

## Young Conservatives mark decade of Thatcher leadership

### Pit leaders accused of return to Luddism

By Our Political Reporter

The Government has renewed its verbal onslaught against the leadership of the National Union of Mineworkers, combining it with fresh expressions of support for the working miners and reiteration of its opposition to the resumption of talks without a commitment from the union to discuss the closure of uneconomic pits.

Mr John Gummer, the Conservative Party Chairman, yesterday told the Young Conservatives' conference in Bournemouth that Mr Arthur Scargill, the miners' president, had used violence, intimidation and threats to bring deprivation, loss and unemployment to the mining industry.

He said that Mr Scargill had been unable to win the hearts of his followers, so he refused them a ballot. "He could not change the minds of the people of Britain so he set out to change them by force. He could not win the arguments on pit closures, so he resorted to lies and deceit."

The Government's firm line had been underlined by the Prime Minister in a speech to the conference on Saturday, when she accused the miners' union leadership of standing out against the coal industry of the future and bringing Luddism back to Britain.

"This strike would have finished long ago had it not been kept going by violence and intimidation," she said. "We have witnessed an ugly chapter in trade union history."

Mrs Thatcher said that if the miners' union accepted that economic factors must be taken into account in deciding the future of pits, if they accepted the right of the board to take the decision after all the procedures had been completed, "then a settlement is ready and waiting".

But even this week, after 11 months, the union leadership was "boasting" that it had not budged an inch, Mrs Thatcher said. That was why seven rounds of negotiations had failed.

"That is why the coal board is right to insist that, before an eighth round, the NUM should indicate clearly its willingness to discuss the central issue in this dispute."

Mr Gummer told the Young Conservatives yesterday: "We the British people support the real historic National Union of Mineworkers against the usurper Arthur, the man who has used power where the ballot fails and violence where he could not achieve his aims."



The Prime Minister acknowledging applause from Young Conservatives at Bournemouth on Saturday

### Inflation pledge as poll gives popularity warning

By Philip Webster, Political Reporter

The Prime Minister today celebrates 10 years as leader of the Conservative Party with personal reaffirmation that the reduction of inflation will continue to be her overriding priority and a warning from the polls that her own and the Government's standing has fallen sharply since the turn of the year and the sterling crisis.

Apart from appearing at a 10 Downing Street photograph session to mark the event, Mrs Margaret Thatcher has decided that the anniversary of her replacement of Mr Edward Heath will be very much "business as usual".

But she took the opportunity of a speech to the Young Conservatives' annual conference in Bournemouth on Saturday to outline the strategy on which she intends to lead the party into the next election by reiterating her aim "to make every man and woman a capitalist" and placing renewed emphasis on the fight to bring down unemployment through lowering inflation further still, easing the burden on employers of taxation, rates and red tape and creating the conditions for enterprise.

As she prepared to mark her 10 years however, there was sobering news for the Prime Minister in the poll by Market & Opinion Research International for *The Sunday Times* which showed that her own popularity had fallen to its lowest level since before the Falklands conflict in 1982.

The poll, conducted on February 6, showed that both the sterling fall and the miners' strike has affected the Government's standing. Only 34 per cent thought Mrs Thatcher to

be a capable leader, the lowest rating since June 1981; 30 per cent said they were satisfied with the performance of the Government, compared with 64 per cent who were dissatisfied, the lowest satisfaction rating since the election.

The poll, which involved interviews with 1,057 adults at sampling points throughout Britain, showed the Conservatives and Labour running neck and neck at 37 per cent, with the Social Democratic Party-Liberal Alliance on 24 per cent. A month ago Mori had the Conservatives on 42 per cent, Labour on 34 per cent and the Alliance on 21 per cent. The Alliance had moved up two weeks later to 24 per cent but in the past fortnight Labour appears to have benefited most by the Government's fall in support.

About 52 per cent believed that on balance Mrs Thatcher is doing a "bad job" on managing the economy. There was little in the poll to cheer Mr Neil Kinnock; only 17 per cent saw him as a capable leader.

In her speech in Bournemouth Mrs Thatcher, who received an ecstatic reception from the Young Conservatives and left to the cries of "10 more years", said that since the Government came to office 1,800,000 more people owned their own homes. "That is the way we will become one nation," she said.

Mrs Thatcher is to spend today working at Downing Street, where tonight there will be a reception for the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council, attended by the Prince and Princess of Wales.

## Gummer onslaught on 'slapdash' teachers

By Our Political Reporter

Mr John Gummer, the Conservative Party chairman, yesterday made an outspoken attack on "sinister" and "slapdash" teachers who he said undermined education and betrayed children.

Addressing the Young Conservatives, Mr Gummer spoke of a sinister minority, those whose aims were to subvert education and pervert its purpose, the political extremists who confused political indoctrination with education.

In his definition of the "slapdash", those who moaned and groaned so much about their conditions that they undermined their credibility with their pupils, Mr Gummer included those who were back-

ing the industrial action by the National Union of Teachers.

"What a discredit they bring to the profession. Pay negotiations have not broken down, yet they refuse to teach classes for their absent colleagues. No ballot has been held, yet they leave school meals for others to supervise."

"Thank goodness they are a minority. Our pupils can do without this example of instant industrial action, ignoring negotiations, disdaining the ballot."

Mr Gummer spoke of teachers who had involved primary school pupils in political campaigns; children had been organized to take part in a half-day walkout in support of the miners' strike and had been caught up in a demonstration

against the police. A teacher had been reported as saying that her job was to counter right-wing bias and help children to grow up to be anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-critical.

Mr Gummer said: "She was wrong. Children and their parents have a right to an education system which help the young to see that discrimination and prejudice is irrational and immoral. A system which helps young people to love their fellows, not to take up the stances of the loveless and unlovely left."

The conference addressed by the Prime Minister and other senior ministers took place amid the tightest security after the Brighton bombing.

But in his speech yesterday

Mr Gummer made clear that the traditional nature of Conservative conferences would be maintained, with representatives continuing to have access to ministers.

More than 2,000 Young Conservatives had been refused to be deterred by the IRA, he said. It was business as usual.

● Mr Kenneth Baker, Minister for Local Government, told the conference the Government was determined to abolish the Greater London Council and the metropolitan councils. "They are unnecessary and they do so little" (the Press Association reports).

He said that the metropolitan councils had few friends and even Labour was not committed to restoring them

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By Our Political Reporter, By Philip Webster and By Our Political Reporter.

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