

Hackney Union

November/December 1990.

News

Printed by Hackney Trade Union Support Unit, 489 Kingsland Road, London E8 4AU.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:-

Page 2: New leaflets, courses, meetings & a chance to find out how much your boss earns.

| Company account 1987/8 | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| J. SAINSBURY plc | | |
| | 1987/8 | 1986/7 |
| <small>(Year ends March 31st 1988)</small> | | |
| SALES | £1,791,000,000 | £1,667,000,000 |
| PROPERTY EXPENSE | £200,000,000 | £200,000,000 |
| TAX | £139,000,000 | £130,000,000 |
| DIVIDEND PAID DIRECTORS | £100,000,000 | £100,000,000 |
| DIVIDEND TO SHAREHOLDERS | £60,000,000 | £60,000,000 |
| RESERVE FUND | £400,000,000 | £360,000,000 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF ORDINARY (Full-time equivalent) SHARES | 51,100 | 51,000 |

Profits up 25%
Shareholders get 25% more
D.J. Sainsbury got £14,154,000 from his shares

Page 7: International: Kurdistan & the Gulf War.



||||| KURDISTAN



Page 3: 'Bacton Fashions 4' are cleared by jury & set to sue the police for assault.

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Hackney Union News is produced every 2 months in English & Turkish by workers at Hackney Trade Union Support Unit. The articles do not necessarily correspond to the views of the workers or the management committee & are written in order to produce debate within the Trade Union & Labour movement.

Articles, letters, comments & suggestions to:- HUN, 489 Kingsland Road, London E8 4AU. Tel: 071-249-8086 or 071-249-6930. If you would like to be added to our mailing list of almost 900 & receive a regular copy then please let us know.

Hackney Trade Union Support Unit is funded by a council grant & aims to provide support, resources & information to workers & trade unions in Hackney. If you would like more information about our work then please contact us at the address above.

HOLDING A MEETING?

Do you want a trade union input?

On October 8th nearly 400 people packed into Hackney Town Hall to listen to Paul Foot, Jeremy Corbyn & Billy Etherington of the National Union of Mineworkers.

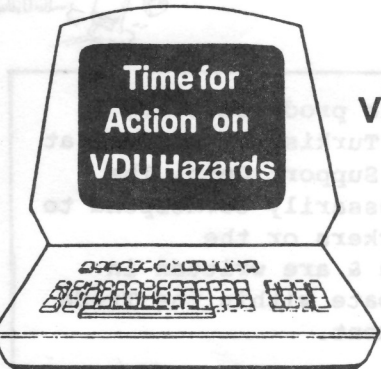
The meeting was organised by the Defend Arthur Scargill campaign in conjunction with the Trade Union Support Unit. Sadly on the evening itself Scargill was ill but the quality of the other speakers made up for some of the disappointment.

The unit used our 8 panel display boards to publicise trade unions in general & also ran a stall with union literature, leaflets & badges. Everyone who attended was given a unit leaflet & 6 names were added to the Hackney Union News mailing list including 2 USDAW stewards.

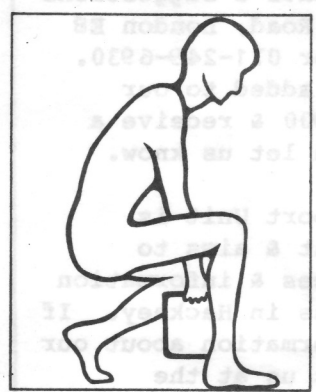
We are keen to repeat the exercise at other meetings, fairs & demo's. Contact us if you think we can help.

We are also willing to speak to any community groups about the topic of trade unions & employment rights. We already carry out such work in many of the local Turkish & Kurdish centres and we are looking to expand this area of our work.

New leaflets available



visual display units



back injuries.

Tel:249 8086

FIND OUT YOUR COMPANIES PROFITS

Do you work in the private sector & find it difficult to get hold of accurate information about the company you work for? If so, the Support Unit may be able to help.

The Unit operates a Company Information service which can help workers discover their companies profits, how much the directors get paid and the general state of the company.

If you find it difficult to counter management's arguments about the need for 'realistic' wage rises or enforced redundancies then this service may help.

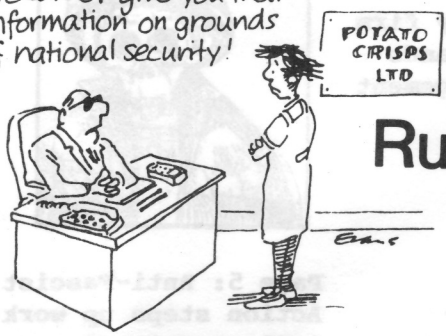
Fighting privatisation.

This government appears to be set on privatising everything. No area or worker in the public sector is safe. If your service or job is threatened by a private contractor, then the Support Unit will either have, or can get information on that company.

The information can counter the arguments that privatisation helps provide cheaper, better services & in addition, it exposes the disgraceful wage rates that private contractors pay.

For more information, contact: Hackney Trade Union Support Unit on 01 249 8086.

We cannot give you that information on grounds of national security!



Rubbish!

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH) REGULATIONS

A one day course 10am - 4.30pm

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 15th

at Hackney Trade Union Support Unit

489 Kingsland Road E8

8,000 to 20,000 workers die every year because of occupational... any of these deaths occur because of... about 600,000 toxic substances in... substances join this list of... in the chemicals... ical workers... by reported

REFUGEES ATTACKED BY POLICE TO SUE

'Bacton 4' found not guilty

The 4 Kurdish refugees who were arrested by the Police Paramilitaries, the Territorial Support Group, on February 26th outside Bacton Fashions in Summerford Grove were all unanimously acquitted by a jury at Snaresbrook Crown Court on October 11th of riotous behaviour & actual bodily harm on police officers.

Their arrests & the subsequent assaults made on them by the police came about when specially trained crowd control experts', the Bow Territorial Support Group attacked a peaceful picket of strikers & supporters at Bacton Fashions.

The dispute had arisen as the TGWU Textiles branch struggled to gain a recognition agreement with the company for its union members. The factory subsequently closed the following day & did not re-open.

It was known throughout the dispute that members of Scotland Yards Special Branch had paid a visit to the factory owner & had questioned the security guard at the factory about the strike organisers, including showing him pictures of a 1988 demonstration by Turkish & Kurdish people against the visit to Britain of Turkish leader General Evren. They had apparently obtained these from the Turkish Embassy.



Photograph by Mete Metin.

With their cases now finished, Serdar Guccuk, Haydar Guccuk, Rizvan Sakar & Tekin Kartel, are now going to sue the police for assault & the injuries they received.

Hackney Trade Union Support Unit worked very closely with the Daymer Turkish & Kurdish community centre in finding witnesses, contacting solicitors & providing moral support for the 'Bacton 4' and sends our congratulations to Serdar, Haydar, Rizvan & Tekin as well as the Daymer organisation. Well done!

11 year jail sentences for 3 anti-fascists

Three Anti-Fascists were recently jailed for a total of 11 years after a fight with a leading member of the neo-fascist Blood & Honour's security wing. Tony & Mark got 4 years & David got 3 years.

A Defence Fund has been set up & anyone wanting to make a donation should send it to 'Anti-Fascist Defence Fund' c/o AFA, PO Box 1734, London WC1 3XX.

POLL TAX UP-DATE

Hackney Council was able to get liability orders against everyone who had a summonses but who didn't turn up at court. The vast majority of people who turned up saw their cases being adjourned. (Some people had to wait over 8 hours!) There were only 10 liability orders made against people who turned up at court on either September 28th, October 3rd or October 10th.

THREE WORKERS KILLED BY A HACKNEY COMPANY

The deaths of 3 workers in the Watney Street Market sewer in Tower Hamlets has led to Floyd Construction Company of Hackney Road closing their offices & 'hot-footing' it to Chigwell. On the very day that Construction Safety Campaign (CSC) members picketed their premises, the company sign was 'painted out' & equipment loaded into removal vans.

The CSC is demanding a public inquiry into the deaths of David & Paul Richardson & Steve Hammond & that the company & Tower Hamlets Council are prosecuted for negligence in the Crown Court. The CSC is also convinced that this disaster would never have occurred if the work had gone to the Tower Hamlets Direct Labour Organisation & is demanding that all future work goes to them.

The events surrounding the deaths are horrific & show how Floyd Construction Company & Tower Hamlets Council completely ignored any basic safety procedures. Quite frankly, the 3 workers never stood a chance.



Four workers were required to pour a 40 gallon drum of hydrochloric acid down the sewer on Friday evening & then return the following morning to carry out the same exercise before descending into the sewer in their ordinary clothes. Only 20 year old Paul Barker survived as the other 3 were overcome by poisonous fumes.

Safety probe into fume fatalities

by MARK GOULD

SAFETY watchdog groups are investigating claims that three workmen who died after being overcome by fumes in a sewer were victims of negligence by their Hackney-based employers.

And the Construction Safety Campaign says that if Floyd Plumbing from Hackney Road was found to be at fault then they should be prosecuted, following the deaths of Ronald Green brothers David (17) and Paul Richardson (19) and Stephen from Steve Hammond (22).

Doctors were considering releasing a fourth victim, Paul Barker, 20, from Bow, who was now "doing well" in the Royal London Hospital, as the Gazette went to press.

Safety watchdogs the Health and Safety Executive say they are investigating

holders and neighbours whom one man stumbled to the surface covered in slime. Firefighters from nearby Shadwell fire station wearing breathing equipment went down to rescue the three men who were given emergency first aid as shop-pers looked on in horror.

David Richardson, from Patriot Square, was dead on arrival at the London Hospital. Doctors fought to revive the three other victims.

Paul Richardson and Steve Hammond died on Monday morning after life-support machines were switched off.

It is thought that the men were overcome by hydrogen sulphide - the rotten egg smell of rick-bombs - which is fatal in concentrations of more than one part in a million of air.

Wapping Neighbourhood said they were satisfied with the firm's working standards.

There are 3 directors of Floyd Construction Company, Carol & Tony Floyd live at 49a Hainault Road, Chigwell & Albert Pickering lives at 5 Couchmore Avenue, Clayhall in Essex.

Working in a sewer is dangerous work with serious risks of flooding & poisonous fumes. There are extensive regulations which firms are expected to abide by including the use of breathing equipment, special radio equipment a gas probe, a spiralamp for gas warnings, a power winch to get a worker out of the sewer as quickly as possible if they are injured & at least one person must have 4 years experience. Floyd Construction ignored all of these!

Floyd Construction Company are a cowboy company who murdered 3 workers, which could easily have been 4. As the average fine for a firm which causes a workers death is only £476 & no employer has ever been sent to jail then firms clearly feel it is worth ignoring all safety risks. Quite bluntly some firms decide that providing safety equipment is dearer than paying fines when a worker dies!

The deaths of the 3 workers also demonstrates the need for all workers to be organised in trade unions & for union officials to fully support workers who refuse to work on dangerous jobs or sites. As firms seek to make more & more profits this must not be at the expense of workers lives.

You can contact the Construction Safety Campaign by phoning:- 071 538 0507.

ANTI-FASCIST ACTION

'No neutrality'

Gary of Anti-Fascist Action (AFA).

Recently in the neighbouring borough of Tower Hamlets the British National Party (BNP) gained 12.8% of the votes in a council by-election. AFA is attempting to mobilise people against the fascists.

A recent report by members of the European Parliament suggests that in Britain a race attack occurs every 26 minutes. Tower Hamlets has the highest concentration of race attacks in the country. Police statistics prove that the level of attacks rises year by year.

It is also only in this area of London that **fascist gangs of the BNP & the NF operate with impunity**. Is this a co-incidence? AFA think not.

Of course fascist gangs do not initiate all of the attacks, though terrorism is the logical compliment to a policy of forced repatriation. The BNP & NF justify, exploit & profit from race hatred & violence.

For too long this problem has been ignored. AFA's first job will be to highlight this **hidden epidemic** & then to help co-ordinate an effective response.



Because the BNP point the finger at the Asian community as the cause of unemployment, falling education standards, inadequate housing they currently revel in the tacit support of a section of the working class in the East End. The BNP might pretend they represent their interests but in reality they represent only their bigotry.

East London AFA Public Meeting.

Tuesday November 13th at 7.30pm in the Davenant Centre on Whitechapel High St E2
Main speakers;- Micky Fenn, ex-steward at Tilbury Docks & Mildred Gordon MP.

Demonstration against NF Flag group march on Sunday November 11th, assemble 2pm at Parliament Square, London SW1.

The big idea behind the big lie is that the working class, here as elsewhere must restrict our ambitions in the national interest. We are therefore condemned to fight among ourselves, along racial lines for the crumbs that fall from the tables of the rich. The smaller the crumbs, like now, the more violent the competition.

Some socialists & some members of the Asian Community believe that the working class & its culture is part of the problem. AFA understand that the **working-class, warts & all, provide the only possibility of a solution.**

One consequence of the lefts lack of resolve is that today, practically the whole of the Asian Community lives under a **State of Siege**. They are trapped between the opportunist racism of a Liberal council, the indifference or hostility of the Police & the lurking terrorism of the fascists. AFA's job is to help lift the siege.

It must be understood that race attacks will no longer be accepted as part of this hidden agenda. Nor will there be any further appeasement or tolerance of fascist gangs. History demonstrates that on the issue of fascism **there can be no neutrality.**

We intend that **AFA's activities will be the catalyst for real change**. We are tired of the politicians hypocrisy, the arrogance of the fascists & the empty bluster from the left. To make any difference, it will prove necessary to challenge the existing political status quo. So it is not to coalitions we look, but to co-insurgents. **Enough is enough.**

Contact AFA by writing to PO Box BM 1734, London WC1 3XX.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Defend jailed trade unionists

By Tim Evans.



Turkish security forces using electric truncheons, helmets & firewood sticks while breaking up a demo on May 1st 1988 in Taksim Square, Istanbul in Turkey.

In Turkey today, celebrating May Day is a political crime. Workers who take to the streets have been beaten up by the police, put on trial & tortured. Over 3,000 people were detained in Istanbul on May 1st 1990, of whom 221 were charged with political & civil disorder offences. The prosecution is calling for sentences of 5 to 23 years. There have been many reports of torture & ill-treatment.

Meanwhile 2 Turkish labour activists, Turabi Polat & Muhtullah Abbasoigullari, arrested on April 27th 1989 for carrying stickers calling on workers to celebrate May Day remain in prison despite strong evidence that they made statements under torture. Amnesty International is calling for their immediate, unconditional release.

They told the Izmir State Security Court that they had been tortured during interrogation. In a detailed written statement, Abbasiogullari described how he had been stripped, strangled, squeezed by the testicles, hosed with ice cold water, & electricity had been applied to his penis & nipples.

They were found guilty of distributing leaflets & membership of an organisation 'seeking to establish the domination of one social class.' Polat was jailed for 4 years & 7 months & Abbasiogullari to 5 years & 10 months.

They are now serving their sentences in Urla Prison, near Izmir. Amnesty International believes they are prisoners of conscience & is working for their unconditional release & an independent investigation into their treatment.

You can work for their release by sending appeals to the Turkish authorities. Please ask for an impartial & independent investigation into all allegations of mistreatment of Mayday demonstrators while in custody.

Write to: Prime Minister,
Yildirim Akblut,
Basbakanlik,
Ankara,
Turkey.

Minster of Justice,
Mahmut Oltan Sungurlu,
Adalet Bakanligi,
Ankara,
Turkey.

For more information about these cases, Amnesty International's work with trade unions, or the local Amnesty group, contact: Tim Evans, 13 Alcester Crescent E5 9PX. Tel 081-806 5036 (h), 071-837 5605. (Trade union worker, Hackney & Islington group of AI.)

INTERNATIONAL: KURDISTAN

By Estella of the Kurdistan Solidarity Committee.

The attempt by Anglo-US imperialism to reconquer Kuwait & overthrow the Baathist regime in Bagdad as a first step towards preserving imperialist control over the world's major oil reserves has had serious consequences for Kurdish people.

On August 6th, only 4 days after the occupation of Kuwait, the Turkish Government having cemented its alliance with America & NATO by its support of Resolutions 660 & 661 in the United Nations informed the Council of Europe that it had suspended its observance of human rights in Turkey by derogating the European Convention on Human Rights.

This decision aimed primarily at the Kurdish people comes hot on the heels of the reactionary decree 413 in April 1990 which intensified the State of Emergency in 9 of the 11 Kurish provinces.



Despite the presence of 450,000 troops & thousands of police & despite a prolonged war, the Turkish regime is unable to defeat the Kurdish war of national liberation. Worse still, since early 1990, the armed struggle has developed into a nationwide "Serihildan" (uprising.)

The Turkish regime's reaction to this has been predictable. For several months whole areas of the Kurdish countryside have been depopulated & thousands of people have been driven from their homes to swell the myriad shanty towns around Istanbul, Ankara, etc.. Woods & fields have been burnt & villages destroyed.

The number arrested is incalculable. Those that have disappeared or killed will never be known. Truly - & sadly - it must be stated that human rights & national aspirations are the first casualties of the Gulf crisis. War rules in Kurdistan.

All this is done to prevent the Kurdish people from even speaking their own language & from asserting their own ethnicity.

It is a measure of imperialist hypocrisy that whilst Hurd, Bush, & Sheverdnadze rage endlessly about Iraqi violation of democratic rights, no one - but no one dares to mention the 30 million Kurds, a nation without a country.

Public meeting on Saturday
December 1st from 11am to
7pm at the Haringay

Community Trade Union Centre, 2a
Brabant Road, N22. (2 minutes
from Woodgreen station.)

Information from:- KSC, 44
Ainger Road, London NW3 3AT.
Tel. 071 586 5892.

Kurdish workers demonstrate in Hackney. Meanwhile massive unrest is taking place in Kurdistan as workers & peasants fight for independence.

Certainly there will be no peace in the Middle East until the racist regime of the occupation powers are overthrown & Kurdistan is recognised as a independent & sovereign state. This is the aim of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) & the Kurdish National Liberation Front (ERNK) which has consistently fought for self-determination. And this explains its mass support & growing popularity in North West Kurdistan.

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

Minimum wages

If you are over 21 & the work you do is listed below then you are covered by **Wages Councils Orders**. This means that your employer must, by law, pay a minimum wage & overtime rates. These Wages Council rates apply if you are a full time, part time or a pieceworker. Some homeworkers may also be covered.

If you think that you may be covered by a Wages Council & that you are being **underpaid**, you should **contact the Wages Inspectorate**, giving full details of your job.

Your enquiry should be treated with strict confidence. If they find that you have been underpaid, they can order your employer to pay you up to 2 years' back pay- even if you no longer work for the firm.

Of course the **best protection against low pay is to join a trade union** & every worker has this right. For further details call or visit **Hackney Trade Union Support Unit**.

WAGES COUNCILS RATES 1990/1.

| Industry | Wages per hour | Overtime rate. |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Shops- non-food | £2.69 | £4.04 |
| Pubs & clubs | £2.50 | £3.75 |
| Shops -food | £2.68 | £4.02 |
| Newsagents | £2.68 | £4.02 |
| Hairdressing | £2.40 | £3.60 |
| Clothing manufacturing | £2.27 | £3.40 |
| Cafes/restaurants | £2.58 | £3.87 |
| Laundries | £2.53 | £3.80. |

WAGES INSPECTORATE is at Clifton House, 83-117 Euston Road, London NW1.
Telephone:-071 387 2511.

Unfair dismissal

If you think you have been unfairly dismissed & you work 16 hours or more each week, and have worked with the firm for 2 years or more you can have your claim heard by an Industrial Tribunal (IT) if you apply within 3 months of dismissal. If you work between 8 & 15 hours each week you cannot claim unfair dismissal until you have worked with the firm for 5 years.

Legislation sets out what constitutes 'fair' dismissal. If you think you've got a claim, you can contact, either the local Citizens Advice Bureau, Law Centre or the Trade Union Support Unit.

If you are a member of a Trade Union you should contact your local Full Time Official who can represent you before the tribunal. You can, at tribunal, ask, for your job back or compensation.

Discrimination.

It is unlawful for your employer to discriminate against you because of your race, your sex, or because you are married, or in any of the following respects:-

- * Pay & conditions.
- * Arrangements for recruitment.
- * Refusing to consider you for a job, or appoint you;
- * The terms on which you are offered a job;
- * Refusing you promotion, or transfer, or training opportunities.
- * Putting you on short time, or dismissing you.

What is a trade union?

Regardless of your personal circumstances be you full-time, part-time, male, female or refugee, you have a basic legal right to **join a trade union** of your choice.

Unions are groups of people who join together to talk to employers about wages, & conditions at work.. You may feel that joining a union is a big step to take & you may be unsure just what implications joining a union may have...If you are unsure don't hesitate to contact us.

We are more than happy to explain in easy terms the ins & outs of trade union membership & the many benefits & advantages it could bring you...

If your not in a union & want further details about what they are & how they work then **contact us on 071 249 8086 or call into Hackney Trade Union Support Unit, Liberty Hall, 489 Kingsland Road, London E8. (just down from Dalston junction.)**