

LATE NEWS:

SOUTHEND: Access credit card is said to be having such problems with service that it is threatening to withdraw its contract. **GLASGOW** Branch is providing life and death coverage. One member went without pay to restore service to the Cleddens Nursing Home between Glen Boig and Glen Mavis so old folks isolated by the weather and breakdown of service could make telephone calls to relatives and friends.

ST. ALBANS: The Schweppes company were expecting a major batch of extensions this week and BT's inability to provide them has led to the threat of the withdrawal of custom. **IPSWICH:** Throughout the country non-members and EOTA members have been flocking to join the Union, and no fewer than 40 non-members have applied to rejoin the Union in Ipswich.

INSIDE:

News from the Districts; on the picket lines; how the action is biting; help from abroad.

BACK PAGE:

How the Union is keeping you in touch.

HOW TO KEEP IN TOUCH

Ring **HOTLINE 01-997 1049**

Ring **VOICEBANKS 01-725 7801**

or **061-400 2004**

KEEP in touch, and keep the Union in touch. Make sure you have a number and place where you can contact your Branch officers or a rep.

Watch out for what is being

said in, or broadcast by, your local media... sometimes it may be the quickest way of communicating.

Keep in touch. The Union needs to know how the dispute is affecting British

Telecom, the public and you. The Union needs to know what the members are feeling.

We'll do our best to keep you in touch. Make sure we're in touch with you too.



Pay up and no strings

JANUARY 22, 1987:

"Congratulations". That's the message to all members from NCU General Secretary John Golding (above), and he goes on to set out the latest position in the pay dispute.

The Clerical Group are calling a 3-day strike and set out their current position in the article on the right hand side of this page.

John's message to all members is:

"Congratulations to all in the NCU for such a magnificent response. Never has the Union been so united. Never have the members been so loyal.

"I have been overwhelmed by the magnificent response to our industrial action. Those at Union headquarters, Greystoke House - Executive members, officers and staff - have worked tirelessly throughout the action.

"Branch officers, indeed all activists, have done a marvellous job. Keep at it. Stay firm, and fight for a fair settlement".

The letter below was sent to BT today and sets out the Union's position for the Engineering Group:

Dear Mr Leeson,
NCU ENGINEERING GROUP 1986 PAY CLAIM: I am writing in response to your letter dated 8th January 1987. I have to inform you that the Engineering Group Executive Council totally reject BT's latest offer to NCU(E) as set out in the above letter.

The Union's claim remains that which was originally tabled on 25th April 1986 which was for

(1) A substantial increase in basic pay rates with effect from 1st July 1986, which involves a significant increase in living standards for all

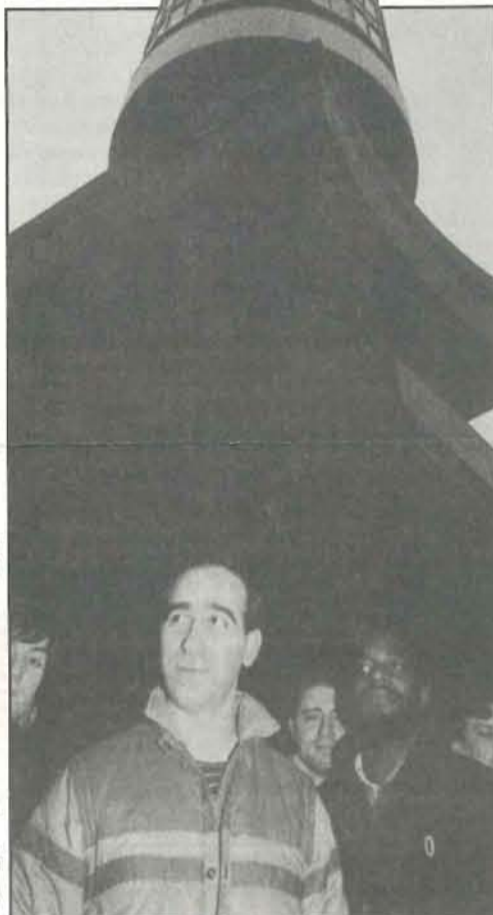
is in the form of a common and equal single
Turn to centre

Journal

National Communications Union

SPECIAL ISSUE: JANUARY 1987

Don't ring us - we're out!



● Early morning pickets at the Telecom Tower. Photo Andrew Wiard (Report)

WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

BT has got it wrong

AS the dispute grew a number of papers began to comment that BT seemed to have misjudged the Union. "The most astonished, judging by their public and private words, are BT's senior executives who appear to have miscalculated badly", said an editorial in the Guardian.

The Guardian commented that engineers, who had shares in the company, "prepared to put share prices at risk has provided management with a sobering barometer reading".

The Guardian said BT's chief executive Iain Vallance had been "aghast" at the ballot result and suggested "a less apparently confrontationist style might well ease the path of change" (see cutting below).

Similar comments were made elsewhere in the Press and broadcasting and the Morning Star headline (left) "Don't ring us - we're out" summed up where BT's miscalculations had got them.



CLERICAL CALL THREE DAY STRIKE

CLERICAL members have been called out on a three day strike from Tuesday. The strike on January 27, 28 and 29 is in support of the claim for a substantial pay rise - without strings.

More and more Clerical members have become involved in action in recent days. Some have been locked out by management, some are out in protest over BT's suspension of Clerical Branch officers or other members, and some have refused to cross picket lines.

"It is essential that all members support the strike and show clearly the strength of the members' demands on the 1986 pay claim", said Clerical Deputy General Secretary Jeannie Drake.

"The Clerical Group Executive Council has made every negotiating effort", she said. "It is the inflexibility of BT that has prevented progress".

● This Journal Special was initially planned for Engineering Group members only. Apologies therefore if the Clerical coverage seems skimpy, Editor.

The Clerical Executive reports over on the events of the past few days.

Turn to centre

ULTIMATUM: RE-INSTATE OR ALL OUT

THE engineers have given British Telecom an ultimatum. Re-instate all those locked out or suspended, and withdraw all the demands for "signatures" and verbal assurances - or face a national indefinite stoppage from Monday January 26. BT had started the escalation of the dispute by warning, and then threatening the suspension of members refusing overtime and working to rule. Actual suspensions then triggered 24 hour stoppages, and these in turn became "lock-outs".

BT had engineered the lock-outs by demanding members signed a letter, or gave verbal assurances, saying they would work as directed. The dispute grew day by day with first a few thousand, and then 24,000, then 40,000, and then 90,000 and nearly all the members employed in BT involved as management moved from area to area making new "suspensions", often apparently at random. London was clearly and deliberately kept to last as BT found they had underestimated members' strength.

Sorry, wrong numbers

The industrial action by British Telecom engineers, which rapidly accelerated yesterday as almost 40,000 walked out in protest at suspensions, has taken virtually everybody by surprise. The most astonished, judging by their public and private words, are BT's senior executives who appear to have miscalculated badly. They felt that, with a new (right wing) executive and a history of relative quiescence, the main union, the National Communications Union, would huff and puff over the conditional pay offer but simply run out of breath and

Pay up with no strings

From front page

- percentage increase for all grades represented by the NCU(E), NCU(C) and STE
- (2) increase in shift and other relevant allowances with effect from 1st July 1986 by the same percentage as is applied to basic rates
- (3) increased annual leave entitlement.

The Engineering Group believes this claim to be reasonable and justified for the following reasons:

1. Profitability

British Telecom is a highly profitable Company and can well afford to meet the Union's claim. Since 1984, BT's profits per employee have increased by almost 100% from £4,108 to approximately £8,000 in 1986. This has not been reflected in pay.

The 1984 pay settlement was only 0.1% above RPI and the 1985 settlement exactly at the level of RPI, with the effect that pay has stood still.

The latest, interim results indicate the extent of BT's profitability with sales up 14%, pre-tax profits up 12% and earnings per share up 20%.

These increases in profitability have only been possible because of the continued co-operation of BT staff to improving efficiency through co-operation with technological and organisational changes over the last few years.

Latest forecasts indicate that profit levels will continue with pre-tax profits for the current financial year expected to increase 13% to £2275M.

Our members are very well aware of BT's financial strength and can only respond angrily when their own contribution to BT's success is not rewarded.

2. Productivity:

While overall operating costs rose 15% it is estimated that, adjusted for acquisitions, the increase is 10.4%. At the same time, staff costs only increased by 9.5%.

The NCU(E) is fully aware of the contribution members have made to continuing improvements in productivity through co-operation with staff cuts.

In the financial year 1985/6 staff reductions totalled 5,700. The year on year reduction of 6,500 announced with the first quarter results indicated that this trend is continuing.

Indeed, we must note with concern the announcement made by Mr. Graeme Odgers last month that BT was looking for a total of a further 20-24,000 job cuts over the next four years.

Since the 1970s, productivity within BT remains unmatched by any other sector of industry in the UK. The NCU(E), therefore, expect its contribution to productivity growth, highlighted and welcomed by Sir George Jefferson, to be acknowledged in real terms.

'British Telecom is a highly profitable company'

3. Outside Settlements:

BT's offer is well out of line with settlements in other companies in this year's pay round. In July 1986 Labour Research figures indicate that the median level for settlements in private companies was 6.5%.

CBI figures for the second quarter of 1986 show average settlements running at 6.5%. In addition, according to the Department of Employment average earnings of the whole economy have been rising at an underlying rate of 7.5% with earnings in production industries rising at 8.25% and those in manufacturing rising at 7.75%.

All these figures indicate that other employers with healthy profits and good business prospects are taking the opportunity to reward, not penalise, their staff.

The figures further show that the great majority of employers who are not nearly so profitable or as successful as BT have, nevertheless, increased the pay of their staff by more than BT is offering, even though the Company is making any offer totally conditional upon acceptance of many conditions involving far reaching changes for our members.

4. Staff Goodwill:

As we have indicated through the eight months of negotiations, the NCU(E) finds it impossible to persuade members to accept the current pay offer, and the list of conditions BT is seeking to attach to that offer.

Our members have also indicated, as we have tried to impress upon you, that the grades re-patterning package must be separated from the 1986 pay offer and will not be acceptable unless BT is prepared to make a significant payment in line with those paid to other groups and unless BT gives assurances of greater protection for promotion.

The Company must understand that it will be impossible for it to pursue

'Many conditions involving far reaching changes'

its aims of increasing efficiency without the goodwill of the staff.

BT has had the co-operation of its staff in the past in increasing BT's financial strength and efficiency but, as recent events show, that co-operation cannot be guaranteed unless the 1986 pay offer is improved.

Lack of morale will cost BT dear as it moves more and more into the competitive environment you have stressed throughout these negotiations.

We understand that the Board has rejected these arguments, choosing instead to insist that despite huge profits, BT will have difficulties making ends meet.

We note, but do not accept, that the Board refuses to accept the validity of comparison with outside settlements.

We also note our arguments about past performance, productivity and co-operation are considered by the Board as "yesterday's arguments".

It does not, however, appear that these arguments apply to the salaries of directors. It has not escaped the attention of our members that the Chairman's salary has increased by 105% over the last two years and that, over the same period, the

'Members are incensed by the current offer'

salary bill of the Board has increased by 80%.

In conclusion, our members are incensed by the current offer. Members all over the country have been absolutely clear and unequivocal in indicating to the Engineering Group Executive Council that they will not accept a pay offer with strings, that the grades re-patterning package must be separated from the 1986 pay, and that the pay offer itself must be increased.

It is for this reason that the Engineering Group Executive Council has resolved that there has to be a 1986 pay settlement without strings and that any package of "strings" be the subject of separate negotiations.

We believe that negotiations should be resumed speedily on this basis.

Clerical staff join growing phone dispute

THE BRITISH Telecom dispute is heading for a major escalation in Wales, with clerical staff set to join their engineering colleagues on strike.
A nationwide three-day stoppage next week involving about 1,800 Welsh

By MARK HUTCHINGS

Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire

'BT puts lives on the line'

By Brian Hope

BRITISH TELECOM chiefs in Manchester were accused today of putting lives at risk when engineers begin an overtime ban next week.

Management has turned down an offer from the city's 4,000 telephone engineers to provide 24-hour cover for the emergency services and seriously ill. Now a full-scale strike is threatened.

REPORTS have been coming in daily into the Action Rooms being run by the Clerical and Engineering Groups. Sometimes though they just cover isolated events, and sometimes the news comes from press cuttings rather than Branch or District reports.

The cuttings here give a flavour of many that have come in. Top, from Cardiff; right, Manchester; below, Reading, Coleraine and Middlesbrough.

The reports below came into the Engineering Action Room on January 22, but cover only a few of hundreds of calls handled in the day.

EAST MIDLANDS DISTRICT. First suspensions in the District came about 3.00 p.m. on Friday 16th January when all over the District management started to suspend Subscriber Apparatus and Line staff and Repair Service Control staff for refusing to work overtime.

Branches then called out the members concerned so that, by the weekend, 150 members were "out". On the following Monday 19th January these members reported for work, but were all sent home. As a result, the Burton-on-Trent and the two Leicester Branches had a 24 hour stoppage.

The following day - Tuesday - the two Derby Branches, the two Nottingham Branches and its members came out on their 24 hour stoppage.

The position as at Thursday 22nd January is that no members are working, but each day some 4,500 Engineers are turning up for what one Branch Official described as "work queues". However, BT is not allowing members to return to work without signing the form, and all members are refusing to do so.

Membership support in the District is total. Indeed members with outstanding levy payments are sending cheques to the Branches, and even non-Union members have refused to go to work and have asked to rejoin the Union.

An indication of the private feelings of at least some First Line managers is that a number of them have been sending cheques to the Union's local fighting fund - one for £50.

Packed mass meetings have been held in Nottingham, Northampton and Derby where morale has been "first class". Local Branches have had very good reporting from the press and local radio and - as one Branch Official put it - "British Telecom have lost the argument".

LIVERPOOL DISTRICT. The action in Liverpool District is described as "fantastic". The solidarity of the members is "marvellous". Two mass meetings have been held and, in each case, over 2,000 members attended.

The second of these meetings was held on the evening of Wednesday 21st January when there was a local Liverpool versus Everton football derby. Any sports enthusiast will know how seriously Liverpoolians take their football, but incredibly members gave away tickets for the derby match in order to attend the mass meeting!

Support for the industrial action has not come simply from long-standing Union members. Trunk Networks Operations recently recruited a number of people on short term contracts and seven of these have joined the Union and gone on strike. One of them only joined BT on Monday 5th January and was taking industrial action within a week which must be some kind of record.

Then there is the case of the Sales Support Officer, a non-member who will be 60 in two months time, who was not presented with the traditional form, went off to seek the form so that he could refuse to sign it, and subsequently went out of the building and joined the Union.

SEVERNSIDE DISTRICT. As a result of the "lockout", our Severnside District is operating from a Transport and General Workers' Union building. The local control room advises that the action in the District is "solid" with over 3,000 Engineers out.

The first suspensions took place on Monday 19th January because of the refusal of certain members to work the previous Saturday. There was a 24 hour stoppage the following day everywhere except Gloucester, and then on the Wednesday Gloucester followed suit.

Mass meetings have already been held in Bristol and Bath and more are scheduled. Those which have already taken place are described as "excellent" with "a marvellous response".

As in other Districts, Severnside management is refusing to co-operate with the Union's offer of emergency cover arrangements. Management is insisting on providing the cover themselves.

Indeed the Head of Industrial Relations Group has threatened that if somebody who is not already suspended is caught by a Line manager providing emergency cover in his own time, then that member would be suspended for providing such cover.

Our colleagues in Severnside have been achieving excellent coverage of the dispute in the local media. Indeed several of them have become media celebrities.

BT disruption threat grows

THE threat of severe disruption to services from the British Telecom dispute is growing, with more than half its 100,000 engineers due out on strike today.

Problems could increase as breakdowns caused by the Arctic weather, then its thaw, go unrepaired.

BT was still claiming yesterday that the action, which has escalated as workers walk out in support of suspended colleagues, had not yet made a real impact.

But the National Communications Union estimated that at least 37,500 engineers had stopped work in support of more than 1,000 colleagues reportedly sent home for refusing to work overtime at the weekend. The union has banned overtime in a row over pay.

In the Thames Valley BT engineers returned to work today after a 24-hour strike in support of colleagues suspended for refusing to work overtime.

The engineers say they will continue their strikes.

Union and management deadlocked in pay wrangle

THREAT TO PHONE USERS

By Robert Huggins

THE BITTER industrial dispute over pay between management and staff at British Telecom intensified this week with the imposition of a general overtime ban and the threat of greater action to follow.

Consumer services in the Triangle, Ballymoney and Moyle areas have been disrupted outside normal working hours as a result of the ban which was implemented by the National Communications Union on Monday.

Strike threat

TELEPHONE services are facing chaos with the threat of an all-out strike by British Telecom engineers in Cleveland and the rest of the country after Monday.

In the latest escalation of their pay dispute, thousands of engineers in the South of England today walked out after 700 members were suspended.

And emergency cover has now been lifted in the Middlesbrough Telephone area and the rest of the North.

Middle National walkout ended overtime.

CLERICAL THREE DAY STRIKE CALL

Group Members have been called out for strike on Tuesday 28th and 29th January in support of Clerical Group's substantial pay cut strings! We will consolidate the 34,000 Members to fight against arbitrary behaviour by management once the demand of our members has been met. We have created a substantial pay cut strings! Members must support the show clearly the members' 1986 pay claim. The January saw a suspension in the NCU's BT's totally unconditional pay cut strings. Many Clerical members have shown solidarity with Group Members by their picket lines. In Manchester Blackburn GMO letters stating work as directed by locked out by man-

week the number locked out for refuse letters dramatised as the industrial action don. 10 members were

ast one of our this is becoming an embarrassment Colin Winsby - the Bath Internal Branch District - was the local BBC programme "Points

children saw the t home, his ten-hter covered her item was finished teen-year-old son the room insisting going to school

R DISTRICT. District Officers are in a UCW office in city. Here the first are on Monday 19th the first stoppages 8.00 a.m. the same

eting was held on st January where sponse was g". Another mass eduled for Monday hen there will be in members of the ghts Unit who will nation and advice its.

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locked out and immediately met and decided to stay out until the letters were withdrawn. Similar action was taken or is being considered by members in other branches.

In Bristol and Bedford letters were either not given out, or withdrawn after local negotiations, as their Members remained adamant they would not give in to threats from management.

After the suspension of the Branch Secretary in Canterbury 200 members walked out and say they will remain out until the suspension is lifted. In the West End of London traffic was disrupted at one stage by hundreds of members reporting for work at their Branch who were locked out by management.

The Branch Secretary was suspended and advised that all Union facilities were withdrawn permanently. Members were told to sign a declaration that they would work Sundays if required!

In Southend and Leicester Members also refused to cross picket lines and met later in the week to discuss further action.

The resolve from the members was most evident in the Clerical Group's Communications Room as Branches rang in advising HQ of their determination not to succumb to BT's bullying tactics. Members in every Branch in the country are clearly telling BT they have had enough!

Foreign unions in phone strike pact

by KEVIN EASON
Industrial Correspondent

STRIKING phone workers have had their hand strengthened by unions in America, Japan and Switzerland.

They say that if their four-day pay dispute with British Telecom is not resolved soon, unions in major financial centres will pull the plug on the City.

Telecommunication workers in New York, Tokyo and Zurich have promised to help the National Communications Union and may refuse to handle any calls from London's business centre.

Plot to cripple the City

NCU general secretary John Golding said: "We have started discussions with major unions in these three cities and they say they will give their support if this situation goes on."

"This is not something we want, but if BT insists on escalating the dispute, the company could end up crippling Britain's financial heart."

The whole of British Telecom's 110,000-strong engineering workforce will be on strike or locked out today, leaving almost the entire country with-

out cover for repairs. Another 5,000 clerical staff are refusing to cross picket lines.

Thousands of customers in Britain have already found their phones off because of the backlog of faults.

Even the TUC's switchboard in London was off for the day yesterday with operators unable to put calls through.

The Stock Exchange - yesterday's prime target as 28,000 London engineers joined the action - escaped without incident, although two stockbrokers

THE industrial action is hitting British Telecom, but some customers are reluctant to admit they have problems. The TUC, bottom left, was clearly a victim however.

Extel, the financial information group, said faults were building up on their private circuits outside London. ICI, Ford and Access were among major customers complaining.

British Aerospace, the Open University and M4 emergency phones were also casualties.

Various reports came in of exchanges "crashing" and union volunteers turned out on a number of occasions to get hospitals back on the air.

BBC and ITN video links suffered and a computer fault hit Radiopaging over a wide area of Southern England.

Other exchange problems hit 999 calls in the Thames Valley. And those were just some reports over a two day period.

Offers of support from the PTTI, the international telecom union organisation, added fuel to concerns over the City's phones as the top cutting shows. BT's rolling programme of suspensions had tried to isolate London from the dispute.

Some more reports of the effects the action is having are set out below, but it is important Branches keep head office and their local Press briefed on developments.

● THE effect of the industrial action are certainly beginning to be felt in the East Midlands District. Ashbourne, a large TXE2 Exchange serving some 10,000 customers, has been off the air for periods which have totalled 12 hours.

Meanwhile, in Matlock, customers can make calls within the town but are unable to make calls externally. Derbyshire County Council - which has some 34,000 staff - is only able to contact 1,800 of them. Radio paging and Cellnet are off totally.

So great is BT management's desperation that they have been leaning on non-members to do work totally inappropriate to their duty. For instance, a pole tester was told to go out on emergency faults but he refused, walked out and is now part of the stoppage.

● ONE company Allied Dunbar has been calling the Industrial Action Control room at Head Office each day requesting an update on the action. The caller in Swindon has frankly admitted that the company is suffering major communications problems with its facilities in Liverpool, Manchester and elsewhere.

Therefore any bland assurance by BT to the media that companies are not being hit by our action are simply instances of BT spokespersons being "economical with the truth" (to use the words of a distinguished British Civil servant when testifying in an Australian Court).

● As elsewhere in the country, major communications problems are now being felt by the Company and customers in Liverpool District. It is reported that half the circuits between Liverpool and Manchester are down. A job excavator cut through three cables, and put out of action 350 circuits near Aintree.

● Information in Severnside on the state of the local network has 'dried up' because local management has placed a clamp on all news. They will not even speak to the local press on the subject.

However, we know that a JCB machine cut a cable which put out of action for a time communications facilities at the civilian airfield at Lulsgate.

In Bath, gas workers contrived to cut three cables before breakfast and our Officers in Severnside advise us that "we are going to make a collection for the Gas Board" because of their contribution to the action!

● THE action in Manchester is biting. It is believed that two Exchanges - Woodley and Ashton-under-Lyne - have actually gone down. On one occasion the Union was asked to allow attendance at a cable to Manchester Airport and refused.

On another instance, local management were so desperate that a Level 3 went down a manhole with two Level 1s in an attempt to repair a cable. Meanwhile the situation has become so chaotic that the flashing lights on operators' boards are looking "like Blackpool illuminations".

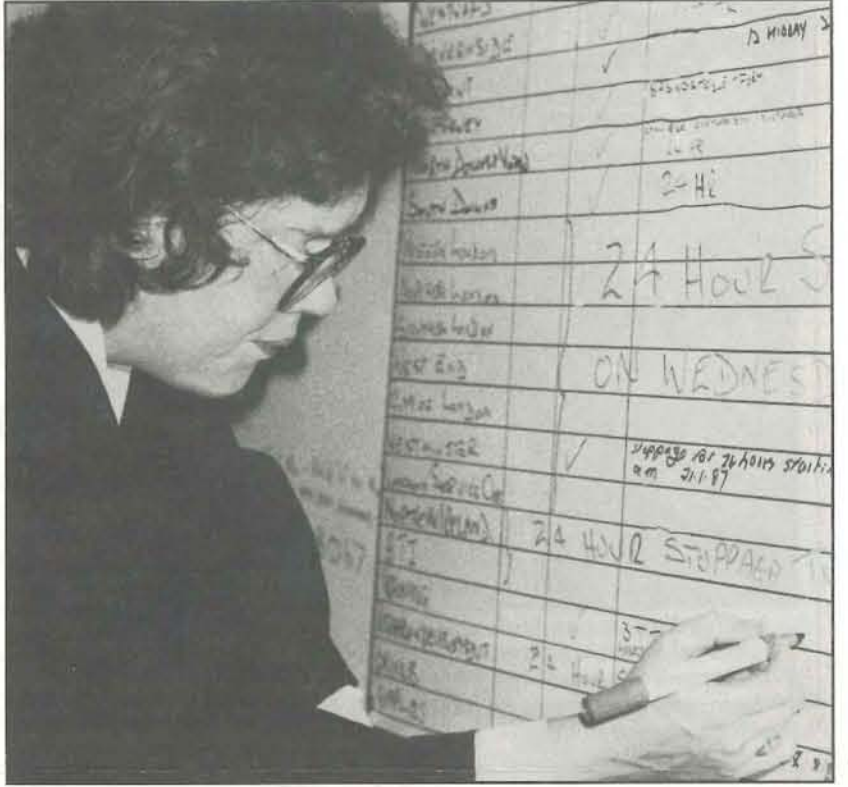
From BT with love

ONE incident reveals clearly the brutally insensitive way in which some BT managers have been responding to the action of our members in seeking a reasonable pay settlement.

One of our Clerical members who works for Materials Executive in London is planning to marry on Saturday 24th January. His bride-to-be works for the Company as well.

He was involved in a one day stoppage of work on Wednesday 21st January and, when he reported back to work the next day, he was told that he had to sign the infamous letter.

Then, so as to show how little some Line managers care for individuals who give dedicated service to the Company, our member was told that, if he doesn't sign the letter, his special leave for his honeymoon would be cancelled.



KEEPING track of the troops Vicky Kidd, top, in the Engineering Action Room, with three picket lines in London below. From top to bottom - BT training centre in Paul Street where a student is intercepted; Fleet Building near the Daily Express, and the large Westminster exchange near Parliament. Photos taken by Jez Coulson

(IFL) and Stefano Cagnoni (Report). Engineering picket lines have been set up to lobby anyone who might do engineering work. Clerical members are not affected by the pickets unless they themselves are out on strike, but in some areas Clerical members have refused to cross any picket lines.

Telecom strike cuts off the TUC

By PAUL WILENIUS
Industrial Reporter

THE TUC became one of the first major victims of the rapidly escalating phone strike yesterday.

The switchboard to the centre of the union movement collapsed yesterday - just as BT engineers in London walked out on strike.

Calls for repair crews produced no response. TUC leaders of the biggest phone union, the NCU, said they did not see it a matter of life or death that the TUC should be re-connected.

Almost 100,000 phone engineers all over the country were out on strike yesterday, 25,000 of them in London.

And in the West of Scotland, 4,000 engineers walked out a day early after three engineers in Glasgow were suspended for refusing to work overtime.

Up to 115,000 BT engineers could be on strike by the end of the week.

Threat

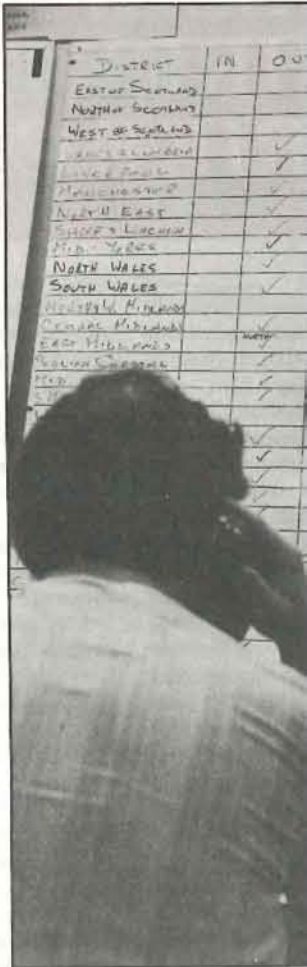
The first signs of panic in the City as a result of the worsening BT dispute

National Communications Union

Journal

SPECIAL ISSUE: JANUARY 1987

KEEPING YOU IN TOUCH



Two way traffic

EVERY effort has been made, and is being made, to keep members informed - and consult them. When members are "out" and Branches have temporary bases this is obviously harder though.

Locally Branches should ensure there are contact points - for head office, as well as members. Hotline and the Voicebanks listed on the front page give members one source of information, but local details are often even more important.

In head office the two Group Action Rooms, Engineering and Clerical, are the contact point for Branch and District officers. The action boards with Pat Lee (above) and Vince Turner (right) help the Union spot problems emerging.

Executive members also keep their Branches briefed. Engineering executives (right) brief their contacts in the North West, London, Northern Ireland and International, while Deputy General Secretary (Engineering) Eric George (above right) has the task of co-ordinating meetings inside and outside head office.

On the media front General Secretary John Golding has been giving interviews from breakfast time through to the



bulletins and cuttings. The supply of information needs to be two way though. Head office can not keep Branches and members, and the press, informed if Branches and members do not keep head office informed.

Even inside head office it is easy to lose touch and misled by gossip and rumour. One short-lived panic that the General Election had been called died when the next radio broadcast added "in Ireland Newsflashes: Industrial action has boosted recruitment, wages and non-members are signing up. B. EOTA signing up. B. MITEL production staff have got 9.6% pay rise in South Wales."



British Telecom engineers picketing Telecom House, Hanley, this morning. The National General Secretary, John Golding is seen with local officials, Glen Plant, chairman, and Jan Zablocki, secretary.

Smile please you're on camera

GENERAL Secretary John Golding has not been the only person bobbing up and down in front of TV cameras and radio microphones. Many Branches have seized the opportunity to put the Union's case to the public through their local media.

Mass meetings of members, leafletting the public, and picket lines have all been opportunities to get publicity. And when members are scattered and Branches are operating from temporary bases the media is also one way of keeping members informed.

A leaflet for customers (left) has been circulated to Branches, and Nottingham (top) were leafletting on their picket (Photo, John Birdsall). Up in the Potteries John Golding joined the picket which got featured in the Stoke Sentinel.

The Union guide (left) on using the media was circulated to Branches. Media training is also part of the Publicity Course at the NCU Education Centre and many Branch officers had their first brush with cameras there.

EMERGENCY COVER

MEMBERS continue to provide "life and death" cover in many areas, except where managers have made it impossible by confiscating

keys, passes and other necessary items.

On many occasions though BT has had to ask staff back in to help, often just after they have suspended or locked them out.

Recent incidents included a hospital heart unit (Ayr), a line down across a road (Aberdeen), two police murder HQs (London), hospital lines (Weymouth, Oxford, Norwich, Aylesbury), a hole in the heart baby (Bournemouth area).

Such incidents should be brought to the attention of local press and head office. In one case a volunteer talked a supervisor through a blind repair over an emergency link when a hospital isolated by snow drifts lost its exchange.

Dear Customer,

These services are being brought to you by a team of dedicated staff... We are sorry that we cannot provide you with the service you deserve... We are working hard to get things back to normal as quickly as possible.

GETTING YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS!

A GUIDE TO HANDLING THE MEDIA

Aileen Boughen, below left, and Kashmir Bilgan, right, handling two of the hundreds of Press calls received at head office in recent weeks. Photos on this page by Jez Coulson (IFL).

