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MR REDWOOD

20 July 1984

POLITICAL PURPOSE IN THE COAL STRIKE

You asked about ways in which the strike is being used for wider political ends by militants both inside and outside the coal industry. The evidence is now massive and indisputable. The fundamentals were there from the beginning: indeed, immediately after last year's General Election miners' leaders declared their intention to oppose the Government by extra-parliamentary action. Their aims were endorsed by activists in other unions and by the organisations and parties of the far Left, to which a number of them subscribe.

As the strike has developed, the political dimension has become more apparent. The dispute has galvanised the Left in a way no other strike has for over five years. Its forces have been active on picket lines, in fund-raising, at countless rallies and demonstrations and in trying to spread the strike to other industries and unions.

The aims and scope of this political dimension can, for convenience, be demonstrated as follows:

- (a) in the public statements before and during the strike of NUM leaders;

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- (b) in the political allegiance of NUM leaders and key activists;
- (c) in the support given to the strike by organisations of the extreme Left;
- (d) in the attempts by the NUM and by militants in other unions to extend strike action to other industries and services.

These activists overlap, as for example, when the Militant Tendency, working through the Newham Miners Support Committee, provides a platform for Mr Benn, Derek Hatton of Liverpool Council, and a Kent miner, or when the Morning Star endorses the call from a Communist miners' leader to a pro-Communist railway union leader for financial and industrial support.

(a) Miners' Public Statement: Mr Scargill's utterances are too many and too well known to require much elaboration here. Worth noting however, is his statement after the 1983 General Election advocating extra-parliamentary action against Government policy decisions, including political strikes (Morning Star, 11 June 1983; Annex A); his front page article in the Morning Star (28 March 1984; Annex B); and his 1975 interview with the New Left Review (reprinted in The Times, 26 June 1984; Annex C).

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Among other miners' leaders, Jack Collins, a Communist Party member and Secretary of the Kent NUM, contributed a statement to London Labour Briefing in May 1984 calling for solidarity between miners and other sections of the working class (Annex D). London Labour Briefing is one of the main forums of the Labour Left in the local government field. it began around the supporters of Ken Livingstone and now extends nationwide. It is deeply involved in planning co-ordinated action by Labour-controlled councils against rate-capping, and it fully supports the miners on strike.

(b) Political Allegiance: The NUM executive is nominally divided 12-12 between 'Left' and 'Right'. The moderates however, are weak and disunited, while the Left is more cohesive, with an effective alliance existing between Communist Party members and labour Left-wingers.

The most important single political group from the extreme Left in the NUM is the Communist Party. Among CP members in the union are Mick McGahey (Scottish President), George Bolton (Scottish Vice President and CP Chairman), Jack Collins and Malcolm Pitt (Kent), Aarfon Evans, Dave Richards and George Rees (Welsh NUM Executive) and numerous activists lower down the scale. They work closely with Labour Party members such as Peter Heathfield (General Secretary), Owen Briscoe and Jack Taylor (Yorkshire), Emlyn Williams (South Wales), Henry Richardson (Notts), and Eric Clarke (Scottish Secretary) on the national committee.

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Some of these individuals are close to the Communist Party. Heathfield and Clarke have contributed to the Morning Star. Both accompanied Scargill to Moscow last August, during which Mr Scargill made an outspoken attack on President Reagan and the Prime Minister. Henry Richardson, though somewhat isolated in the Nottinghamshire pits, is Chairman of Dennis Skinner's constituency party at Bolsover, and has also appeared in the column of the Morning Star.

Below the national level, several revolutionary groups have some supporters in the NUM: Militant Tendency, Socialist Workers' Party, and Workers' Revolutionary party in particular, have been able to find supporters in the NUM to contribute to their newspapers, and speak to the meetings.

(c) Far-Left Involvement from Outside the NUM: The Left has tried to increase the degree of militancy in the strike, particularly by supporting mass picketing and vilifying the police, and to broaden its scope by extending it to other industries.

The CP itself has been in the fore-front of the campaign. Its July executive committee meeting declared that the Labour movement should take up the challenge "not only in support of the miners but on the whole range of Tory policies...". (Morning Star, 16 July 1984; Annex E). The party General Secretary, Gordon McLennan, followed this up

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with a speech in which he said the movement's job was to make it impossible for the Government to carry out its policies (Morning Star, 19 July; Annex F).

The Socialist Workers' Party claims to have produced hundreds of thousands of leaflets and posters for the strike and the Victory for the Miners' placards seen on marches and rallies are the work of the SWP. Besides propaganda, the SWP has encouraged its members to join picket lines and *make* regular financial collections at union branches. It has a seven point programme of action (as set out in Socialist Worker, 30 June 1984; Annex G). Prominent themes in SWP propaganda are anti-police sentiments ("Thatchers' thugs") and distrust of the Labour Party and trade union establishment. The strike does appear to have given a boost to the SWP's morale after several years of pessimism about the prospects for militant action.

The Workers' Revolutionary Party and its agencies, such as the All Trade Union Alliance, want a general strike (Newslines, 11 July; Annex H) and the setting up of Community Councils "as Soviet-type organisations" (Annex I). Some Councils are supposedly in existence (Newslines, 18 July; Annex J) and are providing food and money for strikers.

The Militant Tendency has been developing similar arguments that the Government is creating a "Bonapartist" police state (Militant, 13 July 1984; Annex K). It has also

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attempted to broaden the issue by linking the miners' strike to Liverpool Council and other issues: at a Merseyside Fightback meeting in June, Peter Heathfield was one of the speakers, alongside Liverpool councillors.

(c) Solidarity Actions: despite all the appeals and declaration of intent by national leaders, rank and file trade unionists are unwilling to support the miners by striking themselves.

Militants have had to find other ways of giving practical backing. For a union which does not hand out strike pay, fund-raising has been the most important. Some trade unions, not all with Left-wing leaderships (eg NALGO), have given five figures sums, and Labour-led councils such as Sheffield and Derbyshire have contributed food or money. Fund-raising at the lower levels, in Labour Party and union branches has become a significant factor, with small amounts coming through regularly in hundreds of contributions. The Left has been very active trying to make levies effective, organising collections and in setting up Miners' Support Committees (Socialist Action, 8 June; Annex L). A feature of the strike has been the growth of Women's Committees to raise money, food and clothes. All of this has helped sustain the strike, and the strikers' morale.



PETER SHIPLEY

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DO NOT CUT A

**ALL THE RESULTS INSIDE TODAY**

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Y JUNE 11 1983

MS 11/6/83

# Start anti-Tory fightback now, leaders urged

By ANDREW MURRAY

START the anti-Tory fightback now labour movement leaders urged yesterday as Premier Thatcher geared up for the second round of attacks on the British people.

The message to the movement was that no time must be lost in the fight to mobilise millions after Labour's epic electoral setback in the general election.

"Great mass movements can develop" in defence of peace, democracy, welfare and against unemployment, Communist Party general secretary Gordon McLennan commented. "This can build resistance to Tory policies and win the people for an alternative course for Britain."

But, Mr. McLennan added, to give leadership the labour movement "must develop a new understanding of the need to project its policies and build alliances with other left and democratic forces."

And miners' leader Arthur Scargill said that the trade unions would now have to accept the need "to take extra-parliamentary action against policy decisions of this government."

Adding that he was not "cowed" by the Tory victory, Mr. Scargill said that if welfare services were under attack "people will have to take direct action. That means we will have to consider very seriously taking political strike action."

Leading left-winger Tony Benn, defiant after his defeat at Bristol East, said that "we have to build the labour movement and that we shall do in order to protect people and to begin the campaign for the next general election."

Labour politicians were also preparing for a likely leadership election this autumn, as Mr. Michael Foot is expected to stand down soon.

Premier Thatcher got her desired landslide majority in the Commons in Thursday's voting largely thanks to the votes the Alliance managed to win from Labour in the last week of the campaign.

But she did not get anything like a landslide in terms of votes cast, indeed, the Tory share of the vote declined slightly compared to 1979. It seemed clear that Mrs. Thatcher has won few fresh converts, despite the media support, but is instead profiting from the disarray in the opposition.

The Prime Minister's own vote in Finchley declined, as did that of her top hit-man Norman Tebbit. An dwhile the Conservatives all but obliterated Labour in southern England, they did not make the hoped-for gains in the Labour heartlands or in more marginal areas like the West Midlands.

★ continued from p.1

is not an MP. All potential leadership contenders reaffirmed their loyalty to Mr. Foot yesterday, although Mr. Silkin laid the blame for the defeat on the in-fighting of recent years.

One factor which will affect the next choice of leadership is the somewhat more left-wing character of the PLP, which has 30 per cent of the votes in the leadership electoral college.

For the Liberal-SDP Alliance, the election is a story of frustrated hopes and disappearing dreams. Despite a big surge in their vote, the parliamentary mould wobbled but stayed unbroken.

The Alliance parties failed to overhaul Labour and reach the breakthrough point when increased votes reap a harvest of seats. Their 25.8 per cent of the vote won them fewer seats than they had in the old parliament.

Defection does not pay was the message given to the two dozen retiring SDP MPs elected in 1979 on the Labour ticket. Only Ian Wrigglesworth in Stockton South, John Cartwright in Woolwich and Robert MacLennan in Caithness and Sutherland held their seats.

The collapse of the Social Democrats is sure to bring new tensions in their alliance with the Liberals, who picked up a handful of new seats and only lost Bill Pitt in Croydon North-West.

However, there is no denying the complete dominance Mrs. Thatcher now enjoys both inside parliament and within her own party. The new backbenchers swept into the Commons are largely fashioned in her image.

While she is not expected to ditch all the dissidents from her cabinet she is clearly not going to put up with the continued sniping at her economic policy from within the government that she had to endure during the early years of her first term.

Home Secretary William Whitelaw and Foreign Secretary Francis Pym are likely candidates for dismissal or demotion in the cabinet-making going on this weekend. Mr. Tebbit and Mr. Parkinson, now Mrs. Thatcher's two key aides, are earmarked for promotion.

While the loss in seats was less than some Labour Party managers had been fearing, it is nevertheless the smallest Parliamentary Labour Party since the Second World War which will assemble next week.

And by any other measure, the party's poll performance was catastrophic. Compared with 1979, Labour's vote fell

More election news on pages 2 and 7.

a further 9 per cent to 28 per cent, the smallest obtained by the party of organised labour since the end of the First World War, worse even than in such miserable elections as 1931.

Labour suffered further blows with the loss of several key figures. Leading left-wingers now out of the Commons, as well as Mr. Benn include shadow cabinet member Albert Booth and the chairmen of the two left-wing groups of MPs, Bob Cryer and Stan Newens.

The stage is now set for a prolonged examination of the reasons for the party's decline and the means to rebuild it, which will almost certainly include a leadership election at this year's party conference.

A dejected Michael Foot, now near the end of his career as Labour's most left-wing leader since the war, said, when conceding defeat on Thursday night, that he accepted his responsibility for the setback. He denied that the party's left-wing manifesto was the reason for the defeat and pledged his energy to helping restore Labour's fortunes.

Candidates for the leadership will certainly include right-wingers Roy Hattersley, and Peter Shore and left-winger Neil Kinnock. Deputy leader Denis Healey could stand but would be unlikely to win, as would defence spokesman John Silkin.

Mr. Benn cannot stand as he

★ continued on p. 2

The Liberals retained their foothold in the inner cities, retaining Bermondsey and Liverpool Mossley Hill, while the SDP lost all they had and won nothing new.

Liberal critics of the pact with the Social Democrats will now be heard louder and new squabbles will break out between SDP chief Roy Jenkins and his deputy David Owen over the direction of their party.

They now form a diminished "gang of two" after their partners in the SDP launch, Shirley Williams and William Rodgers were turned out by the voters.

For the Liberals, the frustration was worsened by the agonising near-misses in target seats like Richmond and Chelmsford.

The Alliance will step up their campaign for proportional representation, under which they would have had hundreds rather than a couple of dozen MPs. Liberal leader David Steel said that he was "very angry" that the Alliance had not won more seats.

But there is no chance of proportional representation in any form being approved by the newly-elected Commons, given Mrs. Thatcher's implacable opposition to the idea.

Mr. Steel denied that there would be a split in the Alliance and also ruled out co-operation with Labour in the Commons, although Liberal MP David Alton had earlier hinted at such a possibility.



# The miners' battle for Britain

**IT IS NOT** just an explosion of miners' feelings that is taking place.

Something far deeper has been set in motion, touching a chord throughout society.

Other trade unionists, the unemployed, women, businessmen — and, yes, even some Tories — have contacted me over the past few days, offering and giving support to the miners.

Simply put, a realisation is now dawning that the National Union of Mineworkers is engaged in a social and industrial Battle of Britain. Any initial feelings of hostility are rapidly evaporating.

The knowledge has sunk in that if MacGregor gets away with destroying tens of thousands

**by NUM President ARTHUR SCARGILL**

of miners' jobs in a single year, then absolutely nothing and no-one is safe from the mad-cap ruinous policies of this government.

Total strangers — non-miners and miners alike — stop me in the street and say "You've got to win this one, I've got a lad at home and what chance will he have of a job when he leaves school. . . . ?"

What they are really saying is that they want to end the rule of fear which dominates this land.

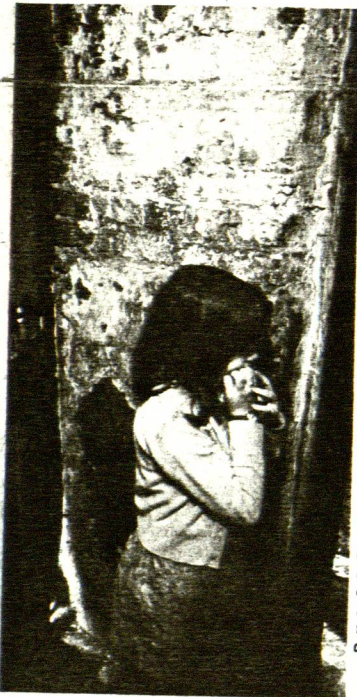
**FEAR** felt by those in work who do not know from one week to the next whether they will suddenly be consigned to the scrap heap.

**FEAR** of a life on the dole that drives school-age kids to blot out reality with a 50-pence tube of glue.

**FEAR** that any action taken to defend the most basic of workers' rights will incur the wrath of the boss and lead to a one-way ticket to the dole queue — or the courts.

A torrent of fear, feeding off a well of human misery unparalleled in post-war years.

But something, somewhere, had to give, turning that fear on its creators. Brixton, Toxteth and St. Pauls were warning shots that injustice and inequality can only be pushed so far.

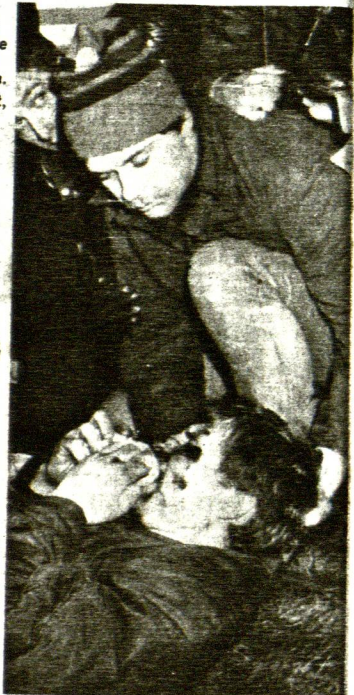


The pictures alongside are two sides of the same coin.

On the left, a child in a poverty-stricken area of Britain, victim of the social violence of unemployment.

On the right a Yorkshire miner, face smashed by the more visible violence of police "activity" in Notts.

Young and old they are the victims of an inhuman, degrading and destructive system of society.



How, when thousands of millions of pounds can be found for nuclear power stations can there be said to be a shortage of cash for investment in coal, reserves of which we have for the next 1,000 years?

And how can anyone talk of a lack of demand for coal when thousands of pensioners freeze to death each year for want of sufficient heat, and people go short of

## ✓ Get those £££s in now

There is no strike pay in a miner's dispute. And that means one thing — cash, in immediate and huge quantities, is of the utmost importance.

As in years gone by, the state will do everything in its power to maximise financial hardship to miners and their families.

Already there are widespread reports of the DHSS being as obstructive and unhelpful as possible.

But even their machinations can be defeated if all of us rally round.

A few ideas:  
Miners benefit nights at your home; factory/office collections; street collections.  
And what about every committed worker

donating a day's pay to the miners? After all, the fight for the right to stay in a job is their fight too!

Time is of the essence. Huge sums are needed immediately to back the people who are waging a crucial struggle on behalf of millions.

Invest in the future and get those donations pouring in to: Miners' Solidarity Fund, St. James' House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield. Cheques and postal orders made payable to Miners' Solidarity Fund. Or you can pay cash in immediately through any bank, quoting Miners' Solidarity Fund, Co-op Bank, Sheffield Branch, Account No. 30000009. Bank sorting code 06-90-75.

### Why we back the miners

**WE ARE PROUD** to give over our front page to the miners today to present their case in their own words.

The miners are fighting a battle for Britain.

Every trade unionist and patriot should stand beside them now. With your backing they can and will win a battle on behalf of us all. Unlike Fleet Street's millionaire press, the Star backs the miners to the hilt.

the 1,001 products made with the aid of coal?

Moreover, the demand for coal is one which could change overnight.

With the situation in the Middle East

● Continued on back page



And what about every committed worker  
DANK JOINING EVER  
Continued on back page

# Morning Star

## Miners fighting Battle for Britain—Scargill

● Continued from page one

highly volatile, oil prices could go through the roof tomorrow, leading to an immediate upsurge in the need for coal.

Pits, however, cannot be turned on and off like taps. They need long-term planning and policies in the national interest, not the short-term whims of the political and market rat race.

### DECENT HOMES

But the questions miners and the rest of society are now asking are not limited to the coal industry. People see 400,000 building workers without a job and they puzzle why this should be when millions in our country cry out for decent, modern homes.

They see the pitiful queues for the health service while medical staff join their own queues of despair at the Job Centres.

Above all, they start to focus on the overall picture of terrible economic injustice which runs like a cancer through our society: How the unemployed and the low paid are watched like hawks lest they should "fiddle" a 50p piece they are not entitled to in their state benefits.

And they contrast that with how the establishment chuckled and applauded when Lord Vestey's Dewhurst chain paid just £10 tax on £4.1 million profits.

At a basic level they see businessmen, stock-brokers, Fleet Street editors and other worthies of society spend more on a bottle of wine than a pensioner has to survive on for a week.

In essence, that's the social powder keg in which the present miners' industrial explosion has taken place. But it is all hot air unless one supreme point is understood:

The miners cannot win this dispute alone. The forces opposed to us, though wobbling, are strong.

To defeat them it will take people and cash on a mammoth scale. Every sinew in every factory, office, dole queue, docks, railway, plant and mill will need to be strained to the maximum. Not tomorrow or the next day, but now.

### SOCIALST PROGRAMME

I ask you to take away this key general thought: The Labour Party, by putting forward a clear socialist programme of employing the nation's resources to benefit all, is now running neck and neck with the Tories. The Tories themselves are rattled, fragmented and divided as the system they try to maintain trembles around their ears under the weight of intolerable social strain.

Doubt, uncertainty and large-scale union support forced them to think twice about the use of their anti-trade union laws against the Yorkshire NUM.

They know they are in largely unchartered land because this dispute is mainly about jobs, and **waiting in the wings are four million unemployed whose numbers could swell the picket lines at any time.**

In sum, the situation in Britain is unprecedented. But what is urgently needed is the **rapid and total mobilisation of the trade union and labour movement** to take positive advantage of a unique opportunity to defend our class and roll back the machinery of oppression, exploitation and deep-seated human misery.

On an equally broad basis, the future of whole communities is at stake. Pit

closures will wipe out not just miners' jobs but other industries, shops, community centres, cafes, pubs, the lot.

And, of course, unemployment would slash the revenue which miners contribute towards local services.

Schools, refuse collection, care for the old and sick, **everything** would suffer.

### QUALITY OF LIFE

That is why when I say this is a fight for Britain and the quality of life in our country, I speak accurately.

We all knew in our heart of hearts that at some time the decimation of our country would be reversed, and that the tide would be turned in the opposite direction.

THAT TIME IS NOW.

**Scargill on Saltley: 'Here was the living proof that the working class has only to flex its muscles and it could bring governments, employers, society to a total standstill'**

# My greatest day

What does NUM president Arthur Scargill want from the miners' dispute - a successful coal industry or a successful class struggle? In 1975, in a revealing interview with the magazine *New Left Review*, he looked back at the crippling disputes in 1969, 1972, and 1974 - and also looked into the future

The first thing that we did in the 1969 dispute was to ask ourselves, first of all, was every pit in Yorkshire out? And the answer then "yes". That was completely sewn up. The next step was to get out every other pit in Britain if we could.

Then we launched pickets into Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. We decided that the best way that we could produce an effective stoppage was to have a rapid mobile picket. We'd used this before in the Yorkshire coalfield, but on a very limited scale and never in an organized way. We launched from the coalfield here squads of cars, minibuses and buses, all directed on to pre-determined targets, with five, six, seven-hundred miners at a time. Of course, the police were going to come, but they couldn't cover forty points at a time, without bringing the British armed forces in.

I believe in a class war you have to fight with the tools at your disposal. 1969 was a foretaste.

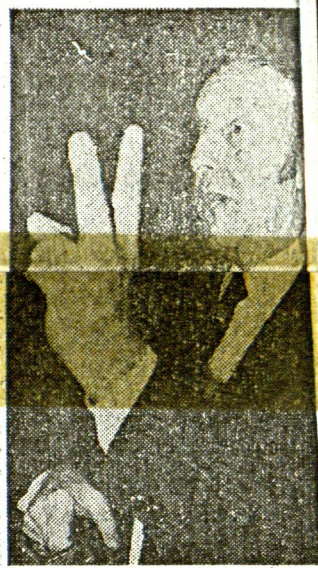
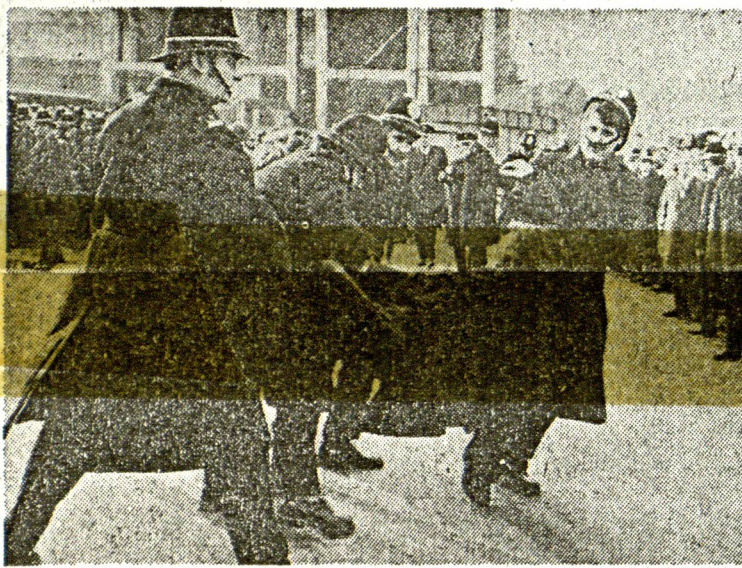
Did you get other groups of workers involved?

No, we didn't because the big problem was that we were not able at this stage to get out our own men. The subsequent result wasn't a victory in the sense that you can say "We've got it" but it would have been a terrible defeat if we'd kept the men out on strike. So we took a decision to go back to work victoriously, and we led them back. I don't care who the historian is but if he regards '69 as anything other than a complete victory, it's time that he went and did some more thinking about it. Because '69 was responsible for producing all the victories that were to come.

Did you keep the rank and file organization in being after the strike?

Well, there were groups of miners in the coalfields who came together. For example, a number of us had launched an organization called the Barnsley Miners' Forum, of which I was secretary. This forum was a platform for the left and a platform for ideas within the movement. You cannot have this sort of forum without having a concentration of ideas, and some kind of unity developing in the coalfields. So to that extent the left were keeping together. In 1970 we had an abortive strike in Yorkshire. This was mainly because the issue at stake was the wrong one; we couldn't get the unity we wanted among the left and there were splits. But at the same time many valuable lessons were learnt because nearly half the coalfields in Britain came out on strike. After the '69 and '70 disputes it was clear that the union was never, ever going to be the same again.

Of course it's a matter of history that the '72 strike took place after an overtime ban. But what is not generally known is where the picketing started in 1972 - it started in Yorkshire. We had every pit picketed on the first morning to get out the weekly-paid industrial staff-members, who were not members of the Yorkshire NUM, to make sure they were out on strike straight away. After this we immediately switched our attack to every major coal depot and power station in the region. We had a thousand pickets deployed into East Anglia, and we had a major battle inside the Strike Committee. The differences of opinion were whether we should concentrate the pickets on one target



Saltley, Wednesday February 9, 1972: a Scargill forewarning of things to come

all over East Anglia to all the power stations.

The argument that won the day was the one to send them to Yarmouth, to Bedford, to Cambridge, to Ipswich, to Norwich, to all the different power stations. I said this was stupid and would not prove successful. For three days we battled with police in the East Anglia area. Then we had a weekend Strike Committee meeting and changed the policy.

I picked the phone up and called East Anglia HQ and said "Move everything in on to Ipswich dock, move everything we can". We produced a thousand pickets in an hour-and-a-half in Ipswich dock, and stopped the dock in an hour. We left a token picket at the docks, moved on, and closed down the power stations one by one. Within two days we'd shut down the whole of East Anglia.

How did the strike develop on a national basis?

The picketing had been launched in all the areas. But mobile pickets directed on targets outside the pits had been sent mostly from Yorkshire. You see, we took the view that we were in a class war. We were not playing cricket on the village green, like they did in '26. We out to defeat Heath and Heath's policies because we were fighting a government. Anyone who thinks otherwise was living in cloud-cuckoo land. We had to declare war on them and the only way you could declare war was to attack the vulnerable points.

What was the permit system that you were operating?

Well, the miners' union was not opposed to the distribution of coal. We were only opposed to the distribution of coal to industry because we wished to paralyse the nation's economy. It's as simple as that. We were fighting a class war and you don't fight a war with sticks and bladders. You fight a war with the weapons that are going to win it.

What were the circumstances that produced the confrontation at Saltley?

By the time Saltley came up everything was quiet. It was a Saturday and the telephone in the headquarters here in Barnsley had been remarkably silent. Every point was covered and the permit system was operating. The telephone rang at four o'clock on that Saturday afternoon. It was someone from the national office: "Can you get as many pickets as possible into Birmingham?" "Pickets to Birmingham?" I said. "What for?" "There's a coke depot there," this bloke said, "lorries are going in, hundreds of them!" Then he put the phone down.

What do you do on a Saturday afternoon? How do you get three, four-hundred pickets to Birmingham

ten men ought to be able to control a coke depot. Anyway, I thought, the only thing to do is to get it organized. So I put out the call and within three hours we had 200 on their way. Within five hours we had 400 men on their way down to Birmingham in coaches.

I drove through the night and arrived in Birmingham at three o'clock in the morning. I went into the centre of Birmingham and found our lads who were in the Communist Party HQ. I was then briefed on this coke depot and we went down on the Sunday.

I have never seen anything like it in my life. It was estimated that there was a million tons; it was like a mountain. It was an Eldorado of coke. There were a thousand lorries a day going in and you can imagine the reaction of our boys, fresh from the successes in East Anglia, fresh from the successes in Yorkshire. Battles raged outside that coke depot and at ten o'clock they closed it.

On Wednesday, it was a struggle all day. Most of the leadership of the strike in Birmingham were getting no more than two hours a night sleep. We were getting home at one, two o'clock in the morning and getting up at four. We were stationed all over Birmingham in houses and the people of Birmingham were absolutely fantastic. The solidarity of the working class was never more evident. On that Thursday it produced the greatest day of my life.

The whole of the East District of the Birmingham AUEW were out on strike, 100,000 were out on strike. It was tremendous. And they were still marching in from Coventry and other places, still advancing into Saltley. It was estimated that there were 20,000 in this area. Maudling, who said that the gates wouldn't close, suddenly found that they were bloody closed and locked. The Chief Constable said: "That's it, I'm not risking any more here, those gates stay closed." He then turned to me - this is absolutely factual - and said: "Will you please do us a favour? Will you please disperse the crowd?" And I said on two conditions: first that I can make a speech to the crowd. He said: "Agreed." And secondly that I can use your equipment, because mine's knackered. He said: "Agreed."

Then I spoke from the urinal in Birmingham, with this police equipment. I gave a political speech to that mass of people and told them that it was the greatest victory of the working class, certainly in my lifetime. The lads who were there were overcome with emotion, emotion in the best possible way. Here had been displayed all that's good in the working-class movement. Here had been displayed what for years had been on a banner but had never been transferred from the banner into reality. You know the

"Workers of the World Unite 'Man to Man Brother Be'. The big words. Sometimes they'd be ridiculed. Through all that ridicule all that sneering, they survived. It was the living proof that the working class had only to flex its muscles and it could bring governments, employers, society to a total standstill. I know the fear of Birmingham on the part of the ruling class. The fear was that what happened in Birmingham could happen in every city. This was the first major defeat of the Heath government and it set the scene for its defeat later in the same year on the Industrial Relations Act and on the imprisonment of dockers. Did the miners have a direct relationship to those struggles against the Industrial Relations Act? Oh yes. You can't separate this from the experience of Saltley because it was so intertwined, beyond belief. We had more people arrested at Saltley, for example, than in the rest of the strike put together. I was the only official of the NUM arrested and subsequently convicted. It was incredible. I was taken to court for picketing and for organizing picketing. But the situation was that later on we were able to use that experience of the strike, when the dockers were put in prison. Yorkshire miners went on strike. We didn't have to ask them, they were out! This is what political education had done for them. They had become aware.

At the moment the militant left wing of the trade union movement defines itself mainly by fighting vigorously for wage claims. However necessary this is, in present circumstances wage battles alone will not be able to defend the living standards of the working class. Shouldn't the left of the unions fight for a fuller, rounded out programme to meet the crisis that affects the working class in every aspect of life?

The problem is that once we start to divorce wages from politics, then we lose our perspectives, we begin to suggest that the trade unions have lost their sense of direction, that they are no longer projecting the real issues of the day, which are nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange. And not just nationalization, but common ownership, real common ownership. But you see you will not get common ownership of the means of production, you will not get real control of the society in which we live, unless you commit and convince the working class of the need to struggle.

It may be that we get a strike situation on our hands similar to '72 or '74 where another Saltley can occur. If we get another Saltley then the whole picture can change from one where you have a peaceful road to one where you do not have such a peaceful road.

LABOUR

# BRIEFING

NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

No. 7

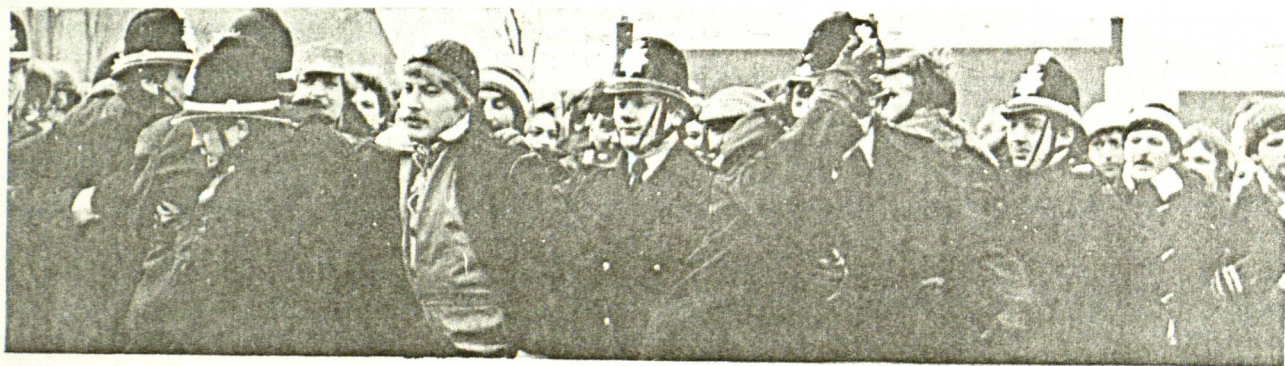
May 1984

## MINERS' STRIKE: WE WILL WIN!

“It’s going to be won. It’ll be won because of the solidarity between miners and by extending that solidarity to other sections of the class. It doesn’t matter if Neil Kinnock doesn’t give us full support because the cheques coming in from local Labour Parties shows that the members of the Labour Party do support us. We’ll appeal directly over the heads of the renegades to the workers.

The right-wing in the unions should be ignored. It would be a disaster to hand over our struggle to the TUC. Len Murray’s been on his backside for so long he’ll only get involved to sell us out.”

Jack Collins, President of the Kent Area of the NUM



**LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!**

## Communist call for action

# Miners open new course for Britain

THE labour movement now has the opportunity to win the leadership of all people who want a change of course for Britain.

Morning Star Reporter

It should not hesitate, the Communist Party executive committee said at the weekend, to go on to the offensive.

At the same time, every opportunity should be seized to broaden and widen the struggle in support of the miners in their strike.

The Communists called on the movement to take up the challenge "not only in support of the miners but on the whole range of Tory policies which threaten peace, attack democracy, destroy social and public services, create mass unemployment and lower living standards."

### OPPORTUNITIES

Presenting a report on the political situation party chairman George Bolton said that "new opportunities for political challenge to the Tories exist to a greater degree than many thought possible a year ago."

While government sources and ministers were holding out the threat of the use of troops in the docks strike, said Mr. Bolton, the dockers' action was an illustration of the impact of the miners' strike.

Despite the media barrage and all the efforts of the government and National Coal Board, the miners were "even more solid than in the first weeks of the dispute."

Their strength in action "is already lifting the fighting spirit of the whole movement."

"Victory for the miners is central to the fight to force the government off the disaster course down which it is pro-pelling Britain.

"What is needed to intensify Tory difficulties and divisions is the development of mass struggle on all the great issues, with the labour movement winning the leadership of all who want different policies for Britain.

"Unity of the left, of Labour and Communist Party members and their organisations has a vital contribution to make in taking the labour movement on to the offensive," Mr. Bolton said.

Communists would do all they could to build unity at the same time as they sought to "show a way out of the immediate crisis and present a perspective for fundamental Socialist change."

Mr. Bolton, himself a miners' leader, said that a new stage had been reached in the strike. Recognition that victory for the miners would be a victory for the whole movement had grown. The government, of course, saw this too.

"Their tactic has clearly been one of trying to make the central question the fact that a minority have continued to work and to try and concentrate on the issues of mass picketing, violence and law and order."

The government was trying,

but had failed, to keep the arguments to such narrow matters.

While the decisive question continued to be the militant role of the miners themselves and the increasing solidarity of other trade unions with them, the question had to be posed; what can be done to broaden and widen every aspect of the struggle?

"There need to be more picket lines, but picket line militancy is not enough. We need to get out and tell the British people why the NUM is in action."

The donations and the money that were pouring in demonstrated that millions could be won to support the miners in their campaign to stop the rape of the coal industry.

### DAYS OF ACTION

In the days of action and other developments involving local authorities, churches and the like "there is the embryo of a truly broad democratic alliance which will be strengthened by other activities emerging in all sections of the population.

"What is obvious is that the Tories are scared stiff and every avenue should be explored in the effort to make them run even faster."

Could the Telecom workers switch off for a couple of hours on a given day, was a national half-day Health Service strike possible or a miners' version of the People's March?

Pledging the party's full solidarity with the miners and offering their condemnation of the actions of the police, he added: "This government cannot afford to open up too many fronts of opposition to its policies."

16/7/84



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# Argentina and Britain in talks

By Our FOREIGN STAFF

ARGENTINA and Britain yesterday began their first formal talks on the Falkland Islands — but with direct disagreement over whether or not sovereignty was one of the matters for debate.

Argentine Foreign Minister Dante Caputo said bluntly: "The exclusion of the subject of sovereignty is inadmissible for the Argentine government."

At the Foreign Office in London a spokesman said the subject of the talks was being kept

confidential but Britain had made it clear it was not prepared to discuss the question of sovereignty.

Senior officials of both governments were meeting under a Swiss chairperson yesterday in the Swiss capital Berne. The talks will go on today and could continue until Friday.

"We have taken on ourselves the task of making our sovereignty over these national territories a reality by way of negotiations," Mr. Caputo declared.

# Defence staff

Morning Star Reporter

DEFENCE SECRETARY Michael Heseltine was yesterday accused of sacrificing national security for the sake of saving cash and boosting his own career.

Labour MPs denounced Mr. Heseltine's plans for changes in the structure of armed forces as an example of his obsession with business efficiency above all else.

Mr. Heseltine announced the plans yesterday which involve the strengthening of central defence staff at the expense of the

staffs of There are stiffly discuss measures.

Labour Davies said had been the present Heseltine's ness manager

And And East) said had acted so own political Julian Ames attack.

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# NUM's new rule illegal, says judge

THE National Union of Mineworkers' new disciplinary code was declared illegal by a High Court judge yesterday.

The Vice-Chancellor, Sir Robert Megarry, also ordered the union not to use the new code, which he declared "void and of no effect."

He granted the orders to 17 non-striking members of the Nottingham area NUM council who had argued that the new disciplinary process was invalid because it was approved by last week's special conference in defiance of a court injunction.

Sir Robert said: "Those who defy a prohibition ought not to be able to claim the fruits of their defiance."

The Nottingham miners had told the judge that they feared the new disciplinary system would be used against them and other non-striking miners to deprive them of union membership and thus their livelihoods.

In his judgment yesterday, Sir Robert said a variety of "critical and abusive" comments about him had come to his notice. "Most of them are too stupid to deserve comment, but if the public interest is thought to require that any of them should be the subject of proceedings, whether for contempt or otherwise, I am well content to leave



the matter to the Attorney-General," he said.

He also imposed an injunction restraining the NUM, president Arthur Scargill and general secretary Peter Heathfield from "seeking to enforce or act upon" the disciplinary rule changes purportedly passed by the union last week.

Mr. Scargill, Mr. Heathfield and the union were not represented yesterday, but were ordered to pay the costs of the hearing and of last week's late-night injunction proceedings at which the judge banned debate on the new rules.

# Socialist Euro-MPs urge cash for miners

The European parliament's 132-strong Socialist group yesterday called on trade unions throughout Europe to give cash backing to the miners on strike in Britain.

The group — the largest in

the European parliament — also called on all governments in Europe to stop coal exports to Britain. An emergency motion tabled by Merseyside East Euro-MP Les Huckfield was carried unanimously

# McLennan in call for offensive 'on great issues'

Morning Star Reporter

COMMUNIST PARTY general secretary Gordon McLennan last night called for a labour movement offensive "on all the great issues" to further intensify the Cabinet's difficulties.

Speaking in Lewisham, London, he said: "Our job is to make it impossible for them to continue imposing their disastrous policies on the people of Britain."

The main way to do this, he said, was through mass extra-Parliamentary action as the miners and dockers were showing.

"Led by the working-class movement, a broad alliance of millions in struggle could transform British politics in the coming months," he said.

## WOMEN 'INSPIRING'

Solidarity with the miners was the central issue with industrial solidarity action where requested by the miners, and with material solidarity, money and food, from every other organisation of the labour and democratic movement.

Mr. McLennan said the women's support movement for the miners was giving an inspiring lead and their march in London on August 11 "should have the powerful support of the rest of the movement."

The Trades Union Congress in September would be the most important in modern times, he said. "Its decisions will be largely shaped by the mass actions of trade unionists in the weeks ahead."

# Block drive are v

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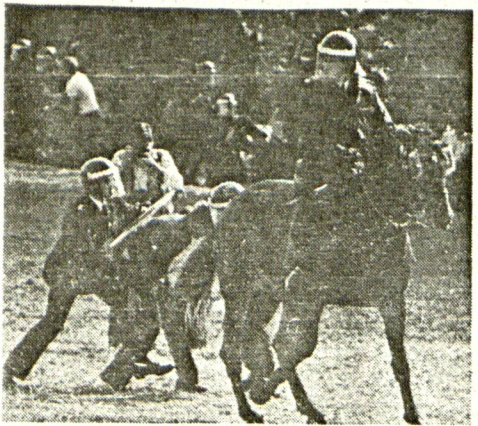
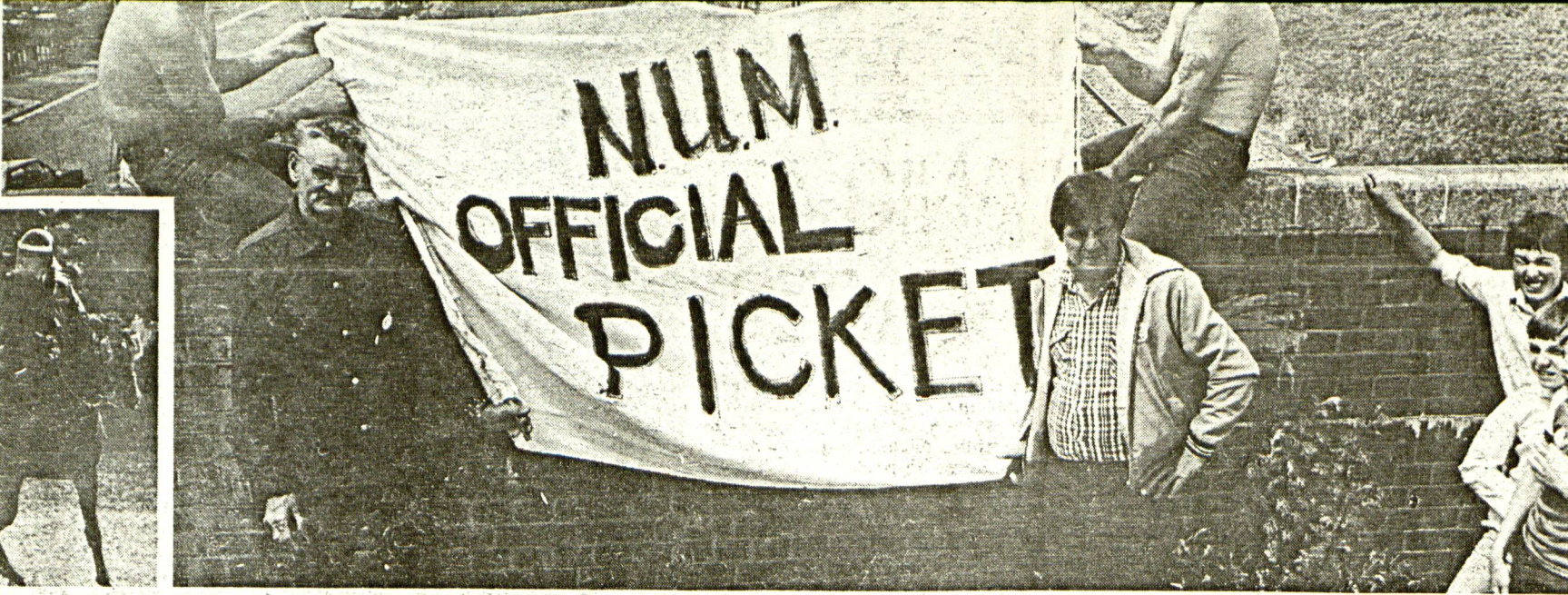
One air claimed its b inundated w aircraft work clock.

TGWU doc mtee meets London to re of the strike.

MORNING STAR 19/7/84

last week.

Such support can thwart the Tories' plans to destroy miners' jobs and smash the power of their union. But only if it is turned now into concrete action in every workplace.



**Build the weekly levies**

THE MINERS need money. The key is getting regular collections in as many workplaces as possible. Make sure your union branch, your stewards committee, your district committee, your national union, are mandated to collect a weekly levy off every union member for the miners.

**Support the days of action**

LET'S SHOW just how many workers do support the miners, despite the divisive talk from the likes of Bill Sims, Len Murray and Alistair Graham. Token strikes by themselves won't win this struggle for the miners. But they enable us to prepare as many people as possible for real action in the future.

**Support mass pickets**

TWELVE YEARS ago the police were beaten at Saltley in Birmingham because miners were joined by ten thousand engineering workers. Make sure next time there is another picket like Orgreave there are thousands of engineers, hospital workers, rail workers, bus workers, teachers and so on there as well.

**Stop all coal, stop all steel**

RAILWAY AND transport workers in particular must make sure the miners win. If a miners' strike is prevented from being effective in case it shuts down the steel industry, what hope is there for future industrial action by railmen, lorry drivers or steel workers themselves?

A victory for the miners is a victory for us all.

**Prepare for action against anti-union laws**

THE TORIES are threatening to use the Prior and Tebbit laws to fine unions if steel is stopped. Every trade union activist must be arguing now for industrial action if unions are fined.

**Black the scab transport firms**

IN 1972 the dockers dealt with firms that were stealing their jobs by using a list to prevent them delivering elsewhere. Many lorry firms are delivering scab coal. Such a list of the firms breaking the miners' strike is needed in every factory now.

**Don't wait for the union leaders**

SOME OF them are positively hostile to the miners. Others refuse to turn verbal support in action and decry the miners' mass pickets. It's up to rank and file activists in every industry to take these steps towards the miners' victory.

9

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NEVER as a government been more susceptible to the united struggle of the working class organised in a General Strike. Never has a Tory government been more discredited among its friends at home, more deserted by its allies abroad, and more detested by its enemies everywhere.

From Lagos to London the Thatcher government has become the hated symbol of everything that stands opposed to the hopes and desires of millions of workers and professional people in Britain and millions more in the Commonwealth who are condemned to live in indescribable poverty and hunger by British imperialism and its agents.

Now the joint struggle of an undefeated world working class, clearly expressed in the 18-week miners' strike in Britain, in the German metal workers' and printers' strike, and the resistance of the Latin American workers to IMF-imposed austerity, has irrevoc-

# STRIKE

ably disrupted the fragile stability of post-war capitalism and precipitated the greatest crash of finance capital yet seen.

## Crash

The desperate attempts of the Reagan government to try and stave off the crash (which has already begun) by hiking interest rates and accumulating huge federal deficits have proved as abortive as the measures taken by capitalist governments in the 1960s and 1970s to prevent the collapse of the post-war monetary system of Bretton Woods.

The first casualty of this is the Thatcher regime whose efforts to stop the plunge of the pound last Friday with a three-quarter per cent interest hike have failed.

Against the huge tidal wave of currencies attracted by the re-

cord US interest rates and the abolition of the 30 per cent Federal tax on the profits of the foreign investment in US securities, the British Treasury's measures have been as effective as the proverbial snowball in hell.

Now the government not only faces the prospect of another huge increase in interest rate and mortgage rate, but of new budgetary measures to cut public expenditure and money supply.

With it will come another massive surge in unemployment, runaway inflation, outright wage cutting and more dictatorial measures as the Tory Bonapartist Thatcher tries to prevent the disintegration of her party and regime.

This is the meaning of Justice Megarry's threat to support the Nottinghamshire scabs with an injunction against today's NUM delegates conference in Sheffield.

Nobody is any longer fooled by the bogus strength of the Tory government and its parliamentary majority — not even Thatcher's sycophants in the City of London who thought that she would beat the miners and crush the trade unions.

## Inept

As the July 7 issue of 'The Economist' said in its editorial 'Thatcher Steps Out': 'Mrs Thatcher's second government is stepping out to become Britain's most inept since the war. The mishaps, mistakes and omissions which have characterised its first full year now have ministers in difficulty with farmers, miners, peers, local authorities, EEC allies, even City financiers. Nothing seems to be going right and what goes wrong is increasingly portrayed as somebody else's fault — a sign of ministers losing their grip. Mrs Thatcher, apostle of strong government and emphatic leadership, still holds the helm, but the rudder is taking on a life of its own.'

Nowhere is this crisis more blatantly revealed than by the 18-week strike of miners supported by railmen and seamen and now joined by a national dockers' strike against the scabbing at Immingham.

The adamant refusal of miners to accept national ballots and their determination to stay out until the basic democratic right to work is secured has shattered the basis of the mid-

dle-class confidence in Thatcher and sent the pound reeling.

To this must be added Scargill's evocative appeal to the working class at the Sattley anniversary last Saturday to support the NUM with industrial action, a call which has already obtained a powerful response in the docks and must be taken up by the rest of the transport workers' union and all those unions who support the miners.

## Empty

There can be no fudging the issue with empty declarations of so-called 'moral, physical and financial support' as the General Executive of the T&GWU did on June 4. This shoddy formula has enabled sections to the T&GWU to break picket lines and violate the most elementary forms of trade union solidarity.

Above all it has enabled Thatcher and MacGregor to prolong the strike and to use the police not only to smash picket lines, but, more ominously, to invade and harass mining villages and extend Thatcher's Bonapartist dictatorship.

It is a direct continuation of the banning of unions at GCHQ and the new legal assault by Mr Eddie Shah of the 'Stockport Messenger' against the NGA print union.

No matter what is agreed — or not agreed — at the talks between the NCB and NUM, the state attacks against the unions and basic democratic rights will be intensified as the slump deepens.

These actions will provoke pit-head occupations and the formation of Community Councils. That is the lesson of the week's events in Fitzwilliam, Hemsworth, Rossington and Hatfield.

## Campaign

There is only one answer to the Thatcher dictatorship — join the campaign of the All Trades Unions Alliance to organise the General Strike and join the ATUA lobby of the TUC conference in Brighton on Monday, September 3.

The message must be carried to this year's TUC from every corner of Britain — Smash Thatcher's Bonapartist dictatorship! Organise the General Strike!

July 10, 1984

## STON RETRIBUTION: PAGE 8



the wrath of the Rossington community in Yorkshire on Monday night provocations and broken promises — see full story and more pictures on

NEWSLINE 11/7/84

# THE MINERS' STRUGGLE

## The case for Community Councils

EVERY trade unionist and worker must come to the aid of the miners in their struggle for jobs against the capitalist state, the Thatcher dictatorship and the National Coal Board.

The working class as a whole and their professional allies must share the burdens and sacrifices of the fight which the miners are waging in defence of the most basic of rights — the right to work and to organise freely in trade unions independent of the state.

Trade union branches, shop stewards committees, trades councils and other labour movement organisations must take the initiative now in the setting up of Community Councils which will act immediately to meet the needs of the miners.

Thatcher and the state are out to smash up pit communities, driving families into destitution and starving the miners back to work. Their aim is not only to destroy the miners' union, but all trade unions.

Miners are, therefore, fighting on behalf of the whole working class. They cannot be left to shoulder the burdens of the strike alone. All workers must ensure that the miners can continue the struggle under the best conditions, and that a common front is presented to the class enemy.

As well as the trade unions, the Community Councils must draw in representatives of every section of the working class and their middle-class and professional allies involved in the anti-Tory fight — miners' wives, youth groups, voluntary organisations and local Labour councils.

At the very same time the Tories are attacking the miners, they are also establishing a central government dictatorship over local Labour councils, threatening cities like Liverpool with financial destruction and abolishing seven authorities covering the major industrial areas of England. Community Councils will take responsibility for the defence of local councils, jobs and services.

There are immediate and practical tasks which flow from the defiant resistance of the miners to the provocations of the NCB, an unprecedented military-style police operation directed by the Home Office through Scotland Yard and the organised harassment by social security, gas and electricity bureaucrats.

The Workers Revolutionary Party believes that the tasks of Community Councils, which should extend beyond mining districts, will be to:

- Provide food for families and children of those on strike. No miner to be starved back to work by the Tories.

- Pay urgent bills for electricity and gas, calling on workers not to carry out cut-offs as an act of solidarity with the strike. Raise funds for new clothing and footwear for strikers.

- Ensure that no miner is evicted by local councils for not being able to pay rent or rates. Make certain that medical supplies are paid for so that miners and their families can get the treatment prescribed.

- Arrange for the care of the elderly dependent on support from miners' families, ensure nursery provision so that miners' wives can participate fully in winning support for the strike.

- Organise the provision of free legal representation for miners who need it. Provide accommodation for miners from other areas.

- Watch out for and organise against provocateurs. Organise the defence of union offices and funds from state attacks.

- Rally other workers to support and back up miners' pickets and organise marches and rallies.

LABOUR COUNCILS must be asked to:

- Provide free school meals and transport for miners' children.

- Make office accommodation in council offices available to miners, with facilities for printing and communications.

- Make sure that no evictions take place because of mounting debts. Wipe out rent and rate arrears.

- Provide free public transport for strikers and their families. Make all council facilities available free to miners. Lay on entertainments and outings for miners' families.

- Resist having to foot the bill for the cost of the Downing Street directed police operation against the miners' union.

This is the best way to answer the challenge of the capitalist state, and the Tory dictatorship. Community Councils — as Soviet-type organisations — will give the working class confidence in its own independent strength to defeat the class enemy and provide the basis for the successful struggle for power which has now been joined.

Discipline vote of

## Rule is out

THE National Union of Mineworkers' new disciplinary code was declared illegal by a High Court judge yesterday.

The vice-chancellor, Sir Robert Megarry, also ordered the union not to use the new code, which he declared 'void and of no effect'. He granted the orders to 17 non-striking members of the Nottinghamshire area NUM council who had argued that the new disciplinary process was invalid because it was approved by last week's special conference in defiance of a court injunction.

Megarry said: 'Those who defy a prohibition ought not to be able to claim the fruits of their defiance.' The Nottingham miners had told the judge that they feared the new disciplinary system would be used against them and other non-striking pitmen to deprive them of union membership and thus their livelihoods.

### Courts

The judge said that if the NUM chose to conduct itself fairly and properly in accordance with its own rules, the proposed rule changes could be made and upheld by the courts. 'But as long as it disregards its own rules and the democratic process for which the rules provide, it must not be surprised if it finds that any changes to the rules made by these means are struck with invalidity,' he said.

Membership of a union was a matter of high importance to a large number of working men and women, and the hurried importation of a disciplinary process might affect that, Megarry said.

It was something that had to be considered with care. The issues

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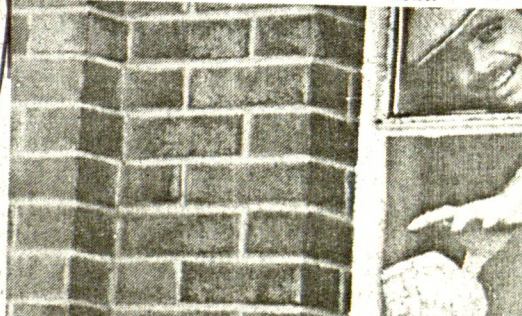
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In his judg a variety of comments ab his notice. most of the deserve com interest is th any of them of proceedin tempt or othe tent to leave Attorney-Gen

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JOIN WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

W.R.P.





# London assemblies visit Blidworth Community Council

REPRESENTATIVES and supporters of three local assemblies in London (Camden, Lambeth, Fulham and Hammersmith), visited Blidworth in Nottinghamshire on Sunday at the invitation of the Blidworth Community Council.

The invitation arose out of the inaugural conference of the Camden Assembly in June this year.

Annette Holroyd the secretary of Blidworth Community Council gave a report at that conference on the conditions under which miners and their families were having to fight in their village in Nottinghamshire, the centre of police strike breaking operations.

Chairman of the Camden Assembly Ian Harrison contacted the other Assemblies to suggest the visit and found an immediate response. 'We thought it would be a good opportunity to discuss the work of the assemblies in London in the light of the miners and dock workers' strike.

'We wanted to know how the miners' families had established their community council and

managed to keep it going throughout the strike with the constant police presence in the village.'

The coach arrived as the families were finishing Sunday dinner in the canteen. We were greeted by a group of miners' children eager to shake hands and say hello.

## Chain

A human chain was formed from coach to canteen store and supplies of baby foods, tinned meats, bags of flour and cleaning materials quickly disappeared.

We sat down over tea to

swap notes and learn about the formidable task of organising 600 cooked dinners a day for the miners' families — plus breakfast — and the 120 food parcels sent out of the village to single miners and families who could not travel in.

Annette Holroyd explained why it would have been necessary to set up the community council even if the miners' strike had not taken place, due to the lack of facilities in the village, particularly for the children.

Even when the strike ended there would be the fight to defend other services and jobs like the local hospitals under



ANNETTE HOLROYD (in white cardigan) helps prepare the Sunday meal

threat of closure.

Representatives from London hospitals were surprised to learn of these closures, because as one of them explained, according to the government the NHS services are being cut in London, in order to release money for redistribution in areas like Nottinghamshire!

Several young miners

joined the discussion and talked about the problems they faced and their experiences during the course of the strike.

Their determination and enthusiasm for the struggle against the government's policies was clear to see, as one young miner put it: 'We have found out who our friends are now, our real friends.'

'We've lost some old ones, and gained new ones, but we are never going back the way we were before the strike'.

## Shoes

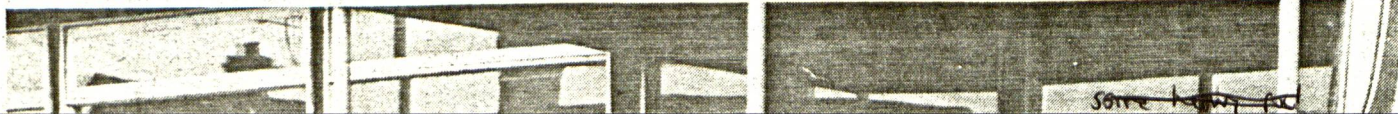
Lists were compiled of things urgently needed like tinned meats clothing, shoes and books for the children, who would soon be on school holidays.

The children had their own ideas too! They want an expert on BMX bikes to visit the village and

some heavy rock bands for entertainment.

A collection totalling £275 being given to the Blidworth Community Council. The visiting assemblies agreed to arrange regular collections to support the miners throughout their struggle.

As the coach crossed over the county border heading back to London we saw two long convoys of police coaches and vans driving at full speed with their headlights on into the Nottinghamshire villages, for another week



some heavy rock bands

of strike breakers

K

# The Tory police state

By Lynn Walsh

"A CIVIL war without bullets!" This is how one Fleet Street commentator described the strike right at the start. It was an apt phrase for the class battle in the coalfields which is having massive repercussions throughout British society.

The military-style deployment of the police, on a scale unprecedented in post-war industrial disputes, highlights moves by Thatcher which suggest a tendency towards parliamentary bonapartism, where behind the facade of parliamentary accountability the Prime Minister, through her control of the state machine, concentrates more and more power into her own hands.

In last week's centre-page articles we showed how Thatcher has attempted to claim almost presidential authority over the Tory party and within the cabinet. At the same time, the Prime Minister's office has been asserting more and more direct control over the civil service machine, while attempting to undermine any element of accountability through the suppression of information and propagandist news management.

But do these incipient elements of parliamentary bonapartism mean the ruling class is moving, under Thatcher, towards a military-police dictatorship? This is the question taken up in this week's article.

The government's deployment of the police against the miners goes much further than in any other industrial conflict since the 1920s and 1930s. The myth of police neutrality and local accountability has been shattered.

The para-military operations are centrally controlled from Scotland Yard—ultimately from the Home Office and the Prime Minister's office itself. The police are encouraged to make up the law as they go along, far exceeding existing legal powers and creatively inventing new offences. Predictably, they are being backed up by the courts.

Does this not show a significant reinforcement of the coercive powers of the state? Undoubtedly, it demonstrates that Thatcher is ruthless in her determination to use the full weight of the state apparatus to enforce her policies. The labour leaders, who have ignored the systematic preparations for such police operations since Saitley Gates in 1972, should be arousing opposition to this development and warning of the dangers posed before the labour movement.

At the same time, it would be wrong to exaggerate the power in the bosses' hands. Thatcher has been able to use the police because of the particular conditions under which the miners' are fighting. The Tories' tactics are possible only because of the division amongst some miners, with Notts miners and other areas still working, and because while the miners have the overwhelming sympathy of the working class, the NUM

remains relatively isolated in relation to the official leadership of the TUC and the key trade unions, who have miserably failed to mobilise decisive industrial support for the miners.

If the Government and the bosses faced co-ordinated action, with miners, transport workers, and steel workers united around a fighting programme for defending their jobs, they would not be able to break the strike with the police. Police forces are already severely stretched (and the staggering bills have yet to be totted up). They would not have the resources to withstand a united movement even of the Triple Alliance, let alone wider action by trade unions. Action of general strike proportions would render the police impotent and leave the state suspended in mid air.

## Police intervention

Police intervention against pickets also poses other dangers for capitalists in the longer run. Their brutal tactics have destroyed for ever the old illusions of miners, and many other workers too. "Before, we believed that the police's job was to fight crime, now we know their job is to defend the bosses and enforce Tory policy!" This is the reaction of thousands who have experienced the police charging in to picket-lines, or seen it on television.

"Every tired young constable flourishing a truncheon for television abets his (Scargill's) cause," warned *The Guardian* (20 June). "Wise ministers—and wise police chiefs are

horrified at the damage to the consent and the practical relationships on which the future law and the future order depends. Throughout much of blasted Britain... there is a tinderbox feeling".

Later *The Guardian* (30 June) reported the comments of "a highly respectable miner approaching middle age": "Before this strike started, I had a relative respect for the law. But not after the way I've seen 'em perform. If I saw one bleeding to death, I'm afraid he'd die". A fellow miner about the same age, said: "I don't think there's any picket that's been on these lines as I'll ever have respect for the police again. I've no respect for 'em and I'll tell everybody in my family to have no respect for 'em whether it's a local bobby or anybody. If there were a van load of police out there afire I'd stand here and let it burn".

Although the modern state has many functions, it still ultimately comes down to "armed bodies of men" to defend capitalist property and power. The police are not (as yet) being sent into industrial battles with arms, but they are nevertheless being deployed like an army to break the miners' strike. Resort to brute force, however, reflects the underlying isolation and social weakness of the ruling class. Strong-arm methods betray the fact that they can no longer rely on unthinking deference to established authority, or unquestioning acceptance of the bosses' rules.

The economic crisis and the Tories' monetarist policies are

destroying the relative prosperity of workers and reforms summed up in the "welfare state"—the dual basis of the "social peace" and political calm which prevailed during the long post-war boom. There was no need for Thatcher to tell journalists, as she did recently that her government has broken with the "debilitating consensus of a paternalistic state and a dependent people" (her description of Keynesian economic policies and the "welfare state").

## Consensus politics

The old "consensus", which former Tory leaders like Harold Macmillan previously shared with right wing Labour leaders, is being battered to pieces by the police at the pits and power stations.

These battles have undoubtedly produced tensions within police ranks. Some sections, like those from the Met, are notorious for callously wading in. Others, however, are clearly troubled by the way they are being used. Fear of a reaction against Tory orders was reflected in the recent complaint from Leslie Curtis, Chairman of the Police Federation: "The police are in an impossible position because the employers have chosen not to seek the right of civil redress from the courts."

The call for the NCB, BSC, British Rail, and other employers affected by picketing to take the NUM and other unions to the courts has been taken up by police chiefs, and also by the rabidly right wing Institute of

Directors, whose spokesmen are calling for both civil and criminal action taken against the NUM, against Scargill in particular. Behind the scenes, however, the Tory government, despite the fact that it put new anti-trade union laws onto the statute book, has been urging McGregor and the rest to refrain from legal action against the NUM. This in itself points to the underlying weakness of the government's position.

They have been able to use the police because of the relative isolation of the NUM within the official trade union movement. But the more intelligent representatives of big business understand that moves to sequester NUM funds or jail its national or local leaders would provoke an explosion.

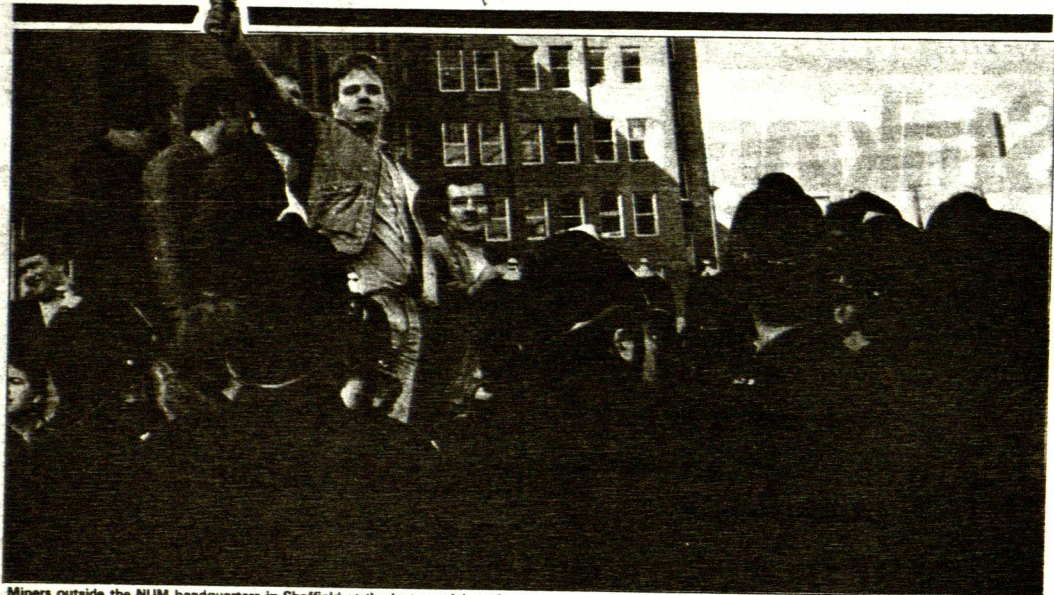
"The government and the Coal Board... remain constrained by their vision of the consequences of such (legal) action," said the *Financia Times* (20 June). "This vision... assumes that legal action resulting in the sequestration of NUM funds or the mass arrests of pickets, or the imprisonment of M. Scargill and other NUM leader would fan the flames of civil disobedience still further and drag in other unions, perhaps the TUC itself, to what would end up as a general strike."

The serious bosses' press recognises that even miners who are present are working could be drawn into the strike, as a result of legal attacks on the NUM.

Even the ultra-Tory *Daily Mail* (20 June) understands enough to warn



Police anti-terrorist uniform and equipment, as shown at the Aldershot Army equipment exhibition a month ago. According to the exhibitors, all this equipment has been issued in Britain, with the exception of the Browning automatic pistol with the silencer. Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)



Miners outside the NUM headquarters in Sheffield at the last special conference.

Photo: Jacob Sutton

## The weakness of dictatorship

**B**ut if the police are not enough to defeat the miners, might not Thatcher bring in the army—and move towards a bonapartist state using totalitarian methods? Aren't Thatcher's tactics just the first steps towards a military-police dictatorship? Such questions are undoubtedly being raised within the labour movement.

After all, under recent Labour governments there have been at least three plots to prepare for military coups. They are warnings—as *Militant* has explained—of the way the ruling class could move in the future. At the moment, however, such plots are entirely premature—and represent the reactionary fantasies of a few gin-sodden generals and political mavericks. At this stage, there is no likelihood of the capitalist class turning towards openly totalitarian methods in advanced capitalist countries. It is ruled out by the enormous power of the working class, which weighs the balance of forces overwhelmingly against the capitalists.

Even before contemplating the consequences of taking on the working class in an all-out struggle, the strategists of capital are held back by

a painful awareness of the conspicuous failure of recent or contemporary bonapartist regimes, or in other words military-police dictatorships, to solve the capitalists' problems. In Europe, dictatorships in Spain, Portugal and Greece crumbled and fell in the recent period, leaving a legacy of insoluble economic crisis—and strengthened workers' movements which have instinctively striven to find a path to a fundamental socialist change of society.

### Pinochet's failure

In Chile, the capitalist experts have been forced to recognise that Pinochet's monetarist "experiment", carried out under "ideal" totalitarian conditions, has been a disastrous failure. In 1973 the serious capitalist press throughout the world applauded Pinochet's bloody overthrow of the Allende government and the murder of thousands of rank-and-file workers' leaders. Within the frame-work of a strong state, they reasoned, Pinochet would be able to apply the necessary monetarist solutions—without opposition from trade unions.

However, after ten years of dictatorship the experts have been forced to admit that not only has Pinochet been a political disaster, but his economic advisors, "the Chicago Boys", have "turned out to be bad economists".

"When the outside world was singing paeans of praise about the Chilean model, the country was living in an orgy of speculation as it was cutting back its industry and agriculture". This admission, under the headline "*The Chicago Boys were all wrong in Chile*", comes from the *Wall Street Journal* (10 February, 1984), the mouthpiece of American finance capital.

"Pinochet," the article is forced to conclude, "has been a political, social and economic abomination". It is not just monetarism which has proved itself bankrupt in Chile, but dictatorship itself. Today Pinochet's tottering regime faces the imminent prospect of overthrow through the mass action of the working class. A new generation of workers is on the move, and it is clear that Pinochet has completely failed to achieve his boldly proclaimed original aim of exorcising the

"spectre of Marxism".

Ultimately, the ruling class in Britain, as elsewhere will turn towards totalitarianism if it has no other way out. But it could impose a dictatorship in Britain only after a whole series of massive defeats for the working class. The organisations of the workers and their fighting capacity would have to be completely smashed. If Thatcher were to move towards establishing a bonapartist regime now, relying primarily on the police and the army to maintain her government's position, it would provoke a massive reaction from the workers.

It would provoke a general strike of unprecedented scope, paralysing big business and the state. The working class would not sit on its hands and passively allow the capitalists to destroy the democratic rights won through decades of struggle. A general strike, moreover, would inevitably pose the question of power, and the active workers would understand that such a crisis could be resolved only through giving the movement fundamental socialist aims.

against any attempt to enforce the laws against secondary picketing:

"Those who clamour for Arthur Scargill and the Executive of the NUM to be brought to court and punitively fined for flagrant contempt of the Tory industrial relations laws ignore one vital point: it is as likely to stoke up as to dampen down the violence. Imagine the scenes when those, seeking to execute the orders of the courts by seizing the funds of the NUM try to enter Mr Scargill's HQ in Sheffield to look at the books. The police would have to smash their way through serrated ranks of miners massed around the NUM buildings. It could make Orgreave look like a picnic."

### Thatcher's mistake

In reality, Thatcher made a big mistake. She calculated that after a number of set-backs for the unions she could inflict a decisive defeat on the miners, opening the door to further attacks on the trade unions generally. The use of the police was not seen as a long term strategy, which would involve an immense burden, but as a lightning tactic to inflict a rapid defeat on miners Thatcher thought to be fatally divided and isolated. But she failed to take account the class determination of the miners and their marvellous tenacity in struggle.

Instead of a glorious "industrial Falklands", the queen of the South Atlantic faces a long war of attrition. The longer the strike goes on now, the worse things could become for Thatcher. The miners on strike have passed through the "pain barrier". They are dug in for a long struggle if necessary. And winter is coming, when the strike will begin to have a crippling effect on coal stocks and power supplies. Significantly many of the Tory papers and business spokesmen who previously egged her on are now urging her, at least behind the scenes, to try to find a way out before it is too late. This points out not the strength of the Tories and big business but their weakness, despite their control of the state.

## Mobilise the labour movement

**I**t is the strength of the working class which stands in the way of capitalist dictatorship in Britain and throughout the advanced capitalist countries. And it is the enormous potential power of the workers' organisations that is the real stumbling block for Thatcher.

The Tory Government managed to inflict a number of tactical defeats on the unions. This emboldened Thatcher to take on the miners. But her failure to score a quick victory has brought her face to face with the strength of the class.

### Strength of unions

In the last few days the Tory press has been crowing about the decline in trade union membership. But fewer have left the unions than have been thrown out of their jobs by the crisis. There are still over 10 million workers organised in unions, and key sections will fight tenaciously to defend their organisations and rights. Even during the recession, more workers have been joining the unions, notably women workers.

During the teachers' action on pay, which has undoubtedly been boosted by the miners' strike, the NUT's membership has increased by about 10%.

Thatcher felt able to take on the miners only after imposing a series of defeats of other workers, like ASLEF, the NGA, and Civil Service trade unionists at GCHQ. But she succeeded only because of the complete incapacity of the official trade union leadership to organise an effective struggle.

The train drivers showed no lack of willingness to struggle, but they were undermined by the TUC leaders. The banning of unions at GCHQ provoked a wave of anger and indignation, even among some Tory trade unionists. There was wide support for the national protest action. But this was nothing to the movement that could have been organised on this issue if the TUC and trade union leadership had given a real lead.

Furthermore, to clear the ground for a conflict with the miners, Thatcher settled with other sections, like the water workers and the

railwaymen in an effort to isolate the miners.

However, Thatcher not only underestimated the class combativity of the miners but she failed to anticipate the effect that a determined fight in the pits would have on other sections of workers. The miners' battle has lifted the mood of many other sections of workers. Some, particularly the railway workers, have taken sympathetic action. Hundreds of thousands have come out on the 'Days of Action' and even more have expressed their sympathy through collections of money and food. Unfortunately, the enormous latent support for the miners has not been mobilised by a bold and decisive lead from the TUC and key trade union leaders.

### Workers' determination

In spite of this, the strategists of capital have been given a massive political jolt. They have been forced to recognise the deeply rooted loyalty of millions of trade unionists for

their organisations, their instinctive feeling of class solidarity, and their unbreakable determination to defend fundamental democratic and trade union rights.

A quick victory against the miners would undoubtedly have strengthened Thatcher's position. It would have then been possible, at least for the time being, for Thatcher to inflict defeats on other sections of workers, opening the door to even more savage cuts in living standards.

Instead, the miners' magnificent resistance to the bosses' offensive has changed the whole situation in Britain. It has shaken the confidence of big business. It has widened the splits within the Tory Party and begun to open up the cracks within Thatcher's own cabinet.

It has become clear to the active workers that the Tory government could be defeated. But what is needed is a socialist alternative and initiative from the top to mobilise the movement's immense resources. The situation nationally is crying out for Liverpool council's answer: Socialist policies, bold leadership, and a fighting campaign.

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-strike. We  
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d Scargill

the others hadn't arrived.  
They went to the pit  
anyway, but were sur-  
rounded by police and  
were arrested.

'Some women were  
kept in custody for 12  
hours. In that time they  
weren't even allowed to go  
to the toilet. One woman  
wet herself.

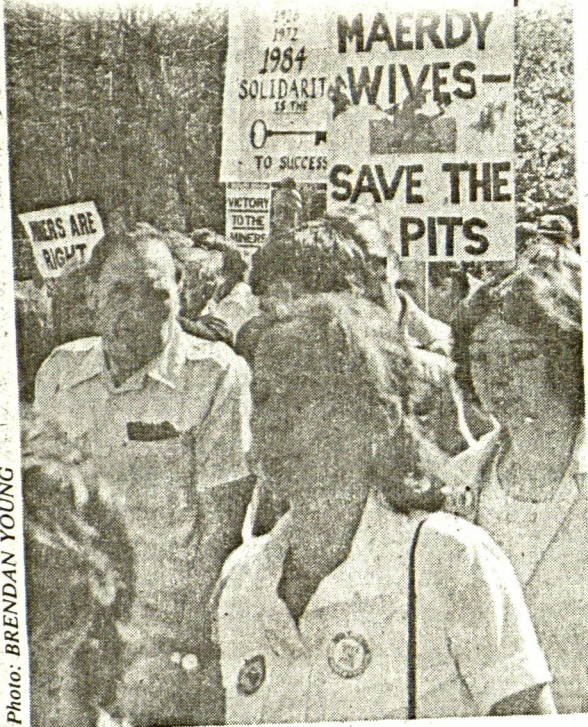
'Another woman had  
knocked a policeman's  
helmet off and was put in  
handcuffs for assaulting a  
police officer. The hand-  
cuffs were so tight that her  
wrists were bleeding.

'I can honestly say that  
I have never seen so many  
women politicising as fast  
as I have in the last few  
weeks.'

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Photo: BRENDAN YOUNG



## Lancs workshops: We're out 'till we win

THE Coalboard's workshops in Walkden, Lancs are on strike, but the NUM branch officials are crossing the picket line. We spoke to COLIN CLOUGH, secretary of the newly formed Walkden Yard strike committee.

We've been out since 22 May when the strike was declared official but even before then many of us refused to cross any picket line that was put on our gates. Now between 30 and 40 of us are out and we form our own picket line.

Our workshops are on the cards for closure. They've been transferring work from here to other yards and they've lowered the voluntary redundancy age from 55 then to 50 and then to any age. A copper asked us on the picket line: 'Why are you bothering? This place is closing soon.'

That's why we're on strike — for jobs, and against all pit and workshop closures. A lot of the 170 men still crossing the picket line here don't realise yet that the only way to keep our jobs is to fight for them.

We are staying with the NUM, all the way 'till we win. Our coming out has already stopped redundancies; none have been discussed during the strike.

We've had overwhelm-  
ing support for our stand;  
from other trade  
unionists, support groups  
and the local community.  
It's put to shame some of  
our own members who are  
still working.

We've begun to  
organise factory tours,  
precinct collections and  
our wives are starting to  
get involved too. We're  
new to this but we're learn-  
ing all the time and we in-  
tend to win.

**Manchester Central  
Euro-Constituency  
Rally**

**Jobs Yes! Bombs No!**

Speakers:  
Eddie Newman,  
LP candidate  
IG Metall speaker  
NUM  
European peace  
movement

7.30pm Friday 8 June  
Manchester Town Hall

## Women's support office opens in Notts

THE NUM women's sup-  
port group in Notts, with

ing the women liaise, print  
leaflets, and most impor-  
tant, raise material sup-

pit closures.  
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pursuing an  
Party  
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mobilised: they domi-  
nate many support com-  
mittees, they are organis-  
ing food collections and  
financial appeals.

I wish the parliamen-  
tary Labour Party were  
as clear and as determind  
in its support. This  
Thursday, the issue will  
be debated — for the  
first time, 13 weeks after  
the strike has started!

There was a shaky  
period at the beginning  
of the dispute, when the  
NUM leadership were  
under a lot of pressure to  
call a ballot. We must  
pay tribute, and willingly  
so, to the leadership of  
the NUM for fighting it  
out at that point.

They said they  
wouldn't be dictated to  
by the media, they would  
continue the area-by-  
area policy and that each  
area could make its own  
decision. That choice  
was right.

The strength of the  
strike now is phenom-  
enal. The striking miners  
are very poor and very  
hungry. But they're  
determined to defend  
their jobs against the  
state.

Arthur Scargill told  
me that 50p per head per

## Support Committee

### Bristol

c/o TGWU, Transport  
House, Room 1, Victoria  
St, Bristol BS1

### Manchester

c/o FTAT, 37 Anson Rd,  
Victoria Park, Manchester  
14

### Preston

c/o John Parkinson, Trade  
Union Centre, St Mary's St  
North, Preston

### Huddersfield

c/o Friendly and Trades  
Club, Northumberland St,  
Huddersfield

### Vauxhall

c/o Joan Twelves/Greg  
Tucker, 1 Alverston Hse,  
Kennington Park Estate,  
London SE11

### Southall

c/o 14 Featherstone Rd,  
Southall, London

### Birmingham

c/o Trade Union Resource  
Centre, 7 Frederick St,  
Hockley

### Ealing

c/o West London Trade  
Union Club, 33 Action  
High St, London W3

### Southampton

c/o NUPE District Office,  
93 Leigh Rd, Eastleigh,  
Hants

### Cardiff

Room 219, Transport  
House, 1 Cathedral Rd,  
Cardiff. Tel: 0222 31176

### Hounslow

c/o Ian MacDonald, 220  
Wellington Road South,  
Hounslow, Middx. Tel:  
01-577-3429

### Medway

c/o Vince Drongin,  
Medway Towns Trades  
Union Council, 19 Randall  
Rd, Chatham, Kent.

### Bury

c/o Brian Marden, 061-  
769648

### Oxford

c/o Claimants Union,  
Princes St, Oxford

### Leeds

c/o District Labour Party,  
9 Queens Sq, Leeds 2

### Lewisham

c/o Labour and Trade  
Union Club, Limes Grove,  
Lewisham, London

### Haringey

c/o Unemployed Workers'  
Centre, 28 High Rd,  
Tottenham, London N17.  
Tel: 801 5629