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FILE TITLE: National Union of Mineworkers		SERIES INDUSTRIAL POLICY
National Miners Left Club		
(Closed)		PART: 1
PART BEGINS: MARCH 1980	PART ENDS: OCTOBER 1981	CAB ONE:



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*From the Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG  
CABINET OFFICE

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The National Union of Mineworkers

The Prime Minister has seen and noted your minute of 20 October about the structure and procedures of the National Union of Mineworkers.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretaries of State for Energy and Employment.

M. C. SCHOLAR

27 October 1981

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22 October 1981

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Policy Unit

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PRIME MINISTER

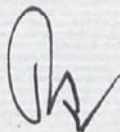
To note

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1. We have studied the report submitted by Sir Robert Armstrong on 20 October. We suggest you only need to read the summary. There is no reason to doubt the report's general conclusion that there is not a well-planned, subversive strategy on the part of the NUM's present or likely future leadership.
  
2. However, the lack of such a plan gives no grounds for comfort. Scargill will look for opportunities to confront the Government. We remain certain that our best defence against an opportunistic Left-wing leadership is to convince a majority of rank and file opinion that strike action would be long and costly - and therefore not worth undertaking unless they feel their vital economic interests are threatened.
  
3. Robert Wade-Gery's group will be reporting shortly on deterrence measures - both building up stocks and increasing our known capacity to replenish stocks during a dispute. This report does not diminish their importance.



JOHN HOSKYNS



Ref, A05761

PRIME MINISTER

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The National Union of Mineworkers

--- I attach a note prepared by officials which discusses the structure and procedures of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the political affiliations of some of its leading personalities; and in the light of that, analyses the tactics likely to be adopted during the current pay negotiations.

2. Since this report was finalised events have moved on in two respects. First, as regards pay, the negotiations have now opened with the tabling of a detailed claim by the NUM, to which the National Coal Board responded in only general terms at this stage. The likely timetable for the negotiations and the details of the claim are set out in the letters of 30 September and 5 October from the Secretary of State for Energy to the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the Department of Energy's understanding of what happened at the first negotiating meeting on 6 October is set out in the letter of 8 October from the Secretary of State for Energy.

3. Second, it now seems very likely that there will be a third candidate in the NUM Presidential Elections, namely Chadburn, the moderate leader of the Nottinghamshire miners. This is not thought likely to effect the outcome. Scargill still seems certain to win.

4. The attached report raises no immediate issues for Ministers, but I thought that you and those Ministers most directly concerned with the miners' pay negotiations would find the background information it contains useful in assessing the course of the negotiations this year. I shall arrange for it to be updated early next summer, by which time the tactics that the NUM will adopt during the 1982 pay negotiations under Scargill's leadership may be beginning to crystallise. The Official Group on Coal (MISC 57) will be reporting separately to Ministers within the next few weeks on the steps that need to be taken to maximise power station coal stocks in 1982 and on the wider issues which arise in relation to 1982.





5. I am sending a copy of this minute and of the attached report to the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretaries of State for Energy and Employment. In view of its sensitivity, I should be grateful if they could arrange for it to be seen only by those of their officials who really do need to be aware of the report's existence.

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ROBERT ARMSTRONG

20 October 1981

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PHOTOCOPY NO 5  
OF COPY NO 1

THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS (NUM)  
(Note by Officials)

The attached note has been produced in the context of the current miners' pay claim. Against the background of information on the membership, structure and procedures of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) it describes the principal personalities in the leadership of the Union and the extent of subversive influence. It then attempts to forecast the likely attitude of the leadership and rank-and-file in the forthcoming pay negotiations and to suggest possible outcomes.

The main conclusions of the note are that:

- (a) This year's pay negotiations will be undertaken under the leadership of GORMLEY who will be looking for a quick, reasonable settlement and seeking to avoid industrial action. The other most influential members of the NEC are SCARGILL and McGAHEY. McGAHEY is a member of the CPGB, while SCARGILL is a Communist sympathiser. The subversive elements will, as usual, take a militant line for wider political reasons as well as for immediate tactical purposes. But against the background of the NUM Conference resolution calling for the minimum surface basic wage to be increased to £100 a week, and in the run-up to the presidential election, no-one on the NEC - with the possible exception of GORMLEY himself - seems likely to adopt publicly a moderate attitude to any offer by the NCB which falls substantially short of the NUM claim. While the extensive subversive influence among the leadership may serve to harden attitudes it is unlikely, therefore, to be a determining factor.

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- (b) In the light of the Conference resolution and hostility to Government pay policy generally, it is inconceivable that the NEC should endorse the sort of offer which the NCB is likely to be able to make. The choice in putting the offer to the inevitable ballot of the full membership is between recommending rejection (and industrial action) and making no recommendation. The latter could be GORMLEY'S aim. The key factor will be the attitude to the offer of the rank-and-file. At present there is little sign of militancy over pay among the membership, and there seems a good chance that an offer which was seen as reasonable in relation to the maintenance of real earnings and as preserving the miners' place in the pay league would be accepted in a ballot, even if the NEC had recommended against it (as in 1978/79). This is the best hope of a peaceful outcome. When negotiations start on 6th October there will be strong pressure for them to proceed quickly, so that a final offer can be made and a ballot held before the Presidential election in December.
- (c) If the final offer were rejected in a ballot this would be likely to lead swiftly to the threat of industrial action. If such action occurred it would almost certainly take the form of an all-out national strike. A stoppage would be total in all areas and protracted, even though there would probably be no strike pay. Other unions would be likely to support the miners to the extent of stopping the movement of coal supplies (including imports) to power stations and industry generally. As described in the MISC 57 report the consequences would be dire.

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- (d) The prospects for negotiations on pay and other issues in 1982 cannot be forecast at this stage, although if, as expected, SCARGILL succeeds to the presidency he is likely to adopt a generally more militant and 'political' line than GORMLEY. The position will have to be re-assessed after the new President has taken office in March and before the 1982 pay negotiations.

24th September 1981

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THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS (NUM)

(Note by Officials)

BACKGROUND

1. During the last 50 years miners have been faced with dramatic changes in the character of their industry and in the level of demand for its product. Between the wars, while the industry was still privately owned, unemployment was high and wages low and for most of that time the energy and resources of the miners' unions were concentrated in seeking, without too much success, to defend their members' living standards.

2. In the immediate post war years, the worldwide coal shortage enabled the NUM to push up wages. From the late 1950s onwards, however, as oil established a competitive advantage over coal, this state of affairs was reversed. Increased mechanisation and the closure of uneconomic pits cuts the labour force and brought about substantial movements from one area to another. Between 1957 and 1972 employment in the coal industry fell from over 700,000 to under 390,000. Over the same period the number of pits in operation fell from over 800 to under 300. The Wilberforce report of 1972 commented:

"This rundown, which was brought about with the co-operation of the miners and of their union, is without parallel in British industry in terms of the social and economic costs it had inevitably entailed for the mining community as a whole."

These changes were also reflected in miners' earnings. In 1967 miners' average earnings were still 107% of the manufacturing average, but by 1971 this had declined to 93%. The miners' position was not improved by the introduction in 1966 of the National Power Loading agreement, which replaced local negotiations under which high productivity areas were able to secure high pay.

3. Since 1972 the miners' situation has once more improved dramatically. The energy crisis has given back to the coal industry markets which it had believed lost for ever. The successful national strikes of 1972 and 1974, fuelled in part by the frustration engendered during the 1960s, has restored the miners' confidence that they are able to protect their position at the head of the earnings league. Those areas like Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire

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which had lost most by the move to national negotiations also urged a return to local productivity deals. They were successful in 1977 in securing the restoration of local incentive payments, which currently represent about 18% of miners' earnings.

4. The present commercial and negotiating structure of the industry was determined after the second world war. In 1945 the NUM came into existence, succeeding the then Mine Workers' Federation, to which 41 constituent mining associations had been loosely affiliated. In 1946 the National Coal Board was set up and took over control of coalmining and certain ancilliary activities from about 800 companies.

#### NUM STRUCTURE AND RULES

##### Membership and structure

5. The NUM is an industrial union, including within its 250,000 membership the great majority of manual workers in the industry. The NUM is also a strongly federal union in that each of its 14 geographical and 5 functional areas retains a substantial degree of autonomy in relation to its own affairs. (In addition colliery members of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers (GMWU) are treated as a separate "area" for the purpose of representation at the Annual Conference and the National Executive Committee (NEC).) The National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers (NACODS) with 20,000 members remains independent, but the NUM has an active colliery officials and staff section (COSA).

6. Policy authority is vested in the Annual Conference which normally meets in July each year but can, if necessary, be reconvened at any time. Between conferences power is vested in the NEC of 28 whose members are elected from each area on the basis of one per area where the membership is less than 22,500, 2 up to 54,999, and 3 where it exceeds 55,000. There are 25 area representatives on the NEC, including one from the GMWU who is a nominated full-time official of that union. The President, Vice-President and General Secretary are also ex-officio members of the NEC and can participate in its discussions, but the General Secretary cannot vote and the President has only a casting vote. (Annex A lists the current NEC members with subversive affiliations where applicable.)

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7. The President and the General Secretary are elected by ballot of the whole membership and hold office until the retirement age of 65 unless they are replaced by a resolution of conference (or retire). The Vice-President is elected for a 2-year term but may stand for re-election. GORMLEY, who has been President of the Union since 1971, will retire in March 1982. There are 2 likely contenders for the post - SCARGILL and Trevor BELL, currently Secretary of the NUM's white collar section. SCARGILL is expected to win, and if he does so the position of the militants will be strengthened. The question of the succession is examined in greater detail at Annex C.

#### The areas

8. Areas of the NUM vary greatly in size, ranging from Yorkshire with about 65,000 members to Kent with less than 4,000. South Wales and Nottinghamshire both have a membership of between 25,000 and 35,000. It is a standing complaint among the left within the NUM that the present composition of the NEC does not accurately reflect the balance of membership. Although Yorkshire, for example, is a dominant element in the production of the industry and in the membership of the NUM as a whole, it has only 3 seats on the NEC while a number of areas with less than 10,000 members have one seat each. Repeated attempts to change this situation have been unsuccessful, though a resolution at this year's Annual Conference received a 61% vote in favour.

9. Each area retains a considerable degree of autonomy, having its own rulebook, and the precise form of area organisation varies. All have area councils with delegates elected from each branch or lodge. Unlike most union branches, NUM lodges are an active part of the union and have an unusual degree of democratic membership involvement. The areas remain substantially a law unto themselves and hold most of the union's financial resources. Arthur SCARGILL's position as President of the Yorkshire Area has enabled him to espouse policies and issue public statements which have not necessarily had the support of the NEC.

#### Financial resources

10. The gross assets of the NUM (ie including those of the areas) in 1979 were £23 million. This included £14.67 million in investments and £1.68 million in fixed assets. Gross income for the year 1979 was



£11.8 million (including £9 million in contributions) and gross expenditure was £8.8 million. The Political Fund had assets of £820,000.

11. Under its rules the NUM is under no obligation to make payments to members on strike. Strike pay may be authorised by the NEC and is payable at the rate decided by the NEC. No strike pay was however paid during the strikes in 1972 and 1974, nor was there any indication that NUM members pressed for such payments.

#### Strike decisions and the pattern of industrial action

12. The NUM rules both at national and area level impose significant restraints upon the calling of an official strike. Any local dispute which could lead to a stoppage of work must be reported to the NEC and withdrawal of labour can be authorised only by the NEC (or by a committee to whom the NEC has delegated that power). A national strike can only take place after a ballot of the membership, undertaken in pursuance of a resolution of Conference, in which 55% of those voting are in favour. Strike action within a local area, or national action falling short of a strike (eg an overtime ban) may be authorised by the NEC without a ballot. Where industrial action falling short of a strike is proposed in a local area, however, it seems that NEC authority is not needed (union rules are not specific about this).

13. Although the National Power Loading Agreement (see para 2) brought about a substantial fall in the incidence of strikes, in recent years the mining industry has come second only to engineering in the number of recorded stoppages. Many of these have however been short stoppages on local issues and the number of days lost per thousand employees has not been far from the national average (532 for mining in 1980, compared with an overall figure of 531). The national strikes of 1972 and 1974 were followed by a period of relative calm. In the last 2 years however fears of further pit closures and the effects of the recession in other industries have produced a more unsettled mood, reflected in a 1-day strike in South Wales in 1980 in protest at threatened job losses in the steel industry, and unofficial action in a number of coalfields in February 1981 against pit closures.



## SUBVERSIVE INFLUENCES

14. The Communist Party has always regarded the NUM as an important target for penetration and, although Communist Party membership in the Union amounts to only about 1,000 out of a total of some 250,000, it has succeeded over the years in capturing a number of influential posts at national and area level. In recent years Trotskyist groups have taken an increased interest in the NUM but have succeeded in recruiting very few members and have little influence.

15. Of the 26 members on the present NEC 3 are Communists and 6 Communist sympathisers. (Notes on those members with significant subversive affiliations and on other leading members of the NEC are at Annex B.) The number of NEC members with links to the Communist Party has remained roughly of this order for the past decade. The 3 Communists are led by the Union's Vice-President, Mick McGAHEY, while prominent among the sympathisers is Arthur SCARGILL. The remainder of the NEC is not a homogeneous group. Although some generally give their support to Joe GORMLEY there is no closely-knit group of moderates. Nor do the Communists and sympathisers always act as a block. For instance, voting in February 1981 on whether to order a return to work after the partial strikes in protest at pit closures went 15:8 in favour of a return. At that time there were 4 Communists and 7 sympathisers on the NEC.

16. In the areas, the CPGB has most influence in the traditionally militant South Wales, Scotland, Yorkshire and Kent. In South Wales the majority of area officials are Communists and sympathisers. In Scotland the area President, Vice-President and nearly half of the area executive committee members are Communists and sympathisers. In Yorkshire, although there are only 1 Communist and 4 sympathisers on the 22-member Area Executive Committee, the area is dominated by SCARGILL and his supporters. The small Kent area is under effective Communist domination, there being 2 Communists and 1 sympathiser on the 5-member Executive Committee, while the Area Secretary is also a Communist Party member.

17. The Communists on the NEC, and particularly McGAHEY, maintain contact with Mick COSTELLO, the Party's Industrial Organiser, and act under general direction from Party Headquarters. The Industrial Department maintains an advisory committee for the mining industry and claims/<sup>it</sup>to have held 5 meetings in 1980. However, the advisory committee has become less important over the years, largely because of the part played by the National Miners' Left Club.



3. The National Miners' Left Club was created in the early 1970s as a result of discussion between the CPGB's then Industrial Organiser, Bert RAMELSON, and Vic ALLEN, Professor of the Sociology of Industrial Society in Leeds University's School of Economic Studies. ALLEN is a leading exponent of the theory that conflict is structurally inherent in industrial relations in a capitalist society, and that its promotion is desirable in order to bring about revolutionary change. He and RAMELSON believed this theory could be put into effect most successfully in the NUM. The Left Club was intended to improve Communist Party organisation and influence in the Union and thus make it possible to give effect to ALLEN's theory. The latter, who played a significant part in the deliberations of Communist miners during the strikes of 1972 and 1974, remains an important influence. SCARGILL was a party to the discussions with RAMELSON and ALLEN, and at times has played a significant part in the Left Club's deliberations. However, his relations with the Communists in the Club have not always been smooth and his attendance at meetings has been irregular in recent years.

19. In recent years this secret forum has met to decide common policy and tactics once or twice a year. Meetings are often related to the Union's annual conference. However, in a Union with strong regional variations and where a ballot of members is necessary before a national strike can be called, the influence of the Communist Party and hence of the Left Club has its limitations. Local considerations may weigh more heavily on Communist members of the NEC than Party loyalties.

20. The Trotskyist parties have very few members in the mining industry. In 1980, Militant Tendency (MT) had about 15, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) 9 and the International Marxist Group (IMG) 5. The SWP's Rank and File organisation produces every two months a paper called 'The Collier', with a circulation of about 500. They do not, like the Communists, attempt to penetrate the union hierarchy, and have not the resources to exert any significant influence nationally on major disputes.



## CURRENT PAY CLAIM

21. The NUM Conference in July endorsed a resolution calling for the minimum surface basic wage to be increased to £100 a week - an increase of about 24% - with corresponding increases for those higher up the pay hierarchy. This is a repeat of last year's claim, then representing an increase of 35%. The settlement date is now 1st November and the first negotiating meeting is scheduled for 6th October. Other items might be added to the money claim, eg a shorter working week.
22. Assessment of the possible course of miners' pay negotiations is notoriously difficult given the unpredictability of the NUM Executive generally and of some of its leading personalities in particular. Some miners' leaders are inclined to see their members as the "shock troops" of the labour movement, whose pay settlements set the target for other groups. On this occasion the negotiations follow closely on the heels of the Trade Union Congress resolution calling on the General Council to develop a co-ordinated campaign, including the use of industrial action, to unite all public sector unions against pay restraints in the public sector; and of the recent announcement of the 4% pay assumption for public service cash limits which miners' leaders, including SCARGILL and McGAHEY have already loudly denounced. This year the miners' negotiations will be undoubtedly proclaimed as a first test of the Government's expectations on pay.
23. On the other hand, the reality can be rather different. In none of the last three pay rounds have the miners settled far out of line with the general trend. In 78/79 the miners' settlement had little observable impact; in 79/80 it may have contributed to the higher outcome; but in 80/81 it may have contributed to the relatively low outcome. In each case the final offers were accepted by a ballot of the NUM membership - in 78/79 despite the Executive's recommendation in favour of industrial action.



24. Against the background of the NUM Conference resolution a O in the run-up to the election of GORMLEY'S successor, the negotiations are most unlikely to reveal any perceptible differences of stance between the moderates and militants (including the subversives) on the NUM Executive. With the possible exception of GORMLEY himself, there will be no advocates for the acceptance of a final offer falling significantly below the claim. The NCB's final offer is bound therefore to go to ballot without endorsement by the Executive. The NUM Conference resolution requires a national delegate conference to be called to discuss the terms of a ballot recommendation in the event of a final offer short of the full claim. GORMLEY was able to ignore a similar motion last year, but will find it less easy to do so again. The militants will want the ballot question to propose rejection of the offer, and industrial action. The moderates might just argue for a neutral question, but if a delegate conference were avoided the more likely outcome would be a choice between acceptance or industrial action.

25. At the end of the day the ballot - ie rank and file perception of the offer - is what matters. Despite the predictable stance of the Executive and the rhetoric of the militants, there is little evidence of current grass-roots militancy over pay. The NCB and moderate elements within the NUM believe that an offer which can be portrayed (perhaps with some massaging) as reasonable in relation to the maintenance of real earnings and as preserving the miners' place at the head of the pay league stands a good chance of acceptance by coalfield ballot, provided there is no evident Government involvement in the negotiations. Much will depend on the immediate political and industrial climate; and the inevitable media treatment during the course of the negotiations is unlikely to be helpful. The militants must be expected to campaign against any offer and the moderates are unlikely to urge its acceptance.

26. Timing is important. The NCB will be looking for a quick settlement. Both moderates and militants on the NUM Executive are likely to want the pay issue out of the way before the Presidential elections in December. SCARGILL <sup>will</sup> want to secure his position for future battles and might be privately content with a settlement by ballot which he could then condemn. This suggests the likelihood of heavy pressure for a final offer to be made quickly, with the ballot (which takes 2/3 weeks) starting in late October or early November.



27. Although the national strikes of 1972 and 1974 were preceded in each case by an overtime ban and working to rule, mainly to develop support for strike action, such tactics are now unlikely as they would entail much greater loss of earnings. Rejection of a final offer in a ballot would therefore immediately threaten a national strike which would undoubtedly be total and protracted, and would stimulate heightened activity by the subversive elements both within the <sup>Union and outside it.</sup> to the extent that it might be necessary, the NUM could confidently expect the co-operation of other unions in stopping the movement of coal supplies to power stations and industry generally. The likely extent and consequences of a miners' strike are described in some detail in the report of the Official Group on Coal (MISC 57) circulated by the Home Secretary on 22nd July.

28. Whilst the pay claim is the most immediate problem, there is a range of other highly sensitive issues on which individually or in combination ready threats of industrial action could be mounted. These include -

- pit closures (as exemplified by the lightning unofficial strikes in February (see Annex D))
- coal imports (on which commitments were given in February)
- Government support for investment in the industry (including the decision on Belvoir)
- any possibility of reducing the NCB's monopoly
- recruitment to the industry (manpower is reducing at an average of 300 a week and recruitment, even at profitable pits, is being slowed with a loss of job opportunities for miners' sons).

29. Developments on any of these fronts are unlikely in the time-scale of the imminent pay negotiations; but they are emotive issues which cast their shadow, and militants and subversives will be ready to take any opportunity to exploit them. They will certainly figure in the December election campaigns for the Presidency, and it cannot be ruled out that the militants will seek to use them to heighten feeling in the industry which might reflect on the pay ballot. In the next month or two the NUM could come to demand more explicit



assurances on these issues. The moderates would not be slow to give their support and BELL (SCARGILL's contender) has already threatened the possibility of a national strike if an attempt is made to privatise open-cast coal workings.

24th September 1981



NUM NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President (casting vote only)	Joe GORMLEY *	
Vice-President	Mick McGAHEY *	CP
Area representatives:		
Cumberland	Harry HANLON	
Derbyshire	Peter HEATHFIELD	CS
South Derbyshire	Ken TOON	
Durham	Tom CALLAN	
Kent	Wes CHAMBERS	
Leicester	Jack JONES	
Midlands	Vacant	
Northumberland	Denis MURPHY	
North Western	Sid VINCENT	
Nottinghamshire	Ray CHADBURN	
	Joe WHELAN *	CP
Scotland	Eric CLARKE *	CS
North Wales	Ted McKAY	
South Wales	George REES *	CP
	Emlyn WILLIAMS *	CS
Yorkshire	Arthur SCARGILL *	CS
	Owen BRISCOE	CS
	John WEAVER	CS
Cokemen	Harry CLOSE	
Group No 1 (Craftsmen)	Tommy BARTLE	
Group No 2 (Craftsmen)	Frank GORMILL	
Colliery Officials & Staffs	Trevor BELL *	
Power Group	Roy OTTEY	
Power Group No 2 (GMWU)	Les ATKINSON	
General Secretary (non-voting)	Lawrence DALY*	

CP = member of the CPGB

CS = Communist sympathiser

All NEC voting members serve for the period July 1981 to July 1983, except GORMLEY, who retires in early 1982. DALY is obliged to retire as General Secretary in October 1984.

\* Those asterisked are the subject of notes in Annex B.



Joe GORMLEY

1. GORMLEY, 64, has been President of the NUM since 1971, when he defeated McGAHEY for the job. Born into a mining family, GORMLEY spent 30 years underground, becoming Secretary of the North West area of the NUM in 1967. In 1968 he was defeated by Lawrance DALY in election for the General Secretaryship.
  
2. GORMLEY has always been a moderate and has on many occasions distanced himself publicly from the attitudes and policies of militants within the union. Assisted by a moderate majority within the NEC, he has had some success in recent years in resisting militant efforts to win support for industrial action on pay and jobs where he believed that this was not in the miners' interests, and has recently called for the return of a moderate Labour Government. GORMLEY has played a modest role in trade union and national politics, stepping down from the TUC General Council in 1980. He has concentrated his attention on the affairs of the mining industry and focused particularly on the need for an energy policy in which coal has a major part. He was given a standing ovation at the union's 1981 Conference for having "lifted the status" of miners over the past 10 years. He recently played a constructive role in discussions with the NCB about possible pit closures.
  
3. While not thinking deeply about problems, GORMLEY is robust and down-to-earth and has established a public image as an essentially reasonable and pragmatic trade union leader who is not afraid to speak his mind.



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Arthur SCARGILL

SCARGILL, 43, first achieved fame during the 1972 miners' strike, when as a member of the Yorkshire Area Executive Committee he developed the tactic of flying pickets. He is a member of the NEC and has been President of the union's Yorkshire Area since 1973. Within his own power base of Yorkshire he enjoys considerable rank and file support, and even in other areas his espousal of causes like pit safety and opposition to pit closures has gained him a following that is widely considered sufficient to ensure him the union's Presidency in the forthcoming elections.

2. From 1955 to 1961 he was a member of the Young Communist League. He has claimed publicly that he left it because he found the minutiae of Party discipline too constraining, but he no doubt also felt that the stigma of membership would compromise his career. Although he is not currently a member of any subversive organisation, his political beliefs remain close to those of the Communist Party. He keeps in touch with leading Communists, such as McGAHEY, and continues to contribute to Party funds.

3. His relationships with the Communists have never been consistently smooth and his fierce personal ambition, particularly to be the next President of the NUM, has made him a difficult colleague within the National Miners' Left Club. A major rift developed within the latter in 1975, caused by resentment at his ambitiousness, dictatorial manner, and ambition-seeking. He then withdrew from it, and although there was later a reconciliation (when SCARGILL

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openly acknowledged the faults above), he has not since attended every meeting. These past disagreements were undoubtedly influential in making other Left Club members put constraints on him during his current presidential campaign.

SCARGILL continues to follow his own counsels when he thinks it suits him. For instance, during the miners' pay negotiations in late 1979 he delayed starting a campaign of support for the claim in his Yorkshire Area until he was sure he could not lose by so doing.

4. Even within Yorkshire his relations with other left-wing union members can be turbulent. He is President of the Yorkshire Miners' Left Club, a local version of the National Club, but his dictatorial style led the Communists in North Yorkshire, where he has less support than in his own South Yorkshire, to form a separate Left Club there.

5. Communists have expressed their concern at the Party's declining membership in the NUM in Yorkshire, and at the future of the left there. They suspect SCARGILL of neglecting local issues as he moves closer to the Presidency and of wanting to distance himself from his own Yorkshire Left Club, and they resent his attempts to fill posts with his own personal supporters. As long ago as late 1979 they and others on the extreme left, including Vic ALLEN, were talking about finding a potential replacement for SCARGILL as leader of the left in Yorkshire. For the moment, however, they continue to support his election campaign.



Michael McGAHEY

McGAHEY, 56, is Vice-President of the union and President of its Scottish Area.

2. He has been a member of the CPGB for over 35 years and has served 3 terms of office (6 years in all) as Chairman of the Party. As a well known figure and an effective speaker, he has become the Party's principal spokesman in the mining industry. He keeps in close touch with COSTELLO and leads the Communist group on the NEC. He has regularly attended meetings of the National Miners' Left Club.

He has organised many meetings of leading Communists in the union and tutored at miners schools organised by the CP. He was recently active in the formation of the Triple Alliance (see Annex D).

3. On grounds of age McGAHEY is now ineligible to stand as the next NUM President, but is supporting SCARGILL for the post. He is expected to retire as Scottish Area President in 1985, but has so manipulated events in the Area as to secure key posts for Communists there. It is therefore likely that Communist domination of the Area will continue after his retirement.



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Lawrence DALY

DALY, 56, after holding office in the Scottish Area, joined the NEC in 1964 and became General Secretary in 1968. He is due to retire from this post in October 1984.

2. A member of the Young Communist League and CPGB between 1938 and 1956, the history of his political affiliations is confused. He resigned from the CPGB in protest at its unquestioning support of Soviet policies but remained a Marxist and in close touch with Communists. In union affairs he for long maintained an aggressively militant stance, and the CPGB supported him in his campaign for election as General Secretary in which he beat GORMLEY. Thereafter he initially kept close links with the Party, and in the early part of his period (1971-1981) on the TUC General Council he made confidential TUC documents available to RAMELSON, then CPGB Industrial Organiser. In recent years he has drifted away from the Party. Since the early 1970s he has had a serious drink problem and in 1975 was seriously injured in a motor accident. These factors have contributed to his decreasing effectiveness and to the CPGB's disinclination to maintain contact with him.

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Joseph Patrick WHELAN

WHELAN, 56, is General Secretary of the Nottinghamshire Area and a member of the NEC.

2. An active and enthusiastic member of the CPGB since 1949, he has served on both Party District Committees and on the Party's National Executive. WHELAN is well regarded by the CP's Industrial Department, and is its main mining contact in Nottinghamshire.

3. WHELAN has regularly attended meetings of the National Miners Left Club, and has been the leading figure in a left wing group of Nottinghamshire miners, mainly Communists and Communist sympathisers, which has until recently met only infrequently.

WHELAN has a close working relationship with SCARGILL and the latter in 1980 encouraged WHELAN to organise the group in a more effective and regular manner, with the prime objective of promoting SCARGILL's election campaign. Apart from secret meetings of the left group, public monthly meetings were also planned.

SECRET



Eric Lionel CLARKE

CLARKE, 48, a Communist sympathiser, is a member of the NEC and General Secretary of the Scottish Area. He is a member of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.

2. CLARKE has never been a member of any subversive organisation, but he established links with the (Trotskyist) International Socialists, now the Socialist Workers Party, in 1973. Later he built a solid relationship with the CPGB, and he owed his elections as NUM NEC member in 1973 and as Scottish General Secretary in 1977 to the Party's support and to his close relationship with McGAHEY. CPGB leaders have expressed disappointment that he is unwilling to join the Party, but nevertheless consider him sufficiently sympathetic to admit him to many of their consultations. Since 1974 he has regularly attended the Miners' National Left Club, and has chaired some of its meetings.



SECRET

George REES

REES, 45, is General Secretary of the South Wales Area and a member of the NEC.

2. He has been a CPGB member since 1963, and his Communist beliefs are clearly reflected in his statements and activities. He is however unwilling to allow his union work to be directly influenced by CPGB leaders and he plays little part in Party activities. Since 1974 he has regularly attended meetings of the National Miners' Left Club, and a close relationship has grown up between him and SCARGILL. This led in 1977 to their collaboration in bringing a court injunction against the NUM to prevent the implementation of area productivity schemes.

3. REES is young and ambitious; he was only 39 when elected South Wales General Secretary in 1976. While he welcomes the support of the CPGB it is unlikely that he will in the future allow his union career to be moulded by the Party. It remains to be seen where his own personal ambitions lie.

SECRET



Emlyn WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS, a Communist sympathiser, has been a member of the NEC since 1958, and President of the South Wales Area since 1973. He is a former member of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.

2. Although WILLIAMS has never been a member of the CPGB he has, on occasions, accepted direct instructions from Party headquarters, and has adopted similar policies to the Communists since at latest 1955. He has been one of the Party's most important contacts in the South Wales Area, and indeed COSTELLO has said in private that he is more useful to the CPGB than his rival George REES, South Wales General Secretary, who is a Party member.

3. WILLIAMS has consistently adopted militant policies and can be expected to vote with Communists on the NEC. Since 1975 he has regularly attended meetings of the National Miners' Left Club. Sixty years old, he is expected to retire within the next 2 or 3 years.



Trevor BELL

1. BELL (54) has been Secretary of the white-collar section of the NUM (Colliery Officials and Staffs Area) since August 1979 and a member of the NEC since the same date. He was formerly a pit craftsman in the Barnsley area, where he started at the age of 14, and was head of the NUM Industrial Relations Department from 1967 to 1979.
  
2. He attended college on union scholarships and twice stood as a Parliamentary candidate for Labour in the 1960s. He is regarded as GORMLEY's right-hand man, writing his presidential speeches. His policy aims on eg pay and early retirement are not substantially different from those of SCARGILL. He is however committed to consultation, rather than confrontation, as a means of improving the miners' position and has criticised threats of militant action as likely to discourage new investment in the industry.
  
3. BELL has thus far made little impact in his campaign for the Presidency but shows himself ready to adopt an aggressive posture over issues which he thinks might further his prospects, eg any suggestion that . . . that opencast coal might be privatised. He will no doubt be hoping that moderate opinion in the coal fields, which has been apparent in a number of pit head ballots in recent years, can be marshalled in his support.



SECRET

George Harold @ 'Jack' COLLINS

COLLINS, 52, is General Secretary of the small but militant Kent Area, and had been a member of the union's NEC since 1971 until being defeated by a moderate earlier this year.

2. He has adopted a militant stance in Kent, and urged strike action to be taken wherever possible. He encouraged his members to take industrial action in support of the striking steelworkers in 1980 and in protest at proposed pit closures in 1981. On the latter occasion, COLLINS was loudly critical of NUM leaders in other areas for what he regarded as premature decisions to return to work. However, his recent defeat in the NEC election reflects a failure to make a personal impact on the Kent miners and a reaction against his persistently militant stance.

3. COLLINS has been an active member of the CPGB since 1958. He is a hard-line Communist, and has maintained friendly links with the small pro-Soviet breakaway New Communist Party (NCP), as he has with the (Trotskyist) Socialist Workers Party and Workers Revolutionary Party. This has worried the CPGB's Industrial Organiser, COSTELLO, who has feared that he might defect to the NCP. However, COLLINS has regularly attended meetings of the National Miners Left Club and of the CPGB's Miners Advisory Committee. He has worked very closely with COSTELLO, and despite losing his NEC seat seems likely to continue to do so.

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SECRET



George BOLTON

BOLTON, 47, is Vice President and Fife Agent of the Scottish Area of the NUM. He has been an active Communist Party member since 1953. He sits on the Party's Executive Committee and its Scottish District Committee.

2. Since the early 1970s, BOLTON has risen rapidly in the union. His prominence as a militant trade unionist stems from the part he took in organising picketing during the 1972 miners' strike. During the dispute over proposed pit closures in February 1981 he tried energetically to escalate strike action in Scotland. He is a prolific and articulate writer on mining matters.

3. Since 1974 BOLTON has regularly attended National Miners' Left Club meetings and CPGB Miners Advisory Committee meetings. His union career owes much to CPGB dominance in the Scottish NUM; in particular to McGAHEY's manipulation in 1979 as a result of which BOLTON was able to stand unopposed for the Vice-Presidency. BOLTON has been groomed by the CPGB as McGAHEY's successor in Scotland. It is likely that he will continue to rise within the NUM.



THE SUCCESSION TO THE PRESIDENCYAnnex C

GORMLEY has been President of the NUM since 1971. After hinting for some time that he was ready to step down - no doubt intended primarily to give false hope to the left - he announced at the NUM Conference earlier this year that he will definitely be retiring in March 1982. There are known to be two likely contenders for his post, SCARGILL and Trevor BELL, currently Secretary of the NUM's white-collar section. An earlier contender, Mr Ray CHADBURN, President of the Nottinghamshire Area, stood down earlier this year, so avoiding splitting the "moderate" vote. SCARGILL's charisma and political instincts seem nonetheless to give him a clear head start and he is widely expected to win. Nominations will be accepted in October and the election will take place in December so that the new incumbent will in effect be "running-in" in the first half of next year.

2. If SCARGILL is elected, the effect will be to strengthen the position of the militants within the NUM. SCARGILL has said he will campaign on a platform of a 4-day week for miners without loss of pay, retirement at 55, and better fringe benefits. He has also made clear his opposition to the Government's whole economic strategy and his intention to campaign for a Government that would put into effect "Socialist" policies.
3. Nevertheless the likely election of SCARGILL must be kept in perspective. He has in recent years avoided being closely identified with the policies of any political party or group and following election to the top post in the union he is likely to continue to maintain his own line. Although the Communist Party and the Left Club support his election, they do so with considerable reservation and they recognise that his propensity to go his own way will be strengthened (SCARGILL's relations with the Communist Party are examined at Annex B).



It is also possible that the responsibilities of senior office might lead him to adopt more pragmatic judgements about how best his members' interests might be served. Moreover the effect of losing his independent base as head of the Yorkshire miners remains to be seen. Whatever his personal beliefs, he will have to work within the framework of the union's constitution, and in particular he will need to retain the support of a majority within the NEC. SCARGILL has said that, if he is opposed by a moderate majority within NEC, he will appeal to Conference decisions for his authority but it seems improbable that such decisions could be used to bind the NEC on more than a handful of major issues.

4. SCARGILL was elected to the TUC General Council from September 1980. The NUM Conference this year voted for him to be joined as from September 1982 by McGAHEY, replacing CHADBURN as the NUM's second nominee on the General Council and thus switching the political balance of the NUM within the TUC. Senior NUM officials have in the past tended to concentrate their energies very much on the coal mining industry, rather than seeking to play a major part in the counsels of the trade union movement generally. It remains to be seen whether, despite SCARGILL's broader political focus, he will seek to use his place on the General Council as a basis for influencing TUC policies on wider economic and social issues. He has always shown himself concerned to defend the interests of his mining constituency. He has on the other hand been a prominent member of the Barnsley Labour Party and has campaigned vigorously for left-wing policies to be adopted within the party, including reselection of MPs. He has not concealed his belief that industrial action by miners should be regarded as a political weapon.



PROPOSED PIT CLOSURES

1. In February the National Coal Board (NCB) told the NUM of proposals for closing between 20 and 50 uneconomic pits, with the loss of up to 30,000 jobs. In Yorkshire and South Wales, opposition to possible closures had been building up for some time and in both areas officials claimed to have a mandate for industrial action if necessary. The union's NEC decided unanimously to recommend an all-out national strike if the NCB persisted with its proposals. SCARGILL and Mick McGAHEY, Vice-President of the union and President of its Scottish Area, both made clear that they saw this as an opportunity to bring down the Government, referring to the earlier miners' strikes of 1972 and 1974. Even they however were taken by surprise by the speed of grassroots reaction. Unofficial industrial action took place in South Wales, Scotland and Kent and seemed certain to spread to other areas, including Yorkshire, within a few days. In these circumstances the Secretary of State for Energy informed the NCB and NUM that the Government was willing to ease the financial constraints on NCB and reduce coal imports. The NCB withdrew the list of proposed closures and despite some initial scepticism, particularly by militant officials, the union's NEC issued instructions for an immediate end to the unofficial stoppages.

2. The NUM Conference in July demonstrated that lively suspicions persisted of the intentions and good faith of both NCB and Government in relation to possible pit closures and investment. Reports (subsequently denied) that the Secretary of State for the Environment had decided against the development of the Vale of Belvoir project, which would require investment of £1 billion and provide nearly 4,000 mining jobs, led to angry denunciation from both moderates and militants within the NUM and threats of industrial action. Feelings on this issue have been heightened by the loss of 9,000 jobs in the industry during the last year together with the certainty that further losses will be inevitable as pits become exhausted, against a background of continued high unemployment. The NCB has also come under some pressure to open up recruitment so as to increase job opportunities for younger relatives of those currently employed in the industry.



3. The seriousness of the NUM threat in February was reinforced by the possibility that industrial action by miners would be supported by other unions. In January 1981 the NUM came to a formal agreement with the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) and the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) in a Triple Alliance to pursue common policies in resisting closures and provide mutual assistance in the event of trouble. The agreement has not yet been put to the test and it remains unclear how far employees in one industry will be prepared to go to support employees in other industries threatened by job losses: miners in South Wales proved unwilling in 1980 to give effective support to prevent steel closures. In any case it is clear the Triple Alliance is primarily concerned with jobs and would have little relevance to a confrontation on pay. This does not mean, of course, that miners would not be hopeful of receiving the support of other unions, including railwaymen, seamen and transport workers, in the event of industrial action on pay.



SECRET

Lead Pol <sup>11</sup> 4

Sir Robert Armstrong

National Union of Mineworkers: National  
Miners Left Club

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute A01808 of 27 March about the activities of the National Miners Left Club, and she agrees that we should await a more suitable moment to make use of the information contained in IAG(80)10.

C. A. WHITMORE

31 March, 1980.

SECRET

TR



Ref: A01808



SECRET

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MR. WHITMORE

National Union of Mineworkers: National Miners Left Club

In your minute of 17<sup>th</sup> March, you reported that the Prime Minister had seen IAG(80) 10 on the activities of the National Miners Left Club and had asked whether some publicity of this might be arranged.

2. I have consulted Mr. Deverell about this. We agree that this is a subject about which publicity could be helpful, and he has been examining the activities of the National Miners Left Club in the hope of finding a way of doing this without endangering sources. I am afraid, however, that the material which he has immediately available and for which there is overt collateral would not be likely to cause Communist Party activists within the National Miners Left Club much embarrassment.

3. We think that it might be best if we held back for the time being. Once the resolutions for the 1980 NUM Annual Conference are published, it is likely that the problems of source protection will be eased, and more may become known about the sub-committee set up to plan and monitor Mr. Scargill's campaign for the NUM Presidency. With the coalmining scene relatively quiet at the moment, it would make sense to keep our powder dry, and our sources of information open, until a time when they could prove particularly useful.

REA

(Robert Armstrong)

27th March 1980

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B/F 24.3.80

IND POL

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

National Union of Mineworkers:  
National Miners' Left Club

The Prime Minister has seen the report in IAG(80)10 on the activities of the National Miners' Left Club and she has asked whether this is not the kind of case where some publicity, arranged under Mr. Deverell's auspices, might be useful.

I should be glad to know what you think.

C. A. WHITMORE

17 March 1980

SECRET



Prime Minister

COVERING  
SECRET

A revealing indication of  
Mr. Vici Athan's influence in  
NUM matters.

I think that we should ask  
whether there could be advantage  
in exposing the existence and  
activities of the Miners' left Club.  
I shall I think be  
pleas'd

On instructions of the Secretary of the Cabinet the  
attached document is issued to you for your personal  
information and safe custody. You may show it only  
to those who are authorised to see this material and  
whose names have been registered with the Secretariat.  
(Mr. M. Williams or Mr. R. D. Roscoe, Cabinet  
Office, 233 7715/233 8437.)

Mr. Williams's  
advice?

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Yes please  
me

Owing to its very sensitive nature it must not be  
placed on a normal Departmental file. It should  
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1AG(80)10.