

EDITORIAL

For the first time ever, we have had to leave articles out. Why?. We had too many. We do try and cover news, events and the occasional stray thought which we think you may find interesting.

As you will see on page 7, we are looking to arrange a Notts TU News special on the dockers - NTUN the post mortem edition!! Let us know what you think.

Our next issue will be out for May Day. Any views on the first 12 months of New Labour? If so, write an article for us.

Thanks to Graham (MSF), Karen and Tanya (GMB) for their help in putting together this edition.

Copy date for Issue 17 is April 17th.

Jon O'Neill - Editor.

Notts TU News,
c/o Box N, MUWC,
2 Beech Avenue,
Mansfield,
Notts NG18 1EY.

CONTACTS LIST

NOTTS CATUC
Jon O'Neill © PO Box M MUWC
2 Beech Avenue Mansfield
NG18 1EY (01623) 424720

MANSFIELD & DISTRICT TUC
(as Notts CATUC)

NEWARK TUC
Dave Bryant 27 Nicholson St
Newark Notts NG24 1RD

NOTTINGHAM TUC
Ian Juniper 118 Mansfield Rd
Nottingham NG1 3HL

RETFORD & DISTRICT TUC
Tommy Hirst, 11 Broadleigh Court
Ordsall, Retford, Notts DN22 7GP

STAPLEFORD, BEESTON & DISTRICT TUC
Mick Worrall 6 Holden Gardens
Stapleford NG9 7GX

WORKSOP & DISTRICT TUC
Dave Pressley 15 Thievesdale Lane
Worksop Notts S81 0NG

Trades Union Resources in Notts
MUWC 2 Beech Avenue Mansfield
NG18 1EY (01623) 424720
118 Workshop
118 Mansfield Road Nottingham
NG1 3HL
Telephone and Minicom
(0115) 958 2369

MAY DAY ADVERTS

We thought we would break with normal practice and ask you for some money(!?!). Issue 17 will be published for May Day 1998, and you are just dying to put in an advertisement carrying May Day greetings to the wider movement.

You know you really want to do this. Follow Mrs Doyle's advice, go on, go on, go on, go on.....

The rates for 1998 are:

¼ page - £25

½ page - £50

Full page - £100

Don't miss out, rush your cheque and advert to Notts TU News, c/o Box N, MUWC, 2 Beech Avenue, Mansfield, Notts NG18 1EY.

Go on, Go on, Go on.....

£0. ITS THE OFFICIAL UNION RATE.

FREETH
CARTWRIGHT
HUNT
DICKINS

SOLICITORS

If your union is a member of the union law scheme, you are entitled to a free first meeting to discuss any problem except work related matters.

Contact Terry Oldham on (0115) 936 9369

FREETH CARTWRIGHT HUNT DICKINS

WILLOUGHBY HOUSE, 20 LOW PAVEMENT, NOTTINGHAM, NG1 7EA. TEL. 0115 936 9369

THE MAGNET PICKETS

(To the tune of "You are my Sunshine")

We are the pickets
The Magnet pickets
We keep smiling when skies are grey
They may sack us They may cheat us
But they'll never take our pride away.
Cos we're the pickets
The Magnet pickets
and united we will stay
We stand together
Through stormy weather
Til justice wins the day.
Cos we're the pickets
The Magnet pickets
And we'll keep fighting all the way
They'll never beat us
They won't defeat us
We hope you're listening KEN BRAY.
(Written by the picket line Kids)

If you think work has made you ill,
you need

**Nottinghamshire Trade
Union Safety Committee**

We offer FREE testing for Hearing,
Vibration White Finger, Lung
Function and can offer advice on
compensation claims and Health and
Safety information.

Call us at 2 Beech Avenue Mansfield
(01623) 424720 and ask for Tony



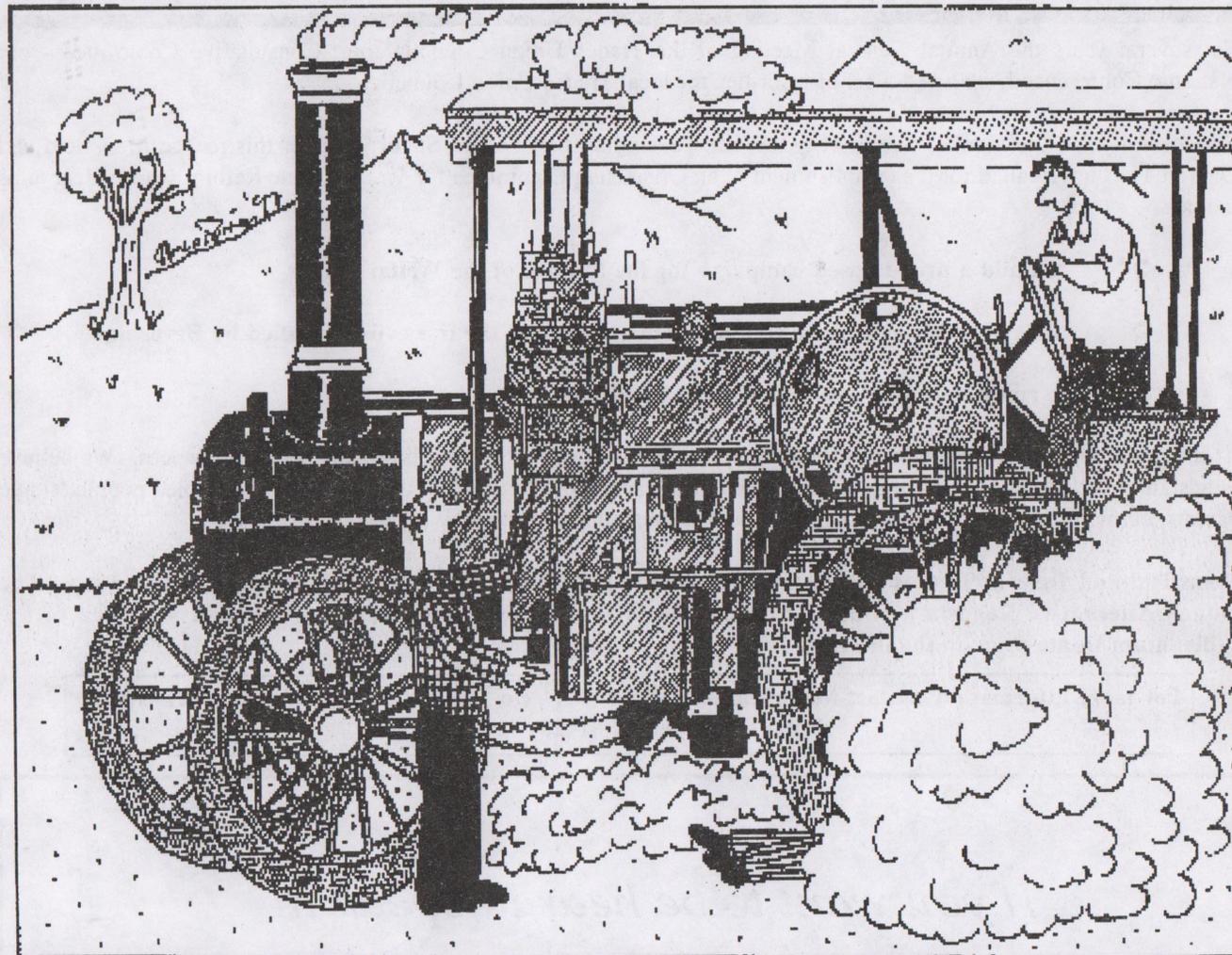
"Aiming
to keep
you safe"

NOTTS TU NEWS

ISSUE 16

Free or Donation
March/April 1998

Published by the Nottinghamshire Association of Trades Union Councils



"Well, he said he wanted a flatter management structure"

CONTENTS

P2.	<i>Smash a dome!</i>	P8	<i>Mai-Day! Mai-Dai!</i>
P3-4	<i>Stop Child Labour</i>	P9	<i>Why Don't You Tell Us a Story?</i>
P5	<i>Magnet - February Update</i>	P10	<i>Euromarch Committee</i>
P6	<i>"New Deal" Negotiating Checklist</i>	P11	<i>Workers Memorial Day</i>
P7	<i>Liverpool Docks Settlement</i>	P12	<i>Editorial, The Magnet Pickets</i>

CAMPAIGNING & DISPUTES

THE ALTERNATIVE WELFARE REFORM ROADSHOW

(SMASH A DOME)

For several years the Annual General Meeting of the Trades Union Councils Joint Consultative Committee - our National Conference has agreed a set of priorities for local Trades Union Councils.

For several years the number one priority has been defending the Welfare State. It is for this reason Mansfield and District TUC have called for the establishment of an Organising Committee for Welfare State Reform whose clear aims include.

- to build a broad based campaign for the Reform of the Welfare State
- to develop a programme committed to eradicating the five evils identified by Beveridge
- to run Alternative Welfare Reform Roadshows.

At the present moment Government Ministers are touring the country and speaking to selected audiences. We believe they should be listening. Listening to positive solutions being put forward by organisations of disabled people, single parents, ethnic groups, pensioners, young people, the unemployed and many others.

Mansfield and District TUC is determined that those of us who rely on the Welfare State have our say. The launch Alternative Roadshow will be in Mansfield in late March where we hope to smash a replica of the Millennium Dome prior to the meeting.

For more information contact Mansfield & District TUC, c/o MUWC, 2 Beech Avenue, Mansfield, Notts or telephone (01623) 424720.

If you want to be heard - speak in

UNISON

Regional Secretary
Nick Wright

Regional Convenor
Norman Wilson

UNISON East Midlands Region

15 Castle Gate, Nottingham NG1 6BY. Tel: 0115 956 7200

CAMPAIGNING & DISPUTES

STOP CHILD LABOUR

For several years the Notts CATUC has been a member and supporter of the British Committee against Child Labour and Forced Labour. Part of the British Committee's ongoing campaign has been to call for the UK government to ratify ILO Convention 138 - banning child labour under school leaving age.

Chris Pond's private members Bill on Child Employment was discussed in Parliament on Friday 13th February. The Minister, Paul Boateng, reiterated the Government's commitment to ratify ILO 138. As a result of this statement, Chris Pond decided to withdraw his bill and wait for the government's proposals as outlined by the Minister. Below we outline the concerns of the British Committee with regard to the original Bill proposed by Chris Pond.

After discussions with our Chair, Jeremy Corbyn MP, I am writing to you on behalf of the British Committee against Child Labour and Forced Labour, following the publication of your Employment of Children Bill and your recent correspondence with Jeremy.

As you may be aware, the work of our Committee is based squarely on the demand for ratification by the British Government of ILO Convention 138, which bans child labour under school leaving age and in any case below the age of 15. We have campaigned on this basis throughout Britain and internationally for more than three years, and have received the support of a wide range of trade unions, elected representatives and individuals.

The very real concern of these supporters is that Britain's refusal to date to ratify ILO Convention 138 represents the endorsement of the exploitation of children for profit, and also has given employers a wider freedom to undermine and directly attack the rights of all workers in moves towards deregulating the labour market.

You freely acknowledge that your Bill is based on European Union Council Directive 94/33/EC "On The Protection of Young People at Work." In October 1995, Simon Burns, then Under Secretary of State for Health in the Tory Government, published his consultation document which also aimed to incorporate into UK law this EU Directive, which we were told constitutes "a tangible step towards developing the social dimension of the internal market"

Our written response to Mr Burns detailed the way in which the Directive specifically authorises child labour from the age of 13, and gives each EU government complete discretion in deciding to what extent its provisions should be regulated. In the Tory tradition of "letting the market decide", Mr Burns proposed to avoid government regulation by shifting onto local authorities the burden of implementing, regulating and monitoring the provisions of

the EU Directive. The mechanism for this shift of responsibility was to be a model by-law to be adopted by each local authority.

Referring to your letter dated 28 November 1997 to Jeremy Corbyn, we are concerned that you view your Bill as the means by which Government can implement "as many aspects of the original EU Directive as possible."

We are also particularly concerned that you agree with Paul Boateng, the current Under Secretary of State for Health, that using the mechanism of a model by-law is desirable, as it is "the quickest way of getting it into law", and indeed will avoid the need for a new consultation.

Our concerns can be illustrated by referring specific points of your Bill:

In direct contradiction to ILO Convention 138, which bans child labour, Section 1 codifies the parameters for child labour in the UK:

During term time, a child, which is defined in Section 20 as being "a person who is not yet over compulsory school age" can be employed:

- for up to 1 hour before school hours start (albeit after 7 am)
- for up to 2 hours a day during the week
- for up to 7 hours a day on Saturdays, and
- for up to 12 hours in any one week

During school holidays, a child can be employed for up to 5 hours a day and up to 25 hours in any one week. At any time of year, a child can be employed for up to 2 hours on a Sunday.

Section 3 (1) specifies that a child working continuously for four hours should have rest periods amounting in total to at least 30 minutes, including a single 30-minute rest period, "unless there are good reasons to the contrary." Section 3 (2) states that a child should have a 48 hours rest period every seven days, but Section 3 (3) states that an employer can interrupt this with "periods of work which are of short duration", "Where there are good technical or organisational reasons for doing so." Who decided what constitutes a "good reason" and a "short duration"? The employer? Who will prevent abuse of rest periods by employers? How?

Section 4 specifically allows child labour at the age of 13 in the following areas, amongst others:

- agricultural work
- delivery of newspapers, journals, promotional material or leaflets [our emphasis]
- work in shops, including stacking shelves
- clerical work in offices
- waiting at tables in cafes or restaurants

CAMPAIGNING & DISPUTES

STOP CHILD LABOUR

(Continued from Page 3)

- delivering alcohol in sealed containers
- cleaning windows up to 3 metres above ground

In other words, Section 4 purposely exempts from the prohibition of employing 13-year olds those industrial and economic activities where the abuse of children of that age is most prevalent. Section 4 (4) states that child labour is not allowed where the work might be harmful to safety, health, development or school attendance, but then omits to make any mention of who might decide when a child is being harmed, or how such harm might actively be prevented.

Section 6 states that a local authority "may make different provisions for different ages and for different types of work". In other words, a local authority will be free to pass any by-law it decides may benefit the local employers, and, since nothing is said to the contrary, may decide for itself to what extent it monitors or regulates those by-laws.

Section 7 reserves to the Secretary of State the right, but not the obligation, to interpret Sections 4 and 5, and to make further provisions as he thinks fit. So, if the Secretary of State is not made aware of the need to rectify abuses at the level of a local authority, responsibility remains with the local authority.

Section 9 discusses the penalties for an offence under Sections 1 to 9, but does not address some simple questions: Will local authorities be required to dedicate resources to discover such offences? What if the local authority budget does not permit it? If resources are not dedicated, what will prevent offences by cynical employers from going unpunished?

Section 10 to 19 discusses enforcement of the provisions of the EU Directive as expressed by the Bill:

- an employer needs a work permit issued by the local authority for every child employed [Section 10 (1)];
- an employer needs to notify the child's parents and school head teacher of the intention to employ that child [Section 12 (1)];
- the child's parents must provide a certificate that the child is fit to work [Section 11];
- the child's parents and head teacher must give their consent to the local authority [Section 13 (1) (b)];
- the local authority must satisfy itself on various counts before it issues the work permit [Section 13 (1) (a)];
- the local authority must consult the chief police officer for the area as to whether the prospective employer is a registered sex offender or has been prosecuted for any offence relating to child labour [Section 14];

- if a work permit is refused by the local authority, an employer may appeal to that local authority's education committee [Section 15 (1)];
- a "designated officer" of a local authority will investigate any suspected cases of children being employed without work permits.

This is the crux of the whole Bill. These sections describe a form of implementation, regulation and monitoring which places the full burden of responsibility and cost on each local authority, and co-opts parents, schools and police into the process.

If a local authority decides it cannot or will not dedicate sufficient resources to each part of this process (which would also require provision within school and police budgets), then every employer in that area will be free to exploit child labour with impunity.

Without proper monitoring, accurate data will not be available, allowing anyone with an interest, including the Government, to deny that any problem exists.

If one local authority is seen to be stricter than others in applying controls on child labour, a large-scale employer can decide to base his operations in areas where controls are applied less strictly, with obvious results for his employees. If the abuse of child labour goes unchecked, adult workers can be coerced into accepting worse pay and conditions for fear of losing their jobs.

At a time when European firms are continuing to actively seek ways of driving wages even lower and of dismantling existing guarantees for the workers on pay and conditions, what is needed is a halt to deregulation.

EU Directive 94/33/EC serves to expose children and young people to the same abuses that deregulation has inflicted on the adult work-force, as a way of substituting cheaper and more vulnerable workers for those currently in work.

Your Employment of Children Bill aims, in your own words, to find "the quickest way of getting (it) into law" [...] "as many aspects of the original EU Directive as possible." Rather than implementing "a tangible step towards developing the social dimension of the internal market" as laid out in the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties, the Government should agree to sign ILO Convention No. 138 without further delay, and to introduce legislation in line with the provisions of that Convention to prohibit child labour.

To find out more about the British Committee, please write to Stop Child Labour, PO Box 8925, London, SW4 0Z.

CAMPAIGNING & DISPUTES

MAGNET STRIKERS FEBRUARY UPDATE

CRITCHLEY SPIRIT LIVES! AND THEY STILL NEED YOUR SUPPORT

The pressure being put on the company has at last paid off, with the first meeting between the two sides having taken place in late January (last meeting took place in August 1996) but with no concrete agreement. The company insist that the leafleting stops and although the picketing, according to them is causing no problems they still want it to stop. TOUGH! When they agree to full reinstatement of all workers and a return to properly agreed procedures for diffusing industrial disputes, without resorting to blackmail of the workers, only then will the picket site be cleared and all leafleting stopped. The second meeting took place on the 6th February and again nothing came of the meeting. After the meeting the company issued a press statement offering £300,000 to retrain all the sacked Magnet workers for other work, on condition we leave the picket line and stop all leafleting and demonstrations. The Unions were not told of this offer until the statement was released. Our answer is unfortunately unprintable and likely to cause offence. The company not realising the error of their ways, must now suffer the consequences.

Letters of support and donations. Magnet Families Hardship Fund. c/o Secretary Ian Crammond Fax/Tel 01325 282389. 109 Jedburgh Drive, Darlington, Co Durham DL3 9UP.

SUPPORT THE SACKED MAGNET WORKERS WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We need you to organise demonstrations, meetings, delegations and fund raisers for the:

MAGNET FAMILIES HARDSHIP FUND

We understand that the January kitchen sales were a flop and so Magnet have gone all out on selling windows with a massive advertising campaign on Channel Four Television. This is a legitimate target for all our supporters and must be pursued vigorously, the company have kindly supplied a free phone number 141 0800 210 226 which supplies you with information on the nearest store. Of course you can ring this number at any time, and if Magnet want to waste money talking to you, well you cannot be held to blame. Please continue leafleting on a massive scale to show Berisfords that the dispute continues, until a fair and negotiated settlement to the dispute is made.

It is with regret that we will be saying goodbye to one of our strikers who has died after a long illness. We send Jack's family our deepest sympathy. He maintained his pride and dignity, and although very ill continued to visit us on the picket line when he could. Always in our hearts.

Respect
by courtesy of local supporters our website
www.gn.apc.org/magnetstrikers/

The struggle continues to win justice for our sacked Critchley members, with a major demonstration next month in Stroud, where the industrial relations dinosaur has a major plant. Stroud is also the home of Critchley plc's chairman. So that's two good reasons to go there on Tuesday March 24th and support our sacked colleagues.

The CWU's campaign for rights at Critchley and other workplaces was boosted last month by publication of the 14th British Social Attitudes Survey, showing that workers want a greater say in their workplace because of "a deterioration in employment relations, managerial performance, job security and their involvement in decision making".

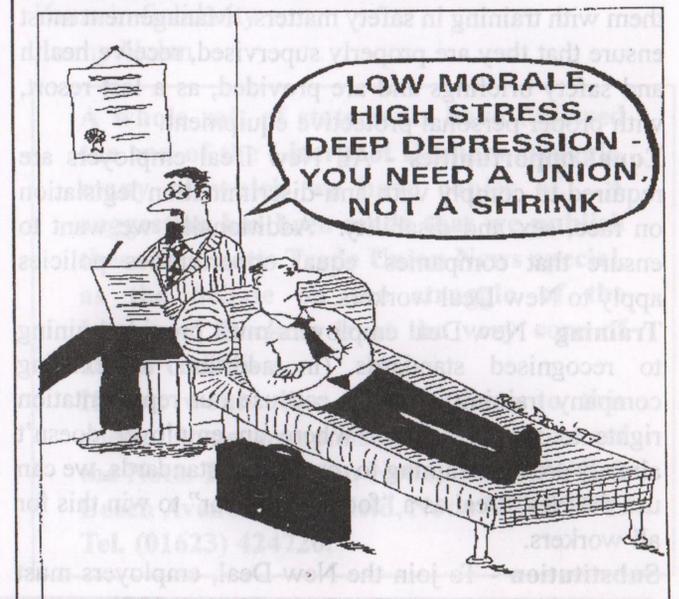
Chair of the union's campaign committee on employment law Andy Furey, commented: "Public opinion clearly favours decent human rights for working people. The shameful treatment of our members at Critchley Labels is obviously out of step with how people want Britain to develop into the next century.

We are inviting all MPs to write to Critchley management and to British Telecom, expressing support for our Critchley members who were sacked a year ago, for insisting on their right to be represented by the CWU.

The need for government action to defend the right of working people to trade union protection is urgent. It was one of the Labour Party's most important election pledges, and we expect it to be honoured in full this year".

Reprinted from The Voice, newspaper of the CWU.

Messages of support to: Sue Hoskins, 54 Beech Grove, Oakdale, Blackwood, Gwent, NP2 0BN.



NEW DEAL

NEGOTIATING CHECKLIST FOR THE "NEW DEAL"

Whether you agree with New Deal or not, as Trade Unionists we should still aim to ensure that New Deal is less bad. For this reason we are publishing the following negotiating checklist published by the TUC.

Approach employers now - don't wait to find out when the New Deal workers walk through the door!

Ask whether employers are taking part in the New Deal - if not, ask them to join up.

Seek an agreement - don't try to deal with problems around the New Deal on an ad hoc basis.

The agreement should cover:

Contracts - The Government expects employers to agree proper contracts of employment with New Deal workers, but some may fail to do so. Unions need to insist that young people recruited through the New Deal have contracts of employment, or they may be exempted from most employment protection.

Representation rights - We want the same rights to represent New Deal workers as any other employees. This includes rights to speak to them during their induction, rights to attend union meetings, representation rights on pay and conditions and in grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Health and Safety - We don't want the New Deal to have the problems which plagued the YTS, so introduce New Deal workers to their Safety Rep as quickly as possible. New Deal workers may only be with the company for 6 months, but like other workers, employers must assess the risks they face, and provide them with training in safety matters. Management must ensure that they are properly supervised, receive health and safety briefings and are provided, as a last resort, with proper personal protective equipment.

Equal opportunities - All New Deal employers are required to comply with anti-discrimination legislation on race, sex and disability. Additionally, we want to ensure that companies' equal opportunities policies apply to New Deal workers.

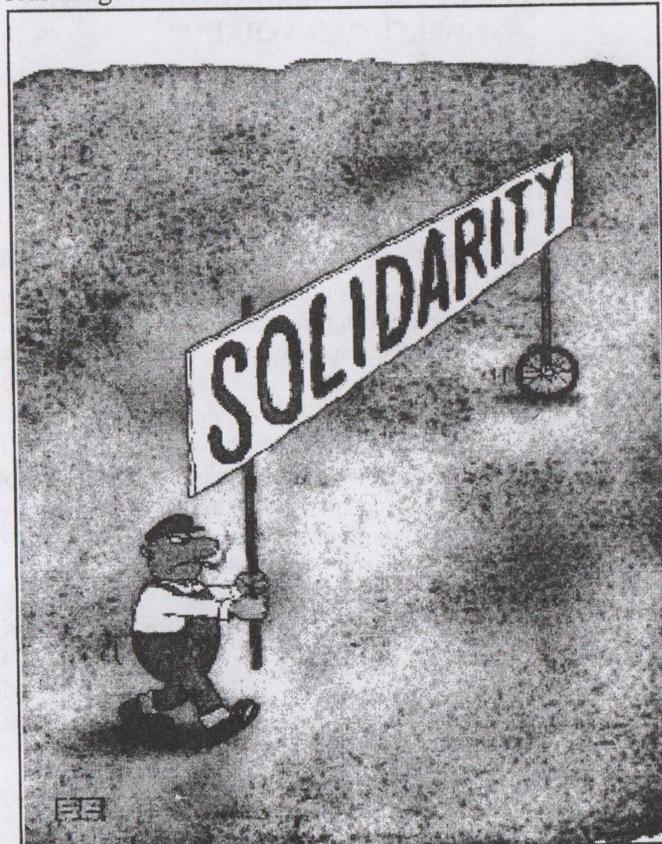
Training - New Deal employers must provide training to recognised standards (in addition to existing company training), and we can use our representation rights to monitor this. Where an employer doesn't already provide training to recognised standards, we can use the New Deal as a "foot in the door" to win this for all workers.

Substitution - To join the New Deal, employers must

promise not to make existing workers redundant to create New Deal vacancies. In many workplaces there may well be grey areas and uncertainties on this issue, and New Deal agreements are the ideal opportunity to address them.

Pay - The bottom line for unions is that we want New Deal workers to be paid the rate for the job. This is what the Government expects too - their New Deal Design Document says that New Deal workers should be paid "the normal rate to comparable employees of the company". In setting pay levels, employers may wish to take into account the fact that New Deal workers will be spending a day each week on day release training - this gives an indication of the fact that it is important that the policy on pay for the New Deal workers is agreed now, before they start work.

Retention - Our goal is to ensure that as many New Deal workers as possible keep their jobs when the 6 month subsidy to the employer ends. We want employers to agree that, in principle, New Deal workers will be retained, and to set objective criteria to be used in making decisions and retention. Without this there is a real danger of discrimination and favouritism.



LIVERPOOL DOCK WORKERS

THE FINAL SETTLEMENT

The following letter has been sent to Liverpool dockers supporters over the last few weeks.

Dear Colleagues

After 2 years and 4 months the Liverpool Dockworkers have decided to end their dispute following a recommendation from the shop stewards. Over the past 4 weeks the shop stewards have been debating what direction the dispute had been moving in. The conclusions that we came to were that in certain key areas, the campaign had started to falter and that in order not to see good men and women lose everything or risk a collapse from within, we decided to conclude a collective agreement on the best possible terms achievable.

We felt that following the last secret ballot in October 1997 in which we gained a 70% rejection of the employers offer, a springboard for greater supportive actions should have been launched. In terms of political intervention for the new Labour Government by the use of their 14% share holding that they have in the Co. and a far more positive role from our own union leadership in calling for an increase in both the national support through the TGWU industrial branches and international support via the ITF. That support never materialised. In fact both of these organisations decided to support the line of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Co. in stating that the dispute was over.

This was also compounded by the fact that the two biggest container companies that use the port of Liverpool ACL and CAST had not been touched by industrial action for some time. We also suffered the sad loss of two of our stalwarts from the picket line who died over the Christmas/New Year period making a total of four during the course of the dispute.

These element along with the extreme hardship that the men and women have had to endure over the past 28 months and the more hard line tactics of the police on the picket line were major factors in our decision to bring the heroic struggle of the Liverpool dockers, their families and their supporters to some form of conclusion.

The terms of the settlement were based on up to £28,000 redundancy payment for all ex Mersey Docks men. We have approximately 80 of our dockers who are excluded from this process and it is our intention to

raise some financial package to ease the obvious debt burden they have accumulated over the past two and a half years. It is indeed possible to quantify the hardship experienced by the dockers and their families over the past two and a half years. Importantly, the limited redundancy payments being made to approximately 2/3 of the sacked dockers will be subject not only to debt repayment but also reclaimed by the benefits office. Tragically, four dockers died during the course of our struggle and their families rights are currently the source of some dispute with Mersey Docks. Over the Christmas period our brave dockers and their families attended two funerals of comrades who died as a direct result of the stress created by such a long and bitter struggle.

A number of jobs are on offer in the port and we continue to examine the practicability of this option. A joint approach will be made in relation to the pension entitlements of the majority of dockers. We have to recognise that work in Liverpool is a rare commodity and we expect that all our comrades will experience great difficulty over the next few years.

It is with a great sadness in our hearts that we write to all our magnificent supporters and express our deepest gratitude. We have to build upon our internationalism, upon the experiences of all our struggles let the words of a great Irish trade unionist capture our thoughts.

"Who is-it speaks of defeat? I tell you a cause like ours is greater than defeat can know. It is the power of powers." ---James Larkin.

Yours in Solidarity

Jimmy Nolan

A whole raft of statements have followed the end of the Liverpool Dockers struggle, many of which we have copies of. A suggestion has been made that we publish these as a Notts Trade Union News special, as the debate on the struggle of the Liverpool Dockers is at the very core of Trade Unionism.

If you would like to contribute to this special issue, or sponsor it please contact the Notts Trade Union News, c/o MUWC, 2 Beech Avenue, Mansfield, Notts NG18 1EY. Tel. (01623) 424720.

MAI-DAY! MAI-DAY!

THE ONLY UK REPORT FROM NEGOTIATIONS IN PARIS IN LATE 1997.

KILLER CORPS TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD!

The Museum of Humanity in Paris is a multicultural celebration of social, environmental and labour progression of several millennia. Inside the population clock ticks up three new births in a second. It stands at approximately 5,901,884,000. Outside, a giant screen in the Eiffel Tower counts down the days to the millennium: 791. But there is another date, May 1998, which will affect each and every one on the planet far more.

Around the corner, behind closed doors in a basement room of a bunker-like office building, representatives from the richest countries of the world are writing the "constitution of a single global economy" in secrecy and in haste. The global impact of their work, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), is almost unimaginable. This agreement is for "the end of history", when the corporations will finally take over the world. The Museum of Humanity, a small notice says, is closing down.

The most important international agreement on investment and trade ever, the MAI, has been negotiated in secret in Paris since September 1995. It will legally bind the richest countries on Earth together for 20 years in a move that will invalidate all international and domestic law regarding environmental, social and labour rights. Countries will not be able to opt out once it is signed. Multinationals will gain the right to sue national governments for even debating issues which may harm the profit of an investor regardless of domestic law.

It will force governments to respond to economic pressures by abolishing worker protections, public safety regulations and measures protecting the environment. Silence on the MAI is deafening in the UK and worldwide.

Details of the plan were leaked and put on the Internet by French activists a year ago and the cause was taken up by global pressure groups. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which include the World's 29 wealthiest countries, meet every six weeks in Paris to plan the MAI. On

Monday they allowed 50 people from pressure groups from all continents precisely six hours to listen to their concerns. SchNEWS (alone in the UK press) was there. The NGO's called the discussions "shocking" and "negative". Chairman of the negotiating group, Frans Engering, told SchNEWS after the 'consultations' that there could not possibly be any delay in the passage of the MAI, and that "we are entering the last stages."

Globalisation has seen over the last 30 years, the richest 20% of the world's population increase their share of income from 70% to 85%, while the share captured by the poorest 20% has declined from 2.3% to 1.4%.

A 600 page document of "reservations" of member countries is not publicly available, but Friends of the Earth received a leaked copy. It reveals that the UK is planning to sign without any reservations for the environmentally or socially-sensitive sectors of the economy. Tony Juniper, Campaigns Director of FOE, says "Labour's blinkered obsession with the free market appears to be absolute."

The real clout in the MAI is the right it gives companies to sue governments for large damages. In what is known as the 'pay the polluter' case, the Ethyl Corporation if America is suing the Canadian government for \$367 millions dollars for banning the use of MMT, a controversial gasoline additive, which it makes in Ottawa. It wants "immediate compensation for imposing legislation which hinders its operations (profit)." under free trade rules identical to MAI.

SchNEWS went to the OECD library to be told by the assistant: "I've never heard of MAI." There were no published documents available. "Their mania for secrecy is our best strategic clue," says Chantell Taylor of the US-based Public Citizen Global Trade Watch, "it's time for the Dracula strategy because this is one treaty that could never survive sunshine."

From SchNEWS, PO box 2600, Brighton, BN2 2DX, England, Phone/Fax (call before faxing): 01273 685913.

E-mail:schnews@brighton.co.uk (source of the above report).

EDITOR'S APPEAL

WHY DON'T YOU TELL US A STORY?

Recently, a couple of incidents proved to me the real potential of Trade Union News - is there any, I hear you ask? Well, not in the mainstream media, but let me go on. When Nottingham Trades Council in the person of Gail Squires organised an effective leafletting outside the Magnet Showroom at Mill House on Ilkeston Road last autumn, an Evening Post photographer passing by in his car was attracted by the news value of the action and stopped to take photographs.

Nothing subsequently appeared in the Evening Post to report this event. What did appear a couple of days later was a joint commercial venture between Magnet and the Evening Post offering a bribe to local community groups in the guise of materials to get them to think that Magnet - or Magnet management - was on their side - which of course it isn't. Otherwise it wouldn't sell crap kitchens to people which are currently being made by a scab unskilled, untrained workforce. How do they get away with it?

Even when earlier we went to the trouble of organising with Alan Weaver, the Campaigns Organiser of the Regional TUC, for the Del Boy Trotter International Trader Reliant Robin to be outside the showroom with Magnet strikers together with Alan Simpson, MP for a block-buster photo-opportunity, the Evening Post carried out a totally effective boycott of the event. Now, there's an irony for you if ever there was one. When will we ever learn? (I should point out that Bro Simpson wasn't actually driving the van but he was carrying a briefcase with him.)

Another incident was when I walked down to County Hall for a Voluntary Sector Consultation Meeting (118 was a bit short of petty cash at the time) only to be told at County Hall reception that the venue for the meeting had been switched to the other side of town - mark you, without so much as a by your leave. So much for consultation. When I actually got to the meeting, I couldn't translate what the Officer from County Hall was saying anyway. Something about "best value" - what's that all about to use a stock phrase from "One Foot In The Grave" - which was exactly what it was like in that meeting anyway. This incident was also boycotted by NEP.

I thought that both these stories were worth reporting:- firstly, the Trades Council being able to actually get a couple of dozen people together for any of its initiatives was quite remarkable, (and this at short

notice too), but Gail was late again - better late than never, which is usually the case for most other people when it comes to Trades Council activity of any kind. Do write in and let me know what the difference between cynicism and reality is, and I'll see if I agree with you.

And secondly, I would have thought a sample of the hubris of County Council Chief Officers is always worth reporting, and would gladden the heart of any poor sod who has nothing better to do that read the NEP anyway. Why am I giving it all this free publicity, anyway? And who cares anyway?

There must be no end of things to do with labour movement activities - especially when it comes to building solidarity between ourselves and actually standing up to some of the shit that's going down - and incompetence, maladministration and sheer corruption carried out by our social superiors, that the local media just wouldn't touch with mine, let alone yours, or vice versa. This isn't because of the reluctance of the genuine journalists (Cmf with reporters - write an essay if you like) themselves to deal with these issues, but because of the system of ownership and control they work within. But you knew all this all along anyway, didn't you - it's obvious. But that's what TUN does - with your help - state the obvious.

So, if you have a story that you can't get in the local media, whether by print or by broadcast, send it to us whether it is libellous, dangerous, or - the most subversive of all - humorous. We're a bit like them McLibel 2 - we can't afford lawyers either but we'll be up for anything that the burgers might throw at us.

You never know, we might even have to set up an editorial sub-committee to go through the material we receive - but then again we have a commitment to getting out 6 copies a year and why should we put obstacles in the way of doing the business. Know what I mean?

Hoping to hear from you.

Yours ever,

**Ian Juniper
pp Jon O'Neill
Editor-in-Chief**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EUROMARCH LIAISON COMMITTEE

I write to ask you to continue your support for European Marches Against Unemployment, Job Insecurity, and Social Exclusion.

Following on from the success of the European Marches '97 a European-wide network has been established, involving the European Organisations and Marchers that set up the European Marches, and the final, massive rally in Amsterdam.

Continuing the campaign against unemployment, job insecurity and social exclusion, the network exists to share information on common problems and to co-ordinate interventions that can put pressure on the European Union Policymakers to make policy that will lead to our demands being realised.

The Campaign has already achieved a successful mobilisation in Luxembourg (Nov 20 1997 - E.U. special conference on employment) where Euromarch had over 3,000 demonstrators out of the total of 30,000 called to demonstrate for a 35 hour week by the ETUC. (This conference was held because of the strength of the Amsterdam demonstration).

Euromarch demonstrations are being planned for Cardiff in June 1998 and in Frankfurt or Berlin in June 1999. Other events already on the calendar are: an International Workers Conference against privatisation, casual labour and unemployment, called by Bosnian Miners, to be held in Tuzla, Bosnia on March 14/15 1998; An International Women's Day event in Liverpool in March, and the G8 Conference in Birmingham in May 1998.

Euromarch is not a bureaucratic, pyramid-type structure, with no decision or policy being binding on any organisation taking part. It is co-ordinated by a Secretariat in Paris, and Liaison Committees in each country.

A Liaison Committee had been established in Britain, based on the organisations and individuals who built the Marches in Britain, helping with the flow of information and co-ordinating events in Britain.

Joining the European Network carries no obligation to join the Liaison Committee Organisations, if they so wish, can subscribe direct to Paris.

The Liaison Committee, on behalf of the Paris Secretariat, can accept subscriptions, and will distribute the European/NEWS and other information. It will also organise and co-ordinate events, rallies etc. in Britain and co-ordinate transport to meetings, rallies and demonstrations in Europe.

The Marches in Britain, in May and June of 1997, were successful in bringing together a wide variety of

organisations and individuals who supported the demands of the March. Unions, Trades Councils and Political Parties all rallied to assist in the organisation of the Marches. In view of the performance of the New Labour Government we need to keep that coalition together and build on it. The Network is not an organisation but a coalition of many political views and ideas. Our political solutions may differ - but we share the same problems, throughout Europe and beyond.

We are still marching together, united in our common demands for full employment, secure jobs and the inclusion of all peoples in a just and fair society.

We ask you to join with us in the Campaign. Please complete the enclosed subscription form.

If you would like a speaker to attend your meeting please contact me at the above address.

Yours in solidarity

Andy Robertson - Liaison Committee Secretary.

c/o Cleveland T.U. & U.W.R.C., 119 Marton Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS1 2DU. Tel/Fax:01642 242413 E-mail:EUROMUK@aol.com

CELEBRATE MAY DAY!

May 1st falls on a Friday this year, and those party animals, otherwise known as Mansfield and District TUC, have decided to celebrate International Workers Day.

To be honest, it is in our programme of work for 1998, sad, but true. So we have booked the Ashfield District Council Sports and Social Club, aka the Dustbin Club, on Urban Road, Kirkby in Ashfield, on Friday May 1st for a family commemoration and social.

There will even be entertainment. The Cabaret on the evening will be provided by the highly talented and slightly political (!) **Ian Saville** and **Leon Rosselson**, as recommended by *the Guardian* and *Time Out*. The Clarion Choir are also being booked.

The aim is also to raise money for two worthy causes (two of many). Notts OFFA - supporting the unemployed in Notts and Magnet Families Hardship Fund. Profits will be split 50-50. **So, if you wish to donate a raffle prize, sell some raffle tickets, sponsor the night, or require more information contact:**

**Mansfield & District TUC,
c/o MUWC,
2 Beech Avenue,
Mansfield,
Notts NG18 IEY.
or Tel (01623) 424720.**

HEALTH & SAFETY

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

On the 28th April, trade unions throughout the UK and many parts of the world will be uniting to commemorate Workers Memorial Day. It is estimated that 9,000 people die each year in the UK as a result of work activities, either through a direct accident or industrial disease.

This day is set aside in memory of those workers. What must also be remembered is that many of these deaths could have been prevented.

It is mostly through pure greed and disregard of workers by employers, that the carnage still continues today.

Unions are asking workers to recognise some form of commemorative event in their own workplace to mark this occasion.

The GMB for instance is asking for 1 minutes silence at 11.00 a.m. on the 28th April.

It would be nice to think that all employers would make some sort of effort to participate.

Unfortunately, too many of them will be worried about how much profit they would lose within that 1 minute.

Notts TUSC urges all workers to remember those who have lost their lives and to please spare a thought also for those left behind; family, friends and work colleagues.

Why not phone the TUSC and tell us what you will be doing in your workplace to commemorate workers Memorial Day.

Let us know what your employers response was, and we will try to highlight this in the next issue of TU News.

If you wish to know more about Workers Memorial Day, or how you can show your support, please contact the Notts TUSC on 01623 424722, or write c/o MUWC, 2 Beech Avenue, Mansfield, Notts NG18 1EY.

THE ACTIVIST'S UNOFFICIAL GUIDE TO INDUSTRIAL ACTION

I am writing to ask for your help in distributing the above booklet, which has been produced on a not-for-profit basis. Once costs have been covered, all income will be donated to assist workers in dispute and their families.

As you will see from the enclosed leaflet, I am a long-standing union activist, who was horrified to discover recently that my own union no longer published a guide to industrial action: I therefore decided to produce my own, and this is the result. The price has been kept deliberately low - though not the quality - so that branches of all unions can afford at least one, and hopefully more. It is my worry that the growth of New Labour and New Trade Unionism will lead to increasingly active discouragement from taking - or even considering - Industrial Action, whatever the provocation by employers. And it is my belief that it must remain the ultimate weapon in our arsenal, however rarely used, if the New Employers (who seem

much like the Old Employers to me!) are to take us seriously and treat us with respect. The deskilling process has got to be reversed: far too much bread-and-butter knowledge is being lost as experienced activists retire or are made redundant. I hope you will be able to copy the leaflets to all of your affiliated branches - an order form is included.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that the RTP Press is entirely independent of any political party or group, and exists solely to further the interests of ordinary working people.

Copies of the guide are available for £2.50 from:

**The RTP Press,
c/o 103 Northcourt Avenue,
Reading
RG2 7HG.**