

HOW THE MINERS ON STRIKE HAVE BEEN MISLED...

1. ABOUT THE STRIKE.

The miners on strike are angry. And it's easy to understand why.

They are angry because of what they have been told by their leaders.

But have they been told the truth?

For instance:

How many miners want this strike?

Nearly one third of the collieries have been producing coal. How many men in the striking pits actually want to go to work? Why has a national ballot been avoided?

How can miners defend their jobs by putting coal's customers out of business?

Two steel plants have stayed 100 per cent faithful to British coal: Scunthorpe and Llanwern. Why are some miners trying to put them and other steel plants out of business?

Are the striking miners killing future growth?

How will British industries turn over to coal if they are worried about being shut down? ICI were planning to convert their Wilton plant to coal — which would have meant an order of 460,000 tonnes of coal a

year. Now they are having second thoughts. Yet coal would be a much cheaper energy source for them than oil. For the same reason, during December — before the strike began — there were 78 applications from industrialists to convert to coal. Yet in the whole of April and May there were only six applications. And 22 more were withdrawn.

How long will this strike last?

On February 9, miners' leaders said that power plants had only 10 weeks stocks. In early May mineworkers were told they still had eight weeks' stocks. On June 26, it was claimed that coal shortages would cause power cuts by August. Yet the CEEGB reports that it has enough stocks to last at least until Christmas. Who — if anyone — can win a strike that lasts until Christmas?

Can the strike end the need to close uneconomic pits?

No — because it can't change a basic fact. Expensive coal is coal that can't be sold. By taking out our four million most expensive tonnes of production, we can get the average cost of our coal down — and thus make it easier to sell.

Are miners about to be thrown on the scrap heap?

Not one single compulsory redundancy has been asked for in the past three years. Or this year. About 20,000 jobs went last year — all of them on the basis of voluntary redundancy and all with very generous redundancy pay. We are sure that we will be able to do this again. No one who wants to stay in the industry will be asked to leave. But if the strike continues, then up to 30 good pits could be closed forever by the lack of maintenance — and with them will go jobs that shouldn't be lost.

It is the strike — not the Coal Board — that could butcher the industry.

That's why it is so important that this strike ends soon.

It was called by the miners' leaders. It now needs to be called off by the miners themselves.

NCB
One in a series issued
by the National Coal Board.

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The Times (London, England), Wednesday, Jul 04, 1984; pg. 9; Issue 61874. (614 words)

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Gale Document Number:CS151228132