workers power

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

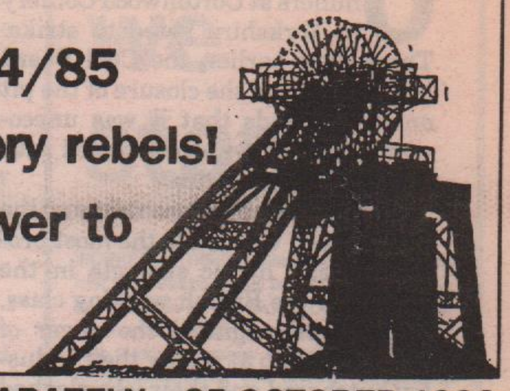
PIT CRISIS SPECIAL

INSIDE:

Lessons of 1984/85

Don't rely on Tory rebels!

A workers' answer to unemployment



10 PENCE IF SOLD SEPARATELY 25 OCTOBER 1992

BUILD ACTION COUNCILS!

General Strike Now!

HESELTINE HAS reprieved twenty-one pits from immediate closure, withdrawn compulsory redundancies and allowed for a select committee inquiry into the pit closure programme. But the procedure has been set in motion to close ten pits. The plan to close 31 pits has not been withdrawn.

It is a stay of execution for the mining industry, not a U-turn.

Meanwhile the Tory revolt in Parliament predictably fizzled out.

Heseltine's panic stricken climb-down was designed to save only two jobs: his and Major's. Thirty thousand miners still face the threat of redundancy in the new year. Communities, factories and shops dependent on the coal industry face the death of a thousand cuts instead of the sudden execution Heseltine was planning.

What should happen now?

A massive wave of anger met Tory plans to butcher the coal industry. No wonder. Over three million workers are already facing the same dole-queue misery that awaits the miners. Millions more live in fear of losing their job, their home, and with it their human dignity.

That is why, from Chesterfield to Cheltenham, working class people rallied to the miners' struggle.

Fearing that anger, and fearing that a section of the Tory party would use it to fuel demands for a reversal in economic policy, Heseltine has climbed down.

That was enough to get him off the hook with a few disgruntled Tories. But workers need to make sure that the government's attempt at orderly retreat turns into a rout in the face of a continuing wave of protest.

We have to turn the anger that was focused around the brutal and immediate pit closure plan into mass strike action now. We need a united fight by all workers to smash the Tory offensive.

The Tories are divided over the economy. Millions of workers can see that after the miners they are next in the firing line. The bosses and their government are planning a pay freeze in the public sector, the privatisation of the railways and Scottish water, huge redundancies in industry and the slashing of dole and benefits. If we all fight together, now, we can spoil their plans to make the working class pay for their economic crisis.

Miners and their families should be building for the biggest possible vote in favour of strike action.

The aim of that strike action should be the immediate withdrawal of all closure proposals and guaranteed jobs for all miners.

No miner should be fooled by Heseltine's long list of sweeteners, or by the promise of a select committee inquiry. Re-training in a collapsing economy is training for the dole. Small business grants in a recession are an invitation to commit financial suicide.

A redundancy payment may cover the mortgage for a couple of years but it won't provide lasting jobs and a decent life for miners and their families.

Despite Heseltine's attempt to buy off the great revolt against pit closures, miners should prepare a united campaign of strike action.

After the defeat of the 1984-85 strike many workers drew the conclusion that strikes can't win. But the catalogue of job losses over recent years proves the opposite: if you don't fight the Tories will get away with murder.

Strike action hits the Tories and their rich backers where it hurts them most—in their wallets. And strikes **CAN** win. The 1984-85 strike lost because other unions failed to provide solidarity. That's why this time round, miners need to go direct to other workers right from the start. The miners must not stand alone.

If this approach is adopted then strike action can win. That is why every miner should vote yes to strike action. While every necessary preparation needs to be made to win a strike vote, there is no excuse for the NUM position of postponement until a campaign of public opinion takes its toll. The public opinion campaign has achieved all that it was ever going to. What we need now is strike action.

To win united action, every effort must be made to win a strike in areas where the UDM is dominant.

Many UDM members are feeling betrayed by their lying leaders who told them all would be well as long as they avoided militancy. Now they can see what boot-licking the Tories gets you: a kick in the teeth. Silverhill Colliery, the jewel in the crown of Lynk's campaign, is still for the chop. UDM members should leave Lynk to rot at the bottom of the Silverhill shaft and join the NUM.

Though the threat of immediate closure has gone, miners should not let-up on preparations for the action needed to save the pits. Every pit where closure is imminent needs to be **OCCUPIED**—not as a token substitute for strike action as with Lynk's pathetic gesture but to stop the shut-down process and to tie up pit-head coal stocks. By the new year many of the ten pits named by Heseltine will be facing the axe once again. The case for a strike and occupation needs to be won in every NUM branch in the country between now and the inevitable moves to close the pits on the immediate hit list.

In the build-up to Wednesday 21 October workers all over the country took strike action or won delegations, in the face of bureaucratic inactivity, management and the law.

The union officials have sat on their backsides while the Tories got away with murder since the end of the last miners' strike. We must demand they call a general strike now to smash the Tories' plans—from pit closures to privatisation to hospital opt-outs and service cuts.

Public sector workers should not wait until the Tories impose the impending pay freeze, and until Labour and Tory councils have decimated jobs and services.

If the TUC can call an emergency meeting to defend 30,000 jobs it should now be forced to swing into action to do something about the three million-plus who are already on the dole, and the tens of thousands more due to join them.

On Wednesday 21 October the

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

CALL A NATIONAL MINERS' STRIKE!

1984/85

Lessons of the mine

In the 1984-85 strike the miners fought for a year while the TUC sat on its hands. This time the miners mu
not that "strikes cannot win", but that the workers' movement needs to go beyond militant trade unionism

ON SUNDAY 4 March 1984 the miners at Cortonwood Colliery in Yorkshire voted to strike. Three days earlier, the Coal Board had announced the closure of the pit on the grounds that it was uneconomic. The pit was to be closed with only five weeks notice.

The closure announcement and the Cortonwood vote led to the most protracted and heroic struggle in the history of the British working class. These events ignited the anger of miners, fed up at seeing their industry butchered and their jobs slashed by the Tory government.

Within days of the Cortonwood vote the strike spread throughout Yorkshire. Scotland, Kent, South Wales and the North East soon entered the struggle. Flying pickets, organised by rank and file militants, brought out whole sections of the "moderate" areas like Lancashire and Nottinghamshire. The one year long national miners' strike had begun. The best chance the working class had had for smashing the Tory offensive was there for the taking.

After twelve months the miners returned to work, defeated. That defeat was a watershed. It led to an onslaught on jobs that has reduced the mining workforce from 184,000 in 1984 to around 60,000 today. It led to a split in the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the creation of the scab company union, the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM).

Emboldened

It emboldened the bosses everywhere to step up their offensive. It strengthened the centre-right "new realists" in the leadership of the labour movement, who counselled retreat and practised betrayal in the face of the bosses' attacks. It helped the Tories win a third electoral victory and encouraged them to press ahead with their programme of destroying every post-war gain the working class had secured.

Yet the defeat was far from inevitable. The remarkable militancy of the miners, their self-sacrifice and endurance during twelve months of bitter class war, provided the potential for a marvellous victory. That militancy was betrayed by the trade union bureaucracy and the cowardly Kinnockite Labour leadership. It was misused and eventually squandered by the NUM's own left leaders like Arthur Scargill and Mick McGahey.

To have defeated treachery and to have overcome the limits of pure trade union militancy the miners needed to be won to a revolutionary communist programme of action, to a new leadership and a new party. This is the most important lesson of the Great Strike.

Not surprisingly it is not the lesson drawn by the reformist leaders of the labour movement of either the Labourite or Stalinist variety. These creatures never wanted the miners to win through the methods of class struggle because they feared the revolutionary potential of such methods. For Norman Willis, Neil Kinnock and Stalinists in the NUM like George Bolton, the lesson of the defeat is that class struggle does not work.

One of the chief spokesmen of these new realists, John Lloyd, acknowledged that the strike "had a politically revolutionary dimension intertwined and indissoluble from its quite real industrial objectives". (*Understanding The Miners' Strike*—Fabian Pamphlet) And he advised Kinnock and the TUC to make clear that the labour movement reject this dimension outright in favour of "the democratic socialist route", that is, the election of a Labour government. The class struggle—the defence of the working class' immediate needs by direct action—must be subordinated to this end, and the rule of capitalist law must be observed.

In the name of these "democratic" principles, the labour movement leadership followed up the betrayal of the miners with that of the Wapping printers, the Dover seafarers and countless other groups of workers. To ensure that Labour's democratic image was preserved workers had to bend the knee to Thatcher and meekly accept the ravaging of their livelihoods by the Poll Tax, the destruction of municipal housing, the break up of the NHS and the education system.

This was cowardice dressed up as democracy. It represented the willingness of the leaders of the labour movement to sacrifice every immediate, let alone historic, need of the working class to the electoral requirements of Labour's parliamentary careerists and the bureaucratic interests of the well-paid, highly privileged trade union leaders.

Against this we stand firmly on the traditions of the miners' strike. We salute the militancy of the miners, their defiance of the police and the law, their courageous resistance to everything the capitalists tried in an attempt to defeat them.

The strike began as a fight against pit closures. The NUM rejected the Board's right to shut down "uneconomic" pits. They were challenging the Board's right to run the industry according to the logic of profit making. They were putting working class jobs and energy needs before that logic. The Tories, whose long term goal was privatisation of the pits, knew that such a challenge had to be smashed. They fought the strike as a political battle from day one.

The bosses' priority in the first weeks of the strike was to break the power of the flying pickets. In the early days pickets from Yorkshire had a massive impact in the "moderate" areas. In North Notts the big pits were brought to a standstill. In Lancashire the coalfield was effectively closed by the pickets. The Tories responded with a full scale police occupation of Nottinghamshire.

Onslaught

Under the direction of the National Reporting Centre police forces from all over the country carried out a co-ordinated onslaught on the pickets. Their brutality at Ollerton resulted in the tragic death of a young picket, Davy Jones. They established roadblocks to stop car loads of pickets getting through. The Attorney General, Michael Havers, gave them the authority to operate a state of siege:

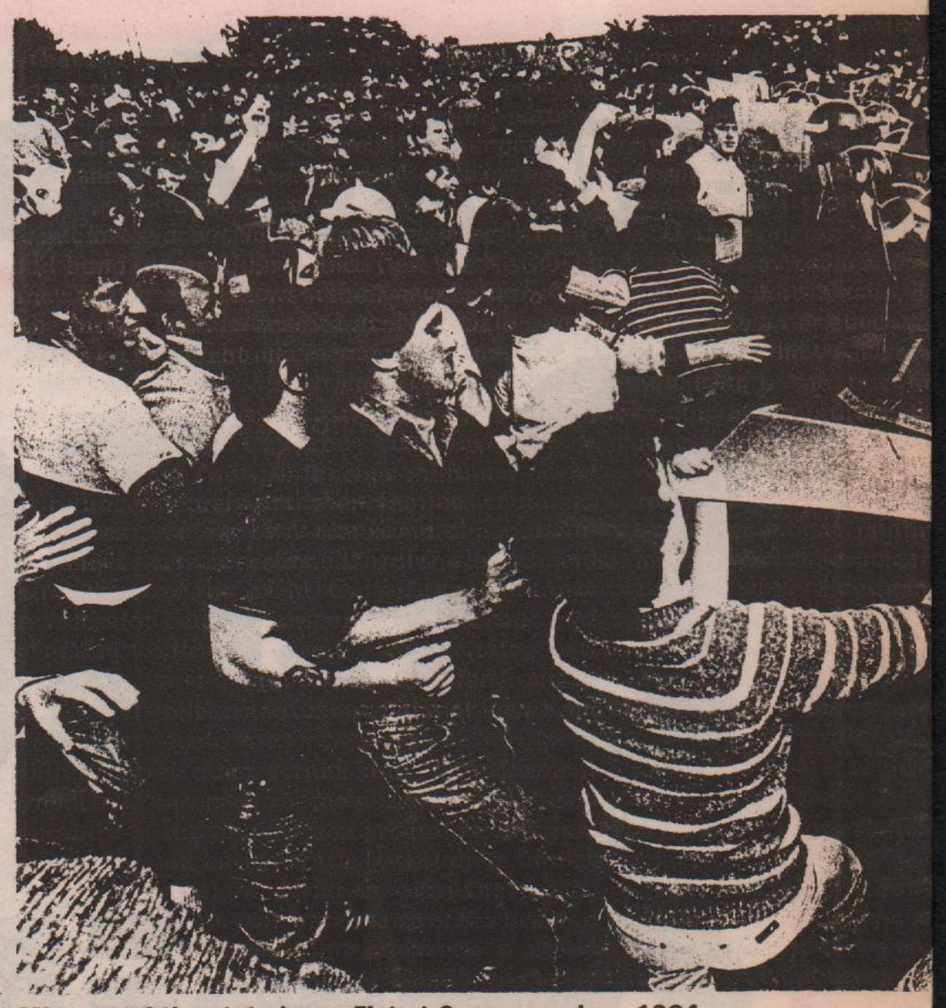
"Police have the power to stop their [pickets'] vehicles on the road and turn them away. Anyone not complying would be committing a criminal offence, obstructing the police in the course of their duty."

The state of siege had a devastating effect on the ability of rank and file miners to get to Nottingham and influence the men there. The Notts miners were isolated by these tactics and many hardened their opposition to the strike over this period of police occupation.

But the police operation did not stop there. When the miners turned their picketing efforts towards stopping scab coal getting to other industries the police prepared for a direct showdown. It came in late May and June at the Battle of Orgreave.

With Scargill's backing, mass pickets tried to prevent coal getting to the coking works at Orgreave, near Sheffield. Thousands of pickets converged on the plant only to be confronted by thousands of police, armed with truncheons and riot shields and backed up by battalions of mounted police and armoured landrovers.

Pitched battles were fought as unarmed miners daily hurled themselves at the police lines. The brutality of the police reached new levels as miners were mercilessly beaten even when all they were doing was shoving against police lines. On 18 June the key battle was fought and the police won. Scargill himself was hospitalised as a result of the police violence.



Miners and the state in conflict at Orvgreave, June 1984

As millions of workers witnessed the blatant brutality of the police on the news, the treacherous leader of the Labour Party demonstrated his real loyalty—to "law and order", to the rule of the bosses and their state. Kinnock rushed to be interviewed on the TV in order to condemn the violence not of the mounted police wielding batons, but of the unarmed miners for their picket of Orgreave.

In the summer that followed Thatcher ordered the police to build on this victory by moving into the pit villages in the militant areas to terrorise the whole community and smash resistance. Armthorpe, Easington, Dunscroft and countless other villages woke up to the sound of mounted police charges. Houses were smashed up, strikers were beaten, even children became victims of this police offensive. Thatcher had, in the summer, dubbed the miners "the enemy within". And she treated them accordingly.

The police offensive was followed through by the courts. Not only were numerous miners framed and imprisoned on trumped up charges, the union itself was subjected to a legal battering. Its conference votes were deemed illegal. Its leaders were fined. In December 1984 its entire assets were seized by the courts. One Herbert Brewer, a member of the Institute of Directors, was appointed by the judges to steal the union's money. When he got it he told the world "I am the NUM".

The role of the state in attacking the strike was unprecedented. It proved conclusively that the strike was political. The Tories were out to destroy the NUM and with it the vanguard class fighters of the British labour movement. How did the miners respond?

At a rank and file level the strikers and their families understood the seriousness of the situation and demonstrated in practice the creative energy and potential of the working class. Faced with a DHSS that was denying them any benefits they set about sustaining the strike. Women's support groups developed spontaneously, drawing thousands of women into activity. Initially aimed at organising food supplies, they developed into a fighting national network of women involved in picketing, demonstrating and politically debating the issues of the strike.

Picket organisation was transformed from a haphazard and informal affair into a co-ordinated and carefully planned operation, first to try and close down the scab pits and secondly to hit the depots, factories and docks handling scab coal. To win solidarity the miners and women's groups organised an army of speakers to tour other workplaces, attend other workers' picket lines and demos and to help build solidarity groups throughout the country which could raise money and food for the strikers.

All of these initiatives came from below. All proved the capacity of the rank and file for struggle and for organisation. But faced with the political problems posed by the dispute this spontaneous militancy was not enough. Against the police lines at Orgreave and the occupation of the villages, pickets, even mass pickets, were not enough.

There was a burning need for the building of trained and disciplined workers' defence organisations. Only such organisations could have secured victories against the highly dis-

SWP and the

THE SOCIALIST Workers Party pro revolutionary leadership during the 1 demand a general strike, even whe 1984. It ridiculed the call for worl peddled the outdated illusion that:

"The miners can win if the rank a a scale even larger than in 1972."

The reason for the SWP's failure t the strike can be found in their whol as "tailism". Instead of arguing for t is to be won, they argue only for ste

So in 1992 they rightly call for a g the demand for action councils. Thes to win strike action and to keep it go it out. But the SWP's tailist method demand.■

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ers' strike

t not stand alone. The real lesson of the Great Strike is o revolutionary politics.



ciplined and militarily co-ordinated police operations. But the leap from traditional mass picketing to the effective military organisation of workers required going beyond militant trade union consciousness towards revolutionary class consciousness.

Similar problems applied to the need to win solidarity. The strike had class-wide significance. This was reflected in the phrase sincerely used by militants and cynically abused by left bureaucrats, "the miners are fighting for the whole working class". This was true but it posed the need to win the whole class, through a general strike, to fighting alongside the miners.

The bureaucrats ran a mile from such a conclusion. The miners were not armed with the arguments to win other sections to such an overtly political challenge to the government. Indeed, many of the best militants, until late in the day, held onto the sectional idea that the miners could go it alone on behalf of the whole working class.

Only revolutionary communism was able to put the argument squarely—if the miners lose the Tories will have scored a political victory over the whole working class, therefore the whole class must, as we said in the first strike issue of our paper, go "into battle shoulder to shoulder with the miners!"

That this did not happen, that the miners remained isolated and went down to defeat, was the result both of the treachery of the TUC and of the bureaucratic leftism of the NUM leaders.

The NUM leaders failed to put forward a perspective that could build on the rank and file militancy that began the strike. Indeed in the early days Scargill and Taylor oversaw a deal with the right wing that led to all pickets being withdrawn from the non-striking coalfields while ballots were held.

With the momentum of a rolling strike halted, the result was votes against action in Notts, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Lancashire. The NUM leaders observed the federal autonomy of the areas, thus handing the right wingers complete control in their own spheres of influence.

Only workers' democracy—mass pickets and mass meetings addressed by strikers—could have turned the tide in Notts and the other scab regions. But Scargill rejected such a course and played it by the bureaucratic rule book.

It was only after six weeks of the strike that the leadership actually sanctioned national action through a delegate conference. This delay, like the earlier withdrawal of the pickets, proved crucial to the fate of the strike. It allowed the scabs to claim that their actions were legitimate within the framework of the union.

Weaknesses

As the strike developed the weaknesses of bureaucratic left trade unionism became more obvious and more dangerous. The battle of Orgreave came at a time when sections of the left leadership were looking to do a deal with MacGregor—the hitman the Tories had specially selected to take on the miners. To his credit Scargill opposed these moves. He placed himself in the front ranks of the Orgreave pickets and used the conflict to outflank the other NUM leaders and prevent a deal being struck.

What he refused to do was organise the rank and file militants into a force independent of, and capable of really challenging, the rest of the bureaucracy. When Taylor diverted pickets away from Orgreave and when Emlyn Williams flatly refused to send South Wales miners to the picket, Scargill would not openly attack them and break from them. He used Orgreave to pressure them, not to challenge them.

Nor would he organise a concerted campaign to mobilise the whole South Yorkshire labour movement in solidarity action with the Orgreave picketers. Instead of 10,000 engineers marching to the picket line, as he had organised at Saltley in the 1972 strike, only a handful of leftists turned out to support the miners.

This highlighted another major weakness of Scargill's bureaucratic leftism, his sectional approach to the struggle. He readily and rightly understood the class wide significance of the strike. Yet he refused to mobilise his supporters to fight throughout the labour movement for a class wide response—a general strike.

Throughout the strike there were a number of opportunities to link the struggle of the miners with the struggles of other workers. The most important one was when the dockers launched a national strike in July, and then re-launched it in August. On both occasions the strikes were linked by the issue of scab coal.

Here was the chance to combine the action of two key sections of workers and rally the whole working class behind them. This Scargill flatly refused to do. He publicly announced that the strikes were separate, made no call for a rank and file link up and allowed the TGWU's left-posturing Ron Todd off the hook.

The result was that after the second strike the TGWU struck a deal that allowed scab coal to be brought in at Hunterston! The same pattern was followed when the pit deputies—NACODS—voted to strike in the autumn. Here was the chance to close down Notts at last. Yet Scargill maintained his stance that the NACODS dispute was their own affair. The result was that NACODS were bought off.

Spontaneous

The spontaneous militancy of the miners and their families could not on its own transcend the bureaucratic sectionalism of the left leaders of the NUM. Only if that militancy had been organised into *a rank and file movement*, a co-ordinated network of militants, could the limits of pure trade union militancy have been overcome.

Such a rank and file movement needed to be mobilised around a revolutionary action programme *against* all bureaucratic backsliding and for a general strike to secure the miners' victory, defeat the use of the law and repulse the Tory offensive. It needed to fight for real workers' democracy inside the NUM and real workers' control inside the mining industry as an answer to the bosses' policy of closures.

The condition for building this type of movement was the existence of an influential revolutionary organisation, a party, as an alternative leadership to all shades of reformism. This condition was missing.

Its absence proved particularly decisive in the second half of the strike. In retrospect the key turning point of the strike was the TUC Congress in 1984. This paved the way for betrayal. No rank and file movement, no revolutionary leadership existed to stop this betrayal. Scargill's go-it-alone strategy ran into difficulties and the militants paid the price for his sectionalism.

Prior to the Congress, Scargill had told the TUC to keep its nose out. The left sounding justification for this was that he wanted to prevent a 1926-style betrayal.

His refusal to call for official solidarity action organised by the national unions and TUC allowed left-talking leaders to obstruct rank and file initiatives. In the ISTC, in the NUR and the TGWU militants who were refusing to handle scab coal were left isolated and open to victimisations by their leaders' failure to make the actions official.

Refusal

This refusal to initiate meaningful joint action extended to the TUC. They were being let off the hook by Scargill. The Stalinist influenced leader of ASLEF and chairman of the TUC, Ray Buckton, expressed the opinion of the whole bureaucracy perfectly when he said:

"As far as the TUC are concerned, when the miners ask us for help their request will be seriously considered".

He might have added, "and when they do my help will be given on TUC terms", for that is exactly what happened.

In order to sustain the strike the NUM were finally forced to ask for TUC help. They asked for money and for the blacking of scab coal. The TUC duly obliged, but with the proviso that all action taken be under their supervision. The NUM, including Scargill, accepted these strings, proving his failure to break from the bureaucracy. He claimed that:

"In supporting the NUM with physical and financial solidarity, Congress has placed itself squarely behind our campaign to secure a speedy and victorious end to the dispute".

In reality the TUC were moving in to organise the final betrayal of the strike.

After Congress mass demonstrations and mass picketing were wound down. Many militants became integrated into support groups whose sole function had become collecting money and food. While such activities were absolutely necessary, they were no substitute for solidarity strike action with the miners.

There was no increase in blacking. Todd, Basnett, Knapp, Buckton *et al* refused to order effective action. Any action that did take place was generally down to the individual or small groups of militants. On their own they could not turn the tide.

Then, when the NUM's assets were seized, when the courts made clear that independent, militant trade unionism was intolerable in Thatcher's Britain, when the urgent need for a general strike was posed, the knife went in. The TUC's promise of support was shown up for what it was. As the *Guardian* reported:

"The TUC flatly told Mr Scargill yesterday that it could not take action to assist the NUM which would lay them open to contempt of court charges."

In the aftermath of this betrayal the forces ranged against continuing the strike grew ever stronger. The Board stepped up a back-to-work campaign. The TUC took over negotiations and got the NUM to accept a clause which "recognises that it is the duty of the NCB to manage the industry efficiently"—that is, a clause giving them the right to close "uneconomic" pits.

Leadership

Then, under the leadership of the South Wales and Scottish Stalinists and Labourites like Kim Howells, a return to work was proposed at the delegate conference on Sunday 3 March 1985. It was passed by 98 votes to 91. It did not even make a return to work conditional upon the reinstatement of the hundreds of miners victimised for their heroic actions on the picket lines during the strike. After a year the battle was over. The miners had lost.

Their return to work was defiant. Their organisation had not been smashed. The Tories had been obliged to spend £26,000 per miner to defeat the strike. Thousands of miners, their families and others had been radicalised by the year of struggle. But it was a defeat and its effects have, gradually, taken their toll.

We repeat, however, that the real lessons of the strike are not that class struggle is useless, or outdated. We leave such twaddle to those, like Kinnock, whose chief aim in life has been to teach the workers servility before the capitalists. No, the real lesson of that momentous year was that the working class has the power, the energy and the will to fight. But it is led by reformists who either do not know how to take the fight forward towards victory (Scargill) or do not want to (Willis, Todd, Kinnock and company).

Our job, therefore, is to build a revolutionary party as an alternative to these leaders; to turn the justified hatred workers feel towards the Tories and the bosses into revolutionary class consciousness; to ensure that in the struggles of today and those in the future we go forward to our goal of destroying the Tories and their hateful profit system altogether. That is the revenge that every miner who did battle in 1984-5 deserves. Nothing less will do!■

miners' strike

ved absolutely incapable of providing 984-85 strike. It steadfastly refused to the dockers struck in July and August ers' defence organisations. Instead it

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argue for the tactics necessary to win e method, a method described by Lenin e steps that are *necessary* if a struggle s that they believe workers are already

neral strike, but fail completely to raise e are necessary to link up the struggles, ng when the TUC bureaucrats try to sell means that they refuse to take up this

Where we stand

WORKERS POWER is a revolutionary communist organisation. We base our programme and policies on the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, on the documents of the first four congresses of the Third (Communist) International and on the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

Capitalism is an anarchic and crisis-ridden economic system based on production for profit. We are for the expropriation of the capitalist class and the abolition of capitalism. We are for its replacement by socialist production planned to satisfy human need.

Only the socialist revolution and the smashing of the capitalist state can achieve this goal. Only the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party and organised into workers' councils and workers' militia can lead such a revolution to victory and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism.

The Labour Party is not a socialist party. It is a bourgeois workers' party—bourgeois in its politics and its practice, but based on the working class via the trade unions and supported by the mass of workers at the polls. We are for the building of a revolutionary tendency in the Labour Party, in order to win workers within those organisations away from reformism and to the revolutionary party.

In the trade unions we fight for a rank and file movement to oust the reformist bureaucrats, to democratise the unions and win them to a revolutionary action programme based on a system of transitional demands which serve as a bridge between today's struggles and the socialist revolution. Central to this is the fight for workers' control of production.

We are for the building of fighting organisations of the working class—factory committees, industrial unions councils of action, and workers' defence organisations.

The first victorious working class revolution, the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, established a workers' state. But Stalin and the bureaucracy destroyed workers' democracy and set about the reactionary and utopian project of building "socialism in one country". In the USSR, and the other degenerate workers' states that were established from above, capitalism was destroyed but the bureaucracy excluded the working class from power, blocking the road to democratic planning and socialism. The corrupt, parasitic bureaucratic caste has led these states to crisis and destruction. We are for the smashing of bureaucratic tyranny through proletarian political revolution and the establishment of workers' democracy. We oppose the restoration of capitalism and recognise that only workers' revolution can defend the post-capitalist property relations. In times of war we unconditionally defend workers' states against imperialism.

Internationally Stalinist Communist Parties have consistently betrayed the working class. Their strategy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (popular fronts) and their stages theory of revolution have inflicted terrible defeats on the working class world-wide. These parties are reformist and their influence in the workers' movement must be defeated.

We fight against the oppression that capitalist society inflicts on people because of their race, age, sex, or sexual orientation. We are for the liberation of women and for the building of a working class women's movement, not an "all class" autonomous movement. We are for the liberation of all of the oppressed. We fight racism and fascism. We oppose all immigration controls. We fight for labour movement support for black self-defence against racist and state attacks. We are for no platform for fascists and for driving them out of the unions.

We support the struggles of oppressed nationalities or countries against imperialism. We unconditionally support the Irish Republicans fighting to drive British troops out of Ireland. We politically oppose the nationalists (bourgeois and petit bourgeois) who lead the struggles of the oppressed nations. To their strategy we counterpose the strategy of permanent revolution, that is the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle by the working class with a programme of socialist revolution and internationalism.

In conflicts between imperialist countries and semi-colonial countries, we are for the defeat of "our own" army and the victory of the country oppressed and exploited by imperialism. We are for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. We fight imperialist war not with pacifist pleas but with militant class struggle methods including the forcible disarmament of "our own" bosses.

Workers Power is the British Section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. The last revolutionary International (Fourth) collapsed in the years 1948-51.

The LRCI is pledged to fight the centrism of the degenerate fragments of the Fourth International and to refound a Leninist Trotskyist International and build a new world party of socialist revolution. We combine the struggle for a re-elaborated transitional programme with active involvement in the struggles of the working class—fighting for revolutionary leadership. If you are a class conscious fighter against capitalism; if you are an internationalist—join us!

A workers' answer to unemployment

The Tories say that ten pits are still "uneconomic" and must be closed. The other 21 pits on Heseltine's original hit-list are set for "phased" closure in the new year. Heseltine claims that the "economic arguments" for closure are still valid.

The Tories claim that there is not sufficient demand for coal. Rubbish. There are houses to be built for the homeless, roads and rail services to maintain and extend, schools and hospitals to be built. All of this needs energy. Yet pits will be closed and untapped energy resources sealed off forever.

There is one simple reason for this. The capitalist class, who own and control all the natural resources and all production in our society, cannot rely on making vast profits from mining coal.

That's why they allowed it to be nationalised in the first place. That's why they want to close down pits so it can be privatised.

Capitalism cannot plan production to meet human needs in a rational way. Against all the Tories' "economic arguments", and against the Labour Party's new found faith in market forces, we need to organise energy production within an overall economic plan to meet genuine need, not private greed.

The Tory rebels and Labour make constant appeals for a "national energy policy", and call for restrictions on the import of cheap opencast American and Colombian coal.

But throwing foreign workers on the dole is not the answer.

We do need an energy policy—one designed to create a safe energy industry, with cheap energy for workers, and to provide jobs in the mining communities.

But the only way of achieving that is a democratic workers' plan for energy and a fully nationalised energy sector.

We should reject calls for import controls and other nationalist, "patriotic" solutions in favour of an international energy plan, fought for alongside the coal, nuclear, gas oil and electricity workers of Europe.

In Germany too miners are facing austerity and an anti-working class government. All over the world mineworkers are being forced to work harder for less money all in the name of staying "competitive" on the world market. With these arguments they divide and rule us.

Whatever the immediate cost of keeping the pits open, of maintaining stockpiles, of subsidising losses it must be borne by the bosses, not the working class.

What we fight for:

- **Cut the hours and not the jobs! For an immediate 35 hour week with no loss of pay!**
- **No to all redundancies. Work or full pay! For a massive programme of useful public works to soak up unemployment, under workers' control and paid for by a steep progressive tax on the rich. Nationalise all firms declaring redundancies and place all nationalised industries under workers' control.**
- **Don't believe the employers' lies. Force the bosses to open their books to inspection by committees of workers.**
- **Against inflation: for a 1% pay increase for every 1% increase in the cost of living—to be calculated not by the bosses' experts but by committees of workers and consumers.**
- **Against the chaos of the market: for a democratic workers' plan of production.**

Any serious attempt to implement these demands would meet with vicious resistance from the employers and financiers that the Tories represent.

Even if a Labour government tried to implement a fraction of what the working class needs they would come into conflict with the unelected civil servants, judges, chief executives, police and army chiefs who hold the real power outside the parliamentary talking shop.

The capitalist state can't be patched up or reformed piecemeal—it has to be overthrown. We need a workers' government based on councils of workers' delegates—subject to immediate recall—and a workers' militia.

That is why we need a revolutionary workers' party, a party that can organise the fight for what the working class needs, not what the capitalists can afford to let us have.■

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

union officials talked left. Public sector union leaders promised a fight against the pay freeze. Fullick of ASLEF said, "If fighting back means walking out then that's what we'll have to do". The same leaders have done nothing as millions of people have seen services cut, jobs lost, pay eroded and a vicious management offensive at work.

We must not let them talk left while doing nothing. We must not let them take us down the dead end of a "public opinion" campaign which they will present as an alternative to strike action.

We need to build **action councils** in every city and every town. These should be made up of elected and accountable delegates from every section of our class—from the pits, the railways, the power stations, the hospitals and all other services and industries that are under attack from this vicious government.

They should be more than simply support committees to raise money for the NUM or to convince the public of the miners' case. Their aim should be to win and spread strike action against the Tory offensive and to demand that the TUC gets off its knees and calls a general strike.

All the workers who won strikes and delegations on Wednesday 21 and Sunday 25 October should be contacting each other at rank and file level, organising action councils to co-ordinate the fightback.

That way we can launch a movement that can drive the Tories from office and put an end to the massacre of jobs, pay and services.■

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No alliance with Tories!

Kick them all out!

In Chesterfield on Saturday thousands of workers cheered a Tory businessman who pledged opposition to Major. On Wednesday and Sunday the TUC leaders plan to give a platform to pit butcher, Malcolm Edwards. Smug Tory MPs who bayed for miners' blood in 1984-85, who have not lifted a finger over the three million unemployed, are being welcomed as allies.

Arthur Scargill and the NUM executive have even delayed the ballot on strike action in favour of a campaign to change the Tories' minds through influencing individual employers and MPs.

Alliance

And what has happened to this grand alliance of Tory rebels since Heseltine announced the moratorium on twenty pit closures and the withdrawal of compulsory redundancies? It has fallen apart. What looked like a possible defeat for the Tories in parliament seems set to fizzle out, leaving the miners at the mercy of market forces once again.

The Tory rebels want to present themselves as friends of the miners. All workers should see through their lies. The real cause of Tory divisions over the pit closures is their dispute over Europe and the economy as a whole.

One wing of the Tories wants to sabotage any return to the ERM. Forcing a U-turn on the economy is the quickest way to stop re-entry. They are using the miners' case to force that policy change. The *Sunday Telegraph* summed up the attitude of many Tories when it declared:

"If the defeat of the government over the miners is the readiest way to advance that cause, so be it."

Climbdown

By his partial climbdown Heseltine has, for the moment, prevented the outright victory of this wing of the Tories. But it would be suicide for the working class to tie itself to these reactionary nationalists.

Tory rebels, as well as the Liberals and the bishops, will not be trustworthy allies in the fight against pit closures. No matter how many declarations of opposition to Major and Heseltine they may make, they will still support some form of closure programme.

Some have argued simply to delay the closures, which will allow for the piecemeal destruction of pits and communities over a longer period, lessening the chance of widespread resistance. Others argue to put each pit through a supposedly "independent" review procedure, staffed by management stooges and economic "experts", over which the unions will have no right of veto. All will start promoting their constituents' pits against other threatened pits through the statutory negotiation process.

The end result will still be fewer pits, more unemployment, more workers' lives wrecked. Meanwhile the miners' fair-weather Tory allies will still support attacks on public sector pay and cuts in benefits. They hope that by attacking our class pit by pit, section by section, they will avoid a united fightback.

There should be no alliance between the unions and the Tory rebels. Instead we should use the Tories' divisions to mount a campaign to kick them out altogether.

Rejection

Our rejection of alliances with the Tory union bashers and their scab puppets is not motivated out of spite but out of realism. Such alliances cannot help us win an outright victory in the battle to save the pits. No Tory "allies" will ever agree with workers using the pit closure struggle to kick-start a fightback against the whole Tory offensive. Instead they will use the alliance to try to hold us back.

The TUC and the Labour leadership are assembling a coalition stretching from Tory backbenchers and manufacturing bosses, through Cardinal Hume and Paddy Ashdown, right down to the scab UDM leaders.

All of these anti-working class figures will be demanding conditions for their support. They will advise us to show "moderation". They will want to avert solidarity strikes. They will preach obedience to the anti-union laws. They will refuse to support workers or unions that break these laws. Above all, they will do everything to stop a national miners' strike.

Effective

Once effective action, pickets or occupations begin these reactionaries will quickly take their places on the other side of the struggle.

Unfortunately, even Arthur Scargill seems to be prepared to hold back on effective action just to keep this coalition together. Although the NUM delegate meeting agreed to ballot for strike action and to call for a yes vote, Scargill has said:

"If at the end of the day all other actions fail we will obviously consult our members."

But by the end of the day it will be too late.

The NUM must press ahead with a massive campaign to prepare the miners for strike action—using the tremendous mood of support in the country to demonstrate that solidarity strikes from other workers are possible if a firm lead is given.

In the meantime Tory MP's should not be cheered—they should be booed off stage.

Response

The campaign of strikes and delegations organised for Wednesday proved beyond doubt that a clear call for action from the TUC would receive an almighty response from the working class.

We don't need an alliance with hypocritical and untrustworthy Tories. We should use the widespread hatred of the Tories and sympathy for the miners to build **joint committees of rank and file workers** to co-ordinate strike action across all industrial and sectional divisions.

That way the Tories won't just be forced to delay their attacks—they'll be driven out of office.■

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PUBLIC MEETINGS

General Strike to Smash Tory Offensive!

CARDIFF: 7.30 Tuesday 27 October, Hotel Diplomat, Cardiff

BIRMINGHAM: 7.30 Tuesday 27 October, Queens' Tavern, Essex Street, City Centre

WOLVERHAMPTON: 1pm Tuesday 27 October, Wolverhampton University (Poly), Dudley Site, Salop St, Dudley

LEICESTER: 7.30 Monday 26 October, see seller for details or phone 519129 ● Workers Power Students' Society 1.30pm Leics University Students Union, Mtg Rm 5, Percy Gee Building.

SHEFFIELD: 7.30 Monday 26 October The Grapes, Trippet Lane, Sheffield

LONDON: 7.30 Thursday 29 October, London School of Economics, Rm A220 Old Building, Houghton Street, London WC2