

# UNION CITY NEWS

BULLETIN OF NOTTINGHAM TRADES COUNCIL

ISSUE 5

## UNION YES WEEK

Nottingham Trades Union Council, in conjunction with the Regional TUC will be launching our "Union Yes" week on Saturday November 2nd in the Market Square between 10am & 2pm. All unions are encouraged to bring stalls, displays and leaflets to the Square on the day. During the following week stalls and displays

will be situated in many public places around the city. Help is needed from you and your union all that week. If you can spare some time to staff a stall or your union can provide displays and leaflets then please contact Steve Battlemuch (President Nottingham TUC) at 191 Burford Rd, Forest Fields,

Nottingham. Tel 470421(work) or 705788(home)

**UNION**  
**YES**

## ANTI UNION LAWS - HOW TO RESPOND

Do you know the ins and outs of the various anti-union laws the Tories have pushed through these past 12 years and feel confident about how to tackle them should the need arise in your Union branch? Yes, well this half day trade union forum is not for you then....BUT if not then come along for this essential guide to the legislation and how to fight it.

**VENUE** - International Community Centre, Mansfield Road

**DATE** - Saturday 26th October

**TIME** - 11am to 2pm (registration from 10.30am)

Speakers include - "expertsdd" on the laws and strikers from OILC & Pergammon.

Plenty of time for discussion. Tea & coffee available - creche available on request (in advance). No delegation fee but branches are urged to sponsor the event at £5 or £10. Cheques & advance registration to Nottm TUC c/o 191 Burford Rd., Forest Fields, Nottm. Further details from Steve on 705788



## OUR HISTORY - THE LUDDITES

180 years ago in November 1811 the Luddite disturbances began in earnest here in Nottingham. There had already been an outbreak the previous March, but from November onwards a great wave of machine-smashing spread beyond Nottingham as far as the West Riding & Lancashire, until some 12,000 troops were employed to maintain order and suppress the movement - more troops than Wellesley originally took with him to Portugal to fight the French.

Even today the Luddites are still sometimes scornfully characterised as ignorant or misguided backward looking people futilely trying to halt the advance of "progress". There was an element of this in Luddism, especially in Yorkshire, but Luddism in Notts was a highly disciplined movement with backing of the local population which sought to gain specific industrial objectives. Machine breaking was not new: the scale & organisation involved, coinciding with wartime conditions, economic depression & the growth of a capitalist mode of production was new.

Luddism was "collective bargaining by riot". Knitting frames were not smashed because they were machines but because they were being used in ways contrary to trade agreements. Unionism was weak & technically illegal. "Legitimate" forms of action had failed so the offending frames were smashed & acceptable working practices were for a time re-established "By Order of the Trade".

## PLESSEY WORKERS SPEAK OUT

*Plessey workers new Newsletter is the key to a successful campaign to defend our basic rights. The old slogans UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE FALL and UNITY IS STRENGTH are as true today as at any time during the history of modern industry & trade unionism. We know that in order to make a successful product we need to work together and co-operate. Clerical, technical, transport assembly & engineering, whatever our role we can be proud of what we have been able to achieve.*

*But now the company wants to make people redundant, divide & rule is once again the order of the day With 3 million already on the dole any leader of industry who still thinks that more redundancies is a solution to our problems ought to be the first to be given the sack*

## Support Group formed for sacked Ambulance Workers

On Tuesday 18th June, Bridgewater Ambulanceman, Tony Stokes - a member of the TGWU and Mike Wallburton of NUPE - were sacked for allegedly refusing an emergency call to Minehead Hospital on Friday 24th May. The men are vehemently denying the charge of 'gross misconduct'. The facts are that the patient concerned - a pregnant woman - had been picked by them previously that morning and left safely at Minehead Hospital with a midwife and doctor, while another patient was taken home at Porlock a few miles away. Just outside Porlock a 'Blue' Control Call came for the men to take the pregnant woman to Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton, some 30 miles away. As the call was not an emergency, and the men had been on duty for 6½ hours without a break, Tony and Mike asked control for permission to take a short break. This was refused, and within two minutes the control officer had upgraded the call to a 'Red' emergency. Again the men asked for a short break, and also why the call had been upgraded, as

normally only the ambulancemen themselves, or a doctor or midwife, can upgrade. When control insisted that the men transport the pregnant woman immediately to Taunton, Tony and Mike, fearing themselves not fit to drive on without a break, had no alternative but to phone in sick. The temperature in the ambulance was 86°F and they had worked for nearly 7 hours without a break. The woman was taken to Taunton by another ambulance and gave birth 7 hours after entering Musgrove Park.

It is obvious to anyone bar the Chief Ambulance Officer Richard Whiteland, that ambulance men with spotless records and a combined 37 years service would never fail to respond immediately to a genuine emergency call, which this was not. When the two men eventually came back to Bridgewater Ambulance Station they were suspended by the Station Officer Ian Childs, a suspension which was turned into three months notice of dismissal, on full pay, with an appeal set.

The staff at Bridgewater

Station, led by TGWU convenor Ken Parkin, responded immediately with an overtime ban, and a resolution of no-confidence in their station officer. They are seeking support to extend this ban over the whole of Somerset, and have some support for this, though the relative strength of the non-TUC 'union' APAP in East Somerset is a problem in getting effective solidarity action.

NUPE and TGWU have given practical and financial support to Bridgewater Trades Union Council which quickly set up the Somerset Sacked Ambulanceman's Support Group and launched a petition which already has 3,000 signatures. Should the men's appeal fail, Tony and Mike, their Trade Unions and the support group are determined to launch a National Appeal to the Trades Union movement and wider public to obtain full reinstatement for the Health Authority.

For more information please contact:

Mike Wallburton 0278 459112  
or Dave Chappel 0278 450562

### AFFILIATE NOW

Is your Branch affiliated? If yes have you paid your 1991 affiliation? Send your cheque to 204 Noel St., Forest Fields, Nottm. If you aren't affiliated - why not? We need all the support we can get. For details of costs ring Leo on 703135 (evenings).

Send articles for the next issue to 191 Burford Road, Forest Fields, Nottingham. Typeset & printed by Eric McNaughton (SOGAT)

### ATTEND

We meet the 3rd Wednesday every month at the International Community Centre at 7.30.