

# Rebels defy NUM vote on 50p levy

By David Felton  
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Nottinghamshire miners' leaders yesterday took a further step to distance the area from the leadership of the National Union of Mineworkers when they voted not to co-operate with a ballot to raise money for dismissed miners.

The national ballot, to authorize a 50p a week levy on all 186,000 NUM members, is due to start tomorrow but will be boycotted by Nottinghamshire, which is likely to be joined by the Leicestershire and south Derbyshire areas.

The decision to call a ballot was taken by the national executive and will almost certainly be used by the leadership as further evidence of the Nottinghamshire area's intent to set up a breakaway union with the two other dissident areas. Disciplinary action against the moderate Midlands areas could be taken at the union's annual conference in July.

NUM leaders have launched the ballot to provide finance for the 650 miners who remain dismissed for alleged offences during the strike. A meeting of the national executive will decide next week whether to recommend action against Nottinghamshire.

It had been thought that the executive meeting would be brought forward to this week, but last night that appeared unlikely. Next week's meeting will hear calls from Nottinghamshire and other areas for a re-opening of formal negotiations with the National Coal Board on pay and working conditions and discuss the possibility of early cuts in the industry's workforce as the coal board implements its plans to reduce uneconomic capacity.

● More than 700 miners walked out of the Betws colliery near Ammanford yesterday when management told them that because of delays to maintenance caused by the overtime ban there was only work for about 50 of them on the morning shift.

Local union leaders had decided to suspend the ban in order to get a cable belt mended, but their advice was overturned by a ballot of the men.

● The NUM in South Wales has lodged an appeal against the dismissal of five men from the smokeless fuel plant at Abercwmboi for the alleged intimidation of Mr Paul Watson who worked during the strike.

● At Markham pit, near Chesterfield, more than 1,000 men, half the workforce, walked out over the introduction of a new maintenance shift. The coal board said it would not negotiate until the men returned.

● The National Coal Board in Scotland announced yesterday that transport contracts for carrying miners to work in west Fife are to be put out to tender.

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