

BIG FLAME

No 37 April 1976

Paper of the Revolutionary Socialist Organisation Big Flame

8p

**They're cutting our services, money and jobs.
We can't afford to live. Now it's...**

TIME TO FIGHT!

ON HIS second day at work, a 16 year old Exeter boy was maimed for life by a metal shearing machine. The boy lost his right hand and three fingers on his left. He will never live a normal life again.

His case came up before Exeter magistrates last month, and they found his employers, a scrap metal dealers, had been negligent. They then went on to fine the company.....£250! How much lower can a so-called civilised society stoop?

Yet with the government determined to make the working class bear the costs of the crisis, thousands of men, women and children face death, injury or permanent disablement.

Suicides

■ The welfare organisation, the Samaritans report that 'suicides and attempted suicides are going up all the time. Previously we were wary about drawing conclusions about the relationship between suicide and economic factors. But not now'.

■ Cold will kill 45,000 old people this winter. Over 2 million old people live in temperatures that would bring instant prosecution in a factory or office.

But the government and the employers are not having it all their own way.

■ Council workers and busmen in Merseyside have both recently forced the council to stop, or withdraw for the time being, proposed cutbacks. In the case of the council workers, whose job it is



■ 3,000 march against unemployment in Liverpool last December.

to service and repair council houses, they said that there was no chance of accepting 181 redundancies, particularly when there was a backlog of 18,000 job orders. (see page 3.)

■ There is mounting pressure generally against unemployment. Last month 50,000 engineering

workers in Scotland, stopped work in protest (see page 9)

Stoppage

■ Train, bus, hospital and social workers as well as teachers, are all fighting rationalisation of their services. Southern region train drivers have called for a stoppage on April 20th against

the cuts and against the increases in fares. Local people in West London are fighting the closure of Acton Hospital. (see stories on page 3.)

In thousands of different ways, people are fighting back. Lets strengthen and build this fight.

Tenants take on chemical firms

At a stormy meeting in East Manchester last month one hundred and fifty angry residents demanded an end to the pollution and filth they've been forced to live in.

Stinging

Their houses are surrounded by three chemical factories which belch chemicals and foul smells. Tenants can't use their back gardens. Children can't play outside without stinging eyes and sore throats, and many people have to keep windows permanently close to shut out the stink. Noise from the factories means that local night shift workers find it impossible to sleep during the day.

Choking

Now, after years of complaining about the choking fumes, the local people have formed the Clayton Tenants Association to take on the factories.

An Environmental Health Inspector tried to tell their meeting that 85% of the pollution was caused by domestic chimneys and the 'hazardous weather conditions'. Tenants told the powers-that-be that they were passing the buck. A 'whitewash' one of them called it, and one angry tenant left the meeting saying, 'this is nothing but a propaganda session.'

Alkali

Anchor Chemicals, who own one of the three factories, claim, 'don't blame us, the other factories in the area are at fault, not us.' No prize for guessing what the other factory owners said!

'And according to the Environmental Health and Alkali Inspectors; 'we can't do anything until you give us details of which chemicals are around, at which times and which direction the wind was blowing at the time.' In other words local tenants are supposed to turn overnight into fully equipped and trained chemists and meteorologists.

Leaflet

The tenants' reaction has been to leaflet workers at the three factories telling them their side of the story and pointing out that the factories have mysteriously found the money to expand but haven't

Conference on Terrorism Act

Just getting up for breakfast and armed police burst into his parents' house in Coventry.

That is what happened to ex-Chrysler worker, Joe Matthews, last month. He was charged with nothing. He has done nothing. He is Irish, and he could be an 'IRA supporter'. He's still inside, awaiting a deportation order. This happened because of the Pre Prevention of Terrorism Act.



The fight for free and safe abortion goes on. The National Abortion Campaign has refused to give evidence to the completely biased Parliamentary Committee which is now considering the issue. (See story page 2.)

March for abortion rights

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION
APRIL 3
Assemble 1:30
Speakers Corner

LOCAL AUTHORITY ELECTIONS PEOPLES CANDIDATES

MOSS SIDE, Hulme, Miles Platting, Cheetham, Salford are all notoriously neglected areas in Greater Manchester. They have some of the worst housing in the country. For decades local authorities have swept the problems under the carpet. But the tenants won't be silenced. Now, to focus attention on the appalling conditions they have decided to stand **people's candidates** in the coming local elections on May 6.

PEOPLE'S CANDIDATES

At least eight will be standing, including Lee Smyth from Moss Side, Maureen Moonsannv from Hulme, Tuto Echo from Miles Platting, Hazel Warren from Oldsall and Joe McCabe

from Cheetham. Although they have no common programme they are all local activists determined that the voice of the people should be heard loud and clear on the Manchester council.

LABOUR SELL OUT

Working class people have for years elected Labour Party candidates to represent their interests. Some councillors have done so, but the majority have used their election to further their careers and play 'party politics'. The result bad housing, poor education and insufficient health care for many people in the city.

PEOPLE'S ANGER

The centre of the revolt is on large new housing estates built on the cheap since the war. There may be no obvious link between the problems tenants face on the huge anonymous Hulme development and

tenants' problems on the Collyhurst estate, but in both cases tenants know their fate is decided by a machine-like bureaucracy and by councillors who don't live in the area and don't have first hand experience of the conditions.

QUESTIONS RAISED: NO ANSWERS

The elections themselves will solve nothing:

- Whatever the result the People's candidates will be in a small minority on the council.

- The powers of a council and local councillors are limited. They are at the bottom of the pyramid that starts with the company and bank board-rooms and descends through government ministries, civil servants and MPs.

But they will mean that the endless deals between councillors and political groups on the Manchester City Council will become more diff-

icult. People's councillors will be able to rub their noses in the problems until they can smell the shit.

WORKING CLASS POWER

But in the end working class power does not lie in council chambers. It lies in the factories, offices, housing estates, trade unions. But that power needs a focus and it needs victories.

The election campaign of the people's candidates could be such a focus. It will raise all the fundamental political issues of housing, education and health.

The Greater Manchester Federation of Local Action Groups is acting as umbrella organisation for this campaign. For more information of FLAG phone the Secretary 061 224-2576.

VOTE FOR THE PEOPLE'S CANDIDATES - MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD

PHONY JOURNALISTS

Two months ago Fleet Street hotly denied that *any* of its foreign correspondents were in the pay of *any* secret service. Yet this month it has been revealed that the Daily Telegraph has employed at least two foreign correspondents who are not genuine journalists.

The newspaper of the National Union of Journalists, 'the Journalist', points out that last December it was discovered that John Drew, supposedly the Telegraph's Saigon correspondent for several years, was in fact Nguyen Ngoc Phac, an officer of the General Staff of the Saigon Army.

Now Drew has been joined by Bruce Loudon, one of the Telegraph's star reporters in Portugal and Africa. 'The Journalist' reports:

'Loudon, a 33-year old South African, is the journalist who spent

part of the summer of 1973 filing dispatches from Mozambique which poured cold water on allegations that Portuguese troops in that country had been massacring civilians (the Portuguese army later admitted that massacres had taken place).

We have copies of documents which show that Loudon was negotiating with the authorities in Lisbon and Mozambique to set up a news agency which would, as he puts it, 'present the realities of Mozambique in a positive and effective manner'."

At the time Loudon was writing for both the Financial Times and the Telegraph. When the FT learned of his activities they sacked him on the spot. The Telegraph, however, rewarded him with star status, which he still retains. The NUJ Telegraph chapel (workplace branch) is not proposing to take any action.

Never too old to STRUGGLE!



In March there was a massive pensioners rally at the Central Hall, London. Thousands of pensioners from all parts of the country, some from as far away as Newcastle, came to the meeting and to lobby their MPs for better pensions. They want 50 per cent of the average male industrial wage for single people and 75 per cent for married couples. They also demanded that the pension should be reviewed every three months, not every year, as is the case at the moment.

The Government representative from Social Services, Michael Meacher, tried to tell the pensioners what a good deal they were getting from

the Labour Government and how their standard of living had gone up 'while all other sections of the community have suffered'. He said in a time of crisis any demands pensioners made had to be reasonable. This was greeted with shouts of 'Get off... sit down...' and 'what a bloody disgrace.' By comparison, there were great shouts of support for the speakers who were demanding better pensions, better social services as well as cheaper gas and electricity.

'We are not those pensioners who say 'give us a better pension and everything else will be alright'. We want better pensions, but we want better everything else as well!'

'An antique vase can be worth £1.25 million, so why aren't we?'

ABORTION.. KEEP IT SAFE AND FREE



THE PARLIAMENTARY Select Committee now considering the abortion issue consists of eight MPs who are all opposed to abortion. Six sympathetic MPs resigned in protest at the committee being reconvened.

The National Abortion Campaign have refused to give evidence to it. In a press statement they say: 'We believe it will serve no purpose to talk to MPs who are already poised to restrict the existing abortion legislation. They have ignored the main bulk of evidence already presented, the majority of which was totally against the provisions of James White's bill.'

NAC, however, is not keeping its evidence about women's needs secret. Many local groups have begun to organise for better facilities for women in NHS hospitals.

As a newsheet of the West London NAC group explains: 'We are fighting for local hospitals to provide safe, early and free abortion for all women in our area, when they decide they need one.' The newsheet says: 'Many women from Hammersmith, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea still have to pay for private abortion because they can't get it on the National Health Service. About 250 women are turned away from West London Hospital (part of Charing Cross) alone, each year. If that is true of the other three district hospitals in our area, then that means 1000 women are having to seek private abortions.'

We asked a woman from West London NAC how they are organising:

'Over the last year we have given out thousands of leaflets in Shepherd's Bush, Hammersmith and Nottingham Hill and collected thousands of

signatures, as well as street meetings and a local demonstration in December.

'We know that we are getting through to local women on a wide level and hundreds of women have come to our meetings. Local unions and a Labour Party ward send representatives. With this kind of support we feel it's really important to win some concrete things for women in our area. We have workers from two local hospitals - Hammersmith and Charing Cross - so we decided to 'have a go' there. We built up our information from hospital workers, the Community Health Councils, local doctors and of course, local women. We asked to meet hospital managements to find out their position. Over the next few months we will be compiling information on outpatient clinics (The Pregnancy Advisory Service has written a very useful pamphlet on it*) and building the campaign in the area. We have already spoken in one or two schools and colleges and we plan to speak to mums at local playgroups and in shopping areas and all union meetings if we can. All this requires a lot of hard work, but it seems to be a good way to carry through the aims of our campaign for FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND - A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE'.

▼available price 30p from PAS, 40 Margaret St. London WIN 7FB

West London NAC Newsheet available from Louise, phone 969-9105 (days)

**SUPPORT THE NATIONAL
DEMONSTRATION APRIL 3rd.
Meet 1.30 Speakers Corner,
Hyde Park, London.**



BENT COPPERS BILL

BELIEVE IT or not, but some people still think the police should investigate themselves in cases of corruption. Despite mounting evidence that much internal police investigation is a whitewash, there are still MPs, both Tory and Labour, who want to throw out the current Police Bill, which would introduce an outside investigator into internal inquiries.

The Police Bill is now going through the committee stage in the House of Commons, where its opponents are trying to remove all powers from it. Yet while the bill is being discussed, Essex police have been forced to conduct their *third* internal investigation into alleged malpractice over George Ince, the man who was framed for the 'Barn murders' several years ago.

There is also a strong suspicion that last month's uncovering of widespread corruption among police dealing with Soho pornographers is a further attempt to undermine the bill. The timing of the arrests is significant. The facts were known last autumn, yet arrests were only made as the Police Bill began to be discussed in Parliament. Is this an attempt to prove that the police's own internal investigations are good enough? Most police, including Sir Robert Mark, boss of the London police force, are strongly opposed to the bill. We can only suppose that they do have something to cover up.

The bill's chances of getting through Parliament are not good. If it does it is likely to be in a castrated form. It is being supported by Labour MPs Robin Corbett and Ian Mikardo, but many Labour right-wingers, like Hammersmith North MP, Frank Tomney, a real hang-em, flog-em and birch-em merchant, are totally opposed to it.

In the end the bill may turn out to be an elaborate public relations exercise to show how wonderful our hobbies are.

(With help from Up Against The Law)

Leyland's illegal tricks!

WHILE British Leyland workers are urged to pull out their tripe to help the newly nationalised car firm out of its bankruptcy, the Corporation carries on as if it were still a private firm - with Government connivance.

Its Israeli subsidiary, Leyland Ashdod, is reported in the Israeli evening newspaper *Yedioth Ahranot*, is at present negotiating to sell trucks to the hard-pressed white Rhodesian regime. The deal is supported by the Israeli Government and is not being stopped by the British Government. Officially, the Labour Government supports the economic blockade of the illegal racist Rhodesian regime.

News of the deal comes at a time when BLMC has just announced a massive expansion of its South African operations - one of its most profitable subsidiaries thanks to the cheap wages and labour intimidation guaranteed by the apartheid regime of Vorster.

**RIGHT
TO
LIVE**



'Our jobs ~ your houses'

Merseyside Corporation workers strike against the cuts

'It's our jobs but it's your houses.' That was the message that 580 building workers were trying to get over to the other workers and tenants in Knowsley (Merseyside) recently. The 580 workers, from Knowsley Council's Direct Works Department, were on strike for two weeks against the council's decision to axe 181 jobs. The redundancies were meant to save the council £700,000 in the coming year, and were part of a huge cuts plan. The men - whose job it is to do repairs and maintenance of council housing - were already appalled by understaffing. When the strike started there was a backlog of 18,000 job orders! But if the council had got away with sacking nearly one third of the workforce, then Knowsley housing conditions would have reached rock bottom.

That is why their struggle was and is so important: a struggle for and of everyone who lives in Knowsley.

UNITY
One feature of the strike was the

unity of the rank and file workers. Although NALGO had immediately accepted 17 redundancies amongst staff, workers from the EEP TU, G&M and UCATT got stuck in together on the picket lines and their aims were clear: not a single redundancy.

They succeeded in stopping contract work being done by Wimpeys, Cubbitts and UNIT. So when it came to the final mass meeting there was an understandably good feeling amongst the men. While they were waiting for the union officials one steward, 'Jacko' from Whiston, had the whole hall in fits of laughter with a 30 minute, unrehearsed comedy routine. But things then got more serious.

BACK TO WORK

The officials reported that the council had offered to withdraw the redundancy notices, for one month, pending negotiations. This led to some discussion. In the end the maj-

ority accepted this as a basis for going back to work - at least temporarily. It would put a month's pay in their pockets at least.

But there were 80 or so who voted against. They felt that the council was on the run and to go back to work would be to lose momentum. They were worried that in a month the council would just come back with the redundancies, but that by then the workforce might get demoralised and the union leaders more ready to do a deal.

It was not an easy decision either way. Many determined militants voted to go back. And they did that only on the basis that in one month there will still be no redundancies. But the council will be up to its tricks; it will try and use that month. Whether it's one month or a year the Direct Works has a hard struggle ahead if they are to keep their jobs and keep them on their terms, and therefore to defend the living standards of the tenants of Knowsley.

'Save Acton Hospital'

PLANS to close Acton Hospital as a general hospital are running into strong opposition from local people in West London.

The area Health Authority wants to turn Acton into a geriatric and psychiatric hospital and move all other patients and facilities to other hospitals in the area. But many of these are already overcrowded. Hammersmith Hospital which will receive the bulk of the transfers, is grossly overloaded. It was built to handle 10,000 outpatients a year, but is currently taking 150,000.

An action committee to fight the closure has been formed. In 3 weeks it has collected 5000 signatures opposing the closure, including all the staff at Acton, and has won backing from the local Community Health Council.

The committee is worried that although no definite date for the changeover at Acton has been given, management are gradually moving out general cases and filling the 80 beds with geriatric and psychiatric cases. Adverts have also gone out for psychiatric nurses.

The committee want the hospital to stay open as a general hospital serving the people of the area. They fear that if Acton is allowed to go, others will follow. Seven cottage hospitals in the Ealing district are threatened.

Last week the local NUPE branch held a meeting for all staff in the hospital to explain why it should stay open. And on April 13 a public meeting has been called to draw in more people from the area and to elect a full committee to fight the closure.

The meeting is at Woodlands Hall, Church Road, off Acton High Street, at 7.30. April 13.

Fourteen Acton doctors have come out in support of the 'Save Acton Hospital' campaign.



300 people joined a march in Liverpool organised jointly by NALGO (National Association of Local Government Officers) and the British Association of Social Workers. The demonstration was against the slashing of spending on welfare and public services generally.

RAIL JOBS ON THE LINE

LAST MONTH it was Eastern Region train drivers; this month it's the Southern Region men. Despite the refusal of the leadership of the rail unions to fight the cuts in public transport, the rank and file fight goes on.

On April 20th, Southern Region drivers have called for a one day strike, and have asked the ASLEF to make it official.

Last month's Eastern Region stoppage died when it failed to get support from other regions. But if it failed to stop the cuts, it won several other demands.

Ron Huffingley, ASLEF Leeds' branch secretary, told Big Flame. 'It's never easy to get the men out on unofficial strike, but in 40 years on the railways I've never seen them come out as quickly as they did this time. We won all our demands about conditions of work, and we got the

Leeds train drivers developed a new tactic in their recent strike, which guaranteed most men full pay. Drivers with sufficient years of service went on the sick. The remainder turned up for work and said they'd work if there were enough drivers. There weren't, of course, so they sat in the mess room all day on full pay. Good one.

British Rail Board to direct the Eastern Region Board to stop being so provocative towards our members. But the Executive Committee sold us down the river on our demand that the new schedules should not be introduced. The major cuts will come out in May, and unless the EC backs the calls for strike action, it will be difficult to get the men out on

We think

What do Uncle Jim, brawny Denis and fast talking Michael have in common. They are careerists who have spent a lot of time trying to convince us that they'd make a good leader of the Labour Party. MPs, who should be tackling the jobs crisis, the cuts and the fall in our standard of living, have spent useless hours discussing who will lead them. But it doesn't make a scrap of difference.

- ▼ The new pay laws will still be introduced and cut our living standards still further.

- ▼ The cuts in education, social services, health and housing will still go ahead.

- ▼ Unemployment will continue over the million mark.

In short the Labour Government will still try to make us pay for the crisis.

One useful thing

Of the six original contenders for the Labour leadership only Tony Benn offered any change. Among all the usual rubbish about planning agreements, workers participation and import controls, he had one useful thing to say - MPs should be accountable to their constituents.

Too obvious to most of us to need saying, but few MPs, once they are on the Whitehall 'power trip' accept it.

- ▼ When the Yorkshire miners suggested last year that MPs financed by the NUM should be accountable to the union, all hell broke loose. Newspapers, pundits and MPs went on the rampage with cries of 'censorship', 'gagging' and the 'end of democracy'.

- ▼ Constituents in Hammersmith, London, have been fighting for 26 years to get rid of their arch right wing MP, Frank Tomney. Even when he is clearly voted out he has the nerve to appeal to the Labour National Executive against the vote.

- ▼ And when it comes down to it, how many MPs consulted their constituents about who they should vote for in the leadership race? Were you consulted?

Whether Benn's commitment to constituency control is any more than hot air we'll never know; but he was right to raise the issue.

Where it matters

But if Labour MPs have wasted many hours in recent weeks, that's nothing unusual. The 32 left MPs who voted against the cuts last month have also wasted their time, unless they back up their words with action.

They were right to vote against the Government's programme of cuts. The surrounding publicity drew attention to what is going on.

But now they must follow up their action and get out in the streets and in their constituencies and help build a real mass campaign against the cuts. Because whether it's the elections to the Labour Party leadership, or whether or not you vote against the Government: parliament and the people in it change nothing unless they see themselves as one small part of a movement of the working class out there where it matters.

If your MP was one of the 32 what is he or she doing about the cuts now?

Thorpe witch-hunt

Big Flame can think of 1001 good reasons for hounding Jeremy Thorpe, the leader of the bosses' Liberal Party. But never because he might have had a homosexual relationship with another man.

In our book, being gay is not a crime. It is a common sexual impulse of many people. (Many more than feel safe to admit it). In Ancient Greece, for instance, it was an open, everyday way of enjoying yourself sexually. And it was nothing for men to go with young boys. It's for social not 'natural' reasons that nowadays it is looked down upon and repressed.

And we will have none of that repression. We are not going to slam someone for what they do with their sexual lives. It's the opposite we need. To start overcoming the guilts and fears we have all been taught to have about sex - homosexual and heterosexual.

It doesn't surprise us that the daily gutter press has done a job on Thorpe. When it comes to selling a few more copies - to getting a 'scandal' - they don't mind who they drag down or to what level.

But Big Flame does not join in. We sell our paper in the cause of personal and social freedom.

Busmen's strike

THE BUSMEN from the S.Liverpool depots went on strike last month in protest at the cuts in services. The strike lasted four days and the local transport authority were forced to withdraw many of their proposed service cuts.

As a union representative from the Speke depot said, 'I believe we won this strike....We knew we were in for economies, but we didn't get the economies they wanted.'

The busmen from the South end of Liverpool have set an example to all transport workers who are now faced with massive reductions in services and the redundancies that that will mean. They have not been content to limit the issues to their own jobs. They realise that they are supposed to provide a service to

the public and have campaigned for public support. They want to provide the best possible service because they recognise that public transport is a right not a privilege. Especially for the people who live in the many outlying estates in Liverpool. (Who incidentally will be those worst hit if the local authority has its way.)

At national level the T&GWU has stated that it is totally opposed to transport cuts, and has promised its backing.

But one of the reasons that the Liverpool strike was only partial was that the area officials said that the national directive did not come into operation until April. The Liverpool busmen are now confident that they will have the support of all depots in Liverpool in the future to stop



Last month we looked at how stewards at Lucas Aerospace, threatened with redundancies, are developing plans to make socially useful goods. This month we look at a plan by Swan Hunter shipyard stewards to take over their yards. Next month we will look at a patient-run health centre in South Wales.

As the Government debates plans to nationalise shipyards, shop stewards at the Swan Hunter yards on Tyne-side have discussed the terms on which they want to be nationalised. Their plan, which aims to involve the whole of the workforce in the running of the yards, is called 'Workers' Control with Management Participation!' Whatever the merits of the plan, we think it is important for workers to question nationalisation

and ask what they want from it, rather than accepting it as a benefit in itself. What follows is an extract from their report.

The shipbuilding industry, if it is to become viable must undergo radical change. We need to start with the total involvement of the workforce. We do not see this democracy being imposed with a rigid structure but developing with experience. We pro-

SOCIALIST IDEAS IN ACTION!

pose a series of joint management and union committees at all levels, operating under an overall board of workers representatives and management. All boards will be composed of elected union members, with non-voting management to report and account for carrying out policies laid down by the board.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES

These would consist of elected representatives. If they worked with a particular trade, a foreman's representative would also be a member, along with a member of management who would not have a vote. They would elect a representative to the Yard Committee. The ideas we anticipate coming from these departments would be of great importance.

YARD COMMITTEES

Yard committees would be responsible for the general welfare of the workers in a yard, and see to it that proper safety regulations were observed, adequate canteen, washing facilities provided, etc. In general, the Committee would make sure that its particular yard was being run in the most efficient manner, listen to workers' grievances and generally see that the policies laid down for that yard were being carried out. They would have close liaison with the management body of their particular yard.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

These would be set up in each yard. They would be responsible for the general everyday running of the yard. They would have a close relationship with the Yard Committee, sending a representative to that committee and also to the Departmental committee.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE BOARD

This would consist of elected trade union members from Yard Committees, and management representatives who would no voting powers. It would lay down the general policies of all yards. Other functions would include the making of appointments, the establishment of a fair promotional scheme and wages structure, the settling of differences that may occur between different yards. In general, it would co-ordinate the efforts of the individual yards. It would be the main committee.

THE CHIEF MANAGEMENT BOARD

This will be responsible to the Chief Executive Board. It should have power to appoint its own buyers, planners etc., after consultation with, and approval by, the Chief Executive Board. It should also be responsible for development of the yards, for seeing they operate in the most efficient manner, and should recommend to the Chief Executive Board what machinery, tools etc need to be acquired. It would also set up training schools for apprentices, and for further training and re-training for adults. In general, it is responsible for carrying out the policies of the Chief Executive Board.

The major question hanging over the report is whether it has sufficient support among shipyard workers to make it more than a pipe dream. It will require a big change in people's ways of thinking, not to mention a fight, to make it anything approaching a reality, particularly since workers control in a capitalist system is full of unsolved problems.

No to pay laws

LARRY SMITH is a full-time union official. He has just accepted a £4 wage cut for his members, in the national interest, and is proud of it.

Larry is national bus secretary of the T&GWU and is negotiating a wage claim for 28,000 busmen with London Transport.

Last month he asked for £10. 'It will need a £10 increase in the basic rates to compensate for the increase in the cost of living', he said. But last week, after negotiating with London Transport, he turned tail and explained: 'The £10 wage claim was intended to show what we really need. Of course, we accept the Government's £6 pay guidelines, and this is what we're going for.'

Hole in the head

'The £10 was intended to demonstrate that we are making a sacrifice.'

As one busman said, 'We need Larry Smith like a hole in the head. With friends like him, who needs bosses?'

Now as the Government puts together the outline of even tighter pay laws, only rank and file opposition will stop them;

Opposition is coming from several quarters. One thrust has been for an emergency re-call of the TUC to discuss the issue.

It now looks as if Scanlon, Jones, Bassett and the union leadership will accept it and use it to win endorsement for their plans for a lower wage ceiling.

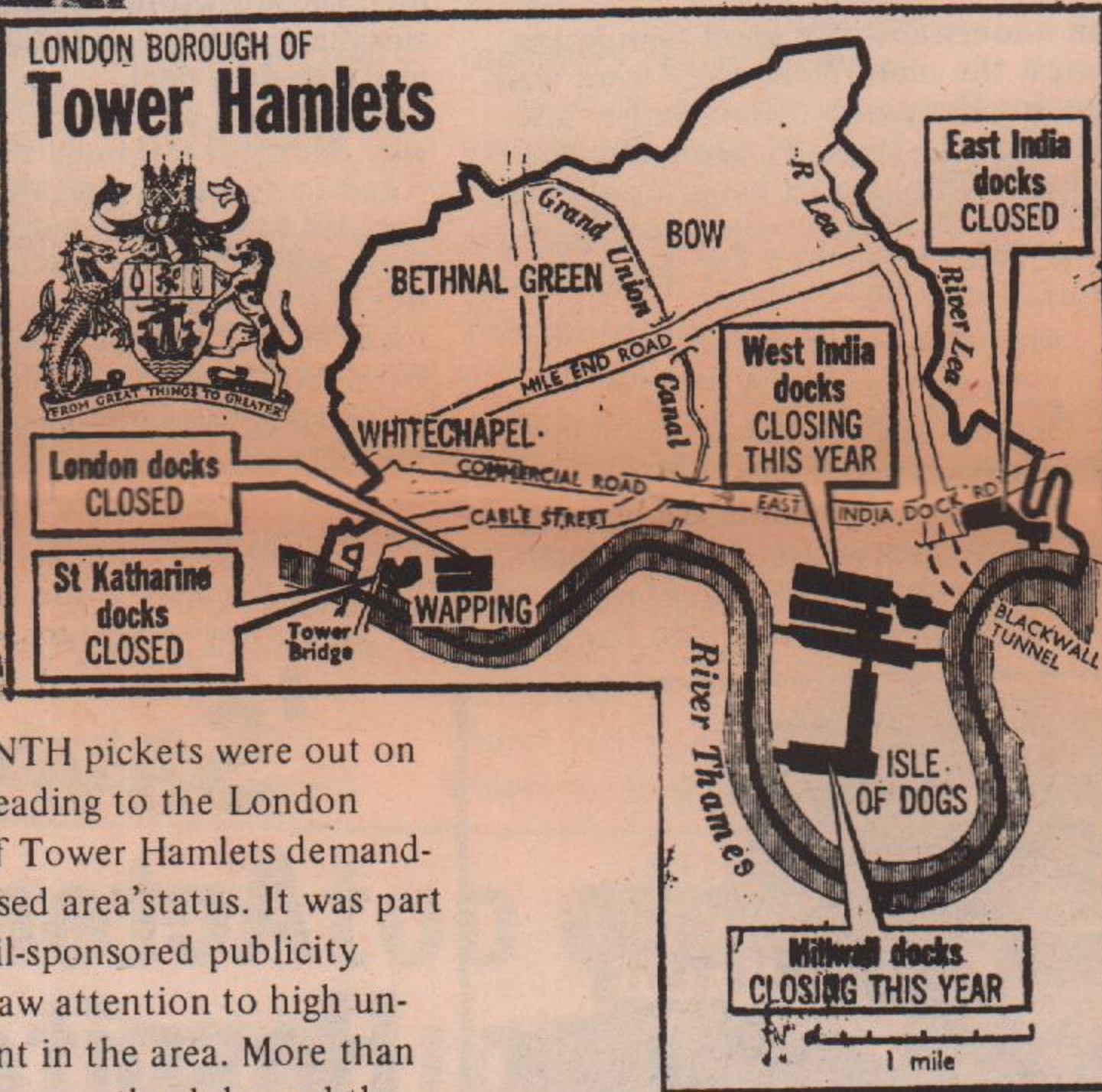
Resolutions

The chances of using it to build up left wing pressure are almost nil. At the most it may draw attention to what's going on.

The second thrust of opposition is inside the trade unions, particularly in preparation for the coming union conference season. Already a number of unions have strong anti-pay law resolutions coming up for discussion.

* The Miners. A resolution from the

London's East End dying on its feet before our eyes



Yorkshire NUM calls again for a £100 minimum wage. A second resolution from the Scottish NUM opposes 'all forms of incomes policy, statutory or voluntary'.

Conditional

*Local Government Officers. Inside NALGO there is mounting pressure to commit the union to oppose further pay laws. A resolution from the Metropolitan District Council reads: 'NALGO's support of a pay policy was only conditional on a number of urgent social reforms', and demands an end to the public expenditure cuts and a drop in the unemployment rate

Leyland

But resolutions to union annual conferences are useless by themselves. They need to be backed by action.

There is no shortage of action over pay. British Leyland alone was hit by four pay disputes last week in the Midlands. But it remains sectioned. The stand taken by some T&G workers at Standard Triumph in supporting the toolroom workers pay claim was absolutely right. (See report page 9). Only rank and file unity will win.

LAST MONTH pickets were out on the roads leading to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets demanding 'distressed area' status. It was part of a council-sponsored publicity stunt to draw attention to high unemployment in the area. More than one in ten are on the dole, and the figure is rising.

In the event only about three pickets turned up. But the following day several hundred people attended a public meeting called by the council to discuss the unemployment situation.

Tower Hamlets, in East London is one of several inner London boroughs which is threatened with becoming an industrial desert. It is closely followed by Brixton in South London, and Hammersmith in West London.

The main employer is the Port of London, which has been undergoing ruthless rationalisation. (See diagram)

Meanwhile the biggest new investment in the area has been a World Trade Centre, a new luxury hotel and a yacht marina. Just what local people always needed.

The council's public meeting was also more in the nature of a publicity stunt than a serious discussion.

PROBLEMS

It threw up almost as many problems as it did solutions.

□ The National Front, who it is believed control two tenants associations in Bethnal Green, were there, peddling their usual racist lies about immigrants being the cause of unemployment.

□ Speaker after speaker hearkened back to the 'good old days' of the rag trade, the food industries and the docks. One speaker in particular grieved the passing of Bryant and May, where East End Trade Unionism started with the match girls strike. None of them stopped to ask what wages and conditions had been like then.

□ The final resolution passed at the meeting demanded the Government 'recognise East London as a special case'. No mention of the other London boroughs, let alone other parts of the country which are unemployment black spots.

All kinds of people are getting in on the 'save Tower Hamlets' act. But the prize for idiocy must go to a local Tory Greater London Councillor who wants the GLC to prepare a report on the viability of the Olympic Games being held in dockland in 1984. He says the East End would inherit Olympic facilities after the games and the project would provide trade and jobs!

(Story...London Free Press)

For the council the meeting was a success. Their main interest is to show widespread concern so they can approach the Government and demand distressed area status, which entails things like relaxing restrictions on Industrial Development Certificates to encourage jobs to come back.

But for the people of Tower Hamlets it is more than just jobs; the run-down of the area hits their whole way of life. When jobs go, housing declines, new schools are not built, young people leave the area, and the environment turns into a wasteland of empty factories and decaying housing.

It's more than a question of the right to work. The area has already been invaded by cowboy companies taking advantage of cheap warehouse space and offering rock-bottom wages and bad conditions. It is also attracting low-paid service jobs like storekeepers and warehousemen.

What is needed is support for campaigns across the whole area of life; for decent housing, welfare and health facilities, and against the cuts. The borough has thrown up campaigns around housing, health, education and the cuts. They all need supporting.

The campaign of hysteria

AS THE new Docks Bill, that will safeguard dockers jobs, and extend port working conditions to thousands of other workers, goes through Parliament, shippers and port employers are mounting increasingly hysterical campaigns against it.

The bill, which extends the National Dock Labour Scheme to all ports and many warehouses and container depots near docks, will bring job security and guaranteed lay-off

pay to thousands of workers, some of whom are only casual labourers at the moment. This is why employers are opposing it.

Last month even the Sun got in on the act. 'Kill this Bill' it said in a front page attack on the dockers.

Cannier employers prefer a more subtle approach. As the Financial Times recently reported: 'employers are already calculating how to exploit loopholes in the bill.'

'Not the most useful job'

I GOT work in the Job Creation Scheme through the Job Centre in Derby Square. Getting a job in that place is pretty good going. It's built right next to the Army Recruiting Office so they can't have much confidence in themselves.

About 16 of us were given jobs in Liverpool Central Libraries on about £26 per week after tax. Not fantastic money but most of us had been on Social Security for a while so we aren't complaining. We shift library records around or put local history manuscripts into protective cardboard folders. It's the kind of work the library would never get round to doing without a big disruption of their permanent staff. But under the Job Creation Scheme the library gets a government grant to employ us to do it.

Let's get this straight. We know damn well that the work we're doing isn't exactly the most useful job in society. Not many people are going to benefit from the fact that all of Lord Derby's letters are safe from the moths because of us. We know it's a waste of our ability too. Half of us are actually graduates like trained

teachers - there's even a bloke who's a qualified librarian! That's the beauty of the system. We get put onto virtually useless work but we'll never complain because we're getting paid for it and the alternative is the dole again.

Actually it's more ridiculous than that. All these jobs were meant for school leavers. So it was arranged that we went to Childwall Tech. every Friday to study for O-levels. But half the jobs went to unemployed graduates with degrees who are as desperate as anybody else. Unfortunately they have to go to lessons on Friday as well, or else they lose a day's pay. One of them has 10 O-levels already. What good is it to him? He wants a permanent job not two more O-levels!

Most of us know the score. The other day a teacher at the Tech asked why on earth we got lumbered with such pointless jobs and what we were doing at college? One bloke, just out of school, said 'We're here to keep the unemployment figures down!' He was dead right.



Job Creation: sticking plaster..

'I believe that these schemes will make a real contribution towards reducing unemployment over the next 18 months.....they could reduce the amount of unemployment by something like 10%.'
(Denis Healey - 24.9.75)

THAT WAS how the Chancellor of the Exchequer heralded the start of a massive public relations job in October '75.

The 'schemes' he referred to included the £30 million Job Creation programme organised by the governments Manpower Services Commission- '...to alleviate the unemployment problems by providing temporary jobs of community value'..... at the same time giving some vocational training.'

In all £75 million is being spent on schemes to cover up the governments unemployment policy. Its nothing more than a public relations job to hide the real facts. Facts like

-cuts of £3,500 million on public spending which cause more unemployment than these schemes could ever cope with,

-the governments deliberate use of the threat of unemployment to blackmail workers into working harder.

Look at the Job Creation Scheme in particular.£30 million-(and a further £10 million in Dec)-has been put into so-called 'community worthwhile projects', at the same time as local authorities are being told to cut spending on community facilities like housing, repairs,nurseries,health and education.

And what 'worthwhile' schemes have been set up so far?

- ▼Improvements to a S.Shields graveyard which has already won 4 awards in the last 8 years for being in such a good condition.
- ▼Cleaning driftwood from an unused Sunderland beach.
- ▼Combing Huddersfields rubbish tips.
- ▼Cleaning graffiti from the walls of Fife.

Big Flame talked to a group of workers on one of the schemes in Liverpool.'Life Chance' as it is known was set up to renovate vans and double decker buses for community transport.

'When you look at some of the schemes that are being started in Liverpool-'Life Chance' looks

like a winner in comparison.I mean they've got kids counting lampposts and letter boxes,checking car registrations for surveys. Next thing you know they'll be getting them to make sure the old-age pensioners have got their shoes on the right feet.Its ridiculous. At least here people are being trained by mechanics,joiners and other skilled men.'

'But when you see 'Life Chance' in relation to the whole area's unemployment,its just sticking plaster.It's a con as well because it only lasts six months and then you're on the dole again.'

'400 kids were interviewed for this place and out of them only 60 got jobs. The same with the skilled men-only 12 were wanted and we got applications from 56 joiners, 40 electricians, 20 plumbers and a number of other time-served skilled craftsmen. Some of these had been looking for work for nearly two years.'

'This place is worth £150,000 and it's provided only 72 jobs. Out of the 86,000 on the dole on Merseyside this is just a drop in the ocean.'

Run out in 6 months

'Job creation is a con - it's set up to spread over two years but each individual scheme only lasts 6 months. They'll work out the figures over two years so they'll look really impressive - all totted up. But they won't say a thing about the individual schemes. The figures won't mention the built-in redundancies for us after 6 months. What happens to our lives won't appear in the figures.'

'For us who work here the worst thing is that : Knowing the job and the money will run out in 6 months months. Every day I work I'm working myself out of a job whatever happens. The redundancies are gettin nearer - the first two will go in the next month or so.'

We asked them how they had organised themselves in this kind of set up and whether they thought they could fight the coming redundancies.

'We got organised into a union (T&GWU) after two fellas had been sacked, without any proper warning or anything. Feeling was high and in an ordianry workplace

we'd have probably gone on strike to get them reinstated but we're not fighting an ordinary employer. Job creation can close this place down at two months notice, especially if it becomes too much of an embarrassment.'

'The union has made a difference day to day - mainly to the management. They thought they could go along with sackings but we showed them different. They have to talk things out with us now.'

Stop and think

'You don't get harassed as much as in an ordinary firm anyway, but if we hadn't got organised there'd have been a lot more 'walking over' than there is now. It's made them stop and think.'

'Mind you, the T&G doesn't give us much support. They don't seem interested. But we're going to the next branch to get support.We want them to recognise that the ending of this scheme is straight redundancies which have to be fought. Palmer the area official of the T&G is on the North West committee of the job creaton so we want the branch to put pressure on him at least to push for keeping the place going.'

Out one by one

'If we were all faced with redundancies tomorrow we'd be solid together. But they're not daft. They'll do it gradually, a few at a time. They'll see it as natural wastage. People got taken on at different times so when their six months is up they'll be out one by one.'

'Another problem is that everyone sees it as a temporary job and are desperate for the money while it lasts. It'd be impossible to fight on our own because they'd just shut the place down - withdraw the money.'

'They've put £40 million altogether into schemes like this - some were useless. Why didn't they use that money to build more council houses. Something really useful like that. They could have trained people on jobs like that just as well as this and it would mean corporation workers brought off the dole as well. But they won't do that and bring themselves into competition with Bovis and the likes. Anyway, this is a publicity stunt - they're not really concerned about the community or the unemployed people.'

WHEN A WOMAN FIGHTS BACK

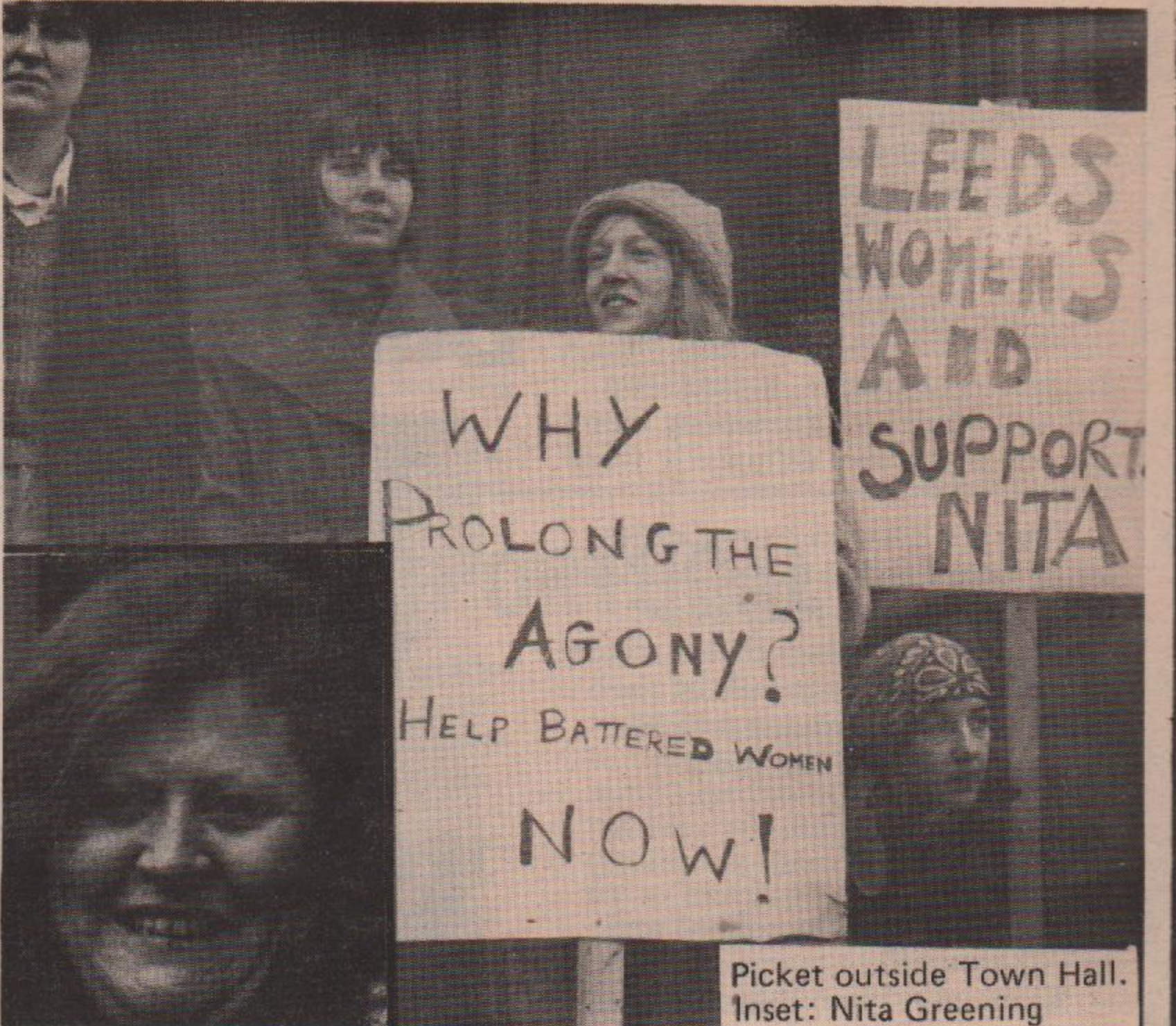
NITA GREENING appeared in Leeds Crown Court on Monday 15th March, charged with murdering her husband on October 29th. She pleaded guilty to manslaughter and the judge accepted this.

The court was told how Nita and her husband Brian had gone to the pub with some friends. He got into a fight before they left. On the way home he knocked her over and kicked her in the face, leaving her lying on the ground. She told a friend that she wasn't going home, but would ring for a taxi to her mothers. Her husband followed her to the call-box and tried to stop her dialling. Then she must have strangled him with the chord; but she couldn't

friends. Some get quite seriously beaten up, and others go to the refuge to escape. The police take little action and few men are ever prosecuted.

The leaflet said 'Many women identify with Nita feeling it could well have been them in the dock.' And many women in the refuge certainly have got close to injuring their husbands in self-defence.

On the Tuesday, the judge seemed very impressed by the fact that Nita was a foster mother to a little girl of five who she had looked after since she was 3 months. But later that day he sentenced her to 2 years suspended sentence. Everyone rushed outside to see her; Mark, her son still carrying his placard saying 'SUPPORT NITA.'



Picket outside Town Hall. Inset: Nita Greening

remember because of all the valium tablets she'd taken, and she'd drank a lot. The psychiatrist backed this up in court. Witnesses saw her give him the kiss of life outside the call-box.

On Monday the judge adjourned the case because no probation officers report had been done.

Everyone said that she was not a violent person and that he always started fights. Close friends said that she was terrified of him.

Women, some from the Womens Aid Refuge stood outside the court with placards-'Women must defend themselves'.....'Womens Aid support Nita'.

Women and her son, Mark, took leaflets around publicising the trial. Saying why it was so important for all women. In Chapeltown Leeds, where Nita lives, women are often treated very roughly by their men-

The national papers have not been too helpful to Nita. They spent most of their time emphasising how big she looked and what a powerful woman she must have been. The Daily Mirror headline, 16.3.76 was 'Hefty Mrs Juanita Greening' and said nothing of how terrified she was of him.

Nitas case is an extreme example of what happens when a woman retaliates after having been constantly beaten up by her husband or boyfriend. She will get no help from the law-the police won't interfere in 'domestic matters'. Yet when a woman finally fights back, she ends up with a sentence or even inside!

Come here comrade and I'll show you socialism..



A village school.

EIGHTEEN MONTHS ago the people of a West African country, Guinea-Bissau, got rid of their Portuguese colonial bosses, and their local African bosses, after a long armed struggle. In short, they set out on the road to socialism.

A long road, that goes without saying. For more than a century these people of Guinea-Bissau had been sorely robbed, pilfered and kicked around. When they won their freedom in 1974 they and their country had almost none of the things that can make a modern way of life.

They are still desperately short of these things. Most of them live in villages, but the villages have no electricity, no piped water, no paved streets. Their independence movement, the PAIGC, has had to build a medical service from nothing at all. But this medical service still can't reach a lot of people. They put a high priority on getting all the children to school, but many village schools do not even have chalk for use on blackboards. They have to make do with a hard paste made from crushed shellfish shells.

Socialism means a decent life for everyone. Obviously these people of Guinea-Bissau can't have that yet. But just as obviously, as you soon find out when you live among them, they are living very differently from before.

They are living in communities which have decided to build socialism. But what does this really mean?

Here are two things that it means; for example, to the people of the Como district, a farming area like most of the rest of the country.

Tank of oil

First, an end to being robbed and kicked around.

'Come over here, comrade', said Bat Nomancho, a spokesman of the farming people who live in Como, 'and we'll show you what that has meant for us'.

I followed him along a forest path to where a big rusty iron tank stood in a clearing. This tank was about five feet high and fifteen feet square.

'The main crop we grow,' Bat Nomancho explained, 'is palm oil, and this is the tank in which our Portuguese boss, a big capitalist, used to store the palm oil that we had to sell him at the price he fixed'.

'His name was Pinho Brandoa, and his price was always lower than the real price our palm oil was worth. But if you went and sold your palm oil to another trader at a better price, Pinho called the police. And the police beat you up'.

By **BASIL DAVIDSON**, author of several books on the liberation struggles in Africa, including 'Angola - in the eye of the storm' and 'Liberation of Guinea'.

'After that, Pinho took over. He wasn't gentle. He had his own thugs, and they took you and tossed you in that tank full of oil. And you stayed there in the oil, in the sun, till Pinho let you out again'.

The people of Como got rid of Pinho during their armed struggle against Portuguese control. They burnt down his house, and Pinho ran away to the Portuguese Army. The Portuguese tried to smash the armed resistance. But they failed.

In 1974, eleven years after the armed struggle had begun, the Portuguese Army threw in the towel. They had had enough. They left. And the party of the people, the PAIGC, took over. And it is the party of the people that controls prices now. Not on behalf of any bosses, but on behalf of the interests of all the people.

On the road to socialism, exploitation ends.

But how can you be sure that exploitation ends?

You can't be sure unless people,

all the people, have a firm grip on the control of their own lives. This means a lot of different things. But one thing it means, above all, is making sure that people know all the facts that matter to their lives, and then making sure that people can and do act upon those facts.

This is something else that comes from taking the road to socialism. And you can see it happening now, here in Guinea-Bissau.

People's Power

In the old days, when the bosses ran everything, the people of this district of Como - like the people of the rest of the country - had to do as they were told. And they were kicked around if they failed to obey. They were fined, sent to jail, beaten up, even killed.

Now it is different.

About 3,000 people live in Como district. They live in fifteen villages. Each village elects its own committee to run local affairs together with the

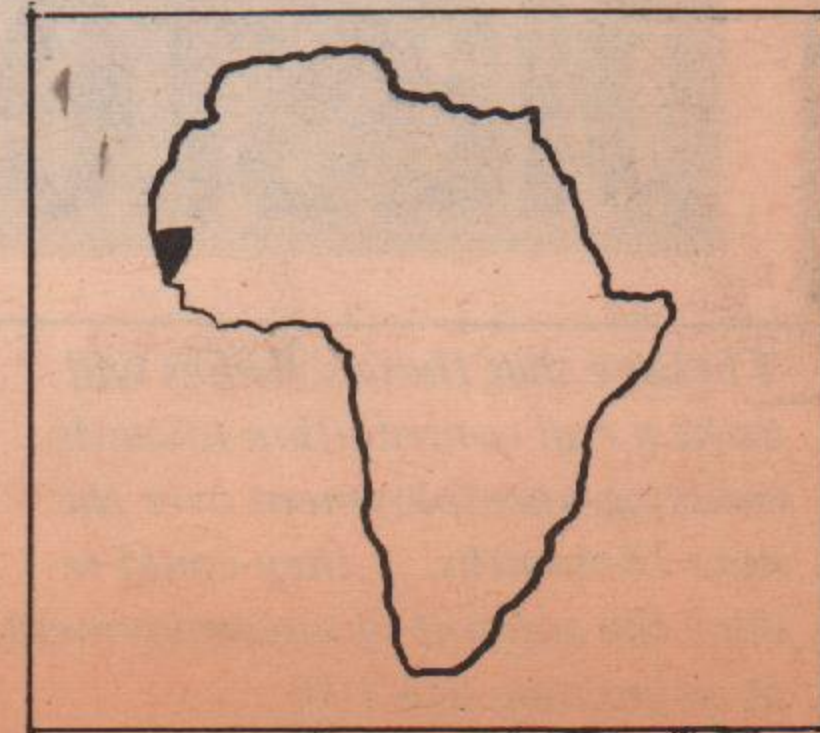
representative of the PAIGC. Each committee consists of three women and two men.

These committees look at local problems, take decisions about those problems, settle disputes, put up proposals for government expenditure, work together with the revolutionaries of the PAIGC so as to get their district moving forward. Other committees are doing the same in other districts.

They don't act behind closed doors. Everyone has to know what is going on, or why it isn't. This means a lot of public discussion. People gather in the shade of forest trees in the cool of the evening.

Not everyone agrees, not everyone likes what is decided. There is nothing easy or automatic. It's another kind of struggle. And to get people to work together for the common good is sometimes more difficult than it was to win the struggle against the bosses.

At one such meeting when I was present there was a lot of dissatisfaction with the state of the local school building. 'We need a good building', said one local man, 'and it's only a thatched shelter'. But no better build-



ing is possible for now.

At another such meeting there was another sort of complaint about schooling. The PAIGC militant in charge of local education had a lot to say about parents who refused to send their children to school. 'It's because you want them to work for you instead', he said, 'it's because you want to exploit them. But how can we build a decent life in our country if we don't have children who learn to read and write, and get to understand all the problems of our country?'

On the road to socialism, education begins. Not education handed down from on high: not education so as to screw more profit out of you.

But education so that people can know and understand all the facts that matter to their lives. So that they can take a hand in all the decisions that matter to their lives.

Building a new society in Africa



A people's committee meeting in the Como district, Jan. 1976.

Guinea Bissau...

where the people burnt down bosses' houses and took over the land

THE STRUGGLE WORLDWIDE



'HEADLIGHTS BLAZING, SIRENS SCREAMING.....'

MIDNIGHT IN Barcelona: headlights blazing, sirens screaming, a fleet of fire engines and ambulances moves slowly across the city. There is no fire or civil disaster. This is a demonstration by municipal workers, now almost a week on strike.

Behind the vehicles march the strikers, office workers protected from attack by long files of their colleagues, the firemen and the traffic police.

Earlier in the day they have taken over the town hall to hold meetings. They demand that the mayor, an old guard fascist, faces them and

their pay claim. Their basic pay is £45 a month, lower than the lowest industrial wage, and this after prices have risen 30% in six months.

A traffic policeman, megaphone in hand, addresses thousands of his colleagues from the steps of the town hall. He calls for the mayor's resignation, after all "we are the people of Barcelona". The mayor's reply is straightforward. He calls in the armed police to clear the building.

Under a dense cloud of choking tear gas, the firemen help their fellow workers out into the street.

Now begins the bizarre motorcade through the city centre, under the startled gaze of thousands who throw open their windows. The next day the strikers are put under military command.

This is the strangest of all the recent struggles in this part of the country, Catalonia, where the regime is now powerless to prevent the public display of the Catalan flag, a symbol of the growing opposition of the whole population to the unreformed fascist government which continues to preside in Madrid long after Franco's death.

SPAIN NEAR TO TOTAL GENERAL STRIKE



'We are the people of Barcelona': a traffic policeman demands the mayor's resignation.

NOTHING HAS changed in Spain since the death of Franco — except the size and intensity of the workers' struggles. Even with five killed by the police in fewer weeks, there is a growing fearlessness in the face of the police, a feeling which is fueled by the deepening certainty that something must change soon.

Everything is moving towards a national general strike, but that could be days or, probably, months away. Meanwhile the working class is building its own unity in action and winning the support of other social groups.

STIRRINGS IN THE ARMY

The enormity of the current strike wave — around half a million on strike in the North alone — has not completely distracted attention away from the armed forces. Nine officers, members of the UMD, the Democratic Military Union, have

just received long jail sentences for sedition in the first case of its kind since the Civil War. Nevertheless, the UMD is clearly growing among the junior officers and is now helping in the formation of a similar organisation for soldiers, the UDS.

Comparisons with Portugal are still premature, but there's little doubt that the European-wide struggle in the barracks has taken hold in Spain. The first thought of the police when they recently occupied the Basque town of Basauri, scene of a total general strike against the shootings in nearby Vitoria, was to seal off the barracks, to prevent contact between soldiers and workers.

WORTHLESS CONCESSIONS

Anxious to check these developments, the Government has now promised to legalise all the parties to the right of the Communists. A

concession that carries no weight. Even the social democratic Socialist Workers Party has declared that "democracy is impossible with the present regime", meaning that it knows full well that the whole working class movement demands nothing less than a complete change of regime.

In any case, it is common knowledge that it is the Communist Party and the revolutionary organisations which command the greatest support among workers, and not the parliamentarians of the Socialist Party. To legalise the real left would assuredly unleash Kissinger's nightmare, a working class free to organise for its own needs and interests. The regime draws back from this prospect. Nevertheless, it is a virtual certainty that that freedom will be won. The longer it takes, the stronger the workers movement will become, and the more determined it will be to carry through radical changes.



Firemen head the demonstration against the mayor of Barcelona.

BIG FLAME FILM TOUR SUCCESS

THE NEWSREEL COLLECTIVE'S new film about Portugal, 'On the Side of the People', has attracted enthusiastic audiences at its 13 screenings on the Big Flame film tour.

The tour has had two aims. To bring home to British audiences the importance of the struggle for working class power, and the threat to Portugese workers from the growing strength of the fascists, supported by NATO and indirectly by Mario Soares' so-called Socialist Party. And also to help establish Big Flame as a

national organisation.

Big Flame speakers have been arguing on the tour for the need for a revolutionary politics that will strengthen the present struggles in this country as well as showing that these struggles contain within them the seeds of communism.

The speakers have criticised all those political tendencies which suggest that the solution to the present crisis is to join them and build the party. None of the existing groups has any claim to the massive support

that would be needed to establish the revolutionary party of the working class.

This policy towards the present situation has won Big Flame support in places where local groups do not as yet exist - Sheffield, Coventry and Redditch.

A second leg of the film tour begins in May with visits to cities in the eastern half of the country. Meanwhile, 'On the Side of the People' can be booked through the Other Cinema. (tel. 01 734-4131)

IRAN is our business

IF THE Shrewsbury 2 had been from Iran, they would not have been unjustly jailed. They would have been executed.

That is just one stark fact of a country with whom our so-called 'labour' government keeps up friendly relations. Since 1953, when a CIA backed coup put the present Shah into power, all trade-unions are banned; militant workers are murdered - 25 textile workers were recently shot dead during a demonstration; and even Iranian students in this country aren't protest without having to cover up their faces. Iran is our business. Multi-

national companies use regimes like in Iran (or Chile) because it means a workforce on starvation wages, who aren't allowed to answer back. If the working-class in other countries get too strong, then the companies have somewhere they can move away to. So its in our interests to support the Iranian workers.

The Campaign for the Restoration of Trade Union rights in Iran are asking all British trade-unionists to raise these matters at their branch, and get the issue of Iran on the agenda of the national conference.

INVASION RESISTED EAST TIMOR

IN EAST Timor, the country invaded by 30,000 Indonesian troops last December, popular resistance has started to hit back hard. Latest news is that for the first time, fighting against the troops has started in Dili, the capital.

Also an army convoy was ambushed, a tank destroyed and a large amount of weaponry and electronic equipment captured. At the same time, FREITLIN, the popular front party which ran E. Timor before the invasion, has re-established radio broadcasting from the country.

FREITLIN has the support of the E. Timor people, who had been ruled by Portugal since 1511, and has been able to stage regular ambushes on Indonesian troops. It

still controls 80% of the country.

In Australia, support for FREITLIN is growing fast. The ACTU (Australian TUC) has passed a motion condemning the invasion and waterside workers are blacking trade with Indonesia. On 18th March well-supported international protests took place throughout Australia and Europe, including a picket on the Indonesian embassy in London.

The British solidarity group is holding a public meeting in London on Friday 23rd April, at 7.30pm at: Artists for Democracy, 143, Whitfield St, London W1.

Subscriptions to the bulletin, (£1.50 per year, 75p for 6 months) from.....British Campaign for an independent E. Timor, 40 Concanor Rd, London SW2.

Conference call for Solidarity

A SUCCESSFUL conference to found a Solidarity Campaign with the Portugese Working Class was held in London last month. High point of the conference was speeches from two Portugese workers; one from Standard Electric (a subsidiary of ITT) who talked about the need to build international co-ordination between workers in the same multi-national company. The second was from the Domestic Workers Union; she talked about how domestic workers had opened popular canteens in working class areas of Lisbon and Oporto. The conference elected a Nation-

al committee to organise future solidarity work with the struggle in Portugal. It will not have an easy task. The Portugese right wing political parties are consolidating their position and this has demoralised many people in this country. But the fight is by no means over. Last month there were important strikes by nurses and engineers. Portugal is still one of the weakest links in capitalism's plans for a stable Europe. This is why the Portugese workers' fight is also our fight.

The Solidarity Campaign address is 12 Little Newport Street, London WC2.

LETTER ON PORTUGAL

WE WOULD LIKE TO CLARIFY THE POSITION OF BIG FLAME following the report on Portugal in the February edition of the newspaper.

The views expressed in that article are the opinions of an English comrade who is resident in Lisbon and is a sympathiser of Big Flame. For that reason, the article was captioned 'by our Lisbon correspondent', to distinguish it from our normal practice which is not to attribute pieces which are put forward as Big Flame policy.

Some aspects of the article have given rise to questions from some readers. First: it ends by stating that 'the sudden turn to the right in November has shown that without a party the people have nothing.' As we've explained elsewhere (BF Journal No. 2), whilst we accept that this has a lot of truth, as it stands it explains nothing, since every defeat of the working class can be - and often is - attributed to the absence of the revolutionary party.

Our position, briefly, is that without the growth of a high degree of class unity, there can be no revolutionary party, a party which must express the unity and strength of the mass of the working class, and not merely some isolated sectors, as

has been the case in Portugal. Moreover, we believe that it is necessary to build revolutionary organisation to fight for that class unity - at the same time maintaining the distinction between revolutionary organisations (limited in their support and capacity to mobilise) and a revolutionary party (commanding vast support and widely regarded as the political organisation of the whole working class).

Finally, even though justifiably favourable comments were made by our correspondent about the PRP and (especially) the UDP, we want to point out that for us the priority is to build a solidarity campaign with the Portugese working class, rather than to develop exclusive links with any of the Portugese revolutionary organisations; PRP, UDP or MES. We oppose that sectarian view that has it that a political organisation can only learn from other organisations abroad which it is exclusively linked to. Big Flame has learnt a lot from many organisations in Portugal and from the popular power organisations - tenants, workers, soldiers committees - and we will continue to use these links to strengthen the Solidarity Campaign with the Portugese working class.

International Committee Big Flame



TIME OFF

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST



'The ward is a factory for the Combine. It's for fixing up mistakes made in the neighbourhoods and in the schools and churches; that's what the hospital is.'

Just one quote from a brilliant new film now doing the commercial circuits, called 'One flew over the cuckoo's nest'. The Combine is the society run by businessmen and politicians; a society which creates fears and inadequacies in people so that some of them are locked away in mental institutions. The film is a savage attack on both the mental institutions that, in the words of one of the inmates, 'turn people into rabbits', and the system that creates them.

The film turns around a man called R.P. McMurphy, a rebellious prisoner who has conned his way into mental hospital for a rest. He instinctively sees through and challenges the rules of the game. He tells the inmates that 'You're no crazier than the average asshole on the street'. His rebellious acts against the all-powerful Nurse release the hidden anger and criticisms that lay dormant inside all the inmates.

He is given electric shock therapy - a so-called 'cure', but as another inmate says:

'You are strapped to a table and touched on each side of the head with wires. Zap! Five cents worth of electricity through the brain and you are jointly administered therapy and punishment for your hostile and go-to-hell behaviour. Enough of these treatments and a man turns out a drooling pants-wetting idiot.'

But the rebellions continue. More inmates discover their power and real identity. The authorities lobotomise McMurphy, another 'cure' which involves removing parts of the brain. In turn the inmates refuse to recognise the lifeless vegetable sent back. Eventually one of them, a giant Red Indian, kills what's left of him before smashing his way to freedom.

One of the central parts of the film is McMurphy's disruption of the 'therapy sessions'; group discussions where problems are discussed 'democratically' and 'collectively'. He shows them to be a sham; their function to allow the Nurse to convince the inmates that they and not the system are the problems.

When the patients demand and vote for change the superficial democracy is withdrawn and repression takes its place. But the repression is too late, the inmates are no longer rabbits. It is here that the parallels with society are consciously drawn.

All of us get trapped inside situations we don't really like, we accept the rules because we can't imagine or organise an alternative. Until, that is, events stimulate us to take action. When we do, they change the rules, but by then it is too late. This event, this spark for change, is represented in the film by McMurphy, but it's inside us all. The world needs more R.P. McMurphys.

Football: Terry's dream 'Palace'.

MENTION Crystal Palace and most people think of Malcolm Allison. Big Mal is the man, they'll tell you, who has steered Palace through to the semi-finals of the cup. But in the background is one of football's most interesting trainers, former QPR star Terry Venables.

Venables has got some fairly outspoken opinions, one of which is that football managers are too authoritarian. As he recently explained: 'When I was at Chelsea, the manager, Tommy Docherty, used to say, 'If anybody's got anything on their minds just tell me,' and I'd say 'Yes', and he'd say, 'It doesn't matter, because it's wrong'. And I'd say, 'Why is it wrong?' and he'd say, 'Never mind why it is, it's because I say so'. At QPR, I was always saying that we should have a democratic set-up which was still controlled by the top man, but like the leader of an orchestra rather than a one-man band. If I tried to take Peter Taylor's (the Palace winger) ability away from him, that's bad coaching. You don't have to stamp your personality on something that doesn't need your attention. All you can do is put him in an area of the field where you're going to get the best out of him. You just try to add little bits to his game.'

Now Venables, together with Gordon Williams, has put some of his opinions into a fine new novel about football, called 'They used to play on grass' (Mayflower, 40p)

It's the story of a South London team that comes good to win the British Cup. Throughout the book, you see a constant battle between the advertising men whose only interest in the game is money, and the players. One of the players says 'Why did every one automatically assume players thought only in terms of money? I came into the game because I had the

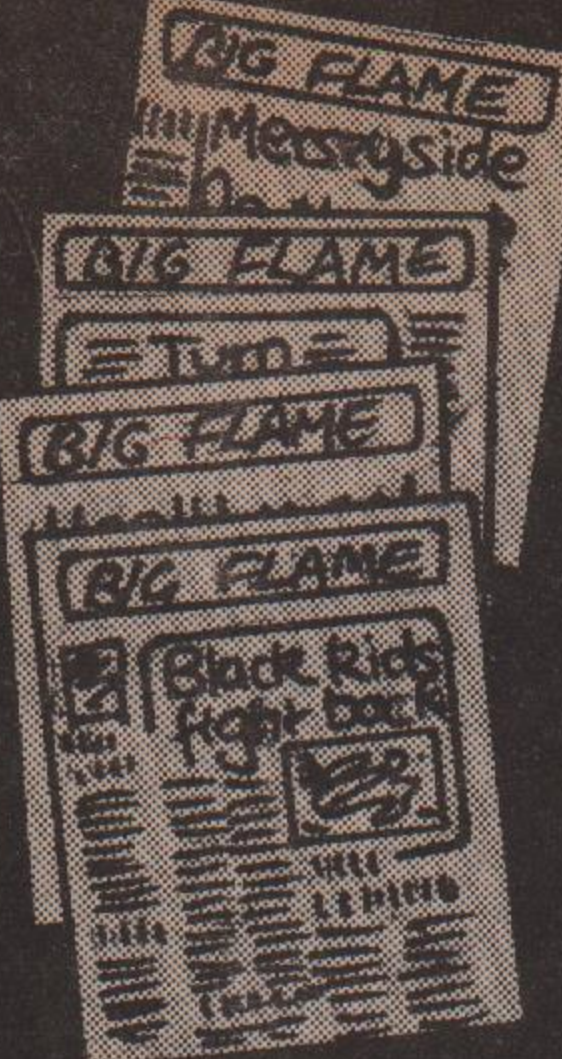
ability to play the game, not to make money. That came afterwards, it's what we pick up because we're good at the game.'

The book also reminds us that football is a working class activity its played by working class men and watched by working class men and women. Even though he money makers have got their hooks into the game good and proper, football still continues to give working class people a sense of achievement.

As another of the players in the book says; 'Well - maybe if this class-ridden country gave the ordinary man a go he'd make us into a real power, but all we've got is football. Geoff Hurst's hat-trick against Germany in the 1966 World Cup - was that just a sports page achievement? Was it hell! That was us, mate, the ordinary common bloke in the street. When did our bloody Foreign Secretaries and Prime Ministers last score any hat-tricks? Only football gave some of us the chance to show we were great men. Society didn't, not our wonderful cosy elitist British society, not our masters of the Eton mafia. Left to politicians and bankers and industrialists where would those men have been - down in the mines or doing robot jobs on the production lines - or dead in trenches? Oh yes, football may be an escapist entertainment for the masses - but we know what we're escaping from. When we get in a big crowd we're cheering our own kind, our own heroes. What we're really cheering for is our own very existence'

As 'They used to play on grass' points out, football is a working class activity that the working class is losing control over. Another victim of our profit greedy society.

Four Editions



As well as a national paper Big Flame produces three regional editions; in London, Liverpool and Manchester. Copies from 632 Books, 632 Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham.



You could use this film!

HOUSEY-HOUSEY is a new film from the Newsreel Collective, about housing struggles throughout the country. It gives widespread coverage to the various struggles against rent increases and poor conditions that have, and are, taking place. It also draws together the fight of private tenants, squatters, and council tenants and shows how they are all rooted in the same problems.

The film explains how 'big city financiers' grow rich at the expense of the working-class by demanding huge interest repayments on borrowed money. Sometimes as much as 70p in the £. As the film develops it gradually uncovers the causes of the housing crisis and what its roots are.

The films weakness is the lack of any talk about forms of organising. You realise who the enemy is, but how do you fight it?

There could have been more on how for instance, people organised during the Kirkby rent strike in 1972. And what more people could have done, or felt they could have done, for the rent strike to have won even more.

It is obviously hard to make a 35 minute film which covers all aspects of housing. This film will be useful for introducing discussions in tenants groups, squatting groups and trade-unions. Hopefully the things that are not covered will come up in discussions afterwards.

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 us 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 contrivances, 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.

Fords: fighting for a shorter week

'FORDWORKERS ARE AT IT AGAIN - always causing trouble' was probably a popular response on reading the Liverpool Echo recently. 'You'd think with the sorry state of the car industry they'd have more sense.' 'Sense enough (you might think) to realise that if they kept their heads down, with a bit of luck, they'll not go the same way as Chrysler with mass redundancies.'

BUT THINGS AREN'T LIKE THAT. 'Causing trouble', as some people like to call it, is the **only** way workers (in whatever industry) can put up any defence over jobs and win better pay and conditions. Let's not forget; the working class may have taken a bit of a jolt with unemployment, but the fight over issues such as pay and conditions has to go on just the same. In fact it's all the same fight anyway.

FORD HALEWOOD

Let's look at Ford Halewood recently. It's one of the few car plants in the country that has suffered very little from the recession in the industry. The main model produced at Halewood, the Escort, has been in great demand for over a year. In this situation the workers have the power to force a lot of things on management. That's why the feeling has grown recently that the shop floor is capable of winning things — things that make the job easier or help to keep your head above water over wages.

The willingness to take on management has resulted in a host of disputes which badly hit Ford's production. The newspapers are fond of telling us how much it cost Fords in lost production but of course they never mention the wages lost to the men. A strike on the night shift was over money they lost when they were sent home one night without notice. So the strike was firstly over wages but also over a principle — a principle that you are not 'casual labour' who come and go when management say.

NO TO FRIDAY NIGHT WORKING

'So why go on strike — isn't that throwing good money after bad?' Well, if you don't win then in the end it is. So why did a mass meeting on nights vote to go home? It's partly been said: there was a principle involved — if management hit you, you have to hit back. But more significant at Halewood at the moment, is the issue of the Friday night 4 hour shift. When they voted on a Thursday night they were also voting not to come in on the Friday even-

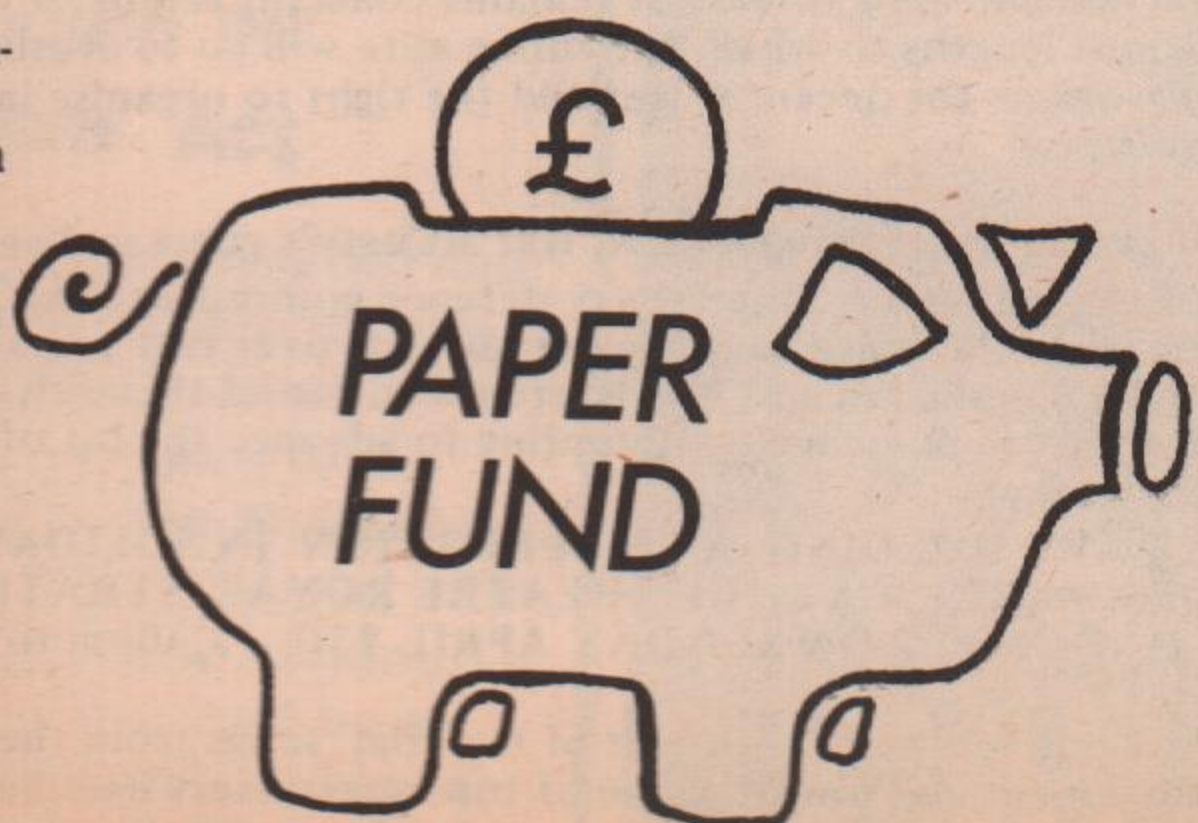
STEEL: resist the cuts

THE SLOW process of chipping away jobs has started at the Port Talbot steel works in South Wales. The British Steel Corporation is looking for a 20% reduction in labour, but it is refusing to say where it will come from and when. Instead, each department is played off against the next. Sometimes the reductions are almost too small to be noticed, two men here, three there. The local Right to Work Committee has formed a steel sub-committee to monitor the situation.

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

We need to raise from donations about £55 per month £500 between now and Jan. 1st 1977. That gives us nine months. If you think we're doing a good job and find the paper useful, help us by sending a donation now.

Donations to the Business Manager, 217 Wavertree Road, Liverpool 7.



ing. So what they want apart from full wages is a shorter working week. Friday nightshift is unpopular on any job, so it's the first target. If you think that Fordworkers are only out for themselves then consider what them winning a shorter working week means. It means less production — so management have to hire more from the dole'queues. It means pressurising other firms and industries to follow suit. If a prominent firm like Ford have to give in on hours then the encouragement is there for other workers to press home their demands as well.

NOT JUST FORDS

But it isn't just in apparently 'safe' jobs like Fords Halewood that you can show strength and take on management. For two years now we've been told we'll have to clip our wings because of the state of the market, whether it be cars, sugar, televisions etc. **One thing is clear, the working class has no control over these matters. Sometimes it's just a management con to get you to work harder, sometimes it isn't. What we do have control over is production.** Through organising over manning levels, shorter working week and lay-off etc. the workers can limit production and have the power in a factory (or whatever) to keep jobs and get better pay and conditions.

SCOTLAND : workers against the dole

A WALKOUT by around 50,000 engineering workers brought a large section of Scottish industry to a standstill last week. The message of the strikers was: 'stop Government policies that are deliberately creating unemployment.'

The stoppage, called by the Clyde Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, was meant to begin at 3 pm, but several Glasgow factories took the whole afternoon off.

It included miners, shipyard workers, transport and local government workers and men from the oil rigs in Fife. It was timed to coincide with a trade union delegation to the House of Commons.

High point of the stoppage was a mass meeting outside Cockburns Valves, in Glasgow, where workers have been on strike for nine weeks over equal pay for women. The meeting was swelled by delegations from many other factories in the area which had stopped for the afternoon.

TRIUMPH UNIONS SPLIT OVER DISPUTE

A WEEK old official strike at Standard Triumph, Canley, by toolroom and skilled workers, is being seriously undermined by Transport and General Workers officials who have instructed transport drivers to cross picket lines and production workers to scab.

Attempts by one steward to get

a motion of solidarity with the toolroom men passed by the Joint Shop Stewards Committee was ruled out of order by the T&G convenor, Eddy McGarry, who then pushed through his own motion instructing men to work normally.

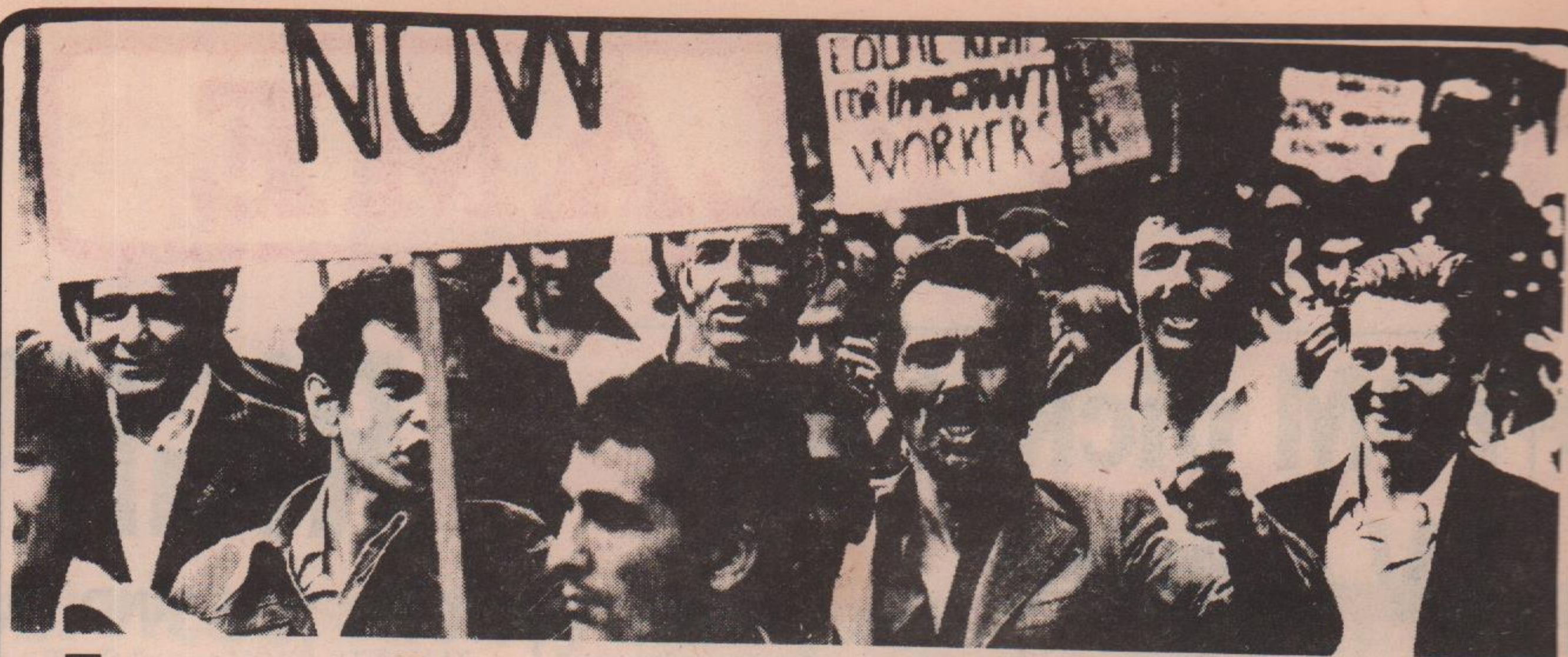
The strike is over differential payments of £1.80 which the toolroom men say the company is refusing to pay. McGarry and co. claim to be opposed to defending differentials, but, as one steward explained: 'It would be alright if they were bringing us all up to the same level, but they want us all to share the same low pay. We still rely on skilled men to push up the wage levels for us all'.

He added: 'Their conduct is threatening to open up a serious inter-union dispute between the skilled AUEW and the T&G. This kind of division is just what the management want'.

If Triumph can pick off the toolroom workers, who will be next?

BIG FLAME NOTES:

While we suspect McGarry's motives in this dispute, we recognise it is very difficult for the majority of workers (in this case T & G) to support a strike for differentials. There can be no substitute for a general fight for across the board wage rises.



Immigrant Workers BUILD UNITY IN STRUGGLE

FOR SEVERAL years the International branch of the Transport and General Workers Union has fought for the interests of immigrant workers. But today, it is in danger of being stifled by union officialdom. Since the War, immigrant workers

have been used more and more to provide a cheap docile labour force wherever international capital needs it. Immigrants suffer untold hardship and misery as they are forced to leave homes, families and friends to find work abroad.

Many immigrants in Britain have been forced to work in shocking conditions in the hotel and catering trade. Those who fight back risk losing their work permits, which can lead to imprisonment and deportation.

Until a few years ago, English trade unions ignored these special problems of immigrant workers. But then a small group of hotel workers began the International Branch of the Transport and General Workers Union. By sharing strength and experience they hoped to link up the fight in different workplaces and tackle problems like the work permit system.

Hotel chain

Members flocked into the International Branch; they took on the management of the Grand Metropolitan hotel chain in London and won better conditions for hundreds of people. But things soon changed.

By 1974, the Action Committee of European Immigrant Workers was writing 'The original enthusiasm of the workers for the organisation soon disappeared because of the inability of the branch to organise and guide the struggle of the immigrants effectively.'

Today, the International Branch is almost dead - firmly under the thumb of a paid trade union official called John Stevens. He believes there should be fewer immigrant workers allowed in. He supports bosses in cutting down on staff and is even prepared to give evidence against people who have been sacked.

How did this come about? After the first successful strikes a split opened up between the Branch Committee and the members. There were fine militants on the committee, but they failed in building new struggles around the immediate needs of the members.

Work permits

Of course, their job was made harder by union officialdom. Such people get their positions because they only support their members within the rules of capitalism. So when the Branch began to campaign for international solidarity and oppose the work permit system, the union leaders tried to stop it.

However, in one workplace after another, Stevens supported the workers where the committee failed. He led fights for small pay rises, or closed shops - and then built each workplace into a separate branch, cutting off the links between immigrants in different places and keeping them under his control. Now there is talk that the only really well organised workplace left in the Branch might soon be split off.

Once a union loses the active involvement of its members, no amount of progressive or militant leaders can save it from this fate.

This union can and must be saved. The best way to do this is for those who are concerned enough to build an action committee to fight for the real needs of immigrant workers to be taken into the Branch.

It means fighting to see the membership lists. It means fighting for control by the members, not by any self-appointed vanguard.

If you work in catering or hotels and agree with these aims, write to...
Box RS, Rising Free, Kings Cross Rd. London WC 1.

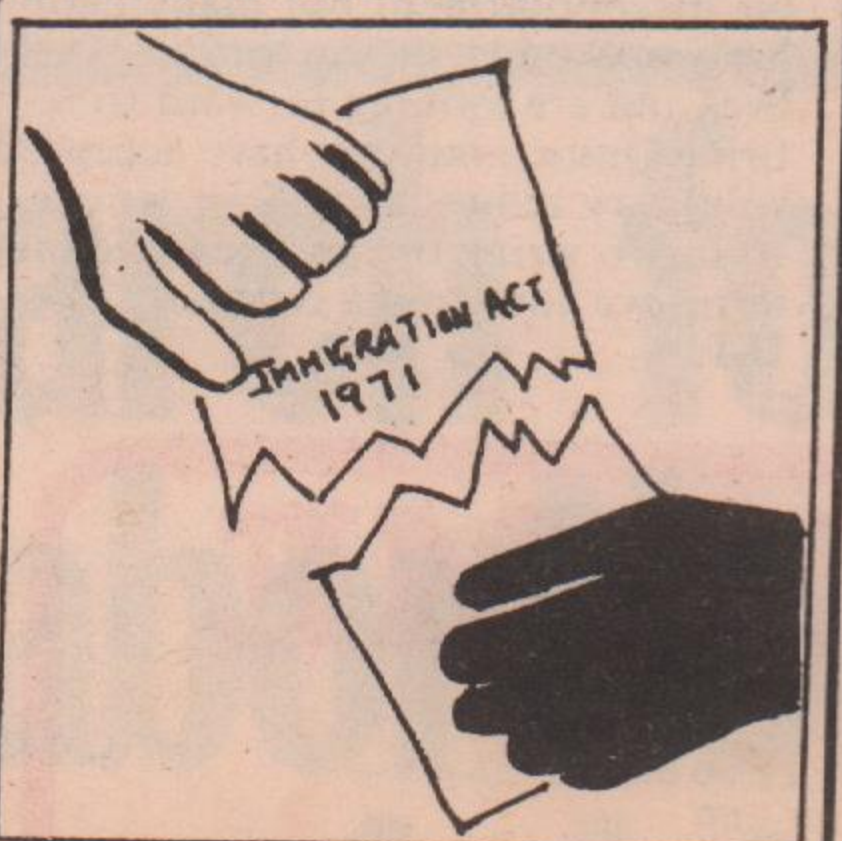
12½ p shares free to all MPs who voted against the new Industry Bill. He wished the Right to Work Campaign the best of luck, but added, 'I'm worried it will die from sectarianism.'

* It was the second mass rally against unemployment in London in two weeks. The week before 4,000 people had greeted the 80 Right to Work marchers who had marched from Manchester to London. On the last leg of the march they had been viciously attacked by police. 35 are on bail. They come up for trial on April 21. They will need all our support.



35 Right to Work Marchers were arrested outside Hendon police station in London after trying to talk to building workers on a neighbouring site.

REPEAL THE IMMIGRATION ACT NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION



Assemble 2.30 Speakers Corner, Hyde Park

Campaign to repeal the Immigration Act Tavistock Community Centre Tavistock Road W11 Telephone 01-727 1228

This article is written by Revolutionary Struggle, an organisation fighting for workers power against imperialism in a number of countries. We express our own views which may not be the same as those of Big Flame.

BIG FLAME

TOM picket on TV centre



ON FRIDAY 19th March, the West London Troops Out Movement, held a picket on the BBC centre in Wood Lane. They were protesting against the 'Friday night Spectacular' on Ireland that was to be screened that evening. The show asked 'Is there a political solution in N.Ireland?' but all the speakers were confined to such well-known loyalist right-wingers as Paisley, West, Craig and the like. The only representative of the catholic population was one member of the SDLP, who according to the BBC must represent the catholics because

they got their vote at the election. The fact that the elections were deliberately boycotted by over half of the catholic people, didn't seem to enter their heads!

Not surprisingly the answers we were given on the programme were the same ones we have been hearing for years. No mention of getting the troops out of Ireland now, or letting the Irish people sort out their problems free of the dominating and continual interference of the British government and their army. But that is the way, the only way, that lasting peace can ever come to Ireland.

MASS CAMPAIGN TO SMASH LAW

THE WEST London campaign against the Prevention of Terrorism Act springs into action this month. On Saturday April 10th, it will be publicly launched at an open conference in Hammersmith Town Hall, beginning at 2 pm.

This will be followed by the mass leafletting of all pubs and clubs in the area which are popular with Irish people. The leaflet publicises the telephone number through which anyone arrested under

the Prevention of Terrorism Act can get immediate legal advice, day and night, and through which the campaign will mobilise widespread trade union and community support to mount a picket outside the police station where someone is being held.

Anyone wishing to help on the campaign should contact Big Flame at 749-5726 or Release (who will be providing the day and night contact number which will operate from 20th April) 01.603.8654

S.T.C. NORTH WOOLWICH FIGHT OVER

ABOUT 1000 workers at the Standard Telephone and Cable Company in North Woolwich, East London, are to be made redundant. The redundancies start in April, with the bulk of the workforce going in June and September. STC, which is a subsidiary of ITT is rationalising its British operation. North Woolwich already has twice the national average unemployment.

When the redundancies were first rumoured last year, an action committee was set up to fight them. This gained some support from other STC factories in the country, but it

was not able to build up enough support in North Woolwich. The factory was also supported by various local groups, including the Newham Action Committee, which in January distributed 5000 leaflets in the area to build a fight against the closure.

TASS steward Anne King said, 'The collapse of the resistance is a big disappointment, but many people have worked at the factory all their lives and are looking forward to retiring. Quite a number have accepted voluntary redundancy. Now we are trying to wring the best redundancy terms we can from a company like ITT.'

SHEFFIELD

RIGHT TO FUEL



GAS AND ELECTRICITY BELONG TO THE PEOPLE

TENANTS FROM several Sheffield council estates attended a meeting last month to set up a Sheffield 'Right to Fuel' Campaign. Significantly only one councillor bothered to turn up to the Kelvin Youth centre where the meeting was held.

Representatives from tenants and community associations told a common story of fuel bills doubling over the last 12 months, £100 quarterly bills, more and more disconnections, old people and those on low incomes having to go without food to pay fuel bills, people afraid to put their heating on because of the cost and cases of people having to borrow from money lenders to pay their bills. Many tenants are now paying more on fuel than on rent.

There was criticism of the council one woman from the Wybourn said:

The majority of councillors don't earn their money; they take your complaint and they do nothing. Of the three Wybourn councillors, you can only rely on one." A man from Springvale flats complained at the inefficient central heating: "It's alright if you're an eskimo" he said.

KELVIN
On the Kelvin itself, tenants pay for their fuel and light in with their rent. This means that though people aren't disconnected, they do pay very high rents, even if they chose to switch off their heating. Six years ago the council concluded a contract with the NCB to supply fuel to Kelvin flats. That contract runs out next year. But in those six years, the price of solid fuel has trebled. So when the new contract is negotiated rents are going to go up and up

It was clear from what people said that the council would not do anything unless forced to. Some tenants said a rent strike might be the only way. But the Government has the main responsibility. Whilst sectors of private industry (ICI for instance) have been getting subsidised fuel, household consumers are being forced to pay the full market price. As one tenant said: "Gas and electricity belongs to the people, it's made by the people. But it's the people who are being made to pay through the nose for it."

One woman at the meeting was a typical example of what's happening: she said that from an income of £30.00 a week, she is paying £10.00 in rent and another to the Yorkshire Electricity Board. This leaves her with just £10.00 to clothe and feed a disabled husband and 2 children.

DISCONNECTION
Disconnections are happening all over the city. On Wybourn you can even to be disconnected without knowing it — there are special white fuse boxes outside the houses. But it was pointed out that the only way to stop disconnections was to appeal to electricians and gas men not to carry them out, and in the long run to get the Government to act, to have cheaper fuel as a right, and higher incomes. (The current social security fuel allowance is now covering only a third or even a quarter of some peoples bills).

The meeting decided to call on the District Council leader George Wilson to meet the local campaign organisers, and to back the national week of action from April 26th—May 1st. There will be lobbying of councillors and local MPs; a banner on the May Day Trades Council march; picketing of YEB offices and a mass rally in the City Hall. The meeting made a collection of £30.00 and appealed for wider support — the right to a warm house was something everyone should be concerned about. (for further information on the Sheffield Campaign, contact 50 Kelvin Walk, Sheffield 6, phone Sheffield 333319)



Demonstrators from the Right to Fuel campaign in Manchester.

Women walk out

WOMEN WORKERS at the British American Tobacco Co. led a one-day strike over differentials recently — and have forced the union to re-negotiate. The women are employed as the lowest grade in the Commercial Road factory in Liverpool's North End. They walked out in protest after hearing details of their annual pay agreement negotiated by union and management.

ALL SECTIONS
They were soon joined by women on higher grades and men from all sections of the factory despite harassment from supervisors and management. The dispute was over a difference of more than £3 weekly in the wage rises granted to the four women's grades.

TYPICAL
Pickets displaying placards greeted the evening shift coming out with shouts of 'union out' and 'we want more'. As some of the girls, members of the Tobacco Workers Union explained: 'The negotiations were typical. We never find out about it until management have agreed.' It is not clear when the re-negotiation will take place, but one worker said: 'If it's no good, I hope it gets knocked back again.'

Bakery to close down

MORE THAN 400 jobs are to disappear in Camden when the ABC bakery — the largest private employer in the area — closes down in the near future. The workers have been given two weeks notice. 'With a snap of the fingers we're all out of work'

said one angry driver. The union, the T&GWU, is putting up no resistance. Instead, it is negotiating with management the final number of sackings.

ABC, a giant food company, says the closure is because of rationalisation in the Greater London area. It's the second bakery to close in Camden Town in so many weeks, following the closure of Marchi Zeller in the High Street several weeks ago with the loss of 150 jobs.

Remember Des Warren

For many the scandal of the Shrewsbury conspiracy trials has faded into history as the working class is threatened by rising prices, unemployment and a whole range of attacks on hard won rights. But for one man at least, it remains constant reminder of the vicious lengths to which the ruling elite will go to crush the just fight of workers for decent wages and the right to organise in defence of their interests.

That man is DES WARREN, Her Majesty's guest in Leicester Jail. The East London Shrewsbury defence committee have not forgotten this man. We have campaigned now for over two years to support both Ricky Tomlinson and Des Warren who found themselves imprisoned as a result of their struggle attempting to advance the lot of ALL building workers

WE ARE HOLDING A 'CELEBRATION' IN SOLIDARITY WITH DES WARREN AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, STRATFORD, LONDON LONDON E. 5 ON SUNDAY APRIL 25th , 7.30pm to 11.0 pm.

You will see a re-enactment of the trial, songs from the Labour Movement and a wide range of top entertainers who have offered their services free in the cause of Justice and Solidarity.

Tickets are obtainable from the Theatre Box Office or from 85, Swaton Road, Bow, London E.3

BIG FLAME

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