

## HILLINGDON HOSPITAL DISPUTE

Pall Mall Services was the domestic and catering contracts at Hillingdon Hospital on 17th October 1994. Their first act was to close down the laundry, sacking the workers. In May 1995, they announced that they would be introducing multi-skilling.

At a second meeting, management laid out their intention to reduce the basic pay by an average of £1 per hour

abolish the London weighting allowance  
abolish unsocial hours rates of pay i.e. Sunday rate cut from £8.40 per hour to £3.58

NHS sick pay and pension schemes  
After a ballot the 53 mainly Asian women came out on strike on 1st October 1995, and have maintained a picket line since.

You can help their campaign against Pall Mall by

1) Sending hardship donations and letters of support to Florence Portugal, UNISON Branch Secretary, UNISON Office, Hillingdon Hospital, Pield Heath Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 3NN

2) Writing to the Chief Executive of Hillingdon Hospital asking him to intervene in the dispute on behalf of these loyal workers: Philip Brown, Chief Executive, Hillingdon Hospital, Pield

Heath Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3NN  
3) Complaining to CR Oakley Smith, Managing Director, Pall Mall Services Group, 125 Acre Lane, London SW2 5UA

4) A demonstration was held on 7th September by Mansfield and District TUC outside the HSS Hire shop, Sutton-in-Ashfield, in conjunction with pickets organised by the strikers themselves in Hayes. HSS Tool Hire is owned by Pall Mall.

For details of further actions contact Mansfield and District TUC.

### PERSONAL COMMENTS

A few weeks ago, I joined Malkiat Bilku and her colleagues on the picket line outside Hillingdon Hospital.

On 1st October they will have been on strike for a full year. During this time they have been subjected to violent attacks, arrest by the police and, I believe, complacency by UNISON who have offered platitudes but no real action.

I was deeply moved by the womens' resolve and heartened by their unselfish act of defiance. Here was a group of workers brave enough to take on their employers without trade union backing, without fear of upsetting the delicate balance of the Labour Party/Trade Union relationship that we are all being constantly reminded of; and they had a clear sense of responsibility for comrades throughout the country who might find themselves treated as shabbily as they had been.

As socialists we cannot allow them to struggle alone. The demonstration held on 7th September is to be the first of many activities in their support.

Thanks to all of those comrades who gave of their time on a cold Saturday morning. We generated lots of interest, not least from the kids in the area. A few cars stopped to ask what we were demonstrating about, a few hooted their support regardless!

Joyce Bosnjak

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### POSTCARD FROM KETTERING

THE 71ST ANNUAL TRADES UNION COUNCIL CONFERENCE HELD IN THE COUNCIL OFFICES, BOWLING GREEN ROAD, KETTERING. May 10/12

This year's Conference was held in the heart of Queen Eleanor's country, she being Eleanor of Castile who married Edward 1 in 1254, when he was 15 and she was a mere 10 years old. What started as a marriage of convenience developed into a love match and in the 36 years they were married they were seldom apart - what more fitting backdrop could there be to this particular event?

The Agenda consisted of a total of 26 motions and 10 amendments received from County Associations, including that from Nottinghamshire which called on the General Council of the TUC to ensure that the TUC Education Department compile and make available suitable Training courses for officers of Trades Union Councils (which was passed, incidentally).

The political approach of the Conference was essentially summed up in the terms of this motion on the Labour and Trade Union Movement, as follows:-

#### MOTION 20 LABOUR AND TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

This Conference calls for Trade Union Movement to work for the biggest possible electoral defeat for the Tories at the next General Election.

We further campaign for the biggest landslide victory for Labour and oppose all support for the Liberal Democrats, as the best outcome for the Trade Union Movement following the General Election.

Conference notes with concern:

The lack of clear policy from the Labour Party on issues of importance to the Trade Union Movement such as Full Employment, funding of the Welfare State and trade union rights. Conference draws on the lessons of the 1964-1970 and 1974-1979 Labour Governments and is concerned that a Labour Government that attacks the Trade Union Movement and the working class will create deep divisions and resentment among Labour Supporters and pave the way for the return of the right-wing Tory Government.

We therefore call on the TUC to campaign for progressive policies and to seek assurances from a Labour Government that a programme will be implemented which aims to restore full employment, to properly fund the Welfare State and restore trade union rights.

What is clear is that after the next election, there will still be an undiminished role for Trades Councils in local campaigning. Indeed, at the time of this year's Conference, 184 TUCs and 30 CATUCs had registered with the TUC - this compared favourably with 160 and 29 respectively at the same time last year.

It is national TUC policy, as adopted by the 1992 TUC Congress, that unions should take all possible steps to encourage and facilitate branch affiliation and active participation within Trades Union Councils. Furthermore, at national level and within each region, unions should be encouraged to give an official specific responsibility for working with TUC Regional Councils liaison and development. Much yet remains to be done.

A future article will look at the Trades Union Council's programme of Work for 1996/97. In the meantime, Kettering should be congratulated on the hospitality and organization from which the Conference benefitted greatly, and the visit to the Kettering Centre for the Unemployed was an impressive highlight of the weekend.

Ian Juniper.

# NOTTS TU NEWS

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## ROYAL MAIL DISPUTE

In May this year, the Communication Workers Union (CWU) balloted around 138,000 of its members who work in Royal Mail for industrial action in pursuit of the Union's claim for a share in Royal Mail's success.

This decision to ballot followed over a year of talks whereby the Union sought to achieve fundamental improvements in terms and conditions that would reinforce Royal Mail's position as the most efficient and productive postal service in the world, by eradicating the problems of low morale, long hours and job insecurity that present the biggest threat to the industry's continued success.

Our claim was not excessive:- a shorter working week (with 5 day week working), enhanced job security, better financial rewards and holiday entitlements equal to those of Royal Mail managers.

Additionally, in an industry where mail volume has grown by 70% in fifteen years - with the same number of delivery staff, we pursued manageable workloads balanced over two deliveries to ensure that the public received a first delivery in urban areas by 09.30 in the morning, with less important mail being delivered on a second delivery - a position further fuelled by Royal Mail's past attempts to reduce the number of postpersons who perform second deliveries and thereby full-time employment.

Royal Mail suggested that the negotiations should be conducted under the heading of 'Employee Agenda' to emphasise that they wanted to address postal workers' concerns; a gesture which concealed Royal Mail's real commitment to improve its employees' lot.

In response to CWU's claims, Royal Mail sought to hi-jack negotiations with its own agenda, insisting that any improvements to terms and conditions must be linked to the Union agreeing to an obscure and ill-defined 'Improved Way of Working' within the industry, based on Japanese style working methods more commonly known as "teamworking and total worker flexibility" which Royal Mail has seen operating in other industries including the US Postal Service (which abandoned such methods this year as a complete failure), which it believed it could superimpose on a

sorting office environment. Coupled to this, Royal Mail refused to agree any improvements in service standards in respect of second deliveries, stating that it would push ahead with its plans to reduce the number of Postpersons performing second deliveries - which would result in a large number of full-time job losses.

It was the combination of these two factors that resulted in the CWU ballot.

On 2nd June, at the CWU Annual Conference in Blackpool, the ballot result was announced. Over 68% of members voted YES for strike action; this was out of



a percentage of 74% of members voting - believed to be the largest ever turn-out for an industrial action ballot.

A ballot result even more tremendous as Royal Mail launched a massive communication exercise, spending around £2 million on trying to dissuade support for the ballot amongst membership.

Whilst the CWU, using its overwhelming mandate, sought to re-enter talks with Royal Mail, it soon became clear that the ballot result would need to be enacted and strike action became inevitable.

Some three months later, and after six 24 hour nationwide stoppages, the dispute continues.

Whilst some progress has been made on the issues of reduced working time, improved

annual leave, job security and pay, Royal Mail's insistence on teamworking and total flexibility - which would turn dedicated postmen and women into company automatons, industrial robots managing themselves in small groups in order that worker can compete against worker, still remains the major obstacle to an overall agreement.

Additional barriers to a resolution to the dispute lay with Royal Mail's refusal to address the issues surrounding delivery standards and the protection of second deliveries and full-time delivery jobs and their refusal to include other Union represented postal grades such as cleaners and administration staff in any agreement on reduced working time, job security and better annual leave.

While the CWU remains open to talks and willing to secure an agreement, Royal Mail have been more interested in running campaigns of black propaganda against the Union and its national officers. A campaign which, even by Royal Mail standards, is erroneous and disreputable, a campaign further encouraged by this Tory Government decision to involve itself in an internal trade dispute by threatening to lift the Royal Mail monopoly on the delivery of mail costing a pound and under; an involvement which has more to do with revenge against postal workers and this Union than so-claimed public interest.

Nevertheless, neither Royal Mail propaganda, nor the Government's interference - which will only serve to undermine the principle of a universal postal service at universal prices, will weaken or demean the dispute or members' resolve.

If MPs can vote themselves 26% pay rises, we will continue to fight for job security, a better delivery service and a share in Royal Mail's success - a success made off our backs. We delivered the best postal service in the world and did it without teamworking and total flexibility.

Any enquiries or messages of support regarding the Royal Mail dispute, please write to:

Darren Glebocki,  
CWU Room, 14 Church Street,  
Mansfield, Notts, NG18 1AA.

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118 Workshop 118 Mansfield

Road Nottingham NG1 3HL

(0115) 958 2369



## EDITORIAL

So here it is, the bigger and better TU newsletter for Notts. One year on from our humble beginnings, not only are we still here, but we have expanded to 8 pages, and we are still free. This is thanks to the many donations to Notts TU News and to UNISON East Midlands agreeing to take a regular advert in the paper. Donations and adverts are still welcome.

Further good news is that due to demand we have also had to increase our print run by 200 copies per issue. I grant you Murdoch would say big deal, but we're happy.

Even more good news, if you can stand it, is that even with our new improved, better than ever, 8 pages, we have been unable to fit everything in. That is not only a measure of the extent of the attacks on our class, but a healthy sign of the level of resistance that is facing these attacks.

In this issue we start a three part series compiled by Alan Rowland (GMB/PTC). "A philanthropists Guide to Socialism" based on extracts from "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists". We also feature an important article on the Disability Discrimination Act. This is taken from the excellent MSF newsletter "Disability Update" which is edited by Ken Orme. Ken who is well known across Notts is, with the wonders of modern technology, now working from home in Kirkby-in-

Ashfield as the National Disability Officer. I am sure all of our readers will want to wish Ken every success in his new role.

In the next issue we will also be starting a 2 part article on the Nottingham Young Peoples Benefits Campaign, as well as looking at TU Education.

If you have an idea for an article, money, letter, money and/or cartoon and money for Notts TU News, please send them to Notts TU News before October 28th, our deadline

for the next issue.

Jon O'Neill for Notts TU News c/o Box N, MUWC, 2 Beech Avenue, Mansfield, Notts NG18 1EY. Tel (01623) 424720.

The following cartoon was extracted from Private Eye. I couldn't resist it. This also gives me an opportunity to say that I think Ian Hislop is the greatest editor of all time, that he looks nothing like Jimmy Somerville, and that despite his overwhelming intelligence and impeccable French, it is the poor quality of his partners which has handicapped him on "Have I Got News For You". Hopefully he won't sue me

for breach of copyright after all that bull.



limitations of the building - my apologies.

I am that author - Ian Juniper (MSF) - 118 Workshop.

## 118 Workshop

In an article on 118 Workshop in a previous edition of Notts Trade Union News (No 5), the author omitted to mention that 118 Workshop has available the TEXTPHONE (MINICOM 5) facility on 0115 9582369. He also failed to point out that printing work can be done for disabled people by the Centre in situations where they are not presently able to access the facilities because of the

## McSLAVERY

In previous issues we have carried articles on the McLibel 2 trial, and in Issue 6 an open letter to McDonald's offering to help recruit their workers into Trade Unions. For this issue we are using text from the latest Labour Movement Bulletin circulated by the McLibel Support Campaign.

The High Court libel trial brought by the \$30 billion a year McDonald's Corporation against two London Greenpeace Supporters began in June 1994 and is now expected to last until at least the end of 1996. It is already by far the longest civil case in British History. The Trial is of particular importance to trade unionists and the labour movement. The Employment section lasted from April 1995 to February 1996.

The defendants grilled in the witness box over 20 McDonald's US and UK executives, regional officials and managers about the company's exploitation of its workforce, a third of whom are under 18 and two-thirds under 21 years old. They have been forced to make many admissions and to reveal confidential information which has exposed the inner workings of a profiteering multi-national - a reality in conflict with their carefully manufactured image (see below). McDonald's previous strategy of trying to silence labour organisations with legal threats (including the Scottish TUC, unions and labour research organisations) is already in tatters as their own witnesses have been made to vindicate the views of their critics.

Two dozen ex-McDonald's workers testified about the poor pay and conditions (see below). Trade union officials and activists from around the world gave evidence about their experience of organising in the face of McDonald's hostility to trade unions. Included amongst these were a) a CFDT union activist at a McDonald's store in Lyons, France who related how five McDonald's managers were arrested for trying to rig union elections in July 1994; b) a Canadian worker who at the age of 16 organised a union branch in McDonald's Ontario; c) two union activists from the seven month long 1979 McDonald's workers' strike in Dublin; d) a McDonald's worker from Norway, representative of the newly recognised union branch and secretary of the Oslo TUC; e) a London TGWU official who testified on conditions in the catering industry; f) others from the USA, NZ and Australia. International information on conditions and disputes has been provided by the International Union of Foodworkers. Closing speeches will commence in October, and Judgement is expected in early 1997.

We are calling on you to support the McLibel Campaign (model resolution below). So far the national executives of the NUJ and CWU, and nearly 200 Trades Councils and TU branches have pledged their support. Articles on the trial have appeared in Tribune, The Voice (CWU), The Record (TGWU), At Work (MSF), and The Journalist (NUJ), as

well as receiving worldwide publicity. **October 12th: Day of Solidarity With McDonald's Workers**

Two years ago an independent Support Network for McDonald's Workers was set up by a group of trade unionists, aiming to provide advice and information, and to promote solidarity for all McDonald's workers wanting to fight for their rights. The Support Network for McDonald's Workers together with the McLibel Support Campaign are calling for a second countrywide (and international) Day of Solidarity With McDonald's Workers on October 12th 1996. This will be the fourth anniversary of the death of Mark Hopkins, a worker electrocuted at McDonald's Manchester store. Last year saw solidarity protests at a number of stores, and thousands of leaflets distributed. This year we again CALL FOR LEAFLETING AT LOCAL STORES.

MANCHESTER - picket of McDonald's at 86 Market Street (organised by Mark Hopkins' parents), 12 to 1pm.

LONDON - picket of McDonald's at Leicester Square (opposite Swiss Centre), 5pm to 7pm. "I want every McDonald's worker to stand up for their rights, which is why I am backing this campaign 100%. In this way, Mark's death will not have been in vain." - Maureen Hopkins, Mark's mother.

For details of local activity, contact NTUN (01623) 424720. For further leaflets etc. write to Support Network for McDonald's Workers, c/o MSC, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, or phone (01603) 611072 (south)/0161 231 8177 (north).

In Notts contact McLibel Support Campaign, 180 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, NG1 3HW (Tel. 0115 9585666).

Internet: <http://www.mcspotlight.org/>

MODEL RESOLUTION - This branch/organisation recognises the poor working conditions at McDonald's and their hostility to Trade Unionism, and supports the right of their staff to organise and take industrial action; protests against the company's attempts to suppress criticism, in particular the use of libel laws as censorship; and resolves: 1) to back the McLibel Support Campaign in its protests, 2) to back the FREE SPEECH PLEDGE, 3) to circulate information about the case, 4) to support the October 12th Day of Solidarity With McDonald's Workers, and 5) to donate £XX.

## CYBER-PICKET

In January 1995 Bridgestone/Firestone replaced 2300 striking workers during an unfair labour practice strike in the USA. The company tried to drive down wages, slash health care benefits, cut corners on worker safety protections and eliminate guaranteed holidays. Despite the union's (United Steelworkers of America -USWA) unconditional offer to return to work more than a year ago, more than 400 USWA members are still out of work, while those back on the job are working without the protection of a contract.

USWA have set up a "Cyber" picket of Bridgestone/Firestone by utilising links across the Internet to allow supporters to send e-mail and graphics (the Black Flag) directly on line to a company's own addresses, guest-books, customers, suppliers and shareholders.

Bridgestone/Firestone are major sponsors of "Indy-Car" racing in the USA, and the "Black Flag" is used to signal disqualification in "Indy-Car" racing.

For further details or to join the "Cyber" picket, contact:

[http://www.icem\\_org/networks/bridge/cybercam.html](http://www.icem_org/networks/bridge/cybercam.html).



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## DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT - FUNDAMENTALLY FLAWED.

A law to establish equal rights for disabled people must contain a general right to reasonable access and non-discrimination in all areas of life, and apply to all people who suffer discrimination on the basis of disability. It must be a law which works in practice - not just a paper right that everyone ignores.

The Rights Now Campaign believes that the Civil Rights Bill would have offered a far clearer and fairer approach to disability discrimination than the patchy and half-hearted Disability Discrimination Act. We continue to campaign for full and enforceable civil rights. We need unions to help us. Please contact Rights Now c/o RADAR 12 City Forum, 250 City Road London EC1V 8AF. Tel:0171 250 3222.

### Definition of Disability

The new law defines disability too narrowly. This is a serious problem because if a person is not "disabled" the law will not apply to them. In other words, it will be completely legal to discriminate against people who do not have a "disability" according to the DDA. The definition is also important because it sets the tone for the whole law. We believe that a wider, social definition is essential, one which recognises that the problems faced by disabled people do not arise from their impairments, but from social attitudes and barriers.

The law's definition is very complicated and requires an individual to prove their ability to carry out "normal day-to-day activities". Normal day-to-day activities is very narrowly defined. (There is also a very complicated section in the DDA which says that some people who do not come within this definition will nevertheless be considered disabled).

At first glance, it may seem fair enough that people who are not "really" disabled should not be covered. But what a discrimination law should focus on is discrimination, not how disabled a person is, but how much they are discriminated against.

The following example makes this point clear. People who are diagnosed as HIV positive will only be protected from discrimination when they develop AIDS-related symptoms. But people experience intense discrimination from the moment of diagnosis, even though they may live for years without experiencing any physical or mental symptoms.

This is just one example. The law's definition will leave out large numbers of people who are discriminated against because of disability. What the law asks is: Are you disabled enough to deserve fair treatment? To claim the right to fair and equal treatment, a person will have to convince an employer or a court, of how incapable they are! MSF thinks this approach is not fair, and does not make sense. The right to fair treatment should not be rationed.

### Piecemeal

A law, like the DDA, which picks and chooses in which areas of life people can freely discriminate against disabled people, is completely unacceptable and will not work. The discrimination which disabled people face is cumulative. It is pointless to offer protection against discrimination in employment, if someone is unable to receive adequate education to qualify for the post, or to access public transport to get to work.

### Small Employers

The DDA will not apply to firms employing less than 20 people, so these 'small employers' will be free to go on discriminating. Fifteen per cent of people work in such 'small' companies, and they form the fastest growing sector of the economy. This is a totally unfair approach - which will be particularly damaging in rural areas where most firms are small.

The armed forces, prison officers and police officers are also excluded from the law's protection, as well as workers on ships planes and fire fighters.

### Transport and Education

Education is excluded from the new non-discrimination right. Schools, nurseries, colleges and universities can continue to discriminate against disabled students. There are many laws covering education, some of which refer to disabled children and young people and their "special needs". What none of them do is make discrimination in nurseries, schools, colleges and universities illegal. This should be the basic underpinning of all policy and practice.

All that the DDA does regarding education is require schools, colleges etc. to provide information about their access and disability policies, not to improve them.

Transport infrastructure - such as stations - are included but vehicles are excluded from the right of non-discrimination. This is extremely confusing. The DDA

does give the Secretary of State wide powers to lay down new access standards for taxis, buses, and trains. However, we cannot be sure if, or when, the Secretary of State will use these new powers, nor will disabled people be able to set the new access standards.

### Loopholes and Excuses

Lord Lester, the prominent civil liberties lawyer, described the new law as 'riddled with vague, slippery and elusive exceptions, making it so full of holes that it is more like a colander than a binding code.'

The DDA defines discrimination as less favourable treatment which cannot be justified. It is not possible to justify direct discrimination under the sex and race discrimination laws, and we do not believe that it should be possible in respect to disability discrimination.

The DDA allows employers to discriminate if they have a "material and substantial reason, taking into account their duty to make reasonable adjustments". What this means is unclear, but we can guess that a lot of employers will try to use it as an excuse to continue with their bad old ways, discriminating against disabled workers. The DDA also allows providers of goods and services to discriminate if in their opinion this is necessary for health and safety reasons.

You can see why the DDA has been called a "bigot's charter"! These loopholes are so broad, that it seems that the law will not have any impact in ending discrimination by service providers.

### Removing Barriers

Disabled people are discriminated against as much by the barriers which an unthinking society puts up, as by the attitudes of individuals. The DDA requires employers and service providers to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person needs this.

This sounds good but the duty to make reasonable adjustments to services will not apply immediately. The Government has said this might not apply 2006! There will be a cost cap on the amount of money which a business is required to spend on making reasonable adjustment. We do not yet know what this will be, but it could be so low that the law will fail to have any impact.

### Positive Action

The quota scheme requires employers with more than 20 employees to have

(continued)

disabled people as 3% of their workforce. This will be abolished when the new employment right comes into effect in November 1996.

Because the Government did not enforce the quota scheme, it was not as successful as it could have been. However it was helpful in encouraging some employers to take positive measures in employing and retaining disabled workers. Even if all employers stopped discriminating tomorrow, it would take a long time for the effects of past discrimination to be reversed. Employers need to set targets and take positive measures to employ disabled staff.

### Enforcement

The Government has failed to put its money where its mouth is, and has not set up a powerful enforcement agency which is needed to police the new law. The Government has rejected a Disability Rights Commission similar to the Equal Opportunities and Racial Equality Commissions, to investigate discrimination, take up cases and tackle breaches of the law.

Instead the Disability Discrimination Act creates a weak National Disability Council to advise the Minister.

Caroline Gooding  
Disability & Employment Rights  
National Advisory Committee  
Member/Rights Now.

**MSF have recently appointed Ken Orme as the Unions Disability Officer. He can be contacted on (01623) 720086.**

## YORKSHIRE & EAST MIDLANDS AGAINST THE JOBSEEKERS ALLOWANCE



**Saturday 5th October 1996 SHEFFIELD Assemble 11am  
Devonshire Green March off 11:30am Rally 12noon Barkers Pool  
Speakers Tony Benn MP Mark Serwotka CPSA National  
Unemployed Workers Combine Speaker**

## HAZARDS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES CHARTER

The Hazards Campaign has launched a charter of occupational health and safety demands aimed at the incoming Government after the forthcoming General Election. The Charter calls for: custodial sentences for employers found to have caused death or injury at work through negligence  
stricter enforcement of health and safety law  
more protection from chemicals including a complete ban on asbestos  
improved rights for workers and their representatives  
implementation of all existing European legislation  
reforms in UK legislation including improved compensation for industrial injuries, the recognition of stress as an industrial injury and the outlawing of bullying  
backing for occupational health projects, health and safety advice centres and support groups  
the establishment of Workers' Memorial Day as an official event  
The Charter was adopted at the National Hazards Conference in APRIL 1996 after extensive discussions throughout the

Hazards Campaign. It will now be distributed widely to trade union and Labour Party organisations in the run-up to the elections and afterwards. David Drury, convenor of the Charter Working Group, said; "Many of the demands are already Labour Party policy: the job now is to ensure that they become priorities for an incoming Labour Government. This can be achieved by ensuring that the Charter is adopted by affiliated trade union and Labour Party organisations". The Hazards Campaign is a network of individuals and organisations pledged to secure improvements in occupational health and safety through the efforts of workers and their representatives and allies.

Copies of the Charter can be obtained from Mick Williams, c/o Hazards Campaign, Mudford's Building, 37 Exchange Street, Sheffield S2 5TR;

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**SOLICITORS**

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Contact Terry Oldham on (0115) 936 9369

FREETH CARTWRIGHT HUNT DICKINS  
WILLOUGHBY HOUSE, 20 LOW PAVEMENT, NOTTINGHAM NG1 7EA. TEL. 0115 936 9369

Because of the clash with the Goose Fair on October 5th, we are unable to organise a march and rally in Nottingham to mark the introduction of JSA on October 7th.

Since then, the TUC Unemployed Workers Centres in the East Midlands and Yorkshire have combined forces to arrange a demonstration in Sheffield on Saturday 5th October. Local transport will be arranged. For details contact MUWC on (01623) 424720.



## A PHILANTHROPIST'S GUIDE TO SOCIALISM in easy parts

Extracts from The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists by Robert Tressell

PART I The causes of poverty - Money

"In order to do away with poverty, we must destroy the causes: to do away with the causes we must destroy the whole system." Owen began his lecture.

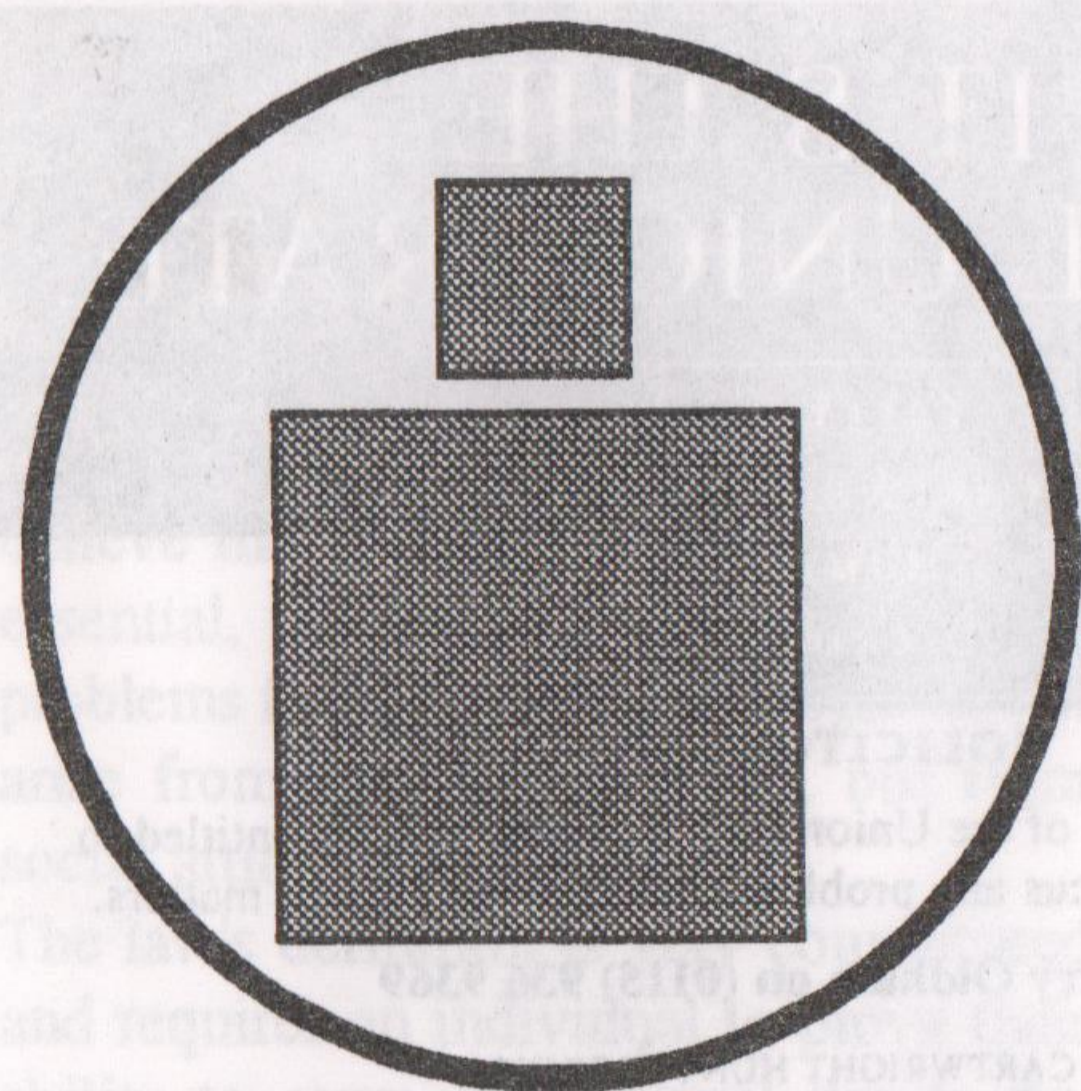
"What are the causes, then?" asked his workmates.

"Well, money for one thing."

"I always thought it was the want of it!"

"Other things are the private ownership of land, private ownership of railways, tramways, and the other means of producing the necessaries and comforts of life. Competition in business ..."

"But, how do you make it out?"



Owen picked up a piece of charred wood that had fallen from the fire and knelt down and began to draw upon the floor. He drew a circle about two feet in diameter. Inside this he had drawn two squares, one much larger than the other. These two squares he filled in solid black with charcoal.

"This circle - or rather the space inside the circle - is supposed to represent England. The two black squares represent a few thousand people. The large square stands for the remainder - about forty millions - that is the majority (at 1906 figures ED). The greater number of the people work for their living; and in return for their labour they receive money: some more, some less than others. In order that these people may live, continued Owen pointing to the large black square, it is first of all necessary that they should have

a place to live in. Now, they can't live in the air or in the sea. These people are land animals, therefore they must live on the land."

"What do you mean by animals, A human being ain't no animal."

"They must live on the land: and that's the beginning of the trouble; because - under the present system - the majority of the people have really no right to be in the country at all! Under the present system the country belongs to those few - those who are here represented by this small black square. They allow the majority to remain on the land on one condition - that is, they must pay rent to the few. The amount of rent is so large that, in order to pay it, the greater number of the majority have often to deprive themselves and their children, not only of the comforts, but even the necessities of life. In the case of the working classes, the rent absorbs at the lowest possible estimate, about one-third of their total earnings, for it must be remembered that the rent is an expense that goes on all the time, whether they are employed or not."

"The majority work hard and live in poverty in order that the minority may live in luxury without working at all."

"So it is right ain't it? If you had a house and let it to someone, you'd want your rent, wouldn't you?"

"By far the greater part of the land is held by people who have absolutely no moral right to it. Possession of much of it was obtained by means of murder and theft perpetrated by the ancestors of the present owners. Vast estates were also bestowed upon remote ancestors in return for real or alleged services. You cannot deny the fact that this small minority possesses nearly all the land of the country and is one of the principal causes of poverty in the majority."

"Well that seems true enough. The rent's the biggest item a working man's got to pay. When you're out of work and can't afford other things, you go without them, but the rent has to be paid whether you're working or not."

"Supposing it is wrong, What then? What about it? How's it going to be altered?"

"Whether it can be altered or not, whether it's right or wrong, landlordism is one of the causes of poverty. Poverty is not caused by men

and women getting married; it's not caused by machinery, it's not caused by over-production; it's not caused by drink or laziness; and it's not caused by over-population. It's caused by Private Monopoly."

"I suppose you think the landlords ought to let people live in their house for nothing."

"Certainly, I reckon the landlord ought to pay the rent for the tenant! Of course, Landlordism is not the only cause. The wonderful system fosters a great many others. Employers of labour are as great a cause of poverty as landlords are ..."

With the recent changes in mortgage interest payments and funding of housing benefit we are going backwards. It seems nothing ever changes only our responses. Tressell had the knack of illustrating basic socialism. Our forefathers were able to understand the meaning of socialism and to respond appropriately. We must re-learn these skills if we are adequately to protect ourselves and those less fortunate than ourselves.

### THE MINERS' SONG

*But we see a light through  
the breaking night and a  
smiling dawn we greet,*

*We'll toil no more in the  
planet's core for a crust and  
a winding sheet,*

*We'll drive despair from the  
breathing air, and hands  
and hearts combine,*

*And we'll find our health  
in the commonwealth  
When the miners own the  
mine.*

From The Miners Song  
by Jim Connell

## ERIC WHALLEY

born 1914 Killed in Action Fuentes de Ebro Front, Aragon, Spain  
13th October 1937

Eric Whalley was born in 1914, the second son of Tom and Charlotte, at 31 George Street Mansfield. His father was active in the Labour Party and his mother in the Co-operative Movement.

He began his education at Rosemary Schools before moving on to High Oakham where he was a keen sportsman; as a youth wrestler, footballer and outstanding sprinter. One of his more unusual interests was his passion for fairgrounds and fascination in their folk. In his early teens he was drawn to politics becoming active when he joined the Youth Section of the Independent Labour Party. In early 1935 he was in the ILP delegation that visited the Soviet Union and it was after his return that in November 1935, together with Ted Hall, Herbert Hooper, Gus Witts, Clarence Mason and Ernest Hackett the Mansfield Branch of the

Communist Party was founded.

In 1936, with his parents, he moved to Brooklands Avenue where their home was aptly and poignantly named "Tovarishaven".

Eric was recognised as a brilliant speaker, drawing crowds of hundreds to his regular Market Place orations in addition to his formal lectures on Marxism and Political Economy. He was a champion for the unemployed and took part in both national and local hunger marches.

In August 1937 he was asked to go to Spain, to meet a political need as Battalion Political Commissar (equivalent to Captain) of the British Battalion of the 15th International Brigade. Eight short weeks later, on 13th October 1937, BPC Eric Whalley was killed in action in defence of the Fuentes de

Ebro Front, Aragon.

"In his short life, rich in experience, he gave much to the workers in leadership and example. His goal was the emancipation of the Working Class."

There will be a Memorial Meeting at Mansfield Library Theatre on Friday 4th October 1996 from 7pm to 9:30pm to pay tribute to the life of Eric Whalley and commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Spanish Civil War.

Chair will be Alan Meale MP with speakers - Bill Alexander (Secretary of the International Brigade Association); Tony Benn MP (Chesterfield); Frank Ellis (who served in the International Brigade 1936 - 1939) and Ida Hackett (Mansfield Branch Communist Party of Britain)

notts campaign against pit closures & Mansfield Unemployed Workers Centre

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