

RED HERRINGS

LOCAL champions of 'socialism', namely Sunderland Borough Council Labour Group have just suspended the groups 'rebel' for six months. Coun. Joe McGrath, also chairman of the Local Area Health Authority, was carpeted for voting against his party 'comrades' at a recent Council meeting. The suspension followed a vote on the question of the site for a new hospital. Apparently the group had decided before the meeting which site to vote for, but Joe stuck to his guns and voted for the Health Authorities choice of site. Incidentally the two sites are only five miles apart.

After his purge, Joe, obviously upset by the whole thing said... 'a lot of red herrings were thrown about' and that he didn't see 'eye to eye with the decision'.

There's no need for the local electorate to panic though, and we can all sleep safely in our beds - Joe stressed that 'there is nothing personal in it. I'll be sticking with Labour'.

Ice picks were slipped back into briefcases for another day. Hurrah for Labour! what would we do without them?

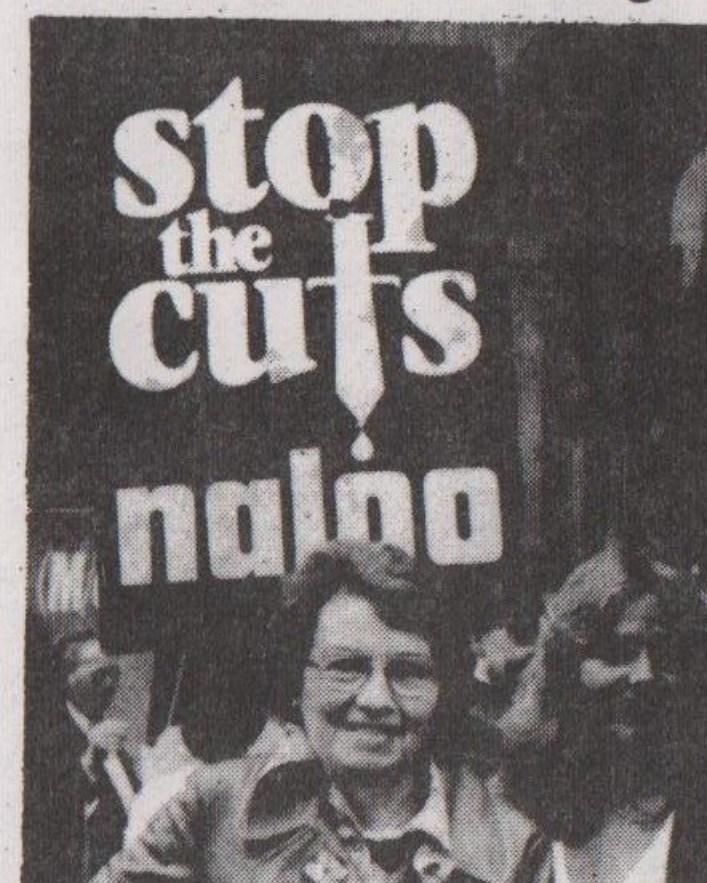
FIGHT BACK!

The working class is under attack. Under attack from the most anti-working class government since Callaghan was given his cards.

Under Labour the value of our wages were slashed due to wage restraint and inflation; dissident workers, such as the firemen and the public service workers were jumped on; and unemployment rose. Far from squeezing the rich until the pips squeaked as Dennis Healy promised, the last Labour Government helped the rich get richer whilst working class living standards slumped. Under the Tories we're getting a lot more of the same. Things have gone from bad to worse. Public Services have been slashed, in some cases proving fatal and unemployment has risen above 2½ million. New redundancies are announced every day and millions are on short time.

Not content with this vicious attack on working class living standards, the Tories intend smashing all working class organisations which pose a threat to their anti-working class policies, especially shop-floor organisations.

In an obvious attempt to return to the dark days of the industrial revolution, the Tories are planning to make most forms of industrial action illegal. In a recently published Green Paper, the government stated its intention of making Solidarity action illegal, making Unions liable for their employers losses in industrial disputes and making collective bargaining agreements legally binding.



The last is an attempt to prevent rank and file union members from challenging deals made over their heads by full-time union bureaucrats. Clearly this shows the anti-working class nature of the legal system. Something which workers must always bear in mind, especially now the class war is hotting up.

And class war it is. At the moment the enemy is on the offensive using the depression as an excuse to sack millions of workers. We must defend ourselves by whatever means necessary. We must fight tooth and nail against all redundancies and against any attack on our collective living standards.

Whatever the law says, we must fight back and support our fellow workers by spreading strikes and occupations to our own workplaces to such an extent that redundancies become so costly that the bosses are frightened to carry them out.

Not only should we fight back but we must go onto the offensive. We must fight to take over industry ourselves; for our own needs, not to fulfill the greed of the employers. To do this we have to organise; we must regain control of our own unions.

Before we can gain Workers Control over industry and our own lives, we must either gain Workers Control of the unions or create new shop-floor organisations that can be used to go on the offensive; to win the class war.

THE DAM

The Direct Action Movement is an organisation of active militants. We aim to offer an alternative for those who do not wish to be organised from above but who nevertheless appreciate the need for organisation, and for action.

Since its founding in March 1979 the D.A.M. has grown rapidly. It now has branches in most large towns active in a variety of fields and working to establish grass roots organisation that does not depend on careerists and self seeking leaders to get things done.

We have no central committee to tell us what to do or think and no tin gods whose sacred words give us all the answers.

We aim to grow by sharing our skills, resources and understanding. We ask people to work with us rather than submit to our instructions.

The world has too many power crazed leaders already. We believe in complete workers control (not the bogus socialism of the so-called 'communist' countries). We believe in genuine democracy (not that represented by professional politicians). If you just leave it to us we aren't going to change the world for you. We'll work with you as equals but we won't lead you. It's up to all of us.

Membership fees (to pay expenses only, all work for the D.A.M. is unpaid) are £1.50 per month (for waged) and 10p (unwaged). Membership is open to all who agree with the aims and principles.



DIRECT ACTION



No.2

15p

Paper
of the
Direct Action
Movement

CHARLIE



GET KNOTTED!



SO Prince Charles and Lady Di are getting married - BIG DEAL! At a time when millions of workers haven't enough money to rub two halfpennies together, one of Britain's richest families is holding a wedding paid for with public money; money which could be put to better use.

The Royals are not exactly short. Before the budget increased their pay they were getting a staggering £21,867,594. That's not including their massive personal fortune. When she came to the throne in 1952, the queen was worth £44 million - the figure has multiplied several times since then. Don't forget, the Royals don't pay tax or even death duty as we lesser mortals do.

Even worse, we'll all be treated to a daily diet of arse-licking from fleet street hacks; each trying to out arse-lick the other in a sickening exhibition of journalism at its worse. For several months we won't be able to switch on the telly without having to watch a load of drivel about the 'happy couple'.

sick joke

In return, what are we getting? A day off work. What's the use of that when many of us don't have a job in the first place? At a time when 2½ million are unemployed and millions on short time, offering us a day off is more than a sick joke.

Remember, the Royal Family are descended from robber barons who plundered the people of this country for centuries in one of the longest running protection rackets in history. Their massive fortune is a result of large-scale rape, pillage and murder. In the centuries since their manners have become a bit more refined and butter wouldn't melt in their mouths. However, by an accident of birth, not only does this family get a share of the loot left by their brigand ancestors, but they and their hangers-on are paid considerable sums each year out of the public purse.

cont. over

Meanwhile claimants live on the the breadline as pensions, supplementary, sickness and unemployment benifits are cut in real terms failing to keep up with inflation. At the same time, they are being stigmatised by the Government and gutter press as deadlegs, scroungers and parasites. Not for them a free wedding at St Pauls or expense paid foreign junkets, just a miserable time trying to scrape by on a pittance.

IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS TO ANYONE WHO ARE THE REAL PARASITES.

Black & White- Unite

WE'D over three million unemployed in Britain in 1931, including 60.5% of workers in one industry (ship-building). In June 1938 there were still 1,885,000 out of work. A black face was a rare sight in those days in most places.

In 1931, only 37% of London families had a house or flat to themselves, the rest shares undivided houses. In 1936 800,000 Londoners lived two or more to a room - the official definition of overcrowding. Where were the immigrants?

Unemployment and slums are as old as city life, go back to the days when people thought the earth was tiny and flat. And so do the tricks that society's rulers use to stay on top. Then, as now, "Divide and Rule" was a first principle - keep the workers fighting for scraps while the rich get on with the feast. More recently, Hitler convinced the German workers the Jews were behind their troubles. He murdered the Jews by the million - and left the German workers (those still alive) starving, homeless and in rags.

Divide and rule's not the only trick. Another is to foster a leadership among the oppressed, to be "bought out" when the time comes. But the workers are beginning to see through the most recent examples of this, as the polls show. It's not blackmen who freeze wages, up taxes and prices and close down factories - it's deliberate Tory policies.

This last we all know - so out comes divide and rule again. Don't fall for it. Workers and employers both come in all colours and shades, and the two classes have nothing in common. All workers have one central problem, though, exploitation under the wage system. We can only fight this together, black and white. United, we can't be beaten - as the bosses and their fascist cohorts know.

LOCK-OUT!

SINCE 25th November last year the workers at Mosedale's Brickworks in Flixton, near Manchester, have been locked-out in a dispute over bonus rates. The dispute blew up when trade unionists at the brickworks discovered that non-unionist were getting a higher bonus rate for the same work. Management refused parity for trade union members so the men went on strike.

Next day, on 26th November, a compromise solution was agreed with management so the strikers decided to return to work. However, when they attempted to return to work, Mosedale's directors told them that "the works was closed" and that they had had enough of "the union being in power for three years" and that all union members were being sacked. This included the Branch Secretary who was on holiday at the time and a member who was on the sick. The TGWU has declared the dispute official.

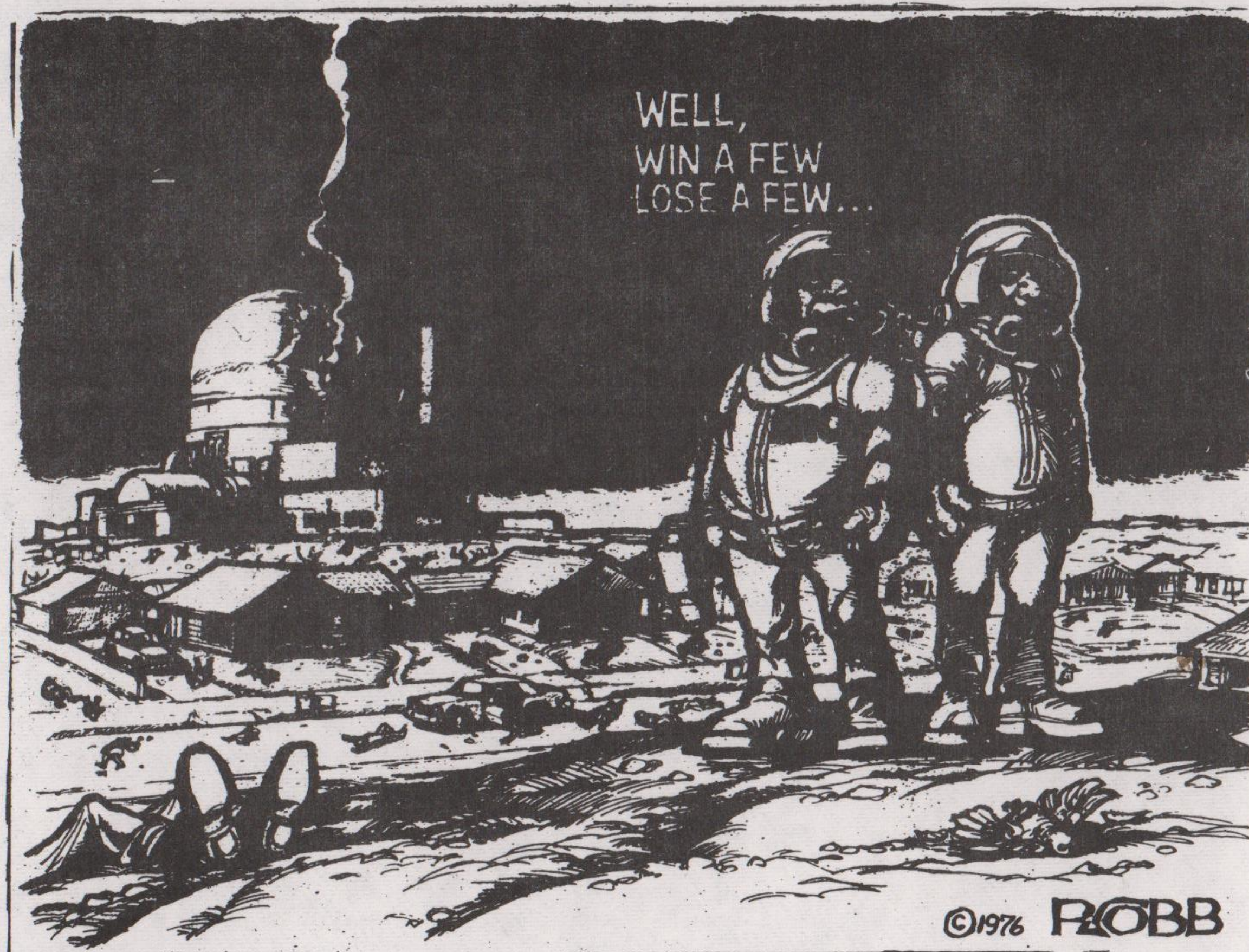
Unfortunately, adding to the strikers' problems, two of their pickets were arrested for smashing scabs' windscreens. They were remanded in custody in Risley Remand Centre - known locally as Grisley Risley because of the high number of suicides there.

At their first court appearance at Warrington Magistrates they appeared dressed only in blankets. Bail was refused because they were trade unionists and the case has political overtones - anybody else would have got bail. The Magistrates felt that the two pickets would probably return to the picket line and cause further damage. They were eventually released on bail after appealing to the High Court. Each was sentenced to a Maximum Community Service Order and ordered to pay over £300 court costs.

Clearly this is yet another example of the anti-working class bias of the legal system. In this case made worse by the fact that Magistrates are generally selected from people who have more in common with Company Directors than with working class people. Mosedale's also serves us another lesson. Direct action, despite what some Labour politicians would have us believe, is alive and kicking. Wherever needs be, workers will always resort to it - as they have always done. The moral is, of course, don't get caught.

The strike committee urgently need money to cover legal costs and for the strike fund. Donations should be sent to:- J. Brown

Secretary
Mosedale Strike Committee
216 Irlam Rd
Flixton
Manchester M13 3WE



CLASS HISTORY!

IN our last issue we promised a regular feature on Working Class history - the sort of history that's not taught in schools and is ignored by the bland statements of politicians harking back to non-existent times when workers supposedly knew their place. In this issue we deal with one of the strangest episodes in our history - the School Kids Strike of 1911.

At the time Britain was in turmoil; it was a time of aggressive Syndicalist strikes and government repression. During an 11 month miners strike in South Wales a striker was killed during riots in Tonypandy and during the 1911 Transport Strike workers in Liverpool and Llanelli were shot dead. There were gunboats on the Mersey and troops everywhere. It is not surprising that the aggressive attitude and militant methods employed by adults in their fight for justice were copied by schoolkids.



DEMONSTRATION BY PRESENT DAY MEMBERS OF THE NUSS

The strikes began in September 1911 as kids in council schools throughout the country came out parading through the streets, or picketing school. The strikes began on 5th September in Llanelli after a deputy head had punished a boy for passing a note calling for a strike.

The strikes quickly spread throughout the country, even across the sea to Ireland. What happened in Hull is typical. There the strike began on September 13th after kids came out at St Mary's RC school. Older boys led younger boys out of the playground during morning break.

The news spread quickly to other schools. By the afternoon there were crowds of boys outside several schools in Hull's East End, howling 'come out' and 'blacklegs' at those ignoring the strike call. By the end of the day hundreds of schoolkids were out, marching from school to school bringing more and more kids. Outside one school a vicar was stoned after trying to interfere and outside another a copper charged kids several times on his bike before they ran away.

flying pickets

Eventually the strikers made their way to Corporation Field where dockers usually held strike meetings. There they held a protest meeting.

Demands varied throughout the country. The most popular, of course, was 'less hours and no cane'. In some places payment was demanded for Monitors. In many places the strikes were well organised, making use of flying pickets especially in Manchester, Ashton-under-lyne, Aberdeen and Glasgow.

In the end the strikes were broken by a mixture of threats from headmasters and mothers forcibly returning their kids to school, bringing to an end one of the strangest episodes in British Working Class history.

Cops and Robbers

The idea that the solution to crime is more policemen has

been questioned in a new book by two Home Office researchers, R.V.G. Clarke and J.M. Hough. The book, called 'The Effectiveness of Policing', looks at the increases in police spending since 1950.

The book's main finding is that as police spending goes up so does reported crime. Since 1950 spending on the police has increased five times in real terms, and we now have twice as many police as we did in 1950.

What has been the result? A five-fold increase in reported crime. The increase in arrests has led to more work for the courts, probation service, and prisons. Since 1950 the number of prison warders has increased four times and spending on prisons has increased ten times.

In the past those in the government who controlled the police and prison system told us that more prisons and more policemen would reduce crime. This is now shown to be a lie, a lie told by both Labour and Conservative governments.

Prisons do not prevent crime, in fact they are a breeding ground for it, as is shown by the number of prisoners who commit more crimes on release. And offences such as burglary and robbery have a clear up rate of only 20%.

All this goes to show that the present system of crime prevention is totally useless.

So what is the answer to the problem of crime? The best way to prevent crime is to eradicate the causes of crimes. Many people are jailed due to poverty, for such offences as non-payment of fines and prostitution, which is caused by poverty and also by the inferior position of women in society.



Many small burglaries are also due to poverty, often caused by unemployment. In fact crime is so deeply rooted in this society that it would be impossible to reduce crime without first changing society immensely. The most successful criminals never see the inside of a prison, they are the people who fiddle millions in income tax and other frauds and who are so rarely caught.

Even more successful are the owners of companies and the heads of nationalised industries, for they rob the workers of the fruits of their labour. The law exists mainly to protect the lives and property of those who have wealth and power, only as an afterthought does it protect (or rather pretend to) the workers from petty crime.

People who work 40 or 50 years in unpleasant and boring jobs have to live on miserable pensions when they retire, while others earn huge wages as administrators and managers, whose main function is to force as much work as possible out of the workers for a pittance!

Work Experience or Slave Labour

'LABOUR isn't working', we all know how true this was and how it never will, but remember that the large expensive Tory advert showing a dole queue. Saatchi and Saatchi certainly did the Tories proud by conning a lot of people into voting for them. Hoping Maggie and freinds would cut the dole queues. With 2½ million on the Dole its obvious that Tories don't work either, and more obvious that governments themselves don't work.

On the unemployment front figures have risen dramatically, especially amongst young people and school leavers. On January 1st this year it was announced that nearly 9,000 youngsters in the North East were on the dole. None of whom have ever had a job. Since January 1980 the figure has doubled.

Although these figures are high, the real youth unemployment figures are camouflaged by government schemes such as YOPS. A staggering figure of 17,500 teenagers between 16 and 18 are employed by the youth opportunities scheme in the North East region alone.

Unemployed young people are increasingly becoming a source of cheap labour - earning £23,50 for a 37½ hour week. They will not be receiving an increase this year as the government has frozen their wages at the 1980 level.



They are taken on by firms for a six month contract, and the promise of a job at the end is dangled in front of them like a carrot. In fact very few are ever taken on permanently. During the six months the majority spend their time doing hard, dirty, and boring work. Many firms rely on YOP workers to keep the firm running as it is cheaper than employing permanent staff. YOP workers also replace people paid off or who have left the firm.

This kind of slave labour cannot be tolerated, and must be abolished. To do this the State that advocates such policies must itself be abolished.

What's up, Doc?

A native of County Durham, Dr Keith Hampson, Tory MP for Ripon, decided to make a pilgrimage home to see how government policies were working.

After meeting unemployed youngsters and adults recently made redundant he wrote an article for the Guardian calling for action.

Was he calling for a government U-turn? Not on your life. To the dear doctor the dole Queues in Durham were merely a "measure of the government's communication problem". And his solution to ending the ever growing dole queues was to spend more money trying to improve the governments image so "it does not look uncaring".



Why the miners won

GOVERNMENT and N.C.B. plans to enforce the closure of pits throughout the country ended with their having their noses well and truly rubbed in the shit. Perhaps they thought that the miners had shown signs of weakness in recent years by their acceptance of productivity schemes and wage controls. Now would be the time to throw a few miners on the dole scrapheap they thought.

They thought wrong. With the South Wales coalfield in the lead the miners started a campaign of industrial action against the plans. As the strike spread the Tories and N.C.B. were quick to drop their closure schemes. Why such a quick back down?

LEADERSHIP

The Tories were amazed by the miners militant reaction but they weren't that frightened of a 'straight-forward strike. The miners, though, left the N.U.M. 'leadership' standing, with the rank and file taking their own initiatives. Joe Gormley was left running around like a headless chicken. Also the strike could have spread to other workers as steelmen and railworkers, spread by the rank and file.

BIFFEN

Tory minister Biffen said on Weekend World, the Government wasn't in the business of politics to become kami-kazi pilots! An admittance by a right-wing monetarist that taking on an organised and angry section of the working class was akin to committing suicide.

Too fucking right!



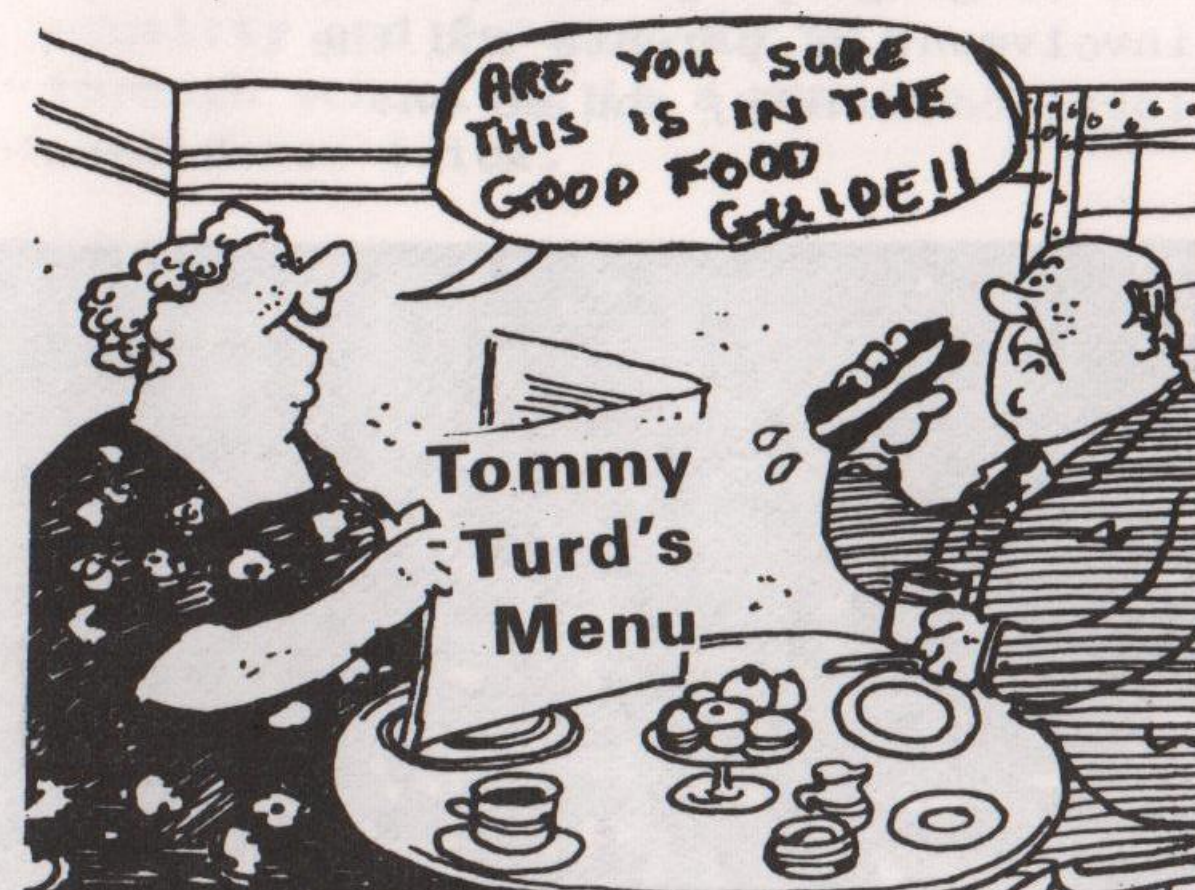
Tommy Turd's Tuck Shop

egon ronay

Works Canteens must present the food critic with a positive treasure trove of all that is worst in English cooking. To discover the disasters of the worlds worst cooking, Egon Ronay, of the Good Food Guide, could chuck up the miseries of the motorway restaurants and dedicate the rest of his life to where the workers go to eat.

Those of us who trough in Holcroft's canteen, Rochdale might be forgiven for wondering why the frog anthropologist Levi-Strauss, claims cooking, like language, distinguishes human society from that of animals.

Surely if the foreigner were to judge English cooking only by the standards prevailing in works canteens we would be condemned forever to the bottom of the league of international cuisine.



cleaning bogs

Toast is all that is available for what passes for breakfast. To this is added catering margarine which is trowelled on with the enthusiasm of an apprentice bricklayer by Tommy Turd. We call him this because it serves to remind us that when he's not buttering our toast, he's cleaning out the toilets.

But at least breakfast toast provides us with some basic equality. For staff and shop-floor alike it is the same mean feast. Lunch, or dinner as we call it up north, is very different. Indeed I doubt if even hens have such a clearly defined pecking order as we at Holcrofts.

brothel

Male labour eat in one place, the women, the lesser staff, senior staff and management eat behind a seemingly endless line of partitions and private cubicals lost from view of the blokes from the shopfloor. Come to think of it, it rather reminds me of a Spanish brothel where the professionals and their clients conceal themselves behind a series of screens.

But the staff and the management are doing nothing more sinful than swallowing the produce of Edna's kitchen.

In some ways this may reflect secret feelings of wickedness, for the segregation is not just simply geoghaphical. Behind some walls and some partitions T-Bone steaks are digested while the shopfloor workers struggle with mince rolls or bacon and sausage.

When he wrote 'Defence of English Cooking' George Orwell tried to dismiss the critics who say all cooking in England is either bad or foreign by maintaining that true English cooking is mostly to be found in the home and not in restaurants

pigs

While I suspect that most expensive restaurants and hotels imitate French cookery and even write their menus in French, this is not the case in the works canteens. There is no dispute that Holcrofts canteen produces English cooking alright, but what a depressing diet it is.

Bernard Levin commenting on Egon Ronays attack on our motorway restaurants said that legislation could not improve them if the English persist in tolerating rubbish. After all he observed, 'pigs will get whatever they put up with'

dreary diet

At least in works canteens the food is cheaper than in our motorway restaurants.

Ned English food be so dull, especially when it is prepared in our canteens? So dull in fact that the Holcroft workers refer to their canteen as the trough.

The odd attitude of the English towards food may be best revealed by the remarks reputed to have come from one of our motherly canteen ladies, commenting on the management's eating habits she is supposed to have said 'D will eat owt put in front of him, but J is too fussy.

From birth practically all Englishmen are expected to swallow everything put in front of them. The dreary the diet we consume without complaint, the more virtuous we are made to feel.

t-bones

The long suffering British public need to publicise and demand better standards. The best place to start is where food is at its worst, that is the works canteens.

The problem of inequality is more difficult to deal with. Some people will defend till the cows come home the right of the management to eat T-Bone steak, while the lads get mince roll.

John Rawls has said, all inequality must be justified.

Offhand the best justification I can come up with is that the consumption of T-Bones is vital to the production of brain cells, and since the managers obviously need more brain cells than your shopfloor worker it is only right that they be allowed this special privilege.

Indeed it may well be argued that the decline of British industry is related to the shortage of T-Bones, and most will see the need for even greater consumption of T-Bones by their managements.



WORKERS RECOVERING AFTER EATING A MEAL IN A WORKS CANTEN.

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Schooling - Or Education?

Everybody is an expert in the true sense of the word when it comes to schooling, for the simple reason that we have all gone through at least ten years of it - compulsorily. And if we have children we have more indirect experience of school with its seemingly inevitable worries and problems.

Whether student, pupil or parent, we know too that school is important in helping to determine the kind of life we are able to lead. It has been said that one of the reasons why children from lower income families do not make out so well in school is that their parents do not place a high value on educational achievement.

easier

But this is soon seen to be nonsense when you talk to them about it. They know only too well that generally speaking the longer you spend in school and college, and the more certificates, degrees and diplomas you collect, the easier is your life. By and large it is the highly schooled who have the best paid, the most comfortable and the most interesting jobs.

It may be that ordinary people believe that the higher reaches of schooling are not for them or their children, that the dice are loaded against them, but this is not so much a deficiency in attitude as an accurate perception of what it is like to be at the bottom of the heap in an unequal society.

equality

Yet, strangely enough, while we know that schooling leads to favour the children of the better-off at the expense of the less well-off, there has existed for at least a century the belief that schooling can bring about a better kind of life for all. This is why the Labour Movement (Party and Trade Union) has always stressed the importance of changes in the system of schooling towards a greater equality of opportunity.

But all the changes so painfully achieved - elementary schooling for all about a century ago, secondary schooling for all after the Second World War, comprehensive schooling more recently - have not brought with them any significant reduction in inequalities of wealth and power.

The same is true of other countries, East or West. It is true that overall standards of living have been raised and more of us have cars, colour televisions, automatic washers, freezers and all the other things that advertisers tell us are essential for the good life - but still the gap between rich and poor, between the order-givers and the order-takers, has been maintained, despite the propaganda to the contrary.



In fact, if we examine the situation carefully it soon becomes clear that in all existing societies the system of schooling operates to maintain rather than reduce these inequalities of wealth and power.

disadvantaged

Ever since the late 1950s highly qualified experts and researchers have been telling us of the problems of those called at various times, 'culturally deprived', 'socially

handicapped', or more recently, the 'disadvantaged'. These are children from lower-income families whose mothers and fathers do what are called unskilled and semi-skilled jobs when they are in work.

By the end of the 1960s we were being told by these same experts that rather than low income and all that goes with it being to blame it was more a question of wrong attitudes and values or deficiencies in language on the part of the parents of the disadvantaged. In other words, the victims of an inherently unequal political and being blamed for their own poor prospects.

assured

We were assured however that there were answers to these problems in the form of 'compensatory' school - nursery school in deprived areas, special language programmes, more involvement of parents and the local community; and so on.



By the second half of the seventies, after attempts by Labour and Tory governments to devote resources to these ends, disillusion set in. It seemed that these remedies were not having the desired effect.

Compensatory schooling for the very young, comprehensive schooling for the older disadvantaged pupils were not, it seemed, making any significant difference in overcoming inequality in society. Working-class kids for the most part still end up in working-class jobs.

So, in 1981, with the added obstacle of Labour and Conservative cuts in government spending there is widespread pessimism about the prospect of a different kind of schooling bringing in the greater equality to which everybody pays lip-service.

trick

It may be that we have not made serious enough efforts - not enough money spent, comprehensives which are not comprehensive enough - as the Labour Party and others might argue. Yet there is strong suspicion in many people's minds that recipes for a better future of equality and freedom for all through schooling is a massive confidence trick.

More of the kind of schooling we have in a society which remains class-divided and unequal in its very structure cannot be the answer. Schools are an integral part of any society based on inequalities of wealth and power (including those with 'socialist governments'), supporting and maintaining that kind of society.

Besides the knowledge and skills necessary for their destined position at the top, middle or bottom of the social pile children learn in school the very attitudes and values to match. For most, the important lessons (fortunately not always learned very well) are those about obedience to teacher or boss, and hard unquestioning toil.



secure

But above all is that the lesson that since they have not done as well as others with regard to certificates and degrees they do not deserve the kind of comfortable and secure life reserved for the more successful, who happen usually to be the children of the better off. For those who want a radically different kind of society where wealth is shared according to need, and where power is shared by all working voluntarily and co-operatively together in work-place and neighborhood, schooling presents a greater problem. Education should be about people young and old, female or male, black or white, learning what they need and want to know, or be able to do - and learning when they want, how they want, with whom they want and where they want.

Schools as we know them are not about this kind of education and learning, that which would match a free and equal society. So where do we go from here?

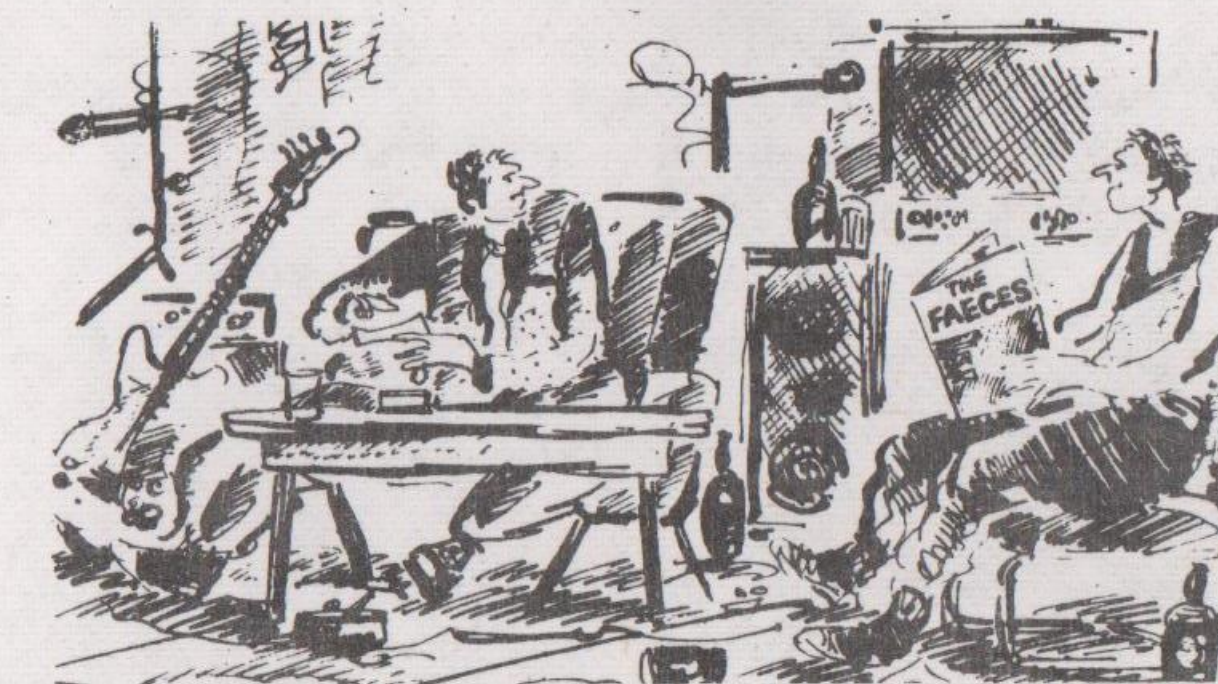
blue-prints

This short discussion cannot offer a neat blue-print for a new kind of education, even if one existed or was desirable. But we need to keep on writing and talking about what can be done now to try to move in the direction of a free and equal education for a free and equal society.

Clearly, for most of us it is difficult if not impossible to opt out of what happens at present in the name of education. Our children are undergoing the kind of schooling we would want to reject if we could. What we really want, as pupils, students, parents or teachers, is that we should be exerting an increasing control over our own lives and futures.

On their past performance, governments and parties of whatever kind will only offer more of the same, with spurious reforms which have only a cosmetic effect to make us believe that something can be done and is being done.

Direct action in education would involve parents, teachers and students coming together in voluntary, self-organised groups - first to resist, then to transform from within the authoritarian and oppressive structures which now hold us down.



"It's the magazine that chronicles the club where the country's decadents while away the night in idle chatter, endless boozing and dilettante posturing. The Houses of Parliament."

PHILIPS ~ \$IMP£Y YEARS AHEAD

For some years Pye of Cambridge has been one of Cambridge's largest employers, along with Marshall's Engineering plant and the University. Its two main factories in Cambridge, Pye Telecommunications and Pye Unicam, specialise in the production of mobile radios and precision scientific equipment, while other subsidiaries in Cambridge and elsewhere produce various types of electronic equipment.

The total number of employees nationally was 13,976 in 1977, but is probably slightly less currently.

docile

Pye's have always been very fortunate in Cambridge in having a fairly docile, pliable work-force content to work for wages well below the national average for the engineering industry. Union organisation at Pye Telecommunications in particular has in the past been virtually non-existent, though in recent years the T.G.W.U. has had a limited amount of success in recruitment.

There are a number of possible reasons for this depressing picture. Cambridge University has long dominated the City as the largest employer, and a notoriously low-paying one at that, so that there is little competition to raise the price of local labour. It is also reasonable to speculate that the domination of the City by one of Britain's bastions of ruling class privilege has produced a deferential mentality in its local working class.

pliable

This, combined with the fact that Pye's recruits much of its labour from outlying rural areas with their own traditions of deference and hostility to Trade Unions, produces a particularly pliable mixture. The rural work-force is bussed in by Pye, and without this transport they would have little alternative choice of employment.

Another important factor is that the manual semi-skilled and unskilled work-force has a high proportion of female labour. Once again, tradition plays its role in discouraging militant activity.

As a deputy shop steward at Pye Telecommunications in recent years, one of the most striking reactions I encountered when trying to recruit women to the Union was the sad but genuine assertion that - "My husband wouldn't like it if I joined the Union".

nursery

Traditional attitudes die hard in the Fens. One reason why women find Pye's a congenial employer is that a nursery is provided, which is not cheap, but is more than most local employers provide.

Pye's have always been keen to publicise this feature as being part of their 'caring' image - a form of paternalism which masks the harsh fact that their captive work-force spends long hours at boring, routine tasks under strict supervision for lousy wages. Since the 1960's Pye's has in reality been controlled by the giant Philip's multinational, who owned 60% of the shares until the complete take-over. Philip's is the fifth largest non-U.S. based company in the world in terms of sales, and the largest in terms of workers employed.



U.S. based

Of U.S. based multinationals, only two (G.M. and Ford) employ more workers. In 1977 the European work-force was estimated to be approx. 1/4 million, 42,000 in the UK. Profits in 1977 were around £200 million, compared with £6 million for Pye's.

In 1977, management announced that all employees were to come under Philip's terms and conditions, as negotiated by the Philip's Industries Joint Council, consisting of senior management personnel and national officers from each Union, with virtually no scope for genuine shop-floor representation.

In 1979, the European Metalworkers Federation, representing most European Unions with membership in Philips, accused Philips of planning "drastic staff reductions in Europe". They pointed out that Philips had already reduced its world-wide work-force by 5.8% over the previous 6 years, including a cut of 50,000 people in Europe.

They claimed that Philips consistently refused to discuss investment, employment plans, or moves to transfer production plants.

closure

Also in 1979, the intended closure of a Pye TMC (telephone equipment) plant in Scotland was announced as part of Philips drive to rationalise its operations, with 500 jobs at risk. In the same year, the small Pye Engineering Services in Cambridge was closed down.

The complete take-over of Pye's was officially announced in July 1979, and Philips claimed that redundancies "will not be substantial". Shortly after this, 125 jobs at another Pye TMC factory, in Kent, were threatened with the axe. In August of 1979 the 'Guardian' reported that Pye's profits had risen dramatically, coinciding with details of Philips' £35 million take-over deal, which was completed 4/9/79.

This year's latest instalment of 'rationalisations' on the Philips' plan is the recently announced closure of the Pye T.V. plant at Lowestoft, with 1100 jobs to go. Who's next for the chop?

specialisation

In his book 'The multinationals' (1971) Christopher Tugendhat, a leading Conservative 'Euro M.P. who is widely regarded as an authority on the subject, describes the Philips' approach "...the basic principle is that each subsidiary should achieve the maximum economies of scale through concentrating on limited but clearly defined tasksspecialisation has become the principle objective.

It is one that cannot be achieved overnight; plants have to be closed, men retrained, and retailers reconciled to receiving their supplies from abroad.

cont. p11

CUTS in benefits

One of the aims of anarchist, possibly the main aim, is to dismantle the State. Well, we are lucky. The Tories are doing it for us. 1980 saw 2 major pieces of legislation, the Social Security Acts 1 and 2, which seem designed to begin the dismantling of the Welfare State.

The effect of the change is to leave 1.8 million people worse off than they were before -- which, perhaps, isn't quite what we intend to do.

The legislation makes numerous changes to the Supplementary Benefits system (supposedly the safety net of the Welfare State) eg. - an effective cut of 40p per week in the long term rate of SB.

- uprating of benefits to be based only on prices, not on earnings even if they are higher

- the number of lump sum payments will be drastically reduced, particularly those given for clothing.

- effective cuts in the amount given in additional weekly payments, eg for those needing a special diet.

- many other payments, eg unemployment benefit, to be cut in real terms by 5% per annum for the next three years.

- phasing out earnings related supplement by 1982 - so people will have been forced to pay in the National Insurance scheme on the assumption that they will get benefits which have now been abolished.

- changes in the rules for strikers dependents obtaining SB. In future all strikers will be assumed to be getting strike pay of £12 a week from their union, whether or not they are in a union, and whether or not they are getting strike pay.

MILLIONS

These are only some of the changes, there are many more. In detail they may sound small and insignificant - but the No. 2 act alone is estimated to save £511 million. (which is no doubt one of the reasons for its introduction)

In total, the changes amount to a savage attack on the poor, the unemployed, the disabled - people who are weak, unorganised and unable to fight back. And these measures went through with virtually no opposition from the Labour Party or anyone else.

So what happens next?

All the welfare rights agencies are learning new rules, and work out the best ways to advise claimants now. Like it or not, they are accepting the strait-jacket of the Acts.

But the Acts aren't just a simple tinkering about with obscure rules.

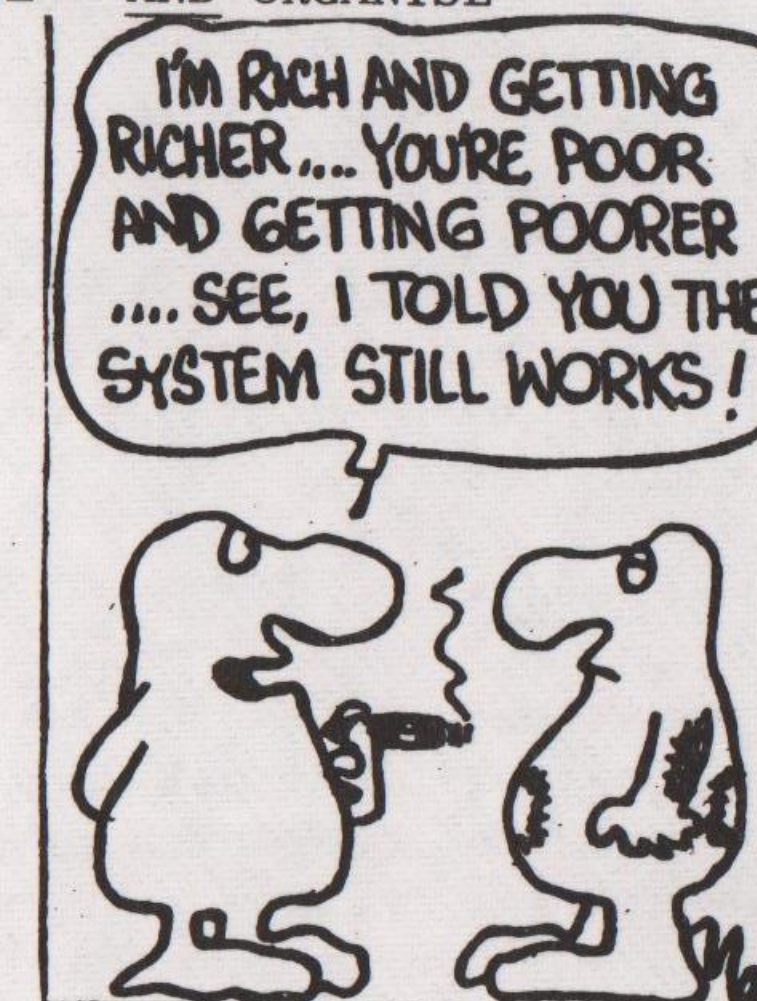
They represent a political attack on a large part of society, and as such should be fought politically. There won't be any changes in the short term and the Labour Party certainly won't do anything to help, but some courses of action may contribute to long term change, eg. the growth of unemployed workers unions - which need to be more than the old Claimants Unions, which were just often unpaid welfare rights agencies.

The UWUs need to have a much wider perspective, such as looking at different ways of working particularly co-operatives. And the established trade unions are also getting much more interested in organising the unemployed, largely because so many of their members are now on the dole.

We need to get involved in this work to ensure that any UWUs aren't simply co-opted into the mainstream union movement.

And finally we need to ensure that everybody realises that the cuts aren't simply a Tory trick, but that the first cuts were started by Labour.

Maybe our slogan should be ADVISE - AND ORGANISE



CUTS in health

I am sick and tired of hearing Tory politicians telling public sector workers that they must behave responsibly. Which in Tory language means accepting disgustingly low pay offers.

DEGRADING

Well, I happen to be one of the poor sods working in the public sector. I work in that jewel of Labour Party legislation, the NHS, where I am employed as a Theatre Porter. My job has some very interesting aspects. It includes cleaning the surgeons' boots, taking the odd amputated leg down to the incinerator and in general being at everybody's beck and call. For this boring and often degrading job I receive the massive sum of £45 a week take home pay.

This year, our leaders will be glad to hear, we look like behaving very responsibly and accepting a pay offer of around 6%. Which will work out at about £2 extra in my pay packet. By the end of the year, with inflation running at 16%, this sum will just about pay for a Mars Bar if I am lucky.



I have news for Mrs Thatcher, the majority may have accepted this pitiful offer, but they are far from happy. It is only a question of time before their anger turns into action and the Tories are told what they can do with their pleas to act responsibly. As for any plans the Government may have to close hospitals or make redundancies, the message from the hospital where I work is short and sweet....NO FUCKING CHANCE

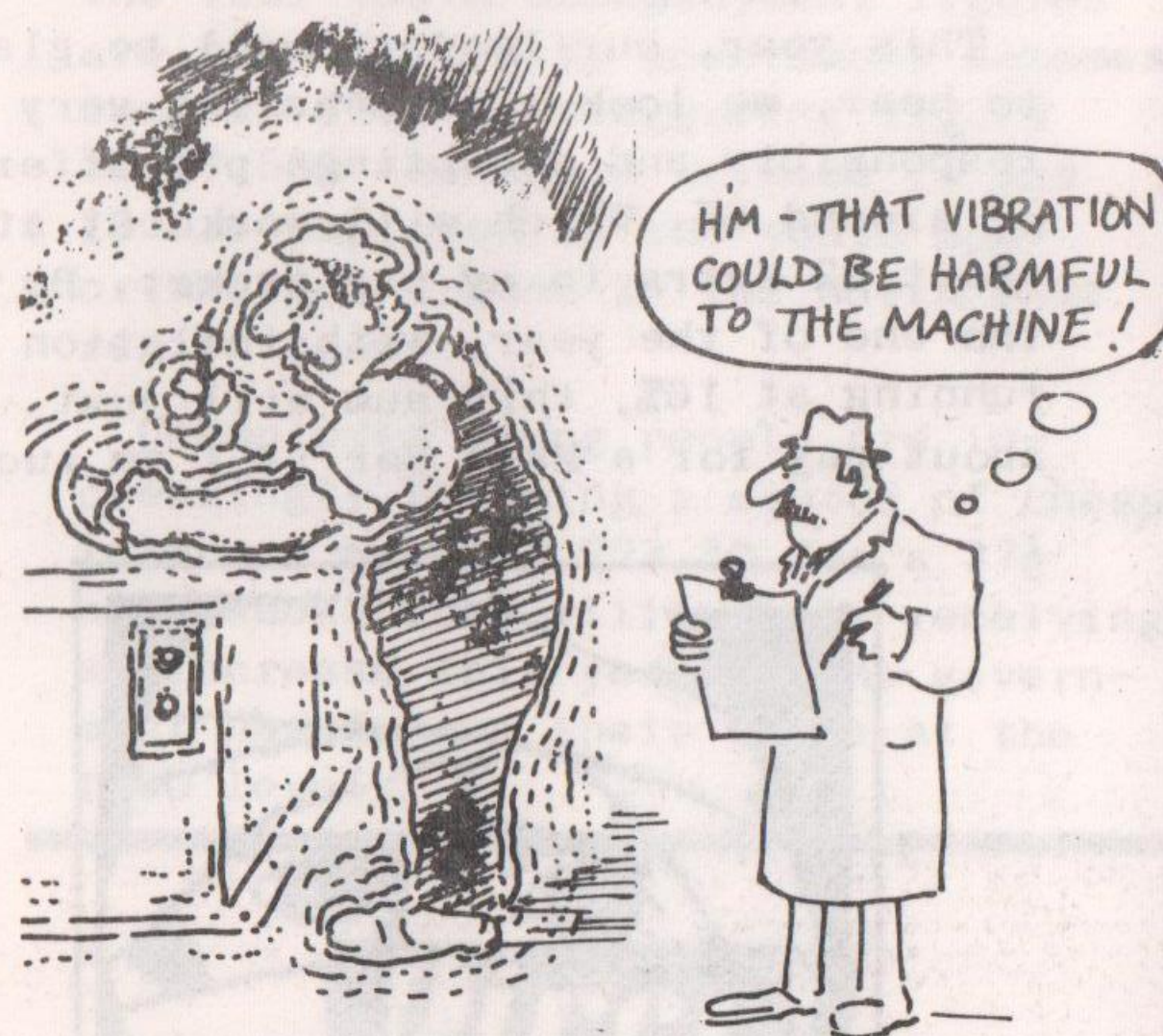
DEAD FINGER

DEAD finger, Vibration-induced White Finger and Reynaud's Phenomenon are all names for a disease caused by vibration of the body, typically the hands, at work.

Vibrations from a hand tool or other machinery destroys the nerves and smallest blood vessels in the hand. The symptoms start as a tingling or numbness in the hands after work. Later the fingertips most exposed go white. Eventually the numbness can spread to the whole of your hand.

Attacks, which are often triggered by cold and damp, last up to two hours. They effect the victims social life (you may have difficulty picking up a cold pint of beer) by ruling out many outside sports and make the person more susceptible to accidents.

Finally the fingers go blue - 'Cyanosis' and gangrene may set in, both as a result of the fingers being starved of blood.



There is a legal limit to the amount of vibration you are exposed to, only a British Standards Institutes guide, which is admitted to be mostly guesswork. The guide gives two levels. One which should not be exceeded for more than 15 minutes a day, and the other lower level which should not be exceeded for more than 400 minutes a day (6 hrs 40 min)

Most ordinary hand tools exceed the 15 minute level. The 400 minute level is no protection at all since you would be unlikely to use any machine for more than 400 minutes in an 8 hr shift.

And in 1975 the Industrial Injuries Board decided not to give compensation for dead finger as there were "no objective tests available". They admit

that the disease exists, but won't compensate you for it because they would have to take peoples word for how badly they were affected.

FOBBED OFF

The long term answer is of course better machinery. However in the meantime you should get warm before you start the job. Dead finger attacks cold hands worse and have plenty of breaks between exposure to vibration. Can this be achieved by job rotation (with no loss of pay)?

Do not be fobbed off by 'anti-vibration gloves'. These often make the problem worse as you have to grip tighter to hold the machine safely.

The one thing you shouldn't do is wait for your boss to make the first move. Why should he worry, he won't get Dead Finger - just indigestion from all those business lunches eaten at your expense. If you've any sense you'll force him to do something about it.

OZONE

When yer dear old mam was a girl they used to take a walk along the Prom to get a whiff of the health giving ozone. However, the truth is a bit different, ozone is a strong irritant to the lungs and throat. Office workers can now save themselves the expense of a holiday and get all the ozone they desire by going to the photocopying room.

Photocopying machines operate at a very high voltages and give off ozone. These machines often placed in small badly ventilated rooms and with the ever increasing rates that these machines run the danger levels are soon exceeded. The danger level set by Health and Safety Inspectors - the Threshold Limit - is ONLY 0.1 parts per million.

While regular servicing can dramatically reduce the ozone levels, between 5 to 30 times lower, this lasts for a short time only and within three weeks they are back to danger levels. Manufacturers are very cagey about giving information about ozone levels and other toxic by-products given off by their machines.

An Anti Advert

The worst machine is the Xerox 3400 which gives off 50 times as much ozone per copy as the one which gives off the least. At maximum rate of use it produces 50% over the Threshold Level Value.

WELDERS LUNG

THAT welders suffer from lung disease is self evident to anyone who knows any old welders, (there are not many about). But the link between welding and lung disease has never been proved conclusively - until now.

A provisional report of a health survey of 600 workers at Austin & Pickersgill shipyards in Sunderland showed a clear link between welding and bronchitis. Welding in ships is as bad for you as 'heavy smoking'. The survey, which was commissioned by the Boilermakers Society at Austin & Pickersgill, was carried out by 2 independent doctors from Newcastle hospitals. Previous surveys sponsored by engineering companies with their own staff have failed to find any hazard (surprise, surprise.)



This is just one example amongst many of the cavalier attitude of management towards the health and safety.

PROFITS

Clearly, as far as they are concerned, profits are more important than workers health! It is up to us to fight back to ensure that our health rather than the size of their pocket book counts. We only have one life; lets keep it.

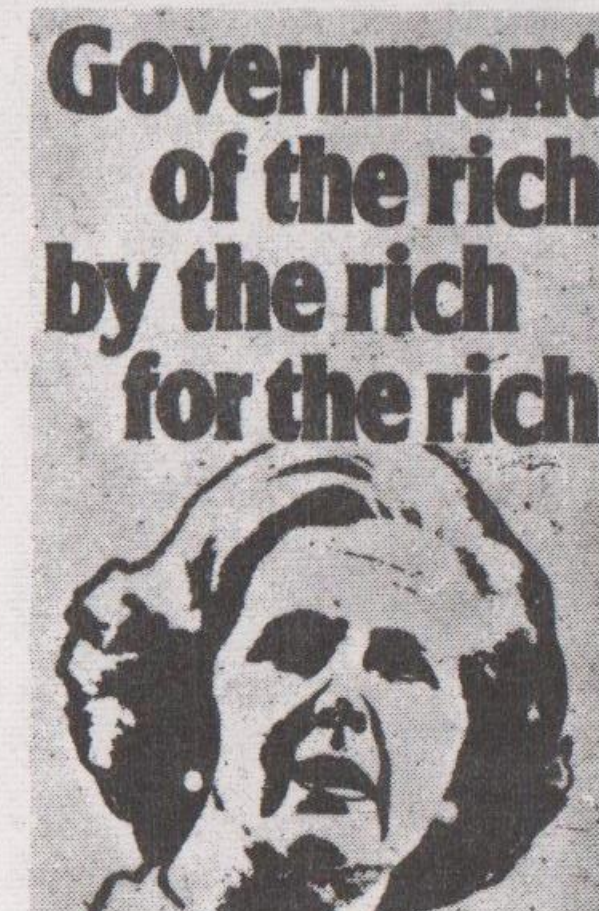


JUST FIGURE-HEADS

WE live in a so-called 'democracy' and this is the way it works. The Government in power appoints Members of Parliament to be Ministers of the different departments. These are all important jobs which involve making decisions which affect the lives of everyone in the country. One would think, and rightly so, that to take on these jobs the Ministers would need specialised knowledge in their particular field.

However, what it really boils down to is the fact the the Ministers are only figure-heads who answer, or rather dodge, questions in the House of Commons. The people who really make the decisions, which the Ministers accept, are the Permanent Under-Secretaries, who are the heads of the various departments. These men never come up for election, they are always there and they are not answerable to the electorate. We may elect a new Government but these people remain. IS THIS GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE?

So now we come to the difference between the Government and the State. It is these permanent, unelected persons who are the State and it is the State that runs and controls our lives. Of course these are not the only persons who make decisions and are not elected by the people. There are other branches of the State apparatus such as the heads of the Police, the armed forces and the Judiciary, and so the State remains intact no matter what particular Party forms the Government.



This is why Anarchists believe that it is a waste of time to vote at Elections. Nothing really changes. We are still ruled, decisions affecting our lives are still made for us. In fact, even though we are considered old enough and sensible enough to have the vote, we are treated like little children who do not know what is good for them.

El Salvador

Reagan's Vietnam?

One of the main problems facing Ronald Reagan when he became President of the US was the deteriorating situation (for US business) in Central America. In Nicaragua the people had already overthrown the US puppet government of Somoza.

In El Salvador brutal dictator Romero has been replaced by a military/civilian junta under the figure-head leadership of the Christian Democrat Napoleon Duarte. The junta has been responsible for the murder of many hundreds of workers and peasants.



Military thugs claim another victim - arms supplied by the thugs in the Pentagon

The killings, though, have not cowed the people into submission and the popular forces now control many areas of the small country. Reagan has been left with three options for maintaining the US domination in El Salvador.

The first is a throwback to the Carter administration and acknowledges the inevitable victory of the broad popular alliance of the Frente Democratico Revolucionario. Carters advisers wished to salvage the best position, for US interests, after the juntas downfall. Reagan is much too hawkish to give this plan much consideration.

The second option is by increasing US aid and 'advisors' to the El Salvador armed forces. Also encouraging the neighbouring right wing dictatorships of Honduras and Guatemala to militarily intervene in El Salvador. The counties two armies have agreed a joint military operation against Salvadorean guerrillas called 'Operation Sandwich'.

The problem for Reagan is that both countries are facing internal strife from their own populations. Lastly, and this may have happened by the time you read this, the US could intervene directly and send in its own armed forces. Needless to say the US establishment will be loath to do this following their defeat in Vietnam.

Also the repercussions throughout Central and South America will be tremendous. Even so, Reagan may be forced by his own cold war rhetoric into finding a drastic 'solution'. The result would be a bloodbath. The victory of the Salvadorean people will be a body blow to American Imperialist interests. And a victory to workers in the rest of the world. And hopefully an end to the bloodshed in that tiny country.

RECENTLY 99 workers from a North-East steelworks were made redundant.

Why 99?

Apparently, if 100 or more workers are paid off 90 days notice must be given.

If the number is less than 100, only 30 days notice is required!

PHILIPS cont.

Events appear to be unfolding according to plan - their plan, that is, and will continue to do so unless Pye and Philips rank and file trade unionist can overcome the immense practical and psychological obstacles facing them and organise a united opposition to the company on an international basis. - The feeble response so far from Union officials at Lowestoft is to murmur about 'Import controls' To attempt to solve the problems of the workers in a Multinational

company on this nationalistic basis is absurd - the real need is for international Trade Union co-operation at shop-floor level, rather than encouraging the competition of one group of workers against another.

Only with such a united front will workers be able to challenge Multinational enterprises and assert the principle that people must not be treated as pliable puppets or discarded at will in the interests of profit.