

# **THE RED MINER**

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**NO. 9 APRIL 86**



**workers  
power**

**Bulletin for miners and their families 10p**

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Thatcher wants to ensure that her reign brings the unions to their knees. When they resist - as the NUM did - she is prepared to spend millions trying to break them. She is also keen to create fifth-column organisations inside the working class - scab unions.

The UDM was deliberately built up by the Tories and the NCB to act as a dagger at the unions throat. But the scourge of scab unionism is not limited to the mines. After stabbing us in the back during the great strike Eric Hammond's EETPU - the electricians union - has organised a disgusting scabbing operation at Fortress Wapping. The EETPU actually recruited men to steal the jobs from the printers that Rupert Murdoch sacked from The Sun, The Times, The Sunday Times and The News Of The World.

A television programme showed Hammond negotiating no strike deals at Hitachi, welcoming Edward Heath to open a union training office, and bragging about his scabbing operations. It was a public relations exercise for what Hammond calls "market unionism".

#### NO STRIKE DEALS

Put bluntly this means that the officials sell their services to the bosses through single union deals and no-strike procedural agreements. And they sell their services to their members too. By service to their members the EETPU now means cheap car insurance and stock market advice. Collective organisation and strength to defend wages and jobs is, they argue a thing of the past. By selling their new wares they guarantee the salaries of themselves and other officials in the "union business".

The fashion is catching on elsewhere. The print unions have just signed a deal with the Financial Times that guarantees the bosses against any disruption of production. Vauxhall has secured a similar deal which allows it to replace striking workers with scabs with full union backing.

The big engineers union, the AUEW, is poised to follow in Hammond's footsteps. It has already allied with the EETPU to break TUC ruling by accepting the Tories' dirty money for ballots. At the moment there are elections for the presidency of the AUEW. The right wing candidate is Bill Jordan. He



Kinnock and Hattersley Love scabs Hate class struggle

openly courts fusion with the EETPU and sings songs of praise to their scab methods. He misses no opportunity to scoff at the failure of the heroic militancy of the miners and their wives to secure victory, ignoring the fact that it was the treachery of the bureaucracy that led to the defeat. This man shared vice-chairmanship of the extreme right-wing Mainstream group with the UDM's Prendergast. If he wins the presidency it will strengthen the hand of the right even further.

#### SCABS IN THE LABOUR PARTY

But the hard right are not alone in helping the spread of scab unionism. The so-called "centre" in the labour movement are co-responsible for aiding the growth of scab unionism. In Lanarkshire in Scotland many Labour Party officials are implicated in recruiting scabs for Murdoch's Kinning Park plant in Glasgow. They are led by one Patrick O'Hanlon. This EETPU member was recently voted off the Scottish Labour Party Executive. But of the 100,000 votes cast for him 67,000 came from the AUEW.

Roy Hattersley, deputy leader of the Labour Party, is also doing his bit to help Hammond, Lynk and co. He described UDM traitors who remain in the Labour Party as "loyal members" at a recent meeting in Mansfield. He had also planned to hold talks with Lynk until a leak to the

newspapers caused him to call off the meeting.

Even the misnamed Communist Party is tolerating two scabs who are regularly crossing the picket line at Wapping - Stanley Levenson and Chris Nawrat - in it's ranks.

#### TUC LEADERS

The most important help being given to the scab outfits comes from the TUC leaders. Their refusal to act during our strike was a favour to the bosses who were stealthily laying their plans for the UDM. Their retreat in the face of Tory anti-union laws today is of a piece with that treachery. Instead of mobilising behind the printers in a fight against the laws they are sitting around tables with Neil Kinnock working out ways to concoct a set of Labour Party/TUC administered anti-union laws. Apart from accepting the sanctity of the ballot the plans being considered include limiting pickets to a small number so as not to give the police(!) the idea that the aim is to stop anything or anyone.

In the face of this retreat the old left in the TUC is falling apart. Only Arthur Scargill raised a voice of opposition to the TUC/Labour Party blueprint for restrictions on the unions. Alas he is not doing anything to mobilise opposition to these plans amongst the rank and file. He is conducting his opposition only within the committees and conferences of the bureaucrats.

But the possibility of fighting scab unionism and stamping it out exists. In our union strikes against the UDM have shown

the way. At Thurcroft in Yorkshire a strike took place after a man was threatened for refusing to work with UDM members. The strike was successful with one UDM man even re-applying to join the NUM. Strikes have taken place against the sacking of NUM member Paul Whetton. His "crime" was that he put NUM notices up at the pit.

The campaign against the UDM must be linked to a fight against other examples of scab unionism. In particular NUM branches/lodges must ensure that the union puts down a resolution at the next TUC to expel the EETPU from it's ranks. Resolutions from branches/lodges to this effect must go forward immediately. Likewise in the Labour Party resolutions calling for the expulsion of UDM members and EETPU members who support Hammond's scabbing must be put and acted upon.

#### CLASS STRUGGLE UNIONISM

The best answer to scab unionism is to fight for class struggle unionism. Unions must be democratised and pledged to fighting the bosses and defending our interests. Practically in our union this means building on and spreading action taken in pits and areas - like the North Derbyshire overtime ban. It means fighting the bonus schemes with strikes like the one that took place at Wooley near Barnsley. And it means building solidarity action with the printers now.

A good dose of class struggle unionism will have all the bosses' narks in our ranks either begging for mercy, or clearing out altogether.



Sac winners Stabbed in the back and now forgotten by the leaders of the TUC

# REGIONAL ROUND-UP



## NORTH DERBYSHIRE

Team briefings in North Derbyshire have been brought to a halt by NACODS withdrawing from them and refusing to implement them in the North Western area. This method - from America and Japan of bypassing and then breaking the union in a firm or company is known as de-unionising so enabling management to reduce wages and jobs and make the workforce work harder.

The North Derbyshire NUM never organised effectively against team briefings and said they were a joke. The NUM should look to places where these methods have been tried before, such as British Leyland and BSC some joke!

### MANAGEMENT FULL OF THEMSELVES

The NCB are still flushed with their success in breaking the strike in this area. Management are strutting about like little Hitlers and treating the men like naughty boys. Mr Moses gave our legs a slap before he left to do his masters bidding or should that be his mistresses! We now have a new Area Director. He is dashing about like General Patton in his lust for glory. They call him Horton and you will know him, he walks around muttering 'kilajouls'. No he is not demented, its just a term for measuring energy like a therm. That's just to let you know Ted that you are not blinding us all with science!

The strategy of the Coal Board has been to lull the men into a false sense of security before they hit them hard which will most likely be this year - 1986. Whitwell has already had the axe hung over it. In February the NCB gave 28 days notice to the NUM that it was changing the Area Incentive Bonus Scheme and implementing a pit by pit scheme. No negotiation - just take it or leave it. This is believed to be only the thin end of the wedge. The next stage is the Doncaster agreement

The union kept a low profile till the agreement was implemented then went for an Area ballot on industrial action. The possible forms of action were an overtime ban; no coal cutting in overtime or snap time; working to just cutting the norm. The ballot taken on the 14th March gave 64% for taking industrial action.

On April 1st a mid week overtime ban was imposed. The play is to hit the Coal Board at the beginning of the financial year to exert pressure on those who negotiate with the union.

So far things are quiet, with just a few rumblings. I think it should have been a full overtime ban so that all the men are affected the same and nobody has any excuse to break it. We are now waiting to see what action comes from the Dirty Tricks department of the NCB. Some information we have received is they are going to use their suer scabs like they did in the strike, to break the overtime ban or to recruit to the UDM (Under Direct management Control) so NUM members must resist the growth of this cancer and its filthy spores.



## YORKSHIRE

There have been lots of short lived strikes in Yorkshire over individual pit issues like bonus etc. The fight against the scabs is still on and ended in a significant victory at Thurcroft

Strike action forced the NCB to move a member of the UDM to Cresswell and the other rejoined the NUM. The 500 men who walked out stayed out for 5 days preventing the Board paving the way for UDM members in Yorkshire despite the weakness of Thurcroft towards the end of the strike with the pit split almost 50-50 on strike and at work. And help from the Yorks exec. They were nowhere to be seen.

## SOUTH WALES.

Last week (10th April) men were on strike again at Hatfield Main Doncaster over working with a scab. This man had only just been found out to be a scab and men were furious that they had worked with him not knowing. There is to be ballot this week to decide what action to take next. We have it on good authority that life hasn't been worth living for the 20 or so scabs at Hatfield and that since the strike 17 of them have 'chosen' to leave the industry. A message from Area to the Hatfield manager was intercepted which instructed him to go all the way to break this fight even if it meant closing the pit. Thurocroft were able to beat the same Area management and show they were not going to be a dumping ground for scabs that others wouldn't work with. Hatfield can take some strength from their victory.

In the Doncaster area the Board has put the pit top transport out to tender to private firms.

### TAYLOR TALK



South Yorkshire Area has hit record performances this year earning the NCB a 'sparkling' £25 million, instead of the anticipated £105 million loss. This has led to praise for union leaders and management. Well I know Jack Taylor said we were on our knees but isn't it time he tried to get up! All he had to say in face of large job losses, management crackdown and an increasing accident rate was "This shows the quality of the people the NCB have working for them. They have achieved this with 8,000 fewer men - it is a wonderful performance." (Sheffield Star 8/4/86) Jack hoped they would now let some of the sacked men have their jobs back.

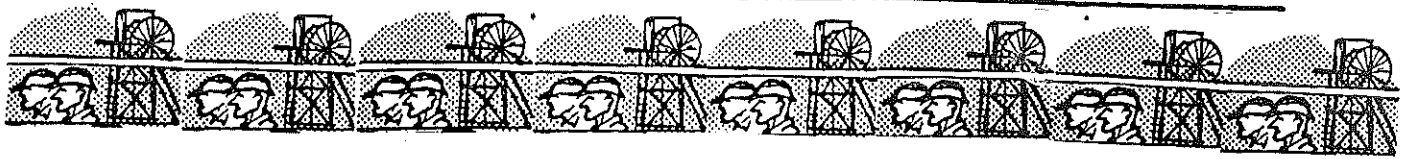
After the closure of eleven collieries and the loss of around 5,000 jobs, productivity in the coalfield has shot up by 46% in the last eight months. The NCB are likely to declare this month that the South Wales coalfield has made it's first profit for 30 years. This follows a loss of over £230 million in the year before the strike. Today's depleted workforce now produce more coal than was produced before the strike.

As a "recognition" of this "significant landmark" the area director recently announced that £30 million was to be spent on a new anthracite mine at Caraway Fawr, near Llanelli in the west of the coalfield. This development will replace part of the capacity of the Cynheidre colliery, and will according to the board secure 800 jobs. The NCB also seem likely to finally go ahead with the £80 million Margam development this year. This would provide a further 700 jobs. In addition the board have also taken on 100 youngsters, the first new recruits in the coalfield for over 4 years. New investment is also continuing, with 10 new faces coming into production in the near future.

While these developments are welcome, they cannot in anyway compensate for the butchery of the coalfield last autumn. The consequences of the mass closure will be deeply felt for many years in areas already with some of the worst social deprivation and highest unemployment figures in Europe.

Whilst understandable at the moment, increasing productivity of the remaining pits only plays into the hand of the NCB. Typically, they are now not satisfied with the coalfield making a profit, they now want "every pit to pay it's way"; i.e. to make a profit. While many pits, like Deep Navigation (which recently announced £4 million profit), Betws, Marine and Oakdale appear to be "safe", miners at the loss making pits will be under even more pressure this year. The threat of falling oil prices is already being used to drive productivity rates still higher - with a target of 3 tons/manshift by Christmas, no matter what the human cost. Last month a man was killed at each of the two Merthyr pits, just coincidence????

# ISSUES IN THE UNION



*We print below a report of a recent Broad Left conference in Durham. Our thanks go to a Warwickshire NUM member attending the meeting for this report.*

A recent conference was held in Durham attended by approximately 50 miners, area reps were from Scotland, Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire, Notts, Leicestershire and Warwickshire. Many organisations had tried to block the conference. Although these gatherings are vital within the NUM, it is important that the correct conclusions are drawn on the way forward and how to stop the retreat.

The morning session was taken up by area reports. Various reports came in mostly all on the same theme. The NCB had the upper hand in every area and were using it to their full advantage. They were carrying out the closure programme with vigour. Local agreements which had been won over the years were being swept aside. Men were still being sacked for trivial reasons. Also from official level within the NUM the line being put forward was "keep your heads down lads there is nothing we can do". I am sure many militants are fed up to the back teeth with this sort of attitude.

During the afternoon session a National Committee was formed consisting of 2 members from each area. We then moved onto the business that miners had travelled to the meeting for. Policy was formed built around six main items. It was decided that Women's Groups should be invited with full voting rights. This was fully accepted and rightly so.



Miners on the march

## AGAINST FEDERALISM

It was with general agreement that there should only be one union. We saw the vital importance of this during the strike and the need to smash not only the UDM but also the federated system within the NUM, when an area like Notts can totally bypass the national rules and use their area rule book when it suits them. Along these lines many changes would be needed within the rule book for the rank and file to take control of their union. Right wing and soft left bureaucrats so often use the union rules to suppress any form of action. These changes will have to be fought for by a militant rank and file that are prepared to build a fighting organisation.



25 pits to date have closed since the end of the strike with 40,000 jobs lost, in many cases there has been no attempt to stop the closures. In the few cases where

there has been a fightback, this has been mainly put forward as an economic fight. As we saw with the Bates closure the farce of the "new independent review procedure" where the NUM won the case and the pit still closed. We can only stop closures by staging a militant fightback. Where pits are threatened rank and file involvement is vital, built around the case for a right to a job and no closure until the pit is exhausted. In pits that are getting investment the membership must take up the case of threatened pits, reducing the amount of coal that is mined, staging work outs in support, and ensuring the bosses know that we are not prepared to accept blanket closure.

## BROAD LEFTS

Rank and file links with other unions are vital in organising a fightback. It was sorely lacking during the Great Strike apart from a few exceptions. If the links can be built for when the next battle comes we can bypass the bureaucracy and gain the physical support directly. What we must be wary of is attempting to build an organisation on the old broad left system which on the whole became an electioneering machine. Otherwise we will fall into the same trap of getting so called "lefts" elected, such as George Bolton (the one who believes the way forward is to get police chiefs and vicars won over) and Henry Richardson (who in the early days of the strike told men to get back to work). If members put up for positions they must be on rank and file policies and there must be some system where they are recallable to the membership. Too many times we have seen people stand on a left ticket and turn right when they get there.

One of the most amazing decisions was to allow anybody in the NUM the right to join the organisation including scabs! Surely if an attempt is being made to build a militant fighting faction within the union the scabs gave that right up when they crossed the picket line.

On the whole the conference didn't come up with firm concrete policies that could be taken to the rank and file as a way forward to stop the retreat

## INTERVIEW

Below we print an interview RED MINER had with Paul Whetton, the recently sacked NUM branch secretary from Bevercotes in Notts. The interview is especially important for two reasons. Firstly it informs us about Paul's fight at Bevercotes and what significance he attaches to that fight. Secondly the discussion deals with the wider issue of the present state of the NUM and what can be done to improve it.

Paul Whetton's comments about his own sacking, and its wider implications are very important. In particular he's absolutely right to link the UDM's growth with general attempts in the Trade Union movement to build scab unions. That's why

Where RED MINER disagrees with Paul Whetton, is in his view of the NUM leadership and the scale of the retreat being organised by majority sections of the NEC.

In recent issues we have stated many times, that we consider a full-scale retreat is going ahead, at leadership level, prompted by the Communist Party and Kinnock supporting members of the NEC. This retreat seeks to isolate Scargill on the NEC with a view to eventually getting rid of him. RED MINER has criticised Scargill's continued refusal to openly appeal to the rank and file to build a campaign to fight off attacks on militant NUM policies. As the interview indicates Paul Whetton takes a different view, questioning the idea of a retreat and saying it is wrong to blame individuals or sections of the leadership.

Elsewhere in the interview Paul Whetton gives support to our call for the building of a rank and file movement. This indicates that we can argue about the question of leadership, Scargill's role etc, but we can find common ground in the call for a conference to unite the rank and file and build an ongoing movement.

RED MINER would be glad to see letters and comments from any other militants who want to put across their views on the points raised in the interview. Please write to us c/o 138 Crookesmoor Rd, Sheffield.



What happened when you were sacked and what's happening now?

Well Paul Whetton was sacked for pinning an NUM notice up announcing a branch meeting at the pit. But I'd rather see it in more broader terms and say a branch secretary was sacked for carrying out his duties as a branch officer, this is happening at Ollerton and others pits in Notts. Its not just a thing in the mining industry. In my opinion there is an out and out vicious attack from the Tories on the T.U. movement itself. What's happening in Notts is just a pointer to what is happening in other places, like Wapping, at Silent Night, Forgemasters and at BSC plants up and down the country. What we see is a concerted attack against the basis



When I was sacked the immediate response was a special branch meeting to call for industrial action. There was a very good response from the both the NUM and the UDM members. This was in spite of a good deal of harassment and intimidation from management. I think it indicated the strength of feeling that management were blatantly stamping on TU rights. The fact that some were not in the NUM didn't stop them seeing this as an attack on rights. If a man can be sacked for putting a notice up or taking one down for that matter, what's going to be the next step? Are we going to have to tug us forelock everytime we walk past a senior management representative? Workers at the pit recognised this and acted accordingly.



Whetton speaks out.

You have got to realise that this is a very difficult situation in regards to what is happening in the Notts. coalfield. They reviewed the situation the following Wed. and because of the support we'd got they decided to keep on until the end of the week. I knew we couldn't keep the action going indefinitely or we would have had men going back in ones and twos. So I wrote to that meeting, I didn't go, urging them to go back to work and carry on the fight underground by arguing and recruiting members to the NUM - taking support from the NCB's puppet..that's still going on now.

How does this link in with the national picture. We argue that there has been a shift to the right in the NUM and an attempt to isolate Scargill. What is it possible to do to stop this retreat?

There's one major problem without condemning any individual, or the executive or the leadership themselves and that is we lost the strike. Many people don't like to admit that, but that is the reality of the situation. After 6 weeks on strike men wanted to know what we would do about the scabs and we said then that if we lost it would be what the scabs would be doing about us. And I think the fact we lost the strike is a major block on the union..they've got no finance, they've got no real clout when it comes to negotiating with the Coal Board and that's a serious setback for everyone, the rank and file, the executive etc.

Having said that and being parochial I think something more should be done about raising recognition of the union in Notts. I don't see how they can sit down at the same table when our union is not recognised by the Coal Board in some coalfields.

MacGreggor's mandate was to smash the NUM and we managed to stop that. He defeated us in the strike but he hasn't smashed the union. What we are going through is a very difficult transitional period from the end of a defeat and trying to consolidate the union. That's another reason the Coal Board are backing the UDM. They need to keep the divisions. I see a period of perhaps 1 or 2 years, until such time as we can wipe the UDM off the map and then have a united union and tackle this question. Whichever MacGreggor is in charge and whichever the Tories are in its going to be extremely difficult whether by the rank and file or national level to tackle the Coal Board.

Would you go as far as to say industrial action over these questions or pit closures is ruled out by the defeat?

I don't see it as entirely ruled out but I don't see it as the answer. At my pit the bread and butter issues, whether its water money, riding time, safety standards, those issues have to be tackled. The UDM will not

bother they will do what management say. The NUM has to take them up and show they are the union who will stand up to management

I think that any attempt to start major strike action against pit closures will be doomed to failure at the present time. We can clearly see the NCB's aims - to cut away the dead wood; to have X number of super pits to sell off to private industry - and I think that any concerted major industrial action will come at that time. At the moment we are in the position of trying to consolidate what we've got and getting rid of the UDM.

In that time we can try to get some steam generated nationally. I would say that where a pit is up for closure any campaign has to involve the whole community, other unions etc. the pressure has to be put on politically on the rest of the TU movement that we are out not just to save holes in the ground but communities. Every community is different and every rank and file will know their own problems and how to tackle them. I am sure that is what will be done in the short term and I don't see a major confrontation until privatisation.

There is an argument from the Communist Party that industrial action is a thing of the past. Although we have differences with you about the timing and possibilities of action, you are not saying industrial action is outmoded

I totally disagree with that approach even though I recognise the difficulties at the moment. Anyone who now believes that the way out is through the review procedure is living in cloud cuckoo land. You just have to look at Bates! There is going to be a time when industrial action is the only answer. I certainly don't believe that industrial action is old hat. I believe it is the only weapon we've got and that any other talk of conciliation, consultation, review procedures is backing away from it. But we do have to recognise the reality of the situation we live in. There's not going to be any national action on pit closures in the very short term.

Lets move on to the question of the Broad Left. There's the National Rank and File Movt. and there's been Broad Left meetings called to get militants together. Do you

think its important to build Broad Lefts in the union ?

I think that such meetings in the areas are important to enable people to feel they are participating and getting things done. The problem in Notts is people think that to have been out on strike automatically makes them leftwing. This isn't true I wouldn't trust some of them politically as far as I could throw a grand piano! That's not to put them down but it does leave a Notts. Broad Left with a bit of a problem.

I think BL's are a ginger group, they can galvanise rank and file activity and there's a lot of benefit can be gained from them but I've also got my suspicions about people who form them and then just use them as stepping stones for their own ends. That's a problem everyone has to be aware of and face

We are very critical of the old style BL as being simply electoral machines. We say there is a need for a rank and file movement that can help turn the union into a healthy, fighting political union. As a step towards this we would say it is a good idea to call a conference along the lines of 'Stop the Retreat' to bring together militants. Despite there being many differences about what to do would you see that as a step forward ?

Yes, I'd see nothing wrong with that at all. It would bring people together to argue out their differences which would be beneficial. What I wouldn't want to see is an organisation where everyone pats everyone else on the back. I think that sort of thing would be disastrous. Obviously there are different ideas about how to tackle the present situation. I don't know if I agree there is actually a retreat on. I don't think anyone can deny we are standing still, we are not going forward but I don't know about a retreat. It is a question of marking time, consolidating what we've got, rebuilding the strength of the national union at all levels and then going forward when we are united again. I believe that it would be of great benefit to the Notts. miners to participate in any forum like that. And I am sure that the experience of the Notts miners during and after the strike can be of tremendous help to other miners experiencing other problems.

**SOGAT**

# PRINT STRIKE



If you would have asked an ordinary trade unionist 10 years ago if it was possible for the entire workforce of a large factory to be fired and replaced they would have said it would be impossible. The unions would not allow it. But Murdoch has done it and he has been able to do it for two connected reasons.

The first is the result of the defeat of the miners' strike. This enabled Murdoch and the judges to immediately steal SOGAT's assets. The second is due to the consolidation of the new breed of trade union leaders - the realists - as a result of that defeat. Dean and Dubbins are two pedigrees of the new realist trade union leaders.

Opposing 'Scargillite' tactics (effective picketing and blacking) as counter productive they have sought to present themselves to the public as Mr and Mrs Nice. They have even spent one and a quarter million Pounds on a Saatchi and Saatchi like exercise to prove this. However this has not prevented SOGAT's funds from being sequestered nor the NGA from being fined. It has not won the co-operation from other 'nice' trade union leaders nor shamed the 'horrible' Mr Murdoch to the negotiating table.

This is particularly true of the miners. The miners were at first told to stay away from Wapping. Later under pressure from their members Dean and Dubbins agreed to invite miners, but through the NUM bureaucracy. This ensures that the NUM bureaucrats severely limit the numbers of miners pickets.



During the miners strike the printers contributed more than £1 million. The Sun snapeis blacked the paper when it tried to compare Scargill to Hitler. Many printers today regret that they did not do more for the miners in their hour of need.

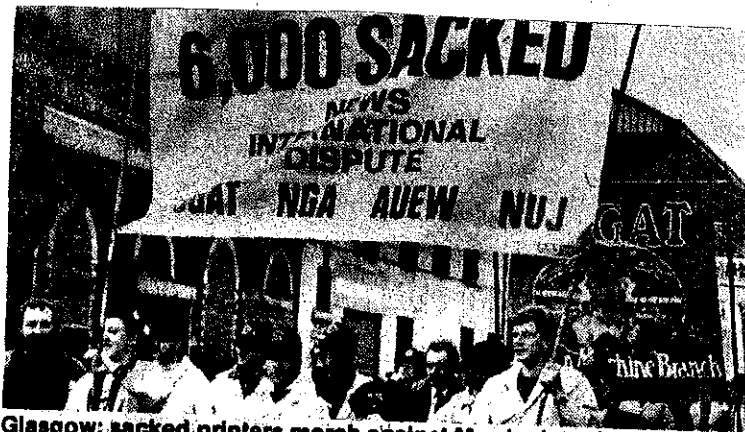
Now the roles are reversed Miners the printers need you! At last sections of the rank and file are beginning to question the existing leadership of the strike. They recognise that bringing Fleet Street out is the key to winning the dispute, stopping the press barons in their track and winning support from the broader labour movement. On April 29th a public meeting has been called in Fleet Street to draw union activists together. Workers Power fully support this initiative.

In the mean time a Union of Print Support Groups (UPSG) has been set up. The UPSG has built on the lessons of the miner's strike. It has oriented itself towards the rank and file printers. It seeks to link up these rank and file printers with rank and file supporters in others industries and in other areas.

If your town, village or pit does not have a print support group, start one and affiliate to the UPSG. Details of affiliation from Larry Hyett (01) 735 567, or Steve Masterson (01) 435 5652.

Unfortunately in order to be nice, Dean and Dubbins have stamped on effective trade union activity. The picketing at Wapping has been demoralisingly disorganised. One Saturday we were even marched past Wapping thanked for being there and told to go home. Dean and Dubbins have discouraged other rank and file trade unionists from joining the pickets.

Do not let Murdoch get away with this. If he wins, other bosses will not hesitate to sack the whole workforce and insist on no strike deals. In this they will be ably aided by the rats like Lynk and Hammond who are all too eager to run their unions to the bosses orders.



Glasgow, sacked printers march against Murdoch and Maxwell

# WIVES' MOVEMENT.....

## ONE YEAR ON

REI MINER described the last NWAPC conference as a 'wasted opportunity'. The conference organisers saw to it that the hundreds of wives brought together for the first time did not make any decisions or take on the running of their own movement.

Demands on the National Committee to open the movement to the enormous energy unleashed by the strike had been repeatedly rejected on the grounds of impracticality and cost and decisions continued to be made by 'those in the know', most often the unelected ex officio members, and rubber stamped by the Area delegates. (It is worth remembering that as early as June/July 1984 the Doncaster delegate, from Hatfield Main Women's Support Group was pushing for a national delegate conference with women from all the groups. Also a conference of over 100 wives in the Midlands in September 1984 asked for the same thing). A full year later we thought we were going to a decision making conference to find instead a set piece rally.

During the strike many women in the pit communities looked to the national movement for a lead and gave their unstinting support to demonstrations, rallies and fundraising. The strike opened the eyes of thousands of women and politicised them. NWAPC could have become the basis of an active fighting working class women's movement. Yet in the period since the strike when the groups needed them most National were extraordinarily quiet. In fact apart from some Christmas money we didn't really hear from them through the whole of 1985/6.

The main problem for the groups was simply knowing what to do and how to keep the groups going. Many folded as soon as there was no kitchen or hardship work to do. The pressure to return to normal, get back to the home and the kids in face of the demoralisation of defeat was understandably enormous. Those most actively involved and the most politically aware struggled to keep the groups going. Most groups survived by doing work around sacked and jailed miners. Today most of this work is simply money raising and with no hope of a fight to get the jobs back NUM branches happily left it to us to be the conscience of the movement.



NWAPC has failed to give a fighting national profile to our movement and has been totally unable to use the new political awareness of women to any effect. In September when the time was ripe to launch a campaign from the strong areas to the weak against scab unionism National Women told us to wait for the NUM campaign. When this failed to materialise instead of going ahead anyway money was provided for the Notts. women to do a leaflet. We should have been down there giving vital support to our comrades with leaflets, arguments, etc.

It is not the inexperience of NWAPC that prevents them co-ordinating national campaigns based on action and in support of any struggles against the NCB it is the attempt to maintain unity at any price. Nothing controversial, like what the hell's going on in the NUM and what we should say about it ever comes up. In the face of the retreat by the NUM executive and moves to get rid of Scargill NWAPC are incapable of cutting free and operating independently



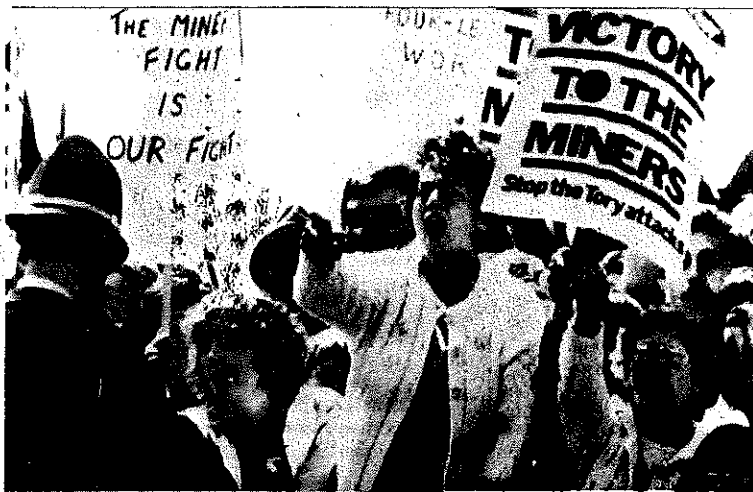
of the union with their own voice. Those directing the movement do not want to build a fighting working class women's movement that could fight on working class issues. They are frightened of, even hostile to rank and file control.

## CONFERENCE

A full national voting conference has at last taken place...5th and 6th. April in Sheffield. Has this 'new and inexperienced' movement hailed as one of the major gains of the Great Strike (by Scargill in every speech he makes) at last got its act together?

Conference showed that despite the lack of leadership there are still women who are fighting. However speeches demonstrated the lack of willingness even now to learn the lessons of the strike, with some women still referring to it as a "great victory".

The speeches also clearly indicated that women had had to go it alone and the lack of any coherent national plan. Activity ranged from those who believed the way forward was to persuade their local council to put coalfired heating in council houses (Are any being built?) to those women in Notts. who were fighting the UDM and the Kent women who were regularly joining the printworkers picketlines at Wapping. Women in Kent still attend NUM branch meetings to report to them and an NUM delgate comes



Militant wives demonstrate against Thatcher

to their meetings. Liz French told us that this happened at Bettsanger where the union was still supportive.

The concern with unity and the resulting compromise with rightwing labour supporters was shown by the acceptance of an ammendment to an emergency resolution

on the print dispute. The ammendment came from the President of Glasgow Trades Council who moved that a condemnation of Maxwell be left out as it might 'upset local negotiations with him'. The logic of this sort of argument is that we better not say anything that might upset MacGreggor or he will get us next. History shows that those who show they are on the run are the most likely to be stamped on.

The delegates passed a resolution demanding that the Labour Party expel UDM members despite the national committee urging it be remitted. Again the fainthearts were worried about using the word 'demand'. It was pointed out by a Warwickshire delegate that anyone who votes Labour has a right to 'demand' it does things in our interest. Another Warwickshire delegate gave a timely reminder of the betrayals of the TUC and the Kinnockites in the strike and warned delegates against imagining that all we need to do is wait for the next Labour government...Kinnock isn't going to reinstate the sacked men!

The conference voted against affiliating to the Labour Party and not to allow scab wives to join although there was a lot of general talk of 'unity'. In fact unity, public opinion and media coverage were about the extent of the campaign strategy finally decided. The chair summed up by saying, "We need to rebuild and maintain the unity of the NUM...we need to fight for a caring compassionate society which is important to women....to get a better life and peace in the world."

Although many delegates commented that the conference was 100% better than the last one NWAPC has again failed to tackle the question of concrete action. We are left to join CND or Coal and Community campaigns, to lobby Labour councils for coal contracts and try and get a 'good press'. We have the grand aims of 'education, peace and jobs' and have again neatly sidestepped the thorny problem of rebuilding the fighting strength of the NUM.

RED MINER has to say that NWAPC have again wasted the opportunity of building such a movement. However many of the wives who continue to be active are still in the movement. RED MINER would like women to write in with their ideas of what those of us trying to change the direction of NWAPC can do.

# WORKERS HISTORY



*In 1917 the Russian workers took power. Their workers councils - the Soviets - became the power in the land. Their factory committees took the power in the factories and their armed militia defended the workers order. In this series RED MINER will look at the Russian workers road to power and at the lessons 1917 holds for workers struggling today.*

Russia in 1917 remained a mainly peasant farmed agricultural society ruled by Tsar (emperor) Nicholas II. Contrary to the soapy image presented in numerous films Nicholas was a staunch reactionary. He stood at the top of a bureaucratic political system that was dominated by the biggest landowners. While a General Strike wave back in 1905 had forced him to grant an advisory and thoroughly unrepresentative parliamentary body - called a Duma - the regime ruled by bloody repression of revolutionary and working class militants.

In this society the working class was small but highly concentrated minority. There were between 4 and 5 million industrial workers in Russia in 1914, out of a population of 200 million. From the end of the last century the regime had encouraged foreign capital and industrialists to take advantage of cheap and dragooned labour, no unions were allowed before 1906. Industry that developed was concentrated in the major towns and in the large scale enterprises. In 1914 over 40% of Russian workers were employed in factories that employed over 1000 workers - a far higher proportion than in either Britain or the United States. The geographical and industrial concentration of the Russian workers gave them an enormous potential strength that was to be demonstrated vividly in 1917.

Heavily dependent as it was on French and British capital and in pursuit of its own Imperialist designs the regime was inevitably an eager participant in the First World War. Yet that war was to have devastating effects on Russia's population. Russia's armies suffered major defeat. Its supply lines were in tatters. By the end of 1916 the main industrial towns were threatened with famine.

The spark that was to destroy the Tsarist regime and open the road for the working class was to come from the women workers in the capital city of Petrograd (today's Leningrad). February 23rd in the Russian calendar was the day celebrated by the socialist movement as International Women's Day. Meetings were due to be held in those plants with high concentrations of women workers to explain the significance of the day. But socialists and militants had no plans for any more than propaganda meetings. In reality these meetings very quickly boiled over into strikes and demonstrations as women workers expressed their fury against a regime that forced them to work long hours in its factories and attempt to maintain themselves and their families in near famine conditions.

The women of the textile factories of the Vyborg side workers district, having pulled out most of their fellow women workers in the area, turned their attention to the metal and engineering plants which had a higher proportion of male workers. The largest and most traditionally militant of them - the giant Putilov plant which employed 30,000 workers - was already locked out by the bosses. Initially this made mass contact with its workers difficult. It was in factories with well organised cells of revolutionary militants that the women workers had their first successes. They pulled out the Erikson and New Lessner plants to join their demonstration. By noon 21 factories and 50,000 workers were on strike.

In the afternoon the strikers turned their attention to plants with a less militant and receptive workforce. At the Arsenal better paid workers would not join the action. They were bombarded with rocks and iron until a picket line could be put round the plant to stop the next shift coming in. The Cartridge factory was invaded and a picket put on to stop its night shift. In one day 32 plants were eventually brought to a halt.

The demands of the strikers concentrated on calls for bread mingled with calls for an end to the Tsar's regime, full democratic rights and an end to the war. The breadth of the events took most Russian revolutionaries by surprise. Around 25,000 of them were grouped in the Bolshevik Party of Lenin. While its battle

seasoned militants immediately set about spreading the action its leadership in the capital city was convinced that the disturbances would have only a temporary character.



*Petrograd 1917: women in the Russian Revolution*

The next day the strikes spread to other industrial areas of the capital city. More importantly there were the first signs that the armed forces of the old regime could not be relied on to save it against the striking workers. On February 24th. the hated Cossacks, who had always been used to crack the skulls of demonstrators, allowed workers to fraternise by passing under their horses. As Trotsky described it "the revolution does not choose its paths: it made its first steps towards victory under the belly of a Cossack's horse". As the strike spread so garrisoned troops turned their guns on their officers or against police attacking strikers. By the 27th. February most soldiers in Petrograd had gone over to the workers side, in turn the insurgent workers now found themselves armed in their own militia squads in collaboration with the soldiers. The old regime was doomed.

February showed the enormous creative potential of the workers to spread and organise their class action. By the 27th. the workers were being joined in the action by cab drivers, waiters and students. But its outcome underlined the absolute necessity for political leadership and organisation if that creative energy is not to pave the way for victory for others on the backs of the workers sacrifice and blood.

On February 27th a meeting was hastily put together to establish a Petrograd council of workers representatives. This Soviet [soviet being the Russian for council] was the work initially of leaders of the Menshevik party. This party as distinct from the Bolshevik party held that as Russia was a backward country its coming revolution would have to give power to the bourgeoisie (the bosses) and usher in a stage of liberal capitalist development. While its leaders called for factories to send representative delegates to the Soviet it did so with a project of that Soviet limiting itself to ousting the Tsar and pushing the liberal Parliamentarians into power.

In their turn the liberal, and not so liberal, Parliamentarians clutched at the project of the Soviet's 'moderate' socialists. The insurrection was none of their own work. It threatened to engulf them too. So eventually a committee of Parliamentary big wigs (the Provisional Duma Committee) plucked up the courage to declare it was the real power in the land and was forming a Provisional Government. One of its chief architect's later admitted his motives. If this decision had not been taken by his committee, he claimed, "it would have been arrested by the mutinous soldiers and cut down to the last man."

In the name of the workers the 'moderate' leaders of the soviet backed the Provisional Government of the bourgeois politicians as the proper course of the revolution. While the workers had paralysed and then toppled the old regime that regime was replaced by a government of capitalist politicians

The outcome of the February revolution was to establish a Dual Power. On the one side there was an official new capitalist Government which owed its power to the workers insurrection. On the other side were the bodies created by the workers in that insurrection - the Soviet, committees in the factories and garrisons and the armed workers militia. The question left unresolved by the February revolution was which side in this Dual Power situation would become the real power?

*It is to this question that we will return in our next issue when we look at what Dual Power meant in the factories and how the Bolshevik Party fought to resolve that Dual Power in the interests of the working class.*

# SOUTH AFRICAN MINERS HEROIC STRUGGLE CONTINUES

South African miners are engaged in a protracted and bitter battle to defend and strengthen their union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). At their recent congress they resolved to ensure that this summer's battle over pay would not end in the same fashion as 1985. Last year the mineowners succeeded in splitting the ranks of mineworkers. Where the union was weak, in the Gencor mines for instance, the bosses were able to refuse major increases and intimidate miners back to work. The union was unable to bring out its stronger sections in the Anglo-American mines. The South African NUM has agreed that solidarity and united action must be maintained this year; the problem is, how to build for it.

The bosses have allowed no let up over winter. Wherever the union tries to build and extend its presence, the mineowners are ready with all the dirty tricks and tactics which Apartheid hands to them. Their favourite trick is to deport "migrant" workers back to the "homelands", the areas of South Africa where most black South Africans are forced to live when not working for the white bosses. The mineowners then recruit scab labour from amongst the pool of desperately poor unemployed workers.

## SIX MINERS KILLED

At the Blyvooruitzicht mine near Johannesburg, the NUM-organised workers fought back against this tactic by organising an underground sit in. They fought an heroic battle against the mineowners security force. Tragically six miners were killed and 176 injured. These are the sort of odds the South African NUM are up against, the miners know they cannot give up their struggle against their poverty line wages, and are learning from every battle.

The bosses have also been using "divide and rule". Under Apartheid, black workers in South Africa are divided by the state into different groupings according to the tribe their families originally belonged to. Often these divisions bear no relation to patterns of life today. They are just a way of encouraging splits amongst the black working class so that the white ruling class can hang onto power. Mineowners split workers into different groups by housing the different "tribes" in different hostels and showing preference to one group over another in terms of better jobs, junior supervisory roles and security forces.

BADGE OF THE  
CONFEDERATION  
OF  
SOUTH AFRICAN  
TRADE UNIONS



So when the NUM tries to organise, as in the Vaal Reefs gold mine this winter, management tries to encourage it's own goon squads and vigilante groups to attack the union militants. Then it tells the world's press that the trouble is all due to "tribal conflicts"! The western media tries to give a picture of backward workers who can't agree amongst themselves- and need the benevolent whites to rule them.

Our union, which has had it's own experience of the bosses tactics and press lies, must take a lead in countering this false propoganda. To help us do this, and to help build support for the South African NUM as it enters the fray this year, we must strengthen the links between the two unions. This is made even more urgent by the fact that the NUM has not only it's own battles to face in the mines but wants to play it's part in the mass strikes against Apartheid laws planned for this summer.

## SOLIDARITY NEEDED

There is a strong possibility of a visit by South African NUM representatives to the British NUM, if they are allowed out of South Africa, if the pressing demands of their own unions allow it, if the finance can be raised and if such a tour is made worthwhile by plenty of branch and lodge meetings being set up to enable as many miners as possible to hear the case for solidarity and see what action can be taken. Such a tour would of course have to be officially organised through the International Department, but it will be made more likely if groups of lodges or branches, and in particular areas or panels, can indicate that they could lay on meetings and facilities for South African NUM representatives.



# WHAT IS



# MARXISM ?

## Why do capitalists employ workers?

They employ workers only to produce profits. If workers do not produce enough profits then they are fired.

**What do you mean by 'enough' profits? Surely as long as workers produce some profits they will not be fired.**

No. In many cases workers who have been fired, have been very puzzled, because their company, plant or mine was closed down while it was still making a profit. The fact is that what interests the capitalists is not whether or not a company makes a profit, but the rate of profit.

## What do you mean by the rate of profit?

The rate of profit is the measure between the total capital invested and the total profit received from this investment. So if a capitalist invests £100 million and receives £10 million in profit each year, his rate of profit is 10%.

## Why is the rate of profit all important?

It is important because it tells a capitalist how much profit he is receiving for every £1 of capital invested. This is similar to the rate of interest in a building society. If the Halifax was giving 12% interest compared to the Nationwide's 10% then depositors would move their money to the Halifax because they would receive 2p more each year for every £1 they deposited with the Halifax.

## Does the rate of profit ever fall?

Yes it does. It was one of Marx's greatest achievements in being able to explain why the rate of profit tends to fall.

## Does it tend to fall because of higher wages?

This is what the bosses and their agents in the labour movement like to tell us. Quite the contrary. It is quite simple to show that each worker has been producing more profits not less.

## So why does it fall?

Because the capital invested in production increases. To make their workers more productive the capitalists have to invest in bigger buildings, more equipment and machines, more materials and so on. Their investment has to therefore increase. Accordingly there is more capital over which to measure their profits and so the rate of profit falls. For example a capitalist, forced by competition may have to invest £200 million in a new factory. His profits however increase only from £10 million to £15 million. As a result his rate of profit falls from 10% (100 million ÷ 10 million) to 7.5% (200 ÷ 15).

## What happens when the rate of profit falls?

Capitalists invest less. The more it falls the less they invest. If enough capitalists stop investing in production, a recession breaks out.



## EXPLAIN!

Investment is the engine of the economy. If capitalists stop investing it means they stop buying steel and cement to build new factories, power (coal, oil etc) to run them and machines to equip them. They also stop recruiting workers. So demand falls throughout the economy because capitalist are buying less and because there are fewer workers with wages to spend.

## So workers are not to blame for the economic crisis.

No they are not. It is the capitalists who are to blame because their economy based on profit is no longer working. Thatcher talks about the wonderful world of profit, but really capitalism has seen its day.

Of course the capitalists will fight tooth and nail to preserve their system. They will try to dump all their problems on the backs of the working class. Sacking us, closing down less efficient plant and mines, harder work, lower pay, worse conditions, all of these measures have but one purpose - to raise the sagging rate of profit.

## What is the workers' alternative to this?

It is the fight for control of production in order to abolish the capitalist system. Abolishing capitalism will abolish the deathgrip of profit on production. It will liberate production once and for all from all crisis.

**MINERS WE HAVE ONLY OUR CHAINS TO LOSE AND  
A WORLD TO WIN.**

# WHERE WE STAND

## RED MINER

The Red Miner is produced by members and supporters of Workers Power. Workers Power is a revolutionary organisation fighting to build a new revolutionary party to overthrow capitalism - at home and abroad.

## WORKERS' STRUGGLES

We support all workers' struggles against the bosses. We fight to turn all struggles into conscious anti-capitalist struggles.

## REFORMISM

The trade union and Labour leaders believe capitalism can be reformed, made better, but they do not aim to overthrow capitalism. They act as go-betweens for the bosses with the workers. Even militant leaders limit their struggles to the fight for gains within capitalism. For this reason we are for building rank and file movements politically independent of the bureaucracy and committed to transforming the unions into democratic, class struggle unions.

## REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

A revolutionary party will be a workers' party, a party that, built in struggle, can learn and pass on the lessons of the 1984-85 strike and other struggles. We stand for miners taking their place in the front ranks of building such a party as they did in the 1920s. Only by building a new revolutionary party can we create the class army that can fight and destroy the stinking capitalist system that threatens us with always having to fight to protect our jobs, conditions and organisations.

## INTERNATIONALISM

We are committed to fighting capitalism internationally. We strive to build an international organisation of revolutionary parties. (Workers Power works with Irish, German, French and Chilean revolutionaries in the Movement for a Revolutionary International). In particular we fight nationalist solutions to the crisis put forward by reformists like calls for import controls. Such demands merely divide the working class.

## DIVISIONS

We fight all divisions in the working class. Divisions are fostered by the bosses to weaken us. We are implacably opposed to racism immigration

controls, fascism, discrimination against and oppression of women, gays or black people.

## THE OPPRESSED

We support all struggles by people oppressed by the bosses of Britain, America, France, Italy and the other capitalist (imperialist) countries. Immediately in Britain this means we support the right of the Irish people as a whole (not just those in the north) to determine the fate of their country. We unconditionally support the republicans and socialists in Ireland fighting for this right and demand the immediate withdrawal of all British troops from Ireland.

## WORKERS' STATES

The USSR, Eastern Europe, etc are workers' states. Capitalism has been abolished. However, in each of these states a bureaucracy, based on the Stalinist Communist Parties, holds political power. This situation arose out of the international isolation of the Russian Revolution in the 1920s. The revolution degenerated at the hands of the bureaucracy headed by Stalin. The other workers' states were degenerate from birth in that they were created in the bureaucratic image of the USSR.

Therefore we call for a political revolution in all of these states to overthrow the bureaucracy and realise the full potential of these non-capitalist economies through democratic planning. At the same time, in order to preserve the gain for the working class represented by these economies, we defend the USSR and degenerate workers' states unconditionally against imperialism which, through war, will seek to re-introduce capitalism in these countries.

## OVERTHROW CAPITALISM

The revolutionary party we seek to build will have as its strategic goal the overthrow of capitalism by workers organised into workers' councils and armed so as to defeat the police and army that the bosses have used, and will use again, against us. We are for a socialist society in which all property is in the hands of the workers' state and all production is directed towards meeting human need - not satisfying the profit greed of the capitalists. We stand on the old slogan of Karl Marx:

**WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE,  
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR CHAINS,  
AND A WORLD TO WIN.**