

Opencast threat to countryside

Dust, noise and traffic feared in rural villages

Since Michael Heseltine announced in October the proposed closure of 31 pits, there has been a strong public campaign to keep all 31 pits open - to keep what is rightfully ours.

The pit camps have been one focus of the campaign, as well as a form of action in themselves. Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures have since January 18th been operating a pit camp, which is a constant reminder to British Coal of their betrayal. To heighten the campaign various occupations of the pit have successfully taken place. One of the main aims of these occupations was to prevent British Coal from closing Parkside: this is still our objective.

This Government has since proceeded with their pit closure programme, with little opposition from Labour politicians or the Trades Union Congress. This has been aided by a media "blackout". In the first half of this year 19 pits have closed and some 1700 miners jobs have gone. It is vital that the issues are once again placed in the public arena. This Government's and British Coal's underhand and vicious actions in closing valuable pits and attempting to destroy the National Union of Mineworkers need to be exposed.

This Government has fed lies to the public about a lack of a market for coal. This lie is now being exposed in the plans for local open cast mines.

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OPEN PARKSIDE NOT OPEN CAST

As we go to press, it seems likely that Parkside could be operational till March 1994. Meanwhile proposals are before St Helens and Wigan Councils for a new open cast site, and an extension to the existing site - both at Garswood, 5 miles away.

The private companies proposing the sites argue there is a market for this coal - at Fiddlers Ferry power station and the domestic market. YES you've guessed it EXACTLY the same markets that DON'T exist for Parkside coal - according to British Coal and their cronies - Boyds' - latest report !

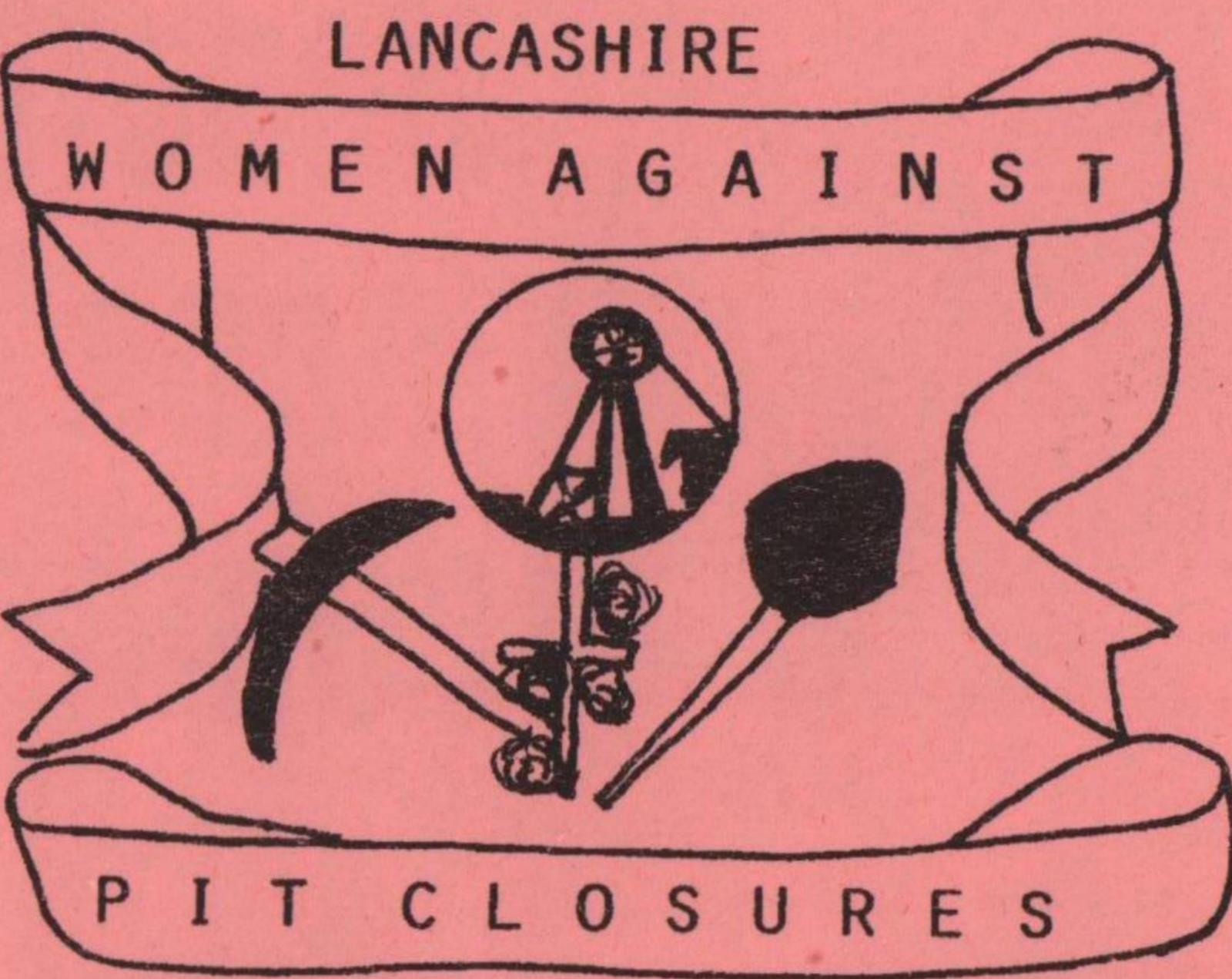
Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures is making links with "Residents Action Against Open Cast" at Garswood, to help fight the ludicrous waste of landscape and resources, when there's a perfectly viable pit at Parkside.

We all know where the Tory Government stands on open cast - at the end of July they overturned neighbouring Wigan and Bolton's refusal of an application for open cast in Westhoughton and Atherton.

WHY open cast - when the coal cutter still sits ready by the new coal face at Parkside, AND the workforce wants to work ?

Join your voice with the residents and us in protesting against this wicked vandalism !

Women keep the camp fire burning



FIGHT GOES ON

The fight certainly still goes on... while the towers stand and the shaft is open Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures will continue to maintain the rota and keep the pit camp running.

British Coal and the Government have told us since October that Parkside is not a viable pit - yet now they are trying to sell the pit (see back page).

We still need YOUR help and support
HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Firstly in a very practical way - contact the Pit Camp (tel no on back page) to help out on the rota. Even a couple of hours gives one of the group a chance to have a break or speak at a meeting. Second every chance you get raise the issue - with politicians, in the papers, at your union branch meetings. Invite a speaker from Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures to your meetings.

Local Councils around the area of the pit are voting on proposals to start open cast mining - fight these proposals - we want Parkside Pit re-opened - we want the miners re-employed - we want to benefit from the coal resources still underground.

WHO IS "THE ENEMY WITHIN" ?

Since the first Government announcement in October about pit closures, this Government has done nothing for the coal industry - in fact the reverse is true. The white paper was a con trick to appease Tory back benchers, the review process was a sham to buy time - to take the issue off the people's agenda.

Following the white paper to "Save The Pits" the government has given permission for more gas fired power stations and more of the bitumen based fuel Orimulsion - without doubt the dirtiest of fuels - causing untold damage to the environment.

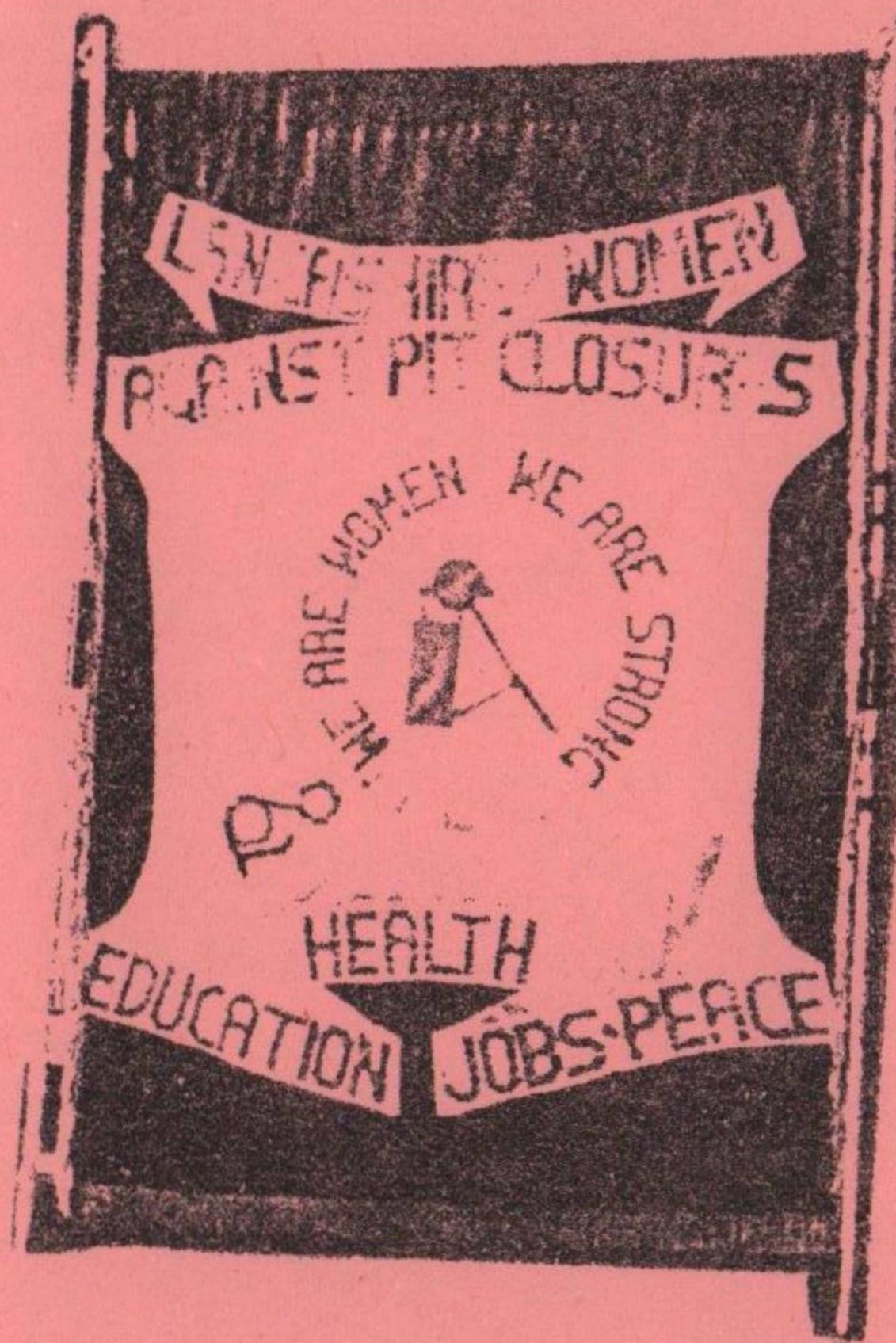
In Lancashire proposals are being put forward for open cast mining which will destroy the countryside. Add to these the insane subsidy to the nuclear industry and imported coal and we have the destruction of the coal industry, with thousands upon thousands of lost jobs - not just the miners employed in the industry today but the many generations of children who would have followed family tradition and also ancillary industries - for every miner employed many more people are employed in support industries.

At this point in time there are 30 collieries producing coal employing 20,000 miners and 7,500 white collar staff. The announcement of 15 more pits to close is another step towards shrinking to 6 pits employing just 5,000 miners.

Arthur Scargill pointed out in a recent article that if the government reversed its energy policies the tax payer would be saved £2.5 billion a year. Redundancy payments alone since October have cost over £1 billion - the economics of the madhouse to spend more to close pits than to keep them open.

Coal reserves are a precious resource that we have inherited - we must fight to protect and use this coal. Most of the pits to be closed have many years of reserves, when pits are closed those reserves are lost forever, we are the only country prepared to gamble on other countries to produce our energy.

The fightback must start now we must show this government that ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.



Women ready for fifth support camp

ANOTHER miners' support camp is set to be up and running on Monday. Women Against Pit Closures announced yesterday.

by PAUL CORRY

The camp, at the threatened Parkside pit in Lancashire, now has a caravan and supporters determined to keep it going.



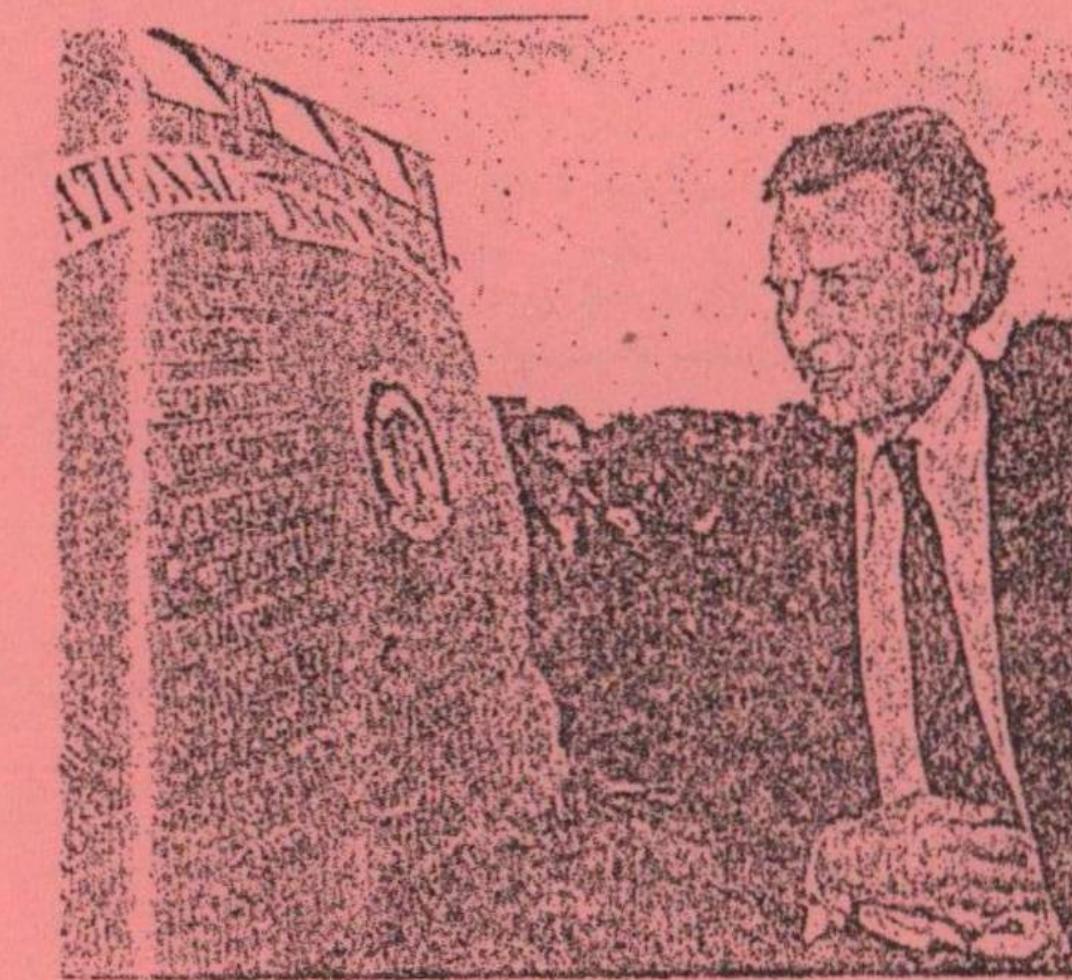
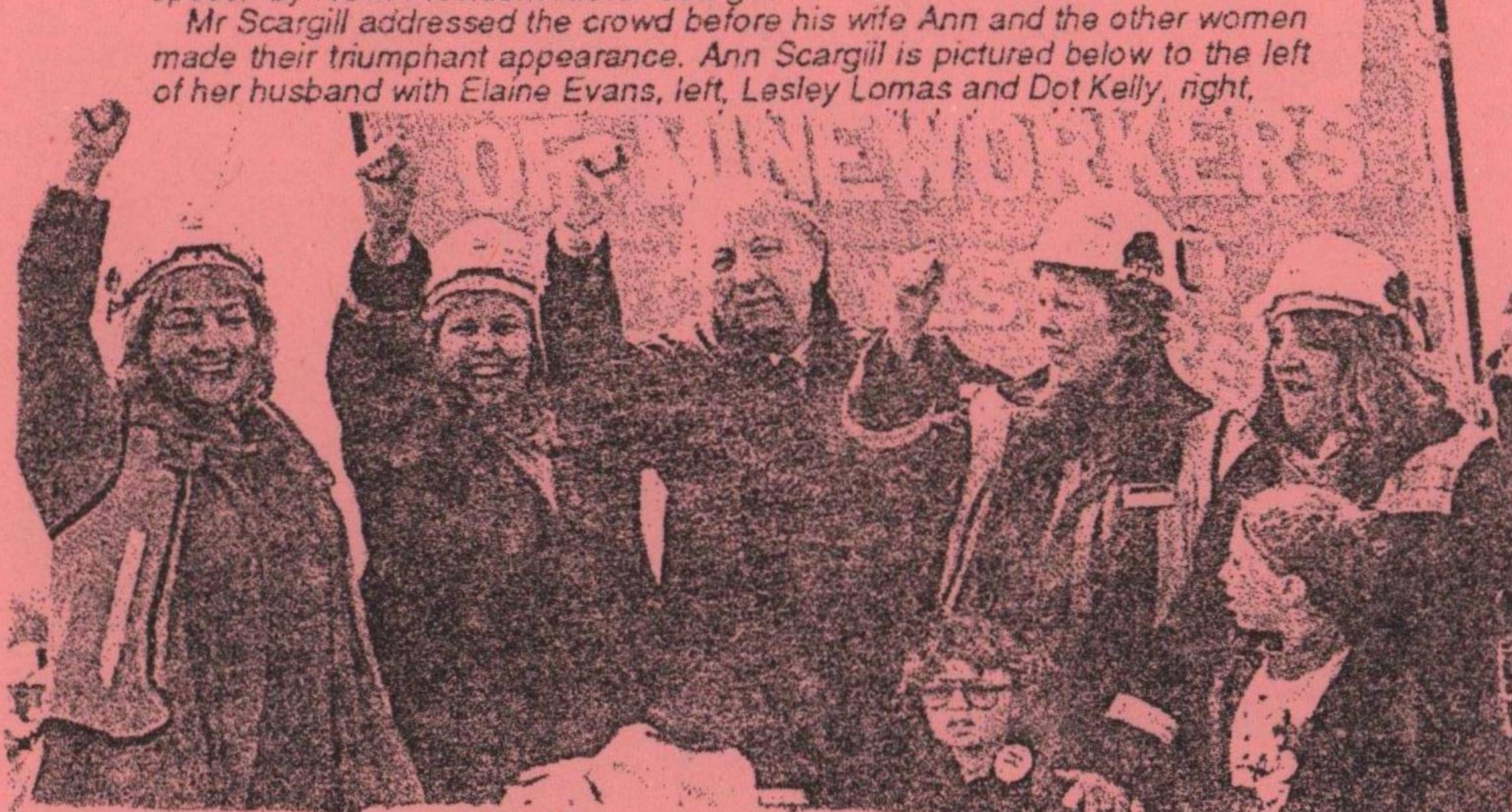
International Womens' day 8th March we celebrated by commemorating the lives of the "Pit Brow Lasses" this photograph was taken on the day.



Defiant protesters receive an overwhelming welcome from the 700-strong crowd as they emerge into daylight for the first time in five days.

The women, who staged a sit-in at the threatened Parkside Colliery throughout the Easter weekend, made their way to the surface during a speech by NUM President Arthur Scargill.

Mr Scargill addressed the crowd before his wife Ann and the other women made their triumphant appearance. Ann Scargill is pictured below to the left of her husband with Elaine Evans, left, Lesley Lomas and Dot Kelly, right.



Heseltine faces pits demo fury

■ Walking into trouble ...

Heseltine is greeted by a protest from miners

■ Save our pits ...

protesters in the business school take on Heseltine



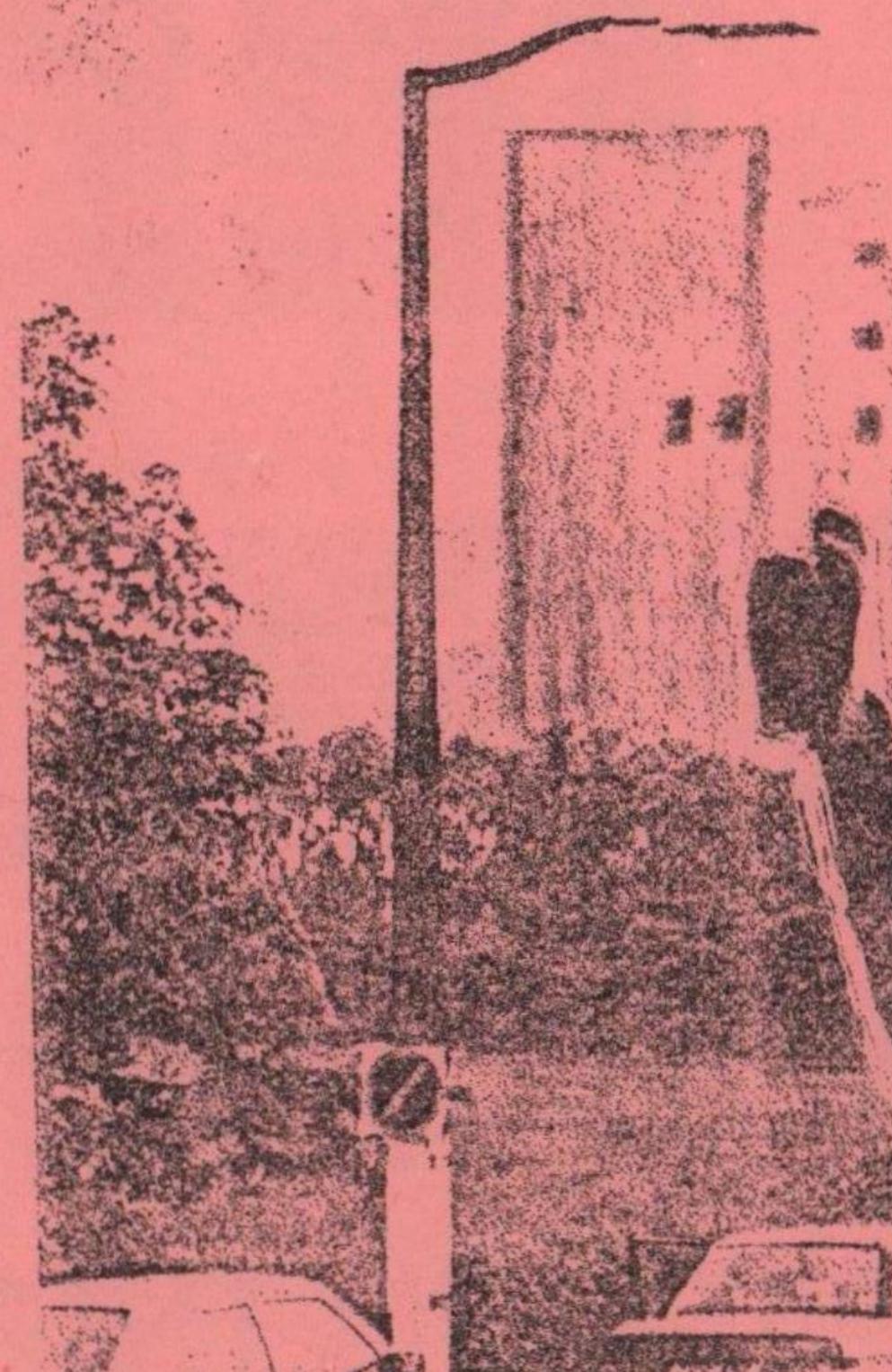
MICHAEL Heseltine faced an angry protest against pit closures on a visit to Manchester.

About 30 demonstrators confronted the Board of Trade president at the city's business school.

Inside the building Mr Heseltine faced a fresh verbal barrage from a handful of protesters as he rose to speak.

The demonstrators included members of the Women Against Pit Closures group at Parkside

colliery, Newton-le-Willows, and miners from Nottinghamshire.



Penthouse pit camp opens at Parkside

The foursome, from Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures, who occupied the tower were: Sylvia Pye, from Newton and the chairman of Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures; Christine Sumner, from Manchester; Sheila Gregory, of Atherton and Lucy Iannou, from Lancaster.

You never know where we will be next — say determined campaigners

THE well-wishers which had gathered at Parkside Colliery to greet the four women on their descent, were met with singing and dancing.

The campaigners, who ended their 80-hour demonstration on Monday afternoon, after three wet and cold nights, burst into song, linked arms and danced in front of a cheering crowd, which had travelled from throughout the

country to greet the members of Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures.

Among the first of the well-wishers on the scene were NUM President Arthur Scargill, his wife, Ann and Susan Wilson, a spokeswoman for the protesters at the camp.

The exhausted campaigners addressed those who had gathered to meet them, emphasising their willingness to continue the fight, by telling British Coal: "You never know where we will be next."



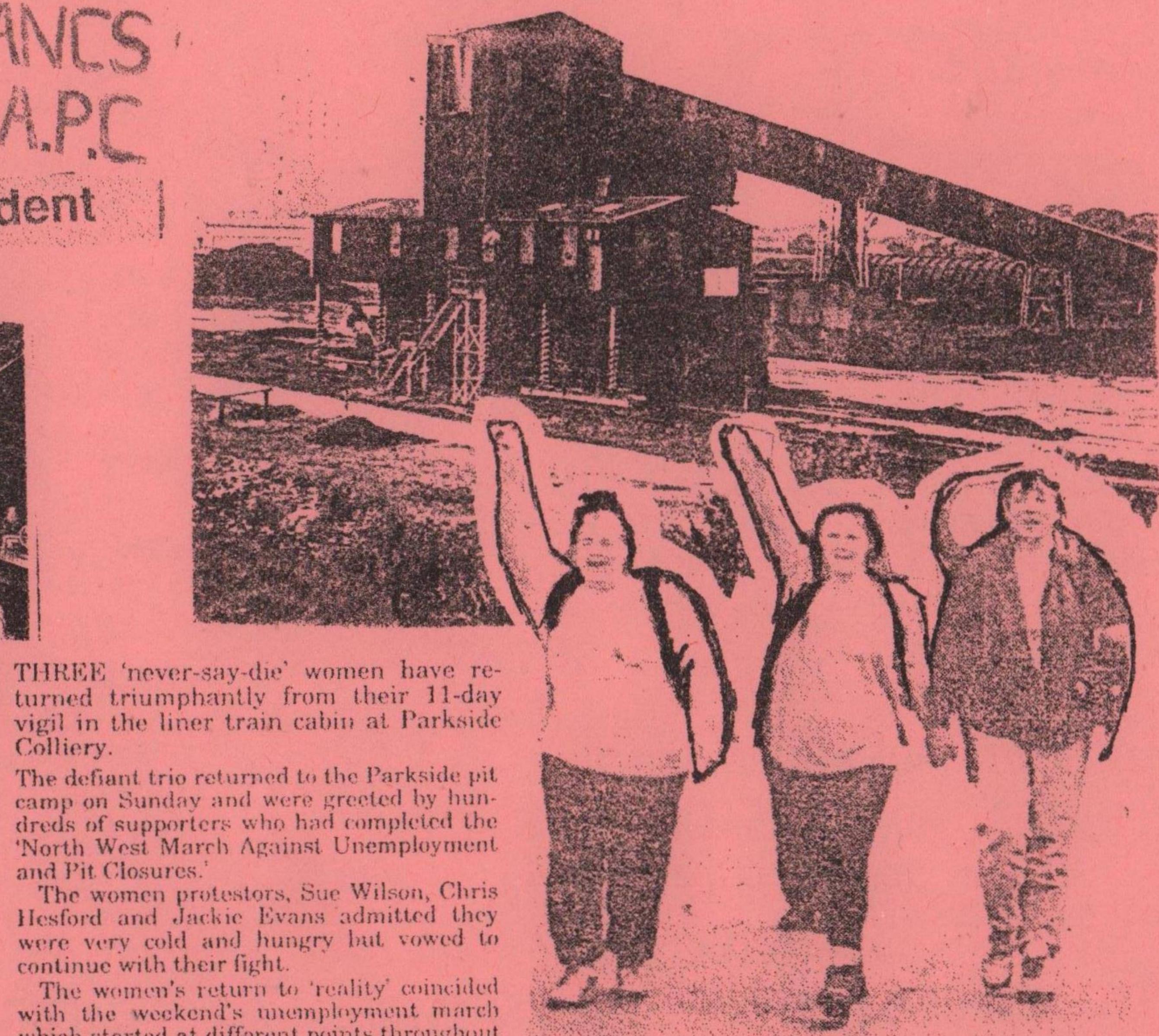
'These defiant protesters are a credit to the entire nation,' says NUM President

APRIL 27th 100 DAYS

Pictured below is the cake made especially for us for the 100th day we received flowers, cards and support from all over the country.



Defiant pit vigil women still in fight



THREE 'never-say-die' women have returned triumphantly from their 11-day vigil in the liner train cabin at Parkside Colliery.

The defiant trio returned to the Parkside pit camp on Sunday and were greeted by hundreds of supporters who had completed the 'North West March Against Unemployment and Pit Closures.'

The women protesters, Sue Wilson, Chris Hesford and Jackie Evans admitted they were very cold and hungry but vowed to continue with their fight.

The women's return to 'reality' coincided with the weekend's unemployment march which started at different points throughout the North West on Thursday and converged at Parkside on Sunday, to be addressed by NUM Leader, Arthur Scargill.