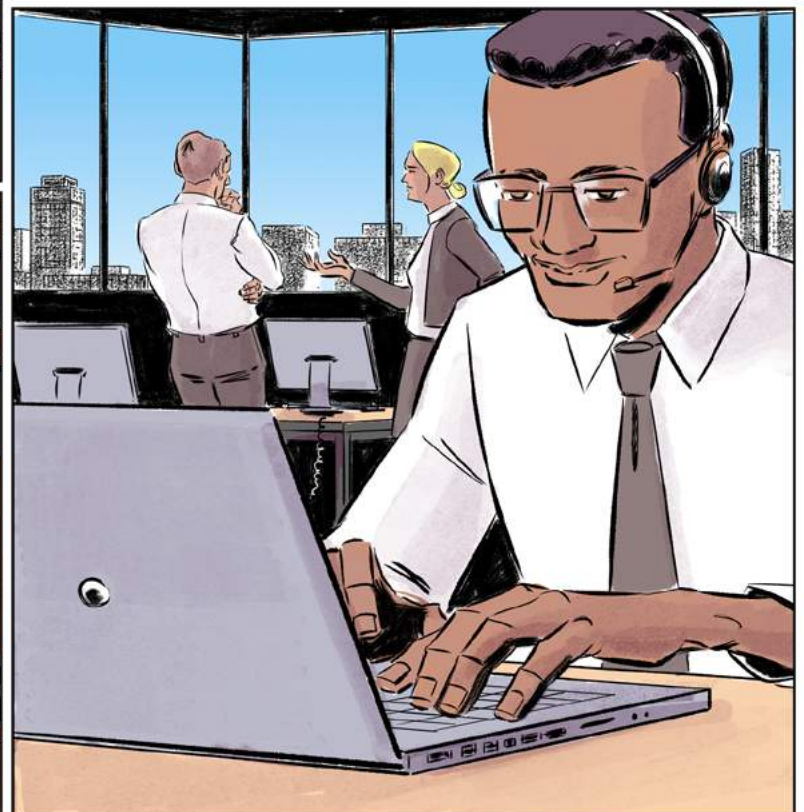




GENERAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

# 120 YEARS SUPPORTING UNIONS



**Written by Sean Michael Wilson**  
**Illustrated by Jaime Huxtable**  
**Based on historical research by Edda Nicolson**





SO, WHAT'S THE NAME OF THE PERSON WE'RE GOING TO MEET?

DOUG NICHOLLS, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE GFTU. I MET HIM ONCE BEFORE, BACK IN THE LATE 80S WHEN HE WAS WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY AND YOUTH WORKERS' UNION.



HI, JOE - LONG TIME NO SEE!

INDEED IT IS DOUG, MUST BE 30 YEARS.



AND, ARUSHI IS IT?

YES, NICE TO MEET YOU.

AND YOU. I'VE DONE A LOT OF WORK AROUND EDUCATION FOR YOUNGER FOLK, SO IT'S NICE TO SEE THE NEXT GENERATION LIKE YOU TAKING AN INTEREST IN TRADE UNIONS.



I THOUGHT I'D GIVE HER A BREAK FROM LISTENING TO ME DRONING ON ABOUT IT.

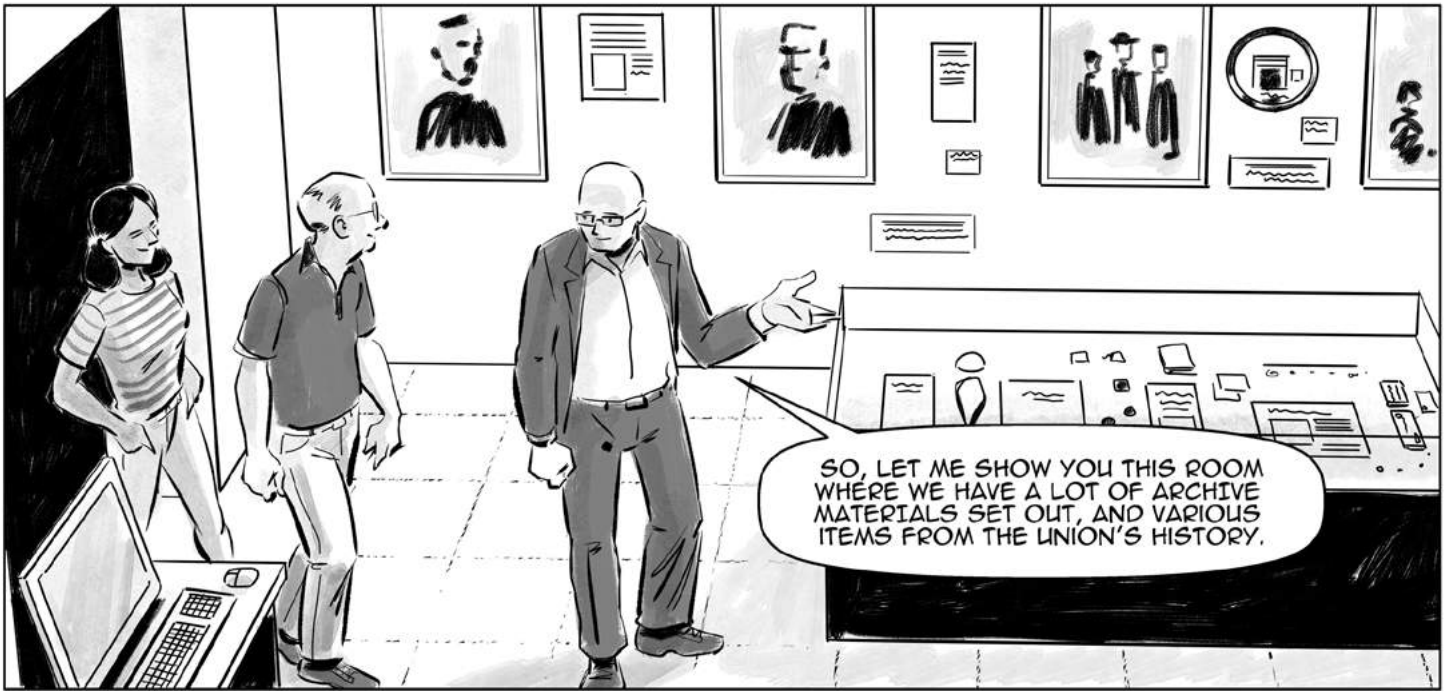
BY GETTING ME TO DRONE ON INSTEAD?

HA, HA!



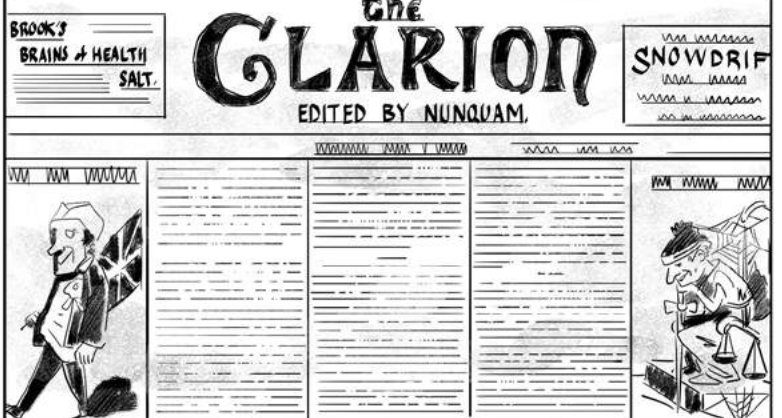
NO PROBLEMS THERE. I'M INTERESTED TO LEARN ABOUT THE GFTU'S HISTORY, REALLY.

THAT'S GREAT. GLAD TO HEAR IT.



SO, LET ME SHOW YOU THIS ROOM WHERE WE HAVE A LOT OF ARCHIVE MATERIALS SET OUT, AND VARIOUS ITEMS FROM THE UNION'S HISTORY.

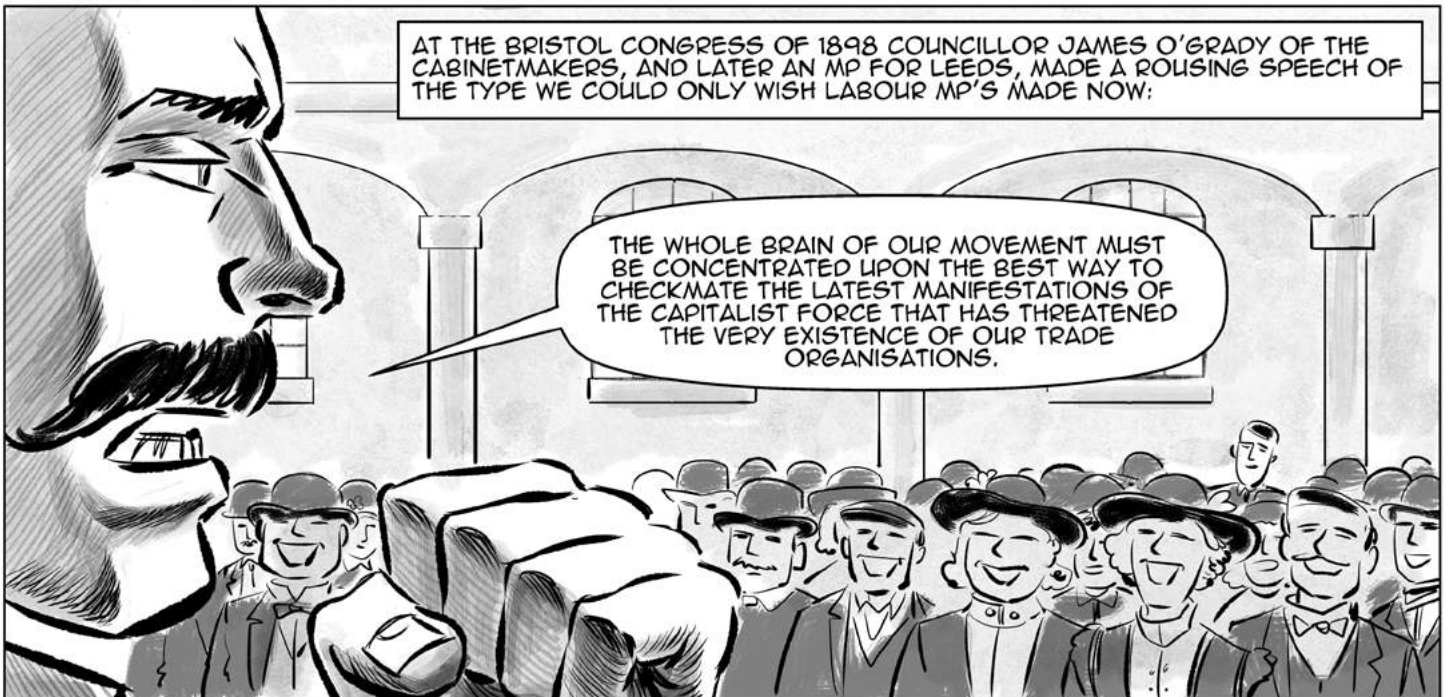
THE TIME OF 'NEW UNIONISM' WAS AN IMPORTANT TIME FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT, AND THROUGHOUT THE 1890S THE IDEA OF A STRONG CENTRAL FEDERATION WAS DISCUSSED. THOUGH DISAGREEMENTS TOOK PLACE BETWEEN MILITANT ANTICAPITALIST MEMBERS AND THOSE INCLINED TOWARDS A MORE MODERATE APPROACH OF NEGOTIATION WITH EMPLOYERS.



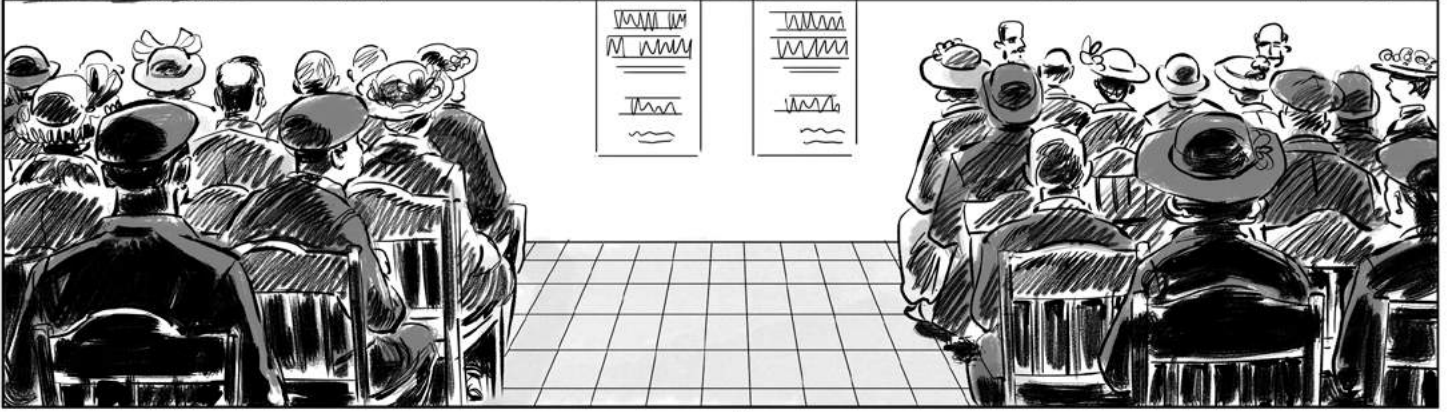
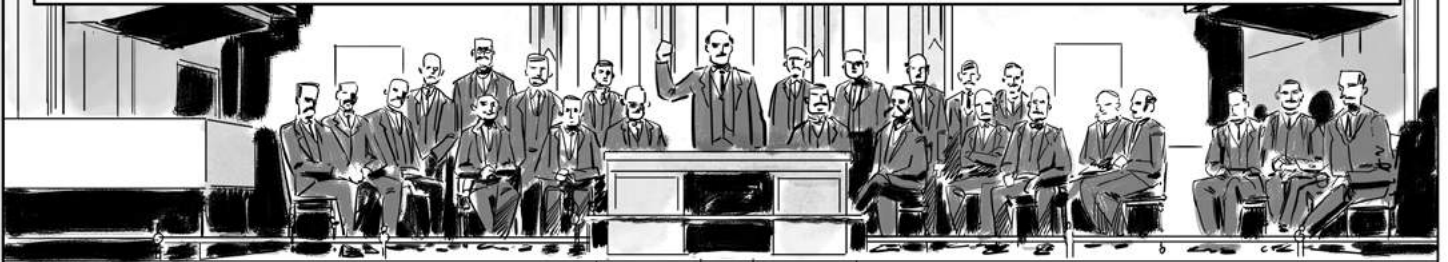
THE TUC VOTED DOWN THE IDEA OF A FEDERATION IN 1896 BUT IRISH ACTIVIST P. J. KING WROTE SEVERAL ARTICLES IN THE CLARION OUTLINING PLANS FOR A FEDERATION, WHICH KEIR HARDIE SUPPORTED. KING'S SYNDICALIST 'NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GENERAL FEDERATION OF TRADE AND LABOUR UNIONS' PROVED TOO RADICAL FOR THE GRADUALISTS OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, BUT THE TUC CAME TO RECOGNISE THAT SOME KIND OF FEDERATION WAS NEEDED.

AT THE BRISTOL CONGRESS OF 1898 COUNCILLOR JAMES O'GRADY OF THE CABINETMAKERS, AND LATER AN MP FOR LEEDS, MADE A ROUSING SPEECH OF THE TYPE WE COULD ONLY WISH LABOUR MP'S MADE NOW:

THE WHOLE BRAIN OF OUR MOVEMENT MUST BE CONCENTRATED UPON THE BEST WAY TO CHECKMATE THE LATEST MANIFESTATIONS OF THE CAPITALIST FORCE THAT HAS THREATENED THE VERY EXISTENCE OF OUR TRADE ORGANISATIONS.



THEREFORE, AS PART OF THAT EFFORT, THE GENERAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS WAS ESTABLISHED AT A SPECIAL CONGRESS OF THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS (TUC) IN 1899. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE WAS TO HAVE A NATIONAL ORGANISATION WITH A STRIKE FUND THAT COULD BE DRAWN UPON BY AFFILIATED TRADE UNIONS.



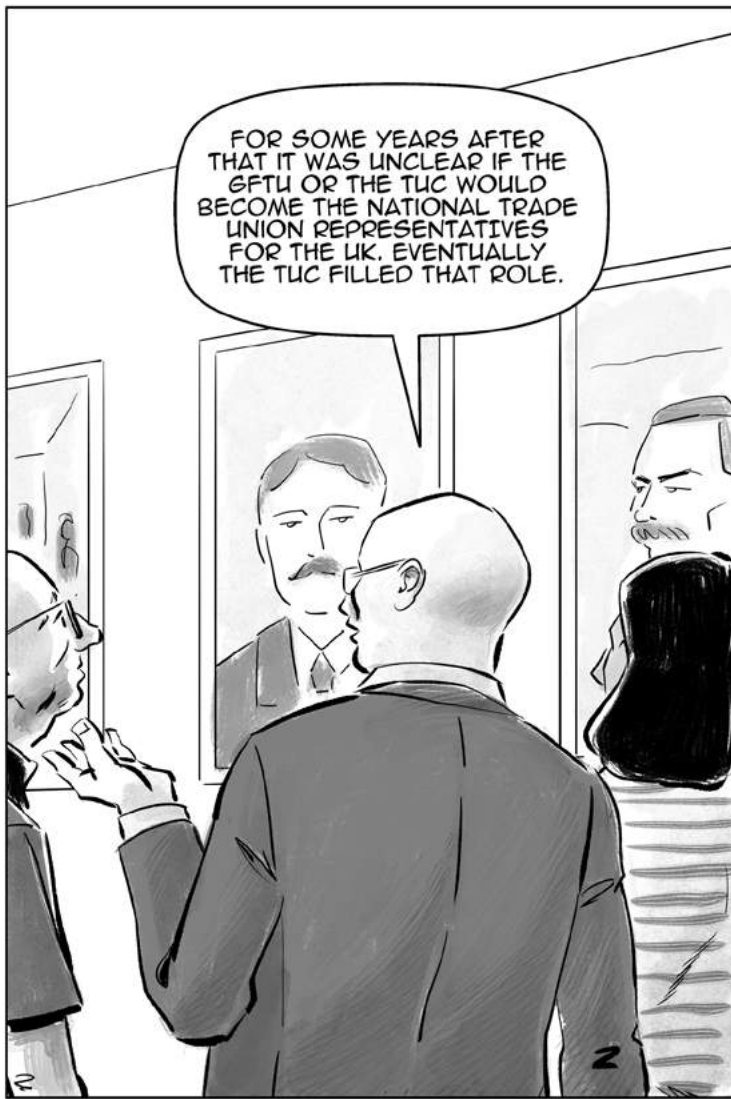
IT WAS FELT THAT SUCH STRIKE SUPPORT WAS NEEDED IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT WORKERS WOULD NOT BE LOCKED OUT AND STARVED BACK TO WORK BY EMPLOYERS - AS HAD HAPPENED IN THE 1897 ACTION BY THE ENGINEERING EMPLOYERS FEDERATION. THIS AND OTHER EFFORTS TO COMBAT CAPITALISM COULD BEST BE ORGANISED BY A CENTRAL FEDERATION EXPRESSING A COMMON TRADES SENSE OF SOLIDARITY AMONG DIFFERENT TRADES.

THE FIRST GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE GFTU WAS HELD ON THE 19TH OF JULY 1899 IN LONDON, WITH A TOTAL OF 58 DELEGATES FROM THE 44 AFFILIATED UNIONS, REPRESENTING 310,437 WORKERS. PETE CURRAN, OF THE G.W.U., WAS THE 1ST CHAIRMAN OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, AND ISSAC MITCHELL OF THE ASE WAS THE FIRST GENERAL SECRETARY.



MITCHELL WAS A QUIETLY SPOKEN MEMBER OF THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT, WHEREAS CURRAN WAS A MUCH MORE PASSIONATE AND OUTSPOKEN IDEALIST, AND HAD LINKS WITH THE SDF AND THE FABIANS.





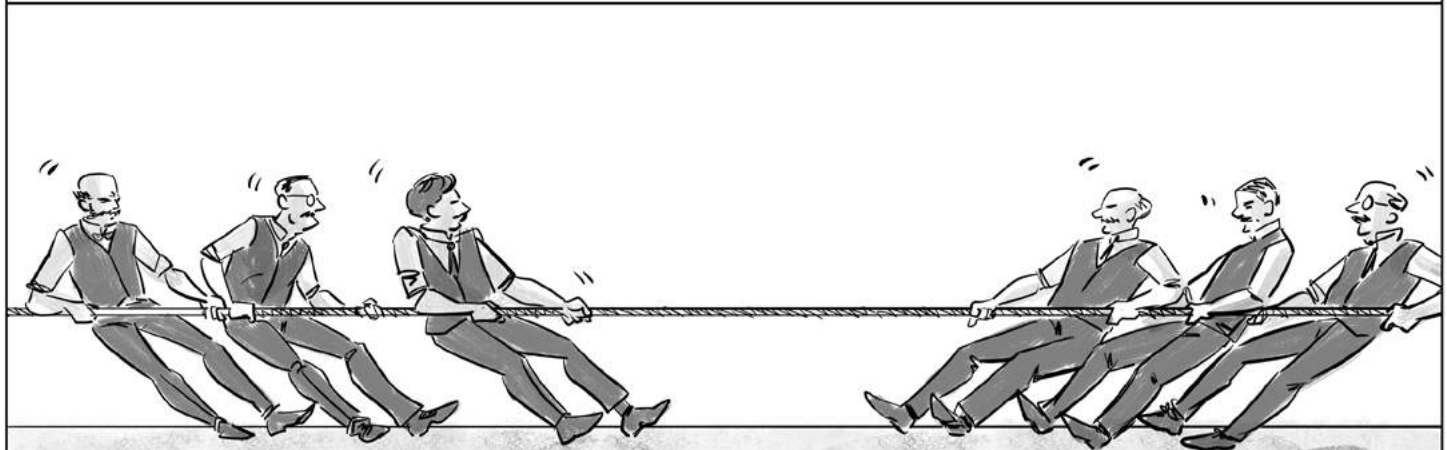
FOR SOME YEARS AFTER THAT IT WAS UNCLEAR IF THE GFTU OR THE TUC WOULD BECOME THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE UK. EVENTUALLY THE TUC FILLED THAT ROLE.



THAT'S INTERESTING. I NEVER KNEW THAT. SO WHY DID THE TUC WIN OUT THEN?

WELL, I WOULDN'T EXACTLY CALL IT 'WINNING', BUT THERE WERE VARIOUS INTERESTING AND COMPLICATED ASPECTS THEN, SOME OF WHICH I'M NOT SURE OF MYSELF.

THE GFTU, TUC AND LABOUR REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE WORKED TOGETHER ON A JOINT BOARD FOR SOME TIME. THERE WAS PLENTY OF DISAGREEMENT/DISCUSSION OVER WHETHER OR NOT THE CONGRESS OR THE FEDERATION WOULD REPRESENT THE INDUSTRIAL SIDE OF THE MOVEMENT, BUT THE TUC WON MAINLY DUE TO NUMBERS BUT ALSO IN PART TO DIFFERENCES IN IDEOLOGY.



**TUC**

**GFTU**

A GENERAL POINT IS THAT THE TUC DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TO DO WITH INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES UNTIL THE LATE 1910'S/EARLY 1920'S. BEFORE THEN, IT WAS ABOUT TRADE UNIONISTS COMING TOGETHER TO DISCUSS AND DEBATE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES, TO ACT AS A PRESSURE GROUP AND TO GET WORKING PEOPLE INTO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. WHEREAS THE FEDERATION WAS INTENDED TO BE THE PLACE IN WHICH UNIONS COULD FIND SUPPORT, ADVICE AND FINANCIAL BACKING FOR INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES.

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT REASONS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A LACK OF SUPPORT FROM THE MINERS, WHO NEVER FEDERATED TO THE GFTU DESPITE MANY REQUESTS TO DO SO, AND EVENTUALLY ROBERT SMILLIE, THE COAL MINERS LEADER FROM SCOTLAND, MANAGED TO FORCE THE GFTU OFF THE JOINT BOARD.



AFTER THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE BROKE DOWN IN 1921, THE MINERS WENT OUT ON STRIKE ON THEIR OWN. FROM THAT POINT THE TUC SHOULD BE THE VOICE OF THE MOVEMENT FOR LARGE SCALE STRIKES. SO, THE TUC REPRESENTED THE WORKERS DURING THE GENERAL STRIKE 5 YEARS LATER, NOT THE GFTU.



SO, IT SEEMS THAT THE TUC ALTERED COURSE AND AFFECTED THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF THE GFTU. THAT WAS FURTHERED AFFECTED WHEN THE BIGGEST UNIONS EITHER DIDN'T AFFILIATE TO THE GFTU OR THE TUC (OR BOTH) AND INSTIGATED LARGE SCALE DISPUTES.

# GFTU

# TUC

IN THE END THE TUC HAD THE NUMBERS AND THE IMPACT IN THE PRESS TO CARRY THE INDUSTRIAL MOVEMENT FORWARD. THE LABOUR PARTY WAS ITS OWN ENTITY BY THEN, WHICH LEFT THE TUC FREE TO BE THE INDUSTRIAL FORCE.

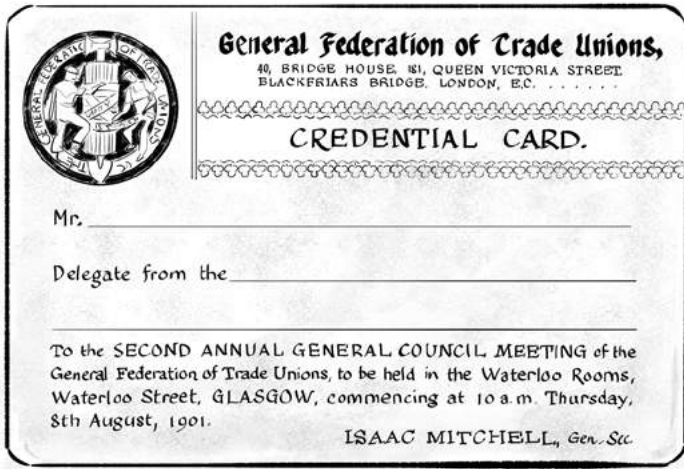
# GFTU

# TUC

# THE LABOUR PARTY



SO, THE GFTU CONTINUED INSTEAD AS A FEDERATION OF SPECIALIST CRAFT-BASED UNIONS. NOW IT HAS 35 AFFILIATES, A MEMBERSHIP OF AROUND 214,000 TO WHOM IT PROVIDES COMMON SERVICES AND FACILITIES SUCH AS EDUCATION AND TRAINING, RESEARCH AND A PENSION SCHEME. IT ALSO CONTINUED ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE BY PAYING DISPUTE BENEFIT TO AFFILIATED UNIONS.

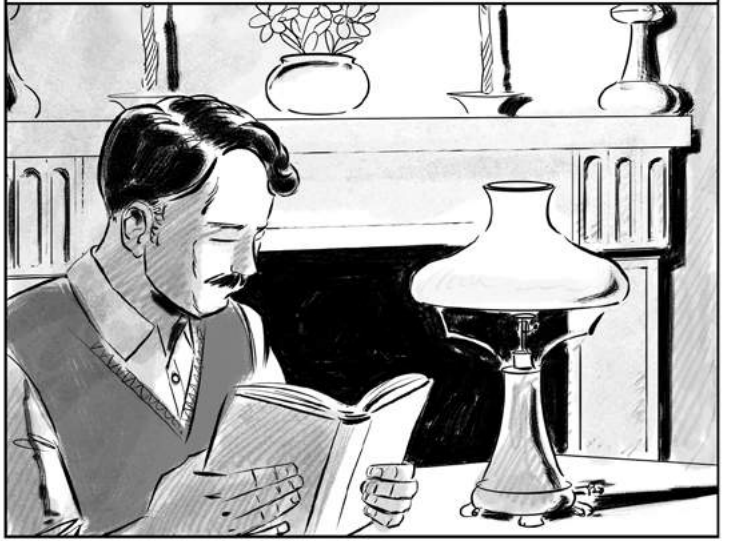


1899:	Isaac Mitchell
1907:	William A. Appleton
1938:	George Bell
1953:	Leslie Hodgson
1978:	Peter Potts
1991:	Michael Bradley
2012:	Doug Nicholls

SOME OF THESE HAD VERY INTERESTING LIVES AND ACHIEVED A LOT IN THEIR TIMES. FOR INSTANCE, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT ISAAC MITCHELL. LIKE A LOT OF UNION ACTIVISTS THEN HE WAS A SCOT, BORN IN ROXBURGHSHIRE IN 1867. HE DID WELL AT SCHOOL, BECOMING A PUPIL-TEACHER, THEN WAS APPRENTICED TO A MILLWRIGHT.



HE BECAME INVOLVED WITH SOCIALISM WHILE WORKING IN NEWCASTLE, LATER REPRESENTING THE ASE AT THE NEWCASTLE BRANCH OF THE TRADES COUNCIL. THEN HE WENT BACK TO SCOTLAND AND WORKED AS A MILLWRIGHT WHILST STUDYING LABOUR HISTORY AND ECONOMICS.



IN 1896 THE SCOTTISH BRANCH OF THE ASC SENT HIM AS A DELEGATE TO THE TUC. BY 1898 HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE TUC PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE, AND THE FOLLOWING YEAR WAS ELECTED AS THE FIRST GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE GFTU.



HE STOOD FOR ELECTION IN THE 1906 GENERAL ELECTION AS A CANDIDATE FOR DARLINGTON.



AFTER APPLETON TOOK OVER, IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT MITCHELL HAD MISLAID A BOND FOR £10,000. LUCKILY, THE BOND WAS SAFE AND ACCRUING INTEREST, BUT A RELIEVED APPLETON SET ABOUT GETTING AN ORDERLY SYSTEM IN PLACE.



AND AS TO APPLETON - HE WAS GENERAL SECRETARY FOR A LONG TIME, FROM 1907 RIGHT UP TO 1938 - YEARS WHICH SAW VERY DRAMATIC EVENTS, OF COURSE.



HE WAS EDUCATED IN NOTTINGHAM GOING ON TO BE THE SECRETARY OF THE LACE MAKERS 1896-1907. BEATRICE WEBB SAID OF HIM:

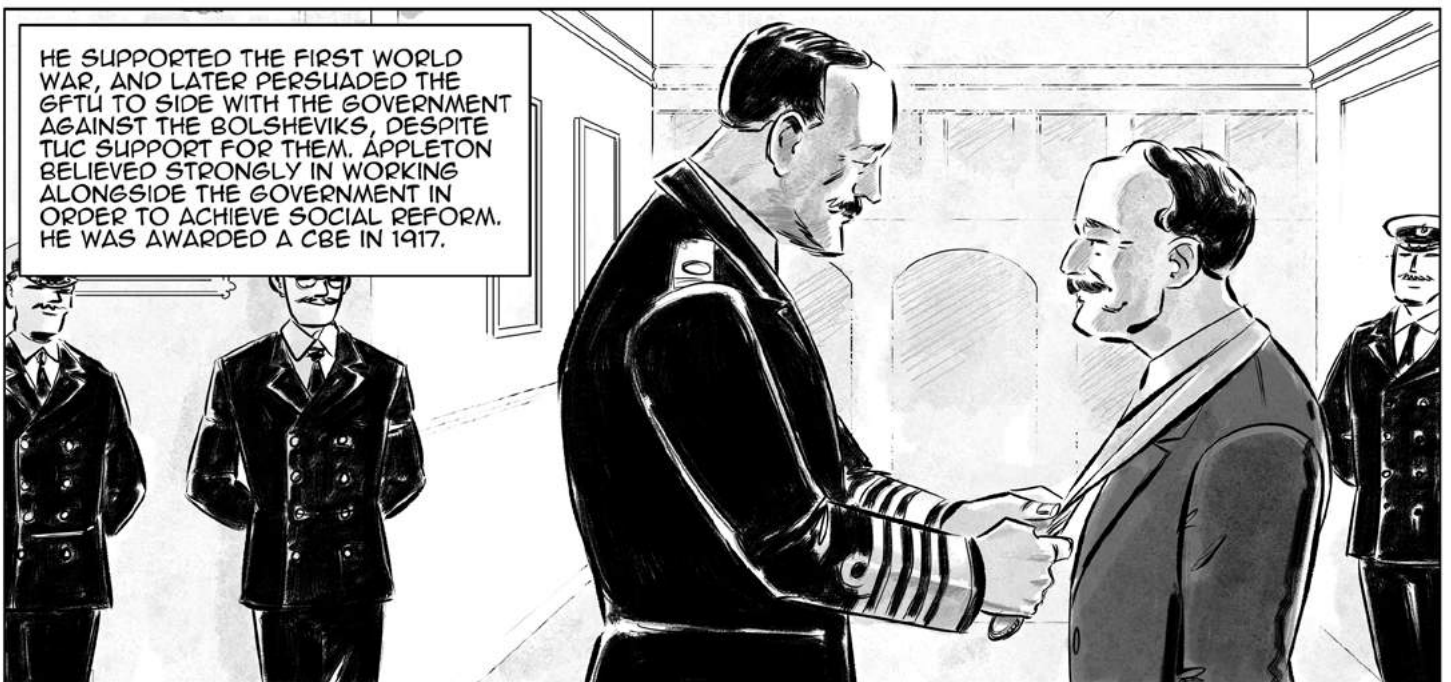
HE IS A FORCEFUL CHAP.



HE WAS OFTEN VERY SURE OF HIS OPINIONS, OFTEN AT ODDS WITH THE TUC AND LRC AND WAS ANNOYED WHEN OTHERS DISAGREED WITH HIS WAYS. BUT HE WAS A TIRELESS WORKER FOR THE GFTU THROUGH A PERIOD OF SECESSIONS WHEN THE VERY VISION OF FEDERATION SEEMED TO BE DISINTEGRATING.



HE SUPPORTED THE FIRST WORLD WAR, AND LATER PERSUADED THE GFTU TO SIDE WITH THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE BOLSHEVIKS, DESPITE TUC SUPPORT FOR THEM. APPLETON BELIEVED STRONGLY IN WORKING ALONGSIDE THE GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL REFORM. HE WAS AWARDED A CBE IN 1917.



HE ENCOURAGED COOPERATION WITHIN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, AND WAS THE PRESIDENT OF THE IFTU WHEN IT WAS CREATED IN 1919. AFTER THE WAR HE TOOK PART IN THE GENERAL EFFORT TO PRESS GOVERNMENTS FOR REFORM.

THE SACRIFICES OF THE WORKERS DURING THE WAR ENTITLED THEM TO BE CONSIDERED IN PEACE.



HE WAS ALWAYS A CRAFT UNIONIST AT HEART, AND PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN MAKING THE GFTU A CRAFT UNION-BASED ORGANISATION. SO THE GFTU BECAME WELL-KNOWN FOR THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE SMALLER UNIONS, AND OFTEN PRESSED THEIR CAUSES TO PARLIAMENT WHEN HARDLY ANYONE TOOK ANY NOTICE OF THEM.



ON THE 28TH DECEMBER 1938 APPLETON GAVE HIS RESIGNATION SPEECH. HE COULDN'T HELP BUT USE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADMONISH THE TAILORS UNION FOR SECEDING FROM THE GFTU AFTER HE FELT THAT HE HAD SPENT SO MUCH TIME OFFERING THEM HELP AND SUPPORT.



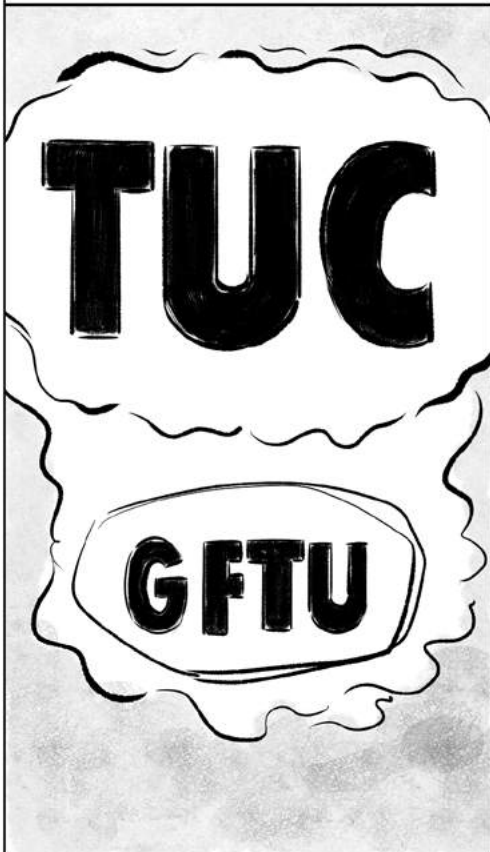
GEORGE BELL THEN TOOK OVER. HE HAD STARTED HIS TRADE UNION CAREER WITH THE IRONFOUNDERS, AND WENT FROM THEM STRAIGHT TO THE GFTU AS AN ORGANISER. HE TRIED TO HELP THE 'LEFT BEHIND' UNIONS THAT HAD ONCE BEEN STRONG IN THEIR COMMUNITY, BUT HAD SEEN NUMBERS DECLINE FOR VARIOUS REASONS.



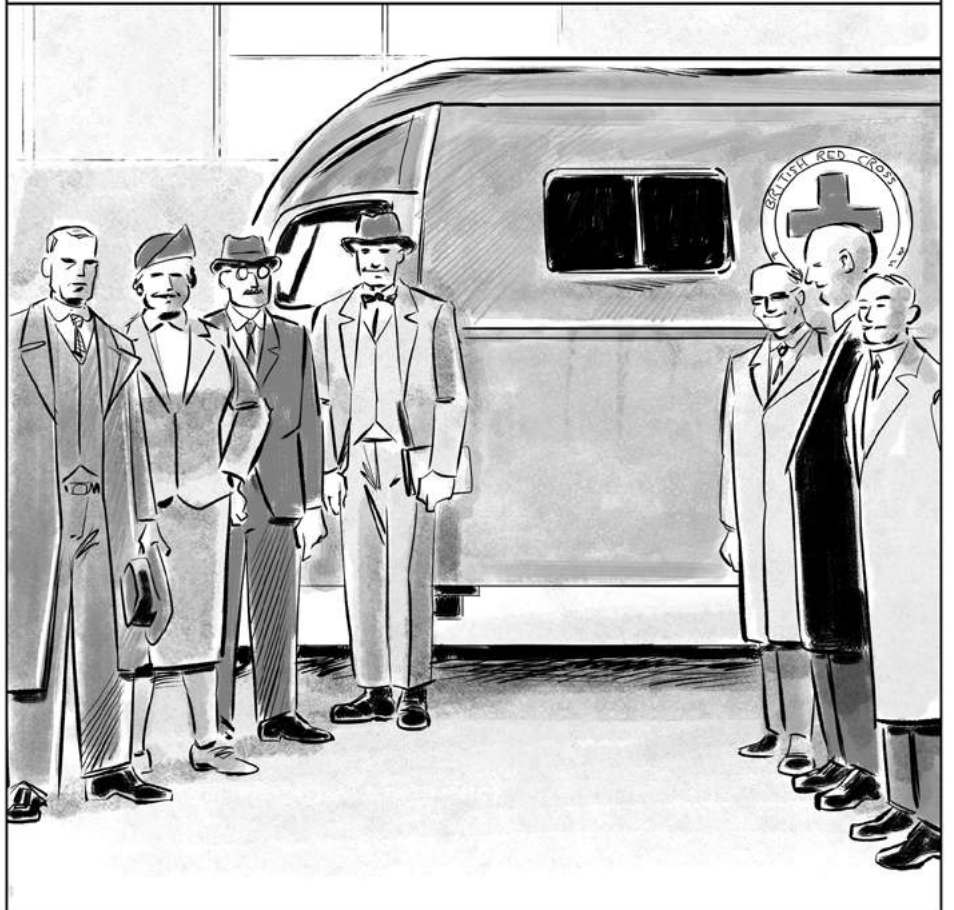
FOR TWO YEARS FROM 1935 THE GFTU LOBBIED FOR UNEMPLOYED STAFFORDSHIRE CHAIN-MAKERS TO BE RECOGNISED UNDER THE NEW EMPLOYMENT BENEFIT LEGISLATION. ULTIMATELY UNSUCCESSFUL, THE GFTU STILL IMPRESSED MANY BY STANDING UP FOR THEIR SMALLER AFFILIATES.



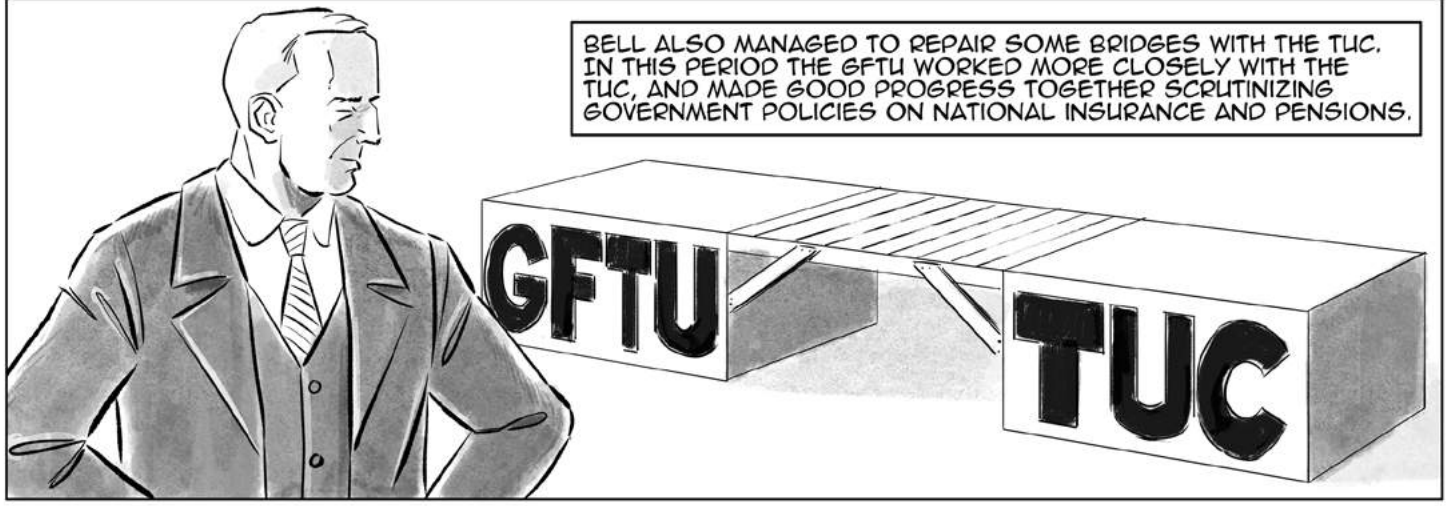
IN 1938 BELL AND APPLETON WERE SUSPICIOUS OF ATTEMPTS BY THE TUC TO 'BRING THE FEDERATION AND THE TUC CLOSER TOGETHER.' OSTENSIBLY A SHOW OF UNITY IT APPEARS THAT THE TUC WANTED TO ABSORB THE FEDERATION.



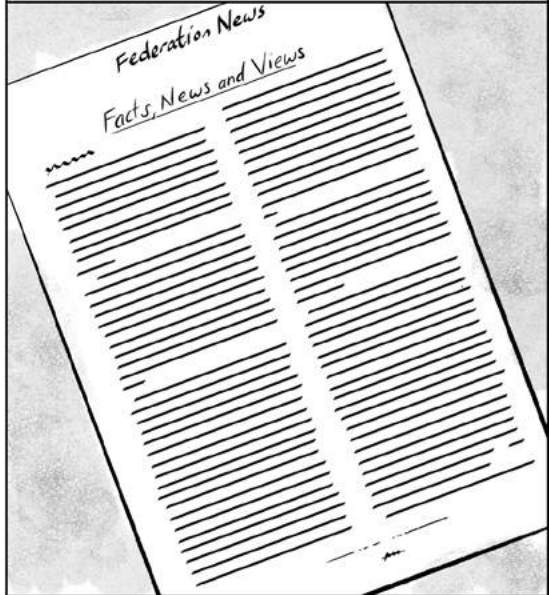
DURING WW11 THE GFTU HAS A SMALLER ROLE THAN IN WW1, BUT STILL MANAGED TO BE USEFUL. BELL'S ADVICE WAS SOUGHT ON ISSUES SUCH AS FOOD RATIONS AND UNHEALTHY WORKSHOPS AND AN AMBULANCE WAS DONATED TO THE RED CROSS.



BELL ALSO MANAGED TO REPAIR SOME BRIDGES WITH THE TUC. IN THIS PERIOD THE GFTU WORKED MORE CLOSELY WITH THE TUC, AND MADE GOOD PROGRESS TOGETHER SCRUTINIZING GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON NATIONAL INSURANCE AND PENSIONS.



BELL STARTED THE GFTU'S QUARTERLY PUBLICATION THE FEDERATION NEWS IN 1951. IT WAS GIVEN FREE OF CHARGE THROUGH UNION HEADQUARTERS TO AS MANY MEMBERS THAT WANTED IT, AND CONCENTRATED ON SUPPLYING INFORMATION ON THE FEDERATION'S ACTIVITIES.



HE RETIRED IN 1953.



YOU HAVE A LOT OF GOOD INFO HERE.

OH, NOT BAD, BUT MOST OF OUR PAPER RECORDS ARE HELD AT THE BISHOPSGATE INSTITUTE ALONG WITH LOTS OF OTHER LABOUR HISTORY ARCHIVES.





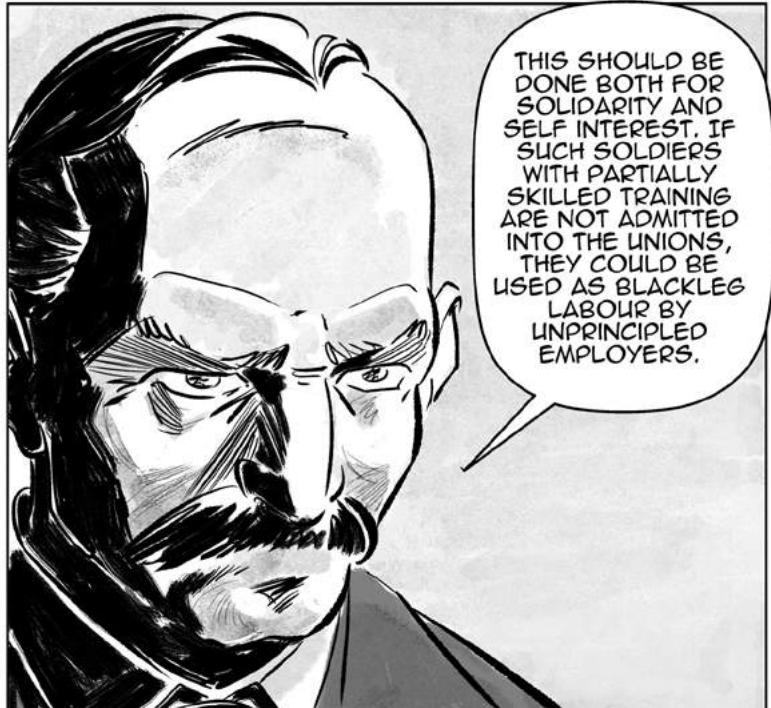
FOR EXAMPLE, THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE EMPLOYMENT OF SOLDIERS: IN MARCH 1909, THE GFTU MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE DISCUSSED THE RELUCTANCE TOWARDS THE TRAINING OF FORMER SOLDIERS. SOME FEARED THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT ON THOSE ALREADY WITHIN THE SKILLED GROUP.



APPLETON SPOKE OUT AGAINST THIS:



WE MUST ENCOURAGE TRADE UNIONS TO SUPPORT THE SOLDIERS IN THEIR TRAINING AND ADMITTANCE INTO UNIONS.



THIS SHOULD BE DONE BOTH FOR SOLIDARITY AND SELF INTEREST. IF SUCH SOLDIERS WITH PARTIALLY SKILLED TRAINING ARE NOT ADMITTED INTO THE UNIONS, THEY COULD BE USED AS BLACKLEG LABOUR BY UNPRINCIPLED EMPLOYERS.

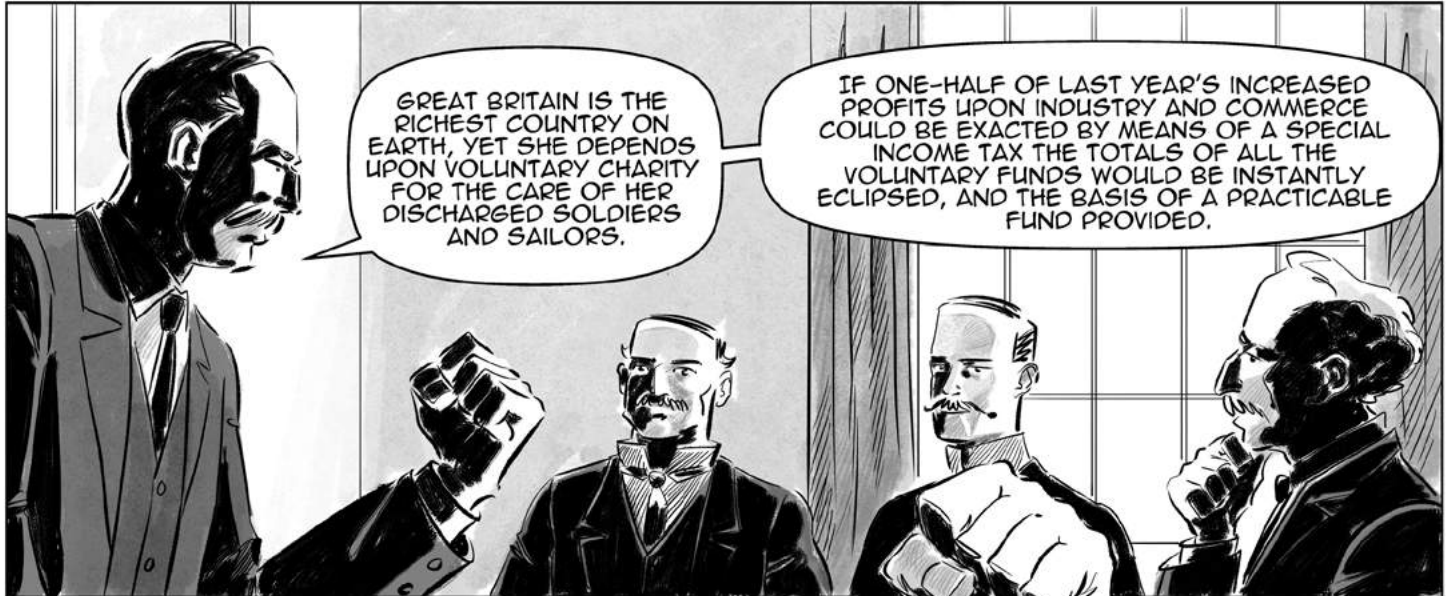
THIS WAS THE START OF A LONG JOURNEY FOR THE GFTU - CHAMPIONING UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROVIDED BY TRADE UNIONS (RATHER THAN PRIVATE INSURANCE COMPANIES), LED TO A GREATER FOCUS ON THE NEED FOR RETRAINING, WHICH THEN GREW INTO AN INCREASING DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS. NORA TURNER, JOHN MAUDE, ANNE CARR, GERTRUDE NEWTON AND FRANK WALKER WERE THE AMONG THE FIRST PEOPLE THE GFTU GAVE SCHOLARSHIPS TO GO TO RUSKIN COLLEGE. THAT FOCUS IS STILL IMPORTANT FOR THE FEDERATION TODAY.





DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR, THE GFTU PUBLISHED A LARGE QUANTITY OF LEAFLETS TO KEEP THEIR MEMBERS INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS. GENERALLY, THE LABOUR MOVEMENT BROADLY SUPPORTED THE WAR. THOUGH TODAY WE TAKE A WIDER VIEW OF THE CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT MOST AT THE TIME ACCEPTED IT WAS A FIGHT TO DEFEAT GERMAN MILITARISM.

IN MANIFESTO TO ITS MEMBERS AND TO AFFILIATIONS IN EUROPE AND AMERICA, APPLETON CRITICISED 'THE PRUSSIAN MILITARIST CASTE' BUT ALSO DETAILED HOW HE EXPECTED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO TREAT SOLDIERS AND CITIZENS DURING AND AFTER THE FIGHT.



GREAT BRITAIN IS THE RICHEST COUNTRY ON EARTH, YET SHE DEPENDS UPON VOLUNTARY CHARITY FOR THE CARE OF HER DISCHARGED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS.

IF ONE-HALF OF LAST YEAR'S INCREASED PROFITS UPON INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE COULD BE EXACTED BY MEANS OF A SPECIAL INCOME TAX THE TOTALS OF ALL THE VOLUNTARY FUNDS WOULD BE INSTANTLY ECLIPSED, AND THE BASIS OF A PRACTICABLE FUND PROVIDED.

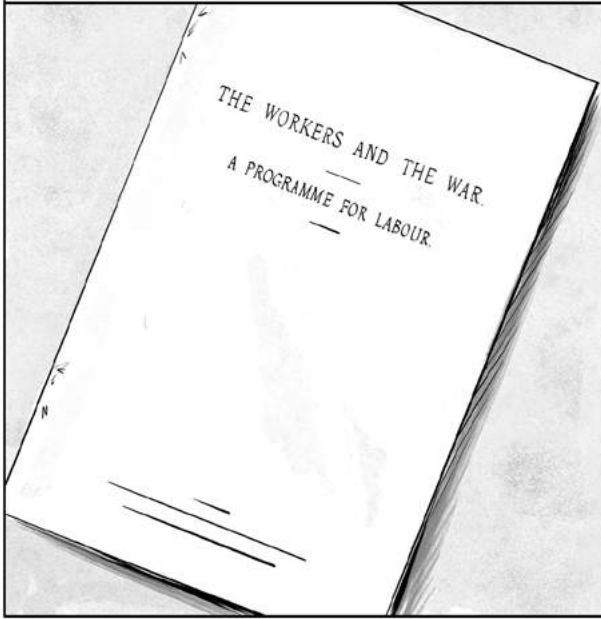


THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY HERE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO SEE HOW WELL NATIONAL CONTROL OF THE RAILWAYS WORKS IN AIDING THE WAR EFFORT.

AND THE SAME SUCCESS CAN APPLY AFTER THE WAR IF WE CONTINUE THE POLICY, RATHER THAN LETTING OUR RESOURCES BE SQUANDERED IN PRIVATE HANDS.

ARTHUR HENDERSON MP INVOLVED MEMBERS OF THE GFTU MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN HIS WAR EMERGENCY: WORKERS' NATIONAL COMMITTEE (WEWNC) TO PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS DURING THE WAR.

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE WORK OF MARY MACARTHUR OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN WORKERS THEY HELPED STOP THE USE OF SWEATED LABOUR BY HIGHLIGHTING BAD WORKING PRACTICES, FORCED THE GOVERNMENT TO LEGISLATE AGAINST RENT INCREASES, PUSHED FOR A HOUSING POLICY, CONTROL OF FOOD PRICES ETC.



ANY BOLD PLAN TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS WILL PROBABLY BE RESISTED BY OFFICIALS AND CAN ONLY BE MADE POSSIBLE BY THE STRONG PRESSURE OF WELL ORGANISED AGITATION.

THE PROGRAMME SHOULD INCLUDE THE PROVISION FOR DISABLED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS AS FOLLOWS:

IF TOTALLY INCAPABLE OF EARNING A LIVELIHOOD A PRIVATE SHOULD RECEIVE A MINIMUM OF £1 PER WEEK...



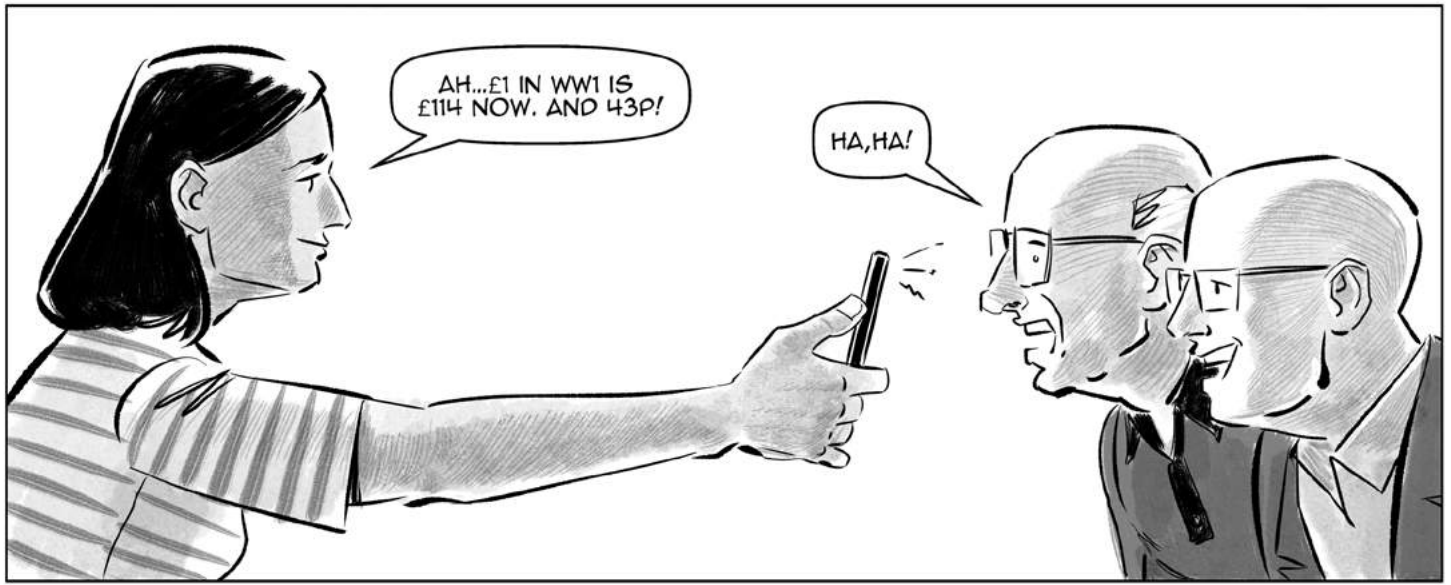
£1 A WEEK HUH?  
WHAT WOULD  
THAT BE  
WORTH NOW?

I'LL CHECK  
IT ON THE  
INTERNET.



OH IS THERE  
A PLACE FOR  
COMPARING  
PRICES  
ACROSS  
HISTORY?

YEAH, ITS  
EASY TO  
CHECK  
ONLINE  
NOW.



AH...£1 IN WW1 IS  
£114 NOW. AND 43P!

HA,HA!

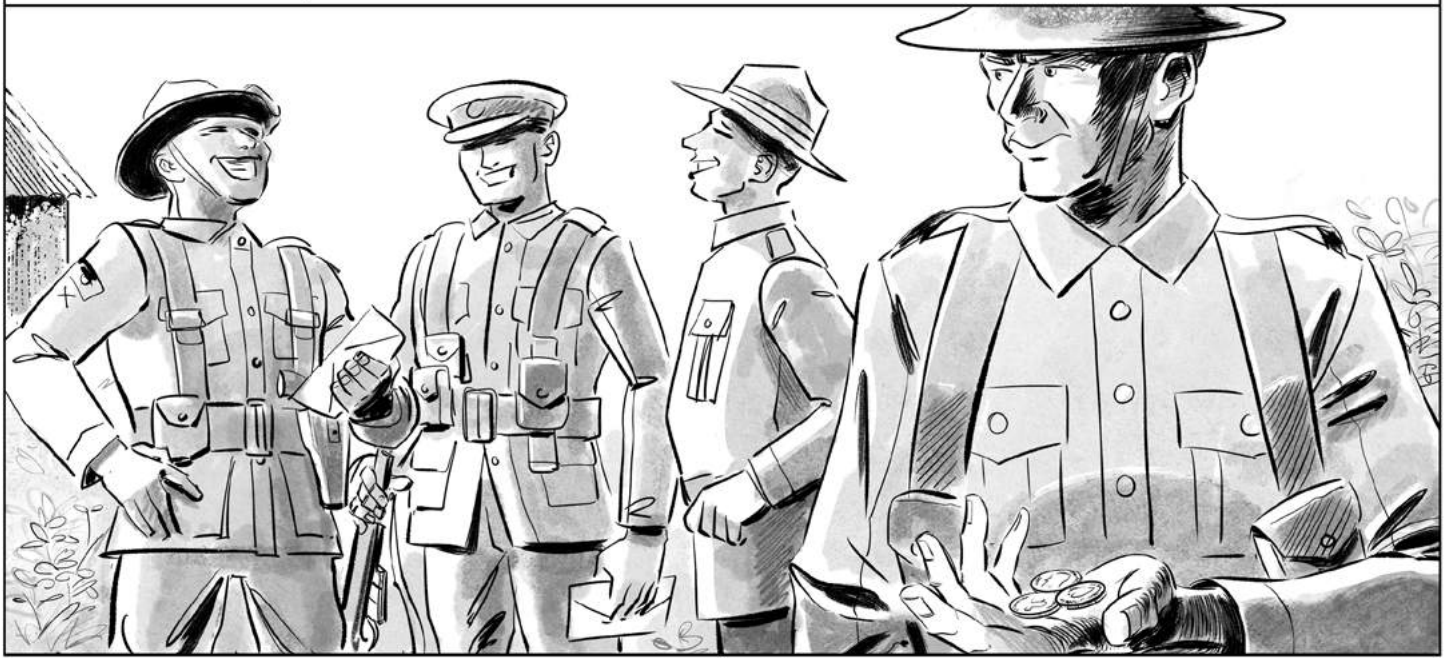


WELL, THAT'S NOT A HUGE  
AMOUNT, BUT A LOT BETTER THAN  
GETTING NOTHING -AFTER HAVING  
FOUGHT FOR YOUR COUNTRY. AND  
THEY PUSHED FOR OTHER THINGS  
THAT BENEFIT PEOPLE TOO, LIKE  
FREE MEALS FOR SCHOOL  
KIDS, ETC.

BUT SOME OF THE GFTU MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE STRONGLY DISAPPROVED OF THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT CRITICISMS OF THE WEWNC. SO, THE GFTU CAME TO BE REGARDED AS THE TRADE UNION ORGANISATION MOST ALIGNED TO THE GOVERNMENT.



STILL, IT WAS NOT WHOLLY PRO-GOVERNMENT. GREAT ANNOYANCE WAS SHOWN WHEN IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT THE AUSTRALIAN, NEW ZEALANDER AND CANADIAN TROOPS WERE PAID FOUR OR FIVE TIMES AS MUCH AS BRITISH TROOPS, DESPITE FIGHTING ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER.



THAT ISSUE BECAME THE BASIS FOR THE EFFORT AT IMPROVING CONDITIONS FOR SERVICEMEN THROUGH HEALTH AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE, EDUCATION AND DEPENDANT'S SUPPORT.



THE CALL FOR BETTER PAY WAS ESPECIALLY CHAMPIONED BY DOCKERS BEN TILLET AND ERNEST BEVIN, AND AS SUCH APPLETON WAS ABLE TO SPEND A FEW MORNINGS AT DOWNING STREET TO PRESS LLOYD GEORGE FOR GREATER CONCESSIONS.



IT WAS LARGELY FELT THAT THE 1 SHILLING PER DAY FOR SOLDIERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD PLEDGED DID NOT GO FAR ENOUGH.





IN 1919, FOLLOWING MORE IMPASSIONED CALLS FOR FAIRNESS FROM TILLET AND THE GFTU, THE GOVERNMENT FINALLY AGREED TO 3 SHILLINGS PER DAY FOR ALL SOLDIERS.



AN IMPORTANT BUT OVERLOOKED GROUP, THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF DISCHARGED AND DEMOBILIZED SAILORS AND SOLDIERS WERE AFFILIATED TO THE GFTU AND DID GOOD WORK FOR RETURNING SERVICEMEN. THOUGH THEY WERE SOON ABSORBED INTO THE VERY A-POLITICAL BRITISH LEGION.

**NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF DISCHARGED AND DEMOBILISED  
SAILORS AND SOLDIERS**



BRANCH ADDRESSES

SILVER BADGE CLUB,  
342, Harrow Road, W.9.

IN 1931 THE GFTU OPENED ITS NEW HEADQUARTERS BUILDING - CENTRAL HOUSE, CLOSE TO ELUSTON STATION. IN THE 1960S WE MOVED INTO THE NEW 6TH FLOOR.



DURING THE 1960S AND 70S THE GFTU FURTHER DEVELOPED THEIR EDUCATION PROGRAMME, AND GENERAL SECRETARY LESLIE HODGSON ESTABLISHED THE RESEARCH SERVICE

BUT YOU PROBABLY KNOW A LOT ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED IN THE 60S TO 90S PERIOD, JOE, BECAUSE IT'S THE ERA THAT YOU WERE ACTIVE IN THE UNION MOVEMENT YOURSELF.

SO PERHAPS INSTEAD WE COULD FOCUS ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GFTU, SINCE THE TIME YOU RETIRED.

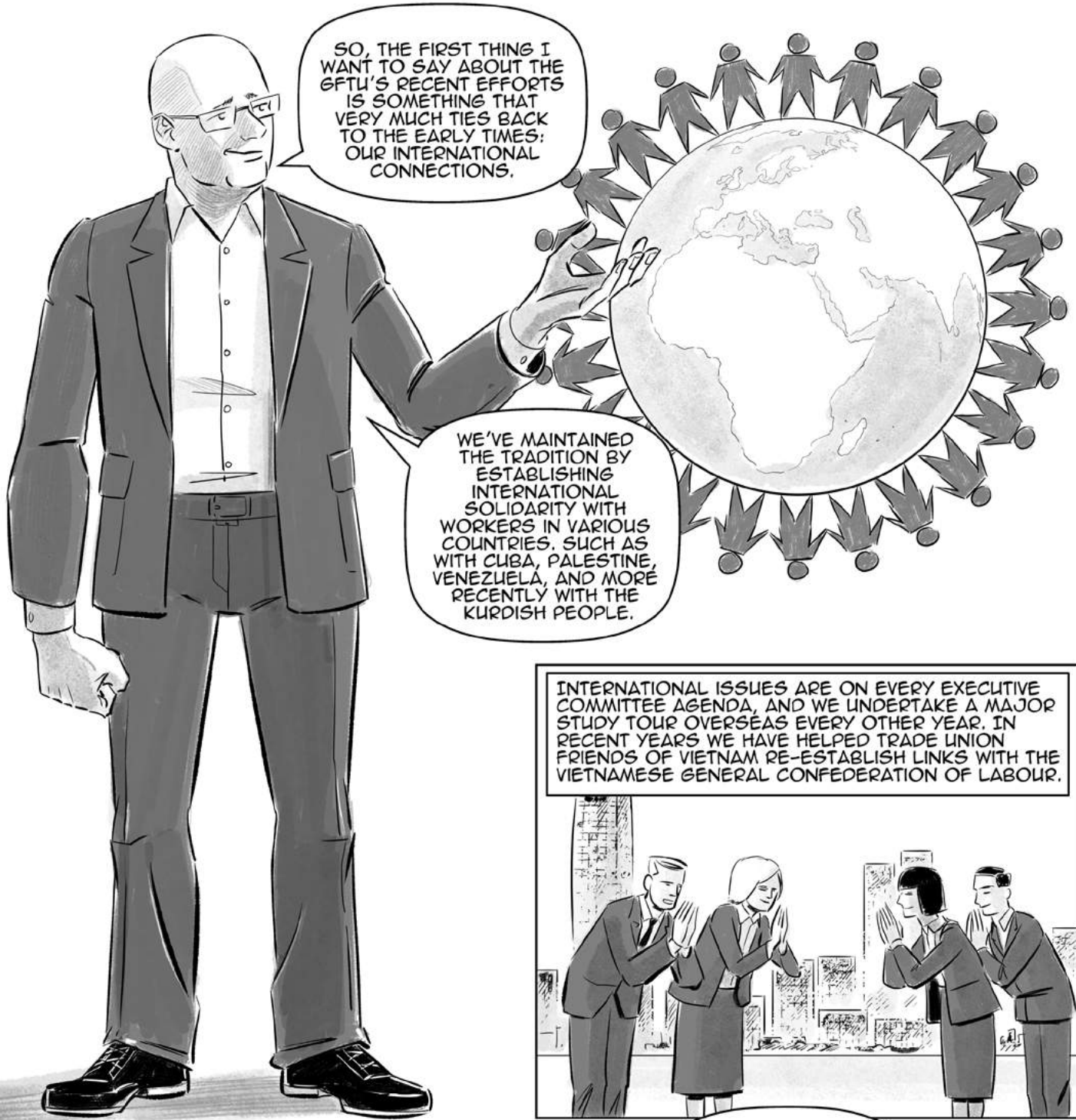
GOOD IDEA. OK WITH YOU ARUSHI?

YES, SURE.

GRANDA AND I HAVE TALKED A LOT ABOUT HIS TIME IN THE UNION ALREADY, SO I THINK I'M ALREADY QUITE UP ON THAT PERIOD.

OK, GOOD.

OF COURSE, I'VE ONLY GIVEN A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SOME OF OUR HISTORY. WE HAVE A PHD STUDENT, EDDA NICOLSON, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON, WHO IS MAKING A MUCH MORE THOROUGH STUDY OF IT NOW.



SO, THE FIRST THING I WANT TO SAY ABOUT THE GFTU'S RECENT EFFORTS IS SOMETHING THAT VERY MUCH TIES BACK TO THE EARLY TIMES: OUR INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS.

WE'VE MAINTAINED THE TRADITION BY ESTABLISHING INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH WORKERS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES. SUCH AS WITH CUBA, PALESTINE, VENEZUELA, AND MORE RECENTLY WITH THE KURDISH PEOPLE.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES ARE ON EVERY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGENDA, AND WE UNDERTAKE A MAJOR STUDY TOUR OVERSEAS EVERY OTHER YEAR. IN RECENT YEARS WE HAVE HELPED TRADE UNION FRIENDS OF VIETNAM RE-ESTABLISH LINKS WITH THE VIETNAMESE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR.



WE HAVE FREQUENT MEETINGS WITH TRADE UNION VISITORS FROM ALL SORTS OF COUNTRIES.



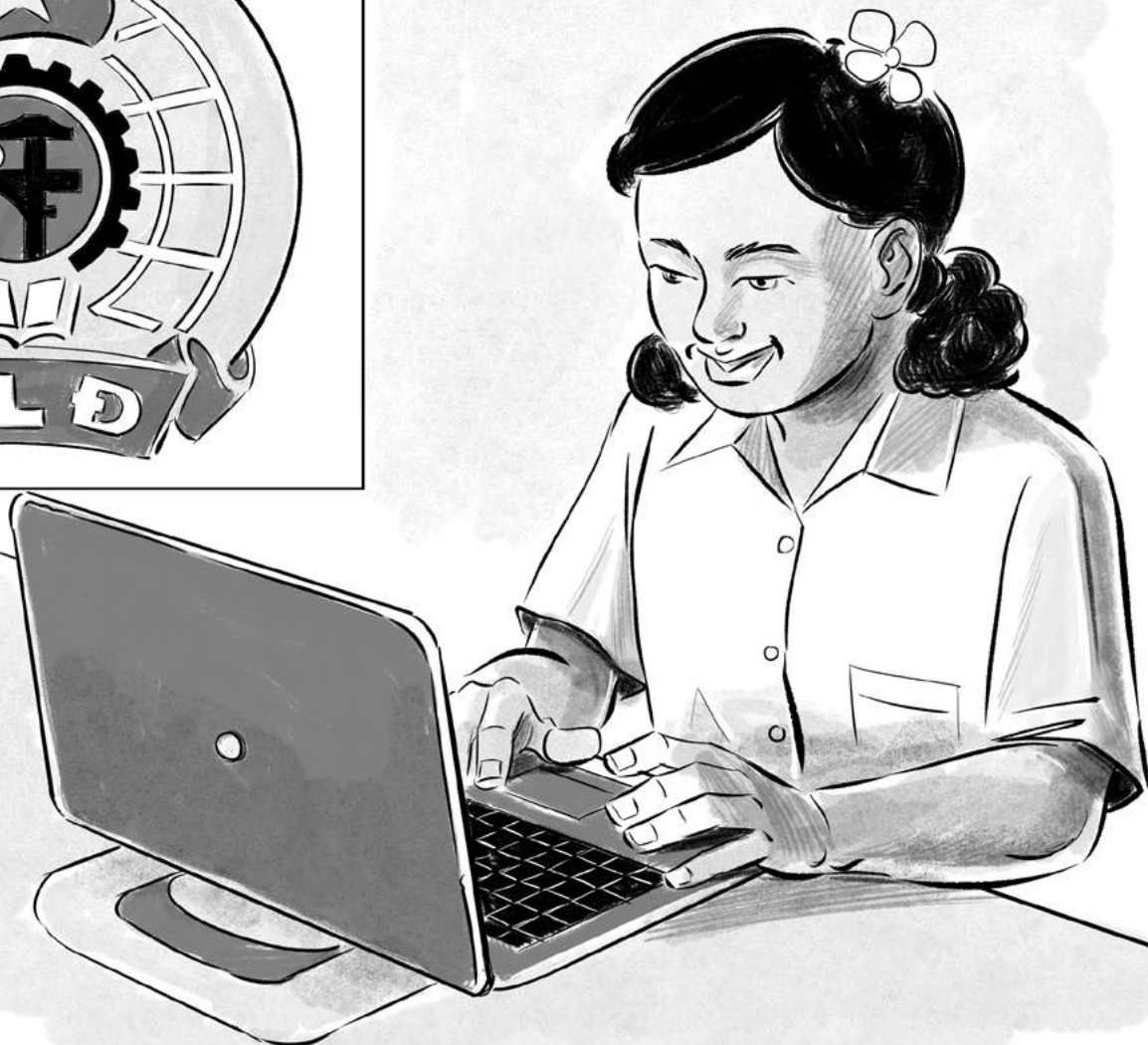
BASICALLY, WE STAND FOR PEACE BETWEEN NATIONS AND THE SUPPORT OF WORKERS EVERYWHERE. IT'S AN IMPORTANT THING THAT IS OFTEN MIRED IN EMPTY SLOGANS, BUT WE TRY TO DO SOMETHING CONCRETE ABOUT IT.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THAT IS THE POLAND STUDY VISIT IN SUMMER 2018. PART OF THE STUDY WAS FOCUSED ON THE MUSICIANS STRIKE ACTIONS, SOME MEMBERS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN IN DISPUTE WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS INVOLVING STRIKE ACTIONS AND DELAYING PERFORMANCES, ETC.

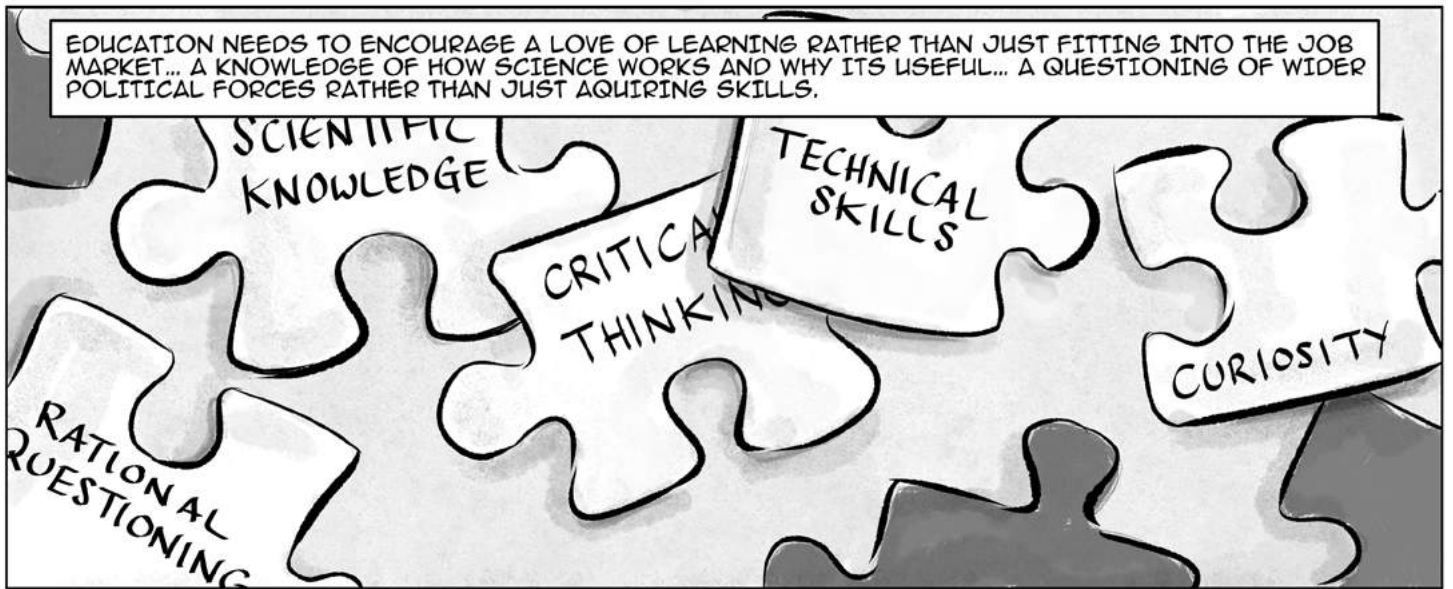
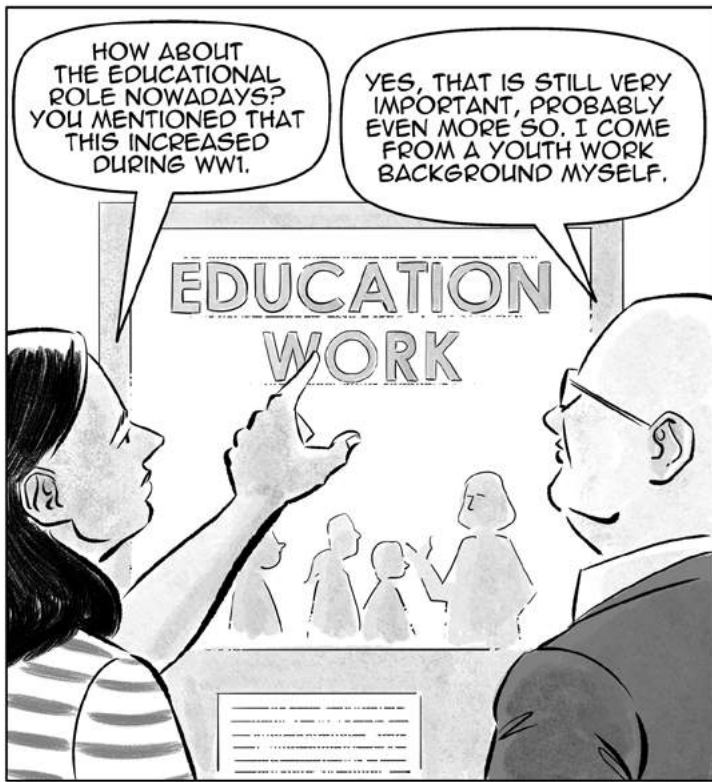


THE GFTU HAS ALSO BEEN VERY ACTIVE IN VARIOUS CONNECTIONS TO VIETNAM, VISITING THERE AND HELPING THE TRADE UNION FRIENDS OF VIETNAM RE-ESTABLISH LINKS WITH THE VIETNAMESE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR. DOUG NICHOLLS IS ALSO A COMMITTEE MEMBER OF THE VIETNAM-UK NETWORK.

IN SUMMER 2018 THE GFTU WAS REPRESENTED BY TWO MEMBERS, NICOLE AND EDWARD, ON A STUDY TRIP TO VENEZUELA, IN ORDER TO GAIN A DEEPER APPRECIATION OF THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT THERE. AMONG THE EXPERIENCES WAS THAT OF SEEING THE SOCIALIST WORKING PROCESSES AND AIMS OF A FACTORY MAKING CHEAP 'CANAIMAS' LAPTOPS FOR POOR STUDENTS. THE FACTORY USED TO BE A MILITARY BASE AND REDESIGNED ALONG ECOLOGICAL LINES.







THIS SAYS 'POLITICAL EDUCATION'. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

WELL, BASICALLY ITS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT POLITICS, HOW POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FORCES IMPACT OUR WORK AND OUR LIVES IN GENERAL.

# POLITICAL EDUCATION

OUR BOOK 'TRADE UNION EDUCATION TRANSFORMING THE WORLD' (WWW.WORKABLEBOOKS.ORG) LOOKS AT HOW MANY TRADE UNIONISTS HAVE ALSO SOUGHT TO DEVELOP A MORE POLITICALLY AWARE SET OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR MEMBERS AND THE IDEAS AND METHODS THEY HAVE USED.

IT USED TO BE A KEY ASPECT OF UNION'S EDUCATION PROGRAMMES, BUT SADLY ITS DECREASED A LOT. SO, THE GFTU'S EDUCATION PROGRAMME 'EDUCATION FOR ACTION' IS SEEKING TO BRING THAT CENTRE STAGE AGAIN IN ALL ELEMENTS OF TRADE UNION LEARNING.

# EDUCATION FOR ACTION

Educating Trade Unionists for workplace and social change.

April 2017 - July 2018

democracy  
empower  
social justice  
equality

€ ¥ £ \$

@

**GFTU**  
education-in-trust

New courses added for 2017-2018

IT IS ALSO WHY WE HAVE A NEW PROGRAMME TO HELP TRADE UNION TRAINERS DEVELOP EFFECTIVE METHODS OF TRAINING IN A POLITICALLY AWARE AND ENGAGING WAY. AND THE GFTU IS SPONSORING THE 'SHOUT OUT PROJECT' WHICH IS TAKING AN ACCESSIBLE POLITICAL LITERACY PROGRAMME INTO SCHOOLS.

# SHOUT OUT UK

OPENING THE MINDS OF A VOICELESS GENERATION

I SUPPOSE SOME OPPONENTS CALL THAT 'BRAIN WASHING'.

YEAH, BUT IT'S MORE LIKE 'BRAIN STIMULATION'. IT A QUESTION OF ENCOURAGING KNOWLEDGE AND INDEPENDENT THINKING.

FUNNY HOW THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ALWAYS AFRAID OF THAT!

IN TERMS OF CULTURAL WORK THE GFTU IS ALSO ACTIVELY CONTINUING ITS LONG-ESTABLISHED ROLE OF SUPPORTING ARTISTS, WRITERS AND CULTURAL WORKERS.

# CULTURAL WORK ▶



WE RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF SUCH CULTURAL WORKERS DOING WORK AIMED AT SOCIAL JUSTICE, COMBATTING THE ABUSES OF CAPITALISM AND ENCOURAGING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN BOTH CREATIVE WORK AND SOCIETY IN GENERAL. NOT JUST FOR THE 'LIBERAL ELITE', BUT FOR EVERYONE.

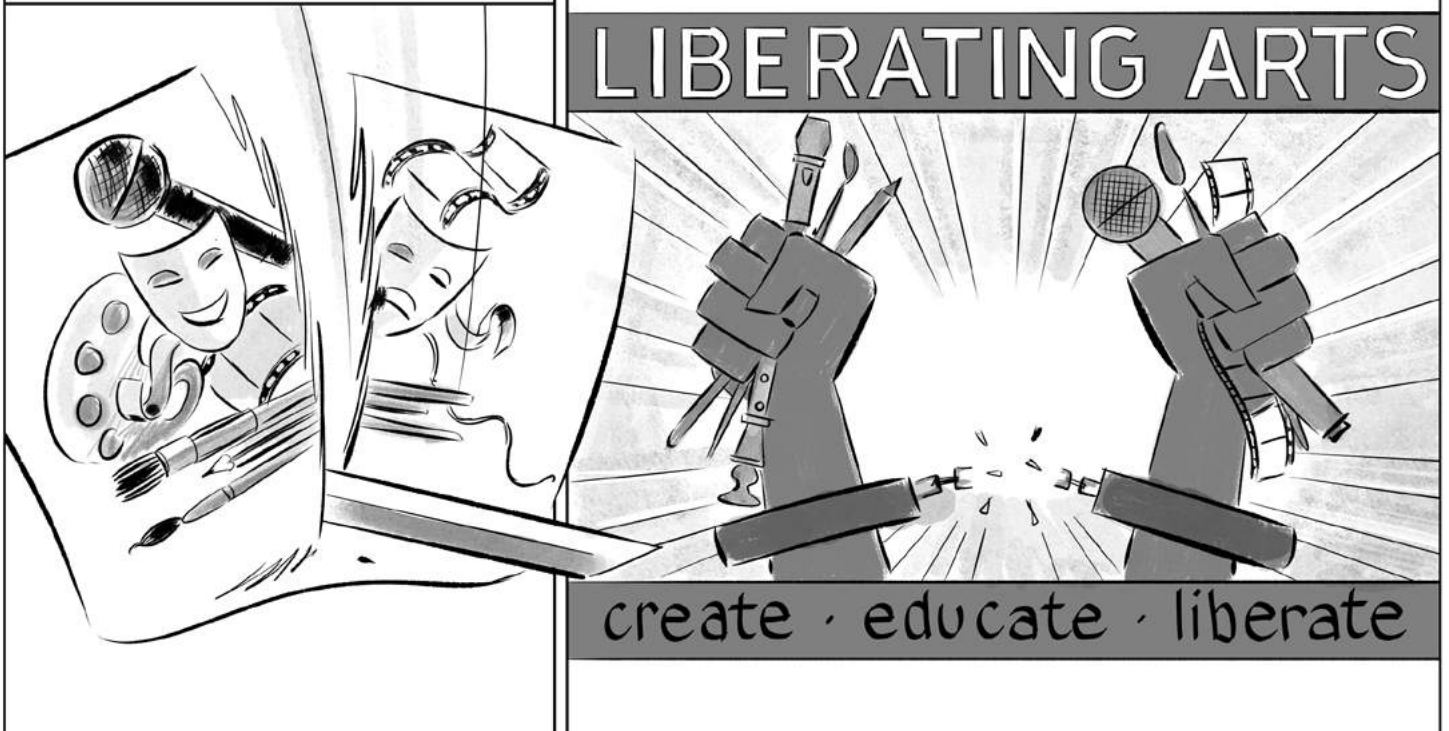
# THE CLIMATE



IDEOLOGICAL BASED CUT BACKS SINCE THE 1980S AND ESPECIALLY AUSTERITY CUTS SINCE 2008 HAVE DAMAGED SUCH CULTURAL WORK BADLY. FUNDING IS SCARCE AND PAY RATES TERRIBLE.

SO, IN ORDER TO SUPPORT SUCH CULTURAL WORK AND TO MORE CLOSELY ENGAGE WORKERS WITH UNIONS WE ORGANISED VARIOUS EVENTS AND INITIATIVES, SUCH AS THE ART OF TRADE UNION DAY AND THE LIBERATING ARTS EVENTS.

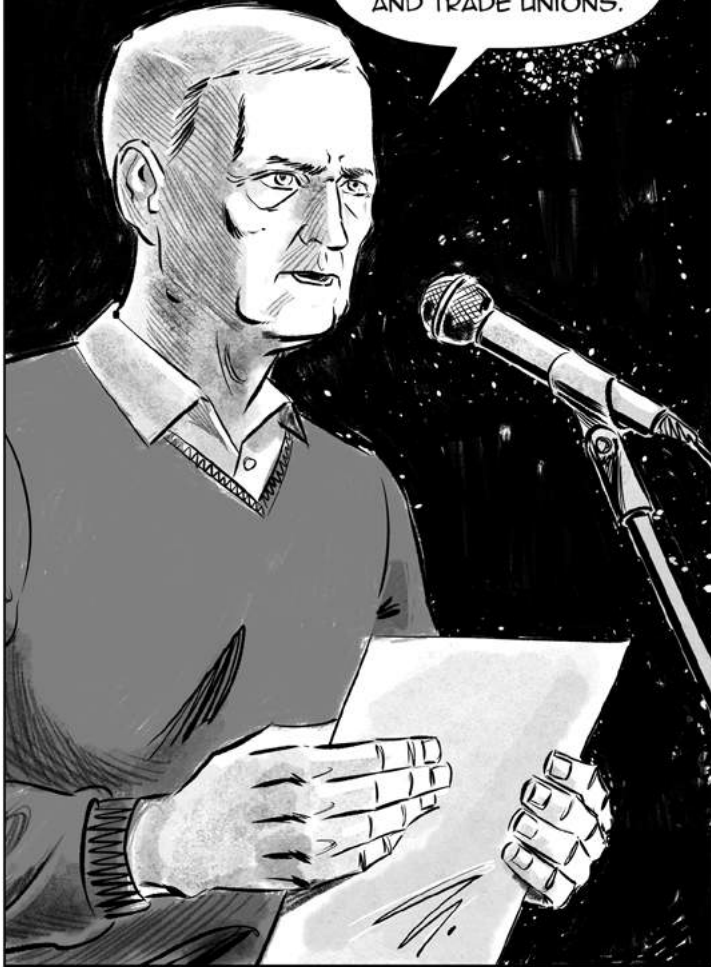
# LIBERATING ARTS



create · educate · liberate

TONY GARNETT, ESTEEMED SCRIPT WRITER AND PRODUCER OF MANY EXCELLENT PROGRAMS IN THE 1960S AND 70S AND STILL AN ACTIVIST NOW SPOKE AT THE LIBERATING ARTS EVENT IN 2017 AND VOICED IMPORTANT POINTS:

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A TRADE UNIONIST. BUT I THINK AN ECONOMIC FOCUS FOR UNIONS IS NOT ENOUGH. WE NEED AN ENERGETIC CROSS FERTILISATION BETWEEN THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY AND TRADE UNIONS.



IN THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES I PUT TOGETHER FILMS FOR THE BBC IN WHICH DOCKERS TOOK OVER THE LIVERPOOL DOCKS AND DECLARED A SOVIET; FILMS WHICH ANALYSED THE GENERAL STRIKE OF 1926 FROM A SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE; A FILM EXCORIATING WELFARE CUTS, SHOWING THEIR TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES.

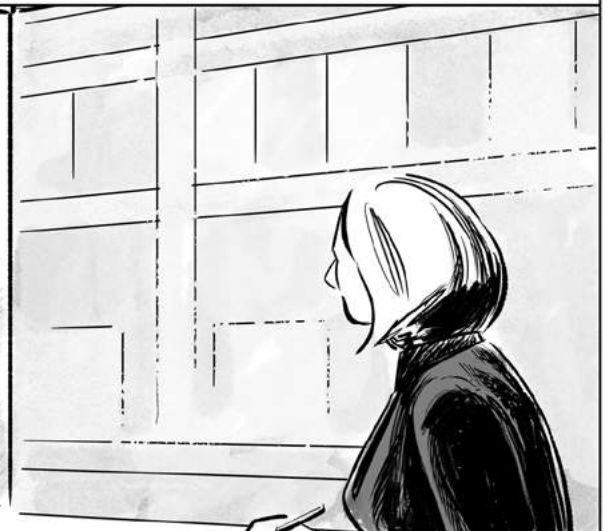
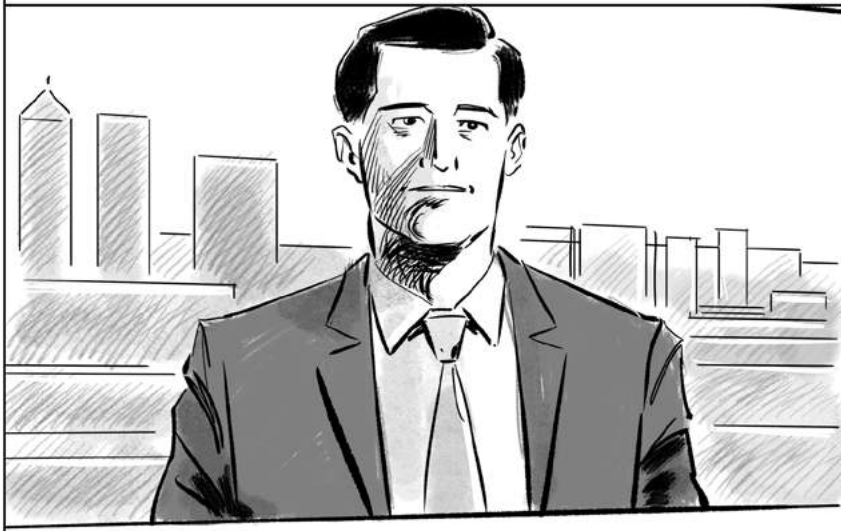


'THE BIG FLAME' A 'WEDNESDAY PLAY' BROADCAST IN FEB 1969.



WE FOUND AND WORKED WITH WORKING PEOPLE WHO HAD NEVER THOUGHT THEY WOULD EVER BE CREATIVE - LIKE A FOURTEEN YEAR-OLD LAD LANGUISHING IN A SECONDARY MODERN IN BARNSELY, DAI BRADLEY. HE CARRIED THE FILM KES, TRUTHFULLY AND MOVINGLY, NEVER HAVING ACTED BEFORE.

BUT NOWADAYS THE BBC RARELY SHOWS CLASS-BASED DRAMAS WHERE WORKING PEOPLE ARE PRESENTED FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW. AFTER THE BANKERS USED THATCHER'S FREEDOM TO ALMOST BANKRUPT THE WORLD, THE BBC ANALYSED THE CRISIS BY INTERVIEWING BANKERS AND FREE MARKET ECONOMISTS - HARDLY A WORD SOLICITED FROM A SOCIALIST ACADEMIC OR UNION EXPERT.





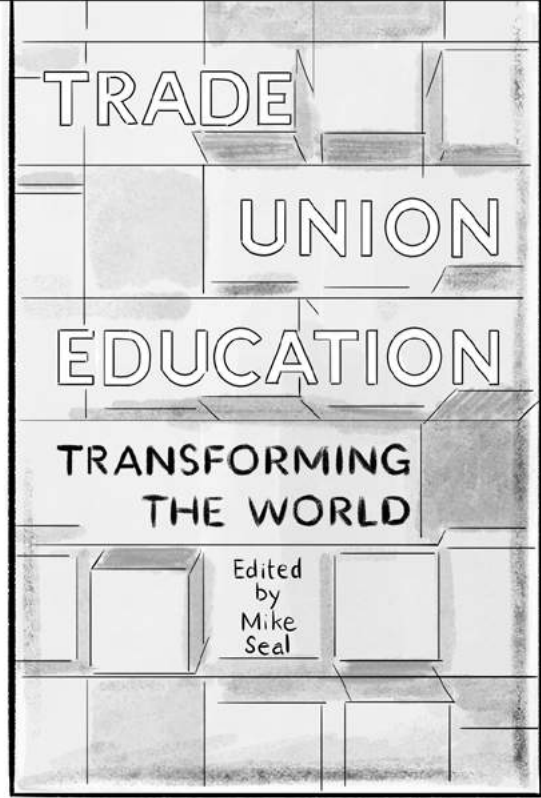
THE GREAT THEATRE PRODUCER, JOAN LITTLEWOOD, SAID, "EVERYONE IS A GENIUS", MEANING THAT CREATIVE WORK OF THE IMAGINATION CAN BE ELICITED FROM ANYONE.

WE NEED ACTIVE IMAGINATIONS TO HELP CREATE A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST FUTURE. IF YOU CAN'T IMAGINE IT, YOU WON'T ACHIEVE IT.



SOCIALISM WITHOUT THE FREE ARTIST BECOMES TOTALITARIANISM. SOCIALISM EMBRACING THE FREE ARTIST IS A FUTURE WHEN WE ALL BECOME TRULY HUMAN.

AS PART OF THIS EFFORT WE HAVE ALSO BEEN PRODUCING BOOKS IN OUR 'WORKABLE BOOKS' IMPRINT. FOR EXAMPLE 'TRADE UNION EDUCATION TRANSFORMING THE WORLD' BOOK IS 20 ESSAYS BY LEADING TRADE UNION EDUCATORS FOLLOWING A COUPLE OF YEARS OF DEBATES AT OUR EDUCATION OFFICERS' MEETINGS. IT CRITIQUED EXISTING METHODS AND CURRICULA OF TRADE UNION EDUCATION AND ADVOCATED NEW WAYS OF LEARNING.



The GFTU supports specialist unions and specialist sections of larger general unions.

- We provide research and campaigning and press support.
- We provide evidence and support in negotiations.
- We provide IT and communications support.
- We run specialist seminars and advice work to assist managing unions.
- We provide training courses, day schools and study seminars.
- We provide free education and research for affiliates as well as nearly 60 practical cost saving services.
- We organise youth conferences and support unions in their work to engage young people.
- We organise opportunities for networking and socialising for affiliates at the TUC.
- We can assist completely or in part with the administration of affiliates' health and safety work or education programmes.
- We provide unique opportunities for affiliates to support international union links and understanding.



**GFTU**  
GENERAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS



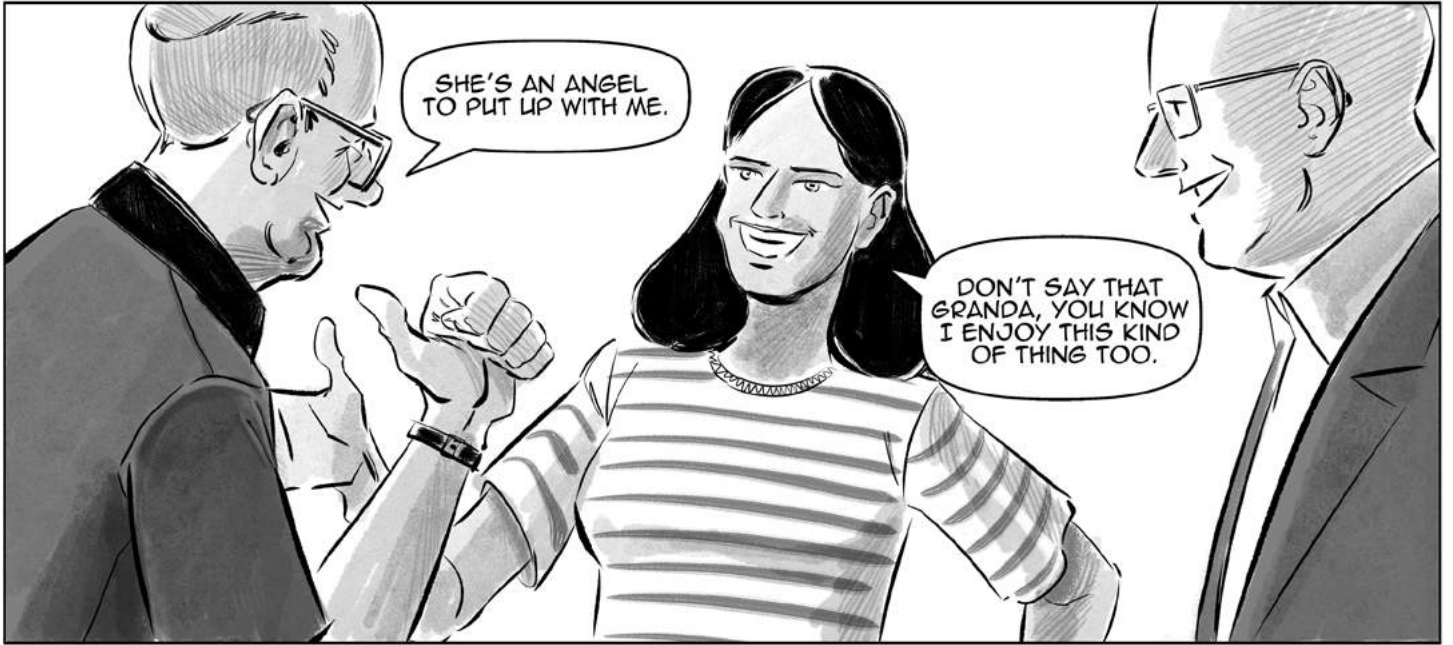
WELL, THAT'S US  
PRETTY MUCH UP  
TO DATE. AND,  
SORRY, BUT I  
HAVE TO GO  
UPSTAIRS FOR  
A MEETING.

SURE, I  
KNOW YOU  
MUST BE  
BUSY. IT'S  
BEEN GREAT  
OF YOU TO  
SHOW US  
AROUND,  
DOUG.



YES, THANKS A LOT.

MY PLEASURE. AND NICE  
TO MEET YOU ARUSHI.  
JOE'S LUCKY TO HAVE  
SMART GRANDDAUGHTER  
LIKE YOU THAT TAKES AN  
INTEREST IN THIS STUFF.



SHE'S AN ANGEL  
TO PUT UP WITH ME.

DON'T SAY THAT  
GRANDA, YOU KNOW  
I ENJOY THIS KIND  
OF THING TOO.





SO, HOW WAS THAT?

YEAH, IT WAS VERY INTERESTING. I LEARNED A LOT. THE KIND OF REAL PEOPLE'S HISTORY THEY SHOULD TEACH YOU IN SCHOOL, BUT DON'T.



GOOD.

AND YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S AN EXAMPLE OF THE LARGE AMOUNT OF STUFF IN OUR COUNTRY'S HISTORY AND SOCIETY THAT IS SWEEPED UNDER THE CARPET BY POWERFUL FORCES.

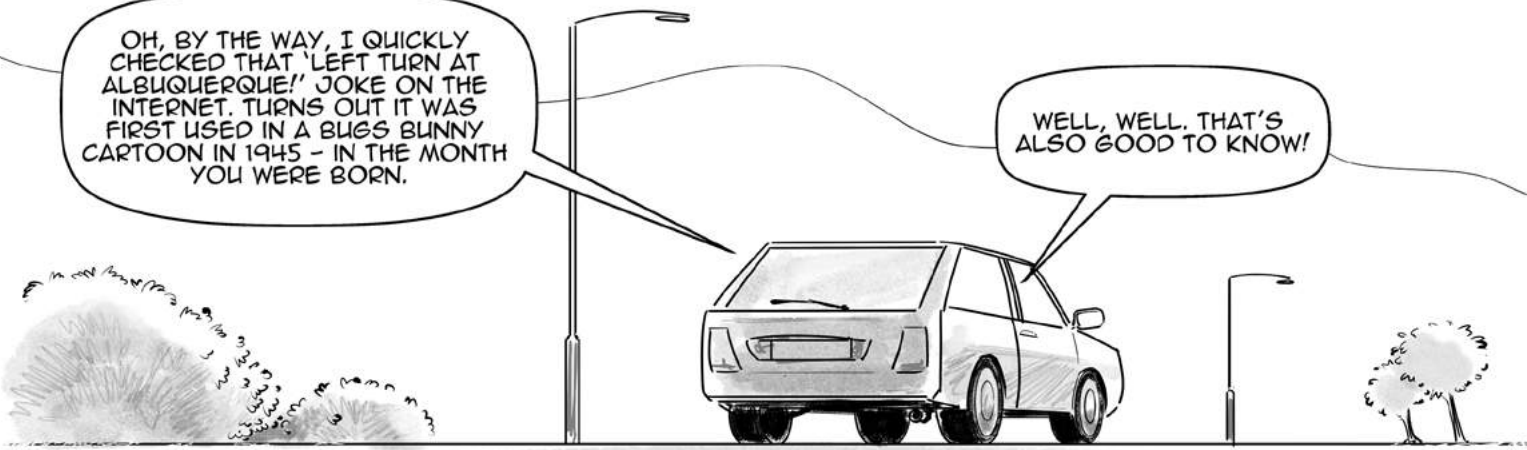


THE GFTU AND ALL THE UNIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THEM HAVE DONE SOME VERY IMPORTANT WORK OVER THE 120 YEARS. BUT IT'S NOT ALL HISTORY - THEY ARE VERY ACTIVE NOW, AND VERY MUCH NEEDED NOW.

YEAH, LOOKS LIKE IT.

OH, BY THE WAY, I QUICKLY CHECKED THAT 'LEFT TURN AT ALBUQUERQUE!' JOKE ON THE INTERNET. TURNS OUT IT WAS FIRST USED IN A BUGS BUNNY CARTOON IN 1945 - IN THE MONTH YOU WERE BORN.

WELL, WELL. THAT'S ALSO GOOD TO KNOW!



THE END.