois have also re-enforced the determination of the regime to cling to power. Even madmen can speak wise words sometimes. As Pinochet said, "with the opposition divided into at least 60 different groupings what is the alternative?"

If the bourgeois at the last minute take action against the dictatorship, the removal of Pinochet would simply unleash an enormous



Pinochet: clinging to his power.



Heroic struggle against the

Chicago economists and Santiago generals ban

THE INSANE lurch to monetarism, under the "Chicago boys" in the early years of the dictatorship, intensified the effects of the world crisis on the Chilean economy. Slashing state expenditure to reduce inflation, cut-throat competition to weed out the weak, would leave the most efficient sections of the economy to flourish. That was the theory.

With a military dictatorship to keep the working class in check, it was to be a laboratory test for the monetarist theoreticians, but a massive cut in purchasing power of the workers and middle class, and a massive rise in unemployment, slashed the market sending the economy into a massive slump which wiped out whole sections of manufacturing industry. It has plummeted to a depth from which it will never recover.

The state itself faced a massive fall in revenue but an enormous expenditure on the repressive apparatus. With 105 soldiers for every 10,000 people, the Chilean army is the largest per head of population in the continent. The repressive apparatus accounts for a staggering 10% of GNP.

For Chilean capitalism the continuation of the Pinochet dictatorship is not merely causing enormous political problems, but has become a financial burden, a parasitical monster producing nothing except a busy trade for the undertakers.

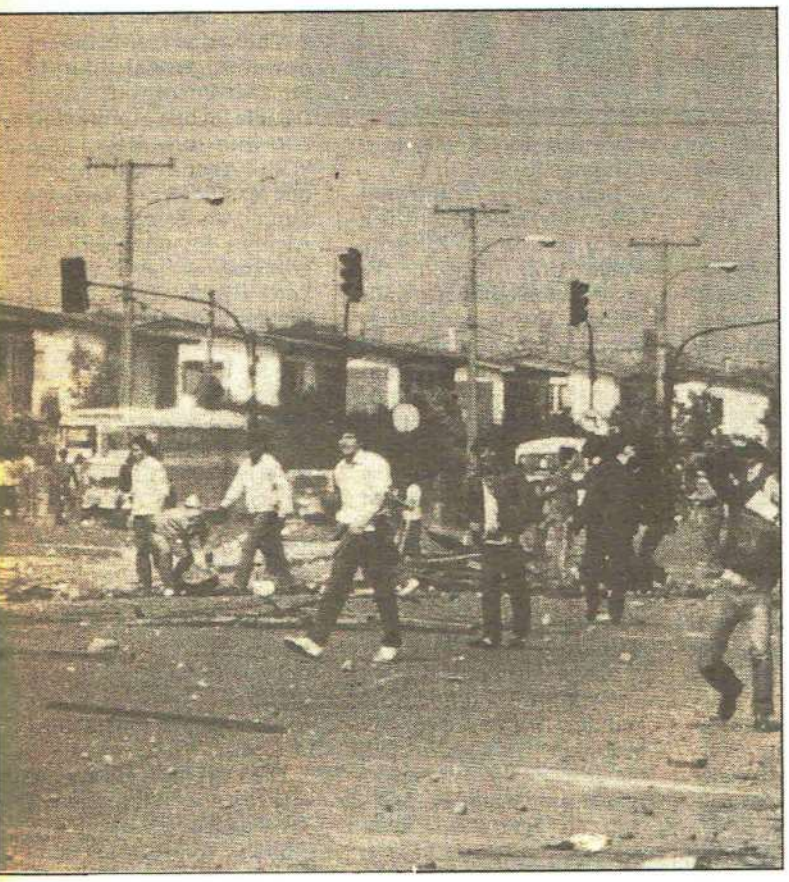
Together with the massive loans for private firms the net result was a gigantic foreign debt, with incredible rates of interest, and the entire economy in the hands of the world banks. Thus when the Junta seized power in 1973, the foreign debt stood at US$4,048m and 15% of the GNP. It now stands at US$19,000m accounting for 80% of GNP, or approximately $US 1,500 for every Chilean.

Pinochet, the stalwart of free enterprise presided over the greatest number of recorded bankruptcies in Chilean history. Under the Christian Democrat President Frei it reached 1,350, under Allende 340 and under Pinochet 3,310. As the opponent of state intervention he

Chile



Protests against the Pinochet regime have not been stopped by repression.



torship's well armed police.

ipt Chile

eads a regime which has 70% the assets from the 50 larges ms in its hands!
The decline had its most amatic reflection in the reduc on of the manufacturing orkforce from 30% in 1973 to little below 19%. Any society hich is unable to develop the oductive forces is historically omed. Chilean capitalism in me respects has taken socie back to the beginning of the ntury. It is over ripe for revolu on. In 1890, there were 50,000 industrial workers. By 00 this had risen to 250,000. the present time in Santiago ere are only 250,000 industrial orkers and not much more than 0,000 throughout the whole untry.

movement of the working class. Failure to do so will lead to an explosion from below reaching insurrectionary proportions. Whatever they do will be a mistake under such conditions.

Possibly the armed forces, or sections of it under pressure of the movement might move to oust Pinochet; even an intervention from the CIA who assisted in bringing the regime to power could not be excluded. However such a move would be fraught with danger and resolve nothing, least of all the advance of the revolution.

However a crucial question lies before the workers' movement (mainly organised in the MDP and the CP and the dominant wing of the SP) in Chile and internationally. Why is the regime still in power with such a weak social base and with the movement of the Chilean masses so determined? The answer lies not in the objective situation but in the thoroughly mistaken policies adopted by the leadership of the Chilean workers' parties, especially the Communist Party.

All the objective conditions for the socialist revolution now exist in Chile. However the leaders of the workers' movement, rather than launch a struggle for revolution raise the necessity of an alliance with the so-called progressive wing of Chilean capitalism, the leadership of the Christian Democrats.

Their idea is that the Chilean capitalist class is a progressive force, and that the tasks of the revolution are bourgeois. Therefore they conclude the dictatorship can only be overthrown in alliance with the progressive wing of chilean capitalism. This has meant that workers' leaders have a policy of waiting for the Christian Democrats before undertaking a struggle. These ideas of the leadership are false from beginning to end.

Bourgeois fears

Chilean capitalism is tied hand and foot to the interests of imperialism through the banks. They can play no role to end exploitation of the country by the world banks and multinationals. More than anything else the Chilean bourgeois fear a movement of the working class, especially after the experience of the Popular Unity government of 1970 – 73.

In the struggle against the dictatorship the leadership of the Christian Democracy (DC) has been a brake on the movement, always opposing the call for a general strike. Even in the recent strike on 30 October, called by Sequel (leader of the union CNT and a DC member) the DC leadership denounced the call.

In September when the Democratic Alliance, of which they are the driving force, called a day protest, its "excesses" and the "violence" were denounced by one of the DC leaders. Most specifically how can the working class place trust in the leadership of this party of the "progressive" wing of Chilean capitalism, when it threw its wieght behind the 1973 coup Alwyn, one of the DC leaders today, declared then that the junta deserved "the support of the people". Together with the NP the very day after the coup on 12 September, they presented a declaration of congratulations to Pinochet.

It is true that the DC has the support of sections of the middle class and even of workers, in opposition to the regime—(or rather was given it by the workers' leaders). However the point for the workers' parties is to win these sections away from the influence of the CD through a determined struggle, a clear alternative taking up the day-to-day problems of these people. Not a strategy to win the political exploiters of the middle layers of Chilean society, but a programme to win the exploited middle layers themselves.

Mass movement of workers

Much of the support they have won has been due to proclaiming their support for "democracy". Enormous illusions exist in the struggle for bourgeois democracy.

After 11 years of ruthless dictatorship, tremendous support for elementary democratic rights exists —the right to hold elections, to strike, to have demonstrations, freedom of the press. The workers' parties must always place themselves at the forefront of such demands. Never must the bourgeois hypocrites of the CD be allowed to parade as defenders of democracy.

The workers' parties must come out in favour of election to a Constituent Assembiy, but a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly, one summoned by a national Congress of Cordones (Chilean Soviets) and charged with transforming society and implementing a revolutionary programme to elminate the plight of the masses. Its base must be the organisation of a socialist planned economy.

Unless accompanied with a programme for socialist revolution, a struggle for such rights will not only fail to solve the fundamental problems facing Chile's workers and middle class, but those very rights will themselves be threatened. After the fall of the Pinochet dictatorship, a failure by the working class to take power will open the way in five or seven years to yet another dictatorship, even more brutal than the current regime if that is imaginable.

Faced with the continuation of the dictatorship, large sections of the youth have become impatient and have turned their attention to the idea of the armed struggle, more specifically support for the ideas of individual terrorism. Drawing upon the lessons of 1973, the majority of the youth have concluded that the reason for defeat lay in the absence of arms.

Especially after the developments in Nicaragua, the vast majority of the youth are now demanding arms. It has found its reflection in the Communist Party where a limited campaign of a guerrilla character is being conducted.

Under the conditions in Chile the instincts of the youth are entirely correct. The necessity to arm the movement, and defend the revolution is clear. The organisation of a workers' militia is the most effective way of undertaking such a struggle. Together with the organisation of an insurrectionary general strike, it would lead to the collapse of the dictatorship.

However what is entirely mistaken is the idea of individual terrorism fostered by the leadership of the CP and other groups such as the MIR, that it will be possible for a small group of heroic armed youth to overthrow the regime with a campaign of bombs, guns and bullets.

A mass movement, under the leadership of the working class drawing behind it the youth, unemployed and peasants, armed through its militia, is the way to overthrow the dictatorship. There can be no substitute for a mass movement of the proletariat.

However to raise such a programme also poses more questions. Where is the movement to arm itself and what will be the result of a confrontation with the troops?

It is a question faced by every revolution. Only by winning the ranks of the armed forces to the side of the working class can the movement arm itself and ensure victory. A tremendously positive feature in the Chilean revolution is the constant attempts at fraternisation between the troops and the youth.

In the recent clamp-down, (involving on occasions the use of 50% of the army), attempts by the youth to discuss with the soldiers were reported. It is a conscript army, 30,600 out of 50,000 soldiers are conscripts, drawn from the wokers' districts. Youth will be fighting in the days of protest one month and conscripted into the army the next.

Under the conditions of insurrection, when the soldiers know that tomorrow they wouldn't have to face the same officers, repression, insults and humiliation, they undoubtedly would be drawn into a movement of the proletariat. Such a prospect is increasing the longer the regime holds onto power.

For the Chilean workers' movement 1985 could prove to be a decisive year. The lessons of 1970 – 73 must be fully absorbed. The overthrow of the dictatorship will be an enormous relief for the Chilean masses. Unless however it is bound up with the carrying through of the socialist revolution and if capitalism is allowed to continue, the problems of misery, poverty and despair will remain.

The Chilean revolution has begun. The death of 50,000 will not have been in vain if the lessons are learnt by the workers' movement. A socialist Chile would open the way to the achievement of the historic objectives of the Socialist Party—the organisation of a Federation of Latin American states. It would mean the ending of dictatorship and the beginning of genuine human society throughout the continent.



Burning barricades in Santiago September 1984.

THE *Militant* Editorial Board has received a request from Marxists in Chile for financial support in their struggle against the Pinochet dictatorship. As internationalists we appeal to all workers to make a donation to those working in the Chilean underground. We therefore urge sellers of the *Militant* to organise collections for this work on the weekend of the 2 and 3 February. All money collected should be sent to: 'Militant for Chile', 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 3HB.

Philippines

The last days of a dictator?

DURING THE past year the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines has been in deep trouble. Economic crisis, massive anti-government demonstrations and the assassination of a major opposition leader have put a question mark over the regime's survival. PAULINE WARDLEWORTH looks at the current situation:

THE UNITED States has the greatest interest in the Philippines, not only in investments but in military bases.

These command an important strategic position in SE Asia and have been launching pads for intervention in Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Today they could be used as springboards for intervention in Africa, the Persian Gulf, the Middle East and NE Asia. Some store nuclear weapons which, according to the new Military Bases Agreement, America can deploy without the consent of either the Philippine government or the people.

Marcos has had full US backing including massive aid to maintain his army, but the regime is becoming embarrassing to the Americans.

The assassination of opposition leader, Benigno Aquino, in August 1983 caused perhaps the greatest outrage for years against Marcos and his US backers.

Aquino, who had been exiled by Marcos, was returning to the Philippines under military escort. As he prepared to leave his plane at Manila airport he was shot dead. Marcos blamed communist "subversives" but was eventually forced to set up an enquiry. The recent official report has confirmed that Aquino was murdered by his military escorts. Certain generals have been named, probably as scapegoats, but Marcos remains, officially, stainless.

Over two million people mourned Aquino in the streets but the anger was deeper than grief over the death of one politician. Since the beginning of the Marcos dictatorship over 70,000 people have been detained as political prisoners.

Two-thirds have been tortured and some 'disappeared' while in custody. Government troops have killed over 100,000 people and more than a million have been forcibly evacuated from their homes. No section has escaped the terror, peasants, workers, even priests have been brutally treated. Added to this is the appalling standard of living for some 80% of the population. (See below)

Because of its debts and reliance on further borowing, the government has been at the mercy of the International Monetary Fund who insisted on the devaluation of the currency and steep tax rises which caused yet more suffering for the poorest people.



Demonstrations

In Manila, protests sparked off by Aquino's death are still continuing, over a year later, at the rate of two or three a week. Demonstrators, who include workers, students, businessmen and clergy have met increasing police brutality which has progressed from teargas to water cannon and now live ammunition.

While demonstrations continue, more organised resistance is gaining strength. The underground National Democratic Front, (NDF), whose organisations have a quarter of a million industrial workers, have struck for economic demands and the release of detained workers.

In Mindanao, the New People's Army (NPA), founded by the Communist Party in 1969 has been causing enormous problems. An estimated one million peasants and farm workers are now organised and armed by the NPA while a further ten million come under their influence and protection. The NPA have outwitted government troops and taken reprisals against Marcos' thug forces, the Lost Command.

Building international links with trade unions is a major task for the Kilusang Mayo Uno, (KMU), the organisation of the free trade unions. This is particularly important for the hundreds of thousands of Filipinos forced to work overseas. Workers are the Philippines' greatest export and dollar earner. Ironically in a country where only about 10% of the population have access to medical facilities, the Philippines is the world's largest exporter of nurses and second largest of doctors.

As the crisis in the Philippines deepens, both Marcos and the US government will be looking for ways to quell the growing opposition and return some stability. Marcos, an aging sick man, wants his wife, Imelda, to succeed him. Imelda Marcos, reputedly one of the world's ten richest women, already holds a number of powerful positions, but she is probably more hated than Marcos himself.

Her contempt for the Filipinos was shown in her comments on one of the recent demonstrations in Manila; "these rallies cannot go on without money. Don't kid me that you will have two million people who are not paid to attend. I have given them movie stars, sandwiches, everything, and still they will not rally for us".

The US government however, would like to replace Marcos with a more reliable puppet, preferably one with some popularity. With Aquino eliminated, one candidate is Salvador Laurel, who last year visited America for talks with the government and who is known to be in favour of keeping US bases in the Philippines.

US businessmen and politicians who congratulated Marcos for providing "heaven sent relief" when he declared martial law now want a possible let-out, a smooth transition to a very limited form of democracy.

But whoever becomes president, the people of the Philippines, who have a brave record of struggle will carry on fighting against the economic and political system which sacrifices them to profit.

The working class are the only force with the potential power to lead the struggle to gain real control over their own destinies.



As in Chile, the women of the poorest districts of Manila show their anger at the dictatorship's economic policies by banging pots and pans.

The British connection: a little terror and torture

THE ECONOMY is dominated by US, Japanese and European companies among them familiar British names like Unilever, ICI, Tootal and Dunlop.

The multinationals rely on government terror to stop those who press for basic union rights. Workers' hours are long, conditions are overcrowded, production quotas are impossibly high. Safety standards are abysmal. Many garment firms' machines are repaired while still running and accidents are commonplace. Many of the clothes they make end up in British shops like C&A and Debenhams.

The British government through the Commonwealth Development Corporation, recently provided a £6.4 million loan to finance an oil palm plantation jointly controlled by the Philippines National Development Corporation and Guthries, a Malaysian owned company.

Evictions and curfews

Guthries employed the Lost Command to evict 3,000 peasants to clear the site. Farmers and peasants were driven off, without proper compensation. Their homes were destroyed and they were rounded up and taken to live in guarded huts in the town centre; subject to a dusk to dawn curfew.

Conditions are often worse than the most squalid slums, with three or four families in one small hut. Many get sick, especially the children, due to lack of food and safe drinking water. Any people who resisted moving to these concentration camps were beaten, or shot. The landless peasants had to rely on the company to provide them with jobs.

Guthrie's manager, British-born Bruce Clew, admitted that acquiring land and recruiting labour would have been impossible without the Lost Command, adding, "If profits flow—what does it matter if the local population has to put up with a little terror and torture?"

Company officials are now reportedly putting pressure on the workers to leave their union, deducting union dues from wage packets but not handing them to the unions for weeks and, without permission, deducting money for fiestas and beauty contests!

Crop sprayers are not given gas masks; two died last year, probably from pesticide poisoning, and workers who dispense fertilisers are not given gloves results in blisters, rashes and infected wounds. The British government still gave the taxpayers' money to Guthries.

Marcos and the Lost Command

ALTHOUGH nominally independent from first Spanish then American rule since 1946, US imperialism still controls the Philippines. The American style political structure was quickly seized by the 200 wealthy families who previously ran the country on feudal lines.

Ferdinand Marcos came from such a background, becoming President in 1965. In 1972, realising how unlikely was his re-election for a third time, he declared martial law, arrested 30,000 people and began a nightmare for Philippines workers and peasants.



President Marcos.

US aided repression

Marcos has tried to compete with other third world countries in cheap labour. He succeeded in making it about the cheapest in the world by brutal represssion.

With US aid he increased his army to 60,000 using their arms to silence opposition to his plans and boosted them with paramilitary death squads like the "Lost Command" who drive defenceless peasants from land needed by multinationals.

The Command, set up ten years ago to suppress Muslims fighting for independence and to hunt out Communists, recruits deserters and ex-convicts and works by torture rape and murder.

Poverty amidst wealth

THE 7000 islands of the Philippines have vast forests, fertile valleys, huge mineral resources of iron gold copper coal and nickel and ample rivers to provide electricity for far more than the current 50 million inhabitants.

But there is 50% unemployment, a foreign debt of over $25 billion, high inflation, half the families live below the minimum-needed nutrition and 70% below the poverty threshold unable to meet clothing and shelter needs. TB and polio are rife, most families suffer the loss of at least one child. Begging and child prostitution are increasing.

FELS builds Labour's support

THE SUCCESS of Further Education Labour Students was seen recently when FELS candidate Lesleigh Woodburn, was elected onto the student union's Further Education National Committee at the NUS national conference.

She received the *second* highest number of first preference votes.

Yet instead of welcoming this increase in support for Labour, the NOLS leadership have attacked FELS. The *Times Educational Supplement* (18 January) reported that some of the NOLS 'Democratic Left' leadership wanted people such as Louise James, FELS organiser, to be expelled from the Labour Party.

Militant put the NOLS leadership's accusations to Louise James:

Has FELS got a proper base amongst FE college students?

At the founding conference of FELS, 178 FE students, who were LP or Labour Club members were present, with another 60 visitors. Over 44 FE colleges were represented. This is the largest event of this kind ever organised for FE students. Unfortunately NOLS has never organised a similar event; there were only 17 FE colleges affiliated to NOLS before FELS conference.

Was FELS set up to oppose NOLS?

No. It was set up to draw FE students into NOLS. Only 4.4% of FE colleges have Labour clubs. There were more NOLS members at Oxford and Cambridge University Labour clubs in 1984, than at all the FE colleges put together.

At the November conference the FELS constitution was passed, which clearly stated: "The aim of FELS is to set up and affiliate FE Labour Clubs to NOLS." Since the FELS conference, the number of FE clubs affiliated to NOLS has doubled.

Did FELS split the Labour vote at the recent NUS conference?

No. A letter was sent from FELS to NOLS chairperson John Mann, asking that a joint FELS/NOLS slate should be elected at NUS conference. John Mann refused every offer to unite the Labour vote amongst FE students. He told a FELS delegation at NUS conference that the NOLS candidates had been selected at a previous NOLS student council.

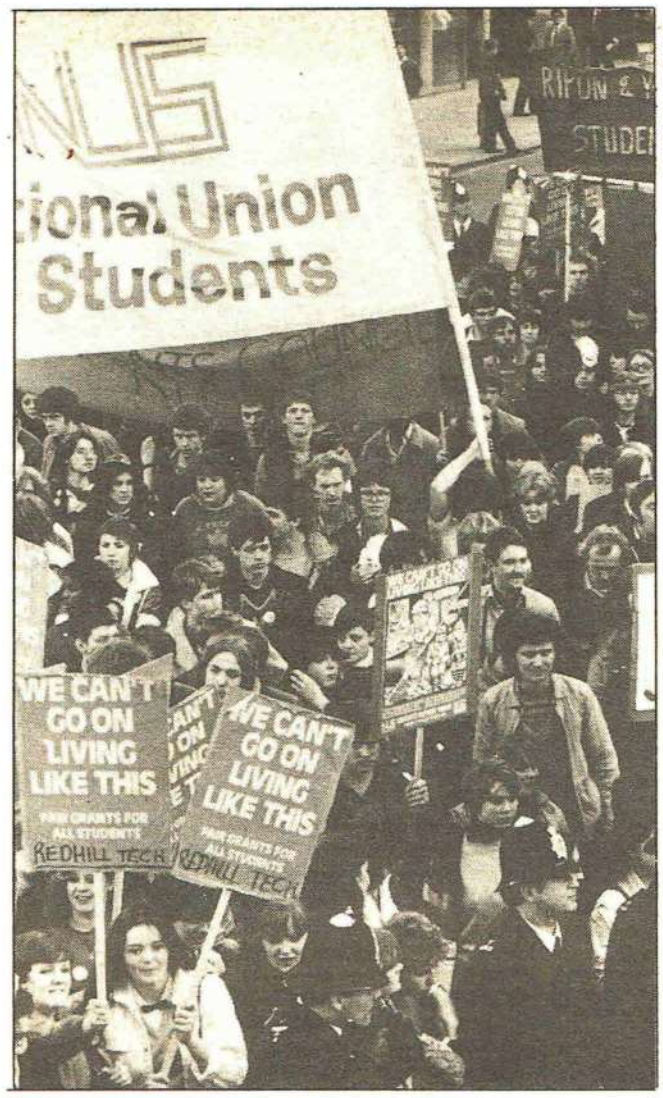


Photo: Militant

FE students demonstrate for decent grants, 1983.

Contradictions

On the same day, Pauline McNeil, NOLS candidate for FENC, said at a FELS fringe meeting that the candidates were selected at a NOLS fringe meeting on the previous night. Students who attended that meeting said no such elections took place.

Did FELS prevent a Labour majority on the FENC?

The other NOLS candidate other Malcolm Pratt received only six first preference votes and ended up coming *seventh* so would not have been elected anyway.

The fact is because of the setting up of FELS, NOLS leaders have been exposed for their failure to take up FE issues seriously. FELS forced NOLS to stand a majority slate for the first time and win the first ever Labour majority.

Loaded dice at NOLS council

THE LATEST tactics by the 'Democratic Left' leadership of the National Organisation of Labour Students shows they continue to operate with the most undemocratic methods possible, in order to ensure that political defeats can be avoided.

Following the 1984 NOLS Conference, rather than answer serious allegations of ballot rigging, the NOLS leaders have attempted a systematic campaign to guarantee a 'safe' conference this year.

A further indication of this came at the NOLS Student Council at Bradford University on January 19-20. This meeting decides how many candidates and who should stand for positions in the National Union of Students' elections at its conference in March.

However, this Council is unrepresentative of Labour students. Delegates are one per Labour Club, but also any NOLS members who are NUS area convenors or on the NUS executive. This means Student Union officers vastly outnumber the more representative and accountable Labour Club delegates. This way the 'Democratic Left' ensure a majority on the Council.

Following anomolies in the registration procedure, and the issuing of delegate credentials, *Militant* supporters demanded that a list of accredited delegates be made available for inspection. This democratic safeguard was refused by the Student Organiser Sally Morgan.

Ian Wright, a delegate from Liverpool University Labour Club, called on the council to have a roll call of all delegates present to ensure that only bona-fide representatives were voting in the elections. Council voted against this procedure. In effect the NOLS rank and file were denied the right to know who participated in elections to select Labour candidates for the leading positions in the student movement.

Meeting delay

On the Sunday the Council had a major delay when the main lecture theatre was closed by the building supervisor, following complaints from cleaners as to the disgusting mess in which it was left (it had been used the previous evening to hold a 'Democratic Left' caucus).

The NOLS leaders used the delay to push through the rest of the business at an incredible speed. The agenda was completely revised with no indication to the Council as to the procedure to be adopted, until this was demanded from the floor. In the elections there were no questions to the candidates!

On the recommendation of the NOLS leadership Council again voted to stand a minority slate at the NUS elections (standing only eight candidates out of a possible 12).

NOLS Conference takes place in five weeks time. The rank and file of NOLS are entitled to ask will the NOLS Conference be conducted along the same undemocratic lines as the Student Council?

Livingston CLP: Militant replies

MILITANT HAS received a letter from the secretary of Livingston Constituency Labour Party, Mr Graeme Morrice, complaining about *Militant*'s reports on events within the CLP. The letter is about 1,500 words long and because of space has been edited.

Mr Morrice writes: *"We are accused of 'witch-hunts' and, by implication, of not working for a miners' victory."* The first part of the letter then outlines the work done by Livingston CLP in support of the miners. The articles in *Militant* did not dispute this—the CLP is to be congratulated on this support.

However, the first part of the letter raises an important point, that DHSS 'snooper squads' are using reports of cash raised to attack miners' benefits. Mr Morrice writes: *"Be warned... the snoopers are attempting to cut benefits yet again by valuing parcels on the basis of the information you are so kindly furnishing."*

We shall certainly take note. We hope that Mr Morrice has also forwarded this important information to *Labour Weekly*, *Tribune*, the *Morning Star* and other labour movement journals including the *Miner* which like *Militant* have carried such information for the past 11 months.

On the question of the events in Livingston CLP, the letter continues:

As to the 'witch-hunt', would our detractors please specify what they are on about?

Infact, at our October GC meeting, our MP, Robin Cook, informed the meeting that his name was being linked with an attempt to 'witch-hunt' the LPYS. Yet when he asked if anyone present could tell him what this was all about, no one spoke up, not even the two LPYS delegates from one of our LPYS branches, both of whom are supporters of the Militant *tendency.*

We are also told that our plans have received a set back in our attempt to initiate a 'witch-hunt'. What plans? Yet no one is, or has ever been, threatened with expulsion. No one is under charge, nor are any charges pending against anyone, for anything. We are bitterly resentful of the crude 'catch 22' type criticism.

On the contrary, we have gone out of our way to help the LPYS in our CLP. For instance, our GC recently agreed to a request by LPYS delegates for £63 to cover the costs of running a disco during a recruitment drive. (This was not the first time the LPYS had requested and had been given funds). Although our funds were too low to make an outright gift on this occasion, the GC unanimously agreed to loan them the amount. Unfortunately, although the disco was a social and political success, it was not a financial one and, faced with this, the GC accepted a request for an extention of the time for the LPYS to repay the loan. Again, this decision was unanimous.

With regards to our miners support activities, we have always provided the necessary facilities for any individual or groups of individuals who have been prepared to assist in our collections etc—LPYS and non-LPYS members. In fact, we pay special tribute to the sacrifices that have been made by some of our LPYS members.

However, over the last couple of months there has been an ongoing situation which has been exploited, distorted and down-right lied about by one or two individuals, who, some of us believe, are taking advantage of in order to create a 'martyr-type' situation which, they hope, will find favour with their leadership. Not only is this bringing our CLP into disrepute but also the Militant *tendency.*

Over the last couple of months our collections have been impaired by a number of comrades selling Militant *at the same time, in direct competition with our collectors.*

These comrades only appear for approximately two hours per week at the local shopping centre where we collect. They choose usually only one out of the five entrances—the most profitable at a peak period; seldom less than four in numbers, sometimes seven, in an entry 22 feet wide. Because of their short length of stay, they are never there to deal with the aggro they cause with their aggressive selling methods when our collectors are moved on and harassed by the police or the centre security guards following complaints by the public. The consequences of a (police) ban ever occuring would be catastrophic for the miners' families we feed.

Faced with this kind of situation, our GC and, in particular, our miners support group, whilst not opposed to the general selling of Militant, *have requested and sometimes pleaded with the* Militant *supporters to refrain from selling their newspapers whilst the miners' collections are taking place and explaining to them the difficulties and problems they are causing.*

Yet the situation would not have arisen at all had the comrades shown some common sense instead of crowding out our collectors. The contest is of their making in that they appear to try to sell papers rather than recognise the collections. They have been offered co-operation, and have rejected it. They have been invited to join us and help the miners' cause and have ignored this. The confrontation is of their own choosing, not ours.

In finality, we asked those behind these attacks on us: If you have the time and people in your organisation to devote to these scurrilous and unfounded attacks on our CLP, wouldn't you be better employed working for a miners' victory, than sowing dissention and acting on behalf of the right-wing attacks?

Yours fraternally
Graeme Morrice
Secretary, Livingston CLP

Phillip Scott of Livingston North LPYS replies to Mr Morrice:

FIRST OF all, I would refer readers to the report on the situation in Livingston CLP in *Militant*, issue 729.

It is not the wish of *Militant* supporters or YS members to be embroiled in inter-party squabbling. Our wish is to continue to support the miners' struggle and build the ideas of socialism amongst youth. Our record on that speaks for itself, and there are now over 70 members in Livingston North LPYS branch due to our campaigning activities.

What Mr Morrice is resentful of is the fact that the CLP has received letters and resolutions of protest from labour movement bodies over the action taken against a young female member of the party, Wendy Milne of the LPYS.

As *Militant* reported, the CLP chairman—after LPYS members said they would not stop selling *Militant* on the *streets* of Livingston after protests from some sections of the party—stated quite clearly to the young member: "I'll leave the chair at the next meeting and personally move your expulsion."

When the local labour movement heard of this, they duly responded. The CLP received many protests, including those from half a dozen or so NUM strike committees, 16 Labour councillors and a petition signed by many striking miners. These are not gullible people being 'exploited' by "one or two individuals", but the response of concerned, experienced labour activists.

Mr Morrice says "no-one is under charge". But the CLP set up a disciplinary committee to investigate the actions of Wendy Milne, after unfounded allegations of 'misappropriation of funds'. Wendy Milne was also sent a letter of reprimand which stated: "We resolved to send you a letter of reprimand hence the reason for this letter." And Mr Morrice complains to *Militant* about "Catch 22 type criticism"! It has still not been explained to Ms Milne what rules she is meant to have broken.

As for the situation at the shopping centre, *Militant* supporters have been selling the paper there since before the strike began, and from the very outset of the strike. Far from being 'pleaded' with by certain CLP members, we have unfortunately been personally abused. Some of these fraternal 'requests' took the form of us being called 'liars', 'cheats', 'thieves', 'scum' and 'morons'.

We do not think selling *Militant* impairs collections for the miners. We believe that raising cash and putting the miners' case and socialist policies through the newspaper go hand in hand. Many striking miners agree with us on this and indeed, striking miners have been amongst those selling the paper. Striking miners would not have responded in the way they did over the attacks on Wendy Milne had they seriously thought *Militant* supporters were jeopardising the collections.

Furthermore, it is nonsense to suggest *Militant* supporters want a 'martyr-type situation'. Over the past years *Militant* has been fighting the expulsion of its supporters and witch-hunt threats tooth and nail. We understand that if the right wing succeed expelling Marxists from the Labour Party, left wing constituencies such as Livingston CLP will be next for the chop.

We hope that this sorry affair will come to an end and in future any political differences can be discussed in the proper manner of the movement, through fraternal debate.

LETTERS

Militant welcomes letters from readers. Send us your views, comments or criticism
Write to *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscott Road, London. E9 5HB

Saturday job

Dear Comrades,

I am a student. On Saturdays for a bit of extra money I work in a shoe shop. I get £9.50 for eight hours work. Since I have been there the manager has sacked the following people for the reasons stated:

Tracey—She couldn't do her job.

Jessica—he didn't like the way she spoke to customers

Danny—He had a broken leg and wouldn't be able to work over Xmas.(He worked there under different managers for 2 years)

Gail—She couldn't do her job (full time deputy)

Dawn—He didn't like the way she spoke to him.

Avril—He didn't like her. He thought she was a bit eccentric. Liz left because she was having asthma trouble and he still gave her jobs with the boxes and this aggravated her condition. Pat and Josie left because they couldn't stand him.

Next July another Saturday worker and I plan to go to Poland. When we told him he said that he would have to sack us because he couldn't afford to lose two Saturdays for two weeks as it is in Sale time.He employed two extra Saturday staff, and now he has decided that he is overstaffed and wants to get rid of two, as we are the only ones that stand up for ourselves in any way I am almost sure that it will be us that he will add to his long list of cast-off workers.

On my 16th birthday last month I asked for a rise. He said I could have a rise of 50p if I promised not to do any overtime for the next year!

On 10 December I worked an extra day for some more money to spend on presents. That extra money will not come through until 12 January.

Would you consider this exploitation?

Sarah Tracey
Tooting

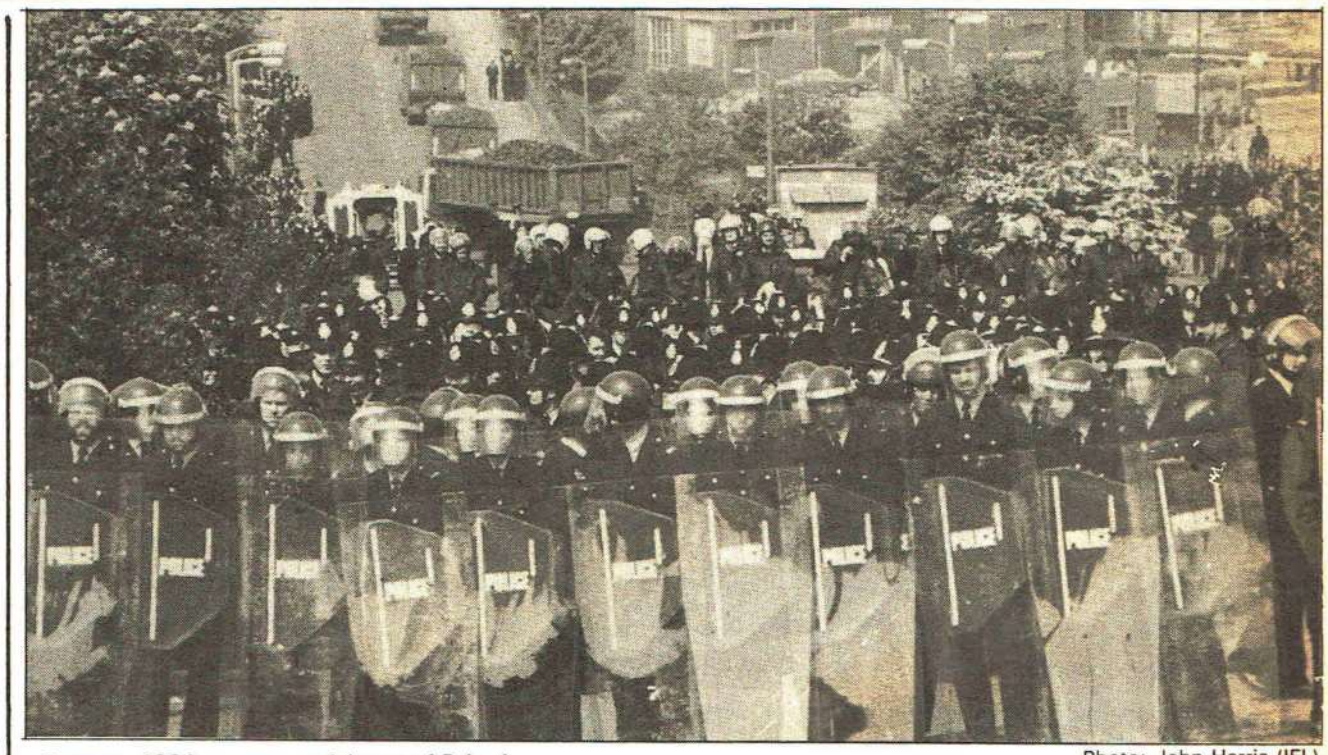
Questioning role

Dear Comrades,

We have seen tremendous struggles through the miners strike.

Recently we held a sale outside our second division football ground, where we sold 17 papers, plus two to coppers, which just goes to show that coppers are asking themselves questions about their role in the miners strike.

Yours Comradely,
Pat McEwan
Grimsby



Orgreave 1984—scenes reminiscent of Poland

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Thatcher's plans

Dear Comrades,

Thatcher has made it quite clear that she cannot accept Arthur Scargill as leader of the NUM. She wants someone more moderate. Of course, the reason being that the union would then be more flexible. But I'm 100% behind my union.

The vicious media campaign is building momentum, they seem to think the end is in sight. But the miners will not go back until our executive tells us to do so.

The Tories' plans to destroy the miners' union has been under wraps for years. It's bad to think that a government democratically elected is trying to smash the trade union movement.The miners' fight would be seen as a test case for the abolition of the trade union movement as we know it.

We have seen incidents in this country reminiscent of Poland. This government is totally committed to disgracing Arthur Scargill. People must be made to see how corrupt this government really is. They are making up rules to suit themselves. The sooner people realise this, the sooner we can kick the Tories out.

Despite what the media says, the miners can win a victory. Let nothing deter us.

Yours fraternally,
A Pullen,
Cwm Colliery NUM &
Pontypridd LPYS



British soldiers making an arrest in Northern Ireland.

Sinn Fein's contradictions

Dear comrades,

The miners' rally, hosted by Ken Livingstone, at London County Hall, on December 7, with Sinn Fein, PLO and other nationalist groups, provoked the usual hysterical reaction in the capitalist press, but hardly any report of the meeting itself.

Amongst the speakers was Gerry McLoughlin for Sinn Fein, who got a standing ovation when he assured the meeting that the miners had the full support of Sinn Fein. I was at the meeting and was astonished to hear this. They are the one organisation claiming to stand on the left in the south of Ireland who are doing little to help the miners, in the key area of financial support.

In Cork where five different groups have collected for the miners, SF have not collected any money or played any role in solidarity meetings. In Letterkenny at a Trades Council collection for the miners, the only delegate who did not contribute was from Sinn Fein. In Limerick and Galway where broad labour movement support groups have functioned for months SF have played no role, and the same is true all over the South, including Dublin.

Because of the disastrous role of the right wing Labour Party leaders, in coalition with Fine Gael, a party of big business, bankers and ranchers, some young people look in desperation to SF, especially when it makes claims to be socialist and represent the working class.

The contradictions between Sinn Fein's 'socialist rhetoric' and the sectarianism of its approach to the majority of workers in the North are great. In the South this new champion of the oppressed workers had a a conference in November at which a motion to expel from Sinn Fein any member crossing a picket line was defeated, with the whole of the executive and half the conference voting against.

Ken Livingstone is easily led. Malcolm Pitt, President of the Kent NUM, who also spoke in County Hall, should perhaps look more closely at Sinn Fein.

Fraternally,
Emmett Farrell
Cork

Shoot to kill

Dear Comrades,

The Northern Ireland Unionists and the Tories are forever telling us that there has been no shift in policy concerning "rules of engagement in Northern Ireland" i.e. a shift towards "shoot to kill, ask questions later"

I take it that point 14 of the "orders of operation N.I." is still viable today as it was in 1977 when I was in the army. If this is the case, then how were four young lads shot, one fatally, at a UDR checkpoint on the outskirts of Belfast recently?

Point 14, clearly states that soldiers are not allowed to open fire unless "theirs or the lives of their comrades are **seriously** threatened"

This car had all its windows wound up. There is no way that any type of weapon could be fired or bomb thrown at the soldiers and yet still the car was riddled with rifle fire.

The Unionists and the government will try to justify the shooting by claiming that three UDR men were knocked down in the incident. However this, nor the crime of joy riding, warrants the sentence of an on-the-spot execution.

The 'minimum' amount of force necessary to obtain an arrest' should have been used and with the equipment that the security forces have at their disposal i.e. radio communication, vehicle patrols etc, a simple arrest could have been made. In recent years there have been at least 12 lives lost through this type of action. The labour movement here in Britain must take up the call by the non-sectarian Labour and Trade Union Group for the setting up of a working class party of Labour in Northern Ireland which would be a tremendous step towards unity and the ending of repression and sectarianism.

Yours Fraternally,
Bob Harker
Gateshead East CLP

'Obscene' income

Dear Editor,

Michael Edwardes is to get yet another fortune in his new job at Dunlop. He will get £130,000 a year guaranteed until October 1988, plus an additional £26,000. Even the Financial Editor of the *Daily Express* said the deal was "bordering on the obscene." Yet, it wasn't this wage packet that shocked him. What really turned his stomach was the option to buy nearly 21 million shares in the company at 14p each.

Michael Edwardes only got this job because he was out of work after ICL had been taken over. On leaving here, he took £500,000 as a golden handshake.

As Edwardes moved in, 11 of the previous 13 directors left, with £878,000 in their pockets from golden handshakes. To top it all, Edwardes had the audacity to say that the banks had wanted him to do a good job and to be highly motivated. Presumably, that is what the riches were for.

Contrast this obscenity with the desperation and poverty of the millions of unemployed, the low paid, etc. and we see what Tory freedom means. Can we afford to have vultures like these picking the flesh off society? The plain answer is no.

Yours fraternally,
David Louch
York

LEFT and RIGHT

A hard life

This month the Duke of Devonshire celebrated his 65th birthday. Asked if he had plans to retire he replied (*Daily Star*, 14 January): "I have never worked a day in my life, so how can I retire?" Quite.

Peasants revolt in Cornwall

Meanwhile down the road in Cornwall, the county's duke, otherwise known as Prince Charles, is having trouble with the peasants. Two years ago Charlie boy magnanimously made a donation of 400 acres of his land on Bodmin Moor to the people of Cornwall. However, the County Council told him to stick it, and have still refused to accept it to this day. They realised that it would cost them £12,000 every year for its keep. They were also a bit miffed to discover that while Charlie wanted to give them the land, he would retain all mineral rights. Just in case.

Room(s) at the top

Just think, there can't be anything worse than having so much money you don't know what to do with it. Take the Sultan of Brunei (who has just purchased the Dorchester Hotel). He owns the largest palace in the world. It cost him £500 million to build and has 1,788 rooms. The thing is the Sultan's family only uses 20 of them. You can't blame them. If they used a different room every day it would take them just under five years before they got right around the building. Besides, that would be showing off.

Switzerland sneezes

The old saying goes that when the US catches a cold, Europe gets pneumonia (and these days Britain gets hypothermia). Well, even the Gnomes of Zurich got the sniffles last year. The unemployment rate reached 1.1% in Switzerland in 1984. That's very low by comparison to other capitalist countries of course, but it's the highest unemployment Switzerland has had since the 1930's.

FIGHTING FUND

This week: £2,361

Area	Received	Target
Eastern	2412	2900
East Midlands	1256	3550
Humberside	1473	1850
London East	1860	3200
London West	1648	2150
London South East	1276	1950
London South West	1343	1650
Lancashire	694	1950
Manchester	1039	2200
Merseyside	636	6100
Northern	2201	4400
Scotland East	696	2950
Scotland West	1330	3650
Southern	1979	5100
South West	886	2150
Wales East	691	2550
Wales West	952	2050
West Midlands	2007	4300
Yorkshire	1891	5350
Others	4079	5000
Total received	30357	65000

Hard work pays dividends

BY THE time you read this the Fighting Fund quarter will have already finished. You will have to wait in suspense to see how we have done. No doubt the right-wing and the bosses will be anxious to know as well.

By Nick Wrack

We will not be able to give the final figures until next week but the reports from around the country show a week of hard work to get the money so urgently needed.

The chart shows Humberside and Eastern neck and neck out in front but the London areas are not far behind and expecting to see a last minute surge. *Militant* supporters have a reputation for being exceptional fund raisers. Well, we'll see this week exactly what can be done.

Appeal sheets, door-to-door visits, donations from LPYS branches, last minute parties—all show the determination of our readers to meet the targets. All our readers, from the newest to longest standing, should have been approached. If any have been missed out the don't stop just because the quarter is over. Go and see them now and get off to a good start for the new quarter.

Rob Bishop from Acton writes: "I have been saving up my loose change for the past couple of months which amounted to £6.50. I have made it up to £10". Shirley Smith from Coventry South East CLP writes: "Having just read the recent article on finance I felt compelled to write this letter. I am not an active *Militant* supporter but I would not like to see the production of the *Militant* hindered by the bosses' system, hence I enclose a cheque for £10 which may pay off half a day's interest to the big banks".

Eppleton NUM, Co Durham, has donated £10.

Dear Comrades,

I enclose 50p for the fighting fund—not much maybe, but one of the most heartwarming donations I've received for the fund. It came from Bryn Jones, a retired miner who used to work at Marine Colliery, Cwm near Ebbw Vale, and who has only recently seen the *Militant* for the first time.

Not bad when you realise his son, Mostyn—another new *Militant* supporter—is a single striking miner who has obviously received no money for the last 10 months, lives at home and is therefore supported by his parents A tremendous example of both the sacrifice and committment working people (50p is a hell of lot when your livelihood depends on the whims of the DHSS "moguls"!) *and* of the appeal of the ideas of Marxism.

As a footnote, the lodge at Marine—in common with other lodges—had no money to arrange transport to take the members to an important lodge meeting last Friday at which there were to be rumoured moves of a return to work by a sizeable number. On the picket line on the Tuesday morning, *Militant* supporters gave a pledge to the lodge chairman that we would raise the money to pay for the coaches.

By Friday (three days later) we'd raised £428!! The result? A big meeting, a good mood and the "fainthearts" in the lodge left even fainter and—although 20-odd scabs have been going in this week—things are still solid.

Fraternally,
A Welsh supporter

£80 was sent by CPSA NEC members. Matthew Stickland in Southampton is selling his brand new leather jacket and cashing in a £100 premium bond. We may be collecting in a day what we used to get in a week or even a fortnight but the hard work and self sacrifice of our readers remains as unequalled as ever.

Bob Law in Bermondsey has given up drink and has sent £100 thereby saved! Helping to change his own shape as well as the shape of society! Bryn Jones, a retired miner who also has to support a son who is also a striking miner, has given 50p, a marvellous donation (see letter left). A jumble sale in Lambeth organised at four days notice, raised £115. Nearly £1,000 was raised at a meeting in Merseyside.

The last two weeks show what can be done with a little thought and preparation so keep it going in the new quarter. We will need at least £6,000 a week but that is entirely possible. Our opponents keep pointing out how good we are at raising money. Let's show them how right they are!

THIS WEEK'S donations include:

T Corrall, Leicester NALGO £25; Kit Ray, President, West Midlands NUPE £25; D Mehmet, London POEU £20; J Cooze, London £20; Rose Twydale, South London £6; C&B Rice, Fife £10; Lindsay Studd, Cleethorpes LPYS £10; Jim Arnell, POEU £10; Bill Lowe POEU £5; OAP, Dorset £10; Stan Russell, Lancs NUM £1.10; K Pickering, Birmingham £5; P Lievens, Oxford NUS £5; F Wawrick, Plaistow ACCTS £5; R Hopkins, Bristol NUR £10; G Huckley, Bristol NUR £10; Lee Copestick, Rochdale LPYS £6.

Get your branch to donate to *Militant*

BRANCH 5/909 TGWU, Rover Solihull have sent us a donation of £10 for the Building Fund. Car workers have been involved in a whole series of disputes and no doubt recognise the enormous assistance they would get from a daily Marxist paper which reported their side of the story.

How many more branches are there which could help us to provide this essential weapon for the labour movement? The sooner your branch can contribute, the sooner we'll be able to do just that.

Week's wages

If a general strike were called then all our working readers would lose at least one week's wages. Unfortunately, due to the craven nature of the TUC leadership, a general strike in support of the miners has not been called. However, many readers have given a week's wages or even a week's dole or pocket money to the Building Fund.

In this way they are building for a paper which could take the ideas of socialism and the need for effective action into every section of the labour movement. This week we have had money from readers in Newham, Peckham, Dagenham, Lambeth and West London. What about readers from outside the capital?

So, if you can make an individual donation or can raise a donation at your trade union or Labour Party branch meeting don't forget to send us the money as soon as possible. With the current high rate of interest the loans from the bank are even more difficult to bear. Let's get shot of the loans and go forward to a daily paper with a Marxist message.

ads

Militant

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

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

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

INQABA YA BASEBENZI the journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress. Issue number 15 contains a supplement: "South Africa, how close to revolution?" and the second part of "Southern Africa after the Nkomati accord" plus articles on Zimbabwe, Botswana and Malawi. Send payment with orders (75p including postage and packing) to BM Box 1719, London WC1 3XX.

NORTHERN IRELAND—a Marxist analysis. A 32 page analysis published by Militant Irish Monthly. 75p (plus 15p postage) 5 or more post free. Order from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscott Rd, London E9.

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

Now available on cassette: all centre page articles from issue 693–721. Send either seven blank C-90 cassettes or £6.30 payable to *Militant* Tapes, 18 Blandford Grove, Woodhouse, Leeds 2. Phone: (0532) 455936.

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

Militant Student Society &
Chile Socialist Defence Campaign

Latin American 'Fiesta'
★ Food ★ Disco ★ Live Music
Saturday February 2nd 7.00 pm.
Polytechnic of Central London
32–38 Wells Street W1
Ground floor, off Oxford Street
Nearest tube Oxford Circus or Tottenham Court Road

Working £1:50
Unwaged £1:00
All proceeds to Chilean Workers.

Meetings

SOUTHAMPTON: Marxist Discussion Group meets every Friday 7.45, 206 Honeysuckle Road, Bassett, Southampton. Tel: 551420 for details of subjects or any further information.

HULL Militant public meeting. Victory to the Miners, socialist policies for Labour. Hear: Pat Wall (President Bradford Trades Council) On: Friday 8 February 7.30pm. At: Trades and Labour Club, Beverly Road.

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

ELTHAM *Militant* supporters:
7 Feb: Northern Ireland.
14 Feb: Victory to the miners.
All at 8 pm, Lionel Road Community Centre, Westhorne Avenue, Eltham.

ADDRESS BOOKS 60p, plastic paper sleeves 20p, bookmarks 40p, sew on badges 50p. 10 plus half price for resale. FF cheques to M King, 10 Rodney Ct, Anson Drive, Sholing, Soton SO2 8RU

LIVEN UP your benefit disco; it's 'The Miners Strike Rap' by Michael Rosen. A record for the miners 'aint no such thing as a pit that loses money while the bees do the work and the boss gets the honey.' Buy this record now, all profits to the miners families. Cost £1.50 each plus p&p 25p per record. Cheques payable to MIS address: 22 Madeira Grove, Woodford, Essex 1GB

MILITANT supporter wants bed-sit accommodation within travelling distance of Central London. Ring Jimmy between 9–5 on 01-388 6609.

HOLIDAYS: Large three-bedroomed house in Paris available during the month of August. Normal rent (£75/week) to be shared amongst number of occupants. Comrades interested write to: Chez Mathey, 67 Boulevard Voltaire, 75011 Paris, France.

WALTHAM MINERS' Support Group: Public Meeting: Monday 11 February, 7.30 pm. Speakers: Roy Jones (Staffs NUM), Dennis Skinner (MP), and a South Wales Miner. At Walthamstowe Assembly Halls, Forest Road, London E17.

OUT NOW!



£1.50 + 25p post and packing from: 3–13 Hepscott road, London E9 5HB.

New *Militant International Review*
Out now
Price 90p (inc p+p) from World Socialist Books, 3–13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

Solidarity Conference of Mineworkers Defence Committee. (Sec K Livingstone) on Saturday 9 February, Octagon Centre, Sheffield.

Speakers include: Peter Heathfield NUM, Betty Heathfield WAPC, Tony Benn MP, Johnie Tocher AUEW Presidential candidate, Phil Holt BLOC.

Each TU body can send 2 delegates, each Labour Party/other organisation 1. £3 per delegate. Send to Mineworkers Defence Committee, 31 Cranwich Road, London N16.

Name .....

Address .....

TU/Organisation .....

No. Delegates .....

Train sale no strain

ON RETURNING to Havant on the train from London, I plucked up courage to do a train sale. It took only about ten minutes, five papers were sold. Trains are an obvious target for sales as people want to read something and you have a chance to talk to them and they can't get away!

If you travel regularly by train, coach or bus, use this opportunity to sell the paper. People want to read the *Militant* so it's our duty to combat the lies and distortions of the millionaire-owned press.

P.S. I also try to sell the paper to the gas man, etc... and the bloke who put my 'phone in.

A few weeks ago a paper was sold to a little lad of about nine years old. The seller explained there was no telly page, but he had handed over his 25p because he "liked the miners" this in Havant, an area at least 100 miles to the nearest pit!

By Delia Hazrah
(Havant LPYS)

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Post office closures opposed

LAST WEDNESDAY, 23 January, from 2 pm onwards Post Office counter workers struck throughout London, to protest at Post Office and government plans to close many Crown Offices.

By Chris Whale
(London Northern District, UCW)

Between 800 and 1,000 workers showed their anger at these plans and their willingness to fight to defend their jobs, attending a rally at Central Hall, Westminster and a lobby of MPs.

Last year the Post Office, backed by the government, ignoring both the hardships that closures would impose on ordinary people, and the threat to jobs and living standards of postal workers, proposed to close 80 Crown Offices nationally, 50 of these being in London.

This blatant attack was answered by industrial action from rank and file UCW members, forcing the Post Office to back down. However, this retreat was only a temporary one. Already we are threatened again with closures—with some offices in London under immediate threat.

Whilst UCW members may have welcomed the initiative taken by the union leadership to lobby MPs, many members are questioning the full effectiveness of half or one-day stoppages on a regional basis.

Leadership

Our leadership must be fully prepared for these attacks and must respond with the same tenacity and willingness to fight that rank and file members have already shown. There should be no national deals that allow for the closure of any office. Instead we must build on the success so far by preparing a massive campaign to oppose all future closures planned by the PO. If any are announced there must be a call for immediate national action.

Whilst certain individual Tory MPs may have been pressurised by last Wednesday's lobby (although many refused to even talk about closures), government and Post Office plans for the future of the communication industry have in the main, already been mapped out.

Privatisation

With the privatisation of British Telecom and the introduction of counter automation, the government already indicated in reports that they would be prepared to sell off the counter network to their rich business friends.

Linked to these plans is the Post Office's proposals to push through new technology and 'new methods of working' on the postal side, without union agreement if necessary. These proposals represent the biggest threat to postal workers yet, with the possibility of thousands of jobs going, the very existence of the union is threatened.

The Communication Workers' Broad Left in London has already begun to organise a campaign of leaflets and meetings in preparation for the coming battles.

With all these threats looming, the leadership of the UCW must face up to the tasks before us. A fighting union is needed more than ever before.



Post Office workers meet at Central Hall Westminster..

Threatened Bermondsey office occupied

ANGRY demonstrators occupied Borough Post Office in Bermondsey, South London as part of a campaign to keep two local Crown Offices open.

About 200 pensioners, tenants, trade unionists and young mothers with children filled the counter area for two hours on Wednesday 24 January demanding to put their case to the District Postmaster. They were joined by local Labour councillors and the Liberal MP.

The threatened closure of the Borough and Bricklayers offices would mean hardship and danger for the elderly, the disabled and young mothers. They'd be forced to collect their pensions and allowances from Post Offices much further afield, either at London Bridge which involves crossing busy, dangerous roads, or at the Elephant and Castle which has a subway system notorious for robberies. The small sub-post office nearby couldn't begin to cope with the 11,000 customers who use the two Crown Offices each week.

Pensioner Mrs Florence Perry said: "Old people can't get along to these other post offices. I know a bloke who's blind, how is he supposed to make the journey? I think it's appalling. They've ignored loads of petitions. Why are they doing these things to us?"

Convenient

Another demonstrator, Mrs Schwarz, said: "The office is central and convenient. They don't seem to care about us. This sort of action is the only way to get anywhere."

The occupation was part of a South-East London campaign started in April last year when closure of a number of Crown Offices was announced.

Wide support

Moss Haley, a spokesman for the Union of Communication Workers' branch, representing counter and clerical staff, told *Militant*: "We've involved a wide range of community groups. This is the second rally. We've had public meetings, been to every Labour Party branch in the area, spoken to trades councils and pensioners' groups. We've had a great response from the public. Now there are just two Crown Offices under threat in our area, but they're both in the poorest part of the borough. There are 33 counters in our district and we intend to keep them all."

Post Office management were clearly frightened by the strength of feeling and had to be coaxed by telephone to meet a deputation. Management said that no final decision had been made. But the protesters made it clear that they don't trust the management and another demonstration is planned for Wednesday 7 February. One of the deputation, Labour councillor John Bryan told *Militant*: "Like rate-capping this is an attack on vital services in a poor borough. Our class hasn't got much to lose any more. Today shows that people have been pushed too far. The fightback starts now."

By Paul Traynor

Main civil service union wants £15

THE CPSA will shortly be submitting its 1985 Civil Service Pay Claim. The claim is for £15 per week and a minimum wage of £100 per week from 1 April. For CPSA's low-paid members these increases are vital to halt the decline in living standards, they will do no more than restore the real value of 1980 pay rates.

Over the last five years civil servants have experienced a 20% cut in living standards. Since the Tories came to power in 1979 the government has scrapped the Civil Service Pay Comparability Agreement, announced in advance of pay negotiations, fixed cash limits for increases, and cut well over 100,000 jobs.

Civil servants have faced savage attacks on both pay and jobs. The wage claim is totally justified and vitally necessary. The question is how can it be secured?

Militant supporters in the CPSA argued at the union's Special Pay Conference in December that the task of securing decent wage levels would stand a better chance if there was a united pay claim covering all civil service unions and workers.

Rhetoric from the union's leadership for the CPSA to go it alone won support at our conference. In the face of the Tories' attacks such a policy was a mistake.

The immediate need is to bring civil servants together and build their confidence and determination to fight to secure the claim. Civil service workers are angry at the way the Tories have dealt with them but in the case of CPSA members the failure of the union executive,led by Alistair Graham and the so-called Broad Left '84, to back the DHSS Newcastle shift workers and lead a fight in support of workers in struggle undermined morale.

Activists at all levels of the union must work hard in the next few weeks to build the unity and confidence of the membership. Composite resolution 23 of the 1984 TUC Congress (sponsored by the CPSA) specifically called for a conference of the executives of public sector unions to plan co-ordinated action. The conference of the NECs called by the TUC is welcome, if late. Now local councils, civil service unions and the CPSA Area Committees must set up local public sector co-ordinating committees to plan and organise leafletting and rallies of all public sector workers in every town and city. Speakers at such pay rallies must demonstrate the breadth of support and the determination to end the attacks on the living standards of public sector workers.

The failure of the TUC General Council and leaderships like CPSA can be set aside by workers' action and the creation of links between the rank and file and local activists.



Pickets during the 1981 pay campaign. Led (and let down) by a right wing leadership under pressure from the membership the campaign was wholly based on selective action. The lesson of the last five years is that a national strike with a determined leadership and massive campaign is the only way to win.

By Kevin Roddy
(CPSA, National Executive, personal capacity)

Irish shop workers' internationalism

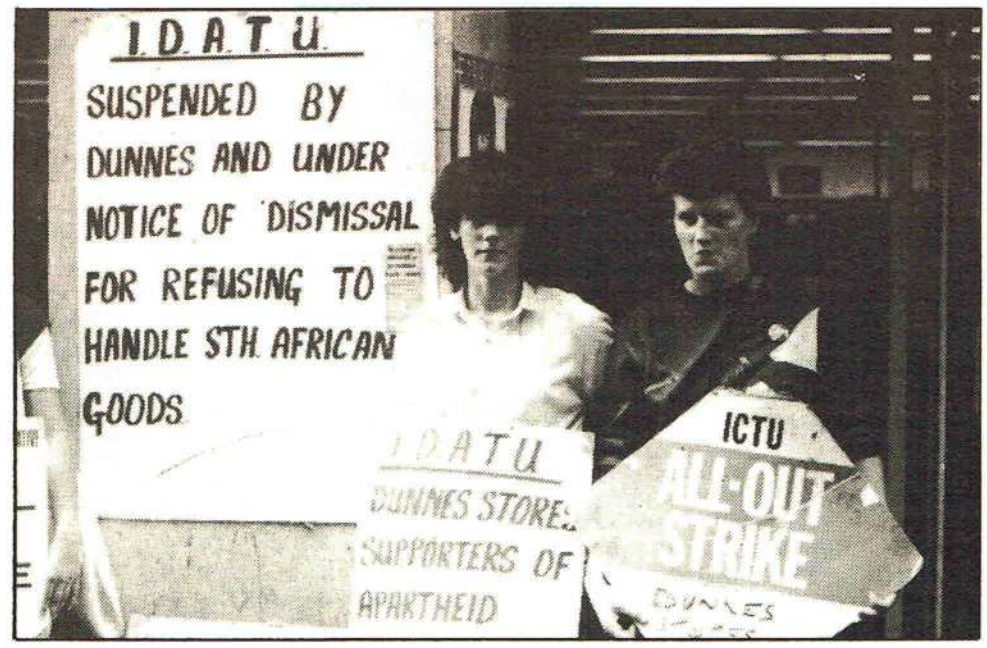
YOUNG SHOP workers at Dunnes store in Dublin, Ireland are in the seventh month of a magnificent display of internationalism.

The strike at Dunnes' Henry Street branch started when a worker refused to handle South African goods, in line with policy of their union, Irish Distribitve and Allied Trade Union (IDATU). The strike has received support from many sections of the labour movement. A great boost for the strike has been the sympathy action taken by dockers in Dublin Port. They have blacked all imports destined for Dunnes. The workers are now appealing to Belfast dockers not to handle goods diverted from Dublin.

Other workers have given generously to collections in workplaces and at union meetings. After Karen Gearon, IDATU shop steward, spoke to a rally of post office workers a collection of £230 was taken. Good collections have come from many CIE amd corporation depots. Labour Youth members have found that estate and pub collections even better received than those for the miners. Many people have independently approached the strikers with small personal donations. A street collection just before Xmas brought in £250.

If this strike is to be successful, this support needs to be translated into sympathetic action. Workers should discuss this strike. Send messages of suport and money to the strikers. The strike has received publicity in South Africa. Non-racial trade unions have sent letters supporting the strike. Dunnes Store management are prepared to ride out the bad publicity and financial losses to try to break this dispute. The international solidarity shown by these workers must be built on in Ireland and Britain.

Send donations to:
Karen Gearon,
c/o IDATU,
9 Cavendish Row,
Dublin 1.



Picket at Dunnes store, Dublin in support of South African workers.

Leaked plans show POEU job threat

A POST Office strategy document leaked to the POEU reveals plans to cut 50% of PO engineering and motor transport jobs over the next three years.

This document and others show the Post Office's real intentions. They have not even identified where these so-called redundant jobs lie. They say: "It will take 12 months to identify where all the surplusses are likely to occur." Yet 10% of these cuts are "envisaged for 1985–86."

Mr KN Young, Post Office Board member, in a letter to Brian Stanley, POEU General Secretary, states that the leaked document is: "An internal management minute which merely postulats opinions for giving effect to a range of magnitude savings". He then goes on to say that Regional engineers should identify by mid-Feburary: "10% of jobs that will be left vacant". Brian Roberts, director of Industrial Relations has said that: "compulsory redundancies will be unavoidable," despite the PO job security agreement, which also covers the bulk of POEU members in British Telecom.

Wider attack

The Post Office intends fixing the job security agreement, doing away with our traditional system of starting, introducing new grading structures, local productivity and standard times and extensive use of contractors.

The time is now ripe for the POEU to take action in support of it's demand for a 32 hour 4 day week in defence of jobs. A short intensified campaign amongst the membership must be an urgent priority. We cannot afford to see individual sections and branches picked off. Many POEU members now see that we have two alternatives; we fight for our jobs or we join the dole queue.

By a POEU member,
East London

News and New Tech

SEVENTY-FOUR members of the National Union of Journalists have been sacked from the *Portsmouth Evening News* over new technology. They refused to edit on visual display units.

The dispute arose because of the transfer agreement allowing National Graphical Association members to retrain as editors using the new technology. The NUJ fears that this will undermine their strength as sole negotiators for journalists.

NUJ members at the company's three other sites in Croydon, Hartlepool and Sunderland have come out on strike in sympathy with the sacked Portsmouth journalists. Management may take legal action under the secondary action laws.

In a separate dispute 300 jobs are threatened on the *Birmingham Post and Mail*. 120 jobs went last year when the company transferred production from Walsall to Birmingham. Management says fewer jobs would be lost if there were reductions in labour costs.

At the *Reading Evening Post*, NGA compositors were given a day's notice for training on new equipment linked to the tele-ads department, designed eventually to by-pass the composing room. The dispute, also involving SOGAT, came about when a verbal agreement between the unions to share the new work 50/50 broke down.

New equipment is planned to start working on 1 February. NGA chapels stopped working to discuss the situation and one day's paper was lost. The latest news is that management have been changing the bolts and locks in preparation for a confrontation.

Similar, stronger, preparations are being made in Wolverhampton at another of the Thomson Regional's publications. It is vital that the print unions develop a united strategy on the introduction of new technology in defence of jobs on regional newspapers and in Fleet Street.

By an NGA member

Pay claims pressure

MAJOR PAY claims and local authority resistance to rate-capping are all worrying items on the government's industrial relations agenda in the next few months.

The Tories may well find themselves under fire on all sides of the local authority spectrum.

The employers' pay offer of £3.70 a week for all grades of the country's 900,000 council manual workers, worth about 4.75% on the wages bill, up from an original 4.5% was rejected earlier this week.

The TGWU leadership has backed the union side's rejection of the claim. Jack Dromey, T&G Public Services national secretary, concentrated his criticisms on the size of the offer. The biggest obstacle appears to have been the employers' refusal to change the settlement date of 4 November, which puts this claim at the head of the pay queue and therefore likely to meet strongest government resistance.

Negotiations are over for the moment and the executives of the various unions involved, mainly NUPE, TGWU and GMBATU will be discussing their response and possible industrial action during the next three weeks.

The teachers' unions have rejected a 4% offer to their 440,000 members in England and Wales, Scottish teachers having already begun a campaign of industrial action over their demand for an independent pay review.

The England and Welsh claim is for £1,200 across the board from April, worth about 12.5%. The employers, acting as Keith Joseph's puppets, have tried to split the unions with a promise of 7% (based on new government money) for acceptance of changes in salary structure and service conditions. These have already been rejected by NUT and talks were broken off. The other unions may be more easily tempted but industrial action in the schools looks on the cards.

NALGO's 39,000 white-collar electricity workers have voted for industrial action to win the 35-week claim they've had since 1974. Sanctions on overtime, covering vacant posts and co-operation with new technology (which will hit show rooms hard) start in February. Things won't be helped by the Electricity Board's threat to take legal action because the ballot paper did not comply with the new Tory legislation.

By Ian Ilett

Tax union—£15 too

THE INLAND Revenue staff federation special pay conference on 22 January decided upon a flat rate claim of £15.00 per week for all grades in 1985.

This was a major victory for the IRSF Broad Left and brings it into line with the CPSA, the major civil service union which has also tabled a flat rate claim of £15.00.

The IRSF also agreed, by a large majority, to put claims forward for a 35 hour working week and a 5 day increase in annual leave, "without compensating reductions in pay."

As a result of this decision it looks likely that the Society of Civil and Public Servants will join a "consortium" with CPSA and IRSF leauing the other unions to submit pay claims of a slightly differing nature. The IPCS, CSU, and FDA fall into this category. Although the differing claims may present difficulties all nine unions are planning joint campaigns though the Council of Civil Service Unions.

CPSA, SCPS and IRSF have also drawn the lessons from the miners strike—that an all out strike will be needed to defeat the Tories in 1985. Already the unions are preparing. CPSA has organised rallies in all major towns in Britain between 4 and 14 March.

Blind workers want union

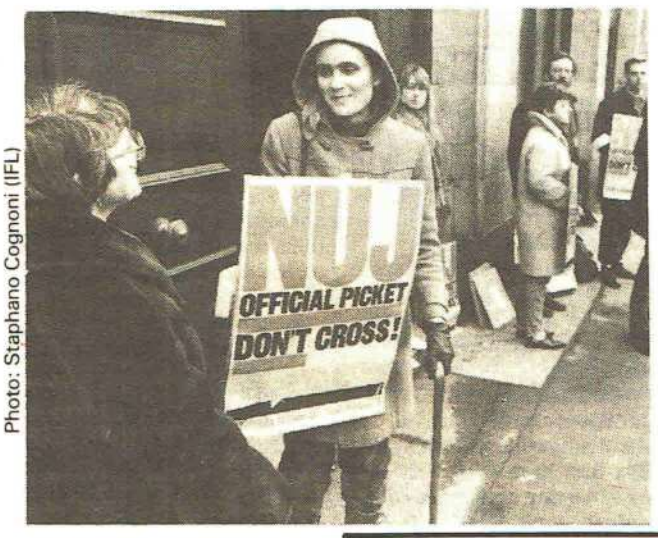


Photo: Staphano Cognoni (IFL)

OVER 60 blind and sighted workers on strike at Braile House in London over their claim for recognition of their unions, NUJ and SOGAT. They are employed by the National Institute for the Blind who claim good will to the unions but insist that though Braile House has over 50% union membership the union must get the same at the RNIB's Wembley and Reigate branches.

Tide turns on Tyne?

A THREATENED strike by GMBATU members working for the Tyne Pilotage Authority could paralyse shipping on the river.

The workers, cutter crew members and maintenance workers, held a ballot after negotiations with management over a 12½% pay claim broke down. they voted to strike from 4 February in support of their claim.

This could bring all movement on the river to a halt, including the daily ferrying of oil from Jarrow oil terminal to Blyth power station.

By Dave Bruce
(Jarrow LPYS)

BLOC
Broad Left Organising Committee

1985 BLOC Conference
23rd March
Manchester Free Trade Hall

The conference will discuss primarily two issues, the strategies needed to defeat all the Tory anti-union laws and the building of a national campaign to defend local government jobs, services and democracy.

Applications for delegates' credentials—each National Broad Left/Trade Union organisation can send up to four delegates (please include names and addresses of delegates on separate pieces of paper).

£3 per delegate—cheques made payable to 'BLOC'. All cheques and forms to be sent to: BLOC, c/o George Williamson, 11 Sutton Place, London E9 6E8.

Militant

Liverpool council stewards fight for jobs Page 6

Southwark council Page 7

Wanted-real jobs

YTURC campaign

THE YOUTH Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) fight against Tory plans to force young people onto YTS through refusing them benefit is on its way.

By John Hird
(LPYS National Chairman)

It was formally launched at a Press Conference in the House of Commons on 24 January. Paul Weller, with other members of Style Council and Brian Hibbitt of the Flying Pickets joined us to help our campaign against the creation of a teenage workhouse.

Tony Cox, YTURC secretary, explained what would be done to build support for the March and Lobby of Parliament on 28 Febuary. YTURC are launching a national petition against the Tories' plans with an aim of getting 234,000 signatures. A special "celebrity petition" was started with the signatures of the pop stars and MPs. This will be used to get more signatures from other public figures.

Concerts

Paul Weller and Brian Hibbitt told the press conference they would aim to help by getting signatures for the celebrity petition, playing concerts in support of the campaign and trying to get widespread support through their being in the public eye.

Other speakers included Dave Nellist MP (Joint President of YTURC), Michael Meacher MP, Joan Maynard MP, Barry Sherman MP (Front Bench spokesman on Employment), Eric Heffer MP, Lesleigh Woodburn (NUS FE National Committee) and Marie Blake (a former trainee). Also present were Margaret Beckett MP and Chris Smith MP, with messages of support coming from Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner MP, Arthur Scargill, Terry Fields MP and John Prescott MP.

The response we will receive was obvious when a group of school students from Manchester on a trip to Parliament came in on the press conference. They said they were interested in helping in the campaign after listenining to all the speakers. One school student summed up the determination of all present to defeat the Tories. When a journalist from *New Musical Express* asked whether the campaign would work. She said "It will work because young people want a choice ." No to slave conditions. Fight for a real choice with us.

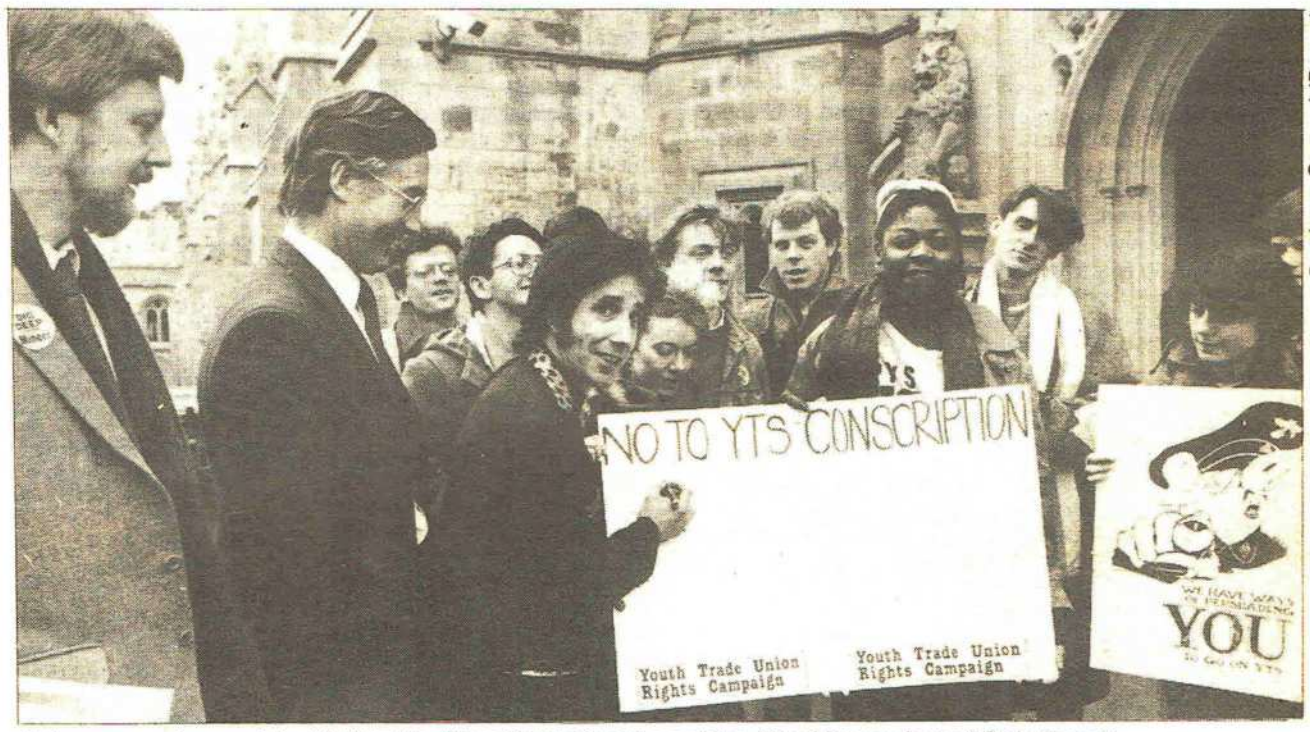


Photo: Stephano Cagnoni (Report)

At the press conference, Brian Hibbitt of the Flying Pickets signs the petition, joined by members of Style Council.

Priced out of market?

IN ANSWER to questions from Dave Nellist MP, the government has revealed the truth about their claim that youth people are "pricing themselves out of jobs".

Already, between 23 November 1983 and 20 November 1984, 1,163 young people have had their benefit cut because they refused to go on a YTS scheme and 10,701 because they prematurely left a YTS scheme.

The truth is that the "incentive" to go on a scheme is non-existent; the government's figures prove that YOP and YTS allowances have been held down. If they had been increased by the same amount as either prices or average earnings since 1979, YTS trainees would be on £40 a week. The present YTS allowance is 35% below that.

Similarly grants to students at college are 39% below what they would be if they had been increased at the same rate as average earninings over the last 20 years.

But most damning of all is the revelation that the same trend is evident in wages for real jobs. Since the Tories came to power in 1979, average wages for boys, in real terms, have fallen by 8% and for girls by 12%, yet youth unemployment has trebled.

Stop Tory rate-capping

THE MOST devastating attack ever is being launched against local authorities. Rate-capping and the abolition of the GLC and Metropolitan counties will mean the devastation of alrady depleted services.

Thousands of council workers would join the dole queue. If the jargon is stripped away, rate-capping amounts to nothing more than the legalised butchery of local authority jobs and services.

Local authority workers have no choice. We fight or go to the wall. A Girocheque leaves little room for creative financing. The only means of defending jobs and services is a massive national campaign of industrial and political action. So on 23 February a conference of local authority shop stewards has been organised.

23 February conference

It is backed by the Liverpool City Council Joint Shop Stewards' Committee and the London Bridge Committee which links the Joint Shop Stewards' Committees of the London Boroughs, the GLC and ILEA.

Delegations will be welcome from any local authority union branch, shop stewards' committee, but especially from those hit by rate-capping or heavy financial penalties. The aim is to form a national joint stewards' body.

We hope that this conference will discuss all the tactics for the struggle and prepare the way for a larger conference in late March/early April to launch a National Local Authority Stewards' Combine. This would be able to organise, prepare, and where necessary call national industrial action in defence of jobs and services. For the first time in history, a national linkage of local authority stewards is in the air, a powerful weapon in the armoury of the working class. We call on all local authority shop stewards to send representatives to the 23 February conference.

For further information contact Ian Lowes, c/o Grove Mount, Penny Lane, Liverpool 8.

Appeal from Chile

WE HAVE received an appeal from Chilean workers for help in developing opposition to the Pinochet regime.

"Our work is aimed primarily toward youth who suffer most from this criminal regime that tries to stop us organising and represses us day after day.

"We have set ourselves the task of educating ourselves and providing a means to solve the economic and social problems the regime has caused. We have laid down particular topics like unemployment, which now affects up to 70% of the youth in the working class areas, the problems of housing, health, drug addiction and lack of leisure facilities.

Pamphlets

"Of course to do this we need to produce posters, pamphlets, leaflets and literature. Although our personal risk is great, we will sacrifice our lives for the sake of our future and that of future generations.

"We need your solidarity given that our resources are severely limited by the economic situation. We bid you farewell counting on your solidarity."

From ***AUCAN? Taller de analisis problematica juvenil*** in Chile.

See pages 8-9

Miners and the LPYS

A YOUNG striking miner has been elected onto the LPYS National Committee. Gary Ironmonger of Cortonwood NUM will represent the Yorkshire region. Gary said after his election: "I joined the LPYS at the beginning of the strike. Young workers like myself learn the need for a political direction through struggle."

By Sue Ayton
(Wakefield LPYS)



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