

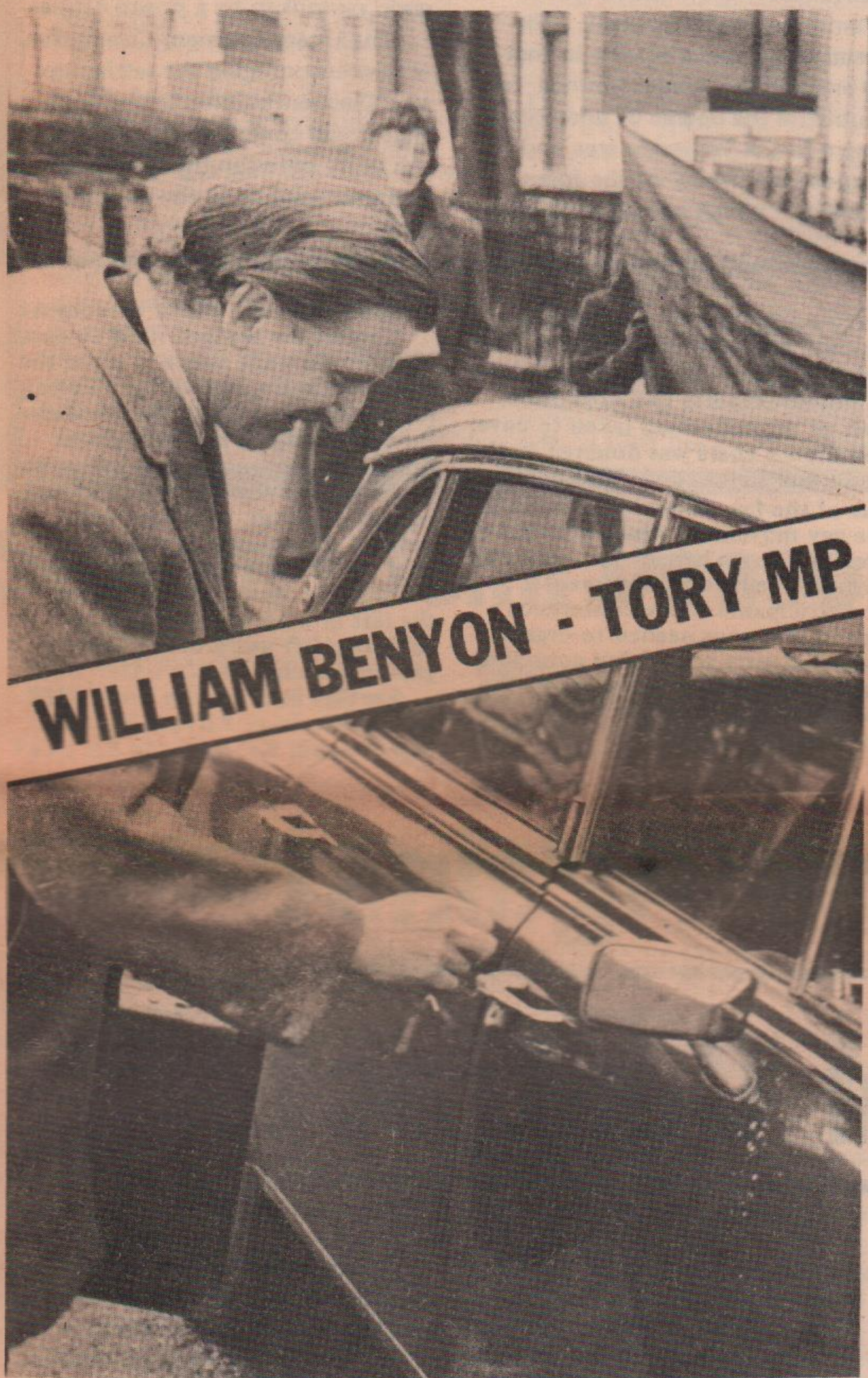
# BIG FLAME

No 50 May 1977

Paper of the Revolutionary Socialist Organisation Big Flame

10p

## WHOSE CHOICE?



Sturrock (Report)

Should HE decide how many kids SHE has?



WOMEN HAVE been fighting for years to have a real choice about having kids or not having them. The development of modern contraceptives like the pill and the coil has been a big step forward. For the first time women can enjoy sexual relationships with men without fear of pregnancy. But these contraceptives are not suitable for all women and drug companies geared to profit do little research into making them better and safer. So when they fail or can't be used, how easy is it to get an abortion? What control do women have over the few facilities there are? What real choice do they have over what happens to their bodies and their lives?

### These are his plans

A highly restrictive Private Members Bill moved by Benyon, A Tory MP, has just passed its second reading in Parliament by 170 to 132 votes. The bill would make legal abortions even harder to get than now.

- \* It bans abortions after 20 weeks except in cases of grave danger to the mother's health.
- \* New regulations for doctors would mean more delays before women could get abortions and brings an end to the work of charitable clinics who performed 30,000 abortions last year.
- \* It would stop research into earlier and safer methods of abortion and could even make the coil illegal.

Even the choice to *have* kids when they want them is being denied to many women who just can't afford it.

Prices go up and it's harder to make ends meet. Most women don't even have money of their own so it's a battle even to get a bare minimum out of men they are living with. School dinners have gone up and nurseries are being cut, some school kids are being put on short-time because of teacher cuts. Amidst all this what *choice* is there to have kids and bring them up the way you want? CONT. P.6.

Demonstration against the Benyon Anti-abortion Bill - For a Woman's Right to Choose. Saturday 14th May. Assemble 1.30 Belvedere Road, (Waterloo) and march to a rally in Hyde Park at 4.30. Details from 30 Camden Road, London N.W.1. tel. 01.485.4303.

## FASCIST ELECTION ADVANCE A REAL DANGER

THE NATIONAL FRONT is poised to take over from the Liberals as England's third major political party. On May 5th, at the local elections, the NF will contest a majority of the seats in London, the West Midlands, Leeds Bradford, Leicester, Bristol and a number of smaller areas.

Martin Webster, the Front's 'Activities Organiser', confidently expects his party will poll 100,000 votes in London alone. There is the possibility that the NF will break through and gain one or two council seats - maybe in London, Leicester or Sandwell - to add to the only other elected fascist councillor, Kingsley Read of the National Party in Blackburn.

Two other fascist parties will also stand candidates - the National Party, concentrated in the North West, and the British National Party in Yorkshire.

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## MARCH AGAINST BENYON BILL MAY 14



# FORDS - BATTLE OVER CONTRACT

ON SUNDAY 17th April a meeting of all Ford UK convenors, attended by several hundred shop stewards, decided on the following claim to be negotiated before the present contract expires next October.

1. Return to free collective bargaining from August 1.
2. 15% minimum wage rise.
3. Recognition of skills.
4. Consolidation on the basic rate of the last rise under Phase 2 of the social contract.
5. 3 1/2 hour week.
6. Time and a third for all holiday pay.
7. Pension scheme in line with staff.
8. 80% lay-off pay.
9. Line workers allowance.
10. Full sick pay after 5 years.

It's clear that this claim expresses in some way the feeling of the shop floor against the social contract. The Government and the TUC know from now that regardless of their agreement a large sector of the working class won't accept pay restraint and a lower standard of living any longer.

But does it go far enough? We don't think so. At the meeting several stewards argued the case for £15 across the board rather than 15%. No amendment was accepted. It's clear that 15% is a very low rise. In all the Ford plants the feeling for more money now is growing rapidly. Many workers, especially at Halewood, are leaving because Ford wages are lower than elsewhere. 15% of 40 hours gross pay (£62) is £9.30. With income tax and deductions it's a rise of about £5-6. And this is not before October when food prices will be rising even faster. We think that anything less than £20 across the board won't take us back to the buying power of Ford wages 2 years ago.

## 35 HOUR WEEK

3 1/2 hour week. This is a step backwards. We've been going for 35 hours for years. That's the demand. This was the reaction of a Halewood militant. Certainly this feeling is shared across the plants. 'If you go for 3 1/2 you'll settle for 39, or for-

get about it. If you gain one hour, they'll shorten your dinner hour or take away a tea break, or something similar' - was another comment.

## MINI - SHIFT

The situation is that the fight for a shorter working week has been going on at Fords for years. At Halewood and Langley workers managed to abolish Friday night working, only only to get stuck with an absurd mini-shift between 5 and 9 o'clock.

In the past two years the unofficial campaigns against the 'mini' have been countless. To make sure that the 'union negotiators' won't forget about this point, Ford workers must take action now. This has been done by one whole line at Halewood when it decided to ban the mini-shift for an indefinite period.

The fight for a 35 hour week and a £20 rise across the board will be central to the future activities of the Big Flame Halewood and Langley groups and of the Dagenham Workers Group.

"Wot, laid-off now that I was trying to save up for Rome?" A very common reaction from Liverpool supporters who work at Ford Halewood. (Liverpool are playing in Rome next month in the final of the European Cup.)

The reason for the lay-off, a strike by skilled men against disciplinary action. While fully supporting their struggle against management's "Riot Act" (nickname for disciplinary procedure) we must point out one thing.

Last January, when the Line-workers went on strike for similar reasons, the skilled men refused to back them up. Had they all stuck together they would have had more chance of victory. Now, no wonder there are bad feelings against the 'craft' among the majority of workers.

Besides, their action might decrease the numbers in the 'Red Army's' invasion of Rome. Maybe they are all Evertonians.

## Homosexual Workers Organise

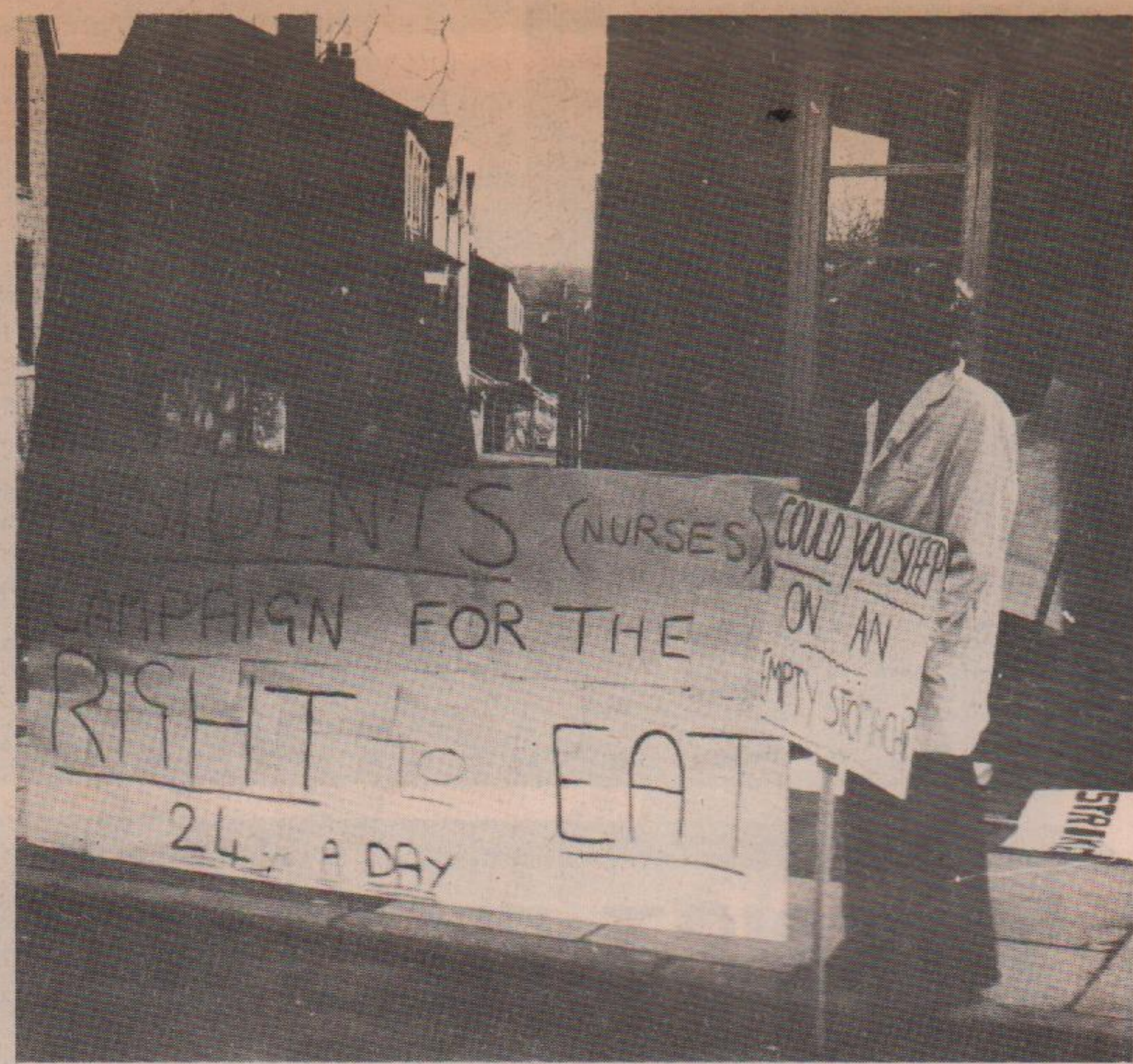
Sixty militants - from twenty trade unions - gathered in London on 2nd April to discuss the special problems of homosexuals in the workplace. Half of the collection taken to cover conference costs was donated to the Grunwick strike fund. This step is one of the few taken by activists in the gay movement which are vital to breaking down barriers between the gay and the labour movement.

Participants at the conference agreed that gays needed to organise independently to develop consciousness and confidence. This helps the main aim of activity - to fight discrimination against all oppressed

groups within the labour movement.

Conference pledged itself to ensuring a strong trade union voice at the National Conference of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, scheduled for 26-29 August in Nottingham. But it was recognised that left unity in the gay movement - around such issues as fascism, which go well beyond the struggle at work - is vital to taking the fight against discrimination forward. Working with the left in CHE is a first step in achieving left unity in the broader gay movement.

Further information about CHE conference from Richard McCane, 26B Westhill Rd. Brighton BN 13RT



## CANTEEN CLOSURE REVERSED

A 5 1/2 HOUR strike won all the demands of workers at North Manchester General Hospital. The strike started when resident staff found that their canteen was closed with only five hours notice from 10.30pm except to those on duty. The immediate excuse was that there had been a fight in the canteen a few nights previously. But everyone feared that this might be the first step in closing down the canteen altogether at night. In any case the workers wanted to know why there weren't more security men on at night to stop such trouble.

The picket started at 6.30 am Monday morning April 4th and the workers demanded, and won:

- 1) The status quo of the canteen to be maintained until the home facilities are considered adequate by resident staff.
- 2) In the meantime night security to be increased.
- 3) Written agreement to state that there will be no cutting of night staff in the canteen, nor cutting of meals available.
- 4) Consultation over any intended changes in our conditions of service.
- 5) No victimisation.

THE IMPORTANT similarities between what has been happening in the strikes of the maintenance engineers at Heathrow Airport and the electricians at British Steel, Port Talbot works, show how we can expect struggles to develop in the coming period.

## PRESS

From both these struggles there has been; 1 a well organised campaign by the press to discredit the strikers. On Heathrow, the press has put out its usual stories about how the strikers are being manipulated by 'politically motivated' men. Over the Port Talbot dispute, the 'Western Mail' has been running full page ads from British Steel saying how the pay claim would be in violation of Stage 2 of the Social Contract.

2: Union officials have been working overtime to get the strikers back to work. At Heathrow, 'Maoist' Reg Birch has made 3: There have been crafty attempts by management to divide the workers. At Heathrow this has led to T & G workers saying they would walk out if laid off. And at Port Talbot, management have offered extra pay to electricians working at the new Sinter plant, in an attempt to buy off some of the sparks.

his position clear. And the role of Frank Chapple and the EEPTU is made clear in this statement by Tom Lyons, secretary of the local



EEPTU branch: "Can Frank Chapple, EEPTU general secretary clarify the minds of his members in Port Talbot?"

"We have been negotiating on this claim for two years, including talks at national level.

"During this period a national officer of the union, Eddie Linton has always maintained our claim is fully justified and recommended us to impose restrictions to back it.

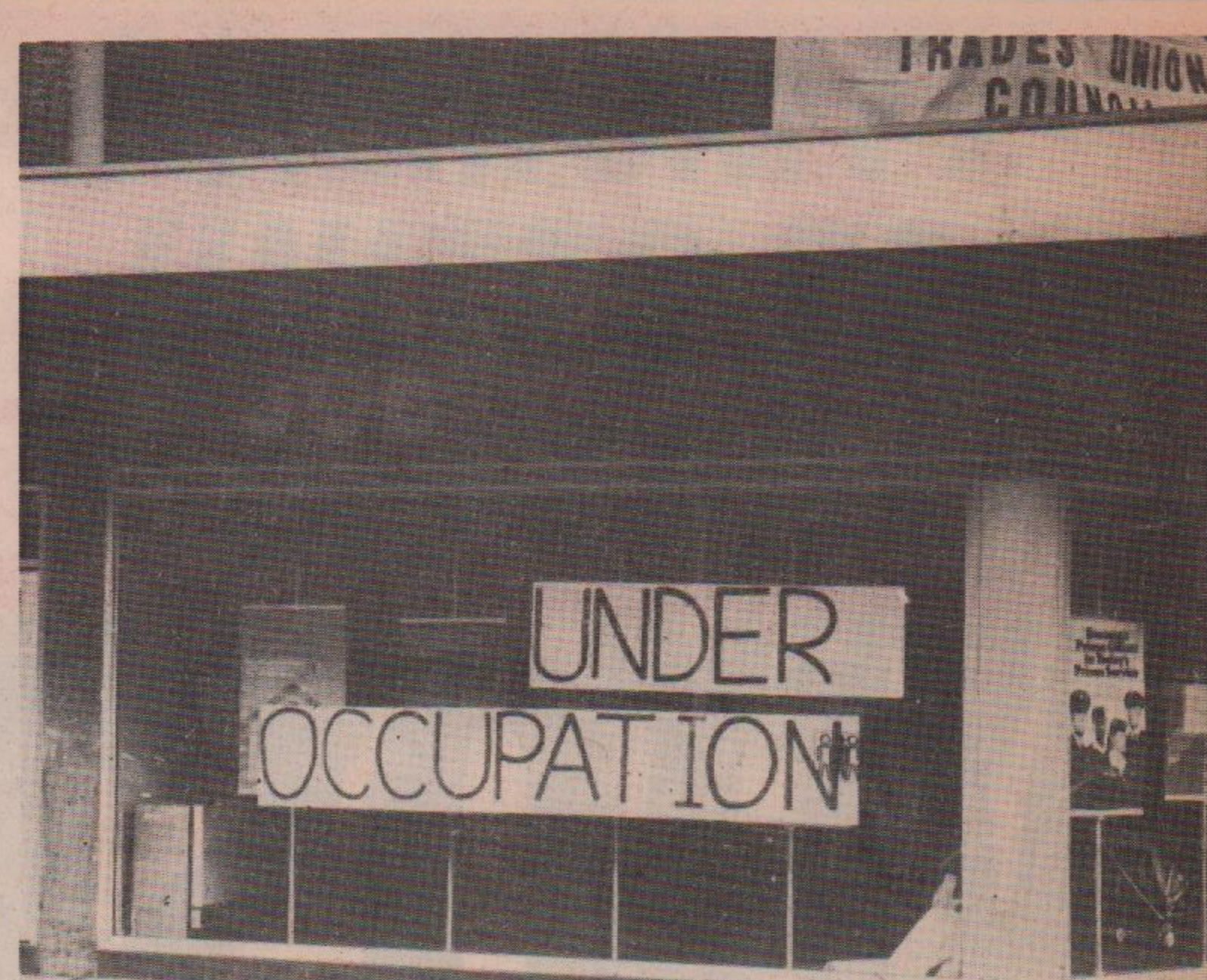
"Why is it that now, after two years, the executive council says the claim is impossible to win, that it contravenes the social contract, and that we should return to work immediately?"

## SPACE

Whilst it is correct to stress the sectional nature of the struggle of the Heathrow and Port Talbot struggles, it is important to realise that these struggles are using space that is within the Social Contract: better shift pay, better pensions, subsidised meals, staff status. And it is with the momentum that these sectional struggles have generated that the social contract will be broken.

## ATTACK

In the face of a three-pronged attack by management, union officials and the press, the strikers at Port Talbot and Heathrow are refusing to give in. They need all the support we can give them.



LAST MONTH, there was a one day token occupation of the Ashton Job Centre, organised by the Unemployment Committee of the Tameside Trades Council. The occupation was a success in that it enabled the Trades Council to publicise the degree of unemployment in the Tameside area and to expose the 'fraud' of the Job Centre - which has only the occa-

sional low paid job to offer. During the occupation, ads of jobs to be a paratrooper were found and, of course, ads of '50 good reasons to be a prison officer.'

The Unemployment Committee is now encouraging the setting up of a Claimants Union in the hope that it will contribute to building the unity between the employed and unemployed in the Tameside area.

# Strikes Against Social Contract



## An Open Letter to the Socialist Workers' Party

To the Central Committee of the Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades,

We in Big Flame have decided to write you this letter because we are seriously concerned about the standing of two revolutionary candidates in the recent Stechford by-election. We also want to raise with you the whole question of participation of revolutionaries in national and local elections. We would welcome a reply to this letter.

Let's start with our position in Stechford. As you know, Big Flame supported the Interantional Marxist Group (IMG) candidate - Brian Heron. We would have liked to have seen only one candidate there, representing class struggle and a real socialist alternative. But that did not happen - and we felt we had to make a choice. We did not support Brian Heron because we think that politically we are nearer the IMG than the SWP. We did it for two reasons:

(i) We knew that the IMG had approached you several times about the possibility of standing a joint candidate. But you had refused even to talk about this. We considered this attitude dangerously sectarian and non-productive, especially in relation to the confusion that it raised amongst the working class in Stechford.

(ii) We thought that the IMG were extremely open in their campaign. Their candidate, an experienced member of their organisation,

is a local shop steward at BLMC Longbridge and actively involved in the struggle. Their platform was completely open to other revolutionary forces (like Big Flame), to Asian groups and organisations. Their campaign drew the support of shop steward committees, one prominent member of the Communist Party and two leading members of the Labour Party district committee. As Brian Heron said: 'We are running this campaign to illustrate what a class struggle candidate could be like - to encourage the process'.

Big Flame's general position on elections has a lot of similarities with yours. Taken for granted that, as revolutionaries, we see the real changes taking place outside parliament, we share your view that revolutionaries must stand candidates in the next general elections, i.e. must use elections in a tactical way. Why? Because of the nature of the policies of this Labour Government and the necessity of giving hundreds, thousands of militants a focus, a rallying point. This is especially true in a period like this, when, after a low ebb in class struggle, the fight back is beginning to take place.

Like you, we believe that elections can be an effective propaganda weapon. But that does not mean that the number of votes is irrelevant. In order to make effective propaganda, we must also show that we have a considerable strength. Just think of the very demoralising concern, the campaign for the ions in Italy had on the comrades of

the revolutionary left. There, the campaign went incredibly well, but the joint slate got only 1.5% of the votes, when everybody, including the ruling class, was predicting 3.5%.

Finally, we think that the standing of revolutionary candidates is an important weapon to counter the growing strength and confidence that the National Front and other fascists are gaining.

That's why we are proposing to you and other forces the possibility of fighting for the formation of a class struggle slate. But we'll come to this later.

In our opinion the outcome of the Stechford by-election shows that there is a possibility for revolutionaries to get good results in elections in this period, both in terms of the campaign and in terms of votes.

But this certainly wasn't helped by the fact that two candidates were standing. How many working class people were asking all of us during the campaign: 'Why aren't you united?' We can certainly say that the total vote obtained by the IMG and SWP (871=2.7%) would have been considerably higher had you come to agreement.

Furthermore, you should ask yourselves why your candidate got fewer votes (377) than the 494 of the IMG, an organisation which is much smaller and less influential than yours. The answer to this question lies in the different nature of the two campaigns, again pointing out the usefulness of the idea of class struggle candidates.

We would ask you to think seriously about these point, unless you really believe that you are, on your own, the only revolutionary tendency in this country; or that the process of building the revolutionary party in Britain, a long and complicated process, can be reduced to increasing the size of the SWP.

Which leads to some concrete proposals. As far as we are concerned, the campaign for the next general elections has already started. Our priority at this stage is to fight for the formation of a 'class struggle' slate - opposed to Labour's capitalist policies. It would include revolutionary organisations, local shop stewards committees, rank and file bodies, claimants groups, womens' groups, black organisations. As well as non-aligned individuals, prominent intellectuals etc. Its programme, one of action, would be discussed and negotiated among all these forces, taking into account their relative weight and importance in areas where we would stand. Our greatest hope is that the SWP, the single largest revolutionary organisation, will take part in the formation of this slate.

Just think of the rejoicing and enthusiasm which has been created all over Europe by the recent success of a joint revolutionary slate in the local elections in France.

We would welcome a reply and invite you to discuss these matters further.

The National Secretariat,  
Big Flame.

## Support John Deason

JOIN THE PICKET OF THE OLD BAILEY, 9.30 am, Wed May 4th

John Deason is one of the 43 unemployed workers arrested last year when the police attacked the Manchester to London 'Right to Work' march.

42 of the marchers were tried before magistrates, one was imprisoned for 3 months, others received heavy fines and suspended prison sentences. 17 were cleared.

The most serious charges were levelled against John Deason, the Secretary of the campaign. If convicted, he faces a prison sentence of several years.

That would be a serious blow against the right of all trade unionists and unemployed to demonstrate without threats from the police.

Many trade unionists have called for support for John Deason and the mass picket of his trial at the Old Bailey on 4 May.

More than 800 delegates to the recent Leyland Combine Conference

signed a petition urging support. Among those who, in a personal capacity capacity, have joined the call for support are:

**Shrewsbury Pickets:** Ricky Tomlinson, Des Warren, Arthur Murray, Brian Williams, Ken O'Shea, Geoff Roberts, John Seabury, Mike Pierce. **AUEW:** Ernie Roberts (Assistant General Secretary), John Tocher (Manchester Divisional Organiser), Laurie Smith (National Organiser), Ken Slater (Accrington District Secretary), M. MacKay (Paisley District Secretary), Jim Mackenzie (Glasgow District Secretary), Bob Dagnall (Bolton District Secretary).

**Miners Union:** Arthur Scargill (Yorkshire President), Peter Heathfield (Derbyshire Secretary), Jack Collins (NUM Executive)

**Also:** Sid Harroway (Chairman Shop Stewards Committee, Ford Dagenham), Peter Carter (UCATT), Jim Hiles (Secretary of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions).

[Reprinted from Socialist Worker]

## Tenants' candidate an alternative to the Labour Party

Tom McClure is standing as Tenants candidate in Hulme/MossSide in the elections to the Greater Manchester Council. Tom works at the Hulme Advice Centre. He lives in the flats on MossSide and has been active in many local campaigns. He stood for councillor in 1975 in the local elections and narrowly failed to defeat the Labour candidate. Tom spoke to Big Flame about the elections.

"The Labour Party has failed to do anything about the problems of MossSide and Hulme. They have completely neglected the inner city areas. The only time they take any notice of the problems of the area is when they are threatened in the elections. But we're not just threatening, we're playing for keeps and I think I have a good chance of winning because people will vote for an alternative policy which gives them a chance of changing their situation. Hopefully, any success we have will act as a launching pad for a massive campaign next year when all the Manchester Council seats are up for election.

**..WE ARE PLAYING FOR KEEPS**

We need to offer alternative policies to the existing parties, policies which are right for the people. We shouldn't be afraid of challenging the Labour Party: it isn't the lesser of two evils. If a government is wrong for the people it doesn't matter

what it's called - it should be kicked out. It's no use sitting on the fence otherwise people won't think that there is an alternative to the parties that exist.

To stand in elections you need to have the confidence of the people. You can't just walk in and convert people, you need to live in the area and be involved in the struggles of the area so that you've got an insight into the problems and a vested interest in sorting them out.

In this area there's no shortage of issues. Clorius meters is still a fight. People want them out and now they have had a year to see that the council conned them into having the meters; now people are facing heavy bills.

Also we want a community centre. The Zion Institute is owned by the council and only part of it is used by the Halle Orchestra. The rest could be used by the people in the area but the council thinks this would be a security risk. Musical instruments are more important to them than the tenants.'

## WHY WE CELEBRATE MAY DAY



CHICAGO WORKERS PARADE ON THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL MAY DAY, 1890

"CHICAGO, 11 KILLED - 4 workers, 7 policemen - as bomb explodes on May Day demo".

To give a nationwide focus to their struggle for the 8-hour day, the US labour movement decided to start May Day demonstrations. The first were in 1886 - the demonstration in Chicago ended with a bomb explosion in which 11 people were killed. The police framed four revolutionaries (the 'Chicago Martyrs') who were sentenced to death. These events made May Day demos a permanent part of class struggle.

In 1889 the Second International was founded - one of its first decisions was to agree to make May Day celebrations international. "The Congress decides to organise a great international demonstration so that in all countries and in all cities on one appointed day the toiling masses will demand of the state authorities the legal reduction of the working day to eight hours. The workers of the various countries must organise this demonstration according to

conditions prevailing in each country."

May Day 1890 was a massive show of strength of the international working class. Engels wrote of it -

"The proletariat of Europe and America is holding a revue of its forces; it is mobilised for the first time as one army, under one flag, and fighting one immediate aim: an eight hour working day, established by legal enactment. ... If only Marx were with me to see it with his own eyes."

Over the years, social democrats and reformists of one kind and another have succeeded in making May Day a festival and not a day of struggle. But still today May Day can become central to the working class movement as it was in Portugal in 1974 and it will be in Spain this year. For us in this country it is important to remember that with unemployment at record levels and much overtime being worked - the struggle for a shorter working day is as important as ever.

FOR A 35 HOUR WEEK - 40 HOURS HOURS PAY.



# 3,000 March Against Facists

THE HARRINGEY demonstration brought 3,000 anti-fascists on to the streets to oppose the 1,000-strong National Front march. Fighting broke out between the left and the fascists and the police made over 50 arrests. The following eye-witness account captures the mood of the occasion.

There was an exhilarating atmosphere of unity and strength in demonstration as we waited for the fascists to appear.

As the Front's march came into sight, sounds of anti-fascist slogans and chants filled the air. The fascists were visibly frightened by the size of our counter-demonstration — they got pelted with bricks, cans, tomatoes and, best of all, smoke bombs which gave off a brilliant red mist.

There were violent clashes as the police reeled in confusion — at this point many arrests were made.

The fascist demonstration, around 1,000 strong, was hounded through the main streets — there were more arrests as the police regrouped to keep the two demonstrations apart. One half of our demonstration lost contact with the Front and tried to catch up with them through the side streets. As they did this they were joined by local youth — our demonstration was growing in size.

When we reached the school where the fascists were holding their meeting it was clear that the police had had time to get well organised — they moved swiftly to encircle us. All we could do was try and make occasional lunges at the Front.

As we dispersed, the violence broke out again. And at Wood Green tube station, isolated left wingers were attacked and beaten up by the fascists.

On the afternoon we outnumbered the fascists and got a lot of support from the local community. The left showed that it was able to fight in a united way. Mistakes were made — like dispersing in small groups and get picked off by the fascists — but they were of a technical nature. At a political level the militant strength of a united left showed itself to be a good foundation on which to build a national anti-fascist campaign.

THEY SHALL NOT PASS!



## A brief guide to the major fascist groups in Britain

The following brief guide to the major fascist groups in Britain summarises their main personalities, areas of activity and strength. These groups make up the hard-core of the growing right wing.

The list omits many of the larger and more influential right wing organisations, such as the National Association for Freedom, the Tory Party Monday Club, TRUEMID (the rightist trade union pressure group) and the potential strikebreaking organisations like that of Sir Walter Walker.

### Action Party

**Founder:** Sir Oswald Mosley (now resident in France)

**Organiser:** Jeffrey Hamm  
A.P. is the successor to the Union Movement and prior to that the British Union of Fascists and National Socialists.

**Journal:** Action. Very limited circulation. Monthly. AP also publishes duplicated material, leaflets and stickers of a more virulent nature than Action.

**Membership:** declining (at present a few hundred) as the old blackshirt element expires, although in the past few months a number of younger men have been recruited.

**Policies** are basically in favour of a strong corporatist European Union (AP supports the EEC). Policies towards blacks and Jews are not as important as they once were.

**Major areas of strength:** north and north-east London.

A small minority of members are also active in the League of St. George.

### British Movement

**Founder:** Colin Jordan.

**Chairman:** Michael MacGoughlin.

**Membership:** 200-300 and rising; recruiting among ex-servicemen, who are attracted by the anti-IRA campaign.

B.M. is one of the most extreme fascist organisations; its journal British Tidings is highly anti-Semitic.

B.M. has close contact with Ulster Protestant extremists (in particular the UDA-Young Militants), and the neo-Nazi Flemish VMO.

Colin Jordan now takes no part in the day-to-day running of the organisation. It is believed that he is building up his own clandestine force.

**Main areas of strength:** Midlands and Merseyside.

## Who's Who on the Right?

### British National Party

**Organiser:** Eddy Morrison.  
**Journal:** B.N.P. Bulletin.

BNP is the successor to the Leeds-based National Democratic Freedom Movement.

**Membership:** 50-100, but very active and like the B.M. very extreme in its views.

### British League of Rights

**Organiser:** Don Martin, assisted by Lady Jane Birdwood.

**Journal:** On Target.

A small organisation but linked with East European emigre groups; strong international contacts through its membership of the World Anti-Communist League, of which it is now the British affiliate.



During the day, when they're putting election leaflets through your door, the fascists show their milder face. When they get home at night, their real feelings become clear. Above is Donald Mudie, who was described in 'Searchlight' as a "nazi scribe" and "natty dresser"

### The Immigration Control Association

**Leaders:** Joy Page and Mary Howarth  
A small but influential group working with and within the National Front, Monday Club and other organisations.

**Main area of activity:** public relations, writing to the press, parliamentary lobbying.

Close links with Jim Merrick's British Campaign to Stop Immigration, Lady Jane Birdwoods Racial Preservation

Society and the Monday Club's Halt Immigration Now Campaign

### League of St. George

**Organisers:** Keith Thompson, Don Sayer and others.

A new organisation, based in the north London area and growing. Claims to be a 'social club' for members of all right wing groups. A recruiting ground for the clandestine paramilitary Column 88

Strong international contacts, especially in Belgium, Germany and the USA.

### National Party

**Chairman:** John Kingsley Read

**Journal:** monthly Britain First  
Following Read's split from the National Front, some half dozen or so branches followed him into the National Party of the U.K. Policy basically similar to the N.F., although less emphasis in private on neo-Nazi ideology.

Active in Lancashire, London and the Midlands. Has the only fascist town councillor in the country, in Blackburn. Main area of activity centres around election activity.

### National Front

**Chairman:** John Tyndall

**National Activities Organiser:** Martin Webster.

**Journal:** Spearhead (privately owned by Tyndall, and edited by Richard Verrall), published monthly. Also newspaper, National Front News.

**Membership:** 10,000 - 15,000  
The NF is still the largest and most dynamic of all the fascist organisations, despite the recent split and internal upheavals.

The opportunist policies of jumping on popular bandwagons by its leadership bring it members and contacts. The mass of its membership is very far removed from, and possibly ignorant of, the Nazi leanings of the leaders.

Now that Read and the others have left, Tyndall and Webster see their way clear to publicising their anti-Semitism. There are very clear signs that the NF is in the early stages of a major propaganda drive against the Jewish community, but at present their main target is the black community.

the NF will contest at least 300 seats at the next General Election. It is well on the way to becoming Britain's third party

The leadership maintains very good contacts with neo-Nazi groups abroad.

(Cont. from page one)

## N.F. ELECTION PLANS MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

It is almost certain that the National Front will now be able to stand the 318 candidates at the next general election which will entitle them to equal TV time with the Labour Party and the Tories. In short, the fascists have achieved a degree of strength which only the most blinkered can afford to ignore. *But the left remains hopelessly divided, even on this most life and death issue of opposing fascism.*

### HOPES OF LEFT UNITY

The Front advertised its demonstration in Harringey on April 23rd to its members saying, "This will be a VERY LIVELY meeting. This part of London is inundated with immigrants and Red groups."

For once, the left reacted to this provocation in unity. Several North London Labour Parties, black organisations and all the main groups of the revolutionary left joined a single campaign to mobilise support against the fascists. Such was the spirit of unity that even the Communist Party felt obliged to add its support — albeit only on the day before the demonstration.

The mood of the organisers of the anti-fascist demonstration was militant — so militant that Harringey Council (Labour-controlled) attempted to ban the left-wing demonstration while allowing the fascists to march. But the left announced it would ignore the ban. (For report of demonstration see separate article.)

### END OF REFORMIST STRATEGY?

The events in North London point to an important change of mood. The strategy of the Labour and Communist Parties, with its emphasis on peaceful protest, non-confrontation with the fascists and bending over backwards to accommodate Liberals,

Tories and the churches, has, in effect, allowed the fascists a free rein for several years.

But the demonstrations in Stechford last month — when 300 turned up to the LP/CP/Trades Council peaceful protest, and 3,000 to the demonstration organised by the black and revolutionary organisations — showed that most opponents of fascism have had enough of these 'do nothing and they will go away' policies.

The Labour Party has been hit where it hurts them most — in the ballot box. It has at last realised that that NF votes are gained at its expense (an estimated 60% at Stechford). Many Labour militants are drawing the correct conclusions and are beginning to campaign strongly against the fascists; but the majority are just running scared. The Labour

Party prefers to duck the issue of immigration and racism — the Stechford was a case in point — despite evidence that where it does take a firm stand, it can stem the tide of lost support to the fascists.

### SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

But there is more to the Labour Party's loss of votes than the issue of racism. Immigration may well be the outward reason for traditional working class voters switching to the NF, but disillusion with Labour's overall policies is the fundamental cause. The fascists use blacks as a scapegoat, as an 'easy answer' to what are genuine grievances and the failures of social democracy to advance working class interests. That's why it is not enough simply to carry out moral crusades against racism. A socialist solution to these problems must be put forward.

It is not enough to oppose the fascists *only* by marching in the street: it is also necessary to use all the opportunities they use — market place activity, door-to-door canvassing, local radio and press etc. This is one of the reasons why Big Flame is supporting the Socialist (IMG) candidates in the local elections in London and Birmingham, and the anti-cuts candidates in Hull, as well as the tenants' candidates in Manchester. (See interview)

It is important for revolutionaries not to underestimate the possibilities elections offer. We firmly believe in Big Flame that there is a need and the possibility of an electoral unity of the revolutionary left over elections. We are making the achievement of such a unity a political priority.



# New Force On Student Left

THROUGHOUT THE last term we saw one of the biggest waves of student militancy for years. Action taken against the proposed rises in tuition fees spread to over 100 colleges with many of them occupying, and some still in occupation.

In many cases it has been the overseas students who have been initiating and organising action. Previously a weak sector of the students, they have now united around their common needs, and by doing so are gaining a strength that will never be lost. Throughout the term we saw mass meetings of students to decide on action, in some cases up to 2,500 students attending meetings. The willingness of students to fight back is now more than evident.

## Court Action

As a result of mass action the so-called 'liberal' management of colleges, who in the past were willing to verbally denounce cuts and rises in fees, have now resorted to court action to end student occupations e.g. Middlesex Polytechnic, S.O.A.S. Throughout the occupations the Communist/Labour Party dominated NUS executive adopted a 'do it yourself' attitude towards action, which did nothing to strengthen, spread or encourage the fight back.

As the occupations were spreading, there was a realisation that an organised alternative to the pathetic protest strategies of the Broad left had to be formulated. One which all students involved in action could develop. It's no coincidence that the Socialist Student Alliance (SSA) has emerged at this time, it can play an important part in the developing and strengthening of the student struggles.

## Alliance

With endless attacks on student living standards and educational facilities there needs to be an organisation that enables us to mobilise for action and create a healthy atmosphere whereby open discussion can take place. To this end the SSA must avoid just becoming a regrouping of non-sectarian left groups — otherwise it will simply develop into another debating ground for left wing strategies. For too long there has been a tendency amongst left groups and parties in the student unions to turn up at struggles and hand down the 'right line', in the hope of exposing individuals and/or recruiting activists, and failing to recognise the possibilities of actually strengthening the struggles as a whole.

With the will to win coming back into the student movement, the SSA has the possibility of becoming a mass student organi-

sation, through which students can fight back and resist attempts by the state to restructure education further away from our needs. One of the most encouraging aspects to come out of the SSA is the call to set up Socialist Societies in every college. In doing so, there will be an attempt to incorporate all the tendencies who want to halt the attacks on students and workers, and start fighting for a system that we want.

**Socialist Students Alliance  
First National Conference  
April 30 - May 1,**

**Birmingham Polytechnic  
Conference open to all interested,  
Details 021.454.5184/5/6**

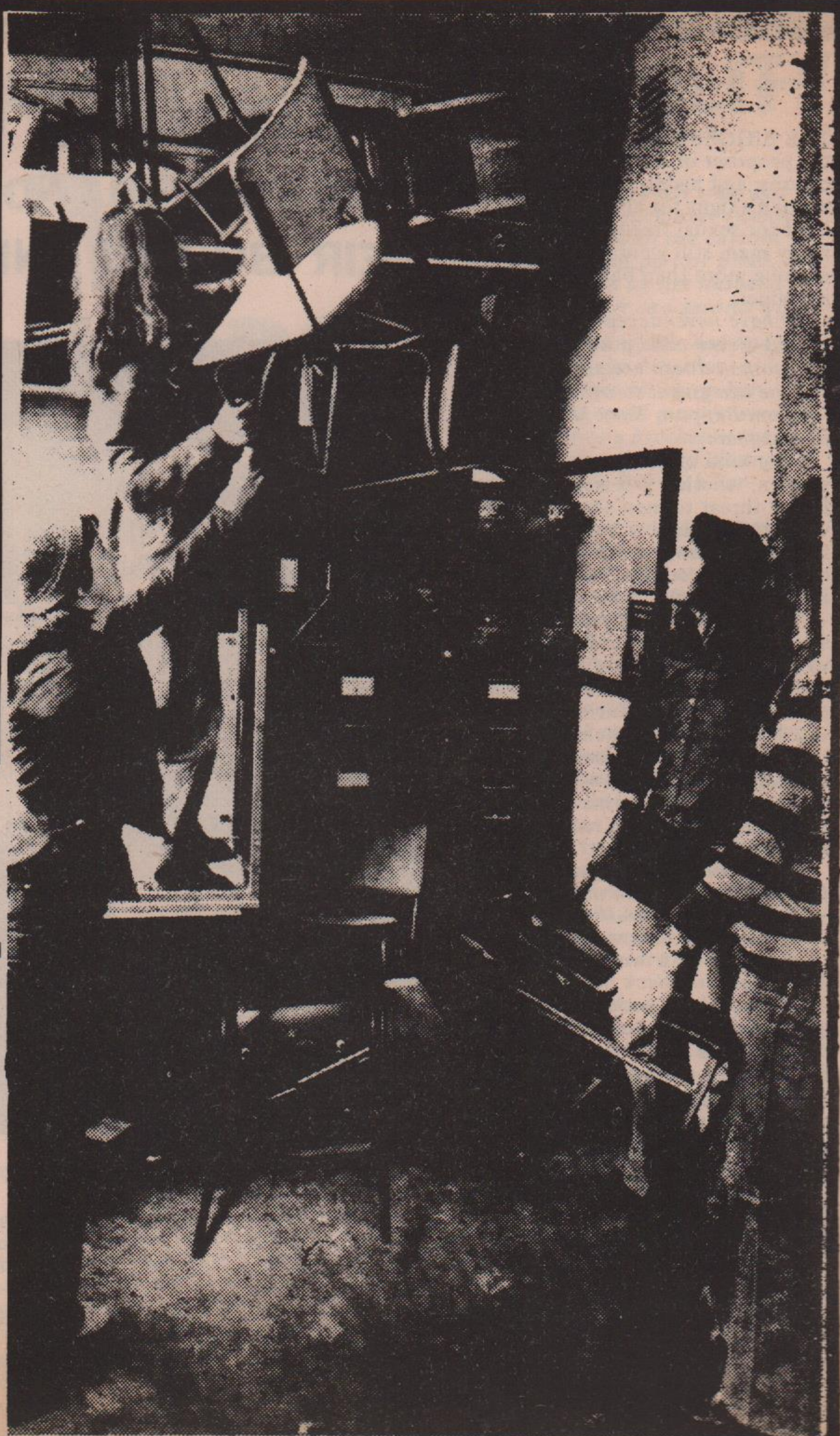
**STUDENT MOVEMENT  
CAMPAIGN ON IRELAND  
CONFERENCE Sunday  
15th May.  
Middlesex Polytechnic (Trent Park  
Site) details 01.449.9254**

## Occupation At Middlesex Poly

On April 7th four students from Middlesex Polytechnic were arrested by police when they moved into evict students from the Enfield site. Students had been occupying various sites in the Polytechnic for some 8 weeks as part of their action against proposed rises in tuition fees and discrimination of Overseas Students. All four students are charged under the 1887 Sheriff's Act dealing with resisting a possession order. One of the students was arrested for "occupying" the students union office!

The students cases will be heard at Tottenham Magistrates Court on May 9th. A picket of the court is being organised and support is needed.

For details contact 01.804.1958



Students building barricades inside the Poly — now they face trial

# All Power to the Soviets

MAY

1917

THERE WERE only two ways forward — either parliament would regain control of the situation, (and then, as Kerensky told the British ambassador, 'the soviets will die of a self-inflicted death'), or soviet power would grow as they spread throughout the country.

## SOVIETS COME INTO BEING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY

Not surprisingly, it was in Petrograd and Moscow that the first soviets were set up after the February Revolution. Now, they spread to the provinces; the number of soviets in existence in May 1917 totalled 600.

Bolshevik followers demonstrate in Petrograd.



## COUNCILS OF SOLDIERS

On the 1st of March the Petrograd soviet issued orders which authorised the setting up of councils in the infantry regiments, the auxiliary branches of the army and the navy. The first soldiers councils were formed in the garrison towns where they sent delegates to the local councils of workers and peasants. Soldiers who went from these garrison towns were crucial to the setting up of soldiers' councils in the front-line regiments. It was the soldiers of these front-line regiments who were having to carry the can for the endless futile military offensives of the Kerensky government. Many of them came to agree with the Bolshevik demand for 'an immediate peace without annexations, which recognised the right of all nations to self-determination'. Many of them deserted and went back to their peasant land holdings.

## THE PEASANT COUNCILS

In the months that followed the February Revolution, things were relatively quiet in the countryside. The deserting soldiers, returning to the land, brought with them ideas of revolutionary organisation. The combination of these ideas with the peasants' deeply felt desire to possess the land was explosive — there were 678 peasant riots in May, 988 in June! Under the leadership of the soldier-peasants, councils were set up to fight for the expropriation without compensation of the land. In garrison towns like Louga, soldier-peasants went to the villages to encourage the peasants to set up councils. The peasant congress of the Louga region decided to send delegates to the Louga soviet — so was created the first council for workers, soldiers and peasants.

In fact, it was from the towns down to the villages that the peasant councils spread. Organised by the Pan-Russian Union of peasants, the first Congress of Peasant Delegates took place in Petrograd from the 4th to the 28th of May. At this Congress the delegates, who represented 150 million peasants, took organisational steps to unify the peasants' struggle throughout the country. They also agreed to support the first Pan-Russian Congress of Worker and Soldier Delegates that was to begin in Petrograd on June 3rd. Of the 1,115 delegates at the Peasant Congress, 571 were Social-Revolutionaries and only 14 Bolsheviks.

## THE FACTORY COUNCILS

If the implantation of the Bolsheviks was small amongst the peasantry, the opposite was the case amongst industrial workers, and this was reflected in the large number of Bolshevik workers on the factory councils. On the 10th of April the Petrograd Soviet forced the employers to accept the 8 hour day and the setting up of factory councils in all workplaces. In a situation where the trade unions hardly existed, the factory councils had the function of settling shop-floor grievances but they were also the organs through which the workers articulated their ideas for changes in the way factories were run and what was produced in them. In the numerous cases where the boss decided to close the factory, it fell to the factory council to take over the running of the factory and get production going again. As a delegate to the 1st Conference of Factory Councils said; 'the factory committees will not be thrown by any obstacles put in their way.'

In fact, they had been forced to take the initiative; because if they hadn't it would have meant many factory closures. Enormous numbers of workers would have been on the cobbles and the always increasing army of the unemployed would have been even larger.

## WORKERS' CONTROL

The Bolshevik slogan of 'Workers' Control' responded well to the feelings of the masses in this situation. Whilst the Mensheviks and the few trade unionists argued the need for 'state control of production', the factory committees fought for workers' management of production at factory level. Of course, the Bolshevik leaders knew the 'anarcho-syndicalism' of the factory committees provided no overall solutions for the running of the economy — as Tomski, a leading Bolshevik industrial organiser said, 'the primary grass-roots control, at the level of each factory and without anyone to lead it, offers no way out of the current economic deadlock.' But, in these months, the Bolsheviks were not interested in the formulation of alternative economic plans, their priority was to build the self-confidence of the masses. Their bitter disagreements with the factory committees were in the future.

In this month there was an enormous geographical spreading of councils and committees — the organs of popular power. As we have seen, these spread through the military, the peasantry and the industrial working class. Their proliferation blocked the ability of the Provisional Government to govern and at the same time was building the ability of the proletariat to seize power.

(Next month 'The Duality of Power')



(cont. from page one)

THE BIGGEST WORRY for Benyon, the proposer of the bill to restrict abortions, and his supporters is that women's fight for abortion is really a fight for sexual freedom. He, like many men, still wants women to be nothing more than baby-producing machines:

*"I have never accepted the catchphrase 'Every child a wanted child'. If a woman doesn't want a child herself she can give it to others."*  
(William Benyon, Tory MP for Buckingham)

Any kind of independence for women, whether it is sexual or financial is a threat to men's power over women. The fight to remove the fear of pregnancy from sex is a fight by women to control their own bodies and their own lives.

But abortion, contraception and sterilisation can be used against women if they do not fight for control of them. It's like the nurseries that were provided during the war and are now being taken away because it suits the bosses. The same can happen with birth control facilities. Black women in this country often get abortions from racist doctors easier:—

*"I did manage to get a National Health abortion from my GP. It took a long time .....there were a lot of unnecessary delays. Since then I've discovered that it was given because he thought his black patients 'breed much faster' and so he was ready to give me an abortion. Also he came out in favour of Keith Joseph's proposals about the working class. We also know that he doesn't give white women abortions or the pill because he thinks they ought to stay at home.*

...and in many cases are forced to accept sterilisation as a condition.

The people of Asia and Latin America have been bombarded with family planning and population control programmes which amounted to nothing less than racial genocide. The men and women affected by them don't even know what's being done to them let alone have any opportunity to control them.

# WHOSE CHOICE ?

## WOMEN DEMAND CONTROL OVER THEIR BODIES AND THEIR LIVES

Big Flame Photo



Demonstration for abortion on demand June 1975

*"In Ernakulam, a district in Southern India, 78, 423 people, mainly men, 'volunteered' to undergo sterilisation in return for 45 rupees and a plastic bucket containing a sari, a dhoti (articles of clothing) and a bag of rice. Free transport, medicines and one week's food were also provided.*

*They were told they would be helping themselves and their country since with fewer children, their standard of living would improve. Three years later only the plastic bucket — indestructible symbol of the modern world — remained as a reminder of the prosperity that family planning was supposed to bring. The bag is empty, the money long since*

Our bodies are our lives and they must be in control  
Nine months is long and childbirth hard, it's us who pay the toll  
And then it's us who does the work, so we must have the choice  
Free Abortion on demand

**CHORUS**  
Always, always keep on fighting  
Always, always keep on fighting  
Always, always keep on fighting  
Till we get the right to choose

We want abortion on demand, we want it safe and free  
But we don't want it forced on us by work or poverty  
Or by the state controlling if and when we can give birth  
We want the right to choose

**CHORUS...**

We want the cash to live ourselves and keep our kids alive  
We want less work so we can do much more than just survive  
Free nurseries and houses for us all so we can choose  
To have the kids we want

Oh SPUC had got a lot to say and most of it's not true  
They say we want to murder babes and even old folk too  
But we're the ones who fight to win the people's right to live  
A better life for all

They say the foetus is alive but that's a point of view  
They want their personal views to be the law on what we do  
They don't care how much suffering it causes me and you  
We want the right to choose

They never march when napalm burns the skin off children's bones  
They never march when families are thrown out of their homes  
They never march when children starve to keep the bosses rich  
No, we're the ones who do!

(Sung to the tune of John Brown's Body)

*spent and the clothes wearing thin. The families still live in poverty."*  
(From a leaflet by 'Emerging Population Alternatives')

South American and Asian women were used to test the effectiveness and possible dangers of the contraceptive pill now so widely used in the West. They were not told they were being used as guinea pigs.

In 1964 Fanny Lou Hammer, a militant black civil rights fighter of the Mississippi Freedom Party, exposed the fact that as many as 6 out of every 10 black women in Sunflower County were taken to hospital and sterilised. Often they were not informed of what had been done until it was too late.

Whenever abortion, sterilisation or birth control of any kind are used by imperialists for their own ends and as a substitute for helping those alive to survive by giving them food and housing, it can only be called genocide.

The Benyon Bill has to be stopped, there is no doubt about that, but at the same time women have to fight for control over the facilities that are provided. And for more money, nurseries, education facilities and health care.

They don't want a choice between bad and worse. They want the best for themselves and the kids they choose to have.

## One woman's impressions of the Womens' Conference

# FIGHT TO CHANGE OURSELVES

THE NATIONAL WOMENS LIBERATION (W.L.) Conference took place on the 2nd and 3rd of April at City University, London. The National Conference is not a delegate affair but is open to all women within the WL movement, and to any individual women who want to come — and they did — 2,300 women registered, and that means about 2,700 probably passed through during the weekend.

The National Conference is a chance for women involved in women's struggles all over the country to get together and talk over their ideas, plan future actions, talk about the things we have learned from past actions, to learn from each other, encourage each other, find even better ways of going forward and also to enjoy being with other women in workshops, meetings and socials.

Lots of things being talked about at the 1977 conference were very exciting. Like theatre, therapy, printing, video, self-defence, publishing, education, nurseries, music and health. Out of one of the health workshops came a new Women's Health Charter, about building a health service geared to our needs.

### Custody

There were also workshops about lesbians and their joys, strengths and problems, especially over trying to keep custody of their children in divorce cases. The courts, with only two exceptions, have never granted custody to a known lesbian mother. This is something that the whole women's movement must fight. We must be able to decide how to live our lives without any courts or other institutions deciding who we are allowed to sleep with.

There was also a workshop about and for older women. It discussed the problems they had finding, not baby sitters, but parent sitters; also the things they could offer the women's movement out of their experiences. They put forward a resolution to the mass meeting about the need for the women's movement to pay more

attention to age differences and the way society often sets old and young people's interests against each other. In the discussion a 16 year old talked about how fed up she was being patronised because of her age, and a 50 year old talked about how much older women could offer. A health worker talked about the need to demand 24 hour geriatric care and day centres for the aged parents that older women often have to take care of. She was not saying that they should be stuck away in some home, but that services should be available to relieve women of some of the burden and strain.

### Classless

There was a topic put for discussion about "Classism" within the WL movement" which was introduced by the working class women's group. They attacked the idea, usually put forward by some middle class women, that the women's movement is classless, that there is no more working or middle class, but that we are all sisters together. They pointed out that working class women know this is not true, and that the women's movement is class structured. They also pointed out that many of the pamphlets and literature put out by the women's movement only reflects the education and problems of middle class women. And often because of their better education they are able to dominate groups and conferences, leaving out the problems and every day difficulties faced by working class women.

*"We can't just want talk, we want change"*

### Revolution

One of the most exciting developments of the conference was the growth of discussion about revolution. It came from feminist socialists and revolutionary feminists (or radicals). These two tendencies start from different bases. The feminist-socialists see the fight against capitalism as an integral part of their fight for feminism. They discussed the need to involve themselves in the struggles of all working class women, and the need to challenge anti-feminism in the working class movement.

The radical feminists believe that women's first fight is against the power that men hold and that women should put all their energies into building a women's power base.

### Silly and weak ?

It was brought out as clearly at this conference as at all the others, that the fight for liberation is not just an economic one — it's a fight to change our idea of ourselves and men's idea of us, because so long as women are treated as inferior, silly weak and incompetent, with no rights to our bodies or our minds, the capitalists will always be able to find a wedge to drive between sections in the working class. They will carry on exploiting the ideas we have held of ourselves for centuries.

Many, many other things, including the vote for a guaranteed minimum income, were covered at this conference, but it would require a whole paper to write about them. Any woman wanting to know more about the conference could write to W.I.R.E.S., the information service run for women, run by women in the women's movement.

W.I.R.E.S.  
30 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds 2  
Tel. 0532-35561



North East Photo Co

Ann Chapple Plessey Shop steward (sunderland).

## NORTH EAST CONFERENCE DENOUNCES GOVT. POLICY

THE NORTHEAST is an area full of 'old industries' — shipbuilding, engineering, mining. Now these industries are in decline as employers re-invest their money abroad, or in the new growth industries.

Swan, Hunter, C.E. Parsons, Plesseys are amongst the companies in the area that have recently announced closures and redundancies.

The vitality of the fight back depends on the labour movements' ability to break with its historic links with social democracy. A conference that took place last month under the auspices of the South West Durham Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions shows the beginning of a realisation that such a break with the past is necessary.

150 delegates from workplaces all over the North East came together to state their total opposition to the social contract. In an area historically dominated by a corrupt Labour Party, it was an

important step forward to see one local delegate after another have a go at the government. Obviously, there is as yet no clear political alternative but delegates made clear their determination to organise the fight back at the workplace and grass roots level. As the final resolution of the conference stated:—

**"Conference declares its support for a Labour Government, but a Lab government with a working class socialist policy in the interests of the vast majority of people. Not a continuation of the present ruinous anti-working class economic policy.**

**If the government is to survive, it can only be on the basis of such a change in policy and conference calls for the widest possible support of all trade unionists for all forms of action to bring about this change.**

Leaders of the trade union and Labour movement do not have a mandate from the rank and file to erode their standard of life."



# POVERTY, OPPRESSION & CORRUPTION - THE INDIAN REALITY

MARY TYLER was a political prisoner in India, along with thousands of others accused of plotting against the corrupt government of Mrs Gandhi's Congress Party. She has written a book about her five years experience in Indian prisons. The authorities claimed she was involved with the Naxalite movement. This is a popular revolutionary movement which is fighting for true democracy and agrarian reform to give India's millions of peasants some power and control and take it from the rich landowners.

Her book tells about the lives of her fellow women prisoners and lets their stories speak of the poverty and oppression and corruption most Indians face.

The majority of the women prisoners are there because they are poor, not because they are convicted criminals. The majority were awaiting trial (often for up to 5 or 6 years) rather than serving sentences. Most of them were saving money to bribe the authorities to hear their cases quickly so they could return to their villages. Take the case of old Gulabi, a poor village woman of about 50:



"A few weeks before I arrived in Jamshedpur she had been hit by a warder and had fallen heavily and dislocated her shoulder. The prospects of relief from the ensuing pain in jail were nil. Her family was desperately poor and she knew it was no good expecting them to get together the money for her bail, so she was relying on her own efforts, saving up every possible coin by selling her oil

and soap rations, so as to have enough for a bribe. Unfortunately the price of settling cases was rising more rapidly than the rate at which she could possibly accumulate her few rupees, and when I eventually left Jamshedpur she had been there three years without once seeing a magistrate. She was, like many other prisoners, completely innocent.

"Together with four other day labourers she had been harvesting paddy on a landlord's fields, unaware that the ownership of the particular land on which she was working was disputed by his cousin, who promptly had all the labourers, and the man who had employed them, arrested for stealing his paddy. Ironically, the two landowners settled their quarrel and

## 'MY YEARS IN AN INDIAN PRISON'

by Mary Tyler Gollancz £5.20

infancy, and had been widowed while still not much over twenty. In accordance with the custom prevalent in that part of Bihar, she had been taken by her husband's younger brother as a second wife.

Though unwilling, she had had little choice in the matter; a local landowner to whom her husband had owed money wanted to sell her into a brothel to make good his loan; the only alternative was to agree to live with her brother-in-law.

She was soon pregnant again, but, goaded by her jealous sister-in-law and depressed at the thought of another stillborn child, had contrived to do away with the unborn foetus. Her sister-in-law glad of the chance to get rid of her rival, had got the matter reported to the local police, and Kormi had been arrested on a murder charge. She sometimes suffered severe abdominal pains, probably a result of the inexpert abortion and lack of subsequent medical care. I was able to sympathise with Kormi when she stated quite emphatically that she never wanted to leave jail, because, at least, while she was there she was sure of not becoming pregnant any more."

Bulabi's employer was released from jail, while the labourers remained behind bars."

Often the women were in prison because they had gone against their families or traditions, refusing an arranged marriage and going to live with a lover. Or as with Kormi for having an abortion.

"Kormi's life had been tragic. She had given birth to five children, only one of whom had survived

Mary Tyler's book is very moving and compassionate and gives a sympathetic picture of the daily lives of Indian peasant women. It doesn't give a detailed political analysis of the situation in India which is frustrating because the information in her book makes you ask why does all this happen? How can it change? But it's well worth reading if you can get your library to order it. Not many of us can afford £5.20 for one book!

### We review a new book by Paul Foot of the Socialist Workers Party and ask

# WHY ISN'T SOCIALISM STRONGER?

Why you should be a Socialist by Paul Foot  
Socialist Workers Party Publication 35p

"Dennis Healey, Chancellor of the Exchequer, admitted in March 1976, that increased payments on government borrowed money would account for almost all the £3,000 million he was hoping to 'save' in public spending cuts."

This booklet is jammed with such explosive facts and arguments, and for this reason alone it is well worth reading. It has the added attraction of Paul Foot's lively and interesting style of writing, and his great ability to put over complex arguments simply and clearly - all too rare among left wing writers. The booklet is "The case for the new Socialist Workers Party.", and there's no doubt that we have to take the SWP and its predecessor, the International Socialists, very seriously. They are the biggest organisation on the revolutionary left with an impressive record of militancy and hard work over a number of years.

### LIMITATIONS

Before you get the idea that I'm going to recommend that we all run off and join them, I should point out that the booklet, like the organisation, has crippling limitations. But it should be obvious that I don't want my criticisms to be seen as sectarian or destructive. The purpose of my criticism is to add to the debate on the left among those individuals and organisations which are seeking the maximum possible principled unity among all revolutionaries.

The main problem with the booklet is the same as the problem with the organisation. It assumes that people will be won to revolutionary socialism by agitation and argument alone. It refuses to try and analyse what is going on under capitalism's skin, and it refuses

to spell out a strategy which will deal with the underlying problems. Chapter Three, for instance, does an excellent job of countering the everyday objections to socialism - that it is the Big Brother state, that it is against 'human nature' that we'll all be battery hens. Running through the book is an analysis of the crisis which would make Old Man Marx turn in this grave in Highgate Cemetery - the crisis is caused by a clique of rich capitalists, aided and abetted by trade union leaders and the Labour Party, who are ripping all the rest of us off.

### PUB DEBATE

We all need, and use these arguments in the cut and thrust of pub debate, and Paul Foot is a master at them. But do they amount to the case for a revolutionary party? The crisis is not caused by the rich ripping off the poor. Part of the explanation, in fact, is the reverse of this: the effectiveness of working class struggle in demanding wage rises and welfare provisions has eaten into capital's profits to such an extent that they have to launch an all-out attack on living standards to try and restore their profits. The role of the Labour Party and trade unions is to help them in their effort to re-structure the economy, principally by de-skilling work and replacing workers with machines, in such a way that working class organisation will be decisively weakened.

### NO RELATION

The failure to recognise this leads the SWP into slogans like "No Return to the Thirties" which bear no relation at all to what is happening in British capitalism today. Simply conjuring up people's fears about the past is no substitute for developing a strategy which fights with the aim of re-structuring today's economy.

In the absence of any such analysis, the SWP is forced to conclude that the obstacle to socialism is simply people's distorted ideas of what socialism entails. I'm sure that Paul Foot will persuade some people that they should be socialists (the booklet has sold 20,000 copies in six weeks). But unless people understand the structural reasons why socialists are not advancing at the rate we'd like, then we'll remain in isolation.

The SWP seems to totally ignore the two main structural obstacles to socialism. One, which Big Flame emphasises

and segmented the working class. Glaring disunity between skilled and unskilled rears up when, for example, the Leyland tool-room workers call for increased differentials, or when strong unions like the AUEW refuse to support public sector struggles against the cuts (often led by sections of the class new to struggle, like the hospital workers and teachers).

### HOME AND DRY

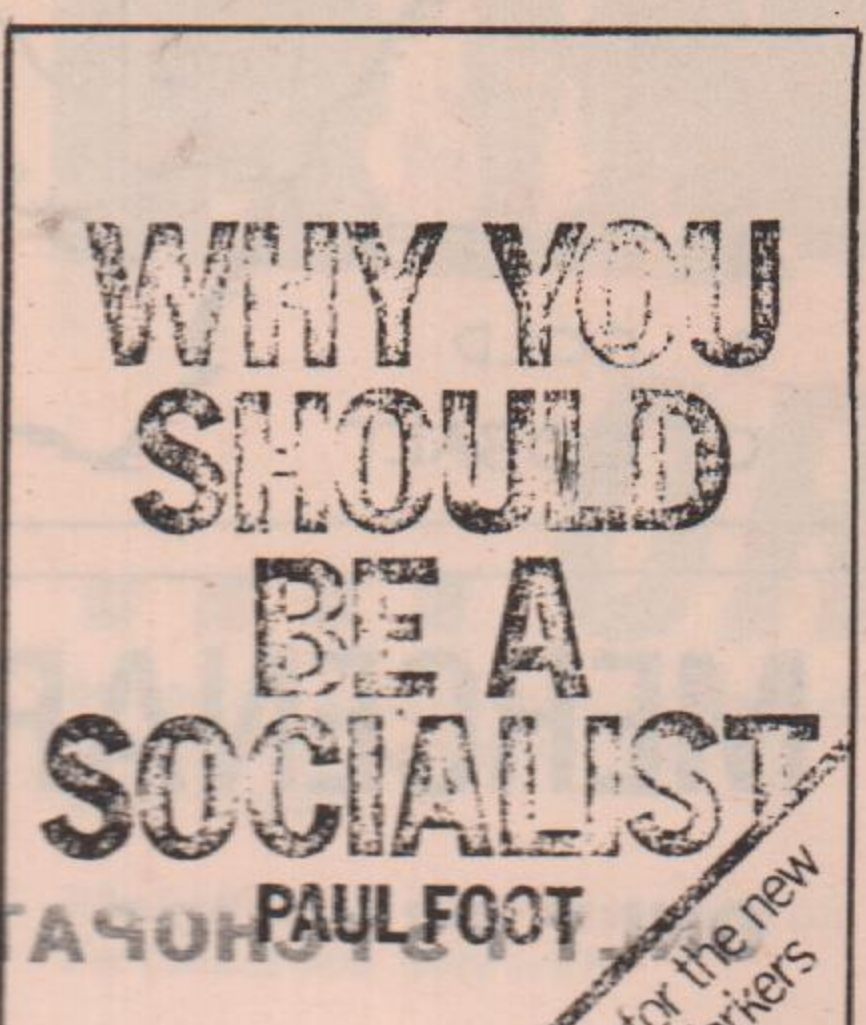
While the SWP is often highly militant in these 'new' struggles, it does not seem to understand their crucial importance as unifiers of the class. The passing references to women and black people in Foot's booklet is evidence of this. Instead of showing the essential role that women and black people have played recently, both at work and in the community, in fighting against capitalism and uniting with public sector workers, Foot simply says "It is time for working women to commit themselves" (p93) and racialism "means weaker trade union organisation" (p31). Show me a woman who is not working and I'll show you god. If racialism could simply be reduced to trade unionism, we would have been home and dry long ago.

So it's no surprise that the SWP declares itself a party without any real internal debate and with no more than an agitational booklet as its founding document. It seems that if you disagree with the line, you have to leave - hence the splitting off of the comrades who have formed the International Communist League and the Revolutionary Communist Group. Disagreement is made more difficult when no general theory or strategy is made public by the SWP. The SWP calls itself a party because, apparently, it has found itself 'more and more on our own in the struggle for a socialist society... the only people who are challenging racialism in a systematic and organised fashion; or arguing against pay curbs; or fighting for the right to work' (p93) Even if this blatant insult to the many groups and individuals who are equally seriously fighting on these issues were true, it would not justify forming party. The IS were right to attack the Socialist Labour League when it called itself the Workers Revolutionary Party in 1973.

They said you cannot form a party until there is mass, unified struggle for socialism. Now they have made exactly the same mistake, for exactly the same reason. Lacking a relevant theory and strategy, they can only attract people by rhetoric, militancy and a newspaper. Their dynamic is the same as the WRP's - to disguise these facts, they have to claim to be the 'only ones' who have an effective national organisation, and they have to become increasingly sectarian against other groups.

### RHETORIC

After two years of set-back to the working class, at a time when there are now some signs of renewed struggle, the revolutionary left needs theory, strategy and unity! It's a pity that neither Paul Foot's book, nor the Socialist Workers Party offer any of these.



is the de-composition and disunity of the working class. The other, emphasised by the Trotskyists, is the stranglehold of social democracy - in particular, the Labour Party and trade union leaderships. We recognise the importance of fighting social democracy, which is one of the reasons why we will support radical or class struggle socialist candidates in elections. But this has to be combined with a strategy which deals with the fact that modern capitalism has de-composed





HOUSING DEMO IN NAPLES

# 'NO THIS IS NOT THE LIFE WE WANT TO LIVE'

## 'Unemployed' Women Organise in Italy

OVER THE past year, one of the important aspects of the class struggle in Italy has been the organisation of the unemployed. In Naples, the committees of the unemployed workers invaded hospitals, started to work there — forcing management to admit that they were short of staff.

The following article is by the Committee of Unemployed Women who work around the Fiat factory at Mirafiori, a large car plant in the outskirts of Turin.

In the beginning we were only a dozen who would meet in the offices of the union's District Committee in Mirafiori. But supported by local women's groups we are growing all the time.

Who are we? Housewives, mothers, the label is not important: what matters are our histories as women. For years, on the council estates where we live, everyone of us has lived in isolation and is faced with the question "is this really a woman's life?" Later in the local women's groups, we learnt to tell our stories, our answer to the question was "no, this is not the life we want to live."

### NO CHOICE

"Who will do the cooking?" and then the kids "There are no creches, where can I leave them?" "He/she is still sick, does he still need me?" Now, we understand that this is not a real choice. Many of the committee members say "when I was in a job, I was exhausted but I was happy. I had good chats with my work mates, now I am always alone."

Having left a job, each one of us has ended up alone with problems of money, kids and housework. Housework is as tiring as working in a work-place, but no one sees it as real work: "our husbands and sons think we have a cushy number."

Then, the Social Contract came. Prices shot up, and wages weren't enough: "We gave up a lot of things. One day, no fruit, the next day, no meat, then no biscuits. How can a family of 4 or 5 live on £100 a month?"

And then there is the problem of being dependent. You can't change your relationship with your husband in the home, in bed: you can't win the right to go out to meetings. When you depend on him for everything, even food. And how can our relationships to our sons be good when we spend our life serving them. From the age of 12 onwards, they only want to talk with their dads.

Our conclusion is very bitter: all our sacrifices are worthless. Years of loneliness, exhaustion, depression and then what? If we want to go out we have to ask permission. That's the truth about the family, love, motherhood, it's not what the magazines or telly say.

We have tried to get work in all the local work-places: but there have been so many redundancies over the last years — 15,000 at Fiat alone.

Today, the bosses can choose: they do not want women, young people, men over 40. And Social Security are no use.

One day, we participated in a meeting of the shop-stewards of Mirafiori. There was a unanimous decision to set up a Committee of Unemployed Women to fight over taking on more workers — an agreement which had already been reached in the contract negotiations.

### UNITY

Our first problem was to extend to all women workers the fantastic unity we already had with the women shop stewards. To achieve this, we went to the gates to talk with the women workers. Why? Because between women we understand each other: all women in waged work are also housewives like us. When we got to the gates, with our leaflets and placards, we were afraid that we wouldn't be understood. It only took five minutes. A woman told us "yesterday we had a mass meeting on the Fiat contract on employment and the turn-over of workers. I didn't understand it, but what you say is clear: we must control workshop by workshop, how many women have stopped working here and have not been replaced. I will raise the matter with my steward" Another said "we must have control over who is hired, we must stop Fiat hiring who it wants."

With these aims, we participated as unemployed women in the last meeting of the Fiat Factory Committee. The Factory Committee must control who is taken on, it must force Fiat to take on organised men and women, it must hire women and young people.

Mirafiori Committee of Unemployed Women Workers. (April 1977)

## THE STRUGGLE WORLDWIDE



# FIGHTING FOR THE LIBERATION OF ZAIRE

THE RAPID take-over of several important towns in the mineral rich province of Shaba (Katanga) in Zaire, by the FLNC (Congolese National Liberation front) has demonstrated again the strength of the progressive forces in this part of Africa

Press reports claim that the FLNC is a force of "ex-gendarmes" who had backed the reactionary Tshombe in this fight in the early '60's to split Katanga from the rest of the Congo (now Zaire). Tshombe was a puppet of the Belgian mining company, Union Miniere, who wanted to set up a state under their direct control so that they could exploit exclusively the mineral wealth of the province.

The FLNC, however, emphatically deny this connection and state that their intention is to overthrow the reactionary and fascist government of Mobutu — not to split Katanga from the rest of the country. Their forces consist entirely of Congolese people — even the Americans have found no hint of Cuban support.

### Aims

Their aims were stated by the leader of the FLNC, General Nathaniel M'Bumba, in an interview not reported in this country. In it he says, "We are Congolese and are fighting for the liberation of all the Congo. We've started in Katanga because of its economic

power. Once Katanga and its mining areas are in our hands, the liberation of the other provinces will be that much easier."

The indications are that the initiative in Katanga has been agreed with other forces fighting against the reactionary Mobutu government, notably in the North East of the country. The inability of the 40,000 strong Zaire army to defend Mobutu has surprised even the FNLC. They report that 40 officers and a considerable number of soldiers in the Zaire army were shot for refusing to fight. In addition, the FNLC reports that three companies of Zaire soldiers have joined them.

### Reactionary

The Mobutu government is one of the most reactionary and corrupt in Africa. There is massive unemployment and poverty in what is a rich country. Much of the wealth has been channelled into the coffers of Mobutu himself. He now claims to be the third richest man in the world. He is even starting to prove himself a liability to the US government and the CIA who have backed him for years.

### Too dangerous

However it is too dangerous politically for the Americans to intervene directly. With the Zaire army having difficulty in driving back the FNLC, it has been left to

France and Morocco (with backing from Egypt and China among others) to supposedly act on their own initiative by sending troops direct to Katanga.

Despite French denials the FNLC claim that 250 French soldiers have been fighting and that one has already been killed.

With the imperialist powers having to resort to direct outside intervention to prop up their puppet regime, the FNLC have made it clear that they are willing for outside observers to verify that no one other than Congolese are fighting in their army. For the West this poses awkward political problems because they condemned the presence of Cuban forces in Angola as an outside interference. Now they are faced with having to justify the intervention of France and Morocco.

### Disarray

The imperialist strategy in Southern Africa is in disarray. The repressive Mobutu regime, which has been the lynch-pin of American strategy in the area for years, has shown itself to be very fragile. The FNLC, however, is proving that it can win the support of the people of Katanga for its anti-imperialist and nationalist fight.

If the western business interests do lose their stranglehold on Zaire then the balance of forces in Africa will be shown to be changing faster than anyone anticipated. Whereas Mozambique and most other countries in the region are extremely poor, Zaire, like Angola, has vast wealth — wealth which is at present being squandered by Mobutu and exploited by western mining interests.

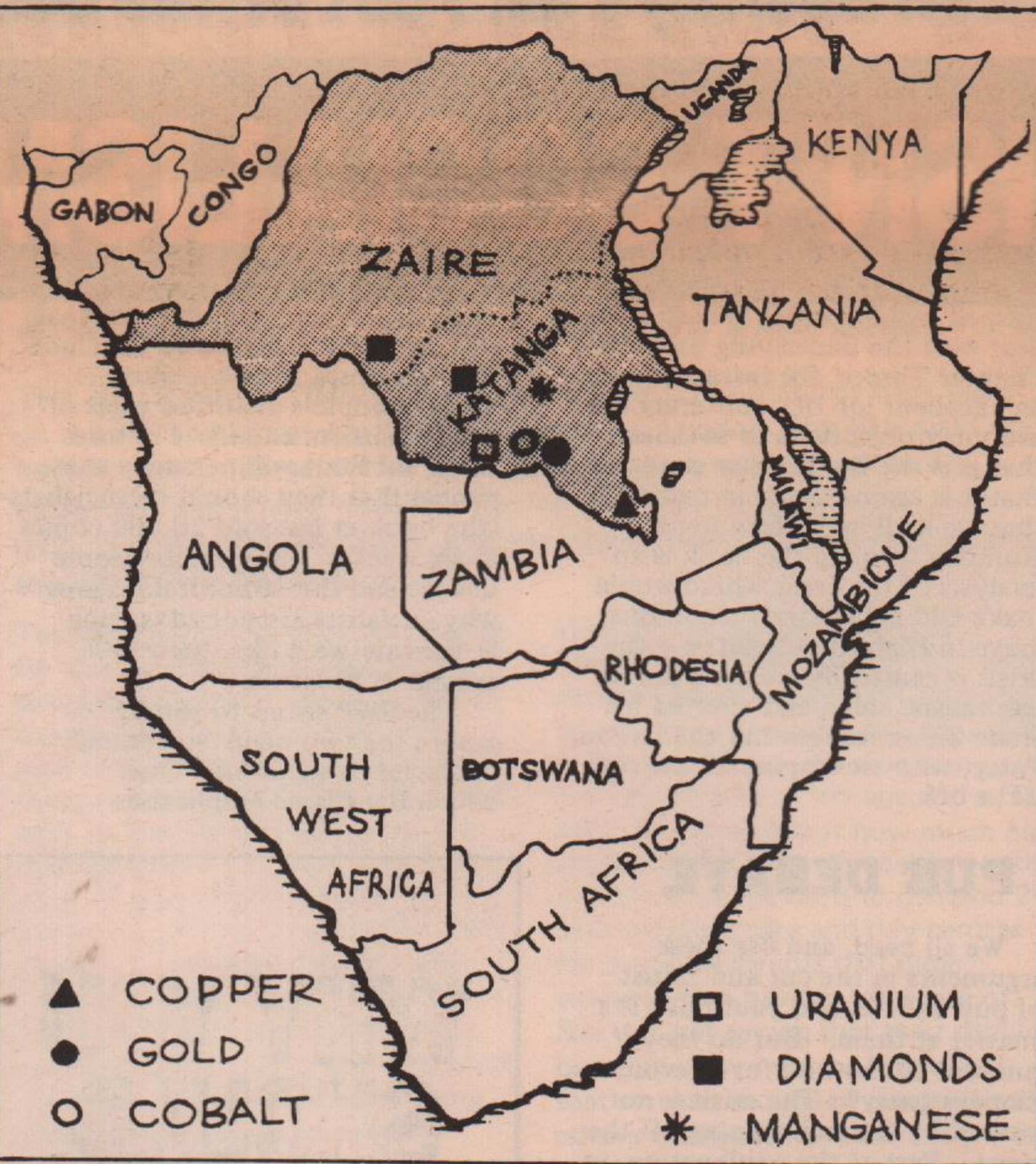
### Far from truth

The FNLC has been described as probably "reactionary" by some on the left in Britain (Socialist Worker 16th April), this assessment seems far from the truth. This is the significance of the accusation put about by the press in the west that they are "ex-gendarmes" of the reactionary Tshombe; they are trying to discredit forces of destabilisation and change.

### Support FNLC

The main movements in Angola Zimbabwe and Mozambique (i.e. MPLA, ZANU and Frelimo) are far to the left of the previous generation of African leaders such as Kaunda in Zambia, who have remained completely willing to do imperialism's work. In addition the influence of Russia is comparatively weak.

The struggle of the FNLC, if it continues to show its willingness to fight the interests of imperialism in the area, should be supported unconditionally and the intervention of France and Morocco, tacitly or overtly backed by the other western powers, should be soundly condemned.



## MERCENARIES WANTED

### ONLY PSYCHOPATHS NEED APPLY

But for all the money and effort that went into the Angolan mercenary operation — and so far we've heard that as much as \$ 500,000 was spent in Britain alone — only 200 or so British mercenaries actually turned out, and most of them seemed a sorry lot. More than 60 of the British mercs were reported killed in action, and the rest came home bitter and disillusioned.

In America as well, the recruiters hit rock bottom, though a group tied to the Congress for Racial Equality claimed to have lined up 200 black Vietnam vets who were raring to go. One way or another, only about 100 American mercenaries showed up in Angola. Will such fiascos put an end to

the use of mercenaries? Not at all. Recruiting continues in Europe and the United States for mercenary service in Rhodesia and Namibia, as well as for future actions in Israel, Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. A growing network of commercial recruiters has sprung up, as have a number of trade journals containing classified merc-wanted ads. And for all the harsh words against the mercenaries from responsible men of state, the CIA and its European counterparts are ready to tap the market wherever it suits their needs; after all, it is a lot easier to hire mercs than to ask Congress or Parliament for permission to wage an honest war.

Even more disturbing, however,

is the growing relationship between the mercenaries and political groups with an openly racist and fascist appeal. This is hardly a new association, as its roots reach back to World War Two and before. But even in Britain one group from the Angolan 'fiasco' calls itself the Anti-Communist Revolutionary Organisation and promises to use its mercenaries to break domestic strikes and combat "other Communist activity" in England. As one of the organisers asked journalists at a press conference, "Do you want a postman with a red star on his hat knocking on your door?"

(from the CIA in Europe by Philip Agee and Steve Weissman)





# ITALIAN WOMEN ORGANISE AGAINST RAPE, WHILE COURTS FREE RAPISTS

THE STRUGGLE of women against men's violence towards them is a long hard one, and a vital part of their struggle for liberation. In Italy, where the tradition of male dominance and the emphasis on 'virility' are deeply rooted and unchallenged, it is even harder.

But things are changing. More and more women are finding the courage to publicly denounce the rapes, batterings and maltreatment they have suffered for so long. Recently one case has made the headlines.

Claudia, an 18 year old woman was raped by 16 youths last August. She refused to follow the tradition of keeping it quiet and publicly denounced them and reported it to the police and a magistrate who somewhat reluctantly agreed to prosecute. She also became involved in the feminist movement and the trial became a central point of a campaign by the women's movement to have rape cases treated more seriously by the police and the courts.

Some of the accused rapists then decided to 'teach her a lesson' and in March this year they kidnapped her

and raped her again and cut her about the face, breast, stomach and legs.

Out of the 16, 7 were sentenced last month. 3 of them got 4 and 3 years (but only because they had previous convictions). The other 4 got 2½ years suspended sentences, so they are now free. Free to commit more acts of vengeance against the woman.

The judge and the lawyers at the trial showed throughout that their sympathies were with the rapists rather than the woman. She was advised by the police, her own father and the investigating magistrate to drop her charges and has received threatening letters. It makes you wonder who was on trial.

The public prosecutor suggested that one of the accused should be acquitted on the grounds that the woman had admitted she went for a drink with him, the assumption being that men have the right to rape women they drink with. A defending lawyer said:

"It's normal that young men behave like that. It's normal for them to tell each other - go with that one,

she's a good f. . ."

Another said:

"My client went with her to show his friends that he was not impotent . . . And anyway, one less or one more doesn't make much difference."

And another:

"Claudia's version of the event is not credible, because she is under the influence of her new feminist friends."

All of this happened in a court in Rome. It is not an unusual case. It shows the way all rape victims are treated and the need for the kind of movement that is growing in Italy. Some of the women involved said:

"To us, not only these 7 were on trial, but the whole of society."

And the judge made this even more obvious in his summing up speech when he said:

"The feminine world is dangerously near and attractive to us, but it is also that of our mothers, sisters and wives."

He expressed the sentiments of a popular Italian proverb:

"All women are whores except your mother, your sister and your wife."

## WEST GERMANY WHEN MUSIC BECOMES A TORTURE

NOWHERE are techniques of repression, sensory deprivation, and torture more advanced than in the 'advanced liberal democracy' of West Germany.

The following are extracts of a letter to the prison governor by Gerard Hof who was a political prisoner in the Wittlich prison. Hof is a writer and a doctor whose imprisonment was a consequence of the publication of his book 'Why I will no longer be a psychiatrist.'

"The radio in my cell switched itself on. The head-warder tried without success to turn the volume down. He said 'The doctor is on his way' and disappeared. I was in bed. At this point the loud-speaker went crazy, putting out a mixture of high pitched whistles, of military orders, of pop music etc. of incredible intensity. The volume control did not work. I could not disconnect it. I rang: no one came. With the palms of my hands pressed as hard as possible against my temples, I still heard this unbearable mix of whistles and other noises. In this din, two thoughts obsessed me 'sensory deprivation, sensory compulsion' and something I had been thinking for a long time 'There is a fascist

tendency in pop music. I climbed onto my stool and with my nails managed to pull out a wire. Later on I realised that my loss of a sense of time was not only due to my isolation but also because after having got me conditioned to certain fixed events (lights, breakfast, the hooter etc.), these events were being scientifically jumbled on the basis of observation of my movements over a 24 hour period. I was a guinea pig in an experimental cage so designed as to make all my movements controllable and measurable. You

were using me to study motivations - varying when you wished my level of frustration. The study you have made of me will be very useful to perfect techniques of psychological torture, and to develop for the needs of the advertising industry knowledge of the sounds most likely to affect the human ear. No doubt there was a team of white-coated research students analysing all the data.....'

In this context of intimidation and harassment of political opponents to the regime an important conference is taking place.

MODEL GERMANY - a conference on the current situation in West Germany. Organised by the Campaign against Repression in West Germany.

Workshops on repression related to law, immigrants, women police and security, Germany and the EEC etc.

Speakers from West Germany. Background documents available from The Campaign (West Germany 35 Wellington St., London WC2, Send large SAE and 40p.

7th MAY, NORTH LONDON POLYTECHNIC, HOLLOWAY RD, ISLINGTON, LONDON N1 10.00 am - 6.30 pm Further details from the Campaign.

## EX - SOLDIER TELLS OF LIFE IN THE ARMY

# DOES IT MAKE A MAN OF YOU

FANCY A JOB working 80 hours a week for about £27 take home pay? Where you stand a good chance of being shot or blown up, and where most people around hate your guts.

If this job appeals to you all you need do is join the British Army and get posted to Northern Ireland. A recent debate in Parliament revealed that the figures quoted above were a fairly typical private's pay.

HOW DOES the Army make a man of you? Or rather, what happens to you if you join up when the Army is in the middle of a shooting war like in Ireland?

One answer came from the mother of a British soldier who had been sent to Ireland and later left to go to Angola as a mercenary. She said in a newspaper interview that after being in Northern Ireland he became "the nearest thing to a fascist" she had met.

We are always being told by politicians, the TV and press that 'our boys' in the Army are the salt of the earth, amazingly restrained and civilised in the face of Irish attacks etc.

But something happens to people when they join today's Army. Don't just ask the Irish. Ask the people of Oslo in Norway after recent visits by British troops in NATO exercises. Thousands of them, including the mayor, signed a petition demanding that British troops be removed. This followed a reign of terror on the town by the soldiers, involving rape, robbery, assaults and general vandalism!

Below we print an interview with a recent ex-soldier in which he describes how the Army can turn ordinary working class lads into callous robots:

What was the training like on a normal day?

It consisted of 6.00 reveille, breakfast, then 6.30-8am cleaning, rooms and getting ready for inspection, then 8 a.m. on the drill square and P.T., weapons training etc. until 4 p.m. You were on guard duty at night at least twice a month and after coming off these duties you were expected to do a normal day's work. The other duties were Civil Defence work (fire pickets). When

you were on these duties you were on two minutes call-out and were confined to barracks for the week. In between this we had night exercises dependent on the training programme. One night we started an exercise at 10 p.m. and finished at 4.30 a.m. and were taken back to camp where we had an hours sleep and were back on duty at 6.00.

Did many blokes crack up?

Yes, one guy after 4 weeks wandered into the guard room and said that he was going to tell the M.O. that he was gay in an attempt to get out. After a few weeks he got out, but how, and what lengths he had to go to to get out, God only knows.

(Note. Both Colchester and Aldershot Correction camps are designed to show dissident soldiers that the system cannot be beaten. To quote the case of a group of Irish soldiers sent to Colchester after they went on strike and refused to 'soldier on' (as the Army puts it): they were stripped of all clothing and placed in single cells, not allowed to see anyone, and when they asked about food, they were told they were not entitled to any. The Army payments that their wives picked up were stopped. They were given no blankets or bedding and were prevented from sleeping. After a few days of these conditions they were made to change their minds and accept that they could not beat the system.)

Were there many 'Physical Jerks' in your training?

We had to do an obstacle course on one part of the programme, which was up a 20 foot climbing frame. A friend of mine fell off and ended up with a compound fracture of the leg. On one ten mile run with full kit (about 94 lbs) our guys were throwing up and stopping. A corporal was running at the back and was grabbing the people that were left



# .... OR A ROBOT?

behind and kicking them in the backside and telling them to throw up while running.

What effect did the training have on the blokes you were with?

After a few weeks you could see that the guys were turning into animals. Normal sensibilities were lost. reactions hardened, physically and mentally. You began to suspect people in the streets. You were waiting for some provocation, only a little thing and you were ready to react, not just to injure them but to put them in hospital for weeks. There are numerous incidents like this around places like Colchester and Aldershot all the time. For the first three months we were treated like the lowest of the low. This was done to build up a sense of 'comradeship' amongst us. But it only built up group interdependence at the expense of individual independence.

There was a rape scene in the barracks, a number of such scenes take place in barracks up and down the country, but I will tell you about this one in the hope that people will see what the Army does to you.

It was about 11.50 at night, they had just got back from the pub into billets, four to a room. One guy had brought a girl back and they were in bed when the others came in. One of the others started to undress saying, "we're next". They were watching and getting ready to join in when the girl realised what was happening and got frightened and hysterical, but the others were still trying to get in on the act. The guy that had brought her back tried to calm her down and to get the others away, but the soldiers were seemingly oblivious to the girls reactions. He finally managed to get them away and sent the girl home in a taxi, but God knows how he managed it.

Why did you decide to leave?

The Army was not as I had expected it to be, it was a pointless existence. I'm not the type to be ordered about, I like to know what an order is all about, for example we were on a night exercise, well a day exercise it was at first. A march between two mountain peaks by compass from 10 in the morning until 4 in the afternoon. During the exercise the cloud level came down. We got lost and ended up on cliff edge and so decided to return to the base camp. The officer then sent us out again on a night exercise in the same conditions. We went by road, instead of the mountain route because we thought it was too dangerous, but we were stopped by a sergeant - who criticised me personally - you know real shit, and told us to go by the proper route. We got back at 4 am and were up again at 6 am and were back on duty!



# TIME OFF

## FOOTBALL

# LAW & ORDER

DENIS HOWELL'S decision to ban Manchester United fans from away games and to clamp down generally on soccer aggro has been enthusiastically received by the capitalist press. For a while, then, the stereotype of the 'football hooligan' will take over from the 'dirty squatter', the 'lazy scrounger' and the 'black mugger' as the evil bogymen of society yet another diversion to keep our minds off low wages, rising prices, the cuts and unemployment.

For the working class, football has always been a way of letting off steam and generating a bit of excitement in our lives, right from the days before the F.A., when our ancestors used to kick, carry and push a blown-up cow's bladder over the parish boundary against the next village.

For centuries, governments tried to suppress football: laws making it illegal were passed five times between 1314 and 1410 alone, but nobody took any notice. That attitude lasted until the game was made respectable by the public schools in the last century, since when they have encouraged it for exactly the same reasons as the Roman Emperors held their games — to keep peoples' minds occupied and away from politics. In addition they have found, through ownership of clubs that football can be a money-spinner. They make a bomb out of putting up admission prices for big games — total gate receipts for the recent League Cup Final were a cool half million. Capitalists large and small have been falling over themselves to sponsor anything to do with the game, not only to get good publicity but because happy football fans make more contented workers, who don't notice the exploitation quite so much.

### Aggro

There has been regular aggro. at football since the early sixties, from a young generation in search of excitement and less prepared than their parents to be bossed around by the authorities. A big mob of soccer fans gives a sense of power to its members; in a crowd you can take on authority and win — a Wolves fan remembers "ten years ago at Stoke, a big mob of us were going down the road when this big Rolls

Royce with the Mayor of Stoke inside started pooping its' horn at us to get out of the way. Well, we got out the spray cans and sprayed the whole thing gold!"

### Faceless

A sense of comradeship is also part of the attraction: by protecting each other against arrest from the police, many have come to realise that the state is only strong when working class people are not united. As one Manchester City fan put it "It's great going to away matches you see the same faces and get to know and trust one another after a while" "you might be a faceless nobody for the rest of the week, but on a Saturday people move out of your way when you walk down the road." And occasionally, football fans can use their power to change things. One Villa fan told us about the time they got the board of directors removed: "We were about sixteen at the time, and me and my mates handed out leaflets before this one match, and after the final whistle blew about two thousand of us in the Holt End sat down and refused to budge until they sacked the Board. Well, they did, although all we really achieved was to swap one load of middle class berks for another."

We asked some Manchester United fans about the ban on them attending away matches. "We've always been discriminated against. Whenever it's us who get into trouble you can bet it will be all over the papers, and the coppers are always on our backs, with 'get on that pavement', 'put that cigarette out', treating us like a load of sheep, and trying to arrest anybody in a red scarf if anybody else with a red scarf causes trouble. And when

# MANCHESTER UNITED

## Our good name depends on you!



...Good behaviour at both home and away matches will uphold the good name of the club and its supporters.

you get to the court, the coppers get believed every time."

Even so, football aggro is still rebellion without a cause; it does not change the grinding, boring reality of the rest of the week. Worse still, it is other working class people who tend to suffer from it. The state has never given a damn about the likes of the folk who live next door to Derby's ground until they finally got organised: the police always shepherd fans away from shopping centres and into working class areas. It doesn't matter to them if Mrs Jones' front window gets put in, so long as it's not Woolworths or Barclays Bank.

### Clampdown

Why is it now that the state has decided after all these years to clamp down on soccer violence? First of all, the upsurge of working class struggle means that football is no longer as useful to them as a way of diverting us from fighting the bosses for a better life — taking on rival fans on a Saturday is not stopping people from taking on their boss in the rest of the week. And with the cuts, the state is unwilling to foot the bill for the police they send

to matches. Perhaps more important is that Britain has the lowest admission prices for Football in Europe, and so they want to make the game attractive to the middle class so as to make more money. They are arguing that the 'innocent bystanders' have left the game in the last few years because of the violence, maybe they have, but it is far more likely that their reasoning has had more to do with low wages and higher admission charges.

### Big Stick

Above all, it remains as true today as in the centuries before that there is nothing that puts the fear of God into the ruling class more than thousands of working class people getting into the habit of running through the streets and letting off steam, with two fingers up to the 'forces of law and order' even if it is only over football. That is the same thing which frightened them about last year's Notting Hill carnival, and why they want to tuck it away into a stadium like they managed by providing a 'permanent site' for pop festivals. Football fans have broken out of the stadiums, and so they are reaching for the big stick.



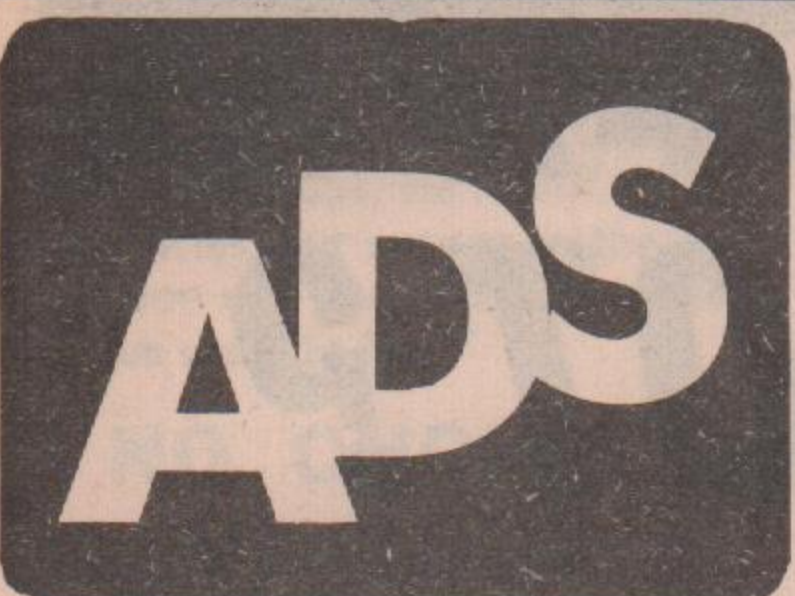
### G.E.C.

In view of the strike against the social contract on April 20th with which I totally agree, I feel it necessary to write to you to point out a few factors concerning the GEC factory where I work in Trafford Park, Manchester. I also enclose a photostat copy of an article from the Mole Express October issue 1975, which should shed some light on the situation prevailing at this factory, and as to why I can't put my name to this letter. Chairman Big Brother Bert Brennan retired in January this year and his place has been taken by a Mr. Alec Green who is much worse than his predecessor. Big Bro. Bert only allowed the workforce to work one weekend a month. This has now been changed to two weeks a month with extra weekends included for a certain clique — which includes stewards and union officials of the works committee. These extras are known as selective overtime, whereas before it used to be all in or all out.

It is not right that these people should work the amount of overtime they do as there is so much unemployment in the area. By the fact that this overtime is worked proves that this overtime is either being invented or that the factory could provide quite a substantial number of jobs for the unemployed in this area — if all overtime was banned and one man one job was enforced and a 35 hour week was introduced. But the main problem is, at this factory, the enemy of the worker is the stewards and union officials in league with management. These people can only be fought with organised resistance on such a scale that these scabs and blacklegs, along with the management, could not victimise and intimidate any individuals who oppose them.

So I would be much obliged if you could organise all the militants in the Manchester area to pressurise the so-called representatives of the rank and file who want some action against the low pay and conditions for the majority who work at this factory but lack the leadership because of fear of the sack. Personally I don't care whether you use fair means or foul to strike

From a militant.



Big Flame Summer School Benefit disco 'FAULTY AND THE SKID-MARKS' Friday April 30th 8 p.m. Star and Garter, Fairfield St. Manchester (near Piccadilly Station) Admission 50p  
Film 'EGA STAYS—OK!' Organised by Mill Road support group. Gregsons Well (Tetley's) Brunswick Rd. Tuesday 3rd May 7.30 p.m. Liverpool

Big Flame Meeting 'EGA STAYS—OK!' Brenda Hilditch (COHSE), Bert Ellicot (NUPE) 4th May 7.30 Uppertorpe Hotel, Uppertorpe Rd. Sheffield

Election Rally Piers Corbyn (IMG candidate) Tariq Ali (IMG) Marcello Dall'Aglio (Big Flame) Tues. May 3rd 7.30pm Stockwell Primary School Stockwell Rd. London S.W. 9

John Deason Pickett At the Old Bailey, London. 9.30 a.m. Weds 4th May

'Socialist Perspectives on the Great Debate Debate on Education' Speakers: John Taylor (Radical Education Education) and Max Farrar (Big Flame) Sat. May 7th 10 a.m. Holly Bank Campus, the Polytechnic, Huddersfield Admission £1. Students 50p Details Alan Odhams, 15 Ashfield Rd. Birkby Huddersfield.

Chilean Music 'Karaxu' Friday May 6th 7.30 p.m. Polytechnic Main Hall Sheffield Tickets 80p for the Chilean Resistance.

NAC Benefit 'THE FOX BATS' Friday 6th May 8 p.m. Barnes Wallace Building, U.M.I.S.T. Manchester

Hospital Action Group Meeting Film 'EGA STAYS—OK!' Weds. 11th May 8 p.m. 14 Piccadilly (Big Flame Office) Manchester

### PUBLICATIONS

Current Big Flame Publications All available from 217 Wavertree Rd. Liverpool 7.

All prices include postage

'Draft Manifesto for a New Revolutionary Organisation'. 35p

Sections include: Modern Capitalism, Composition of the working class, Reformism and popular power, Trade unions, Party and class, International Perspectives, Revolutionary strategy.

Industrial Bulletin No.2 20p Articles on Direct Works, Plesseys etc.

Womens Struggle Notes No.2 20p

Plus the old favourites: 'Portugal — A Blaze of Freedom' (35p) and 'Chile Si' (30p)

Rising in the North 30p

Irish Bulletin No. 8 20p (Out mid-May)

### THE REVOLUTION UNFINISHED

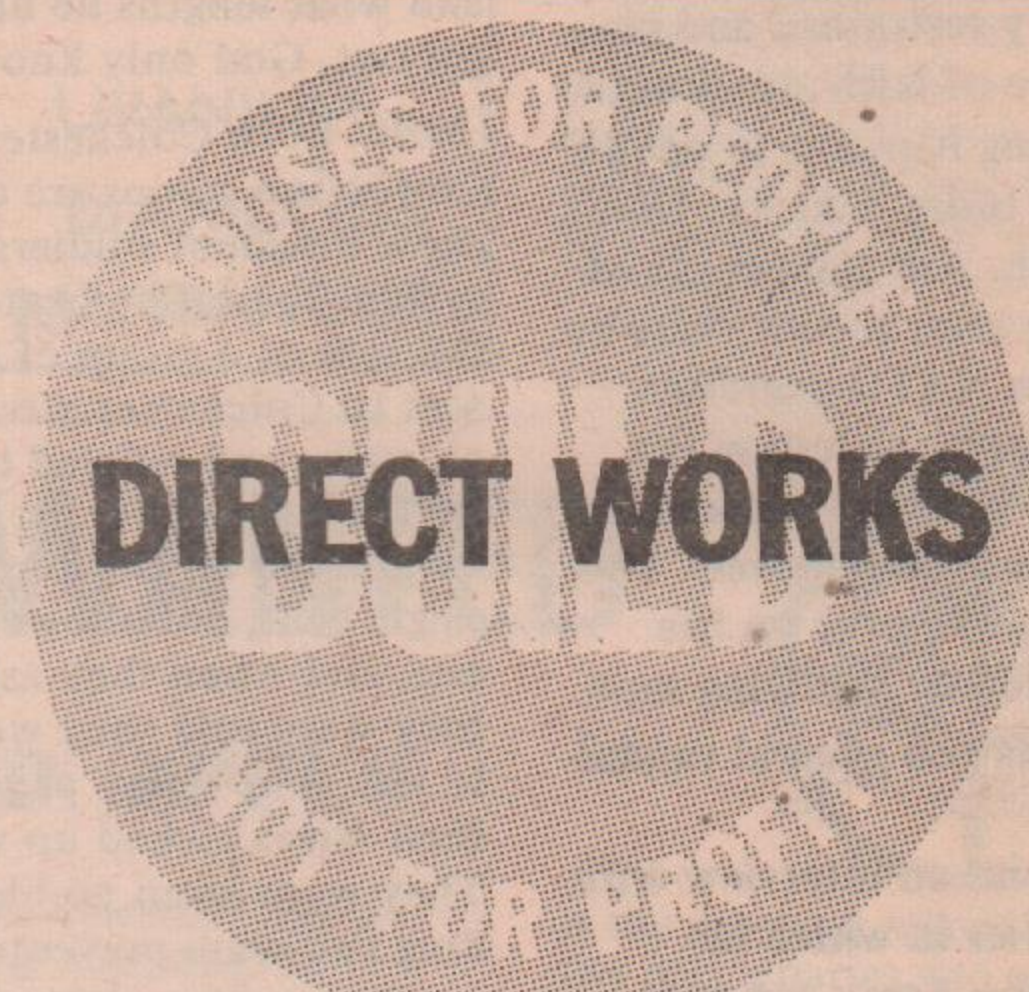
A Critique of Trotskyism. 60p. Two members of Big Flame dissect Trotskyism — the dominant tendency in the British revolutionary left. (Out mid-May)

### THE CASE AGAINST THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

By a group of independent socialists. 10p (+ postage) Order from 217 Wavertree Rd.

### THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION

An analysis of what's happening in education and the role of education in maintaining class domination. Out Now 35p



"BUILD HOUSES FOR PEOPLE NOT FOR PROFIT — BUILD DIRECT WORKS"

Big Flame supports the campaign to save and extend direct labour in the face of attack from private building employers, and supports all resistance to attempts to cut back on local authority construction projects.

To assist those fighting back, Big Flame has produced a badge, illustrated above, which is 1 3/4 inches across in two colours — red and black. For workers' action committees, strike committees and tenants organisations the badges cost 6 pence, and can then be sold as a fund raiser at 10 pence for the campaign locally. Orders to Manchester Big Flame, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester.



# Windscale Nuclear Power Fight

AT PRESENT plans for the development of a nuclear power programme are being delayed by the Government's decision to hold a Public Inquiry in Cumbria

In fact there are many options open for our energy programme. The government could:

- 1) Push ahead with the development of fast-breeder nuclear power stations as the 'nuclear lobby' headed by the Atomic Energy Authority wants us to.
- 2) Develop our reserves of coal as the National Coal Board and the National Union of Miners want us to.
- 3) Investigate the possibilities of developing tidal, solar and wind power in this country.

We should be quite clear that since fast-breeder reactors produce a surplus of plutonium which can be converted into nuclear weapons — they will bring with them super fast escalation of the risks of nuclear war. With the pretext of preventing this possibility, the state will be able to step up its mechanisms of surveillance and control to new repressive heights. At the same time, there is the probability that we will not take up the opportunity of developing research into alternative sources of energy.

Up till now the Labour Movement and the revolutionary left have not thought it important to take up the vital issues nuclear power raises — in fact when they have done, it has been from the narrow perspective of 'protection of jobs.' The struggle against nuclear power has been led by groups like Friends of the Earth, who with very limited resources are fighting a rich and well-organised nuclear industrial lobby.

In a recent press release, Friends of the Earth (FOE) have announced their plans to contest the Whitehaven inquiry.

On June 14th a public inquiry of unparalleled importance will open in Whitehaven, Cumbria: into British Nuclear Fuels Ltd's plans to build a new reprocessing plant at Windscale for the separation of plutonium from spent nuclear fuel. The outcome of the inquiry will have global repercussions far into the future.

In order that the case does not go by default Friends of the Earth today launched an appeal for £25,000 for legal and other expenses. FOE's Executive Director, Tom Burke, said:

"BNFL have unlimited access to public money to back their case. It would be a travesty of justice if the case against the development failed only for lack of money. Having succeeded in securing a public inquiry into BNFL's plans, we are determined to raise the £25,000 necessary to do justice to our case, and we appeal to all those who have helped us so far to make sure that we succeed."

## THE EXPANDING NUCLEAR CLUB

### NATIONS WITH BOMB

- UNITED STATES
- SOVIET UNION
- BRITAIN
- FRANCE
- CHINA
- INDIA

### NATIONS CAPABLE OF BUILDING A BOMB WITHIN A FEW YEARS

- ARGENTINA
- BRAZIL
- CANADA
- ISRAEL
- JAPAN
- PAKISTAN
- SOUTH AFRICA
- SPAIN
- SWEDEN
- SWITZERLAND
- WEST GERMANY

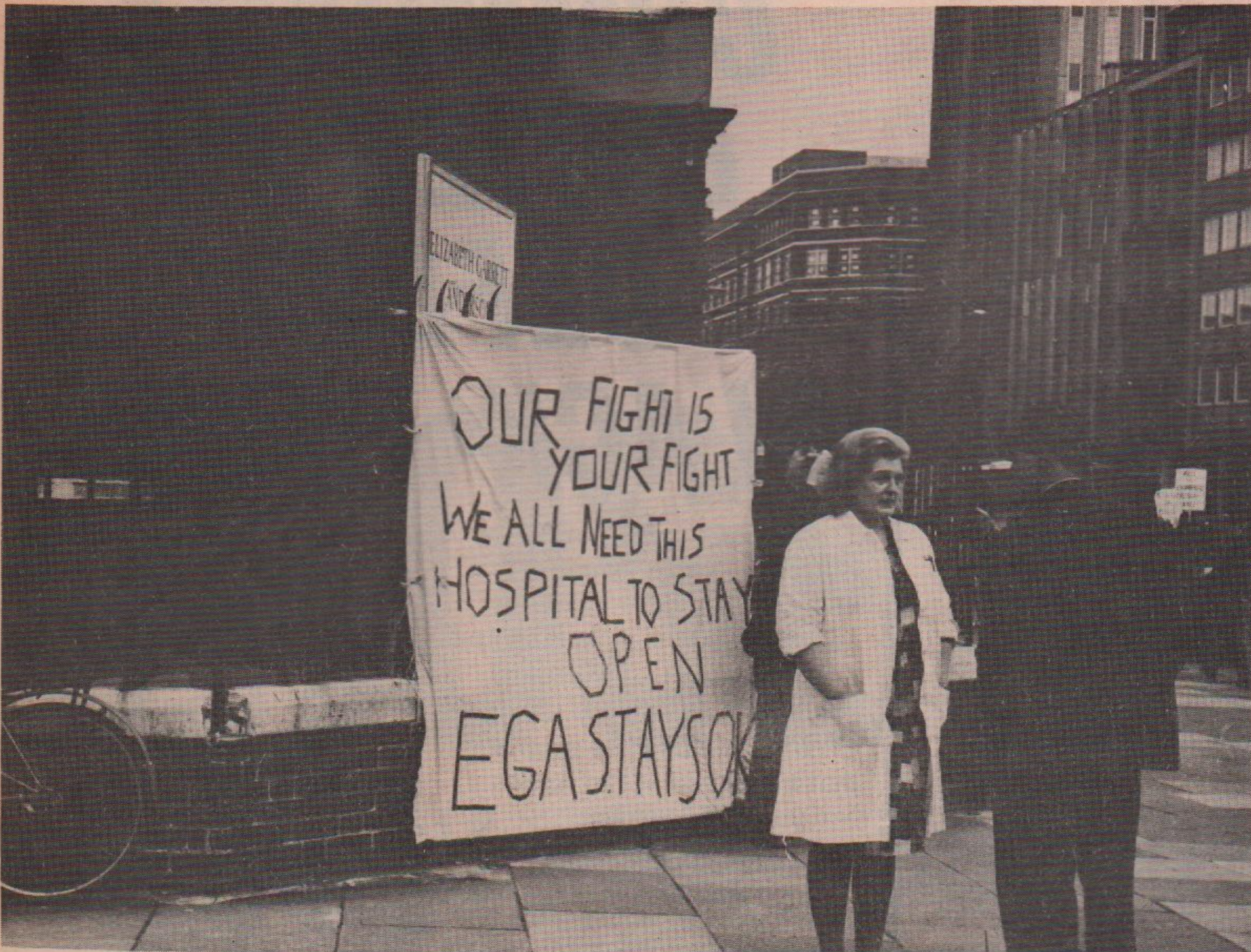
U.S. Government sources

FOE are preparing a programme of fund-raising activities including a rally on May 14th at Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1.

Cheques should be made payable to "The Windscale Fighting Fund" and sent to 9 Poland St, London W1V 3DG.

For further information contact Tom Burke or Czech Conroy, 01.434 1684 (office) 01.671.2753 (home)

A pamphlet has just been published by Socialist Economists in co-operation with GEC/TASS workers which puts forward a socialist strategy for the power plant industry. The pamphlet (cost 15p and postage) can be obtained from Big Flame, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 2, or all good revolutionary book stores.



Big Flame Photo

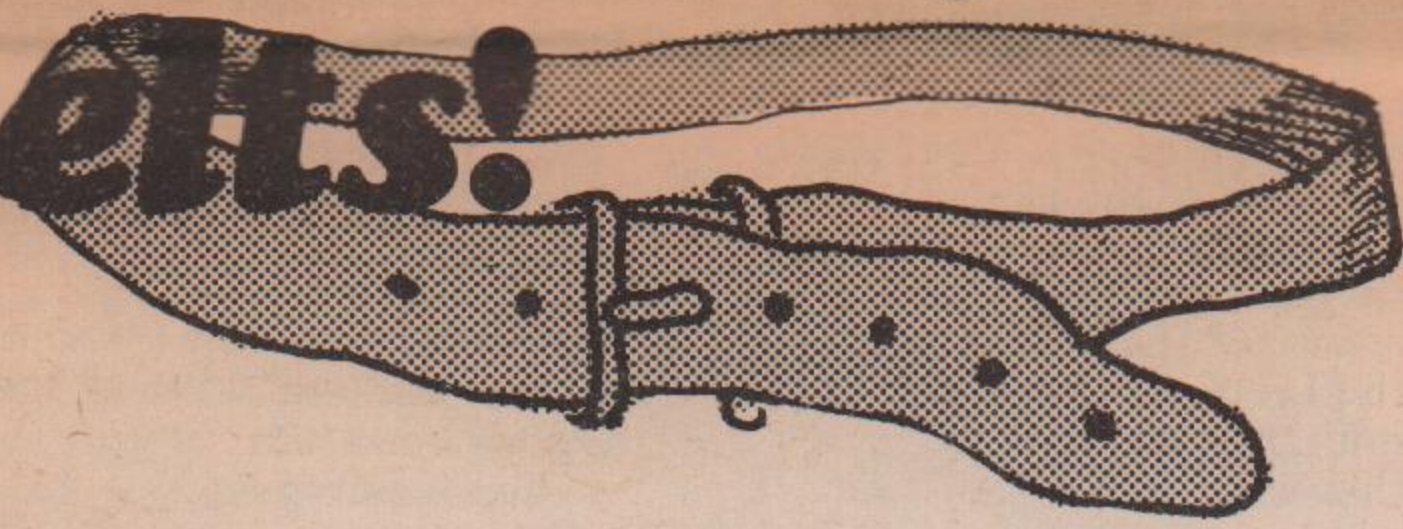
# EGA STAYS OK!

THE STRUGGLE to keep the E.G.A. Hospital open continues. A mass picket on 18th April made it impossible for management to carry out their threat of taking vital machinery away. On May 4th, Big Flame will be showing the excellent film 'EGA stays OK!' in Sheffield. It

will also be shown at a Public Meeting organised in Liverpool in support of keeping Mill Road Maternity Hospital open, on May 3rd, and in the week May 9th-13th the film will be shown in hospitals in the Manchester area.

News of the threatened closure of the womens hospital in Edinburgh of the Mill Road maternity Hospital in Liverpool and of other services for women throughout the country make it clear that the current 'rationalisation' of the NHS is a very clear attack on women.

# tighten your belts!



We're always being told that we should tighten our belts. Reading the papers it becomes clear that tightening our belts for some would seem like pure luxury for the rest of us. Below we reprint some of the articles which have appeared recently in the press.

"The pursuit of equality is a mirage. What is more desirable and more practicable than the pursuit of equality is the pursuit of equality of opportunity. And opportunity means nothing unless it includes the right to be unequal."

Margaret Thatcher 16.9.75

"A facelift worth £1,000 carried out by a top Harley Street surgeon is the top prize in a raffle for high society guests at a special ball in the Dorchester Hotel, London, in May organised by the Guild of Professional Toastmasters. The prize will remain valid for three years."

Guardian 31.1.77

"Electricity costs are just too high for £32 per week council worker. James Ford. So when one of his four young children was due out of hospital he stole a 50p sack of coke from his employers. Ford, now sacked by Sutton Council who he worked for in Cheam Park, admitted the offence. He told the court:

"I am very sorry, it was such a small amount. My son is coming out of hospital today and I wanted something to warm the house up for him; I've got electric heating but the bills are getting to be a lot of money so we just can't put it on all the time." He was fined £15."

Wallington and Carshalton Times 27.1.77

The Countess of Lichfield would find it very difficult to go homeless — her father is the Duke of Westminster one of the richest men in Britain (£300 million plus) and owner of the Grosvenor Estate which has 300 acres in Mayfair and Belgravia (some of the most valuable land in the country). However, the Countess has decided to "put independence before economy." Rather than be beholden to her dad, she is buying a house in Kensington for £100,000. Others are less fussy about taking "charity" from the Duke of Westminster. Edward Heath, for example, has been provided with a £90,000 Belgravia house by the Westminsters at a "nominal" rent.

Daily Mail 1.2.77

A couple squatting with their baby in a South London pre-fab are to be evicted, as the house has been bought for conversion to a chicken coop. The head of the firm which has bought the pre-fab says that a chicken coop was the only thing it was fit for.

Guardian 7.2.77

At a site in West Hampstead, an old people's nursing home is being cleared to make way for, as the London Evening Standard (3.2.77) puts it, "11 speculative houses costing more than any before". Each will be about four times the size of the average three bedroomed semi and the price tag is £150,000.



## WANTED

ÉLIZABETH WINDSOR, unemployed and of no fixed address. Living at Balmoral, Windsor, Sandringham and Windsor. WANTED FOR QUESTIONING by her 'pissed off over-taxed subjects, on matters relating to non-payment of taxes, scrounging off the state, concealment of shareholdings and other serious charges.

All information to:— P.I. Storf, The 'Dots', Yourtown.

Meanwhile at the other end of the social scale you'll be interested to hear the results of the official enquiry into nearly 200 examples of "massive and horrifying" welfare abuses cited by right-wing Tory MP Ian "Scrounger" Sproat.

Sproat, you'll remember, is the man who once claimed that 50% of those claiming unemployment benefit actually had jobs.

The enquiry, which cost £8,000 to carry out revealed eight new cases of fraud. That is, a cost of £1,000 to uncover each case. What we would like to see next is Mr Sproat pressing for a similar enquiry into the number of people who fail to claim rent rebates, free school milk and free prescriptions.

# NIGHT OUT PICKET

MANAGEMENT STILL haven't made a satisfactory offer to Night Out workers in Birmingham. Picketing is being stepped up — starting from the end of April. There are going to be 24 hour pickets on the the Night Out Club and also another Trust House Forte hotel, the Albany,

which is just down the road from the the Night Out.

Mass picket on the Night Out every Saturday at 7.00 p.m.

Messages of support and donations to Night Out strikers, Transport House, Broad St. Birmingham.

There are Big Flame Groups in:		London	c/- Rising Free, 142 Drummond St., N.W.1.
Leeds	80 Harehills Ave, Leeds 7. 0532.620535	Manchester	14 Piccadilly, M/cr 2 061.223.4515
Liverpool	217 Wavertree Rd, L'pool 7. 051.263.1350	Sheffield	07242.587120

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.

£37 for our Jubilee issue. The Pig is back by popular demand. This month's contributions: £5 from a Thameside reader to bring back the pig. £25 from a Liverpool member. £5 Manchester Big Flame £2 Norwich member. That means £37 for OUR Jubilee issue. It's not great.

To show there are no hard feelings, we are offering you a unique chance to make us some money — St Petersburg in the Epsom Derby. This son of Royal Palace and Revolution has a good chance. Our connections are hopeful, though by October he may have to change his name.

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





# BIG FLAME



## Strike out the Social Contract

ABOVE are just a few of the 2,000 demonstrators in London on April 20th - 'Day of action against the social contract'. Delegations from all over the country were there including Liverpool dockers, Yorkshire miners and Midland carworkers. Outside London there were strikes and demonstrations in Glasgow, Sheffield

and Manchester. In Sheffield 13 factories were shut down, with 6,000 on strike. At the end of a demonstration, a resolution was unanimously passed at a rally that stewards present should submit pay claims that 'had no truck with the social contract; and the implementation of those claims to be

August 1st. In Manchester the Dry Docks and Massey Ferguson had an all-day stoppage. In general, the 'Day of Action' went off at half cock. However, the feeling amongst workers taking part was that it was just a start and that at least the issue was now being seriously raised on the shop-floor.



GRUNWICK MASS PICKET

## UNIONS DRAG FEET OVER GRUNWICK

The demonstration on April 27th will be an important show of solidarity in support of the Grunwick strikers. It is now 9 months since the lockout began and although the Grunwick strikers are getting a lot of moral support from the labour movement this is not being converted into practical support.

Even now when ACAS has decided on the right of the locked-out Grunwick workers to join a union (APEX): the trade union movement is dragging its feet.

It should be clear by now that the dispute will only be won by rank and file action - there is an urgent need to black Grunwick products and to support the 24 hour picket at the plant at Chapter Rd and Cobbold Rd (Dollis Hill Tube station).

The collapse of the picket at the Grovesnor House in Sheffield is a reminder that you can't expect isolated militants to remain on picket indefinitely. Often enough, all of us say 'unity is strength': let's put our money where our mouth is for the locked-out Grunwick workers.

Wiard (Report)

# COMMUNITY UNITES TO DEFEND BLACK YOUTHS

THE BLACK community in Islington, North London, is united around the Islington 18 black youths picked up last November on trumped-up charges of conspiracy to rob - a frame-up linked to events that happened at last year's Notting Hill Carnival.

At a meeting of the Defence Committee a West Indian said: "Everybody says the black community is split between the older and the younger generation. The authorities foster this. They talk of the good hard-working older generation and the bad, lazy younger generation. But we parents should start thinking we've worked too damn hard all these years. The parents and the youth have got to come together to form a movement - this is the only way the authorities will recognise us. If black parents stand up and say, 'We are with our kids' we will win. I am convinced of that."

The Defence Committee has attempted to popularise the case by leafletting local markets, hospitals and schools. A teacher spoke of how they had gone about it.

"Some of us teachers distributed leaflets on the 18 around the school. The headmaster - one of those liberals who love people of every colour, green or orange or whatever, as long as they don't get off their knees and fight - tried to stop us. Then he tried to stop the kids - he said he'd expel them. So they stood outside the gates and gave out the leaflets. When the head came and asked for one they said 'You'll have to come outside the gates or it'll be illegal.'"

Just because the Islington 18 are now at the Old Bailey is no reason to stop mass mobilisations for them. In the case of the Cricklewood 12 and the Leeds Bonfire Night 10, it was militant defence lawyers together with the popular support in court and out that got favourable verdicts from the juries.

It was in Islington that Stephan McCarthy 'accidentally' had his head smashed against a lamp post by the Upper Street police: now it is black youth that is being harassed. Racism is all over in a borough that a corrupt Labour Party has ruled for years. But there are signs that the fight back is beginning: a fight back in which support for the Islington 18 will be a central focus.

(Photo and information from 'Islington: Gutter Press')

SUPPORT THE ISLINGTON 18



At the meeting

## YOUT REBELS

a bran new breed of blacks have now emerged, leadin on the rough scene, breakin away takin the day, sayin to capital neva movin forward hevva.

they can only be new in age new in age but not in rage, not needin the soft and also shallow councilin of the soot-brained sage in chain; wreckin thin-shelled words movin always forwud.

young blood yout rebels: new shapes shapin new patterns creatin new links linkin blodd risin surely carvin a new path, movin forwud to freedom.

From 'Dread Beq and Blood' by Linton Kwesi Johnson, published by Bogle L'Ouverture Publications.

## TATE & LYLE 'NO REDUNDANCIES!'

Tate and Lyle's massive sugar refinery has once again announced redundancies for their workforce, and a reduction in the amount of sugar to be refined. The expected loss of jobs is quoted at 400, but workers at the factory can see more damage to come.

### NO MACHINERY

Tate's bosses have said they will introduce a new product to the plant such as tea blending and specialised chemicals. They say this will preserve jobs. However, since these plans were first floated six months ago there has been no sign of new machinery or facilities in the plant.

### DIVIDE AND RULE

It is clear that Tates hope to write

off the Liverpool refinery as a major sugar producer. And even if they do bring in new processes, the long term effect will be to further divide the workforce and make a united resistance more difficult.

### RECORD PROFITS

Many workers at Tates say that the Liverpool refinery is about sugar - and without sugar it will close. For this reason the Workers Action Committee have rejected the company plan. Tates bosses have been crying about sugar costs for years now - yet last year they increased their profits by 10% to £52.5 million. They have invested £125 million in the last two years in 'growth and development'. But the Liverpool refinery has seen none of this. If the writing is on the wall, it should be 'NO REDUNDANCIES!'

# BIG FLAME

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