

Militant



The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 1 August 1984 10p

Fight Tory law

Defend South Wales miners

THIS IS CLASS WAR.

The £50,000 fine imposed on the South Wales NUM is a calculated move to cripple the miners' strike.

In Wales and throughout Britain, the labour movement must meet fire with fire.

THE GLOVES ARE OFF.

When they come for the miners' funds they must meet the trade union movement mobilised in action as never before.

Seizure of the funds of the South Wales miners would not only affect the ability to finance the strike. All sections of the mining community would be hit. It would prevent money being given to the sick and aged, and even the issuing of death grants.

The Times, that rabid journal of big business, has talked not just of grabbing the £2.8 millions of the South Wales NUM. It has also raised the spectre of jailing South Wales miners' leaders for standing by union policy.

Solidarity action

The attitude of the labour movement must be: let them try! Not one penny, not one stick of furniture, not one piece of property must be confiscated from the South Wales miners by the courts. No one must be allowed to rot in Tory jails.

Capitalist laws mean nothing once the working

By Brian Ingham

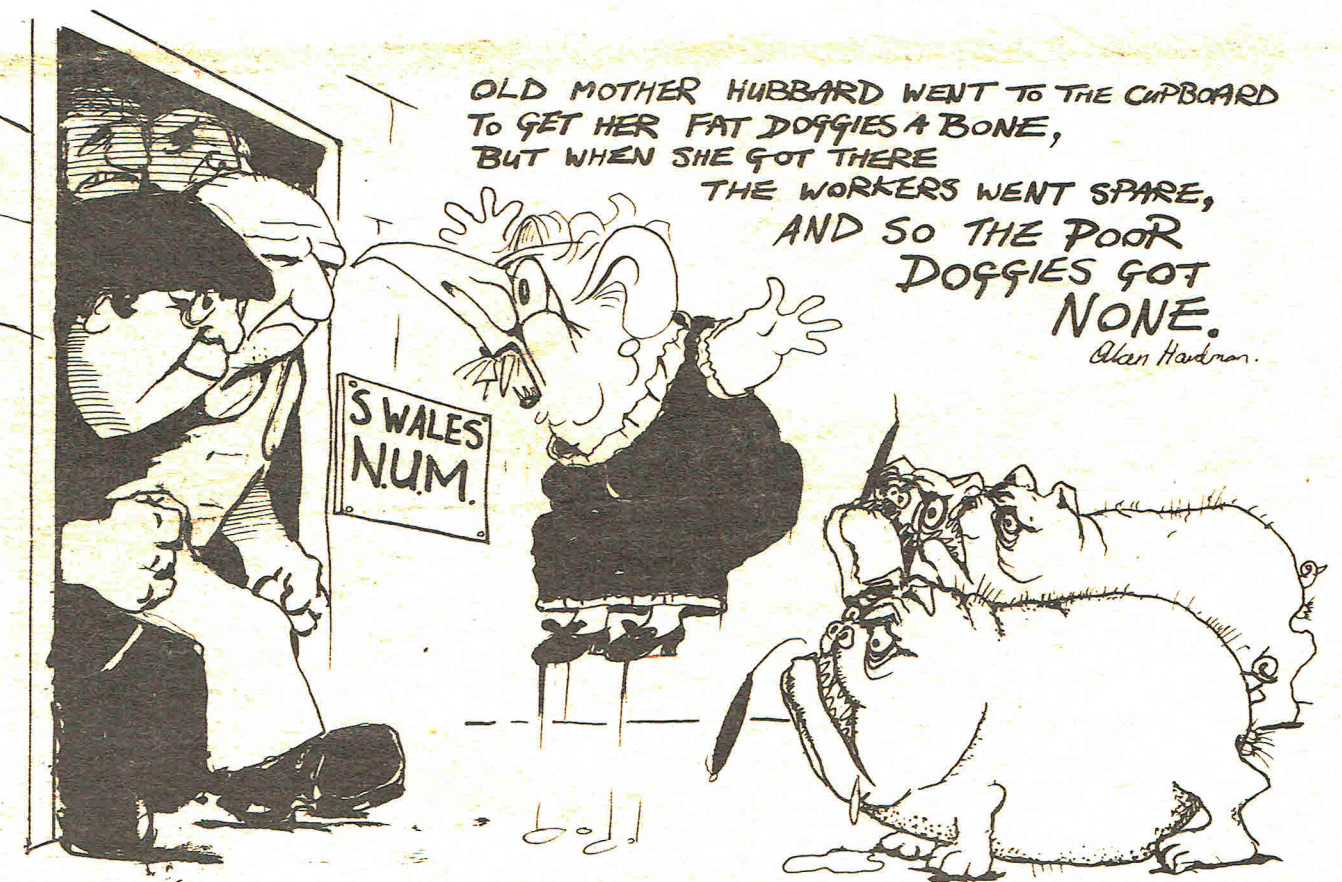
class is united in action. As a first step, a round-the-clock mass protection of all the premises and property of the South Wales miners should be organised immediately.

Wider solidarity is needed. Miners should lead a campaign in the factories and work places. There should be joint meetings across industry, in every locality, of shop stewards and work place representatives to work out immediate steps to defend the NUM.

The labour movement should also prepare for solidarity strike action throughout Wales immediately any attempt is made to seize one penny from the miners.

All eyes within the trade union movement are now on the South Wales Miners' Executive. They must give the lead.

The Tories hope that South Wales miners' leaders will stay in the background for fear of adding to their so-called 'contempt'. This would be fatal. This attack can be defeated. But the lead



must come boldly from South Wales miners.

No surrender

Clear, precise calls to the wider labour movement for solidarity will receive a thunderous response. It is not the miners who are in contempt of the law, but Tory law makers and well heeled Tory judges who have shown nothing but contempt for miners, and other trade unionists.

If the labour movement capitulates to these Tory laws, trade unionism would be thrown back over 100 years. The miners have taken the only attitude possible. They have said that trade unionists will not obey anti-working class laws thrown at them by Tories.

There would have been no labour movement if the pioneers of trade unionism had capitulated to big business 'laws'. Only what advances job prospects,

working conditions, and democratic rights is 'moral' for trade unionists.

Miners are fighting for their jobs, the jobs of their children and for the very lives of the mining communities. They will not be intimidated by threats of Tory fines or imprisonment.

Determination

Thousands of individual miners have already been fined. They have faced mass

arrests, baton charges, police dogs, mounted police assaults. Each and every attack has only strengthened their determination. Thatcher and the Tories face an unbreakable will to win.

They thought they could starve the miners back to work. They did not understand how miners would fight. They did not understand the deep traditions of

(Continued on back page)

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Miners' dispute

Point of Ayr-strikers defiant

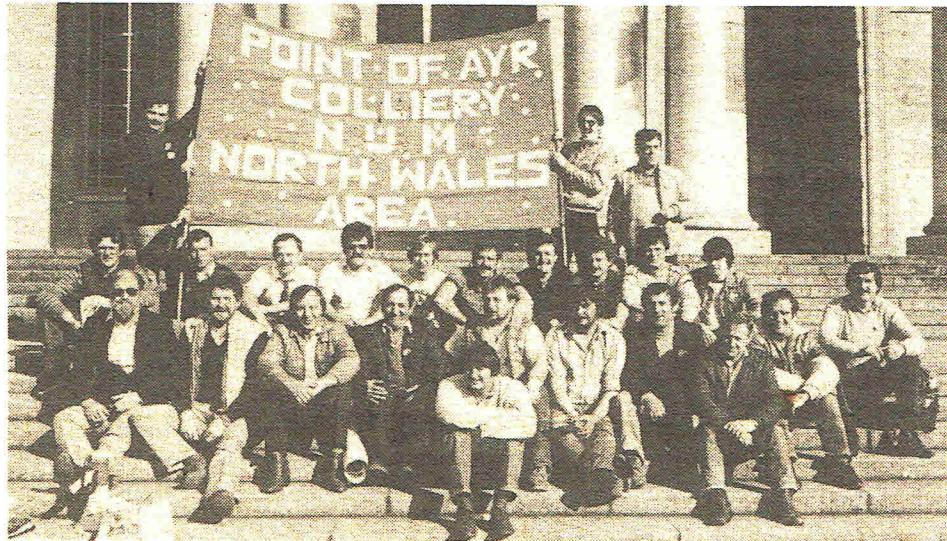
John Mannion and Johnny Wrexham at the Point of Ayr NUM strike centre in Rhyl, describe the position of striking miners in this isolated area:

Out of about 650 workers, about 110 are still on strike. All of us who are out are determined to stick it out until we have won. The history of Point of Ayr speaks for itself. It was the last pit to leave the Spencer union and has always been ready to settle for anything the bosses offer.

Defeatism

They have been conditioned by defeatism and have become alienated from the rest of the coalfields. They are clutching at straws and realising their isolation, they first tried to lean on Lancashire and go in with them, and now are pushing to be included in the Notts area. They want to form their own union called "Democrat '84"

But what future would that union have? They were



Point of Ayr strikers at the Welsh rally 28 April—still out despite huge pressure

the last to come out in the 1974 strike—every pit came out on the Friday, but these men didn't come out until the Wednesday, and then only after a mass picket had been sent up from South Wales.

They live in a world of their own, a dream world. There is a phrase in today's local paper which describes

people who have "lost touch with the reality of our times" and that sums them up.

No overtime ban

Every other area upheld the overtime ban, not these men at Point of Ayr, and they are now working through the holidays to

move the stocks. They are prepared to take the good things but are not prepared to fight for them.

The strike is as solid as it was on the first day, in fact more solid. The more they abuse Scargill, the more we'll stand behind him. When Thatcher compares Scargill to Galtieri she should remember what that

IN 1928 there were 19 pits in North Wales, employing 14,462 men and boys. By the late 1960s 13 of those pits had closed leaving just 6 pits in the North Wales area employing about 7,000 men. 4 of those pits were within 5 miles of Wrexham. At that time in an interview in the *Daily Post*, the local paper, the Area General Manager of the NCB said that although the area had been producing coal for over 100 years ample reserves were still available, and those employed in the industry could look forward to the continuation of the importance of coal mining to the Wrexham district for a long time—"certainly far beyond the lifetime of the present generation." Now there are only two pits left in the North Wales area, Bersham, near Wrexham and Point of Ayr near Rhyl. At Bersham the strike is solid. At isolated Point of Ayr, the majority are working. On this page miners from both pits talk to *Militant*.

shallow victory in the Falklands cost us and is still costing us.

This is a Tory area, so the local support has been disgusting, with the exception of a few individuals and factories. We'd especially like to thank NUPE who have lent us a room in their office to use as a strike centre, and the staff in the office have been tremendous.

Lifeline

The real lifeline of support has been from Birkenhead, Liverpool and Ellesmere Port. The print unions in Liverpool have adopted our pit and sent food and money. The unemployed in Birkenhead and Ellesmere Port hold regular collections for us.

We especially appreciate the LPYS and Trades council members from Ellesmere Port who bring a food collection up every Sunday.

Also we've had tremen-

dous co-operation from the Agecroft Strike committee who have allowed us to collect in their area although they have problems of their own.

I think that this strike has made people more politically aware. Personally I am ready to join the Labour Party and be an active member. I still am, although the attitude of Kinnock to the dispute has cast doubts in my mind. That hasn't completely put me off but I haven't got the 100% confidence in him that I had when he was elected leader of the Labour Party.

Fight now

If we don't fight now we won't have a chance to fight in the future. Thatcher knows that when she wants to close the next pit in Wales she can pick on Point of Ayr and if we don't fight now, where will the backing come from then?

Bersham strike still solid

Keith Hett of Bersham NUM explains how his pit is handling the dispute:

Bersham has got better support now than we had in the beginning. We realise that we've been out so long now we can't go back until total victory.

The local leadership is sort of middle of the road. Locally, they are doing their own jobs, they are not really in-

involved in the strike committee, they are doing their own normal work.

Activists

What we call the strike committee have become the activists and they are running the show. That's not to say that the Lodge committee aren't involved—the officials are carrying on with their own work, which takes

a lot of their own time, so they are out of the way a lot.

I have been co-ordinating with Liverpool, meeting trade unions, speaking at meetings, and raising cash.

Once we make the contacts we have regular levies so the job becomes easier as the weeks go by. Other people have got their own jobs such as packing up food parcels, delivering food parcels and all this kind of



A Welsh message for MacGregor

thing. The local support from non-miners is not bad, not as bad as I thought it would be. When we do street collections for instance, our own lads moan, but I think we get about 50% support—in an area like this I'm pleased with it really.

Labour Party

There's Labour party activists on the support group who play a good role. The Labour party itself is a bit lacking. The national leadership hasn't been involved and they haven't come out as much as they should and this also applies to the whole of the trade union movement—that's a disgrace. In our local branch at Gwersyllt again they surprised me because they come out 100%. It's there at the grass roots, it's the leadership that's lacking all the time.

The role of the Liverpool labour movement has been tremendous. The *Militant* tendency is the best thing. They have proved, haven't they, that if you do carry out your policies, if you go to the people you can win. You can fight the left-wing bogey and

beat it if they see that you are true.

The support we have had off Liverpool has been tremendous. The victory of the Liverpool City Council has given us a lot of encouragement.

We've had help from Ford's, Vauxhall's—big car plants—the dockers and others. My disappointment is locally. We have had good support off the T&G at BICC and a lot of encouragement off them, but there's not many others. The railway lads have done well, and the Fire Brigade.

Militant

Locally, the *Militants* were the first on the streets with the collection boxes in support of the miners, and that's something I always remember. I always point out that Barry Robinson (a local *Militant* supporter) was the first to be arrested for collecting, and I always make a point of this on the YS's behalf.

We're not going back without total victory and everything—, 1983 wage claim, no closures, no

job losses and to be able to dictate the lot, the way Thatcher has dictated to unions that haven't stood up to her.

I have got a serious message for non-striking miners. If we lose this you are going to lose all your trade union rights. You are going to lose the right to negotiate your hours of work, the wages, the conditions—what days you work, and what days you don't, what time you start and finish.

Your pensions will go, because you know, this is what Thatcher's after, she doesn't want working people to have pensions.

You are going to lose everything that the union has won particularly since the last war where we have won a lot of things. You will not have the right to open your mouth and answer back.

It's time they started thinking along these lines. What is it for them if we lose?—they lose.

Reports by Dave Clarke, Barry Robinson and Stuart White.

Gresford disaster

FIFTY YEARS ago, on 28th September 1934, 265 miners lost their lives in a massive explosion at Gresford Colliery, North Wales.

The men were entombed behind a solid wall of flame, and only six men survived the blast.

Some of the bodies were recovered but were charred beyond recognition. Only the body of a 14 year old pit boy was positively identified.

Explosion

On the Tuesday after the disaster another explosion scattered hundreds of heavy bags of sand and tons of timber used to seal the shaft. A man working near the shaft was killed.

At the court of inquiry into the disaster the Chief Inspector of Mines noted that:

1. The assistant surveyor said that on the instructions of the manager he had not made any air measurements for gas since June. The figures in his notebook for July and August were concocted because the manager had told him to do so a day or two after the disaster.
2. After a fall on the 24 May the ventilation was inadequate.
3. Shotfiring was carried on with little regard for the regulations of the Explosives in Coal Mines Order.
4. Men worked longer hours than were permitted by the Coal Mines Regulation Act 1908, generally known as the Eight Hours Act.

The Chief Inspector of Mines also criticised the entire ventilation system at the mine, and suggested that the money to ensure safe work-

ing had been begrudged.

The company and manager were prosecuted on charges arising from the Chief Inspector's report. They were found guilty and fined £140 with £350 costs—less than £2 for every life lost.

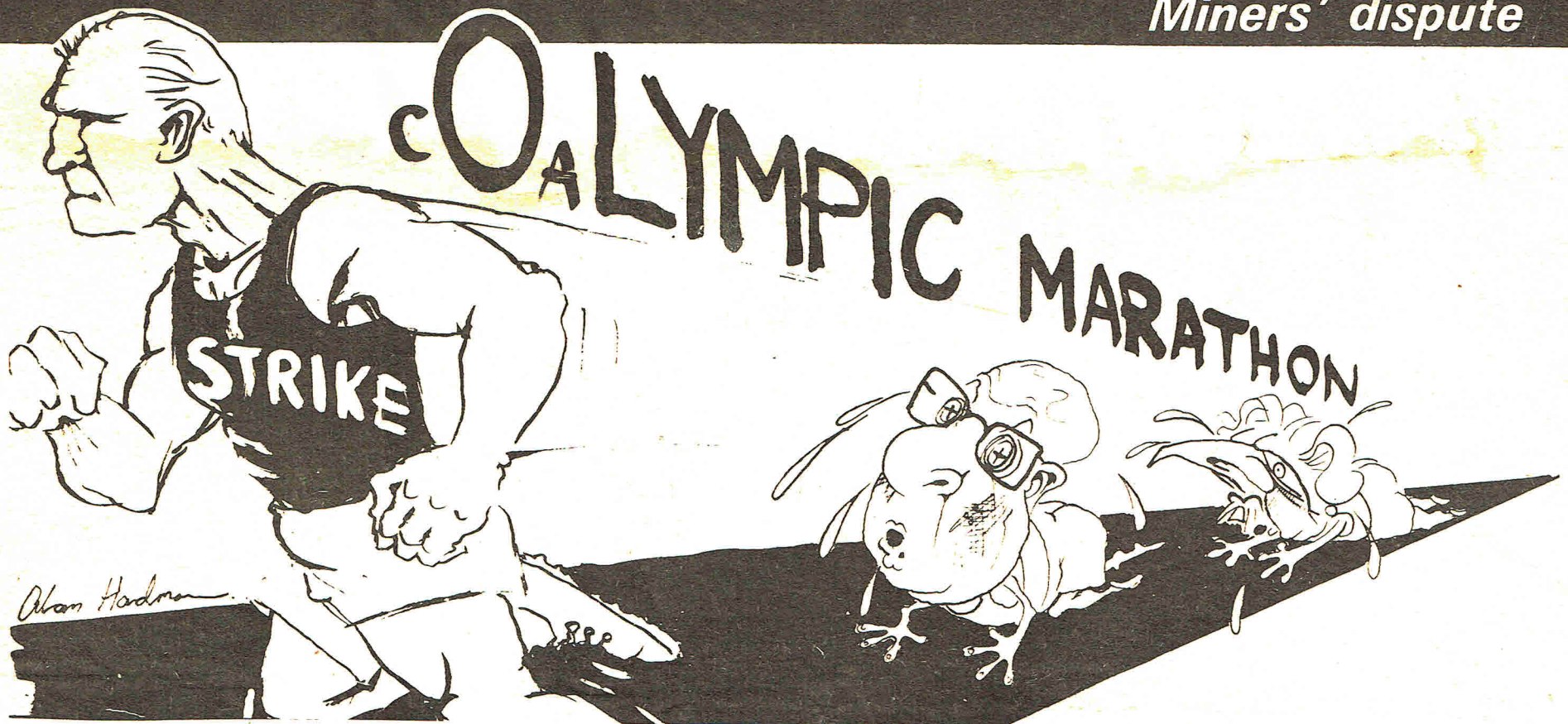
Carnage

The conditions of private ownership which led to the disaster at Gresford must never be allowed to return to British coal mining. The carnage in the South African pits demonstrates that private owners' priorities have not changed over the decades.

By Dave Clark

(North Wales Miners Support Committee, personal capacity)

Miners' dispute



Many steelworkers are seeing the need to back the miners. If the NUM is defeated then Thatcher will renew her attack on the steel industry. Here, two Port Talbot steelworkers speak of their frustration and the changing mood in their works.

"There is a hard core of us ready to have a go and the rest are just wavering, waiting to be given some sort of lead."

BILL SIRTS and the rest of the leaders of the steel unions have given the impression that their members are not prepared to support the miners in their struggle to save jobs. Because of the bankrupt leadership over the past years our industry has been decimated.

The men are naturally concerned about the government's threat to close one of the large steel plants. But even if they shut Llanwern or Ravenscraig it does not mean security at Port Talbot. There is a real possibility that with the new Concast (continuous casting) and the construction of the new hot mill, Port Talbot could end up being privatised by the Tories. That would mean it being handed over on a plate to big business after millions of pounds of public investment.

What is killing me is not just that we are scabbing on the miners but with these coal and iron ore convoys breaking picket lines every day we are also scabbing on the railwaymen who were the first to support us during the

1980 steel strike. These cowboy lorry drivers should not be allowed into the plant and the lads are frustrated at what is happening. There is a hard core of us ready to have a go and the rest are just wavering, waiting to be given some sort of lead.

Day of action

When the Wales TUC called a day of action in support of the miners we resolved to call a 24 hour stoppage, but then we were inundated with circulars from our union leadership and BSC management explaining that the day of action need not necessarily mean a 24 hour stoppage. Instead we could take an hour off at the end of the shift or have a days overtime ban or just have a collection for the miners. Anything but a full stoppage. Despite this attempt to dampen support, on the day many came out on strike and marched alongside the miners in the demonstration held in Cardiff.

It's little wonder that our

members are afraid they would be isolated if they took action as happened in the 11 week electricians strike at Port Talbot in 1977. The steel unions nationally should be out campaigning in all the BSC plants for solidarity action in support of the miners, not writing articles in the Tory press sabotaging the miners' strike. If there was an ounce of leadership amongst Sirs and company we would now be out and the miners would secure a rapid victory.

At a site meeting it was agreed that the £1 per week levy for the miners strike fund would be made compulsory and back-dated to day one of the miners strike.

There are a number of us who want to be out there on the picket lines with our brothers in the NUM but our main aim at the moment is convincing the membership that despite our leadership we must come out in solidarity with the miners. It comes down to the choice of joining them on the picket line or on the dole queue. The miners are fighting for our jobs as well as their own—our place is alongside them.

By a Port Talbot steelworker

Steel mood changing but lead needed



Maesteg miners' wives support group picket Port Talbot BSC.

Photo: Paul Davies

"There are still a lot of good trade unionists in the steelworks and they need to be pushed, brought out more."

AT THE beginning of the strike, no-one really wanted to know. But gradually as the strike's going on, the mood is changing and there is a lot more support for the miners. There's a levy every week now of £1 for every electrician and the ISTC and NUB have a levy as well.

Now it is gradually beginning to sink in that it is not just a fight for the miners, but a political fight to keep their jobs. If the miners lose they are going to rip hell into the steelworks.

A lot of steelworkers are opposed to the violence on the picket line, yet they are looking back to when they were out on strike and doing exactly the same thing, more or less, they were fighting on the picket lines.

They can see why the

miners are having to struggle on the picket lines when lorries are going past and flashing pay packets to the miners, and union cards and things like this, which I've seen them doing myself.

Everyone I know in the works hates the cowboy lorry drivers—they won't have anything to do with them. You get lorry drivers going on TV saying they're doing it for the steelworkers—well they've got nothing to do with the steelworkers. The lorry drivers are only after they money.

No-one in the works like the police actions. The police were having free dinner in the works canteen at one time, but the canteen ladies threatened to strike. They wouldn't serve the police and

they wouldn't serve anybody if the police kept going in there for free food.

It's not like one steel union any more, it's Port Talbot steel union, Llanwern steel union etc. There is no unity nationally among steelworkers any more.

I think the most immediate step is convening a conference of representatives from rank and file level with the executives from all the trade unions involved, at regional and national level, with the miners involved as well.

We have had a lot of meetings over the last two or three years but they have been limited to the leadership. The only way it will change is if the rank and file is involved.

There are still a lot of good trade unionists in the steelworks and they need to be pushed, brought out more.

By a Port Talbot steelworker



Two thousand miners, their wives and supporters marched through Abertillery on 27 July to hear Arthur Scargill speak. South Wales communities know that no job is safe in any industry if the miners lose this crucial battle.

Photo: Martin Shaleshaft (IFL)

The price of coal -

IF YOU were to believe the statements of Margaret Thatcher and Peter Walker, the Energy Minister, you would think that the world had no more need for coal and that coal consumption and production were in decline.

If you were to believe NCB Chairman, Ian MacGregor you would think that the British coal mining industry was the most inefficient in the world, that the industry cannot compete on world markets and that massive subsidies from the taxpayer are necessary to keep the pits open.

DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF THEM. All the available evidence from objective sources shows that none of these statements are true.

Take the question of future coal consumption—is the demand for coal in decline? The International Energy Agency (IEA) regularly takes a look at likely world demand for the primary energy sources: oil, natural gas, coal, nuclear and hydro-electric power. In a recent study it concluded that oil supplies would remain relatively static at the present 50-53m barrels a day level which would be insufficient for future energy needs.

The IEA argue that "world oil demand would tend to exceed available supplies and notional world excess demand could range from 9m to 21m barrels per day by the end of the century". The advanced capitalist countries are advised to look for substitutes for oil by the IEA, given oil's limited reserves and the

By Bob McKee

unpredictability of price and supply from the Middle East.

The IEA predicts a rise in total energy consumption of around 2% a year up to the year 2,000. Other authorities see this prediction as on the low side. However, even on this basis coal is expected to take an increasing share of total world energy consumption. While oil's share will fall to around 31-36% compared to over 45% in 1973 and nuclear energy and natural gas will be unchanged at around 10-11% and 20% respectively, coal's share will rise sharply to near 30%. "On balance", they say, "coal use in the OECD countries could increase by 80-110% by the end of the century". Coal consumption will rise

because it is cheaper than oil and gas and safer than nuclear energy (which also requires heavy investment in technology and plant). Oil import costs have risen by three times since Thatcher came to office while coal prices have only risen 1½ times.

Electricity is the fastest growing fuel source for industry and will be heavily used by the new high technology industries. Already over 60% of power plants world-wide burn coal. That is why the IEA advocates that "the conversion of oil-fired power plants to coal or their early retirement should be pursued vigorously... industries should be encouraged to recognise the advantages of using coal instead of oil... efforts should be made to develop coal mines and transport infrastructure in line with growing demand".

Demand rising

How different IEA policy is from the objectives and plans of the Thatcher government. Far from advocating an expansion of coal-fired power stations, the Tories have called on the Central Electricity Generating Board to run down coal-fired stations and switch to the import of nuclear-fuelled electricity through the grid from France!

What has been the reaction of the major coal producers to this expectation of expanding demand? Since 1977 there has been an annual increase in world output of 2%. In some countries like China and India, production has grown around twice as fast as that, making China in 1984 the largest coal producer in the world.

However there have been some dismal exceptions to this record of growth. Out of the top ten coal producing nations only the USSR and UK have shown a decline in production, with the sharpest fall in British coal output.

Under MacGregor's closure plan another 4m tonnes of mining capacity is to be lost and production is to be reduced to 97m tonnes. This reduction in output not only coincides with a growth in the demand for coal on a world-scale but despite everything, an increase



NUM President, Arthur Scargill.

Photo: Militant

in demand in the UK itself to 112m tonnes this year. Yet instead of British coal miners meeting that demand, the government intends to increase coal imports.

The government and MacGregor justify this cutback because they say that the British mining industry is inefficient, that British miners are paid high wages and 'uneconomic' pits are kept open through government subsidies. Once high cost pits are closed and subsidies ended then what's left can try and compete—says MacGregor.

Again the evidence tells a different story. During the same period that British coal production was declining, productivity of the British miner at the coal face rose by 27%, according to a new report by the Technical Change Centre. So production certainly did not decline because British miners worked less hard.

British coal miners are not heavily subsidised by the taxpayer. The figures show that UK subsidies are the lowest in Europe.

AT £46 (\$59) a tonne British coal

is also the cheapest in Europe. But is British coal the cheapest in the world?

A recent study by Don Barnett of Macquarrie University in Sydney, Australia, throws light on this thorny statistical problem. Barnett found that the cheapest pithead coal was that mined by the super-exploited black miners of South Africa in open-cast (i.e. on the surface) mines—at just \$12 per tonne and from New South Wales, Australia at \$21.

Imports expensive

At first glance this would prove MacGregor's point when compared to UK costs at \$59 (including interest costs and subsidies which balance each other out). However, there is no way that imports from South Africa, Australia or the USA can match UK prices when the costs of transporting coal to Europe or the UK are taken into account.

The full cost of importing South African coal then reaches \$50 per



Bosses' behind nu

THE TORIES' anti-coal, pro-nuclear energy policy is being increasingly exposed.

As the evidence mounts up, it becomes clearer every day that their policy is not based on the claimed economic or technical arguments they use as propaganda white wash.

It is a crude political ploy to smash the power of the NUM by moving away from energy produced by coal. It is reinforced by the pressure of profit-hungry big business firms who stand to make millions out of government expenditure on an unnecessary and dangerous nuclear programme.

The strategy adopted by the CEBG for the development of nuclear power in Britain over the past 20 years has been a shambles. In the '60s it was decided to replace the obsolete Magnox reactors with the Advanced Gas Cooled reactor (AGR). This would have been largely British made. This decision was re-affirmed in 1972.

In 1973 however, the Chairman

By Pete Dickinson

of the CEBG, Sir Arthur Hawkins, called the AGR "a disaster we must not repeat" and informed a House of Commons Select Committee that he wished to order 32 Pressurised Water reactors from the giant American multinational Westinghouse. After a barrage of criticism this plan was rejected and it was decided to build yet another type of British reactor, a heavy water type, the SGHWR.

In the mid '70s the conclusion was reached that the SGHWR was of obsolete design and a modified version of the AGR was proposed (AGR2). In the '80s the CEBG have now decided that the best option is the PWR and are defending this idea at the Sizewell inquiry. There is a strong lobby developing however, backed by the South of Scotland Generating Board, to

return to the AGR2. This saga has made the top management of the CEBG a laughing stock in the energy industry.

It is not just a question of bungling however. The different multinationals who stand to gain if a particular scheme is adopted have been lobbying hard all the time.

The National Nuclear Corporation was formed in 1973, with a very strong initial involvement of GEC, who were to be given management responsibility. Lord Weinstock's company is a major manufacturer of turbines for the Westinghouse designed PWR including a "research reactor" built in South Korea.

Coal cheaper

Since the Tories came back to power the Department of Energy have switched their support from the AGR to the PWR. GEC have made, or have orders for, the turbines for 19 water cooled reactors representing billions of dollars, according to the latest issue of GEC

fact and NCB fiction



NCB Chairman, Ian McGregor.

Photo: Jacob Sutton

tonne and their limited supplies have run out for 1984 world-wide. The full cost of importing non-union US coal is the same as UK prices at \$59, while the cost of importing union-mined US or Australian coal reaches \$75 per tonne.

So expensive are these alternatives that the Rotterdam spot market (the auction centre for spare coal supplies) does not even bother to price US coal, while Australian coal is priced well below the cost of mining it to try and compete with European prices. As the main demand for coal comes from Europe and the USA, Australian and US exporters must transport their coal long distances to take a share of the import market, thus making them as costly or even more costly than UK-produced coal.

The evidence shows that British coal prices are no greater than competitors in the world market, particularly producers of deep-mined coal. And yet Macgregor insists on trying to drive down the cost levels

of British coal at the pithead to the levels of open-cast mines in South Africa worked by exploited black workers.

The modern Selby pit area could produce coal at \$25-30 per tonne but it is not possible for MacGregor to lower the cost of the rest of British pithead coal to South African levels without decimating the industry.

Tory logic

His present closure plan envisages closing 23 pits, losing 20,000 jobs and cutting production. But the costs saved will only reduce the average pithead cost of coal by around £5 a tonne. If subsidies were completely removed that would raise the price £3 to around £44 (about \$57)—still £30 more expensive at the pithead than Australian coal.

The most important lesson is that all this cost cutting is totally unnecessary because British coal is already competitive on world markets once transport

costs are taken into account.

The experts predict expanding world demand for coal for the rest of the century. All other major coal producers are increasing production. International energy authorities are calling on national governments to switch to coal to fuel industry and for electrical energy. Yet the Thatcher government wants to cut production and switch electricity to oil or nuclear power.

The British coal industry is efficient by world standards, lowly subsidised, and its coal is competitively priced. Yet the NCB and the government demand further cuts in costs, making large numbers of pits 'uneconomic' and losing thousands of jobs necessary to the economy.

The only conclusion that can be reached is that the government is not really aiming to make the British mining industry efficient, but is trying to break the power of the National Union of Mineworkers and destroy the coal industry. The government wants a capitalist economy that is not dependent on NUM coal for its profits but instead can rely on more well controlled, even secretive, nuclear and oil-based energy sources. It could even implement privatisation of the remainder of the industry, already hinted at by Norman Tebbit, the Trade Minister, given the profitable future for coal.

What evidence also shows is that a socialist plan for coal and other energy sources could contribute substantially to the wealth of Britain and the world. Under a socialist plan, coal production would be expanded as in other countries.

With sufficient investment in the mining industry, increased productivity would not only lead to higher output, but also to a reduction in the working week and earlier retirement. The demand for coal is going to increase world-wide over the next two decades, both to generate electricity and to supply fuel direct to industry. Only a victory for the miners in their struggle with the NCB and only the implementation of a socialist energy policy can ensure the production that is needed by industry will be created.

A programme for coal

- Open NCB books to trade union inspection.
- Cancellation of NCB debts.
- Immediate programme of full and adequate investment in all pits and workshops as identified by the NUM.
- Maintain every mining job. No redundancies. No selling jobs. No manning losses.
- Share out the work round the pits. A 4-day week for all miners with no loss of pay.
- NUM veto on all pit closures.
- A living basic wage for all miners with automatic increases to compensate for all increases in the cost of living.
- Workers' control and management of the NCB. The board should consist of one third elected by the workers in the industry through the unions, one third elected through the TUC to represent the working class at large, and one third to be appointed by the government.
- Nationalisation under workers' control and management of the mining industry suppliers and distributors.
- Integrated fuel policy under workers' control and management.
- An integrated plan for all nationalised industries.
- Drive out the Tories.
- Bring to power at the earliest possible moment a Labour government committed to socialism.
- Nationalisation under democratic workers' control and management of the top 200 monopolies with compensation based upon proven need.

clear policy

Engineering.

The supporters of the PWR claim that it produces much cheaper electricity than coal fired power stations. The latest evidence contradicts this view.

The most important index in calculating the economics of nuclear power is the load factor. The load factor is the efficiency rating of the nuclear plant. Past studies of the economics of nuclear power have assumed load factors of 75% or 80%, but as more PWR

reactors have come into use it has been possible to measure their actual performance. Load factors have typically been in the 50-55% range.

This has transformed the economics of the PWR, and it has been claimed that a coal fired station ordered now will produce electricity twice as cheaply as nuclear power.

HEALTH WARNING

THE MOST important argument for the halting of Britain's nuclear programme, that of safety and the threat to the very existence of life on the planet receives new support from a government inquiry held inside the Department of Health and Social Security.

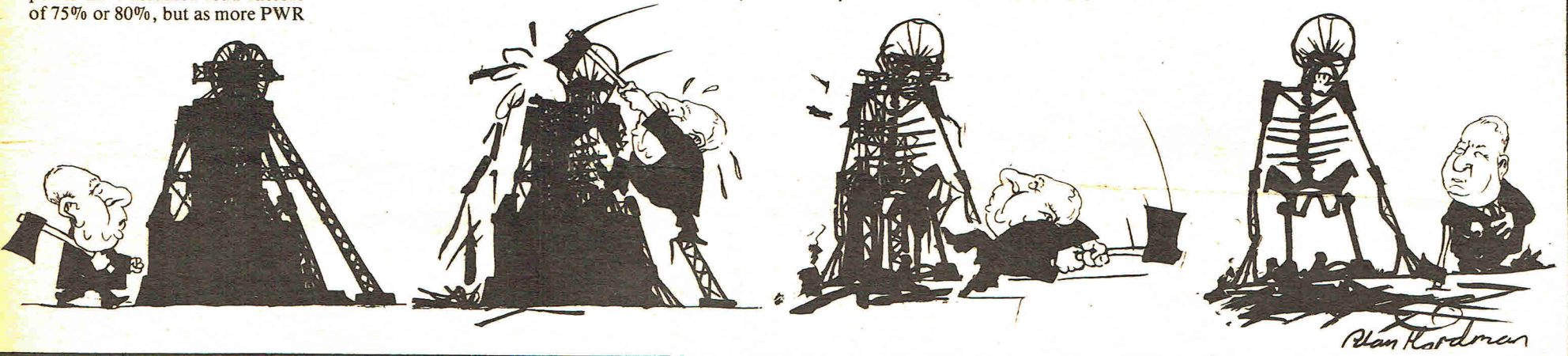
The *Guardian* has reported (20 July) confidential minutes which show the inquiry believes there is sufficient evidence to justify an inquiry into the incidence of leukaemia and other cancer related diseases in the past 25 years in the area affected by the Sellafield (formerly Windscale) nuclear processing plant.

Yorkshire Television recently revealed that the incidence of leukaemia in children under ten in the town of Seascale, just over a mile from the plant was ten times the national average. For the 15-24 age group in Seascale and surrounding villages it is nine times. The quotes which the *Guardian* provided from the leaked minutes are quite damning: "Mortality data for the period of 1959-82 indicate a more

than doubling of the death rate from leukaemia among young persons under the age of 25 in Millom Rural District compared to figures for England and Wales", says the report.

"The excess compared with the expected is statistically significant. Among 152 similar-sized rural districts throughout England and Wales, Millom Rural District had the second highest leukaemia death rate during the years 1968-78."

Sir Douglas Black, who headed the inquiry was wheeled out last Monday to counter these revelations. He described his report as "qualified reassurance" and that barring accidents he believed the people of Seascale were at no greater risk than other people! The published report, however, still expressed concern that Sellafield's discharges of alpha-radiation are "significantly in excess of those from similar countries". Very 'reassuring'.



Letters

Write to *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Lesson in struggle

Dear Comrades,

I have learned more this week about the mining industry in this country, than I even thought possible. Four Kent miners billeted in my home. They were picketing the Bowaters paper mill in Sittingbourne.

They called it their 'rest week,' because it is a respite from the battles taking place in Orgreave, Cortonwood, Notts etc. All had been arrested at some time in the past nineteen weeks. Tony had two ribs cracked, and was separated from Derek and George in the police station.

Out in all weathers at the mill, watching the scab lorry drivers rushing past them, noting all number plates and recording them, these men spent evenings relating their true feelings concerning the strike.

Allan who worked regular nights got £10 extra for doing so, and £5 for standing ankle deep in water. Tony who has four brothers in the mines, George (nick name "Goose") whose generation since the year dot were miners. Derek, whose wife is expecting their second child any day, told me that as long as the working class were backing them, they would beat the Tory government whose aim is to smash their union.

As an LPYS branch is being set up in Deal, where the men come from, we have now sent on four more names, all wishing to join. As they said: "When this is all over it is *Militant* only that will take us through on a proper socialist policy."

We are expecting four more miners this week

Fraternally
Anne Ursell
Sittingbourne

Capitalist crime

Dear Comrades,

I don't often read the Tory rags that deface the counters of our newsagents. On 10 July I picked up the *Daily Mirror* to see what was on telly. In the centre pages I read with horror that one unemployed person commits suicide every fortnight.

While the so-called 'Fox' with his shot gun runs wild utterly confusing the police, I see convoys of them drafted into intimidate strik-

ing miners who are protecting their livelihoods from another killer, "Mag the knife" who wishes to inflict appalling injuries upon every working class person in this country.

Unemployed I may be, but I will not give in. I'm going to fight this bloody system so that my children can forget forever the prospect of a wasted life.

Fraternally
Paul Smith
Coventry

Peace plea

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As you will have probably heard USAF Molesworth is to become the second base for American Cruise Missiles in Britain. If we are to have any effective protest and disruption of these events we need to start planning and organising now.

We have heard that the government will be starting to build silos, bunkers, access roads and put up fences in February 1985.

We need support now. Support in the form of

publicity in papers like *Militant* explaining what's going on down here, and putting our case across. We also need financial support. We need activists who will take part in actions and events here.

We need *Militant's* help and we look forward to hearing from and meeting you in the very near future.

Yours fraternally in struggle,

John Perry
On behalf of Molesworth
People's Peace Camp
Northants

Police try it on

Dear Editor,

I was astonished at a story told to me recently by a friend. While walking down the street peaceably minding his own business, he was stopped by two policemen in a panda car. His crime? He was wearing a "Support the NUM" sticker on his lapel.

He was told to remove the sticker "or else". When he recovered from his amaze-

ment, he told the police in no uncertain terms what to do and walked off. The police made no attempt to enforce their threat. Maybe the odds weren't high enough on their side, or perhaps they had left their riot gear at home.

Yours fraternally
Nick Worth
West Bromwich
West CLP

PS. We don't even live in a mining area—the nearest pits are 25 miles away!

What a mess

Dear Comrades,

I could not agree more with the letter from E. Edwards (issue 708). The leaders—if you can call them that—are just letting the grass grow under them. Len Murray always believed that he could talk to the Tories. So he refused to act when the NGA dispute at Eddie Shah's took place. When Thatcher delivered her 'death blow' at GCHQ he

was well and truly gutted. Now he retires!

He started in a mess and left us in a mess.

What we need and want is a leader who will fight for the workers and not sit back like Murray and hope the Tories will talk over tea and biscuits. Arthur Scargill is a leader, I wish he was a contender for Murray's job, he'd get my vote.

Yours comradely
Paul Sparks
Epsom and Ewell LPYS



On the Kent miners' demo.

Photo: D. Doran

Unity is strength

Dear Comrades,

On August 4 striking miners' families in Thanet will be giving out a very warm welcome to 30 Nottingham children for a holiday by the seaside. The children all come

from families that have been out on strike and are not receiving any money from the Department of Health and Social Security, as their area strike has not been declared official. The main aim is to give

these children's parents a well deserved break. Conditions in Nottinghamshire put the striking miners (a large minority) under enormous pressure. Constant police harassment, verbal and physical abuse from scabs are all part of the daily lives of strikers' families.

The children will be

receiving their meals along with our children at the Labour Hall, High Street, Ramsgate.

This is showing yet again that the workers' unity is its greatest strength.

Yours fraternally
Joe and Ruby North
Kent NUM

5-day general strike?

Dear Comrades,

Now the hour is here for the fightback against Thatcher and her cohorts I think it not before time that we called on the TUC to call a general strike; not just for 24 hours but for a week in solidarity with the miners. Cammell Lairds, the Health Service and all other working class people who are on strike, also the most important people, the four million who are on the dole and also the wives, mothers and children who are living on

the breadline.

Let us show the Tory government and big business that the working class have had enough and that the fightback is on. Also comrades a campaign on this theme should be fought right up to the TUC conference and then onto the Labour Party conference.

Comrades, I feel that if our paper ran a campaign like this it would get the full backing of the working class people in this country.

Yours fraternally
Joe Griffiths
Branch 5 GMBATU
Liverpool

Fighters needed

Dear Comrades,

While I agree with David Drazeg's letter (*Militant* issue 707), supporting Neil Kinnock, I would like to point out to him that it is the right wing within the Labour Party who have caused embarrassments during the crisis in Liverpool and in the miners' dispute.



Photo: Militant

Roy Hattersley.

Roy Hattersley, when interviewed on BBC North East's *Coast to Coast* programme in February, was asked about Liverpool City Council's stand. His reply was that the council should, "stay within the law, even if it means cutting jobs and services since breaking the law will lose the Labour Party their popularity. The cuts would be restored when Labour returned to power in 1988".

That statement has proved that the right wing within the party have accepted 'Tory Law and Order' and if working people took the advice from the likes of people such as Kinnock and Hat-

tersley there won't be a Labour Party to vote for in 1988.

The only way we can overthrow this Tory government is for the party to fight and unite now to ensure a Labour victory in the next general election which is what our comrades have been doing. But the middle class right wingers are more determined to expel the socialists within the Labour Party than fighting the Tories which was one of the reasons why they lost the 1983 general election.

These middle class 'careerists' are only after their money and as soon as we can replace them with members who are prepared to fight on behalf of the working class the better.

Yours fraternally
Brian Renforth
North Shields LPYS

Double standards

Dear Comrades,

Tory ministers were quick to condemn the Metropolitan councils for spending ratepayers' money on a campaign against abolition. But these same ministers are strangely silent when the NCB spends millions of pounds of taxpayers money to attack the NUM. It just shows the double standards of this government.

Yours fraternally
D Copeland
Leyton



All in day's inheritance

Baron Enrico di Portonova inherited a fortune when his grandfather died. He now has \$20 million coming in every year, and spends his life either at Claridges in London, luxury homes in Italy and Washington, or at his \$25 million mansion in Acapulco, which can seat up to 1,000 people to dinner. He is a close friend of the Royal family and married the daughter of a Texas millionaire. You'd think the Baron would be quite content with life. But no, he is currently engaged in a family legal battle with his cousins to get his hands on a further \$2 billion inheritance. Its hard work at the top.

Food for thought

The Euro-food mountains have come to Britain. At a former Admiralty depot in Coventry 1,788 tons of bread wheat and 370 tons of barley have been stored, while in Warwick there is a stockpile of 1,216 tons of butter. Coventry MP Dave Nellist has pointed out that given the cost of handling charges, it is costing Coventry £330,000 a year just to let the food rot. He has demanded that the food be handed out to pensioners and people on social security, free of charge.

Explain this one, Gummer!

No matter how much Selwyn-Gummer and the Tory leaders try to play down the fascist infiltration of their party, the neo-Nazis just keep turning up like bad pennies. The latest is Francois Dior. She is not some reactionary who in her past stumbled into the National Front: she was a raving Nazi fanatic. She is the former wife of British Nazi Colin Jordan, was imprisoned in England for conspiring to burn down synagogues, and gaoled in France for sticking up Nazi posters on the British Embassy. She is now an active member of the French branch of the British Conservative Association.

Bright and breezy

The EETPU leadership announced in the July issue of the union magazine *Contact* that they are trying to make the magazine "bright and breezy and more in keeping with the go-ahead dynamic 21st century image that the EETPU now projects". Its new editor will be prominent SDP member John Grant. This former Labour MP breezed his way into the SDP, stabbing the Labour Party in the back. In the last election the go-head, dynamic Mr Grant lost his seat, to Labour.

Pit closures - economics of the madhouse

When talks between the miners and the National Coal Board broke down, Arthur Scargill said: "This strike has been forced to continue over one word—beneficial". Who benefits from closing down pits?

At first sight the Coal Board's claim that "uneconomic" pits should close seems reasonable. Last year the NCB made a loss and had to ask the government for a £630 million handout. You would expect MacGregor to welcome the strike—the longer the better—to clear all the coal stocks.

But then we hear an official announcement that the strike has cost the NCB £600

million so far. As the NUM has pointed out, the total cost to society is very much more. What is the real situation?

Balance sheet

In the first place, one third of the government subsidy is money spent not to keep the pits going but to close them down. £122 million goes to cover the "social cost" of pit closures and £105 million to help cover redundancy

By Mick Brooks

payments. Since Maggie Thatcher is so anxious to save money we can save her £227 million right away—by fighting the closure programme!

But the flow of money is not all one way. The NCB paid the government £360 million in interest on loans of £3,600 million. A write-off of debt charges—money which reaches such undeserving hands as the old private coal owners—could save £2 million a pit.

The National Coal Board is losing £30 million a week through the strike—they save £30 million in wages but lose £60 million in lost production. So each miner makes £1 for the NCB for every £1 he is paid in wages.

That is not the end of the matter. The Central Electricity Generating Board is losing £20 million a week by its politically motivated decision to burn oil instead of coal. Steel is losing £8m a week in lost production. Rail is losing £5m a week in coal freight. The DHSS is losing £1m a week in payments to miners' families, despite attempting to cheat them out of their entitlements. The exchequer is losing £4 million a week in taxes.

Capitalist logic

The real cost of the strike, £70 million a week, drives home the lesson that coal mining is not a drain but a wealth creating sector of the economy that would be disastrous to chop.

The NCB, like capitalist management, say what is good for them is good for the country. The whole fault of a capitalist economy is that individual managers or owners take decisions which are in their own or their firms' interests but not in the interests of society.



Monktonhall miners lobby Scottish delegate meeting last year during a strike at their own pit.

In articles in the *Guardian* (28 May) and *Militant* (issue 705) Andrew Glyn calculated that the sacking of 40,000 miners in the so called "uneconomic" pits would increase the dole queues by 75,000 because of its knock-on effect on other industries such as mining supplies. This will not be billed to the NCB but will cost society £245 million in lost taxation and increased welfare payments. The coal which would be mined if they were kept at work is worth £475 million—nearly twice as much!

Energy question

Capitalists, including the state capitalist coal board, take short term profit and loss decisions by looking at a balance sheet. This method of decision making is hopeless in the face of capitalist anarchy in world energy markets.

We are supposed to have a glut of energy sources like coal and oil at present. Programmes for building power stations have to be planned for energy requirements fifty years hence and based on projected coal and oil prices fifty years hence. But it is impossible to see what the price of oil will be even a few days into the future—as the fourfold increase of oil prices in 1973 showed. In an anarchic capitalist system nobody actually knows what oil or coal reserves exist.

To take one instance: three months ago Social took over Gulf Oil for \$13.4bn, the world's biggest ever takeover. The main reason was to buy into Gulf's two billion barrels of oil reserves. While oil prices are depressed so are the share prices of oil companies. It is cheaper to buy other people's reserves than to look



Keeping miners at work is far more 'economic' than putting them on the dole.

Photo: Militant

for your own. So the big oil companies eat each other. This 'shrinking' of known oil reserves will prepare the way for another oil price hike in a few years time.

Plan needed

What is needed is a real plan for coal and energy in general. Short-sighted decisions to close pits can cost a fortune to unmake. Thorne colliery was closed in 1956. It will cost £200 million to reopen and no coal can be produced till 1990 at the earliest. Pits can move from profit to loss within a year, just like Cortonwood did—and they can move into the black just as quickly as energy requirements change.

Apologists for the Tories say that coal can be brought from abroad cheaper. Appalachian coal is said to be cheaper than British coal. However the coal is not to be burned in the Appalachians but over here, and transport

represents a huge extra expense as Bob MacKee points out in his centre page article.

What is true is that in a capitalist crisis of over-production other countries subsidise the export of their coal. Britain's subsidies are only £3.19 per ton compared with £17.72 in France, £16.47 in Belgium and £6.85 in West Germany. This shows that other capitalist governments are not as stupid as the Tories. They are prepared to subsidise coal exports to Britain in the short term so as to destroy the British coal industry. Then they can make a killing.

Energy is the foundation of any modern industrial society. A plan of expanded production for coal is needed, but to get the real benefits we need to plan all production for use, not individual profit.

Objectives and relations with Government

NCB objectives
The Secretary of State for Energy, in a written answer to a Parliamentary Question on March 18 1983, announced that he had settled objectives for the National Coal Board with the Chairman in the following terms:

1 Although coal is one of the United Kingdom's major natural resources, in the Government's view the justification for coal production, like that for any other business, lies in the ability of those engaged in it to earn a satisfactory return on capital while competing in the market place. The basic objective for the National Coal Board therefore must be to earn a satisfactory return on its assets in real terms after payment of social grants. This return will be quantified in due course.

2 The NCB should aim at that share of the market which they can profitably sustain in competition with other fuels. The Board should not plan on any continuing tranche of sales which will not be profitable. The Board should bring its productive capacity into line with its continuing share of the market.

Tory objectives for the Coal Board illustrate Mick Brooks' argument that the irrationality of pit closures from society's point of view is rooted in the anarchic competition of capitalist production for profit.

Tories ignore energy experts

SINCE MY article on the future of British coal (see centre pages), some new reports have been published that support the general conclusions reached there.

Those conclusions were: The future demand for coal both worldwide and in the UK is expanding and can easily accommodate increased rather than reduced production in British coalfields; the price of British coal is competitive with other coal-producing areas; production is being cut and pits

closed in the UK for reasons that have little to do with the need for coal or the so-called inefficiency of British coalminers.

Coal demand

A recent report by the International Energy Agency called "Coal prospects and Policies in IEA countries—1983 review" confirms that coal will take a rising share of energy use for the rest of this century—from 25% in 1982 to 30% in the year 2,000. The review does say that there will be a smaller increase in demand

up to 1990 than previously thought. Why? Because the stagnation and decline in world capitalist industry has led to a falling-off of demand for energy and for industrial use of coal.

It is the collapse of the private profit system not the reduction in the need for coal that has reduced expectations of future demand. Nevertheless, the IEA still predicts a 60% increase in coal requirements by the end of the century.

The IEA report also confirms that "the majority of the NCB's present production appears to be com-

petitive with coal produced elsewhere when transport costs to the UK are included" (p139). The recent collapse of coal prices is due to the world recession and has created a temporary surplus of coal in world markets from whatever source.

Electricity sources

A new report by the Policy Studies Institute and the Royal Institute of International Affairs concludes that such is the demand for energy by the end of the century the UK will have to import 40% of its needs

unless coal production is increased to match demand.

The government has tried to argue that energy needs can be met by shifting to nuclear power but this new report makes it clear that even the government plans will not be enough and "substantial construction of coal-fired generating plant would be needed" to provide enough electricity for national requirements.

On a world scale the same situation applies, according to a new IEA survey of "Energy Policies and Programmes". The IEA argues that the demand for oil will

decline as will that for natural gas, while total energy requirements will rise by one-third. Also electricity demand will continue to outstrip economic growth. All these factors add up to increased demand of coal.

Political decision

The real reasons for the attempted cutback in coal production lie firstly with the failure of the private profit system worldwide and in Britain to maintain production levels to meet the needs of the world's population. But they also lie with the aim of the Thatcher government to reduce reliance on coal despite all the advice of international energy authorities.

By Bob McKee

Militant

South Wales Demonstration
Wednesday 1 August
Assemble 8 am at Sardis
Road Car Park, Pontypridd
March to NUM offices.

Defend S.Wales miners

(continued from front page)

solidarity within the working class, nor the special feeling that exists for miners because of their hazardous job, and the leading role they have played in the battles of the labour movement.

Millions of workers feel a debt of gratitude to the miners. Miners' families, the local mining communities and the wider working class have organised money, food and clothing—even holidays—to help sustain the miners. If the call now comes from the miners, workers everywhere will respond.

24-hour strike

The NUM nationally should now name the day for 24-hour general strike. A meeting should then be held immediately with leaders of other left unions to plan for this strike in detail. Miners in all areas should lead the way, calling union activists to mass local meetings where all the issues of this battle could be explained thoroughly, preparing the way for mass meetings in all work places.

A one day general strike organised in this way would be a warning shot to the Tories to back off; it would demonstrate the enormous accumulated power of the organised labour movement. It would prepare the way, if necessary, for even greater solidarity action.

Once the initiative has been taken the left unions should then demand TUC backing. It would be wrong however to leave it to the present right wing leaders of the TUC General Council to organise the necessary solidarity. Remember how they behaved over the NGA dispute.

The left unions must now stand up and be counted. If they give a lead, together with the miners, then the rank and file of all unions will follow. The TUC will be forced to give support.

The Tories wish to destroy the NUM. They want to break the union financially

in order to break this strike and to destroy, for years to come, the effectiveness of the NUM as a fighting force. If they beat the NUM they will then make an even more savage drive against the rights and conditions of other workers.

They have made this move now, hoping that the holiday period will lead to a muted response. They hope that by only picking on the South Wales miners they can limit the response still further, and they are hoping that after 20 weeks there may be some war weariness on the part of the miners.

But while they hope for the best, they fear the worst. This is an act of desperation. Throughout the strike they have stood back from using the law for fear of provoking a wider movement.

Sections of the ruling class already think that this strike has gone on long enough. The price financially is too great. It is also feeding, day by day, the militancy of the whole working class.

But for Thatcher and the clique around her the stakes are too high to surrender. They are therefore staking all on a legal assault.

Defeat Thatcher

If the labour movement stands united it is the Tories who will be broken. The cracks within the ruling class can be widened to a chasm. The beginning of the end of the Thatcher government would be in sight.

★ Stand by the miners.

★ Defend the premises and property of the South Wales NUM.

★ For a 24-hour general strike.

★ Victory to the miners.

★ End Tory Rule.

★ Labour to power on a socialist programme.

SWANSEA & District T.U. Council are holding an emergency meeting of shop stewards and Trade Council delegates to demand the Wales TUC convene an emergency one-day conference to discuss the calling of a 24 hour general strike in the event of NUM fund being sequestered.

Speakers David Jenkin General Secretary Wales TUC and an NUM national official at St. Phillips Community Centre, Wednesday 1 August, 7.30 pm. All shop stewards welcome.

BLOC
BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

LOBBY THE TUC

Monday September 3rd 1984
8.30 am onwards at Conference
Centre Brighton

• Full support for the miners.
• Defend unions against Tory anti-union laws.
• For a fighting, democratic, socialist leadership in the trade unions.

LPYS support

AS NEWS reached the LPYS summer camp of the Tories' attempt to seize the miners' funds, the Young Socialists swung into action. On Tuesday, 31 July, a delegation of all the Welsh miners there plus one miner from each coalfield, together with members of the LPYS National Committee went to meet Emlyn Williams, president of the South Wales NUM. Emlyn said he knew the LPYS would be the first to offer support and he was pleased to receive it. He told them: "We will not pay the fine nor will we appeal against it as it would be a waste of time."

He said that the six lodges threatened with closure would lead the march on Wednesday. The LPYS pledged their support for the march too, saying 200 would leave the camp to join the Wednesday demonstration.

Meet the Judge

THE RIGHT Honourable Sir Hugh James Park, who ordered the seizure of the miners' funds, is a typical judge. Born seventy-four years ago and educated at Blundell's public school (where he is still a governor) and Cambridge University, his sole experience of life outside the courts is when he was a Squadron Leader during the Second World War.

Although in any 'normal' job he would have been retired years ago, Park like MacGregor, continues to lay down the law to the miners. And when Park finds it too tiring, he can relax at the Athenaeum Club in London or his country home at Gorran Haven in Cornwall.



YOUR CLASS NEEDS
YOU

Don Gardner

NGA still face fines

THE TORY judges' threat to the Welsh miners' finance came on the same day as my union the National Graphical Association (NGA) was ordered to pay more than £125,000 damages to the anti-union boss of the Stockport Messenger, Eddie Shah.

Our union should not pay this money. We should link up our case with the NUM and fight against both attacks on the unions. In the Messenger dispute, we were fined £50,000 first and the attacks were progressively increased with the clear intent to smash our union. We now face a bill for millions!

We were let down by the leaders of the TUC. This time the whole movement has got to rally behind the miners. That way we can not only stop the anti-union laws but also ensure an all out victory for the NUM.

By Chris Newis
(National Committee
NGA, personal capacity)

WHAT MILITANT STANDS FOR

- The immediate introduction of a 35-hour week without loss of pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.
- Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, the health service, public transport and other services.
- A minimum wage of £100 a week, including for pensioners, the sick and disabled.
- Opposition to anti-trade union and other legislation that restricts workers' democratic rights.
- Opposition to all forms of discrimination against women, black and Asian workers and minority groups in society.
- Massive cuts in arms spending, now running at £15bn a year.
- Unilateral nuclear disarmament.
- An end to the devastation of basic industries like coal, rail and steel.
- Workers' control and management in the nationalised industries, run by boards to be

made up of one third of each of representatives from: the unions in the industry; the TUC, representing all workers; the government.

- Opposition to dictatorship of the national press by a handful of rich press barons. Printing facilities should be nationalised and access given to political parties except fascists on the basis of their electoral support.
- Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, including the banks and insurance companies which control 80-85 per cent of the economy. This should be done through an Enabling Bill, with compensation based only on proven need.
- A socialist plan of production, in which the enormous resources of the country are democratically planned for the benefit of the whole population.
- Opposition to the capitalist Common Market. For a United Socialist States of Europe, as a step forward to a World Socialist Federation.