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UNEMPLOYMENT CAN BE FOUGHT

That's Enough!

- * 1,250,000 out of work nationally.
- * 35,000 on Merseyside.
- * 800 jobs lost on Merseyside in the last 9 months.
- * One third of Liverpool school leavers still without a job.
- * Youth unemployment 1 in 4 in the Inner City, Norris Green and Croxteth.

On Harold Wilson's whistle-stop visit to Merseyside last week he said:- "The level of unemployment on Merseyside is very serious, and is a matter of deep concern to the government. At 10.5% (12.8% for men) it is the highest for any large national conurbation. More than 10,000 school leavers are still without work."

Nor is he the only one to show such heart-warming 'concern' about the loss of jobs. The Liverpool Echo has run a long series on "Merseyside out of Work." Even the Young Conservatives had the cheek to hold a march through town. 50 self-consciously well-heeled Tories marched, shouting such slogans as "What do we want? - Jobs" They should have added "How did we lose them?" - "Tory policies!"

What links Harold Wilson, The Echo and the Young Conservatives is that their fine words are nothing more than hypocritical cover-ups. Wilson, whose Government has orchestrated the deliberate destruction of loss of jobs thinks he can calm the situation by a few soothing words. The Echo bemoans the figures, but sees it only as a natural disaster. The Tories started the rot in the first place.

None of them can hide the fact that their policies are equivalent to putting a sticky plaster over a cancer growth. They all clamour for the creation of "community jobs" especially for the young school leavers. Such so-called "jobs" are a sham. Cleaning "the environment" and repairing Corporation property not only provide no long-term alternative, but have the effect of doing work cheaply that should be done by Corporation workers at the higher rate. The Government's recent allocation of £75m to help "relieve unemployment" will at maximum create 20,000 jobs, when they are being lost at many times that rate. Merseyside is to get £4m which will possibly find work eventually for 2,000. In the last 9 months over 8,000 have been lost.

None of them are prepared to back any action by workers to protect jobs. Instead they call for things which will lose even more job mobility, so-called natural wastage and reductions in manning levels. They pretend that unemployment is a temporary if serious setback to the economy. In fact, it is a permanent feature of a system that when its profits are threatened, is prepared to throw hundreds of thousands on the scrapheap. There are 1,250,000 unemployed. That makes 1,250,000 reasons for creating socialism - a planned economy, run by workers for need, not profit.

We must start by action to resist further loss of jobs. The fight is against speed-ups natural wastage, labour mobility, and cuts in manning levels as well as against simple redundancies. It is for reductions in hours and amount of work, to create jobs for the unemployed. The fight back begun at Plesseys and Courtaulds is one indication of the turning tide. We can only go forward.



AND PLESSEY WORKERS ARE IN THE FRONT LINE

An immediate 2,000 sackings and thousands on short-time. With more to come later. They're the plans at least. The workers have other ideas, and so far the Unions' policy is NON-CO-OPERATION WITH REDUNDANCIES.

Plessey management is using the cut backs in Post Office orders to push through publicly what it was trying to do anyway, AXE THE WORKFORCE! On Merseyside alone, Plessey planned to get rid of 1,300 jobs from July 1974 to February 1976 by not replacing people when they leave. They call it natural wastage. We call it hidden redundancies.

PLESSEYS PROBLEMS!

What are they? With the Post Office trying to run at a profit not only are there fewer orders but more competition for them. Plessey and GEC no longer enjoy a monopoly although Plessey still gets the largest share and has millions of pounds worth of orders for its Crossbar system. Production of the new electronic TXE4 is starting at Huyton, while in Edge Lane production of the obsolete mechanical Strowger system is being run down. As usual the new system needs much fewer workers.

SHAKEOUT ON THE SHOPFLOOR But the biggest problem for Plessey manage-

ment, along with GEC, Henry Ford and every other boss, is rationalising production and weakening the strong job organisation of the workforce. Sack some, lay others off, move us around (redeployment) get more mobility, retime jobs with tighter rates, so fewer workers will produce more for less pay.

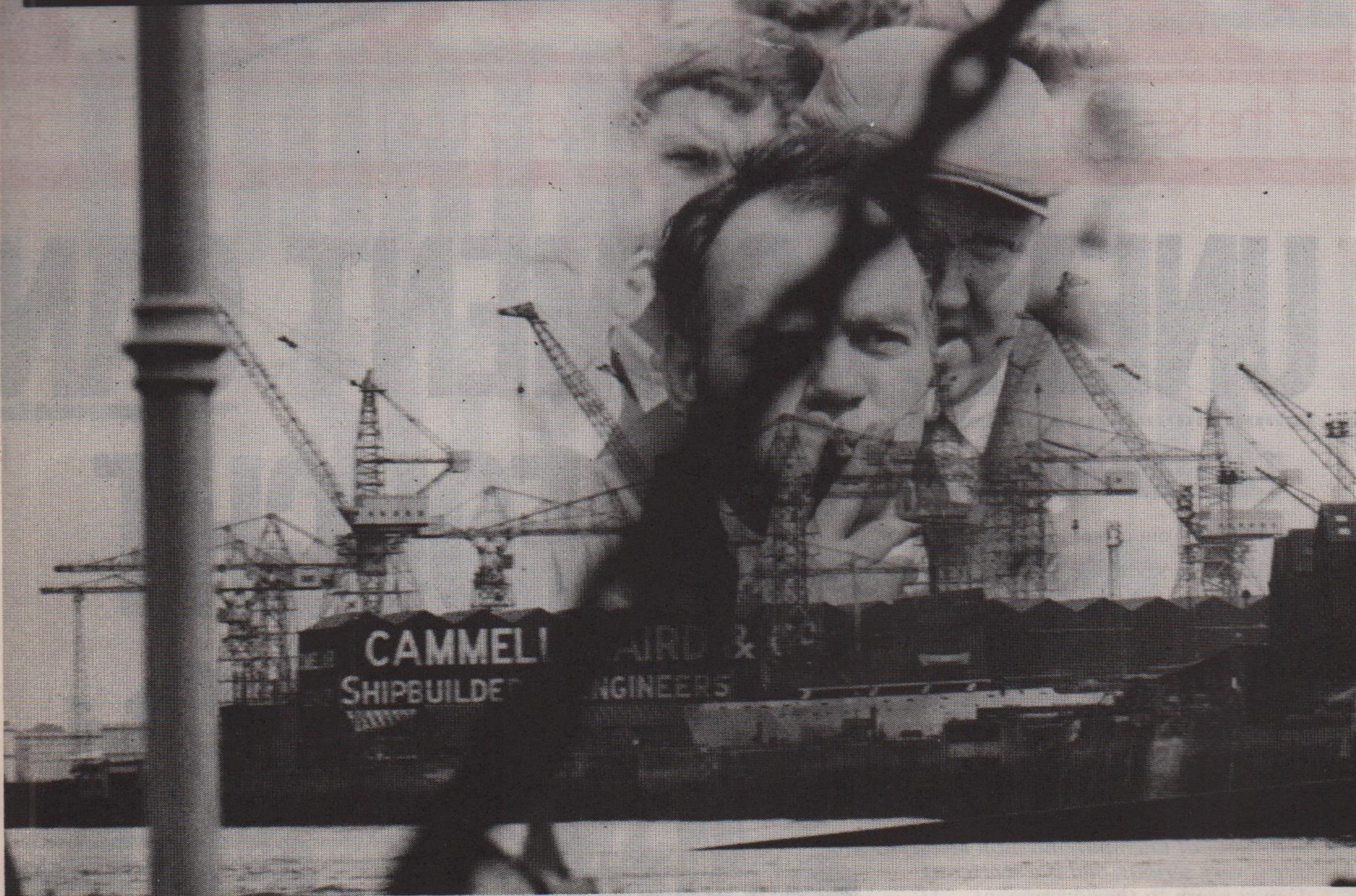
Redundancies and short-time aren't forced on Plesseys by circumstances beyond their control. They're part of Plessey's plans and are used to divide and blackmail us. Plessey still rakes in the profits - £27m in the first 3/4 of this financial year. They still need the production, only this week management in Kirkby was screaming for overtime.

The Post office is a public service, but Harold Wilson has visions of it making profits, which no postal service in the world does. So telephone charges have been bumped up so high that more and more people are being disconnected forever and all those people who've never been able to afford a phone, including many Plessey workers, have no chance of getting one.

DEMONSTRATION IN BLACKPOOL

3,000 Plessey workers from Chorley, Wigan, Beeston, Liverpool and Kirkby went to Blackpool to demonstrate to the Labour Party conference, their determination to fight. The government cuts in public spending go hand in hand with the shakeout of industry and unemployment.

THE MONTH ON Merseyside



BRUNSWICK TENANTS STILL UNITED



TENANTS FROM Brunswick Gardens are as strong as ever in their determination not to pay the rent increase that came in last August. Their last meeting was attended by 100 people and out of them only 4 (who are on SS and therefore have no choice) were paying the increase.

The Corpy is trying to frighten them into paying. After years of living in intolerable conditions the tenants have now been promised that rehousing will begin by the end of this year. 'BUT ONLY IF THEY HAVE CLEAR RENT BOOKS, SAY THE CORPY.

The tenants say that its not on. The block has definitely been sold to a housing assen, for the princely sum of £½million--so the Corpy can afford to let them live rent free for the rest of the time anyway. And say the tenants, they ought to be thankful for getting any rent at all for such housing conditions.

Besides, as far as the tenants are concerned they want a slice of that £½ million. They only owe £28,000 to financiers, so what's going to happen to the rest. The tenants suggest that some of it is given to them--so much a head for upheaval money. And why not? They've paid twice over for the block in rents over the years so it belongs to them as much as to the Corpy.

So the Corpy had better forget it if they think they can smash the rent increase strike in Brunswick Gdns, by waving the threat of clear rent books in their faces. The tenants are on a rent strike because they can not afford it, and as a protest over lack of repairs and maintainance to the flats. These conditions aren't going to get better over the next few months--so why should they pay through the nose for living there??

EVICTIION THREAT.....OCTOBER 30th.

A tenant of Caryl Gardens has been served with an eviction order for October 30th, on account of arrears. The Liverpool Tenants Co-ordinating Committee is pledged to fight all evictions and is organising to stop the eviction on the 30th.

RING 708 7352 or 708 0799 if you can give any support. AND TURN OUT ON THE 30th.

THE BLACKLIST

We all know the big lie technique. If you repeat the same lie often enough and loud enough people can come to believe it, even when experience tells them opposite. The 'big lie' was used to convince people that the shrewsbury building workers were guilty of so-called 'violence and intimidation. In fact they had been convicted only on the trumped charges of 'conspiracy.' The same technique has been used by Merseyside employers who insist that the blacklist is no longer used against workers. They can insist till they're blue in the face: workers know different, especially as a result of some recent disputes locally. One of the notorious industries is the Shipping trade, in particular Cunards. But worst of all are the building companies. Below we describe two local and long running disputes in the building industry where there is clear evidence of victimisation

LAIRDS

Eleven pickets from the former Peter Lind site at Cammel Lairds shipyard have been further remanded for trial on various charges of 'assaulting or obstructing the police,' or 'using threatening words and behaviour.' As we had previously reported in *Big Flame*, they had picketed the site when Wimpeys took over the contract and refused to re-employ the Peter Lind workers.

Once these building workers started to picket the site in defence of their jobs, they became subjected to the most vicious campaign of victimisation since the Shewsbury 24. The eleven men charged include many of the picket leaders and were obviously singled out by the police. Since then Wimpeys have been forced by the magnificent struggle of the workers to employ 21 of the pickets. But this is nine short of the agreed thirty. It seems clear that Wimpeys are refusing to employ the ex-shop stewards and those workers most active on the picket line. The district committee of the Transport and General Workers Union have called for an official

stoppage over such blatant victimisation.

The men involved have stuck together for over eight months, occupying the Cammel Laird site, picketing in the face of violent and unprovoked attacks by the police and even occupying the TGWU headquarters in Liverpool to demand firmer union support. They refuse to submit to the use of the blacklist by the employers, the police and the Courts. They must be supported!

Send all financial contributions towards Court costs etc. to - T. Abbott, c/o 6/533 Branch TGWU, Islington, Liverpool.

IRO

Blacklisting by your employers is bad enough. But when your trade union leaders join in with the victimisation you've got a tough fight on your hands. This is the situation at the Inland Revenue Site in Bootle. The electricians and the employers, McAlpines have agreed to a six-point formula to end the dispute. The employers had previously tried to victimise steward John Byrne, but were forced to back down by the actions of the other electricians. The solidarity of these eleven men, their total refusal to see a fellow worker sacked and blacklisted for life, is a blow against those cynics who deny that the working class can unite, fight and win. That solidarity has now continued unbroken for 4 years!

But even if the bosses are prepared to let John Byrne back on the site - ETU leader Frank Chapple is not prepared to let them. He sums up all that is worst in some union leaders, he is an arrogant boss's man. In this instance he is refusing to recognise that the workers prefer, after bitter previous experience, to negotiate directly with their employers rather than let the likes of him 'represent' them.

Even as we go to press the union leadership still refuses to support the six-point deal reached between the bosses and the men. That deal, based on the suggestions of the Bootle

Times, even agrees to the union 'representing' the men in any future dispute, and to John Byrne ceasing to be steward. But even with those concessions Chapple refuses to budge, he wants blood.

Meanwhile the press are having a field day. Blaming the dispute for holding up completion of the building and delaying the creation of over 1,000 new jobs in Bootle. Harold Wilson has also got into the blackmail act. Following his recent visit to Merseyside he blamed 'a series of unofficial strikes' for the delay. They are all conveniently ignoring the role of the union leadership, and no-one seems to be prepared to pressurise Chapple.

TILLOTSONS

Bosses wine knocked back

Women at Tillotsons Carton Company on Commercial road, scene of a 7 week sit-in in 1972, turned the tables on the boss last month. Literally!!

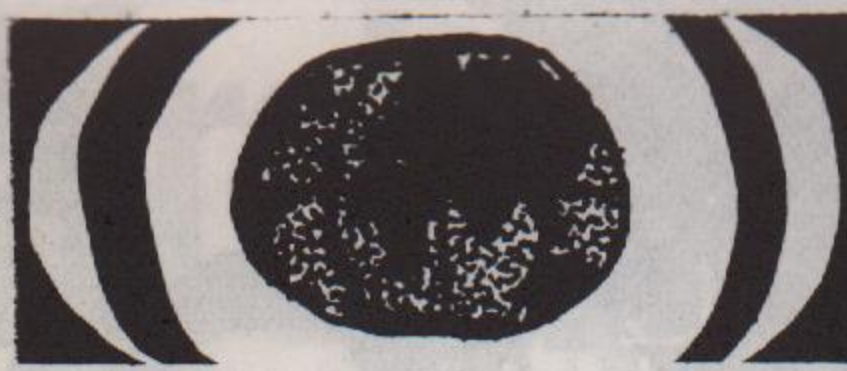
The bosses, trying to cut down on the celebrations which take place whenever a worker leaves the firm, generously decided to lay on a running buffet inside work for faithful workers on their departure.

This way they reckoned on controlling the celebrations and not losing too many hours labour.

But recently the plan backfired. Bottles of wine sent down by the bosses were KBed on the grounds of taste and because the wine was '4 years old'.

The women produced their own refreshment instead. When management finally arrived they were driven out to the sound of shoes beating the table, Khrushchev-style, as all the women revived the sit-in song.





SPAIN

MOMENT OF TRUTH

There's no doubt that the angry international response to the execution of the five guerillas has brought forward the moment of truth in Spain. The problem is that it's still far from clear in what direction events will move. But, for the moment, there's no uncertainty about the scale and the ferocity of the wave of repression unleashed by the police and the fascists in the last few weeks.

A middle-aged woman watching the great patriotic demonstration of support for the regime in Madrid (bosses had to give every one the day off on full pay to attend and the transport to Madrid was paid by the State) called out as it passed her, "These are the real disturbers of public order". The injuries she suffered in the resulting attack were bad enough. But she has now been given a prison sentence into the bargain, under the Anti-Terrorism act.

the regime's reaction to the wave of protest inside and outside Spain has been to retreat further into its bunker. Franco's position has a certain logic to it. In the first place it is a response to the enormous and menacing strength of the Spanish working class. Last winter saw the biggest advances in all the years since the Civil War. In Pamplona, workers and tenants erected barricades to keep out the police during a week of general strike in the city which the shopkeepers and bar-owners supported. In the Basque Country, ETA continued its military operations against policemen who had earned themselves particular notoriety in their use of torture on workers and revolutionaries. And December 12 was a general strike throughout the Basque Country in support of the ETA militants on hunger strike in prison.

In this year's elections in the fascist trade unions the left has been triumphant nearly everywhere its candidates stood. The vote was a clear call by the workers for a system of free unions.

REGIME'S ISOLATION

It was obvious that the regime would be hard-pressed to survive a repeat of a season of struggle on this scale.

The economic crisis was already serious enough when the EEC's decision to end talks about Spain's entrance brought about a new crash in investment and business confidence. Spanish capitalists look on the Common Market as the only answer to their pressing need for larger markets and more capital. They could see all the problems that might face them if there were a democratisation, but they were ready to gamble on being able to control the working class without fascism because that was the price of EEC admission.

THE ARMY

Even if the threat of economic isolation means that most Spanish capitalists are now ready to wipe their hands of Franco, they are powerless to act unless they can win the support of the armed forces.

Many of the thousands of rumours circulating in Madrid are about an impending palace coup to unseat Franco and his cronies and to install a provisional government. The details vary, but one constant of all the rumours is an alliance between the bankers, who control most of industry, and a section of the generals.

There are many who suspect that the army and the capitalists are deliberately biding their time, hoping that if the police are given a free hand now, the problem of controlling a working class exhausted and broken by weeks of repression may be rather easier.

NO TO POLICE STATE

Jim Callaghan, Labour Foreign Secretary, is a man of many faces. At the Labour Party Conference, he passionately condemned state violence. By this, he meant

- *secret police
- *imprisonment without trial
- *denial of political freedom
- *persecution of the press and free trade unions.

But Callaghan was talking about Spain the day after the execution of the five guerillas. Far off, distant Spain. Let's examine the record of Callaghan and the Labour Government over something much closer to home - Ireland.

LEGALISED REPRESSION

Government policy

Labour Government policy on Ireland is built on these forms of state violence -

- *secret police
- *imprisonment without trial (internment)
- *torture. Practised since 1971 and admitted by the Government in the Compton Report. Now under investigation by United Nations bodies.
- *repressive laws: the Emergency Provisions Act which allows the police virtually unlimited powers of arrest is much admired by the racist South African premier Vorster who thought it "too extreme" for his own country.

With the introduction of the 1974 Prevention of Terrorism Act, legalised repression in this country draws closer. So, the police can now detain you for seven days without giving any reason. It becomes illegal to support the IRA, but the meaning of 'support' is left disturbingly vague. The Troops Out Movement could come into this category.

Basically, any support for Irish independence becomes wide open to state interference.

What is perfectly clear is that the Prevention of Terrorism Act is not used against 'terrorists'. After all, there are plenty of laws against planting bombs already! Instead, the Act is being used to intimidate Irish people in general in this country. The police admit that since the Act became law 5,000 Irish have come under surveillance. And Irish trade unionists have become a particular target.

Joe Gallagher, a UCATT shop steward and delegate to Bletchley Trades Council, was served with an exclusion order. Nobody knows why - no reason has to be given by the police - except that Gallagher was Irish. Trade union action forced the lifting of the Order. This is just one of hundreds of cases.

Yet, of 360 people detained under the Act, only 23 have actually been charged with anything!

NO RENEWAL

This November, the Act is due for renewal. Last time it was renewed only 10 MPs voted against. Jenkins has hinted he'll drop it. Don't believe it. The Special Powers Act was introduced in Northern Ireland, supposedly for just one year. But that was in 1922 and it's still on the Statute Book.

It will need a coordinated campaign to fight for our rapidly diminishing civil liberties and get the Act repealed.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

- 1 The National Executive of the Transport Workers Union has opposed the Act.
- 2 Trades Councils and trade union branches have declared their opposition, especially in areas where many members have suffered under the Act.
- 3 Trade union and community action has forced Jenkins to withdraw exclusion orders in three cases.
- 4 A conference has been called in Manchester on The State, the Law and Ireland on 30 November at 2pm in the Lesser Free Trade Hall. Trade union branches are asked to sponsor the conference and send delegates. Write for more details to 6 Braemar Road, Withington, Manchester.



PORTUGAL

ON A KNIFE EDGE

The 6th Provisional Government is politically paralysed. Despite massive support from European social democracy - as well as the Labour Party's blessing - and £60m aid from the Common Market it cannot implement its basic policies.

The reason the Government can't succeed is simple.

THE PORTUGUESE WORKING CLASS HAVE MOVED INTO A NEW OFFENSIVE, GAINING ENORMOUS STRENGTH FROM THE RECENT MASS MOBILISATIONS OF THE RANK AND FILE SOLDIERS AND SAILORS.

THE MFA SPLITS

The mobilisations have been taking place under the banner of SUV, Soldiers United Will Win. SUV developed because the officers' movement which had overthrown fascism in April 1974 - the Armed Forces Movement, the MFA - is split and confused, and no longer acting in the interests of the working class.

A group of Moderates, inside and outside the armed forces, managed to gain acceptance for a document mapping out the future political and economic development of the country. The essence of their position, which won over a high proportion of the officers in the MFA, was to hold back the advance of the working class and restore normality in the barracks.

ALWAYS ON THE SIDE OF THE PEOPLE

This left the rank and file soldiers no alternative but to organise amongst themselves, decisively breaking with what was left of the MFA. SUV emerged early in September with a march by 2000 soldiers through Oporto. As they say in their platform document, "...on several occasions already we have made concessions to the bourgeoisie, particularly in subordinating our struggle to the alliance with the MFA, an officers movement which, as a result of its vacillations and contradictions in

the past, is today following a counter-revolutionary policy."

They demand full democratic rights for soldiers and a rapid improvement in 'working' conditions. In calling for the 'destruction of the bourgeois army and the creation of the armed wing of workers power, the revolutionary people's army', it's clear that they pose the most serious possible threat to the existing state in Portugal. For SUV is uncompromisingly clear about where it stands. **"Always, always on the side of the people - that is our slogan! Workers, soldiers, sailors and peasants - united we will win!"**

NOT ONLY WORDS, BUT ACTION

demonstrated its power and its ability to give a push forward -

September 25 12,000 soldiers and sailors and 85,000 workers, tenants and peasants marched through Lisbon in support of the SUV. The demonstration commandeered 71 buses and under the direction of Military Police, one of the most radical units of all, drove to a military prison outside the city where two soldiers were being held for giving out SUV leaflets. The negotiations with the prison authorities were brief before the two were released.

September 29 troops sent by the Government to take back control of Radio Renascenca from its workers take their side instead and agree to defend them from a state take-over.

October 6 10,000 workers and tenants assemble outside the barracks of the left-wing Lisbon Light Artillery Regiment in support of the unit's determined stand against the Sixth Government.

October 8 a heavy artillery unit in Oporto is occupied by troops from a transport unit whose right-wing commander is trying to break-up the rank and file soldiers organisation. Seven other local units pledge their support to the occupation and workers and tenants committees are quick to show their solidarity.

ON A KNIFE EDGE

But, for the moment, the Government and the reactionaries, such as the fascist CIA-backed

Portuguese Liberation Army (ELP), are paralysed by the working class and revolutionary offensive. But the balance of forces is on a knife edge and there is a long way to go in the fight for a socialist society.

Although there has been a big advance in the formation of local assemblies of direct democracy, which link together soldiers and civilians committees, their spread is still very patchy, especially outside Lisbon. This means that the possibilities for united action are limited.

At the same time, it's important to mention the positive side. FUR, the United Revolutionary Front, which links six organisations to the left of the Communist Party, has played a vital role in helping to set up SUV and in supporting it.

Now it's vital, inside and outside Portugal, to recognise that the main threat to the revolution comes from the 6th Government and from the social democratic parties which dominate it - the Socialist Party and the PPD. We say this not because we believe that there's any long term chance that social democracy will take root in Portugal - even with all the support it's getting from Europe - but because of the belief that its through a tactical defeat of the working class that the reactionaries are most likely to be able to seize their opportunity and establish fascism once again.



symbols of the revolutionary organisations in the F.U.R.

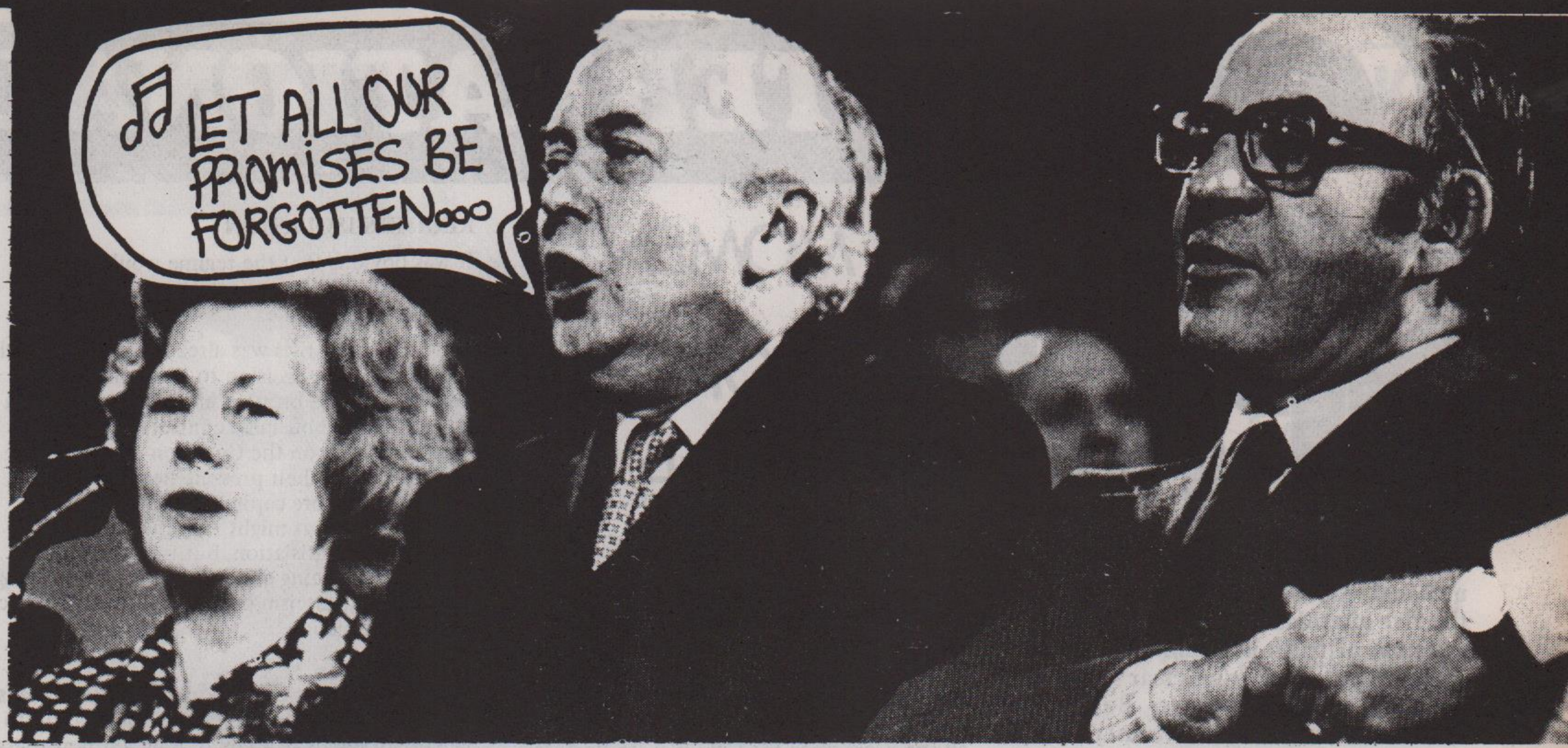
The Labour Party is at this moment a straightforward instrument of the employers plans. Their policies on jobs, wages and public expenditure no longer even have a sprinkling of socialist rhetoric. This course has been clear ever since its return to power. It's feeble attempts to resolve the capitalist crisis, through the phoney social con-trick were defeated by working class action on wages. Unwilling to confront the demands of the employers and financiers, Labour resorted to harsher policies. The seal was set by the defeat of the left and the sacking of Benn after the referendum. Previous to this, groups of workers like at Chrysler, had been using the softer of Benn's policies on nationalisation, jobs and wages to impose their interests on Labour and the employers.

This phase of working class use of the Labour left has ended. The Labour Party Conference confirmed that the left was in headlong retreat. The function of the conference has always been to let the rank and file let off steam, while the real policy makers carry on regardless. This was no exception. The left inflicted marginal defeats on the Wilson leadership - over arms to Chile, defence expenditure and housing. But this does not disguise the fact that the right-wing Wilson leadership is firmly in control of policy making. The key event which illustrated this was Healey being thrown off the NEC and his replacement by the left wing Heffer. Hailed as a great victory, it was immediately revealed to be a token gesture as the conference voted overwhelmingly for Healey's anti-working class economic plans: including the £6 limit and public spending cuts.

NO RESISTANCE

The resistance of the left to this was minimal as we show below, their own policies guarantee their political ineffectiveness. The right-wing is actually gaining by forcing more and more of the trade union blocks to capitulate rather than face up to the fact that this is a permanent crisis of capitalism, not a temporary setback to the 'economy'. When we talk of the gains of the right we are not referring to the Social Democratic Alliance. Prentice and his pals were openly abused, like the Tribunites by the leadership in many speeches. This is not because their policies are really different than Wilsons, but because their violent attacks on the Government's left-wing lap-dogs like Foot and Jones are an embarrassment, Wilson realises the left knows its place: the permanent, complaining, but obedient opposition.

In this situation, the class struggle must have a new emphasis. But unfortunately the lessons of the past few months have not been learnt by some of our comrades on the left. The Trotskyist groups like the



HARD LABOUR

International Marxist Group and Workers Fight still base their policies as if the left was sharing the driving seat. They see the struggle polarising around the Labour Party and the possibility of a re-groupment of sections of the Labour and revolutionary left to sack Wilson and force a socialist programme on Labour.

THE WRONG FOCUS

To do this, such groups are re-entering Labour Party institutions. The purpose of such 'Sack Wilson - defend Benn' policies are to 'expose' the unwillingness of the Labour left to engage in the struggle either inside or outside parliament. These absurd policies are not only wrong because they pose deliberately utopian aims. They are wrong and dangerous because they put the emphasis of action on the reformist institutions at a time when the struggle must go beyond them to succeed. Such a focus hides the bankruptcy of the left in the Labour Party and the Unions. It is no longer possible to win struggles merely by involving Benn or Heffer. The left in retreat is the weakest weapon to topple government policies.

Workers fighting for their jobs are rapidly discovering that the left do not have the power to be forced into saving jobs. Yet the ideas that the weakness of Benn unleashed, like the refusal to take responsibility for the crisis by letting jobs and organisation disappear, are still there. To win battles that emerge a revolutionary, anti-capitalist programme must replace Benn as the focus. By a programme we mean that the most advanced demands thrown up in the course of struggles in and out of the factories, must be brought together to unify the fight in perspectives and practice. The heart of the ruling class offensive is the attack on job organisation, on wages and on the gains we've made in education, the social services and the communities. The heart of our fight back must begin from these basic, but vital political issues.

ILLUSIONS IN LABOUR

Those organisations that present political struggle as only connected to the Labour Party are not only pointing in the wrong direction, but showing their unwillingness to engage in direct intervention in struggle at a mass level. We are not suggesting that

the Labour Party or its left can now be ignored. But they can only be forced to act in our interests by a higher level of independent mass action. This can only be achieved with the utmost clarity about the role of the Labour Party. There are many sincere socialist activists, even some MPs who genuinely believe the Labour Party can be won to socialism. But this is a sad illusion. As the Marxist writer Ralph Miliband recently said:

"The activists belief that they can transform the Labour Party, is the greatest illusion of British politics, which has grappled British Socialism for decade after decade."

When left-wing activists in the Labour Party come under attack, we will help defend them against the orchestrated campaign of the so-called moderates of all persuasions. But the real changes will arise, not out of their activity in a party which has long capitulated to the system but out of the ever growing struggles outside the parliamentary arena.

LEFT IN THE COLD

Monday morning at the Labour Party conference seemed an exciting moment. Everyone was nervously awaiting the 'big debates': on wages, unemployment, social spending, Portugal. You were made to feel that this year could be the one when the Labour left really took on the right wing.

Well, that illusion didn't last too long. Wilson walked in. The Tribunites, the Militant group were left in tatters, and Tribune split even more amongst itself.

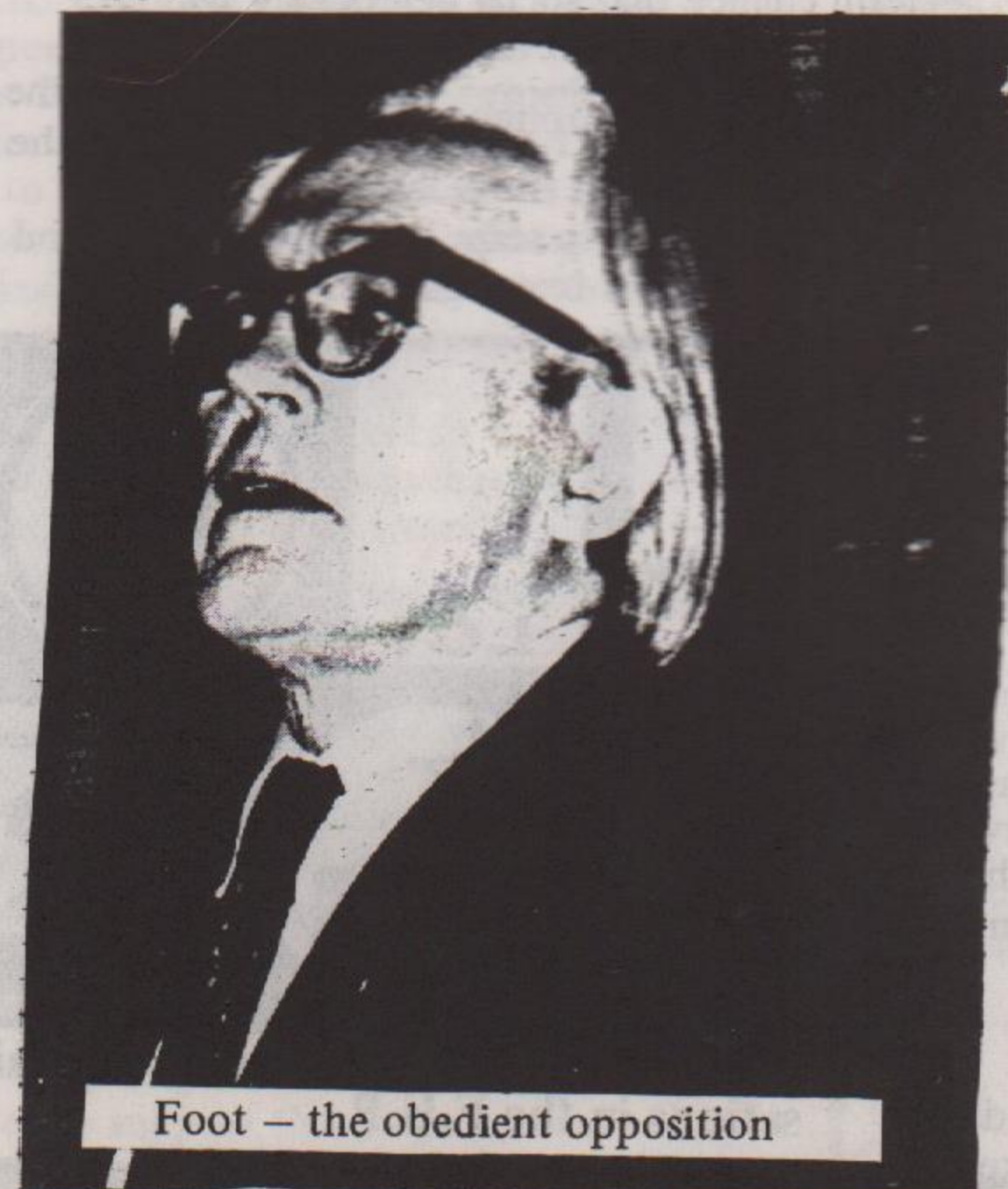
WHY

The left never even managed to organise a large minority of the rank and file in their favour. And the reason is simple, and the same reason for why the Labour left can't mobilise any significant movement, inside or outside the Labour Party: they haven't got the policies. At least Wilson and Healey know where they're going. Capitalism is in crisis, and these boys are going to save it, in the only way possible. To restore profitability, you have to attack the organisation and living conditions of the working class.

But the Mikardos, the Heffers, don't face up to the crisis. They take neither a clear capitalist policy, nor a clear working class one. So they end up in a left-sounding no mans land that in some instance, like their call for import controls, is downright reactionary.

Tribune and the Labour left say:

No to a formal incomes policy. But they leave it at that. They make a few criticisms of the union leaders, but they never come out against the present £6 policy. They're not saying what they're going to do about it, and they're quite happy to keep in with Foot and Benn: two men who support the £6 limit.



Foot - the obedient opposition

Restore Free Collective Bargaining. You'd think we're back in the 1960's. Big Flame doesn't oppose this demand as such. But with the bosses all out to keep wages controlled, with the majority of unions going along, just to restore 'free collective bargaining' will get nowhere. The working class is going to have to organise a fight on the shop-floor to win high wage claims etc. And it is going to have to unite and expand its politics to do that - free collective bargaining, even in the past, only really worked for certain stronger, larger unions.

Increase investment - reflate the economy.

The Labour left suggest that British capitalists are 'unpatriotic' for not investing enough in this country. This is rock bottom rubbish. British capitalists - like all others - are not unpatriotic; they are just capitalists. And they'll invest when and where it is profitable. It's no good talking about 'investment' in general, as if its something neutral that will or can go on without further exploitation of the working class. No. Of course we fight to keep up state spending; of course we fight to keep workplaces open. But we can only do this if we see that this goes against the needs of capitalist investment; and goes against the needs of a healthy capitalist state. Our fight now directly raises the question of socialism: the need for a completely different type of state, a completely different kind of economy and reasons for investment etc. Heffer and Mikardo don't make this clear, and so their schemes look stupid and only half-thought out. Compared to Wilson - who does know which system he supports - they look like 'idealists' whose plans will bring just further confusion.

Bring in import controls. This is reactionary rubbish. The whole capitalist world is in crisis, but these 'socialists' see it only in national terms. Bring up our own bosses, they say, and see if we can't get workers abroad to lose their jobs instead of us. This goes against the spirit of everything our class needs to develop in order to come out on top. It's not even sensible in the short term: firstly, most firms are using the crisis, the fall in demand to push through redundancies that would come anyway. Secondly, import controls provoke import controls by capitalists in other countries and we're back to square one. Except this time more confused than ever.

It's not surprising that the Labour left fail completely when it comes to internationalism. They didn't raise a murmur about the Labour Party backing up the Socialist Party in Portugal, and it was Mikardo himself who spoke for the executive in favour of staying in NATO.

The Labour left can never rally wide forces to take on the Labour government and its capitalist policies. It hasn't got the guts. It hasn't got the policies, because it can't see past its own nose when it comes to the capitalist crisis. To succeed in a fight back you have to be 100% anti-capitalist. It hasn't got the power, because it is still tied to fighting in conference rooms and parliaments and not outside in the world of the shop-floor, the housing estate and the college - the world where the real class movement will be built up by revolutionary and working class militants.

Broken Promises

Labour Party policies in power have seldom born much relationship to the promises of programmes and manifestos. But this time the stated policies have been ignored more cynically than ever before - in every area of policy.

Promise: Wealth

The recent Labour Party Programme promised 'to bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families.'

Fact:

The average take home pay of manual workers after tax, fell by 4% in 1974/75 and is estimated to fall by a further 10% in 75/76.

Promise: Poverty

'To eliminate poverty wherever it exists.' (Labour's Programme)

Fact:

The Low Pay Unit estimates that the majority of low wage-earners with children, will be worse off after the £6 policy, because they are stripped of means-tested benefits if their incomes rise. Labour has refused to tackle this 'poverty trap.'

Promise: Jobs

'We will never stoop to using unemployment as a weapon of economic policy.' (Wilson)

Fact:

The Labour Government has made a mockery of its pledges of full employment. It has encouraged the rationalisations of textiles, electronics, TV tubes, glass, Boots and shoes, knitting and hosiery, and now telecommunications. Unemployment is being used as a weapon of policy and a threat to hold down wages. Healey has openly admitted that his budgets have been aimed at increasing the loss of jobs.

Promise: Housing

Their Manifesto promised to stop the fall in house-building and seriously tackle the problem of homelessness.

Fact:

There has been a collapse of government house-building policy, since 1974, with a 5% fall in housing starts in the private sector and no substantial increase in the public sector. The number of homes completed has dropped from 435,825 in 1968 to only 276,368 in 1974.

Promise: Public spending

Labour has always said that if wages were held down, they would protect the 'social wage,' received in benefits and the like. Barbara Castle said 'During a period of high unemployment, the social services should be the last to be cut.'

Fact:

They have cut public spending by £1 billion. This includes housing and food subsidies down by £215 million, 5% reduction on social service spending, 60% of new projects for the NHS slashed and hundreds of millions of the education budget.

Other aspects of Labour's policies have never promised much. The much praised National Enterprise Board was never intended to be more than a means of ensuring greater state direction of investment and planning, to improve profitability at our expense. It all summed up by MP Brian Sedgemoor (Tribune 8/11/74) As 'The language of socialism is the politics of investment.' This is nothing more than a corruption of Labour veteran Nye Bevan's famous war cry, 'The language of socialism is the politics of priorities.'

The Labour Party refuse to accept that the crisis is one of capitalism and that investment and competition mean increased exploitation for the working class, to say nothing of vast cuts in vital services. They only use the limited weapon of nationalisation when forced to by workers to save jobs. Now their policies are openly seen and admitted to be promising nothing but further hardship and sacrifice. But the sacrifice is one-way. The money gained at our expense flows to the coffers of private industry. They say that if we suffer these present hardships a national recovery will be on the way.

But the only thing that can be guaranteed is that the employers cannot afford to ever let our wages and jobs rise and recover to the same level. For their survival they have to use any government to keep us on the receiving end.

For our survival we have to rely on our own efforts. The Labour Party's record proves they cannot and will not help in the process of the working class challenging the employers and taking power for itself.

TORIES REACH NEW LOW



Edward Heath - positively carried away by Mrs Thatcher at the Tory Conference!

***'No profits mean no investment and a dying industry geared to yesterday's world.' (Thatcher)

If you don't work your arse off and make more money for us, we won't invest and you will be out of a job.

***'There are supposed to be children starving in Leicestershire because they are denied school meals. Are the women of that county no longer able to feed their own families? This is the welfare state gone mad.' (Paul Marland-Prospective Candidate for West Gloucs)

I go mad if money is spent on starving children

***'we Conservatives do not believe that because some people have no chance, no-one should have it.' (Thatcher)

We choose the best, you get the rest.

***'We believe in the right to work, but not necessarily in the same job for the whole of the workers' life.' (Howe - Industry spokesman)

Here's your cards.

***'We live in a Socialist country and as a socialist would have it, a parent can buy his children toys and give them £5 or £10 to fritter away. Many do so. Alternatively he can neglect them or allow them to go to football matches and not care what they do on the way. He can even give his son money to go to brothel.' (Mr Robin Neville-Tate education speaker)

I am a complete idiot.

All joking apart, and some of the statements were not very funny, the Tory conference was send shivers down the spine of anyone with any sense. Sometimes disguised, sometimes blatant - speaker after speaker defended privilege in any form. Even Thatcher's famous 'right to be unequal' cannot match Shadow Minister Michael Heseltine's brutal arrogance of - 'We must give the strong and those with natural advantages and talent, the opportunity to develop their gifts. For there is nobody else to protect or assist the weak.' In this society advantages are seldom natural, but a product of birth and social position and we haven't noticed the so-called strong assisting the poor or the unemployed, except assisting them out of a job! Then about them for sponging off the state. When Thatcher and the Tories talk of choice in education or health, it is the choice that is the prerogative of the privileged few, who can afford private schools or pay beds. The Tories believe in the law of the jungle, those that survive are rewarded for their efforts. But the struggle for survival is not an equal one, most peoples' efforts get little reward. If the Tories ever get back to power, their aim is simple - to make certain that the game is rigged to ensure the survival of those who are already privileged. It's up to us to make sure those bastards never get back to government again.

The recent Conservative Party conference was notable for the many new expressions and policy concepts used. We were a bit puzzled so we asked Mrs Thatcher if she would interpret some of them for our readers. Below we print some of her replies.

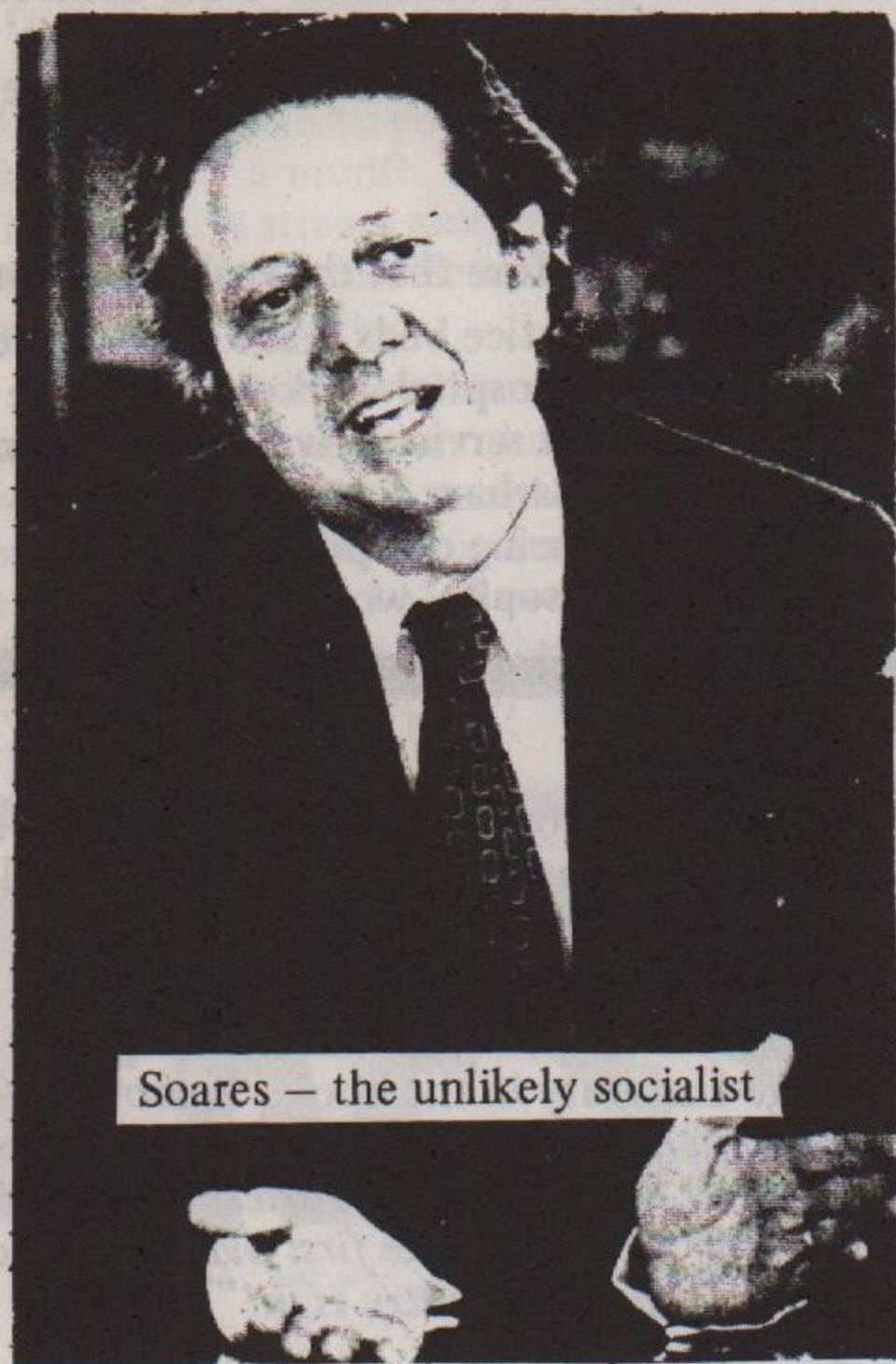
***'The right to be unequal.' (Thatcher)

We've got plenty of money and property and you're not having any.

***'Britain's ancient heritage' (Thatcher)

Sir Alec Douglas-Home.

WHO IS THIS MAN?



Soares - the unlikely socialist

of factories, housing estates and army barracks, Soares wants the workers to give up all the gains they have made. In return they get a 'parliamentary' democracy where they are allowed to vote every few years.

It was the so-called democratic Socialist Socialist Party which launched violent criticisms of the Communist Party and other left wing groups that enabled the Fascist supporters of the previous regime to crawl out of the woodwork and attach the offices of the left and the unions in the North.

They told us that the Socialist Party stood for Free Speech.

No chance. The SP has its own party newspaper. But when another paper was taken over by its printworkers to publicise and discuss workers' struggles, they tried to crush it. They supported one capitalist, the Editor and an SP supporter against all the workers, many of whom belonged to the SP!

And the very first act of the new SP-dominated government was to censor all reporting on political discussions inside the Army. Right now they are sending troops to take over radio stations being run by workers. Their aim is to force them to broadcast only the policies and propaganda of the government.

They told us the Socialist Party represents the workers.

Again no, The SP got many working class votes in April, so did the Labour Party in this country! The key question is what they do. In practice they are opposed to all strikes and occupations. They are trying to destroy left-wing strength in the Army by disbanding militant units: units which are organising in a truly democratic way against the authoritarian practices of the right-wing officers.

With these things in mind, it is no wonder that visitors to Portugal report that it is the well-dressed middle-classes who make up the SP demonstration these days. No wonder also that the SP branches in Evora and other towns left in disgust and set up their own socialist party.

If Soares is a socialist, then spare us the fascists!

After days of attacking the British working class, the Labour Party turned to Portugal. And suddenly every right-wing hack was in favour of 'socialism,' and the struggle against Portuguese capitalism. Their hero was Mario Soares, leader of the Portuguese Socialist Party. They wheeled him in to a standing ovation and clenched fists. Here he was 'the man who stood up to Communist totalitarianism,' and who was to lead Portugal's working class to socialism.

No-one should be fooled, Soares is a sham. In giving him Labour Party support, it was typical Labour Party policies, backing up the bosses in any country.

They told us the Portuguese Socialist Party is a democratic party.

No, it's a bourgeois democratic party. In a country like Portugal where the workers have started their own direct democratic control

"CONFERENCE ENCOURAGES... TORIES TO WORK ACTIVELY IN THEIR UNION BRANCHES" 1975



SUBVERTISEMENTS

WOMENS STRUGGLE IN PORTUGAL

Just out. A short pamphlet on the role of women in the Portuguese revolution and all the problems they face in a fiercely catholic country. 4p from Merseyside Big Flame.

WOMENS STRUGGLE NOTES No 4.

Now available. Detailed description and analysis of women's struggle over the past few months. 10p

IRELAND: RISING IN THE NORTH

A new 32 page pamphlet from Big Flame. With many illustrations, describes the significance of the struggle in Ireland, and looks at the relationship between the national question and the class struggle. 20p

PORTUGAL: A BLAZE OF FREEDOM

Second edition, with new supplement. 30p

All the above from the local BF group or 632 Books, 632 Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham.

HOSPITALS our health at stake

Recent goings-on at Labour and Tory Party conferences show that the problems of the NHS are more complex than the Crisis and the cuts in public spending. Barbara Castle, under pressure from the working class, trying to get decent health care, has made it policy to get rid of private practice in the NHS. The Tories, spokesmen for the hospital consultants and defenders of free enterprise and the 'unequal' society moan about professional freedom, the loss of 'brilliant, young doctors, driven from the country by 'socialist policies', and the demon state control.

Tory and Labour are fighting over what kind of society they want; what kind of health service they want; over how much money and 'freedom' consultants can have. They are not fighting over our health.

The real problem for us is, against Tory and Labour, the fight for control. Against being made to pay for the crisis, against the cuts in public spending, for higher wages, for fewer hours at work, for more jobs.

For better health care for working class people.

CUTTING WAGES

One of the first things the Labour Government is doing in their efforts to cut spending on the NHS is to try to cut the wage bill by implementing a wage freeze and making fewer workers work harder.

The Government and the TUC have brought in the £6 pay freeze at a time when public sector workers pay claims were due to be made. The Government clearly hoped that by forcing its own workers to accept its policies, other workers would follow suit. Council manual workers were first and they accepted the £6.

Hospital workers are expected to follow this lead despite union conference resolutions to go for £40 minimum and a 35 hour week (the basic is now £30 for 40 hours). And despite the fact that the £6 is on top of the basic, it's not included in overtime and shift pay, on which the low paid hospital workers rely. In any case, that £6 would be about £2 after deductions, at least until Christmas 1976.

NUPE General Secretary, Alan Fisher, who, as they say, represents many hospital workers made noises at the TUC conference about 'low paid workers and a £40 minimum' and voted against the £6 limit. But when nearly everyone else voted for the pay freeze, he joined in the farce of accepting a wage freeze to keep Labour in power.

With this kind of lead it's unlikely that hospital workers at shop floor level will take on the Government and for the full £40.

FIGHTING THE CUTS

That's the bad news... On the better side are the day to day battles all over the country against the spending cuts— against speed ups and cuts in manning and womaning levels. Actions like not finishing jobs because there's too much work; refusing to cover other people's jobs; pressurising management to fill vacancies.

At one Wirral hospital, the storemen recently sat in for half a day because the manager was doing their work as well as his own, rather than taking another man on. The storemen were told by management that no job falling vacant would automatically be filled — £½ million had been trimmed off the area budget.

And as one domestic put it, "No, we don't do the work if another woman's off. I work in the offices, there are supposed to be four of us, but if one of us is off then we just empty the bins, dust around, wipe the sinks. We leave the floors".

At North Manchester General, management hired three students as extra porters during the summer. Now that they've gone, the porters are fighting to make those jobs permanent so that they go to the unemployed rather than the temporarily out of work. The management have called in time and motion men to study the porters' claim that they are overworked.

There is to be a picket protesting at cuts in the NHS outside Manchester Royal Infirmary on Wednesday 22 October from 5pm to 8pm, supported by hospital workers unions at several Manchester hospitals.

Workers at Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children in east London last week went on strike for three days against the proposed cuts of £70,000 at the hospital. They were particularly angry about a letter from management saying that savings must be made 'even if by doing so the level and quality of the service to patients is affected'.

USING THE UNION

A lot more could be done by the union organisation in every hospital. It's obvious to every hospital worker how people aren't being replaced when they leave, so that jobs are being lost for ever. So that the people who are left have to work harder. Summer reliefs always used to be brought in, but this year they were not taken on at many hospitals and nothing was done about it.

In many hospitals the union organisation has also encouraged the introduction of bonus schemes. The bonus is used by management to cut the number of jobs by making fewer workers work harder, and to set workers against each other for not 'pulling their weight'. The reward

them and even do essentials like turning bed ridden patients regularly to prevent bed sores. At night, unqualified staff are left with the responsibility of being in charge of wards. An auxiliary nurse, who is untrained, can at times be left alone on a three floor ward at Newsham Hospital in Liverpool. Nurses at Newsham and Walton have asked their union to do something about this situation and may take action in the future.

75% of beds are in pre-1918 hospitals

There are fewer beds than in 1948.

Spending on new building has been cut by 10%.

Nearly all the food, furniture and machinery is made and distributed by private firms. The drugs are supplied by companies which make massive profits.

In 1970 they made £30 million profit from the sale of drugs to the NHS.



for this is a few extra quid which is needed, but which should be included in the basic.

The union should be pushed by the members to see that every job is replaced, that work isn't piled on, that management doesn't get away with making cuts that make our work harder and care of the patients worse. For this, it's important that there are regular union meetings and held in work time. When they are in the evening, it's almost impossible for women, who are in a majority of hospital workers, to get to them.

PATIENTS ON A LOSER

Ever been patched up at Walton Casualty. If you haven't yet, you can expect a wait of four, five, six, even eight hours, unless you're bleeding heavily.

Ever tried to get your varicose veins or hernia done? That'll be about a year in most places— by which time it'll be worse.

There are at present half a million people waiting for hospital treatment, 25,000 of them on Merseyside.

Standards of health are falling because smaller staffs are under more pressure. There's less time to talk to patients, to feed them, to attend to

At the centre of the row going on between Barbara Castle and the consultants, backed up by the Tories, is the issue of private practice within the NHS. Pressure from militant hospital workers — who opposed the privilege of queue jumping and special service that is private practice, —forced her to pledge Labour to phase private practice out of the NHS by 1976.

The consultants are using the patients to bargain for the kind of health service they want. They dread the loss of money from the abolition of NHS private practice. Even more important to them is the threatened 'loss of professional freedom' and the imposition of 'state control', as they put it. So, they are continuing their work to rule against Castle's plans for a more equal health service.

It's been shown before that the real credit for getting private practice beds made over to the NHS lies with the hospital workers who have refused to feed and service private patients and consultants. So, Barbara Castle will only implement the phasing out policy if she is forced to by the hospital workers.

REVIEW DAYS OF HOPE



DAYS OF HOPE

Many people recently saw the brilliant four-part tv play, Days of Hope. The author of the play, which is also a book by the same name, is an ex-miner and building worker, Jim Allen, who lives near Manchester. He is a revolutionary with a long list of plays about working class struggle behind him— The Lump, Rank and File and The Big Flame, about an occupation of the Liverpool docks which inspired us to use the name for ourselves.

This is our view of Allen's book.

I watched the last part of Days of Hope in a pub. When the set was switched off, there was a silence among the people who had been watching until an old man said, "It was exactly like that, you know". It turned out that he was

81 and had been on the Kettering Council of Action during the General Strike. For him, it was plain, those days had been days of hope.

The period covered by Days of Hope, 1919 — 1926, was a turning point in the class struggle in this country. It was a period in which the working class was sold out by the leadership of the organisations it had built, the Labour Party, the TUC and even the young Communist Party. But the working class demonstrated the amazing degree of organisation and solidarity of which it is capable.

During the miners strike in 1921, the mining communities faced starvation. Food convoys were sent from the working class areas of Liverpool and Manchester. During the General Strike in 1926, the working class organised itself within a matter of hours. 'People were moving so fast you had to run to keep up with them', says Sarah, a character in the play. 'They did everything that was expected. Set up

Councils of Action, produced newspapers, organised themselves, and all this they did in nine days!

Yet there was nothing accidental about this betrayal of the working class by its leaders, as Jim Allen makes clear. This betrayal is always on the cards when these leaders basically believe in the present system and will, in the end, do a deal with the ruling class rather than see the working class win. It's like those socialists who believe that the revolution will be made through parliament, with the ruling class peacefully returning all the wealth it has stolen from the workers.

THE MEANING OF DAYS OF HOPE TODAY

Jim Allen is a revolutionary. He knows that many of the lessons the revolutionary movement has to learn come from the period 1919-26. For example, that working class people have no country —

"When I went up before that Appeal Tribunal, said Philip, "to try and register as a conscientious objector, they turned me down. Said it was wrong not to want to fight for my country... And I said that as a socialist I didn't think that the working class belonged to any one country." (p27)

That the Tories and capitalists who make nothing nevertheless control everything—

"One thing the Tories have in abundance, because they've been at it longer, are highly trained administrators."

"Trained?" Sarah interjected.

"Experienced."

"At fleeing the workers, yes!" exclaimed Sarah. "But how much experience have they in running the pits, the docks and the factories?" (p169)

And, that real power in a society does not lie in parliament, rather with the people controlling industry, the banks, the press, the Church, the educational system AND the army.

"The way I see it," says the Labour politician George Lansbury in the book, "Labour is in Government, but not in power, and this suits both the Liberals and the Tories, who I believe called the election in the first place because of the mess that the country is in!" (p176)

There are many differences between the years 1919-26 and today. But most things are still the same.

We still live in a system that provides misery and unemployment for millions. Our children still attend schools that teach them what the bosses want. We still work in inhuman and dangerous conditions. We still have an army of occupation in Ireland.

We still have a Labour Government that deliberately makes the working class pay for the system's crisis rather than destroy the system itself.

But in all this, there are days of hope. There

are the Vietnamese people defeating the US invasion army; the working class building socialism in Portugal. And in this country there are workers and tenants and students fighting back. The revolutionary struggle in

this country will be a long and hard one. It will involve smashing the cultural control the ruling class exercises over us through its press, its telly, its schools, its priests. In this struggle, books like Days of Hope are weapons to help us win.

TOXTETH

Squatters Win out

"It hasn't been easy. One minute its up, the next its down. Its not easy to squat, you have to have guts. But I'm glad I did, and I'll never go back to the other place."

Well she didn't need to. Mrs Levene has been squatting for 13 weeks in a L'pool 8 maisonette. And she will end up with victory this week (unless the Corpy do a last minute double cross.) The eviction order from the Corpy has been squashed and she has been promised alternative accomodation in the area she wants.

For 2 years now Mr and Mrs Levene have been fighting to be rehoused out of an area where they were being intimidated by a gang. They've sought the help of councillors, been to the Housing, written all over--all without results.

"The councillors are all onto a fiddle anyway. They get all the best houses in the best areas for their own relations and friends."

Finally the last straw came when Mrs Levene stepped in to prevent a girl being raped by a gang. The intimidation got worse than ever as a result. But all the housing could say was "If you'd turned a blind eye to that girl getting attacked, you'd be alright"!! The Levenes waited 11 days. Nothing happened. No word from the Housing, and Mrs L's nerves had gone. It was then she decided to squat in the first empty house she saw out of the area.

HOUSING NOTICES.

Suddenly the Housing started to notice. They asked them to go back to the old house and try it for a month. Then they offered them a house a few streets away from the old one. All no use. They were determined to stick out for what they wanted

Why couldn't they have one of the many empty places in the area they'd squatted? Why did so many empty flats get allocated mysteriously to councillors cronies over the next few weeks? Mr s and Mr Levene couldn't be blamed for thinking that the Corpy was trying to make an example of them--"Prove that squatting never pays."

The Corpy certainly was worried. They were afraid that other people, either homeless or wishing to be rehoused, would take matters into their own hands and squat like the Levenes. And who can blame anyone? When so many houses get left empty for months until they're vandalised and not fit to live in.

TAKEN TO COURT.

On 1st August Mrs. Levene was taken to court and ordered to quit the premises by 23 September. So on August 8th she demonstrated outside the Municipal Annexe, and protested and petitioned outside the local housing office

It was there that she met up with the local members of the Liverpool Tenants Co-ordinating Committee who were also picketing the rent office about the rent increases. They were pledged to fight evictions and when they heard about the Levenes case they pledged their support for the 23rd, and began to organise with her for the eviction. By the week before the 23rd, 2,000 signatures had been collected protesting against the eviction, and a demonstration planned in protest.

The Corpy were getting the wind up. The last thing they wanted was too much fuss or publicity. And the Co-ordinating Committee was making sure that that was just what they did get.

Finally Mr and Mrs Levene went to see the Lord Mayor on Sept 19th. They stated their case, handed in the petition, and off went the mayor to stop the Housing meeting on that day to ask for a reprieve and a reconsideration of their case. They got it!! And on Oct 10, Mrs Levene was promised another house in the area she'd wanted. That says less about the Lord Mayor, than about the threat of united tenants action. But it was a great victory all the same.

And with that threat of united action, its not likely that the council will dare to go back on their word.. The Levenes now have moved out of the squatted house but are promised that new accomodation by October 16th.



ROAD BLOCK

Womens victory over Corpy

Great cheers went up as the no 1 bus came down Grafton St for the first time in four weeks. That was Tuesday, September 1.

Ever since the bus was re-routed during road works, tenants had been fighting for some form of transport to take old age pensioners up the hill to the nearest shops. Many of them just couldn't make the hill and had to stay in for days on end, relying on friends and relatives to get their shopping in for them.

After a few weeks of writing to the Corpy, to the MPTE (buses), and to the police - and still getting nowhere - the tenants, mainly women and pensioners, decided the only way to get things done was to organise to stop any other traffic getting through the road. They were out every afternoon for two weeks, with placards saying NO BUS, NO TRAFFIC and WE WANT A BUS. Large oil drums were placed across the road to stop the cars. Most drivers did stop, and make the detour, including workers from Dysons, a local factory. Except for one nasty incident. A stroppy driver went on and knocked down an old woman. She was badly shaken and bruised.

"What's so stupid is that they're letting all the other traffic through but they've stopped the buses. It'd make sense if they stopped everything because of the gas works, but why only the buses? The Corpy says it's the police, the police say it's the bus company, and the gas board says it's nothing to do with them. Whoever it is, the old people and us have to suffer and we're not going to take that lying down" - the comment of one woman on the picket

A pensioner chipped in, *"You know, early one morning I counted 443 lorries and cars coming down the street. They see it as a main road to the docks and the centre. It's that busy, yet they won't give us a pedestrian crossing for the kids. They have to cross it every day to go to school."*

Another woman added

"There used to be a corner shop down here but that went bankrupt so ever since then we've had to climb all the way up the hill to get to the shops. That's why it's so important for us to get the bus put back on. We've tried writing letters and all that but everyone was so busy blaming the other side and not giving us our bus back that we decided that the only thing to do was block the road and cause a bit of chaos. We'll be doing it til we win."

While we were talking, other women were arguing with officials from the MPTE and the gas board, who finally agreed to restore the buses...but only coming down the hill. A mini-bus would be put on until Friday to take the pensioners up the hill, until a normal bus service was resumed.

A victory for the women who's organised the road block, but only a beginning. They were not going to be satisfied until they had them running both ways -

"We're quite well organised down here, over the rents, and we've got a good tenants association, so we all know what's going on. Now we're seen what we can do by sticking together and doing something for ourselves over the buses."

And we'll do it again if we don't get what we want off the Corpy."

PRESS & POLICE INPUT UP JOB

THE RECENT ATTACK ON THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The Liverpool Weekly News is a great newspaper if you like extreme right-wing editorials, articles that attack anything the slightest bit progressive, and a letters page that has just about become the regular column for the fascist National Front.

But you don't have to read squalid local rags like the Weekly News for real old-fashioned red baiting. Recently that 'respectable' national paper, the Observer ran a so-called expose on the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Such articles are nothing new. Most left-wing organisations are regularly 'exposed' by Fleet St. hacks in an effort to discredit socialist politics. Big Flame, for instance, has already been 'exposed' in the News of the World and the Sunday Telegraph. We usually find this flattering because they always hint that the left wing in this country is responsible for everything from the present Irish uprising to fiddling the leccy meter. Upto now this is unfortunately not true (except the leccy meter bit.)

The recent Sunday Times attack on the WRP followed an even more hysterical attack against them by that other pillar of the newspaper world, The Observer. This first attack was a fairly typical example. We were informed that a prominent member of the WRP was 'Irish' (sinister eh?) and that another member, actress Vanessa Redgrave is 'attractive' (hardly the most revealing political comment.)

Most of the article was based on revelations of a former member, actress Irene Gorst. She it seems decided to leave the party at a political school held in a Derbyshire farmhouse. Presumably she wanted to leave when she discovered the commitment and hard work required of a member. But as she rose to go, someone "pushed her back into her chair". Makes your blood run cold, doesn't it?

Obviously there are no depths to which the WRP will not sink. I half expected to read that they had crept up behind her and shouted "Boo".

But the "revelations" led to something more dangerous than just an article on the WRP's internal disputes. Because soon after, the farmhouse was raided by a large force of police, looking for 'arms and explosives'.

Needless to say all they claim to have found were a few .22 bullets under the stairs. This is not surprising, even if the police did not plant the bullets themselves. In a farmhouse .22 bullets are not the most unlikely items to be found. And obviously the raid was simply designed to harrass and intimidate people who are opposed to the present system.

Police raids on political dissidents are a common practice in our so-called 'free country'. But this case has even more sinister overtones because the police were trying to pin charges of possessing explosives on their victims.

Even worse, the police raid was obviously co-ordinated with the Observer revelations,

and timed neatly to come the Sunday before the Labour party conference. The co-operation between press and police had previously been perfected on Irish people. There the press and TV have launched such a campaign of half-truths and lies about the situation, that the state can literally get away with murder. And when it comes to the suppression of the Irish struggle there is hardly a word of protest from people here, because we have been bombarded with press stories, 'proving' how dangerous and 'barbaric' the Irish really are. The same technique is now being applied against political opposition in Britain.

Many leading members of the working-class movement have signed a petition denouncing the raid against the WRP. From Jack Jones to Arthur Scargill. The issue is very important. As the crisis gets worse, the state will try more and more to take away democratic rights from militants and oppositionists. **DEFEND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS! DEFEND THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY!**

COURTAULDS : strike to cut dole queues

Last week a very important strike at the Furzebrook Knitting Company, Courtaulds, Aintree ended in defeat. Below we print the comments and contributions of the workers involved at the height of the strike.

"It all began in March 1975 over a bonus scheme the workers were dissatisfied with. They negotiated with the company but at no time took any disruptive action in the plant. Last month, two factors finally forced the workers to act. For a start, no progress was being reached in the negotiations and - worse - the fact that the bonus scheme pays only at a fixed rate meant that, since March, the workers had not been paid for what they actually produced. An overtime ban was imposed and workers told the bosses that they would only produce at the level that pays the fixed rate of bonus.

A RESPONSIBLE MOTION FROM THE WORKERS

After a week of the overtime ban the bosses threatened to shut down the Furzebrook factory because of so-called "bottlenecks." The workers said: "If more people are required then employ some more!"

Although the workers showed common-sense the management didn't, they refused all ideas relating to employment of other workers.

In the second week, the bosses speeded the machines up. Two workers, told to speed up their machines, refused and were consequently sent home. The FK

workers were left no choice. Who could possibly work under those conditions! They all walked out.

THE BOSSES AND NON-UNION SCABS WORK ON

While negotiations were in progress, an outside non-union firm helped by two of the bosses, scabbed on the strikers and loaded their wagon. So a picket was put on the main gate. The bosses stated that if the men lifted the overtime ban, they would not run the machines at all until the agreement was sorted out.

BOSSES DECEIT SHOWS THROUGH

The picket stayed on the gate, and the striking workers decided as a gesture of goodwill to allow two wagons containing badly needed Nitrogen, to enter the factory so the rest of the site could carry on working. The bosses said "We will not press for the overtime ban to be lifted, forget about that. Lets get the men back to work."

The workers honoured their side, and let the two wagons in, but on the morning of the mass meeting, the bosses changed their minds, and insisted that the overtime ban must be lifted before they could return to work.

Their irresponsible actions resulted in the workers intensifying the picket and refusal to lift the overtime ban. The bosses talked with the Unions National Officer but although they agreed to look at two alternatives that might solve the bonus issue, they said the overtime ban must be lifted.

WORKERS COMMON SENSE

When one considers the crisis capitalism finds itself in and the blame is always put on the workers, by throwing millions of our comrades onto the dole, then surely it

must be common sense to reduce overtime working so as to employ more workers.

All the workers ask for is a 40 hour week and that the problems that exist within FK be solved. IS THAT UNREASONABLE?"

The Furzebrook workers went back to work shortly after we put this statement together. They went back on unacceptable terms, after the union scare-mongers had had their say at a mass meeting. It seems that the Courtaulds convenor in particular put great emphasis on the threats coming from management.

The threats included:-

1. Threat of lay off for the rest of the workforce.
2. Threat of closure of plants
3. Short time working for the men on strike when they returned.
4. The threat that Courtaulds management would not negotiate unless production was resumed.

This last point is the worst of all. It's only the workers **strength and determination** in stopping production which forces the bosses to negotiate on the **workers terms**. Returning to work means that the boss can relax and can impose his own Terms as he faces no threat from the workers.

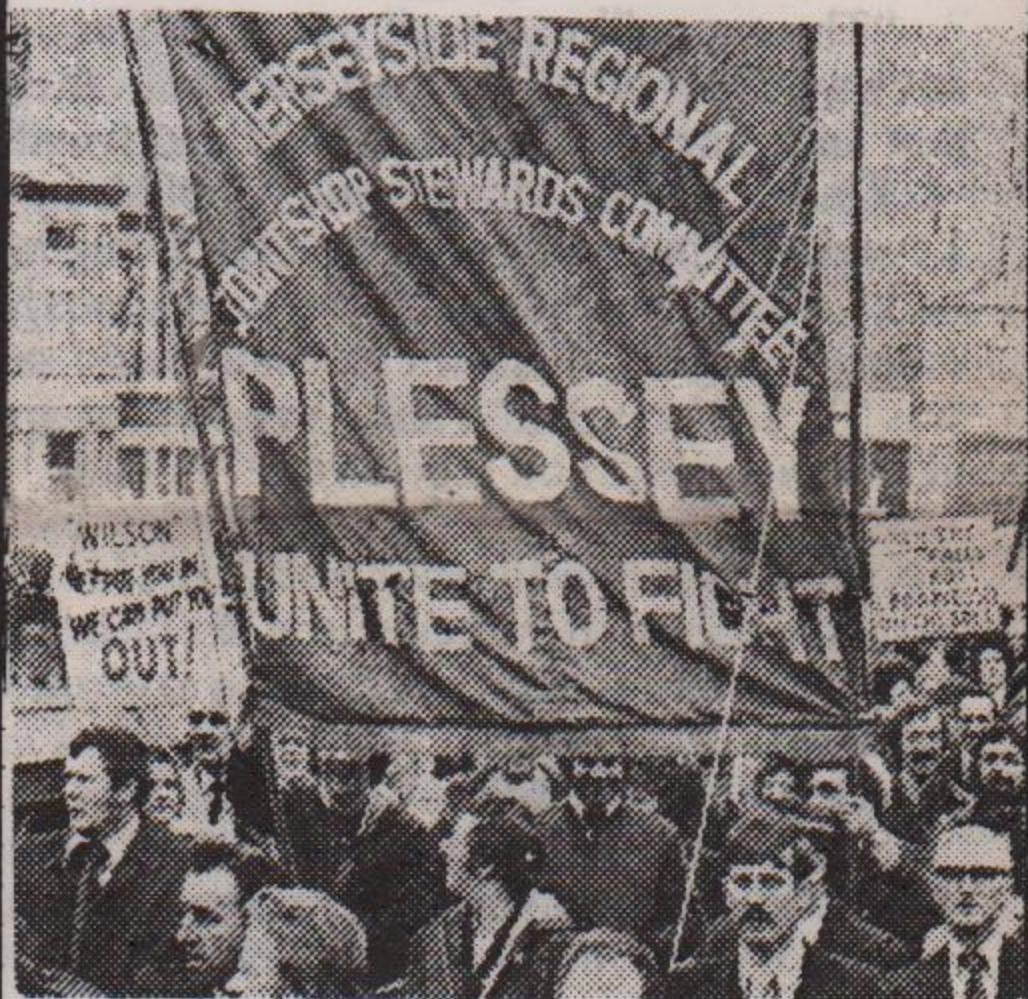
Nevertheless the FK workers, in fighting against inhuman speed-ups and overtime and demanding that workers on the dole be employed in order to raise production have shown the way forward to the unity of all workers, employed and unemployed.

ORGANISE TO WIN!

So, faced with 950 redundancies in Edge Lane and 80 in Kirkby, and possibly with short-time already on us, what kind of fight will there be. Plessey have had a lot of practice at splitting up workers, site against site, full time against part time, staff against hourly paid, and they'll try the same now: In the Lane 750 of the redundancies are staff, or hourly paid indirects (inspection, feeders, functioners) and 200 are hourly paid direct production workers. In Kirkby its half and half. For the first time on Merseyside all the unions involved are working together, and Plessey may try to split this fragile unity by sending out one lot of redundancy notices first. This has succeeded in Wigan and Chorley where 70 part-time women workers were sacked with no resistance from the union who were "saving themselves for the real fight" Presumably the women were working there for fun!

All staff members have received letters from the Union instructing them to ignore any attempts at redundancies. A policy of non-cooperation is a good start but has to be backed up by ACTION.

Everybody has to be clear what action to take **immediately** management tries any redundancies. Once a job is lost it's gone forever. It can't be negotiated back a few weeks later. Offensive strike action will be the only way. After all, with jobs at stake we've got nothing to lose and everything to gain.



Short time is starting this Friday in Edge Lane and Speke. We should demand full pay. Nobody minds working less hours if we get paid, and it can't be used to weaken or blackmail us. The working class policy for more jobs and reduced workloads is 35 hours work - no loss of pay.

If Plessey gets away with the redundancies, it will encourage every boss in Liverpool and demoralise every working class person. The Speke factory has contacted the Speke Area Committee which has successfully stopped two closures, at Thompson and Capper, and George Henry Lee. There's a recently formed Area Committee in Kirkby In Edge Lane, Plessey workers would feel stronger if they involved the workers in all the surrounding factories.

If you want to enquire about joining Big Flame, or find out more about our activities write to one of the groups below

Birmingham 632 Bristol Road
Selly Oak
021-472 7019

London 7 Norland Gardens
London W11
01-603 3275

Manchester 317 Bradford Road
Manchester 10
061-205 5895

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"IT'S THE JOB THAT COUNTS" NOT THE MONEY"

Workers at the Halewood car plant will be pleased to know that FORDS have just appointed their youngest ever director - Neill O'Sullivan. It was such a big deal, it seems, that the national press aired the story.

Commenting on his appointment O'Sullivan said: "I think what brought it home to me was when I arrived for work that day. I stopped at the security gate as usual and the gateman said 'Good Morning, sir.' Until then it had always been 'Good morning Mr O'Sullivan.'"

"Instead of parking his £4,000 company car in the open, he drove it into the subterranean car park reserved for the directors into the executive lift. Outside the lift the carpet started immediately, in his previous job on the fourth floor it started only at the office door. At lunchtime he joined his fellow directors in their own dining room, with its own kitchen and rather better food than lower down."

Meanwhile, back in Halewood, umpteen hours before, Harry Muggins has arrived in a gleaming £10,000 bus (belonging to the MPTE) the security man is too busy chasing Big Flame paper sellers to notice him amongst the hordes at Gate 1. He's on station a few minutes late and gets a mouthful from the foreman. The rest of the day is spent putting sun visors on - Escorts come down the line at 40 an hour. He gets a break mid-morning and at dinner time joins the rest of his mates in the canteen eating mushy peas and hard, white, uncooked chips from the largest chip pan in the world (despite the heroic efforts of canteen workers).

Director Neill O'Sullivan "earns about £13,000 plus bonuses" (which can double

his income), but claims that "he has passed the stage at which money is the prime motivation first you work to feed yourself, then to get a roof over your head, then to

provide a few luxuries. After that there's not much point in working just for the cash.... It's the job that motivates me now, not the money."

Harry Muggins is lucky to take home £36. He works only for the money. The job's a pain in the neck (literally). If he ever met Henry Ford face to face he'd probably chop his legs off. Harry needs the money so that he and his family can live - the more money the better.

Bosses like O'Sullivan are always telling Harry and his mates to be more efficient, produce more cars - in the companies interest, which is the national interest - which is apparently in the interest of job security. Not many people are impressed with this argument, what with wages pegged, prices rising, and nearly 1½ million on the dole. Not many people, except maybe Neill O'Sullivan who probably agrees totally with it.