

# Workers Power

20p/10p strikers

Paper of the Workers Power group

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**SPECIAL**  
KINNOCK

# SMASH THE SCAB UNION

ROY LYNK and David Prendergast have raised the banner of scab yellow unionism in Britain. They have the full backing of the NCB and the NUM.

No miner should be under any illusions about what yellow unionism means. It will open the pits to a ruthless management regime. Lynk and co will collaborate in the destruction of thousands of jobs. They will help management police the introduction of divisive bonus schemes and dangerous productivity deals.

**Scab unionism is a cancer. It must be stopped at all costs.**

Despite the NUM Executive's unanimous vote in favour of unity there can be no room for complacency. Scabs are born liars. Two days before launching the split in Notts, Lynk announced: "We do not intend to break away". They had the cheek to participate in the NUM conference up to the point of losing on the first of the rule changes. Only then did they walk-out, along with their police escort.

There are other scabs in the NUM who will adopt equally dishonest tactics. Ken Toon of South Derbyshire, Jack Jones of Leicestershire and Trevor Bell of the white collar section COSA, all stuck up their hand in favour of "unity". These men are scabs in just the same mould as Lynk. They are staying in the NUM in order to hold a knife against the throat of the union. Soft-pedal they are saying, or we will split.

After the vote Bell was quite candid about this. COSA is to ballot on whether or not to stay in the NUM in August, and Bell hinted that a link up with Notts was a possibility. "I am not saying we will not get involved with the Nottinghamshire breakaway but our members have stated they want an independent organisation". So much for the Executive's unanimity!

Within and without the NUM the scabs are busy building links with each other. George Hunter in Durham has announced that his scab outfit, the Colliery Trades and Allied Craftsmen, will join the Notts splitters. The North Staffordshire winders, who scabbed on the original overtime ban, are having talks with Lynk. The 'Democratic Alliance' of Notts, S. Derbyshire and Leicestershire is still intact and provides Lynk with valuable allies in the NUM itself. The scabs will use these links to recruit in areas like North Yorkshire and Warwickshire, where the super-pits are planned.

The NCB was quick to recognise the value of a scab union. David White, a Durham scab, showed his mettle by saying of the industry's butcher: "I have met him (MacGregor - WP) twice and I find he will sit and listen to what I have to say". MacGregor repaid this fawning by organising a secret meeting with the Durham scabs. He offered them recognition and a check-off system for their members' subs.

The NCB have met with Lynk, promising his breakaway recognition and 'loyalty bonuses' - loyalty to the NCB that is. At the same time NACODS have been given 14 days to say whether or not they would work with the scab unions.

Throughout the strike the NCB's strategy was to split the NUM and help build a scab union. This is why back in August they sent David Hart - right wing adviser to Thatcher, MacGregor, Silver Birch and Lynk - to help the National Working Miners Committee. In an article in *The Times* he made plain the NCB's hopes: "Their dream (the scabs -WP) is to so organise themselves and the other areas that the breakaway union will eventually re-unite, embracing the entire NUM membership".

## PLANNED SPLIT

The NCB and the scab leaders have methodically planned and executed their split project over the last year. The NUM leadership on the other hand, has failed to grasp the biggest scab nettles and uproot them. Its tactics have let it grow.

It became clear by June 1984 that in Notts, S Derbyshire and Leicester, the scabs were hardening into an organised force. The failure to issue a clear call for a national strike gave the scabs cover in the early days. The tactic of picketing out these areas had failed. The ballot was rightly seen as a non-starter. But the failure of the NUM leaders to go into the scab areas and campaign for a national strike at mass pithead meetings let the scab leaders emerge. In Notts, the leaders, Chadburn and Richardson, dithered fatally instead of fighting for a strike. By late June, most Notts miners were at work and many who had joined the strike were drifting back to work.

Discipline and coercion were needed. The leadership appeared



to grasp this when they called a special conference to adopt Rule 51. This rule gave the National union the right to discipline the scabs, up to and including expelling them. When Notts, by this time dominated by scab officials elected in June, went to court to oppose the rule the leadership backed off. They disappointed the hopes of thousands of militants, when they assured the scabs that Rule 51 was never intended for use against them.

Doubtless, this leniency was intended to stave off a split. It failed to have this effect. Unity in the NUM's ranks had to be restored by breaking the scabs, or as many of them as possible, from their leaders. Only the threat and if necessary the execution of the expulsion of the scabs would have achieved this. Expulsion last summer would have robbed the scabs of the precious twelve months they needed to prepare their split. It would have left Lynk out in the cold before he was able to turn the Nottinghamshire Miner into a scab-rag. It would have posed waverers with a stark choice, NUM or no union, because no alternative to the NUM then existed. Now that alternative has been built up. The scab organisers were given the time to do so.

NUM leaders hoped that a legal onslaught would be offset by their leniency. They were proved wrong. Scabs - and their advisers, - brought cases that have left the NUM without any control over its own funds to this day. When Notts voted to change its rules and secure greater autonomy from the national union, the leadership finally acted. It proposed the expulsion of the Notts area and scheduled a conference to decide this on January 29th 1985. Even this was a cop-out. Scargill rushed to meet Toon to assure him that Notts was only being disciplined under rule 40(b) not Rule 51. That is Notts was being expelled for not adopting rules decided

upon by a national conference, not because they were scabs. In fact the conference and proposed expulsion disappeared without trace. Once again the scabs were given a respite.

The question of the rule changes at last provided the scabs with the pretext for a split. They were desperately opposed to even partial attempts to centralise the old federal structure of the NUM. Also at stake were the jobs of Lynk and Prendergast who had unconstitutionally taken new union jobs and sacked Henry Richardson.

## SACK LYNK

The NUM conference decided to adopt the new rules and sack Lynk and Prendergast. The splitters simply got up and left. Before this decisive event the NUM's leaders had once again tried to pacify the scabs. Scargill is reported to have favoured only a reprimand and suspension for Prendergast. The Communist Party's mining advisory committee had argued that the rule changes were 'divisive'. The Euro's in the CP had given space in their paper *Focus* to Hywel Francis's plea to 'build bridges' with the scabs at the conference. Mick McGahey asserted that: "...the traditional coming together of the miners will assert itself in the areas". Scargill said he hoped that the scab-led Notts area, "will remain in the national union".

These arguments are put forward in the name of 'unity'. Unity is an excellent weapon for the working class when it means unity of purpose and unity in action. But the splitters broke unity in the NUM last year. They shattered the unity needed to win the strike. Their court actions against the union proved that they were not interested in the 'unity' of the union. Appealing to these

people in the name of unity will not stop them. Building a fighting unity amongst the rank and file miners will.

Yet even now the NUM have favoured a legalistic approach to the problem. In the first crucial days after the split the NUM went to the capitalist courts to force a ballot on Lynk. True, this buys a bit of time for the NUM, but at the price of creating massive illusions that the 'illegal miners' (as Richardson calls them) can be fought with the weapon of the bosses' justice which has landed hundreds of miners in jail. In an amazing concession to Lynk, Henry Richardson said he was happy with the ruling of the court and that: "We have never argued that they cannot break away but that they have to do it the correct way". And if they do it the correct way, Richardson, does that legitimise the existence of a yellow union?

The answer must be no. This scab outfit cannot be tolerated or lived with. It will have to be fought.

A year has been lost in the fight against the scabs. Not one minute more must be wasted. The NUM must go on the offensive. The way to beat yellow unionism, as is shown by the history of the fight against Spencerism, is to build a fighting class alternative. The course of action for militants must begin with purging the NUM of the fifth column that remains in its ranks. Rule 51 must be used to expel all officials who scabbed in the strike. In Leicester, South Derbyshire and parts of the Midlands this will mean preparing for the refounding of the NUM by loyalists. This is already the task of the day in Notts.

Refounding means creating in every pit where scab unionism has raised its head an NUM-loyal action committee. These committees should be supported by the

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# Women: Needed, a conference to plan the fightback!

THE DECISION BY the NUM conference to deny associate membership to women from the support groups is a slap in the face to thousands of women who gave their all to the strike. It stands in shameful contrast to the indulgence towards the scab officials in Nottinghamshire and in the Midlands coalfields who did their all in direct collusion with the Tories and the Police to break the strike.

## ■ TECHNICAL EXCUSES ■

The bureaucrats of the left areas who opposed associate membership, including Yorkshire, gave technical excuses about the difficulty of determining who should get associate membership. In fact the decision has nothing to do with such technicalities. It represents a triumph for sexist backwardness in the NUM. It is to his credit that Arthur Scargill made known his support for the women's right to become associate members. It stands in contrast to the shameful position taken by Jack Taylor and co. But now the women and the militant miners who support them know where they stand with regard to the 'left' leaders on this issue.

## ■ SEXISM ■

This sexism is however not just a product of male prejudice, as the feminists will say. It is a product of the narrow, routinized and unrepresentative nature of the NUM's 99 strong delegate conference. It is a product of the exclusion of the voice of rank and file militants who for 12 months fought alongside the women and know their worth.

A vital task for the forthcoming August 17th National Women Against Pit Closures



conference (NWAPC) will be launching a campaign to reverse the NUM decision. Speakers to put the case for the women's right to associate membership must be dispatched to every branch and pit. Leaflets and bulletins must be produced documenting the proud record of women in the strike and explaining the positive case for the women's non-voting participation in the life of the NUM. A fight is needed to oppose the NCB's butchery. That fight will need to mobilise the women again. Best for the women to keep mobilised by the NUM explicitly recognising and guaranteeing associate membership status to the women's organisations.

The conference will also need to plan and campaign in Notts and the Midlands to fight the scabs. The wives of Notts miners must once again be approached. Special meetings must be organised and special leaflets distributed aimed at Notts women and explaining the case against scab unionism.

## ■ RANK AND FILE ■

However, whether the August 17th NWAPC conference will decide on such a strategy is open to serious doubt. The history of the organisation bodes ill. The last conference was small and did little to direct the activity of the existing miners' wives movement. And let's be blunt - the NWAPC is not exactly the most democratic organisation going. Who elected Betty Heathfield and Ann Scargill or the other 'ex-officio' members? Nor is it designed to encourage or involve rank and file women in decision making.

## ■ PARTICIPATION ■

Since it was set up women from local groups have argued for the NWAPC to open itself up to greater participation by wives from local groups. Hatfield Main women and women from the Midlands sent a resolution

saying that there should be a delegate from every group plus observers. We don't think that they even got on the agenda paper! And here we are 7 months later still discussing the same thing.

Most worrying is that the last conference didn't allow for any wide ranging debate on the fundamental political questions - on the terms of the settlement, how to deal with the scabs; in fact the conference narrowed the horizons of the thousands of women in struggle.

## ■ QUESTIONS ■

This time we must tackle the questions head on - if we don't, the future of the national wives movement is grim.

This conference will be larger. The organisers are talking in terms of 2000. However the agenda has not yet been decided upon. Resolutions, which have to be in by July 27th, are unlikely to be circulated in advance. It is unclear whether resolutions will even be voted on, whether a vote will only be taken on the organisers' statement of aims.

All of this points to the serious danger of the conference being turned into a rally. Decision making will be once again left to

the unaccountable few 'in the know'. If this happens then the opportunity to re-launch the wives movement as a mass campaigning movement will be lost. Instead of combatting scabs, fighting closures, linking up with other women workers in struggle, fighting to defend communities and their services and fighting for associate membership and observer rights in the NUM, the movement will become at best a passive auxiliary to the NUM. At worst, it could dwindle into an association of local and national officials' wives.

At the conference all militant women must fight for an active campaigning profile on all of the issues listed above. If Women Against Pit Closures is to grow and transform itself into a fighting organisation of working class women, then it needs to have clear foundations on which to fight, and democratic methods of taking policy decisions.



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## Scabs - What we said

FROM JULY 1984 Workers Power believed it was necessary to discipline the scabs. When Rule 51 was introduced we argued: "The scabs will flood the law courts winging up to their friendly judges. They will talk of setting up independent unions. It is far better for the NUM to cut this cancer out of its own ranks now than to let it fester and grow inside it" (WP 59 - 4/7/84)

Unfortunately the NUM leaders did not act against the scabs. To avoid a split they tried to pacify the scabs. So long as the scabs refused to interfere with the running of the strike (apart from scabbing of course!) the NUM held fire. We wrote after the special conference in August: "Fearful of legal action in the courts and loath to break the hallowed bureaucratic traditions of federalism in the NUM, the Executive has refused to take the fight union's discipline into Nottinghamshire and the Midlands, just as it refused to take the for a national strike there in the first weeks of the strike". (WP 61 - 30/8/84)

## ■ BELATED MOVE ■

It was only when the Notts area adopted new rules in conflict with the national Union that a belated move to expel them was made - much to the relief of the Notts militants who had been campaigning for these expulsions for months. In January a conference, which never took place, was called to expel Notts. Even here though, the National Union was simply trying to restore the constitutional status quo in Notts, not break it from scabbing. We warned: "...the thought that wretches like Chadburn will be entrusted with the leadership will be disastrous". (WP 68 - 16/1/85).

We called for the expulsion of all the scabs at that point arguing: "Better a small NUM but one that is stronger politically and more able to defend the members it represents. Thus, the scabs - back broken and betrayed by their officials - will be forced to crawl back to a real union on the NUM's terms. (WP 68 16/1/85).

We were proved absolutely right. And now, we must delay no further. Between now and the ballot every scab official must be kicked out of the NUM. They must not be allowed to use their remaining time in the NUM (granted by a judge, ironically) to use its offices and resources to campaign for a split vote in the ballot.

KICK OUT THE SCAB OFFICIALS NOW!



## DON'T SOFT SOAP THE SCABS

CONSISTENT WITH THE scabby role they played in the Great Strike, the TUC and the Labour Party, are doing their best to obstruct a fight with the scabs. As soon as the splitters made their move TUC elder statesman Bill Keys was quick to say: "No gap is unbridgeable".

David Basnett offered the TUC's help in 'healing the split'. Yellow unionism is a knife at the throat of effective trade unionism, yet our leaders approach it in the spirit of reconciliation. The Labour leadership is equally conciliatory towards the scabs.

Don Concannon, Labour MP for Mansfield, said he supported the split and warned: "Somebody has to stop this talk about not being allowed to affiliate to the Labour Party. These people have given their lives to the Party and the movement".

This is a sickening thing to say. No Notts scabs gave their lives for the movement during the Great Strike. Five strikers were killed though. It seems that the Kinnockite 'left' journal Tribune shares Concannon's scab's-eye view of things. They printed his

comments and added: "Moves will be made to allow members of the Lynk union to continue in the Labour Party".

All that Tribune and Concannon and Kinnock care about is that they need votes from the splitters if they are to win the next election. What these shortsighted reformists fail to see is that even in their own electoral terms scab unionism will demoralise workers, not rally their votes for Labour. The pity is that the NUM leadership has paved the way for this ACAS-style approach to the scabs.

## ■ SUPPORT ■

Every union branch, stewards' committee, trades council, and Labour Party ward must be won to supporting the real NUM. The Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference must openly declare their hostility to the scabs and refuse them both affiliation and the right to individual membership of the Party. NUM members only should be allowed into the Party.

# WORKERS' CONTROL - NOT PARTICIPATION

IN HIS KEYNOTE address to the NUM conference Arthur Scargill called on the 'next Labour Government' to: "remove all senior Coal Board personnel, and all area and local managers, who have not only participated during the last two years in the deliberate destruction of our industry, but who viciously attacked our members and sought to humiliate them since the end of the fight". On this he was dead right.

Of course Labour should put it on record that they would sack the entire anti-working class crew who waged war on the miners. It is one more sign of the Labour leaders' treacherous refusal to enter into any commitment that might upset the bosses that they turned on Scargill for even daring to raise that call. All trade unionists and Labour Party activists should add their voices to Scargill's and fight to commit the Labour leaders to perform this elementary duty to the miners and their families.

But there was more to Arthur Scargill's speech than this call to sack the NCB. He went on to say that once the sackings had been carried through: "The NUM must then be invited to share in the responsibility of running the National Coal Board as it should be run - of the people, by the people and for the people". This marks a shift on Arthur Scargill's part. He has previously always been an opponent of schemes for workers' participation and workers' control in the NCB. Back in 1977 at an NUM sponsored debate on the question he argued: "I submit that we do not need worker participation to play our part as a trade union inside the National Coal Board or any other industry in Britain".

His case was that all experience showed that workers' participation in management undermined the independent fighting strength of the trade union. It left "ownership and ultimate control in the hands of the ruling class" while co-opting the unions in order to sell their policies to the workers.

Arthur Scargill's objection to participation schemes had important strengths. When the NCB was first formed the NUM were desperate to play their part in what was then considered to be 'their' industry. In fact nationalism was a means of running a coal industry for the benefit of the entire capitalist class when none of their number were able to make sufficient profit out of it as a private concern. The old owners were handsomely compensated. Their representatives were placed on the board. An elaborate consultative procedure was designed in co-operation with the NUM.

**Arthur Scargill**  
**Audrey Wise**  
**Mike Cooley**

**A Debate on Workers' Control**

It was within that framework of joint consultation to manage an industry for the benefit of capitalism that the massive run-down of the industry in the late 1950s and the 1960s took place. The NUM itself smoothed the way for closures and the run down. It is no wonder then that many of Arthur Scargill's generation turned their back on that tradition of participation and collaboration with management. He characterised the consultation procedure as having as: "its main function...pushing the decisions and views of senior management in the coal industry".

In place of participation Arthur Scargill always argued that the only way to get anything done for the workers was to build up and maintain sufficient trade union bargaining strength. As he put it: "Provided the trade union is prepared to exercise its strength, we can convince management to change its views or, at the very least, modify them in many fields".

The other side of this rejection of participation was the recognition that management's job is to manage, while the union's



job was to organise to resist or modify decisions which adversely affected the union's membership. That has always been the hallmark of Scargill's militant trade unionism.

The Great Strike highlighted the weaknesses - as well as the strengths - of this approach. Management viciously asserted its right to manage in the interests of the boss class by breaking the organised power of the NUM. On its own the NUM's heroic trade union militancy proved incapable of resisting. It is no wonder then that Arthur Scargill is himself re-thinking the way forward for the miners in the face of an NCB that is - at every level in the industry - ruthlessly asserting its 'right to manage'.

### ■ RESPONSIBILITY ■

At the heart of Arthur Scargill's call for an NUM share of responsibility in running the NCB is a view that he shares with many in the NUM and elsewhere. It is that the real hope of the workers lies in getting a Labour Government. With a Labour Government in power it would be possible to create a coal industry run 'by the people and for the people', and the NUM could take its part within its management procedures.

The flaw in this argument is that the Labour Party leaders have never made any secret of their commitment to govern with policies that are acceptable to the wishes of businessmen and the bankers. In their turn the bankers and bosses have ample means of keeping things that way. It is cruel deception to pretend otherwise and hold out the prospect of salvation at the hands of Labour after two more years of Thatcherite butchery in the coalfields.

### ■ PLAN FOR COAL ■

Arthur Scargill once had some telling points to make about the role of workers participation under capitalism. Those points would be just as telling against participation in a Labour Government's NCB even should

Labour offer a new mildly expansionist 'Plan for Coal'. The industry would still be administered and funded to meet the fuel requirements of the capitalist class. On no account could the workers drop their guard and cooperate in its management. The NUM leaders like to point to the halcyon days of the 1974 tri-partite Plan for Coal. That agreement - through a joint commitment to productivity - paved the way for the productivity deals and the closures of the 1970's. A commitment to rekindling the spirit of 1974 threatens to lure the miners onto a path of collaboration in management.

That is exactly what happened when Labour launched its participation scheme in British Leyland. The once strong shop steward organisation in the car factories was incorporated, demobilised and then destroyed by participation. The shop stewards became bearers of the bosses decisions into the workforce. It was a disaster. It must not be repeated in the mines.

There is an alternative to the snares of participation and to trade unionism's recognition of management's right to manage. It is to fight for workers' control of the industry as part of a fight to break managements' power and destroy the capitalist system. At every level the union should organise to ensure that it, and not management, decides what shall be done. At a pit level this means organising the union so that condi-

tions shifts, manning levels and speed of work are determined by the workers themselves. They must win the power of veto over any decisions of management that the workers decide to reject - be they introducing new technologies or closure plans themselves. At all levels the union must fight for the right to veto all plans that the NUM opposes and back that veto up with action where necessary. In this way the workers maintain the independence of their own organisations while at the same time challenging managements' decisions at every turn.

In the aftermath of the miners' defeat the 'wait for a Labour Government' strategy will seem the soundest option to many. But the truth is that management's brutal new regime must be resisted now. The fight cannot be left to the whims of a future Labour Government. If the bosses are allowed to wipe the floor with miners now, then miners will be in an even weaker position to exert pressure on any future Labour Government.

Management holds 'its right to manage' as its sacred right. It will jealously guard the fruits of its victory in the Great Strike. When we call for a fight for workers' control we do so in the full knowledge that this will

mean re-building the union for a state of permanent vigilance and struggle with the bosses. There can be no stable condition of workers control under capitalism. If workers' control is won then the bosses will use their ownership to thwart it at every turn. The fight for workers' control is vital in the defence of jobs now. But it will mean permanent war with the bosses until they are overthrown. Workers' control and the union and pit committees that will exercise it will be vital weapons in the fight to overthrow the bosses system.

The entire workers movement must back Scargill's call for Labour to sack the NCB. It must be on the agenda of each conference. Kinnock and Hattersley must not be allowed to sweep it under the carpet. But militants must beware of calls for NUM shared responsibility in the running of the NCB. Instead we must:-

- Fight at every level for workers' control against MacGregor and Eaton's management.
- Pull out of the existing consultation machinery.
- Open all the books, computer data banks and meetings of the NCB to inspection by the workers' representatives.
- The Labour leaders must be forced to guarantee that in office they will sack the NCB officials named by Arthur Scargill.
- That they will recognise an NUM veto on all appointments and decisions of the NCB.
- That they will declare a moratorium on all pit closures opposed by the NUM.
- Immediately introduce a plan of public works - under Trade Union control - within which coal resources can be used to meet the needs of millions of working people.
- Nationalise all mining supply companies under workers' control and with no compensation for their former owners.



(John Smith, IFL)



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# KINNOCK - FALSE MESSIAH,

Kinnock and the centre-right coalition of PLP mandarins and union bureaucrats have one basic message at the moment. 'Scargillism' and 'Bennery' have failed - long live Kinnock. At the Durham Miners' Gala, Kinnock spelt this out. Benn and Scargill have been responsible for nothing but defeats. Kinnock, the "great I am", is the bearer of "victory". Benn's democracy campaign and his crusade for "radical" policies is blamed for splitting the Labour Party and losing the 1983 election. Scargill led the miners to defeat and, for a whole year, jeopardised Labour's chances of rebuilding itself as a credible electoral force.

Faced with this line of argument Benn's left reformism and Scargill's militant trade unionism are impotent. For Benn, as for Kinnock, the election of a Labour government was key. Faced with the SDP split and the threat of further defections Benn wound up the democracy movement and in 1982 made a non-aggression pact with the right at Bishops Cleeve.

He has stuck to that deal, while the right and Kinnock have merrily witch-hunted throughout the party. The 1983 election defeat sealed Benn's fate. The self-defeating fundamental flaw of left reformism was revealed again. It is doomed to be a permanent opposition which diverts militants' energies into a futile schema of trying to impose radical policies on a conservative party.

## MILITANCY

The other pole in the Left's hopes and the other figure, Kinnock claims to have defeated and discredited is Arthur Scargill, the symbol of militant trade unionism. The strike he led threatened the position of Kinnock's allies amongst the "new realists" of the TUC. The marvelous militancy of the miners and Scargill's personal intransigence did not and could not bring victory. Just as Benn stuck by the rules dictated by electoral considerations and refused to break ranks with the right, so Scargill stuck by the bureaucratic rules laid down by the TUC. With the full might of the bosses' state ranged against the miners a general strike was needed but Scargill and the Executive did not dare take the actions necessary to win this. These were firstly to demand openly, clearly and unambiguously that the TUC call a general strike and when the latter refused, to send tens of thousands of miners to the largest factories, docks, railway depots, offices etc and

agitate directly for strike action. If the NUM had gone beyond liaison with money collecting miners support committees to helping rank and file militants on the rail, in the docks and indeed all other workplaces to build councils of action then the road to a general strike could have been opened. Instead like Benn with regard to Kinnock so Scargill feared to do anything that might lead to Willis 'breaking' with the NUM - or rather making his total lack of solidarity public.

Now Willis and Kinnock are cynically reaping the benefit of the NUM's defeat. They want to drive the message home - militancy does not pay! Militancy cannot defend jobs and services! Militancy must never overstep the limits of the law - no matter how crippling keeping within the limits of Tory anti-union laws or how vicious judges' rulings may be! Militancy alienates 'public opinion'. It harms Labour's electoral chances. And above all it did not and cannot defeat the mighty bosses' state. The only hope is to get governmental power via the ballot box.

The defeats of Benn and Scargill both give a certain credibility to Kinnock's arguments. So too does the crumbling of the Town Hall left. Here again Kinnock consciously and deliberately hit out at the 'lawbreakers' whilst offering the carrot of parliamentary careers to the more weak kneed

elements. Livingstone steered the London Labour Party up the creek of protest stunt politics and firmly away from mobilising the workers of the capital against the dissolution of the GLC, the take over of London Transport and all the job losses and service cuts it will mean. Then he broke the united front of borough councils with the GLC in return for an unopposed ride to selection as candidate for Brent. The collapse of most of the resistance to the rate-capping, service cutting attacks is again used by Kinnock and co to hammer home the message - all talk of law-breaking or strike action is futile. Just protest enough to put the blame on the Tories and then carry out their policies as humanely as possible. The only real answer is to subordinate all struggles to the return of a Labour Government.

All of these defeats have led many erstwhile members of the 'hard left' to jump ship. Tribune, once denounced as infantile by Michael Foot, is now the mouthpiece of 'new left realism' in the Party.

This retreat by the left could easily turn into a rout unless a stand is made. But the left - who helped Kinnock into the saddle and have failed to criticise him and fight him head on - are pur-

suing a fatal policy. At best they criticise Kinnock obliquely. They insist they will mount no challenge to his leadership. Does this stay his hand? Not at all. His demands on them get more and more outrageous. Now they must shut up about an amnesty for the sacked miners. They must cease putting forward any left policies which might lose votes. They must abandon re-selection. The left cower from these attacks. They excuse themselves from mounting any fightback this year. They will wait till next - 18 months from an election? Are these people serious? No they are looking for excuses to cover their failure to fight. Their cowardice will open the way to a wholesale attack on democratic rights within the Party.

What is needed is a resolute defiance of Kinnock at all levels; at the level of his arguments, at the level of his attacks on progressive elements within Labour's policy; at the level of his attacks on Party democracy; and at the level of leadership within each and every struggle against the Tories. Last but not least his leadership of the party, along with Hattersley's deputy position should be challenged. Skinner and Benn, the most outspoken MP's to support the miners, should challenge the men who stabbed the miners in the back.

Kinnock has only one argument. Only an election victory for Labour can get rid of the Tories. We must sacrifice everything to win. What must we sacrifice - militant struggles which clash with the law, policies that scare off the middle class voters, asking too much of a Labour government, freedom of speech and democratic control over the leadership within the party. In return Kinnock offers us a Labour government just like Callaghan's - incomes policy and all.

## AMNESTY

An amnesty for sacked miners? Outrageous violation of the constitution! Cut unemployment to 1 million in five years? Utopian nonsense! Repeal all the Tories' anti-union laws? Yes but we'll keep the parts that are popular in future Labour legislation! No statutory incomes policy! Well of course all public sector workers are already under one and as for the rest we'll have an 'assessment' of what increases are 'possible' with the TUC and the employers! Militants and the mass of unionists must be made aware of what sort of Labour government they are to make all these sacrifices for - one exactly like the last. One that imposes cuts in real wages, that does nothing to seriously challenge unemployment.

Worse, since this supposed government will have far less to offer in the way of reforms than the 1974-79 one and if elected will be facing yet another economic crisis, the working class will not even get "jam tomorrow". It will have promised nothing. It

be completely unanswerable to the Labour movement. And despite Kinnock's present denials if, after the election, it does not have an electoral majority and the Alliance is a powerful force in terms of seats as well as votes then Kinnock will do a deal. After all he is busy reducing Labour's programme to one with scarce a jot of difference from the SDP's and the Liberal's.

In 1978-79 - during the Winter of Discontent, Workers Power said, "No holding back on struggles to preserve an anti-working class Labour government. Now we say no holding back in the fight against the Tories to instal an anti-working class Labour government. Many militants will go along with Kinnock with a heavy heart. They will say he is the "lesser



Tribune ridicules Scargill, but praises Kinnock



Right boyo, heads we win, tails Scargill loses



John Harris (IFL)

Police move in on pickets - Kinnock defends the police.

# REAL JUDAS



Kinnock condemns miners pickets, miners the victims of police violence

evil". But that is a short sighted argument. Thatcher is a vicious but open enemy of the working class. She is not invincible. Rather it is the existing leaders of the labour movement, right and left, who either do not want to really defeat her (Kinnock and Willis) or do not know how to defeat her (Benn and Scargil).

Kinnock - like Callaghan - can wreak havoc on the organised strength of the working class because he is the enemy within, an agent of the ruling class inside the labour movement. He will protect the gains Thatcher made for Britain's bosses by saying it is not realistic to do anything to reverse them. The result will be to further the demoralisation and disintegration in the labour movement. The way will be opened to a worse version of Thatcher. If the British and world slump of the late 1980s is worse than those of the early 1980s and the mid 1970s then a Labour government will be a short, and reactionary, interlude before some form of strong anti-working class government that will take drastic measures.

This road is far from inevitable if workers learn from the struggles of the past. The lessons of the great trade union battles of the last twelve years - the victories of 1972 and 1974, the Winter of Discontent of 1978-9, the Steel strike of 1980, the Miners Strike itself - is not that militancy does not work but that militancy that remains 'purely trade union' and renounces politics either cannot win or allows the enemy to recover from defeat and return to the attack. Mighty struggles, like that of the mining communities however, do open a way to a transformed labour move-

ment. They mobilise tens, hundreds of thousands in struggle. A strike like the 1984-5 one momentarily does 'transform' sections of the labour movement from the routinism of trade union bureaucrats or the empty wind baggery of Parliament. Struggle is a great, indeed the greatest, educator and organiser. But these enormous gains are frittered away and lost if during these struggles the bureaucrats and MPs are allowed to lead them to defeat or sell them short, or if after them the labour movement returns to "business as usual". The slogan of the militant women "We're not going back to how we were before" needs to be the slogan we start off from.

The labour movement needs to be transformed from top to bottom or rather from bottom to top. The unions need to be thoroughly renewed as fighting organisations based on a real informed and educated membership who democratically control their officials at all levels. The rotten deals and sell outs, the arrogant bureaucrats eager to get their feet under the bosses' table would be impossible in such democratised unions.

## POLITICS

But as Kinnock is going to teach us over the next two years - woe to those who think they can neglect politics, that the unions are good enough or that "the NUM is my Party". Those who think union militancy is enough open the unions to Kinnock's politics. Kinnock's politics were shown up sharply in the strike. Yet now miners are forgetting

their hatred of 'Judas Kinnock' because of their hopes for a Labour government and because their hopes in the NUM have been seriously diminished by defeat. Judas could become Jesus overnight. To prevent this happening, first and foremost amongst the ranks of the militant fighters in the NUM and amongst those who rallied to support the miners, a real fundamental and total alternative to Kinnock's politics must take root.

The alternative is not 'democratic socialism', which means the prostration and subordination of socialism to the bosses' democracy but revolutionary communism. Bosses' democracy is not about 'persuasion', 'winning the argument' 'freedom and liberty' as both Kinnock and Benn believe. It is about a mass media that keeps millions in a state of controlled and manipulated ignorance. It is about MP's elected once every five years and then free to break every promise with impunity. It is about an unelected monarch, and unelected House of Lords, an unelected judiciary, unelected police chiefs and Whitehall bureaucrats. It is about unelected generals and admirals in charge of the armed forces. These people act for the ruling class. They are 'above politics', that is, above even the feeble and indirect democratic control that elections give.

The idea that the wielders of economic power, the great bankers and industrialists, can be reformed out of existence piecemeal, is a foolish illusion. The idea that by vote-catching and electioneering a majority can be gained for a drastic leap into socialism is scarcely less so.

Are revolutionary communists then in favour of some sort of coup to establish a minority dictatorship? No. What we do say is that a great majority of the population can be won to the socialist revolution, because a majority of the population are waged and salaried workers whose basic class interest lies in a planned, socially-owned economy. The road to winning them to revolution is not primarily through electioneering in which this majority is a passive mass, polling booth fodder. It is through active struggle.

Of course this cannot be done for everyone in one fell swoop. It needs a constant, unremitting involvement in each and every struggle in defence both of past gains and to extend our rights. It means learning and teaching, the lessons of those struggles. It means **organising** into a democratic and disciplined force those who learn those lessons first. It means building an organisation of the leading fighters - a **revolutionary** organisation. If we are to win the fight for working class power then we will need to turn that organisation into a real fighting party of the working class - a party radically different from today's Labour Party. Not a loose federation of electioneers and union bureaucrats who hoist into Westminster a bevy of egotistical and uncontrollable MPs but an organisation of the best militants in every struggle of the working class and of the oppressed, geared to support, spread & lead those struggles in the direction of the overthrow of the bosses and the bankers.

Elections, for such a party would be good opportunities to argue, persuade and agitate for the need to decisively settle accounts with the ruling class. Revolutionary Communist MPs would be concerned not with persuading the ruling class to let them take over the running of the bosses' state for five years on condition that nothing seriously against the bosses' interests is done but with exposing mercilessly that system and its crimes, standing up for the oppressed and exploited in Britain and in the countries that it exploits. Capitalism with its wars and slumps repeatedly poses before the working class the opportunity to abolish it. The working class can do this on one condition - that it has a leadership and an organisation to do it.

It is to building this organisation that Workers Power dedicates itself. We appeal to those militants - in the unions and in the Labour Party to join us in this struggle. To do so does not require, as the sects who miscall themselves Marxists or Trotskyists claim, leaving the mass organisations of the working class, but fighting for revolutionary communist politics and leadership in these organisations.

Developing revolutionary wings in the reformist labour movement is a necessary step towards creating a mass revolutionary party. Such a process will not be one of peaceful evolution or organic transformation. Not because communists are wreckers or conspirators as the Labour leaders and union bureaucrats claim, but because these leaders are far from being democrats. They will purge, expel, split and witch-hunt genuine militants, let alone communists, when they organise effectively to counter their sell-outs and betrayals. Therefore the winning of mass forces from the Kinnocks and Co cannot and will not be a long peaceful process but one that requires steadfastness faced with persecution. Armed with a revolutionary programme an organisation can succeed in this struggle. In Britain our organisation alone has such a programme and a fighting perspective. Join us!

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caster) must be built. If K strike then Doncaster must support them and vice-versa. In way resistance to closures can be built up. But such link ups must be stepping stones to future national action. They must be confidence building exercises. T means they must be controlled by the rank and file.

On the pay front, the claim must be backed up by a declaration of an overtime ban and work-to-rule (under the Mines and Quarries Act). Action like this can complete coal stocks, re-activate sense of struggle and prepare strike action. Such action should be aimed at winning not only pay rise, but also reinstatement for the sacked lads.

To hold the line in the pit union representatives for every shift, district, face and section should be elected. Committees with such representatives as a majority, must transform themselves into councils of war, civil war. They must form links across pits and areas, involve the mass via mass meetings and pit bulletins.

By building up such organisations and campaigning for such action we can begin to rebuild the NUM as a force that can defeat the NCB and the Tories. The centre-right coalition have no fight left in them. If Arthur Scargil has then he should openly support every rank and file initiative that takes place - even if the aristocrats oppose it.

The greatest gain of the strike was that it brought to the fore thousands of young miners. They learnt more in twelve months than college courses could teach them in a lifetime. The tired routinised officials need to be removed at all levels and younger militants brought in. The task of fighting Lynk and co's scab union demands this renewal of leadership.

For this reason it is vital that the National Rank and File Miners Movement, meeting in conference on August 10th, transforms itself. To date it has not pursued clear anti-bureaucratic policies. It did not have an independent presence at the NUM conference. It does not have the programme and policies to take on and defeat the centre-right coalition and transform the union. At the conference we will be supporting resolutions that contain the policies outlined here. We call all militant miners to attend the conference and support these policies.

For details of the conference ring:

T Clegg 0302 844446 or  
A Robe 0302 845655

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union and by every miners' support group still active. They will have a big job on. Pithead meetings and rallies addressed by NUM militants, leaders and other labour movement leaders must put the case against scab unionism and for a union that fights the NCB's butchery. The scabs' links with the Tories must be exposed. As well as the special *Miner*, local bulletins should be produced for every NUM action committee.

The reformed NUM will have to do two things. By taking action against pit closures, by fighting for better wages and conditions it must show to all waverers that it is a real union and that Lynk's outfit is a bosses' front. More it must be reformed on the basis of real workers' democracy. Unity in the NUM will be reformed action. To make that action effective the members must be drawn into decision making, and the officials must be made accountable. This means mass meetings to decide on action and the regular election of all officials.

By taking these measures we can first outflank and, in time, totally defeat the scabs. We have nothing to offer workers. We must make sure the NUM does.

**REBUILD THE NUM AS A FIGHTING, DEMOCRATIC UNION**

# workers power

## NUM CONFERENCE - BEHIND THE RHETORIC

THE SCARGILL FAN club on Britain's far left were unanimous in their response to the NUM's conference. Socialist Worker hailed it as a 'breath of fresh air'. Socialist Organiser announced that the 'NUM goes left'. While Socialist Action, as usual the most fulsome in its praise of left leaders, said that everyone from Thatcher, through Kinnock, to Lynk "suffered a severe defeat in the first day of the NUM conference."

These hip-hip-hoorays tell us nothing about what really went on at the NUM conference. They merely confirm their inability to look the reality of the NUM leadership's weaknesses squarely in the face.

Arthur Scargill in his presidential address pugnaciously defended mass picketing, attacked Kinnock for his denunciations of violence and hit at the TUC for its failure to deliver solidarity action and sufficient funds to help the NUM. As a defence of the strike against those who sabotaged it or who are now hinting that it should never have happened this was absolutely necessary. It was as an assessment of the outcome of the strike and as a guide to future action that Arthur Scargill's speech was weakest.

### WAIT FOR KINNOCK?

True he did say that "only industrial action will save pits". Against the creeping Jesus policy of appealing to Bishops and police chiefs he is 100% correct. He demanded that a Labour Government refund the massive fines that the venomous Tory judges stole. He demanded that a future Labour Government re-instate the sacked miners. So it should, but here the weaknesses begin to show. If the sacked lads have to wait for Kinnock to reinstate them they may have to wait a long time. The most glaring weakness in Arthur Scargill's address lay in its failure to draw a critical balance sheet of a defeat. Instead he maintained it was not a defeat! "Let no-one talk to me about defeats or setbacks".

He lashed out at "those who since the end of the strike have prevaricated in a negative and utterly destructive fashion" and who "fall utterly to understand what actually took place". For



Bernie Malone

Arthur Scargill the struggle in itself was a victory. The strike and its leadership is beyond criticism. He wants to lump together criticism of the strike or of militant tactics and intransigent loyalty to its goals with criticism of the strategy of the leadership. The first sort of criticism has come largely from the British Communist Party and from Kinnock's supporters. This should be answered directly, naming names and not pulling any punches. But to try to stifle all criticism and to go on to claim a victory is self-deluding and self-defeating nonsense. Indeed it gives a stick to the Right to beat Scargill over the head with.

How can rank and file miners but acknowledge a defeat which will result in 30,000 job losses in this financial year. The NCB have announced 50 pits earmarked for closure. MacGregor and Co are openly contemplating the closure of whole coalfields - Kent, Scotland and Wales. Of course we have suffered a defeat. That does not mean to say we should have given the NCB a walk-over a year earlier. Only a scab or a cretin could argue that. It does mean that we must learn the lessons of the defeat to discover how to turn the tables, to put the union back in fighting trim, to minimise the damage the NCB is trying to do and to return to an all out counterattack as soon as possible. An old saying goes "he who does not learn from history is doomed to repeat it". We must learn the lessons, positive and negative, of the Great Strike. That isn't to denigrate this tremendous struggle. It is to do it justice!

There can be no doubt that the principal lesson to be learnt from the strike was that the union leadership failed to get the massive solidarity action from the rest of the working class necessary to win the strike. They failed for two reasons. First, because they went about getting this almost exclusively through deals with their fellow national officials eventually turning to the TUC. These gentlemen never once delivered serious solidarity action.

Secondly, because they refused to lead and organise their own rank and file to appeal directly to the rank and file of other unions for solidarity strike action.

Behind this approach lay the leadership's position as part of the caste of union full-time officials. They don't interfere in each other's unions or their struggles. They viewed the strike as a normal trade dispute - scared of its political implications. As a result they did not dare launch an appeal for and a campaign to get a general strike.

No wonder then that Arthur Scargill was prepared to back a general amnesty - for the leaders. "Today's discussion has fully endorsed every single action of the national leaders since November 1983". That is the voice of a bureaucrat who is not open to criticism. Yet the Notts and Midlands minorities know well how flawed were the tactics that let the scabs organise their ballot. They know how little national leadership there was in the first six weeks of the strike.

Militants in Scotland and Wales and Scargill himself know how false was the tactic of sweetheart deals with the ISTC at Ravenscraig and Llanwern. The militants at Orgreave and Scargill know that Jack Taylor and other area leaders blocked picket re-entering the embattled mass picket. The militants in all coalfields know how false the return to work with no agreement was. Yet the militants are effectively told to shut up.

This is bureaucratic steam-rolling not militant leadership. It is important not just because it covers up the present situation. That situation is that the NUM leadership has moved to the right. It is also important because it covers up the lack of any plan of action with regard to pit closures or the sacked miners. Explaining what the NUM has decided to do now, Scargill explained: "We intend to engage in a campaign to win support of the Labour and trade union movement and the wider movement against the programme (of NCB closures - WP)

since it is now clear to everyone that there has to be a campaign to defend pits and jobs".

On the fight for reinstatement the Kent proposal for a conference in October was agreed. The terms of this conference were unclear. In agreeing to it the Executive members and its Kent movers avoided all reference to industrial action. Again the emphasis is likely to be on publicity. Also, by October the number of sacked lads pushing for reinstatement will have dwindled as they seek other jobs.

On pay the conference called for a 'substantial increase'. Refusing to name a figure is a classic bureaucratic trick. It gives them enormous scope for negotiations. More significant the claim is not accompanied by any threat of industrial action - not even an overtime ban. Also, the threat to withdraw from the incentive schemes is fatally flawed. Sid Vincent announced that there was no way Lancashire would withdraw from the scheme. Heathfield responded by assuring the areas that, despite national policy, they could decide whether or not to pull out of the scheme on an area by area basis. This is hopeless. Given MacGregor's plans to introduce a British Steel

style local, productivity tied pay scheme the NUM's claim is pitifully weak. To really smash the area Incentive Scheme you need a pay claim that consolidates bonuses into base rates, that fights for a lump sum catch-up claim and that defends wages from inflation by a sliding scale of increments linked to a cost of living index produced by the union and wives groups. Such a policy really could unite the ranks in the face of MacGregor's onslaught.

The other major decision of the conference was the introduction of the rule changes. These changes were billed at first as centralising the union. Unfortunately they have done little to do this or democratise the NUM. The defence of life tenure for officials, regardless of the attacks on Scargill, was wrong. Emlyn Williams commented that "you are not a better man for being elec-

ted". Of course election doesn't guarantee that a leader is a genius but it does indicate that he has the support of the members. Moreover regular elections ensure that he will remain a better man - ie be answerable to the rank and file. Williams' contempt for trade union democracy is of a piece with the rest of his politics. Arthur Scargill was elected proudly proclaiming his support for the regular re-election of officials. Where does he stand now?

In return for receiving lifetime the national officials assured the areas that the rules would not adversely effect their autonomy. Heathfield's comment on the incentive schemes confirmed this. The result, a 75% vote for the rule changes, other than associate membership for women, was the product of a deal amongst the leadership. It has not ended federalism or strengthened rank and file democracy. In fact the rule on strikes not being official until they are recognised by the Executive and on only being able to remove officials by a two-thirds majority, weaken rank and file control in the union.

### BALANCE OF FORCES

In our view the decisions of the NUM conference reflect a new post-strike balance of forces in the leadership, that is working against militancy in the union. There now exists a powerful centre-left-right coalition of South Wales, Yorkshire and Scotland together with Lancashire, North Derbyshire and the North-East, who distrust Scargill's militant postures and who aim to put a brake on the militants inside the union. The shaping voice in this coalition is that of the Euro wing of the CP. George Bolton of the Scottish NUM is the front runner for this coalition. In place of militant action to win reinstatement for the sacked lads he spoke shamelessly of his efforts to build a 'broad alliance' not only with the powerless bishops but with four chief constables - the men who led Thatcher's war on the NUM!

No wonder the New Statesman smugly talks of the CP as a 'moderating force' in the NUM. This right-Labourite journal smilingly approves of this moderation. The CP led coalition which dominates the leadership favours rebuilding the NUM as just another component of a 'broad alliance'. Its role will be to subordinate its struggles to the greater good of securing a Labour Government. To this end, as we saw at South Kirby in the spring, the officials will do everything they can to isolate strikes that erupt in the pits. A rank and file movement in the NUM must face this fact with its eyes open.

Against the centre-right coalition rank and file militants must address themselves to the task of rebuilding the fighting strengths of the union. Every strike should receive immediate official recognition and spread by flying pickets and mass pit-head meetings.

Alliances of militant areas and panels within areas (eg Don-

continued on page 5 ►

# workers power

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