

Prime Minister

Not brave enough to say the miners'

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT

Case is unreasonable, as to  
condemn violence by which  
Strike is being pursued.



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BT

14/11

AT

Duty Clerk No. 10.

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF  
THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE PARLIAMENTARY  
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

Mr. Bottomley wondered whether  
the Prime Minister had seen this  
editorial by Alastair Graham in the  
2nd October edition of CPSA's Red  
Tape. He thought that it was brave.

Jeremy Cooper

14.11.84.



The amount of public money that has been wasted by the Government in opposing the DHSS Newcastle Central Office and Washington Child Benefit Office dispute has now become a public scandal. The taxpayers money involved now amounts to over £40 million. A colossal sum when one places alongside the possible savings that will accrue from the introduction of new shift working arrangements. The full savings that the reorganisation will contribute to the public purse will be £700,000 per year while the part of the plans which is at the heart of the dispute will only contribute around £50,000 per year — and then only in two year's time.

We hear so much about the new management accountability in the Civil Service. If the Controller of Newcastle Central Office had been Managing Director of a private firm who had spent £40 million to save £50,000 he would have been shown the door very smartly.

Ministers say that a great principle is at stake. They always do when having to explain how £40 million has just been poured down the drain. They are wrong. Within the framework of the national shift agreement there is considerable discretion to management to determine working patterns at a departmental and local level. What is new is the concession of greatly improved transitional arrangements to be paid to shiftworkers faced with changes in shift earnings arising from a change in shift working patterns. The Treasury authorised major concessions over the transitionally arrangements at a much earlier stage of the dispute and all managers, of computer centres and the trade union representatives who represent shiftworkers will have taken note of this for future negotiations.

As in most industrial disputes it is loss of face which is stopping a settlement rather than any great issue of principle.

That is not to say that I agree with the latest tactics of the National Executive Committee in prosecuting the dispute. The proposed escalation to Reading and Livingston computer centres, if it goes ahead, will divide the union and therefore will weaken the strike rather than bring a successful settlement any closer. How can we justify members in Unemployment Benefit Offices spending their working day undermining the action of those who are being asked to go on strike at Reading and Livingston by writing out manually the girocheques for the unemployed. The alternative for members in Unemployment Benefit Offices was to join the strike without strike pay — a daunting prospect when they have nothing to gain from the strike.

I hope wiser councils will prevail: —

1. The NEC at its special meeting on 11 October should rescind their earlier decision to escalate the strike to Reading and Livingston computer centres.

2. The NEC should authorise a small high powered negotiating team involving the President, General Secretary, plus 2 from the DHSS Section and 2 from the strikers to see how the latest management proposals can be improved and then put to a ballot of the strikers.

## More aid to pit families?

The General Council of the Trades Union Congress have asked affiliated trade unions to consider making donations and interest-free loans to the National Union of Mineworkers to help run the union or more specifically to assist relieve hardship amongst those who have been on strike such a long time.

The General Purposes Committee of the NEC have asked the Finance Committee to come forward with proposals to the October meeting of the NEC which will be held on 15-17 October. I argued that before any further donations were made or before we decided to give an interest-free loan that we should first consult members given the scale of protest about the donation of £25,000. I am disappointed to report that a majority of members of the GPC voted against my proposition. I gave notice that I would repeat it at the full meeting of the NEC.

I desperately wish to ensure that the miners are not starved back to work but we can only donate members' money if we have their consent to do so. This consent is in doubt and it would be the height of folly for the NEC to donate any further money without going through the crucial democratic process of convincing members that it is right to use their money in this way. This can only be done by a formal consultation exercise.

I would be grateful to know if branches agree with me.

Without the civil service the government wouldn't be able to function at all. With power such as that there is no way we could lose any battles with government. Hopefully we shall see a properly organised pay campaign for 1985, resulting in success. If the leadership is prepared to give the lead then I and many others are quite prepared to fight for a wage that's long overdue.

Suzi Harrison  
Home Office, London

## Thanks

On behalf of the strikers in SW London (Tooting, Morden, Mitcham, & Balham) involved in the recent dispute over the rundown of Jobcentres, I would like to thank all those CPSA members who sent financial contributions or gave us moral and physical support during the course of the dispute.

The dispute ended successfully on 10 September after 3 months action which started with colleagues in Greater Manchester taking all out strike action on 25 June and with the additional assistance of the members at Teignmouth at a later stage. We are happy to say that we achieved most of our aims in the concluded settlement. However, although we have won an historic battle — one of the most successful in the recent history of CPSA — we realise that we have not won the war waged against Jobcentres and the Public Employment Service by Bryan Emmett, Chief Executive of the Employment Division in MSC, on behalf of the Government.

We must use this success as a platform to fight further cutbacks in the Employment Service and, together with the victory of our colleagues in the Crown Agents section, we hope that our determined stance will give confidence to other members in CPSA.

Any gains, however small, will help to challenge the existing scenario of public expenditure cuts. There is a changing mood of positive determination to oppose cutbacks and job loss, and that is a mood that must be exploited. We have shown that we can win. Let others take heart from the victory.

Dave Jones  
Strike Co-ordinator for SW London

## Praise

I should like to praise you on your excellent cartoons, especially Mr Berkley, who has an uncanny lifelike resemblance to our current supervisor.

Mr J R Allen  
Preston 'B' UBO

With reference to the continuing debate on the donation to the miners, I would like to point out that the dispute between the NUM and the Coal Board has now clearly become one between Labour (the working class) and capital (the capitalist class), for the reply by the state against the miners and workers fighting for jobs, has been to use the riot police, batons, snatch squads, dogs, and mounted police, in addition to the DHSS (in docking benefit money that the miners are entitled to). The judiciary, and the media have also been used against the miners.

In defending the miners, support groups and the trade union movement have admirably collected food and money, but the question arises, is this enough? The answer to this question must be no, for if we believe that mere collections are sufficient when miners are being beaten by police, when picket lines are being destroyed, and when people are being intimidated by police in their own homes, then we are guilty of gross arrogance and betray the very miners that we claim to support.

What we must do is to defend picket lines including mass picketing, and build support groups into well directed bodies to assist the miners in picketing and the defence of mining communities.

We should defend the miners against police attacks, and if the police continue to use violence against people fighting for the human right to work, then it should be returned in defence. For why is it right for the state to use violence against working people fighting for that right, and wrong for these people to use it in defence of that right?

The government needs to defeat the miners so that they can step up the attacks on the rest of us. They must not be allowed to succeed!

Stuart Whalley  
International Branch P&T.

## Disgust

I am writing on behalf of this Branch Executive Committee to express our disgust at the failure of this year's pay campaign to achieve an acceptable pay rise, especially for our lower-paid members in CPSA.

We lay the blame mainly on the ineptitude of last year's NEC and their refusal to consult the membership before the totally inadequate pay claim was formulated.

This branch reluctantly voted to "acquiesce" as per the terms of circular CSE/GEN/9/84 but we wish to stress that in no way were we in favour of accepting such a derisory offer. We realised that in the current political climate, there was little to be gained from embarking on a course of

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members' inte

## Emb

As a member of this year's congress, I was r Alistair Graha the TUC wee (2). When Al by mentioning sions I expecte to talk about "Muppet" Br to those meml far-right grou giant mug-sh Secretary, lob delegates. Far plause, they v and derision f unionists who issues to cons even worse n collection volc delegation whi ficial CPSA highlighted th union was inv would appear terested in ai stardom than members invo

Sadly, Alistair the above even he was action?

## TUC

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Firstly, let tion into its co Branch meeti adopted was a members; this ship of some ? no surprise to familiar with t of CPSA Natio the lower the t Left's chances

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**RED TAPE**  
OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE CIVIL AND PUBLIC SERVICES ASSOCIATION  
VOL. 74 No. 2  
OCTOBER (2) 1984

Editor: CLIVE BUSH  
Editorial Office:  
215 BALHAM HIGH ROAD  
LONDON, SW17 7BN  
Telephone: 01-672 1299

Advertising Enquiries:  
CENTURION ADVERTISING & DESIGN LTD  
37a OXFORD STREET  
SOUTHAMPTON SO1 1DP  
Telephone: 0703 20244

Average ABC circulation  
1st July 1983-31 Dec 1983  
209,518

Printed by Centurion Press Ltd., 3 New Burlington Street, London W1X 2AA.

