

Mr Chairman, for a little over seven months we have been living through an agonising strike.

The miners' strike was not of this Government's seeking. It is not of its making. And we have heard in debates at this Conference some of the individual stories of intimidation and terror that have made this dispute so different from any other.

We heard from colliery manager, Mr Beard, how it had always been accepted by the NUM, and by the Coal Board, that there was a time when it was no more than common sense that a pit should close when the losses were too great to keep it open. That investment in new pits was vital to replace the old capacity. It was vital then. It is vital now.

We heard from a working miner, Patrick McLoughlin, just what a barrage of abuse and worse - a great deal worse - he has to face as he tries to make his way to work.

The sheer bravery of a man like that - and thousands like him - who have kept the mining industry alive is beyond praise.

"Scabs" - their former workmates call them.

Scabs? They are lions. They deserve a campaign medal.

What suicidal folly for the striking miner to attack his workmate. For the working miner is saving both their jobs and both their futures. By attacking his colleague he is in fact attacking himself.

Since the strike began in March, much of the coal that has been mined by the working miners of Nottinghamshire, South Derbyshire and Scotland - men of the greatest courage and tenacity - has gone to keep faith with those who buy our coal, and without whose custom thousands of jobs in the mining industry would be lost already.

The flying picket literally owes his future employment to the man he now attacks and reviles for preserving it.

And then we heard - unforgettably - from that simply marvellous woman and working miners' wife, Irene McGibbon. In a deeply moving and inspiring speech that brought the Conference to its feet, she told us what it meant to be a working miner's wife today. She told us of the pressures endured by herself and her family.

It takes a very special kind of courage to face the picket line day after day. It takes as much - perhaps even more - to stay at home, to receive the intimidation phone calls, to wait for the brick through the window, the mob at the door.

Men and women like that are what we ^{are proud to} call "the best of British". For seven months "the best of British" have faced the violence without flinching, a violence that is central to the strategy of the present miners' leadership.

For seven months the NUM have orchestrated ^{that violence}.
~~industrial terrorism.~~

And for seven months they have blamed it on the police - who have been quite magnificent.

Yet the miners' leaders can stop it at will.

New words through a loud hailer
~~Their President did so, here at Brighton, outside this very hall, the other day.~~ *was enough to stop it.*

The leadership wanted support for the TUC Conference and they knew it would be harder to get if violence took place out there on the Promenade.

But they do it do that at ~~the promenade~~ ^{local fields} - Why?

So their President takes up a loud hailer and told his followers to behave with restraint. And they did.

Because of the fact that they had to speak words of violence

Does he or his Executive say the same to the pickets who gather in their hundreds, sometimes in their thousands, at the pitheads, to stop their workmates who want to work from working? Not on your life.

And
~~Nor do~~ the TUC, who speak only of being against violence "from whatever source it comes". Yet in its Code of Practice of 1979 the TUC said - and I quote - "It is important that demonstrations do

And

not convey the impression that the object is to blockade the workplace".

What are the flying pickets doing if they are not doing precisely that?

Mr Chairman, it is not possible simultaneously to deplore violence and to support this strike. The two go hand-in-glove - and brick-in-hand.

It is a sad day for this country when a once great British trade union relies on ~~a great~~^{ugly} and continuous violence - against its own members, against the wives of those members, against their children; even against the dogs that guide the blind ~~and~~ⁱⁿ their own families.

Some people think that this sickening violence calls for compromise.

I say to every working miner, to every threatened family, I say to the nation, there can be no compromise between the highwayman and the traveller, between ~~the tyrant~~^{by rans} and the democracy, between the mugger and the mugged.

Mr Chairman, the Government did everything we could to prevent this strike. Indeed some would say we did too much. We gave the miners

- the best ever pay offer
- the ^{high}est ever investment
- and for the first time, the promise that no miner would lose his job against his will.

We did this despite the fact that the bill for the losses in the coal industry were bigger than the bill for all the doctors and nurses in all the hospitals in the United Kingdom.

It is ironic that

- oil which has to be won from the wind and waves of the North Sea contributes £5 billion to the Exchequer, while
- coal which is won from below the land takes £1.3 billion out of ~~the~~ ~~country~~ it .

When this strike began few could have known or
forseen^e₁

- that the miners, famous for their adherence to the rule-book, could be

- manipulated to strike without a ballot
- that the TUC with all its proud history of protecting the rights of individual trade unionists could support the mob and deny the ballot
- and that the Labour Party, which once claimed among its number men like Bevin, ~~Attlee~~ and Gaitskell, would deny the traditions and the institutions for which those men fought, and support, nay even applaud, those who ~~kept~~ ^{keep} the strike going by brute force - a force that prevents thousands who would like to do so from going to work, for fear of their own union in their own community.

And all that is supported by the self-proclaimed Party of Compassion, known as the Labour Party.

Mr Chairman, this is a dispute about democracy. About the right to go to work of those who have been denied the right to go to vote.

And we must not forget the ^{many thousands of men} ~~overwhelming majority of~~ trade unionists who are utterly sickened by what is being done in the name of trade unionism.

*the way to go to work but who should
be free to do their own work with the
union in their own community.*

There is a feeling amongst our older generation that we have seen all this before somewhere. Perhaps on film - or was it?

We are told the solution is to compromise. Since the strike began the Coal Board has made move after move to try and reach agreement with the NUM. It has gone to the outer limits - and almost beyond the limits - of discretion and danger.

The NUM has moved not one inch. It remains rock-intransigent on its original demand that there shall be no pit closures except for reasons of exhaustion or safety.

Mr Chairman, there can only be a compromise if the NUM recognises how preposterous this demand is.

Arbitration would not solve the problem.

The NUM would not accept it unless there was no more coal in the pit. The Coal Board could not accept it because its duty to manage the coal industry would be handed to a third party.

What the advocates of compromise are really asking for is appeasement; ^{appeasement} to a wholly unreasonable claim. ¹ Surely we have learnt by this time that each piece of appeasement is followed by pressure for another, and another, and another. Such appeasement would force industry to pay more for its energy. It would push up prices and cause more unemployment. It would condemn the taxpayers to paying more and more taxes.

Yet we are told in certain quarters that to appease is to be compassionate. It is time we had some compassion for those who would be made unemployed ^{ed} ~~ent~~ by surrender to the NUM's demands.

The Government has to consider the good of all the nation, not merely the desires of the NUM.

We have to think of the 50,000 miners who have bravely faced reality and gone on working.

There is a constant queue of Cabinet Ministers at my door seeking more money for many necessary purposes. The demands of the Health Service, of our Social Services and for our Environment, mean we cannot afford a blank cheque for clapped-out pits.

The NUM's case is devoid of sense. That is why they have resorted to violence. Are the advocates of compromise asking that we should surrender to the mob?

If we did that once - just once - there could be no turning back. The flood gates to anarchy would be open. There can be no compromise on that.

So, Mr Chairman, we have a situation in which the leaders of a single union, albeit a powerful one, are seeking to bring down a democratically elected government;

- a government elected just 16 months ago with a large majority;
- a government elected by the people of this country by secret ballot, a process to which the leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers adamantly refuse to submit themselves and their cause.

They seek to bring it down, not by argument, not by debate, not by reason, not by persuasion, but by the illegal use of an increasingly militant

and violent minority.

Let me repeat what has been said by Leon Brittan
and by Peter Walker: They will not succeed.

And they will not succeed for one overwhelming and
historic reason.

Not just because, if a democratic government allowed
itself to be held to ransom it would be ^{con}conviving
at its own downfall and the downfall of the
democratic process, though that would unquestionably
be the case.

They will not succeed because no strike that seeks
to halt the fundamental life of the nation has
ever succeeded without the support of ^{the} nation.

And that support the leaders of the National Union^s
of Mineworkers - and above all their President -
do not have.

Let me make it crystal clear. This nation is bigger
than any President of any union, or any Executive
of any union, or any member of any union.

This nation is not to be held to ransom by violence or militance. ¶ We will not yield to insurrection of any political persuasion whatever, whether it be of the Left or of the Right. ¶ Our country is not to be torn apart by an extension of the calculated chaos planned for the mining industry by a handful of trained Marxists and their fellow travellers.

Democratic change there has always been, and always will be, in this, the home of democracy.

But the sanction for change is the ballot box, not the bully, the brick and the battering ram.