

*Minister of State*

3 September 1984

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PRIME MINISTER

AT 319

TUC CONFERENCE

You may like some quotes from today's proceedings.

Eric Heffer, in the fraternal address from the Labour Party, stated "our job is to get rid of capitalism". The Labour Party was pledged to repeal all of the Conservative Government Trade Union Acts since 1979, to rid Britain of all nuclear weapons, and "the Party is urging councils to pursue policies of non-compliance" with the Government's rate-capping legislation. He pledged full Party support for the miners and the NUM.

In the debate on the miners' motion:

Scargill's opening speech affirmed that there were no uneconomic pits, merely some pits that had been starved of the necessary investment. Scargill welcomed MacGregor's announcement today of new talks, and said that it showed trade union pressure working. It was a direct response to the TUC motion and statement. He complained that MacGregor "never talks about human beings".

Eric Hammond of the electricians argued that the TUC statement was "dishonest": that they are relying on the power workers to disagree. He characterised the mining dispute as "the most violent dispute for 50 years", and in an aside to the barrackers, stated "Hitler would have been proud of you lot". He roundly condemned the "57 varieties of political extremists that have attached themselves to the miners' cause", and affirmed that most miners were "appalled by the violence and want no part of it".

John Lyons, representing the power engineers in the electricity industry, also opposed the motion. He roundly condemned the idea that the electricity industry should hit the "old and sick . . . make the unemployed more miserable, and put at risk the tens of thousands" who work in other industries. He believed that the miners sought to use the power of the electricity industry - "to threaten democracy itself". He concluded by saying that the motion could not be put into effect, that it would not work, and that it was unkind to the miners to pretend that support was coming when it would not.

Nick Leadley of the blast furnacemen made an emotional appeal against the motion on behalf of the steel industry. He stated "the state of the steel industry in this country is at its stretching point . . . this will kill the steel industry in Britain . . . there is nobody else who will resurrect it once it's gone". Competition posed a



particular threat to the future of the industry. "If this is the brotherhood of the trade union movement, then it's this that needs restructuring". He concluded that the steel industry did not wish to give "all of a loaf" to Arthur Scargill and end up starving themselves.

Arthur Scargill prophesied that troops would be used in the end in these disputes, and that the dispute was a fight for the basic principles of the trade union movement and a fight to bring down the Government's trade union laws.

The other unions naturally spoke in favour of the Trades Union Congress compromise, and some - notably the seamen and the railwaymen - were aggressive supporters of Scargill. Both the unamended motion and the General Council's statement on the strike were carried by an overwhelming show of hands, and those who opposed the motion did not call for a card vote, for obvious reasons.



JOHN REDWOOD