

Wapping Special

THE NEW CLASS WAR MEETS OLD-FASHIONED TRADE UNIONISM



DAVE ROURKE

THE BATTLE OF WAPPING

Following almost 12 months after the defeat of the miners' strike, the dispute in the print shows the confidence of the employers, and exposes the irrelevance of traditional trade union methods

If the miners had a reputation for militancy, the Fleet Street print workers have long been renowned for their powerful trade union organisation. The unprecedented onslaught launched by Rupert Murdoch's News International has shaken the confidence of many print workers in their unions and shattered the complacency of their union leaders.

MURDOCH PUTS THE BOOT IN

In the course of the miners' strike, American coal board boss Ian MacGregor became notorious for bringing a directly confrontational approach into British industrial relations. By comparison with the abrasive Australian Murdoch, MacGregor's style appears like that of a benign English gentleman.

In the print dispute, events which took place over 12 months in the miners' strike seem to have been telescoped into a few weeks. Murdoch's transfer last month of *The Times* and the *Sun*, the *Sunday Times* and the *News of the World* from Fleet Street to his new hi-tech plant at Wapping revealed a carefully prepared plan to smash the print unions in News International. The Murdoch scheme has been:

● Calculated

Working through a specially devised network of companies, Murdoch set up the Wapping operation with facilities to print all his titles. He recruited scab labour through the electricians' union and organised an entire distribution network separate from the established rail/warehouse system. A trial run in early January showed that after months of planning, Murdoch was ready to

take on the established print unions.

● Ruthless

Unlike MacGregor, who at least made a pretence of negotiating, Murdoch simply issued an ultimatum to the existing Fleet Street staff — move to Wapping or face dismissal. Leaked internal correspondence has confirmed that he deliberately provoked the workforce into going on strike so that he could get rid of them at the cheapest cost. When the print workers came out on strike in January, they were all summarily sacked — losing rights to redundancy payments. In a move without precedent in the history of British industrial relations, more than 5000 people lost their jobs, and — virtually overnight — the entire News International London operation was transferred to Wapping and a specially hired scab workforce.

● Coordinated

In the opening weeks of the miners' strike government ministers were conspicuously reticent about openly backing the employers, and it was several months before the courts moved against the union's funds. In the print dispute, by contrast, Margaret Thatcher publicly backed Murdoch and denounced the unions in comments in parliament at an early stage in the conflict. And, within a couple of weeks of the action beginning, the entire assets of Sogat have been confiscated, and the NGA has suffered heavy fines. The widely publicised fortifications of Murdoch's Wapping plant have been enthusiastically supplemented by a heavy police presence, which has ensured that picketing does not disrupt the scab operation.

Within a couple of weeks of Murdoch's coup, the employers and their supporters are already gloating over a victory. Murdoch's yellow press leads the way, but other

newspaper barons have not been slow to congratulate Murdoch and push forward their own plans for reorganising production and cutting jobs.

From the *Mirror* to the *Guardian* detailed plans are afoot to sacrifice the much vaunted freedom of the press to the quest for profitability.

When new employment minister Kenneth Clarke expressed some reservations about Murdoch's poor 'public relations', Thatcher soon put him in his place. While he feared that public distaste for Murdoch's methods might further damage the Tories' electoral fortunes, Downing Street made clear that smashing the unions came first. For the Alliance, David Owen agreed: he recommended extending the Murdoch approach to crush the unions in television.

The employers' coercive tactics at Wapping are an ominous sign of their growing conviction that they can sweep aside the old methods of compromise and conciliation and hit the working class head-on.

BRENDA VACILLATES

If Murdoch has carried on where MacGregor left off, the print union leaders Brenda Dean of Sogat and Tony Dubbins of the NGA have made all the same mistakes as Arthur Scargill and the other leaders of the NUM. Their whole conduct of the dispute has been guided by their faith in making deals with the employers and their commitment to the bureaucratic traditions of the print unions. Whereas the miners' officials were always a few steps behind the coal board bosses, the print union leaders have been staggering far behind Murdoch right from the start.

Murdoch has taken the initiative, and the print union leaders have responded. Their strategy has been:

● Disorganised

Throughout last year the print unions were simply passive observers of Murdoch's plans. They were too busy scrambling to make sweetheart deals with other newspaper proprietors and squabbling with one another over members and spheres of recruitment to make plans for the coming showdown with Murdoch. In a series of damaging disputes at provincial newspapers, the major print unions and the journalists' union were at one another's throats.

The print unions seem to have made no attempt to coordinate resistance to the employers' plans. The TUC printing industries committee did not meet for months. It was finally convened only in a futile attempt to beg Murdoch to accept what amounted to a no-strike deal at Wapping — a sign of weakness that encouraged him to press his advantage home. The unions seem to have taken no steps to put their funds out of reach of the courts and in the hands of striking workers.

● Indecisive

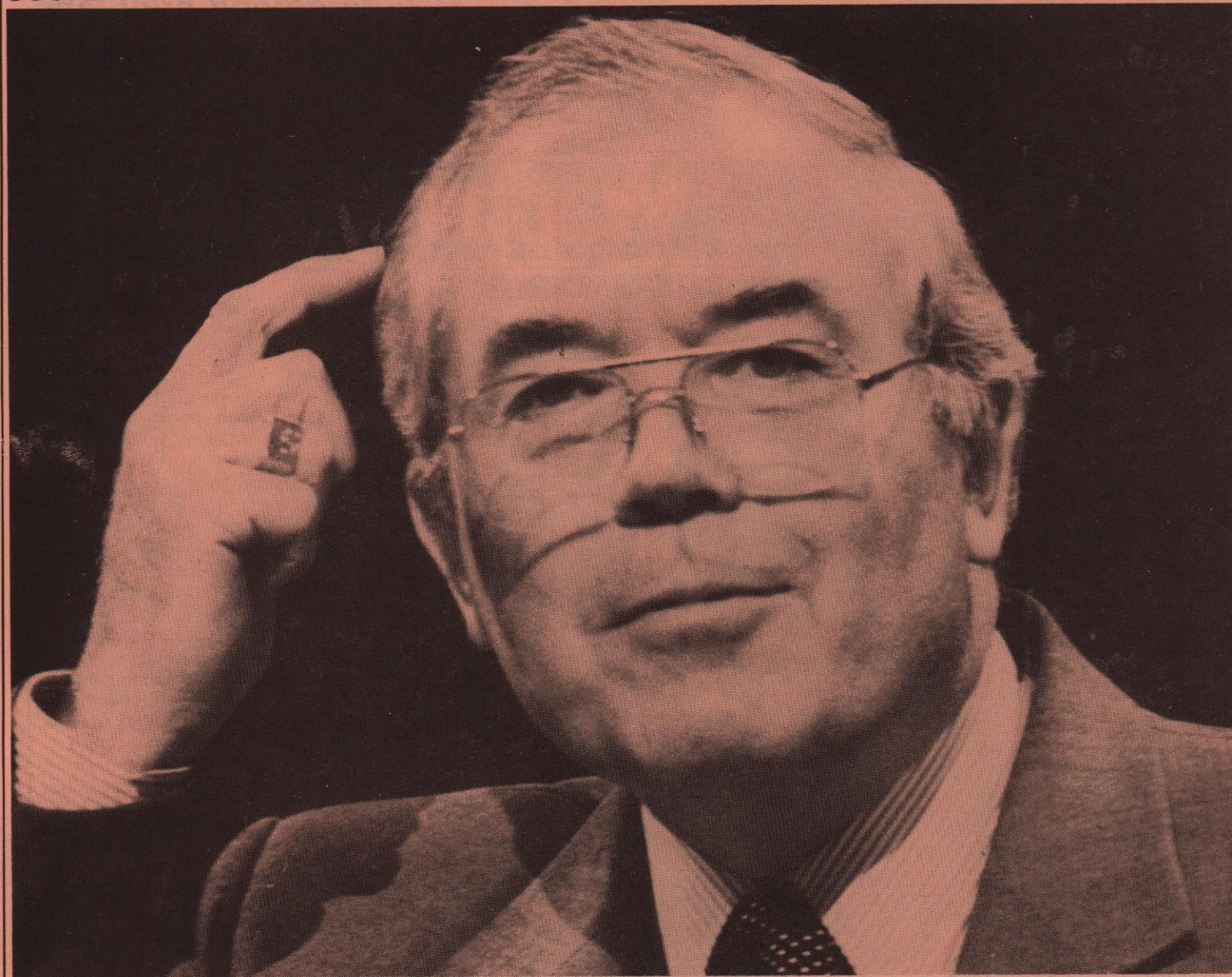
'We want to negotiate,' was Dean's 'message for Mr Murdoch' in the January issue of the Sogat journal. This was at a time when Murdoch was putting the finishing touches to his massive scab operation. As the strike began, the vacillation continued. The union leadership authorised official pickets, but insisted that they should follow TUC guidelines which ensure that the picket lines have no effect. The union leaders called for blacking of other News International publications, but called off the blacking after a court injunction. The union leaders have alternately declared their respect and their defiance for the courts and ended up paying out vast amounts of workers' money for merely token gestures.

● Ineffectual

The emphasis of the print unions' campaign is on winning public sympathy rather than organising working class solidarity. Their main campaign poster is a sentimental picture of a little girl with the caption 'My daddy helped Mr Murdoch make millions. Now he wants to put him on the dole.' They have discouraged mass picketing or sympathetic industrial action that involves breaking the law. But even if this approach could succeed in overcoming popular prejudices against Fleet Street print workers and journalists, it would cut no ice with Murdoch. The only way to get jobs back in News International is through industrial action that hits Murdoch where it hurts. But the print union leaders are too steeped in the methods of negotiation and compromise to lead a real fight for jobs against the sort of methods being deployed by Murdoch.

In practice, the print union leaders have made no attempt to win the dispute with Murdoch. Their objective is to rescue some face for the unions out of what they regard as an unavoidable defeat. Hence from the beginning they have restricted industrial action to token gestures at Wapping, and concentrated their energies on pursuing the electricians' union as a scapegoat for their own failures.

Murdoch has called the bluff of the Fleet Street print unions. He has cruelly exposed that their strong organisation is built on sand, on traditions of collaboration between employers and unions that are obsolete in modern Britain. The traditions of Fleet Street trade unionism are no match for the class war methods of the newspaper proprietors of the eighties. The Murdoch offensive can only be combated by an equally aggressive and wide-ranging anti-capitalist response.



WHERE ERIC HAMMOND OF THE ELECTRICIANS' UNION LEADS, OTHER BUREAUCRATS FOLLOW

STEFANO CAGNONI (REPORT)

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE SCAB IN THE TUC

Many militants, not least militants in the electricians' union, have been outraged at the role played by the EETPU leadership in recruiting scab labour for Murdoch's Wapping operation. Many have echoed calls from the leaders of the print workers and other unions for the EETPU to be expelled from the TUC. So why has the Revolutionary Communist Party opposed demands for the expulsion of the EETPU?

We have no sympathy for the policies of the EETPU leadership under Eric Hammond. In recent years EETPU leaders have openly collaborated with employers, signing no-strike and single union deals, which also generally involve the acceptance of substantial redundancies and flexible working methods. The EETPU leadership has campaigned in favour of capitulating to the Tory anti-trade union legislation, and has pioneered the use of postal ballots to bolster its autocratic internal regime. The role of EETPU officials in recruiting a scab army at Wapping reveals that they are well on the way to creating a fully-fledged company union.

Yet, even though we recognise that the EETPU is a scab union, we do not support calls for its expulsion from the TUC. There are two reasons for this.

First, scapegoating the EETPU lets the other unions off the hook. The methods of the EETPU are by no means unique to the electricians. Many other unions have signed deals which rule out strikes and exclude other unions from recognition.

Eric Hammond can readily supply a list of his partners in crime whenever he is accused of offences by other union leaders. For example, Sogat leads the attack on the EETPU over Wapping, but Sogat signed a single union deal at a paper plant in

Cheshire. The deal excluded four other unions, including the TGWU which complained to the TUC. The NGA is also critical of the EETPU in News International, but it too has signed sweetheart deals at the expense of other unions in Portsmouth, Sunderland and Birmingham. The scabs at Wapping are widely believed to include members of both Sogat and the NGA as well as EETPU members.

The TUC has backed down from its threat to suspend the electricians' union for scabbing at Wapping. Now we must tackle scab unionism right across the labour movement

The print union leaders, not the 180 EETPU scabs, bear the central responsibility for events at Wapping. The behaviour of the scabs is reprehensible and they must be dealt with. But the policies of the print union leaders have created a situation in which the print workers at News International are isolated and their actions ineffectual. If all the Fleet Street print workers had been mobilised around a fighting strategy that could win wider support, then the Wapping scabs would have had little effect on the dispute.

Second, demands for the expulsion of the

EETPU make no distinction between the leadership of the union and the rank and file. In fact the implication behind the expulsion calls is that TUC leaders like Norman Willis or Ron Todd of the TGWU are more progressive than ordinary EETPU members.

Instead of appealing to rank and file EETPU militants to organise against scab unionism and its supporters in their union leadership, the call for expulsion looks to the leaders of other unions and the TUC to tackle the problem.

If the TUC was a federation of anti-capitalist unions, committed to fighting the employers and the state, or even if it was actively engaged in defending workers' jobs and rights, we would support the expulsion of any union engaged in scabbing. But the TUC that exists today is neither anti-capitalist nor pro-worker. It is thoroughly permeated with class collaboration: all the major union leaders have shown that they are willing to sign away jobs, working conditions, living standards and rights, so long as token union recognition is retained.

The TUC has itself endorsed no-strike deals. It pioneered the concept — then called 'the exercise of voluntary self-restraint' — way back in May 1983. In 1984 the TUC offered a no-strike deal as an alternative to the government's ban on union membership at the GCHQ spy centre. While the TUC was happy to settle for token union membership, the Tories thought they might as well have the real thing — a non-union firm. The TUC again offered a similar deal to Murdoch at Wapping — and got a similar response. Some left-wing union leaders in the TUC are strident critics of single union deals. One left winger who keeps quiet about them is Jimmy Knapp of the NUR, whose union signed such a deal with British Transport Hotels after it was privatised.

The TUC's sole concern in the Wapping dispute is to keep itself together at all costs. The big union leaders want to keep the TUC intact because it enforces the 1939 Bridlington agreement, which prevents one union poaching members from another. If the Bridlington agreement goes and there is a free-for-all scramble for membership, it could destabilise the whole structure of British trade unionism. Hence the TUC made some feeble criticisms of the EETPU and asked Hammond to inform his members at Wapping that they were scabbing (as if they didn't know already).

It was significant that in the same week the TUC backed away from kicking out the EETPU, it also effectively abandoned its ban on unions accepting government funds for ballots. This was the very issue on which the EETPU and the engineers were threatened with suspension last September. The other union leaders are angry at the EETPU for taking their own policies a step further. But when it comes to threats of disciplinary action, they have such difficulty differentiating their own behaviour from that of the EETPU that it is hard to make any charges stick. Before the latest threat of expulsion, Hammond declared that, 'It would be a pity if the TUC suspended the EETPU at a time when it has been moving steadily towards policies recommended by the EETPU.'

The EETPU is not a bizarre deviation from the traditions of the modern labour movement. It represents the logical extension of policies which are widely accepted throughout British unions.

For years, unions have sought to protect their members' interests by cooperating closely with employers to ensure higher productivity and profitability. They have concentrated on looking after the interests of workers organised in their own union, even at the expense of other workers — especially if they happened to be women or black. These traditions of collaboration and sectionalism are if anything even more deeply entrenched in the print unions than in the EETPU.

FIGHT THEM ALL

Throughout most of the post-war period narrow trade union methods could guarantee strong organisation and limited improvements in living standards. In conditions of recession the pursuit of these policies inevitably undermines organisation and resistance. Collaboration means accepting sacrifices in jobs and conditions in the drive to restore profitability. Sectionalism leads to deeper divisions among different groups of workers as everybody is forced to fight for their own survival. The methods of the past can only lead to fragmentation, passivity and demoralisation — and ultimately to scabbing.

For the RCP it is impossible to fight the influence of scab unionism by upholding the conventions and institutions of the official labour movement. The 'left-wing' union leaders and the leaders of the TUC are as big a problem as the leaders of the EETPU. We need to fight the policies of the leaders of all the unions and reclaim them for the rank and file before they become consolidated scab unions. The fight against scab unionism cannot be restricted to a squabble among the leaders of the TUC. It is a matter for rank and file workers in every union — especially in the EETPU.

Fighting scab unionism means tackling scab methods in every union, not backing the cynical manoeuvres of left bureaucrats to distract attention from their own sordid practices by pointing the finger at the EETPU.

Given the immediate danger caused by EETPU scabbing, fighting the abject collaboration of the electricians' union must be a top priority. Militants in the EETPU must have the backing of every union activist in the struggle against the traitors in their ranks. Once we have made a start in the EETPU we should not stop until we have purged the labour movement, and reorganised the unions to fight for the rank and file instead of protecting the narrow interests of the bureaucrats. Through reasserting control of our own organisations, we will be in a much stronger position to take on Murdoch and his ilk and stand a chance of winning.

Helen Swift



SOGAT'S BRENDA DEAN (SECOND FROM RIGHT) CAN AFFORD TO SMILE WITH THE LEFT MARCHING TAMELY BEHIND HER

DON'T TAIL THE BUREAUCRATS!

For many years the British left distinguished itself by its 'rank and file' orientation to the trade unions. The print dispute reveals how far the left has now abandoned the rank and file in favour of following the line of the trade union leadership

For the left, the print dispute is the miners' strike revisited. Apparently forgetting that the strategy of the union leaders in that dispute led to defeat, it endorses similar methods in the Wapping struggle. At times this has reached almost absurd proportions as the print union officials have tried to copy some of the miners' tactics. Last weekend's 'women's only' demonstration at Wapping was a feeble attempt to invent a 'print community' in the same sense that there are mining communities, and to appeal to virtually non-existent public sympathy for the Fleet Street print unions — unions with about the worst record in the entire labour movement for their chauvinist discrimination against women.

The Wapping women's demo was a bureaucratically stage-managed affair, with none of the features of independent activity and initiative which were such a positive feature of the women's groups in the miners' strike. Yet all the left celebrated this as a

'magnificent' demonstration, with only the minor quibble that it was a pity that the union officials had cooperated with the police to ensure that the demonstration did not disrupt Murdoch's scabbing operation.

The left has backed the wider strategy of the leaders of the print unions just as it tailed behind Arthur Scargill in the miners' strike. Then the NUM leaders refused to put the conduct of the strike in the hands of the rank and file by holding a national ballot. When their bureaucratic methods deepened divisions in the miners' ranks and rendered the whole strike ineffective, the NUM leaders turned to blame the Notts miners for all their failures. The left backed the bureaucrats' refusal to consult the rank and file and subsequently called for the expulsion of the Notts miners from the NUM. In the print dispute, the left echoes the bureaucrats' attacks on the EETPU and calls for it to be kicked out of the TUC.

'At a time of industrial war', commented *Militant* last week, 'there is no place in the

ranks of organised labour for a body which not only does nothing to defend trade unionism, but actively mans the barricades for the enemy.' By this criterion the TUC itself should be expelled from the ranks of organised labour. The TUC leadership 'manned the barricades for the enemy' during the miners' strike. By endorsing no-strike deals and capitulating to Tory anti-trade union legislation, the TUC is effectively siding with the bosses in the print dispute. If every individual union which 'does nothing to defend trade unionism' was expelled from the TUC, the annual congress could be held in a Wapping wine bar.

Yet all the left joins the anti-EETPU chorus. When the TUC backed away from expulsion, it was denounced in *Socialist Worker* on the grounds that this 'would have shown that open collusion between unions and bosses will not be tolerated'. But how would kicking out the electricians affect the 'open collusion between unions and bosses' in every other union? Focusing on the electricians is a cynical ploy to distract attention from the collaboration of the other unions — a ploy in which the left is fully complicit.

TRUST THE WORKERS

What about the rank and file electricians? *Socialist Worker* echoed the bureaucratic justification that expulsion 'offered militants the best opportunity to organise opposition to the 25-year grip of the right-wing leadership'. Tell that to the militants who have remained loyal to the NUM in Nottinghamshire! The breakaway of the Notts miners has left the militants isolated and, deprived of any effective support from the union leadership, many have become pessimistic about the prospects of defeating scab unionism in the Notts coalfield (see next page).

In both the pits and the print, rank and file militants need the support of activists in other unions, not bureaucratic measures that can only intensify their isolation.

In the print dispute the left supports the manoeuvres of the union bureaucrats to secure their own position, whatever the cost to the rank and file. In putting its faith in the bureaucracy the left reveals its lack of confidence in the rank and file and in its own capacity to fight scab unionism. The radicals who once made a fetish out of 'self-activity' and workplace militancy now offer the administrative measures of senior bureaucrats as the answer to the threat of scab unionism to the working class.

TURN THE TABLES ON MURDOCH!

The first priority is to organise the print workers. The print industry displays the irrationality of the institutions of the official labour movement: workers are organised against one another as much as against the employer. The monolithic Murdoch faces half a dozen or more unions which spend as much time fighting among themselves as they do fighting him.

• A workers' strike committee

The first step must be to organise all the News International strikers into one strike committee, which operates independently of the union machines. This should involve all grades of printers, journalists, clerical staff, drivers, etc — in all the unions in Fleet Street. This unity of the workers in the front line of the struggle is essential to avert the divisive tactics of the employers and to provide the foundation for winning wider solidarity. If the print workers could come together across sectional divides and abandon the petty traditions of Fleet Street, they could set an example of solidarity which the rest of the labour movement would follow. It would also be a first step towards a single union for workers in the print — an essential development to cope with the battles ahead.

• A national print strike

It is vital to close down the rest of Fleet Street. The other newspaper proprietors have already made clear their plans to follow Murdoch's example. If the print workers are not going to be picked off, newspaper by newspaper, the time to fight is now. Murdoch has drawn the battle lines for all the press barons at Wapping. If all print workers act together they can turn the tables on Murdoch, Maxwell and all the other barons.

• Shut down Wapping

The current pickets at Wapping are entirely

With Murdoch going all out for victory, the only way to defend print jobs is to mobilise the widest working class resistance to his union-busting tactics

inadequate and, given the fortifications and the saturation policing at the plant, token mass pickets are unlikely to make much difference. We need to work for a wider blockade of the plant through cutting off vital services supplied by postal and communication workers, and by workers in gas, water and electricity supply. Murdoch's distribution chain remains the most vulnerable part of his operation — it is essential to increase pressure on the transport workers to disrupt his scab operation. Workers in the dole offices can make an important contribution by rejecting official instructions and making sure that the families of striking print workers get full benefits.

• Boycott the yellow press

The *Sun* is Murdoch's flagship so it makes a useful focus for mobilising a boycott of all News International titles. High profile picketing of newsagents is a good way of publicising the cause of the print workers and keeping the pressure on the bosses and all their collaborators.

If the print workers throw off the legacy of collaboration and sectionalism, they can unite their own ranks and rally wider working class solidarity. Nothing less will suffice to preserve jobs in the print industry.



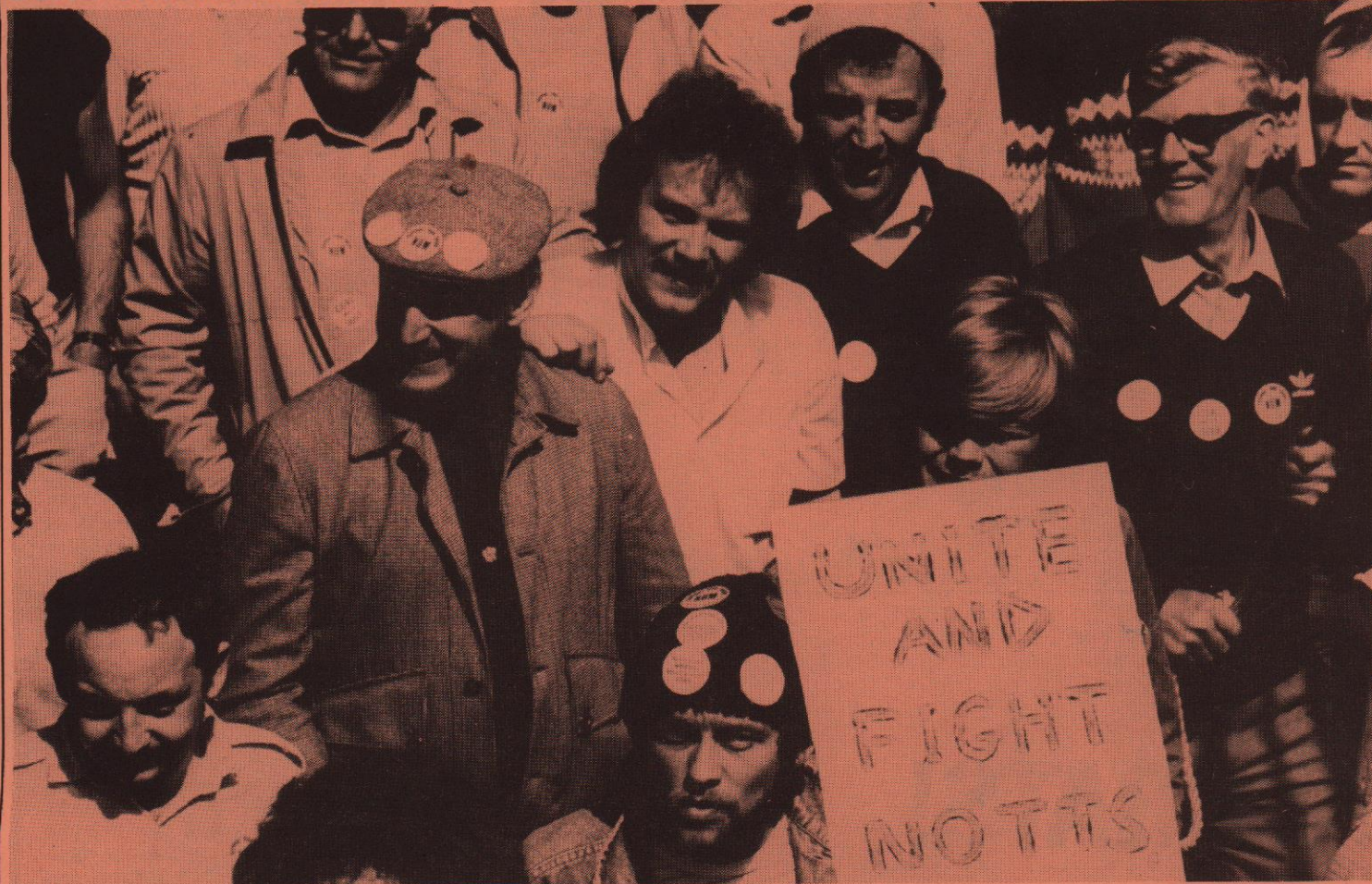
Taking Control, Mike Freeman's handbook for trade unionists, answers every question thrown up by the battle of Wapping: how to deal with scabs, new technology, union bureaucrats and much more.

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SCAB UNIONISM HITS THE PITS



CHRIS BLACK

EVEN THE NUM IS AT IT

'W'e've got them on the run,' NUM general secretary Peter Heathfield told the upturned faces just about visible through the haze of cigarette smoke at the pit club at Fitzwilliam in Yorkshire. The NUM leaders are now celebrating the demise of their breakaway rival, the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers. The headline in February's special Notts edition of the *Miner* proclaims 'UDM crumbling on all fronts'. The latest *Yorkshire Miner* claims 'Tide turning against UDM'.



JACK TAYLOR IS NO ALTERNATIVE

While the TUC accommodates to the scab unionism of the EETPU, the leadership of the NUM adapts to the breakaway scab union in the coalfields, reports Joan Phillips

The NUM's celebrations reveal more about the state of the official miners' union than they indicate any real setbacks to the scab union. The UDM might have failed to grow outside the Notts area. But the response of the miners' leaders to the rise of the UDM has been to moderate their image and their policies.

Rather than mount an effective campaign to defend miners' jobs, wages and conditions, the NUM leaders have followed their UDM counterparts in adopting a style of trade unionism which is prepared to make concessions to the bosses.

The Leicestershire vote to remain with the

NUM is a sign of the times. A year ago area general secretary Jack Jones was a big fan of Roy Lynk and his cronies in Nottinghamshire. Last month he campaigned for the NUM because, as he told his members, the miners' leaders had come to terms with the right's new realism.

• Closures

The NUM leaders have scorned the Notts miners for betraying the fight for jobs. But the Notts miners are a convenient scapegoat for union leaders who have done nothing to organise a national fightback against pit closures. The miners who stood listening to Heathfield at Fitzwilliam had come to hear how the NUM would fight the closure of Kinsley Drift, their pit. Nearly 2000 had just marched from Hemsworth to oppose the closure. But many were already prepared for the worst: as a postwoman rode through the village on a bike with a basket full of giro, miners shouted out 'Where's mine?' And the NUM speakers — Peter Heathfield and Sammy Thompson — said nothing to reassure them. The fatalistic attitude of many miners is the inevitable result of nearly 12 months of surrender to pit closures by the NUM leadership.

• Pay

The NUM's response to the coal board's pay and productivity offer shows the pressure on the union from the UDM. The miners' leaders were prepared to accept the board's demand for written productivity pledges as a precondition for pay negotiations. The deal was a capitulation to the TUC view that the NUM should pursue policies which 'lessen the attraction of the UDM to potential members'. Despite left-wing denials that the deal had anything to do with the UDM's pay rise and rising membership, NUM moderates admitted they were under pressure to deliver a pay deal to their members. The acceptance of the coal board's terms will mean area-by-area productivity bargaining which can only deepen divisions in the miners' ranks. For the NUM leaders sacrificing miners' living standards is the price of their own survival.

• Productivity

The NUM's eagerness to please the coal board has led to a productivity boom. Union officials have been complicit in a competition to break productivity targets. In Kent the board has agreed to suspend the closure of Betteshanger and Tilmanstone pits after full cooperation from the union in

raising productivity. In Yorkshire officials at Silverwood made a verbal agreement with management to break the productivity record in return for reinstatement for sacked men: the men broke the record, but the board broke its promise. Ordinary miners are paying a high price for their leaders' willingness to help balance the bosses' books. There has been a 24 per cent increase in the accident rate in North Yorkshire and four people have died since October.

• Policing

Fearful of being pushed out of their established place in the coal board's industrial relations set-up, the miners' leaders have taken great pains to pacify the employers. Yorkshire president Jack Taylor recently told miners at the NUM's own Northern College that the union was getting on fine with the coal board in the North Yorkshire area and that was the way he wanted to keep it. Bill Doughty, the recently elected branch secretary at Kellingley colliery, declared that his overriding aim was to 'maintain the good relations that exist with management'. In practice this means full cooperation in raising productivity and suppressing rank and file protest. When word got round that Tory energy minister Peter Walker planned to visit the pit, union officials were more concerned than management to stamp on any protests.

• Benefits

The NUM leaders have set out to prove that they have more to offer than the scab unions. Arthur Scargill's response to the EETPU's announcement of its package of membership perks was to proclaim the superiority of the NUM's terms. At a meeting at Thurcroft in Yorkshire, immediately after the Hammond revelations, Scargill spent half his speech listing his union's unbeatable benefits package. The latest Notts edition of the *Miner* carries a major article on an 'unbeatable housing deal' — including reduced mortgage rates, low price conveyancing and special insurance deals — negotiated by the NUM. Rather than show how the NUM can fight more effectively to defend jobs, the NUM leaders now try to show that they can compete with the perks offered by the EETPU and the UDM.

• Reinstatement

The NUM's concern to maintain good relations with the bosses has led it to abandon the fight for reinstatement for sacked miners. The most that sacked miners

have come to expect from their union is help with an industrial tribunal claim and a small cash hand-out. In Scotland, the NUM is refusing to give legal aid to sacked miners who failed to apply for help immediately. Sacked miners in Nottinghamshire are in an even worse predicament because they cannot even rely on their own workmates for financial assistance. One sacked miner complains that when he asked Notts NUM leader Henry Richardson what the national union was going to do, he was told to forget it. Other officials have been less candid, stringing sacked miners along on empty promises.

The miners' leaders and their left-wing colleagues in the TUC are harsh critics of both the UDM and the EETPU. But in practice they have accommodated to the new-style unionism which the scab unions are promoting. It is notable that when the NUM slated the UDM for meeting the electricians recently, its main objection was not to the EETPU's cosy deals with the employers, but to its 'pro-nuclear policies'. The NUM leaders tried to put the UDM at a disadvantage by presenting themselves as the best defenders of the British coal industry.

TRUCE DECLARED

The TUC's main object is not to destroy the influence of the miners' scab union, but to accommodate it within the existing labour movement structures.

As the TUC leaders make clear in their submission to the parliamentary select committee on energy, 'The wounds must be healed,' and the coal board must 'assist the re-creation of a strong integrated NUM restored to its rightful place in the industry's decision-making bodies'. The trade union leaders have eagerly offered their services to the NUM and the Labour Party to act as a go-between in talks with the scab union.

The NUM leaders are not averse to coming to terms with the scab union. At a meeting in Barnsley in December NUM industrial relations officer Mick Clapham raised the possibility of a new federation of mining unions, which would include the UDM as well as supervisory and management unions. The NUM leaders might boast about having beaten the UDM, but in reality they have declared a truce. The miners' leaders have more or less ceded Nottinghamshire to the UDM. While isolated local activists at Bevercotes and Bolsover and other pits have recruited miners back to the NUM, the national leadership has given up on the Notts area. NUM loyalists complain of being abandoned and treated like 'poor relations' by the NUM leaders, who have done nothing to organise a proper campaign in the area.

WHO NEEDS ROY LYNK?

The experience of the miners over the past year shows that even the most left-wing union is not immune to the influence of scab unionism. In practice there is little to distinguish the NUM and the UDM in their approach to basic industrial issues. They are united in their commitment to the British coal industry. They are divided only over how best to achieve their common objective of a viable, efficient, profitable enterprise. The UDM has opted for open collaboration on any terms with the bosses. The NUM may still consider using industrial action to put pressure on the employers over the terms on which collaboration takes place. But more and more the difference is only one of degree.

Rank and file miners cannot stop the spread of scab unionism unless they challenge the collaboration of both the right and the left with a new programme of fighting policies.

The miners' next step campaign has been concentrating on fighting scab unionism in Yorkshire. This means not only blocking the extension of the UDM to Yorkshire, but fighting the UDM mentality of collaboration which is already strongly established in the area. Hence the campaign is directed even more against the betrayals of the Yorkshire leadership than it is against the UDM, which has so far failed to make much headway in Yorkshire. With the policies of Jack Taylor ruling from Barnsley, who needs Roy Lynk? Miners in Yorkshire or other areas who want to get involved with the work of the miners' next step group can contact us on 01-729 0414.