



Irish Women demonstrate for civil rights.

## Women's Day

MARCH 8th IS International Womens Day. It's an important day for all women organising and fighting to improve their situation. 1975 was called International Womens Year but it wasn't much of a year for most women. Prices, rents, bills, bus fares, school meals - everything rocketted, wages were held back and thousands were made redundant. Healthcare, education, housing were all run down, and women bore the brunt. The 1967 Abortion Act came under attack from people who want to make abortions even harder to get. But women have been fighting back and not only in this country but all over the world. In Northern Ireland and Angola - against imperialism, in Spain and Portugal to free themselves from the shackles of fascism. Throughout Europe the campaign for safe abortions and free contraception began to spread. International Women's Day is one day when we should celebrate all these struggles of women throughout the world.

### SINCE 1910

International womens Day was proclaimed on March 8th 1910 to celebrate a strike of women garment workers two years earlier. 150,000 women took to the streets demanding an end to sweatshop conditions and for the right to organise. It has since been celebrated every year recognising the importance of womens struggle in building a powerful revolutionary working class movement. In Russia, 1917, the march of thousands of women in Petrograd on International Women's Day demanded an end to the war, lower prices and higher wages. In Uruguay in 1970, International Women's Day was celebrated by women from the Tupamaros - a revolutionary group fighting the right-wing regime there - by staging a mass jail break from a women's prison.

In this country this year, there will be various demonstrations and events on March 8th. In London there is a national demonstration, while many towns and cities are organising too.

After years of poverty, a community's frustration explodes.

# Black kids fight back

LEEDS BIGGEST Magistrates Court was packed last month by young blacks, when twelve people were committed for trial to Leeds Crown Court.

The court appearances were in connection with the unprecedented attack on the police by young people in the Chapeltown area of Leeds on Bonfire Night last year.

The police allege that the 12, (11 West Indian, one English) used threatening behaviour, caused criminal damage, actual and grievous bodily harm as part of a crowd of about 200 who stoned a series of police vehicles, resulting in near fatal injuries to two policemen.

Hundreds of young people had come to the remand hearing. Some of them also picketed the Town Hall. Visibly upset by the presence of so many supporters, officials threatened to clear the court and ordered the men to take off their hats.

## Broken up by police

Bonfire night in Chapeltown has been a police-youth confrontation for the past four years. In 1974 a peaceful bonfire in Rossington Grove was broken up by police in nine cars, who had the fire brigade turn hoses on people. The youths retaliated with bricks. Three firemen were injured and one youth arrested.

### WHAT HAPPENED

Both sides were expecting trouble last November. The police claimed to be keeping a 'low key' approach. But the presence of large numbers of police vehicles in the area leaves room for doubt. From 7.30pm the crowd swelled to around 300 people enjoying the festivities. It was not until a personnel carrier, a number of panda cars, two dog patrol cars and several unmarked CID cars had driven through the gathering crowd that the first brick

was thrown. The major attack came at around 9.15 pm when a CID car came to a halt under a shower of bricks. Every window was smashed before it could escape to the Harehills Avenue end of Spencer Place. A few minutes later the police fled as the youths ran to overturn the shattered car. For 90 minutes the youths controlled the area.

## A lone panda car

By now the police had begun to arrive in force and, swinging truncheons and using dogs, they began to clear the streets. People resisted, a lone panda car was stoned and drove into a tree seriously injuring its occupants.

Chapeltown is a multiracial inner city area. The crumbling terraces that housed the Edwardian middle class are now occupied by workers and their families from the West Indies, Asia, Eastern Europe and England. A council survey

July 1975 showed that 52% of heads of households took home less than £30 a week, and another 12.6 per cent were unemployed. A quarter of all families have six or more members, compared with 5 per cent for the rest of Leeds. Rising unemployment and cuts in welfare services hits inner city areas hardest. There's no love for the state in Chapeltown.

The most hated agent is the police. Over the past year complaints have mounted against police using dogs to bust the blues (parties).

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## police get rough justice.



## Leyland: MORE DOWN THE ROAD ?

THE ANNOUNCEMENT that five Leyland car plants in the Birmingham area are threatened with closure has been presented as the final straw that could break the company's fragile plans for workers' participation. Will the unions decide to call a halt and pull out?

The answer is almost certainly no. The union side has already comfortably sat through a huge shake up of the Leyland plants. New jobs are opening, old ones are closing and men are being moved around like a game of musical chairs.

● A new £90 million Rover-Triumph plant is opening, but nobody who will be transferred there knows where or when.

● Triumph Canley have been told of production changes throughout the division. Rumours have been allowed to work their mischief, but nobody knows who will get the chop, and when.

What is clear is that in the name of rationalisation - the real meaning of the Leyland rescue operation - jobs are being lost. At Longbridge, Birmingham, twenty five workers in No 5 machine shop were told last November that their work was being transferred to Coventry. They either went with it, or down the road. Some choice!

Throughout this upheaval the unions have had very little to say. In

fact, the latest of the company's memos to employees asking for more worked was signed by the Leyland Cars Joint Council, a joint management-union body. The shop-floor is meant to have participated in this; yet no shop-floor workers have been asked to vote people onto this body!

It is not, as Austin Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson puts it, 'a limited form of workers control.' It's in fact a face-saver, allowing the company and the unions to by-pass shop-floor organisation.

The Labour Government and the bosses know this. They know the power of the shop-floor stands in the way of recovering their profits. We should learn from the fact that the acceptance of workers participation was a condition for the 'saving' of Leyland, and that a number of ruthless top bosses have been extolling the schemes virtues.

We should strengthen the fight to reject the participation con game. It is already being opposed at Triumph Canley, Bordesley Green Morris Radiators, the Cowley Service Division and Rover Solihull. When it comes up for review in twelve months, it should be thrown out.

Above all the fight to strengthen shop-floor organisation should be maintained. It is vital not to give in to 'workers participation' and give management a blank cheque.

# HOUSING IS A RIGHT NOT A PRIVILEGE.

THE HOUSING situation is in the worst state it has ever been, especially in London, which last year accounted for over 50 per cent of all applications from homeless families throughout the country.

## COUNCIL HOUSING

Altogether there are about 3,500,000 people on council house waiting lists, most of whom will never be rehoused. More people are being forced to apply for temporary accommodation, which usually means bed and breakfast.

*'When you've got four kids, bed and breakfast is out of the question. I know that I just couldn't take the strain of not having a proper home.'*

Local authorities spent three million pounds last year on B and B; enough money to pay for 1,500 new council homes.

The actual cost of building a council house is £10,500, but because money has to be borrowed, it means the final cost after interest repayment is over £30,000. If people were to come before profit, then three times as many houses could be built for the same amount of money, as it takes now to build one!

## PRIVATE HOUSING

Private housing is in no better state. If you haven't got a few thousand tucked away, or earn a good few bob, you're not going to get a mortgage, and have you ever tried renting a flat!

*'I've been looking for a flat for over six months...you ring up and the phone is always engaged. When you finally get through the flat has gone....it's always the same.'*

Almost 50,000 people have been forced to squat because of the housing situation. A recent survey in the London Borough of Lambeth showed that 60 per cent of people squatting had families with kids, not rent dodgers or vandals as the telly and papers keep telling us. You can't blame people for squatting when the only alternative they have is to go into short life housing (if they are very lucky) or to be homeless.

No one should be homeless. There are thousands of empty houses that could be done up as well as about 400,000 second homes, used for only a couple of weeks every year. The homeless only want ONE home.

## PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS

## DECENT HOUSING FOR EVERY ONE

### CLASSIFIED ADS

Thurs. 11 March. PUBLIC MEETING: BOYCOTT NON-UNION GRAPES. Speaker, Elaine Elinson, British representative of United Farm Workers of America. Wood Brooke College, Bristol Rd. Selly Oak, Birmingham. 7.30.

Mon. 15 March. BIRMINGHAM BIG FLAME MEETING: STRUGGLES IN LATIN AMERICA. Open to all sympathisers. Contact 021 472-7019 for venue.

Mon. 29 March. BIRMINGHAM BIG FLAME MEETING: HOUSING AND PRICES. Open to sympathisers. Contact 021 472-7019 for details.

Sat. 20 March. Green Ban Action Committee demonstration. Birmingham.

## THE CRIMINAL TRESPASS LAW

LAST WEEK hundreds of people marched in opposition to the Criminal Trespass Law. It's very likely this law will soon be going before Parliament in an attempt to make trespass a criminal offence.

At the moment trespass is only a civil matter, which means you can't be arrested for it, and the police aren't meant to get involved.

If trespass was to become illegal, it would be a serious attack on anyone who takes direct action, whether in the community or at work, in support of their own interests.

### WHO WOULD BE AFFECTED?

If it were to be passed, then people could be arrested for:

- **OCCUPATIONS** of factories and workplaces.
- **OCCUPATIONS** by tenants and students, like the sit-in at Birmingham Poly which was able to stop cut-backs in a number of courses, and tenants' occupations of town halls to stop rent rises.
- **SQUATTING.** The housing situation is getting worse, with more cut-backs. About 250,000 people have no permanent home. As a result about 40,000 people have had to house themselves in some of the 800,000 or so empty houses in England and Wales.
- **PICKETS** on private or state property, like the mass pickets which won the miners' strikes in 1972 and 1974.
- **GYPSIES.** Under the Caravan Sites Act, local authorities were under an obligation to provide permanent sites for gypsies. Most of them have totally failed to do this, forcing gypsies to trespass on open land.

These are only a few examples of the things which would become CRIMINAL offences if the bill is passed.

### WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

These proposals were produced by the law commission; a group of lawyers whose job it is to advise the government on changes in the law. Most of the proposals they suggest, normally become law sooner or later. In its report, No.54, it proposes to get rid of the old laws, and create two new offences:

- 1) Entering property by force, adversely to anyone occupying it or entitled to occupy it, and
- 2) Being unlawfully on property, and not leaving when told by the owner.



They suggest up to two years jail for the first offence, and up to 6 months for the second.

It seems clear from this, it is a move by the state to strengthen themselves against people taking direct action to defend their standard of living.

The Criminal Trespass Law may be limited to groups that are weakest and less able to defend themselves, like tenants and squatters; but even if this were to happen, it wouldn't mean everybody else was safe. The same eviction procedure used against squatters for instance, has already been used against workers and student occupations and demonstrations. So its just as likely, that as soon as the idea of a Criminal Trespass Law has been accepted, that it will quickly be extended and used against other forms of protest. That's why its important that no Criminal Trespass Law is passed, and that opposition to it comes from all groups of people who might one day be affected by it.

### WHY IS IT HAPPENING NOW?

A law like the Criminal Trespass law would give Parliamentary backing, to recent rulings that have been made by judges in court, and replace old long forgotten laws that have been used in recent trials. The Shrewsbury pickets were done under the 100 year old conspiracy laws for instance, and quick eviction procedures, introduced in 1970 to be used against squatters, have already been used against workers and students. Judges will no longer even have to try and find laws under which to prosecute innocent people, but will have one blanket charge which would cover all these activities and more.

Unemployment is at its highest for years and under the £6 limit, wages are being held down while rents and prices are continually going up. The recent cuts by the Labour government mean that the bosses are once again making us pay for their crisis. We are going to be forced more and more to take direct action to defend even our present standard of living, to get decent housing and decent social services. A law like the Criminal Trespass Law, would give them a very strong weapon to use against us.

If you want to know more about the Criminal Trespass Law, or want a speaker or help in setting up a group, then contact the Campaign against the Criminal Trespass Law c/o 6 Bowden St, London, SE11. tel 01.289.3877

To a lot of people, we're the scum of the earth because we squat.

Two women, both with children, talk about why they are squatting and some of the things that have happened to them.

**1** When I first came to London, I had a flat. But when the landlord found out I was pregnant, he started to get really nasty; so I had to get out as he lived downstairs. After that I put a deposit on a house, but the guy ran off with all the money. After that, squatting was the only thing left; bed and breakfast was taking all the money away each week.

*I applied to the council, but they told me to re-apply when I had a child. When I had Joseph I re-applied, but they told me to try again when I had two children.*

I've been evicted once when Joseph was two months old, and I was dead lucky he was so young, because he didn't know what was happening; to be evicted again, if it was anything like the last time....it would really upset him an awful lot because last time they were hard and rude and threatened Joseph when he was only two months old.

The owners, the Crown, didn't care. I asked them what they were going to do with my baby, and they said it wasn't their job, and that it was all my fault. They just didn't want to listen to us.

*I was scared of squatting at first, because I had never heard of it - but when I went to my first squatters meeting, I found that everybody there was just an ordinary person like me, looking for a home. I squatted because I wanted a home.*

**2** When me and my husband split up, I came down to London for a week to try and get somewhere to live. The rents were so huge that the only thing that was available was squatting. We were very desperate to get out of Dundee, so we would have done anything. This house we are living in now was empty for five years before it was squatted.

I had my electricity cut off once. They did it from outside by digging up the road. We went to the homeless family place, and they said they couldn't do anything until we knew the day we were being evicted. on.. They said they would rehouse us then. I said to the women; 'you'd let four children go through the trauma of an eviction before doing anything?' I was then told that I was not homeless and that the only problem I had was not having electricity.

### gas lights

I tried to explain to the women that it was coming on winter, and that I would not be able to look after the kids without electricity. They eventually directed me upstairs to the social services department.

Social services gave me one paraffin heater to heat six rooms, a calor gas stove with two burners, and two gas lights. At the time I thought, great, aren't the social services wonderful; but when I came home, I thought 'who the hell do they think they are - one heater for six rooms!' Luckily I managed to get electricity from the next door house or we would never have got through the winter alive.

It's only a few people who get squatting a bad name; and yet whenever there's anything on the telly about squatting, they always talk about the bad things about squatters. They hardly ever bother to show all the families that are squatting, or the really desperate people.



Eviction in London. Demonstration Feb 28th

In the last three months at least five people have died in housefires in the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Yet last month the local council voted to slash plans to fire-proof old people's homes in the area by three quarters, as part of their contribution to the cuts. In doing so they have probably voted in the death sentence for at least several old people.

A tragedy, but only one of the ways ordinary people are going to be hit by the Labour Government's plans for our future.

Millions of ordinary people are going to find life harder and more painful because of the Government's recent White Paper on public expenditure.

By the end of the decade; **SCHOOLS** will be more crowded. From September this year school meals will go up by 15-20p. **ROADS** will be more dangerous and in worse condition. Road maintenance is being reduced. There will be fewer car parks for more cars. **PUBLIC TRANSPORT** will disappear in some parts of the country and where it doesn't it will be too expensive for many people.

**HEALTH** services will be worse; more people will have to travel further to fewer hospitals. In Denis Healey's own words: 'Many much needed new hospitals, and other developments, will not now be able to proceed.'

**HOUSING**; by 1977 council rents will be rising by some £250 a year.

## NO GUARANTEE

How does the Government think this is going to help us? Healey says all these savings will put an extra £970 million into private industry, so that more jobs can be created. **But there's absolutely no guarantee that this money will into creating new factories and jobs in Britain.**

Many British companies are busy moving work and investment overseas, particularly to third world countries, where workers are unorganised, wages are cheaper and, often, authoritarian governments have banned all industrial action. **In 1974 alone £1.6 billion was invested overseas.** What is to stop Healey's £970 million following the same route? The answer is - **NOTHING!**

Even if some of the money stays in this country there is still no guarantee life will be any better for most of us.

## NO INVESTMENT

\***New investment does not necessarily mean more jobs.** The British Steel Corporation, for instance, is currently investing millions of pounds in new plant ...**in order to cut the number of jobs!**

\***New investment does not mean that conditions, health and safety at work are improved.** Usually it means more people pushing more meaningless buttons to produce more worthless goods. Skill and interest in work disappears.

\***New investment will not necessarily be directed to useful production or uses that create jobs.** It may be swallowed up in speculation.

\***Finally, new investment in industry brings no guarantees that all the cuts in public services will ever be made up again.**

Labour's plans will bail out the bosses; they will do nothing for the rest of us.

# Labour's murder plan



## THIS IS HOW TO FIGHT

THE FIGHT against cuts in public spending in the W. Midlands got a boost on Saturday 21st of February, with a demonstration in Birmingham of well over 3,000 people. Just a few days after Healey's white paper bringing in more cuts, this demonstration came just at the right time.

Although the march was large it should and could have been much bigger, had it not been for the back-peddling of some unions and by parts of the West Midlands TUC who organised the march. NALGO in particular refused to give their support on the grounds that they had their own one lined up for April. Some NALGO members were even instructed not to take banners on the demonstration or support it as branches.

But even with these obstructions the turnout was encouraging - in particular the large number of women present, the large NUPE contingents from the NHS, local government and schools; factory delegations from Rover Solihull, British Leyland Tractors and Transmissions, and almost 100 asian workers from Birmid Qualcast. Porters and domestics at Selly Oak and the Queen Elizabeth hospitals went on strike to go on the demonstration and building workers from the Cubitts market site also walked out to join the march.

The demonstration brought together for the first time many of those who are being directly and severely hit by the cuts - health workers, nurses, school dinner ladies, local authority manual workers and teachers. Many of these workers are women and its women who are hit the hardest, both as housewives and at work the cuts mean more work all round.

Many people on the demo were looking for ways of effectively fighting the cuts, but the speakers at the rally afterwards gave no lead or direction.

Alan Fisher (NUPE) and Ken Gill (AUEW/TASS) gave speeches full of condemnation of the cuts, of Labour's policies and even capitalism itself. But not once did they give a

positive idea on how to fight back at the grassroots. Eric Heffer was even worse. All he could offer was import controls as a way out of the crisis mixed with vague appeals for 'socialist policies.'

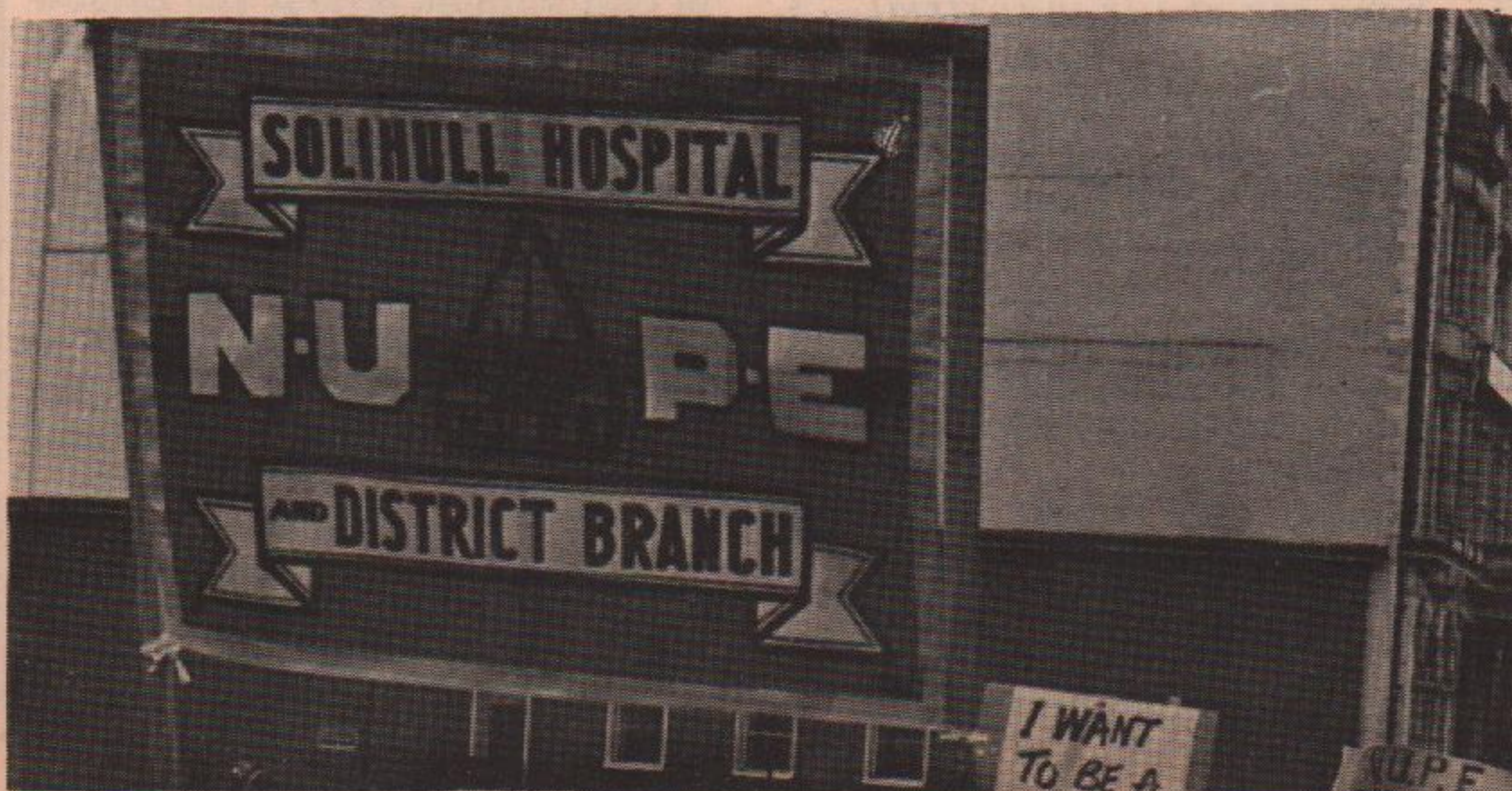
Fortunately in Birmingham, there is an active campaign against the cuts, supported by the Trades Council, UCATT, ASTMS, NUPE, NUS, NATFE etc and several community and tenants organisations. Already locally based area committees are being set up in the Sattley, Selly Oak, Sparkhill, Perry Barr, Aston and Small Heath areas of the city. Meetings are being organised for different sectors - health, education, housing, transport etc which will lead up to a major conference, planned for June

**2** **INDUNDEE** a meeting of 800 local shop-stewards last month voted for a city-wide one day strike on March 5th against the cuts. The Tory-controlled local authority has cut public expenditure by £11 million more than the govt is asking for.

One of the most spectacular victims of this policy has been a local assesment centre which closed before it had even opened. Staff had been recruited, other children's homes in the area (overcrowded to bursting point) had been told the strain would be taken off them, and then the new centre, Kippon House, never opened.

Other victims of Dundee's cuts are meals on wheels which will go up in price; cuts in home helps and staff in old people homes; fewer teachers in primary schools; and a cut in several nursery schools.

**3** **DEMONSTRATIONS** against the cuts are definitely planned in the following areas. The list is not complete  
**Southampton and Solihull** March 6th  
**Merseyside** March 13th  
 Dates still to be fixed for demos in **Avon** and **Leeds**.  
 In Scotland a march to the Scottish Office in **Edinburgh** is planned for **late March**.



# We think

PEOPLE TALK about the crisis as if it is only a matter of jobs and money. These are serious enough questions but the crisis is about a great deal more.

A survey last week shows how it is reaching into every part of life.

## Food

According to the survey, the decline in food consumption is quite horrifying. In the last three months of 1975, food prices rose by 26%, yet expenditure on food only rose by 23%. In other words people are eating less.

## Suicides

Suicides, attempted suicides and calls to the Samaritans have shot up in the last two years. 'Calls are going up all the time', the Samaritans report 'Quite a high proportion are undoubtedly coming from the effects of economic stress, particularly redundancies. We get a lot of men made redundant who are afraid to tell their wives. Family stress has undoubtedly increased. Previously we were wary about drawing conclusions about how suicide is related to economic factors. But not now.' The Samaritans also report that over 25% of their callers are under 25. Youth unemployment may literally be driving some young people to suicide.

## Kids

The rising cost of having children appears to be affecting the birthrate. More and more young couples seem to have decided that they can no longer afford to have a family. Or equally important, with more women having to work to make up the family income, they don't dare have the child both because of the extra cost and because of the cut it would mean if the wife has to leave work. Yet if you have an unwanted pregnancy, it's going to be harder to get an abortion if the government's select Committee on Abortion has its way.

## Travel

Its also getting too expensive

to travel. The number of rail and bus passengers is down. In Brighton for instance, a town with a low proportion of car owners, the local bus service has lost over 5 million passengers in one year!

## Drink

Finally, the Brewers Association report that people in pubs are 'trading down' and mild is fast becoming the most popular drink. According to the Association 'More and more pubs are putting in mild and more people seem to be going back to the traditional mild or mild and bitter.'

## Fighting back

More and more people know that it is time to say enough. Under the governments present £6 ceiling everybody is taking home at least £2 less. Its a much bigger cut for most people, especially the 11,500 extra people on the dole this month.

At the same time its becoming clearer and clearer that the govt and the TUC are preparing an even bigger cut in our standard of living. They want to reduce the £6 limit even further.

Thousands of people are taking action against the govt's 'solution.' Anti-cuts committees and demonstrations against the cuts are taking place all over the country. They need more support. Right to Fuel groups campaigning to stop electricity cut-offs, and gas disconnections are also growing. They need more support.

The whole movement has been given a boost recently by the Scottish miners call for an end to all pay laws. And by the Lancashire textile workers demanding a guaranteed wage for whenever they are laid off or put on short time, and a 35 hour week.

All these moves come to one thing. With the Labour govt trying to make us pay for the bosses crisis, the working class must refuse to pay. For more money and less work. **For the right to live. The fight for a decent life for all of us.**

## The bombs in Britain

FRANK Stagg's death has brought retaliation to the streets of London. Bombs have been planted under cars and in shops. There could be more in the future. It might be the work of the Provisional IRA, or it could be a splinter group, the Irish Volunteer Force.

Few people in Britain bothered about Frank Stagg dying, but if anyone gets killed by a bomb, there will be an outcry. We in Big Flame will share the grief and the fear if a single innocent person is killed. But we will not join in with the outcry.

We don't agree with bombings of any civilian populations. But then its easy for us. We are not Irish. We have not lived under foreign occupation for seven years. Our sons and fathers have not been shot dead or interned by the British army. Our

mothers, wives and sisters have not been widowed, or shot and interned themselves. Our kids have not grown up with soldiers patrolling the streets. One of our comrades has not died on a decision from Roy Jenkins.

We do not believe that any civilian bombing in this country will solve the problem of British imperialism. But we understand well why some Irish republicans will take up that tactic. It is inevitable. Inevitable that is, until the British people have proved their solidarity with the Irish, and built a movement that demands that the British state stops its plunder and domination. A movement for troops out and Irish self-determination.

### BIG FLAME GROUPS

There are BIG FLAME groups or sympathisers in Birmingham, Brighton, Cambridge, Colchester, Glasgow, Great Yarmouth, Hull, Kirkby, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Norwich, Nottingham, Sheffield and South Shields. Details from Big Flame, 632 Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham.

# ABORTION A Woman's Right



Hundreds of people took part in a North West Regional National Abortion Campaign demonstration in Liverpool last month.

'NOT THE Church, not the State, women must decide their fate', shouted hundreds of angry women as they marched through central London last month. They had just heard that Parliament had voted, that evening, to re-form a Government committee looking into how to tighten up abortion legislation.

The committee, known as a Select Committee, will take a close look at Glasgow MP, James White's notorious Abortion (Amendment) Bill, which seeks to make it more difficult for women to have safe, legal abortions. This bill has already failed once to get through Parliament.

During the debate on whether to re-form the Select Committee, there were never more than sixty MPs present; that shows just how interested most MPs are in women's rights. The Committee, which also met last year, has already, in an interim report last summer, been responsible for making abortions harder to get, in accordance with recommendations made in James White's Bill.

Now it has been re-formed it will undoubtedly be looking at White's recommendations to amend the existing grounds for abortion, only allowing legal abortion where doctors are convinced there is a grave and serious risk to a woman's health. Even Barbara Castle has admitted publicly this would reduce the numbers of doctors prepared to perform abortions for fear of prosecution, and consequently drive many women into the private sector and backstreets.

The press has made a great fuss about the resignation of six members of the Select Committee but what they don't say is that this committee can still go on meeting with the remaining members, all known anti-abortionists. It is only required to

have a quorum of three. It can make recommendations which can be implemented without Parliamentary debate, and even if it does seek to make proposals which would change existing law and require a vote and debate in the House of Commons - for example the grounds for abortion - it is likely the vote would endorse any Select Committee recommendations.

The MPs who voted in favour of the Select Committee, and those who continue to sit on the Committee, believe that women should not be allowed to make decisions about when to have children, or about whether or not to have an abortion.

They also make a lot of noise about protecting women from the abuses and financial exploitation of the private medical sector. But reforming the Select Committee is not going to improve the situation for women seeking an abortion. The only way to protect women from exploitation is to extend NHS facilities, to open out-patient abortion clinics, to ensure that anti-abortionist consultants like McClaren in Birmingham can't use their professional position to deprive women of safe and legal abortion.

We have the right to show our determination to fight for women's right to abortion on the NHS and fight for abortion facilities everywhere; we have to take the struggle back into our localities, in schools, hospitals, in our union branches, and mobilise for the National Abortion Campaign demonstration in London on April 3rd.

# JOB FOR WHAT?

## WORKERS PLAN FOR TECHNOLOGY

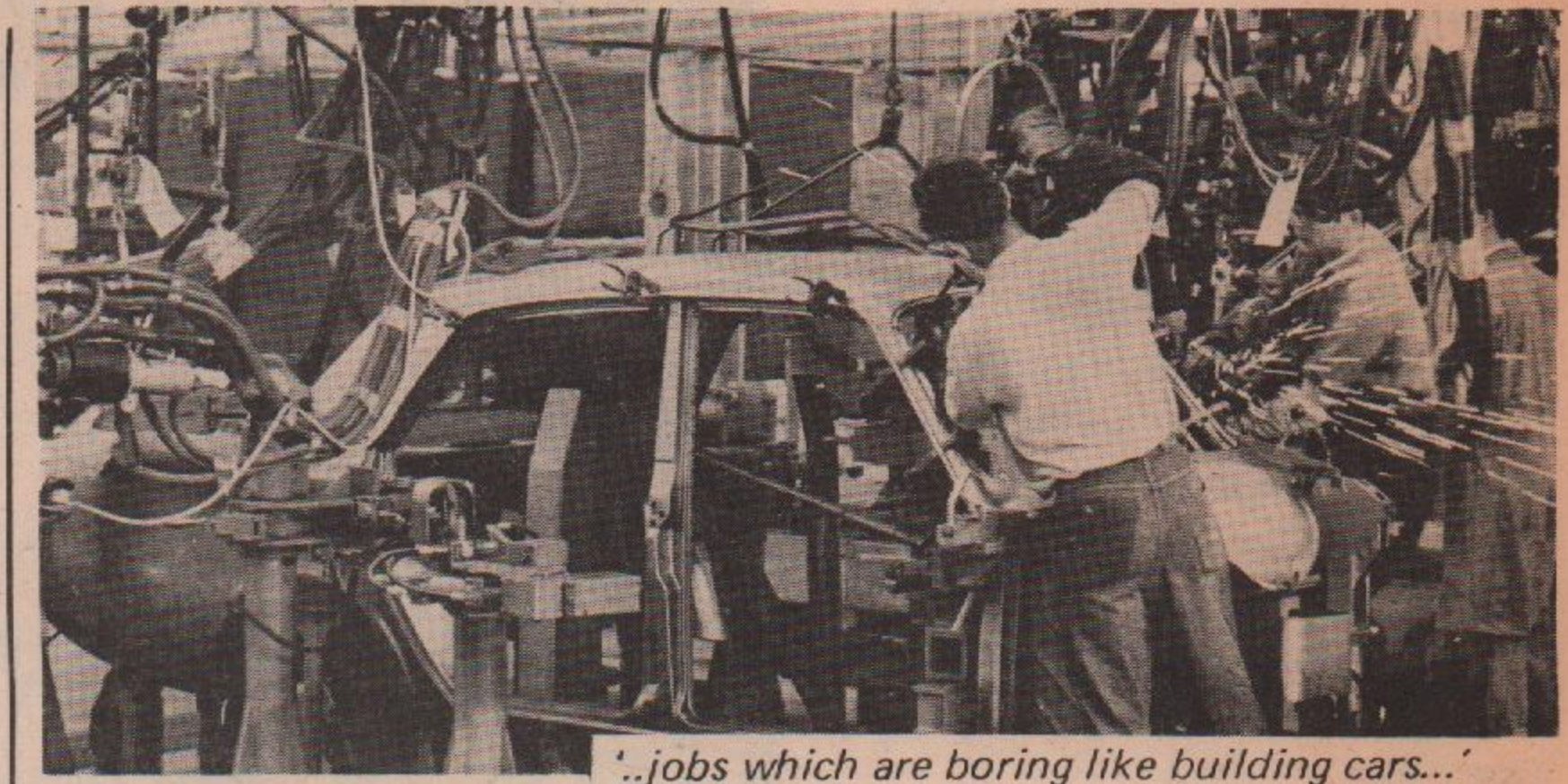
THOUSANDS of workers every week are fighting for their jobs. There has never been a more relevant time to ask: jobs for what? Jobs which are useless, like making electric tooth-brushes; jobs that are harmful, like building guided missiles; jobs which are boring, like building cars; or jobs that are socially useful? The Lucas Aerospace Combined Shop Stewards Committee - faced with a big run-down - has produced a plan for turning the company's sophisticated equipment to useful ends. It may not be everyone's solution to redundancies or closures, but the question, how to use society's know-how and equipment is one that all socialists have to face sooner or later.

The plan looks at three problems:

### 1 TECHNOLOGY FOR WHAT?

The desire to work on socially useful products is one which is now widespread through large sectors of industry. The aerospace industry is a particularly glaring example of the gap between what technology could provide, and what it actually does provide. There is something seriously wrong with a society which can produce a level of technology to design and build Concorde but cannot provide enough simple heating systems to protect old age pensioners who are dying each winter of hypothermia. It is estimated that 980 died of hypothermia in London alone last winter, which was a particularly mild one.

We believe scientists, engineers and workers in those industries have



'...jobs which are boring like building cars...'

a profound responsibility to challenge the underlying assumptions of large scale industry, and seek to assert their right to use their skill and ability in the interest of the community at large. In saying that, we recognise that this is a fundamental challenge to many of the economic and ideological assumptions of our society.

It is not our belief that Lucas Aerospace can be transformed into a trail blazer in isolation. There can be no islands of responsibility and concern in the sea of irresponsibility and depravity. Our intentions are to make a start; to question these assumptions and to make a small contribution to demonstrating that workers are prepared to press for the right to work on products which actually help to solve human problems rather than create them.

But it remains our view that no matter how many sections of workers in other industries take up these demands the progress can only be minimal so long as our society is based on the assumption that profits come first and people come last.

### 2 TECHNOLOGY AND WORKERS

The past seventy years have seen systematic efforts to de-skill jobs, to

fragment them into narrow functions and to have them carried out at increased tempo.

In Scientific Management as its founder Frederick Winslow Taylor tells us 'the workman is told minutely what he is to do and how he is to do it.' Taylor was not unaware of the implications of what he was doing and once said 'that the requirements of a man with a manual job is that he shall be so stupid and so phlegmatic that he more nearly resembles in his mental make-up the ox than any other type.'

The tendency to destroy skill and job interest is now evident in all fields of manufacturing including Lucas Aerospace: but human beings are not oxen and are rebelling against such a system in many ways. In Volvo in Sweden, the labour turnover in 1969 was 52% and the absentee rate reached 30% in some plants. In the United States the reaction has been even more dramatic; in General Motors' Lordstown plant the computer-controlled production line and the products on it have been directly sabotaged by workers who felt completely oppressed by their working environment.

This, of course, is inevitable in a society which views workers merely as units of production. It is intended to campaign for quite radical job redesign which will protect our members from this.

### 3 THE PLAN

The idea of a plan like this is an entirely new initiative by industrial workers. It is, to our knowledge, the first time that such a plan has been proposed in the UK. There has, of course, been some developments of this kind abroad, notably in Italy where at Fiat the workforce put forward a series of social demands in addition to the straight-forward economic ones, such as wages.

This is partly because we recognised that the traditional methods of fighting for the right to work have not been particularly successful. Approximately 150 products were proposed for the plan. 12 of these were selected for presentation at this stage.

These include: **Components for low energy housing;** solar heating, the provision of materials and prototypes for research and development in the Essex County Council experimental house. **Fuel cell technology;** a research and development programme; **Braking systems;** including anti-skid systems and complete braking systems for railways; **Transport systems;** including a combined road/rail vehicle and an airship system; **Oceanics;** including developing and manufacturing devices for marine agriculture; and **medical applications;** such as an investigation of the feasibility of applying aerospace technology to give 'sight' to the blind.

This questioning of basic assumptions about what should be produced and how, is something that is likely to grow. Activities of this kind will, in our view, be far more significant in the long term than campaigns for worker participation or workers directors. There cannot be 'industrial democracy' until there is a real shift in power to the workers themselves.

The Combine Committee's plan is currently being studied by both the Lucas management and the Department of Industry.

# TURNING THE HEAT ON

Electricity prices have doubled in the past two years. Gas has also gone up. It means that :

\*Cold will have killed 45,000 old people this winter. And that if the weather stays mild. In a really bad winter the toll rises to 81,000. This is according to the voluntary organisation, Help the Aged.

\*More than 40,000 people will have to live in cold, dark uninhabitable houses, because their gas or electricity has been cut off. This is according to the British Association of Settlements.

Fuel is as important as food, clothing or housing. Without it people die. People like William and Phoebe Foster, who were found dead on December 5th last year. Lying beside a faulty electric fire that they were too frightened to use. People like Frances Leach, who died a month later in an unheated house. People like Florence Smith, only found when police broke into her unheated house.

Each case is a tragedy, a loss for a family. And the terrible truth is that thousands of deaths are unnecessary. Thousands of our old people who die every winter, could survive and enjoy future summers if only our society looked after them and kept them warm.

It has been estimated that in a community of 2,500 people - a small housing estate - between one and five old people will die from diseases associated with hypothermia.

Its these kinds of startling figures which recently forced Wedgwood Benn, energy minister, and the government to announce that no old people would be disconnected if they ran up gas or electricity bills between now and June.

Over 2 million old people live in temperatures that would bring instant prosecution if it occurred in factories or offices.

But this measure is simply designed to diffuse the growing national movement for a guaranteed right to fuel.

\*\*It gives no guarantee for the future.

\*\*It does nothing for the thousands of people who are not OAPs who cannot afford to pay fuel bills.

\*\*It doesn't tackle the basic problem of fuel being a necessity of life, which should be guaranteed regardless of income.

The fight for the Right to Fuel is taking place both inside the trade union movement and in the community.

In MANCHESTER, tenants on the 'modern' Hulme estate - where flats are all electric and the number of cut-offs has reached record figures - have helped form a Hulme Electricity Action Group. The group has forced the DHSS to pay extra heating allowances to all claimants on the estate. The increases are

●65p for a one-bedroomed flat

●£2.20 for a two to three bedroomed flat

●£3.27 for a four to five bedroomed flat.

In the TRADE UNIONS Cardiff NO 1 and NO 2 branches of the electricians union have passed resolutions calling on their members not to cut off electricity supplies. And both Cardiff and Edinburgh branches are demanding that the NEC of the union makes this national policy

This kind of rank and file action is very necessary. Last month the Child Poverty Action Group called for industrial action to stop all cut-offs. It said:



Will she see the winter through?

'This is the first time we have asked for industrial action. But our attempts at reasoned argument with ministers, the DHSS and the electricity boards have all failed.'

Yet the response of the union leaderships have been typically weak and feeble. The T&GWU considered the question at its Feb 5th executive, and concluded: 'An operative instructed to disconnect a fuel supply is free to exercise his discretion. If he sees anything untoward in the household, he will contact the DHSS. What rubbish! It neatly avoids the fact that the DHSS will do nothing to prevent most cut-offs

From the horses mouth:

'Do not skimp on electricity in cold weather. It costs lives.'

(Chairman of the South Western Scottish Electricity Board.)

The Child Poverty Action Group has plenty of examples where the DHSS has refused to act. According to them: 'Two of the most recent cases we have had, concern single parents with families, who have faced arrears of £240 and £180. The DHSS is not giving those on social security an adequate fuel allowance, and SS departments this winter are refusing to pay fuel bills which they might have paid last winter.'

# CLEANING : 100hrs a week job

CLEANING: It's a job that housewives do every day - cleaning kids, dishes, furniture, clothes, floors, windows...the list goes on and on, and so does the work. Women can spend over 100 hours a week cleaning, and at the end of the week there's nothing to show - everything is dirty again.

All that work doesn't seem to have produced anything. But it has - and the bosses know it. It has produced a clothed, fed and cleaned workforce - maintenance work that does not cost a penny to the boss.

The bosses use the labour of the whole working class for their profits - those who work outside the home get little in return and housewives

get nothing except what they can squeeze out of their husband's wage packets. The working class is forced to do boring repetitive work to earn money to live on, but housewives have to live with their boring, repetitive work, day in, day out, and get no money for it.

And if women want to get out of the home and get a wage they often find themselves doing the same kind of cleaning and servicing work. The pay is usually low but it's better than nothing and the hours 'fit in' with the kids. It may mean working nights or very early mornings; it always means more cleaning on top of what women are already expected to do.....

## 'We muck out the bogs for damn low wages...'

CLEANING WORK is notorious for the bad conditions that go along with it.

Many women have to work all night and then look after kids and do housework all day, snatching the odd couple of hours sleep in between times. In London the current rate for 40 hours of nights is about £24.

On top of this it's common for there to be no holiday or sick pay, and for the cleaners to have to bring in their own mops and dusters. Large employers usually contract their cleaning work out to special cleaning firms, and in this way avoid paying rates that have been negotiated for cleaners.

But women haven't taken these conditions lying down. Over the past few years there have been many struggles of cleaners. For example, in 1971 cleaners at Lancaster University won a pay rise after holding token strikes for free transport to work.

Night Cleaners Campaign, composed of women from Women's Liberation and other left groups, and initiated by May Hobbs, and ex-cleaner, worked to unionise the night cleaners. Office buildings all over London were leafleted. The climax of the campaign came in the summer of 1972, when cleaners at three government buildings in London came out on strike. Supplies were stopped from getting to the buildings, and after three weeks the papers announced that the Ministry of Defence in Fulham would have to close down! The strike was over, but it was by no means a clear victory. When one contractor switched to morning and evening work to get rid of the militants, the Civil Service union refused to fight for them.

Since 1973 the campaign has dwindled away. Leafletters have dropped out. Militant cleaners have been sacked. Women, working a

Lancaster Cleaners' Strike 1971



2. Battle of the farthings - protest march against the one farthing offer made to government cleaners in 1949.

Courtesy of Planet News Ltd

## LONDON CLEANER ON THE 'KEY'

'I go cleaning now. I've cleaned my own house and brought up four kids and now I clean other people's.'

WE TALKED to Eileen from North Kensington about her short experience as a night cleaner and why she sticks to private cleaning jobs.

'I went with my mate, Mary, for a night cleaning job in an office block. When we got there women were queueing up to start work. The man who took us inside to start work didn't even tell us what the hours and wages were going to be. He gave me a small little broom and a mop and the room we were looking at was so big I could barely see Mary at the other end. 'You're going to work on your own upstairs', he said to me. Oh no I'm not!' I said, and Mary said, 'Wait for me.' Four of us walked out past the women still waiting to start work.'

'I work cleaning privately on my own because you don't pay any tax or stamps. If you're working on the 'key' - you have a key to go in while people are out during the day - you're all right. An average day in one place is about three hours, so most women I know do two or even three jobs a day. The pay is now £1.25 per hour.'

'You have to put your foot down as soon as you go into a job and say what you will and won't do. I never run errands or do favours. It's only the old types, who've been working for one family for years and still wear caps and aprons who put up with a lot.'

'The worst job is if you get a family. They expect you to do the

laundry, all the washing up...and when you come to work on a Monday you find they've left you all the mess from the whole weekend to do. When I worked for a family I used to not turn up on a Monday sometimes and not phone in.'

'Once a year when the people go on holiday the cleaners come in and do the whole place out and then the daily just puts everything back in its place. The days of slavery are gone. They used to check up on everything - polished banisters, dust on the top of the wardrobe. They can't be bothered now, as long as the place looks all right.'

'The trouble with working privately is that you are on your own. Everyone is doing different workloads for the same wage rates. Sometimes you're lucky and find someone who doesn't care how hard you work but most people want their flats looking smart. Then you have to go home and do your own housework on top of that!'

### A TYPICAL WORKING-DAY OF A MUNICIPAL CLEANER.

- 5.30.....Get up
- 6.00.....Start work
- 8.30-9.00..Home. Get kids up for school. Take them in.
- 9.00-11.30..Washing, cleaning.
- 11.30-1.30..Pick up kids. Give them dinner. Take them back.
- 1.30-4.00....Housework, cooking. Try and grab quick sleep.
- 4.30.....Leave for work again.
- 8.30.....Home from work. Iron TV and bed.

**'I never seem to stop'**

JOAN FROM Longsight, Manchester, talked to Big Flame about her day:-

'I never seem to stop from morning to night. I get him up in the morning and see to his breakfast and packing up for work. He's no good at getting up. He'd never get off if I didn't wake him.'

I go back to bed then for an hour, then it's time to get the kids up. The two lads are at school, but David who's eight won't stay to school dinner, so he's no sooner gone than he's back wanting feeding.

Jenny's three so she's home all day. I take her to a playgroup three mornings a week. This gives me time to do the shopping and sometimes visit friends.

My time seems to be filled with keeping the house clean, washing, ironing, cooking, amusing the kids. Then it's time for him to come home and I have to get tea ready. Every-time I go to the shop things have gone up so I have to buy food that's cheaper but takes longer to cook.

Jenny's already training to do my jobs. She sees me ironing, cooking etc. and wants toys that let her copy me. She's not interested in cars or Lego even though I try to get her to play with them.

I work at nights at McVities, 5.00pm to 9.00pm, 'housewife shift' it's called. We need it to make ends meet. If he's sick we're put right back, but I can't afford to be sick, can I? All my jobs have got to be done.

I've been stuck at home for ten years now. It's enough. I don't want any more kids. Sometimes I feel like a prisoner. I try to make time for myself, but something always turns up.'

'Most of us have worked as cleaners for years. Working all sorts of hours, early and late, dashing backwards and forwards, so that we can get in a bit more money and look after the kids and house as well.'

## Liverpool CUTTING BACK

In Liverpool, corporation bosses have been trying to economise at the expense of their cleaners. But they are not going to get away with it that easily:

\*They forced the cleaners in a Community Development Project Centre to give up the standard overtime that they had been working for two years. For the women this meant a wage cut of between £7-£12 per week. Since then, they have refused to work any extra hours to help out at Luncheon Clubs and the like. They want their full wages back. Meanwhile the union is negotiating.

\*They asked Municipal cleaners to sign an agreement giving up their early morning shift to work evenings only. This would have meant a massive wage cut and loss of split duty money for the women. So most of them refused to sign. But the unions involved aren't giving them much support and the corporation is trying on the threat of redundancy. They are spreading rumours that unless the women give up their morning shift, they'll lose their jobs altogether.

If they get away with this, and if the unions involved don't push now for what the women really want, it will be a big defeat for all corporation cleaners.



Students occupied a university building in support. One song went;

'We muck out the bogs for damn low wages,  
We're going to the dogs by easy stages,  
We don't wear clogs but it's the Middle Ages,  
-We want free transport now!'

Another successful strike of cleaners took place in Vauxhalls in Luton in 1974. Shop-floor workers helped the cleaners by throwing rubbish on the floor.

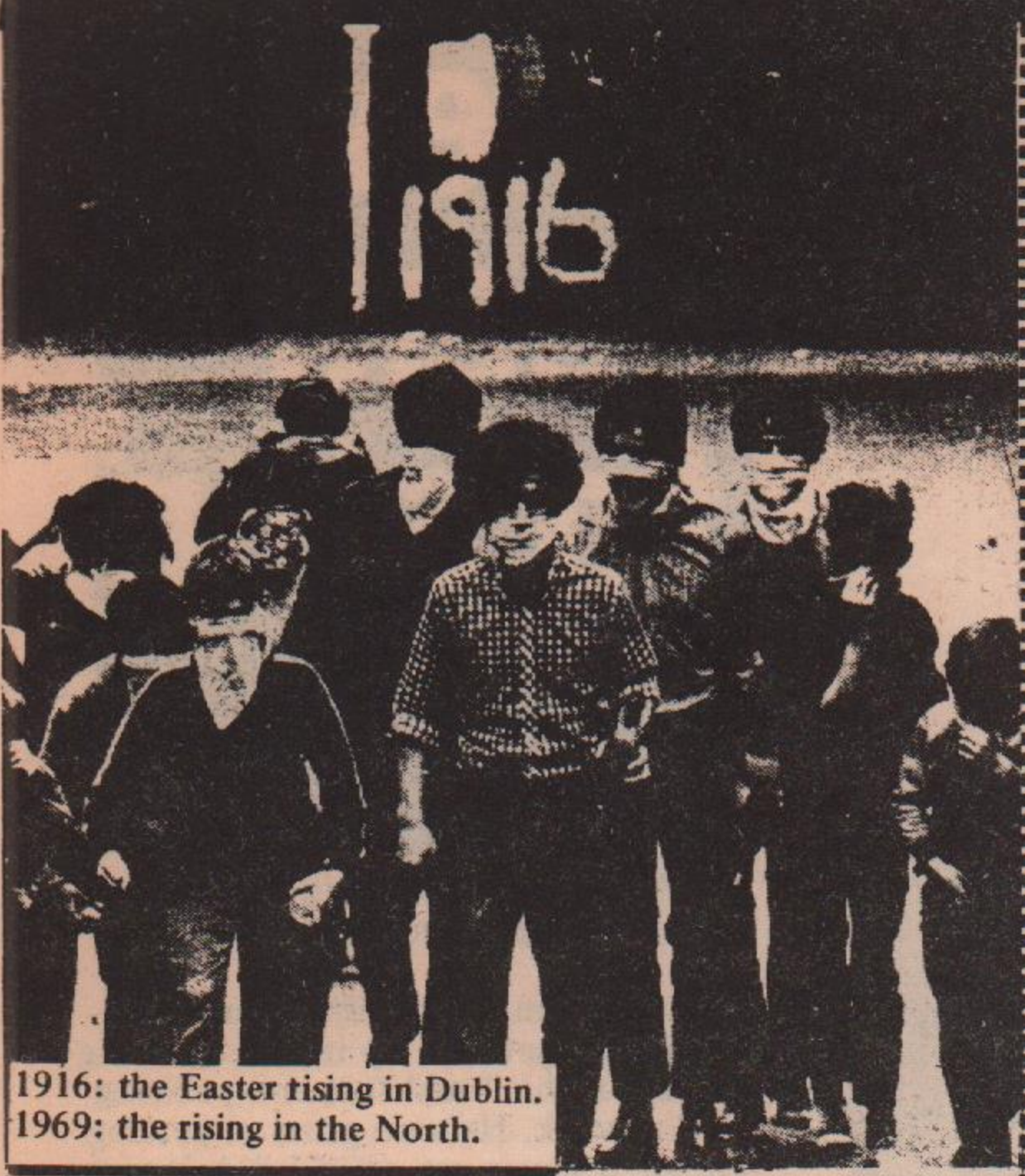
These cleaners could get support relatively easily, from fellow workers or students, but it's harder for night cleaners, whose work tends to be unknown and unnoticed. For these women the first question is unionisation. Between 1970 and 1973 the

double day, find it hard to attend union meetings, and the unions have shown little interest in the cleaners' struggles. The T&GWU have even tried making it a requirement that women pay several months dues in advance before they are allowed to join up!

But women are still fighting, and where they've managed to push the union they've won.

\* Cleaners at Queen Mary College in East London have just won overtime pay after an overtime ban and walk out.

\* Cleaners from the Ministry of Defence have just forced their employer to give them redundancy pay and compensation for unfair dismissal.



1916: the Easter rising in Dublin. 1969: the rising in the North.

# IRELAND WHO ARE THE REAL CRIMINALS?

How many of us have seriously thought about Ireland? Is it really a religious war? Can we trust what the press and television tell us? What is the Army really up to? Is the IRA just a gang of terrorists? All of us owe it to our own intelligence to at least ask these questions.

Through the years, Big Flame has tried to answer some of these questions. But it is never enough. So last year we produced an illustrated, 32 page pamphlet: IRELAND: RISING IN THE NORTH. It's only 20p and we recommend it to all our readers. Buy it, sell it and write and let us know what you think about it.

Because if we don't start thinking about what our masters are doing in another country we'll never be prepared for what they'll do here.

(Also available from Big Flame: Alternative White Paper on Ireland, an excellent, readable pamphlet from the Troops Out Movement, price 15p.)

**FRANK STAGG is dead. He had made his stand: if he wasn't allowed to get away from the harassment and degradation of the English prison system, then he had no reason to live. And Roy Jenkins took the decision and let him die. It came naturally to Jenkins. Murder is the stock in trade of the British rulers where Ireland is concerned. Frank Stagg was more than just another victim. He was a deliberate pawn in Britain's latest game: ending political status for Irish prisoners.**

never defeat them militarily and to ensure that the government could never con them into getting stuck into elections and bourgeois politics. The IRA - with its hundreds of safe houses, with doors on every street left open to it, with thousands of people supporting its demonstrations and election boycotts - is the nearest thing Western Europe has seen recently to a people's army.

For Britain to impose its solution on Ireland it has to smash the IRA. That means rooting out its mass support, which has led to the latest master plan, the ending of political status to Irish prisoners. Rees and Co. want to put over the idea to the anti-unionist population that the IRA has nothing in common with their political cause. He wants to convince them of what he has convinced most British people: that they are 'gangsters'. This was behind the big public relations job he did about ending internment. He thought people might have less sympathy with 'properly sentenced prisoners'. Secondly, he wants to scare off recruits to the IRA who may be less keen if they could end up with the long, hard, 'normal' prison conditions.

Rees could only run after them, spinning out the Convention, and hoping that something would come up. It did. William Craig - to everyone's surprise - declared himself in favour of an emergency coalition government with the catholic SDLP. The loyalist bloc was split and more than a little confused.

Craig has not really changed sides, he's just moved nearer the tactics of the British Government: that unless the protestant and catholic middle classes co-operate, the IRA won't get smashed; and unless the Northern unionists throw some crumbs to the catholics, the Southern Irish bourgeoisie won't be able to co-operate in re-vamping Irish capitalism - North and South.

So Rees' tactics - delay, delay and delay - have brought him some joy. And the British Government now has to consolidate a new 'moderate' middle ground: SDLP, Alliance, Faulkner Unionists and Craig's converts. Now the job is to stop Paisley and the still considerable loyalist extremists from building up and carry through the plan to seize power.

## FASCISTS: TAKE YOUR PICK!

IT HAS taken nearly 2 months since the split in the National Front, for either side to bring out a publication. Now the 'Spearhead' has reappeared as the journal of what is left of the Front. And 'Britain First' has come out for the new National Party of the UK. And both confirm that there is not a single significant difference in policy between the two groups. Both still stand for race hatred, repatriation of all 'immigrants', support for the loyalist paramilitary groups in Ireland, and all the rest.

At the moment both groups are concentrating on winning over the members of the old National Front. And like other past and present fascist groups, the new National Front and the National Party have launched themselves into a bitter sectarian fight.

For the time being that gives the left an advantage. The old NF was unique among fascist organisations because it was the first one, since the 30's to avoid sectarianism and build a quite large, united group. Now that unity has been destroyed the level of fascist activity has gone right down. But the situation is not likely to last. The first

Webster and Fontaine. Because the NP is less tainted with association with the old, openly nazi groups like the National Socialist Movement. (Although at least one leading member of the new party, Dennis Pirie was jailed with Tyndall in 1962 for his part in organising a fascist para-military group in Scotland.)

Much of the press have implied that in ditching the old nazis of the National Front, the new party has ditched their own fascist policies. Instead they are being called 'populists'. This is a very vague term, and is being applied to at least two different factions within the new National Party. First to a group of ex-Monday Club Tories, like Kingsley Read and Roy Painter. These people want to



J. Kingsley Read, leader of the new National Party of the UK.

major battle will take place during the coming Coventry parliamentary by-election

Kingsley Read, chairman of the NP is standing against Andrew Fontaine, chairman of the Front. And the election itself is very secondary to getting one over the other fascist group.

But the issue will not be settled in Coventry. Though when it is, it will probably rest on which faction can put over the best public image. That's one of the reasons why the NP faction has always had the edge over the Fronters like Tyndall,

establish their party as 'respectable'. And secondly it is applied to another group around Richard Lawson, the ex-student organiser of the National Front.

Lawson believes that in order to create a mass movement, the fascist policies have to be dressed up in left-wing rhetoric. So he is fond of phrases like 'workers control' (white workers of course), 'participatory democracy', and he has even declared his intention to build a rank and file movement!

For these reasons, it is this faction that stands more chance of appealing to sections of the working-class.

### CRIMINALS?

In this country we have got used to hearing the IRA described as terrorists and 'criminal gangsters'. Unfortunately, the Irish working class is not so convinced. Ever since 1969 when the police and loyalist gangs invaded and terrorised their ghettos, the northern minority have looked to the IRA as their defenders. This was reinforced in 1970 when the British Army started cracking the whip. And after Bloody Sunday, when 14 innocent civil rights demonstrators were murdered by the Army, the people were queuing up to join the IRA. From then on, the provisionals have been the leading force in the anti-unionist areas. The main defence, and the organisation that most clearly stood for an end to the sectarian, unreformable 6 Counties state.

Mass support for the provisionals has been up and down over the years. But enough of it has always been there to ensure that the Army could

### MORALE

There is always a danger that the anti-unionist people will run out of fight and support for the IRA. Particularly after six years of hard struggle, but they are unlikely to be fooled into it by British politicians. And new volunteers are unlikely to be put off by this 'criminal status' trick. Just having the British Army around puts you in danger of being beaten up, interrogated, tortured or shot dead. Worse prison conditions on top of this hardly changes matters.

Nevertheless, the plan to end political status (the right not to do prison work, not to wear prison clothes, to live in compounds, receive parcels etc) must be opposed by socialists. Irish republicans are not criminals, and not a single concession should be taken away from them.

### LOYALISTS

The affair over political status is aimed primarily at republicans, but even Rees couldn't avoid including Loyalist prisoners in it. So he's going to have problems on the other side.

Recently the Government has been having some success with the loyalists. Last summer the unionists were united in their demand for total loyalist rule: they had a private army and a provisional government all planned, and they were threatening to seize power after the Convention (the present elected assembly) came to an end.

## When will they learn from Chile & Portugal?

THE FRENCH Communist Party has just held its 22nd Congress. The French CP, unlike its British counterpart, is a huge and influential party. It has a membership of over one million, a widely read daily newspaper; its leaders are famous nationally and the biggest trade union, the CGT is Communist. So what it thinks and does is important in France and has great importance for the class struggle in Europe generally.

So what is it thinking and doing at the moment? How to lead the working class to socialism? No, how to become more 'respectable' to the French middle classes and the bourgeoisie.

### DICTATORSHIP

One of the big decisions at the recent Congress was to oust the phrase 'dictatorship of the proletariat' from the Party's programme. They say it is out of date, and that it confuses people about the CP being a democratic party. And they've backed all this up by openly criticising the lack of democracy in the Soviet Union.

The French CP now cannot even claim to be revolutionary. The 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is the basis of revolutionary politics and Marxism. It comes out of the knowledge that the ruling class will not give up its power peacefully and democratically. The working class, the majority, will have to suppress the capitalists, the minority. It is a dictatorship because it will use force, but it will be the most democratic state in the history of the world. The

majority will rule directly. Marx and Lenin stressed how the workers state will be based on a workers militia, not a permanent, elitist army; all leaders and officials will be delegated and subject to instant recall. They will receive only an average wage, and the state will be built on workers control of factories and the communities.

### WHAT'S CHANGED?

In fact, the French CP, like all the European CPs, gave up the idea of revolutionary class struggle years ago. They have long believed in the ridiculous idea of a gradual, parliamentary road to socialism. So when in 1968 there was a great upsurge of French workers and students, the CP did all they could to restore order. So why are they bothering to touch up their reformist ideas now? The main reasons can be found in the events in Chile and Portugal.

The tragedy of the Chilean coup said everything that had to be said about relying on parliamentary means to achieve socialism, but the European Communist Parties drew their own conclusions - avoid the fight and postpone socialism. The Italian CP led the way and announced it would make a 'historic compromise' with the Italian bosses' party, the Christian Democrats. And the French CP was close behind. It fought an election on a programme that was hardly even reformist, (eg. pledging to keep France inside the imperialist war machine, NATO).

The Communist Parties were falling over themselves to prove to the bour-

geoisie that they were strictly non-revolutionary. And they meant it. They have had forty years of non-revolutionary experience. These CPs are huge, bureaucratic machines. Machines are conservative. They have something to lose in a mass overhaul of society. But their problem was that the bosses didn't believe them. And Portugal confirmed their fears.

In Portugal the CP had shown that it couldn't always hold back the mass movement and its own rank and file. The bosses took this in, and

'...in fact the dictatorship of the proletariat is the most democratic form of state ever...'

they also noticed how the Portuguese CP tended to try and wheedle itself into power bureaucratically.

So the French Communist Party, as well as the Italian and Spanish parties, have denounced the Portuguese CP, and even the undemocratic nature of the Russian state. It's all part of a big public relations job, showing its 'human face' and denouncing the idea of the 'proletarian dictatorship'.

But it just takes them further into the bog of reformism. What is wrong with the Portuguese Party isn't that it has too little respect for bourgeois democracy, but that it has even less respect for workers' democracy. What is wrong with Russia is that there is no proletarian dictatorship, but instead there is bureaucratic dictatorship which must be got rid of.

# ANGOLAN victory is racists' nightmare

THE ANTI-imperialist victory by the MPLA has drastically altered the situation throughout Southern Africa. Coming so soon of the victory of FRELIMO in Mozambique, the govts of Rhodesia and South Africa have been shaken to the core. Now their own racist, concentration camp countries are under threat.

The MPLA victory will give great encouragement and material aid to the freedom fighters against those racist regimes. The South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia (SWAPO). And the Zimbabwe African National Unity (ZANU). As well as to all the black people living under the savage regime of South Africa itself.

Angola's new prime-minister has pledged their solidarity with SWAPO and allowed it to open headquarters in the Angolan capital of Luanda. So its hardly surprising that the white populations of Rhodesia and South Africa are frantic with fear. Already there was 10,000 ZANU guerillas training in Mozambique. And given that overall the 273,000 whites in Rhodesia have to face the anger and potential struggle of 5.8 million blacks, then its no wonder that they are on a 'war footing'. One day the black people will have to regain their political and economic independence.

## ALLIES WORRIED

But the real worry for imperialism and all the Western govts is South Africa. This is where the big international firms have their main economic stake. If S. Africa fell, the political and economic hold of the USA and W. Europe over the Southern half of Africa would fall with it. There is at least £7,000 million of British investments in S. Africa and companies like ICI, British Leyland, GKN, and Barclay's Bank must be beginning to feel the heat of the increasing unrest of the black workers. And the increasing threat of an armed struggle to determine the future of South Africa.

It is here that the western powers will wage their final struggle to dominate that part of the world. To carry on exploiting its people and resources as it has for the last 400 years.

**SOLIDARITY WITH THE AFRICAN LIBERATION FORCES !!**

Zimbabwe Solidarity Front, 66A, Etherley Rd, London N15 (01-802-6995)

Namibia Support Cttee, 21/25 Tabernacle St, London EC2 (01-588-4342)

Angola Solidarity Cttee, c/o Gifford, 6 Bowden St, SE11



A white Rhodesian soldier guards the border.

# ANGOLA Building Socialism

AFTER FIFTEEN years of armed struggle, the people of Angola have rid themselves of the imperialist control of their country. The new national government of the MPLA is now looking to repair the damages of the war torn country.

To do this it has affirmed the necessity of maintaining an anti-imperialist 'united front' which groups together all social classes, and in the interests of re-building the economy it has opened talks with multi-national companies. Jose Eduardo dos Santos, minister of External Relations has said that the interests of international companies would be respected 'if they aid the development of our economy and the well being of our people'. And in developing this line, negotiations are now under way with Gulf Oil and the Italian petroleum company ENI over Cabinda oil and DIAMANG over the Diamond mining concessions.

But it's at grass roots level that the biggest political changes are taking place. The people of Angola have begun organising themselves into co-operatives and popular assemblies. For instance, we see this type of political and economic organisation at work in Saurimo (Henrique de Carvalho). There are seven 'zones' in Saurimo and 3 to 4,000 people participate in the decision making popular assemblies. In each zone there is an agricultural

co-operative, a consumers co-operative, a fuel station and schools. The inhabitants when they are not working in the town spend their free time working on the agriculture co-operative.

Women who do not work spend three or four days affiliated to the co-operative. The work is paid for in money and food and the produce sent to the consumers co-operative for consumption in the zone, the surplus is exchanged with other zones or sent to other provinces. Saurimo has 15 industrial enterprises which are united in an 'Association of Popular Commerce'. The employers receive a wage and the surplus returns to the zone. This is the case especially of the bakery, the cafes and the restaurants. All the land in the region is cultivated by the co-operatives and is collective property. One of the co-operatives is run by members of the FAPLA (the military wing of the MPLA) who work to produce food for the armed forces. Near this co-operative is a 'camp of re-education through work'. The government is represented by the 'Commissariat of the Province and the MPLA is present via 'commission directives'.

But, as many militants are already beginning to say: the next battle will be to overcome the contradiction between a united front of all classes and the introduction of socialism.

## BIG FLAME FILM TOUR

SHEFFIELD: Monday 8th March. Council Chamber, Students Union University. 8 pm.

LIVERPOOL: Tuesday 9th March. Dove and Olive, Speke 7.30 pm

\*KIRKBY: Wednesday 10th March

SALFORD: Thursday 11th March. Disco Area, Students Union.

Salford University. 12 noon

MANCHESTER: Friday 12th March. Black Lion, Chapel Street. 7.30 pm.

LEEDS: Sunday 14th March. Leeds Trades Club. Savile Mount. Leeds 7. 7.30 pm.

\*COVENTRY: Monday 15th

\*BIRMINGHAM: Tuesday 16th

\*LONDON: Wednesday 17th & Thursday 18th March.

WOLVERHAMPTON: Wednesdays 24th March. Polytechnic, Wulfruna St. 12 noon

REDDITCH: Trades and Labour Club. Wednesday 24th March 7.30pm

\* Venue unconfirmed - please phone local group for details.

# PORTUGAL CONFERENCE

ON SATURDAY 13 March, the *Solidarity Campaign with the Portugese Working-Class* is having its first national conference at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. The conference runs from 10.00-6.00.

The conference comes at a critical time for the revolutionary movement in Portugal and for solidarity work in this country. Since their defeat of the left-wing forces in the military last November, the ruling-class has been waiting to consolidate its victory. Now they are hoping that the elections in April will provide them with their opportunity.

In the meantime the working-class movement and the revolutionary left are uniting their grass roots organisations in the workplaces and the communities. There is also talk of the left groups putting up candidates at the elections on a common programme.

The more critical the times, the more need for solidarity. Since Portugal is no longer a 'fashionable' issue, this conference will be an important test for the left in Britain. Either we expose ourselves as unreliable and inconsistent. Or we are able to show to our Portugese brothers and sisters that we have a long-term determination to give them the necessary support in their struggle—which looks like being long and hard.

**AFFILIATE TO THE CAMPAIGN SUPPORT THE CONFERENCE**

(SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN WITH THE PORTUGESE WORKING-CLASS. 12, Little Newport St, London WC1)

Support this conference

# On the side of the People

## Film Review

THIS IS an exciting and moving film. It was mostly made in September and October 1975, in the transition between the 5th and 6th Provisional Governments, at a time when the balance of forces in Portugal was changing day by day.

It was shot by a crew of only 3 people and the film reflects both the advantages and disadvantages of this. There are several scenes, such as a meeting of soldiers and officers in a military police unit, or the workers commission at Setenave shipyard, where only a group with socialist politics would have been allowed to film. There is also an immediacy and gentleness in the way people's situations are seen, whether it's women in a laundry talking about what differences getting rid of the boss has made, or peasants explaining the reality of their life in an occupied farm and why it is so important to get their cows back from the fascists, or young soldiers being convinced by a crowd that what they did was wrong.

But one of the film's obvious limitations is its restriction to events in the Lisbon area. Apart from one incident in the Alemtejo and some rather superficial coverage of reaction in the north the film has little to say about the rest of the country. Yet the failure of the Armed Forces Movement of the 5th Government and of any of the left-wing parties to understand and win over the masses of small farmers in the north was one crucial factor in the later setbacks and repression. The film presents the power of the multinationals, of the EEC and NATO (and the links of the Socialist Party with these) but in doing this it neglects the fact that a major part of the country had not benefitted from, or participated in, the changes of the previous year, in fact had suffered economically.

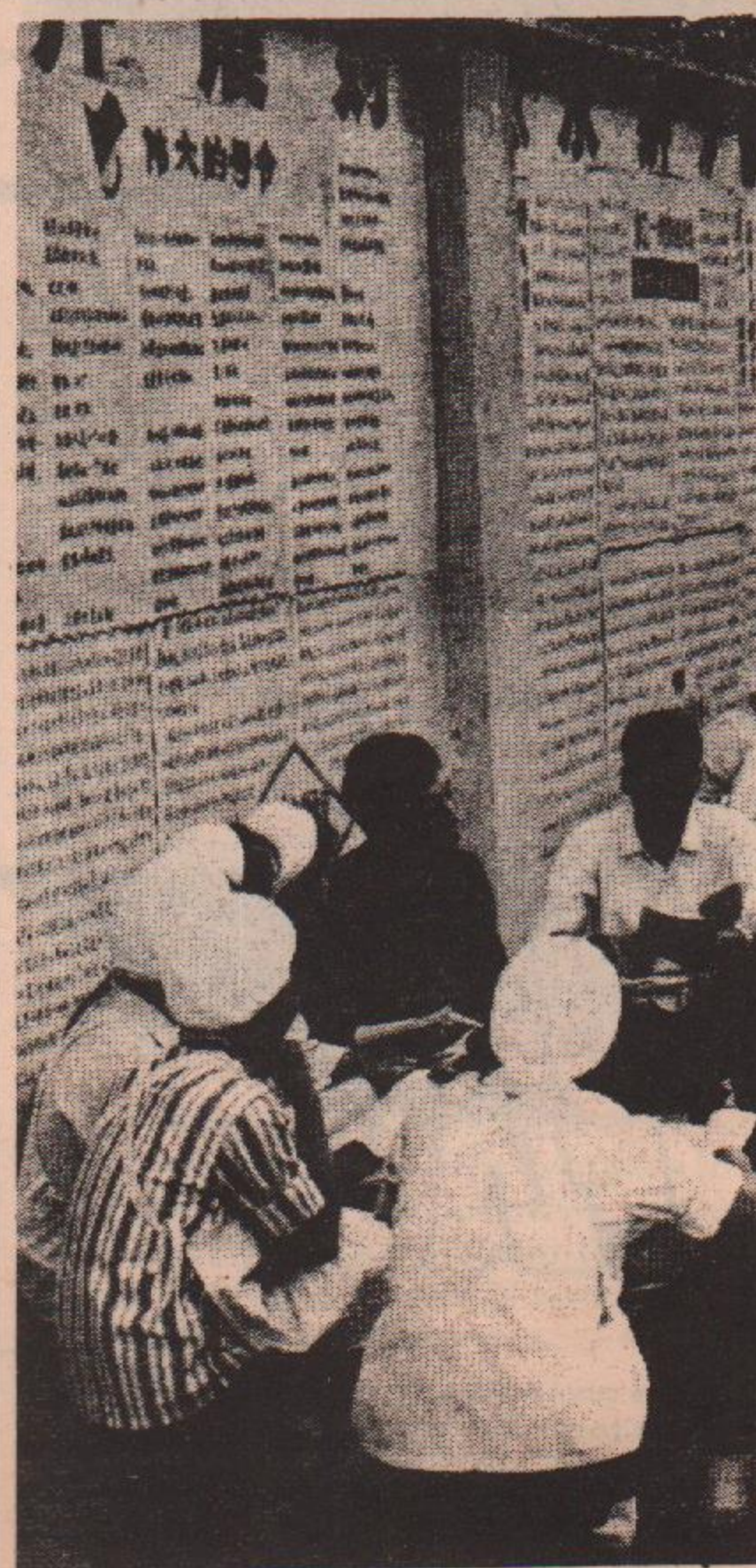
'There is an immediacy and gentleness about the way people's situations are seen, whether it is women talking in a laundry or soldiers being put right by a crowd of people. It is more than a newsreel, it has revolutionary historical importance.'

Revolutionaries need to pay more attention to the petty-bourgeoisie, especially when they form such a large part of the rural population.

The film also contains little on the role of the political parties, especially those to the left of the CP. Instead it focuses on the various autonomous forms of organisation that emerged, such as workers' and tenants' commissions, workers' control in occupied enterprises, including the Republica newspaper and on the role of the army. In fact, the close and changing relationship between the people and the army is the strongest part of the film. It shows how the class struggle withing the army was directly influenced by confrontation with ordinary people, as in the Cascais affair, and the occupation of the previously Church controlled Radio Renascença, how the army intervened to defend Republica or (after much hesitation) reclaim some cows in the south, the ways in which soldiers involved themselves in daily matters such as running a nursery and how arms were demanded and given to the working class.

But, having shown so much about the armed forces, the film doesn't sufficiently answer the question, why was the left in the army apparently so easily weakened by the 6th Government before November 25th? The events of November 25th are given some coverage, but a lot of the background needs to be brought out in discussion after the film if we are not to see it as simply a tactical error the right took advantage of.

This film is much more than a newsreel, it has revolutionary historical importance. It should be seen by everyone!



People discuss wall posters in Peking.

# 'Better red than an expert' China: Masses on the move

WITH THE death of Chou En Lai, the class struggle inside the Chinese people and the Chinese Communist Party has stepped right up. Over the last few years, the victories over bureaucracy that had been made in the Cultural Revolution, had been lost. And 'capitalist roaders' like Teng Hsiao-ping and Chang Ping-Hua had come back into positions of great importance. With Chou gone, they have lost one of their main supports.

What these 'capitalist roaders' are accused of doing is.....

1. Not having supported the fight against the abolition of wage-differentials in the factory.

2. Having tried to sabotage Mao's project of getting city dwellers and students to go into the country and work with the peasants.

3. Having opposed an 'open admi-

ssions' policy in Chinese universities which would guarantee a place for all politically aware soldiers, peasants and workers.

4. Having thought that increased economic management can come from management having more power in the factory. One of the claims of the cultural revolution was that what is needed is more political education in the factories and offices—the slogan was 'Better red than an expert.'

The signs are that once again the masses in China are on the move. The attempts of the capitalist roaders to silence criticism are failing—Pekings People's Daily says that 'a struggle has begun that is in substance a new, great deadly combat'.

Though as the visit of Nixon goes on, we can see that this 'second great cultural revolution' has not yet even touched Chinese foreign policy. So far its the internal problems that the masses have given priority to.



# Who's next for the chop?

'WHO'S NEXT FOR THE CHOP' is the title of a new pamphlet on unemployment. It's full of useful information; the shakeout in the textile, engineering and electrical industries; the attack on employment in the nationalised industries; and what the Government is up to.

It accuses Wilson and his mates of using the crisis to create the highest unemployment since the war. The Government's interventions in motors, machine tools and so on, is linked to rationalisation and job losses. The proposed National Enterprise Board and planning agreements have been substantially modified to enforce commercial criteria at all levels of government intervention.

The report looks at the behaviour of the large companies. From the survey an ominous tendency is apparent: most of the jobs lost in these industries are non-replacable, with companies able to squeeze increased production from a permanently reduced workforce. In 1975, 250,000 jobs were declared redundant. All indications are that 1976 figures will unmanageable proportions.

The devastating effects can be seen most clearly in the rapidly deteriorating regional problem. Most alarming in this respect, the West Midlands, once a boom area, is now established as the new depressed area.

The report argues that, given all these factors, plus the policy of wage restraint, the present Government is blatantly misleading the public with its assertion that unemployment is a temporary phenomenon which will disappear with the next boom. It concludes that unemployment will not fall below one million in the foreseeable future. All indications point to a permanently high level of unemployment.

The only fault - and it is a big one - in an otherwise valuable pamphlet is that it ignores working class struggle. It ignores the fact that the economic crisis and rationalisation of industry are the employers response to working class people fighting for a better life at home and work. It may be easier to argue that the crisis' causes have nothing to do with the working class, but it doesn't do much to help us understand the working class' strength and its active force in society.

'Who's Next For The Chop: The Essential Facts On Unemployment', is available from Counter Information Services, 9 Poland St, London W1. Price 30p.

'The problems about health don't start in hospitals - they end there. The problems start in bad housing, dangerous work conditions. Of course you'll get something wrong with your lungs if you live in a damp flat.'



Private patient dances for joy.

ANYONE WHO goes to see the 'Red Ladder Theatre Group' perform their play 'IT MAKES YOU SICK' will have a good evening out. It's funny but it's also about the everyday experience of working people and their struggle against the system that exploits them.

IT MAKES YOU SICK is about the National Health Service. It shows how the NHS is being bled to death by drug companies and greedy arrogant consultants - the only solution from the working class point of view is for the workers in the NHS to unite and defend their jobs and the health service. For their struggle to succeed, health workers will also need the support of workers in industry and the support of

working class people who use the NHS as patients.

In the play there are many funny scenes including one where the working class patient supports the ancillaries ban on serving food to private patients. When the food ban is extended to him, he shows how skin deep his solidarity really is.

At the same time as we were laughing during the play, we knew we were laughing about deadly serious matters; because we have all need the NHS at some time. The huge cuts that are being planned in the Health Service will affect us all.

Any trade-union branch, tenants or action committee wanting to put on a performance contact Red Ladder at 53, Wray Crescent, London NW6.

IN THE last few weeks the ever-present brutality imposed by screws in some British prisons has come out into the open again. At the same time there is evidence to show there are caucuses of National Front members or supporters in some prisons amongst screws.

The brutality has tended to concentrate in certain prisons. Wandsworth and Winson Green have justifiably had this reputation for some time and there is no doubt that the threat, and its enforcement, of people being shanghaied to either of these prisons has been used to attempt to discipline people in other prisons who are not taking any crap.

It now seems that Cardiff prison is taking on a similar role in Wales. There was a trial in January where five Cardiff screws, including a Senior Officer, were on charges of assault, causing bodily harm on a prisoner, Sean O'Driscoll; punching and kicking him, dragging him along a corridor by his hair and stretching him by his arms.

The same week saw a great, perhaps unprecedented, victory at Birmingham Crown Court. John Willis Holden was on trial for assaulting two prison officers. This assault was alleged to have taken place in Winson Green, and John had been held in solitary confinement for fifteen months. Despite this he made the courageous and right decision to defend himself. In his defense he spoke of the impunity with which screws were lying, how brutality was common and that it was not just against IRA prisoners.

The prosecution case was that John had assaulted the screws when refusing to be stripped and put in a strip cell. The strip cells, of course, are the place for beatings up in Winson Green. No doubt defending himself helped to put his case across forcefully and the jury acquitted him despite the fact that the judge refused his application to call defense witnesses. Obviously the only such witnesses would be fellow cons, and the judge was scared of the lid coming off the whole range of brutality and harassment. We should celebrate a

# A letter from inside

great victory and feel proud that we have a very courageous and heroic brother here.

However, just as John Holden's victory may well produce another spate of jury bashing from the repression establishment, the suspension and charging of the 17 screws brought a response from screws all over the country with National Front caucuses being involved. There were mutterings of a work to rule etc. over the issue and in fact a report that the 17 were suspended on half pay was quickly replaced by one of suspension on full pay.

Meanwhile the Home Office is working hard to ensure that no more cases are allowed into the open. They are still trying to buy off Frankie Fraser with compensation for assaults in 1968 in Parkhurst. And a case where screws are on trial for assaulting Charlie Campbell in HMP Albany in 1972 has been put off yet again - three years after, and they want more time!

But such cases and victories will produce nothing unless they are built on outside. In this major recession issues like prisoners' rights and maltreatment are of no interest to liberals. They are in the hands not only of us prisoners but of the working class movement outside. We depend on you using your strength to help us.



# BIG FLAME IS...

BIG FLAME IS A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST ORGANISATION. Socialist because our aim is to build a society which the working class, the majority of the people, run in their own interests. Revolutionary because we believe we'll only reach that goal by completely changing society, not by patching it up or piecemeal reforms. At the moment the working class produces the wealth and the ruling class takes it. In a socialist society we will get all the wealth and the power to control our own lives.

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

CAPITALISM OPPRESSES THE WHOLE OF OUR LIVES. We are not only exploited at work, we also have to pay high prices and rents; make do with bad

housing, schools and hospitals. And it is not just those sections of the working-class with great economic power, like the miners or engineers who can fight. Housewives, hospital workers, the unemployed all proved they can fight - and win!

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

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

WE TRY TO BUILD A MARXIST MOVEMENT FOR TODAY'S NEEDS. We try to learn from the various Marxist traditions, but we firmly believe in the need to create a politics and organisation which grows out of today's situation. We believe that Big Flame's job is to help the whole working class understand and learn from its own power, and so strengthen that power. We see the need



for a revolutionary party of the working class that will lead the fight to defeat capitalism, but such an organisation can only be built out of the struggles of the whole of our class.

We fight for higher wages, shorter hours,

a lighter workload and for full pay whether there is work or not. We oppose incomes policies, social contracts, productivity deals, redundancies, speed-ups. We encourage the links of factory and community struggles, the opening up of occupations to the community, and the taking of rent and housing struggles to the workplace. We back the fight of council tenants, private tenants and squatters against rents and for decent housing for all. We support the struggle for community controlled facilities like nurseries and playgroups. These things are vital for developing the involvement and strength of women. We fight against sexism and racism and support the independent organisation of women and black people for their own power. We oppose British involvement in Northern Ireland, and support the republican and revolutionary demand for troops out now, for self-determination for the Irish people as a whole, and for a united socialist Ireland.

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

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

# 'HOUSEY ~ HOUSEY'

'Even the rats complain around here, love.'

'Housey-housey' is the title of Newsreel Collective's new film about housing struggles. The film begins with a woman with kids being evicted by bailiffs and shows the kind of treatment you get in a Council Housing Department if you are homeless - 'I'm sorry, we can't help you - you're not a family.'

The film includes struggles around rent rises in Liverpool, high-rise slums in Moss Side, Manchester, white and

Bengali squatters in London and redevelopment in Leeds. It has some background to present struggles with information about the rent strikes in 1972 and the role of the capitalist thieves in the City.

'Housey-housey is 35 minutes long, black and white and costs £7 to hire from The Other Cinema, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2. (Cost of buying a print about £130, negotiable).

\* New TROOPS OUT BROAD-SHEET - basic questions and answers on Ireland. 5p.

\* Latest CIS Ant-Reports on Cuts in Public Spending (45p) and Unemployment. (40p)

\* NOISE - new BSSRS pamphlet dealing with the most common industrial disease. 20p.

\* Solidarity Campaign Bulletins from Portugal, Spain, Angola, Chile, East Timor and Zimbabwe.

\* Midlands' largest selection of socialist literature on: industry, housing, women's liberation, sexual politics, Ireland, imperialism, children, education, health, revolutionary theory, Marxism, International, revolutionary posters, badges and records.

**632 Bristol Rd.  
Selly Oak  
Birmingham**



# MINERS: NO TO CLOSURES

**THE RECENT overtime ban by miners was short-lived due to manipulation by elements in the union and the mass media - but what were the issues involved?**

The action was taken to try and prevent the closure of Langwith Colliery in North Derbyshire (880 men) which the NCB said was 'uneconomic'. This was seen as the thin end of the wedge - if they shut a pit down for 'economic' reasons, half of the pits in Britain will be liable to the same kind of closures because coal in this country is difficult to mine. The threatened closure comes at a

time when coal stocks are enormous when North Sea oil is at last being brought ashore and as the development of the big Selby coalfield is going ahead. In other words, for the first time since the sixties miners are feeling in a weakened position; open to attack through closures, rationalisation and shunting from pit to pit - all measures that were common under the last Labour Government.

This impending rationalisation and attempted restructuring is a common story for the whole of the working class at the moment and in all cases the only policy can be - **No To Any Closures!** Otherwise you fall

into the trap of taking the word of 'expert' like Coal Board engineers for granted, when they flash figures in front of your nose and make out that such and such a pit or factory is 'uneconomic'. The NCB claimed that shutting down Langwith would release miners for under-manned pits elsewhere in the area - **but why aren't they recruiting new workers and cutting the dole queues?**

These were the issues behind the recent events, but for the press and television it was the way the Union responded that became headline news. They seized on every opportunity to mock disunity in the organised working class. The press' fav-

ourite 'moderate', Joe 'Productivity' Gormley, was all too willing to play the bosses' stooge. It's the failings of the union on this issue that arouse anger amongst miners themselves. A miner from Rockingham Colliery (Yorkshire) had this to say:

**'I think most miners were aware of the issues but confused by the antics of Gormley and McGahey. A month ago Gormley was for the ban. McGahey said his men (Scotland) wouldn't operate the ban - it turned out they were all for it! The rank and file have had to rely on the media for their information - no leaflets or posters at the pits.'**

**'The Yorkshire delegation wanted a branch vote or ballot before the decision taken at the National Executive Committee but Gormley pushed for a decision right away. He claimed the ban was a fiasco but it was him who created the confusion. A good campaign at the pit head would have got the ban to stick, because it would have been the rank and file doing it and not on orders from above.'**

The media were quick to point out that the 'militant' Yorkshire area was not unanimously implementing the ban, and used this to scoff at the area President, Arthur Scargill. Was this true?

**'Twenty three pits in Yorkshire had branch meetings and worked normally. This was due mainly to the lack of any campaign. Also it was only the minority of men who do overtime that turned up to vote. This was mainly craftsmen and some surface workers who do a lot of overtime to make up their lower wage.'**

**'The next stage is to get a campaign going and get the men to throw out the latest decision in a ballot that we should have had in the first place.'**



## TEXTILES: The Fight for a Guaranteed Wage

TEXTILE WORKERS staged an angry demonstration recently in Manchester, outside the first union/management meeting on this year's pay claim. The demonstration was led by North West union district committees and the negotiators were handed a leaflet with the message 'Refuse to Negotiate under Duress.'

The workers are disgusted by a document circulated by the Employers Federation for this year's wage settlement. It's straight out of the 1920s. The bosses are demanding that the negotiations should be governed by a set of vicious penal clauses.

These penal clauses have one simple aim: to smash all job organisation in the mills. And it is no accident that the document has appeared just after Courtaulds - the real mad dogs of textile bosses - have rejoined the British Textile Employers Association.

The penal clauses include: the removal of voluntary overtime bans; full rights for management to introduce new methods and machinery and to 'increase workloads without proportionate pay increase where present workloads fall short'; to allow women to work night and multi-shifts; and to cap it all - the right of any individual employer to contract out of any agreed wage settlement!

In return for a slight wage increase, the bosses want a green light to cut through every form of workers' resistance to the drive for profits. If they get away with it here - on a recently weakened section of the working class - it will soon be the turn of others, particularly in the Courtaulds group.

### WORKERS REPLY

Textile workers have been ruthlessly hit by unemployment, closures and short-time. Numbers employed have fallen by 171,000 in the last ten years. And recently they went through the demoralising, dead-end spree of relying on Labour MPs and calling for import controls to save their jobs.

But their response to the bosses' latest moves has been quick, angry and militant. Within days some union districts had organised. The union executive defeated a move to hold an emergency meeting of all districts to discuss the penal clauses. So the Wigan Weavers union district for one circulated a counter-list of proposals for the wages policy.

Their proposals centred round the demand for guaranteed lay-off pay - with no strings attached; no time limit, no penalty clause on absence from work two weeks before lay-off, no excuses! And they are proposing an industry-wide overtime ban to fight for this.

Their other demands include - a 35 hour week; assisted transport to and from work and the introduction of a pension scheme. It was these demands that formed the basis of the leaflet handed out to the union negotiators - a leaflet signed by Rossendale, Wigan, Burnley and Nelson Textile workers union and Northern Union of Textile and Allied Workers.

If this fight can take off, it will be one of the most important steps the working class has yet taken in the fight against paying for the crisis. It shows the beginning of a working class answer - no to the crisis blackmail! No to the attacks on shopfloor organisation! For less work and a guaranteed living wage!

**SUPPORT THE TEXTILE WORKERS!**

## Delegation to Ireland

THIS WHITSUN, the Troops Out Movement will be organising a 100 strong delegation to Ireland. The 100 will be composed of 85 delegates from the trade union movement; and 15 from tenant and community organisations. The delegation, which will spend most of its time in the North, will be sponsored and welcomed in Ireland by the Irish T&GWU.

The aim of the visit is to show representatives from the working class movement exactly what is happening on the ground in Ireland. To do this, the delegates will meet people from all parts of the social and political spectrum. The Troops Out Movement is confident that we are right in what we say, so there's no need for us to 'rig' the visit; or make sure the delegates meet only a specially chosen group of people who will say what the TOM wants them to say.

Building TOM is one of the most important tasks of socialists in this country. The British working class has allowed its ruling class almost a free rein in Ireland. On this issue socialists must be prepared to unite immediately into an anti-imperialist campaign that will continually speak up. And continually organise. One of the biggest travesties in left-wing politics is how big, (or relatively big), organisations like the International Socialists or the Workers Revolutionary Party, claim to support the demands of TOM, but most of the time do nothing. Portugal gets a campaign; unemployment gets a campaign. But Ireland gets just fine words. **BUILD THE TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT! BUILD THE DELEGATION TO IRELAND!**

Information/delegates credentials for the delegation to Ireland can be obtained from the Troops Out Movement, 1 North End Rd. West Kensington, London W14.

# UNDER THREAT AT TATE & LYLE

**TATE AND LYLE workers in Liverpool, London and the Scottish refinery of Greenock have joined the growing list of those facing possible redundancies. AND IT'S NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME. Tates have come up with three 'options' for the future. EACH OPTION INVOLVES THE CLOSURE OF ONE REFINERY' THIS MEANS AT LEAST 1,500 REDUNDANCIES' This classic divide and rule tactic is aimed at setting the refineries at each others throats.**

### IN THE YELLOW CORNER - TATES

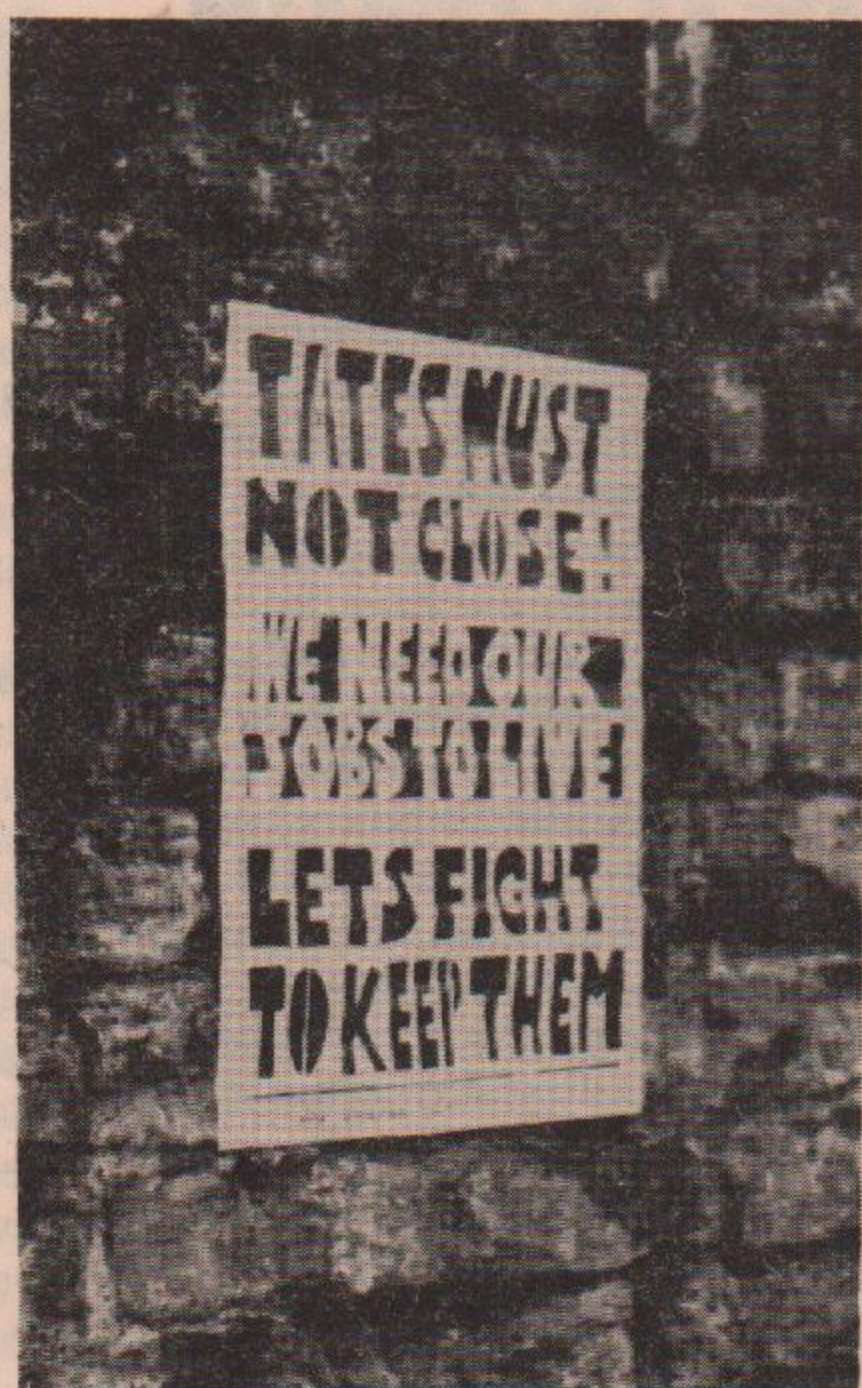
Meanwhile in the corridors of power, Tates bosses are using these threats as a dramatic publicity device to pressure the Government into increasing raw sugar supplies. And yet their refining profits alone trebled to £7.3 million last year - and this is only a small part of the profit from an empire that includes shipping, transport and oversea interests. Even with these profits, they still insist on further Government help to keep running - though this still doesn't rule out closures. Talk about having your cake and eating it too.

### IN THE BLUE CORNER - GOVERNMENT

The Government, who own 36% of British Sugar Corporation, the beet refining rivals of Tates, have different ideas. Since joining the Common Market, their main wish is to develop beet refining in line with EEC plans. As a result, they've been taking work away from Tates.

### WHAT ABOUT THE WORKERS?

So what about the workers? While these boardroom battles rage over their heads, most men and women who depend on Tates for a wage are definitely not being consulted. The union action committees have not



been building the strength and understanding of rank and file workers to prepare to fight redundancies. Instead they have chosen to join in the boardroom battles, by producing their own 'options' and working closely with management.

They have invited the bosses to address mass meetings: and their 7-page 'option' for the industry's future was in the hands of the Government and bosses for months before the workers saw it.

### STRENGTH

The Action Committees' 'option' contains plans which, if carried out, would keep all the refineries open. But it has no teeth without the strength of rank and file support, united between different refineries. In addition, Tate's bosses have a first class publicity machine: their scare-mongering outbursts have appeared in the press, unchallenged by the unions.

### TWO ENEMIES

Tates workers have two enemies. The bosses, who will move out of refining at the drop of a profit percentage; and the Government who run the rival company. For these enemies' interests last. The only way workers can fight for their needs is from a position of strength.

### OUR DEMANDS

BIG FLAME campaigns with those workers who are fighting for:

1. Regular mass meetings to represent the views of all workers, and involve them in the fight for their own future.
2. Militant action to prevent Tates closing down any refinery in the interests of profit. In Plessey, Wigan, recently workers locked out management till they received positive information of future plans, We can do that too.
3. Militant action to force the Government to ensure sugar supplies which keep all sugar workers in employment.

**NO MORE UNCERTAINTY. NO REDUNDANCIES.**



# BIG FLAME

## THOSE WASH HOUSE BLUES

ABOUT 150 women demonstrated outside last month's council meeting in Leeds against plans to close local wash-houses as part of the cuts. The demonstrators carried placards saying 'Don't blight our whites'; 'Don't give us the blues'. Representatives from the different wash-houses read out statements to the council meeting. Most of the demonstrators got inside to support them. One woman said that if they wanted to close wash-houses because they didn't make money, were they going to close parks, libraries, museums and baths as well?

The wash-houses in Leeds are used by thousands of women because they are cheaper, cleaner and friendlier than laundrettes. Women in Armley, Meanwood and Kirkstall have organised meetings and drawn up petitions to stop the closures.

The power of the women caused the council to change its mind over the Armley wash-house which will stay open. The fate of the two others is still in the balance.



## BRUM GREEN BAN

A GREEN Ban-Action Committee—the first of its kind in Britain—has been formed to fight property speculators in Birmingham. The committee which includes workers from the building trade, will fight plans to build a £10 million scheme of office blocks on the site of the present central post office, in the centre of the city.

Over the last few years, property speculators, developers, building consultants and architects have made a fortune 'modernising' Birmingham. This is the first time they are being seriously challenged by working people who have to live with their results.

The Green Ban Action Ctte was formed after a visit by Jack Munday, an Australian building worker whose union have placed 'green bans on buildings they consider to be 'environmentally unsuitable'.

The proposed new office block in Birmingham would mean an extra 300,000 sq. feet of office space, when there is already 2 million sq feet empty within a ½ mile radius of the city centre, and 5 million more being built. At the same time the number on the councils waiting list is rapidly approaching 35,000.

UCATT and T&GWU regionally have come out against the development. And despite the high unemployment in the industry, building workers are supporting the ban.

While the old boys sleep

THE TUC Youth Conference was held last month in Congress House. There were 81 delegates from 37 unions. The Youth Conference has no power. It is a talk shop where the ageing executive of the TUC listens to, or rather sleeps through, the far-away problems of 'young folk' in their unions.

However, at this conference, our 'leaders' got a rather rude awakening. One delegate from the Civil and Public Service Union said; 'I am against the current constitution of this Youth conference. I've talked to a lot of the delegates here and most of them have been appointed, not elected and this is wrong. I am also shocked that there is no mention of unemployment or the crisis on the agenda.' The majority of the other delegates agreed and so we spent the day's discussion on unemployment among young people, how it affected us in many different jobs and ways, and how to fight it.

There were other good speakers from the rail, the pits and the docks. The Conference was over in one day, with nothing to carry it over in a formal way. But in fact, the delegates proved that they were prepared to fight and not just sit in a conference room.

## Fascists in Coventry

WITH HIGH unemployment, the carve up of Chrysler and general demoralisation in Coventry, the right wing have been presented with an ideal opportunity to peddle their poisonous lies.

The National Front, in particular made a big drive to highlight a demonstration in Coventry around the demand 'British jobs for British workers.'

A counter demonstration was organised by Coventry anti-fascist committee. Around 1000 supporters turned up. They included trade unionists, Indian workers from the Indian Workers Association, students and socialists.

A short meeting at the end of the march was addressed by speakers from Coventry Trades Council and the Indian Workers Association.

It was announced that the Front had called-off its march, so about half the meeting broke up. The remainder went to the National Front headquarters in London Road where a scuffle broke out and bricks were thrown, before police moved in to cover the withdrawal of about a dozen fascists. Believing the Front had been dealt a final blow for the day most of the demonstrators then went home. So when a Front march finally turned up in the city centre, few people remained to oppose it.

These events show the need for tighter co-ordination and more thorough information gathering on future occasions. If the fascists are to be kept off the streets, broadly based anti-fascist committees will have to be launched.

It is heartening that Birmingham anti-fascists are launching such a committee to lead the fight against fascism in the West Midlands.

## When only the rich can afford to travel

NEWSPAPERS recently declared that British Airways were losing £50,000 a week on their Bahrain Concorde flight.

The Managing Director was quick to point out that it wasn't that much. Yet, if you stop and think about the thousands of pounds lost per week and the hundreds of millions already spent on Concorde, it seems a helluva lot of money just to ferry a handful of tycoons to the Middle East and back. Especially when you consider what might happen was used for the kinds of transport that working class people have to use, like buses and trains.

At the moment government money to public transport is being drastically slashed. The Government is concerned because British Rail and the bus services don't make any money. But then neither does Concorde, nor is it ever likely to make anything like the money already spent.

Sid Weighell (General Secretary, National Union of Railwaymen) said after the recent 12% fare increases:

'It may well be that if present policies are pursued only the rich will be able to travel by public transport.' So while the very rich travel by Concorde, the rich by public transport, presumably the working class will have to walk.

British Rail at least has been priced out of working class people's reach already. Not that many do any travelling except what is necessary to live - to get to work, to shop etc.

If the proposed cuts go through (7,000 miles of track less by 1981) the worst hit will be country areas and commuter services. Commuters are seen by some as gents with briefcases and bowlers but commuter services are probably the only use the working class has of rail at the moment.



## black kids fight back

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breaking judges rules by interrogating minors without a parent present, and physically assaulting black people. It is the police who confront young people most directly, and the youths have shown they are ready to fight back.

But they are not alone. Chapel town parents demonstrated their own power in a historic strike against the local Middle School in 1973, when their militant action resulted in the dismissal of the headmaster and improvement in the school's facilities. The ready access schools have granted the police in their investigations into bonfire night has alarmed these parents once again.

And now, as the economic crisis bites, concern is expressed at the high level of unemployment and the empty future looming up for many young people. Bonfire night was their way of dealing with these pressures.

### REACTIONS

Police propaganda after bonfire night was swift. Chief Constable Ronald Gregory said on the radio: the day after: 'It is suggested that there were some older people there with

extreme views who are anti-police and were inciting these youngsters to attack the police. That is more ominous.....

The local glamour boy solicitor, Barrington Black, raised reporting restrictions so the police's claim in court that the youth had planned the attack and imported stones into the area was given wide publicity by the Leeds media. The police claim that they were keeping a low key approach was similarly given credibility. Within a few days, 12 youths had been arrested, and many of them made statements as a result of police intimidation.

Chapel town organisations also reacted swiftly, though not swiftly enough to prevent several people making statements to the police. CHAPELTOWN NEWS had an emergency issue on the streets on 10th November. The UNITED CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION made a statement which explained why the event had taken place and called a public meeting. As a result police pressure eased off, and other agencies took over the attempt to contain the revolt.

'Respected race worker' Maureen Baker bemoaned the failure of her liberal efforts over the past 20 years. The so-called Community Association deplored the events, and the Community Relations Council chairman offered West Indians to control the young people's bonfire next year. Privately senior Leeds Councillors put round the totally false rumour that the youths had ripped out the tongue of one of the injured police-

men. Publicly they talked of the Bhapeltown 'timebomb' and the need to improve the housing and facilities in the area.

Chapel town News quickly pointed out that, given the cuts in welfare spending, it was a victory for Chapel town that the council had been forced to spend money on services in the area; proving that direct action benefits the whole community.

### DEFENCE

A Defence Group has organised meetings and pickets and raised a defence fund for the people arrested. But it is clear that many people in Chapel town are nervous about the consequences.

The police are using their door-to-door enquiries relating to two recent murders in the area as a way of compiling information for use in the Bonfire night trial. This creates further confusion and worry for parents and young people. Organisation is also hampered by the suspicion some black militants feel towards white activists.

No other section of the black community in Britain has staged such an open revolt against the agents of the state. No-one was prepared for such ferocity, nor for the problems it would throw up. Some people in Chapel town are coming to grips with these problems, and the working class everywhere will be strengthened by the solutions that are found.

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