

The Glasgow Keelie

Sept 1991

~~Keep Our Scottish Battalions~~
Keep Our Strike Breakers?
Kiss Our Scottish Buttocks!

SECC SCANDAL

One point not on the agenda of this year's TUC conference in Glasgow was the recent history of the venue itself, the SECC. The place used to belong to the Scottish Development Agency until the government told them to dump it. A sticky problem. It's a notorious financial and organisational disaster-zone. But you've got to hand it to the SDA boys and girls. Not only did they find somebody crazy enough to take it off their hands, the new owners stumped up the money to clear the operating company's massive debt! Total sum? A cool £5 million.

Who's got money like that in the middle of the recession? Simple. Glasgow District & Strathclyde Regional Councils. But that's odd. They've made it painfully clear in word and deed that they're both stony broke. Turns out they borrowed the cash from somebody very keen they should have the place and also keen on that peculiar Labour Party mission to enforce an 'enterprise culture' in Glasgow. You guessed it! The very people who wanted to dump the SECC in the first place: the Scottish Office.

Adding insult to injury both Councils gave it to be run by a 'charitable company', imaginatively described as The Exhibition Centre Company which consists of a bunch

of Labour Councillors and certain eminent right-wing businessmen. But they 'forgot' to pass on the debt (with its considerable rising rate of interest). Who's been left to pay the debt? You guessed it. The people of Glasgow and Strathclyde.

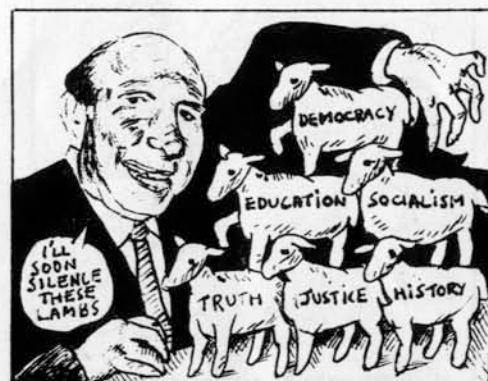
It's a familiar process. Assets owned and paid for by the public are 'spirited' away into 'charitable' companies, eg. the 'Royal' Concert Hall, *Glasgow's Glasgow* (remember the £10 million they lost last year on that one?). It's a further disgrace to these so-called Labour Councillors that one of the few voices raised in protest comes from John Young, leader of the Tory Group. He wants an enquiry into the status of these 'charitable' companies; even he sees they're "some form of under-cover local government power operating in a closet with no accountability" whatsoever to the electorate. It seems the 'austerity' programme adopted by both Councils on basic public-sector funding doesn't extend to 'culture', a word used to mask our new 'Welfare State' for the rich.

As part of the Jose Carreras concert at the SECC Glasgow District Council's Finance Department offered to pick up the bill for a luxury dinner for businessmen and their clients if enough of them didn't

actually turn up! (£100 a ticket. Where were you?). Lally's gang always get their priorities right. Mind you there's a similar sort of generous deal going on behalf of the poorer sections of Strathclyde society where £200 gets spent trying to collect £70 worth of poll-tax.

The TUC conference might mean a lot of free beer for the workers' representatives. But anybody with integrity who went expecting to take part in a decision-making process would find all the important decisions were taken behind their back.

As far as the Labour Group in Glasgow is concerned, the only people they meet face-to-face these days are the right-wing bureaucrats and businessmen of the Scottish Office and all the various 'charitable' companies they've formed to do in the people's money. Lallygrad, it's well named.



"I DON'T GIVE THREE FUCKS"

says Chief Inspector

At the anti-poll tax anti-cuts demo held in George Square last month a platform-guest gave a 15 minute speech in defence of Labour Party Leaders everywhere.

Although he said his name was 'Napoleon' most of the crowd thought he was either Charles Gray, Pat Lally, John Mullen or David Begg (Lothian Labour Group's answer to Joseph Goebbels). When the dignitary finished his tirade against delinquent non-payers and dismounted the platform the police nabbed him. In front of a crowd of about 1000 people they hustled him to the side - just to get his name and address apparently.

TIRADE

It was pointed out that he wasn't really Napoleon at all but an actor, and that the "tirade" which included

the word "fuck" on three separate occasions was a script written for the occasion by a Glasgow author. The Chief Inspector responsible for the decision wasn't impressed. He declared that he let the first two 'fucks' pass, but the third was just too much for public decency. In front of the crowd he was challenged by somebody to the effect that Scotland was now a police state. The Chief Inspector retorted: So? During the argument he was heard to refer to the demonstrators as 'the rubbish'. This man'll definitely go places.



Scottish Victims Fight for Parity with England

Since *The Keelie* highlighted the iniquities of the asbestos scandals in this country the STUC, some politicians and others have taken a marked interest in the brutal treatment of the victims. The STUC along with Clydeside Action on Asbestos (CAA) have initiated a campaign to bring Scotland's repellent legal restrictions on the "pain and suffering" claims of a deceased victim's family into line with England. The Scottish Law Commission will decide whether to grant 'parity' later in the year. This is a fine start. We wish them success (surely to God the Scottish Law Commission will not stand in the way of such a just request). But we also hope that the STUC and others - including politicians of EVERY party - will lend continued support to CAA in their struggle on so many other fronts, not least the fact that ONE cash settlement to ONE English victim often amounts to more than what EIGHT Scottish victims receive on the same count. And these factories might have been located in Scotland but every one was English-owned. Clydeside Action on Asbestos are still in dire need of support, financial and otherwise:
contact them at 15 St Margaret's Place, Bridgegate, G1 (041 552 8852)

Pandering to Race Hate

As far as tabloids go the Evening Times has a fair campaigning record. This makes it all the more contemptible that they should resort to gutter-press headlines over the recent killing in Pollokshields. It was tragic and it was horrible but there is no excuse whatsoever for pandering to race hate which is all you can call a newspaper that screams about the "Nationwide Hunt For Killer Asians". That kind of sick journalism degrades everybody who buys the paper, let alone works on it.

Donnelly Loses Appeal

Lally's gang of cowards have finally done in Michael Donnelly and see their procedures as "fully vindicated". All the hypocrites who took part in this disgusting victimisation, including those who stayed silent, must be hoping things'll now die down. Maybe they will but the smell won't go away. These cowards will be stuck with that for the rest of their political lives.



FLUME BOOM STRIKES CASTLEMILK

There's a bit of a 'Who hit oor Shuggy' argy-bargy in Castlemilk just now, over the swimming baths contract and the failure of the Parks & Recreation Dept. (Bernard Connolly et al) to do the business. The pool closed for 1 year 4 months then opened till September then shut again for 'further enhancement'. It'll no doubt re-open to a great fanfare before the next local elections so Lally and Devine can strut their stuff; "See me! See us!". Well The Keelie asks these professional politicians: Where were you when the flim-flam was going down the flume?

The story starts in Embra, that other capital of Scotland, where Connolly and his two wingers held senior positions in the Recreation Dept when somebody else (it's always somebody else) suggested they spend a lot of cash building a big slide at the Royal Commonwealth Pool. So they did. Then Mr Connolly moved to the Glasgow job and brought winger Bob Hulbert in April '89. The other winger, Douglas Stewart, went to boss the Recreation Dept at Hackney, London. No sooner are Bernard and Bob in position that the Castlemilk citizens get a big surprise. The baths are gonny be done up. New walls, ceiling, flerr and everything in between's to get restructured, remodeled, repainted and refurbished. Plus! A great BIG brand new SLIDE, a flume like the wan in Embra!

The plans had been in the pipeline for a while when the Scottish Office Tories "unusually invited applications for quickspend capital-only projects for funding through Urban Aid projects". We don't yet know who, but somebody, put the Town Clerk's Office up to it; application was made and funds granted to build the great BIG brand new SLIDE. £250,000! In these times of 'poll-tax starvation' that's what Glasgow District Labour Group spends the money on. If you live in the 'Milk you might say, Great! So now the sign went up. Closed March 1990 open Sept 1990. So in September they took the sign down. Only problem: the baths stayed shut. And the questions began. Councillor Larry Flanagan was to find out the score

but it seems he couldn't get straight answers. (A word of advice from The Keelie, Lallygrad doesn't like awkward questions.) Hulbert was 'too busy' to attend meetings and sent deputy Don Ferguson. But Don didn't know what answers to give.

Then oor Josie asked if it's true there's nay money left? (This is minuted.) But the problem is there was too much! £162,000 for tiled curtain walling, at least £250,000 for the BIG SLIDE, plus £490,000 for other bric-a-brac adds up to a cool £900,000. All for a good cause. The weans love a BIG SLIDE. They like Jackanory as well.

The firm of Whitewater Leisure built the flume, just like the wan in Embra. The £250,000 went straight to them. No tender, no competition, no bother. Whitewater was a subsidiary of Contemporary Leisure Ltd. and boss Connolly's two wingers, Hulbert and Doug Stewart were both directors.

Meanwhile in London Stewart got the Hackney authorities to build a flume using the firm of Whitewater to build it... Then he resigned and joined the firm! But at least the Hackney Councillors asked awkward questions BEFORE they built the damn thing: Is it safe? How much does it cost to run? How many attendants to operate it? That kind of stuff. But for all Lally's gang cared the Castlemilk weans could be zooming down the chute at 100 m.p.h and landing in Cambuslang.

Then Hulbert got fun oot and they gave him the sack. Connolly was questioned and said "It wisni me mister", so he's still in the job.

After a year the BIG SLIDE still isn't fully operational. The 'curtain call' contractors are getting the blame for damaging the chute and generally making an arse of the job. Building & Works are getting the blame for taking two months to fix two leaks on the roof. (Just as well it wisni 12 leaks.) The baths workers are getting the blame for everything else. Plus Castlemilk folk are getting the blame for



having weans that want a swim. And you, dear reader, are getting the blame for letting Doo Lally run a leaky ship with a craven crew.

But when all's said and done, you might say, the baths will be lovely wans't they're done. Is that a fact? What about the Tory Local Government Act 1988 which might force Lally's gang to put the running of the place into the greedy mitts of the private sector, affecting prices, safety, staffing levels, opening hours and aw the rest of it. Maybe the Labour Group'll just donate it a 'charitable' company, or else give it ay to Whitewater Leisure Who knows. But remember where you read it first.

Good to see the controversial "Gorbals Story" we ran in past issues has brought results and some of the old reglme have now been toppled. If other districts in the city want to fight local corruption they should pay heed. Some districts are already trying. If we can help by publicising it let us know. Make contact via The Keelie distribution network. For security reasons we're forced to go underground as far as addresses and telephones are concerned.

In a decent society Lally and the gang would be in jail. Instead of that they rule the roost. Keep fighting the bastards!

A Bygone Radical History of the T.U.C.

On 3rd September 1787, more than two hundred years ago, six Calton weavers were brutally slain when the military opened fire on a peaceful demonstration marching through the streets at the east end of the Gallowgate. Although they had removed some webs from their looms their only 'crime' was to protest the vicious wage cuts imposed on them by the mill owners. The order to use the military was issued by the Lord Provost and the Magistrates who later rewarded Colonel Kellet, officer in charge of the 39th Regiment, with the Freedom of the City; the soldiers of the 39th and 56th Regiments each received a pair of shoes and stockings from city funds.

On 11th October 1875 the National Trades Union Congress (as the TUC was then known) met in the South Side Assembly rooms in Crown Street. John Battersby was elected

chairman and James Wilkie of the Glasgow Trades Council was elected secretary. The first national conference of trade unionists had been convened by the Glasgow Trades Council and held in London during the last two days in May and the first days of June 1864 to discuss the anti-trades union legislation that remained on the statute book even after the repeal of the 1824 Combination Laws. One of the Glasgow delegates was miner Alexander MacDonald who addressed the meeting.

The TUC annual conference again came to Glasgow in 1919 and as with earlier gatherings high on the agenda was the fundamental right of workers to form trade unions and to end the employers use of the courts and parliament to continue their untrammelled exploitation of the labouring classes.

Glasgow has a long and proud history in the struggle to build the trade union movement in Scotland. But it is difficult to square this record with the Glasgow District Labour Council's campaign to sell the city to tourists, with a conference centre that attracts the CBI and TUC in turn. They name Glasgow 'Merchant City' which is nothing short of disgraceful. Surely the Labour Councillors are aware that these 'merchants' made their colossal fortunes on the backs of thousands of slaves forced to work on tobacco, cotton and sugar plantations? The names of Glassford, Finlay and Colquhoun appear in most archives held in American Museums and Universities devoted to the history of slavery in the western hemisphere. How can the labour movement even associate itself with such people, let alone glorify them, in the way the District Labour Council does?

Perhaps this TUC conference in Glasgow will take some heed of the past and reaffirm the need for a peaceful way forward to a better society, a socialist society. Despite events in Russia and elsewhere the pioneers who struggled and fought so hard to establish a working class movement were not wrong. We cannot trust our future to the multi-nationals or 'benevolent' market forces. That means mass unemployment and war, or preparation for war; it means massive cuts in social services, a two-tier health service and a grossly inadequate education for our young. These policies have started already. As usual the working class are forced to bear the full brunt of the slump caused by those very market forces we are now asked to accept.

A PECULIAR STRANGER ON GLASGOW GREEN

I came to Glasgow Green one day
in the middle of the night,
and when I came to Nelson's stalk
I spied the strangest sight -
a big tall guy a-strutting there,
and how his eyes did shine
as he repeated o'er and o'er
"This Glasgow Green in MINE!
I own each tree, each blade of grass,
I own the People's Palace,
And should you dare dispute me, sir,
You'll earn my deepest malice.
I own the fields at Flesher's Haugh,
I own the birds and bees
And should a poor old tramp sleep here,
I own his very fleas.
Now should you dare to contradict,"
(A scowl spread down his face),
"I'll pursue and punish you
And hound you in disgrace!
For I have toadies all around
Silenced with cash and power,
Well-trained to rush and rescue me
At any evil hour."
I looked at this strange man again,
So arrogant and odd,
And then to humour him I said -
Why, sir, you must be God."
The smuggest smile spread o'er his face
Of pleasure, pride and mirth;
He shook his head "Not God", he said,
"But the next best thing on earth!"
I sneaked away, but then next day,
I phoned sweet Sister Sally,
"I've found a man needs his brains
scanned,
He thinks he's PATRICK LALLY!"

Freddy Anderson

IT'S A MAN'S LIFE

Nowhere could I get any work so I
signed on the dotted line peacetime -
life being some awful mistake that frowns
on the murdering of men now all
dolloped up I am dead smart and real fine
up to my eyes in that old bullshit but a
professional al capone of the state my
thoughts no longer my own look this is
how you rape and kill stand erect at
ease attention and so here I now am in
sunny

ulster to be sure it's no racist joke like
the one about the nun and the holy
father and a sick mick out on strike with
this pick while every day it's the IRA
from eniskillen to dear antrim town
fenians from bangor to donegal bay
black-and-tans on the emerald green
but then

one joyless night in a sudden blaze of
light hate distorting my face did I not get
a bullet right into my heart and blood
shot all over the place so a

volley was fired across my grave a
token from my country and queen but
no angelus bell did toll that's the rub and
not the wearing o' the green for 'twas it
not better to die 'neath an irish sky than
at port darwin or old stanley town slain
by a

black flash from the end of a gun

Jack Withers

Glaswegians have always been to the fore
in the fight to abolish nuclear bases on the
Clyde. Despite the rheumatic sabre-rattling
of retired military officers bleating for a
campaign to save Scottish regiments these
same Glaswegians know full well that of
all the thousands of Scottish soldiers who
made the supreme sacrifice NOT ONE
died defending Scotland on Scottish soil.
But thousands did die, abroad, on continent
after continent, in the name of the British
Empire. While Glasgow's labouring and
working classes lived in the most disease-
ridden, rat-infested hovels in Europe the
ruling class were taking their sons and
daughters to lay down their lives in India,
Turkey, Africa and the Middle East,
furthering the cause of capitalism.