

BUILDING WORKERS' SPECIAL

THE LUMP MUST GO

BUILDING WORKERS face the biggest offensive ever. The employers are hell bent on driving militant trade unionism out of the construction industry.

The reason is simple. Last year's dispute scared the life out of them. You could hear the ice rattling in their whisky glasses as their hands shook with terror from one end of the country to the other.

Undoubtedly many an employer sought solace Lord Lambton-style.

The prospect of 300,000 builders organised and prepared to fight to win a secure and decent standard of living was one the employers were not prepared to accept. They were afraid to take on building workers all together after the dispute, so it was done site-by-site.

They were well aware that after a long and hard dispute building workers were tired. The counter-attack was made mainly by cutting back the increase on the bonus, so that on most sites take-home pay was hardly different than before the dispute.

VITAL

Nonetheless the strike gained much for the first time in this industry. Perhaps the biggest gain was that builders everywhere know we can mount a national campaign and next time we can win.

The central strategy in the employers' offensive is the use of the lump. We must insist that the lump must be bought to an end and that we organise to do the job.

It is a vital task. And not just for the building worker whose organisation the lump wrecks, whose potential allies against the employers are



reduced to chattels and slaves.

The lump kills and the lump maims and the lump subjects people in a most brutal fashion. But it also ensures that the cheapskate buildings erected for profit and for working people to live in or use are jerry-built and dangerous.

Since the national strike the employers have devoted enormous energies to ensuring that local authorities do not ban the lump on public housing contracts. They are now well on the way to success.

Last June the London Boroughs Association—the umbrella organisation of all the councils—decided to prevent contractors from using the

lump and other various sub-contracting devices on council contracts. 31 London boroughs followed their lead.

The employers then organised a boycott through the National Federation of Building Trades Employers, taking advantage of the construction boom engineered by their friends in the Tory government. They refused to tender for jobs or lodged grossly inflated tenders.

ROTTEN

On 21 March the London Boroughs Association altered its policy. Since then council after council has fallen back into line and opened its jobs up to the lump. On May Day the staunchly Labour Islington Council collapsed.

It is not by chance that the industry is rotten with the lump. It was introduced at a time when shop stewards' committees and the union were trying to make a dent in the industry. It was introduced for one reason: to prevent trade union organisation by splitting the work force. That is why employers are prepared to pay up to £15 a day for brickies and yet will not concede to a £30 basic wage for a 35-hour week.

The effort the employers are putting into this bid to break union organisation can be seen from the cash they are now offering lump workers. £120 a week has been mentioned in London for bricklayers. And in Birmingham £70 and £80 a week is offered with a guaranteed £50 for 40 hours regardless of bad weather.

This onslaught is not confined to London and Birmingham. Areas that have had little interference from the lump now face major problems. Its

growth can be seen from the number of 'tax exemption' certificates applied for since the 'anti-lump' legislation. The official figure is a staggering 480,000.

But no amount of bemoaning will make the lump go away. A campaign must be mounted. A campaign that does not consist of empty words but has some teeth. And it must set out to win the lads on the lump towards organisation under the banner of Direct Employment.

If the employers succeed in driving out trade union organisation then the high premiums now being paid to lump workers will be slashed. It will then be too late to fight back. And without the union there will not be an organisation capable of winning even the basic demands.

VARIETY

The lump must be fought and it must be fought now. But we cannot expect George Smith, UCATT general secretary, to begin such a fight. He doesn't want to. It would only threaten his cosy relationship with the building employers' federation. His attitude to the lump is 'Perhaps we can't fight the lump and should organise lump workers.'

Such an attitude runs away from the problems of the industry. The lump must go whether it be the cash-in-hand variety or the more respectable 'labour-only'. While the lump exists demands for 100 per cent trade unionism, better conditions and higher wages cannot be won.

THE lump, victimisation, blacklisting are the employers' main weapons. They are aided and abetted in their villainy by the state and the police



Against the blacklist

WITH the fight against the lump, there must be determination by officials and the lads on the sites over the issue of victimisation and the blacklist.

Unless a firm stand is made by the union, there is little to give lads on unorganised sites the courage to stand up and take on the job of steward if the only prospect is your cards in your back pocket and little prospect of another job because of the blacklist.

The employers' blacklist must now be about as thick as the Encyclopedia Britannica.

and courts. The Shrewsbury building workers facing conspiracy charges under an obsolete law, the South Birmingham building workers arrested in mid-April and the new picketing laws about to be announced show quite clearly that the building trade employers do not operate on their own.

To resist them we must organise on a national basis. However strong our region is, if left in isolation, it will crack.

CAMPAIGN

As has been shown in Birmingham, we need to strengthen the voice of the rank and file workers. Shop stewards' committees, such as exist in Birmingham and Liverpool, with official backing from the union but maintaining their independence, are certainly a step in the right direction.

The continuing and enlarging of the present campaign against the lump and labour-only must be given full support. If we are to take on the employers, then what better way than by closing down a major firm, hitting its sites up and down the country, and keeping them closed until it agrees to get rid of the lump and the blacklist. Then other major contractors would think twice about using lump labour on their sites.

But before this can be done, regions that have not yet joined the campaign should adopt similar tactics to those used in London and Birmingham.

For building workers the message is loud and clear. Either fight the lump and beat it or be destroyed by it.

Time to fight for a new deal £40 for a 35-hour week

THE fight against the lump must be coupled with the ending of the present two-year agreement and a new claim on the basis of £40 for 35 hours.

Ask any lump worker why he stays on the lump and his reply will be quite simple. Cash. An increase on the basis of £14 would mean a real increase of £25 to £30 when this increase is coupled to existing bonus schemes.

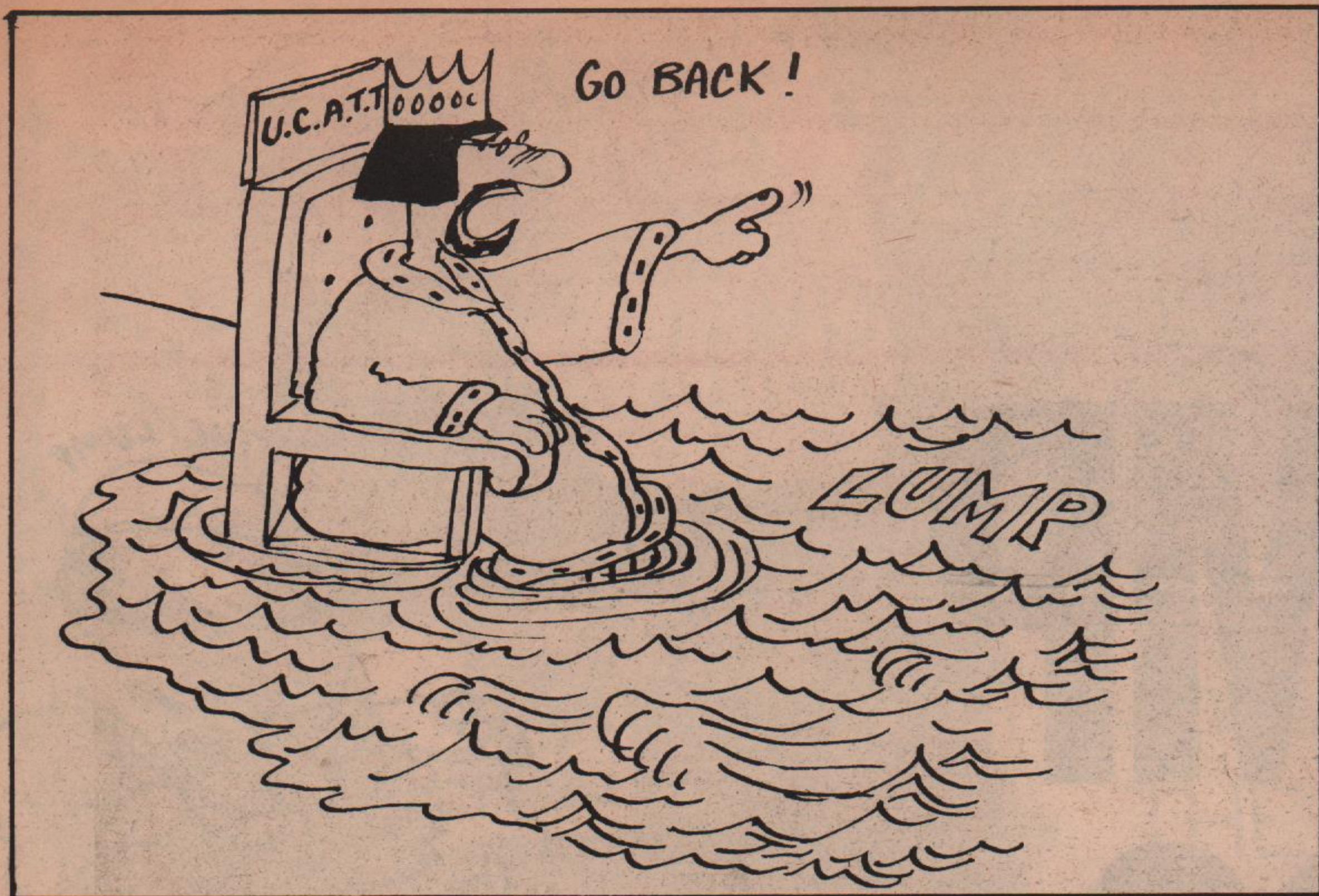
When we begin to talk in terms of wages like that, lump workers will see the trade union as a real alternative to the sorry conditions on the lump.

There is also another reason for ending the present agreement. Written into the agreement is the employers' hobbyhorse for the past 10 years. Grading.

Grading can only hamper the already hard task of trade union organisation on the sites. It plays worker off against worker and splits workers into even smaller groups. The employers also aim to introduce 'flexibility'—in other words trades would almost disappear and we would be left with general craftsmen of varying grades.

With poor attendances at union branches, if the idea of grading is put forward, it would quite likely go through. Particularly as such a move would be covered by long articles and letters from George Smith extolling the virtues of grading.

Graded workers make finer profits for lower wages.



by a Liverpool building worker

MOST trade unionists in the building industry are only too aware of the threat posed to them by labour-only sub-contracting the lump. This paper, the Building Workers Charter, Viewpoint and no doubt many others have carried detailed articles on how the lump destroys site organisation and so depresses wages and erodes conditions.

Mounting accident figures, the slashing of training schemes, declining trade union membership, blacklists and -of course-record company profits all testify that the lump is on the increase.

Many agree that the present situation on the sites is intolerable, and that something must be done. But what?

Since last summer's 12-week strike, the unions have been involved in secret talks with both the employers and the government, and both sets of talks have hinged around some sort of deal on the lump.

At the beginning of April, the TUC Construction Committee—consisting of George Smith and Glyn Lloyd of UCATT, Jack Jones of the Transport Union, Harry Wareham of the Asphalt Workers and Charles Lovall of the Plumbers—met the government and put forward a memorandum on labour relations in the industry. The TUC made three major proposals. These were:

A public inquiry to be set up to look at the problems of casual labour.

The appointment of a 'Construction Industry Manpower Board'.

A register of employers and workers which would be administered by the Manpower Board.

The memo went on to say that registration would be an 'essential precondition' of moving toward de-casualisation, and that workers would be registered according to skill.

It appears the TUC wasn't so interested in getting rid of the lump as replacing it with—in their own words—something more 'effective'. Their report emphasised that the 'electrical contracting and plumbing industries joint approach is extremely effective...'

Construction News summed up the situation clearly: 'The whole system [of labour-only sub-contracting] undermines the proper regulation of employment in which the trade unions have an essential part to play. It leaves them less able to deal with disruptive forces which work more effectively in an ill-regulated climate of unemployment.'

COURTING

'Some industries have found effective answers to the problem. One such is electrical contracting, where tight discipline is imposed over employment by means of grading schemes and job allocation... it is good to learn that the TUC are now taking such schemes seriously.'

Over the past year the leaders of the building unions in particular, and the TUC in general, have been embarrassed by the rank and file of the labour movement too many times. The trade union leaders now wish to proceed unhindered with courting the government and the employers and so need to shackle their members even more firmly.

In the fight against the lump, rank and file building workers have exposed the pathetic gestures of George Smith, Jack Jones and company. But the union leaders hope to steal back the initiative by dealing with the lump while at the same time getting stricter control over rank-and-file militants such as the Charter group.

A register like that of the Joint Industry Board in electrical contracting would formally restrict the lump - though in practice it would still exist: after all, the lump still exists in electrical contracting. This would also centralise all effective authority in the hands of the union executives. It seems that Frank Chapple's vicious methods are rubbing off on the rest of them.

LUMP IT OR LEAVE IT

Further, in talks with the unions at the National Joint Council, the employers' federation indicated that it is prepared to accept some sort of deal similar to that outlined by the TUC. It is true that the federation would have difficulty convincing its own membership, who are mainly small-time operators, to accept any legally binding agreement but they are prepared to sign another meaningless 'declaration of intent' on the lump if only the unions would crack down on the rank and file.

Already the idea of a register covering the whole industry has been diluted to a partial one, which would cover only building contracts in the public sector.

But the retreat only starts there. The TUC are willing to provide loopholes even for lumpers in the public sector. It has been suggested that public contracts should specify that 60 per cent of the labour should be employed by the main contractors and specialist sub-contractors. One is forced to ask who will make up the other 40 per cent? The house-building sector of the industry would be left entirely free for lumpers to operate.

PRIORITY

Clearly the union leaders agree with the employers that the lump should be regulated—and made respectable. The TUC-inspired deal can offer no comfort to workers on the sites.

Recently a great deal of publicity has been given to Eric Heffer's proposals for prohibiting the lump. His Labour-only Sub-contracting Bill got more votes for than against in its second reading in parliament. But so high was its priority for the government that it was designated a '10-minute Bill' and automatically fell. So much for democracy!

Heffer's Bill proposed a complete register of 'persons undertaking work in the construction industry', and a registrar appointed by the government. Local panels of three people—a trade union representative, an em-

ployers' representative, and a 'neutral'—would verify all claims for tax exemption made by those involved in 'construction operations solely concerned with minor repair or decoration of private dwellings or other domestic accommodation.'

Finally, 'a person who is aggrieved by a decision of the registrar... may appeal to a county court and on any such appeal the county court may make such order in the matter as it thinks fit.'

While Eric Heffer's suggested register is much more comprehensive than the TUC's, his illusions about Tory justice must leave many speechless. His Bill proposes that the Secretary of State should have the sole power to appoint the registrar—the same Secretary of State who ordered an inquiry into picketing during the building workers' strike last year, the man responsible for forming the special police picket-busting squad now actively engaged in preserving the lump in London, Birmingham and Merseyside.

Does Heffer seriously believe that the same courts which are at present trying 26 building workers for closing down lump sites, will stand on their heads and deal with lumpers? It is not certain if the class struggle exists in parliament, but it certainly exists in the courts.

While being critical of Heffer's Bill, it was correct that many building workers from the sites should come out for the day to show their contempt for the lump. So it was sad to see that Heffer himself opposed any unofficial stoppages, and asked the unions to send delegations and not contingents. If Heffer is genuine he must realise that only mass action from trade unionists on the sites will smash the lump.

The action being organised by the trade unionists in the Midlands offers the only real hope of 100 per cent trade unionism on all sites throughout the country. Only this way will building workers ensure that they have an effective voice in their industry.

Scab of the year

LEON ALTEMOSE, the Philadelphia contractor, was named as 'US Construction Man of the Year' last February by the American journal Engineering News Record.



LEFT: Leon Altemose, union-buster

RIGHT: Building workers invade the Valley Forge lump site in Pennsylvania

Altemose received the award for 'courageously exercising his right to work as an open shop general contractor despite organised physical violence and its continuing threat,' says the News Record.

Altemose is a union-breaking firm in classic style. He pays only half the union rate, employs non-union labour in open shop, operates a 50-hour week when a 35-hour week is the trade union agreement and to 'faithful servants' guarantees 'continuity of work'. With such outfits as these this means, quite clearly, Scab now—pay later.

Confrontation began when Altemose received the 15 million dollar contract to develop the Valley Forge Plaza in Pennsylvania. This contract carried with it a franchise from the World Wide Sheraton Hotel group.

Altemose, backed by the banks and an influential client, unnamed, moved into the big time. But it was obvious that there would be a conflict with the powerful trade unions in the area that do not recognise the open shop.

Altemose knew this and so did his backers. With plenty of capital behind him and the promise of further rich contracts, Altemose was prepared to be the tool in a legal farce on the 'legal rights' of picketing.

When Altemose moved on to the site he was visited by the Philadelphia building and construction trades council (AFL-CIO)

at his 20-sided office. He refused to sign a closed shop policy and employ his workers at the agreed basic trade union rates.

The unions' objections to Altemose were solely that they wanted to remedy 'the threats to the preservation of our wage and benefits standard,' their legal adviser said in a letter to Altemose.

On 4 June last year a mass picket descended on the site and burned it to the ground. No arrests were made.

Banned

The county courts replied with an injunction barring the unions 'from picketing within a mile of the Altemose job sites' and this was extended to cover his office. It also forbade 'interference with any deliveries to his sites,' and the unions were 'forbidden to seize or damage the property of the company, its sub-contractors, its officers, supervisors and employees.' The protection was complete with the one mile picketing ban to include 'sites and offices which might be concerned in any other conflict.'

The morning after the injunction was issued pickets demonstrated against it outside Altemose's office. The pickets were met by an armed guard of local and state police. The local sheriff read out the injunction, then ordered the police to clear the area. 129 pickets were arrested.

123 of the 129 men were fined 100 dollars and when they came to court a mass demonstration of 10,000 building workers was again met with an armed guard.

The unions appealed to the state courts to quash the injunction and the convictions. The grounds of appeal were that the injunction infringed the con-

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The unions' re 'threat to area wa standards' is crucial as under American argued that action labour disputes sho the National La Board and the state jurisdiction. But successfully it ha established that the were in fact thos dispute.

Once again, the f in the decision. Supreme Court in after hearing the un 6 September last ye

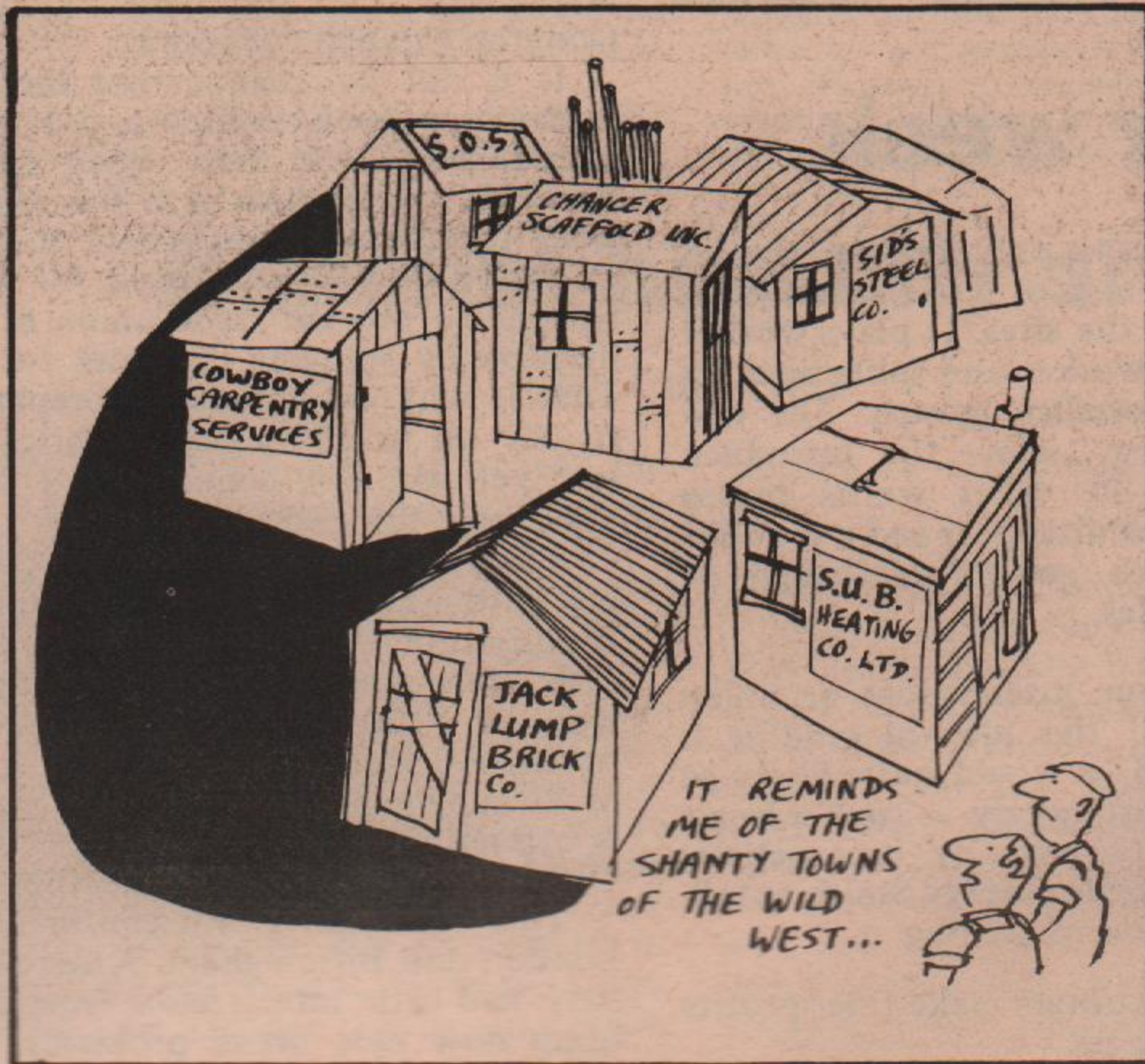
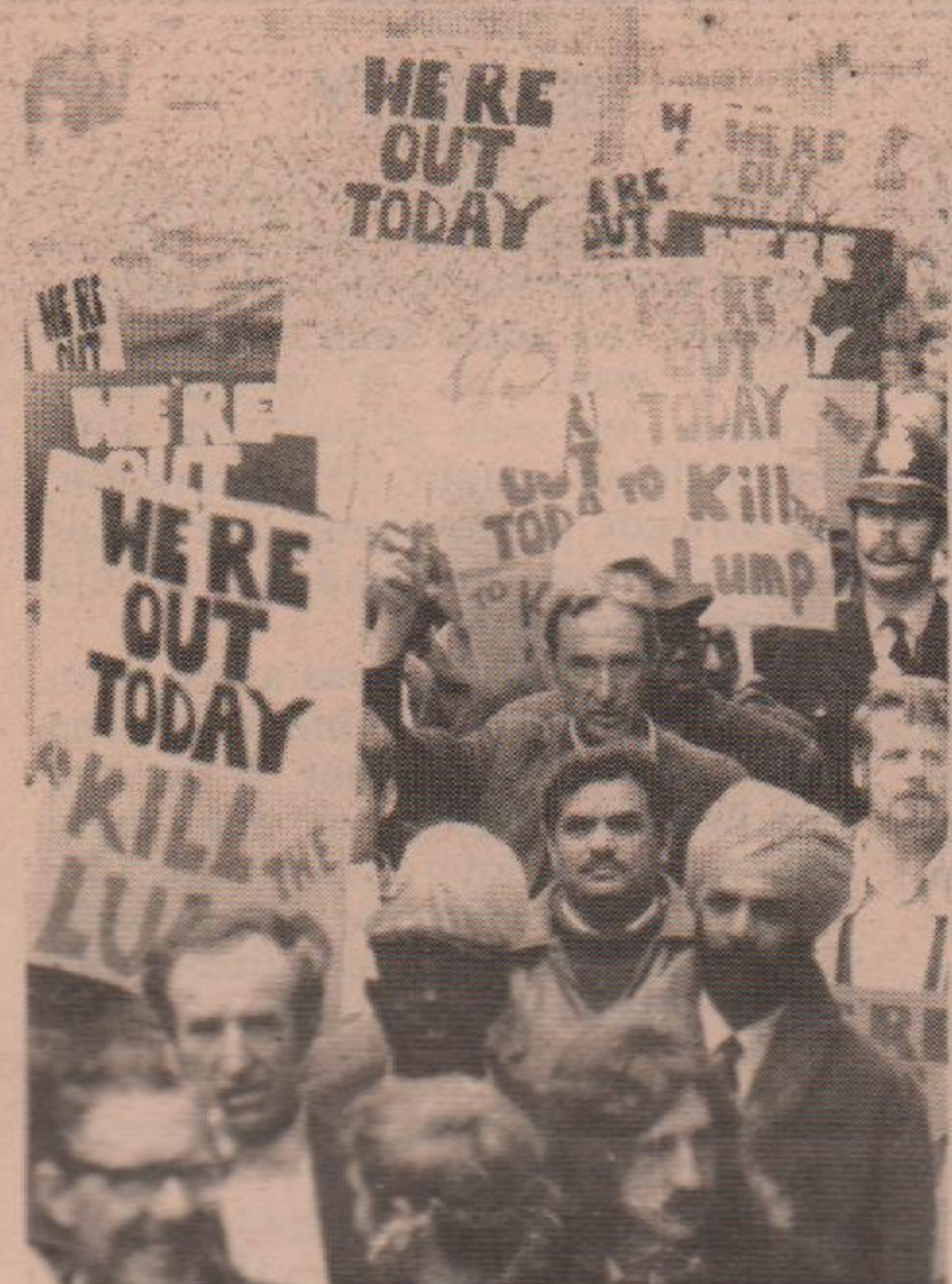
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such conduct, the activities complained of would constitute unfair labour practices (or protected activities) over which the National Labor Relations Board would have exclusive jurisdiction.

So the Supreme Court rubber-stamped the lower court's ban on picketing.

The argument that prohibition of peaceful as well as violent picketing was a violation of constitutional rights was also resisted, citing again the US Supreme Court saying that 'picketing involves elements of both speech and conduct... Because of this intermingling of protected and unprotected elements, picketing can be subjected to control that would not be constitutionally permissible in the case of pure speech.'

Law suit

The only change the court made to the lower court's order was that the one-mile ban on picketing was reduced to 200 yards.

The unions then took their case to the US Supreme Court, but it refused to hear the appeal.

Altemose, having set a precedent on picketing, now seeks to make the injunction permanent. At the same time he is starting a law suit against the Building and Construction Trades Council.

This action is supported by the open shop contractors' trade association, Associated Builders and Contractors Incorporated, of Maryland, and the US Chamber of Commerce. The principal allegation is that there was an illegal conspiracy.

The suit in the US courts will take a long time and cost a great deal of money.

No doubt Altemose will collect handsomely on the franchise offered him for his faithful services rendered.

In Britain, with the memory of the miners' strike and the flying pickets used so effectively, and later the builders' strike of 1972, the employers and the government will have taken more than a passing interest in the Altemose case.

In Britain, several building workers are charged with 'conspiracy' at Shrewsbury.

One thing is certain—the courts

here will find in favour of the employers, just as in the US courts. The police can be relied upon to carry out those decisions, in their usual blatant anti-worker manner, here as in the US.

The arrest six months after the building workers' dispute of the Shrewsbury building workers under an obsolete law, the arrests of the five Birmingham workers, all activists during the strike, show quite clearly that reports on militants by employers find their way to those that carry out the law. And, more important, they are acted upon.

With new laws soon to come on picketing, it is clear that the right to picket will soon mean only a right to be imprisoned.

Already the Industrial Relations Act, which seeks to destroy the hard-won rights of trade unions and our basic right to withdraw our labour, is on the statute books. The court cases of the Shrewsbury and Birmingham building workers will be used by the government to bring in more repressive anti-working class laws on the question of the right to picket.

Of course we have the right to picket. Of course we have the right to withdraw our labour. We, as the majority of the population, the working class, did not want or make the Industrial Relations Act, it was forced on us, just as the 'freeze' was. That is why the building workers now facing heavy

sentences must be supported by the entire trade union movement.

Altemose and his kind do not only serve their own interests but more often serve the purposes of those who run our society. When the employers scream about violence on the picket line by a group of workers fighting to maintain a standard of living, or fighting for their livelihoods, they close their eyes to the organised violence they themselves carry out every day of the week.

We have to fight for decent safety measures on sites to protect our lives. Every day a building worker is killed. Every year we stand a 1 in 18 chance of being off work injured for more than three days. The chance of death is 1 in 40 (official figures).

What happened in America can happen here. There are dozens of 'subbies' that would be only too pleased to be used as a 'test case', to be put up and backed up financially by the employers to change the law. And with such characters as Peter Walker, once of Slater Walker, Geoffrey Rippon, one-time chairman of Cubitt, and many other building employers in the government it is more than likely they could succeed.

Only the rank and file trade unionists have the power to prevent such changes. Be prepared to fight. It's our rights they are trying to destroy.



Building workers march in Shrewsbury in solidarity with the 26 accused pickets

Operation Smash Trade Unionism

MANY people think the building strike ended last September. The building employers certainly wouldn't agree. For them, the new wage agreement was the signal for the big one. They call it Operation Smash Trade Unionism.

They set about spreading the lump—in new guises—even further, so that their unique variety of cancer would wreck the possibility of site organisation in as many places as possible.

Not surprisingly, they looked to their pals in the Tory government for a little help. And they got it.

The subject of their concern was the flying picket. For during the strike the flying pickets had shown that even the lump-riddled sites could be halted and lump workers recruited to the union by the dozen. The employers were determined to make picketing much more difficult and to intimidate and frighten workers, whose only weapon in such a disorganised industry is the picket.

Right at the beginning of the strike, the National Federation of Building Trades Employers told its members to send in details of violent incidents. How they knew in advance there were going to be violent incidents is unknown.

When the picketing started to get really effective, the federation got in touch with its placemen in parliament and lobbied Tory ministers. Magically the police started arresting peaceful pickets.

But the employers didn't leave it there. McAlpines called the police. The police immediately launched a massive criminal investigation with 20 officers working full-time on the so-called case.

Go-ahead

But before any arrests were made, the employers put a few more sticks in the fire. They lobbied Tory ministers and got an agreement that the law on pickets would be much more ruthlessly enforced. They published their fake 'dossier' on 'violence and intimidation' in the strike, as a public relations ploy.

One month after the dossier came out, the police sent the papers on the Shrewsbury pickets to the government law and order department, the Director of Public Prosecutions. His mind was, as usual, already made up for him and he gave the go-ahead for a massive prosecution of the building workers on charges of criminal damage, intimidation and demanding money with menaces. The use of conspiracy charges against some of the men was also agreed.

This is the background to one of the most serious legal attacks on trade unionism this century. With the Industrial Relations Act buried by the struggles of workers over the past 18 months, the employers have changed tack to try to frame pickets on criminal charges and by using the law of conspiracy.

Conspiracy is defined as an agreement by two or more people to carry out an unlawful act, or to carry out a lawful act by unlawful means. It has as many permutations as the football pools and requires the prosecution to put forward little or no evidence. And the possible sentence is unlimited.

Clearly the building employers have persuaded the government to throw the book at the Shrewsbury pickets, and to do this, the government has carefully chosen its ground.

Collapse

The criminal and conspiracy charges are designed to smear the building workers and to cut away their support. The official unions, both UCATT and TGWU, have caved in at the earliest possible opportunity and are refusing even the slightest support.

It was probably this collapse that decided the employers and the police to start off another conspiracy prosecution against building workers—the five Birmingham men, who with three television cameramen, are charged with conspiring to trespass in lump labour bureau SOS's Birmingham office. They occupied the place in a peaceful demonstration against the lump.

Unlike the jailing of the Pentonville Five dockers, the Shrewsbury and Birmingham cases will not come to a head quickly. Part of the government's and employers' plan is to draw the prosecution out.

It is vital that the most effective solidarity movement is built with the men. If it is not, then the law will inflict harsh punishment on them for the crime of being trade unionists.

This is possibly the most hypocritical anti-working class prosecution for many years. No employers are more lawless and violent than in the building industry, with rickety, illegal scaffolds, with conspiracies of the Poulson kind to raid public funds, and with one man killed on sites every working day. The Shrewsbury and Birmingham men are being brought to trial so that these vile parasites can continue their regime of robbery and violence with less opposition from those they would enslave.

ING HERE ...



UCATT members picketing the Laing's Livery Street site in Birmingham—see report below.

MONSTER ON THE SITES

by Ian Collins (TGWU, Bristol)

Reports from the regions

BRISTOL:—A leading local steward described the local situation to a tee the other day. 'It's like a bloody great swamp with a monster guarding it. There's one way out but the people who know it just hide.'

The monster is the lump, the way out is site organisation, the people who know are the union officials who hold back from even just helping the isolated militants trying to fight it.

The seriousness of the situation is seen in two sites, both McAlpines', within 300 yards of each other. One is finishing up and was organised, the other, just starting, is 'subbed out' from the ground work to the chippies. As more and more major projects draw to a close this pattern is being repeated all over town.

What about the Building Workers Charter? The answer is obvious to the militants—a concerted campaign on the sites. Unfortunately the officials seem to think

otherwise. On May Day, workers on the Parkway, Bristol's urban motorway, stopped work to join the demonstrations against the Tories and their system in the building industry, the lump, and marched behind the local Charter banner.

There should have been more—but the letters sent by UCATT telling members of the one-day official stoppage went to the agents! They, unfortunately, did not play the game, and the sites worked as usual.

But with the lump spreading, the second half of the agreement coming up, the loss in wages due to inflation, and the trial of the Shrewsbury pickets threatening every union member, the resolve to fight and win still exists.

Transport union branches are pushing for a mobilisation to support the lads accused at Shrewsbury. This must be the start of a campaign to rid Bristol of the lump, the cancer that threatens every building worker.

'Big money on the lump' is a myth

BIRMINGHAM:—Conditions on many sites are primitive. Toilets, canteens and drying rooms are a luxury and where they exist they are not kept clean. Even the totters horse gets his stable cleaned but if we demand a clean shanty we are mindless, militant extremists!

The lump acts in these circumstances as a union-bashing operation for the employers, dividing the men and maintaining low pay and poor conditions. We have found in Birmingham that the claim that lump workers are making big money is largely a myth. Most men get £4 and £5 per day.

Lump operations such as the SOS bureau pay varying rates. The rate depends on the assessment of the site agent. What happens of course is that the men will

demand of the agent the higher rate. He then tells them that to get the higher rate they must keep their heads down and their arses up. The rate paid can vary from week to week or from day to day.

The lump system offers the worker no holiday, no pay during bad weather—unless he is still prepared to work—instant dismissal and no insurance in an industry with the worst safety record, far worse than the mines. There is a death every day on the sites. A future on the lump awaits every worker if the trend continues. That it must be fought is easier said than done.

Though we must demand that the next Labour Government bans the lump, militants must be clear that this is far from going to solve our problems. As Ken Barlow has correctly stated only a policy of confrontation with employers using the lump can push the movement forward.

This means that a campaign must be mounted in every region similar to that started here in the Midlands. This involves sending stewards to see men on jobs where the lump exists and then trying to persuade them to come out on strike for direct employment. This has involved placing pickets on the jobs and talking to the men for long periods over the loud hailer.

Steward

When the men have come out for direct employment we have done our best to get collections from them on a weekly basis of the organised jobs. This policy has so far been successful on four jobs. We are at the moment trying to crack a tougher nut.

We put a picket on Laing's Livery Street job. Most of the men left the site, had a meeting in a nearby pub, joined the union and elected Eddie Elliot, the crane driver, as shop steward.

The men had good reason to feel bitter with their employers. They were

on the basic rate with bonus rarely earned, no canteen. You must work in the rain. There is no qualified scaffolder on the job and the scaffolding looks very dangerous. The subbie said he would be safety-officer—he got his answer.

Since the dispute started the subbie has protested that he is bona-fide. This may be so but the shop stewards committee is opposed to bona-fide subcontracting in the major trades. After all bona-fide is just a more respectable form of the lump.

The shop stewards committee has been aided by the support of the officials. That has had a tremendous effect on the movement. We must support our officials. But if they cave in due to pressure from Smith we must ensure that the movement is not halted by the lack of their support.

Militants must adopt this position of demanding official support for their struggles but must not destroy our movement by not moving if the officials do not. We need to combat the lump now while we still have unionised jobs and militants are on the right side of the gate.

Blackist hits city site

by Tony Price

MANCHESTER has not escaped the massive increase in the lump taking place nationally.

Laing's Moss Side centre redevelopment in Manchester has been advertising for fixers, brickies and joiners for months. The site is 100 per cent organised with no lump. At the £30 million Taylor Woodrow Market Street development, where the vicious application of the blacklist has made the shortage worse, they are trying to fill the gap by ferrying in workers from Leeds. In recent weeks they have stepped up the lump while

refusing to start local men on the cards.

Militants who want to fight the lump have raised the question in the Manchester Building Workers Forum, the local Charter group. At a meeting on 18 April 'action against the lump' appeared on the agenda. After a report that emphasised the importance of support for Heffer's bill, the convenor from Laing's Moss Side said that while support for Heffer's bill was necessary, an intensive campaign at district level was needed.

THE MEN WHO HOLD US ALL TO RANSOM

'THEY'RE holding the country to ransom!' is an accusation levelled time and time again against workers in struggle. The recent scandals involving Maudling, Lonrho, the Lambton-Jellicoe affairs, have shown who is really making off with the spoils—those who never cease their hypocritical preaching about the need for the workers to pull in their belts 'for the good of the country'.

It is too little recognised that the Poulson affair is not just about high living and foreign holidays for civic dignitaries. They got those things so that big construction firms would get certain contracts. They got those things because the raiders were only too willing to give a few crumbs (or cases of champagne) in return for much bigger prizes—multi-million pound housing projects paid for by you and me.

It would be foolish of anyone to think even for a moment that the departure of one government minister or even several will make any difference.

Maudling, Poulson's business acquaintance, has gone.

Lambton, who has returned to a normal life of luxury on his estate sweated out of generations of Durham coalminers, has gone.

Jellicoe will just take up his little number in the family shipping company—British and Commonwealth Shipping—which is renowned for paying Indian seamen £5 for a 60 to 80-hour week.

They leave behind them men perfectly well equipped to carry on the robbery.

REFUSAL

Sir Keith Joseph for example, who as Minister of Health, rubbed the hospital workers' noses in it. He is a former chairman and still a substantial shareholder in Bovis, one of Britain's big building companies. Bovis had a long and fruitful relationship with Poulson and T Dan Smith, the man who was found not guilty of bribing a man who was found guilty of accepting Smith's bribes.

Or Geoffrey Rippon, a former director of Cubbitts and a few other big firms too. Rippon is boss of the Department of the Environment, which co-ordinates vast areas of public sector building. Rippon has more shares in Cubbitts now than he had when he was a director of the firm.

He recently refused to meet Hammersmith Trades Council's request for a public inquiry into the World's End council housing project. Cubbitts had been trying to blackmail the council to give them an extra £1 million to finish the job, which is already years behind.

The impartial Mr Rippon did not think this scandal merited a public inquiry. Or perhaps he felt Cubbitts and himself could not afford one. After all, what would have happened to the price of his shares?

And shares are what government and business is all about. Bigger ones for the 7 per cent of the population who own 85 per cent of the wealth. Smaller ones for the people who actually produce it—building workers, miners, dockers, nurses, hospital workers and carworkers—the working class.

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