

If men got pregnant...



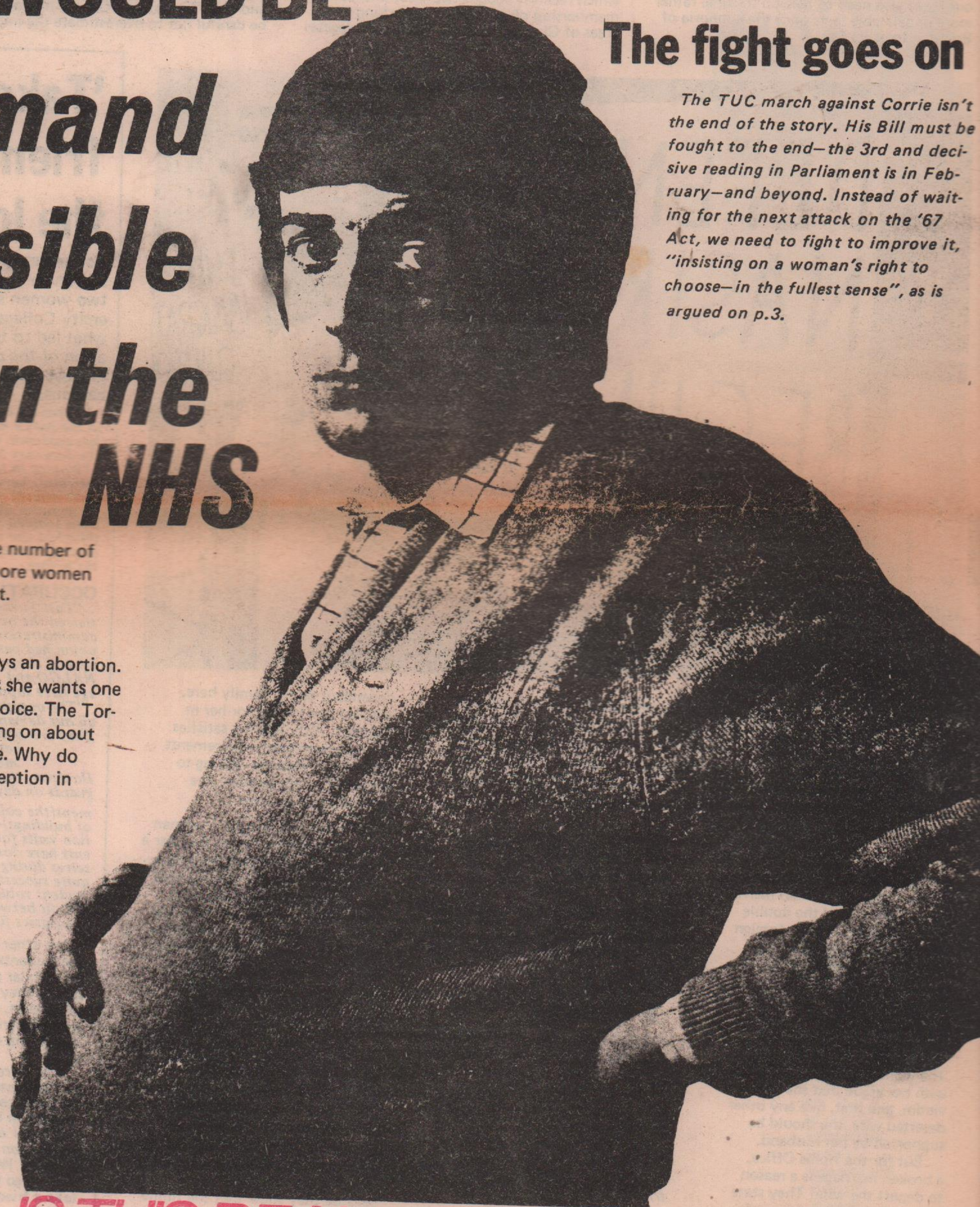
Paper of the revolutionary socialist organisation, Big Flame

ABORTION WOULD BE

- **On demand**
- **Accessible**
- **Free on the NHS**

The fight goes on

The TUC march against Corrie isn't the end of the story. His Bill must be fought to the end—the 3rd and decisive reading in Parliament is in February—and beyond. Instead of waiting for the next attack on the '67 Act, we need to fight to improve it, "insisting on a woman's right to choose—in the fullest sense", as is argued on p.3.



And John Corrie wouldn't be trying to persuade Parliament to make a law restricting the provisions of the 1967 Abortion Act.

And we wouldn't be dusting off and re-using the cover of our November 1977 edition. Then it was James White M.P. who wanted to make abortions more difficult to have. And before him there was Benyon and his Bill.

John Corrie claims that his concern is for the sanctity of life. We say he's a hypocrite because

● before the 1967 Act, when abortion was illegal, women still had abortions. The difference was that then many of them died from their wounds.

ILLEGAL

● the death toll in countries like Portugal and Spain where abortion is illegal shows that restricting abortion rights has

no impact on the number of abortions. But more women will die as a result.

CHOICE

No woman enjoys an abortion. But if she decides she wants one then that's her choice. The Tories are always going on about freedom of choice. Why do they make an exception in this case?

DEMONSTRATE

Zimbabwe

1.30 Speakers Corner
LONDON 11 Nov.

IS THIS REALLY MAJORITY RULE?



"THIS WEEK will have started a tremendous debate with the Left groups...I would like to make us a party these people would like to join. But I have no desire to make alliances with them. When they come into the Labour Party they are immediately absorbed." (Tony Benn in 'The Leveller' on the Labour Party Conference).

TONY BENN'S call for socialists to join the Labour Party is predictable, and likely to fall on fertile ground. In the light of the events of the Labour Party Conference and the fear of the havoc being reaped by the Tories, many militants will undoubtedly be considering joining the Labour Party. Nor can that option be easily dismissed. Only the most pure sectarian did not enjoy Callaghan and his cronies being put on the rack at Brighton, while the Labour Left won important victories on issues like the re-selection of MPs and the drawing up of the Manifesto. There has undoubtedly been a shift to the Left within many constituency Labour Parties and it is certainly possible to enter the Labour Party and work with many other good militants. But socialists in or considering joining the Labour Party also need to face up to some rather more unpalatable facts once the euphoria of Brighton loses its fizz.

The Labour Party conference may have passed democratisation measures, but the debate on policy was non-existent. With the exception of the issue of no compensation of re-nationalised companies, hardly a single

important Left policy was passed. In fact, Conference decisively threw out a key motion calling for resistance to the cuts; Benn himself spoke against plans for extensive nationalisation and the so-called debate on Ireland was the usual disgrace, even more reactionary than that of the Liberal Party Conference. It is all very well to have the NEC draw up the Manifesto, but it is also necessary to have something to put in it!

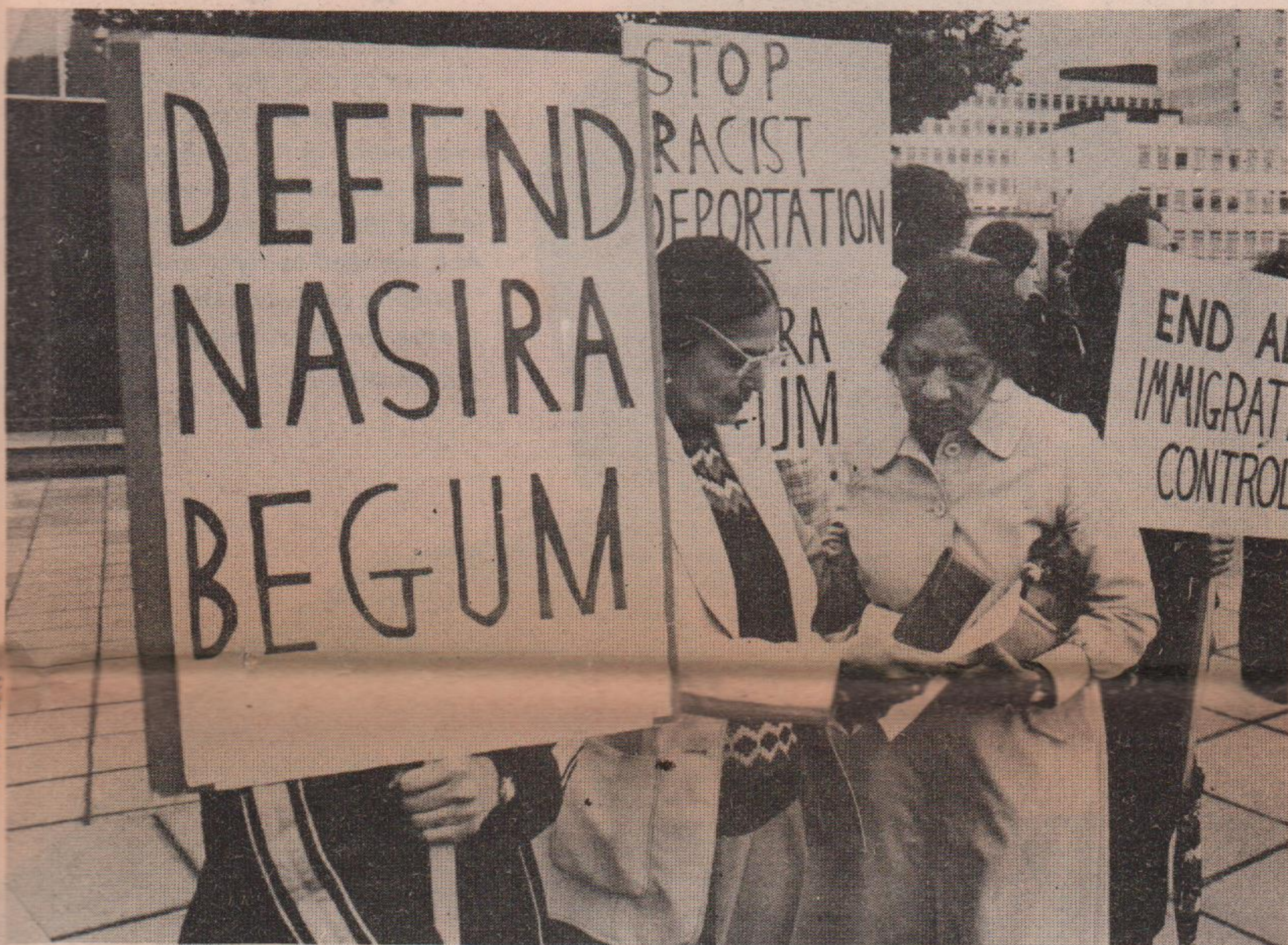
●The Left may be gaining some constituencies, but it is openly acknowledged that Labour is no longer a mass membership party. Membership figures are cooked up to get more Conference delegates. *Labour Weekly* estimates the individual membership figure at 284,000, rather than the official 675,946. Working class membership is shrinking fast. Many of the most decrepit constituency parties are in inner-city areas. Edge Hill party, which recently fought two elections, has a membership of 40 and three working class areas of Glasgow have not sent any delegates

to Conference for the last five years! Many local parties are overwhelmingly populated by left wing 'entrists'. These militants too often assume that Labour's voting support from the working class automatically means that it is the mass party of the working class.

●There is no historical evidence to show that the Labour Party ever was a socialist party or to indicate that it could ever be transformed into one. The contrary is true. The Labour Party has (in Benn's words) 'absorbed' successive generations of Left militants and leaders. Powerful Left tendencies have existed before in the Party—the ILP, the Socialist League, the Bevanites, etc—none have won power, and some of their leaders have been integrated into the moderate leadership of the Party, e.g. Michael Foot and other Tribunites. There is no guarantee that Benn and his followers would not do the same. Benn's 'socialism' is efficiently reformed and managed capitalism. Anyone who tries to manage the system in crisis without a clear break will be tamed by it, as Benn has been in both periods of Ministerial office: in 1966-70 and 1974-79. So, Left Labour militants should be careful not to overestimate the impact of

democratisation. They should remember that many continental social democratic parties well to the right of the Labour Party exist perfectly well without posing a radical challenge to the capitalist system, and with the type of internal democracy the Left wants. Even so, we cannot ignore what happened at Brighton.

To combat the drift towards Labour that will probably take place, it is necessary for socialists outside to involve Labour activists in common campaigns which can make clear the inherent limits of Labour Party involvement in struggles of the working class outside Parliament. In struggles around cuts, unemployment, wages, abortion and many other issues, the Far Left must not only argue for militant, independent working class action. We must also put forward policies which are a genuine socialist alternative to both the Tories and any shade of Labour. Unless we can make clear our differences with Labour and remind people of Labour's dismal record in office, our task will be all the more difficult when we have to mobilise working class resistance to the attacks of the next Labour Government, regardless who the leader of the Labour Party is.



AFTER SEVERAL demonstrations outside the Immigration Office, fifty women and kids picketed the Equal Opportunities Commission in Manchester on October 17th, to protest at the threatened deportation of two Manchester women. Passers-by on their lunch hour were pretty sympathetic, although none of them seemed to know that this was the nasty reality behind our Immigration Laws.

DOUBLE STANDARD
Nasira Begum, who came to Britain in 1976 and then married here, is a victim of the double standards operating for foreign women. The custom in her culture is that the marriage is arranged by the family. But in Nasira's case, three months after the religious and civil ceremonies, the man decided to throw her out of the house. The women who are campaigning with her argue that she is the victim, and that, like any other deserted wife, she should be supported by her husband. But for the Home Office, a broken marriage is a reason to deport the wife! They state that hers was a "marriage of convenience", and it may not have been valid in English law,

ARREST WITHOUT TRIAL

and that in any case her husband no longer lives with her. Therefore, she has no right to remain in England. As Nasira's friends point out, life will be very difficult for her if she goes back. "In our country when you get married, after that you're on your own; your parents and friends will keep their distance."

TOLD TO LEAVE
The other woman, Said Bibi, is

dependant on her family here, with no one to care for her in Pakistan. Although she satisfies all the government requirements for elderly relations wishing to settle with their families, she has been told to leave.

Of course, it isn't only women who get deported. There are over a dozen recent cases that have been publicised in the Manchester area, including Abdul Azad and Gias Uddin (see previous issues of Big Flame). Because the Home Office has absolute power to detain and deport immigrants, without trial, the defence campaigns are the only way to fight for basic human rights. A committee has been set up to co-ordinate these campaigns; it can be contacted through the Manchester Law Centre, 595 Stockport Rd., who also distribute the excellent recent pamphlet: **Immigration Laws Present and Future**, by John Plummer. But cases like Nasira Begum and Siad Bibi are especially important because they show that the Immigration Laws aren't just racist, they're sexist as well.

'Take a friend to the loo.'

As they stamped out badges to sell on an evening protest march, two women students of University College, London, told us what led to the October occupation of the college offices — a protest against rapes on the campus.

"There have been 5 rapes in college in the past 9 months. 4 were in the last academic year, and the other on the Saturday before this term started. "Women in the college (and now men also) have been protesting about these attacks and the lack of security for months. The last rape could have been avoided if the college had re-plumbed the women's toilets and moved them as we had asked 6 months before."

OCCUPATION

"Last Tues-9th Oct at 2:30 pm we started the occupation of the college administration corridors. The student union had passed a motion on security and the proposed occupation. NALGO and NUPE workers at college have supported our action."

"The occupation lasted 8 days and all our demands were basically met. They are—better lighting better alarms more security personnel However, there are no extra security guards on day-time patrol at the moment (the college covers over 7 acres of buildings)—while the administration waits for a police report. Students have done volunteer duty themselves during the day which has been quite successful; also the staff and student volunteers have agreed to do patrols between 5pm and when college classes finish."

Many other colleges have written to the students at UC saying they have had similar problems on their campuses. They have had many letters of support, including letters from women's groups and teachers willing to help arrange self-defence classes.

For more information on how the students organized for better security, contact: Education Welfare Officer 4th Floor of Student Union 25 Gordon St. London WC1. "Don't go to the Loo on your own—take a friend." Notice on the wall at U.C.



Dear Big Flame,

It is with regret, bordering on bathos yet fuelled by fury that your printers take the unusual step of seeking publicity in your excellent columns. But your recent articles on 'Socialist Unity', make some response inevitable.

Ideologically of course we are glad to welcome SU's relative success as you reported it. But, economically, we are angry: angry at being ripped off, and angry at being forced into a role to which we did not aspire — that of debt collector against defaulting left wing groups.

In May 1978 (yes, nineteen seventy-EIGHT) we produced, at the request of the national organisation of SU, a large quantity of posters, printed quickly and cheaply. The cost, £185, has consistently been avoided ever since. And that in spite of 4 letters and 25 phone calls.

Only one of these attempts to recoup our costs has met with any response at all from SU's London HQ. That was a letter, written over 12 months ago, which included such retrospectively unfortunate assurances as "obviously you cannot be left with such an outstanding bill" and "I promise we will clear it off as soon as possible."

Perhaps ripping off alternative presses and consequently exploiting the labour put into them is one of the "more practical lessons we have learned" to which one of your articles referred. We would prefer to be convinced otherwise.

We do not, of course, seek to hold Big Flame responsible for the debt. We have however the hope that some of your readers may feel sufficient sympathy with their ideological colleagues to be activated into remedying this appalling situation — and thus restore to Socialist Unity the credibility it loses through such grubby practices.

Yours sincerely,
Rochdale's Alternative Press

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Send to: BIG FLAME, 217 Wavertree Road, Liverpool 7

paper money

A disastrous month for donations: only a £5 anonymous donation and £30 from a Coventry member: at this rate those of us who work on the paper won't be going further than the Pier Head for our Christmas outing. The one bright spot is standing orders which are up £11.50 to £34.50 thanks to R.K., H.F., R.M., and A.H.

Rush donations to 217 Wavertree Rd., Liverpool 7 and standing orders to Big Flame Newspaper, Lloyds Bank, Water St., Liverpool. Code 30.95.11 Account Number 0008738

Deadlines

In case any of our readers missed the abortion songs, they were on a song-sheet distributed on the demo on October 28th.

December Big Flame hits the streets on November 23rd. The news deadline is Thursday 15th November—features must be in by Saturday the 10th.

ABORTION



The Right To Decide Whether & When We Have Children

It's often difficult while in the throes of an energetic campaign to remember and act on all the richness and complexity of the politics behind the campaign.

RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Potentially NAC, CAC (Campaign against Corrie) and the pro-abortion campaign, by organising around the slogan a Woman's Right to Choose, could open up in a mass way a whole new feminist perspective on how we as women want to live our lives. But in reality this is very difficult. It's not only because fighting for feminism is hard, but because we're forced to put vast amounts of energy into a defensive campaign. We ought to be able to find ways of fusing the positive dynamics of the Womens Liberation Movement with the need to confront the state and manoeuvre with MPs. NAC and CAC raise important questions about how to organise which tend to be avoided in the heat of the campaign — but by remaining unsolved and largely unspoken about, create resentment and alienate many women in the Women's Movement

RAISING QUESTIONS

A recent article in Spare Rib has opened up this discussion, which has certainly gone on in local groups, but has tended to get lost in the welter of activity and organising which have been going in the campaign against Corrie. What is the relationship of men to NAC/CAC? How do we involve the "labour movement" without getting sucked into branch meetings, trade councils and resolutionary politics which don't get through to the majority of members? What is the relationship of NAC/CAC to the women's movement? How can we go beyond the responses we made to the White and Benyon bills since Corrie's bill is likely to get government backing?

...."women in NAC were accused of being male-identified, for drawing women away from consciousness raising groups. My reply then was that I didn't want to raise my consciousness if it was only so that I could stay calm on some backstreet abortionist's table. I still feel pretty much the same, except that I acutely regret the polarisation was ever necessary. Because political activity without constant renewal of our feminist anger, caring and understanding, quickly becomes counter-productive. Yet the women who are left to shoulder the work of meetings and leaflet-writing inevitably have less time for looking at the deeper issues." (October Spare Rib, p 27)

Part of the resolution of the issues would be to ensure that we don't restrict ourselves to "fighting for abortion rights" but examine the notion of a woman's right to choose and integrate it more into our campaigning. This isn't to say that it's not happening, for the leaflets put out by NAC to mobilise for the October 28th demonstration have been sensitive and clear. Yet there is still too little emphasis on a variety of questions which are central to a discussion of abortion.

DEMANDS ON WOMEN

We have to make clear that abortions are only necessary because women are sexually active with men in a situation where contraception is inadequate or men are irresponsible. Because of the impact of the women's movement, women are in some ways in a worse situation than before the "sexual revolution". Women are expected to be sexually active and expected to use contraception — which usually means that men have more freedom and less responsibility than before. It's now a woman's fault if she gets pregnant because she should have known about the pill. To those who argue

in this way, it's irrelevant that many women can't use the pill, and being lumbered with an unwanted kid is the price you have to pay for pleasure. Yet it's these hypocrites who in the same breath moralise about the wonder of human life. It is irrelevant to them that the child is unwanted, it's the just deserts of the sexually "promiscuous"

In August a Scottish sheriff awarded a young single mother only £1 a week maintenance because he considered her careless for not using the pill "In that situation a girl can only have herself largely to blame." He didn't even allow her to explain that she'd been taken off the pill on medical advice.

SEXUALITY

In our campaigning we should also talk more about women's sexuality. The inhibitions that the fear of pregnancy or unsafe contraception put on our sexual expression. The worry that contraception may fail (75% of abortions are due to contraceptive failure) or make us ill. The fact that women have as much right to sexual activity and pleasure as men, on our own terms, where we can control our own bodies. We are not men's playthings, to be sexually used, and then moralised against when we need to have an abortion. If we can open out the campaign to include these issues there may be some who will shy away from our more open feminism, but there will also be others, particularly women in the Women's Liberation Movement who will not continue to see NAC/CAC as external to the politics of the women's movement.

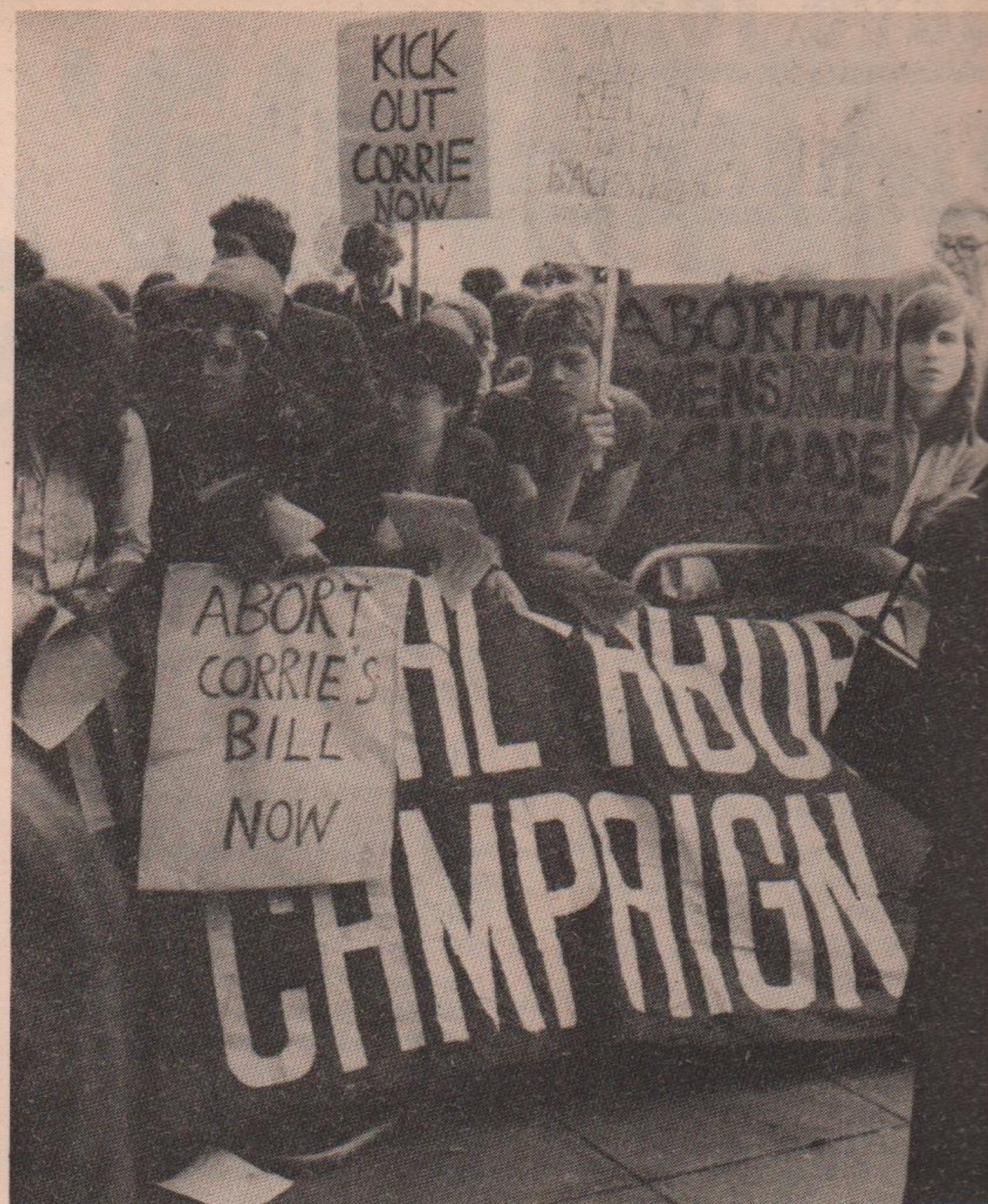


Photo: Hilary Bloom

EMOTIVE ISSUE

It is also true that abortion is an emotive issue, and all too often the pro-abortion campaign has posed abortion in terms of an abstracted "right" which women must have. That's true and essential, but we run the danger of appearing to demand that women have to have abortions. We often avoid talking about the trauma that probably every woman who has an abortion has to go through, even if she knows she wants one and has sympathetic friends/lovers and a caring health service. Anti-abortionists criticise us for being unwilling to accept the results of our sexual activity and claim we see abortion as a matter of fact, easy choice, to make, like popping up the road to the shops. We know this is ridiculous, but how often do we talk about the emotional facts when we campaign for our "rights"? It's important to stress to people that we are not saying that all women should have abortions. Many women in the campaign would themselves not want an abortion. But unlike the moralists we want a woman to be able to make a choice either way,

rather than be dictated to by the moral/political decisions of others.

THE RIGHT TO HAVE CHILDREN

Finally, we must talk about a woman's right to have children and to be able to bear and rear them in a world which does not condemn the vast majority to poverty, bad housing, poor education, ill health. Many black and third world women are forced to have abortions or be sterilised, often in ignorance. Capitalism and the politicians are quite capable of denying one group of women the right to have abortions while being quite happy to force it on another. Their "morality" suits their political ends, and we want nothing to do with either.

The 1967 Abortion Act has to be defended from Corrie's Bill, but we should be clear that the abortion campaign in this country has to be more than a defense of an act which, while a step in the right direction, has severe limitations. The campaign must become a dynamic movement insisting on a woman's right to choose — in the fullest sense.
By a member of Liverpool BF

Whose Right To Choose?

Kick Out Corrie with a 3-Line Whip! No to the Conscience Cop-Out! It was half-way through the Labour Party Conference in Brighton and abortion was still not on the agenda. An angry picket assembled outside the Brighton Conference Centre. Why, amidst all the talk about Labour Party democracy and accountability was abortion not even going to be discussed?

Picketing and petitioning the conference we found quite a lot of local Labour Party and trade union branches supported a three-line whip on the Corrie Bill (which would compell all Labour MPs to vote against it). But the Labour Party National Executive had no intention of opening up the issue for discussion, let alone of allowing conference to take a vote on it. Under pressure the abortion resolution (opposing Corrie) was finally included, the very last item on the agenda. But the amendment on the three-line whip had been omitted.

MP'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

The National Executive reaffirmed the right of individual conscience. That is, MPs' right of individual

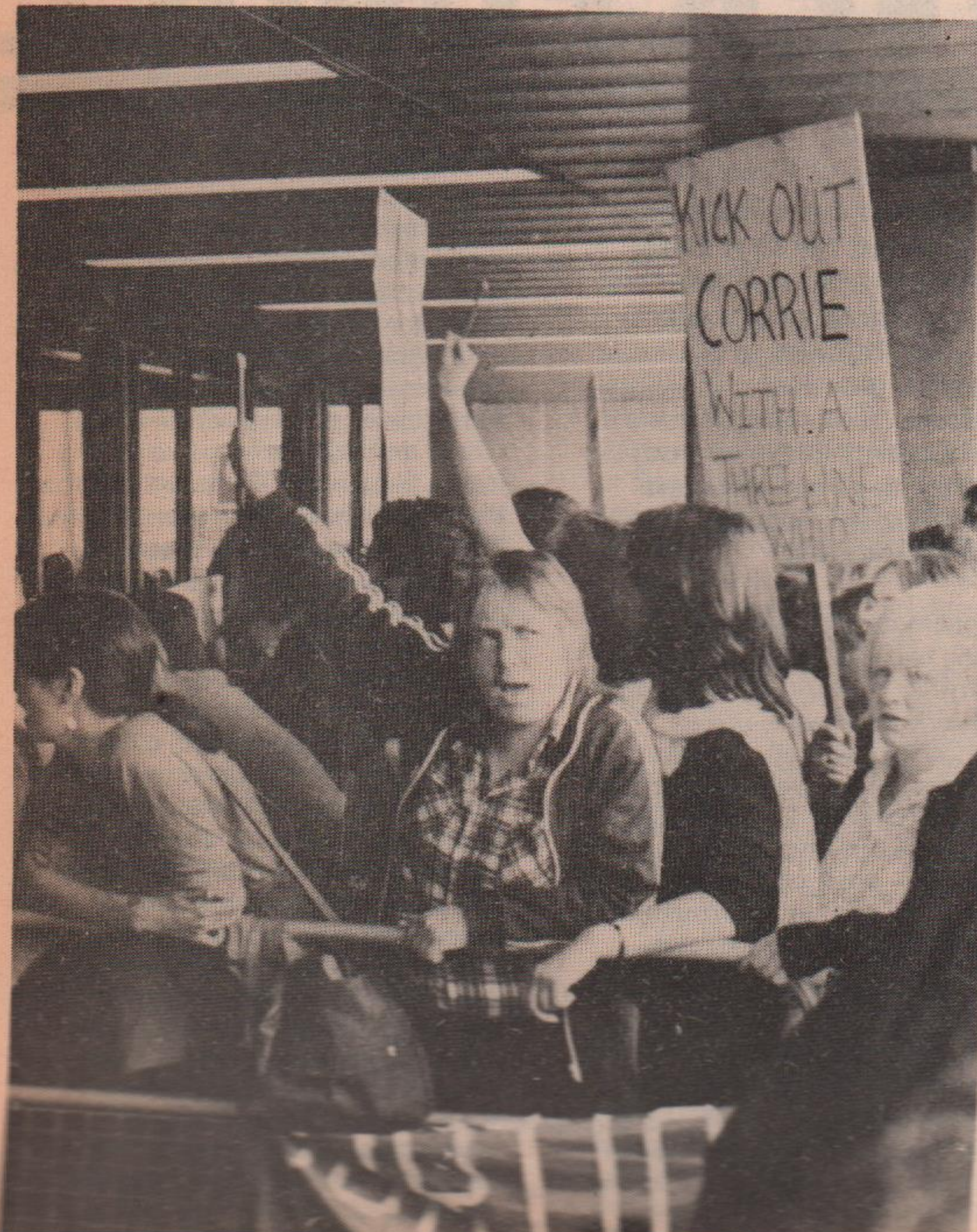
individual conscience have we got as women, if parliament has already made its own decision on our behalf.

The Labour Party's position of "a woman's right to choose" is a sham. Rather it is an M.P.'s right to choose. They seem to hold up the 1967 Act as the perfect embodiment of a woman's right to choose. The 1967 Act is under attack, we must defend it, but it is far from giving women any real choice. It is doctors and the state that choose whether women can have abortions, how they have them, and whether they pay for them or not. And this is all to say nothing of cuts in public spending (initiated by the Labour Party), bad housing,

few nurseries, and so many other factors which make a mockery of any real choice about having children. It is only in the context of our total oppression as women that the demand for a woman's right to choose can have any real sense. And the Labour Party is a long way from any such understanding.

OUR ANGER

The picket of the Labour Party Conference was successful in that it helped force a discussion on abortion. And the individual delegates were forced to confront our anger. But what we need are thousands of people on the demonstration on the 28th October in London. And mass support for a national day of strike action in the week of the third reading. Our anger as women must be translated into mass action, led by women, which the State will not be able to ignore.



Hilary Bloom

Save Jobs, Fight Apartheid

LAST YEAR, ICL workers in West Gorton, Manchester, learned from a Sunday Times article that the company was planning to sell a computer to the South African police department, to administer the Pass Laws. From the model number of the computer, they realised that it was being built in West Gorton. Their angry response left the company with no option but to cobble together two smaller computers from another order in another plant. As part of the campaign, they looked into ICL's operation in South Africa, which went far beyond the Pass Law computer.

Last week, the workers at ICL Dukinfield (Tameside, near Manchester) learned that the whole factory faced closure, with 900 jobs to go.

The plant is used to wire up the printed circuit boards, which are sent to other ICL plants for assembly into computers. One cause for closure is that with changing technology (integrated circuits with larger capacity), fewer circuits are needed per computer, and ICL's market is not growing that fast. The company also claims that the Dukinfield plant is too old to convert to other uses. But what ICL forgot to tell their workers was that the company is currently looking for new production sites, in South Africa!

DOCUMENT

Shop stewards obtained a company document with the answers that managers should give to 41 questions that employees may ask. The document admits that ICL are planning to open up manufacturing operations in South Africa to produce the range of large computer systems now made in the Manchester area. The manager currently leading a team of engineers touring potential sites with South African representatives, is none other than the former Manager of Manufacturing in the North West, responsible for

the Dukinfield factory: Mr J.F. Gilhooly.

FIGHT

Manchester Chamber of Commerce claims that "skilled and conscientious workers" will easily find a job. But the Dukinfield workers are not being conned. A mass meeting voted to fight the closure, and the campaign so far is concentrating on the South African connections and the alternative work that could be done on the same site: manufacturing of other computer parts, under license, which ICL currently imports from the US. All four of the ICL plants in Manchester have banned overtime.

TEMPTATION

Tameside Trades Council has joined the campaign, to build local support (many of the workers live locally). Some of the problems to be overcome are the traditional divisions between staff and manual workers within ICL, and the temptation to sell jobs for the highest price rather than fight redundancy all the way. New technology requires a demand for shortening the working week; but after the long Engineering dispute, workers may not be keen to try again. But the issue of transfer of production to apartheid promises to be one on which all ICL workers can unite.

By a Manchester BF member

Happy Labour Relations on Merseyside

"WE HAVE an extremely happy labour relations situation", says the Managing Director of a Liverpool-based firm of gas-fire manufacturers, Mr L.R. Graham.

Along with an official of the Electricians Union, the EEPTU, he stars in yet another attempt to solve the "inner areas crisis". This time, instead of tree-planting and singing the praises of the small firm, local Councils (in the shape of MERCEDO — the Merseyside industrial promotion agency) have opted for expensive adverts in papers like *The Guardian* (Sept 26th), in an attempt to woo industrialists to Merseyside.

SHORT MEMORY

Unfortunately, Mr Graham appears to have a short memory concerning his "settled and contented workforce". In 1973 his firm, Robinson Willey Ltd., were involved in a bitter strike over union recognition. Management sacked three shop stewards who were in the forefront of the campaign. This provoked an immediate walkout by the whole workforce. Mr Graham mentions that two-thirds of the labour force are female. The same was true six years ago — but they certainly were not contented. As one of the shop stewards told Big Flame at the time,

"They were very angry that the chance of a union and the chance to better conditions for themselves, was taken away from them."

BACK TO THE STONE AGE?

Mr Graham apparently believes in going back a little before 1973 to find his ideal model for labour relations. He says that,

"Industrial groups should be run on the tribal system in manageable units, where employees can identify

themselves with that unit. Each total unit should have a tribal chief who is known to the workforce and is able to communicate easily to all levels of the organisation."

...OR PROGRESS?

Stanley Simpson, the Area Official of the EEPTU, also has his own distinctive solution to Merseyside's problems. He believes that one of the most important parts of his role is,

"persuading our members to accept change. If we are not prepared to accept change and progress there is nothing positive ahead for us."

The problem is, one person's progress, is another's job — as was shown at another factory just down the road from Robinson Willey — Plessey.

Here EEPTU officials have bargained away over a thousand jobs since 1978, despite the anger of the shopfloor against management's massive redundancy plans to achieve "progress" — this time in the shape of a new automated telephone system, TXE4.

By a Liverpool BF member

CAR INDUSTRY:

BL - 25,000 Jobs Threatened

OVER THE last month in the Midlands, the spectacle of full-time officials telling workers to disregard the advice of their stewards and go back to work has become commonplace.

This happened at the mass meetings of the Talbot plants in Stoke and Ryton in Coventry. And at British Leyland, the Confed. (which groups full-time officials of the different unions represented at Leyland) reversed the decision taken by a national meeting of 250 Leyland senior stewards and agreed to recommend the acceptance of a management plan that will "slim down" BL with the loss of at least 25,000 jobs.

LEYLAND

With the Confed recommending acceptance, Leyland management is likely to get a majority of workers workers to accept their plan to restructure Leyland. Over the last week they have been showing the new models to the shop-floor in those plants that will be retained after the "slim down".

Not surprisingly, they have been given standing ovations at these

staged ceremonies. Of course, the new models have not been displayed at those BL plants like Canley (Coventry) and Castle Bromwich (Birmingham) which are scheduled for closure. By holding a ballot of all BL plants, management hope to get a large majority from those plants (e.g. Longbridge with 18,000 votes) which are not badly threatened by redundancies. Their strategy

is to divide BL workers and with the Confed's help, they are succeeding.

NO ECONOMIC SENSE

In fact, management's plan for BL makes little economic sense — it involves the closing of plants like Castle Bromwich which have just had £16 millions of new machinery put in them. It also involves reducing BL to a size at which it will be unable to compete with much larger companies like VW and Renault.

Quite probably BL management know that their current plan is a holding operation and that in a couple of years time they will declare that the slimmed down BL is "unviable" — then, there will be no obstacles to their selling off to private industrialists the money-making luxury car divisions like Rover and Jaguar.

DIFFICULT STRUGGLE

A vote in favour of the management's plan will make things very difficult for the Emergency Committee that has been formed to oppose any redundancies. No doubt there will be resistance from the workers of the plants that will be completely closed if the plan goes through. But unless the campaign can involve all BL workers, it has little chance of succeeding. Last year, when the BL plant in Speke that made TR7s was threatened with closure, the Speke workers asked BL Canley workers to black the transfer of TR7 production to Canley. Canley workers gave no support to the Speke struggle, production was transferred and Speke shut down. Now, TR7 production is to stop and the other lines at Canley to be transferred elsewhere — Canley is for the chop. It's only if BL workers come to realise that they have a common interest that they will be able to fight the tactic of management to pick off one plant at a time.

By a Coventry BF member



Union Place Collective

Demonstration at BL Headquarters in London (above and page opposite)

FORD OVER EUROPE

AT A meeting in Copenhagen at the beginning of October, rank and file Ford workers and shop stewards from Denmark, Holland, Germany, Spain and Britain founded the first European organisation of Ford workers. From all accounts the conference achieved much more than most of those who went to Copenhagen had thought possible — and it looks as though it will lead rapidly to much greater practical solidarity between Ford workers in Europe. The delegation from Britain (twelve workers from Ford plants at Halewood, Dagenham and Langley) was organised by the Ford Workers' Group (the Combine). We talked to Jack Brown, secretary of the Combine about the Copenhagen conference:

Big Flame: What do you see as the most important thing to have come out of this conference?

J.B.: I think the most important result is that we now have a network of militants throughout most of Ford Europe who know each other and who know how to contact each other quickly. That means that if a struggle breaks out in one country, the rest of us can know within a day. We can then put out leaflets to the mass of workers and start putting pressure on the senior stewards and on the unions nationally to actively support the struggle — in all sorts of ways — money, blacking of parts, stopping Fords increasing production to

compensate for what they're losing because of the struggle in the other country. So we have a network to organise urgent solidarity. We've also started a European Ford workers' bulletin (called 'Grip on Fords') which will come out once every two months — produced from Holland — which will contain information about conditions, wage rates, struggles and so on — in the various Ford plants.

BF: Doesn't the union do this kind of work?

J.B.: For years the unions and the senior stewards at Fords here in Britain have talked international solidarity. But they've never actually done anything about it.

Even worse, sometimes they've even scabbed on our fellow workers in Ford Europe — like the year before last when the Belgian Ford workers went on a long strike for the 35 hour week. The unions and the convenors knew about it — but they still allowed Ford to step up production in the UK to make up for what was being lost in Belgium. The result was that the struggle in Belgium was defeated. Needless to say, on the shop floor we didn't even know there was a strike in Ford Belgium.

Right now there's a major struggle going on in Ford Spain. They're the only Ford plant in Europe that works a basic 42½ hour week — they have to work Saturday as part of the ordinary week — not overtime. They're fighting this by banning overtime and Saturday working and by a general refusal of co-operation. Ford has hit back savagely with more than 30 workers sacked recently and over 100 suspended without pay for up to 60 days. They've asked for support from the European Metal Workers Federation — and it's been refused. And they've written to the Ford UK Convenors Committee, and received no reply.

OFFICIALS SAID 'GO BACK'

Talbot-Foremen Get Tough

Big Flame
Interview

AFTER LONG strikes of 12 and 15 weeks, Talbot workers at the Coventry plants of Ryton and Stoke have now voted to go back to work. Again, the decision to return was taken at mass meetings in which full-time officials spoke against the stewards' recommendation to continue the strike.

The return to work was very much on management's terms — for a £75 "lead-in" payment, the workforce has conceded the vital mutuality agreement that existed before the strike. Now, industrial engineers will decide manning levels and timings of jobs — workers will no longer be able to maintain the status quo until a mutually acceptable compromise is reached. In accepting management's offer, the workers' concessions on labour mobility which now even includes transfers from one plant to another!

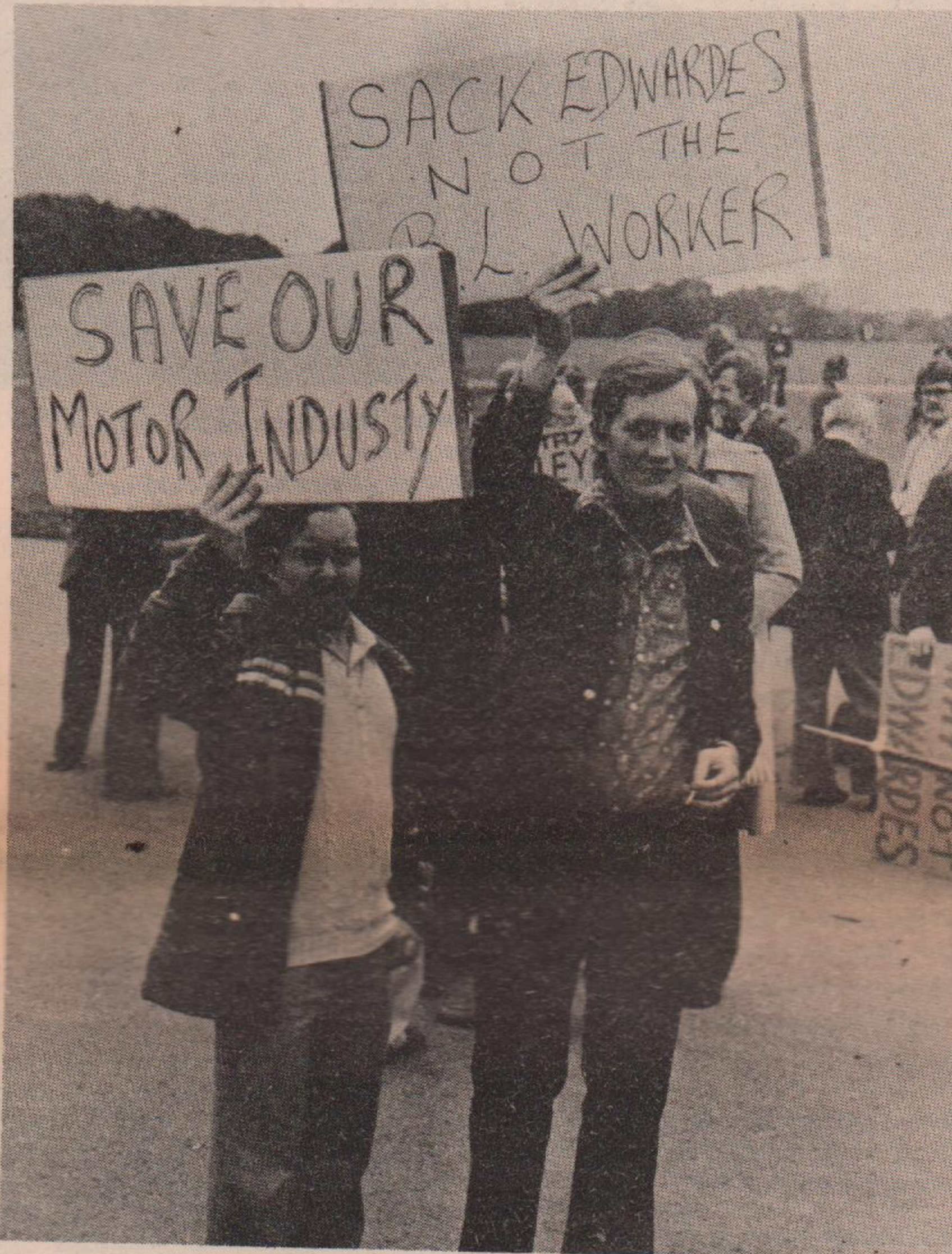
Management are so keen to put the boot in that during the strike foremen and superintendents were given "pep" talks to make sure that they reassert their authority when the strike was over.

Many Ryton workers have already refused to work under the new conditions and jacked their jobs in. And many stewards are demoralised by having to go through a strike in which they did most of the graft and were then disowned by the full-time officials and the shop-floor. Workers' organisation has taken a bad blow at Talbot and it is in very poor shape to confront the national bargaining scheme and redundancies that manage-

ment will try to push through in 1980.

There are lessons to be learnt from defeats as well as victories and it was to find out

what could be learnt from the Talbot set-back that Big Flame talked to a member of the Stoke Strike committee who is also a steward there.



Union Place Collective

Our first mistake was in the organisation of the picketing. We left it up to volunteers, whereas we should have got all the workers involved. And in any case we only stopped goods and not the staff going in — this caused a lot of demoralisation on the pickets.

BF: During the Strike, the Coventry plants did not get much support from places like Linwood. Why?

With its current regrading scheme, Talbot management is introducing wage parity between its different plants — in order to try and introduce national bargaining next year. And in a move towards parity, low wage plants like Linwood stand to gain much more than the comparatively high-wage Coventry plants.

We could turn national bargaining to our advantage if we had national rank and file links to build on. But what we've got at present is a dud combine committee that is nothing but a talk-shop for convenors and senior stewards. What we have to work towards is a situation where there is co-ordination between the rank and file militants to make sure that a national claim comes from the shop-floor and is not imposed on us by the top table.

BF: It must have been a very unpleasant experience for you to

What I learnt in the strike is that it is not enough to rely on the stewards. You see, as a steward you are somehow part of the official structures. For instance at the mass meeting that voted the return to work, the militant stewards were trapped. We were in the position where we acted as a buffer between the full-time officials who were going against our decision and the shop-floor militants who wanted to get at them.

What we needed in that situation was a rank and file group which put us on the spot and forced a confrontation. The strike

has taught me that militant stewards cannot go it alone — they must forge links with the rank and file.

BF: For you, what was the highest point of the strike?

Personally, it was a trip we made to the docks in Newport to prevent a ship with Talbot kits from sailing. We got a lot of support from the dockers and the NUR workers who operate the cranes and were successful in persuading them to black the ship. Of course, by the time we got back to Coventry all hell had broke loose — the company desperately needed to get the kits to Iran. We got a lot of abuse from the full-time officials for taking the initiative of going to Newport!

The next day I spoke to the Welsh UNR organiser who had received orders from higher up to let the ship sail, he had been told "it was causing too much aggro in Coventry."! The ship sailed the next day. And with its sailing disappeared our best chance of forcing management to make concessions in the negotiations.

BF: What do you think will be the situation in the plants when you get back to work?

It's going to be very tough. Local management and the foremen are going to go in very hard — the agreement has given them the powers and they know that the stewards will find it almost impossible to get the men's support for any resistance — after a 15 week strike which got them nothing. Our only hope is to slowly re-build a rank and file presence — the emergence during the strike of a Ryton Action Group is a hopeful sign. And we have to try to link up with other car workers in Coventry, especially workers from the threatened BL plants. If the defeat we have just suffered forces us to break out of our isolation it will have achieved something.

So one of the first issues we're taking up as a result of this conference is what's happening in Spain. We're preparing 10,000 copies of a leaflet about it right now.

BF: How did the conference come about?

In one way it's a direct result of a meeting of industrial workers who're members of the various revolutionary socialist organisations in Europe which belong to the anti-EEC campaign — that meeting also took place in Copenhagen, about four months ago. I went as the representative of Big Flame and met one of the shop stewards from Ford Denmark — a sympathiser of the Danish revolutionary organisation VS. We were promised the support of the various revolutionary organisations for a European Ford workers conference, and we started to try to organise it. The idea won the backing of the Ford Denmark shop stewards' committee and they did most of the practical organisation for the conference. VS also gave a lot of help, and provided the interpreters for the weekend. It's a good example of how revolutionary organisations can help stimulate the development of independent workers' organisation.

That's the way that the conference and the European Ford Workers' network actually came into existence. But I think it's important to emphasise that the conference

the past couple of years, there's been an increasing amount of informal contact — usually over the phone — between militants trying to organise international solidarity for the struggle in their plant. So this conference brought together something that was growing up quite spontaneously anyway.

BF: Have you any examples of that?

JB: There's a couple of good examples. During our long strike against Callaghan's Phase Four Incomes Policy last year, a strong link was formed between militants at Ford Langley (the truck plant near Slough) and militants in the union at Ford Amsterdam (the only other Ford truck plant in Europe). The result was that Ford Amsterdam workers raised more than £2,000 for workers on strike at Langley, and passed on crucial information about how parts were being smuggled round the Langley picket line to Amsterdam. Also during that strike, some workers from Ford Germany came over on a visit to Dagenham, just to find out what was going on.

And in January of this year, Ford workers in Denmark were involved in a major struggle against their Social Contract — agreed between the unions and the Government. In their case, they won support from Ford Daventry — the parts warehouse in the Midlands — where workers sent out wrong parts to Denmark. This action turned out to be the straw that broke the camel's

BF: What are the future plans of the European Ford workers' network?

JB: We passed a number of resolutions at the conference. One against import controls as a solution to unemployment. We realise that jobs cannot be defended in one country

and against all manifestations of racism.

But probably the most effective decision we reached was to launch a major campaign for the 35 hour week throughout all Ford plants in Europe "with the aim of working towards co-ordinated action through-



Ford workers at Langley demonstrate their feelings during last winter's strike

at the same time you're trying to build up international solidarity. It's a nonsense. Another resolution committed us to a fight against all attempts to exploit or harass immigrant workers — which means a fight against the immigrants

out Europe on the demand and secondly to work towards forcing a conference of official shop floor representatives to achieve this end.

The point is this. Ford are adamantly opposed to the shorter working week and that's why they

will only win the 35 hour week by fighting together.

And to launch this campaign — leading we hope to action within a couple of years — we're holding another, bigger conference of

Nottingham Nurseries Fightback

SUDDENLY IT'S commonplace to see six or seven hundred women marching through Nottingham city centre, waving banners, singing and shouting. They are protesting about the massive cutbacks in nursery provision threatened, which would mean the closure of two day nurseries and, through the loss of 246 jobs, a sizeable reduction in nursery places.

LOBBY

2,000 people opposing the Notts County Council spending cuts lobbied a full council meeting in mid-October in County Hall. Despite this massive show of public feeling against reduction of services and loss of jobs, the cuts went through. That is the kind of Council the nursery campaigners have taken on.

But theirs is a very militant campaign: with road blocks, mass meetings, and stormy pickets of Council Committees. In turn, the mothers, the nursery nurses and their teachers have organised action and supported each other's initiatives. Central to the campaign has been the enthusiasm of the mother's Save Our Nurseries group. The County Council hardly knows what's hit it.

PRIORITY

However, the campaign has its problems. One is that since for most mothers you have to be a "social priority" to get a place for your child, the campaign tends to focus on the needs of the supposedly inadequate mums first - a demand for nursery provision for all would unite more people. Secondly, the County Council is quietly sacking a nursery nurse here and a nursery nurse there and because most of them are very isolated, it's difficult to know what to do about this creeping unemployment.



Big Flame interviewed Carol and Margaret about how they saw the Save Our Nurseries campaign. Parts of this interview were also printed in Nottingham Trades Council Cuts Bulletin.

WHY NURSERIES?

Big Flame: Why are nurseries needed?

Carol: Nurseries are a great necessity because they cater for the

underprivileged children, from one-parent families and the like. Overactive children, for example, are in danger of being battered. They need 24 hour supervision, which one person is not capable of giving. In the event of having a nursery, the strain is taken away from you.

Margaret: Nurseries are very necessary for all children. They give a lot of stimulation. Nurseries should be available to every child, not just the under-privileged.

Carol: Also, it gives the children a good start in life. . . things like educational toys, that we could never afford. Children can relate to one another. They become more forward, and the future generation will be better. We should be aiming for a better life.

DIRECT ACTION NEEDED

Big Flame: How have the mothers been organised?

Carol: We still have to plug at them . . . some mothers are lethargic but the majority have got the drive.

Margaret: We spoke to a meeting of 80 people at a school today and got a marvellous response. It was sparked off by a nursery nurse who has been working there for three years being given notice to quit. And the kind of jobs she's being offered are nothing like as good - cleaner, domestic, kitchen assistant.

WOMEN AGAINST THE CUTS

Big Flame: What do you think about the attitude of people in authority towards women in recent months?

Margaret: Terrible! Their policies are trying to get us back in the home, they want to tie us to the kitchen sink. It's ridiculous, for example, to say that only women are capable of bringing up children.

Carol: Nothing cheers me up more than seeing a man with a pinny on - or pushing a pram.



Photographix

Margaret: Girls are given dolls to play with when they're little, boys are given footballs and guns. That is where you get the distinction. Nowhere else. Bringing up children should be a responsibility shared by both partners.

Carol: Women go out to work bring up a family and keep a home.

Big Flame: Do you feel that the campaign being led by women has given women locally more confidence?

Carol: Oh yes. We're made to feel that we're inadequate and we're stupid and that our place is at the kitchen sink and that was it. But we've shown them all.

Margaret: We will not be patronised. It's been said that there must be a man behind these women, pulling the strings. There isn't. It was a spontaneous reaction by the mothers.

Big Flame: How did the ball start rolling?

Margaret: I think in the first instance, the demonstration at the

County Hall, the heckling from the gallery, was a necessity. Because otherwise we would never even have had a meeting with Councillor Borrett. We've had a hell of a lot of criticism about that and blocking Trent Bridge.

Carol: I don't regret it at all. Several mothers have said it was unnecessary, but it wasn't. It was letting them know we want some action, and we want some action quick.

Margaret: We didn't get much aggravation from the general public, in fact, when blocking the road, 99% supported us. It was a very organised thing. No-one can accuse us of being a disorganised rabble.

FIGHT ANY GOVERNMENT

Big Flame: Where have such criticisms come from?

Margaret: A lot from the Conservative Party. It was them that made it political. I definitely was unbiased. And I still say, that even if it was the Labour Party that was trying to implement these

cuts, I would have done exactly the same. If they do get back in and carry on making cuts just the same, we will carry on fighting them.

Big Flame: What has your attitude been to the nursery nurses whose jobs are threatened?

Carol: The mothers are right behind them and they are behind us.

Big Flame: What are the prospects if the nurseries are closed down?

Carol: Well, now, when your child is accepted at a day nursery, it lifts your depression. If you lose your place, you can slide back to being really depressed - or worse.

Big Flame: What next?

Margaret: We've got meetings and demonstrations planned for the future. I've enjoyed the campaign so far, but would have preferred it to be a campaign not to keep nurseries open, but to open more nurseries.

A SPEAKER from the Yemeni Workers' union addresses the largest political rally in Sheffield for four years. About 2,500 people from all over South Yorkshire gathered last month to hear denunciations of the cuts in public spending, and pledges from Arthur Scargil of industrial action should the Government take measures against a Council refusing to implement the cuts.

What was less clear was how many councils would actually refuse to implement, and if they did, what form that refusal would take. All the councillors who spoke saw the answer as jacking up the rates by 50%.

The meeting was also marred by a couple of appalling sexist jokes from the platform and the absence of a creche. On the bright side however, it was good to hear Scargill speaking up for women's rights, and there was unanimous backing for the national lobby of Parliament against the cuts on November 28th. The biggest applause came for speakers who denounced the leadership of the previous Labour Government, and warned against a repetition of Callaghan and Wilson next time.



Big Flame Photo

FIRE BRIGADE UNION NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION NOTTINGHAM 4th October 1979

Eight and a half thousand members of the Fire Brigades Union, firemen, officers, and control operators marched through Nottingham on 4th October. Coming from every brigade in the country they were protesting against proposed cuts in Nottinghamshire's Fire Brigade budget. The demonstration was a slap in the face for the Tory controlled County Council which has issued 22 redundancy notices to wholtime firemen. It must also come as a morale-boost to F.B.U. members in Nottingham, not traditionally a strong area.

The fact that twenty-five percent of the F.B.U. membership turned out for the demonstration is a good sign, but it must be quickly and firmly established that mere Tory-bashing without a deeper look at the last 2-3 years of F.B.U. history will not be progressive.



Big Flame Photo

FULHAM BATHS ON THE BOIL

"IF THEY get away with this we deserve everything we get. The Labour Movement has to get off its knees and fight for its living standards."

"The first they attack are the poor, the old and the very young. These people are those who are denying your children the right to swim, and the old their home helps. It's always the poor, the old and the young who are attacked because they are defenceless."

These quotations sum up a campaign which for sheer energy and verve has little match.

When the council tried to close Fulham Baths in South London on the pretext that the structure was dangerous, they provoked a massive and original campaign involving trade unionists, local residents, old age pensioners and school children to save a swimming pool, warm baths and laundry from closure. The 16,000 signatures collected on a petition to save the baths and the militancy of a public meeting where pensioners brandished walking sticks at

councillors and school children addressed 300 people about the effects of closure, gave backing for a takeover of the Baths 24 hours before the Council was due to close it. The baths is now run around the clock by volunteers and all the services are being kept going.

BLITZ

The campaign is not without contradictions — reasons for saving the Baths and supporting the occupation range from traditional working class sticking up for

Fulham amidst memories of the Blitz and the Jubilee to determined efforts to see that the first major local authority cut in the area is defeated as part of the general cuts campaign.

Among the volunteers are pensioners and teenagers, trade unionists, school teachers, home helps.

Enough specialist help has been forthcoming to keep the services working normally. Those who can't spend time in the Baths have been donating tea, coffee, bedding or money. A four page newspaper publicising the campaign has been printed and distributed and the occupation has been reported on TV, Radio, London evening newspapers and the local papers.

Schoolchildren have made posters and written letters supporting the campaign and made up a song which was sung on a protest march against the closure.

STRIKE

Local Authority workers have staged a half-day strike in support of the campaign and threatened further industrial action if anyone involved in the occupation is threatened. Local Tenants Associations have organised children from their estates to come down and use the Baths during the occupation. The first party arrived like the cavalry

Cuts in the Health Service

ARE YOU lost in a sea of cuts and don't know where to turn? Feeling boggle-eyed at the thought of fighting new Tory cuts while still fighting Labour's? Is your optimism about the fight for socialism swindling? Yes? Then read this little pamphlet.

It will force you to step back from the situation and have a long hard think about what we are fighting for when we are fighting cuts.

CUTS AND THE NHS

Cuts and the NHS gives a background to the setting up of the NHS, how important this step has been for working people, but at the same time tries to get to grips with what has been wrong with the NHS from the beginning.

MYTH EXPLODED

It says that the Health Service was nationalised but not socialised. That richer parts of the country and richer people have always benefitted more than poorer areas (especially outside London) and people on average or low incomes.

With very useful examples and facts and figures it goes on to show how the plans, particularly of Labour Governments have not been leading in the direction of a socialist health service. In fact the whole point of the pamphlet is to argue strongly that our fights against

cuts must themselves be a focus for a struggle for a truly socialist health service, available to all, based on need and democratically controlled by all those who work in it and use it.

WEAKNESSES AS WELL

Having said that, the pamphlet also contains serious weaknesses. The first is that within its own context ("to challenge the way the NHS treats us and defines our problems, and for new approaches to health based on our real needs") much more should have been said about health service workers. I would have thought that this should be an essential feature in a pamphlet like this, as they often feel the first brunt of the cuts, and yet often feel powerless to do anything. Yet without a struggle of all grades of health service workers, there will not only be no anti-cuts fight, but also no fight for a socialist health service. Appallingly low wages, a rigid

review

hierarchy of labour, the introduction of bonus incentive schemes for ancillary staff, the various stages of rationalisations of nursing work, understaffing, management-oriented "participation" schemes, chronic understaffing are all essential features of a nationalised "non-socialist" Health Service. The rapid growth in unionisation and the influence of this on the fight against cuts and for better health is not mentioned. In fact I feel it would be quite difficult for many health workers, including the ones involved in the fight against cuts to make the connection between their position and the perspectives of the pamphlet, which is very unfortunate.

MOVEMENT TOO WEAK

The second main weakness is, that having asked the question "why didn't the Bethnal Green campaign succeed?" (p 21, to save Bethnal Green Hospital) the answer in the pamphlet is

not at all clear. I agree that the hospital was run down over a long period of time and that perhaps the campaign didn't define its aims in terms of the needs of the community clearly enough. But it is wrong to leave out the main reasons why the Bethnal Green campaign and most of the anti-cuts campaigns over the last two years or so have not succeeded. And that is that the working class movement has simply not been strong enough, organised enough and powerful enough to defeat what has become a major plank in the policies of both the Labour and now the Tory Governments... the Cuts in Public Expenditure.

CLASS PERSPECTIVE NEEDED

Individual campaigns on their own cannot win this fight. (Which is not to say that there may be some great little successes on the way... the South Wales campaigns, the saving of Bowthorpe Maternity Home in Norfolk etc.) Now it is absolutely true that this fight will be greatly strengthened by a perspective for a socialist health service, and the Politics of Health Group have raised this in an important and dynamic way. But surely a political strategy for defeating cuts must be rooted in a wide-ranging class struggle against cuts and for better health. This will require the taking of indus-

trial action, actions of "civil disobedience", the building of mass campaigns and industrial workers taking strike action alongside public sector workers to bring the maximum pressure to bear on the Government making their policies unworkable?

FIGHTBACK

The Fightback campaign against cuts in the Health Service has begun to launch a New Offensive along these lines to fight for the maximum unity of forces of trade unions, the community, women's groups, tenants etc. etc. which I'm sure the Politics of Health Group, as in the past, will support. I hope that this will involve a more and more open discussion on strategy and who the main forces involved in this are. So that despite failures on the way, if we are resolute, if we understand the long term importance of building our forces from the bottom-up, if we are organised in a powerful national movement with a class perspective to which this pamphlet is an important contribution, we may have a chance of winning.

Fightback can be contacted at: 30 Camden Road, London NW1 tel. 01.485.8610 *Cuts and the NHS* price 50p available from Politics of Health Group, c/o BSSRS, 9 Poland St., London W.1., and left bookshops.

by a member of Hounslow Big Flame and Fightback.



Big Flame Photo



weakness — but this is the first ever occupation of a swimming pool and baths and thus makes history — the cleanest and fittest occupation on record, with midnight swims for those staying overnight!

But more seriously it shows it is possible to occupy a public amenity and continue providing a service to the public.

The next major crisis will be over supplies of oil to keep the water heated: The local Council has asked the major distributors not to deliver.

The Occupation Committee is faced with having enough money to pay for oil but no one willing to supply it.

by a member of Fulham Baths Occupation Committee

Big Flame Photo





Some of the Patriotic Front delegation at the Lancaster House Conference

ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE

Meanwhile in Africa..

WHILE PIK Botha, the South African Foreign Minister, complains of the slow pace and dangerous direction of the conference, the fact is that the situation is changing very quickly in and out of Zimbabwe. The last few weeks have seen the Patriotic Front (PF) accepting 20% white MPs for ten years, the British proposing to leave whites holding the land and the present civil service controlling the key ministries, more raids on economic targets in Mozambique and Zambia, and the growing commitment by South Africa to support Muzorewa and General Walls in war. Carrington has come out in favour of lifting sanctions "as soon as is practically possible", which probably means Nov 15th. The odds are increasing that the Tories will try to make a deal with Muzorewa, while South Africa takes on economic and military responsibility for the defence of the phoney government sell out.

CONFERENCE

The Conference came close to breaking point over land and the ministries. At present, the 6,000 white farmers have as much land as the 680,000 black farmers. Maize production on the overpopulated African land is only two thirds the 1962 level. White agricultural sales in 1978 were over ten times the black total, because whites have the best land and receive huge government subsidies. Even the British saw that some land would change hands in a new Zimbabwe. But they only offered to help a future government to buy "underutilised land", not the "prime land" in current use. This means that white farmers who received land as a pension, after 1965 for their military service against the guerrillas, would keep their holdings.

TRANSITION

The British also proposed that the ministers heading the Army, police, public service, and judiciary should be chosen from senior members of the civil service; as of now, these are Muzorewa's men. And the chairman of the Public Service Commission would also be Chairman of the Police Service Chairman of Defence, and a member of the Judicial Service Commission. Very democratic!

The Patriotic Front asked that the conference move on to discuss the transition to power (e.g. composition of the police and army during elections) since this would affect the question of the ministries. And, as the British had previously agreed, the Conference would stand or fall as a whole: no Constitution without an agreed Transition. But Carrington moved on with Muzorewa, telling the PF they must accept the Constitution before rejoining the conference, and telling the Tories that "the time for lifting sanctions cannot be far off". Two days later, the Rhodesian army blew up a bridge on the TanZam railway which links Zambia to Tanzania, making the country completely dependent on Rhodesia and South Africa for exporting copper and importing maize. Immediately, General Walls and then Pik Botha flew to London.

STRATEGY

The British have always had three options:
 ● recognise Muzorewa and be damned.
 ● recognise with some international support.
 ● Try to buy off the Patriotic Front.
 The first option appeals to right-wing Tories like Julian Amery, the Anglo-Rhodesian Society, the Freedom Association... Thatcher campaigned on this line, but dropped it under pressure from Carrington and President Carter.
 The third option was tried by David Owen and the Americans after 1976. It counted on splitting the PF, or on a PF government that would allow multinational

THE STRUGGLE WORLDWIDE



One thing our government always assumes is that Southern Africa is not an issue for us; we will leave it to the diplomats, generals and Lord Carrington. But as workers at ICL Dukinfield (near Manchester) found out last week, fighting apartheid is not a luxury to take up after pay and conditions. Suddenly, their factory is closing, and the former managing director has led an expedition to Southern Africa to search for new sites to produce the same products (see this edition). The workers are making this transfer of production a focus of their fight to save jobs.

MANCHESTER

Also in Manchester, 1,000 people attended a Patriotic Front rally on September 28th when Madzimbamuto (ZAPU) and Zvobgo (ZANU) explained the attempts to graft British justice and British parliaments onto the people of Zimbabwe. The meeting raised £1,200 for the PF and another £500 in pledges.

NOTTINGHAM

In Nottingham, the Zimbabwe Solidarity Campaign is organising a benefit with local PF speakers and Peggy Seeger/Ewan McColl as well as other actions to prepare for a national demonstration on November 11th. Of course, we may have to respond more quickly if South Africa intervenes before then to support the Patriotic Front, but the main focus now is to build for a mass demonstration when Parliament debates sanctions.

But, as we know, sanctions can only be imposed by action in the workplace. Anti-Apartheid has a list of British companies in Rhodesia which can help us in local work.

companies to continue mining and farming in Zimbabwe.

Carrington seems to have chosen the second option, although the third is not dead. He wants to recognise a reformed Internal Settlement, strong enough to get Western support and avoid complete rejection by other African states. The question is: why should this be possible now when it never has been before?

SHIFTING

One theory is that with the recession, Western governments are shifting to the right. This is especially true in the US, where the elections are coming up and various Senators have to prove how anti-Communist they are. The Zimbabwe Development Fund (Kissinger's plan to put £1,000 million into a new government) may now be more than the West can afford.

South Africa, on the other hand, is doing well out of the crisis. Gold is over £200 an ounce, and the government is predicting economic growth of 5% per year. And, while granting some form of trade union rights for

black workers (see facing page), South Africa has since April taken a hard line in foreign policy. Raids on Angola are common. SA paid for Muzorewa's election and now funds the war at £1million/day. The right wing gains in the recent bye-elections will make Botha even more committed to the war.

For these reasons, it is just possible that the West will pass on to SA the responsibilities for defending Rhodesia from the PF. In which case the war will go on. Whether or not SA can get away with a direct intervention depends on the Front Line States and the Organisation of African Unity. This may be why the war is now being directed to economic targets in Zambia and Mozambique.

Just now, the PF has gone back into the talks, and the Observer (Oct.21) claims that behind the scenes, the US gave an indefinite promise of money for land compensation. But it is unlikely that the PF could agree to the British plans for supervising elections over a 2 month period. And the threat of more South African involvement is real.

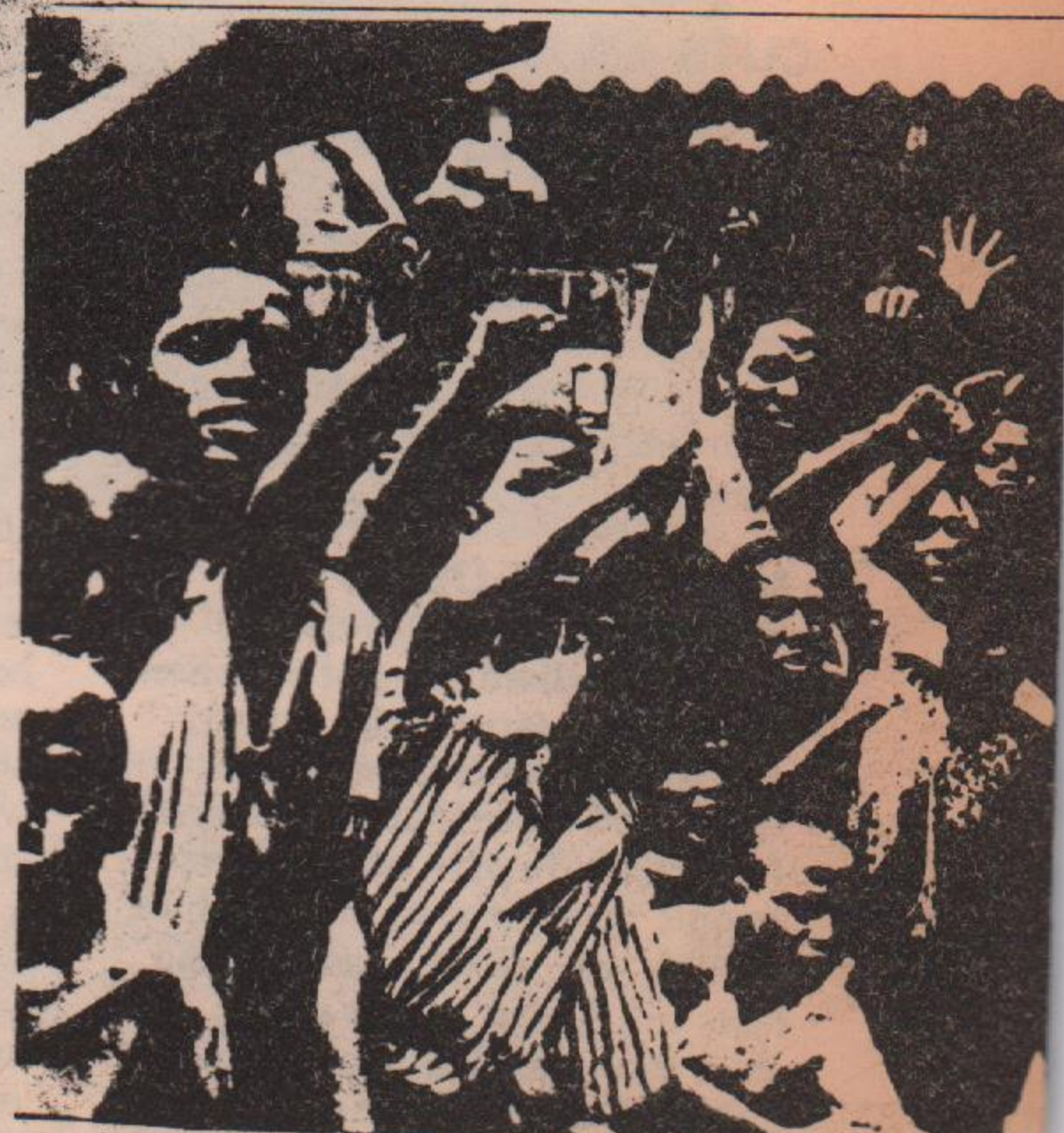
Manchester ZECC Member

ZIMBABWE ON THE BRINK

IN LONDON, the Lancaster House Conference totters on the brink of breakdown. How do the current trade union reforms in South Africa affect apartheid imperialist outpost in Zimbabwe that Muzorewa and Carrington want to create?



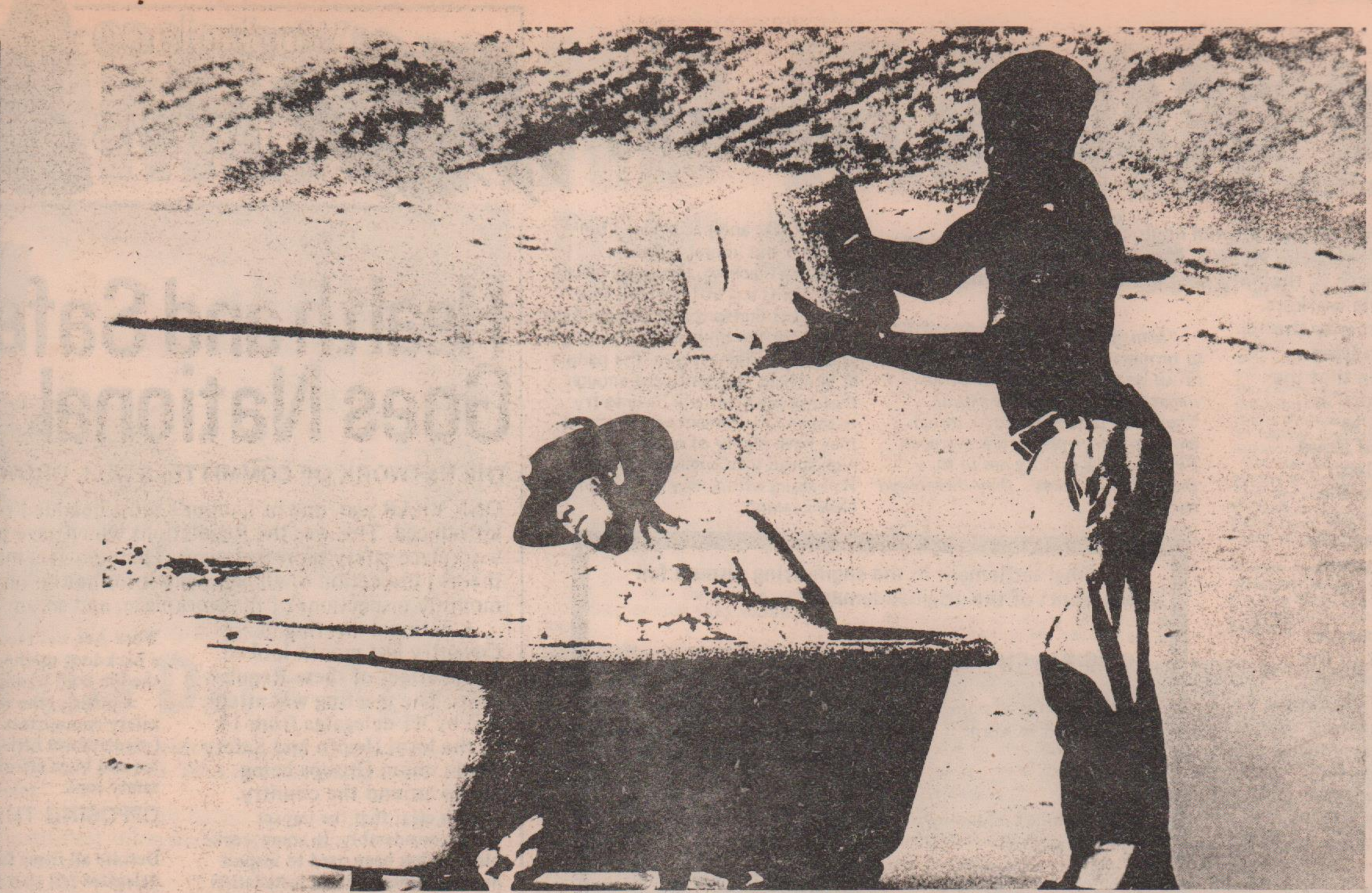
Police break up a SWAPO rally in Windhoek.



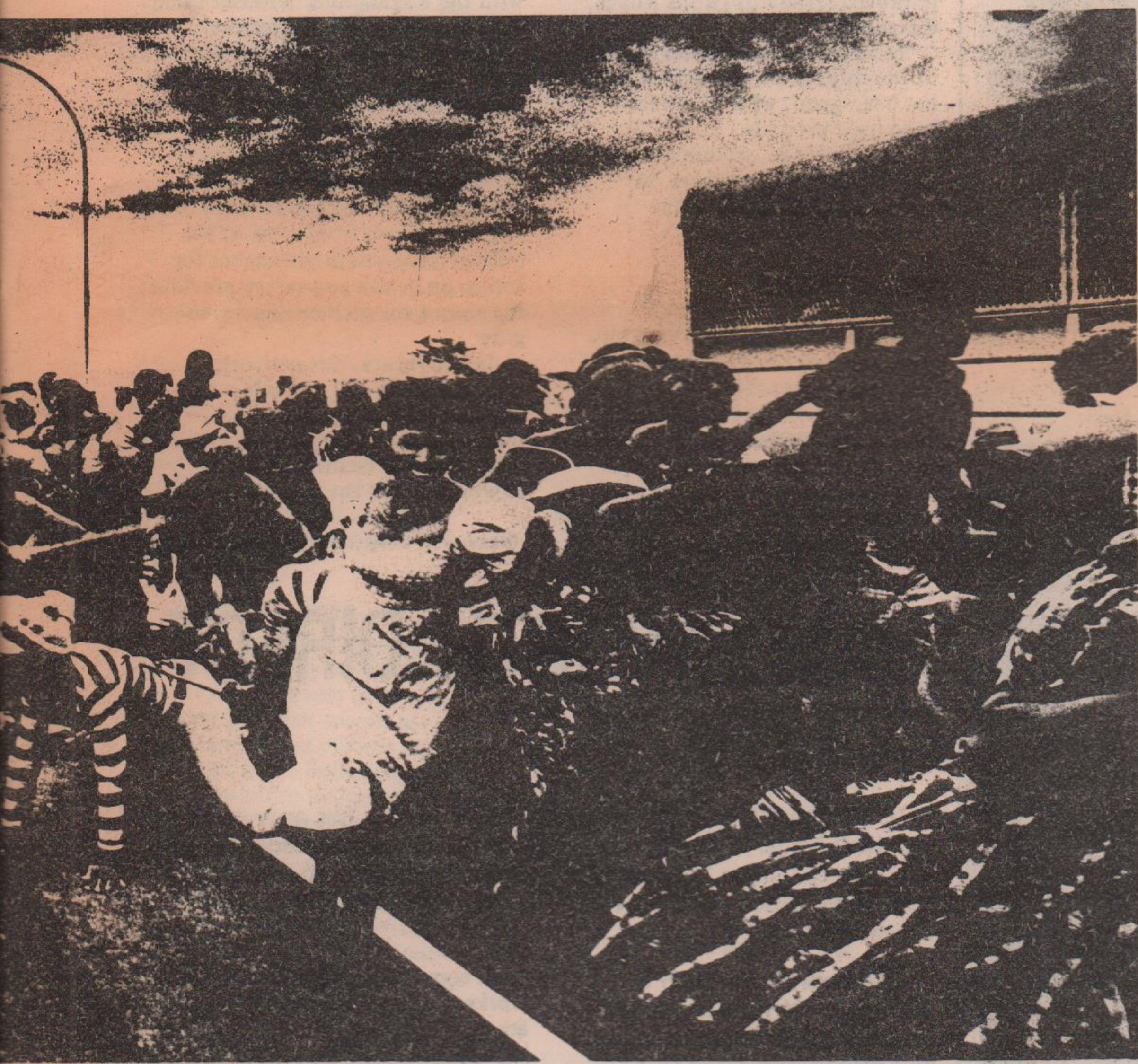
Above: Children protesting in Soweto. These two portable exhibitions: 'Namibia in Struggle under Apartheid', available for around £5 each



What is the strategy of
id's will to defend the



A South African ranger in Namibia being showered by his black aide. South African government policies are enforced in the territory by expatriate white officials and civil servants, the army, police and the security police. ABC Press, Amsterdam



Frank Spooner Pictures



otos form part of
and 'Children
from Publications

Department, International Defence and Aid Fund, 104 Newgate St., London EC 1A 7AP.

TRADE UNION REFORMS? *S. African cosmetics*

IS THE South African government moving towards a "liberalisation" or even dismantling of apartheid? Not a chance. But there *are* changes taking place which we should understand. The Pretoria regime has recently decided to introduce trade union rights for Black workers and is considering amending the system of land tenure which currently gives whites the best 86% of the land. These changes have taken some liberal opponents of apartheid offguard. It is important that we, as socialists, should be able to explain these changes in terms of the overall dynamic of South African capitalism.

THE LIBERALISATION
Earlier this year a commission specially appointed by Pretoria to look into Black trade unionism reported back. The main recommendations of this report, the Wiehahn report, have been accepted by Pretoria:

- There is to be official recognition of selected Black trade unions (including trade union rights for "migrant" workers).
- Some aspects of the job reservation system will be abolished. This system currently excludes Black workers from better paid and more skilled jobs.
- Training and apprenticeship schemes are to be introduced for urban Blacks.

In addition, other changes have been made or are being contemplated in some of the minor discriminatory laws affecting Blacks.

PRETORIA'S NEW STRATEGY

The "liberalisation" makes no changes which are to the benefit of Black workers. Rather, it is part of an overall strategy for intensifying the exploitation of Blacks. The recognition of Black trade unions, if South Africa has its way, will dampen rather than increase militant struggle, for the recognition will be on Pretoria's terms. Only unions which do not engage in political activity will be recognised, allowed to negotiate with employers and have union dues automatically deducted from worker's wages. New penalties for non-recognised unions will virtually smash the more militant unions. Similarly, the partial abolition of job reservation is not in the interests of Black workers. Job reservation laws affect only some 2% of Black workers. The real barrier to Blacks are the closed shop agreements negotiated between all-

white unions and employers. (Since Blacks cannot enter the all-white unions, the closed shop excludes Blacks from skilled jobs). Wiehahn recommended that the closed shop should be retained. The real significance of the job reservation proposals and the training scheme proposals lies precisely in the fact that they will affect only a minority of Black workers. From this minority Pretoria hopes to create a "privileged" Black labour aristocracy and a Black middle class. This minority will then act as a check on the militancy of the masses of the Black workers.

SHACKLED

Apartheid is not abolished or even weakened by these measures. As the proposals for land tenure reform show, Pretoria is still committed to "separate development" for Blacks. Blacks remain politically shackled within South Africa. Despite some cosmetic changes in minor discriminatory laws, Blacks are still intended to constitute a source of cheap and disposable labour. However the changes are not simply window dressing. South Africa is under pressure from its traditional allies to improve its international image. It is also under internal pressure as a result of its war to contain the liberation struggle in Namibia and at home. Finally, even amongst Afrikaaner manufacturing interests there is a growing acceptance of change as increased investment demands a more stable and skilled Black workforce. The opposition to the reforms has come mainly from white skilled workers, small traders and the like, who have turned even further to the Right as their interests have come under threat.

In short, the changes in South Africa are a revamping of capitalist social relations which still rest on super-exploitation of Blacks. They do not represent a dismantling of racism, for in the context of South Africa that requires a dismantling of capitalism itself.

Gavin MacLean (Brighton Big Flame) for Southern Africa Group of Big Flame International Commission)



DUFF DEAL FOR ENGINEERS

SHEFFIELD FIGHTS ON

THE SETTLEMENT of the national engineering strike has been seen by both sides as a victory. Management and unions claim success . . . the only people who aren't so sure are the rank and file workers.

The main reason why the national press have tried to convince the public that the engineers have "won" is because they want to establish Duffy and Boyd as great working class "leaders" so that in the difficult years to come they'll be able to peddle their "moderate" wares (pro-management) unchallenged.

If you ask the people who actually work in the industry; the people who are still on strike fighting for their "domestic" claims, then you get a different picture. We talked to workers at GEC Traction, Sheffield, where the struggle is still going on.

CONDEMNATION

On the Confed settlement, Mick, (Convenor, GEC Traction, Sheffield) had this to say:

"If that's winning, then I'd hate to think what it would be like to lose!"

"We have sent two resolutions, one to the AUEW Executive and one to the Confederation executive, condemning the settlement."

Chairperson of the shopstewards, Keith, told about their own dispute:

"The claim went in for June 6th, which is our annual date. The claim is for: a substantial increase on the basic wage; a better piece work agreement; a better waiting time agreement. . . when the negotiations had exhausted procedure, we decided to ban all sub-let work."

"Management's response was to terminate the sick pay scheme (if we wanted it back, we had to negotiate for it with the claim). They then sent out a letter threatening to freeze piecework averages. Finally as the dispute ran in to the national strikes....they threatened lay offs."

South Yorks and has pledged full financial and moral support including blacking. However, other GEC plants e.g. at Liverpool (out 15 weeks) Stafford and Lincoln have settled for the time being ...leaving Sheffield to fight it out. The people at Sheffield feel confident enough that management will have to try to make a settlement soon because they have plenty of orders for a high speed loco engine for British Rail along with a new order from New Zealand.

The final settlement in the engineering dispute fell well short of the original demands:

ORIGINAL CLAIM	SETTLEMENT
■ £80 skilled minimum, backdated to April.	■ £73, from local pay anniversary dates. (i.e. some might have to wait nearly a year)
■ £60 unskilled minimum	■ £52.50, from local anniversary dates
■ 35 hour week, by 1982	■ 39 hours in 1981 (nov.); 35 hour demand withdrawn for four years
■ 5 weeks holiday now	■ 5 weeks holiday in 1983.

"This was the last straw....we secured the gates and drove articulated lorries across to prevent any movement of materials...."

CONFIDENT

The union at the Sheffield plant see management's hard line as a deliberate plan to isolate them and make them an example. The Sheffield plant has been traditionally better organised and have won better rates than many of the plants across the country. The GEC Combine Committee met recently in

The Sheffield GEC plant sent delegates to the unofficial National Shop Stewards Council of the Confederation of engineering unions in Birmingham recently. They welcome the initiative and see an unofficial rank and file body as a way of breaking the official grip on the unions which resulted in the recent pathetic settlement. They saw it as a start in challenging the non-communication and lack of democracy of official channels.

Member of Sheffield Big Flame

Health and Safety Goes National

THE NETWORK OF COMMITTEES WILL GROW

ONE YEAR ago, one of Labour's most heralded reforms was introduced. This was the Regulations which gave powers to workplace safety representatives. These powers included (in theory) inspection of all company information on safety, three-monthly inspections of the workplace, and so on.

A national meeting in Coventry last month looked at the effect of these Regulations. The meeting was attended by 41 delegates from 14 of the local Health and Safety Trade Union Groups being set up around the country.

It is clear that the impact varies considerably. In some workplaces it has been used to inspect new machinery before installation (United Glass, St Helens). In others it has been used to get detailed information on chemicals used (Massey Ferguson, Coventry) or negotiate a whole series of improved standards (Rolls Royce, Coventry).

In addition, the general impact of the three-monthly inspections has been good, where they have been used properly.

The problems encountered have their roots elsewhere, in the wider weaknesses of the trade union movement

WEAKNESSES

In many workplaces, the safety reps. are either being incorporated into management (like convenors) or their efforts get totally lost in procedure. The failure of Labour's Regulations to empower reps to Stop the Job was seen as the key weakness although the use of Section 7 of the Health and Safety at

Work Act was recommended as a backdoor method of stopping the job with legal backing.

Similarly, the role of most safety committees seems to be (predictably) little more than a tea and buns effort to suck in safety reps.

OPPOSING THE TORIES

Despite all these failings, however, delegates felt that any attempt to water down the Regulations by the Tories should be totally resisted. It was hard enough already in public sector and weakly organised workplaces even with the Regulations. Without them with fewer Factory Inspectors (for all their many weaknesses), with cutbacks in training likely, times would be even harder.

Despite the opposition of the TUC to us, the growth of more local Health and Safety Committees will continue. The absence of any enthusiasm from most of the official trade union movement for action on health and safety provides the source for such committees to grow.

In the future, this network of committees will grow. It was also agreed that a priority for them must be to oppose the effect of the cuts on health and safety at work, and in the community.

Member of Coventry Big Flame



Coventry Women Out On Strike

All women workers of this car components factory are on strike over management's attempt to pay them less for the 'downtime' spent waiting for machines to be fixed. The T and G, which is the union the women belong to, has refused to make the strike official. And male workers at the plant have been laid off with no lay off pay and are not supporting the strike. The women have mounted a round-the-clock picket and are getting a lot of support from workers from the nearby car factories.

A woman on the picket line told us how the strike was going on:

"We've organised a 24 hour picket rota to prevent the company from trying to move work back to the other plant in Telford, where they may try to take on temporary women workers. We have no meetings with management planned at the moment though we've applied for a meeting at Transport House. Four years ago the men were out on strike and they weren't so well organised. We've already had support from other Trade Unions—like donations of wood and supplies, and some of the women's husbands are coming down to the picket lines. Of course

there have been problems with looking after the kids. A lot of men don't mind their wives going out to work during the day, but that's where it ends. There has been some opposition to women picketing from home, because the husbands expect their tea ready on the hour. This has been particularly a problem with the night shift, though now they realise that it's got to be done.

The Draftex strike is a small one. But it is strikes like this that will have to be won if the Government's plans to force women back into the home are going to be defeated.

WANDSWORTH DIRECT ACTION

THE SITUATION at Wandsworth Direct Works has now reached a critical stage. If the Tories attack at Wandsworth succeeds, it will give the green light to employers and councils to mount a confident attack on Direct Labour departments up and down the country.

On Wednesday 10th Oct. Wandsworth Trades Council called a mass picket outside two sites attempting to be worked by Crondace and Turrieffs, who were contracted by the council to replace the Direct Labour organisations.

FLYING PICKET

A flying picket including 30 workers from a nearby private but organised, site was sent to another Direct works site in the area which was working, in an effort to get them out. This site was badly organised and our appeals for them to walk out in support of their jobs fell on deaf ears.

The UCATT Executive have sent instructions to all the sites telling them not to join the picket, so it's hardly surprising that they didn't know which way to turn.

INJUNCTION

That instruction stems from an injunction placed on Lou Lewis a Wandsworth UCATT official by the Tory Council, preventing him

from communicating with the workers on those sites. The officials are waiting to hear the outcome of his appeal against the injunction, by which time, of course, the struggle could be lost.

GRUNWICK

Basic trade union rights are at stake. This is the building workers "Grunwicks"; A mass picket on the 7th November has been called again by Wandsworth Trades Council. All trade unionists, tenants and community groups are urged to attend, to halt the Tories axing of Wandsworth Direct Labour, and to fight for an expanded Direct Labour movement, so that they can continue to build for people, not for profit.

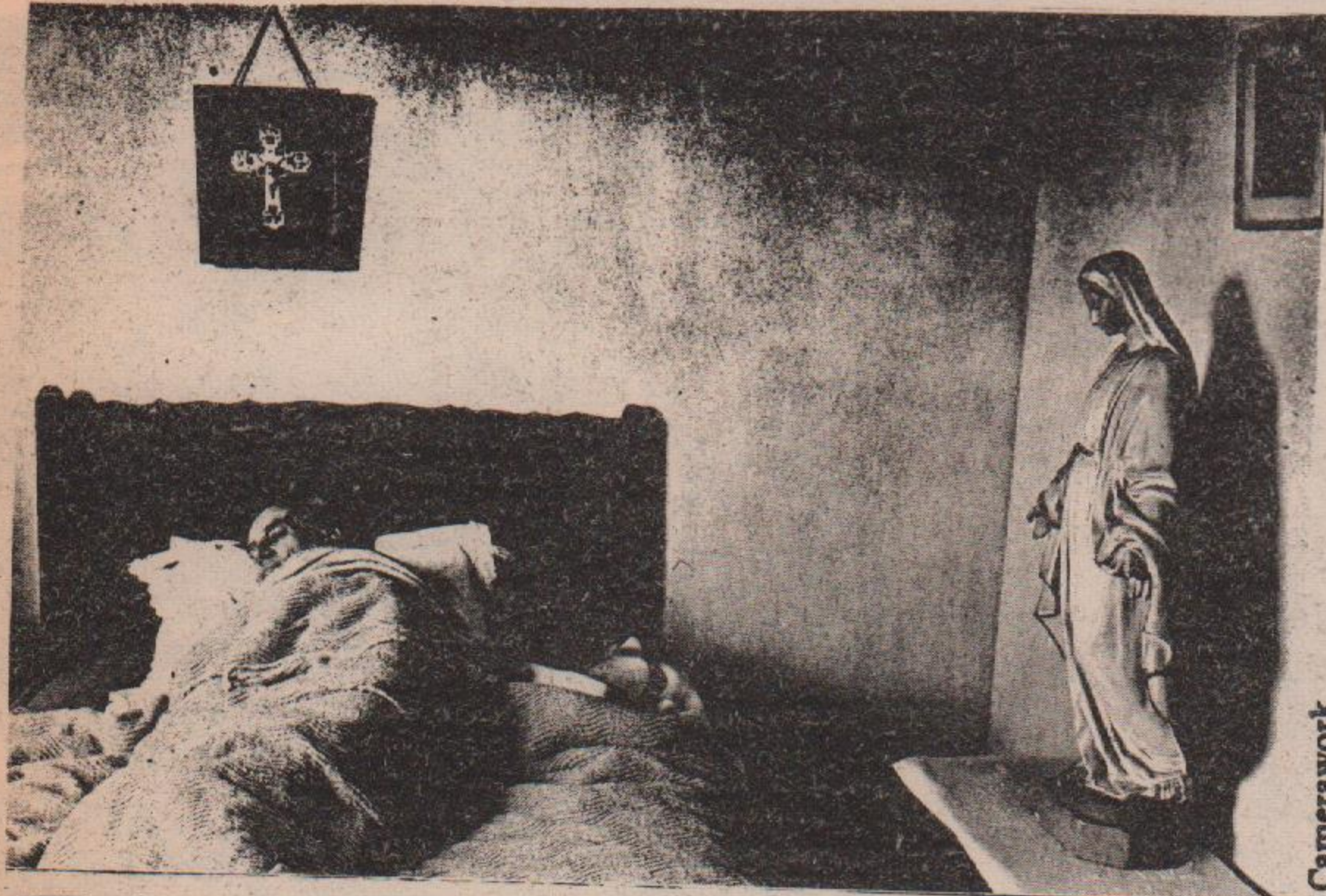
MASS PICKET

7.30 Nov. 7th. For details of sites and plan of action contact Wandsworth Trades Council, c/o Nick Williams, 44 Aboyne Rd., London SW12. Messages of support etc. to same address.

Member of Manchester Big Flame

WOMEN AND IRELAND

RUC Attacks in Armagh



Camework

To celebrate International Women's Day on 8th March 1979, Women Against Imperialism (based in West Belfast) held a picket outside Armagh women's prison. They were demanding an end to inhuman treatment imposed upon the women political prisoners inside. About 50 women sang, cheered, and shouted slogans to the P.O.W.s inside, who responded by yelling and waving banners from their cell windows. It was a great success! As the women moved off quietly to go home, the R.U.C. attacked them. There had been no prior police instruction that the picket was not permitted or that they should disperse.

SUB MACHINE GUNS

An arrested woman described the attack later: "We were suddenly attacked by four jeep-loads of the RUC, armed with their sub-machine guns, wearing their flak-jackets. They began beating us and dragging us to the jeeps. Some of the women were carrying babies and these seemed to be singled out by the police for rough treatment." The eleven women arbitrarily selected for arrest were held for 5 hours and were subsequently charged with obstruction, disorderly conduct and assault upon the police.

THE WOMEN'S ARMY

The women responded to the arrests by singing 'The Women's Army is Marching' and promised to return. And return they did. The second picket was held on 7th

April and women from Dublin and Derry responded to the call to show the R.U.C. that women would not be intimidated off the streets. Again the R.U.C. attacked the picket and removed the sit-down protestors on the pavement. The P.O.W.s inside cheered and the R.U.C. stole Women Against Imperialism's banner for the second time.

The eleven women charged have to appear at Armagh Court on 25th October. They are contesting the charges, but have no faith in the courts and are anticipating heavy fines. They have set up a Defence Fund—all donations to:

Women Against Imperialism (cheques made payable to same)
c/o Ann Marie Loughran
7 Riverdale Park Drive
Belfast 11

From the Dark Ages

WHO WILL pay for the Pope's visit to Ireland? Not just the money — several million pounds. Who will pay the cost in ruined human lives?

A strange question, after a visit hailed by press, politicians and church as the greatest thing since virgin births.

Irish women will pay the greatest cost. The Pope was quite clear in his speech in Limerick. He wants to halt the slow moves towards personal freedom that Irish women have made. He rejected divorce, condemning further generations of Irish women to the misery — and personal danger — of living with men they do not want, but cannot escape. From the so-called "man of peace" a boost for the wife-batterers.

— and only — vocation!

A MAN OF VIOLENCE

But among the Pontiff's victims we must also list the people of the north of Ireland. Ten long years ago the northern Catholics began to struggle — peacefully — for equal rights and justice. They were met by violence. Only after bitter experience of death and destruction by British state forces did the northern Catholics realise that justice would only come when the British were thrown out. But the Pope condemned "the men of violence" in marathon speeches in Dublin and Drogheda. We all knew he meant the Irish Republican Army and the Irish National Liberation Army. He did not mean the 15,000 British troops with their Saracen armoured cars, self-loading rifles and Sterling sub-machine guns. Nor the RUC with their M-1 carbines and Walther pistols. For Pope John Paul "a man of violence" isn't someone with a gun. It's an Irish Republican with a gun.

WOMEN IN THEIR PLACE...

His Holiness rejected birth control in most of its forms, including abortion. He condemns thousands of women to devote their lives to unwanted children, to the guilt, shame and the huge cost of getting abortions in Britain — even when their religious beliefs tell them it is wrong. And this so-called "man of compassion" condemns hundreds of these women to death and serious injury at the hands of back-street abortionists.

.....IN THE HOME

Hardly noticed — or ignored by the press reports — was the Pope's view of women's role in life. In the same Limerick speech in which he attacked divorce and contraception he criticised people who suggested to women that they might have a "vocation" — a job outside the home. Forgetting that women — including nuns — have worked outside the home for as long as they have existed (no-one needs to "suggest" such jobs) he announced that looking after children was their greatest

CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC

The Pope is a conservative Roman Catholic. Like the Irish bishops he condemns all progress in that country — from divorce and contraception to the removal of foreign occupation in the north. He is against all forms of rebellion and liberation — women's liberation, class liberation and national liberation.

He is indeed a man from the Dark Ages.

By a Liverpool Big Flame Member.



Camework

Women's Collective in Sinn Fein?

How can women in Britain support the struggle in Ireland? What is the best way to provide counter information to the propaganda about Ireland in the British mass media?

These were the questions discussed by over 60 women who attended a conference organised by the Women and Ireland group in London on October 6th.

Among the speakers was Mary Enright who represented Women Against Imperialism. She described its relationship to the Republican Movement and the growth of a women's movement in the North. Asked why abortion is not such a burning issue in the North as it is in Britain, she replied that it is not a question of it being less important, but that in a country at war the demands of any women's movement will be different and that many women are actively engaged in the struggle for national liberation. She hoped that women in Britain would realise this and offer solidarity with women in the anti-imperialist war there.

SINN FEIN

Sue O'Halloran from Sinn Fein spoke of the importance of broad alliances like the Young Liberals' March in favour of the withdrawal of Troops in August but argued "it is vital that all we have gained is not sunk into the lowest common denominator as the conditions under which troops are brought out of Ireland is crucially important."

scribed how women in Sinn Fein are developing ideas of women's liberation. This may take shape within the organisation as a women's collective, though nothing has yet been decided.

SOCIALIST FEMINIST CONFERENCE

One of the points raised in the following discussion was the importance of arguing that the next Socialist Feminist Conference should have imperialism as its theme, based on the recognition that the liberation of colonial countries is a pre-condition of Britain's liberation.

In the afternoon there were the workshops which discussed the problems associated with solidarity work and attempted to set out a strategy for the months ahead.

PROPAGANDA

In the workshop on Propaganda and the Media, there was a general agreement that a counter-propaganda campaign was

Ireland, UTOM, and Socialist Feminist or other women's groups should organise public meetings with RAC speakers. We need to co-ordinate and build up our resources so we have control of our own propaganda machine (e.g. tape slide shows, a constant flow of material for publications). The idea of a centralised source such as an Ireland Resource Centre was mooted. Another suggestion was to answer letters and articles in the newspapers on Ireland.

PRISONERS

The other workshop was on prisoners and the Prevention of Terrorism Act. It was agreed to organise an event in November in support of women political prisoners in Armagh, and to emphasize the court cases on October 25th of women arrested on International Women's Day for picketing Armagh jail. The Women and Ireland Group will continue to campaign around Ireland and to build organisational links between women working in this area. For more information contact:

Women & Ireland Group
c/o A Woman's Place
48 William IV Street
London WC2



BIG FLAME PHOTO

THIS BANNER was specially made for a Rock Against Racism tour of Yorkshire to raise money for the Southall Defence Fund. It was unfurled again at a picket of the Sheffield Police HQ on October 10th — one of a hundred such pickets throughout the country on the eve of the reopening of the inquest into the death of Blair Peach. The pickets were demanding a public enquiry into what they suspect was the murder of Blair Peach by the Special Patrol Group in Southall in April.

Quadrophenia The Youth Market

Film distributors must be either pretty stupid or possess a sense of humour that the Left doesn't usually credit them with. The short film put on before Quadrophenia was "King Kenny", a portrait of rockers' hero and motorcycle champion, Kenny Roberts.

As a 1960's Mod, seeing a glimpse of the old enemy merely whetted my appetite for a film that music papers like the NME had already described as the only one ever to say anything serious about youth and music.

PARKA FETISHISTS

I was not disappointed. It was accurate enough to satisfy even the most rabid parka-fetishist. Although some of the dancing, music, and clothes were not as I remembered, the feel of the period was captured perfectly—the recreation of Mod style; the obsession with pep-pills to make the weekend last longer; the sexism and, most of all, the unabashed consumerism that provided such a contrast with the unmarketably scruffy rockers.

This was vividly captured in the scene where the central Mod character, Jimmy, is told by his rocker mate that scooters aren't a patch on motor bikes for speed and power. Jimmy replies that it's not the bikes, 'it's the people on them, and what they look like that matters!'

WACKING POLICE

Along with the rest of the audience, I mentally joined in every minute of wacking rockers and police in what were extremely realistic fight scenes. But the film is not an uncritical description of Mod life-style or a simple glorification of violence.

It has an eye for the futility as well as the joys of youth culture. This strength is drawn from the clear dependence on the Who's album of the same name; itself a remarkably accurate documentation and critique of youth culture.

SAWDUST CAESARS

The director builds on the album with some intelligently researched additions including a real speech by a Brighton Magistrate sentencing Mods and Rockers. It encapsulates the fear and incomprehension of established society: "These long-haired, mentally unstable, petty little hooligans, these sawdust Caesars who can only find courage like rats, in hunting in packs..."

The film reveals many of the limits of youth culture. There is a sickening scene when Jimmy finds himself with other Mods, beating up his old Rocker mate, who'd previously made vague noises about working class youth solidarity under different uniforms. The police and courts are shown as the repressive features they are, no matter how many policemen's helmets you knock off in seaside battles.

THE YOUTH MARKET

Best of all, the film is full of sharp contrasting images of class. Notably there is Jimmy's work situation, where middle aged, middle class executives dream up their latest products for the 'youth market', while real youths are bored out of their minds in dead-end jobs. The film follows the LP closely in charting Jimmy's disillusionment about what being a Mod can actually do to change his life.

Back from the weekend it's still the same lousy job and the same uncomprehending home situation. The grimy surrounds don't fade away with the effect of the pills. The point is hammered home dramatically in the scene in which the Mod Leader, Ace, who was previously arrogant towards all authority, is spotted by Jimmy meekly carrying bags as a Bell Boy at a posh Brighton hotel. You may be King of the Mods, but you're still bottom of the shit-heap when you get off your G5 scooter.

AGING LEFTISTS

Youth culture may not be able to solve the problems or change the conditions which create them. But they are living expressions of the experiences of young, mainly working class people. No amount of lecturing about Mods/Rockers/Punks/Teddy Boys/Rastas being unable to change the world by aging leftists is going to stop the kids seeking the joy, the sense of power, the identity and solidarity which youth cultures create at their best.

Quadrophenia works as a movie because it is told through the Who's brilliant music. Unlike most films, the music is not tacked on as an addition, but is the substance of the story itself. If the film has a weakness it is, ironically, the central character Jimmy. To distance him from other Mods, the LP and the film refer to his emergent 'madness' with sloppy references to 'schizophrenia' that do not fit into the narrative.

AFFLUENCE

Jimmy's small rise and fall are explainable not because of his madness or his differences with other Mods, but precisely because of the similarities of his situation. Mods died because the images of affluence

which gave birth to their style were overtaken by a slowly growing economic crisis in the late sixties. In these less confident, affluent times, skinheads with their stylistic retreat to safe caricatures of a working class style which had long since gone, now ruled the roost.

Now of course there is a Mod revival in the wake of the fast fragmenting Punk movement. Some of these fragments inspired by The Jam are looking for a style different from the other split towards the tougher images of a skinhead revival.

FARCE

History is repeating itself. If not as farce, then the 1979 Mods sitting around me in the cinema are only imitating the shell, not the substance of the style. That is dead along with the social conditions it sprang from. Only the echoes remain.

As I write this review on a train from



Polarization: police standing between groups of Mods and Rockers in Margate, Whitsun 1964.

Liverpool to London, some lads are singing "I'd rather be a Rocker than a Mod." Mods and Rockers are back, but it'll never be the same again.

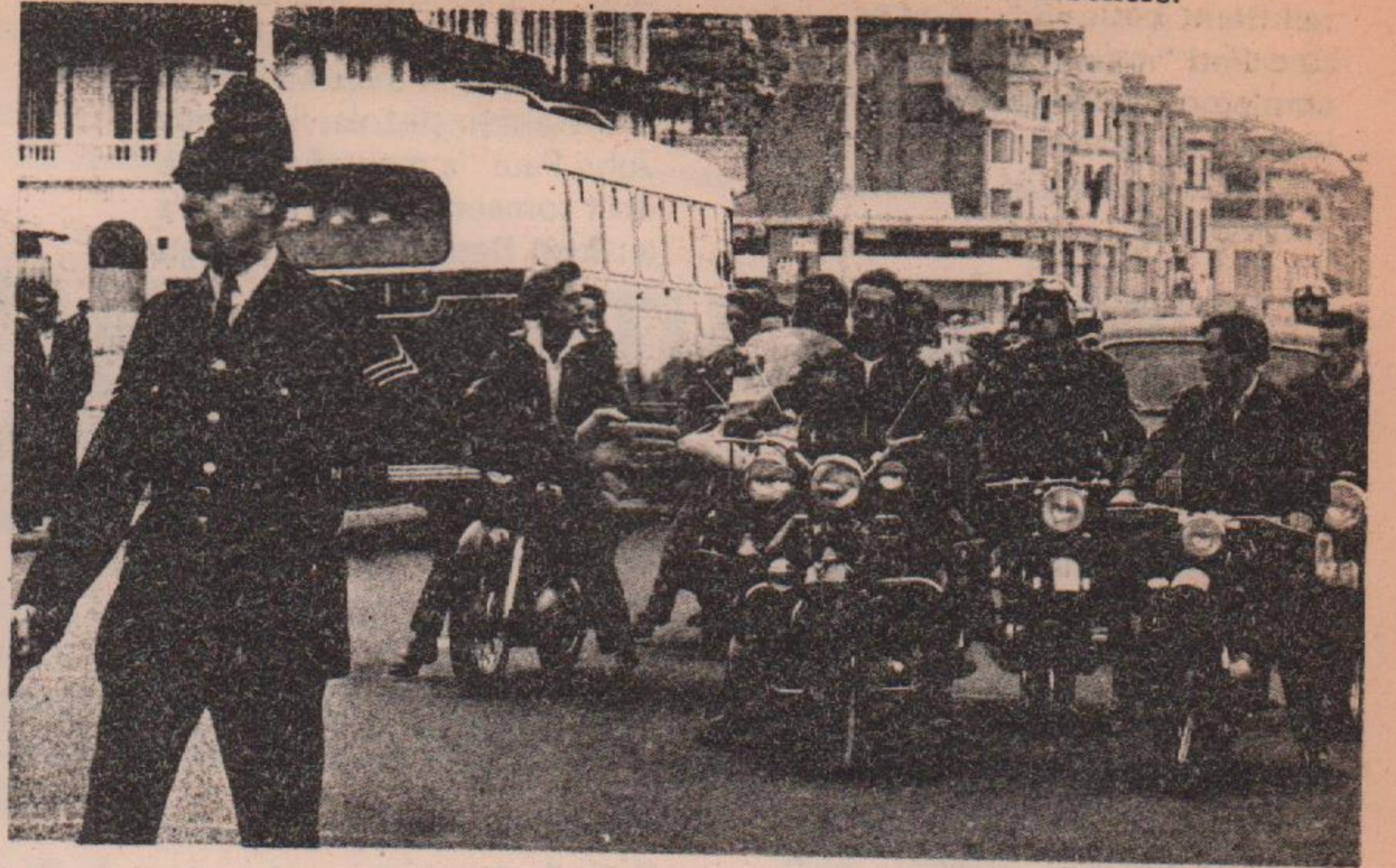
Paul Thompson



THIS IS OUR LIFE



Preparations for the Battle of Hastings: coming into town, August 1964. Top: Mod 'Scooter Boys'. Bottom: Rockers.



Pictures from Folk Devils & Moral Panics, by Stanley Cohen (Paladin Books)



'THIS WAS A MODERN MORALITY PLAY IN WHICH GOOD (THE POLICE AND THE COURTS) MET EVIL (THE AGGRESSIVE DELINQUENT).'

Top: A gesture of defiance as the audience watch the opening of the play.

Bottom: Queuing up for the formal part of the ceremony: the scene outside the magistrates court.

Nicos Poulantzas

OCTOBER 3rd, suicide of the Greek Marxist, Nicos Poulantzas, in Paris. A tragic loss to the Left of a leading theorist on the modern capitalist state, on fascism and on the transition to socialism, and the loss of a leading representative of "Left Eurocommunism".

DIFFICULT
A hallmark of Poulantzas was a very difficult and often quite obscure style of writing that relatively few Marxists (most of them academics) have managed to penetrate.

SYSTEMATIC
This is unfortunate. Poulantzas was one of very few Marxists who has looked seriously and systematically at the Marxist state, especially its post-war development. The restriction of his audience to the self-selected few has meant that most people

have only heard his ideas through interpretations, many of them distorted.

STRAWMAN

Tarred as he was with the Eurocommunist brush, people have tended to throw out the baby of his valuable insights, with the bathwater of his politics (which came first, I don't know). And for much of the Left he has become the straw man of "revisionism" who is attacked as a convenient excuse to defend Leninist orthodoxy.

DEPRESSION

Poulantzas' suicide came after several previous attempts, and was prompted, it appears, by a deep depression caused by the failure of the French left in the 1978 elections, and most recently by the tragic events in Indochina.

'It is a question of realising that we have failed in the past by thinking that democracy was a luxury that could be dispensed with'

**BIG
FLAME**

INTERVIEW WITH RUDI DUTSCHKE

RUDI DUTSCHKE, one of the leading figures on the West German Left since the events of 1967/8, was in Britain recently for the first time since the Tories expelled him (for being a "threat to the national interest," in 1970. He was here only briefly, to speak at a London conference in defence of the East German Marxist (recently released from jail) Rudolph Bahro, but he did have time to talk with Big Flame and the London magazine, Time Out.

THE EVENTS OF 1967-8

Many of us had come from the East. I had come over, thanks to my mother, a few days before the wall went up in Berlin in 1961. With our experiences in the East, we could clearly see that West Germany was not a democratic society.

Very quickly, I got involved in the conflicts at the University, and if you are in the struggle, you learn more quickly. We had, many of us, an anti-authoritarian understanding of socialism, inspired by Rosa Luxemburg. For those of us who had been brought up in Eastern Europe, there was no question of taking up Leninist positions, since Marxism-Leninism is the official ideology of those governments. For a brief while, Trotskyism seemed a possibility, but the Trotskyists' critique was only a critique of leadership — they would not see that it was the entire structures that were undemocratic. So, over time, I came to understand Rosa Luxemburg's attempt to combine organisation, democracy and spontaneity.

It was striking in 1968, and you don't read this in most of the "histories", how many young workers, apprentices and school students, were involved in the struggles. It was much more than just an uprising of students. Among those arrested, there were more workers than students.

But, though 1968 was the highest point of activity that most of us had ever seen, it was also the beginning of the defeat. You know, the Emergency Laws came in already in May '68, and we had no way of dealing with the West German government's use of provocateurs to force us into violent confrontations

ON TERRORISM

The problem is that the ruling class can recuperate violent acts to suit their own interests. And those who commit violent acts are often cut off from the working class on whose behalf they claim to be doing these violent acts.

And remember, the principle of socialism is mass mobilisation. If you give this up, you are giving up socialism. You are condemned to being an object of the ruling class.

ON REVOLUTION

There must be a combination of an uprising in Western Europe with a process of democratisation in the East. They must come together, otherwise there is no possibility for the emancipation of the oppressed.

As long as the East remains so anti-democratic, it stands as a symbol of the oppressiveness of an alternative system. We saw in Czechoslovakia in 1968, when the West was so ambivalent in its attitude to the process of democratisation and to its destruction by Russian tanks, we saw there that democratisation in the East will need the support of an uprising in the West if it is going to survive.

Nuclear power is, you could say, the expression of capitalism at the height of its destructive powers

There are those on the Left who say that nuclear power represents a new and neutral productive force. Yet, as Marx says, there is not only production, there is also destruction, and nuclear power is nothing but a destructive force.

ON NUCLEAR POWER AND THE NEED FOR A NEW PARTY

Taking up the question of nuclear power necessitates making alliances, whether with Christians, liberals, or social democrats. Alliances are of course crucial in the movement towards socialism. And it is with the idea of developing the widest possible alliance of progressive forces in opposition to nuclear power, that we are moving towards the creation of a new socialist Party in West Germany

We are convinced that there is the possibility for a new Party, not as a cobbling together of militants in existing groups and parties, but as a way of binding together those active in the independent movements that have developed over the last ten years. Some of them will have been in the original extra-parliamentary opposition, some from the new groups that have developed in the last few years, groups who see the need to work inside the movement. And people from the movements themselves, from the anti-fascist movement, the women's movement, and above all the anti-Atom, the anti-nuclear movement.

Those of us who are in the anti-authoritarian, Luxemburgist tradition, we have a duty to work together, to see what is going on inside the movement. We cannot at this stage lay down the organisational form our activity will take. But the lesson of the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil war in the 1930's is important. The International Brigade was the last attempt to smash Fascism. Who was in it? They were in fact not the unions, not the Communist Parties, but people from all over. They were clear about one thing that it was a question of the human species. Their immediate interests were quite clear to them that fascism had to be defeated. This was not a limited class consciousness on their part. It was a question of humanity, of survival, of who was going to live in the next generation.

With nuclear power it is the same thing, right down to the failure of the unions and the Communist parties to support us. Once again it is a question of human survival, and the need to bring all possible forces together. This will mean a split in the ecology movement, I am aware of that. The bourgeois and conservative forces will be forced out by the contradictions in the movement. This is inevitable.

It is not a question of saying at this stage exactly how things will develop. It is a question of realising that we have failed in the past by thinking that democracy was a luxury that would be dispensed with. In fact it is the life blood of the revolutionary tradition we are part of.



Photo Michael Abrahams

ON HOW A REVOLUTIONARY WRESTLER WRESTLED WITH THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF A PRO-CAPITALIST WRESTLER AND WON — a tale by Rudi Dutschke.

I USED to be a wrestler, for a number of years. Particularly striking was an experience with a wrestler, a very good one, who took up a very clear political stance against me. When introduced to me, he immediately said "Ah, Dutschke! You're the great socialist, well, me, I'm for capitalism!"

We were travelling in a train together, arguing for hours. Others in the party would come and take part, all basically supporters of capitalism, and all arguing the same sort of points. The fascinating thing was that, after

arguing with one of them for a while, it was not me, but my challenger who would argue my points against the next challenger. Somehow I was able to relate enough to their own experiences to have a profound effect on them, and on a trip lasting several hours I had my positions being argued all around the carriage.

Now, I'm well aware that this was short-lived. The next day they would have slipped back generally to their previous way of thinking. But I found out later that the Devil Dutschke was not

forgotten.

I was taking my son to a wrestling match between a Dane and this same wrestler who was so staunchly pro-capitalist. He was a renowned wrestler who had defeated leading wrestlers from Germany, Holland, France etc. I was just taking my son along to give him an idea of the sport, but the "pro-capitalist" obviously spotted me at the ringside. He was so unnerved that he was defeated in a few minutes. And why? He approached me after and told me that seeing me there he had become a representative of capitalism. And he couldn't get over his humiliation that capitalism had been defeated!



A CASE TO ANSWER

SEAMUS MALLOY, aged 17½ years, was arrested by the police in Green Street, Plaistow, East London on Sat. 10th March. On the following day he died.

His family, who incidentally have relatives in the police in Ireland and America, are absolutely convinced that the police are guilty. "They are guilty and always will be, but no-one seems to want to go after them", said Mr. Malloy, a labourer in Newham. "They started beating him up and then when they heard the surname, well they just took it to the end." What follows is Mr. Malloy's account of what happened.

POLICE ATTACK

Seamus and his older brother Kevin were in Green Street, in East London, on Saturday 10th March. They went into Marks & Spencers and had an argument with two other people. They were asked to leave the store. Which they did. The argument was over. As they were walking away a policeman grabbed them from behind. They naturally thought they were being attacked and Kevin turned around and swiped the policeman before he knew who it was. Then the police really laid in. They made a football of Seamus. A witness said the brutality was incredible and she knew even then that they would kill one of them.

NOTORIOUS BRUTALITY

Mr. Malloy went to Forest Gate police station as soon as he'd heard the news. (He could see that they'd beaten his sons up.) "Seamus had blood all over his face and his right hand." His wife added, "He had a lump on his head behind his left ear." The boys had not been allowed a phone call. Mr. Malloy tried to get his own doctor to examine them in the station but the sergeant said he would be able to be present during the police doctor's examination so he sett-

led for that. In the event, they did not allow him to be present. The two boys were charged with assault and later released. Seamus Malloy wrote two numbers on his charge sheet: K444 and KI. The K division is notorious in Newham and many charges of brutality have been brought against it.

MURDER

The next day, Seamus Malloy took a bath at about 2 pm. He had only been there twenty minutes when Mr. Malloy went into the bathroom and found him lying in the empty bath, face down and bleeding. He was dead.

The very next day, Mr. Malloy made a written complaint to the police saying that they had murdered his son. The police who took the complaint said they were CID from Scotland Yard. They have still had no response from the Commissioner about this complaint. While the police were in the house taking the complaint they asked for Seamus' clothes. The family gave them these, and 6 months later, they have still not been returned.

KILLER BATH?

The police autopsy on Seamus' body certified that he had died from carbon monoxide poisoning while in the bath. Mrs. Malloy had a bath a

few hours before her son. She is still alive and well. The window in the bathroom was open all the time. Very shortly afterwards the gas board came and changed all the geysers on the street and put in a new flue so it was impossible to verify this statement. The Malloy family decided to have an independent autopsy. In this case the Professor Alan Grant certified that he had died from an internal haemorrhage as well as carbon monoxide poisoning. At the Coroner's Court, Mr. Malloy was told not to argue: "There are 36 witnesses against your boy. It'll only ruin your boy's name and he's dead already."

DIFFERING EVIDENCE

When Seamus' brother, Kevin, appeared in the Magistrate's Court on his charge of assault, the nine police officers who had been at Green Street on 10th March, all gave differing evidence. Kevin was found guilty and fined but he took the case to appeal and was subsequently acquitted. The store detective, who had been a police witness stated categorically that the police had attacked the boy. Throughout the trials, no-one was allowed to mention Seamus' name at all.

CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

There were 500 people at Seamus' funeral last March, most of them Irish. The Malloy family want to clear their son's name and they want to prove the police were guilty. The Newham Defence Cttee and East London United Troops Out branch are taking up the campaign.

Y.M., Member of East London UTOM

write on



TAKING THATCHERISM SERIOUSLY

Dear Big Flame,
I would like to follow J. Kimberly in the October issue of the newspaper and make some comments on the new Big Flame pamphlet "Labouring Under the Tories". The pamphlet, noting how the Tories have been able to present their policies as the radical ones, argues: "Even though Labour had won some of the arguments, it had conceded the terrain on which the debate would be fought." Most of the rest of the pamphlet concentrates on Labourism rather than Thatcherism. I believe that the swing to the right is much more significant than is made out. The pamphlet gives a list of the policies the Tories are introducing on incomes policy, unemployment, industrial policy etc. However, beyond these specific policies Thatcherism represents a whole new approach to the way society should be organised. It takes up the themes of anti-collectivism and anti-

statism and calls for the restoration of freedom to the "Individual". It sees society as being gradually undermined from within and advocates more law and order, tougher discipline in the family and a crackdown on political "subversives". Thatcherism is not only concerned with political and economic issues, but also with values and morals. The return to civilised standards is a moral crusade. The new right wants to change the way you think, how you behave and even how you dress. The Tories were able to win the election because the state is experienced by people as a bureaucratic imposition on their lives which doesn't meet their needs. After the sort of comprehensive schools and council housing they have been given, they are willing to try a return to traditional or private forms. The right also takes up issues like law and order that they are

worried about, and on which the left has nothing to say. There is no doubt that many of the themes of the right have gained widespread acceptance - overtaxation and coddling by the Welfare state have destroyed incentives, our culture and way of life being threatened by a flood of immigrants, and so on. This success is partly because Thatcherism has been able to tap themes deeply embedded in British culture - the emphasis on the family, duty, authority, self reliance, etc. There are two reasons why socialists must take Thatcherism just as seriously as Labourism. (1) This new form of authoritarianism advocated by the right has gained considerable support. If socialism is ever to grow significantly, we can't just address those who already hold Labourist positions. We have to be able to argue in a way which will convince people against

the ideas described in this letter. (2) A key part of the Tory offensive will be against women. If it is to be successfully resisted then the ideas behind it on the family, on women's role in the home - have to be challenged. In the October issue you printed an article on the Alternative Economic Strategy. One criticism of it that wasn't in the article is that the AES identifies a socialist strategy with questions of economics. It is interesting to note that a number of key figures on the left of the Labour Party abstained on the second reading of the Corrie Bill. Presumably they believe such questions are secondary and can be left to individual conscience. Nothing could illustrate better the dangers of a narrow conception of the issues which are at stake in the struggle for socialism. In solidarity, John Estes, N. London.

'Labouring under the Tribunites'

Dear Comrades,
I'm all in favour of diversity of opinion in our newspaper, but different views should be clearly stated and not muddled over, as occurred on the "Which Way to Socialism" page in last month's paper. It looks to me as though the editorial collective didn't entirely agree with Fearless O'Hanlon's critique of the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES), but instead of clearly stating their disagreements, slipped in quite different views from cde O'Hanlon's in their leader to the article. For instance, the leader says that the AES "at least tried to indicate the way that socialism could be achieved in Britain". In fact, O'Hanlon actually writes: the AES "At least raises the problem of how socialism is to be achieved in this country" (my italics).

AES (Tribunites etc.) claim, and O'Hanlon cogently argues against that view, conceding merely that the AES makes us discuss a problem which many revolutionaries conveniently ignore. Nor does he say that the AES is strong in its proposed solutions to unemployment and the public services. If you think that there can be any solution under capitalism, alternative economic or whatever, to the problem of unemployment, or to the pitiful effort at a welfare state, then you cease to be a revolutionary.

BLOSSOMING
Big Flame's pamphlet "Labouring Under the Tories" is an effective polemic against the illusions in the Labour Party which are blossoming among marxists and ex-revolutionaries. We are right to reject the armageddon, October 1917 view of revolution, and the Transitional Programme fetishes of some of our comrades on the left. We do have to develop a view of socialism, what it means and how it can be achieved, which provides a realistic alternative to the mass of the working class. But don't let's confuse our efforts at developing our socialist alternative, with the efforts of the Labour left to provide plans for managing the crisis of capitalism. Finally, can I recommend the articles in the SWP's Journal "International Socialism" numbers 5 and 6 on alternative plans - particularly the one by Dave Albery? They help fill out O'Hanlon's analysis. In solidarity, Paul Holt.

NIT-PICKING
I'm not nit-picking on your editorial efficiency. You are right to give the "Worth talking about" page over to discussion of the AES: along with the "alternative plans" of the Lucas Aerospace Shopstewards, these are extremely important issues for us to discuss. There are bound to be disagreements in how revolutionaries assess the "socialist planning", and we should clarify our arguments. O'Hanlon does not say that the AES indicates how socialism could be achieved in this country. That is what the reformist proponents of the

Summer Support



Dear Big Flame,
Coming back from a trip abroad, I read the article on the summer school in the September issues of Big Flame. I felt I'd like to write about how I experienced the summer school as a single parent. Being alone in parenthood is quite a significant kind of isolation. Its peculiar problems have remained qualitatively constant within and out of marriage. Really the single parent family has brought little change in my feelings of isolation, merely helped to crystallise my need to share my problems as they arise. Obviously occasionally in the ten years I shared a roof with a man I developed a framework of emotional support from friends as I met them. From these connection I became

increasingly aware that there was an alternative way of meeting parenthood. I nurture a fantasy in which my children are in a climate of interested individuals who are involved in a mutual growth enterprise as individuals giving and receiving of themselves. Briefly I felt I met this ideal in Leeds, without having any clear expectations of the summer school I found myself in a completely autonomous situation which then reflected on my four children and vice versa. Of course meeting the reality created problems for me and I am sure for the children. Feelings of redundancy and relief beyond imagination. However, in the open system where communication seemed easy these feelings were in fact dissipated. In that week I felt I met

the reinforcement to move myself and my children towards that ideal. In the environment in which I live there is a general climate of feeling that children are a "burden" and "belong" to the person(s) who has given them birth and the only alternative to inadequacy is state institutionalisation. Whilst I was at the summer school I felt that there was an overall acceptance of mutual responsibility and for the first time in my life I felt free of a "burden" that society says I must accept unconditionally as my own "unfortunate" consequences of my actions. I feel in a privileged position sharing and enriching my life with growing individuals. A feeling often under pressure because of my isolation.

An isolation often exacerbated by social expectations and requirements. A woman on her own is often viewed as a social risk by welfare agencies and the schools themselves do nothing to recognise this ever present life situation, still reinforcing the bliss of family life on my children who have very real unrecognised experiences of their own. I have experienced difficulties in the past mostly by my own overwhelmed emotional and frustrated self. Without the outlet of an ongoing supportive system I feel I have often come close to being at risk personally and socially. What I realised at Leeds was the depth and breadth of my situation in the clarity of a socialist alternative. F. Cambridge.



Bearing the brunt of the Cuts

Dear Big Flame,
Would a Women against the Cuts group be a good idea? Cuts are hitting every working class person hard and struggles against them are finding their feet - and their militancy - all over the place. Yet, despite the fact that women are bearing the brunt of the cuts, both losing a wage and losing freedom to escape from unpaid work at the kitchen sink, the openly feminist content of most of the struggles is rarely developed and in fact, often ignored or hampered. It will need the clear voice of feminists in these campaigns, supported by anti-sexist men,

Trades Councils and so on accept that without fighting in a feminist way, there's no possibility of united class action. So, perhaps Big Flame should take the initiative and launch local and national Women against the Cuts groups. On the other hand, Women against the Nazis had a limited effect, often only acting as a "women's section" of the Anti-Nazi League, mobilising women. Rarely did WAN offer a space where women could find themselves and do something about male oppression in

Perhaps this was because WAN was only "action-orientated" casting "the Nazis" as the enemy. And similarly, Women against the Cuts might only recruit more women to give out more leaflets rather than do something about the way cuts will place women even more under the thumb and at the beck and call of the men-in-her life (husband, boss, wolf whistler etc.) Would it be possible for there to be a Women against the Cuts group which didn't fall into these traps, maybe including discussion and consciousness-raising as

sub advertisements

SHEFFIELD ANTI-Imperialist evening. Revolutionary music from Asia, Latin America, Zimbabwe and Britain, Dancing and food. Friday Nov 16th 7.30pm at Attercliffe Vestry Hall. Organised by Big Flame, Chilean MIR and ZANU. Tickets 80p, 40p unwaged.

NATIONAL LOBBY AGAINST the Cuts, Parliament, 28th Nov Wednesday. Initiated by South Yorkshire Association of Trades Councils, with backing from Sheffield and S.Yorks Labour Parties, Yorkshire NUM and many more

POWER MAD - A Red Ladder Show. Friday 2nd Nov. 7.30 pm Langsett and Walkley Community Centre, top of Burnaby St., Sheffield 6. Tickets £1. Also in other Yorks venues. Ring 0114 251111

YORKSHIRE REGION Womens Liberation Conference, Sheffield Nov 17th/18th.

"EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK" 10th/11th Nov. Second Education conference organised by Rank and File teacher and Socialist Teachers Alliance. At Starcross School, London NW1. Focus of defence of education against the cuts and arguments needed for a socialist strategy. Credentials from 13 Bloomfield St., London N6.

The 4th National Big Flame Conference will take place in Leeds on November 24/25. Sympathisers interested in attending should contact the National Secretary at 217 Wavertree Rd., Liverpool 7. Two sets of Conference documents are available at 30p each (including postage). There will

PUBLIC MEETING ON ZIMBABWE Patriotic Front speaker, special film St. Annes, Venn St., Clapham, London, 8th Nov., 7:30 pm.

THE PATRIOT GAME - new film about the Irish situation. Graves Cinema, Sheffield University Students' Union. Nov 1st, 7:30pm

BIRMINGHAM: Big Flame Public Meeting on 'Beyond the Fragments' Speaker: Lynne Segal Monday 12th Nov., 7:30pm Carrs Lane Church Centre Carrs Lane (behind Marks & Sparks)

LEEDS BIG FLAME PUBLIC meeting. Barbara Ehrenreich on Feminism, Socialism and Class Analysis. Friday 2nd Nov 8pm Trades Club Leeds 7.

MANCHESTER BIG FLAME Public meeting on 'Beyond the Fragments' 21st November

The trial that blew open the jury vetting scandal.

● *The Persons Unknown trial — five people charged with conspiracy to rob and defraud, with persons unknown — has completed the exposure of jury vetting begun in the ABC Official Secrets case.*

THE SENSATIONAL revelations of jury vetting at the ABC trial have developed into a campaign that revolutionary socialists should be involved with. After all, it is no good just denouncing trials and courts as a bourgeois farce. We have to fight within and against legal processes to show that they are not the embodiment of eternal rationality and justice—that there is a socialist alternative which is better. But at the same time, we must beware of tendencies in the campaign to idealise The Law, and to imply that it would be perfectly able to deliver Justice if only the ruling class stopped interfering with it.

CHALLENGES

In any jury trial the actual 12-person jury is chosen from a panel or pool of people called for jury service to that court for a particular period. Both the prosecution and the defence have the right to object to the people chosen from that panel to sit as jury on a case. But while the prosecution has the right to "stand by" as many jurors as it likes, the defence right to challenge was limited in 1977 to three potential jurors only.

UNDESIRABLES

The day the ABC trial opened, the defence QC asked for the list of the jury pool, in case he wanted to challenge any. As he recounted in the recent Man Alive TV programme, it was then that he found out that the prosecution had had this list for two months. They had checked all the potential jurors against police computer records and Special Branch files, so that they could be sure to exclude any "undesirables" from the actual jury. When the ABC defendants objected to this, the judge rejected their objection.

SECRETS TRIAL

However, they subsequently discovered that the foreman of the jury that was expelled was a former member of the notorious British Army SAS regiment. Apparently, the prosecution had not thought he was an undesirable person to have on the jury in a "secrets"

trial. When this was revealed by a journalist on TV (at some personal risk of being done for contempt) the judge hit the ceiling. He was forced to order a new trial—with another vetted jury. But the ABC campaign succeeded in showing up the absurdity of the prosecution. The new jury convicted only on a technicality—the Official Secrets Act is so broad you could be convicted for asking a postwoman what her rounds are.

GUIDE LINES

Meanwhile, the vetting of the jury had been raised in Parliament. In fact, it turned out, jury vetting had been going on for years. It had become obvious, especially in IRA trials. But in 1973, Hailsham (now once again Lord Chancellor) had flatly said that vetting was "outrageous" and random selection of juries was the "only way". But when the Labour Attorney-General, Sam Silkin, found out that it could and did happen, he didn't stop it. What he did was to get together with the Home Secretary and draw up some Guidelines which effectively made jury vetting legitimate.

They were supposed to "control" it by lim-

iting it to "exceptional types of cases of public importance" such as "serious offences alleged to have been committed by a gang of professional criminals." But the Guidelines were not published, so it is hard to see how they could provide much control.

In fact, it has since become plain that it is possible for the police to get hold of the jury panel list regardless of the Guidelines and

without getting the permission of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) as they are supposed to. The DPP says that vetting has taken place in 28 cases since 1975. But at least one case he did not know about was last year's trial at Carnaerwon of Welsh Language Society members. In an area where two-thirds of the population are Welsh speakers, it turned out that 10 out of 12 jury members had non-Welsh names, which seemed more than a coincidence. Eventually the Home Office admitted it, and blamed a junior police officer.

NO POPULAR CONTROL

Obviously, police can have much easier access to the court officials who draw up and keep jury lists than can the lawyers of the accused. And this is important not only in the big cases that get all the publicity. There is actually no public control at all of the process of selecting jury panels from the electoral roll. It would only need a mildly racist official, for instance, to avoid streets with large black populations or names he did not like,

to produce a list that is far from random. But we should not be fooled into thinking that the random jury is the guarantee of justice. They are 12 isolated individuals who know nothing about each other, or the accused, and they are brought in to play a very minor role in the judicial performance.

NO CHOICE

Judges in fact prefer to have a jury of "common people" to take on the burden of finding the accused guilty. Within the courtroom, juries are impressed by the majesty of the whole occasion, and the formality of the rules of evidence ensures they hear only a travesty of the truth. In any case, the judge's summing up leaves them very little choice. Their role is to apply the law's alternative: Guilty or Not Guilty. There is no way they can get involved in any better way of sorting out the underlying problems, political, economic, psychological or whatever, that lie behind the "criminal act". Popular participation is strictly limited.

CRACKS APPEAR

So provided the jury sticks to its allotted role in the legal process it is easy for hardline reactionaries like Hailsham to defend random selection and the jury as the cornerstone of liberty. It is when cracks in the system show up that it has to be patched up by devices such as vetting. Recently, the police have become upset that they cannot always count on

conviction of people they think are guilty. So they have pressed for changes in the rules of evidence and a reduction of the right to jury trials. In fact, it was Hailsham who set up the Committee whose report in 1977 was the basis of a great reduction in the right to jury trials—especially for "public order" offences such as "threatening or insulting behaviour" which are a great favourite with police against demonstrators, picketers, and soccer fans.

IRELAND

Sometimes, of course, more drastic action is needed, as in Ireland (North and South) where jury trial has been suspended for political cases. The jury only really becomes the "bulwark of liberty" in situations where the prosecuting authorities can't be sure of getting convictions, even where the accused has obviously committed actions which are against the law. Yet it is precisely in those kinds of situations that the right to a jury comes under attack

Sol Picciotto

JUSTICE SUBVERTED

Post-election Scotland CHANCE FOR SOCIALIST NATIONALISM?

1979 HAS certainly been an eventful year in Scottish politics. Devolution was on offer from the British Labour Party as the only answer they had to the rise of nationalism. The referendum produced a majority in favour, predominantly from the working class, but even the limited power of an assembly has been denied the Scottish people. The Tories have seen to that. Yet, at the general election, there was an overwhelming swing to Labour on a clear class basis, which at the same time highlighted the national question. The Westminster Tory government now has no mandate to govern Scotland.

Amongst other issues, this will give both a class and a national basis to the fight-back against the public expenditure cuts; against the rundown of the shipbuilding industry; and to the rapidly growing anti-nuclear movement against a further nuclear power station, dumping of nuclear waste, and a new nuclear weapons base, all of which are proposed for Scotland. Also in store is a further step backwards on the rights of women and gays. (Male homosexuality is still illegal in Scotland, with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.)

by Danny Cunningham

RADICAL

The dismal failure of the tartan Tories of the SNP reduced to 17% of the vote at the general election, has provoked a crisis in the Party. The left wing of the party has now got organised. The '79 group calls for a socialist republic, but it remains to be seen if they have more to offer than an ambitious and opportunist leadership. With disillusion growing about the SNP and parliamentary politics, especially among the young, there exists a great potential for the development of independent working class politics relevant to the distinct conditions in Scotland and continuing a long radical tradition that includes amongst others, those two great revolutionaries from Scotland, James Connolly

DIVIDE AND RULE FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN

Glasgow.
Trade Unionists march through the Square
Towards the City Chambers.

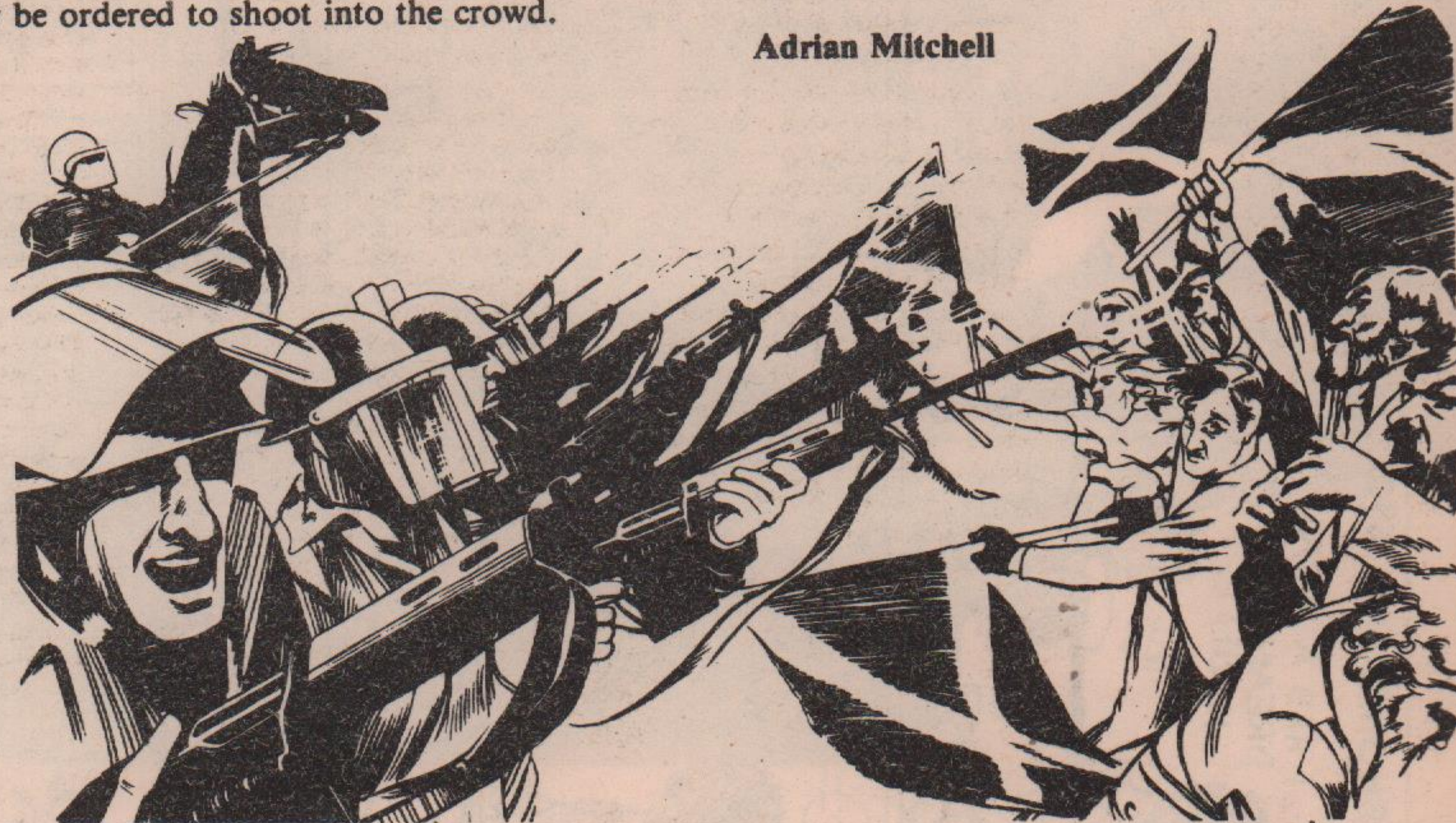
Police. Police. Police.

And in the streets leading off the Square —
Scottish soldiers with rifles.
Live ammunition.
They may be ordered to shoot into the crowd.

And behind the Scottish soldiers —
English soldiers with rifles.
Live ammunition.
If the Scottish soldiers refuse to shoot into the crowd
The English soldiers will be ordered
To shoot the Scottish soldiers

Oh, but that was long ago.
That was in the future.

Adrian Mitchell



and John MacLean.

IRELAND

Certainly, any socialist nationalist movement would have to deal with the Irish question. The closeness of the war of national liberation in Ireland, both geographically and politically, has long been exploited by the British establishment as a way of fostering the sectarian divide in Scotland. Scottish regiments have always been used in deliberately provocative situations in Ireland. This is as true today as it was in 1920 when John MacLean wrote

The Irish Tragedy: Scotland's Disgrace. (Scotland today provides training bases for the UDR and the SAS).

BRIDGE

A deep divide has developed between the two dominant currents in Scottish politics, the Labour movement and the national movement. It is the bridging of that gap that the Scottish Republican Socialist League have set as their task. It is a task neglected since the days of MacLean. This, the centenary year of his birth, is a

fitting time to begin that long overdue re-alignment which will be such a necessary factor in the fight against the increasing power of the multi-nationals and the highly-centralised EEC.

To quote Connolly: "The internationalism of the future will be based upon the free federation of free peoples."

Socialist Scotland 35p +pp, quarterly from Box 5, 45 Niddry St., Edinburgh.
Scottish Republic: 10p +pp monthly from 23 Affleck St., Aberdeen.

Big Flame

15p
for Socialism

Inside this issue

- Rudi Dutschke speaks to Big Flame about the left today.
- Ford workers set up a new rank and file international network.
- Don't take Benn's advice — the Labour left after the Conference.

Police custody unsafety record 70-77. One death every two weeks



Photo: Carlos Augusto

- Between 1970-1977, the total of deaths in police custody was 169—which is one every two weeks!
- Every year one out of 100,000 people arrested die of 'accidental death' in police stations. Which makes police stations, where the police are meant to be watching those arrested, as dangerous as being at home.

for drunkenness there was a danger of them smothering themselves with the blanket! The coroner accepted this nonsense, though there are no cases in medical history of people smothering themselves in a blanket. For every case that comes to the attention of the national press—there are hundreds of cases where the police, quite literally, get away with murder. (source 'The Leveller' Nov. 1979)

• ANOTHER DEATH TO ANSWER FOR—THE CASE OF SEAMUS MALLOY, p. 13

brother goose
O-FILMS present ZIMBABWE!

MASHONLAND 1890
I HAD A DREADFUL DREAM LAST NIGHT... TELL US

WITH THE HELP AND MONEY FROM WHITE GOVERNMENTS.

MOVE ALONG, YOU KAFFIRS! THIS IS RHODESIA NOW!

WE KICK THEM OUT OF OUR COUNTRY AGAIN!

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IN YOUR DREAM?

WITH THE HELP AND MONEY FROM WHITE GOVERNMENTS.

ER... IF YOU MIND IF I CAMP HERE

THEY WILL OCCUPY OUR LAND FOR MANY YEARS

WHAT ELSE DID YOUR DREAM FORETELL?

BUT OUR RESISTANCE WILL DEVELOP!

WE KICK THEM OUT OF OUR COUNTRY AGAIN!

WE KICK THEM OUT OF OUR COUNTRY AGAIN!

ZIMBABWE!

I do like a happy ending!

Soby