



Joan Eardley, National Gallery of Scotland

## The Good Old Days

IT IS 40 YEARS since the belt was banned in Scottish Schools after two mothers took their case to the European Courts.

My own wee sister got lined up, humiliated and belted from age 5 ignoring parents' pleas. Utter cruelty normalised by the State, brutalising the young to 'learn' their place within it. It's no wonder their play times exorcised this cruelty in traditional skipping songs.

**Our wee school's, the best wee school  
The best wee school in Glesca  
The only thing wrang wi' it  
Is the baldy-headed Master  
He goes to the Pub on Saturday  
He goes to the Kirk on Sunday,  
To Pray to The Lord  
To gie him strength  
To batter the weans on Monday**

John Maclean faced up to the Heidy, representing bullied teachers in the day job while he ran popular education

classes at night. Other radical teachers tried to turn 'schooling' into real education; RF MacKenzie in Fife took kids bothying. In Glasgow, Barrowfield Free School linked up drop-out kids with parents/helpers/ teachers.

For more, see [The Spirit of Revolt Baird Collection](#) or [Radical Education Forum](#)

**Got a Story? Email**  
[glasgowkeelie@riseup.net](mailto:glasgowkeelie@riseup.net)

## The Anarchist Critic

One of our government pundits stated that the economy was like a coiled spring and would bounce up quickly.

I believe that the underlying anger of the people is like a coiled spring, and that as this lockdown and pandemic comes to an end, and unemployment and slashed working conditions start to make their mark, that anger in the coiled spring will be released.

In so doing it will bounce up and reverse that submissive attitude that has affected all our actions like a thick gum. Some of the coils are already releasing their energy, all for different aspects of this type of society. Spain, against the arrest of rapper, Pablo Hasél, in India, the largest strike in the world, because of the government pushing its neo-liberal free market policies.

There may be different reasons but the anger is there and will thrust itself up like that released coiled spring.

• Read more at [radicalglasgowblog](#)

# GLASGOW KEELIE

March 2021

Priceless



• Napier Barracks, Folkestone. Photo credit: Andy Aitchison

# REFUGEES UNDER ATTACK

**WITH ALMOST 10,000 ASYLUM SEEKERS** living in detention hotels in the UK, plans from the Home Office to move them to alternative long-term accommodation are welcome. Stays of up to 10 months in these hotel rooms have taken a dreadful toll on the mental health of many people who have already experienced multiple traumas. Activists believe that without the solidarity and grass roots organising that has gone on across the UK, the Home Office would not be accelerating the move of asylum seekers at this time.

The move does call in to question one of the reasons given for moving so many people to the hotels during the pandemic. Namely that there was a difficulty sourcing enough suitable accommodation. There was already concern that some

accommodation being used was damp, unsafe, insecure or lacked proper cooking facilities. The Keelie is left wondering where all this 'suitable' accommodation will be found? We can't tolerate a policy of "Hotel to Hovel".

If you believe that asylum seekers should have:

- **Clean & dignified housing in the community**
- **A Covid-19 safe environment and access to vaccination**
- **Vulnerability assessments before they are moved**
- **A choice where they live and in not-for-profit housing**

...get involved in Glasgow's No Evictions Campaign. Contact via [Facebook](#) [noevictions/](#) or email [noevictionsnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:noevictionsnetwork@gmail.com)

**THE ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT of the communist rapper Pablo Hasél is triggering daily protests in several cities of the Spanish State.**

Becoming the last target of a fascist judicial system and political censorship, he has been sentenced to prison under the application of the 'anti-terrorist law' - which finds its origin in Francoist justice - and the 'Mordaza Law', a legal shift criminalizing social protest after the post-2008 crisis mobilisation cycle.

His criminal convictions are 'injuries to the Monarchy' and 'exaltation of terrorism' in his lyrics and tweets. Hasél's imprisonment is not an isolated case. Rather, it responds to an established policy of imprisonment of dissidence that finds its roots in the Francoist basis of Spanish 'democratic' institutions.

Other examples include Valtornyc - a communist rapper condemned to jail in 2016, opting for political exile - or Alfon, an

antifascist condemned to jail after his participation in the 2012 general strike. The protests represent an outcry of rage of young people standing against police abuse and the authoritarianism that shapes Spanish institutions.

Just to put an example, few days before everything had started, a bunch of youths were indiscriminately attacked by the police at the end of a concert in Madrid and another one was fired at when walking in the street.

Not surprisingly, we have seen a continual discrediting and criminalizing campaign by big media companies against the rapper and brutal use of violence by riot police. Protesters are portrayed as 'violent criminals' despite one girl has lost her eye after being smashed by a foam ball, many protesters has been injured and hundreds of people have been arrested in the main cities of the country.

John McLean, writing in Justice wrote that "the various processes have been so divided and sub-divided". The Management decided that three "Inspector Girls" not on "piece pay" like the other 12 in the department could be dispensed with and their work absorbed by the rest.

They had not anticipated the mood of solidarity and resistance this would provoke. 37 out of the 41 departments walked out. 10,000 on strike, the majority women. It was recorded that the women were the most active against 'blacklegs' defying their class.

## Solidarity

The Strike Committee produced a manifesto. Production was brought to a standstill. A solidarity demonstration on 23<sup>rd</sup> March attracted 8,000. There was a carnival of resistance. Activists such as Tom Bell from the Socialist Labour Party had been spreading industrial unionist ideas and they were embraced. Over 1,000 joined the new Industrial Workers of Great Britain. Yet this Union had no strike pay or the network that the IWW in the USA had. Workers were soon destitute. The Company response was to individualise the response. Although 4,000 rejected the Postcard inviting a return to work, the majority returned to work. The Company offered educational & recreational groups to 'soften the pill'.

The Company then dismissed 400 of the most militant workers including all those in the SLP who had set up the IWGB branch. It is notable that, outside the socialist and anarchist left, the strike failed to get the support

of Trade Unions, eager to limit the appeal of the class solidarity and militancy that industrial unionism personified.

## Revolt

Singers was not an isolated dispute. The two years up to 1913 became known as the Syndicalist Revolt. There was a mood 'in the air'. Suffragism was agitating for women's rights, unskilled workers were driven to resist intensified exploitation. There was the example in late 1910, of the miners dispute at Tonymandy which led to riots and brutal treatment from Cardiff Police Officers, and later the then Liberal, Winston Churchill using the military to 'restore order.'

In nearby Vale of Leven, at Alexandria, for example production at textile dying mills at United Turkey Red stopped when 3,000 went on strike. As with Singers the momentum was provided by women, assisted by labour activists in the National Federation of Women Workers and organisers such as Kate McLean. The women only earning 10 shillings for a 12-hour day, were angry not least at the disparity with men earning 4 times as much. There were outbreaks of violence before their demands were met. A French anarcho-syndicalist agitator, Antoinette Cauvin known as *Madame Sorgue*, addressed strikers. A 55-hour week was one of the demands. The NASDBF & KT Union\* accepted 2,000 as members transferring from the NFWW.

\* National Amalgamated Society of Dyers, Bleachers, Finishers and Kindred Trades  
**See also Radical Glasgow book edited by John Couzin & [Strugglepedia](#)**



## 1911: WOMEN LEAD THE WAY

**THE SINGERS SEWING MACHINE STRIKE IN CLYDEBANK** broke out on the 21st March 1911. This month marks the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this momentous dispute. The Glasgow Keelie back in 2011 had not woken from its long hibernation to celebrate the 100 years.

Casting your mind back: in 1906 the Liberals had won a landslide victory, their last! But by 1910 and two elections this majority had collapsed, and they relied on Irish Nationalists to implement modest reforms such as National Insurance. The return of around 40 Labour Members of Parliament had not resulted in an effective opposition but was cowed and deferential in the Westminster bubble.

This stimulated an interest in

industrial unionism, generated by the emergence of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1905, in USA, Australia, South Africa etc. Small agitational groups sprung up, with orators such as John Turner, Guy Aldred & Tom Mann. Not producing unions but increasing the clamour to organise unskilled workers and militant opposition to the Bosses.

Singers was one of the forerunners of mass production and the application of the Taylorist methods of increasing exploitation, productivity and the subdivision of the labour process. 12,000 were employed in 41 separate departments, with only the 'labour aristocracy' the Engineers in a Union the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, a Union that commonly met in Orange Halls.



## Bread and Roses from Glasgow Food Not Bombs

**THE REGULAR FREE VEGAN MEALS** served up by Glasgow Food Not Bombs provide a great opportunity for some really good conversations with passing folk about mutual aid, food-based activism, and the value of community meals versus charity.

For Shrove Tuesday the only choice was to make pancakes! As one member

of the group says, "everyone deserves treats, and we wanted to offer something special today. Our volunteers delivered 26 boxes of hot syrupy pancakes to our houseless friends all over Glasgow, including Patrick, Finnieston, Hillhead, Shawlands, Strathbungo and the city centre.

We were also able to distribute some more blankets and disposable masks.

• To get involved check [Facebook FnBGlasgow/](#)

**FROM DUKES, ARISTOCRATS, AND DANISH BILLIONAIRES (220,000 acres)** the land of Scotland has been parcelled up and sold off.

It is estimated that fewer than 500 people own half the country's privately-owned rural land. What we have in our city is a microcosm of the same parcelled up and sold off land grab to private developers, facilitated

by the city council and its agencies. "Who Owns Glasgow" could be a title for an Andy Wightman book, because public land in the city is disappearing under our feet at an ever-increasing rate to colonising-developers.

• Watch the discussion on [Youtube The Great Glasgow Giveaway](#)