

DIRECT ACTION



Monthly paper of the **DIRECT ACTION**
MOVEMENT British section of
No. **17** the International Workers Association **20p**

MINERS

STRIKE

The miners' strike is now months old. The bosses must be surprised the miners are still fighting. When the NCB provoked the strike with its announcement (6.3.84) of 20 pit closures this year alone, with the loss of 20,000 jobs (a tenth

"Go to your local retired miners' tea and ask them what it was like.

"Two days on, two days off. Touch your cap to the gaffer and you'll get a decent job."

Fortunately rank and file miners consolidated the strike in the



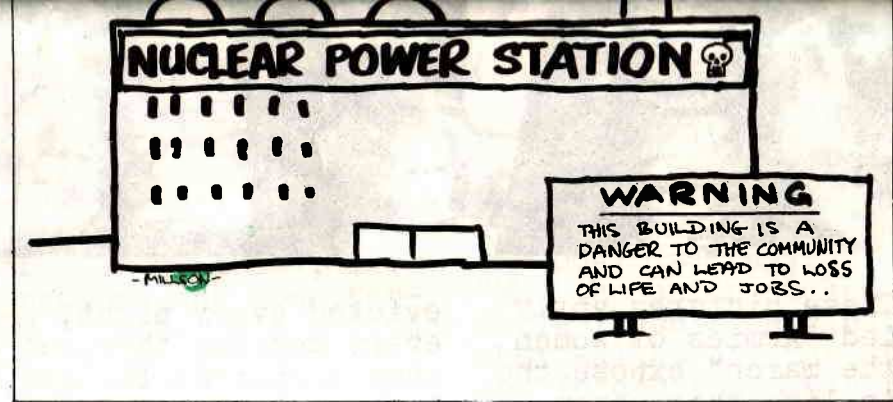
confident of an easy victory. The spark that forced the strike was the gamble by the NCB in suddenly closing Cortonwood in four weeks time, when previously the NCB had said it had many years of life--because they did not believe the miners would fight back.

Summer was on the way. The productivity agreement pushed through by the NCB and the Labour government in 1977, (despite a majority vote of the miners rejecting it) had allowed the NCB to stockpile huge reserves of coal to sit out a strike with and had helped to divide the various coalfields. Then a concerted media campaign was launched, calling for a national ballot. This last move wasn't motivated by a concern for democracy (no-one elected McGregor), but rather by a wish to isolate the miners and halt the momentum of the strike. This can be seen from his statement in the Times that the Coal Board will recover its responsibility for managing the coal industry. This can only mean one thing: a concerted class attack against miners, to put them back into the past. Yorkshire miners' leader Jack Taylor said

was split fifty-fifty. Now 80% of miners are out on strike, (though Nottinghamshire has been sealed off by the biggest police operation since the 1926 General Strike).

As was to be expected the NCB has announced "generous" redundancy payments (if it's not the stick it's the carrot) and that pits may have to be closed because of lack of maintenance--miners have been sacked for occupying their pits and exposing such propaganda as lies. The NUM have maintained safety cover except where the NCB, playing dangerous games, have tried to restart production with tiny numbers of scabs (eg Bilston Glen).

Better still, steelworkers are being conned into seeing the miners' strike, rather than the likes of McGregor ('Mac the knife') as a threat to their jobs. This rubbish is coming from the likes of Bill Sirs with his trash about his members not being "sacrificed" for "someone else's dispute". His incitements to steelworkers to use scab labour are disgusting--has he forgotten the 1980 steel strike?



An ISTC strike bulletin from then complains, "Every devious method is being employed using scab labour and unregistered ports." The bulletin contained an instruction from the TGWU telling lorry drivers to respect picket lines--Sirs is now telling lorry drivers to cross them. Pious words are not enough; for workers to win solidarity is needed, which means you support each other's struggles and don't cross picket lines. The level of class collaboration of the ISTC is becoming repulsive to the extent that BSC boss Bob Scholley was an honoured guest at the recent ISTC conference.

But despite all this the miners are still in there. The stakes are high. That's why all the forces of the state are being employed to defeat the strike. This has included growing violence

by the state against the miners. Two Yorkshire miners have died, men have been beaten, attacked with horses and dogs, handcuffed, tied to trees, jailed before trial, had their phones tapped, their homes watched by police, and the freedom to travel taken away by the setting up of police roadblocks. There have also been reports from miners that the army has been used on pickets--miners have seen relatives they know to be in the army dressed as police--and the claim in "The Miner" (June 1st) that a soldier was driving a police van during the miners' lobby of Parliament, which the Government claimed was a bomb disposal team that just happened to be in the area.

A striking miner who used to be a soldier has sent back his medal he won for "service" in N. Ireland. He told the

continued overleaf

cont'd from page 1

press "I am now a Yorkshire miner and I feel that at the age of 31 I may soon be one of the forgotten masses. In other words, I was good enough to be a Yorkshire bully-boy fighting in Ireland, but not for my job."

But the most powerful army in the world is the working class, and it hasn't yet taken a hand in a big way. The miners can't take on the Government alone. But in factories and offices and on estates across the country there exists the power to come to the aid of the miners and inflict a crushing defeat on the Government. It's time we used that power and ended this strike.

Unlike Neil Pillock

and other assorted corpses in the Labour Party and TUC, we anarchists feel no need to condemn the miners for defending themselves on picket lines. Whenever a strike breaks out the priority of these reformists is always "negotiation". Our priority should be victory! We've nothing against negotiation with the likes of McGregor and Thatcher ... as long as what we're negotiating is the terms of their surrender!

Now is the time to act. The strike must be strengthened. Moral support isn't enough. Neither is waiting for bureaucrats and full-time officials to deliver the goods. Only rank and file action will win the strike.

Donations can be sent direct to the miners. Send to: MINERS SOLIDARITY FUND, CO-OPERATIVE BANK, SHEFFIELD. Account no. 30000009, sort code 08-90-75.

The DHSS deems strikers to be paid £15 per week and so knocks money off the benefit that miners' families can claim. Note families--striking miners are entitled to nothing, so single miners get nothing and families can end up with nearly nothing.

Food for single miners and miners' families should be sent to the NUM Area HQ or pick-up point nearest your home. National Union of Mineworkers HQ, St James' House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield S1. Yorkshire Area NUM, 2 Huddersfield Road,

Barnsley. SILVERWOOD MINERS' WELFARE--South Yorkshire Strike HQ, Dalton, Rotherham.

Barnsley Women Oppose Pit Closures, c/o North Gawber, Wombwell, Dodworth and Worsborough Miners' Welfares.

Sheffield Women Against Pit Closures, c/o 17 Merlin Way, Sheffield 5.

Doncaster Anarchists have been printing leaflets for free for Hatfield Womens' Support Group and need help; donations etc to: DAG c/o John Creagh Society, PO Box 217, Sheffield S1 1FD.

Women's army on the march





These pictures, aptly titled "Armies of women on the march" expose the media lies that women are all strike underminers and a conservative influence. This image of women has been shattered into pieces. The message is clear--here and all around the world --women can be fighters.. For their families, husbands, children and each other.

WHY THIS TIME? I think that when women looked after the children, only men could march, but if the women ask the men or the men volunteer to look after their children then the women can march. Women have traditionally been called the "reserve army" of labour. How true. Women are the "reserve army" of the labour movement, and its struggles are womens' struggles, but women are a significant force in their own right as "The Miner" and "The Yorkshire Miner" fully recognise.

I'm thinking of the Greenham Common women,

evicted every night, every morning they set up camp again; and the striking women at Barking Hospital; and the Thornton View Hospital occupation, now over a year old, led by women in Bradford. I'm also thinking of the Womens' Fire Brigade in Canada, who've shown the way to meet riot police--equally protected and armed (they wore crash helmets, carried shields of their own and truncheon equivalents). Don't forget the women in Solidarity who formed their own section, and of Latin America and Africa where it's really tough; they've fought armed (they have to).

But back to the miners' wives. They're showing the way the Greenham women will probably have to go, ie more direct action. The miners' wives have held peaceful demonstrations so far, and organised mutual aid schemes of food etc, along with unarmed, unprotected miners. This gives them a

great deal of Moral Superiority, true, but is that enough to win? Is this an ARMY of working class men and women? Are these wives really marching, or going through the motions as all demonstrators in Britain, us as well, have done. I know non-violent resistance takes guts, but I wonder about the use of it for real victory. I mean WHY SHOULD YOU/WE stand there and take it and go back next time and take more punishment and unjust harsh treatment. I think we all should start handing some back out. Arm yourselves, demonstrators and pickets--and wear lots of protective gear. Attack don't defend!

Now is the time to fight, now is the time we can get Thatcher and her cronies worried--the Iron Lady is not invincible--she can be brought down for good. Yes, she is a woman--a woman who is the creation of ruthless men --the puppet of male rule who has always been a

traitor to women: "The best man Britain has got" as President Reagan said.

Women are strong together. Sisterhood is powerful. And so is brotherhood. Brotherhood and sisterhood standing united are more powerful still. The miners and their wives have stuck together admirably. As Zapata said, "A strong people needs no leaders".

I don't believe these strong women will stand aside and watch the creation of a pseudo-fascist police state, Cruise missiles hanging over all our heads, whole peoples starved to death, the disappearances of political activists, orphaned children, political police...

I don't believe the men who inspire and support these women--the same men who return to the violence of the pickets--who wash up and babysit so that the women can organise and struggle, will be defeated. UNITY IS STRENGTH--SOLIDARITY FOR EVER! Migs, Leeds DAM.

POLICE STATE

After the violence of Orgreave--where Mr Scargill was not the only miner injured, but only one of more than 100, and where police behaviour was so unrestrained that it embarrassingly slipped through the censorship net and was televised--no-one can remain in doubt about the threat of civil disorder we now face.

How much longer will people tolerate these thugs--often armed and on horseback--roaming the streets at will? Isn't it time we stopped thinking of the police state as something that happens in Latin America or Eastern Europe but could never happen here? After all, the British police and army get plenty of practice in Northern Ireland--no wonder they are experts in violence and terrorism.

Examples of the real nature of the good old British bobby are coming to light thick and fast. Such as the miners' wives in Castleford, Yorkshire, who were collecting money in their local shopping centre: they were quietly watched by policemen until the

sealing off parts of the village with road blocks and intimidated residents--including children--both on the streets and in their homes. They purposely filled the streets with noise in the early hours of the morning. They arrested striking miners with no excuse, often very brutally. The climax of the terrorism came when police ran amok among women and children preparing meals for strikers in Blidworth hall.

Frighteningly, residents who tried to telephone for help and advice found their phones cut off, with only the sound of policemen laughing in the background.

Elsewhere it is common knowledge that troops are being brought in, in the guise of police, to add to their capacity for violence against workers.

Meanwhile, at Orgreave, we've seen vicious cavalry charges by mounted police armed with truncheons, against unarmed pickets; and the brutal behaviour of the riot police with their



workers, however heroic, cannot match the strength and technical superiority of trained, well-equipped police and soldiers. Our real strength lies in the workplace, not outside

at the gates. In order to achieve victory for the miners the strike must spread. Solidarity can win--the miners' fight is all our fight.

AMAC 1

DA no.14 we pointed the role of Britain in the "repression trade"--the supply of internal

of the non-appearance of the AMAC at the exhibition many other orders may have been lost.