

The SYNDICALIST

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NOISY DAYS AT CO-OP

The SILENTNIGHT STRIKERS are asking for a nationwide effort to put pressure on the Co-op chain of department stores, to get them to withdraw Silentnight products, 30% of which are sold there. If the Co-op cancel their orders attention can be directed at other furniture and department stores which take the other 70% (e.g. Queensway and Times Furniture). Silentnight may then be forced to change their tune (see previous issues of "The Syndicalist for details of the dispute).

BEDS CO-OPTED

So far the strikers have organised pickets at Co-op stores across West Yorkshire and East Lancashire, causing Co-op managers much discomfort and embarrassment. The strikers feel that the next step must be to spread the action nationwide and to picket all Co-op stores that stock Silentnight products. Already the Co-op in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, has cancelled its Silentnight order, setting the precedent for others to follow.

PICKETS AND SCAB CITY

Pickets at the factories at Sutton (between Keighley and Skipton) and Barnoldswick (between Burnley and Skipton) are usually about 40-strong, plus of course a large police presence. Scabs from Skipton (dubbed "Scab City") and various small towns and villages in W.Yorks and E.Lancs. usually get into the factories without too much trouble. Lightning pickets have been more successful, and there are some indications that the police may be quite stretched on some occasions.

POOR OLD SCABS

One scab who worked over the winter and then left told strikers that conditions



SCAB LORRY DELIVERING TIMBER TO SILENTNIGHT FACTORY

for the scab workers were the worst he had ever had to put up with anywhere. Silentnight management are clearly not making any attempt to ease the lot of the scabs - who are probably expected to be grateful to Tom Clarke (Thatcher's "Mr. Wonderful") for the work. Not surprisingly scab productivity is way down, and what is produced is very substandard.

MARCHING SPIRIT

Over a thousand people marched through Keighley and held a rally at Castle Cliffe on May 17th. The militancy and spirit of the strikers and the support from their communities was very much in evidence. In Keighley town centre kids could be seen all over the place wearing badges saying "Support the Silentnight Strikers", rather than saying "Wham" or

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ANARCHO - SYNDICALIST MONTHLY

SOLD DOWN THE SWANEE

EDITORIAL

One of the reasons we are given for the enormous amounts of redundancies and closures, by the employers is that of the 'saturated market'. The slump in orders and lack of profits are a major factor for the workplace to be 'rationalised' by the bosses. However viable a closure may look to the capitalist we see no reason why a workforce should be made redundant or a workplace dismantled.

For the answer to the problem of closures we must look not to the bosses, but to ourselves.

In the 1970's, workers faced with ensuing redundancies and closures at Lucas Aerospace, came up with an alternative to simply being put out of employment.

Alternative production was an idea that Lucas workers put forward to offset job losses and closures. Sophisticated machinery and the skills and knowledge of the workforce could be put to social use. The ideas of the Lucas workers were not pipe dreams but well researched and workable.

A major development was to show that with altering the design of existing machinery desperately needed Kidney machines could be produced.

The ideas were rejected by management on the grounds that they were uneconomical and would not meet a market where massive profits could be made.

The problem does not lie with manufacturing in itself but in the uncompromising pursuit of profit.

We must ask ourselves who is capable of running industry, the bosses or ourselves?

It is quite obvious that the economics of capitalism are only concerned with profit — reducing the worker to a tool in pursuit of that end.

It is not enough for us to merely come up with new ideas for production. We must begin to change the structure in which we work. We must not only play the role of producers; we must also take control over what is produced and what is needed rather than what yields the most profits.

We see the fight for greater conditions and wages as a step forward in gaining the confidence and experience for overthrowing capitalism and the state. In the day to day struggles that we face, the occupation of our factories and the mass strikes of workers can be applied to gain victory in cases such as closures and redundancies and better conditions. But their use can be taken a stage further and used to gain control over what we need and what we produce.

Over the last month in the North-East we have been witness to a massive onslaught of cuts, job losses and closures in both private and government-owned sectors of industry. At present unemployment stands at well over 19.1% in the region (240,000 people).

THE 'NEW REALISM'

The latest announced losses and closures come at a time when workers' power within the organised union movement is apparently at its weakest. The printers at Wapping are feeling the full weight of anti-union legislation and the union movement is being divided by so-called "realistic unionism" AEUW and EETPU style. After the initial defeat of rail-workers in the fight against one-man trains, BR now feel that it is the turn of the engineers in the rail workshops who must feel the brunt of their "cost-cutting" exercises.

BY RAIL AND SEA

The recent announcement of over 6,000 redundancies over a three-year period will leave the rail unions much weaker even than they are today while creating a situation of private enterprise in the rail engineering industry. Coupled with these attacks the government have announced that that a further 3,500 jobs must go in the remaining nationalised shipyards, bringing the workforce down to 6,500 from its former self of 30,000 in 1979. Not only will jobs be lost but whole yards such as Smiths Dock (Tees) and Clark Kincaid (Wallsend) in the N.E. and Ailsa's Troon (Strathclyde) in Scotland will be closed and probably sold off to private companies.

SMITHS DOCK

Over the last year Smiths Dock has received millions of pounds of investment to build up new development. In fact over the last two months a half million investment for a new power line has just come into use. This sell off will look extremely tempting to private companies wanting a quick and extremely cheap purchase.

SHIPS GOING DOWN

The dismantling of the shipbuilding industry does not stop with government attacks on nationalised yards. Tyne Ship Repair plan to close down 4 of its 8 dry docks and pull out all operations from Middle Docks, South Shields. Meanwhile the newly-privatised Swan Hunter shipyards plan to axe hundreds of jobs using the excuse that they failed to win an M.O.D. order.

UNDERMINING ENGINEERS

Northern Engineering Industries (NEI), one of the North-East's biggest employers and profit-makers have announced the axing of 700 of its Parsons workforce, and a further 190 will go from the Nuclear Systems factory in Gateshead. The snowball effect of mining closures in the region has begun to rear its head with the loss of 100 jobs at Huwood, mining equipment manufacturers, on Team Valley at the same time as Press Offshore are to cut back 99 of their workforce at North Shields.

IS IT INEVITABLE

In the wake of these losses is there no hope for those threatened with redundancy? Given the lack of serious opposition to these closures from the unions involved, we must ask ourselves how we can fight off these present attacks.

Is there an answer?

NO IT'S NOT

There are possible answers, but they depend on the workers being prepared to fight. A recent example of militant tactics to gain victory was shown a short while ago in Gibraltar where the government faced a general strike if it did not succumb to the workers' demands.

THE GIBRALTER DOCK

Workers in the dockyards had realised that not only were the yards being grossly mismanaged, but that £300,000 of their pension fund had been spent by the employers! Appeldore (who run the yard for the Gibraltar government) had also gone through a £30 million British government grant in 18 months (it was supposed to last 5 years). Though these vast amounts of money were being used by the company, the workers had not had a payrise since 1983. Dockers had been involved in industrial action for almost a week, using demonstrations, street sit-downs etc.

MANAGEMENT LOCKED OUT

Then, more dramatically, they ejected management from the repair yard. Shop stewards gave them 4 minutes to collect their gear and vacate the premises. Then a general strike was called by the union (T.G.W.U.). The government realised the power that the workers had, and that they also had gained mass support from fellow workers. Keeping in mind the general strike of 1974 which crippled the Gibraltar economy (electricity and water supplies were shut down and even burials were stopped) the government crumbled and gave in to the demands of the workers.

POWER AT WORK

Not only were the tactics of occupation put to good use, but the workers clearly transcended union sectionalism and bureaucracy in this example. These events in Gibraltar give us some indication of what organised action and solidarity can achieve. Even in this climate of closures, combined action in the shipyards, railway repair workshops and mining equipment factories could mount a serious opposition to the destruction of their industries. If workers from private and state-owned companies joined forces with other workers, e.g. in the power and printing industries, victory could be that much closer for short-term gains. This would also greatly increase confidence and an understanding of the power that workers can wield.

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 to be made payable to:

THE SYNDICALIST

If you have any comment to make on the paper or would like to contact the group please send all correspondence to the above address.

CONTRACTS; WORKERS STILL ORGANISING

The workers at Contracts Ltd., South Shields, are still managing to organise collectively within their factory, since they returned to work nearly 3 months ago. This is despite victimisation, threats of sackings, isolation of union representatives from members and long hours and heavy workloads. At the time of writing (22nd May) 22 strikers are still not back in the factory - part of the conditions for returning. Management has constantly attempted to break the agreement since the workers started the "phased return". Despite these conditions the workers are more solid now than they have ever been. Some scabs have since expressed

the feeling that they wished they had come out on strike with the other workers. Many are moving towards joining the union, and over 20 have done since the strike ended.

STILL SOLID

A significant demonstration of the feeling of solidarity within the union is the attitude to the 20 or so members who have not yet been taken back. Some of these workers are only 16 or 17 years of age and are unable to qualify for unemployment benefit: they receive less than £18 social security. But they have not been deserted by those who have gone back.

RANK AND FILE POWER

The workers also appear to be moving towards taking rank and file control of their union. A full committee meeting, of all union members, is held every Friday afternoon, including both employed and unemployed. They discuss any developments and decide on any action, with the unemployed members fully involved in any decision-making. The workers carefully monitor what the full-time officials are up to, usually meeting them at a full committee. There is also a plan to call for a nationwide conference of NUTGW shop stewards in the future.

Excerpts from an interview with Jane Kingsland, a shop steward at the factory, are given below.



JANE KINGSLAND

Q. What is the management doing to try to stop you organising?

Jane: The management is determined to segregate both NUTGW members, and scabs, from shop stewards. This is mainly attempted by giving different dinner hours and breaks. If you are caught smoking in the toilet you will be instantly dismissed. If scabs are seen talking to me they are taken in front of the manager. Everything is more undercover. If there are any complaints the manager himself immediately comes and intimidates the individual worker concerned, in order to frighten her. They are kept quiet by fear.

Q. So are you managing to organise within the factory?

Jane: Oh Yes - I'm organising but everything has to be done by the book, so as not to give them the chance to say anything to me. I do it all in my own time.

Q. What was it like when you went back?

Jane: The first week was like walking on eggshells. It was like a time-bomb! But we found after being in there about a month that it was the manage-

ment that was causing the problems: keeping everyone away from reps. and trying to play one rep. off against another - either workwise or by being given better or worse jobs - lots of different ways. But it hasn't made any difference, we are as united now inside as we have been outside - if not more.

Q. What is behind the rumour that you nearly came out again?

Jane: Two weeks ago the manager hadn't taken on ten extra workers, as had been agreed. The representatives asked for a meeting to discuss this, and after 1½ days had received no answer. We were eventually informed, after another request, that management did not want to meet the representatives. The union reps. met again and we informed the production manager that if we could not have a meeting that afternoon, we would switch our machines off, and ask our members to do the same. A message came back to say that management would meet us at 3.30 pm that afternoon. We have got to keep on top of them all of the time. For instance I have had 90 copies of the "peace procedure" made, and everyone got a copy.

On another occasion, our NUTGW area official rang the factory and asked to speak to me. He was told that "Mrs Kingsland is not taking phone calls." The first time I knew about this was this week.

Q. What have the full-time union officials been up to since the strike ended?

Jane: Well for instance the General Secretary, Alec Smith, came up to a meeting with the committee last Thursday (15th May) and we told him

our problems. He told us to go and see the man who does the wages, and ask him to sort it out. I suggested that perhaps he wouldn't sort them out and that I'd get the Wages Council in (which I have already done a month ago). Alec Smith told me not to, but he just doesn't want any hassle, so I told him I would anyway. It doesn't make any difference what they say to us, we'll still do what we want. It's our money and our jobs.

Another example of what the union is like is what happened last week. Three

weeks had gone by, when 30 people should have been brought into the factory; only 5 had. Management had broken the agreement. I got in touch with ACAS, and asked them to arrange a meeting. The Managing Director refused and told us we could not have ACAS involved again. At this point I phoned the union office at Sunderland and not one representative was there.

We need to organise through shop stewards. For instance I sent out all of the minutes of every meeting we had with ACAS to different NUTGW shop stewards across the country. Never mind listening to what your branch secretary tells you - you read it for yourself.

Q. When you look back at the behaviour of union officials what comments would you make?

Jane: Ron Bales was not voted into his job - he applied for it. He hasn't worked in the industry. In fact 90% of workers in this industry are women, but we've got men at area and divisional offices - the majority of whom have not been voted on.



RON BAILES

The people representing you should work in the industry. Otherwise how the hell do they know what the hell they are talking about? They do have Executive members who are rank and file. But they only meet about every 3-6 months!!

If we send some information it goes through the union hierarchy of Area Offices, Divisional Offices and then to London. How do we know, by the time it gets to the Executive, that the information is right?

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

They are sitting up there in their ivory towers making decisions that we know nothing about, because they're never there to see what's going on. All they're doing is getting phone calls and reports, and the ones they were getting were wrong anyway.

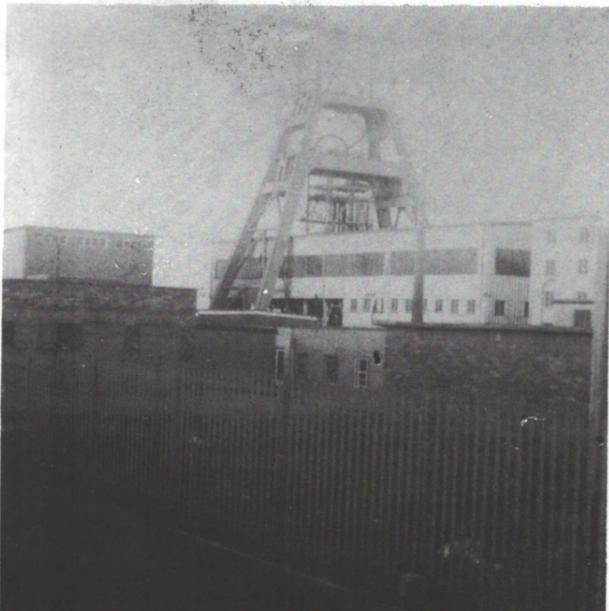
The union journal "The Garment Worker" is a good example. I've never read such a load of garbage in all my life! - and we are contributing to it.

This journal should be for people working on the shop floor. It should be about what is happening to the industry in different parts of the country - what problems people are having. If you can't communicate in other ways it should be done through that. People on the shop floor don't want a union journal that says "The General Secretary's off to Paris". It's hoying money down the drain. They didn't mention our strike for the whole of the 6½ months. When we asked them to they said that since they carried the story of a strike in Scotland 8 years ago, they have had a policy of not putting things like that in. We were told that if people started writing letters as to what problems they were having, it would end up like "Pravda"! It's got to be the members that change this union. If there had been more publicity we would have got more support from rank and file members. How can you have solidarity when the bloody officials don't mix with the rank and file. We've been considering getting in touch with NUTGW shop stewards throughout the country, and calling for a national conference from all other areas - without any full-time officials being present. We would discuss what is happening in our branch, how they get on with their own official, if they are being represented effectively, and what grievances we all have. Above all we'll discuss how we can support each other.

As for Alec McFadden, he should have been a full-time official of the NUTGW, because he's just like them. In fact, you could call him a behind-the-scenes worker for the NUTGW, - mixing with the rank and file but reporting to the officials!

LABOUR LOAN SHARKS

In issue No.4 of "The Syndicalist" we reported on Northumberland County Council demanding repayment of the loans made to striking miners during the year long dispute.



Northumberland N.U.M. met with the Labour group who stated that they want

UNION; 'NO COMMENT'

Tuesday May 6th, prior to the May 8th local elections, saw Newcastle National Front attempting to hold a public meeting at Canning Street School, Benwell, to further their aims of

UNION INACTION

The major question arises on the G&M attitude towards the fascists' meeting. In our opinion the janitor



Fascists at Greys Monument, Newcastle.

creating racial hatred. The local elections and the standing of their candidate, a well-known thug who has been convicted of assaults on members of ethnic minorities and inciting racial hatred, Colin Todd (full-time organiser) opened the way for the NF to use public property in their election campaign.

MEETING STOPPED

Alas the meeting was not to be for these vermin. Given only 12 hours notice of the meeting anti-fascists were able to mobilise a presence of over ONE HUNDRED to stop it taking place. Though the meeting was prevented several questions arise from the events of the evening. As the anti-fascist presence grew the janitor, on realising what was happening, contacted his union (the G&M) for advice. The union reply was "No comment" and the janitor was forced to open the gates of the school. The numbers present were sufficient to stop the fascists entering the building and to stop the police from breaking the ranks. Todd and Ian Anderson, guest speaker, were themselves arrested while trying to get in.

should have been informed by the union that he could keep the gates locked and go home for the evening. The whole question of union involvement in the anti-fascist movement is obviously crucial. The power to stop the fascists from holding meetings such as the one reported above is in the hands of the organised union movement. With a real anti-fascist policy from the unions, and not a piece of rhetoric that never gets implemented, there would be no reason why the fascists should be allowed to organise on Tyneside, let alone even exist.



Colin Todd, Newcastle NF full-timer, has his offices at 98 Buckingham St, Newcastle 4.

ed the money back and "that was that".

Ronnie Campbell (Bates N.U.M.) told us that he was not going to pay up and is urging his members to do the same. "They can come and assess me but I'm not paying it anyway," he told us, "as far as I'm concerned they can bugger off."

According to him it was just a case of the "labour group looking after themselves just like Thatcher looks after her lot..." "If they want the money back they'll have to take us to court - and that'll be the day that I tear up my Labour Party card."

We spoke to Deidre Campbell who told us that it stated on the forms that they originally signed that the could be written off, which the county promised they would do. (As North Tyneside did.)

The way the council got them to sign the forms was very suspect. About 30 women were crowded into a small room and were asked to sign a sheet without having the small print read out, and without being given a chance to read it.

It seems as though the Council did not mind getting some of the glory during the dispute, but once out of the public eye are taking the money back from people who are still suffering hardship.

REAL ACTION

Our power to stop ale supplies to pubs that refuse to stop allowing the fascists to meet, our power to keep rooms locked, and to single out and isolate fascists is a weapon that the unions hold. Street battles and physical confrontation are grounds chosen by the fascists - we should only use them when there is no alternative. It is up to us to make sure that our unions have anti-racial and anti-fascist policies. If the union already has the policies we must make sure that it is not just lip-service but an actual measure being taken against racists and fascists on Tyneside.

SILENTNIGHT CONTINUED

"Tears for Fears" or whatever. One of the strikers said that,

"The march would probably be small for somewhere like Leeds, but for Keighley it was massive."

STRIKING IMAGES

The same striker described the development of attitudes during the strike,

"At the beginning we abided by Maggie's laws, and held ballots and so on."

He remarked that some of the people involved (such as some union officials) were more concerned about the "image" of the union, and of the strike, whether or not a nice image would help in the dispute. The implication was

that some would prefer the strike to fold rather than risk sullyng the union's image. The striker continued,

"We saw through all that soon enough."

MAKE CO-OP CO-OPERATE

Rank and file building workers are now organising pickets at Co-op stores in London. Solidarity and support in the form of money, "adopting" a family as well as at pickets is gaining momentum. Strikers are speaking at meetings all over the country, urging action against the Co-op. If they and the other stores can be forced to withdraw Silentnight goods management may have to reinstate the strikers or close the factories. They may then learn that the erosion of pay and conditions and the breaking of agreements cannot be imposed by the threat of redundancy, or the sack anyway if workers protest. As usual the company pleads poverty to justify itself but massive dividends to shareholders and payrises to management give the lie to that pretence.

WHAT TO DO

Find out if your local Co-op stocks Silentnight stuff (see box for names of subsidiaries). If it does, ask the workers in the shop if they would be prepared to black it. If this gets no results, tell the manager in no uncertain terms what you think of the situation. Support pickets, and get donations to:

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

and messages of support to:

9 Frank Street, Barnoldswick.

SILENTNIGHT HOLDINGS PLC,

Wellhouse Road, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancashire BB8 6DR. Tel. 0282 815888.

A Ltd.
Bouyant Upholstery Ltd.
Contessa Upholstery Ltd.
Daco Productions Ltd.
Foster Binder Ltd.
R.Foster & Son Ltd.
J.A.Enser & Co. Ltd.
M.Hackney & Co. Ltd.
Heckmondwike Flock Co. Ltd.
Lay E Zee Ltd.
Fred Booth & Son Ltd.
Edmund Leon Ltd.
Lifsum Ltd.
Harry Parkinson Ltd.
Perfecta Bedding Ltd.
Rest master Ltd.
Sealy Sleep Products Ltd.
Sherbury Ltd.
Sleepy Lagoon Ltd.
Uganda Mattress Co. Ltd.
Welbeck House (Sandiacre Upholstery) Ltd.



RALLY IN SUPPORT OF SILENTNIGHT STRIKERS KEIGHLEY SATURDAY 17th MAY.

HULL: Filters Strike

12 T&G members have been sacked by Donaldson Filter components after striking to defend 2 colleagues who had been victimised 10 days before. Donaldsons is a multinational with a strong anti-union record. Based in the U.S. when the workforce at one of its French subsidiaries decided to unionise, Donaldson shut down the whole plant and moved operations to the Hull site in Britain where the management thought they would have a more pliant workforce.

INTERNATIONAL AID

The 12 strikers have already made contact with the union at Donaldson's French company (the CGT) calling for solidarity action. The Hull Trades' Council Disputes Committee have also written to the IWW in Chicago calling for aid.

Most of the workforce are on temporary contracts ranging from a few weeks to 3 years. Contracts have been terminated just before a public holiday, so that the company does not have to provide holiday pay for the day!

PAY AND CONDITIONS

Safety standards are poor in the factory, machine guards only being provided when the Health and Safety Executive visit. To raise morale among the workers the company suggested that the works football team should have a new strip. The catch was that this should be paid for out of the annual pay rise.

THE LAST STRAW

Not surprisingly the workers began to get fed up with these conditions. Donaldson responded by setting up a Works Consultative Committee. When this

asked the firm to do things it was promptly closed down.

Finally the few full-time workers took the lead in trying to organise the workers into the T&G. 70% agreed in principle so Donaldson sacked the 2 leaders. The other full-time workers then struck.

The strikers are putting pressure on the AUEW and EETPU who have members in the factory, who have said that they will come out if their unions give them the go-ahead. The strikers are determined to win reinstatement and union recognition.

GROWING SUPPORT

The militant Hull dockers are blacking Donaldson's products, meanwhile the plant is being picketed every day. On May 21st several hundred Hull trade unionists demonstrated in support of the strikers.

A HARD STRUGGLE

It will be a hard struggle. Donaldsons have already said that they were prepared to lose a lot of money fighting the dispute, they have already flown in 2 scab workers from the U.S. One of these then broke an important piece of machinery, which the company said had been sabotaged by strikers burgling the factory at night.

Support the strikers now. Send messages of support and donations

Mrs P.Proctor, 17 x 14th Avenue, North Hull Estate, Hull (Tel. 885289)

The Silentnight strikers are willing to speak at your meetings. For more information on speakers contact; Terry Bennet: Tel: 0282 603055 or Heather Smith: Tel: 0282 813662.

GATESHEAD M.B.C. SUPPORT THE PRINTERS?

Two weeks ago 5 of the 6000 sacked N.I. printworkers came to the North-East, sponsored by NUPE and TASS. The delegation consisted of 2 NGA members, 2 SOGAT members and 1 AUEW member.

When the delegation visited the Gateshead Council Incinerator, management there refused to allow the workers to meet delegates on the premises. This resulted in a 24-hour strike by the back shifts.

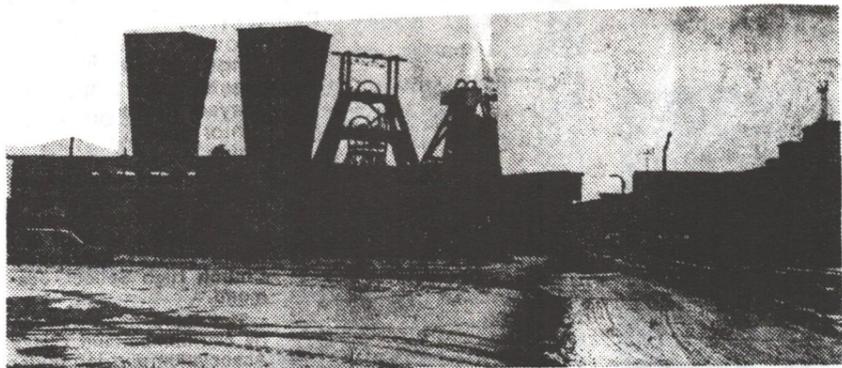
The labour-controlled council has shown that its capacity to provoke strikes by hindering workers' solidarity is the same as any Tory-controlled local authority.

Picketing is still continuing at TNT distribution at Houghton-le-Spring and at various W.H.Smith depots in the area. Although SOGAT officials have purged their contempt they still turn up as pickets (although not in an official capacity) in support of the NGA. "The fight continues."

BATES: THE END

A MINER'S VIEW

On Wednesday, 16th of May, the last shift clocked off at Bates colliery in Blyth. The colliery closed officially on June 2nd. This marks not only the end of the pit itself, but of



Bates Colliery



Ronnie Campbell

the long struggle, during the year long strike, and afterwards, to keep Bates open.

Among the most prominent militants in this struggle has been Ronnie Campbell of Bates N.U.M. We talked to Ronnie, who is leaving the industry about the closure and the last two or more years of bitter struggle.

"I'm leaving because even Westoe must be in jeopardy, Ellington, Dawdon and Wearmouth are the only pits in the area that the N.C.B. want to see kept open" Men from Whittle and Ashington, when they visited the pit couldn't see why it was being closed.

Looking back on the strike Ronnie talked about the increasing use of the law by the bosses in industrial disputes. No sacked men in the North east have been given their jobs back. - "The Coal Board won't take any notice of the tribunals. The attitude of management nowadays is to ignore the law while the unions are scared of it. The bosses are building a workforce on fear."

Talking about the courts, Ronnie pointed out that Labour Party magistrates "true to form handed out the heaviest fines- one lad slapped someone and got fined by a magistrate called Barker. Another lad pinched three sheets of hardboard worth £36 went to court and was fined £340 by the same magistrate and lost his job."

During the strike "we had the whole state against us, the courts against us, everything against us."

In view of the power given to the police and the courts, and with the eventual failure of the strike now apparent with the closures, Ronnie

was very critical of the tactics used at the time; "Obviously picketing is essential, but I don't think that the mass picketing worked - it just got lads sacked". He told us, "all we were

doing was paying solicitors fees- money that could have been better spent."

Other tactics, he said, should have been used; "In hindsight, if we'd have thought beforehand, we should have occupied the pits and kicked the bosses out" he pointed out that this would have to have been a coordinated action on a national scale - "If us at Bates had done it alone we would have all just been sacked." This happened in the Kent coalfield in the summer of 1984.

Another thing that would ensure a victory is solidarity. Of course this solidarity was never forthcoming "We didn't have any muscle because we were on our own physically"... "There should have been an alignment of Trade Unions who supported us. If we'd have got a general strike, not just for a day but for a week - followed by another, then the government would have taken notice but the T.U.C. failed us."

In the long term it was in other workers best interest to physically support the miners. Ronnie talked about the print dispute, which they had just collected £1000 for "If they had given us physical support then this wouldn't be happening to them" In his view it is important for other workers to learn the lessons of the miners; "At Wapping" he said "they're repeating the same mistakes."

One of the most constructive things that did happen in the strike was the formation of miners wives and community support groups. Ronnie felt that these were invaluable, "If it hadn't been for them we would have gone back earlier." Talking about the need for permanent support groups he said, "The Womens support group in Blyth disintegrated after the strike which was a shame, especially with Bates having the most sacked lads in Northumberland."

Like many others in his position, Ronnie has no immediate plans for his own future - "Go on the dole, look around for work, take it easy on my thirty pieces of silver...there's a good chance I'll be blacklisted...it's difficult when you've been wound up fighting for so long."

We owe a debt to all those, like Ronnie Campbell who fought for a year to save Britain's coalfield, and save jobs. We owe it to those men sacked or imprisoned, or having to take redundancy, to learn the lessons of the miners and begin to turn the current trend of workers defeats into victory.

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.

N.U.T. Triumph?

On 9th May the NUT Executive made an agreement with employers that secured an "on account" payment to all teachers from 1st April 1986. This was hailed by the Executive as "a triumph for the NUT and a complete vindication of (the) pay strategy" Financially the deal is a good one - mostly benefitting the lower-paid teachers. Yet in the staff-rooms there is still confusion over conditions, and a lot of worry and anger at having not been balloted (during the strike action period members were balloted nearly every fortnight). Also, the area of "no cover" for absent colleagues is confusing, the NUT having issued some conflicting statements. There is a lot of pressure within schools to start covering for absent colleagues and out of school activities.

Perhaps the most worrying development are employers' attempts to get teachers to work at lunchtimes. For instance in North Tyneside, the day that teachers heard about the agreement, notices went up to offer teachers payment for lunchtime supervision. This is interesting as it introduces the threat of job losses of certain staff. The NUT has always opposed this.

