

Twin challenge to Kinnock over response to strike

● Mr Neil Kinnock faces challenges from Mr Arthur Scargill and left-wing MPs over the miners' strike on his return from Moscow this week.

● Mgr Derek Worlock, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, appealed to the coal board to negotiate with the miners rather than wait for the strike to collapse

● The two working miners attacked at the weekend called for an NUM rule change to require reelection of the union president

● The transport and miners' unions may become isolated in their defiance of Conservative employment laws. A new TUC paper urges a pragmatic attitude

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By Barrie Clement, Philip Webster and Clifford Longley

Mr Arthur Scargill yesterday issued what amounted to a challenge to Mr Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader, as left-wing MPs prepared to attack Mr Kinnock over his handling of the 37-week-old miners' strike.

Mr Kinnock will be appearing with Mr Scargill, president of the National Union Mine-workers, at a party rally next Friday in Stoke-on-Trent organized in support of the pitmen. It is fast becoming the most crucial public meeting for the labour movement since the dispute began.

Mr Kinnock is expected to repeat his denunciation of violence in the dispute from any quarter - including the miners. It is an argument which resulted in a hangman's noose being dangled over the head of Mr Norman Willis, general secretary of the TUC, at an NUM rally in Aberavon, South Wales.

Mr Scargill's challenge to Mr Kinnock yesterday comes as the Labour leader returns from Moscow tomorrow to face criticism from some left-wing MPs over his handling of the dispute.

The demonstration by MPs which brought the Commons to a halt last Wednesday, the day Mr Kinnock went to the Soviet Union, was seen as a mark of the frustration of many of them at what they regard as the less than wholehearted backing

from the front bench for the strike.

Mr Kinnock's remarks in Moscow that reports that the miners and their families were on the point of starvation were exaggerated has also caused resentment. Mr Martin Flannery, MP for Sheffield Hillsborough, a member of the left-wing Campaign Group of MPs, furiously attacked Mr Kinnock last night. He said that if Mr Kinnock had not distanced himself from the miners over the entire struggle, and brought himself into disrepute with his own South Wales miners, he would not have said what he did.

Mr Kinnock, who refused to attend a series of NUM rallies in support of the strike, will be expected to give unequivocal backing to the dispute. Mr Scargill implied yesterday. But recent indications from the Kinnock camp have been that the Labour leader is significantly less confident about the eventual victory of the pitmen than Mr Scargill.

In an interview on BBC Radio yesterday Mr Scargill was asked about the response of the Labour Party to the strike, and he pointedly did not mention Mr Kinnock. The party itself had given "wonderful support" and Mr Jim Mortimer, general secretary and Mr Eric Heffer,

former chairman, had been "quite superb".

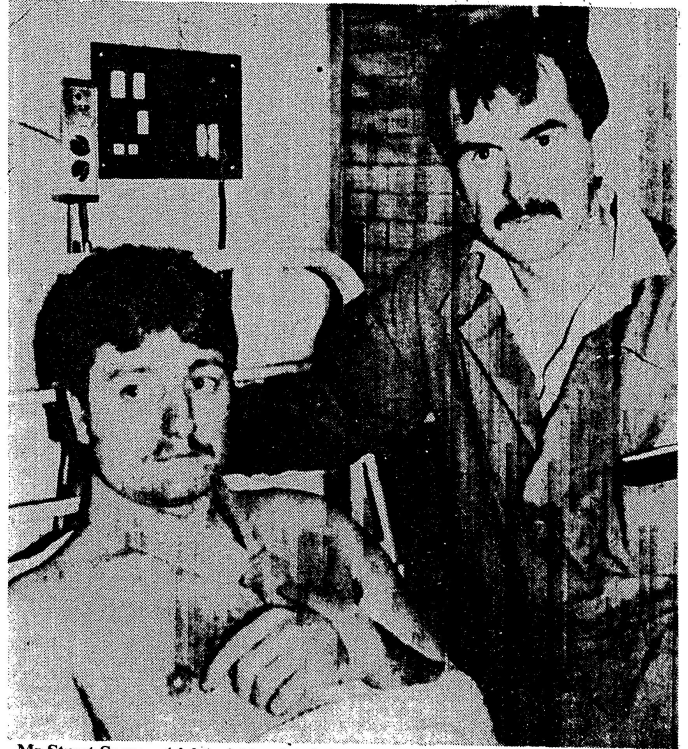
When asked about Mr Kinnock, he said: "No doubt on the occasion of the meeting on Friday night in Stoke the leader of Labour Party will make clear what he wants to say and where he stands on every single question affecting the miners' strike."

Mr Scargill added that the miners expected both the TUC and the Labour Party to abide by the near-unanimous resolutions of total support passed by both conferences.

Archbishop Derek Worlock of Liverpool, one of the four senior churchmen who met leaders of the striking miners last week appealed to the coal board yesterday to resume negotiations.

Seeking "total victory or unconditional surrender" would not lead to lasting peace in the coal industry, nor heal the bitter divisions in mining communities, he said. Mgr Worlock spoke at a rally in Liverpool after consultations, it is understood, with the Archbishop of York, Dr John Habgood.

Mr Scargill yesterday made a fresh appeal for more support from power and steel workers on the eve of a crucial meeting of the TUC's finance and general purposes committee which is due to review the strike today.



Mr Stuart Spencer (right) visiting Mr Michael Fletcher in Pontefract general hospital yesterday. Both are working miners who suffered attacks.

Enraged hijackers threaten to kill 103

By Our Foreign Staff

Armed hijackers of a Somali Airlines Boeing 707, "extremely furious" at the rejection of their demands by Somalia, yesterday threatened to blow up the plane along with all their 103 hostages

Chernenko to visit France next year

From Diana Geddes, Paris

President Chernenko will pay an official visit to France next year, "events permitting" President Mitterrand announced here yesterday. No date was given.

It would be Mr Chernenko's first visit to the West as President of the Soviet Union, and the first official visit to

the West about arms reductions (Christopher Thomas writes). But there is widespread scepticism in Washington about Russia's motives, which Senior officials suspect may be no more than an attempt to reverse serious public opinion defeats over arms talks intransigence.

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By Barrie Clement, Philip Webster and Clifford Longley.

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