

# Big Flame

for  
Socialism

Paper of the revolutionary socialist organisation 'Big Flame'.

No. 75 June 1979 15p.

Teachers Fight Racism

10 Years of Gay Pride

Attack on North East

Workers' Plans Against Redundancies

Women Worldwide

Hospital Users Fight Back

# Inside

this  
issue

Prisons- More Riots To Come



# LABOUR FAKES A LEFT TURN

As automatic as clockwork, as sure as night follows day, Labour's begun its lurch to the left. It happens after every general election defeat.

For five years they cut our living standards and put us on the dole. They shot us in Ireland and humiliated us at immigration controls. And now they've got the nerve to talk about socialism.

## Preach

'We have to get out and preach democratic socialism. . . My message to you is not to believe that socialism has failed. You haven't tried it yet - and we ought to try it. We ought to learn the lesson.'

So says Ron Hayward, the Labour Party's General Secretary, after the election. But it could equally well be Tony Benn or Peter Shore. For this is a time-honoured ritual in the Labour Party. Talk about socialism when you're down and out but never when you're in power.

Otherwise there might have been a danger of carrying out that fundamental re-distribution of power and wealth in favour of the working class

that their 1974 manifesto came on strong about.

But they didn't - and they lost. Labour was defeated because it deserted the working class. And now the Labour left is getting ready to reap the rewards of the inevitable swing away from the Tories. So, in 1984, or maybe sooner, Labour will once again present us with its 'socialist' programme'.

## One Way

There's only one way to stop history repeating itself and that's to create a socialist alternative to Labour - a force to be reckoned with, that will attract all the people who will take up the cudgel against the Tories between now and the next election.

Let's build a movement of the working class, for real socialism not the Hayward disappearing socialism act. Now's a good time to start, whilst Labour in power is still fresh in





# Editorial

**THE GENERAL Election result was a setback, but by no means a decisive defeat for the working class. What happens now depends on our ability to create the means to withstand the inevitable Tory attack on work working class organisation.**

But it also means that the left, the people who are prepared to fight any capitalist government, Labour or Tory, must learn new ways of combatting reformism — at all levels of struggle.

## TORIES

The Tories, despite Thatcher's fire and brimstone, will find it difficult to rapidly implement many of their economic policies without creating major unrest in the state and economy. The whole trend in the last 25 years has been towards increased state management of the economy. However, a look at other capitalist powers like the United States, shows there is a trend towards new, hard-line Government.

There is no doubt that the Tories will go further down a road well-paved for them by Labour — cuts and wage restrictions in the public sector, racist immigration controls, torture and repression in Ireland, using the climate created by Callaghan's Concordat with the TU leaders to restrict the right of the trade unions to picket, take part in solidarity actions and organise their own affairs. . . the list is endless.

But the Tories will not just be extending Labour's policies. They won the ideological arguments with a Labour Party unable even

to argue for minimum ideas of collective social needs. This will mean a significant shift to the right in the ideological climate which will make the fight-back much more difficult than in the 1970-74 period.

## THATCHER-FACTOR

This may be aided by the much talked about 'Thatcher-factor'. Thatcher may want to appear as the 'caring woman' — she has gone on record as supporting the retention of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Women's hospital, threatened by closure, and the need to have more women doctors — but her policies will, of course, do much to worsen women's position. The threat to cut Social Security to strikers' families will put more pressure on wives; cuts in public spending will reduce jobs for women and increase their workload in the home; and the new 'moral climate' will encourage those opposed to abortion and better contraception facilities.

The left itself still has a lot to learn on issues like sexism, as was shown by Labour Party stickers with the message 'Ditch the Bitch'.

## ECONOMIC CRISIS

Despite their ideological victory, the Tories are still faced with the underlying weaknesses of British capitalism — obsolete machinery, underinvestment and a relatively strong trade union shopfloor organisation. The jump in share values on the Stock Ex-

change and the sounds of greedy anticipation from financiers which greeted the Tory victory may mean their problems will worsen. A reduction in corporation and income tax will only lead to increased investment abroad by British capital, rather than in this country.

## OUR TASKS

The Tories are always in favour of state intervention when it helps them and hurts us. This may mean that basic rights, which we have come to accept as normal and essential for organising under capitalism, will come under threat. To defy this attack requires a broad movement with the left ensuring that its ideas are not submerged by liberal illusions that these rights in themselves solve our problems.

## LABOUR

Labour in opposition always appears more credible as a left-wing force as its decade in government fades in the memory. The revolutionary left must provide an alternative to the pull which Labour exerts on independent militants, by thorough argument on the weaknesses of the parliamentary road to socialism and the fantasy nature of the 'Alternative Left Strategy'.

But it can only provide a realistic alternative itself if it is prepared to learn and produce strategies, attitudes and ways of organising. For the other traditional response to a Tory government is a crude anti-Tory militancy. It is not enough to have 'revolutionary pat-

ience', assuming you have the right analysis and answers, and wait for the 'inevitable' anti-Tory upsurge.

## REFORMISM

Reformism will not disappear overnight as the revolutionary organisations grow. 'Common sense' ideas run much deeper than the reformist leaders of the unions and Labour. We need a more sophisticated explanation for Labour's defeat than that which says 'their policies were not 'socialist' enough'.

We must develop the germs of new strategies emerging from struggles like those around the Lucas Aerospace Alternative Plan. Ideas which are ultimately subversive because they challenge the bosses' right to manage and question the neutrality of the work process. It means developing new ways of organising ourselves which show people that we have a different set of attitudes and values, linking them with the fightback against the Tories.

Out of political choice, Big Flame tends not to stress recruitment. However, we are convinced that because of our rejection of dogma and our ability to understand changes in the struggle, we have an important contribution to make to the revolutionary struggle in the coming period.

**So, we ask those of our readers who are in broad sympathy with our politics to seriously think about joining Big Flame, and then join.**

## POLICE RIOT

### 'Misty'

### Defence fund

### organised

"I went into the front room with the kitchen with Clarence and four kids, three Asians and one white. There were policemen standing in the corridor and up the stairs. They were telling people to get out quickly, and they were raining blows on everyone, particularly round the head as they walked through.

Two policemen dragged Clarence, trying to get him to walk out. He kept shouting 'I can't! My eye! My eye!' and he couldn't get up, so they pulled him by his locks to the door.

The police were very cocksure, they smashed windows while I was standing there. I only got away because I walked out just behind the kids. They talk about vandalism, but now that house looks like a police shot of a house after vandals have been in."

With these words, Geraldine Ragiste describes the SPG's attack on Clarence Baker, the manager of the reggae band Misty, and their destruction of the People's Unite Centre during the 'riots' in Southall. Clarence is now slowly recovering from his very serious injuries. But the centre was totally wrecked and all Misty's equipment and records were destroyed. They have brought out a new record (see above) to raise money for themselves and the Southall Defence Fund, and groups including Stiff Little Fingers and the Clash have agreed to play benefits. The record costs £1.50. Contributions should be sent to the Peoples Unite Defence Fund, 45 Lea Rd., Southall, Middlesex.



## paper money

This month's donations:  
Coventry BF member £43.50  
South London BF £20.00  
BF NC Collection £1.60  
Sheffield Readers £2.00  
S.R., Preston £1.60  
A.C. Carb £2.10  
Standing Orders £18.00  
A Total of £88.80

This month's total comes very close to matching our monthly deficit. It's an encouraging start for the new newspaper which seems to have pleased you. A great help is a regular income so if you can take the banker's order on this page to your bank and get them to send us monthly whatever sum you can manage — THANKS!

We urgently need money - our account is 'Big Flame Newspaper' account number 0008738 and the code of our Lloyds Branch is 30-95-11.

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Maggie Thatcher giving well-known salute

THE PEOPLE of Derry are used to the army raiding their houses. However, they were somewhat surprised at a 'new' tactic of the Hampshire regiment. Recently one woman in Shantallow was subjected to the usual insults accompanying a house raid. But the Brits decided that they had raided her by 'mistake' and sent down an officer with a box of chocolates and an apology!

The woman had little hesitation in reacting to the insult. She threw the chocolates down on her doorstep who left amid roars of laughter from the neighbours. and trampled them, according to Republican News, 'into the shape of the late unlamented Airey Neave' - The action got no laughs from the officer

## seeing red

PREGNANT EMPLOYEES of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant were docked pay or vacation time for not coming to work during the now famous "event" which took place at the Harrisburg facility in late March.

"We are excusing pregnant females from work if their doctors feel they shouldn't be in the area" said Tom Hombach, regional personnel director of Metropolitan Edison, which operates the plant. But he added that Met Ed didn't feel "obligated to pay them for not working."

The policy applied to at least two women, both clerks at the plant, who decided to stay home without pay until Pennsylvania Governor Dick Thornburgh lifted his recommendation that pregnant women and children stay at least five miles from the plant. Pregnant state workers who lived within five miles of the plant were excused from work with no loss of pay or vacation time.

## SPECIAL KAYE

MR. KAY, Conservative candidate for Colne Valley: "I believe the government treats ethnic groups as inferior by helping and subsidising them as subsidies imply that people cannot stand on their own feet. People should exploit their best qualities, for example. West Indians

ROYALS LOSE OUT ON PAY The Royal family have come out of the current pay round worse off than NUPE members — they have received a mere 8.9% increase!

The deal, negotiated without a strike, gives the Queen £174,000 extra, taking her annual state income to £2,134,000.

All in all, members of the Windsor family will get an extra £2,609,200 — or the equivalent of 52,000 NUPE members' full wages for a 40 hour week.

None of the Royals has received £1 on account (like other public sector workers) of a comparability exercise, which surely could have been set up, comparing their income with the Shah of Iran.

(Socialist Press)

A LABOUR Candidate was inconvenienced during the elections. His unattended briefcase had given rise to a bomb scare. "I shall be making sure my case is with me for the rest of the campaign", he declared when his briefcase was returned. The case arose suspicion because of the candidates initials on the side - his name, I.R. Adshad!

are better at singing, athletics and humour than the indigenous English; Asians are good businessmen; women are better at having babies (sic); men are better chefs, etc. I think education is very important for the children of minority groups."

Huddersfield Hammer

Neither the Sun nor the Express has yet carried a 'Rhodesian scroungers' story on its front page. This is strange. Many councils are already rehousing white refugees — including Hillingdon whose Tory Housing Chairperson recently dumped an Asian family on the doorstep of the Foreign Office because he said they weren't his responsibility.

COMMONSENSE Here are some entries from A Dictionary for Underdogs by Jack Common, the North Eastern working class writer who was a mate of George Orwell during the 30s.

PROFITS: That part of a worker worker's earnings s/he doesn't get.

WOMANHOOD: A biological excuse to get out of paying the rate for the job.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE: A method of running industries so as to secure a maximum loss to one community or another.

TORY VOTER: A poor person who thinks that the rich will be kind to the poor some day; a rich person who is damn sure they won't.

£1 to the reader who sends in the month's best contribution to Seeing Red.

Incidentally, for the seventh month running, Big Flame's circulation figures have topped those of the Times.

# subscribe

I want to subscribe to the paper  Sub rates: £2.75 per year, Britain & Ireland. £1.40 for 6 months. Abroad: £3.50 & £1.75.

I want more information about Big Flame

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_



# Divide & Rule-Never

## Teachers Say No to Racism in Schools

ALL LONDON Teachers Against Racism and Fascism (ALTARF) has now been in existence for over a year and its June conference will give an opportunity to assess what has been achieved so far. Progress has been patchy; public meetings on Race and IQ, Police, and Black Youth, Experience of Black Teachers, have been rather poorly attended but ALTARF members in the secondary and primary workshops have been hard at work, pen in hand.

### INJUSTICE

Two pamphlets have recently been published which should be useful to class room teachers. **Teaching and Racism** (10p plus postage) is a discussion document produced by the secondary workshop. A series of practical articles by English, Science and History teachers stress that the anti-racist struggle cannot be confined to the curriculum

*"cultural struggle cannot substitute itself for the fight against injustice and material inequality. But we do believe that, in a way that manifests itself more immediately in some areas of the curriculum than others, our work as teachers in the classroom compels us to take sides on social and political questions."*

The other pamphlet (20p plus postage) is on Racism in Schools and begins with a critique of the ILEA document on multi-ethnic education: *"The purpose of this pamphlet is to provide teachers with a critical appraisal of what the ILEA has done, to comment on what the major official teachers organisation, the NUT, is prepared to do on the racism issues, but most importantly to state the roots of racism in schools and the practical ways in which it can be combatted."*

This pamphlet will also be of interest to teachers in other parts of the country who are interested in going beyond the current educational consensus on multi-cultural education, even if that

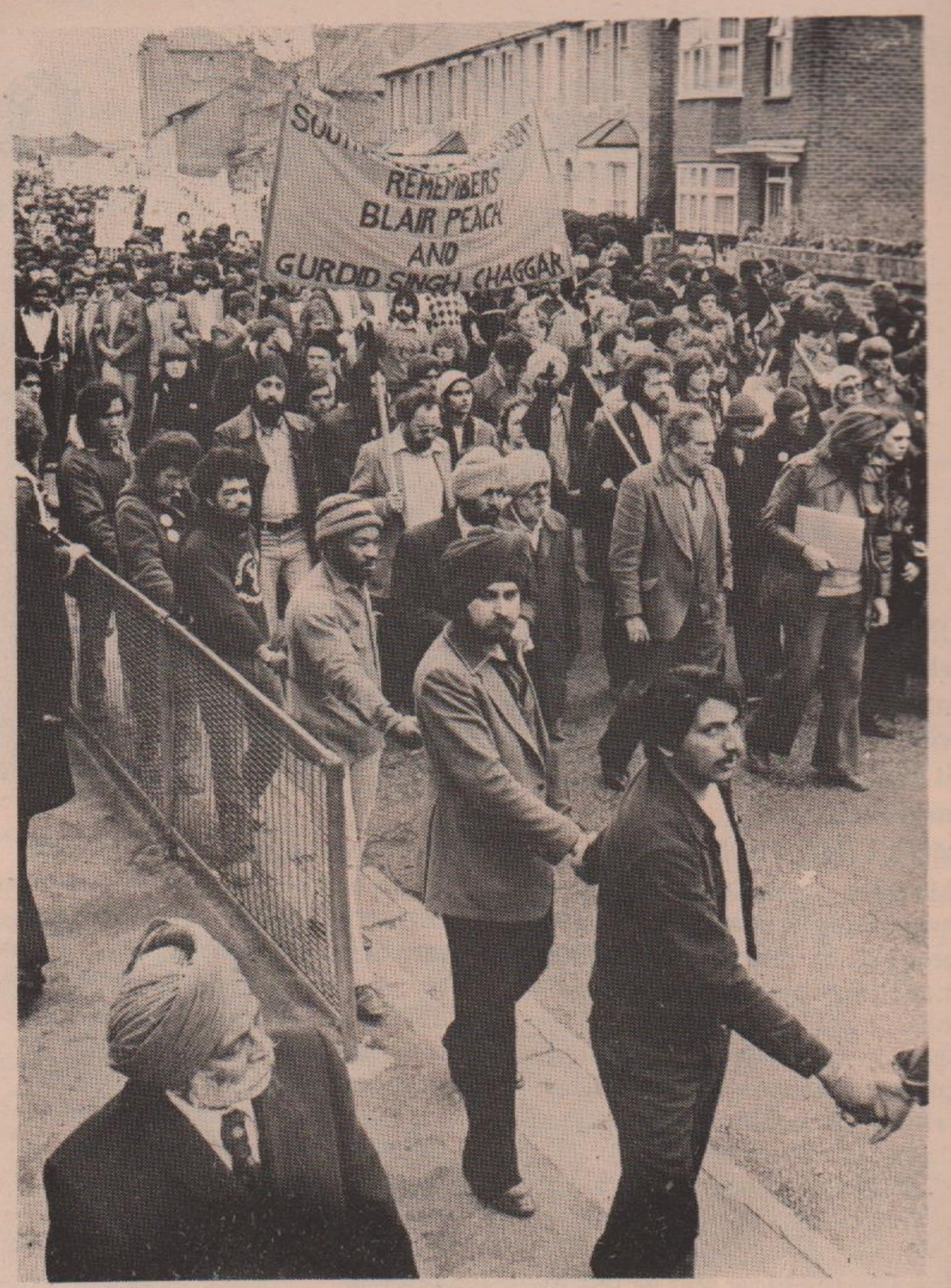
consensus has not reached them yet!

### FILM

Another publication ALTARF has contributed to is a booklet entitled "Divide and Rule - Never!", support materials for the Newsreel Collective film of the same name. The booklet provides some original material on immigration, Empire, the '50s and '60s, media, schools, work, law, racial violence, the '30s fight against Fascism, as well as some originally published in TANKITS. The material, addressed to school students, costs 40p (plus 15p postage), ten for £3.50 (plus £1 postage), 30 for £8 (plus £1.50 postage).

The thinking behind these pamphlets should contribute to the conference workshops. The film Blacks Britannica will be shown and there will be viewings and discussions with the producers of two of the "Our People" TV programmes. The Annual General Meeting will be held mid-way through the day.

ALTARF materials available from 33 Rushmore Road, London E.5.



MARCH IN SOUTHALL IN MEMORY OF BLAIR PEACH

Blair Peach, who was murdered by the police in Southall, lived and worked in East London. For the last ten years he was a teacher at the Phoenix School for the Delicate as well as being President of East London NUT until a year before his death.

A Memorial Fund has been set up to continue the fight against racism that Blair gave his life for and to support his dependents.

The Blair Peach Memorial Fund is c/o Langdon Park School, Byron St., London E.14.



## Paddington Centre Fights Closures

THE 5-1-0 COMMUNITY Centre, Paddington has had its Urban Aid grant renewed after a six month fight against Tory Westminster City Council's attempt to gag the centre and stop it engaging in "contentious political activity."

Mr Carl Drayton, chairperson of the 510 Management Committee said "We are pleased that 510 has now won its struggle for free speech. This means anything from criticising the council's housing policy, opposing the health authority's plans to close St Mary's Hospital, to exposing the racist policies of political parties."

The campaign began after the Council decided not to renew the grant after a "Don't Vote Nazi" leaflet was distributed by the Paddington Campaign Against Racism, based at the Centre. The

Council demanded a guarantee that the Centre would "refrain from urging or advising the electorate to vote for or against any particular candidate in any election or supporting or refrain-

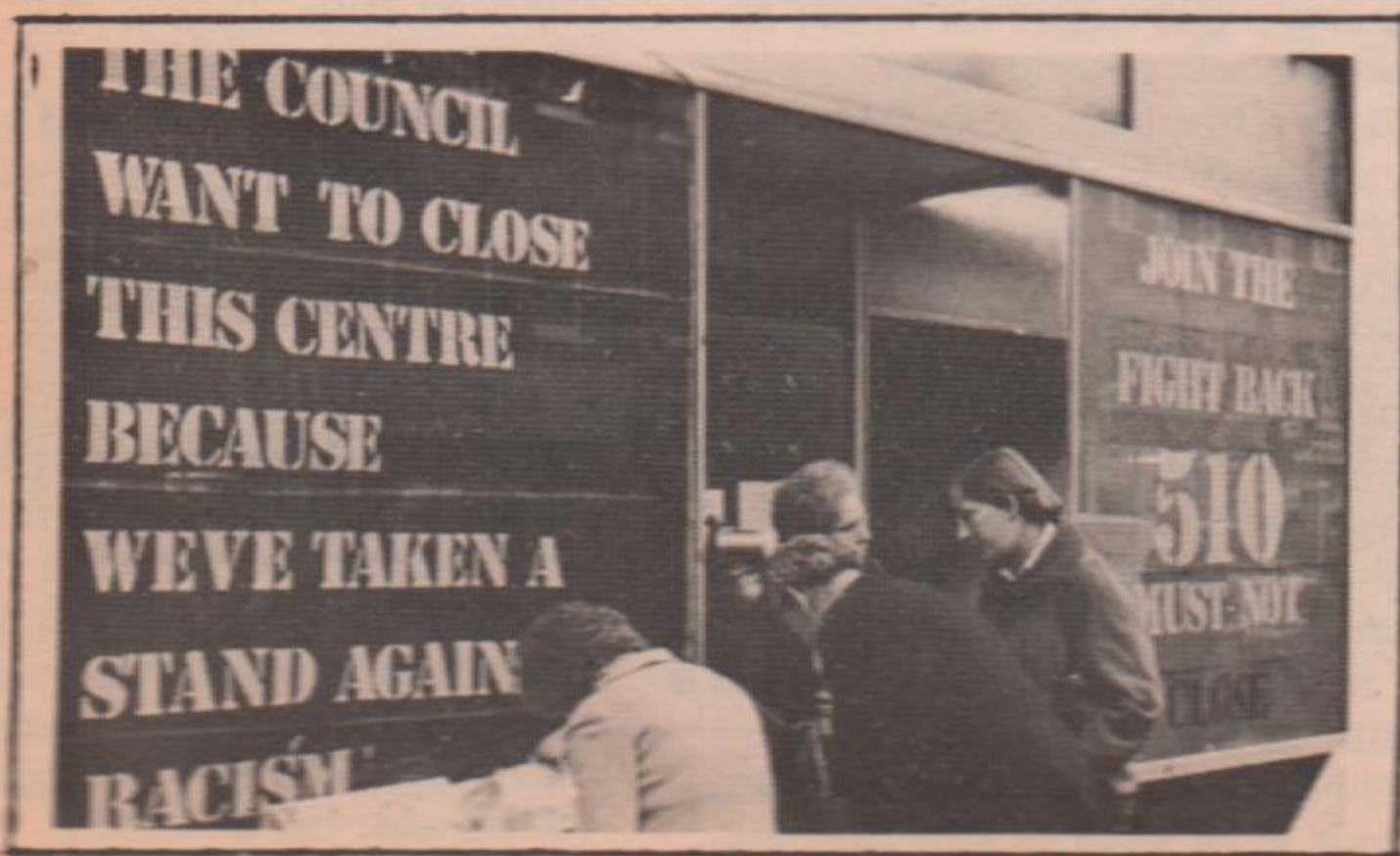
ing from supporting any political party at any time." in return for renewing the grant.

### CAMPAIGN

The result was a vigorous campaign mounted on the basis that a community centre must by its very nature be anti-racist; that the council's conditions would stop the Centre representing the community in struggles around housing, school closures and hospital closures in the locality. 5,000 signatures were collected on a petition to the council.

### THREATENED

The 510 was one of a number of community centres, law centres and other projects throughout the country threatened by reactionary local councils. The fact that Urban Aid is conditional on the first 25% being contributed by the local authority makes any project that "bites the hand that feeds it" vulnerable. Urban Aid is likely to be cut or even abolished under the Tory government and so it is essential for socialists to sort out where they stand on the issue. Not all Urban Aided schemes are just palliatives. Some provide opportunities for useful work to be done.



## 'Sin Bins' Opposed

THE NATIONAL Association for Multi-Racial Education became the first broad based teachers' organisation to support the right of school students to organise autonomously, in groups such as NUSS and SKAN.

At its recent conference NAME agreed to work with such groups where appropriate and said that such co-operation was particularly important in the fight against racism. NAME's stand contrasts with that of the NUT which refuses to recognise student self-organisation and actively seeks to stop it. As NAME works with the NUT on various joint committees it is hoped that some progress will take place on changing their position.

The Conference also passed a motion criticising the way LEAs have ignored the views of parents, teachers and school students when pushing ahead with school closures in urban areas and stressed the benefits of community based schools with small class sizes.

Another important issue was raised when a motion expressing alarm at the increase in the number of units for disruptive pupils, popularly known as "sin bins" was approved. There are now about 4,000 children attending such units, most are aged from 14-16 but some are as young as five. The ILEA (Inner London Education Authority)

has recently invested £1m in a disruptive pupil programme and aims to make a "sin bin" available to every secondary school in the capital.

The danger of herding children into such units would lessen the pressure on schools to change - the child is seen to be at fault rather than the school. There is a danger that black pupils already alienated from the school system will form a disproportionate percentage of children allocated to the units. The Conference agreed that the growth and use of such units should be monitored and the issue taken up under the Race Relations Act if appropriate.

Since the Conference it is apparent that concern about the issue is spreading and several public meetings have been held to discuss this latest means of social control in education with parents and pupils.

Further information can be found in Issues in Race and Education No 19. (available from 58 Collingborne Rd., London W.12) and Radical Education, Summer 1979.

## REVOLUTION RALLY

IF THE DAILY Mail editor and the directors of colleges had had their way the Revolution Rally would never have taken place. They feared the implications of youth being "indoctrinated" by Marxists.

### OCCUPATION

It was no thanks to them, that the rally attracted 100 young people and about the same number of the not so young. If the students had not occupied the students union of the Institute of Education, the night before to ensure access it might never have taken place.

### WEAKNESS

The weakness of the event was that it was very much the case of

people in their late 20's telling the line to "tomorrow's leaders". The audience was given little chance to respond to the "star speakers" and much of the discussion on finer points of disagreement between the "old left" must have intimidated anyone new to such events.

### ACHIEVEMENT

Despite this the rally was an achievement bringing together so many people from around the country. Self organisation is a vital ingredient in the development of an independent youth organisation Revolution, the youth organisation, will have to realise this if it is to take the important role it could in its development.



# The attack on the N.E. continues

## MONSANTO PULLS OUT

ON THURSDAY, May 11th, Monsanto announced its plans to close the whole of its nylon production division. The largest factory to go is in Ayreshire, where 830 workers will lose their jobs. But the shut down will also involve two Advanced Textile Mills factories in Crook and St Helens Auckland, both in SW Co Durham, with 560 jobs being threatened there.

### MULTINATIONAL

Monsanto, a multinational firm specialising primarily in chemical production, moved into the man-made fibre industry in the mid-'60s. It has never had a large share in the nylon market and the current recession in textiles has resulted in significant losses for them in this field.

But their struggle to retain profit margins by shelving unprofitable sections will mean the full force of the blow will be felt by

the communities where the jobs are to be axed. South West Durham currently has an unemployment rate of 12.7% and very little industry. An added 560 jobs to the dole queue is going to accelerate the general decline the area is experiencing quite significantly.

The four unions representing the workers in the two Durham factories have already set up a joint Action Committee, and intend to fight the closures tooth and nail.

## FAILURE OF NORTH EAST DEVELOPMENT POLICY

THE FACT that Co. Durham has experienced the threat of closure from two of its major employers — both in textiles — over the past few months is little, or no, coincidence. It stems directly from the inadequacies of the North East's development policies of the past ten to fifteen years.

### GRANTS

With the closure of large numbers of the pits in the mid '60's, a complex network of grants and State Aid was developed to induce new industry into the area. Road networks were built and housing developments thrown up. In particular, grant aided schemes for providing new factories cheap and

rent free, for buying machinery and for subsidising the wages of each employee were offered to employers.

Both the Courtauld's plant in Spennymoor and the Monsanto one in Crook and St Helens Auckland were built on these schemes. Now they are highlighting the drawbacks of these policies.



The work-in at the Vickers Scotswood plant in Newcastle has now ended. The remaining workers have agreed to an orderly run-down of the plant which will close in September.

By holding onto the presses in the plant the workforce possessed a powerful weapon. But they lost the struggle because they believed firstly that the Labour Government would pull something out of a hat, and secondly that management would be convinced by rational argument. Unfortunately, good arguments are not enough to stop closures.

### SHORT TERM

None of these factories were built as long term investments. They cost Courtauld's and Monsanto virtually nothing, and as a consequence were built so that the multinationals could cash in on a boom in man-made textiles cheaply. None of the plants can realistically be converted to produce anything else.

### RECESSION

Now that recession has set into the textile market, these factories are obviously the first to go, because they cost nothing. Monsanto are clearing out altogether but Courtauld's aren't. They are even retain-

ing production of "Courtelles".

But the "Courtelles" factories they are keeping are the older ones in Yorkshire — the ones which were not built with grant aid and which employ a large number of Asian women on wages almost half those paid at Spennymoor. Already, it seems, the machinery at Spennymoor is being moved to other factories within the Courtauld's Empire.

### ABUSE

Despite these blatant examples of abuse of the schemes, there are no indications that they are to be replaced by more positive

policies. The May edition of the Durham County Council newsletter recognised the particular distress of the East and West areas of the country and said the council was considering providing additional financial incentives to draw industry into them.

If the election policies of the Tory Government are to be implemented at all then the promised reduction of grants and subsidies is going to result in even further decimation of investment in the region. Somehow, the fight for to save jobs in the North East is going to have to tackle this problem.

## Courtauld's 1570 jobs lost

THE WAVE of redundancies and closures in the North East is continuing unabated. In Spennymoor, Co Durham, Courtauld's "Courlette" Spinning plant, which we have reported on in the last two issues is now in the process of closures. The redundancies began on April 19th and by the end of May all 1570 workers will have lost their jobs.

### ULTIMATUM

The closure did not proceed without a struggle. It began with the management giving the workforce an ultimatum that they accept 560 redundancies and a £7 wage cut or face total closure. The shop stewards were keenly aware that Courtauld's had played similar dirty tricks at other plants and they were determined that the company were not going to get away with it again. But in the end Courtauld's were too powerful for them.

### VIABLE

There is no doubt that the Spennymoor plant was perfectly viable and that Courtauld's were deliberately making it run at a loss. It was on this basis that the shop stewards Defence Committee approached the Department of Trade and Industry to try and get them to negotiate with Courtauld's to keep the plant open. It now seems likely that the DTI had already accepted that the closure would take place long before the workforce knew anything about it.

### WHOSE SIDE?

The Northern group of Labour MPs had been called in to help with the battle but at times it was hard to see whose side they were on. Ernie Armstrong, Labour MP for SW Durham, suggested it would probably be for the best if the workers

accepted the wage cut and 560 redundancies. Ted Fletcher, Labour MP for Darlington (and a member of the Tribune group!) stated that in his opinion there was nothing anyone could do to stop companies like Courtauld's doing just whatever they liked.

### NO SURPRISE

It came as little surprise, then, when Courtauld's chairman, Sir Arthur Knight announced that he was tired of talking and the factory was definitely going to close.

Some of the Shop Stewards made a last ditch attempt to keep their jobs to approach the National Enterprise Board for support to run the factory themselves. But by then they were exhausted and overwhelmed by the problems of running an enterprise which has little choice but to buy and sell to Courtauld's itself.

### HINDERED

The Campaign was hindered throughout by a dwindling of support from the workforce. The majority of the workers greatly disliked working for Courtauld's and so many were reluctant to fight to keep their jobs. At the same time the campaign received little backing from other workers in the Courtauld's Empire.

If nothing else, the struggle has proved the need for a strong Combine Committee within the Courtauld's Empire.

## SHEFFIELD: Strike support for victimised steward

A NEW FIRM moves North. Could be any number of places. But they choose Sheffield because of its "good record on industrial relations." Perhaps they mean low wages. But it's also near the M1, which is handy when shifting staging equipment. Rent free factory for first year — can't be bad.

### LOW WAGES

The firm recruits new labour — don't pay them the rate until they've tried them out. Training's pretty quick though — so keep the wages low. £1.50 an hour for welders. A fair saving on the £1.87 the firm's paying down in Hemel Hempstead. And no bonus either.

### MILITANT

But what's this? The blokes have elected their own shop steward. Seems a bit of a militant. He's asking for tables in the canteen. Other workers are asking about extraction equipment for the welding gear. Better get onto head office about this. Let's see now, what can we get him on. Not following procedure? Dodgy, since we don't always give verbal warnings. Bad time-keeping — much better. This'll sort them out....

### STRIKE

And that — more or less — is how Paul Acaster got the sack. But Access Equipment (a subsidiary of the William Moss Group) had reckoned without Paul's mates. "The members see this as a case of victimisation, and an attack on shop floor organisation. They (management) want someone who'll toe the line... a shop steward of their representation." So they came out for two days. And then, after the case had gone through procedure and management still refused to take Paul back, they started an indefinite strike, just before the general election.

### FIGHT TO WIN

The good thing about the Access strike is that the workers are fighting to win. Without waiting for the national executive to make the strike official — which always takes time — the strikers were out explaining their case to other workers, collecting money, and getting an effective picket rota organised. The Sheffield District Committee of the AUEW backed the strike early on, which was helpful, but the strikers realise that they can't rely on the officials to win their case for them. They're also well aware of the wider significance of the dispute: as one of the pickets explained to Big Flame: "I think it's very important. It makes a whole nonsense of Industrial Relations in Sheffield. If a firm comes from outside and can run roughshod over employees, like this firm is trying to do. We see this as a point where we've got to make a stand to stop other outside firms coming to do exactly the same. If this firm gets away with it, then there's no hope — it's going to happen all over."

### "GET TOUGH"

Sheffield, like many towns which have lost manufacturing jobs, are desperate to attract new firms, and provide attractive terms. But the Lord Mayor had his official opening of the Access factory called off as a result of the strike. Perhaps it will help the Council think again about what kind of jobs they are

A mass picket is planned around the last week in May

"The City Council, the property consultants, the directors, have worked together in getting priorities right in making sure Access Equipment were in - and operating - and fast.

The point which came out in the discussions and had a bearing on the decision to say Sheffield was the city's enviable labour relations record. Its industrial record is particularly impressive and the City Council has a genuine harmonious discourse with the representative bodies of labour in the city".

- from Sheffield Promotion Committee publication, Developments Sheffield.

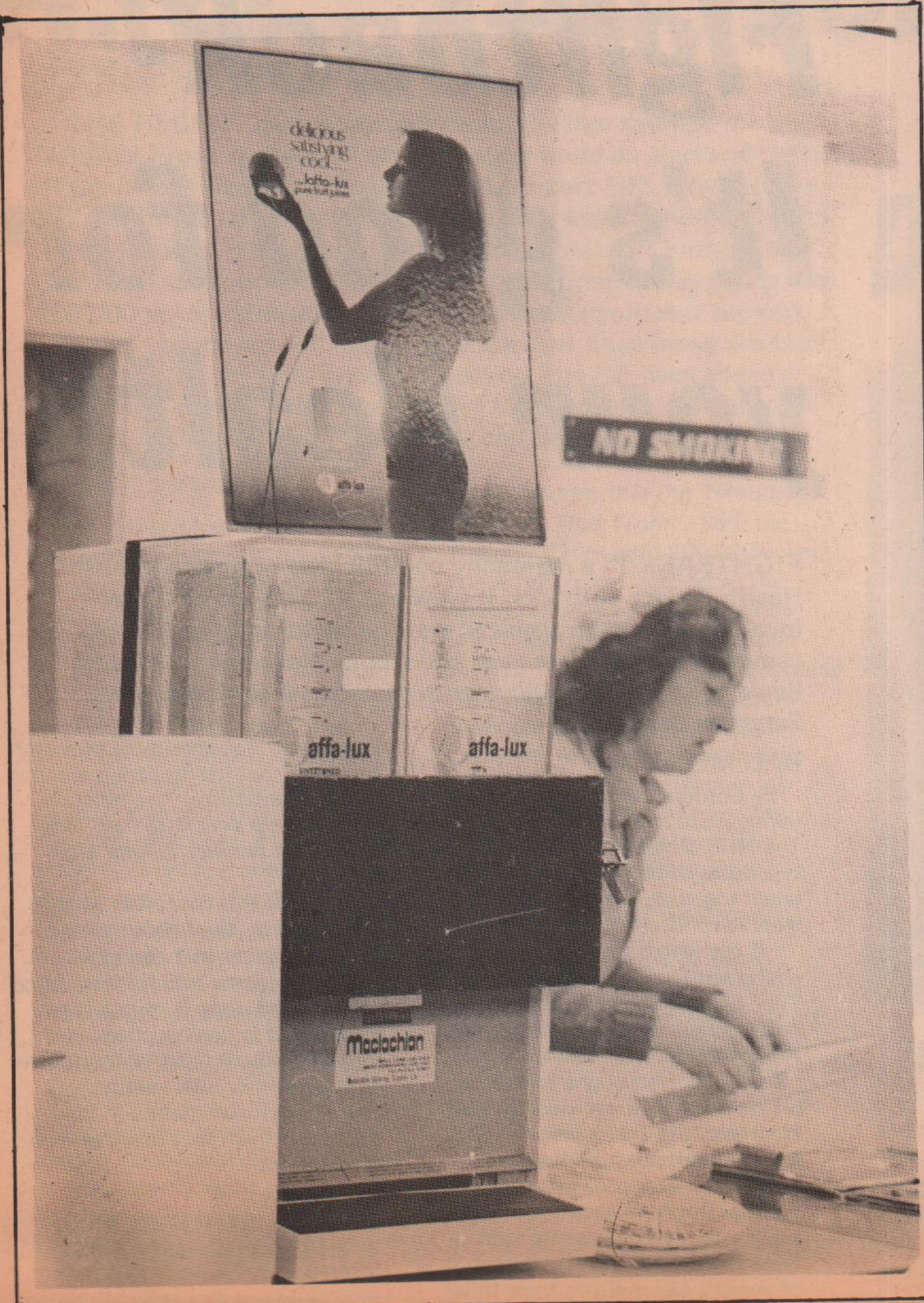
trying to get. The strike has also highlighted the new "get tough" policy of the Engineering Employers Federation — under the new Government, the EEF will get tougher still.

### OFFICIAL

The strike is now official and the blacking of all Access work has been called for. But since the organisation is very new at Access, they started with virtually no funds. They've got the claimants union helping blokes having social security problems, but money for the strike fund is badly needed. Donations and messages of support should go to: Henry Carr — Strike Treasurer, 405, Bellhouse Rd., Shiregreen, Sheffield. tel. 611360



"I regard my home as a prison. Going out to work is an escape for me. Home is prison because I'm not allowed freedom - my husband can come and go as he pleases, why can't I? My marriage is like boss and employer. I take orders from my husband!"



Women are often branded as less capable mentally. Advertising reinforces the idea that women should be judged by what they look like



Women aren't just interested in wages. Equal pay is much more than a wage demand, it's a demand for self respect.



Everyone knows that if something is called 'women's work' it means it will be low paid, probably very essential, often uninteresting and unpleasant and that men don't want to do it. Low pay for a woman assumes that she is dependent on a man for part of his wage. The myth that women's work is for pin money still persists - ignoring that many women are the only wage earners in the household.

## North East Photo Herstory

The North-East Photographers' Cooperative is a group of socialist photographers who are committed to encouraging the use of photography in local struggles. Our work area covers Tyneside, Wear-side and County Durham.

The coop has been going for over two years now, and work has been done for tenants groups, trades union organisations, community newspapers and others working for socialism in the area.

These photographs are a selection of past and present projects in which women were an important aspect.

Anyone interested in knowing more about us can contact us at : 14 Railway St., Langley Park, County Durham.

PIC'  
of the  
month



No form of trade union organisation amongst women can be satisfactory unless it encourages women to take a large part in their own affairs.



"There was never any other question in my mind than getting married. Really you're prepared for motherhood. I think now when I buy my little girl's toys - she's got a cot, and dolls, and she's got a pram and you buy the ironing board and iron and a little washing machine and it's all miniatures of what you have in real life later on. It's like being prepared for the future."



**HANDS OFF OUR HEALTH SERVICE!**

# Fightback- It's good for your Health

**FIGHTBACK IS** a nationally co-ordinated campaign against Health Service cutbacks. It grew out of the need of those involved in local struggles to end the isolation of grass roots campaigns. It now has over 100 labour movement bodies affiliated to it, and is holding its third national conference on Saturday June 30th.

## BAD MEDICINE

The Conference could not be taking place at a more crucial time. The NHS is being forced to swallow two doses of bad medicine which, taken together, may prove catastrophic to its chances of recovery.

Those who have been lulled into a false sense of security by the Tory Government's sympathetic noises about the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, and small hospitals in general, ought to look a bit closer at their policies. In their Manifesto the Tories claim that they will not cut spending on the NHS, but this is pure deception. First, as inflation accelerates and wages rise, this means real cuts. Second they plan to finance more of present expenditure from those, who can least afford it, the sick and infirm, by raising "prescription and other charges." This could mean anything from more expensive spectacles, dentures, to accommodation charges for hospital patients.

## THE STAMP

Perhaps most important, however, is the fact that the Tories promise to look at the whole basis of NHS financing. The contributory principle has always been present, but in practice "the stamp" has never covered more than a fraction of NHS costs. We can be sure that the Tories will try to change this situation.

They also plan to reduce the state's role as a provider of health care. This is something they did in their previous period of office with pensions. Now, as well as phasing pay beds back in, they plan to subsidise private health schemes publicly by giving tax relief on employee and employer contributions to private schemes.

## RESPONSIBILITY

The Tories also place a great deal of emphasis upon "the voluntary

movement" i.e. charitable provision, and deny that health care is a communal responsibility: "we must do more to help people to help themselves, and families to look after their own."

Much of this continues what was begun by the Labour government: the ideas that demand for health care is infinite if no price tag is placed upon it, that expenditure on it is unproductive, and that individuals must take responsibility for their own health. The Tory Government will now try to put them into practice with a vengeance.

## FUTURE STRUGGLES

It is vitally important that the Fightback Conference receives the widest possible support, inside and outside the NHS. It will be an occasion for reviewing the lessons of past struggles, and marshalling our forces for the struggles we know lie ahead. We must drive home the point that it is not the health service which is unproductive for industry, but industry that is counter-productive to our health.

It produces unhealthy products in unhealthy conditions, and a living environment that makes for accidents, ill-health and mental stress. It is working class people who suffer from the diseases of "affluence": cancers, coronary heart disease and ulcers.

The next Fightback Conference will be the occasion for exposing the myths used to justify cuts, to educate ourselves concerning the Tories intentions and, above all, to unite all those who are prepared to oppose them. Support the struggle to save the health service by affiliating your organisation or body to Fightback. Send delegates to the national conference.

**Tell the Tories: Hands off our Health Service! (see ad. for details)**

## BRENT RESIDENTS SAY - 'WE ARE THE EXPERTS'

WHEN IN October 1976 the Brent and Harrow Area Health Authority closed a nine-year old purpose built Accident and Emergency Department and all the acute beds at Willesden General Hospital they didn't reckon on the response they'd get from local people. They were very angry. They knew that the ill health caused by low incomes, shift work, bad housing and hazardous factory conditions make government 'norms' for hospitals irrelevant and that going to the next nearest hospital (optimistically called the Central Middlesex Hospital!) would be difficult on the bus, especially for the elderly and people with kids

### CONSULTATION

The campaign against the closure was led by the Community Health Council using the formal government consultation procedure, but all the documents and deputations of the CHC did not get local people very far. It then decided that more militant community activity was needed to convince the AHA of the strength of local feeling and launched the Willesden Hospital Action Committee.

### MORE AND BETTER

Soon WHAC had the support of over fifty local organisations for a proposal to re-open Willesden as a Community Hospital. We wanted a hospital dedicated to "routine everyday health care and the struggle for better health".

### ACTION

Finally, heckled by Brent Active pensioners, the AHA decided that they would hold a special meeting to discuss the Community Hospital idea and - a very important concession - that they would hold it at a time when local people could actually

that Willesden needs a Community Hospital and that they will go back to the DHSS to seek ways of funding it. Of course it will be a long struggle to make sure that they do put up a fight. The key thing is that we have forced the AHA to acknowledge that at the moment local health care is inadequate and we have done it by confronting them with our collective anger

For more information about Community Hospitals or about Willesden Campaign contact WHAC at 16 High St. London NW10, tel 01 961 2028.

decisions affect. The public gallery was packed and members of the CHC and WHAC, who had struggled to be recognised as special dignitaries, sat downstairs behind the Area Health Authority. Every seat was taken, except for nine for AHA members who did not turn up. The public were not allowed to speak but they made their voices heard loud and clear. After attacks from the CHC representatives on the lack of democracy at the meeting, the two doctors speaking for the NHS management stressed they they were democratically elected. But when the crowd shouted 'by who?' they were forced to admit it was only by other doctors. When it was suggested that the AHA should listen to its expert officials, local people shouted back "we are the experts". Whenever it was suggested that the AHA had not got the money, the answer came back strong and clear: "then fight for it" and banners were dropped from the gallery to make the point.

### VICTORY

We had gone to the meeting expecting that this would be the end



Demonstration last year in Hemel Hempstead. The campaign for a new hospital in Brent is growing fast. On May 14th there were 10,000 people on a demonstration.



# A.N.L. THE WORK MUST CONTINUE

THE RECENT general election was a further setback for the National Front strategy of attempting to build an electoral party of significant size and influence. With support 50% down on the 1974 elections, this result follows the poor votes achieved in the 1978 elections. However, it would be a mistake to imagine that the National Front is finished as a serious threat. They still polled 200,000 votes nationally and they still have significant support amongst youth, not reflected in the election since many are too young to vote. In fact, since the election, the NF have already announced publicly that they intend to open three new regional centres, in Birmingham, Manchester and South London.

## NF SHIFT TO VIOLENCE

Because their vote was low, because they have support amongst the youth who are interested in action, we are likely to see a shift in emphasis of strategy from building an electoral machine to more 'normal' fascist tactics of physical violence. This has already been seen since their setback in last year's local elections. An increasing catalogue of attempts to break-up meetings, attacks on ANL supporters and left wingers and organised attacks against the black community. This is likely to increase and means we must take the question of self-defence and stewarding of individuals meetings and marches more seriously.

## TORIES STEAL NF CLOTHES

One factor in the decline of the fascist vote has been the Tory Party stealing its political clothes through its more openly racist policies, particularly the immigration controls. The other major factor has been the enormous success of the ANL in getting across the message to the

whole country that the 'National Front is a Nazi Front'. Still, the National Front polls 200,000 votes, still it retains the support of the youth. The factor which the National Front are able to play upon so well. The time has come to expand beyond crude 'Nazi-bashing', and to mount a sustained campaign against all forms of racism in Britain, whether it be individual attitudes or institutionalised racism through immigration laws, 'sus' laws, job discrimination etc.

## ANL - DEMOCRACY NEEDED

For this we need a national, democratic organisation. This can only be the ANL. We cannot afford to throw away the credibility, the publicity and the support of the tens of thousand that the ANL has obtained. However, as it presently exists it is inadequate to carry out the tasks of the future. The mistakes made in the past, particularly its unwillingness to organise physical opposition to the fascists, and its lack of emphasis on combatting

# I LOWER HAMLETS DEFENCE COMMITTEE



racism are inevitable as long as the structure remains undemocratic and the leadership unaccountable. This lack of democracy has also meant it could not provide a forum for debate, discussion and education, particularly important since many of the supporters lack political experience and are in danger of

being lost now that the elections are over.

The immediate needs are, firstly, to strengthen the base by linking up local committees and setting up regional coordinating bodies. The Merseyside ANL has already taken the first steps towards this by organising a North-West Regional

Conference in July. Secondly, a national conference to elect a national steering committee and set up a democratic national structure. To abandon the ANL and throw away the gains of the past would be a disaster. Equally, 'more of the same' is a short-cut to stagnation.

## European Elections The left needs to strengthen its links in Europe

THE EUROPEAN parliament has very few powers, but with no prospect in the medium-term of Britain getting out of the EEC, Big Flame will call for a vote for the left on 7th June. That means voting Labour everywhere except West London, where we support Tariq Ali's campaign

### WORKERS UNITY

For us the importance of the elections has been less who gets elected than how can we on the far left strengthen our links across Europe. A series of international meetings under the slogan "Against the Bosses Europe - for Workers Unity" will continue after the elections are over.

The next meeting, at the end of May, begins a discussion about what we all mean by internationalism. We are clear that we reject the democratic centralist internationalism of the now defunct Third International and of the Fourth. Internationalism must start with the recognition that

the revolutionary movement develops along different lines in the various countries.

After that there are meetings planned on trade unions (Copenhagen May 24th/27th) Immigrant workers struggles (London and Strasbourg - June 3rd); cultural oppression of the Third World (Madrid June 16th/17th)

### AGAINST THE BOSSES EUROPE Who's involved?

PLS and Arbeid (Belgium); VS (Denmark); Mc/OIC and PTE (Spain); OUT and MES (Portugal); Democrazia Proletaria (Italy) KB (West Germany) Sinn Fein (Ireland); SOAK (Luxembourg); SU (Norway); OCT (France); Big Flame (England).

## Political Prisoners conference report

Delegates to the conference on 'Political Prisoners' organised by Sinn Fein (Provisional) in Dublin did not have an easy time of it. Both the Big Flame and PLS (Belgium) delegates were arrested in the 26 counties, a member of Sinn Fein was arrested on 'suspicion of belonging to an illegal organisation' and the UTOM delegate was detained on landing at Heathrow.

It is quite fitting that the conference was held in Ireland since there are over 2,000 political prisoners there as a direct result of the liberation struggle against British imperialism.

The striking feature of the conference was the noted similarity of conditions in all the different countries represented. One after another delegate spoke of mass surveillance and computerisation; process of arrests, exceptionally long periods on remand, the use of archaic laws and the implementation of new repressive legislation; interrogation techniques, torture, sensory deprivation, and 'suicides' which have taken place in extremely suspicious circumstances.

It is abundantly clear that the EEC is intending to develop into

a superstate, united in its repression of all its opponents. The recent 'Convention on Terrorism', the increasing collaboration between states regarding extradition arrangements, the extra-territorial court system being developed, the amassing and centralisation of information and the exchange of military and police personnel for training techniques are all glaring examples of this process.

A resolution was signed by all the participants pledging solidarity with all the political prisoners in Western Europe and throughout the world. A further resolution was also passed "admiring and upholding the heroic stand of the Irish men and women in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh and Armagh Prison who are leading the struggle to defend the position of political prisoners (and incidentally of all prisoners) not alone in Europe but world wide."

Helping the fightback against Euro-repression is one of the priorities of the 'Against the Bosses' Europe - For Workers' Unity' Co-ordination. And from the evidence presented at the Dublin conference, there's plenty of work to be done.

As part of the co-ordination of revolutionary organisations in Europe Big Flame is holding a meeting on "Immigration in Europe" on Sunday 3rd June, 1979, 1pm - 6pm. at St. Anne's Centre, Venn St, Clapham, London SW4 (Clapham tube).

Speakers: The High Commissioner Designate of the revolutionary Government of Grenada, Fennis Augustine; Portugese Worker's Co-ordinating Committee; Sinn Fein; Organisation de Communiste de Travailleurs (France), Black Women's organisations; Big Flame.

The meeting will be followed by a social in the evening. Delegations from other revolutionary groups participating in the co-ordination are expected.

Further details from Big Flame.

## The struggle continues at

## the Nottingham

### Post

THE STRUGGLE continues of the Nottingham Evening Post (see previous issues of Big Flame). Last month there was a small mass picket of the Evening Post called by the Trades Council. The object of the picketing is to stop Evening Post vans collecting and delivering the Saturday paper. This time the police allowed us to argue with the drivers about working for a non-union firm.

The 28 sacked journalists continue to produce the weekly Nottingham News, which has now established itself as an alternative paper in the city to the Tory Evening Post. Nottingham News supported Labour in the local elections but gave Socialist Unity almost no coverage despite the fact we'd supported their mass pickets. The NUJ still pays the wages of the workers on Nottingham News but, with a bit of investment, the Nottingham News could possibly get enough advertising to go "independent."

The recent picket was jointly supported by the NUJ, SLADE and NGA. This solid organisation will be needed when the NUJ's national call for a national one day strike is acted upon sometime in the near future. Without that joint union organisation (journalists and the print) the strike won't work. The one day strike is meant to hit the Newspaper Society, who then should put pressure on the Evening Post to settle. So far, they aren't even talking to the union.

# Immigration in Europe Sunday 3rd June 1pm - 6pm London



# 'FIGHT ENEMY INSIDE YOUR HOME'

"I DON'T owe my consciousness and preparation to anything but the cries, the suffering and the experience of the people."

**DOMITILA BARRIOS** de Chungara is a Bolivian woman, the wife of a tin-miner, and a militant leader of the Housewives Committee of the SigloXX mine. She was born in poverty in the mines of Bolivia, the daughter of an activist in the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (a bourgeois nationalist movement) who lost his job because of his political activities. Her mother died when she was nine, and she was left to struggle to get an education for herself and to bring up her four little sisters. She married a tin-miner, and became politically active through working in the committees which were organised to support the miners' strikes. She has been imprisoned twice for her political activities, and lost two of her seven children through torture and beatings in jail.

In "Let Me Speak!" we are given a first hand account of the struggles of the Bolivian people over the past fifteen years, taken from recordings of conversations and the political speeches of Domitila.

## SHANTY TOWNS

Though Domitila's experience is of the tin mines, she clearly sees the need to link the struggle of the miners to those of the factory workers, the peasants, the shanty town dwellers and the students. She notes how the bourgeoisie tries to divide the working class and break down its unity by propaganda, by setting peasants against workers, men against women, and conscript soldiers (themselves the

sons of peasants and workers) against striking miners from other regions. Here, for example, is part of her analysis of women:

"One day I got the idea of making a chart. We put as an example the price of washing clothes per dozen pieces and we figured out how many dozen items we washed a month. Then the cook's wage, the babysitter's and the servants'. We figured out everything that we miners' wives do everyday. Adding it all up, the wage needed to pay us for what we do in the home compared to the wages of a cook, a washerwoman, a babysitter, a servant, was much higher than what the men earned in the mine for a month. So in that way we made ~~our own~~ *paneros* understand that we really work, and even more than they do in a certain sense. And that we contribute even more to the household with what we save. So, even though the state doesn't recognise what we do in the home the country benefits from it, because we don't receive a single penny for this work.

"And as long as we continue in the present system things will always be the same. That's why I think it's so important for us revolutionaries to win the first battle in the home. And the first battle to be won is to let the woman, the man, the children participate in the struggle of the working class, so that the home can become a stronghold that the enemy can't overcome. Because if you have the enemy inside your own house, then it's just one more weapon that our common enemy can use toward a dangerous end. That's why it's really necessary that we have very clear ideas about the whole situation and that we throw out ~~forever~~ *forever* the bourgeois idea that the woman should stay at home and not get involved in other things, in union or political matters, for *example*."

## SOCIALISM

At the same time, Domitila sees that, for women like herself, the struggle is for socialism and not just for equal rights.

"I made them see that in Bolivia human rights aren't respected and they apply what we call "the law of the funnel": broad for some, narrow for others. That those ladies that play *canasta* and applaud the government have full guarantees, full support. But women like us, housewives, who get organised to better our people, well they beat us up and persecute us."

Let Me Speak by Domitila Barrios de Chungara with Moema Viezzer, translated by Victorai Ortiz, published by Stage 1, May 10, £2.95.

INFORMATION HAS just come out of Chile about a new project for the sterilization of working class and peasant women in the area of Antofagasta. This barbaric project is the brainchild of North American imperialism, and is being carried out by Chilean doctors trained in the US.

The method of sterilization used involves the introduction of acid into the interuterine tubes. This inflames them and causes them to shrivel up. The passage of the egg to the uterus is prevented, and permanent sterilization of the women results.

## EXPLOITING

Apart from the danger to the women who are being used in these experiments, imperialism is also exploiting the hunger and poverty of the Chilean working people. Since the coup in 1973 many people have been thrown out of their jobs and food prices have increase many times. To bribe women to have these injections, large sums of money are being paid. They are paid 1000

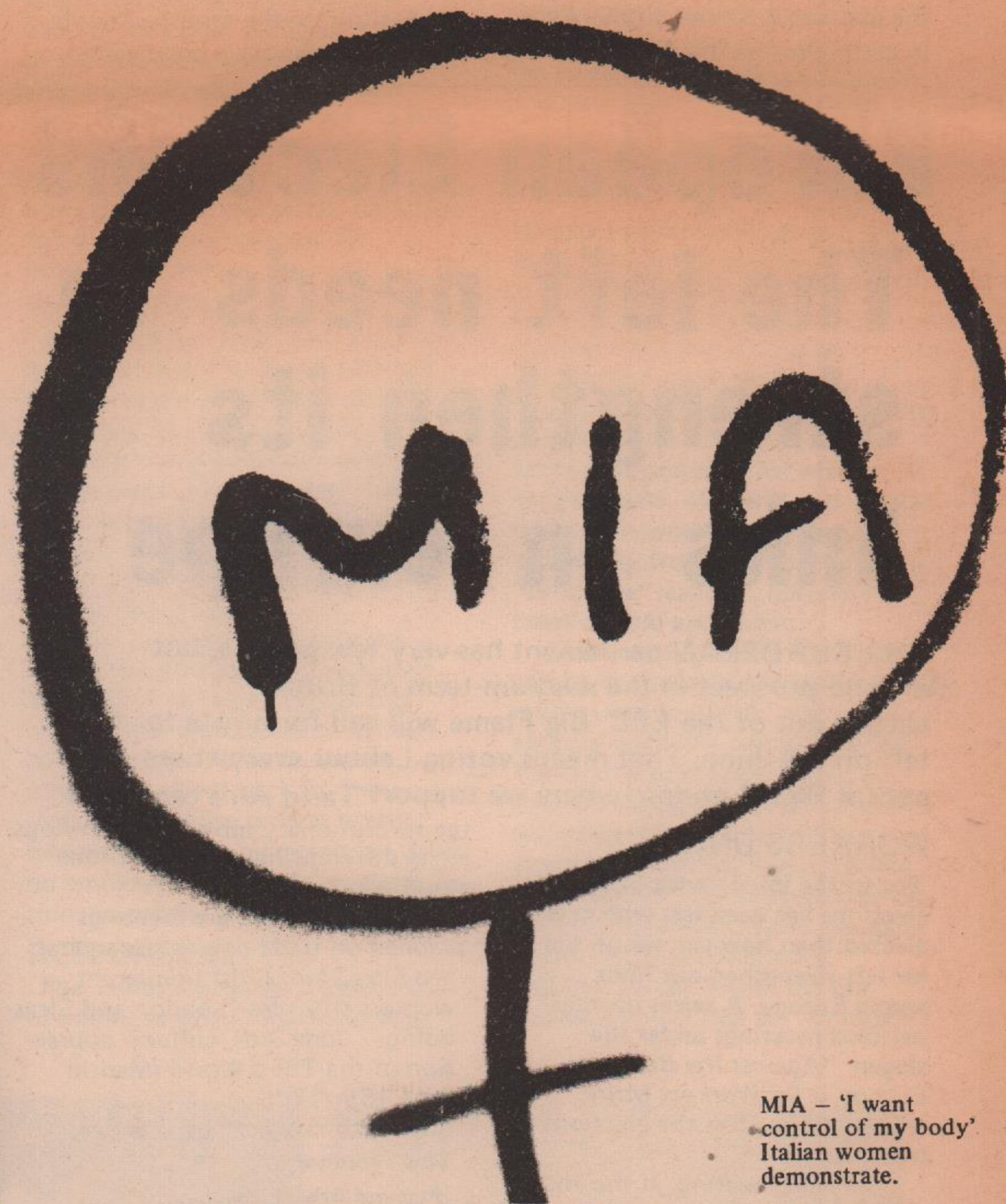
# KILLING GUERILLAS OF FUTURE

the injection, and another 300 dollars when they have a check-up three months later.

Pinochet and his thugs may think that population control is the answer to hunger and unemployment in Chile, and to the growing resistance to the repression. It has been said that:

"In Latin America it is more hygenic and effective to kill guerillas in the womb than in the

# NO FRONTIER



MIA - 'I want control of my body' Italian women demonstrate.

# TO WOMEN'S STRUG

## SET DESSIE FREE

REMEMBER INES Garcia, JoAnne Little, and Noreen Winchester? All jailed for defending themselves against men who raped them. Then released as a result of pressure from women all over the world.

Now, in America, another woman, Dessie Woods, has been jailed for 22 years for killing a man who attempted to rape her. She has been

in prison for three years and in that time she has been drugged, isolated, starved, tortured and put in a ice-cell. On several occasions her life

has been threatened. Dessie is resisting efforts to destroy her, and is convinced she was right to defend herself. She is fighting laws made by men and sustained by men to oppress women, especially in a state like Georgia, where white men assume they can get away with raping black women - and Dessie is black.

A Defence Committee has been set up in America which was successful

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# WOMEN

BIG FLAME, will be arguing at the next socialist feminist conference should take up the theme of imperialism, how it affects us and how we can organise against it. The Womens' movement in this country has a partial understanding of the affects of living in a country with a strong imperialist tradition and inheritance. Often the needs of non-white, British women are not understood, or worse, assumed to be the same as those of white, native feminists. The womens' movement does have a strong international outlook and at times is partial. Successful women's struggle in Northern Ireland against British Imperialism will have consequences on the mainland - after all we are ruled by the same state. The anti-imperialist fight in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia will have a special significance to the women of Britain. Quite apart from anything else, we will be adding their voices and to be virulent racist. Law and order, hang'm and flog'm etc.

Some of the fears expressed at the National Post-conference planning meeting was that by using the theme of imperialism we would put off women coming, because imperialism is what the male left about. A sister from the Women and Ireland Group entered this by asserting there were plenty of feminists who were Irish, non-white or from the third world who had vast personal experience of the effects of imperialism and how to organise against it. So that the discussion did not be a wrangle over finer points of a theoretical understanding of the nature of imperialism. And that even if white feminists were put on the conference theme, it would draw in a wider audience of women because black, Asian, women would feel that they had a central place at such a conference.

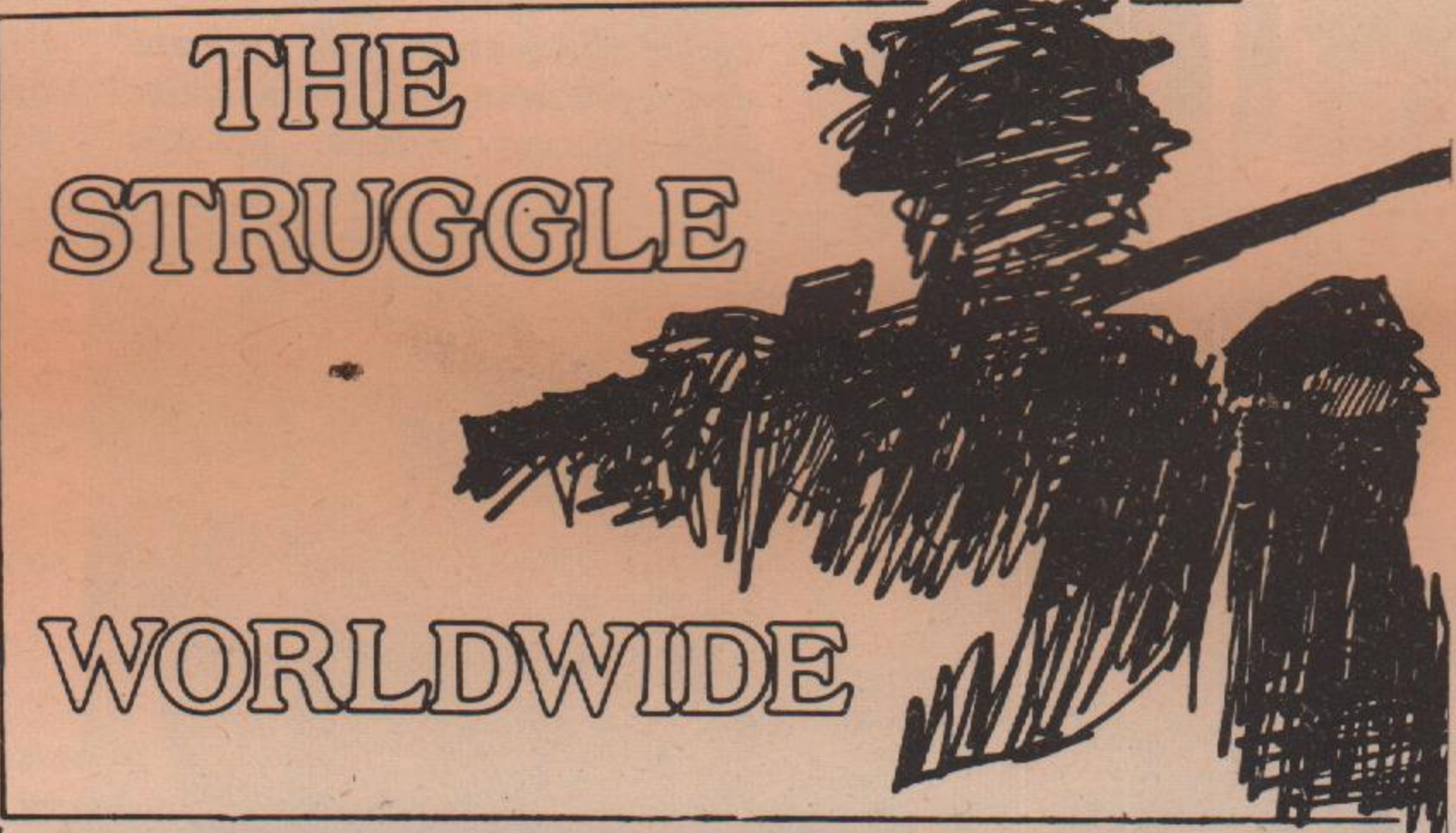
Precise wording and organisation of the conference to be discussed in Sheffield on June 23rd.

We will be there arguing that the theme be imperialism.

# GLE

having her transferred from a mental institution to the Georgia institution for women. But even once her transfer Dessie's life has been threatened.

The Defence Committee asks for postcards of support to be sent to Dessie Woods, Georgia's Womens' Correctional Institute, Hardwick, Box 218, A78927, Georgia 31034, Atlanta USA. Also send letters of



## Where Women = 1/2 Person

The womens movement in Lebanon has an enormous task ahead of it: as the country is ravaged by civil war. But the war situation also creates crises that make all change seem possible. This article is by a comrade active in the Lebanese struggle. She is a member of the Lebanese Womens' Democratic Union (LWDU).

For many Lebanese women the first step towards womens liberation came during the civil war when the communist organisations began organising the communities collectively: creating collective kitchens, people's hospitals, etc. Being together, instead of being isolated in each individual kitchen had a very liberating effect on many women.

### MALE SUPPORT ONLY TACTICAL

Many women became and remain active militants in the womens movement at this time, despite the fact that when the events calm down, the family and even some "comrades" encourage the women to slide back into their traditional feminine roles. This has made the women very aware of the need to build a strong and autonomous womens movement. They realise it's a permanent battle and support offered by men during the war is often only tactical.

The feudal family traditions are still strongly entrenched. The male head of the family is like a feudal lord, the sons like privileged princes, whilst the daughters are the household servants.

The laws treat the women like a half person: her testament in court only equals half a man's. All legal

band, father, cousin - her closest male relative). You see the difficulty for a women seeking her independence.

### THE INEQUALITY OF RELIGION

Another example of discrimination, the inheritance laws give her nothing or a half of what the male relatives get, depending on the religion. For there is no civil code in Lebanon, all laws of divorce, marriage, inheritance differ according to the different religions (and there are 17 different religions in Lebanon!) The religious leaders use this to divide women and make them accept their lot.

### A WOMENS' MOVEMENT

The Lebanese Womens' Democratic Union (LWDU) has made the principal point of their programme to have a civil code which will render all women equal before the law.

The state no longer functions because the country is in a state of war and completely divided politically and geographically. As there is no centralised state body which could implement reforms, the LWDU had to make a scientific analysis of the situation and draw up a political programme. They found many points

# PROUD TO BE Black

"PROUD TO be black" - that was the feeling that came out of the first OWAAD (Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent) Conference. Here a woman who attended the Conference describes what she felt afterwards.

*"It felt for me like one of the early Womens' Liberation Conferences - a sense of something new and exciting about to take off."*

I came away from the first OWAAD (Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent) Conference with my head full of questions and ideas.

I've been black as long as I've been a woman. Nine years ago I started consciously organising as a woman but not consciously as a black woman till recently.

### NIGGER

My earliest memory of racism was as a five year old at school, when someone called me a "nigger". But generally my childhood was sheltered. My mother is white and I was brought up in a white world. I knew I was brown and was glad to be different.

As I got older things got worse. I experienced racism on the street. I couldn't pretend I was white any more but I didn't think I was black. I was brown, a half caste. I didn't speak an Asian language. I didn't belong in the Asian communities where the solidarity and struggle was growing.

### INSULTS

The insults and potential violence I faced from men on the street were not just sexist but racist. What began as "jokey sexist comments" turned to nasty racism when I refused to play the game. I got scared. I felt like a victim without any sense of strength or solidarity from other women in my position.

The OWAAD conference gave me

that strength and solidarity. I felt proud to be a black woman, not apologetic. I heard other women say things I had felt and said. The opening paper put it all in the right perspective.

*"When the African peoples were shipped from the shores of Africa as slaves, and the Indian peoples slaughtered during the wars of resistance against British colonialists, those who committed the crimes did not distinguish between us. When nowadays racist Immigration Acts are passed no distinction is made between Asian and Caribbean peoples, the aim being to keep us ALL out and Britain predominantly white."*

*"Why then, when so much unites us, should we make distinctions which only provide fuel for the divide-and-rule tactics used against us."*

*"Our unity arises from a common experience of oppression which is historical, racial, sexist and economic. Our use of the single term "black" is one way of stressing this unity."*

We talked about all the ways black women are being attacked in this country but more importantly the ways we are fighting back.

### HARRASSMENT

Black women have begun to organise against the network of racist immigration controls erected by the British state. The demonstration at Heathrow was not just against the single "virginity test" that received publicity but against all the tests which have been going on for years unreported. And against the particular harassment faced by black women trying to enter Britain.

For the "lucky few" who do get in, life is certainly not easy. Black women are forced to take the lowest-paid, least-unionised jobs, with long hours, often shift work, appalling sweat-shop conditions and discrimination from employers and white workmates.

### HOUSEWORK

On top of this there's the housework, made harder by the appalling housing conditions forced on black people. But more and more black women are organising against their home and work conditions.

It is black mothers who take on the schools and teachers who do little to accommodate the needs of black children.

Again the black mother suffers most when her children are picked up and harassed by the police on trumped up charges like SUs, or when her children are murdered at the hands of NF thugs.

### GUINEA PIGS

Although it is black women who hold up the NHS with our labour, our health is not considered important. We are frequently used as guinea pigs for new drugs, or sterilised without consent. Little attention is made to provide interpreters to help Asian women with language difficulties. But in every area where black women have been exploited and oppressed they have organised to fight back.

OWAAD hopes to strengthen and build on these struggles and build greater unity among black sisters. The conference was the



# MORE RIOTS



More than eighty prisoners who crowded on to the roof at Peterhead Jail, Aberdeenshire

## Cut the population of prisons!

Suspended jail sentences of between four to nine months have been handed out to eight prison officers at York Crown Court. They were convicted of conspiring to assault prisoners at Hull Prison in 1976. Four other officers were acquitted.

PROP, the national prisoners' movement, welcomed the verdicts: 'The fact that prison officers beat up prisoners after the Hull riot is now established. The guilty verdicts vindicate what prisoners, and we on their behalf, have been saying for years.'

### EX-PRISONERS SPEAK OUT

At a well-attended meeting in York after the trial, PROP speakers outlined the importance of the case. Dick Pooley, who has spent 20 years as a prisoner, said: 'It was a very moving moment just before the prisoners came down off the roof at Hull. They linked arms, sang 'Auld lang syne', then hugged and kissed each other. They left one banner up there: 'Remember Hull 76'. Well, PROP hasn't forgotten. And it is a direct result of our investigations and pressure that the trial of the officers has taken place.'

Geoff Coggan, another member of PROP who has spent four years inside, said that it was not realistic to have expected the officers to have been sent to prison. It is remarkable enough that they have been convicted. 'But', he added, 'even if they had gone inside they'd have been sent to an open prison, along with all the cops done for corruption, and put their feet up waiting for parole.'

Geoff said that the convicted officers are not 'rotten apples in the barrel': 'It's the barrel itself that is rotten. The press, and the Judge, have been saying that the screws acted like they did because of the prisoners' riot. But that's not the point at all. The point is that the prisoners rioted because the screws were acting like that.'

'It's very ironic that at the start of the trial the screws were most concerned that no-one who had had any trouble with the police, however minor, should be allowed to serve on the jury - and

now, even though they themselves have been convicted of conspiracy to assault, they're saying they shouldn't be dismissed from the Prison Service.'

### HEAVY MOB

John McVickers, who has spent 15 years in prison and was once 'The Most Wanted Man in Britain', said that the nucleus of the Hull Prison 'heavy mob' had been convicted.

He drew parallels between the Hull riot of 1976 and the Parkhurst riot of 1969. Prior to both riots there was a tightening up process, which increased the use of petty rules, and let the screws flex their muscles.

Prior to both riots allegations of brutality were made, and were ignored by the Home Officer.

John referred to prisons as 'hate factories', and said the hate comes from the officers, not the inmates. 'Prisoners are called animals, and the scum of the earth, but in my experience the screws treat prisoners far worse than prisoners treat their victims.'

He called for the setting up of a Prison Ombudsman, independent of the Home Office, to investigate prisoners' complaints.

### LESS MONEY FOR PRISONS

Geoff Coggan attacked prison reformers who think that the only problem in prisons is overcrowding, and that more money should be spent on the prison service. 'We don't want more money spent on prisons', he said, 'we want less. The new prisons are even worse than the old ones. The liquid cash (drugs) is taking over from the physical cash. It is not PROP's job to help the Home Office run its prisons, but to be the voice of the prisoners.'

visiting time). The annual subscription is £2.50.

Annual Associate membership of PROP costs £6. This includes a subscription to PROP journal, notification of activities in your area, all press statements, and advance notice and reduced rates for PROP publications.

Contact:  
PROP  
104a Brackenbury Rd.  
Hammersmith  
London W. 6

## in the prisons are a certainty

● writes Jake Prescott

ONE OF the main issues involved in the prison struggle which flared into the Hull Riot of 1976 was the existence and use of the Control Units. Over a period of three years almost all the prisoners subjected to the crudest "white box/sensory deprivation" system of control in these units had been screened and selected out of the prisoner population, and selected as suitable guinea pigs for this latest experiment in penal policy.

These were later deemed to be "temporarily suspended" by the same politician who had given the go-ahead to their opening, namely one Roy Jenkins, a wonderful socialist who, in his job as Home Secretary, whilst dreaming of the future in the shape of a £60,000 a year job as "our man in Europe" and contemplating his ever-expanding belly allowed two political prisoners from Ireland, Michael Gaughan and Frank Stagg to die agonisingly whilst on hunger strike for repatriation.

### SURREPTITIOUSLY

Recently the Association of Prison Governors called for the re-opening of these Control Units; (notwithstanding the fact that, since the original Control Units ceased to function small "private" ones have been opened surreptitiously in many prisons - notably

Durham, Gartree, Strangeways and Dartmoor)...Now we have an even larger - but not socialist! gentleman in the seat of Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, who has to decide what ~~todo~~ about the control units.

### SHARP SHOCK

Given that his only clearly stated political belief seems to be the one about giving kids "a short, sharp shock, and reinforced by the fact that he is directly responsible for the ~~doomed~~ attempts to de-politicalise the status of Irish prisoners of war in Long Kesh, it looks as if the Control Units will be right up his street.

And of course, meanwhile back in the jails, prisoners being subjected to harassment and beatings by gangs of NF supporting screws, and being denied any human rights - of education, correspondence, dignity for ~~example~~ - have the singular right to petition, yes, the Home Secretary if they have any complaints about prison treatment. If they exercise this right and wait just a few months, they can expect to receive a small slip of paper which will state: "The Secretary of State has carefully considered your petition but can find no grounds for complaint or action"

Thus, it will not be "accidental" or unfortunate if there are more riots - as there will be - as sure as eggs is eggs.

### PORRIDGE

Some prisoners are of course aware of the surreal joke behind their struggle to break out of boxes - physical and mental - getting to the rooftops and attempting some dialogue with people "outside"...only to find themselves "on the bee" in someone's front room, and being slagged off for "having it too easy in prison" "they're always watching telly in there" (who's had too much "Porridge" - those inside or those outside?)

Still, some prisoners are also aware that there are more people "out there" who are actually imprisoned than there are in nick... slave labour factories, women and children imprisoned in kitchens and classrooms, stuck in relationships that are more painful than kickings from yobbo screws - and that this rat-race money-grubbing system is run by people whose only political creed is that of the stick and the carrot, the barren industrial estate and the control unit

### CHANGE

It is no accident that 99% of all people in prison come from the working class and from the most oppressed working class areas, and it doesn't need sociologists and the like to tell us why this is. It's more to the point for people to understand that prisoners' struggle is for change, for reforms yes, but for changes in themselves, and active solidarity with our class; to put an end to the alibi we provide to the bourgeoisie by acting in petty crime and thereby obscuring the colossal exploitation of the class - and for working people not to be led into the trap of using prisoners as scapegoats for the real crimes against all of us.



Prisoners on roof at Hull. (Jake Prescott standing).

## PRISONERS UNIONS

PRISONERS UNIONS, an end to prison secrecy and access to independent legal representation for prisoners are some of the main suggestions from RAP - Radical Alternatives to Prison (founded in 1970) - to Mr Justice May's inquiry into the prison service. They also want a halt to the prison building programme and a reduction in the prison population.

'Holland has a prison population which is proportionately four times smaller than ours, more than half of which serve sentences of less than six months, compared to only 17% in this country.'

### FREEDOM

"Yet (they say) the crime rate in the two countries is just about the same - a point which shatters the argument of those who persist in believing that the incidence of criminal behaviour is affected

by changes in sentencing policy."

It's obvious, argues RAP that the present policies don't work. The crime rate is growing and the prison population is growing. They point out that "imprisonment is used most in those societies which value freedom least, and the ~~trowth~~ of a prison system is the sharpest indicator of the political direction, which a society is taking.

A Memorandum to the Inquiry into the UK Prison Service, RAP 104a Brackenbury Rd., London W6. 50p including postage

PROP produces an excellent bi-monthly journal called PROP. The latest issue contains articles on Hull; the Gartree Riot and use of drugs; and interview with Des Warren, one of the 'Shrewsbury Two' building workers, about drugs in prison; women prisoners; Astrid Proll; Hohn Stonehouse; George Ince; the link between the 'popular' (ponce) press and rape; and much else, including analytical articles about prisons.

PROP want you to buy and sell their journal (especially outside prisons during



# GLAD TO BE GAY

## BIG FLAME INTERVIEWS 'GAY LEFT' WRITER

TEN YEARS ago the Stonewall riots took place in New York. The police raided a gay bar and instead of accepting arrest as part of their everyday harassment the gays fought with the police.

What happened at Stonewall became an important focus for the growing self-confidence of gay people. Now, ten years on from Stonewall, the Gay Movement is organising a Gay Pride Week at the end of June which ends in a carnival in Hyde Park, London, Saturday June 30th.

"Coming out is usually seen as a personal process, says Jeffrey Weeks in his book, 'Coming Out', and he continues, "But it can also be seen as a historic process, the gradual emergence of a homosexual identity and public presence."

Jeffrey Weeks talked to Big Flame about this process, and about the work of 'Gay Left', a magazine with which he is involved.

"Different cultures need to regulate sexuality in different ways. In Western cultures over the last 200 years, one of the ways in which homosexuality has been controlled is through the categorisation of homosexuality as a separate thing, as a characterisation of certain types of people who are then set apart, defined as 'sick', 'perverted' or 'degenerate'. Capitalism creates types of people to fit particular needs at particular times, but never straightforwardly or deliberately. What happens depends on particular struggles, particularly balances of forces, particular defining events.

### THE RIGHT WING

Over the last hundred years there has existed a strong moral purity tendency, located particularly amongst the lower middle class. In times of acute social crisis the strata most frightened by it look for a new moral stability and become ever more vocal as their search continues.

Thatcher, for instance, is trying to resolve the political crisis on the right by welding together a new coalition, an element of which are these moral purity enthusiasts. Purity will cement the new power bloc — or so some people hope.

### THE OUTSIDERS

Gay people, largely because of our new visibility over the last ten years, are particularly vulnerable to increased harassment and control.

Homosexuals have over the last 100 years fought against being seen as outsiders and, in response, developed a network of sub-cultural organisations and even small reform societies.

But Stonewall represented a new type of resistance, not based on apology but on an assertion of pride in homosexuality and the validity of the homosexual experience. This struck a chord in a wider group of people from the traditional gay scene. Hundreds of people coming together for weekly meetings gave a tremendous new sense of strength in what you could do as a gay person, acting openly, and collectively with other gay people. This sense of belonging to a movement led us to

reject the stigmas thrown at us and assert pride in ourselves.

### WOMENS MOVEMENT

Once the gay movement had emerged in a radical form much of its ideology, analysis and inspiration in terms of organisation, like the emphasis on small groups, came directly from the women's movement and this was very positive. But there are specific elements of sexual oppression which can't be derived directly from gender oppression. The lesbian and gay men's movement is only now developing analysis of its own, which compliments those of feminism.

The gay movement now is the totality of its activities rather than a simple grouping. Women were involved in the Gay Liberation Front from the very beginning, largely because there was a feeling that the women's movement was disinterested. But eventually a number of women did leave the male-dominated gay movement to work openly in the women's movement.

### SOCIALISM

I reject the 'big bang' theory that a socialist society can be created overnight. One of the important elements of socialism is democratic control over society, and this must include self-determination and control over our sexuality.

What underlies the whole gay movement is an affirmation of homosexuality as an experience. There are many aspects of sexuality that might be more easily expressed if there weren't such a rigid organisation of sexuality. The familial

organisation of sexuality is very important for capital and social relations. The affirmation of homosexuality implies the acceptance of sex as pleasure not as reproduction.

The movement has to be more than just socialists, it is a vast variety of expressions of a new sense of pride. This is a very positive development, it is impossible to attempt to impose a political unity.

In the future we need to work on all fronts — self help services, militant reformist groups like the Gay Activists Alliance and in traditional pressure groups like the Campaign for Homosexual Equality.

### GAYNESS AND SOCIALISM

Gay socialists have to fight as socialists in the gay movement and gays in the socialist movement, which is a very difficult job. Some people resolve this by opting into a straight left group but often find it impossible to raise questions of equal politics in such groups.

The opposite danger is of raising socialist questions in the gay movement in a very abstract manner, detached from concrete political struggles.



Campaign for Homosexual Equality at Trafalgar Square meeting, Peter Harrap (Report)



We have to support various types of gay organisation. This also means engaging in analysis of sexual oppression and working openly as gay people with other socialists. What we cannot do is opt out of either struggle. That's why Gay Left is important, we try to break down the division between theory and practice to find a way of focussing energy in a socialist way while dealing specifically with the gay question.

### FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF OPPRESSION

The left has failed to go beyond its ghetto, the notion that any one group has got all the answers is one of the bug-bears of the left, sustaining the dangerous view that one organisation can lead everyone else to liberation.

Socialists must affirm the validity of autonomous groupings, which is the only way to integrate into wider socialist analysis. The left must re-orientate itself and base itself on people's experiences, and struggles at the level where people feel their oppression to be."

For more information about Gay Pride Week events contact Gay Pride Week Committee, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DX.

For Gay Pride Week events in Liverpool contact LINK, 14 Colquhoun St, Liverpool L1 4DE. Tel: 051-740 9835.

It's easy to see why Jack London — a best seller in his day — remains one of the most compelling story writers. His 40 short years were packed with incidents and adventure. When he died in 1916 he had established a reputation as a writer who was also a socialist: *The People of the Abyss* and *The Iron Heel* have joined the select company of working class classics like Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*.

The extracts below are from his potted political autobiography 'What Life Means to Me', a piece written in 1905 when London was at the peak of his socialist commitment. Strangely romantic

## London: A working class classic



London was always intensely realistic about the human material out of which a new society had to be constructed.

Sometimes he's perceptive — when he explains the pressures which make us all potential scabs in a competitive society — but sometimes he's altogether too much to take: 'I am first of all a white man, and only then a socialist!'

'What Life Means to Me' is one of a new set of stories and essays, *Revolution*, published by the Journeyman Press.

As for visions! When I was sixteen I had already earned the title of 'prince'. But this title was given me by a gang of out-

by whom I was called 'The Prince of the Oyster Pirates.' And at that time I had climbed the first rung of the business ladder. I was a capitalist. I owned a boat and a complete oyster-pirating outfit. I had begun to exploit my fellow creatures. I had a crew of one man. As captain and owner I took two-thirds of the spoils, and gave the crew one-third, though the crew worked just as hard as I did and risked just as much his life and liberty.

This one rung was the height I climbed up the business ladder. One night I went on a raid amongst the Chinese fishermen. Ropes and nets were worth dollars and cents. It was robbery, I grant, but it was precisely the spirit of capitalism. The capitalist takes away the possessions of his fellow creatures by means of a rebate, or of a betrayal of trust, or

supreme-court judges. I was merely crude. That was the only difference I used a gun.

But my crew that night was one of those inefficient against whom the capitalist is wont to fulminate because, forsooth, such inefficient increase expenses and reduce dividends. My crew did both. What of his carelessness he set fire to the big mainsail and totally destroyed it. There weren't any dividends that night, and the Chinese fishermen were richer by the nets and ropes did not get. I was bankrupt, unable just then to pay sixty-five dollars a new mainsail. I left my boat at anchor and went off on a bay-pirate boat on a raid up the Sacramento River. While away on this trip, another gang of bay-pirates raided my boat. They stole everything, even the anchors; and later on, when I recovered the drifting hulk, I sold it for twenty dollars. I had slipped back the one rung I had climbed.



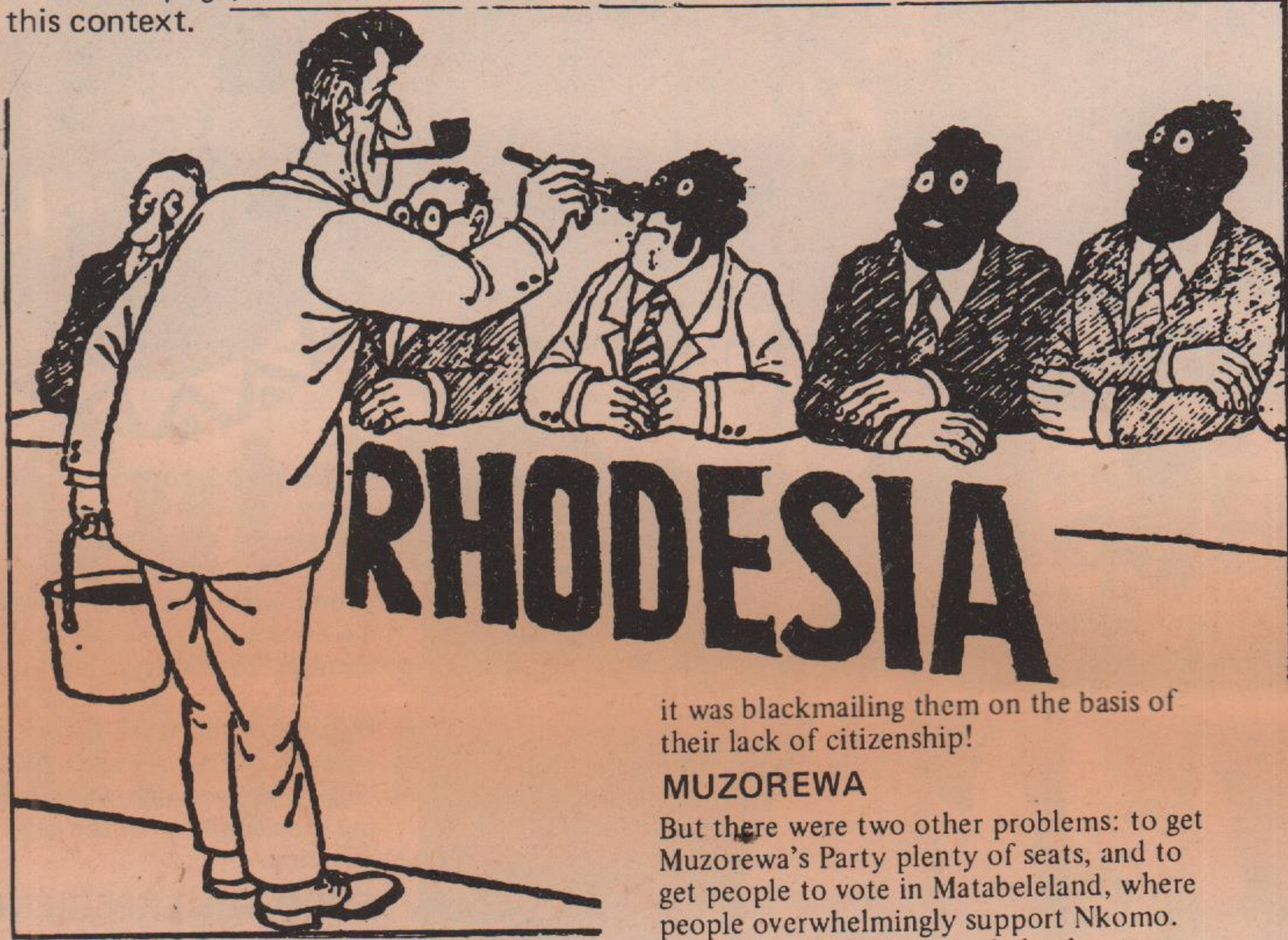
# Election Fraud

THE RECENT Rhodesian elections, promises of substantial South African support for the regime, new Government assembly in Namibia — all confirm a determined strategy for the region by South Africa. It aims to create buffer states which will protect the real bastion of white racial capitalism, South Africa itself. The strategy allows for limited change — elections of Black people to Parliament, amendments to job colour bars, state controlled unions for black workers — but is opposed to even the liberal reforms the West would like to see.

South Africa wants to create a confederation of about 40 million people in a huge area, rich in minerals. The countries would be linked by defence interests and the migrant labour system, tribally based. The area would be passionately anti-communist, but - partly because of this - would have a love-hate relationship with the West.

By contrast, Western imperialists want to preserve the capitalist system in Southern Africa by incorporating the liberation movements, or at least their leaders, into stable societies. They are willing to allow black nationalism to trim profits, if that will prevent a resolution. They fear the South African strategy (which the West abandoned after its defeat in Angola in '76), because it seems unstable at its core. It will not end the wars of liberation. So the West, while arming and investing in South Africa, is forced to confront it. These are the limits within which the Conservatives are forced to operate - right-wing pressures notwithstanding.

On this page, we look at the recent developments in Rhodesia and Namibia in this context.



**RHODESIA: BLACK BISHOP TO WHITE PAWN**

As the tide of media propaganda subsides, one thing is abundantly clear: the "majority rule" elections in Rhodesia were a complete and utter fraud.

It's not just the "irregularities" pointed out by the media: the 64.5% total turnout figure — which the regime could concoct at will, as there was no electoral roll (so the total electorate was a figure determined arbitrarily by the regime); and the intimidation of potential voters — though that's important. No, it's far more than this.

There was an elaborate preparation for over a year, using an armed force that had considerable strength and no inhibitions; using ruthless "private armies" ("controlled" by Muzorewa and Sithole), which increasingly infiltrated the tribal trust lands, where much of the rural Black population lives, and which are not against killing people to achieve their aims; and using the brutal starvation policy (Operation Turkey, see March Big Flame)

### PRIVATE ARMIES

All these tactics were designed to make the war as unpleasant as possible for the Black population, and to lay the blame on the liberation movement. "Your vote can end the war" said the posters, the politicians, the newspapers and, gun in hand, the private armies. A persuasive message. But propaganda couldn't be enough, of course. It was imperative that the vote be high, and any means were legitimate to achieve a high vote. So, there was generally no check on age — and uncounted numbers of people voted who were under 18. And 6 million ballot papers were printed (for an official electorate of 2.9 million!) so that voting more than once was no problem.

Employers threatened redundancies to those workers who refused to vote — and even shut down production for a bit to make sure people voted.

And, 250,000 foreign workers on white farms had the choice of either voting or losing their jobs, their home and their right to live in the country. The regime had refused the workers citizenship: now

it was blackmailing them on the basis of their lack of citizenship!

### MUZOREWA

But there were two other problems: to get Muzorewa's Party plenty of seats, and to get people to vote in Matabeleland, where people overwhelmingly support Nkomo.

Muzorewa's Party was helped out partly by massive financing from South Africa, the Rhodesian regime, big foreign mining companies (like the American Alleghany Ludlum) and the Shah of Iran (before his fall). Whole busloads of supporters were shipped to marginal constituencies. For example, Mashonaland West in the North East was secured in this way.

The vote in Matabeleland was boosted by the creation of a new Party out of the tiny Chief's Party, ZUPO. With a leader from the Matabeleland area, the new Party gained the majority of votes there, though there was only a 30% turnout (regime's estimate).

### REGIME'S STRATEGY

What was the point of it all? It seems to be essentially a holding operation, an attempt to strengthen the regime's position internally and internationally, to prepare for future negotiations (they don't really expect to win the war) and to maintain white privilege as long as possible.

White privilege is entrenched in the new constitution, with the whites controlling the army, police and civil service, with no basic changes in the property structure or the constitution allowed, as the whites have a fixed blocking vote.

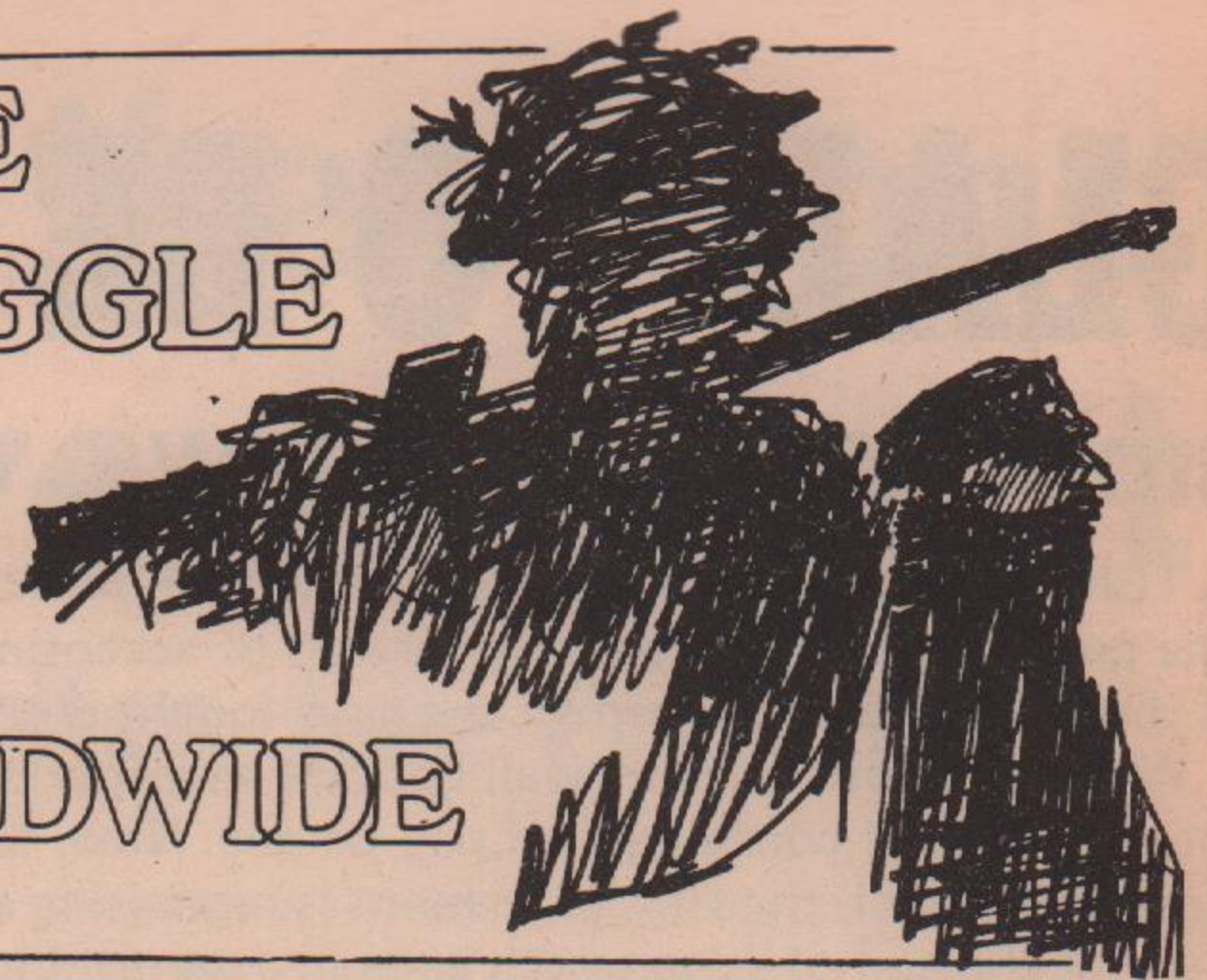
Internally the regime will benefit from greater support from South Africa, and from the international support that may gradually trickle in from the more reactionary regimes. These may include the Tories, though not before the Commonwealth conference in August, and any possible changes in the position of the US and the EEC. For, at present, Tory recognition would not only conflict with UN, OAU (African States), and Commonwealth positions, but also with official US and EEC positions.

Nevertheless, Tory recognition may in time come, and it is the duty of all socialists in this country to oppose it with all means at their disposal. After all, the real question is not whether Rhodesia should be recognised, but whether South Africa should be de-recognised (with sanctions imposed).

The question of recognition for Rhodesia is, then, a diversion which only helps the Right

## THE STRUGGLE

## WORLDWIDE



# NAMIBIA: PUPPET ASSEMBLY

The West, with a big financial stake at risk, has temporarily failed in its Namibian balancing trick. Knowing the multinationals oppose sanctions against them, the South Africans have once again gone ahead with their own solution for the country — a fake election like Zimbabwe's. And that means that the war goes on. Greg Purvis explains the background.

On March 6th, while his airforce bombed Angolan villages ("SWAPO bases"), South African Prime Minister PW Botha told parliament:

"The people of Namibia shall determine their own future." He explained that the Western Powers and the UN had betrayed South Africa's good faith, by making concessions to SWAPO (the Namibian liberation movement). But South Africa was still willing to negotiate so long as the UN would confine SWAPO to monitored bases in Angola and Zambia.

On March 5th, a Guardian article had said: "...Everything seems to depend on the West's ability to persuade SWAPO to accept revision of the (UN) report...." And by March 8th, the Guardian leader was calling SWAPO the main obstacle to peace in Namibia.

Now, after the election victories of Muzorewa and the Tories, South Africa has taken the next step. Formally rejecting the UN proposals for a ceasefire and supervised elections, South Africa instead strengthened the Constituent Assembly to form a National Assembly with the power to pass and repeal laws. The assembly will be dominated by members of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), who were "elected" in December and are loyal to SA. The assembly will repeal the laws of petty apartheid (against the wishes of the Namibian far right), and these reforms will be presented to the world as an advance for the cause of moderation. The Tories will use them to justify a veto against any call for sanctions against SA. And the war will continue.

### NEGOTIATIONS

With the shift in Western strategy after Angola, and the Anglo-American plan for Zimbabwe, Namibia received a settlement plan from the US, UK, France, West Germany, and Canada. Multi-national companies, based in exactly these five nations, control the Namibian economy both directly (ownership of mines like RTZ's Rossing) and indirectly (investment and arms for SA). So Namibia is both a colony of SA and a neocolony of the West, as well as a Trust Territory of the UN.

The five hoped to keep control of the diamonds, copper, uranium...by appearing to oppose South African colonial power. In April '77 they proposed a ceasefire and election under UN supervision, knowing that SWAPO would probably win it. By late April '78 SA had accepted the plan as a basis for negotiation. But when SWAPO accepted it as well, SA responded on May 4th with the massacre of over 600 unarmed Namibians, refugees at the camp in Kassinga, Angola. The West did not call for sanctions against SA; they pressed the Front Line States to convince SWAPO to negotiate again.

But meanwhile, Vorster had resigned and Botha immediately announced the internal election plan. Western diplomats pleaded frantically with Botha, looking for a formula to avoid economic sanctions. They got a promise that SA would try to persuade the new government (after December) to allow the UN plan to go ahead. On Nov 7th Dr Owen told the Commons "Sanctions could only be justified by a situation of the utmost gravity." And on Nov 14th, the Western five abstained while the Security Council passed a resolution calling on SA to cancel the December elections, and threatening sanctions if there was no UN supervised election.

### ELECTION

The internal election went ahead, with SA and the West German right buying up the Namibian press to promote the DTA. The DTA is the child of SA's Bantustan policy, invented in the early '60's in response to SWAPO's attempt to unite the resistance. It plans to divide Namibia into twelve independent tribal areas. For the election, SA police arrested the SWAPO internal leadership and employers threatened workers with the sack if they failed to register and vote. The DTA won. And in April Muzorewa followed them.

As late as February, SA claimed to be considering the UN plan, but then suddenly discovered the issue of SWAPO's bases in Angola. With this excuse, it now rejects the UN and backs the new government.

But SA also knows that the war is not over. 60,000 troops have been brought into the territory, some posing as teachers and helpers; 3,000 blacks have been recruited to the 'Namibia National Army'; martial law has been enforced since before the elections; the SWAPO leaders are re-arrested; the raids into Angola continue.....



Like the Patriotic Front, SWAPO urgently needs our support. One of the reasons that the West can cynically manipulate the UN is that the labour movement has ignored Namibia. Even if the UN voted for sanctions, it would depend on Western workers to impose them. The immediate needs are for practical opposition to the Rossing Uranium contract, donations to SWAPO for material and medical aid, money to buy a Land Rover for the SWAPO Women's Campaign, and opposition to any Tory moves to recognise the new regime. The Namibia Support Committee is co-ordinating solidarity work, and publishing the valuable bulletin Action on Namibia. Contact them at: NSC, 188 North Gower Street, London NW1 2NB. tel. 01.388.5539



# IRELAND

## H Block prisoner released

A WEEK after the General Elections, Irish republican Kieran Nugent was released from the H-Block of Long Kesh. It was Kieran who, by refusing to wear the prison uniform, initiated the "blanket protest" against the withdrawal of political status — which had previously been granted to Irish prisoners of war. It remains to be seen whether this is the first step in a Tory plan to de-fuse the Irish situation.

Kieran was on the blanket for over 2½ years. He spent that time in a small white cell without heating (except at the height of summer). He wasn't allowed to have any reading or writing materials, television or radio, and had no recreational facilities. No exercise is now permitted, and association with other prisoners is restricted to Sunday mass. In all the time

that Kieran was on the blanket, he was not allowed to receive one visitor.

### HUMILIATE

Yet the H-blocks were not widely known about until after the "dirty protest" started last March. This protest, which involved prisoners refusing to wash or to slop out their cells

was a response to an attempt by the screws to further humiliate the men.

There are over 400 men still on the blanket. And despite everything — untreated illnesses, severe weight loss, and beatings — morale is very high.

### COLONIALIST

The British attempt to isolate the republicans has failed, in Ireland and abroad. Imperialists always try to represent their opponents as thugs and murderers. But in refusing to extradite an ex-British soldier turned republican, a Californian judge argued last month that his actions only made sense in the context of a colonialist war.

## British Army feeds lies to Press

WHEN ELSIE Kelsie's table was stolen, few realised that the thief had also stolen Father Murphy. Confused?

Well, we shouldn't be confused at all...if we had an honest press. Elsie Kelsie is the Lady Mayoress of Lisburn, Northern Ireland. She held a party. After the festivities she discovered that some villain had walked off with her table. The police finally arrested a guest — Police Constable William McCaughey — and soon charged him, along with seven other policemen with far more serious crimes such as murder, attempted murder and kidnapping Father Hugh Murphy.

The 8 men — including three sergeants — are still awaiting trial.

### WHY?

This is one of the many interesting items under investigation in the latest Workers Research Unit Bulletin from Belfast.

Most of the excellent issue covers exactly how and why scandals in northern Ireland, like the police

murder gang, get little mention in the British Press. They reveal how 99% of so-called "neutral" newspaper stories came straight from the British Army Press office in Lisburn. And how the desire for a scoop or a sensation leads reporters to reel off every crack-brained anti-Irish lie that the Army Press officers can dream up.

Above all, it shows why there is little crude censorship in Britain. Because if the government parties, the Army and the newspaper editors and reporters all agree with each other about the Irish war, there's no need for censorship.

Buy it — and you'll never believe those "exclusives from the Provo heartlands" ever again!

"Media Misreport northern Ireland" Belfast Workers Research Unit Bulletin Spring 1979 No 6. 65p from all left bookshops or from Workers Research Unit, c/b 52 Broadway Belfast 12. 65p + postage.

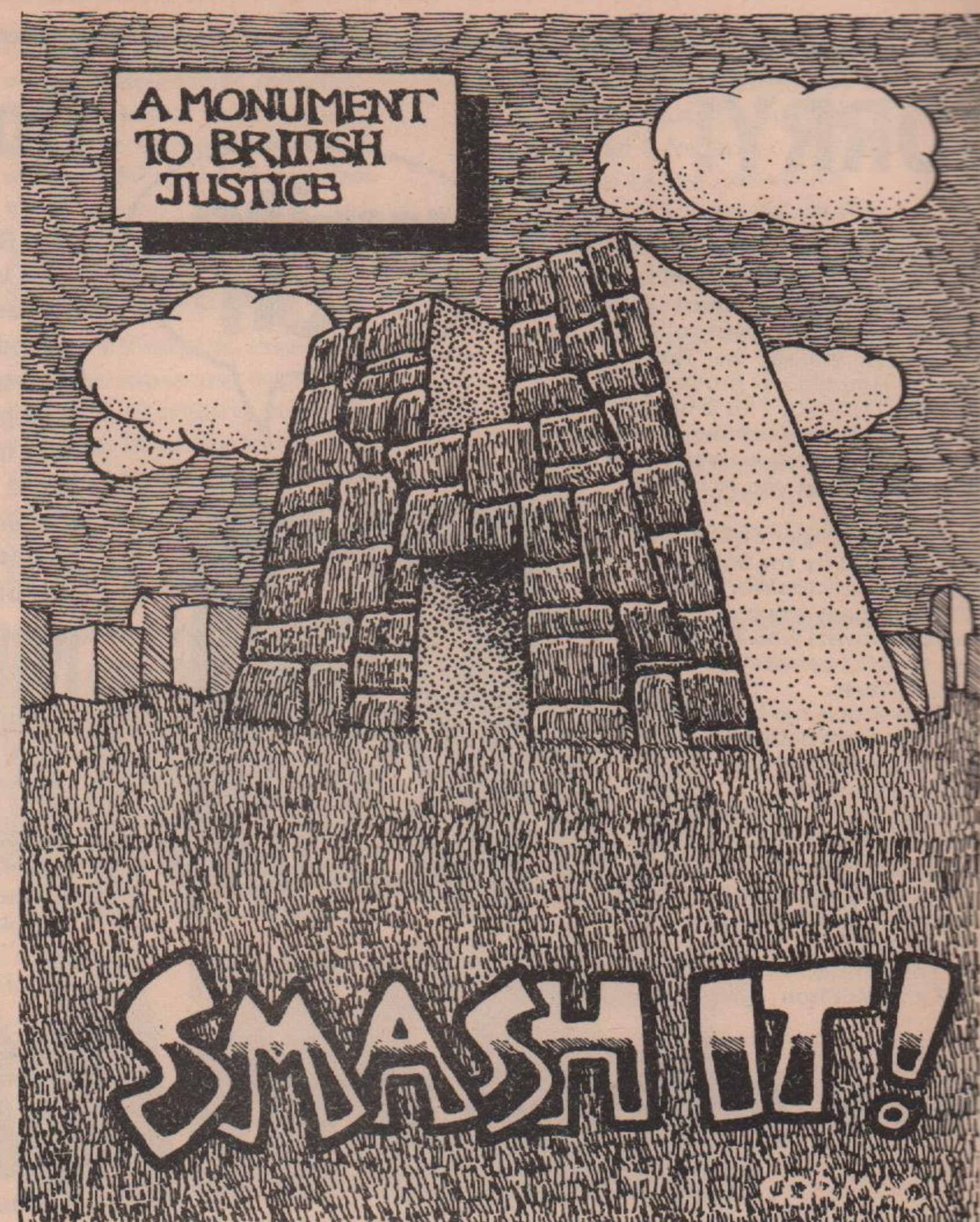
ANOTHER PAMPHLET is now available which looks at the methods the media uses in Ireland. "The British Media in Ireland" is from "Information on Ireland".

The pamphlet is made up of a collection of readable articles written by various journalists and TV directors.

If you think of it 50p (what it costs) is just the price of a few papers which won't tell you the real news anyway.

The same publishers have reprinted a Pamphlet "British soldiers speak out on Ireland" (30p). The first 5000 copies sold out in the first few months. The pamphlet brings together articles by ex-soldiers saying what they think about the Army's role in Ireland as well as songs and poems.

Both these are available from Left bookshops or from: Information on Ireland, 1 North End Rd., London W14 (add 15p p&p each when ordering).



## SECRET ARMY DOCUMENT SHOWS IRA MORALE HIGH

A TOP-SECRET British Army document, captured by the Provisionals, reveals that the IRA is far from beaten, regardless of British propaganda.

The document admits "The Provisionals campaign of violence is likely to continue while the British remain in Northern Ireland...we see little prospect of political developments of a kind that would seriously undermine the Provisionals position." Army intelligence chiefs also wrote in the document "Our evidence of the calibre of rank and file terrorists does not support the view that they are mindless hooligans drawn from the unemployed and unemployable."

### MORALE

All in all, senior British officers appear (amongst themselves at least) to be impressed by the IRA's support, training, fighting ability and morale.

Which is more than can be said for the morale of British soldiers. On 15th May Captain Michael Biggs was allowed to leave the army as a conscientious objector. Mr Biggs argued that the British military presence in Ireland was "antagonistic and provoked more violence."

## GERMANY Radical paper resists state threat

A SETBACK for the German state. A partial victory for the German Left and for the freedom of the press. This is the outcome of the opening of the trial of Kai Ehlers, editor of the radical West German newspaper "Arbeiterkampf" when the state withdrew one of its main charges against the defendant: that he had "slandered the state" by suggesting that the Baader-Meinhof leaders, Baader, Raspe and Ensslin, may not have committed suicide in prison (see December '78 Big Flame).

The charge was dropped because the state's case was so weak, and because it couldn't face a detailed analysis, in court, of the deaths of the Baader-Meinhof leaders. The official reason given was that it was dropped in favour of a "more

serious" charge: insulting the neo-fascist Franz Josef Strauss by writing his name Strau55

The following points (which incidentally only represent a small part of Arbeiterkampf's case) help explain the state's anxiety:

"The authorities were asked why the pistols with which Baader and Raspe allegedly shot themselves, were not examined for fingerprints. They replied that they were covered with blood. When one of the prison guards pointed out that this was not the case, the authorities agreed, but added that there were no identifiable fingerprints on the pistols. But how did they know if they hadn't examined them?"

"It remains unclear how Baader shot himself in the back of the head. The authorities fail to agree over the grip he used, over the markings on his hand, over what happened to the bullet after it re-emerged from Baader's head, and over the marks on

Baader's head. The examination of his head came to the conclusion that the shot must have been fired at a distance of 30-40cms (13-17") or with a silencer. There was no silencer.

There is the mystery of the chair in Ensslin's cell. Those who saw the cell shortly before and immediately after her death saw no chair. It only appeared a few hours afterwards. But how did she hang herself without a chair to stand on?

The autopsies on all three of the bodies showed a brain disease caused by a severe lack of vitamin B. This can be artificially induced by drugs, and is a technique that has been well researched by the CIA.

These and many other peculiarities

seriously undermine the state's argument that the deaths were "indisputably caused by suicide. The victory of Arbeiterkampf gives hope that the case can be openly discussed in Germany in a way that has not been possible since the deaths occurred in October 1977, and there can be little doubt that the verdict will have to be changed — either that or the German state will apply the forces of repression that it knows so well.

Letters of support for Arbeiterkampf and/or donations can be sent to Verlag Arbeiterkampf, Lerchenstrasse 75, Hamburg 50, West Germany, or (money) to Arbeiterhilfe eV. Bank für Gemeinwirtschaft, Hamburg, West Germany (KONTO NR: 1 244 365 3)



School in Eritrean refugee camp in the Sudan.

## ERITREA Liberation fighters need aid

DESPITE THE lack of coverage in both the bourgeois and the Left-wing media, the war in Eritrea continues. The savage onslaught by the Ethiopians, with considerable Soviet and other back-up, which forced the Eritrean Liberation fighters to withdraw from most of the towns by the end of last year, is now in the process of being reversed. The Eritreans maintained their base and their support in the rural areas and they are using these, with growing success, to counter-attack. Once again, the Ethiopians are losing huge amounts of equipment and massive numbers of troops, and the towns are falling again to the Eritreans.

In the liberated areas, radical changes are taking place — despite difficult conditions. Masses of illiterate people are being

improved dramatically; the role of women is being transformed, mainly through the women involved in the women's association of the

not just for the people in Eritrea itself, but also for the tens of thousands of refugees, most of them in the Sudan. It is here, through the provision of material aid, that the Left in this country can best help the liberation struggle. Money, or anything appropriate that could be exchanged for money, should be sent to:

Eritrean Relief Association, BCM box 865, London WC1. 6XX. (National Westminster A/C No 26529357)



# SORRY!

write on



Dear Big Flame,  
In your article in the April Big Flame entitled "Council Housing: should be about collective control" you say the "Red Paper on Housing was produced by Leeds TUCRIC. This is not true and there was nothing in the information you were sent which would lead you to believe it was the case.  
The "Red Paper on Housing" was produced by the Socialists Housing Activists Workshop - an independent group of housing activists who are developing a socialist perspective on housing issues.  
Your article has been embarrassing for both bodies and I would appreciate a correction in your next issue.  
Incidentally, I neglected to send you the price of the "Red Paper" it is 80p and available from Tyne-Wear Resource Centre, 13 Swinburne St., Gateshead.  
Yours fraternally,  
Keith Mollison

# Don't get side-tracked on abortion

Dear Big Flame,  
I am writing to you about the case of the foetus which is supposed to have cried in hospital after an abortion. Groups like LIFE and SPUC have made a song and dance about this case, and I think it is important for socialists to understand what is behind this bit of propaganda.

Firstly, I don't think we should get into the argument about the viability of the foetus at 30, 26, 20 or even 6 weeks. With new developments in technology, viability is going to be reduced until it, will become possible to keep a foetus alive outside the womb almost from

con-ception.  
Secondly, the issue for us must not be about whether one foetus, did or did not cry on being aborted. The issue is whether thousands of women can make the decision about what happens to their bodies. So let's not get side-tracked

into what are really academic arguments about viability.  
What we want is safe and legal abortion, on demand for all women, and let's make this the central issue of our propaganda and demands!  
Jane Dobson (Coventry)  
In solidarity.

# MENS' MOVEMENT WRONG

Dear Big Flame,  
A few things worry me about the page on a "Mens Movement" in the last issue. There is little enough in the left press about sexuality, especially male sexuality for the article to concentrate completely on a "Mens Movement" which interests a tiny minority, even on the left. The

article should have been on male sexuality generally. A Mens' Movement will inevitably attract only a few men who define themselves politically in relation to feminism. Such a movement is wrong, not because it deals with male sexuality, but because it ghettoises it. Although the article

was critical of aspects of Mens Movement politics, I think it accepted some of its weaker points. For instance, when it said that - "The left-wing movement is dominated by tough, rational, unemotional men."  
I have always taken rationality to be the core of socialist politics, it doesn't have to be an extreme excuse for no feelings and no

fun. Toughness and emotional self-control are also qualities needed in combatting this system. Aren't these points in the article, held together by the ritual, blanket, one line condemnation of "Leninism" another case of throwing the baby out with the bathwater?  
Paul Thompson, Liverpool

# New paper is great!

Dear Editorial Collective,  
The new newspaper is great! The design and content are considerably improved; definitely a step in the left direction. Revolutionary newspaper can't and shouldn't try and compete with The Sun or The Express instead they need a completely different approach. This mustn't be an attempt to stuff communist propaganda into the supposedly empty heads of workers to supplant the capitalist propaganda of The Sun but rather attempt to provide information and honest discussion (like "Why a Men's Movement" in May's paper) and when necessary, genuine self-

criticism.  
It is a realistic aim for Big Flame to produce a thoughtful monthly paper but the contributors (myself included) will need to plan our articles and graphics well ahead.  
Producing a newspaper is a fantastically time-consuming business: writing, editing, typing, layout, printing, distribution selling, and when it comes out it's always out of date. Might it not be better to experiment with that much more modern and immediate media, Radio, as they've done in Italy Portugal etc?  
Yours in solidarity,  
Keith Ward

# Disillusion With ANL tactics

Dear Big Flame,  
During the last General Election, I became disillusioned with the tactics of the Anti-Nazi League. I still believe in and am prepared to help the ANL in any way possible. I am now convinced that confrontation with the NF such as happened at Southall only attracts bad publicity and those type of people who have a morbid interest in mob violence to the NF. I think a lot of people who had a genuine sympathy with the aims of the ANL have been shocked and dismayed with the scenes of violent confrontation on television and have withdrawn from active support.  
The ANL attracted the biggest public support since the C.N.D. and instead of building on that support will end up the same way.

Between now and the next General Election, there will be local, county and bye-elections. The National Front will use these to stir up racial hatred and attract those moronic big mouthed bigots, who are despised, even by people without any political conviction. Just as the army in Northern Ireland are the best recruitment for the Provos, so too the ANL for the NF.  
They are a racist group who incite hatred and violence through invective and provocation. The Race Relations Act and other acts have not been used to their fullest conclusion. I know a lot of my comrades in Big Flame and the ANL will disagree with me. Hopefully not violently.  
A.T. North Liverpool

# WAGES NOT GIROS

Dear Big Flame,  
In last month's paper an illustration declared "Work not Dole". This slogan reflects some of the weaknesses of the limited movement against unemployment. A re-write to the effect of "wages not giros" might command more sympathy from many, like myself, who are out of work. The immediate problem that faces me weekly is where the rent is going to come from - not whether I can be exploited for 35 or 40 hours a week.  
The point I'm trying to make is not that we shouldn't demand jobs and fight redundancies, but that along side this we must also discuss the nature of work under capitalism. No-one likes going to work in the morning - so why is the "right to work" so

sacred?  
Now that the Tories are in they will be demanding that unemployed people take the first job they can, thus giving employers the opportunity to pay lower wages and still maintain their workforces.  
Hopefully a debate in the pages of Big Flame could raise both the question of building a real movement against "unemployment" and also raise the question of how work can be more satisfying and less alienating. Clearly, such a concept is Utopian under capitalism but it would raise a vision of a socialist future as a goal worth fighting for.  
Yours, J. Roberts, North London.

# Deer Hunter review missed point

Dear Big Flame,  
Your review of The Deer Hunter misses the point. The film is not essentially about the politics of the Vietnam war, so criticism on this level is totally inadequate.  
The film is about men, violence and killing. The Russian Roulette and hunting scenes are both allegorical portrayals.  
Your reviewer is wrong to

say "Robert de Niro comes through scarred but dripping with medals and machismo" - he doesn't. The whole point of the return and the second hunting scene is to show his changed attitude to killing.  
We would urge all Big Flame readers to ignore your review and go see the film for themselves.  
Bob Dent & R. Gaffey



Photo: NEPCO

# Battered women fight in Chester Le Street

"CHESTER LE STREET, Co. Durham has no permanent, staffed, short stay accomodation for the homeless. Women involved in local battered women's refuges fear that women are being asked to return home. Durham Women's Aid is not satisfied with Chester Le Street's attitude towards local battered women and suspects that they may be trying to evade the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act of 1977.

**DEMONSTRATION**  
That's why they organised the demonstration at Chester le Street which attracted women and children from refuges and supporters of Women's Aid from all over the North East.

**RESPONSIBILITY**  
The Housing Act for the first time recognised battered women with children as legitimately homeless and made Local Authorities immediately responsible for providing them with temporary housing. Chester le Street is falling down on this responsibility.

**TEST CASE**  
So Durham Women's Aid is looking into the possibility of taking the council to court for failing to implement the act. They are also organising a campaign around the demand that Chester le Street Council offer "permanent rehousing for all battered women as of right in

accomodation of good standard".  
Local Councillor George Staines told the Northern Echo that he was "not aware that there is a problem of battered women" in Chester le Street.

**AWARENESS**  
Ms Penny Lapper, speaking on behalf of the Womens Aid campaign, commented: "The Select Committee Report on Violence in the Family of 1976-7 noted that battering of wives was a common phenomenon across the country, and recommended that an initial target of provision of one refuge place for every 10,000 population in all local authorities. I find it hard to believe that Chester le Street has no incidence of battering. If so it is the only local authority area in the country which hasn't. If they don't have any awareness of battering then I think it's about time we had an investigation to find out why they don't."

# sub advertisements

**DEFEND OUR UNIONS**  
Rank & File Conference  
Sat 23rd June, 11am  
New Century Hall,  
Manchester  
for more info contact  
John Deason 01-986 5491

**BIRMINGHAM:**  
KARAXU Concert for the Chilean Resistance.  
Thursday, 31 May, 8 pm  
Debating Hall,  
Students Union,  
University of Birmingham

**COVENTRY**  
Concert by 'KARAXU' - Music of the Chilean Resistance.  
Friday, June 1st, 7 pm. Sidney Stringer School.

Congratulations to Palace on winning promotion - watch out Liverpool next season. (Ad paid for by BF Crystal Palace supporters group).

"Rock Gegen Rechts" (Rock against the Right) - 15-17 June, Frankfurt West Germany. Counter Festival to a big fascist festival. 35 of Europe's best progressive bands have been invited - everyone is invited for 2 days of anti-fascist festivity.

**SHEFFIELD:** "Karaxu" - Radical Chilean folk group singing at Sheffield Poly Students Union, Sunday 3 June 7.30 pm onwards to the resistance.  
**LONDON:** Demonstration called by East London UTOM in response to NF attack on Bloody Sunday demonstration last January. Smash Racism, Repeal the PTA, Abolish Racist Immigration Controls! Oppose the NF. Supported by anti-racist organisations. Saturday 1st June 2.30pm Myde Park Corner.

A new publication 'An Introduction to Big Flame' is available for 20p including postage. To find out more about Big Flame send off the form on the back page.

**'REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM' No.3 NOW OUT.**  
Includes 'Barcelona Tenants Up In Arms'; 'Italy - a New Politics'; 'Shop Stewards as Full-Timers'. From BF Journal, Room 265, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.  
40p (& 15p postage) or from all good bookshops.

**SEXUALITY AND FASCISM**  
Documents from Big Flame, including 'Women and Nazi Germany', 'Women and the NF', 'Men and Fascism'. Price 20p (inc. P&P) from 217 Wavertree Rd, Liverpool 7.

**ALTARF DAY CONFERENCE**  
Saturday June 9th, Conway Hall, London. 11am  
1. Film - Blacks Britannica  
2. Workshops - primary, secondary, f.e., black teachers  
3. Annual General Meeting  
4. 'Our People' video plus discussion.

**OXFORD: FASCISM TODAY**  
a national weekend school for anti-fascists, June 29 (pm) to July 1. 30 speakers from ANL, CARF, Anne Frank Foundation, Searchlight, BASH, AGIN, CARM, MJR, SEFT, CCCS, CSE, plus films, socialist poetry and the "Roots of Racism" show. Registration forms, posters and programmes from Oxford ANL, POBox 16, Oxford OX1 2JE, tel 0865 52000. 500 places only, please book now - £2.50, £1.50 (students/claimants).

1979  
BIG FLAME  
SUMMER SCHOOL  
JULY 28TH. TO AUGUST 4TH.  
One week of fun, frolic and work-shops on the theme of "SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVES"  
BOOK NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT  
Forms from 31 Villa Road London SW19.

Classified Ad. rates:  
3p a word

**YORKSHIRE/HUMBERSIDE**  
Regional Socialist Feminist Conference. Sat. 30th June 9.30-6pm. Swarthmore Centre, Leeds. More info. tel. Leeds 629427. For Creche Leeds 789240

**NEW BIG FLAME PAMPHLET**  
Draft now available of "Fighting Racism and Fascism", from Anti-racist Convenor, BF, 217, Wavertree Rd., Liverpool 7. 20p plus 10p postage.

**FIGHT STATE RACISM**  
Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act; Abolish racist immigration controls; oppose the National Front.  
March: Sat 16th June, 2.30. Speakers Corner, Marble Arch, London. Initiated by UTOM, supported by Anti-racist bodies and left groups.

**NATIONAL FIGHTBACK**  
Conference 30th June, 10am Conway Hall London  
Details: Fightback, 30, Camden Rd., London N.W.1. tel. 01.560.3431 x 679



Revolutionary socialists have always known what they dislike about capitalism, but we have been less clear about what socialism will look like. Even worse, we have been remarkably unclear about how to move from the kind of society we now have to the kind we want to see ( and the kind we think is necessary if the human race is to have a long-term future ). Our politics have all too often been a mixture of denunciations of capitalism, and hope for a socialist future. Thought about

the awkward bit in the middle has often been confined to discussions on 'the party'.

**INEFFECTIVE**

But it has become more and more obvious that a revolutionary movement cannot be built on the basis of denunciations and pie-in-the-sky visions of the future. Even worse, the current capitalist crisis has made the political demands and strategies of the sixties and early seventies largely ineffective. Unemployment is high and rising, firms are

closing down and workers are having to fight hard just to stop stop wage cuts. Re-organisation of industry and the development of new technology demand a socialist response, not blind Luddism.

**ALTERNATIVES**

A socialist alternative for industry and society involves more than demands for nationalisation and workers' control. These are only the first steps, and on their own they make no sense. Nationalise for what?

Control what? And how? A socialist alternative requires thinking about the economy, about the uses of new technology and about the environment.

**AGAINST REDUNDANCIES**

One attempt to raise some of these issues and provide a practical alternative to redundancy has been the Lucas Aerospace Corporate Plan developed by the LA Shop Stewards Combine Committee. It has provided an alternative plan

for the future of the company, harnessed new technology for social needs and, above all, provided a focus for organisation in Lucas Aerospace against redundancies. In the following article we discuss the current battle over redundancies in Lucas Aerospace and the way the Corporate Plan is being used and misused by the Combine, the trade unions and management. The discussion on alternatives will be taken up more fully in *Revolutionary Socialism* 4.

# WORKERS PLANS TO BEAT REDUNDANCIES

THE LUCAS AEROSPACE workers' Corporate Plan was developed by the Combine as part of the battle against redundancies. So, when for the first time in four years the company announced redundancies last year, the Workers Plan was facing a big test. Supporters of the Corporate Plan clearly hoped for success, while those who saw it as a diversion from more basic demands — such as the right to work and nationalisation — expected the Plan to fail in practice. Would the company be forced to back down, and perhaps even start production of alternative products? Or would the Lucas workers see their jobs disappear? Success at this stage for either side would be vitally important for management's future plans to trim labour at Lucas.

Ever since the company said it would close the Liverpool, Bradford and Shipley factories with the loss of over 2,000 jobs the battle has been on. And at the moment there is no clear winner. The Plan in practice has not been a dramatic success or a terrible failure. Experience has shown that workers plans are not a magic solution to redundancy — but they can help. Above all, the events of the last ten months have shown that Lucas management, the unions and the government will have to be pushed all the way by the rank and file in the company if Lucas Aerospace workers are ever going to produce socially useful products and save their jobs.

*'Limited victories are better than total defeat'.*

between workers and capital. Now, as before, events at Lucas Aerospace are proving that there is no substitute for hard work, careful organising and sustained struggle. The Plan and the Combine are important weapons in the struggle — not substitutes for it.

**TRIMMING**

To the doubters, who will argue that the Plan has not stopped some redundancies, it can only be said that there were 14,000 redundancies in major firms on Merseyside alone last year, and there was not too much fight against them. Limited victories are better than total defeats. If the Combine is right in thinking that last year's redundancy proposals were the first part of a bigger trimming-down operation, then there are more battles to come.

**STRUGGLE**

It is obvious that the Corporate Plan does not provide a magic solution to the threat of redundancy and many of its supporters knew that. There are no wonder demands that solve the struggles

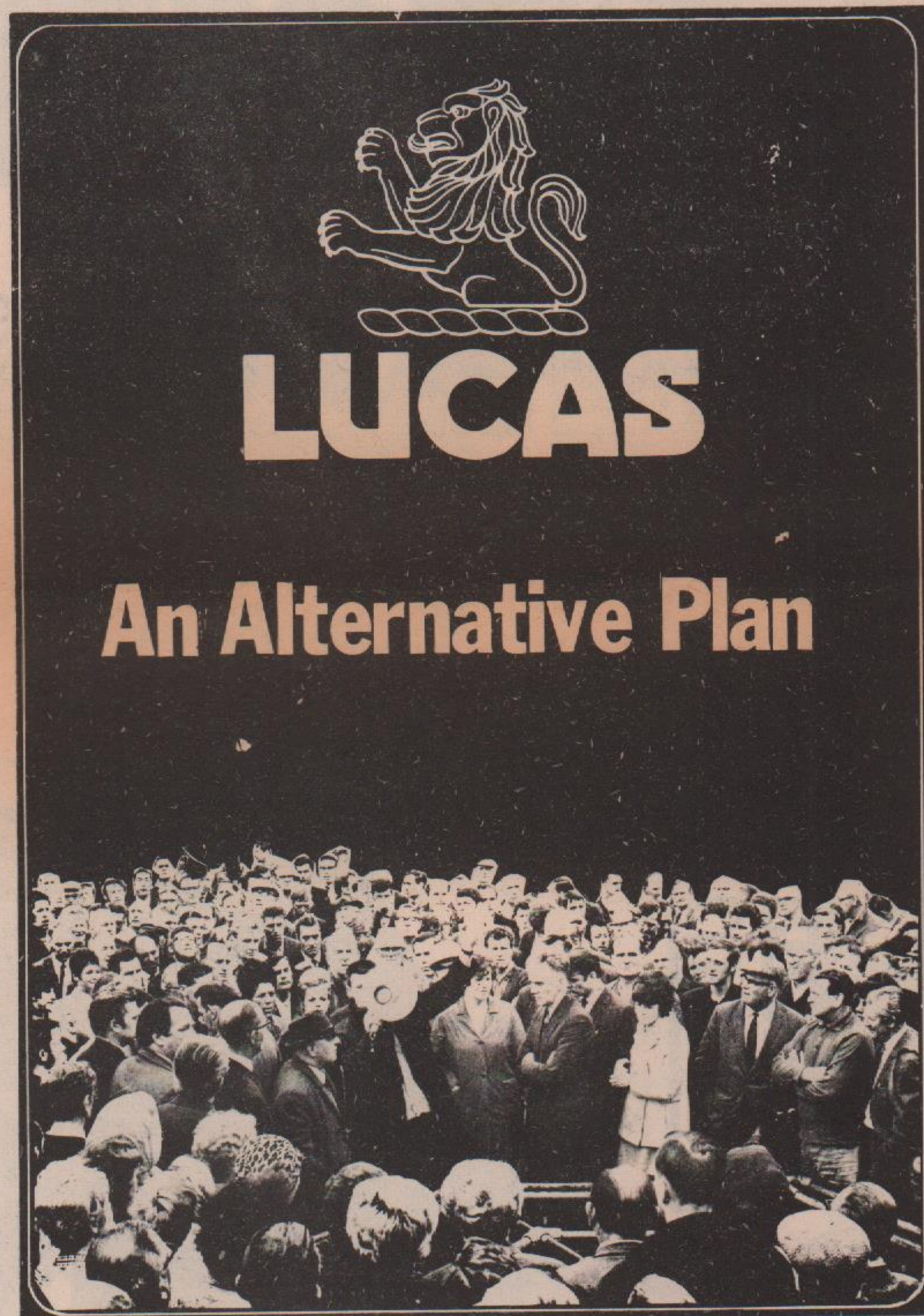
Lucas management agreed to consider starting production of "a limited number" of alternative products, and about 1200 jobs will be saved. This is 500 more jobs than the company was prepared to create at first. More workers will be employed in Liverpool (800 instead of 500) and there will be a new factory with 400 workers in Bradford. The Lucas workers have won something.

**VIABLE**

Balanced against this are four factors. 1. The management has not had to recognise the Combine Negotiations about alternative products are between the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the company. The Confed has never recognised the Lucas Shop Stewards Combine, and some union leaders are hostile to it. 2. In spite of company concessions, there will still be redundancies. 3. The company will only consider alternative products that are commercially viable. 4. The government is handing out a lot of money to Lucas in grants, but it will not take a stake in the company and it is not determining which products will be produced by the new factories.

**TIES**

On the negative side, then, implementation of some of the Plan's proposals has been taken out of the hands of the Combine and into the area of tri-partite negotiations between State, management and unions. And only some jobs have been saved. On the positive side, management and unions have been forced to take up some of the Plan's proposals, and this can be used as a stepping stone to further implementation. In particular, there should be close ties between the Combine and the workers in the two new factories, who should press for more production and further investment.



## A Critical Assessment

*"However effective, therefore, our campaigning on single issues, our womens' group, our shop stewards' committee or our anti-fascist propaganda, our lack of activity at the times which for everyone else are moments of political choice, seriously weakens the impact of our political ideas."*  
*(From Introduction to "Beyond the Fragments, Feminism and the Making of Socialism" Hilary Wainwright, Sheila Rowbotham and Lynne Segal)*

The limited activity of revolutionary socialists during the elections was a tragic missed opportunity. The SWP's poster campaign and a few desultory public meetings, in defiance of their conference decision to stand candidates was not an intervention. Meanwhile the WRP, (Workers Revolutionary Party.) despite the absurdities of parts of its politics - restore wage differentials, defence of anti-communist Arab regimes and so on - was able to appear as the main socialist alternative to Labour's Tory policies. A real socialist alternative was desperately needed as Labour ideologically crumpled before the Tory onslaught. The successful ANL campaigns against the NF were not and could not be a substitute for an alternative.

## socialist unity

The component forces of Socialist Unity(SU) had always agreed that its aim was to provide a socialist alternative rooted in existing struggles, expressed through an action programme. Interventions that could focus these struggles and build the campaigns around them, from rank and file union organisations to UTOM and NAC (National Abortion Campaign). All SU campaigns worked hard to build such initiatives, with some successes, notably in the mass anti-racist struggles in Southall. But there were also problems. The most important of these are not of our own making: firstly, the rigid divide that exists between the parliamentary orientation of the Labour Left and the workplace focus of the revolutionary left and secondly, the non-involvement of the SWP who put

considerations of party-building before the needs of the struggle.

**CRITICAL ASSESSMENT NEEDED**

There were, however, problems that need to be critically assessed and not avoided, if the first and vital joint election initiative by the far left is to be built on in the future:  
■ The interventions lacked a solid framework to provide political and resource back-ups. There had been no meetings of the National Steering Committee for sometime, and no national mailings were sent out. This meant that it was hard to maintain continuity and involve independents, made worse by the resulting lack of any internal life to SU. The local campaigns were left to get on with it, losing the feeling of being part of a genuinely national political initiative.  
■ There was a lack of thorough political planning of the areas and interventions. The problem was not so much that we had not been active as SU before, but whether there had been sufficient groundwork laid by the activity of revolutionary socialists in general. One result was that some campaigns were not rooted enough in the local needs and situations.  
■ The forms of progananda and agitation were sometimes unimaginative and too imitative of conventional politics, like cramped, badly-presented election addresses. A number of comrades felt that not enough space was given to act-

ually arguing for socialism in general, beyond the necessary action programme. ■ Lukewarm support by some members of Big Flame and IMG.

These were factors that limited the scope of our interventions. It is doubtful whether they affected the vote. The vote for the ten SU candidates (and the two independent candidates SU supported) was disappointing, because they failed to break out of the normal far left vote of between one and two%, even in Southall. They compare unfavourably with SU bye-election and local election results. We cannot trumpet these successes and then say "votes don't matter" when things don't go as well.

**WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

Votes are secondary to what we succeed in building. We must build on the experience of SU to fight for things like a class struggle programme in the unions, unity in action on general political initiatives, building the independent movements of women and youth; but most of all to fight for the idea of a united electoral intervention of the far left. BF will explain our views on the future of SU and such electoral initiatives in the next issue of the paper. Both the programme and forms of organisation, must be debated at the SU conference, which is due to take place soon. We would be interested in reactions from our readers particularly those who have been active in SU campaigns.



GOOD KINGS  
CALLAGHAN  
DEPRESSED!

OH NO!  
LAST MONTH WE LEFT OUR VILKIN - AN APPALLED FIGURE STARRING AT THE HORROR HE HIMSELF HAD CREATED!!!

OH YES! THE AYATOLLAH THATCHER  
BACK! TO THE OLD VALUES  
BACK! TO SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST  
TURN BACK THE CLOCK TO PURITY, DECENCY & FREE ENTERPRISE

AFTER YEARS OF GREEDY CONNING RUTHLESS MALE PRIME MINISTERS - A GREEDY CONNING RUTHLESS FEMALE PM.

WHAT'S NEW SHE'S WHITE  
WHAT'S NEW SHE'S RICH  
WHAT'S NEW SHE'S STRAIGHT  
WHAT'S NEW SHE WENT OXFORD

OUT OF THE WOODWORKS OUT OF THE BOARDROOMS THEY CRAWL INTO THE LIGHT

SIR KEITH FINAL SOLUTION/ JOSEPH DON'T LET THE LOWER CLASSES BREED

SIR GEOFFREY HOW IS THE MAM BEHIND THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT & THE HOUSING FINANCE ACT

PETER GET RICH QUICK - WALKER SPIV AND PABERTY SPECULATOR

AFTER THIS GHASTLY CREW, EVEN A SCAB, BULLY AND PATRONISING PROFITEER MIGHT SEEM AN ATTRACTIVE PROPOSITION.....

OH GOD NO! I'M A GENTLEMAN FARMER

WE'VE HEARD ABOUT THIS BASTARD - HE'LL CUT OUR FEED AND MAKE US WORK TWICE AS HARD

RESIST!

HELLO ANIMALS!

WITH HIM THE GREAT SURVIVOR BRINGS HIS "NEST EGG" - THE WEALTH HE ROBBED FROM THE COUNTRY FOR HIS "RETIREMENT"...

THE ANIMALS RESPOND WITH ENTHUSIASM... CHARGE! HELP!

AND OVERTAKE HIM.

DAVE DRICT BY THE ABANDONED NEST EGG STIRS. HIS HAIR LINE CRACKS STRUCTURE IN ITS FINE STIRS WITHIN? WHAT

# Big Flame

for Socialism

No. 75 June 1979 15p.

Attack on North East  
Teachers Fight Racism  
Women Worldwide  
Hospital Users Fight Back  
10 Years of Gay Pride  
Prisons - More Riots to Come

## Inside

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**WORKERS PLANS**

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**LUCAS AEROSPACE**