

RADICAL PAISLEY

Number 4

April 2023

CELEBRATE PAISLEY'S

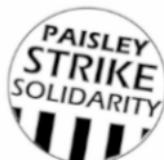
MAY DAY

WORKERS RIGHTS ★ ANTI-RACISM

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HIGH ST

ASSEMBLE
AT TOP OF
NEW ST
FOR
MARCH

SPEECHES ★ MUSIC
POETRY ★ THEATRE



RESISTANCE IS FERTILE

THERE'S A DEAD MAN LYING IN THERE.

4TH JUNE, 1964. 6.40AM. A summer morning. Friday. Payday. Shift finished. Weekend ahead. Frank McPake goes through the Gatehouse at Brown and Polson's Royal Starch Works, Falside Road, Paisley.

He hears a hissing sound. He sees a blaze rising from a top window. He sees smoke and flames. He stares, sees, hears a deafening explosion. Glass fragments fly everywhere. Out of that staggers, stumbles workmate Tom Ramsay: the skin hanging off his arms, and his face a mass of blood.



Aftermath of the disaster at Brown and Polson's

Tom cries out: "**There's a dead man lying in there.**" There were **5** dead men lying there. The local Bobby says: "I have seen terrible scenes during the war, but never anything like this."

The dead workers were:

- John Harrigan, 20. Braids Road, married, 1yr. baby
- Hugh Watson, 19. Glenburn, married, one child
- Ian Ferguson, 23. Camphill, married. Children: 3 months, 2 yrs.
- Andrew Houston, 21. Stockholm Crescent
- James McLean, 26. Howard Street

Workers' Memorial Day
Renfrewshire House
28th April 12pm

The **Fatal Accident Enquiry**: the cause "...not being established, although it was probably caused by dust being ignited from a fan." The **5** deaths were deemed accidental.

This local disaster links us all to the International Workers Memorial Day observances. Join us in reflection at the Council gardens in Paisley to remember all who lost their lives at work or on duty:
12 noon April 28th.

Thanks to Renfrewshire Heritage.

Your questions on the strikes answered

WHAT DOES STRIKING ACHIEVE?

IN WORKING CLASS HISTORY, STRIKE ACTION HAS PAVED THE WAY to things like the end of child exploitation, a two-day weekend, limits on working hours, rights to a break, safety at work, fair pay, holiday entitlement and much more. There's lots to be said about all of that but most importantly, we'd have none of it without our collective power and ability to take strike action.

Striking is described as the fight to achieve better pay and conditions. But it's often a fight to just maintain pay and conditions that are under threat.

In a world where our rights aren't given to us from generous employers, where we must stand up for ourselves and our right to live decent lives, where the limited rights and freedoms we do have are threatened every day, it is our ability to stop working that is the most impactful tool we have to protect ourselves.

It's a reminder that society cannot run without us. That it grinds to a halt when railway workers walk out or when nurses say, "**enough is enough**".



Teachers were offered an insulting 2% pay rise - by taking strike action they secured a 7% pay rise now, rising to 14% in January 2024

At its heart, striking achieves an awakening in **public consciousness**. When we **stand together**, as the people that make society function, we discover we can run things without the owners and the "bosses" at the top of society.

But they can't run anything without us. We find **our power** is the greatest of all.

Next issue: **Why should you join a trade union?**

Got a question about the strikes? Send it to paisley_strike@proton.me

FAN OWNERSHIP DELIVERING SUCCESS FOR ST MIRREN

IN ITS SECOND SEASON OF MAJORITY FAN OWNERSHIP, having faced the pressures of COVID-19 and cost of living rises, St Mirren FC is thriving. The club has rejected common narratives around the necessity of a wealthy backer that has enabled the sportswashing of human rights abusers and oligarchs particularly in the English Premier League. Instead, the Buddies are close to securing a first top 6 finish since 'the split' was introduced to the Scottish Premiership in 2000, with hopes of pushing further for a European spot.



St Mirren fans became majority shareholders of their club in summer 2021

A spectacular 12 game unbeaten run at home notably included Celtic's single league defeat in the past 20 months. The league champions in waiting were comfortably bested by a well-drilled formula of defensive and counter-attacking football. Similar difficulties were experienced by their Old Firm rivals who relied on a penalty in

the final 10 to claim a draw in Paisley. And despite a weaker away record, Saints have claimed first victories in over a decade at both Pittodrie and Tynecastle.

Players and staff have credited the support and input from fans with helping carry the team, with attendance at the stadium nearing capacity for some fixtures. The decision to restrict all travelling away fans, including Old Firm, to the single away stand exemplifies a decision taken in line with the interests and wishes of the fans and squad rather than purely financial interests.

With the toxifying effects of capital on football internationally, stories such as St Mirren's could help shift the narrative locally towards **reclaiming football for people not profit**. Clubs cannot be treated simply as private enterprise when to many fans their local team is a public service as vital as any other.

VICTORY FOR HUNT SABS

After 252 years of hunting wildlife, the Lanarkshire & Renfrewshire Foxhounds met for the final time on Saturday 4th March 2023.



Long run the fox! Fox hunters in Renfrewshire were finally defeated earlier this year

This seismic victory comes just a month after the Hunting with Dogs Scotland Bill was passed. Clearly the restrictions in place were not workable for the L&R hunt and as a result, the hunt have thrown in the towel.

Local Hunt Saboteurs are ecstatic to see the demise of the L&R as Glasgow Hunt Sabs and their predecessors Clydeside Hunt Sabs worked tirelessly for years bringing this hunt to their knees.

- Read the full story on [Facebook: Glasgow Hunt Sabs](#)



JOIN THE I.W.W.
The Union for ALL workers
IWW.ORG.UK

CLASSIFIEDS

FLAT FOR RENT - Castle Residential are delighted to offer to the market this ROOM ONLY self contained apartment. Situated in the heart of Paisley, this spacious home comes equipped with a bathroom and modern kitchen-bedroom combo. Make the dinner from the comfort of your own bed! All this* could be yours for the bargain price of just £525 per calendar month.



* Stained mattress not included

SICK OF THE STATE OF PAISLEY? - Living Rent, Scotland's tenants' and community union, is active in Paisley.

Members use their collective power to win improvements to our homes and neighbourhoods. **Together we are stronger - together we can win!**

**JOIN
LIVING
RENT
TODAY!**

livingrent.org/join

GREEDFLATION ↗

Today we see exploitation on multiple fronts but it is worth pointing out what is going on with the real cost of trying to live today. Many of you will have heard the term "***inflation***" being regularly bandied about by people wherever you get your news from. It's a term used to persuade people to accept that prices are going up and companies are struggling, so don't fight for a wage increase, that'll only push prices up further. We reject this thinking. We'd prefer to hear the term "***greedflation***" used more.

Apparently we live in difficult and challenging times... for people, for governments, and for businesses. So let's just look at that for a moment. Unite the Union's recent research refers to not a cost of living crisis but a cost of **profiteering crisis** - dramatic price increases in transport, energy and food are hitting the pockets of each of us. In a time of supposed crisis, with a war in Europe, recovery from a pandemic and Brexit to contend with people often think "we are all in this together", we have to put up with all of these increases in prices because there is no alternative.



We don't believe this, trade unions don't believe this and many economists don't believe it. In 2021 Tesco, Sainsbury's and ASDA, the companies who sell food to us, **doubled their profits** - UK Power Networks, the people who manage our national grid declared pre tax **profits of £1.3 billion**, last year the top 350 companies in the UK saw their **profit margins increase by an average of 89%** compared to 2019. At the petrol pumps the big oil companies are reporting their biggest profits ever!

So the organisations charging us for food, transport, and energy are raking in increased profits are fuelling "**inflation**", pushing shopping bills to record highs. When you hear the Bank of England bleating on about workers having to limit their wage demands, when you hear people criticise junior doctors, nurses, Amazon workers and others who are fighting to win fair pay increases, remember big businesses are making choices - they are choosing to increase profits, not protect customers. What is driving **greedflation** is the insatiable demand for bigger profits, the constant drive to push down wages and we can choose to oppose it.

UNITY KEY TO CHUCKING

THE THREAT OF NAZISM IS NEVER FAR AWAY. Erskine has been the latest battleground in the struggle against Nazi hatred. Every Sunday at 12pm demonstrations have been held to oppose asylum seekers being housed in the old Erskine Bridge Hotel. The demonstrations have been staged by Patriotic Alternative, Britain's most active Nazi group, since early February with no end in sight.

Counter demonstrations have been organised by Paisley and District Trades Union Council, not only to oppose the Nazis but to show our solidarity with the asylum seekers. PA try to play it cool and spin the situation to convince local people that counter demonstrators just call everyone they disagree with Nazis.



For 11 weeks running a coalition of local people, trade unionists, and anti-fascists have been out supporting the asylum seekers and opposing the Nazis

We call PA Nazis because they are. Their platform is to end all immigration and to remove all non-white people from the UK. They believe that Jews control the world and are conspiring to make white people a minority by pushing immigration.

STOP PRESS - it turns out the only thing that PA hates more than Jews is itself! The

Scotland branch has decided to split from PA for unknown reasons as of yet to form a new group which is yet to be named. Splitters!

A small hardcore minority of local people continue to join the Nazi's protests despite best efforts by anti-fascists to expose them for what they are. Locals say they are worried about the safety of women and children, and that we need to look after "our own" first. The Nazis will not stop with the removal of asylum seekers - they have their targets set firmly on **removing all non-white people from the UK.**

It is concerning that this minority of local residents are more than happy to stand by racist extremists. One local resident who has been joining the anti-fascist counter demonstrations said that: *"The minute the plans were public, there was a lot of racism and hostility all over Erskine Facebook. If anything, I feel like they practically or all but invited or gave green light for PA to come. At first, they said they wanted their own separate protest,*

NAZIS OUT OF ERSKINE

which lasted exactly one day. There's a small group of hardcore ring leaders. I don't think PA had to try too hard. They [locals] are not even embarrassed at being associated with them [PA]"

Another Erskine anti-fascist said: "The local people who are joining PA are upset because of the state of our own community. They are living on the bread line, struggling from month to month. Obviously all the media's and PA's narrative is to persuade people that it's the asylum seekers' fault that they're the reason they're suffering. I do think they are probably good people, they're not bad people. Obviously their views and the stuff they're coming out with are not nice and it is racist. PA are coming in and hyping them up by feeding into their fears and putting words into their mouths basically. They are probably feeding into their egos as well."

"See the amount of money that's in this world, the imbalance is immoral. People turning up to the PA demonstrations are basically saying we want to help our community first, but I believe there's enough to go around to help everybody."

The question of how this will end is on everyone's minds. One Erskine resident said: "I think if the trade unions, churches, politicians don't start speaking out and giving them zero tolerance this could go on for months. At the moment only trade unions and activists are standing up to them. We need to get broader support."

Another resident said: "PA's efforts have targeted Bargarran which is a less well-off part of the town. People in the rest of Erskine just don't know what's going on. I think having those conversations and making people aware that there is an extreme right-wing group coming every Sunday to protest against the asylum seekers. There is a silent majority on our side. But there will be difficult conversations too."

We have the opportunity to decisively nip this in the bud **now** before it spreads to other towns. Counter demonstrations are not enough - we must defend our communities from within every home and every

workplace. A united front of all people could deliver a sea of resistance to drown the scourge of Nazism. But this sea of resistance won't happen on its own - we must **all** take up the mantle. Talk to your neighbours, friends, and work mates. These conversations might not be easy but we must do everything we can to protect each other from the threat of Nazism.

