

COUNTER INFORMATION

NEWS OF THE
MINERS STRIKE
WEEK ENDING :
22ND SEPTEMBER 1984

REPORT :

BILSTON GLEN near Edinburgh

HUNDREDS OF POLICE menacing the pickets, security guards with dogs patrolling a perimeter protected by huge rolls of barbed wire – local miners have renamed this pit BELSEN GLEN.

Management recently painted two white lines across the start of the small driveway leading to the pit entrance. They say that any striker crossing these lines will be instantly sacked – and the guards have orders to set their dogs on any 'trespasser'. One miner has already been dismissed for this 'offence'.

At shift changes hundreds of police force all the pickets well back from the gate, preventing anyone speaking to the strikebreakers.

But despite all this intimidation by the local Board and the police few of Bilston Glen's 1,800 miners are strikebreaking.

The NCB's figure of 159 scabs includes office workers, supervisors, etc. Only about 18-20 facemen are working. When coal is produced its only about 50 tons per shift – normal production is 2-3,000 tons. And management are reportedly flouting safety procedures by getting untrained men to operate machinery.

Police are brought into the area from all over the country. Their presence extends from the pit throughout the small town of Loanhead. Strikers are followed by the C.I.D. People have been arrested for shouting SCAB at strikebreakers in the street.

The courts play their full part in this state repression. Bail conditions bar miners from picketing, under threat of immediate arrest and imprisonment. Irrespective of the evidence Sherriffs dish out guilty verdicts and heavy sentences.

The Coal Board have sacked two miners from the Loanhead strike centre because they'd been arrested, and the total number dismissed in the Lothians area during the strike is in double figures.

Any settlement must involve the reinstatement of everyone sacked, miners told us. After six months there can't be any compromise. The only acceptable reasons for closing a pit must be that there's no more coal, or for safety reasons. And there's also the question of the still unsettled wage claim.

It's not just a mining industry dispute, several miners stressed. It's really the working class versus the government. If the miners are beaten the government will go on to attack everyone else's living standards even more.

The railway workers have been made vague promises to try and stop them taking action now, but the government will slash the rail network afterwards, if the miners are defeated.

The authors of this bulletin urge that NOW is the time for all of us – miners, dockers, railway workers, civil servants, unemployed, etc., etc., – to take action to win our demands and needs, and TO LINK ALL THESE STRUGGLES together.

(Information from pickets at Bilston Glen and miners at Loanhead strike centre, Miners Welfare, The Loan, Loanhead, Lothian Region.)

FIREFIGHTERS SOLIDARITY

When pickets set rubber tyres ablaze during clashes outside Bilston Glen pit firefighters refused to cross the picket lines to put the fire out.

(Source: Pickets at Bilston Glen September 1984).

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Some Swedish dockers are showing solidarity with the striking dockers in Britain by refusing to work on British ships.

(Source: BBC Radio News, 7th Sept)

IN SOME AREAS miners and other workers are acting to unite their struggles. At Cammel Laird in Birkenhead shipyard workers have been occupying a ship and a gas rig to oppose threatened redundancies. On September 4th 200 miners arrived at the Merseyside shipyard to help the Cammel Laird workers resist a management eviction attempt.

(Information: Daily Mail 4th Sept.)



At 7.30 am on Tuesday 4th September Clydeside Anarchists and Castle-milk unemployed activists entered the premises of Price Waterhouse, 141 West Nile Street, Glasgow and held a occupation.

This action was in protest against the seizure of the South Wales N.U.M. funds and relief funds for Miners families. It was a peaceful demonstration to bring to the public the fact that Price Waterhouse were stealing money and food from the miners and their families. The only damage caused was holes around the door facings which were for bolts to hold an eight foot steel plate... which made a forced entry to get to the protesters by the police very difficult.

A member of the occupiers who called himself 'Billy Wilson' had discussions with a Mr. Campbell of the Scottish offices of Price Waterhouse, who near the end of the occupation said that no charges would be pressed if the protesters left voluntarily. They then had 'discussions' with a Chief Superintendent McBain who also claimed that if they came out no charges would be pressed. Needless to say, once the protesters came out at 4.30 pm they were immediately arrested, charged with breach of the peace and malicious mischief and kept in to 4 pm the next day.

(Source: J., Clydeside Anarchists)

Xtra!

The miners are receiving no strike pay and are not paid Supplementary benefit. Miners families can get a pittance of Supplementary Benefit - the normal miserly amount MINUS £15.

After 6 months on strike many miners are in a desparate financial situation, eg thousands of pounds in debt. In the Lothians (and no doubt elsewhere) some miners are being threatened with the loss of their homes because they can't pay the mortgage. One of the building societies involved is the Halifax,

This needs a collective response; it's not an individual problem. In West Yorkshire local building societies were threatened with blacking if they tried to repossess the homes of striking miners.

(Source; pickets at Bilston Glen September 84 and Black Flag 11 June)

HALIFAX
THE WORLD'S NO.1
EXPLOITERS

London offices of Price Waterhouse were attacked by a group calling themselves 'Miners Support Group No. 7.' This follows an occupation by strikers at the firm's Birmingham offices.

(Source: Black Flag)



Miners are being refused Legal Aid in Kilmarnock.

A lawyer representing the strikers has tried 14 times to have the Sheriff concerned disqualified from dealing with picket line offences, following remarks made by Sheriff David Smith in private.

(source: Daily Record)

COCKENZIE POWER STATION

Miners are picketing Cockenzie power station, near Edinburgh, and are persuading many lorry drivers not to deliver supplies.

In addition the power station workers have agreed not to handle any material taken through the picket lines.

Miners believe that Cockenzie is nearly ready for closing down. Usually it burns 90% coal to 10% oil, but now it's using half coal and half oil, a method of operating for which it is not designed.

(Source: Miners at Loanhead)

EVERY PENNY COUNTS...

A couple of unemployed workers in Kilmarnock piled some unwanted commodities from their homes into a shopping trolley and took it into the town centre. The goods were given away and £14 which was collected handed over to the local strike committee.

(source: Kilmarnock Anarchist)

Two miners who attempted to stop a police convoy escorting a scab to work, by covering a road with 22 spiked beltclips were each fined £750 at Dunfermline Sheriff Court on Monday 10th September.

(source: Glasgow Herald)

HOORAY HENRY ?

The media frss over the new royal baby is in complete contrast with the treatment of miners and their families.

In Ayrshire the wife of a striker was refused a social security grant for maternity clothes, and in Burnley a 19 year old pregnant wife of a striking miner was told by a social worker to 'eat potato peelings'.

(Info: Burnley D.A.M.)

SAME THE WHOLE WORLD OVER...

Seven black miners on strike were killed during clashes in South Africa. Apartheid police say they were part of a 'mob' who had gone on the 'rampage'

(BBC Newsnight 18th Sept)

FOREIGN AGITATORS ?

Striking miners from the Doncaster area are touring the mining regions of Spain on a visit organised by the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist union, the CNT-AIT.

One local hack journalist reported that the delegation were there to start a general strike !

(Source: Direct Action)

WOLVES IN SHEEPS CLOTHING.

A transit van, on normal business was stopped on the Glasgow/Edinburgh motorway by 'police' searching for travelling pickets.

The driver of the van saw one of the 'police' in a pub the same night... in army uniform.

(report given to Clydeside Anarchists)

COUNTER INFORMATION

This news bulletin was collated as a service by anarchists and revolutionaries from Edinburgh and Clydeside.

Please feel free to use the information as required, or for reprinting. Extra copies, electrostencils or duplicate printing plates available by return of post.

This issue is mostly geared towards Scotland. ANY INFORMATION FROM OTHER AREAS WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

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