

COUNTER INFORMATION

JUNE 1985 No.6 Free.

NO RETURN TO NORMALITY

"WE'RE SICK OF BEING TREATED LIKE THIS." -South Kirby Striker.

South Kirby miners walked out immediately when management victimised and sacked yet another miner on 29th April. The strike soon spread to other pits in the Barnsley area.

But the Yorkshire NUM leaders went all out to sabotage the struggle, and the miners returned to work on May 9th with the men still sacked.

A local miner sent us the following information:

"At the time of writing South Kirby pit walked out on strike after yet another man was sacked for alleged intimidation of a scab, this now brings the total number of men sacked to 5 all for alleged offences of this nature. The word SCAB is now good enough to get any man sacked, combine this with a manager who thinks he's God Almighty and we have now reached the stage of true "Capitalist democracy". To use the managers own words when one of the sacked men said he could produce 20 people to say he had not done anything, "Bring them and I'll sack them as well."

this action is due directly to the hard line attitude of the management, under strict guidelines from "Mack the knife", well they are in for a fucking shock if they think we are going to tolerate the bastards much longer and it is about time other people started to take the same stand, all conscious elements should now stand up and say fuck off you bastards we want every sacked man back in this pit or you wont get another cobbler of coal cut."

- Miner from Yorkshire.

Another local miner described how the strike started with a spontaneous walk out, at the beginning the action came completely from the "rank and file", there were no union officials involved.

But then the NUM moved in, saying they didn't want too much disruption. Holding back the struggle as usual, the union officials issued orders restricting picketing. They said that miners could only picket pits that had already pledged support, that pickets should be limited to 6, that the sacked men shouldn't picket.

Nevertheless the South Kirby and Ferrymoor Ridding's pickets met with success- solidarity strike action was taken at Royston, Dodsworth and Houghton Main collieries and at the shafton workshops miners were ringing up all round Yorkshire asking for pickets to come to their pits.



A South Kirby miner told us that he and many other strikers believed that the strike shouldn't only be for reinstatement for the sacked men but that the aims of the year long struggle should be taken up again.

However on 7th May the Yorkshire area executive of the NUM refused to make the strike official and urged that everyone return to work, and ordered the withdrawal of flying pickets. Though South Kirby and Ferrymoor Ridding's strikers stayed out for another day, there wasn't the confidence to defy the union and continue the strike till victory.

It's no good relying on support from the Trades Union structure, they're now part of the whole system of exploitation. We must expect that they will try and stop struggles, or contain them. From the start, struggles must be controlled directly by those involved. Union officials should be treated with the same contempt as management or any other boss.

Negotiations are now underway about the future of the sacked men at South Kirby. If the sackings are confirmed there may be further strike action to win their reinstatement.

CLASS JUSTICE FROM THE COURTS: Miners still continue to be sent to prison. On 3rd April, 5 Kent miners were sentenced to 3 years each at Chelmsford Crown Court.

The 5 men were charged with *conspiring* to commit arson on a scab haulage company which operated convoys from coal wharves on the Essex coast. No damage was done in fact - but this did not stop the judge from imposing this vicious sentence.

And on the same date, another miner, Nigel Birch from Northumberland was jailed for 3 months - his crime? He wrote the words scab on a hall.

SOUTH WALES...

Walk outs at St Johns colliery on 29th April, stopped management victimising electrician Mike MacDonnell. With no evidence whatsoever, they had accused him of being responsible for the sabotage of 9 cables worth 1000 pounds each, they had been cut over a period of 9 weeks.

NORTH DERBYSHIRE...

Strike action at High Moon colliery on the 24th and 25th April forced management to back down over their refusal to pay water money to miners working in wet conditions.

NORTH EAST ENGLAND...

Miners at Westoe colliery struck on 17/18th April against the sacking of Keith Smout.

These are only a few of the strikes since the national return to work-scenes of other recent disputes are:
ASKERN- DONCASTER
BICKERSHAW- GOLDBOURNE (LANCS)
BETTERS HANGER- KENT
WARSOP & MARKHAM- DERBYSHIRE
BETWS. ABERCWMBOI & 4 CYNON VALLEY PITS. (S. WALES)
MONKTONHALL- SCOTLAND.

EDITORIAL ON RESISTANCE IN THE MINING COMMUNITIES.

For many political groups, the implications drawn from the Miner's Strike, have merely been used to prop up decaying ideological positions. We feel, that while chronicling areas of resistance, such as in the mining communities, a realistic assessment has to be made, so as to gain insights into the ways society is changing and hopefully to pinpoint methods of combative resistance to the Capitalist system.

The continuing resistance in the mining communities, shows that there is a good deal of moral left. It also reveals, to some extent the Management's plans to push through closures and new work practices as soon as possible. The Unions have largely been sidestepped. Their role in "managing" workers so often seen in disputes has greatly been reduced in importance. Indeed it could be said that for the government and "managers" of the economy, the defeat of the miners strike is seen as the final stage in Britain in the defeat in the traditional workers movement, the Car and Steel industries as other recent examples.

For management, to gain complete control over the work situation once more, the long term economic "gains" are worth the high short term costs of rationalisation - redundancy payments and the channeling of Capital into more profitable areas, as with the creation of

mergers and super pits in the mining industry.

The Government, too, appear in a buoyant mood, confident that solidarity between workers in different sectors has evaporated. However the end of the miners strike hasn't meant an end to industrial disputes, the School teachers and pupils strikes and recent NACODS overtime ban stand as testimony to this. There are also other areas where resistance could develop, the Social Security cuts and YTS conscription being two of the more obvious.

Indeed rather than a time of demoralisation, there has definitely been no return to normality.

The main problem has been the fragmented nature of resistance. Partly caused by Unionism, clearly shown after a year of bitter struggle, to be a positive disability to "working class" autonomy and effective resistance.

Not only have Unions (eg the NUM at south Kirby) lost the spirit to fight, but they have been shown to be a part of the system of control within Capitalist society desperately trying to cling on to their waning function in the face of central administration and austerity which are slowly getting a grip on society.

At the same time it would be wrong to see Unions as the main problem, in the light of the miners strike the whole nature of Class and Struggle need to be re-assessed.

One positive thing to be learned from this dispute, is that for practical necessity, Class has to be re-defined in terms of community rather than work. The nature of Womens Self-organisation shows up as the best example, as with the independent Womens support groups, and with the case of Notts and S.Derbyshire independent strike meetings.

Questions in general of community life have been raised, sexual and individual stereotypes openly confronted, by the necessity to confront the police and hardship caused by the year long struggle.

However these very positive gains can be quickly lost if not continually put into practice. Many people from the mining communities lament the possible loss of the communal spirit they experienced. But as other articles show this has not been completely destroyed. As in Musselborough, strike centre, with both working and sacked miners continue to meet. There is the need to retain this self organisation of community where all can participate.

No longer can work be seen as the sole means of life and centre of struggle, community and personal relationships have been drawn into the battleground. A re-definition of class struggle is that of communal resistance to the whole Capitalist system rather skirmishes over a material position within it.

...NEWS FROM SCOTTISH PITS... MONKTONHALL, LOTHIANS.

Monktonhall miners are showing great spirit in resisting a management attack on their conditions. Before the strike the men had always worked from 12-8pm on the Friday back shift, instead of 2-10pm- this was so they could go out on a Friday night. But after the return to work the management suddenly stopped this usual and accepted practice. However the miners haven't let the management get away with this vindictive act. They've been turning up for work at 2 all right - and ten walking out at 8pm. At the time of writing the Monktonhall miners have stopped work at 8 every Friday since the return to work. Miners at Castlehill in Fife have responded similarly to the same management attack.

Back to monktonhall - miners told us that to hit back at the NCB many of the workforce were deliberately working badly. There has been some sabotage of machinery etc. These kind of tactics are often criticised by Union leaders who accept the system's values of "working hard" and "increasing productivity". But, in fact deliberate slow or poor work can be good at hurting the bosses plans by adversely affecting production,

especially when its organised collectively.

The Class struggle must be carried on everyday not just during strikes.

The manager Kerr has been trying to throw his weight about over low production levels and the frequent harassment of scabs - but he's often been met with a hostile response from the workforce.

Clearly the miners at monktonhall have not been cowed, and there's certainly not been any return to normality.

(Information: Monktonhall miners 5th April 1985).

FREE THE CLASS WAR PRISONERS 150 IMPRISONED FOR SUPPORTING MINERS STRIKE.

"This is not justice, it's state persecution." Speaker from FITZWILLIAM PRISONERS AID COMMITTEE, "We all know why myself and all the other miners have been imprisoned by Thatcher's puppets in the judiciary, it's because we pose a threat to the "dictatorship" she wishes to impose on the working class of this country, but beaten she can be and beaten she will be."- Jailed Kent miner TERRY FRENCH.

Don't let the class war prisoners rot in jail unsupported. the Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee was formed by miners and other local people to give actual solidarity to prisoners and their families. SEND DONATIONS TO THEM AT F.P.A.C. C/O 4 ROCKINGHAM ST FITZWILLIAM NEAR PONTEFRAC T WEST YORKS. PLEASE WRITE TO THE FOLLOWING MINERS, ALL SERVING SENTENCES OF 2 1/2 YEARS OR MORE:

MARK BEST(B74749), GARRY NEWELL(B74745)

EMLYN DAVIES(B74746)

BRIAN DAY(74748)

TERRY FRENCH(B73383)

ALL IN WANDSWORTH PRISON LONDON SW18.

CHRIS TAZEY(A29398).

IN: YOUTH DETENTION CENTRE. SPRINGFIELD

RD CHELMSFORD ESSEX.

DAVID GAUNT(E71037)

PAUL JONES(E71036)

DAVID MASON(E711033)

PHILIP STIRLAND(E71035)

ALL IN CUSTODY AT MILLER PARK YOUTH

CUSTODY CENTRE. DODDINGTON RD,

WELLINGBOROUGH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE NN 8NH

WILLIAM SMITH,HMP DURHAM, OLD ELVET,

DURHAM DH1 3HU.

IT IS BEST TO WRITE RECORDED DELIVERY.

MORE PRISONERS NAMES FROM COUNTER INFORMATION OR F.P.A.C.

Many more initiatives in solidarity with the prisoners is needed- it's no good relying on the NUM, they arn't even supporting anyone arrested away from the picket lines.

REINSTATE ALL SACKED MINERS! FREE THE PRISONERS!

In the Lothians coalfield in Scotland over 100 sacked miners are organising together in the Lothians Victimised Miners Association. They are meeting regularly at the strike centre in Musselburgh to plan activities.

Organising collectively is vital to combat isolation and demoralisation. But what's the best way to get everyone reinstated?

The Scottish NUM leaders want support from the Church, "Respectable" public figures, Labour Politicians even "wet" Tories!

But sacked miners point out that these establishment figures won't do anything. The aim must be for

EVERY SINGLE SACKED MINER TO GET THEIR JOBS BACK -INCLUDING ALL THOSE IN PRISON.

Everyone jailed for supporting the strike must be released.

This can only be done by working towards widescale strikes and direct action.

On 12 April 200 people, including many women from the mining communities, demonstrated for the reinstatement of all sacked miners at the NCB HQ in Edinburgh. Some collections for sacked and jailed miners are continuing in the Lothians. Sacked miners are speaking at local workplaces. But much more is needed, some sacked miners advocate that the sacked men picket pits and appeal for the miners there to strike in solidarity for a day and then moving on to another to get the message across.

In the pit village of Kivelock, Derbyshire, the police station was attacked several times on the evening of 25th March, windows were smashed, 2 patrol cars were damaged, two officers received bruises. 5 men including 4 miners were arrested and charged with criminal damage. So much for the return to "normality".

"WE'RE PROTESTING ABOUT EVERYTHING"

Danish workers delivered a sharp reminder of their strength in a 3 week strike which spread from factories, and ports to office and service workers.

Government plans to impose a 2% wage settlement for all workers across the board came unstuck. The unions too, got a fright as all their attempts to confine the dispute to legal & token protests were bypassed by a popular strike after the Danish parliament declared the unrest "illegal".

"Our philosophy is that law is law and law is obeyed. We will not support continuation of the strike"- declared a top union boss as soon as the parliament had rushed through emergency legislation.

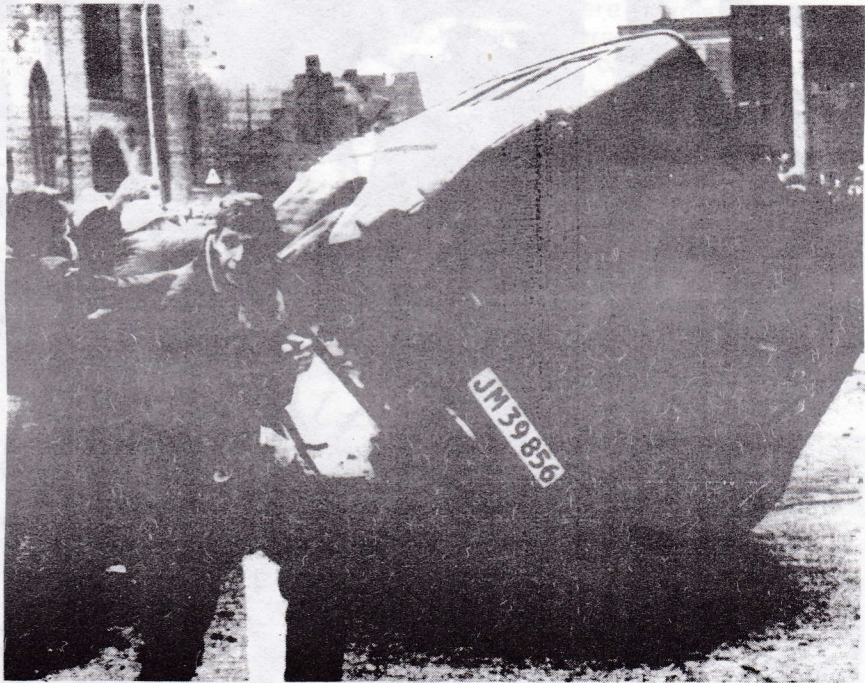
But the strike would not go away. A demonstration on 1st April of 100,000 workers besieged parliament buildings in Copenhagen. Strikers mounted road blocks, while a number tried to storm the parliament using sentry boxes as battering rams.

Far from disappearing, the actions grew in intensity, culminating in larger demonstrations on 10th & 11th April. A quarter of a million public sector workers, in hospitals, refuse collection, schools, child care and the civil service joined the unrest. Mass pickets at oil refineries and the ports disrupted the transport system, while most other services ground to a halt as a "festival" of discontent erupted.

3000 people in a violent demonstration in Odense, the third largest city, clashed with police, overturning some of their vehicles. The media attempted to foster divisions over this issue, but instead this rebounded as many workers drew the conclusion that violence was a valid tactic and necessary to change the balance of power.

The image of Denmark as a nation of affluent and contented workers, has been cast aside. Although the unions were able to reassert control by the 13th April and focus issues again more narrowly into wages keeping pace with inflation and shorter hours, they

DENMARK



DEMONSTRATORS turning over a police van in Odense on 1 April

realise that they will not be able to take traditional respect for their leadership and legal channels for granted in the future.

For years strikes and unrest have been effectively "outlawed" by a twice yearly ritual whereby a wage norm is agreed by government and unions. The determination of workers not to accept a wage cut quickly escalated to the point at which many were protesting against every feature of capitalist "normality".

Similar strikes in Spain and to a lesser extent Sweden, Greece and Britain (after the end of the miners strike)

perhaps indicate a groundswell of class opposition to the continued attacks on our living standards.

What is also clear, is whether in government or masquerading as "opposition", Labour or Socialist Parties play the same game worldwide, of advertising their use for the stability of Capitalism, by diffusing anger, channelling opposition into token actions, attempting to limit demands to the crumbs that are available by negotiation and reinforcing the divisions between sectors of workers and by means of national boundaries.

WHAT HAPPENED AT SCOTT-LITHGOWS ?

On the second of May, there was a mass walkout at the Scott Lithgow shipyard in the lower Clyde, but within ten days "sufficient" numbers of manual and clerical workers had volunteered for redundancy.

For the last six months or so this has happened time and again. Even when an industrial unit is "slimmed down" on a number of occasions there are usually enough takers even amongst those who had originally resisted the "inevitable" the first time round.

Mass unemployment and the systematic attack on shop/floor organisations allied to stern work practices have produced a "new realism" which has undercut any efforts by a minority of workers to effectively resist.

The Left repeatedly try and rally support behind the Unions, but the reality is that Unions whether led by "militants" or "moderates" have contributed greatly to the demoralisation of the workers. In Scott Lithgow on the 2nd May, a mass meeting

of the workers decided to occupy the yard faced with 600 redundancies, with the knowledge that another 600 would follow at the end of the year.

Duncan McNeil and his shop stewards committee were faced with angry calls from many workers to occupy immediately and set up a committee of occupation to draw together the worksquads of specialist tradesmen from their places of work separated by large distances from each other. What was the response from the Union Convenor? Skillfully he managed to ward off the call for an immediate occupation and declared that the stewards would go back to each work section and organise a "rota" for occupation!

The reason for this was that the stewards would be hard placed to control any immediate occupation. Instead the workers were to remain fragmented and only able to communicate with each other through the stewards. After a weekend of reflection it's no small wonder that much of the anger and militancy was dissipated as quickly as it had arisen.

The Union could then turn round and say that the workers could not stomach a fight. A minority of workers demonstrated a lack of faith in the Stewards, but this is some way short of recognising the deliberate way the Unions sabotage worker's resistance, and the separate needs of Unions, and the workers they are in business to "represent" and control.

NO DOLE-DRUMS!

There was food and drink and music in abundance at the housing benefit office in Edinburgh on 16th May. Claimants were holding a party to highlight the "ridiculous delays" in the payment of housing benefit. Their invitation to a party leaflet stated

"This situation is the fault of the Government, whose cuts are effecting people who are already bad off, why should we be sacrificed by the rich to make them even richer?"

Also recently, a group of unemployed people occupied the Council's City Chambers in Edinburgh. This action was against the cuts in Social Security payments to "Bed and Breakfast" residents under the age of 26. This vicious cut back threatens to make thousands of young people homeless.

SCHOOLS OUT! STRIKES & DEMOS



Over 3,000 school students went on the demonstration in Cardiff

OFFICE - WORKERS RESIST DICTATION ?

The lot of an office worker is to be a cog in the hierarchy, bossed by the order-givers all the way until the pinnacle of the **owners** and top managers who reap the benefits.

Modern machinery, computer terminals create just as many health hazards for the worker, usually women. Low wages, cow-towing to idiots further up the ladder and spending **hour after hour** doing tedious, boring tasks. And is your **leisure time** much more exciting? Take a grip of yourself, **communicate** with those who want to do more than just **grin and bear it**.

COUNTER INFORMATION IS PUT TOGETHER FROM NEWS, INFORMATION AND PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF RESISTANCE TO THIS ROTTEN SYSTEM. AT PRESENT IT IS PUT TOGETHER BY PEOPLE IN EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW. WE WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE THE WIDEST POSSIBLE DISTRIBUTION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT, & REGULAR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PEOPLE WITH A REVOLUTIONARY DESIRE TO GET RID OF ALL THAT IMPOVERISHES OUR DAILY LIVES. THE MORE MATERIAL WE RECEIVE, THE MORE ABLE WE WILL BE TO PRODUCE THE BROADSHEET REGULARLY & ENSURE IT'S DISTRIBUTION AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE. WE WELCOME DONATIONS TOWARDS COSTS, AND ENCOURAGE ALL THOSE WHO WANT INFORMATION/ BUNDLES TO DISTRIBUTE TO CONTACT US.

ON APRIL 17TH. 11 MEN WERE FOUND GUILTY OF BREACH OF THE PEACE AND MALICIOUS MISCHIEF. FOR THE OCCUPATION OF PRICE WATERHOUSE. GLASGOW OFFICES.

This Direct Action had been initiated by the Clydeside Anarchists in solidarity with the miners strike and against Price waterhouse's legalised robbery of the mining communities of their funds.

At one point in the 2 1/2 day trial, court officer . P.C H164 assaulted one of the defendants (in front of the

Sherrif Charles Smith) pushing him to the ground and the grabbing him from behind in a stranglehold. This was while the accused were protesting about lack of space and facilities for them to take notes. Sentencing was deferred until May 8th when the defendants received fines of between 200 to 300 pounds.

ANY DONATIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO CLYDESIDE PRESS, 53 COCHRANE ST, GLASGOW.

Strikes and illegal demonstrations by school students are sweeping the UK. The first walk outs were in solidarity with the miners, eg at Edlington and Doncaster on FEB 11th.

February and March saw walk outs hit schools in ; Bradford, Keighley, Edinburgh, Middlesborough, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Southampton, and elsewhere. Sometimes sparked off by the Teachers dispute, the school students actions seemed to show a basic rejection of the way they've been bossed around and regimented in school. Recently school students have struck against the Government's plan to make the cheap labour YTS scheme compulsory. On 22nd march Glasgow Police were over run by 10,000 striking school students when they invaded the city centre. On the 25th April 200,000 pupils struck against YTS in over 40 cities and towns. Often students marched to neighbouring schools to extend the strike. In Pontyprydd several miners from 3 pits joined the demo.

ITALIAN ACTIVIST MURDERED BY POLICE.

On 9th March in Trieste in Italy, the police shot dead Pietro Greco, an activist in the WORKERS AUTONOMY movement.

The vicious state repression in Italy had forced Pietro to go on the run. He was accused of "subversive association" and participation in an "armed band" (vague charges that made no reference to specific crimes) and of possessing arms - none of which were ever found.

When Pietro returned to his flat in Trieste shortly after 11pm on the 9th, police were waiting on the landing. They fired at him on sight. Pietro fled into the street and was brought down by a hail of bullets. Hit seven times, he died in hospital. The police and newspapers confirmed he was unarmed.

There was immediate reaction to Pietro's death, with strikes by school students in Padova, and counter-information produced by the Autonomists denouncing this "premeditated assassination" by the state.

The Judges, Political parties and police are condemned for being responsible for the murder of Pietro, and for upholding the whole oppressive political and social system in Italy. But, proclaim the autonomists, this repression will not succeed - they will continue to struggle against the system of exploitation and for a better way of life, as Pietro himself always did.

More information from: CENTRO DI DOCUMENTAZIONE ANTINUCLEARE ANTIMPERIALISTA, VIA BELZONI 14, 35121 PADOVA, ITALY . OR BOX 81 c/o 43 CANDLEMAKERS ROW EDINBURGH.

RESISTANCE TO THE SPREAD OF COMMODITY RELATIONS...

A group in Oxford, signing itself the "Port Meadow angry brigade" has sent threatening letters to a boat yard which seeks to extend its commercial operations onto Port Meadow, possibly the oldest piece of common land still existing in England. It has never been cultivated or used for any economic use. Rumours that the yard has been hit by arson are unconfirmed. Source: P.T Leeds.

COUNTER INFORMATION c/o BOX 81, 43 CANDLEMAKERS ROW, EDINBURGH.