

5p for strikers

Workers Power

Paper of the Workers Power group

INSIDE:

FILE ON
PIT
SPECIAL

ALL OUT WITH THE MINERS!

THE MINERS ARE now locked in a life or death struggle with the Tory government and Thatcher's henchman at the NCB. The Tories are thirsting for revenge on the mines. They have never forgotten or forgiven the humiliation and defeat inflicted on Heath in 1972 and 1974. But their hatred is not blind. They know that the miners are the most militant, best organised and most politically aware section of the whole British Labour Movement.

For four years Thatcher avoided a head on confrontation. First she attacked the steelworkers, then the Health workers. Prior, Tebbit and King have pushed through Parliament law after law that loaded trade unionism with chains such as it had worn for over a hundred years. In private industry the bosses were encouraged to "rationalise" ie. to throw millions onto the streets. Militants were victimised, union organisation weakened. Instead of leading a fightback the TUC has begged, pleaded and humiliated itself before Thatcher. Everyone who has seen Murray entering Downing St., cap in hand, or emerging with Thatcher's boot marks stamped on his forehead face must feel sick to the pit of their stomachs. When Murray and Co knifed the NGA in the back hoping by this sacrifice to warm Thatcher to them, she went for the very right to union membership at GCHQ. Ironically it was the right to organise of the CPSA, whose leader, Alastair Graham, was the loudest advocate of total surrender to Thatcher. Instead of summoning the whole union movement to an all out battle, the TUC heroes carried out a battle for "public opinion" that centered on wooing the Tory backbench MPs. Their "day of protest" was too little, too late. These easy victories for the Iron Maiden have emboldened her to go for the miners at long last. She knows that a defeat for the miners will cave-in the whole front line of resistance to the next round of Tory attacks.

The Tories need to smash effective trade unionism. They want a low wage economy. They want to turn the whole country into a "free enterprise zone" where employers are free of any trade union restrictions on their ability to exploit at will. They want to be "free" of the rates and taxes that go to support the health service, the education system and public transport even at

their present bare minimum level of decency. Thatcher wants to finally turn the welfare state into a Poor Law State - that is what "Victorian Values" really means.

The unbroken strength of the miners stands in the way of this. Yet this strength rests on two things, the united mass mobilisation of the whole strength of the NUM itself and the active support of the whole trade union movement. These two tasks, how to unite the NUM in all-out battle and how to win the sort of support from other trade unionists that the NUM got in 1972 and 1974 - hold the key to victory.

None of us should underestimate how hard a battle it will take. The Tories have at their disposal laws which make solidarity unlawful - which allow every judge to indulge his hatred of the unions to the full by seizing their funds and resources. They can give the police anti-picket squads the legal go-ahead to put the boot in. We will need greater organisation and solidarity than in 1972 and 1974 put together. We need the mass rank and file involvement of 1972 - the active involvement of the overwhelming majority of miners, not only in picketing but in delegations to the power stations, factories, offices, hospitals, fire-stations, etc to put the case for solidarity. We need Sattley Gate repeated 100 times up and down the country. We also need the solid backing the NUM won from the unions in 1974.

In the early 1970s the miners' strikes meant a battle with the Government - one which called Heath's militantly anti-working class government into question. Today this is a hundred times more so and both the miners and millions of workers suffering the Tory attacks are aware of it. The cities whose councils are threatened with abolition for resisting massive cuts in services and jobs - like Liverpool. The Health Service where the axe hangs over hundreds of wards and whole hospitals, where nurses, porters and cleaners jobs will go while the patients wait longer for treatment. The millions of unemployed - the kids that have never had a job and have no hope of getting one. ALL look with expectation to the miners. To them we have to say - don't stand back and wait. Help the miners win NOW. Do the most you can, where you are, at once. Push forward your own struggles and link them to the miners. The Tories look far stronger than they



Above and below: Mass picket of Bilston Glen pit, 12th March.

John Sturrock (Network)

are because so many union leaders have kept their members divided, fragmented and on their knees. We must forge a new unity around the miners starting a fightback today. A growing united offensive by all sections will sap the Tories strength and divide the ruling class. Already since Thatcher's victory, splits and divisions have appeared in the ranks of the bankers, and industrialists who rule

Britain. Their Tory and Alliance "full-time officials", their hired journalists and broadcasters have begun to criticise Thatcher and talk incessantly about banana-skins. A miners' victory would be the biggest banana skin in twentieth century British history. It would not only take the feet from under MacGregor for good. It would bring down Thatcher and her government, throwing the

whole battle-line of the bosses into total confusion.

This strike will now end in a major victory for one class or another. That is beyond a shadow of a doubt. We must strain every nerve and muscle to make sure it is the millions of workers rather than the handful of parasites who win. Into battle, shoulder to shoulder, with the miners!

WHAT WE MUST DO

IF THE MINERS ARE TO WIN they must receive immediate practical help from other sections of workers. Transport workers must stop all movement of coal. Total effective blacking must be implemented within the power stations, at the docks, on the railways and on the roads.

Whilst we must demand that leaders like Jimmy Knapp and Moss Evans instruct their members to black coal movement at once, we should not rely on them to do it. Direct appeals should be made by the miners to the transport workers and organised links established to free as many miners as possible from routine picket duty.

Information about coal stocks and movements must pour into NUM picketing centres. As well as blacking coal power stations workers should regularly inspect and report on the coal stocks and summon mass pickets where strike-breaking is underway.

Workers everywhere must do everything in their power to back the miners. Top priority must be given to massive financial assistance. The TUC and individual unions should make large donations to the NUM's strike funds, placing the cash out of the reach of sequestrators. In every workplace we must start the funds flowing, first by collections then by a weekly levy.

Miners should be invited to add-

ress mass meetings. Leaflets and bulletins should regularly put the miners' case and answer the lies of the press and TV. Large scale delegations to miners' picket lines should be organised to offer practical help. This will raise the fighting spirits and solidarity of both sets of workers.

Every major workplace should adopt a pit. For example the COHSE branch at Nether Edge Hospital in Sheffield not only declared its support but pledged itself to adopt a pit and established direct links with it and its flying pickets.

Every organisation of the Labour movement, be it trade union or political, and every student union should place its resources at the miners' disposal. They should not wait to be asked. Law centres, trade union resource centres, Labour party offices should keep up a barrage of publicity.

The Co-ops must be won to give food parcels and extend credit to miners' families. Labour Councils should waive rent collection and should - in conjunction with local government unions - organise the welfare of the miners' families throughout the strike. Union members in the Social Security system should facilitate miners' claims so that the NUM has as little work to do on this front as possible.

The Labour Party leaders should stop apologising to Thatcher for so-called violence on the picket lines.

Kinnock should keep his condemnations and his new-found respectability to himself. The PLP and the NEC should put their oratorical and organisational skills (and a portion of their salaries) at the service of winning the widest support for the miners.

In every major town and city a Miners' Support Committee must be formed. It should be constituted by delegates from workplaces, from shop stewards' committees, union branches, district committees, Labour GMC's and all Labour movement bodies that have pledged and will deliver practical support to the miners. Trades Councils or other Executives should take the initiative in convening such committees immediately. Bureaucratic routine and rule-book fetishism should go into the dustbin. Time is short. The whole Labour movement must act on an emergency basis - must put itself on a war footing.

The Broad Left Organising Committee is calling a trade union conference on Saturday March 24th. If it is to be anything other than a useless rally it will

*organise to build miners support committees in every area.

*organise for effective solidarity action alongside the miners.

*fight to force the TUC to call a General Strike to smash the Tory anti-union laws.



John Sturrock (Network)

SMASH THE ANTI-UNION LAWS; WIN THE MINERS' STRIKE



A scab crosses the line in Leicestershire

THE MINERS' STRIKE, like every other serious dispute under the Tories, has immediately fallen foul of the law. Over the last four years the Tories have put on the statute book a web of anti-union legislation which, if adhered to, would destroy the possibility of effective trade union action. When the Yorkshire pickets attempt to spread their strike by persuading Nottingham miners to join them, their actions are at once declared illegal. For under the 1980 Employment Act workers can only picket at or near their own place of work.

UNLAWFUL

The NGA pickets of the scab "Stockport Messenger" were unlawful for the same reason. Every one of the thousands of trade unionists who joined the NGA in that struggle were also breaking the 1980 law which forbids workers not directly involved in a dispute to engage in picketing. Again, everyone of the 40,000 trade unionists who struck against Thatcher's ban on trade unionism at Cheltenham GCHQ was committing an "unlawful" act as whatever the judges rule to be "political strikes" are also banned.

Where unforeseen events arise Thatcher knows she can trust the bewigged Tories in the high courts to deliver judgements in favour of the employing class. These gentlemen, elected by no one, are drawn almost exclusively from the upper classes. Their public school education

and direct and indirect links with the bosses ensure their bitter hostility to the trade union and labour movement. Thus in every case where there has been some doubt as to whether the laws ban a certain action these upper class hit-men turn the screw still further on the workers. Thatcher's favourite judge, Sir John Donaldson (who used to run Heath's Industrial Relations Court) has been doing just that since he was made head of the Court of Appeal. When the Post Office Engineers, fighting against British Telecom's preparations for privatisation, blacked "Mercury", a private telephone system, Donaldson quickly overturned a high court decision and declared such strikes unlawful. Not only would blacking have held up Tory plans to sell off profitable state assets to their business friends at knock down prices, but it turned out later that Donaldson himself was a substantial shareholder in the major partner in Mercury Communications - Cable and Wireless!

More recently he has been backing the BBC's David Dimbleby against the National Union of Journalists and the NGA. This "impartial" broadcaster dismissed his printers in a dispute and tried to print his papers at a notorious scab printing firm in Nottingham - T. Bailey Forman - with whom the NUJ were in dispute. When NUJ members working for Dimbleby blacked the work, once again the Court of Appeal under Donaldson declared their actions unlawful. He ruled that

the NUJ were in dispute with T. Bailey Forman Ltd not with "TBF Ltd" - a new company set up by the same owners!

For the Tories and their judges the law only has one purpose, to hamstring the working class' organisations in their struggle against the employers. This has been a major objective of the Tories since they came to power and the anti-union laws have been the central part of this strategy. This is why the smashing of these laws would send Thatcher's government reeling. This is the lesson Edward Heath's government learned in 1972. When the

HEATH DRIVEN OUT

National Industrial Relations Court-headed by Donaldson again - fined the TGWU £55,000 and gaoled five dockers' stewards for refusing to stop picketing, a massive strike wave of tens of thousands of workers forced the TUC to call a general strike. The ruling class reacted in disarray, its judges miraculously discovering an "official solicitor" to release the dockers. Heath, with his attempts to "curb the unions" in tatters, was severely weakened and was driven from office by the miners in 1974.

Already the Yorkshire miners' funds are under threat of seizure. Of course the miners will be right to take every measure to thwart, frustrate and cheat the judges, the bailiffs and sequestrators of their prey. However only mass solidarity strike action can permanently keep their hands off our money. Whilst in every region where miners' funds and premises are attacked mass action must stop the thieves in their tracks, more is needed... a General Strike to smash the Tories' Union Laws. Only an indefinite General Strike - a strike which mobilises the immense power of the millions of workers in the trade union movement and outside - will break the will of this government to shackle the trade unions. Only class wide action will have the judges and boot boys in blue not knowing where to turn. Whilst they can pick off one isolated section or industry if all the major sections of the Labour movement come out on strike, if every city and town was stopped in solidarity with the miners, in defiance of Judges and Tories, they can be hurled into headlong retreat.

T.U.C. MUST ACT

How do we achieve this? Certainly we should demand that the TUC leaders put their "opposition" to the laws into action and call such a strike. But we are also socialists who know that bosses' men like Murray and Duffy will only be forced into it by massive pressure from below, from fear of workers taking action themselves, as the TUC was in 1972. The miners must appeal

directly to other sections of workers who have fought, and are fighting the laws and the government - the NGA and other printworkers, the Post Office engineers, the NUJ and the civil servants-to-strike against the laws. They must demand that the unions nationally and locally take the lead in setting up miners' support committees in the localities, drawing in the transport workers, dockers, engineers, power workers, etc. These bodies must be built up into fighting Councils of Action which can be centres of organisation for a General Strike in each of the localities.

These committees have a host of tasks. First and foremost, they can organise surveillance of coal stocks and the movements of the police and the government. They can help make the picketing effective and organise local mass solidarity on the picket lines. They can and should recruit and train picket defence squads to see off the paramilitary SPG police picket-busters. They can organise transport and the distribution of essential supplies.

PIE IN THE SKY?

This is just pie in the sky, will come the reply from even the left union officials. We've failed so often to get action over our own sectional claims. How can we expect such solidarity? Our reply must be that the prospect of *united and effective action* can completely change this mood. Just as the determination of the Yorkshire miners to fight closures has brought out the vast majority of the union on strike so a militant lead around a strategy that can win can have the same effect on the whole class. The action of militant sections of miners, printers, dockers etc can start an avalanche. The potential is certainly there. This is shown by the good response to the Cheltenham ban. Despite the TUC's weakness and only two days notice to organise, tens of thousands responded out of growing anger at Thatcher's policies. Every miner and militant worker knows that once on strike and involved in struggle, they and their workmates experience a sudden release from the hypnosis produced by isolated exposure to the bosses' TV, press and radio. Mass solidarity action in a general strike would release a thousand times more energy and daring. It would demonstrate the power of the workers to themselves as a *class*. It would show the limits of the bosses' power and indicate the way it can be crushed and overthrown.

Last time, when the working class with the miners in the lead drove Heath and the Tories from office in 1974, we failed to finish the job.

A general election and a Labour government elected on a "left-wing" manifesto did not resolve the crisis of British capitalism in the inter-

ests of either the miners or the working class. For scarcely twelve months it carried out some limited, necessary reforms, repealing Heath's anti-union laws for example. But free of working class mobilisation and pressure Wilson and Callaghan were soon willingly carrying out the dictates of the Confederation of British Industry, the City and the International Monetary Fund. They soon clawed back for the bosses the gains working class action had clawed out of them in 1974.

The Labour movement was subjected to a series of social cuts which actually cut real wages. The working class paid for Labour limited reforms or for maintaining services with rocketing taxation which caught millions in the so-called "poverty trap" and alienated the better-off skilled workers. Productivity deals fragmented and weakened the NUM. Participation sapped the fighting strength of the shop stewards' organisation in the car industry. These attacks, culminating in attacks on the Health Service and in the "Winter of Discontent", paved the way for Thatcher.

If we allow Thatcher to bow for a Kinnock/Hattersley Labour government with or without Tony Benn in it (he was in the last one) it will be no different. This time we must not lay down our arms and go home if an election is held and Labour elected. A Labour government - even if it had the will to challenge the economic power and state forces of the bosses - cannot do so. As against a pile of blot papers, the bosses would have the judges, the civil service, the police forces and the army as well as the economic disruption and sabotage of the economy that privatisation of industry and the banks gives the ruling class. To break the bosses power means to break all this. It can be done; but only by mass working class action.

DESTROY THE TORIES

A workers' government would be able to do this if it was based on councils of action, on a labour movement ready for action, with its own militia. It alone would be able to boot out the Donaldsons, dissolve the police squads, win over the working class rank and file of the army and set about nationalising all the Banks, major industries, communications, etc to create an economy planned for need, no profit, where all could have work and a decent standard of living.

Thatcher has shown she is determined to put back the clock to unbridled brutal nineteenth century style capitalism. She is not ashamed of it either. Neither should we be mealy-mouthed about the only answer - an end once and for all to this rotten and bankrupt system and its replacement by working class power.

BUST THE PRODUCTIVITY DEAL

THE DEEP DIVISIONS that have opened up between the coalfields are the direct result of the productivity bonus schemes pushed through by the NCB in 1978. Masterminded by Tony Benn when he was in charge of the Department of Industry, these deals have set pit against pit and coalfield against coalfield and broken much of the national unity that was built around the fight for the national pay claims in 1972 and 1974.

In many areas bonus payments have undermined the relevance of the National Pay Claim to miners' earnings. In one week in 1982, for example, 60 faces earned no bonus at all, 101 faces earned between £60 and £90 in bonuses while 5 faces earned £120 bonus payments. It is precisely the areas with the highest bonuses that voted least in favour of action against the NCB in 1982 and 1983 and have proved most resistant to taking action to stop MacGregor now. In the South Wales coalfield it has been the more "productive" pits in the West that have proved most resistant to action.

Any campaign to heal divisions in the ranks of the NUM must destroy these bonus schemes and fight for a national pay claim that unites all miners. In the autumn of 1977

a national miners' ballot overwhelmingly rejected the productivity deals. It was Gormley and the Right wing who smuggled in the deals through fostering local, area by area, balloting to split the prosperous coal fields away from the rest. Miners everywhere are today tasting the bitter fruit of that policy.

If militants are to lead a fight against the divisions in the miners' ranks they must wage a battle against the federalism in the NUM that allowed Gormley and the NCB to play the areas off one against another. At present the constitution gives one NEC seat alike to Derbyshire with over 11,000 members and North Wales with 1,000. Yorkshire has 3 seats for over 60,000 members while Leicester has one for 3,000. Craft and foremen sections have representation far out of proportion to their respective sizes. Miners need an industrial union with an executive that represents the regions according to their size and which has the power to overrule local agreements that hit the miners' national strength. That kind of union could resist the NCB's drive to set the regions against each other and resist the right wing area executives who have played along with their plans.



N.U.M. - LEFTS PUT TO THE TEST

AS MacGREGOR HAS tightened the screw on the miners, militants everywhere will have felt deeply relieved that Arthur Scargill and the left dominate the NEC and not the assortment of right wing crawlers who backed Joe Gormley. Gormley was a businessman in his own right and fought hand in hand with Derek Ezra to push through pit closures and the productivity deal. For his services he even made the House of Lords before Ezra.

Scargill, McGahey, Williams and Heathfield are made of different stuff. They want to stop the butchery of the industry. They are not in the pocket of the NCB management. But does the record of their leadership so far suggest that they can stop the Tories' transatlantic hit-man?

That MacGregor has got as far as he has now is often blamed by militants on the failure of rank and file miners to back calls for action. In fact miners have responded to MacGregor's closures and get-tough management with militancy and determination. In the first months of 1983 30,000 miners were involved in unofficial stoppages against the NCB. From Lewis Merthyr in South Wales to Kinneil in Scotland and Cortonwood in Yorkshire, threatened miners have fought closures and organised to win support. In Dodworth last year miners struck against the sacking of George Marsh and unofficially picketed out 16 pits in their support.

LEADERS OPPOSE ACTION

The problem has been that on each occasion the left leaders have not been prepared to positively lead and campaign for those struggles to become the springboard for all-out action to stop MacGregor. They have either opposed action - as they did over Dodworth - or left the rank and file to fend for themselves without official backing.

In December 1982 Kinneil miners struck and tried to bring out Scots miners behind them. McGahey and the Scottish NUM gave them sympathy but not their official backing and the Kinneil miners were left to go down as miners crossed their unofficial picket lines. McGahey blamed the Scots miners for selling Kinneil down the river and washed his hands of the affair.

In February 1983 a rolling strike in the South Wales coalfield, with pickets dispatched to other areas, offered a very real chance to unleash a general struggle against closures. The NUM executive refused to call for immediate backing to spread the action. Instead they first of all passed the buck back to the Welsh miners by declaring that the NEC would respond to requests for support from South Wales. They then called a ballot at precisely the time the militant sections should have been backed to the hilt by calls for action in order to step up the momentum of the campaign. The March '83 ballot registered the mood of the miners after the NUM executive had taken the struggle off the boil.

NO OFFICIAL BACKING

At Dodworth strikers protesting against the management's new iron heel policy in the pits received no official backing for their struggle. Yorkshire left wing leader Jack Taylor told angry Yorkshire miners that their struggle was premature.

The result has been that one by one pits have reluctantly accepted shut downs as the NCB has upped the tempo of its closure plans to its present frenzied pitch. Since last March 12 pits have been closed with the loss of 16,000 jobs. The record shows that the blame for this cannot be laid at the door of the rank and file miners.

to account and re-call them, can they make sure that the officials - however "left" they may be - continue to really represent them. If they do not, then any official will become isolated from the interests of his or her members and increasingly weighed down by the pressures that are exerted on any trade union bureaucrat.

To an important extent Scargill and the NUM leaders are already prisoners of their own positions. As officials of the NUM they have been posed with a sharp choice. Either they could run the executive in coalition with right wingers like Vincent or Bell and pay the price for it or they could fight the right wing officials and organise the rank and file to back them up.

RANK AND FILE MINERS

Scargill has chosen not to break with the right. That is why he has gone along with the compromise of an overtime ban. That is why the left have made no attempt to challenge Jones and Chadburn by challenging their right to exempt their members from a fight to stop MacGregor. They have not set off into Nottingham, Lancashire or Leicester to challenge the right on their home ground and organise the best militant miners there to step up the battle to spread the action.

Neither have Scargill and the left been prepared to organise a movement of rank and file miners that could hold them to account. Instead their project has always been to take over the existing posts in the union bureaucracy and use them to fight the Coal Board. True, Scargill and Heathfield have tried to change the rules so that NUM officials are not all elected for life, but even here the right wing machine has blocked this simple and small scale advance. Scargill and Heathfield can now hold their posts until they are 65.

Only a movement of rank and file miners could break the entrenched power of the full-time officials, keep Scargill and Co under the direct control of the members who elected them and restructure the union to make sure all officials fight for the interests of the members at pain of immediate re-call should they fail to do so.

In order to prevent any sell-out and step up the action it is vital that militants in every area are organised together into a rank and file miners movement. It must be based not only in the areas where the majority of union activists are militant, as is the case in Scotland, Yorkshire and South Wales. It must consciously reach out to the militant minority in the backward coalfields like Nottingham and organise to give them back-

ing to fight their right wing officials who will not dare stand up to the NCB.

Linked together with national and local conferences and producing its own paper and bulletins, a rank and file movement would organise to hold the left leaders to their fighting talk and replace them with authentic representatives of the rank and file whenever they wavered or betrayed. It would fight to transform the union so that every leader was regularly up for re-election, was accountable to a lay delegate executive and lay delegate annual conference and was paid no more than the average wage of a working miner.

At a pit level a rank and file movement would find new ways of involving all members. It would fight for regular work-time pithead meetings to become the basic democratic decision making bodies of the NUM. These would supercede the national ballot and be a thousand times more democratic than it. The Sunday Lode meetings, which suffer from low turn-outs, are no replacement for pithead meetings. The system of "delegates" for each pit is no substitute for an equivalent of workplace based shop stewards. Each workteam or section should have a representative. Each pit should have a committee of these delegates with full negotiating powers.

In each region these committees should be linked up as regional bodies. Their action should be made automatically official by the Executive. The national and regional NUM papers must be overhauled and turned into campaigning papers, democratically run and open to contributions from all miners. Every pit committee would need to supplement these papers with regular pit bulletins.

TRANSFORM THE N.U.M.

The aim of militant miners must be to use the strike to build such an organisation and transform the NUM into a real class-struggle union. Rank and file miners and leaders who are real fighters for and with the rank and file have nothing to fear from such changes. Workers' democracy of the sort we argue for will strengthen the union, not weaken it. If Scargill and the left are not to become lifelong prisoners of their positions they should lend their weight to the building of such a movement.

Their record to date suggests they will not, but should they do so we should welcome them without sacrificing our independence to them and their positions. Our motto must be *with* the leaders when possible, *against* them and *replace* them when necessary, *watch* them always. Two years of Arthur Scargill in power shows just how right that motto is.

WOMEN MUST BACK THE STRIKE

THE COMING STRUGGLE in the mines is likely to be a long and bitter one. It will involve not only the miners but their wives and families in tremendous sacrifices. Already miners' families will have discovered that one of Thatcher's measures of 1980 has deprived them of between £2.00 - £14.00 a week in social security benefits. This cut is made in the already meagre allowance on the basis of presumed strike pay - whether or not a miner is receiving any.

The media is already going full steam to try and turn the real concern felt by miners' wives at this point into anti-strike feeling. Thus the handful of wives opposing the Yorkshire pickets at Ollerton were given star treatment by the yellow press, with such headlines as "Pit wives smash picket invasion!" (The Sun)

ACTIVE SUPPORT

Miners and their wives must take immediate steps to counter this black propaganda. They must take a leaf out of the Ford workers' wives' book. In the 1978 dispute they organised an immediate counter march by wives and children when the press tried a similar tactic. Above all women must not be left at home, isolated and at the mercy of the bosses' media. They must be won to active support of the strike through the union organising meetings to explain the issues, providing child care facilities to let the wives attend. The women must organise themselves into support committees to help with spreading the strike and with picket duties and welfare work.

VITAL ROLE

Any miner who saw the vital role of the women's clubs in the "Harlan County" miners' strike should recognise their importance - indeed militant miners and their wives should ensure this film is shown at every miners' club during the strike. These American women can show the NUM a thing or two. If the women mobilise in this way, they can only strengthen the strike movement. It must not be left to the bosses to organise them against it.

RIGHT WING OFFICIALS

All full time officials have conditions and wages that are markedly different to those of the rank and file workers they represent. In every industry the machinery of negotiations and joint committees serves to further separate and isolate the officials by incorporation. The right wing officials in the NUM and elsewhere positively embrace this role with open arms. They only ever whine against management or the Tories when they are excluded from their seats in the corridors of power. Only if the rank and file directly control their officials, can directly call them



Miners rally to Scargill in Sheffield

John Sturrock (Network)

FOR AN ALL OUT

STRIKE TO WIN

TAKING THEIR CUE from the Yorkshire pits, a majority of miners are in battle with MacGregor's NCB and the Tory government. They face a determined and ruthless employer whose stocks of coal are high. They face an unprecedented police operation against their flying pickets. The judges are on call to declare any effective action unlawful.

Even more disturbing to many miners is the fact that while a majority of miners are out, the Midlands coalfields are back to work behind the police lines. If the miners are to win - and win they must - they will have to tighten the strike in the militant areas and use this advance guard to bring the Midlands miners out behind them.

At the same time, support must be won throughout the whole of industry. The course of the dispute has already highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the NUM. The strengths we must build on; the weaknesses we must overcome.

In Yorkshire, Kent, Wales and Scotland, flying pickets were able to bring the coalfields to an immediate halt in response to MacGregor's closure announcements. Temporarily, flying pickets were able to shut down most Nottingham and Leicester pits. Even a police occupation of Nottingham has not stopped the pickets.

From the start, however, there was a problem of how to secure a permanent stoppage in the Midlands. The police were obviously going to do everything in their power to prevent flying pickets influencing the Nottingham miners. The spotter planes, guard dogs, road blocks and police blockade that accompanied the post-ballot Nottingham delegate meeting, showed this to be the case. Thus it was unlikely to prove possible, by mass picketing alone, to keep the Nottingham miners out for a long, drawn-out and determined battle to stop MacGregor.

LEADERSHIP FAILURE

In this context, the NUM Executive decision to leave it up to the various areas to decide what to do was a serious failure of leadership.

It gave the right wing leaders in the less militant areas the chance of arranging a "democratic" excuse for strike-breaking through local ballots in their regions. It left it up to the flying pickets alone to try to persuade the Midlands men to come out. It left many Midlands miners feeling that their return to work was democratically sanctioned and that any who opposed them were challenging the usual procedures of the union.

The NUM Executive sat on the fence and refused to call for an all out national strike and fight for it by every means available. It was absolutely right for Wales, Yorkshire, Scotland and Kent to come out on immediate strike. What was

wrong was that the Executive did not call for an all out strike. They should have called for immediate pit-head meetings which would hear the case and vote on action directly.

The traditional time-consuming form of the national ballot would, of course, have allowed the right-wing and the waverers to take the struggle off the boil at precisely the time it was necessary to push forward.

Immediate pit-head votes would not have slowed down the stoppages and they would have strengthened the case of the strike pickets and the militants in the weaker areas, that the will of a majority of miners had been given a voice, and that those who were against a strike were in a minority. A national Executive call for strike action would also have persuaded miners that the Executive meant business and was not just passing the buck to the areas to test the water, as it has done on previous occasions.

REVERSE DECISION

Now pickets from the striking areas and the Nottinghamshire militant minority will have to use the picket lines and recalled branch meetings to turn around the no-strike decisions, pit by pit.

Police blockades can't stop pickets filtering through. But they may stop them getting near enough to persuade the waverers unless additional tactics are used. For example, dozens of skilled agitators can slip into a pit at the start of a shift to hold a meeting.

Where do we go from here to win? Firstly, we must tighten the strike in the striking areas. Every striker must be enlisted for picket and delegation duties. We need total involvement in order to muster enough forces, and to maintain the morale and democratic involvement in the strike.

Every pit should elect a strike committee to organise and lead the strikers. In the face of the largest police operation since the 1926 General Strike, pickets must be picked and trained to be able to defend themselves, their comrades and their union.

MacGregor's managers will doubtless try to use this dispute to close yet more pits on the grounds of flooding or an absence of maintenance. Pit heads must be occupied in order to prevent the management getting away with this.

Maximum solidarity from other workers must be won. The biggest coal stocks ever are of no use to MacGregor if other workers refuse to touch them. The TGWU's call for a blacking of all coal movements must be backed up by direct approaches to TGWU branches and shop stewards, to make the blacking bite. Delegations must be sent to the power stations and railway depots to win solidarity blacking. They must visit every organised factory to win support.

The most glaring problem facing the strike is getting the Midlands pits out. Police are trying to effectively seal the area off from the mass picketing, but it still remains vital to get them out. A call for all-out strike action from the NUM Executive can help break the log-jam.

The pay levels and job security the Nottingham miners enjoy is a direct result of the strength the NUM showed in the 1972 and

1974 strikes. If MacGregor wins sequestrators successfully bankrupt the NUM, there will be precious little the Leicester and Nottingham miners can do to defend themselves. MacGregor and Thatcher will laugh at miners' payclaims. They will axe jobs and pits at will. They will introduce a fierce and dangerous speed-up in the name of productivity. Management will let the miners feel the full force of its hand. MacGregor

has already ordered his managers to "restore discipline". People who lick boots get kicked in the teeth.

This is the message that must be put over at pit-head meetings wherever possible, and with bulletins and arguments in the miners' welfare and social clubs.

Arthur Scargill and Heathfield must make it crystal clear where they stand. The cohesion and funds of the union are at stake. They command a majority on the Executive. They should call a national strike to smash MacGregor's plans and win the full pay claim.

To set in motion the protracted process of a national ballot supervised by the Electoral Reform Society would take the steam out of the dispute. We must resist calls for such a ballot. Neither can we take the result of the Midlands ballots as being final. Nottingham and other areas voted *not* to take regional action against MacGregor

and not to join a series of regional disputes. In fact, in the no-strike areas, more voted for a strike than in the last ballot. Delegates to the pit-heads can build on this. However, if pits or areas remain opposed to strike action after such a series of meetings, in the face of massive support for a strike from the rest of the miners, the no-strike areas must be picketed out by large number of disciplined, organised pickets capable of both preventing scabs from working, and of resisting police attacks.

The police occupation of Nottinghamshire, the road blocks and threats of arrest, and the threat to bankrupt the NUM all mean that the terms of the dispute have changed dramatically, even since the ballots.

Recall mass meetings must be convened in the non-striking coalfields to put strike action to the vote once again. The militant minority in these areas - 26.5% in Nottinghamshire as a whole, 45% in some Notts pits - need the backing of rank and file miners, and the NUM Executive, to pull out their pits and make the strike solid.



SHUT THEIR LYING MOUTHS

WAS THE 24-year old miner David Jones killed by a hail of bricks from deluded victims of Thatcher's Britain in Ollerton? Or was it the crushing impact of a police attack on picket lines?

Whichever was the case, you can rest assured that the yellow press will not be blamed. Yet it is these Tory rags - the "poisoned messengers" as *The Miner* so rightly calls them - that have been whipping up a frenzied hate campaign against the miners.

Picketing miners have been accused of creating "mob rule" and "villages of fear". The scabs are worshipped as defenders of the "right to work". Yet the miners striking to defend jobs are called hooligans.

Behind all these lies is an organised attempt by fat-salaried Thatcher-lovers to convince miners and the working class that the strike is imposed by a minority. *The Sun*, owned by union-baiting millionaire Rupert Murdoch, has taken the lead in encouraging violence against

pickets. The press, which is overwhelmingly in the hands of Tory owners, is a powerful weapon in the hands

David Jones



of the bosses, particularly in the present struggle. Printers and journalists must immediately demand the right of reply for the miners and trade unions every time one of these rags attacks the miners' struggle.

If the owners refuse, we should prevent them printing their lies. The same applies to the television and radio, which every day spews out Thatcher's propaganda in its biased reports of the strike. If they refuse, the transmitters must stop and the screens go blank, the radios fall silent and the presses stop.

Workers must remember the death of David Jones, a young miner who died defending his comrades and their future. The first "victim of violence" was a striker not a scab. Those morally responsible for his death were the Tories and their lying media which incited the police picket-busters and the scabs.

Our condolences go to David Jones' family, with an assurance that we will do everything to win the victory he so wanted.

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