

REBUILD THE HACKNEY TRADE UNION

MOVEMENT

Hackney Union News (HUN) has been produced by the members of Hackney Trade Union Support Unit. (TUSU) It is intended to print it, at least, six times a year in English and Turkish. Letters, articles, cartoons and comments are welcome and should be sent to the address above.

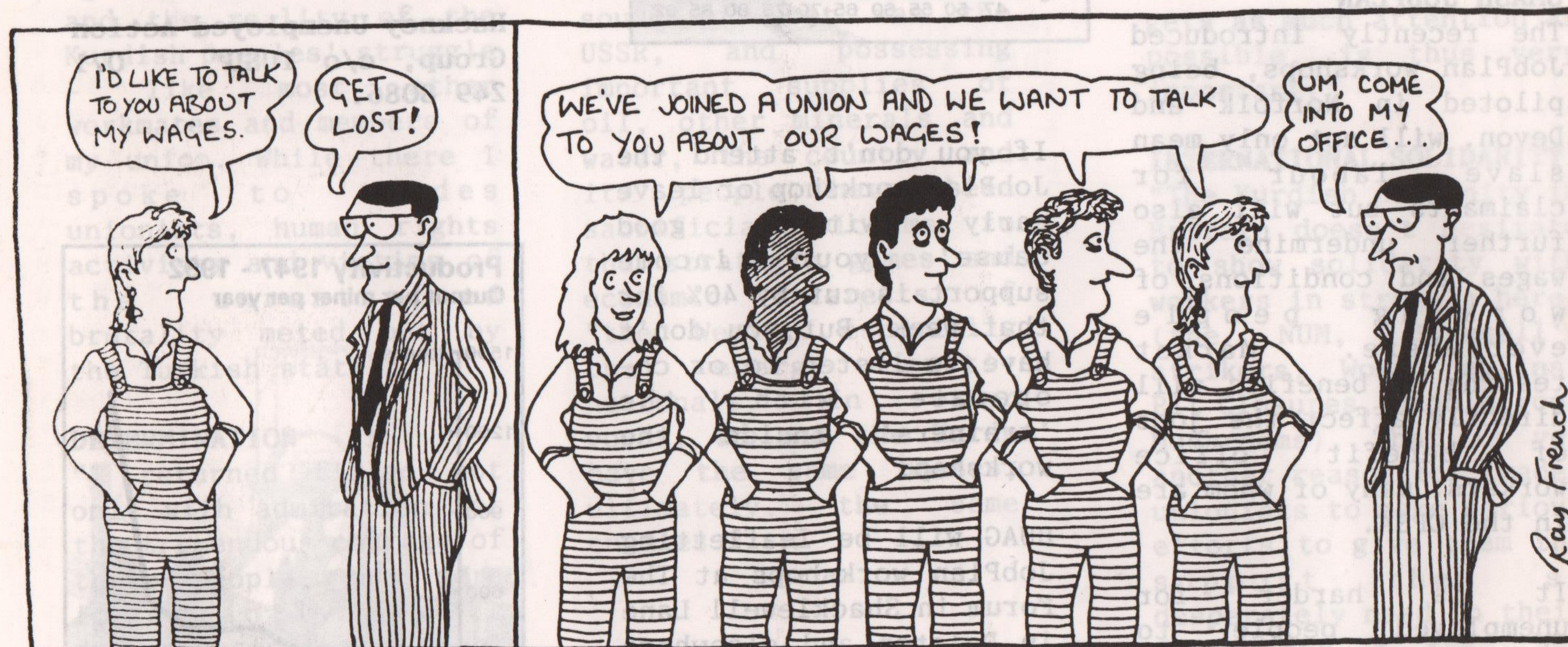
We hope to use Hackney Union News as a means to organise trade unionists, launch trade union recruitment campaigns amongst non-union workers and the unemployed, spread information, give advice on employment rights, build solidarity and encourage debate so that we can help rebuild the trade union movement in Hackney.

Hackney Trade Union Support Unit has an office in the Colin Roach Centre, premises that it shares with Hackney Community Defence Association; which supports the victims of police violence and injustice.

TUSU is independent and unfunded and relies solely on donations from trade union branches and membership fees. Involved are delegates, individuals and shop stewards from a wide variety of organisations including UNISON, COHSE, NUT, CPSA, TGWU, UCW, Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, Daymer Turkish and Kurdish community centre, Labour Party, SWP; as well as unemployed activists.

Activities and decisions are taken at a monthly meeting on the last Thursday of the month at 7.30pm - the next meetings are on September 30th, October 28th and November 26th. They are in the Colin Roach Centre at 10a Bradbury Street N16.

Membership costs £5 waged, £2 waged and branch affiliations of £25. Donations gratefully received. Fill-in the form below.



I would like to become a member of Hackney Trade Union Support Unit.

Name.....Organisation.....
Address.....
Phone.....

Enclose either £5 waged or £2 unwaged and return to HTUSU, c/o Colin Roach Centre, 10a Bradbury Street, London N16 8JN.

FREE/donations welcome

HACKNEY UNION NEWS

October 1993

UNITE ALL OUR STRUGGLES

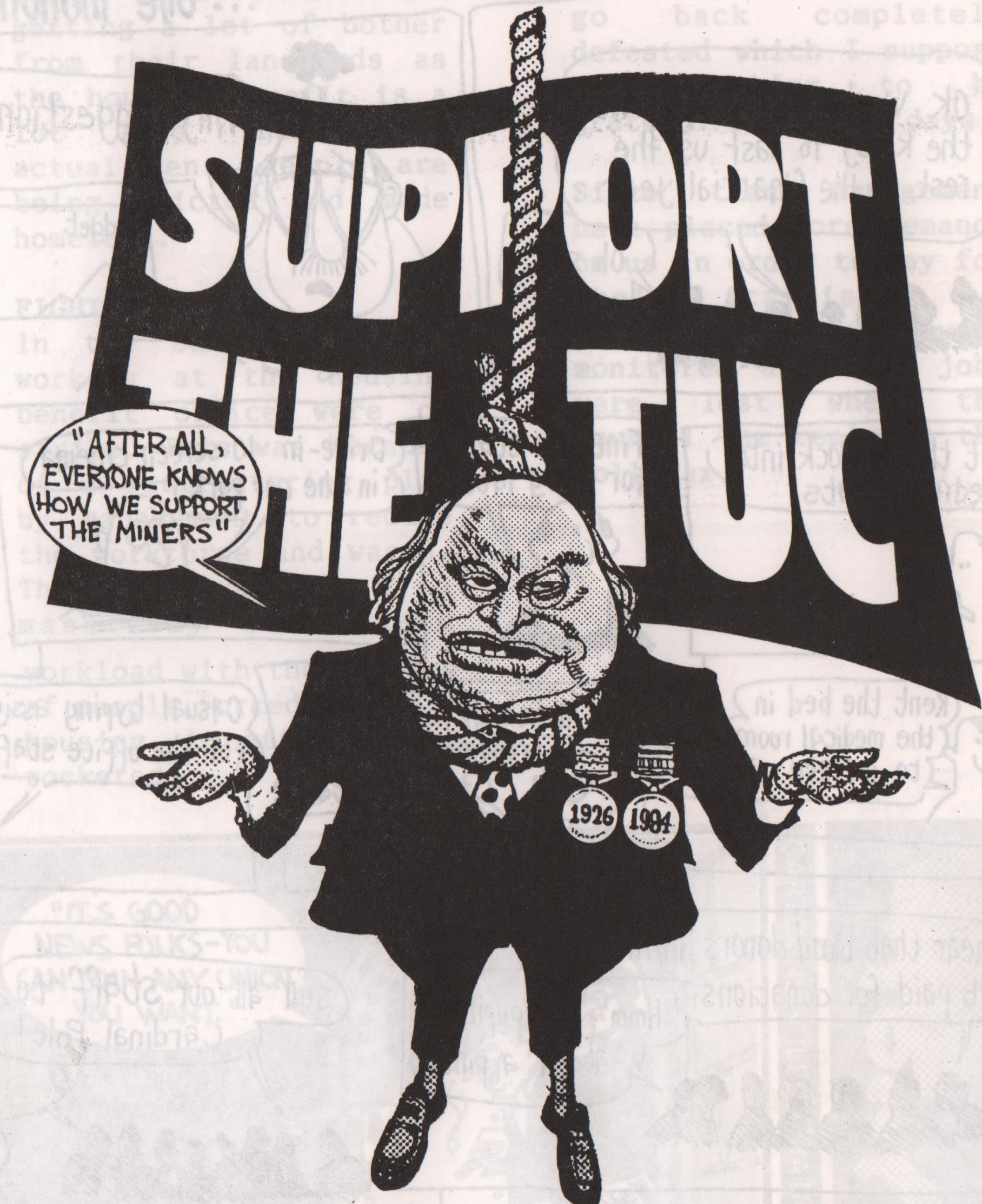
These are critical times. Everyone is under attack, no one's job is safe, social security benefits are being slashed, black workers face attacks by racists and the new asylum laws, people are being forced to work longer hours for less pay, young people face the prospect of a future without work...and the attacks are increasing!

We believe that no single group of workers is capable of waging a struggle against the attacks being mounted by the Government, employers and in Hackney, the Labour council.

Whilst there has been resistance with strikes by rail, hospital and council workers, miners and Timex it is only by combining our forces that we can hope to fightback and organise the strike and community action needed to reverse all cuts and job losses.

We can't wait for John Major to be replaced by the invisible man, John Smith, or for the Trades Union Congress to organise a general strike. Such 'demands' are really calls to do nothing.

Neither can we rely on the leadership of the local council to do much more than continue it's practice of carrying out Tory cuts. As workers and unemployed we must do it ourselves.



In Hackney that means organising all who want to fight into a single body composed of workers and the unemployed from different unions, communities and political parties.

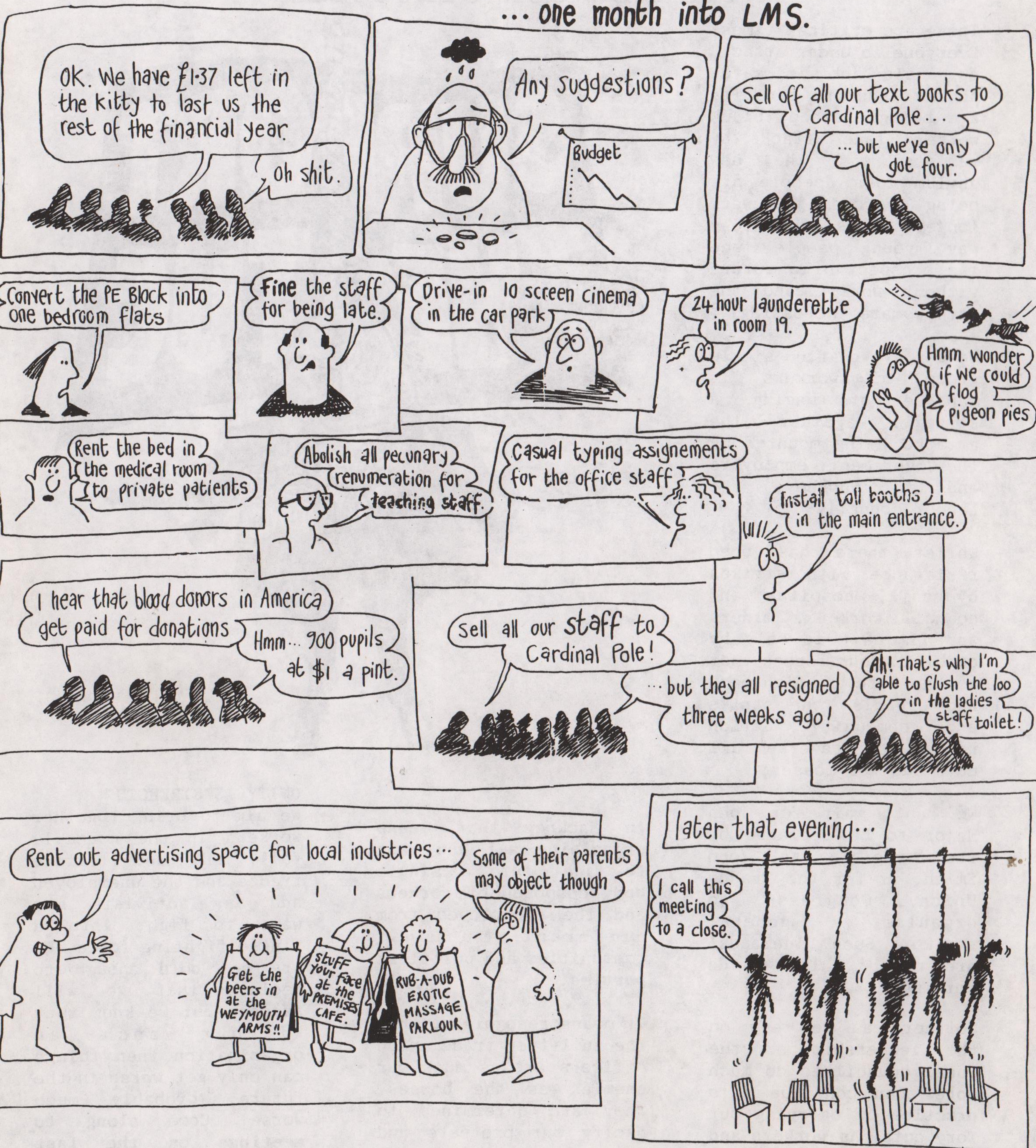
It means recognising that the full-time trade union officers are as much our enemies as the bosses. They are determined to pacify our protests and stop the strike action needed.

UNITY IS STRENGTH

We aim to bring together workers in the council, rail, NHS and textile trades and the unemployed and any activists who want to fight into a single fighting force. We are not bold enough to declare that we will succeed but we know that without such an organisation then things can only get worse in the future, probably much worse! Come along to meetings on the last Thursday of the month and get involved.

Produced by Hackney Trade Union Support Unit members.

The Fiscal Reality Gap Working Party... ... one month into LMS.



HOUSING BENEFIT CHAOS

The housing benefit office in Mare Street is in crisis. There are over 16,000 pieces of post waiting to be linked and probably up to 8,000 cases waiting to be assessed. Files are piled everywhere in an air of chaos and desperation.

Managers had promised to the council that all the backlog would be cleared by April 1993, now they predict August 1993, we are predicting April 1994 - but only if you are lucky.

The only way that people's housing benefit gets dealt with is if they actually come in the office and queue for hours or if they ring. Housebound people without a phone are not likely to get benefit. So much for 'equal opportunities.'

DELAYS

It is not unusual for people to wait six months for their housing benefit. In addition the rent office is currently bring down rents very sharply - and that means many claimants are getting a lot of bother from their landlords as the housing benefit is a lot less than their actual rent. People are being evicted and made homeless.

FIGHTING BACK

In the summer of 1992 workers at the Housing benefit office were on strike. This was because of a restructuring plan by management to reduce the workforce and wages. The background was a massively increased workload with the numbers of people forced to claim housing benefit having rocketed.

We did not get much out of the strike - an upgrading for some but most workers were downgraded and jobs were lost. At least we didn't go back completely defeated which I suppose is something to be grateful for these days.

Since then management have placed more demands on us in order to pay for their crisis. Our productivity is always monitored and more jobs were lost when the Council Tax replaced the Poll Tax.



CARTOONS • ILLUSTRATIONS • PUBLICITY • DESIGNS



BENEFIT CRISIS (2)

Recently a new top manager was appointed. Lesley Burr showed what she was made of when she refused to allow a union meeting after a porter was brutally attacked on the reception by a claimant.

She apparently remarked that the union had been running the office for too long (if only!) and refused us permission to have union meetings on council property - until we walked out at the end of July. The walkout was over the fact that the management wanted us to cover reception. (ie paper over the cracks)

It was great as it was a clear sign of our strength and management were certainly surprised by it! We did get our time-off meeting and the workers who had been disciplined had the warnings removed from their files. However one worker has now been sacked for being ill.

UNITY

The only way to stop cuts is through action. If we want to improve our lives - then we've got to do it ourselves. So it means talking to each other (thus congratulations to TUSU for bringing out this bulletin as part of

this process), it means bringing together our various struggles and fights. It means sticking together and having no illusions - it means taking the fight to them by all possible means.

Finance directorate stewards have initiated a lobby of the finance sub-committee's meeting on Wednesday October 13th at 7pm at Hackney Town Hall - at this meeting the management will be presenting their plans for the next round of cuts.

PUT PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS

Community Care workers who are angry at the introduction of the Community Care Act in April and the refusal of the trade union leadership to oppose its effects have organised a meeting on Wednesday September 22nd at 7.30pm in the Samuel Pepys on Mare Street. In this article one of the organisers tells us why.

The Government is undermining our ability to provide decent person-centred services. The Community Care Act stipulates that 85% of the funding from social services must be spent in the private or voluntary sector. A survey by the public sector unions reported in May that nationally over 500 old people's homes were closed or privatised in the run up to the changes.

Across the country direct provision for people with learning disabilities and grants to voluntary groups were massively reduced.

There is uncontrolled panic by managers at the implications of the Act - that each project must compete financially in a 'deregulated' marketplace environment. Cost cutting is now the only aim of care service managers.

Workers have experienced major changes in the political climate at the workplace level with a new ruthlessness towards those who speak out. With ineffective trade unions, managers have steamrollered an approach closely resembling that of running a workhouse.

TOO EXPENSIVE

The Government's comments about the increasing budget for social services betrays their worry that too many working class people are living longer, and therefore needing some sort of care. They intend to resolve the issue by destroying access to free, good quality support and care for people who need it.

RESISTING

Hackney already suffers from chronic underfunding of public services, and Community Care in the borough is at crisis point - particularly in Mental Health. If resistance is to start anywhere then here would be an obvious starting point.

The union bureaucracy have done nothing to resist the attacks. UNISON is now the dominant union and it has already proved to be more interested in offering cheap insurance and magazines than fighting privatisation. Workers with common interests are isolated in different unions or branches.

UNISON
the public service union

RANK AND FILE RESISTANCE

Workers at Hackney Independent Living Team, who provide residential support for people with learning disabilities, have called the meeting to set up a Community Care Worker's Liaison Group to build resistance to attacks on pay, conditions and jobs.

The aim is to organise genuine, militant, rank and file resistance to the attacks with workers in control of any action, and without the constraints and bureaucracy of the present union organisations. Come along on the 22nd of September.

**SUPPORT
THE
MINERS
NUM**

Resistance to the destruction of the mining communities is continuing. At the forefront of the struggle are 'Women against Pit Closures.' There are three pit camps which need your support.

Grimethorpe Pit Camp:
nr Barnsley, S72 7NB.
Tel. 0226 780787.

Parkside Pit Camp:
Winwick Road, Newton-
le-Willows,
Merseyside. Tel.
0925 291799.

Rufford Pit Camp:
Kirklington Road,
Rainworth, nr
Mansfield. Tel.
0623 496080.



BURNSALL STRIKERS

After fourteen months on strike, fourteen mainly Asian women remain determined to win their struggle against the bosses of Burnsalls in Smeethwick, Birmingham.

Disgustingly their union, the GMB, has withdrawn official support making it more important than ever that rank and file trade unionists support the workers struggle for a decent wage, union recognition, improved health and safety conditions and equal pay for women.

Further information from Balvir Singh, 82 Rosefield Rd, Smeethwick, Birmingham, B67 6DX. Tel. 021-565 5416.

Protest letters to the GMB can be sent to GMB Head Office, 22-24 Worple Rd, Wimbledon SW16. Demand that the union restores backing and strike pay and steps up the dispute.

COUNCIL PAYS COPS AND ROBBERS

Hackney Council Spending (£millions)						
Financial Year	87/88	88/89	89/90	90/91 ¹	91/92	92/93 ²
Net expenditure	114.5	104.9	111.9	261.9	257.4	272.4
Police precept	6.6	6.9	9	15.9	17.6	18.4
Capital projects	71.3	68.5	79	52.3	54.3	38.4
Education	-	-	-	105.4	104.8	115.5
Social Services	45.1	47.3	52.8	56.8	51.6	53.5

¹ This is the first year after ILEA was abolished and London boroughs became responsible for the education budget. ² Figures only an estimate for this year.

NO CONTROL

What's also very worrying is the way in which the council manages it's capital projects. A report earlier this year admitted an overspend of over £10 million attributing it "to the consequences of the deficiencies in management control of the Capital Programme and individual schemes." So is any responsibility for this going to be apportioned? Are heads going to roll for this waste of public money? No.

The amount of money given to the police by Hackney Council has jumped by 178% from £6.6 million in 1988 to £18.4 million in 1992/3. Meanwhile between 1990 and 1992/3 capital project spending for estate renovation, house building and road construction has been halved from £79 to £38.4 million.

Capital projects are contracted out to private firms (not the council's own DLO) and are heavily controlled by a central government that has benefitted from major donations from private building firms.

Part of the fall is supposed to be made up with the infamous 'City Challenge' money of £37.5 million over five years. This is supposed to attract private money but we have yet to hear of any definite investments in this time of recession.

Questions should be asked about the management of projects and the way contracts are awarded to private contractors seemingly revelling in easy money made from winning them. Are the tenders for such contracts being inflated with public money going on boosting the profits of private companies?

If the council doesn't ensure that we are paying a proper price for the work done in Hackney by private companies then they are an accomplice in the fleecing of Hackney residents for work done.

DRUGS AND ASSAULTS

The police precept is the only area of the budget that has increased. Hackney Council gives £18.4 million to a police force that has given us a drugs scandal in Stoke Newington Police Station and has violently assaulted local people resulting in serious injuries and deaths. Meanwhile there is a serious crime wave taking place in Hackney.

The problem is that the people of Hackney are the butt of the current Tory government's anti-working class economic and social policies. The Labour Party has, however, at both national and local level failed to represent working class people.

MORE CUTS

* As we go to press we have been informed that the council leaders will be looking to make over £12 million cuts in 1994, which is around 7% of its total budget. 'Secret' documents show that they want to postpone these cuts until after the May local elections.

POLICE PROVOCATION IN HACKNEY

Hackney Community Defence Association released a statement on 26 August which was covered by a number of black papers, like the Caribbean Times. The Hackney Gazette chose to ignore it, as they have done with most things that concern local people. We reprint it without comment.

In the six weeks ending 25 August, 23 cases of police malpractice have been reported to Hackney Community Defence Association (HCDA) involving officers from Stoke Newington, Hackney and City Road police stations.

Every year tension on Hackney's streets increases during the summer months and then subsides in the Autumn.

This year, however, police officers seem determined to provoke a riot on our streets at a time when local people are doing everything possible to calm the situation. Five of the cases of malpractice involve persons being arrested at police stations after they have gone to record complaints against police officers.

HCDA believes there are several reasons for this deliberately aggressive policing. We do not know if it is with the sanction of senior officers.

* The Operation Jackpot enquiry into corruption at Stoke Newington police station was completed in late July. It is possible that police officers are seeking revenge against the local community for exposing police crime at the station.

* Police officers are engaging in political activity to attract public support for their opposition to the Sheehy recommendations on police responsibilities and awards. It is possible that junior officers are deliberately provoking public disorder in an inner city area so they can gain public sympathy from other parts of the country.

The victims of these police crimes, and the people who have witnessed them, have all reported that serious disorder has only been prevented by people remaining calm. All those concerned have expressed fears that police are deliberately provoking people to attack them. Our community's experiences of riot situations are that the police win. Hackney people do not want a riot.

PRESENTING, YOUR COMMUNITY RELATIONS EXPERT!

HAND PICKED AT HENDON FROM THOUSANDS OF APPLICANTS, SUBJECTED TO RIGOROUS TESTS, SUCH AS ESSAYS ETC. IN ORDER TO ASSURE THAT ONLY THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE QUALITIES...

CONTINUED ON P. 250



THE RAW RECRUIT THE POLISHED EXPERT
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE?

SUPPORT SUDANESE TRADE UNIONISTS FIGHTING FOR THEIR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS.

"We are an organisation of Sudanese trade unionists in exile who have been forced to flee our homeland because of our union activities.

We have not given up our struggle or forgotten our comrades who remain in Sudan. On June 30th 1989 a military dictatorship seized power and since that time Sudan has one of the world's worst human and trade union right's records. The regime which rules has imposed strict control.

Devasted by civil war, the south is also suffering the effects of a severe famine. Many trade union leaders and activists have been imprisoned without charge in 'ghost' houses (secret detention centre) and some have been executed. Trade Union activities have been outlawed.

In December 1992 the UN General Assembly passed a resolution condemning the Sudanese regime's abuses (torture and summary execution) of it's citizens.

We appeal for the support of British Trade Unions. We ask you to:-

- * issue our support resolutions
- * send protest letters to 'The President, O El Bashir, Republican Place, Khartoum, Sudan
- * Make a donation to our campaign
- * Invite a speaker to address your meeting (s)
- * Write to your MP about the Sudanese situation- For further details telephone 081 960 9649 or write to 5 Brewster Gardens, London W10 6AG.

FASCIST ATTACK IN HACKNEY

On Saturday August 7th at Old Street Tube, a group of 20 to 25 fascists attacked Tony H, an active anti-fascist. He was repeatedly kicked and hit. While unconscious, half a paving slab was thrown at his head but luckily missed. Three women friends were also attacked but not injured.

POLICE INACTION

Tony was taken into the ticket office, where the fascists tried to attack him again, saying that they knew where he lived and would kill him. It took the police 25 minutes to arrive from the nearby police station and they took no action despite Tony pointing out some of his attackers. The police took Tony home where he collapsed. A group of fascists had been there and smashed his windows.

Tony was taken to hospital by friends where he was x-rayed and found to have internal injuries, injuries to his ribs and lacerations to his neck.

TIME TO ACT

Tony H says the attack is not surprising as the fascists are known to be violent, but the scale and planning of the attack does. It indicates that the they have tightened up their organisation and become more effective. If you have any information about this attack or any other fascist activities, please contact us. And if you are interested in fighting fascism, get in touch with us. Hackney Anti-Fascist Collective, Box 24, 136 Kingsland Road E8.



SMASH SWEATSHOPS

TUSU members are working with Turkish and Kurdish organisations before beginning a recruitment campaign. Mustafa of Day-Mer in Howard Road N16 explains more.

'Daymer was founded 3 years ago. It aims to defend the rights of Turkish and Kurdish people living in London, strengthen solidarity between them and emerge as a community rather than as individuals.

SWEATSHOPS

The majority of the Turkish and Kurdish community work in the textile trades in bad conditions, with low wages, overtime, few legal rights, no job security and denied the right to join a union. We want to change this and we have been coming to the TUSU meetings in order to discuss how we might best develop a strategy to change this. In the next few months we hope to launch a recruitment campaign.

The people who work in the catering, restaurant or bakery trade also work in the same conditions and are subjected to intensive exploitation.

MINIMUM DEMANDS

In recent weeks bakery workers have demonstrated a willingness to struggle for a maximum working week of 40 hours and minimum pay of £4 an hour. At the moment they get £150 for a 72 hour working week. Leaflets have been produced and regular meetings have been held - to which TUSU members have attended and given valuable advice.

At the end of October a meeting is to be held on 'Improving the wages and conditions of immigrant workers.' This will be on a Sunday at the Halkevi - details out shortly.

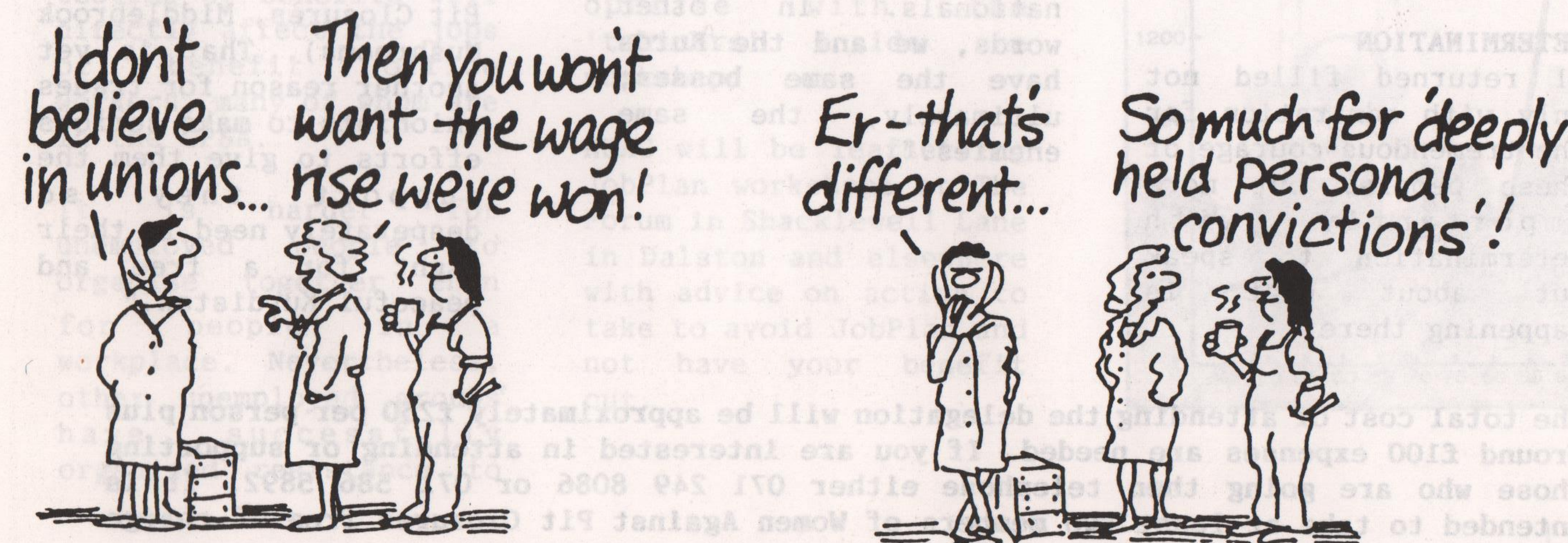
Macdonald's

Two members of Greenpeace, Dave and Helen, are being sued by MacDonaldis - the largest retail property company and food service organisation in the world.

Their 'crime' is to have printed the truth about MacDonaldis' exploitation of workers, animals, the environment and customers.

In Hackney two years ago the company was forced to allow workers to be recruited into the union but the management told the workers that the company would never recognise the union.

The McLibel Two need your support. Contact McLibel Support Campaign, c/o London Greenpeace, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1. 071 837 7557.



VISIT KURDISTAN IN NOVEMBER

Between Friday November 19th and November 26th Hackney Trade Union Support Unit and the Kurdistan Solidarity Committee is organising a delegation of trade unionists to visit parts of Kurdistan under Turkish rule. This will offer a chance to see the situation faced by the Kurdish workers and peasants living there.

Sue Samuel of Hull Trades Union Council visited Kurdistan with three other trade unionists in 1992. "We visited three Kurdish cities and spoke to fellow trade unionists from a wide variety of sectors, I'd encourage any activist believing in internationalism to support this year's visit, either by attending themselves or by obtaining financial support from union branches to help someone else attend."

"Before going to Kurdistan I was quite ignorant of the country and the reality of the Kurdish peoples' struggle - like most other workmates and members of my union. While there I spoke to trades unionists, human rights activists and victims of the unrestrained brutality meted out by the Turkish state."

DETERMINATION

"I returned filled not only with admiration for the tremendous courage of these people, but more importantly with determination to speak out about what is happening there."

The total cost of attending the delegation will be approximately £250 per person plus around £100 expenses are needed. If you are interested in attending or supporting those who are going then telephone either 071 249 8086 or 071 586 5892. It is intended to take at least two members of Women Against Pit Closures free of charge and donations are therefore required.



KURDISH POPULATION ESTIMATES

Middle and north-west Kurdistan (Turkey)	15 million
East Kurdistan (Iran)	7 million
South Kurdistan (Iraq)	4 million
South-west Kurdistan (Syria)	1.5 million
Outside Kurdistan including Soviet Union	3 million

"Kurdistan may seem remote from our lives and experiences because it is geographically distant. In reality there is an intimate connection. Situated directly to the south of what was the USSR, and possessing important supplies of oil, other minerals and water, the country and its people have been sacrificial victims to the strategic games and economic interests of 'the West', especially the energy multi-nationals. In other words, we and the Kurds have the same bosses; ultimately, the same enemies."

"This is one reason why events in Kurdistan receive so little publicity in the media here. The work of delegations which report back on the true situation, and make sure that this information gets as much attention as possible, is thus very important."

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY.

"The Kurdish community in Britain doesn't hesitate to show solidarity with workers in struggle here. (the NUM, Burnsall's strikers, Women against Pit Closures, Middlebrook Mushrooms). That is yet another reason for trades unionists to make serious efforts to give them the support they so desperately need in their fight for a free and peaceful Kurdistan."

SIGNING ON : FIGHTING BACK

Having just recently been set-up the Hackney Unemployed Action Group (HUAG) is aiming to campaign around the erosion of benefits and claimants rights; whilst also offering advice for unemployed people experiencing difficulties with benefit claims.

The Tories have been attacking the unemployed for years by massaging the figures, reducing benefit to well-below the poverty line, forcing us on to rip-off schemes, stopping benefits for 16 and 17 year olds and students, hitting single parents through the Child Support Act, targeting 'vulnerable' sections of society such as refugees, disabled people and people who are ill.

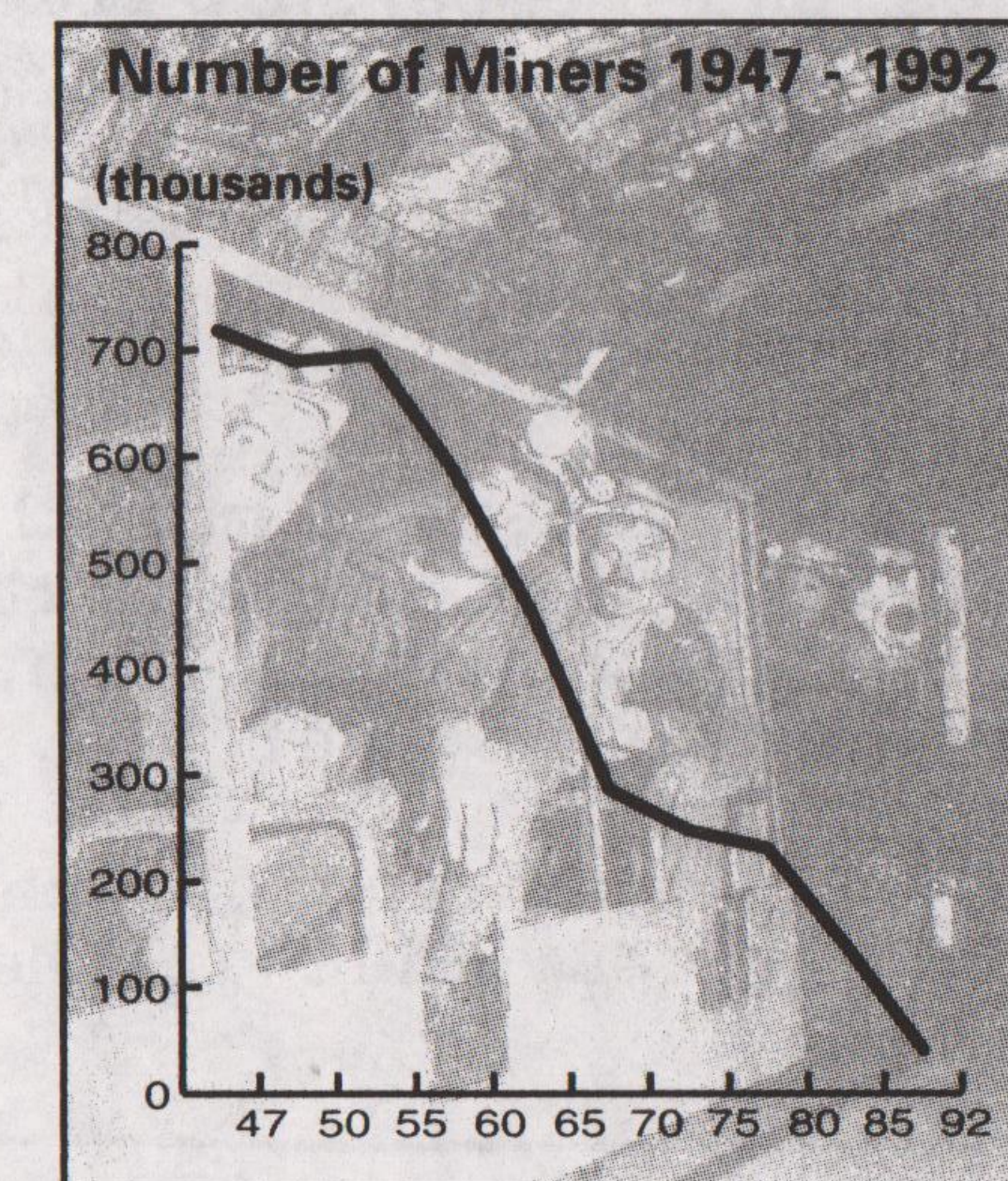
Alongside the attacks on wages and conditions of working people to boost the employers profits, unemployed people who have endured various ineffective training schemes are ultimately going to be forced to work for our dole.

SMASH JOPLAN

The recently introduced JobPlan workshops, being piloted in Norfolk and Devon, will not only mean slave labour for claimants but will also further undermine the wages and conditions of working people everywhere. Market testing of benefits will directly affect the jobs of benefit office workers, many of whom are in the CPSA.

It is harder for unemployed people to organise together than for people in a workplace. Nevertheless, other unemployed groups have successfully organised resistance to

the week-long courses run for the government by private companies as a money-making venture. Various people who have attended have described the workshops as 'patronising,' 'guilt-tripping the unemployed' and of being 'treated like nursery school kids.'



If you don't attend the JobPlan workshop or leave early 'without good cause' your income support is cut by 40% for that week. But you don't have to listen to or co-operate with the 'trainers' inside the workshop.

HUAG will be leafletting JobPlan workshops at The Forum in Shacklewell Lane in Dalston and elsewhere with advice on action to take to avoid JobPlan and not have your benefit cut.

Unemployment			
	Official (000s)	% of working population	On old basis (000s) ¹
1992			
May	2,708	9.6	3,816
June	2,678	9.5	3,865
July	2,774	9.8	3,886
August	2,846	10.1	3,948
September	2,847	10.1	3,998
October	2,814	10.0	4,017
November	2,864	10.1	4,064
December	2,983	10.6	4,147
1993			
January	3,062	10.8	4,164
February	3,043	10.8	4,136
March	2,997	10.7	4,086
April	3,001	10.7	4,089
May	2,917	10.4	4,055

¹ Calculated by Unemployment Unit, 409 Brixton Road, London SW9 7QG.

LINKING UP WITH UNIONS

We hope to work with the CPSA and London-wide unemployed groups on a national demonstration, and a high-profile 'publicity stunt' highlighting the continuing rich/poor divide. Other action gets decided at our meetings at 7pm on the first and third Tuesday of each month at the Colin Roach Centre.

Hackney Unemployed Action Group, c/o TUSU 071 249 8086.

Productivity 1947 - 1992

Output per miner per year

