

SOLIDARITY

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newsletter of the

Greater Manchester

Miners Support Committee

CAN'T PAY-WON'T PAY - NUM and the courts

The High Court decision to fine the NUM £200,000 with the threat of sequestration of its assets, escalates the dispute to a new level. It also means the Government is getting rattled.

Winter is coming, coal stocks are getting critically low, power cuts loom, and yet Thatcher and MacGregor have completely failed to smash - or even to dent - the miners solidarity and determination after 8 bitter, violent and hungry months.

Having failed to beat, starve or tempt the miners back to work, the courts are now in the front line. Writs are flying around like confetti, and the intention is clear - bankrupt the NUM and make the continuation of the strike impossible.

It is now more essential than ever that solidarity and support be stepped up. Arthur Scargill said after the writ was issued, "Over the next period we're going to be involved in possibly the most major confrontation that we've ever witnessed." He's dead right. By refusing to pay the fine, by refusing to allow unelected and unaccountable judges to run the internal affairs of a democratic trade union, the NUM will need the full backing of every trade unionist, both in stepping up food and money collections, and

also crucially in getting assurances of direct action should the sequestration go ahead. That means first making sure that the TUC Conference decisions are fully implemented now. No scab coal must be used or transported, and oil bound for power stations must be blacked. Picket lines must not be crossed. It also means arguing at branch, district, regional and national level that the time has come for firm commitments of solidarity atriike action from the rest of the trade union movement.

Noone seriously believes that this strike is just a battle between the NUM and the Coal Board. It's the Government against the entire trade union movement. What better illustration than the two Party Conferences. At Brighton Norman Tebbit put it quite honestly. "I see this strike as the last of its kind. When its over we will have finally broken the shackles of the trade unions". At Blackpool Arthur Scargill told delegates, "It is more important to stand by one's class and to stand by one's members than to cave in and accept the decisions of an unelected judge, or the dictats of a government which can't even spell democracy".

Step up the support now. With the future freedom of the trade unions on the line noone can afford not to!

SPECIAL TRADE UNION MEETING AT AUEW BUILDING, THE CRESCENT, SALFORD.

WEDNESDAY 31st OCTOBER AT 7.30

"THE MINERS STRIKE - IMPLEMENTATION OF TUC POLICY"

Organised and sponsored by Agecroft and Walkden NUM and M/cr North and South AUEW District Committees.

Speakers...Davy Millar, Yorks NUM, John Tocher, Manchester Confed.

Jimmy Knapp, Gen. Sec. NUR

STOP SCAB COAL- FIDDLERS FERRY-STOCKS LOW

Roy Jackson and Mal Gregory (branch secretaries at Bold and Sutton Manor NUM) spoke to Lenni George about the situation at the power stations and the use of the courts.

"the largest power station in the North West is at Fiddlers Ferry in Merseyside. They have refused to handle scab coal throughout the summer and we have been told that they will run out in two weeks time.

"ASLEF officials informed NUM pickets at Fiddlers that £1 million has been spent to save coal and big power stations have been put on low burn whilst B type stations like Bold and Carrington were brought up to feed the National Grid.

"Bold station is now no longer handling scab coal, and Bold miners picketed Carrington power station last week and were told that the union officials had now received instructions from their national offices to implement TUC decisions not to handle scab coal, and they were instructing their members to implement that from this week.

"Now that we have received the backing of the TUC and increasing numbers of power workers, the Tories have turned to the courts. If the courts sequester union funds we hope all the power workers will join forces with us.

"If the courts begin requestration of the funds they know it will unite the miners, power workers and many other trade unionists. The N.U.M. will work from the street if it has to. But this is only a threat, a token gesture. In South Wales the courts could have taken every penny - they didn't. We don't think they will this time either and even if they do the miners united will never be defeated."

WOMENS SUPPORT CONFERENCE

Date -- 17.11.84
Venue - Manchester Town Hall



This conference which has been called by the 'Manchester women support the Miners', 'Bold Miners wives support', and 'Walken Miners wives support' groups. This conference has already attracted support and sponsorship from Miners wives groups, trade unions and Womens organisation all over the North West. Discussions are planned around the issues of building support within the Labour and trade union movement, the policing of the strike, and its

links with the Greenham movement. The conference offers a forum for consolidating and building the tremendous support Women have already shown for the Miners struggle. Women will be able to discuss thier experiences during the strike and develop perspectives on the way forward during and after the strike. All Women activists are invited to the Conference and the social afterwards. All womens and Labour movements are asked to sponsor the meeting.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRODUCED BY THE GREATER MANCHESTER MINERS SUPPORT COMMITTEE. WE CO-ORDINATE IDEAS, NEWS AND DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE MANY LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS. WE ASK THAT YOUR GROUP SEND A DELEGATE TO OUR MEETINGS. THE NEXT ONE IS ON THE 1ST NOVEMBER AT 7.30 IN MANCHESTER TOWN HALL, AND EVERY OTHER THURSDAY THEREAFTER.

FOR ANY MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US AT C/O FTAT, 37 ANSON RD, VICTORIA PARK, MANCHESTER 14. TEL 061 224 0513.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

From the outset of this dispute it has been obvious that the Tories intended to break the power of the NUM and thereby deal a severe blow to the wider trade union movement. Thatcher has used the DHSS to attempt to starve striking miners back, she has used the police to try and beat them back. And she has the courts to rob workers of their union funds, and so try to bankrupt them back to work.

The labour movement has denied her victory through the massive support it has given the NUM, and particularly important have been the setting up of miners support committees. By adopting a pit, raising money and collecting food the committees are helping the miners and their families directly. To gain maximum effect a committee should organise regular collections and try and meet every week.

Seeking publicity is also important. Issue press releases, give out leaflets and organise public meetings to counteract the Tory propaganda in the media.

So - get organised and build the support!

LIFE ON THE LINE....

There are few things more threatening than coming face to face with a police dog on a picket line. Chris Wignall of Golborne NUM told us of his experience.

"I was arrested on August 23rd when about 300 police, some with dogs, faced a similar number of pickets. Whilst some of the dogs were obedient others were vicious and uncontrolled.

"One of these dogs attacked me and bit my arms and legs. This in itself is not so unusual - except that this dog was being held by a P.C. on a short lead. By the time I got to court the police case suggested these wounds were self-inflicted and that there were no police dogs on the line!

"When the police used their typical strategy of pushing the pickets into a corner the police line was broken and we spilled out onto the pavement. Then, under the scrutiny of a police superintendent the pickets were physically picked up and thrown back into the picket line.

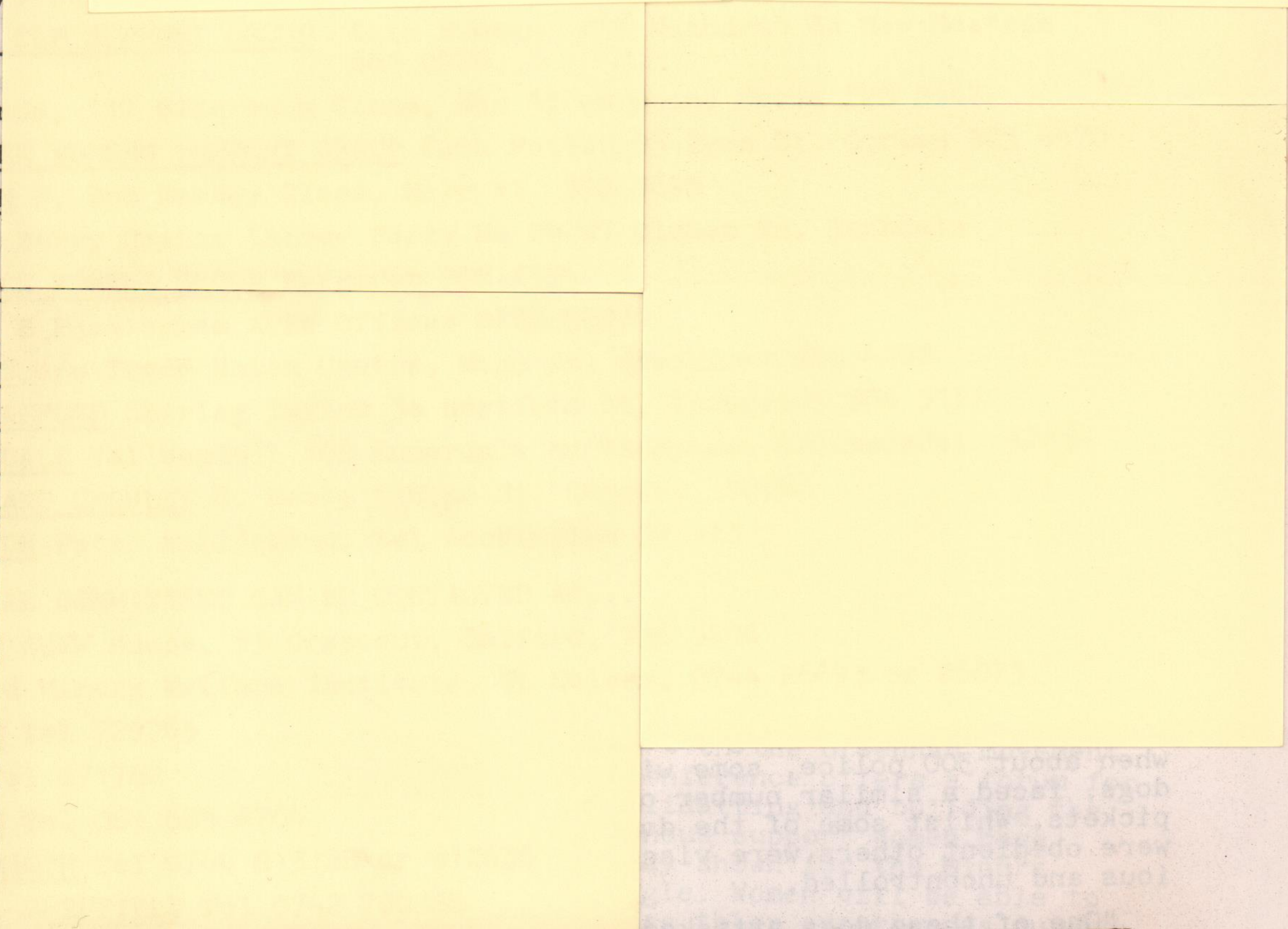
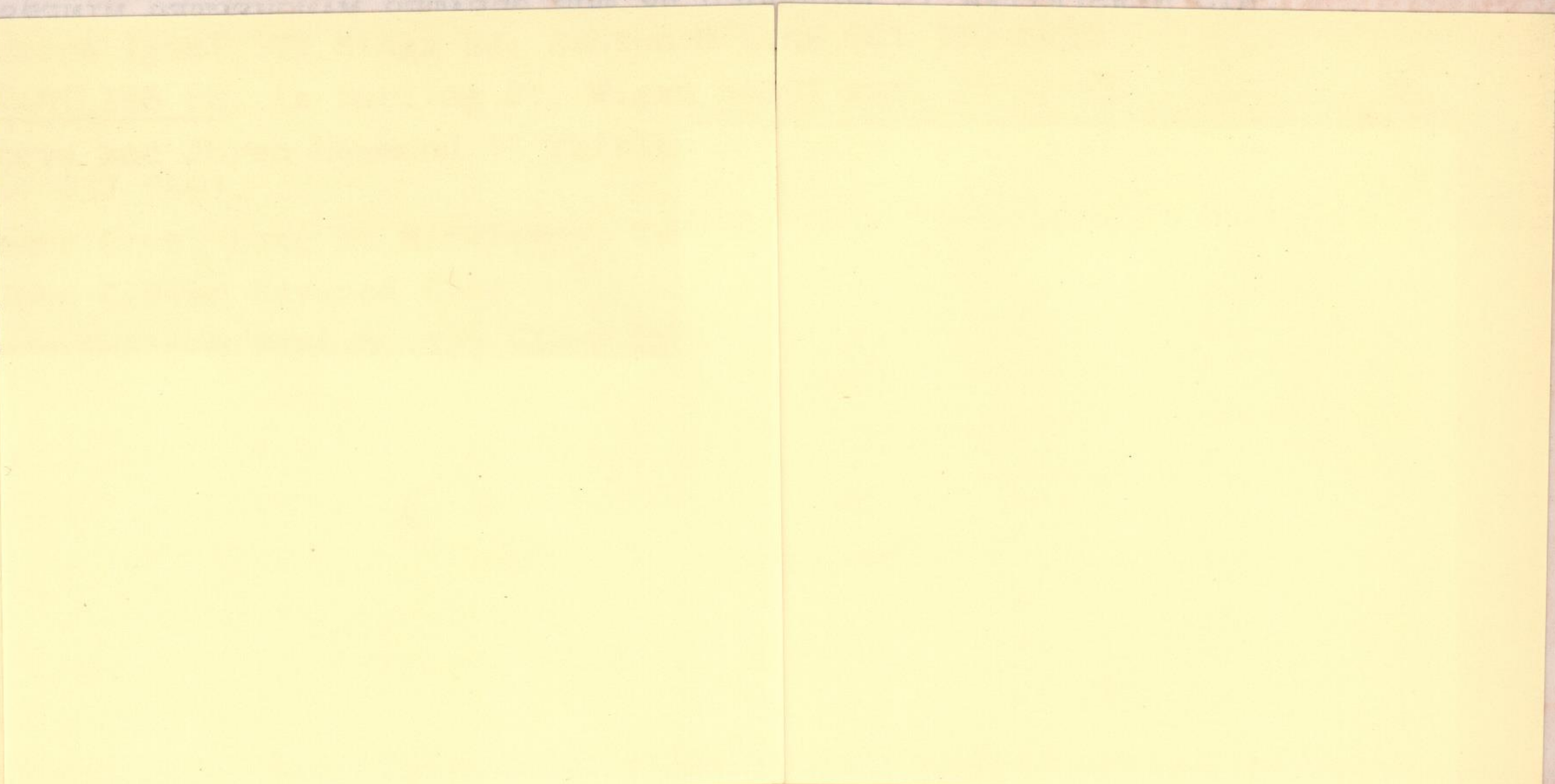
"I was picked up and charged under section five of the Public Order Act (actually falling onto the pavement), and taken to Leigh police station. There the charges were extended to assaulting a police officer.

"My case had a happy ending - unlike many others - and after four hours the case was dismissed. The police evidence was quickly seen through and thrown out of court.

"I think I was lucky that the case came up at Wigan Magistrates Court. If it had been at St Helens I reckon I would have got at least a fine - maybe even prison".

Join your local support group

- THAMESIDE, Ba
- WIGAN MINERS
- WYTHENSHAW S
- MIDDLETON La
- HEYWOOD Tel
- LEVENSHULME D
- CHORLTON
- CRUMPSALE
- SALFORD
- LEIGH M
- LONGSIGHT
- OLDHAM C
- BURY Bria
- BOLTON c/
- BLACKLEY
- HULME Lin
- MANCHESTER
- DROYLSDEAN
- ROCHDALE
- WITHINGTON
- HYNDBURN
- STOCKPORT
- SOUTH TR
- SKELMERS
- COPPULL
- ACCRINGTON
- NUM STRI
- AGECROFT
- BOLD Bol
- GOLBORNE
- LEIGH T
- PARKSIDE
- SUTTON M
- NUM H.Q.



SATURDAY 3rd NOVEMBER - MARCH AND RALLY IN ATHERTON.
 Assemble 11.00am behind Formby Hall, Atherton, march to Atherton Labour Club. Speakers include Dennis Skinner and Mick McGahey.

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