

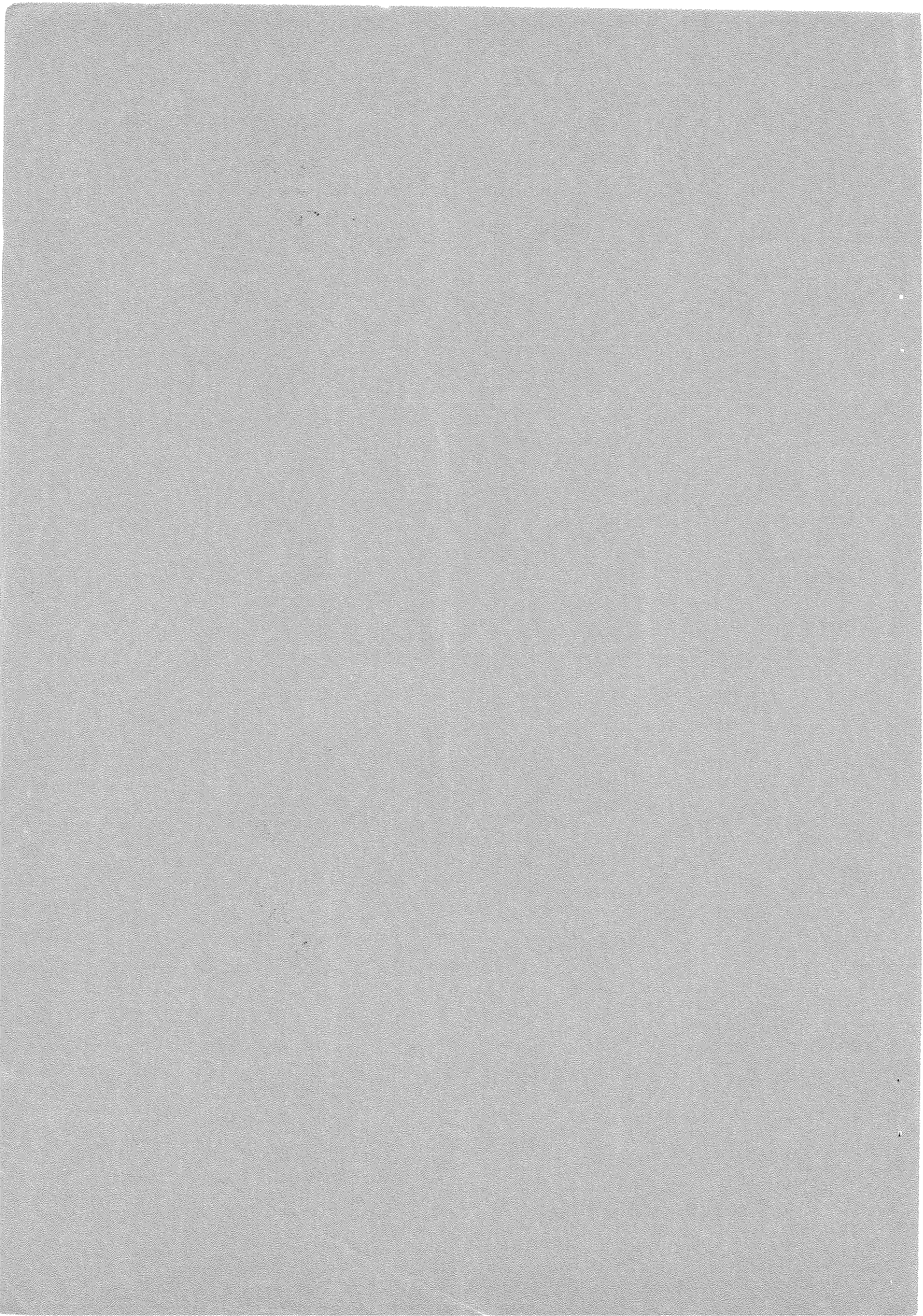
THE RED MINER

NO.12 OCT. '86



**workers
power**

Bulletin for miners and their families 10p



RED
MINER

EDITORIAL



SPREAD COALFIELD ACTION!

Miners from a number of areas are showing increased signs of militancy. The action by the Durham Mechanics, (see regional round up) is only the latest example of rank and file miners fighting back against British Coal's savage attacks.

With most of the leadership unable to see past negotiations with new boy Haslam, and hopeful of getting back together with the scabs in the UDM it has been left up to the rank and file to show the way forward.

And the way forward is quite clear ACTION is what is needed and ACTION is what they are going to get. The regional reports in this issue of RED MINER reporting on the overtime ban in South Wales action in Durham and attempts to get the ball rolling in Yorkshire are clearly only a sampler of the mood of anger growing in the pits and the rebuilding of confidence at rank and file level. As a leading South Wales militant told us "rank and file morale is good and at the moment, the men are ahead of the leadership." Why is this mood not reflected in the leadership?

The Tenby conference demonstrated clearly whose hands the Executive is in. The new-right Communist Party/Labour Party Alliance is firmly in the saddle. We must not underestimate the dangers of leaving the running, on the overtime ban issue, to the likes of Taylor, Bolton or even Dufield.

SCOTLAND

Up in Scotland the area leadership faced with pit closures, job losses and the refusal of British Coal to reinstate sacked men - even when they have won an industrial tribunal - has been less than useless. When miners at Comrie Colliery in Fife held a mass meeting to decide what to do over the planned closure George Bolton (Communist Party) told the meeting that there was no hope of any investment, and after the sacking of 900 miners at Monktonhall in the Lothians Bolton called for a "positive attitude" to the sackings and repeated the coal board arguments that manpower reductions will lead to future investment. "There are great possibilities in the next three or four years" he claimed.

While Bolton may be the worst he is by no means alone in his willingness to sell our jobs for empty promises from British Coal. In Yorkshire Jack Taylor has been trying to quash rank and file moves for an overtime ban because "we want a reasonable

approach". Even Des Dufield has repeatedly stressed that he does not want the action taking place in his area spread to others. WHY NOT?????

RED MINER places no faith in the promises of British Coal, and neither do we place any faith in the likes of Taylor Bolton and co. There are two alternatives facing rank and file miners, either we fight, or we see our industry disappear. More and more miners are choosing to fight and if we are to be successful then we must also fight the "enemy within" which is prepared to see our industry disappear in return for a quiet life.

FOR A NATIONAL OVERTIME BAN

What is needed above all else is the linking up of all those willing to fight in a national organisation which can take on British Coal where our leaders shy away.

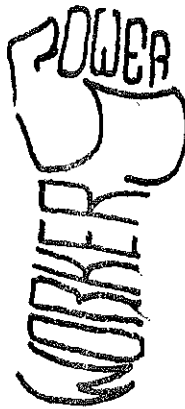
That is why Red Miner supporters put forward a resolution calling for a campaign for a full overtime ban, at the first national conference of the new Broad Left held in September. This conference attended by 100 miners and a handful of women from support groups preferred to pass a resolution calling on areas to get whatever action they could - to build confidence etc. Red Miner fully supports any action taken, against the Board, however small. However we believe an alternative leadership has to be built in the NUM and that any Broad Left aiming to lead miners in a determined fight against the savage attacks of the Board must fight for what is needed and be seen to take up that fight forcibly and nationally even in areas where we fear defeat. We need to be seen to be fighting to back areas like Yorkshire where rank and file miners are pushing for a full overtime ban.

Such a campaign can link together the area actions into a united campaign. It can rebuild the fighting strength required before another strike can be launched. If the new Broad Left is to escape the bureaucratic fate of the still existing, highly selective and secret old Broad Left, it must prioritise such a campaign. We need speakers from every area and pit taking action to go out and address miners throughout the country. If the present round of action is not spread then Bolton and co will get away with selling jobs and conditions and the militant areas and pits will be carved up.

Red Miner will be running a full analysis of the Broad Left conference in the November issue.

REGIONAL ROUND-UP

SOUTH WALES



Overtime ban The workforce in South Wales have, as you know, been operating an overtime ban on coal production since the beginning of August. The original decision to implement the ban was in protest against (1) Failure to pay the £5.50 pay rise given to the UDM - compounded by the recently imposed increase from Sept only. (2) The Board's plans to reduce the area workforce by another 10%, because of reduced CEGB prices and (3) Continued hardline management attitudes and general discontent amongst NUM members. Even though the overtime ban is only partial, the Board has lost well over a £1 million in revenue, with production being reduced by around 5,000 tons a week. The affects of the ban are patchy, as many pits don't produce coal during overtime. Only about 5% of faceworkers are affected, with some losing about £10 a week as a result of the ban.

A coalfield conference in early September voted unanimously to continue with the ban. However from the very start Area President Des Duffield has blocked calls to extend the ban to other areas. The future of the ban will be decided at a conference this month - this time all the lodge committee members will be attending, rather than just the officials. A leading militant told Red Miner:

"Rank and file morale is very good at the moment, the men are ahead of the leadership", but added that "in South Wales in the next few months there is no chance of a full overtime ban. We need to slowly build the morale of the men"

Red Miner argues that a full overtime ban is needed (see editorial) but we recognise that the partial ban in S.Wales is a sign of returning militancy, the first real sign since the strike.

Workshop Reprieve? British Coal are now reviewing their decision to close Tredegar workshops. They are expected to announce a plan to keep on 200 of the 420 men. However this surprise reprieve was not the result of any effort by the NUM leadership, rather it seems to have been left to Michael Foot the local MP to 'fight' the closure! The NUM leaders are now publicly supporting this fight and have added this in as another reason for continuing the overtime ban.

More Closures? The threat of closure continues to hang over 3 South Wales collieries - Nantgarw, Abernant and Cwm. With new investment all are expected to break even by the end of the year, but if they don't B.C. have warned that "further measures will be considered". However the men at Nantgarw have not been taking management attacks lying down. They went on a one-day strike in August in protest over manning of faces - a whole day's production was lost. Another sign of growing resentment was the NUM's refusal to meet Haslam on his recent visit to Deep Navigation Colliery.

Pay Rise The decision to implement the £8 has been met with general disgust. Even Duffield was heard to comment "We welcome the decision to pay the men but we deplore the fact that it is not being backdated". Nice to know you are still around Des! There are also fears in South Wales about B.C.'s plans to conduct future pay negotiations at area level. Face workers in South Wales already receive around £40 a week less than the national average and this could get worse if BC get their way as geological conditions have always meant lower productivity compared to other areas.

Scab Union Tries again The scab union leaders have been up to their tricks again. They now claim that virtually all the 3,000 NUM members who work at the 86 open cast sites are set to defect to the UDM - "due to widespread discontent with the NUM" As usual they can give no evidence of this. In South Wales there isn't a single scab union member and if there was they wouldn't last long. It is just another desperate attempt by the scabherders to save their sinking ship by claiming a success in an NUM stronghold.

NORTH DERBYSHIRE

Ireland branch's call for an overtime ban - over the wages issue - while being accepted by Area Council will only be used if the ban in other areas escalates. Area officials would run a mile rather than North Derbyshire show a lead in a fight against the bosses.

Both Markham No.2 and Ireland have had strikes over bonus payments resulting in three shifts ragging up (going home) recently. With the change in the Area bonus scheme, strikes like these are likely to be a regular occurrence.

The gala organised by the East Midlands Justice for Miners Campaign in Mansfield on Sept. 6th. was attended by miners and their families from all over the country, banners from South Wales, Scotland, Yorkshire, Durham, Notts, as well as Silentnight strikers and Chesterfield AUEW were on show. One banner notable for its absence was - yes you've guessed the banner of the North Derbys. NUM only 10 miles away over the border.

Renishaw Park branch have started collecting tins of food weekly to help the Silentnight strikers and their families who have been on strike for well over a year and are now without any strike pay as their union has run out of cash.



YORKSHIRE

Red Miner talked to militants from the Doncaster coalfield on the eve of the September Area Council meeting. They were convinced that Taylor and company on the Yorks executive would use time wasting tactics to prevent anything coming of the 6 resolutions for action being tabled at the meeting. The Area executive now meet before the Council meetings to get their line sorted out!

Area Council met and as expected made no decision on the resolutions proposing various forms of overtime ban, on the pay issue, to back up South Wales. Taylor's argument for doing nothing was based on the fact of high coal stocks...well Jack the longer we leave it the higher they will get!....and the talks with the Board. On Yorkshire T.V. he made his ultimate threat: "...if we don't get what we want we will have to go to the National Union to ballot on action..."

..And when is that likely to be Jack? November/Dec...later?

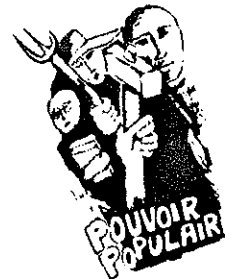
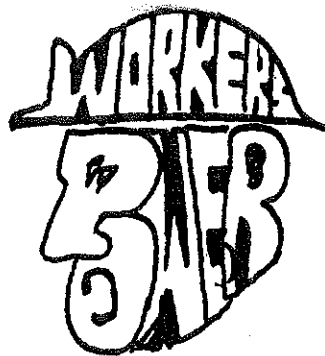
The resolution tabled by Silverwood pit for a full overtime ban was withdrawn to enable it to be put again this month thus avoiding the 3 month rule.

The men we talked to confirmed that there is a growing anger and renewed confidence in the pits. Dave Douglas said that the anger generated by the Board's provocation on pay and the recent decision on sacked men, i.e. only to consider reinstatement for those who had won tribunals - 30 men! was enough to mean an overtime ban could be won. It was also having a wider effect with more action over threatened closures and management tactics within the pits in areas like Durham (see next report)

Rossington Meanwhile the management offensive continues. At Rossington colliery, Doncaster management are trying to overturn the priority system for selecting men working on retreats and have cut the numbers from 11 to 9. A potential strike led to the management withdrawing their list however the team was left undermanned with the time and motion being brought in. If they get away with this at Rossington they will use it as a precedent in other pits. The issue is still in procedure.

Rossington are now producing a union bulletin The Rossington Ringer which will help keep the men informed about what the Board are up to in our area and nationally. Strike Action At Sunday's branch meeting it was agreed to hold a 24 hour stoppage on Friday 3rd Oct. in protest at the treatment of Rossington's sacked men. Action is likely to be extended in future weeks drawing in the pay issue depending on the Area Council decision about an overtime ban.

Hatfield Main Last month passed a motion on South African coal. This will be taken this month at the Council and proposes that joint action is sought with other unions like the railway workers to mount a 24 hour picket at the 3 local wharfs where the bulk of South African coal comes into the country.



MORE REGIONAL REPORTS
OVER THE PAGE

NORTH EAST.

On the 22/9/86 one of the biggest pits in the North East was at a standstill as the first of a series of one day strikes by Durham Mechanics began. Production at Murton Colliery in County Durham was halted when the night shift came out. Only 6 people crossed the picket lines after an 80% vote in favour of strike action at the colliery.

The Mechanics action, which will take the form of a series of one day strikes over an 8 week period, centres on 4 issues. The sacked and victimised miners, the wages issue, the unilateral decision of the board to take away conciliation procedure and the closure of Seaham Colliery. These 4 issues were put to the Mechanics in a ballot on strike action which received an overwhelming yes vote.

Dave Temple, lodge delegate at Murton Mechanics explained how this came about.

"We were confronted with a number of problems, particularly the intransigence of the coal board. The executive said they could do no more so we put the matter to the lodges - the reply was an overwhelming vote in favour of a series of one day strikes."

In the same week the Mechanics voted on action the 8,000 Durham NUM members voted by a 68% majority in favour of an overtime ban on the same 4 issues.

Sackings continue in the Durham and Northumberland area NUM. In the same week as the Mechanics vote 2 NUM members were sacked at Westoe Colliery at South Shields for allegedly attacking a member of the UDM. This action led to a walkout and unofficial 24 hour strike which involved 1400 of the 2000 men employed at the superpit.

The closure of the Seaham Colliery is just the latest in the attempts of the NCB to run down the Durham Coalfield. Since March 1985 6 collieries, 2 coke ovens and 2 workshops have been closed resulting in the loss of 9,000 jobs.

Dave Temple explained:

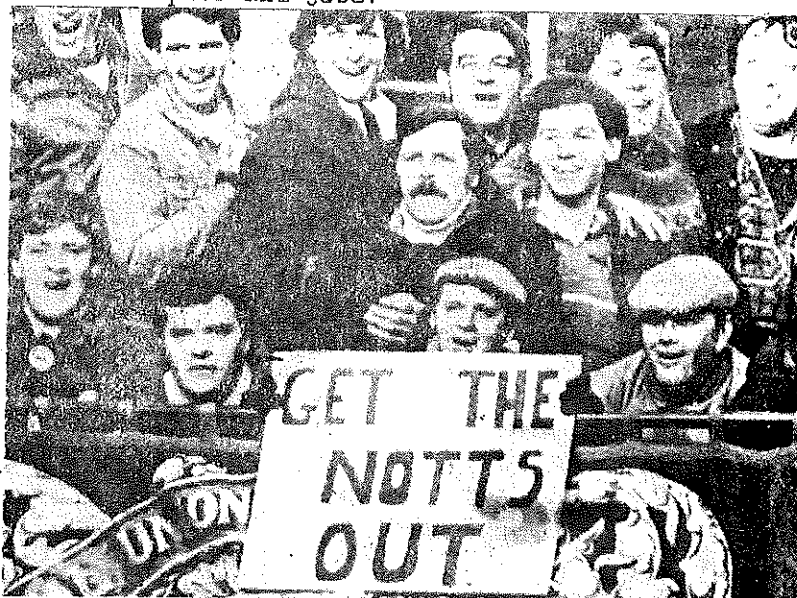
"..the men are sick about everything, about being pushed about. This action shows that all those fainthearted leaders who say the men are not prepared to take action are only speaking for themselves. We now need to launch a serious campaign and aim through these strikes to start to rebuild the strength of the union."

The Board are not very happy about the action..surprise, surprise! North East area director, David Archibald, tried blackmail.

He said the strike put the whole future of Murton at risk. But - this did not stop the Mechanics! Another spokesman tried to recruit support for the advertising image of the Board.-

"It is absolutely crazy" he said, "this sort of action will not impress the public or our customers"

We don't think that will deter the Durham Mechanics or miners who are fighting to save pits and jobs.



A message for scabs

WARWICKSHIRE

Ansley workshops, with 160 workforce, is to close, say NCB management. Only a tiny handful went on strike there and most are now UDM members - this is their reward, but that's not very surprising! The bosses use scabs and throw them on the scrapheap when they have fulfilled their purpose.

UDM members there have recently had a meeting with management to sort out the terms of the closure 90 want redundancy, 3 want to transfer to other workshops and 63 want jobs elsewhere in the industry.

106 people signed a petition asking for the NUM to be allowed to attend the meeting, and Brian Williams the NUM branch Secretary turned up. He was kept out not so much by the management but by Dick Emery, Secretary of South Derby UDM. (He is really from Warwickshire but the UDM 'incorporated' him and his men into S.Derbys, so's they could 'fiddle' the required number of members in that area!)

The meeting went badly. UDM members stormed out at the treatment they were getting. They have now approached the NUM agent, Dick Storer, to get them the best terms possible, as the UDM can't deliver the goods. He's agreed to help them in the hope of winning them back to the NUM.

The NUM is right to concern itself with the workforce at Ansley. But is this the best way to go about it? Should NUM members dues and skills be put at the service of UDM members? They should be told the truth - if they want the NUM's help, they'll have to help the NUM! Leave the scab union, join the NUM and fight to save jobs! Then they could link up with the other threatened workshops. The coal industry is being cut to bits as a prelude to privatisation - what will conditions be like then if we don't break the scab union now and win any half-decent people in it to take up the fight.

COVENTRY COLLIERY Coventry Colliery are getting men to rejoin the NUM - but on what basis?? Is it worth taking men back when they haven't got any better principles than they had before.

3 men, including a superscab and an informer, rejoined the NUM so they could go on a deputies course. (NACODS are refusing to work with the UDM)

Some men who rejoined the NUM after the strike then joined the UDM to get the pay rise. Then 6 of them having got the pay

rise, applied to join the NUM again and were accepted back into the branch! What use are folk like this!?! This is the result of all the 'building bridges' talk going on around the branch. Well if that's the sort of material the bridge is built on, remind me not to put any weight on it!

The NUM must fight the UDM, not pander to it's worst elements. If people want to rejoin the NUM, fine, but it should be made clear that the NUM is still faced with battles ahead, it is on that fighting basis that NUM branches need to regroup and reorganise.

Last month an afternoon shift refused to go down when the word went round that the management had been caught "red" handed photocopying documents for the UDM. The NUM have always been barred from using the photocopier. Well we always knew they were a gaffer's "union". This action shows the will exists to fight the scab outfit - let's build on that get our own NUM pit bulletin out and organise a network of union stewards to represent every workteam. Let's show them we mean business instead of talk about building bridges and running raffles for sauna baths!!

TERRY FRENCH

KENT MINER TERRY French got a four year prison sentence during the miners' strike. His crime - defending the right to a job.

This 'crime' earned him the hatred of the Coal Board. They knew he was a militant and stood at the forefront of the strike. They were out to sack him. The police knew of his role as well and were gunning for him.

Terry has suffered badly in prison. The prison authorities have consistently mistreated him. Attempts to send him reading material have been blocked. Parole has been denied, despite Terry never being 'in trouble' with the warders.

Now his painful saga has been given an even more cruel twist by the vindictive authorities. During an authorised weekend's leave from open-prison Terry visited the TUC Congress in Brighton. This was not in contravention of any prison rule. Yet, on his return, he was punished for this 'political' act.

He was moved out of open prison and into Wandsworth, where he was locked for 23 hours a day in his tiny, miserable cell. British

prison conditions are infamously bad. Terry is receiving no relief from them.

This treatment shows the reality of British justice. It is a class justice which wreaks spiteful revenge on all workers who fight for their rights against the bosses.

Every militant in the labour movement must raise Terry's case and continue to protest against the imprisonment of him and the other miners jailed because of their role in the strike.

RELEASE JAILED MINERS!

REINSTATE VICTIMISED MINERS!

Back the sacked miners - affiliate

THE NATIONAL JUSTICE FOR MINeworkERS' CAMPAIGN

Organisation
Address

Enclosed Affiliation Fee: National Organisation £50
Regional Organisation £25
Local Organisation £5

Cheques payable to "National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign" please
Please return to National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign,
c/o NUM Durham Mechanics Association, 26 The Avenue, Durham DH1 4ED





FREE ELEUTERIO

International

Eleuterio Guttierrez is a militant miner and a local trade union leader from the Bolivar pit in Oruro, Bolivia. He has been incarcerated for a year in appalling conditions in jail with no sign of his case coming to trial. He has been accused of stealing mining equipment. The "evidence" for this charge is based on the word of a well-known local management stooge who has already withdrawn one statement, admitting he had been pressurised by the Oruro police.

Recently, a delegation from Workers Power, the organisation which produces 'Red Miner', visited fellow revolutionaries in Bolivia. They spoke to Eleuterio himself about the real reasons for his victimisation.

leading militant

Sitting in the bleak open courtyard, with an armed guard close by, Eleuterio explained the background to his case. He worked for 12 years as a miner at the Bolivar pit in Oruro. Later, having studied on his own in the evenings, he qualified as an assistant topographer at the same pit. He was a leading militant there and regularly elected as a delegate to the Bolivian Miners' Federation congresses.

He was also well known in the region for his work in the struggle to nationalise the privately owned Totural mining site. The powerful miners' union having won the fight to nationalise this site were faced with a situation where the technicians in the mine were boycotting the plans of the state mining corporation, COMIBOL, to take over the mine. As a result Eleuterio was asked by the union to use his skills as a topographer to prepare the necessary survey. For 2 months Eleuterio worked at the site without pay to ensure the success of the project.

revolutionary

Eleuterio was not only a trade union militant. He was an active member of the Revolutionary Workers Party, an organisation claiming to be revolutionary and Trotskyist. He stood as their candidate in the 1985 national elections.

These are the real reasons why Eleuterio and hundreds of other working class militants and revolutionaries were jailed or deported after last years' defeated general strike against closures and privatisation.

"profitability"

Today Bolivian miners are fighting back against pit closures and privatisation implemented in the name of "profitability" (sounds familiar?). They have demanded the release of Eleuterio at a mass meeting in Oruro in August. Meanwhile Eleuterio remains in jail, refused bail because he is a militant. He cannot even afford legal representation. His wife and children have to survive in a country where there is no social security and where the average wage is \$25 a month. (A meal for four in a cheap restaurant costs \$17!!)



GUTTIEREZ!

CLASS PRISONERS WAR

Eleuterio is one of many Bolivian, South African and British miners who are in jail because they have put up a militant fight in defence of the interests of their class. They are prisoners in the class war. We must fight for the release of them all.

A fund has been set up in Oruro, Bolivia both to help support Eleuterio's wife and children and to pay for legal and campaigning activities to get his release. Any donations will be sent on to Bolivia by the Free Eleuterio Campaign.

campaign

The Campaign to Free Eleuterio Guttierrez is growing. On September 20th a meeting of miners in the Broad Left agreed to support the Campaign and the 'Durham Miner' is going to carry an article on Eleuterio in its next issue. The North East Justice for Mineworkers Campaign voted not only to support the Campaign but to immediately protest to the Bolivian Embassy in London.

In the name of international workers' solidarity 'Red Miner' is asking British miners to demand the release of Eleuterio Guttierrez. Raise the question in your Branch, paper and bulletins. Send your protests to the Bolivian Embassy and messages of support to the Bolivian miners' union. [addresses below] Leaflets and information are available from 'Red Miner' at our usual address.

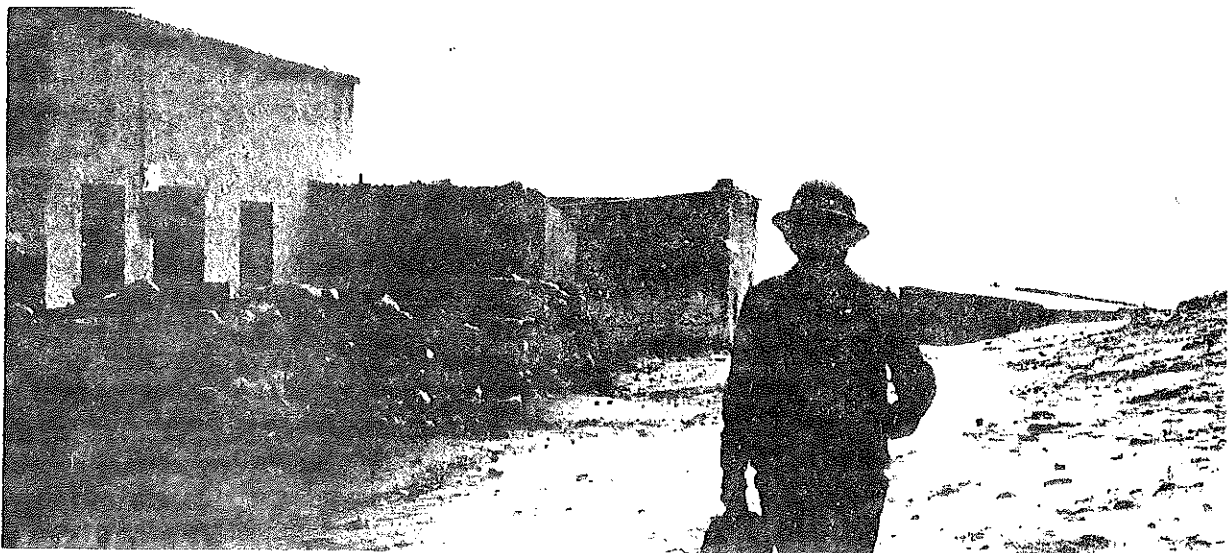
Send messages of support and donations for Eleuterio's legal defence in Bolivia to:

Steve Masterson
BCM 7750
London WC1 3XX
(Tel: 01-435 5652)

Send letters urging action and indicating your support to:

Bolivian Embassy
105 Eaton Square
London SW1

Trade union Federation of
Bolivian Mineworkers (COB)
Ayacho 288
4th Floor
La Paz
Bolivia



Oruro, Bolivia's mining centre, home town of Eleuterio

INTERVIEW/ LABOUR PARTY

As Red Miner goes to press, the Labour Party conference is about to begin. Next month we will have an analysis of what happened in Blackpool and how this will affect Labour's election chances. One thing's certain, if Kinnock gets his way, the purges of the left will go on and so will the drift to the right. Since the defeat of the strike, Kinnock has had things virtually completely his own way - in the Labour Party. Many of yesterday's 'lefts' are today enthusiastically joining in his campaigns.

Despite this though, many miners and their families continue to see no serious alternative to the Labour Party. Even those who have no confidence in Kinnock still keep faith with the Labour Party, in the belief that it can be transformed into a real socialist party.

In the abridged interview that follows, Cath and Mick from Coventry Colliery describe their beliefs and outlook towards the Labour Party. We print their views, not because we agree with them, but to start a discussion in Red Miner over coming issues about the Labour Party and what our attitude towards it should be.

During this discussion Red Miner will aim to convince people such as Cath and Mick that, while taking on the right wing in the L.P. is important, it is necessary to build a revolutionary alternative to reformism.

RED MINER What were your ideas about the L.P. at the beginning of the strike in 1984.?

CATH... I thought the Labour Party would back us. I don't mean Neil Kinnock sitting on the fence...we'd hoped for backing from the executive members of the L.P. All through the strike it was the case that the rank and file members of the L.P. were fantastic. They did all they could to help us. But they didn't have the guide from the leadership to say "you should be doing this". Neil Kinnock wanted to sit on the fence. But if he'd had the guts to say "Yes I do back the miners" or "No I don't" he would have got more respect from people than he did by sitting on the fence. And going to Russia and telling them we didn't need any help and saying there was no police violence on picket lines, was a complete fabrication of the truth. He never came and asked us, he never stood on any picket lines. He never saw any violence



because he didn't want to. To me he is not our L.P. . He is not a socialist.

R.M. You didn't feel that the L.P. was the party fighting for working people ?

Mick No I didn't. At the time of the strike we weren't really genned up as far as the L.P. or even politics were concerned. We went up the school and voted Labour just because we were working class, do you know what I mean? But since the miners strike we've become stronger as far as politics are concerned. But still, I don't think Kinnock is the right person for the working class. He hasn't come forward with any convictions as far as the working class is concerned.

R.M. Have your views changed a lot since the end of the strike? Since the defeat of the NUM as a consequence of that sitting on the fence?

Mick: Well the way I look at it it is better the devil you know than the one you don't . As I've said we're working class - we always will be working class and there is only one party for us - the L.P. But things have to change inside the L.P. for it to do any good for the working class.

Nick: Oh - there's no doubt about it....

Cath: I mean God help us there is nothing else to vote for! There's not one party that has got any standards of socialism for us to vote for. Admittedly, yes I would like to vote for somebody that had my standards. But if we did that we would be splitting up the Labour vote again. So you can't vote for anything else. It's ridiculous that in this democratic country you are forced to vote for somebody you don't particularly like.

R.K.: Recently Hattersley described U.D.M. miners who are members of the L.P. as being "loyal members of the party" and as you know, he and Kinnock declined to speak at the UDM conference, not for political reasons but because they hadn't enough time in their calendar - given their tight control of the party do you see the rank and file being able to take control, especially given the general rightwing drift.

Cath: You've only got a rightwing drift in this country at the present time because people are frightened. People are frightened that if they get too leftwing there will be a revolution in this country. They are frightened of it now and they think they will go on the winning side at the moment. You will always get people who will go on the winning side and at this time they are going with the rightwing of the L.P. Kinnock is very, very wrong when he thinks he can expel every member of The Militant because really most L.P. members are left wing. He just doing it to boost up his votes among the middle class people who sometimes would vote socialist.

Nick: Neil Kinnock is taking this view - for the expulsion of Militant - to attract the voters sitting on the fence. He knows he has young people coming up to their first time to vote and these are some of the people he wants to attract. That's why he is against the YTS and YOPS But as Cath said there is no way he is going to get rid of the militants from the movement.

R.K.: But if he can control the Militant and maintain the policies he favours - which he seems to be doing - is it possible to fight for an alternative to the L.P.?

Cath: No I don't think there could be another Party. The L.P. and Kinnock can get the working class vote. He just hangs on to the fact that his father was a miner and this helps him get the working class vote.

Nick: I think what we have to do as the working class - we've got to get the L.P. in and when the L.P. is in start then to form a new Labour Party in the leadership.

WE INVITE OUR READERS TO SEND IN THEIR VIEWS ON THE POINTS RAISED BY CATH AND NICK. NEXT MONTH WE WILL INCLUDE ANY LETTERS AND RED MINERS OWN VIEWS.

PRINTERS FIGHT ON !

Once again printers sacked by Rupert Murdoch are to vote on his "final offer". Apart from a few percent on the "compensation fund" the latest offer is essentially the same as the last one in May. The scabs will remain in work, the sacked printers will remain out of work. What was rejected in May must be rejected again now. But why is it even being put to a ballot again?

The reason lies with the union leaders, Dean and Dubbins, rather than Murdoch. Nothing has been done to make him change his position and, therefore, he has done nothing more than repackage the terms of surrender that he offered in May. The union leaders are "New Realists". Or to put it another way, they cannot see how workers can expect to win a dispute against a determined boss.

They have never expected to win at Wapping in the sense of getting back jobs and union rights. Compensation was about as far as they could see. For them, the purpose of the dispute was not at all to win back jobs but to convince other Fleet Street bosses that "doing a Wapping" was, in the end, less cost effective than negotiating away jobs with their co-operation



This is why Dean and company have opposed effective action right from the start. Instead of spreading the strike to the rest of Fleet Street they argued for a boycott campaign - to convince 5 million Sun readers to become good class conscious trade unionists.

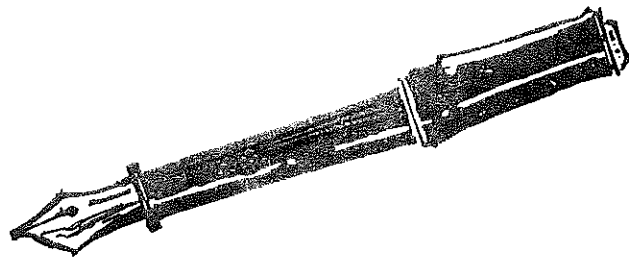
The only real opposition to Murdoch came from the rank and file who had been sacked, picketing the plant, going off round the country trying to build support and building links with other workers in struggle.

Many miners have been down on the line at Wapping, and supported them throughout their dispute. They need that support now more than ever. The only guarantee against the leadership selling them down the river is militant action from the rank and file.

Rank and file printers have been organising to try and stop the sellouts of the leadership and get their jobs back, invite them to union meetings and give them the support they need to save their jobs.

Speakers Info etc from
Larry Hyett 102a Cromer Street
London WC1

Dear Red Miner,



I cut the enclosed item out of the Guardian last month, as it reminded me of a discussion we had in our women's support group. We were discussing a demonstration against social security cuts in Birmingham. After the demo. we were invited to go and have tea at the Lesbian and Gay centre. Some of the members of the group were worried about this and thought because of the threat of AIDS, we would be better off not going there. We then had a discussion about AIDS, how you get it, whether sexually transmitted diseases were something to be ashamed of and so on. It was clear that the media do a good job in persuading a lot of us that gays are "sick" and its better just to leave them alone.

Lots of gay people organised to help the miners and their families in the strike. They didn't have the attitude of just saying "why should we bother about their problems?" That's just one reason why we should help gays when they are being oppressed and persecuted by the state.

Look at the dreadful incident in the paper cutting. A man actually got away with murdering a gay person by giving the excuse that he killed the man in self-defence because he thought he might get AIDS!

In a way it is not surprising the courts let him get away with it, but its still awful. The bosses courts don't care about this sort of killing, just as they don't care when some striker or trade unionist is killed on a picket line.

Don't let's be taken in by the AIDS scare and the accompanying anti-gay propaganda - look at what it is used for and please Red Miner readers remember this newspaper cutting if you ever feel tempted to make remarks about gay men or women.

Yours in solidarity,

Gen Doy.

Coventry Colliery Women's Support Group.

Doorman freed from prison

A DOORMAN at a gay club, gaoled for killing a customer who, he claimed, had bitten him, was cleared of manslaughter by three Appeal Court judges in London yesterday and freed from his three-year sentence.

James Fisher, aged 42, of Dudley, West Midlands, said that the man was a homosexual and he was scared that he might get aids from the bite. He was gaoled at Stafford Crown Court in November after the man died of a fractured skull. The judges said that a plea of self-defence should have been allowed

LESBIANS & GAYS



SUPPORT



THE PRINTWORKERS

SOUTH AFRICAN MINERS HEROIC STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Miners and workers the world over were shocked and horrified with the death of over 180 miners at the Kinross gold mine in South Africa on the 16th of September. Once again black South African miners paid with their lives for the profits of South Africa's racist bosses in a disaster which Cyril Ramaphosa the general secretary of the South African NUM said was "completely unnecessary".

This century alone over 48,000 people have died down South Africa's mines, almost all of them black, and the attitude of the government and mine bosses always being that mining was a hazardous occupation so deaths were unavoidable. As any miner himself knows, no death down the pit is unavoidable. Faulty welding equipment and lack of proper safety training and adequate safety equipment were the cause of the initial fire, and the polyurethane foam used to line the roof and walls of the pit turned it into a death trap.

GOVERNMENT HYPOCRISY

The reaction of the bosses and the government was as expected. Cyril Ramaphosa was held up at a road block when he tried to get to the local hospital and has since received nothing but obstruction from the mineowners and the government has spent its time condemning the critics of the mine owners.

3 years ago 68 miners were killed underground at Hlobane pit in Natal in a methane explosion. The mine owners were found guilty of deliberately covering up the presence of methane a few days before the disaster, running the pit without the ventilation system, and having at least 14 pieces of equipment down the pit which could cause an explosion. The company was fined £250!!

Last year 539 miners were killed in South Africa's mines and black miners determined that the deaths must stop, are organising and directing their anger against the system which has sent so many of them to their deaths.

When the owners tried to organise a hypocritical memorial service for the dead, black miners took it over, chased out the whites and turned it into a militant anti mineowner and anti government rally. Since then the NUM has organised protest stoppages and their own rally despite attempts to force them down the pits at gunpoint. At the rally Winnie Mandela called for future strike action to end apartheid and was met with rapturous applause.

Their day will surely come and there are many debts which will have to be settled. British miners can help by sending support to the South African NUM, and fighting for real workers sanctions against South Africa, speeding the day when our black brothers and sisters will be free

NUM AT THE TUC

Over the last years the NUM has stood on the Left of the TUC congress. In the Great Strike and last year it spoiled the plans of Kinnock and Willis to keep any smell of class struggle out of the Congress.

The 'New Realists' who headed the NUM delegation to Brighton this year swung the NUM the other way. They agreed to withdraw an amendment to the Labour Party/TUC document on union legislation that opposed compulsory pre-strike ballots and stood for rights for collective organisation rather than fashionable individual rights the trendy new trade union leaders are all talking about. The move was led by delegates from ...surprise,surprise...South Wales,Scotland and Yorkshire.

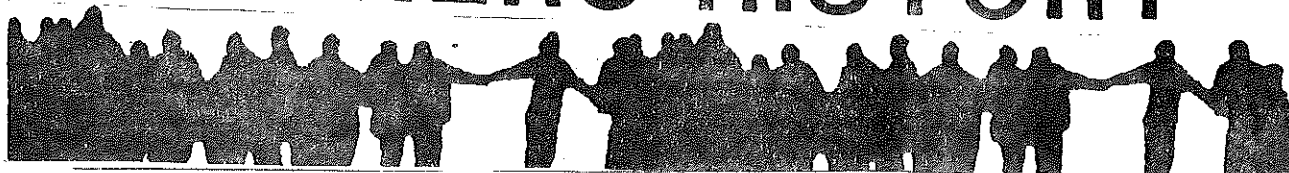
Rank and file militants must make their delegates answer for their actions. They must be held to account for the disgraceful spectacle of the NUM backing off from a fight with Kinnock and Willis.

Some of the delegates will say they had not been consulted on the amendment. That is a shoddy evasion. They know the NUM's traditional opposition to the anti-union laws.

It was Scargill who put the amendment down in line with traditional NUM procedure that gives the President the right to do so. It is this undemocratic procedure that should have been changed, not the stance of the union on anti-union laws. The talk of procedures is a smokescreen put up by officials who have no use for rank and file democracy themselves, and are set on reaching a cosy truce with Willis and Kinnock.



WORKERS HISTORY



RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Part 3 - ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS!

In our last installment we looked at how the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks reacted to the revolutionary crisis of early 1917. A situation of Dual Power existed in Russia. In purely formal terms power belonged to a Provisional Government which was initially staffed by members of the bourgeois parties. In reality day to day authority in the factories resided with the factory councils, in the garrisons with soldiers councils and in the major cities transport, food supply and even troop movements operated on the say so of the workers and soldiers councils - the Soviets.

THE BOLSHEVIK VIEW VERSUS THE MENSHEVIK

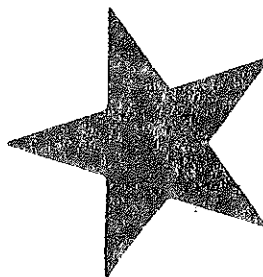
The Menshevik's answer to this situation was to join the Provisional Government all the better to bolster it and smooth the way for a bourgeois revolution and a stage of democratic capitalism in Russia. For the Bolsheviks the barbaric imperialist war that engulfed all of Europe and the gigantic potential power of the worker's Councils showed all too clearly that the Mensheviks were wrong. The war highlighted the fact that capitalism was ripe for overthrow at the hands of the working class. The Russian Revolution had within itself the potential to be the first episode of an international struggle for power by the working class.

In the first months after February the Mensheviks had a clear majority in the Soviets. Workers had real illusions in the democratic path outlined by the Mensheviks.

In the first flush of revolution after years of Tsarist tyranny this was hardly surprising. Accordingly at the first All-Russian Congress of delegates from Soviets only 105 out of 822 delegates registered support for the Bolsheviks. The Soviet leaders were wedded to coalition with the bourgeoisie, the problem for Lenin and the Bolsheviks was to break the mass of workers from their trust in those leaders.

WIN THE RANK AND FILE

The Bolsheviks achieved that break through a variety of tactics. Firstly they focused their attention on fighting for their programme amongst rank and file militants rather than persuading or converting the soviet leaders. A good example here is the Bolshevik orientation to the factory committees. In all the major plants in Petrograd and other large cities there were permanent battle lines drawn between the employers and the newly formed factory committees. The employers tried to pass the burden of paying for generalised economic crisis onto the backs of the workers. They did so by attempts at factory closures or halting production on the pretext of a lack of orders or fuel shortages. From the earliest days of the revolution a key task of the factory committees had been the maintenance of production. As the Sestroretsk works committee explained "*Since the first days of our work we have stood by the view that our main aim is the task of maintaining production in the factory come what may*".



TROTSKY

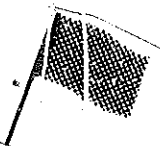
The struggle to maintain production took many forms, all of which challenged traditional management rights to manage. Petrograd factories sent delegations to procure coal from the miners of the Doubass. The Petrograd Central Council of Factory Committees requisitioned fuel from well stocked plants so as to maintain production in others. Factory committees carefully watched over stocks moving in and out of the plants. In the Petrograd Cartridge Works they established their own parallel checking system in early April. Such developments spread throughout the city in the next weeks.

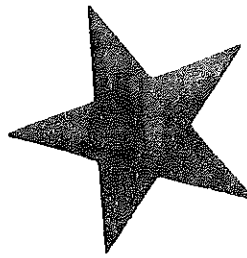
DUAL POWER

Faced with the threat of closure and starvation the factory committee movement was forced to challenge management rights in order to protect jobs and livelihoods. In reality dual power stretched right down into the factories. For the Bolsheviks this highly unstable situation could only be resolved by the factory committees fighting to impose "workers control" in the plants. In turn even that situation would remain unstable until it was generalised into "workers control of production and distribution" at a state level. Amongst the militant leaders of the factory committee movement the Bolsheviks argued that the battles the workers were waging could only be victorious when the workers had state power in their hands and could organise production and distribution for their own ends. As a road to that goal they advanced a programme of the fight for workers control.

The Bolshevik orientation to the rank and file militants, and their resolute struggle for a programme that linked the achievement of socialism to the real

battles the workers were engaged in, increasingly strengthened the following of the Bolshevik Party. They may have been a minority at the June Congress of Soviet Leaders. But when, at the same time, the First Conference of Petrograd Factory Committees met from 30th May to 3rd June the Bolsheviks were able to secure an overwhelming majority for their programme. That was to be the case in all subsequent factory committee conferences. While the Bolsheviks probably had about 23,000 in their ranks in February, that figure had risen to 200,000 by August.


Soviet Power



LENIN

ILLUSIONS

The Bolsheviks also sought to sharpen the contradictions between, on the one hand, the working class' hostility to capitalism and the war and, on the other, their illusions in Soviet Parties (the Mensheviks and SR's) who backed the war and the capitalist politicians. In June the Provisional Government launched a new military offensive under it's 'socialist' War Minister Alexander Kerensky. The Petrograd Soviet felt moved at the same time to organise rallies in support of the coalition government and 'peace'.

These rallies were quickly turned against their organisers. The mass of workers eagerly took up Bolshevik slogans. They did so not only against the war

"DOWN WITH THE OFFENSIVE"

"PEACE TO THE HEARTH WAR TO THE CASTLE" but also against the class collaborationist games of the Mensheviks and SRs.

The coalition government contained six professed socialists and ten ministers from expressly bourgeois parties. the Bolsheviks raised the call

"DOWN WITH THE TEN CAPITALIST MINISTERS" alongside that of

"ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS"

They were calling on the non-Bolshevik majority in the soviet leadership to break with the capitalists and base themselves directly on the soviets as instruments of power. Given the workers hostility to the capitalist parties and loyalty to the soviets the Bolsheviks were putting the real affiliations of the workers leaders to the test. If the Mensheviks and SRs broke with the bosses parties they would be opening the road to soviet power within which the Bolsheviks, as champions of that power, would increasingly become the leadership. If they remained wedded to the coalition then their supporters would be won to the ranks of that party which stood for the independant interests of the workers and all oppressed.

BOLSHEVIKS GROW IN STRENGTH.

Developing Bolshevik strength in Petrograd during June confronted the party with new problems. The mass of workers, soldiers and sailors in the city had seen enough of the coalition government. They wanted to overthrow it. Garrisons and factories bombarded Bolshevik HQ in the early days of July with requests to lead an onslaught on the government. Sailors from the militant Kronstadt naval base started to arrive in the city intent on doing just that. On June 23rd, when the Council of Petrograd Factory Committees met, it called for the immediate transfer of power to the soviets. In early July the 35,000 Putilov workers struck.

The situation put the leadership of the Bolsheviks to the sharpest of tests. The Party leaders knew that the mood in Petrograd was well in advance of the mood of workers in other cities. More to the point, the great mass of the Russian population were peasants and, except as mutinous soldiers and sailors, had yet to be drawn wholeheartedly into the revolutionary struggle. There were all the ingredients for Red Petrograd to be socially and geographically isolated and militarily crushed. There was a real danger the advanced workers of Petrograd would put themselves out on a limb. But there was a similar danger that they would turn from the Bolsheviks if they failed to give a decisive lead.

BOLSHEVIKS TAKE THE LEAD.

The Bolsheviks could not duck the task of leadership in that hour. Massive spontaneous demonstrations called for the overthrow of the Provisional Government - around 2/3 of the city's workers and 1/2 its garrison joined the demonstrations. The Bolsheviks called for the demonstrations to continue, but attempted to lead the movement away from a suicidal confrontation. At a time when the government was isolated in the city this was often not a popular stance for the party's agitators to adopt. Trotsky, for example, had to rescue Social Revolutionary leader and Agricultural Minister Chernov from the hands of angry Kronstadt sailors.

Next month.....BOLSHEVIKS TAKE POWER!

SUPPORT SILENTNIGHT STRIKERS

Silentnight strikers are still fighting for their jobs back. After more than a year on strike their union is unable to provide them with strike pay. These 200 men and women are determined to carry on and are confident that with more active support from other trade unionists they will beat their boss, Tom Clarke, one of Maggie Thatcher's heroes. They need our help to get out to union branches again and restate their message. Any one who can organise a meeting or adopt them from their branch should contact:
Terry Bennett, 22 Garrick Street,
Nelson, Lancs.
tel: 0282 603055/814556/843649.

**Workers
Power**

SUBSCRIBE!

Name.....

Address.....

Send £4 to the address below and receive 10 issues of the paper. Make cheques payable to: Workers Power and send to: Workers Power
BCM 7750
London
WC1N 3XX

SUBSCRIBE TO
RED MINER
send £1 for 4 issues
to
RED MINER
138 Crookesmoor Road
Sheffield S6 3FS

**FIGHT
FOR THE
NACK
SEAHAM**

In last month's Red Miner we ran an interview with a miner's wife who had been on a fact finding visit to Afghanistan.

Red Miner would like to make it clear that we welcome other people's opinions, and seek to debate all issues in a comradely fashion. However this does not mean that we agree with all the comments made by those we interviewed, which in this case we did not.