

# TUC pledges cash support for miners

By Paul Routledge, Labour Editor

The TUC's "inner cabinet", the finance and general purposes committee, agreed yesterday, to raise at least £150,000 a week to ensure that the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) does not fail financially.

The decision is part of a financial package being put together to keep the NUM solvent as the pit strike enters its seventh month.

Appeals are going out to the TUC's 98 affiliated unions asking for support for the striking miners' union. The support will be channelled into two separate funds. One will be for maintaining the administration of the NUM; the second will be to alleviate hardship among striking pitmen's families.

lot in terms of appeals to branches and a lot of money has been raised", a TUC official said. The money had been sent not only to the Solidarity Fund but also to individual pits.

But trade union officials insisted that money raised through new union branch and factory appeals would go directly to alleviate hardship.

The costs of picketing in the coalfields and elsewhere have been borne by individual areas of the NUM and do not figure in the £150,000-a-week cost of administering the national union, the statement added, in a clear attempt to differentiate between keeping the union alive and funding the mass pickets.

The money is going into a Miners' Solidarity Fund, with trustees, that can be examined by outside inspection. It seems certain, however, that most of the cash being raised in this way does go to the pit villages where food kitchens and other supporting activities are being organized.

A meeting between miners' leaders and the TUC steel industries committee at Congress House, central London, ended after two hours last night with uncertainty remaining about how the steelworkers will respond to the NUM's appeal for direct industrial support.

The committee voted to put the issue to the individual consciences of the constituent unions and members.

Continued on back page, col 4

## Security net after threat to Scargill

A threat to kill Mr Arthur Scargill is being taken seriously by the police, who plan a huge security operation during the miners' president's visit to Stoke-on-Trent today for a rally. The threat came in a telephone call from a man yesterday to the news room of an independent local radio station. He threatened that Mr Scargill would be shot if he went to the town.

Yesterday's decision, taken before talks between the miners and the steelworkers and before a confrontation on Monday between labour movement leaders and the coal board chairman, Mr Ian MacGregor, was designed to indicate that the TUC backs the miners' strike rather than the abortive efforts made so far to end it.

The NUM estimates that it needs £150,000 a week in donations from other unions to keep going, apart from the cost of running the dispute.

The TUC said last night that it was mounting a concerted campaign to raise money to alleviate hardship in the coalfields and to maintain the NUM financially.

"We are conscious that a lot of unions have already done a



Mr Bill Sirs on his way to the talks

# TUC offer of cash for miners

**Continued from page 1**

Steel union executives are to be asked to respond affirmatively to the TUC's decision to give "total support" to the mineworker's objectives to keep open pits by their strike.

Key unions in the steel industry are going along with the proposal to support the NUM but there are strong reservations within the largest union in the industry, the Iron and Steel trades Confederation, which is holding a ballot of its 12,000 members in state steel plants.

Mr Arthur Scargill, NUM president said as he went into yesterday's meeting that he was not asking for big cuts in production. "I am asking for no production at all."

**Deputies' ballot, page 2**

**Enoch Powell, page 8**

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