

Earlier the state authorities had outlawed all strike action by power workers. They also began to introduce non-union labour. The new laws also enabled the unions to be fined up to \$30,000 if they strike without first giving notice. (this law applies to all the other unions, not the power workers', who are restricted in striking altogether).

As for the 1000 dismissed power workers, Bjelke-Peterson has said they will only be reinstated if they either sign a no-strike agreement and go back to work under a new contract that would extend their working week by 2 hours and their 2 week shift by one day, or to pass on all the names of the 'ring-leaders'.

Bjelke-Peterson later said that 'I am not going to allow these militant people...to let anarchy (sic) reign here'. The state authorities are using every law at their disposal in an attempt to crush the strike. Media types have been prosecuted for merely covering the strike, for example.

The extent of Bjelke-Peterson's determination is shown by the thoroughness in which the new laws are designed to plug every loop-hole. Individual strikers, for example, can also be fined up to \$1000 for taking strike action and the state also has the power to confiscate their possessions, their homes and to declare them bankrupt.

Solidarity from other unions has been heartening. After the 1000 power workers were sacked for refusing to sign a no-strike agreement, other power station operatives took action, resulting in blackouts in Brisbane and other areas. Soon coal miners also came out and declared an indefinite strike, as did building workers and railway electricians. There was a ban on oil supplies by the

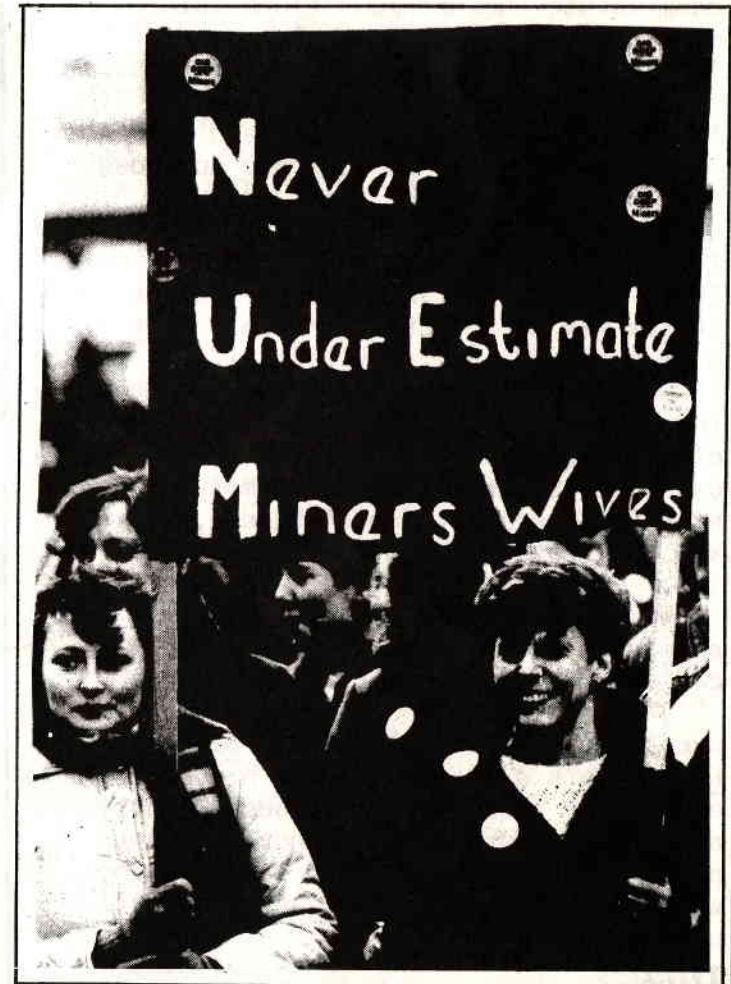
N.U.M. MEMBERSHIP TO INCLUDE SUPPORT NETWORK

Provision for membership in the National Union of Mineworkers for all members of the Womens Support Groups and other support groups, is to be decided at this years NUM Annual Conference. If the proposal is carried, then quite simply the NUM will no longer be a trade union but will have taken a considerable step in the direction of syndicalism, with significant implications for workers organisations in the UK as a whole.

The proposed change is for a new category of membership to be introduced: that of Associate Membership, specifically designed to take in members of the Support Network.

The move would pay recognition to the essential role the community-based organisations play in the defence of class interests, and how, if unions in the future are to win the fight against the class enemy, a wider class base needs to be built up in preparation for the battles ahead.

No other union in this country has ever before considered such a step. British, craft-based, trade unionism has a history of sectionalism and protectionism, which over the years has compounded the erosion of inter-industry solidarity that was so badly needed to win the '84/'85 strike. In South Wales the NUM and the local communities have always been as one; in other areas too. This move would merely



constitutionalise what has now become practice in the mining areas.

A union that is organised both on an industrial front and on a community front is twice as strong, as the mining communities have demonstrated for all to see.

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INDUSTRIAL

NACODS Wavers

Suddenly discovering trade union principles, or maybe it's a case of dredging up a modicum of credibility, NACODS (the pit deputies' union) in a 'better late than never move' has made aggressive noises about taking industrial action to prevent the closure of Bedwas colliery in South Wales.

Trouble is a halt of the pits nationally by NACODS could not come at a worse time of the year: the winter is over and the miners are still trying to recover from 12 months of being on the breadline. If they do take action, maybe they should therefore bring Nottinghamshire and the other renegade areas to a halt and force the scabs to go without pay for a while.

The time when NACODS should have come out was last November. Suddenly though they have come to the rather late realisation that they have been hoodwinked by the Coal Board on the review procedure agreement. Some Bedwas miners, demoralised, have already agreed to accept redundancy payments, others want to fight but are wary of what can be achieved the way things are.

Bedwas is by no means the only pit under immediate threat. There are nine marked for closure, three in Scotland, two in Kent and the rest in the North East. The Coal Board is using the excuse of 'irreparable damage' to close some of these pits.

N.B. NACODS has just been reported as making noises about balloting its members for an overtime ban in response

Have We Lost A War?

A valued comrade wrote to us regretfully cancelling his subscription, for "the war is over, and I'm afraid we've lost". Many miners feel equally depressed and its no good saying we only lost a battle, not a war. One of the greatest upsurges of the workers for many years, in this country certainly, has ended with a victory for starvation tactics, with the forces of repression entrenched, with cynics smiling and those who flinched from battle feeling justified.

It is true there is a positive angle: that thousands of English, Welsh and Scottish miners have learned that the heavy hand that rules in the north of Ireland can fall on them too overnight; they have relearned the techniques they pioneered in free co-operation and solidarity in which the women from the mining communities in particular have shown once again some of the mechanism that would make a free society tick.

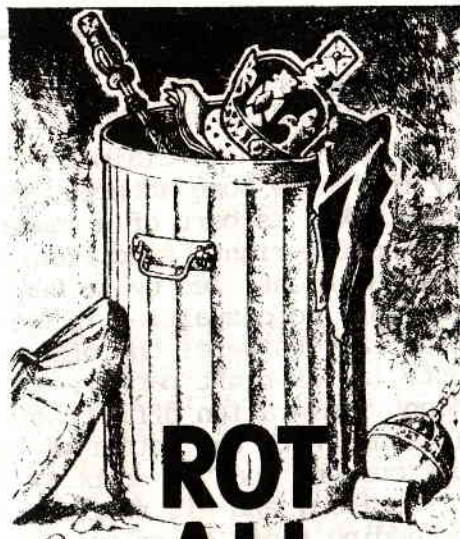
But they have not won. Nor can it be said that they were betrayed by their 'leaders'. They have not put trust in leaders, who have been content to follow the movement rather than presume to direct it, and the politicians among them have lost all credibility as the TUC has proved itself once again useless in regard to showing solid-

nobody was ready for industrial action, everyone expecting Parliament to step in or political influence to be used. Unions sought legalisation which has now resulted in the courts taking over and presuming to decide union policy - much as if during the war German Generals were enforcing British military policy.

The greatest debate of all was on NATIONALISATION OR SYNDICALISM. The decision went wholly in favour of the former. That distinguished 'Socialist' theoretician, Ramsay Macdonald, proved convincingly that state socialism was incompatible with syndicalism, and that his answer (taken from the Fabian Society) was nationalisation. It was strange that nationalisation should have become popular in Britain as a socialist measure, since in Germany it had already been adopted in the 19th Century as a capitalist one by Bismark, who nationalised the railways, to benefit the landed estates and to exploit the workers.

The syndicalists were attacked for various reasons, every one of which is seen now to be phoney. It was thought heavy industry could hold the country to ransom - it was held that workers control meant that there would be no place for the community - it was alleged that there would be an excess of power in the hands of key industry workers. All these

N.B. NACODS has just been reported as making noises about balloting its members for an overtime ban in response to the threatened pit closures. Whether it gets a mandate is irrelevant: NACODS has already shown that its leadership can be induced to ignore mandates. Already the leadership is talking about seeing the Prime Minister to discuss the situation, which is a good indication of how they see things (ie, the influence of government being paramount). If a mandate is given, and lo and behold the executive takes it up, or even if the membership takes unofficial action, then, as stated above, surely there is a case for limiting the action to the Scab Areas and only the other Areas if the NUM members so request? Let the scabs starve for a while.



**ROT
ALL
RULERS**

among them have lost all credibility as the TUC has proved itself once again useless in regard to showing solidarity, capable only of delivering votes to the Labour Party.

Could they have ever won? The most that the miners were fighting for was the right to be exploited in the same way they had always been; to carry on with the same exhaustive work they had always done. They were fighting a rearguard action against a vicious enemy. All they were trying to preserve was their place in the battlefield. They did not want their communities broken up and people dispersed from productive work to become car-park attendants and door openers in the prosperous south. In going back without an agreement they have at least maintained a presence in the coalfields.

In the past, following victories and defeats, the miners have had mighty discussions on how they should proceed, on what should be the future of the industry, and on how they should prepare for a battle to take over command of their destiny.

In the early part of the century, miners took an active part in establishing the Trade Union Congress, so that all workers could come to the assistance of each other. This was doomed to disaster since the growing trade union leadership sought to establish themselves, and extend to political power, rather than form a fighting union. Their idea was that if they could exert political power, they could obtain more from parliamentary than industrial action. The closed-shop principle, dear to the hearts of British trade unionism, meant that leaderships were impregnable (dare to challenge the machine and you're out, with nowhere else to go to), but that

an excess of power in the hands of key industry workers. All these Macdonaldite arguments carried the day; and as a result heavy industry holds us to ransom, the communities are destroyed and there is an excess of power in the hands of managements.

Nationalisation of the mines, originally a compromise solution, became a dream of miners throughout the '20's and '30's, and in 1945 the Labour Party came into power and it was the first promise it carried out. The national flag flew at all the pitheads. The mines became 'ours'.

The National Coal Board was created and was hailed as the harbinger of the state socialist utopia. It is this same National Coal Board that is the enemy today. The old private owners could not have withstood the billions of pounds losses incurred by a year long strike. The NCB can.

The TUC notion that it is only Mr MacGregor's wilfulness that is at fault and that if Mrs Thatcher were not Prime Minister and Mr Kinnock was, the NCB would still be 'ours', is pathetic. It is the NCB that is the enemy. It was a sad day for the miners when they decided that they would follow the path of state socialism and nationalisation, encouraged by the 'militancy' of the Communist Party integrating itself into the establishment, and rejected syndicalism. If, or rather when (as they may do) they return to the old method of struggle they would find that a greater battle might well be won.

A.M.

