

The SYNDICALIST

NUMBER 5 MAY '86 MONTHLY 20p

STILL VICTIMISED

JUSTICE RALLY

The formation of a national campaign for justice for miners sacked or jailed in connection with the N.U.M. strike has already been reported in this paper. On Saturday 19th April the campaign held a rally in the Westoe Miners Hall in South Shields. The rally was addressed by Dave Hopper, Secretary of Durham Area N.U.M., and Eric Clark, General Secretary of the Scottish N.U.M..

There are still 82 sacked miners in the Durham area and 17 in Northumberland. In many cases these men were sacked after being charged by the police with various offences. Despite the fact that these charges have subsequently been dropped, the men remain sacked, the N.C.B. is taking the view that they are still 'guilty'. They claim to have 'reviewed' all the mens cases; neither the N.U.M. nor the men involved have been allowed any involvement in these 'reviews'. There are also 32 sacked N.U.M. members from private mines in the Durham Area. They were sacked for refusing to cross their own unions picket lines.

WHOSE LAW

Durham area have not yet been successful when taking the victimised mens cases to industrial tribunals, whereas in Scotland 35 men have so far gained favourable Tribunal decisions. Of these 2 (two) have been re-instated. Dissolutionment with what Eric Clark called our "class-conscious corrupt law" is widespread.

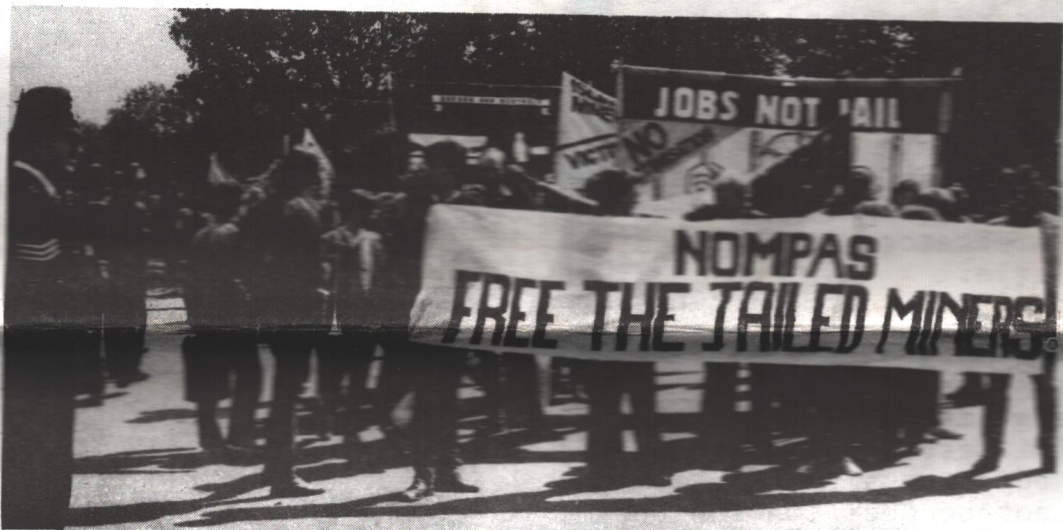
It is clear that the sackings were contrived. Add to this the rank and file activism of the sacked men and a clear picture emerges. The sackings have been a deliberate and concerted attempt to destroy grass roots militancy and the unions power.

RELEASE AND REINSTATEMENT

The short term prospects of the victimised men are gloomy. For those

presently running the country we can expect nothing, and direct industrial action is unlikely in the post strike climate. Of course we could wait for

those with Trades Council involvement, they were conspicuous by their absence. Perhaps Bob Howard was lunching with the Prime Minister instead!



The National Organisation of Miners in Prison and Supporters

the return of a Labour Governemnt, but despite Tony Benn's commendable release and reinstatement Bill, this is not an option that fills many with enthusiasm. Remember Des Warren, the jailed Shrewsbury picket who remained in prison and served every last day of his sentence even after the return of a Labour Government in the seventies.

MEANWHILE....

Immediate release and reinstatement must be the objective. The facts behind the victimisations can be made as widely known as possible. Sacked miners can be invited to address branch or shop stewards meetings. Branches can adopt a victimised miners family and forms for financial pledges for individual trade unionists will be available from the N.U.M. or local Trades Councils.

By the way, don't rely too much on the Trade Union bureaucrats. Members of the Northern Region T.U.C. were specifically invited to the rally but, except for

LATE NEWS

The 25th April saw the first ruling by an industrial tribunal in favour of a North-East miner. The NCB say they will now "consider" whether or not to reinstate Geoff Hartnell at the Tursdale workshops in Co. Durham.

CONTENTS

1. MINERS.
2. SHIPYARDS.
3. JOB SCHEMES.
4. EFFICIENCY ?
5. SOUTH AFRICA.
6. LAING.
7. REMPLOY.
8. COLWAY TYRES.
9. TEACHERS.
10. SUPPORT NEEDED.
11. N.I. DISPUTE.
12. WHERE WE STAND.

ANARCHO - SYNDICALIST PAPER

EDITORIAL

The collapse of the Laing dispute illustrates the need for workers to be in complete control of their disputes. Control is often allowed to fall into the hands of trade union officials and bureaucrats. When that happens, victory, no matter how attainable, becomes more difficult or nigh-on impossible at times. This was made clear with the betrayal of the Contracts strike in South Shields. It has been echoed in the recent sell-out by UCATT and the T&G of the Laing lock-out committee.

All of this shows that rank and file control and solidarity action are what is needed to gain victory over bosses. This point is reinforced by the bosses' use of the law to defeat workers, as in the Wapping dispute. Anti-working class laws can be used to frighten union leaders and officials away from taking any effective action. Civil and criminal law has been used effectively in recent disputes, partly because union leaders go along with it and appeal to public opinion and the moral superiority of their cause. Apart from never working, this "strategy" doesn't involve the rank and file, leaving them as passive spectators in their own struggle.

Courting public opinion has to be done through the mass media, and they distort information systematically. Any benefits gained are subtle and slight (witness the print unions' boycott campaign). This cannot be decisive enough to affect profits significantly, or to bother the bosses unduly.

On the other hand, imaginative direct action can bear fruit. Energetically seeking the support of other workers, better planning of picketing, and hitting the bosses' profits where it hurts most should be the order of the day.

When they are not mesmerised by the posturing of their union leaders, the rank and file employ these methods to great effect. They are the means by which the bosses' laws can be bypassed so that we stand a fighting chance of victory in any dispute.

The 'Syndicalist' is produced on a shoestring. If you would like to see the continuation of this paper please send donations to;

Tyneside Revolutionary Syndicalists,

c/o D.O.H.,
62, Thornton Street,
Newcastle upon Tyne.

All cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to:
THE NED SCOTT SOCIETY

CO-OPERATION NOT COMPETITION

The announcement by the government that Belfasts Harland and Wolff shipyard has won the 180 million pound Royal Navy order, brings to an end a massive ploy by management of both the Belfast yard and Swan Hunters on the Tyne to increase workers productivity.

The "mini-nationalism" that the imposed competition fostered, meant that the management could push the workers as hard as they wanted in the interests of "survival".

It also meant they could forget labour relations: like laying off men for working to rule, and the secret launch of the HMS Coventry, which was reported by the government and media as a Falklands style victory.

The media has always seen the Swan hunters/Harland and Wolff affair in terms of the workers of each yard competing against each other for jobs. In the end the Belfast yard got the order anyway. And Swans management are saying that order or no order, jobs would still have to be cut. It seems that, whatever Swans management may say, Harland and Wolff were going to get the order anyway; the whole thing was nothing more than a carrot on a stick for shipyard workers.

What this shows is that it is not in the workers best interests to vie with each other for jobs. This only produces a vicious circle of decreasing wages for greater production, which was the governments and managements aim.

What is in the workers best interests - and this goes for any industry - is to forget management fallacies about the benefits of competition, and to cooperate with each other to fight for jobs and wages.

The government has been able to carry out these tricks over the last few years because of high unemployment

- the threat of 4 million on the dole. It can be very tempting for unemployed workers to take work on any terms, and for those in work to accept falls in wages to keep their jobs. But remember it is very easy to give up workers

rights, but it takes years of hard struggle to gain them back again.

Leave competition to the bosses, the workers can only win through co-operation.

THE MYTH OF EFFICIENCY

How often do we hear that a lack of 'new technology and efficiency' in this country is what prevents us from competing with the rest of the world?

The cases mentioned below cannot be accused of being lacking in these departments, so what other answers can our capitalist overlords come up with?

N.E.I. CLARKE CHAPMAN

Today this factory, the most technologically advanced set up in Europe for power plant, lies one step away from total closure. Massive redundancies over the past few years, opposed only by rhetoric and no action, has shown that the rank & file must heed the lesson that the only way to oppose closures is action by the workers themselves.

In the past activists on the shop floor led the way and the co-ordinated organisation was well known and feared by the management. This rank and file organisation has been eroded over the years with

'Action for Jobs'

Believe it or not this is the slogan for the recent government propaganda in the media about Y.T.S., Community Programme Schemes and the like. They paint a glowing picture of 'whats available' for unemployed people, but lets get things into their true perspective and look at the real facts.

Take the Community Programme Scheme - amongst any group of workers employed on a particular job, the average wage must not exceed £67 per week. This very low figure was chosen to encourage the creation of part-time jobs, which are no good to people striving to make ends meet, but good for government and their manipulation of unemployment figures.

Why not try the new 'Job Start Allowance Scheme', where if you take a job for less than £80 per week the state will give you £20 per week for six months, taxed of course. Again these low wages do not meet people requirements, but this benefit is a blessing to unscrupulous bosses who will drop their wage rates even lower to take advantage of state cash.

These schemes, and others like them, serve in the long run to further the aims of the capitalist creed in this country. They push down other workers wage levels, cut dole figures, cut working practices, union rights and keep people occupied and therefore less inclined to react against the state.

Its not just the Tories who push these ideas, the Labour Party via Labour Councils actually act as sponsors for these anti working class ideas. The T.U.C. play an active part in the running of the schemes by participating at local level with government bodies such as the M.S.C..

In July 1986 people who have been out of work for 12 months or more will be 'invited' to a job centre to look at all the available schemes now in operation. The next step could be to mimic the American policy, where if you are out of work you must take a job on a scheme like those mentioned earlier, or receive no benefit whatsoever.

Unions have it in their power to call a halt to further expansion of these false jobs and ultimately the destruction of the entire set up. Any new Community Programme Job Scheme must have approval at local level from the relevant unions concerned. Don't give it - let these crazy ideas die a death they so rightly deserve. We want meaningful well paid jobs - not starvation level stopgaps.

little setbacks turning into major defeats and now the ultimate fate is in sight.

BIRTLEY R.O.F.

Another massive pay off at the Birtley Works well known for its efficiency and quality of products. Alas its another display of apathetic resignation by the union officials outside and within the factory. Instead of organising the workers to fight these constant redundancies, the shop stewards pointed the finger at their fellow workers in other parts of the country, asking why they weren't suffering the same cuts as at Birtley! No industrial action has ever been taken, not even seriously contemplated. They should have united with their fellow workers in these other factories and fought the bosses, not each other!

Weakness on the shop floor ultimately leads to more job losses and cuts in the working conditions of workers.

(Cont'd from previous page).

COMMUNITY IS STRENGTH

Perhaps the most imaginative ideas involve action at a local level. White shops in Howick have been boycotted successfully, and an organisation called Sawco has been set up.

Sawco stands for 'Sarmcol Workers Co-operative'. It includes the following:-

- : a t-shirt and badge making co-op,
- : an agricultural co-op, using 50 hectares of land donated by local churches,
- : a travelling theatre to publicise the strike,
- : a purchasing co-op, run by the shop stewards committee, to buy goods at wholesale cost for re-sale at a small profit. This surplus goes into the relief fund.

: finally, a health screening project is underway. It's aim is to detect serious case of malnutrition. Many strikers' children suffer from this.

In line with M.A.W.U.'s Industrial Unionist principles, Sawco is linked to the union itself constitutionally. So strikers and Sawco members "have a direct representation in working-class structures".

The co-ops and financial donations alone could not win this dispute. BTR itself must be hurt. So, the strikers have tried to spread the dispute to other BTR SA plants. The most recent reports (mid April), indicate growing success in this area.

Following the dismissal of one worker at another plant for solidarity action, wildcat strikes ensued. Four

of BTR's 11 plants were affected, with 1,500 on strike. This included members of the C.W.I.U. (Chemical Workers Industrial Union).



B.T.R. WORKERS CO-OPERATIVE IN ACTION

An indication of the effect of this fightback is given in BTR's annual report. Pre-tax profits for BTR SA were down 36% in 1985!

That is not the end of the story. The strike has not yet been won.

WHAT NOW?

Solidarity action is desperately needed. This could be simply sending a message of support, or a donation. Workers employed by BTR here should take special note and consider taking industrial action. They have the same employer and the same enemy - if the women at Dunnes can strike in solidarity with SA workers, so can we.

This fight, by a small number of workers against a vast multi-national, is something we can all learn from.

They've benefitted from talking directly to other workers abroad; from spreading the strike as much as possible; and from involving the whole community. Unless a union has the open, democratic structure to allow the community to join in, then it is unlikely that they will. That resource - of women and men, the unemployed, the young and old - will be lost. Britain is often said to be the home of Trades Unionism - but we obviously have a lot to learn!

Messages of support, and donations, can be sent to:-

SAWCO,
P.O. Box 18109,
Dalbridge,
4014,
Natal, South Africa.

DISABLED WORKERS FIGHT BACK

Disabled workers at an Ashinton Factory came out on Friday 14th April, against "disciplinary action" involving four workmates. The four were suspended for refusing to work on a contract which allowed them too little time to work on the order.

The unofficial strike is at Remploy Ltd., a government subsidised company which employs a 148 disabled workers. The factory mainly produces wheelchairs. The workers heard that a contract with the Ministry of Defence to produce metal table legs had been agreed. The work had originally been blacked at a Stoke factory when workers were refused a request for an extra welder for the job, and were told by management that a supervisor would be enough.

The workers decided that if any of them were sent home they would all walk out. When management asked for paint-line operators to start work on the M.O.D. contract, they refused, and were immediately suspended without pay. Eighty-four, out of a workforce of 148, walked out in protest. There are 121 Union members at the factory. However, there is a high rate of absenteeism, due to disabilities. A picket of 60 was maintained each day.

On Tuesday, 22nd April, the workers agreed to return after Des Smith, regional C.M.B.A.T.U. official, had talks with management. The job will now be re-timed, and union representatives from the factory will discuss the time to be given for the job, with management. In the meantime workers would receive the average bonus. The strike shows that disabled people

The strike shows that people with disabilities can fight back - in defence of pay and conditions - alongside non-disabled workers. This is important, as disabled and handicapped people are often greatly exploited because they are thought to have no industrial muscle, and often lack organisation in the workplace. However, the trend is that many workers with disabilities and handicaps are increasingly joining Trade Unions.

LAING: LOCKOUT - SOLD OUT

The Laings lock-out dispute ended on the 21st April. The best efforts of Laing management were not succeeding, but then the behaviour of bureaucrats in the building workers' trade unions turned a promising situation into a disaster for the lock-out committee.

BACKGROUND

A bricklaying gang (all UCATT members) were sacked twice, locked out three times and transferred three times by the construction company LAINGS in London (as reported in the last issue of "The Syndicalist"). Laing and their subcontractors came up with all sorts of reasons for wanting rid of the men. But it seems that their real reason was not wanting active trade unionists on their sites, and that they had found out that members of the gang had been involved in trade union activity before. Given the weak state of organised labour at the moment they will have assumed that they could get away with it easily.

STRANGE CONCILIATION

In the first stage of the dispute, late in 1985, the National Conciliation Panel decided in the men's favour, recommending that they should all be reinstated. This led to promises from Laing in November concerning their employment. But it was soon made clear that Laing had no intention of following the recommendation or of honouring their guarantees. The company received a big boost when the South East Regional Conciliation Panel took it on themselves to consider the case, even though the National Panel had

already dealt with it. The Regional Panel decided that one member of the gang should stay sacked and that the others should be split up. The bricklaying gang (by then the Lock-Out Committee) rejected this, in solidarity with the one individual and because of the strong likelihood of physical intimidation if the gang was split up. It isn't clear why the Regional Panel met. It may not be relevant that the chair, a T&G official named Kavanagh, resigned soon after following accusations of corruption.

BOSSES COURTS

In February Laing succeeded in the High Court in getting injunctions on the six brickies. If Laing had acted on the injunctions the men would have gone to jail if they went to meetings, asked for support, or if more than two of them picketed.

NASTY BEHAVIOUR

The lock-out committee faced opposition and interference coming from all directions. Laing obviously blacklisted trade unionists, manipulate workers through their use of subcontractors and sack and transfer workers whenever the whim takes them. They offered the lock-out committee "substantial settlements" (ie bribes), and have combined this benevolence with attempts at victimisation in the traditional ways. Police harassment of pickets led to five arrests, and a large piece of concrete was dropped 50ft onto a picket line on one occasion. The bureaucracies of the building workers' trades unions did little to help, and much to hinder the lock-out committee (see below).

LOCK-OUT NOT LOCKED UP

Support and solidarity action were beginning to be effective. It is probable that Laing were reluctant to use their injunctions so long as the dispute stayed in public view. Laing are very image-conscious, wishing to be seen as a "nice" company. Also, other construction companies were watching from the sidelines. If Laing had used the injunctions successfully, others may have followed suit. The vigorous activities of the lock-out committee and other support action may be what kept the men out of jail.

PICKETTING LAING'S

The lock-out committee, building workers and other rank and file trade unionists organised pickets at Laing sites up and down the country. Most were in London, others included Edinburgh, Manchester and Durham.

Laing's site at Hayes Wharf in London is a prestigious development of an old warehouse by the Thames. From Monday 14th April there was a daily picket there each morning. This was quite successful, and managed to turn away over 70% of lorries carrying supplies and materials. Also, bricklayers on the site were blacking material that had crossed the picket line. Had those brickies been disciplined by Laing, the dispute would have been escalated further.

SO NEAR YET SO FAR

Just about every conceivable issue relating to unions was at stake in the dispute. Laing management were on the point of crumbling, and offered to negotiate with the lock-out committee. This was a clear signal that the dispute could have been won.

But later in the same day that Laing sent the Telex offering negotiations the General Secretary of UCATT, Albert Williams, signed an agreement with Laing. This agreement completely sold out the lock-out committee. An important part of their strategy was to get the Regional Conciliation Panel's findings overturned. But the agreement between Williams and Laing squashed the National Panel's ruling. Williams' excuse was that the lock-out committee had been picketting!

In other words, Laings hadn't needed their injunctions at all, because the union leaders did their work for them.

MORE BUREAUCRATS

The T&G's treatment of the lock-out committee was equally disgusting. Apart from Mr Kavanagh, stories were made up and spread around about violence done to T&G members by pickets. To cap it all T&G members were instructed to cross picket lines.

Combined with the lack of support from building workers, this astonishing sell-out by the union bureaucrats has led the lock-out committee to abandon their struggle.

COLWAY TYRES

At a T&G branch meeting on 12th April Colway Tyres workers voted overwhelmingly to continue industrial action in pursuit of union recognition (see "The Syndicalist", no.4). But again they gave the manager another chance before escalating the dispute. He has "unofficially" recognised the union by allowing union business to be conducted on his premises, and by negotiating with shop stewards who are T&G members. He says he is negotiating with the "Works Committee".

The T&G seem prepared to accept this state of affairs and are holding a ballot on the pay offer (£9 per week rise, but some workers will lose a bonus of £18 p.w.).

The trouble is that this sort of "informal" recognition can be withdrawn as easily as it is given. The manager may have got more or less what he wanted, being helped by getting so many "last chances". If the workers vote to accept the pay offer and do nothing more for proper union recognition, their determination and militancy may eventually turn out to have been in vain.

T.R.S.

Wish to extend fraternal greetings

to all workers on

MAY DAY

1886 - 1986



South African unions

People in Britain could be forgiven for thinking that the struggle in South Africa consisted of large demonstrations at funerals, rubber neclaces, blacks fighting amongst themselves and speeches by Winnie Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu. This is the image given us by the TV and newspapers. It ignores an upsurge in activity, organisation and militancy by trade unions. Here we try to redress the balance.

SOME HISTORY

Until 1979 blacks in South Africa could not be members of trade unions and multi-racial trade unions were banned. This did not stop the formation of unofficial trade unions and their growth and increasing success - during the 1970's - forced the government to recognise them in 1979.

Since then, blacks could belong to 'registered' trade unions; many unions refused to register, but since 1981 they too have been required to comply with the same restrictive trade union legislation. Government recognition of these unions was an attempt to gain some control over them. The SA trade union movement is still developing and changing - both in terms of its organisation and its aims. There are obvious conflicts over issues such as multi-racism, rank and file control, and 'political' activities.

MOTOR INDUSTRY

For example, in the motor industry in 1979 two unions were formed, the National Union for Motor and Rubber Workers of South Africa (NUMARWOSA), for coloured workers and the United Automobile Workers Union (UAW) for blacks. Subsequent disenchantment with the initially cautious, non-political approach of these unions led to the formation of the Motor Assembly and Component Workers Union of SA (MACWUSA) and also to the merging of NUMARWOSA and UAW into the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU). This process of subdivision and coalescence took place against a background of frequent strikes and severe government repression by all the usual means - arrests, jailings, torture, killings, etc., and is still continuing.

THE PRESENT POSITION

South African labour law is distinctly unfriendly to the worker. Many in the public sector, agriculture, domestic service, etc. do not have the right to join a trade union and strikes are virtually illegal. Only 3 out of 1400 strikes between 1973 and 1981 were officially 'legal'. Picketing is illegal and giving money to workers in an 'illegal' strike is illegal. Yet industrial action is increasing. In 1984 there were 469 strikes involving 182,000 workers and 385,000 working days were lost due to industrial action in January 1986. Most of the strikes are for political objectives rather than over wages and conditions.

MORE INITIALS

This politicisation is reflected in the aims and demands of the Congress of SA Trade Unions (see box) formed in December 1985 and uniting 33 separate unions representing 558,000 members. Affiliated trade unions include the National Union of Mineworkers, the broad-based and militant South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU), 4 of whose leaders are on trial for treason (organising Strikes), and the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) whose rank and file principles and involvement in the BTR dispute are reported elsewhere in this issue.

Two militant and exclusively black trade unions remain outside COSATU, the Council of Unions of SA and the much smaller Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions.

COSATU is also supported by the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), which has been officially legal since it was formed in 1955 but which has operated largely underground and outside the law. SACTU is closely linked to the banned African National Congress (ANC).

WORKER CONTROL AND COMMUNITY ACTION

There are encouraging signs that the rank and file in SA can avoid losing control to political and trade union bureaucrats. In the Howick/Mpophomeni district of Natal, the area affected by the BTR Sarmcol dispute, MAWU have set up a workers co-operat-



ive which includes a health project, agricultural, buying, and t-shirt/badge making co-ops, and a cultural project. (See article elsewhere)

Over Easter there was a conference of 600 community organizations, trade unions, and political organizations in Durban which called for non-whites to take over and organise for themselves the running of their communities. In particular, the conference called for school students to abandon the school boycott, return to school, and take over the schools and education system themselves.

On the other hand there are political and trade union leaders who would prefer to concentrate power in their own hands. At the recent anti-apartheid trade union conference in London the ANC representative discouraged the formation of direct links between union branches here and in SA, preferring any contact to take place through the ANC or SACTU in case

British trade unionists got in touch with the "wrong people". We do not wish to denigrate the contribution of the ANC or SACTU in any way, but we hope to report on more direct channels of communication in the next issue.

SUPPORT FROM BRITAIN

British trade unionists can also support our brothers and sisters in South Africa by taking direct action against employers with South African links. NUPE and T&GWU members in the health service in Portsmouth are continuing to boycott South African goods and need support.

The following local companies are believed to have South African links:

APV Mitchell (Dryers) Ltd, Carlisle.
Associated Lead Manufacturers Ltd - Wallsend.
Black & Decker Ltd - Spennymoor.
Burgess Microswitch Co. Ltd - G'head.
CMP - Glands Ltd - Newcastle.
Cress Paperware Ltd - Cleator Moor.
Cummins Engine Co. Ltd - Darlington.
Davy McKee Ltd - Stockton.
Domnick Hunter (Engineering) Ltd - Birtley.
Elmwood Sensors Ltd - North Shields.
Head Wrightson Machine Co. Ltd. - Middlesborough.
Huwood Ltd - Gateshead.
Lumsden Machine Co. Ltd - G'head.

Micaply International Inc. - Carlisle.
NEI Parsons Ltd - Newcastle.
NEI Reyrolle Ltd - Hebburn.
Pearson Machine Tool Ltd. - Newcastle.
RHL Hydraulics Ltd - Newcastle.
John T. Scott & Son Ltd - Carlisle.
Sekers Fabrics Ltd - Whitehaven.
Sevcon Engineering Ltd - Gateshead.
Simonarcco Ltd - Carlisle.
Thermal Syndicate Ltd - Wallsend.
The Torrington Co. Ltd - Darlington.
Vickers Ltd - Michell Bearings - Newcastle.
Vickers Products Ltd - Wallsend.
Welwyn Electric Ltd - Bedlington.

Among the demands made by the Cosatu launch conference were:

- The repeal of the pass laws. (Should the regime fail to comply, Cosatu will start a defiance campaign, including the burning of passes).
- The immediate lifting of the State of Emergency.
- The withdrawal of the racist troops from the townships.
- The unconditional release of Nelson Mandela, and all political prisoners and detainees.
- The repeal of orders restricting individuals and outlawing organisations.
- The dismantling of the bantustan system.
- An end to the migrant labour system.

The Cosatu unions commit themselves to:

- Worker control
- Non-racialism
- Broadly-based industrial unions
- The struggle for political rights
- Representation based on paid-up membership
- Co-operation at the national level in the new federation

A broad range of resolutions at the launch conference dealt with organisation against the apartheid regime. Some of the issues covered were:

- Industrial Unions - There must be one national union in each industry.
- A Living Wage - There must be an ongoing campaign for a national minimum wage, linked to the inflation rate.
- Unemployment - All workers have a right to work. Overtime must be banned, and all should work a 40-hour week. Workers must fight the introduction of technology that costs jobs.
- Strikes - All workers must have the right to this democratic form of struggle.
- Women - Because women are exploited on the basis of sex, class and race, workers must fight all unequal and discriminatory treatment of women at work, in society and in the Federation.
- Worker Education - To combat the present education system which is undemocratic, divisive and serves the interests of the ruling class, there must be education programmes to politicise, mobilise and organise the working class so that they can lead the transformation towards a society that serves the needs of those now oppressed and exploited.
- Disinvestment - An essential and effective form of pressure on the regime that must be supported.

BTR SARMCOL DISPUTE

"We did not ask BTR to come here. We used to work on the land. But the whites took away our land and for years we have worked for low wages in the factory. Now they have taken away our jobs. That factory should have been like a father to us, but instead we have been abandoned."

John Makhatini, shop steward, Metal and Allied Workers Union, July 1985.

Two months before saying that, John was among 950 workers who were sacked by BTR Sarmcol of Howick, Natal Province, South Africa.

BTR Sarmcol is the biggest producer of rubberised conveyor belts for the SA mining industry. It is part of BTR SA, which is in turn a division of BTR PLC, a UK-based multi-national (The initials meant something once - Birmingham Tyre & Rubber).

In 1985, BTR took over Dunlop. Combined, they have subsidiaries all over the world (including Pretty Polly tights, Tilcon, and Charlton-Leslie Engineering in the UK).

MONEY GO ROUND

This vast conglomerate is estimated to be worth £5 billion. Profits before tax last year were £362 million. It's Chairman is Sir Owen Green, a successful man, at least going by his salary - £142,000 p.a.

With all this money going around, you might think they could afford decent wages for their employees. Not in SA, it seems. Workers at BTR Sarmcol were paid below the EEC's Code of Conduct Minimum Level (i.e. Poverty Line). That is one reason why they joined the Metal and Allied Workers Union.

For two years, workers at Sarmcol negotiated with management for Union recognition. Occasionally, there was a go-slow or short strike. Despite this, they were unable to gain recognition, raise wages, or halt the company's policy of "retrenchment". About 1,000 jobs were lost due to retrenchment in those two years.

When all 950 workers went out on strike on 30th April 1985, they were sacked en masse. Sarmcol brought in 800 scab workers from more distant townships. When pickets were mounted, 6 strikers were murdered and another 100 detained by police. This was clearly an attempt to destroy the Union, as well as reduce manpower.

Now, a year later, the fight continues.

One of the difficulties the strikers face is the distance between their homes and place of work. Originally, they lived in Howick, where the factory is. In the late 1960's however,

they were forcibly removed to a place called Mpophomeni - 20kms away. It now has a population of 15,000 most of whom are unemployed.

This problem has been overcome by sheer hard work - they walk to the picket if necessary. Other problems were not so easy.

WORLD APATHY

Calls for international support have been ignored by the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations Organisation. So too have complaints to the EEC about the breaking of their Code of Conduct - even the scabs are underpaid!

As far as M.A.W.U. are concerned, the EEC Code is nothing more than a "smokescreen for continued foreign investment in SA's apartheid state".

Most international support has been gained by M.A.W.U. going directly to workers abroad. Donations and support for the strikers are flowing in steadily. This follows visits to the UK and USA in Sept. and Dec. 1985, and again to the UK in March of this year (see last issue).

Support from some national British unions has been forthcoming (notably the G.M.B.A.T.U., and others with members employed by BTR here). However the personal visits achieved the greatest impact.

(Cont'd over).

N.U.T. SINGLE UNION CALL

At the recent National Union of Teachers conference, in Blackpool (29 March-2 April) delegates passed a motion in favour of the creation of a single union of teachers in England and Wales. This would amalgamate the NAS/UWT with the NUT, which would be affiliated to the TUC.

The motion also recognised that changes in organisation in education have reached a point which requires close collaboration between the college lecturers union - NATFHE - and other TUC affiliated teachers unions.

Moving the motion, Ramond Sirotkin said

"We are well aware of the role of the NAS/UWT leaders but we must not be sectarian" urging delegates not to let goodwill at other levels "evaporate because of pointless

Did you see?

Channel 4, Easter Monday, "Eleventh Hour".

The programme on the nationalisation of the coal industry and the relationship between management and miners since 1947 provided some very interesting insights. Apart from showing the far-reaching implications of a union movement willing to use no-strike tactics under the Labour government of the time, it gave rare expression to the ideas of individual rank and file miners.

Showing how the newly-formed National Coal Board was to be seen in the eyes of the working masses, signs were posted exclaiming that, "On nationalisation day this colliery will be owned by the people, for the people."

Lawrence Daly (NUM General Secretary 1968-1984) stated,

"one or two of the old syndicalist-type miners ... believed state control was no better than private enterprise control, and ... warned against it.

I remember one man called Willie Selkirk in one of the Lothian pits refusing to have the notice put up at his pit."

Selkirk had claimed that, "It would prove to be the same team in new jerseys." Lawrence continued,

"years later, we realised it was."

As syndicalists today we stand by the comments made by Willie Selkirk. The pits shall be owned by the people when, and only when, they are run directly by those who work them, for the use of all and not for the production of profit.

**JOIN THE
SILENTNIGHT
DEMO
SATURDAY
17th MAY
12 noon Lund Park
Keighley**

rivalry".

Seconding the motion Hilda Kean pointed out that for the first time since the formation of the NUT, over and 100 yrs ago,

"It no longer has the majority of the teaching force". This meant that trying to recruit non NUT members in schools and challenging the NAS/UWT leadership in a bid to take recruits from that organisation where no longer adequate responses to the problems of unity.

The motion was opposed by the NUT executive but received the highest number of votes, to prioritise it in a debate.

Some delegates opposed the motion on the grounds that the NAS/UWT was a "Sell - Out" union. This month it joined with the other 5 teacher organisations, to suspend all action for 6 months while talks on pay and conditions took place. The NUT has since been ejected from the talks.

Local authority employers re-

fused to negotiate while its members were continuing to apply sanctions in schools.

However, as one delegate pointed out, the line should not be drawn between the NUT and the NAS/UWT, but between the two TUC affiliated trade unions "And the other 'Noddy associations".

The issue was summed up by David Turner a delegate from Sheffield:

"What we are looking for is Unity"

Some delegates opposed the motion

It was in the nature of institutionalised bureaucracies to want to hold hold onto their power. It was upto the membership to direct the Executive and the officers to move in the direction of unity.

In the meantime, on the 25th of April, the NUT executive decided that the union will press ahead with its plans for intensified action if the Burnham Committee - on which it no longer has a majority - refuses to discuss its pay claim for 1986.

THEY NEED YOUR SUPPORT

SILENTNIGHT

Ten months of struggle at the two Silentnight factories of Sutton and Barnoldswick has seen extreme hardship being thrust upon the locked out workers.

The dispute over rights, and management breaking agreements on redundancy and wage levels began in July of last year.

The 200 sacked workers are now appealing for unions, union branches, shop steward committees and support groups to 'adopt a family', a structure which was set up earlier in the dispute.

The present situation at

DONATIONS.

Mrs A King,
10, Rainhill Cres,
Barnoldswick,
Colne,
Lancs.

AI FEEDS

Dispute at AI Feeds in Bootle, Merseyside has entered its fifth month. The dispute arose through the sacking of two workers after they had approached management on the question of recognition of their union the T.G.W.U..

14 workers are presently involved in the strike at the Liverpool plant. Letters of support, donations etc should be sent to:

AI Feeds Strike Comm,
Transport House,
Islington,
Liverpool 3.

the two factories remains basically unchanged from past reports in the Syndicalist.

Timber is being delivered to the two factories by a Hartlepool Dock based company, ABBA Shipping.

Though requests from sacked workers have been made to unions both at local and regional level on the question of solidarity action no support as yet has been forthcoming.

Pickets at the two factories remain solid and a demonstration has been organised to take place on May 17th.

Appeals for all Silentnight goods to be blacked both by workers and the consumer have received widespread support, though this pressure needs to be stepped up. The CO-OP has a £15m order with Silentnight

CORRESPONDENCE.

Stephen Burns,
9, Frank Street,
Barnoldswick,
Colne,
Lancs.

MORRIS

35 workers from Morris of Glasgow remain sacked almost one year after they took action for the right to work a 39 hour week laid down by the Furniture Manufacturers Agreement.

Pickets continue to be mounted and the men feel that they shall continue their fight for re-instatement and for their demands to be met although they need your support in meeting their objective. Support has been given to the workers from other trade unionists both within and outside of Glasgow. S.O.G.A.T.

and coners about 30% of Silentnight products. Silentnight has companies and outlets all over the world including subsidiaries in Jersey, Kenya, Belgium and Uganda.

Silentnight workers can be contacted etc at the following addresses:

If you would like a speaker, contact:
Terry Bennet on
0282 603055 or
Heather Smith on
0282 813662.

STRIKE HEADQUARTERS:
0282 816709.

'ADOPT A FAMILY'

Mr & Mrs Williams,
41, Lower West Ave,
Barnoldswick,
Colne,
Lancashire,
BB8 6DW.

Tel: 0282 814556.

printers and G.M.W.U. members at Radion Clyde have refused to handle advertisements of the sacked mens jobs, though scabs have been recruited to do the work. Dockers have been blacking materials and goods, including tables etc imported from Italian Company Faelli Passoni destined to be sold in Britain under the Morris name.

Widespread appeals have been sent out asking for support.

Send all donations etc to: R. McCallum,
46, Carlton Place,
Glasgow,
G15 9TQ.

NOBODY WINS AT BINGO

Support for the 6000 sacked which include clerical workers cleaners etc and not just printworkers has been coming in steady and strong. Pickets and demonstrations are being staged nationwide. Similar pickets to that of Houghton le Spring are happening at other distribution points such as Cardiff and Southampton.

Picketing of Murdochs other production plant at Kinnington Park, Glasgow has been mounted by rank and file EPTU members.

True working class support has come from the residents at Wapping who have been furious at the police tactics which has included intimidation, interrogation and road blocks to allow the scab lorries through, so that the British breakfast time is yet again blessed by the presence of the 'Sun'.

FEES PAID TO THIEVES!!!

SOGAT initially had their funds sequestered both locally and nationally. At one point the local branches were so worried that they were using SOGAT nationally to return to the courts to purge their contempt and thus end the further threat of seizure. NUPE had already guaranteed offices and equipment to keep the local branches functioning. The NGA found itself in a similar situation with the Warrington dispute. There the T&GWU offered similar support which was accepted. As of the 25th of April though an appeal court ruled that SOGAT branch and Chapel funds were separate from national funds and that they should therefore be left alone.

SOGAT branches before this ruling were kept functioning by voluntary contributions while union fees paid in at the the offices were going directly to the sequestrators coffers! Lack of support has driven pickets at the T.N.T. depot to resort to actions such as stoning lorries, gluing up locks etc along with actions taken to block gates and false picket details circulated to the police.

Regular picketing is being maintained at the major TNT depot at Houghton - le Spring and at the various W.H. Smith warehouses in the area in a continuing attempt to stop Murdochs' papers.

The determination and enthusiasm of the pickets (after 9 weeks) is still strong. The police in their role as well paid strikebreakers have hampered any major attempt to bust the Houghton Le Spring operation.

The scab drivers have consistently refused to stop at official picket lines although when asked ordinary T.N.T. drivers have respected them. The response from the drivers from other papers has been good.

NOBODY WINS AT BINGO - ITS ALL A FIX!

As part of the dispute a solidarity march was organised which passed through Ashington, Newcastle and Middlesbrough locally. The marchers, strikers from London, were friendly and enthus-

astic. They said they had addressed many meetings including in Middlesbrough NUPE, hospital workers and the union members from the local paper. the strikers seemed to be hoping more for the boycott campaign to succeed rather than direct industrial support, which is unfortunate. One marcher did say that Murdochs' sales of the 'Sun' had dropped from 4.5m to 1.8million.

SOGAT ON HOLIDAY!

The main W.H. Smith depot in Newcastle about 20 SOGAT members working within it. They have consistently refused to go along with their unions' instruction to black the News International papers.

As reported in the last issue of the 'Syndicalist' plans were being made to set up a joint meeting of all the SOGAT members working within the W.H. Smith depots regionally. The aim of this proposed meeting was to persuade the members to black the NI papers. The Gateshead branch along with others had initially voted to do this but were outvoted by the larger Newcastle branch.

Unfortunately this meeting came to nothing which perhaps is not surprising seen as though certain key people including a SOGAT official decided to go on holiday!



Newcastle march, April 5.

WAPPING NEWS-NO WAY

On the 21st of March the Wapping residents organised a march to the gates of the NI plant. 400 took part while 1000 people lined the route showing the deep hostility of the locals to Murdochs plans. At the end of the march which was largely made up of women, a petition was handed in, in opposition to the NI scab operation. As the strike bulletin 'Picket' said,

"The fact that the march represented a cross section of the working class community of Wapping, was encouraging and it shows the feasibility of militant picketing in the Wapping area with the support of the tenants."

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.

WHAT NOW

If as shown locally a small number of pickets can harm Murdochs plans think how easily this dispute could be won if action was taken by electricians, water workers, postal workers etc as well as with a larger number of people to build up picket lines.

It is up to the organised bodies of the working class through rank and file action who could defeat Murdoch and his scab operation.

Sources:

Local NGA & SOGAT members,
PRINT (NGA paper)
T&GWU 'Record'
SOGAT 'Journal'
PICKET. Information bulletin
C/O 628 Tottenham High Rd,
London N17.

MURDOCH IS BAD NEWS

DON'T BUY

THE **Sun**

NEWS OF THE **WORLD**

THE **TIMES**
THE **SUNDAY TIMES**