

# The TYNESIDE SYNDICALIST

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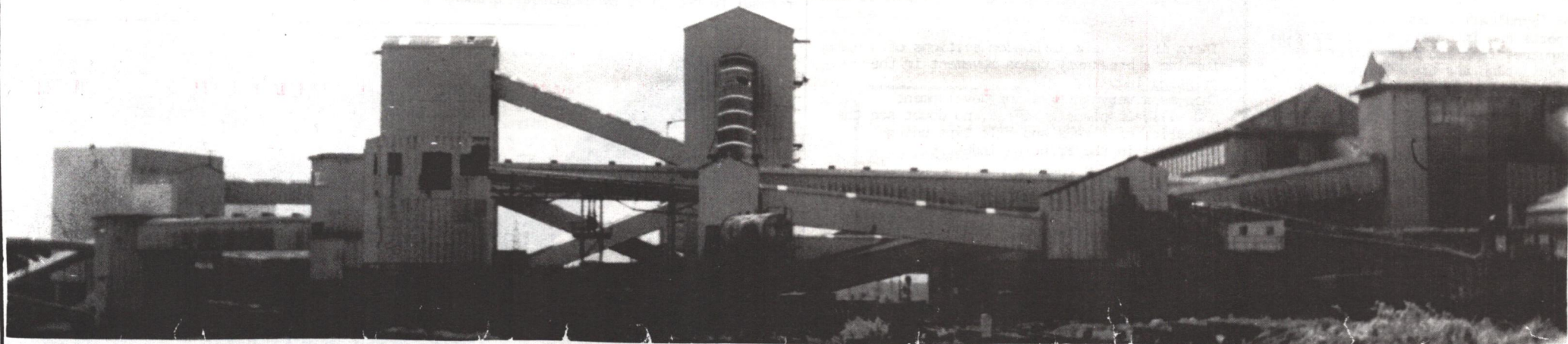
# NORTH-EAST GARMENT WORKERS TO FORM RANK & FILE

"The attitude of our Full-time officials must change. If it doesn't, we will get them out, and the union we are left with will be very different".

So said a shop steward and member of the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers (NUTGW), following the latest chapter in a period of mounting discontent of union members with their union officials.

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## BRITISH COAL ATTEMPT TO BLACKMAIL N.U.M.



Lynemouth coal preparation

full story inside

## ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST MONTHLY

**inside:** LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS.

# T.R.S. EDITORIAL

The recent upsurge of worker-control over their disputes and union organisation, both nationally and internationally, can only be seen as a major step forward from the traditional bureaucratically structured organisations that we know only too well in Britain. Confidence, of workers in many industries, is at a very high point at the moment with workers learning from many others in struggle, as well as through their own actions.

There seems to be a growing tendency to distance themselves from trade union officials and official union 'procedures' in favour of a more 'direct' approach, as seen through the formation of rank and file organisations.

Rank and file control of both dispute and union organisation is a must if an effective union body is to be built and maintained.

One criticism of attempts to build strong and mass rank and file movements is that, "in the long run, especially during national disputes, it will not be possible for the rank and file to remain in complete control of the situation".

On the contrary such organisations are extremely capable of maintaining complete rank and file control as well as the organisations other benefit of ensuring no 'sell-outs' occur from any bureaucratic leadership. A good example of the way in which the rank and file can remain in constant control during national disputes is that of the methods of the 60,000 strong rank and file South African Industrial Union, Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU). The entire national executive of MAWU, all of whom are normal shop floor workers, are involved in bargaining during such a dispute. Simultaneously a national shop stewards council is convened to consider any offers made. However the final decision of whether to accept is not made here. The offer is relayed by telephonic links to each organised factory concerned where the final decision on approval or rejection is made by the mass of workers.

Complete worker-control is sustained very easily through such practices.

If a rank and file movement is to be taken seriously, which there is a real urgency for, the mass of all workers should be the decision making bodies on all issues, and when needed, fully recallable delegates the means of ensuring that all decisions made are carried out in full.

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 '*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

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# WAPPING — THE FIGHT GOES ON



Despite the decision by all unions involved in the Wapping dispute (NGA, SOGAT, NUJ) to pull out, the struggle continues. As one striker said at the news of his unions decision, "well the union hasn't been with us from the start".

"The future of our union is in the hands of Mr Murdoch" stated Brenda Dean, SOGAT General Secretary, the day before they ended their role in the dispute. This is no surprise as very early in the dispute the unions National Executive had decided that the "union assets must be saved at all costs". This is one of the main reasons behind the abandonment of the strikers by union officials.

### FINANCES NEEDED

The future of the pickets that continue the fight for jobs inside Wapping with full union recognition does not look too rosy on the financial front as well as with support from other workers. The withdrawal of what little strike pay was being received and donations from other workers, due to a complete press blackout that the dispute continues and difficulty of keeping people informed of events, leaves the strikers in even deeper hardship than ever before. Financial support is obviously greatly needed.



THE ~~ABC~~ TIMES  
THE SUNDAY TIMES

### MORE REPRESSIVE ACTION

This problem is not however the only one that exists. Due to the continuation of picketting the unions will attempt to distance themselves even further from the dispute and expulsion notices may very well be served.

Police will be given greater encouragement to attempt to stop pickets, using even more force than before, and use of the Public Order acts which effectively ban such activities as picketting, demonstrations etc.

### SUPPORT NEEDED

Whatever direction the Wapping pickets take next every effort must be made to support their initiatives. The Printworkers Support Groups, built up during 'official' union involvement must be maintained and others created.

### BREAKAWAY UNION

There is now talk in London sections of forming a breakaway union movement in the printing industry. This is a very interesting development and will, if plans go ahead, no doubt see the formation of a rank and file type union structure in the Printing industry.

It must be made clear that just because the union leadership have pulled out of the Wapping dispute that the will not continue. The dispute with Murdoch's News International CONTINUES.

## FASCIST SCUM!

On the 24th February the monthly meeting of Gateshead Trades Council delegates was disrupted by about 7 members of the fascist British National Party (BNP). They entered the meeting as a member of the Tyneside and District Anti Fascist Association was speaking. A union jack was unfurled and slogans shouted. Scuffles then followed and the police were called resulting in arrests.

The disruption highlights how confident the fascist groups in Gateshead are at the moment. They were sufficiently confident to stage the protest at the Gateshead Civic Centre, and that the police would be sufficiently ineffective, for them to succeed.

## COALBOARD BLACKMAIL

Coal Board attitudes to workers in the mining industry has not change much since the departure of Ian MacGregor and takeover by John Haslam as British Coal boss.

### BLACKMAIL

Fear and the intransigent attitude of board bosses are still the main ingredients of industrial relations in British mining, with miners not knowing what to expect the coal board to come up with next in its persute of killing the industry and the NUM with it. Blackmail has been at the centre of two recent developments in the coalfields, both at local and national levels.

At the time of run-down at Lynemouth and the consequent merger with Ellington the board had stated that Lynemouth men would be entitled to autonomy in union branches. Now however the board have told workers at the South Side Washeries that they must join the Ellington Branch. The action on the 5th is the first in a series of actions planned for the future.

### NO RE-INSTATEMENT

The twist to the whole episode concerns the re-instatement of miners sacked during the 1984-1985 strike. Miners at the complex had been told by the Ellington-Lynemouth bosses



The back end of January saw coal board plans revealed concerning the development of a major new colliery at Margam in South Wales. South Wales has seen the closure of 14 pits since the end of the 1984-1985 miners strike and Margam would be the first pit to be developed in the area for over ten years. The pit would provide thousands of jobs but, say the board, that future lies in the NUM hands. The coal board have demanded that if the pit is developed the NUM agree to six day continental working shifts (instead of five) along with other sweeping changes in working practices, if the NUM do not agree the board will refuse to go ahead with the Margam development.

### MORE ACTION PLANNED

On February 5th the Ellington-Lynemouth complex was hit with strike action over B.C. refusal to recognise Lynemouth NUM branch.

that they could not re-instate miners (even if they had won tribunals) as this decision could only be made at national level. Now the board say that if Ellington Branch, and the miners involved, can guarantee that there will be no loss of coal during action by the Lynemouth branch sacked men will be taken on. Again we see that all statements made by the coal board are complete lies which can, and will, be changed when it suits their advantage.

Meanwhile the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign continues and needs your financial support. Send donations to;

North East Justice for Mineworkers Campaign,  
26, The Avenue,  
Durham.



Going Going Gone...were the newspaper headlines referring to the giant chimney at Ashington Colliery, when it bit the dust in early February. The decision to knockdown the chimney came after British Coals decision to close down the pits washeries. The title, Going Going Gone, can only seri-

ously refer to the future of the Northumberland coalfields if the coal board are allowed to continue with their destructive plans. Northumberland has only two pits remaining, Ashington and the Ellington-Lynemouth complex though the future of the Ashington Colliery is in jeopardy.

# FIGHT BAKERS' BILL

Education Secretary Kenneth Baker is attempting to bring in a bill which will greatly reduce teachers' rights to organise, and force them to sign a contract shackling them to unreasonable conditions. The Bill directly threatens collective bargaining in the teachers profession, and by implication such conditions will be imposed on other workers if teachers fail to stop it. The National Union of Teachers Executive is making it increasingly difficult for their own members to fight the Bill.

the Bill led to the suspension from the union of the 'organisers'. Rank and file members around the country were outraged. Many local teachers' associations sent motions of protest. On Tyneside, both Newcastle and North Tyneside associations condemned the suspensions. The Socialist Teachers Alliance - a growing rank and file pressure group within the NUT - campaigned for the re-instatement with a national petition.

The members have now been reinstated, but the damage has been done. The victimisation of those involved has intimidated any other teachers from taking similar action and effectively immediately stifled any further wildcat action.

## HALF DAY STRIKES

Now the NUT Executive has called for a token half-day strike against Bakers Bill. Locally the whole farce is being treated with total contempt. Many militant teachers are even voting AGAINST such a strike, because it will not be effective as a sanction, and will simply aggravate parents. One North Tyneside secondary teacher told us, "the union executive need to be sacked, they do not represent us"

## JOINT ACTION

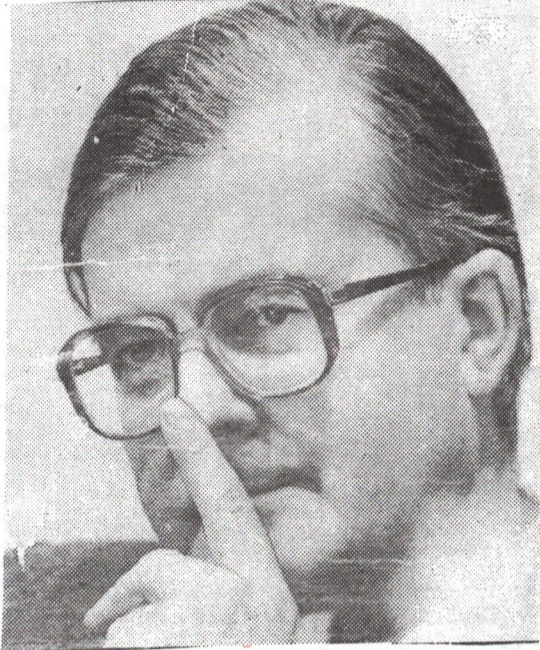
The general feeling is that there has been a sell-out, and that rank and file "guerilla" action must be renewed. At grass roots level NUT and the NAS/UWT members have cooperated together whereas their "leaders" have always traditionally been in open opposition. For the first however, the two unions - the only two in the teaching profession (others are right wing bosses associations) - have come together to issue a joint ballot on strike action.

## POLICING THE TEACHERS

As a footnote, the ILTA is again the subject of controversy - in a little publicised

dispute. The Association has a policy of keeping the police off school property, due to pressure from black and Asian parents, as the police's openly racist behaviour obviously materialises into overt propaganda

and recommended the video. Ms Morrell urged teachers to carry out head teachers decisions about its showing. On reflecting over who should decide over such a matter, it is perhaps enough to say that many



Kenneth Baker Education Chief

## UNOFFICIAL ACTION

Recently an unofficial strike by the Inner London Teachers Association (ILTA) against



when they go into schools. Recently, ILTA voted to ban a police video on child abduction. Ms Francis Morrell the Labour leader of the Inner London Education Authority (a supposedly anti-racist organisation) has since by-passed the grass-roots concern,

studies on London heads views, have consistently shown that they are overtly racist in their policy decisions. Newcastle Education Authority have recently decided to continue with plans to cut 47 secondary school jobs in an overly crowded and increasingly worsening education area.

## GOVERNMENT RACIST LAWS

The government is presently threatening many Asian and black people with deportation on an unprecedented scale, with the help of its racist immigration laws. Over the last few months many families have been harassed by the police, and threatened in the courts, with the aim of splitting them up. As well as this state racism, black and Asian people are also living in fear of violence from racist attacks which have also increased over recent months. A recent study for the socialist group of the European parliament found that a racist attack is committed once every 29 minutes in Britain!

## FIGHT BACK

Many grass-roots campaigns have sprung up around the country to fight the deportations. Trade unionists are also becoming involved on a larger scale than ever before. In Manchester recently, 1,000 council staff took strike action in protest at the threatened deportation of one of their colleagues. The Viraj Mendis defence campaign is probably the largest anti-deportation campaign, and aims at coordinating with other campaigns.

## SUPPORT THE WHEELERS 4

The strike at Wheelers Fish Restaurant, Brighton, continues this month with striking workers, said to be the first Chinese workers ever to have taken this form of industrial action in Britain, stepping up pickets of their employment and others connected to the Wheelers owner Dennis Bailey.



## UNDER DIRECT MANAGEMENT

Bailey took over the restaurant in February 1985 and proceeded to implement sweeping changes while refusing to consult the workforce, some of whom had worked there for many years. Workers were forced to participate in a 13 week probationary employment trial.

## IN SANCTUARY

Viraj Mendis has lived in the United Kingdom for over thirteen years, and is a member of the Sinhalese community in Sri Lanka. He is in immediate danger of being sent back to Sri Lanka by the British government. If this takes place, and he is forced to return to Sri Lanka, he is in danger of being killed or tortured by the government, because of his support for a Tamil homeland. Viraj has now taken sanctuary in a church in Manchester.

## WIDE SUPPORT

The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign has many local groups around the country, as well as the main one in Manchester. The Newcastle group has held collections and leafletting sessions at the Monument, in the town centre. A public meeting was also recently held at Newcastle University to which over fifty people attended. The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign along with many other campaigns in the area against the deportations of people need your support. The Tyneside group can be contacted via the Gateshead Law Centre.

Tel: 4771109.

Since the dispute began, and all 4 workers sacked, Bailey has put up £12,000 to take out a court injunction to limit pickets to six in total (4 chefs, an interpreter and one union official).

## THE UNION LINE

Although the strike is official (TGWU) the

union have not provided much support either locally or nationally. The first sign of this was a six week delay in payment of strike pay. The union have repeatedly refused to spread information to local branches without going through bureaucratic and time consuming procedures. Though union support has been lacking the

## A1 FEEDS 1st ANNIVERSARY

It is now over a year since 12 workers at A1 Feeds, Liverpool, were sacked by their employer.

The dispute began way back in January of last year after two workers were sacked by the company. Twelve colleagues decided to take strike action in support and were immediately sacked. The main reasons behind the sackings were the mens determination to force their employer to recognise the union in which they were organised, the Transport and General Workers Union. This along with



HARRY NUGENT: run down by a scabs' car

the fight against atrocious working conditions which included, amongst many things, no heating, no protective guards on machines,



no lights on staircases and no dust excluders, plus the hours which the men fa-

dispute has continued to grow with the four workers and their supporters succeeding to cut Bailey's customers by at least 50% at his restaurant in Brighton, due to pickets.

## WIDER IMPLICATIONS

As this dispute is being carefully watched by the Chinese community, country-wide, the final outcome of this dispute may have major effects on the confidence of Chinese workers and others in restaurant and catering services throughout the country.

The Wheelers 4 need your support, send all letters and donations to;

Wheelers Support Group,  
CIAC 152-156,  
Shaftesbury Avenue,  
London,  
WC2H 8HL.

NOTE: Five chefs from Wheeler restaurants in London have recently been sacked.

ced forced the employers to either fully concede their demands or find another way of quieting the workforce. The end result was the sack.

## DETERMINATION

Since the dispute began the men have been continually harassed, beaten up on picket lines, hospitalised, arrested, fined and penalised by the DHSS. However even after a year of such circumstances the men are determined to win their fight for re-instatement, recognition of their union, better working conditions and wages and an end to long working hours. These workers desperately need your support, all workers involved in any way with products or materials being delivered to the Jootle factory are asked for solidarity action. We have included a list of firms that have been involved in scabbing. Donations and letters of support should be sent to:

A1 FEEDS STRIKE COMMITTEE,  
TRANSPORT HOUSE,  
ISLINGTON,  
LIVERPOOL 3.

Companies involved in scabbing which need to be blacked;

- INGHAM STOCKFEEDS, BLACKBURN.
- R. ATKINSON Ltd, CREWE.
- A.F. TRANSPORT, CLITHEROE.
- JOHNSONS MORNFLAKE OATES, WARRINGTON.
- MARSHALLS OF CLITHEROE.
- M.J. HALE and SONS, WILTON, WIRRAL.
- MARK WILSON TRANSPORT, BELFAST.
- DREMAN TRANSPORT.
- JOHN WILLIAMS, ANTHONY SUDLOW.
- OAK MILLERS, CORN MERCHANTS.
- DOUG TRANSPORT, FRASERBURGH.
- COLBORN DAWES NUTRITION Ltd, ATERSTONE.
- FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION, WARRINGTON.
- H. BINKS and SONS, LEYBURN.
- ENSIGN PETROLEUM, CLWYD.



# BOLIVIA: Unionists Jailed

20 Union leaders of Bolivia's One Big Union, the Bolivian Workers Center (COB) have been arrested and imprisoned by the government. During a recent wave of strikes to hit Bolivia the government announced that they were going to take "tough action" against the strikes.



**TOUGH ACTION**

In recent months government troops have broken up strikes and protest demonstrations

and hundreds of unionists have been jailed for fighting the government-imposed austerity schemes that have slashed real wages and cost thousands of workers their jobs. In the past most government attacks have been on the mineworkers but on these occasions government repression has been directed at Teachers and oil workers. On February 6th Oil workers took strike action in demand for increases in wages to compensate the effects of Bolivia's raging inflation. Four days later they were joined by Health service workers. The strikes continued to gain momentum and teachers began to take action, refusing to prepare for the school year which begins this month (March).

## TWENTY ARRESTS ORDERED

In the face of such action Interior Minister, Fernando Berthelemy, ordered the arrest of 18 Oil workers' union members and two teachers on charges of inciting workers to strike and insulting the authorities. International solidarity is urgently needed to secure the release of these class war prisoners and to stop the repression of the Bolivian labour movement. The COB appeals for industrial action on an international scale in all relevant industries.

It is also asked that letters condemning the detention of workers and demanding their release be sent to;

PRESIDENT VICTOR PAZ ESTENSORO,  
PALACIO de GOBIERNO,  
PLAZA MURILLO,  
La PAZ,  
BOLIVIA.

MINISTER FERNANDO BERTHELEMY,  
MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR,  
AVDA ARCE,  
La PAZ,  
BOLIVIA.



# BTR SHATTERED

Recently the attempted takeover of Pilkington Brothers, Britain's biggest glass manufacturers, by the massive Industrial conglomerate BTR was defeated in the face of widespread action by Pilkington's 16,500 employees. Workers obviously feared for their jobs if the £1.2 Billion takeover bid had went through.

## FUTURE WORRIES

Workers at Pilkington factories all over the country knew full well that their future with the company would be very shaky, even though Pilkington management had already axed two thirds of the workforce over ten years workers saw BTR as the worse of two evils. The history of 'shot-gun' management of BTR is very widely known by workers. Since the takeover of Dunlops a major run down and closure programme has been put into effect.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Internationally the BTR industrial relations and hard-headed management are no different.

In May 1985 1,000 workers at BTR Sarmcol, South Africa, were sacked after they walked out in a fight for union recognition. (Full story: Syndicalist 4). The dispute that has followed the sackings has seen the death of many Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) members on picket lines and the imprisonment of many more. The dispute with BTR Sarmcol continues and workers ask for international action in support of their fight. Workers worldwide need to be on their guard against any such takeover by international corporations.

All letters of support and donations for MAWU members atill on strike at Sarmcol should be sent to;

Metal and Allied Workers Union,  
P.O. Box 9451,  
Johannesburg 2000,  
South Africa.

Tel: 11-4023432.

Please note that it is advisable to send all mail by registered post.



Moses Mayekiso MAWU General Secretary

# FRANCE: RANK AND FILE ACTION

In the past few months French railworkers were involved in a bitter struggle against management plans to introduce major changes in working practices, conditions and wages. The dispute resulted in many important lessons for both French workers and others internationally. Railworkers over the last few years have been faced with increased attacks on their conditions and wages, the spark which began the recent action was the planned introduction of what they call "Grille de Merit" which affectively created a dispute which could have been one of the biggest working class struggles in French modern day history.

## GRILLE DE MERIT

The "Grille de Merit" system is basically a scheme attempted lately by many British employers which places all hopes of promotion and wage rises on the flexibility, usefulness and good behaviour of employees.

## BOSSSES AND BUREAUCRATS

The fight of striking rail workers was not only against the French state but also the trade union bodies such as CGT (communist Party controlled) and CFDT (socialist). Membership, at present, of French trade unions is far less than that of their British counterparts due mainly to the workers deep suspicion of the bureaucratic union structures and officials. Officials are in positions for life and cannot be sacked.

## THE RANK AND FILE

Due to this situation the strike was began in December of last year by non-union and rank and file union members. The action by workers on the shop floor sparked immediate repressive action by the French state, who

attempted to beat workers into a return to work with the use of the CRS (riot police). The media, fascist groupings and the trade union bureaucrats also played a major role in an attempt to end the strike action and the workers demands. Condemnation was whipped up through the television, papers and radio in an attempt to form rail users opposition groups to the strike, used mainly for scabbing and anti strike demonstrations. Fascists were involved on a large scale in this attempted mobilisation.

## UNION CONDEMNATION

The CFDT and more vociferously the CGT condemned strikers and their methods. The CGT initially seeing the workers action as weak and unpopular amongst rail workers. However with growing support and the strength of the actions the CGT were forced to abandon this opposition in order to save face.

## SOLIDARITY ACTION

Rank and file action, which began and continued to control the dispute, was a major fear of the Stalinist CGT who saw their influence over French workers in a very dangerous position of being eroded. One day strikes limited to the public sector were called, as a tactic to take control of the dispute, but once again the CGT had underestimated the militancy and feeling of workers. CGT members and others on the Paris metro, bus systems, power industry, munitions and postal workers all agreed to continue the action in support of colleagues in the SNCF (French railways).

## CGT SABOTAGE

CGT members in the merchant navy, who had at this time been involved in strike action

since early December bringing ports to a standstill, were ordered back to work by the union officials. Workers at seven port refused to do so. Fearing repercussions of the rank and file build up (ie similar action throughout French industries affectively destroying any influence that the CGT has) the union entered into negotiations with the French government in an attempt to strike a deal which would see a return to work. Strike leaflets at the time maintained that "the CGT hope to act like the fire brigade saving the French state" obviously a view of the union that the leadership could have done without.

## STRIKE COMMITTEES

Why then were the government and the unions so afraid of the railworkers and their supporters actions?

In the back of many peoples minds were the days of 1968 and the acute possibility of a major working class confrontation. Due to the build up of the rank and file controlled strike committees both government and union feared for their positions. Chirac afraid of the distabilising affects on the French economy and the stalinist fear of being left behind by a growing working class movement.

The strike committees came in the form of locally controlled rank and file bodies linking together on a regional basis through fully recallable delegates. On December 26th this was extended still further when a national committee was called. All rail workers regardless of grade or union were asked to attend.

In opposition to the rank and file committees the CGT (in the stalinist role of sabotaging working class movements not

under their control) formed its own bureaucratic co-ordinating movement creating confusion to both rail workers, other workers and public alike.

## DIRECT ACTION

Tactics of the strike were condemned from all union bodies, political parties and the government. Strikers used affective tried and tested direct action tactics such as blocking of rail lines and sabotage. The sabotage tactics consisted of uncoupling wagons, tipping cargo on tracks, attacking signal boxes and rail electricity supplies. Also high on the strikers list of actions was the occupations of signal boxes and stations. Meanwhile support from other sectors did not stop at simple strike action. Power workers blacked out selected factories and supermarkets and in some areas switched customers to cheap night time tariffs as well as refusing to disconnect people for non payment of bills. In the face of such action the government had no other alternative but to drop the "Grille de Merit" along with other plans.

## SYNDICALIST UNION

It is heartening to see that French workers have learned, even on this small scale, to distrust the union bureaucracies along with their stalinist and socialist leaders. This small look at syndicalist type organisation of French railworkers with their rank and file committees adds hope to the development of mass revolutionary syndicalist bodies in France. The French CNT (Anarcho-syndicalist union) have already been requested to form branches in parts of the SNCF. Lets hope that this is only the beginning and workers worldwide will soon learn the lessons of the French railway workers.

# CATERPILLAR WORK-IN

The occupation by about 950 workers of their Caterpillar factory enters its second month with steady support from the local community and labour movement.

The occupation of the Glasgow factory started after the American-owned company decided to close the plant within 12 months, resulting a loss of 1,200 jobs.

The local community is firmly behind the occupation - and the action has renewed a general mood of militancy. At a shop

stewards conference in Glasgow on Feb. 5th John Heenan, of East Kilbride, said the town's Miners Support Group would be revived in order to help fight the closure. Massive collections have already been made locally.

## SOLIDARITY

Dockers at Greenock have blacked tractor parts destined for the United States, as have many others at British ports. On Feb. 13th, shop stewards and trades unionists

from the European plants of the giant Caterpillar Corporation met in Brussels

to discuss ways in which they could organise a concerted strategy to defend the threatened factory. Delegations from plants in Charleroi, Belgium, and Grenoble, France, met Scottish trades unionists.

On Sat. 28th Feb., a 10,000 strong demo marched in support of the occupation. In attendance were workers from the French and Belgian plants.



## 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.

## A WEB OF DECEPTION

The last issue of the 'Tyneside Syndicalist' contained an article concerning the sacking of staff at Trader Group Newspapers in early December last year. The Group is owned by Lionel Pickering who admires and styles his industrial relations on the likes of Shah, Maxwell and Murdoch.

The workers were sacked during industrial action in their persute of an agreed wage rise from earlier in 1986.

### STRIKERS ACTIONS

The dispute continues, round the clock picketting of the plant in Derby, where the workers were sacked, is being maintained. A plant in Breston, Near Long Eaton, was the scene of strikers pickets when it was discovered that one of the titles, the Notts Trader, was being printed there by T. Bailey Foreman (the company that owns Notts Evening Post).

The first picket was unsuccessful as thousands of copies of the Notts Trader came rolling off the presses. Later a further picket, much larger in numbers, was mounted though no scabs arrived. It is probably more reasonable to suggest that the scabs were frightened off rather than a conscious decision to respect the picket line. Investigations are being made to find out where the issue of the paper was printed.

### DHSS SUSPEND BENEFITS

Predictably the strikers are having difficulties with the DHSS. Strikers are receiving



strike pay but this should be supplemented by DHSS (amount depending on number of children).

After paying benefit, then withdrawing it, then paying it again, they have once again suspended benefits.

The DHSS are presently looking at reasons of dismissal, if they can prove strikers were sacked for "gross-misconduct" benefit will be lost for 12 weeks.

This attempt to harrass the strikers will

"WE BUILD SHIPS", Channel 4, Monday 23rd February, 11pm.

Channel 4's excellent series, "Eleventh Hour", continued with the beautifully made film from the Siren Film and Video Collective, who are based in Middlesborough. The film told the story of the workers at Austin & Pickersgill (A&P) in Sunderland using an imaginative blend of interviews, commentary, images of the town and yards in Sunderland, and the people in them.

### MANAGEMENT LIES

As reported in past issues of "The Syndicalist" the recent history of shipbuilding in the North-East has seen a catalogue of management deceit and hostility towards the industry, with privatisation, redundancies, closures and workers increasingly forced into a corner.

Sunderland has been no exception; its one-time position as the leading shipbuilding centre in the world being no protection against the profit demands of the financial markets.

### THE STORY

The programme told the story of developments in the last couple of years in Sunderland, in the context of yard after yard closing in the town until only A&P was left. We heard from workers (and one of their wives), shop stewards, the works convenor and MP's (Bob Clay and right-wing Tory, Edward duCann) of the case for keeping the yard open - an argument taking into account

probably only delay payments, rather than lose the strikers money. There is no question of having been sacked for "gross-misconduct". Naturally enough the uncertainty is worrying the strikers, many with families to support.

### WIDER SUPPORT

Derby County Council have withdrawn their advertising accounts from Pickering's free newspapers. Trader Web not only produce free newspapers but also trade union journals, amongst them the T&G Record and the NUM paper the Miner. However these two

unions have already boycotted the company and are having their journals printed elsewhere.

Support groups to aid the sacked workers are at the moment being formed in both Derby and Nottingham. Support on a wider scale, is however, greatly needed.

For more information, donations and requests for speakers contact;

Trader Sacked Workers Dispute,  
c/o 114, Stonehill Road,  
Derby.

## A&P REVIEW

local history and present needs and the role of shipbuilding and fitting in Britain, Europe and the world. The passion, commitment and intelligence of the workers came across forcefully, and was highlighted in the final part of the film which dealt with the strike over the employment of subcontractors which ended in January.

The pressure has not lifted, however, since the management have stated that their voluntary redundancy programme will not continue after the end of March - ie. anyone who will not accept voluntary redundancy by then may lose their job.

This is the latest vicious act by a management intent on stamping workers into submission and going along with the death of their industry. The recent militancy in the yard has already led to the "resignation" of British Shipbuilders' area boss - he failed in not finishing off the closure plan quietly with no fuss.

The level of support for the A&P workers in the town and the region was seen to be tremendous, and will help them fight on.

### DRAWBACKS

There were some flaws in an otherwise very good film. A preview was held in the Side Cinema, Newcastle, on the 11th February. Workers and Shop Stewards were present and in the discussion following the showing pointed out that the workers tended to be portrayed as angry and passionate in their demands for the yard to be kept open. But when it came to the detailed arguments the film-makers relied on the MP's. The impression could have been gained that the workers did not know these facts and complex

arguments, whereas the reverse was true - they were fully aware of all of the implications and ramifications. One worker could put across the point very briefly and affectively without a mass of statistics or web of logic; eg. the statement by one worker that "you can't mothball skills".

Indeed, the makers treatment of the workers did follow this pattern - not only in using the MP's but also with the works convenor, talking while travelling along the Wear in a boat or standing on the quayside. There was much less of the workers at their stations, even though the sections we saw of this were far more effective. In general there was an unnecessary emphasis on institutions, experts, leaders. Perhaps too this was reflected in the fact that the subjects of the film - the A&P workers - only got a chance to comment on the film when it was too late to do anything about it.

But despite these reservations positive sides of the film were many. The music from people like Alan Hull and Lindisfarne and Elvis Costello heightened the emotional intensity of the film, as did moments of humour helped along by Mike Elliot. The peice about the Bartons yard

once the only yard in the world launching directly into the sea - but which was now only memory, was handled very well. Hearing the disbelief of men who had worked at the yard standing bewildered on the site - now completely flat with no sign of a yard ever having been there - and then seeing those same peoples increasing determination in their struggle was the most effective part of the film.

## PAMPHLETS AVAILABLE

The following publications are available from the TRS.

The Spanish Revolution 1936 - 1939. History of workers organisation.....	TRS...	15p.
Libertarian Labor Review. New technology, working week, Bolivia.....	IWW...	80p.
Strike strategy. Early National Rank and File publication.....	NRFM...	10p.
I.W.A. Aims and Principles. Aims of International Workers Association.....	IWA...	40p.
Strike action. Tactics and way to organise during disputes.....	DAM...	20p.
Miguel Garcia story. Militant in Spanish civil war and after.....	MGMC...	11p.
Anarchism and feminism. Women workers and trade unions.....	DAM...	35p.
Tell us lies about the miners. Media coverage of '84 - '85 strike.....	D. Douglass...	60p.
Come wet this truncheon. Police role and actions in '84 - '85 strike.....	D. Douglass...	80p.
Bulgaria - A New Spain. Bulgarian revolution of 1944.....	ABAF...	60p.
Libertarian Communism. Ideas of libertarian structure and organisation.....	Puente...	60p.
My Social Credo. The belief of Anarcho-Syndicalism.....	Maximoff...	50p.
Program of Anarcho Syndicalism.....	Maximoff...	11p.
Syndicalists in Russian revolution.....	Maximoff...	45p.
The Tragedy of Spain. A look at the revolution of 1936 - 1939.....	R. Rocker...	11p.
Syndicalism in practice No1. Spanish revolution.....	Rebel Worker...	20p.
Syndicalism in practice No2. Argentine organisation, FORA.....	Rebel Worker...	20p.
Syndicalism in practice No3. Syndicalist organisations of Chile.....	Rebel Worker...	20p.
Syndicalism in practice No4. Syndicalist organisations of Poland.....	Rebel Worker...	20p.

Please add 24p for orders under £2 and 10% for those over, to cover postage cost.

We wish to point out that TRS do not necessarily hold all views contained in the literature above.

# GARMENT WORKERS RANK and FILE

## UNION COLLUSION

The NUTGW executive's behaviour in recent months has been nothing short of open collusion with the bosses of the many sweat-shop factories in the area. Such as Contracts Ltd (scene of six month strike, 1985-1986), South Shields and J and J Fashions (involved in wildcat action in November of last year) factories dotted around the North-East.



JANE KINGSLAND

The massive wildcat strikes which took place throughout the region, which were totally controlled by rank and file committees, secured a pay rise higher than that which was negotiated between management and union officials and consequently "advised". Such activities have proved a catalyst for further organisation.

like.

This year the shop stewards plan to arrange a rank and file meeting to make contacts and talk about setting up a national rank and file structure of union members.

## BROAD LEFT

The North-East garment workers have no interest in such organisations as the 'Broad Left' which spend most of their time trying to get 'left wing' members elected into union positions. Garment workers in the area have experienced full well the Bureaucratisation of union officials once elected. Ron Bales, local NUTGW full-timer, was in the past a member of International Socialists (IS) going on to sell out the workers at contracts during their six month dispute. Their power lies with the control with the rank and file.

## GAINING CONFIDENCE

The growing militancy of the areas garment workers began with the Contracts action. In the words of Jane Kingsland, shop steward at Contracts,

"We showed our colleagues in other factories that it was possible to take on both the bosses and our union officials; Neither of them were going to dictate to us - and the workers at J and J Fashions have taken up the struggle with the same confidence".



## SHOP STEWARD CONFERENCE

Shop stewards throughout the region met for the first time ever shortly before xmas.

"The atmosphere was so different from the usual meetings - we could actually talk to each other, instead of having to listen to our union officials talking rubbish"

commented Jane Kingsland, shop steward at Contracts Ltd. Such sentiments are now echoed by many garment workers. Signs of a new-found power, emerging, out of a previously male dominated, bureaucratic union. The workers usually meet once a year only and then with their officials present. This being totally inadequate, the shop stewards now plan to meet regularly ALONE.

## RANK AND FILE BREAKAWAY

The unions annual conference, in Wales, in May, is to be a target for the North-East shop stewards message. Usually the officials stage manage the conference by-passing motions they do not

Despite being forced back to work by a hostile press, union and financial hardship, the workers at Contracts are still organised and militant, in the face of extreme provocation.

## BAD WORKING CONDITIONS

They are now regularly videoed when doing a new job so that the manager can decide, with the help of a computer if they are working fast enough. Yet the system allegedly designed to improve wages for "good" work has not provided any increase in wages for the factories workers.

## THE FUTURE

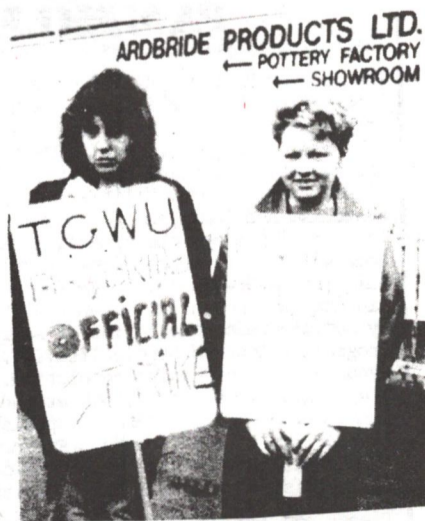
It is hoped that in the long-term an active rank and file union will in the end enable workers to smash management tactics of control and gain workers better wages, conditions and other practices. This development in the North-East may turn out to be one of the most important tasks undertaken in the working class movement for a very long time.

# BOYCOTT ARDBRIDE & LAURA ASHLEY

The dispute at Ardbride Products, Androssan, Scotland, continues into its fourth month. 21 women from two factories owned by Stuart Ross went on strike in September of last year over union recognition, wages and working conditions. The three main elements which seem to be at the forefront of many disputes throughout the country lately. One of the main products produced at the plants are lampshades and on many occasions workers have fainted due to glue used to stick them down, extractor fans do not work properly. Dust levels in the factory are 12 times the actual permitted level. The workforce at Ardbride factories are largely women and Y.T.S. trainees. Top wages are £1.70 an hour.

## ILLEGAL CONDITIONS

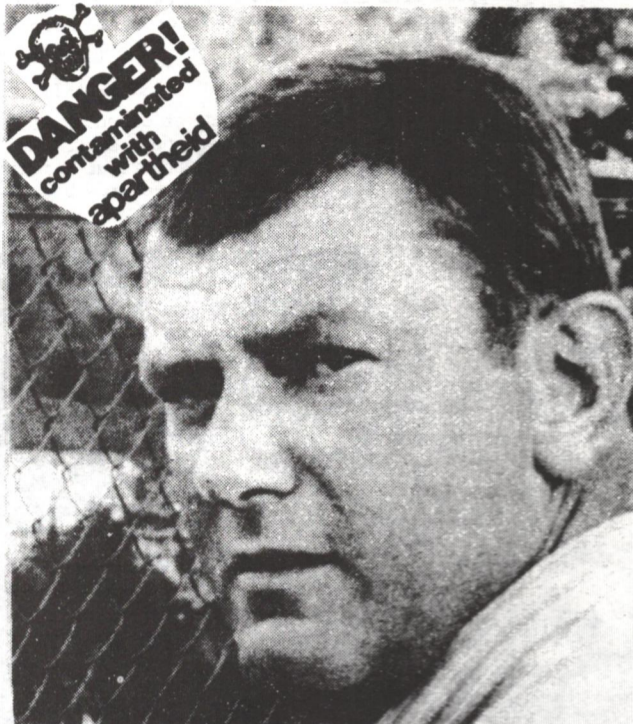
The company has had a history of shot-gun industrial relations with its workforce. In March 1986 three workers were sacked after management discovered they had joined the Transport and General Workers Union. Later after Ross discovered others were joining the T & G he refused to pay an agreed 10p per hour wage rise. Ross continued to victimise and harrass workers and continued to make life at the factories hell for them especially after the Health and Safety Executive



# DUNNE IT AGAIN

The Dunnes Stores anti-apartheid strikers are still unable to go back to work. On Jan. 1st the (Irish) governments new restrictions on fruit and vegetable imports

of some foodstuffs. Of course it was full of loopholes, the first exemption licence was given to the biggest fruit importer in the country, FII.



Ben Dunne where he belongs.....in a cage.

from South Africa came into effect. Ben Dunne, boss of Dunnes Stores, had always said that their jobs were still there. When they turned up for work they were presented with new conditions of employment that were totally unacceptable. None of the other workers in Dunnes were asked to sign them, only the strikers. In effect they have been sacked.

## NOT A SURPRISE

This does not come as a great surprise. We argued throughout the strike that a defeat would give Ben Dunne the confidence to go on the offensive against the union. It need not have happened. There was a possibility of winning, though we recognise it would not have been easy. But that possibility was not even considered by IDATU (the union) leadership. They refused to attempt to spread the strike to other Dunnes shops, and on Dec. 24th 1985 ordered the lifting of the picket in Henry Street. The union General Secretary, John Mitchell, gave an interview to the 'Irish Press' in Sept. 1985 which claimed that, "...we are dealing with a company that will never give in". Such public defeatism would hardly bring Ben Dunne to his knees.

## CONCESSIONS

Instead the emphasis was put on getting the government to act. Forced to make some concession to the massive support for the strikers they brought in a ban on imports

It did nothing about all the other imports (£14 million in the first 11 months of last year) nor the Irish exports to the racist regime (£25 million in the same period). And it did absolutely nothing to get back the jobs of the 11 strikers in Henry Street and one in Crumlin.

## SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY

We salute these courageous workers who have been fighting since July 1984 against having to handle the produce of apartheid. Their long struggle is positive proof that the spirit of solidarity lives on.

That their heroism should lead to having to ask a 'Rights Commissioner' to look into a case of unfair dismissal only emphasises the importance of what 'Workers Solidarity' said 12 months ago. "...Workers can rely on nobody who is outside their control. The fight has to continue for genuine democracy and rank and file control of the unions. In the here and now that means going with the officials when they are with us, and having the shopfloor organisations and confidence to go without them when they are against us".

This article is taken from "Workers Solidarity", monthly paper of the Irish "Workers Solidarity Movement".



were called in, who did not even know of the factories existence, and declared the working conditions illegal.

## NO STRIKE PAY

On September 17th after two days of strike action for conditions, wages and union recognition all strikers were sacked. The T & G have refused to give the workers strike pay for they say they had not been members of the union for the required 32 weeks (they had joined 26 weeks before strike action). The D.H.S.S. have also refused to hand over any money, as a result extreme hardship is being faced with two strikers already being forced to give up their homes due to poverty. Obviously the T & G should not be allowed to get away with turning their backs on these young workers. Condemnation throughout the T & G by members is needed.

## ARRESTS MADE

Pickets have been continually harrassed both by Ross and the scabs he has employed along with the police. Three people have already been arrested at the factories and two others were arrested while picketing Laura Ashley in Edinburgh.

Workers and supporters have continued to picket the Ardbride factories but have also lately began to picket Laura Ashley shops.

## PUBLIC CON

The shop in Edinburgh is supplied with lampshades and is the companies biggest customer. The lampshades are actually sold as 'Hand made' for between £15 and £80 each. In fact each shade costs around 1-2 pence on Ardbride machines made by workers who take home just over £40 per week. These practices throughout the country will not be un-common. Strikers need as much support as possible, given the lack of it shown from their own union linked with the harrassment of the employer, police and DHSS.

Anything to do with Ardbride Products and Laura Ashley needs to be blacked. Letters of support and donations should be sent to;

ANNA DRUGGEN,  
28d, MONTGOMERIE STREET,  
ARDBROSSAN,  
KA22 8EQ,  
SCOTLAND.