

Reticent Scargill arrives in Moscow

From Richard Owen
Moscow

Mr Arthur Scargill arrived in Moscow last night for talks with Soviet officials but declined to say whether he would discuss Soviet aid for British miners during the recent strike or how much the Russians had donated.

Mr Scargill said he had come to Moscow to discuss arrangements for an international miners' conference in Britain later in the year, and would return to Sheffield by Thursday. He is the guest of the Soviet coalworkers' union.

As Mr Scargill flew in on British Airways, Soviet television screened a documentary called "350 days on the picket line - a television study of class struggles in Britain". During the miners' strike the Soviet media repeatedly attacked alleged "police brutality" on the picket line and portrayed



Mr Scargill: Strike cost blamed on Mrs Thatcher

the strike as a class struggle against a viciously anti-working-class Conservative Government.

The state-controlled miners' union collected thousands of roubles for striking British miners from "class comrades".

Mr Scargill said on his arrival that the strike had cost

the British taxpayer £6.5 billion "thanks to Mrs Thatcher's intransigence", but refused to say exactly how much the National Union of Mineworkers had received in Soviet donations. He appeared irritated by the question.

The television documentary showed Mr Scargill leading a miners' march and raising a clenched fist in victory salute to supporters. It quoted him as saying the miners had won even though the strike had been defeated, and the programme of pit closures had been abandoned.

The film showed repeated scenes of picket-line violence and portrayed the police as the brutal instruments of capitalism against a background of mass unemployment, social strife and the steady erosion of trade-union rights by the Government.

It showed Britain as a

country where pensioners freeze to death and the police charge workers menacingly with batons, and ended with the dramatic words "The miners' struggle continues". It made no mention of violence between miners during the strike.

Ironically *Pravda* yesterday lambasted the management of the Soviet coal industry and Soviet miners, saying the miners lacked expertise and their equipment was inadequate. It criticized labour productivity in Soviet mines and singled out the Kuzbass, a basin in Siberia, where it said miners had been failing to meet targets for years.

In August 1983 Mr Scargill caused a stir by saying in a speech in Moscow that the greatest threat to world peace stemmed from Western imperialism

Dissidents win, page 2
Diary, page 12