

EXCLUSIVE: ARTHUR SCARGILL PUTS HIS CASE

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IF THE MINERS LOSE, YOU WILL ALL SUFFER



UNION BOSS: Scargill

■ **ARTHUR SCARGILL**, President of the National Union of Mineworkers, often claims he does not get a fair hearing from Fleet Street.

■ **THE News of the World** has repeatedly made it clear we are opposed to Mr Scargill and his strike.

■ **BUT TODAY** in the interests of democracy and fair play we have invited Mr Scargill to state his case.



COAL BOSS: MacGregor

LAST week Coal Board chairman Ian MacGregor shocked even his senior officials with an open declaration of his intentions.

He told them he wanted "to see the leadership of the National Union of Mineworkers roundly defeated rather than see a quick solution to the miners' strike.

"It would be better for the future," he continued, "if the strike went on for some time."

This man, who destroyed over 100,000 jobs at British Steel, is now obsessed with butchering the British coal industry and destroying the National Union of Mineworkers. He will not succeed.

The miners' strike is a fight for the future. Miners and their families are fighting to save not just their jobs, their communities and their pits, but a vital national asset on which Britain's energy welfare depends.

Ten years ago, after the shock of the 1973 oil crisis, the Labour Government realised it must put coal on a safe footing—given that it was our richest and most reliable source of energy and that British miners produce the world's cheapest deep-mined coal.

Thus was born the Plan For Coal agreed between Government, Coal Board and the mining unions.

Output

The Plan foresaw the possibility of short-term market fluctuations, and stipulated that these should not affect the development of the coal industry.

It called for an annual output of at least 135 million tonnes by 1985, and guaranteed investment into existing collieries together with the development of new mines.

Pits were to be closed only when their reserves were exhausted (a point with which the National Union of Mineworkers has always agreed), or if severe geological conditions made them unworkable.

Plan For Coal, based on hard common sense was reaffirmed in 1979 (when the Conservatives took office), and again in 1981.

Then, in June last year, the chairman of the NCB announced the board's intention to take 25 million tonnes of coal capacity out of our industry over the next several years.

Translated into flesh-and-blood terms, he was announcing the closure of over 70 pits, and the destruction of at least 70,000 miners' jobs.

On March 6 this year, the first blow fell.

Ian MacGregor announced the initial move in the closure programme—



'This is a fight for the future of a vital national asset'

the axing of 20 pits and 20,000 miners' jobs over the next 12 months.

It was a gesture of open contempt—contempt for the mining industry and for the people who work in it and depend upon it.

It sparked off strike action throughout the British coalfield.

Miners and their families know that they now face directly the same devastation that has torn through other British industries and the communities dependent on them over the past five years.

Misery

They've witnessed the cost in human misery, and they see the utter senselessness of it.

The British people will suffer a double blow if the Coal Board's closure programme goes through.

First, there is the destruction of this vital industry, and what that destruction would mean for the future.

Second, there are the overwhelming consequences for local economies and communities, and for the Exchequer — £4.6 billion — more than

double the £2 billion it would cost to keep those pits open, producing coal.

British taxpayers are entitled to ask how much longer can we afford this 72-year-old American whose policies not only violate the signed agreement between Government, Coal Board and unions but who has provoked a situation currently costing the nation £30 million a day.

After nearly four months on strike, miners are angry that the Coal Board, after agreeing during recent talks to withdraw its pit closure programme, suddenly insisted that it must stand, and abruptly broke off negotiations.

Our people are enduring terrible hardship — hardship we thought had gone with the 1930s and the Depressions. But the strength and courage of mining families grows and grows.

Their determination has enraged the Government still further.

Violence

It has sanctioned and master-minded a campaign of violence and intimidation against our people that trade unionists would not have believed possible in Britain.

The unleashing of riot police, some on horseback, in full battle gear, and the unleashing of police dogs to attack miners in jeans, tee-shirts and pumps as has happened at Orgreave, illustrates clearly the lengths to which the Government is prepared to go.

The stop-and-search operations, the prevention of free movement among striking miners in Nottinghamshire, the midnight raids on their homes—all these are new to British working people today.

But, despite all this, miners stand firmer than ever.

No amount of intimidation or terrorism by riot police, or denial of civil liberties will prevent our people from fighting against the destruction of an industry, of jobs for the future, of communities and family security.

Miners have a responsibility not only to their children but to the generations which will come after us. It is a responsibility we will not surrender.