

Make the Links.

December 9th saw two historic events: Charles and Di finally made it official and moved into separate castles and the TUC launched its Day of Recovery, asking Trade Unionists everywhere to chat with their bosses about jobs and recovery. Charles and Di are one reason for this event receiving little attention. The other is that it was uninspirational by design.

Together with the NUM, Nottingham Trades Council called for a lunch-time rally in support of the miners and against job losses and cuts in services. They said - rightly - that nobody needed to chat with the bosses to find out their plans for jobs and services!

Despite appalling weather, the rally was attended by several hundred people. A contingent of local government workers marched behind their NALGO banner from County Hall. They were joined on Maid Marian Way by social security workers in the CPSA and met up with people from other city unions in the Market Square.

Speakers included Ken Capstick of Yorks. NUM, Henry Richardson of Notts. NUM and Linda Draycott of Women Against Pit Closures. Other local speakers were from NALGO, the Fire Brigades Union, the rail and seafarer's RMT, the National Union of Teachers and the local student's union.

The message of the rally was clear. We need to make links between all groups of workers. And we need to link up the attacks on our jobs with the continued attacks on public services: locally, in education, in health. They are all attacks on our livelihoods.

The miners' fight is our fight.

Produced by: N.C.A.P.C..
Box 5, 118 Mansfield Rd.
Tel: 705788

Solidarity In Action

A Message from Cotgrave.

from Steve Bunting

I would like to bring to your attention the plight of the Cotgrave miners, and the effects the pit closures will have on their community and families.

The men going to work every day and being sent home is soul destroying. This pit can and should be turning coal, by law.

I see young men walking about the village with nothing to do but worry for the future of their families. This is a daunting outlook - for Christmas and the rest of their lives.

At the same time they make me wonder - those in the UDM, which is the majority union by far at Cotgrave. They are told lie upon lie, but they still remain with that union. This is more soul-destroying to me than anything else.

When will they realise that they have been used by very devious people? The very same people who have taken the miners' livelihood away to meet their own ends.

Diary

Saturday 19th December:

Scottish Miners' March reaches London.
8.00pm: National Lights Out - switch off for 5 minutes, put a candle in your window.

Wednesday 30th December:

Benefit Gig at Arboretum Manor pub (next to Arboretum). Labour Party Socialists. Half proceeds to Nottingham Campaign Against pit Closures.

Saturday 9th January:

Workshop Rally. Assemble 10.00am Farr Cmnty. Centre. Rally 12.00 Bassetlaw Centre.

National Miners' Support Group Conference - Sheffield

Regulars.

Every Tuesday. Notts. Campaign Against Pit Closures - International Cmnty. Centre, Mansfield Rd at 7.30pm.

Every Saturday. NCACP Stall - St. Peter's Gate.

STRIKE BACK

Newsletter of the Notts. Campaign Against Pit Closures.

Issue 3. 16th November 1992.

Women Against Pit Closures Occupation

On Friday 11th December Aggie Curry, Hazel Pedalty, Brenda Nichols, Anne Scargill and Gwen White entered Markham Main colliery (one of the ten on the 'immediate' hit list) and took over one of the offices. As news of the occupation spread, dozens of bouquets of flowers arrived from all over the country as a symbol of support for their action.

On Sunday, hundreds of miners and others gathered at Armthorpe and marched with their banners through the village to the colliery. Although warned to stop at the colliery gate, and of liability to prosecution if they entered British coal premises, the march continued straight up to the office window, from where the five women from Women Against Pit Closures addressed them.

They announced that, having shown what could be done by a handful of people, they would now leave the office, to march back through Armthorpe with the procession to a meeting at the Welfare. There the overflowing hall was addressed by each of the women, along with the Yorks. NUM President, Ken Capstick, and Arthur Scargill. The women spoke of their fight, not just for the mines, but for all jobs and communities, as well as the National Health and other services.

What five women can do, each and everyone of use can do! We must salute the action of these women, not just in words, but by taking inspiration from their initiative and stepping up the fight for our future and that of our children.

One of the women said, "If you will back us, we can do it!". Let's do more than 'back' them. Let's do it ourselves!

Closing Cotgrave Quietly

Public outrage forced the Government to give a three month 'stay of execution' to the ten pits earmarked for immediate closure. During this 90 day consultation period (required by the Employment protection Act) British Coal pledged to the courts that no pit would suffer irreversible damage.

Yet, all but one of the ten have ceased working and are sending miners home, refusing to allow them to cut coal.

Not only is no proper consultation taking place, but because the mines are not being worked the rising of pit floors and rock fall means that it will be difficult to impossible to reopen the seams. Over £55m. worth of machinery has already been buried at Silverhill alone.

A cynic might say that the government is planning for the mines to shut themselves. Why else pay the miners not to work? Yet on '30/10' the Energy Minister, Tim Eggar, assured Unions that there would be a 'full economic review of all 10 pits'. We have not heard the result of this review.

So, why has Cotgrave pit been preparing shaft floors for concreting, for the past six weeks? Why are long-loads of ballast, for filling the pit, arriving daily?

If consultation and review are not a sham, preparation for closure should cease immediately and all ten pits should resume coal production. Perhaps the Government imagine that the fight for the ten pits will be abandoned as a lost cause. If this happened, they could then concentrate on picking off the other twenty one on the hit list, one by one. We cannot allow this to happen.

NO PIT CLOSURES.
NOT 31. NOT 21. NOT 10.
NOT ONE!!

s o l i d a r i t y i n a c t i o n

Pensioners Speak Out.

This is the text of a submission from:

The British Pensioners and Trade Unions Association
to Notts. County Council Inquiry into Proposed Pit Closures.

The Government's assault on the mining industry is a crime against the British people.

Coal is our country's priceless asset, and has been for one hundred years and must be in the future the basis of our industrial strength. No other fuel is as reliable or cheaper.

The loss of 31,000 mining jobs, plus thousands more from the effects of the closures will be a severe setback for our economy.

The viability of the industry is undeniable.

The effect on our balance of payments problem through coal imports will be worsened, and there is no doubt that the importers will raise their prices if British pits are allowed to close. In fact Britain could become an exporter of coal if pits are allowed to remain open and the Government gives a transitional transport subsidy.

The main points we wish to make is about the effect on community life, and particularly the fears of pensioners, as we do not live in a vacuum.

Many of our members have sons and grandsons working in the mining industry; some work in coalfired power stations and some in transportation of coal. The average age of a miner in Notts. is 32 years; our concern is that, due to the horrific job losses, many will not work again.

This will have a traumatic effect on family life as living standards will be savagely reduced, and the possibility of marriage breakdowns cannot be ignored. Many will lose their homes through repossessions, and mining communities will become the new depressed areas.

The cuts envisaged in the Local Authority's budgets will mean that the Social Services will not have the resources to cope with the overwhelming problems they will be faced with. Councils will not have the dwellings to rehouse the homeless, and the NHS will have great difficulty in coping with cases of mental stress and poverty related illnesses, and this includes children.

Retired miner and miners' widows are extremely anxious about their concessionary fuel allowances or cash in lieu. How can they be guaranteed that they will still receive these rights if pits are closed and privatisation of the industry goes ahead. The existing coal stocks should be distributed to pensioners, unemployed, low paid, one-parent families, sick and disabled to ensure warmth during the winter months. In many EEC countries there is extra fuel or heating allowances for pensioners during the winter months. The cost would be offset by savings for the NHS and there would be fewer deaths from hypothermia and other cold-related illnesses.

Retired miners are also very concerned about their industrial pensions. Will these be guaranteed; without it thousands more pensioners would have to exist just on or below the poverty line. Already in Britain 50% pensioners are in this category.

Since the privatisation of the electricity supply industry, obscene high profits have been made. If they are allowed to dismantle coalfired power stations and replace them with either gas or nuclear fuels it is estimated that electricity could rise by 16%.

The profits of the privatised electrical supply companies are put before the interests of miners, the communities, the British people and the country.

In concluding our submission we state that the economic case for keeping our pits open is unanswerable. Only those that are exhausted should be closed.

The Government must listen to the majority of the population, who are wise enough to want to save our most valuable asset. Coal.

November 12th. 1992.

To Be - nefit or Not To Be - nefit.

Thinking you might take the money and run?
Here's something else to think about.

Unemployment Benefit :

Payable for 1 year only (possibly 6 months from next year); if you've got enough stamps.

How much? Single person : £43.10
Couple : £69.70

(No additions for children)

Income Support :

This is to top up (not as well as) UB; or if you're not entitled to UB.

Payable if you have capital of less than £3000; £3-8000, a proportion payable; over £8000 - nothing.

Redundancy money doesn't count as capital for the first year (although some of it could be counted as wages for 3-13 weeks, thus disqualifying you from UB and IS for that period).

After a year it counts as capital. If you use some or all of it to pay off debts or buy a 'luxury' item you could also be disqualified (unreasonable disposal of assets).

How much? 18-25 : £33.60
over 25 : £42.45
couple: : £66.70
child under 11 : £14.55
" 11-15 : £21.40
" 16-17 : £25.55

Child Benefit is deducted from these amounts. Benefit only for children still at school.

(E.g. Couple with 2 children under 11 get a total income - including Child Benefit - of £95.80 p.wk)

Rent will be rebated in full.

Mortgage: 1/2 interest only for 4 months; then interest only.

N.B. If either of a couple work for 16 hours or more per week, they cannot claim IS at all.

Can you live on this? Ask those who are trying to.
How long would you have to live on benefits? Dozens, in some cases hundreds, of people are already chasing every job. True unemployment is over 4 million, and rising. Many have been unemployed for more than 5 years. Can you guarantee another job? Ever?

Besides, taking 'voluntary' redundancy means selling a job that is not your property to sell. It belongs to all of us, and our children.

Think about it.