

# Walton prisoners' hunger strike over complaint about warder

LONG-TERM prisoners at Walton have staged a meal strike over allegations that a prison officer asked three prisoners to beat up two others.

The intended victims of the assault were two brothers, Michael and Brian Muldoon. The Muldoon brothers have just been granted leave to appeal against their conviction for armed robbery because, a judge said, there was "some misunderstanding" over calling a witness from Walton Prison.

The prison officer at the centre of this "misunderstanding" — a Prison Officer Donovan — is also the officer alleged to have asked other prisoners to beat up the Muldoon brothers.

Michael (28) and Brian Muldoon (36) were each jailed for five years at Liverpool Crown Court last July for robbing a Huyton rent collector at knifepoint.

Brian was already in Walton, having been convicted of burglary along with another man a month earlier. It is this other man — Bernard O'Rourke — who the Muldoons wanted to appear as a witness at the robbery trial.

Their solicitors, Malcolm Ross and Co., asked the Home Office to produce O'Rourke at court, but were told he was not willing to give evidence. Rather than subpoena an unwilling witness, the defence dropped the idea of calling O'Rourke and the Muldoons were convicted.

Inside Walton Prison, O'Rourke insisted he had agreed to give evidence and said he had no idea why he had not been called. And in a sworn statement to the Muldoons' solicitor he said:

"I was asked by a prison officer — Mr Donovan — whilst I was in my cell if I was prepared to attend court. I told him 'Yes'. There can

be no mistake, I simply said 'Fucking right'."

This version has been confirmed to the Free Press by another prisoner who was in the cell when Prison Officer Donovan interviewed O'Rourke.

O'Rourke's statement goes on to say that when he was not taken to court he went to see an Assistant Governor who told him there had been "a cock-up in the prison".

Neither O'Rourke nor the prisoner who witnessed the conversation have been questioned about the incident with Prison Officer Donovan. Yet the Home Office were able to assure MP James Dunn in a letter of January 24, that "when asked by a member of the prison staff, Mr O'Rourke stated that he did not wish to give evidence."

Obviously either the two prisoners are lying or Prison Officer Donovan is. An Appeal Court judge

recently decided to give the benefit of the doubt to the Muldoons. "It does seem that there was some misunderstanding," he said, over calling O'Rourke.

The Home Office were also supposed to be holding an inquiry into the allegation that Prison Officer Donovan asked three prisoners from 'I' Wing to beat up the Muldoons.

On January 18 the Muldoons' solicitor was promised an inquiry. Since then he has heard nothing.

However, a Home Office spokesman told the Free Press that the Governor of Walton Prison has held an investigation and found no substance in the complaint.

Michael Muldoon says that his request to have the police brought in to the inquiry was turned down. And all 153 long-term prisoners on 'H' Wing took the allegations seriously enough to refuse their evening meal in protest on January 10.



THE SHOP inside Walton Jail sells only one kind of chocolate biscuit — the one called 'Bandit'.



A MAN went into a boutique in Bexley Heath, helped himself to an Afghan coat, and went to the nearest pub to sell it. No-one would buy, so he came back and asked for the contents of the safe, but eventually settled for a bundle of notes from the till. Next he took a woman's purse, but learning that she was a pensioner, gave it back. When a customer came in, the man told him to go away: "I'm stocktaking". But the customer insisted on buying a pair of trousers, so the man sold them after knocking 99p off the price.

Then he locked everyone in the toilet — except for one shop assistant, whom he took to a cafe for a cup of tea and a cake before making his getaway.

A remittance prince? While the British press speculates that Prince Andrew is being sent to Lakefield College School to help Canada through a constitutional crisis, our sources tell us that the real reason for the prince's being sent to Cannada in mid-term is that he's xng bi & ng! ((prondi ic456- % BNOTh,t cpyty whhhhhenn e9090 () ) which issn't too sprising to those who know the boy's private interests.

Toronto Sun

## COUNCIL OF WAR...

THE NEWS that Merseyside bureaucrats plan to survive a nuclear war in the basement of the Walker Art Gallery will have come as a great disappointment to many people.

Most senior officials have now got an extra title for use when the unthinkable happens.

The Director of Museums would become Director of Emergency Feeding — so no doubt he's stocking up the tropical fish tanks.

A man named Dottie would be Head of Intelligence.

## FA Cup cash

ONE RESULT of the Liverpool-Everton FA Cup clash is certain — the players will not be short of a bob or two.

The after tax pay of two Everton players the week they beat Stoke City in an earlier round illustrates the point. Duncan McKenzie got £191 and Bruce Rioch £189.

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Further information write: Metcalfe, 18 Poplar Grove, Liverpool L21 1BR.

## PROGRESSIVE BOOKS

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RECENTLY IN: New draft of C.P. programme, "British Road to Socialism".

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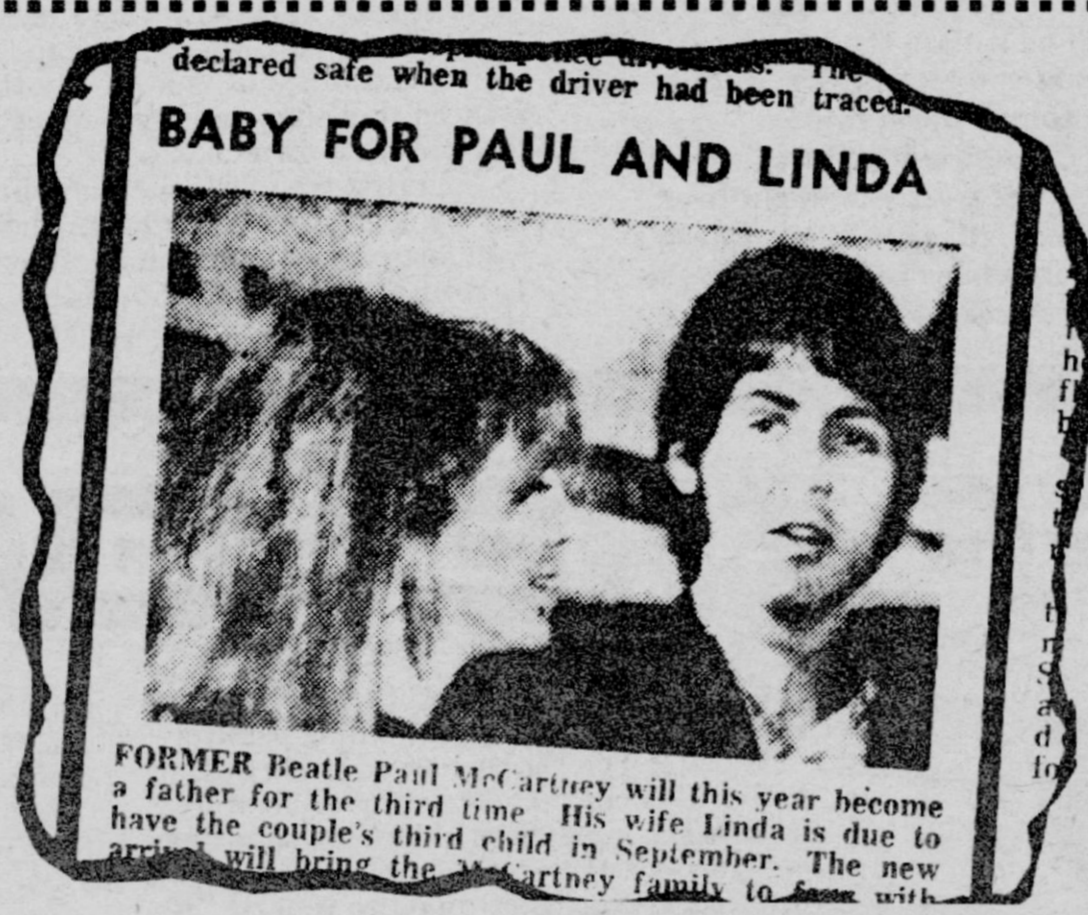
Leon Rosselson records and songbooks.

Gramsci: "Political Writings, 1910-20".

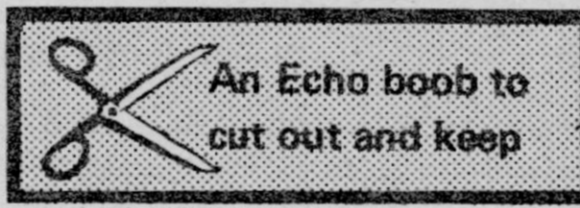
Checklist for Shop Stewards (monthly, 5p)

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Good news for the McCartneys. But bad news for the Liverpool Echo. Unfortunately the woman in the picture is not Paul's wife, but Jane Asher, his ex-girlfriend.



## Landlord Hefferon sues pensioner

SLUM LANDLORD Michael Hefferon has just sued a pensioner for rent he should have collected four years ago.

Mrs Elsie Burke, of Onslow Road, Liverpool, has been ordered to pay the former Liberal councillor £105.55 — money she insists she did not owe.

In 1973 Mrs Burke had a Hefferon flat at 25 Rufford Road. If Hefferon's story is true, Mrs Burke's rent was over 40 weeks in arrears on April 30, 1973. And yet he had taken no steps to get a legal eviction, nor had he made any efforts to collect the rent since.

At least, not until November last year. That was when a woman called at Mrs Burke's door. Suddenly, as she stood on the doorstep, up

popped Hefferon with a summons in his hand. He had been hiding round the corner.

Like most Hefferon tenants, Mrs Burke had no rent book. And not surprisingly after all this time, she has difficulty proving she paid the rent. When she appeared in court last month, the judge took Hefferon's word.

Hefferon got Mrs Burke out of the flat with his famous "eviction by improvement grant" technique.

Mrs Burke returned to her flat one day to find it wrecked. "Everything was pulled down. I just said 'Where's my clothes?'. The workmen said 'In the next room'. Then Hefferon came in himself and he said to me 'If I were you I'd find a flat for yourself'."

Later he had the nerve to say he'd only let Mrs Burke stay there "to keep the vandals out".

● Hefferon's "debt" collecting activities landed him in court again a few days later. A judge banned him from two houses in Princes Avenue which he owned, and which the corporation are in the process of possessing. He was also forbidden to remove any fixtures.

Hefferon said afterwards: "The corporation are withholding a very considerable sum of money which is owed me."

## Building society in bother again

THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S Trading Standards Department are believed to be taking a close interest in the Oak Co-operative Building Society.

Their investigation follows a complaint from a Mr Hanif of Garmoye Road, Wavertree. A critical report to the government's Office of Fair Trading could possibly result in the Oak Co-operative losing their licence to trade.

Action against the Oak Co-operative, which has offices in Dale Street, Liverpool, and in Southport, is long overdue.

The Free Press revealed a year ago how Oak borrowers had been forced to insure their homes with an insurance company run illegally by the building society's own chairman, Abram Maxwell Caplin, CBE.

He revealed, too, that the Oak Co-operative had lent money to enable people to buy uninhabitable houses from a property firm also run by the Caplin family.

Mr Hanif's complaint is a familiar one. He wanted to borrow £3,825 to buy a house in Botanic Road, Wavertree. He was told a loan was possible over 20 years but that the Oak Co-operative would have to survey the property.

This was done and Mr Hanif had to pay an £11.88 survey fee.

Then the Oak Co-operative made him an offer. They would lend him the money — but with impossible conditions attached.

Firstly, it would be over ten, not twenty years, doubling the monthly payments; second, the person selling Mr Hanif the house had to deposit £800 with the Oak Co-operative for ten years — at a very low rate of interest; and, finally, he had to find an "approved guarantor".

Clearly the offer was never intended to be taken up. (Why should someone selling a house kiss goodbye to £800 for the sake of the buyer?)

So what did the Oak Co-operative have to gain. The answer is the survey fee.

Suppose they had no intention of lending Mr Hanif any money. And suppose they were getting 25 survey fees a week in this way.

Mr Caplin would be raking in a lot of money — and the police should be just as interested as the Trading Standards Department.

150 WORKERS at Gibbons Bros., Brierley Hill, Staffs., walked out because their factory was too cold. The firm makes heating equipment for factories.

IN NEW YORK Mrs Rosalyn Tillman, 26, had her purse snatched by a one-legged man on crutches. Several onlookers gave chase, but he hopped too fast.

CONGRESSMAN John A. Galbraith, from Ohio, wants to abolish January and February and divide the 59 extra days among June, July and August. He believes this would save a great deal on fuel bills.

MILLIONS of Spaniards put their children to bed early. They had heard 'Last Tango in Paris' was to be shown on television.

The adults then sat down for a spicy evening's viewing. But instead of the film, they found an orchestra playing a tango. It was the Day of the Innocents — Spain's equivalent of April Fools' Day.

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