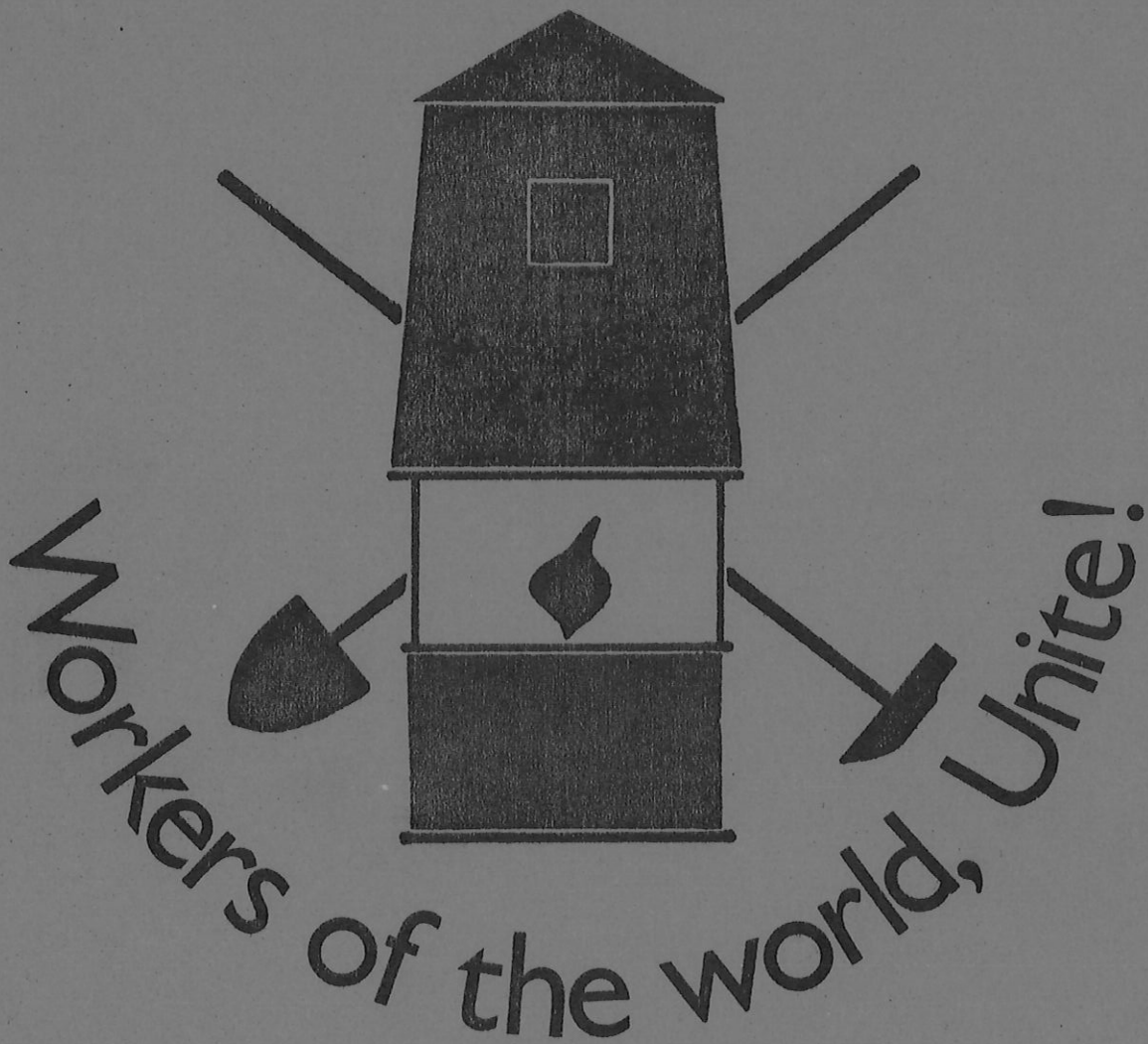


THE RED MINER

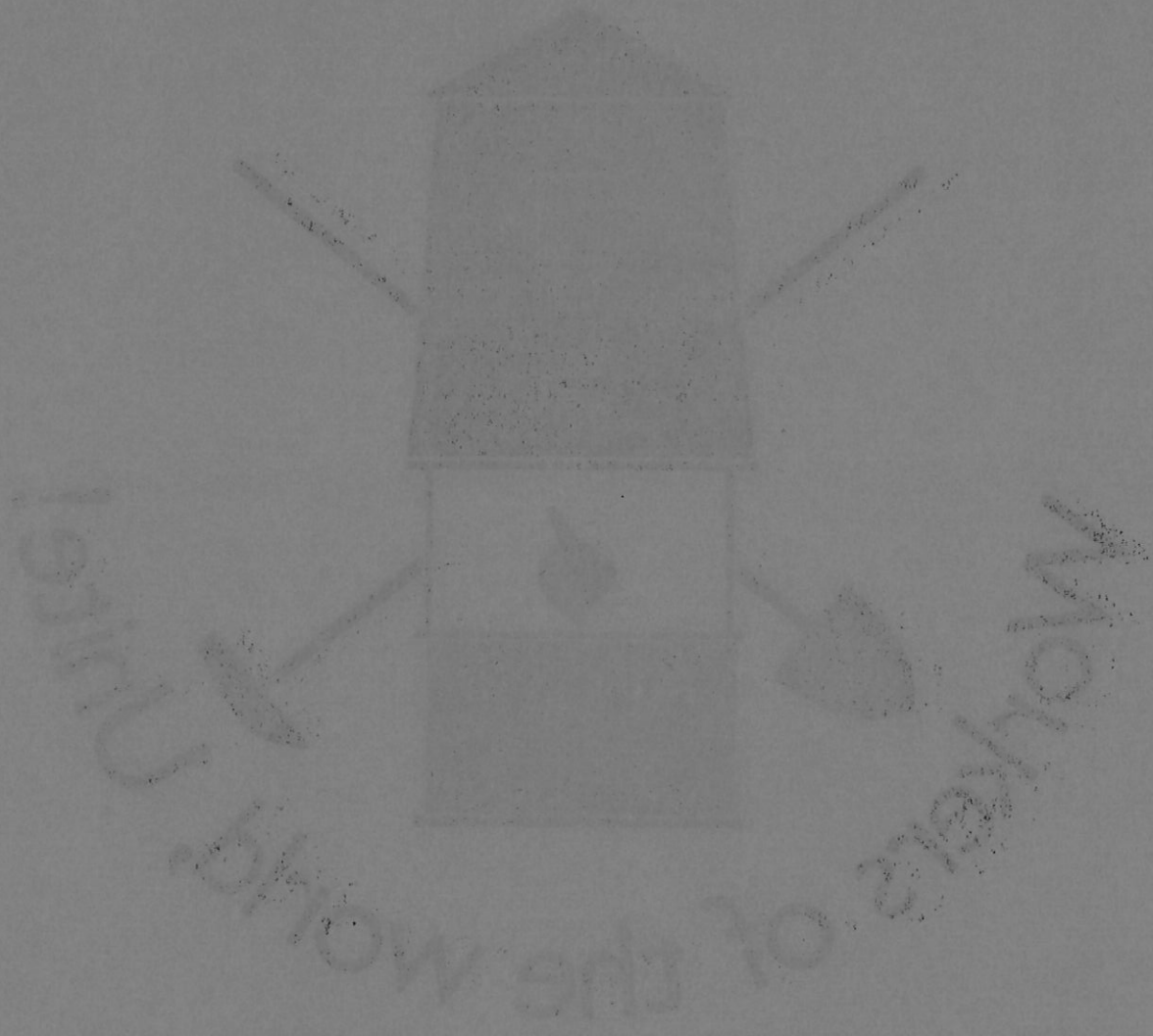
Nº 4 SEPT. 85



**workers
power**

Bulletin for miners and their families 10p

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Having taken all the time and all the funds they needed, Lynk, Prendergast and Toon are about to formally establish their own separate scab miners' union. From their base in the Notts coalfield they will reach out and push forward with their plans to break the NUM. They will be able to prevent the miners ever mounting effective national action against the NCB.

Not everything is going the scab leaders' way. In Notts they did not dare risk balloting to leave the NUM. That would have required a 70% majority. Instead they opted to ballot on amalgamating with the Durham scab outfit the Colliery Trades and Allied Craftsmen. Toon has not proved too successful in delivering the goods either. Over 700 South Derbyshire miners enthusiastically attended an NUM rally addressed by Scargill and they may yet reject the split proposals.

Outside their chosen front line coalfields Lynk and Prendergast's allies are having patchy success. The Leicestershire August Council agreed to ballot on a split but did not come up with any recommendation as to how Leicestershire should vote. In Warwickshire the splitters have been isolated as a hardened scab minority except at the intended super-pit at Daw Mill. So far the scab organisers have also been isolated in Staffordshire.

All this shows that the scab leaders can be defeated. Their gains can be minimised. What is important now is that the campaign to defeat them should not be based on a series of shoddy deals with scab officials which will effectively prevent the NUM functioning as a fighting and national union in the future.

In the present climate of 'unity' and 'bridge building' it is vital that militant miners act decisively against those in the

NUM's ranks who helped Thatcher and the NCB to victory in the Great Strike. The Union must strengthen itself by ridding its ranks of the small and conscious groups of hardened scabs. In practice this should mean decisive national and area action to expel all union officials who scabbed on the strike, or members who organised against the strike from the outset. Lynk, Prendergast, Jones, Toon and their henchmen in the branches, must be expelled. In doing this the NUM will serve notice to all miners and the NCB that it is a union of struggle and that it will not tolerate open agents of the bosses using its offices to further their cause.

Such action should have been taken long ago. But it is no less necessary now as a result. If expulsion is not immediate now then it will give Lynk's allies and agents ample time to work for them in the future. Every branch and area must expel their own hardened and organised scabs. They know who they are. They must act now to prevent them spreading their poison.

While the NUM has every interest in driving out the scab organisers it has no interest in artificially swelling the ranks of the new scab union. In the most solid areas like Doncaster, Barnsley, South Wales and Kent those who scabbed knew precisely whose side they were working for. Their branches must exclude them from the union for ever. Such super-scabs must also be excluded in the areas that were weaker or that collapsed. But in areas like Lancashire, North Derbyshire, Scotland, the North East, North Yorkshire and eventually South Yorkshire, there were those who scabbed because they were beaten back to work as the strike failed to break out of its isolation. In the scab areas themselves the national leadership allowed their area leadership the chance to lead many members to scab. In Notts, for

example, the dithering mis-leadership of Chadburn and Richardson sold the pass to the scab organisers. The failure to call for a national strike from the start allowed the Notts area to ballot themselves out of the action.

The NUM has no interest in driving those who were misled - or those who proved weaker than the heroic active minority who held the strike together - into Lynk and Prendergast's arms. To do so would immeasurably strengthen Thatcher and MacGregor. There were many crucial points during and after the strike when the threat of expulsion should have been used to discipline those who considered themselves loyal to the NUM and isolate the hardened scabs. The failure to do so by the leadership further strengthened Lynk's hand. But now the key is to maximise the number of miners who can be taken out of the clutches of the new-Spencerites. In those branches where the strike collapsed this means keeping in the NUM's ranks all except those who organised the scabbing or who narked to the police or NCB on their return. In the scab areas it means actively campaigning to win the vast majority to stay in a union that will fight.

These are the tactics that can isolate and drive out the poison of company unionism. They involve no concessions to the architects of betrayal or the federalism and regionalism that has always weakened the miners union. They mean a fight to oust the treacherous leaders.

The national leadership's campaign is working in the opposite direction. At first they tried to keep Lynk, Toon and Prendergast in the union. When that failed they looked for new allies amongst the scab officials to lead their campaign for them. The Communist Party, who believe that all scabs should be kept in the NUM in the interest of a spurious 'unity' are enthusiastic arguers for this disastrous policy. In Notts the campaign has been put in the hands of Chadburn and Richardson who opened the door to

the scab unionists. In South Derbyshire all hopes are now being pinned on Toon's henchman Richards who actively scabbed on the strike. In Leicestershire the campaign has handed leadership to one T. Tracey who has the dubious credentials of having refused to cross an NUM picket line on the relatively rare occasions that one was put on his pit.

This means that leadership in these areas is being left with those who betrayed. It means that the heroic minorities in these areas are being brushed under the carpet - they are the ones who are fit to lead and not the likes of Chadburn, Richards and Tracey. All the signs are that the national officials are also making major concessions to keep these characters as the front for their campaign. Sid Vincent, for example, has appeased his own scab organisers by declaring that the national rule changes don't apply in Lancashire. Richards and Tracey have been wooed with promises that the very regional autonomy which they used to undermine the strike will not be tampered with. Unless militants organise to put a stop to such deals and to fight for a new leadership composed of tried and tested strikers they will find their hands tied in the battles that lie ahead. They must organise to make sure that it is they and not bureaucratic diplomacy that decides who is in the union and who leads it.

The fight against Lynk and Prendergast must be used to strengthen the union and oust those who have paved the way for the split. It is a tragedy that Lynk and Prendergast have been allowed to choose the time of their own departure. Now we must make sure that they take all that is poisonous with them so that the NUM can be strengthened for the battles ahead.

REGIONAL ROUND-UP

NORTH DERBYSHIRE

Overman Jack Cowley's expulsion from the deputies' union NACODS has resulted in the night shift being sent home for the past nine nights at Ireland colliery.

Mr Cowley was expelled for refusing to accept disciplinary action for breaking an overtime ban. Although his actions are unclear at this time, it has been mentioned that during the year-long strike he would not cross picket lines and that he said NACODS members should have fought alongside the NUM when the uniting of these two unions could have brought about a victory.

It is understood that NACODS is asking for Mr Cowley to be transferred to another job which does not require NACODS membership; it is unlikely to be a position of BACM and would be a promotion.

The NCB has now agreed to make payments to some miners sent home as a result of the dispute, but Derbyshire NUM secretary Gordon Butler said he was still seeking some payment for the majority sent home. He is also going to urge the NUM National Executive to seek talks with the NCB to ensure that miners are paid if sent home as a result of a dispute involving another union.

.....

Markham miner John Dunn has been selected as the NUM's choice to become North East Derbyshire's MP. Current NUM-backed MP Ray Ellis (noted for his great impression of Lord Lucan during the year-long strike), a former miner, is retiring at the next General Election due to ill health.

.....

Renishaw Park passed two resolutions at their last branch meeting, one called on the NEC to expell all scab organisers, this was passed by the Area and has gone to National. The other called on the special conference to be held in October to reverse the decision taken by the annual conference and to give associate membership to the women, including

observer status at all levels, but this was ruled out of order.



WALES

Treforgan, developed in 1963-6 and promised a golden future after the 1974 strike but which had been purely a development pit for the last two years, voted to accept closure. Half of the workforce are accepting redundancy, half are being transferred and those being transferred to Aberpergwn fear that this may also face the axe in the not-too-distant future. Activists readily concede that the defeat, plus the fact that Treforgan was solely a development pit, plus the creation of the redundancy terms meant that there was no chance of a fight being mounted. All eyes are still on St. John's Maesteg now, but hopes are not high.

MIDLANDS

Daw Mill : The real reason behind the officials' visits to america, and MacGregor's return visit has been made clear to everyone. Despite all their claims during the strike of abiding by the rules (in order to scab) the branch officials flouted the rule book to organise a pit ballot on breaking away from the union. Not surprisingly, considering Daw Mill's record of scabbery (27 strikers left at the end of the strike) they voted 4 to 1 in favour of leaving the NUM.

But Dick Emery's hopes of a full-time job as a scab agent are coming unstuck. Daw Mill is becoming increasingly isolated. At a branch meeting in August, Birch Coppice voted unanimously to stay in the NUM. More surprisingly, Ansley Workshops, second in scabbing only to Daw Mill, also

voted not to break away. At Keresley the idea of joining Daw Mill has been laughed out of branch meetings.

STAFFS

Littleton 6 scabs were agitating for a ballot to join the breakaway. Ironically the branch chair, himself a scab during the strike, ruled this out of order.

At Lea Hall the Tony Morrisons of the pit (the mega-scabs) were defeated in the branch elections. There is now a strong commitment from all the branch officials to fight the scab union should it rear its ugly head.

Keresley: At Keresley, anger at the continued sacking of 11 men is mounting. The Power Group have met alongside the NUM branch and after a series of meetings it was decided to hold a ballot on 24 hour strike action for the re-instatement of the men -demanding that management cease its dictatorial attitude towards the union in the pit. The ballot result was 560 to 475 in favour of taking industrial action. However, that result was known over 2 weeks ago. No action has yet been taken. The branch committee decided to write to the NEC for permission to go on strike. The sacked men have not yet been re-instated despite four of them having won their case against unfair dismissal at an industrial tribunal.

On the whole the news from the Midlands is encouraging. It shows that the men are still prepared to take industrial action in defence of their conditions and for the re-instatement of the sacked men. It also shows the increasing isolation of Daw Mill's attempt to break away from the NUM. However, we still have a number of problems. Those officials and individuals who organised the scabbing during the strike remain in the union. The price of isolating Daw Mill should not be at the cost of allowing these scab organisers to remain in the union no doubt to repeat their bosses dirty work in any future struggles.

Once again it is up to the rank and file to take the initiative. Strike action must take place immediately to force the NEC to make disputes like Keresley's official.

Miners and miners wives must address meetings at other branches in the area to spread the action. Picket lines must be organised, not only at Keresley but at other pits in the area. None of these tasks are easy but these are the perspectives we must have if we are to isolate the scab union, rid ourselves of the scab organisers in our own ranks and re-establish the NUM as a class-fighting union.



Keresley miners lobby the TUC

YORKSHIRE

Strike stops Minister's visit: A strike at Thurcroft Colliery, caused by the threatened inspection by Coal Minister David Hunt, had the effect of showing management that their efforts to get a substantial return to work in the last weeks of the strike had not broken the rank and file's determination not to eat grass. When the membership at Thurcroft heard of the coming inspection they immediately decided on a 24 hour stoppage which prevented the visit. Four sacked miners from nearby Silverwood Colliery joined the picket lines at Thurcroft for a face-to-face meeting with the Coal Minister. Their intention was to confront him with the fact that he is in charge of the coal industry and therefore responsible for telling the NCB that there would be no reinstatement for sacked miners.

Strike-breakers - No thanks !: A social evening arranged by trustees from Manvers Colliery between miners and the police at the Miners' Welfare caused militants from Manvers to complain to branch officials and threaten to demonstrate outside the Welfare if the event took place. Branch officials at Manvers decided that a vote of no con-

fidence should be put. A special branch meeting is to be arranged, called for by one of the trustees - ex-president of Manvers, Tom Roebuck, who said that the attendance at the meeting was not a true representation of the feeling of Manvers branch.

Super scabs still in union !: National and Yorks NUM officials decided not to discipline Ken Foulstone and Bob Taylor, the two men whose court action caused the sequestration of Yorks area funds, the appointment of a receiver and the judgement that the Yorks area strike was unofficial. The decision was based on agreement by Foulstone and Taylor that court action against the NUM would be dropped if a promise of no discipline was made. The action of the NUM was also approved by Mr Justice Scott in the High Court in London. Militants at branch level should now be becoming aware that in spite of all the chest-beating of the area officials, they know that we suffered a crushing defeat. They should also note that the area officials have no intention of carrying on the fight against the NCB or the Tory government. Instead, they are retreating on all fronts and in some areas sacrificing our own members in a desperate attempt to buy off the NCB and Tories. These actions still go on in spite of the rank and file's willingness to fight as shown at Thurcroft and other pits in the Yorks area since our return to work. It is time the rank and file told the Area and National officials to get off their knees and stand and fight.

Rossington: As we go to press, Rosso has voted overwhelmingly for strike action at a branch meeting of around 700! The lads have been trodden on once too often by the rough justice of management. The time has come for a fight back. Three issues have triggered this action. Firstly, management have ignored the established agreement of the Doncaster priority (ie. union members who have waited the longest for jobs are given priority). Management are now unilaterally choosing who they think should have a job, without any reference to the agreement. Also, two men have been suspended for refusing to do a job on a point of safety. They have the backing of the safety engineer and are in line with the 1953 Safety Act. However, the safety issue is wider than this case alone. Condi-

tions at Rosso have deteriorated, as elsewhere, when it comes to management cutting corners on safety. The men are determined that this must stop. Many of those who voted for action are willing to back this up with picketing, etc. This is vital if the strike is to spread and prevent Rosso from being isolated. Doncaster panel are meeting to discuss this position, although they have already passed a resolution recommending strike action in cases of victimisation. Militants will see this as an opportunity for the union to make an about face on the steady retreat seen since the end of the Great Strike.

RANK & FILE CONFERENCE

On August 10th the National Rank and File Miners' Movement (NRFMM) held its third conference. The conference debated the NRFMM's future political direction.

A series of resolutions, some moved by supporters of Workers Power, laid a clear political basis for the movement. On the crucial scabs issue the conference voted to campaign for the expulsion of all scab leaders and organisers from the NUM. In contrast to the vague resolutions on pay and closures at the NUM conference, the Rank and File called for the scrapping of the Incentive Scheme and a campaign to rebuild the NUM in preparation for a new round of national strike action.

Wary of the bureaucratic nature of the recent rule changes the conference agreed to campaign for a thorough-going democratic transformation of the union, ending the federation that has proved so disastrous.

The conference also voted to support the struggles of South African and American miners. Resolutions of support and financial donations were agreed.

Though the conference was small the militants grouped in the movement are serious about addressing the problems facing the NUM. If resolutions passed can be turned into practice by intervening in the countless local disputes taking place, as well as other conferences and forums being organised in the NUM, then the movement can be built into a strong force in the NUM.

Women's Conference - a wasted opportunity

The national Women Against Pit Closures conference on August 17th. was a wasted opportunity for the thousands of women mobilised by the miners strike.

The conference was carefully designed to give a show of democracy, yet was tightly controlled by the committee of area delegates and the ex-officio members Betty Heathfield, Anne Scargill and Jean McCrindle (none of whom have ever been elected.)

Women arrived at the conference angry that the planning meeting had ruled no votes, therefore no democratic decisions would be taken. We were not pleased that only an hour had been set aside for discussion of all the proposals.

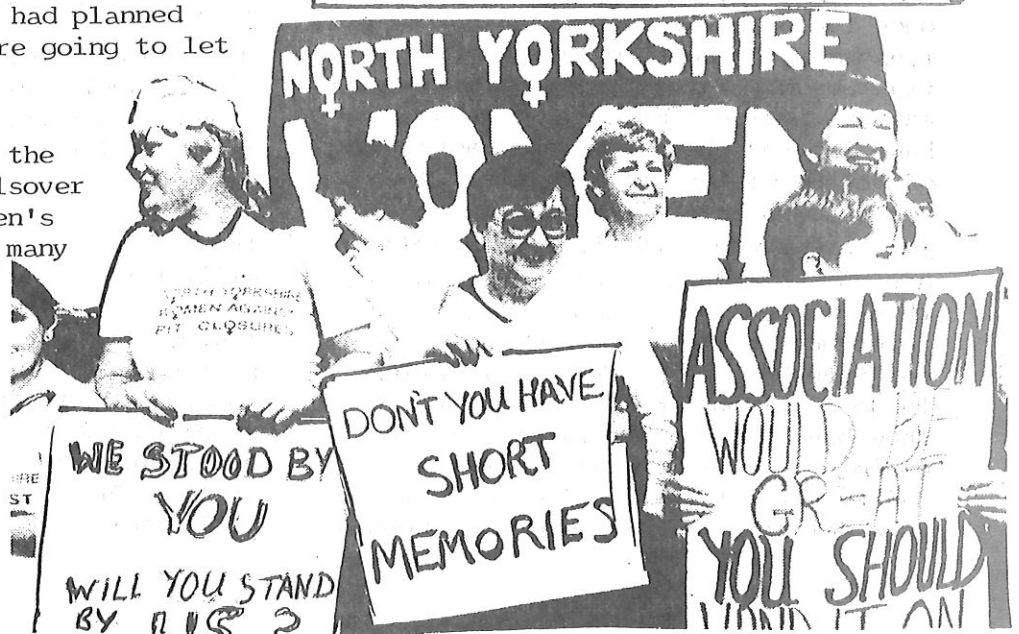
Uproar from the conference floor about this ruling forced Anne Lilburn, President of WAPC, to allow a motion from South Wales to be put. This motion giving more time for discussion and decision making in a closed session was passed amid a noisy expression of support from the floor, " we want a vote ", " we want a conference not another rally. " Most of us believed we had won the right to vote - in fact the Chairperson had used the confusion to manipulate the delegates. We were informed later that we would not be allowed to vote. Having failed to hold the set-piece rally they had planned there was no way they were going to let us take decisions.

Toni Bennett a member of the North Derbyshire, The Bolsover and the Chesterfield Women's Action Groups was one of many women arguing for open and proper discussion. She expressed her bitter disappointment to Red Miner after the day saying " In my opinion the decisions had already been made and this was just a show.....I didn't like the insular nature of

the draft proposals, I felt that as socialists we should be discussing wider issues such as education, cuts in the N.H.S. as well."

All the leadership of WAPC had to offer the 490 miners wives who had travelled to the conference was a series of organisational proposals relating to membership and dues. By contrast a resolution from Hatfield Main Women's Support Group argued for a change in direction. The delegate speaking to this resolution argued for a fighting movement based on the urgent need to help rebuild the N.U.M. and re-galvanise militant miners and wives for the fightback. She argued that WAPC should be part of building the necessary new national strike not waiting in the wings as an N.U.M. auxillary. She argued that we should link up with all working class women fighting to defend their jobs, communities and services. And last but not least for a campaign around the N.U.M. branches for associate membership with observer rights at all levels of the union to strengthen the fight against pit closures.

Wives lobbying the N.U.M. conference for associate membership, without success.



FAILED

The year old WAPC movement has failed to hold a conference representing all the groups - with one delegate per group - despite repeated demands for this. The handful of women who set it up continue to control it and have ignored the pressing question of maintaining and building the movement which is dying on its feet.

The leadership have deliberately side-stepped the vital task of relaunching the wives movement to combat scab unionism, fight closures, link up with all working class struggles against the Tories, especially those of working class women.

The present leadership of WAPC do not want to see it develop policies independent of the N.U.M. and will continue to tie as many militant women as they can to a non-political auxiliary of the NUM. They have no perspective of building a fighting working class women's movement that could offer a course of action for the thousands of women politicised during the strike.

We must challenge this leadership and push for active support for any struggles erupting in the pits. We must be in the forefront of co-ordinating resistance to Thatchers attacks and we must put up a renewed fight for a real democratic conference.

Dear Red Miner,

I am writing to tell you our feelings about the National Women Against Pit Closures'conference' on August 17th.

The conference was a shambles from the start. Women had come from all over the country for a good decision-making conference. All it was, was a glorified rally. No floor vote to be taken and the proposals to be voted on at a later meeting by the Area delegates. There are only 17 Area delegates for all of the miners wives groups in the country, so a conference vote would have been much more democratic with hundreds of us there.

South Wales put a proposal forward that we should all vote, and that there be closed session without the press. The floor took a vote and this was passed. But the Chair said it wasn't possible to change the whole course of the meeting and give everyone the vote. Women were also accused of behaving in an unruly manner and of rowdiness especially in front of the press. Well, we didn't invite the press there anyway, we had voted to ask them to leave. We don't want to discuss our business in front of them after what they said during the strike!

Since the start of WAPC the majority of women's groups have been pressing for one delegate per womens group. But the national committee are against this. Why? The movement is still young but one thing they should learn from this conference is that they have to listen to the Rank and File women who are the WAPC. If they don't the movement will never go forward, it will just crumble. We need to do this, not just for women's struggles in Britain and abroad but for all working class struggles.

From,

A sacked miners wife, Coventry Colliery Wives Support Group.

P.S. If you agree with this letter and want a better conference please contact us. We are hoping to lobby the next Area delegate conference to demand one delegate per wives support group. Contact C. Donnelly, Secretary Coventry Colliery Wives Support Group, 6 Winster Close, Keresley, Nr. Coventry, Warwickshire.

FORCED BACK - AT GUNPOINT !

As RED MINER goes to press, the South African mineworkers have been forced, at gunpoint, back to work. However for the young National Union of Mineworkers (South Africa), this is only the start of it's struggle against the apartheid regime. The N.U.M. (S.A.) which represents around a quarter of the country's black gold and coal mineworkers, 130,000 claimed a 22% wage increase, and improvements in holiday allowance. The existing average wage for black gold mineworkers is 358 Rand. That means, roughly speaking, that a black miner in South Africa earns in a month what a British miner, on average bonuses earns in a week.

DIVIDE AND RULE

The employers have responded with tried and tested tactics. First divide and rule, with three of the mining companies including the biggest, Anglo-American, stepping up their offer in last minute negotiations. This left the union starting the strike only in the mines of those companies who had taken a "hard line". Here the union was met with the vicious repression expected of the South African bosses. In cahoots with the police and army, strikers were sacked and deported back, either to neighbouring countries or to the "homelands". (These are the poor and overcrowded areas of South Africa that the apartheid regime has designated as 'belonging to' the majority black African population). One of the companies, Gold Fields of South Africa, is British controlled. It is part of Consolidated Gold Fields and contributes about half of consolidated's profits.

MORE BLOODY REPRESSION

Red Miner readers will know that the South African mineworkers are not alone in their struggle and suffering. The black population's protests - strikes, demonstrations and boycotts - against the vicious apartheid regime have been growing in strength up to July of this year. Prime Minister Botha responded with more repression. Already 100 'political' trials had taken place since January and nearly 400 died.

But Botha's emergency has put another 2,000 into detention and 36 districts under martial law.

There can be no doubt where our duty lies. Our brothers and sisters in South Africa are up against an enemy which directs $\frac{1}{4}$ million armed police and defence forces. Every step in the struggle to overthrow apartheid lays our fellow workers open to imprisonment, injury or death. The international working class must rally to their side. Our responsibility in Britain is particularly great because of Britain's close ties - a half of the 2,000 multinational companies operating in South Africa are British. Britain takes 30% of South Africa's exports.

WORKERS SOLIDARITY

What form should solidarity take? The key is workers action. We cannot trust the bosses or the Tories to do the job of destroying apartheid through 'sanctions'. Of course, in this crisis situation any measure which hits the regime is welcome. But the 'progressive' businesses who are now calling for reform are just worried about their profits. They have been exploiting cheap black labour for years, and would like to continue. They want just enough reform to take the pressure off, but not to fundamentally alter the position of the black working class.

Working class action, by contrast, can't be turned on and off at the bosses' commands. It can help the South African workers destroy the whole rotten system.

- The NUM (S.A.) urgently needs funds to finance further action. You can send it to 'Emergency South African Miners Strike Fund'. Account no : 7092256. Lloyds Bank plc. 88 Tottenham Court Rd. London W1. Sorting code : 30-18-82. Peter Heathfield is one of the trustees of this fund.

- Build links with NUM (S.A.). The NUM in Britain is giving direct support but the membership needs greater information and links. Branches should ask for literature and speakers.

BLOCKING

- The trade unions should be organising blocking of all goods and components to and from South Africa. Already dockers in Southampton have refused to load a milling machine for armaments production. Joint union committees are needed at every level to organise this.

- The NUM has a role in this even if it is not a transport union. It can help build joint union committees. Branches can ensure that no canteen food is South African produce - a small step, but arguing for it raises the issue. More significantly, what about mining technology produced by firms with a South African connection? Branches should ask H.Q. for details.



Botha - aiming for reform?

RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICA

Red Miner is urging its readers to put the following resolution at their branch meetings :

THIS BRANCH NOTES:

1. The state of emergency in South Africa where the racist regime is gunning down and imprisoning blacks who are fighting against apartheid.
2. That black South African miners supported the NUM during the Great Strike and even made financial contributions despite being on less than subsistence wages.
3. That the British government and British companies have over the years given, and still give, immense political and economic support to apartheid governments.

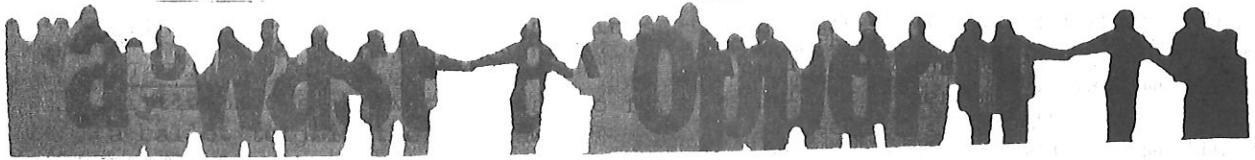
THIS BRANCH RESOLVES TO:

1. Support the demonstration and rally on 28th Sept in Sheffield.
2. Campaign amongst the members in order to gain maximum support for our brothers and sisters in South Africa.
3. To block all goods from South Africa and boycott all firms who assist the racist regime by investing in it.
4. To make a donation to a black trade union and to make attempts to twin with a South African black trade union.
5. To campaign within the broader trade union movement through the setting up of joint trade union committees for national action against the racist regime through blocking of all supplies to South Africa and all exports from South Africa.

ANTI-APARTHEID DEMONSTRATION - SHEFFIELD

SATURDAY SEPT 28th. ASSEMBLE 10.30 am SPITAL HILL ('Caborn's Corner')

WORKERS HISTORY



THE MINERS' MINORITY MOVEMENT (Part 3)

In the last article we saw how the Miners Minority Movement (MMM) and its leadership, the Communist Party (C P) contributed to the miners' victory of 1925 - 'Red Friday'. In this article we look at the General Strike that came in 1926 when the settlement granted on Red Friday (basically Government subsidies to the mining industry) ran out.

Despite the temporary gain of 'Red Friday' the MMM saw that this settlement could not resolve anything, that it was purely a delaying tactic by the Government and that a General Strike would still be inevitable when the settlement ran out in May 1926. They saw as their main task the organising and preparation of the rank and file to match the determination of the employers. No such organising and preparation had been planned by the union leadership. They did nothing to prepare for the showdown, hoping desperately that it could somehow be avoided.

At this point the C P and MMM insisted that these preparations must be seen in a revolutionary context - i.e. in terms of a struggle for power against the Conservative Government. However, between July 1925 and the General Strike in May 1926 a significant change in strategy occurred in the C P with inevitable repercussions in the MMM. It was a turn that led to an accommodation to the left-reformist leaders inside the unions.

The real determining factor of this strategic about-turn was to be found in the Communist International (C I) and its leading organisation, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Following the defeat of a number of revolutionary upsurges throughout Europe, severe isolation caused a political degeneration of

the Russian Revolution and consequently an uncheckable growth of a bureaucracy headed by Stalin. Since the CPSU was the dominating influence in the Communist International this degeneration naturally infected its international work and thereby the work of the C P in Britain. It was to have a disastrous effect on the class struggle in Britain.

The object of Soviet strategy was to neutralise British Government hostility to the USSR by gaining access to the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). To this end great importance was placed by the CPSU on the Anglo-Russian Committee set up in early 1925 between the British TUC and Russian Trade Unions.

Through the Committee the developing Soviet bureaucrats made friends with left-talking leaders in the TUC like George Hicks of the building trade workers and A.A. Purcell, president of the TUC. Fearful of upsetting their fairweather friends, the CPSU ordered the pliable British party to tone down its criticisms of these men. Indeed it pressured the party into making declarations of faith in these 'lefts' in its publications. The flattering remarks made by the 'lefts' about the Soviet Union seemed to justify this policy.

In fact such remarks about international issues served to disguise the bankruptcy of these 'lefts' on the home front. Soviet power in Russia was fine. In Britain they were doing nothing to build Councils of Action to prepare for the coming strike. In the CPSU Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition were the only voices that spoke out clearly against the bureaucratic, short-sighted policies of Stalin and warned the British party against any reliance on Hicks, Purcell, and even

Arthur Cook, the miners' leader.

Inside the MMM, particularly in South Wales, there was some resistance to the "new line". Arthur Horner, one of the leading figures in the MMM, was arguing in the "Mineworker" as late as March 1926 that the struggle for the living wage should continue:

".... fight for a policy of wages commensurate with the increase in the cost of living, and prepare the docks for action by uniting the workers more closely than ever."

However, by April 1926 there had been a marked change in the attitude of the MMM, probably as a direct result of the pressure put on by the CP to align itself with national policy.

As the new strategy gained support in the British CP so the original revolutionary positions of the MMM were overturned. Instead of continuing its policy of encouraging independent action from the rank and file it became increasingly bent towards compromise with the official leadership. The new line meant that the CP and MMM worked in a united front with the TUC, performing the role of a basically loyal ally of the leadership, making criticisms that were in the main only directed against the right. This was in stark contrast to their former position of radicalising the trade unions from below and replacing the leadership with communists.

By doing this the MMM helped to maintain the illusion that reformist politics could gain something from capitalism in crisis and it gave confidence to those leaders who had no intention of struggling for the class interests of the workers against the parasitic system of the bosses. It thus served to undermine the emerging revolutionary consciousness of the British working class and therefore weakened the labour movement immeasurably. Thus, on the eve of the General Strike no preparation had been made to forge an alternative leadership in the event of a sell-out by the present leaders. Instead, a passive fatalism prevailed in the CP and MMM on the outcome of the strike. As J.P. Murphy an executive member of the CP wrote in 'Workers Weekly' just before the

General Strike:

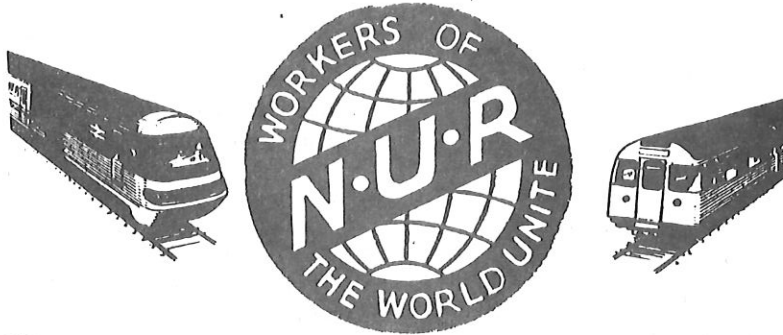
"Our party does not hold the leading positions in the trade unions. It is not conducting the negotiations with the employers and the government. It can only place its forces at the service of the workers - led by others."

Whilst the CP were relinquishing the task of fighting for a communist leadership, initiatives were being taken by workers for the coming battle. When the General Council sanctioned the formation of Councils of Action on day one of the strike the militant areas lost no time in putting them into operation - and in fact taking them beyond the formal co-ordinating role envisaged by the TUC. In the Fife coalfield, for example, the Council of Action organised sections dealing with food, transport, information and propaganda, prisoners aid and even entertainment. A Workers' Defence Corps was also formed and as reported in 'Workers Weekly' No 173 (11.6.26):

"After police charges on mass pickets, the Defence Corps, which 150 workers had joined at the outset, was re-organised. As numbers rose to 700, of whom 400 commanded by workers who had been NCO's during the war, marched in military formation through the town to protect the picket. The police did not interfere again."

Despite this kind of exemplary fighting spirit the TUC leadership sold out the strike after only 9 days. No alternative leadership had been built to keep the strike going. Defeat was inevitable. The CP's new strategy reaped its rotten reward as 'left' leaders Hicks, Purcell and Swales failed to stand against the General Council's betrayal. Even Arthur Cook, although continuing the struggle for the miners, did not challenge and expose the right and left wing leadership.

The outcome of the 1926 struggle is a well documented piece of workers' history. Yet the lessons of that defeat are still to be learnt by the labour movement.



NUR CLIMBDOWN : WE MUST LEARN THE LESSONS.

A major victory has been scored by British Rail and the Tories with the result of the guards ballot on industrial action over Driver Only Operation (DOO). Facing what amounts to unconditional surrender by the NUR British Rail have pressed ahead with DOO and mass sackings to force the unions to eat dirt.

Although the battle is far from over the narrow vote against industrial action revealed the crippling effect ballots have on the working class. The Tories knew this when they made ballots for industrial action legally binding. It is essential that every workers learns the lessons of the recent events on British Rail.

What did the ballot result signify? Firstly nearly 50% willing to take action at the start of a battle is by no means a small percentage. The brave resistance of railworkers at Glasgow, S. Wales, Immingham, London etc. in the face of massive management intimidation showed a strong determination to fight amongst guards at the forefront of the attacks. Its no good blaming rank and file guards. As is always the case it was a failure of leadership that was decisive.

KNAPP RESPONSIBLE FOR DEFEAT.

Many have said that Knapp and his cohorts, who waged a campaign for a yes vote, cannot be blamed for the situation we are now in. This is not true. They are responsible in many ways. Let us look at just three.

Firstly it was Knapp who got the last AGM to reverse previous union policy of opposition to ballots. He even used the argument that the anti-union laws were a double edged weapon which could be used against the Tories. What a sick joke that turned out to be.

Secondly, the NUR executive gave no answer at all to managements threats of

further sackings and job losses. It is small wonder that many were affected by these threats. In fact their opposition to managements case for improved productivity was pretty weak all round. Like all trade union bureaucrats Knapp actually accepts many of managements assumptions about the need to be competitive and so on. He should be concerned with the needs of his members not those of BR which run in the opposite direction.

CRINGING BEFORE THE LAW.

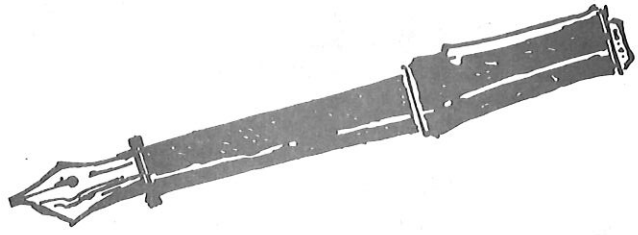
Lastly and most decisively, the Executive Committee's cringing before the law took the steam out of the fast developing fight. It meant that no action whatsoever was called in defence of those sacked. They were left totally isolated. Hardly a stance that is going to breed confidence in the leadership. On the contrary it bred demoralisation. Waiting for the ballot allowed B.R. and their friends in the press the time they needed to frighten workers sat at home making their minds up as isolated individuals rather than as part of a collective.



But the ballot result is not the end of the matter. Guards are not the only section under attack on the railways. The situation and the mood can change rapidly. We need to develop real workers democracy, through regular workplace meetings, which can both help create and reflect that changing feeling.

And when that battle does take off we will be looking to join with the miners in a broader front to turn the tide against the bosses.

Dear Red Miner,



Dear Red Miner,

Coal not dole - that was our slogan over twelve months. Miners' leaders at every rally and meeting pushed this message. Miners went out nationally and internationally preaching this message to anyone who would listen and to people who did not want to listen. So what the bloody hell's going on? Have all our leaders and rank and file miners suddenly suffered a severe loss of memory? Has the last year been in vain?

Here we have an advert in the Yorkshire Miner headed "Taking Redundancy?" - telling us how to invest our blood money, how to invest the dirty money for selling our jobs. What hypocrisy! Have we sunk so low as to accept Tory NCB money to spread their propaganda? Why is there no word from our union against this evil?

So come on all you miners who fought the last twelve months' battle - stand up and demand from your officials that these adverts be withdrawn.

The people responsible for allowing these adverts to appear must be asked to explain themselves, and if we don't get a satisfactory answer, they must be removed from office. Pass resolutions at your branch meetings - let's have no more of this in our paper, let's confine this tripe to Coal News.

TAKING REDUNDANCY?

YOU'VE WORKED HARD FOR YOUR MONEY. MAKE SURE IT WORKS HARD FOR YOU.

For example

<p>£10,000 INVESTED FOR 4 YEARS TO APRIL '85</p> <p>Building Society £13,518 Av 7.82% no income drawn</p>	<p>Inflation £12,982 Value to keep buying power Av 6.7%</p>
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London WC1N 3XX

WHERE WE STAND

RED MINER

The Red Miner is produced by members and supporters of Workers Power. Workers Power is a revolutionary organisation fighting to build a new revolutionary party to overthrow capitalism - at home and abroad.

WORKERS' STRUGGLES

We support all workers' struggles against the bosses. We fight to turn all struggles into conscious anti-capitalist struggles.

REFORMISM

The trade union and Labour leaders believe capitalism can be reformed, made better, but they do not aim to overthrow capitalism. They act as go-betweens for the bosses with the workers. Even militant leaders limit their struggles to the fight for gains within capitalism. For this reason we are for building rank and file movements politically independent of the bureaucracy and committed to transforming the unions into democratic, class struggle unions.

REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

A revolutionary party will be a workers' party, a party that, built in struggle, can learn and pass on the lessons of the 1984-85 strike and other struggles. We stand for miners taking their place in the front ranks of building such a party as they did in the 1920s. Only by building a new revolutionary party can we create the class army that can fight and destroy the stinking capitalist system that threatens us with always having to fight to protect our jobs, conditions and organisations.

INTERNATIONALISM

We are committed to fighting capitalism internationally. We strive to build an international organisation of revolutionary parties. (Workers Power works with Irish, German, French and Chilean revolutionaries in the **Movement for a Revolutionary International**). In particular we fight nationalist solutions to the crisis put forward by reformists like calls for import controls. Such demands merely divide the working class.

DIVISIONS

We fight all divisions in the working class. Divisions are fostered by the bosses to weaken us. We are implacably opposed to racism immigration

controls, fascism, discrimination against and oppression of women, gays or black people.

THE OPPRESSED

We support all struggles by people oppressed by the bosses of Britain, America, France, Italy and the other capitalist (imperialist) countries. Immediately in Britain this means we support the right of the Irish people as a whole (not just those in the north) to determine the fate of their country. We unconditionally support the republicans and socialists in Ireland fighting for this right and demand the immediate withdrawal of all British troops from Ireland.

WORKERS' STATES

The USSR, Eastern Europe, etc are workers' states. Capitalism has been abolished. However, in each of these states a bureaucracy, based on the Stalinist Communist Parties, holds political power. This situation arose out of the international isolation of the Russian Revolution in the 1920s. The revolution degenerated at the hands of the bureaucracy headed by Stalin. The other workers' states were degenerate from birth in that they were created in the bureaucratic image of the USSR.

Therefore we call for a political revolution in all of these states to overthrow the bureaucracy and realise the full potential of these non-capitalist economies through democratic planning. At the same time, in order to preserve the gain for the working class represented by these economies, we defend the USSR and degenerate workers' states unconditionally against imperialism which, through war, will seek to re-introduce capitalism in these countries.

OVERTHROW CAPITALISM

The revolutionary party we seek to build will have as its strategic goal the overthrow of capitalism by workers organised into workers' councils and armed so as to defeat the police and army that the bosses have used, and will use again, against us. We are for a socialist society in which all property is in the hands of the workers' state and all production is directed towards meeting human need - **not** satisfying the profit greed of the capitalists. We stand on the old slogan of Karl Marx:

**WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE,
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR CHAINS,
AND A WORLD TO WIN.**