

## ● Anthony Begley -killed by the cuts

Recently 13 year old Anthony Begley died whilst waiting 13 months for a heart operation in a Manchester children's hospital. When we rang up the Regional Health Authority, their honest comment was that there was nothing unusual about waiting this long and longer. They said that they expected other patients to die whilst on waiting lists and that this was a direct result of cut backs in government spending on health.

# NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE -SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT

30 years after its creation the National Health Service is on its last legs. The vision of a free, preventative health system is turning into a nightmare of overcrowded wards, hospital closures and long waiting lists for operations — so long that people die whilst on them.

## THE PROBLEMS OF THE NHS

■ Too little government money spent on the NHS — the percentage spent on health by British governments is much lower than in countries like West Germany and France. Any recent cut-backs in a period of inflation have had serious consequences for the standards of health care. The government tells us about the £50 million for new kidney machines — it forgets to tell us that the NHS has neither the money to run the machines nor enough workers to look after the patients.

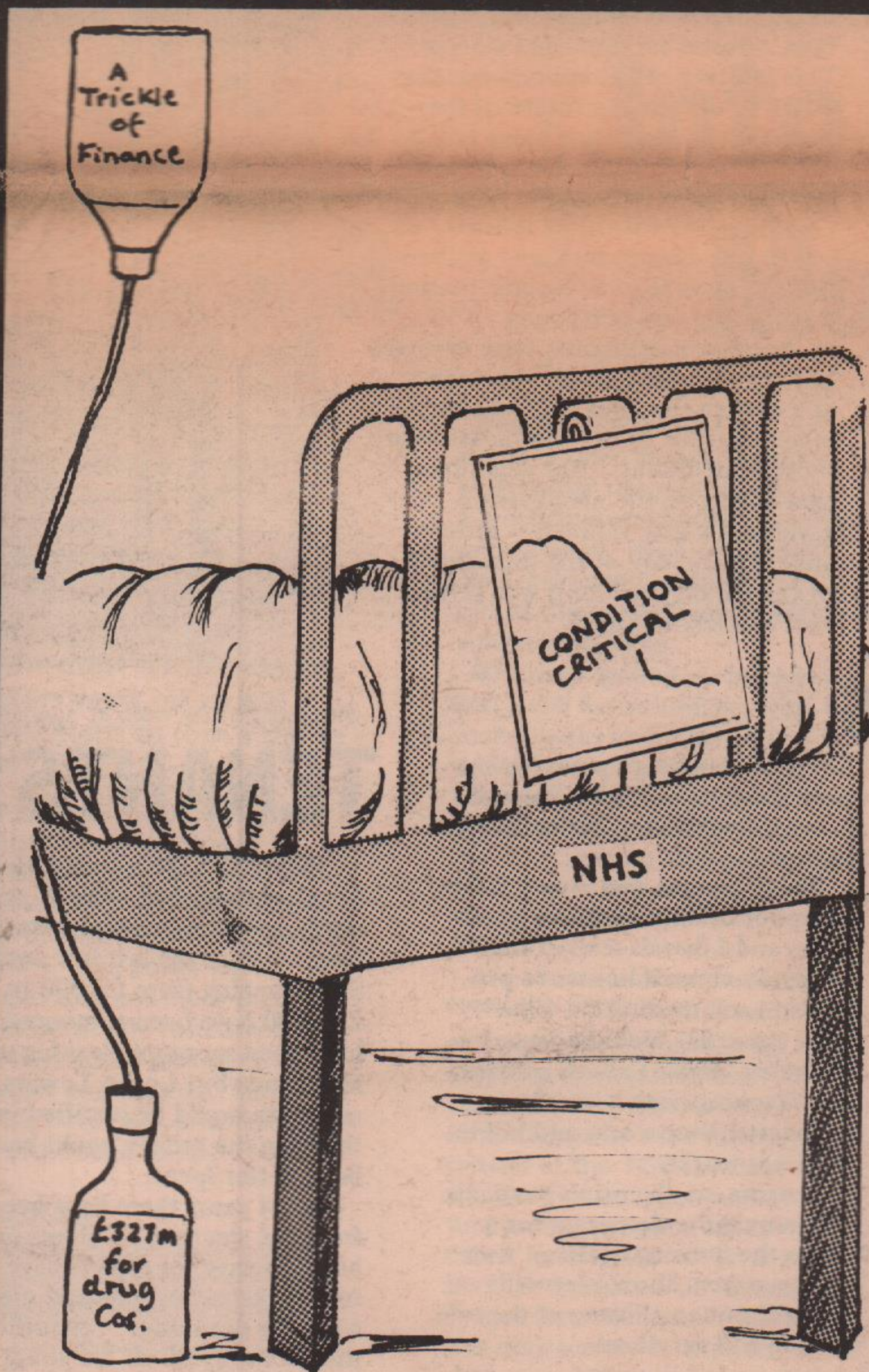
■ — High profits by drug industries. In the last 25 years, the yearly drug bill of this country has risen from £39 million to £327 million! Drugs are already accounting for 43% of all money spent by the NHS and the figure is rising. Each prescription costs the NHS over £1 — as doctors insist on prescribing brand-name products.

■ — The elimination of vital preventative services on the NHS. Up and down the country, mobile X-Ray units have been grounded, smear tests for cervical cancer are much more difficult to obtain, and visits to the housebound by dentists

have been drastically reduced. Now that dentists are paid by the NHS on a fee per item basis, more and more jobs are done fast and badly — last year 134,830 crowns were re-cemented or re-fixed because they had fallen out! Many services like making dentures are being 'selectively withdrawn' by dentists as part of NHS treatment — though they will do them privately for you.

■ — Private medicine milking the NHS. In 1975, the Labour Government decided to phase out pay beds from the NHS. This is going ahead slowly. But its effect is to encourage the growth of the private sector. Since consultants can work part-time for the NHS they are setting up clinics to do their private work and encouraging their NHS patients to go private to jump the queue. More and more people are subscribing to private schemes like BUPA and PPP as waiting lists grow: subscription is becoming a perk of many white collar jobs. Of the 10,600 NHS consultants, half do private work.

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## London March to Support Irish P.O.W.'s

Yes, Britain does have prisoners of war. There are over 300 men in Long Kesh and Crumlin Road and 24 women in Armagh who are prisoners in a war of national liberation and whose political status has been removed.

But, like the Soviet Government, our government denies that there are any political prisoners. It says that they are criminals, and insists on treating them as such.



The Prisoners Aid Committee has called a national demonstration for Sunday July 9th, starting from Speakers Corner, Marble Arch, Arch, London at 2.00 p.m. Its slogans are: "POW status for all Irish Political Prisoners" and "Amnesty for all Irish POWs within the context of British Withdrawal from Ireland."

## HAMMER ATTACK ON TRADE UNION LEADER

Mystery still surrounds the brutal attack on the President of the Liverpool Trades Council, Barry Williams, but fascist involvement is a strong possibility.

Williams, a prominent member of the Communist Party and full-time official of the Boilermakers Union, was attacked by a lone assailant with a hammer on Wednesday 14th June at his union offices in New Ferry, Birkenhead.

Blows were rained all over his body leaving him with serious injuries, but Barry Williams, now out of hospital, is recovering.

The well planned nature of the

attack and the fact that Williams did not recognise the attacker rules out the possibility of it having been someone with a personal grudge.

Police enquiries so far have revealed nothing, but one possibility is that the attack is linked to the Boilermakers Union's activities in the area. Barry Williams has played a prominent and militant role at Cammell Lairds, Western Ship Repairers (which is shortly to close making some 600 redundant), and over the 'Marie Elizabeth', a ship which was due for conversion in Liverpool into a floating factory.

More likely, though, is that it

was the work of fascists. Slogans have been seen in Birkenhead city centre saying 'Get the Bolsheviks — Barry Williams and Colin Barnett' (Colin Barnett is Secretary of the North West TUC), and signed with British Movement symbols, swastikas and the legend "We are Back."

If fascist were responsible the attack marks a significant escalation in their use of violence against the trade union movement and will bring home to the left on Merseyside — which has remained comparatively free of fascist violence — the importance of organising the anti-fascist struggle.



# Tenants Fight Housing Run-down

## NOTTINGHAM:

**THE CONTROVERSIAL** sit-in staged by tenants in Basford Flats (Nottingham) to retain their independent tenants association and advice centre has reached a crucial stage recently.

Regular open meetings had been established to make key decisions - keeping the sitting-in rota going, planning a demonstration, keeping other tenants informed - and despite some confusion created by the usual difficulties of maintaining occupations, support was growing.

### BANGING AND HOLLERING

However, we needed to "bring the council to battle" since they would certainly have liked to leave us to rot; that is, get fed up and give up. To solve this problem groups of tenants, generally about a dozen at a time, began making "polite but firm" visits to the home of the Chairman of the Housing Department. He objected to our representations, turned his doorbell off, hid in the toilet and after the third visit called the police.

Since the doorbell was turned off the police had to resort to banging and hollering to attract his attention: much more intimidating than anything we'd ever done.

Still, it did the trick, Council representatives began to negotiate and after a few days offered terms allowing the Tenants Action Group use of the tenants hall for meetings and the return of the Action Centre. We voted to accept these terms and - foolishly as it turned out -

ended the occupation. The next day's news announced our victory - 12 o'clock, 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock - then, suddenly at 3, a change of line! The Deputy Housing Chairman denied our right to use the Action Centre but before the activists could re-occupy the Council had changed the locks. Tricked out of our victory.

### POLITICAL CHALLENGE

The TAG Sit-In had been a major focus throughout the city - a beacon for others to look to. The last few years tenants across the country have seen local councils carrying out the policies of central government to increase rents, reduce facilities and smash independent tenants organisation. TAG's resistance and temporary success had offered a political challenge to this policy. It has real politics in the sense of tenants showing their power against the power of the system (not phoney party politics).

**What matters now is what the activists will do next.** TAG will rise again! The next battle seems likely to be over '118', a community resource centre whose workers were sacked the same day (Wednesday June 21) as the TAG sit-in ended



BIG FLAME PHOTO

"The Piggeries", the three blocks in Everton where 16 families remain in appalling conditions.

## LIVERPOOL:

**ALL IS** not so quiet on the housing front in Liverpool. But the City Council's way of dealing with its problems is to go off for a long tea-break - and not come back!

Outside the Town Hall, picketing the councillors in the pouring rain, were tenants from Netherley, one of Liverpool's housing disaster areas. For weeks now tenants have been collecting signatures for their petition - to get the whole of Netherley pulled down! They say the place is so badly designed that the only thing to do is pull it down and start again.

Funnily enough, three men who were involved in building that other large-scale housing disaster, Tower Hill estate, Kirkby, have just been sentenced to prison terms. Their crime was not to make life unliveable for thousands of tenants, but to have engaged in minor acts of bribery and corruption. So it doesn't look as if the politicians, architects or builders responsible for Netherley will ever be held to account for their sins.

Also outside were representatives of the last tenants of the notorious 'Ugly Sisters', the blocks of flats which were all the news a couple

of years ago. Talks have gone on about the future of the blocks - one is now empty, but the remaining two have 16 unfortunate families in with no communal lighting, failing lifts, surrounded by empty flats.

A picket was also mounted outside the town hall about St Monica's Hostel. The hostel is still being occupied (see Big Flame 63) against the council making it into a homeless families unit, rather than a hostel for homeless women. This meeting of the council was supposed to discuss the future of the hostel, but before they came to that part of the agenda, the councillors needed a tea break.

When the councillors returned all but 19 had disappeared, and as there need to be at least 25 people present, the meeting was postponed.

Another meeting has been arranged to deal with the left-over business, at a cost to the rates and continuing inconvenience to the people affected by their decisions. But what does that matter to the members of Liverpool's City Council - after all it was the day of the semi-finals of the World Cup, and it was getting near to kick-off time!



Slogans on the wall at Logan Towers, Liverpool - legacy of the 1972 rent strike - now removed.

BIG FLAME PHOTO

## DIRECT WORKS:

**THE GOVERNMENT'S** abandonment of council house building has condemned thousands of Liverpool council tenants to squalid housing for life. The run-down of the direct works departments is leading to the deterioration of corporation flats and houses through lack of maintenance. "There's a backlog of 40,000 repairs in Liverpool", says a senior steward at the Shaw St. maintenance depot.

Now tenants, direct works department employees, NALGO members and researchers are coming together to mount a campaign to expand the department. A planned maintenance scheme, now being discussed, could wipe out

the repairs backlog - provided the council can be pushed to take on dozens of workers, off Merseyside's lengthening dole queues.

The prospects aren't very bright. Liverpool's ruling coalition of Tories and Liberals restrict their interest in council houses to proposals to sell them off. Like many councils - including nearby Knowsley, under Labour control - they favour private contractors for maintenance work, and kill off direct works.

Tenants, on the other hand, are becoming more desperate for a halt to the housing decline. And direct workers know very well that without an alliance of the two, nothing will get done.

## TENANTS DEMAND COMPENSATION

**TENANTS OF** a tower block in Liverpool watched amazed as corporation workers removed slogans from walls in the last few weeks. Sums ranging from £7,000 to £20,000 have been rumoured to have been spent on cleaning up walls in the area but Logan Towers, residents would be justified in thinking the money could have been better spent.

For 4 years there have been frequent electricity failures in the block, delays for repairs have mounted, cockroaches, rats and mice are a regular occurrence - conditions in the 21 storey block are going down hill fast.

### BANK HOLIDAY BLACK-OUT

Events came to a head over the Whit bank holiday when the electricity was off from Friday to Tues-

day. Explosions were heard in the electricity ducts, tenants were stuck in lifts. Some flats were left without water and an electrician broke his leg falling downstairs when the emergency lighting failed.

### TENANTS MASS MEETING

Tempers were rising after the bank holiday as hundreds of pounds worth of rotting food were thrown down the chute. A tenants mass meeting put a package of demands to the corporation representatives including the immediate carrying out of outstanding repairs, emergency power while the work on the electricity was repaired, immediate disinfection of the block. A further demand was for compensation for inconvenience and loss of food for the holiday and for a

rent free period until the repairs on the electricity were carried out.

### COMPENSATION

Realizing that in its present state the block was dangerous the Corporation was eager to get the repairs on the electricity done quickly. But they would not agree to the compensation demands which would have amounted to 10 weeks' free rent.

Tenants are now taking action to get the corporation's derisory offer of compensation raised to what would be a realistic amount for the inconvenience of living in the towers.

As the work on the electricity has not begun in the promised 7 days it looks as though some new slogans may soon be appearing on those nice clean walls!

## Community Action Public Meeting

During the last few years, and especially since the Cuts began to bite, alliances have developed across the traditional boundaries of the labour movement - particularly between trades unions and community groups often in the public sector - such as the links developing between building workers and tenants (Camden, Tower Hamlets), caretakers and tenants (ALHE/NUPE), hospital workers and local community organisations (Hounslow, EGA), or the current attempts of London Transport workers to include community and passenger organisations in their Campaign to Improve London Transport. We believe these links are of vital importance in strengthening the labour movement at the present time, and we are calling this meeting in order to begin building support for a delegate conference in the autumn. The meeting is open to representatives and individuals involved in cuts campaigns, tenants' associations, trades councils, women's groups, joint shop stewards committees and other trade union and community organisations.

7pm Thurs 29th June St Pancras Church House, Lancing st., London W.C.1. (1 min from Euston Station)

## FAIRWEATHER STRIKE VICTORY!

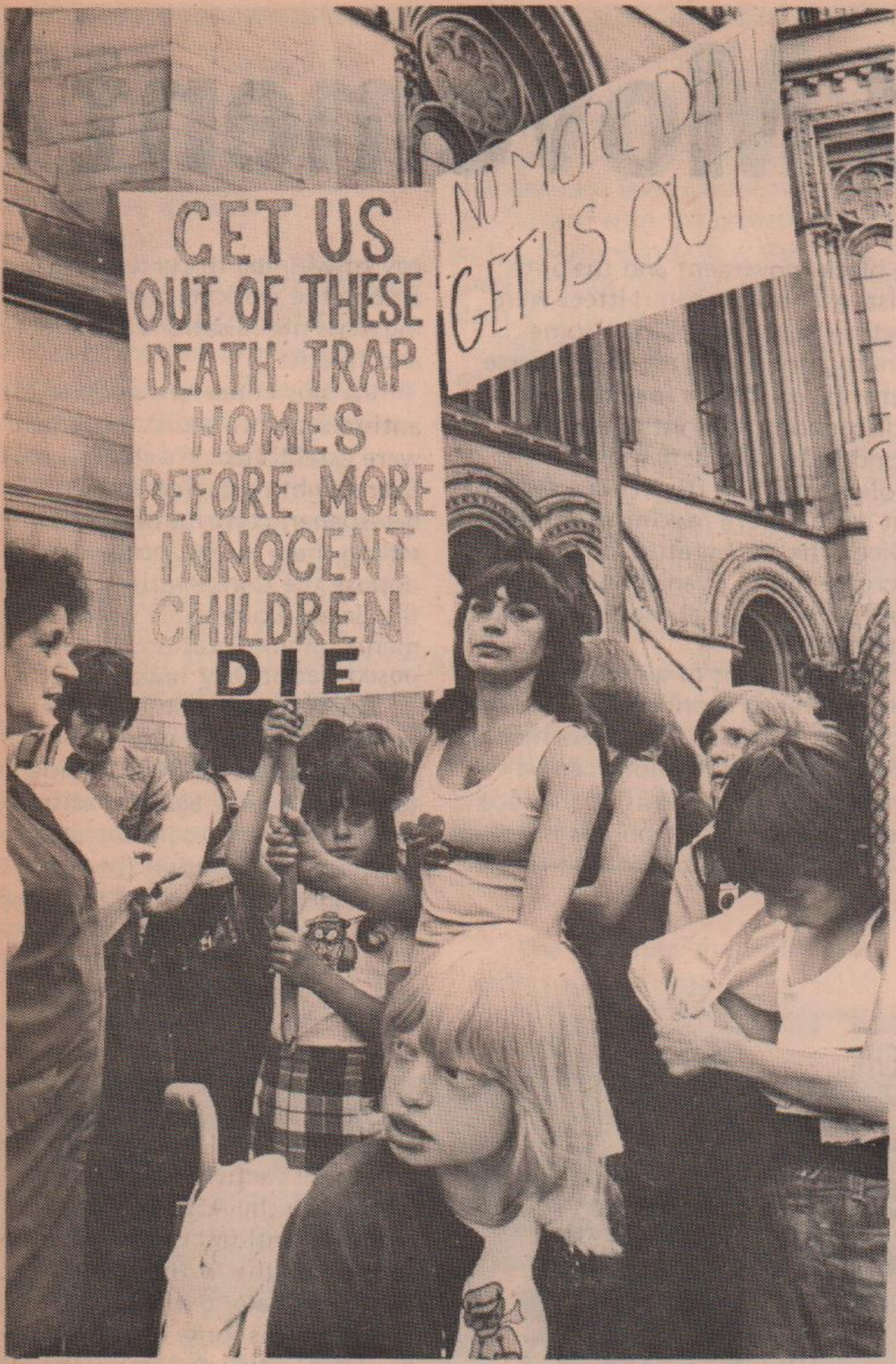
**AFTER EIGHT** weeks on the cobbles the strike over 16 redundancies on the Fairweather Building Site in Wandsworth, London, has ended in total victory. Management have caved in completely and reinstated the men, including stewards, who they were

sacking in favour of sub-contractors.

By the use of flying pickets, the strikers brought four London Fairweathers sites to a halt and gave a shot in the arm to building trade militants throughout the country by taking on an aggressive management and winning a battle over the direct employment of workers by

the main contractor. The strikers have gathered a lot of support from other sites, including the local direct labour department. This unity between private and public sector construction workers shows the way forward for workers to fight attempts to carve up even further the depressed Construction industry.





John Sturrock Report

Hulme tenants in Manchester demonstration against housing conditions.

# Moss Side Story

THE LABOUR government has decided to use the Moss Side by-election to 'test the water' for an autumn General Election. And in some respects they could not have selected an inner city area that is a better example of the mutilation carried out, up and down the country, by City Councils and town planners.

## HIGH RISE PRICES

For the 1960's Manchester Corporation mounted a massive slum-clearance operation in the adjacent working-class areas of Moss Side and Hulme (both in the constituency). The area was cleared after the defeat of determined and often violent working-class resistance. Most of the people who live there wanted their houses renovated - instead the Council gave them high-rise. With the flats came a District Shopping Centre with shops too expensive for local people to use and a sports centre which caters to well-off sports-people from outside the area who can pay the high charges for squash and badminton.

The flats, built by 1971, were a complete disaster. Over the years, tenants have reluctantly become experts in local insect life. As one woman put it

"... it has mice, we got rid of them, then it has bed bugs, we got rid of the bed bugs, then we had the maggots, and then we had silver snails, all around your bins and everything. We got rid of them. I was overrun with them, they were running across the ceiling, they were in bed with the kids and everything. We'd wake up and my children would be lying on dead cockroaches where they'd got on the bed and squashed them".

As for the District Centre, by now 1/3 of its shops are closed and a state of siege has developed between local youths (many of whom are black) and the security 'goons' who patrol the estate.

"The architect must have had some idea that he could build flats that look like prisons - he could engage people and they'd probably think that they were in prison".

A recent confidential survey carried out by the Corporation's Housing Department states that: "It would appear that 81% of tenants are 'not happy' living on the Moss Side District Centre estate". And of the "improvements tenants would like to see made", the report says: "Almost all suggested a solution: that the flats be blown up!" But this the council is not prepared to do. Its current plans include moving families with children off the estate and tarting the flats up to make them acceptable to middle-class couples and students. The process of removing the working class from the inner city would then be complete.

## PROTEST VOTE

What has happened to the residents of Hulme and Moss Side is in no way extraordinary. They are the victims of a Government Housing policy that gives no weight to the desires to those who cannot buy their own homes.

The fact that it was a labour controlled Corporation that is responsible for the Hulme and Moss Side high-rise disasters will mean a high Tory and Liberal Protest vote in the by-election. But this will not cure the housing problems of the people of Moss Side. For them more drastic surgery is needed - the removal of an economic system that puts profits before people.

(research for this article by Sean Damer)

# editorial

No industrial merger ever caused as much misery and unemployment as the marriage of GEC-AEI under Sir Arnold Weinstock. But it was hailed at the time - as these things always are - as the start of a strong, new British electrical engineering industry.

The truth is otherwise as the recently published Consultative Document on Monopolies and Merger Policy shows. After thirty years of takeovers and mergers, Britain's economy is now dominated, far more than other countries in Europe and America by giant firms. And what have we got from it all, apart from massive unemployment? Nothing, says this official report, for gigantic firms don't do any better than any others by any measure, not even profit. Worth bearing in mind the next time you're asked to sacrifice for the country's sake.

The recent sale of the century of paintings fetched £12 million. Amongst the many buyers were the pension funds of large British companies - amongst them the British Rail pension fund that snapped up a candlestick for £½ million million.

Of course, British Rail workers were not asked whether they wanted £½ million spent on a candle stick.

What this episode makes very clear is the need for workers to fight for control of their pensions fund - to be able to decide what they want to spend their money on.

The Labour Government has decided to go to the country on a 'you've never had it so good' ticket. They want to take the political issues out of the general election and make it an issue of personalities - Sunny Jim versus Snatcher Thatcher. The Moss Side by-election on July 13th is a trial run for this strategy.

As we go to press, Socialist Unity is deciding whether or not to stand in Moss Side. If it decides to stand, its campaign will be centred around the issues of housing, unemployment and racism - these issues are closely related to each other - they are the results of the disastrous government policies for the inner cities.

As factories move out of the inner cities to be replaced by high rise flats, hand outs (called 'urban aid') and job creation are no solution to the needs of the people of Moss Side. (See 'Moss Side Story' on this page).

Clause 42 of the West Yorkshire Bill sets a maximum fine of £200 for

failure to comply with the provision that anyone organising a demonstration or procession in the streets of that authority must give at least seven days notice of it, to the relevant officer of the local authority and to the senior officer of the police stating the route, date, time, nature of the procession and its purpose, and naming the responsible person.

The same clause is contained in equivalent local bills for Cheshire County Council (clause 30), Merseyside County Council (clause 43) and West Midlands County Council (clause 53).

These bills are the first of what will be a spate of local bills which will be processed through Parliament as a result of the terms of section 262 of the Local Government Act, 1972, which requires local authorities to review their by-laws and local regulations.

These four bills have already passed through the House of Lords, where it seems they were introduced, and where the clauses in question met with no question or opposition. The report of the Select Committee (April 24th) makes no mention of any discussion of this question.

There is a very serious danger that this section 262 will be taken up by all local authorities. It is essential that all progressive forces mobilise against it. If and when section 262 becomes law - we may not be allowed to demonstrate against it.

We apologise to our readers for some of the errors in this month's paper. We were let down by our IBM equipment - it's built-in obsolescence is beginning to wear through.



MARK RUSHER (IFL)

Getting bullish about Garners

THE STRIKE at the Garners Steak House in London is now five months old. Faced with wages as low as £28 for a compulsory 55 hour week and the likelihood of the sack for the most trivial reasons, workers went on strike for the right to join a union - the TGWU.

Picketing has concentrated on the 6 most profitable branches in the West End and is believed by the strike committee to have reduced business by 80%. The police have refused to allow more than 6 pickets at any restaurant and have asked picketers to show union cards. Ten people have been arrested on the picket line so far.

## BLACKING

Attempts are being made to introduce secondary blacking against Garners suppliers but given the existence of small wholesalers willing to make deliveries, it is unlikely that blacking can ever be totally effective. However, as Garners unlike Grunwicks is dependant on daily supplies and customers going into their restaurants, these weapons are much more likely to bring about a victory for the strikers.

On June 22 there was a labour movement delegate conference on Garners organised by the strike committee in association with the South East Region TUC, Region No 1 of the TGWU and the Greater London Trades Council. Habib Rachman made the following points on behalf of the strike committee:

# Catering Strike Into Fifth Month

● Each union branch or trades council should 'adopt' a particular restaurant for a lunchtime or evening session once a week. With 10 branches open and 5 people on a picket this would require 600 volunteers a week.

● Further secondary blacking and a call for volunteers with motor bikes to follow vans which break the picket.

● A voluntary levy on the membership to TGWU Region No 1.

● A day of action on a future date including a 'poster parade'.

In the discussion that followed the platform was used as a platform to make long speeches denouncing the Lib-Lab pact. Most of the other delegates were highly critical of the TGWU leadership for not doing enough to further the struggle. Many called for a levy on TGWU members. A delegate from Brent Trades Council argued that it was disgraceful for a union with two million members and 500,000 in No 1 Region to be only paying £6 a week strike pay.

## MASS PICKET

Another delegate from APEX called for a mass picket one Saturday claiming that putting the screws on business in the West End was the way to win the struggle. Others called for a one day strike by all the membership of TGWU Region No 1.

Through a barrage of heckling Les Shorter restated the position of the TGWU leadership. Mass picketing he believes "isn't the answer". As for a regional levy

"The rulebook doesn't allow for it".

## DAY OF ACTION

Habib Rachman defended Les Shorter saying that we shouldn't be attacking each other and that the TGWU had done much for the strikers. Another member of the strike committee Manuel disagreed. He believed that the full resources of the union needed to be used if those strikers becoming less active were to be won back. He proposed a day of action on July 22 including:

- A march from Trafalgar Square to Hyde Park.
- Followed by a mass picket on all Garners Steak Houses.
- A strike that day by all members of TGWU Region No 1 in the Hotel and Catering Trade.

He was not allowed to put this proposal as no motions were allowed to be introduced at the conference. The meeting then overwhelmingly endorsed the strike committee report.

Within the strike committee the majority support the TGWU leadership. Like the strikers at Grunwick they think that their best course is to work closely with it and try to assert pressure on the union leadership.

## YOU CAN HELP

If you can offer the strike committee any help, by adopting a restaurant for a session once a week or with financial support to supplement the meagre strike pay, contact them c/o TGWU, room 84, 12-13 Henrietta Street, London WC2. Tel 01-240-1056.



# Can We Build a United Movement?

LAST MONTH'S Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist Conference was an important event. Not only for the positive steps it took but also for the political differences it brought out between men and women anti-fascists. How fundamental these differences are is something that will be resolved in time. In the meantime as these conference reports

from Women Against Racism and Fascism (WARF) and Big Flame make clear it is essential anti-fascist men stop seeing the contributions coming from the women's and gay movements as diversions and realise that the anti-fascist struggle will only be successful if it's broad enough to fight all aspects of racism and fascism.

resolutions on local and national anti-racist work, the positive attitude to the Anti-Nazi League, the understanding of the importance of sexism by the majority of the conference, and the belated realisation that workshops are essential for the political and emotional sanity of anyone who goes to a conference. Last, but not least, a ten person Steering Committee was formed to set up a regionally elected National Committee.

the black movement and the anti-racist, anti-fascist committees were meeting to try and discuss some common policies. With such diverse elements, conflict is inevitable and, if discussion can continue, it is bound to be productive. For the whole of the first day it was clear that that people were making every effort to keep the temperature down and to create unity. Even though this broke down, several useful motions were passed.

egy of winning the widest support among the working class for building mass mobilisations against racists and fascists".

Various important policies for the anti-racist, anti-fascist movement were established. We shall support Searchlight magazine and CARF newspaper, contributing to them and selling them in our local work. We oppose the Conservative Party's and the Select Committee's recent statements on immigration, and the proposed nationality laws.

The National Committee is instructed to carry out and organise campaigns against these. Guidelines for local activity against racism have been spelled out, concentrating on racism at work and in the community, in particular the racist activity which arises from the Immigration laws. We recognise that anti-homosexual and anti-feminist activity is a key part of the fascists' ideology and we are committed to opposing sexism in all its forms. Finally "we welcome the growth of the ANL... pledge to support the ANL (along with other anti-fascist activities) and resolve to work with the ANL towards building a unified anti-fascist movement and to support the forthcoming ANL conference along these lines."

There was some debate about how the National Committee would be established. The Organising Committee's proposal was that ten should be elected from the conference, and at a later stage ten should be elected from regions and from other relevant bodies. Big Flame proposed that ten should be elected from the conference as a steering committee to organise regional elections for the National Committee. Our argument was that the movement has to be built from the base, using the strength of the local committees, grouped in manageably sized regions. Our proposal was carried. It has since been argued that this will result in the National Committee being too weak to carry out the necessary tasks. We maintain that real strength can only lie in a National Committee which accurately reflects the base committees. Time will tell. The task now is to ensure that the National Committee is established soon, and that the policies we have passed are put into action — in conjunction with the Anti-Nazi League.

Fred Read (BF Anti-Racist, anti-fascist Commission)

THE DOMINANT impression of the national Anti-Fascist, Anti-Racist Conference (3-4 June) was one of conflict. Conflict about how to run the conference, about the place of anti-sexism in the struggle against fascism and about racism and the relationship between black and white militants. To gloss over this conflict is to miss the importance of the politics that underlie these conflicts. But it is also important to remember the immediately useful things that the conference achieved — the

ationship between black and white militants. To gloss over this conflict is to miss the importance of the politics that underlie these conflicts. But it is also important to remember the immediately useful things that the conference achieved — the

## POSITIVE STEPS

One of the most positive things about the conference was the fact that, for probably the first time, representatives from the feminist movement,

## London : June 18th Counter Mobilisation Against Racist Attacks



## Nottingham

LAST MONTH, a demonstration over 1,000 strong picketed the NF's new offices in the city centre. The aim of the picket, called by the ANL, was to prevent Front members from getting to their office.

The only ones who managed to get in had got there very early. An encouraging aspect of the picket were the many young people on it and also the new faces to the anti-fascist struggle.

## Blackpool

THE NORTH-WEST Regional Council of the TUC is advising Blackpool Corporation that if they let the Corporation property to the National Front for a National Conference the Regional Council will advise all trade unions at national level to no longer consider Blackpool as a venue for National Conferences.

## 'At what cost?'

A SOLID united front at any cost. This seemed the rather panicky aim of the anti-racist anti-fascist conference held in London. A quick efficient response to the popular Anti-Nazi League without any of its unfortunate, simplistic, undemocratic lapses! Small wonder that such an unrealistic goal should result in chaos. It seems amazing to us that so few people should realise that a strong national body cannot be forged overnight from many disparate anti-racist, anti-fascist groups who have never met or talked to one another, merely by listening to a few star speakers and then rushing through a set of resolutions in a confusing, debating-

hall manner. Surely many of us at the start of the conference were confused as to whether we wanted such a national structure, what we wanted it to do and how we wanted it to be organised.

We women from anti-racist anti-fascist groups resent the fact that our sensible proposal to alter the structure of the conference to one which would start with a discussion of issues in small groups and then move towards voting — surely more logical than voting first and discussing afterwards — was seen as destructive and diversionary. We are not just specialists on sexism. We are groups of women experienced in fighting, racism and fascism in our local areas, and through our links with the women's movement, we are also experienced in organising successful conferences. However, it seems the left still do not take us seriously. We were forced more and more into a situation where we were constantly having to confront the sexism of the conference. This was not what we had come for. Hopefully, there are some people who have not merely written off the weekend as a total nightmare but remember the all too short hour of sanity on Sunday morning when we finally managed to hold discussion groups.

So what would we have liked to

say that weekend, had there been space to do so? We can see the desirability of a strong national structure in terms of hustling Parliament about Immigration Controls, Nationality Laws, Social Security and Child Benefit, Sus Laws etc, but creating such an efficient structure cannot be hurried. A national body is only the sum of its parts. Isn't C.A.R.F. making the mistake of trying to compete with the Anti-Nazi League? The strength of C.A.R.F. lies in its strong longstanding local community work. The ANL started as a national body and then set about creating local groups with an imposed, centralized policy. The whole credibility of C.A.R.F. depends upon its continuing to work from the roots upwards and refusing to simplify the issues merely in order to create an instantaneous, illusory solidarity.

Women in W.A.R.F. groups are sorting out this sort of national meeting identity amongst themselves. At our national meeting we talked about what we wanted from our own national structure. For us at the moment it seems to be a question of support and information so in the course of a day we managed to organise a newsletter to circulate information which will be written by each group in turn, and sort out the next meetings which will be

about the various issues which really need to be discussed in depth eg the question of violence. This is one of the reasons we organise separately. We find we can work more efficiently this way. However, we do feel we have much to contribute to the mixed struggle. There is the benefit of our experience in having successfully organised ourselves without taking over the elitist debating-hall structures of the ruling classes which most left wing groups do not seem to have ever questioned.

Some people may be interested in receiving further information about the way we work — street meetings, support networks, wall newspapers, discussion groups to increase our awareness of racism and fascism and, above all, slow consistent work in the community so that people feel trusting rather than threatened, involved rather than manipulated. We would certainly be interested in hearing from other groups who are working in these sorts of ways. We can be contacted through WIRES, 32 Parliament St., York.

This has been written by Susie (Leeds WARF) and Dena (York WARF) who were at the conference. It is not intended as an official WARF statement. (We don't go in for such things!)

## MOBILISE

WITH THE shooting of Karl Foster, treasurer of the Lewisham 21 Committee, in Lewisham, and the murder of an Asian Youth in Charlton, racist attacks are on the

increase in South London. An important mobilisation has been called by the South London Black People's Defence Committee Against Racist Attacks.

Assemble Loampit Vale Lewisham, Saturday 1st July 2pm



**CLOSURES** — the second in our series in which we examine the reasons why we have failed to stop the massive growth in redundancies.

*RECENTLY, THE blast-furnace was shut down at the British Steel Corporation works at Shelton in Stoke. The BSC has decided to end iron and steel making at Shelton resulting in the loss of 1,600 jobs.*

*The closure of Shelton has to be put in the context of world wide over-capacity for steel making. One result of this over-capacity is that BSC is losing £500 millions a year and management reckons that it can reduce the loss a bit by transferring production from Shelton to one of its maxi-steel works which are the centre of the BSC strategy for the 1980's. The truth of the matter is that Shelton only produces 1% of BSC's output and has been a consistently profitable plant.*

In fact closing Shelton makes no economic sense, but BSC has got government approval to close it because Stoke on Trent has a lower than-average level of unemployment (3.4%) and with the growth of orders in the pottery industry, there are local jobs for the workers made redundant at Shelton.

The closure of Shelton has been on the cards for the last five years. In 1973, an Action Committee was formed with representatives from the twelve unions on the site. Over the years, it fought off successive attempts by BSC management to close the plant. In 1975, following the Beswick report, BSC announced that Shelton had been reprieved and that a new arc furnace

would guarantee production there well into the 21st century! But the arc furnace never was installed — even though management constantly said it was coming. Last month closure was announced and the existing furnace was shut down.

The interview that follows is with two members of the Action Committee.

## SHELTON STEEL:

# 'Don't Fight Closures on Management's Terms!'

We have made the case clearly that closing steel-making at Shelton makes no economic sense — since the giant mills like Scunthorpe are not flexible enough to deal with the small orders we get. The truth of the matter is that we are being discriminated against for being too successful.

There is demoralisation in the plant especially amongst the production workers most of whom are members of the I.S.T.C. which has certainly not fought for their interests — its time seems to be taken up appointing worker directors for BSC. The I.S.T.C. have smashed their members morale by agreeing to a productivity deal which lost them 20% of their basic wage and made them much more dependent on the productivity bonus. But at the same time, production was falling since it is controlled by how much iron ore comes from Scunthorpe and so I.S.T.C. members were ending up with 57% of the wage they were getting last year! Not surprisingly they are not leading the fight against the closure.

All the available figures make it quite clear that Shelton is profitable, — we got a private merchant bank to confirm them. At present the plant makes a return on capital of 11% — and with the installation of an electric arc furnace, we are prepared to guarantee a return on capital of 35%. And quite clearly the BSC know that the plant can remain profitable since they have told the private companies interested in buying it that they can do so only on the condition that they do not install an arc furnace! They do not want the skills of the Shelton workforce to be used in competition with the BSC.

In our fight to keep Shelton open we played it by the book. We proved the economic viability of the plant, we produced an advance employment plan, we accepted management's demand for redun-

dancies of 16% of the workforce, we let them introduce work measured incentive schemes. We did everything they asked for and still we lost. It's because we were so reasonable that they thought they could get away with closing the plant. What happened at Shelton is a lesson to everyone — don't fight closures on management's terms!

## BE A BF SUPPORTER

**DUE TO the intervention of the prices Commission we have to maintain the price of the paper at the unprofitable level of 10p. Unlike Rank-Hovis-MacDougall, whose recent price increases have been allowed, we are a small organisation unjustly victimised for our anti-government stand!**

**To allow us to continue our work means a big effort from you. If 35 of our supporters were to cut out the Standing Order form opposite and give us a regular donation of £2 per month, we will be able to break even. If your generosity exceeds this we will be able to improve the paper and help us create a new format, (and go a long way to curing the worries of our long-suffering printers.)**

**If our hopes are met, the Pig may still live to see another month. This 12 months total is £23.70. Our thanks for donations from: £10.00 Sheffield supporter £5.00 Liverpool member £5.00 Sheffield Standing Order £2.00 Sheffield Member £1.70 Liverpool Big Flame**

## BATTERED WOMEN:

# 'ENJOYING THE FREEDOM WE FOUGHT FOR'

## WHY WE WENT TO THE REFUGE — 2 WOMEN SPEAK

**How did you hear about the refuge?**

*Well I had to find somewhere to live when things got bad and I couldn't stand it anymore, so me and a friend contacted the Housing Advice Centre, who said they'd try and find somewhere. After about five weeks they rang my friend and said that the refuge was open.*

*That five weeks was the worst part — just waiting to hear. I felt it was worse because I was leaving in cold blood. During that time he attacked one of the boys with a rod and chased him up the stairs.*

*On Monday morning I just saw him off to work, then as soon as he'd gone I packed up and left.*

(Rachel)

*The solicitor rang up the refuge for me, but it was full up — I had to wait three weeks. I wasn't supposed to cook for him or anything — he knew I has a court order, so he tried being nice, but when he saw that wasn't changing my mind it got bad again, so I went to Social Services. They rang the refuge and there was a room free.*

(Martine)

**Why did you eventually leave?**

*For 27 years I'd been treated as a backward child. The only thing I was supposed to be capable of was having children and washin up — and I couldn't even do that right, there was always something to pick on. He used to talk down to me all the time.*

(Rachel)

*Yes, that was the same for me. He was the boss and it was his money that was keeping me, he owned me and like a child you need a smack to be kept in place. He used to tell me I'd be lost without him, with no money or anything — and I used to just sit there and think "Oh God, let me be lost — I'll do without money or food just let him go."*

(Martine)

## BATTERED WOMEN ARE HOMELESS



*He used to hit me when the kids were younger, then it turned to mental cruelty, he'd wait till the big ones were out, then he'd start on me, but I mean, he wouldn't hit you with six foot sons around the house. Then the thought of living with him on my own, you know spending my old age with him .....*

(Rachel)

*That didn't really enter my head — he used to argue with me when the boys were there as well.*

*There was never peace in the house, the children weren't allowed to make a noise when the T.V. was on, and it was always on.*

*We used to watch for his face as he walked up the garden path to see what mood he was in*

(Martine)

*He used to come home with his wage at 5 o'clock you know, but he'd never give me my house-keeping till about 11 o'clock; he used to give the children 1/2pence pocket money, but he used to make them wait for it, they'd be hanging around waiting and I used to think "Oh God, just tell him what to do with his 1/2p"*

(Martine)

*You were lucky, he used not to give me any money till the thursday after the pay-day on friday before*

(Rachel)

*Yes but he was always more frightened in England than when we were in Ireland — he was more frightened to hit me over here because the laws are better for women.*

(Martine)

**What did you think the refuge would be like?**

*I thought it would be like a prison — rules and things*

(Rachel)

*Like a hostel*

(Martine)

*As soon as I got in — with everyone laughing and being happy, and knowing I never need to go back. It was great*

(Rachel)

*The peaceful feeling — I came in and they said that's your room, and there's your key, and I just sat in that chair in my room, I can't describe it, just going to bed and waking up, being left alone at night — and just the two children there in the morning.*

*But everyday thinking "It's too good to last, I don't have that kind of luck. Nice things don't happen to me."*

(Martine)

*I kept thinking someone would come to take me back to him. I couldn't believe at first that I didn't have to go back.*

**What's it like living with other women?**

*It changes your outlook....*

(Rachel)

*You have to learn to give and take, accept people as they are...*

(Martine)

*Just muck in and share things.*

(Rachel)

**What are you going to do now?**

*Try to live a happier life than we had before, and enjoy the freedom that we've fought for — watch the T.V., going out when we want, enjoy the kids .....*

*But we've been sad all these years we've a right to be happy now.*

(Rachel)

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	£	£	
ACCOUNT TO BE CREDITED, or Name and Address of Payee if payment is to be made direct.			ACCOUNT No. OF PAYEE IF KNOWN
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# Lucas Aerospace : 'THE RIGHT TO WORK ON

"IT'S A SCANDAL". That was the reaction of Ernie Scarbrow, secretary of the Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee to the Government's announcement last week of an £8 million handout to Lucas Aerospace.

Two months earlier, the company had announced plans to close important factories in Liverpool, Bradford, Shipley and Hemel Hempstead with the loss of over 2,000 jobs within two years. These closures are being fought tooth and nail by Lucas Aerospace workers and their main weapon in the battle

is the 'alternative' Corporate Plan for the Company, drawn up by the workers themselves.

The Corporate Plan is a direct challenge to Lucas Management and to all it stands for. It has harnessed the skills, enthusiasm and creativity of hundreds of Lucas workers — designers, draughtsmen, skilled and semi-skilled workers — who have developed over 150 different products which could be done by the workforce using the existing plant and equipment at its 17 sites.

The range of products is staggering — from a portable kidney machine to a vehicle that can run on both road and rail; from a Hobcart for children with Spina Bifida to a totally new power unit for cars, coaches, lorries or trains. But the one thing these products have in common is that they are socially useful. They are not trivial luxuries. They are not designed to make life even more comfortable for a rich and powerful minority

at the expense of everyone else. They are part of a campaign for the right to work on socially useful products, rather than face the demoralisation and poverty of the dole.

Despite the £8 million handout from the Government, Lucas Aerospace is still determined to close down the four factories. But with the Government money, it will now be building a small purpose built factory in Liverpool. This is just what Lucas wanted. A few jobs will stay in Liverpool but overall the 2,000 jobs will still be lost — but now

it's with the support of the Government.

Meanwhile, the Government has given no support to the Corporate Plan, and an executive member of the combine committee, Mike Cooley, is now threatened with sacking by the company because of his work on the plan. There are even signs that Bro. Cooley will get no support nationally from his union AUEW/TASS, of which he is a past President. Alan Hayling explains the background.

It all started in 1971. Lucas Aerospace had announced the closure of the Chandos Road factory in Willesden, London, with the loss of over 800 jobs, the first move in what the workers expected would be an extensive rationalisation programme in the company. It was a hard fought battle. The workers occupied the plant day and night for more than eight weeks. But still they were defeated.

As they pointed out, over 3,000 people die each year in Britain because they cannot get a kidney machine. If you are under fifteen or over forty five it is almost impossible in many areas to get one. Instead the doctors will allow the patient to go "into decline" as they nicely put it. They pointed out that in the winter of 1975-6, 980 old people died of cold in the London area alone, when Lucas Aerospace has the capability of

*"It has given us a creative cross-fertilisation between the analytic power of the scientist and technologist on the one hand and, perhaps what is more important, the direct class sense and understanding of those on the shop floor."*

PREPARING THE CORPORATE PLAN

The first step of the new combine committee was, they now admit with hindsight, a mistake. They wrote to 180 leading authorities institutions, universities and trade unions all of which had in the past suggested the use of technology in a socially responsible fashion.

They asked them very specifically what could a workforce with these facilities be making that would be of great benefit to the community at large. They received only four useful replies.

## A WORKERS SURVEY

They then turned to the Lucas workers themselves, and asked them what they should be making. Each of the shop stewards committees in the Combine was asked to complete a questionnaire, taking it onto the shop floor, getting all types of workers involved. And within four weeks the answers came pouring in.

*"We deliberately composed it so that they would think of themselves in their dual role in society, as both producers and as consumers. We therefore quite deliberately bridge the absurd division in this society which seems to suggest that there are two nations, on that works in factories and offices and an entirely different nation that lives in houses and communities. We pointed out in the questionnaire that the kind of products in which we were interested and which we might design and build during the day at work should be meaningful in relation to the communities in which we live."*

(Combine committee spokesperson)

## GETTING THE MASS OF WORKERS INVOLVED

One of the principles on which the Combine Committee has worked is that the Corporate Plan had to involve the mass of Lucas Aerospace workers. Not just the highly qualified designers. They wanted to involve the whole workforce and people from the communities around the factories as well.

...."in the winter of 1975-6, 980 old people died of cold in the London area alone, when Lucas Aerospace has the capability of designing and manufacturing a cheap system for heating homes, and the thousands of electricians on the dole have the capability of installing such systems."

It was clear that a different tactic had to be developed to fight a powerful and sophisticated multinational like Lucas. As one of the workers involved in the Willesden struggle said:

*"We realised that the morale of the workforce very quickly declines if they can see that society, for whatever reason, doesn't want the products they make. We therefore evolved the idea of a campaign for the right to work on socially useful products. It seemed absurd to us that we had all this skill and knowledge and facilities and that society urgently needed equipment and services which we could provide, and yet the market economy seemed incapable of linking these two."*

There was no doubt that Lucas Aerospace contained some of the most skilled designers and workers in any company based in Britain. They designed and built equipment for Concorde, for missiles, for fighter-bombers, for gas turbines. The workers had equally no doubt that their skills could be put to better use, and that there was no need for any of them to go on the dole.

designing and manufacturing a cheap system for heating homes, and the thousands of electricians on the dole have the capability of installing such systems.

## FOUNDING THE SHOP STEWARDS COMBINE COMMITTEE

By the time of the Willesden struggle the Combine Committee was already coming into existence — organising all 17 Lucas Aerospace factories into one united force. This, they felt, was the only way of fighting the company's rationalisation plans. They'd seen how GEC chairman Arnold Weinstock had succeeded in sacking 60,000 highly skilled workers by turning one GEC factory against the other. And they were determined the same wouldn't happen to them.

The combined shop stewards' committee at Lucas Aerospace is unique in the British trade union movement in that it links together the highest level technologists and the semi-skilled workers on the shop floor. This has been of great importance in the development of the Corporate Plan.

Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Committee

THE CORPORATE PLAN

A positive alternative to recession and redundancies

## A BIG FLAME INTERVIEW

# 'Marxist Economics For Socialists'

**'What is true is that the traditional wage militancy of the working class is inadequate in a period of crisis; because if it is successful it makes the crisis worse. What is needed is a strategy that both protects current pay and job conditions and shows a way of moving to a socialist system by building up elements of workers' control.'**

JOHN HARRISON has written the recently published "Marxist Economics for Socialists". The book is extremely important in that it makes clear the key role of Marxist economics in the struggle against reformism and social democracy. Unlike most Marxist economics books, it does not take bourgeois economics as its reference point. It is an essential book for militants who want to understand the economic laws that govern the society we live under.

One of the key points that you make in your book is that methods like reflating the economy that have been used by capitalist governments for the last 40 years are no longer working. Can you explain why you think that this is the case?

The point is that there is a contradiction between two aims of the capitalists — increasing consumption and cutting wages. If the capitalists want to increase the consumption of their products they must increase the wages of the workers. By stimulating the economy, they can increase production and lower unemployment. But if there is less unemployment, workers are more likely to fight for higher wages and so the capitalists find it difficult to increase their rate of profit. If the capitalists cut back on production, they can force wages down but they are unable to sell their products — so there is a problem of realising their profits — you haven't made the profit until the goods are sold.

Is this because it is the working class that buys what the capitalists produce?

Yes, this is especially true of consumer goods. It is also true that the demand for the machines that are used in the factories that



# SOCIALLY USEFUL PRODUCTS'

This has been more successful in some areas than others. In Burnley, the whole plant stopped work for a couple of hours to hold a mass meeting to debate their answers to the questionnaire. And this has been followed by a public meeting in the Town Hall about the Corporate Plan. In some other plants, the questionnaire never got beyond the shop stewards committee. But even then it forced the stewards to think about the real possibilities of what their plant could produce, with the existing skills and equipment. It forced workers to think not only about their own section but also about the section next door - about what it could produce if it was freed for useful production. In a small way, the questionnaire began to break down the isolation and sectionalism that's encouraged by managements, and is typical of so many factories in Britain.

## WHAT THE WORKERS CAME UP WITH

### ● Health services

"Some of our members realised that a large percentage of the people who die of heart attacks die between the point at which the attack occurs and the stage at which they are located in the intensive care unit in the hospital. So they designed a light, simple, portable life support system which can be taken in an ambulance to keep the patient ticking over until they get to hospital."

Workers at the Wolverhampton plant visited a centre for children with Spina Bifida and were horrified to see that they could only move around by literally crawling on the floor. So they designed a vehicle called the Hobcart - so successful that the Spina Bifida Association of Australia wanted to order 2,000 of these. Lucas would not agree to manufacture them because they said it was incompatible with their product range.

### ● Alternative energy sources:

Drawing on their experience of advanced aerodynamics, they have designed a range of wind generators. They have proposed a method for storing the heat of the summer for use during the cold of the winter, using hydrogen fuel cells. They have developed a low-cost set of solar-collecting equipment - part of an overall scheme to enable working-class people who have no previous experience of building work to design and build low energy homes in their own communities.

And they've proposed a whole range of products which would be useful for developing countries. But as they say:

"At the moment our trade with these countries is neo-colonialist. Our products would tend towards making the developing coun-

tries more independent and self reliant."

### ● Alternative transport:

While car manufacturers are currently perfecting an engine which will be automatically replaced every 20,000 miles, the Lucas workers have designed and built a combined battery and petrol powered engine which will last for twenty years, improve fuel consumption by over half, will reduce pollution

the skill of the miner would still be used but the miner could go through the mining process remotely in a safe environment whilst the telechiric device actually did the mining for him. As he or she tightened their hands, so the machine would tighten its hands. And the miner would see via a TV monitor, would hear via a radio, would feel via another device and so on.

...."we have discovered that management is not a skill or craft or profession but a command relationship - a bad habit handed on from the Army and Church."

by 80% will be practically silent and which will require negligible maintenance.

### ● Robots:

It's in the design of robotic equipment mainly for the maintenance of North Sea oil pipelines - that it is clearest that the Lucas workers have had to think deeply about the future of society and about the quality of life of the mass of the people. Did they want to design robots that would rob people of jobs in which they could develop their skills, grow and develop as human beings?

"Thus we human beings would continue to be involved in that precious learning process which comes about through actually working on the physical world, and it would mean also that we would be countering structural unemployment."

The Lucas workers point to the forecasts of 5 million unemployed by the mid 1980's because of the effect of the use of mini-computers and automated machinery. Not all socialists will like the solutions they've come up with. But at least they're asking the right questions.



Workers at Lucas Aerospace Burnley Plant C.I.S. PHOTO

"When we were considering the design of robotic equipment, the more we thought about this the more it became clear the terrible waste we are making of the great human intelligence which is available to us."

So, instead of hugely expensive and energy consuming robots to do the job, the Lucas Corporate Plan includes in their place a range of remote-control devices which actually require more human skill, while reducing the danger and physical effort of the work. They call them "telechiric" devices which literally means hands or control at a distance. So, in the case of a miner,

## THE RESPONSE OF THE COMPANY AND THE GOVERNMENT

The Company clearly understood the importance of the Corporate Plan. They saw it as a threat. A threat to their plans to sack thousands of workers. And a threat to their so-called "right to manage". As one of the returned questionnaires from a site shop stewards' committee said:

"In thinking about this questionnaire we have discovered that management is not a skill or craft or profession but a command relationship - a bad habit handed on from the Army and Church."

The company has now centrally rejected the Corporate Plan and refuse to even meet the Combine Committee to discuss it. They say that "the existing product range is our best guarantee of work," forgetting that they want to sack two thousand workers almost immediately.

But fighting this was the whole purpose of the Corporate Plan. And its success has been that in the four years of its existence, the Plan has so mobilised the Lucas workforce and begun to influence a number of MP's (for what they're worth) and trade union officials (for what they're worth) that Lucas management have not been able to make one sacking.

The Combine Committee approached the Government and "had every sympathy short of actual help." Junior Ministers like Les Huckfield have written saying "In my considered view those best suited to deal with this question are the company and the trade unions involved." In other words "Piss off".

"There can be no islands of responsibility and concern in the sea of irresponsibility and depravity."

## COMING TO A CRUNCH

Now the situation at Lucas Aerospace is coming to a crunch. Management is determined to press ahead with the closure of the four factories. Already the Combine has taken action. There was a three day occupation at the Victor Works in Liverpool. And the removal of all machinery and the transfer between plants of all design and technical information has been banned by the workers.

In the past month, the management even went to the extent of threatening the dismissal of Mike Cooley, the Chairman of TASS/AUEW in Lucas Aerospace and executive member of the Combine Committee, for working on the Corporate Plan. This threat was withdrawn following the decision of the Combine Committee to call all-out strike action should the threat be carried out.

Instead the complaint has been referred by the company to AUEW/TASS, the union to which Mike Cooley belongs. Unhappily, but not surprisingly, the union nationally has indicated already that it will not support Brother Cooley, "because the Corporate Plan is not official policy of the union." This is despite the widespread support that the Plan has won in the trade union movement - to the extent that the TUC has even made a film about the Plan.

## FIGHTING THE MULTI-NATIONALS

Despite these setbacks, workers in a number of other large companies have seen the strengths of the Corporate Plan in fighting the plans of the multinationals for rationalisation, sackings, closures and harder work for those left at work. Already similar initiatives are under way by workers in Rolls Royce, the British Aircraft Corporation (Preston), Chrysler, Vickers and Clarke Chapman.

## DANGERS

But there are some dangers in relying on this sort of Corporate Plan. There's no doubt that some moderates see it as a useful way of diverting energy from the main struggle - against the class divisions and exploitation inherent in this society. And these same moderates would doubtless be delighted to use such a Plan instead of industrial action in the struggle against redundancies and closure.

Then there's the charge that such a Corporate Plan is just tinkering with the system, trying to do away with some of its worst idiocies. Just an attack on the more unacceptable face of capitalism, rather than an attack on capitalism itself.

At Lucas, there's an awareness of these problems. As they write in the Corporate Plan itself:

"There can be no islands of responsibility and concern in the sea of irresponsibility and depravity."

## PLAN IS ONLY ONE WEAPON

They see the struggle for what they produce as part of the overall struggle for working class power - and they've already been forced to take action to prevent Lucas selling off their kidney machine production to a Swiss company. In the Combine Committee, the Corporate Plan is seen as another weapon in the struggle - alongside industrial action - occupations, strikes and other measures - one more way of developing the power, solidarity and self-confidence of the mass of workers against the immense power of the multinationals.

And so far it's worked. For four years there has been not one redundancy. But with the Government wading in on the side of Lucas, and with the attitude of AUEW/TASS, there's little doubt that from now on the fighting's going to get rough.

make consumer goods is a derived demand - if there is no demand for the consumer goods there is no demand for the machines. This is clearly not the case in the case of arms production where the finished products are not bought by the working class - in that respect arms production is very useful for the capitalists.

This month at the summit of EEC prime-ministers in Bonn, there will be an attempt to get an agreement to get out of the current crisis by reflation on a European scale. Will they get such an agreement and could it work?

No, because what is a contradiction on a national scale would be moved to a contradiction on an international scale. If there was reflation at a European level, this would lead to inflation on a world scale that would strengthen the working class internationally.

What Marx wrote about the 'reserve army of labour' is important here. There is no doubt that the presence of millions of unemployed affects the militancy of those who do have a job.

One of the things that follow from your explanation of the crisis is that the working class is stronger in a period of economic boom - when there is less unemployment. And this would explain the retreat of the industrial working class in the current economic crisis.

This is true up to a point. But it is important to remember that the working class has entered this crisis strong and well organised. Whereas it entered the crisis of the 1930's with its strength broken - by the General Strike and the victory of Fascism in Italy and Germany. What is true is that the traditional wage militancy of the working class is inadequate in a period of crisis; because if it is successful it makes

## CONFERENCE OF SOCIALIST ECONOMISTS

This year's Conference of Socialist Economists is being held in Bradford University from July 14th-16th. Its main theme is "the development of class struggles in advanced capitalist countries." The conference has in the past been an important forum for discussion amongst revolutionary socialists.

the crisis worse. What is needed is a strategy that both protects current pay and job conditions and shows a way of moving to a socialist system by building up elements of workers' control.

Do you see the proposals of the Bullock report as having any role to play in this process?

I am very hostile to Bullock. There is a very great difference between workers' participation in management under capitalism and workers' control which begins with the power to veto management decisions. This would be the embryo of dual power at factory level.

You write in your book that the Labour Party and social-democracy can only retain its hold on the working class in a situation where there is economic growth and it is able to give some of the crumbs of this economic growth to the working class. But the fact is that recent by-elections make it clear that three years of austerity have not lost working class support for the Labour government.

My argument is that it is impossible to win the working class from social democracy in a period of boom and that in a crisis, there is a possibility of this happening. I am not saying it will happen automatically; a lot depends on the ability of the revolutionary left to develop a coherent strategy. All I am arguing is that in a crisis there is less support for 'middle ground' positions - there is also the possibility of the growth of support for fascist positions.

Still I think your book under-estimates the hold social-democracy has over large sectors of the working class - it is much more than an economic relationship that ends when the goodies run out.

Maybe so. But I reckon that many working class people are still voting Labour not because of any strong ideological commitment to social democracy but because the alternatives are so much worse.

(Marxist Economics for Socialists' is published by Pluto Press at £2.40)



## THE STRUGGLE WORLDWIDE



In 1962, 63 Tories demanded that the British Government recognise the right to self-determination of the Katangese people. At the time, Mobutu was not yet in power and an independent Katanga seemed the best way to protect the valuable minerals of the area from the volatile and unpredictable politics of the country as a whole.

# ZAIRE French Arms Cannot Save Corrupt Regime

Zaire and the FLNC by the Belgian *Zaire Comite*. In the meantime, the latter can be contacted at Sint Jacobsmarkt 82, 2000 Anvers, Belgium.

French soldiers on patrol in Zaire

### THE REAL ISSUES

What are the real issues in Zaire? Western capitalist countries know that they are supporting a totally corrupt, ruthless dictator who is not even able to run the economy in a way that produces profits for them. The figures speak for themselves: in the last ten years, the National Debt of Zaire has increased by 2700% whilst the standard of living of workers is only 15% of what it was in 1960. What this means is that the Western capitalist countries are having to lend Mobutu's Zaire more money than they are getting from the mines.

The imperialist countries who are trading with Zaire know that changes have to be made. Countries like France whose main trade with Zaire is in the sale of arms and government equipment don't mind sticking with Mobutu.

Belgium, which wants to see the mines working properly since it is the main investor in them, has realised the need to get rid of Mobutu and replace him with a more efficient puppet. But they realise that the situation is delicate since any attempt to get rid of Mobutu may act in favour of the FLNC who now control large sectors of Shaba Province.

There can be no doubt that there will be tremendous popular support for any movement to overthrow Mobutu — earlier this year hundreds of peasants in the Idiofa region were slaughtered in a bloody uprising.

The struggle in Zaire has now got caught up in the last ditch stand of the whites in Namibia, Zimbabwe and Azania (South Africa). But the presence of Marxist-Leninist regimes like Angola has irreversibly changed the balance of forces in Africa. By providing bases for progressive forces like the FLNC, they are making sure that the days of despots like Mobutu are numbered.

FOUR WEEKS ago it happened. The horrifying spectacle of a horde of drug-crazed journalists massacring the English language, looting and pillaging from stories written over 70 years ago, and blasting their way into people's homes with a barrage of sensationalism, distortion, racism, jingoism and enough gory pictures to reverse the downward flow of the morning cornflakes.

### MEDIA DISTORTIONS

What were the distortions? The media's coverage of the actual events — the rebel penetration into Zaire, the French-Belgian invasion, the massacre — has been adequately attacked on the left. But there are further distortions.

A common one is the suggestion

that the rebel forces (The National Front for the Liberation of the Congo — FLNC) are fighting for the secession of Shaba Province (Katanga). But, as their name suggests and as the movement has often made clear, the FLNC is fighting for the liberation of all Zaire. A quotation from the FLNC leader, M'Bumba, in an article in the May 1977 of Big Flame confirms this:

"We are Congolese and we are fighting for the liberation of all the Congo. We've started in Katanga because of its economic power. Once Katanga and its mining areas are in our hands, the liberation of the other provinces will be that much easier."

Another distortion concerns the role of Cuba. The famous conversation between the American Envoy

in Havana and Fidel Castro was originally reported by Carter as evidence that Cuba knew about the FLNC's plans a month in advance but did nothing. Cuba's complicity in the 'massacre' was thus 'proven'.

In fact, as was later admitted, Castro had said that he knew about the plans a month in advance and did his best to persuade the rebels to change their minds (because of the potential threat to Angola). Moreover, the CIA still openly admits that it has no foolproof evidence of Cuban involvement in the training of the rebel forces.

Those interested in further information about Zaire should note that the Zimbabwe Information Group is shortly planning to publish a translation of a pamphlet on

## LETTER

The same week as I read the article in Big Flame by Frank George attacking trade unionism (last month: "Speke Shows Weakness of Trade Unionism"), I came across an article in *Socialist Challenge* by Bob Pennington called 'Vote Labour, but fight Labourism'. It seems to me that there is a new form of argument in the air which claims that it is legitimate to separate off a way of thinking and acting from the institution that has developed this way of thinking and acting. And I want to argue that this form of argument is nonsense.

If you look at Frank George's article you can see that when he is talking about trade unionism he is referring to the 'undemocratic structures that run through industry', the 'passivity caused by delegation' and the 'sectionalism of the fight, the belief that one tiny section of society can defeat the society-wide strategy of the capitalists acting with the support of a Labour government'. In fact, what he doing is describing trade unions, which are undemocratic, sectional and tied to the Labour Party.

In fact if you look at the history of the growth of the trade unions in this country you can see that they were always sectional — they came out of craft guilds — and they have always been tied to the Labour Party. And this has been reflected in the historic separation inside the *English Labour Movement* between economics and politics — with the unions looking after economic problems, while the Labour Party gets on with the politics. It is this historic separation that has produced over a long period of time a way of thinking (syndicalism) that makes workplace militants unable to deal with today's new situation where the division between economics and politics has been broken down with the incorporation of the trade union leadership into the process of government.

Many of the issues Frank George mentions as worth fighting for are important e.g. combine committees, united slates for union elections, unofficial action groups. Others that he leaves out are also important, like the recallability of all union officials, election of all union officers, the amalgamation of unions to break down sectionalism and inter-union rivalry, and the closed shop. But it is the context that he puts all these demands in that is unsatisfactory. His article has as its ending 'a solution to the crisis will come only from the base'. Anyone who argues this has to explain why a solution has not come from the base in the last 130 years — since the Chartists. Part of the answer lies in seeing that trade unionism and Labourism are not just structures they are also a way of seeing things taken up by many members of the rank and file. It is not accurate to suggest that there is in this country a revolutionary rank and file being held back by a 'sold out' (reformist bureaucracy.)

A major long-term task of revolutionaries is to re-build a revolutionary socialist tradition inside the working class movement. To do this we need to be very clear about the institutions of the society we live in. For instance, we must realise that trade unions are not revolutionary but that they fulfill a vital role in protecting workers from the worst excesses of exploitation.

Unions can be 'politicized' but not to the extent of making revolutionary parties redundant. In fact, revolutionary parties have a key role to play in the process of politicization.

In the long run we will have to build institutions that build on and go beyond the working class power and organisation formed by trade unions. Reference to non-existent distinctions between trade unions and trade unionism is no help in understanding what this process will be like.

Pete Anderson (Manchester BF)



Victory to the Freedom Fighters". One of the banners on the Soweto demonstration

THE DEMONSTRATION in commemoration of Soweto in London on June 16th was, sadly, more a commemoration of the demonstration a year before. Rather than being a unified demonstration of solidarity with a great and important struggle, it was an unhappy victim of the petty sectarianism that split the event a year earlier. About 200 people turned up.

A year ago, an attack on the Soweto Students Representative Council by some members of Anti-Apartheid led to a major split in the Soweto demonstration of June 16th, with the majority supporting the SSRC.

This year a similar split seemed in the offing when Anti-Apartheid and the African Students' Union

organised for separate days. Then it was decided to hold the ASU demonstration before an Anti-Apartheid rally and a successful evening of commemoration and support seemed possible.

However, the complete failure of AA to actively support the demonstration (despite assurances to the contrary), and it's decision to put all its efforts into the rally, meant a miserable turnout was inevitable. And this on a day when 600 Blacks were arrested in South Africa, at a time when imperialism is beginning to mount a more overt counter-offensive against anti-imperialist struggles in Southern Africa, and at a time when the struggles in Zimbabwe and Namibia are at a crucial stage!

### Clench your fist high Soweto!

In Soweto I live,  
And yet do not exist,  
For I am lost,  
Indeed deprived  
In the streets and garbage  
Of a civilisation  
Brutal and atrocious,  
Laden with repression and  
exploitation,  
That crushes me with antagonism  
and alienation,  
And without conscience.  
Now it is the time Soweto,  
Clench your fist high,  
Dear comrade  
Take my hand  
On capitalist civilisation we declare  
total war,  
Firing our guns and mortars,  
Along the rugged path to peace and  
socialism.

Chris Katsande, June 1976



# REPUBLICAN news

The arrest of *Republican News* editorial staff on April 27th (as reported in June *Big Flame*) hasn't prevented the newspaper coming out regularly.. Sales have actually increased.

The 'Security Forces' can't yet discover where it is being printed. The paper is being produced in the homes of supporters in the working class districts of Belfast.

However, on June 15th the RUC/British Army intercepted four pages of the paper which meant only an eight page paper came out that weekend.

## ANOTHER SEIZURE

On the same day the *Irish Free Press* had their office in Belfast raided, workers there were harassed and the paper's subscription lists were seized.

And around the same time an Irish Republican Socialist Party member in London was called on by the police and his lists of outlets for the newspaper *Starry Plough* were taken. He and his wife have been tailed ever since.

In London on June 7th about 20 protestors forced their way into the International Press Centre and leafleted the building, including the bar where a retired colonial journalist declared "We have no interest in propaganda here"! The protest was organised by the Ad Hoc Committee for the Defence of *Republican News* who also organised a march down Fleet Street the following week.

For the news Roy Mason doesn't want to read: subscribe to *Republican News* - 170a Falls Road, Belfast.

# Judge Chambers Plays Safe

The outcome of the case of Patrick Kelly of Belfast is the exception rather than the rule.

A week ago he was released from court a free man - despite having signed a confession to possessing firearms and being in the IRA.

He had been savagely beaten during a 17-hour interrogation in the notorious Castlereagh torture centre in East Belfast. Doctors reported 'unexplained cuts and bruises to his legs, arms and ribs.

## NO JURY

In normal circumstances Kelly would have been found guilty straight away. The Special Courts in Northern Ireland have no jury. Witnesses are not named and cannot be questioned by the defence, so you can't argue against their evidence. The judges alone decide on guilt or innocence.

Most Northern Irish judges are members of the Protestant establishment. Many are members of the all-Protestant Orange Order. One, the notorious Judge Topping, was even the "Grand Master" of the Order. Not surprisingly,

Catholics from Republican areas get no sympathy from judges like these. Lawyers estimate that over 80% of prisoners are convicted on the sole basis of confessions beaten out of them.

But Patrick Kelly was lucky. The recent Amnesty International exposure of torture made at least one judge think twice about accepting the signed confession as genuine. After all, people are asking why the judges (supposedly neutral) have never seemed to question the flood of 'confessions' from battered-looking prisoners. Judge Chambers played safe and released Kelly from custody.

## "NOT INHUMAN"

But Chambers has not suddenly changed his views of the police. Even though he released one of the torture victims he covered himself by saying that Kelly's injuries "did not amount to inhuman or degrading treatment". In other words, they can beat the hell out of you and no judge is going to really listen if you complain.



Birmingham Photographic Workshop

Big Flame

THROUGHOUT THE country protestors have staged pickets in solidarity with Irish Prisoners of War demanding Political Status. In Birmingham (left) the United Troops Out Movement (UTOM) organised a picket outside the Evening Mail offices. They also drew attention to the authorities

attempts to close down *Republican News*. The right wing *Evening Mail* has a reputation for 'misinformation' which has helped keep the Birmingham public in the dark about Ireland. The picture on the right shows pickets in Manchester outside the Central Library.

## Injury Time

An unusual football match with a team from the Free State Senate and Leinster House playing a team of British MPs was interrupted at half time by members of the Troops Out Movement carrying placards which included the slogans: "When will Mason blow the final whistle?" and "They are into injury time in Castlereagh."

## IRISH BULLETIN

There are some issues *Troops Out*, the UTOM journal can't deal with easily. Realising that, *Big Flame's* Irish Commission has brought its *Irish Bulletin* to life again. The new (June-July) edition, which is wholly concerned with the recent left-turn in the Provisional Republican Movement is a good example of what we mean.

The new left Provisional thinking is summed up in three points:

1. The British Government NOT withdrawing from the six Counties.
2. The anti-imperialist struggle cannot be successful if based only on the nationalist population on the Six Counties.
3. Republicans must develop links with radical trade unionists and become involved in the struggles of the working class in the South.

The reason for the growth of the Provisional left and what it means for their day-to-day activity are analysed.

There will be further issues of the *Irish Bulletin* whenever circumstances in Ireland demand an in-depth investigation. *Irish Bulletin*. 17p (including postage) from *Big Flame*, 217 Wavertree Road, Liverpool 7.

BRITISH SOLDIERS speak out on Ireland. New 32 page pamphlet produced by ex-soldiers - including poems songs and illustrations. Available from Information on Ireland, 1 North End Rd., London W.1. 30p + 15p p&p. 10 copies £2.50 + 50p p & p.

LONDON All out to oppose recruitment to the army of occupation in the North of Ireland. Poster display and leaflet distribution outside Earls Court Army Show on Saturday July 15th. Assemble Warwick Rd. entrance to Earls Court Tube at 12 noon. Supported by All-London United Troops Out Movement and the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign.

# Ireland Censored

"There has not been a serious detailed account of the history of Northern Ireland... the BBC, the IBA and the British Government don't wish us to know..." Jonathan Dimpleby on BBC TV.

Those active on the struggle against British imperialism, anywhere in the world, have known this for a long time. Journalists and TV workers are becoming increasingly aware of it too. For them, the last straw was the IBA's decision to ban a 'This Week' film on torture in the North.

Britain's colonies have never known free speech. In 1865 it was *Irish People*, the newspaper of the growing movement for independence, which was suppressed. In 1914 British troops and police smashed the presses of the *Irish Worker*, the paper edited by the socialist and nationalist, James Connolly. Then, in the last few weeks, come the raids on *Republican News*, the newspaper of a legal political party, Provisional Sinn Fein.

As in 1865 and 1914, the aim of the raids is to silence the resistance, deprive it of a means of organising and informing itself.

Demoralise it by leaving it utterly voiceless.

## SECRETS GAG

News about the struggle for political status in the prisons is gagged at source. The Official Secrets Act deprives prisoners of any right to speak to the outside world about their conditions.

And in Britain there's the Prevention of Terrorism Act which has little to do with terrorism but is very effective when it comes to harassing Irish people, especially those active as trade unionists or in the republican movement. The Act permits the police to hold suspects incommunicado for up to seven days without charging them. It empowers the Home Secretary to deport people long resident in Britain.

## CENSORSHIP BY CONSENT

Methods like this are too crude for restraining the mass media in this country. Censorship operates by consent, normally, according to guidelines laid down by the Government.

A handful of journalists, people like Jonathan Dimpleby, have refused to act as 'His Master's Voice'. Their protests had gone largely unheard until the well-publicised 'This Week' ban by the IBA. And Roy Mason's heavy-handed threat to withhold funds

from the BBC unless they were more careful in their reporting - that is, continued to mention the rising movement of protest against prison conditions in Northern Ireland.

## COLONIAL WAR

There is now a growing audience among media workers for Dimpleby's view that what is happening in Ireland is a colonial war in which most of press and TV are engaged actively on the side of the imperialists - as always.

Censorship of the Irish situation can be opposed.

\* Media workers can raise it in their unions and fight for a

serious treatment of Northern Ireland on the air.

\* We can support *Republican News* and oppose the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and we can sell papers which provide the truth about Ireland. *Troops Out* is easily sold because people want to know what's going on.

\* We can campaign on the issues which are being covered up - the conditions in Long Kesh and political status for Irish prisoners.

Finally, we can bear in mind that that there will be no free speech on either side of the Irish sea until the British get out of Ireland.

## "Shoot on Sight"

Keepers of the peace, defenders of law and order - that's the mythical role of all armies of occupation, in including Britain's in Northern Ireland. Assassination and terrorism are the stock in trade of the modern army, as those who attended the recent conference on the British Army organised by the United Troops Out Movement heard.

The repressive history of the Army was traced by speakers from Ireland, Britain and Malaysia as well as by several ex-soldiers.

"... One day in April 1972 I was on plainclothes surveillance duties with two other soldiers. We drove along the Whiterock Road, Upper Falls. We had a death list with names and photos, with the orders: 'Shoot on sight'. One of the soldiers saw James Bryson, a man on the list, and another whose name I forget. We swerved our car in front of them, by some school gates, and leapt out, drawing our pistols and opening fire... We radioed for a uniformed patrol. When it turned up the commander said to us "You

stupid bastards, you've shot the wrong fuckers." The Army issued a press statement alleging that the men had shot at us and that the army had a pistol to prove it. This was a lie. Both men were brothers on their way to work, going about their lawful business."

These war memoirs, by an ex-NCO in the infantry, were read out because he couldn't risk delivering the speech in public. He was a member of the Army's undercover squad, the MRF (Military Reconnaissance Force). He continues:

"In May 72 another MRF patrol assassinated a man called McViegh, with the intention of blaming the protestants and taking the heat off the army. A month later the MRF shot three taxi drivers in Andersonstown."

## NEW FILM ON ARMY

Another highlight of the conference was the premiere of a new 40-minute anti-recruitment film, 'Home Soldier Home'. (Hire for £10 plus carriage from Information on Ireland, 1 North End Road, London W14)

## Prisoners' Relatives Tour

A meeting organised by the United Troops Out Movement (UTOM) in Birmingham, at which two women from the Central Relatives Action Committee in Belfast described the conditions of prisoners in H-Block (Long Kesh) and the RAC's own activities in support of these prisoners.

They also spoke at similar meetings in Liverpool, Sheffield and

several in London, including the UTOM conference on the role of British Army, a meeting organised by Women in Ireland and a meeting in Hackney which resulted in a decision to form a UTOM branch there.

The tour which was organised by the UTOM also took in radio interviews in London and Liverpool



# TIME OFF

## Harlan County

IT'S PRETTY rare for a partisan socialist film to win an Oscar, but Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County U.S.A.* did just that (1976 Best Documentary film) and at long last this magnificent film is now going the rounds in this country, distributed by *The Other Cinema*.

Harlan County is a mining area in East Kentucky. It has long been the scene of bitter struggles by the mineworkers and their families against the coal companies, which in the States are still in private hands. In 1973 the workers at the Brookside mine voted to leave the company 'union' and join the more independent United Mineworkers of America. They wanted more money, better health and safety conditions and union recognition that obviously included the right to strike. The company refused, the workers struck and the violent and protracted Grunwick-like dispute began.

Almost from the beginning, Barbara Kopple and her film crew, which was mostly women, filmed the strike — the meetings, the miner's homes, the police and scab violence on the picket lines. Committed to the strike, they were welcomed and trusted by the strikers who let them film the union meetings and the womens meetings. (Often the film makers used to take their cameras up to the picket line, without any film, just because this was a way of scaring off the company thugs and gunmen and keeping the violence down.) From 'in side' the struggle the crew have managed to produce a film that is about people's lives as much as a 'political event.' They filmed the do-or-die commitment of the community and the solidarity of the women, but they didn't avoid the problems thrown up in the course of the struggle and neither did they try to make any glib political statements. The filming of the final tragedy that eventually forces the pluralist American state to grudgingly understand that murdering strike breakers are an unacceptable face of capitalism is as moving as you'll see in any film.

### UNION CORRUPTION

The story is interspersed with mining songs and background footage of past struggle and working conditions in the mines. At one point an old timer recalls the first time he got sacked for trying to organise a union, when the boss told him "we can always hire another man, but we have to buy the mules". There is also a potted history of the mafia-like UMW, long dominated by corrupt Tony Boyle. In 1969 a rank and file miner, Yablonsky, stood against Boyle in the presidential election on the ticket that ordinary miners "didn't want for president, a man who was in bed with the coal owners". Just before the election Yablonsky, his wife and daughter were shot dead. Boyle was later found guilty of murder. In the film, too, are examples of the Catch 22 situation the unorganised miners (and for that matter all unorganised workers) find themselves in when it comes to health and safety. A doctor doing research on pneumoconiosis sums it up when he says "You see, miners won't quit until they know they will get benefit".

By that time most will have black lungs and have to spend their retirement hooked up to some oxygen machine.

In the foreground, though, is the strike itself and it is there, through the sympathetic and non-manipulative work of the film makers that we can share the experiences and difficulties of those involved - realise that struggles are only really won when workers and their wives and families organise themselves - that the bosses and the state will go to almost any length to prevent workers getting what they want - and that capitalism and the unions are the same the world over. After being arrested one striker tries to cheer the others up as they sit in a prison cell and says "Well, you're in a prison out there anyway, so you might as well be in here."

### THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Because the majority of the film crew were women they were much better placed than a male crew would have been to support the women involved in the strike and to open up the film to the women. What is absolutely clear from the film is that at certain moments during the strike when things were uncertain or on the ebb it was the action and personal commitment of the miners wives, mothers and kids which made them the focus of energy and determination. It was the women who stepped up the picketing and blocked the road when the company gun men fired on the strikers and they who understood the need for self defence.

When asked how the strike and film had changed her, Barbara Kopple, the director said "I guess it changed me tremendously. When I went in there a lot of the people were really backward and I was able to watch change happen. People starting their own newspapers, people starting to study and read politically; we'd all read together and have little study sessions, things like that. It made me learn that you can't do anything by yourself and that in order to achieve something or in order to win some kind of victory you all have to be united under the same cause or the same idea. It taught me a lot about criticism and self criticism — that it wasn't on a personal level, but that it was on a political level and the survival of everybody depended on it. It also taught me what it meant to be in a life or death situation where nobody was going to help me. The only power you had came from that community and if that community went against you you were dead."

In the film, she has communicated all this and a whole lot more. See it and organise a showing wherever you can. I hope it's a film that's around until hell freezes over!



(Left) Barbara Kopple producer/director of *Harlan County U.S.A.*; (right) jailed women strike supporters. (Radical America)



## Islington Socialists

ISLINGTON, LONDON, is to have its own socialist centre. That's the decision taken by the 150 people who attended a recent conference in North London called by *Islington Gutter Press*, a local paper now in its sixth year. Lynne Segal, member of the paper's editorial collective reports

The people at the Conference came mostly from the various community groups and campaigning bodies, from the non-aligned socialist feminist and gay left, together with representatives from the Labour Party, Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, Big Flame, I.M.G. and other political groups. Yes, it did succeed in getting the left in Islington together. Though of course there were many local militants whom it didn't reach.

### RALLYING CALL

The day began with a general session to enable people to get in touch with some of the variety of local groups. People spoke from the EGA Campaign, Single Homeless, Under 5s Group, Islington CARF, the Anti Nazi League, Socialist Unity, Holloway (Black Youth) Project, White Lion Free School, London Friend (a gay group) and others. So the Conference soon became both a Forum in itself as well as an attempt to set up a regular Socialist Centre and Forum. It provided a rallying call for various actions in the following

weeks, for example gaining support for a NAC picket, a CPSA picket, and the EGA campaign.

Apart from the workshop on the idea of a Socialist Centre and Forum which everybody attended, there was a second round of workshops on general areas of struggle bringing together people working in similar areas. For instance in the Health workshop there were people from the Islington Community health Council, hospital workers, EGA campaigners, women hoping to set up a health centre, people working on a mental health project and others.

The workshop on Local Government Strategy also served to link the Labour Party left with others outside the Labour Party. The three councillors in that workshop said that they needed the help of outside groups to formulate genuine left policies. At the workshop on the *Gutter Press* it was felt that a few pages of the paper could be opened up to the Socialist Centre and Forum, thus enabling greater participation from other left groups and individuals who were involved in this activity.

### SOCIALIST CENTRE

It was the idea to launch a Socialist Centre, however, which occupied most of the final full session. There was over-whelming support for the idea of a centre, with some debate as to what sort of centre we wanted.

There were some who saw the centre more as a way of organising

ourselves, the variety of local activists at the Conference, and others who saw its main function as attracting the more traditional Labour Movement. In the end these two views were sufficiently reconciled to elect a steering group with representatives from the different left groups present as well as including many non-aligned socialists.

The Socialist Centre is now about to start. It will meet every Sunday in the Hemingford Arms, Hemingford Rd, N.1. The first event will take place on 25th June with a speaker from the Prisoners Aid Committee on the situation of prisoners in Ireland and England. It will also mobilise for the demo on July 9th. Another six weeks of music, films, theatre and discussions are planned.

In the long run the Centre hopes to find premises of its own. It hopes that the Socialist Centre gatherings will also serve as a Forum where people can link up campaigns and gain support from each other, and as a place where general debates on work around particular areas can occur, where a socialist culture can begin to expand and grow, where individuals can meet other socialists and enjoy themselves.

On the *Gutter Press* we see this initiative as the beginning of a real socialist unity in Islington. Ambitious and difficult as this may seem, we have made a start

If you want information on the Centre and its programme, write to: Islington Socialist Centre, c/o 2a St Paul's Rd., London N.1.



Islington Gutter Press picture of the Socialist Centre



LIVERPOOL ANTI-NAZI LEAGUE PUBLIC MEETING July 18th. 7.30, St. George's Hall. Speakers: David Edgar, Paul Holborrow, Tariq Ali and Eric Lynch.

SOCIALIST UNITY National Conference to decide strategy at the General Election: Sat 9th September, 11 am-6pm, St Matthews Meeting Place, Brixton, London S.W.2. (opposite Ace Cinema). Further details from Socialist Unity, Box 15, 182 Upper St., London N.1.

A NEW REPORT from the Committee on Poverty and the Arms Trade (COPAT) called Bombs for Breakfast. Shows how the arms trade contributes to a vicious cycle of impoverishment repression and militarism in the Third World. Price 50p (+ 15p p & p) from COPAT c/o 5 Caledonian Rd., London N.1.



# Ford Pay Claim - a turning point for the working class?

YOU MIGHT have seen it on TV a couple of weeks back: Ford workers demand a £20 rise and 5 hours less work each week. To unemployed youth drawing £13 on the dole, or an unsupported mother trying to bring up two kids on £28 a week, a £20 rise might sound a lot.

Here, Jack Brown, Secretary of the Ford (UK) Workers Combine explains the background to the claim. Why it is the important claim for the working class this year. And why it deserves the support of the whole working class - miners, nurses, engineers, housewives, the unemployed.

This year Ford workers in Britain made £246 million for the Ford Motor Company. Pure profit. They sent £78 million straight back to the USA to be handed out to Henry Ford and the rest of the shareholders.

Over the past three years of the Social Contract, Ford UK profits have gone up 3,000%. Over the same three years, the standard of living of the majority of Ford workers has gone down by 29%.

Ford workers have long been the lowest paid car workers in Britain. Now they are the lowest paid Ford workers in Europe - way behind Ford Germany, Ford Belgium and even behind Ford Spain.

The average take-home pay for an assembly-line worker at Ford is £48.50p. On that kind of money, you're just living week to week. You can't afford decent clothes for the family, or a holiday. You can't save, and many Ford workers can't even afford a second hand car, let alone the new ones we build.

"Phase 4 of the Social Contract" because the Social Contract has become unpopular with rank and file workers. Instead they're talking of the need for an "understanding" with the Government on wages, or an "Economic Contract".

There's no doubt that the Government is placing much of its hopes for winning an Autumn election on getting just such an agreement with the TUC. They claim that wage rises cause inflation. But at Fords, we know it is not as simple as that. While our wages have been held down for three years, we've seen the price of Ford cars and trucks go up much faster than the small rise in our wages.

**PROFITS CAUSE INFLATION**  
We know that huge profits cause inflation. We know that raw material prices and commodity speculation cause inflation. We know that high interest rates paid to money lenders cause inflation. And we know that the huge salaries paid to directors and managers at Ford cause inflation.

But trade union leaders like Tom Jackson of the Post Office Workers' Union and Geoffrey Drain of NALGO still insist that the standard of living of workers should be held down in order to hold down inflation - and in order to ensure that Labour is re-elected.

Many leading members of the TUC feel that they have done well under Labour. They have far more real power and responsibility. They sit on influential governmental bodies; give advice on the budget and economic strategy; have easy access to Ministers.

As David Basnett, General Secretary of the GMWU recently said "in exchange for our growing power, we have to bargain with responsibility and moderation". In other words - in return for the growing power and prestige of these union leaders, we rank and file workers have to accept a further cut in our standard of living.

## NO MORE

But now, after passively accepting the Social Contract for three years, Ford workers have said "No More". At a meeting in June, shop stewards from Ford plants all over Britain and Ireland issued a unanimous statement rejecting any more Government or TUC attempts to interfere in wage bargaining.

The same meeting decided on the wage claim which will go to the company in October.

\* £20 a week plus an extra allowance for assembly line workers. This is to make up the 29% we have lost over the past three years.

\* 5 hours off the week. This will mean less boring, hard and meaningless work for those of us with a job, and it'll force Ford's to give jobs to some of those on the dole.

\* Better sick pay, pensions and holidays.

So in early October, all eyes will be on Ford's. Like last year, the Ford claim is the first in the annual round

of wage negotiations. So it'll be the first test of any Government - TUC wages "understanding".

This year, even more attention is likely to focus on Ford's. Because October may well be the month of a General Election. So Ford workers will be up against all the forces in society that want to hold down working class people: the bosses, the Labour Government, the mass media, the TUC, and all the full-time and lay officials in the trade union movement whose power and position is at the expense of working people.

If we win, it'll be the end of the Social Contract. It will mean that one of the major obstacles to working class struggle will have been swept away. It'll mean that all sections of the working class will have a little more space to struggle against lousy pay, unemployment, harder work and the cuts in public spending. It could be a turning point. But we'll need a great deal of support - to even begin the fight.



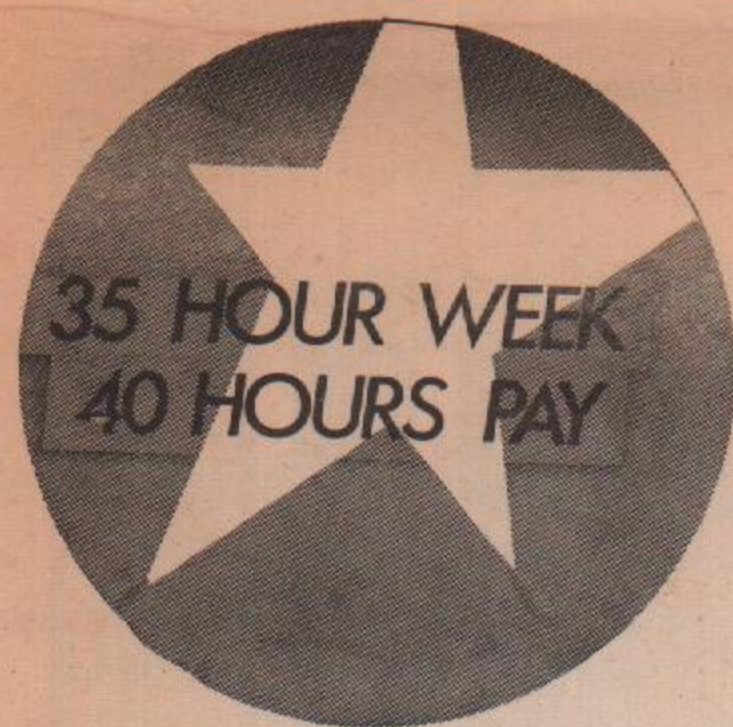
## BOSS' 80% PAY RISE

Meanwhile, the salary of Sir Terence Beckett, newly knighted Chairman of Ford of Britain has just gone up from £30,457 to £54,843 - a cool 80%. Plus he gets two free cars and all expenses . . . . .

The fact is that the Social Contract has been a disaster - and not just for Ford workers. Unemployment has shot up to 1 1/2 million. Everyone's living standards have been forced down. Low paid workers like hospital and post office workers remain very badly off. And many workers have been forced to accept harder work via bonus schemes and productivity deals as the price of staying in a job, or getting a little more money. But already it's clear that many trade union leaders are anxious to do yet another deal with the Labour Government. They won't call it

## 35 HOUR WEEK BADGE

The fight for the 35 hour week is gaining momentum - even the TUC leadership support it. This Big Flame badge in Red and Black is once again available from Big Flame, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. 25p incl. p & p



## ABOUT THE FORD (UK) WORKERS COMBINE

The Combine is made up of ordinary Ford workers and some shop stewards from several Ford plants around the country. It began in April this year to co-ordinate the fight inside Ford's for a wage claim which would be worth fighting for - £20 on the rate and 5 hours off the week.

This was essential because at Ford's there are several leading stewards and convenors who want to avoid a fight with the Labour Government and TUC at all costs. And particularly in election year. These people were campaigning for a vaguely worded claim asking for a 'rise in the standard of living of Ford workers over the period of the next contract.' In other words, they were not prepared to name a figure.

The Combine co-ordinated a push in shop stewards committees and trade union branches in practically every plant in the country fighting for our claim and against the vague claim decided by the convenors. As a part of the campaign, 14,000 copies of a leaflet were distributed at all major Ford plants. Finally the Convenors' Committee decided by the narrow margin of 13 votes to 12 to support the claim for £20 and 5 hours off the week.

But it is clear that the convenors and senior stewards are not going to be prepared to launch a mass campaign for the claim. The next meeting of the Combine - to discuss our campaign takes place at the General Picton pub, 2 Wharfedale Street, London N.1. on Saturday July 8th at 1pm. All Ford workers and their wives/husbands or girlfriends/boyfriends are invited.

# DONT LET THE BASTARDS GET YOU DOWN

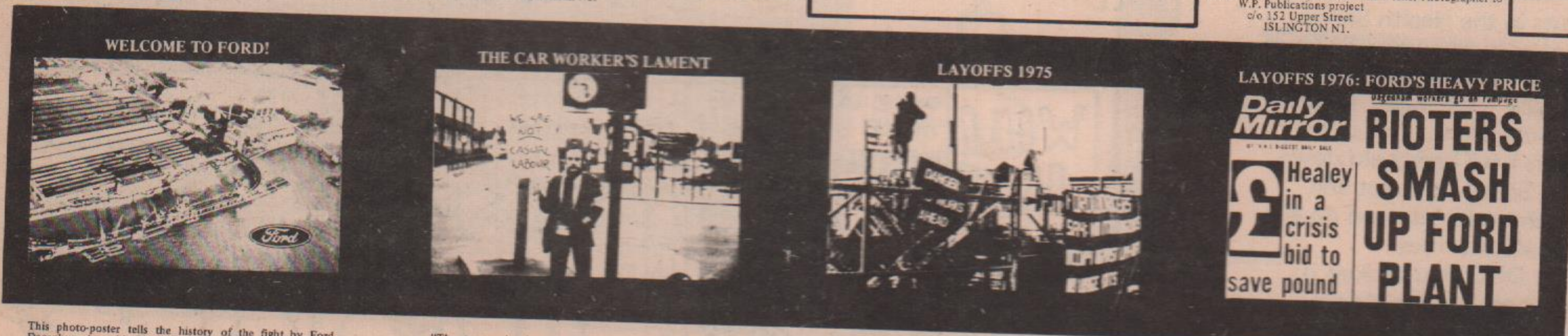
WORKER PHOTOGRAPHER c/o 152 Upper Street, London N1 1RA. £1.00 for four issues.

## THE WORKER PHOTOGRAPHER

# FIGHTING FORDS LAYOFFS

The photos on this sheet commemorate the Dagenham workers struggles against continual layoffs. Most of them are colour photos, part of a 40-minute slide show which has been produced as an organising tool in the campaign against layoffs. It is available on request, for showing. Write to Box 15, 26 St Paul's Road, London N1.

Please address all enquiries for The Worker Photographer to W.P. Publications project c/o 152 Upper Street, LONDON N1.



This photo-poster tells the history of the fight by Ford Dagenham Assembly Plant workers against the repeated layoffs and insecurity of earnings they suffer. A first step towards a new phase of organisation at Ford's!

"The two main slogans of our struggle were: WE ARE NOT CASUAL LABOUR and 80% OF BASIC PAY WHETHER WORKING OR NOT. This battle goes back for years and years."

The Body Plant occupied, against Ford's lockout policies, October 1975. "The Company thinks that they can kick us while we're down-but just wait till we're back on top. Then we'll be kicking them!"

The Management Centre in the Body Plant is smashed up in protest against layoffs. "It's as much of a sin to vandalise a worker's wages as it is to vandalise property."

"The Worker PHOTOGRAPHER is pledged to help working people master the art and craft of film and photography in order that they may both be used to further the struggle against capitalist oppression."

If you are confused and can't see the difference with that other photo-journal CAMERAWORK, open up the first edition of the WORKER PHOTOGRAPHER. In poster form it makes clear the tape-slide show made by the Ford Dagenham workers group about lay-offs and how to fight them. This, in short, is a journal - broadsheet, more accurately - "unashamedly addressed to the working classes" and their struggles.

Like CAMERAWORK, it wants to subject photography to a socialist analysis and to discover ways of using it to create socialist values and attitudes. But like its predecessors of the 1920's and '30's - LEFT FILM FRONT and CAMERA FORWARD - it wants to use film and photo as an adjunct to struggle, and not merely as a comment on it.

The first edition makes the point by itself - it's not as glossy or well photographed as Camerawork. And the instruction sheet on how to make a tape-slide sequence shows the activist bent. What I say here is not to suggest any inevitable conflict between good photography and political photography. The American photographers of the Depression show that that isn't so. It will be interesting to see whether Worker Photographer avoids the trap of much socialist art, at least in its early stages, of stifling the form and creativity by over stressing the message.

Is that high falutin' and superior. This is what the Ford Dagenham group say about photography - "And take it from us - you don't have to be an expert to do it! We're

RED LADDER, a regionally based socialist theatre company run collectively, requires an Administrator. Apply giving full details of political and work experience and reasons for wanting to join to: Red Ladder Theatre Co. Cobden Av., Leeds 12 5PB tel: 0532.792228. Closing date July 12th

## NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS

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

LOOK BACK at Grunwick! Book now - the film that looks back over the struggle of immigrant workers at Grunwick's last year and how Garners workers took up the struggle this year. 25 mins long it is short enough for a branch meeting, long enough for a film show. Available from the Other Cinema 12/13 Little Newport St., London W.1. tel. 01.734. 8508

CARF - CAMPAIGN against racism and Fascism - No 6 out now. Articles on racist attacks, Tory proposals, immigration law, Child benefit, National Front Activities, Conspiracy theory, Chief Constable Anderton, Campaign Reports etc. Available from most progressive bookshops, price 15p or ARAFCC Box 35, 182 Upper St., London N.1. (10p p&p) Sub £2. Bulk orders if cash with order 2 1/2p discount (plus p& p)

NEW! FEMINIST L.P.s by six different Artists are now available in Manchester from Grass Roots Books, 1 Newton St., Piccadilly, Manchester.

MANCHESTER BIG FLAME MEETING UCATT votes to accept a derisory pay offer of under 10%. Building employers pump £ 1/2 million into a campaign to fight building industry nationalisation, Flying pickets stop four sites in London after employers sack men to take on sub-contractors. What is happening in the building industry? Neil Swannick, a steward from Direct Works, will attempt to piece together some of the threads. Thursday 20th July - 7.45 p.m. The Ancoats, Great Ancoats Street.

SOCIALIST UNITY Steering Committee meeting, Sunday 9th July, 1.00 pm, 328 Upper St. London N.1.



# BIG FLAME

## Health Workers Prescribe 'No Bosses Here'

AS BUREAUCRATS and politicians get ready to toast thirty years of the NHS, the fight back against the run-down of the health-service goes on.

The struggle is particularly acute in the South-East where the cuts are being made even worse by the re-allocation of resources away from the area.

### WORKERS COUNCILS

#### BROOKWOOD

At Brookwood Hospital, the workers highlighted an effect of the cuts that is not so dramatic as closures of wards and hospitals, but just as dangerous. It's called understaffing and the workers at Brookwood found their own popular solution to the problem, a worker's council.

Management at Brookwood have consistently refused to employ more nurses. Out of an establishment of 805, only 420 staff are employed. On many occasions, there was one trained nurse in charge of three wards, having to give out drugs on their own.

The grievances at Brookwood piled up over many years. Finally the hospital staff decided they would run the hospital more efficiently and without all the aggravation of management, and a Workers Council was formed. Within weeks they have won action and recognition on many of their grievances.

Brookwood have shown that it pays to dare to take action when you know it's right.

#### BANSTEAD

A second Workers Council has been set up covering two psychiatric hospitals in Banstead (Surrey) and Horton (near Epsom). The Works Council has been set up because the Area Health Authority wants to replace the Banstead District Management Team (DMT) with one from Horton which points to the closure of one of the hospitals. The Workers Council has made it clear that if the Horton DMT enters the hospital they will take complete control: workers from NUPE, COHSE, F&G are involved plus staff reps and a consultant. It has set up an Executive Council which is dealing with wages, administration, medical supplies and staffing. For more information contact: The Secretary Joint Union Committee, Banstead Hospital, Nr Sutton, Surrey.

#### EMERGENCY BED SERVICE

If you or a person close to you is rushed to hospital, you don't stop to think about how it's arranged that a bed is

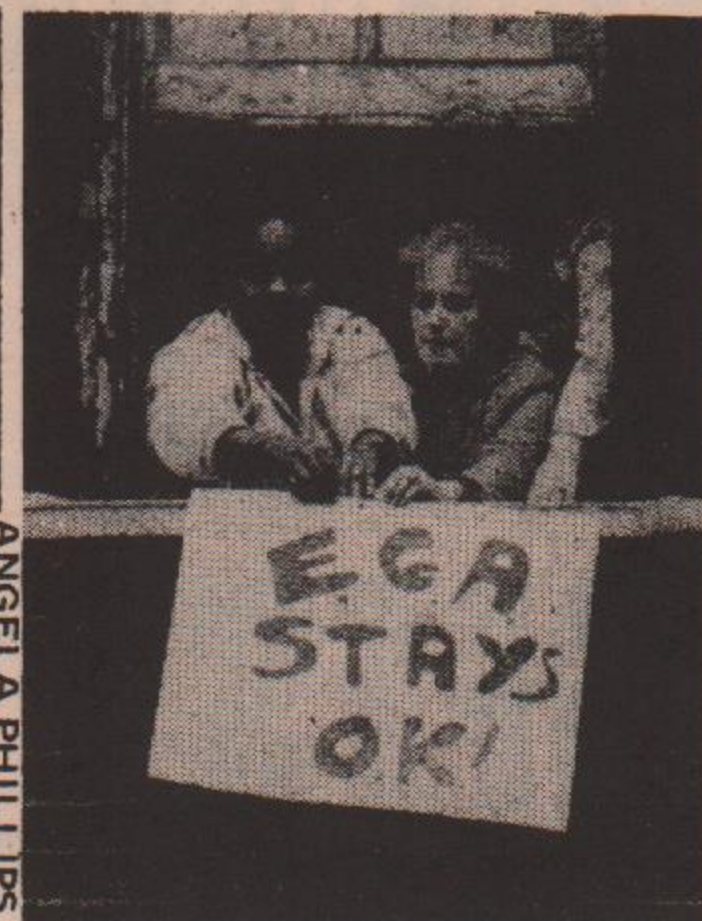
available when you get there. But all that work of finding spaces and circulating information is vital, and it's carried out by the Emergency Bed Service (EBS). The COHSE branch at EBS support all attempts by staff in London London's hospitals to fight cuts and keep the Health Service running properly.

For this reason, they supported the EGA workin, and refused to accept instructions from Camden and Islington Area Health Authority telling them to stop sending patients to the EGA.

For this gesture of solidarity, 9 COHSE members were suspended, but thanks to militant support, these disciplines have been reduced to warnings, which the workers are now fighting to get removed from their work records.

#### EGA

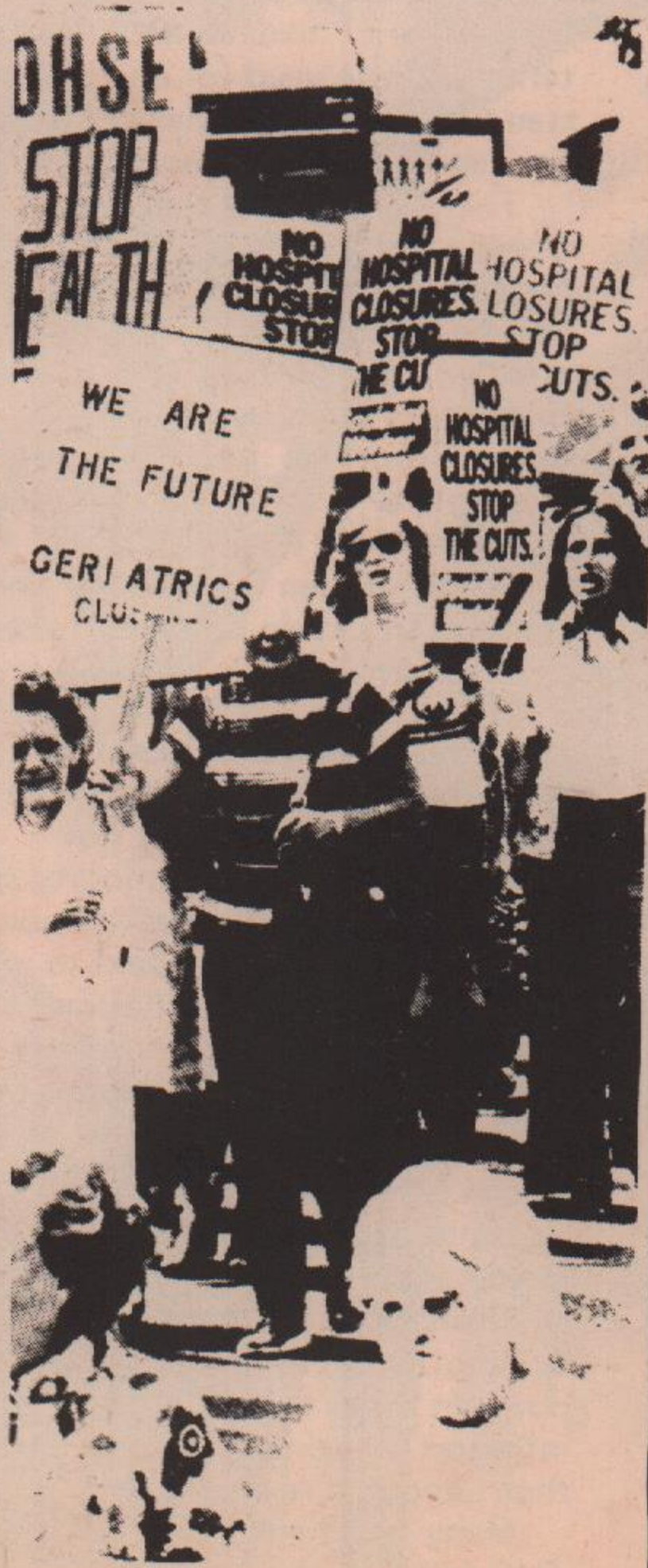
The Government has promised further consultation over the future of the EGA. In the meantime, the hospital is to continue functioning as a unit. The struggle to save the EGA has so far prevented the closure of the only woman's hospital in London. It has also developed space for the service provided by the well-woman clinic.



ANGELA PHILLIPS

Cuts in the Health Service do not only mean closures, run-down of facilities and staff shortages. Our wages, together with those of all other workers have been held down by the Social Contract and the cash limits imposed on all Health Authorities.

The DHSS has broken its promise to the electricians despite having recently come to similar agreement with doctors, to keep their pay levels in line with professionals in other fields. What applies to doctors should apply to electricians as well.



John Sturrock (Report)

## NHS is 30 -from page 1

### WHAT WE WANT

In the long run, what we want is a People's Health Service under the direct control of those who use it and those who work in it — the patients and the workers.

In the meantime, the NHS must be defended and improvements fought for. These include:

- Nationalisation of the drug industry.
- An end to prescription charges — including dental charges.
- An emphasis on preventative medicine.
- Community control of health centres and surgeries.
- An end to part-time consultants in the NHS.
- No use of any NHS facility by private patients.
- More health workers to be taken on to reduce waiting lists.

SUPPORT THE TORCHLIGHT VIGILS JULY 4th/5th IN LONDON, BIRMINGHAM, SHEFFIELD, HULL

# AGAINST THE NAZIS

## STEEL PULSE BUZZCOCKS CHINA STREET

SATURDAY JULY 15 RALLY AT 12 NOON  
STRANGWAYS, BURY NEW RD  
MANCHESTER  
MARCH TO ALEXANDRA PARK  
SPONSORED BY NORTH WEST REGION TUC

ORGANISED BY ANTI NAZI LEAGUE, PO BOX 151, LONDON WC2, TOGETHER WITH ROCK AGAINST RACISM, AND NORTH WEST COMMITTEE AGAINST RACISM

## Builders Back-off

INDUSTRIAL action throughout the country over the annual wage negotiations for the construction industry was abandoned after the Conference of UCATT, the largest of the building trade unions, voted overwhelmingly to accept the employers offer of 9.7%

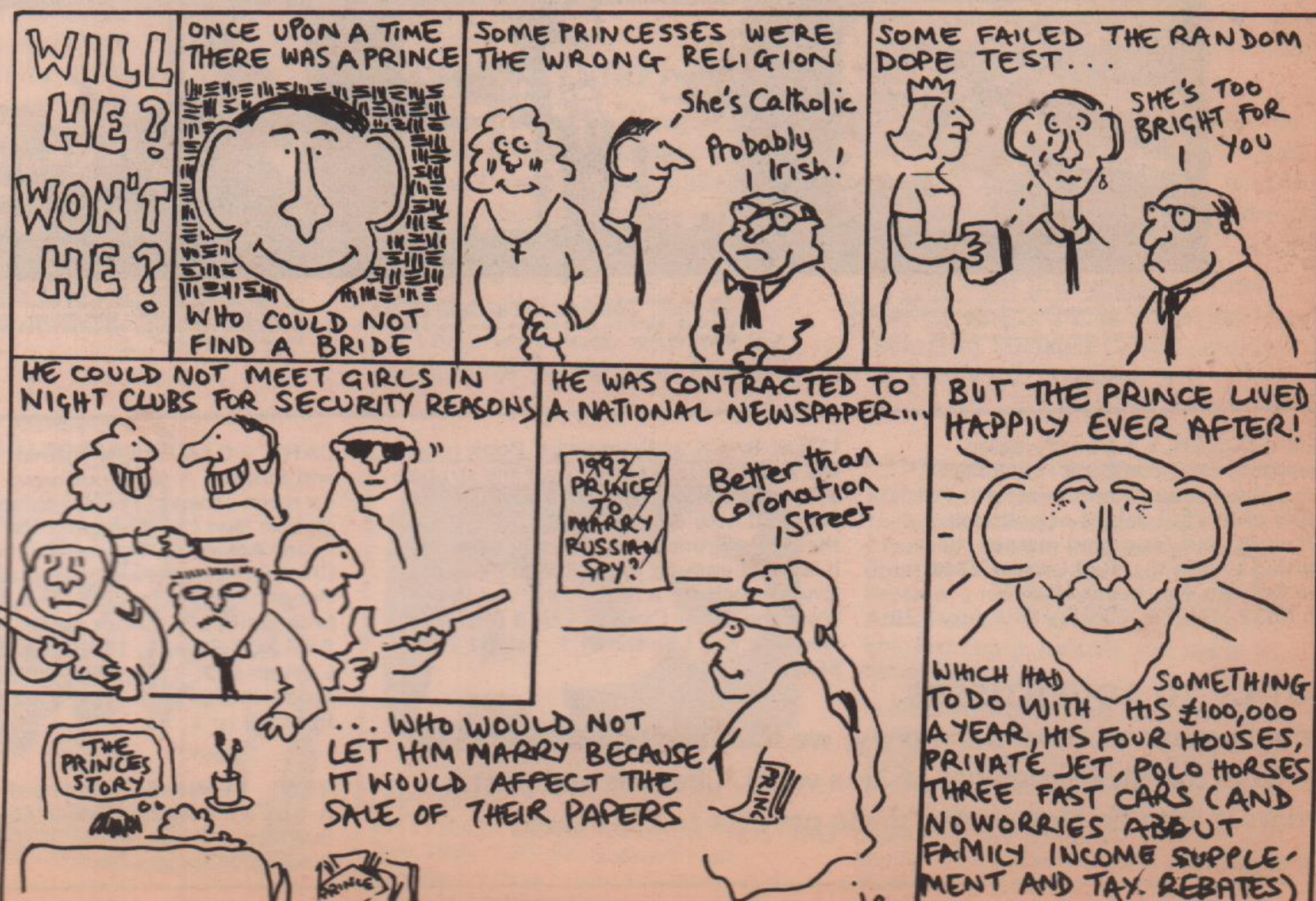
At one stage a week earlier it seemed as though the TGWU was going to go it alone and carry through the policy of industrial action decided on by the delegated trade group national committee. There were obvious problems in deciding on strike action when it was fairly clear that UCATT would not go out officially, and the "moderates" were talking about the possibility of violence on the picket lines between trade unionists.

### CROSSED LINES

When the UCATT Conference decided overwhelmingly

to accept the pay claim and it became obvious that UCATT would officially be crossing TGWU picket lines the TGWU negotiators, in particular George Henderson, the national trade group secretary, who had no wish for a strike in the first place, wriggled easily off the hook. The dampers were put on regional activity and the national trade group committee hastily recalled to reverse their earlier decision.

UCATT speakers at the Conference condemned TGWU policy claiming that the TGWU plan was a manoeuvre to poach members in the construction industry. It was probably more the worry of the executive that they would lose control of the rank and file. In the wake of this whole saga many building trade militants are angry at both unions for not taking a more aggressive stand on the original demands of consolidation of supplements and on the 35 hour week.



# BIG FLAME

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