

**SECRET**

N BPM

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AT 7/12

MR TURNBULL

7 December 1984

COAL DISPUTE

The return to work has reduced from 6,000 to 2,000 and now this week to a trickle. It is too close to Christmas for the Government to initiate any new hard-line stance. We should therefore be using the time to ensure that the Government and the NCB stance are in harmony, and to work out a detailed plan for increasing the pressure in the New Year.

Michael Edwardes raised a couple of proposals that the Policy Unit have considered in the past. We would reject the proposal that MacGregor resigns if Scargill will do likewise: MacGregor has finally managed to move himself out of the limelight and it would be folly to bring him back centre-stage.

The proposal of a ballot about a ballot was a sensible alternative before the most recent wave of returns: any direct ballot would have been viewed as an attack on the union and therefore have got a large loyalty vote. The split in the union is now far more clear cut and a ballot about a ballot would be unnecessarily clever and viewed as too devious.

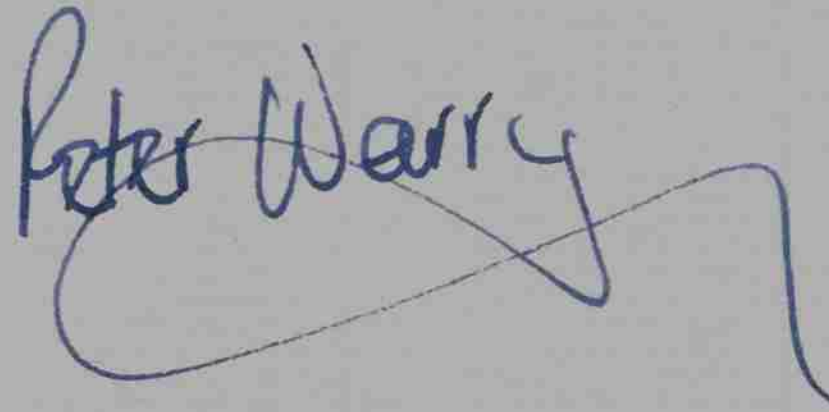
A direct ballot is more possible. There would be severe but superable problems in preventing the 'local watch committee' collecting up the ballot papers, even if they were sent to individual homes. However, as most people think that most NUM members want to return, anything less than all the workers and half the strikers voting in favour (ie two thirds majority) would be a defeat. Even so, such a vote would only aid the drift back but is unlikely to break the strike. On balance it is probably unwise.

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It remains crucially important to get the message across that one cannot divorce the strike from the violence. Anybody who supports the strike is also a supporter of the violence. They may say they 'disassociate themselves' from the violence but in reality what they hope to disassociate themselves from is the bad publicity.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Warry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

PETER WARRY

SECRET