

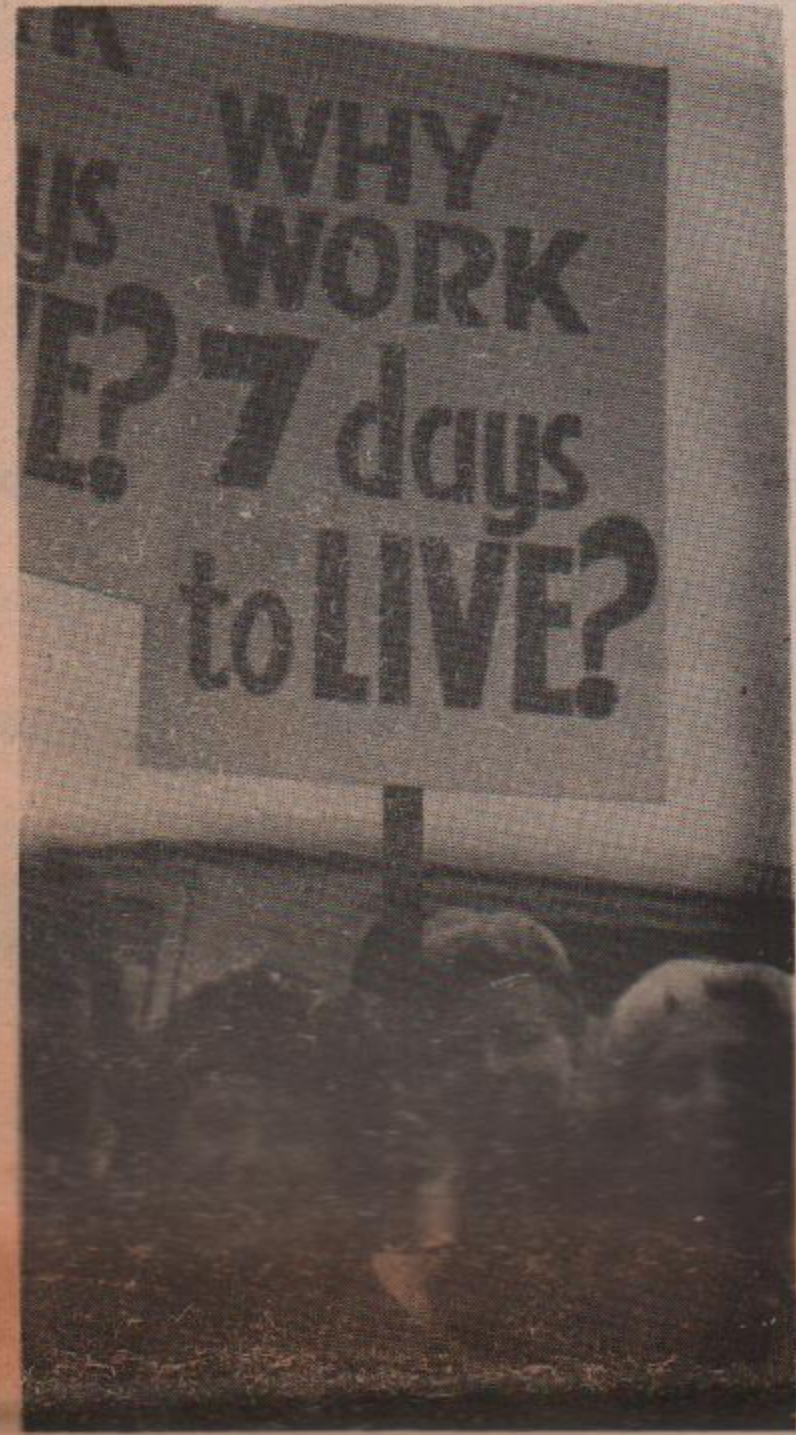
BIG FLAME

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Paper of the Revolutionary Socialist Organisation Big Flame

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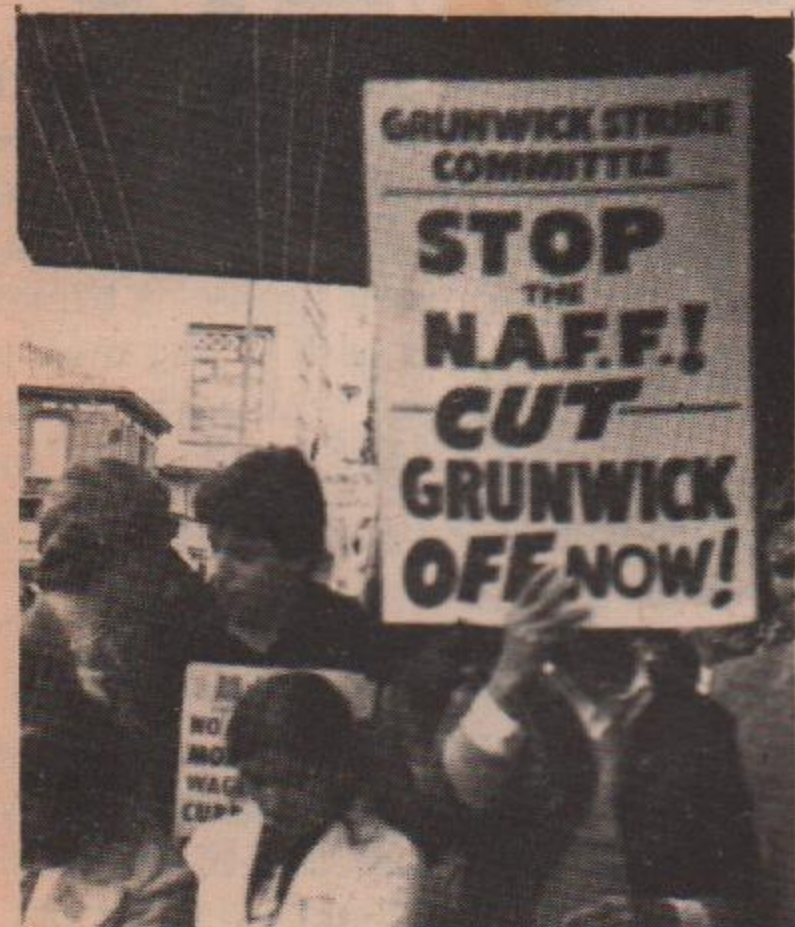
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STOP THE FASCISTS!



There is NO acceptable face of fascism

see page 4

NORTH MANCHESTER SWIFT ACTION AT CRUMPSALL HOSPITAL

MANAGEMENTS recent attempts to victimise union militants at Crumpsall Hospital, North Manchester were met by an immediate strike. For months tempers have been rising over workload, shifts and conditions and when management disciplined the branch secretary and a NUPE steward it became clear that something had to be done.

The two men were disciplined for refusing to cover for two other porters who had already refused to remove a fire damaged carpet without protective clothing. No action was taken at that time but in this case management were clearly trying to undermine the union.

Nurses porters and ancillary workers mounted a very successful picket on the main gate of the hospital. A new leaflet was produced

every day giving up-to-the-minute information. Lorry drivers delivering non-essential supplies turned back when they saw the picket and heard the story and by the end of the week the telephones were beginning to fail as Post Office engineers refused to cross the picket lines to mend them. Patients' visitors too gave their support. Message of support and financial contributions came in from other NUPE branches around Manchester.

At the moment a settlement is in sight, on Sept 9 the strikers voted to go back to work with a guarantee of no victimisation. They are awaiting the decision of an independent arbitrator appointed by ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service).

As one hospital worker said after the strike:

"Not everyone felt that we



Official picket at hospital gates should go back, but in the end it was decided that we should go back together, in strength. Some things have been won already as a result of the strike

We have shown that we are not prepared to let union representatives be picked on for their militancy.

*We have shown we can organ-

ise fast, effective action very easily and that with each battle we go into we learn that little bit more.

*We are not afraid to bring out into the open questions of who runs the hospital, who is telling the truth about the cuts, who decides what levels of staffing are needed on a ward.

*While we were on the picket lines, many others were on strike or threatening action, electricity men, water men, bread men. We felt the solidarity of other workers who refused to cross our picket line and we felt part of the rising tide of anger in answer to two years of attack on our standard of living and working class organisation".

We Defend OUR Hospital

SAY LANCASHIRE MINERS

MINER'S PENNIES helped to run Haydock Cottage Hospital. But after 100 years a Labour Health Minister has given the go-ahead for the closure of the cottage hospital.

Haydock is an old mining community between St. Helens and Wigan, and now enraged pitmen at neighbouring collieries have threatened industrial action over the closure of the hospital, which they helped to pay for before the post-war National Health Service takeover.

The fight against the St. Helens and Knowsley area health authority closure scheme, now approved by the health minister, has been led by a residents action committee, St. Helens trades council, St. Helens borough council, local GPs, the local community health council, NUPE and the patients.

Haydock people talk about it as 'their' hospital and it means something very special in the community, not just sentiment but a case based on real need. The cottage hospital is one of the very few amenities in the area.

The 19 bed hospital, which was designed with the help of Florence Nightingale in the 1880s, caters mainly for elderly patients from Haydock under the care of their GPs, plus a weekly orthopaedic clinic and a fort-

nightly surgical clinic.

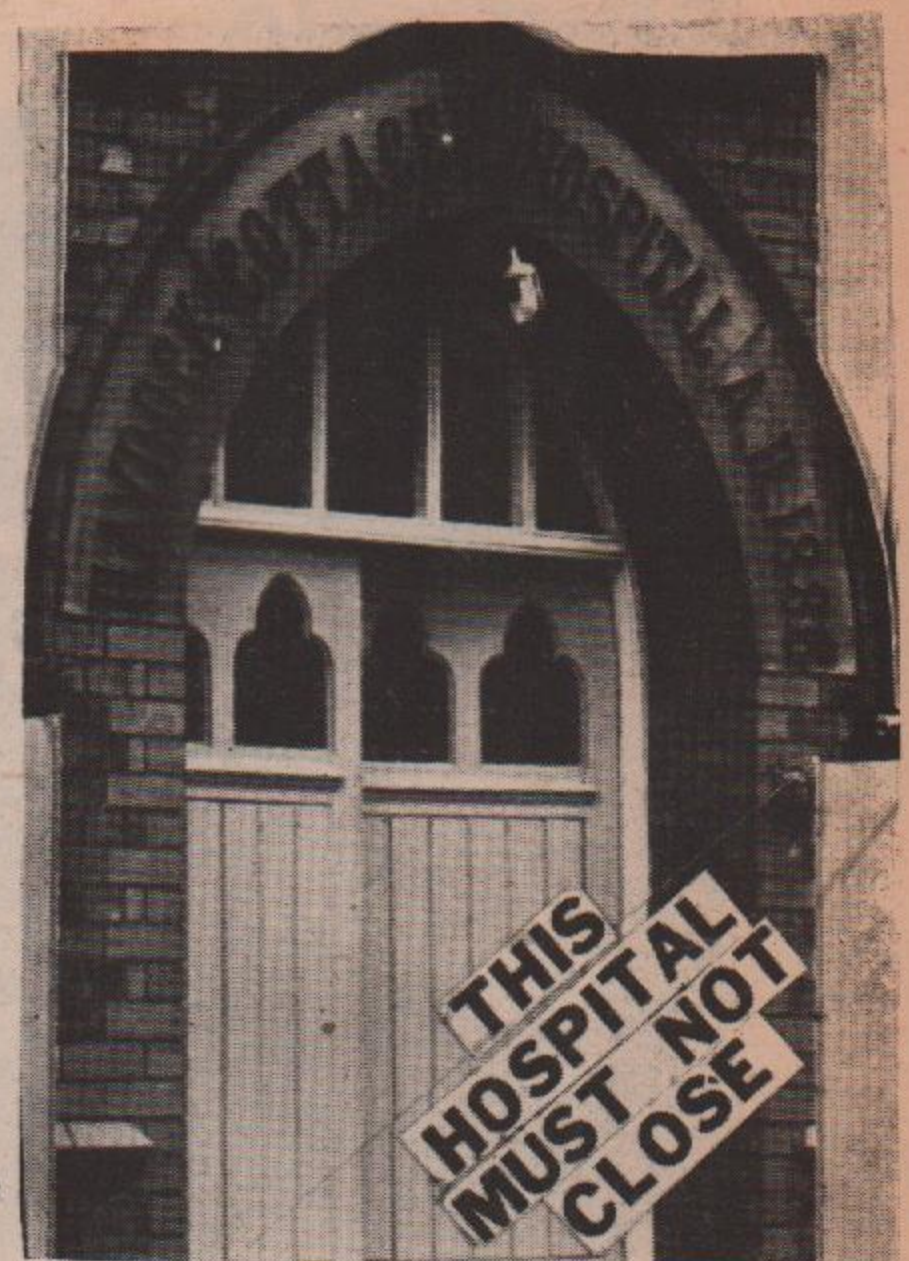
Local GPs slammed the closure plan for 'showing a complete lack of knowledge of the local situation' and said in a statement put out as early as last year: 'The experience of local doctors shows that it is not the case that services can be provided at other hospitals in the area.'

Mal Gregory, secretary of the NUM branch at Bold Colliery makes the point that of the 30,000 people living in Haydock 10,000 are retired miners. 'For these men and their families, getting to any other hospital is very difficult. To Newton, which is where many of the silicosis cases are sent, you have to take 3 buses and then it's a 1½ mile walk to the hospital. They've been running the hospital down for years, transferring machinery to other hospitals. Now they say it would cost £54,000 a year to keep it open and they are not prepared to spend that amount.'

One way out would be for the National Coal Board to take the hospital over, after all many miners got silicosis working in the pits - but I can't see that happening. The Action Committee has collected 9,000 signatures in support of keeping the hospital open and we are organising a deputation to Ennals, the Minister for Health. If all else fails, we will serious-

ly have to think about strike action."

The patients in the hospital want it kept open, local people know there is the need for a community hospital and for many visitors the closure of Haydock Hospital will be a disaster. So far the area health authority are not prepared to be 'reasonable'. Maybe industrial action is necessary to make them change their mind.



Cold War at Bird's Eye

ALL PRODUCTION workers at the Birds Eye are on unofficial strike for a £7 bonus for everyone. Production is being 'modernised' and there's a new line which will throw out pies faster than the eye can see.

The new line means re-organisation of the workforce. Some of the women workers have had to start working shifts - early and late. The workers - about 1,500, members of the T&GWU - agreed to these changes. The women started shifts but they refused to start operating the new line until there was agreement over a production bonus.

The management wouldn't negotiate and, a week after the line should have started, threw down an ultimatum. The new line had to start the next morning and anyone who refused to operate it would be sent

home.

Next morning the whole factory went home - on strike. A previous mass meeting had unanimously agreed on the figure of £7, and a later one agreed not to start the line without it.

The workers say the increased productivity warrants a productivity bonus. This won't count as a pay rise and so even under the government's and TUC's 12 month rule they will be able to get a pay rise next April.

The wages in Birds Eye are low. The workers have to rely on piecework bonuses and shift allowances to make their wages up. They need the £7 now and a wage rise in April.

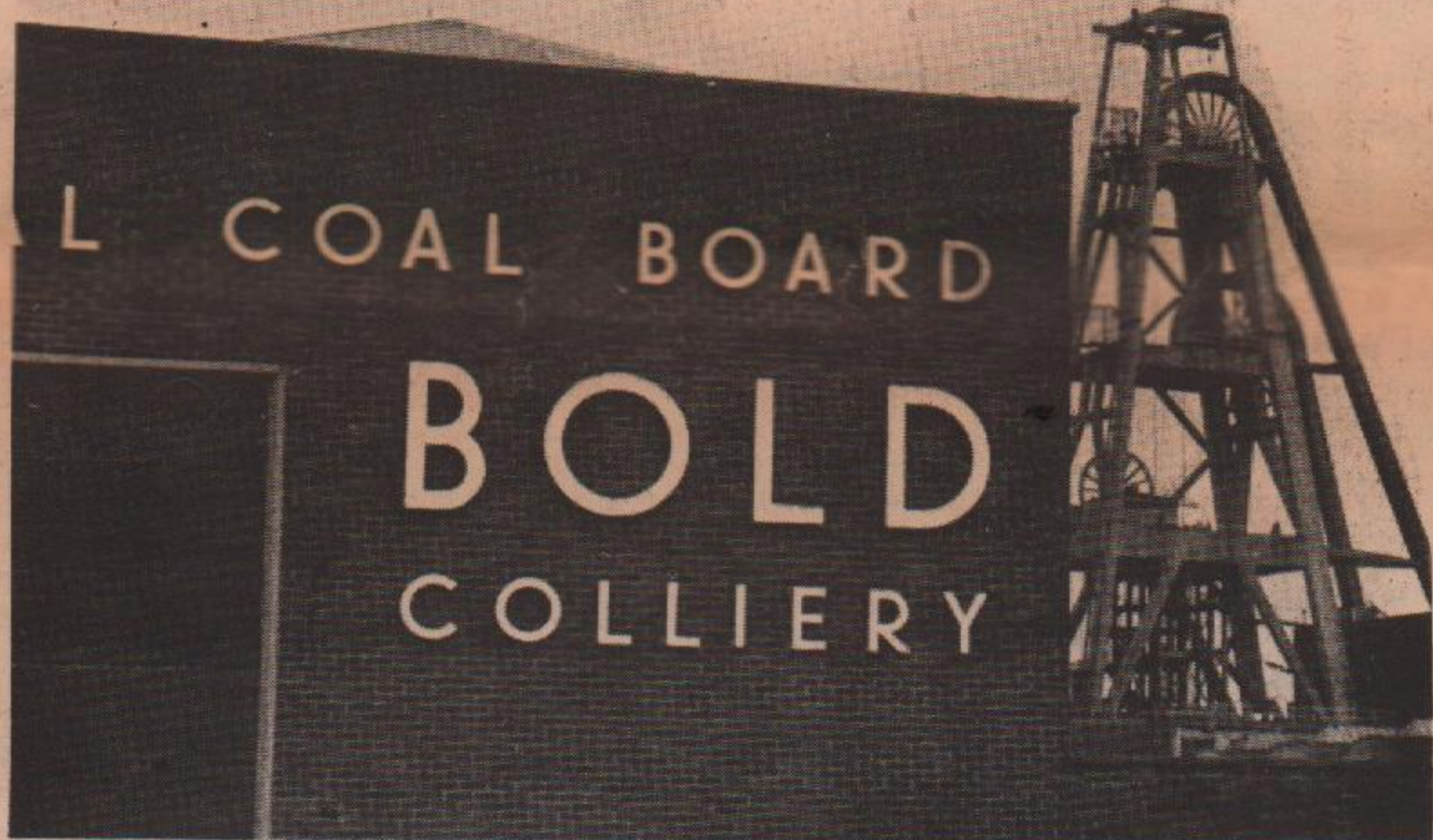
Management says it won't pay any money until it sees the productivity! Presumably the workers should speed

up just for the good of their health!

The Chairman, Mr Webb, has sent out a letter to all the workers. Even though reading it is good for a laugh, it's not really very funny. It threatens the workers with losing their jobs. He goes on about how good he was to keep the Kirkby plant open, and tells the workers, 'Don't throw it all away'.

Kirkby has got very high unemployment. There aren't any jobs going. There are thousands of people on the dole who want jobs and decent wages. But that doesn't mean big firms like Birds Eye can get away with murder. Threatening letters letters or not, Mr Webb won't get his pies until he pays for them!

All donations and messages of support to Birds Eye Strike Committee, Kirkby Labour Club, Kirkby Lincs.



Seeing Red

Steve Biko, the black South African revolutionary leader has been murdered while held in prison. The racist government claims he died on hunger strike after seven days!

The cruel sadism of the South African ruling class is clear in these comments on Biko's death made at a conference of the ruling Nationalist Party.

Mr Kruger said: 'Biko's death leaves me cold. I feel nothing, although one is sorry about any death. I suppose I would feel sorry about my own death.' Amidst further laughter, a Nationalist delegate from Springs, Transvaal, Mr C Venter, arose and praised Minister Kruger for 'being so democratic that he gives people the democratic right to starve themselves to death.'

Mr Kruger responded amidst even further laughter 'Mr Venter is right. That is democratic.'

When spoken to afterwards the man said: 'I suppose it was a crazy thing to do, but I felt I couldn't carry on letting him insult black people and women.'

(From 'Second Post', Swansea)

WHEN Reginald Maudling was a Tory cabinet minister, the Government decontrolled rents - for private landlords this was a license to print money. But in exchange for this Reggie got a rent-controlled mansion in Hertfordshire - at £2 a week guaranteed for 70 years! And Reggie's landlord was no skinflint - he had a £7,000 swimming pool installed for his tenant. And who was this generous landlord? None other than the late Sir Eric Miller, 'Labour Party' millionaire and personal friend of Harold Wilson.

The Daughter of Lord Chief Justice Goddard, a reactionary male chauvinist pig, has this to say about her father:

"My father always had an eye for a pretty girl. I remember the time when he had a bigamy trial before him. It happened that the bigamous wife was not an attractive person.

At the end of the trial he told the prisoner "Bigamy is a crime which varies greatly in its enormity. I could send you to prison for a very long time, but on reflection", he said, looking towards the bigamous wife, "I think you have been punished enough. I therefore sentence you to be imprisoned for one day."

'The Thoughts of Chairman Alf', Warren Mitchell's one man show as Alf Garnett was recently performed in Swansea.

The highlight of the evening came during a sequence in which Mitchell was comparing women with football players, 'or any other employees' - to be put on the transfer list when he was sick of them. A woman at the back shouted 'Women are independent people, there're nobody's property', and then a man rushed onto the stage, punched Mitchell and overturned a table with a union jack on it.

BIG FLAME PHOTO

BIG FLAME PHOTO

STRONG ARM TACTICS

whatever is the interpretation, the situation in Northern Ireland since 1969 has not been politically satisfactory to the Army also"

THIRD FORCE

IN A TELEVISION documentary, shown before the Nation Front demo at Hyde was banned, an expert on police strategy claimed that the police wanted a confrontation to take place so that the newly formed Tactical Force unit in the Lancashire police could be given an opportunity to perform under 'combat conditions'.

Over the last few years, Special Patrol Groups (SPGs)

of the police have been formed. They are para-military units modelled on forces like the CRS in France.

SOCIAL CONTRACT

Behind the creation of these forces, lies a bitter dispute going on between military planners as to whether the tasks of internal military repression should be carried out by the armed forces, the normal police or, a 'third force' like the SPGs.

The arguments against using the normal police is that it would

spoil the very special relationship the police have with working people in this country! As Major General Richard Clutterbuck, an expert in counter-insurgency (the state's fight against those who disagree with it) puts it:

'Because of their day to day contact with the public - helping a distraught mother to find her lost baby, etc., - the British police are more humane in their attitude and because most people do not like violence, their relationship is enhanced rather than damaged when they restore order in a riot situation!'

This relationship, he says, might be lost to a heavily equipped para-military force.

'The greatest strength of our unarmed police force lies not in its equipment, nor in any equipment which might be provided for it, but in its social contract with the public. The unarmed policeman can only operate if the public accept that they are responsible for his safety as much as he is responsible for theirs. This social contract has been generally honoured since the Metropolitan Police Force was formed. We should not lightly throw it away.'

THE ARMY

So the problem is clear for the forces of 'law and order' - how to greatly improve the combat strength of their forces without breaking this 'social contract' between the police and the general public. A possible solution would be to get the army more involved in situations of internal repression and security - and it is no accident that McNee, the new head of the Metropolitan Police was in charge of two joint police-military operations, the Glasgow firemen's strike and the Glasgow dustmen's strike.

'A POLITICAL PROBLEM'

But the experts in internal repression know that control is a political as well as a military problem and the use of the armed forces in such situations can produce a

political backlash in favour of the 'insurgents'. On this issue, the lesson of 'Northern' Ireland is clear - the use of the military as a force of internal control has not been successful. As one expert writes:

'Further, no matter how well the Army has acquitted itself in Ulster, it remains a debatable point whether or not its presence has helped to maintain law and order. At best, the Armed Forces have helped to hold violence and sectarian confrontation at a minimum level; at worst it has contributed to a prolonging of the conflict ...'

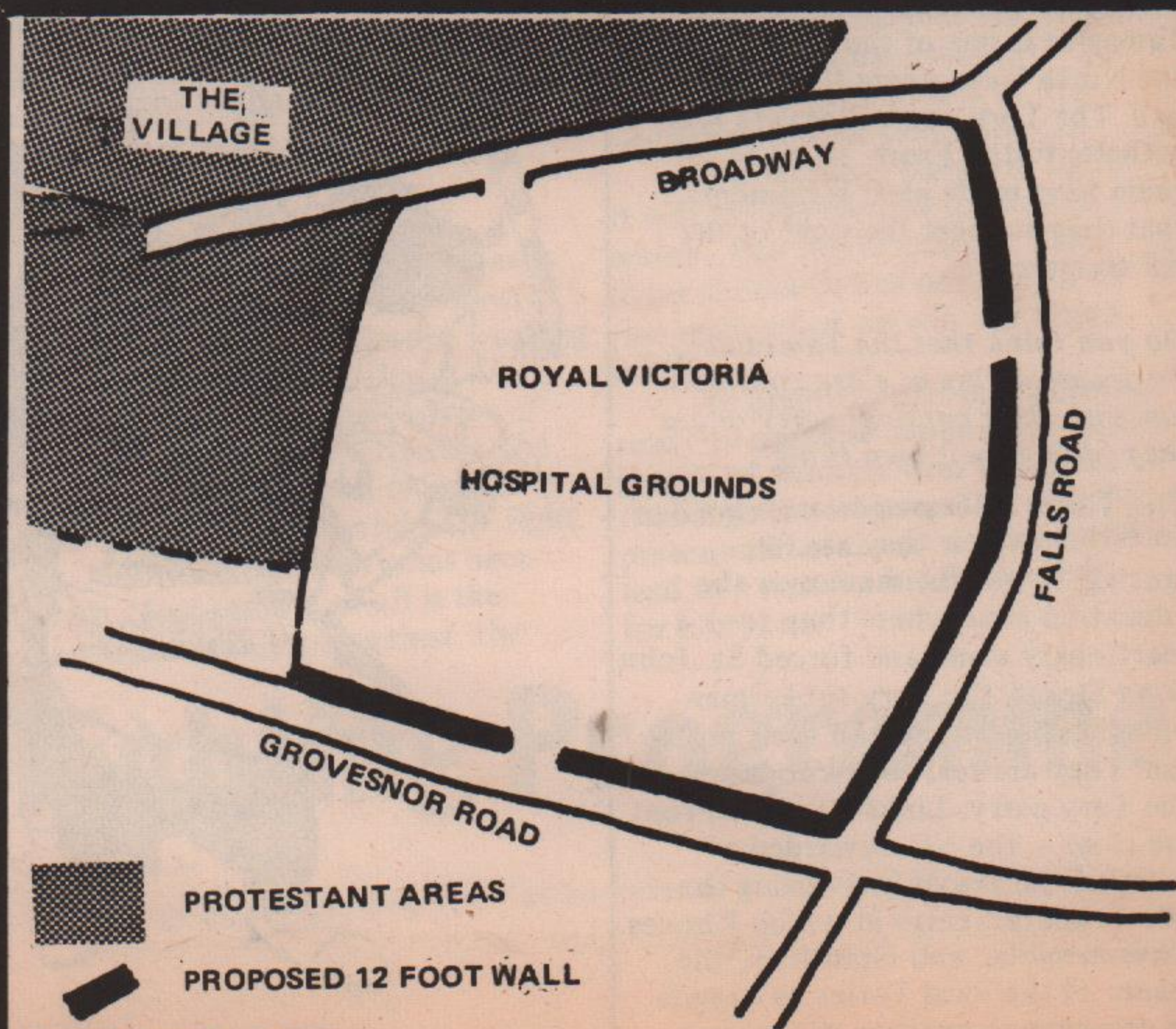
It is the fact that internal control is both a military and a political problem that is leading those in charge of it to opt for the development of a 'third force'.

They hope that this third force will have the military effectiveness of the armed forces and the political acceptance of the police. It is a risky strategy in that its long term effect could be to break the special 'social contract' that holds between the police and the British people.

It is extremely important for revolutionaries that this 'social contract' is broken.



Police advancing down Portobello Rd. at the Notting Hill Carnival



BELFAST: Hospital Threats

A large hospital serving Catholic areas of West Belfast, the Royal Victoria on the Falls Road, is controlled by a rabidly anti-Catholic administration, according to 'Anderstown News', the area's community newspaper.

Apparently the administration - which is 100% Protestant - plans to reserve ALL jobs in the Royal Victoria exclusively for workers of that religion. At present about 60% of the staff are Protestants even though the hospital is in a predominantly Catholic area. Most of the Catholics are concentrated in lower-paid, unskilled jobs like porters, cooks and cleaners.

DEATH THREATS

Increasingly, these Catholic workers are feeling under pressure to get out. Many have received death threats from loyalist extremist groups like the UDA and UVF who have been responsible for the murders of hundreds of Catholics. One worker who asked to be moved to a safer area after one of these threats was threatened with dismissal by the hospital authorities!

Recently the harassment has been stepped up. The administration have decided to close completely one of the hospital's entrances in a Catholic area on the Grovesnor Road. The other entrance on the Falls Road will be open for only eight hours a day. Only the entrance to the Protestant area called the Village will remain open all day.

Many Catholic workers will have to walk through the village to get to work. For many, that could mean death.

WALLS

To emphasise the point the hospital administration ordered the building of twelve-foot high walls along the Grovesnor and Falls Roads, but not in Protestant areas. This would force Catholic workers to use the dangerous entrance. Many would choose the dole rather than the chance of death. Feelings against the walls grew so strong that the Provisional IRA have now ordered work on them to stop, and the workmen are staying away.

The hospital authorities are believed to be hoping for the crushing of the revolt by the Catholic working class in northern Ireland. Once that happens they will weed out the remaining Catholics from the workforce.

WORKERS UNITY?

What is happening at the Royal Victoria Hospital is only what happens in nearly every place of work in the Six Counties. The 'province' is controlled by mainly Protestant businessmen, landowners and local government administrators, who divide the workforce by allocating the best jobs and houses to Protestant workers. As a result, the bulk of Protestant workers join the Orange Lodges which are led by the Ulster middle classes, seeing their Catholic fellow workers as a threat to their standard of living. At the Royal Victoria, for instance, the Catholic workers have gone on strike against the harassment but receive no support from Protestant workers or from the local branch of NUPE, their union, which is Loyalist controlled.

THE BRITISH?

This scandalous situation is reinforced by the British occupation. Every time Roy Mason appears on TV he boasts about how many arrests, convictions and house raids his men have carried out. His least concern is the evil men who control this system of Protestant domination. All he is interested in is putting down 'terrorists', his name for anyone who fights injustice.

As long as the British army remains in northern Ireland the biggest businessmen can (more or less) 'sleep easily in their beds. Their system is safe and they can continue to buy the support of Protestant workers. The people of both religions will only be united when the system of discrimination is destroyed. That will only be possible when the British army is withdrawn.

[Information from Anderstown News and Peoples News Service, available from 82 Upper St, London N1]

ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)

Army Create

Trots hire IRA to bomb English cities

IRA-linked Left-wing militants are planning a bomb war on English cities.

And it could lead to a winter of havoc and bloodshed if the scheme works.

British Trotskyites and Marxists have spent two months forging links with wild IRA bomb-

ers. They are believed to have offered help to the bombers in organising a blitz of shopping centres, railway stations and Government offices.

And they helped them compile a list of prominent victims marked down for murder.

A Republican source said in Belfast: "These

people have hired experienced IRA bombers as mercenaries. They have tapped the rebellious younger element of the Provo."

Targets

A pointer to the target area came last week when police in the Irish Republic intercepted a

shipment of arms and explosives on its way from Dublin to England. Among the list was a list of VIPs, businessmen and members of the Government, who are targets for assassination.

Provo Chiefs believe that the British intend to want the IRA to undertake a campaign of sniping.

Then they will step in to exploit the situation with counter-gangs and street battles.

'Strategy of Tension'

THIS SCREAMING headline in a recent 'Daily Mirror' tried to link Marxists with the left-wing of the IRA. The article went on to claim that the 'Trots' and Marxists are, "believed to have offered help to the bombers in organising a blitz of shopping centres, railway stations and Government offices".

The article, a very deliberate fabrication, was signed by Joe Gorrod. He works for the 'Mirror' in Belfast and is known to have very good contacts with the British Army there. His article should not be seen as a pure scare story. It is part of a very long-term campaign of the Army to get the working-class readers of the 'Mirror' to accept a 'strategy of tension' if and when it becomes necessary. If and when the Army decide to explode bombs in shopping centres, they know that many people will have been psy-

chologically prepared to believe that it was the IRA, assisted by 'Trots' and Marxists that planted them. So, there will be little civilian response to ferocious repression of the the revolutionary left.

This strategy of tension is not new to the Army. They have used it with success in Aden, Cyprus, Northern Ireland etc. In his latest book 'Bunch of Five', Frank Kitson who is an army expert on counter-insurgency (on how to deal with insurgents) says:

"The second part of the problem could perhaps be described as the mechanics of the business and involves the provision of people to monitor the enemy's propaganda and prepare and disseminate material required for countering and putting across the government's point of view. It can be achieved either by direct action, as for example by the provision of leaflets, or the setting-up of an official wireless or television

network, or by trying to inform and influence the existing news media" (our emphasis)

The first stage is already being done - the article in the 'Mirror' makes this clear. The second stage, which for good reasons Kitson does not write about, is for the armed forces to carry out actions that will break any sympathetic link working people have with the insurgents. The massacre of radical white priests in Rhodesia by the Rhodesian Army and then trying to blame it one the freedom fighters is one example.

Many of us accept too quickly the myths of 'fair play' that surround the British armed forces. We would do well to remind ourselves that 'our' armed forces have a tradition of brutality second to none. Men like Kitson are developing counter-insurgency methods to a fine art - our job is to understand this and make it as public as we can.

HYDE MASS PICKET GOES AHEAD

ONE OF the reasons for the success of the mobilisation of anti-fascist forces in Tameside has been the militant position taken by the Tameside Trades Council, who from the start made their opposition to the Front clear. The day to day work that the mobilisation required has been done by the anti-fascist committee of the trades council. In this interview we talk to Bert Ellicot, secretary of the Trades Council

Why do you think that the Front chose Hyde to meet in; it seems an odd choice since they have no strong base in the area?

I think that the main reason is that Tameside is one of the only places in the North West where they can get a hall. The Tory councillors are sympathetic to the Front, some of them have made clear statements that they support the right of the NF to march.

Do you think that the Tameside Tories are acting in close consultation with their national party or are they 'doing their own thing'?

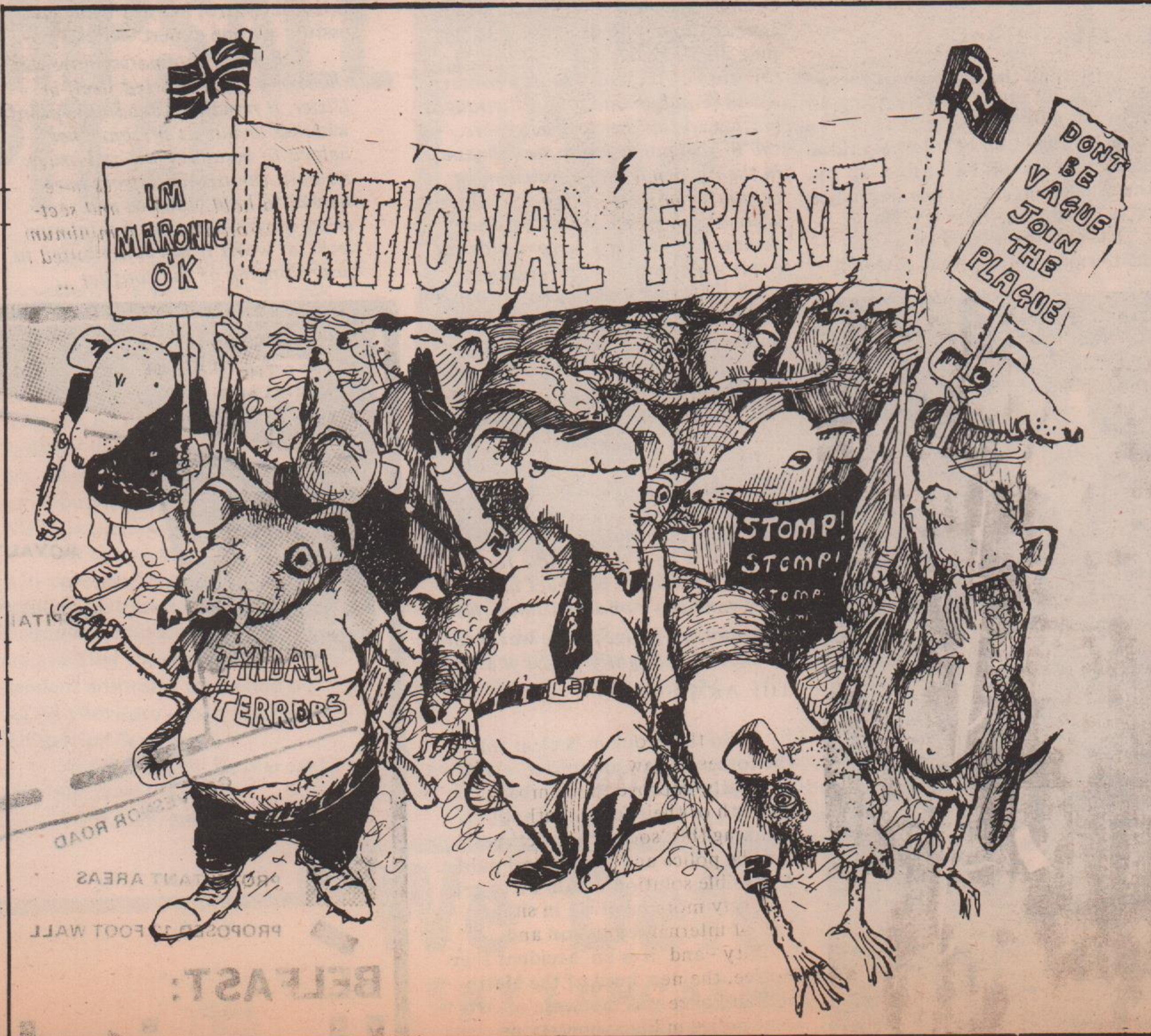
The Tories in Tameside are a law into themselves, they are free-lancing. It was the same over the education issue where they took a reactionary stand and forced St. John John Stevas, the Tory spokesman on education, to defend their position. They are real backwoodsmen of the Tory party. Links with the Front are close - the NF stewarded a meeting the Tories had during the education campaign at which Rhodes Boyson spoke, and Grantham, the leader of the local Tories, is a regular drinking companion of Dawber, the Front organiser in the area.

How did you set about organising the anti-fascist mobilisation for October 8th in Hyde?

Well, this has been done through the anti-fascist committee which has been meeting since July. We have street meetings in the different market places every Saturday at which we try to put across the different aspects of fascism and hand out leaflets. We have made sure the area is covered with posters, a leaflet for distribution to schools has been done. We are speaking on the telly and local radio programmes. At the same time, we are in touch with the anti-fascist movement nationally and we have been asked to send speakers to public meetings in Hull, Oxford, the Wirral etc.

What has been the result in the Labour movement and the black community of your approaches?

Within the Labour Movement there are those who take the 'ignore them and they'll go away' attitude but they are not very strong. The Trades Council and both the constituency



Labour Parties supported the call for a mass picket on the basis of denying the fascists a programme. The Communist Party is the only left organisation in Ashton that refused to participate in the mass picket.

The Asian community in Ashton indicated support - but the Bangladeshis in Hyde were very worried about what was going to happen. Through the Community Relations Council they have appealed for white people to come and stay with them and give them support on the 8th. The CRC made it clear that they would not support the mass picket because of their fear of violence.

The North West TUC came down in favour of the mass picket after some initial reservations and were attempting to mobilise the trade union movement in the North West.

What is the attitude of the Trades Council to asking for the banning of the march?

It was raised at the trades council a

while back that we ask the Home Secretary to ban the march, but it was felt to be a waste of time to do this. Other organisations have devoted their time to getting a ban - so we devoted our activities to stopping the NF physically.

Personally, I would have preferred the march to have been banned under the Race Relations Act for incitement to racial hatred. The problem with it being banned under the 1936 Public Order Act is that this blanket ban will be used to prevent left-wing demonstrations as well.

What do you think is the most important lesson of the mobilisation against the National Front demonstration?

What forced the police to recommend the council ban the march was the massive support that we were getting from working people all over the country. It was the prospect of 20,000 anti-fascists that made them ban the march, make no mistake about it.

THE MESSAGE of the Tameside Anti-Fascist Committee to the thousands of working class people who have already booked their seats to come to the anti-National Front picket at Hyde on October 8th rang out loud and clear from the Committee's press statement of September 23rd:

"DON'T BE FOOLED - WEBSTER WILL NOT MARCH ALONE - TURN UP ON THE EIGHTH".

The statement read: "This Committee, having carefully considered all information received, recognises that Martin Webster will not be alone on his march through Hyde on October 8th. We assert the right of the Labour movement to defend the democratic rights of all our people. We, therefore, call upon all forces who oppose Fascism to join us on a mass picket of Hyde Town Hall at 10. am on Saturday 8th October."

Webster, the NF Dr Goebbels and author of the pamphlet "Why I am a Nazi", told the national press on Tuesday 20th September that he would take on the Home Secretary's ban on public procession in Tameside by marching by himself along the proposed NF route on October 8th to Hyde Town Hall where he would address "my fellow countrymen" from the Town Hall steps.

Just as Hitler never went anywhere without his bodyguard, Webster will most certainly be flanked along the route by NF thugs masquerading as local people cheering him from the pavements.

FASCIST FILTH

UNSUSPECTING CITIZENS have recently been receiving large unsolicited envelopes through the post, containing sheet after sheet of racist and anti-Semitic filth.

A glance at it illustrates what is being defended in the name of the right to free speech.

'Clear your mind', the first leaflet urges 'of the poor persecuted nigger propaganda - see the blacks as they really are: destructive, violent, unstable, ugly, sub-human parasites'. The bulk of the leaflets concentrates on the propagation of traditional Hitlerian anti-Semitism. The Jews, we are told, are responsible for all the economic ills of Britain - the leaflets say they are in total control of Socialism, Communism, the Government, Scotland Yard, the army and the IRA! The death of 6 million Jews in Nazi concentration camps is a myth

- another fiendish Jewish plot to extract reparations from Germany. Details are kindly provided about 'ritual slaughter of gentiles'. Christ, incidentally, was not a Jew according to these leaflets. One concludes with these profound thoughts: 'The time is short - fight hard to turn the tide. Whatever happens don't cover before the Jews... etc....etc!'

The package of leaflets ends by urging the reader to join the National Front. They are published 'independently' by the 'Arnold Leece (Gentile) Information Service', but the address is interesting. It is that of Michael McLaughlin, Fuehrer of the British Movement, all of which points to the growing affinity between the Nazi extremists. And who was Arnold Leece? - Britain's first Nazi leader in the 1930s, Colin Jordan's old tutor. And the NF has the affrontery to claim they have no links with Nazis.

ANTI-FASCIST FIGHT NEEDS UNITY

IN BRITAIN today we have an extremely dangerous political situation - unemployment heading for the two million mark, racialism endemic amongst the white working class, national chauvinism rampant - factors very much a product of Britain's late unlamented days of imperial conquest and glory. Coupled with these factors we have a growing sense of disillusion with both the Labour Government and the trade union leaders. Workers' living standards are being forced down continually. But we hardly need tell the Socialist Workers Party any of this.

The forces of the left are divided, backward and to an appreciable extent unorganised. Given these factors it would be rather surprising if the fascist right did not appear on the political scene, as we all know they have,

communities that the fascists use as scapegoats must be brought into the struggle, a section of the most advanced trade unionists must be involved. The best elements of the Labour Party must be activated. Members of the women's and gay movements are directly threatened by fascism and must be involved, along with the Communist Party and last but not least the revolutionary socialist organisations.

This can only be achieved by working in broad-front anti-fascist organisations. In no way should any section of the revolutionary left separate itself from the increasing development of such united fronts, or present itself as the force opposing fascism in grand isolation from all the other forces who are actually engaged in this crucial struggle. All those who share the minimum political commitment to a 'no platform for fascists' position should work together.

This then is what is required, but what do we find? On demonstration after demonstration the SWP insists

on organising separately, even in areas where they have token representation on an anti-fascist committee. The SWP, it must be said are well organised and courageous on anti-fascist demonstrations, but this is not the point.

Throughout the mobilisation for the Hyde demonstration the SWP has separated itself from the activities of the Tameside Trades Council, even though it was pursuing policies which the whole of the revolutionary left including the SWP agreed with. The SWP has divorced itself from the actual vanguard and done its own thing before.

A demonstration was organised during the by-election campaign in Stetchford earlier this year by all the local Asian organisations, who argued that their priority must be to defend the Asian area against the NF. Only the SWP insisted upon an abortive foray against the Front.

In Hyde the SWP, without consulting the trades council anti-fascist committee, went ahead with booking

Hyde town hall for a rally two days before the Front was due to use the same building. It was this booking that allowed the Tories to get off the hook and enabled them to save face by banning all 'extremist' marches and bookings.

The moment the NF rally in Hyde was banned the SWP announced a 'victory rally' somewhere in Manchester on the 8th. The SWP called for support for its rally from the labour movement and other anti-fascists - again without consultation or consideration of the full range of tactics which might be necessary that day. So now, when the Tameside trades council has called for the picket to go ahead, we are faced with the spectacle of the SWP, the largest section of the revolutionary left, celebrating a 'victory' (the police ban on the NF) which previously they had correctly said would not stop the fascists.

The SWP seems to have an unfortunate knack of reducing everything it does to a recruiting cum publicity

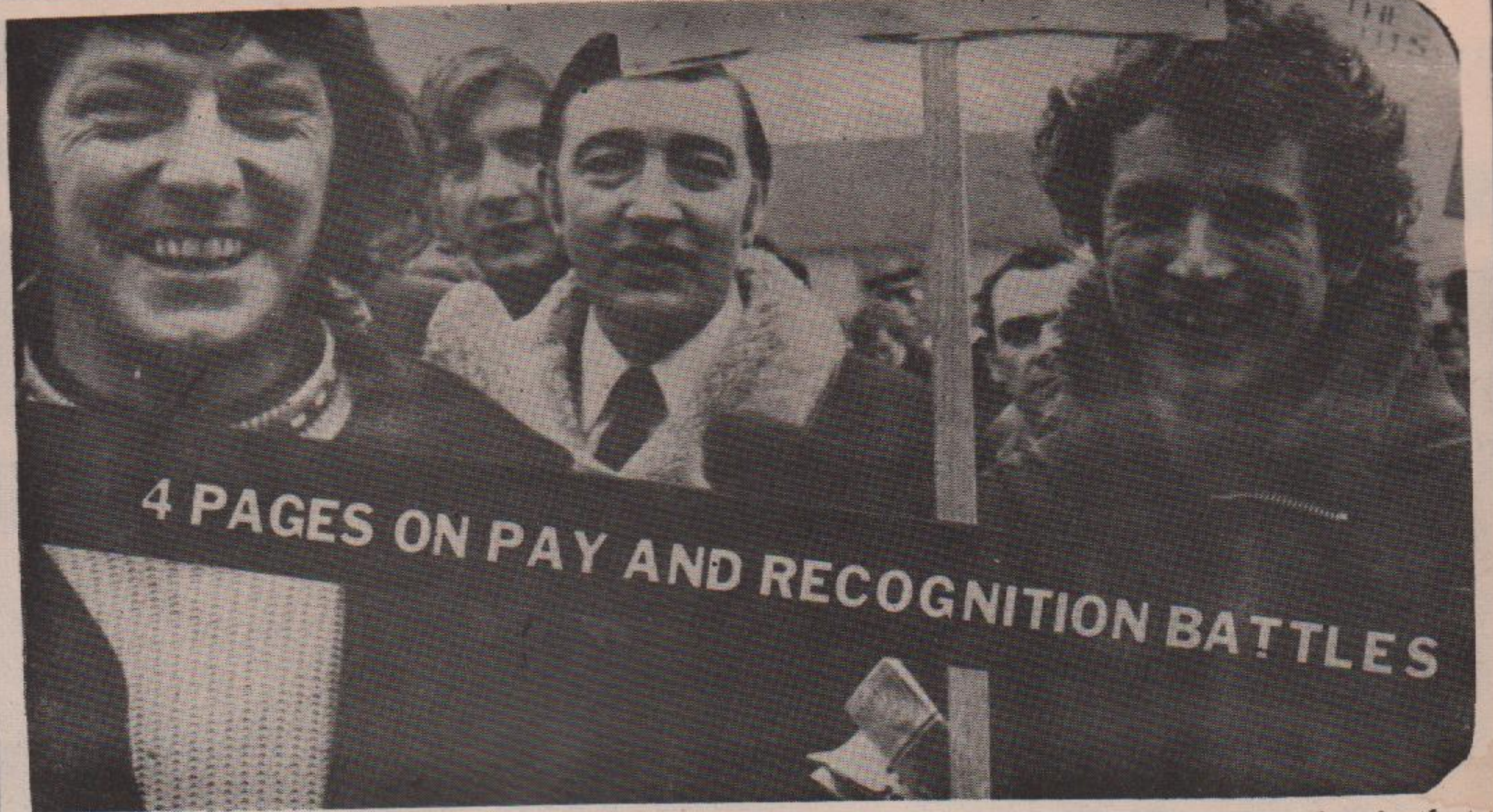
stunt. The net result of this is that the SWP is playing right into the hands of the media who are only too pleased to reduce the anti-fascist struggle to a left-right dogfight - and we might add with some success.

Therefore, despite the sincere and honest content of the SWP's anti-fascist activities, the end result of its tactics could be to inhibit whole sections of potential anti-fascists away from involvement in anti-fascist work.

It has now become, unfortunately, a very real part of the anti-fascist struggle to explain to people that the opponents of fascism are not just to be found in the ranks of the SWP - people who are prepared to identify with an anti-fascist committee are not necessarily always prepared to identify with any one revolutionary socialist organisation.

The task is to build as large a movement committed to denying the fascists the freedom to organise as is possible. This long-term need must come before any short-term party-building considerations.

WORKERS AGAINST THE PAY LIMITS



THE PROSPECTS for James Callaghan and his government have suddenly become brighter. The TUC in Blackpool voted to support the 12 month rule (limiting pay rises to one a year). The balance of payments is no longer in crisis nor is the pound.

Pickpocket

Not only do the trade unions support Labour. So it seems does much of the ruling class. No wonder! Who could expect a right-wing Government under Margaret Thatcher to persuade the TUC to do what it has done for Callaghan!

Yet there's no room for the working class to be satisfied with what's going on today. During the last year, despite a promise that inflation would be halved, prices rose twice as fast as wages. Now Dennis Healey makes the same promise - if wages are held down for the third year running, the level of inflation will be reduced to single figures.

Why do most people seem prepared to accept this?

One obvious reason is that their trade union leaders' commitment to the Labour Government leaves them with little option. There aren't many groups of workers prepared to throw down the gauntlet on wages policy after the setbacks of the last three years.

It's very clear why the TUC goes along with Labour through thick and thin.

What really worries the TUC is Thatcher's attitude to the unions. In the last three years, the marriage of unions and state has come closer to reality. Union leaders are increasingly involved in policy making at the highest level. Some of them see more of 10 Downing St and the TV Studios than many cabinet ministers. This is a power they don't want to lose.

The rank and file want their officials to come down to earth. They would prefer that the unions returned to their traditional job of winning better wages and conditions.

After all, the living standards of the working class have dropped most drastically at a time when the political influence of the Jones and Scanlons and Gormley's has been at its peak.

Alarms

But the union leaders aren't the only problem.

More and more people believe in the wage controls. They believe that the return to free collective bargaining will result in an alarming level of inflation. And, on the other hand, they believe that patience now

will be rewarded in a year or so's time when the North Sea oil revenues begin to flow.

In one way they could well be right. An essential part of Labour's pre-election strategy will be to put the cash back in our pockets. But the increase in spending power through tax cuts will in no way compensate for the fall in living standards we've taken since 1974. And even if Labour is re-elected they will clamp them down again.

In short, Labour's hopes for another term in office are based on more and more unfulfilled promises.

The problem for socialists is how to show that, as always, the only way to gain anything worthwhile is to fight for it.

Juggling

The new Ford engine plant at Bridgend in South Wales, a result of cosy discussion at No 10 between Callaghan and Henry Ford, is announced as a real gain on the jobs front. Certainly, hundreds of jobs will be created there. Less prominently featured is the news that this will mean reducing the workforce at other Ford plants in Britain. The other aspect of the juggling trick is that a large part of the cost of providing these jobs falls on us anyway - through

tax incentives and an endless catalogue of government grants. In the meantime, Terry Beckett, the Ford boss in Britain, leads the hard-line camp which would reduce wage increases to sub-zero if it got the opportunity.

It's important to see that even if things are picking up only slowly over wages, in other ways the working class is showing clearly that it will fight if it believes in the politics of the issue. All over the country, the struggle against hospital closure is mounting. Hounslow and EGA fight on; Mill Road Maternity has been saved. Most stirring of all is the growing mobilisation against the

National Front. That and only that forced the police to ban the Front's rally in Hyde. Also over the summer there was the massive response to the call for a mass picket by the Grunwicks Strike Committee.

The working class will fight. It will answer the call for united action. Our job is to argue that living standards can only begin to rise again when we win the wages battle.

In practice, that means being ready to organise support for those groups of workers who decide to challenge the wages policy. In the present climate, one victory could lead to a massive break through, for everyone.

Fighting Programme

- Large across the board, inflation-indexed rises in wages and state benefits.
- £50 minimum wage.
- Guaranteed income for everyone.
- Against wage cuts, 12 month rule and rises tied to productivity.
- End to unemployment.
- Equal pay and opportunities for women without strings.
- Democratically controlled trade unions and strong workplace organisation.

WITHOUT THE POWER TO ORGANISE, YOU STARVE



The strikers' demands are for full union recognition (AUEW) and reinstatement of convenor and strike leader Fred Hopper. The management, under the growing pressure of the spreading blacking, have offered union recognition on an individual level, no collective bargaining rights as a union and reinstatement of Fred Hopper, but not as convenor. Both offers have been turned down by the strikers.

Money is very tight for them. They get £9 a week strike pay, a ridiculously low sum, which has meant that many people who are still working inside won't come out for financial reasons. The pressure of making ends meet and paying the rent has driven a lot of strikers back to work. The original 180 have been whittled down to 74.

There are two important events coming up at Desoutters which need massive support. The first is a benefit disco at the White Horse pub, Willesden High Road on October 1st from 8 p.m. to 12 - entrance 50p.

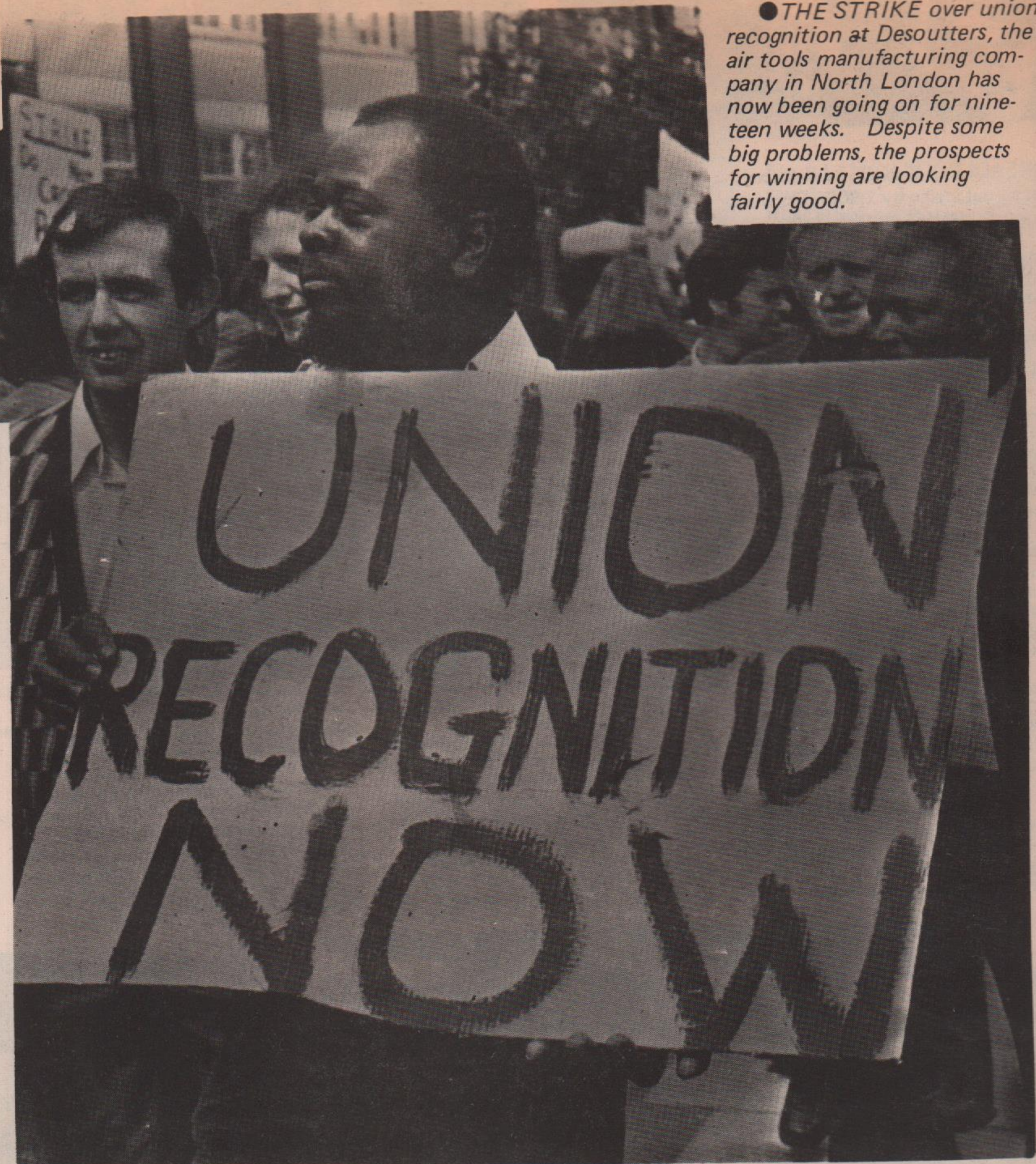
The second is a mass picket of the factory on Friday October 14th from 6.30 a.m. onwards. It is particularly important to show utmost solidarity with the strikers on this day, and to show the management the strength of support behind the strike. Tube to Colindale (Northern Line) or bus No. 266, 30 or 32 to Colindale, then ask for directions.

For further information and donations contact Barry Moroney, (Strike Committee, 27 Springfield Mt. Kingsbury NW9).

Another problem is that this strike has been over-shadowed by Grunwicks, which is close by and which is over similar issues. People have nationally ignored Desoutters.

The third problem is the union's lack of support. It was only after fourteen weeks on strike that a full-time union official appeared on the scene at all. They have constantly lobbied the high-ranking officials, and most importantly, have by-passed them, and remain almost totally independent of them.

That's the big difference with Grunwicks. With the help of the revolutionary left and sections of the Labour Party, they have established an alternative network of shop stewards and militants up and down the country. That's how they've organised the blacking.



● THE STRIKE over union recognition at Desoutters, the air tools manufacturing company in North London has now been going on for nineteen weeks. Despite some big problems, the prospects for winning are looking fairly good.

ONE OF the most important tests of the Government's present wages policy takes place at Ford and Vauxhall in early October. The Ford and Vauxhall workers are the first in line this year. The first test of whether the bosses can hold us down for yet another year.

Big Flame asked a Ford worker, to explain the background to the present wage claim - what's at stake and what's likely to happen.

There are a lot of myths about Ford workers. One is that we earn £100 a week. I don't know anybody who's earning that kind of money. I take home £42 for a 40 hour week on days and £51 on nights. But if we go on strike, the press and television will still be saying we're on £100 a week.

Over the past 3 years, our standard of living - that's of an assembly-line worker - has dropped 25.8%. That's official figures. And that means I can buy about £12 less EACH WEEK than I could 3 years ago.

In the past year Ford have had 3 price rises and made £121 million profit. While last year we only got a 4½% rise. NOTHING. That deal was a licence for Ford to print money. This year they want a licence for daylight robbery.

The union's put in a detailed 82 page claim. Basically it's for a 15% wage rise plus a cost-of-living safeguard - so that as prices go up our wages would go up. And they've asked for better sick pay, holiday pay and better pensions. Then they want a reduction in the working week to 37½ hours without loss of pay, which is very important. It would mean less work for us - and the chance of a wage for people who're on the dole, by reducing unemployment.

Ford's reply to claim : 'AN INSULT'

The wage slip shows the reality behind the lies of the adverts from the E. London Advertiser.

Finally, we want an end to being treated by Ford like casual labour. Time and again we're laid off without pay because of struggles in other Ford plants that might have nothing to do with us. It can mean a man and wife trying to live on Social Security for days on end.

A lot of us weren't satisfied with this claim. It isn't enough to make up for the 25% we've lost. And if you want to get 15%, then you start by asking for 25%, or 30%. Besides it shouldn't have been a percentage claim - which gives more money to the better paid and less to the worse paid. It should have been a claim for £20 across the board for everyone.

Except in one small factory, this claim wasn't even put to mass meetings of the blokes. That's because they would have rejected it. Some of the Convenors are influenced by the Communist Party, one or two are in the CP. And the CP didn't want a big claim that would have the real support of the blokes, because they didn't want to start a struggle that might bring down the Labour Government - like the miners did to the Tory Government. I can't see that much difference. They're both Tory Governments.

What surprised me was Ford's reply to all this. It was an insult. They offered 2 days extra holiday for anyone with more than 25 years service. They're still looking for him! And they "offered" rises of between 7½% for the lowest paid to 11% for the highest paid. That made

blokes really angry. It's obviously divide and rule, trying to buy off the higher paid workers with much bigger increases. Most of us on the lines would get 8% - that's £3.20 after tax and national insurance.

They offered nothing at all on all the other parts of the claim. We're already the lowest paid car workers in Britain and the lowest paid Ford Workers in Europe. Ford Germany pays line workers £106.80 for a 40 hours week on days - for building the same cars we do, many of them imported and sold in this country.

From the comments of the blokes, there's almost certain to be a strike, unless Ford drastically improves the offer. And I don't think they will, unless the Government is forced to back down over the Mackie's engineering factory in Ireland. Ford's expecting a strike. They're importing extra cars from Germany and Spain. And they're building ahead of schedule.

If we handle it right we can get a lot of support, because we're fighting for all the working-class this time - car workers, miners, housewives, nurses.

In my plant we have an Action Committee of blokes from the line which is trying to do this. Already some of our wives and girlfriends are enthusiastically involved - preparing a petition for other wives, and they've sent out a letter. We're trying to get the Union to think like this. I'm sure that if we get the support, we can win.



BREADLINE WAGES have forced an all-out strike by 2,200 glass workers at St. Helens on Merseyside.

Their bosses, the giant United Glass group, have ruthlessly kept the minimum industry pay rates as the maximum actually paid.

Now the St. Helens workers are demanding the right to negotiate directly with the company for extra pay above the industry's minimum rates.

The United Glass bosses, who have grown fat on the cheap labour, have refused any local pay talks to supplement the industry-wide pay rates, set nationally between the GMWU, USDAW, T&GWU and the glass container firms.

According to the strike committee the frustration over low pay has been building up for years, but when the management refused the right to negotiate there was an explosion of anger. The Ravenhead plant walked out immediately, followed after picketing by the other factories and depots within days.

The basic day rate for 40 hours is £38.10 - with many men and women taking home less than £30 after deductions. For a basic 52 hour shift the pay is £52.18 plus a bonus based on 1969 rates, and the average take home pay is often around £40. With a shift differential of 10p an hour, long hours of overtime is the only way of making a living wage.

ST HELENS: Glassworkers strike for living wage

The United Glass stage 2 pay award for process workers ended on September 9th. The new minimum rates for the industry are currently being negotiated at national level. Up to now the GMWU has refused to make the strike official.

The strike is not only a rebellion against low pay, witnessed by the huge labour turnover at the St. Helens factories with many workers staying for only a few weeks and then quitting because they can't make ends meet on the money.

But it's also about power. The GMWU's full time national officials don't want any negotiating rights to slip through their fingers or to lose control over wage claims, negotiations and settlements.

For the St. Helens glass workers on strike - deeply suspicious and cynical about the GMWU's role in the town

and industry - the right to negotiate for extra pay above and beyond the NJIC minimum rates means strength power and control for their local trade union organisation.

The strike committee is claiming 50p an hour increase on the basic rate and better pay for overtime and shift work. Management and the union negotiators have produced a productivity deal which the union is pressuring the workers to accept. The workers know that this will mean speed-ups and redundancies - the deal goes no way to meet their claim.

The only way for the rank and file to defeat the union's attempt to suffocate their struggle is to link up with other workers - workers at the Ravenhead Glass factory in St. Helens have now also come out over a productivity deal. The way forward is in spreading the strike.

LIVERPOOL:

'Don't let Tories in' call stops docks fight

BRITISH DOCKERS have not fought a major national struggle since the victorious freeing of the Pentonville Five in 1972.

And it shows. National co-ordination by shop-stewards is definitely rusty and unreliable. All the ports have accepted the paltry 5% pay increase, on an individual basis. This would mean less than £4 extra per man before tax.

"OUR LABOUR GOVERNMENT" ?

But the main problem that faces dockers is the one that faces all workers who desperately want to improve their living standards - what do we do about the Labour Government?

This problem came to the fore at the mass meeting of Liverpool dockers which accepted the employers meagre offer. They knew that all the other ports had already accepted without a fight. They were on their own and shop stewards chairman Dennis Kelly made sure they didn't forget it.

But he also knew how angry they were at watching their living standards fall. So he warned of the dangers of going it alone and maybe causing a major political crisis. It would probably bring down 'our Labour Government' and let the Tories in.

This problem worries many militants. There still lingers the idea that the Labour Party somehow represents our interests. Even when the Labour cabinet has been raising prices and unemployment while freezing wages and slashing social services in typical Tory style.

FRUSTRATION

In Liverpool many dockers showed their frustration at the mass meeting by heckling the platform. But most realised that a strike was not practical at this time and reluctantly accepted the offer. About 80% of the dockers there accepted the employers' offer once it had been established that attacks on manning levels would not be entertained.

The dockers will only make a decisive move once they can be sure that all the ports will act together and when they decide that we all have to fight to defend our class interests regardless of what government is in power.



WORKERS AGAINST

WHEN GEORGE Ward turned down the generous offer made to him by the Scarman inquiry, he robbed the trump card Roy Grantham and other APEX officials needed to ditch the strike.

Forced to abandon their attempts to woo Ward, APEX officials decided to concentrate on undercutting the strikers demands at the Blackpool Trades Union Congress. They proposed an emergency resolution (to which no amendments can be made) which called for increased support for the strike, something that has been pledged for the last 13 months, and in practical terms a blockade of all SUPPLIES to the company.

The essential SERVICES such as gas, electricity, water and post were never mentioned.

What has APEX been doing over the past year of the dispute if it is only now that they call on the TUC to black such supplies as paper, envelopes and chemicals etc, things that Ward has a plentiful stock of anyway?

One recent example of this back-sliding by APEX and the T & G on 20th September an oil tanker from a T & G closed shop crossed the picket lines to supply Grunwicks with its recently aquired generators. Why did

Ron Todd of T & G region 1 allow this to happen when his own members are involved in the strike? Not surprisingly, the APEX resolution has done nothing for the strikers' hopes as Kamlesh Gandhi, chairman of the strike committee put it: 'we are at a difficult stage now, we are waiting for a decision from the General Council of the TUC on Wednesday 28th September on the APEX resolution. We hope that they will officially call for a cutting off of all services to the company, but our expectations are almost nil. The strikers are becoming very disillusioned, especially with this demand to black only the supplies. We can't wait forever for the TUC. We've done our bit, it's now up to them to do theirs. If there is no positive action very soon, we will be calling for mass picketing. Certainly unless there is swift action, the Grunwick strikers face another winter on the picket-line.

MASS MOBILISATION

Supporters of the Grunwick strikers should be gearing up for a possible mass mobilisation soon.



Mass Trade Union Rally in support of Grunwick strikers, July

ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)

GRUNWICKS: Talk but no action from T.U. Leaders

Leyland Truck workers strike for

£15 with no strings

THE STRIKE of the 9,000 Leyland truck and bus workers is the first strike of workers whose claim is not covered by the 12 month rule - the last settlement was 12 months ago. The workers want a £15 across the board rise, a reduction in the number of grades from 9 to 4 and improvements in work conditions. Managements offer is £5 (7.5%) and further rises through a self-financing productivity deal.

Leyland management's response to the workers demands shows what we can expect managements up and down the country to do over the next 12 months - offer more money if at the same time it enables them to raise productivity by getting fewer workers to work harder.

We spoke to Dave Hewitt, Convenor at Leyland. The interview makes clear the problems facing the bus and truck division have very clearly been caused by insufficient investment over the last 20 years.

Obviously management's offer comes nowhere near to your claim, what are the most important sticking points?

The feeling from the rank and file is very clear - the main issue is money. Management's offer of a jiver doesn't even cover what's been taken away by inflation over the last year. The other major point is the productivity deal. We have made it clear that we will consider a productivity deal once we've got the £15 in our wage packets. But it must be a deal over which we have some control. The scheme management have offered us relates to effective work hours divided by the total hours worked (which includes indirect labour). Its effect would be to divide the direct workers from the indirect and smash the unity of the workforce that has been built up. In any case we would have no control over the implementation of the scheme. We would lose out over machine breakdowns that were nothing to do with us.



Leyland Truck Workers Mass Meeting

The strike has just got the unanimous support of a mass meeting, how do you think things will go from here?

We have got the support of the District Committee of the AUEW and that means they are likely to make the strike official for their members. There is a meeting with management and members of the Confed. on September 26 and it's quite possible that they come up with a compromise that is very far from what we want.

There isn't the tradition of militancy in the Truck and Bus plants that there is in the cars - why?

For a start there is a much higher proportion of skilled workers in Trucks than in cars. Here at Leyland the skilled men are well over 30%. The great majority have served their time here and will stay here till they are 65. Trucks is more like ship-building than cars. Also there is the fact that the men

and women that work here come from miles around - Preston, Chorley, Ellesmere Port, even Manchester. This means that the union branches hardly function. What there is here is a strong stewards organisation.

Management here is very paternalistic. Their method is a pat on the back. They are always saying 'remember when we served our time together, can you do a little bit extra as a favour?' They give the impression of caring which cons a lot of people.

The press is describing the strike as 'taking on the Government', how is that affecting the morale of the workers?

Let's face it, people are worried. They think that you cannot take on the government and win; they think that trying to break the government policy is futile. On the other hand, they are fed up with this 'jam tomorrow' promise; they've had two years of hardship and want a settlement that gives them some security. In fact, what people are saying is 'enough is enough'. Of course, we are playing down this 'taking on the government' the press is so keen to land us with.

In all its plants British Leyland is carrying out a participation scheme. What effect has this had in Trucks and Buses?

We recently left the participation scheme. We were just being used to rubber stamp management's decisions. We haven't got the tools, the preparation to question management's decisions - they present us with certain investment proposals and we're meant to assess them on the spot. It's much better for us to go back to being trade unionists which we can do well.

Of course, there is no point in standing still, but if we are going to get involved in a participation scheme it must be in a proper one. We want a say in who runs this company, in who the management is. Maybe what we need is a participation scheme that is a step on the way to workers' control - certainly not the one we've got now.

Trucks and Buses is the most profitable section of Leylands, and yet the waiting lists for buses are very long?

For many years now Leyland have just milked profits out of Trucks and Buses and invested nothing in return. The investment programme that is starting now should have been started in the early 60s. We are having to work with old machines and tools that are just not up to it. The workers see all these profits being made every year and now they want their share of them.

THE WAGE LIMITS



THE ISSUE BEHIND THE ELECTION OF SCANLON'S SUCCESSOR

SUPPORT IAN MORRIS IN AUEW ELECTIONS

THE TRADES Union Congress at Blackpool revealed some of the most serious splits in the trade union movement for years. There were divisions both between unions eg over the 12 month rule and whether to support a £50 minimum wage; and within unions, most noticeably the AUEW. Around the same time, several important strikes have been lost, abandoned by union leaders - for instance, the Lucas toolroom, and the 'Daily Express' engineers.

And yet, more and more workers have been ready to enter into struggles for a wide range of very positive demands: the 35 hour week (Leyland trucks); against night shift working (Rover); to save hospitals from closure (Hounslow); for big flat rate wage rises (Jaguar, Beechams, Wilsons Brewery); and for paid bank holidays (Bakers). Many of these workers have had little experience of union organisation - they had looked to the unions for support. But after Blackpool, they are unlikely to get much.

Two years of the Social Contract have opened up divisions between union members and their leaders on a scale unparalleled since the mid-60's.

It is in this situation that a crucially important election is taking place, for the President of the AUEW to replace Hugh Scanlon. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) have put forward Ian Morris, a British Airways steward, as a 'Rank and File' candidate.

These initiatives raise important questions for militants in the unions. Should we support Morris against the 'Broad left'? What is the usefulness of rank and file bodies of the kind pushed by the SWP?

CARRONS LAW

Many engineering workers were really angry about their union president's disregard for his delegation's and National committee's opinions in the TUC vote on the 12 month rule. It was this same delegation's views he had been so keen to uphold in the earlier vote on whether to expel the Transport and General from Congress. Yet this was Hughie Scanlon, the man described by the Engineering employers'

Federation on his election in 1967 as a 'militant left winger' and 'apostle of workers control'. How could it come about that the left winger Scanlon was now doing exactly the same as his notorious predecessor, William Carron?

It was to abolish 'Carron's Law' that the active members voted Scanlon in. Blackpool completed the full circle.

Unfortunately, the Broad Left, and its supporters like the 'Morning Star' have found it difficult to explain the turnaround. Their analysis of the unions has always stressed the main conflict as being between the right and left wings. As more and more of the left wingers shift rightwards (Scanlon, Birch, Jones, Daly etc) this analysis starts to wear a bit thin.

The Broad Left fails to emphasise the extent to which there are pressures on union leaders at all levels which force them into compromising the membership ... and towards more right-wing politics. These pressures arise, not just because union leaders are paid a lot compared with their members and are not always forced to contest regular elections, but mainly because of the FUNCTIONS of unions under capitalism. Trade unions exist to bargain over the price of labour-power. To argue about the terms of exploitation - not to challenge its basis. When we add to this the specially close relationship that has developed between the Labour Government and the TUC, it is hardly surprising that Scanlon, Jones and the rest behave in such a manner. Hugh Scanlon's action at Blackpool was deplorable. **BUT IT WAS A LOGICAL EXTENSION OF HIS ROLE AS CHIEF NEGOTIATOR OF THE SECOND BIGGEST UNION IN THE LAND.**

Unions are essential

This doesn't mean that unions are useless, or that all leaders will inevitably sell out and are a load of rubbish. Unions are essential for defending us in the day to day struggles at work. But we have to understand their limitations. We also have to realise that some unions are better than others, so are some leaders, and a lot of that depends on how the members actually use their unions. That's why we're in favour of more democratic unions, of having meetings in works time, of regular elections and accountability of officials. But these things will not turn unions into organisations fighting for socialism. So we always stress the need to strengthen the anti-capitalist and anti-reformist content of struggles,

as well as involving the maximum number of members in decision making.

Disagreements

The candidate of the Broad Left in the AUEW presidential elections is Bob Wright, an experienced and dedicated official.

But he misses out on something crucial. That is a commitment to mass action in the factories, irrespective of which Government is in power. Mass action, and the linking of struggles between factories and industries is important because it's the only way to win.

And this is why we support Ian Morris in this election. Big Flame has a lot of disagreements with the SWP, and we don't think Morris' programme goes far enough (for example we would have included the demand for threshold payments linked to the cost of living, and a demand for 40 hours pay, work or no work) We've also been critical of the manner in which the SWP have handled the campaign - their failure to engage in debate with the Broad Left, the use of what is basically a 'front' organisation, the Engineers Charter, to give the appearance of a broad base for the campaign, the failure to stand in district and divisional elections beforehand.

Nevertheless, we still think that Morris is the candidate which can best help a real fight back and a break with reformism. Morris stands for:

- *£15.00 across the board
- *refusing to recognise the 12 month rule
- *rejecting productivity deals and speed up

Such a debate will hopefully affect the likely second round of the ballot, and give the left a better chance of victory. Lastly, we want to make it clear that **WE REJECT THE ARGUMENT WHICH SAYS THAT A VOTE FOR MORRIS WILL SPLIT THE LEFT THUS ENABLING DUFFY TO WIN.** To win, Duffy will need over 50% of the vote on the first round. Thus what matters is the combined vote of his opponents.

Fight Racism

He is also in favour of confronting the fascists and fighting racism, and mobilising solidarity strikes to achieve equal pay for women.

We think a big vote for Morris will help to open up an important debate in the left inside the AUEW on the problems which have been so clearly revealed over the last few years - the shift to the right in

elections, the erosion of shop stewards power through measured day work, productivity deals, the growing menace of the multinationals.

RANK AND FILE ORGANISATION

Whilst we support Morris in this particular election, we are wary of the SWP's project to build a national rank and file movement. Firstly, because of the tendency for these movements to become little more than recruiting fronts for the party. Secondly, because they place too much emphasis on changing the structure of unions, and not enough on generalising the political potential of workplace struggles.

We are in favour of helping to build fighting rank and file bodies which are independent of party structures. And we are for putting forward ideas for action which go beyond the normal bounds of trade unionism, and start posing socialist alternatives. Unlike some on the left, we think the seeds of socialism are already present in the daily struggles of the working class in the factories and the communities. Our task is to build on that potential in order to strengthen the autonomy of the working class - and this needs an open and non-sectarian attitude on the part of left-wing groups and parties.



C.A. Parsons workers' demo in Newcastle. It is their unity at a shop-floor level that has forced the government to bring forward the ordering of the Drax B power station and save their jobs.

JOHN STURROCK REPORT

WILL WAGE CONTROLS CUT INFLATION?

THE GOVERNMENT is trying to persuade us to forego rises for another year. Then according to them, the prospect would be falling inflation and unemployment and tax cuts.

This picture has been strengthened by the rise in the Stock Market. Funny that the Stock Market reaches a new high when unemployment is a lot higher than at any time since the 1930's. In fact, the boost to share prices is an unreliable sign, especially, since the Stock Exchange index is still below the 1935 level, even allowing for inflation.

More to the point is what's happening to production and productivity - that's the real key to the amount of wealth being produced in

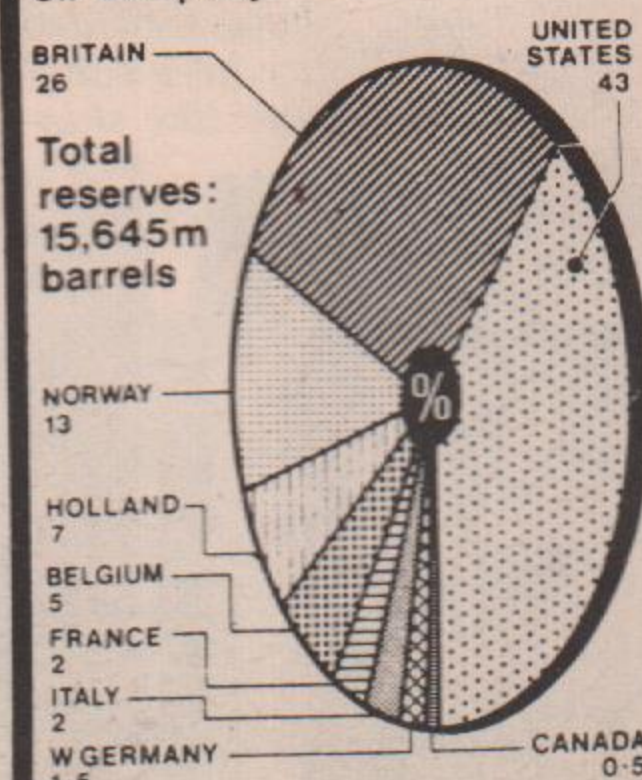
Production has hardly grown in the 1970's, although workers have become more productive - that is they are working harder, the result is that the economy needs fewer workers, and unemployment grows.

What makes it worse is that most new investment is in labour-saving plant. That's why the promise of North Sea oil royalties - the state should get £5 billion from the oil companies between 1976-80 - means so little. Besides, much of this will go to lame duck firms to shore up their profits, rather than to create more jobs.

In short, there is no good reason for believing that unemployment will come down very much. So what about prices?

Carved up

Ownership of proven North Sea oil reserves, by nationality of oil company



Royalty and participation arrangements mean that companies do not have complete control over this oil

the rise in the price of school meals, from 15p to 25p a day, will add "only 0.1%" to the cost of living. But for a family with 2 kids at school this 0.1% means £1 a week extra - scarcely 0.1%.

This kind of economic fakery is familiar to everyone by now. Every government announcement on prices has to be treated with the same trust as you would a pickpocket. We have been promised a fall in prices for three successive years now. But there's no way that the government can guarantee lower prices in return

* Firms still put up prices if either their profits are falling or other costs rise, or if they can get away with it. Foodcombes like Kwiksave and J Sainsbury are celebrating record profits this year. Even though the wages of their workers have risen least of all

* Price rises are passed on from imports. There isn't much the government can do when Brazilian firms decide to hoard coffee to force up the price on the world market.

* The government steadfastly refuses to control prices in the way that it controls wages.

The ultimate blackmail used by the government is to offer to ease up on public spending in return for trade union support for wage controls. The promise is that money will be pumped back into the economy - creating more jobs - if wages don't rise beyond the 10% limit.

Worst of all, it's a safe bet that the government will generate a mini-boom in the next year or so to try to make sure it is returned at the next General Election. And once Callaghan is back in Downing Street, the screws will be on again.

SPAIN:

THE STRUGGLE WORLDWIDE



Barbecue ends with Police Beatings

'Most of us voted for the Centre (the right-wing governing party), said one of the inhabitants of Navaluenga, near Avila in Spain. Their conservative allegiances, typical in this part of central Spain, hadn't spared the town's 1,500 people from one of the most bizarre cases of police brutality.

Fiesta

The highlight of the local fiesta was the bullfight. To the crowd's

dismay, one of the bulls turned out to be shy and a retiring type. Infuriated by the animal's docility, young men of the town carried it off. Still it didn't resist.

Police

Then, as is the custom in these cases, the bull was slaughtered, roasted and eaten. Meanwhile the bull's owner and breeder had sent for the Civil Guard.

Police behaviour is a thorny question in post-Franco Spain. The Social-

ist Party has just tried to have the minister responsible for the police sacked after one of their MPs was beaten up by riot police in San Sebastian. Jaime Blanco had gone over to prevent them beating up a youth on a demonstration when they turned their attentions to him.

He took a thrashing and a night in the cells - more or less the same treatment meted out to the young men who killed the bull.

After the general election last June, many expected that the gov-



King Juan Carlos inspects the civil guard's anti-riot armoury

ernment of Adolfo Suarez would exert a tighter control over the police. In fact, they continue to behave as a law unto themselves. 40 years of

As in Britain, they are adept at provoking violent incidents on demonstrations so as to justify police charges or press attacks on socialists and nationalists.

Control

fascism have left an indelible impression on them. The failure of the Socialists' censure motion on the police minister won't have helped things.

The root of the problem is that Spain has exactly the same police forces as it did under Franco. Only the revolutionaries demanded the abolition of the police as a condition for the return of democracy.

Independence

The latest incident of this type was the excuse for a frenzied police charge on the rear of a demonstration of over one million people in Barcelona recently. The march was to call for the restoration of Catalanian independence. As well as dozens of injuries, the police caused the death of one of the marchers. There has been uproar in Barcelona over this.

Uncontrollables

It's true that in recent months there have been fewer beatings, shootings and cases of torture by the police. But that's partly because much of this kind of activity is being carried out by the so-called 'uncontrollables'. These groups of anonymous fascists, specialising in intimidating supporters of the left, are in reality paid, controlled and partly staffed by the police.

Governor

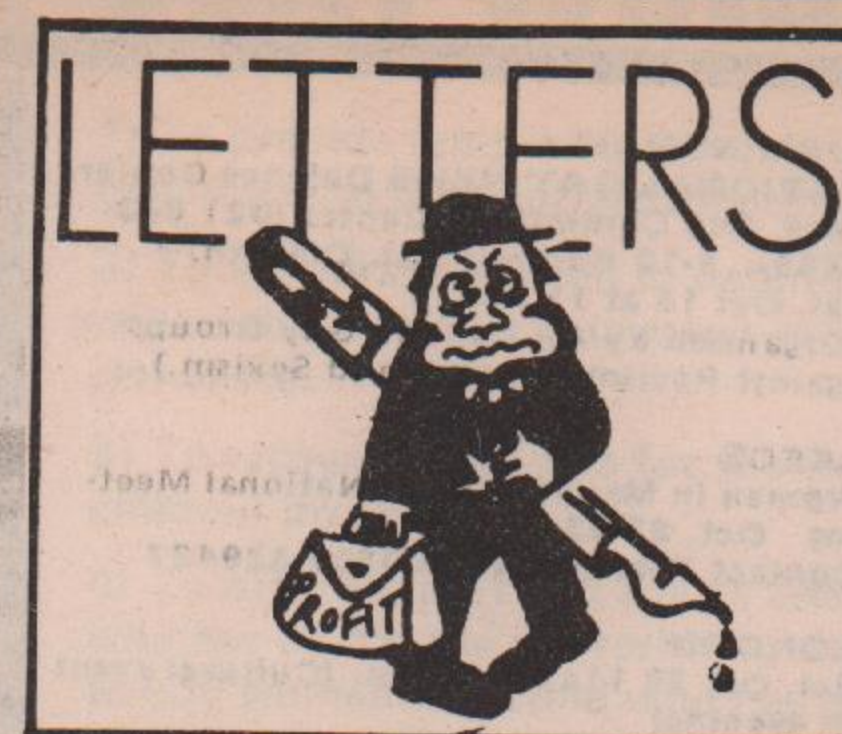
Now, the civil governor of Barcelona has suggested that the riot police may be removed from the city altogether. If they are, it will represent a considerable victory for the working class movement in Catalonia. The problem remains, though, of how to bring the 'uncontrollables' to order. Nothing less than the dismantling of the entire police force will have any effect.

BETTER ACTIVE TODAY THAN RADIOACTIVE TOMORROW. THE FIGHT AGAINST THE FAST BREEDER SITE AT MALVILLE, FRANCE

It's been a hot summer for anti-nuclear power demonstrators in Europe. The violence of the confrontations at Malville (France), where a demonstrator was killed, and Kalkar (West Germany) make it clear that a high level of police repression goes with the development of nuclear power stations, especially the fast breeder stations. Nuclear power stations, especially the fast breeder, raise fundamental questions of how energy is to be produced, where and under what conditions.

In this country, the state has been very clever to contain the anti-nuclear power movement in a series of conferences and inquiries - the one at Windscale is endless.

These inquiries are just window dressing which never go against the interests of the powerful nuclear lobby. The anti-nuclear movement will have to take up the fight as our brothers and sisters are doing all over the world. In the meantime, there is a lot of work to be done amongst the trade union movement where there seems to be a lot of support for the idea that nuclear power means jobs - in fact the opposite is true.



institutions has no principles, and have made socialism and nationalisation a dirty name in the eyes of the people and have sold out to the international speculator and money lending fraternity. What I would like to see is a mass organisation of the rank and file trade unionists attending all their branches to pass resolutions to stop all donations to Labour Party funds until they return to an all-out socialist programme of nationalisation without compensation. wishing all of you success in the future, I enclose £1 for your funds.

Dear Comrades,
I'm writing to tell you of something that happened at this factory in August. Two outside contractors came to install safety equipment.

The shop steward, Peter Niles, found that they were not members of a trade union. He, along with Kevin Valentine the secretary to the works committee ordered the management to take them off the job and out of the factory. This was done, but funnily enough the machine operators were allowed to carry on working the new machine without safety equipment.

Instead of using this situation to discuss the pay first, and failing a satisfactory settlement stopping the machine altogether, the operators worked the machine for three weeks without safety equipment and the pay has yet to be determined. This should give you some idea as to what idiots represent the shop floor and as to why the wages are piss poor.

The major problem facing the few militants is that they are either in different unions or separate branches which divide the shop floor in favour of the scabs of the trade union officials and in turn the management. I would also like to point out that I am not against the principles of trade unions or socialism but the simple facts are that the hierarchy of these

GEC militant, Trafford Park, Manchester.

Dear Editors,
I thought we were socialists not religious bigots!

I'm talking about the headline to the article on the Queen's visit to the New University of Ulster. You called it a "Prod seat of learning".

Believe it or not the word 'Prnd' is used as a term of sectarian abuse for 'Protestant'. No doubt one of the editorial committee thought that it made a handy, shortened version of 'Protestant', thereby making his or her life a bit easier.

As the paper has never used the word "Yid" instead of "Jewish", or "wop" instead of Italian, I can only conclude that at least some members of the editorial committee are ignorant of Big Flame's position on the Irish question. We oppose Loyalists, NOT because most of them are of the Protestant religion, but because they defend a system of discrimination against Catholics which enables British big business to exploit the divided Irish working class.

Yours in solidarity,
Ken Rogers, Liverpool BF.

10 Days That Shook The World

THE OCTOBER Revolution in Russia took place 60 years ago this month. It was an event that changed the course of history. In this article we look at how the revolution happened.

'Revolution is a sickness. Sooner or later the foreign powers must intervene here - as one would intervene to cure a sick child, and teach it how to walk. Of course, it would be more or less improper, but the nations must realise the danger of Bolshevism in their own countries - such contagious ideas as 'proletarian dictatorship' and 'world social revolution'... there is a chance that this intervention may not be necessary. Transportation is demoralised, the factories are closing down and the Germans are advancing. Starvation and defeat may bring the Russian people to their senses... Winter was always Russia's best friend. Perhaps now it will rid us of revolution.'

This was the situation in Russia immediately before the October Revolution, as described by a Russian industrialist known as the 'Russian Rockefeller'. The Provisional Government together with the officer corps that remained loyal began to empty Petrograd of soldiers, sending them to the front. The Petrograd Soviet representing the workers, peasants and soldiers had to act very fast. It set up a Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) to supervise protection of Petrograd which meant overriding orders of the general staff to send troops to the front. Representatives of all the Petrograd regiments passed the following resolution: 'The Petrograd garrison no longer recognises the Provisional Government. The Petrograd Soviet is our government. We will obey only the orders of the Petrograd Soviet, through the MRC.'

The local military units were ordered to wait for instructions from the Soldiers section of the Soviet.

Three days before the actual seizure of power on the 25th of October, the MRC got the support of the overwhelming majority of the soldiers and sailors of Petrograd; 'The

garrison, moreover, declares that with the revolutionary proletariat it assures the maintenance of revolutionary order in Petrograd. Every attempt at provocation on the part of the bourgeoisie will be met with merciless resistance.'

In the days that followed, it became clear that the MRC was in control of the city. The MRC ordered all printing plants not to publish any appeals or proclamations without its authority, it raided one of the largest arsenals of the town and seized great quantities of arms and ammunition that were to be sent to General Kaledin on the eastern front.

KEY DATES

10 Oct. Bolshevik Central Committee, with Lenin attending, decides to organise armed insurrection. (The vote is 10 to 2)

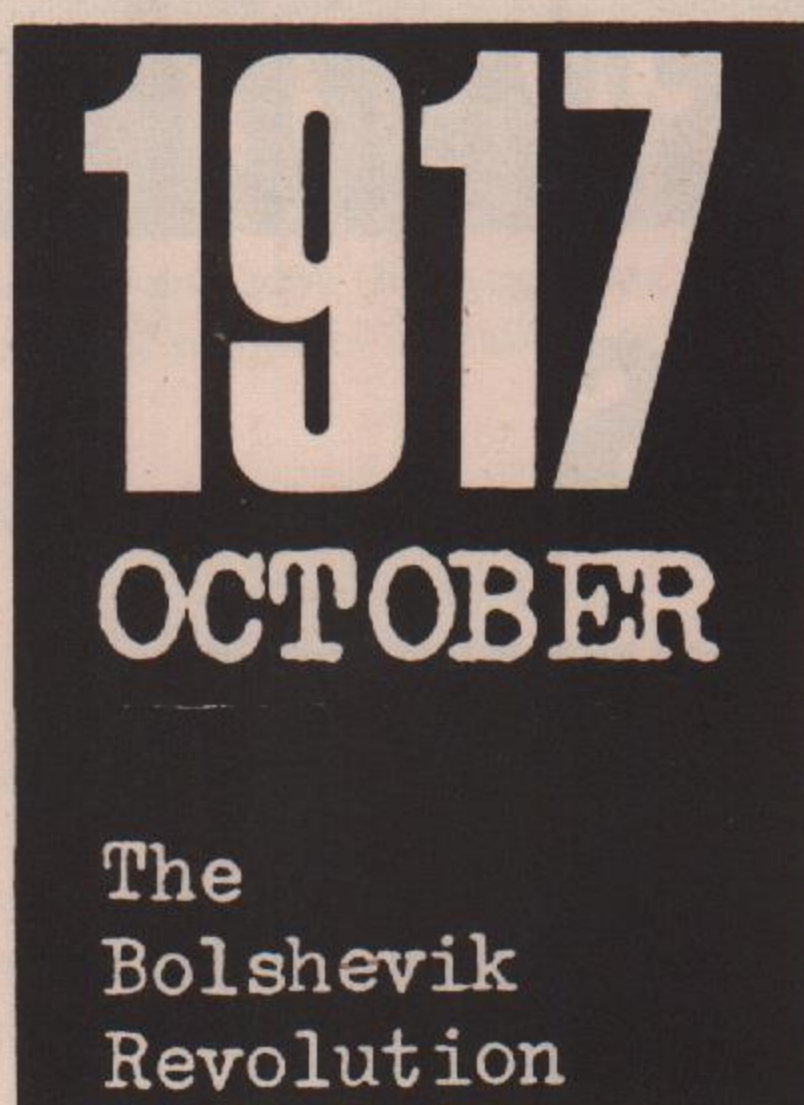
12 Oct. Petrograd Soviet establishes Military Revolutionary Committee.

24 Oct. Bolsheviks complete preparations for insurrection. Provisional Government militarises, closes down Bolshevik press. Lenin arrives at Smolny Institute, HQ of the Petrograd Soviet.

25 Oct. Second Congress of Soviets opens, with Bolshevik majority. Kerensky leaves Petrograd to organise resistance. Provisional Government overthrown in Petrograd.

26 Oct. Soviet Government issues decrees of peace and land.

By October 25th, the Soviet and MRC were in virtual control of the city - the 'storming' of the Winter Palace was in fact a pretty tame affair. Throughout the city few shots were fired and revolutionary forces were in control of the city as the Second Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers Deputies began late on the evening of October 25th. In Moscow the fighting was much greater and lasted a week. In other parts of the Soviet Union there was fighting until the end of the Civil War in 1921!



There is no doubt that there occurred in the months preceding the Russian revolution a rare historical experience - where the Bolshevik Party was to perfection able to synthesise and unify the revolutionary desires of the Russian masses. As Victor Serge put it:

'The rebel masses of Russia in 1917 rose to a clear consciousness of their necessary tasks, of their means and the objectives, through the organ of the Bolshevik Party. This is not a theory, it is a statement of facts. In this situation we can see, in

conscious level, and then carries it out. The party reveals to them what they have been thinking. It is the bond that unites them from one end of the country to the other. The party is their consciousness, their organisation.'

This is excellent as a general statement, but it is also important to see that during the summer of 1917 the Bolshevik Party was divided over all fundamental issues - including the key one of how to seize power. And it is just because the Party reflected these key contradictions that existed within the revolutionary classes, that it was able to function so perfectly as 'their consciousness, their organisation'.

In a letter written from Finland to the Party's Central Committee on the 13th of September, Lenin said:

'Having got a majority on the Worker and Soldier Soviets of the two capital cities, the Bolsheviks can and must seize power.'

This letter of Lenin's hit the Central Committee like a bombshell. It decided to burn the letter and make sure agitation in the factories and barracks was cut back. The opposition to Lenin's call for an insurrection was led by Kamenev and Zinoviev, two long-time leaders of the Party who argued that to call for an insurrection now was to put in jeopardy

the date it would occur - was still under discussion.

On October 16th the Central Committee met again and again there is violent disagreement about the mood of the masses. Some comrades said that the time was not ripe. Others, like Rakh'ia, argue that the Party is in danger of falling behind the masses.

'Comrade Rakh'ia shows that the masses are consciously preparing for an uprising. If the Petersburg proletariat had been armed, it would have been on the streets already, regardless of any Central Committee decisions. There is no sign of pessimism. There is no need to wait for a counter-revolutionary attack for it already exists. The masses are waiting for slogans and weapons. They will erupt into the streets because famine awaits them. Apparently, our rallying cry is already overdue for there is doubt whether we are going to live up to our exhortations. It is not our task to reconsider, but on the contrary, to reinforce.'

At this meeting a Military Revolutionary Centre of the Party was set up which became part of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. It fixed the date for the insurrection for the 25th. Articles by Kamenev and Zinoviev denying that the Party was planning an upris-



1917: Russian soldiers reading news of the revolution

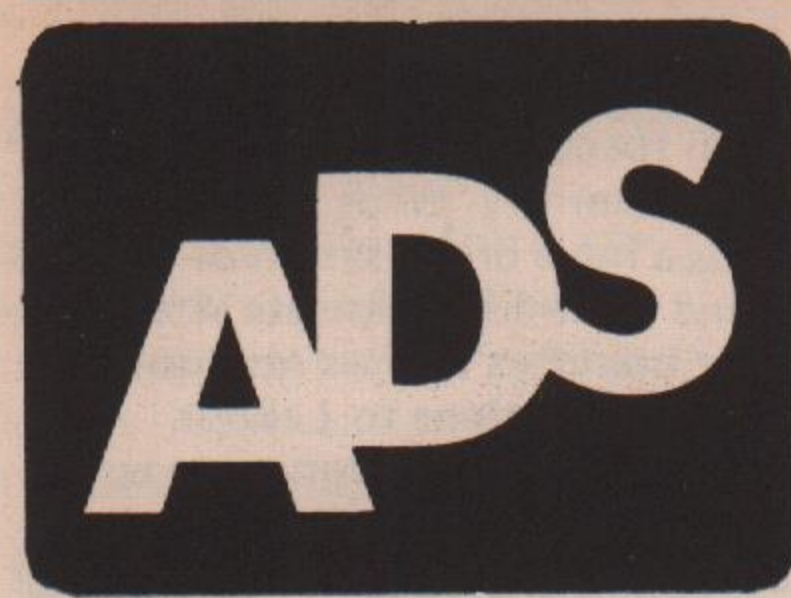
superb relief, the relations that obtain between the party, the working class and the toiling masses in general. It is what they actually want, however confusedly: the sailors at Kronstadt, the soldiers in Kazan, the workers of Petrograd, Moscow and everywhere, the peasants wrecking landlords' mansions; it is what they all want without having the power to express their hopes firmly, to match them against the economic and political realities... to select the most favourable moment for action... it is what they really want, without being able to constitute themselves into a force of the requisite training, will and myriad energy. What they want, then, the party expresses at a

not only the future of our party, but also of the Russian Revolution and the international revolution.'

A terocious debate took place at all levels of the party. At a meeting of the Central Committee on October 10th, it was decided to prepare for an insurrection. The minutes say: 'Recognising therefore that an armed rising is inevitable and that its time is come, the Central Committee suggests that all Party organisations be guided by this and approach the discussion and solution of all practical problems from this point of view.' Kamenev and Zinoviev were still in disagreement with the decision and made their disagreement publically known. The Party took a decision to lead an in-

ing continued to appear in the non-Bolshevik press. So great was the unrest and uncertainty inside the Party that Lenin was obliged on the 18th to circulate a letter to party members accusing Kamenev and Zinoviev of 'strike-breaking' and reaffirming the decision of the party for an insurrection. The letter ended: 'Nevertheless, the task will be accomplished, the workers will unite, the peasants revolt and the extreme impatience of the soldiers at the front will do their work! Let us close ranks more tightly - the proletariat must win!'

SERIES ENDS



MANCHESTER
Red Ladder in 'Would Jubilee've It!'
Saturday 15th October 8pm
The Squat, Devas St.
Manchester University (Oxford Rd.)
50p. Organised by ASTMS & MANUS

MANCHESTER
Conference of Socialist Economists.
Planning meeting to discuss year's work.
Monday 10th October 8pm.
Committee Room, Poly, Aytoun St.

MANCHESTER
Picket for Keith Hackett - arrested for handing our anti-recruitment leaflet.
Friday 30th September 9am.
Crown Square
(organised by the Manchester Anarchist Organisation 061 861 0080)

MANCHESTER BIG FLAME
Wednesdays at 7.45pm in BF office.
Resource Centre (6 Gore St.)
5th Oct; Current Situation in Ireland
(with slides)
26-Oct; Womens Revolutionary History

NAC CARAVAN IN NORTH WEST
Saturday 22nd October:
Manchester (Piccadilly) 11 am.
Ashton-u-Lyne (market) 1 pm
Bolton (precinct) 3pm

MANCHESTER NAC
'Bouncing Back with Benyon' a new play
by Pirate Jenny.
Wednesday 19th Oct
8 pm Manchester Poly Students Union
(Cavendish St.)
8pm Francis Shaw Social Club
Colbatt St, Clayton
(check venue with 061 223 4515)

MANCHESTER:
Socialist Teachers Alliance. A public
meeting to discuss democracy in
schools.
Wednesday 13th October, 8pm
Unioncorn Hotel, Church St.
(near British Home Stores)

BIRMINGHAM
NATIONAL GAY NEWS Defence Confer-
ence. Gay Community Centre (021 643-
7889). 9-10 Bordesley St. Digbeth.
Sat. Oct 15 at 11 a.m.
(Organised by All London Gay Groups
against Racism, Fascism and Sexism.)

LEEDS
Women in Manual Trades National Meet-
ing Oct. 22-23
Contact Tess McMahon 0532-629427

LONDON
Sat. Oct 29 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. (Cultural event
in evening)
Day Conference on Superpower Imperial-
ism.
Thames Polytechnic, London SE 18
(Woolwich Arsenal B.R. Station)

THE CARAVAN IS COMING

The National Abortion Campaign caravan
is on a national tour and will be in your
area soon.

First week of October - Wales and
South West.

Second week of October - London and
Home Counties.

Third and fourth week of October -
Midlands, ending in Birmingham for the
demonstration.

For more details and late bookings con-
tact NAC at 01 485-4303. Money is still
needed. Send it to NAC, 30 Camden Rd.
London NW1

BIG FLAME

There are Big Flame members in
Merseyside, Birmingham, Manches-
ter, Leeds, Sheffield, Colchester,
London, Cambridge, Norwich, Swan-
sea, Leicester, Brighton. For further
information contact: National Sec-
retary, 217 Wavertree Rd. Liverpool 7

We have received £26 this month.
Our funds are still very low. Each
month we send free copies to many
prisoners, and they are very well
received (see letter in last issue).
Why not send us a sub for one of
these prisoners. Rush contribu-
tions to Business Manager, c/o 217
Wavertree Road, Liverpool 7. Make
cheques payable to 'Big Flame News-
paper' - see back page for sub rates.

SOCIALIST UNITY • What

RAGHIB AHSAN'S Socialist Unity campaign in the Ladywood by-election had an unexpected result. What was at the start just a temporary electoral alliance — of the IMG, Big Flame and independent socialists — has ended by offering membership to local militants.

Ladywood has shown that a locally-based campaign with a good local candidate, aimed at strengthening local working class struggles, can work.

The Socialist Unity conference to be held in November has the task of launching the campaign nationally and sorting out what direction it should take.

Committees already exist in several cities, including Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield and Liverpool, but Socialist Unity has lacked so far both a structure and a programme. These are the issues that the conference will have to resolve. It must also decide SU's attitude to the Labour government and which constituencies to fight.

next?

During October there will be a national series of meetings to mobilise support for the conference. Make sure the local meetings are well publicised and attended in your area. Organise a group to attend the conference. Invite local working class and socialist organisations and militants to sponsor Socialist Unity.

The conference is open to all militants who support standing candidates in principle. It is not intended as a forum for debating the principle.

Further details, conference credentials and sponsorship forms from, Socialist Unity, c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper St. London N1.

National Conference

19 November from 11-5p.m. at University College London Garage, Gower St. London

to launch Socialist Unity



Ladywood: Ahsan's Socialist Unity campaign wins mass support

DAVE EVANS (IFL)



LONGSIGHT NEWS is a community newspaper run by groups and individuals in Longsight, Manchester. aims to provide local people with a forum for their views and concerns.

But now its future is at stake. A contributor to the paper is being sued for libel over an article printed three years ago. The article had described the treatment a child received at the hands of a local policeman, a PC

Kelly. The paper is refusing to retract a word of what they know to be the truth.

Longsight News sees this case as a warning of what can be expected as a result of the new police complaints procedure. Policemen can now bring a court action over the content of a complaint. PC Kelly's case is being backed and paid for by the Police Federation.

The newspaper is hoping that the publicity this case attracts will discourage the Federation from repeating their support in the future.

They have already been advised that they should drop the case. A judge called it trivial. But Kelly is pressing on. When the case comes for trial — probably next year — the Longsight News will need a lot of support.

Longsight News Defence Group, c/o 109 Oxford Rd., Manchester 1. Or phone 061-236-3112 (after 6pm, 061-224-6387).

"It's really a big step to take, to up and walk out, especially if you've got kids."

HAMMERSMITH WOMEN'S AID

Why women's aid?

- 1) To provide temporary refuge, on request, for women and their children who have suffered mental or physical harassment.
- 2) To encourage women to determine their own future and to help them achieve this, whether it involves returning home or starting a new life elsewhere.
- 3) To recognise and care for the emotional and educational needs of the children involved.
- 4) To offer support and advice and help to any women who asks for it, whether or not she is a resident, and also to offer support and aftercare to any woman and child who has left the refuge.
- 5) To educate and inform the public, the media, the police, the courts, social services and other authorities with respect to the battering of women, mindful of the fact that this is a result of the general position of women in our society.

the people of Lancaster in a loudly positive and colourful way, the fact that the council are a load of rubbish as far as battered women are concerned.

Action took place all over the country during the week, with radio programmes, plays, street theatre and market stalls. Trying to point out to people that not only do battered women exist, but they exist because of the way our society regards women. It's a short step from regarding 'your' woman as your personal property, not liking her to go out without you, thinking her only interest should be as a glorified Mrs Mop, questioning she's spent 'your' money — to clobbering her when she doesn't do exactly as she's told.

POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

The difference between the NAWF and do-gooding charities is that it questions the assumptions about women that society is based on. It is a political organisation in that it rejects, as does the women's liberation movement, the image of women as submissive, second class and owned by men. It believes that women together are strong and a force to be reckoned with.

At the recent Womens Aid conference in Sheffield on the political...

whether men should be involved with the refuges. It is an important debate. Many women feel that men should be excluded from Womens Aid. They feel that until women start to take control of their lives and their futures for themselves, they will never be truly independent. For most women the refuges are the only places where they can be together and see how it's possible to stand up by themselves.

There was discussion about the necessity for an independent income, and a campaign around that demand. Just having refuges around isn't going to stop battering — women must have the economic freedom to walk out of rotten lives and relationships. There was also talk about pressuring the government and local authorities to provide decent housing for women under the threat of battering. It's no good walking out if you've got nowhere to go.

Many women also wanted Womens Aid to publically align itself with the women's liberation movement and to accept its six demands. Hopefully all these things will be brought up at national conference.

POWER TO THE SISTERS MEANS POWER TO THE CLASS



London 1976: women's aid groups demonstrate

"IT'S REALLY a big step to take to up and walk out, especially if you've got kids. Once you come out and admit you're battered, you seem to attract all the sneering and callousness that's going around."

Women's Aid is a co-ordinating organisation for the 100 or more refuges for women who do take this step. Most women, when they leave home, don't have any money of their own. Applying to the Social Security

"Did you do something to deserve it?", or 'If it was that bad why didn't you leave him years ago?'

And then the money they get is barely enough to manage on. On top of this are comments from people in general about "Social Security scroungers" and battered women "deserving all they get".

It's not just money either — rehousing is difficult if you leave your husband or bloke. Womens Aid tries to give women the support they need to come again and provides

their kids. But some councils, like Lancaster and Salford, refuse to re-house women from Womens Aid refuges.

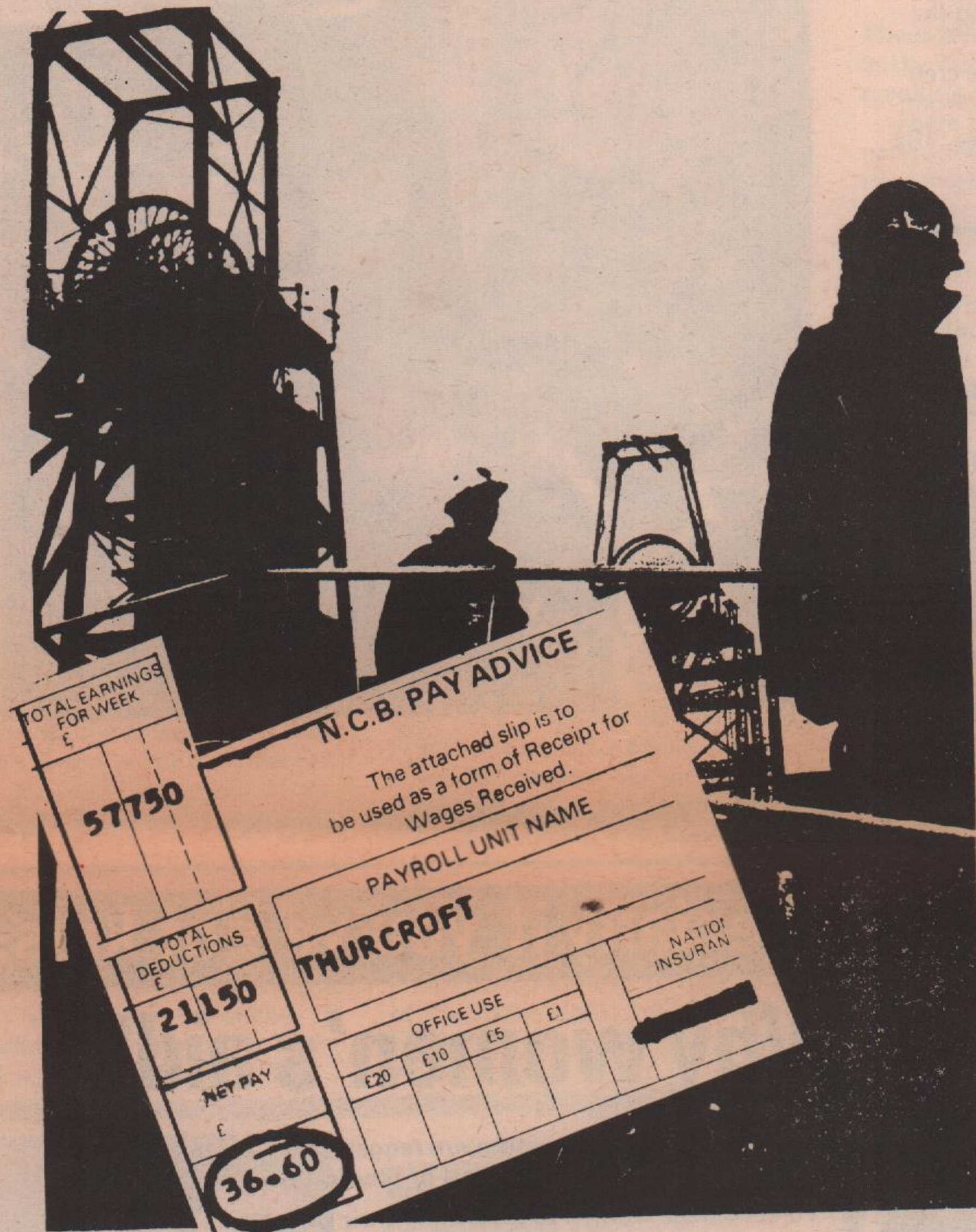
NATIONAL WEEK OF ACTION

That's why at the start of the national week of action the National Womens Aid Federation (NAAF) held a march through Lancaster town centre, ending up in a demonstration on the town hall steps. More than a 100 women and kids, complete with

ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)

BIG FLAME

Miners must fight **Deathly Threat** of Bonus Scheme



LET'S SMASH THE MYTH OF THE £100 A WEEK MINER. THIS IS THE TAKE HOME PAY OF A MINER FOR A NORMAL FIVE DAY WEEK

THREE MAJOR decisions were taken at the NUM conference two months ago:

- to fight for a top wage of £135
- to ignore the twelve month rule and submit the claim from November 77 instead of March 78.
- to reject any incentive/productivity scheme.

These decisions have been completely ignored by the majority of the national executive of the union.

Despite the clear rejection of pit by pit incentive schemes in the 1974 ballot, Gormley and friends have never taken a blind bit of notice and have never in fact stopped negotiating with the NCB over such a scheme.

Now they feel they can at last foist a productivity deal on the miners. After two years of wage restraint miners will be much more easily lured by the promise of a bit of extra money. At the moment it seems like a reasonable way out of the pay trap since everybody realises that it would

take a hard struggle to win a big basic wage increase without more backing from the TUC.

Three birds are being killed with one stone. Gormley openly admits that the incentive scheme has been giving public airing now to stave off a fight this winter for £135. The 'great fear' of the national press is unfounded - nothing is being done by the union to prepare for a fight and November is only a few weeks away. If the productivity deal is introduced it may well postpone any fight for a big basic wage increase indefinitely.

WHAT WILL A PRODUCTIVITY DEAL MEAN?

FOR THE NCB.

The Boards plans for the next 20 years involve the closing of about 150 pits and the loss of 150,000 jobs. They want a concentration on 100 or so 'super pits' with high output per man.

A productivity deal would make that process much easier - attaching miners to the pits where bonus money is easier to 'earn' and in so doing justifying the closure of less profitable pits. (See article on Rockingham)

Part and parcel of this grand scheme is the destruction of the NUM as a militant union. Since the introduction of a national day wage in 1966 miners have achieved unprecedented unity. Now that unity is threatened between areas, between pits and even between 'competing' face teams.

FOR THE MINERS

The national press presents the scheme in glowing terms - £20 bon-

us for faceworkers and a chance to work 'our' way out of the economic crisis.

In fact this fairy-tale £20 would only be available to a minority of miners working in good conditions. The NCB says that each face would be assessed as regards conditions, but there is no way they will allow a situation to arise where men receive big bonuses and very little coal is being cut.

If the pressure is on to cut more coal then the first thing that gets for gotten is safety. Corners get cut and the accident rate will soar. Outside contractors in mining, who work on a piecework system, have a 7,300% higher death rate.

Whatever the outcome of the productivity scheme one of the biggest battles is going to be within the union itself.

The Yorkshire area has committed itself to court action if the NEC violates union rules. The NEC has broken union rules (not for the first time) - so the ball is now in Arthur Scargill's court. He and the rest of the Yorkshire executive, with the backing of at least the S.Wales, and Kent areas, are unlikely to let Gormley ride rough-shod over conference decisions for much longer.

If there is a national ballot as Gormley suggests then the odds are at the moment that the miners would take the carrot that bites back. It's up to militants in the industry to try and win the majority away from that idea and press for a national overtime ban and strike for £135 for faceworkers.

NATIONAL COLLIER MEETING
Co-op Hall, Spring Gardens, Doncaster
Yorkshire. Sunday 15 October.
11.00 - 4.00 p.m.

NCB 'sabotage' in pit closures

THE SAGA of the threatened closure of Rockingham Colliery in Barnsley continues.

The NCB want to close the pit so they can man up more productive pits such as Houghton Main (seven miles away). To do this they have deliberately withdrawn plans for the development of 24 new faces and refuse to consider plans to make further development.

At a meeting on September 17

Scargill was put in the position of having to convince many of the men who worked there that the pit was worth saving. In the words of one committee member the current working faces are 'dog rough'. This doesn't mean that things could not be improved greatly if the NCB was not sabotaging the pit's future deliberately.

Scargill has referred to NCB sabotage on a number of occasions. Deliberate mis-management is the easiest

way to shut a pit you don't want. Dodworth Colliery is the latest pit in the Barnsley area that is in line for the chop. Millions of pounds worth of development has been withdrawn. One of the reasons they want to shut Dodworth is the militancy of the miners there.

Fighting the closure of Rockingham is an important part of the fight against the productivity deal and against the NCB's plans to rationalise the industry.

ANTI-ABORTION BILL FALLS BUT...

'THE BENYON Bill has fallen, but the fight for a woman's right to safe, legal and free abortion continues' In Birmingham, we are not likely to need such a reminder. For here not only are National Health Service abortions more difficult to obtain than anywhere else in the country, but over the years, the situation has worsened. Nine out of ten women in this city have to pay for their abortions. In 1975 out of 3065 abortions carried out on Birmingham residents only 309 were performed by the NHS.

Large numbers of women, very often guided by sympathetic GP's, no longer even bother to try for an abortion in the NHS hospitals. It simply isn't worth the delay and

moral upbraiding only to be turned down at the last moment.

Birmingham is the worst city in the country for NHS abortion provision. This is the reason why the National Abortion Campaign has called for the next national demonstration to be held there; it is here that the inadequacy of the current abortion law is most clear. Birmingham

DEMONSTRATE OCTOBER 29th IN BIRMINGHAM. 1.30 ASSEMBLE VICTORIA SQUARE.

Check with your local NAC group or Students Union for transport to Birmingham.

ingham is the most extreme example of how it is possible for anti-abortion doctors to manipulate the abortion law to suit their ideas, although it is by no means the only example.

So appalling is the NHS record here that the Area Health Authority has been forced to propose action to improve the situation by subsidising the private clinics! The Area Health Authority may be embarrassed but they are not prepared to move against the powerful hospital consultants. While the law places the ultimate power of decision in the hands of doctors, it will always be possible for doctors to over-ride with will of women.

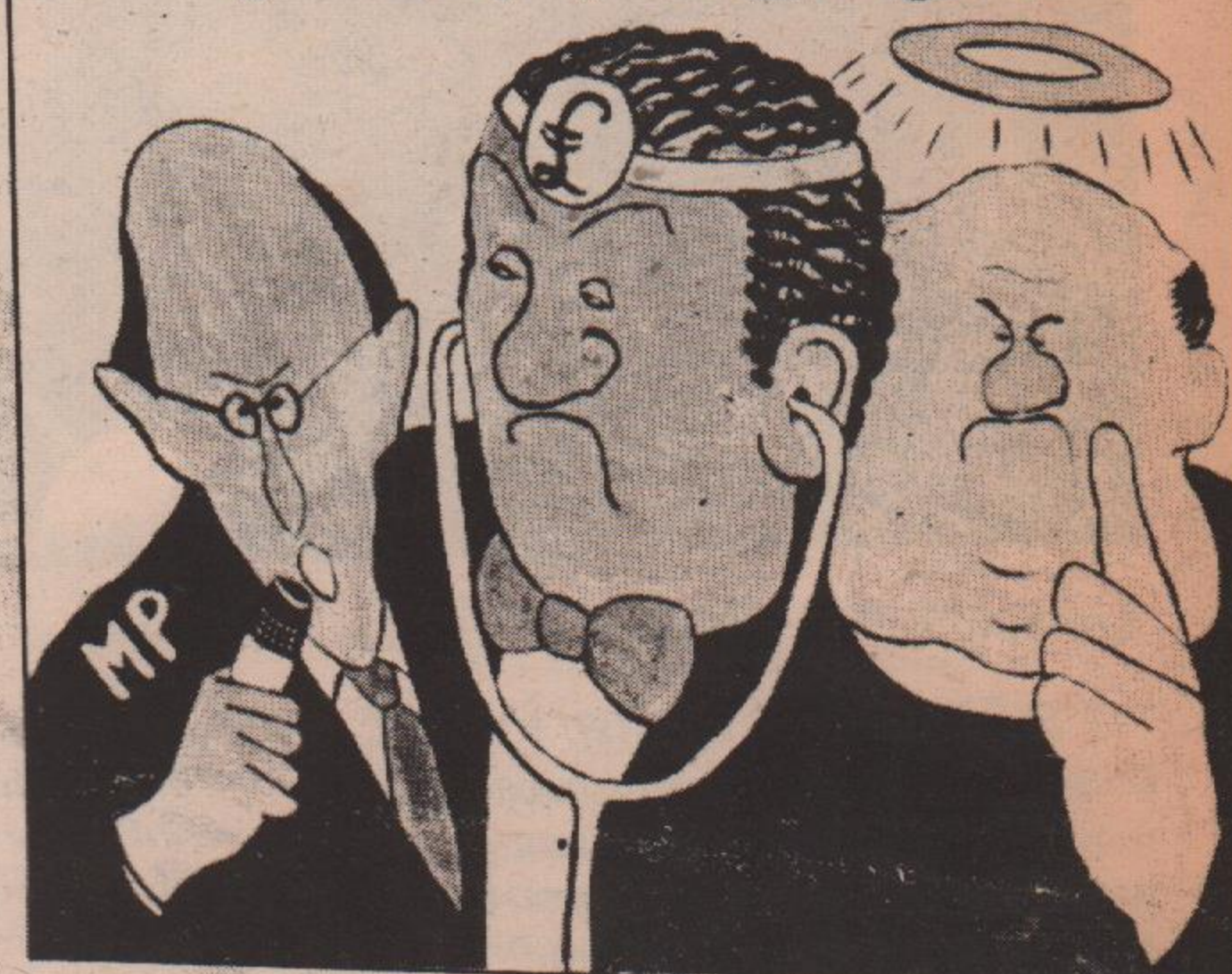
CUTBACKS

To provide the sort of facilities which would meet the true demand for abortion in the city, the service would have to be expanded. The Government's policy of dismantling the welfare state in order to maintain profits dictates that this is impossible.

The fate of women in Birmingham is inextricably tied to the fate of all women in this country. We are not the victims simply of peculiar local circumstances or the odd morality of one gynaecologist. The situation in Birmingham persists because it rests upon current law and Government policies, upon a health service which is controlled by small influential cliques and upon the oppression of women throughout society which denies us control over every area of our lives.

Written by Birmingham National

LOOK WHO'S CHOOSING FOR US!



BIG FLAME

I want to subscribe to the paper
I want more information about Big Flame

£2.25 per year Britain and Ireland
£1.10 for six months.
Abroad £3.00 and £1.50

NAME and ADDRESS