

DIRECT ACTION



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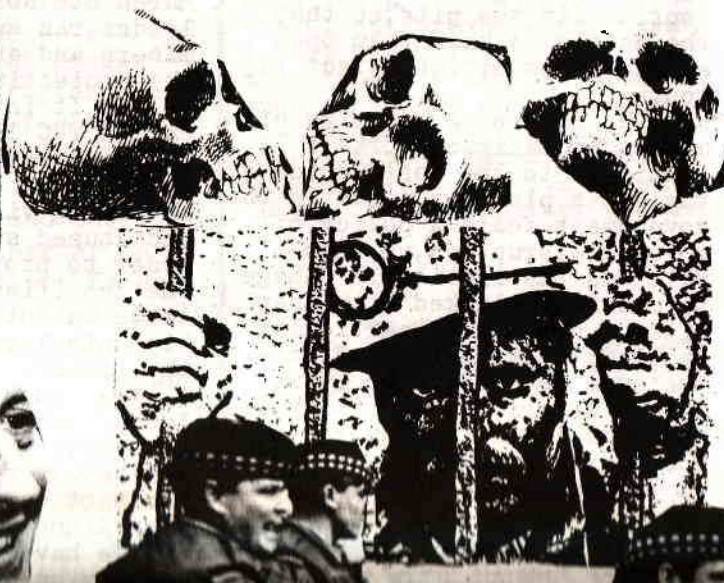
PAPER OF THE DAM/IWA...THE VOICE OF ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM.

.The miners' strike has been defeated, not by the strength of the state so much as by reformist trade unionism, which has forgotten how to fight.

The members of other unions could not render practical industrial assistance to the miners due to the very structure of the unions they are in. Trade unions have been emasculated by 100 years of bowing to legality, bowing to the Labour Party, bowing to arbitration and conciliation, rather than fighting.

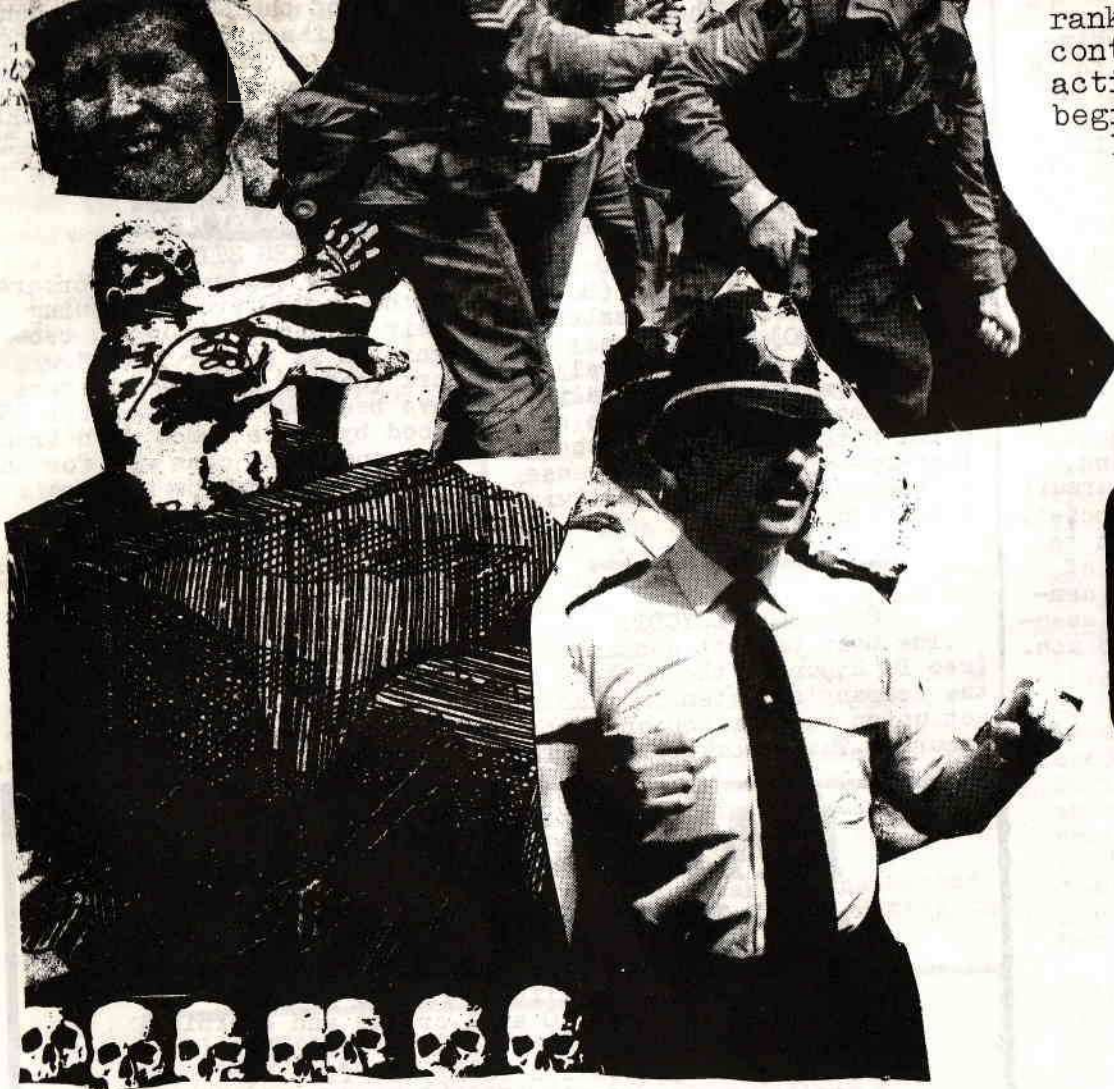
Faced with a resolute Tory government they are powerless. From 1979--1983 the TUC hung around waiting for their "pals" in the Labour Party to be elected. When that didn't happen they hadn't a clue what to do.

The unions have shown their weakness and it has been noted by the Tories during the miners' strike. Now it will be the turn of the teachers, healthworkers, dockers, railworkers, etc and they will all be picked off one by one, their huge fortunes seques-



rank-and-file groups, independent of all parties, contemptuous of the law and committed to direct action and solidarity. If this is done they can begin to turn the tide.
It is the only realistic option.

STORM CLOUDS GATHER



IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

ENERGY: oppose thatcher's no-future policy **BOOKS:** albert camus

HEALTH: the real killers **SOUTH AFRICA:** workers fight back

WHAT NEXT? the rank-and-file organise

Plus Lots More...

A DISARMING WEAPON

Most people have very definite views on the nuclear issue. There is much public debate between those who want to be rid of nuclear weapons and those who profess to see them as a necessary evil. In general, however, the two broad bodies of opinion do share a common area of belief—a very significant one.



It is widely accepted that nuclear weapons are the products of the Cold War: that the global division between two groupings of states each clustered around one of the two "superpowers", has evolved into a situation where East and West are in a perpetual state of rivalry, trying to protect and promote cherished ideologies.

Listening to celebrities of church, showbusiness and politics preaching to the converted may be a pleasant way to spend an afternoon, but what people think and do in their day-to-day lives is more important.

As long as the energies of those people most committed to getting rid of nuclear weapons (and conventional ones too, for that matter) are diverted into relatively futile activities, the peace groups are fulfilling the role of a safety valve, easing the pressure created by peoples' anger, which would otherwise vent its full force on the government, and providing a means of soothing confused middle-class consciences.

Awareness of this gives rise to another idea which merits consideration. Consider the possibility of a "stitch-up". To be more specific, the idea that the governments of the world use the idea of a nuclear holocaust as a threat to hold over the heads of ordinary people. Understandably concerned, activists get involved in campaigning against nuclear weapons. Their energies and anger are directed into the nuclear issue and the numerous areas of debate arising from it. Consequently, pressing everyday issues are set aside. "Yes, it's terrible the way people at the lower end of the economic scale are treated, but let's concentrate on saving the world before we set about making it a better place". Of course this is not a conscious attitude, but it is descriptive

MINING DISPUTE fighting on the job

Despite the strike being called off, all the issues remain. Pit closures kill communities and throw workers on the scrapheap. Now there is the issue of the 700-plus miners sacked and victimised by the NCB: they must be reinstated. We owe it to them and to Joe Green and David Jones who died for this strike on the picket lines, to continue fighting.

That the strike lasted so long and remained so solid is a tribute to the determination and bravery of the miners. The strike may have been lost but the struggle goes on; we change our tactics but not our principles. The fight must now continue in the pits, so that the battle to keep them open and the communities intact is won.

*The return to the pits of a mass of militant workers committed to the destruction of the NCB's plans is a tactic the government fears. A policy of go-slow, disruption, work-to-rule and the inevitable damage to machinery linked with snap wildcat strikes of particular sections or trades is effective even in pits where it is only a minority who are involved. Such a strategy embraces not only those who have stayed out on strike for its full duration, but also those who have been driven back through hardship and in shame, in the dying weeks of the strike. Obviously these latter are different from the hardline

*Each pit needs to create its own council of action, including sacked NUM members, which can co-ordinate its actions with others, to protect those who have been or may be sacked. We need to be flexible and farseeing in our strategy, to advance again in the future so as to tighten the screw on the government.

TUC

*Of course this strike could have been won, but for the betrayal and inaction of the TUC. Their promises of solidarity were never delivered. Most unions made no real effort to organise effective industrial action. No real work was done to convince rank-and-file unionists of the need for action, to protect their own unions from attack as well as the NUM.

*The lesson is that we cannot depend on the TUC to do other than to sell us out, and sabotage any efforts to build solidarity. At the anti-rate-capping demo in London on March 6th, Norman Willis, TUC leader, ran away from angry miners and anarchists, and into the protective arms of the police. It is ironic when a so-called TUC leader seeks protection from the very same police thugs who have rioted in mining villages and injured and abused so many miners, in order to protect himself from the justified anger of decent trade unionists, disgusted at his spineless behaviour during the strike.

*We cannot depend on the Labour Party to do other than make half-hearted statements of solidarity supported by inaction, particularly from corpses like Kinnock.

*We have to win this battle largely on our own: we will not achieve victory in the boardrooms of the NCB, nor the House of Parliament, nor through the

promote cherished ideology. This, it is argued, has led to the stockpiling of horrific nuclear weapons, to protect each bloc's interests from encroachment by its enemies. These views form the broad context in which the nuclear debate takes place, in the mass media and at other levels. The purpose of this article is to offer a few ideas to challenge the "conventional wisdom" and broaden the scope for debate.

It goes without saying that peace campaigning groups, such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, are a thorn in the side of the government, diametrically opposed in attitudes and aims...or does it? As an organisation, CND appears to have neither the ability nor the inclination to do any more than propagandise. This alone is no reason to criticise. Many political pressure groups are limited by circumstances to a position where, in the short term, to attempt anything other than effective propaganda is to court disaster. Many people involved in peace groups are very dedicated characters, whose concern and commitment to their ultimate goal is to be applauded. The problem arises from the fact that so much of these peoples' time and energy is channelled into activities which often result in no more than expressions of their aims.

A rally in Hyde Park may be a good morale-booster, and a chance to meet like-minded people, but in relation to the effort put into it, little is achieved in the way of awakening people to what is going on. Standing among a good-natured crowd of kindred spirits

attitude, but it is demotivating of what happens. Too cynical? Overly pessimistic? Possibly. After all, there are a lot of things about the ways world politics function about which we are never likely to know the truth. But it would be stupid to discount totally the idea of the nuclear arms race being a piece of global theatre to distract people from mundane issues of economic, social and other kinds of oppression—in other words, from issues which might make them begin to question the logic and rationale of the status quo.

This kind of questioning, logically leading to the pursuit of a complete change of society, poses a far greater threat to the state than any number of CND supporters harmlessly demanding the abandonment of weapons no-one really wants to use. G.Kirkman.



different from the hardline political scabs. We can reunite our union and redress the division and humiliation Thatcher has tried to create.



THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT!

The syndicalist COB (Bolivian Workers' Central, membership 800,000) victoriously concluded a 16-day general strike against the "socialist" government of Siles Zuazo on March 25th. The fruit of their victory—a 350% wage increase to keep well ahead of Bolivia's inflation rate.

COCA-COLA BOYCOTT

The Coke boycott continues (see DA 23) until the workers at the company's Guatemala plant get union recognition and job security. These workers are lit-

of Parliament, nor through the benevolent offices of ACAS. This fight started in the pits and there it shall end. I.S.LEEDS

WOBBIERS STILL OUT

The IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) are continuing their struggle for union recognition at Keller Fish, New York (see DA 23). The strikers have been out since October 25th faced by scabs armed with iron bars and local cops out for their arrest. Fellow workers have raised \$1,400 for the strike fund. Donations to: Keller Strike Fund, IWW, Box 183, New York 10028.

erally fighting for their lives—officials of STEGAC, their union, have been imprisoned and tortured. Support for the boycott can help them win.

RANK & FILE CONFERENCE

will be held at Kellingly Miners' Welfare on 20-21 April at 10 am. A creche and overnight overnight accommodation will be available if required. Registration is £3.00—free to strikers and unemployed.

SPONSORED BY:

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Socialist Federation
Bradford Trades Council
NUM Kellingly
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and File
Rank and File 83
Thornton View Hospital
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WORKSHOPS TO INCLUDE:

The miners' strike
Rank and file in TUS
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The role of the police
INVOLVING THE UNEMPLOYED
THERE WILL BE A SOCIAL
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Credentials from:
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Keighley, W. Yorks.

In The Tradition

Syndicalism & the Miners

CONCLUDING LAST MONTHS ARTICLE

Last month we saw how the syndicalist idea of rank and file union control, with solidarity and direct action influenced the miners (especially in S.Wales) in their struggle with the owners.

THE MINERS' NEXT STEP

Syndicalist ideas received further publicity with the publication of the pamphlet "The Miners' Next Step" by the South Wales Unofficial Reform Committee in 1911. It attacked the conciliatory nature of the South Wales Miners' Federation, and its bureaucracy: "The possession of power invariably leads to corruption...in spite of good intentions". The pamphlet argues that this corruption leads to union officials being sucked into the collective bargaining and conciliation system of the state. It also maintained that such a class of union officials led to passivity on the part of the members: "Why fight when the professionals can negotiate for you?" To combat this the authors of the pamphlet argued for the abolition of full-time union officials in favour of control by a self-reliant rank-and-file. Instead of negotiation and conciliation, they advocated a fighting union policy using direct action methods, and instead of several cent-

reprinted by Jim Larkin in the "Irish Worker" and in the ISEL's "The Syndicalist". It argued for soldiers to side with their class and not their officers: "The idle Rich Class, who own and order you about, own and order us (the working class) about also. They own everything. You don't, we don't. When we kick they order you to murder us. When you kick, you get court-martialled and the cells. Instead of fighting against each other...help to win the world for the workers".



MINERS' MILITANCY, THEN AND NOW

industrial guerrilla war, as they realised just how minimal the new minimum wage levels were.

The failure of the strike strengthened the position of the syndicalists as the miners realised fully that the action of the leadership was responsible for their defeat. The Unofficial Reform Committee expanded to become the Industrial Democracy League, a specifically syndicalist organisation within the SWMF. By the end of 1912, in a mood of smouldering militancy among miners, with strikes frequently

ing 500,000). In both these countries organised syndicalism persisted through the war and subsequent government repression, both organisations surviving up to the present day, though smaller in size. In Britain syndicalists never formed lasting union structures.

A third factor in the demise of large-scale syndicalism at this time was the false image of success of the Russian Revolution. Many syndicalists joined the Communist Party under the illusion that the political action of the Bolsheviks had won socialism, rather than the hell on earth

further reading

SLOW BURNING FUSE

J Quill
paperback

The last history of the British anarchist movement up to the fifties.

ANARCHISTS IN LONDON, 1936-55

£1.95 A Melzer

Paladin Books pamphlet

A personal memoir of those years by a long-time activist, still working today.

£1.50

Cienfuegos Press

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM - HISTORY AND ACTION

Various

pamphlet

An excellent introduction to modern day syndicalism, produced by the Direct Action Movement, British section of the International Workers Association.

DAM Publications

.30'

unions, one industrial union, based on a federal structure to maximise local autonomy.

As anti-statists the Syndicalists opposed nationalisation of the coal industry. Instead, they put forward the idea of "industrial democracy" —control based on the workers' economic organisations, backed up by a central Production Board, to be arrived at by a revolutionary general strike. These are all ideas as relevant today as they were in 1912—as a glance at the sick state of affairs in present-day unions will show.

The idea of "voting in socialism" is rejected in this pamphlet. Parliamentary action is described as "a delusion and snare behind which lurks the spectre of capitalism

Thousands of copies of the pamphlet were sold and syndicalist speakers toured the coalfields.

STRIKE ACTION

As a result of this vigorous propaganda, and further attacks on miners' living standards there was a ballot of 445,801 to 115,921 in favour of strike action to secure a minimum wage in February 1912.

The response of the government and bosses was to deploy troops in the coalfields. Some units, like the Leeds Artillery, were even issued with swords in case of hand-to-hand fighting. Mine managers built barricades around their homes, and the territorial army was mobilised—a sign of the fear always inspired in the state by militant working-class action.

DON'T SHOOT!

The Industrial Syndicalist Education League attempted to counter the threat of armed force with a bid to subvert the army. Fred Bower, a stonemason, published a leaflet, "Don't Shoot", which was

the syndicalist to be imprisoned under the 1787 Mutiny Act. Their six-month sentence, said one activist of the time, "made syndicalism a household word in Britain".

In any case, the mobilisation was not met by violence from the miners simply because the issue of a minimum wage was so popular that there was no danger of scabbing.

The real traitors were the union full-timers who, in spite of a ballot to stay out, accepted a government formula which offered the "principle" of a minimum wage, but not the reality. A majority of the miners ignored the call to return to work, especially in the areas most influenced by syndicalist ideas. Pits in Northumberland and Durham declared that any settlement must include the release of the syndicalist prisoners, Bowman and Mann, while Yorkshire miners called on transport workers to join the strike and widen the struggle. Yorkshire full-timer Herbert Smith, at a rally during the strike, warned that sympathetic action would amount to revolution. Hecklers replied from the floor that this was the best thing that could happen.

ANTI-LEADERSHIP

At Featherstone, Rotherham and Middleton mines, miners voted for the resignation of all union officials. At Dinnington pit an anti-leadership crusade was launched, demanding regular recall of officials and periodic elections. In spite of their combative attitude, however, by mid-April the strike had ended, the return to work led by the militant but financially exhausted South Wales miners (who had only recently been on strike for a year—see last month's DA).

The miners now resorted to

breaking out at different pits, the syndicalists formed a large and vocal minority of the miners, and perhaps a majority of those in South Wales. The campaign to implement the programme outlined in "The Miners' Next Step" continued in expectation of the next round of conflict.

THE DECLINE OF SYNDICALISM

If, as I have argued, syndicalist conceptions of unionism were so popular among the miners before the first World War, why is it that we hear nothing of syndicalism in the years after the war?

The great mass of non-syndicalist miners (and other workers) were of course caught up in the ghastly carnival of Jingoism that marked the outbreak of war. The syndicalists, on the other hand, had always laid great emphasis on anti-militarist propaganda. This had only been widespread for some four years, however, and it is understandable that it failed to contend successfully with a hundred years of state propaganda in favour of patriotism. As in so many wars, the mass of the working class were fooled into believing that they shared a common enemy (in this case Germany) with the ruling class, and that national interests must come before class interests.

The durability of organised syndicalism among the miners was also lessened by the fact that syndicalist miners sought to revolutionise the existing, corrupt miners' federation, rather than form a breakaway revolutionary union of their own. During the same period, Italian and American syndicalists formed rival unions (the Italian Syndicalist Union, numbering 800,000 members, and the Industrial Workers of the World, number-

rather than the role of union they had in fact created. Mistakenly, they put their faith in new leaders from outside their class instead of relying on their own strength.

THE RELEVANCE OF SYNDICALISM

Although organised syndicalism was extinguished amongst miners by the 1920s, many of the ideas that constituted it have persisted, for example, direct action, opposition to full-time officials, and self-reliance.

In the aftermath of the 84-85 strike, most miners surely see how reformist trade unionism sold them down the river and how the Labour Party held them in disdain. But the strike also demonstrated the potential for success of solidarity practised throughout—and even beyond—mining communities, by miners' wives and strike support groups, the value of industrial solidarity (the government was only really worried when it seemed possible that it would have to face trouble from the dockers as well as the miners), and the value of international unity among workers, in view of the generous support that came from workers abroad.

These ideas and practices are the cornerstones of syndicalism, and represent the true areas of working-class strength. It is only natural therefore that NUM branches should be among the first to sponsor the forthcoming Rank-and-File Conference mentioned elsewhere in this issue. It is to be hoped that this will lead to the building of a rank-and-file structure with broadly syndicalist aims and methods throughout the mining industry (and of course generally). The miners have as much to gain from syndicalist ideas today as they did in the early years of the century. GC

DIRECT ACTION

NUCLEAR POWER IS BOSSES POWER

At the end of January the government announced that the plans to dump nuclear waste in the old ICI anhydrite mines under Billingham, on Teeside, had been abandoned.

In Billingham, where opposition to the plans was almost total, the news of the climbdown was welcomed after 15 months of waiting. Billingham Against Nuclear Dumping (BAND) had demonstrated, lobbied and petitioned against the proposed dumping, but the popular pressure was only indirectly responsible for the plans' withdrawal... the death blow to the scheme was ICI's decision in March '84 to refuse access to the mine entrance on its land. This move wasn't prompted by a concern for the

point is that nuclear power itself is the evil, not just the dumping of its toxic wastes. And it's workers' power rather than pressure group style politics that can halt the nuclear programme.

The government's energy policy involves the run-down of the coal industry and the increased use of oil- and nuclear-generated power. This can only be described as criminal and lunatic. Nuclear power is much more expensive than coal-generated power ("uneconomic" in fact), and oil is twice as expensive to burn as coal. The big advantage for the bosses is that both will reduce their reliance on mine-workers. And that's what the miners' strike was all about really.

North sea oil is the only thing that enables Britain to pay its way internationally, now that we are a net manufacturing importer, and the oil won't

THATCHER'S SURCHARGE

The government intends to pass on the cost of the miners' strike to the consumers, through a so-called "Scargill surcharge". This is what it will be called on our bills, and no secret will be made of the reason for the price increase.

The main item of extra cost in keeping the electricity supply going is the vastly increased use of oil at the power stations. City stock-brokers Laurie Milbank estimate that the four-fold increase in oil prices in recent months has cost the Central Electricity Generating Board an additional £45 million a week.

As far back as October it was reported that Treasury ministers were committed to raising the cost of electricity to help meet the cost of the coal dispute. To cover this, it's estimated that the average bill will have to rise by £15 this year, but all-electric households will face a £40 increase.

The government has two motives for imposing this surcharge--not only to pay the massive bill incurred by its strikebreaking policy, but also to put across what the Chancellor believes is a valuable public message: that we have to pay for the miners' strike. By



MEGAWATTS
NOW
- Megadeaths
Later

We must organise against this surcharge. THE PRICE OF ELECTRICITY IS ALREADY TOO HIGH. This is not a Scargill surcharge, it's a THATCHER SURCHARGE. It reflects how expensive electricity will become if the government's policy of less coal, more oil and nuclear power becomes a reality, and will cause many working people hardship as a direct result of Thatcher's monetarist policies.

A mass consumer boycott of this charge would turn the tables on the government if we can demonstrate the links between government policy and its effect on people's pockets.

When the quarterly bills go out in April they should be met with an organised refusal to pay the surcharge. Community groups, tenants' and housing organisations, strike support groups and union branches could all organise such a refusal, and a well-organised campaign could develop and spread across the country.

Nuclea



importer, and the oil won't last long, so our energy needs will be provided either by the cheap and plentiful coal reserves, or by expensive and environmentally disastrous nuclear power.

Nuclear power holds advantages for capitalists only. It is expensive and the working class will be made to pay for it. It will require a small workforce, closely controlled under the pretext of necessary security, rather than potentially troublesome miners and power station workers. Thus the working class will lose a vital element of its power.

However, it appears that the shrewdest capitalists realise that burning coal still makes sense in economic terms. On Teeside ICI are converting part of their Wilton power station from oil to coal 'burn', which it is said will safeguard the jobs of a thousand Durham miners. They seek the best of both worlds: cheap coal, with a submissive and malleable workforce, and strategically useful nuclear power.

Their plans must be resisted. But a marginal anti-nuclear movement based on pressure-group style politics will prove as ineffective as it has to

environment or altruism on ICI's part, but was a response rather to the overwhelming opposition in Billingham. ICI is the biggest single employer on Teeside, with 14,500 workers half of them at its Billingham complex. So in the interests of calm industrial and community relations the company had to come out against the proposal.

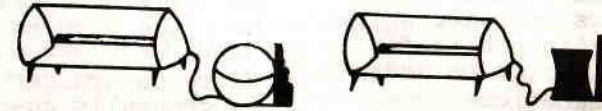
BAND has pledged itself to support any other community to resist a similar threat. But the

local contact

distinguishing the surcharge from the rest of the bill, they hope to get public opinion on their side against the NUM.

and spread across the country.

DEMAND THAT THE THATCHER LEVY IS SCRAPPED!



THE ELECTRICITY FOR A ONE-BAR FIRE FOR ONE WEEK WOULD COST £4.43* FROM MAGNOX NUCLEAR STATIONS BUT ONLY £2.94* FROM COALFIRED PLANT.

***1979/80 FIGURES**

date (not one nuclear missile or power station halted). It has to be realised that nuclear power is a class issue; it affects both the miners and the wider working class. And the only thing capable of halting both the nuclear programme and the missiles (whose materials it supplies) is an organised and militant working class. This must be the last time a government can sit out a year-long strike by running nuclear power plants flat out, regardless of safety requirements, as the Tories did this time. We must put a stop to their limitless programme of investment in this lethal and extravagant technology.

NUCLEAR POWER IS BOSSES' POWER—WE STILL DEMAND COAL NOT DOLE!

Teesider.

Our thanks

DONATIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING:
T CROWTHER, MANCHESTER, £20; ANDY, M'CHES-
TER, £20; D MARCONE, £3;
G KIRKMAN, OXFORD, £3;
R MARSDEN, £2; AP KELLY,
LEAMINGTON, £10;
P FROST £2.

OUR GRATEFUL THANKS TO ALL ABOVE. CONTINUED REGULAR DONATIONS ARE VITAL TO KEEP THE PAPER APPEARING REGULARLY.

