

COUNTER INFORMATION



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BILSTON GLEN



BARBED WIRE AT "BELSEN GLEN"

ACTION is needed to stop the transport of coal out of Bilston Glen colliery in the Lothians and to strengthen the strike there.

During November the number of strike-breakers jumped from around 100 to about 600, over a third of the workforce. By early December the return to work had slowed drastically, to a trickle - but the NCB have been stepping up the transport of coal out of the pit.

They started with deliveries to hospitals, using strikebreaking NCB lorry drivers. Now coal is being transported to schools, coal merchants depots, and other unknown destinations. Several private contractors are involved, including Bruce Lindsey Waldie of Haymarket, Edinburgh. From depots the coal could be taken to industry and power stations. If the NCB get away with taking coal out of Bilston Glen they will be more confident about doing the same at other strikebound pits.

The present small pickets have only been able to turn back a few lorries. Local strikers have wanted MASS pickets. Both the Scottish N.U.M. leadership - McGahey, Bolton & co. have been OBSTRUCTING their wishes. The mining communities themselves need to take over the running of the strike at a GRASSROOTS level, co-ordinating with other areas, and ignoring the leadership.

All is not lost at Bilston Glen. Some strike-breakers have RE-JOINED the strike, possib-

ly disgusted at the MILITARISATION of the pit - security men with dogs stand guard within the colliery buildings, doors everywhere are locked and bolted. But the local strikers do NEED PHYSICAL SOLIDARITY from other areas, eg Fife and Ayrshire, where the strike is still solid. And the strike needs to go back onto the OFFENSIVE, the struggle needs to be spread into other industries and areas of society.

This happened when from 20th November janitors at LASSWADE high School refused to accept SCAB-coal from Bilston Glen. The janitors were suspended and then came out on STRIKE: Teachers came out on an UN-OFFICIAL 24 hour strike in SOLIDARITY. The school was shut down for several days.

The action spread when the janitor at the local Further Education College also REFUSED to accept the coal. He was suspended and the college shut down. Unfortunately other school janitors in Midlothian didn't take up the struggle and the Lasswade janitors became ISOLATED.

However, at the time of writing [10-12], it's reported that 58 schools in AYRSHIRE have closed due to a lack of coal. Having an impact beyond the coal industry like this is VITAL. And while obviously hospitals should be supplied with coal, let no one say that the indoctrination centres known as schools are not worthy candidates for CLOSURE!

Info miners at Loanhead, The Scotsman 21-23-11, Socialist Worker, 1-12, Radio Scotland News 10-12).

A COMMUNITY OF STRUGGLE

One of the most positive aspects of the miners strike is the tremendous involvement of women in the struggle. Not only in the food kitchens, but on the picket lines, organising, speaking at meetings.

Talking about this development, Mrs Barbara Jeffrey of the Wives Support Group in Leicestershire has said, "At one time I never read political stories in a newspaper. We all take a keen interest now. In South Derbyshire, the wives of a small group of striking miners actually vote with the men" (Guardian 26-11)

This direct involvement by women in taking decisions is extremely important. The women are fully involved in the struggle, so WHY shouldn't they have an EQUAL SAY with the men?

In the miners strike there could be regular meetings in all areas, in which everyone - miners, women, unemployed, school students, other workers - could participate in decid-

ing how to take the struggle forward - this sort of thing HAS happened before. For example, during the 1980 steelworkers strike in Caldicott on the Welsh border, mass meetings were held every week in a local



club. The whole community discussed the STRATEGY for picketing and advancing the strike. Everyone took part in making DECISIONS, joining in the ACTIONS decided on. Similar forms of organisation were created in the Plesseys and Fisher Bendix factory occupations in 1972 and in the Barcelona Docks in 1979 in Spain.

To organise in this way will generally mean going against official trade union opposition. This might seem a big step, but it's a vital one if we're not to be led like sheep to yet more defeats.

DON'T LET THEM THROUGH!

The scab firm Yuill and Dodds, joined by a host of others from Musselburgh to Motherwell have been involved in increased transportation of coal from Hunterston to Ravenscraig. The community protests in Barrhead caused them to divert the convoy and they now stream through Pollok at 50mph, travelling four at a time through a huge Glasgow South-Western housing estate before joining the motorway at Bellahouston.

