

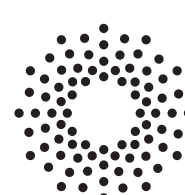
# The Workers United



This exhibition commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Trades Union Congress through exploring the extraordinary holdings of the TUC Library Collections – a centre for the study of trade unions and working life from the 19th century to the current day and now part of the Special Collections at London Metropolitan University. The exhibition uses the Library's printed, manuscript and visual resources to explore the work and policies of the TUC since its foundation in 1868.



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# 1868 – THE WORLD INTO WHICH THE TUC WAS BORN

In the 100 years before 1868, Britain was transformed from a mainly rural society into one based on industrial production and whose population had moved to fast expanding towns.

This social and economic disruption, worsened by the long war with France (1793-1815) and huge rises in food prices, gave an impetus to workplace and trade organisation, and a demand for reform in Parliamentary representation.

By the late 1840s, the railway network had stimulated the growth of the staple industries - coal, iron, cotton and engineering and Britain dominated world trade. Skilled workers set up new stable unions, like the Amalgamated Society of Engineers 1851 which collected membership dues, employed full time officials and offered 'friendly society' benefits.

The London Trades Council, formed in 1860, brought together many of the London based leaders of trade unions, but it was the Manchester and Salford Trades Council that convened the first Trades Union Congress, which met June 2-6, 1868 in the Manchester Mechanics Institute.



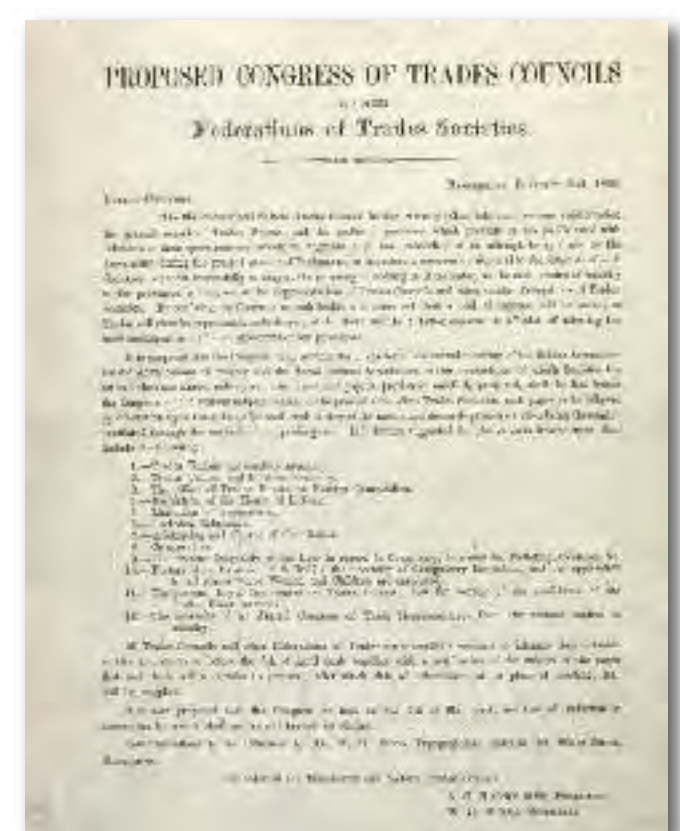
Top left: Emblem and Membership certificate of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, 1852.



Top right: One of twelve watch cases believed to have been struck in 1864 to mark the meeting in London of the International Association of Working Men (The First International).



Above right: Reform Demonstration 1866.



Above: This first Congress passed a resolution "that it is highly desirable that the trades of the United Kingdom should hold an annual congress, for the purpose of bringing the trades into closer alliance, and to take action in all Parliamentary matters pertaining to the general interests of the working classes".



Left: Early TUC leaders including George Potter, Henry Broadhurst, Daniel Guile, George Odger and George Shipton. 1873.



# THE INSTITUTION



Above: In 1958, the TUC moved into Congress House in central London. Now Grade II\* listed, it was built as a modernist memorial to the trade unionists who died in the two world wars, and is home to a notable Jacob Epstein sculpture in the courtyard.

Below left: Fire destroyed the large Colston Hall in Bristol during the 1898 Congress. All papers left in the Hall were destroyed but Congress continued in an adjacent room. This photograph shows the TUC Parliamentary Committee and other officers sitting unperturbed in the ruins.

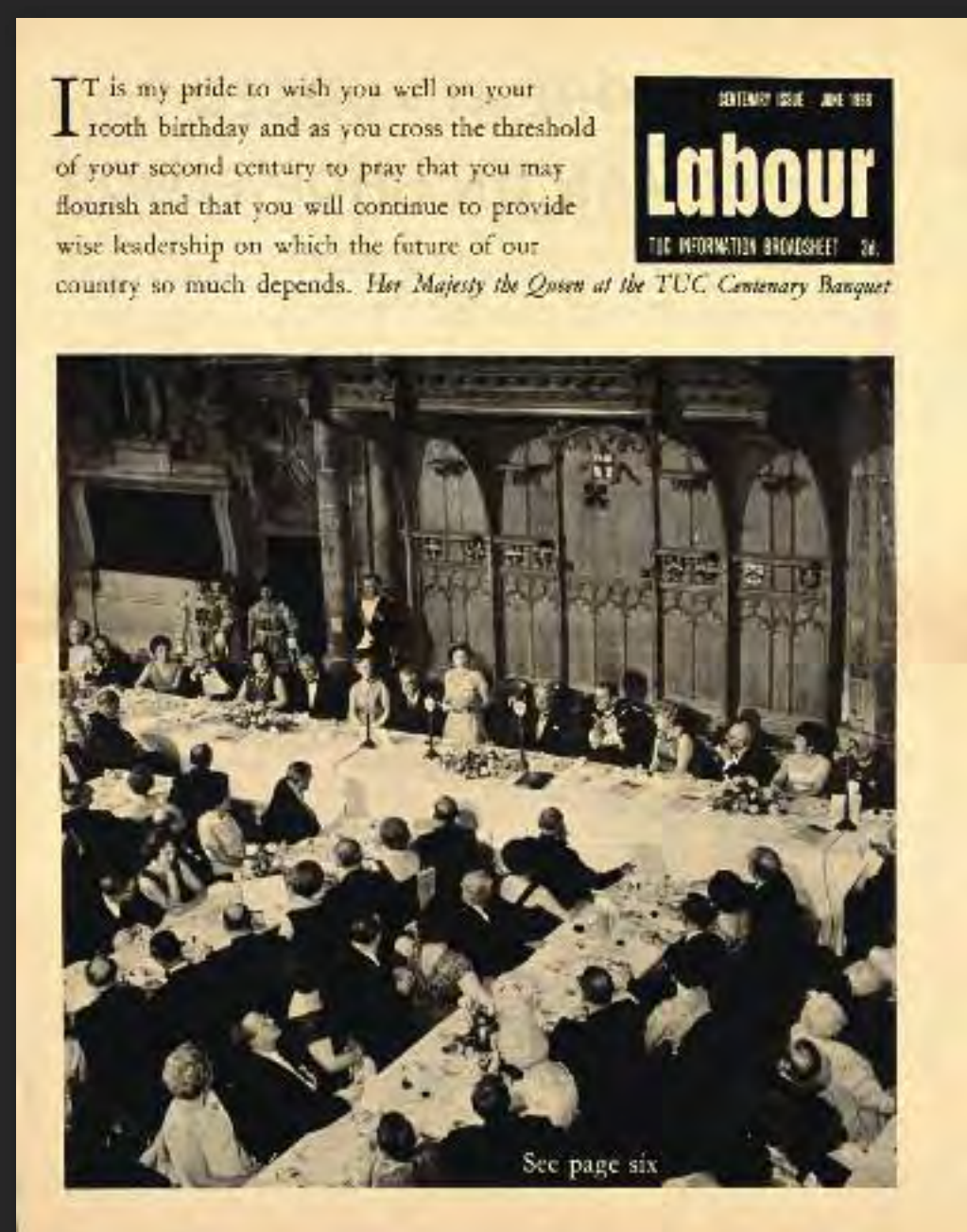
Below: TUC General Secretaries (l-r): John Monks (1993-2003), Norman Willis (1984-1993), Frances O'Grady (2014- ), Brendan Barber (2003-2013).



Over the following years, the TUC grew and established itself as the voice of trade unions. In its first decades, the TUC concentrated on influencing government policy, but from the 1920s onwards it took a more active role in industrial matters.

Over time, the TUC recruited a permanent staff, and became part of the infrastructure of the trade union movement, as well as an influential and formidable campaigning body.

The TUC also became part of the fabric of British political life, consulted by governments on policy and leading opposition to any attempts to undermine the rights and living standards of working people.



Bottom left and right: In 1968, the TUC celebrated its centenary with a parade and other events in Manchester, a concert at the Royal Festival Hall in London, a special postal stamp, and the Queen attended a banquet in London's Guildhall.



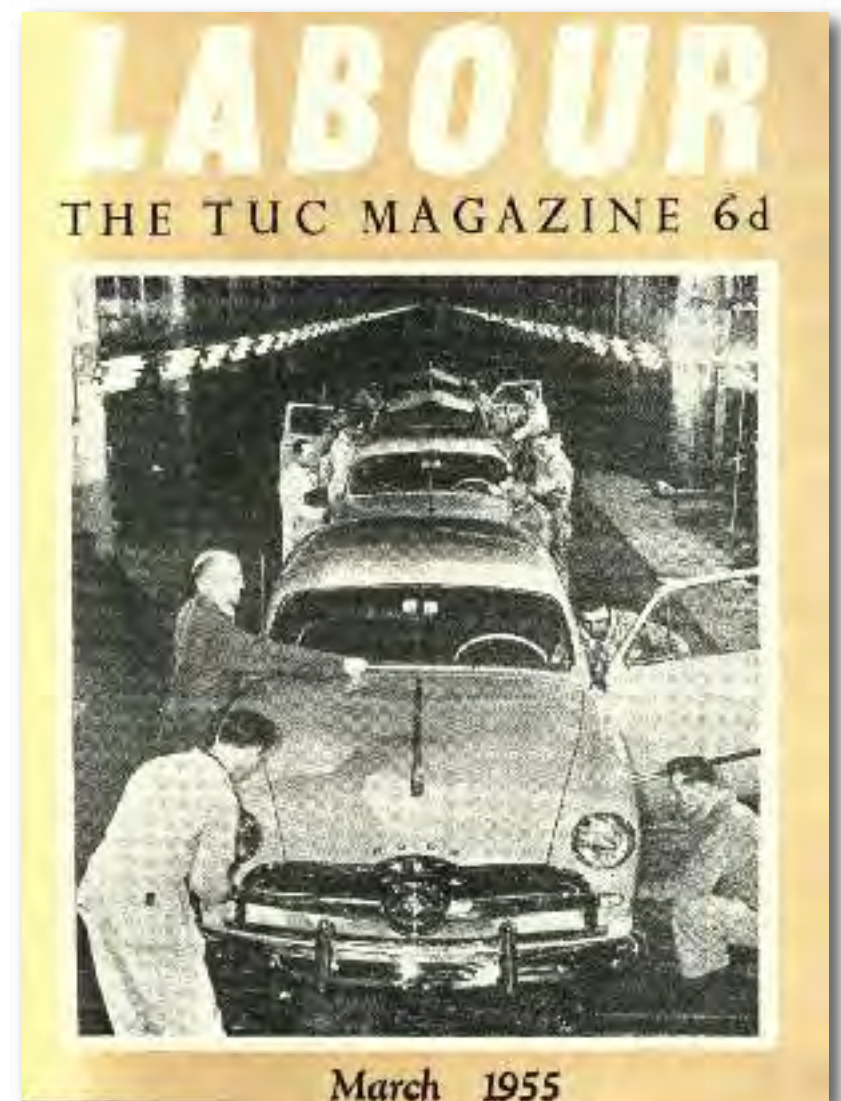
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# THE MEDIA AND THE MESSAGE



The TUC has always been a high profile organisation. As the collective voice of working people it has rarely been out of the news.

The TUC Press and Publications Department played a major role in the work of the organisation; producing posters, magazines, badges and even newspaper and cinema adverts to back its campaigns. But however

influential its own materials were, most people learned about the TUC through what we now call the 'mainstream media'. Until relatively recently every media organisation had specialist journalists covering the labour and trade union movement.

Coverage of the TUC was at its most intense around major disputes but the annual Congress was also

guaranteed to make the headlines. From the 1960s - 1990s, Congress proceedings were broadcast live, sometimes on both the BBC and commercial channels.

Today, in this digital age, the TUC speaks directly to its members and the public through the internet and social media.



Above: TUC Congress badges, 1899-2002.

Above right: The most famous image of the TUC was that of the carthorse drawn by cartoonist David Low. Although the image might now seem old fashioned and offensive, at the time this slow, steady, strong, and hardworking beast was regarded with such affection that the TUC itself hired a white carthorse to lead its centenary parade around Manchester. Copyright David Low © Evening Standard.

Top l-r: TUC poster 1933.

From 1922 – 1964, the TUC produced its own daily newspaper The Daily Herald, initially directly and from 1930 as a minority shareholder in what became the world's largest circulation newspaper. The Herald was the first paper to break the two million daily sales mark in 1933. The 1930s saw fierce competition between The Herald and right wing rivals such as the Daily Express. But by the 1960s its sales had declined and in 1964 the TUC sold its stake to the International Publishing Corporation, which re-launched the paper as The Sun, now ironically owned by Rupert Murdoch with an anti-union editorial line.

Labour, the TUC magazine published 1922-1977.



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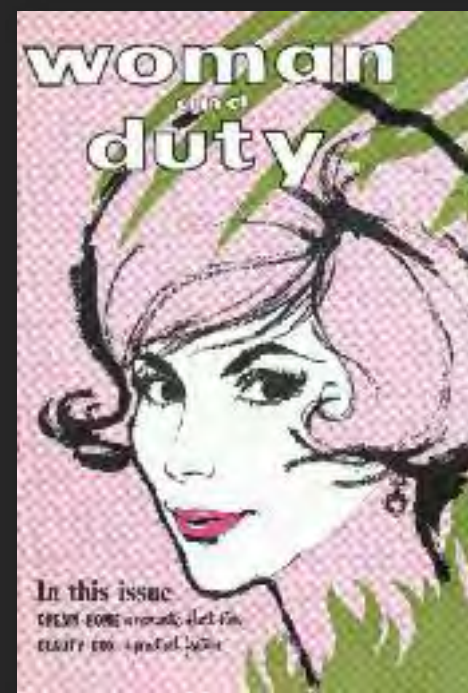
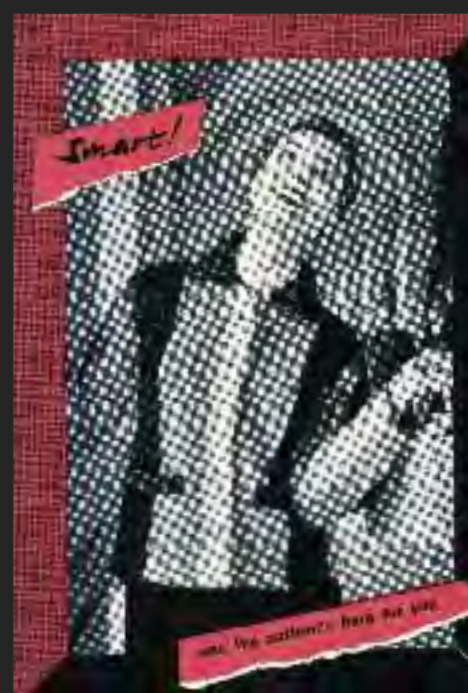
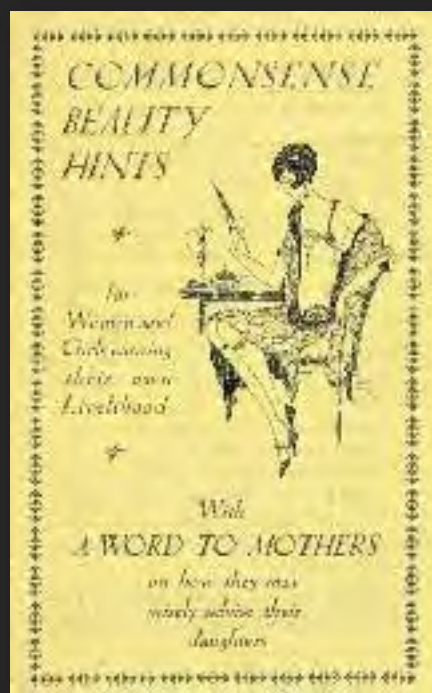
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# JOIN A UNION – NOW

The high unemployment of the 1920s and '30s, following the decline of the staple industries in the old industrial centres and worsened by the 1929 'great crash', led to a decline in trade union membership from around 6.5 million in 1920 to its lowest point in the inter-war years of 3.2 million in 1934. Individual unions and the TUC launched mass recruitment campaigns, particularly aimed at women and young workers.



Bottom left: Union Yes campaign bus toured Manchester and the London Docklands area offering information and advice on equal pay and similar issues. 1990.

Top l-r: Early TUC recruitment publicity for women often aped the styles of popular magazines.

Above left: From the 1980s, unions actively produced recruitment literature aimed at black workers and different language groups.

Above right: In 1938, the TUC Youth Charter demanded the raising of the school leaving age to 16 years, a limit of 40 hours on the working week and the abolition of overtime for under 18s, adequate technical training and 14 days paid holiday each year.

Far left: TUC recruitment poster, 1937.

Left: From 1929-1940, the TUC also ran an awards scheme as an incentive for the recruitment of new members.



Union membership rose again steadily from WW2, reaching a peak of 13 million in 1979, but deindustrialisation, unemployment and a hostile political climate in the 1980s affected union strength and new recruitment strategies were required.



# A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN HER UNION



Above: The marriage bar was removed for all teachers and in the BBC in 1944, in the Civil Service and most local government and the post office in 1954. Elsewhere it survived into the 1960s.

In the mid-19th century, most women workers – except in weaving – were excluded from unions. In 1874, the Women's Protective and Provident League (later the Women's Trade Union League) was founded to encourage women to join existing unions where possible and to set up separate unions in women-dominated trades such as dressmaking, bookbinding and upholstering.

The League's secretary, Clementina Black, moved the first successful equal pay resolution at the 1888 TUC. The League was dissolved in 1921, when the TUC agreed to take on its functions.

From the 1920s, the TUC has organised an annual Women's Conference. In the inter-war years,

women in trade unions continued to campaign for equal pay and against the marriage bar in employment. Despite their contribution on the industrial Home Front during WW2 and the recommendation of a Royal Commission in 1946, women still had to wait until the 1960s to see equal pay legislation.

From the 1970s, women in unions have taken up many broader issues relating to their lives such as childcare, contraception and abortion, and women's health issues. In 2016, 54.5% of union members were female.



Above: Corruganza Box Factory workers on strike 1908. In 1906, the League set up the National Federation of Women Workers as a militant general workers' union, campaigning for minimum wages for women in low paid trades. It claimed a peak membership of 100,000 in 1917.



Above: During WW1, women were drafted into industry in large numbers and in August 1918, women bus and tram workers won a strike for the same increase in the war bonus as men workers. Copyright Rita Ferris-Taylor.

Far left: Sexual Harasment Poster. Copyright BECTU.

Left: Membership card.

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# BLACK & ASIAN WORKERS IN UNIONS

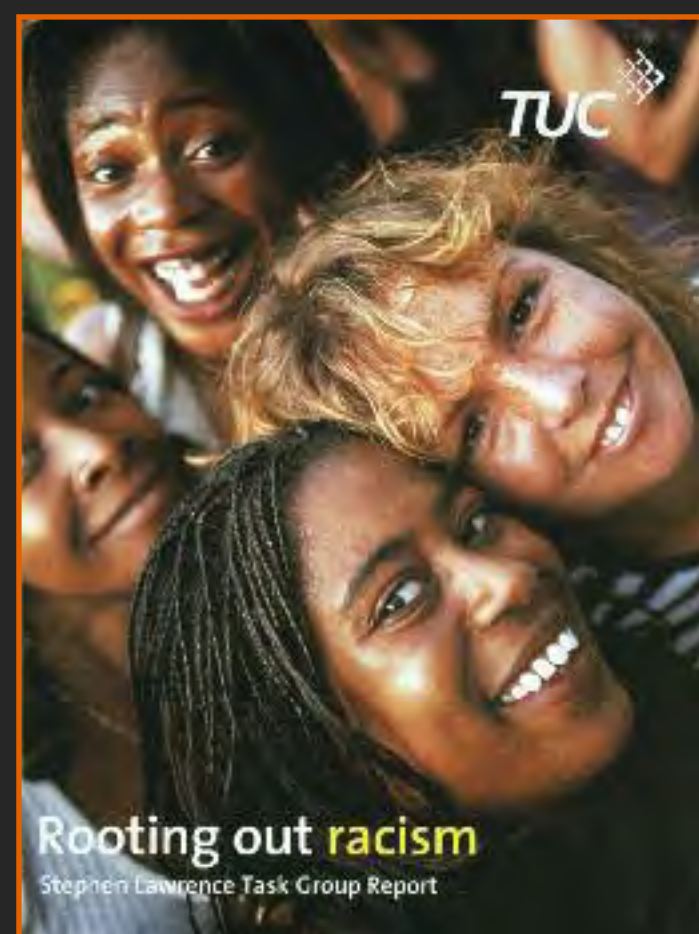
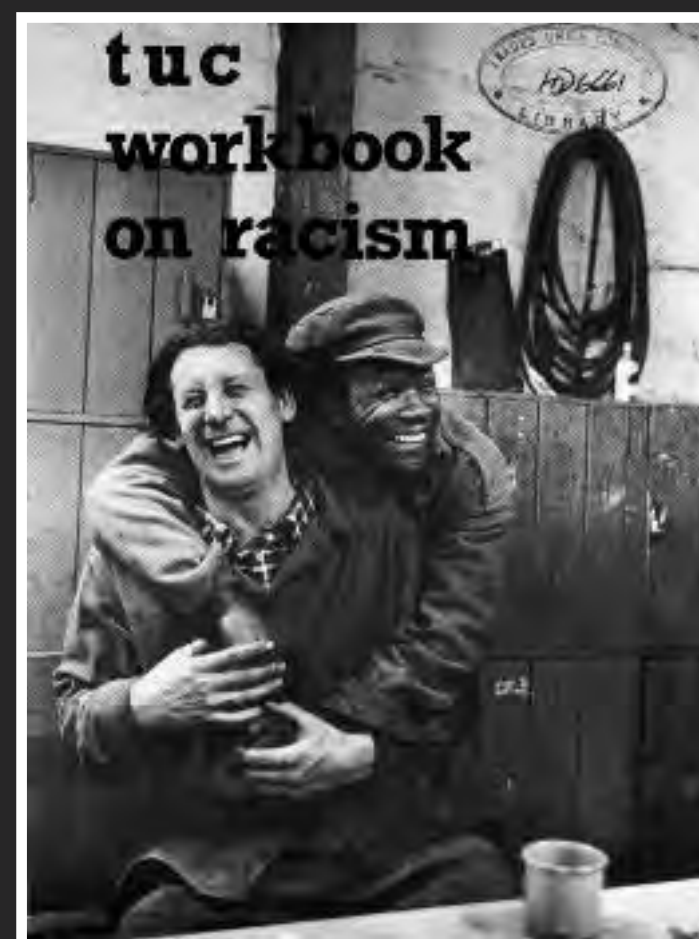
## Challenging prejudice

In the past, trade unions not only failed to take up issues facing black workers, but were often hostile. Some black workers set up their own unions. In the 1930s, there was a Coloured Seamen's Union, fighting the colour bar on the Cardiff Docks and also a Coloured Film Artistes' Association. The Indian Workers Association formed in 1938 initially focussed on Indian independence, but from 1950s more on trade union and anti-racist struggle in Britain.

Despite joining unions in large numbers, migrant workers arriving in the post-war period were not welcomed by unions, but stereotyped as a "problem", a threat to the

jobs of British workers. But the growing number of strikes against trade union racism by black workers and the rise of far right organisations in the 1970s shook the TUC into change.

In 1975, the TUC set up a Race Relations Advisory Committee. Campaigns against racism and racist organisations were initiated, educational materials and other publications were published, including a Black Workers Charter in 1981. Some unions agreed to varying forms of black self-organisation in the early 1980s. An annual TUC Black Workers Conference was instituted and from 1994 there were reserved seats for black workers on the TUC General Council.



Top: TUC workbook on racism produced for use on TUC education courses. 1983.

Above: Following a public inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence the TUC set up a Task Group to examine institutional racism within trade unions. TUC Equality Audits, carried out every two years to check on progress on equality were a key result.

Below: Black and Asian workers were involved in many disputes through the 1960s and 1970s, supported not by their union, but by their own communities. Although unsuccessful, the strike at the Grunwick Film Processing factories in North West London 1976-78 was historically significant as the first such dispute to attract mass support from the trade union movement.



Far right: The TUC Unite Against Racism Campaign 1994 included two national demonstrations to counter the electoral success of the National Front and led to the establishment of the Respect (subsequently Rise) anti-racism festivals in London.



Above right: TUC poster.

Above: Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council report detailing racial attacks in the East End of London during the period 1976-1978, the role of the National Front, and the response of local police.



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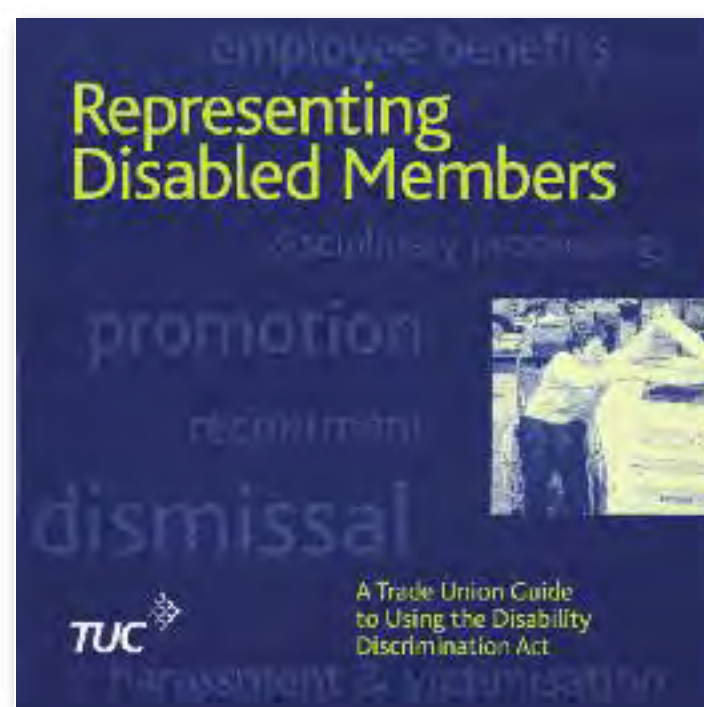
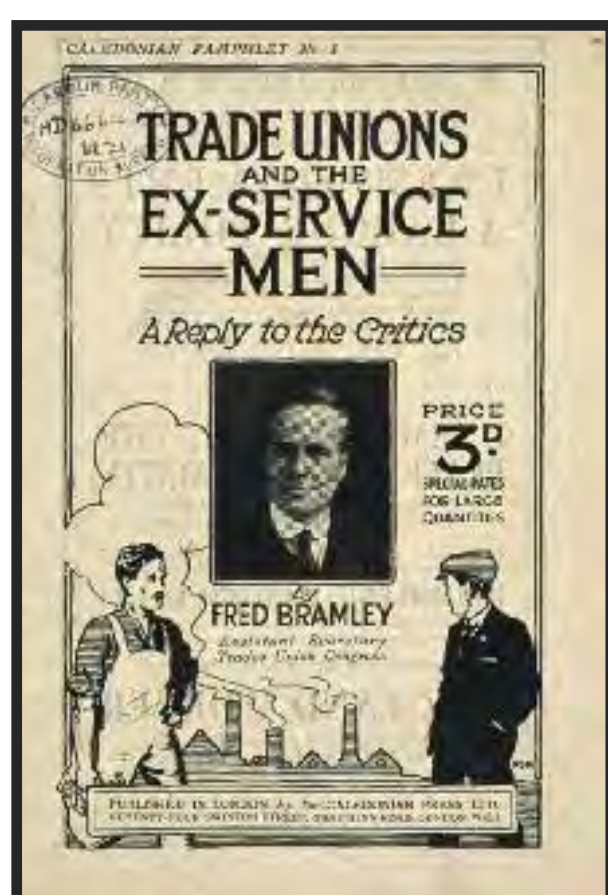
# All EQUAL



Above: Gay rights within unions were given prominence by the support given by LGBT organisations during the 1984-85 Miners' Strike. Copyright LGSM 2014 (poster by Kevin Franklin).

Right: National League of the Blind march 1920. Copyright Working Class Movement Library.

Below: 1921 TUC pamphlet written in response to criticisms that unions were discriminating against WW1 veterans by restricting access to skilled work and not supporting rehabilitation and retraining schemes for disabled workers.



Far left: The success of the tailors' and other Jewish trade unions in 1889 encouraged William Wess, the secretary of the Tailors' Strike Committee, to propose the establishment of the Federation of East London Labour Unions; to provide advice and support for the further unionisation of sweatshops in East London.

Middle left: TUC publication 1999.

Left: NALGO poster 1984. Copyright UNISON.



The TUC, as many other institutions, was slow to change its structures to encourage inclusivity until reacting to pressure from members themselves, often with the support of external activist groups.

The National League of the Blind of Great Britain and Ireland, later known as the National League of the Blind and Disabled, was founded in 1894 and joined the TUC in 1902. The League campaigned for the state to take responsibility for employing blind people, for legislation to end employment discrimination, and for adequate benefits for those who could not work. After the League merged with another union in 2000, the TUC has held

its own annual conferences for disabled workers and set up a Disability Committee.

From the 1980s, many unions developed policies to protect members from discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and the 1985 TUC Congress passed a resolution accepting that lesbian and gay rights were a trade union issue. Since 1998, the TUC has had a Committee and organised annual conferences on lesbian and gay rights. From 2016, these became more inclusive when renamed LGBT+ Committee and Conference – showing that the TUC would act on all the many areas of discrimination.



# UNIONS AT WORK

Below: Meeting at William Warnes rubber factory - Barking, 1977.

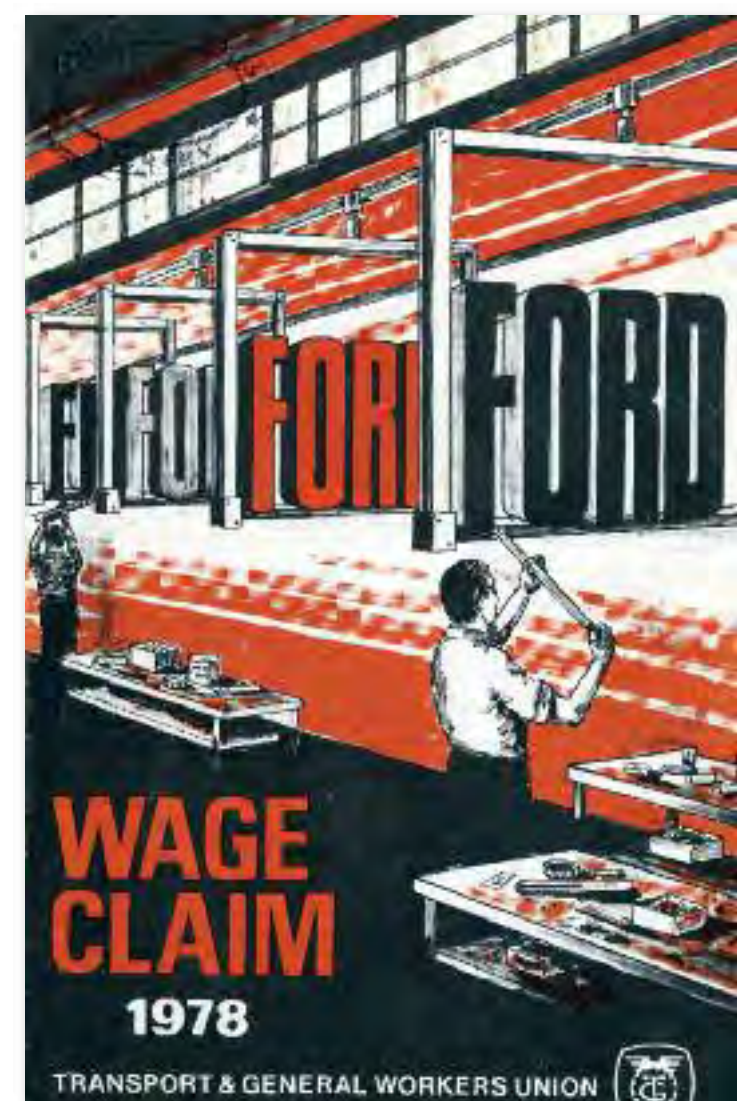
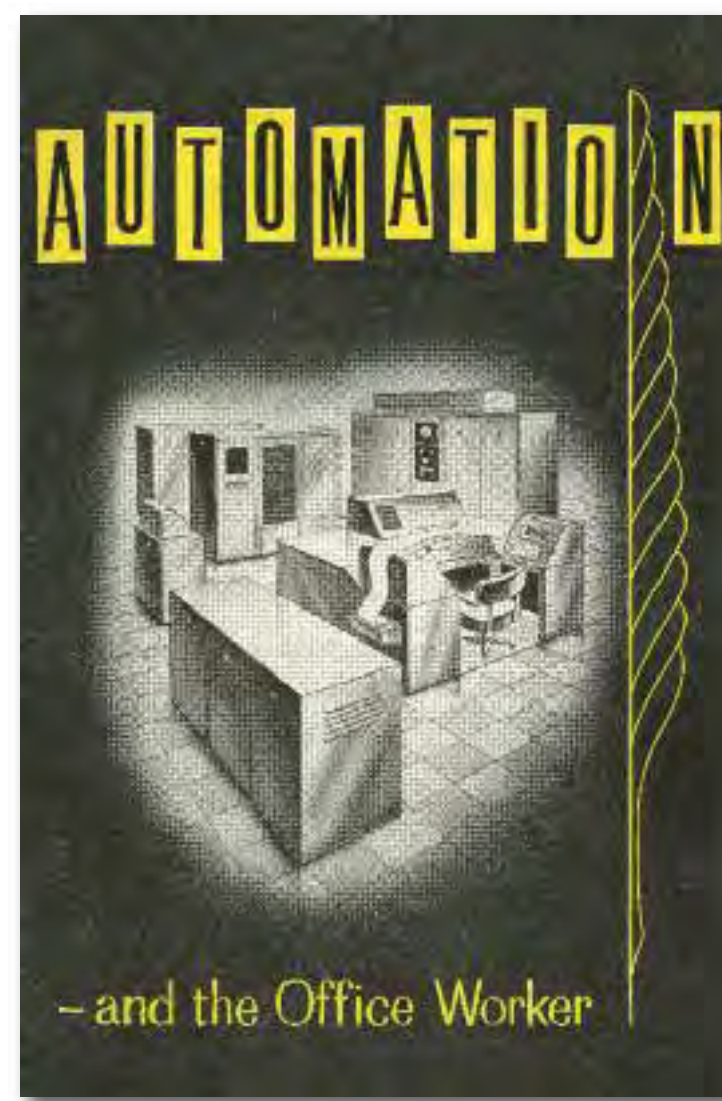
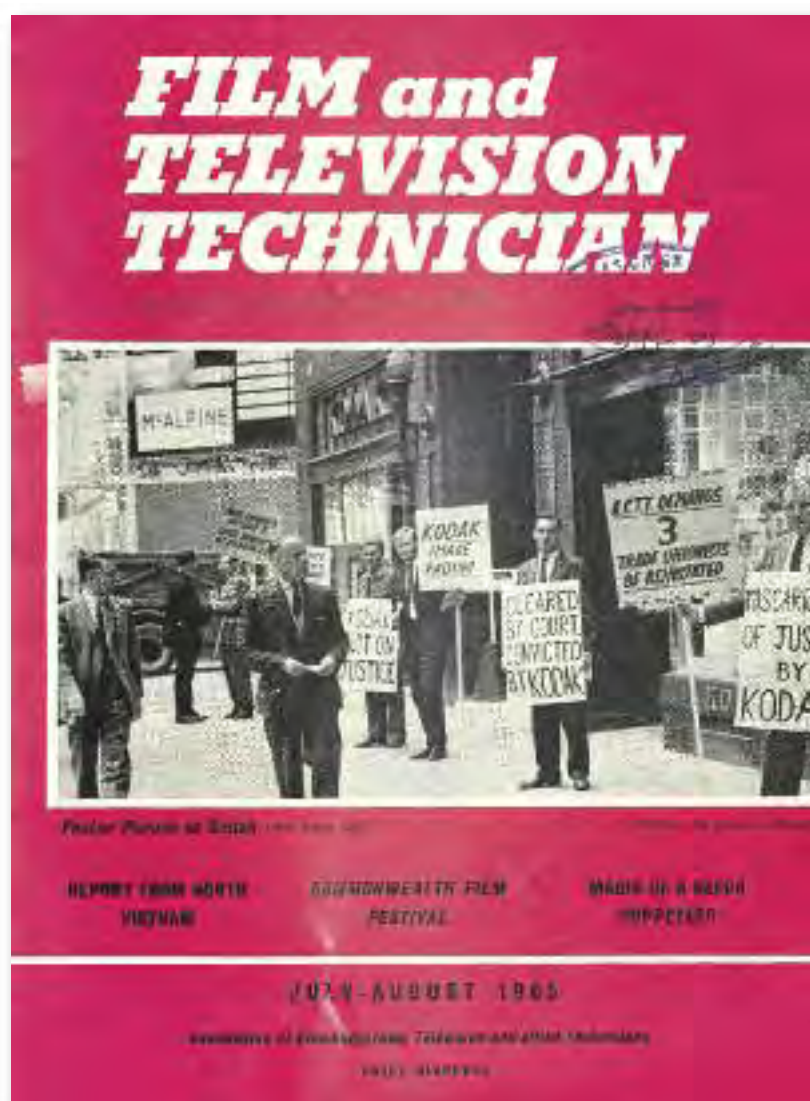


Below: Unions were not recognised at the American owned Kodak company until 1972, when the Union of Kodak Workers replaced the workers' representation committees. Copyright: BECTU.

Below: Unions can help companies plan for the future and manage change – as well as making sure workers have an independent voice if big changes like redundancies or site closures are planned.



Below: The annual wage claim to the Ford Motor Company from the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee, published by the Transport and General Workers' Union.



The purpose of unions in the workplace remains the same as when they started - groups of workers organising together to win a better deal. In most workplaces where unions are active, members will meet together to discuss any problems or changes in pay, safety at work, unfair treatment, pensions, new equipment or processes or simply the way work is organised. Members elect someone to speak for

them, called a rep (representative] or shop steward and they are usually a volunteer. The rep takes up their concerns with management, and helps individuals too.

Every year, the TUC trains thousands of union representatives and campaigns for them to have fair and reasonable paid time off and other facilities to be able to perform their duties and

activities effectively. Most sensible employers welcome having a union in their workplace and understand that to avoid conflict at work, it is better for workers to be able to raise problems and sort them out.

In 2016, union members, on average, earned over 13% more per hour than those who were not part of a union. This is known as the union wage premium.

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# TRADES UNION COUNCILS AND TUC REGIONAL STRUCTURE



Far left: This special edition on the The Birmingham Journal published by the Birmingham Trades Council in September 1959 publicises a march organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), which had been formed the previous year.

Above left: Isle of Sheppey Trades Council carnival float 1962.

Top middle: Special train for delegates returning from the 1951 annual trades councils conference in Clacton. The train crew are shown shaking hands with the conference Chairman, Sir Luke Fawcett, and TUC Assistant Secretary, Victor Feather.

Left: South West TUC Magazine.

Trades Union Councils consist of trade union branches which meet in the area covered by that council, or which have members working or living in the area. They campaign around issues affecting working people in their local workplaces and communities, and take up broader concerns such as unemployment, housing, public health, and local services.

The Councils [then called trades councils] developed from the 1850s - the earliest were probably Glasgow 1858, then Leeds and Manchester called the first TUC Congress in 1868. But in 1895, they were excluded from TUC affiliation and no longer able to attend Congress. Those in Scotland then founded their own organisation, the Scottish TUC, which met for the first time in 1897.

In 1894, Dublin Trades Council initiated what became the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. After 1895, there were no formal links between the TUC and the councils until the TUC established the Trades Council Joint Consultative Committee and annual conference in 1925.

The TUC's regional structure developed from the 12 TUC Regional Emergency Committees set up in 1941 to work with wartime Regional Commissioners. In 1945, these became TUC Regional Advisory Committees. Following the reorganisation of local government, the 1973 Congress set up County Federations of Trades Councils and the Regional Advisory Committees were replaced by 8 Regional Councils in England plus the Wales Trades Union Council, to match the Government's economic planning regions.



# Solidarity

*Unity is Strength, Solidarity!*  
*United we stand* are cherished mottos of the trade union movement. Combining in the workplace allows workers to harness their strength to protect and improve outcomes for the whole group. This feeling of collective identity with other working people stretches to other trades, industries and even across national frontiers.

Most disputes end with a negotiated agreement, but the right to strike is a fundamental human right, protected by international treaties and human rights standards, and defended by the British trade union movement throughout its history. However, despite a vigorous union campaign, the recent Trade Union Act 2016 endangers this right. The UK now has some of the most complex and restrictive industrial action laws in the developed world.



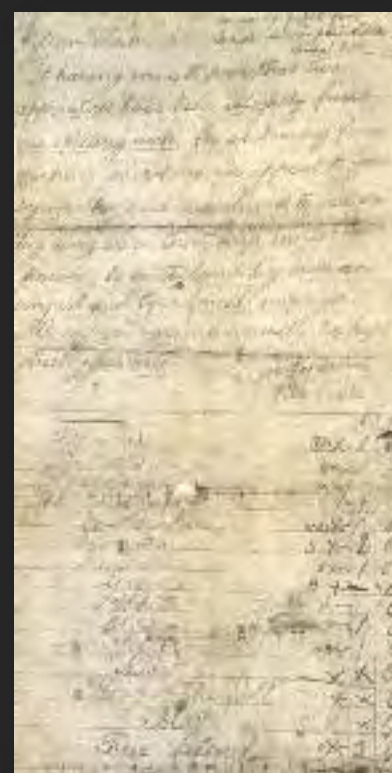
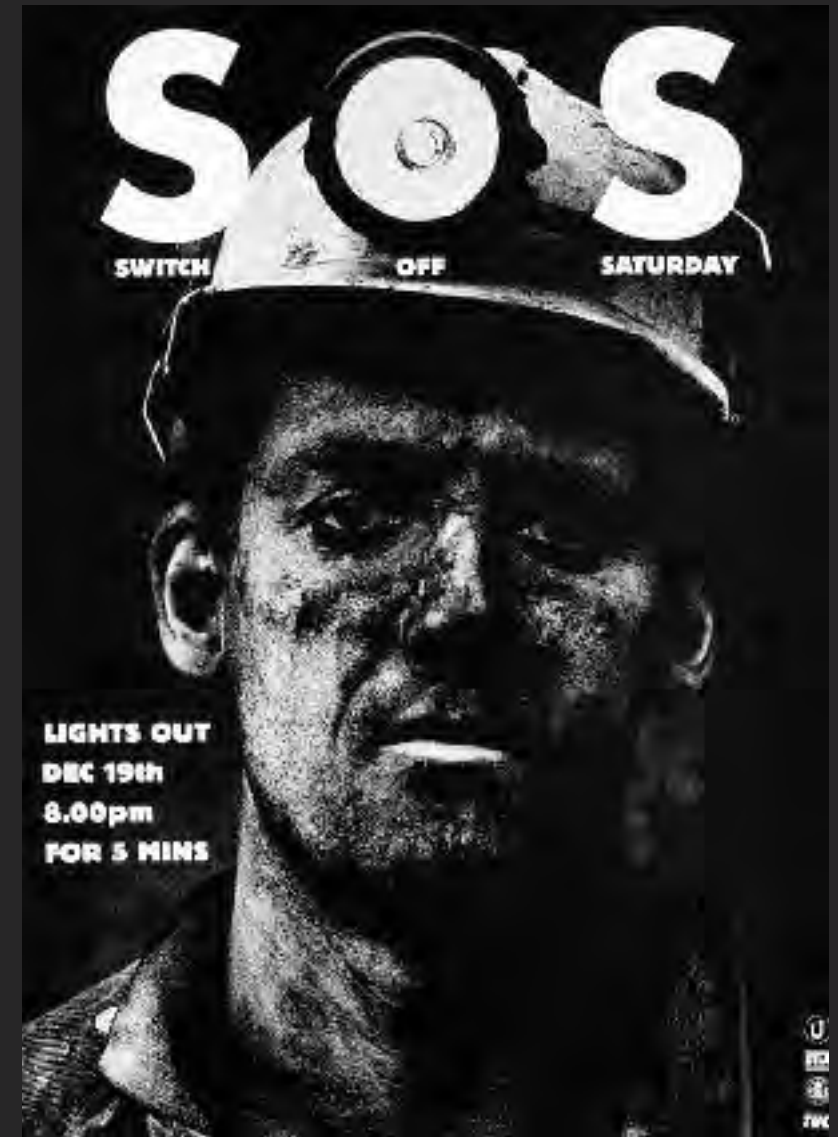
Above: In January 1984, civil service staff working at the Government Communications Headquarters in Cheltenham were banned from holding trade union membership. Despite a legal battle and international condemnation, union members were sacked and the ban remained in place until the 1997 Labour Government allowed them to return with compensation for unfair dismissal.

Below: Firefighters national strike, 1977. Pickets and protests enable trade unions and their members to communicate the reasons and purposes of industrial action publicly, peacefully to persuade employees and substitute workers to support the industrial action and to mobilise support for their campaigns.



Right: Campaign Against Pit Closures, 1992.

Left: TUC Cotton Fund in support of the Lancashire cotton weavers' strike 1932. The Fund distributed vouchers which could be redeemed at local co-operative stores.



Above: Petition against fines imposed on two apprentices for refusing to work overtime, together with list of donations signed using pseudonyms, c1880.

Above right: Community support for National Federation of Women Workers strike at Pinks' jam factory, Bermondsey, 1911.

Right: British TUC delegation addressed a mass meeting in Dublin during the 1913 transport workers' strike and called for an investigation into police violence when 3 workers were killed and hundreds injured.





# GENERAL STRIKE 1926

The General Strike was called by the TUC to support over 1 million miners locked out in a dispute over the withdrawal of a government subsidy to the coal industry and also reductions in pay and conditions. The strike lasted 9 days, from May 3 - 12, 1926 and 1.75-2 million workers came out.

Although the action appeared to grow more effective daily, the TUC decided that it could not be maintained over a longer period and ended the strike on the understanding from Herbert Samuel, Chair of the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry, that subsidies might be reinstated.

However, the Government later made it clear that negotiations would not be reopened. The TUC received angry protests and thousands of union members who had taken sympathy action were victimised when they tried to return to work. The miners' lockout continued until November, when they were forced to return to work on lower pay and longer hours.



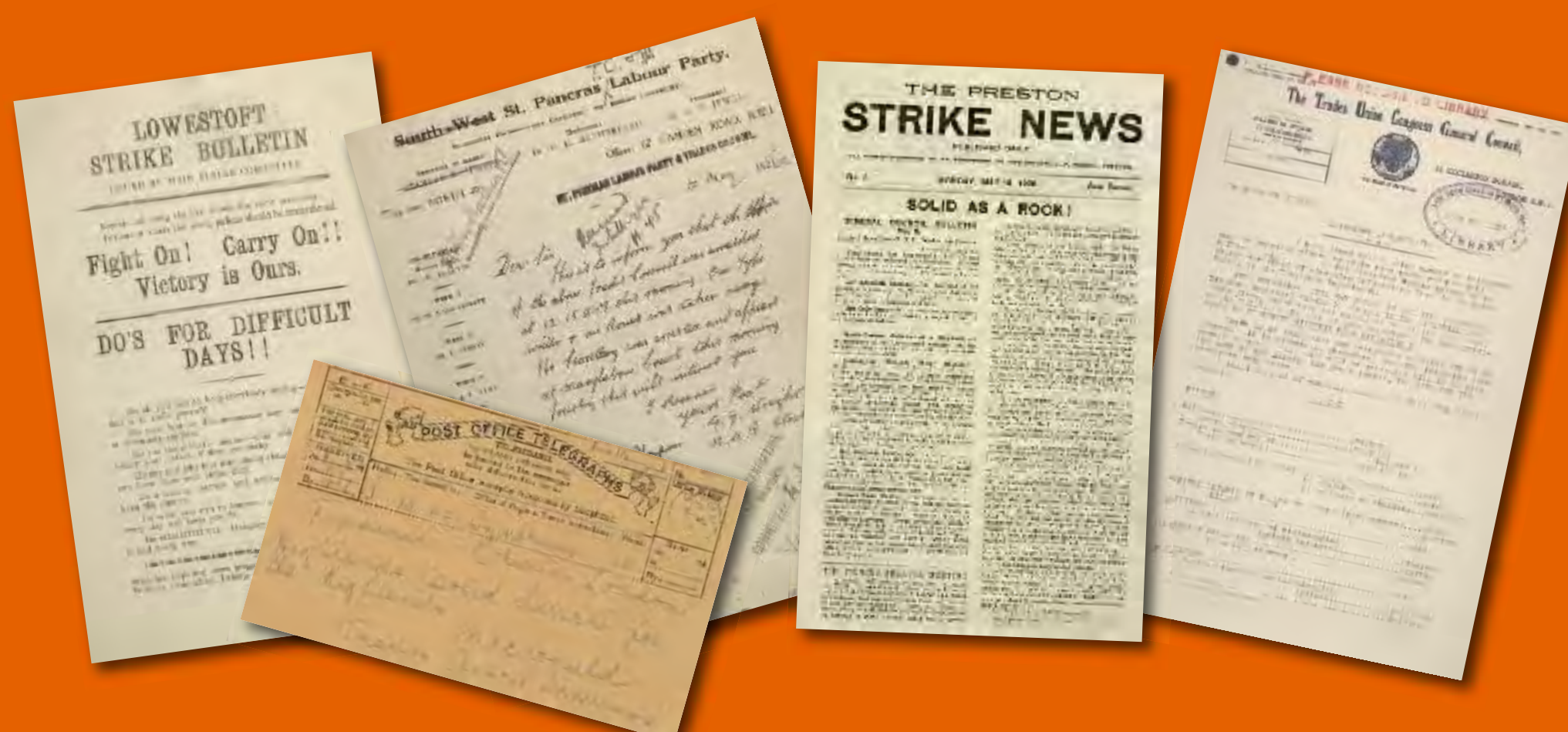
Top: Pickets at London Docks during the General Strike.

Right: Dispatch riders await instructions outside TUC headquarters in Eccleston Square, London. As postal services were disrupted and telephones were not trusted, dispatch riders carried news reports from the TUC and union offices around the country, at the same time collecting accurate news of the strike's effectiveness – often reporting back in code.



Bottom right: Local meeting in Durham.

Below: The TUC's strike paper, The British Worker, printed on the Daily Herald presses in London and in 4 other cities.



Left: Local Trades Councils set up joint strike committees. They coordinated work of local union branches, collected and disseminated news, organised meetings, ensured food supplies, issued permits to pass through picket lines, dealt with welfare issues, and organised legal defence for arrested pickets. They often organised sports and entertainment to hold up morale.



# LEARN ALL ABOUT IT Trade Union education

The origins of workers' education lie in the industrialisation of Britain, and involve a diversity of organisations, such as literary and philosophical societies, Mechanics' Institutes, and the university extension movement. Specific trade union education develops from the end of the 19th century. Ruskin College, a residential college for workers, mainly sponsored by trade unions, is founded in 1899, and the Workers, Educational Association (WEA) in 1903. A breakaway from Ruskin led to the formation of the Plebs' League in 1908 and the National Council of Labour Colleges (NCLC) in 1921. The WEA set up a Trade Union Committee in 1919 (WETUC).

The NCLC's aim of working class education by and for the working class had led to it calling for the TUC to be responsible for trade union education. Attempts had been made in the 1920s and 30s for the TUC to take over workers' education, but these had ended in failure. However, in 1944, the TUC developed a plan for a college as a war memorial to trade unionists. This became Congress House, the TUC Memorial Building, containing its training college. The TUC

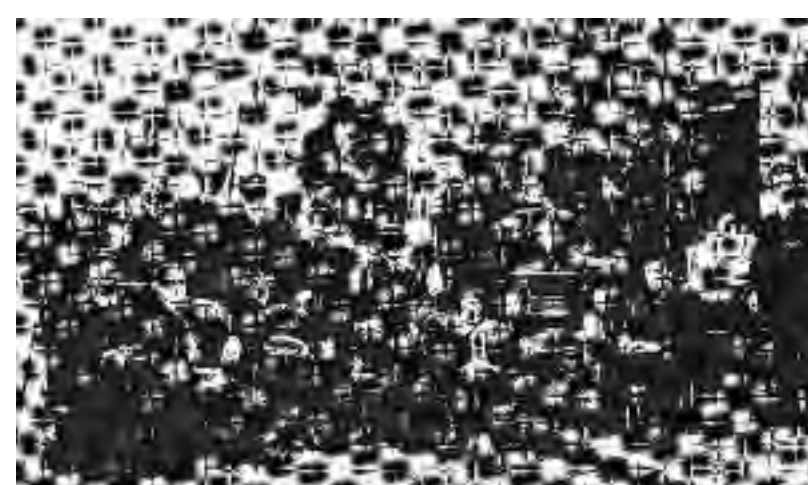


Left: TUC weekend school for women, Whitley Bay, 1935.

Below: The 1908 strike by students at Ruskin College led to the formation of the Plebs League and Central Labour College.

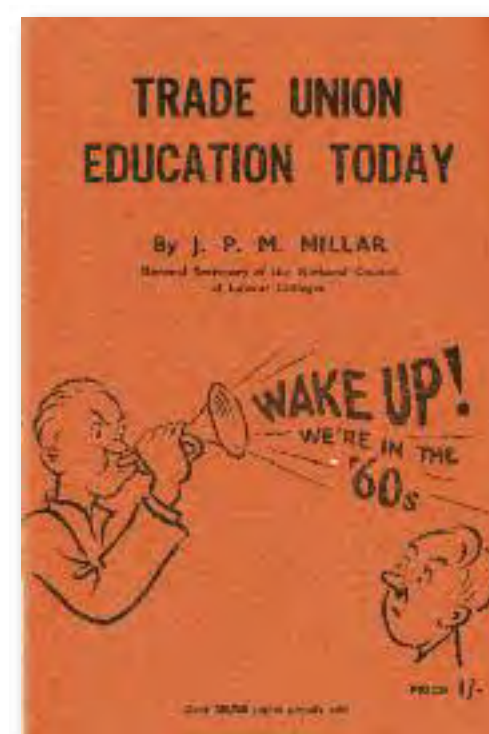
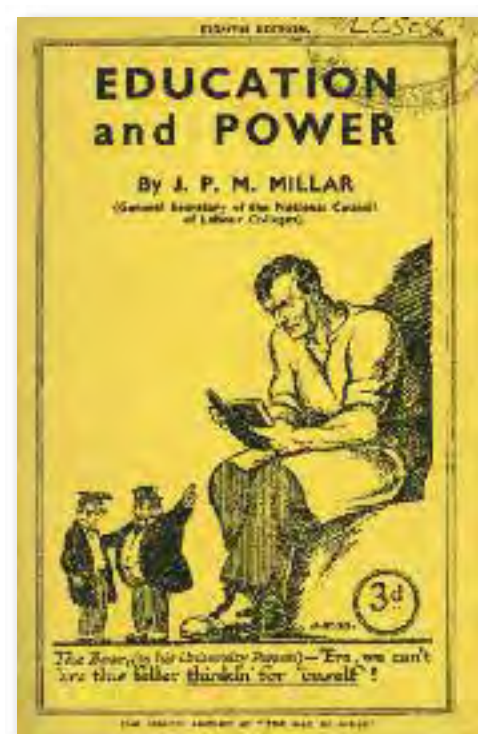
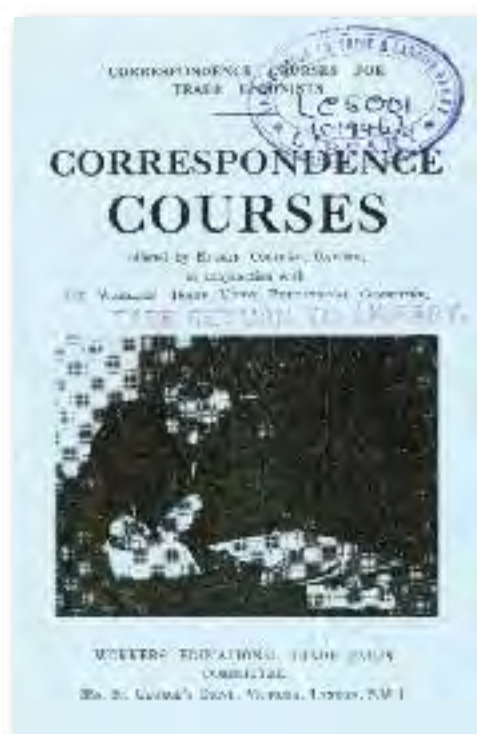
also sponsored students on a three-year evening course at the London School of Economics.

Financial difficulties that unions faced after the Second World War led to calls for rationalisation. The educational work of unions and the TUC was growing and the duplication of providers was costly. In 1964 the TUC Education scheme came into being, taking over the NCLC and the WETUC. In the following years an extensive programme of training for shop stewards, health and safety and other representatives was developed, using tutors employed by further education colleges, the WEA and universities.



Above: From 1975-1978, the TUC Education Service with the BBC and WEA ran a Trade Union Studies project using television, postal courses and publications. The course books included several cartoons by Larry. Copyright Courtesy of Chris Beetles Gallery on behalf of the Larry estate.

Below: From 1976 the TUC received a government grant for union education, and, with legal rights for union reps to training, came an expansion of day release courses. The TUC ran courses for union officers, first at Congress House, and then from 1984 – 2005 at the TUC National Education Centre in North London.



The NCLC and WETUC dominated union education in the inter-war years. Ideologically the two organisations were poles apart. The NCLC stood for revolutionary change in society - the WEA for reformism: a divide that reflected the politics of the time and is still relevant today.

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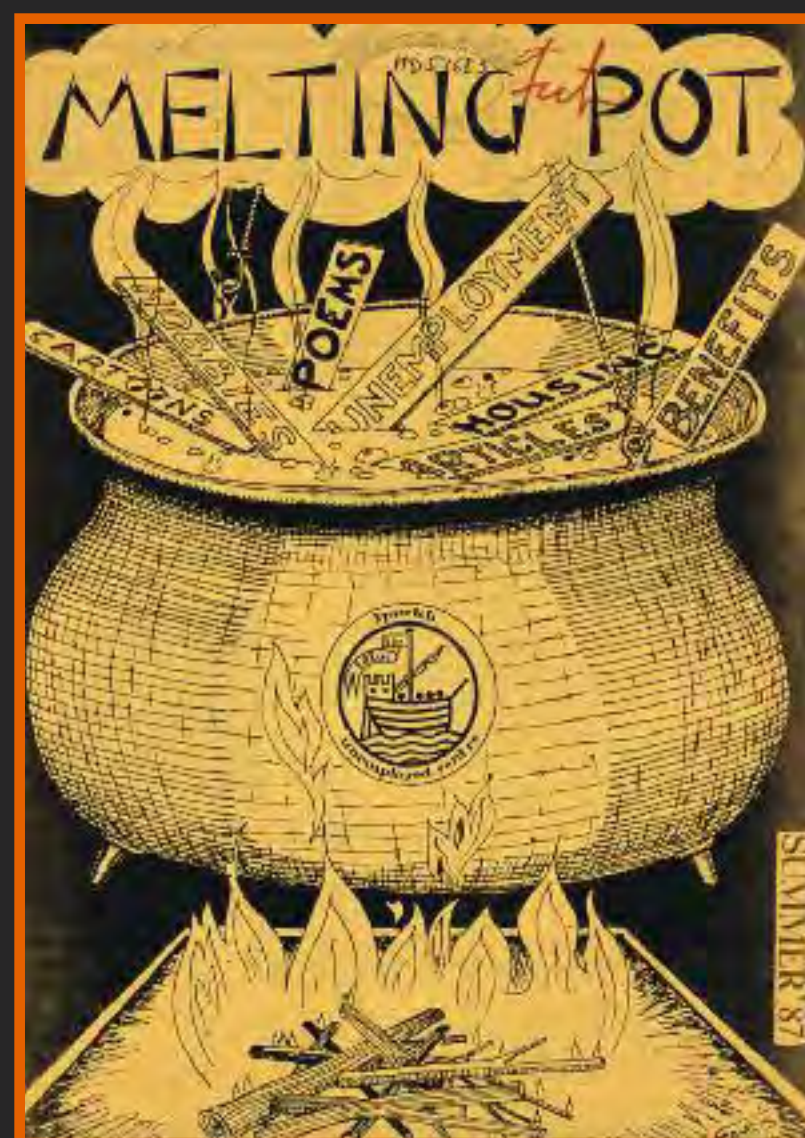
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# THE RIGHT TO WORK

## The nature of work, skills and unemployment



Top left and below: Poster carried on the TUC - and Labour Party National Unemployment Demonstration 1933.

Top middle: The 1981 People's March for Jobs echoed the unemployment demonstrations of the 1930s. 280 marchers from Liverpool met a rally of 150,000 in London and this poster shows the route taken across England.

Left: The TUC set up local unemployed associations in 1927 and by the mid-1930s, there were 100 with around 24,000 members. Attached to local trades councils, they offered benefits advice, social and educational facilities as well as campaigning activities. In the 1980s, the TUC set up a similar network of over 200 Unemployed Workers Centres organised through the TUC Regional Councils.

Bottom left: Unemployment Benefit Demonstration, 1920. Under the 1920 Unemployment Insurance Act, women were refused benefit if they rejected work in domestic service. The National Federation of Women Workers set up its own scheme offering more than the Government scheme.

Above: TUC leaflet 1936. From the early 20th century there was concern over the impact of automation on employment.

The causes of unemployment and how they might be combatted has been a recurring theme throughout the TUC's history. Early campaigns focussed on national and municipal Public Works schemes and on limiting working hours. To deter unemployed members from working for low pay and protect established pay rates, many skilled unions introduced their own unemployment

insurance schemes in the 19th century and these continued into the 1920s despite State insurance schemes – which unions considered to be discriminatory.

Today, the TUC is campaigning against the replacement of permanent jobs with insecure alternatives – like zero hours or short-hours contracts, working as a temp or through an agency.



# THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD AND BE REPRESENTED



Above: Many union officers have gone on to play a key role in Government: [l-r]  
**Margaret Bondfield:** women's officer of the National Union of General & Municipal Workers became the first woman Cabinet Minister and Privy Councillor when appointed Minister of Labour in the 1929 Labour Government.  
**Ernest Bevin:** General Secretary of the Transport & General Workers Union became Minister for Labour & National Service 1940-45, and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1945-1951.  
**James Callaghan:** Inland Revenue Staff Federation official held several Cabinet positions prior to becoming Prime Minister in 1976.  
**Alan Johnson:** General Secretary of the Union of Communication Workers and held various Cabinet posts from 2004-10.  
 Copyright James Gifford-Mead.

Throughout its history, the TUC has sought with varying degrees of success to influence all governments – not only lobbying to improve standards of living for union members but to introduce positive change in all areas of social and economic policy.

To take advantage of the 1867 extension of the franchise to better paid urban male workers, the TUC formed a Parliamentary Committee in 1871 to act as a parliamentary pressure group. This was the forerunner of today's General Council. The TUC created the Labour Party to ensure representation for working people. Some unions are affiliated to the Party and use their political fund to support its work. Many others have political funds which they use for other campaigns such as anti-racism.



Above: TUC Conference 27 February 1900, at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London at which the Labour Representation Committee (known from 1906 as the Labour Party) was established.

Left top: Trade union members on London County Council 1902 - active on issues such as poor law reform, representation on school boards, fair wages for Council workers and creation of parks and open spaces.

Left: 'The Right Ticket': An electoral pact with the Liberal Party returned 42 Labour MPs by 1910 and ensured Labour support for the Liberal legislative programme including the National Insurance Act, 1911 which gave trade unions an important role in the administration of benefits.

Left: 'A Word to the Trade Unionist': TUC Leaflet urging members to join the Labour Party by contracting into their union's political fund, 1944.

Below left: The Liaison Committee was set up in 1971 and became a policy forum for the TUC, Labour Party National Executive Committee and the Parliamentary Party. In 1973, it developed the 'Social Contract'.

Below right: GMB Political Fund poster, 1985.



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# THE WORKERS' WAR



Above: Following the invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany in June 1941, the TUC formed an Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee and a delegation from Russia visited Britain during the Winter of 1941-1942, touring factories across Britain.

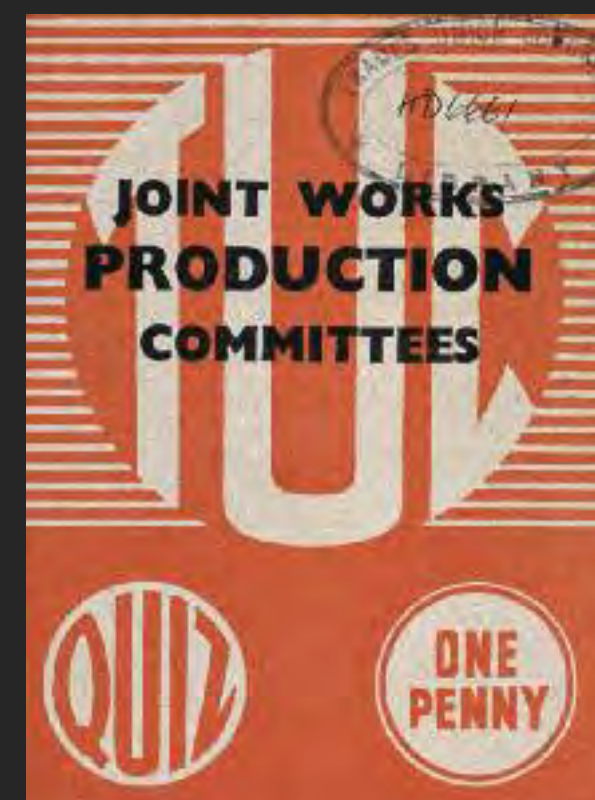


Above right: 3 Government posters 1941-42.

Below left: 'War job' 1943. An account of production on the Home Front and the mobilisation of war workers, distributed by British Information Services.

Below left: From 1939-1943, the number of women in industry rose by 2 million to 7.25 million - initially voluntarily and from 1941 conscripted. To meet childcare needs, the government funded local authority nurseries. At the same time, the number of women trade unionists doubled to 1.9 million.

Below right: Joint Works Production Committees were encouraged to avoid disputes and increase production. They helped develop consultative machinery at factory level and strengthened the shop stewards' movement.



In May 1940, Winston Churchill made Ernest Bevin, from the Transport and General Workers' Union, his Minister of Labour and National Service in the new Coalition Government. Bevin established a Joint Consultative Committee with both union and employer representatives to advise him on production. Both sides accepted Emergency Powers allowing control of labour, compulsory arbitration in disputes and a ban on strikes. In return, the government improved factory working conditions

with canteens, washrooms and other welfare facilities.

Unions felt they were assuming a national responsibility – voiced by Jack Tanner, President of the Amalgamated Engineering Union at the union's 1940 conference: "This is an engineer's war... whether it is in the anti-aircraft defences, or the machines on land and sea, or in the sky, it is the engineer who stands behind them all...Such is the grave responsibility thrust upon the membership of our Union, and such is the collective responsibility that

all of us present here to-day have to accept."

The TUC, both nationally and locally, was seen as essential to the war effort and was consulted on many issues including food supply and air raid precautions. The TUC also began lobbying for radical social change in post-war Britain, producing bold plans for wider access to education and welfare, for a national health service, and for economic reconstruction including public ownership, industrial democracy and price control.

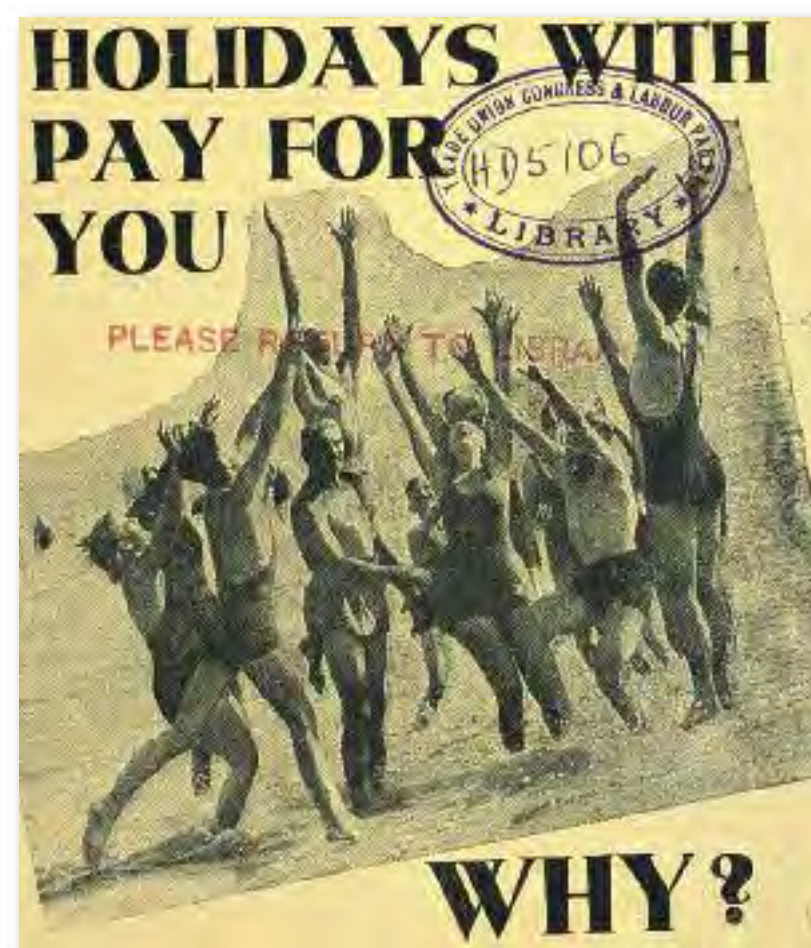


# UNIONS AND THE LAW **The Good**



Above: TUC International Women's Year Rally. 1975 also saw the Sex Discrimination Act.

Right: 1976 TUC guide to the new Labour Government legislation including the Employment Protection Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Health and Safety at Work Act and the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act.



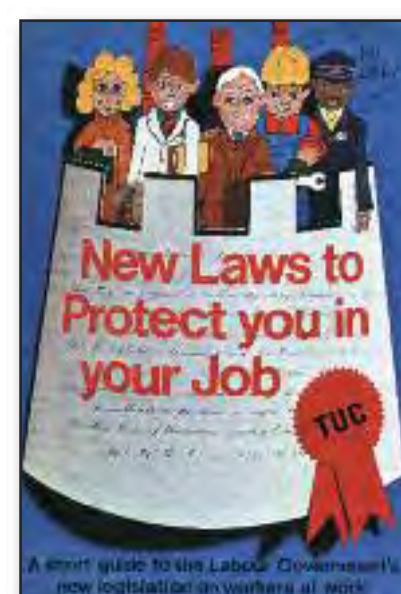
Above: TUC leaflet 1939. The TUC renewed its lobby for paid holidays in 1936 after the passing of an International Labour Convention. The gradual introduction of paid holidays was agreed and the Holidays with Pay Act gave workers, whose minimum wages were fixed by trade boards, one week's holiday per year. The TUC, which was calling for 2 weeks' holiday for all workers, was disappointed in the limited legislation.

Until the last part of the 20th century, Britain enjoyed a 'voluntarist' system in industrial relations, with the law mainly kept out of collective bargaining - but law has also been useful.

Soon after the TUC's birth, the 1871 Trade Union Act recognised unions as legal entities, entitled to protection under the law. The 1906 Trade Disputes Act gave unions immunity from being sued for damages incurred during a strike. Trade Boards and Wages Councils legislation from 1909 and later the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 aimed to provide a safety net for the very low

paid. The 1960s saw positive legislation such as the Contracts of Employment Act 1963, Redundancy Payments Act 1965. The 1968 Royal Commission on Trade Unions report, supporting the central role of collective bargaining at the workplace but underpinned by a comprehensive legal framework, was welcomed by the TUC.

The platform of equality legislation- much of it codified in the 2010 Equality Act - and the framework of rights at work from the European Union have provided a useful basis for union campaigns.



Above: Despite equal pay legislation, progress is still slow and unions support pay audits to assess the extent to which employers had made progress towards its implementation.

Left: Racism at Work, TUC booklet, 2002.



Below: The Trade Boards Act 1909 introduced minimum wages in certain industries, but employers often refused to pay them. In 1910, women chainmakers in the West Midlands were on strike for several weeks before receiving improved wages.

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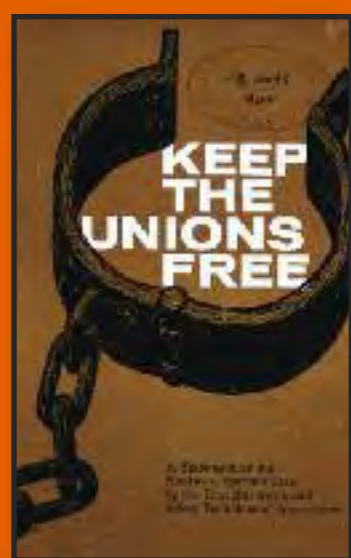
# UNIONS AND THE LAW The bad and the ugly

Law has often been used to curb the strength of trade unions.

The growth of shop floor bargaining after WW2 led to political debates on reforming trade union law. The 1966 Labour Government's policy document 'In place of strife'[1969], granting the right to intervene in unofficial disputes, was opposed by the TUC, but the incoming Conservatives produced a more interventionist legal framework in the 1971 Industrial Relations Act. The Act worsened industrial conflict and the Government fell. The new 1974 Labour Government produced a platform of

positive laws, but the theme of union power was now a media constant, coming to a head during the so-called 'Winter of Discontent' 1978-79.

Elected in May 1979, the new Conservative government determined to re-establish 'law and order' at work. A raft of legislation was introduced to 'regulate' union strength. Employment protection measures were repealed, union immunities under common law were diluted, and law entered their internal procedure such as balloting in elections. Unions became heavily regulated and industrial action fraught with pitfalls.



Above left: Keep the Unions Free, TUC pamphlet 1964.

Above right: TUC poster against 1982 Employment Bill.

Above left and centre: The 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act has been used many times to bring charges of intimidation against pickets. The 1891 leaflet refers to a recent victory in the courts, but in February 1973, 24 building workers were arrested on a picket line and charged under the Act. 6 men were imprisoned, including Ricky Tomlinson shown here at the 1975 TUC after his release on parole. The last man, Des Warren, was not released until August 1976.

Above: TUC demonstration against the Industrial Relations Bill, 1971. The TUC claimed that it was the largest demonstration (an estimated 140,000 people) against Government legislation to take place in the UK in the 20th century. However the Act was passed and in July 1972, 5 dockers were arrested on a picket line, committed for contempt and put in Pentonville Prison. Thousands struck in protest and the TUC called a one day national stoppage for Monday, 31 July. The men were released on 26 July.

Left: TUC & Labour Party leaflet opposing the Trade Disputes and the Trade Union Act 1927, introduced after the 1926 General Strike. The Act banned civil service unions from joining the TUC and restricted the political levy, sympathetic strike action and picketing. The Act remained in force until 1946.



# SAVING LIFE AND LIMB

## Health & safety and everyday heroes



The struggle to achieve decent working conditions has a long history. Health and safety legislation was introduced from 1833 onwards – in mines, textiles, and then to other factories. Workers' compensation for injuries at work was introduced in the 1890s. The 20th century saw updating of Factory Acts and other laws, but the new industries and hazards emerging after WW2 were not covered.



Top: Asbestos Lobby outside the 1976 TUC Congress at Brighton during a discussion on making the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act more effective.

Above left: Explosion at Roberts, Dale and Co. chemical works, 22 June 1887.

Above right: Women colliers at Rose Bridge Pits, Wigan 1865. The 1842 Mines Act barred women and children from working underground at coal mines.

Below right: The 'Daily Herald' Order of Industrial Heroism 1923-1964 recognised bravery in the workplace. The award, which focussed attention on workplace hazards, was designed by Eric Gill.

Below: IPMS poster 1995.



Left: In 1930, the TUC appointed Sir Thomas Legge (1863-1932), a former Medical Inspector of Factories as its first Medical Adviser.



Left: Liberal MP for Derby, Samuel Plimsoll (1824-1898). The 1876 Merchant Shipping Act, sponsored by Plimsoll and supported by the TUC Parliamentary Committee, introduced the 'Plimsoll Line' to protect seamen from the hazards of overloaded ships.



TUC Congresses in the 1960s called on the Labour Government to make protection more effective and, influenced by broader environmental campaigns, the right to take up their concerns at workplace level. A Royal Commission set up in 1968 led to the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, along with its associated Safety Representatives & Safety Committee Regulations. European Union legislation has added to the framework of protection available today, but many workers still don't know or understand the hazards they face. The toll of death and illness is still immense and unions have much to do in educating people and agitating for improvements.

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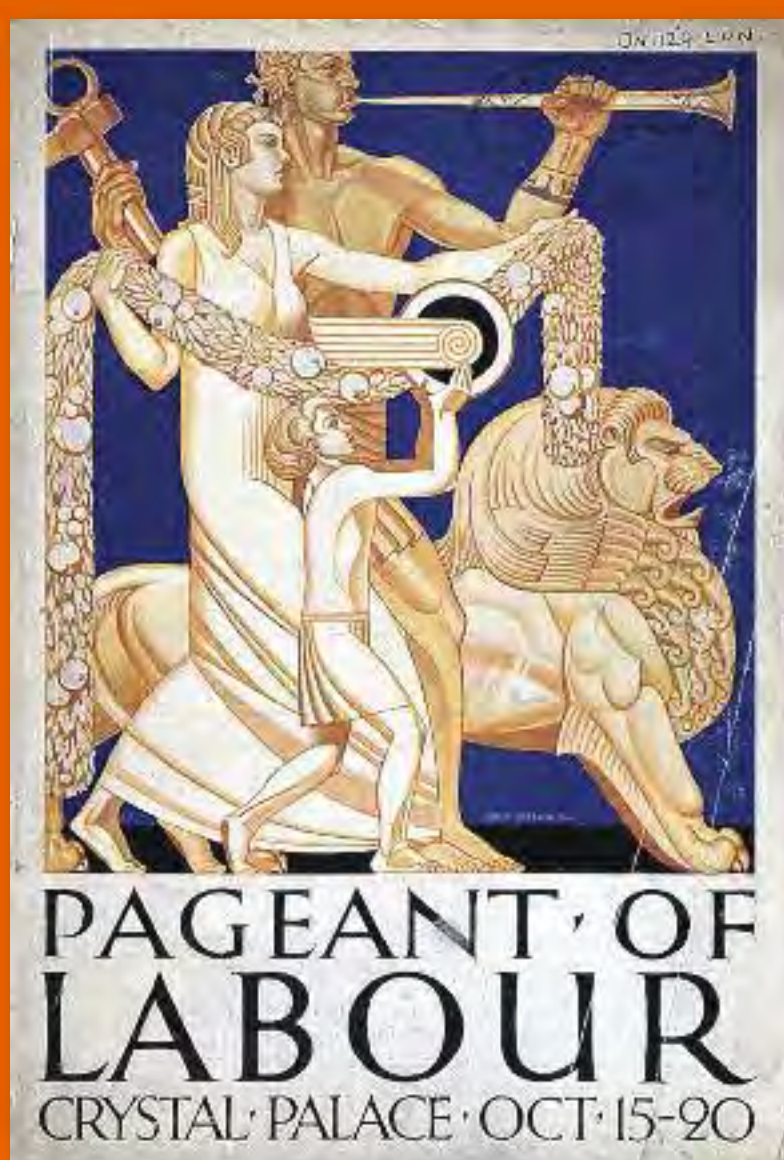


# BREAD AND ROSES Education and the Arts

TUC policies on education and the arts have always focussed on equality of access, public funding and democratic accountability, and it continues to fight against current problems of the privatisation and under-funding of these vital community resources.

Early campaigns were for representation on School Boards, free education, the raising of the school leaving age, school meals and medical inspections. In 1942, the TUC contributed to post-war reconstruction plans in education with a radical programme calling for a school leaving age of 16 years, free secondary education for all, an end to private schools and student grants for further and university education. The TUC was also a founder member of the Council for Educational Advance.

The TUC has also recognised the arts, and access to cultural institutions such as museums, galleries and libraries, as central to the quality of life.



Below left and right: Centre 42, a group of artists, writers, actors and musicians, led by the playwright Arnold Wesker, took their name from Resolution 42 at the 1960 TUC Congress, which stressed the importance of the arts in the community and urged unions to participate in cultural activities. The group organised local union festivals such as these at Nottingham and Bristol in 1962 and raised funding to transform the Roundhouse in Camden into an arts venue.

Top left: In 1980 and 1981, the TUC organised events with music, comedy and a variety of other entertainment at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in London.

Below left: The 1934 London Trades Council pageant retold episodes from labour history using drama, music and dance. Labour choirs from all over London provided a chorus and the music was directed by Michael Tippett.



Top right: 1894 School Board election leaflet for Joseph Goodman, secretary of Liverpool Trades Council.

Above: In 1914, Burston schoolchildren went on strike against the unfair dismissal of their teachers, Annie and Tom Higdon, by the Norfolk Education Committee. The Council school was boycotted and the Higdon's' alternative school continued until 1939 and is now a museum. Tom Higdon was Agricultural Workers' Union delegate to the 1936 TUC.



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Changing the world  
one step at a time



## 21. WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

British trade unions have always been aware of the importance of international coordination and solidarity.

The TUC helped to create the tripartite International Labour Organisation in 1919. This brought together governments, employers organisations and workers representatives from countries around the world. Its mission to establish workers' rights everywhere, and has played a key role in international trade union organisations. The TUC General Secretary, Walter Citrine, was also President of the International Federation of Trade Unions from 1928-1945. The TUC held determined anti-Fascist views during the 1930s and in 1945 a TUC delegation visited Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Italy to advise on the re-establishment of free trade unions. The TUC's strong anti-Communist convictions in the Cold War period, led to the establishment of the

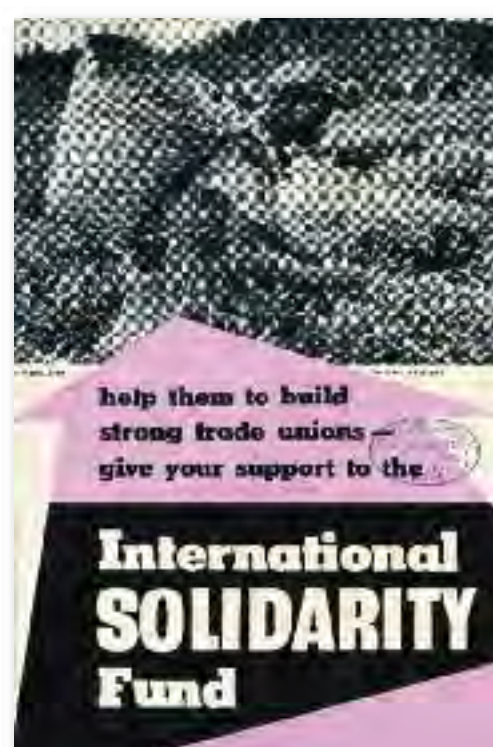
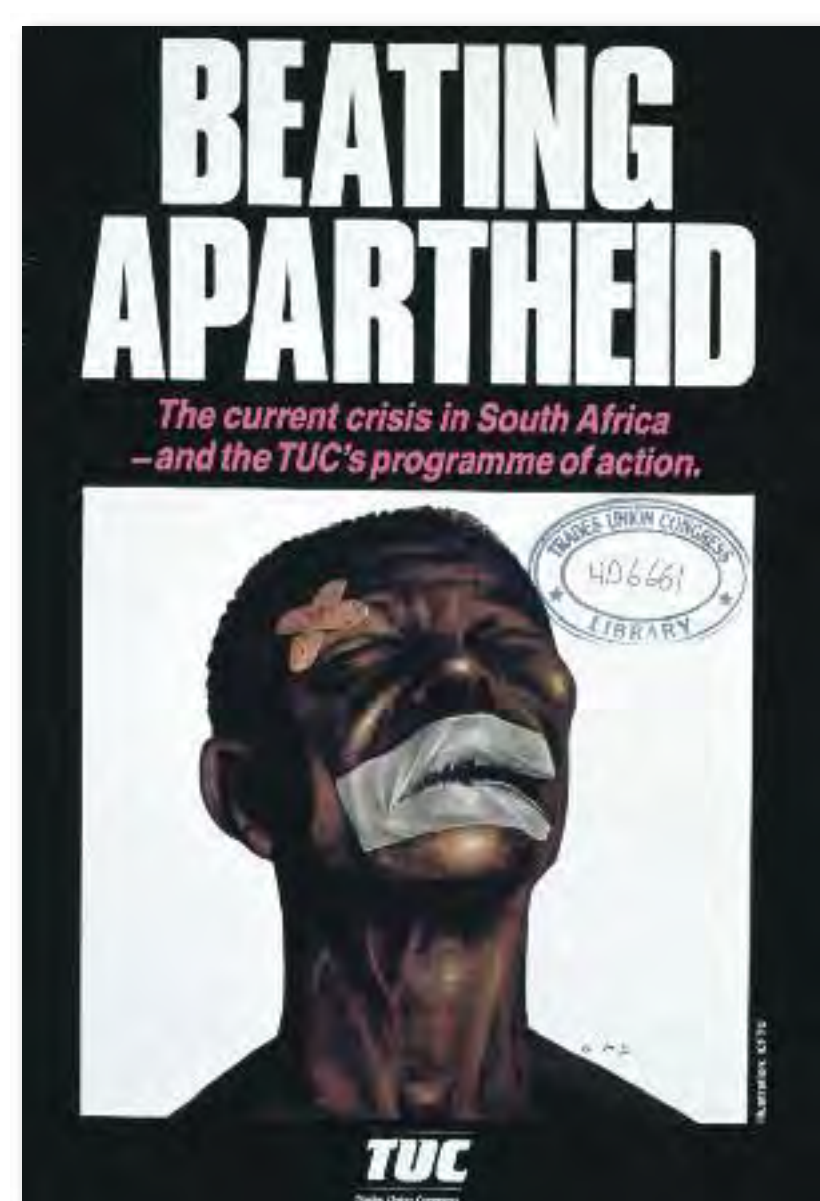
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions [now the International Trade Union Confederation] in 1949, which excluded the Soviet Union and its allies.

The TUC continues to demonstrate solidarity with trade unions around the world, especially those experiencing repression and abuse, and has played a key role in advancing workers' rights in Europe and making the case for a Social Europe. The TUC's work on international development covers issues such as trade, human rights, sustainable development and modern slavery.

Top right: Spanish Civil War - London Trades Council Appeal, 1939.

Below right: Labour Movement delegates visited post-revolutionary Russia from 1917 onwards and were initially impressed with what they saw and deposited the papers they collected in the TUC Library. When British military intervention in the Russo-Polish War seemed imminent in 1920, the Labour Party and the TUC threatened a general strike.

Below: Commonwealth trade union students in the TUC Training College in Congress House May 1969. Technical and educational assistance provided by the TUC encouraged the development of trade unionism in the British Commonwealth – especially in Africa, the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent.



Far left: TUC poster 1957.

Left: An early TUC Secretary, George Odger, was the first President of the International Working Men's Association, the First International founded in London 1864, and union delegates attended subsequent international socialist and trade union congresses.

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# The TUC and Today's Workplace

## These are the Trades Union Congress' guiding principles and core values:



For more than 150 years, unions have fought for safer workplaces and wages you can build a life on. And today we're needed more than ever to make sure every job is a decent job and everyone at work is treated with respect.

We bring together more than 5.5 million working people who make up our 48 member unions. We support unions to grow and thrive, and we stand up for everyone who works for a living. Our values underpin everything we do – and they are how we'll make the working world a better place for everyone.

## Working people joining together can change things.

### Fairness

We believe in a world where everyone has what they need to live a life of dignity.

### Equality

We believe that everybody should have the chance to make the most of their lives and talents, to live and work free from prejudice and discrimination.

### Respect

We value others and honour their dignity in everything we do.

### Solidarity

We stand together with others, knowing that together we can achieve more than we achieve alone.

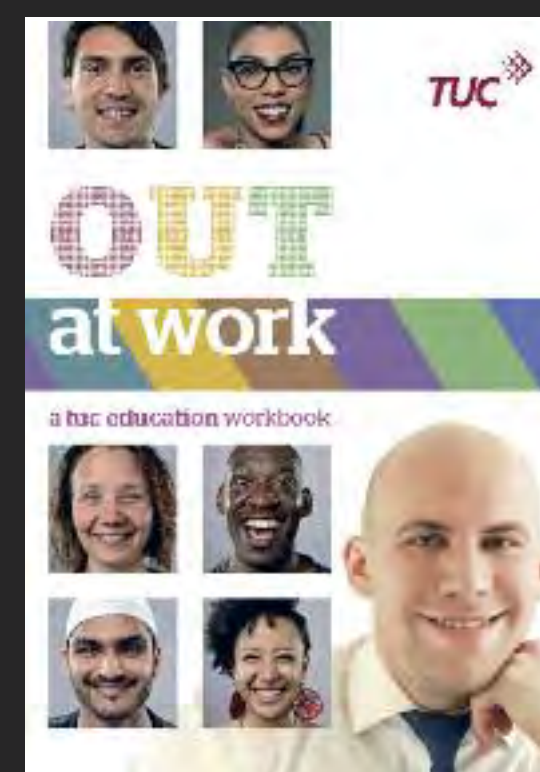
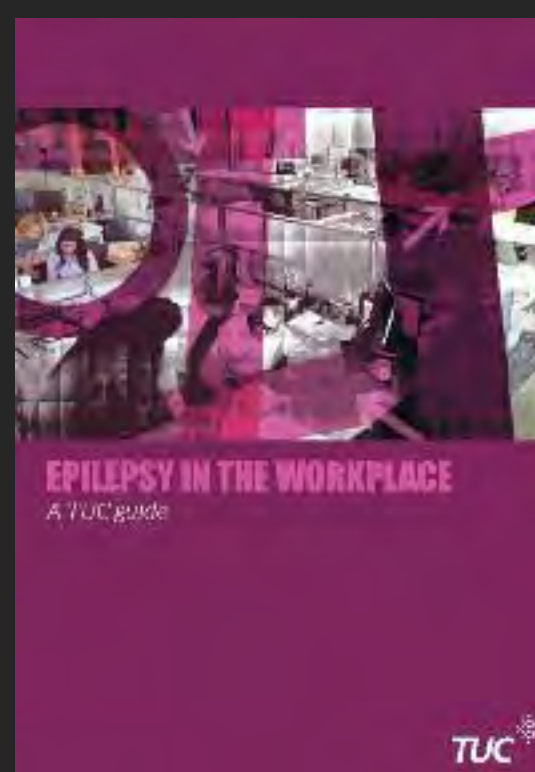
### Justice

We seek the realisation of fairness, equality and respect for everyone, worldwide.

### Dignity

We treat others as valued individuals, respecting their qualities and their differences.

**Every day, we campaign for more equal and better jobs, and a more equal, more prosperous country.**



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# Acknowledgements

## Thanks to everyone who helped with this exhibition:

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To those who allowed us to use their images.

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Design – Becky Shand

Coordinator – Jeff Howarth (TUC Library)

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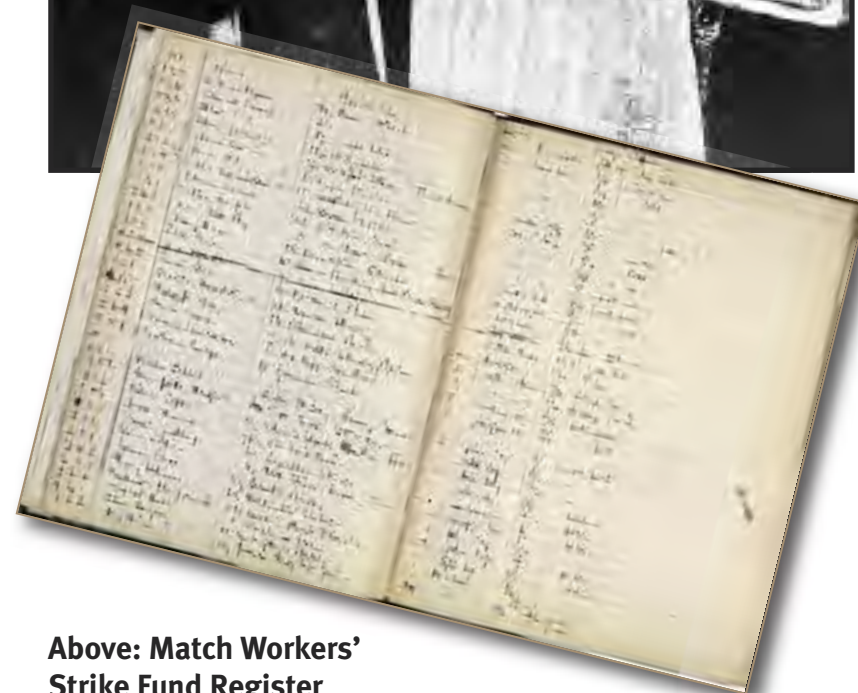


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The TUC Library is part of the University's Special Collections which includes amongst others, the University Archive, the Archive of the Irish in Britain, and the Frederick Parker Collection.



Above: Match Workers' Strike Fund Register 1888.



Above: Women pickets, Civil Service strike, 1981.



Left: Walter Crane covers, The Cooperative Commonwealth and Solidarity of Labour, by Walter Crane



Below: The truth, News International dispute, 1986.

Below left: Manuscript of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, by Robert Tressell.



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