

BIG FLAME

No 61 April, 1978

Paper of the Revolutionary Socialist Organisation Big Flame

10p

If you don't want to be on the dole EMIGRATE!

That's the advice a group of Cambridge Economists give to the working people of Britain:
"Ten years from now, unemployment will be rising towards five million unless mass emigration occurs in the meantime."
 — source: annual *Economic Policy Review*, Dept. of Applied Economics, Cambridge.

OTHERWISE...

We were all horrified to read of Stephen Dayus' death. But none of the papers asked the important questions that his death raises.

FOUR QUESTIONS THAT MUST BE ASKED

- Why is there so much permanent unemployment?
- Why can't the profits from North Sea oil be used to create jobs?
- Why are people working more hours per week today than in 1976?

TAKE YOUR OWN LIFE

occurring in industries which are traditionally strike-free, like steel and textiles.
 And often management provokes a strike when it wants to close a factory — and then uses the strike as a reason to shut the factory down. Standards at Speke is an example of this technique.
 The government's only response to the crisis will be a budget that reduces the amount of income tax we pay, whilst raising the amount of tax we pay on VAT, fags, drink, and maybe petrol. The effect of this will be to switch tax pay-



ing from the rich and super-rich, who right now pay most of their taxes income tax, to the working class, who proportionately pay much more tax on food and consumer durables, like washing machines and televisions. Of course, the budget is the plea to middle class voters to vote Labour. The Labour Party has nothing to offer to its working class voters. It gambles on the union leaders' continuing ability to whip their members into line.

A NATION OF SHOPKEEPERS

At the Standard No. 2 plant, Speke, hundreds of workers, threatened with redundancy, are looking forward to getting out of the factory once and for all. Who wouldn't if they had the chance? Factory work is a long way from paradise.
 Besides, many workers, doubtful about the possibility of a successful fight against closure, would prefer to have the certainty of being on the dole, to hanging on and not knowing what the future will bring.
 In the pubs around the plant and across the dinner table there's a lot of talk about what they'll do with the redundancy payment which for some, mainly older workers, will amount to a few thousand. Everyone knows that the chances of another job are getting worse.
 Of course, if all the plans to set up corner shops come off, then Merseyside will be the best served part of Britain with papers and ciggies.
 But it isn't only car workers facing the economic squeeze these days. The most sorely pressed businesses are the tiny family firms and shops. Increasingly, the only way to keep your head above water is to work all the hours God sends. There may be more freedom in running a corner store, but it's only the freedom to work yourself to death.
 Capitalism doesn't go out of its way to provide easy solutions to redundant workers' problems. On the other hand, the best way of halting the dole queue sprawl is to stay and fight closures. Jobs lost will never return. And there's a limit to the number of tobacconists the nation can support.

UNEMPLOYMENT: THERE'S A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

What is our answer to the crisis of unemployment?
 There is no doubt that unemployment could be reduced very quickly with the following measures:

- A 35 hour week with no loss of pay.
- Retirement for men and women at 60 with no loss of pension rights.
- A programme of public works which would immediately reduce the unemployment in the building industry (see the article on page 2).
- A programme of socially useful products for all factories

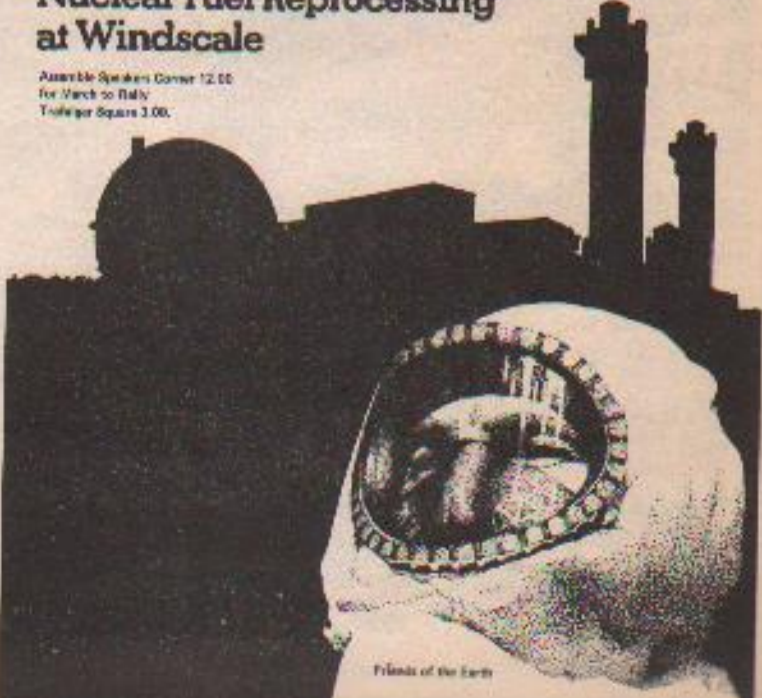
corporate plan of the Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee makes it clear that there are many essential products whose production cannot go ahead because manufacturers do not expect to make a profit on them.
 ■ Inflation-proofed pensions and social security payment, to make sure that it is not pensioners and those without a job who pay for inflation.
 ■ Apprentice schemes for every industry instead of the current Job Creation, Youth Opportunity, and Special Temporary Employment Project (STEP)

porary and do nothing to create permanent jobs.
 If these measures were carried out, unemployment would slowly be reduced. Without them, we can be prepared for many more acts of despair, of which Stephen Dayus's suicide is an extreme case. His death is one of the daily acts of aggression committed by the economic system we live under against working people. At the inquest, the coroner's verdict was death by suicide: in fact, it should be, 'MURDERED BY AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM THAT PUTS PROFIT

WINDSCALE DEMONSTRATION

SATURDAY 29 APRIL
 TRAFALGAR SQUARE 3.00
 To Oppose the Proposed Expansion of Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing at Windscale

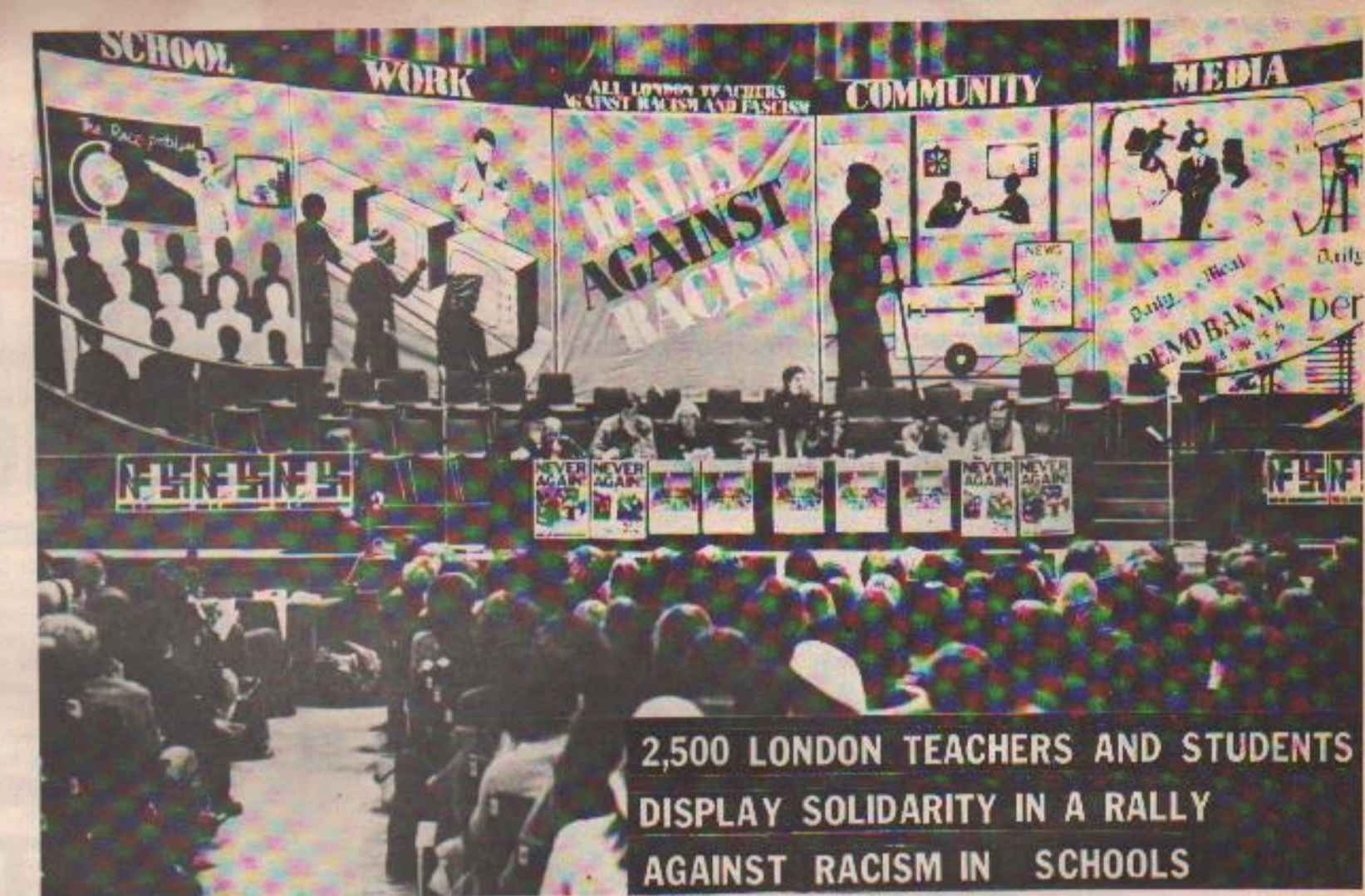
Assembly Speakers Corner 12.00
 For March to Trafalgar Square 3.00.



THE MASS media chose to ignore a unique demonstration when on March 16th 2,500 London teachers and school students filled the Central Hall Westminster in an unprecedented display of solidarity in a Rally Against Racism in Schools.

The rather pathetic picket of the hall by a dozen Young National Front members was not enough to provoke any response and the TV cameras retired with their appetite for sensation and gore unassuaged. At the rally, A. Sivanandan, Director of the Institute of Race Relations gave an account of the history of racism and told teachers that they had to tackle their own racism and choose whether to allow our schools to be the kindergarten of a fascist Britain. Arthur Latham, MP for Paddington, told the rally that anti-racist, anti-fascist teaching was a legitimate educational activity and Farrukh Dhondy spoke of the conflict between his experiences as a black person and a classroom teacher, and of the developing power of black youth. Michael Hamilton a black student from a North London comprehensive school spoke of the need for teachers and school students to unite in opposing racism and Linton Kwesi Johnson, an ex-pupil of a Brixton comprehensive gripped the audience with the power and rhythm of his poetry. Nada Woolley a primary school headmistress told of the practical step she had taken when she and her pupils had toured the locality of the school removing racist slogans.

ALTARF announced a Conference as a follow-up to the Rally to be held on May 20th to exchange ideas and information on anti-racist work in education and to decide the form and scope of the



2,500 LONDON TEACHERS AND STUDENTS DISPLAY SOLIDARITY IN A RALLY AGAINST RACISM IN SCHOOLS

organisation. The Conference will be making decisions on a London basis as it was felt there was not yet enough experience and practice to justify a national organisation or conference. However teachers from other towns who feel they could contribute or gain something from the conference would be welcome to attend.

Meanwhile a petition is being

organised aimed at stopping the NF from using schools for election meetings. ALTARF is selling the unique Rally poster by Dan Jones to raise money (£1 and postage) and a broadsheet giving details of anti-racist action in education is also available.

Further details from ALTARF c/o 12a Little Newport Street, London W.C.2.

Construction Industry Claim Blocked

EMPLOYERS HAVE told the trade unions in the annual negotiations for wages and conditions in the construction industry that they are not prepared to discuss a reduction in the working week.

With official unemployment figures in the building industry at the level of 208,600 and a realistic figure, allowing for self-employed and technical staff closer to 300,000 rising to a projected figure of 400,000, by the end of 1978, the joint adherent unions in the negotiations, TGWU, UCATT, FTAT and GMWU are pressing strongly for a 35 hour week. This, they argue, would cut the intolerable level of unemployment and increase leisure time and efficiency, and help reduce the accident level in the industry.

The employers say that it would increase unit costs by increasing overtime worked and not reduce the level of actual working hours. The figures for cuts in working hours over the last 40 years (as the working week slowly dropped from 48-40 hours per week) do not support the employers claim however, and in fact show an overall drop in hours worked. But the building employers say that a 35 hour week would not be possible under the pay guidelines when the unions are also demanding a substantial pay rise.

PAY
The employers have also knocked

back a proposed 35% increase in guaranteed minimum earnings which would have brought the minimum earnings of a craftsman up from the present £54.60/£56 (inclusive of supplements) or a labourer from present £47.70/£49.70 inclusive to approx £81 for a craftsman and £69 for a labourer. This figure would, the unions argue, have only then caught up the 45% increase in the retail price index since the last time that wages were negotiated in June 1975.

But the employers have so far offered only a 9.8% increase, maintaining that if they were to breach the 10% then the government would implement its plans for sanctions in tendering for government contracts.

DEADLOCKED
So far negotiations for settlement in June are deadlocked and unless militant action is taken and the membership of the joint unions decide to reject such a shabby offer, the negotiators might act the way they did with the Local Authority Building Trade negotiations last November when they caved in for 10% without a whimper and without proper consultation of the membership. It is up to militants in the building trade to organise meetings on the job and pressure the unions to organise regionally co-ordinated meetings, so that the operatives let the negotiators know that we are not prepared to accept rising unemployment and falling wages.

Canon Murphy's Stunt Shows British press bias in Northern Ireland

A bigoted Catholic priest, Canon Padraig Murphy of Belfast, has been using young children from his parish to put over his views in the British press. The photo, and the 'poor wee darlings' article come from an edition of the widely-read Scottish *Sunday Mail*.

In the article Canon Murphy insists that very few people in his parish support the IRA or want British troops out of their country. He had himself photographed with local children to give the impression that he is popular in the area.

TRUTH

So angry were the children's mothers that all of them (bar two had them selves photographed with the children in the Belfast Republican paper, *Republican News*, in order to show that they have no time for Murphy or his pro-British views. Needless to say, the *Sunday Mail* never printed their reply.

The one-sided views of the *Sunday Mail* are typical of the British press coverage of Ireland. As far as they are concerned, the problem is caused by a small group of unpopular terrorists (the IRA) waging war on the harmless and well-intentioned British Army.

ATROCITY

Any horrible incident - like a bombing or murder - is instantly blamed on the IRA, even if the mass evidence points to other people. One such case, the murder of 15 people in the 1971 bombing of MacGurk's Bar, a Catholic pub - was recently exposed in the Belfast *Workers' Research Unit Bulletin*, No. 3. They reveal that a member of an extreme anti-Catholic terror group - the perfectly legal Ulster Defence Association - has recently been jailed for bombing MacGurk's. The UDA hates Catholics and has murdered lit-

erally hundreds over the past few years. The MacGurk's bombing was one of their early operations. An extreme anti-Catholic and pro-British organisation claimed the bombing by phone soon after the explosion.

ARMY - PRESS COLLABORATION

Yet virtually every British newspaper blamed the IRA for the bombing! They wrote what the British Army Press Office told them to write. They claimed that IRA members were carrying the bomb while drinking in the pub when it went off accidentally. As if your average bomber pops into the local for a quick one before the operation!

Yet the *Daily Express* said, 'IRA extremists planned it,' the *Sun* asked, 'was it murder by mistake?' The *Telegraph* stated trustingly, 'Security forces discounted reports that a militant Protestant group were responsible, while the Tories called it 'a double bluff by Republican extremists.'

All deliberately gave the impression that the IRA was responsible, playing their part in the British Army's propaganda effort.

Nothing has changed since the Press treatment of the MacGurk's Bar massacre, seven years ago. We still get a one-sided view of the war. Most paper articles, from short reports of shooting incidents, to long 'scoops' about how terrible the Irish are, and how wonderfully well-behaved the troops are, are actually written by the Army Press Office, based in Lisburn, and then churned out by biased reporters as the god's honest truth.

No wonder most people can't understand why the Irish continue to demand troop withdrawal. No wonder most people 'turn off' at the mention of the word 'Ireland'.

There are many countries where reporters are censored by the government. In a way, this country is much worse. The journalists are hardly censored at all. They just write what the Army tells them, straight away!

Workers' Research Unit Bulletin, No. 3, costs 70p from: c/o 52 Broadway.



All the mothers (except two) and their children pose for a 'Republican News'

CLAIMANTS ORGANISE TO FIGHT

On Wednesday, March 15th, a *Claimants Union* was launched in Nottingham. The 25 people at the meeting had a good discussion with almost everyone having their say. Those taking part were mainly claiming Social Security or Unemployment Benefit with a handful of interested trade unionists, people interested from a community centre, a community worker and three sympathetic members of the DHSS staff trade union (CPSA).

After talking about the usually bad experiences as claimants - waiting for hours, no facilities for children in the offices, money being cut off for no obvious reason, six weeks suspension for leaving a lousy job, separated mothers having their personal lives pried into and much more - it was agreed that 'you don't get anything unless you organise and fight for it'. Nottingham Claimants Union hopes to get a lot of support and be capable of winning claims and wider issues.

claimants to support each other in the offices, at the dole and on home visits. The other important way of doing this is by seeking the support of other working class people, through trade unions, tenants associations, women's and immigrant groups, and the like. Already the Claimants Union has been invited to speak at a tenants meeting in May.

With rising unemployment a Claimants Union must prevent some claimants getting shunted into lousy jobs and all claimants being called Scroungers. *Everyone should have good conditions and an adequate income*, whether working, bringing up children, living as a pensioner, or on the dole.

It was agreed to look for common ground between sympathetic DHSS staff and claimants.

The next meeting is April 18th, St. Mary's House, Raleigh Street, at 1.30. Bring the kids. A nursery is available. We will discuss Fam-

WHEN THE SCHOOL KIDS WERE SEEN AND HEARD

editorial

Last month's teacher's boycott of voluntary duties had a completely unexpected outcome: the mobilisation of thousands of school students throughout the country, some for and some against the teachers' action. What began as a dispute over pay quickly turned into a national controversy over students' rights, teaching methods, and discipline in schools. A report from our own correspondent in Birmingham.

Police Called as Pupils March Pupil Power Erupts Teachers Cane Young Rowdies Pupils in Lie-Down Stops Traffic Anarchy Hits Schools

It took 10,000 students in Birmingham — plus many more elsewhere in Britain — to produce headlines like these last month, when the teachers banned voluntary duties in support of their pay claim.

Someone once said, 'When people can't breathe they break windows.' The mass 'pupil power' protests the teachers' action sparked off often looked like a long pent-up reaction to suffocation. For many school students, the teachers' actions simply highlighted just how little control they have over their own lives inside the classroom — especially when teachers arrogantly or disdainfully took their action without any explanation to the school students.

Where the teachers had the wit to explain why they were banning voluntary duties, then they often won the support of the students.

As they did at Golden Hillock School, Small Heath Birmingham.

'TEACHERS' PAY, 10 PERCENT'

These 5th and 6th formers marched to the City's Education Department. 'Pupils arrived to deliver a 1000-strong petition in support of the teachers' pay claim. Children chanted, 'Teachers' Pay, Ten Per Cent'. (Evening Mail, 17 March).

Over the first four days, an estimated 40 schools in the Birmingham region were affected by some form of protest, although it wasn't always pro-teacher. To the fury of the authorities and the press, it was obvious that whatever the merits of the issues involved, most of the youth were reveling in their new-found strength and solidarity.

FLYING PICKETS

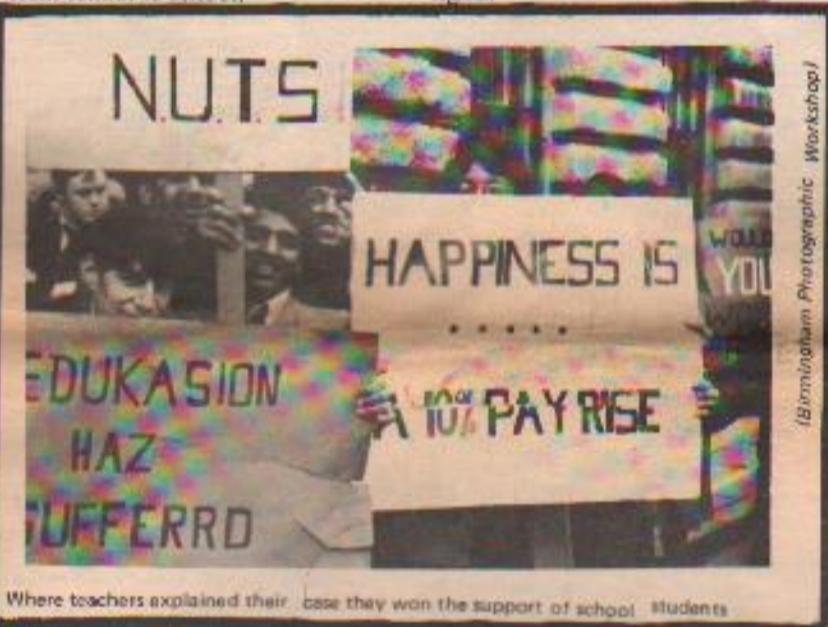
School students were occupying school buildings and in many areas there were reports of 'pied piper style marches' (flying pickets) going from school to school in what proved to be often successful attempts to swell their ranks and take to the streets.

Under the heading, 'Pupils lie down in traffic', the Birmingham Post (15 March) reported on one incident in which over 250 youths from several Northfield schools, marching on a nearby school, blocked one of Birmingham's busiest main roads by lying in the middle of the road. Meanwhile, there were reports coming from the other side of the city in Tile Cross. The Post reported, 'About 500 children invaded the grounds of Archbishop Williams school...and were chased out by teachers who barred the gates. Earlier in the day about 200 of the school's own pupils had staged a walkout. At Turves Green school Northfield, the Headmaster acting on a tipoff, sent children home 15 minutes early to their lunch when he heard that one of the marches was heading his way'. The headmaster said, 'this was done to avoid a confrontation, when they arrived the cupboard was bare'.

Similar scenes were being repeated throughout the West Midlands. The Sandwell Evening Mail reported that 'police received dozens of emergency calls as crowds of chanting youngsters marched...pied piper style from school to school'.

ers) out to 'Abolish the innocence of our children'. The media were busy painting a picture of school students as cabbages unable to think and act for themselves. Left-wing leafletters giving out leaflets in support of the NUSS (National Union of School Students) on the other hand, were portrayed in cartoons as the political equivalent of a 'dirty old man' discreetly handing out porno postcards at the school gates. One epic Birmingham Post cartoon with the caption 'Suffer little children' showed a 'lefty' leafletting a school. Close scrutiny of the cartoon showed one school student apparently reading a 'your rights' leaflet the wrong way up.

As the week began to draw to a close, the dispute, which had started as a battle by teachers for more wages, had taken on a completely new dimension. The NUT, in its official statements, was quick to place itself firmly on the side of law and order in the schools. Its position, completely contradicted in practice by the teachers' industrial action, was to 'keep politics out of the schools'. Another way of saying that school students have no political rights.



Where teachers explained their case they won the support of school students

The students' actions continued throughout the weekend reports began to appear in the press of similar actions taking place in places as far and wide as Belfast, Huddersfield, Bournemouth, Nottingham, and Stoke on Trent. There were reports of youths going on the rampage in city stores and the Birmingham Post (March 16th) said, 'Nearly 500 surrounded the ATV studios and stones were thrown at the doors'. The demands varied widely, including, 'More Food Less Work', 'No school meals, No school', 'The pupils united will never be defeated', 'We hate teachers', and 'give us school dinners'.

EVIL FORCES

By the third day the local and national press were playing up the existence of 'evil' forces (left wing-

On the final two days of the week activities the authorities took drastic action in an attempt to defuse the situation and return to 'normal education'. This took several forms. In some schools the authorities had lost control, and all that could be done was to send the students home for a two day 'cooling off period' and a long weekend. The NUT and teaching authorities in Birmingham agreed to open up classrooms for use by pupils in the dinner hour. There were even attempts to get senior pupils and parents to take on dinner duties. At Abbey Highschool, Redditch, parents were being offered £1 an hour as supervisors. Last and by no means least came the big stick:

'The authorities have reacted with a vicious backlash of arrests, canings and suspensions. Even the police, so

It is not surprising that the Labour Government refused to accept the proposals of the House of Commons Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration. Given their strategy of contesting the elections as the party that is principled on race, they could hardly accept a report which (as the Financial Times put it) is 'written in the language of double think and is a straight endorsement of the views of Enoch Powell.' Labour will only implement the proposals if they win the next general elections — by then they will be free to forget their principles and carry out changes in immigration policy that are a logical successor to other racist legislation.

Many commentators have already mentioned that the proposals will:

- introduce pass laws and identity cards,
- destroy the family life of immigrants by not allowing kids over 12 and husbands the right of entry.

As the Institute of Race Relations point out, 'the message to immigrants is if you want family life, go home and have it.'

It is reasonable to expect of a Parliamentary Committee that it makes sure that the research on which it bases its recommendations is measurably accurate. This the Select Committee on Immigration did not do. Its figures are from the Office of Population Census Studies which classify as immigrants: foreign, businessmen or doctors and even working holiday makers who stay longer than one year in this country. This makes the committee's projections totally unreliable.

Though, as far as we are concerned, the report might just as well have invented its figures since restricting immigration will do nothing to

improve race relations. On the contrary, immigration controls and racial conflict are two sides of the same coin.

We cannot expect the Labour Movement to move heaven and earth against the implementation of these racist proposals. What we can do is appeal to trade unionist's self-interest by point out that identity cards cannot be instituted for immigrants alone. Any government which wants to introduce ID cards will appeal to principles of non-discrimination to make sure that everybody gets them. We will then be one step nearer to the police states of France and West Germany, where ID checks are an every day occurrence.

● Another area where the effect of Labour's policies are clear is over children. Recently, Ennals, the Secretary of State for Social Services, had to inform the Cabinet that families with children were getting less financial support than the Conservative Government provided in 1970, 1971, and 1972 and less than Labour gave in the late 1960's. The level of child support today is well below the level reached in 1946!

For example, family support for a three-child family is down in real terms by over £3 a week.

From this month child benefits of £2.30 are to be paid to all children. If payment is maintained at this low rate in the budget, the government will save money by having phased out child tax allowances in favour of child benefits. Worse off

will be immigrant families. Immigrant workers are entitled to claim child tax allowances for dependent children resident overseas, but these are being phased out. But child benefits are not payable for dependents overseas. Once again, another case of Labour refusing to put its money where its mouth is.

called forces of "law and order", have used dogs on pickets'. [From a school students leaflet in support of, NUSS.]

THE BIG STICK

'Vicious' is by no means a melodramatic definition of the punishment dished out to militants. The last two days, papers were full of reports of mass canings and suspensions. Neither punishment being exclusively for one sex or the other. The Evening Mail (March 16th) under the headline 'Pupil Power Girls Get a Caning,' spoke of 'the biggest blitz' coming at Polesworth school in Warwickshire, where '50 youngsters, including girls, were given two or three strokes of the cane each, after children had barricaded themselves into classrooms for more than four hours'.

'If workers had to go to work in uniform, ask permission to go for a piss and got caned for breaking petty rules, there'd be a general strike. But this is precisely what school students in this country have to put up with'. [A militant school student.]

NEW MOVEMENT

It's hard to be sure now, but maybe looking back the wave of student protests of March 1978 will be seen as marking the real start of a new movement in this country. The last few years have witness the birth of independent movements of women, black people and gays. Perhaps now it's the turn of the school students to organise around their specific oppression.

Youth involvement in politics is nothing new, of course. But in the past it has tended to take the form of youth wings of political parties, such as the Young Socialists. This dependence on adult politics reflects the economic dependence of youth. Until they leave school, they are forced to depend on adults for the means of survival.

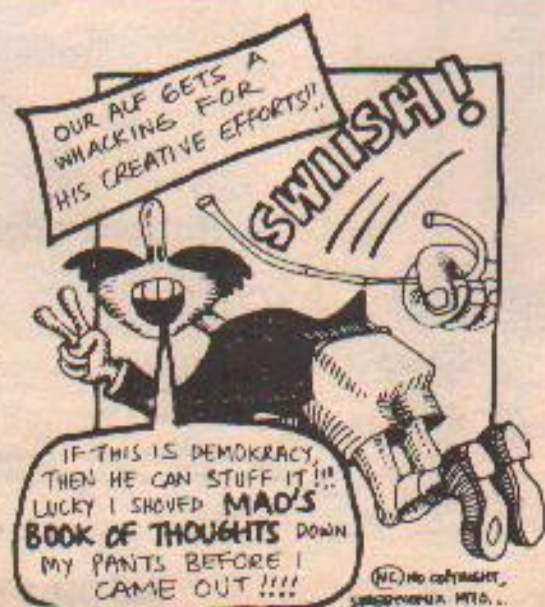
But if there is to be a politically independent movement involving school students, then adult socialists will have to re-think traditional attitudes towards youth. There will at times be friction, especially if the adults act and speak as parents and teachers first, and as socialists afterwards.

'Whatever the outcome of the teachers' dispute, we've learnt one thing: if you want anything done, we've got to do it ourselves. As youth we have little power over our lives, they attempt to divide us and rule us. We must not allow ourselves to be divided. If we unite irrespective of sex, race, or age, we can challenge their authority. They say we live in a free country, yet when we exercise our rights we are persecuted....

...and when we do have ideas THEY use the cane and discipline to put us down. We all know what we can achieve if we work together. School meals are probably the least of our problems. We must continue to organise ourselves and fight for better conditions.... The teachers, too, have too much power over us and use corporal punishment to keep us quiet. Let's fight to abolish this legalised violence.

...We want to discuss the possibilities of a day of action throughout Brum, to win some of our demands and we want to set up branches of the NUSS in every school and an action committee to link all our schools together.'

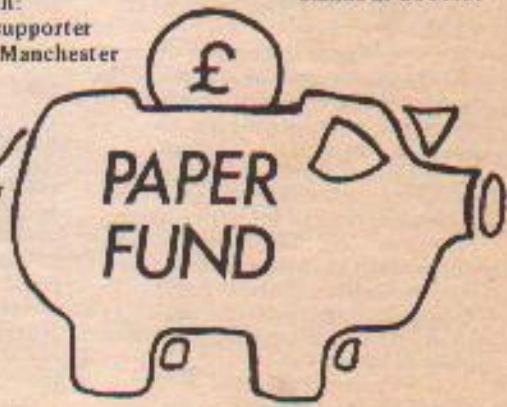
From school students' leaflet in support of NUSS



This paper costs about £200 per month to produce. Only about £150 is re-couped in sales. This month has taken us £44.55 nearer to our January-June Fund Drive Target of £500. So the total to date stands at £181.65

Donations this month:
£25.00 Manchester supporter
£6.70 from another Manchester supporter
£8.00 from

'Lucius' courtesy of a tip from Red Star Parcel workers, Liverpool
£2.75 J.A.H., London
£1.10 Liverpool Big Flame
£1.00 Evesham supporter



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

What do the fascists have in store for women? Ruth Tyler and Caroline Wilson on what happened in Nazi Germany



WOMEN UNDER HITLER

■ When they came to power, the Nazis made the display and advertisement of contraceptives illegal. Birth control clinics were forced to close. Abortion became an act of sabotage against the state and Germany's racial future, and carried jail sentences of 15 years or more for doctors who performed them.

■ The desire of women for equality was labelled by the Nazis as a 'Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy' infecting Germany. Women's true equality, said Hitler, could only lie in women performing the role which nature had given them — service to men and bearing children.

■ After the Nazi seizure of power, married women doctors and civil servants were dismissed. 'A woman's place is in the home'. From 1936 they were barred from the legal system and couldn't serve on juries as 'they cannot think logically or reason objectively, since they are ruled only by emotion'.

■ Despite the fascist state's all-penetrating organs of force and propaganda, women did resist their subjection to drudgery. It is equally true that many women were carried along on the fascist tide. Not very surprising when you consider that the Nazis views on sex and race were nothing new.

■ Restrictions on contraception and abortion, the sickening racism which is so deeply rooted in everyday life, are normal features of capitalist society. It's just that fascism takes the brutality, the chaos and the personal isolation of capitalist society to their extremes — and that includes the subjugation of women.

'GIVE A BABY TO THE FUEHRER'

THE WEIMAR Republic of Germany before the rise to power of Hitler's National Socialists (Nazis) was a period of great economic and social upheaval. One aspect of this was the growth of an organised women's movement, which challenged the role of women in the male dominated authoritarian family and fought for equal rights. By 1925 there were 11.5 million women in the German workforce. They had won the vote. Many middle class women were entering professional jobs and the universities. Women were also challenging traditional morality and 'respectability' which denied them sexual freedom and controlled every aspect of their behaviour... from having children to what they could wear, to which public places they could be seen in. Women, too, were involved in wider political movements. Women like Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin were in the forefront of the struggles of the socialist movement.

In the economic and social chaos and uncertainty of Weimar Germany — which suffered from the effects of the First World War, high unemployment, and inflation — the aspirations of women, like the aspirations of the working class were seen as yet another sign of moral degeneracy and collapse.

In this situation the fanatical anti-feminism of the Nazi Party found much support. Many of the unemployed thought that it was women workers who had taken their jobs. Many among the middle classes depended upon the women in their family to run their businesses and farms. All these groups were bewildered and outraged by the threat to their 'moral standards' which women's militancy represented.

Reprinted from *Spectator* November 1976

When Hitler promised to return Germany to the harmony and tranquility of a mythical golden past, the middle classes were ready to give him support. This not only meant crushing the conflict between classes by destroying the independent workers' movement, it also meant destroying conflict between the sexes by relegating women to the submission of the home and out of public life.

The fascists had taken the first steps towards this end within their own ranks when in 1921, women were permanently banned from ever holding office in the Nazi Party.

'SACRED' SECOND CLASS CITIZENS
Nazi propaganda revived the vision of the sexually and racially pure peasant woman, content to serve her nordic mate by keeping his house and bearing his children.

'Woman is sacred to us in her naturally predestined role and every man has reverence for her vocation (child bearing). She is the guardian of the German race, pure by nature. No less a person that our Fuehrer has restored the German woman to this most worthy and befitting place in the nation.'

If women were 'sacred' in their role of housebound wife and mother, women who rejected such imprisonment became the enemies of purity and sacredness. Even women who smoked, wore make-up or trousers

Goebbels set to work to convince women that it was all for their own good. He pointed out:

'Our displacement of women from public life occurs solely to restore their essential dignity to them.'

WORK WITHOUT WAGES

Firstly, women had to be forced out of their jobs. Amongst working class women this wasn't so easy. Employers, whatever their attachment to Nazi philosophy, were much more swayed by their wallets. And women were cheaper to employ than men. A skilled female worker cost only as much as employing an unskilled male worker. On top of this women were a vital part of the economy. They represented 37% of the total workforce in 1933. One in two agricultural workers were women, and in many industries, e.g. catering, women were 60% of the total workforce. However, the Fascists made some headway in reducing the numbers of married women employed.

Similarly women were being excluded from education. In schools many married women teachers were dismissed. At the same time the content of girls' education became more geared to domestic subjects like cooking, household management, etc.

The numbers of women allowed to enter college and university were drastically cut. The state ruled that there should be only one woman to every ten men. To discourage women still further a compulsory 'domestic year' was introduced. Girls of 18 were forced to work for one year on a farm or as a domestic servant in return for bed and board. No wages were paid.

CHILD FACTORIES

The fascist state needed children, preferably sons, to redress the falling birth rate and as plentiful supplies of cannon fodder in the army.

The question of whether or not to have children and how many was not a matter that the Nazis thought women should have any say in. It was a duty to the state, and the state was all-powerful. This state coercion to breed was dressed up in the most sickening mother cult propaganda. Producing children was the condition of woman's citizenship. Childless women did not rank as fully paid up members of the Nazi state.

to the Fuehrer' campaign appealed to patriotism and duty in order to force upon women a battery hen existence. The German state was proud of childbearing women in the same way the peasant is proud of his prize cow. Every year on Hitler's mother's birthday the German Mother's Cross was awarded to women who had produced large broods. Much like the rosettes pinned on animals at cattle shows, this cross was graded according to numbers: bronze for four children, silver for six, gold for eight. The motto on the cross was 'The child ennobles the mother.'

OFFSPRING

The state refused permission for marriages where the age of one partner made producing children unlikely. Childless marriages were often 'persuaded' to divorce so that the partners might 'produce' with somebody else. Young girls going out with soldiers were urged to become pregnant before their boyfriends were sent to the front — that way they could churn out the maximum crop of offspring. This was the essence of Fascist 'equality' for women.

RACIAL PURITY

'What was expected of her' went beyond the mere production of 'quantity'. The state demanded 'quality' offspring. To Hitler's Nazis quality meant 'racially and physically' pure stock. To this end women were told who they could 'mate' with and who they could not. Such regulations were summed up in 'the law for the protection of German blood and

Every year on Hitler's mother's birthday the German Mother Cross was awarded to women who had produced large broods.' A ceremony in Berlin

honour' (1935). Marriage and sexual intercourse between Jews and Germans were prohibited. The penalty was penal servitude. Jews found guilty of thus 'defiling' the German race were executed. This grotesque doctrine extended beyond race to cover the mentally and physically handicapped, the blind and the deaf, all of whom were compulsorily sterilised. Anyone who escaped sterilisation and became pregnant had their embryos immediately aborted.

LYNCHED

The ban on sexual relations extended to cover all other nationalities. This included the many thousands of Poles, Russians and French who were forcibly conscripted to work in Germany during the war, as well as the prisoners of war. German women who worked alongside these men in factories and farms were expected to regard them as being of inferior racial stock. Obviously they did not — for the only way the state could enforce its hideous ruling was by horrendous punishments. In 1939 sexual relations between German women and foreigners were put on an equal footing with sabotage and disruption against German military potential. Women who committed this supposed 'offence' had their heads shorn, were put in public pillories or sentenced to periods of hard labour. The men concerned were often lynched by local Nazi party officials in the name of racial self defence.

One further task was assigned to women in their production of racially pure stock. They were expected to indoctrinate their children with the Nazi philosophy. Mothers were to be the first moulder of the child's mind into the doctrines of Fascism — the boys to become soldiers — the girls mothers of soldiers — both the tools and property of the state. Women were expected to do this even down to the last detail of explaining their own inferiority. Even the Nazi women's league had to complain that 'A son, even the youngest today laughs in his mother's face. He regards her as his natural servant and women in general as merely willing tools of his desires and wishes.'

RESISTANCE

What happened to the women of Germany under the Nazis is an example of what fascism does to all exploited social groups. The Nazis smashed a strong and vital women's movement in Germany. They crushed it just like they crushed the trade unions and political parties of the workers' movement as a whole. After that people who might have wanted to resist found it almost impossible to do so. Once people are isolated from one another and have no organised way to fight for what they want, it is very difficult for them to oppose the fascist's police regime — the state really appears to be all powerful.

See also: *Reds and Blacks Against Hitler*, *Women's Movement in the History of the Working Class*, *Women's Movement in the History of the Working Class*, *Women's Movement in the History of the Working Class*

Carnival Against the Nazis

Eve of May Day Sunday 30th April 1978

Proceeding from a rally in
Trafalgar Square (10.30am)

through London's East End to
Victoria Park

for an open air concert with

Tom Robinson Band - Steel Pulse

The Carnival against the Nazis will be a chance to fight back. A chance to reply to every racist statement, every insulting joke, every Nazi attack. It will be a day when ordinary working people, black and white, men and women, young and old can reclaim the streets from the men of violence.

Think of your neighbours, your workmates, the people you go to school with or friends you meet in the pub, at the shops. Did they recall at the thought of the Ku Klux Klan bringing their lynchings and hatred to this country?

Persuade them to come along to the Carnival. A day when they can come together with thousands like them to walk and march and dance through areas the Nazis would love to make their own.

This will be a day of solidarity and celebration that, different as we are, we won't be divided by the Nazis' racist poison.

Tell the people around you.

It's your day **Be there!**



SOCIALIST FEMINISM

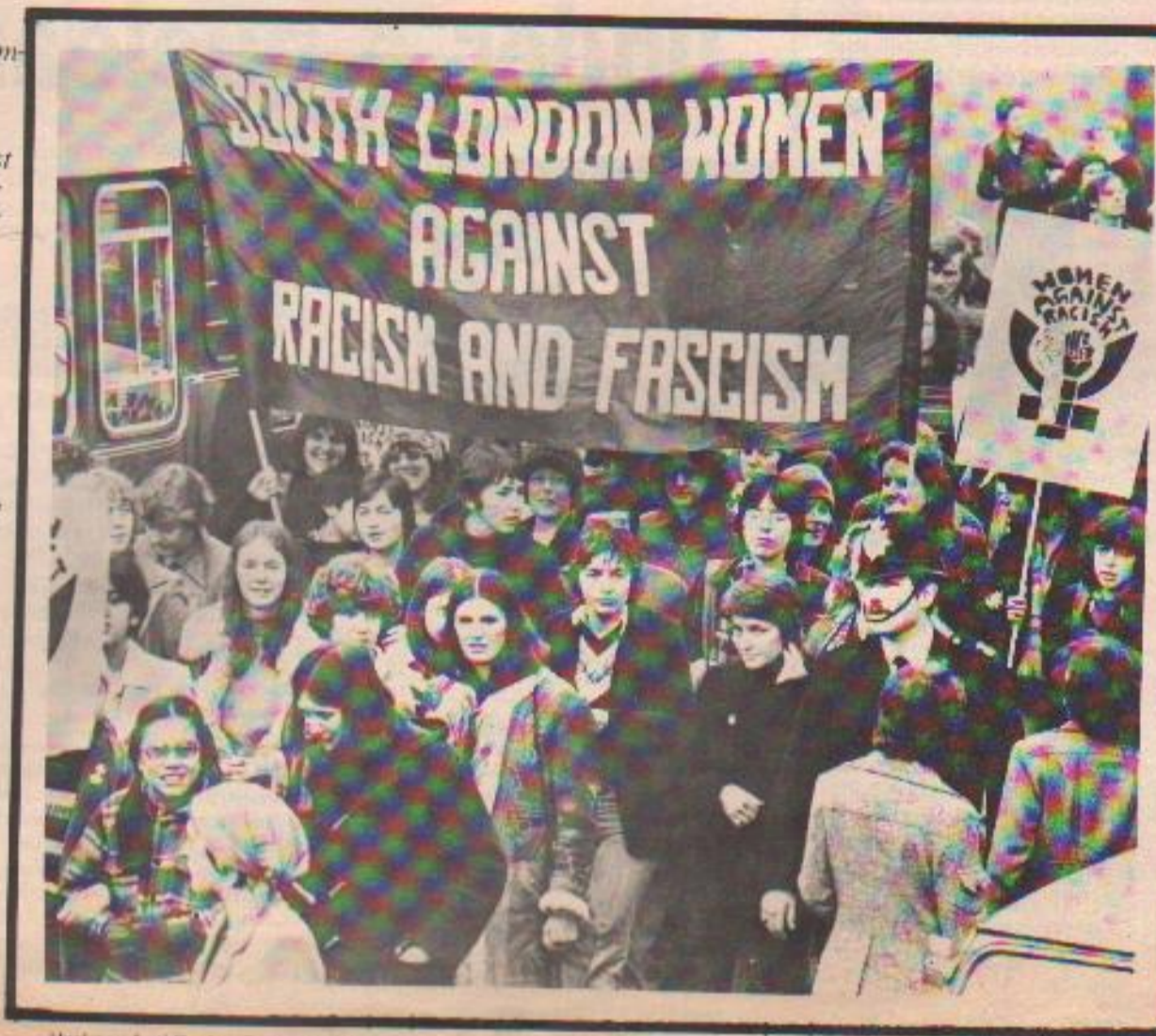
The emergence of the Socialist Feminist Current within Women's Liberation is the most exciting development in organised socialist politics of recent years.

At the recent national Socialist Feminist conference in Manchester, over 1000 women met to discuss their ideas and experiences working in different campaigns and activities. The discussions ranged from rape to electoral activity within the Socialist Unity campaign. There were women who work only within women's groups and women who were in left groups. Unlike many other women's conferences, there was a positive feeling that aligned and non-aligned women activists can — and must — discuss their common problems together, and learn how best to organise.

Apart from some excellent initiatives like involvement of women's groups in local strikes and campaigns, there has not been a powerful nationally organised movement which has consistently argued for the ideas and aims of the Women's Liberation Movement in working class political organisations, or for working class politics within the Women's Liberation Movement. The socialist feminist current provides the possibility of linking and strengthening these struggles so that feminism is not scorned as 'irrelevant' by working class militants, and socialism is not seen as a male preserve by the women in Women's Liberation.

JUSTIFIABLE SUSPICION

In the past there has been justifiable suspicion of women in left groups by sisters who have chosen not to join a mixed organisation. All too often men (and unfortunately some women) in left groups have refused to respect the autonomy of women's organisation and political development. All women activists whether in left groups or not have met with patronising attitudes or open hostility from men, who talk about the 'real' class struggle, from which they see women's liberation as a diversion — and this often from men who claim to be revolutionary socialists!



Hackney Anti-Racism Demo last year (Andrew Ward: Report)

All too often individual women, or a small grouping have tried hard to intervene in trades councils, support groups, national campaigns, and the like, only to have their voices ignored. The presence of a large contingent of well-organised women on the Grunwicks picket, or at large anti-fascist demonstrations like Lewisham, has a fantastic effect. It provides a focus for more women to become involved — and it shows without doubt that the women's movement is not irrelevant to working class struggles. And it also widens the political impact of campaigns which often don't go beyond a limited audience of 'the labour movement.'

It's hard work. Often in the past, women activists have not been able to get sufficient support or a sufficient exchange of ideas with one another in order for a feeling of strength and solidarity to blossom. The success of the Manchester conference shows that the socialist feminist current within the Women's Liberation Movement can now provide this framework without isolating women from the Women's Liberation Movement as a whole. No one wants the socialist feminist current to split itself off from the Women's Liberation Movement. What is needed is a forum in which women can exchange experience and develop perspectives about

the relationship between feminism and socialism.

FEMINISM AND SOCIALISM

Historically, the theory and strategy of the left had at worst dismissed and at best paid lip service to the oppression of women — until women organised, debated and developed an understanding of their situation which could challenge this complacency and ignorance. But there is still a long way to go, and many crucial areas of women's lives and history are only just now being explored. Reproduction, child care, and housework, and the sexual division of labour; women's health and sexuality; rape; women and fascism... The list is endless and the task facing soc-

ialist feminist women to develop a theory and strategy is enormous. But it is made much easier and more exciting knowing that there are hundreds and thousands of women throughout the country wanting to tackle the problem and organise for a socialist revolution which will bring real and lasting gains for women and their total liberation. And it is not only in this country that the socialist feminist movement is growing. It is international. Last year there were two conferences, in Paris and Amsterdam, where women, mainly from Western Europe, but from Latin America and the third world, too, met.

PROBLEMS

A big and immediate problem is that there are few working class women actively involved, and most socialist feminist groups have not found ways to reach beyond an audience of those who are already politically aware and involved in the women's movement. There are socialist feminist groups who see the need to involve themselves in the study of feminist theory without being willing — or knowing how to — make their politics accessible to women in their area: housewives and wage workers, women who don't see their daily struggle to survive in the capitalist system as having anything to do with 'politics' (which they see as something that concerns only men).

HIDDEN HISTORY

Discovering the hidden history of women and developing feminist theory will only have relevance if it can become meaningful for every woman who is fighting to change her and her children's lives. Just as the socialist feminist current is demanding that there cannot be a socialist revolution without feminism, so must the socialist feminist current take upon itself the task of arguing within the Women's Liberation Movement — and more importantly, outside of it — that there cannot be a feminist revolution without socialism.

To do that the socialist feminist movement will always have to find ways of opening itself out to include more working class women and to make itself public, so that it can insist — in the face of capitalism's daily demands and drudgery — that a socialist feminist revolution is the only realistic future for women

For more information about the Socialist Feminist Network, contact Scarlet Women Collective, 5 Washington Terrace, North Shields, Tyne and Wear.

LIVERPOOL : Women's Action Group

The Liverpool Women's Action Group is a good example of a group whose ideas have been developed by the emergence of a national socialist feminist network, and whose practice can show a way forward for other socialist feminist groups.

We began as a group within the Liverpool Women's Liberation Movement, whose members wanted to take action over issues affecting local women, and to take the ideas of the WLM to a wider audience. We have been involved in a wide range of campaigns and issues in the 18 months of our existence, some of which have been more successful than others.

HOSPITAL CAMPAIGN

Our first campaign was to keep a Maternity hospital — Mill Road — from closing. We petitioned in local markets, getting thousands of signatures from women who had had their



Women Demand Abortion babies in Mill Road, or who wanted to use it in the future. We also lobbied the Community Health Council and

used the contacts that one of the group — a shop steward in NUPE — had amongst the health workers' unions. The hospital stayed open.

We tried to ensure that every Saturday we would be out on the streets, either in the centre of town or in other busy shopping areas, talking about our ideas, giving out information, or encouraging women to take action with us over issues. This didn't always happen, for a variety of practical reasons, but the commitment of the group was to this type of work.

FIREMEN'S WIVES

During our first year of practice, the Liverpool Women's Centre folded and we felt it was crucial to try to find a meeting place that was well-known and public to all the women in Liverpool. This took up a lot of time and energy. We finally found an ideal premises on a busy street — and were all set to move in. It burned down. This was really ironic, since at the time the group was actively involved with a Firemen's Wives Support Group that had been set up to campaign in support of the firemen's claim. We were out leafletting and petitioning for them outside our future women's centre the day it burned down!

Before the National Socialist Feminist conference there were some of us in the group who wanted the Women's Action Group to become a more openly socialist feminist group. There were tensions in the group between those women in left groups and those who weren't. There were some women who were much more active than others, which often meant that they seemed to 'run' the group and control what it did.

There were quite a few women who had come to meetings because ours were the only open Women's Liberation Movement meetings apart from the National Abortion Campaign and the Women & Health group. Yet they came only to find that the group didn't suit their needs. This is a constant problem of any WLM group: how to deal with new members and yet continue to function.

Quite a few women who had been very active in the group from the beginning find it more difficult to come because of child care and baby sitting.

WOMEN'S PAPER

After the conference we decided to organise regular, open monthly discussions on issues relating to the Socialist Feminist current, so that our ideas would become clearer and hopefully reach a larger number of women on Merseyside. We have also just produced the latest issue of the Merseyside Women's paper, which has articles on some of the campaigns we have been involved in.

Exchanging our ideas and experiences with other women in the socialist feminist current has been for us both a challenge and a source of strength.

This article was written by an individual member of the Women's Action Group who is in Big Flame. Unfortunately, time did not allow it to be shown to the group, and so it does not necessarily represent everyone's views.

THE NUCLEAR POWER DEBATE:

Life would be grim under a nuclear regime

The nuclear lobby has got a free hand to go ahead with its plan for a big reprocessing plant at Windscale in Cumbria. Justice Parker's recent report suggests that public inquiries are only likely to back the plans for constant expansion of nuclear power. Just as well, then, that the anti-nuclear

movement is just getting off the ground in this country. Anti-nuclear movements in Holland and West Germany have forced their governments to cut back expansion plans. Maybe the demonstrations in London on 29 April and Torness (Scotland) 7 May will lay the basis for a mass movement.

"Some people argue that nuclear power would be ok if democratically controlled. I disagree. There are some technologies which are inherently alienating, inefficient and unhealthy... nuclear power is one of these."

That's Jane Cartwright's view. A member of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, she writes here in a personal capacity.

AN EXTENSION of nuclear power will mean fewer and worse jobs, very significant health risks to workers, restrictions on trade union activities in the power industry, extensive political surveillance of power workers and restrictions of civil 'liberties' for the general public. On top of this are the concerns of the 'eco-lobby' — environmental disruption and the increasing proliferation of nuclear weaponry.

ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

The extra energy we do need does not have to be provided by nuclear fission. There are the so-called alternative technologies. The nuclear mafia have managed to create an image of the alternatives which associates them with Welsh hill farms, dotty eco-freaks and austerity. The truth is that with suitable investment (comparable with, say, that planned for fast breeders) these technologies can make a contribution at least comparable with nuclear power with none of the disadvantages outlined above except environmental disruption (and that at a more acceptable level — hilltop windmills or extensive electric grid from coastal areas to deliver wave power as against radioactive waste disposal problems of several thousand years duration. Fast breeders are also an 'alternative' power source — and a dubious one compared to wind or waves — there just



'Operation Smokey' goes up in Yucca Flats, Nevada in 1957. This 44 kiloton bomb, twice the size of Hiroshima was exploded in front of 400 GIs.

Now six of them have leukemia and their children are born with an above average rate of genetic defects.

isn't enough plutonium (or thermal reactors producing it) to power enough breeders (even if they plunder their weapons for plutonium — unlikely!) to bridge that energy gap of theirs!

NUCLEAR POWER AND JOBS

'But at least nuclear power means jobs' — What sort of jobs though? Nuclear power creates temporary jobs in remote areas whilst a station is being built, the locality is disrupted by the temporary population bulge and then everyone moves on to the next site. Very few permanent jobs are created — and for those workers lucky enough to get these jobs, trade union activities will be limited. The nuclear workforce will be screened for dissidents — you can't let militants near plutonium. The phrase 'holding the country to ransom' — with strikes at nuclear plants — will take on a new dimension. The 'Sun' would have a field day and very little information (about productivity, profitability or health and safety issues) will be available to trade unionists to fight back with. There's already been a threat of troops to break the picket line at

Windscale during a strike last year.

Recent trade union activities initiatives — the Lucas stewards' alternative corporate plan and studies by stewards at AEI (Trafford Park), Parsons and Clarke Chapmans have concluded that small coal-fired power stations with district heating schemes, wind and solar energy technologies, heat pumps and home insulation create a wealth of skilled and varied jobs in the power industry, the materials supply industry and the building trade.

CONSERVING ENERGY

In any case, the scope for conserving energy is vast. Houses can be insulated and draught proofed. More efficient central heating with heat pumps and controlled air circulation — ventilation systems can be installed in poorly heated homes. A lot of energy could be saved if we switched back from electricity to gas or solid fuel heating because electricity generation and transmission costs so much fuel (but the nuclear industry doesn't like this idea because no-one's thought of a non-electric way to distribute nuclear power). New housing can be designed to take advantage

of the sun's heat. Remember houses built in the 1950s and 60s took little account of energy costs because oil was so cheap.

Waste heat from electric power stations which at present is lost in cooling towers can be pumped around housing estates if the trend to bigger and more remote power stations is reversed and we go back to smaller urban stations (not such a good idea if power stations are nuclear). On-site generation of electricity for factories (at present discouraged by the CEBG) would similarly allow use of waste heat.

Life would be grim under a nuclear regime.

POWER WE CAN DO WITHOUT With plutonium shipments up and down the country the 'threat of terrorist activity' will be a perfect excuse for extensive surveillance of 'subversives', i.e. anyone from Friends of the Earth leftwards.

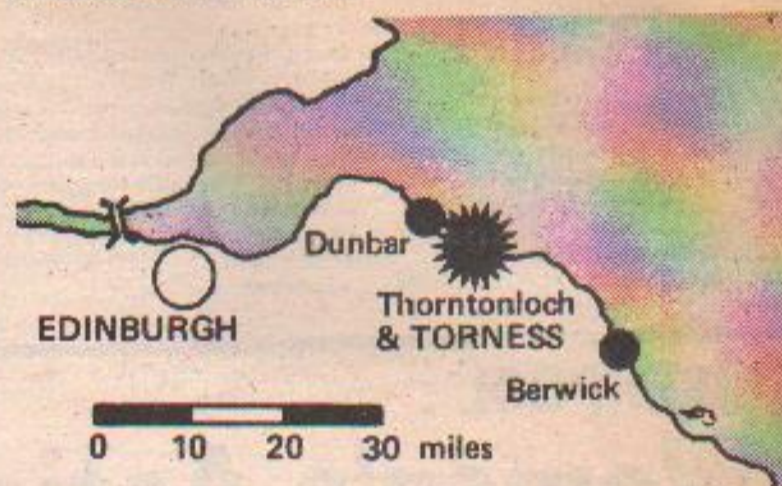
Some people argue that nuclear power would be ok if democratically controlled — socialist nuclear power. I disagree. There are some technologies that are inherently alienating, inefficient and unhealthy. Such industries are incompatible with the changes in social relations that socialism demands. Nuclear power is one of these. Don't let them build Windscale.

TORNES IS JUST 30 minutes from Edinburgh, and is the proposed site for Britain's next nuclear power station. This will be one of the two Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactors (AGR) agreed to by the Government. While the AGR's are probably the best of a bad deal on nuclear power, all nuclear power stations produce radioactive waste which remains dangerous to life for hundreds of thousands of years.

No wonder, then, that SCRAM — the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace — is calling for a protest. Especially when it's clear that the SSEB have at least 20% too much generating capacity and that their forecasts of future electricity demand are over exaggerated. Also when it is becoming increasingly clear that there are feasible alternatives to nuclear power.

Unlike other countries there has never been a large-scale manifestation of public opposition to nuclear power. It's time that this changed.

JOIN THE PROTEST:
*****MAY 6th & 7th 1978**
ASSEMBLE IN DUNBAR, MAY 6th, AT MID-DAY
*****MARCH TO TORNES**
*****MASS RALLY ON SITE**



SOMETHING TO READ
 What Choice Windscale, by Czech Conroy, a leading light of Friends of the Earth. £1 from PDC, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London, EC1.
 The Fissile Society, by Walter Patterson, £2, also from PDC.
 Undercurrents, bi-monthly magazine of the British ecology/alternative technology movement. 45p.

Ford Anti-Report



"Ford workers have proved their militancy and organisational ability at plant level in the past. Only by extending their tight-backs on international lines can they resist the depredations of what has become the most global of global corporations."

That's the conclusion of Counter Information Services new *Anti-Report* on Ford. It makes a lot of sense after you read about the way Ford operates across the world.

Competition from General Motors forces Ford to rely more and more on its international sales. They provided 44% of its total profits last year. What makes Ford tick so profitably is the way it organises itself world wide.

CIS, 9 Poland St. London W1. Price 90p.

TACTIC ONE — DUAL SUPPLY

Ford makes five passenger cars in Europe. They are assembled at nine different plants, so that no model, except the Granada, is dependent on one plant alone. During the recent Halewood Press Shop strike, Ford was able to import Escorts from Europe. This 'dual-sourcing' is used against workers and competitors. Ford has taken advantage of British Leyland's weakness by importing cars from Europe according to market demand.

TACTIC TWO — DIVIDE AND RULE

Ford specialises in dividing its workforce. Stand outside the gates of most of its plants and you'll see what I mean. They internationally recruit from different nations and colours. On the continent, where immigrant labour is the majority of its workforce, Turkish, Spanish

and Italian workers have to overcome language problems before they can begin to unite.

TACTIC THREE — TAMING THE STEWARD

Ford leads the world in labour relations — from an employers point of view. It was the first 'British' car firm to abolish piece-work and replace it with measured day work. After the successful 1969 strike, Ford went all-out to break the unity and militancy of the shop stewards. It gave them the job of policing the shop floor and preventing disputes.

The stewards lost their control over wages to the national officials and future wage rises became conditional on productivity and manning strings which the stewards had to put into operation.

TACTIC FOUR — SAFETY LAST

Ford is notorious for putting pro-

duction before the safety of its workers. Less well known is its ruthless attitude toward customer safety. The *Anti-Report* documents the Pinto case.

US Ford engineers knew that a rear-end impact on its best-selling Pinto model could rupture the fuel tank, turning the car into a petrol bomb. The company coldly calculated the cost of remedying the defect and compared it to the cost of compensating the victims of burns injuries in rear-end accidents. They decided it would be cheaper — or more profitable to pay damages. (Ford assessed the value of a human life at 200,000 dollars.)

Ironically, a man who suffered 80% burns after a rear-end Pinto collision has recently been awarded 60 million dollars compensation by an American court. In one fell swoop, Ford has lost what it expected to save by not carrying out the Pinto fuel tank modification.

What are the key issues for Socialists?

KEY ISSUES OF THE NUCLEAR DEBATE

The tactics of the nuclear lobby have been very successful so far — not surprising considering the cash and expertise at their disposal. Their argument is that there will be an energy gap by the 1980s, that only nuclear power can fill. 'So let's go on with nuclear power'.

This raises a lot of questions. Here are some of them.

* What is the extent of the energy 'gap'? And to what extent can it be met by other sources of energy, eg. coal, the sun, tidal power and schemes like home insulation that reduce the amount of energy needed?

* What is the connection between nuclear power stations and an increase in police controls? All nuclear power workers have to be screened politically and the transportation of nuclear fuel up and down the country means the introduction of new forms of police surveillance.

* We know that there have been accidents at nuclear power stations — but how serious is the possibility of a radio-active leak? Why are we never told about the nuclear plants that have 'gone critical'?

* Since India exploded a nuclear device in 1974, it is quite obvious that international non-proliferation agreements are not working. Yet it's key to the reprocessors' case that centralising fuel reprocessing in a few places discourages other countries from developing their own nuclear weapon capability.



The main nuclear sites in Great Britain

THE NUCLEAR DEBATE IN BIG FLAME

Many socialist used to think (and some still do) that socialism was about the distribution of wealth — that how wealth was produced was not a political decision, that the technology society used to produce its wealth was neutral. It is no longer possible to hold this view when we look at the effects of technology like the assembly line, the computer and now nuclear power on the development of countries that were once thought to be socialist. Technology affects relations between people and the struggle for socialism is about the changing of relations between people — at work and in all other activities of everyday life.

On these pages we introduce

developed by the floats. The important point to be made here is that we are not spending enough money on research; in other countries like the States and France much more research is being done.

Q. The anti-nuclear power movement in this country has been led by groups like Friends of the Earth; what is your opinion of them?

We see them as middle class organisations dominated by middle class interests. They seem connected with the 'back-to-the-land' movement and energy conservation and zero growth. The fact is that the only way the working class can survive is with economic growth — there is no way we are going to get a larger slice of a shrinking cake. Zero growth ideas are anti-working class and working class people sense it. But that's not to say there aren't great dangers with nuclear energy. For instance, we're very worried about the disposal of nuclear waste. At present, it's dumped in the sea in steel containers like egg boxes. The pressure on these boxes must be enormous — enough geological movement could just bust them open.

Q. In any case, in order to protect jobs in the industry there will have

to be some form of nuclear power?

If we're going to successfully fight for jobs, we have to be selective in what form of nuclear reactor we call for. There is nothing inconsistent in being against the fast breeder reactor and for the AGR. We must also fight for the development of nuclear fusion (as opposed to fission) which is basically the heating of hydrogen to very high temperatures. We are not opposed in principle to the development of nuclear power — in the long run we are sure that it can be made as safe as other forms of energy. What we think is essential is that the trade union movement

inued debate in Big Flame on nuclear power. Like the rest of the revolutionary left in this country Big Flame has been slow to take up the nuclear issue. This is in part due to a defensive orientation we share with other left wing organisations. For too long we have refused to accept that as revolutionary socialists we have something on what kind of society it was we wanted to build — and it is very relevant to ask whether nuclear power and socialism are compatible. In 'Brave New World', Huxley wrote: "It is probable that all the world's governments will be more or less completely totalitarian even before the harnessing of atomic energy; that they will be totalitarian during and after seems almost certain."

develops an integrated energy strategy. Unless we do this we will remain in the situation we are in now where the employers are able to oppose one group of workers against another — AGR workers against PWR workers, nuclear industry workers against the miners etc. Until we unite around a common energy strategy, we won't be able to involve in the fight the shop floor worker who so far has remained a spectator in these arguments.

'Workers Power', a socialist report on the power plant and energy industries by the energy group of the Conference of Socialist Economists with AUEW-TASS, Trafford Park, Manchester, is available, price 25p, from News From Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool 1.

Nuclear Power needed

THE DEBATE on nuclear power has only just begun in the labour movement. Some trade unionists in the electricity power supply industry have given nuclear power unconditional support on the grounds that it will provide the industry with jobs. Others, like Yorkshire NUM Executive have come out in clear opposition to nuclear power on the grounds that it will mean the end of jobs for miners. In this interview, Jeff Goss and Ron Murphy, two TASS, militants put forward their view that certain forms of nuclear power (the advanced gas-cooled reactor reactor AGR) should be developed at the same time as much more money is spent on the development of alternative power sources — wave power,

solar energy, tidal power etc. They develop their views in the pamphlet 'Workers Power'

Q. What forms of nuclear power, if any, do you think should be developed?

A. The position of our TASS committee at GEC Trafford Park (Manchester) is that we should go ahead with the development of AGRs which is a second generation reactor and give priority to the HTR gas reactors which is a third generation reactor. We think there is the technology available to build safe reactors. It is the case that building the AGRs will provide jobs in the power turbine industry and that must be part of any perspective we put forward.

Q. But what about all these arguments about the 'plutonium state' — aren't you worried about the dangers of a nuclear reactor blowing up and the threats to civil liberties that will come with nuclear power?

We believe that it is inevitable that

some of the country's energy needs are met by nuclear sources. We also think that as great a share as possible should come from renewable energy sources (solar, tidal etc.) but it must be made clear that so little money is being spent on research that it is very difficult to know what their capabilities are. We are opposed to the fast breeder reactor and the pressurised water reactor that Weinstock and GEC want to build in this country under license from the States. These mean quick profits but a dangerous product and no chance of export orders since the license would only be for home production.

There are obvious dangers with any type of nuclear reactor but there are also dangers with coal-fired stations.

In fact, in recent research we have seen claims that with large coal-fired stations there are considerable emissions of carbon dioxide. It is also the case that the Severn barrage scheme and tidal and wave schemes will also have an impact on animal life — in the case of tidal power, fishing is bound to be affect-

The unacceptable costs of Nuclear Power

Recently when Benn in his capacity as Energy Secretary cancelled the heavy-water project, he announced that the cost was £145 millions — of which £45 millions had gone down the drain of the plant in Winfrith. As one private company after another drops out of the nuclear energy business, it is becoming clear that nuclear power is not financially viable even given the 'peculiar' methods of calculation used to cost the projects. Companies are being bailed out of these projects with the injection of government money — which we cough up and have no control over. As the price of uranium soars and there are cost overruns throughout the nuclear industry, alternative sources of energy like tidal energy, wave power, heat pumps, district heating schemes look a better proposition from a capitalist economic point of view.

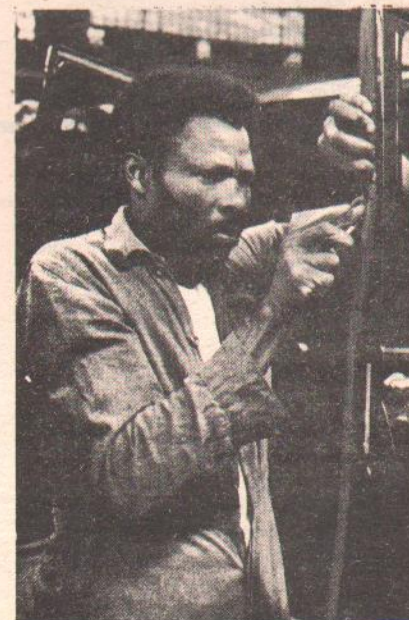
Leyland in S.Africa

WHAT'S HAPPENING to British Leyland's South African empire? They've closed down their plants in Australia Spain and Italy, but it seems more investment is to be ploughed into South Africa. Does this mean still more Land Rovers for the police and army (they used them at Soweto)? Not if Leyland's South African workers, and their supporters in this country, have their way.

The basis of apartheid is foreign investment; about 50% is British. Liberation for black South Africans (and for workers facing lay-offs in Britain) means breaking the South African conne-

A new Anti-apartheid pamphlet *British Leyland and South Africa*, shows that the secret of Leyland's South African success is non-unionised cheap labour, coupled with the investment which is drawn from Britain.

BLACK WORKERS UNIONISE In 1967 the Minister of Labour, Mr. Viljoen said "...the Bantu worker himself does not show any great interest in trade unions either." BLSA's position became clear after 1973, when African workers tried to get their Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) recognised by the company. Although the apartheid laws would stop MAWU from becoming a registered trade union, recognition by BLSA was legally possible. At the Mobeni plant in Durban, 95% of the African workers were in MAWU, but Leyland "regretfully reserved" negotiating rights. After disputing the composition of the 'works committee', the African workers struck in March 1974. They risked arrest, fine, prison, dismissal and their right to be in



There is no dole or supplementary benefit for Africans either. BLSA sacked all the strikers, then reinstated them, then laid off 65 who

In November 1974 Alpheu Mthetwa Secretary of MAWU, went to the Elandsfontein plant to recruit new members. He was arrested by the South African Security Branch, called in by BLSA. By September, 1976, he was banned, together with Siphon Kubheka, the branch secretary in Johannesburg. And in Britain, Leyland told the T&GWU and AUEW that it could not recognise MAWU before other employers did, as this "might set back the cause of African representation."

BRITISH SUPPORT

Shop stewards at Rover, Solihull, aren't satisfied with this situation. They have produced a broadsheet about BL's South African operations, and are demanding:

- Recognition of MAWU
- An end to all investment in South Africa.
- An end to all arms sales to South Africa, including Land Rovers.
- Increased contact between South African black workers and British trade unionists.

THE STRUGGLE WORLDWIDE



ISRAEL'S EXPANDING BORDERS

Q. In what way was the invasion by Israel of South Lebanon caused by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation raid on Tel-Aviv a few days before?

A. The raid only provided an excuse for the Israeli invasion; it would have happened anyway. The fact of the matter is that Israel has had its eyes

on the south of Lebanon since its creation as a state in 1948. In fact, at a secret meeting during the Suez crisis in 1956, the prime minister of Israel, Ben-Gurion, proposed to the English and French that Lebanon be dis-membered with Israel grabbing the south — the proposal was too risky for the English and French to accept. In any case, it is quite clear that the purpose of the raid was not merely to hit PLO targets, as the Israelis claim, but to clear the native population from the area. This eye-witness by a journalist makes that clear. 'Further south in Tyre, all that remained of a population that once numbered 45,000 was a few hundred aged Lebanese civilians and scores of teen-aged Palestinian fighters. Smoke rose from the ruins of a building hit by Israeli bombs. Palestinian and Lebanese dug through rubble in search of bodies. The bombardment seemed to have been indiscriminate, both from the air and from ships offshore. Except for one Palestinian anti-aircraft gun on the outskirts of town, no military targets had been hit. The port remained undamaged. What had been hit and hard, was the civilian dwellings. Was this deliberate counter-terror on the part of the Israelis? It certainly looked that way.'

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES IN THE MIDDLE-EAST CONFLICT ?

amount of territorial annexation will satisfy Israel; it will only be stopped by a military defeat. As Moshe Dayan, a leading Israeli military man, said, 'Let there be no Jew who thinks that this is the end of the process.'

Q. What is the involvement of the super-powers in the Middle East situation?

A. The Russians have very little involvement in the area. Their recent attempts to gain influence have all ended in failure. And they have their hands full with the conflict in the Horn of Africa and in Southern Africa. The Americans have always been and remain the dominant Imperialist force in the area. Over the years, they have been a staunch supporter of Israel, which gets every year vast amounts of US arms, money loans and gifts from rich Jews living in the West. But over the years, the US has also encouraged the growth of the pro-Western Arab bourgeoisie (ruling class) that it needs to make sure the Arab masses are kept under control — this includes the ruling classes of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, etc. The fact that

Q. What effect on the support for the PLO from the Palestinian people has recent Israeli aggression had?

A. As one Palestinian said after the PLO raid on Tel Aviv: 'I deplore that there are 34 people dead in Israel, just as I deplore that as a result of the Israeli retaliation there will be ten times as many people dead in the Lebanese refugee camps. But how can you blame us? You say this action is not very noble. Name a course that we can take that is in fact noble. We have nowhere to go, nothing else to do.' There is no doubt that recent events have strengthened the PLO politically.

What their effect militarily on the PLO is depends on the PLO's ability to fight a guerilla war. For the first time in its history the PLO found itself fighting a classical guerilla war. Quite correctly it decided not to make a heroic stand, but has begun hit and run tactics on the invading Israeli army. It was this ability of the PLO to conduct a guerilla war that surprised the Israeli army and explains the failure of the Israeli invasion to destroy the PLO.

Q. What are the politics of the PLO?

A. The PLO is a coalition of different political forces — the dominant ones being nationalist and populist. There is no clear commitment to socialism on the part of the PLO leadership and in those countries where they have established a presence, as in South Lebanon, the PLO was not willing to develop a political relationship to the Arab peasants and workers who live there.



Lebanese Refugees fleeing from Israeli Advance (Oct Publication)

Q. What are the goals of the Israeli invasion?

A. In the first place, the Israeli government hoped that the invasion would divert pressure that was on them to make a settlement over the West Bank of Jordan. By grabbing the south of Lebanon, the Israeli government will make 'getting out of Lebanon' the centre of their discussions with the United Nations and foreign powers. Also, land grabbing is part of the very nature of Israel's imperialist expansion that has gone on since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 — the more land you grab, the more frontiers you have with unfriendly states that you have to 'neutralise', so the more land you have to grab, etc. No

these countries, especially Saudi Arabia, are a major supplier of oil is another reason for the US government wanting to keep them 'sweet'. The large Jewish vote and the pro-Israel lobby in the US Congress have some weight in determining US policy in the Middle East, but even without them, support for Israel would be part of the US imperialist strategy. Still, it is also the case that the Carter administration would very much like to bring about a settlement in the Middle East that contented the Arab ruling classes — there is no doubt that the big loser in any such settlement would be the Palestinian people who would lose any claim they have in exchange for some bullshit 'autonomy' on the West Bank of the Jordan [see 'West Bank Puppet State', this page]

Q. Many people are worried by the PLO's refusal to accept the existence of the state of Israel — surely Israeli Jews have a right to live in Israel?

A. A very clear distinction has to be made between the working class Jews who live in Israel and the Israeli state. The Israeli state is Zionist, racist and imperialist, and its destruction is a precondition for the building of socialism in the area. At the same time, Jews who live in Israel must be recognised as having a right to live together with Arabs in a multi-racial, socialist state. A phoney 'homeland' on the West Bank will do nothing to answer the needs and aspirations of the Palestinian people; neither does the reactionary state of Israel answer the needs and aspirations of the Jewish working class which lives there.

Palestinians - Arabs With No Country



The map above shows where the Palestinians are living today. By definition, Palestinians are Arabs who live in (or are refugees from) the area now consisting of Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank, all of which was once called Palestine, after the Philistines, who lived there (along with the Jews) in biblical times. The largest number of modern Palestinians still remain in that territory: 693,000 in the West Bank, 447,000 in Gaza, and 574,000 in Israel proper. Many more live in the neighboring states such as Jordan and Lebanon, the poorest amongst them in refugee camps that were first established in the later 1940's. Other Palestinians live in Libya and the Persian Gulf; there is an estimat-

ed 50,000 living in Europe and 60,000 in the USA. Until 1948, many more Palestinians lived in what is now Israel, but they were expelled by the Israeli government, who forcibly confiscated their lands.

For the last 30 years, world powers have hoped that the Palestinian people would be dispersed and the Palestinian 'problem' go away. Because of their struggle, this has not happened. And now it is as clear as it ever has been that there can be no settlement in the Middle East that does not include the Palestinian people. In the words of one of their poets: 'We are like grass. The more you cut it, the more it will grow.'

WEST BANK PUPPET STATE

It would seem that Israel and South Africa are not only getting along well in trade and selling each other arms, but they also seem to be exchanging political solutions. For there is no doubt that the plan for a Palestinian 'homeland' that the Israeli government is trying to sell the USA and Egypt is very closely based on the Bantustans of South Africa. The Begin 'peace plan' which calls for 'self rule' for the Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip does not include any provision that would substantially alter Israeli occupation.

According to Begin's plan, the proposed autonomous Palestinian council, which would administer the territories, would be given jurisdiction over the local education, commerce, tourism, agriculture, health and policing. Defense and public order, however, will remain in Israeli hands, as will, of course, foreign affairs and the all-important issue of economic relations with Israel itself and with the rest of the world. If the distinction between 'policing' and the 'maintenance of public order' is puzzling, it should not be. 'Public Order' obviously refers to the task of defending the Israeli settlements, present and future, from the surrounding Palestini-

an population, as well as the suppression of what would undoubtedly be defined as illegal organisation, namely all groups, such as the PLO and the Communist Party, who would be challenging the legitimacy of continued rule.

The greatest joke of all is the suggestion in the Begin plan that those Palestinians who opt for Israeli citizenship would be able to buy land and settle in Israel, while Jews would continue to be allowed to buy land in Gaza and the West Bank. The fact of the matter is that when Israel is want land occupied by Arabs they don't buy it — they just grab it and there is no land for Arabs to buy in Israel, since 90% of the land is owned either by the Israeli state or the Jewish National Fund. So, the offer to allow Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to 'settle' in Israel is meaningless.

Even Sadat, by continuing to demand a Palestinian state on the West Bank, shows that he cannot accept Begin's offer of a Palestinian Bantustan. And what's not good enough for Sadat, certainly ain't good enough for the Palestinian people.

[Useful background information can be found in the article on the Middle East by Mousa Hadidh, in Revolutionary Socialism, No. 1.]

FRANCE : Irish Tour Visits LIP

WORKERS at the famous LIP watch factory in France, now in its fifth year of self-management, recently had a chance to hear about the Irish situation at first hand.

500 workers debated the future of Ireland with touring representatives of several resistance organisations. Apart from the LIP factory at Besonçon, the tour took in nine

al), the Irish Republican Socialist Party, Peoples Democracy and Revolutionary Struggle were the organisations involved.

The tour, apart from raising £400 for political prisoners defence funds, gave over 2,000 French people who attended the meetings an opportunity to find out about the war in the north of Ireland. The tour was arranged by the French

Dear Big Flame,

I am writing with regard to the question of a radical newspaper, which I see as a central question today if we are to begin the long-term building of an effective ideological and political opposition.

The three main problems to be resolved, it seems to me, are 1) the language and style of the paper 2) the breadth and depth of the content, and 3) the nature and size of the audience addressed. The three are, of course, interrelated, but I think we can solve them only by seeing their distinction as well as their unity.

A paper serving the interests of workers is qualitatively different from a paper serving (whether directly or indirectly) the interests of capital. It has both popular and 'intellectual' content and popular and 'intellectual' appeal. Its style and language is popular but not insultingly so — that is it relies on clarity, humour, wit, consciousness and the avoidance of jargon rather than tits and bums and sensationalist epithets. And it avoids trivialities and petty squabbles.

More concretely, the combination of 'worker' and 'intellectual' paper is achieved, I would suggest, through the coverage of a variety of issues that directly affect the working class, that the working class (and intellectuals) are concerned about or that the working class is receiving a barrage of misinformation about.

This has been done in the past, with a certain degree of proficiency, with regard to the more obvious political issues such as strikes, elections, international anti-imperialist struggles and the struggles of

blacks, women and youth. However, it could be both improved and broadened as follows: Culture: We should provide critical analysis of the complex culture that workers encounter in their TV and in the cinema; provide counter information to the more distinctive advertising; analyse the workings of the film industry, the distortion of it through monopolisation, etc.

Sport: this is a central part of working people's lives and should by no means be neglected. Apart from simple reporting of results and match reports, we can provide analysis and (counter)-information on such issues as 'football hooliganism', the bankruptcy of so many soccer clubs, the distortion of sport through capitalist social and market relations, the parochialism and petty nationalism involved in team-worship.

Then there is the 'politics of food', squalor, crime, isolation, homelessness in the cities, the planned obsolescence of cars, TV sets which always seem to go wrong, 'the environment', problems of contraception, etc.

I could go on. The important point is that, amongst the lighter material and the more traditional material in the paper, we can have two or three articles a week on various issues that are constantly discussed by workers (blue-collar and service), which are not obviously political, which are very close to home, and which are often the object of so much distortion by the media.

A LEFT-WING SUNDAY PAPER I don't know if the idea of a radical Sunday paper has been mooted before. Perhaps there are serious

drawbacks. However, it would appear to have great advantages: a) Sunday papers are a national institution, and are read by most adults, and many kids. b) People have time to read most of the paper, which is generally not the case in the week. c) There is no left wing Sunday paper, hence less competition, less chance of sectarianism.

A Sunday paper, then, should be able to attract radical journalists (and aspiring journalists) from all walks of life and of varied political views. Excess 'looseness' can be countered by general guidelines laid down by the editorial collective (and subject to change by the vote of the papers readers and/or sustainers); excess 'intellectualism' can be countered by an editorial commitment to a popular style, a relatively high proportion of visual material (comics, photos) to written material, careful attention to layout etc.

Finally, funds would be a problem, but would be aided by the lack of sectarianism and dogmatism. However, first things first. The idea is there. Any takers?

Yours in struggle,

Ben Lowe, London SW18

We welcome Ben's letter as an important contribution to the debate on what kind of newspaper we need. There is a serious technical obstacle to his suggestion — that is distribution. A Sunday paper would rely totally on newsagents all over the country. Most distributors and newsagents would not touch a radical paper and militants can hardly be expected to street sell on a Sunday morning.



DEMOCRACY UNDER THREAT IN THE TGWU. Alan Thornett, one of the shop stewards at British Leyland's Cowley plant, is threatened with expulsion from his union, the TGWU. A national meeting (for TGWU members only) to discuss how to defend Thornett and his comrades has been called for Saturday, 8 April, 1 pm to 5 pm, at the Cowley Community Centre, Oxford. Sponsors include: Stan Cook, Chairperson, Shop Stewards Committee, Ford Langley; Ian Ollie, Shop Stewards, Royal Docks, London; Pat Hickey, Shop Steward, SKI Plant 5/909 Branch; Roger Kline, shop steward Massey Ferguson; R. Ahsam, Shop Steward, Rovers Solihull; Joe Carberry, Chairperson, Shop Stewards Committee, Birds Eye, Kirkby.

Readers who are TGWU members should try to attend. More information about the meeting from: P. Cullen, 23 Overmead Green, Blackbird Leys, Oxford.



Dear Big Flame,

Last month, Mr Ennals visited the hospital unexpectedly. He looked round, met staff and held a press conference. He made no decision — nor would he say when a decision would be made. He committed himself to maintaining his earlier promise to keep the EGA as a "unit" — and nothing more, pointing out that EGA would have to compete with renal dialysis units for special funding.

The situation now returns to putting pressure on Ennals to keep the hospital open — and consolidating and building active, local opposition to any possible closure.

This is difficult after a long drawn out campaign, which has also tended to have a national focus.

This is being done through:

- 1) organisation of emergency telephone tree and speaking tour.
- 2) Well woman clinic committee — involving local women by spreading information about women's health and attempting to influence the future development of the kind of health care given by the hospital (see EGA News and old leaflet about Well Woman Clinic Committee) — In-sisterhood, EGA Campaign.

p.s. for further information about the Well Woman Clinic Committee contact Jane Barker on 01.837.8031

work, call it by any name you like, the results are always the same.

Strikes by small powerful sections laying off the majority and causing problems in the subsidiary industries.

Think again NUM executive, and 'Joe.' Abandon the bonus fiasco and go for £135 per week for faceworkers as per conference decision. Reintroduce the day-wage system and once again we will have solidarity in the coal fields.

Solidarity that can change government policy, solidarity that can defeat bad governments.

Solidarity that can create a sense of pride instead of this internal wrangling for an extra 'lick at the bone'.

Andrew Summers
Edlington NUM
Committee

Dear Comrades,

I would like to bring to the notice of your readers the death of Geoff Howard of Stockport on the 13th March, following a motorbike accident on his way home from work.

Geoff was a trade unionist of great integrity and a socialist respected by his many comrades and friends. He was at one time a member of Big Flame and later of the Socialist Workers Party.

He put in hard work building the union in the small Manchester engineering plant where he worked as a fitter, and as convenor, over a number of years, fought for the rights of his fellow workers and always took to them his experience of revolutionary socialist ideas and solidarity.

He was an active member of the campaign for solidarity with the Portuguese working class at the time when they overthrew

fascism and started to build the organs of popular power, and Geoff had many friends amongst the Chilean exiles in the town.

His death at the age of 32 is a tragic loss to his wife Joyce, also an active socialist, and his children Steven and Sarah, and to the members of the labour and socialist movements in Manchester.

Fraternally,
Neil Swannick, Manchester,

Dear Big Flame

I got your address from the latest "Science for People". I am writing on behalf of the Aberdeen Women and Health group.

At the National "Women and Mental Health" conference in London last October, it was suggested that there should be a self-help-therapy week sometime — taking the form of a skills-exchange in various basic techniques.

We are now in the process of trying to get this event organised. It is to be at Laurieston Hall, Kirkcubrightshire, the week ending July 20th.

We were wondering if you could help us with suggesting contacts etc. of people who would be prepared to take workshops. We had in mind a self-help-skills-exchange week, with a variety of workshops on many non-sexist, non authoritarian techniques (e.g. co-counselling, relaxation, assertion training, role playing etc.) The event is to be open to both non-sexist men and women, as we feel both men and women would benefit.

Further details will be available, nearer the time, but at present our main concern is finding initial contacts.

Thanks for any help, best wishes,
Mary Scott.

Ed: Would anyone interested write to Mary Scott, Garthdee Farm, Garthdee Road, Aberdeen.

Once again Scargill is correct! 'Incentive schemes in the coal industry put men against men, pit against pit.'

The winders of the Doncaster Winders Branch have taken unilateral action in seeking to achieve a higher percentage of bonus.

At present they receive 40% of the Colliery average. This is not good enough for them! I agree, but also there are many other anomalies in the incentives scheme and these can only be put right by talking with the 'board' round the bargaining table.

The 90 winders of DW branch, by taking action on their own, will lay off 17,000 fellow NUM members.

Already it can be seen that the coal industry is in for the same kind of problems that have stricken the car industries of Britain. When you put men on bonus, incentive, piece-

MAY DAY FESTIVAL AND MARCH BIRMINGHAM Digbeth Hall, 11am-mid night. Tickets £1, details from Co-op Party, 38 Bristol St, Birmingham, B57AA., tel. 622.2570

NORTHERN DRIFT with HENRY LIVINGS and ALEX GLASGOW Sun April 23rd, Everyman Theatre Liverpool. To raise money for premises for Liberty Hall. Tickets at £1 and £1.50 from the Everyman and News from Nowhere, Liverpool.

PICKET AGAINST THE FRONT Action Against Racism, Blackburn, is organising a mass picket of the Public Halls, Northgate, on 5 May when the National Front propose to hold a meeting there. AAR PO Box 32, Blackburn, Lancs.

MANCHESTER BIG FLAME Debate on Nuclear Power, Speakers: Ron Murphy (TASS, GEC, Trafford Park) Dave Berry (Friends of the Earth) Wed. 12th April, 7.45 pm, The Ancoats Great Ancoats St.

LAMBETH CENTRAL SOCIALIST UNITY BENEFIT Sat April 8th 8 pm till late, Waterloo Action Centre, Bayliss Rd., London S.E.1. Admission 50p

CONFERENCE OF SOCIALIST PLANNERS 3rd National Conference, April 15th. Issue No 2 of CSP Newsletter now out, price 25p inc. postage. Details of conference and newsletter from Box CSP, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool 1.

All London Men's Conference, 22-23 April in East/West Centre, 188 Old Street, London. The conference has been organised by and for anti-sexist men. Cost: £3.50 (£1.50 for claimants), including meals & social on Saturday evening. Contact Dave Lowe (01-622 8151) or Dave Lewis (01-435 5957).

UNITED TROOPS OUT Movement open meeting for all London supporters and everybody interested in building the movement. 7.30pm Fri 7 April, St Clements Building, 1st Floor, LSE, Houghton St., London.

YORKSHIRE CONFERENCE ON IRELAND Saturday, 22 April 9.30-6 Swarthmore Centre, 3 Woodhouse Sq, Leeds 3 (behind Leedg General Infirmary, 10-15 mins walk from Leeds City Station) Accommodation will be provided. Creche, please bring food for young kids. Further details from UTOM,

MAY DAY FESTIVAL Stanley House Upper Parliament St., Liverpool All day and evening: Unity Theatre, Leon Rosselson, Harold and Sylvia Hinks, continuous films all day, workshops on music, drama, politics and technology, legal rights, womens health and who controls Liverpool. Art exhibition, informal live music, book stalls etc. Food, Bar and Creche provided. Evening: Clapperclaw, Good Time Charlie Jazz band, Blue Bells steel band. Tickets: 50p day, £1 evening, from News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Further details: 708.7270

MIDLANDS REGIONAL PLANNING MEETING UTOM branches in Birmingham and Leamington have called this meeting to discuss the possibilities of building a Midlands Region Conference on Britain's presence in Ireland. Friends Meeting House, room 45, Bull St., City Centre, Birmingham (next to Lewis's) Sat. 22 April, 12 noon. Further information from UTOM ('B'Ham') c/o 766 Digbeth, Birmingham B56DY

HANDS OFF LEBANON Meeting to co-ordinate activities over Middle East. Friday April 7th 7 pm, Conway Hall Red Lion Square, London, W.C.I. (meeting called by Palestinian Solidarity Committee)

THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION Socialist Teachers Alliance OPEN CONFERENCE London 29-30 April. with Raymond Williams, Simon Frith and Sol Picciotto. Send booking forms to 25 Highgate West Hill, N.6. Cheques payable to Politics of Education Conference. Admission and papers £2. Students and unemployed £1. Overnight accommodation in London arranged. Creche if required.

WITNESSES WANTED Anti-Nazi picket at Bolton Town Hall 10 Feb. Bolton Defence Campaign needs witnesses and photos of any incident at this picket. Donations towards fines to Bolton Trades Council (Defence Fund) and sent to Dave Siddle, BDC c/o 70 Stewart St, Bolton

CONFERENCE AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT Sunday 9 April Everyman Theatre Hope St., Liverpool. Credentials from Liverpool Trades Council, 70 Victoria St., Liverpool 1.

PIRATE JENNY Theatre's play 'Sir is Winnin' by Shane Connaughton about Tynedale teachers is still available on certain dates in the coming months. May 3,4,6, South; 27 Manchester, June 8,10, London; 14,16 Home Counties; 20,24 Yorkshire and 27,28 June and 1 July in Birmingham. If you are interested in booking the play for any of these dates contact Pirate Jenny immediately on 01.969.2292

MERSEYSIDE WOMENS DAY meeting, a Saturday early in May, contact 051.727 4508 for details

Wanted: Books, pamphlets, or donations to send to comrades in South Africa. Also urgently needed is money for a duplicator. It is hoped to build a Marxist library in South Africa. Send to: Books for South Africa Appeal, c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London, E. 1.

Liverpool Socialist Unity Social — 27th April. 8pm at Chaucers, Hardman St. Tickets 50p from Big Flame, Comedian, Disco, and live entertainment.

UTOM Anti-Recruitment group meeting, Saturday, April 15th, 1pm, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. All UTOM branches should send one delegate. Accommodation available. Agenda to include anti-recruitment film and tour, fundraising, the formation of UTOM Soldiers group, the London UTOM conference on the role of the Army. For details contact: Tommy Atkins, Unit 265, 31 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

Just Out: Important new pamphlet on the current state of the Revolutionary Movement in Italy. 95p. Available from Red Notes, 2a St. Paul's Rd., London, N1.

Just Out: Revolutionary Socialism, No. 2. Spring Issue 1978. 40p. Includes articles on the personal & political, youth, black autonomy, abortion, and the politics of food. Available from Big Flame.

HOLLYWOOD : CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH WOMENS LIBERATION

COMMERCIAL HOLLYWOOD films are not made in a social vacuum — they reflect the culture industry's attempts to come to terms with radical social and political movements. In the last few years two of the most important of these movements have been women's liberation and the movement for sexual liberation. 'Julia' is a film that responds to many of the ideas brought to our consciousness by the women's movement, 'Looking for Mr. Goodbar' is a film about the way conservatives respond to ideas of sexual liberation.



Goodbar

LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR is a hype and a rip-off. Starring Diane Keaton (from 'Annie Hall') the film is a sensationalised account of a true story which shook New York, of a 28 year old school teacher who was murdered by a man she met in a singles bar (bars for single people only which are very popular in the States).

Now, there is an important film to be made about the sexual loneliness of big city life and how the growing sexual independence that women are fighting for is causing a crisis in men-women relationships. Such a film would have to deal with the increasing strains being placed on the 'couple', with the increasing mobility of men and women in industrial societies of today and how urban 'planning' (e.g. tower blocks) is making it more and more difficult for people to have social relations with each other. It would also have to consider how the movement for womens liberation is raising the sexual expectations of women (from a very low point) and how these higher expectations are experienced as a threat by many men, who are not prepared to give up their role as sexual initiator ('the hunter'). Together with others, these factors do add up to a crisis of personal relationships which could provide the subject matter for quite a few films.

But 'Looking for Mr. Goodbar' is only about important themes in so far as they can be used to support the film's message which is — a woman who searches for sexual freedom risks her life. And in fact the film is no more than a glossy version of those Mafia-financed 'snuff' porn movies in which the woman is actually killed in the intercourse scene which is being filmed.

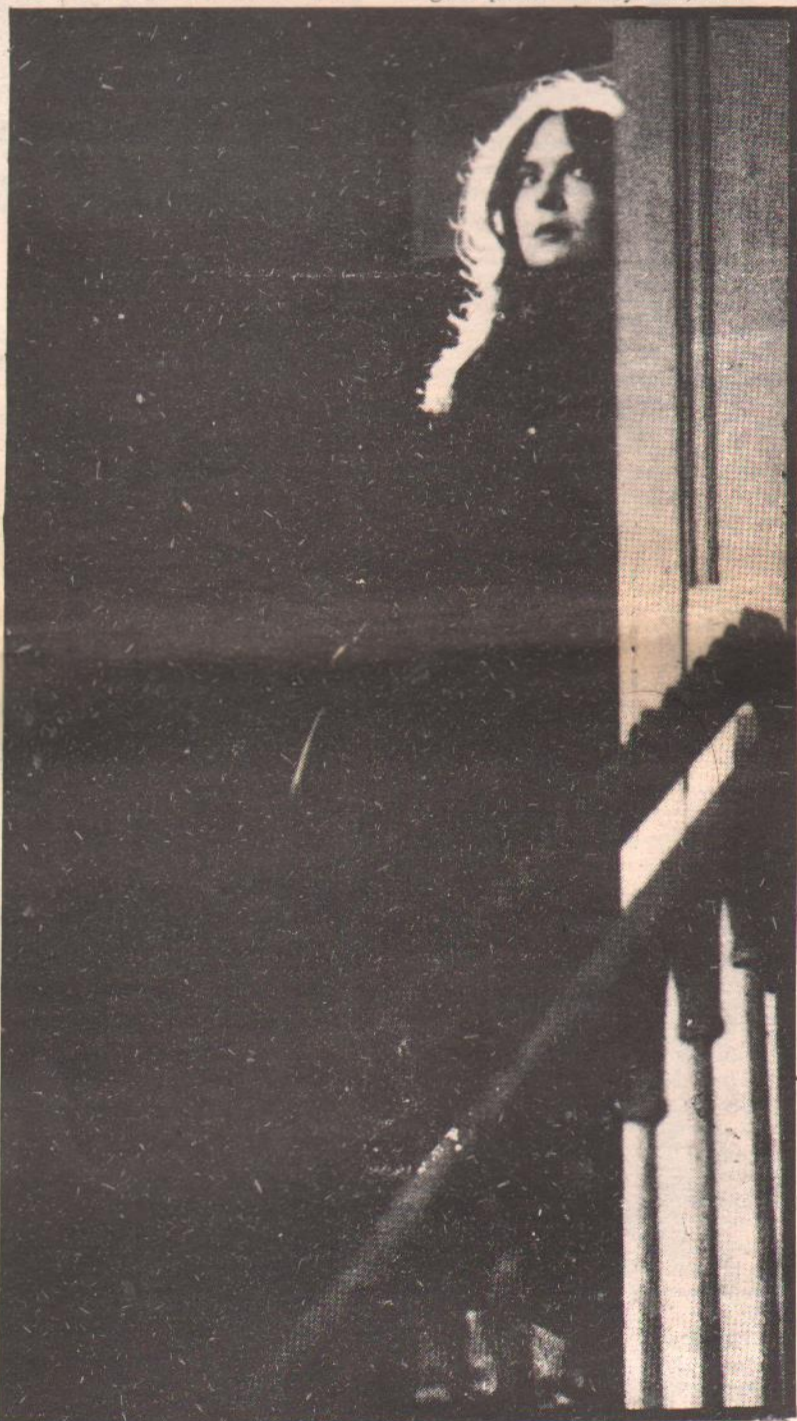
'Looking for Mr. Goodbar' trades on the identity that Diane Keaton established in 'Annie Hall'. Once again she is the schizoid liberated woman — school teacher by day, sex maniac by night. And her problem, which is the problem many of us face, of finding personal relations difficult in large cities, is reduced to a deranged sexual craving that leads to death. All Richard Brooks, who made the

film, can offer as an explanation of Theresa's (Diane Keaton) behaviour is that she is 'rotten to the core'; according to him, it has got nothing to do with the conditions she lives in, her difficult job or the repulsive chauvinism of the men she has relations with; the university professor (Alan Feinstein) is particularly unpleasant. According to

Brooks, all Theresa's problems would be over if only she would decide to settle down with the moony social worker who isn't so hot in bed, but who can make a knock-out spaghetti bolognese. But she turns him down, maybe because she has already got one mamma in her life who makes good pasta. In any case, this

rejection of the social worker angers the film-maker (the god) and very soon after Theresa is savagely murdered by the man she met in the singles bar. As the strobe-light in her bedroom (!) flashes, she is slashed to pieces. The audience is meant to go away happy with the thought that the liberated woman has got what was coming to her.

'Looking for Mr. Goodbar' is a sick, violent film. It will not be banned from any cinema in this country — that is because its violence is the violence of our oppressors.



Diane Keaton as Theresa Dynn in Looking For Mr Goodbar

Julia

'Julia' is an honestly made film, extremely well acted by Jane Fonda and Vanessa Redgrave. Adapted from a story by Lillian Hellman (in a collection called 'Pentimento') 'Julia' is the story of a friendship between two women set in Nazi Europe in the 1930s. The film is exceptional in that it is the first Hollywood film in which women fill the main roles, in which their relationship to men is of secondary importance. Nor is there any attempt to sensationalise the film by introducing a sexual element into the relationship between Julia and Lillian — as in the book, they are friends not lovers. In fact, if you think about how few, if any, films or plays, are about friendship, you begin to realise how great a debt the film and its viewers owe to the womens movement. For it is the womens movement with its very strong sense of **sisterhood** that has reminded us of the importance of asexual relations between people. Of course, there are in films and books, examples of friendships between men — but these are always unequal relations in which one is 'fall guy' for the other — for example, the Lone Ranger and Tonto, Laurel and Hardy, Holmes and Dr Watson, Batman and Robin.

Julia is a good film because it is a film that responds sensitively to human relations, it is a progressive film because it is anti-Nazi in a quiet, but effective way. Julia, played by Jane Fonda, is a courageous socialist and anti-Nazi

Big Flame Conference

The 3rd National Big Flame conference will take place in London on the 13-15th May. Conference documents are now available and can be obtained from the Liverpool office (40p including postage). Any comrade interested in attending the conference should apply to the National Secretary - also at the Liverpool office.

Regional Aggregates; the first regional aggregates will be held in LIVERPOOL, LONDON and LEEDS on Saturday 15th of April. For more information contact the local Big Flame group involved.

who convinces her friend Lillian to get involved in the struggle against fascism. Lillian is at first a liberal who finds it difficult to take Fascism seriously, "We were disturbed by the anti-Semitism that was an old story in Germany and some of us had sense enough to see it as more than that. Many people thought of it as not much more than the ignorant rantings of a house painter and his low-down friends, who would certainly be rejected by the Germans, who were for my generation an 'advanced' and 'cultivated' people."

But by 1935 or 1936 what had been only half understood, unsettling distant stories turned horror-tragic and new assessments had to be made fast of what one believed and what one was going to do about it... As the film progresses, Lillian's determination to contribute to the fight against fascism gets inspiration from Julia, who dies in that struggle.

If there is a criticism to be made of the film, it is that it does not convey clearly the link between the struggle against fascism and the struggle for socialism. The link is much clearer in the book in which Lillian goes on to get involved in the Spanish Civil War. But criticism is out of place when talking about as beautiful a film as 'Julia'. It's not often that you can pay money to 20th Century Fox to be shown a film about friendship triumphant against the evil forces of National Socialism. (The quote is from the book 'Pentimento' by Lillian Hellman, published by Quartet at 95p. On sale for a trial period at W.H.Smith)

BIG FLAME IS...

BIG FLAME IS A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST ORGANISATION. Socialist because our aim is to build a society which the working class, the majority of the people, run in their own interests. Revolutionary because we believe we'll only reach that goal by completely

changing society, not by patching it up or by piecemeal reforms. At the moment the working class produces the wealth and the ruling class takes it. In a socialist society we will get all the wealth and the power to control our own lives.

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

CAPITALISM OPPRESSES THE WHOLE OF OUR LIVES. We are not only exploited at work, we also have to pay high prices and rents; make do with bad housing, schools and hospitals. And it not just those sections of the working class with great economic power, like the miners or

engineers, who can fight. Housewives, hospital workers, the unemployed have all proved they can fight — and win!

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

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

WE TRY TO BUILD A MARXIST MOVEMENT FOR TODAY'S NEEDS. We try to learn from the various Marxist traditions, but we firmly believe in the need to create a politics and organisation which grows out of today's situation.

We believe that Big Flame's job is to help the whole working class understand and learn from its power, and so strengthen that power. We see the need for a revolutionary party of the working class that will lead the fight to defeat capitalism, but such an organisation can only be built out of the struggles of the whole of our class.



We fight for higher wages, shorter hours, a lighter workload and for full pay whether there is work or not.

We oppose incomes policies, productivity deals, redundancies and speed-ups.

We encourage links between factory and community struggles, the opening up of factory occupations to the community,

and the taking of rent and housing struggles to the workplace. We back the fight of council tenants, private tenants and squatters against rents and for decent housing for all.

We support the struggle for state-paid community-controlled facilities like nurseries and playgroups, which provide a better life for our children, and are part of the struggles of housewives against their unpaid labour in the home.

We fight against sexism and racism and support the independent organisation of women and black people for their own power.

We support struggles for sexual freedom. Freedom from the law and freedom from social prejudices. In particular we support the independent gay organisations.

We oppose British involvement in Northern Ireland, and support demands for troops out now, for self-determination for the Irish people as a whole, and for a united socialist Ireland. Against the army and the British state we give basic support to all the republican and socialist groups fighting in Ireland, whatever criticisms we may have of their political strategy or tactics.

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

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

THERE ARE BIG FLAME GROUPS OR MEMBERS IN

Bolton, Birmingham, Brighton, Cambridge, Colchester, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Norwich, Nottingham, Sheffield, Swansea and Wirral.

More details from NATIONAL SECRETARY 217 Wavertree Road Liverpool 7

FOCUS ON LIVERPOOL



BIG FLAME PHOTO

SOCIALIST UNITY, the common left-wing election slate founded last year by Big Flame, the International Marxist Group and many independent socialists, will be making a strong national appearance in the May local elections. Although there won't be the 60-80 candidates talked about at the founding conference, there will be 15-20 in London, 8 in Birmingham and three in Liverpool as well as in Bolton, Bradford, Manchester and some places in Scotland.

TEETHING TROUBLES
Everything hasn't been plain sailing. An excellent local candidate had to withdraw in Leeds when it was pointed out that her four hours a week of work for the council disqualified her. Hull Socialist Unity had to abandon its campaign too — there are no local elections there this year. It hasn't always been easy to find a well-rooted local candidate, like the ones in Granby and Vauxhall, Liverpool. Then there have been agonising decisions about whether to bring in an outsider.

Normally, our aim has been to stand someone local working class voters can identify with — preferably a militant with a base in the working class movement. The signs so far are that Socialist Unity's aim to provide a focal point for local struggles and organisations is bearing fruit. Independent militants are attracted by the kind of non-sectarian socialist alternative we can offer to Labour's Tory policies. They find in Socialist Unity a way of getting active locally and getting through to the mass of the working class.

THE LIVERPOOL Socialist Unity group was hurried into existence when a by-election in Edge Hill constituency seemed imminent. Its particular strength is the large number of local working class supporters. Apart from Big Flame and IMG, the biggest single grouping seems to be members and ex-members of the Labour Party!

There will be three Socialist Unity candidates in Liverpool.

SANDHILLS/VAUXHALL

This is the ward with the rare distinction of holding the record for the lowest turn-out in the country: 14%. This vote of no-confidence in Labour and the major political parties gives a good start to Agnes Thompson, a working class woman who was born and brought up in the area. She is standing in this traditionally Catholic dockside area where one in four are out of work against the ex-Lord Mayor, a political heavyweight.

The campaign has brought together for the first time in years a large group of militants active in the fight against rent rises, redundancies and bus cuts. Everybody very much sees this as a chance to build a strong, permanent socialist fighting group in Vauxhall.

Even the younger members of the CP were drawn into the campaign — at first. Then the local hierarchy stepped in, and announced they

would be fielding their own candidate, an extraordinary co-incidence since nobody under the age of 75 can remember the last CP candidate in a local election in Vauxhall.

The campaign began with a stall in the local market, organised by the women's sub-committee of the campaign. A key problem in this area is how to adapt the Socialist Unity programme to local conditions. Abortion and Ireland are very sensitive issues in this strongly Catholic area. Important in other ways are the things Socialist Unity has to say about pensioners, youth and workers facing redundancy at Tate and Lyles.

GRANBY/PRINCES PARK

Edna Finnerty, also a local working class woman with a long history of activity in the community, is the candidate and will be fighting on a programme featuring the inner city problems of cuts, racism and housing. Granby contains a large part of Liverpool's long-established black community.

FAIRFIELD

Another decaying inner area, this ward was captured by the liberals some years ago, thanks to the incompetence of a defunct and right-wing ward Labour Party. Our candidate is an independent unemployed socialist, Tony Meehan, until recently himself a Labour Party member. Tony is likely to face the challenge of a National Front campaign.

Agnes Thompson: Socialist Unity Candidate for the Vauxhall/Sandhills Ward

EVERYONE AT the recent Socialist Unity meeting was thrilled to think that Agnes was going to stand as our local Socialist Unity candidate. There was no question that she is the ideal candidate. She has been involved in the area for years, she knows the problems of the area, like the cuts and the way unemployment affects us all. But the fact that a woman is standing makes it even better. She's so unlike the people we're usually asked to vote for and sees that as a woman she can talk about many of the issues usually ignored at election time.

Agnes has taken on a big task but there are a lot of people who are going to support her. A group of women are meeting to discuss how the campaign should relate to women in the area.

Here Agnes writes about why she is standing.

"I just think it is time to try something different"

Why am I putting myself forward as a Socialist Unity Candidate? Even writing that down brings a sickening lurch in my stomach. Why am I scared? It's just that for me, a working class woman, I seem to be entering into something in bureaucracy terms that I don't know much about. For me it's like coming out into the open and laying myself open to abuse and everything else that gets thrown at you when socialism is mentioned. I have four children, a husband on the docks, and myself

cleaning offices. Two of my eldest children have been on the dole since they left school, one for seven years and the other for three. I have seen over the last few years my living standards falling. The rents have quadrupled in the ten years I have lived in this house, electricity bills are soaring and the price of feeding my family is so much that I can't afford to give them all the meat and fresh fruit they should have.

I see no future for my two youngest children. I find it increasingly hard to keep them clothed, and this is with my husband working. I don't know how people on the S.S. cope, it must be very hard and frustrating.

I have been involved in community action covering a wide range of events, rent strikes, demonstrations about the cuts in hospitals and busses and many more struggles and I've seen a lot of defeats and a few victories. We all know what is happening to our lives and the way we are being fobbed off by the promises of the politicians.

Only 14% of the people bothered to vote on the last Council election, which goes to show that people are apathetic about everything. We see hospital closures, bus cuts, unemployment at one and a half million, prices sky high, ale and ciggies up, youth clubs left standing because there's no money to open them. Kids on street corners aimless, with nothing to do and getting into mischief. Houses freezing cold, damp smelling bedrooms not enough money to keep them warm. Never out of the doctors with chest colds and runny noses, running from shop to shop looking for the cheapest cuts of meat that is sometimes inedible. I have been married for 22 years and I have seen governments come and go with all their promises.

I see the unions, once the "champions of the working class," cowering down to a labour government. I see our lives taken out of our hands and put into nameless faces in Brussels and the Multinationals. Working men and women afraid to strike with the criminal trespass laws which will make it even harder for pickets and sit-ins. The Thatchers of this world with her racist remarks, turning black against white and vice versa. National Front policies playing on peoples fears all being played off one against the other. I could write lots more, the discrimination against women, equal pay policies that are a farce, and many other things that affect our lives, but I won't go on.

I just think it is time to try to do something different and I think there is a way by amalgamating all groups and individuals who feel the same as we do.

Agnes Thompson



Last month a health worker from Liverpool wrote about what she thinks a health service under socialism should be like. This month we have a reply from a member of Manchester Big Flame who has recently been a patient in her local hospital.

Like the writer of the article last month, I am also a health service worker, having worked in that service for the last 22 years, from a cadet nurse to a sister, working in the Outpatient Department.

But more recently I have spent almost three months on the other side of the bed as a patient on an acute surgical ward.

The experience I gained as a patient really frightened me and made me think how an ordinary working class patient with no medical knowledge must feel in this situation. Very frightened, I would say. Patients were signing operation consent forms and often the operation had not been fully explained to them, they had no one to turn to. Even the domestic was too busy, due to staff shorta-

ges she had to clean two wards.

I spent many a long hour explaining to patients what was happening to them. Some patients, myself included, had to wait up to four hours for medical care to be carried out because the staff either had no time or could not cope. To have a major operation is an extremely traumatic experience to come to terms with, let alone to be demoralised by having inadequate care.

Some women on my ward were without visitors due to the inflexible visiting times because their men worked shifts or they could not come because they could not bring the kids.

One woman needed to come in for emergency surgery and because she was a single parent had to spend several hours getting her

kids into care, thus delaying her admission and entailing her having a more extensive operation..

Food in hospital is boring. Patients on diets are often getting food not suitable for that particular diet.

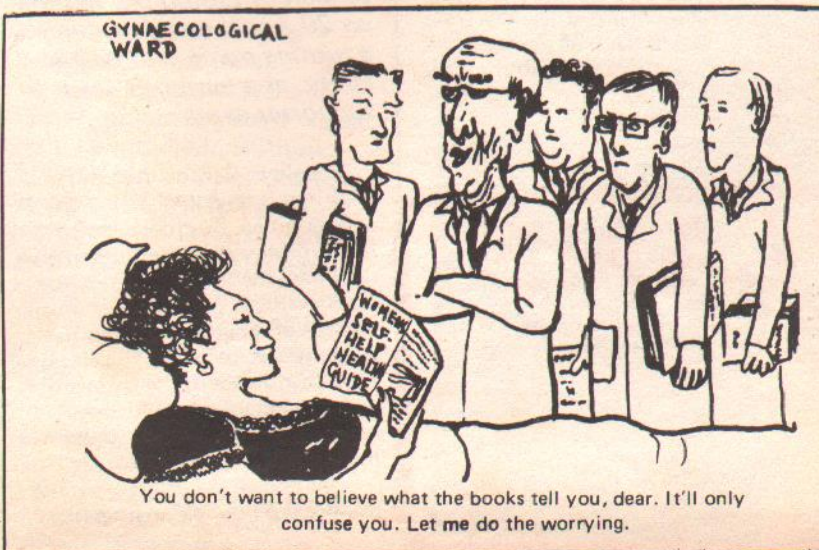
The patient's day is a boring one. Up at 6 in the morning till early evening, with very little to do. The hospital staff are frustrated with their lot, nurses haven't the time, through lack of staff, to give the care they would like to their patients. Domestic staff are having to cut corners off their work when they often have to cover another ward.

The Socialist Health Service I would like to see includes hospitals run by committees consisting of representatives of all grades of hospital staff, and the people who use the health service.

— for the well being of the hospital staff, I would like to see occupational health centres open 24 hours a day and carrying out cancer screening on all women.

— 24 hour nurseries for the pre-school kids of workers.
— Centres that older kids can attend in the school holidays.
— For patients especially one parent families, I would like to see Reception centres set up within the hospital to care for their children.

In a Capitalist society, the NHS pays millions of pounds for life saving and diagnostic equipment. The companies can charge huge sums just because they know we need the machine. Under socialism factories would turn to making socially useful products, like much needed hospital equipment, on a no profit basis. They would make as many as were needed.



BIG FLAME

STALEMATE AT GARNERS

The Garner's Steak Houses strike will soon be entering its 3rd month. The workers who, before the strike were working a 55-hour week for £28 basic, no sick pay, compulsory overtime, and no security of employment, are still out.

SO WHAT'S NEW?

The situation has reached a stalemate. Cyril Margolis, the owner, is known to want the strike to die 'a natural death', and is playing a waiting game. This is probably his trump card, because both funds and morale could run out in time.

The situation looks bleak: Already two strikers have been made homeless due to rent arrears that have grown up during the strike. The state is using the DHSS as a strike breaking force, denying even supplementary benefit to single male strikers. And the TGWU strike pay - only £6 each a week - obviously doesn't go very far.

The resounding trade union support promised at meetings has so far failed to materialise. Nor has the backing of supplies been effective.

But the strikers' morale is still high. Pressure seemed to be coming from an unusual quarter the other day when the *Daily Telegraph* carried a front page article - quite unprovoked - that was sympathetic to the strike.

The strike at Garner's, like that at Grunwicks, contains a lot of lessons. It has shown that in fact immigrant workers, far from being a weak link, are in fact a strong link in the struggle. Despite the intense exploitation and insecurity of employment they experience they have taken up issues strongly.

The strikers have a *double fight*. Against the bosses, and against reformist and racist ideas within the union.

After the collapse of the mass struggle around Grunwicks many people feel unenthusiastic about supporting what seems to be a very similar strike. But it was precisely because there was mass support for the Grunwicks strike that a lot of problems - the organisation of the pickets, the relationship between picketers, the strike committee, and the union - became clear to a vast number of people, many of whom had not been involved in supporting workplace struggles or with a union before.

Also during the days of mass picketing working links were forged between women's groups, gay groups, squatters groups, etc., and the strikers and the unions. If those links could be strengthened and developed as a framework for coordinating struggles, we would have gained a very useful weapon.

● Last demonstration down London's Oxford St by Garner's workers before the Metropolitan Police Commissioner's ban came into force. (Andrew Wiard, Report)



The last meeting of the strike committee made the following decisions:

1. The strikers will not return to work.
2. To press for blacking to be carried out as much as possible.
3. The other unions must be approached officially by the TGWU for their assistance.
4. A liaison committee should be set up for the purpose of mass picketing.
5. Picketing is to continue.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

It's up to us now to help the strikers force the management's hand. The strikers need a lot of support on the picket line and in terms of funds. They want to start mass picketing at weekends.

What they especially need is for groups to take responsibility to regularly join a picket at a particular restaurant at a particular time every week.

1. Get your local group - union

branch, women's group, men's group, gay group, Socialist Unity group, etc., to make a regular commitment to a particular branch's picket.

2. Form a local Garner's support group to spread information, coordinate picketing, raise money, etc.

3. Organise a benefit if possible.

4. Fly-post posters in your local area to raise support.

And finally: phone the Strike Committee, at 01 - 240 1056, c/o T & G, Room 84, 12/13 Henrietta Street, London, WC 2.

FIRE BOMBING

There's no proof that the National Front firebombed the Afgan's house in Longsight, Manchester. It could have been a thoughtless prank. More likely, it's the logical result of the Front's anti-immigrant campaign. With their march through Longsight last October - secretly planned with Chief Constable James Anderston - and their racist graffiti, the fascists have encouraged attacks like this.

BAD WIRING

Until March 7, Mr and Mrs Afgan and their 5 children lived at 92 Duncan Road, in Longsight, Manchester. Their house, the end of a row, adjoins an empty building, and the windows were often broken. In 1973 Mr Afgan began to tell the police about stone throwing and a smashed door. He asked the corporation to fence off the lot next door; they put up a 'No Trespassing' sign instead. Last year, there was a fire at the back door, where Mrs Afgan saw 'NF' written. The house was robbed three times. The police never came to visit.

On March 7, at 7 pm, while Mr Afgan was at work on the buses, there was a knock at the front door, but no caller. At the second knock, Mrs Afgan went out to look around, at which point the back window was

smashed and the back room went up in flames; soon half the house was gutted. Upstairs her son Javid Iqbal, age 6, was asphyxiated; he is now speaking, but not yet walking, after 3 weeks in a coma at Pendlebury Children's Hospital, where he will stay for several months.

On March 8, the Manchester Evening News reported the 'unexplained' fire. Later, the Chief Fire Officer sent a report to the Pakistan High Commission in Manchester. Mr Afgan is a naturalised British citizen but he never received the report. It was passed to the *Daily Jang*, which wrote that the fire was due to faulty electrical wiring.

After the fire, the house was robbed again. The police came to take fingerprints, but also said anyone could enter a burned house. They are 'investigating', and Mr Afgan says that two witnesses have spoken to them about a group of youths seen next to the house just before the fire.

The family has stayed with friends, but is to get a temporary Council house. When their own house is repaired, the Corporation expect the Afgans to move back!

Support for the family has come from the Asian community, the TGWU & union members in SEL-NEC, and local anti-fascist groups. The Afgans are also especially grateful to the firemen who rescued Javid and the staff of Pendlebury Children's Hospital.

LAMBETH SOUTH (BY-ELECTION) VOTE JOHN CHASE SOCIALIST UNITY



John Chase, S.U. candidate, speaking at Socialist Unity meeting in Brixton. (Lawrence Sparham, IFL)

THE BY-ELECTION in Lambeth Central, South London caused by the death of Marcus Lipton MP (voting on 20 April) could well mark a turning point for Socialist Unity, as a local campaign supporter explains.

Lambeth Central includes one of Britain's largest West Indian communities, Brixton. In this typically depressed urban area, unemployment is double the national average. Housing, schools and social services are all on the verge of breakdown. The National Front candidate in the by-election will, predictably, be allotting responsibility for these ills to the West Indian community.

The fascist campaign is bound to raise the political temperature

in Brixton. Blacks, who generally live in the most neglected housing, last year discovered that the council has long been placing black families on the worst estates, whilst reserving the best estates for whites.

Young blacks are subjected to systematic police harassment. Suspicion of loitering laws mean that police can make an arrest on the grounds that they suspect someone is **thinking** of committing an offence. People have been arrested waiting for the bus. Add to this the recent parliamentary report calling for tougher immigration controls, and it's easy to see why the black community in Brixton feels none too secure. The aim of the National Front campaign is to organise whites to harass blacks still further, and not simply in Lambeth Central, because this by-election will receive national coverage.

THE LEFT DIVIDED

The Socialist Unity Campaign has started well. 100 or so independent militants, plus various left-wing organisations will be backing the candidate, John Chase, a postal worker and member of the CBC, an independent black group. This must be one of the most strongly locally rooted of all the Socialist Unity campaigns to date.

The problem is that the left as a whole has failed to agree on a unified candidature. John Chase will be competing for votes with two other socialists, one of them black. In addition, the West Indian Block, a loose reformist organisation, which initially gave its support to Socialist Unity, has now thrown in its lot with the Liberal Party. Some of their members, including the prospective candidate have joined the Socialist Unity campaign.

BIG FLAME

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