



Crisis in the coalfields NUM divided over tactics of defiance

The dominant left-centre coalition on the executive committee of the National Union of Mineworkers is deeply divided over its strategy of defiance of the High Court, and Mr Arthur Scargill, the union's president, suffered his first serious rebuff at the hands of his union's delegates, it became clear yesterday.

As more details emerge of the 11 votes to six split over cooperation with the receiver appointed by the High Court to manage the union's funds, it became clear that the leadership is divided over the next step in the 39-week coal strike.

Some union leaders fear that the special conference decision taken in London two days ago to deny assistance to the receiver will lead to further actions for contempt and huge fines in addition to the £200,000 already levied for defiance of orders that the strike is unofficial.

The internal union conflict cuts across traditional political boundaries, with Communists voting different ways and moderates siding with the hard left. Well-placed sources within the industry argue that the executive is showing signs of confusion and weariness.

But it is regarded as most significant that Mr Scargill was unable to carry the delegate conference for his policy of

limited cooperation with the receiver.

Mr Scargill won the backing of the executive by 11 votes to six, with five abstentions, but he was rebuffed by the delegates on a card vote of 139 to 80.

Those supporting Mr Scargill on the executive were: Mr Michael McGahey, the vice-president; Mr Eric Clarke, secretary of the Scottish miners; Mr Harry Hanlon (Cumberland); Mr Abe Moffat (Scottish craftsmen); Mr Idwal Morgan (Cokemen); Mr Ted Mackay (North Wales); Mr Ray Chadburn, and Mr Henry Richardson (Nottinghamshire); Mr Ron Dunn (Durham mechanics); Mr Sid Vincent (Lancashire) and Mr Gordon Butler (North Derbyshire).

Those opposing him were: Mr Emyln Williams and Mr George Rees (South Wales); Mr Dennis Murphy (Northumberland); Mr Bill Stobbs (Durham); Mr Jim Colgan (Midlands) and Mr Wes Chambers (Kent).

Those abstaining were Mr Jack Taylor, Mr Owen Briscoe, and Mr John Weaver (Yorkshire); Mr Trevor Bell (COSA) and Mr Jim Dowling (Midlands craftsmen); Mr Jack Jones (Leicestershire) and Mr Ken Toon (South Derbyshire) did not attend.

Mr Scargill's opponents argued that any collaboration with the High Court or its agents would be a severe blow to the morale of the militants on the picket lines who are sustaining the strike, and their number included four left-wingers.

NUM chiefs swear to keep law

By Craig Seton

Four moderate members of the executive of the National Union of Mineworkers have sworn affidavits pledging to observe the law and uphold court orders in response to the attempts in the High Court to make the 24 members of the executive individually responsible for payment of the £200,000 contempt fine.

They are Mr Ted McKay, NUM agent for North Wales; Mr Ken Toon, secretary, south Derbyshire; Mr Jack Jones, secretary, Leicestershire; and Mr Trevor Bell, secretary of COSA, the union's white-collar section.

All four men have appointed solicitors and taken advice from barristers on the defence they intend to present and will be represented separately from other members of the executive when the High Court action resumes on Friday week. The proceedings were initiated by the National Working Miners' Committee.

The defence of the four men will centre on their claim that they were not personally responsible for the original contempt of court. The remaining members of the executive are receiving legal advice from a firm of London solicitors appointed by the union.

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By Craig Seton.

The Times (London, England), Wednesday, Dec 05, 1984; pg. 2; Issue 62004. (592 words)

Category: News

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Gale Document Number:CS34836357