

Thirty London hospitals threatened with closure

We all might be lucky to be alive in 1979. The latest report from the Department of Health reveals the biggest ever cuts in hospitals in the London area.

In the immediate future, 30 hospitals are threatened with closure or reduced facilities. And over a period of time a hundred others are threatened.

These figures, and more dirty linen, come from a new report called 'A Revised Hospital Plan for Inner London', produced by the London Co-ordinating Committee which is chaired by a permanent secretary at the Department of Health.

Why haven't they publicised this report? Well, the shock might give us all heart attacks, and there's not enough beds, plus the undertakers are on strike for the measly £6. But seriously, Barbara Castle has been keeping very quiet about the size of the cuts, and where they are going to be in the hope that no one will notice before it is too late

We need our hospital

Acton Hospital in Gunnersbury Lane is one of the small local hospitals which is threatened. It is an old hospital, badly in need of modernisation, but which has served the local community for years. Local hospital workers called a meeting inside Acton Hospital on January 28th to organise to fight the threats.

The Area Health Authority wants Acton to be a geriatric hospital, which will only cater for old people.

The operating theatres and casualty department would 'move' to Hammersmith Hospital, or the Central Middlesex at Park Royal.

In other words, they would just have to carry the extra burden of work with no new facilities. But the people at a meeting of the health authority had other ideas. One woman said: 'I'm a local woman. I was a patient in this hospital for thirteen weeks. They saved my life. We need our hospital.'

Another woman said: 'Hammersmith Hospital is a long way. We have to take two buses from here. We would be waiting hours for the bus and when we get to Hammersmith, we will have to wait hours in the queue. I have lived in this area for twenty seven years. I have worked in this hospital for four years and before that I worked in the Co-op. I talk to a lot of people and no-one I know wants this hospital closed. It should stay open.'

A woman teacher from Acton Technical College said: 'In a college, there are often small accidents with bunsen burners in the labs; people cut themselves. We need a casualty here. Where would we bring people if it was closed?'

Waiting

A local tenant said 'this hospital serves the South Acton Estate and the local schools. People need a local hospital. They've already stopped the 24 hour casualty and made it only 9 am to 5 pm. This hospital should not be run down anymore.'

Shop stewards and militants from several local hospitals and from London Airport spoke about the need

Health is not for sale

to get support from local workplaces to keep Acton Hospital open.

Last October a similar meeting took place in Hackney Town Hall over the threatened closures and re-planning of several East London hospitals, including the Eastern, the Metropolitan and the Mothers' Hospital.

Someone shouted: 'Talk about closing hospitals now and making improvements later is like hanging a man one night and holding the trial in the morning.'

And a porter from Barts Hospital (also under the axe) said the only way they could close down the Mothers' Hospital was to castrate all the men in Hackney.

Hackney is another area which has been promised a new central hospital ever since the war, and now there is NO CHANCE in the foreseeable future. And this, despite the fact that more children die at birth, more people get bronchitis, TB and cancer, or suffer from mental breakdown in Hackney than in any other

area of London.

Ever since it was clear that Barbara Castle intended to attack our health to try and restore profit margins to private industry and hidden bosses, there have been angry responses from working class people all over the country.

The Government tries to make it sound as if they were just redistributing the money. At the Acton meeting one doctor said that we needed more care for old people and psychiatric cases. He said there were too many beds for acute cases and these could go elsewhere. Fortunately, workers at the Hammersmith and Park Royal know how overcrowded these hospitals really are.

Cuts; the real facts

But behind the disguise of redistribution lie the real facts: CUTS in hospitals, CUTS in staff, CUTS through keeping our wages down.

Continued on back page

Act used as terror campaign against 1,000's



THIS MONTH a major campaign against the Prevention of Terrorism Act starts in West London. It follows considerable police action against Irish people in the area. Over 1,000 people have been detained under the Act. Yet of these only 35 have been charged with serious offences - all of which existed before the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Three people have been charged with wasting police time! And of the 56 people deported to Ireland, none have been charged with any offence. One shop steward from a Hammersmith building site was even picked up and held from Christmas Eve to Boxing Day, and then released without charge. It's clear this Act is being used to intimidate the Irish community.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act was introduced in November 1974. It has been renewed every six months since. Under it the police can:

- * Detain without charge for seven days.
- * The authorities have the power to take finger prints and photographs, forcibly if necessary, and hold on to them as long as they please.
- * They can deport to Ireland without charge or trial. They do not have to give a reason for this.
- * Belonging to or supporting the IRA is illegal.

The Act is being used to gather information on Irish people, their friends, drinking habits etc. It's being used to stop people expressing political opinions, if these opinions are support for the Republican movement. And in some cases it has been used to intimidate Irish militants.

The campaign against the Act was started by the Hammersmith Shop Stewards Committee, and is supported by the West London Troops Out Movement. The aim is to provide immediate support for anyone arrested under the Act, by mounting pickets outside police stations where someone is being held, mobilising the local trade

union movement, and providing day and night legal advice.

If you need our help, contact 01-603.8654 DAY OR NIGHT. If you want to help on the campaign, for instance by distributing leaflets, contact Big Flame.

In West London we have already seen that local action can get people released. James O'Rourke, a local TGWU member, had an exclusion order on him withdrawn after action by the West London UCATT branch and the Hammersmith Trades Council.

Hopefully the idea will snowball. Already people in South London, Liverpool and Birmingham are thinking of starting similar action. Eventually it could snowball into a campaign to repeal the Act.

DEMONSTRATION and RALLY against PUBLIC SPENDING CUTS

SATURDAY FEB 21st Assemble 10 am at Digbeth Civic Hall MARCH 10.30am to Birmingham Town Hall for MASS RALLY

Organised by West Midlands TUC

GAY WORKING PEOPLES CONFERENCE

Feb 14-15 Leeds Polytechnic, Calverley Street, Leeds.

Registration £1 Wageless 50p from 153a Woodhouse Lane, Creche, disco, films. Leeds 2

Strike wave hits Spanish bosses

The latest strike wave in Spain is the financiers'. They are taking their money out fast; a vote of no confidence in the men who've taken over from Franco. For the truth is that it's no longer possible to guarantee that high level of profits that businessmen took for granted in Spain since the Civil War.

Nothing has spelt this out more clearly than the actions of the Chrysler workers in Madrid. No longer content to take home two thirds of the average car worker's wage in Spain, these men and women have come forward in the last few weeks as the leaders of the struggle against the regime. Since the police destroyed the shop floor organisation a few years back, Chrysler had become infamous for its wages (low) and the speed of its line (faster and faster.)

That was bad enough, but what was unbearable was the regime's wage freeze coming at a time when inflation wasn't far short of 20%. So, the Chrysler workers have given notice to their bosses that the days of the superprofits are over, at the same time as they demand more money, plus the right to organise freely to get it. This is more or less the programme of the whole working class and one which thousands of workers, housewives and students have shown their will to fight for since Christmas, despite the tear gas and baton charges of the police, and even the emergency conscription of the striking metro and postal workers.

no more liberal

The working class has registered the same fact as the financiers. The repression may go on, but it no longer carries the conviction it did under Franco. For one thing, it's no longer so uniform. The police must have been told to lay off, for in the case of one demonstration in the north, by workers against unemployment, they cleared the way through the traffic for the marchers. The new cabinet is no more liberal than the last, but it does at least realise that the side that lost the Civil War - the working class, and the Basque and Catalan nations - can no longer be governed by the stick alone.

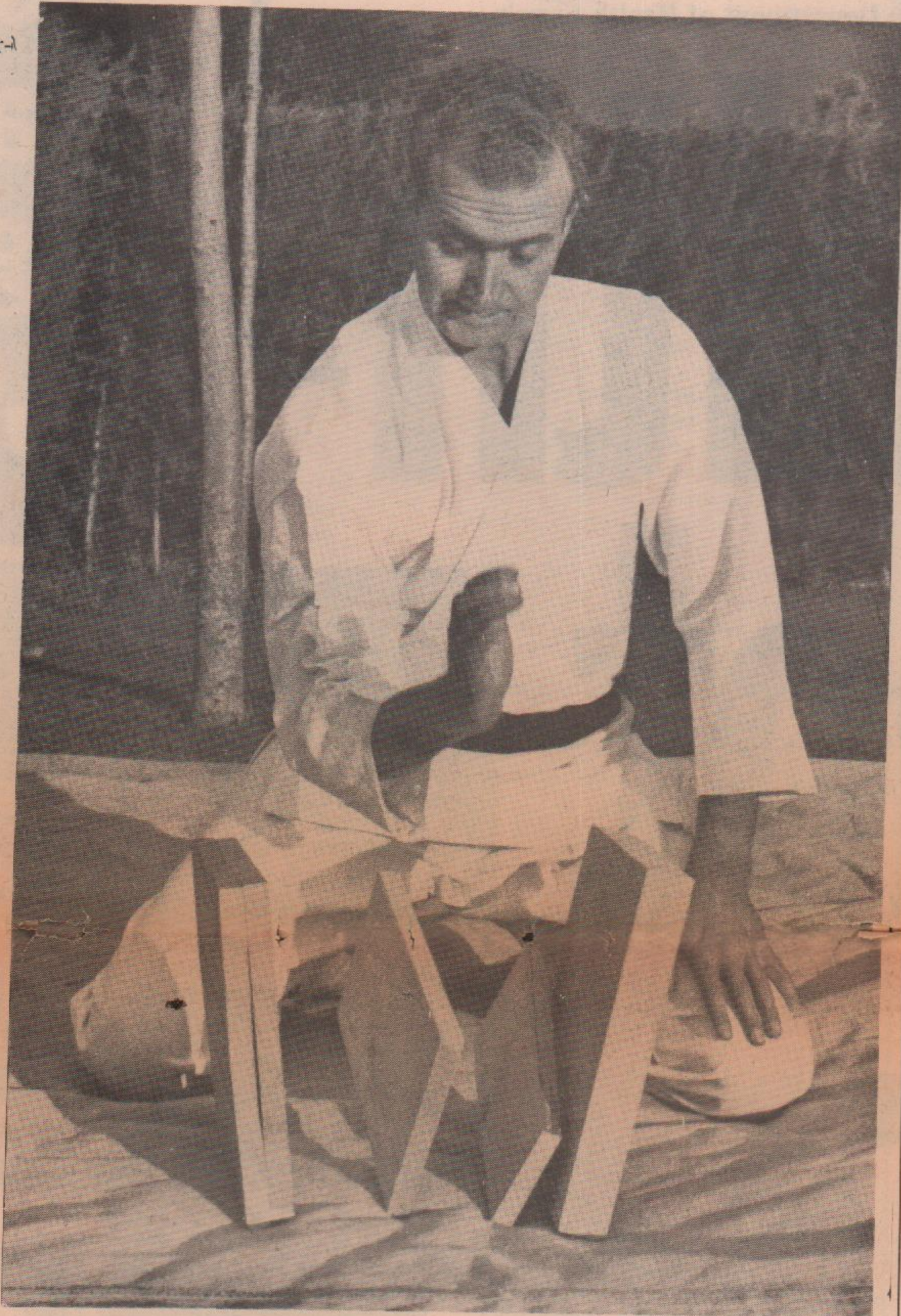
Their response to the rising wave of strikes of the past few weeks has been two-sided. They've taken a no-surrender line against what they call 'subversion' - for example, demonstrations calling for freedom for political prisoners which make the police see red - and at the same time suggesting that concessions are on the way if everybody behaves themselves. So, while the police deal with the demonstrators, the minister for the interior (home secretary) engages a leader of the Socialist Party in conversation about his desire for democratic elections soon. Time is running out for the regime and the pressures on all sides are doubling week by week.

democratic regime

The main problem for the men who took over from Franco is how to set up a more democratic regime - one which would win Spain entrance to the Common Market - without opening up the way for revolution, as in Portugal. This involves a big gamble. Already, the working class has shown itself impatient for real political and economic change. It's probably true that in the course of the battles of the past few weeks, the workers have effectively won back the right to demonstrate on the streets.

Spain is a policeman's paradise and there are many who are, as they say in the Merseyside police, 'stick-happy'.

There is an alternative, but it's not one which the financiers and big employers want, and that's to return



Juan Carlos: will he be next for the chop?

to a state of siege. Spain has been a policeman's paradise for forty years, and the condition known in the Merseyside police as 'stick-happy' is widespread. The police and the gangs of fascists, who work together, are determined to prevent any shift to the left, and they know they can rely on important sections of the armed forces. But highly industrialised societies can't be run for profit by primitive policemen.

above ground

There is a section of the Spanish employers who want to see the Communist Party legalised this year. They know they can expect a police backlash if this were to happen, but on balance they are ready for that if, as they believe, the Communist Party above ground is the best guarantee of the good behaviour of the working class.

On the strength of the last few weeks, that's by no means sure. The

Communist Party wanted to use the strike wave as a bargaining counter with the regime. It backed the strikes to prove that unless it was recognised and legalised, Spain would be ungovernable. In fact, the strikes quickly spread outside the control of any of the parties. Despite the rise in unemployment and the uncertainties of the last few months, the Spanish working class seems as determined as it was this time last year. It's hard to see how the regime can escape from its dilemma except by giving way on the immediate demands - an end to the wage freeze and the release of the political prisoners. But once that happens, what will be left of the regime?

Franco spent his last winter in 'hibernation', kept alive by a battery of machines while the arrangements were made for his succession. But it all seems to have been a waste of time...

CIA hand out

AN AMERICAN newspaper has claimed that Fleet Street is subsidised by British intelligence. The Washington Post says British newspapers rely on subsidies from the secret service to pay foreign correspondents salaries.

The story was immediately hotly and indignantly denied by Fleet Street. Yet there is evidence to suggest there may be a grain of truth in it.

Last summer at the beginning of the latest phase in the war in

Angola, a batch of British journalists flew out to Angola. They were under contract to write for various Fleet Street papers. The trip was paid for...not by the papers... but UNITA, the South African and American backed Angolan group.

And where does UNITA get its cash from? Apart from South Africa, at least some of it almost certainly comes from the CIA and British intelligence. The Washington Post wasn't so far off the mark.



Britain could still do Ireland a favour....

GET OUT

REPRESSION, REPRESSION and more repression. That is the sum total of our "democratic" governments policy for the crisis in Ireland.

In 1969 the catholic civil rights movement provoked a violent backlash from the Ulster police-state. The system went into crisis. So Britain sent in the troops to maintain law and order; to calm the situation and make sure any reforms were controlled from above - not from the people themselves from below. Repression!

In 1970, the army was unable to persuade the anti-unionist people to give up their arms. The people were refusing ever again to be defenceless against the loyalist mobs and the rampaging, sectarian police-force. So the army took off its gloves and clamped down. Repression!

By 1972, the British state had had enough of this 'civil rights nonsense' and wanted the people disorganised and grateful for what they were given. So in February of that year, the Paratroop Regiment shot dead 13 unarmed civil rights demonstrators. Bloody Sunday!

Its just been more of the same ever since. The "latest move" - sending the SAS into South Armagh - just happens to be one of the sickest. Its sick because the SAS has been in Ireland secretly for years. Even the RUC Chief-Inspector Drew admitted that a 'plainclothes army patrol' shot dead or wounded a group of 5 unarmed catholics in Belfast on 12th May 1972. And its sick when any govt uses trained psychopaths as a sop to the

demands of the Paisley's and UDA men of this world.

These men and the sectarian state that spawned them are the real Irish problem. They lash out everytime the anti-unionists get within a sniff of their monopoly of power. Houses get burned out, civil war is threatened and a few more catholics get killed.

The republicans usually fight back without resort to sectarian assassinations. But however tragic, its inevitable that at times, some republicans will retaliate in kind. Like at Bessbrook after 5 innocent catholics had been murdered in one weekend.

So what's the answer? Not for Rees to call a meeting with the UDA. They are still fresh from bombing Dublin airport and Mulligans Bar in Kilburn. Not to send in the SAS even to try and force through some sort of phony power-sharing.

There's only one way forward to peace and equality in Ireland. Britain has got to stop propping up the unreformable, sectarian state of Ulster. That's the cause of the problem. Weaken that. Demoralise its fanatical supporters and then the protestant workers will be forced eventually to come to terms with the equality and rights of their catholic brothers and sisters. Take the power away from the Paisleys. The power that today they are using to try and yet again organise a loyalist takeover. TROOPS OUT NOW!! SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE!!

The Angolan War



MPLA militants celebrate independence in Luanda

GOLD, OIL, and diamonds. In three words, the reason why the US, the EEC and S. Africa have been so keen to keep "western-style democracy" in Angola.

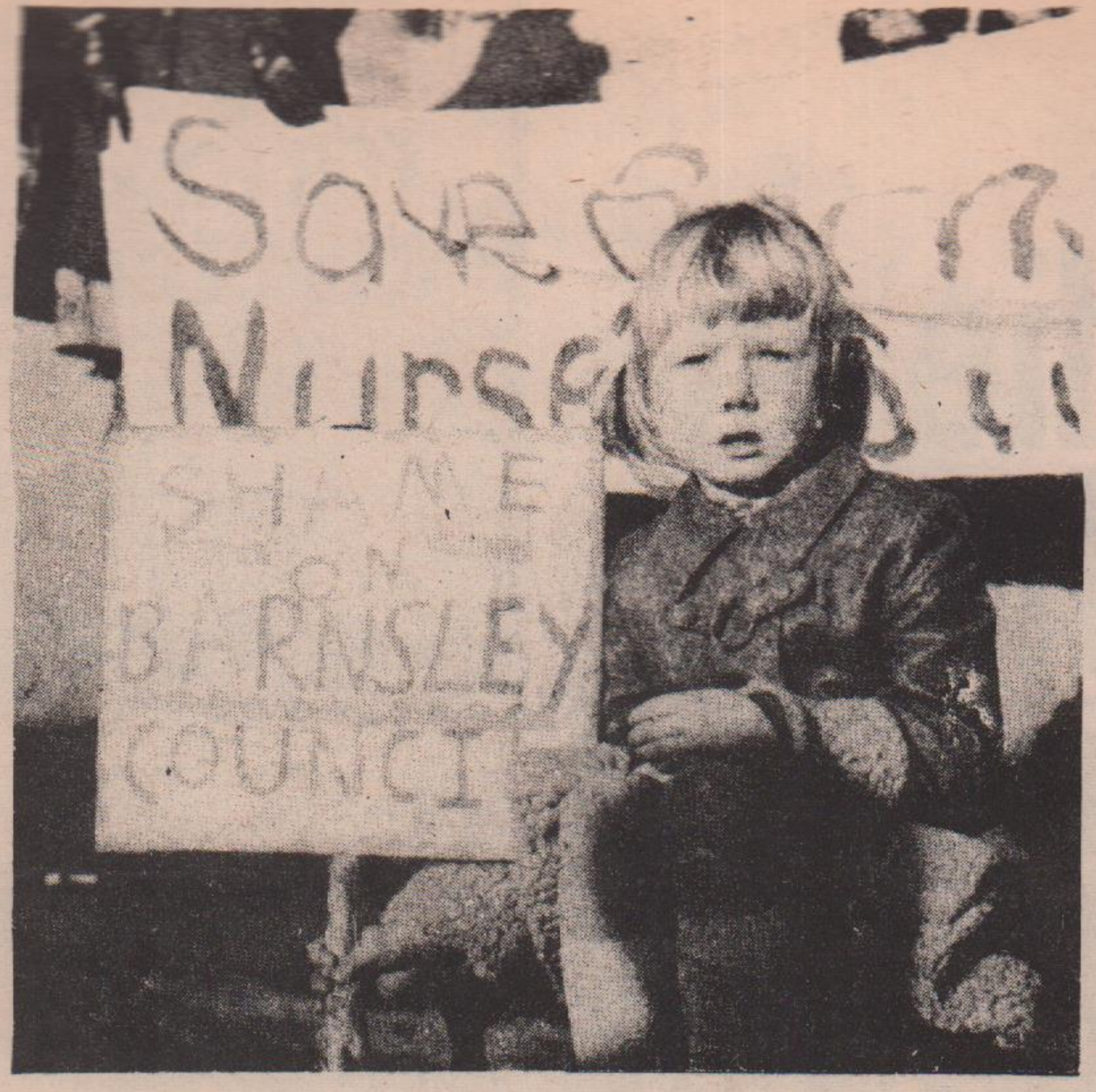
For 15 years, MPLA have been fighting for Angolan independence. But they can't be manipulated, so imperialism sets up the rivals: FNLA and UNITA. Movements that will keep Angola under the domination of foreign big business. Movements that can be relied on to keep down the Angolan workers. Like when Unita suppressed the Lobito dockers strike or when FNLA murdered the

militants before they were kicked out of Angola's capital, Luanda.

The MPLA are not puppets of the Russian state. They receive aid from Russia, but they have a right to any aid that will help them win their justifiable fight.

But they insist on their political independence. They are a left-wing movement and at the moment are the only force which promises to put Angola on the road of genuine liberation and social freedom. VICTORY TO MPLA! LABOUR MUST RECOGNISE THE LUANDA GOVERNMENT

Fight the cut-backs



Hospitals in South Birmingham suddenly found themselves without clean linen recently, when cleaners refused to do the extra work. The 25 cleaners at Moseley Hall Hospital had to be asked to 'make do', when staffing was 25% below adequate levels.

The cleaners boycotted doctors' homes and left nurses' beds unmade. They refused to clean kitchens and left the washing up to nurses and porters. Eventually the management caved in.

Resistance to the cuts like this can be found throughout the public services.

●At Preston Royal Infirmary ward clerks have won a fight to get a vacancy filled. When one of the ward clerks left, management informed the others that the vacancy would not be filled. They would have to do the extra work themselves. Under the threat of industrial action from T&G members, management did a hurried climb down and the vacancy was filled.

●In several social work offices in London, where staffing levels are being cut back, social workers are refusing to do 'non-essential' work like chasing up rent arrears.

●At Newcastle Polytechnic NALGO members are threatening strike action if management go ahead with plans to 'rationalise' the administration. A team of work study experts has been moved in. A meeting of 240 NALGO members last week threatened all out action if they aren't withdrawn.

●In North Tyneside tenants on the South Meadow Well estate are campaigning against the local authority's refusal to modernise pre-war council flats. They have organised a petition, held two demonstrations outside the council offices, and are now trying to organise support from other council estates in North Tyneside. They are demanding that all council houses in the area should be improved by 1980, and that the cost of this should not be taken out of any other schemes.

'The elderly will wait longer for a place in a home; their home help and meals on wheels are likely to be cut. The disabled will be denied the aids and adaptations they need. The mentally ill and handicapped will suffer a reduction in the already inadequate service they receive. And children and families at risk will be met by social workers with even less time to help them.'

The British Association of Social Workers.

But in the face of widespread Government cutbacks, the cuts campaigns are still small and isolated. There is a need for more muscle and more organisation. There are no ready made answers to this, but there are some things that can be done.

1. In the trade unions; both the local government officers' union NALGO, and the public employees' union, NUPE, are committed to fighting the cuts. NALGO says it is 'deeply concerned' about the cuts and has issued a pamphlet called 'Crisis: Save Your Services.' NUPE's Executive Council has said it will back all members resisting cuts, and has asked them to do whatever they

can to ensure that cuts don't go through. Fine words. These unions must now be made to put their words into practice. Workers in both unions have been given the green light to take action. They should do this and fight to ensure that their unions give them official national backing.

Cuts committees

2. In your area; there are at least a dozen anti-cuts committees around the country now. Some are better organised than others. Tyneside has got one of the best organised. The Tyneside Action Committee Against the Cuts came out of a conference attended by some 350 people in November. Since then it has held two other public meetings, and set up a series of four working parties to look into housing, education, health and social services, and public transport. There is also an overall co-ordinating committee. The aim is to first find out what is going on and then co-ordinate action against it. The Committee is backed by local trade unions, tenants associations and the trades council.

'In Surrey the education budget has been reduced by £3.8 million. It will mean an end to part-time teachers, closing remedial centres for children with reading difficulties, the abolition of the school library service, closing some branch libraries, closing all youth centres, and ending all adult education classes not teaching vocational subjects. There is also a proposal for a further £3.5 million reduction in the budget.'

Surrey Education Committee

This kind of co-ordination is not only applicable in areas. Newcastle Polytechnic lecturers in the ATTI have set up a Cuts Committee of their own to monitor what is going on. The Poly has recently been merged with the local college of further education, and staff at both fear rationalisations. Cuts come in all shapes and sizes. One of the difficulties is recognising them and knowing what is going on. The job of the monitoring committee will be to look at likely areas of cuts and keep a close watch at what management is doing.

3. Action. NUPE and the West Midlands TUC are organising a major demonstration in Birmingham on February 21. Everybody in the surrounding area should support it.

A dark future for us all

'RATHER BLOODY' is how one civil servant described the Labour Government's plans for public spending over the next twelve months. It's easy to see why. The Government's Public Expenditure White Paper, due this month is expected to recommend:

- Heavy cuts in transport, health and welfare.
- Lesser cuts in housing, defense and education.
- Finance for private industry as top priority.

The plan was due out before Christmas, but the bloodletting has been so severe that it's now months late.

Already there are signs of what this murder plan will mean. In further education it has been estimated there will be big redundancies, up to 200 lecturers in a typical city, and a decline in the number of students over the next eight years by 40,000. These estimates come from no less a source than the Times Higher Educational Supplement, not known to hold hysterical opinions.

At the same time local authorities have received their marching orders for the coming year. They have been told there will be a 'standstill' in local government spending. This, of course, is a joke; all local authorities are in debt and with interest rates going up, while budgets remain the same, something has to go. You've guessed it - public services!

These measures, however, are only the beginning. The Labour Party's own Home Policy Committee really let the cat out of the bag in the middle of last month when it argued that the Government should

'Government cuts in public expenditure mean that a crisis of enormous social dimensions is looming'
Geoffrey Drain, General Secretary, NALGO

We think

EVERY WORKING week, 15,000 lose their jobs. That is the same as two 'Chryslers' a week. It means 1,400,000 unemployed. The highest for 30 years.

Those with jobs have the same kind of problems hanging over them; Government payrestrictions and bosses screaming for manning changes, mobility and increased productivity.

Everyone is on the receiving end. In the home the housewife is squeezed by inflation and forced to take on an even greater load. For free she's the nurse who has to cover for a health system that is being deliberately run down; for free she's the full-time baby minder, even more trapped now that the nursery programme is cut back.

And our kids: suffering the cut-backs in health and education; on the receiving end of parents tensed up by trying to cope with inflation; and if they're grown up and leaving school, it's straight onto the dole queues or into badly paid jobs.

Our whole life is under severe attack. The working class, in or out of work, is never well off in capitalist society. But it's worse at times like this.

It happens because we are stuck with a system that runs on one principle alone: profitability. If the return is not there for Mr Bourgeoisie then it doesn't happen. And if that leaves a million on the dole in Britain, or a million starving in Bangladesh, then too bad. The working class and peasantry may have produced all the wealth in society. But they control it. And that's what matters.

Today, profitability is down. So either Mr Bourgeoisie and his mates don't invest; or invest only on the basis of making us work harder. For us it's all the same big problem; capitalism.

It is a system that every day of its existence destroys working class people and prevents us controlling and enjoying the wealth we produce. It is a system that wants us poor; wants us competing with each other; wants us powerless. Why should we take an ounce of responsibility for this system's crisis?

They've declared war on us. It's time we declared our own war. FOR THE RIGHT TO LIVE!

AT WORK

- ★ No redundancies. 35 hours with no loss of pay to share the work.
- ★ 40 hours pay - work or not. Lay-offs or not!
- ★ No speed-ups, no productivity deals. If they want more work, get the unemployed men and women in.
- ★ No to any incomes policy.
- ★ Nationalise without compensation any firms closing down.

AND OUT

- ★ Stop the cuts in public spending.
- ★ Freeze prices and rents. No evictions.
- ★ £6 now for the unemployed. For a guaranteed living wage, including an independent income for housewives.

make wholesale revisions in its policy commitments made during the elections in 1974. This exercise in revision would come into effect in 1977 and would cover a five year period. It would involve cutting back all commitments made so far.

As a final insult the Government has also announced cuts in the number of civil servants in public services. This will mean that election pledges like introducing a wealth tax will never see the light of day because of staff shortages.

The plan is to cut tens of thousands of civil servants over the next five years. If you think red tape is bad now, think what it will be like then, when staff levels are slashed in half.

Wrong thinking

The aim of this mighty squeeze on our public services, which we pay for out of taxes, is to channel money and workers into private industry. The thinking goes that as soon as we get our long promised economic revival it will be essential there is nothing in the way of private industry expanding as fast as possible. In the words of Harold Wilson: 'We must ensure that our private industry is able to make the maximum use of any upswing in the economy.' Money tied up in government and local authority shares will be shaken out, to become available for private investment. Workers, who can become dangerously scarce and powerful in boom periods will be shaken out onto the dole queue, ready to be snapped up by private industry when (and if) the time comes.

The arguments behind this thinking don't hold up though.

1. It's said Britain's public services are too large. Wrong. They are no bigger or more expensive than those of other 'modern' societies. Far from being exceptionally large, rather, British workers are being asked to accept a large reduction in essential services, by comparison with what their brothers and sisters are prepared to accept abroad.

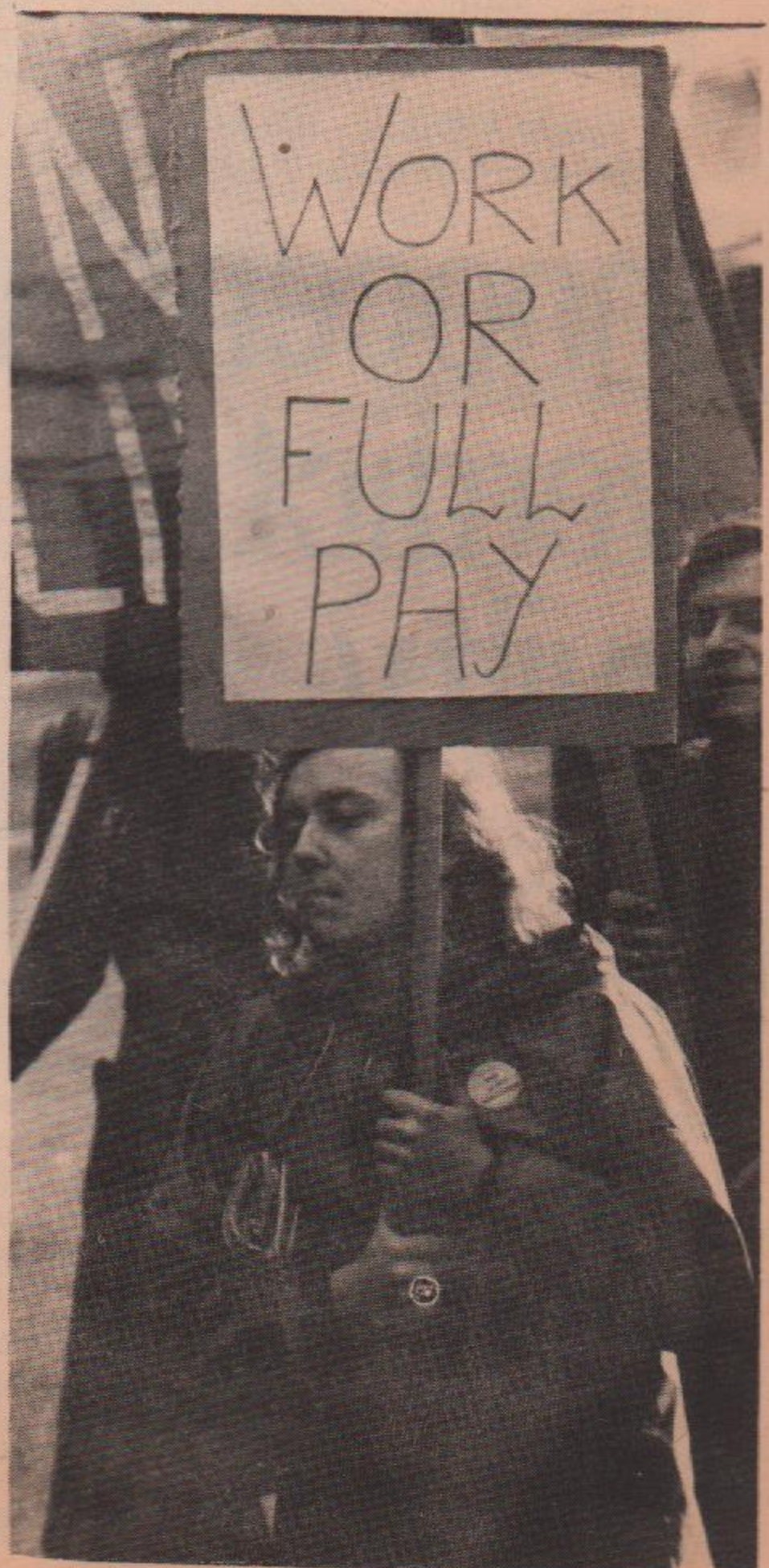
2. It's said that if we squeeze the public services, the money will find its way into private industry. Wrong. By squeezing the public services there is absolutely no guarantee that the money squeezed out will find its way into private industry in Britain. Just as likely it will go straight overseas, where bigger profits can be made. In 1974 alone British financiers exported £1.6 billion for investment over-

seas. What is to stop this continuing?

3. It's argued that the public services are heavily in debt and therefore we should cut their budgets to stop this happening. Wrong. The main reason why money is having to be borrowed to support public services is the crisis. If the crisis disappeared tomorrow, half the debts of public spending would disappear overnight. This is the millions of pounds being spent on dole money, and not being collected in national insurance payments while people are out of work.

Private business

The Labour Government's solution to the crisis is to bail out the private bosses. Not content with freezing wages, they are also after the public services we need. This is Labour's solution to the crisis, to prop up private business at the expense of the general, and therefore working class, good.



Chrysler

Three people die an hour

After only two weeks back at work, Chrysler has already run into opposition to its plans to carve up the workforce.

At Ryton, Coventry, on the first day, work stopped for nearly two hours when a bogey came off track. This is normally a ten second repair job. But foremen and supervisors were operating a campaign of non-co-operation against the carve up. They reported the breakdown, in writing to the maintenance. It was an hour and a half later before production could start up again.

Meanwhile at Linwood, Scotland, the plant's 6,000 workforce went on strike in support of 17 men transferred to the factory from a small Chrysler subsidiary. The 17 men wanted the same rate for the job as the Linwood men.

Despite this opposition the company is still pushing to double productivity. To do this it is throwing all traditional working practices out the window

- At Stoke, workers have been told manning levels will be cut.
- At Ryton, where the new French 'Alpine' car kits will be assembled, many 'traditional' jobs will disappear and workers face an entirely new situation. New timings, job definitions and manning levels. Shop-floor organisation will have to be completely rebuilt round the new jobs.
- At Linwood it's the same story. There, workers face a new model, in this case, the Avenger, transferred from Coventry.

In the chaos of reorganisation management can be expected to use every trick in the book to push through maximum productivity. And the same chaos and crisis atmosphere surrounding the company make it hard to resist.

Chrysler's aim is to introduce the levels of productivity it operates in its other plants around the world. Here is what it, and its friends, have proudly managed in America.

Stress and tension

'Every day in the US, 65 car workers drop dead at their job on the factory floor; on average some 1,600 of them die in the plants every year, and over half of these have heart attacks. Add to these figures - which do not include the results of accidents at work - the 63,000 cases of disabling diseases, and the 1,700,000 cases of lost or impaired hearing, and you realise the car industry wreaks as heavy a toll upon the US working class did in the Vietnam war.'

These are just the measurable statistics. Millions of others suffer from unmeasurable stress and tension.

'James Johnson worked at Chrysler at its axle plant at Elsdon, in the

US. After a dispute with the foreman, he left the plant and returned with a shotgun which he used to kill two foremen and a job setter. The defense lawyer claimed that working conditions at Elsdon were such that Johnson could not be held responsible for his actions. The judge and jury visited the plant, found the situation 'abominable' and agreed that Johnson was temporarily insane at the time of the killing.'

This is the prospect now staring thousands of Chrysler workers in the face. For these and other reasons workers in British car factories have refused to accept the insanity of the production line. As one observer wrote:

'Workers don't like the line; the last thing they want to do is screw on wheels. They leave jobs unfinished; they throw bombs of Bostic into scrap bins, sending flames towards the roof of the plant.'

At Chrysler it is no different. At Ryton management had practically lost control of production last summer.

'It's anarchy. This plant only runs because we're prepared to let it. The foremen have lost control.'

Rank and file

This is the 'workers control' that is now under fire. Our refusal to accept death, injury, nervous tension and boredom as a necessary part of everyday life.

But in the new situation of unemployment and redundancies the rules of the game have changed. The last couple of months has shown that much of the existing trade union organisation at Chrysler doesn't work, if it ever did. Inter-plant organisation, the combine committee, effectively broke down months ago. In Coventry, where the two Chrysler plants are only seven miles apart, there hasn't been a single joint meeting of the all assembly workers. Inside the plants, senior stewards and convenors have shown that they have not come to terms with the new situation. Their only answer is to save jobs. But at what cost to those who leave and those 'lucky' enough to stay behind.

The initiative is now back with the shop-floor. It is at this level, on a day to day basis, that the company's plans will have to be resisted, and the fight to be recognised as human beings and not cogs in a machine, will go on. It's not only a matter of seeing that as few jobs as possible go. It's also the conditions of employment. The fight for jobs is as much the fight to maintain job organisation, the only guarantor of health and safety in the car plants of tomorrow.

summer they were in a strong position. That's when the British Leyland management announced the sacking of 1,500 workers. The workers answer was immediate: no jobs must go. Shop-floor pressure was intense and the unions were forced to back the fight and call for solidarity from the whole region. This was their first important move.

The workers also realised from the start that Leyland management was in fact trying to close the whole plant and the sackings were only the first step. So they voted to occupy the plants. Immediately their suspicions were confirmed. Leyland management said they were no longer interested in the plant and machinery and offered it to the Italian Government.

This is when the Innocenti workers made their second important move. Instead of worrying about embarrassing the Government, they organised a huge demonstration to put pressure on it to nationalise the company. 300,000 workers from the whole Milan region marched through the streets of the town one day last

hour

Think Tank's Dream machine

Report

OVER THE next year every man, woman and child in this country will be putting the equivalent of £3 into the Chrysler car company. You should know what you are getting for your money

First, what you're not getting. You're NOT getting a sane or rational transport system; the Chrysler carve up has not been considered in the light of the rest of the car industry - Lord Ryder, boss of the other government subsidised car company, British Leyland, wasn't even consulted. And it certainly hasn't been considered in the light of the problems facing public transport, a shortage of money to run both buses and railways.

Neither are you getting a new style Chrysler car company that makes any sense. The 'rescue' doesn't provide enough cash to fully relaunch the company, who's share of the market has dropped to a disastrous five per cent. Several years ago Chrysler said it needed 15% of the market to be viable. Nor are you getting a company that makes sense organisationally. Who ever thought of moving Avenger production from Coventry, where most of the comp-

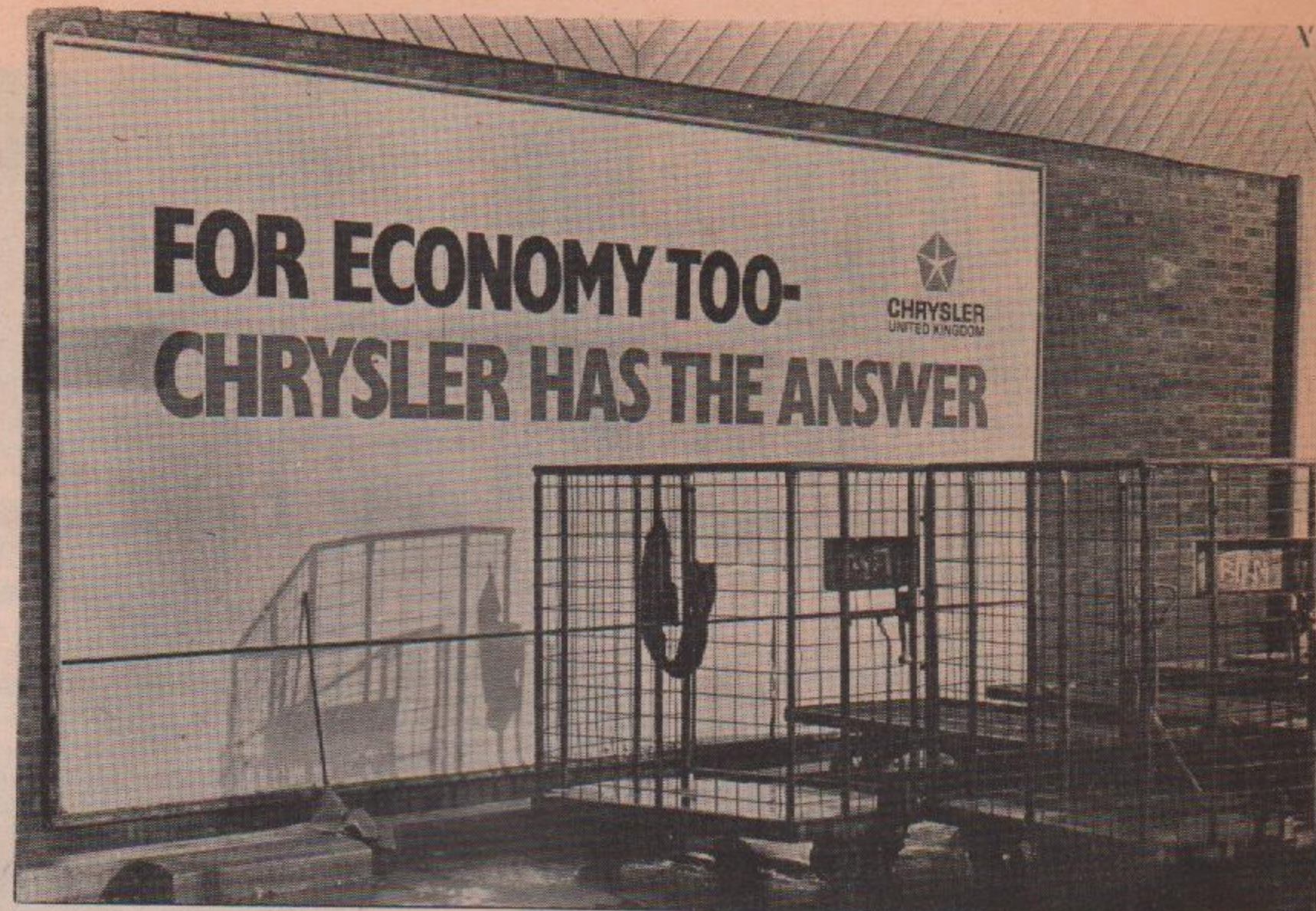


job must be lost' and '35 hour week with no loss of pay'.

The Government, under heavy pressure, tried to persuade Honda to take over the plant. But the workers rejected the idea. First because the 'rescue' did not guarantee their jobs, and second because they'd had their fill of being the pawns of a multinational. Instead they got Fiat to commit itself to take over the plant and convert it for truck production.

Since then it has become clear that Fiat is not in a hurry to start re-tooling, in fact prefers to play cat and mouse with the workers so that many will leave of their own accord. The company also claimed a 100% subsidy from the tax payer. At this point the unions rejected the plan.

Now the fight of the Innocenti workers is entering its most delicate phase. The workers are still together, the plants still occupied. The Italian Government has fallen and the general fight for the renewal of the con-



ponent manufacturers are, to Linwood in Scotland, where there are almost no component makers?

So what DO you get? In the first place you get the Government off the hook. In the longer term we have

Face saver

to turn to the Government's Think Tank report on the future of the car industry in Britain to see what's in store. This is the report that recommends shaking out one in four of the industry's workers IMMEDIATELY

As a short term measure the 'rescue' is a valuable face-saver for the Government:

- It saves it from the embarrassment of seeming to encourage unemployment, particularly in Scotland, where the Labour Party is both split and losing ground to the Scottish Nationalist Party.
- It helped defuse a potentially explosive situation. The three main Chrysler car plants were poised on the brink of occupying soon after the Company's November ultimatum to the Government. For the following six weeks the Government hedged; a rescue was in the air, but nobody knew on what terms. Union officials and convenors used it as an opportunity to hesitate. The delay and the final timing - Christmas time - sapped people's conviction. After six weeks of uncertainty, months of short time, and in some cases weeks without work, many Chrysler workers were sick of the whole business. It may not be enough to explain the final cave-in of the workers' resistance, but it played a part.
- Any big battle to save jobs would have been deeply inconvenient for the Government. Its whole economic strategy rests on continuing the present 'sweetheart' relationship with the trade union leadership, particu-

arly now while Phase 2 of the social contract is under discussion. A fight at Chrysler would have put this relationship at risk - trade union leaders might have been forced by rank and file pressure to oppose the Government. Furthermore, we know that once the £162 million was offered, considerable pressure was put on senior stewards, convenors and local full-time union officials not to embarrass 'our Labour friends in power'.

But even these 'undoubted benefits' come a bit dear at £162 million. It's the long term implications of the carve up which have really got motor manufacturers sitting on the edge of their cushioned seats. Because the beauty of the Chrysler 'rescue' is that while it appears to save 18,000 jobs at the cost of 8,000, in fact it lays the groundwork for thousands more redundancies in the future. Both Chrysler and the Government have said that the 'rescue' will only go ahead on the basis of a big increase in productivity. Virtual no-strike clauses have been written into it. As *The Times* put it: "Tightly written provisions of the final agreement... mean any big strike, sit-in or disruption of production will endanger the whole scheme". It will be hard for workers to resist with this kind of threat hanging over them. Having lost the fight to save 8,000 jobs, it's going to be difficult to fight over a couple of extra workers here and there. The plan is to turn Chrysler into the streamlined carmaker of the Tink Tank's dreams, and prevent workers' fight back against the insanity of the production line.

Chrysler has become a test bed for the whole of the motor industry. If it works, other motor manufacturers will follow. In the long-term the 'rescue' is not about saving jobs, but losing them - at Ford, Vauxhall, Leyland and the main motor component companies. It's about creating a compliant work-force that will give the same productivity levels as the sweated works of fascist Spain or Brazil.

If it doesn't work, Chrysler and the other US multinationals will pull out to where they CAN get this smooth, streamlined production. There's considerable evidence to suggest that whatever Chrysler may say, it has been laying the basis for pulling out for some time. There appears to have been a deliberate policy of running down their British operations.

- The Company has run down investment in this country. In 1972 the value of machinery in UK factories was half that of the company's Spanish plants.
- Tools and machinery have been physically transferred to Chrysler's other subsidiaries. Machine tools estimated to be worth £165,000 were shifted to Chrysler plants in South America, and machines worth £700,000 were transferred from Coventry to France and Spain.
- Since Chrysler took over a majority share in the old Rootes Company, there has not been a single all-new Chrysler car made in Britain - despite assurances from the President of Chrysler International in 1970 that they would produce at least one new model a year.
- The Chrysler UK company has given away actual and potential sales to the French Simca subsidiary, by offering its British dealers a better deal to sell Simcas than Chryslers.

- But most serious of all is the evidence that Chrysler International has been manipulating its accounts so that profits are drained out of Britain to a Swiss subsidiary, where taxes are lower. One of the benefits of being a multi-

Innocenti: workers verdict is guilty

'NOT ONE JOB MUST BE LOST'. This is the slogan of the Innocenti car workers in Milan, Italy, who face an almost identical situation to Chrysler workers. Innocenti, owned by British Leyland, has been occupied by its 4,500 workers since November against company plans to pull out and close down.

As the Chrysler carve-up takes effect, the question still lingers - how could it have been fought successfully? What is the working class solution when a multi-national company threatens to shut up? Innocenti workers are still fighting - but their struggle suggests some answers.

All through last year Innocenti workers had fought hard to defend job organisation; by the end of the

WOMEN: 'WE'LL KEEP ON FIGHTING'

Seven million anti-depressants are taken every day by women. That's twice as many as ten years ago, and it's not surprising. Women, housewives in particular, are one of the sections hardest hit by the crisis.

As the cuts in public spending spread, women are expected to step in and fill the gap.

EDUCATION CUTS mean no new nurseries and children have to wait longer to get into a school. Who looks after them at home? Women. **HEALTH SERVICE CUTS** mean longer waiting lists and shorter stays in hospital. Who looks after the sick at home? Women.

Abortion, contraception and sterilisation facilities are being starved of funds. Who puts up with the consequences of unwanted pregnancies? Women.

CUTS IN COUNCIL BUDGETS mean no money for house repairs or new housing. Who has to work in deteriorating conditions, mop up floods, fight to make condemned houses habitable, and then, at the end of the day, find the rent? Women. **INFLATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, WAGE FREEZES** all mean women have to make do on less, spend more time on shopping around and buying cheap. And they don't get paid

for any of it.

Inflation has forced women out to work, but the crisis has meant having to fight to keep these jobs. When redundancies are threatened, women are frequently the first for the chop. Often they don't get union backing; they may not work enough hours to get into a union, or part-time or flexi-shifts, designed to fit round housework, are used as an excuse not to put up a fight. To make matters worse many women work less than the 21 hours needed to get protection under the Redundancy Payments Act.

Those who manage to keep their jobs in the face of this battering, still live with the daily threat of redundancy; a whip used to push workers to work even harder. Equal pay or wage rises end up with all kinds of strings attached. **BUT WOMEN ARE FIGHTING BACK.** Last year saw ever more women refusing to pay for the crisis - either at home or work.



Abortion demonstration - June 21st 1975

For Free Safe Abortion

June 21st. Over 30,000, mainly women, march in London for **FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND.** The National Abortion Campaign brought thousands of women together and reflected the anger of millions who feel that:

"Nobody has the right to force a woman to have children

she doesn't want. Only that woman understands her own circumstances, her own feelings and what it would do to her mentally and physically."

The right to choose should not be in the hands of doctors and consultants, but women. What we need is free outpatient abortion clinics that make abortion safe and

simple, as well as better contraceptive services. Things like these are the first to get shelved with the cut-backs, so the fight will have to get stronger over this year.

"More and more women, faced with rising prices and low wages, are feeling the need to decide for themselves when they have children and how many...."

For Equal Pay

The Equal Pay Act became law on 29th December 1975, but women were busy fighting all last year to make sure of getting that money with no strings attached. This year will be no different. The Act was passed in 1970, so the bosses have had five years to make plans to evade it. They've used regrading, made jobs single sex and found loopholes. They've worked out ways of using it to get more work. But they haven't always got away with it.

In mid-May women canteen workers at Rolls Royce, Coventry, had to fight bosses attempts to use a loophole in the Act. The Act says that the lowest women's wage should be equal to the lowest man's wage in any factory agreement, but these women weren't included in the agreement so they were offered a miserable £1.33 rise, when they earned £17.20 less than the lowest male grade!!! Their 4 week strike led to a £9.50 rise and a promise of negotiations into the factory pay structure. It won largely because of good picketing and support from male workers with an overtime ban.

At Balfour Darwins, an engineering factory in Sheffield, the women had won a good equal pay agreement through their organised strength and were on the same rate as the semi-skilled men. When the firm later threatened redundancies, 23 out of 25 were women, presumably because they couldn't use them as cheap labour any more. The workers fought back, occupied the factory for ten weeks and forced management to back down and



agree to no compulsory redundancies. Other Edgar Allen (owners of Balfour Darwins) plants in the Sheffield area staged sympathy strikes which formed the beginning of more link-ups between the plants. The workers took a stand on redundancies right from the start and refused to let women be scapegoats for the bosses rationalisation plans.

can be declared wherever it's convenient. In June last year the Labour Research Department claimed that Chrysler UK was charging artificially low prices to other subsidiaries, particularly the Swiss. It calculated that price manipulations of this kind could have milked the UK company of £93 million in three years.

In this Chrysler is not unique. Last year *The Guardian* wrote: 'Car manufacturers' main interest in recent years has been in Poland, Russia, Spain and Brazil. In the next few years countries like Korea, Iran and Turkey are all likely to acquire not just car assembly plants, but local components industries as well.'

Notice what these countries have in common? They are all authoritarian regimes - countries where

strikes are forbidden and smooth uninterrupted production can, at least partially, be guaranteed.

Pouring money into Chrysler could encourage the company to stay here, in a slimmed down form and at a terrible cost to the people who work there. Just as easily it could provide the breathing space the company needs for an organised withdrawal from Britain. Putting money into a multinational like Chrysler is like climbing on to a bus blindfolded; you don't know where it's going.

While we don't have much confidence in nationalisation as a solution to workers' problems, it does have one advantage. If Chrysler were nationalised at least the money would stay in this country. Then we'd know who to blame.

For Higher Wages Against Closures

In Nov/Dec 1975 women of the Courtaulds-owned Northgate factories learned the hard way that the Government's promises of £6 wage rises to help the lower paid were empty. Like many others they had to fight to get a £6 rise on their basic of £21.90. The strike lasted for 4 weeks. It was hard going but the women were determined:

"It's a hard time to have a strike, the picket line's freezing and it's getting nearer Christmas. But it's even harder for the bosses, they're desperate to get their Christmas orders out so they're really worried now..."

The strike, which involved four Merseyside factories and eight in South Wales, won the £6 in stages that will mean that inflation will have eaten it up before they get it all. It also smashed the £3.60 limit that the Clothing Manufacturers' Federation was trying to impose on workers throughout the industry.



The picket line at Northgate - Aintree.

In summer 1975 an electrical component factory, Ward and Goldstone, in Kirkby, near Liverpool, was threatened with closure. Women there had other ideas. They contacted nearby Massey Ferguson workers and the local Kirkby Trade Union Action Committee for support to fight the closure. The bosses chickened out when they saw what they were up against; they had thought that the women wouldn't put up a fight. They cancelled the closure and brought in more work. But the women haven't fought for their jobs just to work harder and faster, they're ready to fight any attempts at rationalisation or increased productivity. These women used to be cheap labour, but they've fought to resist a productivity deal, to get equal pay, to get less hours and to stop the management sending out warning letters. They also refused to work on a new conveyor belt, saying: "We're not battery hens".

Against The Cuts

In the communities and housing estates housewives have been fighting against the cuts, refusing to work harder to pay for them. They have organised road blocks to get better play facilities for kids and safer roads. They've organised demonstrations and sit-ins to get rehoused from slums and high rise

blocks. They've squatted, organised rent strikes when the rents went up, and spent the money on food and clothes. They've organised against the closure of nurseries, hospitals and washhouses, all the things that make work as housewives a bit easier. Women have said time and time again that they won't pay for the crisis.



Liverpool: Women demonstrate against the rent rises in August 1975.



Liverpool: Picket at Town Hall demands rehousing.

'Give Us Houses.... Not Rent Rises!'

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

'Are you being served?'

We're seeing cuts in education, cuts in housing, cuts in the health service. What else is there to cut?.... Public transport!

Rail

In December last year thousands of railmen lobbied the House of Commons against the threatened slashing of Britain's rail network. The rail unions were worried about a major review of British Rail taking place in secret on the instructions of the Treasury. Government grants to British Rail are to be cut in line with the philosophy that railways should somehow be profitable. But railways in all major countries receive state financial support. The cuts will mean a deterioration of services and higher fares, with the inevitable result that travel by rail will become less popular. This will, in the planners' twisted view, justify the cuts in the first place. If they have their way there will be 7,000 miles of track less by 1981 - many major towns will have no rail link at all.

Buses

By cutting transport supplementary grants and insisting that local public transport be self-supporting the government has condemned us to poorer services and ever rising fares. Over the country subsidies for buses are to be reduced from £9.45m to £4.25m.

As with rail, by deliberately running down services and making you pay more for what is left, the only possible outcome is fewer passengers.

Few countries in the world, and certainly none in the EEC, consider public transport can run an efficient service through a fares system...

(From a document submitted to transport ministers by transport unions.)

It's clear that the government at the moment is not the slightest bit interested in an efficient transport system as far as the working class is concerned. The money we might save by not going to visit relatives on Sundays, or going into town on Sat-

urday night will be more than eaten up by rent rises anyway.

Who's fighting back

Some councils are delaying the government policy. South Yorks are subsidising to the tune of £6 million per year, plus the £12 million a year government grant. Nottingham was another place that subsidised public transport and bought buses out of the rates. Fares were frozen from 1972-4. But the Government has now forced Nottingham to put up their fares.

The T&GWU has called on all its members to resist cuts in the services.

In Liverpool bus shop stewards handed out a leaflet called 'Are You Being Served?' to explain to the public why services were deteriorating and why they'd been on strike to defend jobs. As they put it...

'It's our jobs, but it's your money.'

In St. Helens the drivers' and Conductors' T & G branch have attacked fare rises as an impossible burden on the working class, leading to the cycle of falling numbers of passengers.

In Manchester a Public Transport Action Campaign has begun mass leafleting to highlight the corporation's destructive policies.

A motion was put to Manchester Trades Council to stop fare rises - this was blocked by the local T & G WU, who argued that fare rises were necessary to keep up wages!... They don't come more short-sighted than that! The only way for transport workers to keep jobs and maintain wages is to fight for an improved free transport system. Fares cannot pay wages or maintenance bills.

There's clearly little unity amongst the unions on this issue, but the biggest problem is to unify busworkers and passengers. The relationship between busworkers and passengers in the major cities is strained at the best - mainly due to the pressure of work and the excessive fares. The leaflet put out in Liverpool is a step in the right direction. If passengers don't know what's going on it's hardly likely they'll support the busworkers.



In Liverpool drivers have discussed the possibility of refusing to collect fares as a protest action against the cuts. This is a tactic often used on the continent. The snag is that it is claimed to be illegal. There are ways around it, for instance if a lot of drivers did it the bus company would be wary of prosecuting. Another way is to put the initiative on to passengers, like only

asking for the fare when they are getting off. In Italy a popular tactic of passengers is to tell the conductor 'Agnelli's paying' (Agnelli is the boss of FIAT). If a lot of people do it there's no reason why we can't say 'Denis Healey's paying'! Action against fares has always gone on to some extent; paying the minimum fare and dodging the inspectors, for example. It's time we did it in a more organised way.

Steel Unions Climb Down

WORKERS AT British Steel plants round the country now face the danger of being picked off plant by plant, department by department.

This is the meaning of the steel unions recent climb down and refusal to take on the British Steel Corporation at a national level. The full weight of the fight now rests with local plant organisations.

Two weeks ago British Steel, which is trying to cut costs by £170 million at the expense of 40,000 jobs and reduced wage packets, backed down from forcing through their economy package in the face of a threatened national steel strike. They were worried that a series of unofficial local actions, particularly in South Wales, could spread.

Instead they offered to negotiate redundancies and wage cuts plant by plant. National union officials from the TUC's Steel Committee jumped at the offer to negotiate rather than lead a national action.

But individual plants are not in a strong position to fight. They are divided between themselves and internally between the dozens of different unions in each works. Each plant and each union has a tradition of looking after its own first and foremost.

Many workers feel that all their negotiations have won is a temporary lull in the fight and that when the struggle starts again they will find it hard to re-build any national action. BSC has instructed all local managers 'to move quickly in drawing up new manning levels for all the major steel making operations.'

The fear among workers is that departments and sections inside plants will be picked off gradually, month by month. Joint Works Committees in the plants are little more than management talking shops, which means co-ordinated resistance in plants will be difficult. But it is the only way.

Workers in South Wales are trying to form a Right to Work Committee which will co-ordinate action between plants in South Wales.

Support Frank Stagg

By the time this article is published Frank Stagg may be dead. If he is then the Labour Government will be guilty of murder and responsible for any of the consequences.

Frank Stagg is an Irish Republican who wants his country free from the interference of the British State. He is convicted of conspiring to form an IRA unit. He's not even 'guilty' of possessing guns or explosives.

He is demanding political status and the right to be transferred to an Irish jail. This is his legal right and a right granted to other republicans and 20 Ulster loyalists. For Stagg it means getting away from the English warders who continually harass and beat him up. SUPPORT FRANK STAGG.



cars waiting to be delivered during the Silcock's strike

SILCOCK BOSSES CAVE IN

THE SUCCESSFUL strike of drivers of Silcock and Colling (car delivery firm) can be a lesson to us all. At a time when all we hear about is the need for 'productivity and rationalisation' the workers have rejected management schemes for just that!

They have fought for and won a £6 wage rise with no strings attached. Management originally demanded an increase in mileage (work from 22 to 24 mph as part of the deal.

The significance of the strike is that although it started at Halewood

(Liverpool) it became the first nationally organised strike of the Silcock group. This unity put a real stranglehold on the car-firms, especially Fords. Silcocks wanted this year to be the one when they would take on their workers, and Fords were certainly prepared for the strike. They had built new storage compounds just before Christmas. But when the determination of the workforce came clear, Silcocks came under pressure from Fords and were forced to concede defeat.

The price of the truth

SIGNS OF growing fear in Government circles about resistance to the cuts? How else can we interpret the sudden announcement of the closure of the Home Office financed Community Development Project, Information and Intelligence Unit, in London, which recently helped publish an important expose of the Government's cuts operation, called 'Cutting the Welfare State. Who Profits?'

The official grounds given were economic, but workers at the unit which was due to close in 18 months anyway, say savings will only amount to about £10,000: a drop in the ocean compared to the Project's total budget of some £4.5 million. As the Unit workers say: 'There can be no doubt that the real reason for the premature closing of the Unit... is purely political.'

Skelmers 'dole' 14000 join jobless

AT THORNS Colour Tubes in Skelmersdale, 1400 workers have just been forced onto the dole. Skelmersdale is an overspill town for the Merseyside area. It was built with all the publicity about 'getting away to a new and secure future.' Today they call it Skelmersdole. Ghost town with 20% unemployment.

There was a great chance of stopping the Thorn's redundancies. For weeks the workers anger had been building up. And because of all the ideas about 'secure futures', they could have won a lot of support from the neighboring factories and housing estates.

But it never happened, and many Thorns workers know why. At the end there was only 200 of them who still voted for an occupation because all along their anger and will to fight had been whittled away and demoralised by side-track tactics. A year ago at the first sign of redundancies, the unions accepted them on the basis that they were voluntary. The first 319 jobs down the road.

Then with the threat of closure, they got themselves into a begging position. They went to the government and asked for import controls or financial assistance. When that never worked they wrote to the Japanese asking for a buyer for the factory.

But capitalists and right-wing governments never do anything the working-class asks for

The real answer was for the Thorns workers to stop asking and start telling. Building up their militancy and taking the initiative to occupy the plant. Forcing a workers point of view down the throats of the government. If the Thorns bosses wouldn't guarantee no redundancies, then nationalise it with no compensation to save the jobs.

Fighting redundancies is not easy. You are up against a whole system which will only want to produce and employ when that is profitable. (Which is why the demand for import controls are no answer at all.... see BF 32.)

Its a fight to impose the needs and interests of the working class. But the alternative is 1400 more people on the dole in Skelmersdale ghost town.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Mon 9th Feb. BIG RED LADDER SHOW 'IT MAKES YOU SICK' Tickets 25p Francis Shaw Social Club, Corbett St. Manchester 11 7.30pm

Tues 17th Feb. BIG RED LADDER SHOW 'IT MAKES YOU SICK' Reeve Hall, Rainhill, nr Liverpool 8. pm tickets 30p

Sat 14th Feb. DEMONSTRATION 'FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS IN IRAN' London, Cavendish Sq. 1.0pm Coach leaves St Peters Sq, Manchester 8.0am

Tue 17th Feb. CENTRAL MANCHESTER TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT Educational 'The Politics of the I.R.A.

also Tue 2nd March WILL THERE BE A BLOODBATH IF THE TROOPS WITHDRAW? Committee Room Poly Union Cavendish St. 8.30pm

Sun 15th Feb. NORTHERN REGIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE OF ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEES 2.00pm Manchester University.

Mon 16th Feb. RED LADDER SHOW 'IT MAKES YOU SICK' Hulme Labour Club 7.30pm

Sat 21st Feb N.W. REGION NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN DEMONSTRATION Liverpool. Assemble Sefton Part (Ullet Rd entrance) 12.30 pm. Rally St George's Hall 3.00 pm

Make sure it's you who gets the sandwiches

SINCE WATERGATE, the culture industry in the United States has had problems. Many of its key workers — film makers, writers, journalists — are in rebellion since they discovered that values they believed in like 'freedom of the press', and non-intervention in other 'democracies' don't exist. These men and women are becoming angry as they discover that secret government agencies like the CIA and the FBI are tapping phones, funding political parties, tampering with press agency reports, hiring Mafia killers and making money from the heroin connexion.



Sidney Pollack is one of these angry liberal film makers whose latest film 'Three Days of the Condor' is a hard hitting attack on the CIA. Like Philip Agee's book 'Inside the Company', 'Three Days' is about a CIA researcher who accidentally discovers just what methods the 'Company' is prepared to use to get its way. He tells his story to the press who publish it.

'Company'

The film begins with hero Robert Redford being sent out to get sandwiches for himself and the eight other workers in his office, naturally a CIA front. It is a situation in which one faction inside the CIA has to eliminate another. Whilst he is out, hit men hired by the 'Company' brutally murder the eight other workers. As Redford tries to contact his superior in the CIA, he realises the dangerous situation he is in. And in fact the CIA agent sent to 'bring him in' tries to mow him down. At this point his deadly struggle to expose the 'Company' begins. With him in the struggle are two other characters. One is a professional freelance killer who is portrayed as more sympathetic than the CIA agents because he just does a job for money and paints toy soldiers in his spare time. The other is a woman, Faye Dunaway, a professional photographer who takes photos of empty trees with no

leaves on them, benches with no one sitting on them. A comment on the loneliness and emptiness that inhabitants of large cities experience: it's pretty corny. As in most Hollywood films, Faye Dunaway's role is a loser — she's just there as a prop — sexual and otherwise — for Robert Redford.

In its 118 minutes, the film gets it across that the CIA is a very dangerous institution — in the film its secret plan is to invade the oil-producing countries — a cancer that has contaminated the whole society. It will be shown to audiences that are in tune with what the CIA is up to. Hardly a week passes without the press carrying stories about poison for Castro's beard, assassins for Castro, prostitutes for Suharto, mercenaries for the FNLA and UNITA. But there are certain important questions. 'Three days' does not ask. It does not ask what is wrong with a society that produces monsters like the CIA.

Crisis

'Three Days' is an accurate statement of a society in crisis. In American cities there is private affluence for the few and poverty, loneliness, violence for many. For liberals like Sidney Pollock, the CIA has become a handy explanation for all these evils. The power of the CIA will be controlled, but this will not alter the fundamental inequalities of American Society.

BIG FLAME IS...

BIG FLAME IS A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST ORGANISATION. Socialist because our aim is to build a society which the working class, the majority of the people, run in their own interests. Revolutionary because we believe we'll only reach that goal by completely changing society, not by patching it up or piecemeal reforms. At the moment the working class produces the wealth and the ruling class takes it. In a socialist society we will get all the wealth and the power to control our own lives.

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

CAPITALISM OPPRESSES THE WHOLE OF OUR LIVES. We are not only exploited at work, we also have to pay high prices and rents; make do with bad

housing, schools and hospitals. And it is not just those sections of the working-class with great economic power, like the miners or engineers who can fight. Housewives, hospital workers, the unemployed all proved they can fight — and win!

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

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

WE TRY TO BUILD A MARXIST MOVEMENT FOR TODAY'S NEEDS. We try to learn from the various Marxist traditions, but we firmly believe in the need to create a politics and organisation which grows out of today's situation. We believe that Big Flame's job is to help the whole working class understand and learn from its own power, and so strengthen that power. We see the need



for a revolutionary party of the working class that will lead the fight to defeat capitalism, but such an organisation can only be built out of the struggles of the whole of our class.

We fight for higher wages, shorter hours,

a lighter workload and for full pay whether there is work or not. We oppose incomes policies, social contracts, productivity deals, redundancies, speed-ups. We encourage the links of factory and community struggles, the opening up of occupations to the community, and the taking of rent and housing struggles to the workplace. We back the fight of council tenants, private tenants and squatters against rents and for decent housing for all. We support the struggle for community controlled facilities like nurseries and playgroups. These things are vital for developing the involvement and strength of women. We fight against sexism and racism and support the independent organisation of women and black people for their own power. We oppose British involvement in Northern Ireland, and support the republican and revolutionary demand for troops out now, for self-determination for the Irish people as a whole, and for a united socialist Ireland.

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

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

'I HAD TO GET OUT'

Interview with ex-British soldier

IN TIMES of high unemployment many young people are tempted to 'get away from it all' by joining the army. Civilian life seems a dead end. But what's the army really like? We asked an ex-soldier, whose four and a half years of service led him to one conclusion: he should buy himself out.

"I was working in Fords, bored, so one day I said 'Let's give the army a try'. I went down and in a couple of weeks I was away. Most lads just drift in like that. Except the ones that are really keen to get to 'exotic countries'. But you know that that's a con. 98% of our troop got nowhere further than Germany. It's like when they promise to teach you the trade of your choice. In reality most people get pushed into driving or radio-operating.

The training is all about changing you from a civilian into a non-thinking entity with a number, two shiny boots and very short hair. The hair-cut is the symbol of this change-over. It's all competition and aggression. Who's the smartest? Who's the best shot? Who can salute the best? It's like school except with a gun. And if you don't compete, then you're always up on charges.

Class

Right from the start you can see the class differences in the army. And which class is in control. The officers dress differently, speak differently. You always have to salute them. But they never discuss with you what the army's all about. Though you soon learned how the enemy is the communists, the Arabs, the IRA etc. And how the big problem in Britain is the trade unions and the lazy working class. I remember one officer saying that we were still able to vote but that 'In the army we all vote Conservative, so there's no problem there, is there?'

There's millions of other problems too. Boredom and getting drunk is one. When I went to Germany, the soldiers were drinking pints of brandy and coke! Housing; there's a housing list which is really bad for the rank and file soldier, who is often left at the mercy of the German landlords who really use the language difference to bump up the rents. Education; kids have to be sent miles to the nearest school and the older ones have to board. But that's dead expensive for the parents. Hospitals and health; this is one of the biggest problems. The nearest hospital to us was 70km away. Pregnant wives had to travel that distance in labour. But they started to force them to go in early and have the birth 'induced' like it was some factory system. And a lot of soldiers were really sick but couldn't be bothered going through the rigmarole of getting your kit ready and going on sick parade. They suffered quietly. Mental health is the worst. Any neurosis or psychosis is just put down to lack of discipline and you

get punished for being a bad soldier.

I know in France and Italy there has been talk of organising independent rank and file soldiers. But there's very little chance here. You daren't talk openly about it. You'd

that. He was talking about what would happen if the working class 'carried on' the way it was. I've always been socialist-minded and I could see that the army was a ruling class army. All discipline, no democ



The army at work

racy. It has to be that because soldiers are used as tools. In Northern Ireland or Germany. The tools of capitalism. It cost me well over £300. But I had to get out."

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BIG FLAME

Birmingham bribery Tip of iceberg

Just 'good friends'? That's the question many people in Birmingham have been pondering in past weeks as detectives sift through contracts and documents as part of a wide-ranging enquiry into Birmingham City Council's Architects, Planning and Public Works departments.

The inquiry follows the jailing in 1974 of Birmingham City architect Alan Maudsley together with private architects James Sharp and Evan Ebery. All admitted a conspiracy in which the two private architects bribed Maudsley with gifts and 'loans' of cash.

Since then police enquiries have continued after a statement from George Carman, Council for Sharp that only the tip of the iceberg had been revealed.

Detectives have been probing the relationships between architects, contractors, council officials and developers. Sharp recently alleged that a major Midlands building

company, Bryants, 'had lavishly entertained Maudsley when he was leading the city's massive housing programme. Maudsley's answer is that he and Bryant's directors were just 'good friends'. Good enough friends to go on holidays together to Germany, Ireland, Portugal and Denmark!

Good friends or not, it should be noted that Bryants carried Corporation contracts worth more than £83,000,000 between 1961 and 1973, including the Chelmsley Wood 'urban jungle', Woodgate Valley and South Aston schemes, all three incidentally designed by Sharp.

Bryants have built up quite a

reputation over the years, especially amongst building workers, often on the receiving end of Bryants anti union, anti working class policies. Attempted blacking of militants from Midlands sites is just one of their many tactics to make money. They have also concentrated on adventurous schemes like office blocks where there are big profits. Meanwhile Council houses, desperately needed in the city, have been effectively blacked because they don't make enough profits.

But perhaps the most sickening sight of all is the way Chris Bryant chairman of Bryants, masquerades as helper of the homeless: he is chairman of the Midlands region YMCA, which caters for homeless youths. Sheer hypocrisy for a man whose done more than most towards putting 30,000 brummies on the council house waiting list. Good Christian principles!

WOLVERHAMPTON POLICE PROTECT FASCISTS

WOLVERHAMPTON. Attempts by self-styled Fuehrer, Colin Jordan, and his fascist British Movement, to hold their national conference at Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton last week were met with only a token resistance from Midlands anti-fascists. No more than 50 rallied to picket the meeting.

The fascist thugs were well armed and the police seemed prepared to protect them, so the picket was abandoned after a short while.

It was no accident that the British Movement, whose main hobby is dressing up in Nazi uniforms, chose Wolverhampton for its conference. Apart from the obvious nostalgia surrounding Enoch Powell's old con-

stituency, it also seems that the Midlands are supplying more than their share of fascist recruits. The most alarming pointer to this can be seen in the 21% poll for the National Front in the recent local election. Plus the fact that nearly 30 NF candidates stood at the last local elections in Birmingham, with hardly a whimper of resistance, enabling the Front to consolidate more than substantial support in the city. NF weekly internal meetings at the Shakespeare pub, off Birmingham's Sumner Row, are reported to be attracting at least 100 Front supporters. The Front have already stated that recruitment figures in Birmingham warrant the drinking men's club

they plan to set up in the city.

Meanwhile, in the East Midlands, in the NF stronghold of Leicester, several prominent Tory councillors are considering going over to the fascists, (one already has.) which raises the possibility of them capturing at least one seat in the local elections there.

WAKEY-WAKEY

The poor turn-out and lack of purpose at the Wolverhampton picket shows the need to re-activate the Black Country anti-fascist committee. We've already allowed the fascists too much rope and they have proved themselves more than capable of hanging on to what they get. If we are effectively to smash fascist organisations like British Movement, the NF or the newly-formed National Party of the UK, we have to:

*Consolidate anti-fascist support into broad based anti-fascist committees in every area and locality - capable of fighting fascism, not only at their meetings or when they take to the streets, but also through political agitation.

*This means finding concrete ways of fighting every aspect of the bosses' crisis - a crisis which the fascists are able to use. The strength of fascism reflects the weakness of socialism.



IMMIGRANTS USED AS CHEAP LABOUR

CATERING INDUSTRY bosses through their organisation, the British Hotels, Restaurants and Caterers Association, have applied to the Department of Employment to increase the number of immigrant workers allowed work permits in 1976 from 8,500 to 10,000. They foresee growth in tourism and in the words of their chief executive: 'The British have an inherent reluctance to go into the service industries. We have to change the national state of mind here. On the continent service is regarded as an honourable profession.'

They are being opposed by the TUC and Manpower Service

Commission who say there shouldn't be any quota at all; unemployment is already too high, and unskilled British workers should be retrained to go into the catering industry. A spokesman for the TUC Hotels and Restaurants Committee says: 'With unemployment at 1 1/4 million and still rising it is crazy to import people from overseas. Importing cheap labour means that employers are able to hold down wages for everyone in the industry - especially foreign workers who are often exploited.'

But it's precisely the quota system

that keeps immigrant labour cheap. Because they fear losing their work permits and being put in prison and deported, immigrant workers are easily intimidated against joining trade unions and other organisations which fight for their rights.

This affects all workers. By keeping immigrants in the lowest paid sectors and using work permit laws to keep them from organising, wages of all workers are held down and organisation threatened. Besides, if immigration is restricted and people are kept in their 'home' countries where wages are even lower, industry can go on taking capital out of Britain to invest where labour is cheap. That means less work for people here, causing lower wages or even more unemployment.

The Campaign for the Repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act is calling for the abolition of all restrictions and an end to the work permit system. Immigrants must have the right to join political organisations and trade unions to fight along with all workers for a better life.

The Campaign can be contacted at 45 Kensington Park Road, London W.11.

SAYERS BAKERY STRIKERS ASK FOR HELP

THE DISPUTE at Sayers is now into its third month. It started with the victimisation of 3 AUEW members, and then the sacking of 20 engineering staff who went on strike against that victimisation. The demands are simple: the complete re-instatement of the 20 men.

Below we reprint extracts from the Information Bulletin of the Sayers workers.....

'All three unions with members involved, the AUEW, EETPU, and the SMCHDU have now declared official support for the dispute. However, Sayers have continued to misrepresent it as "unofficial" to the remainder of their workers and to their materials suppliers. They have employed an outside security organisation - "NORSEC" - complete with alsatian dogs, in an attempt to provoke and intimidate our members on picket duty on the gates and have imported blackleg labour to carry out engineering duties. One blackleg titter is currently living in a caravan (together with his dog) on the bakery premises. Despite all difficulties, our 20 members have maintained a 24 hour picket of the premises since the commencement of the dispute. Help so far received from fellow trade unionists has played a vital part in assisting our struggle.

We plead for this assistance to continue and we seek any and all assistance which can be given by trade-unionists everywhere. We particularly ask colleagues in other establishments to:-

- 1) Boycott Sayers products at their company canteens etc. and through their family shopping.
- 2) Take particular care to refuse any contracting service to Sayers.
- 3) Resist the supply by their employers of raw materials to Sayers.
- 4) Above all, we ask all trade-unionists to honour our official picket line at Sayers bakery by refusing to cross.

Please continue to support us in any way you can. Donations and offers of help may be sent to the Sayers Engineers Strike Committee, Secretary, Harry Rimmer EETPU 118 Allerford Road, Liverpool 12. tel.220.2798

L'POOL Cleaners

CLEANERS EMPLOYED by Liverpool Corporation are being threatened with a massive cut in wages. The Corpy are trying to economise - and they are starting at the bottom as usual.

Their plan is to reduce working hours by up to 15 hours a week by stopping the split shift system which operates morning and evening in schools and offices like the Municipal Buildings. If this is allowed to happen, the cleaners will not only lose their 'split duty' money: the Corpy also plan to introduce 'flexibility of labour' and will no longer replace workers who leave or retire.

So far the Corpy have been prevented from employing the less organised 'contract' cleaners who are exploited and underpaid by such money-grabbing firms as City Cleaners. They have left this up to the Liverpool Echo who is employing a contract cleaning firm in its new offices.

Many Corpy cleaners have so far rejected the new plan. A meeting is planned for all cleaners (GMWU and NUPE) on 16th February. As one cleaner said 'None of us can afford not to work. If we could, we wouldn't be struggling down Dale Street at 6 o'clock every morning in the freezing cold. We don't work just for the good of our health.'

The Corpy are always shouting about cuts in public spending. None of the Corporations bosses are taking a wage cut - so why should the cleaners?

HOSPITALS cont

And every region has been told to cut its budget, down; the worst areas are London and Merseyside.

Already, several Action Groups to fight these plans and to fight for better health care in all areas have been set up. And inside hospitals, people are beginning to see the need for regular branch meetings, Joint Union meetings and shop stewards committees to fight all the ways that hospital managements are trying to implement the cuts.

But all these are still weak. It will take a lot of organising, coordinating and footslogging to begin to resist the cuts effectively.

As a woman at the Acton meeting said: 'I am an ordinary housewife. I don't want to hear about trades, delegations and conferences. We are the local people. We can start here and now.'

(Information about the cuts from London Free Press, And news about Hackney from Hackney Newsletter, 'Around the Market'.)

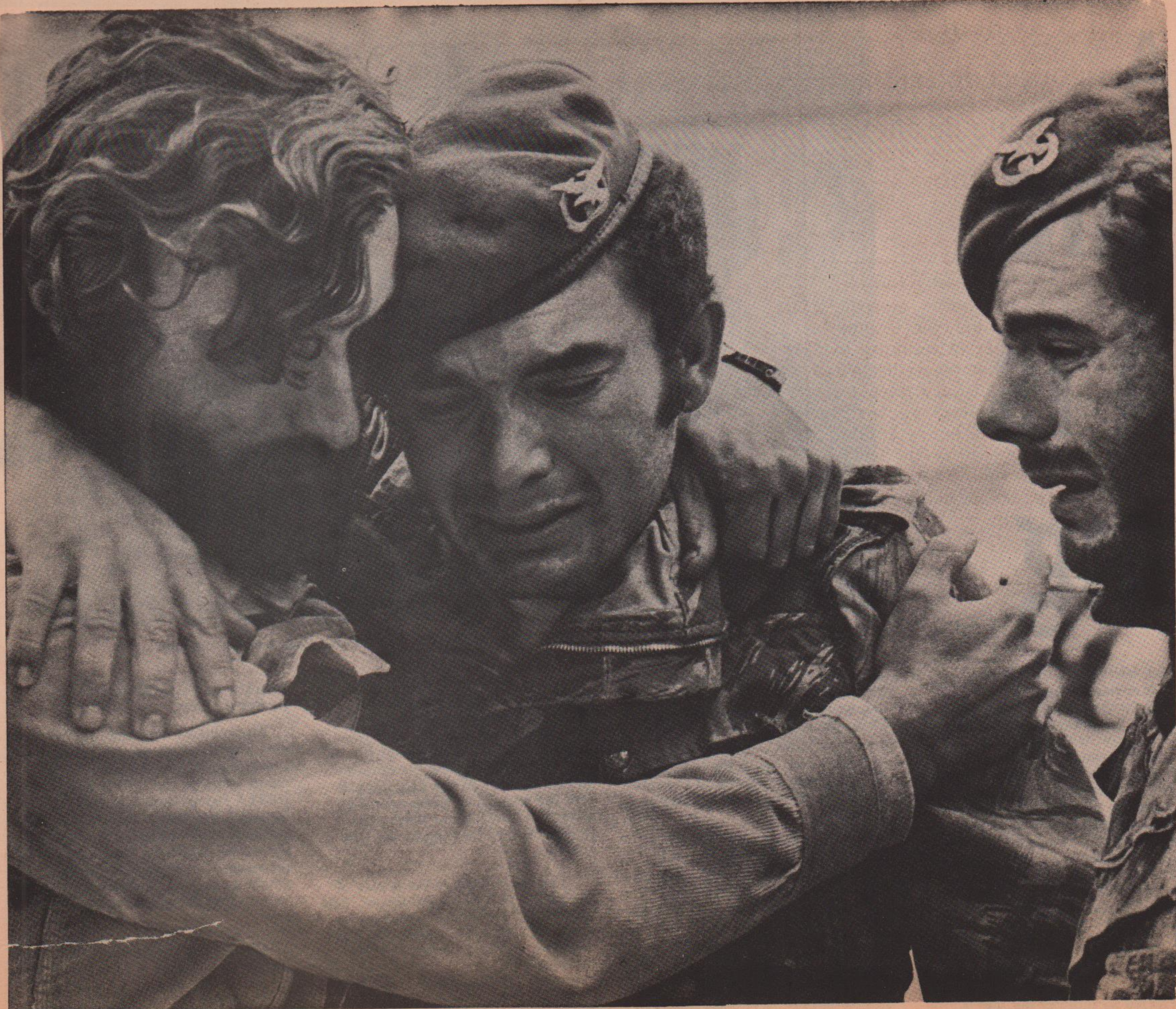
BIG FLAME

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NAME AND ADDRESS.....

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PORTUGAL, November 1975: left-wing paras weep with disappointment as they surrender to the commandos, the men who made the coup for the right-wing.

BIG FLAME FILM TOUR

Beginning on Monday, 23 February with a performance – the premiere – in London, Big Flame will be touring the Newsreel Collective's new film about Portugal, *On the side of the people?*, around the country for a fortnight.

The tour has two main aims. In the first place, we want to draw attention to the struggle in Portugal. Second, we hope that we will be able to consolidate the presence of Big Flame's politics, above all in the towns where no group at present exists.

The film, made late last year, should be a striking reminder of the pressing need for solidarity with the Portuguese working class, now faced not just by inflation, wage freeze and growing unemployment but also by a real danger from fascism. The film comes just in time for the work of preparing for the first labour movement conference called by the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese working class. The conference is on 13 March in London and we urge as many as can to get themselves delegated by their organisation to attend it.

Performances of the film will be accompanied by two speakers – one who will be talking about the situation in Portugal, Angola, Spain or Chile, and a second, speaking on behalf of Big Flame.

We'll be calling at –

- London
- Cambridge
- Norwich
- Birmingham
- Redditch
- Liverpool
- Manchester
- Salford
- Sheffield
- Leeds
- Hull
- South Shields

Times and dates of all the meetings will be advertised in the press, but you can get information about local venues by phoning 051-207 5400 from 10 February.

Local Film Bookings

On Merseyside, the Portuguese Solidarity Campaign is organising its own tour with the film, for a week, beginning Thursday, 5 March. If you are interested in booking the film, free, that week, please phone 425 4104.

Otherwise, bookings of the film should be made through the Newsreel Collective, at 01-602 4402.

PORTUGAL AFTER THE COUP

★ Fighting Wage Freeze and Inflation

★ To Defeat Fascism

From Big Flame's correspondent in Lisbon

AFTER THE successful 'cold coup' by the Portuguese ruling class last November, everyone has been learning anew the three 'R's' –

- *Repression, against the popular movement,
- *Reorganisation by both sides, and
- *Resistance by workers, peasants and soldiers to the flood-tide of reaction opened up by the coup.

1. REORGANISING THE GOVERNMENT

The Armed Forces Movement is dead. The Council of the Revolution (CR), a group of officers drawn from the right, is now the supreme authority of the state. It is proposing to remain so until 1980. Its plan for re-ordering the government means that the President could be overruled and dismissed by the CR. Parliament, the Cabinet and the courts would have very little independent power. They would remain a meaningless facade of bourgeois democracy.

The Socialist Party of Mario Soares, dominant in the present (6th.) government, must be looking for a very big vote in the new national election, scheduled for this April. Otherwise, they risk being undercut by a group of officers who are implementing increasingly right wing policies. And finding a great deal of support for them among the people who once backed fascism.

This is why the Socialist Party is moving closer to an alliance with the Communist Party and, on the other hand, coming into growing conflict with the so-called social democratic PPD, especially on the key issue of land reform.

Although the PPD and the PS share a lot of common political ground – they are the main parties in the government and they both welcomed the November coup, it's obvious that they represent social interests which are more and more at odds. The PPD includes many of the old fascists as well as many big farming interests who are scared that any land reform will lead in the end to wholesale state, or peasant takeovers, of their own property.

The construction in Portugal of a stable bourgeois democracy is what the liberal faction of the capitalist class – the section which the Socialist Party represents – hopes for, but is this on the cards? The economic crisis in Portugal is so deep that it's impossible for the government to make a concession to one section of society without hitting the interests of another: that does not make for stability.

Then, there is the growing strength of the fascist movements, both in underground groups like the ELP and in the state machine itself. Since November, about 300 fascists and secret police from the old regime, have been released and the commission of inquiry into the PIDE, the secret police, has been wound up.

On the other hand, the government has to reckon with the strength of the popular movement which, even if it's taken a severe knock in the last few months, still represents a real force in Portugal.

2. POPULAR RESISTANCE

The worst setback so far has been the suppression of the soldiers committees and the imprisoning of

the revolutionary officers. Some units have been completely reformed and there's evidence that the ranks are being refilled by mercenaries and by veterans of the colonial wars. Nonetheless, soldiers dismissed from some units have kept in contact and in some barracks the committees have started to work again, but underground.

The campaign run by the families to obtain the release of the revolutionary soldiers and officers imprisoned after the November coup has become to some extent a rallying point for the working class movement. Support committees have been set up in several factories. Hundreds of workers from the CUF concern were at the demonstration outside Caxias prison on Christmas Day and again on 1 January. This one was broken up by commandoes.

Despite the feeling of horror at what happened at Custodias prison, Oporto, on 1 January, when the National Republican Guard (GNR) opened fire on the demonstrators, killing four and wounding several more (most from shots in the back) the people have not been intimidated and there have been more rallies to demand the prisoners' release.

The GNR and the riot police have had a new lease of life since November and are obviously itching to let rip with automatics and tear gas as in the 'good old days'. On the other hand, they seem rather less enthusiastic about tracking down those responsible for the continual bombings in the north.

The purge of the mass media goes on. Radio Renascença, once run under workers control, has been

handed back to the Catholic Church, but the workers who were bombed out on 7 November have not given up the fight and are in the process of forming a popular information cooperative and setting up a mobile radio van. Republica, the daily newspaper whose struggle to survive made it the symbol of the fight for workers power, has been closed by the workers. They couldn't raise the money to keep it going and the government had cut off supplies of paper. Sacked left-wing journalists are talking about setting up new papers to combat the right wing's domination of the press, radio and tv.

Also under attack is land reform, maybe the most important advance in the months after the fall of fascism in April 1974. The Socialist Minister of Agriculture, under tremendous pressure from the right (farmers in the north have threatened to cut off road and other links to Lisbon unless all land occupations come to an end), has outlined a new policy which lays down that there will be no more land take overs, except by the state. In future, state takeovers are limited to the south of the country – where the power of the peasants is most strong – and compensation will be paid to the owners. Moreover, land occupied within the terms of the law will come under state control and rent will have to be paid.

Considering how land reform and occupations have hardly affected the north so far, it is amazing how the 'senhores' are able to whip up

cont. overleaf

ANGOLA

Why the MPLA is winning



If the people want socialism, even the world's biggest military machine can't stop them in the end.

THE POPULAR Movement, the MPLA is driving its enemies back — FNLA to the north and UNITA to the south. It looks as if the People's Republic of Angola, which has already won recognition from most countries in Africa, will establish its control over the whole country. Of course, the MPLA's success owes a lot to the help given by the Russians and the Cubans. But that is far from the whole story.

The turning point in the MPLA's fortunes has come with the decision of the US Congress not to undertake an open military offensive against the MPLA, followed by South Africa's decision to withdraw its troops back to the border with Namibia. The western powers have not given up their efforts to defeat the Popular Movement, but the trickle of mercenaries into Angola is unlikely to have much impact any more.

So, what made the US and South Africa abandon UNITA and FNLA to their miserable fates?

What has happened in Angola reflects how badly things have gone for the US and its allies since the fiasco in Vietnam and Cambodia. In the US itself, there is widespread hostility to the idea of another military-political involvement like Vietnam, with its unbearable costs in lives and money. Few states are prepared to back the US in another adventure in the way that Britain and Australia once did over Vietnam. The exception is South Africa, but that kind of backing is the kiss of death. Even Brazil, a harsh military dictatorship and the US's closest ally in Latin America, preferred to support the MPLA rather than be linked with apartheid in the eyes of the many black african states it does business with.

In the US and among its allies in Europe there is a growing

suspicion about how useful the CIA's techniques have been in defending world capitalism. In Chile, the economy has never been in a worse mess, while the CIA's best efforts in the eastern Mediterranean have led to the loss of two NATO members, Turkey and Greece.

ANOTHER ADVENTURE

Not only is the US' record in the world badly tarnished, even on its own side, but there is a general recognition in western governments that Kissinger's hysterical warnings of a Soviet takeover in Angola have been overdone. In fact, it is obvious that the MPLA has no intention of allowing the Russians or the Cubans to rob them of independence after having fought the Portuguese for it since 1961.

Of course, a victory for the Popular Movement would be bad news for the bosses. Apart from rubbing home the scale of the advances made

by socialism in the last few years, they know that the Popular Movement will put a stop to the ransacking of Angola by multinational corporations and give priority to developing the country in the interests of the Angolans. It was the reversal of these priorities that won UNITA and FNLA the United States' backing in the first place.

The consequences for Africa of an MPLA victory are profound. And this is why Kaunda of Zambia has declared a state of emergency. His country and every other country which simply serves the interests of foreign financial interests will now be threatened. Their opposition movements will be encouraged by a victory for the MPLA and will know that they can count on support from Angola.

As well as the threat to the black regimes, Rhodesia and South

Africa would find themselves under greater pressure.

The military campaigns in the new year have shown the political superiority of the Popular Movement. Whereas the FNLA and UNITA troops have laid waste to the land, the MPLA has tried to conserve the country's resources. Its troops have been trying to win the support of the people in the newly won areas, promising them help in rebuilding the local economy.

Faced with the seriousness of the MPLA's claims to put the needs of the people before the interests of the mining corporations and the multinationals, the rival movements have had nothing to offer except a return to tribalism. Vietnam has shown clearly enough that the biggest military machine in the world is unequal to the task of defeating a people which wants socialism.

Portugal After The Coup

cont. from overleaf

the fear of the small and middle peasants and turn it into a violent anti-communism. The mass of the peasants in the north have genuine grievances which have been ignored by every government so far, but they can and must be won over to the working class movement. Otherwise, there is no possibility of socialism in the whole of Portugal. Some farmers, meeting in the north in January, have already condemned the reactionary owners and have given their support to the land reforms.

In the towns, the biggest issue is the rising cost of living and the wage freeze. Pay deals now have to continue till March, regardless of inflation. Petrol, which went up over 40% in one jump, is now the dearest in Europe. Potatoes and sugar have also become dramatically dearer. On top of this, there is a shortage of certain foods, so that butter and milk are now an unobtainable luxury for most people, while meat is very scarce. Unemployment is estimated at 20% of the working population, and most of these receive no form of state support. Many small and medium firms are going bust and the multinationals show no sign of being attracted back to Portugal.

The building workers, who have not had a rise since 1971 and whose successful struggle against the government in early November has borne no fruit as a result of the freezing of pay talks, organised a two hour strike on 21 January,



A soldier from RALIS, the red regiment which is no more: new underground soldiers committees are organising.

saying "We will not pay for the crisis of capitalism". Following the builders lead, there have been other strikes, like the shopworkers on 21 January. The slogan, "Austerity, yes, but for the bourgeoisie", put forward by print workers in Oporto, has been taken up by other workers organisations.

On the evening of 16 January, several thousand people turned out in freezing cold and heavy mist to march to the parliament building against the high cost of living and repression and for popular unity.

It was the first demonstration in the capital since the coup in November and was called by a steering committee set up by over 100 tenants committees and influenced heavily by the UDP, a maoist organisation with a strong working class membership.

The next day there was an indoor rally backed by most of the workers organisations, the trade unions and several political organisations, above all the Communist Party. The CP still has a lot of support in the working class, but rather less among young workers. It is constantly reminded by the other organisations that it still has one minister in this government, the most right wing since the fall of fascism and that many of the repressive and reactionary laws now being applied stem from the days when the CP was the main force in the government. This is true, but it is nonetheless ridiculous to call the Communist Party the greatest enemy of the working class, as some lunatic fringe maoists do. That real enemy is to be found in the Council of the Revolution, the government and the US State Department.

3. REORGANISATION

Is there any political alternative to the CP? Most of the members of the defunct Revolutionary Front are now split or preoccupied with domestic battles. The PRP seems to have survived the November coup best and claims to have made

gains from other groups, including several hundred ex-members of the CP.

But it is the UDP which remains the strongest revolutionary organisation, with the biggest working class support, the best programme for the present situation and the clearest strategy. It has been

working hard to build up an alliance of housewives, street vendors and small shopkeepers against the middlemen, warehouse owners and supermarket bosses who, with the food processors, are mainly responsible for rising prices.

The UDP's programme stresses three points —

- *Defence of democratic liberties: no purges in the armed forces or in the mass media; release of the revolutionary prisoners; the right to demonstrate.
- *Better life in the cities: defence of wages; unemployment benefit for all; prices freeze.
- *End misery in the countryside: defend the occupied farms; no compensation for landowners; subsidies and guaranteed prices for small and middle peasants. The aim is to build as broad a front as possible against the ruling class, led by the working class.

The UDP now forms part of a reorganised maoist party. This is part of the process of re-forming which has gone on in the working class and the left since November. There are now fewer political organisations around and there is a strong feeling that popular power must have a much stronger base from which to take on the government.

Police raids of occupied farms and the physical eviction of squatters serve as a warning that the mass of the people have got to be mobilised to halt the present move to the right. A mass united front is an urgent need now. It must have a political leadership capable of carrying the front into a counter-attack on the ruling class. The sudden turn to the right in November has shown that without a party, the people have nothing.