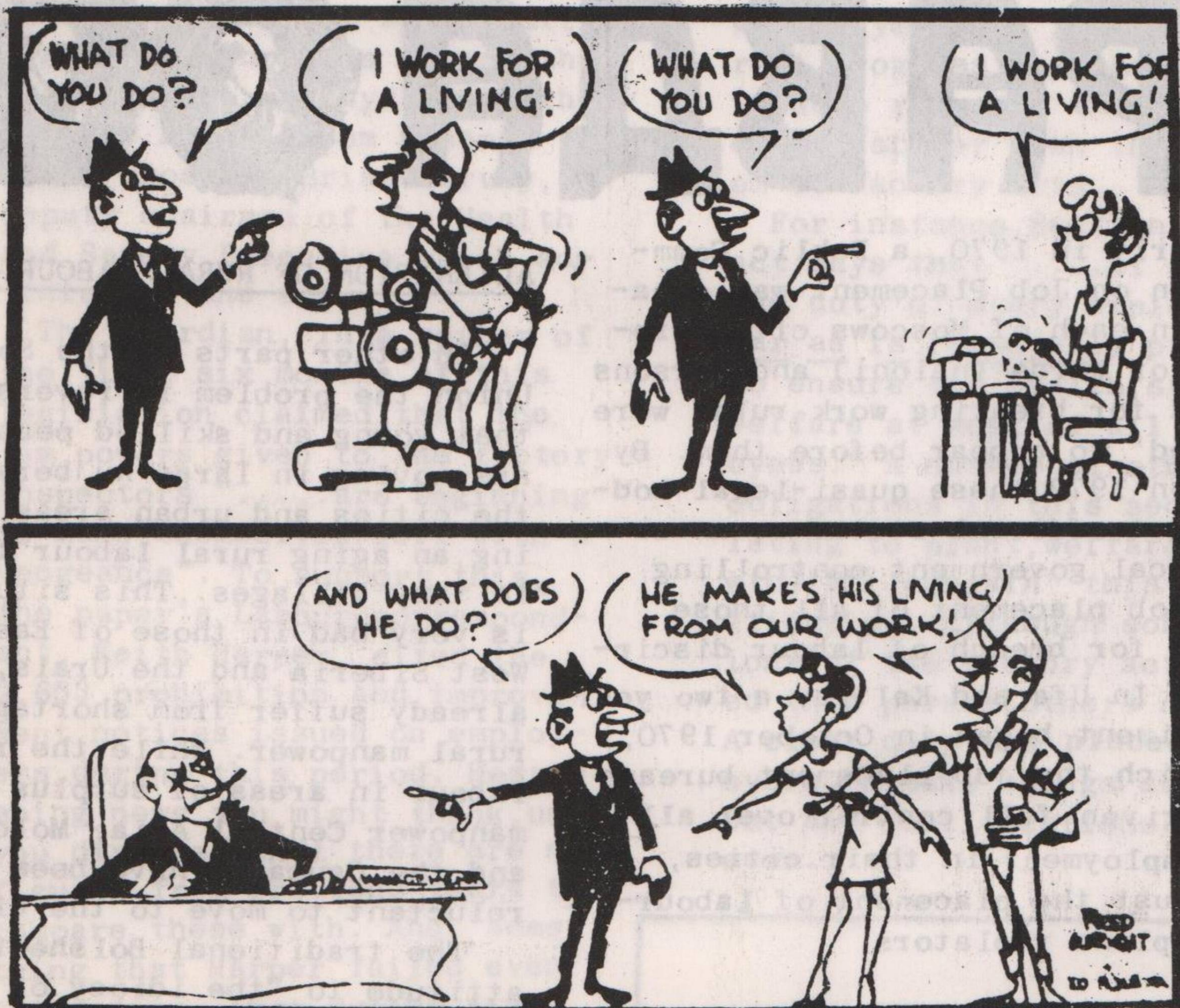


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DIRECT ACTION

SYNDICALIST WORKERS FEDERATION no. 10 5p

British Section of the International Workers Association



shall be accepting a stick for our own backs which will be hard to break. It is salutary that the first major problem which will confront the worker/management committees will be to agree on a method of getting rid of 10,000 more Leyland workers.

As our industrial system stands there are several reasons for the stewards negotiating committee's rejection of the original proposal to draw the worker members of the participation committees by direct election from the shop floor. Worker management elected from outside the ranks of union militants could produce "yellow committees" which would do top management bidding in return for personal favours. It would attract personal power seekers, also anti-union individualists who are so destructive to workers' organisations.

WHO CONTROLS?

"Having been elected, a government does not go back to the voters in order to choose a cabinet"

These words were spoken by Eddie McGary, Chairman of the Leylands shopstewards 32 man committee which negotiated the worker participation agreement with Leyland management.

Bro McGary used the words to underline the Leyland shopstewards insistence that workers representatives to the joint 3 tier management-worker committees which are to be set up at all Leyland plants must be drawn from amongst the shopsteward themselves, and not from the total workforce. The initial agreement is for a 12 month trial period. The committees are to play a consultative role and will have no executive power, but will obviously pave the way to actual power sharing in industry between labour and management.

The Leyland stewards insistence on keeping all power roles for themselves, may set a precedence for future negotiations. If it is not challenged we can look forward to a system in which trade union officials will be an integral part of management and the state, which will be able to exercise more and more control over our lives. Whether this state of affairs comes about under private ownership, or under a state-capitalist system will make little difference to us.

Our sole contribution to industry will be to elect shop stewards at regular intervals who will then proceed to impose upon us the management we deserve.

Our own "Big Brother"

All trade unionists know how difficult it is to grub out entrenched branch caucuses with which our unions are riddled. If we do not fight now for genuine democracy in our organisations we

Despite these facts, we believe that there are greater far-reaching dangers for workers in the system which is being adopted at Leylands. The real answer is for an extension of industrial democracy at its base amongst the rank & file based upon 100% union membership and an intensive programme of education for all industrial workers. At present both management and trade union officialdom have the benefit of industrial education courses throughout their working careers.

These advantages, if extended to the total workforce will bring into being a conscious working class both aware of its problems and able to supply management at all levels to resolve them. This is the way towards self-management of our lives for working people, which is what workers control is about.

Beware of imposed imitations. They are dangerous!



SWF

Pete & Denise Bond,
c/o 35 Moorland Cres.,
Upton, Poole.
Dorset.

Manchester S.W.F.
c/o Grassroots
109 Oxford Rd.,
MANCHESTER.

National Secretariat,
Box 101,
c/o 84b. Whitechapel High
Street,
London E.1.

Derek Pattison,
83 Thorncliffe Ave.,
DUKINFIELD
Cheshire.

THE MANCHESTER SYNDICALIST
WORKERS FEDERATION hold
weekly meetings contact the
M/C. secretary for details.
Write to 109 Oxford Rd.,
Manchester 1.

LABOUR RELATIONS IN RUSSIA

You've really got to hand it to the Russian Government, they know how to use the law against their workers even if it has consequences other than intended. While the trade union movement in Great Britain was combating the Tory Governments Industrial Relations Act, the U.S.S.R. was already well on the way to developing legal measures against labour 'indicipline' and 'excessive' labour turnover.

In May 1969 a regulation was adopted in Leningrad, which compelled each person sacked for an irraction of labour dicipline in an enterprise in that city to be brought before the then new Labour Resources Utilisation Administration for assignment to a low-skill low-pay job for a period of 3 months. Persons thus disciplined were not eligible for any enterprise bonuses and were to be assigned to lower positions on the waiting list for new housing.

The intention of this move was to combat excessive labour turnover which was becoming serious in many areas and creating instability in the system. Persistent offenders in any kind of irregular job behaviour become liable to legal penalties under the regular 'anti-parasite' laws, which provide for the imposition of sentences of up to one year of corrective labour or even prison. In 1970 these laws were reaffirmed in a number of Republics, and a new U.S.S.R. Labour Code- effective January 1st 1971 reinforced the concept of punishing undisciplined workers and rewarding conscientious workers.

ПРАВДА



Early in 1970, a Public Commission on Job Placement was created in each of Moscovs city boroughs or wards (naioni) and persons fired for breaking work rules were 'asked' to appear before them. By autumn 1972 these quasi-legal bodies got official status as an arm of local government controlling the job placement of all those fired for breach of labour discipline. In Ufa and Kalvga, a two year experiment began in October 1970, in which the job placement bureaus were given full control over all new employment in their cities, not just the placement of labour-discipline violators.

CENTRAL ASIAN RESISTANCE.

The problem of a labour shortage underlies these new legal steps. Since Soviet planners can no longer rely on a more or less unlimited supply of unskilled labour, the authorities are moving in to boost the size of the labour force. Besides punishing cases of alleged industrial misconduct the authorities in 1964 dropped the various financial penalties used against pensioners who worked on after reaching pensionable age, and began encouraging pensioners to reenter the Labour force. Now up to 8 million people of pension age are employed in the public sector or work on collective farms or private plots.

To provide a supply of potential manpower for the Soviet economic 'mainstream', the authorities have also started mobilizing and urbanising the rural peasantry. Directing them to productive employment either in the new industries developed in Soviet Central Asia or in jobs elsewhere, where manpower is in short supply. The Central Asian peoples however have traditionally resisted such mobilization even when it was being imposed by Stalin.

ALIENATION OF RURAL LABOUR.

In other parts of the Soviet Union the problem is reversed, in that young and skilled peasants are moving in large numbers to the cities and urban areas, leaving an aging rural labour force in many villages. This situation is very bad in those of East and West Siberia and the Urals, which already suffer from shortages of rural manpower. While the rural labour in areas of surplus rural manpower Central Asia, Moldavia and the Caucasus have been most reluctant to move to the cities.

The traditional Bolshevik attitude to "the idiocy of rural life" does nothing to help the situation. At the present time according to Wadekin, about 40% of total, private agricultural output originates outside the collective sphere, primarily on the plots of Sovkhozniki and urban dwellers. The rest of the private sector in Soviet agriculture, the Kolkhoz, involves an integrated relationship with the collectives in which the collective farms specialise in mainly grain and capital intensive crops and large scale animal husbandry providing the peasants private plots with fodder and equipment on rent. The collectives in turn depend upon the private sector for livestock and labour intensive crops.

The advantage of this set-up is that the plots supplement the low real incomes the peasants earn from collective work. In 1965, the average wage of collective farmers was only half that of industrial workers (state farm workers being paid roughly 75% of industrial workers wages) (1)



continued from page 2.

By 1970, as a result of the introduction of guaranteed wages on collective farms the wages of collective farmers went up to 75% of the industrial wage, while state farm wages amounted to 85% of industrial wages.

Rural workers have a worse deal even these figures suggest as industrial workers get about twice as much in benefits from social funds (2), and medical facilities and other vital services are lacking in many rural areas. In the Georgian Republic, where the ratio of doctors to population is higher than anywhere in the USSR, there were no physicians at all in the 25 rural hospitals and 127 rural outpatient clinics in 1972 (3). Other more basic necessities such as public utilities are also underdeveloped in rural districts, a central water supply was in 1973 available to only 23% of the rural population, and household gas to about 18%. (4). Many new houses in the villages still have no indoor plumbing, and some are said to be 'nothing but imitations of old mud huts'. (5)

LEGAL CONTROLS.

It is not surprising then that there has been a flight of farm workers in many vital rural areas to the cities. This has happened in spite of the administrative restriction upon migration and attempts too improve rural life. The withholding of internal passports and the requirement of special residence permits in the largest cities seems not to have seriously stemmed the flow.

In fact one investigation of collective farms in Central Russia showed that those farms which refused to issue passports had a greater exodus rate than those which issued passports. The reason being that many youngsters, realising that after reaching the age of 16 years they would be prevented from migrating, took off for the cities before they officially required passports.

The refusal of residence permits in the big cities has resulted in what V. Perevedentsev calls "pendulum migrants" that is people who officially live in one place and work in another. This also leads to migrants without residence permits being constantly on the move to avoid detection resulting in wastage of time and money, and conflict with the authorities. Moreover, labour hungry enterprises in the cities almost always find an excuse to get the appropriate document, for the prevailing practice seems to be one of 'endless individual exceptions circumventing the general ban'. (6)

STATE MANAGEMENT or a SYNDICALIST SOLUTION.

The significance of all this is not so much the obvious comparisons between the efforts of the British Tory Government to enforce the now defunct Industrial Relations Act and the attempts of the Russian political system to control labour movement, turnover and behaviour, all British Governments in recent years have been comitted at times to State intervention in the economy through incomes policies and industrial relations laws. And, indeed the British Tories have been in most respects more ideologically inconsistent in pursuing these policies, in that they have departed from the 'pure' economic view, this is that the market should be left to control the economic system. Increasingly Governments of all sorts now approach solutions to economic problems by the use of political measures external to the economic system. Since Keynes, in the west, political economics has been replacing 'pure' economics as the way of dealing with the economy.

Will state managed controls tackle the problem better than the market mechanism? Reports from Leningrad suggest that the program there is having some success and now there are fears of more fierce national controls of labour mobility, echos of Stalin and the deportations. Since the fall of the Industrial Relations Act many English correspondents are less optimistic of the long term success of compulsory measures in the British context and legal authorities are now reported to be concerned about

the legal snags in the intended new incomes policy of the current Labour Government, and this neglects the political and industrial opposition to such measures. As the Russian example shows many workers find ways round legislative controls, even if they don't oppose them head on, like the Soviet Central Asians. Legal controls in British industry are also usually accompanied by fiddles and wangling agreements, which to some extent undermines the power structure.

These then are the State solutions to the economic problem, for the Syndicalist the answer will lie more in the development of a system in which man/woman has a real and immediate interest in the economic system through direct control of his/her work situation. According to Dr. Ota Sik only when man has "... an immediate economic interest in the future development of an enterprise, in investment, equipment and so on," will he "gradually begin to master his own conditions of production". Without workers' Control the problems of inflation, labour turnover and the like will not be solved, State control and industrial laws are more of a cosmetic than a long term solution.

Dealing with the problem of the young Russian farm workers, Zaslavskaja comes to much the same conclusion, it is not just boredom and lack of interest which is the problem, but "the young people feel that they are not so much masters (khoziaevy) as hired labourers in agricultural production, as a rule they have no share in managing the collective farm, the section or the brigade, they do not participate in the making of important decisions, and therefore they have no opportunity to utilize their potential and their knowledge of the productive process". (8) Our position then is that we oppose the State managed economy and all Government sanctions, just as much as former cut throat capitalism, but that we seek to construct through the workers organisations, a libertarian solution to the economic question based on workers control and not on subservience to the commands of the state machine or the whims of an economic market system.

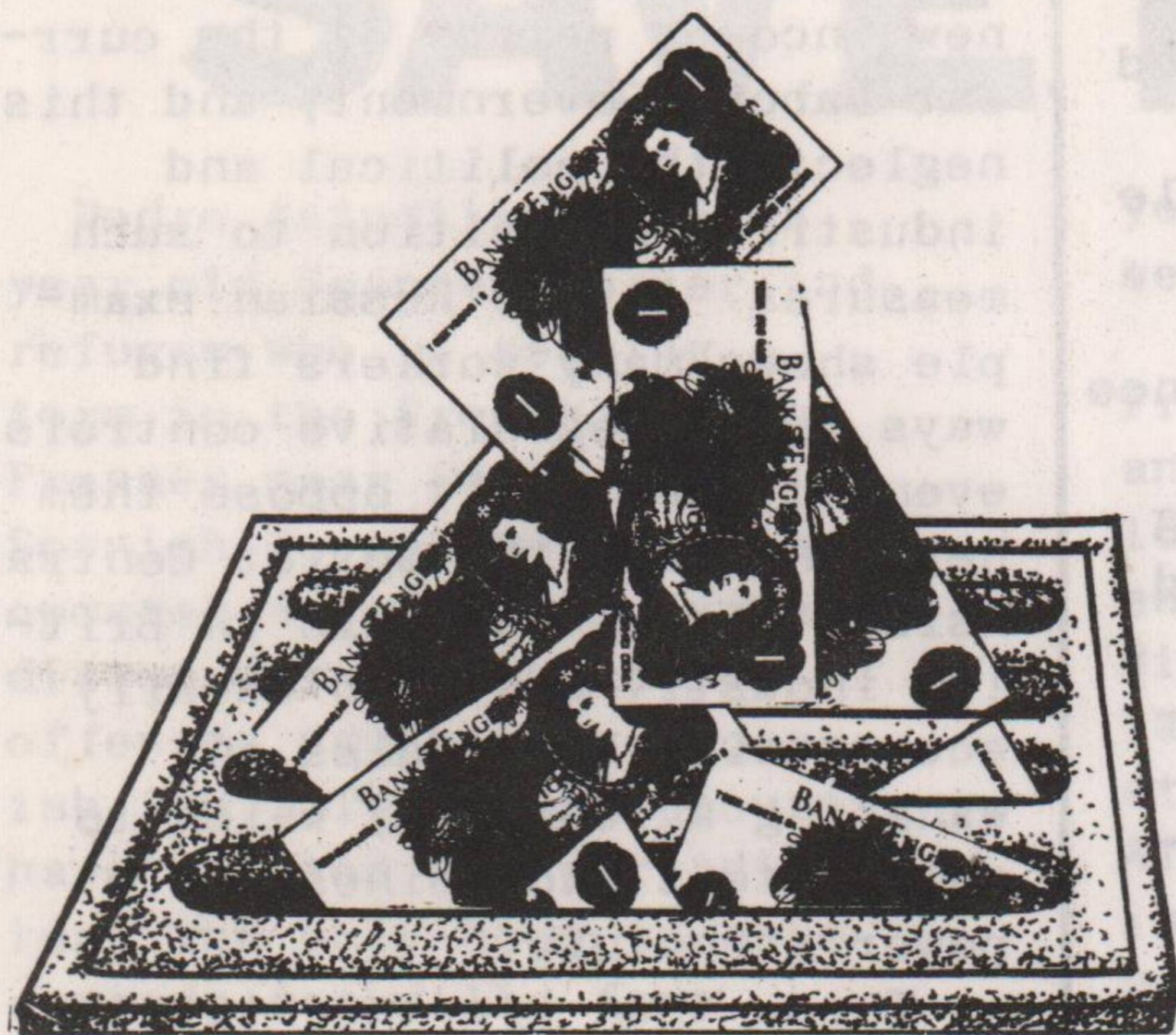
1) Voprosy ekonomik, No 6, 1966 tr, in Problems in Economics Vol 9, No 12. 2) Voprosy ekonomiki No 5 1972, tr, in CDSP Vol 24 No 45. 3) Zaria vostoka (Tbilisi) Nov 1972, tr, in CDSP Vol 24 No 50. 4) planovoe Khoziaistvo (Moscow) No 2 1973.

5) Sovetskaia Rossiia July 1968

6) V. Perevedentsev.

7) Dr. Ota Sik The Times Oct 1972

8) Perevedentsev and Novyi mir



VERY TAXING

We're always reading in the papers about state handouts. This usually makes you think of social security payments and old age pensions. However, there is another type of state handout, these are made to the rich. The richer you are, the greater is the value of the payments you will receive in the form of tax concessions and allowances.

Nowadays when massive cuts in public spending are being planned, the argument is how to cut down on the benefits which help the ordinary people.

TAX BENEFITS OF THE RICH



It would appear that the government has such plans to cut down on the tax benefits of the rich. The contrast is perhaps most noticeable in housing where rent rebates are provided to tenants, and tax allowances to houseowners. Families with two children would receive 100 per cent rebate a £6 rent if the income is not more than £25 the rebate declines as the income rises, assuming a rent at the same level. At a wage of £45 a week the rebate would have fallen to £1.87 a week

TAX RELIEF FOR SOME



However, with a mortgage, tax relief tends to rise as your income rises. From an average of £2 per week for those below £60 per week, up to an average of £10 for the £200 a week bracket. The annual cost of tax relief on mortgage 1973-4 was £500m and increased to £700m in 1974-5!

After the last Tory conference hearing them whine about their taxes, it is worth looking at who bears the real burden of taxes. It is 'not pop stars of the "fame drain" who can afford to live abroad or "unacceptable" capitalists like in the Lohnro affair who can fiddle theirs through tax havens like the Cayman Islands. The majority of taxes come from the fixed income groups automatically assessed through P.A.Y.E. no escapes, no loopholes.

For instance, a self employed draughtsman I knew used to claim for his wife as a secretary, his mother as an office cleaner (his house) telephone bills, travelling expenses, an entertainment allowance, among other things. He didn't even have to rack his brains figuring it out, that was done by a firm of accountants who make a lucrative business out of fiddling taxes. But this is only chickenfeed compared with real business men with their de-luxe life styles on the expense account and other perks, i.e. company cars and houses (company expenses also cut down company tax). This state of affairs is quite calmly accepted by the tax authorities but when someone with a fixed income tries to claim, that's a different matter.

This brings us to the case of Mr. S.A. Woodcock an engineering worker from Droylsden, Manchester. For the past four years Mr. Woodcock has been attempting to claim tax relief on clothing expenses incurred at work. Letters had been sent to the Inland Revenue to try and ascertain permissible expenses, to no avail. Mr. Woodcock had even gone as far as writing several times to Dennis Healey, Chancellor of the Exchequer reminding him that every member of Parliament was a participant in expense account perks. He received no reply even though the letters were sent by

registered mail. Over the four years of Mr Woodcock's battle with tax bureaucrats, he has been inundated with an avalanche of paper work, which must have cost a small fortune.

Eventually, on the 9th May 1975 had his case presented before the special commissioner at the VAT tribunal centre. At the tribunal his claims were presented as follows, Tools and overalls as per standing agreement with the Craft Unions, replacement of such items as shoes, socks, shirts, trousers etc. Although Mr Woodcock pointed out to the tribunal that every claim had been kept to minimum, they reduced his claim even further. After a hearing which lasted 5 hours, Mr Woodcock won his case.

Now, another worker at the same factory, is claiming for additional expenses. However, it doesn't seem that Mr Woodcock's case has set a precedent for anyone else. So it seems that the Inland Revenue are prepared to offer stiff resistance to workers' rightful entitlement.

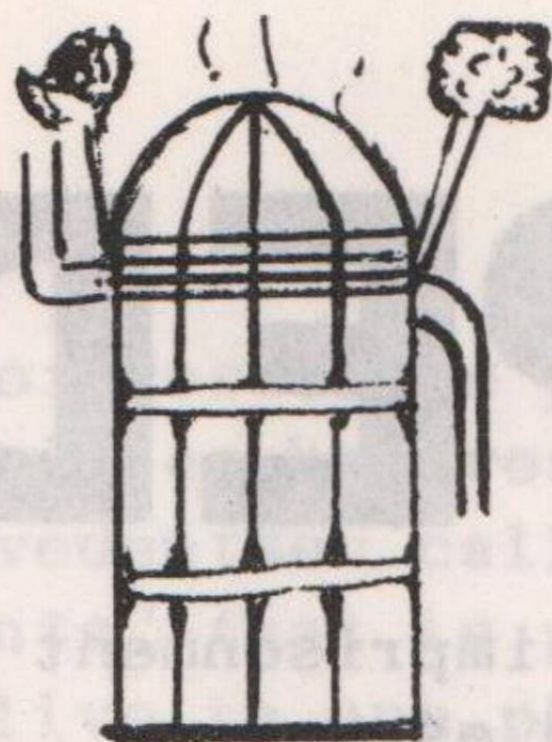
Here, we quote a letter that this worker received from the Inland Revenue dated 23/5/75:

"You mention in your letter the case of S.A. Woodcock who was granted additional expenses by the special commissioners. I have knowledge of the case, but in any event decision by general or special commissioners have no relevance to, and do not impose binding rules on other tax offices".

PAYE, Pay as you earn, is an unfair imposition on all wage and salary earners, by the Government. All concessions must be fought for tooth and nail. Only by a concerted effort on the part of taxpayers could possible make the state rethink its tax policies, and adjust them in a fairer manner.

SAVE IT

PLUG IN, TURN DOWN, SWITCH OFF, PAY UP, NO CHANCE!



The campaign to save electricity by telling people to turn some appliance off, has been a resounding success. This has resulted in a drop in the demand for electricity. So much so, that the price will be going up in April next year by 10%. This is a triumph for the Market Economy beloved by both the 'capitalists' and the 'state-capitalists', a like, who are fond of singing its praises.

Though the Electricity industry is nationalised, it still still operates the same as 'privately owned' industry. The same forces are at work, the smaller the amount of electricity the board sells, the greater their losses.

This eventually forces them to increase the price of electricity to the consumer.

Capitalism is an irrational system, by our attempted economies prices are again forced up. The EEC has a surplus of apples, wine and butter and it would appear they have no solution to the problem. Other than destroying the goods or cutting back on production. They have even tried selling butter to Russia at give-away prices.

Perhaps the Italian idea of 'autoreduzione' will be tried on in Britain. In Italy, the people have been paying electricity and other bills at the old rate, not mention bus fares. Of course, an idea like that wouldn't work here in Britain would it? Why? Because we in Britain really respect the law

FREEDOM

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6 months £2.

BLACK FLAG Organ of the
Anarchist Black Cross. 13p.
for a sample copy from:
83a Haverstock Hill,
London N.W.3.

ANTI-FASCISM

The Bolton Anti-Fascist committee scored a victory when the High Court reversed a decision of the local magistrates who had fined three officials of the committee for offences under electoral law.

The leaflets in question were issued by the committee at last October's General Election. These leaflets were attacking the racist policies of the National Front who were contesting both constituencies in Bolton.

The case has important implications for all anti-fascists, and libertarians who wish to issue leaflets at election times and are not standing as candidates themselves. If the fines had been confirmed by the High Court it would be deemed an offence under the 1949 Representation of the People Act. While it is an offence for anyone, without the authority of an election agent to incur expenses aimed at trying to get a candidate elected, it is not in the case where one tries to prevent the election of a particular candidate.

This is obviously a victory in the struggle against racism and fascism and the National Front is hopping mad at the decision. Already the NF has stated that they will not be contesting the next election. They have tried to put a bold face on their decision by saying that they will attack the Labour Party as the party of immigrants in any election. However this will just show them up in their true colours, they will be saying in a covert manner vote for the Tories. We are glad that the three anti-fascists N. Duffield, M. Luft, and G. Atkinson have had their fine set aside.

EDUCATION

Local Government cut backs are obviously affecting education. In Salford, the policy of the Council is to make no new appointments in the education service. There has been an Ad-Hoc committee set up by three councillors. They are to vet any vacancy that does occur, and judge whether or not it is necessary, obviously with a view to cut where possible. You can imagine three people coping with a workforce of thousands! In Hope High School Salford there are two teaching vacancies, interviews were held and two unemployed teachers accepted by the school. At the time writing this article they not been appointed.

Rumours are rife about so called redeployment. Teachers in the wilds of Worsley - a suburban area, are worried in case their schools are classed as overstaffed and they are transferred into the depths of Salford.

There were over 100 people at the last N.U.T. meeting - normally there are 25. Suddenly Unionism is important to teachers! Nevertheless, it was an interesting meeting. People said they had come to find out

what the Union's views were or "to get Union advice". I did point out that we are the Union, and it wasn't advice we needed, but backing for action. At one point, the President of the association, who had just been to see Mr Barnes the Director of Education. Al- he was our representative he said he had been given confidential information. At first, no one seemed to think that this was odd.

A motion was eventually passed that 1) Teachers should not be moved to other schools against their will. 2) That teachers should not cover up for absences where under the normal state of affairs the post would be filled. 3) That the Union executive should be informed of any vacancies not filled.

Since this article was written the N.U.T. executive has decided that in certain areas where either a job vacancy is not filled or a staff member is off sick for more than 3 days, existing staff should not work extra periods to stand in for them. How far the Union executive will go in this remains to be seen.

Ann

So the undertest of all

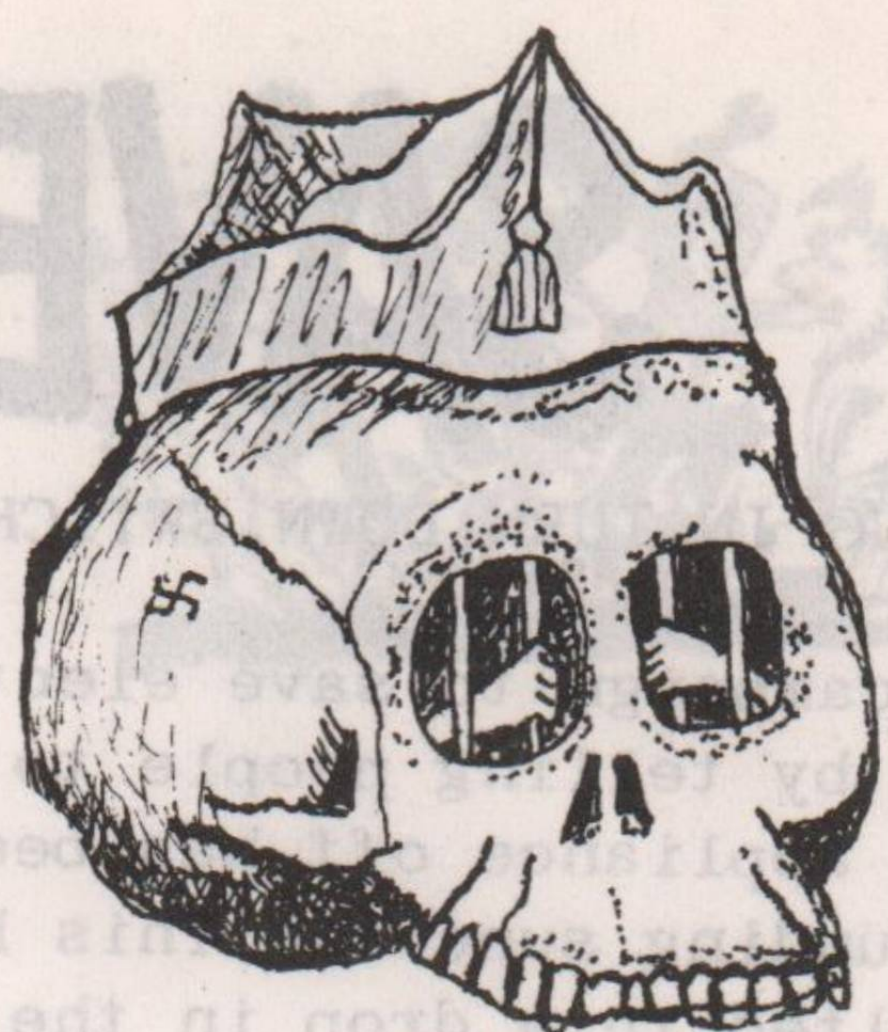
SAVE PEDRO

Pedro Astudillo is a 48 year old Spanish Worker and refugee who is serving a term in the French prison Fresnes near Paris. The Spanish Government has requested Astudillo's extradition for various heavy offences against the Spanish Army. Two French courts have granted the extradition. The only hope to save comrade Astudillo from certain death is to have the French Government reverse the courts decision. To obtain this, obviously Astudillo's case should be widely publicised in France and in every other country and the public should vigorously state their support to Pedro Astudillo. The following is an abridged translation of comrade Astudillo's story:

"My name is Pedro Jose Astudillo Calleja, I was born in 1927 in the Basque province of Viscaya. My father, after fighting with the Republicans, was captured and shot in 1940. My mother was tortured by members of the Falange and died shortly afterwards. When the army called me in 1949 I refused to join but was arrested four years later, served one year in prison and was forcibly enlisted. However, after barely three months, I was again arrested inside the barracks and sentenced by a war tribunal to six years and one day imprisonment. I decided to break jail, I succeeded with the help of some comrades but was captured by the Guardia Civil, one month later and taken back to the same barracks. My former officers tortured me savagely (e.g. by forcing me to drink petrol) to obtain the names of those comrades who had helped me. I refused to give them away. After a period of unconsciousness I found myself with a torn cheek, one testicle crushed and several ribs broken. About four months later, the same comrades helped me once more to escape. I have not been recaptured since. I was told later on that they had sentenced me in absentia to twelve

years imprisonment for my second escape.

I crossed over secretly to France at the end of 1954 and asked for political asylum. I had no job, no documents, no fixed address and did not know the French language. I was driven to steal in order to survive. After a petty theft in a car in Marseilles for which I received a six month jail sentence. On two more occasions, I was refused political asylum. Again I had to steal for survival, I got arrested in 1957 and was liable to be sent out of France. But I found myself a wife and an illegal job and stayed on in the country. In 1969 as the resistance against Franco's regime was growing in strength, I went over secretly to Spain. In 1970 some comrades asked me how to procure arms. I proposed to go and fetch them from the barracks where I had served. During the Summer of 1970, after a reconnaissance of the premises that were familiar to me, we laid our hands (without violence) on some light arms and ammunition and also some political documents concerning the 'goings on' of the military police. This expropriation was done on my own initiative, for exclusively political aims and without personal material interest. In March 1971 two comrades whom I did not know were stopped by the Guardia Civil. After a shoot out, one was wounded, captured and found in possession of a pistol that had been stolen from the barracks. When subjected to torture he gave my name. I was living then with my wife who is French and our daughter in Basauri near Bilbao. Friends warned me about the arrest and I took off without luggage. Soon after this, my brother and his wife, who had given me shelter in their house in Potugallatte near Bilbao, were both tortured to force them to give away my hideout. I had to go on living illegally in France. In 1973 I was arrested with a false I.D. and sentenced to one year of imprisonment. The Spanish Embassy requested my extradition on the grounds of theft, possession of arms transportation of arms and



ammunition. The tribunal in charge of the extradition procedures is the 'Chambre des Mises en Accusation'. My counsel presented them with a set of political statements in my favour and I gave the fullest details about the arms theft. Accordingly, the tribunal ordered that I should be set free after my one year in prison, although the administration had decided to expel me from French territory. I was also told that I was wanted by an army judge in San Sabastian for an action against the Spanish State.

Now I am in prison again. The Spanish undercover agents in Paris engineered a plot involving an officer of the Spanish Consulate who was dealing in false passports and I was framed

continued on page 8.

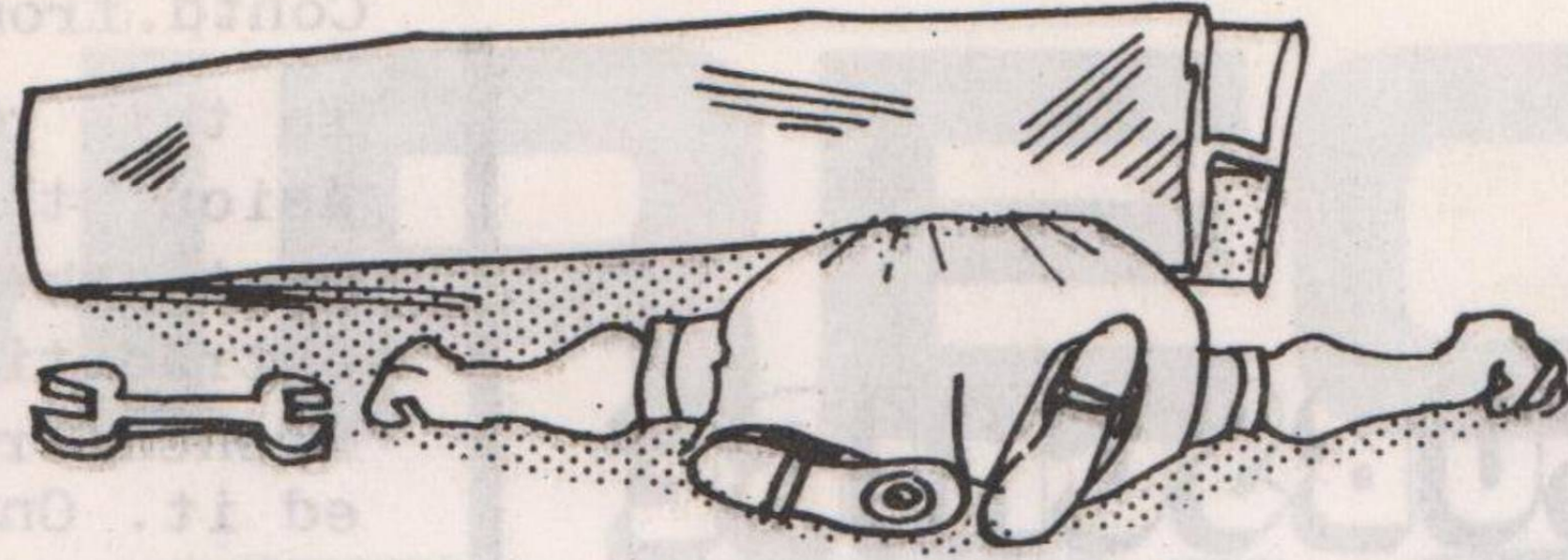
ICELAND

WOMEN'S GENERAL STRIKE

Iceland came to a standstill when women staged an almost total one day General Strike on the 24th October. Even housewives joined in and refused to do the cooking and other daily chores.

The aim of the strike was to demonstrate that women are essential to the economy and that they earn up to 25% less than male workers.

Newspapers didn't appear, the theatres were closed, 90% of women shop workers did not turn in for work. Men took children to work with them because schools were unable to cope because women teachers were out. In Iceland women teachers form 65% of the staff. This strike was very poorly reported as no doubt the media doesn't want the idea to spread.



Robbed of your health

In April this year the new 'Health and Safety at Work Act' came into full operation. It is designed to provide full protection at work for some 5 million people who were beyond the reach of the old system of the Factory Acts, "from bishops to tarts" boasted Brian Harvey, deputy chairman of the Health and Safety Executive which administers the act.

The Guardian, in a review of the first six months of this legislation claimed that the new powers given to the factory inspectors ".....are beginning to make themselves felt with a vengeance". To support this, the paper's Labour correspondent, Keith Harper, cited the 2,653 prohibition and improvement notices issued on employers during this period. Heartening news you might think, until you discover that there are no figures from previous years to compare these with. And, something that Harper failed even to mention, that during the first two months of the act, the factory inspectors refused to implement it because of a pay claim they were pressing.

Indeed, the inspectorate's, the Institution of Professional Civil Servants (I.P.C.S.) has raised a number of doubts about the effective working of the act.

During the second reading of the bill. Michael Foot (the well known 'socialist' employment minister) called for a 50% increase in the Factory Inspectorate over the next five years. It is known however that the government wishes to cut back on the Health and Safety Executive's budget by up to 10% over the next year and the I.P.C.S. has claimed that this reluctance to provide funds could well sabotage the act. Even if this 50% increase does take place, the assistant general secretary of the I.P.C.S., Mr Cyril Cooper, has said that the Health and Safety Commission has completely underestimated the number staff needed.

With these reservations in mind, the claims that the act is beginning to make itself felt

"with a vengeance" appears as somewhat of an exaggeration.

But what of the act itself. Is it a great improvement on the previous system that its supporters claim it to be? In the sense that just about everybody at work is now covered by Health and Safety legislation the answer is yes. But in general, no real progress has been made and in some respects the new act is even flabbier than the old system of Factory acts.

For instance, Section 2 of the act says that "....it shall be the duty of every employer so far as is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees." A number of other basic obligations in this section (relating to plant, welfare, training etc) all contain this same qualification. Although some sections of the factory act contained this phrase, others did not. A clear duty was placed on employers to make things safe without any qualifications whatsoever.

FACTORY INSPECTORATE 1971 FIGURES

(Note - This was before the current legislation added another 5,000,000 workers to the inspectorate's coverage).

Number of places to be inspected:	400,000
Size of inspectorate:	714
Size of general inspectorate in the field:	456
Number of <u>visits</u> (not necessary inspections):	300,000
Number of prosecutions (firms or individuals):	1,330

Official figures are grossly and probably deliberately misleading but one writer has estimated the annual figures to be:

Killed at work or dying from injuries:	2,000
Killed by recognisable industrial diseases:	1,000

Injured or off work with industrial disease for at least 3 days:

nearly 1,000,000
Injured needing first aid:
10,000,000

Taken from P. Kinnersley - "The Hazards of Work".

The phrase 'as far as reasonably practicable' is nothing more than a legal loophole through which employers can crawl to escape liability.

Even more fundamental, but not unexpected, is the total failure of the act to give any power to those who actually face the hazards of work - the people on the shopfloor. Although the act encourages the setting up of joint safety committees with management and the appointment of safety representatives, it has been suggested that the "....motive for this seems to be to enable employers to spread the blame for accidents away from themselves and towards the workers safety representatives." (note 1)

And one enterprising employer in a northern shipyard recently found another use for the joint safety committee when, with the reluctant cooperation of the shop stewards on the committee, redundancies were instituted by saying that old machinery had become dangerous and would have to go along with the men employed on it.

It would be naive however, to think that any government, whatever its political complexion, will ever give power to those who carry out

it on their backs. Or that in a society dominated by the profit motive responsibility for our safety and health can be delegated to our employers and to paid officials of the state. Although safety legislation can be usefully used by workers in order to force employers to conform to minimum safety standards, it is no substitute for a strong shopfloor organisation with the power to enforce safety standards set by the workers themselves.

As Theo Nicholls and Pete Armstrong put it in a pamphlet on industrial accidents - ".... the safety ".... the real safety and health problem is to protect workers against the inherent 'unnatural' excesses of a society dominated by the market; a society in which some men are paid to squeeze as much production as possible out of others". and "... safety is a question putting people before production; the people who do the producing must have the power to that their safety is put first.. (note 2)

note 1 Taken from Newham Rights centre pamphlet "A cause for Concern". note 2 T. Nicholls & P. Armstrong "Safety and Profit"



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British workers are quite rightly concerned that the £6 wage increase limitation, despite a vastly greater increase in the cost of living, will result in lower living standards for the next year at least.

However, the proposed cuts in the social services, if implemented, will result in lower living standards for many years to come. It is no accident that many of the direct grant schools are choosing to opt for independence, now that the education cake is being reduced to crumbs. Less money for teaching staff, less school building, smaller grants for facilities. All this adds up to inadequate teaching in overcrowded classes, a situation which although it can be arrived at within a year, will take many years to remedy.

The same process applied to the National Health Service will have horrific effects. Fewer hospitals along with a cut back in grants, will mean more patients to fewer beds coupled with a drop in nursing facilities. This situation is made worse by the reduction of new homes for the needy, aged, spastics etc.

The present Housing Minister tells us quite blithely that he has had a rethink about the housing problem. We don't need new homes, in any case council housing deteriorates. He proposes to patch up our existing slums. This solution to Britain's housing problem will help the fortunes of slum landlords who have taken rent for years without giving anything in return. It will raise the pickings, for Architects, Surveyors, Solicitors, Estate agents and Jerry Builders. What it will not do is supply decent housing for those who need it. British workers need to be worried about the future for themselves and their families.

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POORE
TRICK

BY OUR MOTOR CYCLING
REPORTER

Norton Villiers Triumph chief trickster Dennis Poore is renewing his efforts to smash what is left of the British motor-cycle industry in the financial interest of his masters: The Multi-national Manganese Bronze.

Hugh Palin, one of the NVT Directors has announced that only the 'barest minimum' of what is left of the former three great British motor-cycle companies is to be spared the final indignity of the knackers yard. They have in mind 100 out of the many thousands who were employed in the industry before Poore began his financial manipulation using millions of pounds of public money to do his bidding. Those lucky? 100 workers are to be retained solely that NVT can capitalise on existing stocks, of bikes and spares.

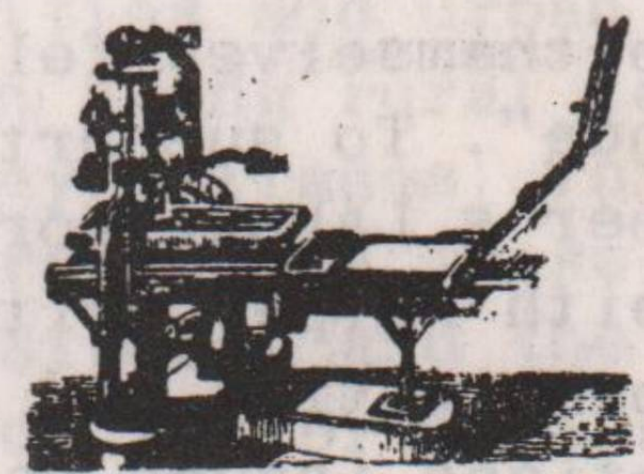
N.V.T. had advance knowledge that the Meriden motor-cycle co-operative was negotiating with Moto Guzzi, the Italian bike manufacturers, to produce

Contd. from page 6.

in this plot. On this occasion, the Spanish Government asked again for my extradition and now the French Tribunal has granted it. Only if the Government decides not to follow the tribunal's advice can I be saved from being turned over to the Spanish Army. The danger which threatens me is very serious indeed. For a soldier to have committed a theft of arms and political documents in his own barracks is high treason and all the more serious is that the arms found their way into the hands of the regime's enemies. If I am extradited, I shall be first horribly tortured to force out of me the names of my comrades and later my fate will be the firing squad.

Pedro Astudillo.

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two of their light weight models in this country. It has come to light that Poore has set up a new company which he intends to use to produce foreign lightweight motor-cycles himself no doubt relying on the financial assistance of his business friends to smash the Meriden workers new venture.

Poore and his masters have already wrecked the livelihood of thousands of workers in the interest of profit. The break up of an industry which incorporated hundreds of specialist skills was as nothing in comparison with the money obtained from the selling of plant and property. The time has come to stop this asset stripping. The motor-cycle workers at Small Heath, Wolverhampton and Meriden have all the skills necessary to rebuild a British motor-cycle industry at their fingertips. If the three work forces remain divided they will be doing Poore's bidding. United they can obtain the assistance of the labour movement to rebuild their industry for themselves.