LONDON LABOUR
# BRIEFING
SPECIAL ISSUE
10p
On the miners' strike

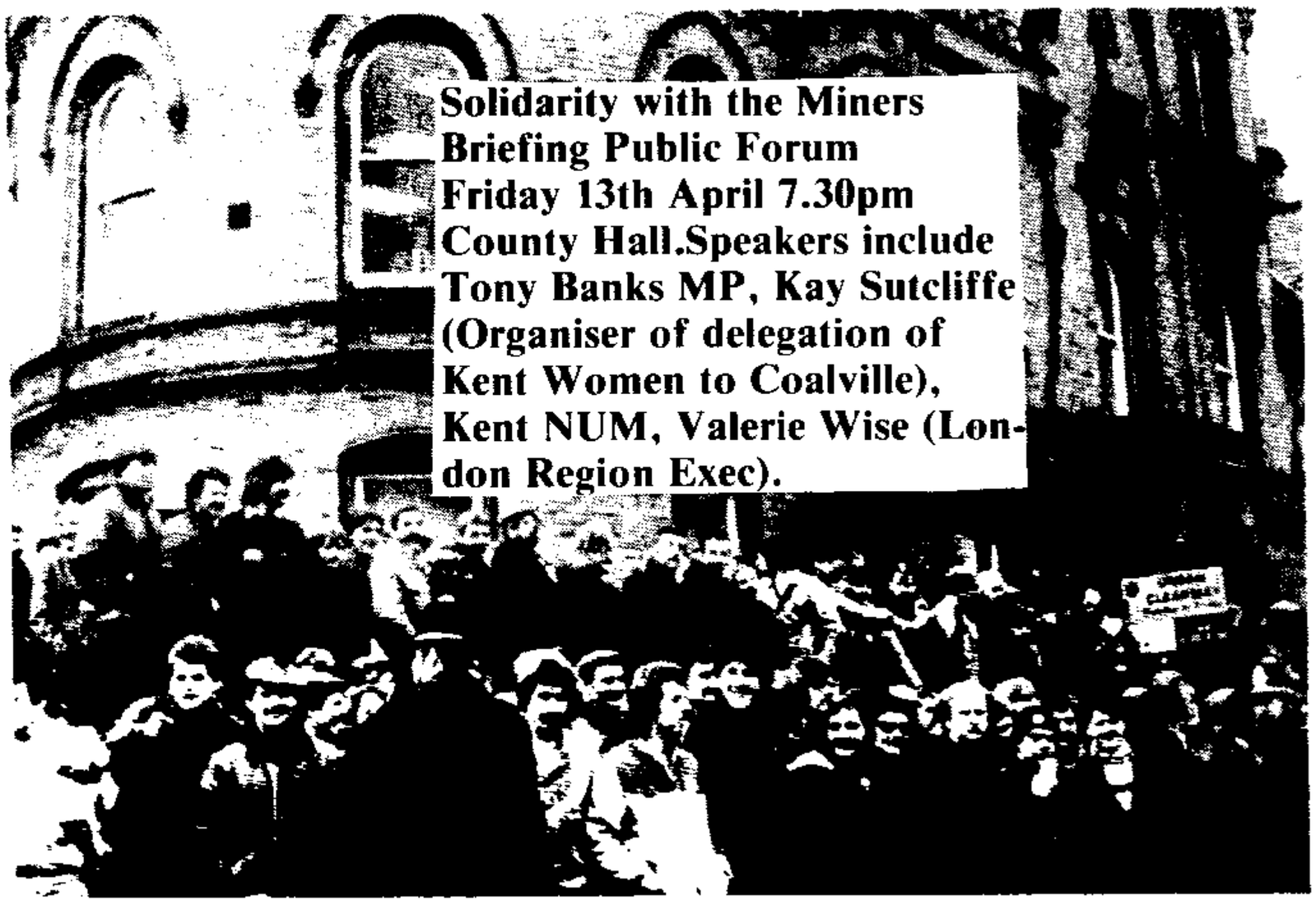
# MINERS MUST WIN!

*'The confrontation in the coalfields is rapidly turning into a push by the anti-parliamentary left to reverse the result of last June's general election. Having failed to remove Mrs Thatcher by the ballot box, the hard left is now trying to do it by force' said the Sunday Times.*

*The bourgeois press and the Tory government is furious at the revolt of the miners against the National Coalboard: The miners are striking against MacGregor's plan to run down, perhaps even eventually privatise, the coal industry. MacGregor believes he can do with the miners what was done in the steel strike of 1981 — isolate them from the rest of the class and force them to back down.*

*But MacGregor and Thatcher behind him may have bitten off more than they can chew. The Coalboard has decided to back off from using the anti-union legislation to take the NUM to court for secondary picketing. The use of 8,000 police to attack the right of militant miners to take their case to moderate miners and to restrict their movement around the country is backfiring as the labour movement rallies round to give its fullest support to the miners.*

*Both Len Murray and Neil Kinnock have remained quiet about this dispute, Tony Benn, in contrast, has come fully behind the Scargill leadership. It's high time that Neil and Len did the same. Name the day for Solidarity action we say. It's NOW that the whole movement must fight to ensure that the miners win.*



**Solidarity with the Miners Briefing Public Forum**
**Friday 13th April 7.30pm**
**County Hall.Speakers include Tony Banks MP, Kay Sutcliffe (Organiser of delegation of Kent Women to Coalville), Kent NUM, Valerie Wise (London Region Exec).**

**LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!**

# LONDON LABOUR IN



## Croydon

BY David Evans (Secretary Croydon North East Labour Party).

The labour movement in Croydon is solidly behind the miners. Kent miners have been staying in the area addressing union and Labour Party meetings, including T & G Thornton Heath Bus Garage, G & M District, Wandsworth and Croydon NALGO, Croydon TUC, Bromley Labour Party and Croydon North East Labour Party. At the GMC of Croydon North East, Johnny Moyle, Secretary of Betteshanger Colliery and a Labour Councillor stressed how vital the NUM's fight is to the entire labour movement: 'If we lose this fight it could set the labour movement back for 10 years, but we do not intend to lose. There is growing support for the strike amongst our members and among other trade unionists.'

In the last week over £800 has been collected for the Kent NUM fighting fund and this is expected to be doubled this week. Jack Younger is a faceworker at Betteshanger. 'I'm really impressed by the way things are going. The campaign has been taken over by the grass roots of the labour movement.'
Contact: Dave Evans, Croydon Trade Union Support Unit on 01-686 0219

## HORNSEY & WOOD GREEN LABOUR PARTY

An emergency resolution in support of the miners was discussed at the last GMC supporting the strike, opposing police presence on picket lines and pointing out that this was the way the government was attempting to silence all opposition. A public meeting is planned and the Women's section is considering a fund-raising benefit.
Contact: Yvonne Taylor on 01-482 1973 (W).

## HOLBORN AND ST PANCRAS LABOUR PARTY

The last GMC meeting unanimously supported a motion which congratulated the NUM on its stand against the government's destruction of the British coal industry. The motion also condemned the interference of the media in the dispute and the actions of the police. Members of the GMC agreed to offer accommodation in their homes to any miner required for picket duty in the London area, and £100 was collected for the NUM strike fund. The GMC also agreed to organise a rally in support of the miners, and a press release was sent out to make public the Party's support.

Since then the campaign committee of the London regional executive has agreed to support the rally, which is to be held on Monday 16th April.

For details of rally, contact: Fred Le Plat, 01-633 8064.

## BEXLEY HEATH

**Labour Party Young Socialists are organising a Public Meeting with Kent NUM speaker on Wednesday 11 April at 67, Pickford Lane at 8pm.**

## HACKNEY

**A solidarity campaign has been launched in East London. The Kent area NUM has allocated two miners to live in East London to build solidarity for the duration of the dispute. Several coachloads of supporters will be going to the Kent coalfields to show solidarity on 14 April, from North and East London Labour Parties. Coaches will leave from Islington, Hackney and Stratford in the late afternoon for Betteshanger Miner's Social Club. £3 waged, £2 unwaged and youth. Delegation is sponsored by Harry Cohen MP, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Kent Area NUM, Newham North West, Hackney North, Hackney South, Leyton, Walthamstowe and Islington North and Islington South Labour Parties. Friday 13th April, Hackney Labour Party Rally, Hackney Town Hall. Arthur Scargill has been invited to speak.**

*CONTACT:* **558 0069/519 0037 or 986 6439.**

## EALING

**The West London Trade Union Club has been handed over to miners who are already involved in dozens of workplace and factory visits. The Trades Council has set up meetings with Asian Community organisations in Southall to organise solidarity. Speakers are planned at Ealing, Southall and Ealing North GMCs.**
*CONTACT:* **Bob Wood 997 7440 (h).**

## SOUTH LONDON

**A Kent NUM speaker addressed the Battersea Labour Party GMC on Thursday 29 March and a collection took place. The GMC agreed to have speakers at all the wards. Battersea Labour Party is discussing a South London Labour Movement Rally jointly with South East London Labour Parties in support of the miners.**

## COUNTY HALL

County Hall workplace branch has organised a Solidarity rally for the lunchtime of Friday 13 April with speakers from the Kent NUM and Dennis Skinner MP. County Hall, first floor, 1pm.
Contact: Fred Le Plat on 01-633 8064

## GILLINGHAM

CLP has passed a resolution in support of the miners and decided on speakers and collections at every Labour Party meeting. Every month another collection will be organised until the strike ends.

Miners are picketing at Kings North Power Station and a public meeting is being arranged with a miner's wife and a Kent miner. Gillingham YS are producing a leaflet explaining why coal is vital to British industry.
Contact: Alisdair Williams on 0634 51973

## CAMPAIGN GROUP OF MPs

Miners' MPs are visiting coal fields. MPs are speaking at regional rallies and meetings and the Campaign group has arranged a meeting with the NUM. For further details of the Campaign group's activities, contact Alan Meal on 01-219 4532 or any member of the Campaign group at the House of Commons.

## BRENT

**Close links have existed between the Brent labour movement and the NUM since the 1972-74 disputes. Charrington's Coal Depot in Neasden was the focus for picketing in the area at the time. The miners returned this solidarity in 1976 when they provided the backbone for mass picketing outside the Grunwick gates.**

**Since the beginning of the recent dispute, Brent East Labour Party has played an active role. A resolution was unanimously passed at our GMC both supporting the strike and organising a public meeting with Brent South CLP and agreeing to assist on the picket lines at Charringtons. It was further agreed to pay fines of any cdes arrested on picket duty. £50 was collected as an initial contribution for the strike fund. Brent Trades Council has been co-ordinating assistance to miners staying in Brent. At a public meeting they raised £100. The local ASLEF branch has been maintaining and blacking the movement of coal and an NUR delegate to our CLP has been suspended for refusing to move a train.**

# SOLIDARITY ACTION

## NEWHAM NALGO

**Newham NALGO held a mass meeting to discuss taking strike action on democracy day on 27th March. 130 members of the Planning department heard a Kent miner explain the similarity between the struggle to defend local democracy and the miners fight against job loss.**

**Roger Godfrey stressed the gross infringements to miners democratic rights being carried out by the interference of police on picket lines. He described what happened to miners at the Dartford Tunnel. The way in which miners freedom of movement was being curtailed because they dared to fight for jobs was analogous to Thatcher's curtailment of the right to elect a local council in London and elsewhere.**

**Practical solidarity was shown through the collection of £30.**

**Bill Hamilton (Newham North East Labour Party Trade Union Liason Officer).**

## GLC/ILEA/NALGO

**Recent events involving the NGA, the Miners, the Civil Servants at GCHQ have all raised the question of where and when it is right for Trade Unions to break the law in defence of jobs. The current legislation could well be used to defeat our campaign to save the GLC and ILEA.**
**NALGO Broad Left Open Meeting 'Trade Unions, the Law' and Saving the GLC'. Kent NUM speaker April 25th County Hall, 6pm.**

## ACTTS (T&G)

**The Central London branch 1/524 met on April 2nd and had a guest speaker from the Kent NUM. A donation of £500 was given and a resolution passed calling on all parts of the labour movement the TUC, the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party to give their full support.**

**Pat Jordan (Hackney North CLP)**

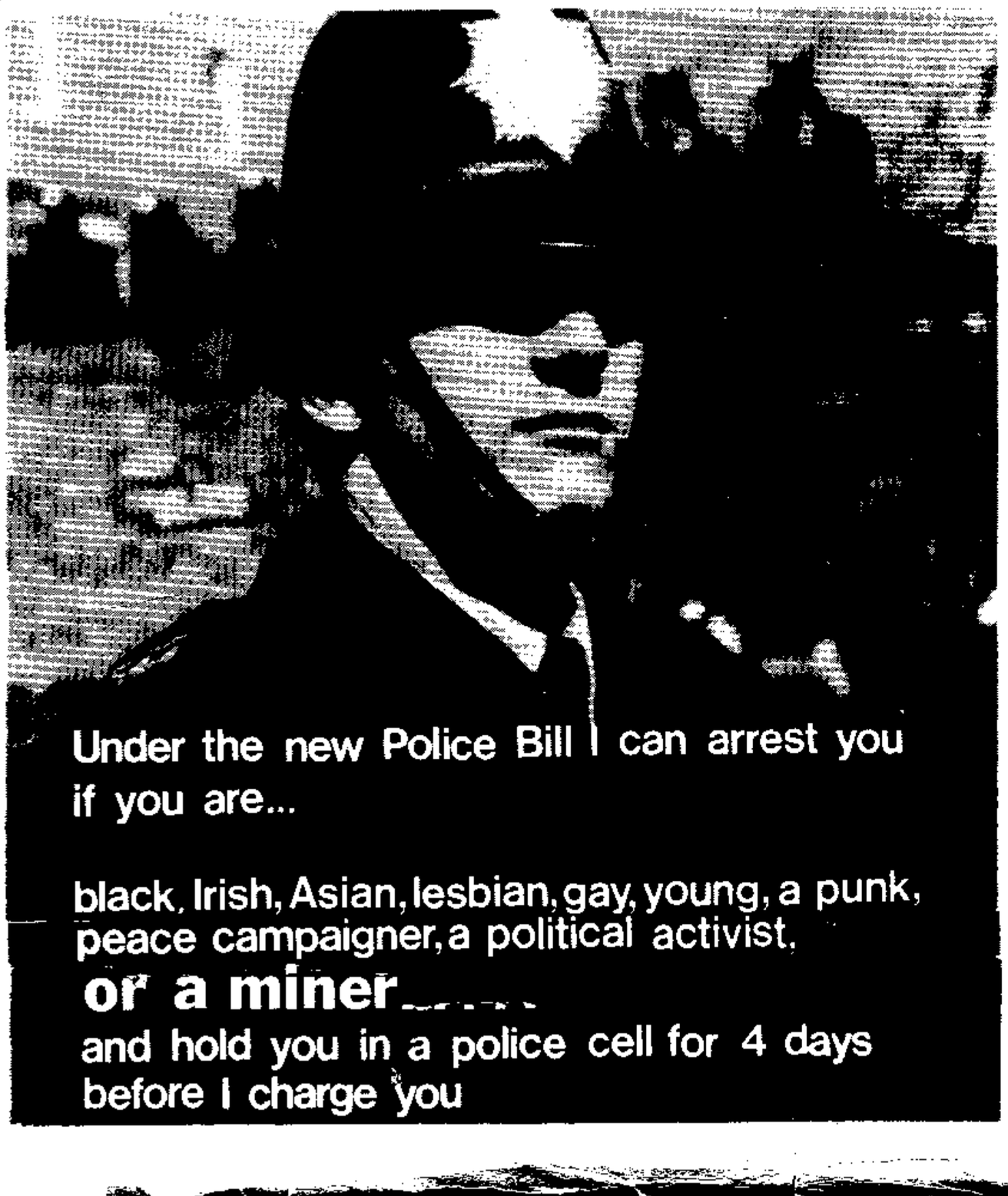
## How Labour-controlled Councils can help.

**By Pat Jordan (Hackney North CLP, Vice Chair).**

**Labour controlled councils can do a lot for the miners. They have at their disposal offices, printing facilities, accomodation and, most important of all, access to large numbers of workers.**

**Mass meetings can be organised with the council workforce and collections taken. In some cases solidarity strikes can be organised as a focus for showing how strongly the labour movement feels about the miners case. All libraries, council offices and notice boards should have posters and leaflets arguing the miners case. Office and printing facilities should be made available and special issues of council broadsheets printed explaining the real reason for the strike. Adverts can also be placed in the press.**

**All technical and legal obstacles to these solidarity actions must be swept aside. If the will is there — the way will be found. Anyone who equivocates in supporting this strike in the Labour Party should be taken on. Of course Tories, the Liberals, the right-wing of the Party, and their lackeys in the press will squeal. But let them. Their opposition will provide another opportunity to explain the issues.**




## Ballot for a place in the dole queue!

*London Labour Briefing* asked Jack Collins, President of the Kent Area NUM, about the democracy of the NUM.

**'Miners have got the right to sack me because they employ me but no miner has got the right to sack another miner by placing a cross on a piece of paper.**

**The people that are calling for a ballot are doing so to kill the present struggle. They've got the audacity to suggest that they want a ballot to RECOMMEND national strike action. Why do they want to do this when we're already on strike? Roy Ottey should accept a challenge and come into Kent and hold a ballot in Kent to determine whether he should be employed any longer. The answer he would give to this is that he's not employed by Kent miners, so we can't sack him. So why should he have the right to suggest that the miners in the Kent area should be thrown on the dole by the Coal board?**

**My area is one of the most democratic areas in the country and I'd ask the super-democrats, the 'Gang of Nine', to carry through their support for democracy to the National Executive. One of these people represents 600 miners in Cumberland. Another represents 1,000 miners in North Wales. They each have one vote on the executive. In Yorkshire there are 64,000 miners and they have 3 representatives. If we're talking about *real* democracy Yorkshire should have 63 votes not three. We'd like to see where they stand on the election of union officials in full-time posts as well. They think they are there for life!'**

## NUM addresses

**Kent NUM**

*Kent Area Address*
**Miners Offices,**
**Waterside House,**
**Cherry Tree Avenue,**
**DOVER CT16 2NJ**
**Tel 0304-206661**

*London Office Address:*
**T&GWU Offices,**
**Headland House,**
**308, Grays Inn Road,**
**London WC1 8DS.**
**Tel 01-278-7801 Ext 39.**

# WOMEN SUPPORT THE MINERS

**Kay Sutcliffe is a miner's wife from Kent. On Thursday 22 April she, along with two coachloads of women from Dover, arrived in Leicester to demonstrate their support for the Kent miners and the NUM. As her story reveals the women from Kent not only changed the minds of some Leicester women about the dispute but they gained a new self-confidence from their actions. Kay was talking to Valerie Coultas.**

'In the 1974 strike we had a small women's committee to organise distribution of food parcels to the miners. We kept our section going for a short while but when the mining industry got on its feet again we split up. We still had the basic structure when this new trouble came up.

The first meeting we held was last Tuesday. 40 women turned up. We weren't quite sure at first what to do. So I said I would like to take our Snowdown banner and march through Nottingham. Everyone thought this was a good idea. We approached the union and Jack Collins, Kent NUM, said he wouldn't tell us what to do but he made a suggestion that we might go to Leicester coalfields, because they were part of the South Midlands coalfield with Kent.

When we arrived in Coleville several men met us. It was our plan to do everything ourselves, carry our own banner and march as women like a women's peace march. But two of the men -- one was my husband – pointed out that the Snowdown banner was rather heavy, and we let them carry it.

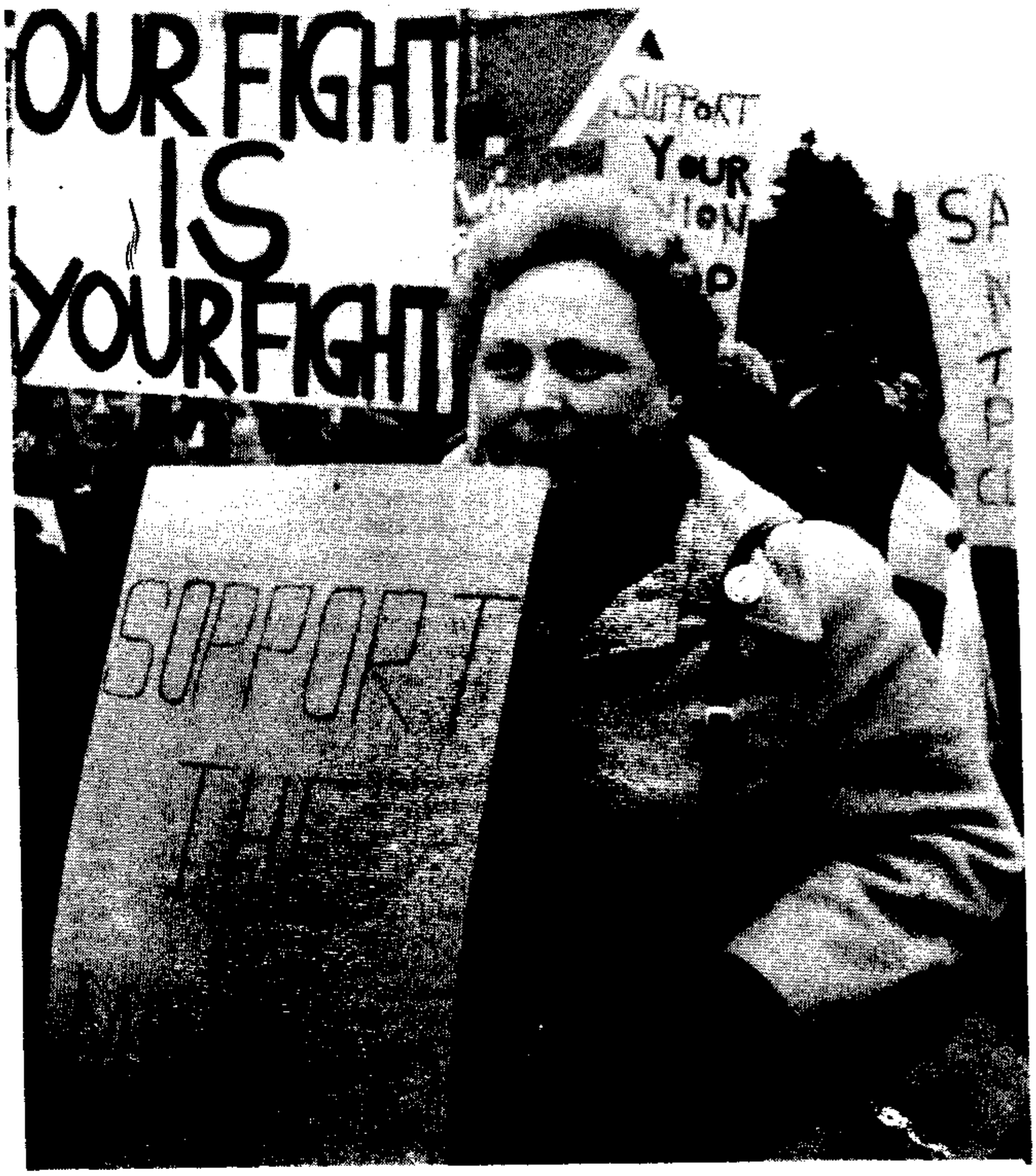
## 'WE'LL BEAT MACGREGOR'

We assembled at Scotland Road Playing fields and the march went ahead. 'Black is the colour, Mining is the game, we'll beat MacGregor and send him home again. We'll march on through the wind and rain, because Snowdown is our name', we sang as we were walking through the streets. Several local women abused us urging us to get back home but we ignored them and kept on with our march.

At the end, after I and one of the Yorkshire women had spoken, some Coleville women came up and confronted us. They were under the impression that when the pits were closed in Kent everyone had been promised a transfer to another pit or large sums of redundancy money. The Kent area has never been given such a guarantee. Women thought everyone had a job to go to. We finally convinced a couple of them that our men had no jobs to go to if all the pits were shut and they were very sympathetic.

## A CLOSE COMMUNITY

I can't really say that the response of the Kent women has surprised me entirely. We've got a very close community down here. Women have responded who are not only wives of miners but any woman who is closely involved with the community.




On Monday night we had another women's meeting. Numbers didn't dwindle, even more women turned up after they had heard what we'd done. We're ready and waiting for the next event. In 1974 it was different. I was 10 years younger and I had small children. Women were in the background receiving instructions. I've never known women get involved like this before. I think it was that silly photograph of a woman with a plastic gun in the *Daily Mirror*, saying that she wished she had a real one to shoot at Arthur Scargill that angered me most. Anyone who makes a threat like that should be taken to court! It was so important to me to show people that women supported the strike and the union.

## MY ANGER MOVED ME TO ACTION

It was my anger that moved me to action. Previously I've always taken a back seat and let others speak for me. My husband wasn't at home when I started to think about doing something – a good thing because if he had been I'd probably not have surprised myself so much. If someone had told me a fortnight ago that I'd get up and motivate other women I'd never have believed them. It just came so easily and I really enjoyed it.'

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