

# BIG FLAME

Paper of the Revolutionary Socialist Organisation Big Flame

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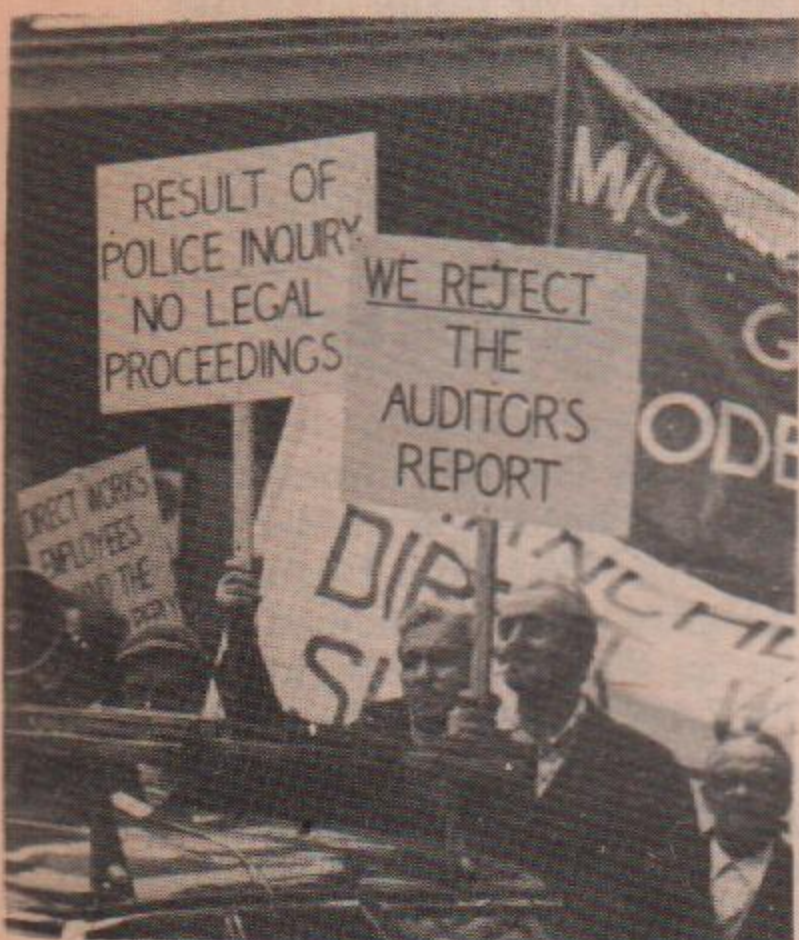
## Equal Pay Act 1975



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# SACRIFICES TODAY DON'T MEAN JOBS TOMORROW

live in a country where there's no work for 1½ million people.

Another flood of rumours and the pound sinks again. The pound in your pocket shrinks. Prices have reached a level no-one dreamed of a year ago and there's no sign of them stopping. What does it all mean? Where is it leading?

## WE AREN'T THE WINNERS—THATS CLEAR

Wages aren't keeping up with price rises. We've pulled in our belts, but we're told that the crisis is getting worse.

## GOOD NEWS FOR THE BANKERS

All over the world speculators are having a field day. They don't care if we can't pay the bills and can't afford meat. Their only interest is in making money.

## THE BOSSES WANT THE £ TO FALL

Every fall in the pound cuts our living standards but helps to make their goods easier to sell abroad.

## BUT THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN THAT

Worried and confused by the constant crisis talk, working class people are being harassed into accepting a permanent cut in living standards.

Hospitals, schools, buses — all public services — are being cut back. The same with jobs. If the bosses have their way, 1½ or 2 million unemployed are with us for good.

## Million

The bosses union, the CBI, tells us that if we accept the cuts in jobs and public services now, then in a few years time they'll create a million new jobs.

But this isn't true. Those thousand

s of jobs Courtaulds want to kill off will never come back. Instead, we'll get a few automated factories employing only handfuls of workers.

Under cover of the crisis, there is a massive transfer of money and power going on. And it's in the bosses' favour.

## Eighties

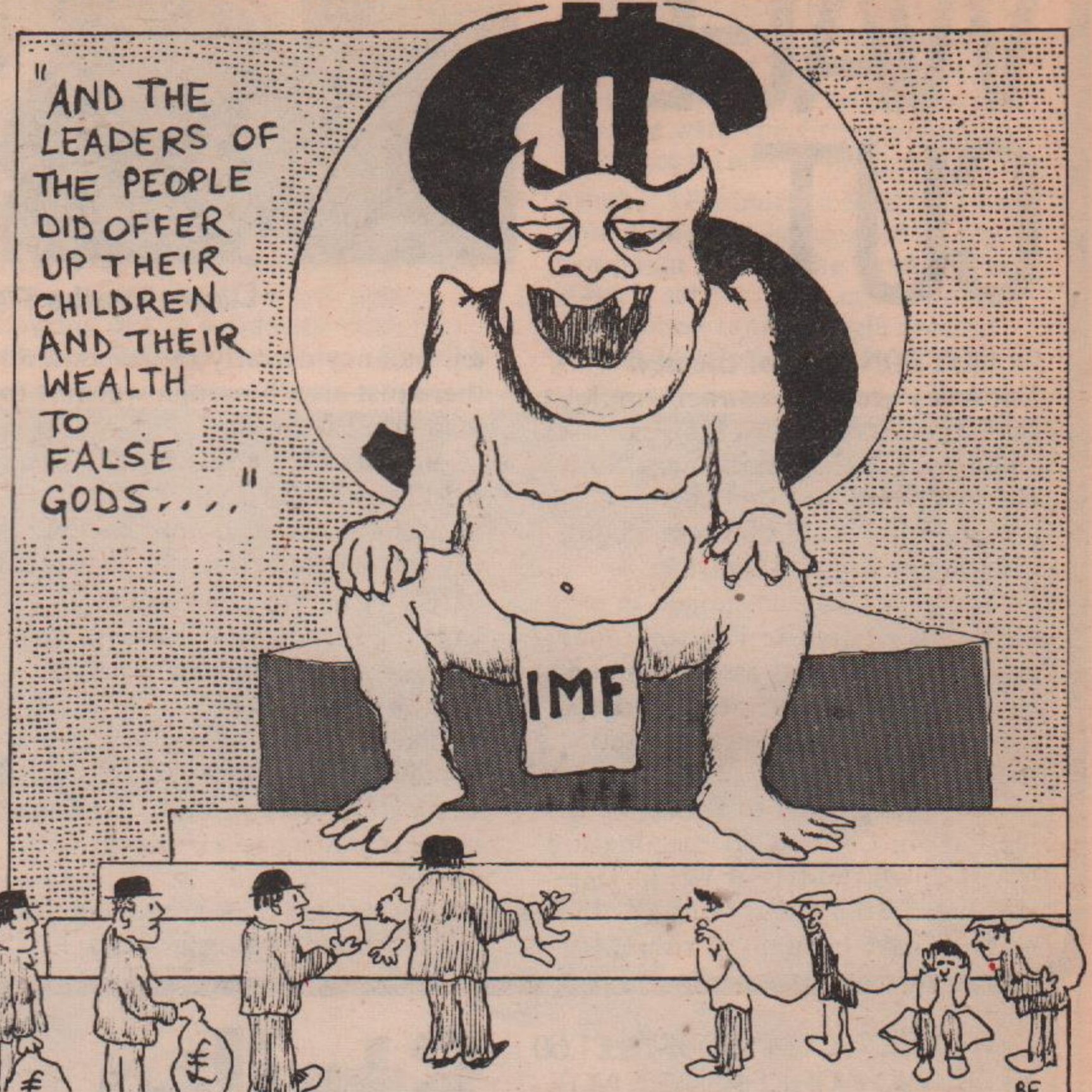
We're not going back to the Thirties. We're being dragged backwards into the Eighties.

The more we give way, the more they'll try to take. If we let them run down the hospitals, it won't be long before we are paying a fiver a time to visit the doctor. Then, those who can afford it will be free to 'choose' to pay for their health. And those who can't — that's most of us — will rely on the unpaid nurse at home, the housewife.

## Housing

We need better housing, more hospitals and schools. Yet we

It doesn't make any sense. It can't, because capitalism is madness. That's why we say, get rid of it, before it causes any more harm.



Next month, IMF (International Monetary Fund) representatives will be visiting Britain to decide the conditions on which which they will lend the Government money.

They will certainly demand more cuts in social spending and more unemployment.

# SUPPORT LOBBY AGAINST THE CUTS NOV 17 AND THE TUC ANTI-RACIST DEMO NOV 21

# MANCHESTER COUNCIL WORKERS MARCH

MORE THAN 2,000 out of the 4,500 workers from the Manchester Direct Works Department marched through the city on October 26th to protest at the concentrated barrage of muck-raking let loose by the Tory-backed private builders against the Department.

This was part of a half-day stoppage on all sites and depots in the city called by the Stewards Council with last minute official backing by the construction union, UCATT.

The marchers demanded the right of reply to the smears, and an investigation by the Ombudsman into the controversial city Auditor's report. And they announced their intention to fight any attempts to run down the Direct Works in favour of private enterprise.

## MASSIVE CUTS

The stoppage and march came as a reply to the carefully planned political and economic strategy of privately owned building firms. Backed by their Tory spokesmen in the council, they aim to prepare the public for massive cuts in the Direct Works Department, should the Tories take control of the council in the next elections.

### Stage 1 ●

The auditors announce that there have been 'some irregularities' in the bonus payments and in the materials used in the maintenance sections of the department. Ignoring the normal internal proce-

### M'SIDE

# LONG STRIKE OVER WAGE CUT

IN HUYTON, part of the new Knowsley area, the council employs ONE tiler to deal with 9,000 houses, and only THREE drainlayers. So it's not surprising that there's a backlog of over 25,000 repairs outstanding on council housing.

These facts are contained in a leaflet distributed to Huyton tenants by the local tenants association and Direct Works Department workers - now in the eighth week of their strike.

The background to the strike is the Labour Council's determination to cut down the Direct Works Department. In the last six months 114 workers have been given voluntary

reductions, the matter is immediately referred to the police Fraud Squad and released to an overjoyed Tory press.

Not so co-incidentally, this is immediately before the last local elections and is used by the Tories as a weapon in their campaign to cut back further capital works building (council houses, flats, etc.) and cut the budget for modernisation and maintenance work.

If the Direct Works was reduced to a skeleton then it would open the way for private builders to take on the work that was previously done by the council workers. Stage 2 ●

As we now know, the Tories were not successful in gaining control of the council but this did not stem the press hysteria about direct works 'fiddles'.

## POLICE

But the police came to the conclusion, that although there existed some inaccurate entries in time sheets due to the difficulties of operating the system and some rule of thumb measurements for materials, nevertheless there were no grounds for criminal prosecutions.

This did not stop Mr. Willan, of the Building Employers Federation writing an article in a trade magazine (later reprinted in the national and local press) arguing that, in general, Direct Labour was wasteful and inefficient when compared with private enterprise. Despite the fact that the Direct

Works Department have to tender alongside private concerns for building and maintenance contracts.

### Stage 3 ●

The city Auditors report announced through a haze of half-truths and some mystifying calculations that owing to irregularities and a 17% drop in maintenance work, the council should trim its budget by about £340,000 and 'trim its labour force in relation to its budget.' They didn't say that the drop in maintenance work is accountable to the fact that due to changing to the giro system of rent paying, tenants often had no easy way to report faults.

The magical figure of £1/3 million cuts seems to fit very nicely into national and local government policies, and opens the door to a casualisation of the direct labour force. Stage 4 ●

The private builders cartel starts to operate again as it has done at previous times when attempting to run down the direct works. In the tendering for the modernization of the walk-up flats in Every Street in Ancoats Manchester, it is found that a private builder is able to do the modernization of a dwelling for £400 less than direct labour can, even taking into account the fact that the direct works operatives would be taking a cut in bonus levels to do the job. When you consider that on top of the costs for a job, the private

builder has to make a PROFIT, there is no way that this can be achieved by a reputable builder unless the job is being subsidised as an investment for the future when there would be no direct labour competition

## PROFITS

Why are the private builders worried? They have always been anxious because direct labour represents a threat to private enterprise. Because in Direct Works good pay and benefits and safe conditions have been won by the organized power of a stable workforce. Because direct works operatives are not hired and fired when a job is started and finished and so cannot be used as pawns in the bigger capitalist game of 'manpower mobility', and dole queue blackmail.

But more than this, a bill is prepared for this session of Parliament which will allow direct labour departments to tender for contracts outside their own immediate areas and gives free rein to the expansion of direct labour. So in little backwaters where previously the building employers have been lining their own pockets at the ratepayers expense, now they are to be faced with an organized and efficient labour force which can threaten their livelihoods with costs-only tenders. This would be the death of the private building industry. This is what the bosses are most afraid of.



Direct Works Rally at Manchester

redundancy or early retirement. So there just aren't enough workers to maintain the houses.

But the final straw for the Direct workers was the council's decision to withdraw their bonus system. One of the stewards told us it would hardly be worth his while to go on working if the council got its way. In many cases it means a cut of £10 or more a week.

The bonus cuts are bad news for tenants too. The backlog of repairs is unlikely to shrink any faster if the incentive of a bonus is withdrawn.

Aware that they are saving thousands of pounds in wages and

maintenance materials, the council refuses to talk to the strikers. They are banking on starving them back to work.

The Direct workers are incensed by the council's attitude. It's partly that they object to being accused of extorting an unfair bonus (actually a bonus which just about makes their basic rate tolerable), but it's also because they see themselves surrounded by so much official waste.

Recently, for instance, Direct workers were putting up gutters on the Huyton Farm estate. They need not have bothered. Along came a bloke from a private company to

tell them they already had a contract to put those gutters up. So later this company came along and tore down the new gutters to put their own up!!!

For the record, Knowsley is the council that 'invested' thousands of pounds on a ski-slope in Kirkby that was too dangerous to use. Some of its councillors clearly have a double standard when it comes to making cuts in public spending - last year they claimed £40,000 in expenses alone.

After 8 weeks on strike the workers are seriously short of cash. All contributions to the strike fund are welcome. Send to: - J. McNally, c/o TGWU, Islington, Liverpool.

Big Flame photo

# Anti Racism News



NOVEMBER SEES 2 local council by-elections in South London where National Front and National Party candidates are standing. For the fascist organisations these elections are important to keep up the momentum established in South London council by-elections in the summer: at Deptford, in Lewisham, (where their poll, if combined, of 43% was higher than the winning Labour candidate); at Southfields, in Wandsworth (where they obtained several hundred votes); and at Waddon, in Croydon (where together they polled nearly 800 votes and enabled the Tories to take this seat from Labour.)

Both Deptford and Waddon are solid working class constituencies, as is Angel Ward in Brixton where there is a by-election on 18th November. Both the NF and NP are standing here. They will be opposed among others, by a left-wing Labour Party candidate, and a Socialist Worker candidate.

The other by-election, at Sydenham West, Lewisham, takes place on 4th November. Again both NF and NP are standing in this marginal seat which is currently held by the Tories. Anti-fascist leafleting has been carried out in the area by local anti-racists.

For their part, the NF and NP have been increasingly in evidence in South London. 30 NF members attempted to break up a meeting organised by Penge Labour Party, Bromley, on 21st October, and there has been a battle waged by the local left on the streets on South London to prevent the fascists selling their literature. On 16th October a picket of 70 people successfully prevented the NP from selling their papers in Streatham, one of their favourite spots.

## Long term

Whilst more and more individuals on the left are recognising the need to do long-term work against racism in the communities and workplaces there is still a long way to go to counter the trend to the right provoked by such statements as those of Judge Gwyn Morris when he argued for white vigilante patrols in South London.

Much of the (white) left's response has failed to draw in the support and active participation from the black community. One of the key struggles to be waged is a political struggle among the left to recognise the essential need for independent black organisation to overcome the many divisions within the black working class. Until this political need is accepted, blacks will be conspicuous by their absence on many anti-racist campaigns.

## Exception

One exception to this is the Croydon Trades Council Campaign which is holding a public meeting on 11th November to counteract the growing influence of racist and fascist ideas and to build for the TUC/Labour Party demonstration on 21st November. Such initiatives as these should be supported by all those on the left who recognise the dangers to the whole working class movement from the increase of racism and development of fascist organisations in its ranks.

PUBLIC MEETING AGAINST RACISM. Thursday 11th November 7:30pm Ruskin House, Coombe Rd Croydon. Speakers include Ron Keating, Asst. Gen. Sec. (elect) NUPE. Organised by Croydon Trades Council Campaign Against Racism (membership 50p), Ruskin House, Coombe Rd., Croydon.

WHERE A CUPPA COSTS £1.50 AND WORKERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO JOIN A UNION

The 'Inn on the Park' is a luxury hotel in Park Lane, London. Costs for rooms range from £32 a night for a single room to £162 for a suite - and that's without breakfast.

Over the past year management have cut back in staff in all departments and continually harassed those workers they wanted to get rid of. A majority of the workers want to join a union (the Transport and General, International Section) - but management have so far

# Strike brings hardship to Kojak



A FOUR SEASONS HOTEL

refused the union recognition. ACAS are conducting an inquiry. In the meantime, the workers are meeting to decide on a strike

which will bring immediate 'hardship' to Kojak and the other moneybags who stay at the hotel.

Like other hotel owners, the Canadian owners of the 'Inn

on the Park' get a £1,000 a room grant from the government to build the hotel. They are now making enormous profits on the backs of an unorganised workforce. Over the last few years, there has been a slow, hard struggle to improve the conditions of catering workers - unionisation is a first step in this struggle since it protects workers from arbitrary sacking.

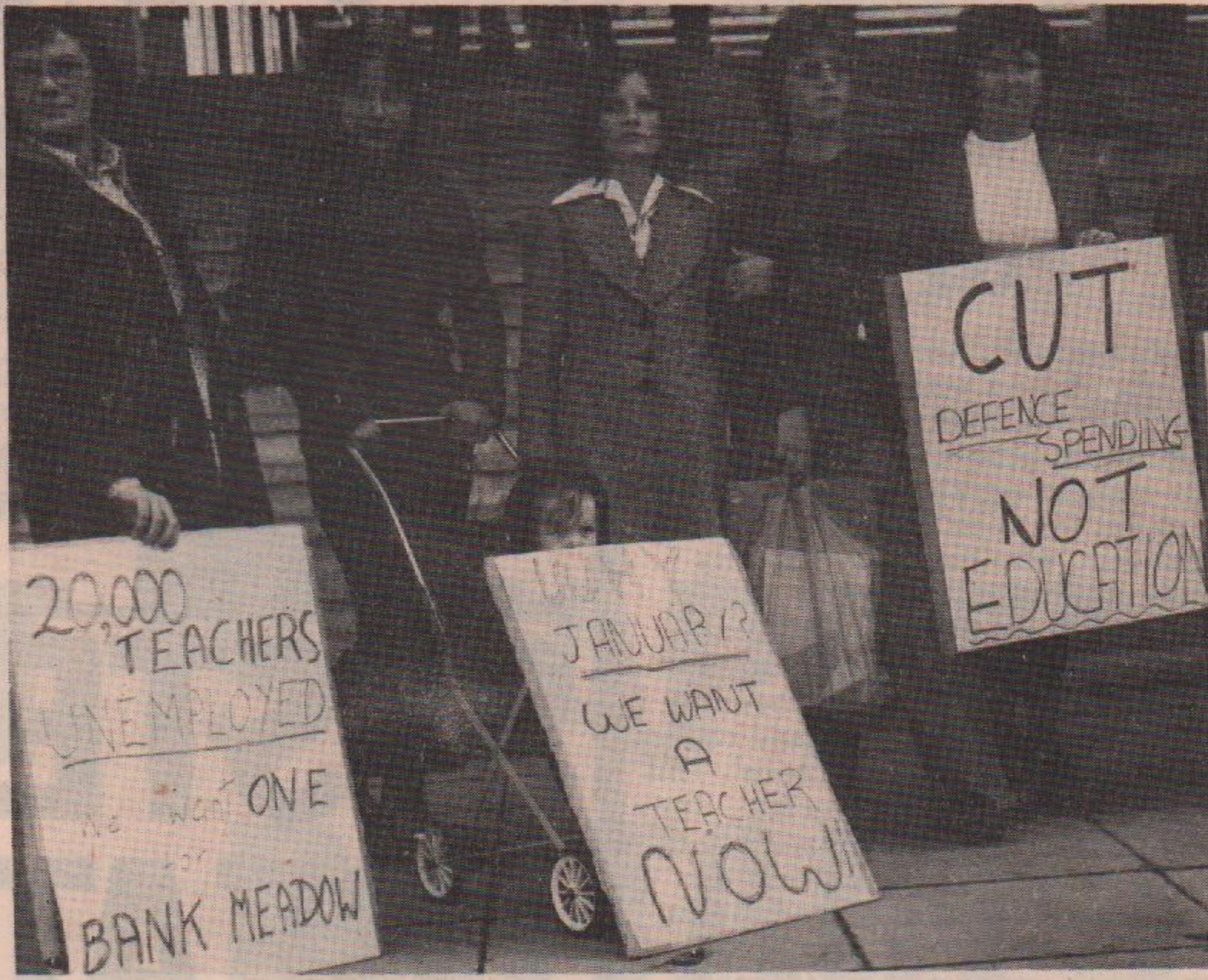
The Inn on the Park' workers expect to get the support of taxi-drivers and delivery drivers in their fight to force management to recognise the union. As one of the workers said 'We won't stop the guests, but there won't be any services for them.'

# CUTBACKS

## EDUCATION: whose choice?

GOVERNMENT CUTS in social expenditure are beginning to have an effect. The fight back against them is taking place all over the country.

One such fight is on at Bank Meadow Primary School in Ardwick, a working class district of East Manchester. It's only a small school but the Education Authority thought it could get away with not replacing a teacher who left last term. But the parents, mostly the mothers, have refused to let them get away with what they see as an attempt by the Education Authority to lower the educational standard of their children. As one woman put it, 'In Ardwick, because it's a working class area, we get the worst of everything; they think we're all ignorant and don't know any better'. The parents know that large classes of up to 40 are bad. But the Deputy Education Officer tried to claim that 'there is no proof that large classes harmed children educationally.' The parents also realise that just shuffling the kids around like a pack of cards, as has been done, and disregarding the children's needs is no solution either



'By Christmas, I'll be wondering where on earth our exercise books will be coming from..... and our pens and our pencils and our ink. I'm already rationing paper, with the result that I have to limit severely the enthusiasm of the children. Just imagine what this means to a kid who is discovering reading and writing for the first time in his life. Well you don't have to imagine it: when the paper starts to run out, you can come here and watch him lose interest, lose his command of the language and accept what his life outside school conditions him to accept. (Oldham teacher)

### wrong

They also know that there's something wrong in a society with 20,000 unemployed teachers and millions of children in overcrowded classrooms, and a Government that spends £50 million a year on buying places in an independent school — the same as the latest round of education cuts! In a society where the proportion of working class children, as against middle class, going to university has not changed in the last 50 years!

### rrr's

At the moment Callaghan is trying to divert our attention away from the education cuts by calling for a return to the 3 R's and the so-called 'golden age of education' which never existed. But the parents of Bank Meadow School are not fooled and know it's not more discipline we need but more teachers and new schools.

So far the parents have had a petition and several pickets on the education offices. They are now visiting all the schools in the area to see what conditions are like there. They also want to contact other parents who are fighting education cuts of any kind (especially as Manchester is planning to get rid of another 100 primary school teachers), and to encourage other parents to check up on their children's school. They see that the only way to win is to join together, parents, children and teachers — to fight for the future of children's education, against a government which is trying to take away our right to a decent education.

Interested please contact: Parents Action Group, 1 Aden Close, Ardwick, Manchester 11.

## E.G.A. TO STAY..OK...

The fight to save the Elizabeth Garret Anderson, (EGA) a womens hospital in North London, is now in a decisive phase. Recent important events have included:—

September 20th — Camden and Islington Area Health Authority says patients of the EGA will be moved out 'soon'

September 23rd - Mass meeting in EGA decides to resist patients being moved out and to 'work-in' if necessary.

October 11th - Hospital Staff Action Committee elected representing all staff

October 18th - letter from Ennals, Minister of Health says hospital to close by end of year.

October 22nd - mass meeting in hospital reaffirms decision to 'work-in' if necessary - but leaves actual decision on whether to call work-in and how it would be organised to an emergency union meeting.

The EGA campaign has been extremely successful in uniting hospital workers, militants of the women's movement, local tenants and pensioners in support of saving the EGA. As the campaign report says this is due to the fact that 'the campaign does not consider its role as merely defensive, but as a positive platform for the improvement of a particular aspect of the Health Service - the care of women'.

The demands of the campaign are

**NO CLOSURE, NO REDUNDANCIES:**

**MEND THE LIFT AND UPGRADE THE HOSPITAL ON ITS PRESENT SITE'**

An excellent pamphlet 'EGA Stays OK' can be got from the EGA Campaign (58A Plimsoll Rd. London N.4) which needs your support.



WEST LONDON: Nurses from St. Charles Hospital in Ladbrooke Grove were out leafletting and petitioning on September 23rd, telling local people how the cuts will affect their hospitals.

The nurses have formed themselves into an association and worked out a plan of action with St. Mary's Hospital in Paddington. They're protesting against a management decision to cut the intake of student nurses from 560 to 450 by the end of the year. They say patients will suffer because staff nurses can't do their job properly without sufficient student back-up. And they are afraid nurses now in training won't be offered jobs when they qualify. The district health authority says it's only carrying out Government policy and claims to be doing so without causing any redundancies — which simply means recruiting fewer students and not replacing staff who leave. (Spare Rib)

## SHEFFIELD TOOLS another calculated killing.

THE NEWS broke on Friday morning, 8 October. Shop stewards at the Capital Works were called in to meet their new boss, Gilbert Hunt, who told them that the factory would be closing and all 400 workers would be made redundant.

Capital Works is part of the tools division of steel and engineering firm Edgar Allen, Balfour, a British based multinational company.

The company claims that the works is not viable: that after making losses for years, it will lose £600,000 in the current financial year. But they have refused to show the workers the figures on which these claims are based.

The workers' case is that the plant could be viable — if the firm were willing to invest.

Workers we spoke to say that Edgar Allen, Balfours has deliberately run down the works, and has been planning its closure ever since the merger of Balfour Darwins and Edgar Allen in March 1975.

Convenor Derek Simpson uses the illustration of a lawn mower and a pair of scissors — 'It's like someone giving us ten pairs of scissors to cut a lawn, and having to compete with a lawn mower,' he says. 'We wanted a lawn mower of our own, but all they did was to take away two pairs of scissors to cut the costs.'

### plans

The first sign of the company's plans came back in May last year, when the special sections of the Sheffield tools division were transferred to Opeñshaw, Manchester. When, however, later in the year the firm tried to get rid of 100 workers and transfer the stock control and packing unit to Manchester too, their plans came unstuck. They failed to get sufficient volunteers for redundancy, and then they tried to sack 28 workers, mainly women, the workers responded by striking and staging a sit in. For ten weeks, the 360 strikers took it in turn to occupy the stock-control unit on Greenland Road; deputations visited other factories and pits to rally support; weekly mass meetings were held to report back and discuss plans. And in the end, Edgar Allens were forced to withdraw the redundancy notices.

The workers returned from the strike with their organisation and confidence intact. And in addition they had used the dispute to build links with other workers in the group. On November 5 '75, the first ever combine-wide strike had been staged, with several plants coming out in solidarity with the sit-in at Balfour Darwins. There is

is a strong feeling amongst workers at Greenland Road that it is because they have been the main force behind building the group shop stewards committee, coupled with the fact that their wages are £10 higher than those in Manchester, that the firm is trying to shut the plant. There is little doubt that Edgar Allen, Balfour could make the Capital works profitable if it decided to do so. It made record profits last year, and has big reserves - the chairman has also stated that they would be willing to borrow more to expand both at home and overseas. Instead, they have run down the plant, and invested heavily in Australia and Canada and in Manchester. In the highly competitive world market for special steels and tools, the Capital works is too much of a liability. Its high wages and equal pay agreement are a reference point for parity for other workers in the group. Its strong organisation, and the stewards attempt to build a combine committee are the major threat to the company's rationalisation plans.

### come out

At a mass meeting in the plant just after the announced closure, which is due to take effect in January, the workforce unanimously agreed to fight the company's plans. They have been backed by the workers at Manchester, who have said they will refuse to cooperate with the firm's plans. Representatives of most of the other EAB plants in Sheffield have now come out in support of the campaign to save the works. The stage is set for what could be the most important struggle around jobs in Sheffield for a long time.

WHO? THEM OR US?

# Over 2,000 innocent people arrested under... Police terror Act

THE TRADE UNION Committee against the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) has been campaigning for nearly a year now. We have always seen the Act as part of the British Government's war on Irish people. It is a weapon to harass and intimidate Irish people in Britain so they remain silent about British policy in Northern Ireland.

## LATEST FIGURES FOR ARRESTS UNDER P.T.A.

No. of people charged	46
No. of people deported	80
No. of people released after up to 7 days detention	2074
Total arrests	2200

1200 of total were held at ports and airports. 1000 of total were picked up in Irish communities in Britain.

It is obvious from the figures of those arrested that the Act has a political purpose, and has interfered with the lives of a lot of innocent Irish people.

But the Trade Union Committee is becoming increasingly concerned with the way the Act is being used to put known Irish Republicans behind bars for long periods of time.

On September 28th, 4 people were arrested in London under the Act. 3 were released after 2, 4 and 5 days. One man was charged.

### CASE 1

I myself am the Secretary of the Trade Union Committee. At 6.40 on the morning of September 28th, nine Special Branch men, a woman and a dog let themselves into our flat, and appeared in the bedroom while I was in bed. They searched the house and took away boxloads of paper, writings and notes belonging to me, including the files of the Committee.

An hour later they took my husband and myself to the Police Station. Numerous sets of fingerprints and photographs were taken, and our hands were tested for traces of explosives.

There followed two days and a night in a cell, into which a light blazed night and day. An empty tiled room with a bench and toilet

and nothing to do but sit and wait and wonder, in between sessions of questioning by Scotland Yards Irish squad.

Outside the door is a small blackboard with the word 'Terrorism' scrawled in chalk, and the jailer is told by the policemen to 'watch this one'. I was treated as if I was guilty of something. Two days in these uncomfortable conditions won't greatly harm a healthy person, even a pregnant woman, as I am. But these are conditions of punishment under which nearly 2000 innocent people have been held in the last two years.

You are allowed no solicitor, no phone call. You are not told why you have been arrested, what their plans are for you, when you will be released, when you will be brought out for questioning again.

Their aim is to startle, confuse and frighten you. Friends who phoned were told I was not being held, even after a day and a night. I was told no-one had called to ask after me. The jailer treated me as if I was convicted.

Once I asked her the time and she said, 'What's the use of time to you? You're going to be here for days and days.' Actually I was let out 5 hours later - into the welcoming arms of a chanting picket which had begun half an hour before.

### CASE 2

Ena and Anthony Cunningham were also arrested on September 28th. Ena was released after 5 days, Anthony was charged after 7.

Ena is a chronic asthmatic. She wears a medical bracelet, uses an oxygen pump and takes tablets daily. They refused to let her see a doctor, saying 'this isn't a hotel', and she had to wait overnight - a dangerous delay. She slept for 5 nights in a hot, airless cell on a bench with no mattress. It was especially distressing because she is claustrophobic.

After her release, she found her home in total disarray - floorboards up, clothes torn, family photos spoiled. She lost her job as welfare worker for Brent council. ('The clients would be terrified'). She discovered that her 12 year old daughter had been met at the school gates by detectives who interrogated her 3 times in a cell in Paddington Green Police Station

All this disruption and inhuman treatment - and then release with NO CHARGES!

Emergency Phone No's.  
Manchester: 061 832-8102  
Liverpool: 051 227-1301  
London: 01 603-8654

### CASE 3

Ena's husband, Anthony, was charged after 7 days with 'conspiracy with persons unknown to cause explosions between 1973 and 1976'. Six months ago the Committee held a picket for Sean Canavan, a young Irishman, who had been similarly charged after 7 days.

In both cases the charges were open and vague. The police had not enough evidence to arrest them under ordinary criminal law and charge them with 'causing explosions'. This is where the PTA is so 'useful' - they can use the 7 days of isolation and extensive questioning to build up enough circumstantial information, and a plausible-sounding network of the man's connections, to bring a general 'holding charge' of conspiracy. Then they use the long remand period to gather more evidence and make a specific charge fit. Many prisoners in these cases are held for months, often a year, before their trial. The 7 days can also be used to put all kinds of pressures on prisoners to sign statements and incriminate themselves to avoid 'worse charges, which are threatened.

The combination of 1, the PTA, 2, long remand periods with no bail (a form of internment), 3, the conspiracy laws - is leading to 20 and 30 year sentences for people on evidence that would normally be laughed out of court. The McGuires, the Birmingham 'bombers' and the late Noel Jenkinson are cases in point.

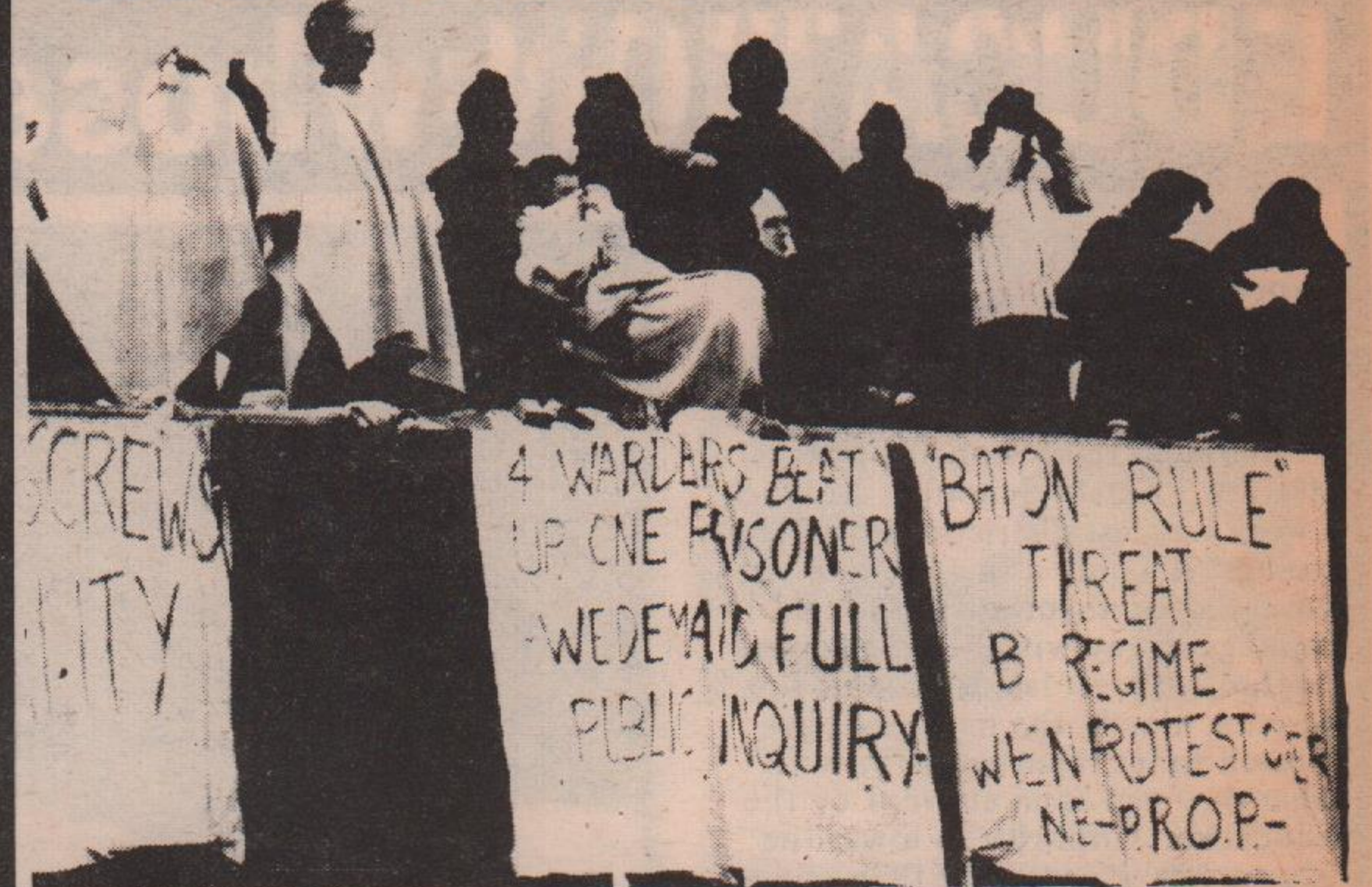
### PUBLICITY

The Trade Union Committee hopes to extend the campaign during this winter towards a more nationally organised body. There is an active branch in Manchester and other Northern cities. London is planning a series of local meetings in the coming months in the Irish communities - beginning with Acton on Thursday November 4th.

The main thing at the moment is to publicise what is happening to make it less and less possible for the police to hold people for days with no-one knowing. We have had some success in this but we need more people organised to hold pickets, distribute emergency phone numbers and interest trade unions and Irish people in these activities - so that we can build a national campaign.

Susan O'Halloran,  
Secretary of the Trade Union Committee against the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

# HULL PRISON RIOT....



# SYSTEMATIC BEATINGS

People who 'have a go' in a factory or on an estate know that there is a chance of winning something. For prisoners things are much more difficult. Because they are isolated it is easier for repressive forces (screws etc) to put the boot in. Many prisoners end up paying a high price for their militancy inside - victimisation means more than getting the sack when you're inside. If prisoners are to make lasting gains in their struggle, they must be supported by the working class outside.

Unfortunately, there are no signs that the working class movement is prepared to take action in support of prisoners. Organisations like PROP (Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners) fight on, but they are isolated. One of the reasons for this isolation is that the labour movement and the revolutionary left have avoided a frontal attack on prisons as an institution of capitalist repression.

With the prison population at 41,728 (a growth of 50% in the last 15 years), it is clear that prisons are being used to contain working class men and women. Of course, there are a few middle class prisoners and there is a small minority of working class prisoners who need re-education and medical care, but the large majority of prisoners are working class people who are in prison because of the class nature of society, which day by day forces people to break their 'law and order'.

The pamphlet 'HULL 76', just published by PROP, is a moving account of what happened in Hull Prison between August 31 and September 5 this year. It describes the intolerable conditions that were the cause of the riot.

At the beginning of their takeover of the prison, the prisoners

found files kept by the screws on them. The following is just an example.

'A is a professional criminal and a dangerous psychopath. He is bitter and has a biting wit which he employs against the staff at every opportunity. He has served two years of an 18 year sentence and will be 60 by the time he is due for release, by which time he should be a cabbage'.

On the roof the prisoners found out that many kids from the nearby estates had come to support them. The kids shouted 'WE LOVE THE PRISONERS', and the prisoners shouted back, 'WE LOVE THE KIDS'.

When the prisoners decided to come down from the roof all together they were, of course, told that they would not be beaten up. As the report makes clear, however, everyone of them involved in the riot was beaten up, some very badly.

A lot of guys were transferred immediately after processing - they got their roughings up, were handcuffed, and subjected to abuse and more beatings as they made their way down the stairs, surrounded by screws, chanting, spitting and kicking at them. And then on to the waiting buses. Those who went to Strangeways, Manchester, in buses of 12 were met by some 20 screws and, while handcuffed, were beaten from the buses to D Wing segregation unit.

Those of us who remained were taken off to undamaged areas in various parts of the prison. I was in with a group of some 25 guys. We were put in single cells, all in a row - this was about 4 pm Friday. Very soon after we were all locked up, the first group of screws arrived - about a dozen of them - this was the start of the systematic beatings that were to continue until Sunday afternoon.

The screws split us into groups of about 4 or 5, and worked their way up and down the line of cells. It was systematic and co-ordinated - either they would charge into a cell, push the prisoner on to the floor and kick him into a corner. Or they would drag you out, with your arms and legs flailing, and hurl you against a wall, landing blows on the head, back, legs and kidneys - anywhere that was exposed. Without exception every prisoner got at least one beating in this session, which continued up to about 8 pm on Friday night.'

The pamphlet will have achieved nothing if it does not get a response. There are things that those of us outside can do - we can demand from our MP an inquiry into what happened at Hull, we can support PROP in their fight for prisoner reforms and we can fight for prisoners rights through our union branches etc. The prisoners at Hull have made it clear the risks they are prepared to take in their struggle - they have the right to expect some support from those of us on the outside.

(The pamphlet 'HULL 76' is available from PROP, 339a Finchley Rd, London NW3, price 30p)

## Mao article naive

Dear Big Flame,  
As a member of Big Flame I feel I've got to make some criticisms of the Mao article in the last issue of the paper. I think the content of the article diverged from a view of China that is held by most members of Big Flame. That is that China is a transitional society between capitalism and socialism, and that within Chinese society there is a dynamic class struggle, the results of which will determine whether China will be socialist or not. We accept that certain features of Chinese society, e.g. the progress in the abolition of mental/manual division of labour, represent concrete advances on the path to socialism. Most of all perhaps we accept that Mao Tse-Tung has made a large contribution to the development of Marxist thought.

I'll just confine myself to two points.

1. It is naive to identify the problems of Chinese society purely in the existence and influence of a few 'capitalist roaders'. Obviously the revisionists do exist and are a main obstacle in the path to socialism but they have a concrete social base in Chinese society,

## LETTERS



and are not just a survival from a former epoch.

2. We can certainly not explain Chinese foreign policy by saying it is simply a reflection of the same individuals' interests. Chinese foreign policy is a complex subject which can be as much explained by the whole Chinese conception of socialism with its emphasis on 'relying on your own strength' as due to direct reflection of capitalist interests. The article itself didn't ever criticize Chinese foreign policy which is lamentable. It is impermissible not to mention Chinese foreign policy in Ceylon, Angola, etc, whilst at the same time praising the support given to Vietnamese and Palestinian revolutionaries.

Richard Lapper,  
Merseyside Central Branch.

## Gushing over Mao?

Dear Big Flame,  
As an IS member who is always being told how much more radical Big Flame is than we hacks, I was amazed at your obituary of Mao Tse Tung. China's revolution was not from below, the self-emancipation of the working class to create a democracy of the most radical kind. Instead Mao marched to power at the head of a rural army, his separate military base, quite independent of the class struggle in the factories or fields. Present day China is governed by a political elite and Mao's thought serves an almost religious role in fostering obedience, puritanism and hard work. Everything, including the emancipation of women, is finally justified in terms of its contribution to production. Farms may discuss how to fulfil norms but not the norms themselves which are decided at regional and national level.

There are nothing like soviets and political democracy is confined to stage armies supporting rival factions in a palace elite. In foreign policy the Chinese Government has ended

up supporting the murderers of Allende in Chile and contributed to suppressing rebellion in Bangla Desh and Sri-Lanka. I would suggest that anyone with Big Flame's politics in Shanghai today would find little favour with China's new leaders.

Everyone, including the Daily Telegraph accepts Mao was one of the greatest revolutionary leaders of the century. But I'd like to know, apart from rhetoric and sentiment, how Big Flame's stated aims; workers power from below, independent of Party elites, marries up with what Mao actually did and the way modern China is really run? To analyse and understand Mao critically is to pay him more respect than to gush over him.

D. Widgey, North London.

\* The article on China on page 7 takes up some of the points raised in these two letters.

Dear Big Flame,  
My son Jim Greenfield, one of the Stoke Newington 8, is no longer a category 'A' prisoner. He is now at Wakefield and able to receive letters and visits with food for the first time since he was jailed 5 years ago.  
In Solidarity,  
Jack Greenfield.

# BIG FLAME CONFERENCE

Since the last edition of this paper, Big Flame has held its second annual national conference in Speke, Liverpool. And we've come out of it with a much clearer idea of what needs to be done over the coming months. Above all, Big Flame is now committed to investigating the possibility of setting up a new communist organisation to the left of the International Socialists.

Our first national conference 18 months ago welded together what were then very scanty forces into a firm structure with agreed principles. This conference has marked another step forward.

The 120 delegates, plus comrades representing other revolutionary organisations in Britain and abroad, came to Speke after several months' intensive discussion in preparation for the conference. The number who spoke, the seriousness of the debates, the scope of the motions passed: all this suggests that Big Flame has now arrived as a national organisation with a clear-cut working class approach to fighting for socialism today.

On these pages we present some highlights from the Conference discussions. Later in the year we will publishing a full report.

## Ireland

A YEAR ago civil war seemed likely in Ireland with the loyalists talking about 'finishing it off', but the situation has changed.

Now Irish socialists and republicans, many of them exhausted by the long struggle, must find the energy to reassess their strategy. Faced by a long drawn-out haul, they have to build a clear, working class programme for the 32 counties.

Conference instructed the Big Flame Irish Commission to build closer political links with socialist and feminist forces in Ireland. We reaffirmed our basic position -

**TROOPS OUT NOW!  
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR  
THE IRISH PEOPLE AS A  
WHOLE!  
SOLIDARITY WITH ALL  
REPUBLICAN AND SOCIALIST  
FORCES FIGHTING BRITISH  
IMPERIALISM!**

## Education & Youth

'The State is taking advantage of the spending cuts to reorganise education so that it meets the needs of big business better'. That was the position put forward by Liverpool Big Flame Teachers Group at the conference and after Callaghan's recent speech nobody could deny it to be true.

Speakers in the education debate were arguing that the crisis was throwing into question the whole shape of education in this country. One good reason for not responding with defensive slogans like 'defend education' or 'the right to learn'.

A second reason came out when conference looked at the youth question. For the school students, the education system leaves a lot to be desired. So, slogans like the ones we've mentioned are unlikely to make a hit with the students themselves.

Some speakers criticised Big Flame for not understanding this earlier. They argued that we had to make up for lost time by giving more priority to building an independent, anti-fascist youth movement. 'So, youth activity now becomes 'a very important part' of our overall activity.

## Racism

Big Flame set itself apart from the rest of the revolutionary left by voting unanimously to 'encourage the development of an autonomous black working class vanguard by developing working links with black revolutionaries and opening our resources to them to further their organisational growth in the black working class'.

It's in this context that comrades from the Brixton and Croydon Collective intervened in the conference on the same basis as Big Flame members and have been invited to take part in our Commissions.

For us it's a priority to fight the racism of the white working class and to stress the leading role that black militants are playing in the fight against racism. We have re-stated the importance of the work in side and outside the anti-fascist committees against the

# WHAT IS HAPPENING IN BRITAIN TODAY

This is an article based on the opening speech of the conference. The speech, which will be printed in full in the next Big Flame Journal, was based on a document on the general situation which was passed unanimously.

For the first time since the war, we are seeing a serious attempt to alter some aspects of capitalism. The ruling class is trying to regain the ground it has lost to the working class over the last thirty years.

So, the cuts and the series of massive redundancies are neither temporary measures to get the economy out of the recession, nor do they mean a return to the Thirties with the wholesale massacre of all the post-war reforms. Government and capitalist policy is more far-reaching than that: it aims to make British capitalism safe for the 1980's.

## Shop floor

Key to the reorganisation of the economy and society is the attack on shop-floor strength by changing the way production is organised. Job mobility, and manning cuts are hitting workers' organisation everywhere. Two weapons are used to defeat resistance.

The first is the blackmail of the dole queue. Unemployment is here to stay at a permanently higher level. It is not, as in the 30's, as a reserve army of labour to be recruited again during the next boom. Cuts in labour use and investment in capital-intensive machinery mean that a permanent layer of unemployed is being deliberately created.

The second is the authority of the trade union leaders who have endorsed these policies so fully that they've become identified with the State itself.

One of the chief causes of the present level of unemployment are the public spending cuts. The government aims to provide a lower level of services, shifting much of the financial and physical burden instead onto the backs of the working class, especially of the housewives.

## Women

But even in a period of retreat, there are important struggles going on against these crisis measures. In many cases, it is women in factories or at home on the estates who have been in the forefront. The equal pay victory at Trico shows that women are determined to fight for their own independent income regardless of the crisis blackmail. Black people have also been prominent in the recent struggles. They have

made it plain that they refuse to accept the worst jobs and living conditions because of their colour. Nor are they willing to lie down to the racist attacks of the fascists and papers like the Sun.

Public sector workers form a third group of 'resistance fighters'. They are expected to put up with the combined effects of the cuts - more work for fewer workers - and the wage limits. Less closely tied to the Government than say Jack Jones' of the Transport and General Workers Union, many public sector union officials are being pressured into militant action by their angry members.

## Change

The emergence of these new leading sectors - women, blacks, public sector workers - is the result of a change in the balance of forces within the working class itself. This change is a result of long-term trends. We are now hearing much less of the engineering workers, for example, whose industry is going through a really deep crisis.

It's hard to say yet whether further falls in living standards will produce an even broader reaction to Government policies than we are seeing today in time for the next election. What seems likely is that the elections, and the probable defeat of Labour, will lead to a new upturn of struggle and lead to a new upturn of struggle and change.



Big Flame photo

## Public sector

In the year to come, Big Flame militants in this sector will

1. At work attempt to develop the power of rank and file workers in the public sector by fighting for branch meetings in work time, joint union or shop steward meetings for all workers in a given work-place, regular branch bulletins that put information in the hands of all workers.

2. Seek to bring together working-class communities who use the threatened services with the workers of these services e.g. to unite parents and teachers, patients and health

workers, tenants and council workers.

3. Seek to develop inside cuts struggles a socialist alternative for these services - to make space for an offensive inside a defensive struggle.

It is also clear that there is an organised attack in the mass media against 'unproductive' workers, against social expenditure (opposed falsely to industrial investment), against progressive education, against council tenants. This attack, must be countered by a revolutionary perspective that makes clear why a society organised to make profit for the few cannot meet the needs of working-class people - this will be one of the tasks of the BF Political Economy group.

## Worldwide

'The biggest contribution you can make to our struggle is by strengthening the working class here in Britain'. It was the delegate from the Portuguese organisation, the PRP speaking in the debate on the international situation. From Chile (the MAPU), Israel (Matzpen), Spain (OICE), France (Revolution) and Switzerland came other messages of support in a similar vein.

## Revolution

As the international committee pointed out in its report, although generally things on a world scale were favourable to the revolution, we were passing through a phase of counter-attack by imperialism. The comrades from Israel and Portugal explained what that meant in their countries. But it was from Spain that the news was most encouraging, with the regime about to face the most sustained season of struggle since the Civil War.



# BIG FLAME CONFERENCE cont.

## Towards a new communist organisation

THE CLIMAX of the Conference came on the last day with a long debate about revolutionary organisation in Britain. At stake was the future of Big Flame.

The discussion was very practical: speakers were trying to analyse what kind of organisation was needed for this period in the struggle; then, looking in these terms at the role and tasks of Big Flame.

The strengths and weaknesses of our organisation were pinpointed, and there were suggestions about how to develop Big Flame's links with the mass of the working class. All this was discussed in the context of our long-term commitment to building the revolutionary party.

### TWO POSITIONS

Two main positions were put forward — one stressing more the need for consolidating our existing forces; the other putting more emphasis on the need to see Big Flame as just a temporary stage in the development of the party, and pointing out that that stage had now probably been overtaken by events.

Despite the obvious differences there were many similarities between the two positions. Both, for example, agreed on the urgency for setting in motion the political education programme. After a constructive debate, the second position won. So, now the whole of Big Flame will be involved in putting the new strategy into practice.

Before we look at what is entailed, we should set out some of the analysis which the proposal flowed from.

In the past Big Flame has been accused of being against the building of the party. This

is untrue. It's simply that we saw the party coming out of a mounting period of struggle, and we wanted to put our efforts into building the independent power of the class. That was right in the period between 1970 and 1975.

But it is no longer so. Instead of a mounting struggle there is a growing polarisation between the working class and the bosses. For more and more people, the need for a complete alternative to this society is ever more deeply felt. They look for the organisations which can take them closer to that ideal.

How does Big Flame measure up to these demands. We can quickly state our strengths —

- \* some long-standing political practices in factories, communities and colleges.
- \* an overall perspective based on the often unconscious and spontaneous but tangible struggles against wage labour and the way the capitalist organisation of work rules our lives.
- \* an understanding of the importance of helping in the building of autonomous movements of women and blacks as a stage in the building of a general class unity.

### TENDENCY

These are important things but they don't offset our weaknesses. Despite our growth over the past year, we've had a lot of difficulty establishing a national presence. We've managed to define more clearly what we stand for, but we've failed to bring together that loose tendency — or even part of it

to unemployment.

The other one is for a rise in dole or social security for all people on the dole. This campaign has the chance to mobilise the unemployed starting from their material needs.

On the question of our relationship with the Trade Unions, we recognised that the trade unions represent the organisational form of the reformist side of the working class. At the same time we see in this situation a growing contradiction between rank and file and leadership within the unions. We must insert ourselves inside this contradiction.

Our priority is that of developing the autonomy of the working class at a mass level. The unions can and must be used towards this development. But on the other hand we must always recognise the embryos of the mass autonomous organisation inside the struggles of the masses and consciously work towards their formation in the long term, even if that is not a short term task.

Discussion ended by unanimous decision to give more priority to our industrial intervention, and engage in thorough investigations on other major sectors of industry other than the car industry.

### Elections

At the conference it was agreed that it would not be politically correct for BF to support the Labour Party at the next general elections.

It was agreed by a majority vote that BF would take seriously the need for radical socialist candidates at the forthcoming elections and where necessary to take an initiative along these lines.

— that stands to the left of the International Socialists.

It's a tendency that includes many of the comrades who have become disillusioned with the bureaucratic politics of other organisations. Or groups of people who work together politically in the same factory or housing estate, bound together by a common hostility to capitalism.

The working class is in retreat, but that is a long way from a sharp historic defeat. In fact, a general retreat is combined with the beginnings of a fight back.

But our main task is aiding in the unification of the working class. In a situation like this, only struggles which win the support of the majority of working class people are likely to be successful. A revolutionary vanguard organisation, solidly rooted in the working class, can speed up the building of unity by hitting back at the capitalists attempts to divide us, ideologically and materially. The creation of that kind of organisation takes on a real urgency for us in Big Flame now.

Yet it is with these comrades that we feel we must combine to form the new broadly-based left

communist organisation which is so badly needed today. An organisation which will act as one of the starting points of the revolutionary party, engaging other tendencies in a long and hard process of confrontation and cooperation.

What we want to see is the political consolidation of our tendency from the base up. The aim is not to merge already existing groups of convinced revolutionaries, but to bring together the working class base of a new organisation.

We don't take it for granted that this can be done. But we have given ourselves 6 months to see how feasible it is and another 6 months to set it up if the investigation proves positive.

We don't intend to carry out a door-to-door survey of the comrades we believe might be interested. Instead we will test out our project through joint work with other comrades, and by taking initiatives with them. This is how we'll find out whether they agree with us that our ideas and our strategies are workable ones.

This project has meant some changes in Big Flame's internal

organisation, to make us more ready to carry it out. We have selected a National Committee and given it more responsibility to develop our political line. As we've elected a Secretariat of five which will carry out that line from day to day.

We've set up an education programme because we want the newest comrades to be able to understand the new proposals well enough to be able to put forward in their own situation.

And if the investigation proves positive? Then, we'll join forces with all those who have welcomed the proposal, and disband Big Flame into a new organisation.

The investigation is already under way. Documents are being written explaining our strategy in more detail that we have space for here. Many individuals and some local groups around the country have been contacted and shown interest.

On Merseyside, many working class comrades have decided to join Big Flame since the Conference. They want to be able to prepare for the new organisation. Their experience and enthusiasm may make all the difference.

The task in front of us is hard but we are confident. Like the foolish man in Mao's tale, we'll remove the two mountains — capitalism and reformism.

If our proposals interest you, you'd like to arrange a meeting, receive the documents, please contact the National Secretariat, 217 Wavertree Road, Liverpool 7



not all housework can or should be socialised, and the working class should have the right to choose if they want to look after the elderly, the sick or their children at home, and the State should pay for this and provide all the facilities needed.

4 no division of labour between men and women, inside or outside the home. Housework should not be seen as 'women's work'. Women have to be seen more than wives and mothers, as people with their own identity and power.

The last seven years has seen the development of a more open and combative women's struggle. But now the ruling class is trying to push women back into their traditional roles. Unemployment and the poverty that goes with it places an extra burden on the housewife. Inside and outside the family physical violence against women is increasing. The cuts in public services make housework harder, and the loss of part-time jobs doesn't help. The class struggle of women is very varied and complex. We've felt it necessary to outline a programme with a working class viewpoint which will speak to all the different ways that women are fighting against the crisis.

### Programme

The programme will be used as a means of fighting for a working class perspective in the women's movement as well as for a feminist perspective with the struggles of working class women.

It recognises the importance of working inside Women's Action National Abortion Campaign, local women's groups, and of fighting within these for more mass political work within communities and workplaces.

The development of a strong, autonomous women's movement which brings all these things together is crucial if women are to have real power and strength in the wider working class movement.

## Housework is work



HOUSEWORK IS work, organised by capitalism for the sake of ruling class profits and power. This was the central issue of the debate on women's struggle at the Conference.

Big Flame recognises that housework is a very central part of the lives and struggles of the mass of working class women. What women win in their struggle as housewives will affect what they win on everything else.

Four points were put forward to the Conference by the Women's Commission as guidelines for developing the struggle against unwaged housework —

1 the socialisation of housework, paid for by the State, controlled by the working class. We don't want this so that women can go out to work. We want it because housewives already do work and it's part of their fight to better the conditions they work under and to make their work less hard. At the moment this means fighting for the

power to control services like the hospitals and the nurseries and to make the State pay for them.

2 guaranteed adequate income for all women, including housewives. Income should be based on need not productivity. But we stress that it must be independent because we can't destroy on sexual, emotional and political dependence on men while we still have to depend on them for money. This point also means the fight for jobs (wages) with no strings, for equal pay with no strings, more family allowances, lower rents and better social services, for full dole for married women and against the cohabitation rule. In other words, for money of their own for women.

3 housework to be paid for by the State, whoever does it and wherever it's done. This is not an alternative to socialising housework. We don't, for example, intend to accept payment for housework so that they can cut down on public services. But

# CHINA WHAT

# THE STRUGGLE WORLDWIDE



## IS HAPPENING?

Last month we printed an obituary to Mao Tse Tung which has been sharply criticised (see letters page).

Rather than take up the points of the letters point by point, we thought it better to set out what we thought was going on in China today.

We asked a member of Big Flames International Commission to make a personal assessment. We hope that it will begin a debate in the newspaper about not just China but the underlying question of how the transition to socialism takes place.

600 MILLION, or 80% of the Chinese population, live in a rural commune. For most Chinese it is what happens there that is at the centre of their lives:

The communes, 30,000 of them, are like independent states, almost self-sufficient in themselves. Almost all the commune's production is consumed within it. The small surplus goes to the state.

Within the communes, the communist principle 'from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs' is gradually being put into operation.

There are impressive advances in other fields.

\* The age old division between mental and manual labour is being attacked.

Students work in the fields and come to learn that there are more ways to knowledge than through books.

\* preventative medicine addressed to the needs of the majority of the population (the barefoot doctors) is replacing curative medicine.

\* There is a constant struggle to ensure that moral incentives replace material ones.

Unless the observers are wrong, it seems that at the commune level China is perhaps the most advanced socialist society in the world.

### THE LOCAL-NATIONAL SPLIT

The problem, of course, is that this active involvement of the masses in fighting for change and

socialism contrasts with their lack of involvement at regional and national level. The Chinese Communist Party is the only national governing body, and there are no organisations other than the party connecting the communes to the centre.

So it is only at rare times, like the Cultural Revolution that the masses have made their presence felt nationally. The problem can't be reduced to the view often expressed on the left and the right that the Chinese people are dominated and manipulated by a tiny elite.

China is living through a rare period of relative stability. Landlords, famines and droughts have disappeared. But that improvement in life has only come about as a result of decades of constant struggle - at the beginning of the century it was struggle against European imperialism, then in the 30s against the Japanese invaders and then until 1948 against the Chiang Kai Shek reactionaries. Not surprisingly there is a deep felt need amongst the masses for political stability, for the time to concentrate on improving living standards.

### THE RADICALS' DILEMMA

Mao was only too aware that that desire for stability could lead to a blunting of the people's struggle for communism, and in so doing open the door to the re-introduction of capitalist values. He stressed that the class struggle didn't cease in 1948, that there were remnants of the old society still to be fought.

The Long March of the Red Army in the 30's, the Great Leap forward in production in the 50's and the Cultural Revolution of the 60's were all proofs that revolutionary victories can be won against the odds.

It's easy to see now how Mao and his followers failed to give enough emphasis to the other pressing problems of the revolution. Periodic cultural revolutions are no substitute for day to day mass control of the state machine. Without this, the masses have tended to show some suspicion for the notions of continuous revolution put forward by Mao's supporters.

These people, the so-called 'Shanghai Clique', conscious of the need to maintain the momentum of revolutionary change, have appeared after Mao's death to be wanting to force revolutionary change on the masses. But Chiang Ching and her comrades

don't have Mao's authority among the people, and their push for change has met with hostility and resentment.

The hatred directed at Chiang Ching - 'the woman who nagged Mao to death' - is a sign of the position that women still occupy in China. There is still a very long way to go before Chinese women are liberated. There is no doubt either that the division between the interests of the urban and rural people is still a live issue. One of the key differences between the Shanghai Clique and the new party leader, Hua, concerns the right way to industrialise agriculture. The radical want to speed up the process but in their hurry they have been seen by the peasants as going against the peasants' interests.

### FOREIGN POLICY

The absence of the masses from national affairs is obvious in the field of foreign policy. It seems unlikely that the masses would otherwise support a policy which has constantly subordinated proletarianism to the needs of the Chinese State.

The main priority in Chinese foreign relations is the political isolation of the Soviet Union. The invasion of Czechoslovakia confirmed for the Chinese that they had more to fear from the Russians' growing military power than from what they see as the declining strength of US imperialism.

This explains their support for the FNLA in Angola, for the Pakistan regime, and their recognition of Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile. It also explains their warm welcome for Common Market leaders who they see as a counterbalance to Russian ambitions in the East.

It all has a logic, but it is a flawed logic; it is also short-sighted. It does not take account of the support China has lost in Africa and in Asia, much of it ironically to Russia's gain. And it overlooks the ways in which a stronger international movement might support the Chinese revolution against a Soviet threat.

But the final contradiction is that this kind of foreign policy can be produced by the society of the communes. The missing link is the peoples control of the state, but that is not the same as saying that the revolution in China is going backwards or that it is a state capitalist society, tightly governed by a bureaucracy. The reality is more complex than that.

The UGT, weakest of all the Spanish underground trade unions, is winning surprising support here.

## MONEY FOR SPLITTERS

THREE WEEKS ago a delegation of Spanish workers was about to set off on a visit to Britain. Meetings had been arranged with trade union and Labour Party leaders. The group was drawn from the two underground underground unions with the widest support in Spain - the Workers Commissions (left-wing socialists and communists) and the USO (left-wing Catholics).

The aim of the visit was to count-

er the growing international campaign of support for the UGT. This Socialist Party union is the weakest of the big three workers organisations. Nonetheless, it is attracting large scale support, financial and political, both at home and abroad.

The reason is simple: the UGT is opposed to the creation of a unified trade union movement - and so is the Spanish regime.

So, at the last moment, the Work-

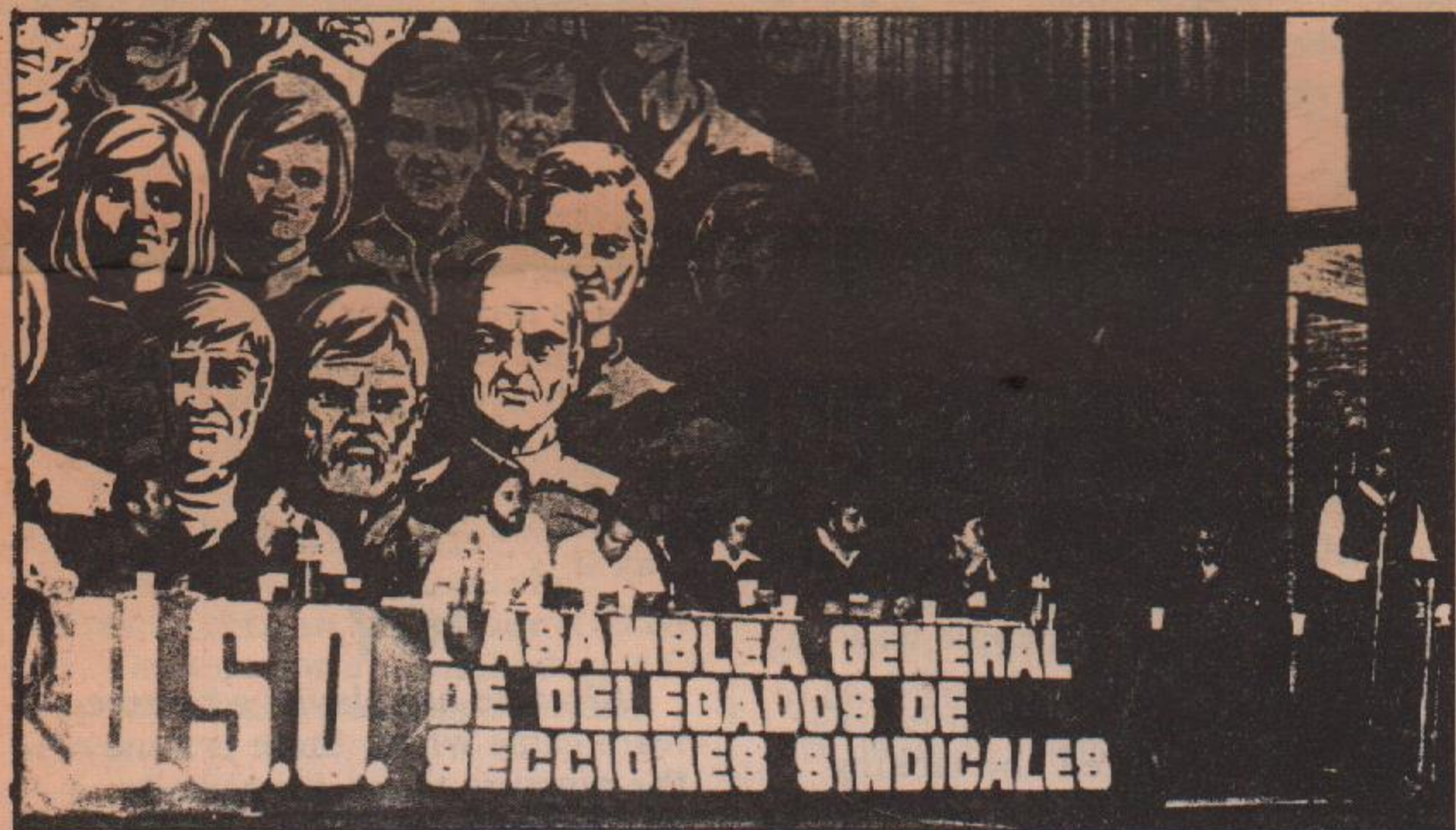
ers Commission/USO delegation had to be cancelled when the Government refused to grant one of the party his passport.

Meanwhile, Len Murray and Jack Jones are off on a fact-finding trip that is almost sure to endorse the T&GWU's and NUM's existing backing of the UGT.

The UGT's support comes from two directions. There are those, like the Spanish bosses and the CIA, who are determined to prevent the creation of trade union unity in Spain; and also there are those, like Jack Jones, who want to see the establishment of moderate social democracy in Spain rather than real socialism.

On November 12th there will be the first real general strike in Spain since 1936, called by the USO, the UGT and the Workers Commissions. If it is successful, it will be little to do with the UGT's efforts. Instead, the Workers Commissions and the USO are likely to be confirmed as the most popular workers' organisations in the country.

**BARCELONA: 1200 delegates from all over Spain for the recent USO conference.**



## CHILE

Where a pair of socks cost £15 and inflation is 375% and 22% are jobless

LAST MONTH Milton Friedman, an American economics professor, was awarded a Nobel prize for services rendered to international capitalism. Friedman is the official economic advisor to General Pinochet, the Chilean dictator. He is also a close friend and advisor to Sir Keith Joseph and the man behind many of Enoch Powell's ideas and those of the National Front.

More importantly, his ideas are now being adopted by the British Treasury and that means that they

As for controlling inflation, the most acclaimed of Friedman's box of tricks - well, Chile sets an example to us all with a yearly rate of inflation of 375%.

The spectacular breakdown of the Chilean economy since the coup and the misery of the working class and the peasants as a result of Friedman's policies has been documented by Orlando Letelier, an ex-minister in President Allende's Popular Unity Government.

### RECIPE FOR ECONOMIC DISASTER AND A POLICE STATE BY U.S. 'EXPERT WHO ADVISES BRITISH POLITICIANS

will become economic policy no matter what party forms the government.

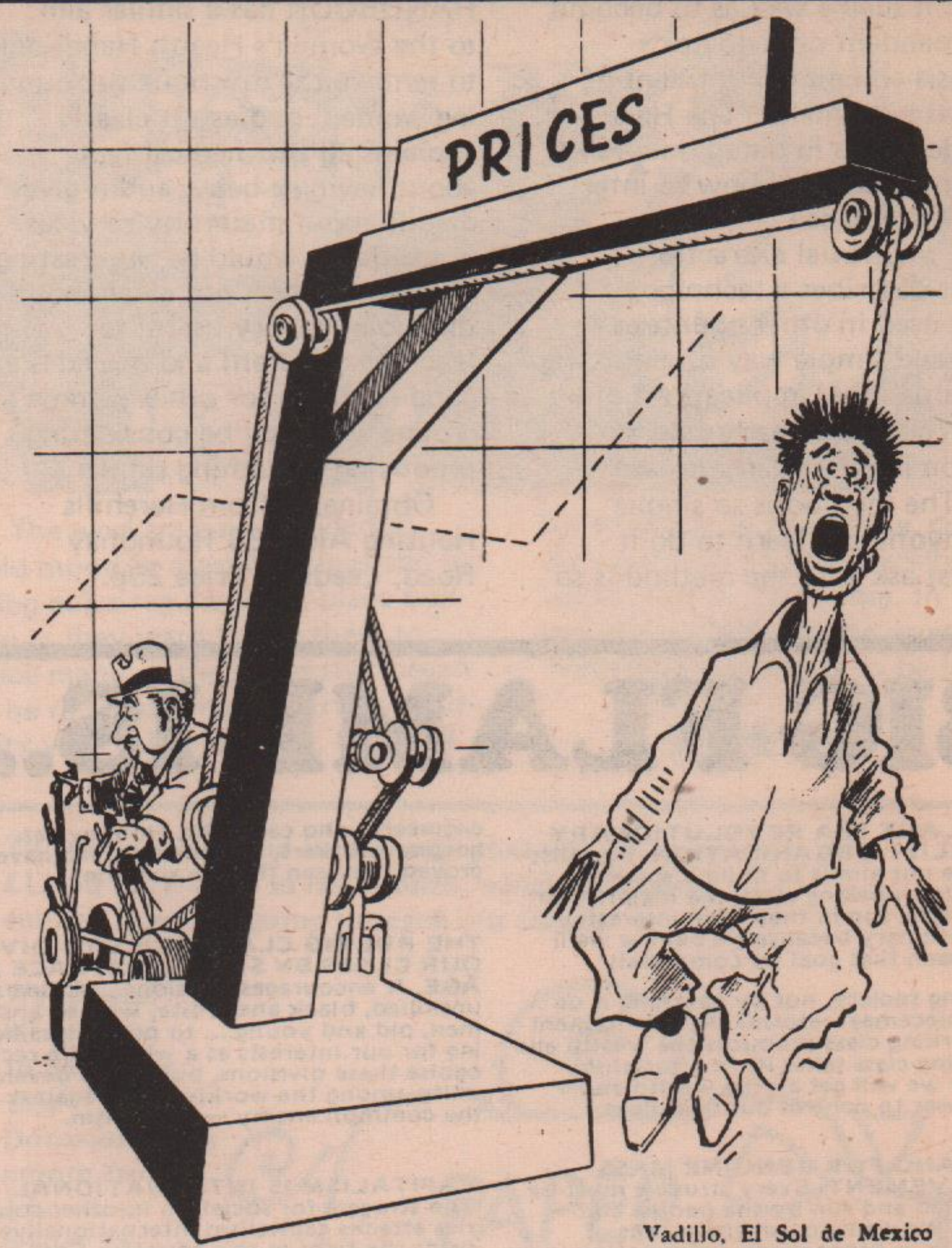
Friedman describes himself as a 'monetarist.' He believes that inflation (and almost all other economic problems) can be cured by decreasing the amount of money in circulation (the money supply). But there is more to inflation than printing too many pound notes. In fact all this talk of 'reducing money supply' is really besides the point - what Friedman is really on about is reducing living standards, cutting the social expenditure of the state and bringing about even more unemployment: all policies that have been carried out with a vengeance in Chile since the coup.

Today in Chile unemployment is 22%. Friedman said, 'Leave the economy to the free play of market forces and it will all come out right'. That's why the Chilean people have to pay 6 pesos for a kilo of bread when the average daily wage (for those who have work) is 15-18 pesos. And why a pair of tights will set you back the equivalent of £15.

Letelier was murdered last month by Chilean secret police agents in the US. In an article recently published in an American magazine, The Nation, he shows that Friedman's economic theories (workable or unworkable) are closely tied to extreme right wing political ideas.

'It would seem to be a commonsensical sort of observation that economic policies are conditioned by by and at the same time modify the social and political situation where they are put into practice. Economic policies, therefore, are introduced in order to alter social structures.

There is then an inner harmony between the two central priorities announced by the junta after the coup in 1973: the 'destruction of the Marxist cancer' (which has come to mean not only the repression of the political parties of the left but also the destruction of all labour organisations democratically elected and all opposition, including Christian-Democrats and church organisation), the establishment of a free 'private economy' and the control of inflation a la Friedman



Vadillo, El Sol de Mexico

It is nonsensical, consequently, that those who inspire, support or finance that economic policy should try to present their advocacy as restricted to 'technical considerations', while pretending to reject the system system of terror it requires to succeed.

This is what is so worrying about Thatcher & Healey's enthusiasm for

Friedman. If his policies are really put into practice, they would provoke such resistance that the government would be forced to take a leaf out of Pinochet's book.

Anyone wanting a copy of Letelier's article should send an S.A.E. to: National Secretary, 217 Wavertree Rd. Liverpool 7.

# WOMENS HEALTH BOOK 'FRANK & SENSIBLE'

WOMEN'S HEALTH HANDBOOK by Nancy McKeith. - available from 16 Methley Terrace, Leeds 7. - Price £1.

How often do women leave the doctor's surgery angry, humiliated or just downright dissatisfied? Often enough for the Women's Health Handbook almost to sell out in a month! The Handbook was written by a group of women who are concerned with women's struggles to control their own bodies and their fertility. They hope the book will 'serve as a starting point to help women fight for better health care'.

The Handbook deals comprehensively with most aspects of women's health including sections on contraception, cancer, VD, vaginal discharge, cystitis, period pains and the menopause. The contraception part is excellent, describing all the methods including some more recent than the Pill. It answers all our questions about the differences between pills and how each one affects our bodies. Included are step by step accounts of what actually happens when you have a fertility test, a hysterectomy, a sterilisation or an abortion. The approach to all these subjects is frank and sensible and the book is well illustrated and written for people who are not experts.

The emphasis of the book is how to recognise disorders and how to treat ourselves. Possibly the most important sections of the book are those on **speculums** (a simple instrument for examining the vagina, up till now only used by doctors, which women can now obtain to conduct self-examinations) and on **menstrual extraction**. With a speculum a woman can examine her vagina as clearly as she can examine her throat in a mirror. Used in health groups, women can examine their bodies in such a way as to become less dependent on a doctor's diagnosis and more confident of her own judgement. The Handbook describes in detail how to use a speculum and how to interpret what you see.

The menstrual extraction chapter describes a technique widely used in other countries - 'a safe and simple way of emptying the uterus'. the implications of this in relation to early safe abortion is particularly important. The method is so simple that anyone can learn to do it - we must ask why the method is so

rarely practised in this country and why it is illegal for trained paramedics to perform this simple procedure. Part of the reason lies in the way 'advanced' societies have put medicine in the sole hands of 'experts', and cannot make room for women to challenge this 'expertise' in an effort to regain control over their own bodies.

There is also an interesting chapter which is highly critical of the psychiatric treatment women receive. 'Women are often expected to deal with their illness/stress by conforming more closely to the female role'.

The Handbook presents a dramatic challenge to the National Health Service. At a time when 'expert' hospital treatment is being savagely cut back, the idea that women can treat their illnesses on their own might be welcomed by some sections of the establishment. This reactionary use of women's self help must be opposed. Instead the idea must be linked to the demand for free abortion and a woman's right to choose. It must be used alongside the demand for a free, efficient, national health service which meets women's needs. Already there are several women's health groups, which are building the confidence and knowledge of their members. Attempts to widen this experience to working class women by providing self-help clinics have not yet succeeded. We must all fight to have the insights of the Women's Health Handbook into the political struggle around hospitals and abortion to make the knowledge available to working class women.

## LEEDS HANDBOOK

THE LEEDS PREGNANCY HANDBOOK has a similar aim to the Women's Health Handbook - to remove the mystique surrounding women's bodies. It clearly explains all the medical facts about having a baby, and it gives details about maternity services in Leeds. It would be interesting to anyone who's not clear about the biology (very useful for teaching children) and provides a good example for other women's groups who may be considering producing something similar.

Obtainable from Harehills Housing Aid, 188 Roundhay Road, Leeds 8 - Price 20p.

# TIME OFF

Only a Game - by Eamon Dunphy  
Kestrel Books - £2.50.

THIS BOOK is a conscious attempt by one footballer, Eamon Dunphy, to convey his everyday experiences and feelings during a four month period at his club, Second Division Millwall. During that time Dunphy kept a diary and the book is based on its contents. It starts in July at the beginning of the season when there is a high level of expectancy and confidence within the club, and particularly from Dunphy himself, as to the club's chances of gaining promotion to the First Division. We see those hopes decline and eventually sink completely until finally Dunphy is transferred to another club at the end of November.

Dunphy's intention is not just to present a personal account of those days, but to enable the reader to come to some understanding of what sort of life a professional footballer leads. Therefore though we see things through his eyes and are concerned with the relationships and power struggles between individuals and groups at one particular club, much of the behaviour reflects common experiences shared by most footballers. A footballer's life revolves around his club, it is this environment which dictates his attitudes and behaviour, and the conflicts which do arise are resolved within the club. Throughout the book, there are only a couple of occasions when Dunphy mentions life outside of the club, and we see the extent of the footballer's dependency not only on the club, but on the game itself. In the first instance, he is dropped and becomes an aimless and edgy individual at home 'Your whole life has a point. And that point is 3 o'clock on a Saturday afternoon... And when you aren't playing there is a big void.' Secondly, when he is transferred, he suddenly realises that he lives in a club house and that if Millwall turn nasty he could be out on the street.

The pressures of a footballer's life, then, are not those of paying the rent, clothing the kids etc., but ones stemming directly from the game itself. Dunphy says 'most people don't think that players have ordinary lives with ordinary fears and worries. We're expected, and expect one another to some extent, to be automatons.' But the book deals solely with those worries related directly to football.

At Millwall, which Dunphy describes as a homely club with a close relationship with its community, the dockland of London's East End, there nevertheless exists the same relationships between directors, manager, players and supporters as at any other club.

'You talk about team spirit and being together. But you always find in practice, when the bad times come, the cracks come, it's every man for himself.'

There are inconsistencies in his views, towards the manager, the

# ONLY A GAME



Eamon Dunphy in action at the Den

club captain and particularly towards the game itself (how it should be, and is, played). Where Dunphy is definite is in his contempt for the directors whose own contempt for the players shows when they give £5 handouts at Christmas; for referees who are 'mostly pretty weak'; for coaches and the way coaching is taught instead of 'showing people how to express themselves...not subjection, but liberation'; for journalists who are limited and lacking knowledge of the game; and for the way apprentices are treated, 'one of the really shameful aspects of the game'.

## PRIDE

Dunphy tells of a conversation he had with team-mates in the Republic of Ireland squad when they discuss what it is that motivates footballers. In Dunphy's opinion it is pride, whereas the others tend to agree that it's fear - whichever it is the result is the sacrifice of skill for effort in the game. Dunphy recognises this but compromises his principles by criticising those individuals (like Tommy Craig), who lay more stress on skill. On the pitch he develops the aggressive

part of his game, 'work rate dominates skill, because that is what is required. Yet throughout the book there are reminders of what he feels this means for the game 'I think it is wrong. It is counter-productive, bad for the game. But the fact is that is the way it is.'

## JOY

After he has played a reserve team game where there is none of the pressure there is normally associated with a game, Dunphy sums up his feelings 'I enjoyed the game aesthetically in a way that you never can in a league game... just playing for personal enjoyment for the sheer joy of doing some thing well. That is missing from league football.'

Dunphy's sense of rebellion led him to say and do things off the pitch which led to him gaining a reputation as a troublemaker, and to his eventual departure from the club. His transfer was a direct result of an article he wrote in the 'South London Press' criticising the 'grey men' of the football establishment.

He is now in the process of going to Maidstone as a player-manager - we wish him all the best.

# BIG FLAME IS...

**BIG FLAME IS A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST ORGANISATION.** Socialist because our aim is to build a society which the working class, the majority of the people, run in their own interests. Revolutionary because we believe we'll only reach that goal by completely

changing society, not by patching it up or by piecemeal reforms. At the moment the ruling class produces the wealth and the ruling class takes it. In a socialist society we will get all the wealth and the power to control our own lives.

**WE STAND FOR GENUINE MASS INVOLVEMENT.** Every struggle must be controlled and run by the people concerned. We want to put the means of struggling - propaganda, information, ideas and organisation into the hands of the majority of the people. Not just a handful of militants, however committed. Only when people join together and fight do they work out where their interests lie and use their imagination to achieve them.

**CAPITALISM OPPRESSES THE WHOLE OF OUR LIVES.** We are not only exploited at work, we also have to pay high prices and rents; make do with bad housing, schools and hospitals. And it not just those sections of the working class with great economic power, like the miners or

engineers, who can fight. Housewives, hospital workers, the unemployed have all proved they can fight - and win!

**THE RULING CLASS TRIES TO DIVIDE OUR CLASS BY SKILL, SEX, RACE AND AGE.** It encourages divisions...skilled and unskilled, black and white, women and men, old and young... to prevent us fighting for our interests as a whole. We recognise these divisions, but try to develop unity among the working class against the common enemy - capitalism.

**CAPITALISM IS INTERNATIONAL.** The struggle for socialism in other countries attacks capitalism internationally and helps the fight in this country. For countries dominated by imperialist powers, the fight for national liberation is a progressive fight and usually inseparable from the struggle for socialism. This is the case in Ireland, a country oppressed by Britain for 800 years. We support these struggles and try to spread information about them.

**WE TRY TO BUILD A MARXIST MOVEMENT FOR TODAY'S NEEDS.** We try to learn from the various Marxist traditions, but we firmly believe in the need to create a politics and organisation which grows out of today's situation.

We believe that Big Flame's job is to help the whole working class understand and learn from its power, and so strengthen that power. We see the need for a revolutionary party of the working class that will lead the fight to defeat capitalism, but such an organisation can only be built out of the struggles of the whole of our class.



We fight for higher wages, shorter hours, a lighter workload and for full pay whether there is work or not.

We oppose incomes policies, productivity deals, redundancies and speed-ups.

We encourage links between factory and community struggles, the opening up of factory occupations to the community,

and the taking of rent and housing struggles to the workplace. We back the fight of council tenants, private tenants and squatters against rents and for decent housing for all.

We support the struggle for state-paid community-controlled facilities like nurseries and playgroups, which provide a better life for our children, and are part of the struggles of housewives against their unpaid labour in the home.

We fight against sexism and racism and support the independent organisation of women and black people for their own power.

We support struggles for sexual freedom. Freedom from the law and freedom from social prejudices. In particular we support the independent gay organisations.

We oppose British involvement in Northern Ireland, and support demands for troops out now, for self-determination for the Irish people as a whole, and for a united socialist Ireland. Against the army and the British state we give basic support to all the republican and socialist groups fighting in Ireland, whatever criticisms we may have of their political strategy or tactics.

We support and work in the National Abortion Campaign, the Troops Out Movement, the Portuguese Solidarity Movement and local anti-fascist committees.

We want people who agree with us to work with us and join our organisation.

# Contact Big Flame

- Merseyside:**.....217 Wavertree Rd. Liverpool 7. 051 263-1350
- Manchester:**..... 14 Piccadilly, Mcr. 061 223-4515
- Leeds:**..... 80 Harehills Ave. Leeds 7. 0532-620535
- Birmingham:**..... c/o People's Centre 768 Bristol Rd. Birmingham 29.

There are also groups in South and West London and Sheffield. For more information contact:- National Secretary, 217 Wavertree Road, Liverpool 7.



# British Army squeezes Peace Movement.

THE BRITISH ARMY is destroying Ireland's so-called 'Peace' Movement. When the 'Peace' movement began it blamed the IRA for all the violence, but a series of brutal acts by British soldiers is beginning to reverse that idea!

First came the murder of 12 year-old Majella O'Hare, shot dead by a soldier only four days after the 'Peace' movement began on August 10th. The press attempted to play down the incident.

But they could not hide the anger of people on one Belfast estate, Turf Lodge, after they had borne the brunt of the British Army's new 'get tough' policy. On 22nd September an Army patrol fired on a passing car in Turf Lodge. The driver was hit four times in the back and had to have a kidney removed in hospital. He was unarmed and not involved in any incident.

A week later a soldier on patrol in Lenadoon, Belfast, decided to 'get fresh' with 23 years old Kathleen Doherty as she sat in her car. Getting the brush off was obviously too much for him. He was drunk and, after the patrol moved off, one of them fired two shots into the car. One bullet smashed the windscreen and the woman received a serious eye injury from the glass.

There were many witnesses to the incident and the local branch of the Peace Movement suddenly found itself forced to organise a protest picket of the local Army post!

## THE FINAL STRAW

The worst incident came again in the Turf Lodge area. For no apparent reason a soldier blasted a plastic bullet against the head of 13 year old Brian Stewart. He died a few days later. This was the final straw in a number of Army attacks which were never mentioned when the 'Peace' Movement were criticising the 'men of violence'.

So it was not surprising that when an angry meeting of tenants was called to protest at this murder, the leaders of the one-side Peace Movement, Bettie Williams and Mairead Corrigan, were soon kicked out. Their cars were smashed up and they were lucky to escape serious injury.

Later they tried to pretend that they had always criticised the British Army as well as the Republican army, but they weren't kidding anyone. They had to face the same anger again when they held their most recent Belfast march. They were stoned and abused and at one stage were only saved from further attack by Provisional Republican stewards holding back the stone throwers!

## THE REAL CATHOLIC SECTARIANS

One of the injured Peace marchers was Father Padraig Murphy, an extreme right wing Catholic priest. He violently opposes any reduction in the absolute power of the priests in the Catholic ghettos. So he backs anything that appears to weaken the IRA or any other movement for change in Ireland.

Such people are found at all the 'Peace' marches. They were at the recent Dublin rally when the demonstration was joined by pacifists who oppose ALL killing whether by underground or government armies. They carry placards condemning the Dublin Government's decision to hang two political prisoners, Noel and Marie Murray, for the alleged killing of a policeman.

But the so-called Peace marchers had no objection to the Government killing people! In fact they called the police and several of the anti-hanging demonstrators were arrested!

## NO POLITICS ALLOWED

It also happened at the 'Peace' rally in Leeds only a fortnight ago. The Leeds branch of the Troops Out Movement handed out leaflets arguing that peace will only come when British interference in Irish affairs is ended. Several priests harassed the leafleters, knocking leaflets out of people's hands, tearing them up. They were terrified of anybody

raising questions about the 'Peace' Movement.

## FREE PUBLICITY

The 'Peace' movement is not finished yet. Their rally planned for Belfast in a few weeks will probably be very big. They have the total support of the TV and the press, endless free publicity and, it seems, enough money from somewhere to finance trips to America and Europe etc.

But the vicious reality of British occupation cannot be hidden from the people who have to live under it. The recent murder of Maire Drumm in hospital is only one more newsworthy example of the murder campaign directed by Loyalist gangs against Catholics of ANY description. The 'Peace' Movement cannot protect them against attacks like this.

The only way things will end is when the British Government finally, after 800 years of violent occupation, decides that Britain has no role to play in Irish affairs.

# Save the Murrays

Noel and Marie Murray, two Irish revolutionaries, are awaiting execution in a Dublin jail, having been found guilty of murdering an off-duty policeman.

They were denied the right to trial by jury. They were convicted by three Government-appointed judges, and were not even allowed to be in court during much of their trial.

A campaign has been started throughout Europe to pressurise the Irish Government to stop the hangings.

The Irish Government stands accused of:-

- 1) Obtaining confessions by torture and then trying to hide the facts by refusing any independent medical examinations and trying to prosecute the press for reporting allegations of torture.
- 2) Denying the Murrays a fair trial for a serious crime, instead condemning them with three Government appointed agents who did not even hear (or maybe did not need to hear) all the evidence.
- 3) Condemning them to death. Not for the crime they are actually accused of, but because of the general unrest that exists in Ireland, and in order to further its own political ambitions by appearing to be taking 'a tough line'.

Murray Defence Group  
(London)  
Box 2, Rising Free, 138/142 Drummond St. London N.W.1.

(Liverpool)  
Box MDC, 48 Manchester St. Liverpool 1.



# IGNORED TO DEATH

LAST YEAR thousands of pensioners died because of lack of warmth during the winter, and that was only a mild one!

One old man, Mr. O'Brian, was one of the lucky ones. He had an accident last January and was sent home early from hospital before he'd fully recovered, because the hospital was short of beds. He was ordered by his doctor to have a fire on day and night. As a result his electricity bill was £90 which he just wasn't able to pay, and he had to battle against the workmen to prevent being cut off. He's got one consolation though, at least he's still alive.

During the recent week of action in London over heating, pensioners sat outside David Ennals' house on a 48 hour vigil. On Saturday morning one woman said, 'I thought I thought I'd be really cold and miserable by now, but I'm not. I

feel really great. It must be the brandy we had last night.'

There was a lot of enthusiasm on during the vigil and at the rally in Trafalgar Square on Saturday afternoon which brought the week of action to an end.

One of the speakers, Betty Harrison, stood next to the lions in Trafalgar Square with her hands firmly in the pockets of a large winter coat and talked with no preparation about what it's like to be old:

'We haven't lived this long just to be ignored to death....Healey said to me that the Government couldn't do anything about pensioners because there are just too many of us ...that's gratitude...'

There was singing and a few speeches before the march down to Downing Street to hand in a petition the pensioners had collected against electricity and gas cut-offs.

# TRICO: We are the champions'

IT WAS a very dark morning when the the women who had been on strike at Trico for five months for equal pay pay went back to work.

Lots of people came out to support them, although it seemed odd to be cheering people back to the factory. There were bottles of champagne and people chanting 'We are the champions'. The women were really excited, not only about winning, but also about what they could continue to do in the future.

'From now on we will have a weekly collection of 10p in teh factory for other strikers....no-one should be left alone.'

It is a victory and it's great that the women refused to accept what the Equal Pay Tribunal had said to them. As one of the strikers said:

'We didn't go to the Tribunal because we expected a 'No'. If we had gone, we'd be bound by the decision. We never formed unions to hand over our power to civil servants and lawgivers.'

With the exception of 3, all 400 women voted against management's last offer (September 17th). Eileen, one of the strikers said of it:

'They must think we're as green as cooking apples. The offer was only worth ten bob.'

The victory at Trico shows that the ruling of the Equal Pay Tribunal is not the final word, and that determined strike action can force management to pay up.

The women forced management to give them the same operational rate as the men - a rise of roughly £6.50 a week (some jobs are worth more). But the final settlement is still a bit unclear. The rise has not been backdated to January 1st (the day the Equal Pay Act became enforceable) as it should have been.

The management say this is because it is a negotiated settlement outside the tribunal.

The increase is above the 4½% pay norm, which is one of the reasons the management originally said they could not pay, unless the Tribunal said otherwise.



The importance of the outcome of the strike is more than just the winning of the money.... it will have a lasting effect. For one thing, it will give other women in similar situations the strength and confidence to fight for equal pay.

The Trico women will be able to pass on their experiences, and the newspaper articles, strike bulletins and photo-exhibitions produced during the strike will be of practical help.

The women involved in the strike have also changed; many of them had not been involved in industrial action before. Since getting back to work there is already a fight for equal opportunities with the men. One woman has now been accepted as a fork lift truck driver - a position normally held by men - and 19 other women have already applied! There are also many new women shop stewards.

One thing that didn't change much were relations within families: throughout the strike, the picket was poorly attended from 4 to 6 when women 'had to go home to make tea'.

The workers have decided to hold monthly mass meetings and to bring out a regular work-place bulletin - they want to use these to voice many of the issues that began to be raised during the strike: solidarity with other workers, the need

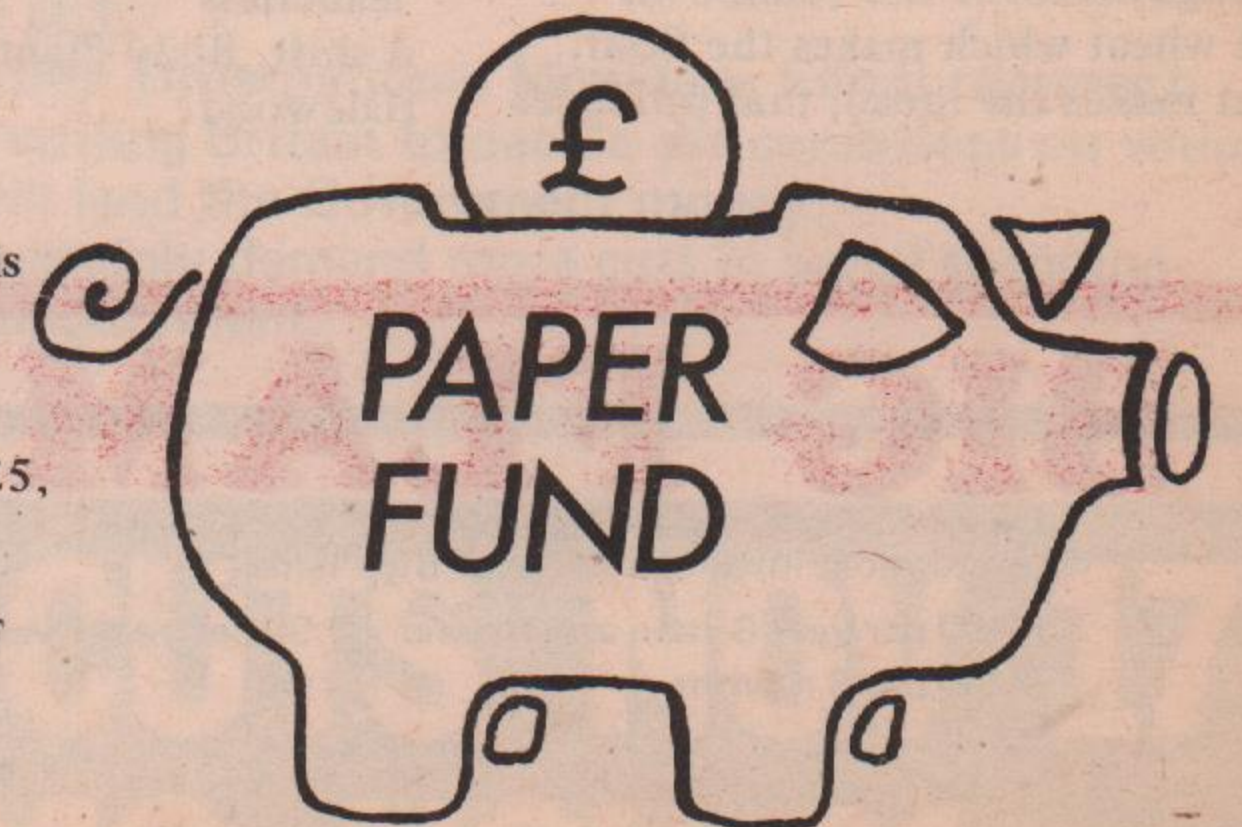
for meetings in work-time, creches during strikes and the division of labour within the home. In the ocean of class struggle the waves of Trico have just begun to be felt.

★ ★ ★

The newspaper fund is still only plodding along slowly £12.50 only came in last month, which isn't good enough if we are going to reach our target.

We request all readers to help on this.

Donations this month from:  
a London reader £5;  
Sheffield BF £5,  
Central Branch,  
Merseyside BF £2.50.

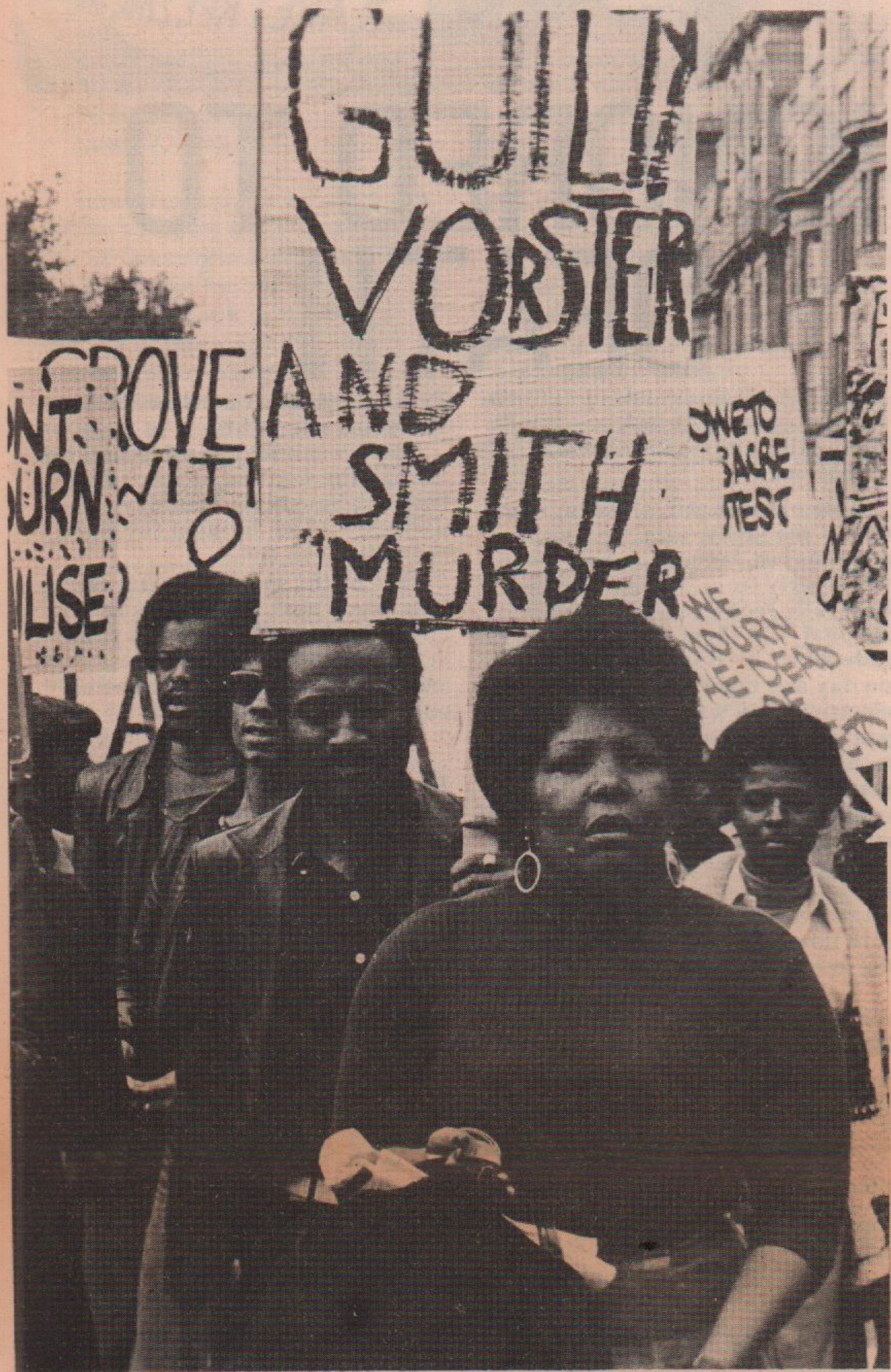


Donations to the Business Manager, 217 Wavertree Road, Liverpool 7.

# BIG FLAME

NOTTING HILL..SOUTH AFRICA

## Same struggle



Big Flame Photo

OCT. 10th. MARCH FROM NOTTING HILL TO SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY. Meanwhile in Geneva, Britain, the US and Ian Smith try to find a negotiated settlement to the 'Rhodesia problem.'

## Enough of this farce!

I suppose you have all heard lately about price rises in the shops. Well, I for one am right glad that we have a social contract to protect us. If we accept wage restrictions then the Government will, in turn, restrict price rises, or will they?

We all know the sorry tale of the potato, the staple diet of the working class, that could not be helped because we had a drought, as they said: well it's only fair isn't it?

Butter and milk? The price of cattle food has gone sky high, and the farmers have to make their profit so the price has to go up, they say. Well, it's only fair, isn't it?

Bread. Wheat prices are sky high and Weston and Rank need to maintain huge profits so they say the price has to go up - even though Westons and Rank own the wheat which makes the flour, that makes the bread, that produces

the huge profits. Well, it's only fair, isn't it?

Sugar. The Government say that prices must come into line with other Common Market countries, and Tate and Lyle and Sankeys say 'Hear, hear'. Well, it's only fair isn't it?

But what happens when we approach the Company and we say potatoes, bread, milk, butter, tea and sugar have all gone up along with rents, rates, bus fares, gas and electricity and therefore we feel that it is 'only fair' that our wages should rise accordingly as we are protected by the social contract.

They say 'Bollocks'. Well, I don't think that's fair, do you? We've had enough of this farce. They can stick their pay deal up their arse.

'leaderless'  
A shift, Body Plant, Ford, Halewood

# Alternative

## plan helps fight redundancies

IN THE March issue of Big Flame we drew attention to the proposals of the Lucas Aerospace Combined Shop Stewards Committee for the production of socially useful goods. Their plans which run into 6 volumes of thoroughly researched proposals, amount to a demand for the right of workers to use their skill and ability in production for need rather than for profit. They are a testament to the talent and vision of the working class, and a sharp answer to all the Doubting Thomases who claim that 'we need bosses', because the workers could never run society without them.

As the Lucas stewards pointed out at a meeting in Manchester last month, it is the bosses and the capitalist system which stand in the way of further human progress: the Lucas bosses have allowed an improved braking system to rot on the shelves for 25 years. Why? Because it would not make enough profit!

### Drudgery

The stewards told of their proposals for work methods which would give Lucas workers the chance to 'work with dignity, at a civilised tempo.' Contrast that with the mind-numbing drudgery of working at British Leyland, where the workers are allowed a total rest period of 36.4 minutes per shift, including the following allowances for:

- 'Visits to the lavatory' ... 1.62 minutes.
- 'Recovery and fatigue' ... 1.3 mins.
- 'Sitting down after over-tiredness' ... 65 seconds.
- 'Monotony' ... 32 seconds.

We want working conditions suited to human beings not robots.

The stewards mentioned how Lucas workers in Neasden, London, had successfully fought off redundancies by demanding that they be employed in making kidney machines. Each year, 5,000 people die because there are not enough of these machines available; meanwhile, secret committees stick pins of lists of people who want one, deciding who shall live and who shall die! Meanwhile, workers who could be making them are instead kept making things like tanks, guided missiles and nerve gas.

### Simplistic

The workers, as the stewards pointed out, live in the real world, where the left's simplistic demand for defence cuts mean just one thing - redundancies. So long as socialists mouth this demand without suggesting realistic alternatives for the employment of the workers in the defence industry, then those workers have no choice but to support defence spending. The Lucas workers have shown that the demands that come from the working class, out of the workers' own experience, are in most cases infinitely wiser than demands made on behalf of the workers.

The Lucas workers pointed to the dishonesty of Callaghan's recent call for more technicians to be trained. If industry is crying out for technicians then why has Lucas just demanded that 280 of them at the Burnley factory be made redundant as they are 'superfluous'?

The stewards insisted that the greatest achievement of the Combine Committee had been in forging a unity between manual and white collar workers, in the face of all the traditional hostility between staff and shop-floor workers. They said how in a big multi-national like Lucas, the managers are mere numbers, to be pushed around just like the shop-floor. That's capitalism all over. When the working class runs society, we can hardly do worse.



For more information about the alternative plan and the fight against the threatened redundancies, contact: Terence Morgan, 594 Padham Rd. Burnley. Tel. 0282-34569

## Conference

The Conference on Direct Action and Criminal Trespass organised by The Campaign Against the Criminal Trespass Law, is to be held at Reading University on the 27th and 28th of November.

Tickets are £2.50 or £1.50 for claimants on Social Security or dole etc.

The address for tickets is  
CACTL  
6 Bowdan St.  
London SE 11.



Big Flame photo

## TAKE THE MONEY & RUN

COURTAULDS are planning to sack thousands of workers, mainly in the North West. The areas hardest hit will be Flint (Castle Mills) and Skelmersdale, which have both been turned into jobless deserts in the last few years. For the rest of the Courtaulds workforce it is a matter of 'work harder or you'll be next'.

For some people, threatening to close new factories like those at Skelmersdale or Furzebrook (Liverpool) is madness. But there is method in this madness.

Take Skelmersdale New Town: it should have been a shining example of trouble-free life under capitalism. New houses, new factories, new roads and a new car to get you to and from work. Instead, people have to put up with a barren, concrete wilderness and nearly 25% unemployment. A huge sign on the outskirts reads, 'Skelmersdale New Town, Regional Growth Point' like some kind of sick joke.

It might have been a nice scheme for the planners, but firms such as

Courtaulds had different ideas.

Their plan was 1) Set up factories with government grants; 2) Milk an initially unorganised workforce for as long as the going was good, and 3) threaten to pull out unless they got another government grant to protect jobs'. It's a double black-nail: you threaten the workers with closure to get productivity up, and at the same time you threaten the Government with 'politically embarrassing' mass unemployment to try and get a few more handouts.

# BIG FLAME

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