

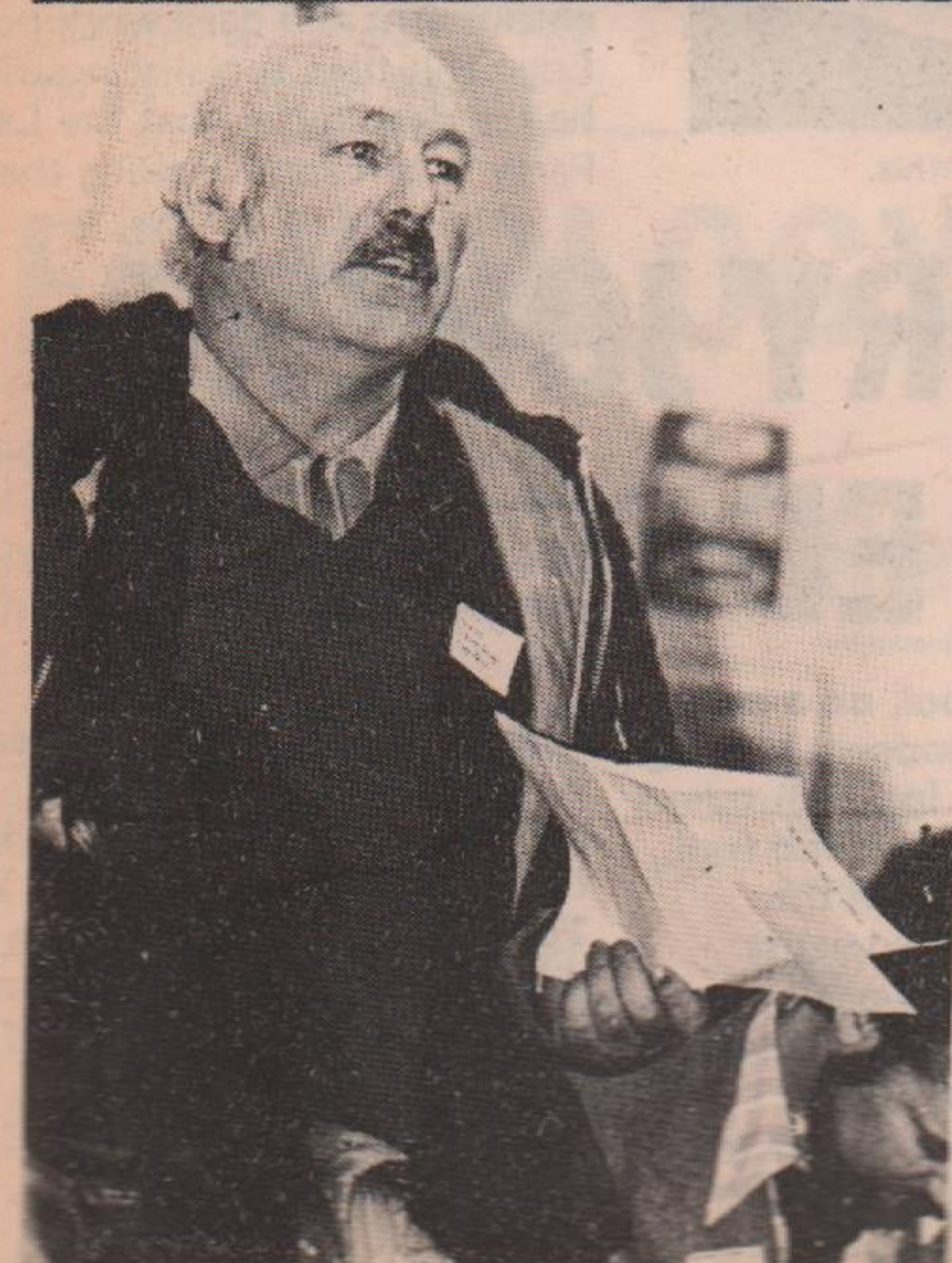
BIG FLAME

Paper of the Revolutionary Socialist Organisation Big Flame

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Dunlop Workers' Ultimatum to Callaghan: 'NO JOBS - NO VOTES'



'GUARANTEE OUR jobs or we won't vote for you — that's the brutal ultimatum to the Government from 2,400 Dunlop workers in Liverpool whose Speke plant faces closure on April 19th.

The Dunlop Action Committee — who are all Labour voters, and many of whom are Party activists — want the Government to step in to prevent the closure. In a letter to the Prime Minister they say: 'Unless we have a positive response to our demand for urgent action to stop the closure . . . we intend to mount a massive DON'T VOTE campaign in the Edge Hill by-election.'

EXPLOSIVE

The Dunlop workers have hit on a potentially explosive tactic. The biggest threat to Labour's election prospects comes from the people who will abstain, not from working class voters going over to the Tories. There are thousands of workers facing redundancies who could take up the 'no vote' call: British Steel, Corby; Vickers, Newcastle; Courtaulds, Spenny-moor; Plessey, Liverpool — to name but a few.

Nonetheless, the Dunlop workers haven't broken with Labour. They are using their vote as a lever to force the Government to save their jobs.

The problem they face is shared by the whole working class. Labour's policies have been disastrous, often barely distinguishable from the Tories'. But what's the alternative?

SOCIALIST UNITY

Socialist Unity and a handful of independent left candidates will stand on a clear socialist platform in the general election. But nobody's pretending that this represents a real alternative to Labour at present.

For that to happen, there would have to be a massive break with Labour throughout the working class movement, and we're still a long way from that.

Big Flame will actively campaign for Socialist Socialist Unity and other left candidates — Pat Arrowsmith standing against James Callaghan and Brendan Gallagher against Roy Mason in Barnsley — because our long term aim is to build a socialist alternative to Labour. We do not support the return of a Tory government. Reluctantly therefore, we call for a vote for Labour where there is no Socialist Unity or similar candidate. We don't think much of Callaghan, but we can't be indifferent to the prospect of the most right-wing Tory government since the 1930s.

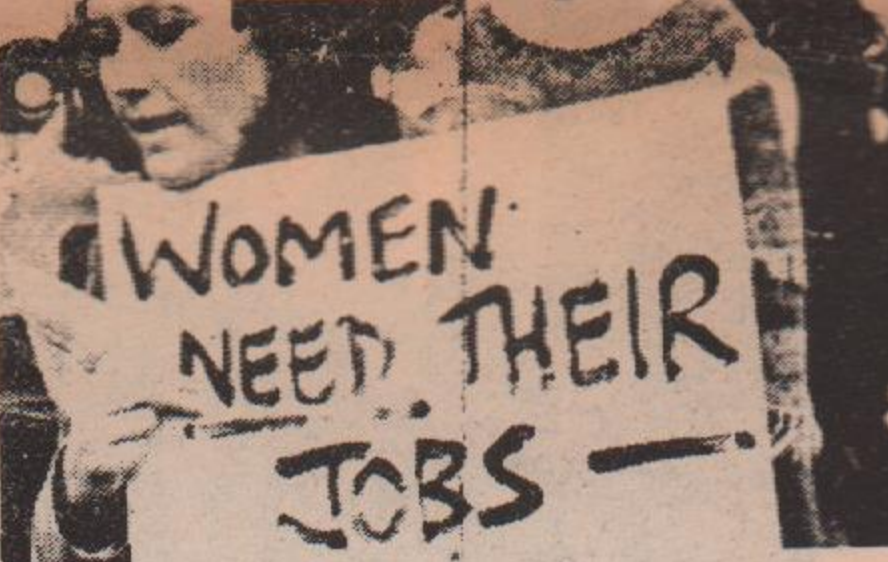
DISASTROUS

In the meantime, the working class can only follow the Dunlops example, limited as it is. The Action Committee is saying in effect, you can have our votes, but you have to earn them.

As a sign of a move away from the old loyalty to Labour, their stand is admirable. But we doubt whether it will win them their jobs. Only militant mass action and an occupation, combined with more traditional forms of action provides any hope of keeping Dunlop, Speke, open.


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LIVERPOOL BY-ELECTION: Arguing for Socialism

The announcement that the pending by-election in Liverpool Edge Hill was to be held on March 29th was made the day after the devolution referendum result became known. Within three days Merseyside Socialist Unity had organised a supporters' meeting, elected a candidate and a campaign committee and had declared its intention to stand.

The group didn't take the decision lightly. Facing 17 days concentrated activity — and with £19 in the bank — all SU supporters realised that there was a tough time ahead, yet all agreed that the Edge Hill by-election was too important to ignore.

Edge Hill is one of Liverpool's inner city constituencies. It has some of the worst housing in Britain with nine times the national average of sub-standard housing. In some areas unemployment is a staggering 34% compared with 7% nationally.

For over 30 years Edge Hill was 'misrepresented' in Parliament by Sir Arthur Irvine, Britain's laziest MP — he only ever asked two questions in

Parliament and was not a familiar sight in the constituency. After a long internal struggle, the local Labour Party management committee withdrew their endorsement of Irvine for any future elections. Last November Irvine died, giving rise to the by-election.

The by-election was as much a surprise for the local Labour Party as it was for the people of Edge Hill. Immediately it was announced, Transport House moved in to run new man Bob Wareing's campaign — whatever kind of fresh Labour image Wareing might have been able to present to Edge Hill was quickly submerged under the Government's pressing need to keep up its Parliamentary voting strength.

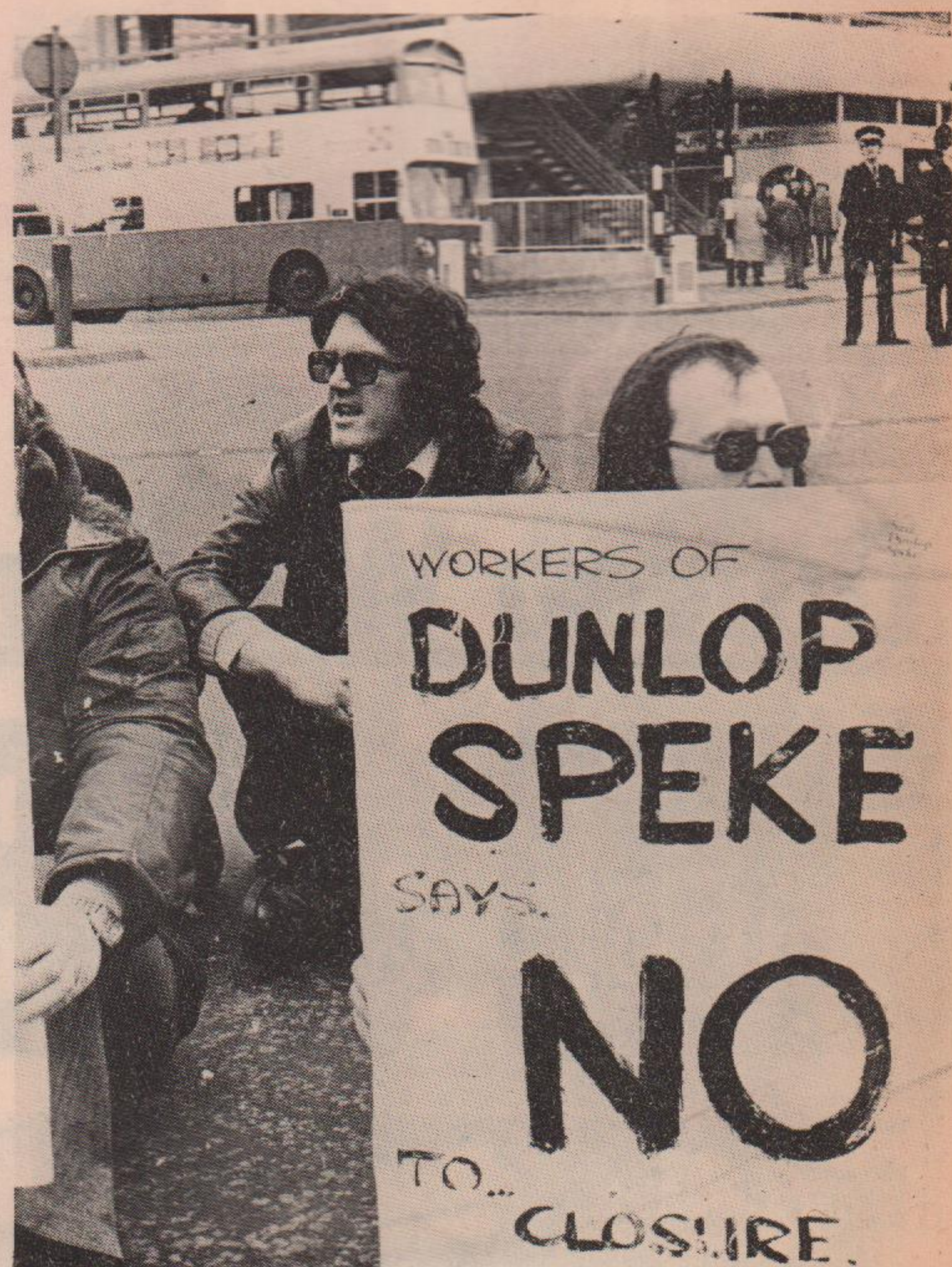
Wareing's campaign was fought

solely on the Labour Government's dismal record and it was this that Socialist Unity attacked. For example, one Wareing press statement proclaimed that 'The Labour Government has stood by its pledges to families, pensioners, the sick, the disabled and others' — and they imported six cabinet ministers,

Foot among them, to back up this fiction.

The commitment made by both the Labour and Liberal party machines testified to the importance of the by-election to both parties. The Liberals built their campaign around their candidate, David Alton, the City Housing Chairman, whose image of concern for 'community' politics was a potent force in the election. Alton's position was particularly ironic given the depressed and decayed state of Edge Hill.

Even so, some local people who had supported Socialist Unity in the council elections last year had been impressed by Alton's efforts to rehouse them. We re-



Socialist Unity candidate, Alan Walker (centre) supporting Dunlop workers in sit-down demo. Alton's Housing Committee, with full Tory backing, was

Big Flame Photo

selling off the better council houses and is building more council houses for sale than for rent.

We were also able to point to the joint Liberal-Tory education policy which reduces Edge Hill's already inadequate secondary schools to short-stay comprehensives, understaffed and with greatly restricted course options.

Socialist Unity directed its efforts to involving as many people as possible in highlighting all those issues that the major parties deliberately distort and forget in their Parliamentary wrangling.

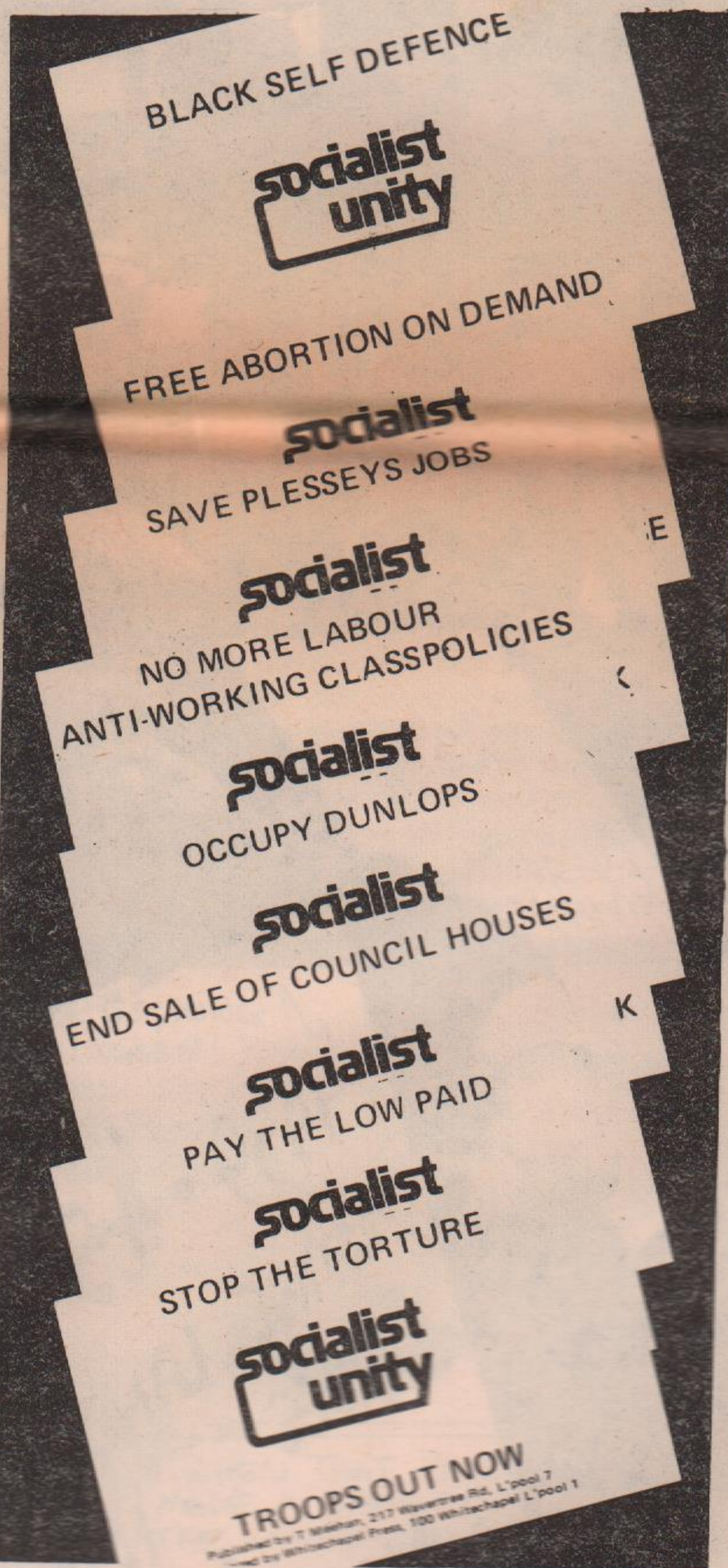
We mounted blanket pickets in support of the Irish struggle. We produced leaflets on the position of women, on racism and on housing. We held a rally with speakers who represented the whole range of socialist politics and, as the days passed, our politics met with a positive response from many of the disillusioned working people of Edge Hill.

Socialist Unity on Merseyside has certainly been boosted by the Edge Hill by-election campaign but our experience has had a much wider significance. Firstly, we've had an impact in Edge Hill itself, particularly amongst youth. Although we see Socialist Unity as an electoral alliance, this doesn't mean that SU supporters will stop being involved in the area. We aim to give what political and physical support we can to the initiatives that we've helped to generate.

Secondly, the Edge Hill experience must have a positive impact on Socialist Unity nationally, for, despite its limitations, we have again shown that there is a need for a socialist alternative in local and national elections. If the campaigns in other areas during the General Election can match the enthusiasm and hard work put into Edge Hill then socialist politics won't be the dead letter that the Labour Party is currently making them.



Fascism and dereliction face voters in Edge Hill



These are the policies SU is fighting for to counter this.

Youth Get Their Say For Once! TORY JOKERS IN EDGE HILL

ALBERT BOOTH, the Minister for Unemployment, came to Edge Hill to talk to a Labour Party by-election meeting. Socialist Unity and *Revolution* supporters had leafleted local schools and colleges inviting people to tell Booth what they think of youth unemployment in the area.

About 50 people turned up for the picket, most of them were young people from the area. I went in first expecting a big meeting but I was greeted by three old age pensioners demanding to know how old I was and if I was old enough to vote. Obviously they weren't interested in the kids' problems, just in getting votes. The message from

the kids outside who weren't allowed into the meeting was, 'We have no future with Labour'.

Inside, Booth kept harping on about the drop of 5,000 in unemployment nationally. He forget to mention the rise in Merseyside's unemployment figures. As he was droning on Socialist Unity supporters were coming in in dribs and drabs because they weren't allowed in in

a group. The hall filled up, but as we weren't allowed to get our point of view over we were all bored so I decided to file my nails.

Finally when the chairperson told us that if we didn't like it we could leave — we did. As we walked out I looked round and laughed because there were more people on the platform than were left in the audience.

I'm going to vote Socialist Unity cause they're the only party that can offer me and other kids a future.

Owie, Liverpool *Revolution* Group.

Prescot Road, Liverpool, on a cold Saturday morning. Shoppers looking at cheap cuts of meat in the butchers butchers. Old ladies, small and frail, go in and out of shops. On the pavement half a dozen Socialist Unity campaigners hand out election addresses, chat to passers-by, get cold hands and feet.

And then, the Tories march by. A group of about 15 people. Tall, on the whole, well-fed, well-dressed, sheepskin coats that would cost

two months of an old age pension. An array of smart suits and grotesque rinsed hair-dos. Where do they dredge them up from? The Tories are doing the election rounds. And, at their head — the man to talk to electors, the man to put Tory policies to the electors? Ken Dodd. Ken Dodd, complete with blue tickling stick. A comedian, a professional nut-case. Just about sums up the Tory campaign.

PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS

Ambulance strike action WEST YORKS. ►

THE AMBULANCE drivers, who have been out since January 22, are holding out firmly against the Government's 9% insult. 'We're the Cinderellas of the Health Service', said one driver at Manchester's Belle Vue station — the first to take action in the area.

An ambulance driver's basic pay is £44.80. The offer of 9% would bring that up to about £50. They have been receiving a non-enhanceable cost of living allowance of £7 of which £3.50 is to be consolidated — but the offer falls well short of their demand for £60 basic and a 35 hour week.

Support for the strike has come from other health workers, firefighters and many of the public.

Officers are still working, as they did in the firefighters' strike, receiving emergency calls and passing them on to the police and the army. One of the drivers at Belle Vue said, 'You only hear the officers in the police and army telling you everything is under control, but the privates and constables are struggling'.

The unions representing the drivers are COHSE, NUPE and TGWU, and this they reckon is one reason why the strike isn't as solid as it could be. Munsall is the only ambulance station out of the four in Manchester that is handling emergencies and this they think is due to the recent shift by the drivers there into COHSE, whereas most of the other stations are NUPE members.



AMBULANCE WORKERS have been on all-out strike in West Yorkshire since 16 March. About 650 workers are out, members of NUPE and COHSE they are demanding a £60 minimum wage.

At present their pay is £44.80 before tax for a fully qualified worker plus a £7 supplement. Trainees receive only £38 before tax.

22 Army vehicles are answering 999 calls in the cities and towns affected, which include Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield and Wakefield.

Pickets at Saxton Gardens Ambulance Station, Leeds said that they were 'locked out' because management told them to "work normally or else". Pickets are allowing the Army to use the stations, but not the equipment.

One driver was arrested in Halifax when he refused to leave the Ambulance Station premises. He was detained in police custody overnight, and released without charge. Drivers at Leeds say that they will not return to work if he is charged, until all charges are dropped.

"The local people have been really sympathetic to our strike" said the pickets. "They've been bringing us tea and toast and everything".

Meanwhile, as we go to press, drivers are travelling to Dewsbury, Menston and Settle, the only Stations still working, to persuade the workers to walk out.

Civil Servants Reject Comparability Con

FOR THE first time the two major civil service unions the CPSA (Civil and Public Servants Association) and the SCPS (Society of Civil and Public Servants) have joined together over a series of mass actions to force the Government's hand over the deteriorating pay situation throughout the Civil Service.

Official and unofficial actions are on the increase as in response to the Government's heavy handed attempts to sack workers for refusing to cover for strikers. Big Flame interviewed Elaine Harrison, Manchester Area organiser for the CPSA and Eddie Moth CPSA, DHSS Regional Committee.

BF: There's not been much of a tradition of militancy in the Civil Service. What's got people so angry this time?

EH: People have come to realise that the Government is no angelic employer. They've reneged on promises time and time again. Civil Service pay has been negotiated with reference to figures produced by a Pay Research Unit (PRU), with compares pay in the private sector with the public sector. Over the last 4 years of Pay policy the private sector has moved

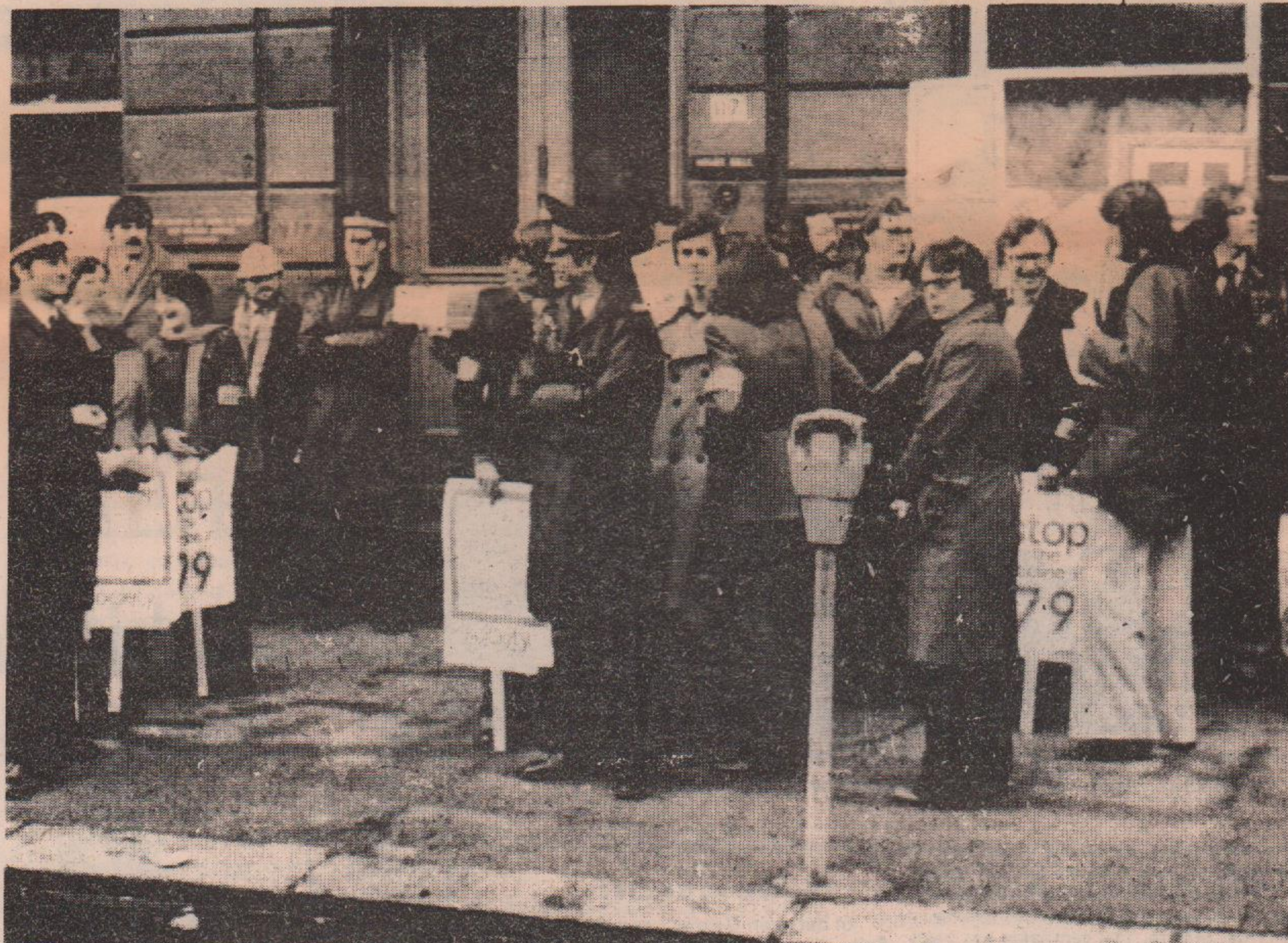
ahead whilst we've been held to the limits. The PRU figures now show that we need rises of between 15% and 35%. Last year, part of our settlement contained an agreement to implement PRU this year. Yet they've ignored it. Hattersley, who is the Minister responsible for the negotiations lied when he said the figures have only just been produced, we've had them since the end of last year.

BF: How have you responded to the sacking threats in Scotland?

EH: This action has really got people's backs up. There have been protest stoppages all over the country this week. Many of these protests have started off as unofficial actions which the union leaders have subsequently recognised.

BF: How's the strike been going so far?

EM: We've tried to avoid hurting the public, so most of the actions so far have been directed at Government revenue collectors centres and departments like Customs and Excise, Royal Ordnance Factories, Ministry of Defence. It's mostly computer operators who are on official strike at present. And its beginning to hurt them.



Scottish civil servants picketing a Glasgow court, one of the most successful actions during the selective strike

BF: Ken Thomas, General Secretary of the CPSA is a signatory of the Concordat. Is this the position of the CPSA leadership in general?

EH: They would like to put the dampers on, but can't due to rank and file strength. The SCPS, who represent the higher grades have tended to take more of a positive leadership role at the national level.

BF: Where do you see the campaign going from now?

EM: The most militant sections, like the DHSS and the Dept. of Employment have not even been called out yet. If the Government continues to delay its only a matter of time before the escalation starts.

BF: Low paid workers everywhere are campaigning for a better lot. Any lessons?

EH: Don't let the Government fob you off with comparability. We're supposed to have had it for years and where are we now? We've been sold down the river and they'll do the same with NUPE given half the chance.

TECHNOLOGY AND JOB LOSS

THE EFFECTS of the introduction of word processors is already being felt in Bradford despite a 13 month long opposition by the typists in the Architects Department, Bradford Council introduced 9 word processors producing an annual saving of £59,000, increased productivity of 19% and the loss of 22 out of 44 jobs.

The word processor is designed to replace the traditional typewriter by performing the same functions more efficiently, much faster and more cheaply. In addition to having the capacity of storage and retrieval of information threatening the jobs not only of 3-5 typists per machine,

Resisting the Word Processor in Bradford

but also those of filing clerks and people in other related departments, such as reprographics. However, in addition to the creation of massive job loss, the impact of word processors on those who remain to operate them means deskilling: with automatic self-correction, accurate typing at high speeds is unnecessary and with in-built supervision and 'screen prompts' the machine actually tells the operator what to do.

STRIKE

The strike began when the management tried to begin a time and motion study and introduce more word processors

On 2nd March, the typists went back to work on the advice of NALGO. Management agreed to suspend the study while a working party looked into the whole question of new technology.

COMPROMISE TALKS

The compromise talks about the need to 'strike bargains and agreements on how the equipment is to be introduced and how any benefits are to be shared between the staff and the Council'. Apart from not clarifying what these benefits might be it contradicts NALGO branch policy which is to oppose job loss through new technology, certainly the benefits to the Council are clearly increased productivity and a smaller payroll, and after all "machines can't go on strike".

That there might be benefits to the typists is questionable - the equipment certainly does not as its manufacturers would argue, decrease the routine and boredom of clerical work, rather it produces exactly the reverse, tedium and monotony are increased and stress and fatigue are added.

Despite the 2½ week strike, management's attitude to the typists appears to be that they don't know their own minds. The Management Services officer told them "You're all going to leave and have babies anyway".

Despite this type of pressure, the typists are determined to fight for their jobs. Management say they will guarantee them jobs 'when' the new system is introduced, but the women are wary of this "they're trying to get out of paying redundancy money".

George Lindo Free

"SICK - but happy". That's George Lindo, a 26 year old Jamaican living in Bradford.

George feels sick because he has spent a year in prison for a crime he claims he did not do. He is happy because he has just been released.

George was sentenced at Leeds Crown Court to two years imprisonment last March, for allegedly robbing a betting shop of £67. He has maintained all along that he was framed by Bradford police.

In January after a year of vigorous campaigning by friends and relatives, George was granted leave to appeal, and he was also granted legal aid. Then, in an unexpected move, he was granted unconditional bail on March 8th, and released from prison pending his appeal.

"I used to cry all the time for about three months". Carol, George's wife said when he was released. "I couldn't eat, and lost three stones. I was getting pills from the doctor. Rachel, our youngest daughter, didn't sleep properly for six months. And Dawn, who is six, couldn't eat. I am surprised that he has so suddenly been granted bail, but I never gave up hope".

George's appeal is expected to be heard in the next few weeks.



George Lindo's release stems from the militant campaign in his support, plus the revelations about sharp police practice in his case.

The campaign's aim all along has been to get mass support. Armley Jail and Leeds Police Station have shaken with the sound of marching feet and angry voices calling for George's release. The campaign has been featured on BBC's Tonight and is the subject of a major film, Black Britannia. Songs, music, poetry and social activity have been as important as the marches and pickets. Linton Kwesi Johnson, the roots poet and member of the Race Today Collective, has regularly brought the house down with his 'George Lindo is a working man'.

GUILTY

It all began when George, a 26 year old textile worker, was arrested at his home in Bradford. After 18 hours questioning at Bradford's main police station, the Tyrils, George signed a 'confession'. He had been given no food, and was denied the right to contact a solicitor.

When he was released on bail he made a statement refuting the earlier 'confession', saying that it was written by a policeman, and that he was pressurised into signing it.

... court the only 'evidence' against George was this so-called confession. There was no forensic evidence or positive identification linking him to the robbery. Three of George's workmates appeared and said that he was at work on the afternoon of the robbery.

Language experts gave evidence that the confession, which the police maintained was taken down word for word from George's mouth, could not have been dictated by George.

But the Jury, of 12 whites, found George guilty. The George Lindo Action Committee was formed that day, 15 Feb 1978, and for over a year they have campaigned for George's release, mobilising

large numbers of black people in Bradford.

CONFESSIONS GALORE

In between George's conviction in February and his sentencing in March, a very important development took place, which cast further doubt on George's 'confession'. On 17 February Geoffrey Elliott was cleared of a rape that he had previously 'confessed' to, when another man admitted the offence.

The George Lindo Action Committee claim that one Bradford officer, Detective Sergeant Craven, was involved in both the Elliott and the Lindo case. Courtney Hay, editor of Bradford Black and a member of the campaign, said "We've now learned that Craven is at this moment facing civil action, as a result of his role in the case of Mr Elliott".

Courtney also claims that Detective Constable Brearley, "one of the three responsible for framing George and taking his statement under duress, has been discovered by a Home Office Investigation to be responsible for improperly obtaining statements from defendants. We have now learned that Brearley resigned from the force in September last year".

DEMANDS

Asked what effect knowing of the campaign outside had on him, George said, "It gave me great courage". The Campaign had five demands:

1. George Lindo's immediate release.
2. That the conviction be quashed.
3. That D.C. Brearley and D.C. Jackson be dismissed from the force immediately.
4. That the police stopped framing blacks.
5. That, in future, black defendants have the right to demand at least three blacks on the jury hearing their case.

editorial

Day in day out, the ruling class administers its repression and brutality. Those who carry it out and those who witness it are usually paid enough to keep quiet; but sometimes money is not enough to keep people quiet.

Why Dr Robert Irwin decided to speak out about the treatment of prisoners at Castlereagh is a mystery. But now that he has done, we must make sure that what he said is well-known.

According to Dr Irwin the injuries sustained by prisoners at Castlereagh could not have been self-inflicted: 'Ruptured ear drums (one of the most serious) could not possibly be self-inflicted. There is not enough leverage in one person's arm to rupture his own eardrum and falling about does not produce a ruptured ear. It can only be produced by a blow with force

from someone else.' And he added: 'The sites of some of the injuries, and the extent of the bruising that has been seen on occasions indicates that considerable force has been used from some other source.'

How seriously the Government takes Irwin's allegations can be seen from their attempt to discredit him by putting around the 'duty trick' story that his wife was raped by a member of SAS and that this was the reason for his allegations. Presumably, this is seen as proving that he is a man blind with prejudice!

No doubt Irwin's confessions will lead to another report which like the ones before it will whitewash what's being done in Northern Irish gaols and detention centres. Our participation in Irish solidarity work is an important way of showing that we are in no way taken in by this blatant propaganda.

Posterity will ne'er survey
A nobler grave than this;

Here lie the bones of Castlereagh:
Stop, traveller, and piss.

Byron.

FIGHT DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL FREE ABDUL AZAD

THE IMMIGRATION Act, like the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Mental Health Act, gives the police and the Home Secretary the power of detention without trial. To defend us from the 'criminally insane', from 'terrorists', and from 'illegal' immigrants, suspects can be picked up by the police, examined by 'experts', and then deported to psychiatric hospitals or out of the country. To defend ourselves, we must organise, not just around individual cases, but against the laws themselves. In the case of Abdul Azad, the Bangladeshi Association of Oldham is leading the way.

Abdul Azad, who is 17 and lives and works in Oldham (Lancs), was picked up for questioning by the police last October, after his mother was murdered. Held for a day without food, he was released that night, and picked up the next morning. It now emerged that the police were less concerned with investigating a murder than with forcing Abdul to confess he was not the son of his mother and father. After 10 days of

hitting him and tearing his hair, the police got him to sign a paper. During this period, Abdul was denied a access to his relatives and legal advisors. He was then transferred to Risley Remand Centre, and held for 3 months. Before being released after pressure from a wide range of organisations and individuals.

He was re-arrested, 2 days before his mother's funeral. This time, the police said that Home Office blood

tests had proved that Abdul wasn't his mother and father's son. Like the virginity tests at Heathrow, this was just the expert evidence Merlyn Rees needed to sign the deportation order for March 16. But the order has been deferred under pressure from the Defence Committee.

Abdul Azad's father told pickets at Risley, 'I want my son, I want you to fight for him'. Abdul was released. But he could be rearrested at any time and held indefinitely.

Under the current law, the Home Secretary is not obliged to prove the case against Abdul. It is up to Abdul to prove that he is legally resident in this country. The Authorities do not need a warrant. Once arrested there is no trial, no Appeal, and no right of Habeas Corpus. These are the issues being taken up by the Abdul Azad Defence Committee, which organised a national demo and picket of Risley last month.



Relf's bid for Martyrdom fails

ALTHOUGH he has recently broken his hunger strike it's clear that the far-right would like to use Robert Relf as a martyr for their campaign for "free speech". Anthony Read-Herbert, the head of the NF legal department was recently quoted in the Guardian as saying "A martyr is good for the movement".

It's clear that the right is trying to use the publicity to their advantage but anti-racists must make sure that this publicity is countered.

Relf has often been portrayed in the press as a harmless idealist. He has, however, a long history of far-right activity, and numerous convictions for race related offences. For example in 1968 he threw bricks through Indian shopkeepers' windows and scattered pro-Nazi leaflets. Perhaps the most publicised of his offences is his attempt to sell his house to an "English family only". He has had links with the openly Nazi British Movement and there were rumours in 1976 that he may be adopted by the NF as a parliamentary candidate. Less publicly known are his attempts to set up a Ku Klux Klan branch in Leamington.

Relf was convicted in January of two charges of "Incitement to Racial Hatred" and one charge (under the Public Order Act) of publishing "abusive and insulting leaflets likely to cause a breach of the peace". He was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment and immediately proclaimed that he would go on hunger strike. The sentence has since been reduced to 9 months on appeal but the judge made it clear that he could die if he wanted to.

The local Anti-Racist, Anti-Fascist Committee, has supported the conviction of racists under this act. But whether

the law can stop racism and fascism is another question. However, the enforcement of this law makes it more difficult for abusive literature to be published without some criticism. This is important in a place like Leamington, where there is a large black community, and also a large amount of racism and support for people like Relf.

Of course, the only effective way to stop Racism and fascism, is when the whole community rejects the ideas, and that is the goal that anti-racists and anti-fascists must aim for.

In support of Relf and in opposition to the amended Race Relations Act, three far-right demos of several organisations have been held in Winchester where Relf is in gaol. Effective mobilisation against this and leafletting to let people know what Relf really stands for can go a long way to counter the publicity the far right are getting. Although Relf's appeal against conviction was turned down the far-right will not give up using Relf for their cause.

The 'Defend Robert Relf Committee' are planning to hold a march in Leamington in the near future and a large and effective counter-demo is obviously vital.

An interesting postscript is that the Leamington Tory MP Dudley Smith was recently reported as trying to get Relf a job locally if Relf would come off his hunger strike!



Relf on NF march.

Photographs by Julian Stapleton

Feminism and Socialism: CREATIVE TENSIONS

THE WOMENS movement has gone through alot of changes since its early, heady days of enthusiasm and sisterhood. In recent years more distinct campaigning groups around particular areas of womens oppression have developed - Rape Crisis Centres, the womens aid movement, NAC, women against racism and fascism, women in manual trades, women in the media to name some. There are now "currents" within the Women's Liberation Movement - revolutionary feminists, radical feminists, anarchy-feminists, socialist feminists.

So what exactly is the socialist feminist current?

The key to the difference between socialist feminists and other feminist currents within the womens liberation movement appears to hinge around two things. Firstly an understanding that both capitalism and patriarchy oppress women in complex and interrelated ways which traditional marxist thought has failed to encompass and which the political practice of many of those who call themselves "socialists" ignores. Patriarchy is the structure of social and sexual relations in which women are left powerless and oppressed by men. This oppression preceded the development of capitalism, but capitalist economic relations were built on a family system in which women and children were defined as the possessions of an individual man and men asserted control over womens reproduction and sexuality. To achieve a socialist revolution it is not enough to change only the social and economic structures of a class society. It is also essential to undermine and overthrow the political power which men wield over women.

Secondly the socialist feminist current sees that it is only through debate, discussion and action that women can hope to come up with the answers which will help to change the lives of the majority of women in this country. It is not enough to create a socialist feminist haven in one's own head and

think that individual feminist purity is going to change the world.

The daily lives of most women are an active and constant struggle for financial independence over childcare, housing, sexuality and countless other areas of oppression. The women's liberation movement is often seen by them as a luxury for single, economically independent young women, barely affecting their lives, out of touch with their reality. And yet they are just as much part of the struggle for womens liberation as those who have "joined" the womens movement.

Throughout the country, but often very small and isolated, there are womens groups trying to tackle the problem of how to relate to a wider audience of women on the questions of socialism and feminism. Women's Action Groups and Socialist Feminist groups, are trying to clarify their ideas and develop ways of working which support the struggles of working class women at home and at work.

It's not easy. While the slogan "No Women's Liberation without socialist revolution; no socialist revolution without women's liberation" encapsulates the general idea of the need for women's and anti-capitalist struggle to be seen as essential to one

International Day of Action on Contraception, Abortion and an end to forced Sterilisation. March 31st.

London Demonstration:
Assemble Hyde Park 1.30pm
March to Trafalgar Square
for Rally.

Liverpool Demonstration:
Assemble opposite Rialto
Community Centre 10.30 am



SUPPORT FOR DUNLOPS WORKERS: Liz Cousins for Liverpool International Womens Day Committee addresses the rally after the march against redundancies at Speke. Local socialist feminists are now working with Dunlop women workers and women from the Speke community to oppose the Dunlop closure.

another, social movements and revolutions are not built on slogans alone. But how can socialist-feminists take their ideas and practice out to a wider audience of women and men and affect the overall political situation?

The National Socialist Feminist Conference this weekend is hoping to come to grips with some of these questions. By sharing ideas on 4 major themes:-

- social policies
- economic conditions
- reproduction and sexuality
- communications

and discussing socialist feminist strategy and tactics the conference has set itself a large task.

As the Conference organisers have written "for too long women have been put off by the polarisation of the struggle against class exploitation and against sexual oppression. For too long women have been put off by the polarisation between theory groups and campaigning groups. We hope this conference will open up new ways of tackling these problems. It should be an exciting weekend.

LIVERPOOL RECLAIM THE NIGHT.

As part of the International Women's Day events this year Women in Liverpool planned a Reclaim the Night Demonstration. Due to police intimidation this march was postponed, but we are now building for a much bigger march. Come and join us, bring placards to Princes Park Gates, assemble 9.30 pm on Friday April 6th

YOU CANNOT WALK ALONE

Sisters! Listen! We must reclaim the night, hold back fear, Why must the strong invade our freedom? stalking beast. Our bodies are our own, some find it easy to ignore the flashers leer.

Yet, we are vulnerable, invasions imminent, we, lead before the altar for the rapists feast.

If we wanted violation, we could always advertise the fact But choosing to be unmolested, earns us the label odd, sometimes even queer!

Cannot the men in power see, all we demand is a reasonable pact.

Giving us peace of mind and body, instead they give a patronizing sneer.

Maybe we should hunt you in the dark, giving you neither courtesy nor choice,

Using you as we wished, discard you to explain, and prove your rape,

Would you then treat us with disdain, turning deaf ears to the womans voice

Or, like us, would you feel dirty, guilty without cause, hoping for anonymity and escape

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE INVIOLETE?

Olive Rogers

Scotland: 'Socialism or Nothing'

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN SCOTLAND AFTER THE DEVOLUTION REFERENDUM? THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE BY ED ROBERTSON OF THE *SOCIALIST SCOTLAND* MAGAZINE ARGUES THAT THE CHOICE IS NOW BETWEEN INDEPENDENCE OR NOTHING AND INDEPENDENCE MEANS A SCOTTISH SOCIALIST REPUBLIC.

IN THE tiniest piece of self-determination, a majority of Scots have voted yes. The Unionists may say a small majority, but a majority the size of the entire population of Greenock. It might also be claimed that the result should not stand because there was a low poll, but the poll was much higher than is normal for local authority elections. The low poll was not indicative of any lack of support for independence, or for our own government, but was a product of the lack of enthusiasm for these proposals, which would have meant an assembly without any real power, with all its decisions and standing orders preempted by the imperial parliament in London. Indeed, the Yes vote took place against all the odds.

One of those odds was the Yes Campaign itself. Official Yes propaganda from both Labour and erstwhile nationalists, has talked of the

assembly tackling social problems, re-organising local government etc. and being of value in itself. "No it's not a sop to the nationalists, not it's not going to break up the united kingdom" etc., and so took away from the campaign any nationalist content. For socialists, devolution, and decentralisation has no value in itself, when it is taken in abstract from the questions of national oppression and social questions which do make it of importance. The voters who failed to turn out were the Labour voters, who failed to see what problems the assembly could solve - and who can fault them for their doubts?

Stepping stone

The strength of feeling in Scotland is a great deal more than might be thought from the result, and invests the result with a great deal more importance than it would seem on first sight. Despite all this, Yes won. Yet, devolution is dead. We voted for it, and the government aren't going to give us it nor are the SNP (Scottish Nationalist Party)

going to fight for it. And that is the crux of the matter. The Scottish Republican Socialist Club, and the supporters of *Socialist Scotland* worked for a 'Yes' vote in the belief that this would be a stepping stone to an independent socialist republic. It now appears that it is independence or nothing.. And yet, it does not put the boot back on the foot of the SNP. The ideas of Scottish independence and support for the SNP are beginning to be separated out. Those who stand for independence and socialism are beginning to come out into the open and that means hope for a genuine national independence movement.

Socialism

The prospect of the Labour leaders reneging on their devolution commitment, followed by the probable election of the Tories at the next election is bound to have repercussions inside the Labour Party itself, but not until that election is over.

The prospects for Scottish socialism look brighter than they have done for almost exactly 60 years, but only if Scottish socialists have the courage to grasp the nettle and call for an independent republic.





Bishops, MPs and prospective MPs march at the head of Dunlop march. But will they be able to save the jobs?

CLOSURES: MA

The sooner the factory is occupied the better. It'll end the uncertainty. But an occupation isn't enough alone. There are thousands of jobs at stake if Dunlops closes. The company buys goods and services from over 2,000 Merseyside firms. Workers from these firms should be directly involved in the fight now.

BRING SPEKE TO A HALT

Nearly one in three of the working population of Speke is already unemployed. Dunlop's closure will hit the future of thousands of families and young people still at school. All these people can and should be involved in the fight against closure. But there's

nothing they can do solidly until the fight turns to action.

Bring the industrial estate to a halt with flying pickets of workers and people from the community. Force Dunlops or the Government to guarantee those jobs. Organise a community strike against closure. Stop the schools and local business.

These are desperate measures, but what else will keep the plant open? Only 100 workers have accepted redundancy money and that leaves well over 2,000 who know that the only way to save their jobs is to fight. They have a lot going for them.

DUNLOP: OCCUPY TO WIN

400 MARCH from the plant to the local dole office, 2,000 join a trades council march in the town. 100 shop stewards block the main road into the Speke industrial estate and are allowed to make their protest before being moved on. At one level the fight to keep the 2,400 jobs at Dunlop Speke has been hotting up over the past few weeks. Stan Pemberton, member of the Action Committee has said that

In many ways Dunlops workers are in a better position to keep the factory open than any other workers for a long time. The Action Committee is trying to get airport and dock workers' support in boycotting Dunlops' goods into and out of the country.

'more acts of civil disobedience, like the blocking of the road are planned.'

But with only five weeks to go before the 90-day notices are up the Action Committee will have to stop being quite so polite in its protests if they are to win what the 3,000 workers at the Standards No.2 plant down the road lost just over a year ago — their jobs. And that, above all, means an occupation.

But that's not saying they are bound to win. Most importantly, they are not talking about occupation — perhaps leaving this as their trump card. By not occupying the plant they are leaving open the possibility of Dunlops removing the tyres and machinery.

The only barrier at the moment to the removal of tyre stocks worth £250,000 is the community picket.

Too much faith is being put in the Government to stop the closure by freezing loans which the company desperately needs. Unless a massive fight is organised in Liverpool the Government will bow down to the company.

Although the Action Committee has been organising weekly mass meetings morale amongst the rank and file isn't high. They have not been involved in what action has been organised and many are already talking about having lost.

The Speke community, whose support is so desperately needed to mount a massive campaign against the closure has not been drawn into the action — the community march on March 7th got little local support which was demoralising but not surprising when so little work has been done to spell

out the issues to the local community.

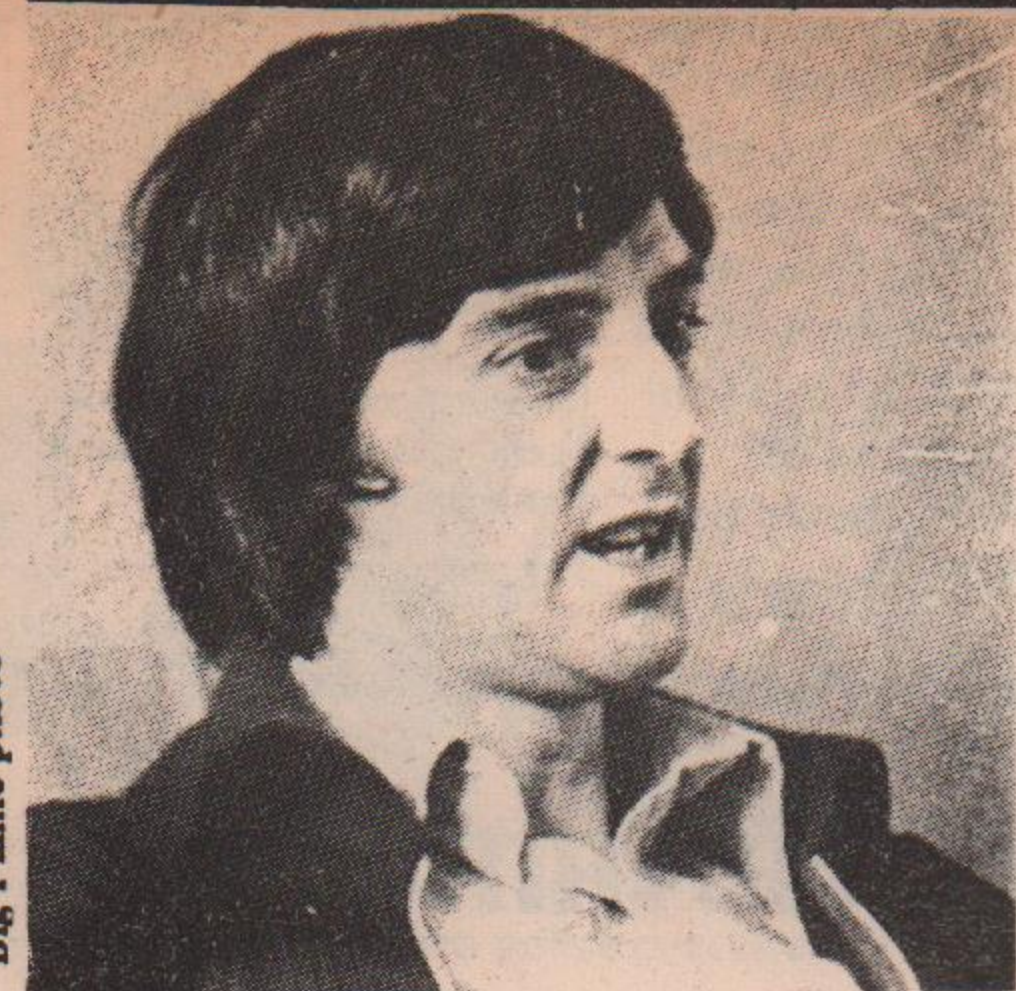
The Action Committee is keeping its hand very close to its chest — not letting the rank and file in on its future plans for action and not drawing on the support of other trade unionists and members of the community in any way other than through marches.

On Merseyside it is clear that if we let Dunlops close we'll be letting the door open for still more closures. Dunlops have already announced another 100 redundancies in their golf ball division and will only be a matter of time before the rest of the 270 jobs at the International Sports Company go.

Other companies are watching the developments at Dunlops with interest. There are certainly plenty more jobs threatened — here are just a few examples: Lucas Aerospace (950); KME (740); Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (over 700); British Leyland Speke No. 1 Plant (500); Kodak (120); Pilkington Bros. (750); Plesseys (3,400) — a total of over 7,000 jobs at stake.

EX-STANDARDS WORKER SAYS

FIGHT FOR YOUR JOBS



Ken This article, by Big Flame, appeared in the first edition of Dunlop Spekes.

In the Spring of 1978 3,000 workers were made redundant from the Standards plant in Speke. Ken Routledge was one of those who lost his job. Here he and his wife Ann talk about what this has meant for them.

I think we could have won, even with the situation as it was. The problem was the sudden about turn by the unions. Coming so soon after the 17 week strike, without official backing, people had no stomach for maybe another 17 weeks without strike pay.

I got £2,500. A lot of people got less than they thought they would. They'd forgotten about the strike — the 17 weeks was taken off your two years service so some people weren't legally entitled to anything, except that the firm came up with an offer for the short service men.

Initially it was lovely. That's a product of it, the T.V., we got a tumble dryer, some units. I've tiled the back kitchen. For a time it's very nice. You're getting the dole and earnings related and you're possibly equal to what you'll ever have got in Standards, taking into account that the money there varied from week to week.

DRINKING

Then your tax runs out. Then your earnings related, after six months. And slowly the lump sum goes. I've got well under half now — less than a year since we finished there. You look around you and say, where has it gone? If you go down town any day of the

week, I'll show you certain fellows, I know, where I can find them, drinking it away.

The effect of not working? It's left me not knowing either what I want to do or what's open to me. When I first went to the Job Centre they ask how much you're prepared to work for, and I said I want £75—£80. Well, now I'm even considering that if a tiling job comes up — that's what I did before Standards — I'll have to take it. The top line with that is £60. So slowly without realising it, your options close. There's no hope of getting in a factory where the top line was the equivalent of Standards.

HOLLAND

I was offered a tiling job in Holland, for a few months. The money would have been very good, about £250 a month. But I'd have had to leave Anne and the kids and that wasn't on.

I met a fellow called Alec recently, he stood up at one of the mass meetings before the closure and said we should take the money because he couldn't see any ways of keeping the factory open. He wanted the job, but he believed that if we opposed the closure we'd lose the money, other than the legal entitlement. Anyway, I met Alec a couple

of months ago and he said to me he was thinking of moving away from Liverpool because there were no jobs. I reminded him that we'd lost 3,000 jobs without a fight, and partly on his say so.

You only had to look at the man to see he'd changed. He was sick. I know about 20 who've got jobs since the closure. There's one young lad who opposed the closure, who's taken a poorly paid job as a school caretaker in desperation. If you go down the Job Centre it's more like a joke centre. You find jobs up there — bingo callers £38 a week. I mean you'd want a top house thrown in for £38 a week.

The traditional jobs — Fords and the buses — they're closed to you. You can't get in. I applied to Fords. Not suitable; they told me. Well, I only worked in car factories 7½ years, but I'm not suitable. The only sort of job which is always vacant is Courtaulds. But there you're working continental (continuous) shifts and the money's poor and it's very tedious work. You can't even get a form for the post now — the waiting list is that long.

I'm utterly confused about where my future prospects lie. I even thought about training to be a social worker. I don't want to but I'll probably end up on the tiling. Tiling's a disease to me. I'm not going to work for £40 a week.

I've got a brother who works in Lucas and he could be out of work. And



Ann

along the line, someone's got to say, that's it, that's the end of the closures.

Here's what Ann had to say:

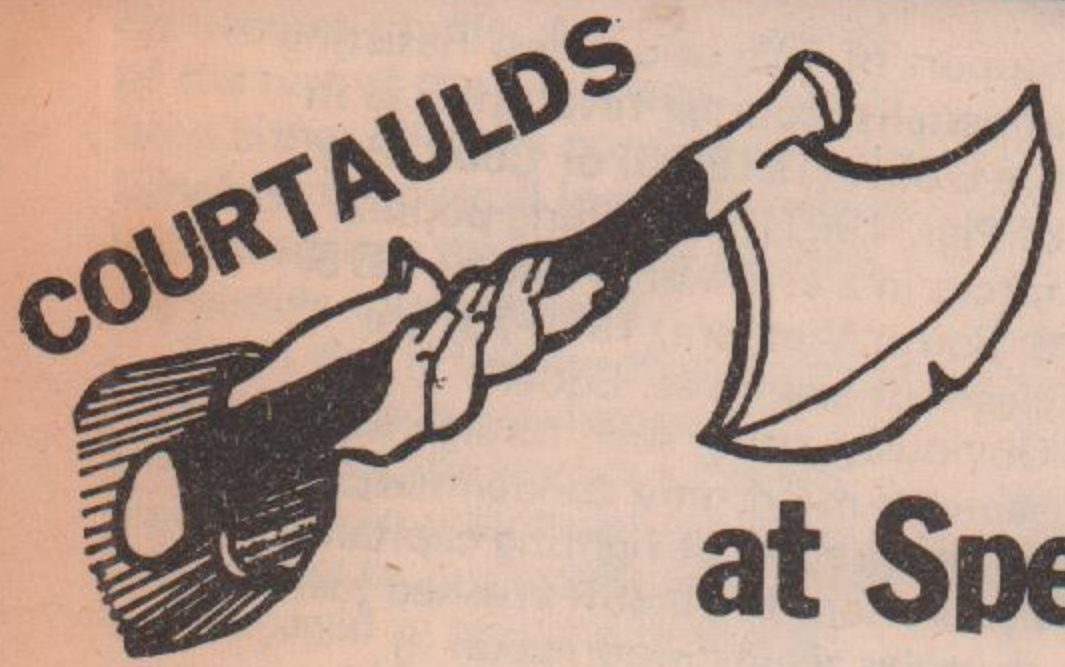
It's made a big difference to our lives together. There just seems to be more of a strain on the marriage. We seem to argue more. I think Kenny loses his temper a lot more with the kids and with me. And I seem to be nagging a lot more. We don't see as much of each other. Now I don't know what time he's coming home. He seems to be doing that many things: he goes training and he's started this course, Second Chance to Learn. He would cope with everything better if he had a job. We've got a really stable relationship, but I think other couples could very easily have broken up because of this. I don't think we will, but it's a definite strain.

WASTE

I don't want him to go back to working nights. I think Kenny's got something more than just working in a factory. And I think it's a waste of a life if that's what he's going to end up with. In a way getting out of Standards was a good thing for him. On nights, it's the wife who has to cope with the kids and everything.

The prospects for Merseyside do scare me. I don't just think of Kenny. I think of these kids. On the other hand, I wouldn't consider leaving Merseyside. I've

SAVING THE NORTH A WASTELAND



Stop the axe at Spennymoor

To redundant miners in the Durham area, Courtaulds had this to say when they opened a new plant in Spennymoor:

"A good wage and a job for life. Above all else a job at Courtaulds, Spennymoor, offers you security with an excellent weekly wage and employment consistently throughout the year."

Now, ten years and £5 million in grants later, Courtaulds has announced the closure of Spennymoor for April 19th.

The local council has published a report which makes it crystal clear that there is no hope of the Courtauld workers finding other jobs. The report points out that:

- 58% of the workers are over 40
- 95% of the workers are men
- 86% of the workforce, the 1,230 'machine operators and others' will probably find that for every vacancy for a comparable job there will be 140 applicants.

The report concludes that "there is a real prospect of male unemployment of higher than 13% occurring in the Spennymoor area."

It is the Joint Shop Stewards Committee that is organising the fight against the closure. Given the low wages and oppressive work conditions, it is not surprising

that the rank and file's response to the closure campaign has been a passive one — no-one is that keen to fight for the right to work at Courtaulds. Given the rank and file's lack of enthusiasm for the campaign, the stewards are reluctant to call mass meetings and run the risk of getting "knocked back" in their attempt to escalate the campaign. In fact, however militant the stewards are, they cannot win a campaign against closure without mass support. And to win this support, you have to be prepared to take risks.

Unlike Scotswood where there is a feeling amongst skilled engineering workers that "it is part of a tradition" that engineering work goes on on Tyneside, at Courtaulds, there is no such sense of tradition. The workers there, who a while back were made redundant by pit closures, see unemployment as something that inevitably happens from time to time. The closure at Spennymoor won't come as much of a surprise to them.

(Information for this article came from "STOP the AXE" the publication of the Spennymoor Shop Stewards Committee available from Paul Ellis, 58 Ancliffe Place, Newton Aycliffe, Durham.)



ONCE UPON A TIME, IN 1968 TO BE EXACT, A KIND GOVERNMENT PAID LOTS OF MONEY TO A MAN CALLED COURTAULD TO FEED HIS SMART NEW FACTORY AT SPENNYMOOR.

FOR A WHILE, EVERYONE WAS HAPPY - LOTS OF JOBS, & LOTS OF PROFITS.

BUT MR COURTAULD ARRANGED HIS BUSINESS SO THAT ALL THE PROFITS WENT STRAIGHT TO ANOTHER OF HIS FACTORIES.

UNTIL, ONE DAY, THE UNIONS WERE TOLD -

AWFULLY SORRY CHAPS, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO LOSE 560 JOBS & £6 EACH A WEEK OR WE'LL BE FORCED TO CLOSE THE FACTORY.

AND REMEMBER, WE ONLY BREAK AGREEMENTS WE DON'T AGREE WITH!

THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY SAID AT FLINT & AINTREE & SHELMEBESDALE - WE ACCEPTED & THEY STILL CLOSED DOWN.

PROFITS

JOBS

WILL IT BE YOUR JOB NEXT?

NEIL YERGEN

B27B



SCOTSWOOD MUST NOT CLOSE

The North-East has been in the news recently — because of the weather! There's hours and hours of safe, boring news on the weather: no danger. But the real news from the North-East is about the closures and redundancies: the Scotswood plant of Vickers, Courtaulds at Spennymoor, Head Wrightson at Middlesbrough are all down for closure this month.

Male unemployment is already 14.5% on Wearside, 15.3% in Hartlepool, 12.4% in Durham, 12.2% in South Tyneside and will rise with every new round of closures.

If the economic policy of the Labour Government would have worked anywhere, it would have worked in the North-East. New towns were built, new shopping centres went up and firms got millions in grants to keep production in the area.

But the fatal flaw in the Government's economic policy is that being nice to large companies doesn't persuade them to invest in jobs; if there are no easy profits to be made they don't want to know.

Vickers has said that they're looking for profits of 30% — you don't get these kind of profits off the backs of well-organised North-East workforces, you get it in real estate and in production in Eastern Europe and Taiwan — and, not surprisingly, it's into these fields that Vickers is going. In 1968 foreign subsidiaries accounted for 2.5% of Vickers' business, in 1978 it was nearly 50%. And in the same period 15,000 jobs have been lost from Vickers' traditional business — some 40% of the workforce.

represents 3/4 of the plants and the liaison between local factories threatened by closure which is organising the lobby of Parliament on the 28th of March.

In a secret ballot, workers at Scotswood voted two to one to continue with the campaign to fight the closure. Now that the stewards have got this vote of confidence, they're going to have to take the rank and file into their confidence and suggest going on the offensive. For unless other Vickers workers see that Scotswood is prepared to take militant action — they're going to be reluctant to commit them-

made by the stewards of Fords Halewood who have made it clear that they will not let into their plant any presses not made in Scotswood. The ten presses currently being completed at Scotswood are £5 million of machinery that may play a key role in the struggle against closure. The links being developed between Scotswood and Halewood show the possibility of a workers' plan being developed to cover a whole industry.

CO-ORDINATION

Since there are closures all over the North East, the co-ordination between all the local factories affected is essential. Already this co-ordination was responsible for the lobby of parliament; it has now got to look at ways that build the struggle locally by involving the rank and file.

As the economic integration of



Scotswood Joint Shop Stewards Committee discusses the closure.

FACTS & FIGURES

Of course, if you know facts and figures, you can prove that Robens is wrong and that it's lack of investment that is killing heavy engineering — and nothing else. But facts and figures don't stop closures — that is done by workers' organisation. In Vickers, that organisation is the Save Scotswood Campaign, the Vickers Combine Committee which

DECISIONS

The Chairman of Vickers is Lord Robens, who when he ran the National Coal Board got rid of 300,000 jobs. Last month on BBC North-East, Robens said, "The plain facts are heavy engineering, jobbing engineering, is finishing as a trade in this country." Of course, men like Robens are used to thinking that they can make their predictions come true. He doesn't believe in consultation, he's used to taking a decision and implementing it. In his own words, "When it comes to taking decisions, a small group of

selves to any solidarity action. The Scotswood closure is also a difficult test for the Combine Committee. Vickers management have made it clear that they intend to transfer Scotswood work to the nearby plants of Elswick and Austin Michell — in fact the space is ready! So, it is essential that the Vickers plants that stand to gain from the Scotswood closures make it clear that they will black any machinery or work transferred from Scotswood.

the Common Market develops, "out of the way" areas like the North East become redundant to capitalism's needs. For too long, its militants have relied on their special relationship with the Labour Party to get an extra slice of whatever cake was going. By now, it is becoming clear that the Labour government hasn't got the power to deliver the goods to the North East — even if it wanted to. The habit of relying on social democracy takes deep roots — these will have to be dug up pretty sharply if the North

DUNLOP: Women's Action Group

"THIS IS our fight too." That was the message at the first meeting of the Dunlops Women's Action Group. The group includes wives and girlfriends of men in the threatened plant, women working in Dunlops, including the International Sports Company, and women from the community who are worried about what the closure will mean to Speke.

UN-DOWN The threatened closure would affect women in many ways. Their family's income will be lost, their children's future job prospects will get worse, shops will close and the run-down of the Speke community will continue apace.

ACTIVITY

Plans for action were worked out at the first meeting. We will be leafleting and petitioning the markets in Garston and Speke and have planned a Women's and Children's Day at the Community picket on Tuesday April 3rd at 10.am Come and join us, bring placards and a flask of tea!

MEETINGS

Regular meetings will be held in the Youth Opportunities Shop at 165, Eastern Avenue, Speke, at 7.30pm on Fridays. Wives and girlfriends, of Dunlop workers, women in the factory and from the community are all welcome. Try to come along — it's your future that's at stake.

'THEY'VE NO RIGHT TO SELL JOBS'

"THEY'VE GOT no right to sell jobs — they don't belong to them. Jobs belong to the community and those jobs are the kid's future."

That's what Tommy Murphy Shop Steward in the Direct Works Department had to say at the Campaign Against Youth Unemployment meeting in Liverpool recently.

IT MAKES YOU SICK

"I've been working in Croxteth recently and we have young lads coming up to us saying "Can you get us a job, Mister?" it makes me want to cry — and mean that. The situation is so terrible for the kids that it's criminal. The people responsible want locking up. Anybody

be belted behind the ear. They should be sent packing without a penny. We should refuse to drink with people like that."

NATIONAL FRONT

Eddie Roberts, T&GWU organiser in Kirkby told the meeting: "Living next door to my father-in-law is a young lad who's in and out of work practically every six months because every factory he works in gets closed down. Now that lad's found a great new thing. He's joined the National Front. He's decided that he hates black people and he hates the trade unions because they can't keep him in a job. Now he can go around in a gang of thugs beating people up because it gives him something to do and gets

THE STRUGGLE WORLDWIDE



Socialist

by Chris Marshall



'I don't know what got into me... I went to America... I ate hamburgers and Coca-Cola... I wore a 10-gallon hat, and then I invaded Vietnam...'

THE WARS in Indochina are a catastrophe for the world workers' movement. Whatever other differences exist, the far left press worldwide has been virtually unanimous that the Vietnam/Kampuchea (Cambodia) and China/Vietnam wars, involving so-called socialist regimes, have brought discredit to the cause of socialism. The bourgeois press, just as unanimously, has lost no opportunity to suggest that the wars 'prove' socialism offers no hope for freeing the world from want, oppression and war.

INFLUENCE OF IMPERIALISM

Yet, a closer look at what's been going on reveals a different picture. In the first place, imperialism — notably US imperialism — created many of the conditions for the war, by its prolonged hostility to the Chinese Revolution and its murderous colonial adventures in Indochina. In the second place, imperialism — again, notably the US — has been directly involved behind the scenes in the run-up to the wars.

Briefly, imperialism has sought to safeguard its interests in South East Asia, and also — in a broader context — to play off China against the USSR to the disadvantage of

both. Because of internal problems associated with the need to preserve bureaucratic privileges in times of economic difficulties, both the Moscow and Peking regimes have willingly gone along with this ploy. But in the third place, and most relevantly for this present article, supposedly socialist regimes have been involved in foreign wars before, and revolutionaries today can use the lessons of these past experiences to help understand, and take an attitude to, what's going on today.

SOCIALIST SELF-DEFENCE?

Obviously, some military involvements by socialist or relatively progressive regimes deserve the full

support of revolutionaries. Resisting imperialist counter-revolution as in the USSR (1918-20) or Cuba (Bay of Pigs, 1961), and aiding popular forces in a civil war (Angola, 1975-6; South Vietnam, 1960-75) are clear-cut examples. Equally Obviously, other such foreign involvements merit only condemnation: on the pretext of fighting capitalist restoration, the USSR crushed just struggles against oppression in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968). During the past two years, both Cuba and the USSR have allied themselves with the bloody-handed military dictatorship in Ethiopia to deny national self-determination to the Eritrean and Somali peoples.

VIETNAMESE INVASION WRONG

From these examples — and other similar ones, such as Eastern Europe in 1944-53 — we can draw a general conclusion: *revolution by conquest isn't worth the candle*. The conquered people will resent the foreign con-

Election 'Con' in Zimbabwe

IF YOU haven't already heard, elections are taking place this month in Rhodesia. According to the Rhodesian regime and its faithful servant, the British press, the elections will bring in 'majority rule' for the first time in Britain's 'rebel colony'.

In fact, the elections will have no direct effect on the lives of the vast majority of Zimbabweans. They are mainly a public relations exercise designed to gain at least some international recognition for the Smith regime before it finally succumbs to the pressures of war.

Smith knows he cannot win the war, but he also knows that the war could be ended by negotiations (between the regime, the imperialist powers, and the Patriotic Front). The hope is that the elections will strengthen the regime's position in the negotiations.

OBSERVERS

What is astonishing is the way that not only the right-wing but even liberals in the imperialist countries, especially Britain and the US, are clamouring for 'observers' to be sent

to witness the charade and, supposedly check on its democratic credentials. For Smith himself has said that if 20% of the electorate vote he will be satisfied.

Almost the whole country is under martial law, with Rhodesian security forces intimidating the population in some areas, and the private armies of the internal settlement parties intimidating (and often posing as Patriotic Front fighters in doing so) in other areas — and the Patriotic Front controlling the rest.

Hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans (total pop 6 million) are in controlled areas — effectively concentration camps — where they can easily be herded into mobile polling booths and forced to vote. And each of them can be herded through as often as the authorities wish (as there is no registration of voters) so the

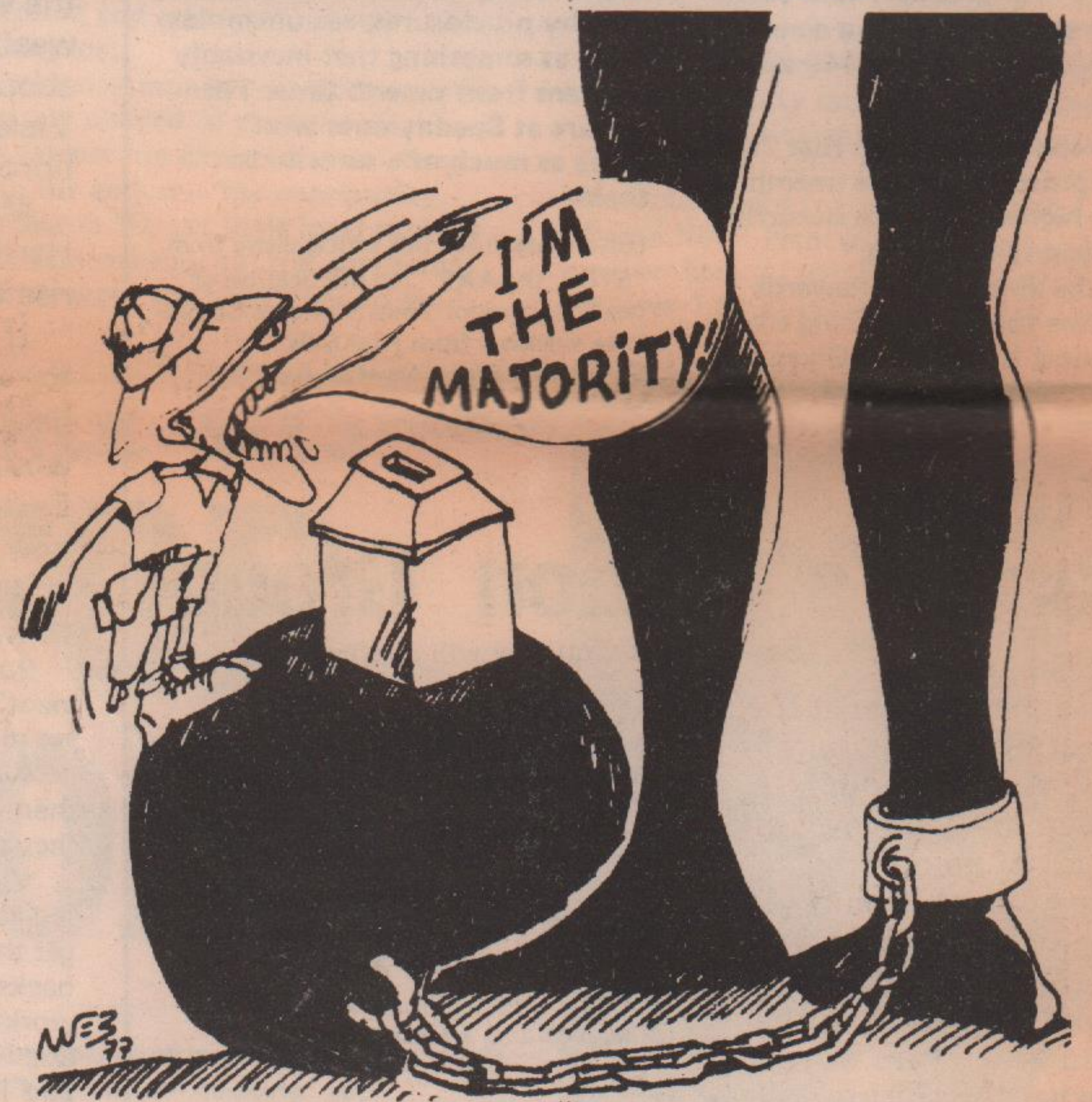
regime can, without any trouble, achieve the percentage of votes it wants.

INTIMIDATION

In the towns, employers will no doubt threaten the sack to those who refuse to vote. This was a tactic used effectively in the elections in Namibia, and one which 'observers' were oddly blind to.

And the elections will cover a period of several days, in order that intimidation and bribery tactics can achieve their full effect. This tactic was also successful in Namibia.

So why are so many people willing to take such a farce so seriously? Mainly because they want to do all they can to prevent the success of the Patriotic Front, and they see these elections as a means to that end. For these people, majority rule is not a question of who has the power, it is merely a question of a majority of black faces in the Government. The lives of the masses are ignored by these people. So, we should ignore their propaganda.



Ireland: Loyalist groups link with

TERRORISM AND TORTURE is in the news again from Northern Ireland. The Butchers of Shankill, a gang of brutal protestant para-military killers, were all sent down for unusually long life sentences, after being found guilty of sectarian murders and attacks. And the Royal Ulster Constabulary has been found guilty by a government enquiry, of ill-treating (torturing) suspects. None of this is likely to affect in the slightest, the renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, a measure which has little to do with terrorism but is vital to the State's harrassment of the opponents of its policies in Northern Ireland.

It might often be forgotten, but the British state is currently engaged in a war.

Since 1969 upwards of 15,000 British soldiers have been on the streets of the six north-eastern counties of Ireland — "Northern Ireland". There have been thousands of deaths. There are thousands of prisoners of war. Trial by jury has been abolished. The police force is heavily armed, and organised along military lines. And there are all the other features of a state's response to an insurgent people.

LOYALISM

In addition to state repression, the anti-imperialist population of the Six Counties face another

enemy: Loyalism. Loyalism is expressed in Racism and fears akin to fascism:

"Watch the jews... watch the Papist Rome rising to a grand crescendo with the Communists. The Reds are on the march. They are heading for an alliance against the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ." (Protestant Telegraph, 4th Feb. 1967)

The "solutions" of the loyalists are not unlike those of fascism either. An example from "Loyalist News":

"The time will soon be ripe when the Republican scum will make their final effort. Already the signs are manifesting themselves, this time we

must give them the final solution" (18 Sept. 1971)

Putting their ideas into practice Loyalist terrorist groups such as the Ulster Volunteer Force have conducted a campaign of indiscriminate murder against Catholics:

- 125 sectarian murders in 1972
- 93 in 1973
- 136 in 1974
- 150 in 1975
- 175 in 1976

The killings have declined since 1976, but the potential threat remains.

LINKS WITH THE NF

Loyalist groups have close links with fascist organisations in Britain, notably the National Front. When the NF opened a Belfast office, the UVF wished:

"Every success to the National Front in Northern Ireland and trusts that it may grow from strength to strength." (Combat, April 1974)

These links have not been limited to words of encouragement. A few examples of Loyalist/fascist co-operation in recent years:

- Tommy Thompson, British Commander of the Ulster Defence Association, joined an NF march in London against the IRA.

- A coachload of fascists and Loyalists violently smashed up a National Council for Civil Liberties meeting on the Prevention of Terrorism Act in Manchester.
- Regular NF attacks on Irish people commemorating the execution of the Manchester Martyrs.
- Regular NF and British Movement attacks on Bloody Sunday commemoration marches. Over 300 fascists attacked the 1979 march.

Loyalists and fascists, then have very similar ideologies. The Loyalists in the Six Counties, however, are much stronger than the NF are here. As one Irish person puts it:

"The Loyalists here, although they are essentially working class people, because of the position of power vested on them by the British, they have always regarded themselves as that bit better than the Catholic working class; and therefore they have been consistently conservative or right-wing in their thinking."

APARTHEID IN BRITAIN

The main threat to Irish people, however, comes not from the NF or Loyalists, but the state. And in

particular, from the Prevention of Terrorism Act, introduced at the end of 1974.

- Under the PTA:
 - The police can hold you for seven days without charge.
 - You can be sent to prison for belonging to, giving financial or other support to, or holding a meeting in support of a proscribed organisation — the IRA. (An ex-British soldier was sentenced to six months inside for selling posters which read "Join the Provisionals the People's Army")
 - You can be deported, without being charged, from Britain. If you attempt to return you will be sent to prison.
 - You have no right to remain silent whilst in custody.
 - The police can take your photograph and fingerprints by force.
- Between December 1974 and December 1978, 3,600 people were held under the PTA. 160 were deported. Yet only 24 people were charged with offences under the Act.
- The PTA has been used both to terrorise Irish people out of political activity; and also to gather information and intelligence on the Irish community. An one Irish activist explains:

Power Politics?

queror, who in turn will tend to become (or become more of) a bureaucratic bully. And the peoples of the rest of the world won't be too keen either. Despite possible local benefits, the overall long term effect will be against the interests of working people internationally.

From this it follows that the Vietnamese invasion was wrong. Undoubtedly the previous Pol Pot regime was an unpopular tyranny and no loss to the world, undoubtedly it engaged in military provocations against Vietnam (apparently because of its own internal difficulties). Equally undoubtedly, there was a developing people's resistance to the Pol Pot regime, and the Vietnamese would have been correct to offer it generous assistance, not excluding military advisers. But a wholesale invasion, before that movement had the strength to stand on its own feet, was a serious error. The case of South Vietnam is not a relevant parallel, precisely because that was the partitioning of *one country*: North Vietnamese troops were anything but foreign conquerors of the South. In

Kampuchea things were very different. Revolutionaries in Indochina should not have had any truck with defending the Pol Pot regime, and should have sought assistance in its overthrow from Vietnam; given the Vietnamese mistake, they now have to work to build genuine popular power in Kampuchea, combined with the speedy withdrawal of Vietnamese troops.

CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY

The Chinese invasion of Vietnam, on the other hand, involves big power politics far more directly than events in Kampuchea. Partly because of a genuinely threatening posture on the USSR's part, but mainly because of internal economic problems affecting the regime's popularity, the Chinese government is bent on seeking aid — trade, technical assistance, industrial co-operation, even weaponry — from the imperialist West. This policy has been pursued since long before the death of Mao, and right through the Chinese have offered the West in exchange their support for the most

reactionary and repressive of imperialism's client regimes around the world. Having been on the wrong side in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Chile, Angola and Zaire — to name but the most spectacular — the Chinese capped it all by a state visit to the bloodstained streets of Teheran a bare few months before the Iranian people ousted the Shah. There appear to have been, and still to be, differences over details within the Peking leadership. But the general thrust since around 1970, 'justified' by the 'three worlds theory' of Mao Tse-Tung, has been supported by all factions. Richard Nixon was feted in Peking in the days of the Gang of Four, Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping on a US visit gives America advance notice of the planned invasion of Vietnam. Thus that invasion has to be seen as an integral part of Chinese foreign policy, i.e. of a deliberate plan for alliance with reaction at the expense of progressive movements everywhere. Revolutionaries condemn Chinese aggression just as we condemn other examples of meddling by imperialists or their allies in South East Asia.



A wounded Vietnamese carried from Lao Cai

CHINA'S WAR WITH VIETNAM

THE WAR between the 'socialist' countries in Indochina presents very serious problems for socialists — for a kick off, we have to try and explain to ourselves how it is that countries that see themselves as continuing the tradition of Marxism-Leninism behave in ways indistinguishable from the chauvinist nationalism of bourgeois nation states.

On the current conflict, Big Flame's position as decided at the March National Committee was that 'China should withdraw from Vietnam. And that, in the long term, the presence of Vietnamese troops in Cambodia is not in the interests of the Cambodian people — although we recognise that the Pol Pot regime deserved no support from socialists.'

Of the two articles on these pages on the situation in Indochina, one is a personal view by Chris Marshall, a member of BF. The other is an interview (which had to be cut) with Anthony Barnett, an editor of the New Left Review, who is currently writing a book on the conflicts in Indochina.

BF: China provided military and other support for Vietnam right up until the end of the war against the US. When did the relationship between China and Vietnam begin to turn sour, and why?

AB: It is true that China was giving Vietnam very important aid right to the end of the war. And Vietnam still maintains that that aid was crucial, and give it equal importance to Soviet aid, even though it mainly consisted of food and small arms, and its dollar value was less. The

element of ambiguity in China's support for Vietnam, however, was greater than in the case of USSR. For, you see, in the last years of the war it was China's policy to prevent the victory of the Vietnamese revolution in so far as that victory meant the unification of Vietnam, whereas Moscow was happy to see such a victory provided that it did not lead to a showdown with the United States, especially a nuclear one.

To understand all this we have to go back to the early period of post-

revolutionary China. The new China saw itself as the rightful heir to the mantle of the Nationalist China of the late 1940's; the China which had been accepted at the United Nations as one of the five major powers of the world. But it found itself condemned to economic and political isolation by the USA, and thrown back on to a client relationship to the Soviet Union. Its first real attempt to break out of this isolation came at the Geneva Conference on Vietnam in 1954. Here China had three main aims: It wanted an agreement to be reached (to break out of its diplomatic isolation); it wanted the imperialist powers out of mainland Asia; and it wanted to gain more influence over the Indochina region, which it saw as its own legitimate sphere of influence.

The crucial concession it made to achieve these aims was to agree that the North Vietnamese should be excluded from Laos and Cambodia. This concession denied the North Vietnamese a vital aspect of their military strategy, it made South Vietnam viable — at least in the short term — and it thus helped to divide Vietnam at the time when the North was in a very strong position to move towards unification. Not surprisingly, from that point on the Vietnamese regime tried its best never again to be totally reliant on the People's Republic of China — whatever the political and geographical proximity of the two countries.

BF: Vietnam's concern for non-alignment effectively stems, then, from 1954. How was this affected by the split between the USSR and China?

AB: Vietnam benefited from the rivalry between Moscow and Peking when they competed to demonstrate their socialist credentials. But eventually, at the end of the sixties, it was to suffer when the split became an open conflict and a competition for close relations with Washington. At the end of 1964 the present Soviet leadership threw out Khrushchev and immediately set about improving relations with the Asian Communist capitals, in particular Peking and Hanoi. Simultaneously, however the United States decided to escalate their presence in South Vietnam, and to bomb the North (when Kosygin, the Russian leader was actually visiting Hanoi). The Soviet and Vietnamese parties, wanted united action against US aggression. Almost all the Peking leadership agreed. But Mao single handedly rejected the proposal. Mao saw a Russian inspired escalation in

Vietnam as the Soviet means of containing China, and set himself against it. His narrow parochialism led him to disregard the actual struggle in Vietnam. So for Mao, at least, the simultaneous entry of Soviet diplomats and aid on one side and American ground troops and bombers into Vietnam on the other was a double blow. Whereas for the Vietnamese the impact of the US was countered by massively increased Soviet aid.

Then a third blow occurred that was especially serious for Peking: the liquidation of half a million Indonesian Communists. The Indonesian Communist Party which the Chinese had especially cultivated and guided, and was the most powerful of the Parties outside the socialist countries themselves, was simply annihilated.

Under these blows China simply withdrew from world diplomacy altogether in the Cultural Revolution. Unfortunately, we do not have time

to discuss that event here. Let me simply say this: that while the Cultural Revolution presented a 'left' front, this covered a rightist policy on Mao's part internationally. Mao got Lin Biao to argue, in 'Long Live the Victory of People's War', that Vietnam should not escalate the struggle with Washington but protract it, when it was obvious that such a move would allow the States to consolidate the South Vietnamese regime. Instead, the Tet Offensive was a massive defeat for Chinese strategy, as it drove the USA to the bargaining table. Mao was furious that Vietnam should be negotiating directly with America.

BF: But, in the end China succeeded in negotiating directly with America.

AB: Exactly! Nixon sensed the weakness and exploited it. The dominant position of capitalism globally, and the conscious role of US imperialism in Asia, has not been stressed sufficiently here. These forces still have the upper hand, and are the main enemy.

BF: Are you suggesting that Nixon merely confirmed a process that was underway?

AB: No, he had a definitely new strategy, which ultimately failed. But he managed to deal Mao into it, and with that much of Peking's leadership. The Nixon-Mao accords were the decisive turning point in China-Vietnamese relations, for the reasons I've already suggested. From that point on Hanoi knew that China would sell them out. How did they know? Because Mao, ever over-

confident, told them directly. The Soviet Union has pursued peaceful-coexistence but it has never entered into an alliance with the United States since the Second World War. Such as China has entered today. **BF:** This is where I disagree with you. I think there is a real danger in turning a blind eye to the failings of Soviet foreign policy simply because Chinese foreign policy is so bad. In fact there are many examples over the last three decades of non-progressive and even reactionary policies on the part of the Soviet Union.

AB: Such as where?

BF: Such as, very recently, Eritrea, such as Czechoslovakia 1968, such as lack of support for ZANU in Zimbabwe...

AB: Certainly I agree with some of your examples and could cite others. But today you must explain the following contrast. On the one hand Teng goes to Washington to try, amongst other things, to buy American arms. Peking encourages Thatcher and Strauss; argues for the embargo of Cuba; denounces Angola etc. Teng goes to Japan and attacked the US for its weakness in Iran. You may have seen the recent statement in support of Pinochet in Chile, which 'Socialist Challenge' publicized. Now compare this to Breshnev's recent emphatic insistence that support for national liberation struggles is a principle of Soviet foreign policy. And consider the fact that the USSR's Gross National Product is less than that of France and Germany combined, that, in other words, the USSR is not particularly wealthy. Then it can be seen that it gives quite generous support to the revolution.

BF: Would you agree that the Left should call for the unconditional withdrawal of China from Vietnam and Laos and the the immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia?

AB: I think that we should call for more than an unconditional Chinese withdrawal. We should also call for any apology. We should demand compensation as a part of the re-establishment of proper socialist relations, between the countries. As for Cambodia, it is clear that if Vietnam were to withdraw now there would be a restoration of capitalism there. The Vietnamese are at least attempting to enable some sort of reconstruction in Cambodia, and their withdrawal would only mean, at the present time, the victory of forces backed by China, the reactionary Thai regime and the United States.

National Front

"I see the PTA as a racist act; an act to gag the Irish people in this country, to make them keep their heads down."

A NATION THAT ENSLAVES ANOTHER.....

The situation in Ireland, and the state's attacks on Irish people here are vitally important to the working class of England, Scotland and Wales. Yet the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement in this country continuously ignores the imperialist war going on in Ireland; the racism of the British state against the Irish, and the development of sophisticated techniques of surveillance and repression in the Six Counties that are gradually being brought "home to roost" — on the working class here.

As Marx wrote, over a hundred years ago:

"I have become more and more convinced — and the only question is to drive this conviction home to the English working class — that it can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland

most definitely from that of the ruling classes, until it... makes common cause with the Irish... If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading strings of the ruling classes, because it will have to join with them in a common front against Ireland."

It must be a priority for socialists to build a mass solidarity movement with the Irish people (the United Troops Out Movement) to fight back against the repression racism, and imperialism.

How long will it take the left to fully understand what the British state knows only too well — that if we let them defeat the Irish, they'll be that much stronger against us? Whereas if they are defeated in Ireland, the Irish people will be great allies in our fight for socialism.

EASTER UPRISING Commemoration Marches.

Sunday 1st April.

(1) Ad Hoc Committee (Initiated by IRSP supporters and supported by UTOM, Big Flame, IMG and SWP)
Assemble: Cricklewood Crown forecourt, march to Kilburn Sq.

(2) Provisional Sinn Fein:
Assemble 2.30 Hyde Park Corner, march to Kilburn.

ONLY A POLICY of expanding council housing, if necessary at the expense of owner occupation, will solve the growing housing problem. This is the line of the new "Red Paper on Housing" produced by Leeds Trade Union and Community Resource and Information Centre (TUCRIC) and reviewed on this page.

One of the authors of the Red Paper (and of a recent housing report by Leeds Trades Council) is Keith Mollison. Interviewed here, he explains the thinking behind the Red Paper. Trained (and politicised) as a planner, Keith belongs to the radical camp in community work. The growth of working class community activity has been the key to the political development of this new breed of community workers. Cut off from the far left, with its traditional obsession with industrial struggles, people like Keith — in Shelter, Community Action magazine, and the defunct Home Office Community Development Projects — have been forced to develop their own strategy. The Red Paper joins a library of radical reports which provide the only alternative to the Labour-Tory consensus in social policy.

NO HOMES OF YOUR OWN

The Trades Council report argues against the Council's subsidy of owner occupation by selling land for private development, and then using Housing Revenue funds to buy new land. The Red Paper takes this further, arguing that only a socialist policy can solve the housing problem, and this policy

must be based on "council housing only". It's true that such a demand is difficult to stomach right now, when buying your own house is an investment for the future. But it can only be a real investment if house prices rise faster than inflation — in other words, when there's a shortage of housing. This is what happened in

Council Housing: should be about collective control

the 1972-3 boom in house prices, but between 1974 and 1977 prices levelled off because there was a glut of houses and a shortage of finance. So the "advantage" of owner occupation relies upon an absolute shortage of housing, which means homelessness.

"Buying your own house can only be a real investment ... if there's a shortage of housing...which means homelessness."

We pose council housing as the solution because, at least in principle, however badly it's actually done at the moment, it's based on the idea of collective finance

and collective control. At the moment council house building is deliberately restricted to make own owner occupation more desirable. Why have we had to wait until 1979 for a Tenants' Charter? It makes council housing look like a charity for the poor. In the Red Paper we argue that council housing could be greatly improved. Housing should be judged according to the kinds of social relationships and quality of life it made possible.

cisms of bad housing conditions every now and again. The left's bogged down in economic struggles, and has few ideas of what a socialist future might actually mean. For me, housing is an essential part of socialist politics: it is the link between the international economic scene, through central and local government right into personal life. All these are areas of struggle. This is what the Red Paper is pointing out, and it's trying to discuss what can be done. It's imperative that the left explores this. Especially with rising, permanent unemployment, we have to organise outside the

THE REPORT

The objective of the Trades Council Housing Committee is to make propaganda with this report. We've circulated it to tenants associations, councillors, trade unions and sold it generally, to show that the Trades Council is interested in housing, and to try and make the Labour Party give its views in response. The problem with the Labour Party is that, nationally, they have the same view as the Tories — that the housing problem is solved and all that is necessary is to increase owner occupation. We haven't had replies from the Labour Party locally yet, because they haven't had time, but we do know that some Labour Party people agree with the report.

The report probably won't be taken up by the far left because it doesn't seem to have a position on housing — it just makes criti-

"The left is bogged down in economic struggles, and has few ideas of what a socialist future might mean."

workplace. Particularly if you take the women's movement seriously, you have to take seriously the political questions around the home and the community.

'Which Way Home?' is available from The Secretary, Leeds Trades Council, Trades Club, Saville Mount, Leeds 7. 45p
The Red Paper on Housing' is available from Tyne and Wear Resource Centre, 13 Swinburne Street, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.



Home Defence: Region Six

MANY OF us know that 'they' are planning to deal with 'us' if there are serious disturbances and threats to the bourgeois state in the U.K. But not many of us realise the full extent of the planning being undertaken at local and national level to deal with civil disturbances, which can include nuclear war and its aftermath, natural disasters, major fires and explosions, strikes and social protest.

Recently, Robert Mark, formerly Commissioner of Police, said that the police were too busy to stop burglaries in urban areas because the force was too busy doing more important jobs. Included by him in the list of more important jobs were combatting 'terrorism' (as in the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act against

trade unionists), controlling demonstrations and acting against strikers. The capitalist State is preparing to combat social unrest with brute force, and this presents a serious threat to all of us who want to see big changes in our society.

"Home Defence: Region Six", available free if you send a stamped addressed envelope to Brighton Voice, 7 Victoria Road, Brighton, Sussex.

This 8-page document, which examines the role of the Emergency Planning Officers and the whole Home Defence structure in the South-east of Britain, includes information on the control structures to be used in the case of social unrest, the training of the police and the army and their co-ordination, and the use of the machinery during the Firemen's strike. The report is free and is well worth a read.



Dear Big Flame, Kate Truscott's article on the low pay campaign in last month's "Big Flame" underestimates the involvement of the revolutionary left in the campaign.

Though it is true that the presence of the revolutionary left in separate organisational forms (e.g. the 30/65 Campaign) has not been great, it certainly is the case that revolutionaries have been very active in the NUPE branches up and down the country that have been organising the struggle against the Government's offer.

During the last five years, revolutionaries have been taking jobs in the NHS and local government and by now many of them

are well rooted in union branches — so their need for separate organisational forms is less great than in other industries.

The few cases of external political intervention that I know have been pretty clumsy: e.g. the rejection by the IMG's political leadership of Camden NUPE's successful fight to win the 35 hour/£60 minimum claim (in which IMG members played an important role).

The problems Kate Truscott mentions of injecting a "socialist class perspective" into the struggle are very real but I am not sure that the best time to attempt this is during a wage dispute: maybe they stand a better chance of being got across in the consistent year-round organising that should be our aim.

Peter Anderson (Coventry Big Flame)

Rape has been around since the dawn of patriarchy. It is an attack on all women by all men. Even the richest women aren't safe, though they're likely to have more protectors to call on. Upper class white men are more likely to get away with it, as they are any crime. But all men are potential rapists, all women potential victims. I cannot accept a "socialist analysis" of rape.

And to see it put on the level of vandalism — a crime against property — well, that shows how men see women, doesn't it? As property. And according to O.A., not very valuable property at that, since to damage them is only a "petty" crime, committed by "petty offenders".

Yours in great anger
Al Bettychild (Leeds)

REVIEWS

Achilles Heel:
about changing our lives

THE SECOND ISSUE is out of Achilles Heel, a new magazine of 'men's politics.' But what is men's politics?

Women created the women's liberation movement because they were no longer willing to put up with an inferior role. They insisted on having women-only meetings, and started a new kind of organising — small 'consciousness-raising groups' that met every week or so.

Many men found they had got to admit that what the women said, was true. Men were oppressors and they were oppressing women. For example:

- men are free to do great things, become artists, scientists, explorers, etc — 'great men' — while they are looked after by women who feed them, look after their clothes and homes, and give them love and care and support.
- so men go out into the world, while women's place is isolated in the home.

- in fact, women's main job in life is seen as looking after men.
- men have more confidence because they are used to being treated as superior. So at any meeting, for example, most of the speakers are men.
- men rape women, terrorize and attack the women they live with and judge women's appearance against their own standard of sexual attractiveness (which treats women as existing to serve men).

A while ago, I was sitting in the Wine Bar in Upper Street one lunchtime, and I couldn't help overhearing the conversation of a group of plain-clothes coppers at the next table.

(At least, I assume they were plain-clothes coppers, because they were talking about police business, and they weren't wearing uniform.) All three were knocking back the wine.

So some men, forced by 'their' women to think about sexism, or affected by the women's movement, started men's groups.

The magazine Achilles Heel seems to aim itself at this 'men's group' section of men.

It isn't a piece of anti-sexist propaganda that you could give to

They began to talk about the advantages of their job. "If you want to knock off some bird, you just tell the wife you were working that night, you know, no questions asked."

Later — towards 3pm, closing time — the talk took on a serious note.

"What would you do if you found out your Mrs. was knocking it off with somebody else?"
"She'd get the hiding of her life."

your man in the street gazing at page 3 of the Sun, or going to see porn films (which are all sexist propaganda). He wouldn't understand it. Partly that means it's aimed at an educated readership, partly, that it's an 'in group' sort of thing.

I think that's a criticism. But on the positive side, Achilles Heel seems to be alone among groups on the left (?) in carrying on the idea that to be part of a radical movement, should mean changing your life.

But I'd still like to see someone making propaganda in a mass style against men's sexism.

The next MEN AGAINST SEXISM Conference will take place on the 7th-8th April at the Abraham Moss Centre, Crescent Rd, Manchester 8 from 10 am. Amongst the subjects the conference will be discussing are the need for an autonomous men's movement and the relationship between men's politics and the socialist movement.

Registration is £2 (£1.50 unwaged) from 544 William Kent Crescent, Hulme, Manchester 15.

Organising to Win

'Here to stay' - Ford UK Workers' Group

"FRAUD NEWS is no flash in the pan. We're here to stay." That's how the Ford UK Workers' Group ("the Combine") announced the birth in February of its newspaper "Fraud News" as a regular bimonthly paper "written, designed and published entirely by Ford Workers for Ford workers, their families and friends."

It's an eight page paper, looking like a cross between the Daily Mirror and the Ford Motor Company's own newspaper for its workforce - Ford News. The Paper looks professional - with 'exclusive' inside stories about management plans, exposures of corruption at the top, news of Ford workers' struggles from all the plants in Britain and some in Europe, cartoons, photo spreads and competitions.

It's gone down very well on the shop floor (though with only 2,000 copies, it's spread pretty thinly among the 58,000 Ford workers). It's helping to keep up the links between militants in the various Ford plants around the country that were formed during the strike. And it's given a lot of credibility to the Ford Workers' Combine.

LEAFLETS

The Combine started in the months leading up to the 1978 Ford strike. The idea was to bring together a wide range of militants from all the main Ford plants to fight for a wage claim that would be worth striking for - £20 on the rate and five hours off the week with no productivity deal.

In the previous years, a great deal of groundwork had been done by socialists working both at Ford and supporting Ford workers' struggles from the outside. There had been regular mass leafletting at Ford Halewood, Langley and Dagenham for years - putting an uncompromising working class point of view.

By mid 1976 this kind of work had led to the existence of two independent workers' groups - the Ford Langley Action Committee at the truck plant near Slough, and the Ford Dagenham Workers' Group - in addition to a Big Flame group at the Halewood plant in Liverpool



UNSECTARIAN

It was these three groups that together called the first "Combine" meeting in April 1978. Everyone was surprised by the number of workers who attended. Most were independent socialists or just militants fed up with the way the union was acting at Ford, but among those in political groups were members of the SWP, Big Flame, IMG, the Militant group in the Labour Party, a small Marxist Leninist Group, and the CP. And in the twelve months that the Combine's been in existence, we've had no problems with sectarianism!

With a wide range of Ford plants represented in the "Combine", it was possible to co-ordinate a big campaign in shop stewards committees, trade union branches and - most important - by regular mass leafletting on the shop floor, to force the Ford Convenors' Committee to adopt the claim which the "Combine" had decided. And despite initial strong opposition from some senior convenors (notably the members of the CP) the campaign was eventually successful.

From there, we went on to build strong grass roots support for the claim. The extent of the feeling for the claim was clear from the spontaneous

walk-outs at Southampton and Halewood when Ford made its 5% offer.

WIVES

During the strike, the Combine kept up a constant level of independent rank and file activity - through weekly strike bulletins handed out at every Ford plant in Britain by the thousand, by a mass badge campaign, by regular pickets and lobbies of the negotiations. And the Ford Women's Action Group which was formed early on in the strike, involving male Ford workers wives and girlfriends and some women Ford workers, was able to outnumber and outmanoeuvre an abortive wives "get back to work" campaign by the media.

The big question was - what would happen after the strike? Could a rank and file group continue to exist, grow and build up a mass base for socialist struggle such as a strike?

Fraud News was seen as part of the answer. It would keep people informed about what was going on at plants in other parts of the country. It would give the Combine greater credibility. It could help to co-ordinate struggles for example against the penalty clauses linked to the "Supplementary Bonus" which impose financial penalties for taking part in any industrial action.

The paper also gives us more scope than a leaflet for discussion. So the first issue contained a stinging attack on Ford News' sexist use of a "page 3 girl". There was a debate on whether or not Ford workers should stop paying the political levy to the Labour Party. And an attack on racism - both the Company's and the workers'.

But Fraud News is only part of the answer. For a start, it can only reach a fraction of the workers that mass leaflets can reach - given out on the gates and inside the plant. And it can't be produced quickly in response to the needs of a particular struggle.

So the "Combine" also has to return - in a sense - to its past. Strong local groups, producing regular (and emergency) mass leaflets, dealing with the day to day struggles, problems and needs of Ford workers from a militant, socialist point of view. Building up support on the shop floor and winning policies in the trade union branches and stewards' committees.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

To follow up last month's article on 'Safety at Work' we are printing two responses which look at the problems faced in particular industries.

-Chemical Industry

PEOPLE WORKING in the chemical industry in North East Derbyshire have always known that exposure to toxic chemicals has a bad effect on their health.

Managements in the local factories have also known that they were exposing their workforces to highly dangerous substances. But with high unemployment in the area and threats of plant closures, there has been little militant activity around the issue of health and safety.

However, surveys being carried out on the workforces of several factories near Chesterfield have been confirming the workers' worst fears. There are suggestions that exposure to several groups of chemicals are causing damage to the workers' liv-

ers and high levels of blood fats, which are known to be associated with serious heart disease. The chemical involved is found in a tremendous variety of products, but particularly weed killers, wood preservatives and plastics.

This means that not only workers in the chemical industry but everybody in the community is exposed to them.

Next month Big Flame will be carrying a more detailed article discussing these issues.

-London Transport

I work on the London Underground and at present we are beginning to organise over Health and Safety.

The Health & Safety of staff has never been any railway management's favourite subject, take a look at the history of the Railway Companies before nationalisation in 1947 - in the 1900's one general manager argued that "the majority of accidents occur through want of care on the part of men". Major accidents on the underground don't happen all that much today but the risks are hanging round our necks - with all the brilliant advances in technology, track maintenance workers still have only the most basic protection against trains and, as a result a lot of them get killed every year. London Transport management have refused for years to deal properly with asbestos (blue and white) on the trains and stations/tunnels. The unions, mainly NUR have fought to get this stuff banned, there was

big trouble in 1978 after press reports about asbestos on the Central Line and the issue has come up again recently on the Piccadilly Line (Oakwood). The new Health & Safety Act may help to organise a clear policy in the unions as a basis for big changes in conditions, the rest of it has to come from acceptance that underground workers will not take second-hand assurances from official health 'experts' whose main concern is to count the number of asbestos particles that can be fitted on a pinhead. Nobody's immune to the long-term effects of shiftwork on social life and health as has been shown by the work of local health and safety groups. There is a huge turnover of staff on this job, many young people just don't want to put up with it for peanuts. This question is reflected in calls for better shift payments with a bigger emphasis on a living wage which isn't dependent on overtime.

D.W. (London)



photos by Carlos Augusto/John Smith [I.F.L.]

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS

Only because we need the money, we have decided to introduce a charge for adverts of 3p a word. Cheques and postal orders should be crossed and made payable to Big Flame Newspaper.

CHARTIST new magazine format (incorporating CHARTIST INTERNATIONAL) bi-monthly. First issue contains articles on the Labour left, socialist feminism, immigration controls, Bolshevism, Rosa Luxemburg, the economy, local government. Price 35p plus 15p post and packing. Available from Chartist Publications (BF) 60 Loughborough Rd., London SW9.

BRUSSELS COUNTER EUROVISION CONCERTS
To co-incide with the Eurovision Song Contest, "For a Workers' Europe", the European alliance of which Big Flame is a part is organising two concerts. Those participating include Jose Alphonso (Portugal), Misty (GB), Gilles Servat (France), Fenian Folk Group (Ireland). The venue is Cinque Royal, 81 Rue de l'Enseignement, Brussels.
Saturday 31 March/Sunday 1 April. 6pm - midnight.
A LP record of the concerts will be available soon!

SOUTHERN AFRICA: THE WORKERS VIEW. Speakers Tour of factories, union branches, and towns in Lancashire. Besides the workplace meetings, several public meetings have been arranged, with speakers from the South African Congress of Trade Unions, ANC, SWAPO, ZANU, and ZAPU.

MANCHESTER: March 29, Town Hall Basement Theatre, Albert Square, 7.30 pm
April 1 (trade unionists only) GEO Trafford Park, Melville Hotel, Barton Road, 6.45 pm
BURNLEY: April 4, Old Red Lion, Manchester Rd, 7.30 pm.
ACCRINGTON: April 6, 7 pm (Venue to be arranged).
BLACKBURN: April 7, AUEW House, 1 pm
PRESTON: April 8, Preston Polytechnic Students Union, 7.30 pm.
BURY: April 9, Manchester Road Community Centre, Manchester Road, 8 pm,
LIVERPOOL: April 10, AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant St., 7.30 pm.
BLACKPOOL: April 11, Details to be announced by APEX.
For more details, or to arrange meetings at your workplace, phone 061-434-7549 nights.

BF SUMMER SCHOOL
This year's summer school will take place from July 28th to August 4th. The venue is in Yorkshire (near Leeds). Book as soon as you can since accommodation is limited. For more information write to Summer School, c/o Big Flame, Room 265, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

LONDON: Big Flame EDUCATIONAL on IMMIGRATION LAWS. April 8th Sunday. 12.00 introduced by Joint Council Welfare of Immigrants speaker.
For details write to Big Flame, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

LONDON: International Meeting on IMMIGRATION 12 May - place to be fixed.

NOTTINGHAM: Big Flame Public Meeting on "MEN, WOMEN AND FASCISM" two speakers, International Centre, Wed April 11. 7.45

COVENTRY BIG FLAME Educational Meeting - "Politics and Personal Relations" Tuesday 3rd April, 7.30 pm. Swanswell Tavern (opposite Old Fire Station, Pool Meadow).

CARF No.8 Out Now. Includes Black Self defence, SPG, Illegal Immigration Intelligence Unit. 15p. Bulk orders from Carf, Box 35, 182 Upper St, London N1

RACE AND CLASS pamphlet No.6 "Police Against Black People". Includes 'sus', 'community relations'. 95p plus 15p p&p from IRR, 247 Pentonville Rd., London N1 9NG

Day Conference on 'Women in Left Groups and Work in Unions'. Sat. 7th April 10.30am - 4 pm. TV Room, North London Poly, Holloway Rd. (Organised by ISA, IMG and Big Flame)

MANCHESTER BF OPEN EDUCATIONALS. at 14 Piccadilly, 7.45 pm.
April 5 - Ireland - April 19: The Centrality of the Working Class. May 3: The Third Road to Socialism. - the Chilean Experience.

MANCHESTER SOCIALIST UNITY MAY DAY FESTIVAL, music, stalls, jumble sale, Theatre group, from 12am-12 pm Saturday 28 April at Birchfields Community Centre, Longsight.

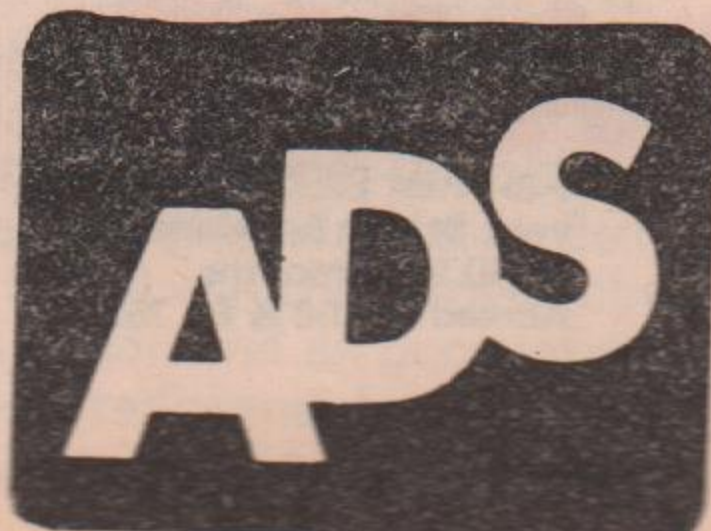
A new publication 'An Introduction to Big Flame' is available for 20p including postage. To find out more about Big Flame, send off the form on the back page.

'REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM No.3' NOW OUT. Includes: 'Barcelona Tenants Up In Arms'; 'Italy - a New Politics'; 'Shop Stewards as Full-Timers'.

From: BF Journal, Room 265, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. 40p (+ 15p postage) and from all good left wing bookshops.

'SEXUALITY AND FASCISM' Documents from Big Flame, including: 'Women and Nazi Germany', 'Women and the NF', 'Men and Fascism'. Price 20p (inc. p&p) from 217 Waverree Rd., Liverpool 7.

A CLOSE LOOK AT FASCISM AND RACISM: a BF pamphlet. * 30p (including postage) from 217 Waverree Rd., Liverpool 7



BIG FLAME

RONEO-VICKERS, KIRKBY: Fight To Reinststate Convener

The Dispute over a sacked AUEW convener at Roneo Vickers Partitions Ltd in Kirkby has finally been made official. It started in January when management called the convener, Ray Long, into the office ten minutes before clocking off time and sacked him. The reasons given were 'incitement to strike,' 'spending too much time on union activities' and involvement in a dispute which was of no concern to Roneo Vickers Ltd.

This 'dispute of no concern' was the national lorry drivers strike. The Roneo Vickers work workers had refused to load the lorries of a non-union firm, Willow Transport.

Ray Long's sacking has been calculated to undermine the growing strength of the shopfloor. Kirkby had an overtime ban for an improved bonus system and there had been trouble over the freezing working conditions. In addition Vickers are also faced with a growing national Combine Committee, which the Kirkby workers are part of, and which has held a special meeting over the Kirkby sacking.

When they heard that Ray Long had been sacked the 50 shopfloor AUEW workers immediately went out on strike for his reinstatement. The 30 TASS office workers were to support them with one day strikes. The local District Committee made it official.

The strike was solid and a few weeks later the workers returned to work, with Ray Long back on the payroll but not in the factory, while negotiations went on. These resulted in him being sacked again and the workers came out for the second

LOCAL SUPPORT

time. They got a lot of local support and the shopfloor was united until management sent out threatening letters 'turn in on Monday or you're sacked'. It had been more than a month since it had started and the AUEW still had not made it official, so most of the workforce, broke and confused, reluctantly straggled back to work over the next few days. With the high unemployment in Kirkby there's obviously a lot of pressure on you not to lose your job.

About ten workers stuck out with the sacked convener. They are still getting a lot of support even though the Employers' Federation

is sending letters round all local factories warning them not to let the men in to explain their case.

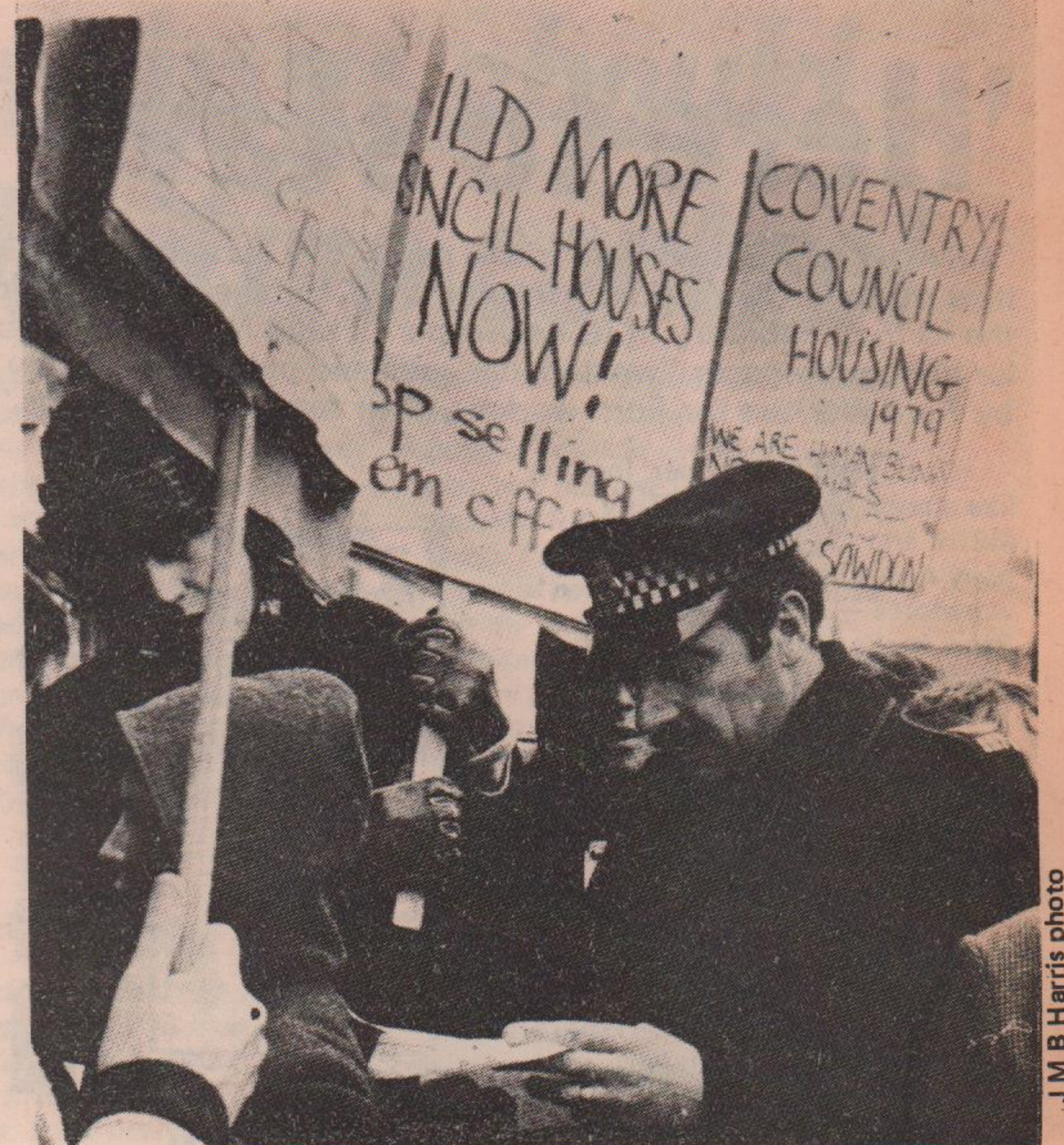
This support is both financial

PICKET LINE

and on the picket line. Knowsley Trades Council and Knowsley Council workers fully support it. Several unemployed local women and men have been helping on the picket line, and there's been talk of organising a community picket like at Dunllops in Liverpool. Kirkby people know that with redundnacies and closures taking place every week in Kirkby every single job has to be fought for.

At the end of March there was a special conference, called by Knowsley Trades Council, to discuss how to start and organised fightback against the barrage of lost jobs. Workers talked about their different situations and hopefully the feeling of solidarity and the need for action will soon build up into an organised campaign.

Contact the Strike Committee:
J. Richardson,
12 Boyes Bow,
Tower Hill,
Kirkby.



J M B Harris photo

Coventry tenants in Part three accomodation have organised themselves into an association whose actions are making sure that the conditions they are forced to live in are known to everyone in the city.

Their latest action (see photo) has been to picket the shop of the councillor in charge of housing. On the picket, they immediately collected 500 signatures. Sawdon, the councillor, applied for an injunction in the High Court to stop the tenants picketing — his injunction was granted.

Coventry has a housing waiting list of over 8,000 and many of the flats are what the council refers to as 'less desirable'. Current housing practice is to keep 'temporary' tenants in Part Three accomodation for periods of up to 5-6 years even if they are not in rent arrears.

By their well-organised actions, Coventry Temporary Tenants are determined to get the support from workplaces that will be a decisive help in their struggle. All the support they can get will be much appreciated.

NEW, BIGGER, BETTER PAPER NEXT MONTH.

As from next month Big Flame will expand to 16 pages and 15p. We hope this will give us more space to produce a better balanced paper. With the extra pages we will be able to have a photo feature and articles on personal politics — both subjects we have so far neglected.

We want our readers to write for the paper and sell it.

Deadlines for articles for the next month are printed in each copy of the paper: the one for features is always earlier than the one for news. For next month the dates are Thursday April 12th (Features) and Wednesday April 18th (News).

Given that we have no full-timers working on the paper, we rely very much on your contributions including letters. We are forced to raise the

price of the paper to 15p because of the increase of size and rising printing costs. But it is also the case that donations to the paper are at a very low level. It would certainly be a help if we could get the 16-page paper off to a good financial start — THINK ABOUT IT!

All correspondence to Big Flame, 217 Wavertree Rd., Liverpool 7.



BIG FLAME

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