

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

*Unite the left!*

## Pit Crisis Special

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**Strike on October 21st! Join the lobby of Parliament!**

# MARCH FOR THE MINERS!

## **Rally to the miners! Unite to fight the Tories!**

The battle is on to stop the Tories' crazy pit closure programme.

The NUM are, rightly, doing everything possible to gain time to build up a massive wave of opposition against the Tories. That is why they went to court.

Every extra day is time to campaign and to build up support. It provides an opportunity for trade union activists on the ground to get over the arguments for turning the broad popular sympathy that exists for the miners into solidarity strike action.

## **Occupy to stop closures!**

But time is not on the miners' side. The Tory Government is determined to ram through its pit closure programme. British Coal will now quickly move to close pits — what can we do to stop them? Arthur Scargill's suggestion to miners and their families was to "take whatever action you possibly can to prevent the closure of their pits". That can only mean: occupy the pits to stop them being closed down. Take physical possession!

## **Strike on October 21st! Join the lobby of Parliament!**

The miners need to know they are not alone. The more they feel that they can rely on effective support from other workers, the more it will help unify their ranks, strengthen their position and ensure a resounding "Yes" vote in the impending



Defiant till the end. March 1985. Photo: John Harris

ing strike ballot.

We need to look carefully at the kind of practical steps necessary to win solidarity action for the miners. Next Wednesday's lobby of Parliament called by the NUM and rail unions provides an excellent focus.

Trade unionists should use this lobby to raise the question of solidarity in their workplace.

- Call an emergency branch or shop stewards' meeting and push for a walkout in support
- Send delegations and banners on the day
- Organise a collection for the miners

The more people we can get on the streets next Wednesday the more action we can deliver once the struggle gets going.

# TUC — call a nation

**T**his Saturday, October 17, the General Council needs to give a clear call for a national day of action on a working day in support of the miners.

Now the leaders of the TUC might be too frightened of the anti-union laws to talk of solidarity strike action. But there are plenty of rank and file trade unionists who aren't so scared. Act to help the miners!

In 1988 and 1990, hundreds of thousands of workers struck in support of the healthworkers and the ambulance workers without any official call from the TUC. The Tory anti-union laws were only used once — in one Thorn EMI factory in Manchester — and even then the bosses backed down. The Tory laws are not unbreakable!

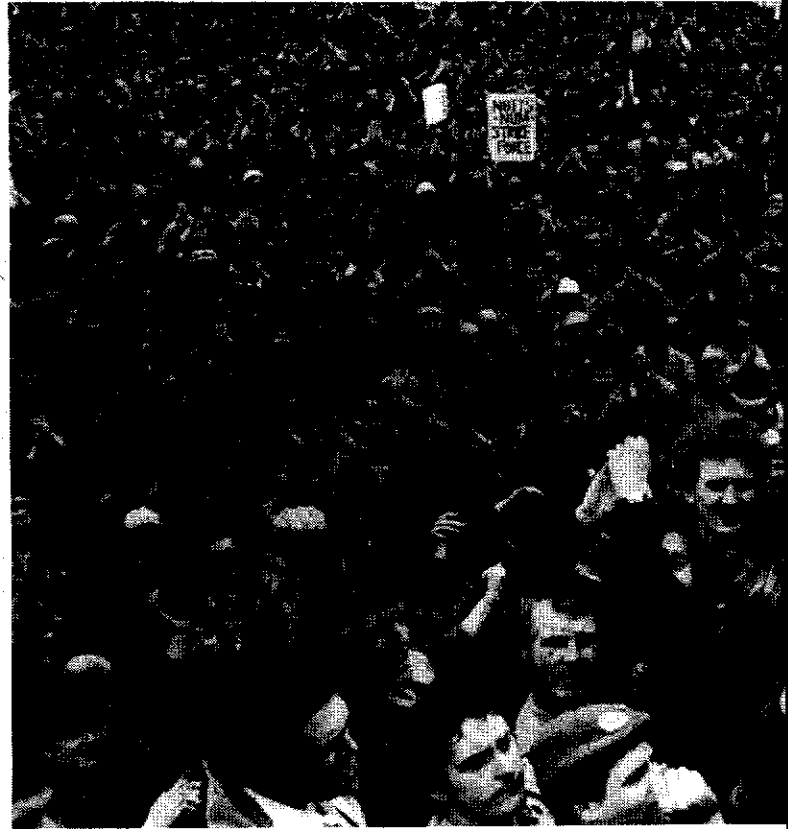
***“The Tories don't want to fight on two or three fronts at once. That's why the railworkers and the powerworkers are so important to this jobs battle.”***

A movement on a much bigger scale can be built today. All we need to get the ball rolling is for Norman Willis to name the day.

We can turn a TUC day of action into something close to a one-day general strike.

Just to shout “General strike!” now would let the trade union leaders off the hook, by demanding something which we know they won't do and failing to demand what they could immediately do. UDM leader, Neil Greatorex, has called for a general strike — as a get-out from the UDM calling any action!

To demand that the TUC makes a *legal* call for a day of action, and to fight to get an “illegal” one-day general strike from that call, is more effective than slogans demanding the



We can raise a great army behind the miners. Photo: John Harris

TUC call illegal action. What is more, it's a much better way of putting Willis and friends in a position where we are strong enough to force them to call official solidarity strike action.

But strike action by miners and railworkers, linked with action in solidarity and on other jobs fights across the country, could lay the basis for an all-out general strike. And a general strike is what is needed to stop the job cuts!

## **Save rail jobs!**

Railworkers could lose up to 10,000 jobs and 8 freight depots could close as a result of the Tories' plans for the pits. They have good reason to strike alongside the miners. And they can.

ASLEF leader, Derrick Fullick, should think before he speaks. After the railworkers' joint meeting with the miners last Wednesday, he told the press that strikes by railworkers over pit closures were out of the question.

He seems to be oblivious to the fact that the job losses and depot closures that will come in the wake of pit closures provide the grounds for an official railworkers' fight to defend railway jobs.

If Rail Freight sector management won't give a cast-iron guarantee of no depot closures, no compulsory redundancies and the maintenance of the PT&R agreement, then he's got a dispute. The same goes for Jimmy Knapp.

## **Pull the plug on Major!**

The issues are very similar for power station workers. We

### **Socialist Organiser London Forum**

**Stop the jobs massacre!**

**How to fight the  
pit closures**

Speakers from RMT, NUM and  
John O'Mahony (editor *Socialist Organiser*)

**7.30pm**

**Wednesday 21 October**

**Calthorpe Arms,  
252 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1**

# onal day of action!



don't yet know how many workers or how many coal-fired stations are on the Tories' hit list but, for sure, job losses there will be. Already, 8,000 people have lost their jobs in the last two years. The National Grid Company expects over 60% over-capacity in the power industry in five years time. Imagine the scale of the job losses.

The leaders of the powerworkers' unions have to strain every sinew to get an official dispute going over job losses.

What's more, the Tories don't have the money available to bribe the powerworkers with massive overtime payments like they did in 1984.

The Tories don't want to fight on two or three fronts at once. That's why the railworkers and the powerworkers are so important to this jobs battle.

## Unify the anti-Tory fightback!

There is a long list of workers who have good reason to make common cause with the miners.

Postalworkers and railworkers face privatisation. In the run-up, union organisation is under attack on the railways, with the sacking of four RMT reps in Manchester, while in the Post Office huge job losses loom and management continue to stall over the pay offer.

On the London Underground, despite last minute negotiations, the unions are going to have to ballot for strike action to defend 5,000 jobs and to maintain terms and conditions.

The Tories are also attacking workers in what's left of the rest of the public sector. Strikes across London against cuts and job losses in the councils are expected on November 4th in response to a call from the Metropolitan District of

NALGO. The action could spread elsewhere.

Thousands of Health Service jobs could go as a result of the Tomlinson Report which could close four central London teaching hospitals. The health unions plan protest action.

Up to one million jobs could be lost in the public sector if Tory plans for contracting-out — Compulsory Competitive Tendering — go ahead. There have already been local protest strikes by civil servants in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff.

University white collar workers are already involved in strikes over pay.

On top of all this, every public sector worker faces the prospect of a big cut in real wages as the Tories clamp down on public spending in response to the collapse of sterling and withdrawal from the ERM.

The case for a unified public sector fightback is irresistible.

It's no different in the private sector. If the Tories are allowed to get away with their destruction of the coal industry, no manufacturing job will be safe. British capitalism's descent to the status of an offshore investment island with a future only in services and tourism will be that much nearer.

A victory for the miners in their fight for jobs will give confidence and courage to everyone else fighting redundancies.

The raw material is there for a massive jobs fightback against the Tories. We should do everything we can to pressurise the official leaders of our movement to direct it.

We should lobby the TUC to act. We should take up the issue in our own unions.

But, as the old Clydeside slogan goes, "if the leaders won't lead then the rank and file must".

Miners' support committees, which covered the country in 1984-85 can be re-activated.

The time to turn sympathy into solidarity is now!

## Solidarity needed

**"T**he key to winning the strike ballot is whether or not miners think they are going to have to fight the Tory government on their own: if the miners think that they are not going to have to fight on their own, then we will win this ballot".

That's how one NUM members summed up the basic situation in the pits.

He's dead right. That's why it's so important to deliver solidarity action now.

The other side of the fight for a strike is to win over the ranks of the UDM. Arthur Scargill has already called for UDM members to support the NUM's campaign. The next step is to reach out to the ranks of the UDM by forming joint action committees. The key issues to focus on are the respect for NUM picket lines and a UDM strike ballot.

That's the way to undermine Lynk and Greatorex.

**Labour must campaign for a General Election:**

# Kick the Tories out!

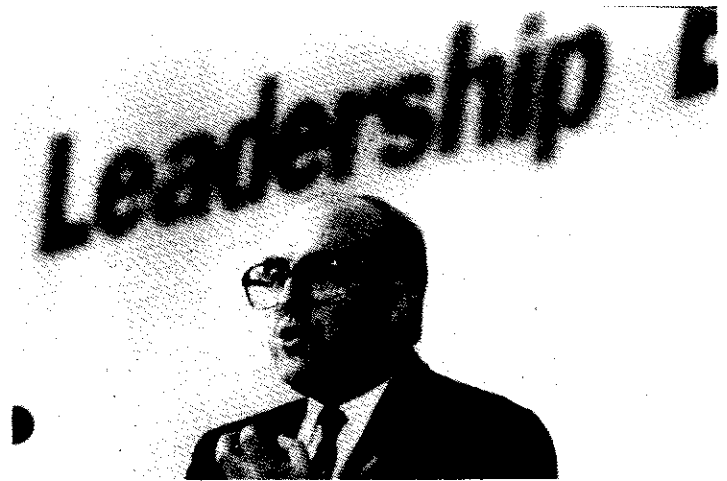
The Labour Front Bench has been indistinguishable from Tory Winston Churchill this week. John Smith has attacked the Government but he hasn't led the Labour Party. Arthur Scargill put it well: "Even if we only had a leader of Harold Wilson's calibre he would be making it clear that the Government must go to the people".

John Smith should demand a new General Election. The Tory Government's April 9 promises are in tatters. They are divided, unpopular and far from invincible. But the Labour leadership are letting them off the hook.

This gets us to the heart of the matter. It only requires a moderate amount of imagination to picture what would be possible if the TUC and Labour Party gave a lead. Hundreds of thousands took to the streets without any lead over the poll tax. Many more would do so now for the miners if they got it.

It's this lack of a lead from the top rather than the strength of the Tories which is the key question today. A month ago, the Tories were in trouble but not on the rocks, while the labour movement was in a depressed state with strike figures at an all-time low after Labour's fourth consecutive election defeat. The pressure of the slump and the anti-union laws was putting the dampers on union militancy.

But since Black Wednesday, the Tories' troubles have esca-



We need some

lated while union resistance is areas like local government has been on the increase.

Today it's still dangerous to underestimate the Tories, but the best way to assess their strength is to test it.

## The psychopathology of the market

The Tories are said to be surprised at the hostile reaction to their decision to close down most of the mining industry, ruining the lives of tens of thousands of people. They expected nothing of the sort. People scarcely come into it: for them it is just "economics".

This Government is run by people who suffer from a condition that is the political equivalent of being a psychopath. A psychopath appears to be a normal human being, but the psychopath cannot feel what normal people feel. He lacks empathy, sympathy, imaginative fellow-feeling. People are things to the psychopath, not beings like himself — things to be used and abused, often horribly. Thus, some psychopaths can do things to people which almost defy belief.

Like the psychopath, the men and women who staff this Tory government lack the ability in crucial areas to feel with other people, to care about them, or recognise that they have human rights. People are things to them. People exist to serve the market. They firmly believe that it is right that this should be so. Thus, narrowly blinkered and self-hypnotised, they have blundered into a major political crisis.

Non-socialists as well as socialists long ago pointed out that capitalism's blind subordination of people to economics is, in human terms, sick and degrading, and that a society in which there is no connection between people except the "cash nexus" is unnatural, inhuman and degrading.

The Government's casual, business-as-usual, "what is all the fuss about?" decision to wreck the lives of millions of people is

the latest manifestation of the psychopathology which "the market" induces in those who worship it.

The Government's astonishment that so large a part of the people of Britain have reacted with outrage and horror against them tells you everything you need to know about where they stand as human beings. Very low; no higher than a psychopath, in fact!

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