

# Socialist Worker

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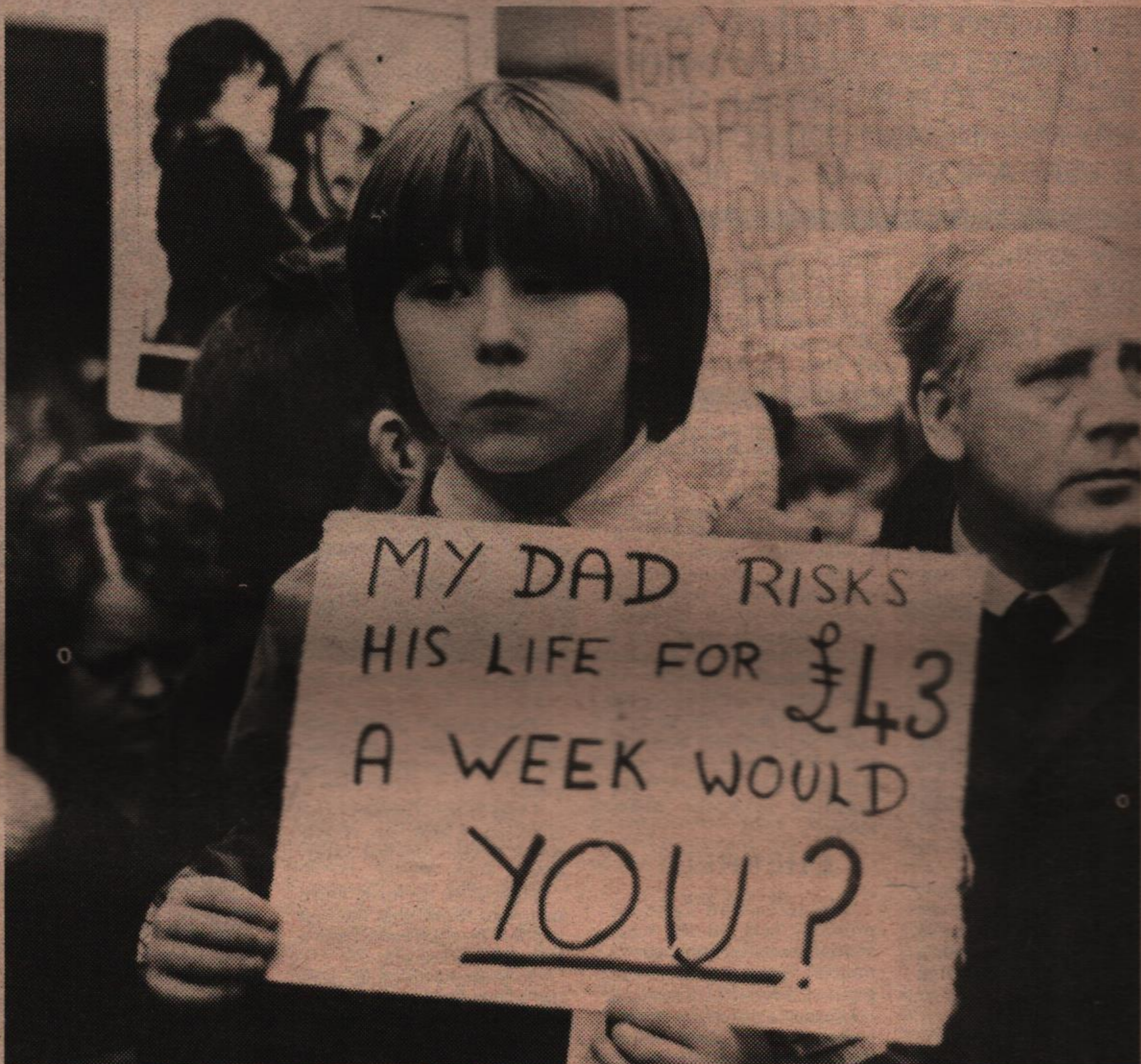
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How many must die before the government see sense?

# FORCE THEM TO PAY THE FIREMEN



A demonstrator in Liverpool on Saturday when firemen's families marched in their support.

Firemen picketing Kingsland Road fire station in London cheer local building workers who marched in their support.

Pictures by Phil McCowen



## THE GOVERNMENT is waiting for people to burn to death.

That is the desperate ploy it is using in an effort to deny firemen a living wage.

The Financial Times reported on Monday: 'The government hoped to mobilise the force of public opinion against the strike.

'The view was, apparently, that many deaths which arose from inexperienced and ill-equipped troops being unable to cope would be blamed by the public on the strikers rather than the government.'

The government is still following this inhuman tactic. It knows that the Flying Goddesses, the large numbers of inexperienced soldiers, the handful of experienced RAF fire fighters, the wild talk of seizing breathing equipment and turntable ladders from fire stations, cannot deal with any major fire.

It is almost as if it is hoping for a major fire which will burn dozens of people and lead to a witch-hunt atmosphere against the firemen.

On Tuesday an attempt to launch such a witch-hunt was made by newspaper editors who spend as much in one evening

wining and dining as the firemen get in a week. They claimed that somehow firemen were responsible for the deaths of two children at Leytonstone

Yet the local firemen had rushed from their picket line to try to rescue the children as soon as they heard about the fire. They left just one fireman behind as a picket. They reached the fire *before* the army.

If there was any delay, it was the government's fault. Their ramshackle system of dealing with fires involves police checks on suspected burning buildings before any preparations at all are made to rescue those inside.

### Press ahead

The army took half an hour to get there because of this.

The government is playing with people's lives.

It is up to all of us to stop the government's antics.

The more other workers join the firemen's demonstrations, the more we take token strike action in support of the firemen, then the more quickly the government will give in to the firemen's demands for a living wage and the fewer will be the number of unnecessary deaths.

# PAY THE FIREMEN!

# How firemen are



THE LEVEL OF ACTION BY THE FIREMEN AND SOLIDARITY SHOWN THEM BY OTHER GROUPS OF WORKERS HAS BEEN MAGNIFICENT. IT WOULD TAKE ALL 16 PAGES OF SOCIALIST WORKER IF WE WERE TO PRINT DETAILS OF EVERY MEETING AND COLLECTION. BUT HERE ARE SOME OF THE BEST:

## 'EVERY STRIKE is a victory. It gives workers the time to talk and to think.'

These are the words of a French poet and song writer speaking on a recent visit to Britain. His words might almost have been a tailor made description of the firemen's strike.

The strike has led to an explosion of activity and creativity among rank and file firemen. They have taken the union by the neck and set it alight with their energy and enthusiasm.

Two incidents from Essex illustrate the process that is at work. One day last week police rushed down to Grays Fire Station to tell the pickets that people were dying in the fire at Tilbury power station.

Firemen who refused to protect property agreed to go and try to protect life.

Once most of the pickets had gone off to help, the police and the army broke into the station and took a Simonitor unit for delivering large quantities of foam or water.

They rushed it to Tilbury. They were proud of their little trick, but they had made a terrible miscalculation.

One of the pickets spotted the unit when he got to

Tilbury. He was so outraged at the way he had been conned that he jumped into it and drove it straight back to Grays Fire Station chased by the army and the police. It is now once again held and blacked by the pickets.

Two weeks ago the man who did this was scarcely the most enthusiastic union member. Today he is a changed man, changed by the struggle, by comradeship and by determination to win.

This same tremendous enthusiasm was in evidence at 8am on Sunday morning when strikers staged a mass picket outside Colchester Fire Station.

People came 40 or even 50 miles to picket, even though many of them had been up half the night and even though the picket was organised at a few hours notice.

## CHEERED

Those same people probably believed the mass media when they attacked the miners' flying pickets in the past. Now they're enthusiastic about the flying picket because they know that it works.

There's the London Firemen who turned up for the Spurs match in uniform on Saturday.



Firemen on the march in Battersea

Thousands of people cheered him and insisted that he go to the front of the queue.

There's the firemen who collected £1000 in Argyle Street in Glasgow last Saturday.

There's the Kentish Town men who found that the first support they got came from a Pakistani newsagent.

He brought his children to the picket line and told the strikers that they needn't worry about paying for their morning papers during the strike.

## JAMMED

Imagine what that did to clear out the last remains of racism in anyone!

There's the story of Rank and File Radio in Battersea where firemen used their equipment to relay information on the strike, and, in this supposedly free country of ours, were jammed off the air by order of the government.

The firemen need more than good will to win. They need to translate good will and big collections

So far the TUC has kept silent about what workers should do in support. So has the FBU leadership. Which means that the responsibility lies clearly with the rank and file.

## ROUND THE COUNTRY

**CRAWLEY** — On the local industrial estate factories have agreed to 'adopt' one fireman each and collect money to cover his wages.

**TREDEGAR** — Part-timers who are NUM members agreed not to scab on the strike.

**CREWE** — USDAW members working at the Co-Op tea factory are providing FBU pickets with donations of tea. The Crewe Junction works fire brigade is refusing to answer any outside calls.

**WINDSCALE** — Whitehaven Cumbria — The Windscale GMWU branch covering the Atomic Energy Plant there has given their members on the Internal Fire Service a very strict instruction not to operate outside unless there is danger of loss of life. If the firemen go beyond this mark they will not be allowed back into Windscale.

**READING** — A mass factory gate meeting at Prestcolds Ltd (part of British Leyland) voted overwhelmingly for £200 to be given to the firemen's fighting fund.

**STRIKING firemen in Swansea** were joined on the picket line last Wednesday by engineering workers from a local BSC plant, the Unit Superheater and Pipe Company.

More than 150 men and women walked out on a one-day token stoppage after negotiations broke down over their own 25 per cent pay demand which would give an extra £15 a week to craftsmen.

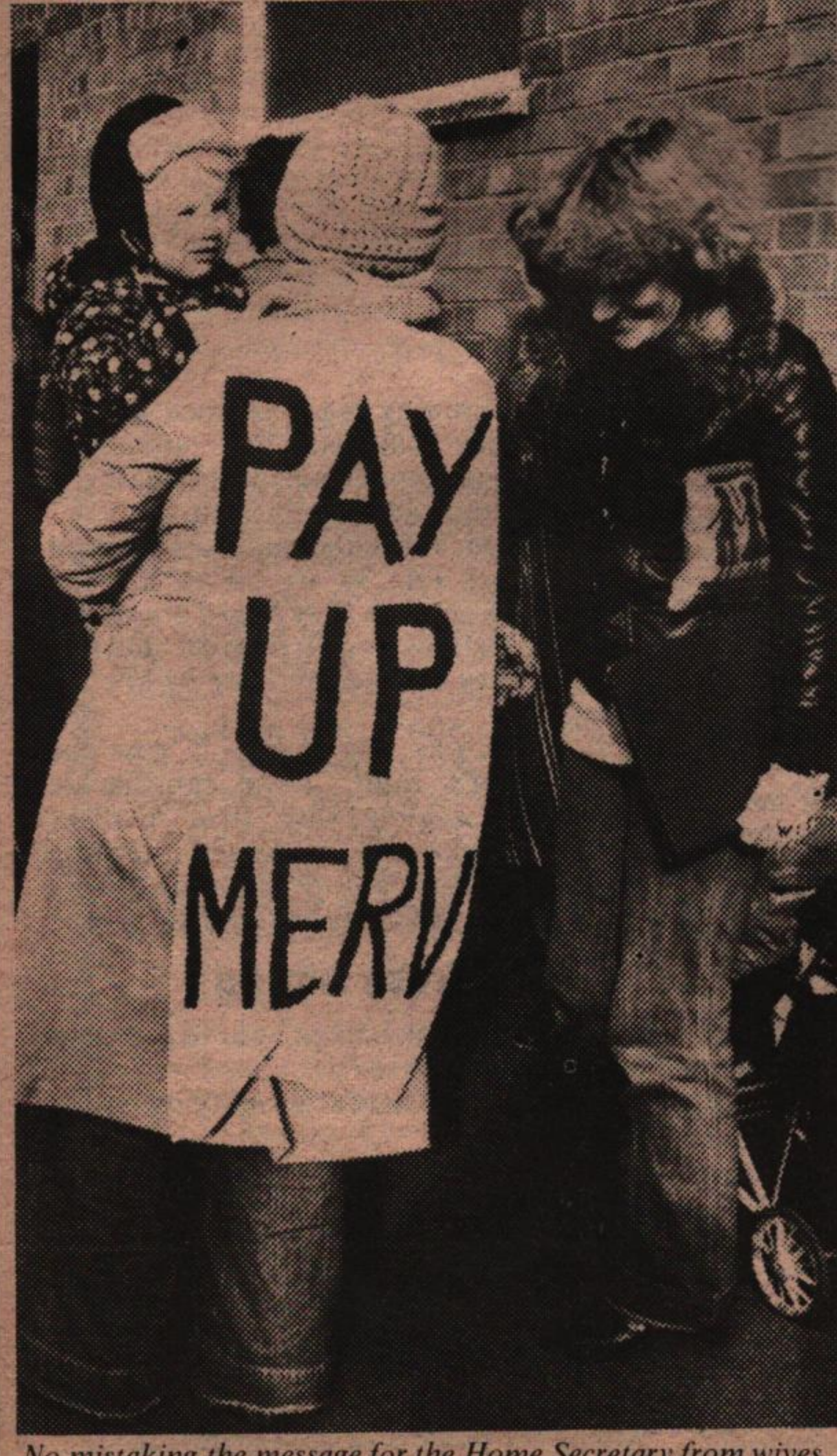
They decided to demonstrate their solidarity with the firemen by marching through the town to join pickets at Swansea's fire station.

OVER 50 local shop stewards formed a Leicestershire Support the Firemen Committee as soon as the strike began. The Committee has already provided a network of support throughout the local trade union movement, arranging speakers for branch meetings and organising collections in factories, offices and hospitals. In addition the Committee has been able to draw together a number of shop stewards involved in disputes over the last 12 months and crucial advice on claiming social security has been passed on to the firemen.

A SUPPORT the Firemen Committee is being formed in the Dudley area by delegates to the trades councils and other trade unionists.

Cannon Industries Shop Stewards Committee have promised a donation of £50 to the firemen's strike fund. Firemen at Tipton station

have visited a number of factories in the area to gain support. Soldiers at Stourbridge complained of the cold while on duty. The council sent heaters, but the driver refused to cross the firemen's picket lines. P. BOLTON



No mistaking the message for the Home Secretary from wives in Romford.

## The man who loves firemen

MR MARTIN BRANNAN the Cumberland Tory councillor who tried to witch-hunt the striking firemen and the Socialist Workers Party on Monday is one of the most repulsive company directors who ever scoffed a business lunch.

Speaking on the World at One on Monday Brannan chairman of the employers side of the Fire Service national joint council said that intimidation, was 'widespread' on unspecified picket lines and unspecified damage inflicted on an unspecified Liverpool fire station was 'the work of extremists'.

## POISON

Mr Brannan's touching concern for the firemen is most interesting. He and his three sons who run the Brannan's factory in Cleator

Moor, Cumberland have for years been inflicting physical damage on human beings.

Brannan's make thermometers. To do this they use mercury which is highly toxic.

Safe use of mercury involves abiding by tight safety standards. But safety costs money and in the Brannan's factory the concentration of mercury was anything up to seven times the permitted level.

This scandalous state of affairs and the low wages led the workers to join the Engineering workers Union.

Twelve claims for compensation for mercury poisoning were started. A push for safer working conditions was launched. And then the company provoked a strike.

The strike turned into a fierce fight. Mass pickets were called to support the strikers after union leaders in

the area had their houses attacked and windows broken.

Leo Golsworthy at the time of the strike district president of the Engineers Union, now full time district secretary, went on record as follows about Brannan on Tuesday:

## OBSTACLE

He claims to be concerned for the firemen. It beats me how he even dares to open his mouth on the subject given his past history. He says he's worried about extremists.

But he's so right wing he thinks that Ted Heath's a leftie. He hopes to divide and confuse the firemen and dreams of reducing them to the same level of impotence as the workers in Brannan's Thermometers of Cleator Moor. There five years after the end of the strike there is no union organisation at all.

## NORTHERN IRELAND:

THE STRIKE hardened in Northern Ireland last week when part-time firemen who cover all areas outside Belfast and Derry decided to answer emergency calls only. They had previously been working normally.

Attempts by Merlyn Rees to browbeat the 500 fulltimers back to work by accusing them of leaving the North 'at the mercy of the IRA' have had no effect.

The Provisionals, in fact, have reduced the number of

incendiary attacks and the Belfast IRA pledged that they would not 'confuse matters' by taking advantage of the situation.

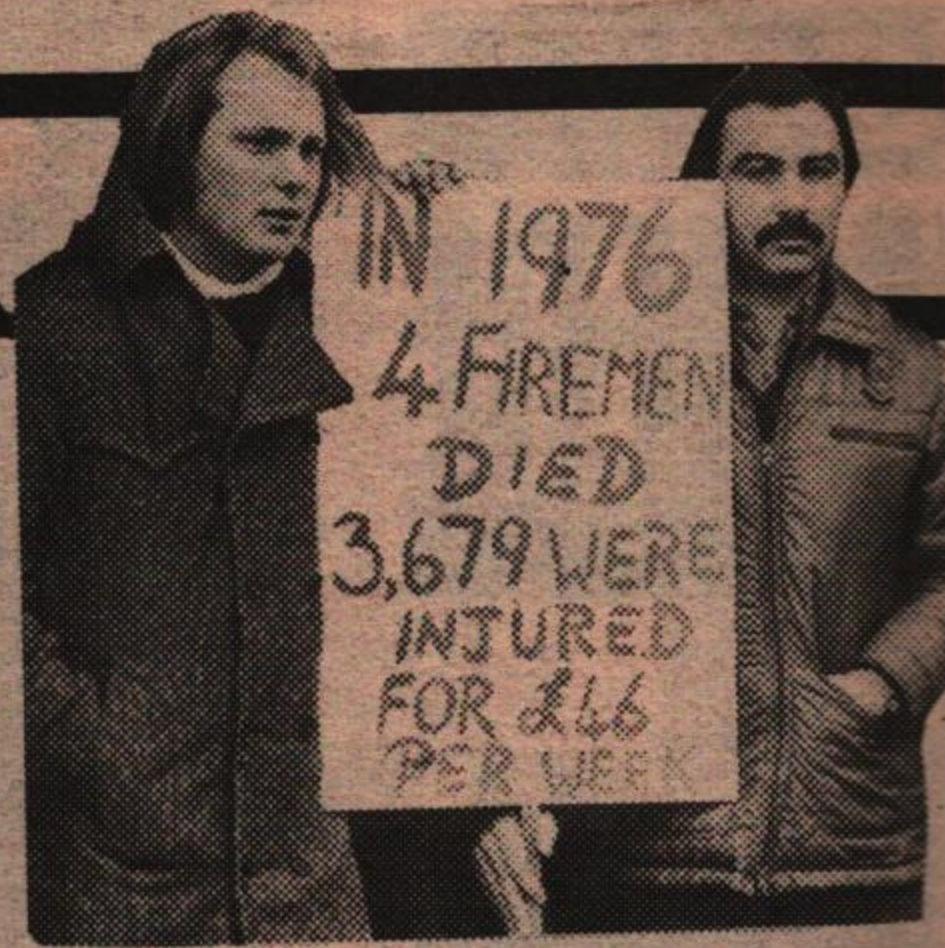
The men have rejected with contempt an appeal by Rees to stay at work because of 'special problems' here. They remember that when they struck last year for an extra allowance on account of the troubles it was Rees, then Northern Ireland Secretary, who produced a 17-page document 'proving' that they were not a special case!

**FIRE BRIGADES UNION MARCH**  
 London Region  
 Saturday 26 November in London  
 Assemble at 10.30 Temple Tube, Embankment to  
 march to Speakers Corner.  
 ★ Fight for trade union delegations with banners  
 ★ All SWP members in London to support

Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

**PAY THE FIREMEN!**

# running the strike



## Why you should support my dad

—Lesley Day

MY FATHER is a fully qualified fireman and is based in the East End of London. After 27 years in the service his take home pay is £51, including London weighting, for a 48 hour week.

His life, and the life of our family, is dominated by the shifts he has to work, two days (9am to 6pm), two nights (6pm to 9am) and two days off.

The rota does not take any account of weekends, bank holidays, Christmas.

My sister and I have had many Christmases with only one parent present. Many people think this is counted as overtime, but it is not.

The conditions are bad enough when you talk of any type of work. But most other jobs do not have the constant danger a fireman's does.

I know first hand of a family's worry when a fireman goes out to work or when reports of killed or injured firemen come over the news.

### SUPERVISE

You cannot rest until he comes home or phones to say that he's safe, that it wasn't him this time.

One large private company benefitting from the services at my father's station is Fords of Dagenham. They constantly call out the firemen to supervise their own private fire brigade in dealing with their many small fires.

Perhaps the government should look at the profits of these companies before proclaiming that they cannot find £40 million a year to pay the firemen a decent wage. My father is not a militant. But after struggling with his conscience like many other firemen he knows that the time has come for a change.

## Wives demonstrate

I'M WEARING a black armband today because I'm grieving for our fire service. I am proud of my husband as we should all be proud of the stand they're taking and of their unity.

Kathleen Barton, whose husband has been a fireman for 18 years, addressed a street meeting of more than a hundred firemen's wives, children and supporters, in the centre of Liverpool on Saturday.

'My husband is a station officer,' she told Socialist Worker. 'Yet we are entitled to a rent rebate.'

'It has taken a lot of heart-searching and anxiety to get here. Last week we were crying because it had come to this. But this week we're not crying.'

'That's our message to Rees. We're not crying any more, we're sticking it out, because we've got no choice.'

'They've shown what they think of the firemen. Well Rees needs our men a lot more than they need him.'



ABOVE: The firemen's wives' demonstration in Liverpool on Saturday.

## ON THE MARCH

by W I Inches, Tayside Fire Brigade Union Secretary

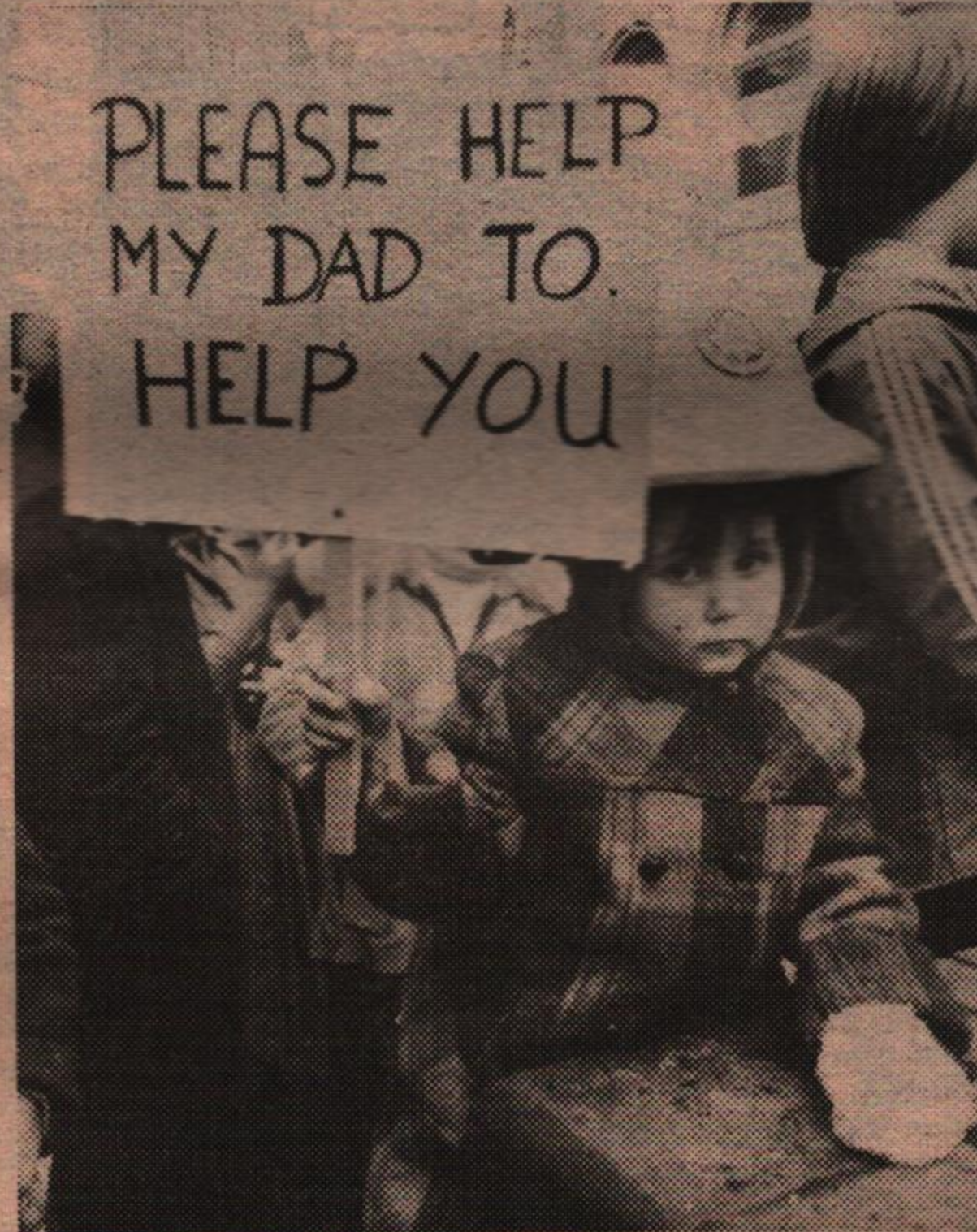
THE DEMONSTRATION and public meeting called last Saturday by the Tayside Fire Brigades Union and supported by Dundee Trades Council was attended by nearly 500 firemen from all over Scotland.

So determined were the firemen from Strathclyde to support the demo that when their second coach broke down not far from Glasgow many of them got out and thumbed the rest of the way.

There was standing room only in the Marryat Hall for the public meeting which was opened by Jackie Gordon, Chairman of Dundee Trades Council.

In Battersea 300 firemen and local trade unionists marched in a demonstration called by the trades council.

In Glasgow 2000 firemen marched and held a meeting by a warehouse fire, explaining to the public why they would not put it out.



150 building workers from Cubitt's Hackney site in London, turned support into active solidarity for the firemen last Wednesday.

They marched off the site and staged a demonstration along Kingsland Road to join the firemen on their picket line.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP THE FIREMEN TO WIN

TO WIN this strike in the shortest possible time we've got to step up our campaign. This means:-

- Calling on other trade unionists now for solidarity stoppages—in protest against inadequate fire provisions and to force the government to pay us.

- Asking fellow trade unionists to pay a weekly levy towards the local FS strike fund.

- Organising weekly demonstrations of firemen and other trade unionists to show we are still

fighting and support is growing.

- Stepping up the pickets on scabbing NAFO members—their actions are prolonging the strike and causing unnecessary risks.

- Picketing depots and barracks where the troops are operating to stop petrol, food and other supplies from going in. The quicker the troops operation grinds to a halt, the quicker the strike will be over and the fewer soldiers will be needlessly injured.

—from the Daily Strike News of Rank and File Fireman,

## A daily newspaper

ONE SUCCESS story of the strike is the daily bulletin of the National Rank and File Fireman, Daily Strike News.

This has provided thousands of firemen with details of how the strike is going in different parts of the country, of the odd weak spots that need reinforcing, and of the manoeuvres of the government.

As the bulletin explains: 'Many firemen have been asking, "Who is behind Rank and File Fireman?" and "Why don't any names appear in it?"'

National Rank and File Fireman was formed in April by firemen involved in three local rank and file action groups in Strathclyde, Liverpool and South Yorkshire. Other places also helped.

The first National Rank and File Fireman paper came out in May and all

the names and brigades of contributors were printed in it. The result: a massive witchhunt by the EC against the contributors.

Ronnie Robertson, a Strathclyde delegate to Conference in Bridlington was actually refused admission to Conference by the EC. Both he and Terry Segars from East Anglia were suspended from office and only reinstated when they gave assurances that they would not break the rules of the FBU.

### ATTACK

As a result of this witch-hunt Rank and File Fireman apologised to its readers and supporters for the fact that articles now have to be anonymous to protect the writers from attack.

The Daily Strike News has been able to come out

because the National Rank and File centre has given over the firemen its facilities—which is one reason why many firemen will be supporting the rank and file conference this Saturday.

## Why we must keep the right to strike

The idea being floated in a few newspapers to give the firemen money now and then take away our right to strike is definitely a non-starter.

If we are close to the bottom of the wage league now when we have the right to strike, where the hell would we be without it?

The answer is that in a few years we would be even worse off.

And then, when we tried to do anything about it, there would be the prospect of hundreds of us being thrown in jail.

The fact that this vicious suggestion is being made at this early stage is an indication that the strike is beginning to bite and that the Insurance Companies are starting to squeal.

**SOCIALIST WORKER SAYS SUPPORT THE FIREMEN!**



## Our livelihood—Your lives

By a Fireman at Kingsland Road station, London

AFTER FOUR inquiries and many unfulfilled promises, we have now been forced into strike action. Our pay is so bad that many of us have to apply for free school meals and clothing grants for our children, and for rent and rate rebates.

Above all there is the worry about making ends meet.

Your life could depend on a fireman whose mind is occupied with such problems. In order to work as a good responsible fireman, a man must be

satisfied he has fulfilled his responsibility to his family.

The rise we are asking for to provide our families with reasonable food and clothing, with a good, decent home so that we can concentrate on serving you to the best of our ability.

Mr Rees and the rest of the government are prepared to gamble and risk your lives. Don't be fooled. The troops are almost useless. Your life is in danger.

We have helped you in the past; with your support and encouragement we can get back to work and help you in the future.

## Why the press are against us

'WE HAVE more than a fair suspicion that there has been some interference in the Press about coverage of the firemen strike.'

It looks very much as though the Press are deliberately playing down the fires, especially the big ones which damage property.

It's not going smoothly, not at all. We know of several huge fires which haven't even been reported.

'We think there has been more fire damage to property in the first week of the firemen's strike than there was in the whole of last year.'

Lou Lewis, a member of the Fire Brigades Union national executive, summed up the feeling of many striking firemen that there is deliberate news management.

Originally, the firemen had heard that a 'D' Notice, restricting certain kinds of

reporting, had been issued by the Government.

This was denied to Socialist Worker by Rear Admiral Farnhill, secretary to the 'D' Notice committee.

A more likely story comes from the two miners strikes of 1972 and 1974. When the editors of all national newspapers were called in to the Home Office and asked not to 'blow things up too much' about the strike.

**SWP**  
**WHERE**  
**WE**  
**STAND**



**PAY THE FIREMEN!**

**Why soldiers break the strike**

BY A FORMER SOLDIER

IF YOU'VE been watching the BBC News over the past few days you'll have seen the pictures of young soldiers stumbling out of smoke-filled buildings, choking their guts up, with tears streaming down their faces, and wondering what the hell they're doing there.

I know exactly what they must feel like. Three years ago my unit was told we were getting a special treat.

Glasgow, it seemed, was about to be overrun by a plague of rats. Kids, possibly ours, would be bitten by them and rabies would spread like wildfire.

The reason? A group of greedy dustcart drivers had decided they wanted more money than the country could afford and were prepared to create a health hazard to get it.

That was how the Lieutenant Colonel put it. And most of the lads believed him.

**Refused**

After all, it meant a chance to see wives and girlfriends, to get drunk with old mates in a Glasgow pub and generally have a good time.

But some of us, a very small number, saw it differently. We were being used to break a strike by a group of low-paid workers trying to get a decent wage. So we refused to go.

What happened next shows why so few soldiers attempt to

organise as trade unionists inside the army.

We were taken to the notorious military corrective training centre at Colchester and forbidden to tell the other inmates the real reason why we were there. Like everyone else in Colchester we were put on restricted diet—which means you're permanently hungry.

Six days a week this was the daily timetable:

**6am:** Rise, make up bed pack, take black boot polish and polish a 3ft-high strip of black matt paint round the outside of the cell block till it shone (almost impossible if it's been raining overnight.)

**After breakfast** a mug of cocoa without sugar and two slices of bread—the rest of the day was divided into eight 50-minute periods of drill, PT, drill, PT, with a break for lunch—a mug of soup and three slices of bread.

Then more square bashing and PT.



Troops fight a fire, surrounded by drums of chemicals labelled 'Inflammable liquid'

By light out, at 9pm you're aching all over and the next morning you're sto stiff you can hardly move.

But Colchester isn't the only reason why so few soldiers question what they're doing.

The same Lieutenant Colonel told us that when we reached Glasgow there would be groups of people on street corners handing out leaflets and selling newspapers. These he said were 'Communists'.

**Blackmail**

If you talked to them or mingled with them at all they would get information out of you about where you lived, how many kids you had, where you were stationed and so on. They would then use whatever information they got from you to blackmail you into giving them more information.

The only way to be safe was to avoid contact with them

altogether, he said.

No doubt the young squad-dies who have been roped in to do the firemen's jobs have been told much the same thing.

I'd be the last person to pretend it's easy to organise as a trade unionist inside the army. There is a constant barrage of propaganda, through film shows and officers' talks, about greedy workers, communists and trade unions having too much power.

But if a start isn't made soon to organise trade union ideas in the army then soldiers, usually unemployed lads from a working-class background like myself, will find themselves being used more and more as strike-breakers, preventing ordinary workers from winning a decent standard of living.

Today it's firemen that the soldiers are being used against. Who will it be tomorrow?

**ANGRY Army wives took pot shots at the top brass yesterday**

By MARGARET CAMERON

Mrs Susan Kane, 22, said: "My husband has been sent home by his officers to keep me in order."

For sending their husbands home "to keep their wives from creating trouble."

The women had protested on Thursday about their husbands' working conditions.

And about 30 of them took up "picket duty" at Sighthill Fire Station, Edinburgh.

The women—all wives of soldiers serving with the 1st Battalion Royal Highland Fusiliers—live in married quarters in the Longstone area of Edinburgh.

**FREEZING**

Mrs George Grant, whose husband is a corporal, said: "Surely it is only fair to ask that our men get adequate training and protective clothing."

"Most of our husbands are still sleeping on floors or in overcrowded, freezing rooms."

After meeting striking firemen, the army wives cooled their anger...

They agreed to sign a petition supporting the firemen—and the firemen signed the wives' petition.

Douglas Forbes, Fire Brigade Union branch chairman at Sighthill, said: "The women were quite sympathetic to us. Like us their complaint is with the Government."

An army spokesman said: "Serving soldiers must carry out their duties."

"However, if any petition which raises genuine welfare points is presented to us, it will be seriously considered."

A report from Glasgow's Daily Record last Saturday.

**WILL A WITCH-HUNT BE THE NEXT WEAPON?**

THE FIREMEN have won their first battle—for public sympathy.

The government calculated that the public would turn against the firemen, and calculated wrongly. Everywhere, there are reports of almost unanimous solidarity with the firemen from other workers.

But public sympathy is not enough. Twice in the past 12 years national official strikes have had plenty of public sympathy. The post office workers in 1971 had lots of sympathy—but the Tory government beat them into the ground.

In the seamen's strike in 1966—a closer parallel with the firemen—the Labour government realised after six weeks that it couldn't beat the seamen outright.

**WILSON**

It set up a public enquiry which recommended a compromise. When this was rejected by a majority of the seamen's union executive, the government, led by Harold Wilson, launched into a violent witch-hunt against seamen's union militants.

Wilson devoted two speeches in the House of Commons to what he called

the tightly-knit group of politically motivated men who he said were running the strike.

Communist Party members were named. The contents of tapped telephone calls were revealed. The places where militants stayed and even their conversations with one another were exposed.

The witch-hunt worked. After another three weeks, the seamen's executive reversed its vote and called the seamen back to work for no more than the public enquiry had offered.

In terms of money received, the seamen's strike was neither a defeat nor a victory. But by

the witch-hunting tactics, the Labour government managed to isolate the left in the union. The union—and its members—did not recover for ten years.

This Labour government may soon be forced into the same tactics as their predecessors. If the firemen obviously cannot be beaten down, some sort of half-baked compromise—overtime payments for the six hours—might be worked out.

**SALVAGE**

But the government will not let matters rest there. They will seek to salvage

from the strike a victory against the militants and activists among the firemen who have kept the strike going at such a fine pace.

A glimpse of what is to come was the statement from a Northumberland councillor earlier this week that the Socialist Workers Party is running the strike, and a move to ensure one fireman in his FBU branch at the weekend for his activities as a SWP member! (The move failed by the way, after a unanimous vote against it).

The rank-and-file firemen who have produced their weekly bulletin and campaigned in the open for

spreading the strike and for more militant policies have nothing to hide from a witch-hunt.

**CONTEMPT**

Whatever FBU general secretary Terry Parry may say, most firemen have nothing but contempt for people who go to witch-hunt the socialists and militants among their colleagues.

Let Callaghan try on the firemen what Wilson did to the seamen. He will find, as his colleague Merlyn Rees did over the 'public sympathy', that his tactics could, to coin a phrase, go up in smoke.

**INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION**

The workers create all the wealth under capitalism. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

**REVOLUTION NOT REFORM**

The present system cannot be patched up, or reformed, as the established Labour and trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown.

**THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD**

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers. The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most, parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system. Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

**INTERNATIONALISM**

The struggle for socialism is part of a world-wide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

■ We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

■ We oppose racialism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

■ We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements. The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

■ We support the struggles of workers in these countries against the bureaucratic ruling class.

■ We are for real, social, economic and political equality of women.

■ We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against homosexuals.

**THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY**

To achieve socialism, the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

■ We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

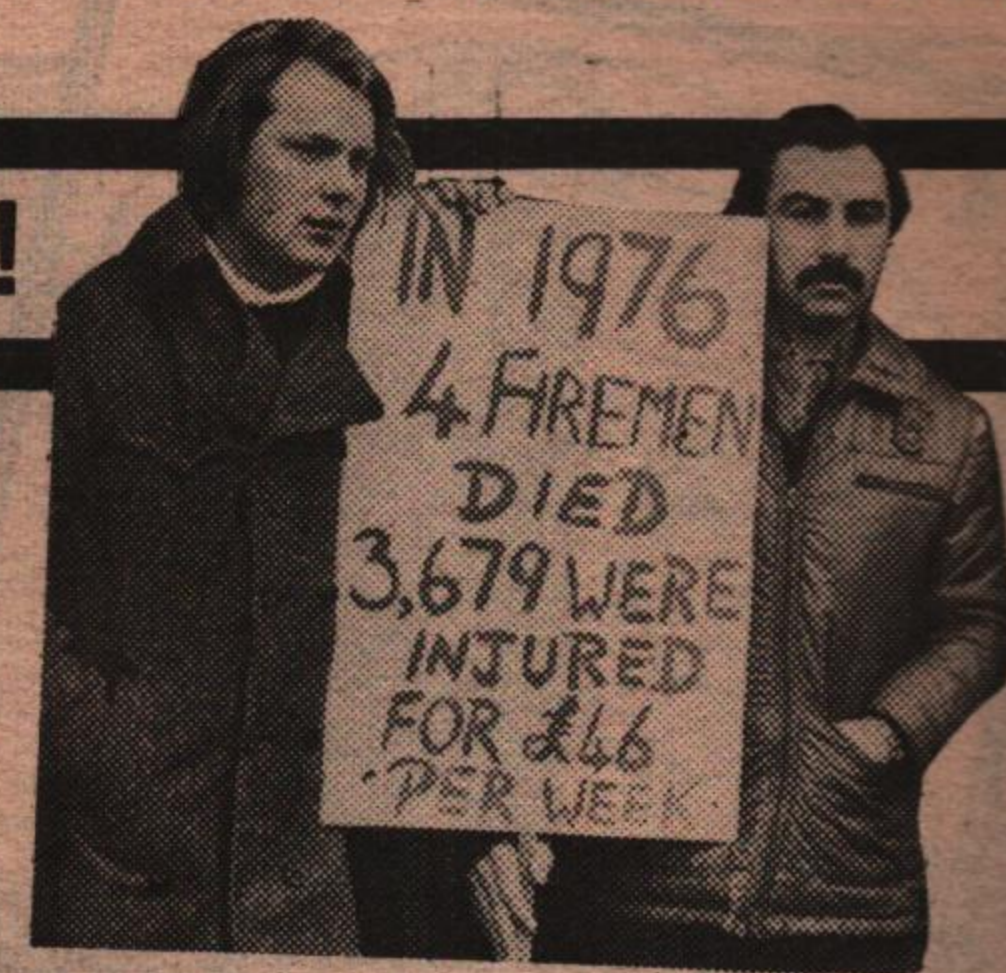
■ We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

■ We urge all those who agree with our policies to join with us in the struggle to build the revolutionary party.

If you want to know more about Socialist Worker and the Socialist Workers Party, fill in the form on page 15.

Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

**PAY THE FIREMEN!**



# The firemen need their rise, All workers need a rise, And the country can afford it

**THE FIREMEN** are not the only group of workers upset by the 10 per cent limit.

Local government manual workers, health service workers, ambulance workers, dockers, miners, seamen, all have pay claims in for much more than 10 per cent.

The government claims the country cannot afford to pay these claims, without forcing up prices and inflation, so creating 'confetti money'.

But there are at least two ways of satisfying all these claims without pushing up prices at all.

## Socialist Worker

WHAT WE THINK

**THE Royal Commission on the Distribution of Wealth reported last week. It showed that the top 5 per cent of the population share between them nearly 14 per cent of all personal income.**

Put it another way: if we really were 'all in the same boat' and the rich were forced to live on the same average income as other people, then

enough money would be released to increase the pay of the 50 per cent of the population who are poorest by 30 per cent each, without prices rising by a single penny.

This is without taking into account the vast amounts of property owned by the rich, or the many perks they receive from the companies they run—cars, company meals, company houses, underhand, tax-free payments paid into bank accounts in the Cayman Islands.



The government's policy is not one of 'equal sacrifice for all'. It is a defence of the existing inequality of wealth, which is forcing down the living standards of those who

work for a living and forcing up the living standards of those who live off directors' fees, property speculation, dividends, and money lending.

**THE economic crisis means that less wealth is still being produced in this country than five years ago, or even than during the three-day week imposed by Tory prime minister Edward Heath at the beginning of 1974.**

If the shut-down factories were opened up and the 1½ million unemployed were allowed to work, vast amounts of new wealth would be created. A recent estimate by Frank Field of the Child Poverty Action Group is £5000 million a year.

When you add to this the £2,800 million a year paid out in various benefits to the unemployed, you can see that there should be plenty of

wealth available to pay all workers wage increases big enough to catch up and overtake price rises.

What stops this happening is the present organisation of society, with control over industry lying in the hands of a small group of very rich people, whose only concern is making profits. Because they are not satisfied with the level of profits, they allow factories to shut and force workers on to the dole queues.



The government occasionally claims to be socialist. But instead of taking measures to deal with the power of these parasites, it is attacking the living standards of workers such as the firemen, using the troops to reinforce its wage controls and risking the lives of hundreds of people.

The only possible reply to the wage controls of such a government is for other groups of workers to follow the firemen's lead, to demand wage increases that will overtake prices, and to strike in support of these claims.

'You are being offered £72 a week and there are a lot of people in Cardiff taking home less than £72 a week'.

That was prime minister Callaghan's claim when he was heckled by firemen in Cardiff last week.

It was a doubly disgusting retort for him to make.

Firstly because it is not true that all firemen would get £72 before tax under the government's offer. Only those with more than five years service would get that.

Someone just starting the job would get a mere £57.80—which after deductions would leave them with little more than £40 a week for risking their lives.

Meanwhile there is at least one man in Cardiff who rakes in much, much more than £72 a week—Callaghan himself. He gets £17,500 for being prime minister, plus the dividend on 500 shares owned by his wife in the bank of his old friend Julian Hodge, plus the income from his quarter of a million pound farm in Sussex—estimated to have increased by about 28 per cent in the past year, compared with the 10 per cent limit on wages.

With Labour leaders like that, who needs Tories?

### NO LIMIT FOR SOME

Rail fares are going up by 14 per cent in the New Year. No 10 per cent limit or 12-month rule there.

Nor for the bread manufacturers. Bread went up another 2p on Monday. That means bread prices have risen by 25 per cent in a year.

Yet the government says that wage demands of 25 per cent are 'insane'.

### THE COUNTRY CAN AFFORD...

Professor David Henderson of University College, London, has estimated that two government projects in recent years have incurred losses of £5000 million between them—that's £250 from each wage earner in Britain.

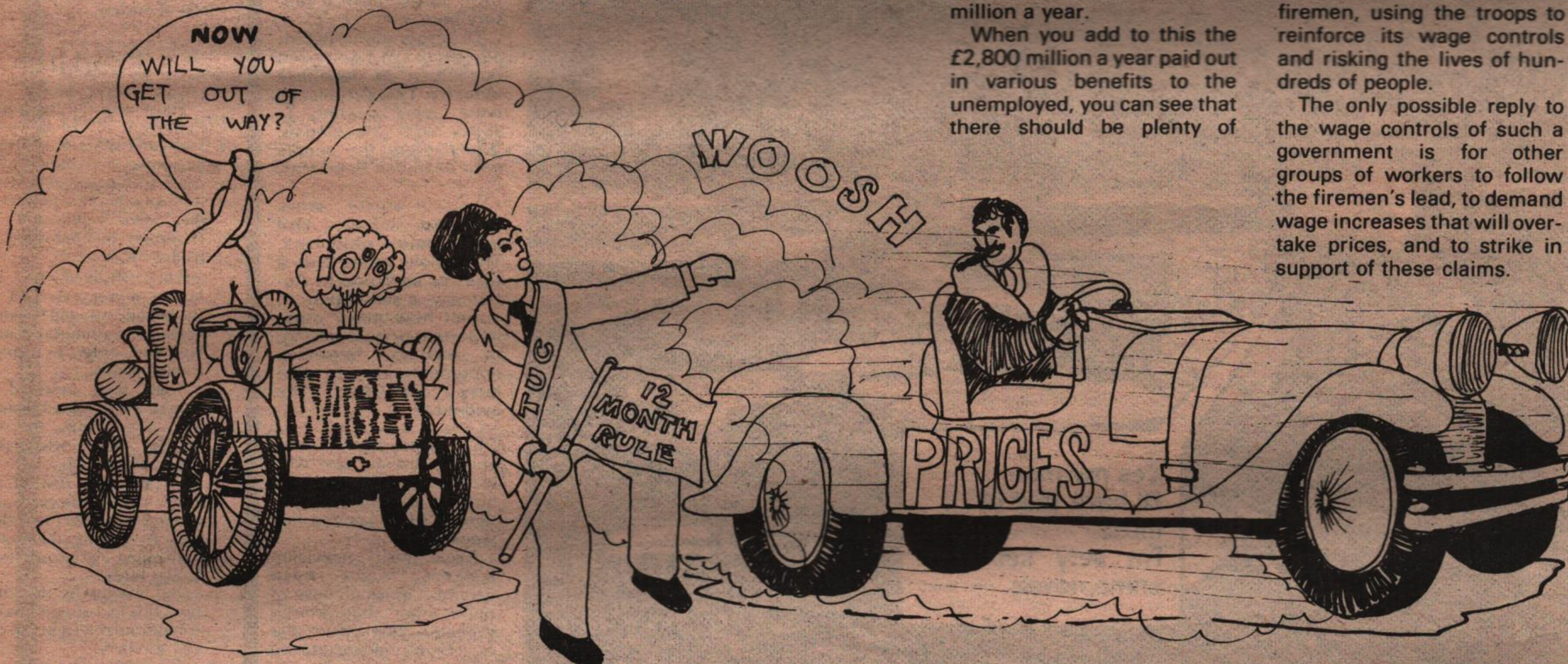
Neither of the two projects—Concorde, for flying the rich at supersonic speeds, and the Advanced Gas Cooled Nuclear Reactor, for producing electricity more expensive than that produced from coal or oil—can be of any benefit to wage earners.

### WHERE THERE'S FLAMES THERE'S BRASS

The Royal Insurance Company announced its profits last week for the first nine months of this year. They have grown by £50.8 million on the same period last year.

Compare that with the mere £40 million needed to settle the firemen's claim.

By the way, a considerable hunk of those profits come because of the success of the firemen in putting out fires in industrial properties.



UNTIL 1904, A MAN WITH A RED FLAG WAS REQUIRED BY LAW TO WALK IN FRONT OF ALL MOTOR CARS...

Cartoon by Roger Crossley

## COME TO THIS CONFERENCE -FIREMEN'S LETTER

**An appeal from Fire Brigades Union brigade and branch officers:**

Dear brother/sister,  
We are firemen on strike to win a living wage. Rank and file support from other trade unionists is vital if we are going to win. Ours is a fight against the government's 10 per cent limit.

This is why we urge you to make certain that your union organisation is represented this coming Saturday, 26 November, at the National Rank and File Delegate Conference in Manchester.

*Yours fraternally,*  
*(in our personal capacities)*

**Strathclyde:** J Delargy, branch secretary, South Fire Station, Centre Street FBU, A Begg, branch delegate, Castlemilk FBU, J Hamilton, branch chairman, Ingrams Street FBU.



**Merseyside:** M Melia, branch chairman, Banks Road FBU. R Hatton, branch chairman, Conleach Road FBU. B Roxborough, branch secretary, Strand

Road FBU. J Weaver, branch rep, Warrington FBU.

**Tyne and Wear:** John Miller, FBU brigade secretary. M Twigg, Brigade Committee secretary, Hedder Branch FBU.

**West Midlands:** G Poxon, brigade committee.

**Yorkshire:** R Tomkins, branch chairman, Elm Lane FBU. J Cox, Bradford branch FBU.

**London:** J Fitzpatrick, branch rep, Battersea FBU. Les Higgs, chairman, Plaistow FBU. J Rabbits, branch chairman, Hendon FBU.

### RANK AND FILE DELEGATE CONFERENCE

Support the firemen  
Smash the 10 per cent limit

**Saturday 26 November, 11.30am, New Century Hall, Corporation Street, Manchester.**

☐ **LATE CREDENTIALS:** Delegates with letters of authorisation from their branch/shop stewards committee secretaries will be able to get credentials at the door of the conference.

**Transport to the conference:**

**LONDON:** Special train leaves Euston, 7.30am. £5 return. Tickets from the Rank and File Centre, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4. Phone reservations now, (01) 802 0978 or 0977.

**BIRMINGHAM:** Coach leaves 9am, Hall of Memory.

**SHEFFIELD:** 9.30am, Harmer Lane, near Pond-Street bus station, £1 return.

**GLASGOW:** George Square, 7.30am, £4 return.

**HULL:** 9am, Socialist Books, Springbank, Hull.

**CARDIFF:** 7am, Central Station.

**NOTTINGHAM:** 8.30am, Salutation Inn, Maid Marion Way.

**DERBY:** 9.15am, Guildhall.

**YORK:** Minibus details, phone Anne Barber 52619.

**NEWCASTLE:** 8am, Central Station, coach £3.

**SUNDERLAND:** 7.30am, outside Joplings, coach £3.

**LEICESTER:** For details, phone Elspeth Alcott on 660883.

# How the system began

ONE OF the most ludicrous arguments you hear is that things could not be different to the way they are now. Yet things were different. And not on some distant part of the globe, but in this country, not so long ago.

A mere 250 years ago people would have regarded you as a lunatic if you had described to them the world we live in now, with its huge conurbations, its great factories, its planes, its space expeditions, even its railway systems.

For they lived in a society which was overwhelmingly rural, in which most people had never travelled outside their

local village, in which the pattern of life was determined, as it had been for thousands of years, by the alternation of the seasons.

Go back a few hundred years further, and little of what we take for granted today existed. Cities were not only few and far between—they were also hardly bigger than many present day villages.

## Civilisation

Reading and writing were skills confined almost entirely to some of the inhabitants of monasteries, 99 per cent of the population tilled the land, working from sunrise to sunset, using methods that had hardly changed since the collapse of Roman civilisation, 800 years before.

If you had talked to people about 'nations', or 'the rule of law', or 'wages'

or 'dividends', they would not have known what you meant.

The horizon of most people's lives was set by the village in which they lived. They spoke a dialect that was virtually incomprehensible to people who lived only a few miles away. They certainly did not feel they belonged to the same 'nation' as these strangers, still less as the local feudal lords, who spoke a version of what we would call French, or the monasteries, where writing was still in Latin.

In return for their right to till bits of land for themselves each peasant household had to work a certain number of days each year for the local lord, and in addition had to give him certain of their own produce as 'gifts'.

No money passed between peasant and lord.

There was no legal system as we

know it, with courts, judges, policemen, prisons. The lord of the manor was also the person who decided what could and could not be done in the village.

Finally, the role today performed by the mass media, of giving the lower classes some overall view of the world in harmony with the interests of their 'betters', was performed by the church.

## Non-Christians

It was only through its services and chateisms that most people derived some idea of how their little village fitted into some wider order of things.

The content of the teaching was quite different to that which you would get from any church today—for instance, lending money for interest was regarded as a mortally sinful activity which only non-Christians (Jews) could engage in.

Seven or eight hundred years ago a development began which was eventually to challenge this whole set-up. In isolated areas groups of craftsmen and traders began to establish the beginnings of towns, no longer giving their services gratis to some lord, but instead exchanging products with different lords and serfs in the surrounding region for foodstuffs and increasingly using precious metals as a measure of that exchange.

It was not a big step from that, to seeing in every act of exchange an opportunity to get a little extra of the precious metal, to make a profit.

At first the towns could only survive by playing one lord off against another. But as time went on the skills of their craftsmen improved, more wealth was created by them, and the basis was laid for greater influence on the rest of society.

## Feudal

Those who ran the towns could now afford to make arms and employ soldiers. Beginning as termites in the crack within feudal society, they soon became powers in their own right—and increasingly in opposition to feudal society.

They disliked the arbitrary power exercised by the feudal lords and began to demand a national system of law and order to protect trading routes.

And they resented a church which forced them to act according to the dictates of a society they were outgrowing.

At first the rich of the cities, the 'burgers' (or 'bourgeois') tried to get their way by allying themselves with monarchs against lesser feudal lords.

But eventually the kings used this increased power to trample on the 'rights' of rich city dwellers.

In anger, the cities rose up against the kings, and tried to take control of the whole of society for themselves.

Where they succeeded, as in Britain, with the English revolution and later in France with the French revolution, society was re-established on a new basis that could carry it forward.

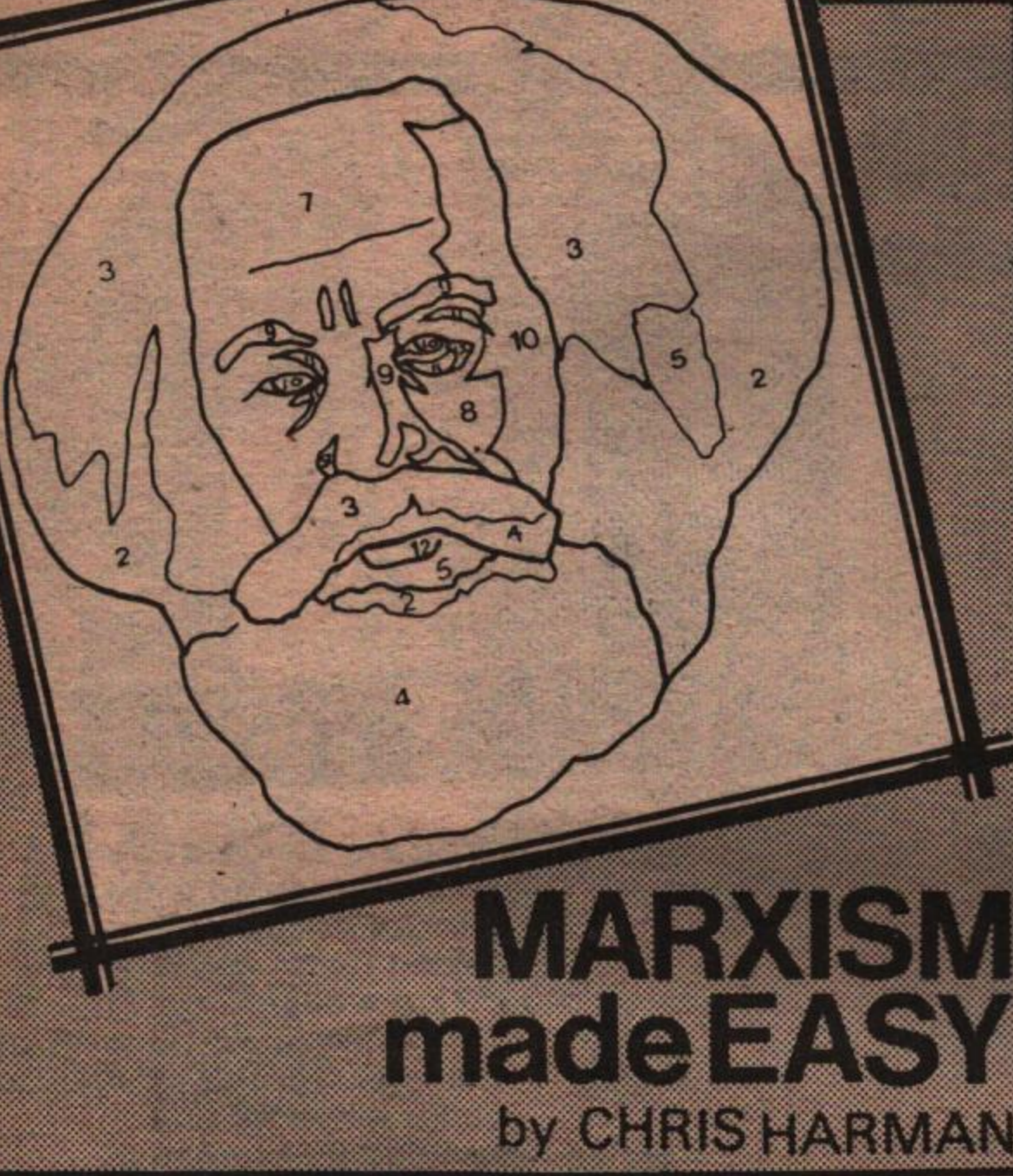
But elsewhere they failed at first.

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# We know, we know

by Murray Armstrong

COMMISSIONER McNeen's policy of confrontation at Grunwick's is making it clear to everyone whose side the police are on, and exactly what they are protecting. The Dixon of Dock Green image of the British bobby is quickly being replaced by something nearer the truth—a boot swinging thug on the take.

But that's not the only place where our attitude to the police is being changed. It seems that most of the senior officers are spending their time facing juries, being suspended, or resigning to dodge the rap.

## Disaster

Two South London detectives were eventually sent down for corruption and extortion. Another one disappeared and hasn't been seen since. Of course we were told at the time that it was just some 'rotten apples'.

But then there was the Drug Squad inquiry, which got another three inside. And finally came the porn squad enquiry which is still knocking down the odd top cop and making many more squirm behind their magazines.

It's all cleaned up, you might think. Not a chance!

The interesting thing about these inquiries is this: the pillar of society who headed the first inquiry into the Times allegations, DCS Moody of the Yard, became four years later one of the main suspects in the Porn Squad case!

The inquiry into corruption in the Drug Squad was conducted by the Lancashire police—a 'neutral, outside body'. Wait for it... the Chief Constable of

Lancashire, Stanley Parr, was charged with 37 separate offences after a confidential report on him, compiled by the Chief Constable of Hampshire, had been published by the Lancashire Evening Post in February.

Parr was suspended and brought before a disciplinary tribunal last month. We are anxiously waiting for its result.

But it seems now that Chief Constable Parr wasn't on his own. Last week another inquiry was

set up to 'investigate corruption in local government and business circles in Lancashire.'

This information, concerning graft over planning permission and building contracts has apparently come to light as a direct result of Parr's exposure!

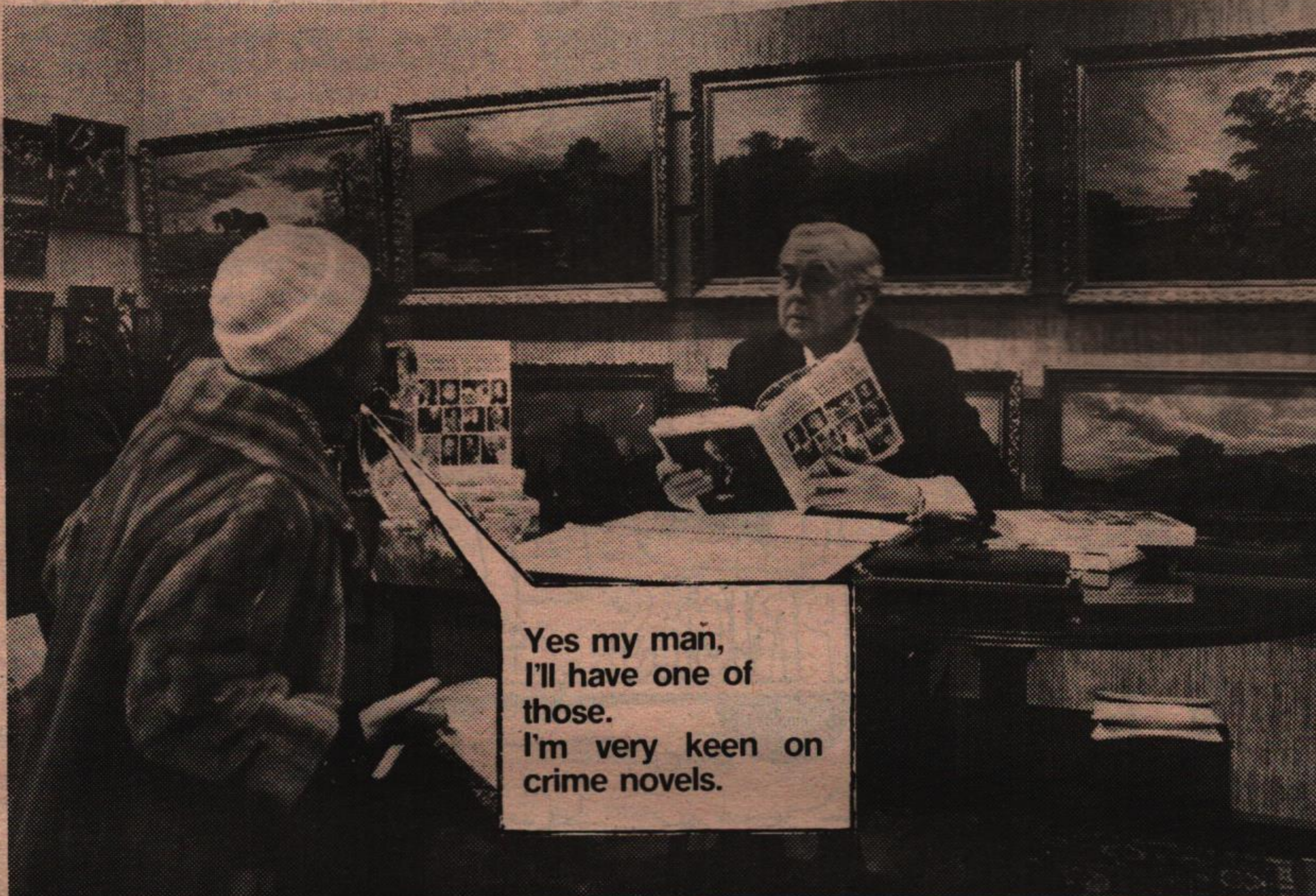
## Respect

But don't worry, two senior officers from Nottinghamshire have been called in to conduct the

investigations! Police corruption is just a small corridor in the gray train. 'Society as we know it' thrives on it, the wheels of government are oiled by it, the Labour Party is decomposing in it.

When the Home Secretary was asked to set up an inquiry into police violence at Grunwick's he replied, 'The police have my full confidence and the confidence of the government, and I stick to that.'

*We know why, Merlyn. We know why.*



## The closed shop they don't want to ban.

EARLIER this year police raided a health studio in Littleborough, Lancashire. A summons was issued alleging that solicitor Robert Vining had sexual intercourse with a 14-year-old girl.

When he appeared in court, the charge was dropped and police offered no evidence as a result of the Director of Public Prosecutions intervening.

Reason: Vining is a solicitor, part of that well-known closed shop, the legal profession.

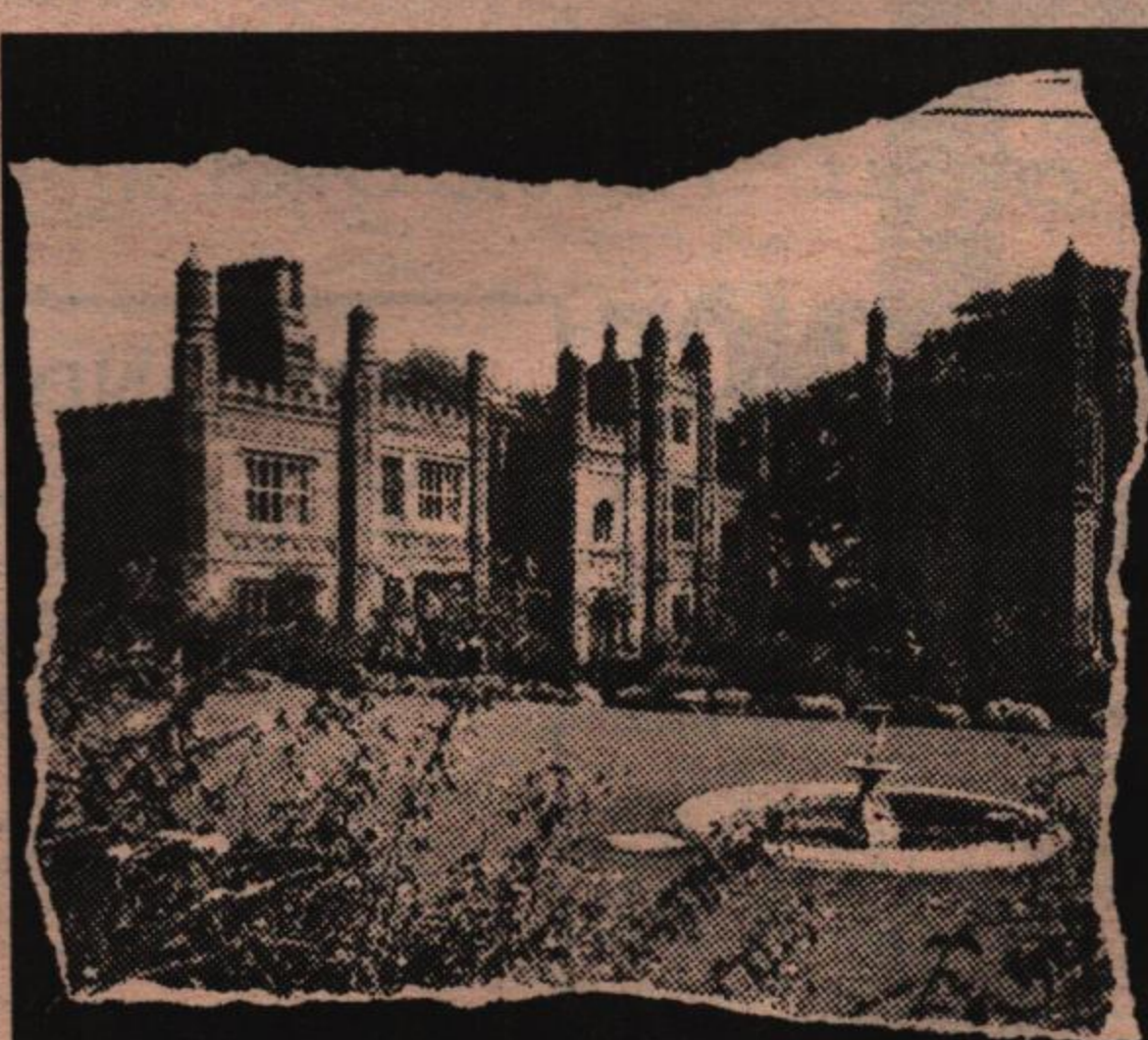
As the Oldham Chronicle comment piece put it: 'We would like to be able to assure people that all is well, that justice really was done. Unfortunately we cannot.'

The Chronicle gives a comparison with another man, charged with the same offence with the same girl. He has been committed

for trial at Manchester Crown Court. But then he is just a foreman mechanic.

□ □  
'You cannot get a decent package holiday for under £2,000. I have to earn £4,800 just to clear the £800 needed to pay insurance on my Rolls.' Mr Alf Gooding, who earns £30,000 a year, speaking to the Confederation of British Industry Conference.

□ □  
'IN RHODESIA the white people are so keen to look after the blacks that they even do their voting for them.' —from Sunday Mirror letters page, 20 November.



## PROPERTY CORNER:

FIFTH Column readers with a few hundred thousand to spare might be interested in making a bid for this 16th century manor house at Walsingham in Norfolk. Six acres of gardens, minstrel gallery, seven bedrooms, four bathrooms, tennis court and heated swimming pool.

ONE HUMAN tragedy as a result of the lift engineers' strike hasn't received enough publicity.

One woman office worker's lift has been out of action for 12 days now. As a result she has to walk up 12 floor every day to her office.

But don't weep. The woman concerned is Shirley Williams, Education Minister, and a notorious hard liner against union wage demands.

THE camera never lies. Except it seems on some editions of World In Action.

In a recent programme World In Action 'investigated' opposition to a plan by Hitachi, a Japanese electronics firm, to establish a factory here.

The programme included shots of American opposition to Japanese industry. Two Americans were seen wearing T-shirts with the slogan, 'Sony—from the people who gave you Pearl Har-

bour'. The T-shirts were printed by the programme's producers. The whole scene was a fake, or as World In Action say, a simulation.

Just how many other impartial, or hard hitting, or fearless, television documentaries are also busy 'simulating' the evidence?

DID anybody spot the well-known British Nazi who went to visit the two SS officers at the police station in West London last week?

Eagle-eyed television viewers might have caught a quick glimpse of none other than Martin Webster, king pin in the Nazi Front, nipping into the nick.

## For your Christmas list

THE FOLLOWING people are on the Christmas list of the Economic League. The League provides employers with information on trade union activists. If you know one of these people, let Fifth Column know.

Those who will receive a bottle of Bisquit Dubouche VSOP are:

- G H Webber from Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex;
- W A Whitehead from Longwick, Aylesbury, Bucks;
- E D France from Farnham Royal Slough;
- Mrs V Broad, Fareham, Hants;
- P Lagden, Valonia Gardens, West Hill, London, SW18;
- H Tarrant, Reigate Surrey;
- Major L A A Newman, Dolphin Square, London, SW1;
- J J G Geary, Smallfields, Horley, Surrey;
- E Clarke, West Green, Crawley, Sussex.

PAY THE FIREMEN!

## A FIREMAN SPEAKS OUT:

# Why I am a socialist

TERRY SEGARS is regional chairman of the East Anglia Fire Brigades Union representing 2,500 firemen. He has been a member of the Socialist Workers Party for ten years. Last Thursday he took time off from the firemen's strike headquarters in Chelmsford to talk about his life and why he became a socialist.

I AM the oldest son in a family of three living in North London. From the age of about eleven my mother had to bring the three of us up by herself.

I suppose one of my earliest political recollections is how I came to see the welfare state.

My mother had to rely on it. She worked occasionally in the local factories. But she couldn't work and see to us at the same time.

I remember the welfare worker coming round from what was then called the 'Assistance Board'. I can still see the welfare worker criticising my mother for smoking cigarettes.

'How can you afford it?' she demanded to know.

The welfare worker didn't know that smoking was the only thing keeping my mother sane. She didn't know that and she didn't care. It was horrible.

## Dressed

My family was very proud of me. I'd got myself to the local grammar school. Only my mother couldn't possibly afford to keep me dressed in the same way as all the middle-class kids.

Things haven't changed, by the way. My daughter is at comprehensive school—there are reactions about the colour of her gym slip.

Every Tuesday morning I

always arrived late for school. The other kids and the other teachers knew the reason. I had to go and collect the family allowance from the Post Office.

Some sneered. Others were nice about it. Maybe a few didn't notice. But I noticed. I failed my O-levels. I didn't really know where I was. There were dreadful dramas at home all the time. It was a terrible period of my life, a dead period.

After I left school I got a job in one of the local factories.

I gravitated towards the Labour Party. I had become a socialist at school. The Labour Party seemed the place to be.

The International Socialists (now the SWP) had members in the local party. One of them arranged a series of lectures on Marxism with Tony Cliff speaking. These made a really big impression on me.

I began to understand world problems and how they could be solved. I felt that I had my part to play in solving them. That is what struck me most. Me and all the others sorting things out.

I soon got fed up with humping glass around in the glass factory I was working in.

## INTERVIEW by John Rose

I looked around for something more interesting.

**THE fire service caught my eye. It seemed more worthwhile. I liked the idea of helping people. So I joined.**

I quickly worked out that I didn't want to become an officer. Even though such a prospect would be held out to an ex-grammar school boy like me. I didn't like the rigid hierarchy. I could see it was a reflection of the class-system.

## Active

That sounds glib. But that's why I hate it.

In 1970 my wife and I moved out of North London and came to East Anglia. I became much more active in the union and in the International Socialists.

There is one great advantage of being a fireman. The job itself may be tough, but there is plenty of time in the mess room. People want to talk. That means that I could and can talk politics.

Of course very very few agree with my point of view. But they will listen. Your point of view is much more credible

if you are union activist and have worn real gains for the men.

Lewisham caused lots of discussion. I was really uplifted by what happened there.

No one can defeat the argument that the National Front and violence are the same thing. My watch realises that the National Front are Nazis. They can see why they have to be put down.

Of course the men didn't like the way policemen were injured. On the other hand there is less sympathy for the police than is sometimes realised.

Firemen do not identify with the police. They resent the publicity the police grab. The firemen's role is often ignored.

It's we who pull the bodies out of the crashed cars—while the police get the credit.

Women cause lively arguments in the mess room too and not only in the way that you would imagine. The page 3 of the Sun attitude leads naturally to the view that women are the weaker sex and hence are not strong enough to be firemen.

This provides for some excellent arguments. I always argue that if women pass the

tests then they should be employed. This of course is the legal position—though I don't know of any firewomen.

Of course for most people it seems like a 'Man's Job'. Yet firemen have to do the things on the station that are thought of as 'womens' work'. We buy our food and cook it and we wash up.

**BUT ONE subject above all others has dominated discussions in the mess room over the past months. Pay and prices.**

The resentment just mounted daily. An increasingly keen interest was taken in strikes by other workers. There was by no means always agreement with other groups, but everyone began watching the industrial scene.

There is no doubt in the minds of most firemen, we are not something apart, we are workers.

## Joke

There is no sympathy for the Labour government and its pay policy. The pay policy is a joke.

Firemen cannot see the difference between Labour

and Tory. They really can't.

The trouble is there is no obvious alternative. This leads to a feeling of simple indifference to the government. But it also leads to the feeling that we must use our force to change the pay policy

## Suspended

Industrial power is the only way. But this ties in exactly with the need for a rank and file movement, a point well understood by the FBU executive, who suspended me from the union for five months for being associated with Rank and File Fireman!

The strike has confirmed the speed with which workers can realise their capacities. Men who for weeks wrestled with their consciences about striking are now into it with boundless enthusiasm.

I walked into a room full of strikers the other day. Three they were, sitting down calmly and coolly deciding on ways of making the strike a success. Everyone was volunteering for

different responsibilities.

It was as though they'd it all their lives.

A fire station had remained open somewhere in the countryside. There was no queue about it. A flying picket line be arranged to sort it out.

When Tilbury power station went up in flames a few days ago the troops lured firemen away from the picket line. They told them human life was at risk.

It was a trick. The troops took the fire engine from the station where the pickets were.

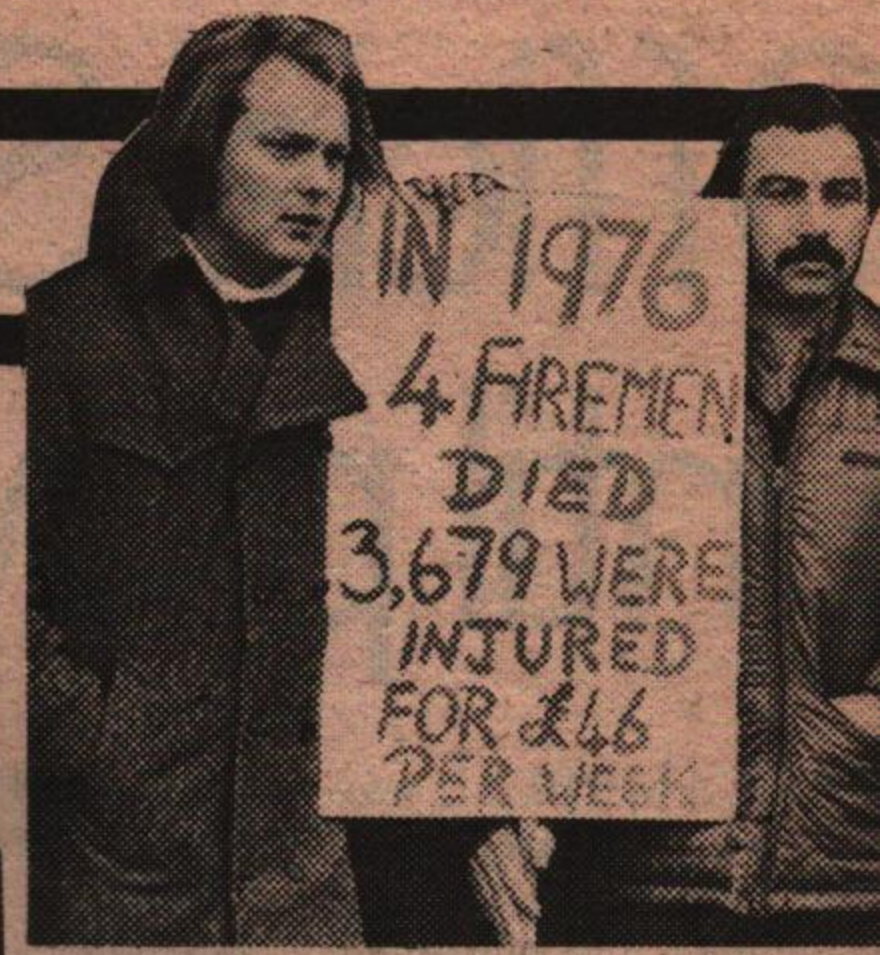
The pickets were furious. One not a trade union activist particularly, was so angry he slipped into the driver's seat of the fire engine when the army driver wasn't looking. He drove it right back to the fire station with the soldiers and police giving chase!

The man broadcast over the engine's radio. The engine had been reclaimed for the strike.

The other firemen were as pleased as punch.



Terry Segars talking to fellow firemen picketing the fire station at Brentwood in Essex.



## If we ran society, far fewer would die in fires



by Glasgow fireman **RONNIE ROBERTSON**

IN A SOCIALIST society, highly profitable and apparently cheap synthetic materials like polyurethane foam and plastics, which are used in the making of furniture and which give off deadly toxic gases when involved in fire, would be subject to far stricter control.

The criminally large number of deaths which occur

because of these materials, mainly in working class homes, would be greatly reduced.

Regulations which lay down standards for building materials; means of escape in case of fire; and the provision of equipment to fight fires, in which architects like tax accountants, spend their time finding loopholes in order to cut costs, would be strictly enforced and new buildings made safer to live in.

Our skills as firemen would be used to design for living rather than have us come along in the wake of avoidable tragedy.

The real tragedy of fire in terms of human lives lost is that it strikes mainly those people in society who already have little or nothing.

Fire hits the old living on bare pensions, the poor and inadequate living in the ghettos, people who cannot afford to pay electricity bills and

so instead use paraffin heaters or even candles which, with cheap furniture, add up to incendiary bombs

The role of the fire service in a socialist society will not differ all that greatly

But the role of firemen will be to unite with other working people to eliminate the conditions of squalor, misery and deprivation which not only deny these people a dignified life but also a dignified death.

## IS SOCIALISM POSSIBLE?



The latest Socialist Worker **POCKET PAMPHLET.**

5p a copy, plus 7p postage, or 30 copies for £1, post free.

FROM SW Distributors, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.



# Official Secrets: You're guilty until proved innocent

MRS CAMPBELL was very angry indeed. She approached a court policeman and bellowed at him: 'You've got no heart, have you? No heart at all.'

'You've taken them to the cells and you're going to lock them up in Brixton over the weekend, aren't you? You ought to be ashamed of yourself.'

The policeman *did* look a bit ashamed, though, to be fair, it wasn't anything to do with him. If Chief Superintendent Nicholls, head of the Special Branch, had passed by Mrs Campbell at Tottenham Magistrates court in North London last Friday night, I wouldn't have fancied his chances of survival.

Nicholls had opposed bail for Mrs Campbell's son Duncan, for Time Out reporter Crispin Aubrey and for social worker John Berry.

The three men have been out on bail for several months and Nicholls had no new reason for opposing bail. They were out on bail in the evening.

## Police

Yet Nicholls' action was a grim reminder of the real aim of this Official Secrets trial: the imprisonment of journalists and their informants for finding out or revealing the facts about Britain's secret police.

After lunch, the three men were committed to trial at the Old Bailey on all the charges lodged against them.

These include the first ever charges against journalists for their informants under Section One of the Official Secrets Act, which was drawn up for use against spies and agents of foreign governments. It carries prison sentences of up to 14 years.

What has led to this trial?

Duncan Campbell is a specialist in telephone technology. He is worried about the use of communications in his own words 'to create a police state in this country overnight'.

John Berry is a former NCO in Signals Intelligence in the



Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

Part of the government's hardened communications system, an underground control centre in Holborn, Central London, being used this week as strike-breaking HQ against the firemen. It is the extent of this network the Official secrets trial is trying to protect.

British Army. At the time of the deportation of ex-CIA agent Philip Agee and journalist Mark Hosenball last year, he made a brave statement to the National Council of Civil Liberties.

People, he said, ought to know more about the secret use of Signals Intelligence not merely for intercepting foreign calls, but against dissenters in Britain.

To find out more, Duncan Campbell and Crispin Aubrey interviewed John Berry in his flat last September. The Special Branch tapped their telephones and raided the flat.

They took away a tape which Crispin Aubrey had made of the conversation. This tape is now the main prosecution evidence against the three men.

## Power

What is in the tape? Is secret? Could it be of use to foreign power?

Or is it the sort of material which we all ought to know about?

We can never know. For the entire Official Secrets case is conducted under a classic Catch-22 formula.

The material, says the prosecution, is secret.

## by PAUL FOOT

There we cannot know more about the secret use of Signals Intelligence not merely for intercepting foreign calls, but against dissenters in Britain.

People, he said, ought to know more about the secret use of Signals Intelligence not merely for intercepting foreign calls, but against dissenters in Britain.

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## Enemy

Simple as that, old boy. What the colonel says goes. And who is a miserable Labour Party magistrate in Tottenham to deny him?

Duncan Campbell also faces a charge of 'collecting

information about defence communications'. This arises from thousands of documents taken by the Special Branch from Campbell's flat.

None of the material, the prosecution admitted, is classified. But, Combe reminded the magistrates, 'we're concerned not with whether this is *in fact* useful to the enemy, but whether it *might be*...

## Proved

What's more, 'any sketch, photograph or diagram of any communications post shall be deemed to have been collected for interests prejudicial to the security of the state unless the contrary is proved.'

'If you've got a post card of the Office Tower in your house, you've 'collected' it. And you're 'deemed' to have collected it to subvert the country unless you can prove otherwise!

You are guilty, in short, unless you can prove your innocence.

And by the way, who decides whether the material could be useful to the enemy? Right again, the prosecution witnesses representing 'the state'.

Let us suppose that Duncan

Campbell is right—that the unelected officers of Signals Intelligence are constructing a system of total control over communications—telephone, radio, television—which could 'turn the country into a police state overnight.'

Let's suppose that that system is aimed mainly at people who protest or disagree with the government: at the very heart of democracy itself. Should that be made public?

## Public

Of course it should. Every vestige of freedom we have depends on it being made public.

Yet the Official Secrets Act can be used by army officers and Special Branch to stop every publication about these matters and to imprison the journalists who even try to find out about them.

Socialists often talk and write about the 'state machine'. It sounds like jargon, like the product of a conspiratorial imagination.

The Official Secrets trial lights up what it means. It means bodies of men, unchecked and uncheckable by any form of democratic process, building ramparts round the property of the few and their control of our society.

In this case, it means Nicholls and his Special Branch men guarding their control over communications with the most brutal reprisals against anyone who dares even to ask a question about it.

It took ten minutes for the pathetic magistrates, chaired by the chairman of the Tottenham Labour Party, to sweep away six days of legal arguments that these were unique charges, and should not be allowed to continue.

Crispin Aubrey, John Berry, and Duncan Campbell come up at the Old Bailey next autumn. In the interim, a mighty campaign must be waged by socialists and radicals of very description to force the Labour government to drop the charges.

# WE'RE THERE! BUT...

£10,000 fund reaches £10,152

WELL, we bust through the magic £10,000 this week. Your contributions brought it up to £10,152.

But the eviction from our headquarters at Cottons Gardens was something we hadn't expected. The 'damage' to us as a result of the Nazi bombing is still to be paid for—until we can find another headquarters.

What we need is to make it

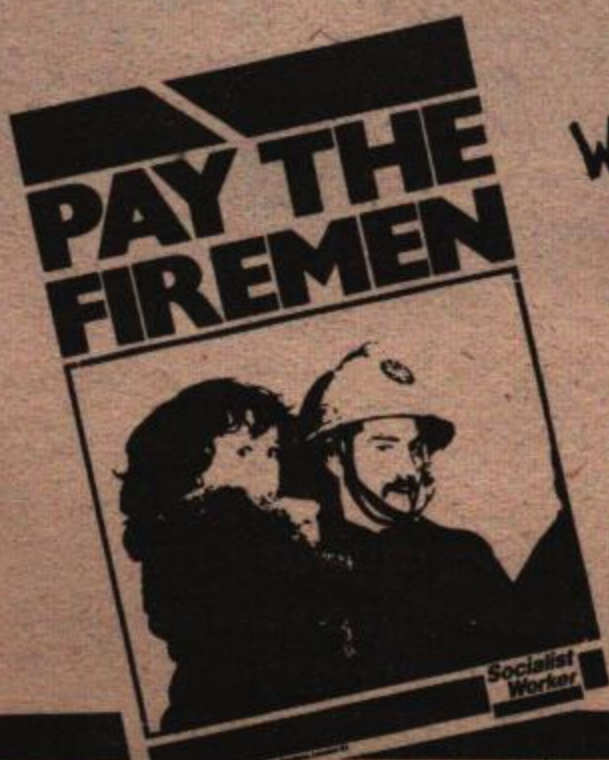
£12,000 by Christmas. All over the country SWP members have responded to the fireman's strike call with leaflets, posters, demonstrations. These things cost money. And you're the only source of it.

So send us something. Let's make that £12,000 by Christmas.

□ Donations to SW Fund, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

THANKS THIS WEEK TO:

- Manchester Polytechnic
- Students Union
- Glasgow School of Art
- P Foster
- SW readers, Australia
- University of Warwick, Coventry
- W Brown
- Western District Office UPW
- Anonymous, Edinburgh
- Anonymous, Solihull
- J McBarney
- SWP branches in: Brighton, Lea Valley, Carlisle, Central London, Pontefract, Loughborough, Durham, Merseyside, Central London Poly, Swindon, Blackpool, Maidstone, Glasgow, South London, Chelmsford, Gloucester



Would YOU do his job for £4.7/week?



Posters produced by the SWP in support of the firemen. Our fund helps us support workers in struggle when they need it.

THE AL NONE OF THIS beings have the needed to design warm housing v What stops u profit-oriented introduces imm while with the o on fire insuran





# They profit from your loss

Picture: Red Saunders



**CEILING TILES:** Made of highly profitable polyurethane foam to keep the room warmer. In a household fire they burn to give off poisonous gas. They also melt and drip from the ceiling on to anyone below who is attempting to escape the fire. The result is very like napalm.

**FURNITURE:** When set alight, this combusts into deadly gases which choke you and blind you and kill you. For years the Furniture Workers Union and the Fire Brigades Union have been campaigning against this deadly foam—but getting nowhere. The big petro-chemical companies like Shell and BP have been making vast fortunes out of the stuff.

**ELECTRICITY:** Foreign critics of the British electrical system say they don't understand why such a high-powered current is used for domestic purposes, increasing the chances of being electrocuted and the risk of fire.

**CARPET:** Probably foam-backed, again producing poisonous fumes when on fire.

**ASBESTOS:** What's your fire door covered with? Asbestos sheeting probably—which may be fireproof, but is deadly if dust from it is inhaled. Your ceiling tiles may be asbestos too. Like fire, asbestos kills.

## ALTERNATIVE

is at all necessary. Human skills and the knowledge and build safe, spacious and which minimises risk. is the chaotic, unplanned, system. With one hand this nse fire risks into your home her it encourages you to take ce policies for protection.

There's profit to be made from both. In a society run under workers' control we would do away with this obvious stupidity. If the priority was human need not private greed, houses would be ten times better designed using solar heating for a start. Nor would power stations blow off massive amounts of heat into thin air—it would be conducted to heat local housing.





PICTURES: Angela Phillips (FPL)

# Reclaiming the night

by ANGELA PHILLIPS

THE NUMBER of times I've walked through London's Soho and been whistled at, commented on, leered at by those little creeps who haunt the doors of strip joints, uuk!

But this time they were scared, scared of us, scared of women, it was great!

There were hundreds of us, all women, charging through the late night, neon-lit streets of Soho. Some were dressed as witches and vampires, some banged tin lids, cymbals, blew whistles, screamed, yelled, whooped.

Leaflets handed out along the way proclaimed the fact that women were Reclaiming the Night, demanding the right to walk alone without fear, demanding an end to rape and to the exploitation of our sexuality.

## Damage

At last, with the safety of numbers, we were able to protest, to put stickers on sex-shop windows, throw stink bombs through letter boxes, spray-paint displays.

There was instant retaliation. A strip-club bouncer, astonished and alarmed at the damage to 'his property', lunged out, striking women as they passed.

For an instant they drew back, used to cowering and feeling afraid. But then realisation dawned: this time there were more of us, this time we were stronger than him. He disappeared behind a crowd of angry, kicking,

fighting women.

A feeling of sheer exhilaration took hold.

Just for once they were feeling a tiny fraction of the fear and anger that women are forced to feel when they walk alone at night.

There were some people who conclude that we are Mary Whitehouse types. They couldn't be more wrong.

## Sexuality

The Women's Movement isn't interested in her tight-arsed attitude to sexuality. We don't want to ban sex, we want to enjoy it, on our own terms and without exploitation.

We were marching not to get laws changed or to punish porn peddlars, but to show that we recognise the connection between the sexual, social and economic exploitation of women—and violence against women.

Women provide material for porn and pin-ups because the opportunities for earning good money, with flexible hours to accommodate child care, are few—and because we have always been taught that the best way to make money is by selling our bodies... models, strippers, dolly secretaries, receptionists, prostitutes, wives, our faces are our fortunes and, we are told, the fastest way out of poverty.

On the other hand, the existence of porn and pin-ups serves to reinforce the idea that bodies are all we are, objects, bits of flesh



TOP: Women demonstrators pass a Soho club. ABOVE: A porn cinema gets treated to a mass of 'This degrades women' stickers.

with convenient holes in them.

While men keep on buying Tit and Bum magazines, keep on supporting the industry, they are contributing to the exploitation and degradation of female workers—the models—and all women.

## Conspire

It isn't only that the existence of 'sexploitation' is degrading to women, it is also dangerous.

Television, films, records, books and magazines all conspire to tell us that women are sexually passive and men are sexually aggressive.

The sight of nude female

bodies in attitudes of totally passive receptivity, is so commonplace that it is not surprising that real women are also treated as passive objects or that rape and battering are seen as extensions of red-blooded virility.

The demonstration, organised without publicity (nobody wanted to be outnumbered by the police), by word of mouth, meetings and discreet announcements in the women's liberation press, brought together hundreds of feminists in nearly a dozen British cities.

It was an expression of anger, and a demonstration of strength. It didn't give us answers but it certainly gave us more courage to confront the questions.

# THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF A POLITICAL AGITATOR

THIS true story is of a little Jewish boy from London's East End who, confronted by a Christian laddie claiming 'Your people killed our Saviour', asked: 'Why?'

On being told Jesus Christ, he replied: 'I've never heard of the bloke'.

Some devout churchgoers must have received a shock if they saw BBC2's 'Chronicle—The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ'. To have it stressed that the New Testament Gospels were not written as historical documents, that they were compiled at least 70 years after the crucifixion, when no eye-witness accounts were available and that all the evidence is hearsay, may have caused some to switch to

TELEVISION  
by  
Ossie Lewis

another channel. The trial of Jesus Christ was shown as a political one, very much rigged, something we seem to be coming accustomed to today in the civilised 'Free world'. The argument in the documentary production of Dr Hain Cohn's book was that the evangelists found it expedient to appease the Romans during a period of

very fierce repression and twisted the story of the execution, inventing a few untruths on the way so as to shift the blame from the Romans on to the Jews themselves.

Dr Hain Cohn certainly puts forward a convincing thesis and has to refer to the class structure in Judeah by showing that the High Priesthood, which had always symbolised Jewish nation... pride, was confined to a few aristocratic families.

Following the suppression of the Jewish rebellion, the High Priests were seen to be collaborators of the occupying power and were losing their popularity as the masses became more and more outraged by their arrogance and display of wealth.

Jesus, an idealistic reformer who never claimed to be a supreme being, was giving hope to a repressed people in preaching about his 'Kingdom of God'.

## Escaped

Had he capitulated to the High Priests and agreed to abandon his messianic pretensions or 'stop causing trouble', he would have escaped trial and the consequences. Thus frustrated, the High Priests, typical of any ruling class, conspired with the occupying power to have him pout out of the way.

'Twas ever thus... Like Gay News, he was eventually charged with blasphemy (are you there,

Mary Whitehouse?) for which he paid the supreme penalty. At the same time there were some 2000 underground fighters who were rounded up in Jerusalem and who also suffered death by crucifixion.

The influence of the domination of church and state must definitely be on the wane for a programme such as this to be shown on TV—or have the BBC governors decided to risk excommunication?

Can we look forward to some more reasoned arguments on other New Testament stories—the virgin birth, miracles and so on?

Or better still let us have some debate between theologians and secular Marxists.

**Womens VOICE 1978**

*"You'll never do it while I'm here"*

*"You've got nothing to show for it"*

*"You've heard you'll pull the bosses down"*

**JANUARY**

9	16	23	30
10	17	24	31
11	18	25	
12	19	26	
13	20	27	
14	21	28	
5	22	29	

**FEBRUARY**

6	13	20	27
7	14	21	28
1	8	15	22
2	9	16	23
3	10	17	24
4	11	18	25
5	12	19	26

**MARCH**

6	13	20	27
7	14	21	28
1	8	15	22
2	9	16	23
3	10	17	24
4	11	18	25
5	12	19	26

This is the first ever Womens Voice calendar. Beautifully designed, and printed in two colours, it comes folded, so that you can either display two months at a time or stretch it out to its full length. Because we want as many people as possible to be able to have copies we are offering two calendars for £1, postage and packing free. We will enclose a message for copies sent direct by us to your friends. Order early in time for the New Year!

75p each, or send one to a friend and you can have two for £1. Cash with order to Womens Voice Calendar, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2.



**Socialist Workers talking**



ALAN GIBBONS

I ALWAYS get a strange reaction when people ask me where I come from. I say Crewe and they burst out laughing.

But for the old music hall song 'Oh Mr Porter', I doubt if the town is mentioned anywhere in the annals of the British people. Not as though it deserves a mention.

It is one of your original dirty old towns, all faded headscarves, drab raincoats and runny noses. No plaques to commemorate great men, no heroes, no past. You might change trains here but it isn't the sort of place you actually live in.

Mention Cheshire, though, and you get a different reaction.

Cheshire, eh? You aren't one of the Beeston Gibbons?

**Farm**

It smacks of Aston Martins, pretty villages, and obedient peasants. Leaf through Cheshire Life and you'll see them, the big farmers and the masters of the hunt.

I was brought up in the Cheshire countryside but as a farm labourer's son, I saw the other side of the rich man's place in the country. We lived in a tied cottage just up the lane from the farm. My dad worked long hours for lousy wages.

Injuries were common. He was gored by a bull once and almost lost his foot after a bad fall.

But there was one incident that seems to sum up real Cheshire life.

My dad answered the door one night. I was about six and had never seen anything like it. Some people, including my father's employer, were guffawing in front of the door in their running sports cars—the original gin and tonic Monty Python brigade.

**Fright**

It turned out that they were cooking across the country playing a stupid game and wanted to borrow a toy to hide.

It was their sheer arrogance that frightened me.

Yet foolish and pathetic as they were, my father had to recognise them as his betters. More than the harshness and boredom of the life, it was this casual belief in their own superiority which humiliated us.

By the way, they never returned the toy. They don't seem very good at observing anybody's property rights but their own!

# SADAT THE ARCH APPEASER



PEACE! blares the publicity machine—but what secret deals are Sadat (left) and Israeli prime minister Begin making?

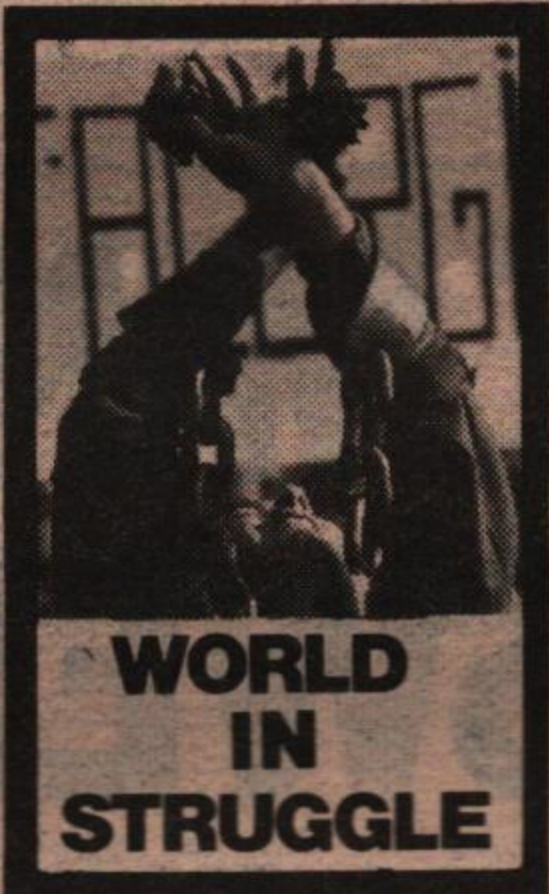
**IN THE NAME of peace and brotherhood, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt has addressed the Knesset—the parliament of Israel.**

Two thousand journalists were there to trumpet clichés across the world, and to pretend that his visit brought a 'glimpse of hope' to the Middle East.

For millions of Palestinian and Arab people in all Middle East countries, it has brought exactly the opposite.

A week earlier, the Israeli government had shown what it meant by peace. It unleashed its bombers to pulverise refugee camps in neighbouring Lebanon.

Whole camps were destroyed by the bombs, thousands were made



**WORLD IN STRUGGLE**

homeless, and 150 people killed.

Beigin, prime minister of Israel, went on television to rejoice at the slaughter. 'We have taught these savages a lesson', he said.

As for 'brotherhood' and 'love', all the actions of the Beigin government

have been directed to two aims:

□ To tighten the discrimination against hundreds of thousands of Arab people who live in Israel and in the occupied territories of the West Bank of Jordan, the Gaza strip and Sinai.

This is one of the most brutal occupations in the world. Any sign of resistance is met with a standard punishment: the blowing up of the suspects' house, and their enforced removal to the nearest refugee camp.

**SUBSIDISE**

In the face of even the American government's protests, Beigin has announced a huge government plan to subsidise more Israeli 'settlements' in the occupied territories, requisitioning Arab land.

□ To continue harassment of the other two million Palestinian people most of whom still live in conditions of unspeakable poverty in the camps set up after their expulsion from Palestine in 1948.

Cut the newspapers' cackle, and the

truth is clear.

Sadat is the arch-appeaser. He is shaking hands and giving comfort to one of the most oppressive and racist regimes in the world.

As for 'hope', his appeasement, like all appeasement, will not harness the Israeli tiger.

With the Egyptian front secure, Beigin will turn his forces with redoubled ferocity on Lebanon and on Syria, and above all on the Palestinians and on the Arabs in the occupied territories.

For years the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinians and the Arab workers have been pinned on the warlike noises made by Arab leaders like Sadat against the imperialism and racialism of the Israeli government. Now those protests are shown for what they are.

Only one good can come from Sadat's posturing—if Palestinians, Arabs and Jews all over the Middle East cut loose from the regimes which have suffocated them for so long and begin to find a new strength and confidence in themselves.

## Why he went to Israel

by PHIL MARFLEET

SADAT'S visit to Israel was a lone venture, and an act of desperation. It was not, as the press wants us to believe, a heroic act of courage to open a new phase in Middle Eastern political life.

It was the act of a man who knows that his time is limited, and who is willing to gamble to win himself an extra breathing space.

For Sadat is a man who loves power. He is the man who has moved his family into the old royal palace in Cairo—from which the Egyptian workers' movement expelled King Farouk 25 years ago.

Sadat had always been almost hysterically anti-Communist and pro-American. From the beginning he threw Egypt fully into the western camp.

**Display**

He brought in American advisors, and made a deal with President Nixon which he was told would at last set the crisis-ridden Egyptian economy on its feet. Nixon promised 2500 million dollars of investment.

The policy failed dismally hardly a penny arrived.

The Egyptian economy is now among the world's weakest, with international debts of 16 billion dollars, inflation still at over 30 per cent a year a huge military budget, a rapidly rising population and dreadful poverty.

Sadat's wealthy Arab 'friends' in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf have done little to bale him out. They are more interested in profitable investments in London's Mayfair or Park Lane.

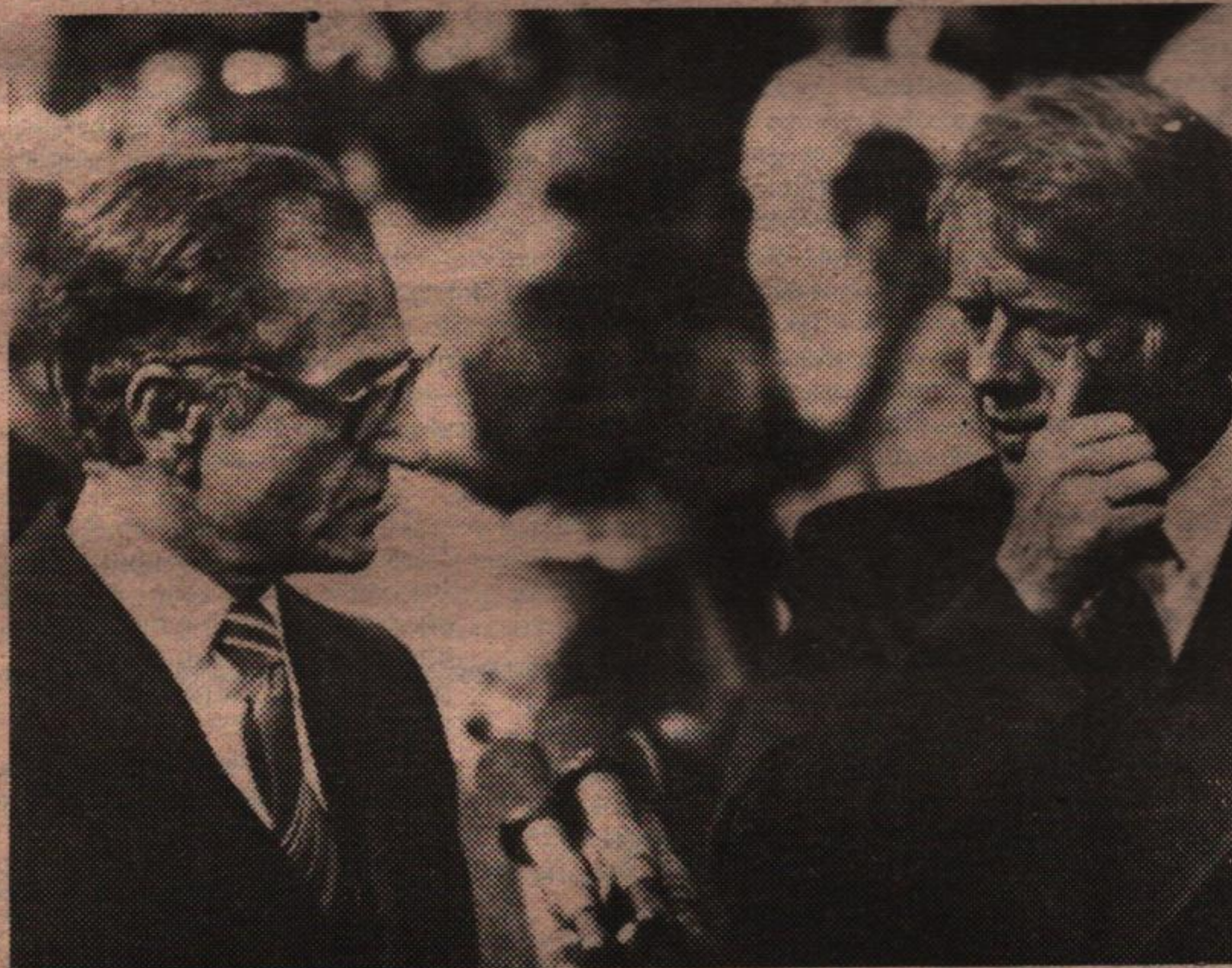
But the warning Egyptian workers gave Sadat last January has not been forgotten. Then, when he tried to raise food prices, they rose throughout Egypt in huge demonstrations of anger.

**More**

Sadat backed down, while the army watched closely, undecided whether they should move to take power. Sadat survived, just.

The visit to Israel was a desperate attempt to win further American support, to convince his 'friends' that he, Sadat, is the strong man of Egypt, to reach a deal with Israel, 'stabilise' the Middle East conflict, and attract to Egypt the cash Sadat desperately needs.

It will achieve nothing. It will create only more suspicion among Egyptian workers.



## THE SHAH: I wish he'd choked

by ELAHEH POVEY

ABOVE: A small taste of their own medicine for the Sha, President Carter and diplomats caught by the tear gas used against human rights demonstrators.

BELOW: Demonstrators chase an Iranian official cross the White House flower beds.

I WATCHED the television report of the Shah of Iran's recent visit to America. I watched the demonstrators charging down on the White House ceremony, and I saw the Shah and President Carter and all their aides crying from the tear gas.

I loved it! Only one thing. I wished they'd all choked. When he got round to his

welcoming speech, Carter spoke of 'enlightened leadership'. I was born and grew up in Iran and I know all about the Shah's enlightened leadership.

It means tens of thousands of political prisoners rotting in jail, and the savage torture of anyone who dares protest against the government.

So this is what Carter's 'human rights' campaign means. It stops at a handful of dissidents imprisoned in Russia and Eastern Europe. The rest can rot while Carter entertains their jailers.

Why was the Shah in America? To buy more arms. He managed to buy seven of the world's most sophisticated radar warning and control systems.

**Resist**

He'll use these to make himself into an even bigger super-power in the Gulf. He'll also use them against anyone who dares to resist his government.

The American government, which is pretending to have talks for 'strategic arms limitations' with Russia, has agreed to supply arms worth 23 billion dollars in two years.

The Shah lashes out that sort of money for arms. Meanwhile at home in Iran my friends tell me that water and electricity to homes is

being cut off for months at a time.

As a result of land speculation by the royal family and other parasites, rents have jumped to 75 per cent of wages—often for a single room in a slum!

There's protest and resistance against all this. Last week 2000 students at the Arymehr Technical University in Teheran occupied their campus and demonstrated against the brutality of the police

**Bodies**

These were the largest public demonstrations since 1963, when, as I remember, the streets were left strewn with the bodies of the demonstrators.

The Shah needs to keep this protest down. So he's delighted to be promised continuing help from his democratic friend Jimmy Carter.

□ Iranian students and the Students Union in Bradford University have organised a demonstration in Bradford in protest at the arrest, jailing and torturing of two Iranian students who did not return from holiday in Iran this year. It will start from the union building on Saturday 3 December at 2pm.



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**Soviet Power/**  
**The Soviet Working Class Today/**  
**The Russian Revolution and India**  
 price 30p

□ Ask your Socialist Worker seller for a copy.



**BILL HAMPTON** brother of the murdered American Black Panther, Fred Hampton. Bill is on a speaking tour around Britain to demand the prosecution of the Chicago police who murdered his brother while he was sleeping. Enthusiastic meetings have drawn 70 people in Leeds, and 60 in Birmingham. For more details contact Flame on (01) 739 1878, or write to 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

## Metropole: Support our picket!

SUPPORT for strikers at the Metropole Hotel in Central London has been growing. The picket line has been supported by strikers from Rolls Royce, workers from Desoutters and from Fleet Street.

The strikers have also decided to hold a meeting in support of the firemen, this week.

But they desperately need support from other hotel workers. The strike is for a £50 minimum wage for all hotel workers. Workers in one hotel chain—Centre Hotels—which includes several London hotels and the Old Kentucky restaurants—is meeting this week to decide on strike action for the £50 minimum.

A strike in the Centre group could transform the Metropole, giving those strikers the support they need so badly. It could also trigger action in many other London hotels, where wages for a whole week are usually less than one night's bed and breakfast.

Mass picket this Friday 6pm onwards. Metropole Hotel, junction of Edgware Road, and Praed Street.

# Socialist Worker

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## Subscribe!

# Reading school students drive out the Nazis

by COLIN COLDMAN

WHEN THE National Front were banned from meeting in Reading after a public outcry, they tried in desperation to recruit members from local schools.

A small group of school students had already got together to oppose the Nazis infiltrating our schools. We called ourselves Reading Schools Against Nazis and we leafleted schools about the dangerous policies of the NF and how they affected school students.

The reaction of the school authorities was predictable. Some members were threatened with expulsion and leaflets were banned.

But we refused to be intimidated. Support grew in schools and we received coverage in the local press.

When we heard the Nazis were trying to recruit from the schools we decided to call a meeting for all school students opposed to the Nazis.

We produced another leaflet and again got publicity in the press. We printed membership cards with a subscription of 10p. We put a lot of work into preparing the meeting so we expected it

to be a good one. But the response surprised everyone.

About 25 school students came along and most of them joined at the end. In addition another five people joined since the meeting and the present membership is about 30, representing five schools in the area.

There was tremendous enthusiasm at the meeting. As well as fighting the Nazis everyone decided to fight against the wearing of school uniform, corporal punishment and other oppressive measures used in schools.

We all left the meeting feeling more confident about

fighting the Nazis in schools. The National Front, on the other hand, have been completely demoralised. If there are any Nazis in our schools they are too scared to come out in the open.

The reason Reading Schools Against Nazis has been successful is because it has united all anti-fascists in schools. This is why the Anti-Nazi League has been formed. What we have done in Reading should be taken up all over the country.

The Anti-Nazi League has produced tens of thousands of leaflets for distribution in schools.

Chris Trimby, from Reading Schools Against Nazis, said: 'These leaflets are bloody great. They are just the thing we need to bring home to school students exactly what the Nazi National Front stand for.'



**PAUL HOLBOROW**, secretary of the Anti-Nazi League, welcoming the Nazi Colonel Meyer when he tried to hold a press conference in London last week.

Meyer was a member of the Waffen SS. This was one of the military sections of Hitler's Nazi Party.

Among their other activities the Waffen SS provided guards for the concentration camps, they led the mass murder of tens of thousands of Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, they murdered the entire populations of villages in occupied France and Czechoslovakia.

One of these animals was discovered last week staying in the house of Johnathan Guinness. He is a former chairman of the right wing Monday Club and a Conservative Parliamentary candidate.

Guinness's mother is now married to the former leader of the British fascists, Sir Oswald Mosley.

The Nazi who Guinness was entertaining, like Meyer, was in Britain to publicise a new book that whitewashes the SS and pretends that they were simple soldiers who didn't know what was going on.

Not only did the SS know what was going on, they were responsible for most of the murders.



Get your trade union organisation, shop stewards committee, students union, anti-racist committee, trades council, to sponsor the Anti-Nazi League.

Get donations to the £100,000 fund. Approach individuals, trade unionists, academics, sympathetic businessmen, to give money and personally sponsor the League.

Order posters, leaflets, sponsorship forms now. Posters £1, plus 50p postage, for 30. Leaflets £2.50, plus 50p postage, for 1000.

WRITE TO: Anti-Nazi League, 12/13 Little Newport Street, London WC2.

# THE MINERS' ANSWER...

by BILL MESSAGE

'FROM THEM that do to them that don't'. That was the message that accompanied three shovels delivered to the HQ of the National Union of Mineworkers last week.

The shovels, one each for the three NUM national officials, were delivered by Sammy Thompson, branch delegate at Markham Colliery near Doncaster.

They were sent as an expression of anger by the branch at a letter bearing the signatures of Joe Gormley, Lawrence Daly and Michael McGahey that has been circulated to all NUM branches. The letter blames the men for the drop in output and appeals for greater productivity.

The men at Markham are particularly angry that the letter was signed by Mick McGahey. They feel that his time would be better spent dancing on the grave of the productivity deal rather than cracking a whip over the heads of the rank and file.

The terms of this letter, which were dictated to NCB chairman Sir Derek Ezra by Energy Minister Tony Benn, rejected any increase above the government's 10 per cent norm and outside the 12 month rule.

In a secret letter to Ezra, Tony Benn has made it clear that he expects the Coal Board to approach the TUC for their help in holding the miners to the 12 month rule.

The reason behind Benn's secrecy is his preoccupation with maintaining his image as the 'friend of the miners'. Like Pontius Pilate he is now publicly washing his hands while privately plotting to defeat the miners.

At the NUM executive meeting right wing Nottingham Area President Len Clarke provocatively moved for a ballot on strike action. He could not find a seconder. But the broad left offered no alternative apart from sitting tight till the next executive meeting just before Christmas.

The longer the left holds back on mounting a campaign for the claim the greater chance the right wing has of encouraging certain areas and pits to go it alone with local productivity deals.

There is certainly no enthusiasm for productivity deals as such among the membership but there certainly is deep frustration over the low wage levels that have come about as a result of the social contract.

At a few high productivity pits there is talk of negotiating local productivity schemes, even at pits like Solsgrith in the militant Scottish Area.

## If the firemen win, we can win

MORE THAN seven thousand university teachers demonstrated in support of their pay claim. It was unprecedented for a quarter of the membership of the union, the Association of University Teachers, to make any public commotion at all.

University staff had their 1974 claim blocked in 1975, and pay has been frozen ever since. As a result real pay has gone down by 25 per cent.

Junior staff are now lucky

to be offered £70 gross—or roughly £40 take home pay.

The AUT leadership has tried throughout the campaign to limit attention to the 1975 'anomaly', and play on the members' fear of doing anything not respectable.

The meeting and lobby of parliament on Wednesday was designed to wear out the militants so that there would be no more action.

The SWP University teachers distributed leaflets

calling for a straight pay increase for all grades of £24 per week, opposition to the public expenditure cuts hitting universities, and an all out strike to win not only the 1975 claim but also a massive increase now.

University teachers know—as the leaflet said—that our claim depends on the firemen winning. Straight self-interest means they should be doing everything they can to help the firemen win.

# Gypsum: A hard lesson

by Terry Taylor and May Taylor, Geoff Jones and Doreen Jones

THE FOUR of us decided to pen this article in the local working men's club with the hope that our experience gained at British Gypsum will help other families in similar disputes.

Our strike began eight weeks ago. The management tried to bring in contract labour when the engineering union workers were working to rule.

The engineers went on strike. The 100 members of the Transport and General union, with no history of militancy refused to a man to cross the picket line.

In the first two weeks, the euphoria was sustained by a flying picket linking up with other major strikes in the Bolton area.

The strikers showed a militancy far above their experience. This was helped

by the full understanding and support of most wives. Some even came picketing with the flying picket.

When the management tried to use scab office staff to restart production we occupied the factory for three days.

It was handed back to the management at 2.00pm on Saturday, at one hour's notice, to enable our members to enjoy their Saturday after-

noon sport.

The occupation was a success because of the comedy. When the senior management refused to leave the office premises, the strikers barricaded all exits, leaving access through one window.

Management climbing in and out provided a hilarious spectacle for all.

The management had no food, so the strikers ate in full view of the locked in



(BLOCK CAPITALS)



# Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY 10P

## Shock at palace as commoner is born

THE NATION was plunged into mourning last week as the news came through that Princess Anne was delivered in hospital of a commoner.

This is the first time for 500 years—and the first time ever in the Hanoverian dynasty—that so dreadful a deformity has been born to a royal person.

Doctors and midwives gasped as the appalling spectacle emerged from the royal womb. It had two arms, two

legs a head and body. 'There's no coronet!' muttered the Queen's Doctor through sobs.

Nor was there any sign of a tiara!

The creature was entirely naked! No ermine or linen clothed its small body!

The worst shock came when the tiny being started to cry. There was no sign of any royal accent in the cry!

Said a statement from the Royal College of Physicians: 'It might for all the world have been the cry of a servant girl's

child'. The Queen and Prince Philip cancelled all engagements as they sought to recover from the shock.

### Shape

Every possible effort is being made by the royal family's considerable resources to put the matter right. The 'commoner' has been rushed to Gatcombe Manor in Wiltshire, Princess Anne's new home, where it will be treated with every known luxury.

Elocution experts will be brought in to shape the commoner's speech suitable to royalty. The commoner's attitudes will be moulded to show the correct arrogance and contempt for his fellow creatures.

Hope was expressed in palace circles last week that the nation would soon forget the shock. Prince Philip said:

'A few years at Gatcombe Manor should put the little scrounger straight.'

## Cornish workers occupy!

by JIMMY RULE

CORNWALL: 250 workers at Teddington Auto Controls, in Redruth, are occupying their factory in the fight for a living wage.

The workers, 50 of them women, have been banning overtime and declining to do piecework because their wages are so low. A toolmaker takes home about £39 and a labourer a mere £27.

This is at least £20 below the district rate in engineering which in Cornwall is in any case one of the lowest in the country.

### Area

Management's response to their action was to suspend all the workers. This move led to the occupation.

Teddington Auto Controls is part of the United Gas Industries Group. This outfit specialises in opening up plants in the most depressed areas of the country, for which they can pocket government grants and get away with paying lousy wages.

Workers occupying the plant on a rota basis fear that the company will just shut up shop rather than pay them their due. The statutory seven years the company has to stay in the area after receiving government grant is up.

This means that the workers, members of the AUEW, desperately need support and backing. This is all the more urgent since no union official had, by Monday, even visited the plant.

Messages of support and donations to, and information from, Gordon Wragg, 8 Northpool Close, Illogan Highway, Redruth, Cornwall.

# GRUNWICKS: THE CRUELLEST BETRAYAL

**AFTER 15 months on strike for the right to join a union, four courageous men and women have been slung out of their union!**

They are Yasu Patel, Vipin Magdani, Jayanben Desai and Johnny Patel. They are on strike at Grunwicks, the firm which is supported by the National Association of Freedom and the right wing of the Tory Party.

Fifteen months ago they and 86 other workers walked out on strike in protest against appalling conditions and a bullying management.

They joined APEX, the clerical workers' union, which officially supported their demand that Grunwicks recognise the union.

For fifteen months, the four have stood on picket lines, joined mass pickets, gone on demonstrations and travelled the country drumming up support.

### HUNGER STRIKE

In September, they stood in the gallery while the entire Trades Union Congress applauded them.

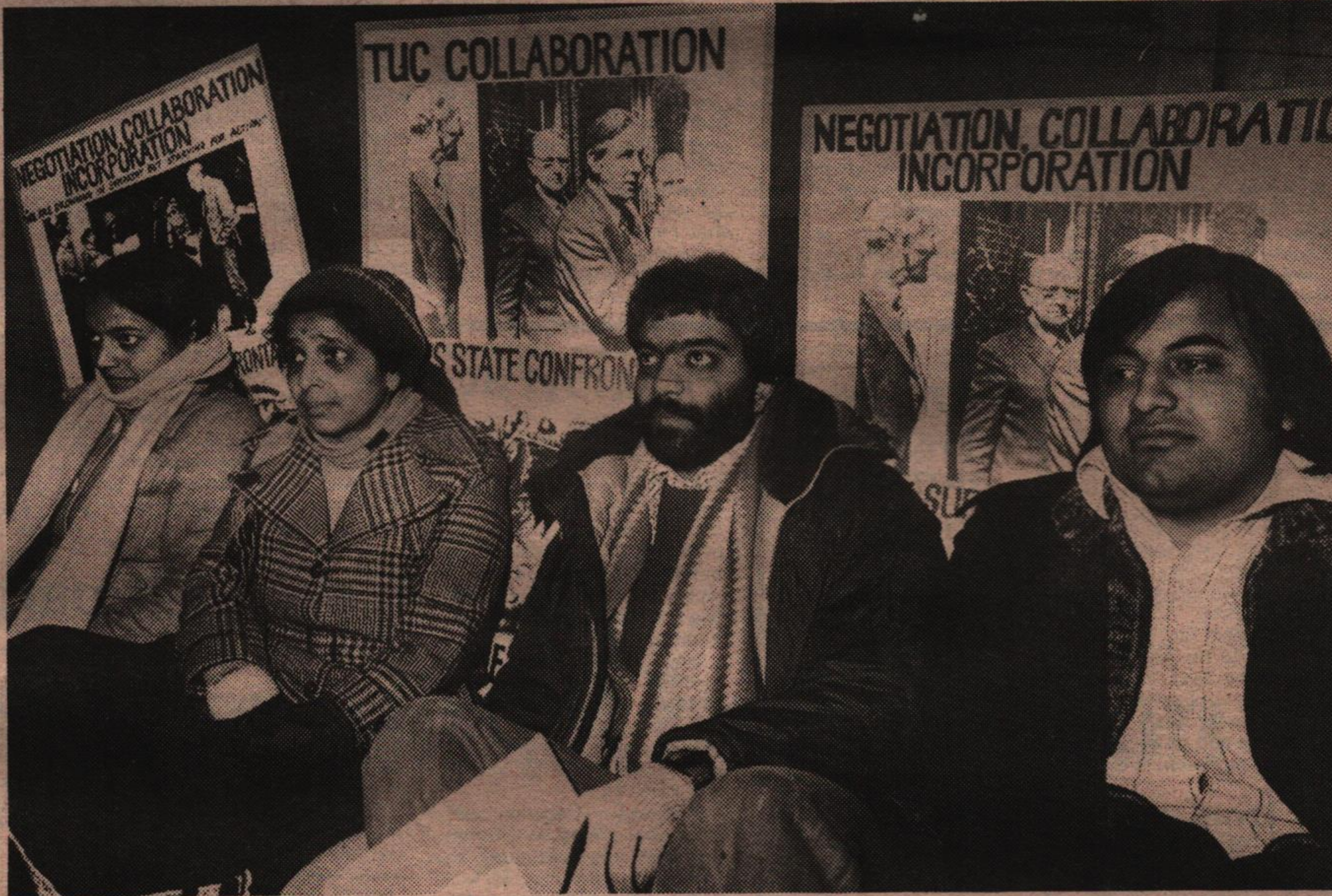
On Monday they went to the TUC again, this time to sit on hunger strike in the cold, demanding the action against Grunwicks which the TUC had voted for!

And for their action the APEX leaders suspended them for four weeks, and denied them strike pay for that time.

Mrs Desai, blue with cold, fatigue and hunger, said: 'They told us not to have a mass picket because it would lead to violence. Now they tell us not to take non-violent action. They don't want us to do anything'.

Kamlesh Gandhi, chairman of the Grunwicks strike committee, is attending the Rank and File Conference this Saturday in Manchester.

Margaret Thatcher, leader of the Tory Party, has dined twice this month in secret and in private with George Ward, the Grunwicks managing director.



The hunger-strikers outside the TUC Congress House. For this their union has suspended them.

## London Airport: Hundreds out against racism

A WHITE supervisor gets into an argument with an Asian employee. He orders him up a spiral staircase on to the roof of the building.

He challenges the Asian worker to a fight. The Asian worker asks if the supervisor wants to kill him.

This incident happened at London's Heathrow Airport.

Asian workers in the catering units at Heathrow have been putting up with this sort of harassment for months. But on Friday last week they'd had

enough. 450 workers stormed out of the gates after two shop stewards had been told to 'Bugger off' by a laundry supervisor called Shephard.

### Sick

Shephard had arbitrarily changed the shift of a laundry worker who had been sick. When two shop stewards, Gurbhajan Sekhon and Amrik Rai, complained, he just abused them.

If the bosses take the same

attitude throughout the airport, nearly a thousand Asian workers could be on strike in the biggest Asian strike protest ever.

This is not the first such strike. Three summers ago hundreds of Asian workers struck at the South side catering unit over appalling working conditions and racist management.

The Race Relations Board referred the case to the Race Relations Complaints Committee of the National Joint Council for Civil Air

Transport. The catering unit shop stewards submitted a document packed with information.

### Threat

They describe unbelievable incidents of constant harassment of the Asian employees by the white supervisors. Rudeness to the women workers, threats of physical assault on men employees are the norm.

The airport committee rejected these findings and declared there was no racial discrimination at the airport!

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For more information and to send donations and messages of support, write to British Airways Catering Cabin Services Centre Strike Committee, c/o Southall Indian Workers Association, 18 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex.