

Militants attack Scargill for lack of initiative

● Striking miners in South Wales are becoming increasingly disillusioned with the NUM's national leadership and are calling for new initiatives to "keep the strike solid".

● More than 40 Labour MPs, one in the Shadow Cabinet, are organizing a fresh campaign supporting the miners' strike.

● Mr Arthur Scargill, NUM president, and his wife joined a picket line near Doncaster and said he was as confident of victory as he had been last March.

● The miners' strike has cost £2.4 billion to the end of 1984 and may now be costing £85 million a week, according to a firm of city analysts.

By Barrie Clement and Tim Jones

Strong criticism of Mr Arthur Scargill and the miners' leadership came yesterday from the militant South Wales coalfields on the eve of the first working day in the new year.

Dr Kim Howells, spokesman for South Wales pitmen, said that it was no longer sufficient for them to repeat the same old slogans. "They must take the lead with new initiatives," he said.

Dr Howells' comments come the day before 160 out of Britain's 174 collieries are due to open after the Christmas holiday. The National Coal Board last night refused to predict how many more strikers would go back to work, but key officials believe that more than half of the 188,000 members of the National Union of Mineworkers will have broken ranks with the strikers by the anniversary of the stoppage in two months time. About 70,000 were working at the end of last year.

Mr Scargill, president of the NUM, however joined his members outside a power station near Doncaster yesterday and pledged a winter of continued defiance.

"Once again we are out on the picket line, on January 1, 1985, with the same determination and fervour as we

showed in March 1984. The only difference is that we are more convinced and confident of winning now than we were then," he said.

Miners' leaders will be shocked nevertheless by the comments to *The Times* by Dr Howells. South Wales pitmen have been the most steadfast supporters of the strike. Only 126 men out of 20,000 have returned to work there.

After an informal meeting of representatives from the central area of the coalfield yesterday, Dr Howells said: "The men are just going through the most depressing period of the year and we must see new initiatives if the strike is to remain solid."

He said the union appeared merely to be responding to propaganda statements made by Mr Peter Walker, Secretary of State for Energy, and had been "bodily beaten" by his announcement that there would be no power cuts this year. He said: "The union must realize it is against a Government that will spend billions to beat it. They will stop at nothing to maintain electricity supplies and we must have a new strategy."

Meanwhile leaders of working miners have predicted that men at three more unnamed pits in South Wales will return

to work today. At the moment 21 of the area's 28 pits are strike-bound.

Mr Michael Eaton, spokesman for the coal board, believes that there is a widespread feeling of disillusionment among the strikers.

In a statement to *The Times* last night, Mr Scargill said: "Throughout the entire 10 months of the strike I have consistently said - and been backed by the union's National Executive Committee - that it is the economic issue which will determine the outcome of this dispute." The Government was prepared to take the economy "over the edge" to break the strike, he said.

● The cost of the miners' strike up to the end of 1984 was £2.4 billion, according to a report by Simon & Coates, a firm of City analysts.

It says that the switch from coal to oil at Britain's power stations is costing an extra £40 million a week now, compared with £20 million in mid-September. The total running cost of the strike may have risen to £85 million a week.

Lost coal exports and the burning of extra oil are now costing £350 million a month on the balance of trade.

Scargill is defiant on picket line

By Peter Davenport

It was a new year but with an old message from Mr Arthur Scargill, the miners' president, yesterday.

Accompanied by his wife, Anne, the pit leader joined a group of his members on the picket line outside the Thorpe Marsh power station near Doncaster in Yorkshire to pledge a winter of continued defiance.

Despite the announcement by Mr Peter Walker, Secretary of State for Energy, that the dispute would not lead to power cuts this winter and faced with the uncertain results of the National Coal Board's new drive to restart the stalled drift back to work when the pits reopen after the holiday break, Mr Scargill remained outwardly confident.

He told the pickets, and a group of German trade unionists visiting the picket lines: "Once again we are out on the picket line on January 1, 1985 with the same determination and fervour as we showed in March 1984."

"The only difference is that we are more convinced and confident of winning now than we were then."

Mr Scargill arrived on the picket line at about 7am on a cold, frosty morning.

The day before Mr Scargill had issued his new year message to the striking miners: "Stand firm and we will win."

He said that the dispute had cost the Government £5,000 million pounds, 77 million tonnes of lost production and seen the pound plunge by more than 20 per cent.

Labour MPs renew support for strike

By Philip Webster, Political Reporter

A fresh campaign to back the miners' strike is being organized by more than 40 Labour MPs, including a member of the Shadow Cabinet, amid renewed criticism of the party leadership's allegedly lukewarm attitude to the dispute.

Trade unions have been urged to ignore the instructions of the High Court sequestrators not to help the National Union of Mineworkers while its funds are under threat of seizure. Instead they are asked to join together to pay the wages of staff employed in NUM national and local offices during the strike.

Labour controlled local authorities are urged to help miners with their mortgages by giving council loans and to provide free school meals for miners' children.

The proposals, contained in a checklist of ways to help the miners, issued by the left-wing Campaign Group of Labour MPs to the unions, constituency Labour parties and Labour councils, came as Mr Eric Heffer, the former party chairman, said that Labour must not shrink from giving all-out

support to the miners and warned it against hiding away in the face of the political enemy.

In a New Year message Mr Heffer, who lost his place in the Shadow Cabinet in the autumn, accused the Government of "increasing political savagery" against the trade union and Labour movement.

And in remarks aimed at Mr Neil Kinnock, whom the left has criticized for an alleged failure totally to back the miners, Mr Heffer quoted Aneurin Bevan's words that: "Parliamentary institutions have not been destroyed because the left was too vigorous - they have been destroyed because the left was too inert".

In the suggested "guidelines" for helping the striking miners the campaign group, whose members include Mr Michael Meacher, Labour spokesman on social security, Mr Heffer, and Mr Tony Benn, states that all trade union executive should ignore the threats from those involved in the sequestration of NUM funds by continuing to make large donations to the miners' solidarity fund and to offer the NUM large, long-term, interest-free loans.

It says that unions should levy their members at 10p to 50p a week to aid the miners, hire NUM members on a consultancy basis, and pay for the hiring of trains and buses by the miners' union for national and regional demonstrations.

The checklist also calls on all union members to refuse to become involved in the movement of coal stocks.



Mr Heffer (left) and Mr Kinnock.

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By Barrie Clement, Tim Jones, By Peter Davenport and By Philip Webster, Political Reporter.

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