

BLACK FLAG

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MORE HELL RAISERS NEEDED!

Police sealed off Hatfield Main Colliery entrance and fought off attempts to stop scabs by a mass picket organised locally. Local NUM organiser, Dave Douglass was snatched by the police, but the pickets retaliated. Media coverage was nil.

Several members of the BLACK FLAG collective were eyewitnesses to the incident, had been invited to the picket and a social (the night before). At the social, a contingent of Nottingham miners were welcomed, as were ourselves (our group included several members of the Direct Action Movement and comrades from South London). A good time was had by all. A BBC crew filmed the evening's entertainment for a slot on their 'Real Lives' series. Behind a backdrop of a banner proclaiming '1926: TUC General Council Traitors. 1984: TUC General Council Traitors', a motley of performers sang songs, told jokes, etc. Dave Douglass did a turn, Sandra Kerr from London sang the 'Unwaged Maintenance Engineer', 'Which Side Are You On' and others, a Labour man sang an anti-Labour Party song called 'Just One More Chance', the only low moments being when a couple of blokes did some anti-women and racist jokes but some good ones against the National Coal Board and scabs. It all ended with the usual 'Here We go'.



The next morning we gathered early at the local Welfare Hall for a pre-march rally. A Channel 4 crew filmed the packed hall and several speeches were made. An ASLEF delegate told those gathered that railway workers had blacked oil (although most of it is carried by truck and by direct pipeline). After a bit of a whine by a local Labour MP, Dave Douglass gave a rousing speech urging miners and support groups to organise to visit workplaces to widen industrial action. His final words were, 'We don't just want fundraisers any long — much needed as they are — we want HELLRAISERS, and more guerrilla resistance'.

The 600 of so of us at the rally then marched out of the hall, past the gauntlet of trotskyst paper-sellers, and walked the mile or so to the pit entrance. We were followed by a convoy of police vans and riot vehicles. As those of us near the front of the march got to where the entrance was a wall of about 40 cops stood in our way. Immediately they grabbed Dave Douglass and three others and dragged them off behind police lines. We then went straight for the police lines. Cops were kicked, punched and stones were thrown. But within seconds the police convoy had sped up and pushed through the marchers, forcing a gap towards the cops on foot. We managed to drag a woman back who the cops had tried to nick, but then we realised that we would all get trapped between the foot cops on one side, the police convoy on another, and a house on a third side, so we regrouped and went for the tail end of the police convoy, which by then was being attacked from all sides. As the last van (a jeep) sped through a couple of miners managed to grab a petrol can and some police baggage and throw them at the windscreen.

For the next 45 minutes we stood our ground while waiting for the scab bus to come by. But some outsiders had already begun to drift away and a contingent of Workers Revolutionary Party members made a dash for their coach before the trouble began. This left about 300-400 of us to face what was by now a similar number of cops who had their back-up of riot equipment in their vans as well as dogs. There were few missiles around to grab and the roads were all sealed off except for one which the cop vans could easily charge down.

Suddenly the scab coach appeared, there was a big surge forward and stones went flying for the cops. A few hit their target and some vans got hit too. The police retreated to their vans for protection and we lobbed more stones. We then realised that this was only the lull before the storm: we were now few and a large reserve of cops were still waiting in their vans. All of us then began to drift back without getting set upon. For Hatfield the day's events were just one of many such intrusions by the police on their liberty.



AFTER 11 MONTHS ON STRIKE
WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

TOWARDS INDUSTRIAL ACTION

A Congress for Industrial Action took place in Burnley on January 19. It was initiated by the Burnley Miners Support Group and members of the Direct Action Movement. Speakers included Peter Heathfield (General Secretary NUM), Dave Douglass (Hatfield NUM delegate) and a delegate from the NUR, Tony Crowther (DAM National Secretary).

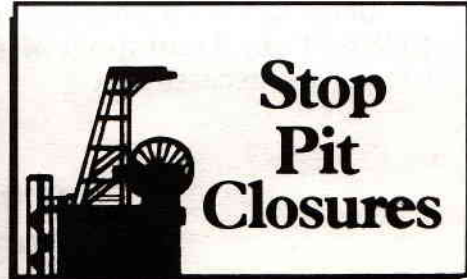
Heathfield gave a very general speech, but Dave Douglass (who introduced himself as a NUM delegate and a DAM supporter) tore into the Labour Party and the TUC leadership as well as the trotskyst groups who spend their time paper-selling and doing fuck all. There were a few trots in the audience, but not many as their respective leaderships had instructed the bulk of them to boycott the congress for sectarian reasons. Douglass then went on to thank the DAM for organising things and referred to the NUM as also being a movement of direct action.

Tony Crowther then angrily denounced Kinnock and his hypocritical pleas against violence, as well as the NUR/ASLEF leadership who are doing their best to contain secondary industrial action, rather than widen it. A Labour MEP then spoke from the floor, pleading with us not to set our sights too high, while at the same time

patronisingly telling us not to get too pessimistic. A power workers delegate then attacked TUC guidelines relating to the use of oil where coal supplies have been blacked: he explained that these guidelines made a whole mockery of the blacking. Instead he called for mass picketing of the power stations and a boycott of the guidelines. After a break the congress was broken up into syndicates and later convened to formulate proposals and a common strategy.

The final recommendations were: to organise at rank and file level for industrial action, to back-up any regional initiatives for regional strikes, to call upon other regional congresses to follow suit, to spread the idea that all support groups should be made permanent (not only to help out the mining communities in their hardship, once the strike is over — whatever the result — but also to provide mutual aid for others taking industrial and community action and to serve as a focus for class resistance), and to urge support groups to take more of an active role on the picket line. Finally there was also a call from the floor for more support from local groups of the large numbers of pickets imprisoned and for a list of these prisoners to be drawn up and where they are being held.

The South East Region TUC-NUM



ALL OUT FOR THE MINERS

11 FEBRUARY 1985 — DAY OF ACTION

February 11 will mark the eleventh month of the NUM strike — a strike to protect jobs, communities, indeed the coal industry. During these last eleven months the government, through the National Coal Board, has attempted to isolate the miners, and to discredit and starve them and their families into submission. **We can not and will not allow this to continue.**

We know that the miners' strike has attracted considerable support, with millions of pounds and thousands of tonnes of food being donated both nationally and internationally. Railway workers, seamen, dockers, printers, lorry drivers and power workers have taken direct industrial action, because they too have recognized the significance of the strike.

Why this support?



Miners have always had a special place in the hearts of working people. Former Tory Prime Minister **Harold MacMillan** spoke for us all when he recently described miners as the 'salt of the earth'.

But many workers also support this struggle because they see their own jobs, their own communities and indeed their whole welfare state under attack by the Thatcher government.

Workers and their families are being confronted on a number of fronts by this reactionary government: **anti-trade union legislation, the attack on local democracy, privatising public assets and destroying health, housing and transport services in pursuit of dogmatic economic policies.**

Chancellor Nigel Lawson described the cost of this dispute, **£5 billion**, as 'a good investment'! **What madness!** How will this benefit working people? Why isn't that £5 billion invested in creating jobs, a better education system, more houses, more services for pensioners? Why? — because this government is not about investing in people. But £5 billion is the price we will be expected to pay to ensure the success of their plan.

Because this strike is part of a well rehearsed and thought out Tory strategy, drawn up in 1978 by **Tory Transport Minister Nicholas Ridley**, and leaked to 'The Economist' journal, it states the necessity to:

- * **Confront the NUM** *
- * **'Buy off' power and other key workers** *
- * **Encourage an army of scab lorry drivers** *
- * **Cut strikers' benefits** *
- * **Build a well equipped, mobile police force** *

The time has now arrived when only massive solidarity action by other trade unionists will encourage the NCB back to the negotiating table in order to resolve this dispute.

Solidarity Action

Support for the February 11 'Day of Action' will be decisive in ensuring that the miners, and ultimately all workers, are not defeated in the struggle to protect jobs and communities.

You owe it to

- * **The miners** *
- * **Yourself** *
- * **Your family** *
- * **Your future** *

to support the

Day of Action — 11 February 1985

The NUM want you to take industrial action and show your support by demonstrating at key targets in your area. These will include: power stations, oil refineries, oil and coal depots, Coal Board premises, and Price Waterhouse.

For further details phone:

01-928 2388 x246

01-459 6221

01-595 4252

01-582 0996

Local contact: **Hit Squads/local militias/direct action groups**

LOCAL EVENTS:

- * **Raids on cop stations plus Court Houses***
 - * **Sabotage of oil pipelines, power grids,***
 - * **generating sub-stations, haulage companies***
 - * **Ambush of cops/scabs***
 - * **And for London — siege of Seat of Government***
- (bring your own weapons)**

SERTUC FIGHTS WITH THE MINERS

MINERS UPDATE

MINERS UPDATE

MINERS UPDATE



A STRIKING MINER

I am being forced to choose between kids and community. I live in a dingy terrace in a dying valley where unemployment reaches 40%. I am fined £10 after taking a roll of wallpaper from Timberland. I have a life expectancy of 69, I have a good chance of accident and diseases. I am sliding down the razor blade of life, down the wages and job security league. In this strike I have seen Ireland move to Wales, seen police hurl bricks onto miners at Orgreave — more frightening than two pitfalls.

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATIVE

I earn more than £27,000. I lead a party which supports the House of Lords, Monarchy, Private Banks and Credit. A colony in Ireland. An Alliance based on nuclear technology private medicine and education. My party has closed many pits, sold plutonium to the USA, imported radioactive waste and dumped it at sea and inland. Approved Trident. Introduced prescription charges and interned people without trial.

Kinnockio

ASK AND THINK and avoid a centrally planned brain — think for yourself!

NO NOOSE IS BAD NOOSE



MASS PICKETING

Calls for mass picketing in Scotland were answered when over a thousand pickets converged on Monkton Colliery; the police (who heard about the action in advance) were also there in large numbers to block the roads and seal off local villages. As we go to press we hear of more mass picketing action in the pipeline but their locations are secret.

PICKETING LOSSES AND GAINS

Shirebrook Coal Depot — crucial, massive scabbing with continuous movement of coal stocks.

Didcot Power Station — AUEW members have stopped their boycott on the handling of new stocks of coal (transported by trucks in massive supplies). The station is now working to normal capacity.

Thames Valley Stations — low on fuel, some support already by power workers, and at Tilbury on January 21st with support demo in solidarity.

Aire Valley Power Stations — low on capacity, some close to being shut down

Power supplies are being stretched to their limit and there have been reports of brief power failures in many parts of the country. With the current freeze in weather the government is glad of the divisions forged by the scabs, but fears any initiative that will bring about a return of mass picketing at the power stations.

Over the past month or so the NUM leadership has noticeably adopted a low profile and this has been complemented by calls from certain mining areas for more involvement by the membership in the wider strategy making.

Some miners have been saying that if only 50% of all those not scabbing put all their efforts on picketing the power stations, a strategic two or three, there would be a good chance of power workers being persuaded — above the heads of their union bosses — to taken selective action.

At the moment many of the power plants are being picketed by support groups and sympathetic trade unionists, with a small number of NUM pickets. Where NUM picketing has been organised it has been at the pits in response to scabbing. In some areas though scabbing has reached its peak, in others there will be a steady trickle of scabs no matter what.

The picketing of scabs is a defensive action, as was the response to the seige conditions of the mining areas, and villages. As with the beginning of the strike the miners know that they have to return to the offensive —

PICKETS GET 5 & 2½ YEAR SENTENCES

A striking miner, Terence Finch, has been jailed for five years for a picketing offence (alleged Greivous Bodily Harm on a policeman). His mate, Chris Tazey got three years Youth custody and was convicted on the same offence.

Prosecution described how the policeman, PC Learmouth, was punched to the ground, kicked in the body and had his face stamped on. Both defendants were from Kent and had been picketing at Wivenhoe in Essex against coal imports when the incident is supposed to have occurred.

In another case eight miners and a farm worker each got 2½ years for arson. An 18 year old got sentenced to three years for his part: all those accused entered a plea of guilty.

The attack in question was made against Thompson Engineering of Pleasley Vale, Mansfield, when five coaches used to transport scabs past picket lines — were completely gutted after being petrolled and set alight. The premises of the firm were also damaged, with total costs at £35,000. All the miners involved came from the Shirebrook Colliery.

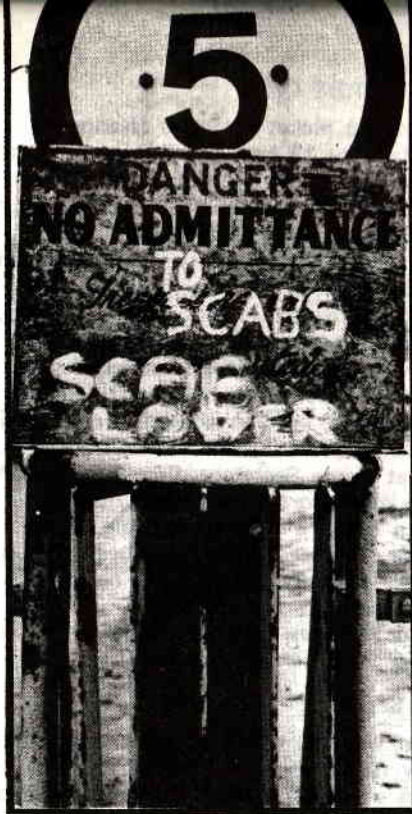


TERRY FRENCH . . . Jailed for five years

ONE LAW FOR THEM, ANOTHER FOR US OR ARE THEY JUST ABOVE THE LAW

Miners, on strike for months and finding their families starving but hungry and





A SHIFT IN THE LIFE OF AN ASKERN PICKET

You have to be at the pit for about 3.30am because the two scabs not 5 or 8 as everybody will have you believe, arrive at 4am.

There are about 100 pigs spread about the pit at this point trying to stop pickets massing.

By now the flying convoys of pigs start coming through and they stop to see if the situation warrants them staying ie. more than 6 pickets, if not they will get whomever is about or go and beat somebody else up.

If there are enough pickets they will get whatever they can lay their hands on to make a barricade for when the convoy with the scabs arrives, then pour paint all over it for when the pigs try to move it.

When the TV arrive with their cameras the pigs do, their party act, they line up in nice little neat rows and do their quick step, that's the bit you see on TV news, not when they club hell out of you, or chuck petrol over the cabin the pickets have used from the start of the strike, set fire then make sure the TV and reporters say the pickets did it.

the response to the seige conditions of the mining areas, and villages. As with the beginning of the strike the miners know that they have to return to the offensive — particularly the picketing (sometimes mass picketing) of power stations.

They also know that a winning strategy cannot afford to follow one course of action only, but must be backed up by other contingencies. Industrial action spreading to other *key* industries, brought about by rank and file organisation without TUC 'help', is another option still on the table.

The railway workers, for example, have the power — despite the threats of massive fines, sequestration, etc, — to bring about a victory for the miners, and speedily. Not with a pathetic 24 hour regional stoppage, but with selective action involving key workers (eg. signal operators), unofficial/wildcat in sympathy stoppages as some railway workers did in other regions on Jan. 17th. If the Courts become involved. . . bigger tactics.

POWER STATION PICKET

As we go to press we are told of a picket at Dungeness on January 28 called by Kent NUM and South East Region TUC. Coaches leave Kings Cross Station at 4am.

GENERAL STRIKE?

February 11 has been named as the day for regional rank and file congresses to work for. Yorkshire and Humber-side TUC has called for a regional 24 hour strike on that day. Other regions have been asked to support the initiative in the hope that the regional one day strike will then become a national one.

FITZWILLIAM 9

The police 'pincer movement' on the Fitzwilliam Hotel on July 9 of last year led to arrests, beatings and a recent trial (see last issue). The Magistrates Court criminalised those who defended themselves and have now taken them as hostages in the class war. Slogans such as 'free the prisoners' and 'Dimmock — community spy' (referring to 'Community' PC John Dimmock) adorn the walls of Fitzwilliam, and Hemsworth police. station is now like a garrison.

Cards and letters can be sent to *Peter Hurst, No. 78282, HM Prison Armley, Leeds*. Donations to the support committee to help the relatives can be sent to: *Fitzwilliam (Kinsley & Hemsworth) Prisoners Aid Committee, c/o 4 Rockingham Street, Fitzwilliam, Pontefract, West Yorkshire*. (The Aid Committee say they 'intend to support any miner and anyone who has supported the miners strike in this locality').

ONE LAW FOR THEM, ANOTHER FOR US OR ARE THEY JUST ABOVE THE LAW

Miners, on strike for months and finding their families starving but knowing that if they give up their whole community will be endangered, finding that some of their former colleagues and friends who see only that they are safe for the time being and might as well make hay while the sun shines, sometimes resort to violence when they are harassed by the police, moved in on the scene in force to prevent picketing.

This is condemned as wicked by Mrs Thatcher and denounced by the media, which sensationalises all such acts. It generally seems to be agreed that violence is totally unjustified even if the kiddies are going short at Christmas.

Sir Clive Sinclair, multi-millionaire boss of the biggest computer makers in Britain, went for a drink at Cambridge and found Mr Christopher Curry there — he's the millionaire boss of Acorn computers and a former employee of Sir Clive's, whose advertisements have been knocking Sinclair Computers. Sir Clive, an adviser of Mrs Thatcher, rushed at Mr Curry, beat him up and tried to push one of her adverts down his throat. Their sycophants joined in the fray. No police were seen and no proceedings taken: the pub landlord said tactfully that both were valued customers. Neither of them were short of a few bob at xmas.

Sid Vincent, in his sixties, not in good health, flew off to Tenerife with his companion Joan Hodkinson. After the strain of the year — both are divorced, and he is at the centre of the Lancashire mining strike — why not?

The entire media, of course, ganged up on him, following them to Tenerife, tracking them around (and getting virtuously surprised when duffed up by the burly miner) and putting the worse possible construction on it ('while the miners are starving, he basks in the sun'), getting quotes from scabs to make the story stick.

Yet he made it quite clear than Joan Hodkinson is paying for the holiday. Would there have been any fuss if the sex roles were reversed and she was the striker? The journalists may be trendy and liberated on their own ground but the veneer soon sloughs off when they get to reporting.

Conservative thinking is that anti-Tory feeling is 'motivated by envy of the rich' but envy by the rich is much more frequent.

