

Pit police face petrol bombs in 7-hour fury

From Peter Davenport
Sheffield

The National Coal Board's intensive campaign to persuade more striking miners to return in the heartland Yorkshire coalfields was answered yesterday with an unprecedented eruption of violence and civil disorder.

At the beginning of a critical week in the future of the eight-month dispute the anger, frustration and pent up emotion fuelled by the deadlocked strike boiled over in clearly coordinated attacks in pit villages across the area.

Petrol bombs were used against a police station and police vehicles for the first time in South Yorkshire, barricades burned through the early hours in many villages and shops were looted against a backdrop of the by now familiar confrontations between police, clad in riot equipment, and pickets hurling a barrage of stones and bottles.

By the end of the morning which saw trouble at more than half of Yorkshire's 53 collieries, 45 men had been arrested and 33 policemen injured, 12 requiring hospital treatment. At least nine pickets were also hurt in the clashes, which signified a change of tactics by the strikers.

But their attempt to stem the increased drift back to work in Yorkshire failed to prevent 614 men crossing the picket lines to clock on at 32 of the area's pits, 342 more than at the end of last week.

In a radio interview yesterday, Mr Arthur Scargill, the miners' president, again blamed the police as the cause of the violence. His comments drew a quick response from Mr Peter Wright, Chief Constable of South Yorkshire, who had spent the morning collating reports of dozens of incidents in his office.

He later told a press conference at the Sheffield headquarters of South Yorkshire police: "It is nonsense that we are to blame for everything that has gone on and it is repeated ad nauseam. I can only draw the conclusion that it is the policy of the NUM to blame the police.

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Yorkshire pits anger explodes into violence

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"There is a lot of anger, frustration and all other emotions that come along with a strike going on for this length of time and it is in the interests of the NUM to focus that anger and frustration on the police. Otherwise those who have it and feel it might well be directing it elsewhere."

"We will continue to get this type of ridiculous statement, but we are not manufacturing these events. This is nonsense about police violence provoking the very presence of a police officer is seen as provocation because we are stopping them achieving their ends by unlawful means."

Mr Wright added: "The actions of those who are creating this behaviour is to stop the pits that are working. They have not been able to do that and they are doing anything they can to achieve that particular objective. They are not going to achieve that objective, therefore it is all so pointless."

The style of the violence caught police commanders apparently unaware. During the dispute they have been accustomed to dealing with mass pickets, thousands strong, descending on one or two pits chosen as targets for the day.

But in the early hours yesterday there were incidents at more than 25 pits and villages with what the police termed as "major incidents" at seven locations. Estimates of pickets active in the coalfield ranged between 1,500 and 3,000 but with no group more than 300 strong and each seemingly operating in a pre-planned way.

A coal board spokesman in Doncaster said that all 16 pits in the Barnsley area had received warning telephone calls between midnight and 2am telling management officials not to leave their offices "because pickets were going on the rampage".

"This was not spontaneous. It was highly organized, pre-meditated violence on a massive scale. But it is not going to work. We doubled the number of men returning to work overnight as it were and we confidently expect 1,000 men to be by the end of the week."

"The voice of the silent majority is now making itself heard by the return to work. We say it is the tip of the iceberg. The tiny minority of hard-core militants are even

more determined now to make their presence felt."

Senior officers in South Yorkshire are concerned at the levels of violence used yesterday and are resigned to it continuing, if not escalating, as the strike continues. The build-up to the coal board's self-proclaimed 'D-Day' of next Monday, the date by which strikers must return to qualify for holiday and bonus pay for Christmas, is clearly going to be a sensitive period.

The violence yesterday began at 2 am and lasted in some areas until 9 am. But the most intense confrontation occurred in a period between 2 and 4 am when petrol bombs were thrown in two separate incidents, at least 27 concrete lamp posts toppled, shops looted, cars overturned and barricades erected.

Many pit villages woke to find streets littered with the aftermath of clashes between police and pickets but these were among the most serious of the catalogue of incidents:

DINNINGTON: At 3.15 am the local police station came under attack by a 40-strong mob. Two petrol bombs were thrown, one exploding on the forecourt and the other failing to go off. A hail of missiles, including a 2lb weight and several windows, one so violently that it was embedded in a wall.

The duty sergeant, two constables and a woman police officer evacuated the station for their own safety. Twenty lamp posts were uprooted to build barricades, a car set on fire and shop windows in the village's main street smashed with one electrical shop looted of £1,000 Christmas-display of television sets, radios and cassette players.

The shop owner, Mr Kevin Inger, said: "We have supported the miners and donated £200 to the strike fund. We have done repairs free for them and loaned them TV sets. I am very disappointed that we got this kind of aggro."

Fourteen men went into the local colliery yesterday for the first time since the dispute.

CORTONWOOD: At 3 am the lone miner, Mr Uwe Linguard, who last week broke the strike at the colliery at the centre of the dispute was joined by three other men in returning to work. Up to 150 pickets clashed with police in the streets of the surrounding village Brampton

'Scruffy' £1 note to follow gold sovereign

By Robin Young

The Bank of England is to stop issuing £1 notes, although those in circulation will remain legal tender for at least another year, Mr Nigel Lawson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced in the House of Commons yesterday.

It owes its demise to the increasing disrespect it gets from the public, according to Mr Ian Stewart, Economic Secretary to the Treasury. £1 notes had become items of change and were stuffed into pockets and tills without being returned to banks for replacement as often as previously.

The Bank of England was finding it increasingly difficult and expensive to keep the notes in circulation, clean and usable, he said last night.

The £1 note, introduced as an emergency measure in 1914 despite cries of outrage from the public accustomed since 1489 to having gold sovereigns, joins the French 10-franc, the German 5-Deutsche mark, the Swiss 5-franc, and the Japanese 500-yen on the list of notes being replaced by coins.

The American \$1 is now the only significant paper survivor which is worth less than £1.

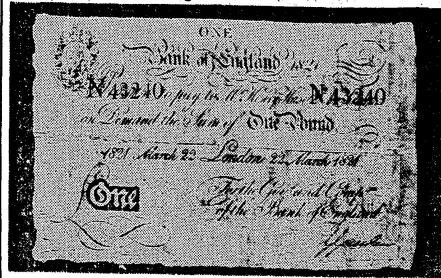
After the introduction of the £1 coin in April last year, the £1 note won a further year's reprieve by the personal intervention of the Prime Minister who said last December that she had reason to believe that the £1 note would continue to circulate for some time to come.

The Royal Mint has built up a reserve of 570 million coins, more than enough to replace all the 560 million £1 notes that are still in circulation. It costs 2½p to mint each £1 coin, which will last 40 years compared with 1½p for each note, now likely to last no more than 10 months.

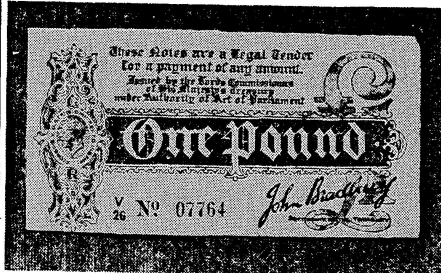
Yesterday's announcement does not affect the issue of Scottish bank notes in Scotland, but Mr Stewart said that the Scottish banks too were finding notes increasingly costly.

● In the Commons Mr John Stokes, MP for Halesowen and Stourbridge, said he was horrified. The new £1 coin was highly unpopular and it was difficult to carry a lot of them.

Sir Peter Mills, MP for Torridge and West, Devon, said he would ask the Chancellor to reconsider the decision. "Symbolically, it is very bad."



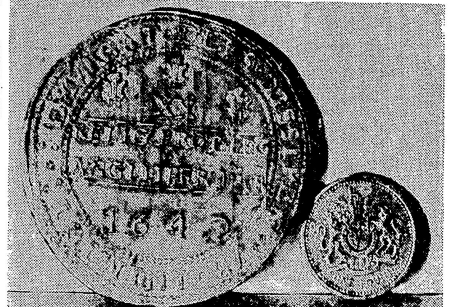
One of the first £1 notes, issued in 1821



The first twentieth-century £1 note (1914)



In 1919: A new design and signature



Charles I £1 coin (1642) and the modern version

Bierlow, hurling stones and bricks.

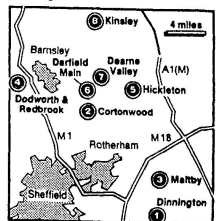
Charges by police horses and vans were used to break up the demonstrators who fled into a nearby housing estate. A petrol bomb was thrown at a police Range Rover lighting up the night sky in a brilliant flash of flame.

MALTBY: Trouble broke out at 2.45am as three windows in the local police station were smashed and street lamps pulled down to form barricades. A garage and general store near the colliery were looted.

DODWORTH and RED BROOK: A steel wire was strung across the entry road to the pit and severed an aerial on the car of a member of the management team. "If he had been a motor cyclist he would

have decapitated," a board spokesman said.

HICKLETON: Two members of the board staff on pit security duty were attacked by a mob wearing balaclava type hoods and badly beaten. Two vehicles were overturned and set alight.



The pit stores were looted at Darfield Main, the colliery wrecked at Dearne Valley where damaged electricity pylons blacked out a village, and a fork lift truck and crane vandalized at Kinsley.

Coal board officials in Yorkshire said that they had received 1,500 "positive" replies to a letter sent to 54,000 miners in the coalfield last week urging them to join the return to work.

Yesterday the board said it was organizing transport and protection measures aimed at getting hundreds more men back into the pits this week.

● There were clashes between pickets and police as South Wales miners launched their biggest picketing operation since the strike started in an

attempt to thwart the board's back-to-work drive. (the Press Association reports).

Up to 2,000 pickets were on duty at the area's 28 collieries. The board reported a record turnout of 45 working miners. Five arrests were made on picket lines.

In North Derbyshire, board officials said they were shocked by a "vicious" new ploy in the miners' strike which could have badly injured office staff: Two letters containing razor blades were received by the board in envelopes, both postmarked Sheffield.

Mr Ted Horton, deputy director of the board's North Derbyshire area, said: "It was extremely fortunate that an innocent secretary was not badly hurt."

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From Peter Davenport.

The Times (London, England), Tuesday, Nov 13, 1984; pg. 1; Issue 61985. (1463 words)

Category: News

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Gale Document Number:CS18321261