



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

This has been sent in by
David Hart.

MA

MICHAEL ALISON

16.4.84

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THE INEVITABLE CONFLICT.

The street knows that there has, sooner or later, to be an all-out attempt by the Union Movement to engineer and win a confrontation with the government.

If not this year with the Miners, then in another year, under other circumstances. There is, indeed, a kind of desire for it as people long for the impending storm to break and so bring relief.

The street does not think the Union Movement will win.

I enclose a note to me from one of my street contacts, an ex-policeman, now running a small building business in Wales. It expresses very clearly the feelings among miners and ordinary people everywhere.

When the confrontation comes it will not be a strike against the Coal Board or any other Nationalised Industry but a strike against you. The trigger may be Coal Board business but the motivation will be opposition to your policies in general and you in person.

The street does not award any significant distinction to Nationalised Industry chairmen. It believes that you are, and will, especially when any crunch comes, be running the show. I am not sure anything you can do will succeed in convincing people otherwise.

In the same way that the light needs the darkness to be able to express itself, where there is strong government, there will always be strong opposition.

But it may not appear in the usual places. If the opposition is not satisfactorily articulated in the House, then it will try to make itself heard and felt outside it. A much more dangerous thing. The present Labour leadership is not proving sufficiently effective for the real opposition. Accordingly, without formal representation, it is beginning to appear and reappear in different guises, out of different mouths, outside the House.

It is Scargill who has found a role as the focus for and leader of the real opposition to you.

You couldn't have found a better man. For you. He is unwise, impulsive, bad television and repulsive to many, including many miners. Scargill's clumsy attempts to railroad the miners into a strike has created much unnecessary opposition among the miners to a strike.

In the same way that the opposition to you is extra-parliamentary, it is extra-social. It is not bound by the usual social rules and is informed only by its collective hatred for all the things that you believe in.

The leaders of this opposition are liars and cheats. Consider Scargill's utterly dishonest statistics that he keeps advancing on television. The only truth he has managed to utter is his oft repeated goal of 'getting the Tories out'. Meaning you.

These men are also classic communists. They want confrontation with the police. They want to goad the police into overreaction. And hope in this way to make more people lose respect for the state. Classic communism, and very old hat. Far too old hat for modern Britain.

The opposition to police action in this dispute is in Fleet Street and the Labour Party. Emphatically not on the street.

The men of violence in the union movement are emotional cripples, disappointed ones. Look at the faces of the young, unmarried miners who make up Scargill's shock troops. Drunk with the excitement of violence impending, glad, at last, to have found a group that will have them as a member.

In an age lacking in spiritual authority, authority for morals, these lost ones will join any group that will give them a sense of belonging and take responsibility for personal decisions off their shoulders.

Present circumstances with the miners are very favourable to the government. It is hard to see how they could be more favourable in any future confrontation with the Union Movement.

Though to be seen to precipitate a strike would lose public support, it would be very foolish to make any concessions at all in order to try to avoid one.

If the miners drift slowly back to work, neither roundly defeated nor victorious in their battle against you, all will, I am afraid, have to be repeated again.

Next time, whoever leads the opposition, even Scargill, will choose better ground for the battle.

David Hart. 11th April.

Dear David,
I have managed to do some grubbing a bout during the last few days including a very interesting visit to the Point of Air colliery in North Wales. The deeper one delves the more interesting it becomes.

The miners are obviously split and there seems little likelihood at the moment that the militants will be able to command or concoct the unity necessary to do the business.

The miners I spoke to were of the 'To the death' variety expressing attitudes and opinions based solely on their traditional militancy. underlying all this huff and puff however was a growing sense that the current dispute represents some sort of last stand not only for the miners but for the Trade Union movement in general. The most striking attitude expressed by almost everyone I have spoken to, (excluding the No Surrender head bangers) is that the miners must be on a loser, this is based on the belief that Mrs T. simply cannot be beaten in this sort of confrontation particularly in view of the coal stocks and the fact that production is continuing. There is also a growing acceptance of the inevitability of pit closures which results from recent trends in other major industries. I am sure it is the acceptance of this fact which has prompted many miners to ignore the strike call and not, as has been suggested, self interest by better paid miners. It would be interesting at some other time to see the level of support for Mrs.T. in general among the Nottingham miners.

As far as public opinion is concerned most people seem to believe that the miners are bound to lose, this includes the growing army of disaffected voters who would love to see Mrs. T. fall flat on the aris.

The only other point worth bearing in mind when guaging public feeling on the matter is that it is still largely a spectacle, i.e. domestic supplies and electricity supplies have not as yet been affected so everyone can sit back

and watch the drama in comfort.

The Police are coming in for a lot of stick for their role in the dispute particularly where it is seen that they are bending laws in order to control the movements of pickets. I feel that if the dispute drags on with the miners becoming more and more frustrated, (particularly in Yorkshire), then gross agro must be expected.

So it goes.

This £20 word processor of mine does not seem to be working too well, perhaps you have a redundant one you could let me have, or better still how about a n allowance for a secretary.

Love

[Signature]