

The TYNESIDE SYNDICALIST

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25P

"A MINI WAPPING" GATESHEAD WORKERS FIGHT SACKINGS

Since News International's onslaught against printworkers during the 'Wapping' dispute many employers (both small and large) have looked carefully, and learned lessons from Murdoch's industrial tactics. The North-East is no different as 'Wapping comes to Gateshead'.

The dispute at HFW (High Frequency Welding) Plastics, Gateshead, began on March 18th with the introduction of an overtime ban in pursuit of a long awaited wage rise. The reaction of the employer was, 'loyalty or the sack'. The dispute has resulted in the dismissal of 47 SOGAT members at the factory.

BACKGROUND

For over four years workers at the factory have received no wage rise. After the take-over of the company by a joint father/son in law ownership last year workers agreed to what amounted to a £10 wage reduction to get the company back "on its feet". When new machines were purchased and orders books were full a demand for higher wages was made. The joint-owner, Keith Jackson, refused. At a mass meeting workers decided to implement an overtime ban Jackson reacted by issuing loyalty oaths demanding normal working. The form asked, "Do you want your job? If you don't agree to do overtime your sacked".

Eight workers including the FOC (Father of the Chapel) were immediately sacked. Remaining workers voted unanimously to take all-out strike action in support of the dismissed workers, they too were sacked. Their jobs were immediately advertised in local job centres and interviews organised at the 'Five Bridges Hotel' (Gateshead). On the second day of interviews the Five Bridges refused to allow their premises to be used after pressure was put on the club by local Trades Councils' (the Five Bridges is to be the venue for many trade union conferences and events this year).

Jackson was obviously prepared to stand his ground and must have planned the entire situation from the start. Phil May, sacked FOC told the Tyneside Syndicalist, "He wanted the union out" thus creating the conditions for total control and further wage cuts etc. As soon as the first pickets of the factory were mounted Jackson already had a 'bus' to ferry in scabs. Scabs also had ready made sweatshirts which read, 'HFW PLASTICS OFFICIAL WORKER'.

Applicants for the 'vacant' (sic) posts were offered £67 and £58 per week for men and women respectively. These amounts are half



of the original wages of the sacked workers. Only 30 people have been taken on so far though at the time of writing only two have crossed picket lines.

One Scab, Harry Matfen, was not long ago no other than one of the shop stewards who attempted to fight job losses at NEI Parsons in Newcastle. The ex-shop steward had even been involved in a march to and lobby of parliament to put the case for jobs in the area. Obviously not a man to be trusted he was one of the first scabs in the factory.

PICKETTING

From day one pickets have been mounted in three four hour shifts (7am-7pm). Most of those arriving to deliver of pick up (etc) have turned away in support of the picket. One striker told us, "the only person allowed past is the tax man". Up until April 15th picketting had largely

been peaceful, but police are now beginning to stir up trouble.

Earlier in the dispute one picket was almost knocked over by a K.B. Transport van who drove straight through the line.

MASS PICKETS A SUCCESS

At least once per week a mass picket is held (phone SOGAT 2817971/2 for details). On quite a few occasions these have proved very successful with scabs not able to enter the factory until around 11am-12 noon (they are made to make up time by Jackson in the evening). On Thursday 9th April pickets locked the gates shut and physically removed the companies van from outside the gates as it attempted to enter. The following day scabs were given the day off and no production was done at the plant at all. Since then the gates have been welded open (chains were cut and locks glued) and heavy handed security guards brought in. Wednesday 15th April saw solidarity from German trade unionists who had been in the area on a trade union exchange. One member of the I.G. Metal (German metalworkers union) party was punched in the face by a police thug. The policeman had served for many years as a Military policeman in Germany, he did not take too kindly to their support for the sacked workers. Needless to say it was the picket who was arrested, he was later released. That day a SOGAT official, D Griffiths (assistant Branch Secretary), decided to instruct 'his' picket (I'm in charge! he told the sacked workers) to

move from the gates leaving only 6 'official' pickets. Luckily this looks like it was a one off.

SUPPORT

Workers at Jackson's other jointly owned plant, Crawfords in Longbenton, have offered support to the sacked workers (they now have an overtime ban) and attend the picket line regularly. Considerable support has been gained from trade unionists and unemployed in the area, support groups are being formed and collections have already been held in Newcastle and Gateshead. Workers from factories in the local area attend pickets regularly, Kimberley Clark, De la Rue and many more.

Your support is needed both financially and physically, attend the picket line, raise the issue through your branch etc and start collections in your workplaces and communities. Goods produced by both HFW Plastics and Crawfords (they make paper binders etc) must be blacked as well as everything to do with the two companies. Phil May, FOC, told us, "its just like Wapping but on a smaller scale", we all know what happened at News International we must make sure it is not allowed to happen here. Let us give all our support to gain a swift and decisive victory.

For more information, donations etc contact; HFW STRIKERS, c/o SOGAT, 119, Jesmond Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE2 1NL.



ANARCHO - SYNDICALIST MONTHLY

T.R.S. EDITORIAL

It is becoming more apparent that the employers are gaining a confidence when it comes to 'Murdoch' style industrial relations. Armed with anti-trade union legislation, designed to make 'normal' trade union activity impotent, and a growing number of unemployed, bosses up and down the country are seemingly more willing to orchestrate disputes to gain supreme right to 'manage'.

Present disputes at H.F.W. Plastics, Keetons, Senior Colman, Trader Web and Ardbride Products have born witness to these developments when management have shown a willingness (or even eagerness) to dismiss their entire workforce if they refuse to comply with the 'loyalty' of the company.

An unwillingness to fight this situation through the 'official' trade union movement has been seen with such sickening desertions as at Wapping and Silentnight, such treachery along with the employers growing confidence must be confronted and completely smashed.

Parliament cannot, and will not, reverse the legislation giving employers such powers, likewise the employers will not, through negotiation, be willing to end such practices. The only avenue for hope, as has always been, is through direct industrial action bypassing the bosses laws and trade union reformism.

The T.U.C. and trade union officialdom speak highly of workers in Poland and South Africa, who in their day to day struggles must break repressive laws if they are to survive, but refuse to support when when confronted with existing legislation in Britain. This attitude and deplorable practice has effectively sealed the 'death warrant' to many very 'winnable' disputes in the past and will continue to do so until a fundamental change is made.

We cannot expect support from the union bureaucrats when we are faced with breaking the governments rules, this must not however deter us, if they choose the side of the employers they too must be fought as we would fight the employers.

Mass inter-union rank and file solidarity is the vehicle to destroying this present climate and a major weapon in gaining all our future demands.

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

GARMENT WORKERS STRIKE AGAIN

Once again North-East garment workers have shown that they are unwilling to be pushed around in the future. Over the last few months the 'Tyneside Syndicalist' has reported on wildcat actions at J&J factories in the area and the intentions of forming rank and file garment workers body. The latest action was to hit the local Avimores factory.

PAY ON TIME

On Friday April 3rd workers, who were about to collect their wages, were informed that due to cash flow problems workers could not be paid their wages. Some workers were given a percentage while others received nothing. On Monday morning as the management turned up for work they were told by their employ-

TGWU: NO WILL TO WIN..

Workers at Ardbride, who have been on strike for over eight months (see past Tyneside Syndicalists), have experienced a total lack of support from the union in which they are organised, TGWU, throughout their present dispute.



Below we include extracts of a letter concerning the union role since the beginning of the dispute.

(October): "During this time we were having difficulties on the picket line, our strike was unofficial, drivers refused to turn back, the GPO delivered to the factories, only British Telecom refused to cross us. It took nine weeks for the dispute to become official. By that time the damage was done. Stuart Ross had employed a new workforce, in his own words, 'The union had given me time to get my act together'. We firmly believe that had the dispute been made official at the beginning of this strike we would not now be in this position. When we were told by Jim McCreadie we were now official we were also told that we were not entitled to strike pay as we had not been contributing members long enough to qualify (contributions had been paid from

..BUT WORKERS GAIN INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY!

A vast amount of support is now being shown the Ardbride strikers from rank and file workers' organisations and individuals throughout Britain and the rest of the world. We expect the actions that the T&G now participate in but this has strengthened the resolve of both strikers and supporters. With International pressure that is now being put on such companies as Laura Ashley Ardbride may soon be forced to either surrender to the workers demands or close the factory entirely. Internationally, thanks to the efforts of the Direct Action Movement and the International Workers Association (Anarcho-Syndicalist International), Laura Ashley shops throughout the world have been picketed and support groups for strikers formed.

Anna Druggan has participated in a speaking tour of Germany (April) organised by the Frei Arbeiter Union (Free workers union, German section of IWA). FAU have also organised pickets of Laura Ashley shops in Bochum, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hanover and Stuttgart. The American Workers Solidarity Alliance (USA IWA Section) have picketed in New York and the French Anarcho-Syndicalist union, CNT, have picketed in Paris, Bordeaux, Lyons, Strasbourg and Toulouse. As we go to print workers in Holland, Canada and elsewhere plan pickets of Laura Ashley.

A meeting by Laura Ashley management in Rotterdam discussed the widespread action at their shops and have told the Ardbride

May 5th 1986 on a weekly basis)....In December ('86) strikers gatecrashed a T&G meeting in Saltcoats district office. David Shoat was present at that meeting, Harry O'Neil had informed us the meeting was being held to discuss this dispute and our eligibility for strike pay. We felt we should be there. We were told by David Shoat, strike pay, was out of the question but a hardship grant would be made to each individual, hopefully in time for xmas. We also asked why we had never received an official letter saying the strike was now made official by the T&G, we had repeatedly asked for a letter to show that we had to let drivers and others see it who still crossed our picket line.

The official letter was given to me the following day. A few days later we held a demonstration on a Saturday morning at the T&G House in Glasgow, fellow member had phoned me to say that shop stewards from all over would be there. We went and tried to get some support for this dispute. The Majority of shop stewards we spoke to had never heard of Ardbride (T&G had said branches throughout the area had been contacted).

In December 1986 three of the girls were charged with breach of the peace. They had asked Harry O'Neil for a T&G lawyer, they were refused. In January '87 David Shoat met with Stuart Ross's lawyer, an offer was made on Ross's behalf. He would accept 4 or 5 of the sacked 23 back and the others would be re-employed as his business expanded. We refused. Jim McCreadie told us this was the best offer we would get and that we should seriously consider it. A second offer was then made to David Shoat. It was worse than the first. He was now only prepared to

boss, Stuart Ross, that he must clear up his labour problems immediately or their contract will be in danger (the contract between the two companies is up for renewal).

In England and Scotland support groups are springing up all of the time. At present active Ardbride support groups exist in Newcastle, Bristol, Bath, Cambridge, Coventry, Edinburgh, Leeds, London, Manchester, Shrewsbury and other areas.

Ross is having extreme difficulties at his factories due to support being given by workers refusing to cross the strikers picket lines. Private contractors have had to be hired to remove rubbish as council binmen are refusing to move it. A private

firm was hired to connect the factories by phone as Telecom engineers refused to go near the plants and a further private company has been hired to transport the Laura Ashley goods as drivers of the company are also refusing to cross the picket line. Postal workers are also refusing to deliver mail.

On Saturday 4th April a Newcastle based Ardbride support group held its first picket of the Laura Ashley shop in the city centre (8, Nelson Street). Many people turned away. Collections were also held at the Monument. Both pickets and collections are to remain a regular event in support of the strikers. For more information on times and dates of

accept two or three back and applications would have to be filled in. From the application forms he received he would choose two or three to take back. We refused. Harry O'Neil then informed us that David Shoat had indicated, should we refuse this offer, the T&G would seriously consider withdrawing from this dispute. (T&G then agreed to give more support after meeting with strikers...ed).....Stuart Ross had an interim interdict granted on December 19th against T&G and strikers. We have been warned by Jim McCreadie not to shout at scab employees, to say nothing, not even utter the word scab or blackleg. We must be the first silent picket line in history.

We have repeatedly asked Harry O'Neil why Stuart Ross has not been prosecuted for non registration of his company. We have been told that it was up to HSE, or the District Council to prosecute. Nothing to do with the union".

Latest: The T&G was threatened by Ross, who said he would sue for £2-3 million if they did not pull out of the dispute. Since then the strikers have received several recorded delivery letters from the T&G stating they have nothing to do with the demos outside the factory gates. Anna Druggan told the Tyneside Syndicalist, "they've had nothing to do with it from the start! the T&G is trying to put us in a hole".

Strikers have recently asked the local T&G representative to sponsor three delegates to Labour Party Youth Conference in order to make the case "clear" to Ron Todd who would be attending. T&G in Glasgow (regional centre) refused to sponsor.

pickets contact;

Ardbride Strikers Support Group
(Newcastle),
Common Ground,
1, Charlotte Square,
Newcastle.

The latest on the dispute: Ross offered strikers several thousand pounds to leave him and his factories alone. It amounted to around £300 per person though their would be no re-instatement or trade union recognition. The offer was rejected.

The Ardbride strikers need your support. Pressure needs to be put on the Transport and General Workers union over its lack of support for the strikers, send letters of

protest, pass resolutions at branches, trades councils etc demanding financial support etc. Make financial donations to the hardship fund. Organise workplace collections, donations through branches etc. These workers need our support to put an end to Ross and his disgusting industrial relations and practices.

For more information on the dispute, letters of support and donations write to;

Anna Druggan,
28d, Montgomerie Street,
Ardrossan,
KA22 8EQ,
Scotland.

STRIKERS DEFEATED BY BASHING UNION

The long running dispute with furniture manufacturers Silentnight has been ended with the dispute being completely sabotaged by the strikers union, Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades (FIAT).

BACKGROUND

The dispute began way back in December 1984 after the company imposed 88 redundancies. An agreement was struck with workers to the effect that there would be no more job losses if in return workers accepted to postpone their nationally agreed wage increase. Eight weeks later a further 52 redundancies were implemented. Management refused to implement the wage increase and a work to rule imposed. Management reacted by suspending 200 workers and in July 1985 all workers (over 500), including those that had been suspended, were sacked after taking strike action.

ees, "pay on time or face the fine of strike action" by a demonstration of workers already armed with placards and banners ready made for their dispute. The company which specialises in jeans and has customers such as Dorothy Perkins, Chelsea Girl and Marks & Spencer were obviously very shocked at the situation.

DIRECT ACTION

Management at the factory had probably expected things to run through official procedure, with the union bureaucrats doing the negotiation- it is hard to say how long it would have taken to resolve the dispute in this manner but through the immediate direct action, which is rapidly becoming a day to day weapon in the garment industry locally- leaving aside the union officials and their bureaucratic structure- management told workers that a cheque had been put straight into the bank and was at that time being cleared.

The dispute that followed saw the hiring of scabs to replace those sacked, scabs were not skilled.

SUPPORT GIVEN

As well as picketing of the two Silentnight factories where the sackings occurred, Barnoldswick and Sutton, and mass rallies and demonstrations support groups were formed up and down the country, including Newcastle.



A boycott campaign against the selling of Silentnight goods from such stockists as the CO-OP (who were one of the biggest stockists) proved to be quite a rallying point for support as supporters mounted pickets at local stores. On many occasions Silentnight goods were removed from the sales floor through either pressure from workers or managements fears of growing publicity due to pickets.

The so-called 'workers friend' the CO-OP refused to lend support to sacked workers, they felt that if Silentnight orders were withdrawn profits and turnover would be affected.

UNION SABOTAGE

As usual the TUC did not come forth with support needed while FIAT did as little as possible to develop the dispute. December 16th 1986 saw the final sabotage by the union as they officially pulled out of the dispute. After almost two years of action against Silentnight the pressure from anti-trade union laws and the lack of interest by their own union the remaining strikers were forced to make a decision. On February 9th a mass meeting voted to end the dispute, though this was not a completely unanimous decision it was felt the situation was impossible.

THANKS EXTENDED

The Silentnight sacked workers wish to extend their thanks to all those that supported their struggle. No thanks to the FIAT officials or the CO-OP, workers stated, "We can in no way minimise the fact that since the General Executive Council of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades union withdrew official backing from our dispute. ...it has become impossible to continue with the strike, although we were having great effect up until that date (19th December 1986). We feel strongly that a grave injustice has been done, not only to Silentnight strikers, but to the trade union movement as a whole when a group of workers fighting for basic trade union rights can then be deserted by their own union and the TUC".

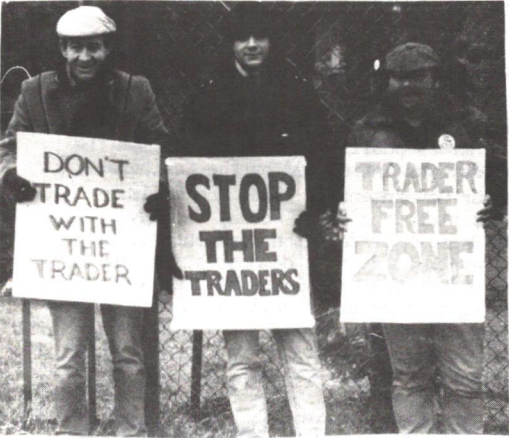
Once again we see the side on which the trade union bureaucrats and the TUC general council wish to fight, the side of the bosses against workers.

SACKED PRINTERS STOP UNION SELL-OUT

Sacked printworkers involved in the Midlands Trader dispute (see recent Tyneside Syndicalists) have successfully resisted attempts by their union leadership to wind up the struggle. They have also won a victory in the courts against their former boss Lionel Pickering - who was trying to sabotage picketing at his plants, by slapping injunctions on key activists.

MASS SACKINGS

The Trader dispute began last december, when Pickering - infamous millionaire and renowned union-hater - sacked 90 printworkers at his Heonor Gate plant, after tearing up their



4% wage deal.

It was at a meeting with national NGA reps on February 27th that the printers saw clearly the kind of support they could expect from their union bosses. The NGA reps - only one of whom had ever visited the picket line - had already accepted defeat for the Trader printers, and now wanted to name a date for the end of the dispute.

GUTLESS UNION

"We forced them to change their minds", explained John Allen, one of the sacked printers. "When they saw the strength and determination of the Chapel - and learnt that Pickering could be re-opening the Heonor Gate plant with a scab workforce at anytime, they had no choice but to give us support - by keeping the dispute 'official'".

USING THE COURTS

Pickering, meanwhile, had been doing his best to sabotage the printers fight. Armed with a pack of lies and half-truths as

evidence, he tried to lodge injunctions against 8 named printers, to keep them away from all his printing plants. By singling out individuals as "examples" he hoped to crush the resolve of the rank and file as a whole. But his plan failed.

At a court hearing in London on Wednesday March 18th, the judge threw out the cases against four of the accused - and awarded costs against Pickering. The remaining four did have injunctions placed on them - but only forbidding them to picket in a "threatening or abusive manner". To celebrate this partial victory, the printers immediately called a secret picket of Pickering's Langley Mill site for March 24th, and pledged that picketing would continue as before.

SUPPORT DEMONSTRATED

A 200-strong march and rally in Derby - organised solely by the rank and file printers - on March 7th, showed publicly the extent to which the printworkers themselves as in firm control of the dispute. This inspiring example, though, is not being matched by fellow-NGA printers at one plant in South Wales. Here, despite a national call to refuse to handle any of Pickering's titles, thousands of copies of the Trader come off the presses each week. Calls for solidarity from the sacked printworkers have been met with excuses, and the time-old scab anthem "of course we sympathise, but....".

SUPPORT GROUPS FORMED

While workers in the same industry let bosses divide them and set them against each other, they can expect nothing but to be trampled underfoot. Only solidarity will ever ensure victory.

Trader Printers Support Groups now exist in Derby, Nottingham and Leicester. Part of their work is to target major Trader advertisers - to try to undermine Pickering's ads revenue. Rumour has it that, as more advertisers join the boycott, he is being forced to offer firms a 45% discount - just to fill up the space in the paper. The more this financial pressure is piled on, the weaker Pickering will become.

FUTURE PLANS

Pickets at Heonor Gate plant spotted two police inspectors studying the approach roads to the factory site recently. This has fuelled speculation that the return of printing to the plant is imminent. This would obviously escalate the dispute - and the printers

are now preparing for mass picketing to begin in earnest.

With the rank and file firmly in the driving seat, this dispute looks - at present - well on course. And as Ron Senchack, the sacked printers FOC (Father of Chapel) said at the Derby rally, "We're all angry now. Bloody angry! And we aren't begging for our jobs

back either: We're demanding them back. We aren't ever going away...".

Messages of support, requests for information and donation to:

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



N.I. DISPUTE: THE LESSONS OF WAPPING

On Thursday February 5th the National Executive Committee of SOGAT 82 decided to withdraw all support for the year long struggle at Wapping for jobs and union recognition. The NGA, whose leaders allowed the SOGAT bureaucrats to do the dirty work throughout the dispute, thus maintaining a degree of credibility for themselves, followed suit the next day claiming they could not continue the strike alone. From the start it was clear that only one thing could win - solidarity. This would take two forms. Firstly, a regular mass picket of the Wapping plant to stop the trucks bringing out papers, or at least delay them if this was not possible. Secondly, action at the other workplaces in the form of blacking of News International and ultimately the closing down of the other Fleet street papers in support of the Wapping struggle, and in defence of their own working conditions which were coming under vicious attack at that time.



Wapping was not an isolated case, it was merely the most clear-cut representation of what has been happening across the whole of Fleet Street and the print industry nationally. The background to this offensive by the bosses has been a sickening lack of will to fight on the part of the trade union bureaucracies. At Warrington in 1983 the TUC refused to honour its conference resolution to defy the Tories anti-trade union laws and failed to give the support that was necessary to the NGA who were in dispute with newspaper boss Eddie Shah. This was compounded by a pathetic capitulation by

the SOGAT NEC which saw General Secretary Brenda Dean boasting on television that she had already negotiated away thousands of jobs on Fleet Street, so why was Murdoch being so unreasonable? A united struggle against the newspaper barons would have freed enough printers from work to shut down Wapping by sheer weight of numbers and would have placed immense pressure to settle on Murdoch from the other paper bosses.

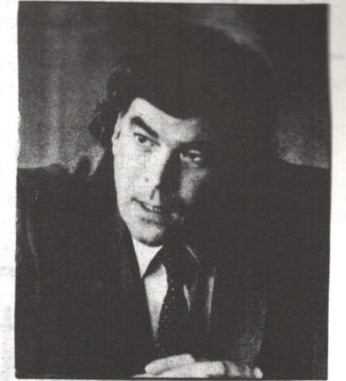
BOYCOTTS OR RANK & FILE ACTION?

From the start the only strategy the NEC put forward was the highly expensive but largely ineffective consumer boycott, whilst the stalinist dominated London District Committee who had real control of the strike refused to call Fleet Street to come out.

What was necessary was for the rank and file to take control of the dispute through regular mass meetings with a strike committee elected by and accountable to these meetings. At the high point of the strike Dean was booed off stage by a mass meeting of 4,000 printers, yet the opportunity was not seized to organise a rank and file alternative. The only focus for these ideas, the Fleet Street Support Unit (a small rank and file pro-poganda group) was unable to turn its demands into reality. This meant there was no organised expression of the strikers militancy which had the authority and the guts to put pickets on Fleet Street. The strikers often had control at street level (despite the machinations of those who wished to put a brake on effective picketing), but this largely spontaneous adhoc activity took no coherent form.

A turning point in the dispute came at the SOGAT biennial delegate conference, where the NEC, supported unconditionally by the LDC, succeeded in getting a motion passed committing the union to stay within the law in order to avoid its funds being sequestrated for a second time. SOGAT had already had its funds sequestrated once because it had not balloted its members in the provincial wholesale trade before asking them to black News International titles. The result of this passive attitude towards the courts was that all blacking was called off and the mass pickets of Wapping became token demonstrations, allowing the trucks to leave on time. Any SOGAT member breaking the injunction was informed by the executive that s/he would be disciplined. Hence the union put itself in the position of acting as a policeman for its own members. While the NEC caved into the courts, the rank and file turned to more militant forms of action - secret flying pickets aimed at exacting high damage levels at regional depots, ambushing the trucks as they left the area around Wapping, and 'spontaneous'

stormings of the main gate in the early hours of the morning. Whilst this was the most effective form of action in the circumstances, it represented a retreat. The failure to see this activity as a rearguard strategy whilst building for wider solidarity resulted in the isolation of the dispute. The LDC, for its part, was prepared to turn a blind eye to what was happening as it did not threaten its political control of the strike.



On the anniversary of the strike, 25,000 workers besieged the plant and directed their anger at the police. Whilst an attempt to close off all the exits would have been tactically more constructive, the battle that ensued represented a year of frustration with the uniformed scabs who had protected Murdoch from day one. From that day also, the NEC had been looking

N.E.: THE LESSONS

The fight against Murdochs sackings at News International in the North East was organised through a N.E. Joint Dispute Committee which was SOGAT 82 and NGA Officials. The main focus was the TNT Regional Distribution depot at Houghton le Spring, where all NI titles arrived for distribution in the area from Kinning Park.

PICKETS

Initially pickets were large attended by miners, womens support groups, rank and file printers, unemployed and students. There was no question of lorries respecting the picket line, all emphasis was put on surprising police and stopping lorries. This led to a dwindling number of pickets and general situation. This should never have occurred.

SOGAT members in the smaller local depots such as Gateshead, Ashington etc had the power to block Murdochs titles.

LOCAL DEPOTS

SOGAT officials never really attempted to gain the support of workers in the local

for a chance to ditch the dispute. But twice the strikers had rejected compromise deals, the second time by an increased majority. However, the second round of court applications from NI which coincided with the anniversary provided the excuse the bureaucrats had been looking for. Seizing upon the conference decision they argued that they could not risk sequestration a second time through 'mass intimidatory' picketing. Quoting solicitors' advice that the court action would leave them bankrupt, SOGAT pulled out, with the NGA running behind th-

en. No mass meeting of the strikers was called, and through their individual chapels they voted to end the dispute. The lesson of a year struggle is clear: only direct rank and file control can provide the vehicle which is necessary to mobilise the solidarity which is needed to win.

Source: A Wapping picket.

depots though some areas were more than willing to take action, but not alone. One branch, Gateshead, even had to tell SOGAT officials to organise a meeting of all workers in Depots (North Shields, Sunderland, Durham, Ashington and Newcastle) to discuss action. The official went on holiday.

On many occasions Gateshead and the other small depots voted in favour of blacking the NI titles but were always outvoted by the much larger Newcastle WH Smith depot. Why these people refused to vote in favour of action is a mystery but then again SOGAT never attempted to explain the issues and develop solidarity.

The campaign against NI in the area failed because it never really started. It rested in union offices where commitment may have been real but the ability to create interest and involvement was nil. It should have started with workers, unemployed and all those who were out on the streets collecting and giving support to the miners but SOGAT officials made sure that the total control of the dispute in the area was firmly under their complete control even if the price was defeat.

Firstly the Tyneside Revolutionary Syndicalists and the 'Tyneside Syndicalist' wish to extend May Day greetings to all workers on this anniversary of International Workers Day.

In this the 14th issue of our paper we look at the past events that surround May Day, the losing of the original demands and tactics and the political manipulation that is now inherent throughout the world on this occasion. May Day 1987, and for many years prior, have become just another event. In the West politicians and bureaucrats continuously mouth off about a 'socialism' that has very little if anything at all to do with rights of the working class. In the Eastern block May Day has become a show of the Dictatorships military strength.

We hope in this special May Day section to recapture the 'real meaning of May Day' and hopefully generate discussion to enable us to confront the problems that the working class are faced with today.

PART ONE

PART ONE: THE ORIGINS OF MAY DAY

Following Americas Civil War (1860's) a campaign to demand the shorter working of workers was launched. This campaign led to several Federal and State laws being passed concerning hours of working. Many of these laws were introduced on May 1st, hence the rallying points years later on this date. At this period in time workers were forced to work six 10 Hour shifts per week and the laws which were introduced had little affect on this way of working. The campaign for the 'eight Hour day' continued but with little success.

DIRECT ACTION

At the fourth congress of the Federation of Organised Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada in November 1884 Gabriel Edmonston proposed that the eight hour day be imposed through direct action from May 1st 1886. This proposal was taken up widely by the American labor movement.

FIRST MAY DAY ACTIONS

On Saturday 1st May 1886 mass strikes, meetings and demonstrations were held throughout the country. The situation in Chicago was particularly intense due to a lock-out of 1,500 workers at the McCormick Reaper Company. Throughout America and Canada most industries were hit as the strikes extended, many workers were also locked out by employers who saw such a move as fright-

ening their workforces.

At its peak there were over 800,000 on strike with over 80,000 either striking or locked-out in Chicago alone. This city was to be the setting of mass round ups of union militants and anarchists, we shall look at this later.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

1888 saw the American Federation of Labor (which had been formed in 1886) continuing the fight for an eight hour day with May 1st remaining the day of action. The AFL called for mass strikes and demonstrations to be held throughout America in 1890. On this occasion the actions were extended to an international field with the adoption of the demand by the Second International (Leftist revolutionaries and anarchists were excluded from this International).

That year actions were taken all over Europe.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY

May Day soon became established as the international working class day of solidarity. Year after year massive demonstrations, meetings and strikes took place all over the world.

Australia had won the eight hour day as early as 1856 and held a labor day in commemoration of its victory. Ironically the reformist trade unions in America and Canada opted for a 'Labor Day' before such a victory had been secured. In 1894 'Labor Day' became a national holiday and shifted to September as some sort of Industrial Harvest Festival.

Things went as usual in Britain. The first international actions in 1890 fell on a Thursday, the reformist socialists and the majority of the labour movement under their control opted to hold the event on the nearest Sunday, only anarchists and revolutionary socialists insisted the event take place on May 1st. This decision by the reformists was to set a future pattern in Britain and other European countries.

EASTERN BLOC MANIPULATION

After the sabotage of the 1917 Russian Revolution by the Bolsheviks and subsequent decay of working class rights May Day became a state ritual.

Other so called communist countries following WW2 followed suit with their mentors in Moscow.

The original show of working class solidarity was replaced with a show of the states military strength.

However, on occasion, workers in Eastern Bloc countries show defiance of the dictatorship of the party and oppose the official marches. Polish, and others, working class actions on May Day are usually put down with extreme force by the authorities armed forces and police.

FURTHER MANIPULATION

In 1933 in Nazi Germany May Day was also turned into a state holiday, as happened in Vichy France in 1941. This move was seen as a tactic in preventing a large show of organised working class resistance, this has also been the case in the Eastern Bloc and elsewhere.

In the West May Day has been absorbed into a Harmless public holiday. In Britain the holiday was introduced by the Callaghan Labour Government in 1978, the holiday takes place the first Monday in May. The British Trade Union Movement still prefer to hold their demonstrations on the weekend nearest May 1st, while workers living in repressive regimes such as Poland and South Africa continue to respect the history of International Working class solidarity by demonstrating on May 1st.



The 'real meaning of May Day' is not a Saturday afternoon stroll through the town followed by the speeches of a few Labour politicians and union bureaucrats but a day to remember the struggles of those in the past who fought and died for the rights of workers throughout the world. We must now renew our demand for May Day to take place on May 1st and call for shorter working, better conditions, better wages etc through the use of Direct Action.

PART TWO

PART TWO: THE MARTYRS

The Haymarket, or Chicago, Martyrs are very often associated with the history of May Day. This association is due to the circumstances under which they were arrested, tried and judicially murdered.

Before 1886 May Day strikes a bitter dispute in Chicago resulted in the locking out of 1,500 workers at the McCormick Reaper Company factory (part of McCormick Machine Co and now International Harvester). The dispute was over wages.

On May 3rd a large picket at the factory attempted to stop police and 300 Pinkerton gunmen from taking scabs in. The police opened fire on the pickets killing six and wounding many more.

As the final speaker was about to finish 200 police arrived and demanded the dispersal of the gathering and an end to the speeches. What had been a peaceful demonstration was soon to be turned into a blood-bath as a bomb was thrown into the police ranks, one was killed outright and others died later.

The police went berserk and opened fire on the crowd. Twenty- three workers were killed and many others injured.

ARRESTS MADE

That night and the following days saw a systematic round up of anarchists and union militants by the police.

Eight anarchists were eventually brought to trial for the bombing and murder of the policeman. Six of these men had not even been present when the bomb was thrown. During the trial no evidence was produced



would be convicted for their beliefs even if no evidence was shown.

EIGHT SENTENCED

Oscar Neebe received a 15 year prison sentence while the remaining seven were sentenced to death. Michael Schwab and Samuel Fielden had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment though countless appeals and an international campaign failed to overturn the death sentence on the other five.

On November 10th 1887 Louis Lingg committed suicide. The Following day August Spies, Georg Engel, Albert Parsons and Adolph

Fischer were hung. The five were buried on November 13th at Walheim cemetery where their tomb soon became, and remains today, a monument to the working class.

JUDICIAL MURDER

In 1893 the imprisoned men were pardoned by Governor J.P. Altgeld who criticised the entire trial. He claimed the trial had been conducted with 'malicious ferocity' due to the fact that there was not a shred of evidence linking the eight anarchists with the bombing (this may have been carried out by police provocateurs), the five dead men had been judicially murdered by the state.

MASS RALLY

The following evening a demonstration was called to protest at the murder of the six pickets. Thousands of workers turned out that evening to a mass rally in Haymarket Square where workers called for the heightening of strike action against the employers.

to link the eight with the bombing but through hysteria generated through the press, a biased judge and jury turned the trial into a Kangaroo court. The Judge was a well-known 'hard-man' while the jury was made up of businessmen and their clerks along with a relative of the dead policeman. This ensured the eight

Attention Workingmen!

----- GREAT -----

MASS-MEETING

TO-NIGHT, at 7.30 o'clock,

----- AT THE -----

HAYMARKET, Randolph St., Bet. Desplaines and Halsted.

Good Speakers will be present to denounce the latest atrocious act of the police, the shooting of our fellow-workmen yesterday afternoon.

Workingmen Arm Yourselves and Appear in Full Force!

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

PART THREE

PART THREE: THE LABOUR BANDWAGON

We have already mentioned the obscuring of the meaning of May Day, 1987 is no different. 'A Victory For Labour' is one of the demands of this the 101st Anniversary of the May Day actions. Due to this fact and the forthcoming election we have decided to include a short look at the anti-working class practices of Labour in and out of office.

Labour

Investing in people

Since the formation of the Labour Party in 1906 as the party of the working class (sic) workers in Britain have suffered cost of Labours lies and hypocrisy. Many of the major issues under which we fight today have their roots in Labours role as 'leaders of the nation' and against the wishes of workers. Issues such as 'Troops out of Northern Ireland', 'Britain in NATO', 'American Air Bases', 'Prevention of Terrorism Acts', 'Youth Training Schemes', 'Anti Trade Union Legislation', 'Nuclear Power and Weapons' and a host of others have their settings during Labour terms of office. Though we have no wish to look at each case separately we have chosen two main areas for a brief history.

1. WAR AND ITS PREPERATION.

In 1914 Kier Hardie, the labour pacifist, was to completely change his position and hence lay the ground for Labours lies and hypocrisy concerning the issues of war which continue to be a fact of life today. Though for years Hardie had campaigned against war it took just 10 days after the start of WW1 to make an about turn and claim, "a nation at war must be united" thus uniting with the ideas of capitalism against the interests of the working class. Throughout this and the second World War Labour were to stand on the side of the bosses and the Right. During their 1945-51 term of office not only was full support given to President Truman during the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki but they even went as far as to send official observers. During this period Labour began production on Britains very own atomic weapon. Before this was completed Churchill and the Tories ousted Labour. Churchill commented, "I should no doubt pay my compliments to the leadership of the opposition" on the question of Britains nuclear bomb programme.

Before Labour were removed from No. 10 compulsory military service had been continued through this term and troops sent into action in Indonesia, Palestine, Egypt (Suez Canal zone), Malaya and Korea. On top of this Troops stationed in Greece were not withdrawn until 1950 after helping put down leftist guerillas during the civil war. The defence budget in 1950 (over £4.7 billion) was paid for through wage freezes and cuts and the introduction of various NHS charges.

UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT

In 1960 the Labour Party conference voted

in favour of unilateral disarmament, though this policy remained throughout their 1964-70 office it was never implemented. Instead spending on both nuclear and conventional weapons was increased. Again during this period full diplomatic support was given to the Americans, this time during the Vietnam war. Labours policies on defence have nothing in common with the needs of people while in power. During Opposition crocodile tears are wept over the issues of nuclear weapons, technology etc but once elected their concern soon changes to support the moves of capitalism.

2. LABOURS INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Workers at present are extremely concerned at the growing legislation which enables the employers to smash trade unionism in their places of work. It has always been, and will always be, a task of successive governments to limit the organisation of the workers movement. Labours terms in office have been no different than that of the Tories and Liberals in the past and present, when it comes to the rights of the working class. It is now seven years since Labour last held office, this is a long time to forget or even forgive a Labour Government hell bent on driving down wages and conditions. A short history of past industrial relations shows that the 1975-79 government was in no way unique.

TROOPS AGAINST WORKERS

An iron hand was used against workers at the outset. Their first term of office (1924) showed that like the Tories and Liberals they were not afraid of sending in troops against workers who dared to rock the boat. Days after their election troops were sent in the break up a London Transport strike, likewise in 1945 it took only six days for Labour to decide that troops had to be sent in against a 10 week old Surrey Dock strike. During the 1945-51 period troops were sent in no fewer than 18 times to break workers disputes.

During the next term (1964-70) Labour were



given full backing of the TUC to introduce wage restraints and cuts in public spending. Cuts included the scrapping of free milk in Secondary schools and the introduction of various means tested benefits. This Labour/TUC corporatism is a real danger today as in the past, it will surely be used again against workers. The danger signs are already there with the support shown

Kinnock by the likes of Willis and the TUC Congress.



WE CANNOT FORGET

As we have mentioned, seven years may be a long time to forgive or forget the actions of the last Labour government. We find it very hard to forget that council house building was the lowest since 1945, that in the first two years of office 25,000 hospital beds had been lost and for the first time since the 1930's teachers were put on the dole queue. Prices doubled and gas, electric, postal and transport charges soared as subsidies were withdrawn. Unemployment rose dramatically (labour have never left office with unemployment lower than when they went in), the Social Contract (Con-trick!) was introduced (again with the help of the TUC) to keep wage levels down and the employers were again given the support as against workers. Lorry drivers, council, health and many other workers were opposed by the Labour Party. Police smashed pickets at Grunwicks and we cannot forget the Green Goddesses as the troops were sent in to break the long running Firemens strike.



The Labour Party is an extremely reactionary body which has always been, and will always be, a capitalist party opposed to the ideas and needs of the working class. It is very easy for the Labour Party today - while in opposition - to talk of freedom of the individual, the freedom to organise and the right to a nuclear (weapon) free world. But

the capitalist, opportunist and reactionary ideology is clear for all to see on many occasions. Full support for the Tories during the Malvinas/Falklands war and Kinnocks trips to America over Labours present defence policies only go to show the true nature of Labours real plans. Kinnock and Co have no intentions of getting rid of Britains bomb, as they have no intentions of relaxing the existing anti trade union legislation (most of which was devised by Labour policy planners during their last term in office). However Labour do plan a change in existing industrial legislation if elected. It is planned that all trade unions who do not hold secret ballots on questions such as strike action will be disciplined through tax concessions being removed.

OPPOSE THE LABOUR PARTY

The Labour Party are a very real part of present day capitalism and must be fought as we fight the Tories and their rotten ideology.

It is ironic that this Party should be funded through the working class, as it is we who have had to suffer their attacks in the past. At the forthcoming election we ask all working class people not only to oppose all parties but also to build true rank and file controlled workers organisations to affectively fight both the bosses and the reactionary anti working class political parties.

A step, through the unions, must be made to sabotage Labour and their use of the working class as their political cannon fodder. A large amount of Labour Party funds comes from the Labour Movement in the form of union affiliations, this means that a proportion of the political levy (which should be used for union campaigns and strike support etc) which we need in our day to day struggles is handed over to the Labour Party. Union Sponsorship of MP's, the payment of grants for the upkeep of their constituencies and during election time the massive donations to the election fund ensure that Labour have the finances to run

their election campaigns. This must be stopped. We must strive to get our union branches, regions etc to disaffiliate from the Labour Party, all funds to their MP's and election campaigns need to be blocked and a worker controlled organisation developed to destroy any future TUC/Labour Party pact.

PART FOUR

PART FOUR: SOCIAL NEEDS

Irrespective of any laws made or rights gained through the Trade Union Movement workers today still face long and arduous working weeks. Whether it be through necessity due to wage levels or compulsion through states or bosses the eight hour day for many workers is a complete myth. Capitalism and its 'economic madness' not only sees millions unemployed when others work long hours but also allows poverty and deprivation to run wild. Our Health Service is presently being dismantled, people are forced to live in broken down squalors pertaining to be accommodation, council house building has all but been stopped, people are dying from diseases because it is uneconomical to invest in research or produce such things as kidney machines, pensioners die every year of hypothermia and people all over the

world are being left to die as it is uneconomical to feed them.

We obviously have not enough space to look at all of these subjects in this issue of the 'Tyneside Syndicalist' so we have decided to take unemployment and the issues that surround it.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Many economists and so called socialists, especially within the ranks of the Labour Party, see the cure for mass unemployment as straightforward. They say that huge injections of government money into both private and public concerns will lead to the problem eventually being done away with completely. This naive view represents either a total lack of understanding of the capitalist system, sheer ignorance, or perhaps simply hopeless rhetoric to convince voters of a lie.

A CAPITALIST TOOL

Unemployment is not, as many would have us believe, down to merely economic slumps,

inefficiency and overproduction. Even under a total economic recovery unemployment would still remain. As has always been the case, unemployment is used as a tool to drive down wages of the worlds workers, increase workloads, reduce working conditions and to erode every advance that the working class has ever made. The pool of unemployed, well over 4 million in this country at present, can be used at will by the bosses in their pursuit of ever-higher profit margins. Dole queues will be cut somewhat if a profit can be made, and extended when workers have lost their "economic viability". The pool is also used as a weapon to threaten workers lucky enough to find work, they can always be told that plenty of others will be willing to work for less pay in worse conditions and for longer periods of time if they are not willing. This is the clarion call of many employers at present in their attempts to de-unionise workforces and show that they alone have the "right" to manage.

PROFITS BEFORE PEOPLE

The social needs of workers are never taken into account. Workforces can be slashed to the bone even when vast amounts of work need to be done. But this work is only in the interests of ordinary people - the owners and money men find it unprofitable to build hospitals and homes etc. The "profit before people" idea is a very real factor in the rapid introduction of new technology and automation. Jobs in almost all industries are being lost

due to the misuse of the "modern" age technology. Under the right circumstances, this technology can be a very useful and effective way of ridding ourselves of dangerous, unhealthy or boring work - but only if the criterion for its use is that of social need.

BAN OVERTIME

The question of overtime is inseparable from the issue of unemployment. It is quite ob-

vious that it is cheaper for employers if some of us work overtime than to employ others to do the extra work. The question of wage levels is very important on this issue therefore a campaign to end all overtime would have to be linked to the fight for higher wages. This working of overtime can very easily lead to lay-offs. It has been proved in practice to have the effect of working people out of jobs.

SLOW DOWN



THE JOB YOU SAVE
MAY BE YOUR OWN

In many industries overtime is classed as a benefit and taken for granted. This illusion must be undermined. Even militant unions like the NUM (Known for its members working large amounts of overtime) have fallen into the employers trap. The ban on overtime is not a basic call through class solidarity, with workers realising that through this practice employers can reap in higher profits while others are denied jobs. Instead overtime has been accepted as "realism" within the workplace and has been put aside as a tactic in industrial action rather than a principle of refusing to play the bosses game.

SHORTER WORKING

As we have already stated, shorter working has been for many years a paramount demand of the union movement although no real effort has been put into achieving this by the modern trade unions. We have heard that the eight hour day (existing only for some) was not gained by the whims of politicians or concern of employers for our health or

to grant us leisure time. It was won through workers' militancy and massive industrial action and for no other reason. The fight for a significant shortening of the working week has died. A working week of say 30 hours might not eradicate unemployment, but it would be a step in the direction of cutting the number of unemployed. Of course if this is to be an objective, vigilance would need to be maintained to ensure that gains were not simply whittled away by management tactics and the ineptitude of bureaucrats. For example shorter working would prove pointless unless speed-ups in production and overtime could be resisted. Speed-ups could push production up so that the bosses would hardly notice that fewer hours were being worked. Production levels could be set to such a point as to make it impossible to meet them, so that workers would be more than happy to revert back to the old system.

When considering a possibility of a shorter working system wage levels are again (as with bans on overtime) a major concern. If wage cuts were taken in line with the hours we would be playing into employers hands. Again, attempts to cut wages would need to be fought through effective industrial organisation.

We have the power as producers to procure these advances, we have the sufficient power at grass-roots level to create the organisation to begin the fight for our rights. It is through a direct democratic workers organisation that the working class can fight and win the demands we have mentioned above. Our fight for better housing and working conditions, better health and social care and so on must be fought for in our basic demands for a better social life. However we as revolutionary syndicalists must not lose sight of the real struggle and demands with which the working class is faced, that of the complete destruction of capitalism and the state and the implementation of true workers control where people actually run their own lives, communities and workplaces.

SUNDERLAND POLY: STUDENTS AND STAFF RESIST CUTS

On Monday 9th March 500 Sunderland Poly students occupied the Polytechnic Administration building, Langham Tower. This action was part of a sustained and determined protest campaign against the massive cuts being imposed on the Poly by Sunderland's Labour Council. In addition to demonstrations and lobbies of the council, the campaigners have also had to face opposition from the Poly's directors who for some reason are not resisting the cuts. So the occupiers of Langham Tower hoped to put the maximum possible pressure on the directors to refuse to implement the cuts.

DETERMINATION

This first occupation ended on Monday 23rd March shortly before the police would have acted on a court order for eviction. But the students moved into Langham Tower again a week later, and in general have shown a determination to fight the cuts to the end. This is reflected in the mass support given to the campaign by students, staff and unions at the Poly and in the support of Sunderland people.



Langham Tower

BACKGROUND

Despite an expenditure surplus of £4.5 million and enough money to expand council staff and lower general rates, Sunderland council want to cut 86 jobs at the Poly and close the Education library, in order to save £350,000 in the next nine months. The closure of the library would be disastrous in academic terms, but equally would jeopardise the safety of women having to trek across town to and from the main Poly library in Chester Road, and this at a time when attacks on women occur at a very high rate in Sunderland.

OTHER EFFECTS

The 86 job losses would include 45 academic staff (e.g. 1 in every 6 would go in the Humanities Faculty), 20 technicians, 16 student services workers and 5 manual staff. Courses would have to be dropped and others would not be validated by the CMAA (and hence degrees gained would not be nationally recognised). Books, equipment and laboratory facilities would be badly hit, adding to the existing impoverishment of the Poly. And of course the council will have been responsible for putting even more people out of work in an unemployment blackspot.

POLY PICKED ON

Why the council should have it in for the Poly, in the light of the status it gives



Sunderland, is unclear. The situation has all the characteristics of some kind of crusade by the leader of the council,

Charles Slater, and other high-up councillors (especially as the council is supposed to have a policy of not enforcing redundancies). Apparently many ordinary Labour councillors oppose the cuts. However, none it seems are prepared to risk disciplinary action against them by voting against the cuts. Such is the nature of local "socialist" politics, especially when an "old-guard" is entrenched in the Civic Centre.

BUREAUCRATS SUBSERVIENCE

It is similarly uncertain why the Poly directors should be so uninterested in fighting the cuts. They could at least refuse to implement the redundancies; instead they have taken on the task without a murmur. This is strange given the damage to the Poly that would ensue (and also, therefore, damage to their own interests, prestige etc). We will refrain from speculation here as to the real reasons for the councillors' and Poly directors' behaviour.

A DIFFERENT SPIRIT

But the students and staff have shown a different spirit. Although the students union (SPSU) initiated the campaign against the cuts they have sought the active involvement of all levels of staff from the beginning, contacting them through their unions (NUPE - manual workers, canteen staff etc; NALGO - office and library workers; NATFHE - academic workers).

An Emergency General Meeting in the students union on the 9th March, attended by well over 500 students and representatives of NALGO and NATFHE, decided to launch the occupation. An advance party went straight to Langham Tower and evicted staff. Meanwhile over 400 students marched through Sunderland, past the Civic Centre to Langham. Others took over the Poly telephone exchanges. These actions are explained in an open letter to all Poly staff (see box).

ORGANISED ACTION

This letter shows that the occupation was highly organised, and it was also run in a very democratic manner. The decision-making body was the occupation meeting, convened at 9pm each night, consisting of everyone involved who cared to attend. This meeting was able to delegate individuals and groups to serve various necessary functions (such as appointing a publicity group, who was to meet councillors and Poly



Mass turnout at the emergency general meeting

officials, who was to chair meeting etc), and to recall anyone so elected. Fairly quickly the initial chairperson (Evan Jones, SPSU President) was recalled and Helen Clarke, SPSU Womens Officer, elected instead. The occupation meeting took over from the Students' union bureaucracy in making decisions about the whole campaign. After the occupation ended similar assemblies continued this more directly democratic process.

LOBBYING

The first occupation meeting on the 9th did not content itself with slowing down but instead concentrated on escalating the



prior to the lobby

campaign. The next action would put pressure on the council by lobbying councillors at an important rates debate. On Wednesday 11th

of the people of Sunderland has and will continue to be crucial, and on the evidence so far it will be forthcoming.

WHAT NEXT?

When the first occupation ended the morale of the campaigners remained high and various plans embarked upon to continue and step up action. A large march and rally on Thursday 26th March attracted nearly 2,000 students, staff, representatives from other student unions, unions (eg. TGWU, NUM) and Sunderland Trades Council. A protest at the civic centre followed the rally and on Monday 30th another occupation of Langham Tower began. The resistance is clearly unlikely to dry up, and if Poly workers and the Sunderland public can become more closely involved with the campaign, there's every reason to believe that this particular struggle can be won.



March over 33 students demonstrated outside the civic centre whilst 16 of them locked themselves into the council chamber, thus preventing the debate from starting. By the time police had hacked their way in with special cutting equipment the action had been recorded by press and television.

PROSPECTS

Whether or not this happens, the dispute between lecturers and the NAB (National Advisory Board - similar to the Burnham Committee which decides wages and conditions in secondary schools) will probably become very bitter in the coming months. The NAB are trying to push through changes in lecturers' contracts which would require them to double their workloads. An overtime ban was NATFHE's first tactic but more will almost certainly be needed. But if Sunderland Poly students are as militant and as organised in support of that struggle as they are showing themselves to be in this one, who knows what could happen? Meanwhile the campaign against Sunderland Council and the Polytechnic Directorate continues.

A short note in case it isn't too late for anyone interested in attending an 'inter-union Rank & File' conference on May 9th.
TIME: 1.00pm until 6.00pm.
VENUE: CONWAY HALLS, RED LION SQUARE LONDON.

Taking part in the conference will be the Building Worker Group, Rank and File 83 (NUT), Railworker 86, Scottish rank and file (EIS) and a host of other unemployed groups etc who have been invited.

For credentials write or phone Allan Armstrong, 11, Viewforth Tce, Edinburgh, EH10 4LH. Tel: 031 229 9591.

PUBLIC SUPPORT

The following Saturday saw students taking their cause to the streets in the town centre. Balloons for the kids, cards, leaflets and posters were showered across the town and petitions were signed by thousands of people who were even prepared to stand in queues to do so in the subzero temperatures. Throughout the campaign the support

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL STAFF OF SUNDERLAND POLYTECHNIC.

Speculation and rumour are rife about the student occupation of Langham Towers, and we hope here to put the record straight.

WHAT DO THE STUDENTS WANT?

We want two things - firstly an assurance from the Rectorate that they will refuse to implement the cuts, and secondly an assurance that the education library will not be closed.

WHY NON-IMPLEMENTATION?

Non-cooperation would probably be a better way of putting it. We want the Rectorate to refuse to cooperate with any of the council's cuts. We feel (and the Rectorate agree) that these cuts will inevitably lead to closure of courses and a reduced standard of education for us. Of course, more jobs may well be lost from the 'knock-on' effect of the cuts.

IS'NT IT REALLY ALL THE COUNCIL'S FAULT?

Yes. We've suffered serious underfunding for years, but now the poly is finally being broken. If the Rectorate were willing to refuse the cuts we'd be in a much stronger position to fight. As it is they're going along with it. The council are trying to make it look like the poly is making the cuts, and they're very nearly succeeding. If we said 'no' the council would have to do their own dirty work.

DO STUDENTS FEEL A STRONG GRUDGE AGAINST THE RECTORATE?

Not really, the Rector is widely regarded as quite a nice old duffer, while everyone knows how hard Michael O'Carroll works. It's just a shame that some of them don't have the backbone to stand up to the council.

WHY OCCUPY LANGHAM ITSELF?

Langham is where all the central administration work is done. We are eff-

-ectively bringing all this to a halt except for wages. The occupation does not by-and-large affect the everyday running of the faculties.

ARE THE STUDENTS DAMAGING LANGHAM?

No. Langham has been regularly inspected by polytechnic staff and by a Sunderland solicitor. All have confirmed a "most orderly" occupation. The building is, in fact, cleaned by the students every morning (and the plants watered).

WHY DID THE STUDENTS OCCUPY THE SWITCHBOARDS AND WHY WON'T THEY PUT ANY CALLS THROUGH?

The switchboards were occupied to help bring central admin to a halt. We staffed the exchanges with trained and qualified operators but the Rectorate ordered B.T. to cut the main lines. Subsidiary lines were left open for the nursing sisters etc. and these were used for academic and emergency calls until the Rectorate cut these as well. We appreciate their embarrassment at our telling callers the situation here, but we strongly feel that emergency lines could have been left open. There is a great disappointment felt that the Rectorate should sacrifice safety to make a 'political' point.

WHY DID NEGOTIATIONS BREAK DOWN?

We don't really know. We haven't as yet had an explanation from the Rectorate as to why they cancelled our last meeting. We had just about reached agreement when we invited the Rector to speak to an occupation meeting to hopefully finalise negotiations. However, hours before the meeting someone telephoned to say that no-one would be coming.

We feel strongly that this fight must be won to save our polytechnic. The polytechnic brings in over £20 million to Sunderland and the council's actions are putting it at risk. The council have the money available but they don't want to spend it on us.

It's your jobs and our education. If you support us please join us on Thursday's march and sign the petition available in the libraries. We already have over 5000 signatures of people who support the polytechnic. Help us make sure Sunderland poly stays something to be proud of.

ATTACK ON WOMENS RIGHTS

SENIOR COLMAN

SACKING WOMEN

Last year saw cuts in single payments for maternity and baby items. The maternity grant was last increased in 1969 and now through the 'Fowler Reviews' the £25 grant has been abolished and replaced by a means tested benefit available for women on Supplementary Benefit and Family Income Supplement (FIS).

THE NEW RULES

The new means tested benefit came into affect last month (6.4.87) and means that a maximum of £80, less than half of the previous amount, will be available in the form of a single payment. A new Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), which replaced the Maternity Allowance and Pay, will be paid by employers to women who have worked (there) continuously for at least the first six months of their pregnancy. The payment is equivalent to the lowest statutory sick pay - £32.85 - for a maximum of eighteen weeks. Women who have been in employment for less than two years could find that they may be sacked when becoming pregnant. In employment for over two years, or five years for part-time, means that a higher payment will be received - nine tenths of the average earnings over an eight week period prior to a claim. This specific time period may however disadvantage those women whose 'normal' pay varies with piecework/ bonuses etc. This higher rate will only be paid for the first six weeks of maternity leave, the following 12 weeks will be at the lower basic rate.

In the future there will probably be many more women, than at present, being sacked when becoming pregnant. Companies such as Hitachi etc are already know for the sacking of pregnant women. It is much easier for employers to attack womens rights at work, 85% of all part-time workers are women. Fewer than half the women who take maternity leave will have the right to their jobs back after they have had their babies.

LEGAL SACKING

On March 20th 1987 three judges dismissed an appeal by Maria Brown against a tribunal ruling in favour of Stöckton-on-Tees council. The women was sacked as a YTS supervisor or four months after she became pregnant. This decision will no doubt set a precedent for employers in the future.

At present the government are discussing a white paper under the title, 'Building Businesses not Barriers'. The paper includes;

1. Firms with less than ten employees will be exempted from the rules of re-instatement of mothers after maternity leave (currently it is firms with less than 6 employees).
2. The 'Hours of Work' requirement for maternity rights would be increased from 16 - 20 hours a week for full-time workers and from 8 - 12 hours per week

for part-time workers.

3. A £25 fee would be charged for access to industrial tribunals which is only refundable if the applicant wins.

There is a real potential that these changes along with others may come into affect in the future. Others are said to include the abolition of free milk and vitamins to pregnant women and children under five years of age. Children at school may also suffer as free schools meals could also be abolished due to Fowlers cuts, these could be expected in April 1988.

NO SCHOOL MEALS

NUPE claimed that around 7,000 school children in five local authorities in the North-East could lose out on school meals, this would put childrens health and social development at risk.

If these cuts are to be opposed a joint campaign through the trade unions and unemployed and community groups must be mounted.

For more details on the question of the changes in Maternity Rights contact;

The Maternity Alliance,
59 - 61, Camden High Street,
London.

In the next issue of the Tyneside Syndicalist we shall include a section on the global patterns of employment of women.

VICTORY AGAINST IMMIGRATION LAWS GEORGE ROUCOU WILL STAY!

George Roucou (originally from the Seychelles), a UCATT shop steward employed by Manchester City Council was faced with the threat of deportation. He won his case.

BACKGROUND

The situation arose when the Home Office lost George's passport in 1979, when he sent it in to renew his work permit. The Home Office decided that George had no legal grounds to stay in the U.K. after his marriage to an English women broke down. A George Roucou Defence Campaign was then formed.

nearly 400 supporters with 30 trade union banners present this showed that George had substantial backing and it certainly made an impact on the Home Office. The H.O. lawyer, Mr Richards, felt it necessary during the summing up to warn the Adjudicator that although George and his campaign and backing, this should in no way influence his decision.

THE HEARING

The hearing was an eye-opener it starkly revealed how Britains racist immigration laws really operate. The H.O. did not

the campaign from trade unionists, unemployed and students was the decisive factor in this decision taken.



The significance and broader point to be made is that George Roucou and his campaign won a victory that many thought impossible. For the first time, for a very long time, the slogans 'an injury to one is an injury

to all' and 'united we stand. Divided we fall' had been given real meaning. All Britains immigration laws need to be smashed. At present many workers are faced with deportation and need our support. Viraj Mendis at present is one such man (see past issues of Tyneside Syndicalist). The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign can be contacted at;

c/o North Hulme Centre,
Jackson Crescent,
Hulme,
Manchester.

The George Roucou campaign is in serious debt. All donations will be gratefully received.

G.R.D.C., Room 3005,
Town Hall,
Albert Square,
Manchester.

present a case. As Steve Cohen (a legal representative on the day) stated to the adjudicator in his summing up: "the Home Office have not presented a case here today. They are saying; 'we want to deport this man, you the Home Office simply declared George Roucou to be guilty without even feeling it necessary to begin to prove it.'" George was basically guilty as he is black in racist Britain.

A VICTORY

The Campaign received the news that George had won his appeal on 31st March. This represents a major victory against the present deportation laws. Support shown the



DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

On the 6th February the campaign held a successful demonstration in Manchester city centre. The march was supported by over 1,500 trade unionists who stopped work to march against George's threatened deportation.

A lobby of Aldine House was held on 13th March, the date of a final hearing to decide if George would be deported and forcibly separated from his common law wife Kim and their three children.

THE LOBBY

The lobby was a great success attended by

KEETONS DISPUTE

In November '86 an agreement was made between AEU and management at Keetons (a tool factory), Darnell, Sheffield, that there would be no redundancies, no lay offs and no harrasment. In return employees would 'where practicle and possible work combinations of machines', which in affect meant one worker running four machines at one time.

LAY OFFS

As if the agreement had never existed workers were layed-off, harrased and put under extreme pressure to operate extra machines, often 25 yards apart.

In July (86) the 38 strong workforce voted (secret ballot) by a 2-1 majority for strike action. The entire workforce were immediately sacked and their jobs advertised. Hundreds of applications were received by when confronted with the facts and picket lines all but 12 refused to cross, these remain the only scabs in the factory.

AGREEMENT REFUSED

In February this year strikers rejected an offer which included no strike agreement, no union recognition, employees working any machinery and no annual pay review. Keetons workers have stood firm against these proposals and harrasment (recently their picket hut was burned to the ground) and have won the support of many trade unionists, not just in Sheffield but all over the country.

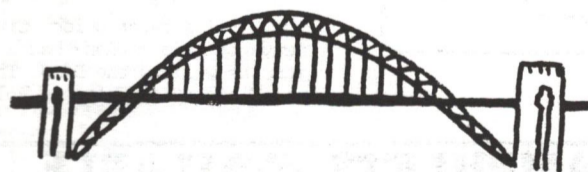
They are close to winning their dispute but more than ever need your support. Send letters of support, donations and requests for more information to;

Keetons Strike Committee,
AEU House,
Furnival Gate,
Sheffield.
Tel: 769041.

Latest: April; Keetons management visited firms in Hull, who have blacked the company, armed with anti-strike propoganda. They went away without results.

HISTORY WORKSHOP 21

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
Friday 20 - Sunday 22 November 1987



SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES?

History Workshop is a movement of socialists and feminists who publish a journal and run workshops every year.

In November the organisation will be holding a workshop in Newcastle: "History Workshop 21".

The theme this year is "speaking for ourselves ?" and aims to look at how working class people - particularly women, and oppressed minorities - have (and do) express themselves through literature, culture and history.

History Workshop 21 is organised by people who believe in recording working class history as opposed to "kings and bishops". The theme is that history is happening now, and has more relevance than is usually portrayed by schools, the media and historians. Yet it is not an academic affair.

The main principle is that if someone has something that they think it is worth reco-

rding, then they should contribute something. This year people from the mining communities, the 'Contracts' workers, among others will be presenting workshops. The various titles include; Approaches to teaching history, community publishing, the womens voice, technology and the workforce, anarchism, gay history and writing and working class experience.

The event will take place over the weekend of 20th - 22nd November at Newcastle Polytechnic and there will be a social at the Guildhall on the Saturday evening. There are usually around 700 places for the Workshop, if you would like more information or would like to get involved contact;

History Workshop 21,
History Workshop Centre,
Newcastle Trades Council,
4, The Cloth Market,
Newcastle Upon Tyne.



NO AGREEMENT

Stewards refused to give a verbal agreement as the changes were seen as a change in working practices. The company made it clear that there was no question of negotiation, they expected the full implimentation. Management circulated to statement to all shop floor workers stating that all those refusing to comply with the new changes would be disciplined. Workers gave management a written refusal to agree. That afternoon (Jan 16) four workers were made examples of and sacked.

STRIKE ACTION

On Monday 19th a mass meeting of workers voted 110 - 112 in favour of indefinite strike action to gain the re-instatement of the sacked men. The following morning all union and non union strikers received notices stating that if they did not return to work by 8.00am on the 21st they would be sacked. On the 23rd notices of termination of contracts were received. Before the sackings management had taken on scabs and attempted to intimidate workers to return. Since the sackings each individual has received various offers of redundancy pay or pay in lieu of notice, though mass meetings have consistently rejected them unanimously and demanded full "re-instatement".

PICKETS ATTACKED

Pickets have continued at the factory even in the face of extreme provocation from both management and scabs. On Feb 19th a High court decided that pickets had to be limited. The AEU are at present making sure that the court order is obeyed, the union has also given assurances that scabs will not be threatened or intimidated, this

includes verbal abuse.

On Feb 20 one worker was physically assaulted by three scabs as he made his way to a mass meeting, other attacks have occurred.

SUPPORT

Food collections etc have been started by a Senior Womens Action Group but support is needed.

Send all donations, letters of support and requests for information to;

Senior Colman Strike Committee,
AEU House,
43, Crescent,
Salford,
M5 4PE.

Footnote: Century, a steel and Alluminium supplier, based on the Barley Mow Industrial Estate, Gateshead, is known to be crossing picket lines.

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.

CATERPILLAR: WORKERS GO IT ALONE

The leadership of the AEU engineering union decided on the 31st March to order workers occupying the Caterpillar factory at Uddingston, Near Glasgow, to surrender. Why? The occupations illegal! Jimmy Airlie, veteran of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work in (now member of AEU executive) delivered the message on April Fools Day. Caterpillar announced, no Jan 14th, that production would end in May 1988 and work transferred to Belgium and France. 800 shop-floor workers and 400 staff would be made redundant. Simultaneously the plant was being occupied.

NEW REALISM

After this encouraging start the workers followed the tactics of 'new realism' finding some dubious allies. These included the Communist Party, the churches, nationalists and wet Tories. The general attitude was summed up by a French OGT delegate who promised support 'within the realities of the situation'. Similarly there were fruitless lobbies of parliament (5th March) and the Scottish Labour Party conference (March 14th).

SUPPORT SHOWN

Financial support has been good (£15,000 per week) from street collections and donations. Solidarity from Caterpillar plants in Leicester, Gosselies (Belgium) and Grenoble (France) have been largely token. In early March Leicester plant refused to accept replacements for parts normally supplied from Uddingston. This was overturned by AEU officials. Positive developments have been the use of mass meetings to ratify the decisions of the occupation committee, and the setting up of a womens committee. The occupiers have also used the plant for music nights on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

UNDER PRESSURE

Under pressure from the Labour Party/trade

union bosses and Caterpillar support for the occupation at mass meetings has been gradually falling, many have voted with their feet. In Mid February the remaining white collar staff abandoned the occupation. On 23rd March those remaining voted 418-352 to continue. Caterpillar immediately announced that the factory would close on May 11th. 800 Eviction orders were delivered to the factory gates. None were opened with workers stating, "they can lie there and rot as can Caterpillar management" and "our futures decided by what we do in there (the factory) not whats in those envelopes". The company then sought an injunction.

OLD ILLUSIONS

With faith in the law, the stewards met the company in court on March 25th with 'much regret' the judge ordered workers to end the occupation. Another illusion dented, the workers refused to comply until it was put to a mass meeting on March 30th. Trade unionists were asked to show support by 'physical presence' at the meeting. The workers voted 269 to 263 to continue. The Trade Union leadership were horrified. After that the knives were out.

After the decision of the AEU to withdraw support for the occupation on May 1st workers were furious at the unions intervention. One occupier stated, "the unions sold us down the river, they shouldn't be in here at all, its our struggle. Its us that should decide. Needless to say the occupiers have voted to defy the union call to end the occupation and ACAS has now got involved.

To defy the bosses (union or otherwise) the struggle must change and spread. Tactics should be debated and decided upon by all supporters, family, friends etc of the occupation. This strengthened the Fisher-Bendix occupation on Merseyside in 1972.

Source: Counter Information, Scotland.

ORGANISING IN THE DOLE OFFICE

One of the biggest tasks the working class movement faces is to confront the effects of the governments divide and rule tactics. At the moment, teachers are being blamed by government ministers and the media for defending education. They are accused of "selfishness" when they go on strike, yet they are striking to defend conditions which effect everyone. These include keeping class sizes from increasing, and staff cuts. They are striking for the rights of the very people the government is attempting to divide from them; kids and parents.

DEFENDING LEVELS

Workers at the DHSS are at a similar position; when they go on strike against staff cuts, they are condemned as "cruel" and accused of making things worse for the unemployed—the very people they are trying to defend. The essential aim of uniting unemployed and employed people is a difficult one, in face of such slick government propaganda. What can be done? One north east DHSS worker told the Tyneside Syndicalist, "The only thing we can do when we go on strike, is get across to people why we are doing it...we are under increasing pressure: staff are being slashed all the time, and our pay is very low".

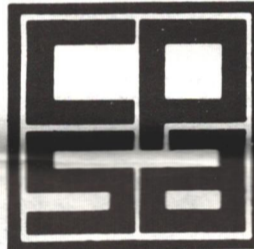
PUBLIC SERVICES

It is estimated that an extra 13,000 DHSS workers are needed nationally, to provide a proper service. The only staffing that is increasing is in the fraud section; "We simply haven't the resources to do the work we should be doing—like visiting pensioners that can't get and checking up that people are getting all of the benefits they are entitled to" a worker from Washington DHSS told us.

CPSA

The Civil servant union—Civil & Public Servants Association—has a number of sections as well as the DHSS. These include the Ministry of Defence, Police support

staff and the Department of Environment. Traditionally, the DHSS section is the



most militant. But even within this section, there are serious divisions. For instance, last year the union section was about to embark on a policy of opposing the Fowler legislation and actively campaigning against it. This was passed at the National conference. It was proposed that a leaflet be put out instructing staff not to cooperate with any of the changes. A writ was served on the union for recommending breaking the law. At this point the main militant organisation within the section—'Broad Left'—was split. The militant (Trotskyite organisation) wing of Broad left proposed watering down the campaign and opposing the Fowler proposals only on the grounds that the staff would not be able to cope with the extra work. This was accepted, and given the support of 'Broad Left 84'—a communist party dominated, right wing break-away from "Broad Left".

WATERED DOWN

So what was originally a potential campaign against cuts in unemployment benefit, was watered down into a single-issue campaign which actually goes against the policy agreed to at conference. The situation now is that any leaflet put out by the DHSS CPSA must be censored by the national CPSA executive.

ACTION

The DHSS staff will be threatened with much over the next few years; in five years, the management aims to computerise the entire sector. Every local office will have direct access to a central computer and the management claim that benefit claiming will be speeded up. "that depends on how it will be programmed" so said one CPSA member (see issue 11 of Tyneside Syndicalist). In doing this, 20,000 jobs nationally and 1,500 locally, could be lost.

FRESH ACTION

The workers level of industrial action is frequent. Last year, there were over 200 disputes in the DHSS—from 24 hour walk-outs to month long stoppages. The strikes were over various issues; pay cuts, staff cuts, ethnic "monitoring" of claimants and the discriminatory "available for work" which particularly affected women. The present action (as we go to press) has hit many DHSS and other civil service sections throughout the country. Workers are demanding a better wage rise than the 4% offered by the government.

March 20th saw over 2,000 workers at NEI Parsons taking strike action. Management had offered the workers a degrading 2.5% wage settlement with strings attached. Workers at Parsons, who are in the process of axing 800 jobs, have not ruled out further strike action in pursuit of their wage settlement.

It is now estimated that there are over 100,000 homeless families in England at the moment. In Newcastle there are over 2,600 families without full-time accommodation and many more living in squalor.

On March 12th all NACODS (Deputies union) members at the Northumberland Ellington Super pit after British Coal suspended one deputy for supposedly breaking safety procedures. No coal was cut, etc, at the pit until the men returned on March 17th after it was discovered BC planned to sue NACODS for damages for taking strike action without holding a ballot. The estimated loss of production, due to fact that NUM cannot work without safety cover, was 300,000 each day.

The compulsory Youth Training Schemes have begun to have effect in the area. Already three school leavers have had their benefits of £18.40 per week reduced by £7.35 for refusing to take YTS places. Others have had benefits suspended pending decisions at the DHSS. Many others are having their benefits looked at.

On March 6th 160 Gateshead Council roadmen walked out (employed by the Highways Dept) over bonus plans and the sell off of the road maintenance to a private company. Bonus changes will mean an average of £10-£15 wage cut per week. Obviously workers also fear for jobs and services if the section is sold off privately. In support of the roadmen 300-400 council workers, waste disposal, porters, and school dinner workers all came out on strike. Pickets were mounted by members of NUPE, UCATT and GMBATU at entrances to the brand new (and extremely expensive) Labour controlled Civic Centre. As we go to press no decision has yet been taken over the tender.

Recently a Community Programme worker with North Tyneside Age Concern was unfairly sacked without warning. The union involved, ACTS (part of IGWU) were not interested. Irene Sword a member of the management committee and one of those responsible for the sacking is also the ACTS shop steward. After over a week of waiting for help from a union representative the man decided to take his own case. The outcome was that he remained sacked for alleged misconduct, though he was given a good reference and a letter stating he had been employed on a short term contract. Far too often reformist trade unions are uninterested in the problems that face shop floor workers.

Health Service unions have recently rejected a miserly wage rise by their employers. It claimed by many health service unions that over 30,000 nurses are being forced out of the profession every year due to terrible wages and heavy workloads, a further 7,000 trainees also leave. Newcastle RVI looks set to be the next battle field for the areas Health workers over pay. NALGO have claimed that 90% of their 4,000 members in the region are paid less than £100 per week with many receiving under £70. During March NALGO launched a campaign for better wages with a token leafletting at the RVI, with workers dressed in Victorian costumes. NALGO Clerical and Administrative staff have warned that unless they receive better wages in the very near future all out strike action may be taken.

Between March 6th and April 12th the Anne Frank International touring exhibition was in Newcastle.

The personal history of Anne, her parents and sister serves as a powerful example of what could happen to an ordinary family during the Nazi era. The exhibition contained both a serious warning and an encouraging message. It shows the end result of a deadly combination of Fascism, racism and public ignorance but it also shows that individual and collective responsibility can be effectively exercised to counter these evils. Newcastle N.F. (scum) organiser Colin Todd was arrested at the exhibition after taking offence to a section on present day fascism, the animal attempted to rip the peace from the wall.

Labour controlled Northumberland County Council has decided to take action against more than 100 miners who are unable or unwilling to pay back loans made during the year long pit strike. The Labour councillors have refused to right off the loans.

HFW PICKET

7am — 7pm
Every Weekday

AT
HFW PLASTICS
ALBANY ROAD
GATESHEAD.

(JUST OFF SUNDERLAND ROAD)

FOR CONFIRMATION OF
PICKETS TELEPHONE
SOGAT 281797/2

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If you are finding it difficult to purchase a copy of the Tyneside Syndicalist on a regular basis, or would like to begin receiving the paper, subscriptions rates are as follows;

3 MONTHS	£1.00
6 MONTHS	£2.00
1 YEAR	£4.00

All subscriptions include postage. Donations are welcomed.

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.....	TW...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.....	MGM...£1.
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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.
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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...£1.
Syndicalists in Russian revolution.....	Maximoff...45p.
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Syndicalism in practice No 1. Spanish revolution.....	Rebel Worker...20p.
Syndicalism in practice No 2. Argentine organisation, FORA.....	Rebel Worker...20p.
Syndicalism in practice No 3. Syndicalist organisations of Chile.....	Rebel Worker...20p.
Syndicalism in practice No 4. 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.

LATEST NEWS

H.F.W. PLASTICS

Wednesday 22nd April: Mass picket blocks scab entrance to factory though later union officials agree to meet management and picket called off and scabs let in. This move allowed the company production on 22nd and 23rd while talks broke up on the 22nd - Workers were angry at this move, realising that nothing would come of the talks.

Friday 24th April: Police remove mass picket with force and five people are arrested. A picket of around 30 - 40 is held at Gateshead police station in protest at the arrests. Three found guilty and two other cases to be heard later in May. Production at the factory was held up for around 1½ - 2 hours due to the picket.

Monday 27th April: A womens' sit down protest at the factory entrance holds up scabs. Meeting of strikers and supporters at Gateshead Civic Centre to discuss dispute. More such meetings will be held in the future.

Wednesday 29th April: Police take violent action against pickets, injuring many. Around 50 police - from other divisions - in attendance at the factory entrance.

Friday 1st May: Around 60 police - with many more standing by - force pickets out of the factory entrance to allow scab bus in. Three people are arrested - charges were dropped against one - two to be charged.

Picket of around 40 - 50 strikers and supporters held at Gateshead police station. Two pickets arrested though charges were later dropped. Scaffolding work at the police station was halted as the Gleasons workers - AEU members - refuse to cross picket and agree not to return to work that day.

Saturday 2nd May: Gateshead leg of May Day rally held from HFW factory in support of the sacked workers.

There are now around 50 scabs entering the factory each morning including two AEU members. A meeting of the AEU Tyne District Committee to be lobbied by the sacked workers. AEU will discuss whether or not the scabs will be expelled.

The company has removed the gates from the factory entrance in an attempt to sabotage the pickets effectiveness.

There is a real need for more workers to show solidarity with the 47 sacked HFW workers by attending the mass pickets, blacking HFW and Crawfords, giving financial donations and raising the issue at your union branches, shop stewards committees etc and discussing effective action that can be taken in support of the sacked workers.

The Socialist Workers Party are becoming conspicuous by their absence at the mass pickets - continuing to arrive about thirty minutes after the scabs have managed to get into the factory, selling papers for 20 minutes and then leaving again. At a recent public meeting of the SWP a sacked worker was given a short time - about 3 minutes - to make an appeal for support. A collection was made - the SWP agreeing to halve the collection - and £26 raised. £13 was given to strikers and the other half kept - the meeting room costs only £5 to hire.

CATERPILLAR

Sunday 26th April: Occupying workers agree to call off sit-in.

Many workers are furious that the deal reached was accepted as they felt it amounted to a total defeat. Before the occupation began Caterpillar management had stated that the factory would close in 1988 - deciding later to close it sooner due to the occupation - the new deal states that there will be no redundancies before October 16th 1987. MPAT company are presently negotiating with Caterpillar over the takeover of the plant.

It is not too late for workers at the factory to defeat the Caterpillar management, though this could only be secured if the trade union bureaucracy is ignored on this occasion and industrial solidarity gained from other workers. Many lessons are to be drawn from Caterpillar - such as isolated struggles (which the AEU and Glasgow District Trades Council were effective in doing) cannot gain victories in disputes with the likes of Caterpillar, solidarity action is needed.

* * * * *

STOP PRESS: One of those to be charged after the Friday 1st May arrests is to be prosecuted under section 4 of the new public order act. Fines may be heavy and imprisonment possible.