

The SYNDICALIST

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20P

CALL MY BUFF

A popular Newcastle social club has had its bluff called during an attempt to get rid of union members working as bar staff. In this case management were forced to concede under union pressure.

ROYAL & ANCIENT ATTITUDES

The Newcastle R.A.O.B. (Royal & Ancient Order of Buffaloes) Social Club in Heaton Road is known locally as the Heaton Buffs. It has over 3,000 members and recently won a competition, earning the title 'Club Mirror Supreme Club of the Year'. But the judges can't have taken into consideration the clubs attitudes to its workforce and to unions.

At the beginning of June six members of the G.M.B.A.T.U. (General & Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union) were sacked for a variety of reasons. Infact the committee at the Buffs wanted the G&M out of the club and used any excuses they could think up to sack people who were union members.

EXPECTING THE SACK

In one case the excuse they came up with was so crude as to show that they couldn't have expected any trouble in carrying out

HEATON
BUFFS'
SHOP
STEWARD
PAULINE
COLE.



their de-unionisation strategy. The G&M shop steward in the club, Pauline Cole, was sacked because, supposedly, her pregnancy would prevent her from lifting and carrying as part of her duties as a member of the bar staff. However Mrs Cole felt that lifting full pint pots onto the bar was unlike-

ly to be a problem, and that anyway sacking women because they were pregnant was highly unfair, if not illegal. Deciding to fight the sacking as far as she could, the union were called in.

BEER BAR

The Buffs committee were not impressed until solidarity was sought from the T&GWU and G&M members involved in delivering beer to the club. The sacked staff resolved to picket the club during all of its opening hours from Friday July 4th onwards and draymen agreed not to cross the picket. Faced with the beer running out over a summer weekend, the clubs members finding out what the committee were up to, and the publicity arising from the unusual sight of a bar being picketed, the committee caved in even before the first picket was mounted. At a meeting with the CIU 'peacemaker' Mrs Cole was re-instated, granted maternity leave and will be free to return to work at the Buffs afterwards.

ONLY A HICCUP

The position of the other sacked union members is uncertain, although negotiations continue. The clubs excuses for sacking them are probably less threadbare, so although they have not got rid of the shop steward their tactics may yet work with the others.

There has been trouble with arbitrary sackings at the Buffs before. In October 85 an industrial tribunal ruling forced the club to pay out £7,000 to workers.

CLUBBING UNIONS

The episode raises several points. Not least, Mrs Coles victory and re-instatement was very important for her, as the breadwinner of the family, but also as a shop steward in a workplace where workers clearly need protection from vicious and dictatorial employers. Her courage and determination are laudable, but also necessary in the present climate where employers too often get away with treating unionisation with contempt.



Heaton Buffs.

RIGHTS & WRONGS

Possibly more important is the question of womens rights at work. The legal 'protection' available is just as full of loopholes as for workers in general, but womens rights seem to have to be fought for continuously and much more strenuously to avoid a steady erosion of conditions.

That Heaton Buffs thought they could sack a woman for being pregnant tells us quite a lot about likely attitudes to women in their employ. Women are a substantial minority of the workforce in Britain, but still earn far less, under far worse conditions (on average). Pauline Cole's welcome victory comes at a time when rights and conditions in the bar trade on Tyneside have been under constant attack. It is an excellent example of effective action resisting that trend.

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T.R.S. EDITORIAL

The political climate in Spain at the moment shows the degree of contempt felt by so-called "socialist" governments towards true working class organisation. The Spanish government has tacitly and materially supported a completely dishonest attack on a rank and file union which wouldn't succumb to the needs of big business. In a similar vein the working class in Britain has on many occasions been on the receiving end of "socialist" policies. Ever since the first Labour government in 1924 which sent in troops to smash a long-running transport dispute (some strikers had actually canvassed for the "party of the workers") right up until the last, which saw troops being used to break the firemen's strike, police attacking workers at Grunwick and the "Social Contract" to keep down wages, workers have been betrayed by their (sic) party.

The criminalisation of workers in rank and file organisations in Spain is not a far step from our own social democratic Thatcher government, with its anti-union legislation making almost all union opposition to redundancies and cuts a criminal act. But would a Labour government be all that different? After all, most of the current wave of anti-union laws were devised by Labour policy planners during the 1975-9 government. In previous Labour campaigns workers were at least given to believe that everything would be alright so long as enough seats were won. This time around nobody believes that except the right wing and a few confused "radicals". Canvassers are now even instructed not to discuss "politics" on the doorstep!

Plans are already afoot to revamp the Thatcher union legislation. Labour intend to take away the right of trade unions to tax relief, if they do not hold secret ballots before taking industrial action, an idea Tories would congratulate them on.

The reactionary and anti-working class nature of Labour in power is not restricted to seeking to render unions impotent. As people in Spain are currently discovering, socialist ministers seem to delight in passing the most repressive laws. Labour brought in the Official Secrets Act, internment in Northern Ireland and the Prevention of Terrorism Act. They did absolutely nothing to restrict the activity of intelligence agencies like MI5, who continue to harass and interfere in the lives of people as unthreatening as trade union officials and CND members. Labour commissioned nuclear weapons testing and the British Bomb and joined NATO. They consistently accepted updated nuclear weapons technology and American bases. Labour in opposition talk a lot about "freedom of information". Would they do more than the Americans, who made sure that security was advanced enough to cope with apparent openness before allowing access to low-grade official information?

Look at how the Tories are rolling back the Welfare State. People are being punished at every available opportunity for suffering the effects of government policy and the movements of Capital. But in power a Labour government would not restore the losses. As always it would do as little as it could get away with, while trying to keep its false image of protector of the poor. In the past Labour stopped married women from claiming benefits, withdrew free milk in secondary schools, set the ball rolling for YTS schemes, and presided over massive cuts in health and education and the "winter of discontent" in their last term of office.

We note with contempt that MacGregor is retiring from British Coal at the end of August feeling that his aspirations have been fulfilled (ie he has outlived his usefulness). Nationalised industries didn't fare much better under Labour though. Mines were shut at a rapid rate, rail jobs were slashed to the bone, and the pay and conditions of workers in the nationalised industries were rarely better than in the private sector. It could be argued that Labour wouldn't inflict someone like MacGregor on us as head of a nationalised concern. But Labour are just as committed as the Tories to highly centralised dictatorial management, whether it be of trade unions, political parties, health and social services or companies and industries. They have in the past, and certainly would in the future, appoint individuals of an equally high order and calibre to ruin state-owned enterprises.

Labour's new name for nationalisation is "social ownership", which is a bit like saying that the working class rule in Russia. It's no nearer real social ownership than the charade of share-selling in British Telecom, Airways, Gas, Oil etc. If workers ran their factories and industries without hindrance from political power or profit motives, and co-ordinated production and services in federal co-operation with community organisations - now that would be social ownership.

Socialist government means political leaders helping the bosses increase their profits, trade union leaders making sure that workers don't get what they want, and the whole system working to ensure that ordinary people don't rock the boat or cost too much. This sounds rather similar to Conservative government!

The 'Syndicalist' publishes news, reports and information on industrial disputes, rank and file workers organisation and trade union activity, and community and social issues on Tyneside and elsewhere.

If there is something happening in your workplace, community or trade union that you feel people should know about please write to us with details, if possible an address or telephone number where we can contact you shall be of help. All communications will be treated with complete confidentiality.

More action at Contracts

Workers at Contracts LTD, South Shields, who last year took part in a six month long strike for union recognition, are again taking action against the dictatorial policies of their employers. On Tuesday 22nd July they informed management that following the two-week holiday period starting on the Friday, they would be implementing an overtime ban and work to rule. The Decision was made by almost all of the workers, including those who scabbed during the Strike; Only five voted against it

Small Bonus

The Move follows a week of provocative behaviour by management. It centres around the agreement made at the end of the strike concerning bonus payments. The Agreement was that when an order of over 500 garments came in, a 'Team bonus' would be implemented, whereupon wages would be calculated at a certain level, and if the workers in the Team managed to work harder, a bonus would be paid. Over the last few weeks, workers who have increased their production over the stated level have either received nothing or payments as low as 5 or 6p a week. When asked to explain how the Bonus payments had been calculated, the manager could not do so.

Although the renewal of industrial action centres around this particular grievance other cases of gross provocation by management have taken place. For instance, workers have been sent home after coming in late. Recently, a worker came in late after first phoning in, and was made to wait over an hour in the canteen until the next shift started.

Provocation

The latest move by management is the projected introduction of a "General Sewing Data" System (G.S.D.), which entails a breakdown of the skills needed in sewing, and the use of computers and video to spy on workers. The Scheme, described in the Manual as "A technique for methods analysis and the setting of time standards for needle trade work", analyses workers' actions in minute detail. For example, the time taken for "Eye action" is analysed, and defined as ;

If you would like to make any comment on the Syndicalist, contact the Tyneside Revolutionary Syndicalists for more information or would like to contribute to the paper both financially and with information please contact;

THE SYNDICALIST,
c/o Tyneside Free Press,
5, Charlotte Square,
Newcastle Upon Tyne,
NE1 4XF.

If you would like to see the continuation of the Syndicalist we urge you to make a financial donation immediately. The paper is produced on a shoestring and your support is needed. Please make all cheques and Postal Orders out to;

THE SYNDICALIST

The July issue of the 'Syndicalist' contained a pull-out section on the 50th anniversary of the Spanish Revolution. This special supplement is now available in its own right complete with poster, exclusive interview and reports on the events and organisation during the period of 1936-1939 in Spain. Copies can be obtained for 15p plus postage (normal trade terms for bulk orders) from the Syndicalist.

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Scientific Sadism

This system and others like it give management an illusion of utter control and domination, quite irrespective of real gains in productivity, all hidden with technological and scientific-sounding jargon. The breakdown of sewing a garment into component bodily movements ignores the fact that it is humans, not robots or machines, that are involved. Questions of fatigue, hunger and thirst and other body rhythms, not to mention the mental strain of having to pay attention to whether or not one spends too many split seconds performing each of dozens of separate actions, mean that such a system can rarely be used to speed work up. Instead it is a punitive measure, designed to deny bonuses or to reduce wages. Since this could be expected to reduce morale and productivity further, it will only tend to be attractive to the more sadistic of managements, such as those intent on revenge for previous militancy among a workforce.

The rhetoric of technological progress and business rationalisation is often a lie - and in this case is a smoke-screen for the personal gratification of management. This may be no consolation to Contracts workers having to suffer the humiliation and degradation it entails. But seeing through the "scientific" nature of GSD standards can help workers feel justified in resisting and subverting them in practice.

Bureaucratic Union

The N.U.T.G.W. has lost considerable members nationally because of the officials almost non-support for the strikers. Many garment workers have been joining the Transport and General Workers Union.

Ron Bales, the Regional N.U.T.G.W. official, who continually attempted to undermine and sabotage the Strike, has been officially reprimanded by the union executive following an internal inquiry over the strike. The Contracts workers were not consulted during the "inquiry" and some have commented that Bales has been used as a scapegoat to cover up the bureaucracy of the Union officials.

Union Money

The workers at Contracts who went on strike have finally been given the money that was donated to their hardship fund during the Strike. Despite the fact that the supporters gave money for the immediate relief of hardship, the full-time union officials at the Sunderland offices of the N.U.T.G.W. got hold of the money and refused to hand it over, even refusing to disclose how much there was. The Money, over £600, was to be handed over to the workers on 24th July: Roughly just over £8 each.

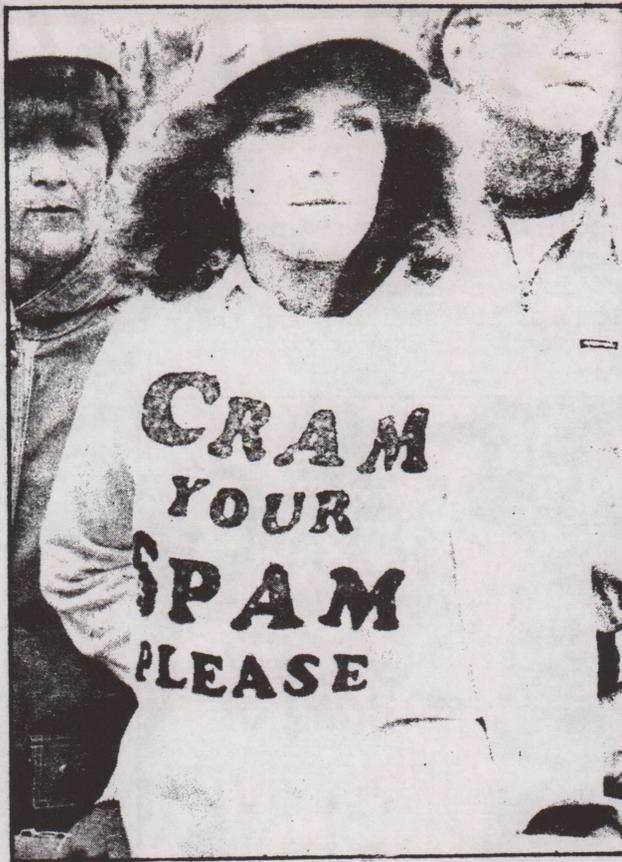
this and so it remains relatively small and stuck.

United Support Group

The anti-concessions groups did not anticipate a high level of independent organisation such as has appeared in the Hormel strike. The United Support Group was set up long before the UFCW 'ended' the strike and talk of forming a new union began some time ago, we also did not anticipate such open hostility from union bureaucrats at this point and it was just this hostility which forced the hand of the Hormel rank and file and has been responsible for the formation of the new union. I think that many of us expected long drawn out court cases and this has proved to be a feature of anti-concessions strikes in the United States today.



To summarise; The strike is still on, The boycott continues, a new union has appeared and is challenging the UFCW, some court cases will have a big effect on the strike and the new union, the UFCW is moving to the right, the rank and file is watching the strike intently and the upcoming union



election will resolve some issues but will not settle the battle. Your continued support is encouraged and appreciated.

Support  Needed

Financial and moral support is desperately required. The blacking of all Hormel goods is a major priority, Hormel products include 'SPAM' and should be blacked. All letters and donations should be sent to;

United Support Group,
P.O. BOX 396,
Austin,
MN 55912,
U.S.A..

No further mail should be sent to the P-9 Emergency Fund as this was wound up when the UFCW put the Local P-9 into receivership

**BOYCOTT
HORMEL PRODUCTS**

BASQUE TRADES UNIONISTS FRAMED

The Spanish government and police are very worried about rank and file controlled unions, which are the only ones protecting and furthering workers' interests at the moment. Whereas the Socialist and Communist unions just collaborate with management and government, police chief Martin Vila stated in 1979, "I don't fear ETA and their bombs, but the confederal union card - which is a menace!"

MILITANCY IN VITORIA

In Vitoria, Euskadi (the Basque country), a syndicalist union, the CNT (different from the anarcho-syndicalist union - CNT-AIT) has attracted a large membership through its committed and principled approach. Officials are paid and do union work in their spare time, and can be recalled at any time by the assembly of members which has ultimate control. At the Michelin factory in Vitoria



the CNT is the largest union, and won a series of important disputes in 1981. Also, in Vitoria the CNT organises all refuse collectors and has thriving sections in the cement, construction, textiles, health, schools and metals industries.

TRUMPED-UP CHARGES

Reflecting the states concern about this successful unionism, 6 members of the CNT, workers at Michelin, have been framed on serious charges and will face trial soon. Since the initial arrests in 1979 70% of the original charges have already been dropped because the only real evidence was confessions gained from the men while they were being tortured with beatings and electricity. Nevertheless, to give credence



to their miserable case, the state will ask for a total of 107 years jail for the six, should they be found guilty of various charges of terrorism (eg bank robberies, attacking a Michelin director, sabotage etc etc).

BAD JOB WELL DONE

The sinister anti-'subversive' legislation brought in by the 'socialist' government is actually worse than what was in force during the fascist years under Franco (this tradition is seen through the Labour governments in Britain bringing in the most repressive laws). But the states desperate attempt to cripple the CNT might have been too hasty. Usually a cache of arms is unveiled by the police as evidence, for the 'shock-horror' gratification of the media. But in this case it seems that the bank robberies are supposed to have been carried out using wooden sticks! However, the state could succeed in linking the CNT with terrorism if the trial is delayed until the national elections to the Works Committees in October. The smear would then be transmitted faithfully by the media even if the trial collapsed afterwards.

THE CNT NEEDS HELP

A general strike in Vitoria greeted the original arrests and charges, bringing large factories such as Rio Tinto Zinc and Michelin to a standstill. The CNT in Vitoria is now heavily in debt through paying bail and working on behalf of the six. They are appealing for financial assistance to conduct the defence and

want observers sent to the trial.

Send donations to:

Marcelo de la Torre,
Caja Provincial de Alava,
Cuente no. 2141216, Vitoria,
Spain.

OVER HERE

We can help the accused by publicising and spreading news of this blatant attack on trade unionists in Spain. Pressure can also be applied by boycotting Michelin and its subsidiaries - Vitoria Michelin have the most to gain from attacking the CNT and were instrumental in trumping-up the charges.

In this country Michelin have factories in Stoke, Burnley, Aberdeen and Dundee, and at Ballymena and Dublin in Ireland. Their British HQ is at; Campbell Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 4EY. Michelin wholly own ATS (Associated Tyre Service) which has branches in many towns and cities. Picketing and leafletting ATS and Michelin offices, factories and branches will get news of the situation around, while at the same time encouraging a boycott of them and a blacking of their products by trades unionists in this country.

SUPPORTING THE MICHELIN 6

Locally Michelin has offices at Drum Road, Chester-le-Street, and an ATS station at Blenheim Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne. The latter was picketed on 24th July by supporters of the accused. Future pickets will be held at both offices and workplaces.

A.T.S.

Picket - 23rd Aug.

10.30am

Blenheim Street.

HORMEL: P-9 BETRAYED

The last issue of the 'Syndicalist' carried a report on the Hormel dispute in Austin, Minnesota, USA. Below we contain an update of that dispute from a comrade in the U.S.A.

the local unions assets, including its hall and is now trying to seize the funds of the United Support Group, which is an independent body of the strikers and their families

meat packers who will not join a union which treats its members so badly. These people could form the base of the new union. It is also possible that the new union will be able to negotiate with the UFCW from a position of strength and thus force the UFCW to alter its structure and positions.

Growing Structures

As disorganised as it is, the anti-concessions movement has been able to organise mass support for the strike and has been able to put together autonomous boycott committees. Hormel workers have travelled all over the United States explaining their strike and bringing back to Austin news of other labour struggles. The effect of this has been that there is now a large body of fairly articulate and knowledgeable strikers who are managing the strike and boycott work.

Rallying Round P-9

The isolation of the Austin workers has been broken down. Large rallies in Austin have drawn thousands of people time and time again. Also a mass demonstration in support of the 507 sacked workers in Ottumwa was not only attended by workers from the Austin plant but also thousands of other supporters.

Hormel workers have joined other picket lines and mass demonstrations as well. Strikers turn up at labour conferences and mass meetings regularly. This is all the more impressive when you consider that most labour leaders have sided with the UFCW and against the strike. Obviously the rank and file is following the strike and supporting it.

Anti-Concessions Movement

The most well organised anti-concessions movement is the National Rank and File Against Concessions. The Hormel workers have affiliated with this group but it may be more of a 'marriage of convenience' than anything else. The National Rank and File Group was founded primarily by local union officials and great fuss was made at the founding convention that the group must not be associated with the union reform movement, must not be seen as radical and must stay within the traditional union movement. Much of this talk now seems somewhat stupid given the course taken by the Hormel workers.



The strike is almost one year old. The spirit of the strikers is strong and there is still some hope that the strike can be won. The parent union, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), has ended the strike but the majority of the workers refuse to listen to these leaders. April 14th & 15th saw hearings being held by the UFCW Int. on whether or not local P-9 should be brought into receivership for refusing to obey the Internationals March 24th order to end the strike and return to work. A letter was sent to each member of Local P-9 which contained a final \$40 strike benefit and a form addressed to Hormel's personnel manager offering to unconditionally return to work and accept whatever work assignment the company offered.

A large though disorganised anti-concessions movement is still lending moral support and financial assistance to the strikers and the boycott of Hormel products continues in full force. With the strike has come a great deal of militancy, not only among workers in the meat packing industry but also amongst other workers and farmers as well.

New Union

The Hormel company is less and less of a factor in the strike. Of the original 1500 strikers, about 800 remain actively involved in the strike. Many of those who crossed the picket line have been fired and the plant is running way below capacity. Recently about 600 signatures of workers on strike and in the plant were collected by the local union on a petition for a new union election. If that election is held strikers and scabs will be voting for either the UFCW or for a new union created by the strikers. This new union, still in its infancy, is known as the North American Meat Packers Union. It has the support of a significant number of the strikers. There is an outside chance that neither union will win the election and that the plant will go non-union.

Union Corruption

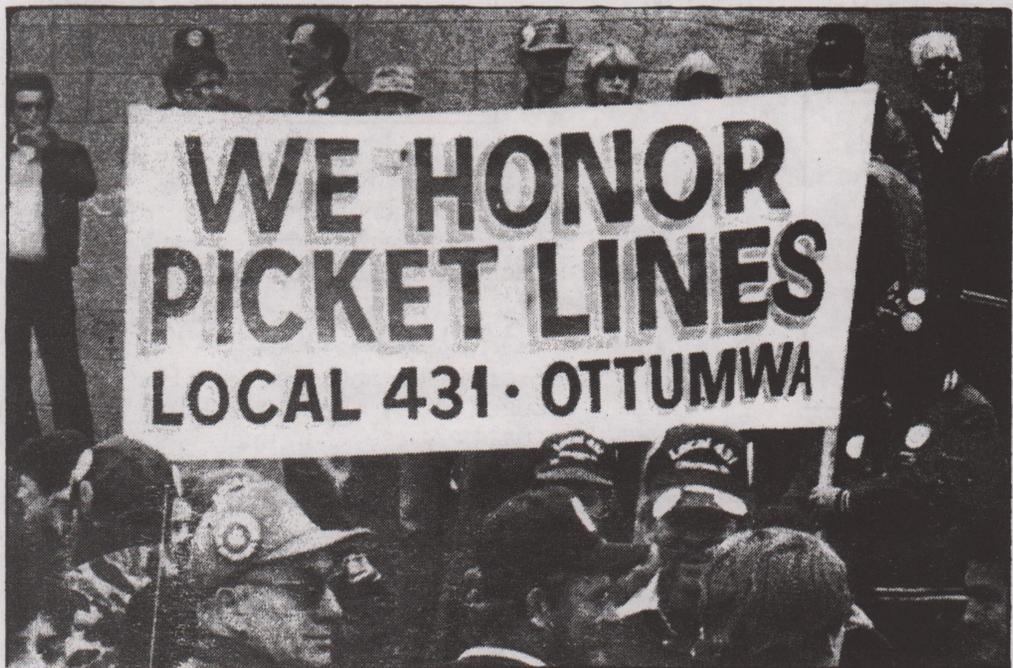
It is painfully clear to us that the UFCW is doing some of the company's work for it. Strikers have been offered cash bribes to return to work by the union and workers who are close to retirement will lose their medical benefits if they don't return to work by August 17th, the one year anniversary of the strike. The UFCW has taken over

who feed and counsel the workers.

During the strike the UFCW has become much more Conservative and authoritarian. The union leaders reason that the strike cannot be won, that it is most important to maintain pattern bargaining and national contracts and that the independent organisation of workers is not at all a positive thing. Some parts of the left, most notably the Communist Party, go along with this. The Hormel workers are ignoring them all.

Supporters Sacked

Hormel workers in Fremont, Nebraska, who honoured picket lines set up by the Austin workers have been fired on Masse. They recently won a court order which requires that the company pay them unemployment benefits. This is one positive decision in an otherwise bleak period. The courts have consistently ruled in favour of Hormel and the UFCW and against the workers. Meanwhile another 507 Hormel workers from Ottumwa, Iowa have been fired for refusing to cross picket lines mounted by the Local P-9.



Support For New Union

The new union could force a change in the meatpacking industry, if only by threatening to split the UFCW. Several locals have refused to pay dues to the UFCW in protest over how the parent union has dealt with the Austin local. There are also many union activists who are dissatisfied with the union and a growing number of non-union

rs, the rank and file want democratic workplace organisations and they are prepared to go outside of the traditional labour movement to get them. If this is seen as 'radical' by some, then so be it. They will go that far and further for there is little left for union workers to lose. The National Rank and File organisation did not recognise

PIT TALK FROM THE COALFACE

There is considerable unhappiness with the current NUM policy of re-admitting scabs to the union; why should UDM members be welcomed back when 600 men are still sacked or in jail? The re-admission policy is the result of some NUM/Labour Party deal with a General Election in mind. It is an aspect of the "unity at any price" idea, with the added bonus that a mass return of scabs from the UDM to the NUM might save some Labour seats in the Nottinghamshire area. Once again principle is the first thing thrown overboard in the pursuit of power.

Everyone wants to see the destruction of the UDM, but the methods chosen by the politicians and TUC bureaucrats show that their only priority is votes. This is also crystal clear from their lack of support for the miners during the strike, and explains why they are not exactly energetic in supporting the sacked and jailed men.



Local Control

Arthur Scargill is apparently against the new policy but is tied down by the rest of the National Executive including Scottish CP members McGahey and Clark (see issue no. 5 of "The Syndicalist"). At less exalted levels dissatisfaction is more apparent - Westoe Lodge are now at odds with national policy, having decided recently that scabs will only be re-admitted to the Lodge in exceptional circumstances and only after explaining themselves satisfactorily to the committee. This is clearly a more appropriate method than by dictat from leaders and politicians.

Democracy Inaction

Not that Scargill is flavour of the month either. The Durham areas delegate to the NEC has retired early on health grounds and the NEC decided that they would not spend money on the mid-term election of a replacement. Scargill is believed to have used his casting vote in favour of this decision.

Private Prosecution - Union Money

Meanwhile he has lost his private prosecution of the police for wrongful arrest. His assurance that he probably won't have to call on union funds to pay the massive costs of the case has upset a lot of people - the implication is that if he doesn't find the money elsewhere then union funds will be used. It makes you wonder what criteria are being used to decide when union money is spent.

RELEASE THE JAILED MINERS

SOUTH WALES

DEAN HANCOCK: Oakdale — Eight year sentence. Gartree maximum security prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicester.

RUSSELL SHANKLAND: Taff Merthyr — Eight year sentence. Gartree maximum security prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicester.

KENT

TERRY FRENCH: Betteshanger — Four year sentence from January 1985. B73383, Weald Wing, Maidstone jail, Kent.

DURHAM

JOHN MATTERSON: Murton — Two years and three months youth custody from December 1985.

JOHN HEMINGWAY: Murton — One year and three months from December 1985.

JOHN ROBSON: Murton — One year and three months from December 1985.

ROBERT HOWE: 22 — Affray, attempted not guilty (judge refused to allow change of plea) 21 months.

ANTHONY RUTHERFORD: 24 — Affray, attempted not guilty, 18 months.

JOHN ROBINSON: 21 — Affray, attempted not guilty, 18 months.

GARY BLACKMORE: 19 — Affray, attempted not guilty, 2 years Youth Custody.

ANTHONY HOWE: 19 — Affray, attempted not guilty, 2 years Youth Custody.

WILLIAM BELL: 20 — Affray, attempted not guilty, 18 months Youth Custody.

YORKSHIRE

MARTIN HODGSON: Wakefield — Three year sentence from November 1985. Armley Jail, Leeds.

NIGEL HODGSON: Wakefield — Three year sentence from November 1985. Armley Jail, Leeds.

PAUL WRIGHT: Saville — 18 month sentence. G76424. Kirkham Jail, Freckleton road, Preston Lancs.

CLIVE THOMPSON: Frickley — Three year sentence from April 1985. G79348. Ackington Jail, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9XF.

N. DERBYSHIRE

DAVID GAUNT: Shirebrook — 2½-year sentence from December 1984. E71037. A Wing, Millers Park Youth Custody Centre, Dodington Road, Wellingborough.

Days at the Face

Finally, for the sake of clarity, the recent British Coal proposals for a four-day week do not mean that miners will now have a long week-end every week. The proposal is designed to get pits running seven days a week by introducing even more unpleasant shift systems and also to cut down the proportion of time spent in actually travelling to and from the face, rather than cutting coal. Miners could easily end up working four days on one shift and then another four following on immediately on another shift.

ROUND UP

Yards Strike Ballot

The question of conditions and pay is still a major factor determining industrial relations in the Swan Hunter Shipyards, management continuing to resist the workers valid claims. Following their rejection of the latest offer from the new bosses, the AEU have decided to hold a ballot over strike action. Meanwhile an overtime ban is still in operation by the seven unions in the yards.

Health Service

Along with the fight against privatisation other disputes continue to occur in the areas hospitals.

The Freeman Hospital in Newcastle has been hit by a dispute over bonus payments. An overtime ban and strike action have already taken place, by G&M members and other staff and sterile-supplies workers.

British Ropes

On July 1st 250 workers at British Ropes factories in Willington Quay and Gateshead took 24-hour strike action over attempts by management to sabotage an overtime ban. This had been in operation as a response to management's miserly pay offer.

Management were hit severely by the strike action because they were trying to finish an "important" order. To continue working on it, contractors were brought in during the strike. After the strike action this particular contract was blacked, and a work to rule implemented, resulting in a go-slow.

Striking workers at Morris of Glasgow still need your support. Donations to; Morris Strikers, c/o R. McCallum, 46, Carlton place, Glasgow, G15 9TQ.

A TALL STORY

The Tall Ships Race that started from Newcastle on July 10th was a curious mixture of rich person's sport and family fun for the people of Tyneside. Perhaps inspired by 'Letter to Brezhnev' the two Russian boats and their crews were very popular with the locals. There was a certain amount of drinking and other forms of social interaction with the crews of the Sedov and Kruzenshtern and its good to know that cynicism and disenchantment with the media and governments seems to be quite common in other parts of the world.

Predicably the Royal Navy tried to muscle in on the show via the frigate H.M.S. Jupiter. It was originally

planned that the two Russian boats would berth alongside one another with the Jupiter in the next berth down river. The Russians didn't like this arrangement so the Kruzenshtern moved in and took Jupiter's berth. The Captain of H.M.S. Jupiter wasn't amused, he tried to moor alongside the Sedov, was sent packing and eventually ended up miles downriver at Tyne Dock, South Shields. This was quite a bonus as everyone was spared the Jupiter's crew making nuisances of themselves on the quayside. Also hardly anyone bothered to trail down to South Shields for the Captains cocktail party. What rotten luck.

YES OR NO?

The D.H.S.S. has once again unleashed new repressive regulations on claimants of social security benefits.

This time it comes in the form of a twenty-paged leaked document outlining that questions contained must be answered by claimants, without any help from the officer (which are more than likely to be non union members), which could result in the suspension of their benefits.

The new regulations will be enforced in twelve different areas including Newcastle, as a test run for the implementation in all areas throughout the country.

Claimants will be faced with a choice of yes and no answers when the interviews take place. Questions range from whether claimants are available to do any work, in any area at a moments notice to whether or not they will accept less pay than their last employment.

The wrong answers to questions, meaning if you want more pay than your last job, even if your last employment was some years ago, or if you are unable to just up and go for a job immediately in an other part of the country, these shall result in benefits being stopped. Probably the most affected will be the youth and obviously one parent families, who, if unable to give assurances that they are able to find a child-minder, or work away from home shall, say the regulations, have all benefits stopped. Of course there is more to this new move by the D.H.S.S. than we have briefly outlined which shall probably affect most, if not all, those claiming benefits.

In the next issue of the Syndicalist we shall include a full report on these latest attacks by the D.H.S.S. on those in receipt of state benefits.

SILENTNIGHT STRIKE SOLIDARITY

The Silentnight strikers are beginning to make headway in their bid to get the CO-OP to cancel its large Silentnight order (see previous issues). The CO-OP is an USDAW (shopworkers union) closed shop. Some sources say that USDAW nationally has ordered boycotting Silentnight beds but that officials have not pushed the idea too hard. USDAW officials at the Newcastle Area Office refused to talk about Silentnight - they recommended contacting the HQ in Manchester. Members at the Newgate Street CO-OP in Newcastle City Centre seem to know little about the strikers and their situation.

BETTER DOWN SOUTH

In other areas action by USDAW members has been more encouraging. In St. Albans, following a picket, CO-OP workers not only refused to take more scab beds but also removed them from sale altogether.

**Support the
SILENTNIGHT
Strikers,
Picket the Co-op
every Thursday
5.30pm-6.30pm
Newgate St.
Newcastle.**



Silentnight strikers at the Durham Miners Gala told us that pickets and USDAW CO-OP workers' action were also being successful in places like Bristol and South Wales. Solidarity continues from the rank and file building workers who are holding regular pickets of the CO-OP in the London area. Support has also come from the TUC and Labour Party - who officially recognise the strike. Strangely this seems to be getting the strikers nowhere!

STOCK CONTROL

From the point of view of local CO-OP managers, they are more or less at the mercy of regional buyers - what they buy,



STRIKERS AT DURHAM MINERS GALA

the managers are obliged to stock. So in the North-East area pressure could sensibly be directed towards;

Mr. Smithson, Furniture Buyer
N.E. Co-operative Society
Tower Place
Simonside Trading Estate
South Shields.

LOCAL CO-OP PICKETS

Leaflets explaining the strike to shoppers and urging them not to buy Silentnight beds were handed out during a picket of the CO-OP department store in Newgate Street on Friday July 19th by a Silentnight Support Group. These pickets will continue until the CO-OP withdraws the beds from sale or the strike ends. See advert above for future pickets.

SHOW SOLIDARITY

Silentnight strikers donated £80 from their strike fund to the Donaldson Filter strikers on a recent visit to Hull.

Show your appreciation of their support for other workers in struggle and show your support for their dispute by sending a donation to:

Mrs Ann King,
10, Rainhill Crescent,
Barnoldswick,
Colne, Lancs,
BB8 6BS.

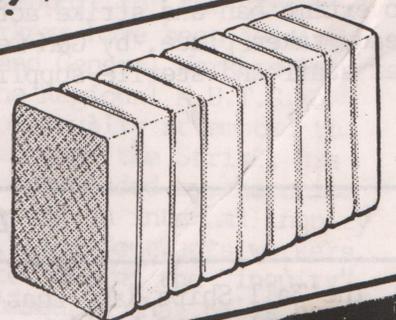
Cheques should be made payable to; Cravendale 92 Branch Strike Fund. All other correspondence to: Silentnight Strike Committee, c/o 9, Frank Street, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs.

WHERE WE STAND

1. We believe in independent, non-hierarchical working class organisation independent of all political parties and bureaucratic trade union structures, none of which represent the true interests of the majority of people, i.e. the people who create the wealth by manual or intellectual means.
2. We believe that under the present system of capitalism support should be given to the struggle for short-term gains, such as better pay and conditions, but these should always be seen for what they are - limited interim reforms which are no substitute for the total reorganisation of society necessary to ensure true freedom, equality and democracy.
3. We believe that the parliamentary system does not serve the interests of the working class. The solution to the problems that we the working class face do not lie in the election of a new leadership, but in the creation of new structures both in the workplace and the community which allows for us all to have total control over the decisions which affect our lives.
4. As revolutionary syndicalists we believe that only by a general strike accompanied by mass occupations and the implementation of workers control, can capitalism be finally removed and a free self-managed society where production and labour is geared towards need and not profit, be created.
5. We are opposed to all forms of racism, fascism, nationalism and sexism - indeed any ideology which sets out to divide the working class.

SUPPORT SILENTNIGHT STRIKERS

BEDS GALORE!! P.L.C.
ALL BRANDS



**DON'T BUY
SILENTNIGHT
BEDS
MADE BY SCABS**