

COUNTER INFORMATION

STRIKES SWEEP YUGOSLAVIA

"Soaring Yugoslav inflation, outpacing most wage increases, is sparking off a rash of protest strikes in virtually all regions of the country.... Complaining of poor pay, over-priced food and bad housing, some 2,000 miners went on strike at Treпча in Kosovo on August 13-14th.

The local authorities in Treпча said some of the miners

requests were justified, but complained that they had resorted to strike action, and noted that some of the younger workers had previously worked abroad, as if to imply that strikes were a bad foreign habit.

Some strikes have met with harsher reaction. Eight workers were sacked and 15 others were demoted and fined for leading some 500 dockers and port workers out on strike over pay on July 12 at Koper in Slovenia." Financial Times

SUPPLEMENT TO SEPT ISSUE 1985

"The mantle of militancy still hangs over the coal industry" commented Coal Minister David Hunt on 28th August. His attempts to visit a Yorkshire pit that day were a humiliating fiasco - Miners at Silverwood, Thurcroft, Barlborough, Manton and Manvers Collieries all either threatened to stop Hunt visiting their pit or took strike action.

July, August and September saw miners throughout the coalfields participating in short ~~coal~~ strikes to resist the NCB's offensive.

There were strikes against sackings at Bilston Glen near Edinburgh, Kersley near Coventry and at Westoe in South Shields.

At Barnsley Main miners stayed out for 8 days in early Sept when management tried to drastically increase work loads.

Kent miners at Betteshanger struck from 21-27th August against the use of new drilling machinery which didn't use water to damp down dust.

In August miners at High Moor Colliery in Derbyshire won a 48 hour strike, over payments for working in water. Armthorpe and Markham Main pits in Yorkshire also struck over this issue.

N.E.
In ~~Now~~ England management set new production targets at Dawdon and at Ellington and re-organised shift times to increase output.

At both pits miners hit back with work to rules, then strikes after management threatened suspension.

Other pits where strikes took place include Ireland Colliery in Derbyshire and Wistow in Yorkshire.

A feature of these strikes has been a high level of unity at pits like Bilston Glen, which had seen a big return to work during the national strike. It's through such struggles over real issues that unity can be created.

In contrast the current pre-occupation of the NUM leadership - the dispute with the attempted break-away Union in Notts - is largely a diversion. Workers real interests don't lie in putting their trust in any Union structure. Another feature of the many, local strikes since March, has been the attempts by many NUM Branch officials and the NUM hierarchy to limit the effectiveness of the struggles, eg by restricting picketing, by advocating a return to work before the struggle was won.

The question of whether the women in the Support Groups should have Associate membership of the NUM is also a blind alley. Many advocating Associate membership for the women defend the proposal on the grounds that it would not, after all give the women a vote in decision-making.

But the women are a major part of the struggle. They bloody well should have equal say in

the decisions! And during the strike in parts of Notts and S Derbyshire the women did participate and vote in the meetings along with the striking miners. This of course was in areas where the strikers were a minority and were therefore organising outside of the normal restrictive trade union structures.

This shows the way. Organising strikes through open meetings, outside of the Union structures, in which the strikers, the women and all involved in the struggle participate. Spreading the struggle as far and fast as possible, ignoring any Union restrictions ~~and~~ picketing.

And with other groups of workers - like the railworkers, steelworkers, printers, etc. - now facing the bosses offensive the need for different groups of workers fighting together is even clearer.

TAKING OVER

Unemployed youths occupied government offices in Quebec City and Montreal, Canada, on April 3rd. They were protesting against the lack of jobs and low welfare money. (info Ekomedia Bulletin, Toronto).