

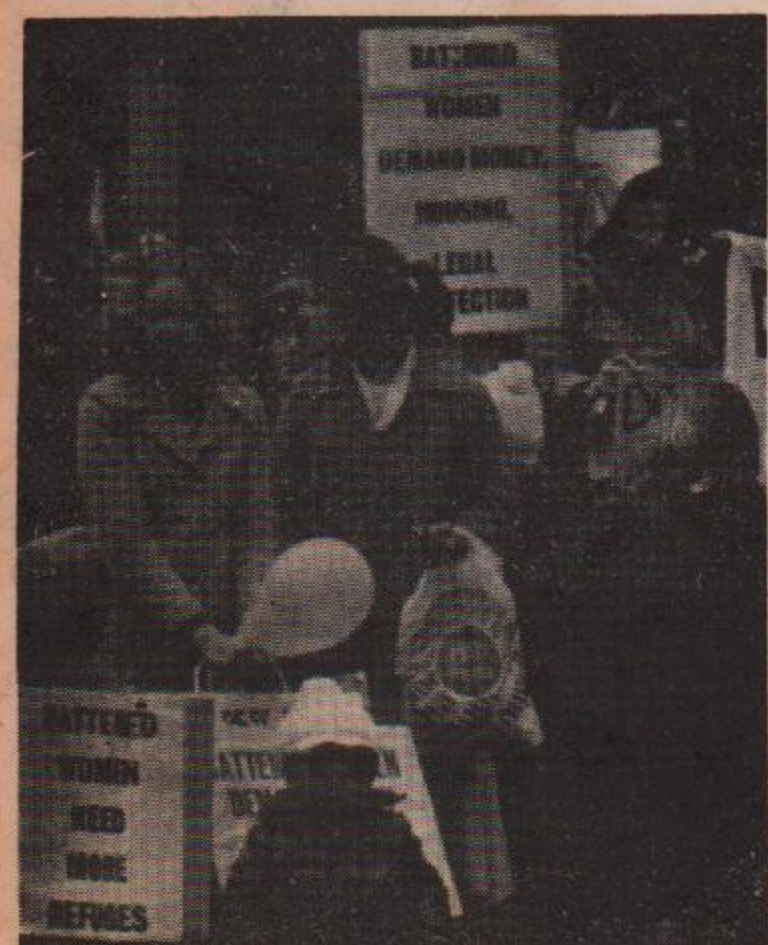
# BIG FLAME

No. 56 NOVEMBER 1977 Paper of the Revolutionary Socialist Organisation Big Flame

10p

## If men got pregnant

### INSIDE



WOMEN'S AID WEEK OF ACTION page 11

HOSPITAL HAS BEEN WRECKED COME IN AND SEE

HOUNSLOW OCCUPATION back page



GRUNWICK STRIKE CONTINUES - SUPPORT MASS PICKET NOV 7th, pages 6 & 7



WELL-KNOWN NAZI COMMITS SUICIDE page 9



## would abortion be on demand?

You bet it would. It's men in the main, who control the laws and facilities that restrict women's right to abortion. Women are just baby-machines in these men's minds.

■ The 1967 Abortion Act was supposed to make abortion more easily available but the DOCTORS still have control.

■ McLaren, Birmingham's chief gynaecologist, makes it almost impossible to get an NHS abortion - because he's against them.

■ Research into contraception is controlled by men and by drug companies whose main interest is profit rather than women's health.

■ And now the latest news is that the government is planning a new Bill. They say it will try to satisfy both sides. But really they're scared of losing Catholic votes. They've invited only male ANTI-abortionist MP's, NO women, NO PRO-abortionists.



We had to accept. We had no choice because the Unions were asking for so little - I had nothing left to fight for. There is no point in going on strike for an extra quid when you've already been offered seven.

FORKLIFT DRIVER -  
DAGENHAM BODY PLANT

# FORD: THROUGH THE PAY GUIDELINES...

WHEN the Stock Market heard that the first three Ford plants had voted overwhelmingly to accept the company's "final" offer, the Financial Times Index broke the 500 barrier and put on 7 points.

The "good news" was that Ford workers of all grades had accepted the second cut in their standard of living in two years.

LAST YEAR, under the "Social Contract" between the Labour Government and the TUC, Ford workers

had been forced to accept a 4½% rise. The same year prices had gone up 19%.

This year, with inflation still just over 17%, Ford's final offer was 9.9% for the lowest paid - the cleaners, 11% for the assembly line workers and 14% for the highest paid - the maintenance men. A wage-cut for every grade.

There's little wonder that Dennis Healey was smiling all over his face at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in London. It wasn't just the caviar and champagne. Despite the fact that Ford's offer broke through his 10% pay guidelines, the Chancellor told his audience of bankers that he was "delighted".

There's a general rule that what's good for the bosses is bad for the working-class. So what's been going on at Ford? Why have thousands of traditionally militant Ford workers voted to accept a wage-cut? What are the lessons for the working-class?

Even the "Times" has called the Union claim "moderate". That's an understatement. While inflation's running at 17%, the Unions put in for a rise of only 15%. As one worker told "Big Flame":

"If they wanted 15%, they should have asked for 30%. In any case, they should have asked for the same increase for all workers - £20 across the board".

The rest of the claim was made up of some very important fringe benefits: a line allowance for assembly-line workers who have the hardest, dirtiest and most boring jobs in Ford; lay-off pay to be paid for internal as well as external disputes; a reduction in the working week to 37½ hours.

But the Union has never led a real struggle over fringe benefits like these. In 1971, Union leaders agreed to the ending of the allowance for lineworkers, which up till then had been paid as "merit money".

At Dagenham earlier this year, Union officials at a mass meeting were chased off the platform by angry workers after they'd tried to force the Assembly Plant to end its two week struggle for lay-off pay.

And at Halewood, where for the past three years thousands of workers have been struggling for a shorter working week by refusing to work the Friday night four hour 'minishift', the convenors and shop stewards committee have consistently refused to give support to this rank and file campaign.

## FORD'S FINAL OFFER

When Ford made their final offer, it was only the assembly-line workers

who felt bitter and angry. They had been offered only 11% while the skilled workers had been given nearly 14%. And they had been offered NOTHING on the line allowance, NOTHING on lay-off pay (lineworkers are always the first to be laid off without pay if there is a dispute at another Ford factory), and NOTHING on the shorter working week.

The lineworkers felt they were being treated as second class. Many of them were prepared to go on strike just to get the same rise as the skilled workers and the line allowance (altogether worth about an extra £7 a

## ...BUT WE'VE STILL BEEN ROBBED

week). Many others wanted to go out for lay-off pay and the 37½ hour week.

But - perhaps surprisingly - lineworkers are a minority in all the Ford plants in Britain. And the mood among the rest of the workers was strongly against a strike. As the forklift driver said, it just wasn't worthwhile going out on strike for 3 or 4%. The unions' claim had been far too little. The lineworkers felt isolated.

## THE UNION CLAIM - THE INSIDE STORY

Why was the original claim so small? The 'brains' behind it was Sid Harroway, Deputy Convenor in the Body Plant at Dagenham and a member of the Communist Party. The policy of the Communist Party is to keep the Labour Government in power, and slowly push it towards the left - through the influence of 'left-wing' union leaders using their power in the Labour Party and Government.

Way back in February and March, when this claim was first being discussed, it was already clear that a

major struggle around wages could sweep away the government, as the miners had done to the Tories in 1974. The Ford claim was crucial. It would be the first claim after the end of Phase II of the incomes policy.

So it was to keep the Labour Government in power that the Communist Party chose to put its weight behind a very moderate claim. Sid Harroway put it to the Ford Convenors' Committee - and sold it to them as a 15% minimum. If necessary it could be raised later on, as negotiations with Ford drew nearer.

The next hurdle was the conference of all shop stewards from Ford plants around the country. It took place in Coventry in early April.

Many of the stewards were unhappy with the claim. Some had

## S.Yorks lightning bus strikes

BUS CREWS in South Yorkshire are to continue to press for 70% wage rises it was decided at a meeting on 20th October. A series of lightning one-day strikes has brought all SYPTE buses off the roads recently. But for the moment the Transport Executive are determined to stick to the 10% Government limit. Unless the crews settle for a 'self-financing' productivity deal. Some workers, particularly in Rotherham and Doncaster, are in favour of stepping up action to bring things to a head. Decisions on further action are due at the beginning of November in Sheffield, but perhaps earlier in Rotherham and Doncaster. Local T&GWU official, Jack Green, has shown no stomach for a fight and has called for a return to normal working while negotiations are in progress. Needless to say, this plea was ignored.

## NF stabbing "Not political"

GARY WHITING, a left wing paper-seller, was stabbed six times by a National Front supporter in Bradford shopping precinct on October 1st. He had to undergo serious surgery but is now recovering.

Police arrested the man responsible for the attack but claim that the knifing was not a political act. The police version of events is that fighting took place between two 'political factions' immediately prior to the stabbing, but that the man arrested, named Appleby, was not part of this. But local anti-fascists say Appleby had been seen selling the NF magazine 'Spearhead' just before and that he had been around on two previous occasions when violence had been used against anti-fascists - once when some black youths were attacked and once when the victims were white trade unionists.

This fits into a national pattern of

brought amendments, calling for a £20 rise and a 35 hour week. They were never discussed. Twenty minutes before the end of the meeting the Standing Order Committee ruled that there was not time to take amendments. A press conference had to start at 1 p.m.

The final hurdle was the mass meetings to ratify the decision made at Coventry. The solution was simple. With the exception of one plant - Langley - NO MASS MEETINGS WERE HELD. And at Langley a resolution calling for £20 and the 35 hour week was ruled out of order by the chairman of the shop stewards committee - another member of the CP. He said the purpose of the meeting was to ratify the Coventry resolution - not to debate new material.

From that point - back in May - it was clear that unless Ford's final offer was an insult to the workforce as a whole there would be no real struggle to prevent yet another cut in the standard of living.

Instead, Ford made a very divisive offer which massively increased differentials, and which - against what most people expected - broke the government's wage guidelines. That is why there was no strike at Fords.

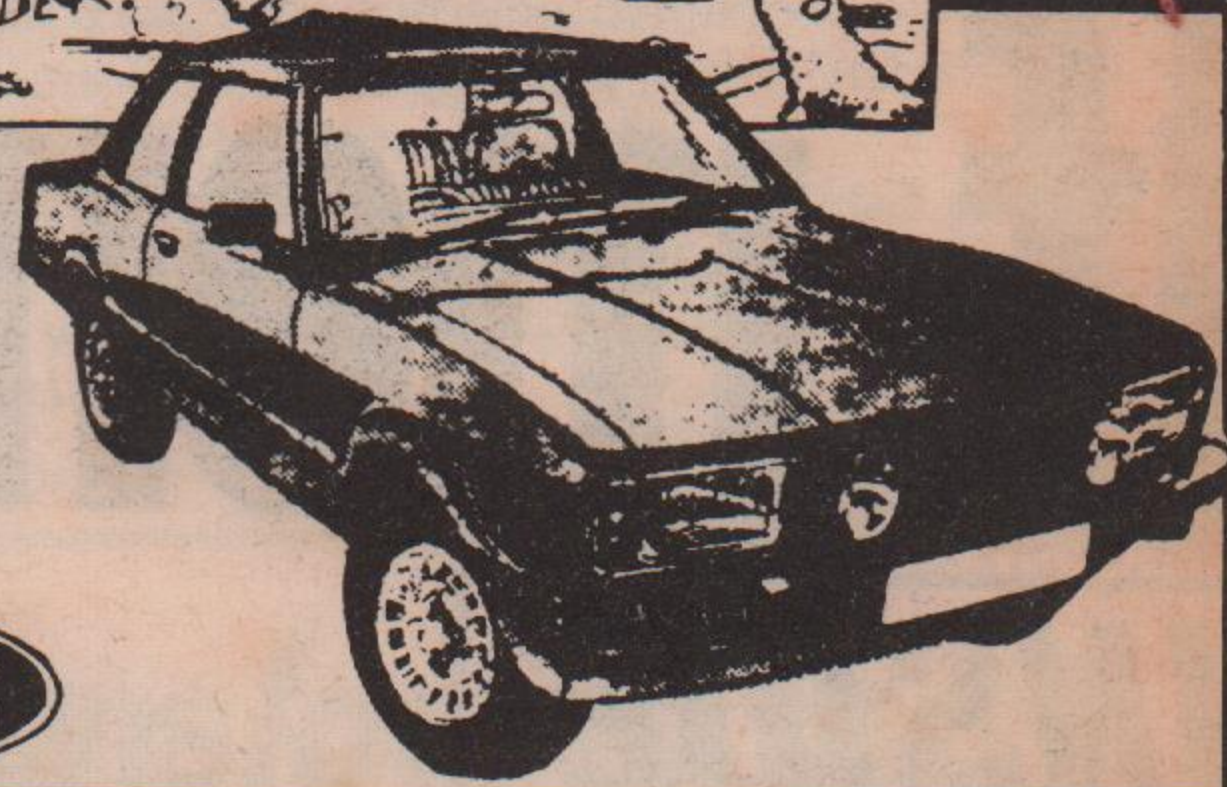
What has happened is undoubtedly a setback. A major struggle at Ford could have acted as a rallying point for the whole working class. But there is one very slight saving grace. NO BOSS CAN NOW USE THE GOVERNMENT'S PAY GUIDELINES AS AN EXCUSE FOR NOT PAYING WHAT WE NEED TO LIVE. Fords have gone through the guidelines. And an inch is as good as a mile.

# Tired of living...? Henry Ford needs YOU!



Making poxy Fiestas and Cortinas. There's MORE for you at Fraud...MORE night work, MORE overtime, (in fact you need never go home!)

Not to mention the Big Fraud Benefit Package: long holidays (whenever you are laid off); excellent funeral facilities, free toilet paper and that special Never-Never-Never car purchase plan.



Strikers on picket at British Oxygen Company's Hackney plant.

THE NATIONAL strike now in its third week is for a £20 pound rise, increased shift allowances and the full consolidation of past wage rises. Management have, as could be expected, offered a self-financing productivity deal which in the words of a BOC shop steward is self-financing in two ways.

'We either lose all the overtime at the same time as getting a pathetic basic rise, or we lose jobs. A self-financing scheme means that our blokes will lose their mates off the job. We'll lose one man in five. This BOC dispute shows up the Government campaign for productivity deals. Look, we put this Labour lot in. We accepted the £6, then the £4 and inflation kept on going. Now they want us to take the productivity deals, just like ten years ago. These deals are going to put another million on the dole if we're stupid enough to swallow them.'

As thousands of workers in factories get laid off because of the BOC strike, pressure on the strikers to return to work will get nastier. Already BOC has placed a half-page advert in the 'Sun' whose aim is to turn other workers against the BOC strikers.

BOC shareholders, on the other hand, do not read the 'Sun'; in the papers they read different facts are mentioned - that BOC had an operating surplus of £121 million last year, paid only £128,000 in profits tax and in the last four years have raised profits per worker by £250 a year.

Messages of support to John Walsh, 19 Maynell Rd. London E9



# editorial

It's not often that we find out what our rulers really think. Now, Sir Richard Dobson, with his infamous 'Wogs' speech, has given us a rare glimpse behind the scenes.

Our congratulations to **Socialist Challenge** for bringing about Dobson's prompt resignation. The case is just the tip of the iceberg, of course. If you had watched the Tory Conference on TV you'd know what we mean.

...the conference gave its loudest applause to those who went straight to the point — delegates who called for the restitution of the privileges of middle class education, those in favour of the slashing of public expenditure and of taxation on upper middle income brackets, and, above all, those who demanded a direct assault on the chief class enemy, the trade union movement."

Not our view, but that of the bosses' daily, **the Financial Times**.

There was a time when our rulers were as forthright in public as Dobson was in private. But no longer can they risk public references to 'wogs' or to trade unionists as 'bastards'. They dress their language up to suit the occasion.

And so it is with Mrs Thatcher. She speaks a code language that brings standing ovations from the Tory rank and file and some support from working class people who see life as a lone battle to look after number one.

A good example of this is the Tory slogans about freedom.

## Freedom is Won by Organising

### FREEDOM FOR WHOM? FOR WHAT?

Mrs Thatcher has an audience in the working class when she calls for greater freedom. She attacks the Government for over-taxing us and the union unions for over-controlling us. She argues that Britain is inching towards a socialist bureaucrat's paradise. And, on the other hand, she proclaims the Tories are the party of freedom, the party of the people.

But as always, the Tories have a peculiar definition of freedom. They mean that people with wealth should be able to use it to benefit themselves without any restrictions. That way, they claim, everyone benefits in the end, rich and poor.

What would happen if the Tories had their own way and brought us all 'freedom'? Rich people would be free to choose their own health care — they would buy it. Private health would flourish and all the best staff would abandon the NHS, whose hospitals would return to being poor-r houses.

The poor would also be free to decide which kind of health care they preferred. They could be treated in a run-down NHS hospital, or they could rot at home.

### THE PARTY OF RULING CLASS FREEDOM

The Tory pretence to be the traditional defenders of freedom is really hollow.

■ If the Tories had had their way the trade unions would still be outlawed.

■ If the Tories had had their way, the working still wouldn't have the vote. Many still regret the concession.

■ If the Tories had had their way, the state would still regiment our private lives: homosexuality would still be illegal and abortion the right only of those women rich enough to pay for it in Harley street.

■ If the Tories had their way, every factory, office, school and college would still be run by petty dictators who took no account of the views of

Freedom is not the gift of Mrs Thatcher and her forebears.

Freedom has always been won for all by the working class and its political and trade union organisations.

Without our strength and our freedom to organise, we would have no freedom. That's the lesson of the last 150 years.

### PUBLIC SQUALOR AND PRIVATE AFFLUENCE

What the Tories are offering is the vision of a Britain where the strong are better off at the expense of the weak, where the fittest survive and prosper whilst the less fit go to the wall. As the Iron Lady herself put it, 'Let our children grow tall; let some grow taller than others, if they have it in them to do so.'

### NO REPLY FROM LABOUR

The reason why the Tories have taken the initiative over the fundamental issues is because Labour have refused to oppose them with a socialist alternative. To this Tory rule of the jungle there should be opposed the vision of a compassionate, egalitarian society where no-one is allowed to grow fat at the expense of others. A society where great wealth, **which always goes with great poverty**, is illegal. And where power is spread evenly throughout society and not confined to the small minority of politicians, industrialists and bankers as it is today.

But Labour's leaders have decided that this is not the way to get the votes they need to win the next election. Instead they are carrying out a watered-down version of the Tory programme which includes:

● Cut-backs in income tax instead of increased spending on health and education.

● A compromise with the forces of reaction over abortion (see page 3)

● Introduction of the Criminal Trespass Law which is a serious erosion of working class rights in pickets, occupations etc.

● The abandonment of their proposals to extend Direct Works departments.

● Continuation of the bi-partisan policy over Ireland.

● Total collaboration with West Germany and other countries in the fight against 'international terrorism'.

And as the election gets nearer we can expect Labour more and more to compromise. A Lib-Lab pact at the next election would mean the complete abandonment of any progressive policies. By comparison with today's Labour mob, the Atlee Government of 1945 were a bunch of revolution-crazed radicals.

### A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

In this situation, where Labour's response to the Tories is to try to steal their political clothes, we desperately need an independent political force to put forward a socialist alternative. An alternative that makes it clear that only collective solutions can solve the problems of bad housing, education, unemployment, sexual oppression in which so many working class people are trapped. That puts clearly the need for public affluence as a solution to private squalor. The 'Socialist Unity' campaigns at Ladywood and Spitalfields show great promise — we must use the conference

# Don't Tinker With Taylor

## PARENT GOVERNORS AND THE LEFT

REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS have always argued that the present education system is a means of controlling the ability of the working class to express its own needs.

We believe that the working class should control education, but how do we move towards this situation; what does this mean to you, me and all the rest of the people in our street and community?

This problem has been highlighted by the controversy over the William Tyndale Primary School in London, and more recently by the publication of the Taylor Report which recommends that the governing bodies of schools should be composed of equal numbers of representatives of local Education Authorities, teachers, parents and members of the community.

Do we as socialists push for more working class involvement on school governing bodies and parent-teacher associations, using them as a means of fighting for our needs. Or, do we just let the debate rise over our heads? Certainly the Tories think the idea of Parent Governors poses no threat to themselves and have tried to ensure that the majority of governing bodies in certain areas under local Tory councils are composed of Tory supporters.

### Predict

All of us reading this could have more or less predicted or can predict how our lives are going to turn out. What sort of jobs we end up with, what living conditions are like. Of course examination certificates do make some difference, but they do not fundamentally change this prediction. The education we get is designed to sort us into the slots already created for us.

So just imagine yourself, a product of this system, as a school governor. Sitting in a room with

headteachers and local notables, being served coffee and sherry, surrounded by notices telling the pupils of the school to be quiet and stay away from the area you are in. You probably feel scared and cannot express yourself. You think you have nothing to offer. But this is precisely what you have been educated to think, especially if you are a woman.

Most of the present parent governors are those middle class professionals who have been brought up with the idea of speaking on committees. They know that the present education system is the type which will help their children. The Taylor proposals will increase the numbers of these people, and relegate the pupils to token observer status, unless working class people get involved in these structures and use them.

### Progressive

Progressive educationists like Eric Midwinter, ardently support the Taylor proposals because they do not necessarily upset the status quo. Terry Ellis, the former headmaster of William Tyndale Junior School, who lost his job for trying to do this, realises this.

"Progressive educationists are not trying to change education for the children, and progressive education theories are not practised by the majority of schools. You only have to see the results of the most recent survey where most teachers wanted to bring back the cane, and wanted more tests. Those schools which say they are practising progressive methods, get rid of children who are disadvantaged and don't conform. They are not honest about their relationship with the kids. Schools are based on white Anglo-Saxon middle class culture."

The only time parents are encouraged to have a say in what is going in the schools is to provide

fuel for the reaction against any policies which attempt to radically alter the present education system. Over the last year the newspapers try to instil fear within us about the way our own or our children's education is suffering. They do this to whip up hysteria to block any changes and actually shift existing educational policies to the right. This has made many teachers sceptical of the support of parents. As Terry Ellis says "The more you demystify yourself as a teacher, the more parents feel confident to criticise you. The paradox is that they can be manipulated against you."

### Tories

In the present climate, parent power will mean that the parents whose voice we will hear will be the articulate middle classes and the Tories. If individual working class parents become involved on governing bodies there is a danger that they will be picked off and integrated into the education bureaucracy. Just as dangerous is the protective arrogance of the teachers unions who see the involvement of others as amateurish meddling.

The only realistic path is where parents, pupils and non-teaching members of the school staff are backed-up by and represent a growing movement made up of organisations like the National Union of School Students, Tenants

organisations, women's organisations, trades councils etc. To have real power, parents and pupils must have the support of others — as individuals we are weak.

### FOR WORKING CLASS CONTROL OF EDUCATION

(For more background to this issue read the Big Flame pamphlet 'The Crisis in Education' — 45p inc. post from 217 Wavertree Rd. Liverpool 7.)

# REVIEW: Youth Power

THIS document, produced by people in Leeds, has arisen out of their experiences in helping to build a revolutionary youth movement, and breaks away from the traditional derogatory left-wing view of today's youth being tomorrow's working class.

At last, there is a serious group of people who recognise the value of youth struggles within the schools and the community, yet see the movement, as being, in the pamphlet's own words, "the 'property' of no one except the youth within it"

### SCHOOL STRIKES

The increasing number of school students' strikes, and their rebelliousness in the streets (as with the spontaneous rising of Asian youth in Southall last year) indicates the concern of youth to "do" something about their environment. Neglect of this by revolutionaries has, as the pamphlet says, made fascist propaganda "attractive to white working class youth", when nobody else seems to be taking any notice of them".

### LABOUR MOVEMENT

Young people do want to organise, being aware of the constraints imposed upon them, and aware of the limitations of the Labour Movement: "We've got to organise things our-



haven't got the right to organise. That's the basic thing we've got to do first" (14 year old).

The author's see the need for a means of co-ordinating and generalising experience; an end which a "national youth paper" would service, and which could be a "tool for militant youth to bring consciousness and continuity to the rebelliousness of youth". That is the reason behind the "Schools Out" paper, which, after being handed out at schools, received comments from notable reactionaries like Dennis

disgusted by its contents.' Not surprisingly school students liked it and wanted to write their own paper.

The pamphlet is an excellent statement of both the situation of youth and revolutionaries. Avoiding condescension or pretentiousness, it argues for the autonomy of youth. Although far from comprehensive, it is an important first step in developing a coherent politics towards youth by adult revolutionaries.

'Towards a Revolutionary Youth Movement' (25p with 'Schools Out' paper) from Schools Out, c/o 153



# FROM BELFAST TO BRITAIN WITH A VENGEANCE

Police 50 deep outside Hyde Town Hall where Webster is "speaking"

## ..... 3,000 POLICE MARCH WITH WEBSTER

FOR EVERYONE who was out and about in East Manchester on October 8th, it must have seemed as if Belfast had come to Britain. As police helicopters buzzed overhead, the working class people of Hyde, Gorton and Longsight found themselves accosted by plain clothes police frisking and harrasing them, mounting road-blocks and generally behaving as though World War III had started. As one local woman put it, "it seems like the Martians have landed."

**£250,000**

### spent on demo

The object of the whole exercise the final cost of which is estimated to be nearer a half than a quarter of a million pounds, was to pave the way for the Fascists of the National Front to march in their paramilitary uniforms through the streets of Manchester without either warning or consent.

For several months now, the state has been using the periodic clashed between the Fascists and the left as an excuse for arming itself to the teeth for use against any future working class struggle, all in the name of law and order. The press and TV have served their masters well by stirring up public opinion for more power to the "thin blue line" while the Tories rant and rave about underpaid policing. Only a matter of days after Lewisham, on the crest of the press's hysteria about 'Red Fascism' riot shields were issued to the West Yorkshire Constabulary, for use against ..... threats to public order' like pickets, demonstrations and any other tactics used by workers in struggle.

### Police and Front work together

But October 8th really saw the writing on the wall, not only has the Chief Constable of Manchester publicly admitted that he colluded in secret with the National Front for days in advance about what would happen on the day, but he deliberately ordered nine thousand police onto the streets of the city in full knowledge that little over a thousand anti-fascists were going to be there. He had previously backed up his original demand for a ban on the NF march by saying that his intel-

ligence sources told him how many were coming to oppose the fascists. Now if he was in a position to know the extent of the original mobilisation, those same sources must have revealed the extent of the demobilisation consequent upon the ban, and yet he went ahead with a full-scale operation ridiculously out of proportion to the numbers involved, but which gave his forces a dress rehearsal and a 'dry run' for the state's future confrontations with the working class.

## THROUGH

In Hyde town centre, where six hundred anti-fascists gathered to hold a peaceful protest against the NF, police cameras were clicking away for most of the day from the surrounding high buildings. Some 3000 marching policemen provided the bodyguard for Martin Webster's 'one man march' through the town. There were holes in the police uniforms where the letters identifying the force from which they came had been torn off. No wonder NF Fuhrer Tyndall told the Observer last month that "our opponents in the Establishment would be quite frightened if they knew that"

*"our opponents in the establishment would be quite frightened if they knew how much sympathy we have in the police."*

### Press and Cameras after aggro

Tameside Trades Council is demanding an inquiry from the Home Secretary into the various complaints against the Police. They are asking for specific examples of police misbehaviour to be sent to them.

The press, of course, whimpered on about how the 'brave police' had prevented a major riot in Hyde between the NF and the SWP, despite the fact that they all knew damn well that the SWP were nowhere near Hyde on the day. The press had been flitting round the Tameside Anti-fascist committee for weeks before hand like bees round honey asking about the possibility of violence. When none occurred, you couldn't see 'em for dust. But when 'the gentlemen of the press' sat down to write up their reports, they seemed to forget all about the interviews they had so anxiously sought with the Anti-Fascist Committee. The picket suddenly became 'organised by the

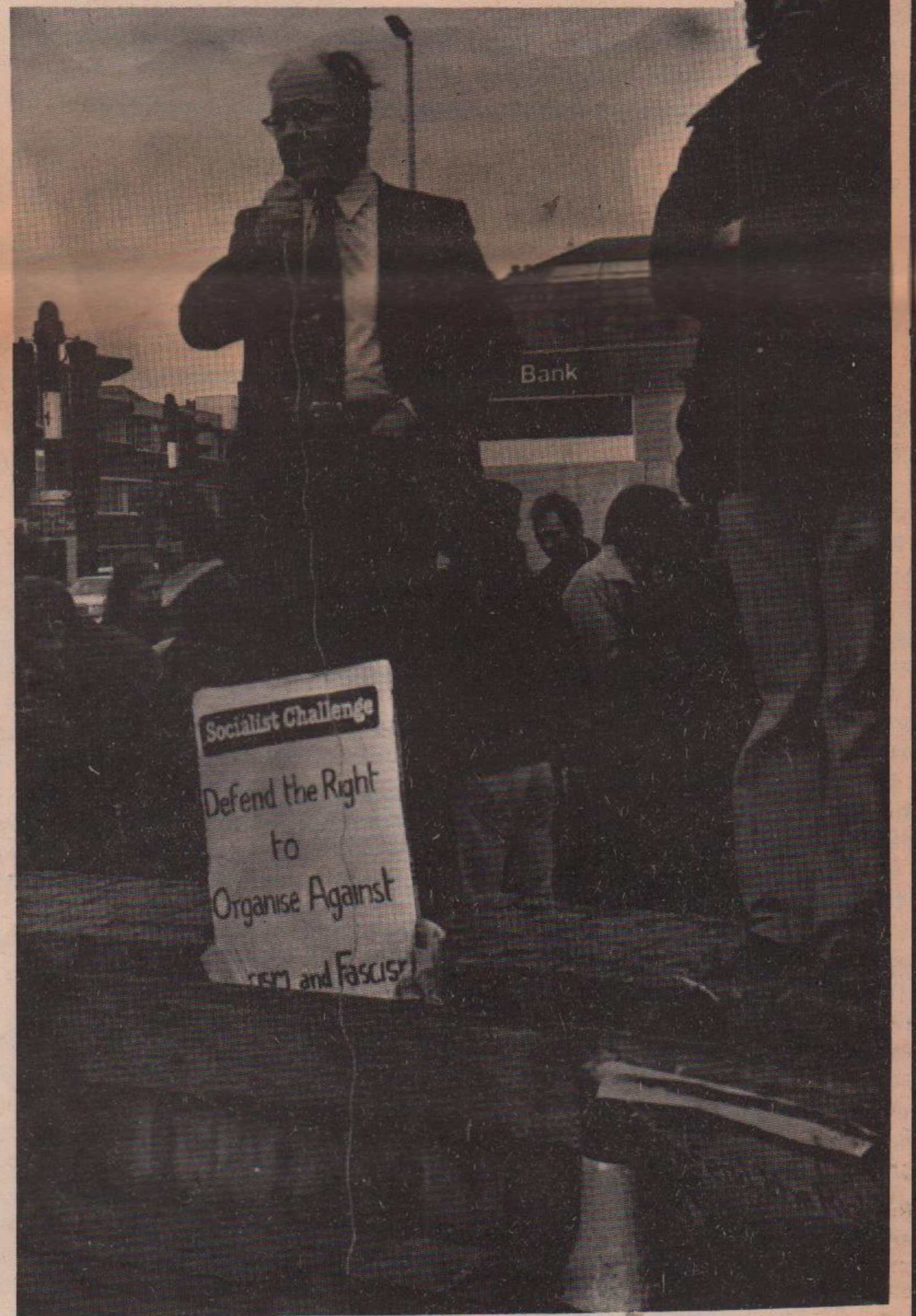


## HYDE

SWP'. Nothing could be further from the truth: the SWP had drawn away many anti-fascists from Hyde who told them that the Front were definitely marching in Stockport. In the event the Front marched through Longsight and Gorton, and the SWP's attempts to reach them were reduced to impotence by the organised might of the state.

### Limited Victory

October 8th was a limited victory for the anti-fascists movement. We asserted our right to hold public meetings in defiance of the state's attempt to ban us along with the fascists. We drowned out Webster's speech as we had intended. We reached a large audience of local people and stopped the NF's attempt to establish a sizeable base in Tameside. But the most notable event of the day remains the Belfast style operation of the police. For the anti-fascist movement, this means that while we continue to oppose the Fascists right to public platforms by force, we must make it as difficult as possible for our activity to be used by the state as an excuse for strengthening its repressive apparatus. The fight against fascism will be won not by the shocktroops of the revolutionary left, substituting themselves for a mass working class anti-fascist movement, but by the building of that movement around the anti-fascist committees.



A victim of Aushwitz addressing the anti-fascist meeting in Hyde on the real issue, which the press ignored - the end-result of fascism.



## Group on line against racism

A NEWLY-formed group of Shepherds Bush residents struck their first blow against racism on Saturday.

Following a pre arranged route from the White City Estate to Hammersmith, they scrubbed off or painted over National Front and racist slogans on buildings and signs.

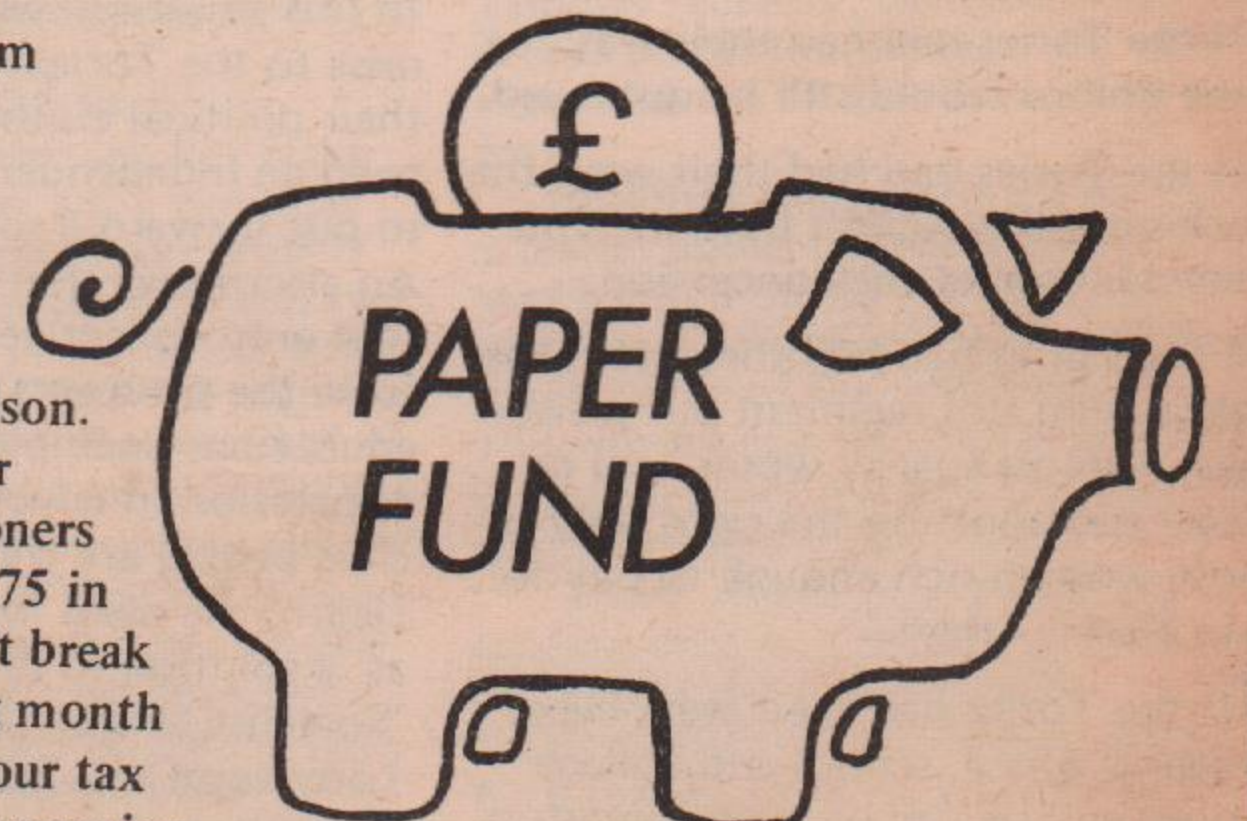
involved in the clean up, and they also handed out about 600 leaflets explaining the aims of the Shepherds Bush Anti Racist Group.

"We talked to a lot of people and most of them were pleased to see the slogans go," said one of the group's members. "People seemed to think we were doing a good job."

"We have got plans for the future, but they're not definite."

This paper costs about £200 per month to produce. Only about £150 is re-couped in sales. The problem is the hidden costs; office equipment, telephone calls, supplies and correspondence.

Money in this month. £3 from Liverpool member, £15 from Manchester member. £5 B and M Davidson. £2.75 from our 'letters to prisoners scheme.' £25.75 in all, which won't break the bank. Next month we expect all your tax rebates to come pouring in!



BIG FLAME PHOTO

BIG FLAME PHOTO



# Our 'right to choose' under attack

## NOW THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO MAKE A "COMPROMISE" BUT WITH WHOM.....?



Mark Rusher (IFL)

First day of the NAC Caravan tour

As the National Abortion Campaign prepared itself for a demonstration in Birmingham, 'the worst backstreet abortion city of all,' news was revealed of a further threat to women's abortion rights. Prime Minister Callaghan has ordered his Health Ministers, Roland Moyle and David Ennals, to set up a meeting to discuss 'changes' in the 1967 Abortion Act.

And who has been invited to this meeting?

\* William Benyon — proposer of the last anti-abortion bill

\* Sir Bernard Braine — the bill's most senior Tory backer

\* Leo Abse — a well-known anti-

abortionist.

\* James White — proposer of the first anti-abortion bill

... to name but a few.

No women have been invited, and several Labour MPs like Renee Short who would have been expected to have been kept in touch with such developments knew nothing of the meeting.

The meeting will discuss an all-party bill which supposedly will be a 'compromise' between pro- and anti-abortionist views. If this is really true why have no pro-abortionists been invited to the meeting?

It would be nearer to the truth to say that the meeting will plan further restrictions on the already inadequate Abortion Act. This is

despite the fact that the recent Labour Party conference voted by 4,666,000 to 73,000 against such restrictions.

But Callaghan is more concerned with vote-catching than sticking to Labour Party decisions. He is afraid of losing the Scottish Catholic vote especially since a Scottish Catholic lawyer and businessman called on television for all Catholic Labour voters to withhold their vote unless the Government restricted abortion. Callaghan hasn't bothered to find out what support this man has from Catholic working class women in Scotland or the rest of the country. Is he prepared to ignore the rights and demands of thousands of women who are planning to march in Birmingham on the 29th?

Even if I lived in Buckingham Palace I wouldn't want a child every year

*'I've been fertile for 21 years, ovulating once a month. That's 249 times I didn't get pregnant. You spend so much time thinking about getting pregnant or trying not to get pregnant. Either way it rules your life.'*



### Cuts in Contraception

\* A recent survey by the advisor to the British Pregnancy Advisory Service has found that nearly half the women interviewed were pregnant because of contraceptive failure — due, in most cases to inappropriate advice from their doctors.

\* Only 5,000 out of 21,000 GPs giving contraceptive advice know how to insert IUDs and there is no indication that any more of them know how to fit diaphragms.

\* A survey by the Family Planning Association found:—  
— that clinics are seeing only half as many women as they did before the Government took over the service.  
— Area Health Authority clinics see fewer patients per hour and are less flexible than their predecessors  
— some AHAs are cutting clinic sessions and cutting back on the range of contraceptives stocked.

## NAC Whatnext?

Birmingham, the city with the worst record for backstreet abortions in the country will be the centre of a big demonstration on October 29th. The National Abortion Campaign, with its slogans: 'Free Abortion on Demand' and 'A Woman's Right to Choose', will be on the streets again, and like last time they will probably be totally ignored by the press.

What is the state of the campaign now? How do the women, who have been fighting so long, feel? They've defeated two anti-abortion bills and now are threatened with a third more powerful one on the horizon. What is the next step?

'A Woman's Right to Choose' has always been the most vital slogan of the NAC campaign. Unfortunately, there has sometimes been the tendency to see this as just a matter of women controlling their own fertility when in fact it should mean a lot more. Women need to be able to choose not only when or whether to have kids, but also under what conditions. They need to have all the things necessary to make having kids, if they want them, an enjoyable experience.

A lot of the fight so far has been against legislation that even further restricts abortion rights — this has been very necessary and in many places has been linked with the day-to-day struggles of getting quick referral and safe abortion facilities. More recently, in an attempt to move away from the defensive on the parliamentary side, there have been proposals of positive legislation. This would be aimed at making safe abortions more freely available when women choose them. This too is worth fighting for and even if such legislation were implemented would involve a further fight to make it meaningful. The law as it stands now, inadequate as it is, isn't even implemented properly.

But organising against reactionary bills or for progressive ones isn't enough. Locally there have been fights for day-care abortion facilities and against anti-abortionist doctors. And recently the NAC sent a caravan on tour around the country to publicise and argue the case for abortion on demand. Unfortunately the van was sabotaged and was unable to reach many places — but if the tour so far has been successful then NAC should start an appeal to replace or renew the van.

Many of the women who have been involved in the campaign since it started are worried that the fight is not positive enough.

A loose grouping called Feminists Against Benyon took direct action in the week before the Benyon Bill fell in July, as a move against what they saw as the defensiveness of the campaign so far. They disrupted the Standing Committee meeting, interrupted a David Frost Show debate on abortion, occupied Westminster Cathedral, singing songs and making speeches.

One thing is certain, abortion can't be seen as a single issue. The right to choose when and if to have children means fighting for a lot more — decent housing, better health care, no cuts, more time and money, better nursery facilities and contraception that works without side effects.

And we're not just talking about women controlling their social lives, but their sex lives as well. Women are brought up to feel guilt or fear about sex. They're not supposed to enjoy it. They're not considered 'normal' if they don't have kids. Lesbian women are punished by having their kids taken away from them, and by being beaten up, harassed and ridiculed. 'A Woman's Right to Choose' should mean a choice about all these things.

The latest threat of a government bill which will restrict abortion is very worrying since it will have more chance than ever of getting through. The fight against this and for a real right to choose will have to be stronger and linked with the struggles of health workers against cuts and closures. It shows the real hypocrisy of the government when you realise that on the one hand they are threatening to restrict abortion and are cutting contraception facilities, while on the other they are cutting maternity services, and nurseries wherever they can get away with it.



National Abortion Campaign Caravan at Winchester

Mark Rusher (IFL)

## 'LIFE' & SPUC'S LIES

**'We consider all people equal, no matter what their colour, race, class, creed, education, physical and mental ability and age.'**

That's a quote from a recent LIFE (National anti-abortion organisation) leaflet distributed at the Labour Party conference. Once again the anti-abortionists are launching a fresh attack on our rights to abortion. This time though it is in the guise of 'equality', but yet again women have to pay the price.

The price we pay is to be born a woman and therefore be stuck with our biological role as baby-machine. LIFE talks about 'equality for all' but does not consider how women are to fight for equal pay, more nurseries and increased child benefits if we don't even have the right to control the number of children we have — the right to control our own bodies.

### SANCTITY OF LIFE?

Anti-abortionists and the Catholic

Church make much of the 'sanctity of life' but leave the fight for better housing, more jobs, and against hospital closures to others. LIFE also says 'the unborn child is now the most vulnerable, oppressed and unequal member of human society'. But if they really believe what they say why do they keep silent at the plight of thousands of single women with children who live below the poverty line on supplementary benefit of £12.90 and a measly £3.60 for a baby?

Where are the anti-abortionists when a woman is being battered by her husband? Where are they when women commit suicide or need enormous quantities of valium just to cope with family life?

### LIES ABOUT ABORTION RISKS

Great play is also made of the supposed risks to women of infertility after an abortion — a risk totally unsupported by fact. They talk about the dangers and conveniently ignore the fact that it is much more dangerous to continue with a pregnancy than terminate it.

To cap it all women who don't want to have a child are constantly in

formed that they don't know their own minds — it's supposed to be a hormone at work — and are confidently informed that all pregnancies are wanted at 30 weeks.

According to the anti-abortionists, women not only have no right to control their own bodies but don't even have enough sense to know their own minds!

### WHO CARES IF YOU ARE PREGNANT? THEY DON'T!

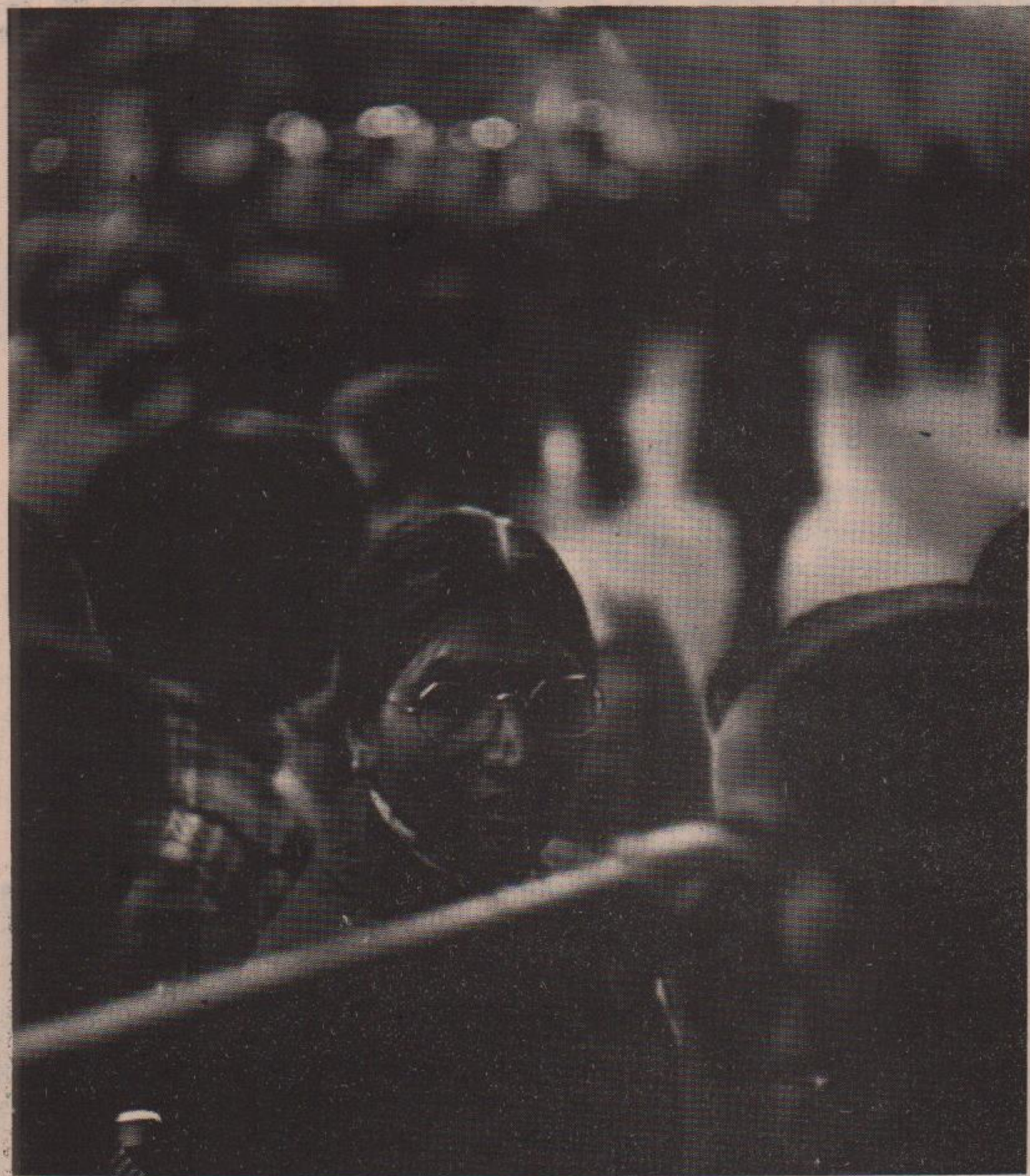
We're also told that after nine months of a pregnancy 'we can give it away'. This, of course, was written by a man. They claim there are hundreds of couples wanting to adopt. Why then are there children's homes crowded with unwanted children? You can be sure most people only consider adopting white, blue-eyed, healthy babies.

No woman should be forced to go through with an unwanted pregnancy.

LIFE has offices in several cities, advertised as places to go for help with a pregnancy. But they refuse to offer abortion advice to those who don't want to be pregnant. Warn your



# THE STRUGGLE



# THE TUC WANT



# TO FORGET

AS THE Grunwick strikers call for another mass picket in the hope of avoiding another winter outside the factory gates — a winter their strike might not survive — one thing is becoming clear. Their struggle is seen by the Labour Government, the T.U.C. and their union APEX as a political liability they would like to be shut off.

Not for a long time has the empty posturing of the Labour Government and the TUC been made so visible. A TUC which is doing nothing to implement its general Council's resolution of the 28th September which "decided to recommend the executives of the unions concerned to apply such sanctions as are open to them with the full backing of the General Council".

The unpleasant truth of the matter is that Ward and NAFF, the direct opponents of the Grunwick strikers, are much more determined to force a confrontation over the issue. The knowledge that they will have total media support and some public support for the hard stand they are taking on the right of management to manage, violence and the closed shop (though of course, APEX have never asked for a closed shop). On the other side, the Labour Government and the T.U.C., the 'supporters' of the strikers, are much too worried about what happens at Grunwick will do to their election chances to take militant action: they know the Tories and NAFF have taken the

raises and they reckon their best bet is to lie doggo and wait for the strike to collapse.

From this situation, the only way forward for the Strike Committee was to call for a resumption of the mass picket in the hope that to cut off services. And, of course, a large turn-out of the next mass picket on November 7th is essential.

The larger the turn-out, the greater the pressure on the unions. It is quite clear that time is not on the side of the Grunwick strikers: Ward has survived the 'amateur photographers' summer high season.

The Grunwick strikers having won some of the legal battles - the Scarman Report came out in their favour - now find that legal victories are not enough. And the mass support of the Yorkshire miners and the revolutionary left can't offset the effect of the inactivity of the T.U.C. and their own union. Our problem has been to not have sufficient strength to overcome an unfavourable balance of forces.

Whatever happens on and after Nov 7th there are already two lessons of Grunwick:

1. The interests of the working class as a whole no longer coincides with the interests of the Grunwick strikers. For the working class as a whole, the important thing to do is to shut Grunwick down - as with Roberts Arundel in Stockport, the point has to be made that cowboy employers are not welcome here. This will not get the jobs of the strikers back but it will threaten

HOW do you organise at work when the union leaders who used to be called left-wingers are actively supporting the Government against the working class?

During November there will be two attempts at resolving this dilemma.

There is the conference of the Rank and File Movement and a national meeting of car and car-components workers. Big Flame's Industrial Commission explains its attitude to these two events.

IT'S NOTHING new for trade union leaders to leave their members in the lurch. They've been doing that for as long as there have been trade unions. And the members have been fighting their leaders' unreliability for just as long.

What's changed in recent years is that the union leaderships don't just agree to the anti-workers policies of the Government, as they often did in the past. Now they are actively involved in drawing up plans to save capitalism at the expense of the working class.

That's why the gap between the interests of the membership and the leadership in most unions has never been greater, or the relationship so strained.

alist society.

## THE LIMITED AIMS OF THE UNIONS

But behind all this lies another reason for the trade union officials' readiness to sacrifice their members interests for the sake of capitalism.

People join trade unions because as individuals they are weak whereas together they can force the employer to concede better wages and conditions. That's what unions do, they bargain over the price of labour. But the interests of the members are broader than that. The working class does not stop at demanding a few pence an

# Socialists and the rank and file movement

The political influence of pro-capitalist Labour politicians and trade union leaders has helped to limit the class struggle to the most immediate demands. Unfortunately, revolutionaries have largely failed to present any real alternative to the mass of the working class.

It's easy to find good reasons for this. There have never been many of us, and our enemies are very powerful. But we should try to be self-critical. The fact is that we have failed to create a mass base for our ideas in the working class. The traditional - and unsuccessful tactic of the left has been to win positions of power within the unions. One minority replaces another minority.

Hugh Scanlon's career shows how well this tactic **doesn't** work.

Promoted to high office as a leftist through an election campaign run by leftists, he ends by turning his back on these supporters and going over to the Government. Union politics are the affair of a minority. Almost nobody makes any attempt to

involve the mass of the membership, except once in a while when an election is looming. This cynicism towards the majority has been the undoing of the left time after time after time.

## FIRST STEPS TOWARDS A RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT

1962-72 was a breakthrough for the left, although a limited one.

Trade unionists moved into action on a massive scale against Labour and Tory attempts to shackle their organisations to the State.

Whose essential function is to show the Government and the T.U.C. that to do nothing about Grunwick will cause them more aggro than taking steps to deal with Ward. They are counting on the Grunwick Strike just disappearing; we must make sure it doesn't.

ADVERTISEMENT

## RANK AND FILE DELEGATE CONFERENCE

Saturday 26 November, 11.30am, New Century Hall, Corporation Street, Manchester

Delegates invited from all trade union bodies. Credentials 50p from Rank and File Centre, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

So, legal action is threatened against Hugh Scanlon for voting for the Government's 12 month pay claims rule and against the agreed policy of thousands of AUEW members. That's why Kent miners have tried, through the courts, to prevent Joe Gormley foisting a productivity ballot on the NUM, for the umpteenth time in recent years.

Trade Union leaders are not as all-powerful or influential as Sir Keith Joseph and other right-wingers suggest. They are, however, increasingly indispensable to the smooth running of a modern capit-

hour more.

Socialists believe that, in the end, the working class wants nothing less than the abolition of capitalism itself. This is the only way of overcoming for good the insecurity, frustration and hardship of life in this kind of society. But to abolish capitalism is also to abolish the job of the trade union official. This is one good reason why the union leaders are so hostile to socialism. They are paid for controlling their members, rather than preparing and mobilising them to fight for a better society, for socialism.

over the country.

2. Those who argue that a Labour Government is a government of the working class have been proved wrong all along the line. Once again we see the need for a political representation of the working class that does not put electioneering before the

needs of the class - this the Labour Party has consistently refused to do throughout the Grunwick dispute.

What must be done is clear - to use the film 'Stand Together' and the touring members of the Strike committee to get the maximum support possible for the mass picket.

# Nottingham's Grunwick

VIOLENCE FLARED up on the picket recently outside a small furniture factory in Langley Mill (Notts) where 15 workers have been on strike for three months. A car driven by one of the managers hit and sent flying, Frances Cowan, a student, who has responded to the strikers call for support for the picket.

The union involved in the dispute is the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union (FTAT). As this statement by the local FTAT district official makes clear, the dispute at E and H architectural is yet another instance of employers disregarding the recommendations of bodies like ACAS and

during the government to do anything about it.

"This factory was organised in 1972 by my union and at one time the union contributions were being deducted from wages. However, relations with the Directors deteriorated and eventually the Company withdrew what recognition there was left.

The labour force was about twenty five of which 18 employees were members of the union. It was obvious that the Management was discriminating against the union members, giving overtime to non-members and we believe paying the non-members more than the union members. The Union applied to ACAS for a Recog-

niton Agreement in February 1977 and under difficult circumstances our members waited for ACAS to do their work. Having more than 50% membership we were confident that the outcome would be in our favour. However, the Management after drawing out the negotiations, refused to sign a mutually agreed document arrived at via ACAS and terminated all further discussions with the Union and ACAS.

Our members were left without any alternative but to take action and left their place of work".

The Company sacked them, but the 16 remain on strike. The struggle is now going into the third month.

MASS PICKET EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY. NEXT PICKET: 2nd November at the factory in Eastview Terrace, Langley Mill, Nottingham, at 7am. Comrades in the area are asked to support.

left: E and H workers on the Grunwick mass picket on 17th October.



Central to these mobilisations was the work of an organisation formed by the Communist Party, the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions. (LCDTU). LCDTU functioned well whilst the union leaders were prepared to go along with their rank and file in opposing the Government.

The trouble arose when the rank and file began to oppose its leaders over wage controls.

Labour Government sacrificed working class living standards so ruthlessly.

Just around the corner, moreover, is the frightening prospect of a Tory Government with the most reactionary leadership for 40 years.

Now is the time, undeniably, when we need a strong organisation of the rank and file. It needs a clear programme capable of uniting every section of the working class. It must be broadly based and able to

Now, two years later, sensing a change of mood, for the better, a greater readiness to fight than we've known in Britain for years, the SWP returns to pick up the pieces with a new Rank and File Conference.

The programme proposed for discussion on 26th November is simple:

- Smash the 12-month rule - £15 a week minimum pay rises now.
- For the right to work - no prod-

Rank and File Movement is the SWP's clear refusal to allow the Rank and File Movement its independence. All over the country, many ex-SWP members will see the coming conference as yet another stunt and refuse to get involved.

Second, neither the SWP or any other single organisation has deep enough mass roots to allow it to propose the right political line for the whole movement.

and the role of union officials. The conference should set up a network through which information can be exchanged, militants kept in touch.

Not a dramatic leap forward but a vitally necessary move in starting a programme of political work among the mass of car workers in the major factories.

The National Delegate Confer-



No rank and file movement worth the name without women and public sector workers.

ence will have to tackle the problem we've already mentioned - the narrowness of its programme - and steer clear of instant solutions to the long-term problem of building a firm base within the mass of the working class.

Our own experience of political work in industry proves the value of consistent work among the rank and file, beginning at the level of the everyday struggles. Jumping from campaign to campaign has only one purpose - to recruit conscious militants to the party - and that runs directly counter to the prime need of strengthening the independent organisations of the class.

And its only when there is a mass base for your politics that you can carry out the main task of revolutionaries within the workplace: bring together the daily militancy expressed in workplace struggles into an overall perspective for change in our society.

Times like this always produce rank and file movements of opposition within the unions. The question is whether the Rank and File Movement can establish itself as the focal point for all the various rank and file groupings, in different sectors and areas. To do that it will have to prove itself capable of independent action. Workers are increasingly suspicious of political stunts carried out at their expense. Until revolutionaries grasp that, the left will remain weak.

Just at the point when a rank and file organisation with a socialist outlook could have built itself on a mass base, the LCDTU had to put the brakes on. The reason for this is clear. The CP and the LCDTU which it directs are simultaneously part of the rank and file and part of the trade union bureaucracies. Rather than risk a rupture of its alliance with the Labour left in the unions - with Scanlon and Jones above all - the CP gave the order to retreat. A tremendous opportunity was squandered.

A key lesson of this episode is that a genuine rank and file movement can't be tied to an organisation controlled by a political party. The movement must either be independent or be used in the interests of that party. More of this later.

1977

After several years of retreat, the working class is once again moving into action. Yet, never have the trade union leaderships been so devoted to the interests of a Government. And never before has a

defeat the manoeuvres of the trade union officials. It must also be able to put forward an attractive alternative to the policies of Labour, Tory and the National Front alike.

RANK AND FILE AND THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

The National Delegate Conference is the Socialist Workers Party's second try at building a national rank and file organisation.

The first made a bright start in 1974 - on the basis of consistent work at a mass level. It held well attended conferences in March and November. Yet in 1975 it collapsed.

The downturn in the struggle as Wilson's Government established itself in office, was an important factor in its demise. And so was the decision of the SWP itself to transfer its energies to building the Right to Work Campaign. By this lightning switch, the SWP not only stranded many of their best militants, but they also destroyed their industrial base.

activity deal.

- For rank and file unity - against against racialism.
- For a Rank and File Movement.

Very simple, but perhaps too simple. The list of conference sponsors includes hospital workers and women. But where is there any reference in the programme to Equal Pay or fighting the Cuts? In 1977, unlike the early days of the Rank and File Movement, the struggle of immigrant and women workers and the struggle against Hospital closures is central to the whole struggle of the working class.

It is clearly essential to bring together the more local issues of the class struggle with the wider issues the working class must take up like racism and sexism. Otherwise, there is a very serious danger of remaining trapped within a narrow trade union perspective.

DRAWBACKS OF PARTY CONTROL

The main problem facing those who want to see a strong and genuine

It is surely no accident that most of the SWP dominated rank and file groups and papers born in 1972-5 no longer exist. Whilst independent rank and file papers like Dock Worker or Building Worker have survived.

The demise of Carworker illustrates well how negative party control can be on the development of a workers' group. The motor industry has changed profoundly in the 1970's. The role of the shop steward has changed with the shift from piece work to measured day work. These changes caught the SWP out. It was saddled with a view of the steward which was increasingly outdated, yet Carworkers was built on the support of senior steward and convenors, many of them at odds with their own rank and file.

CAR WORKERS CONFERENCE

This brings us to the conference of car workers. This is a much more modest affair. The aim is to provide the forum for a discussion of two topics which dominate the industry: the change to measured day work,



Rank & File building workers meet

BUILDING WORKERS facing five years in prison for the antique charge of 'resisting the sheriff' told their story at a recent conference in London.

The conference discussed the formation of a national rank and file organisation and a radical programme of action for workers in the already demoralised building trade.

The conference, the first meeting of its kind since the collapse of the Charter movement, first heard reports from delegates from different jobs and areas. Many wanted to discuss the fight-back being waged by different direct labour organisations and in view of the many set-backs, demanded immediate and concerted action from the building trade to combat the smear campaigns and redundancies. The message came over clearly that councils (whether Tory or Labour - controlled) were trying wherever possible to introduce sub-contract labour and many budget-cutting tricks such as do-it-yourself work for tenants.

The tunnel miners faced with prison are involved in a dispute over the right to union organisation at a sewer site in Finchburg Park, Lond-

occupiers. Delegates to the conference pledged their support and half of the collection taken was donated to their struggle.

Many delegates gave examples of the operation of a black-list of militants and two delegates there had only recently been taken on and fired within days. This situation had now permeated into direct works departments.

The second session of the conference got down to sorting out some of the nitty-gritty points of policy and the election of a national committee. Previously the paper Building Worker had been produced entirely by London comrades and worked in close co-operation with the rank and file building workers' group there. Now delegates were asked to establish paper sales and distribution in other regions on an organised basis, establish building worker groups from contacts in the areas and initiate local campaigns. After taking amendments and changes to a statement of policy and electing regional and national officers the conference was closed with probably most of the delegates going away feeling greater support and fired with more enthusiasm for the setting up of a national grass roots organisation for building workers.

All building workers are asked to contact the national address for more information on the organisation or the regular newspaper - BUILDING WORKER 19 RED POST HILL, LONDON SE24



# THE STRUGGLE WORLDWIDE



Let me say, at risk of seeming ridiculous, that the the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love.CHE

## 10 YEARS ON

IT IS NOW ten years since Che's death in Bolivia. To revolutionary youth all over the world Che continues to be an inspiration.

Some may feel uneasy about the ever-present posters and berets that show how strong the cult of Che continues to be, a cult not untouched by machismo and male arrogance. But, even the revolutionary movement needs its heroes and heroines and it is better that its cult figures be gentle loving and humourous like Che whose whose great strength was to have a sense of his own limitations.

In fact, in selecting Che to be their cult figure, revolutionary youth have made a good choice. For Che put into practice many important ideas that make up our revolutionary tradition - including internationalism and the building of a new person under socialism.

### CHE'S INTERNATIONALISM

For Che internationalism was not abstract, he saw it as an essential part of the strategy to defeat imperialism, itself an international force of oppression. His famous slogan 'create one, two, three Vietnams'

reflects accurately the need for there to be as many centres of resistance as possible to weaken the very powerful repressive forces of imperialism. In his life, Che fought in the Congo, in Algeria in Cuba and in Latin America - though it would have been very easy for him to become an elder statesman of the Cuban Revolution.

### Not only military help but also food

Che went to open a front in Bolivia at the request of the Vietnamese FLN, who at that time were under terrible pressure from US aerial bombardments. They knew that a second front would force the Americans to spread out their forces of destruction.

But internationalism for Che was not only military involvement - it can be seen in the huge amounts of rice the Cubans sent to Vietnam - rice that was in no way surplus to their own needs. It can be seen in the

internationalist posters that are all over Cuba and in the support, at all levels, that the Cubans have been giving Angola.

### THE NEW PERSON

For Che, two complementary factors were necessary to build socialism:

1. A development of the productive forces
2. A new socialist consciousness amongst the people.

And he believed that this new socialist consciousness would be built by example and by appealing to the collective side of human nature. He did not believe that such a move to a more collective consciousness had to wait for the development of the productive forces. Like Mao, he thought it was possible to 'put politics in command' - that in some cases a new consciousness would determine new productive forces.

In moments of great danger it is possible to use moral incentives more, but to continue their use it is necessary to develop a consciousness where values take on a new dimension. Society as a whole must be converted into a giant school.

Socialism is young and will make mistakes. We are revolutionaries who often suffer from lack of knowledge and the intellectual daring necessary to confront the task of developing the new person. We use old, conventional methods, which were created in the society we come from.

The road is long and in part unknown; we know our own limitations. We will make the person of the 21st Century ourselves.

Che's myth is important to the revolutionary movement if only because it reminds us of the essential role love and generosity have to play in revolutionary politics. As Fidel Castro writes in his introduction to Che's diary:

'There will always be many reasons to not struggle, but it will always be the only way to win our liberty. Che has not survived his ideas but he has nourished them with his blood. On the other hand his so-called revolutionary critics with their political cowardice and their eternal passivity will no doubt still be around long after the incorrectness of their own ideas has become obvious.'

## IRELAND: RELATIVES ACTION COMMITTEE

IN THIS issue we talk to one of the women who has been involved in the Relatives Action Committee which has organised the 'blanket protests' which we've reported in previous issues.

The Relatives Action Committee was formed about one or two years ago in order to fight for the political status of the prisoners of war in Long Kesh. Prior to March 1976 the prisoners had political status, or 'special category' status. This was withdrawn by an act of the British Parliament during the reign of Merlin Rees as secretary of state. This meant that the British Government was trying to criminalise the Irish prisoners - and they wouldn't accept that they are ordinary criminals.

Everyone sentenced for crimes allegedly committed after March 1976 were without political status. The first to be sentenced was a boy from the Lower Falls called Kieran Nugent in September 1976, and he refused to wear the prison garb. He said that the prison garb would have to be nailed on him before he'd wear it. And since then he's been joined by over 200 others and they sit in solitary confinement clad only in a blanket and nothing else except four bare walls, a plastic chair and a bible. They have no contact with the outside world - no newspapers, no radio, no TV - nothing at all. They have one letter from their family per month and they have no other contact at all. The numbers are rising daily (I believe by Christmas there will be about 500). There are also about twelve women in Armagh - they are also in a special wing of their own.

The Relatives Action Committee was formed to fight for the prisoner of war status of these prisoners. There's a central committee and then local branches for different areas - about twelve local branches in the sort of anti-imperialist regions I suppose I could best call them - of

Belfast. The local branches meet every week as does the central branch. We organise street demonstrations, protests, pickets and so forth. We had pickets around the forts and barracks during the Queen's visit, and we carried black flags. Next week we are having pickets outside Armagh Jail. We are having a mass rally on the Falls Road on Sunday - from the Busy Bee in Andersonstown down to the City Centre.

### On the blanket

Last year, before Christmas, some women in the Turf Lodge area erected a tent and they stayed there for a week

in the actual conditions that the men were living in in H Block - six women stayed there clad only in a blanket.

Women in the Relatives Action Committee have used the blanket protest to symbolise the plight of the men inside Long Kesh.

Two women in blankets protested outside the American Consulate a few weeks ago after Carters' utterances about human rights.

Last April a group of women from the Relatives Action Committee went to London to protest outside Westminster, and one of them chained herself to the railings.

We've gone down to Dublin and staged blanket protests there.

We would like to be contacted by anyone interested in our struggle.

## More British aid for 'Ungrateful' Irish

ROY MASON, Minister for Northern Ireland, has announced a big boost to the six county economy. 450 more jobs will be LOST by 1980!

By investing £29million in new plant and equipment at their Derry factory, the giant US chemical company, du Ponts, will be able to do without the raw materials from the nearby British Oxygen Company plant. This will close with the loss of 450 jobs. And du Ponts won't be taking on any extra people at their own works.

The only fresh jobs will be for about 800-1,000 workers to build the new plant - and they will be back on the dole once the job's over.

### SUCCESS

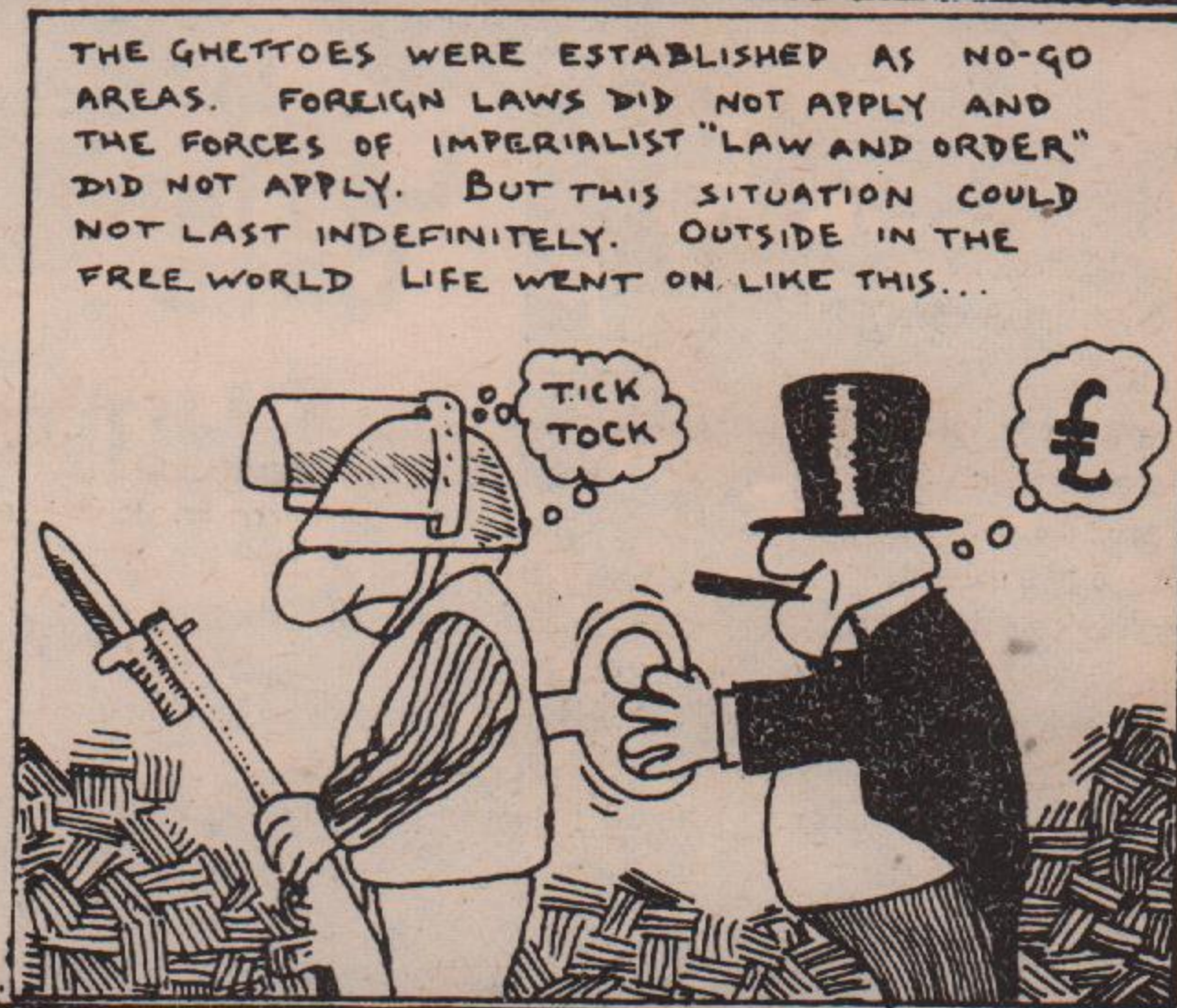
Amazingly, this blow to job pros-

pects is being widely welcomed by Roy Mason. In fact he personally visited du Pont's H.Q. in

### Who's money

Wilmington, Delaware, to clinch the deal. Bearing in mind that most of the £29million investment will probably come from British and Irish taxpayers in the form of government grants and subsidies to the company, the Du Pont management will be laughing all the way to the bank. Their only problem will be persuading some American whizz-kid to go over to become the manager of the plant. The last Du Pont manager was shot dead by the Provisionals.

In view of Du Pont's treatment of Irish workers, this isn't at all surprising.



### SUPPORT DEMO AGAINST VISIT OF ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER

Early this month Begin, the Prime Minister of Israel is coming to have a chat with 'Moses' Callaghan. No doubt they will be discussing ways of excluding the Palestinian people and their organisation, the PLO, from taking part in a settlement of the Middle East question. At the same time as the Americans are trying to get everyone round the conference table at Geneva to discuss the Middle East, the Israeli Government is settling Israeli citizens in the occupied territories.

To protest against Begin's visit the Palestine Solidarity Campaign for a demonstration to assemble Sunday 30th October 12.30 p.m. Hyde Park Corner

The campaign can send speakers to meetings. For more information contact H. Al-Rawi, 58 Old Brompton Rd. London SW7 (01 584-1743)

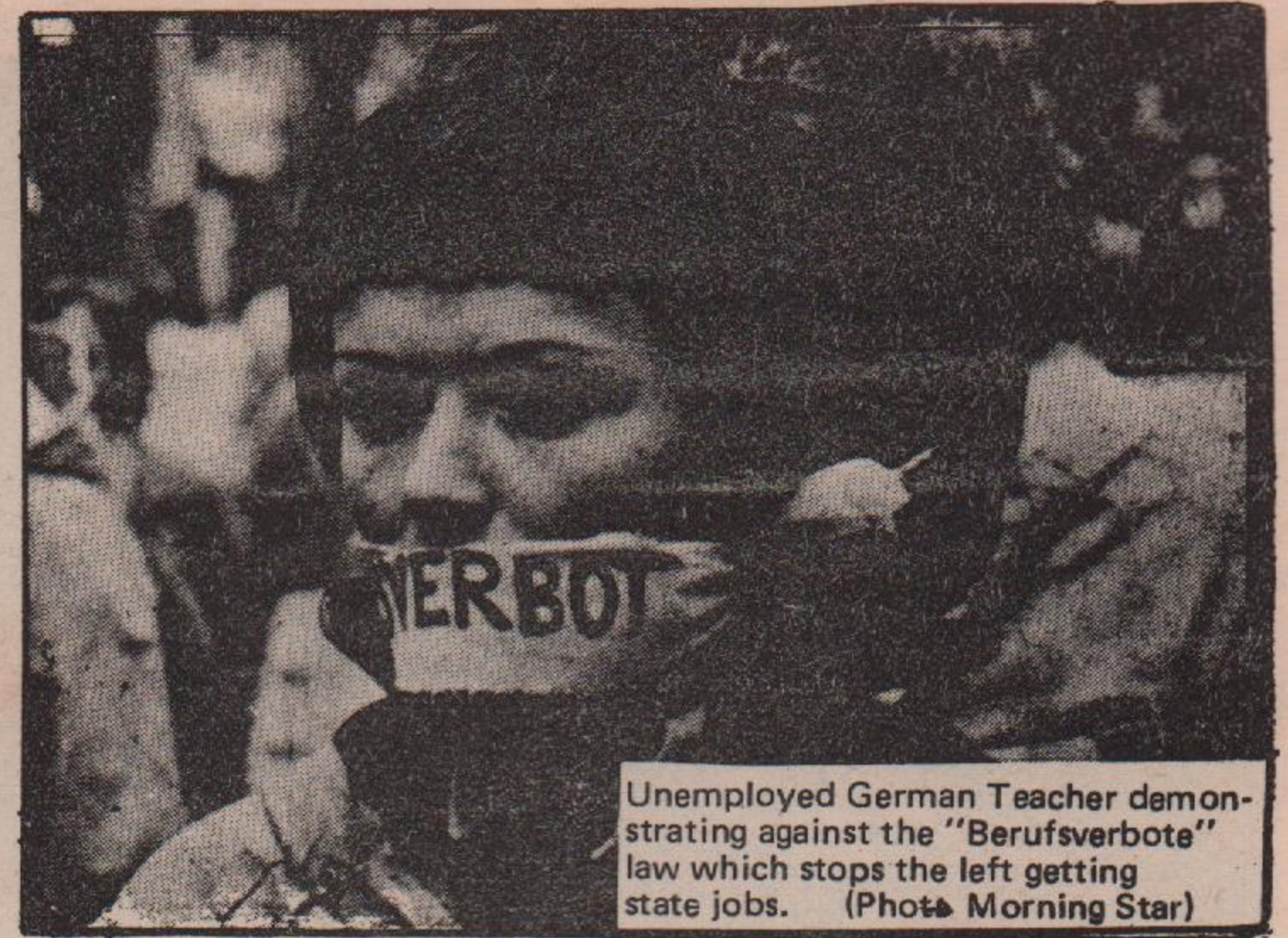


# GERMANY : State Murder

THERE IS no way in which the truth about how Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe, three leading members of the RAF died will ever be known — for a state which murders its political opponents does not carry our honest investigations. And in any case, that the German State took their lives is not in doubt — either by physically liquidating them, or by so damaging them psychologically that suicide was

their only way out. The statement by Boelling, the chief government spokesperson, on their deaths is one the South African government would be proud of. He said "The prisoners were using their own self-destruction to continue their brutal and murderous attacks on the state." What he forgot to mention is that the more RAF prisoners dead, the less to be sprung from prison.

Whatever socialists might think of the strategy of the RAF it is crucial to realise that they are political prisoners (there are still over 60 people on similar charges in German prisons), who have not only been denied the rights which should have been granted to all prisoners, whether political or not, but have actually been treated as if they were not human beings at all. They have been treated as monsters, to be broken by experiments in sensory deprivation.



Unemployed German Teacher demonstrating against the "Berufsverbote" law which stops the left getting state jobs. (Photo Morning Star)

## RED ARMY FRACTION

ONE OF the most consistent lines taken by the authorities and spread through the 'straight' press is that the phenomenon of urban guerilla warfare can only be explained by the fact that 'terrorists' are mad, deranged or recently in the case of the Red Army Fraction (RAF) sexually and personally frustrated women. Branding the prisoners as psychopaths justifies, in the eyes of the government, their mistreatment. In an article in the 'Sunday Times' of 7th August, Anthony Terry wrote in this way, totally avoiding both the social and political background of the Red Army Fraction, and the illegalities and brutalities practised by the German state on political prisoners.

Because of the elitism and isolation of the RAF, the Left has also often given up attempting to analyse why they did what they did. Or have been so anxious to distance themselves from the strategy that they have failed to look objectively at it. It is very sickening to hear socialists moralising and becoming hysterical when talking about today's 'ultra left terrorism' whilst they approach past acts of political violence as if they were chess games played in history.

### Vietnam War

But the main reason why the RAF emerged is to be found in

West Germany's active participation as a logistics base, in the Vietnam War. Philip Agee and Winslow Peck both former CIA agents, had agreed to testify at Ulrike Meinhof's trial, with evidence that the RAF's claim to be fighting against the American war effort in Vietnam was valid as a number of the buildings attacked served as intelligence bases for the US army.

### Repression

The "German Model State" produces violent reaction: urban guerilla warfare is the counterpart to a completely managed society, in which the legal possibilities for bringing about change are so restricted. The emergence of the RAF was a reaction to the way in which the German state has countered any forms of dissidence for many years: by repression, harassment and a massive show of force. Where else would a squat be evicted by 100 armed men with sub-machine guns at 3.00 a.m.?

The degree of physical intimidation in West Germany is incredible, utterly out of proportion to the threat posed by civil disorder. An atmosphere in which any car with a defective back light is at once thought to be a terrorist getaway vehicle has led to the deaths of 200 people shot by police since 1968

The Red Army Fraction took that name because they thought their actions would serve to unleash the

support they had — support which would show itself as conventional political and social struggle. They saw themselves as an armed fraction of a revolutionary movement, encompassing youth, unemployed and immigrants, sections of the population with which they had worked and where they knew they had some support. This was not however to be. And as their own tactic failed to develop inside Germany they became more and more isolated from the Left in general, and more and more critical and dismissive of them. The revolutionary left, for its part, did not know what to do about a political group which it disagreed with, but which it felt it ought to solidarise with. Ever since the leaders of the RAF have been in prison, the main actions by their supporters and sympathisers have been directed as getting their release rather than continuing with their original strategy.

The RAF hoped to reveal the violent and authoritarian — they said fascist — nature of the German state and society behind its facade of democracy: they wanted to bring home to Germany the war which Germany was helping to wage against the exploited peasants and workers of the Third World. But this is not the same as developing the revolutionary movement in Germany. This is the priority for revolutionaries and this the RAF, with their incorrect analysis of the German state have not done.

## LIFE & DEATH OF A NAZI

- 1915: Born, Hans Martin Schleyer. Offenburg/Baden.
- 1931: Member of the Hitler Youth
- 1934: Student member of the SS (membership number 227014). Wore the Golden Badge of Honour. Head of the Imperial Student Union in Heidelberg (a cover organisation for the German Security Service.) Later carried out the same job in Innsbruck and Prague.
- 1937: Law student. SS troop Leader.
- 1938: Sent to Austria after the union with Germany to organise fascist student organisations, and after 1940 to Prague where he worked in the 'Protectorate' to harness Czech industrial output for Nazi Germany's war aims. Remained in Prague until a few days before it was liberated, and then headed 'home for the Reich.' Schleyer was already a high Nazi official, a reward for, as he put it then "being drawn into the struggle at an early age." Arrested by the Americans he was held for three years for his war activities and then released. The Americans were looking for people like him to run industry.
- 1951: Began his career with Daimler-Benz. By 1959 deputy member of the management, and by 1963 a director. (The current manager of Daimler-Benz, Dr. Joachim Zahn is another "old fighter" in the Nazi cause. His Party number was 350-194).
- 1963: Noticed as an enthusiastic representative of business interests, Schleyer begins his rise through employers associations.
- 1973: Appointed head of the Federal Union of German Employer Associations.
- 1976: Adds to this Presidency of Federation of German Industry.
- 1977: Taken prisoner by the Red Army Fraction. Killed following the deaths of RAF prisoners in Stuttgart-Stammheim jail on October 18th.

"It is regrettable that he die. It is even more regrettable that he ever lived." RIP.

# ETHIOPIA : A CRUMBLING EMPIRE

BASIL DAVIDSON has recently returned from Africa. Here he tries to make sense of the tangled conflict around the Horn of Africa.

SOUNDS OF fighting and confusion have been coming in plenty from a huge piece of the African continent that is called (though for no obvious reason) the Horn of Africa.

The Somalis are at war with the Ethiopians (who used to be called the Abyssinians), and so are the Eritreans; while the Ethiopians themselves are also in the midst of great internal struggles of their own. All sorts of foreign interests and powers — Americans, Russians, Arabs, and others — have their hand in the game. It's a very complex game. But what are the facts that matter to us?

The first fact we need to note is that all this conflict is far from being a meaningless carry-on by a lot of people who don't know what's good for them. On the contrary,

what's at stake here is a revolutionary drive for liberation from hunger and oppression. Inside reactionaries are trying to stop this drive, or deflect it in favour of their own interests. Outside reactionaries are trying to influence or control it, once again for their own interests. But the peoples here know very well what is good for them, and they are trying to get it.

### SOMALIA

The second important fact concerns the breakdown of the ancient Ethiopian empire. Founded centuries ago, its new form took shape at the same time as the European colonial empires in Africa: that is at the end of the last century.

This was when the Ethiopian imperial government seized control of vast eastern plains inhabited by a neighbouring people, the Somalis. At the same time the Somalis lost the rest of their homeland to Italy and Britain, each of which took a slice. Ever since then the Somalis of these eastern plains, called the Ogaden, have wanted to be free of Ethiopian control. Today they want

to join the Republic of Somalia formed when the Italian and British colonies were dissolved in 1960.

Nothing happened to weaken Ethiopian imperial domination until 1974. Then there was a revolution in Ethiopia. Pushed by the grassroots pressure of the Ethiopian people, Ethiopian army officers kicked out Haile Selassie and promised to make a social revolution. But these officers soon began quarrelling. Most of them wanted to stop any real revolution and only make a few concessions to the people's demands. A minority were ready to go further, but didn't know how.

### ERITREA

With different dates, it's been much the same for the Eritreans. They became an Italian colony then, much later, they were simply included in the new Ethiopian empire built by the late Haile Selassie (the last Ethiopian emperor, who died in 1975). An Eritrean war of liberation began as long ago as 1963.

The officer who came out on top, Mengistu Haile Mariam, turned out to be the kind of man who says one thing and does another. He talks revolution, but he refuses to give their freedom to the Somalis of the Ogaden or to the Eritreans. On the contrary, he has vowed to defend the Ethiopian empire. This means that his revolutionary policies begin by being counter-revolutionary. Nor surprisingly his government has arrested or killed a lot of Ethiopian left wingers, including many students.

So the Eritreans have gone on with their war of liberation, and now they have practically won it, for they control most of their country. And the Somalis of the Ogaden have got help from their fellow-countrymen in independent Somalia, and begun in their turn, a war of liberation. They have practically won this, too.

### EMPIRE

Meanwhile the people of Ethiopia are paying a high price for Mengistu's policy of "stand firm and save the empire." They have to fight in wars that are none of their interests, and they suffer, while doing so, from an army government with a heavy hand.



And the Great Powers? The Americans pulled out of Ethiopia after 1974, but the Soviets have gone there instead. Further down the line, the oil sheiks of Saudi Arabia and elsewhere are doing their best to buy the Somalis and the Eritreans out of their revolutionary ideas and aims. So far, however, without success.

Given all these complexities, the outcome is far from certain. As things look today, however, the people are winning in Eritrea and also in the Ogaden, and they have at least a chance to improve their situation, if not yet to change it, in Ethiopia itself.

For more information, read "Wereqsa" the journal of the Revolutionary Ethiopia Solidarity Committee. Price £1.50 per year or 15p single copy (inc. p & p) Available from 101-103 Gower St., London W.C.1.

we are the people's government a revolutionary government



every revolution has enemies & enemies have to be destroyed



so we are going to hunt down the feudalists, the petty-bourgeoisie, the anarchists...



the communists, the workers, the students, the peasants, the Eritreans... we'll destroy all the enemies of the REVOLUTION...



... Then there will be no one left to cause problems!!!!





# Music: the voice of the Chilean resistance

"WE WANTED to be a voice for the Chilean resistance." Ingrid and Carlos came to Liverpool three years ago as political refugees. The song on this page was written by Ingrid for their small daughter, Tina.

"Carlos and I began singing about eight years ago, in Chile. We helped to squat and set up a shanty town with people who had no homes. During the Allende period (1970-73), there were dozens of amateur groups like us all over Chile, singing about the people's struggles. And helping to re-discover their music."

"Up to now, our main concern as exiles was to win solidarity over here for the resistance. Later it became clear that that wasn't enough. We had to get involved with the struggles of people in this country."

Recently they've been

joined by Juan, just released from prison in Chile. Together they form Kelikuri, which means red and black, the colours of their organisation, the MIR, in Mapuche the language of the Chilean Indians.

"Because of the speed of events under Allende the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) didn't have time to develop music politically. But the decision to form Kelikuri is partly MIR's decision. They've given us a lot of support and arrange our tours here and in Europe."

Most of their songs are about Chile, especially the ones Ingrid writes, but increasingly they are broadening the repertoire.

"Because Europe has always been the centre of the world, you tend not to know a lot about the rest of the world, especially the Third World," says Carlos; an

English comrade is writing songs for them now — one of them is about Grunwicks — and they draw a lot on other Latin American writers.

Kelikuri's tone is very different from the smooth professionalism of the other Chilean groups — Karaxu and Inti-Illimani. It's refreshing to hear a woman's voice, especially one as varied and emotionally powerful as Ingrid's. Nobody could mistake the political commitment in their performances.

"We don't just want to sing about Chile all the time. And we want to get away from the usual image of Chile. We want to sing about a movement which is recovering its strength and no longer crying. Music can give us the real strength we need for when we go home again."

If you live in Leeds, you can hear Kelikuri on 12th November.



BIG FLAME PHOTO



## TO VALENTINA

Valentina, Valentina  
my morning star, my tomorrow,  
I am not sad anymore,  
if you hold my hand.

You are like a bright light,  
coming through my window,  
reminding me every day,  
that the sun will shine every morning.

White like a dove,  
blonde like the early wheat,  
you represent the tenderness,  
of each one of my brothers' hearts.

When the sorrows of my soul  
are disturbing my reason,  
I only have to look at your eyes,  
and my heart smiles again.

If I lose hope  
of seeing the copihue again †  
your little footsteps,  
are showing me the correct way.

I would like to give you the joy  
of living in a free Chile,  
of growing up by the oak tree,  
and by the mighty Andes.

That is why I sing to you,  
because I know you understand,  
And if I die in the struggle,  
you will be my fighter.

*Copihue is the Chilean national flower.*



BIG FLAME PHOTO



## REVIEW: Union Maids

As the Women's Movement gets stronger it is developing a sense of its history. This involves locating militant women who have taken part in earlier feminist struggles and recording their lives which until now have been 'hidden from history'. 'Union Maids' is a wonderful film that is part of this process.

The film is about three women, two white and one black, and the history they helped to make in the 1930s and 40s in the USA. It was a time of great upheaval when the farmworkers were flooding to the cities to try and find jobs, and the economy was collapsing, crushing thousands with it. These women rose to the demands of their time and became organisers of their class, which meant committing yourself and violently fighting against police, bosses, landlords and also the leaders of the skilled workers' unions, the American Federation of Labour.

It was a time of struggle on a mass scale when thousands of unskilled workers, blacks and whites, men and women, came together to form unions against low pay, sweat-shop conditions and the constant threat of unemployment. Later, committees of the

unemployed were formed as well, and the evictions for rent arrears were mass struggles in the streets.

There is no doubt about the violence of the struggle. There are shots in the film of the brutal police attacks on strikers, and we see the company thugs armed and ready. But the vitality and humour of these women comes across as well, like when the black woman, Sylvia, talks about their fight to take time off work. The women worked seven days a week in a laundry and then went home to clean up their houses, so they were working non-stop. They were sick of being harassed over absenteeism so they decided that when they came back to work they would tell the truth — they were very tired. That's it, just tired of working 24 hours a day. In the end the bosses gave up on getting people for absenteeism.

The songs were part of the struggle too, and form a constant background to the film — defiant and proud. That's the overwhelming feeling you are left with — pride. Proud to be a woman and a fighter, proud to be working class and black (or poor white, or Polish or Chinese). One

criticism of the film was that it didn't show enough of the problems of being a black woman, oppressed by sexism and racism. But one reason for that is that these women are so tough. Although they describe the problems they faced they also tackled them head-on, so what you learn from them is that any obstacle can be overcome if you set your mind to it.

These women though are not heroines on a pedestal. They saw themselves as part of a radical movement working with people they respected and not regretting one minute of their lives, even when their families told them they had achieved nothing, or when they saw the unions they helped to build become reactionary and throw out the radicals.

Their lives aren't over by any means, as Stella talks about joining the women's movement and how she felt it is long overdue, so that women like her, without a family, who had fought as individuals now had a whole movement behind them.

So that's it. A film about three women who organised during the Depression, survived the witch-hunt of communists in the cold war period and are now involved today in the new radical movement. Not surprisingly there is no chance of 'Union Maids' going on general release, but it can be hired from Contemporary Films, 55 Greek Street, London W1. Phone 01 734-4901.

SHOW IT.

## Rock Against Racism

### BUT WHAT ABOUT SEXISM?



Rock Against Racism, the campaigning organisation of musicians started by the Socialist Workers Party is now being asked to take a firm

stand against sexism too.

Feminists and socialists in Liverpool are asking, 'what's the point of opposing racial oppression if you ignore women's?' Forty of them picketed a Rock Against Racism benefit in a local pub where the Accelerators were booked to play.

This group had been 'outlawed' by Rock Against Racism, as sexist, in Socialist Worker, but some local members of the SWP decided nevertheless to go ahead with the booking. But the picket, which included Women's Voice supporters and some men SWP members, forced the benefits' organisers to extract an 'apology' from The Accelerators.

The whole story began in August when the group played at another

benefit in Liverpool. The drummer wore a badge with the slogan: "all Women's libbers are cunts". Some of the women present found the slogan insulting. One of them poured a glass of beer over the drummer's head.

"The lead singer grabbed me and started hitting me" recalls Ann Cunningham, who picketed the RAR benefit. "One of the women in the audience came up to help me. She had a glass in her hand and as the singer hit me the glass cut my face....I was rushed to hospital for 20 stitches." There was no apology or explanation from the Accelerators.

Until the picket, that is, when their statement, read to the audience by the local SWP organiser, said that "not all women's libbers are cunts."

Some of the women on the picket have now written to Rock Against Racism asking for an explanation for the booking of this band. Local Women's Voice supporters are threatening to resign from the SWP unless it takes the fight against sexism seriously.



Dear Comrades,

Many women are being told to keep calm by doctors since the recent 'revelation' that the Pill is not the safest contraception method, especially for women over 35 years old. It's not a surprise for women to learn this.

For years women have had to bear the responsibility for making sure they don't get pregnant. When they do get pregnant, women are accused of not taking care, of being irresponsible — "It's all their own fault." But now we know that there is no 100% safe contraceptive that has no side effects. And women over 35 are now told that abortion up to 12 weeks is a safer method of birth control than the pill. With medical evidence like this, how long can the government justify totally inadequate abortion

facilities in many areas.

Why should women have freedom of choice about which method of contraceptive they use, but then have to persuade two doctors to allow an abortion, when contraception fails. And when are women going to be offered a contraceptive that works without increasing the risk of death or illhealth. Sterilisation is not an answer for women who don't want children now, but may do later. It's wrong that drug companies exist just to make profits (and they make vast profits) and not to improve medicine by research.

In sisterhood,  
Anne S.  
Liverpool

Dear Sisters,

I am afraid this is a begging letter!

The night before the Benyon Bill was due to have its third reading, NAC (National Abortion Campaign) organised a peaceful picket opposite the House of Commons. The Police managed to split our group and during the upheaval I was arrested for obstruction. At the time I was walking towards my car to put some of NAC placards in the boot when four Police Officers, one a Chief Inspector, stopped me. They told me I could go no further, and I pointed out that I had done nothing wrong. Whereupon I was threatened with arrest if I continued towards my car. I repeated that I had done nothing wrong and the Chief Inspector then stepped back and said "O.K. love, off you go." So I went, and was immediately arrested for obstructing the Police.

I was taken to Canon Row Police Station where the Chief

Inspector admitted in front of other Police Officers that I was right and he was wrong but he refused to drop the charge. Obviously being innocent I pleaded 'Not Guilty.' We are going to fight this case to the best of our ability and have therefore retained a first class solicitor and barrister.

The case will be heard at Bow Street Magistrates Court on November 1st 1977 and whether I am found guilty or not the legal costs are going to be somewhere in the region of £200. As a small group we have not got that kind of money and so we would be very grateful if you can make any donation — however small — towards this case, sending it to SURREY NAC at the above

Yours in sisterhood,  
for Surrey NAC,  
Mary Vreede.

please send donations to:  
Surrey NAC, c/o C.M. Vreede  
Victoria House, 23 Woodcote Side,  
Epsom, Surrey.



Dear Big Flame,

On Thursday October 8th the 'Guardian' ran a large and not unsympathetic article entitled 'Police Pay: the Nastiest Problem'. The problem for the state, although it is always unstated in such articles, is how to keep police pay up so that they will faithfully perform their political function of smashing pickets, intimidating trade unionists and socialists to keep us in line pay-wise. At the same time try and attempt to give the government's sick and discredited pay rules at least a semblance of credibility. If the government broke its own

'guidelines' for the police it would make it very much harder for the same characters to oppose other workers' claims to be treated as special cases.

The article itself, however, contained some interesting statistics about police pay which are not seen in the pages of the Mail, the Express or the Daily Mirror — papers which millions of workers read.

"No one can pretend the Police are poorly paid. In April the average constable earned £87 a week (compared to £72 for the average manual worker) while the average for the federated ranks, which embraces all those between constable and inspector, was £94 (compared to £91 for all white collar workers). The perks which used to attract recruits — job security, generous rent allowance and an inflation proof pension equivalent to half pay after 25 years and two thirds after 30 still hold."

Look at the earnings of Health Service ancillary workers. A grade 4 porter or storekeeper has a basic wage of £31.68 to which can be added 'non-enhancible' pay supplements to bring this ludicrous basic up to about £40-50 After deductions this

usually falls to something in the region of £35 for a married man with two children. It is fairly obvious who should be treated as a special case and it is also fairly obvious who will be if anyone is..

The backwoods folk of the Conservative party led by Snatcher Thatcher have also been in their usual bloodthirsty 'pro-police-pro Law and order frame of mind at the party's annual gathering. The double-speak and hypocrisy of Thatcher and her kind knows no limits.

She speaks out about crime and vandalism, but does she mean the crimes of the Poulsons of this world? Does she hell, does she mean the crimes or should we say somewhat indiscreet business activities of British companies in South Africa paying criminally low wages to its African workforce in order to keep the likes of Maggie and her clan in the lap of luxury. No, she means none of this.

Yours in anger,

Merseyside reader



BIRMINGHAM

Campaign against Criminal Trespass Law. National Conference. Birmingham Nov. 26-7 Digbeth Hall.  
To discuss the implications of the law for all forms of occupations; to consolidate and extend the opposition to the law and discuss the need for mass mobilisation in defence of occupations which are threatened or attacked; to assess the use of occupations as a tactic - in all its forms - and make widely available the experience that has been gained in its use; and to unite the many different sections of the broad working class movement which have used occupations as a tactic (industrial workers, hospital workers, students, tenants and the homeless homeless squatting).  
Registration fee £2.50 (claimants £1.50). For details of agenda contact CACTL, c/o 35 Wellington St. London WC2 Tel 01 289-3877

"STAND TOGETHER" — just finished, a film about the mass picket at Grunwicks, July 11th, by the Newsreel Collective. 16mm colour, 50 minutes long, made for and with the Grunwick strikers. Now available for hire from: The Other Cinema, 12/13 Little Newport St., London W.C.2. (tel. 01-734.8508)

BRADFORD Thurs. Oct. 27. 8 p.m. Big Flame showing of 'Stand Together', the Grunwick film. Left Club, Edmund Street.

IRELAND UNFREE — the bulletin of the student movement campaign in Ireland. This journal is committed to a complete end to British domination of Ireland. Enquiries and letters should be sent to: The Editor,

Ireland Unfree,  
Box 1, 2a St Paul's Rd,  
London N.1.

TROOPS OUT, paper of the United Troops Out movement, price 10p available from 182 Upper street, London N.1.

**PUBLICATIONS**

All prices include postage.

DRAFT MANIFESTO for a New Revolutionary Organisation. 35 p Sections include: Modern Capitalism, Composition of the working class, Reformism and popular power, Trade unions, Party and class, International Perspectives, Revolutionary Strategy.

THE REVOLUTION UNFINISHED A Critique of Trotskyism 60 p Two members of Big Flame dissect Trotskyism, the dominant tendency in the British Revolutionary left.

THE CASE AGAINST THE SOCIAL CONTRACT — By a group of independent socialists 20 p

WORKERS POWER 25 p A socialist report on the power plant and energy industries. By the Enrgy Energy Group of the Conference of Socialist Economists, in co-operation with AUEW-TASS, Trafford Park, Manchester.

BIG FLAME JOURNAL No 3 60 p Including a major article by Christopher Roper on Argentina

'TROOPS OUT' Second issue of the United Troops Out Movement paper due out mid-November. Information on bulk orders from United TOM newspaper collective, c/o Islington Community Press, 2a St Pauls Rd, London N.1.

WOMEN'S STRUGGLE NOTES no 4 includes articles on sexuality, women's health, Women's Aid and lots more. 15p (10p to claimants) OUT NOW

**BIG FLAME**

There are Big Flame members in Merseyside, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Colchester, London, Cambridge, Norwich, Swansea, Leicester, Brighton. For further information contact: National Secretary, 217 Wavertree Rd. Liverpool 7

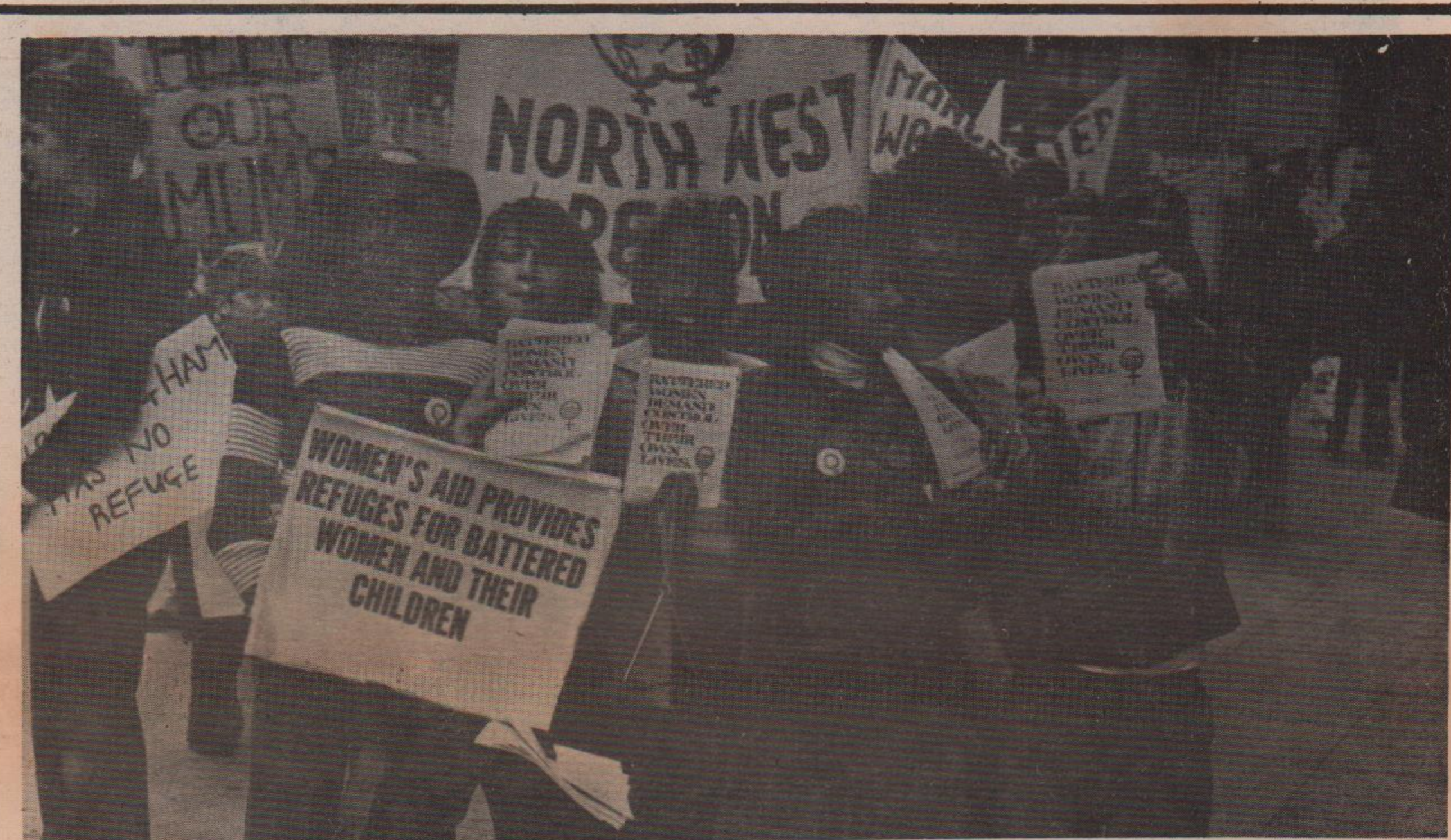
LIVERPOOL Merseyside Hazards Group Day Conference on health hazards at work. Sat. Nov. 12th at 10.30 a.m. AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant. Speakers: Pat Kinnersley, Charlie Clutterbuck and Dave Eva & North West Spanner Theatre Group  
Thurs. Nov. 3rd. MERSEYSIDE SOCIALIST TEACHERS GROUP The Dolphin, Canning Place. 7.30 Meeting on 'WHO CONTROLS SCHOOLS SCHOOLS' Speakers: Tameside parent governor, Tameside teacher and National Union of School Students.

MANCHESTER HOUNSLOW HOSPITAL PUBLIC MEETING with speaker from Hounslow Occupation Committee. Weds. Nov 2nd. Star and Garter, Fairfield St. (near Piccadilly Station) (This meeting is organised by Manchester Hospital Action Group which holds regular meetings every other Thursday. For more information contact 061 223-4515)

MANCHESTER Big Flame public educationals. Weds. Nov. 2 Big Flame's Marxism Weds. Nov 16 Women's revolutionary history Weds. Nov. 30 The crisis of the European revolutionary left. Meetings all start at 7.45 in Big Flame office, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1.

LEEDS Coalition Against Racism and Fascism present 'Resistance', an anti-fascist play by Recreation Ground. Weds. 23rd Nov. at 8 p.m. Swathmore Centre. Woodhouse Square, Leeds 2

LONDON Tues. Nov. 15th. Planning meeting for International Tribunal on War Crimes in Ireland. LSE Union Building at 7.30



'Every week should be a week of action for Women's Aid — we've got a lot of fighting to do!'

This was the rallying call for 1,500 women and children who marched through Birmingham city centre on Saturday September 24th. The march

was a great end to the National Women's Aid Federation's week of action. There were meetings, street stalls, information displays, leafleting and picketing in cities all over the country. Women's Aid is about fighting for battered women to be able to control

their own lives — it's not about producing a cheap social service or sweeping the problem under the carpet. We are fighting to change a sic society which condones and laughs at violence against women. [Taken from Spare Rib No. 64]



**Bigger vote than Tory and Front together**

SOCIALIST UNITY got a real boost in the Spitalfield council by-election. It's a small ward and the turnout was only 20%. Still our candidate, Hilda Kean, came second to Labour in the poll with 243 votes — beating the Tory and National Front candidates. Socialist Unity's feverish activity of the last week was certainly worth it.

Spitalfield is a run-down area in East London with a high proportion of Bengalis many of whom are forced to live in very unsatisfactory conditions. Socialist Unity canvassers were again and again told of the same problems — overcrowded housing, decaying surroundings and no play space for kids. And for the Bengalis there was the added threat of constant attacks by fascists.

There was a lot of resentment against the sitting Labour councillor who obviously didn't care much about the area and spent most of his time abroad. The reaction of many people to this neglect was apathy, but quite a few saw Socialist Unity as a positive alternative.

The campaign in Spitalfield was very open — involving many independents as well as militants of the International Marxist Group and Big Flame — towards the end of the campaign many students from the City of London Poly got involved.

Fascist provocation reached its climax on polling day, when they tried to intimidate Bengalis from voting and beat up a Socialist Unity comrade — their low total of 70 votes

was a decisive setback. For us, the Socialist Unity vote is an encouragement to all the unaligned militants who supported the campaign and a clear indication that it is possible to build a political presence at a local level that puts forward a principled socialist position.

At the Socialist Unity conference Big Flame will be arguing for the kind of programme, organisation and practice that can involve the maximum

**Socialist Unity National Conference London 19 November**

Socialist Unity,  
Box 15, Rising Free,  
182 Upper Street, London N1

The Labour Government has been responsible for working people suffering a real decline in their living standards. Since 1974 wages have bought less. Unemployment has risen. The social services have been savagely cut back. Even more vicious Immigration Laws have been introduced. The few gains made by women such as the 1967 Abortion Act are coming under attack. There has been a steady erosion of democratic rights with the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the deportation of Agee and Hosenball. The war of repression in Ireland still carries on.

Despite these attacks on the working class and its allies, the left Labour MPs have organised no fight back and their opposition has been restricted to nothing more than verbal protests. Likewise the 'left' trade union leaders by their acceptance of Labour's anti-working class policies have safeguarded the interests of the employers as against those of their members.

It is our opinion that there is an urgent need to organise united action amongst the working people and their allies in the Women's movement and in the immigrant communities, to fight back. One of the means in which a united fight back can be carried out, is by the standing of class struggle candidates in both parliamentary and local elections. Such candidates could show that there is an alternative socialist solution to that of Labour's pro-capitalist policies. By their campaigns in the localities they can help to build and encourage united activity on issues like fighting cutbacks in schools, housing, nurseries etc. and also help to build a strong anti-racist movement in the localities.

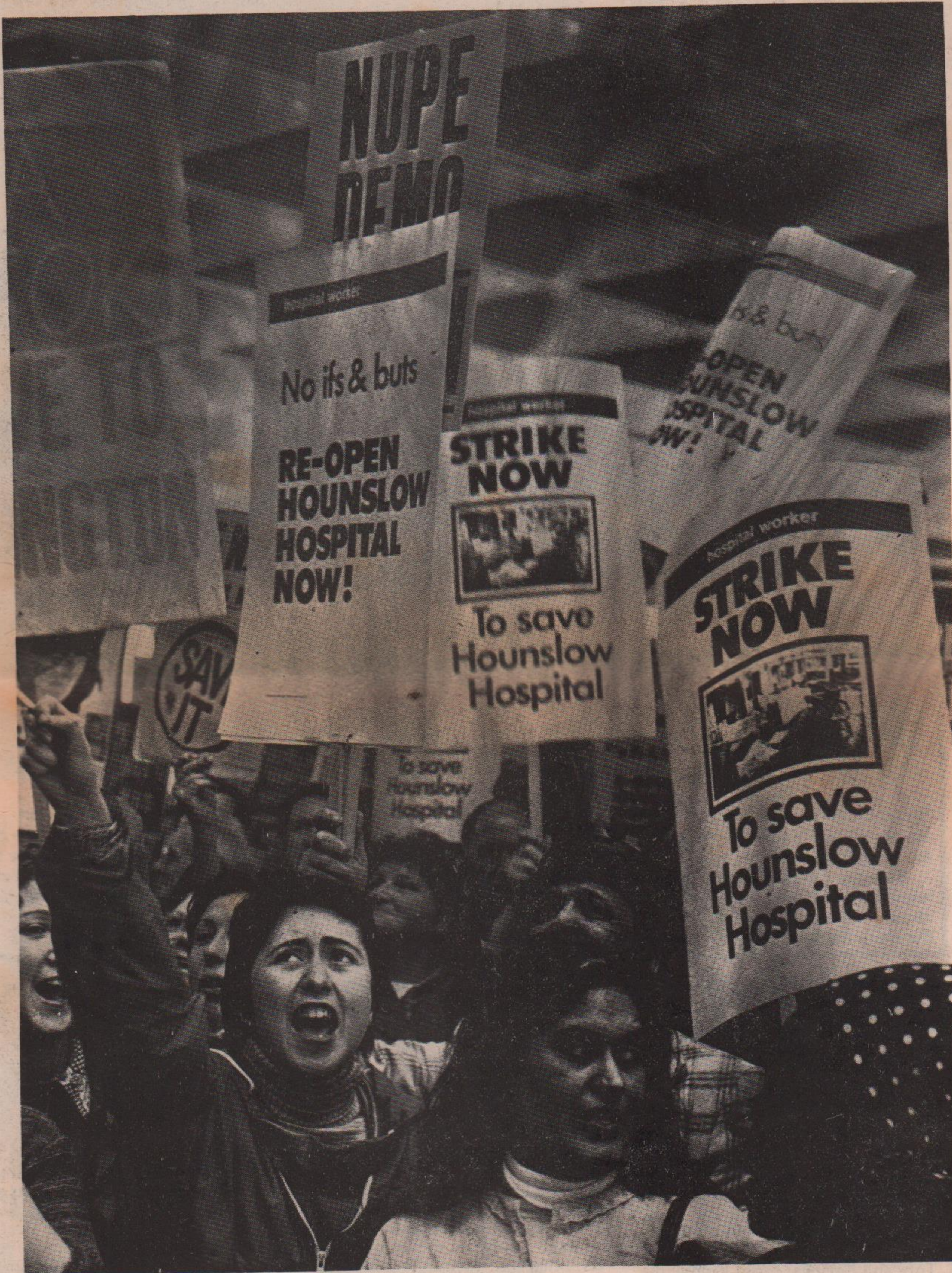
We fully recognise that the return of a Tory Government would be a setback for the working people so Socialist Unity does not claim to be a national alternative. However, we consider it very important that in a number of selected constituencies and wards, a clear socialist alternative is put forward.

Socialist Unity, which is an organisation of left-wing political groups and independent militants, is holding a conference at The Garage, University College, London WC1 on Saturday 19 November, to discuss the programme on which such candidates should stand. We support this action taken by Socialist Unity and hope that you will give your support to the conference.



# BIG FLAME

## HOUNSLOW OCCUPIED: ORGANISING OUR ANGER



Mark Risher (IFL)

ON THURSDAY October 6th, Health Administrators took private ambulances, driven by scabs and accompanied by police, on an organised raid on Hounslow hospital. They seized 21 elderly patients and transferred them to the District General Hospital (West Middlesex Hospital) leaving the wards devastated.

The abduction of patients in this manner, unprecedented in the history of the Health Service, took place as a desperate attempt to smash the work-in at Hounslow Hospital, which had been going on for seven months. This official action was receiving increasing support from the trade union movement, the Health Service and the general public, which enabled it to continue two months past the scheduled closure date of August 31st. The cutbacks demanded by administrators, at Hounslow and elsewhere in the District, will mean the loss of 130 beds and 200 jobs.

The Defence Committee immediately decided to occupy the hospital, in order to continue the fight to maintain a small hospital which has become a focus of resistance to cutbacks in the NHS.

(from the Hounslow Hospital Occupation Committee leaflet)

### Hounslow is just the beginning

I arrived at Hounslow hospital 1½ hours after management had left with the kidnapped patients. For anyone who works in a hospital or has been a patient, the sight of a wrecked ward is a very big shock. In fact some of us who saw it first just started crying. Wards which hours before had been home for 21 old people had been ripped apart. At first we were stunned. Soon we were furiously angry.

If some of us had come within striking distance of some of our Area bosses then, there wouldn't have been much left of them.

That evening, the Defence Committee formed itself into an Occupation Committee and took over the building.

The next day, the local people of Hounslow were streaming in and being shown round the wards by nurses, domestics and porters. Everyone was shaken and angry by what they saw and it was then and over the next couple of days that we realised that we had to organise this anger to get Hounslow re-opened. And at the same time, forcing people to realise that the cuts are brutal and that we can and must resist them now.

#### SUPPORT AT CHARING X

The unions in our Area Health Authority (Ealing Hounslow and Hammersmith) have worked together in a Joint Union Committee for nearly 2 years now, after abandoning the Staff Consultative Committees. From a small beginning we have taken joint action and local action against cuts and have consistently lobbied our AHA, and tried to build up hospital and local support.

So over the weekend following the raid, about 6 stewards from Charing X came to help at the Hounslow, and we decided to immediately organise further support in our own hospital.

On the Monday morning we leafleted our hospital at the front doors from 7am til 9am and spent the morning telling stewards about a meeting at midday with 2 nurses and 2 domestics from Hounslow. At this meeting, the reaction of our staff was one of disbelief and then rage, and we began to talk about coming out on strike on Wednesday to support a lobby of the AHA.

The best moment came when one of the union hacks, Mrs Brookstone tried to pour cold water on the whole thing, calling us irresponsible. Straight away, one of the quietest staff nurses in the hospital turned on her, saying it was our health service and that it was us who really cared about patients, that we must support Hounslow and that anyway we would leave a skeleton staff. The matter was settled.

The next day we held a mass meeting of 450 people after leafletting the whole hospital again. The feeling was tremendous and on the Wednesday, about 200 of us from Charing X marched through Hammersmith to join the lobby at the Town Hall. The stewards met again on Thursday and Friday and we have decided to step up our action against cuts in our own District and try and stop the closure of the Western hospital (a small hospital nearby). We are also helping Hounslow with picketing and working in the campaign.

by Kate Truscott, COHSE shop steward, Charing Cross Hospital

## "They're not fit to run our Health Service"

by Sister Cath Cooney

THE RAID on Hounslow was carried out by senior administrators 4 consultants and 4 Nursing Officers, a private ambulance firm (The Private Ambulance Co Ltd) and a couple of scab porters.

This team of "body-snatchers" included 12 members of the union NALGO who were interfering in an official union dispute which is

backed by NALGO.

None of the patients were examined before being taken away, incident which has shocked the Hounslow nurses into openly criticising the Administration and consultants.

We talked to sister Cath Cooney. The administrators do not really

understand what has to be done for patients, - that is a 24 hour cover by sympathetic people. Without this understanding of all grades of staff a hospital cannot function.

"If there is an emergency, it is always the nurses on the spot who make the decision because the doctor wouldn't necessarily be there. We have to deal with it. It is the nurses who remind the doctors about checks on blood, urine etc.

"These senior Nursing Officers on the raid did NOT know the patients particular problems. The consultants couldn't have known whether there were any problems. The House Officers (resident junior doctors) were not informed.

"The bigger hospitals do not understand how the smaller ones function. In 5 years since I have been here, we have never had an emergency we couldn't cope with. I would

consultants are not even capable of TALKING to staff. They never tried to discuss the work-in. It was us who went to the AHA meetings to talk, but we were never allowed to.

"We weren't really militant, we just wanted to keep the hospital open, and since they wouldn't listen to us, we decided to work-in.

"Most of all, these cuts will be devastating for the women of the country. When do these administrators ever look after patients? When do they ever stay up at night? It will be nurses, women, neighbours community nurses - ALL WOMEN.

"Does the whole Labour Government, do they all detest women so much that they are forcing them to look after all the extra sick people at home for no money because they are closing half our hospital beds? We will not let them get away

HOUNSLOW Hospital Occupation Committee have produced leaflets and posters to publicise their case. They are prepared to speak at meetings. In particular they need MONEY. There will be a tour of the following towns which will include hospital, workplace and public meetings:

Mon Oct 31 - Birmingham  
Tue Nov 1 - Liverpool  
Wed Nov 2 - Manchester  
Thur Nov 3 - Sheffield

On Sat Nov 5th, there will be a Conference organised by Hounslow, EGA, Plaistow and St Nicholas hospitals to discuss health cuts and how to fight them. Open to delegations.

Day of Action Wednesday Nov 9th to include demo and lobby of DHSS and of the AHA.

contact Hounslow Hospital Occupation Committee, Staines Rd, Hounslow, Tel 01-570-4448

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