

What are the Alternatives?

There are alternatives to pit closures which will create jobs, security and benefits for everybody:

- Build more combined heat and power schemes using an extra 15 million tonnes of coal.
- Extend the Coal Firing Scheme to more factories, hospitals and schools – 22 million tonnes of coal.
- Develop Coal to Oil and Coal to Gas projects.

Share out the benefits of new technology instead of using the productivity increase to put men on the dole:

- A four-day working week promised in 1919.
- Early retirement at 55.
- Longer holidays.
- Open up new jobs for young people.
- Retraining in new skills.
- Invest more in South Wales, Scotland and the North East.

Remember – pits are made “uneconomic” through lack of investment. By fighting for pits and jobs miners are fighting for a human future and against permanent mass unemployment.

***We owe it to the young people.
We owe it to future generations.***

How can I help?

You can help the miners by building solidarity with the strike and by raising funds for miners, their families, and to pay for publicity, petrol and so on.

Non-perishable food contributions will also help.

- Get your Trade Union, Community Group, Ward Party, Women's Group, etc., to pass a resolution supporting the miners and pledging financial assistance.
- Hold weekly workplace collections.
- Invite a miner to speak to your meetings.
- Visit Nottinghamshire and experience the police state.
- Send delegates to the picket lines.

The DHSS deems strikers to be paid £15 per week and so knocks money off the benefit that miners' families can claim. A family can end up with literally nothing to live on.

Food for miners' families should be sent to the NUM Area H.Q., or pick-up point nearest to your home.

Donations should be sent to:
**MINERS' SOLIDARITY FUND,
CO-OPERATIVE BANK, SHEFFIELD.
Account No. 30000009, Sort Code 08-90-75.**

**JOIN THE CAMPAIGN
FOR COAL AND SAVE
THE NATION'S ENERGY
FUTURE**

*For further copies of this leaflet contact the
NUM National Office, St. James' House,
Vicar Lane, Sheffield S1 2EX.*

*Large quantities available for Trade Unions and Community
Groups, etc.*



**NATIONAL UNION OF
MINEWORKERS**

FACT SHEET

THE MINERS' STRIKE

Miners are on strike to stop pit closures and prevent more than 20,000 jobs being axed in 1984.

In June 1983, the National Coal Board Chairman said that 25 million tonnes of capacity must be phased out of the industry. This is 6 times the amount admitted publicly by the Board and its implementation, alongside new technology, will lead to the closure of over 70 pits and the loss of more than 70,000 pit jobs.

This leaflet explains what is happening to the coal industry and why you should support the Miners.

Why are Miners on strike?

To stop colliery closures and stop job losses on a massive scale:

- In 1979 there were 235,000 miners and 223 pits. Now there are 182,000 and 175 pits. In 1982/83 20,000 jobs were lost from the mining industry.
- Over the next few years the Coal Board want to axe more than 70,000 jobs and close 70 pits.
- The Board's closure programme will condemn thousands of miners' families to a life on the dole, ruin their life chances and blight their hopes for the future.
- In many mining areas unemployment is already in excess of 20%.
- Redundancy payments are no substitute for a regular wage and are not sufficient to maintain a person's previous standard of living for long.
- More than half of all men attempting suicide are unemployed.

There is a direct relationship between unemployment and the incidence of illness and neurosis.

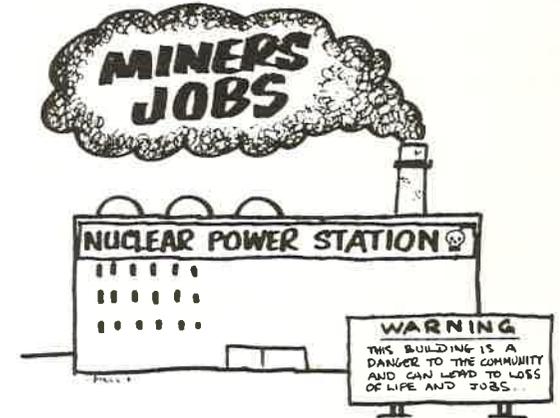


But surely uneconomic pits should close?

The term "Uneconomic Pit" is an arbitrary judgement based on the short term profit and loss accounts of the Coal Board. It says nothing about the prospects of a pit:

- The demand for coal has been cut by the Government's monetarist policies which have destroyed much coal-using industry.
- Since 1979 the miners have increased overall productivity by 9%. At the coal face, productivity has increased by more than 20% over the last three years.
- Despite the fact that Britain has the most efficient deep coal-mining industry in Western Europe, it gets the lowest subsidy.
- The industry is saddled with enormous interest payments – £366 million per year – which should be written off.
- Between the first quarters of 1982 and 1983 the price of coal to large industrial customers increased by only 4.7%. The price of electricity went up 8.1%. If the price of coal had risen to the same extent, the Board's operating loss of £97 million would have been virtually eliminated.
- It actually costs more to close pits than it does to keep them open. To close 70 pits and make 70,000 miners redundant would cost £4.5 billion. To keep them open would cost only £2.3 billion.
- In short, it is *policies* that make pits uneconomic.

But Why Coal? Couldn't we use another source of energy like nuclear power?



Britain has large coal resources, which at 200 million tonnes extraction per year would last 1,000 years.

Coal is a safe and economic way of providing heat and electricity. Nuclear power is inefficient, unsafe and it costs more:

- The Tory Government want to extend nuclear energy to crush the Miners. They are so anti-union they would risk the safety of the nation's future to try to break the NUM. In 1979 a leaked Cabinet minute stated: "A nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial proportion of electricity from disruption by miners and transport workers."
- A major accident in the nuclear industry could result in tens of thousands of deaths. Nuclear pollution is uncontrollable. Nuclear waste cannot be safely stored.
- The USA has halted its nuclear energy programme because of the vast problems. They are now converting unfinished nuclear stations to burn coal.

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