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Not in a hurry

nce the beginning of the year, in spite of the fact that the Government has published its proposals for the coal industry and National Coal Board (NCB) has announced its main proposals for the coal industry, Scargill downed the Government's proposals through negotiations through the NUM. Scargill said too many coal miners would be lost in the Government's proposals and is, in effect, an unprecedented ferocity in the police and the miners while Scargill said the NUM did nothing to prevent the confrontation at Orgreave was a great setpiece battle. Scargill lost the will of the union leadership and largely exhausted the union's resources.

Last week, while the NUM was saying that the deal was not done and was his doing, the NUM was collapsing around him. The union will not be laying the delegates and led to rubber-stamp the expulsion of NCB negotiators to settle the dispute. It is geographically tends to Leicestershire, Derbyshire, and Yorkshire. A deep anger among the miners whatever happens to the NUM will continue to exist. These men have not been defeated. They do not want to be. They do want to be. Their dream is to see themselves and other areas that the runaway union will unite, embracing the NUM membership.

The Nottingham NUM executive committee, where the schism began, is controlled by working miners. Things are much more complicated in other areas, notably the Midlands, where, with only 980 men on strike, out of a total force of 22,000. The NUM is divided into three branches controlled by pro-Scargill strikers. The dissatisfaction with the leadership expresses itself as antagonism to three Scargill proposals for change:

The now famous "Star Chamber" Rule 31 introduced in July aimed to give the NUM leadership power to discipline members at national rather than, as hitherto, at a local level.

Scargill's attempt to reorganize the NUM into areas to consolidate his authority of the national executive committee by merging moderate areas into larger groups with less resentment. The most glaring example of this is the plan to merge Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Midlands and the Power Group, representing 23,000 men, to have two seats on the present NCB executive. Militant Kent, with 2,000 men, would remain independent and retain its Working miners' groups calcu-

reorganization, if all result in a loss of jobs, and only one proposal to institute supercede area areas, each area currently and is, in effect, an union within the NUM.

Scargill cited his authority for the NUM conference. The same conference called for a ballot on pay and pit closures before a strike was called.

Although Scargill backed away from the second and third of these proposals, last week he tried to beat with a campaign of negotiations. He has only his own men.

The NUM is sending signals even from the union wants peace, a large number of men work, with the NUM the pressure on the NUM to negotiate grows every day from the confusions of the NCB executives. Many believe that the strike ended by negotiation. True negotiation is a present defeat for the nation since it will inevitably be further if they were in new language.

The time negotiated settlement. Scargill has to agree to the NUM's proposals of uneconomic pits within the procedures set out in the settlement last October with the NCB, the pit deputies' union. He must accept, in advance of the talks and in writing, that the board has the right to manage the industry.

There must be no equivocation. Those who call for a bridge over the built-up pits are the NUM. Scargill engaged the nation. He would do to the Thatcher government what the miners had done to the Heath government. He and his colleagues presided over unprecedented violence. The nation wants to see him defeated.

The Coal Board proposals are more than fair. They are still on the table. If Scargill and his colleagues do not have the courage to pick them up, they must be defeated - for the sake of the increasing number of working miners; for the sake of the members of other unions who have refused, despite great pressure from their own leaders, to be conned into industrial action by Scargillite arguments; for the sake of ordinary Britons everywhere who have loyally supported the Government.

The nation will not easily forgive those responsible if defeat, whether by compromise or fudge, is snatched from the jaws of victory.

Week

Will Star Wars split the West?

Even before it has been designed, President Reagan's anti-missile system has scored its first hit: the President's relationship with Mrs Thatcher. Little blood has been lost so far. But the hole - some diagnose it as more of a tear, or rift - is not necessarily going to heal and, under the stresses of the forthcoming arms negotiations, the injury could turn nasty.

The collision between the two leaders, which happened during the Prime Minister's visit to Camp David just before Christmas - resulted from their differing assessments of the prospects and even wisdom of "Star Wars". The impact has been serious because of so many differences: of government systems, views of the world, attitudes to technology, even of temperament.

Ronald Reagan's power as a political leader is his ability to persuade the American people to share his dreams. Right now, as his inaugural speech once again showed, he is in thrall to his vision of a world made safe by anti-missile defences. And he presides over an economy rich enough to pursue it.

Margaret Thatcher, by contrast, leads a country inclined by nature and history to manage the status quo rather than seek some dramatic new order, and her frugal soul is appalled by the mountains of money the Americans propose to gamble in search of one. Meanwhile, behind her stand some of the better brains Whitehall can currently muster, murmuring that the political consequences of the search - let alone of its success - could be very dangerous.

President Reagan was genuinely saddened to learn of her doubts at Camp David. Of course Her Majesty's Government had signalled its views well in advance and forms of words had been drafted to bandage over what everyone foresaw could be a deep gash. But Reagan has admired Mrs Thatcher for her courage and vision and was convinced she of all people would respond to what he sees as a noble venture. Instead, as one source put it, "she talked and talked, lectured him about her worries. And he realized she was just a European like all the others."

The agreed statement made after their meeting was a masterpiece of ambiguity. In return for very partial blessing of Reagan's present plans, Mrs Thatcher was able to announce agreement on four policy guidelines which mean as much or as little as either side wants. The British view is that they go to the heart of the Star Wars debate.

"The United States and western aim was not to achieve superiority but to



Freedman: government adviser opposed to anti-missile defence.

maintain balance, taking account of Soviet developments." British gloss: If the US were to perfect an anti-missile defence system beyond Soviet capability, that would effectively achieve western superiority, which is here disavowed. This points to SDI development only by agreement between the superpowers.

"SDI-related deployment would, in view of treaty obligations, have to be a matter for negotiations," British gloss: This is a statement of policy tactfully disguised as one of fact. The treaties that a missile defence would breach are the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and, perhaps, the 1967 Treaty on Outer Space.

But while the British regard as central the fact that the ABM Treaty is of unlimited duration, either side can abrogate it without negotiation merely by giving six months' notice and a written statement of the "supreme interests" which are said to justify this. And the outer space treaty bans from space only "weapons of mass destruction", meaning nuclear weapons, which the SDI programme does not envisage deploying.

"The overall aim is to enhance, and not to undermine, deterrence." The essence of the SDI debate is precisely whether missile defences would enhance or undermine deterrence. In other words, this represents American agreement to talk through the issue with its allies.

"East-West negotiation should aim to achieve security with reduced levels of offensive systems on both sides." This too goes to a core SDI

issue: whether a unilateral American deployment of missile defences would simply provoke a Soviet build-up of offensive missiles.

In the aftermath of Camp David, the reaction of those in the Administration committed to the "Star Wars" initiative has been politically tactful. Mrs Thatcher, it is said, is at heart as sound as ever, she has merely fallen prey to misguided advisers. Two are singled out: John Weston, the assistant under-secretary in charge of the Foreign Office defence and arms control departments; and Professor Lawrence Freedman, professor of war studies at Kings College, London. It is an eminence neither would relish.

Professor Freedman caused a stir in this small world last autumn with a detailed attack on the political and strategic implications of SDI in a paper he read to the annual conference of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Among the audience were substantial figures from the Reagan administration. When Freedman later allowed himself to be quoted by a major American newspaper as believing SDI to be "a hoax, an expensive hoax", his notoriety was sealed.

John Weston's selection is something of a compliment, coming as recognition that he has the most creative brain on strategic policy currently employed on the topic in Whitehall. In typical fashion, the three other first-rate minds available to the Government on this issue have been moved to posts outside

the arms control field: Sir Michael Quinlan to be permanent secretary at the Department of Employment, John Blesloch to oversee Defence Ministry management and budgets, and David Gillmore to be High Commissioner to Malaysia. Mr Weston himself moves to the Paris embassy in July. This may be good for career development, but it has impoverished Britain's voice at a risky time.

The greyer reality is that Mrs Thatcher's doubts derive not from some quirk of advisers but from a long-term Government review of the whole issue of missile defence.

The review began soon after President Reagan first shared his vision with the world in March 1983, although it appeared to gather momentum only last spring, after the first American briefing teams had come to Nato to explain just what the president had in mind. The review was made initially by the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence - including scientists from the latter's technical establishments - with the Cabinet Office overseeing the results for presentation to a small group of senior ministers, chaired by the Prime Minister. The whole process was completed only weeks before the Camp David visit.

The review's technical conclusion, very broadly, was that nothing in the laws of physics appears to make SDI impossible, but that its technological problems are likely to prove so formidable as to defeat even the Americans. In policy terms, however, the review marshalled reasons for concern at the impact SDI could have upon superpower stability, strategic doctrine, Nato policy and conventional military budgets. (The implications for Britain's Trident programme were far from the biggest item on this "worry" list. The far-off timetable of Star Wars was held to reduce its impact on Trident.)

All of these issues, the Government hopes, remain for discussion between America and her allies: the Camp David communique was really an effort to establish interim ground-rules. "Alliance solidarity" is the motto. What gives focus to Whitehall worries is the very real prospect that Moscow will exploit these differences of opinion in the forthcoming arms talks: To take the simplest case: what would happen if Russia were to propose deep cuts in its missile forces in exchange for American abandonment of the "Star Wars" project? On the basis of present policy, President Reagan would be bound to reject that offer. The uproar that would follow in Europe could dangerously jeopardise the Nato alliance.