

womens voice

MONTHLY WOMENS PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Between January and June unemployment rose by 121 per cent amongst women and 48 per cent amongst men.

40 per cent of the total workforce are women. One in five women are the sole wage earners.

AS unemployment rises and our livelihoods are threatened with redundancies the old arguments are resurrected: 'Women have no right to a job', or if it comes to a choice between a man and a woman, 'the woman should go'.



We've already seen in Birmingham Post Office that the union capitulated to management announcements over redundancies. The union's response was 'redundancies are inevitable'—it's the women who should be sacked. The cries of 'women out first' will get louder, unless we ourselves are convinced of our right to a job and are prepared to fight.

The attack on the right to work for women is a fundamental attack on our independence. When people argue that women have no right to work, they are basically arguing that a woman's only right is to be in the kitchen, rearing children, tending the husband, the 'real' worker in the household.

Fighting for the right to work means fighting for a woman's right to her own wage packet, instead of being dependant on someone else. It means the right to live a life of your own—not just tied to the kitchen.

And when people start using the argument that women should be sacked because the family can survive off the man's wage because it's higher, we have to state loud and clear—WOMEN NO LONGER WORK FOR PIN MONEY. The woman's wage pays the rent or the mortgage, or some other basic family essential. Families need every wage that comes in. We can't afford to lose any jobs.

All these arguments and prejudices against women come up when workers basically accept that the boss has the right to make workers redundant. They are arguments about how to fit the bosses' plans. Instead we should be arguing how to fight redundancies, all redundancies. A job lost, man or woman's, whether through 'natural' wastage or 'voluntary' redundancy, is a job lost to the labour movement—lost for our children.

As Maggie Dunn put it at the Womens Voice Rally: 'When I leave school, I want a job'. That means fighting for jobs, arguing our right to work with other women and men. Organising the fight as they did at Personnas.



THE RIGHT TO WORK CAMPAIGN

When it comes to organising the fight for jobs, like so many other things, we have to rely on ourselves. The official trade union movement, in the shape of Len Murray and the TUC have failed to give a lead. They opposed the lobby of parliament on November 26th which was supported by thousands of trade unionists.

That is why the National Rank and File Organising Committee has set up a Right to Work Campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to unite the unemployed and employed in the fight together for jobs. People with jobs have the power to stop redundancies: the unemployed workers understand only too well the urgency. The strength of the employed must be linked to the unemployed.

The unemployed cannot wait for the official movement. The National Right to Work Campaign is helping to set up local Right to Work Committees in every area. Unemployed women should join these committees. Find out where redundancies are happening in your area. Through the right to work committee, contact the shop stewards to find out what they are going to do about it. Leaflet the factory or office urging the workers to fight for their jobs. Once you're outside the gate, it won't be easy to get inside again. Try a picket of the place to draw attention to the situation of the unemployed.

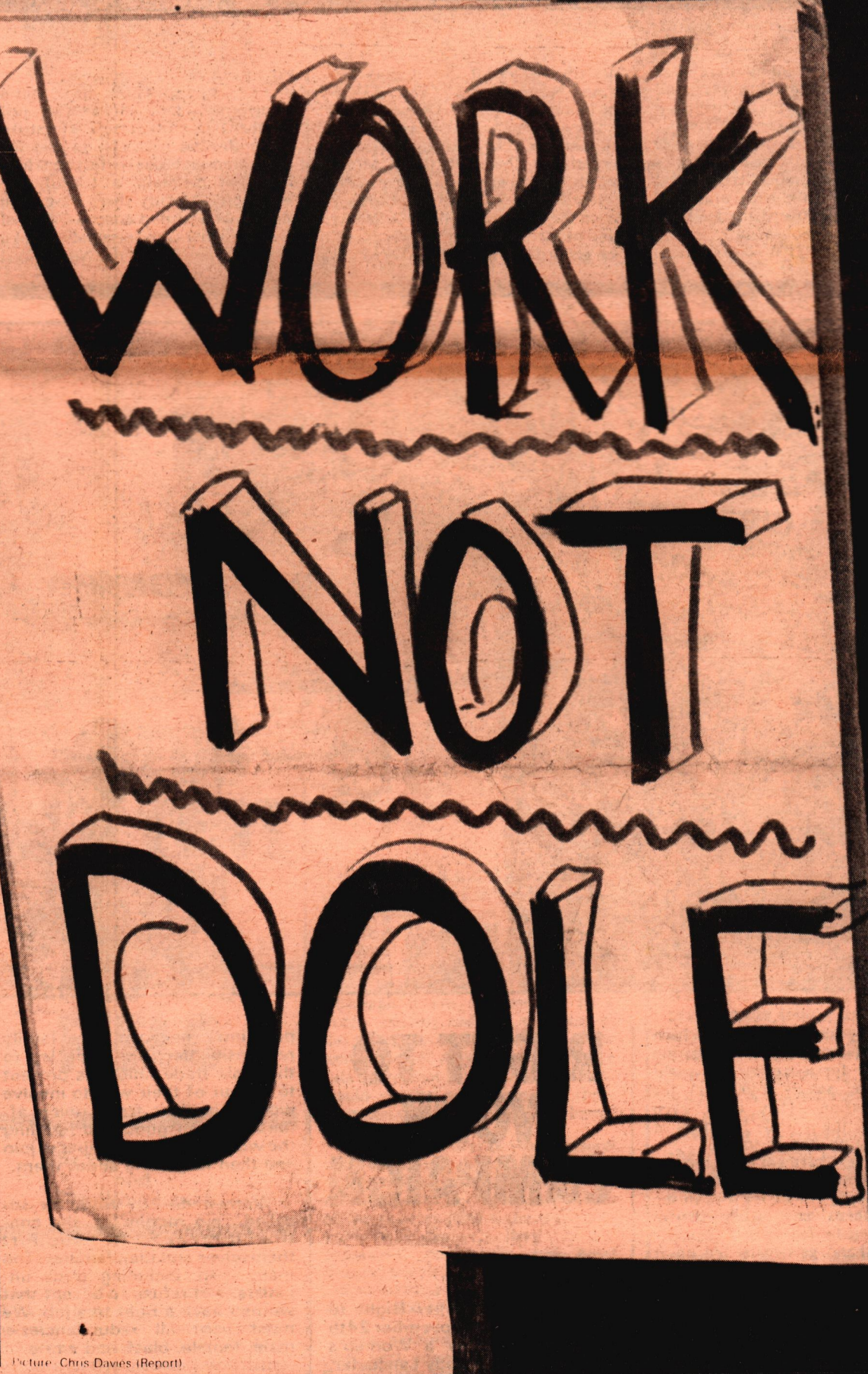
Local Right to Work Committees have already been active—occupying job centres in Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool and London. The demonstration on November 26th was a great success.

The campaign has only just begun. A march is being organised in mid February from the North West to London, finishing with a rally in the Albert Hall. We have to make sure women in every locality are part of the campaign, on the march and organising support for it, part of the struggle at every stage.

If we can unite in struggle, men and women, employed and unemployed, we can win.



For further details about the National Right to Work Campaign, write to 46 Prince George Road, London N16.



Picture: Chris Davies (Report)

Womens Voice rally report... see centre pages

PERSONNA OCCUPY FOR JOBS

By Dave Sherry

THE Personna razor blade factory in Hillingdon, Glasgow. 300 workers, a majority of them women, are occupying the plant in defence of jobs and working conditions. Their fight for the right to work takes place against a background of mounting unemployment figures and the threat of mass redundancies throughout the West of Scotland. The outcome of the struggle is crucial for the whole right to work campaign.

Personna is a subsidiary of the giant American-owned Philip Morris group, a combine which operates in 36 different countries and last year made recorded profits of over £175 million dollars. In the past year the workforce at Personna have already accepted three batches of voluntary redundancies and 112 jobs have been lost.

Despite promises from the management that their production problems were solved, they threatened another 46 redundancies and put forward outrageous proposals for flexibility and multi-manning of machines. Faced with these demands the workforce decided that they'd sacrificed more than enough and struck to defend jobs and conditions.

The strike continued for four weeks and involved round-the-clock picketing at the factory. The management refused to budge, so the workers decided to step up the fight and at a mass meeting on Saturday 18 October the workforce unanimously decided to occupy the plant.



Personna during occupation which is now over. Full Report in January issue.

Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

Occupying the plant has developed the self-confidence of the workers and they are now using the factory as a centre for organising the kind of support they need to win. Delegates have been round local factories organising levies and collections and large meetings have been organised inside the factory for delegates from the local labour movement.

Betty Franci, AUEW shop steward,

described some of the support they have been getting. 'The AUEW members in the Rolls Royce on the estate are organising a weekly levy to support us. The Hull dockers have promised to black all Philip Morris goods. Our delegates have been across to the East of Scotland to get support from the miners and Helen Gallagher, one of the TASS shop stewards, will be going down to Wales to try to raise

support there.'

The occupation has been transformed into more than just another industrial dispute. The strike committee has been able to organise entertainment inside the factory which helps to maintain a friendly atmosphere. Already there have been three folk and pop concerts. One of the highlights of the occupation was a free performance by the North West

London Theatre Workshop of their play in support of the National Abortion Campaign. The women I spoke to felt that the play had been excellent because it showed that the real issue was about women's right to choose.

One of the reasons why the occupation is so solid is because the tradition of trade union organisation inside the factory has been so good. Joan Brown, the PACE convenor, talked about equal pay. 'We've already won equal pay. The women are just as militant as the men.' The benefits of these attitudes are paying off now. The workforce are united and the women are not prepared to take a back seat and leave the fight to the men.

The men and women are beginning to realise that their own self-activity is the key to victory. The AUEW National Executive Committee delayed making the strike official so the workers sent a squad of flying pickets down to London to protest at the AUEW headquarters. The pressure paid off and the occupation was immediately given official support.

The workers are determined to win. The management have been trying to sicken them by sitting it out, but so far they have failed. Betty Franci put it this way, 'Philip Morris hope to starve us out. Well, they're not going to get away with that now. We're determined not to go down the road. We're determined to hold on to our jobs.'

STOP PRESS
PERSONNA OCCUPATION OVER. THERE WILL BE A FULL REPORT NEXT ISSUE

'We want to fight back'

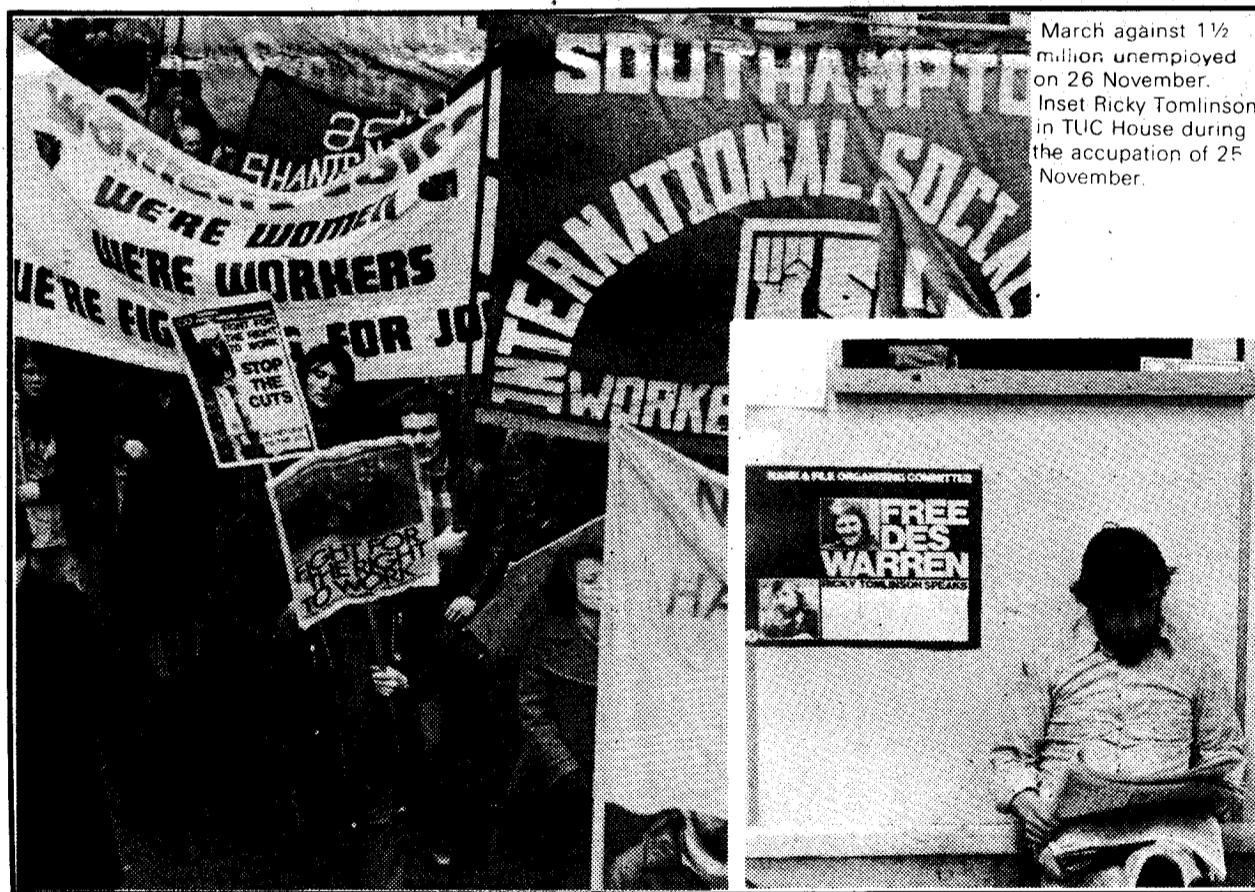
JUDY LANCASTER
AUEW

SINCE LAST November, except for a period of five weeks, my husband has been unemployed. He has been made redundant twice in 18 months. He used to work at Strachans in Hamble near Soton. Suddenly, one bright March day, they were given 1½ hours notice. There was a fight over it and one of the factories occupied. Due to some wheeling and dealing by some of the trade union officials, the occupation was defeated. When my husband became unemployed again in November 1974, we thought it would be relatively easy to find work. He's a bit of a jack of all trades. But weeks went by then months, the unemployment figures crept up. Suddenly, we realised he wasn't going to get another job.

Where we live in Portsmouth, unemployment is above the national average. Luckily I'm still working so to get a reasonable wage, £27 after stoppages. There's no union in my place, but as far as I can gather the difference between us women and the men in wages is only 60p. (The men are very tight lipped about their wages).

The way they push up the men's wages is through massive overtime. Who the hell wants overtime? Eight hours a day is enough. And besides the way I look at it is this, if it wasn't for the overtime working, my husband would have more chance of a job. We should have a better basic wage and a 35 hour week.

John gets £7.50 dole. They cut it in half a few months ago. We have no kids so we're a lot better off than some families. But by the time we pay rent, electric, food, HP agreements, there's hardly anything left. Besides why should we all have to scrape and juggle with our money. We must be really stupid. The men aren't tightening their belts. In the summer during the holidays, they go on holiday and the



March against 1½ million unemployed on 26 November. Inset Ricky Tomlinson in TUC House during the occupation of 25 November.

Pictures: Andrew Ward (Report)

nerve to report that £1000 had been spent at one hotel alone on ordering champagne for a week. And yacht crews were paying £400-£500 for accommodation. They don't even mind admitting it while hundreds of families are on starvation level.

Big business have got themselves in a mess and with government aid are making us pay for it. We'll be in the soup kitchens next while they're feeding their fat faces.

My husband gets really fed up at times, plodding around the streets for a job. He does the shopping, washing, cooking. He doesn't mind that, it's just so boring. Women get sick of housework, so I understand how he feels. We used to be able to have a Saturday night out but that's gone now, what with Christmas nearly on us.

John is going to the Right to Work Committee meeting here. We want to do something that has been accepted as a right to work.

RIGHT TO WORK CAMPAIGN

A SOCIALIST Worker Right to Work meeting on November 24th was addressed by a Women's Voice supporter, Judy Lancaster. Judy, a local engineering worker active in the AUEW, emphasised the need to involve women in the fight against unemployment and redundancies. Women are especially vulnerable as so many of them have to work

part-time because of family responsibilities. She appealed to the male trade unionists present to go out of their way to involve women in their trade union affairs. 'It's no good just handing the women a piece of paper to join and then forgetting about them.'

'Women do not work for so-called "pin money"', she continued, 'but to support themselves and their families. Too many men, including trade unionists, still refuse to accept that women have a right to a job. We must fight all redundancies—male, female, black and white.'

Women trade unionists will be arguing strongly for at least one woman representative on any Right to Work Committee set up from a meeting of shop stewards and trade unionists on December 6th.

'My wife is the breadwinner'

JOHN LANCASTER

ONLY WHEN a man becomes unemployed does he realise how much of a drag it is for a woman who has to stay at home. My wife is now the breadwinner and I do the housework, cooking and washing. At the moment we don't have any kids, but I can imagine how hard it would be for a woman who has the additional burden of looking after two or three youngsters.

Although I don't feel any way ashamed that my wife works and I don't, I do get very depressed that all the plans we had gone out of the window because of lack of money.

When I was at work, like many other men, I thought that women did not understand the ways of the world, ie, trade unionism, politics. No wonder when you are stuck all day at home with nobody to talk to but yourself, the only communication you have with world events is the radio and we all know how that lies.

It is women's complete isolation from the outside world that keeps them in utter ignorance of the plight of other housewives. They never get the chance to organise as housewives therefore they tend to leave the thinking and decision making to men. I do not see women as objects of pity, nor do I wish to appear patronising.

What I have learned is this. Two years ago I was on a mass picket at a local factory and half the pickets were women. The women were just as militant as the men and in some cases more so.

Only when women look on themselves as equals and get rid of the Max Factor image, fight in the workplace for real equality can we ever hope to get socialism. Any man who thinks we can get socialism without women is a fool.

Interview with Pauline Holmes by Anna Paczuska

'THE MARCH was a great success. It showed that we've got some public support. I'm glad of that support' said Pauline Holmes, NUPE steward from the Invalid and Crippled Children's Hospital.

She was speaking about the march organised by the East London Action Committee Against Cuts in protest at the Health Authority's plans to close the ICC—the hospital where Pauline works. She, like the other 22 women who work at this small geriatric hospital, is fighting to save the hospital from closure. Last Friday the march was supported by some 200 local trade unionists who marched from the ICC to a meeting of the Community Health Council to urge them to reject the Health Authority's plans.

'When closure of the hospital was first announced' said Pauline 'not all the women were in the union. But we joined up all the nurses and ancillaries who weren't. After all 22 women can't fight on their own. They've got to get union backing.'

And the campaign to save the ICC has mobilised considerable backing. Local ambulancemen have given an undertaking not to move any of the patients out of the hospital without the go ahead from Pauline. Staff at the hospital have arranged with the local NUPE official not to interview for other hospital jobs while there is a chance of saving the ICC. And the ELACAC is continually being strengthened by new delegations from trade union branches in the East End determined to oppose the run down of the hospital service.

WE WANT TO CARRY ON FIGHTING

The ICC is a small neighbourhood hospital which management say is inefficient to run. Pauline says 'It's a lovely hospital. I wouldn't want to work anywhere else. Some of the old ladies in there are 80. We have a nice friendly atmosphere. They are near their relatives. If management close us down these patients will be moved to a large hospital on the other side of the

borough elderly relatives won't be able to visit so often. There's hardly any provision for geriatrics. It's about time these old ladies were properly catered for.'

In its own report the Area Health Authority admits that 'there are few geriatric and no psychogeriatric beds in the area—patients from Newham have to be treated outside the district'.

In the same paragraph they announce the closure of the ICC which is one of the few geriatric units in the area. And it's not the only hospital that is being illogically closed. Two maternity hospitals are under the axe supposedly because they are under used. 'But that's simply not true' a

nurse told the Community Health Council.

'I work at one of the hospitals. Often we have an extra line of beds down the middle of the ward, there's such a demand for beds'. 'And the other maternity hospital wouldn't have so many empty beds if all the births weren't induced!' shouted another voice from the public gallery to general approval.

Altogether ten hospitals are scheduled for closure in the East End. The Area Health Authority claims that these closures will be countered by the opening of a grand new super hospital in the late 70's. But as one senior doctor pointed out 'No matter how you juggle the hospital beds about, the plans mean a cut back in services. Doctors are almost unanimous in their opposition to the plan.' A casualty officer pointed out how the plans meant a cut back in the already inadequate 806 casualty beds—to a mere 580. He painted a grim picture of vast areas of hospital covered by casualty admissions lying on hard trolleys because no other facilities would be available.

But decline in the service is only one side of the picture. Hospital closures also mean loss of jobs. This is particularly serious in the East End where 1 in 10 is already unemployed. Although no hospital workers are being sacked, the number of jobs is shrinking. When people leave, their jobs are not re-advertised. The vacancies are not filled. The Health Authority's plans mean a cut back of some 600 jobs overall.

'We want to carry on fighting' says Pauline. 'We are worried about jobs. But it's not just jobs. I hate to see any hospital closing. As a member of the public I am worried about the run down in the service in this area too.'

She urged all members of the public worried about loss of jobs and the rundown of the hospital service in East London to contact ELACAC and also to support the call by Hackney Trades Council to lobby the Area Health Authority on December 11th.



Left: March against closure of the Invalid and Crippled Children's Hospital. Centre: The London Hospital, half demolished waiting for a new wing to be built. Right: Meeting at St James Hospital, Portsmouth. Called to discuss lack of jobs.

3 BEDS IN A TENT ON AN EMPTY FIELD

By Pauline Fenn
and
Gay Whitehouse

down to a 240 bed, 1 unit hospital. With any luck, by 1979 (the proposed opening date) the survivors of the Government cut-backs might get three beds in a tent on the empty field that is the proposed site of this wonder of the medical world.

Because of the way these closures are being kept quiet, people just don't realise what's happening. This suits

the Area Health Authorities fine. But last Friday, the East London Cuts Committee organised a demonstration from the Invalid and Crippled Children's Hospital to the Town Hall where the Community Health Council was discussing the closure proposals. Although it was supposed to be a public meeting and 200 members of the public wanted to go in, only a few were allowed. Any questions on the cuts were not answered and they would give no assurances that these hospitals were *not* going to be closed.

The consequences of these closures will not only affect people's health but also the jobs, because Newham not only has one of the highest death rates in the country (due to air-pollution, industrial disease, lung cancer, bronchitis, pneumonia and heart disease) but also has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. So we stand to lose both ways.

Local authorities are now planning their next round of cuts in Social Services, the Health Service, Education and Housing and if you think you are entitled to a better life now than we had in the 30s, you need to start fighting now not after the axe has fallen.

Cutting the Welfare State

THE PARTY certainly is over. (You may not have noticed there being much of a party in the first place—but there's no not noticing how much worse it's getting.) Houses, hospitals, schools, social services are being cut left, right and centre. Bus queues, hospital waiting lists, housing waiting lists, classes, are all growing. So is the propaganda telling us we can't afford the 'luxury' of a welfare state any more. A Labour government, Barbara Castle at the helm, is busy deciding when and where to chop the next billion pounds or three from public spending. *Cutting the Welfare State (who profits)* shows why this is happening. It shows the death grip that private capital has on government spending, and points out the logic behind the government's economic strategy. It shows that this strategy, based on the 'regeneration of British industry' must lead to the dismantling of the welfare state. How the banks, insurance companies, drug companies will take advantage of this. How inequalities between areas of the country and sections of the community (men, women, black, white) are going to be further intensified. It examines four areas—North Tyneside, Liverpool, Birmingham and Newham to show how the cuts are already affecting those living and working there. We're being told it's cuts or loss of jobs. This report shows quite clearly that it's cuts and loss of jobs—unless we fight back.

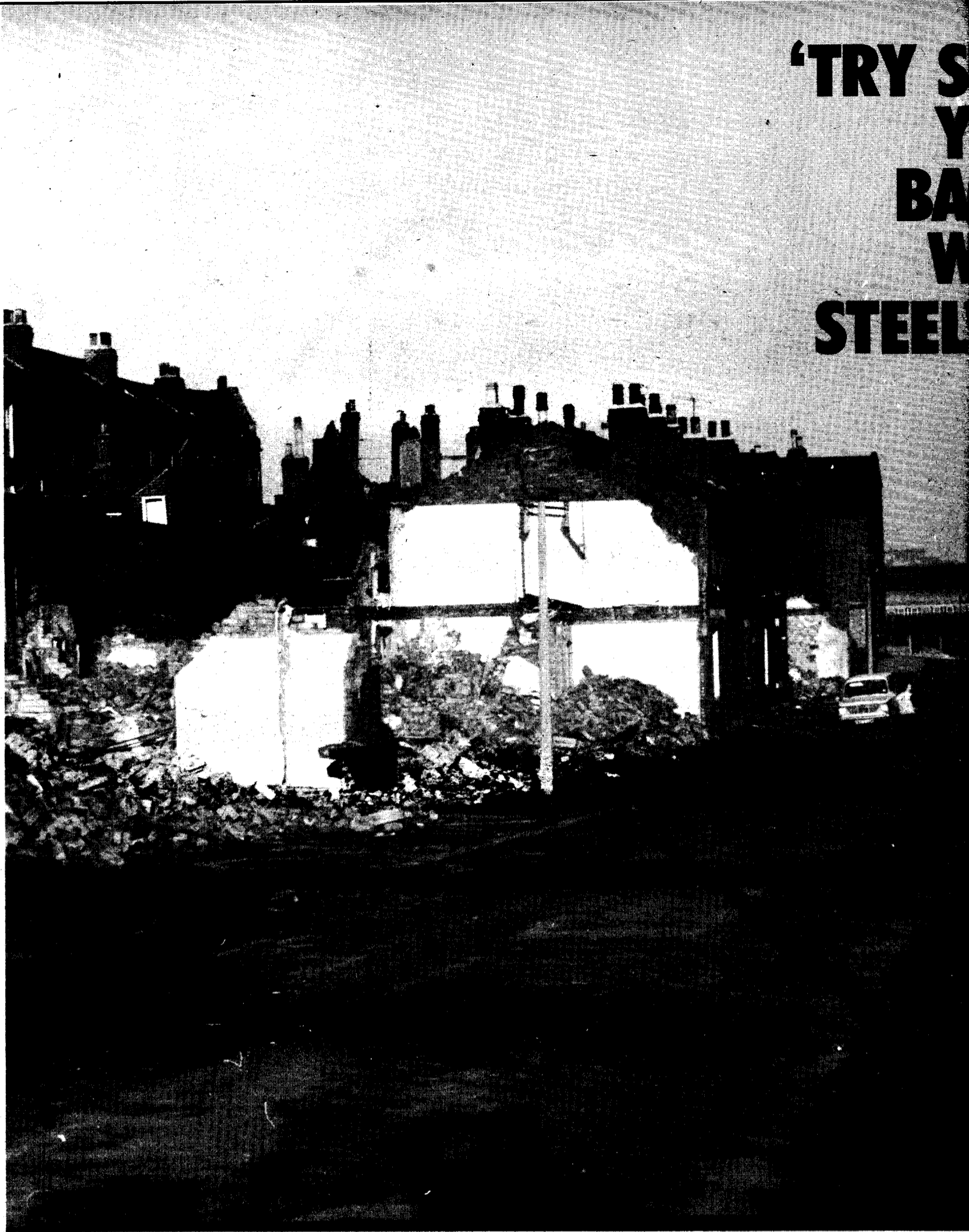
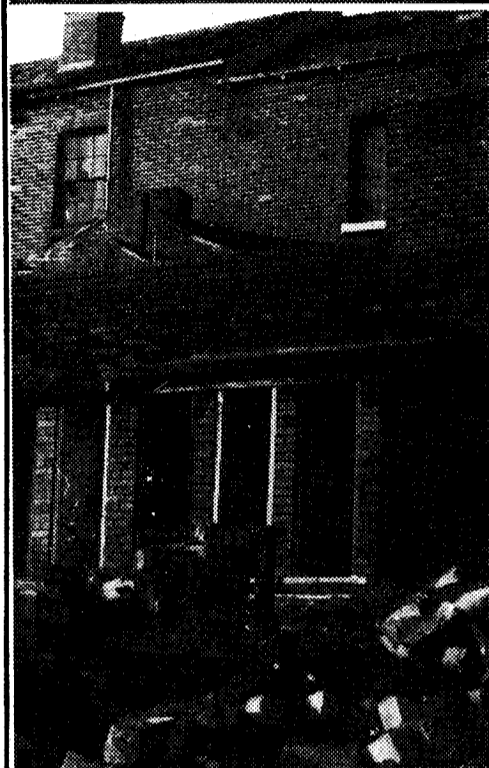
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Thirty-three and a third off, free of mailing charges for orders over 100. Credit will be extended to bona fide organisations.

IF YOU live in Newham and are likely to be seriously ill, move out quick. Five out of nine of our local hospitals are threatened with closure. Poplar Hospital has already been closed and the Invalids and Crippled Children's Hospital is next on the casualty list. We will then be left with the prospect of having three small hospital for 236,000 people.

When the five are closed, we will have only one Casualty Department, maternity beds reduced from 170-100, one less hospital for old people, the only hospital near the docks will go and, if you should need an abortion, and are lucky enough to be the one in three that apply and get granted permission, forget about it because the hospital you would be sent to is being closed as well.

But really, there is no need for people in Newham to worry because we are going to be the lucky recipients of the Government's new brain-child in the hospital line—'The Nucleus Hospital'. Once upon a time, 20 years ago, this was planned as being a 1200 bed, 5 unit hospital. By 1975 we are



**'TRY S
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STEEL**

**By
Simon Ogden and Ann
Silverleaf**

IN Sheffield the local paper once again wrung their hands in horror at the conditions in one of the city's slum clearance areas—Ellesmere—in the industrial east end of the city. 'The worst depths of squalor' . . . went the headlines.

It's been bad enough living in this area ever since it was built—sharing your backyard with a steel-works, having to walk a hundred yards to the toilet and fighting against damp and dirt. But in the last five years conditions have gone downhill twice as fast since the council started its 'humanitarian' slum clearance procedure.

Landlords no longer see the houses as a long term investment and give up doing repairs. 'Every time it rains the cellar floods' commented one tenant. 'The doorway is coming away from the wall—there's a gap you can put your finger through.' There's no electricity in three of the seven rooms and with the damp they are scarcely usable in the winter. The

wiring is rotten and no points are earthed; the house could burn down any time.'

Last week the remaining two hundred and fifty three families in the area wrote an open letter to the evening paper:

'Over the last weeks, conditions have deteriorated fast; we don't think there is anyone around here who cannot tell of some sort of hardship that is being suffered'. Young children play in streets of burning houses, old people are afraid to go out on the street after dark for fear of vandals and the debris which is strewn across pavements and streets.'

Sheffield is meant to be a 'progressive' Labour council, proud of its housing record. Yet the simple reason why these people and thousands of others in Attercliffe, Heely, Walkeley and other inner city areas are condemned to such squalor, is that not enough houses are being built, in Sheffield or anywhere else.

In 1966, 3433 houses were built in the city. Last year it was down to 1170. Since 1970 they've

actually built less houses than they've knocked down! Meanwhile there are 20,000 applications on the council's housing list, representing something like fifty or sixty thousand people. Many of these are condemned to live in areas blighted by long-term demolition plans, and dotted with vandalised empty houses.

In Darnell, in the east end of the city, the fire brigade has to come out almost every week to fires in empty houses, in streets still inhabited by hundreds. The council claims it is doing all it can under the circumstances. Well, what are the circumstances? They are that by Christmas there will be an estimated 250,000 building workers unemployed, and enough bricks stockpiled to build 90,000 houses.

The blame for this criminal lack of urgency lies in two facts:

First that houses are still bought for profit and not in response to need. And secondly, because the government cynically uses the building industry to regulate the economy instead of taking the real controls into its own hands.

It is widely believed that council houses are not built for profit. This is just not true. Councils have borrowed money to build houses ever since the 1930s. Ever since, they have been paying interest on these loans. They pay the interest out of the rents and rates they collect. Sheffield, for instance, now has a massive debt of £200 million. Every year the Bankers, investors and insurance companies, who are the 'real landlords' of millions of tenants, take a bigger share of the housing departments income. Since 1970 it has shot up from 80 per cent to 100 per cent.

THIS YEAR SHEFFIELD HOUSING DEPARTMENT WILL PAY OUT MORE IN INTEREST THAN IT HAS COLLECTED IN RENTS AND RATES—A COOL £20 MILLION

Clearly they will be thinking seriously about putting rents up and we must be clear about what is happening.

Meanwhile the government has announced cuts in almost every department of local spending, especially housing and social services. The aim is to drive down the spending of working people. One of the most effective ways of doing this is to cut down on house building because everybody tends to spend a lot on new furniture etc, when they move into a new house.

Now local authorities are being told not to spend any more next year than they did this— which means letting inflation inflict massive inroads into your spending power and doing nothing about it. We must be clear that the only effect this will have is to make the remaining houses on the market more valuable and therefore rents and house prices will go up. This is the government's idea of 'restoring prosperity'.

It's worth remembering what happened in Clay Cross. There, the eleven councillors decided to take on the entire system of local government finance—and to fulfill their election promises. They refused to put up rents under the Tory Hous-

SHARING OUR BACKYARD WITH A WORKS'



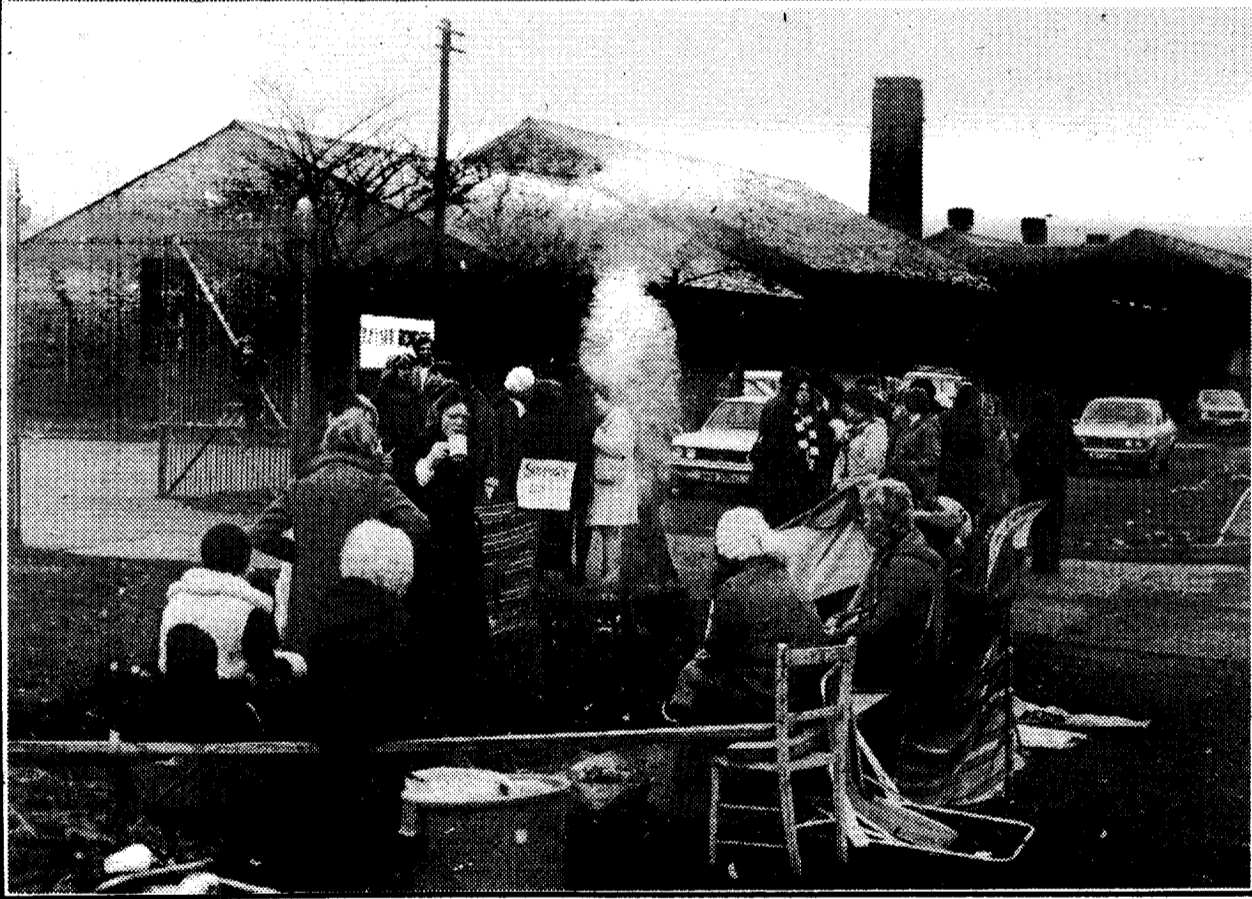
...es of housing taken in Ellesmere, Sheffield

ing Finance Act, they eradicated 95 per cent of their local slums and built houses at five times the national rate. Other social services were provided in response to need—the chairman of the council's expense allowance was used to provide free school milk. Even the mayor's chain was melted down and put into the housing revenue account!

What has been the response to this magnificent commitment?

Abandoned by the TUC and Labour Party, the eleven councillors are now being subjected to the most savage interpretation of the bankruptcy laws to pay a demand for £63,000. Nearby Labour Councils such as Sheffield or Leeds who all pledged support in 1971 will not lift a finger to help now.

So long as local councils 'play the game' and knuckle down to the needs of financiers and stock-brokers, we will have rent increases and totally inadequate housing provision. They will try to put up the rents. Council tenants and those who cannot even get a council house must unite together—their enemy, the pursuit of profit—is the same.



'Aren't you going pickling this morning Mum?'

JENNY JACKSON

LAST MONTH has seen women textile workers—many who have never been on strike before—fighting for the £6 increase.

It all began several months ago when the government's wages council recommended textile workers get the

£6. The wages council has never been known for making outrageous demands on behalf of workers. It is responsible for the measly £21.90 a week wage at the moment. When the women heard of the £6 increase, the feeling was 'It's about time. We're certainly worth it.'

So you can image the furious reaction when Courtaulds management who own most of these factories decided to pay only £3.60 and let the women make up the rest by increased productivity!

The first factory was Kayser Bondor in Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales. The stewards got in touch with other factories in South Wales and the unofficial action spread. Then after a national meeting of Tailor and Garment Workers Union stewards, four factories in Merseyside came out. The local organisation of these strikes is really impressive. For example, at Merthyr Tydfil, the 400 women work in three sections—Barbara's room, Evelyn's room, and the bra room. Each section is responsible for one day's picketing in every three. Since

the bra room is the smallest section, the clerical and cleaning workers join them.

The picketing in South Wales is not just a token 9am-5pm. It's round the clock! Proper picketing requires proper facilities.

All the sites have blazing fires, benches, windscreens. Many

caravans—so the pickets can sit inside with a cup of tea until a car or lorry comes up that needs to be checked. At Pyle, everyone chipped in 20p a week for the caravan and 10p for the gas. At other places collections from neighbouring factories help pay for them.

One weakness was that a lot of the women didn't realise their small factory in an old church or whatever was part of the Courtaulds empire. They didn't know Courtaulds announced £22.1 million interim profits the same week they were being told a £6 rise just wasn't possible.

The flying squad from Merthyr Tydfil spread the strike. But lack of funds and information about other factories throughout Courtaulds made it difficult for them to continue. Another danger to the unity of the strike was the local press.

After ten days of unofficial picketing, the 'South Wales Evening Post' and the 'Western Mail' ran articles implying all the women had agreed to go back to work the next Monday for three or four days to ballot for an official strike. They gave the impression the women would work until the results were known.

At Merthyr Tydfil the women's reaction was 'Well, let the others do what they like. It's their decision. But we're staying out until we get the £6.' The press report dampened their spirits, but they were still determined.

Fortunately the others were just as determined. They decided to go back to vote and come straight out again. Pat Williams, steward at the Treforest factory said, 'We're not even going to clock on. There are piles of finished goods sitting in there. The manager could put us all on despatch, get them out in two or three days, and then he'd be happy for us to sit out in the cold until Christmas. We're not daft.'

The organisation, imagination and determination is fantastic. And it's beginning to pay off.

Management has cracked at Kayser Bondor in Merthyr Tydfil. They've won the £6, although it's coming in two stages. Negotiations are going on for the others in the group now as we go to press.

'I've never seen girls so militant—and I've worked here for donkey's years,' said Rita Griffiths, steward at the Maesteg factory.

'It's lucky we've got the husbands with us. They know we have to do this. They're helping with the kids. My little girl asked me this morning, 'Aren't you going pickling this morning Mum? She doesn't know how to say it, but she has the idea,' a machinist on the picket line said.

Barbara Evans, steward at Merthyr Tydfil, summed it up beautifully. 'Considering it's Women's Year, this is one up for the women!'

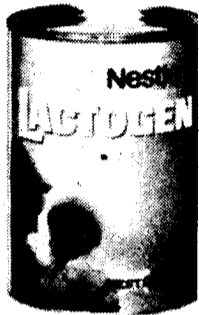
A FULL list of all Courtaulds factories is available in the excellent 'Courtaulds—Inside Information Service. If you work in textiles, you ought to read it. It breaks down the company's finances in understandable terms and gives you the ammunition you need to deal with Courtaulds' tricks and schemes.

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NESTLES MILK THIRD WORLD DRY

TO MOST OF us the name Nestles means chocolates or cocoa. To an unknown number of mothers and babies in the underdeveloped world it means malnutrition, infection and death.

Nestles makes, advertises and sells tinned baby milk. They say themselves that the 'growth market' for tinned baby milk is in the Third World with its rapid population growth. But tinned baby milk must be mixed with pure or boiled water in exactly the right quantities. It must be cooled to the right temperature, and fed to the baby in a bottle sterilised at least once a day.

For the poverty bound African mother, this is just not possible. Already thoroughly steeped in the idea that 'West is best', she is soon persuaded to associate bottle feeding with modernity, improvement, status. Posters showing healthy babies clutching bottles are everywhere; on a typical day the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service will run 15 thirty second adverts . . . 'Now Lactogen a better food cos it don get more protein and iron, all de important things dat go make pikin strong and well.'

But she may well not be able to read the instructions on the back of the tin. She may well not be able to sterilise the bottle, have no pure water to mix with, no facilities for boiling or cooling water five or six times a day. And then she finds that tinned milk is using up 20 per cent or 30 per cent of her family's weekly budget. So she uses less powder to 'make it go further'.

The results are malnourished children, with a low resistance to disease, and the ever present threats of infection from an unsterilised feeding bottle. Many that do not die are drawn into a vicious cycle of malnutrition

and disease that will leave them physically and mentally stunted for life.

In Freetown, Sierra Leone, a hospital survey showed that 713 out of 717 babies admitted for malnutrition had been bottle-fed. And in the rural areas of Chile deaths of babies under three months old are three times higher among those fed on tinned milk.

These facts are known. Nestles knows them. At this moment they are busy suing the Third World Action Group, who publicised the facts, for libel. But Nestles, the second largest food company in the world, carried on advertising, carried on persuading women to change from breast feeding to bottles. It backs up its radio advertising with press and poster campaigns, gives away free samples (once tried it will be impossible for the mother to go back to breast feeding), it even dresses up its sales girls in nurses uniforms.

All this is no accident. It is just one more example of the 'Profits before people' values built into the system itself. It creates wealth for the already wealthy, at the expense of the poor and the powerless. The suffering of these babies is part of the same process that condemns miners in South Africa, tea pickers in Sri Lanka, plantation workers in South America to live and work in wretched conditions for wretched pay. It is also part of the same process that throws us out on the dole when it's not 'profitable' to keep us on, that closes our hospitals and nurseries when industry 'needs' a bigger slice of the cake. The operations of Nestles are just one particularly clear and disgusting example of a corrupt and disgusting system.

ELANA DALLAS

AFTER A meeting of the Sheffield Womens Voice Group, it was agreed that I should write to express our regret that the letter from Jane Fielding of the Abortion Law Reform Association, was printed without editorial comment on the back page of the last issue of Womens Voice.

. . . As a way of attacking SPUC, in last month's Womens Voice, Jane Fielding says that 'women have no right to inflict the burden of handicapped children on the state' adding: 'why should we overburden the state with unwanted people who take up so much of our resources?'

Most socialists would be rightly horror-stricken by such statements, which tie in more closely with the philosophy of Hitler's Nazi Party than with a 'socialist perspective'. The National Abortion Campaign uses the slogan, 'A woman's right to choose', but unfortunately many women who want and choose to have children give birth to babies who are physically handicapped. . . . Facilities for helping such people are pitifully inadequate under the present system.

. . . Many adult workers become a burden on the state because of working in unsafe industries. Whilst the bosses rake in their oversized share of the wealth, many of the workers who created it are suffering from pneumoconiosis, asbestosis, liver cancer, or like the steel workers at Scunthorpe last month—are killed. . . . When Womens Voice talks about fighting SPUC, we are struggling for one aspect of our right to decide how to live our lives. But abortion on demand is just one issue what we



really have to fight for is a situation where adequate housing, child care facilities and working conditions make it possible for men and women to make a real choice about whether or not to have children.

JUNIOR DOCTORS have been in dispute with the government for several weeks now over their proposed new contract. Junior doctors still work exceptionally long hours. A majority work 80 hours a week and many still work more than 100 hours a

week. We want recognition of these long hours by having a salary based on 40 hours like most other workers and a reasonable overtime rate after 40 hours. Achieving this would have a double purpose, as it would force the government to attempt to reduce the hours which doctors work in the long term.

The government offered a contract which asked some doctors to take a cut in pay and gave the rest of us an overtime rate of 30 per cent (ie 70 per cent less than basic). The response of doctors has been patchy and with mixed motives. Some see this dispute as an opportunity to attack the Labour government and 'bring back the Tories', but many for the first time have realised that they have much in common with other health workers who find their standard of living falling and their conditions of work becoming more and more difficult and frustrating due to the cutbacks in a National Health Service that was already suffering from an appalling lack of resources.

The contract offered to Junior doctors is yet another example of the attempt by the government to run a National Health Service on the cheap, relying on the good will of health service workers to try to cover up the lack of facilities and staff.

Hopefully, the junior doctors' dispute will be just one stage in a continuing battle by all workers, not just health service workers, to resist attempts to slash the National Health Service and to fight for an extension and improvement of the service. A Junior Doctor.



BREAKOUT a recently published book of Poems and Drawings from Prison by Pat Arrowsmith, Published by Edinburgh University Student Publications Board: Price 30p.

Pat Arrowsmith recently had a book of poems and drawings published which she produced during terms of imprisonment.

The poems document the emotional and practical difficulties experienced by women in prison, the horrors and deprivations of prison life; they reflect particularly Pats own awareness of her situation, her growing militancy towards the conditions inder which she is forced to exist; her refusal to work, her two-week hunger strike in solidarity with the IRA Price Sisters' demand to be transferred to prison in Northern Ireland, and her escape from open prison.

Pat Arrowsmith has been imprisoned nine times over the last 17 years for political offences; her last sentence was spent in

Holloway Womens' Prison on a charge under the Incitement to Disaffection Act for distributing leaflets entitled 'Some Information for Discontented Soldiers.' Part of that sentence she spent in solitary confinement for her part in trying to form a prisoners' union.

Pat has campaigned over many years for her beliefs and is at the moment actively involved in the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign. 14 of her comrades from BWNIC are at the moment on trial at the Old Bailey—charged under the Conspiracy Laws and Conspiracy to Contravene the Incitement to Disaffection Act, for distributing similar leaflets to those for which Pat was charged. The 14 will be sentenced within the next few days after a trial which has lasted over 6 weeks. At the beginning of the trial at the Old Bailey, during a picket in support of the 14 outside the court, **Socialist Worker** was on sale—it contained the full text of the leaflet for which the 14 were being charged. The text was widely printed in the left press and must be in the posses-

sion of millions of people at the moment. However, the trial of the 14 continues.

Any move to organise against the capitalist system is virulently and unscrupulously attacked by the government and the boss parasites; those who control capital and fear lest they should lose out on fat profits and all that goes with them. The use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act along with the resurrection of the conspiracy laws and the Incitement to Disaffection Act are just such measures.

Pay says in one of her poems entitled 'English Political Prisoner'

'No. I am English. This is England, land of justice, of peace, democracy, equality, fair-play, We are temperate, tolerant, urbane and placid, enjoy free speech and free association—there are no political prisoners, they say.'

MECCA LTD, dance hall owners and organisers of that yearly circus the Miss World competition, have been found guilty of unlawfully barring black people from their ballrooms. The court ruled, 'Mecca were operating a tight door policy. We are satisfied that policy included the exclusion of substantially all coloured people.' So much for peace, harmony and international understanding.

Meanwhile, 280 women and men workers in the West of Scotland are sacked by Ladbroke's, the firm which runs the betting on Miss World. While the glittering jamboree was in full swing, these workers were out in the cold, picketing for union rights.

'Dirty Linen' will be a regular column in Womens Voice in the new year. Send us small items, the dirtier the better. We'll give them a good airing.

A judge has spoken out against 'do-it-yourself divorce'. This is where people

conduct their own divorce cases to avoid paying hundreds of pounds in lawyers' fees. But, says the venerable judge, they sometimes don't know court procedures and take up too much time. Could it also be that the legal profession—the most exclusive

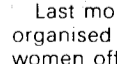
Dirty Linen

closed shop in the country—has got the wind up?

THE will has been published of Mrs Miriam Sacher, of Belgravia. She left £850,907 net. A woman on £40 a week would take 545 solid years to earn that much. The air must be pure in Belgravia!



Last month the Ministry of Defence organised a high class binge for senior women officers in NATO, to celebrate International Women's Year. Among the generals, admirals, air chief marshalls and ambassadors, were a sprinkling of duchesses, and your very own 'socialist' woman minister, Shirley Williams, MP.



'In five years we would have been doing nothing but giving homes to Asians.' Bill Watts, Labour Councillor, Chairman of the Newham Housing Committee, explaining the new points system. No comment . . .



Many people believe that women should stay at home with young children—otherwise the children suffer. This is a view you come up against often, even among socialists, when you fight for nurseries and for the right of women to work. It is, however, a view that is based on no good evidence. It's a dogma, preached by so-called experts, spread by the press and TV, just at a time when the government wants to cut spending on nurseries and to get women out of the workforce.

During the second world war, it was a different story. Nurseries and day-care centres were provided so that women could work in the factories and keep production going. Scare-stories about the evil effects of women working disappeared overnight.

In fact the propaganda made you feel guilty if you weren't working.

And, strange as it may seem, in spite of war-time conditions, the health of babies improved dramatically.

At the end of the war, when the men returned home, women were persuaded once again to give up paid work. The argument about mothers working was taken down from the shelf and given a new coat of paint. A man called John Bowlby came up with the notion of 'child maternal-deprivation'.

So day nursery places fell dramatically, from 43,000 in 1949 to 21,000 in 1966. Plans for building more nurseries, made in the late '40s, were scrapped.

Today, three-quarters of all places in state-run nurseries are occupied by the children of middle-class and professional parents. And in this time of public expenditure cuts and unemployment, 'maternal deprivation' is rediscovered. The Sunday Times links childhood separation with delinquency in teenagers. Mia Kellmer Pringle, director of the National Children's Bureau, joins in, on television, arguing that mothers should be at home all day with young children, or else vandalism, maladjustment, mental illness, suicide and even murder could result.

But the National Children's Bureau itself recently completed a large-scale study which could not prove any harm arising from mothers going out to work.

Mothers are again being made the scapegoats for the failures of a whole social system. The interesting thing about this is how scanty the evidence is for such reactionary and anti-feminist views. Bowlby's work was done on children brought up in children's homes, without any mother substitute. They were less well-adjusted



Picture: Chris Davies (report)

GET YE BACK TO THE KITCHEN WOMAN!

depression, in comparison with 15 out of 100 mothers of under fives who work. Depression hardly makes for good mothering.

Mia Kellmer Pringle's answer to this? Not community facilities to break down the isolation and make motherhood easier, but the threat of losing your child into 'care' if you are judged to be a poor mother. Given that mothers want to work to provide for family needs and for their own independence, tying them to the home won't make for better child care. Some women are happy to stay at home all day and every day looking after children, but many are not. Why should they be? We don't expect men to do it. The opposite in fact. Men are expected to work long hours away from home and hardly see their children as a result.

Child care experts aren't concerned about this: they don't propose shorter working hours and higher pay for men because this would conflict with the way society is run and they aren't in business to do that. In fact all types of people could benefit from looking after children and children could learn co-operation and tolerance if a wider range of people looked after them rather than a single, often possessive mother. We would need a different truly socialist society, however, for that to happen.

The idea that mothers of young children belong at home affects many things. It makes it easier to get away with the appalling scarcity of nursery facilities and ignores the fact that this simply drives mothers into using babyminders in much worse and often unsafe, conditions. It also means that what nursery expansion there has been in the last 10 years has been in play groups, which do not help women to go out to work. Even local authority nurseries tend to act as if working mothers are social misfits, who aren't caring properly for their children. The latest scheme in Camden is to turn day nurseries into family centres where mothers are trained to look after children rather than being able to get other jobs.

'Maternal deprivation' has proved a useful smokescreen: it shifts the blame for delinquency and stress in children onto mothers, it is used to convince men and women, that a woman's place is the home and that nurseries are for crisis cases only, but it is no more than a dogma. What we must ensure is that our children are well cared for, not through forcing women back into the home but through fighting for, and winning, high quality nursery and other social facilities, which enable women to lead fuller lives without the fear and guilt now imposed on them.

IRENE BREUGEL
ASTMS

and more delinquent than other children. Apart from wondering how such matters are judged, there is a world of difference between leaving a child in an institution for years, and leaving it in good nursery care each day.

Michael Rutter, who looked at 500 studies of maternal deprivation in 'Maternal Deprivation Reassessed' (Penguin) shows what really matters is how well children are cared for, not that their mother, whatever her

circumstances, sticks with them till they are school age.

It's obvious really. After all, no psychologist seriously suggests that upper class children suffer material deprivation because they are looked after by a nanny or 'au pair' girl rather than their own mother. As textile workers pointed out to Mia Kellmer Pringle on TV, if working mothers created delinquents then half the children in Lancashire would be in remand homes!

The importance of high standards of child care (and housing and welfare) is however brushed aside by those who argue that mothers should stay at home. It's quite obvious under capitalism the quality of care a mother at home can give her child is limited by money problems, poor housing, lack of play space, isolation and loneliness. For all the 'fulfillment' motherhood is supposed to provide, as many as 40 per cent out of 100 full time mothers of under fives are likely to suffer from

AT ANSELLS brewery in Birmingham, part of the Allied Breweries complex, the management thought that they had found a weak link in the union organisation—the women workers in ACTSS, the clerical section of the Transport and General Workers Union. Management broke an agreement with ACTSS and thought they would win.

ACTSS has been steadily recruiting pub managers. In opposition NALHMS were also recruiting. Ansell's clerical workers were handling rival subscriptions to nalhms—in other words, ACTSS clerks were handling the subs of a rival organisation. Management agreed to end this at the end of September. When it didn't, ACTSS members decided to take action. They blacked orders from Doubles Diamond and Skol. As a result, 68 workers, mainly women, were suspended. These workers were employed in sales and orders departments. If no orders come in, no deliveries got out. As a consequence, 600 delivery and manual workers were laid off and as the dispute wore on, Ansell's pubs in Birmingham closed through lack of beer.

The local Evening Mail ran a vicious campaign of lies and distortion in an attempt to discredit the Transport Union. Reading the Mail, it was difficult to tell that Ansell's had broken an agreement, not the other way round. The Mail implied the whole thing was an inter-union dispute with the drivers involved.

ANSELLS WOMEN DETERMINED TO WIN

By JANE FOSTER

There were horror stories of thousands of gallons of beer being poured away daily—no-one mentioned that it was contaminated brew which would have to be destroyed anyway.

The women were very angry at the publicity their dispute got. But the manual workers in the Transport union and the pub managers gave them tremendous support, taking regular collections to alleviate financial hardship.

After six weeks, there was a combine meeting of all the unions involved in Allied Breweries. A great step forward as, until then, only the clerical workers had had combine meetings. At the meeting a vote was taken for strike action throughout the combine unless the dispute was settled.

By this time, Ansell's were getting fairly bothered as their Christmas

trade was in danger of being lost unless orders start coming in. At a 15 hour meeting the ACTSS and TGWU managed to win some important concessions from management. But the NALHMS/ACTSS was not settled and is going to arbitration. Many of the women are very disappointed, although they are still optimistic they can win.

The workers won a £3 million expansion programme for Birmingham Ansell's plants, which not only means job security but more jobs in both clerical and manual sections. ACTSS pub managers won better terms of contract from the management and there has been some compensation for loss of earnings for people laid off. There is also a 'No victimisation' clause as part of the settlement.

Janet Haynes, ACTSS committee member told Womens Voice, that,

despite the hardship, particularly for single and unsupported women, all involved in the dispute were adamant that they would stick it out. The women were determined to show the management that as ACTSS members, they were as solid and militant as any other section of the union. Management tried intimidating them at the very beginning of the dispute by calling the women individually into the office. This tactic failed miserably.

The women were very pleased by

the support that they got from the male workers and that the barriers that exist between manual and office workers have been broken down.

There is disappointment that the ACTSS/NALHMS dispute was not settled before the return to work. But the women are adamant they will keep up the pressure whilst their dispute is at arbitration. It is now up to all union members to ensure that Allied Breweries implement the terms of the settlement. This must not become another 'broken' agreement.

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By KATHY FINN

LADBROKES MUST NOT BECOME ANOTHER FINE TUBES

Six months ago, 280 members of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) went on strike. They are the men and women who worked in the Ladbrokes' betting shops in the West of Scotland. The reason for their strike?—the right to belong to a trade union. The result?—they are still out on strike, still picketing but with ever-decreasing support from the union they have fought so hard to belong to.

They had been out on strike for six weeks when they were told by the officials of the TGWU to go back to work meantime, while the union would continue to negotiate on their behalf. When they attempted to do this, they met up with a classic situation.

Ladbrokes, assessing this as a sign of weakness, refused to take any of them back. They were locked out! They have been in that position ever since.

Six of the workers took their cases to the Industrial Tribunal, claiming unfair dismissal. The tribunal found in favour of these six test cases, ordered their reinstatement at their jobs, and compensation to be paid. However, that order seems to be non compulsory. Ladbrokes are still refusing to take them back. The TGWU have apparently accepted Ladbrokes' position.

They are now negotiating over paltry compensation sums and not demanding re-instatement. The strike committee are quite rightly taking no part in these negotiations. **THEY WANT THEIR JOBS BACK.** The TGWU are now threatening to cut off their £6 a week strike pay unless they come to heel.

Understandably, this prolonged strike has taken a heavy toll of the people involved, particularly the women. Most of the workers involved are women. At least one marriage has broken up. Some women have had nervous breakdowns; others are on pills just to keep going.

Locally, there has been some support for the strikers. TV cameramen have blacked races sponsored by Ladbrokes. Bar staff at a



Pictures: John Sturrock (Report)

local hotel, members of the GMWU refused to serve when Ladbrokes held a beauty contest there. TGWU drivers have offered to black deliveries to the shops. All of this is at rank and file level. The officials of the TGWU have not attempted to mobilise any support at all.

Picketing has continued throughout the six months. One local betting shop, in the Easterhouse housing scheme in Glasgow, has the highest turnover of any betting shop in

Europe. Before the strike, on a Saturday, about 7000 lines were put on. Ladbrokes reopened it, using scab labour, but due to persistent picketing, only about 50 lines are handled on Saturdays.

The local community have supported the strikers. Local trade unionists have helped at the picket lines. One AUEW factory has agreed to branch any member who bets with Ladbrokes while the strike is on.

An old age pensioner comes along

every day with a flask of tea, milk, sugar, biscuits etc in her shopping bag. The bloke who is in charge of the gents' toilet across the way from the betting shop, looks after their placards every night to save carrying them back and forward.

All this support from the rank and file is great. But the TGWU has failed to use its strength to back up its members. No attempt has been made at official level to spread the strike or organise blacking.

How can fellow workers help these women, even at this late date? BY CRIPPLING LADBROKES WHERE IT HURTS MOST. Picketing should be spread to all Ladbrokes' shops, not just the ones in the West of Scotland. Ladbrokes also own Lingfield Park Racecourse.

This is a strike over union recognition. Trades councils, union branches and factory committees in every area where Ladbrokes operate should be asked to support pickets. Money—last but not least. The strikers have been living on £6 strike money plus whatever comes in from local collections. Now they might lose the £6. They desperately need financial assistance. Anyone who can get a collection or a donation for them should send it to Ladbrokes Strike Committee, 216 W. Regent Street, Glasgow.

The Right to Work Campaign is calling on trade unionists everywhere to picket Ladbrokes' betting shops up and down the country on December 13th between 11am and 3pm. John Deason, spokesman for the Right to Work Campaign had this to say: 'In a period of rapidly rising unemployment, we cannot afford to lose jobs anywhere. The Ladbrokes workers have fought on their own for six months. The biggest union in the country, the Transport and General Workers Union has done nothing to make sure they win their struggle. It is about time fellow workers, men and women took up their cause.'

That is why we are calling this picket on Saturday 13 December. Trade union branches and trade councils, shop stewards' committees should organise blacking of Ladbrokes betting shops and financial support.'

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'WE'RE BANKRUPT SO IS LABOUR'

JUNE NUTTALL, Clay Cross councillor and wife of David Nuttall, one of the original Clay Cross eleven, made this speech at the Women's Voice Rally in Manchester

Comrades,
For the past three years the elected councillors have been harassed, prosecuted and persecuted for carrying out socialist policies. And now, after battling through all the courts in the land they have been made bankrupt.

At the moment the official receiver is planning to send in bailiffs to remove furniture and personal possessions. Cars and superannuation pensions have been taken from them.

And for what?
For refusing to increase rents. For providing free school milk for the children. For providing employment for the unemployed.

And above all for even having the audacity to look after the old and disabled people in Clay Cross. For giving them free travel tokens and free television licences. For carrying out election pledges.

In 1973, when the present Labour government was in opposition, all of these things that I have mentioned were official Labour Party policy.

But who is it that continues to betray these eleven councillors?

The Labour government supported by the trade union leadership.

But the betrayal does not stop there. In two or three weeks time the second Clay Cross eleven are going to be dragged through exactly the same procedure as the first eleven.

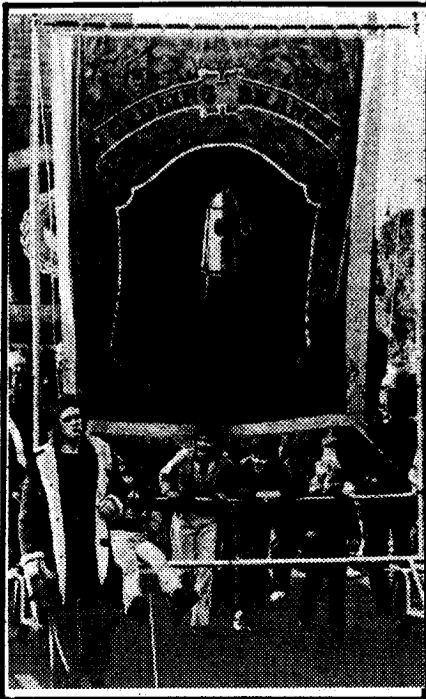
We are only allowed to govern as long as we are prepared to be puppets and prop up a capitalist system with capitalist policies.

Are we going to continue to allow these injustices to exist?

Comrades, of course we can't allow it. As socialists and trade unionists we must stand by people like Des Warren and the Clay Cross councillors who stood firm on the principles and policy of the Labour and trade union movement.

But on Saturday 6 December, we have a demonstration in Clay Cross, jointly organised by Chesterfield Trades Council, the Clay Cross Labour Party and some members from the International Socialists in Chesterfield.

I would urge you to support this demonstration by bringing along your friends, husbands, boyfriends to join in the march and help stop the betrayal of the Clay Cross councillors.



Clay Cross: the local movement on the march against the Labour betrayal

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