

British Section of the International Workers Association



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It is now at the time of writing 7/4/75. thirteen weeks since the Glasgow dustcart drivers went on strike to achieve parity of wages with their counterparts in the private sector of industry. In the interests of the so called social contract between the labour government and the trade union top brass the dustcart drivers after being on strike last year agreed to return to work with the promise of more money. The Labour council broke its promise. The dustmen reacted by once more withdrawing their labour. Unfortunately like most sections of the working class these municipal workers are divided and subdivided by their respective unions. Consequently from the start they were in a weak position. Their workmates, the binmen and maintenance men continued to work on. Plastic bags were distributed to the general public to contain refuse. However, in spite of this the dustcart drivers were determined. But the lackeys of the government were not idle. The press and T.V. were mounting their propaganda campaign against the strikers. Day by day the public were being spoon fed with the inevitable health hazards. The hypocrisy of it all would make one vomit. As if the health hazards in large cities like Glasgow are not forever with us. Don't we have health hazards due to industrial pollution: to bad housing and lack of proper sanitation, don't we have them especially among old people due to lack of fuel and sufficient nourishment, don't we have the hazards of disease in all our big cities due to housing slums and industrial processes? We all know the answer to that although ignored by many.

On the ninth week of the strike after the anti-strike campaign had borne fruit the Labour council had said that something drastic must be done or soon the rats would be showing their noses in daylight. The council called upon the government to use troops to break the strike but of course under the pretext that this was to prevent a health hazard.

The council was right, the rats did show their noses. They forgot to say of course that many of them would only have two legs.

The troops first went into their strike breaking action on the 18th. March and were confronted by pickets. On Wednesday 19th. pickets at the Dawsholm incinerator were joined by stewards from Rolls Royce Hillington and from Yarrow of Scotstoun West. Engineers and labourers at Polmadie refused to cooperate with the army and left the incinerator station. On Thursday 20th. maintenance engineers at Dawsholm refused to cooperate with the troops. In Partick, pickets were successful in disuading contractors from removing refuse from a tip. Due to effective picketing and non-cooperation by workers at the incinerators the troops were forced to dump refuse on the fringes of the city. The sad side of the matter was that the binmen who incidentally are also entitled to more money; (they collect the rubbish whilst the drivers remain seated in their cabs) continued to work on and finally cooperated with the troops. Trade union officials in

general identifying themselves to a greater or lesser degree with Labour government policy have been another impediment to gaining solidarity action much needed since the intervention of the troops. The strike now at time of writing seems to be dying a natural death. Maintenance workers are returning to work and sadly to say the majority of other trade unionists in Glasgow seem to be disinterested and seem to have accepted the ballyhoo of the yellow press.

Having said that there is one thing which may shake Glasgow trade unionists from their slumbers. And that is if the dustcart drivers retain their determination now that council drivers in Dundee, Gourock, Greenock, Port Glasgow and Bellshill decided to have a sympathetic strike. For in such a situation more army personnel would be necessary. Some M.P.'s don't exactly think that its unlikely that more troops may have to be used. To mention just one Tory M.P. for Cathcart Glasgow seems to think the army should extend its strike breaking activity by intervening in Glasgow corporations electricians wage dispute. The electricians are on a similar dispute as the dustmen. They want parity of wages with their counterparts in private industry. If troops are used in the above mentioned areas and against the electricians surely other trade unionists must awaken and realize that troops are most likely to be used against them when on dispute.

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DOCKERS VICTORY

The recent London Docks strike which ended without any apparent concession from the Port Employers has nevertheless signalled a major victory for the Dockers in their long fight to obtain similar pay and conditions in the Inland Container depots as the Dockers have won in the actual port areas. The Government is now committed to including previously unregistered ports in the new "Dockers Charter" as well as giving the Dockers union rights in container depots up to 5 miles from the actual port area. This will help to bring the "Lump" situation in the smaller ports, in which employers use gangs of casual labour who act as scabs when employers move ships to their ports during a dispute, to an end.

The Dockers action must be seen as a consequence of the dwindling number of dock jobs due to the rapid containerisation of ship cargoes in recent years. As far back as 1970 firms such as Unigate had begun to close down river wharves and open up container depots further inland at which they employed non-union labour at less than union rates. The struggle is not yet over. In the Midlands and elsewhere there are huge container depots which have yet to agree to the dockers demand for parity on pay and working conditions. This is a principled struggle. The London Dockers are fighting to protect their own jobs and to improve the lot of their fellow workers elsewhere.

Let us honour Ben Tillet as the 'Dockers Leader' but always remember that when the German anarchist Rudolf Rocker asked our Ben what he thought of the mass of exploited and rejected slum workers who were but factory fodder for the crowded sweat shops Tillet considered them beyond the pale and a threat to 'honest labour'. "In times of revolution", said Tillet, "it was from these quagmires of degradation that the hyenas of the revolution emerge. A socialist government would therefore have to think of ways and means to get rid of this scum, false pity for them would harm the socialist cause". Ben was no mean prophet and they called it National Socialism and the concentration camp and the gas chamber was to sterilise the Corporate State of industrial disharmony with a workers car, a neat frau haunting mass produced brick homes or an ex KGB boss for a trade union leadership gaffer, a Hero of the Father Land medal for Time and Motion beyond the call of duty and a place in the official parade behind the latest rocket launcher for those who conformed or surrendered. Our place is in the ranks of the working class my comrades but with those who are rejected by a newly created working class meritocracy. It is along side the Indian worker struggling, as they had to struggle in the home land that drove them out, for the right to human dignity. The scrubbers, the cleaners

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DUREXploitation

One of the most profitable monopolies in Britain is the London Rubber Company, the makers of Durex. Recently they issued a High Court writ against their competitor Surex Ltd. This was to stop them using the sales slogan, "why pay Durex prices?"

The cost to manufacture a packet of Three Durex (Featherlite) is less than one old farthing (.21p.). However, by the time you buy them over the counter, they cost 25p! whoever is prepared to sell them can get a rake off up to 15p. a packet.

The London Rubber Company doesn't do all that bad either. Their cut works out at 4½p. Of course they are sold by the million.

Some of the methods used by L.R.C. to retain their dominant position in the market are real sharp practices. They range from damaging the machines of rivals to the setting up of dummy organisations such as the Genetic Study, which spreads propaganda against products made by competitors. Another trick of the trade is to buy up the french letters of rival firms from retailers and replace them with their own.

In a capitalist society everything that we use is sold for a profit, all needs, all our pleasures are gist to the mill. We are not arguing for fair competition are apologising for the Monopolies Commission. What we want is an end to the profit system. We want a society where human needs and desires are satisfied for their own sake, and not used to make a fortune for the shareholders.

MAY DAY

And the tanks will roll in the Red Square and the Social Democratic politicians of the Free World will stand hard hat in hand as the regimented regiments of the working class indifference parade behind the national flags and the prostituted trade union banners of a working-class militancy absent on parade. For it is May Day and governments and Trade Union bureaucrats demand this show of loyalty from a class they hate, despise or loath every other day of the year. Yet comrades we must march and always let our banners wave as the battle flags of a united working class and let those in authority who order these charades learn that we march as free workers and if we are denied our protesting place in the ranks behind the ancient fluttering glories of the past then let us go back to first principles and chalk up our own crude banners. Do not be downhearted if our numbers are few for we shall triumph and be betrayed for it is the struggle that will unite us for behind the Church Universal is the Church Militant and behind and before them is the Church Primitive and that my comrades is our eternal and only battle field for we are the companions of the left hand of God. In 1833 Robert Owen appointed May 1st. as the beginning of the millennium and over a hundred years later Robert we are still waiting but we are in good heart. In 1889 the first Paris congress of the second Socialist International decided May the first for the annual international celebrations and give or take a world war that resolution has been honoured.

The movers of the motion had intended that we the workers should by Direct Action enforce a holiday on May 1st. no matter what day of the week it fell on and in Europe our working class comrades attempted a one day strike and the Establishment honoured them by ordering the police to break up their marches and parades but governments learn slowly, slowly and by the simple Machiavellian ploy of declaring the day a public holiday thereby, as in north America, gelding the stallion of working class defiance and or protest. In 1890 or 1892 according to differing authorities London stood in witness of its first Labour May Day demonstration but my comrades the craft unions and the banners of the Superior Working Class dominated the parade, for it was never a march.

Always absent was the unskilled casual workers yet it was the Bryant and May match girls, starvation paid, ill used and of the British untouchables whose strike in July 1888 was responsible so wrote Engels, for 'the entire avalanche to follow', of industrial warfare between the proletarian working class and the middle class employers. On the 13th. of August 1889 a small number of day labourers struck work at the South West Indian Docks and Tillet and Burns floated into leadership as the great dock strike began and thousands of men marched but remember comrades the first march saw 41 banners and 'some were no more than red rags on poles'.



WOMENS CAUSE

'Women: their oppression and their cause'.
printed and published by

Socialist Union, 16 Abbeyfield Rd,
Dunscroft,
Doncaster,

No price given.

'Now, woman is confronted with the necessity of emancipating herself from emancipation, if she really desires to be free. This may sound paradoxical, but is, nevertheless, only too true'.

EMMA GOLDMAN

The Socialist Union describe themselves as a small revolutionary socialist group of miners engineers, labourers and housewives. They are based in the north east and are developing contacts nationally and with North America, The Revolutionary Communist League. This pamphlet was presented to state the views of the Socialist Union on the oppression and struggle of women. They felt this necessary as they had failed to deal with it in their manifesto.

The pamphlet opens with an attack on the feminist movements. They feel it necessary to counter the feminists attitudes and pose a socialist view point on the oppression of women within the context of the class struggle. Much of the socialist left are accused of clinging to the petit-bourgeois notions of the feminist and Womens Liberation Movements, solely because they want to be seen to be supporting womens struggle. These people are "failing in their duty as socialists". They are told that they must "denounce these movements as being middle class orientated and more concerned with personal liberation and opportunity and the belittling of the male sex than with the plight of the millions of working class women". (These middle classes are such a problem, even in revolutionary movements! They pop up everywhere like that Karl whats his as second class citizens by society. No doubt that society is sexless. This is seen in education, job opportunities as sex objects and within marriage. On the other hand, men of course are certainly not privileged, as capitalism represses the whole working class. Women therefore are doubly exploited. Perhaps that is why some feel the need of their own organisations.

Although the pamphlet states that women should fight against their oppression, the emphasis must be towards the struggle against the capitalist system, which is the origin of male dominance. The role of woman in the family being a product of private property. Women it is said may make some gains under this system but will never be really free from oppression and inequality until it is overthrown. This is the reason, they feel that feminists ideas must be "shown for what they are, political cul-de-sacs which lead women away from struggling against their real oppressor the capitalist system". Praise is given for the advances made by women in socialist nations i.e. "the fourteen worker states were capitalism has already been defeated and replaced by socially and economically superior systems based on the common ownership". etc. No mention here of the abortion controversy in the U.S.S.R.

The exploitation of women as cheap labour is disgusting. This, it is explained, stems from the idea that women are second class beings, unequal to men both mentally and physically. Capitalism has used the existing bias against women to boost profits. It seeks also to divide the working class, men from women. As far as workers organisations are concerned we are told that one in every four trade unionists is a women, yet most full time union officials are men. This of course is common in all organisations within this male-dominated society.

In my opinion the main reason for this pamphlet is to give a clear and straight forward analysis of society in Marxist terms. This includes the oppression of women and what they should do about it within the class struggle. The suggested (albeit for them reformist) actions are similar to lots of those put forward by the womens movement. The difference to me seems that here, women, especially those in key industries, are thought of as fodder to help win the class struggle. Of course taking over the economic control of society is of prime importance- but people are individuals. At the same time as fighting for economic control of their lives, they must be able to pursue freedom through their own personal liberation. To do this they must feel free to form separate organisations were necessary. We all know the dangers of merely changing the ownership of the means of production.

I would like to say that although I think women do need separate organisations I agree there maybe a danger of isolation. It seems a good idea to get together as women politically e.g. London Womens Anarchist Group. otherwise to find some time to spend with the male dominated political groups.

ANN

HOME FRONT

Remember in 1973 the labour fakirs in Glasgow council called for troops to be used in the fireman's strike? Despite this the firemen were successful. Their type of work was just too much for the troops.

Both Conservative and Labour governments have quite a record for using the military and the police and the judiciary which are the blood and sinews of class rule. Quite a large volume would be necessary to illustrate this in full. So only the solidarity of rank and file trade unionists can overcome the strike breaking action of troops.

It must be remembered that in spite of the use of troops trade union officials have virtually turned a blind eye and the strike remains unofficial.

The Glasgow dustmen are to have a mass meeting in the Kingston Hall on Wednesday 9th.

The shop stewards committee are bitter about having failed in a last attempt to persuade the corporation to have local negotiations on their £5 a week pay claim following the failure to reach agreement at national level. This is not surprising since the corporation had promised to negotiate at local level should talks at national level fail. Subsequently the corporation violated their promise which is also not surprising to this writer. The situation will be conveyed to the men at their mass meeting on Wednesday.

And so the death knell has sounded: Today Wednesday 9/4/75 at the mass meeting of dustmen it was decided by an overwhelming majority to return to work on Monday 14th.

Dan Duffy of the strike committee stressed that the corporation had played a disgusting role in the whole affair. The men had decided to end their strike on a recommendation by their committee.

Dan Duffy said that the men will have a great deal of bitterness and disgust on returning to work. They will be returning with no wage increase, no improved conditions, no promise for the future.

The only condition they are asking for is that the troops be moved out before they move in.

To say the men will be bitter is an understatement. For they have been stabbed in the back by the official trade union movement. A few initial lessons will have to be learned. They will have to avoid constitutional blacklegging by some means or another. As a first step to this they must start thinking about obliterating trade union barriers, craft or otherwise. The ideal would be to get organised in one all embracing union of all municipal workers without high paid officials. Even if it means dual unionism starting from scratch. And the old conventional methods of striking may have to be given second thought. Instead of going on the cobblestones new strike methods must be seriously considered. In this case the old method of going on the street has failed miserably.

The official trade union movement has to be thanked for that.

R. L.

Recently Jo Grimond has been (sic) saying that local Councils are no good at running their housing Departments. Anyhow Uncle Joes solution is that Councils should either sell their homes to their tenants or should hand over the running of estates to tenants co-operatives.

His first solution is absurd simply because few, if any, Council tenants will be able to afford to make the necessary mortgage repayments or even to raise a mortgage. I remember, from working in a council mortgage department, that to get a mortgage of about £8,000 a person needed to be earning approximately £50 a week or more depending upon how his/her income was made up, (i.e. overtime, bonus etc) and don't forget that interest rates are now higher by about 3% or 4% and house prices have risen. Of course this is not taking into consideration the present high unemployment rate and the number of people laid off on a 3 day week or more.

Anyhow let us turn to Uncle Jo's second solution, the handing over of the running of council estates to 'Tenants Co-operatives'. On the face of it, it looks like a good idea in fact I'm sure that tenants co-operatives would be better at running their own estates after all they can't be run any worse than they are now. There's also the fact that council tenants will have more control over their own lives.

Lets however examine what Uncle Jo means by 'tenants co-operatives'. I get the impression that he means some sort of tame tenants association that will work hand in hand with the local council. In other words the council collects the rent and in return the co-operative does the maintenance work on their estates thus helping the council to spend less money on its tenants for the privilege of spending more money on their own repairs. Obviously this is about as far away from people controlling their own streets as nationalisation is from Workers Control of industry.

Perhaps I'm wrong about Uncle Jo's intentions in which case he won't mind if council tenants refuse to pay rent or rates and genuinely control their own lives - or would he. You don't need 3 guesses to know who will be among the first to call for a return to 'law and order', 'moderation' and the other catch phrases used during the rent strikes against the Housing Finance Act that the Tories introduced a few years back.

CONCERT/GALA

at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1
(nearest tube station: Holborn)

SATURDAY, MAY 3rd

Profits to Anarchist Prisoners Everywhere & Spanish Resistance

HOUNDS OFF OUR
WILD LIFE



caretaker flop

By now most workers have come in contact or conflict with work study engineers. When work study was first introduced it was called time and motion. But as is common with the unpleasant realities of our working lives, different terms are used to gloss them over. Being made redundant is still the 'sack', and work study is still time and motion.

However, some of the mobile caretakers on the Greater London Council wher faced with these work study engineers have simply stayed put. This action, or should it be called inaction, has so far prevented further studies being taken. After about an hour the work study men leave.

These mobile caretakers covering three estates in Battersea are objecting to being watched, or snooped upon. So far the action has been effective.

But the idea of the mobile caretakers was the brain child of the work study engineers of County Hall. In their drive for 'efficiency' their plans of re-organisation have meant a deterioration in the up keep and cleanliness of estates with a marked increase in vandalism. When the mobile caretakers scheme was first discussed, the work study engineers claimed that the caretakers visiting an estate who wasn't a resident would help to keep down vandalism. The mobile caretakers would act and appear as a kind of 'policeforce'. Just the opposite has happened. The personal contact between tenant and caretaker has been lost. The little complaints and repairs, like blocked sinks and drains etc, which the caretakers took care of, are no longer done, except after the inevitable delay by the maintenance gangs.

Nowdays the mobile caretaker turns up in his truck with three or four men armed with brooms and shovels to sweep up the yards and maintain the rubbish chutes. Because they have been work studied they rush round trying to earn some bonus. As a result the estates are far from clean.

As with so many aspects of our lives the mobile caretaker scheme depersonalises relationships. The caretaker no longer belongs as apart of an estate and does not share its problems as he did when he lived there.

But as far as the work study engineers are concerned, people are mere units of production. The caretakers on the G.L.C. have become to the tenants faceless 'policemen'.

In their drive for so called efficiency the work study engineers scheme has added to the vandalism that exists on G.L.C. estates. They've also added to the fear that many of the older tenants feel.

Certainly everything was far from well on the estates with resident caretakers. Some

were good while others refused to help anyone in need. But given the remoteness and the inhuman way tenants are treated by the G.L.C. its understandable there is so much vandalism. Huge estates exist, but without any play facilities for the children. When new estates are built or modernised, the last thing the G.L.C. think of including is a community centre for tenants to use for social activities.

But as syndicalists have pointed out before, we expect little or nothing from those in authority, whether at work or from landlords. People have to act for themselves and create their own organisations to bring about improvements and change to their daily lives.

P.T.



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yea all those forced to clean up society's shit for the right to eat its leavings. And my comrades, as they move up into the working class world of shallow security they will reject us but it is no matter for they have no obligation to fight our battle but, nay for as long as, Ben Tillet's 'scum' exist these are our companions in battle with "no more than red rags on poles" for our battle flag and let our presence in the streets with a single red rag mark May Day as the day of revolt.

A.M.

Cont. From Page 1.

At the moment most union leaders are professional executives who have got to the top through a process of political infighting which inevitably pervades the whole trade union structure resulting in a seperation of aims between the officials of the union and their supposed employers, the rank and file membership. Syndicalists believe that the best way to build up a union leadership which would truly reflect the members needs is the adoption of a system under which all officials are drawn from the membership of the union itself, and in which all policy decisions are subject to a rank and file endorsement mandate. The corollary to this of course is that the total union membership involves itself in union activities. Only when this comes into being shall we be on the road to true social ownership.

freedom

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