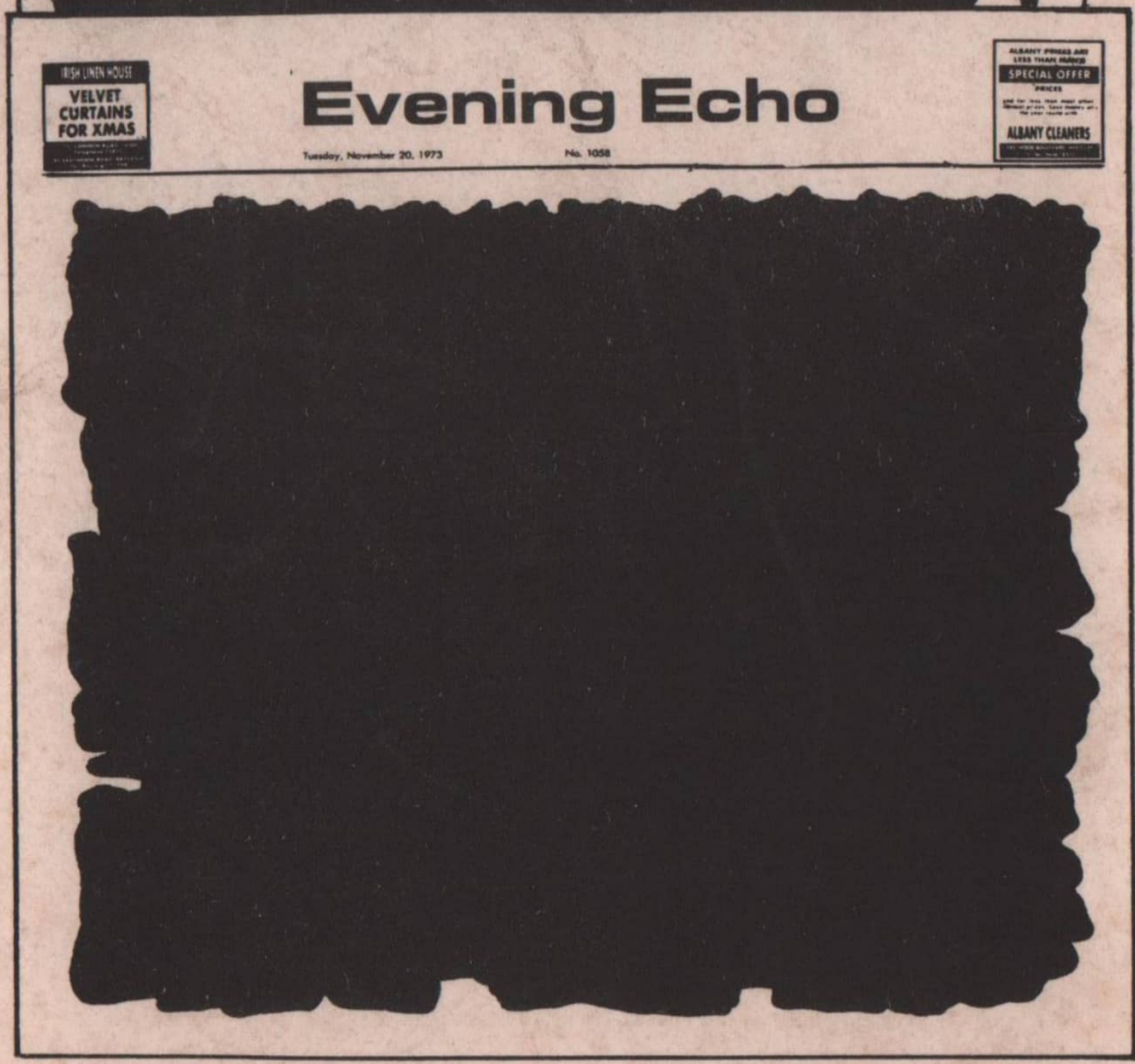
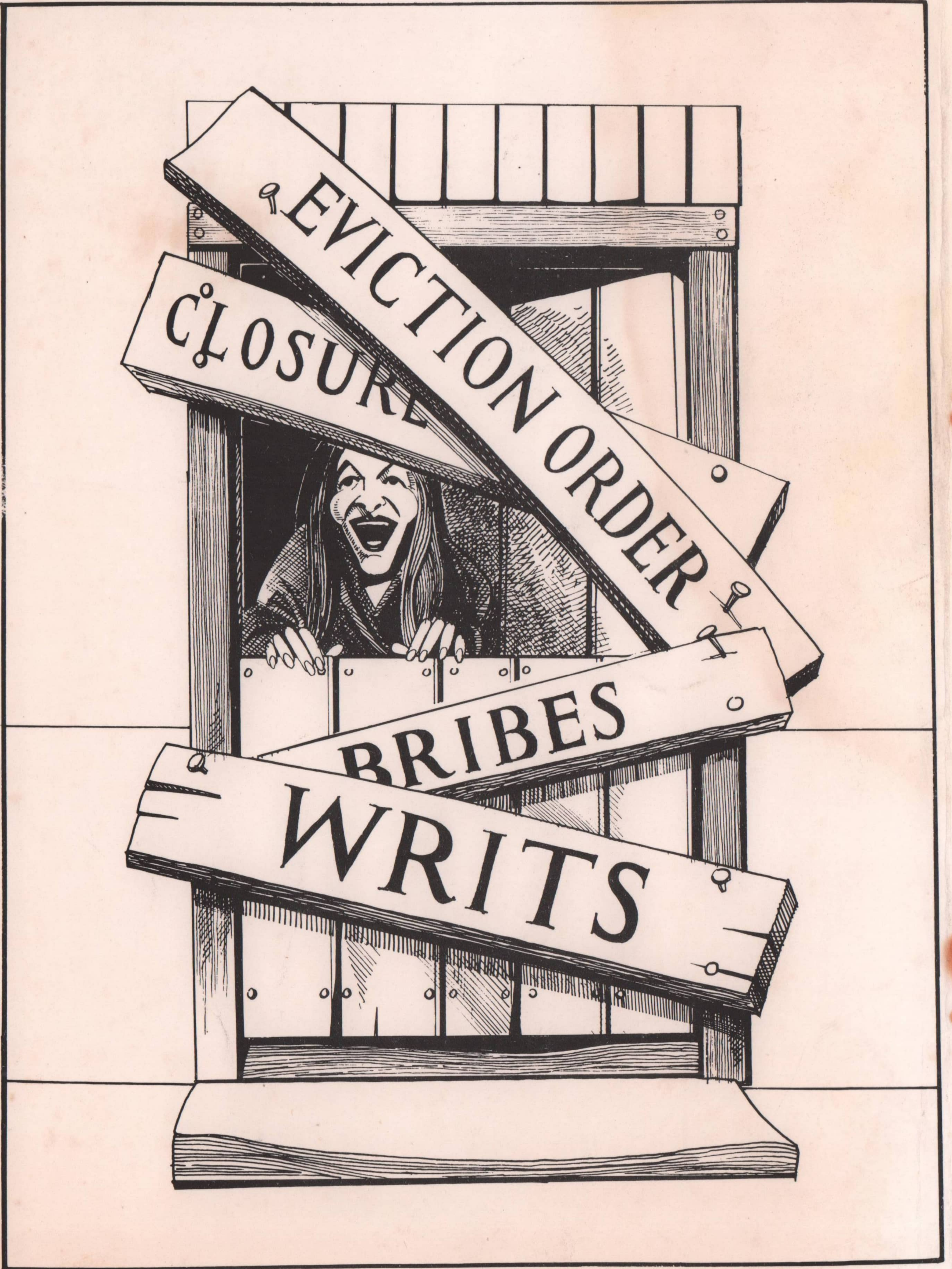


# inside story

No 13 December 1973



## When no news is good news ...



## cover story

You can't expect the national media to report industrial action by journalists with any more accuracy or sympathy than is usually shown to other trade unionists in dispute. Over the page are a few - unpublished - details of what the provincial journalists have been doing in the last few weeks.

Other trade unionists may reasonably say to the journalists: what steps have you taken in the past to resist your bosses' attacks on us? Or, more positively, what steps will you take from now on to fight for straight reporting of industrial disputes?

The key factor is whether journalists see themselves as workers - or as an elite group of 'professionals.' If journalists are workers, how long can they afford to organise and act in isolation from the other workers in the communications industry? Because of their essential weakness in industrial disputes - newspaper journalists, for example, can only stop production with printers' help - journalists have a particular reason to forge links with their fellow workers.

The paradox of the NUJ is that, the more militant its members become, the more dissatisfied they will get with the NUJ itself.

The NUJ rank-and-file group, Journalists Charter, is now beginning to discuss the idea of one union for all workers in the communications industry. That would worry Newspaper Society bosses - among others.

## HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

The NUJ stopped production of the Luton Evening Post and the Watford Evening Echo (both owned by Thomson Regional Newspapers) for three days.

A determined 40-strong NUJ picket prevented deliveries of plates, newsprint and mail, barricaded the plant's back entrance with planks and oil drums, and cordoned off the delivery vans' exit.

Co-operation of the production unions played a big part: the NGA refused to handle copy prepared by the Post and Echo editors for each other and said they would stop the presses if police were called to clear the pickets.

## SOUTHEND

The Southend Evening Echo and Standard and the Basildon Standard Recorder did not appear for nearly a fortnight when the 86 NUJ members were locked out following a 24-hour union meeting and all the NGA staff were sacked when they blacked non-NUJ copy.

With the help of a local Labour print-shop owner, a one-off 'alternative' free sheet was produced by NUJ and NGA staff ...and management had the sense to settle forthwith (before the NGA blew up nationwide).

## MIDDLESBROUGH

Journalists on the Evening Gazette came out when management withdrew their 'house agreement' following a three-day guerilla strike, which meant some journalists lost £15 a week. When national talks restarted last week, both sides agreed to lift all sanctions. But the Newspaper Society claimed it could not persuade its own member, TRN, to reinstate the house agreement. The NUJ chapel was still out on official strike - without pay - at the weekend.

## WELWYN

Four sub-editors on the Welwyn paper owned by Home Counties Newspapers were identified as applying 'sanctions' - refusing to handle non-NUJ copy. The whole chapel was told they would get no pay unless they withdrew their restrictive practices: they refused, were locked out and were rapidly declared on official strike.

The NUJ's lawyers' view is that management action in locking out reporters before they even had time to apply

sanctions is illegal. Again, the NS could not make HCN toe the line in time for the new talks: the chapel is still out - again without strike pay.

## SHEFFIELD

NUJ action halted the Morning Telegraph except on Saturdays and many issues of the Sheffield Star, during a bitter four-week dispute that began with the monitoring of union officials' phone calls and the refusal of management to talk. This was in spite of open hostility from the MATSOPA chapel (which has always had management's ear), deteriorating support from, surprisingly, the NGA and picket-busting by T & G men - aided at one point by the notorious Chrysler picket-buster Tony Bilton.

Bilton's truck, loaded with reels of newsprint, smashed a picket's car and the police were called. Management promised Bilton's truck would not be unloaded, so the pickets agreed to leave. Shortly after, the local police inspector went into strike headquarters, apologised and told the NUJ to go back on the street - management had broken its promise immediately.

Capitulation of the other unions was partly due to fear the shaky Telegraph would be closed down. So the 160-odd NUJ members went back together to avoid a slow crumble; but this was probably the first time a big NUJ chapel was out solid for four weeks without strike pay.

## SOUTH WALES

Management locked out the NUJ in one of South Wales' biggest offices for 11 days after a three-day official guerilla strike.

All this has been happening with hardly any notice from the national press.

All this has been happening in one of the weakest arms of the meekest union of all: provincial members of the National Union of Journalists.

All this has been happening without the tight organisation and fast communication of long-militant unions.

All this has been happening by grassroots decision at a moment's notice from NUJ head office - an extraordinary act of faith from dozens of isolated offices who have always been told the union is a non-combatant, who have little idea whether they're out on their own or with massive support.

All this has been happening among those hitherto more reluctant to strike than civil servants: middle-class men and women with mortgages and pretensions to professional status.

Who brought all this about? Simply, a greedy employers' organisation, the Newspaper Society, which while making their biggest profits for years have continued to use bullying tactics over wage rises - and a government that has deliberately sunk living standards by law.

The anger has been growing for years. But now the long succession of mini-wage rises means a fully-trained senior provincial journalist can, on some papers, be paid as little as £32 a week. And 'juniors' - young men and women under 24 - get only a percentage of that; during their first year in the job, little over £16 a week.

The employers have naturally staffed their newspapers mainly with cheap juniors. And this may have been their biggest long-term mistake: the young get angrier faster.

This year's wage claim was the biggest ever, thanks to pressure from young militants learning how to work union machinery: £15 all round for the provinces; another £5 for the South-east; yet another £5 odd for those in Central London competing with Fleet Street; freedom for house agreements (plant bargaining); and all to take effect as soon as Phase Three ends, with as much as possible paid out now.

This was all agreed openly: the employers knew. They also knew the union would brook no delaying tactics this time (designed always to force a last-minute settlement before the previous agreement runs out). Yet at both the first and second meetings of the negotiating teams, the employers refused even to make a cash offer.

First signal of the new militancy came when chapels (office branches) voted for industrial action in support of a two-year-old claim for better junior pay. As the Newspaper Society's intransigence grew, that industrial action 'rolled over' on to the new claim particularly freedom for house agreements.

It really began with 24-hour disruptive chapel meetings on 7 November. The following week the union's Action Committee started pulling chapels out on two or three day strikes. And a work-to-rule began in a majority of offices.

But two huge problems face journalists who want to stop the presses. One is the flood of news pouring into every sizeable office from the Press Association - under contract to Newspaper Society proprietors. The other is the large number of non-union members and executives (many of whom used to be journalists) in most offices who can produce - for some days at least - a

thinner version of the newspaper.

PA teleprinters are controlled by the National Graphical Association, who are basically sympathetic but not yet ready to act decisively on a national basis in support of journalists. And NUJ members at PA, who are notoriously conservative and afraid of reprisals from their bosses (remember those contracts), neither decided, nor were asked officially, to take sympathetic action. (Also, see INSIDE STORY 11 for brief account of successful management action, backed by union HQ, to destroy NATSOPA organisation at PA - incidentally, victimised FoC John Lawrence has returned to the print via the NGA.)

Another problem the journalists faced was their own union leadership. They decided on a policy of secrecy over who should strike next, with the obvious idea of surprising the bosses. But that left hundreds of offices, who didn't know what was happening or what was going to happen, without any clear and reassuring programme ahead.

The situation got more and more confused. And the union's creaky information machine - branch circulars and the occasional bulletin - couldn't keep up with journalists who wanted to know what was happening.

But the imposition of 'sanctions', aimed deliberately at the production process, frightened the Newspaper Society. First, they began imposing and threatening lockouts: for instance, the London office of Westminster Press, which agreed to start restrictive practices as well as blacking copy to strike-bound offices in the group, were promised instant suspension.

But the Newspaper Society also approached the union for renewed talks. On Tuesday, the 27 November, the Society's negotiators offered a small concession: they would try to persuade their backwoods members to abandon the house agreements embargo, if the union met them for more general talks on the claim beforehand.

The union agreed, reluctantly; but warned the Society that if house agreements were not freed by the evening of Wednesday 5 December, the boot would go in again. Current plan is to pull out one-fifth of NS journalists on an open-ended strike, with financial support from the other four-fifths.

# libel report

On 1 September 1973 Paul Foot reported in Socialist Worker that the paper had received a letter from the head of publicity at Cambridge University Press about one of its books, City Politics and the Press: 'We would request,' said the letter, 'due to unforeseen circumstances, that no reviews of this book appear for the present.'

Foot then told his readers: 'The "unforeseen circumstances", needless to say, amount to a libel action - started by Mr Bernard Shrimley, a former editor of the Liverpool Echo' (and now editor of the Sun).

Of course Socialist Worker would not be 'taking any notice of this letter': this was a new form of 'censorship by libel'.

Shortly afterwards Socialist Worker received another letter which they 'took no notice of'. This was a letter for publication from Pat Arrowsmith, author of The Colour of Six Schools. She contrasted the paper's bold stand against 'censorship by libel' with SW Litho's withdrawal of her book when threatened with a libel action.

As printers of the book, SW Litho took this decision jointly with its publishers the Society of Friends and the British Council of Churches. The publishers paid the costs. (For allegedly libellous passages of The Colour of Six Schools, see INSIDE STORY 11.)

We sympathise with Socialist Worker/SW Litho: it is difficult to combine a political paper with a printing business. But we think Pat Arrowsmith's letter should have been published: surely the membership of IS is allowed to know that its right foot is sometimes out of step with its left.

In fairness to SW Litho we must add that - whatever criticisms we had of their printing - we were not asked to supply a solicitor's 'libel letter' when they printed INSIDE STORY. And we did not ask SW Litho to print No 11, although they did the cover (Fed Edge was a pseudonym for SW Litho).

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We take this opportunity of rescuing from our files a couple of sentences which we were prevented from publishing in INSIDE STORY 1: Darwin Press, who printed the magazine in those days, did insist on a 'libel letter' (incidentally INSIDE STORY 7 was read for libel - without the

Holloway article being queried).

The passage which, in a solicitor's opinion, risked legal action was a quote from Mr Papaphotis, father of one of the six girls expelled from Silverthorne School, on their appeal to the governors: 'I've never seen so many people bend backwards and sideways to cover up. The whole thing was prejudged. My solicitor said afterwards: "On that basis half the children in the country should be expelled... And they thought: "Five blacks and another immigrant: who's going to shout?"'

In fact the staff meeting which decided who was to be expelled considered the possibility that the expulsion of the six would be seen as racist and discussed adding an English girl to the list. However, they did not.

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Our suggestion in INSIDE STORY 12 that Acupuncture: Cure of Many Diseases was being threatened by writs was mistaken, say Pan's press office: the book was withdrawn, apparently, because of a 'printer's error' on the cover.

A Pan book which was withdrawn 'for legal reasons' was Rosita Sweetman's On Our Knees, published in the summer of 1972 and pulped shortly afterwards following a libel action by Commander Burges of Bosham, Sussex. The Commander is also suing John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy over their play The Ballygombeen Bequest - and he has threatened the Irish Times.

All three referred - in terms which the Commander clearly did not like - to his attempts to evict the Fahy family from his property in the west of Ireland. Burges had The Ballygombeen Bequest taken off the stage in London last year, putting the theatre company temporarily out of work, and publication of the script is indefinitely held up.

But the Commander failed with the Irish Times. Their reporter, Michael Finlan, told INSIDE STORY: 'Burges wrote threatening action but we continued to cover the story as it developed.'

In Finlan's opinion Rosita Sweetman's was 'a very accurate account of the story. But I must admit a prejudice: I'm very much on the side of the Fahys.' On the next page is the relevant extract from On Our Knees.

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# Cdr Burges

Oughterard is a smallish town about 17 miles from Galway City. It grew up like all country towns at the cross roads of the village traffic. It's surrounded by a population of small farmers and is situated on the banks of the longest lake in Ireland, Lough Corrib. A walk through Oughterard would make you wonder where the farmers and their wives do their shopping. There are antique shops, gift shops, and posh hotels and posh pubs, but not a single supplier of the normal farmers' gear that you'll find in lots of other country towns and villages. The kind of shops where wellingtons hang, empty-legged from a bar over the counter, where bacon, eggs, tea and bootlaces are laid out in seeming chaotic abundance.

Oughterard's nearness to Galway, and location on the beautiful Corrib Lake have made it attractive to developers as a tourist town. Hence the hotels and the gift shops. A walk down the lake shore shows another development - holiday chalets, retirement bungalows, fences and railings around neat lawns that are the hallmark of wealthy connoisseurs rather than farmers.

A tattered poster on a lamppost attracts your interest then, 'SUPPORT SMALL FARMERS \* OPPOSE GOLF COURSE'. If you have time you can learn the story behind that. Of how four local businessmen and women bought 150 acres of valuable land in Oughterard. Of how that land had been promised for years back to 14 small farmers in the heavily congested area of Oughterard and how the Land Commission was over-ruled in its bid to purchase for the small farmers in a court in Dublin in October 1968. The land was bought by these business men, who now propose to lay out a golf course there. For over two years they'll tell you, the small farmers of the Oughterard Land League, how they've fought to have this decision reversed. But then they'll point out how the people with the money control the show, in Oughterard as everywhere else.

If you've a bit more time you could walk down to the lake shores. You'll only get glimpses of it through the rich men's bungalows, but at the end you'll discover the inevitable outcome of a state that's run in the interest of money and contrary to the interests of the people. You'll meet Mrs Nora Fahey, and she'll tell you how she's fared in such a state.

Mrs Nora Fahey is a poor woman. That is, her material possessions are not extensive. She has four cows, four calves, a Connemara mare, a Connemara foal, two hens, a cottage on an Irish acre and another acre over a mile away which she rents from the Irish Land Commission for £20 a year.

## A RICH MAN

Mr 'X' is a rich man. He owns a bungalow beside Mrs Fahey which he rents every year to holidaying families. He himself lives in England. He has an interest in an English business, and flips over the odd fortnight every summer to see how his tenants in his bungalow beside Mrs Fahey's are. In the 'good old days', before the trouble that is, Mr 'X' used to pay Mrs Fahey 25p per family that stayed in his house if she cooked and cleaned for them.

You might say Mr 'X' has more than enough to satisfy one man. He had his career in the Services, (he fought in the First World War), his business interests, and used to have Mrs Fahey to cook and clean for the tenants staying in his cottage by the shores of Lough Corrib. Mr 'X' wants more. Specifically, he has done everything in his power, short of lifting Mrs Fahey into a truck and driving her to Malin Head, to shift her from her home and from her land.

Mrs Fahey is from Ros a mhill (Rossaveal) in the Connemara Gaeltacht. A native Irish speaker, she married Bartley Fahey in 1947 and moved into his family's cottage on the shores of Lough Corrib. The Fahey family have lived on the end of the New Quay Road, Oughterard for as long as anyone can remember. About 150

years they say. Theirs was the first house to be built by the lake. A trip down the same road today shows signs of the times. Good, or bad times, depending on your purse and politics.

As you turn off the road marked 'pier' just before Oughterard village, the sky sits on the whole world before you, a wide semi-circular lid. Cycling the road, patches of the Corrib lake glint back through the hawthorn trees, rowing boats lie belly upwards, winter resting. You pass a house. Slow the bike. Look again. A rich man's house. Then another. Bungalows for the retiring rich. Hand cut stone, deep wooden windows and doors. Balconies over the lake, each gateway protected by a gangling cattle grid. A couple walk on their laurel-bushed lawn, their voices suspended between the stillness of the lake and the wide sky.

### STOCKBROKER BELT

Farther along the road there are more bungalows. The residence of Mr Pat Hughes, a multi-millionaire director of Tynagh mines. Outside his house a wide sweeping drive and neat cut grass. A motor boat, and genuine gypsy caravan, the whole fenced with white paling.

Connemara's very own stockbroker belt. On an island in the lake the Director of P & O lines. You wonder then how they're all there. In the very midst of the poverty of the West of Ireland. Small wonder then if contrary to all laws of planning permission they're on the lake side of the road, blocking the view and disallowing local fishermen to land their boats at the piers used by their fathers and grandfathers before them.

At the end of the road, a pier. The Corrib. Islands singled out in turn by the winter's fingering sun. Stretching back to the sky, water with its cargo of tree studded islands. From the bungalows back the road, straight stone piers sticking out onto the lake's back, each garden with its own stone built tie-up. 24 miles of free fishing. Turn your back to the lake and Mrs Fahey's cottage is directly in front of you. Look to the left and slightly beyond it you'll see Mr 'X's green corrugated holiday bungalow, with its balcony onto the lake.

Mrs Fahey is a small woman. Slightly bent and 67 years old. She opens the door cautiously, fearful of the bailiffs coming to put her out. A brown, lined face, and steel grey hair in a neat bun. A smile that arrives as unexpectedly as the weather over the Corrib, but seldom enough since all the trouble began. At first she'll only answer what you ask, reservedly. With dignity, the story of how it's come about that she's to be stripped of the little she's ever had. Not someone to admit defeat too soon. She speaks haltingly, explaining that Gaelic comes more naturally to her. She pulls the blackened kettle over the embers of the fire for a cup of tea and cuts a piece of apple cake that she's just made. As she talks to you she's carefully washing two china cups in an enamel basin on a wooden table, then shooshing the water out into the yard scattering the two brown hens.

Mr 'X' has had his eye on the Fahey's cottage and land for some time. Looking out the window you can see why. A paradise for parasites. But the Faheys, although they didn't have a registered title to their land like thousands of other country people, had what's known as squatters' rights. That is, when Ireland became free - in name anyway - the land was theirs for they'd been there so long.

### 'A BIT OF PAPER'

'One night,' says Mrs Fahey carefully, each word now slowly placed in the air, 'my husband was coming home. He'd a bit of drink taken, and Mr 'X' met him up in the town (Oughterard). Mr 'X' asked him home, and said he wanted him to sign something, nothing really, just a bit of paper.'

Mr Fahey was drinking and talking and not really bothering much with the 'bit of



Their action is in support of their demand for 'political' status and transfer to prisons in N. Ireland.

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The 14 prisoners charged with escaping from Brixton on 30 May have been sent for trial at the Old Bailey - after the abandonment of their committal proceedings by the Director of Public Prosecutions. Following the bizarre events of 26 October which we reported in our last issue, reporters and members of South London PROP turned up at Brixton prison on 5 November for the resumption of the proceedings - only to be told that they had been adjourned again.

Two days later the Guardian reported that the DPP had in fact already abandoned the proceedings altogether - that on Friday 2 November the notorious judge Melford Stevenson had approved in secret a 'voluntary bill of indictment'. This means that the formality of presenting the prosecution case before magistrates - to see whether it stands up - has been dispensed with.

Lawyers acting for the prisoners protested that they had not been informed of this until told by the Guardian. One said it looked as if 'committals are being turned into a privilege rather than a right', while the NCCL called the move 'state power gone mad'.

It's clear that the DPP's decision was the result of the protests inside - and outside - Brixton. Presumably the police didn't feel able to lay on an 'escape attempt' every week to distract the media's attention.

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The night before the Guardian piece appeared London's chief of police, Sir Robert Mark, had complained on television that the existing legal system - and the 'dirty tricks' employed by defence lawyers - made it difficult for the police to get criminals convicted. Mark did not of course point out - and nor did anyone else in the 'controversy' which followed - that, when necessary, the state will dispense with the legal system and make bent lawyers look like Sunday School teachers.

A state which uses internment and torture as instruments of policy in Northern Ireland - and which, on the other hand, neatly arranges to release the five dockers jailed under the Industrial Relations Act when threatened by workers' protests - hasn't got much to learn.

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Recently the DPP himself, Sir Norman Skelhorn, gave an American audience a

glimpse of his views on 'Crime and Punishment'. Addressing the Harvard Law School Forum, Skelhorn said that there were only two kinds of people in prison: the 'reformables' and the 'irreformables'.

The state mistakenly allowed both to have 'ameliorative facilities' like 'television sets, concerts, hair-dos for the women and smoking privileges' - so that British prisons were losing their deterrent effect. Skelhorn called for lengthy and 'unpleasant' sentences 'to protect society from the irreformables'.

He interspersed his speech with contemptuous jokes about the criminal classes, their attempts to 'help themselves' and the irrelevance of psychiatric reports. But he was unable to explain on what basis anyone could determine whether a prisoner was a 'reformable' or an 'irreformable'.

Asked to justify British torture in Northern Ireland, Skelhorn did not trouble to deny its existence but said that, when dealing with Irish terrorism, the state was justified in using any methods.

A leaflet had been distributed at the meeting suggesting questions the audience might like to ask Skelhorn. One was: 'What charges have you brought against the prison officers in HM Prison Brixton and HM Prison Leicester (Gartree) after their recent assaults on British prisoners?'

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That question remains unanswered. Meanwhile, as most British readers will know 80 prisoners have been transferred from Gartree. Apparently the governor told the prisoners abusively he'd like to get rid of the lot of them.

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A demonstration by screws and their wives outside Albany prison on 18 October was reported at the time - but incompletely, to say the least. The night before, the long-term men were allowed to watch the whole of the England-Poland match, while those in another wing were not. At 8.30pm the second group refused to leave the recreation room and stayed on to watch the second half. When the match ended they turned off the set - and that would have been that.

But the screws, supported by their wives, refused to work next morning until they'd received a guarantee that the prisoners would be punished. They lost 14 days remission.

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As the Radical Alternatives to Prison  
newsletter has reported, the French  
prisoners organisation, Comite d'Action  
des Prisonniers, has recently added a 12th

demand to its earlier ones on prisoners' rights. The 12th point is: abolition of prison. Below is the text of the CAP statement (translation by RAP).

This point, friends, comrades, fellow-citizens of all the nicks in this lousy society, is one we almost forgot to mention - but only because it is so obviously the core of our opposition to imprisonment that we took it for granted. And in 'imprisonment' we include all the forces that try to crush the individual and mould him into conformity: mental hospitals, the army, most schools, most families, factories... Not to mention mind-destroying, brutalising machines that are at the disposal of the authorities. Like television.

This 12th point must be included in our manifesto, lest it appear that CAP is seeking only to improve conditions inside jails. To believe this is to ignore reality and forget the reason for our existence. We do not believe in reforms that will only perpetuate the prison system by making it more acceptable. We know there is a danger that if prison becomes 'not so bad', our brothers inside may lose the will to fight. Yet how can those who know what prison is, refuse to support reform?

At the present moment, riots in prisons are concerned with material conditions, basic rights. The majority of prisoners, like the majority of workers, ask only for better standards: whereas the only meaningful demand from the former would be 'No more prisons' and from the latter 'No more exploitation'.

This 12th point aims to take the struggle into another area - contesting the right of prisons to exist. Prisons cannot be reformed. They must be destroyed before they destroy us all.

The strength of the authorities is that they have succeeded in persuading all of us, including prisoners, that prison is indispensable; whereas it is only one of the means whereby the status quo is preserved. Many will say to us: 'But what will you do with criminals?' To which we reply that society has criminals to the extent that it is criminal itself. There are some 50 million criminals in France. Most of them keep within the law. The rest have no choice but to break the rules. They are the ones who go to prison, as an example. And they are, almost without exception, from the working classes.

In such a set-up there are only two

solutions: to rob or to be robbed. The worker is robbed of the fruits of his labour. And the only solution he has found up to now is to rob in his turn, although his theft is rather a way of taking back what is rightly his, as happened at Lip.

As for 'known offenders', they are a tiny minority, and they would be even fewer if we lived in a society that was less ruthless, more humane and fraternal. In any case it will be a long time before they outnumber the licensed (and honoured) villains, the purveyors of alcohol, motor cars, guns and adulterated foods.

Friends, comrades, it is time to unite, to refuse this one-way guilt that is foisted on us by the legal mafia. We must ~~throw~~ in our lot with all who are exploited, all who are in prisons of different kinds: workers, immigrants, internees, orphans, the handicapped. Instead of trying to improve the conditions of our survival, we must repudiate these conditions.

That is why the CAP calls for a regrouping of all those who intend to stop submitting and start fighting back.

CAP's Journal des Prisonniers (monthly, 6 issues 12F from: CAP, 15 rue des Trois-Freres, 75018 Paris) includes articles on 'other prisons', eg the army, and foreign prisons: the October issue had material from South Vietnam, USA and Madagascar; the November issue had a page on psychosurgery in the United States and the dangers of what could become an 'alternative to prison'. A regular feature in the paper is a monthly report on French prison suicides.

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Michael Tobin, who was released from Chelmsford last summer, issued a press statement at the time (published in PNS 31) in which he asked prisoners and ex-prisoners 'who have been or continue to be the victims of cruel, brutal and degrading treatment in British prisons to contact me personally by letter at the following address: Michael Tobin, PO Box 10638, Amsterdam, Holland'.

He has since written to INSIDE STORY asking us to publicise this address and stressing that his action followed discussion with other prisoners in Chelmsford: 'We agreed that I should produce such a press release - announcing an address in Holland where information could be sent in confidence, after which I would see that it was processed and published.'

paper'. He signed it. That was the start of the trouble. Next day he discovered he'd signed a caretaker's agreement. That is, he'd signed over the title of his land, and his house, to Mr 'X'. That he and his wife would remain there in future only as caretakers, and at Mr 'X's pleasure. 'My husband burned the bit of paper then.' Mrs Fahey says, 'he was so sick with himself, for when he read it he saw what he'd done. I remember still that one of the things in the agreement was that if we didn't obey all Mr 'X's rules he could evict us out at a week's notice.'

That was 1954. No money passed hands. Mr 'X' has his bit of paper, the Faheys had burned theirs. But then they felt secure enough in spite of that, 'seeing as we'd been here so long we thought we'd never be put out.'

Things went along much as before until Bartley Fahey took ill. For eight years he was in and out of hospital. Their three children, Peadar, Mary and Brid were all going to school, the two elder ones to a secondary school which in those days had to be paid for. Mrs Fahey went out cooking and cleaning for the rich people up the road to get the children's school fees. She was determined that they'd all have a good education..

### THREATS AND BRIBES

'In 1967 my husband was very bad. He had had an operation, but we all thought he'd be coming home from the hospital. We decided to repair the house. It was rotting and falling. We started putting in three new windows in the south side where there'd been none before. The house was very uncomfortable with very little light coming in. One day Mr 'X' came down with his wife, this was his new wife, they came for their honeymoon to the bungalow. He got very abusive, arguing with me when he saw we were doing up the cottage. He said we'd no right to do it. Then he wanted to give me what I'd spent on the house in the way of repairs, to get me out, but I wouldn't take any money.. He said he owned the house. But even though I knew my husband had signed the bit of paper I thought we were so long in it that we had our rights. Mr 'X' was coming and going, giving out, all the time.'

Mr 'X' wasn't content with trying to bully or buy Mrs Fahey out. While her husband was dying in hospital he started abusing him as well. Said to Mrs Fahey that he was a 'no good', and other things besides. Mrs Fahey has asked that some of the things he said should never be printed. Let the dead rest. But the living are still answerable.

In November, 1967, Bartley Fahey died. Mr 'X' was 'coming in and abusing me and threatening me,' Mrs Fahey says, 'I said to him one day, there was tears in my eyes but I wouldn't show him, "if I had a man around here you wouldn't be carrying on like this."' In June 1967 Mr 'X' was still harrying away at his target. He told the tenants in his own bungalow that Mrs Fahey's cows weren't to be allowed to wander round the lane leading down to the lake. The tenants told him they didn't mind. But people further up the road fell in with Mr 'X'. After all, Mrs Fahey's cottage was something of an eyesore in their little haven. Then again, it might even have been a guilty reminder to the moderately sensitive amongst them. Might.

So Mrs Fahey's calves wander along the muddy pathway at the side of the tarmac road, getting a bit of grass here and there and the cattle grids, and the clean white fencing, ensure that they don't trample on, or dare say it, actually eat some of the grass that the rich can afford to walk and sunbathe on.

All Mrs Fahey says as she wheels her bike a mile up the road to her field with a stack of hay tied to the saddle, 'Isn't it an odd turn, those big houses there, with their lovely lawns and gardens, and here ponies and cattle are actually starving for lack of food? Isn't it just.' And she wheels on bent-backed to her cattle a mile away up the road, and climbs in over the stone wall, the hay waving on her shoulders, and then throws it down in the field, separating out a portion

for the pony, and the cattle snort, pulling the hay into their letterbox dripping mouths.

## THE WRIT

For a while Mr 'X' had left things quiet enough. Summer was coming on. Brid the youngest girl was doing her Leaving Certificate exams, Mary was working in a Montessori school in England, and Peadar was helping Mrs Fahey do the house up so that as she got older and the farm work got more difficult she could take guests in the summer to help make ends meet. They were putting three small rooms upstairs, wiring the house for electricity, making a new living room at one end and getting in running water. Then it came. A writ to appear in court in June (1971).

'It was a bombshell all right,' Mrs Fahey says. 'We'd very little time to prepare a good case, we hardly got a solicitor in time.' The court was to be held in Dublin. The case was lost. This despite the fact that it was admitted in court that Mr 'X' had a bottle of whiskey on the table when Mr Fahey signed. Brid failed her exam from worry. One of the ponies got killed on the road the day they were away. Mrs Fahey 'went down with the nerves'. She was taken to hospital. An appeal was lodged to be re-heard in three months' time. Due to Mrs Fahey's illness it had to be postponed.

Meanwhile Mr 'X' waited. The Fahey's house waited, with wires dangling and floors half finished, 'nobody had the heart to go on with it'. Peadar had to let a job go in England - a trainee apprenticeship for carpentry - Brid had to re-sit her exams. Before the court case Mr 'X' offered Mrs Fahey £500 to get out. After, he offered her £1,000.

In Oughterard £1,000 wouldn't buy Mrs Fahey a field. In fact there isn't a field to be had. Nor a house. Not for any money. The last County Council cottage that came on the market in Oughterard there were 17 homeless families after it.

On March 14, 1972, Mrs Fahey's appeal came up in the Galway Court. Her appeal was rejected. The judge ruled in favour of Mr 'X'. He was chased through the streets of Galway by angry local residents. Not that that halted the inexorable wheels of 'justice'. Mrs Fahey has been given six months in which to vacate her house and her land. She's been given no compensation. Not a penny.

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In August 1972 - at about the same time as Pan withdrew On Our Knees - Nora Fahy died of cancer. But her children, in particular Brid who lives in the cottage, have continued to resist Burges's attempts to get the family out. And there has been a lot of local support for the Fahys.

As the Irish Times reported earlier this year, 'There is a strong local Land League, and they have joined Brid in her fight; the Official wing of Sinn Fein are backing her; the student body at University College, Galway (where Brid is a student) are on her side; 400 people in Oughterard have signed a petition in her cause; and, at its recent annual meeting in Limerick, the 40,000-strong Union of Students in Ireland passed a resolution supporting her.'

Brid told the paper that Burges had repeated the cash offer of £1000 made to her mother to get her out and described the offer as 'dreadful. It

was not done through solicitors (but through a local priest) and it was the strangest offer in the manner in which it was made.'

According to Brid, under the agreement she would get £100 immediately on quitting the house. After six months she would get another £400, and after yet another six months she would receive £500. The total sum would have to be divided among Brid, her brother Peadar and her sister Mary.

There were conditions attached to the offer. For one, she would have to agree that there would be no more publicity about the issue. Secondly, she was asked to drop all claims to a stretch of nearby land over which there is a legal dispute.

Later three Oughterard businessmen offered Brid £10,500 and a new house on a nearby site if her family would leave the house. But Brid told the Irish Times: 'We don't want a new house. We simply want to be left to live in this

house, which is ours. She estimated the value of the house and the three acres of land attached to it at - wait for it - £250,000.

The legal history of the cottage, as summarised by the Irish Times, is as follows. The Fahys have lived there since the 1820s, originally as tenants. In 1905 Brid's grandfather sold his tenancy of the house to the landlord, Lord Phillips, for £60. At the same time the grandfather signed a caretaker's agreement with Phillips.

After the grandfather's death in 1935 his widow, Honor Fahy, refused to sign a new caretaker's agreement. She continued to live in the house with her six children, the eldest of whom was Bartley, Brid's father.

In 1945 Burges inherited the landlordship of the house from the Phillips family and in 1954 Bartley signed the caretaker's agreement mentioned in Rosita Sweetman's account.

Although Burges's ownership of the property has twice been confirmed by the courts, it seems that he has never applied for an eviction order. But his attempts to gain possession have continued.

On 28 August this year, while Brid was abroad and the cottage was empty, Burges broke into it, padlocked the doors, boarded up the windows and put up a sign reading: 'Any person entering these premises without legal permission will be guilty of a criminal offence.'

Burges told the Fahy family in a letter that they had until 11 September to remove 'all goods and chattels' from the cottage. 'If not removed they will be put outside the premises on the public road.'

The house was re-occupied by six of Brid's friends. Her brother and sister, who live in England, and Brid herself came home. The ultimatum expired without any further attempt by Commander Burges to re-enter the cottage - and in the end he went back to England. Brid Fahy, who is clearly determined to keep her home, is unlikely to leave it empty again.

Of course there is a solution which would save the Commander's face: why doesn't he sell Brid the house - for the £60 his ancestor paid for it?

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The article above is based on Irish Times cuttings. At our request Brid Fahy telephoned INSIDE STORY on Friday 23 November: we wanted to check the article with her - and, if possible, include anything which had happened in the last few weeks.

Brid Fahy said that any article we published on this subject was without her agreement - we didn't, in fact, ask her to agree or disagree, just to state the facts. But she refused saying: 'I have enough trouble at the moment...I'm trying to study.' However she implied that, if INSIDE STORY had been a bigger magazine, she would have agreed.

She was particularly opposed to our republishing the extract from Rosita Sweetman's book. 'It's a pack of lies,' she said. 'She didn't ask my mother's permission and she didn't take the trouble to investigate the situation.' But Brid Fahy would not say which parts of the account were inaccurate.

And she wouldn't even tell us whether 'Fahy' (Irish Times) or 'Fahey' (On Our Knees) was the correct spelling of her name. She seemed to think that answering this question might in some way imply agreement to our publishing an article. But she did say that the Irish Times reports from which we have quoted were accurate: 'They were excellent, the best of the lot.'

## James Tully

Foreign mining companies make spectacular tax-free profits in Southern Ireland - and there's one government minister who can hardly be unbiassed on the subject since his son holds a key post in the biggest company.

Southern Ireland is surprisingly rich in minerals: lead, zinc, pyrites, molybdenum. Among those surprised to find this out was the Eire government, then Fianna Fail, which in the 1960s started handing out tax-free mining concessions to foreign companies willing to dig for anything bigger than potatoes. What the Irish were supposed to be getting out of the deal was less than clear.

With figures being quoted like £100 million in tax-free profits for one mine alone (the Tara mine, Navan), there is ~~rising~~ public pressure on the government to do something. And in September the Fine Gael-Labour government announced that mining companies will in future pay tax - at an as yet undisclosed rate. Their activities will be 'brought into line with comparable activities abroad' although in such a way 'as still to encourage investment'.

The response of the mining companies has been to declare that, if they were forced to pay tax, they might as well pack up and leave rather than - as they claim - mine increasingly thin supplies.

In the opinion of a lot of Irish people, that wouldn't be such a catastrophe. For in fact the exploitation of Ireland's mineral resources has hardly begun: there's a lot more down there waiting to be dug up.

Already the largest lead/zinc mine in the world is Navan. The price of zinc is rising - currently it's £450 a ton - in response to predicted long-term shortages. A geologist at the Tara mine has predicted a further big find, on the scale of Navan, every five years.

However, the most profitable part of the mining process is not done in the country at all. The ore is brought to the surface, concentrated and then shipped abroad. If it was smelted it would double in value - if it was turned into manufactured goods, there would be a further tenfold increase.

By not encouraging secondary industries - and related ones, eg petro-chemicals - Ireland loses 95 per cent of the value of its ore: no taxation can make good this loss. And the potential jobs for unemployed Irish workers are lost as well.

Demands from the left for nationalisation without compensation and for a ban on all metal production until secondary industries are created have been widely taken up. This issue was the main dividing point between the left and the leadership of the Labour Party at the October party conference.

There is of course the odd connection between the mining companies and the politicians who treat them with such benevolence. As the Irish People has reported, James Tully, Minister of Local Government, has a close - not to say intimate - connection with the Tara mine: his son holds the key administrative post of secretary. But not only that.

Tully used to be both General Secretary of the notoriously 'moderate' Federation of Rural Workers and a member of Meath County Council. He has been succeeded as councillor by his son, John, and as union boss - while he is in government - by his son-in-law, Frank Carolan. The three members of this happy family are thus in a strong position to marry the interests of the Tara mine with those of the state, the local authority and organised labour.

Planning permission for development of the Tara mine has to be sought from the Meath County Council - with the final right of appeal to the Department of Local

Government. Which means, in effect, that John Tully asks himself for permission - and if it's refused he goes to his old man.

But far more scandalous is the Tully family's ruthless and cynical exploitation of the Tara miners. Without any reference at all to the men already working at Navan, the employers and the FRW agreed a contract of work which:

- \* compels all workers to join the FRW
- \* bans from the mine any book or poster not previously approved by the management
- \* prohibits the men from joining a strike of workers employed by any sub-contractor at the mine - even if these men are themselves members of the FRW
- \* keeps the Tara men at substantially the same rates of pay the FRW is accustomed to accepting (£18-£23 a week).

This state of affairs became known when 10 men refused to sign and went to the ATGWU - Irish district organisation of the British T & G - which has taken up the issue.

After all this, it hardly seems worth adding that James Tully is opposed to the idea of nationalisation without compensation: he has threatened to leave the Labour Party if it adopts this proposal as policy.

Perhaps it would be indelicate to speculate on what the Tully family are giving one another for Christmas this year.

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## prison report

As we went to press the nine members of the Provisional IRA sentenced to life imprisonment two weeks ago were in the following prisons: Dolours and Marion Price - Brixton; William Armstrong and Paul Holmes - Parkhurst; Martin Brady and Hugh Feeney - Wakefield; Roy Walsh - Wandsworth; Gerard Kelly and William McLarnon - Wormwood Scrubs.

For almost two weeks the Home Office kept their whereabouts secret and some were refused visits as we went to press. All, except Martin Brady and William McLarnon, were thought to be still on hunger strike and the five men were already being forcibly fed: Roy Walsh, when visited on 29 November, said that the tube had been 'shoved down his throat'.

The Price sisters, however, were not being force-fed: in fact the Brixton prison doctor unsuccessfully tried to get their sister, Claire, to persuade them to break their strike.

# notes

## Nicolas Walter discusses recent publications by Pluto Press, in particular the Big Red Diary

There are Marxist publishers attached to the various Marxist groups pursuing more or less sectarian policies - Lawrence and Wishart (CP), New Park Publications (SLL), Red Books (IMG). There are also Marxist publishers attached to no particular group and pursuing more or less non-sectarian policies - Merlin Press, Monthly Review Press, Stage One. An interesting combination of the two types is the Pluto Press (the god of the underworld - get it?).

This originated from International Socialism, but is financially and editorially independent. As well as books and pamphlets of predictable kinds, it has produced works by or about Alexandra Kollontai, Rosa Luxemburg, Antonio Gramsci, Karl Korsch, Albert Rosmer, and Victor Serge, and also valuable reprints of out-of-print texts in British labour history.

Among recent publications of particular interest are Sheila Rowbotham's new book, Hidden from History (£3.30, paperback £1.50), a further instalment in her massive work in progress, complementing her previous book Women, Resistance and Revolution (reviewed in INSIDE STORY 7), and Werner Thönnessen's The Emancipation Of Women (£3.75, paperback £1.50), a study of 'the Rise and Decline of the Women's Movement in German Social Democracy' giving an unfamiliar angle on a fashionable subject. Both books should certainly be read by anyone interested in the historical dimension of feminism.

On another important subject, there is Jane Cousins' Turkey: Torture and Political Persecution (paperback 1.50), a large-format illustrated compilation of material about the brutal repression of the left under the Turkish military regime since March 1971. This is an example of the kind of work usually carried out by Amnesty International - as in its recent Report on Allegations of Torture in Brazil (paperback £1), containing similar material about the atrocities under the Brazilian military regime since December 1968 - but the Pluto Press book is well (if rather artily) produced, and Jane Cousins adds the essential political context.

More practically useful to industrial militants in this country is Pat

Kinnersly's Hazards (paperback 80p), 'a Worker's Guide to Health and Safety', which covers all the physical dangers of work, again adding some of the political context.

Another venture is a book club, Book Link, by which Pluto Press distributes copies of selected books produced by commercial publishers at discount prices for mail-order customers - the first one being Rosa Meyer-Levine's biography of her husband, Levine (originally Saxon House, £2.50, through Book Link £1.50).

A particularly attractive publication by the Pluto Press is the first issue of the Big Red Diary (paperback 75p). This is a diary for 1974, large pocket size (6 x 4 inches), with 160 pages, about a third being used for basic political, economic, legal, journalistic and research information, and the rest being a standard diary, with a week for each double-page spread, illustrated with pictures and quotations, and annotated with commemorative summaries of relevant historical events for most of the dates.

The idea is excellent, but it is much more difficult than it looks to put into practice, and it must be said that the first attempt hasn't really succeeded. The obvious trouble is that the designer has made the book very nice to look at but virtually impossible to use as a diary, because the illustrations, which are striking, use up about half the space available for diary entries.

Then the date notes are ambitious but highly variable in quality. There are too many unnecessary mistakes - like making the Tsar assassinated on 13 March 1881 Nicholas II instead of Alexander II, or confusing the Committee of 100 sit-downs of 18 February and 29 April 1962; the note on Kropotkin at the Lyon trial in January 1883 gives the wrong date, the wrong offence, and the wrong sentence!

There are also too many glaring omissions. To begin with, the diary fails to give the two dates which used to be commemorated by the whole revolutionary left every year - 18 March 1871, the popular rising which sparked off the Paris Commune; and 11 November 1887, the execution of the four Chicago anarchists - and it also fails to give the suppression of the Paris Commune on 28 May 1871 or the Chicago Haymarket bomb on 4 May 1886. Similarly it gives the suppression of the Kronstadt rising by Lenin and Trotsky on 17 March 1921 (an entry which must have caused some difficulty with the publishers' Leninist and Trotskyist staff!), but not the beginning of the

rising; the arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti on 5 May 1920, but not their execution on 23 August 1927; and so on.

In general the coverage is scanty and patchy, and by no means reliable. It is a pity that the compilers, in their laudable attempt to produce a reference book for all members of the left, did not take the trouble to approach several groups to contribute material and then have the entries properly checked. Perhaps this lesson will be learned for next year's issue; and perhaps at the same time the publishers will make up their minds whether it is really meant as a diary to use of just as a fetish object to enjoy.

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#### JOHN MACLEAN

Pluto Press have just published Nan Milton's John Maclean (£4.35, paperback £2), a life of the great Scottish revolutionary leader by his daughter which they rightly describe as 'a major contribution to any assessment of the revolutionary socialist tradition in Britain'. If you know anything about him; you will want the book; if you don't know anything about him, you need it.

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#### PEACE NEWS

After 37 years as a London-based paper, Peace News is to move to Nottingham and become a fortnightly. Here one of the paper's co-editors describes how the decision was taken.

Peace News was founded in 1936 as the house paper of the Peace Pledge Union. When it became independent 20 years later, it still had a simple cause to identify with - unilateral disarmament - and it soon had a clearly defined movement to serve. Since the decline of the Committee of 100, however, the anarchist inclined nonviolent movement has been rather amorphous and radical nonviolent activity pretty fragmented in form.

In 1970, rather than have the paper as the mouthpiece of a small editorial elite, the co-editors and some supporters decided to develop more of a sense of community by calling the first 'Potlatch' in Britain to bring together nonviolent radicals active around the country. (Potlatches, decentralised meetings, have since become independent of Peace News.) Later, after a bitter internal

struggle, it was decided to re-structure Peace News in order to make the 'community' the sovereign body over the paper - a community using, promoting, writing for and in tune with the paper.

The old Peace News Company had controlled Peace News, Housmans Bookshop and Finsbury Park Typesetters. It was basically composed of people with a long association with the paper, some from its PPU days, some from the Ban the Bomb time. More or less the same body of people were to become 'Trustees' - ultimately responsible that the paper was pacifist and financially level-headed - and other companies, autonomous within those limits, would be formed to run Peace News, Housmans and FPT.

The co-editors and their supporters agreed to the creation of a legal structure - 'Peace News Ltd' - as a subsidiary of the Trustees, but in fact PN Ltd has always ignored all but the minimum legalities: not bothering too much who was actually a legal member, encouraging anyone interested to attend meetings, appointing the minimum of two directors but strictly specifying that these posts were nominal, and generally trying to be as open and participatory as possible.

But this community/company did not develop as fully as hoped and the paper still failed to be adequately in touch with activity in the direction of nonviolent revolution. So, in March this year, four of the five co-editors proposed that the paper move out of London, print offset-litho (it's still letterpress), change its name and be produced fortnightly. It would thus clearly align itself with alternative society theory, they argued, and, as a fortnightly, be able to develop a style of reporting which could put it more in touch with community struggle, communicate more about alternative society projects and raise critical questions for the development of an alternative society.

A company meeting in April deferred the decision to September. This second meeting was held in Nottingham as the paper had been offered a house there. This was the largest meeting about Peace News for years and a strong majority supported the change. So, too, did a separate vote of those who were apparently legal members of PN Ltd. Had this meeting felt otherwise, the co-editors would have accepted that decision as they feel the paper has a more important purpose than their self-fulfilment.

After this, some opponents of the decision began to work out ways of starting an anti-militarist weekly in London, using Peace News' Trustees' funds. Tony Smythe, they