

*'Come on, you're going down to the pit' they shouted.  
'Are you kidding?' we replied.  
'There's going to be trouble down there we want no part of it, we're staying here.'  
'Get fucking walking or you'll get trouble here' they said and started wheeling their horses up behind us and pushing us out of the field.  
When I stopped a guy who looked in charge, I protested, 'look, I am being taken from a place where there is no trouble, no breach of the Law, and being taken to a place where I have reason to believe a breach of the peace is about to occur. I have no wish to be involved in a breach of the peace or any trouble.' The considered answer didn't take long:  
'You've come here for bother, now you're going to get some.'*

This pamphlet has been published by the author and the Doncaster, Cambridge, South London DAM-IWA groups and Canary Press. The Direct Action Movement is the British section of the International Workers Association (Anarcho-syndicalists).

A quarter of the price of this pamphlet will be donated to victimised miners.

80p



# COME AND WET THIS TRUNCHEON

DAVE DOUGLASS



# **THE ROLE OF THE POLICE IN THE COAL STRIKE OF 1984/1985**

Doubtless there will be others. Already the leftist groups have started to put into print their 'lessons' of the miners strike from which we are all supposed to learn. This pamphlet deals with the way in which the police operation confronted us as ordinary working people, the things that shook us and the changes we have gone through as individuals and a community as a result. Where the works of other people help to illustrate the point or authenticate something I've said I've quoted from them, after all it is not enough that WE know what happened it is essential that you know.

I am aware that after reading everything high-lighted here (and there is much much more that could have been said) there will be some who still will shake their heads in disbelief, something in their very human fabric will not allow them to believe that the police in Britain have acted like this and are about to carry on acting like this as a matter of course. To those people I can only say, there were some in our community who thought that way too, about the blacks, about the Irish, about the youth and the way the police dealt with them. Left 'lies' and horror stories of what the police were doing to those sections of these islands were met with utter cast-iron disbelief. Then the police called on us, and those members of the community EXPERIENCED the nature of the police and SAW IT in operation day by day. Perhaps your faith in the guardians of law and order is too deep to be shaken by a small pamphlet. You may one day have it shaken in a different manner by those you at present so implicitly trust.

**DAVID JOHN DOUGLASS  
NUM BRANCH DELEGATE  
HATFIELD MAIN BRANCH DONCASTER**



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There have been a number of small pamphlets on various aspects of the police in the 1984-85 miners strike. Some by Civil Liberties and Civil Rights organisations have exclusively dealt with the wider implications for 'civil rights' in Britain. Others have been written by lawyers, outraged at the extension of police powers without any legislative authority. Some sociological groups have written of the way in which the police haven't played to the 'social contract' and 'policing by consent'. Doubtless there will be others. Already the leftist groups have started to put into print their 'lessons' of the miners strike from which we are all supposed to learn. This pamphlet deals with the way in which the police operation confronted us as ordinary working people, the things that shook us and the changes we have gone through as individuals and a community as a result. Where the works of other people help to illustrate the point or authenticate something I've said I've quoted from them, after all it is not enough that WE know what happened it is essential that you know.

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**DAVID JOHN DOUGLASS  
NUM BRANCH DELEGATE  
HATFIELD  
MAY 1985**



One of the early days we went to Orgreave, before the pattern of events was etched into our collective class memory. An older miner previously uninvolved with picketing but remembering his service on the line in 1972 and 1974 joined in a non-violent but full-bodied push against the police lines on the bottom road.

The police line began to buckle, suddenly the sound of hooves was heard and at full pelt the mounted police squad crashed into the unarmed pickets.

'Hey-up' he shouts. 'That's not fair.' NOT FAIR!

The naive, simple sense of injustice of that man, was a dying expression of a feeling that had previously existed among ordinary mining folk. That showed, whatever problems, conflicts and confrontations we'd had with the police, they still adhered to some inherent sense of fair play, of common justice, of mutual respect.

Since the bloody days of '84 that feeling has been completely laid to rest FOREVER.

People like my Dad. . . a veteran of the 1926 strike, sharp on class understanding then, had heavily moderated through the 40's and 50's. Never would hear a word against the police, always beleived they were only doing their job. The reward for his and his comrades moderation was a society of inherent fair play, the rough edges of conflict had been rounded off. The Welfare State was a safety net and a steady progress of life was ensured. The bad old days had gone.

Now near the end of his life he sees the clock turned back, sees the naked partisan brutality of the police; mutters that 'Churchill's troops are back again'. The society of 'bash the miners back down their holes' is rife again.

He, like many a retired miner, will never trust the police again. He has been betrayed by a society he had been led to trust.

The women, children and teenagers of the villagers have had the horrors of occupied Ulster exploded on their streets, have felt the sharp edge of uncontrolled brutality and repression charging down their garden paths, smashing through their back doors into their kitchens. Holding them afraid to go to sleep at nights as the searchlights from the blue lamped Range Rover Rovers sweep the streets and explore the windows, doors and front gardens, as the police vehicles rush here and there or the silence of the night is broken by a police car's loud speaker calling out repeatedly the name of a young militant.

The children with their little bellies in knots of fear for the giant men in black uniforms who have invaded the warm sanctuary of their family home. Tortured them with the fear of their Dads being hurt or jailed or killed. Have swept their mothers off the streets, taken them away kicking and screaming, leaving the child at once alone, vulnerable and confused.

Oh yes, we as a people have relearned a lesson taught us at regular intervals of our history about words like 'justice' and 'fair play' under this system.

The police have generally recognised that the miner in the dispute stood firm with the community as a whole at his back. For this reason when the police have moved en mass into the pit villages they have chosen to attack the community at large, all are guilty whether they be miners or not.

Ernest Cusworth, a dustman with the South Yorkshire Council is scared to leave his home following a vicious attack by the police. Mr Cusworth who is 54 years old, suffered a fractured collar bone when he was jumped on by police as he went to work.

## CIVIL LIBERTIES

In the First Report of the Independent Enquiry by the NCCL, the council warns of the implications of the strike and warned of a possible 'drift towards acceptance of the denial of liberties'.

*'The strike. . . has been the occasion of the most massive and sustained deployment of the police ever experienced in Britain. By 8th November 1984 7,658 arrests had been made in England and Wales alone.'*

The report highlights the way in which civil law and criminal law became merged with the police sliding over to taking the civil options of the employers and making them into criminal cases.

It was something which we shouted to the four winds but nobody, not the press, the police, or the courts were interested that SECONDARY PICKETING IS NOT AND WASN'T A CRIMINAL OFFENCE. The police never did have any responsibility for enforcing CIVIL LAW. In particular things like cordoning off pickets *because* they were engaged in secondary picketing was not their remit and they had not legal authority to do it. But they did it. Who was going to stop them? They never did have the right to stop us demonstrating or rallying or protesting — that is supposed to be our civil right, but that has never guaranteed we could do it.

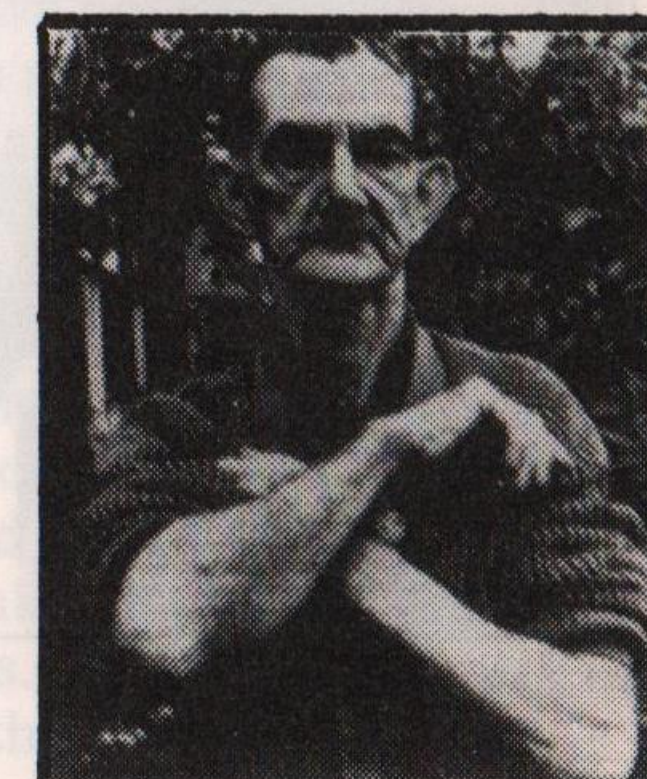
The report highlights the way in which the police went to *any* extent to get tiny numbers of strike-breakers through. There was no legal obligation on their behalf to do so, when the numbers involved and the risks of injury or disorder were disproportionate. Cortonwood for example. On 9th November, a solitary strike breaker was accompanied by anything between 1,000 and 2,000 police officers.

*'In addition to being inappropriate use of scarce police resources, such decisions promote disharmony and discontent among those picketing; this can contribute to alienation and ultimately more public disorder.'*

The locally based SHEFFIELD POLICEWATCH — a team of independent people who have followed the activities of the police made their first report over the period April-October 1984. One of the things they noticed very clearly was the deliberate removal or non-wearing of police identity numbers. The obvious purpose being to avoid detection in any subsequent complaint by villagers or pickets. They noted the following occasions:

*'Cresswell 9th April; Orgreave 26th April; Orgreave 31st May; Shirebrook 11th June; Crowle 24th July; Markham 30th July; Gascoine Wood 17th August; Markham Main 23rd August; Brookhouse 29th August; Kiveton 24th September; Brodsworth 12th October; Brodsworth 19th October.'*

Sid Richmond (pictured). Sid, a retired 70 year old miner, was stopped by cops as he was driving along in his car. Because he refused to turn back (he was on his way to see his daughter) they ordered him out of the car, knocked him around and handcuffed him.



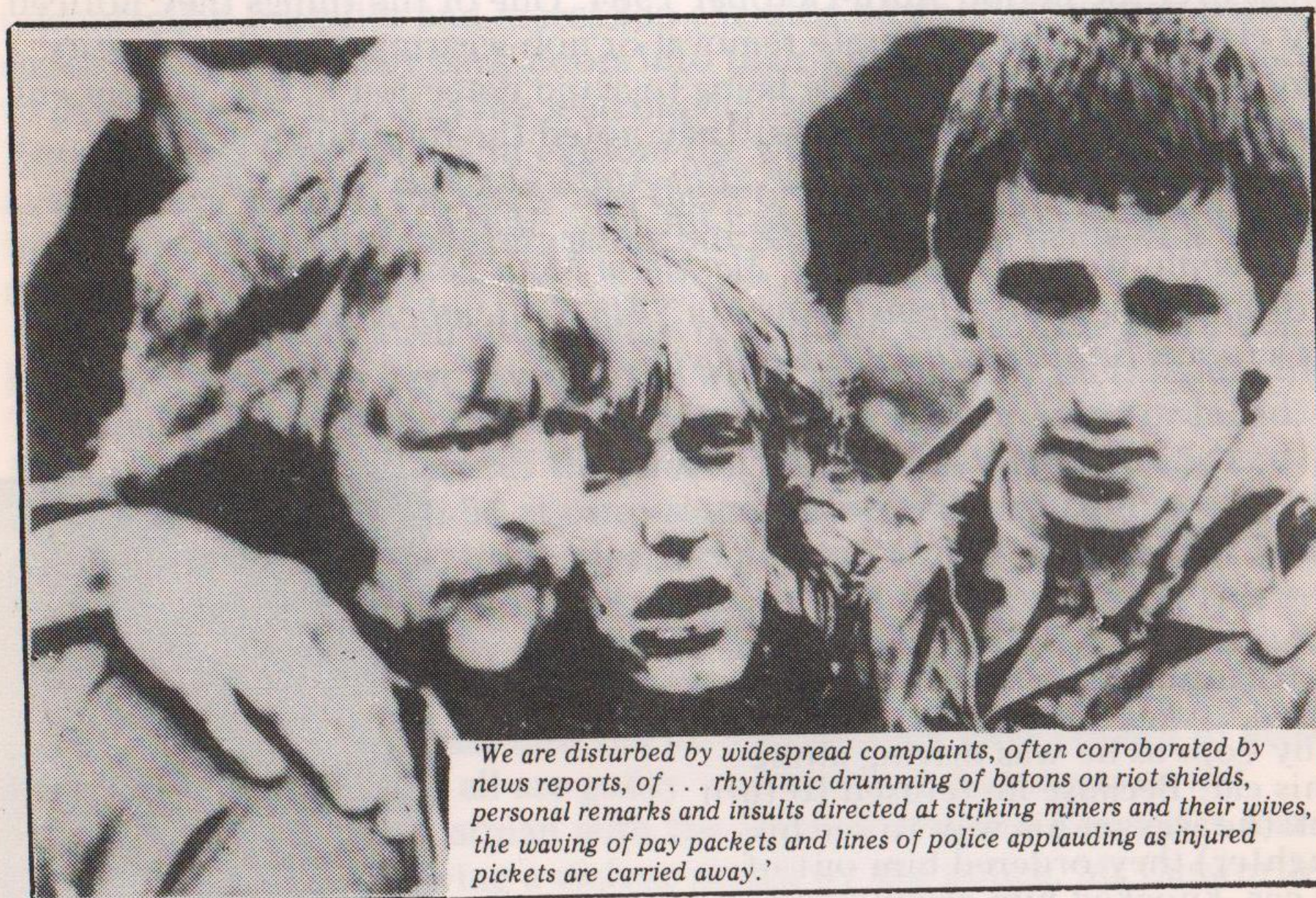


## THE THRILL OF THE CHASE

Riot police in full charge. 'Take no prisoners', many of us have heard them shout that as they advance. The logic of the situation demands that where they would have to arrest large numbers of pickets they would be 'held down' holding the prisoners. They could not then engage in the sport of chasing and hitting pickets. The tactic thus developed of laying into the miners in an attempt to seriously injure them and beat them off the street. When a picket was felled, he would be left laying just where he was. If he managed to crawl away while the fighting continued elsewhere he got away with it, if he was still there when the police returned he would be picked up and charged.

One such man was a 58 year-old miner from Wath. He managed to crawl away although he had kidney damage and two suspected broken ribs. The branch President Bernard Jackson was also a victim that day. A fellow miner arrested with him was so badly beaten about the face the police became worried they had gone too far and so released him on the spot, they could always then claim the injuries had happened elsewhere. When Barnard and the others were put into the vans, the old finger in the eyes trick was employed (they think if they partially blind you you'll be in so much pain you won't cause any trouble on the way to the police station), and the men were made to sit on the floors, in easy reach of the police boot.

Wath Committee-man, John Beard, was arrested as he tried to calm things down. 'This copper said I've had enough of Wath village' then he smacked me round the face and arrested me. Both he and Barnard swear that police threw bottles and bricks at the pickets. They also smashed the picket's hut after trying to tip it over and set fire to it. Picket huts were an easy target for the police and virtually every hut in Yorkshire was either totally destroyed, like the ones at Hatfield they set on fire, or else badly damaged.



'We are disturbed by widespread complaints, often corroborated by news reports, of . . . rhythmic drumming of batons on riot shields, personal remarks and insults directed at striking miners and their wives, the waving of pay packets and lines of police applauding as injured pickets are carried away.'

BLACK FLAG



DENNIS DOODY



PETER HURST

*They admitted beating those they arrested and a police investigation is being held into the brutality. Three police officers said they hit Peter Doody seven times on his arms and chest. Yet the front of his body was unmarked.*

*They claimed he had been lying on his back in the street kicking and throwing stones. However, photographs show 15 truncheon weals on Peter Doody's back. He also suffered a displaced fracture of the shoulder. The police told the court that the marks were inexplicable!*

*The police thug who beat Peter Hurst told the court that he also dragged a handcuffed Alan Hurst (48) by the hair from a police van containing other prisoners to another where he was on his own. Alan Hurst says he was beaten in the second van. PC Boyer admitted twice hitting Alan on the knee before he was thrown in the van. 'I don't mess around', he told the court.*

*None of this made any difference to the stipendiary magistrate.*

Socialist Worker 12/84

## THE BATTLE OF FITZWILLIAM

Every pit village in Britain has its own unique story to tell of this strike. There will be many featured tales, covering all aspects of the year of hardship, struggle and courage, but all, without exception will feature the special way in which the police dealt with them. The people of Fitzwilliam in North Yorkshire, for example, will remember till their dying day the police riot that ripped through their village.

The trouble began with the appointment of a new Chief Inspector — Inspector Reece. He admitted in court that although he had only had the job six days he had come to carry out 'more positive policing of the area'.

Being more positive took the form of leading his men on a punitive raid into the village under the cover of night. Some 50 armed (with clubs) police officers charged into the area in what was described in the court as 'a synchronised pincer movement' descending on a pub they knew was a popular place for miners, their wives and friends in a provocation so hard the police knew that there would be resistance, indeed calculated on their being resistance and then used this as an excuse for extremes of violence which shocked the village to its roots. The police claimed they had been subject to a hail of missiles for several hours, in fact on their own admission only *one* of their men was injured in the whole operation. Police Drs. however treated six of the men in the cells who had been snatched from the streets.



## WOOLEY

Ralph Summerfield, one of the moderate North Yorkshire officials was knocked to the ground and mercilessly beaten with truncheons. It was the 30th Oct (84) a normal picket at his pit, when suddenly the police introduced dogs. While talking to an inspector in an attempt to get them to withdraw the dogs, the riot police swept up and knocked him to the floor.

Police smashed the window of the minibus he was driving with a truncheon — which was then used on his face. Another minibus driver was threatened with arrest when he tried to move his vehicle.

### No trouble

The force involved were West Yorkshire who, said Ralph, 'are supposed to be taking a softly-softly approach.

There's never been any trouble there before when there's just been a normal picket. There weren't enough pickets to cause any trouble. But there were dogs behind the front line and riot police waiting.

I'm convinced they came down to sort us out. I don't condone brick-throwing but, when they use dogs, that's what gets lads' backs up.'

Three days later, Wooley was again the scene of indiscriminate assaults and arrests, when police chased miners on to a nearby estate after an inspector in charge assured miners' officials there would be no trouble if the pickets were kept in order.

Trouble erupted when, despite the assurance and an orderly picket, riot police, horses and dogs were brought in, said Church Lane Treasurer Jack Carr.

Pickets were chased on to a nearby housing estate, which was 'swarming with riot police'. There the police continued to make indiscriminate attacks.

After knocking him to the ground with a riot shield and kicking him where he lay, they dealt him three blows to the head with truncheons, causing injuries that needed hospital treatment.

Later, as he and others retreated from the dogs, his son was arrested as he came to assist. Ralph insists it was a 'normal picket' until the police brought in the dogs.

### Sense

'They let them go on long leads, biting indiscriminately,' he said. 'As soon as that happened, the balloon went up and our lads started retaliating by throwing stones. I was trying to remonstrate with one of the inspectors on duty, to get him to stop using dogs.

While I was talking to the inspector, trying to get some sense back into the situation, 12 to 20 coppers in full riot gear came and attacked us.'

After the attack, he and a group of others were moving away from the pit chased by dogs. 'My son Glen came back to assist me and they arrested him, alleging that he's been throwing stones,' said Ralph. 'He hadn't — he only came back because I was in trouble.'

Among the injured that day were Rob Hunter, from Wooley, taken to hospital after being bitten on the chest by a dog, and Reg Greaves, from Houghton Main.

'There was a village bloke, about 60 or 70, who I saw get a real bang with a truncheon from police in riot gear,' he said. 'He was just sat on a wall, watching.' Among those arrested was Church Lane President Eric Richardson. 'He was just rallying the lads round' said Jack. 'He wasn't involved in any pushing.'

## HICKLETON

The pattern of assaults in villages was so regular that an obvious plan existed for all these operations, the police riot through the village. The 'short, sharp shock' of attacking the community at large, intimidating the young'uns and teenagers, chasing off coal pickers, attacking houses, and using all force available against the pickets themselves. Attacks on pubs and clubs became one of the set features of the police campaign. The Coronation Club, in Thurnscoe on November 20th ('84) was no exception. Hickleton Branch Delegate Ken Cole was in the club when the police burst in, knocking 62 year old Walter Davies to the ground. Next there was a bump at the door and a young lad about four feet tall (aged 14) ran in. Following him were ten police men, who grabbed the lad by the neck and hauled him away.

Ken, who was on the picket line earlier in the day, said the picket dispersed after the strike-breakers' bus came out of the pit. 'As far as I was concerned everything was over,' he said. A group of people gathered near the village hall, well away from the pit, as Ken went into the Club. Half a dozen police vans were still parked near the pit.

### Smiling

Three-quarters of an hour after the picket had finished, Ken looked out of the Club window and saw riot police charging up the road towards the Club. 'They were pounding up, with smiling faces, with truncheons and shields chasing lads,' he said.

'I've come to the conclusion that the Metropolitan police are just brutes. I think they are loving it. I think they've got the intention that if there's people gathered they're going to have a go at them and bray them.

In among those lads were women and children and they chased them up the streets just to clobber them. They weren't doing anything. I'm certain of that — they were just stood there watching'. Walter Davies, who has to take tablets for a heart condition and whose wife is also ill, says he lay unconscious for two minutes after being knocked to the floor.

## THE MET

The Metroploitan Police became infamous for their anti-Northern hostility, the abuse being directed at the miners' Northern accents, 'thick Geordie bastards' or 'ay-up ay-up ay-up' in mock imitation of the Yorkshire greeting. At Coal House in Doncaster they poured off the buses shouting 'we've come 200 miles to get you bastards, who's first?' Also a little touch of their own, after wrecking pickets cars at Cotgrave they left their calling card: a little sticker which read: 'YOU HAVE JUST MET THE MET'. Burned out picket huts were found to have such stickers on their windows or nearby lamp posts. Black miners were especially singled out by the Met for the normal torrent of racial abuse, ape like gestures and monkey like cries. This open racial hostility for the first time brought the meaning of what that means home to many of the miners standing with their black mates, many of them having been guilty of similar remarks in the past albeit in a 'friendly' way. Seeing the class enemy display a shocking example of it led many miners to realise it really wasn't a joke.



## ARMTHORPE — VILLAGE UNDER POLICE SEIGE

*Armthorpe village, near Doncaster, has been under police occupation, experiencing some of the worst police violence of the entire dispute.*

*Several witnesses confirm that, on August 22nd, during a picket of Markham Main, Armthorpe, police:*

- sealed off the village, banned journalists from entering and halted bus services;
- trapped pickets between rows of houses and indiscriminately beat anyone in the area not in police uniform;
- broke into the houses of miners and non-miners alike, where they damaged property and threatened and injured householders including elderly and disabled;

● forced pickets to lie on the ground before kicking and beating them. There is also evidence once again, that troops were involved in the exercise. Yorkshire Area NUM's legal department, who are compiling a dossier of witness statements, have appealed for any witnesses not yet interviewed to get in touch.

### Military

About midday on August 22, police charged pickets from the gates of Armthorpe pit, where the pit yard has been used as a police headquarters housing 250 to 300 police vans, plus other vehicles, horses and dogs.

Across the road from the colliery are two streets, Paxton Crescent and Charles Street. Where they meet, to form a horse-shoe shape, is a single entrance to an area of gardens and garages, enclosed on all sides by houses.

Police in riot gear converged on the fleeing pickets from neighbouring parts of the estate, forcing them into the enclosed area, in what witnesses described as 'a military style operation.' There, truncheons and riot shields were used to beat beat pickets and residents alike.

Local householders let pickets into their homes for refuge — but to no avail. The police forced their way in, breaking doors and windows, as well as property inside the houses. Some were not miner's homes.

### Trapped

*Householders were intimidated and threatened — and in some cases injured — by the invading police. In one case, a 59 year old woman was trapped behind her door when a policeman kicked it open. He then rammed the door into her, several times, while holding her behind it. He then left the house after discovering there were no pickets there.*

*In another, the 66 year old wheelchair-bound wife of a retired miner complained about the police behaviour from outside her front door.*

*She was abused and threatened with the truncheon if she did not shut up. She compared the police with the Nazi Gestapo.*

*Pickets were dragged from gardens and homes and severely beaten before being thrown into police vans. Some were forced to lie down before being kicked and truncheoned, with as many as seven officers attacking a single picket.*

*Some had to be taken to hospital. The police continued marching up and down, maintaining a 'military style' presence in the area, according to witnesses.*

Earlier on the 16th Aug the Sheffield Police Watch Group recorded the mornings events:

6.55 AM: All the miners were herded into the corner beside the pit entrance. We were across the road from them. Any miner on our side of the road is asked to cross over and is tightly herded in. Some miners object. Police move through the pickets to get to the back of the miners. The miners are now completely surrounded. Packed together very tightly surrounded by police. Approximately 250 miners and 250 police. . .

7.05AM: Working miners arrive in a little van which is completely darkened. You cannot look in. The miners start pushing and the police lines nearly break. Police reinforcements come running up and some police run into the crowd. There are lots of shouts and people are falling down and being kicked and trampled on. Miners are thrown out of the pack covered in dust. One small stone is thrown into nowhere. Miners are grabbed by three to four police as they come out, and arrest them. The police keep on pushing the miners back although there is nowhere to go. The police are still inside the group of miners fighting.

I counted 16 arrests. Mainly people who were trying to get out of the pack or who had been laying on the floor.



ARMTHORPE 22.8.84 'Community policing' street meeting, 1984 style.

Black Flag Autumn 1984



## BITTER TO THE END

Throughout the dispute the police regarded not only our picket lines as being a threat to them, but also felt personally engaged in a struggle against the strike itself.

Partially this is reflected in their attitude towards our whole community and those non-miners in it who supported the strike. It was also very clear in their attitude to every success we had, for example when the train drivers refused to cross our picket lines or when a lorry turned back. The drivers inevitably being abused and the picket, no matter how small, being harassed as punishment for its success.

The special treatment singled out for the people collecting for the miners their frequent arrests and confiscation of funds, even to the extent of arresting a Santa Claus in London for collecting toys for the miners' children for Xmas.

Even at the end of the strike, the police didn't feel like backing off. In Durham as in other coalfields the lodges decided to march back into work. The banners would fly, the women and children would turn out, the local community would salute the stand of the miners and the men would march, heads high, back through the colliery gates. The gesture would not be lost on the police, it would be too strong an act of defiance, even though no Laws were being broken.

At Wearmouth the police were waiting as the men and their families marched back to work. Without rhyme or reason the police threw up a cordon across the pit gates and blocked all entrances with their vans.

Having thus blocked the miners triumphant return they attacked the whole column of marchers. Eye witnesses said: 'Police went beserk kicking and punching miners and marchers alike' (*The Durham Miner*, March '85). No consideration was given to the children and old people on the demonstration, indeed the whole object seems to have been to teach the miners a lesson in front of their families and community.

Dave Hopper, the Lodge Secretary, made the point that after a year of pulling out every stop to get people into work, they now turned round and tried to stop people going back to work!

Everyone who was there comments that a squad of police made a 'bee-line' for the banner, which was hauled down and badly torn.

The sheer weight of numbers of police intent on smothering our action has undoubtedly led to the abandonment of normal crime control.

The so-called 'Fox' was given rein for weeks before members even of the county police force in which the brutal rapes were taken place were actually recalled to look for him.

As Arthur Scargill said at the Durham Big Meeting, we know he's not a miner or the police would have had him ten times over.

## 'NOBODY TOLD ME WHAT WAS HAPPENING'

So said the ordinary, non-Nazi German population when they discovered near the end of the war what had happened to the Gays, Gypsies, Socialists, Communists, Anarchists, Jews, and anyone else who didn't fit in to the 'German-ness' of the new order. The people of the allied countries seeing the massive scale of the genocidal operation, involving as it did tens of thousands of victims, and mass movements of people involved in the calculated murders couldn't believe it.

On another level, tens of thousands of people proclaim that they didn't know the stuff outlined in this pamphlet was going on. They didn't. But actually some friends did their best to first of all pin down the *facts* because always our accusations were put down as left wing extremist lies and propaganda, and next to have those facts available for the people to know.

Those friends, such as the GLC collected the evidence, but the press did not want to know. . . although of course they read it and knew it was correct. The TV investigative journalist side fought like hell to release the truth and with few notable exceptions were knocked back. The facts revealed, were on offer, but the media chose to ignore them.

Using the remit of *Policing London* the GLC Police Committee was able to dig into the mechanics of policing the miners. These facts were published in the (Number 13) July/August '84 edition of their bulletin, and yet all but a relative handful of the British population know of their findings. We have the freedom to print what we want, say what we want SO LONG AS THE STATE ENSURES THAT ONLY A MINORITY OF PEOPLE WILL HEAR OR SEE WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY.

The GLC Police Committee dug into the cops own journals to discover their disposition towards people they were policing. The police papers readily admit that the boys in blue were far from 'cool' or in control of themselves. . . but who ever reported that, after police riots? Nobody!

*There have been complaints of fatigue due to long shifts as well as the boredom of hanging around: As a PSU Commander, my concern was that the men kept restrained in carriers or on standby for long periods would be difficult to control when actually confronted with a public order problem. Police Review 27.4.84.*

That they came to us in great numbers even the toddlers in the pit villages can tell you, yet the average British punter saw the 'Bobby' as understaffed and outflanked by massive columns of our miners.

*In the first 10 weeks of the strike the National Reporting Centre arranged 220,000 assignments from a pool of 13,500 men. Its work has raised the spectre of a national police force emerging. Hall claims that the NRC stops the development of a national force. Former Chief Constable John Alderson says that in practice the NRC is the national operational centre.*

The public believed (and still believe) the police went against their wishes to the coalfields, in fact the common crack among the southern forces particularly was that easy money could be made, and a license to do what you wanted was the name of the game. Policemen often boasted to poverty stricken miners of the money *they* were making at our expense. Rubbing that in was the cause of many bitter confrontations near the end of the strike, waving fivers at the pickets or worse still toys at the miners children at xmas time, together with shouts of 'My kids getting one of these, what's your dad getting you?'

*'A policeman transported into the coalfields would have to work 40 hours overtime to earn £500 for a weeks' work — and apparently this is not unknown. £400 a week is fairly common' Tribune 6.4.84.*



## PHONE TAPPING

It's just about generally accepted that the police tapped miners' phones all during the dispute. The Telephone Engineering Union has agreed anytime, anyplace, anywhere, to come forward and tell us all just how many and how how they were selected IF they will not be jailed for doing so. At present of course they are subject to the Official Secrets Act, but *they* know, and we of course know, it's happened on a *massive* scale. The GLC report makes mention of this matter also:—

*'A Yorkshire journalist was on the phone to the Yorkshire NUM when a police radio message about traffic on the roads came over the line. The NUM employee said he was going to get a tape recorder and added 'hello copper, can you hear me?'... the interruption stopped immediately. A Yorkshire miner has also claimed that on phoning the Barnsley strike control centre he had been connected to a police emergency service'* Guardian 4.5.84.

On April 29th David Norman, General Treasurer of the Post Office Engineering Union, challenged the Home Secretary to let members of his Union investigate claims of phone tapping during the miners' strike.

*'If Mr Brittan claims it is a 'smear' to suggest that members of the NUM are having their telephones tapped during the dispute then I ask him if he would be prepared for the POEU to conduct its' own public investigation into the allegation and give it immunity from prosecution under the Official Secrets Act.'*

None was forthcoming, but the POEU know anyhow.

In South Wales the owner of a hire coach service was phoned by the NUM asking about hiring one to go picketing in Derbyshire. Minutes later the Derbyshire police phoned asking how many pickets were coming on the bus!

David Norman put it this way:—

*'To our certain knowledge, the process of tapping telephones is systematic and widespread, far more widespread than we are led to believe by official statements.'*

## YOUR MAIL TOO!

Perhaps it will not come as too much of a shock to know that if they tap phones they also read letters as well, although they've been doing this for some time. They are taken from the sorting offices to the local POST OFFICE INVESTIGATIVE BRANCH... in the case of London its UNION HOUSE in St. Martin's-Le-Grand (near St Pauls). The methods are not very sophisticated and haven't changed much over the years... the steam from a boiling kettle, or a hot needle, or a thin straw gummed along the edge to stick into the letter and be wound round and drawn out. They are trained to take special care to replace any loose hairs drawn under the envelope flaps or watch for any of the other traps people set for them. See article in *Guardian*, April 18th, 1984, by Nick Davies... on phone taps etc.

At times they simply split the envelopes and read the contents, then stick the envelope back into the delivery circuit. Parcels from abroad can be searched easily as customs or under the old trick of 'Found damaged and resealed'.

## BUILDING A NETWORK

Having read your incoming mail and discovering that you are a subversive, bomb-throwing hell-raiser, they will then check on the sources of the letters ie. who is writing to you. They will then stop and read *their* mail, thus getting not only your replies but also a host of new people to check on from that person. So a huge network of suspects can be built. If they are on the phone (easily checked) a tap can be applied and another segment of 'free society' gets entrapped in the State's net.



The people of Stainforth flee in terror as the riot police comb the streets in multiple lines, clubbing, kicking, grabbing anyone and everyone who got in the way. These people have learned the truth about the nature of the police, they are unlikely to forget it in a hurry.

The report to the Yorkshire Area of the NUM covering only the first six weeks of the strike made a strange prediction about the role of intelligence gathering.

*'Intelligence gathering is not only important to the state in respect to further criminal charges which might be brought later, for example conspiracy, but is important in any post strike period. If miners lose the strike the NCB will make a sweep of the union, rooting out radicals, militants and political party members. The intelligence information for this sweep will have been gathered from the thousands of arrested men... The strategy had three objectives firstly to criminalise the strikers both within their own organisations and in the eyes of broader society, secondly to thin out the numbers of men available for picketing and thirdly to gather masses of intelligence on activists for use in a post-strike situation.'*

A State of Siege... Op Cit.



After six weeks of the strike such a prediction or even gentle suggestion of actually losing the strike didn't enter the head of any active picket or branch leader. In retrospect the formulae is proved to be accurate. The police, where they can force a conviction immediately, get them sacked from their job, with the pledge from the Board that they will never be re-employed. Thus the militant is evicted from their job, their social standing and their *political effect*, at least in that very strategic corner of society. Where the police have been unable to win a conviction in the court the evidence they present is given to the colliery manager who then chooses what the 'due process of the law' says, finds they are guilty of being militant and sacks them for misconduct. Lastly where they aren't even brought to court and no charges are made, the police file is passed onto the manager or the area director of the Board who thus processes the prosecution with the same devastating effect.

While police video and surveillance cameras swept the picket line, Coal Board protagonists would identify various pickets. . . 'do you want us to get *that one*?' and the managers disposition to get rid of active trade unionists became the next order of the snatch squad who win draw or lose at court had served their class purpose in ridding the industry of its mining militants. It was a form of 'shoot to kill' policy on an industrial level.

Lastly the unemployed and now victimised miners become a political suspect on whom much is already known, as they graduate towards leftist groups as a means of finding redress for their problems. They become those 'most likely too' and for the rest of their days (while the system lasts) will have the quiet surveillance of the Special Branch never very far from their collar (or phone).

## OVER THE TOP

They didn't come to 'contain' us or 'match us in numbers' as the popular press would have you believe. They came to bury us, to show us the futility of resistance, the job of getting scabs in, or scab fuel in, could have been done with a force a quarter of the size, that was never the point. The point was to take on the pickets, the scabs were almost irrelevant to the operation.

*'At Ravenscraig in Scotland, where police mounted a carefully planned operation stretching over 50 miles and formed a human chain five deep in places'* (Guardian 4.5.84)

*'Mounted police riding into the pickets could clearly be seen loosening their boots from their stirrups and kicking pickets in the back with their steel toe clips'* (Morning Star 8.5.84).

*'At the Hunterston steel depot in Scotland, five miners were taken to hospital after 2,000 police had been used against 800 pickets; one had a broken arm after a mounted police charge.'*

Taking polaroid photos of suspects is supposed to be unlawful, but that never bothered the law men. Worse still, if anyone tried to use even passive resistance they were given the Gestapo treatment. As one ex-soldier said:

*'When it came to my turn I refused to have my photo taken, I kept my head down and as a consequence I cannot be sure exactly who was responsible for what happened. I know that one officer walked up*

*from somewhere else and said to the other two who were holding me 'Get that bastard's head up' then 'Pull his hair'. Someone did pull my hair but this did not make me raise my head. Next after saying 'Grab his nose' the officer tried to force his fingers into my nostrils. I moved my head from side to side. Then I heard the same officer say 'Right Bastard' and I was violently punched in the face. The punch landed on the top of my nose between my eyes. The officers then held my head in an arm lock and forced my head up. My glasses were broken and fell to the floor. They managed to take the photograph.'* (State of Siege, Op Cit pg. 36)

Another 'torture' feature was the widespread use of plastic tie-bands in place of handcuffs. These tin plastic straps are designed for industrial use for hanging cables and pipes etc. and work on the ratchet system, the tighter you pull the more notches go down the ratchet and the firmer the grip. Applied to the wrists at full bite, usually with the hands behind the back, they are impossible to break off and the more you struggle the tighter they get. I myself had the dubious pleasure of having these tie-bands put on me. We were on our way to the Trent Wharves and had got to within two miles of Gunness when a massive road block was encountered. I was arrested for refusing to turn round. The Northumbrian police force officers stuck the bands on me, my arms behind my back and pulled the plastic tight. I was left alone in the back of transit while the struggle continued further down the road. At first I tried to ignore the pain in my wrists and arms, but it grew steadily over a period of about 30 minutes, my hands started to swell up and felt like they were going to burst, while my arms felt drained of blood, the wrists throbbing and the vessels under the arms aching. I began to lose consciousness and slipped to my knees on the floor of the van. The a police officer came by looked in the window and said 'You enjoying that sunshine?' and went away. I was sweating like a pig and was laid flat and just on the verge of going over when they came to cut them off me. It was agony but none of them could cut through them. I was then dragged out of the van and put into another vehicle to be transported to Scunthorpe Police Station. I lost consciousness on the way, and was only partially conscious when they got me into Scunthorpe. The desk officer got some big industrial cutters out of a drawer, and with two officers holding me, the other cut them off. The surge of blood and withdrawal of numbness as it gradually spread through my limbs was almost as agonising as having them on. All together they were biting into me for nearly six hours from going on to being cut off. For weeks the red and white seals were on my wrists and the sensation lasted for days. My solicitor mentioned it in the court and I had asked several times to take an official complaint about them, but I was told they were 'pretty commonly used during the strike'.

The police, by the way, call them 'plastic handcuffs' giving the impression to the court that they are something specially made for the job.

If many of the police behaved like they were mad, the outpourings of certain of their officers was hardly less nutty. Inspector Malcolm Biggins sees himself as a sort of Joan of Arc of the police force. He quite seriously and in public expressed the view the the NUM President was controlled by the devil. Biggins from Sutton Coalfield knew the signs and it was clear the pickets were 'demons possessed'. He had taken the



## ALL THE KINGS' HORSES AND ALL THE KINGS' MEN

We estimate in excess of 18,000 perhaps 19,000 police in operation against us; and since we don't believe they breed that fast, unless the incubation period for cops is roughly similar to that of frog spawn, we have had many suspicions of military involvement.

Actually nailing down the story has evaded us throughout. At one time we thought we actually had it with a sly photo of an Army sergeant who was driving a police transit. A hysterical pursuit of the photographer through the streets, a quick change of the precious film and its replacement by a new one, and eventually the scenes of capture by the 'pit spy'. The rage that his actions had engendered and the dramatic way they seized the camera and pulled out the film seemed to prove our widespread suspicions. However despite our featuring the photo in pride of place under the *Sun newspaper* parody headline 'GOTCHA', we hadn't. The explanation for the soldier in the police vehicle and for the paranoid pursuit of the cameraman was explained by saying he was a member of the London Bomb Disposal Squad who often it seems use police vehicles and work in close relation to the London Metropolitan police.

Hundreds of Geordie, Scots and Yorkshire mining families with sons or brothers in the Army (the growth in unemployment and the imbalance of wealth and industry in favour of the South, left only the pits, the dole or the Armed Forces as a means of living) swear to having seen their relations in police uniforms on the picket lines. Some swear that they have seen them face to face and spoke to them, while others say they have seen them clearly on TV. In all cases the army has described the stories as 'rubbish'. Though pit folk involved swear to their accuracy, no proof has yet emerged and the story remains a widely believed folk tale.

The nearest we got to actually putting meat on the bones of the story came when a young parachutist walked into the Barnsley Offices of the NUM to 'give himself up'. His story is as follows. His mother was a paraplegic his father a life long (though now retired) mineworker. He had joined the Parachute Regiment and was attached to a Special Forces Group. For the previous two months he had been in operation on the picket lines with a number of soldiers from different groups. He wore a police sergeant's uniform when on these duties. Officials at Barnsley discussed the question with the lad and subsequently involved people from our legal department to try and establish the possible come back on the soldier if, as he had requested, made a public statement or had a press conference. Despite all warnings of probably military and legal action against him, the soldier agreed to go ahead and the Barnsley offices started talking in terms of a press conference. Sadly a day or two later, the soldier returned, he had suffered yet another setback, a tragedy. His father had been coal picking along the railway line and had been struck by a train and lost a leg. His mother was now totally helpless, his father not in a position to fend for himself or his wife, so he would take a compassionate leave from the services. The question of a press conference, legal retaliation with all the social and political furore which would follow was now unthinkable.

You can take this story as it was given, personally I believe the bloke, but how extensive the Army involvement has been will probably remain a secret until the granting of a 'Freedom of Information Act' or a sympathetic Civil Servant leaks the relevant document of instruction to some head of the Forces.

Our frustrating failure to find real evidence still leaves certain strange facts laying around. One is, as said, the huge number of men in police uniforms which seemed to come from nowhere and vanish away again at the end of the dispute.

The number of police uniform clad characters who were clearly under regulation height, was not only a delight for some of our pickets but also a source of amusement to many of our women folk who lost no time in ridiculing the 'unshaved bairns' and 'dwarfs'. Many heard officers addressing underlings as 'corporal' (a rank which doesn't exist in the police force) and some of the uniforms, apart from being totally ill fitting, stepped straight out of the police museum. Strange, double-breasted jackets with different colour trousers, ancient 'Dixon of Dock Green' Helmets etc.

For many such reasons we have suspected Army involvement. . .but perhaps that is not important. The important thing is that, as a whole, the police force have become a paramilitary force, a section of the Armed Forces for use in times of civil disturbance. . .a de-facto Political Police Force.

## AGENTS PROVOCATEURS

If proof of Army involvement has been elusive, evidence of police provocateurs operating among the pickets is more easy to come by. One of the clearest cases was that of a Nottingham police sergeant Mr. R.A. Lake, who spent weeks on plain clothes duty posing as a miner. His role has been subject to official complaint.

In Derbyshire, miners videos picked out men in the crowd wearing NCB jackets and strike badges. Their role was to start a push two or three rows from the front, eventually pushing men they had selected as 'leaders' through the cordon where they were arrested. Still photos of the provocateurs were circulated to every strike centre and support group in case they had been miners or outside supporters. They were neither. It is clear the police planted people in crowds especially for the purpose of singling out 'leaders' and having them arrested.

One plan was simply to stroll up to pickets and start boasting of activities supposedly engaged in elsewhere, in the hope of encouraging statements from pickets about what they might have done or seen done. The pickets were later picked up and arrested.

At other pickets unidentified people in NCB gear would suddenly start throwing stones which would then lead to a concerted baton charge, subsequent arrests being made for far more serious offences than would have otherwise taken place on that day. Also the stones would land where many suspected they were meant to, on the front rows of advancing pickets. This had the effect of stopping pickets advancing, and making many reluctant to go into the front ranks for fear of being hit from behind by bricks, etc.

Nobody ever identified these cock-eyed stone throwers as miners, even though at times we organised our own snatch squads to try and catch them. The press picked up the story of 'outsiders' as being members of the left-wing groups, but our long experience with so named 'revolutionary left' is that they would never get down to such actions as throwing stones, generally saving their efforts for selling newspapers or trying to talk us all to death. We are convinced, that although some stones were justifiably



(and usually accurately) thrown in self-defence, there were frequent times when the people who did this were police agents for the reasons just mentioned.

Brian Walker, Branch Secretary at Newstead Colliery, was leaving a Nottingham Council meeting at Berryhill, Mansfield, when he saw three men, dressed as miners, climbing into the back of a police vehicle. Their pally relations with the police, and clear fact that they were not under arrest, seemed very strange. Later that day while watching a news bulletin about a demonstration outside Berryhill Miners offices, he recognised the same three men and got right onto the TV company. He subsequently appeared on local and national TV pointing out the activities of the men in question. They were clearly seen pushing miners to the front so that fellow officers could arrest them.

*'Snatch Squads arrests have nothing to do with proper legal processes and the men who are arrested by this strategy are picked out not because they are suspected of any offence but because they are prominent union officers or activists or because they have had some personal confrontation with a police officer at some time or other during the strike. Men are targetted and then 'lifted' from inside the picket by a wedge-shaped charge of police officers. The fact that the police manage to effect these arrests at all is a clear indication of the peaceful attitude of the great majority of pickets.'*

(A State of Seige. . . op cit. . .) P

## WHO GIVES THE ORDERS?

That this was a *special* kind of police operation ought to be obvious to even the most cynical liberal, but what happened also was that a special type of police were deployed, by an even more special type of authority. THE ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF OF POLICE OFFICERS came on the scene as a sort of 'War Office' to carry through the *political* and *class war* against a section of the miners. The director of that war office, otherwise called the NATIONAL RECORDING CENTRE, was (as always) the president of the ACOPO in our case David Hall, the Chief Constable of Humberside. He took the reins in the early months of the strike. He claimed that, within *three and a quarter hours* of our pickets first going to the Nottinghamshire area, he had mobilised 1,000 officers. A few days later, he had mobilised 8,000 involving special support squads (riot police) from all parts but two of Britain's police forces, all with similar transport and equipment. It was no great deal. . . they had been waiting since 1974 when they started to prepare for just such an operation. It had been planned from the announced closure of Cortonwood right through to a computer plan of how we would react, and how they respond at each and every turn. The police were certainly 'only doing their job' but that job was an overt exercise, not in carrying through the law such as it is writ, but in prosecuting the class war in a totally partisan way the dictat of Downing Street. ACOPs are now elected by anyone and are not accountable to anyone except the Home Secretary who was hand picked by Thatcher herself.

A *State of Seige* (report to the Yorks area of the NUM) comments that: *'They have become the high command of a national riot force, what the chair of the South Yorkshire Police Authority calls 'a Junta' operating from the National Recording Centre.'*

(A State of Seige. Policing the coalfields in the first six weeks of the miners' strike. Susan Miller and Martin Walker.)

## OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Official figures admitted up to 8,000 police *reinforcements* deployed in any one day to picket lines. Added to the available native county force of 5,000, even the Conservative government figures talk of some 13,000 repressive bodies in the field. Plus of course the accompanying hardware, the vans, horses, cars, helicopters, checkpoints, surveillance checks, phone taps, dogs and computers that go with them.

An ordinary police operation? Even the most naive, must see there is something far more sinister going on.

The rewards have been great. With overtime of 40 hours payments to constables of £500 a week has not been uncommon. For those with a psycho bent there had been ample opportunity to beat people senseless without the penalty of enquiries or press complaints.

As members of the Met' shouted at COAL HOUSE Doncaster, 'We've come 200 miles to sort you bastards out'; and, 'Come and wet this truncheon!'

ON SUNDAY, 24th of February, 1985, more than 80,000 trade unionists marched in support of the miners. Behind the Lancashire banner miners from Agecroft, Bickershaw, Bold, Kirkless, Parkside and their supporters throughout Lancashire.

The march was headed by a fine Scottish Pipe Band in full national dress. The first banner being the Scottish banner, followed by NUM banners from all over the British coalfield. Following behind in the march were a mass of trade union banners from all over Britain.

On a fine clear day a carnival atmosphere was felt despite a noticeably high police presence.

As part of the procession gathered in Trafalgar Square to hear the speakers, a young woman selling newspapers has them scattered all over Whitehall by a police officer, obviously upset by the content of the paper. This resulted in an instant reaction by marchers to defend the young woman, which was answered by a massive over reaction by the police, in which they halted the procession thus preventing people from getting to Trafalgar Square.

They halted the rest of the rally on Whitehall opposite Downing Street, with a dense cordon of police, then systematically attacked the rear of the procession.

Eventually using mounted police with batons drawn, women, children, old and young, even a brass band, were shown no mercy as the police ran riot in Whitehall.

In the wings 12 army water cannons were waiting for orders. At the rear of Whitehall itself people arrested were subject to police brutality as they were put into police cell wagons and, when they were gone, police coaches. The police riot lasted over 2 hours in Whitehall and afterwards onto the embankment.

Ironically the majority of the NUM marchers were in Trafalgar Square, while police were giving supporters a taste of what they have given miners for the past 12 months, and a hint of what's to come in the future with soldiers waiting in the wings.

(Lancashire Miner)



## PAUL FOOT — ONE RAY OF LIGHT IN A TOTAL MEDIA BLACKOUT.

My previous document on the strike, **TELL US LIES ABOUT THE MINERS** deals with the outrageous press cover up. With one exception, they have conspired to keep the truth of the police and law court operation against the miners a secret from the people of Britain. Paul Foot in his *Mirror* column tried almost single handedly to set the record straight. This pamphlet makes no apology for quoting from his July 12th expose. . .

● **NOTTINGHAM** solicitor Susan Gregson-Morris says out loud what a lot of lawyers in her area are thinking.

"I don't believe people realise what an incredible thing is happening in Nottinghamshire," she says. "I think it's the violation of the English legal system."

"I think it's being sub-

verted, quite frankly. And I think people don't realise how frightening and dangerous it is."

She says that in their treatment of miners on strike, Nottinghamshire police and magistrates are taking away basic civil liberties.

She complains, specifically:

THAT arrested miners with no criminal records are treated worse than people with long records

accused of crimes like burglary and rape.

THAT conditions of bail not to picket or demonstrate are imposed indiscriminately on groups of miners, without each case being properly considered.

THAT a bench chairman at Worksop, Notts, told a solicitor in her firm: "It doesn't matter what you say to me about bail. I've made up my mind."

THAT magistrates are restricting unconvicted miners with curfews and bans of the type you might expect in Russia or South Africa.

These claims are strenuously denied by Mr Edward Higham, the chairman of the bench at Mansfield Magistrates Court, which is at the centre of the criticism.

Mr Higham, who owns a shoe shop, told me: "We look at every case on its particular merits."



GEORGE BROOKES

### Wife's ordeal

● **MINER'S** wife Mrs. Gillian Watson picked up at Mansfield Magistrates' court on July 4. He was convicted of threatening behaviour, fined £100 and ordered to pay £90 prosecution costs.

The prosecution lawyer asked for "witness expenses" for two policemen who had travelled from Surrey to give evidence.

These expenses, he said, totalled £230.90.

The Mansfield magistrates ordered Shaun Webster to pay the full amount—which came to more than his fine and costs. Shaun, his wife and two children

are living on £24.75 a week.

No lawyer I have spoken to in Nottingham can remember an order for police witness expenses being made against a defendant.

Mansfield magistrates are reviewing the award made on July 4.

But it is not unique. At least two other "witness payments" of £90 and £50 have been awarded against miners to pay for policemen's fares and lunches.

The lawyer who told me about them has eight years' experience as a prosecutor. He remembers nothing like it happening before.

No way do we think of these people as people in a trade dispute or miners or whatever they are. I personally have varied bail conditions considerably."

The chairman of the Mansfield Magistrates General Purposes Committee, Mr John Almond JP, says:

"At no time has the picketing problem been

discussed by my committee."

Mr Almond is a coal merchant. Neither he nor Mr Higham thinks that makes any difference to his ability to sit in impartial judgement over miners.

Here are five cases which show how some arrested miners are being treated by the police and courts.

● **MINER** Barry Roberts set out last week to be tried at Mansfield magistrates court. But he never made it. He and his three fellow defendants were stopped in their car by Nottinghamshire police, and asked where they were going.

They replied that they were "on lawful business" and invited the police to follow them and check.

Instead, Barry Roberts was arrested, and his car locked up. His companions

had to make their way home on foot.

Barry was kept three hours in a police van, which was left out in the blazing sun. He was then taken to Mansfield police station next to the court.

In court, the police said Barry had not been arrested, and they had no idea where he was.

After the court rose, they agreed they'd had him all along, and released him without bringing any charge.

joined a dozen other miners' wives in a journey to Calverton pit, Notts.

Soon after they arrived, the group of women were surrounded by police.

"All the time, they circled round us, taunting us," she says.

"They told us we should be at home washing pots, not on picket lines. They

gloated at us about how they ate steak every day, and were we really eating grass pie?

"When the cars came in with the workers, we were singing, and pushing forward. I was pulled out, and shoved in a van with some others."

"There were tiny cells in the van, with no windows, and they turned the lights out. We were held there for a very long time."

"When someone said they wanted to go to the toilet, a policewoman gave her a milk bottle."

"At Hucknall we were put in cells and taken out for questioning. I was asked if I had a mortgage, and how much furniture on hire purchase."

### Phone

"I wouldn't answer. They said they would hold us indefinitely until we answered. I asked if I could phone my husband and tell him where I was, or ask him to get a lawyer. They said no—they did all the phoning."

"I was kept all night in the cell. The next morning they let me go. They said there was no evidence against me."

## How Shaun copped an extra 'fine'



VICTIM: Shaun Webster, with his wife.

● **SHAUN WEBSTER**, 25, from Cortonwood colliery, South Yorkshire, came up at Mansfield magistrates' court on July 4. He was convicted of threatening behaviour, fined £100 and ordered to pay £90 prosecution costs.

The prosecution lawyer asked for "witness expenses" for two policemen who had travelled from Surrey to give evidence.

These expenses, he said, totalled £230.90.

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The lawyer who told me about them has eight years' experience as a prosecutor. He remembers nothing like it happening before.



VICTIM: Gillian Watson and family.

Last week, George Brookes got a letter from the manager of Bevercotes pit, Mr David Widdowson.

It ended: "Having considered the available evidence, I believe that you did assault a working miner."

"I believe you have committed gross industrial misconduct and you are, therefore, summarily dismissed."

"Please note that your entitlement to concessionary fuel will cease with immediate effect."

## ONE STEP FROM INTERNMENT.

King Herod it is said slew all eligible male children in an attempt to get the one he considered guilty. The British Army worked off the same maxim in occupied Ulster. What they did, was to round up all those eligible (for service with the Irish Republican Army) from teenagers to old men and put them in concentration camps without trial, judge or jury. As the song of the period said:—

**'NOT FOR US A JUDGE OR JURY.  
NOT FOR US A TRIAL AT ALL  
BEING IRISH MEANS WE'RE GUILTY  
SO WE'RE GUILTY ONE AND ALL.'**

During the coal strike many of us encountered aspects of policing which seemed to prove that the principle underpinning internment had already been approved. Only the scale of the operation was different, the principle it seems had already been given its blessing by Government departments.

After having been nicked during the dispute and being battle weary I wished to avoid another arrest. With that in mind I approached Harworth Colliery with the intention of taking part in a quiet non-confrontational picket. When me and my mate got within ¾ mile of the colliery we saw large numbers of police, driving in and marching in to the colliery. We then resolved that today we were not getting involved. We sat on the grass, two of us just watching the day go by in a farmers' hedge side nearly a mile from the pit. Suddenly we noticed a group of police on horseback riding towards us, truncheons drawn. We sat. They arrived.

'Come on, you're going down to the pit' they shouted.

'Are you kidding?' we replied. 'There's going to be trouble down there we want no part of it, we're staying here.'

'Get fucking walking or you'll get trouble here' they said and started wheeling their horses up behind us and pushing us out of the field.

When I stopped a guy who looked in chrage, I protested, 'look, I am being taken from a place where there is no trouble, no breach of the Law, and being taken to a place where I have reason to believe a breach of the peace is about to occur. I have no wish to be involved in a breach of the peace or any trouble.' The considered answer didn't take long:

'You've come here for bother, now you're going to get some.'

We were then marshalled down the streets of Harworth like slaves before the ancient Roman masters. All the while other such captives were being forced to join us, local residents out shopping or sitting on walls, all were rounded up and herded by police on horseback down the street. We were then channeled into a tight square of police. Needless to say, it wasn't long before the police then attacked the captives and started arresting them. Many of course for 'breach of the peace'.

The following correspondence via the local Member of Parliament from the Home Office willingly concedes that 'containment' necessitates the rounding up of people who may not be involved in order to catch those who are



There is nothing to prevent whole villages being treated in this way the night before a planned picket or rally. The self same justification can easily be applied.

The seeds of internment have been planted. . . only the social climate will prove their rate of development.



HOME OFFICE  
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE  
LONDON SW1H 9AT

*Dear Mick*

I am sorry that I have not been able to send you a full reply before now to your letter of as long ago as 30 August, with which you enclosed this one from your constituent Mr David Douglass who complained about police action at Harworth Colliery on 24 August. As my Assistant Private Secretary said in her letters of 12 October and 21 December enquiries have been made of the Nottinghamshire Police and I regret that it has taken so long to conclude our consultations with them. I have received and considered the comments of the Deputy Chief Constable about the points which Mr Douglass made.

Mr Douglass is concerned that he and a number of others were prevented from leaving Harworth when they witnessed a large police presence, and that they were told by officers from the Sussex and Nottinghamshire forces to join the demonstration against their will.

The Deputy Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire tells me that on the date of the incident described by Mr Douglass the police were aware of a significant build-up of people approaching Harworth Colliery with the intention of picketing in large numbers. Very serious breaches of the peace had occurred in Nottinghamshire over a number of weeks and the police had reason to fear that there would be a significant breach of the peace again on this occasion. In accordance with the policy adopted by the force, therefore, officers acted so as to contain in a limited area any persons thought likely to be joining the demonstration. The Deputy Chief Constable has acknowledged that preventative action of this kind will sometimes cause inconvenience to other people who unwittingly get caught-up in the containment action and he regrets that this is so.

I should make it clear that both the Home Secretary and I, and chief officers of police, take very seriously any allegations that the police have acted incorrectly in the performance of their duties but as the Home Secretary explained to you in his letter of 17 April about another incident arising from the miners' dispute, he has no role in the investigation of individual complaints against the police. Under the provisions of section 49 of the Police Act 1964 it is the duty of the chief officer concerned to record complaint against a member of his force and cause it to be investigated. The present legislation relating to the investigation of complaints against the police does not, in fact, define the term 'complaint'. However, the long-standing practice is that the requirement to record and investigate a complaint under section 49 does not extend to complaints about the general administration, efficiency or procedures of the force which do not amount to a complaint about the conduct of an individual officer. The decision whether to record a complaint under section 49 is completely at the discretion of the Chief Officer concerned. In this case

/the

Mick Welsh Esq MP

the Chief Constable has decided not to record Mr Douglass' comments on the section 49 complaint as they relate to matters of force policy for which he as Chief Constable is personally responsible.

I do not, however, rule out the possibility that if Mr Douglass wanted to pursue this matter further there would be legal avenues open to him through which to do so. Whether he considers it profitable to take civil action against the police would be for him and his legal advisers to consider bearing in mind all the facts of the situation in which he found himself.

*Yours  
Giles*  
(GILES SHAW)

*Dear Mick*  
Thank you for your letter of 14 March enclosing a further one from Mr David Douglass of 16 Abbeyfield Road, Dunscroft, Doncaster.

I fully appreciate that Mr Douglass feels strongly about this matter but, as I said in my letter of 5 March, this is an operational matter for which the Chief Constable is responsible and in which I have no locus to intervene.

I can fully reiterate what I said at the conclusion of my letter that if Mr Douglass wishes to pursue the matter further, there are legal channels through which it might be possible for him to do so. Whether or not he wishes to have recourse to civil action is, however, something which only he can decide, in consultation with his legal advisers as necessary.

*Yours  
Giles*  
(GILES SHAW)

## THE INVASION OF DONCASTER

During a week when regiments of police decided to invade the Doncaster pit villages, captive miners were taught a lesson few thought possible. Adrian Simpson, received severe head injuries and a broken jaw, was in intensive care, many thought he might die. He recovered though, minus many teeth. He emerged from the hospital to a charge of assaulting the police. For the crime of fighting to defend other miner's jobs he is under suspension and threat of losing his own, apart from facing a lengthy jail sentence.

In the same village (Hatfield Colliery) an 85 year old partially blind, woman was terrified. She had her back door broken down, kicked in by half a dozen riot police with shields and clubs — ransacking her home looking for pickets for a full ten minutes. They wrecked items very person to her.



When neighbours took the complaint to the local police station they were met with laughter and derision.

In the next village of Armthorpe, a similar rampage was underway. A 59 year old woman, taking too long to open the door for riot police had it kicked open, into her face, and then rammed again and again into her as she fell back against the wall.

A heroic 66 year old miner's wife, in a wheelchair, came to her door to complain about police rampaging through her front garden. She was told, by a police man waving a truncheon at her, that she could have some too, if she wanted.

Enter the brave boys. Another woman in a wheelchair, Mrs Brenda Stout, was assaulted by two of the upholders of the Law and Order on the 27th of July at a colliery in Leigh. In order to force her from protesting she was seized round the back of the neck with both hands, while the police accomplice turned her chair round by prising his knee into her back.

At Brodsworth Colliery (August 2nd) it was the turn of a 14 year old boy to be attacked and inflicted with a broken leg.



The entire village under occupation, police order people out of their own gardens and 'back into the house' on pain of arrest or threats to 'come over the wall and put you in'. Children are verbally abused on the street.

An unusual sight for mainland Britain — pickets forced to lie prostrate on the ground, in a line, under the threat of cops with truncheons until the meat wagons arrive to take them away. That's what happened in the village of Armthorpe.

Pickets left handcuffed to lamposts on the main street — that's what happened at Cresswell. Where occupants of houses giving tea to visiting pickets were threatened with arrest. As were women and teenagers who refused to move away from their own front gates and 'get yourselves back inside those houses'.

Kiverton Park Miners Welfare was attacked by police who let dogs off the leash into the room where families with children were having their meal. Women kitchen volunteers were badly bitten and children terrified.

On May 19th they did the same in a raid on Blidworth Village Hall. A journalist who happened to be present in the hall reported:

*'A police van containing about ten men roared up to the village hall, at least four constables hurled themselves at the door, burst it open, and wide eyed with anger, rushed inside. . . terrified children screamed. Police raged around inside the hall saying they 'suspected something may be happening'. In fact nothing more sinister was happening than tea-making and a game of dominoes.*

Of course something more sinister has happened, as we know from identical operations in Ulster. The name of the game is INTIMIDATION.

Police interrogation of children at school and stopped on the streets, was a widespread event in Nottingham.

The whereabouts of parents, picket operations, parent's political views. The children's own view of the strike. . . all of these carefully logged where they have managed to extract information.

## A CALCULATED CYNICAL OPERATION

They've been cynically preparing this mixture of social poison since we beat them in 1974. This they admit themselves. It is not, as has been said in certain parliamentary circles, something which got 'out of hand'. Its been coldly and clinically planned and if it's been enthusiastically and zealously put into operation, its because the faceless powers behind desks and phones have made sure they only recruit the right sort of person who unquestioningly get on with the job of beating down the workers.

Where are all the constitutional checks and balances so famed of the bourgeois political theory? The separation of powers and administrators to prevent the rise of such unchecked actions? The judiciary, as we have seen, fell nicely into line.

The press in almost any bourgeois democratic country, in the world would have bawked at the march towards a de facto political police force under a single centralised control. . . but this? This press of 'ours' at best remained silent, more usually kids the millions that the poor old British Bobby, one step removed from Toy Town's Mr Plod and still in the garb of Dixon of Dock Green is only doing his job, nowt has changed and England, Merry England carries on. The warmth of the Tory living room is secured by the knowledge that the police are outside the window, holding the gates of civilisation shut against the barbarian Blacks and Irish now suddenly re-inforced by the hooligan pit men down from the North



or up from the valleys. The wild men are coming down from the mountains of history and out of the dark past.

We, the miners, are pushed out on to the margins of society. We are now its' enemy — We are the 'terrorists' now. To quote Thatcher, we are 'The enemy within'.

The police have moved massively onto the streets and roads of Britain.

The roadblocks everyone by now, will know about. But they are not just on the motorways and intersections of Nottingham they were on the outskirts of pit villages, like Armthorpe sealed off from any visits by their Doncaster neighbours.

They were on the roads to Humberside, the roads off into the North of Yorkshire. . .and everywhere they choose just to put them.

At times they have been at the end of people's *streets*, anyone trying to leave the street has been arrested, on 'obstruction' charges!

That the miners and their action has been criminalised can be seen in the totally illegitimate use of the Police/ National Computer to monitor the movement of miners cars. The vehicles being entered into the 'stolen and suspect vehicles' index.

## OBSTRUCTION THE 'JUMP WHEN WE TELL YOU TO' LAW.

Anything a policeman tells you to do from standing still, or going back into your house when ordered, anything from not giving away newspapers to your neighbours or holding an NUM banner — anything you refuse to do no matter how non-provocative or lawful is met with the 'obstruction' charge. Thousands of our comrades, men, women and teenagers; miners and other village folk, have been arrested under that charge.

That charge means 'do everything and anytime any police officer tells you, and do it without protest.'

By now many people will know that cars refusing to surrender their passengers at road blocks, refusing to open their doors, have their windshields shattered by police carrying truncheons; who also get a kick of knocking the doors off the cars, thus wrecking them.

Many PSUs carry a variety of fire officers' axes, especially for the purpose of smashing windshields, axeing doors off the hinges, or if you refuse to open the boot or take too long about it, that too is axed open.

Car drivers passing the scenes of such wanton destruction have stared in disbelief at police wielding axes through windshields, and pulling young men by their hair through shattered glass, out onto the bonnets of the cars, where they have been beaten senseless. The police proved they could stand the gasp of the passing motorist, secure in the knowledge that the press, radio and the TV will be holding the ruling class line and telling no tales.

They all 'piss in the same pot' as we say.

## POLICE OCCUPATION

When stories started to drift out of the mining villages being under 'police occupation' we meant just that.

At Blidworth, in a street where Doncaster miners were staying as the guests of local people, massive numbers of riot police suddenly occupied the street and surrounded the houses, turning searchlights onto the premises and flooding the gardens with helmeted, riot shielded men, carrying clubs.

The both implicit and explicit threat being that everyone in the street was going to be attacked as punishment for housing Doncaster miners.

The only way in fact a bloodbath was avoided, and a carnage of destruction missed, was to allow the Doncaster miners to be evicted without a fight.

They were escorted by a huge party of police vehicles from Blidworth right to the edge of their own village in Yorkshire. The lads all the while wondering every mile of the dark and deserted roads, if they were going to be stopped and battered.

The unfortunate miner's families who had housed the Yorkshire miners were not subsequently spared of any violence and were the subject of much harassment, physical abuse and eventual arrests.

Before going into action, many police removed their numbers, thus demonstrating a PREMEDITATED inclination to brutality and assault. After all if one claims to have been carried away 'in the heat of the moment' its as well to have taken off all forms of recognition two hours before that 'moment' arises!

Sometimes the numerals are interchangeable for the same purpose. On May 10th at Ollerton, a cop vigorously engaged in putting the boot into pickets was identified as 1150. A little later he re-emerged in another clash as 5110, this time leading an ambush party engaged in jumping out and downing isolated pickets, as they walked away to their cars.

## THE COURTS

*'And the Courts give them Justice*

*As Justice is given,*

*By well mannered thugs.'*

The Courts have, without exception, bent over backwards in finding ways of attacking previously existing civil liberties and customs. Bail conditions — remember that is BEFORE being found guilty of any offence or even having been tried for any offence;—

**'NOT TO VISIT ANY PREMISES OR PLACE FOR ANY PURPOSE IN CONNECTION WITH THE CURRENT TRADE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE NUM AND THE NCB OTHER THAN PEACEFULLY TO PICKET AT THE USUAL PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT.'**

It meant of course that you couldn't *speak* at any meeting, even in your local pub, or attend a rally or give out a leaflet, sell a newspaper, or speak through a loud hailer outside the local shopping centre.

Such bail conditions have not simply taken away the right to *picket* they have taken away the right to exercise any of the functions one



would expect a bourgeois democratic system to have; and if they can be whipped away without so much as a muffled protest from the so-called 'guardians of the unwritten constitution' — did we ever have such 'rights' in the first place? — so much the better for the State.

## HOUSE ARRESTS

This came in the form of bail restrictions that cite, 'you must not leave your homes *at all* between the hours of 1pm and 9am.' some 20 hours of house detention, in some cases lasting for months duration BEFORE ANY TRIAL' LET ALONE CONVICTION.

Miners have ended up in jail for failing to comply with such outrageous conditions, one of them for addressing a National Union of Public Employees conference.

The whole scene is given an additional stroke by continually adjourning the Court hearing, thus extending the period in which your free movement and liberty can be prevented.

As 'A State of Siege' comments;—

*'The Criminal Law is very specific and so can be easily used in political situations; no matter of great legal concern is ever argued out in a Magistrate's Court, nor is motive ever considered. Because the police officer is so well received in the Magistrate's Court, it is an uphill struggle for the defendant to prove his or her innocence, while guilt is virtually taken for granted.'*

In the case of quite a number of Yorkshire lads, they spent *weeks* in Lincoln Jail *without trial or proof of any guilt* for breach of what was anyway only the stupid, cover-all 'obstruction charge' bail restrictions.

Malcolm Pitt got 19 days in jail for taking a party of Japanese miners too close to a picket line, contrary to his bail conditions. Will anyone really, seriously tell us about 'a free country' and 'freedom of speech' again?

## VIOLENCE

It seems incredible, but the miners are now the subject of the dismissive attitude which attends the accusations of black folk and Irish people of outright police brutality. Incredible, to us the ordinary mining folk. After all, for decades we 'played the game', were Law abiding and constitutional. Few then would have spat on the flag or welled up with hate at the sight of a police uniform. Despite passionate histories to the contrary, we had become 'your average Law abiding citizen'. That we were subject to such horrors at the hands of the police, who were previously considered the guardians of decent people, is to us a life changing experience.

That we as self designated 'honest people' are not *really* believed comes as an even greater shock. It's a kind of yawning 'oh yes, police violence!' response to our tales. And yet, it really did happen to us. As Mr Kevin Barren MP discovered when he came to tell the pickets not to throw any stones at the police and to 'calm things' and for his pains had his arm broken and his head clouted by the police who didn't care who or what he was about. . .you have to see it to believe it. That happened to Kevin

in one day, on a visit to the picket line. I told him personally, that if he had come back the day after and tried to tell the police not to hit innocent people and they had knocked him down again, by the third day he too might have thrown stones at the advancing lines of riot police.

The day after Arthur Scargill was arrested at Orgreave, the pickets had been penned into a corner by multiple black lines of police. For no reason whatsoever (nothing was happening, there were no pushes, no shouts, no offensive in any shape by the crowd of bored-looking pickets) the police ranks parted and the mounted psychopaths rode into the captive crowd, spurring the reluctant horses to push over men, and flaying their night sticks to the left and right. Both TV channels reported that evening:—

*'Police horses were called in to restore order.'*



Policing the miners' strike at Orgreave, Yorkshire, May and June 1984.



AUGUST 21st 1984

The Government's efforts to install a solitary scab at every pit in Yorkshire came to my own adopted village of Hatfield, Doncaster. The police, in short, rioted through the village, the population of which, men, women and children had turned out to show their disgust at the scab. This scab's name was Mr Freeman, who had miraculously managed to get a golden handshake/redundancy lump sum from far away Scunthorpe steel works and be taken on at Hatfield within a blink of the eye, a few years back, before the advent of the strike. He had not of course become part of the village, and lived with the gentry farmers, out in the middle class, farm-owners' village of Belton.

The police brief that day was, so we were told at the subsequent public enquiry, to escort the scab in and out of work. However they continued to attack the villagers for a full three hours after the scab bus with its' solitary sleeper had left.

A young lad was placed in intensive care after a severe beating, an old retired miner, tottered on the brink of the same department. Women and children were ruthlessly stampeded through their own streets, while old folk had their doors smashed open and their rooms ransacked by police engaged in totally cavalier 'seach and destroy' raids to find 'pickets'.

In the next village of Armthorpe, the next day, police went from house to house, breaking, entering and dragging away anyone who looked to them as though they might have been a picket. Obviously not a picket in their living rooms or having a cup of tea in someone's kitchen, but of the correct age, look and general sort of person who the cops had encountered on various picket lines. It was called, when applied to young black people in London, 'SUS' (on suspicion that they *might be* about to commit a crime.)

The police went to war with the mining communities. They *did* actually take a personal and not a 'professional' attitude towards the dispute. We know that by the way they responded on perfectly legal, non-violent, peaceful and quiet picket lines of under six people. When for example a train stopped with supplies of iron ore or fuel to power stations or iron works. They felt personally outflanked, their side lost. At Immingham, our handful of bridge pickets from Hatfield who succeeded in stopping *all* fuel and ore by rail, found themselves the subject of great police annoyance. A police inspector saying 'we have to stop all this'. The picket's cars and vans couldn't stay in the vicinity, it being a 24-hr picket of course meant there was no where for people to sleep or take a minute out of the rain. No shelter was allowed to be erected, the little polythene tent had to be removed. No fire could be lit. A chair was too close to the road (a very quiet road). So it went on 'Have you been drinking?'. . . 'If you throw away that chip bag you will be arrested'.

Note the way food collectors, a Santa Claus included, were arrested, others obstructed, food confiscated etc. Collections for almost anyone but the miners' families would have gone unnoticed and unmolested. The short truth was that the working class support, 'rattled them' personally, because they did see themselves as part of a side, and perhaps even some of them, part of a cause.

## WHAT WAS LEFT IN THE ARMOURY?

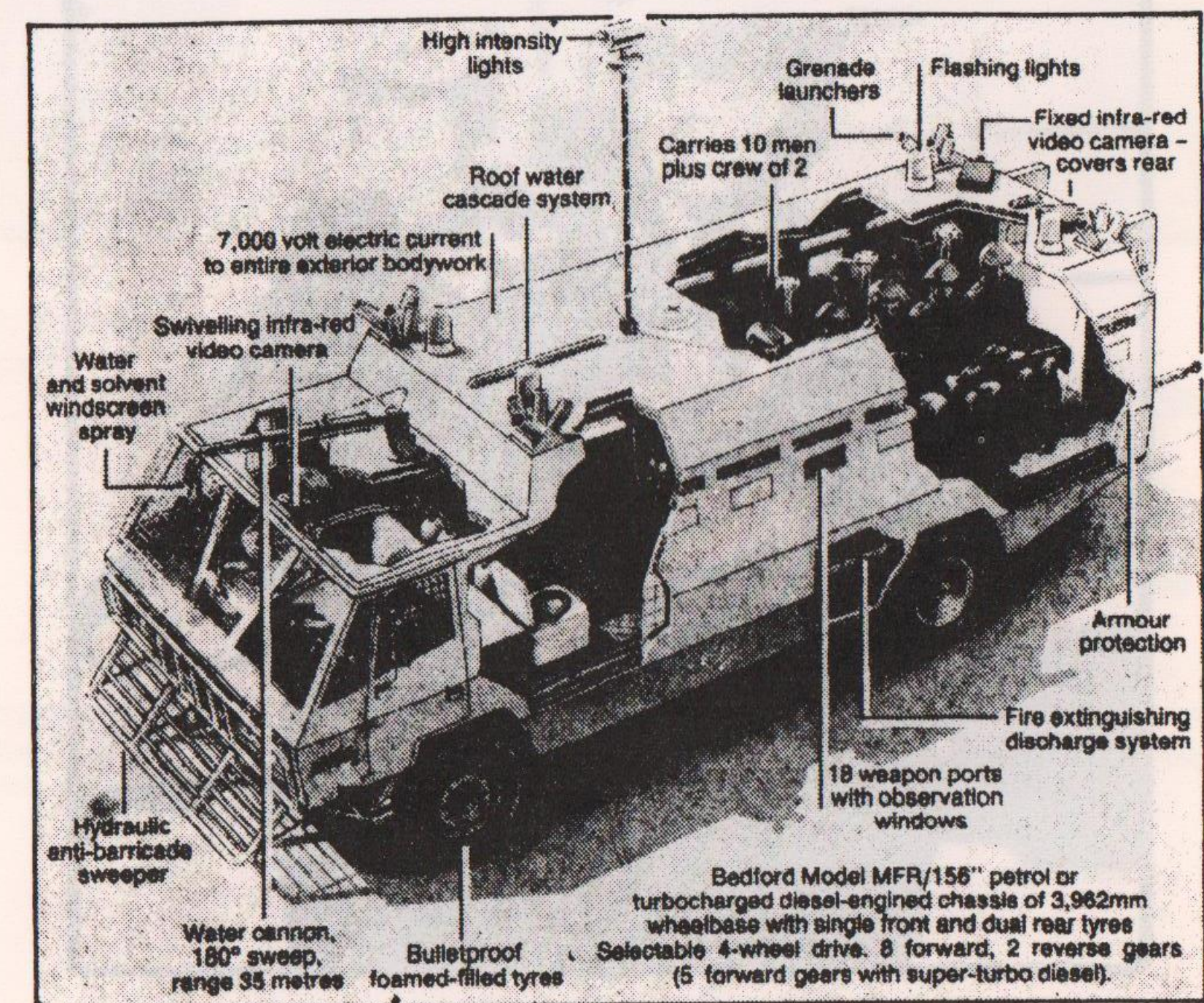
We didn't get all they had ready, but we nearly did. On the last day at Orgreave, police at the top gate had tear gas, but an anti-cop wind flowing in their direction stopped its use. At Hatfield, on the 21st August, police officers with tear gas bags (a smart shoulder bag for grenades) and stick together gas guns were behind the scenes, or rather in the wings, their bloody offensive with clubs obviously made their new toy unnecessary.

It was not a question of 'if' only more a question of 'when'.

The jail sentences mounted in length and number. Leon Britton urged life sentences for miners caught in confrontation with scabs, police or coal board property. The press howled for blood and the TV interviewers gently pushed for more custodial sentences for what were previously minor civil offences.

The Chief Constables became more publicly political, expressing their views on the left wing dangers of certain trade union leaders etc. All the while they and their Tory cheerleaders were wetting themselves at the thought of trying out their newly issued plastic bullets on the miners. Stocks near the end of the dispute were around 3,500 rounds at up to 20 different forces. The end of the strike robbed them of the opportunity to use them on this occasion, but the certainty that they would have been used and undoubtedly *will* be used in future, similar disputes is a deeply felt belief in the pit communities.

It is highly probable that contrary to a year's old report in *The Times* the AMAC (below) *was* supplied to key areas of the coalfield struggle and was under wraps ready for a good opportunity to go into action. The fact is *it is here* and once it comes out onto the streets it will never go away again until the type of social system we live under is radically changed.





The sight of the police battle wagon, stone proof, electric force fielded, armoured from top to bottom would tend to throw the most determined picket into despair. I showed a photo of the new assault vehicle to some Irish activists who quickly commented 'I wonder what it would look like after being hit by a paving stone from a twenty storey block of flats?'

Because repression breeds resistance, it is inevitable that the miners would not have taken kindly to being shot by gas grenades, tear gassed or fired at by plastic bullets, neither would they take kindly to the armoured truck firing high pressure water hoses or electrocuting them. They would invariably have hit back with something stronger than the odd stone or two. Given the response of other European workers to attacks, the petrol bomb might well have become a feature of miner's resistance.

However the forces of 'law & order' were already kitted-up with even harder stuff in readiness for just such a response. . .and so the drift into deeper and deeper armed police repression goes on. Its' process has now already started to take on the characteristics of the State's war in Ireland.

The dark forces waiting in the wings have not vanished because the miners' strike is over. . .they are still there.

The implication for the labour movement at large and civil liberties in general are deadly.

Things have already changed far more than most people realise. The passage down the slippery slope to a markedly more repressive system has accelerated alarmingly.



Day by day, the walls are closing in around all of us. The *only* rights we have are those we have successfully fought for or defended. There are no rights enshrined in some untouchable glass case that we can always refer to to protect us from autocracy. The end of our strike left us as a union and as a movement bereft of a whole range of civil liberties and expected safeguards we thought we enjoyed. The powers of the police have expanded enormously. The role of the Law and Law Courts has blanketed everything we had previously marked off as being 'industrial relations' and not, therefore, their territory. In a word there is *nothing* that they cannot do to us, and nothing that we have that cannot be taken off us, if we are unable to fight to keep it or to hold them back.

This is why the recent disputes was never simply the miners private campaign or a struggle as to whether some Yorkshire village or another would have a pit in it or not. This is why support from and participation in that dispute by other sections of the trade union and labour movement was never an act of philanthropy. It has been, and still is a battle for our survival, of the people's means to resist. A battle for all progressive people and people engaged in a vast array of protest organisations. Most assuredly the features of repression used against us, and the infringements of our previously assumed rights, will become the yardstick in dealing with any section of the working class or the wider population who are seen to pose a threat to this government and the faceless powers who pull the strings in the background.

Whoever it was said:— 'If they come for you in the night, then they will come for me in the morning. . .' was dead right. We've had some of it, now I believe they are looking for you.

David John Douglas.  
NUM Branch Delegate,  
Hatfield. May 1985.

DALEK (BRITAIN)  
Extremist.



NOT NICE COP (BRITAIN, TOXICITY)  
BLDORTH etc.) Has a degree in  
paramount. Experienced at leading  
from vans with shield and truncheon.  
Avoid.

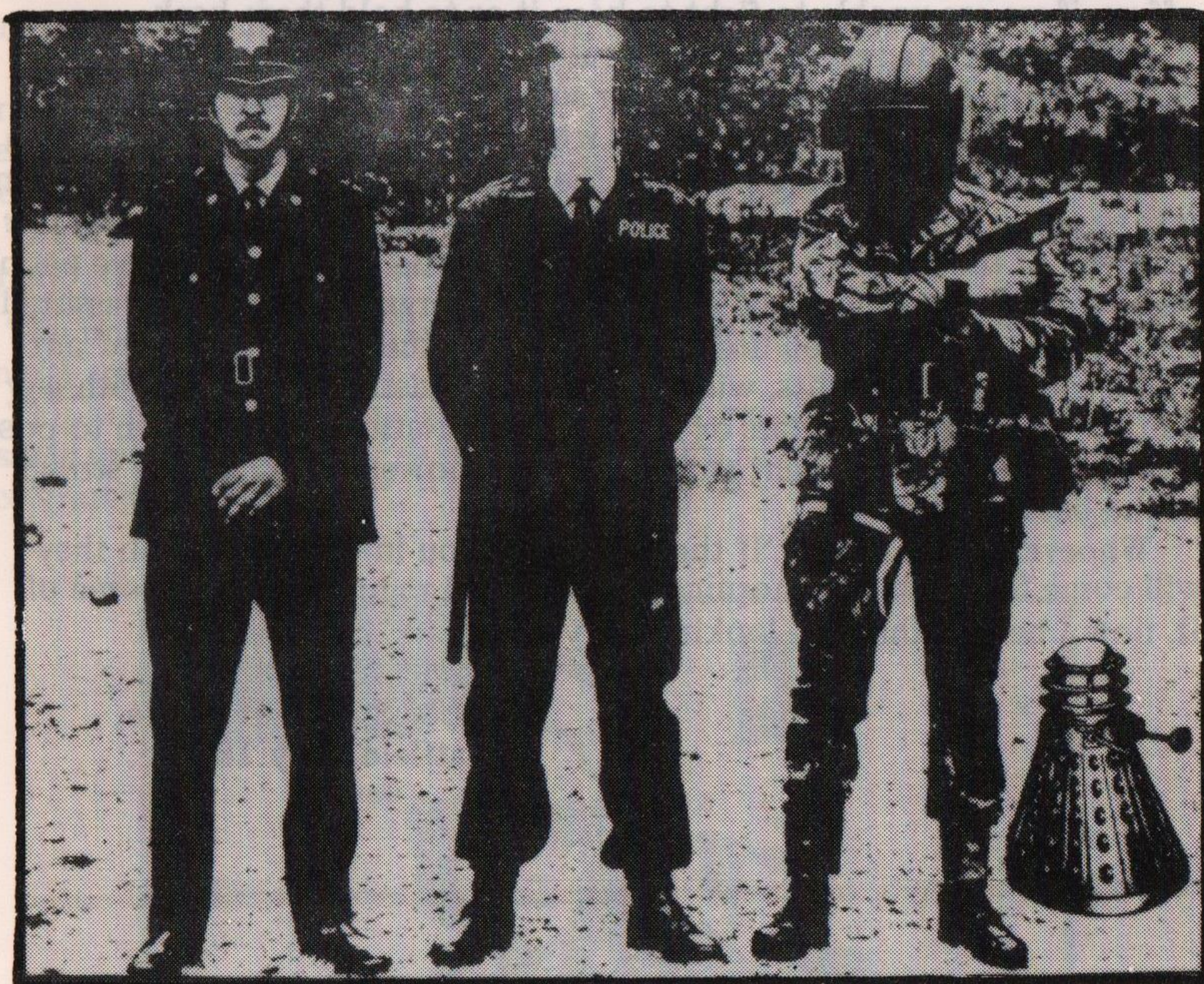


NASTY COP (BELFAST, ULSTER)  
The expert. Skilled at killing with  
plastic and lead bullets. Being cloned  
all over.

NICE COP (BELGRADE, BOMB)  
Tells tourists the time. Finds lost cars  
etc.



# WHO'S COMMUNITY COP?



**NOT NICE COP (BRIXTON, TOXTETH, BLIDWORTH etc.)** Has a degree in harassment. Experienced at leaping from vans with shield and truncheon. Avoid.



**DALEK (BRITAIN)**  
Exterminates.

**NICE COP (BELGRAVIA, LONDON)**  
Tells tourists the time. Finds lost cats etc.

**NASTY COP (BELFAST, ULSTER)**  
The expert. Skilled at killing with plastic and lead bullets. Being cloned all over.