

BLACK FLAG

ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

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NUM APPEAL THEIR HOUR OF NEED

The NUM are faced with treachery on all sides: from the TUC, from the Labour Party leaders, from scabs within the coal industry and from scabs in the related industries. Where old alliances are waning, new ones need to be sought. The Support Groups have been the mainstay of the struggle from day one: Now is the time for them to be mobilised, to rally round to give physical support for the final battle ahead. The Battle for Scab Coal.

Traitors

History is repeating itself in more ways than one. As in 1926 the TUC has backed away from providing the sort of support the Miners depend on to save the trade union movement from total defeat. TUC



JOHN STURROCK/NETWORK

emphasis to the oil fired and nuclear powered stations. This leaves the NUM with a number of options to go for if government strategy is to fail.

To return the balance in the favour of the NUM, all of the following must be achieved: some (but not all) of the

ers to rally round and provide direct physical support to end this dispute once and for all. The appeal went on:

'Our cause is absolutely just; our communities havens of decency...No matter what it takes we will continue to do

connived to secure a compromise agreement through ACAS, the state sell-out agency. The pit deputies union, NACODS, won their dispute on the backs of the Miners, and then left them high and dry. There was a majority of pit deputies who wanted to strike but, with encouragement from the TUC - who saw the NUM as an embarrassment, showing up the TUC for what it is: a counter-revolutionary cancer guaranteed to contain militancy within 'acceptable' bounds - the NACODS leadership opted to pull out of the battle for the mines, knowing that the NUM would be isolated and that a quick settlement between the NCB and the NUM might have been imposed.

But the TUC and NACODS miscalculated. True: together they have pushed the NUM into a corner. But the will to capitulate to treachery was not there.

Raising the stakes

It's now a whole new ball game. The rail workers, together with the seamen's union and some dockers, are still continuing with the blacking of coal movements, and T & G workers in some power stations (see page 2) are refusing to handle new stocks, but a realistic analysis shows that unless the situation changes drastically the power stations might just be able to make it through the winter.

Around 650,000 tonnes of coal is needed each week by the CEEGB to keep the main coal-fired stations and some of the auxiliary ones operating. The working pits can only supply around 500,000 tonnes per week. But current stocks at power stations stand at 16m tonnes. On this basis the main coal-fired power stations can probably make it to the end of March without the need for extra imports. The government's plan is to switch greater

output, oil imports must be prevented from reaching their destination, new imports of coal must also be impeded, workers in all power stations (whether coal or oil fired or nuclear) who are in any way sympathetic should be encouraged to take selective, unofficial, disruptive action.

The crucial make or break still, nevertheless, lies with the giant Midland power stations, serviced by the scab pits. One set of independent estimates has shown that during peak time in the winter months these power stations, despite the switch in emphasis to the oil-fired and nuclear stations, have insufficient capacity to fulfill the total requirement needed by the National Grid. A further 20% is required from the other, auxiliary coal-fired power stations outside the Midlands area. And it is these stations where T & G workers have already agreed to boycott all future delivery of new coal supplies. The big question is, are the current stocks in these peripheral power stations sufficient to keep them supplied. The answer is no (see page 2) and for this reason the CEEGB is forced to reduce their operational function at these power stations until the blacking has been lifted.

Midlands hold the key

The Miners strike began with a battle against scabbing and that is how it will probably end. The scabs have chosen their side and they will face the consequences of their action for years to come. But at this moment in time these scabs act as the final obstacle to victory. Their treachery is the Tories most potent weapon.

For the striking miners their hour of need is now here. The NUM, through The Miner, has appealed for all support-

and communities. ALL WE ASK IS THAT EVERY PERSON WHO CAN, NOW JOINS US ON THE PICKET LINE'.

Mass picketing of the scab pits was thwarted by an army of police who imposed a state of siege in the coal mining areas. The time is now here when all those who support the striking miners and who are not prepared to see our class defeated by the forces of reaction, will need to organise to make certain no coal from the Midlands scabs is used any more to further the aims of this union-bashing government.

TUC help can no longer be relied upon and the NUM has made it clear that the whole labour movement must now be mobilised to lend physical support to the mass pickets.

This government has indicated that it is prepared to face many more months of industrial strife and all that that entails. But it is doubtful whether it will also be prepared to accept further massive economic collapse brought about by the widening of physical support.

The Support Groups and the labour movement beyond has the potential to form a vast army capable of marching on to the scab coalfields, to blockade the pits and the power stations and to reclaim the pits from the scabs once and for all.

It took 10,000 to stop Orgreave. It will take considerably more to stop the scabs. More than the NUM can muster. One thing is clear, however. If all else fails, if the power stations continue with normal output, if oil supplies to the oil-fired stations are not sabotaged (either by blacking or by more conventional means), if the government resorts to mass scab labour or the use of troops to move coal supplies to those power stations low on stocks so as to keep the Grid ticking over...then the Midlands coal fields must be taken. And held.

MINERS NEWS

Spartacus

Pickets from Kellingley Colliery arrived at Denby Grange at 6am on Thursday 25. Numerous police and mounted policemen met the pickets. It was rumoured that four men were about to go to work.

Before the scab van arrived the pickets began to push accompanied by the usual chorus of 'Here we go, Here we go!'. The police clearly under strain, began to slip back. They then split ranks, drew batons, and charged the miners. The pickets were forced back except for one man who managed to pull a policeman off his horse. Police closed ranks; their vanguard being the cavalry. One miner then threw a firework in the air: the explosion causing the police horses to back into their own ranks. Horsemen then retreated into the rear. Next miners raided a nearby timber yard for ammo. Whereupon the Chief pig ordered pickets to disperse. The pickets front ranks split revealing their rearguard armed with sticks.

The police then ordered the miners to put down their 'weapons', whereupon a picket shouted out 'I'm Spartacus', holding a stick in the air. The remainder then followed suit. (To appreciate this act of solidarity you must be familiar with the Kirk Douglas epic of the same name. The scene this parallels is the one where the victorious Romans - ie, the police - promise to spare the slaves - ie, the pickets - if they betray their leader. The slaves refuse with the cry, 'I'm Spartacus' too.)

After this the pickets then began to chant and to bombard the police with their sticks. Those police who did not

Power Workers Show Support

T & G members at the following power stations have refused to handle new coal stocks: Aberthaw, Drax, Ferrybridge, Skelton Grange, Fiddlers Ferry, Thorpe Marsh, Eggborough, Tilbury and West Thurrock.

A vote was taken at each power station to block all new supplies from now on. Although these stations are not part of the crucial Midlands complex, they do have a part to play in the government's emergency strategy. At peak time during the winter months these stations are expected to provide up to 20% of the capacity needed for the National Grid.

None of these stations have supplies capable of lasting more than FOUR MORE WEEKS. They are therefore being run down and are only operating at a ticking over rate.

At some point in time the government will attempt to move fresh coal supplies in and will hope that the T & G workers will by then have been broken. But word is that is highly unlikely.

Disabled woman attacked by scabs

This is almost the reverse of the 'shock horror' stories you read in the gutter press. Needless to say the dailies have refused to cover the story.

Brenda Stout, an active member of the Bickershawe Miners Support Group has often been on picket line support, despite the fact that she is disabled and confined to a wheelchair, and in one incident she was even assaulted by cops.

But the crunch came when three masked scabs broke into her house and beat her up, knowing full well she was defenceless and they could get away with it.

Just after her husband left for picket duty the three smashed their way into

Pontefract Miners Wives Support Group,
c/o 9 Westbourne Cres.,
PONTEFRACT, W. Yorks. W.P.8 4JT
Tel. 701342

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

I am writing to you on behalf of the above group.

Because of the mining dispute, we have started a Food Cache in Pontefract, which is a large mining community.

We contacted our local Argos store and they put us in touch with you. We are launching a special Childrens Christmas Appeal Fund to provide a decent toy for every Pontefract Miners child at Christmas and are hoping firms such as yourselves, which are well established in the Pontefract Mining Community, could make a donation.

Everything donated will be gratefully received.

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Yours Sincerely,
Brenda Stout (Mrs)
SECRETARY

Tell the men to go and get some work done
STOP screaming then and help
Try not to get something for nothing again

Which side are you on?

A letter from a Pontefract Miners Wives Support Group - one of 30 sent out to various concerns - asked Argos Stores if they would contribute to a scheme - the Childrens Christmas Appeal Fund - which would provide one toy for every Pontefract miner's child at Christmas.

However instead of a donation, or even a polite refusal, the appeal letter was returned to the group from Argos central office at Edgware with the words, 'Tell the men to go and get some work done.'

'I'm Spartacus' too.)

After this the pickets then began to chant and to bombard the police with their sticks. Those police who did not wear protective riot gear sustained casualties. The cavalry then charged pushing pickets back in to the Timber Yard, using a riot squad charge. The pickets beat a hasty retreat.

Barricades were erected, using wooden stakes. The police were halted. The police then retreated, pursued by pickets. Once more the police charged, only to be pelted by stones, bricks and sticks. This tug-of-war continued three more times. Eventually the police won and the cavalry forced the pickets to retreat into a nearby field. A chase then ensued until the pickets were driven back to their cars. 8am and the Kellingley pickets left Denby Grange.



RUBBLE left after the pitched battle outside Woolley Colliery.

scabs broke into her house and beat her up, knowing full well she was defenceless and they could get away with it.

Just after her husband left for picket duty the three smashed their way into her house, wrecking the place. They then assaulted Brenda, slapping her in the face and called her a 'decrepit spastic scrounger for the miners'. But worst was to come. One of them then pulled out a Stanley knife and tried to slash her across the face. Bravely, Brenda tried to defend herself and ended up getting a cut arm. This only seemed to drive the scabs even more insane: they grabbed the telephone cable, yanked it out of the socket and wrapped it around Brenda's neck, trying to strangle her. Brenda blacked out and fortunately came to about an hour later.

Typically the police, as they do when ever there is a racist attack, suggested to Brenda that her wounds had been self-inflicted!

Apart from the left papers and those papers who support the Miners in their struggle, you would be hard pressed to see this story in any of the national dailies. It's the sort of story the media prefers to forget about.

Stonewalled

There's been more trouble at Woolley Colliery recently when police tried to escort a scab - Tony Haller - through the picket lines. This provocation led to over 1000 miners enforcing a blockade. Fighting was heavy. Clashes occurred in the road and in neighbouring fields. Over 23 cops were injured, 3 needed hospital treatment. One cop, PC Jennings, had to have 5 stitches in the head. A Superintendent was also wounded in the head. Burning barricades were built by the pickets across the road and even a stone wall was built (later demolished by cops - see adjoining photo) with the use of bricks nearby. There were no arrests.

However instead of a donation, or even a polite refusal, the appeal letter was returned to the group from Argos central office at Edgware with the words, 'Tell the men to go and get some work done. This will help. Stop scrounging. Trying to get something for nothing' across it.

The Kellingley NUM branch has called for a boycott of Argos by mining families during the remainder of the dispute and to continue once the dispute is over. Argos have responded by denying that the letter was handled by any of their own customer relations staff but have so far not come up with any dough.

Well it's time they decide whose side they are on and whether they value their customers or not. By prevaricating in this way Argos will easily set itself up as a target for retaliation.

Satanist cop

A nutty police chief has publicly stated that he believes Arthur Scargill, the NUM President, is controlled by the devil.

Inspector Malcolm Biggins, based at Sutton Coldfield, said that he and other Christian police have seen pickets who were 'demons possessed' and said that after he went away from the picket line to pray for their souls he returned to find that the mood had changed. Biggins, who wrote an article in the newsletter of the West Midlands branch of the Christian Police Association - of which he is Branch Secretary - went on to say that during the past year God had raised up Billy Graham to try to save Britain and Satan had raised up Mr Scargill to wreak havoc.

The loony Christian Police Association is the same body that employs off-duty police thugs to intimidate dissidents who turn up at right-wing fundamentalist rallies, such as those organised by Louis Palau.

that. This cowardly behaviour was totally disregarded by the press. (We assume the woman must have told the local press about the incident - BF Collective).

The next day the woman, plus a few well chosen friends went to a Monday Club fringe meeting on Northern Ireland in an attempt to show that they would not be intimidated by these thuggish tactics. After a Troops Out Demonstration disrupted the meeting all of the anarchists present were violently evicted to the chants of 'scum, scum' - but not before the Monday Club had taken plenty of photographs (with the assistance of the local police who held people still whilst the photos were taken).

During the next couple of days several known nazis - such as Patrick Harrington (the NF Student Organiser at the centre of the N London Polytechnic row) - were noticed at the Conference. Unfortunately an unknown nazi (wearing NF and BM badges) managed to take lots of photos of local anarchists and TOM supporters. The NF took the opportunity to peddle their propaganda to an eager audience. Some of the conference delegates - such as Peter Thomson, recognisable by his 'Maggie Thatcher' T shirt - spent an unhappy week looking out for potential left-wing subversives, ignoring the right-wing ones.

At the next meeting of the Monday Club - on the Thursday - the chairman opened the meeting by saying, 'after the intrusion at yesterdays meeting by left-wing infiltrators I hoped you have all checked under your seats for bombs?'. If only he had known!

Thursday evening found the local CND group on the beach in front of the Grand Hotel - having a party around the remains of their 'Trident'. An hour after they left their was a big bang and the beach where they had been was showered with glass and rubble.

As the dust settled on Brighton sea-front on Friday, the Sussex police were

to force people off the road even though there was no traffic since the road had been closed. People taking part in the demonstration - especially the old aged pensioners - made moving speeches that exposed the government as the callous bastards that they are.

As the media went to town with their criticism of the 'mindless slaughter of innocents, etc...these demonstrators stood their ground and spoke the truth about the situation. An OAP said, 'when that woman is on TV this afternoon with her mock tears, you should question who are the real murderers in this country.' Too many old people die of hyperthermia due to this governments well-calculated policies. During the past five years there has been alarming increase in the suicide rate amongst unemployed people. People are dying daily because the government prefers to buy weapons instead of supplying essential dialysis machines

FROM THE NUM

Dear Comrades,
Congratulations on Black Flag; a serious and theoretical Anarchist Journal has been badly missed since the mid-60's. Would-be Anarchists have too readily swallowed the 'non-political' tag and took that to mean a rejection of all political processes (including Anarchist ones). Anarchism had become equivalent with apathy and fashion and a spray paint can.
Hopefully Black Flag will raise the level of political consciousness on the left generally and at least stimulate a more serious discussion of the issues and nature of the beast.
Your non-preaching, solidaristic, extensive coverage of the Miners Strike has been second to none.
It is appreciated.
Revolutionary Greetings,

David Douglas,
Hatfield Main Branch,
NUM, Doncaster.

be terrified to make his escape and earning me a telling off by a detective inspector.

Bomb disposal vans soon became a regular sight in Churchill Square and there are still an inordinate number of cops in the area. Many lefties selling their papers were constantly approached by children asking, 'why didn't they manage to blow her up?' or 'why didn't they just shoot her?'. Tomorrows revolutionaries we hope!

COMMENT: It was interesting that virtually all the trot papers ignored the bombing or gave it only a passing mention, so as not to appear 'disrespectful'.

As for the fascist presence at the Conference this was to be expected given Brighton - the HQ of many of the fascist higher echelon - was the Conference base. Under such circumstances any 'subversive' types are bound to be singled out unless they are well protected and have a reserve in case of trouble.

REPLY:

On the 'non-political' tag, for years the anti-syndicalists, individualists and wishy-washy liberals desperately tried to hijack Anarchism and make it into something it never was.

They each fell for the smear - put out by authoritarians of both left and right - that anarchists were opposed to organisation. The truth was that where anarchism was shown to have wide support, organisation (a central requisite for anarcho-syndicalism) proved paramount.

Fashion - whether hippie, punk or whatever, has nothing to do with yer anarchism and Mr Douglas is quite correct to damn those who reject political organisation/ class organisation.