

Unions failing to attract youth

WHILE THE TGWU is the worst example of a major union in serious decline, others have been hit hard by membership loss. UCATT, for example, has been afflicted by both membership haemorrhage and financial crisis. It is literally collapsing into the TGWU. Like other unions MSF lost around 5% of its members, whose dues are deducted at source, as part of the 'sign-up' exercise required by Tory legislation. This has prompted cutbacks and a freeze on staff pay. Some of the retrenchment measures — a ban on foreign trips, stricter con-

trol of officials' expenses, a moratorium on employment of consultants — may appeal more to the membership.

What is of particular concern is the 'massive' drop in the numbers of young members noted in a recent TUC report. Between 1990 and 1993 the number of members under 25 years of age declined by nearly 40% from 1.83million to 657,000. The number of members under 20 fell by 63%. According to the report only 1 in 10 workers under 20 were in trade unions at the end of 1992.