

●Police pay UP 45%

●Housing spending DOWN 17%

No Wonder Housing's In A Crisis!

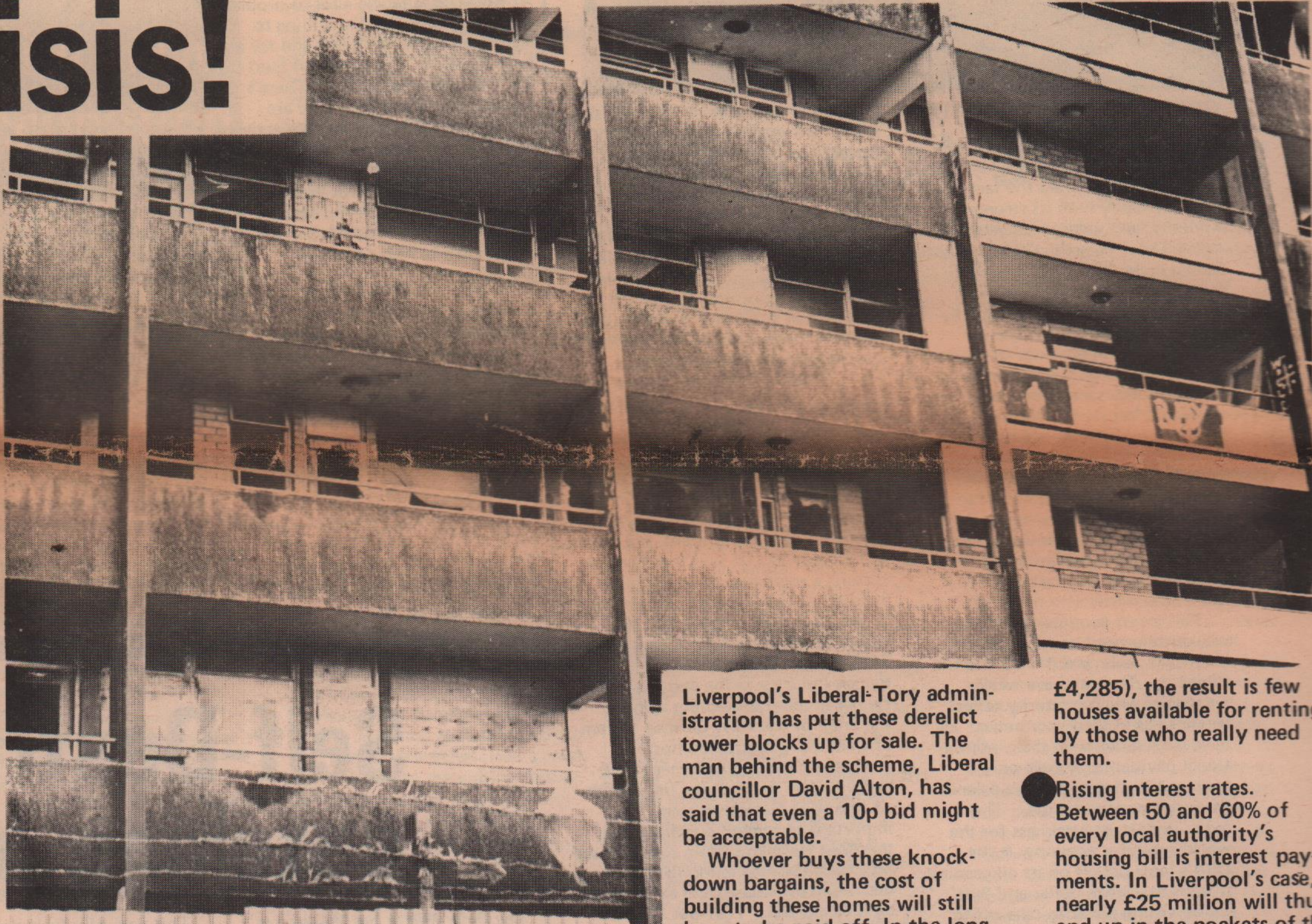
Socialist Plan to End the Housing Shortage

- 1) Cancel the debt payments; nationalise the banks and building societies.
- 2) Nationalise the building companies under workers control.
- 3) No more council house sales. Emergency programme of house building.
- 4) Take workers off the dole queues, expand direct works departments. Start proper planned maintenance schemes to stop the run-down of council housing.
- 5) Freeze rents and mortgage charges. 100% mortgages for those who want to buy a home.
- 6) Nationalise the land.

The inner London borough of Camden illustrates the enormity of the housing problem, which can only be tackled by building more council houses.

There are 85,000 dwellings in Camden of which 10% are empty and 10% are classified as unfit to live in or substandard. On top of this many council estates are rapidly falling into disrepair through lack of maintenance. There are over 10,000 families on the waiting list and yet, given the present budget allocation, the housing department estimate that by 1981 the number of substandard dwellings will actually have increased.

from a new pamphlet, *Building with Direct Labour*, which argues for public building departments and exposes the strategy of the private contractors. £1.75 including post and packing from Housing Workshop of Conference of Socialist Economists, 55 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AE. Or 65p (plus 25p post and packing for orders through trade unions, tenants organisations & trades councils).



Liverpool's Liberal-Tory administration has put these derelict tower blocks up for sale. The man behind the scheme, Liberal councillor David Alton, has said that even a 10p bid might be acceptable.

Whoever buys these knock-down bargains, the cost of building these homes will still have to be paid off. In the long run, this can only mean even higher rents and rates.

Liberals and Tories have always hated council housing. But now they can count on Labour Government support as well.

Since their election in 1974, Labour have reduced spending on housing by 17% — although they've found the cash to raise spending on law and order by 9%. Local authorities have been forced to cut back on building new houses and to slash the maintenance of older ones.

Waiting lists are growing, to over a million in England and Wales alone. 1½ million families are condemned to live in houses without an inside toilet. One household in ten in the inner cities are living in overcrowded conditions.

Three things are making this situation go from bad to worse:

- Selling off council housing. Apart from the fact that only a small minority can get or afford a mortgage (in 1976 the average income of the first time building society mortgagee was

£4,285), the result is few houses available for renting by those who really need them.

● Rising interest rates. Between 50 and 60% of every local authority's housing bill is interest payments. In Liverpool's case, nearly £25 million will thus end up in the pockets of the money lenders this year. More than anything, it's rising interest rates which have cut the value of public spending on housing.

● The campaign against the direct works departments. With the private contractor in a profits crisis, they want

to put an end to the non-profit making local authority direct works departments. The private builders consider this important enough to merit the £500,000 campaign against building industry nationalisation, CABIN, which will mount anti-Labour propaganda in 80 marginal constituencies in the general election.

Properly financed and run direct works departments present a better deal for everyone. The only people who would not gain are private contractors. Quality of work is more reliable, and conditions for the workers are superior too; direct labour organisations take on apprentices.



Manchester Direct Works trains more apprentices than the whole of private building industry in the North West. (Photos: Big Flame)

editorial

FIRST BONN SUMMIT THEN STAGE FOUR

HEADLINES in the daily papers of leading industrial countries trumpeted the 'success' of the summit conference held in Bonn last month. It appeared as if West Germany had agreed to increase its rate of economic growth, and so help pull the world economy out of its current recession. But the reality was in fact the opposite. Although Germany agreed to introduce a small package of measures which would stimulate their economy, and accelerate economic growth in Western Europe by around 1% to near 4%, this will not be sufficient to stem the rise in unemployment. Perhaps the actions of the German government may be just enough to stave off individual countries resorting to import controls to protect their own economies — but they won't set the world economy back on a path of growth.



GERMANY CALLS THE TUNE

In fact, the so-called 'economic' summit turned out to be a very political affair: it reflected the fact that West Germany with its strong economy and secure leadership can call the tune over the USA, with its falling dollar and shaky political leadership. As the *Economist* regretfully pointed out last week, whereas Schmidt and Giscard D'Estaing can sketch out their monetary proposals on the back of envelopes in restaurants, President Carter is obliged to pass his proposals through the 'so many committees'. And the policies which Schmidt and Giscard D'Estaing wrote in the ketchup were policies which put monetary stability before economic growth — in other words, a conversion to monetarism as the first line strategy of capital to get itself out of the crisis.

This is not good news for the weaker bourgeois economies, such as Britain, Italy and the USA at the moment. They all have weak currencies which primarily reflect weaknesses in their economies: all have large deficits on their international payments, or have only managed to stagger near to balance through savage recession. The most important weakness for the world capitalist economy is the USA's large deficit on its oil account: it leads to a weak dollar and 'hot funds' sitting ready to take off to countries such as West Germany where they would arrive and fuel inflation and damage these countries' strong international balance of payments. Pressure is on Carter from the outside to raise the domestic price of oil in the USA, which would throttle back consumption (and so imports). Carter can't do this because of backing from a variety of directions in the States, not the least the unpopularity of increasing the cost of heating and motoring to the US public.

SCHMIDT

One way to remove these big deficits would be for the countries with balance of payments surpluses to reflate — speed up economic growth in their own countries — which would draw in imports and help the deficit countries. By refusing to do this Germany and Japan are taking on the responsibility of the world's capitalist policemen: Schmidt fears that reflation would encourage a renewed wages' drive and would just lead to more inflation without any real boost to world capitalist profitability. His emphasis on monetary stability, in which Germany and France would exercise great power through the proposed European Currency Unit, is an indication of the fact that Germany wants to use the weakness of the USA to

If the economic results of the summit were thin, the seven governments present did manage to agree

on steps to take against air hijackers. From now on they will act jointly against any state that lets the 'terrorists' land further its own aims and power within world capitalism.

For the working class, this policy will mean that unemployment will continue to rise in the industrialised countries — a political fact which is the result of a political decision, but which will appear to be the unavoidable consequence of market forces.

STAGE FOUR

In its presentation of the Stage 4 in the White Paper, the Government makes clear that it wants to institute as a permanent feature of British politics an annual agreement on a pay norm between Government, the unions and employers. It says that Stage 4 permits a transition to a long-term 'reform' of Government bargaining. In the Commons, Healey said he would be examining the idea with the TUC and the Confederation of British Industry in the coming year. He has in mind something along the lines of the West German system of a centrally negotiated norm.

As the Labour government successfully edges towards the imposition of 'the West German system', it is important to remind ourselves that this West German system was imposed on a West German working-class destroyed by fascism and exhausted by a World War. Post-war German economic growth is based on this system which is a combination of ferocious work-place discipline (e.g. wild cat strikes are illegal) and the super-exploitation of immigrant workers who are deprived of even the basic freedom of liberal democracy. Its introduction in this country would mean the end of independent shop-floor organisation and even stricter controls of immigrant workers.

3.5% GROWTH RATE

According to the predictions of the O.E.C.D., the overall growth of its 24 member countries, including all the major capitalist countries, will in 1979 not exceed 3.5%. Because of increased productivity, this will mean the loss of another 500,000 jobs — resulting in registered unemployment of 17.5 millions in the 24 countries.

The purpose of the Bonn summit was to make sure that no one country stepped out of international line. Stage 4 is the contribution of the British government to make sure that we accept in orderly fashion the recession imposed on us by the forces of international capitalism. It must be fought not by sectional struggles around divisive issues like differentials but with a unifying perspective that makes it possible for the working class to re-appropriate the wealth that it is the sole producer of

Socialist Challenge Trade Union Conference

a useful meeting point

LAST MONTH, over three hundred people attended the Socialist Challenge Trade Union Conference in Birmingham. It came at a time when the left-wing is under increasing pressure in the trade union movement. At the Leyland Cowley Assembly Plant, nine leading shop stewards are being victimised — by the Regional Committee of the T&GWU. There's a clamour for similar action against two stewards at Leyland Longbridge. Tom Birmingham, a steward in the Body Plant at Ford Dagenham, recently had his shop steward's credential withdrawn by the union, and within a week he was sacked by the company.

How should the revolutionary left respond to these problems? Under the banner 'Rebuild the Left in the Unions' the Socialist Challenge conference offered a chance of discussing all this in some detail. Below we interview Jon Courage, an AUEW member at Lucas in West London on his reaction to the conference.

Why were you interested in going to the Conference?

At work we're facing a lot of problems in organising — and I'm willing to learn from other militants and try any path forward. I'm finding it hard to use the union framework. There's a great deal of apathy — few are interested and quite a few are actively opposed to it (fascists, of which there are many). According to the AUEW rule book, my particular branch shouldn't even exist — its been inquorate for six months, and they can't find a branch secretary.

What's your factory like?

It's a big engineering factory in West London. But the workforce is very divided and that's a serious problem. There's about twenty nationalities — a quarter of them women, and most people are over 45 and tend to see any struggle as "bovver" even if they are willing in principle. For many of them it's not long till they retire.

The work isn't particularly hard — but there have been struggles and there is space for some political organising on the shop floor. But

you have to be careful. Many people will back you up until the pressure comes on.

What happened at the Conference?

A lot of people spoke from their own experiences and generalised from that, and I think that was what made me listen. Many of them seemed to come from white collar union though — civil servants, teachers — and the struggle in their unions seems a bit different to the problems in the AUEW.

Much of the time was given over to the idea of forming Left caucuses in the Unions. And I was disappointed that only a couple of people were in evidence from independent rank and file organisations — they were from Fightback and the Ford (UK) Workers' Combine.

I had some fears about the Conference before I went. The way that the resolutions for the conference all came from the IMG and were given out just as we got on the bus to go, I half expected a stitched up, pre-arranged conference.

But I found some of this dispelled

by the obvious attempt to have as many people as possible speak.

Did the Conference deal with the kind of problems you're facing in trying to organise towards a mass rank and file movement on the shop floor?

For me, the answer of building a left caucus in the union is not enough. Given the apathy and disinterest of most workers, we'd be playing games behind the backs of the mass of workers. A left caucus needs to be built alongside strong and militant shop floor organisation, not necessarily starting in the branch. That means looking for the problems on the shop floor — like the divisions — which stop the development of strong base organisation. That means beginning to rebuild a practice of solidarity — on the basis of workers mutually supporting each other from day-to-day on the shop floor against all the petty things that add up to repression. That means supporting workers who're not only victimised by the bosses, but militants who're victimised by the so-called "moderates" in the unions.

What decisions did the conference make?

First, there's going to be another conference in six months time or so because the definite feeling was that this conference had been a success. There's also the possibility of area union-based meetings to try to co-ordinate the building of left caucuses. And there's to be a picket of the TUC Conference in a couple of months time in support of the 35 hour week. We'll have to see what comes of it all.

Self-Destruction: catching on fast

The *Daily Mirror* has 'discovered' why so many black youths get arrested under the notorious 'Suspicion' laws. It's not because racist police will arrest blacks at the slightest opportunity. No, it's because the youths WANT to be arrested!

This gem of information came originally from the government-appointed Commission for Racial Equality, a body which is more concerned with sucking up to the police than in exposing the racists in uniform.

MANHOOD

According to the Commission, black youths are trying to prove their 'manhood' by deliberately getting arrested.

British newspapers are very good at turning things on their heads and blaming the victims of state repression for their own suffering.

Recently they have all insisted that Irish prisoners of war in British jails aren't torture victims. Their wounds—cuts, bruises, broken teeth, even broken bones—were 'self-inflicted!' According to the Fleet Street hacks, the Northern Irish police are truly wonderful. If only the Irish would stop trying to discredit them. RAPE

Or what about the victims of rape? 'It's all their own fault!' says decent, respectable opinion. They shouldn't be out alone, or wearing 'provocative' clothes, or sitting next to strangers on the bus. It's all your own fault.

WHAT NEXT?

What other shafts of wisdom can we expect from the hard-hitting, no-holds-barred bunch of crawlers who claim to be independent journalists? How about an exclusive on miners deliberately hurling themselves under rock falls to prove that the new productivity scheme is dangerous. Or what about the old age pensioners who freeze themselves to death in order to get higher pensions. From the big-business newspapers any distortion is possible!

Workers Control at Bethnal Green

In the few days since the official closure of the casualty at Bethnal Green Hospital in East London, 200 patients have been treated and several people's lives saved by the workers action which has kept the casualty open under staff control.

When the District Management Team announced that the casualty would be closed at 8:00pm prompt on July 1st, the workers at Bethnal Green immediately stopped work for 2 hours, and blocked the road outside the hospital in protest. On Friday June 30th, a mass meeting in the hospital took a vote of no confidence in the DMT, and elected a committee representing all staff to ensure that the casualty runs as usual. That day, 6 hospitals joined a 24 hour stoppage in support, and when the closure hour arrived on Saturday night, a vast picket of several hundred local people joined those working inside to prevent the casualty from closing. The ambulance service is defying instructions still bringing patients, and GPs and the Emergency Bed Service are still referring them.

Management have been forced to say that they have decided to keep a skeleton casualty open, in order to try and save their face. Roland Moyle, Minister for Health, had to meet a delegation from the campaign on July 5th, and promised to look at the situation, before rushing off to face the thousands on strike from Hemel Hempstead demanding their new hospital. (David Ennals must have been pleased after all that he was in hospital and missed it all!)

24 HOUR PICKET

Despite the support, management are still refusing to fully staff the casualty, and are pressing ahead with plans to close the acute services in early August. They are putting pressure on nursing staff to move to jobs in other hospitals - particularly difficult for student nurses to resist.

And in an attempt to smash the unions who have been on strike twice in local hospitals in the last month in support of Bethnal Green, they have threatened with the sack those they consider to be the 'ring leaders'. Local people, however, have given a fantastic response to the workers action, and are keeping a strong 24 hour picket at the hospital. Local workers have threatened to stop work immediately the casualty is interfered with, and further rolling strike action is planned

for August if guarantees are not given that full services at the Green will continue.

Keep Bethnal Green Hospital Open Campaign, Bethnal Green Hospital, Cambridge Heath Rd., London E2. (Phone: Myrna Shaw 01-980 3413)

From 'Fightback'

We interview Occupation Committee member

What does it mean to take over the casualty?

It means that all the staff who work there are involved in making the decisions. The workers still get wages as long as there are patients in the hospital. The GPs and Emergency Beds Service will only continue to refer patients to the casualty as long as there is consultant surgical and medical cover. So the loss of the consultant's support would immediately pose a serious problem for the work-in.

What has been the response of the local people to the work-in?

There has been amazing local support. The day the casualty was supposed to be closed (July 1st) - over 500 people were there to guard the hospital. The management had said that it would put up a 'CASUALTY CLOSED' sign - they didn't dare with such a large turnout,

which included the telly and the local press. The Area Health Authority wants to convert Bethnal Green into a temporary geriatric hospital. But there is no support for this 'change of use' since no-one wants to work in what would be a geriatric workhouse. It is very difficult to get staff for all geriatric hospitals and this would give the AHA a good excuse to close the place down. In any case, 13,000 people used the casualty last year and see Bethnal Green as a friendly local hospital. Waiting time at the casualty of the London Hospital is already 5½ hours and it will become even longer if this one closes.

The Community Health Council did not oppose the change of use until it was too late - did this make any difference?

Support from the CHC would have helped our struggle but their not supporting it isn't the end of the world. One of our difficulties is our dependence on the consultant cover - we need it for referrals to continue. Local doctors have drawn up an alternative plan that is good in that it calls for the setting up of a community health centre - but it is unsatisfactory in that it accepts the cuts.

What are relations like between workers involved in the sit-in?

The barriers between doctors and auxiliary workers have been very quickly broken down. In normal conditions, auxiliary workers live in awe of the medical hierarchy and medical management - in situations like the work-in they are much less likely to be pushed around. Also, very good relations have developed between local people and the workers. There has been a lot of support for the picket - over 300 have signed the rota for picket duty! Our emphasis has been on involving local people in the campaign - in taking leaflets round etc. And their response has been a great morale boost to the workers inside. We have just had a very successful demo to an AHA meeting. The big problem is where do we go from here.



photo Luta Comun

N.H.S. next 30 years

BIRTHDAYS ARE an emotional time; everyone looks backwards and forwards, wondering which way to go now. The NHS is now 30, and there's been an avalanche of reports on different ways forward, as well as growing cries of crisis and collapse.

NHS: The Next 30 Years. 45p from Department of Community Medicine, Guy's Hospital, London.

This pamphlet, produced by the Department of Community Medicine, Guy's Hospital, London, is a good clear read about the possibilities for us all - not just the NHS as an institution. But it doesn't say much about how we realise this vision of the future - where people's health is given a higher priority than production. It also makes no reference to the hospital closures which are happening now, particularly in London. What it does do is suggest the kind of demands that community groups and workers organizations can put forward to increase their control over health. The writers obviously believe in the idea of the NHS as opposed to private medicine or Medicaid as in the USA. The NHS gives a valuable social insurance to people and many of the problems come from outside it.

Firstly, because NHS spending is used to regulate the economy, rather than to promote health, it is always fluctuating. The NHS is therefore always uncertain about how much money is going to be set aside to spend on health.

Secondly, there is the economy which the writers see as a wasteful, stressful, destructive system which actually produces ill-health.

Thirdly, there is the world-wide crisis of technology in medicine, where somehow the instruments have got out of control and doctors and hospitals produce disease while they cure.

The writers believe that if people knew the truth, they would choose a much more rational system. The pamphlet claims that it is the media's responsibility to help create wiser policies for the NHS. Well, yes, but it also needs support - where workers and patients are bold enough to try to change the structure of the NHS to suit their needs. The overall perspectives they put forward are not new. Points such as, more emphasis on prevention rather than cure. More devolution, with important decisions made democratically by local, accountable committees. Using the high level of unemployment to inject more people into socially useful work. And much more imagination about what constitutes health care. But as they spell out these ideas, they make reference to many exciting and possible projects, and this makes the pamphlet well worth reading.

OLD BILL'S A RACIST • TRUE

'SUS' IS the charge under Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act of 1824 of 'being a suspected person loitering with intent to commit a felonious offence'. This report by the Runnymede Trust attempts in the words of the foreword, to provide 'impartial research' into its use. It therefore carefully presents the police view and includes such controversial suggestions as the claim that there is racism inside the police force only as quotations from other groups.

There is plenty of good information on sus including some useful case histories. The charge is only brought in a number of large cities, notably London, Liverpool and Manchester, and then mainly against young blacks. In the vast majority of cases the only witnesses for the prosecution are police with the alleged intended victim rarely being present. The case histories demonstrate just how dubious the police evidence often is.

The recommendations made are much less useful. Apart from the call for the repeal of the charge of sus they vary from the liberal (more training in race relations for the police), to those which would find favour with the law-and-order lobby (the increased use of crook locks

in cars, more uniformed police on the beat).

The evidence the police have to provide for a charge of attempted theft is the same as that for sus apart from the need to establish that there was something of value which could have been stolen. Therefore, there seems no reason to believe that by itself the repeal of sus, while obviously an advance, would substantially effect the way the police act towards the black community.

There is now a campaign against sus underway in various areas of London. Those able to offer help of any kind including financial support should contact. Black Peoples Organisations Against 'Sus', c/o 206 Evelyn St., London SE8.

'Sus' a report on the Vagrancy Act 1824 by Clare Demuth



Demonstration outside the Duchess of York hospital in Manchester. 'The Duchess' is a small childrens hospital which the Area Health Authority want to convert into a home for maladjusted kids. Strong local protest has forced the Authority to postpone its decision until September - in the hope that the campaign will die down over the summer. (Big Flame Photo)

'No one would work underground'

John works as a miner in Nottinghamshire. This is his view of what it might be like.

Write about what pit work would be like under socialism, the man said—so here goes....

My first thought was that it would eventually mean that nobody would have to work underground. We could all get away from the dust and bad roof. It could all be done by machinery under remote control. I suppose there would have to be some men around to deal with breakdowns—electricians and fitters could do it all, though I think some of the foremen would wonder how much coal would get produced if that was the case.

Trouble with that particular dream is that we'd only benefit if it was a socialist society: one where the wealth produced by the machinery was distributed to everybody whether they were working on surface or didn't need to work at all. The danger is that remote control

The point is that these increases in productivity that we're continually being asked for have to benefit us and not just swell the coffers of the NCB, the coal delivery merchants, and the stockholders in machinery suppliers like Dowty's and Dobson's. If we were benefitting I'd be all for new machinery and higher productivity, but not now, when it means pit closures and more accidents.

What else? Well, of course, *no gaffers*. We all know that the job gets done more smoothly when they're not around looking over your shoulder, trying to speed things up. Men who've been doing a job for 20 years know perfectly well how to do it properly. We'd still need people trained to fire shots and watch out for safety but they could remain ordinary workers. As it is, the best of our deputies don't try to

REVIEW

Fighting for Safety

For many years, workers' health and safety have been in the hands of lawyers and factory inspectors. Instead of taking direct action to improve safety, official union policy became to develop legal departments so that 'careless employers' could be 'fined' by a claim for damages.

This strategy won many thousands of pounds for dead and maimed workers. It didn't prevent many accidents. After all, the employers took out insurance policies on such claims and could also rely on a pathetic Factory Inspectorate who, with a few exceptions, tried to 'educate' employers instead of prosecuting them.

The one exception to this pattern were the Workmen's Inspectors in the pits, which to some extent involved workers in their own health and safety.

PREVENTION NOT CURE

Two main things changed all this. The massive growth in the use of chemicals created thousands of new hazards many of which (especially the cancer-related ones) took many years (up to forty) to become apparent. It was clearly a waste of time suing for damages 40 years later. There had to be more emphasis

is on prevention not cure.

Secondly, the sheer scale of hazards has grown. Giant chemical complexes required much greater safety awareness from the workforce otherwise costly explosions might occur. The Flixborough and Seveso disasters are a stark proof of this.

This is the background to the Health and Safety at Work Act. On the whole it is no radical measure, most of it having been drafted by the 1970-74 Tory Government. It does cover many more workers than before and streamlines the Inspectorate. But it contains one change that can be of real importance.

On October 1st 1978, the Safety Representative Regulations come into force. The pamphlet by the Labour Research Department outlines the legal rights of Reps and does so well. All Safety Reps and trade unionists will find it useful.

However, while extolling the virtues of the Regulations which give workers some powers of veto over health and safety, the pamphlet does not spell out some of the problems facing us

Firstly, in some areas, employers will make a determined attempt to use the law to suck safety reps into joint safety committees. Such

Guide for Safety Representatives - 50p from Labour Research Department.

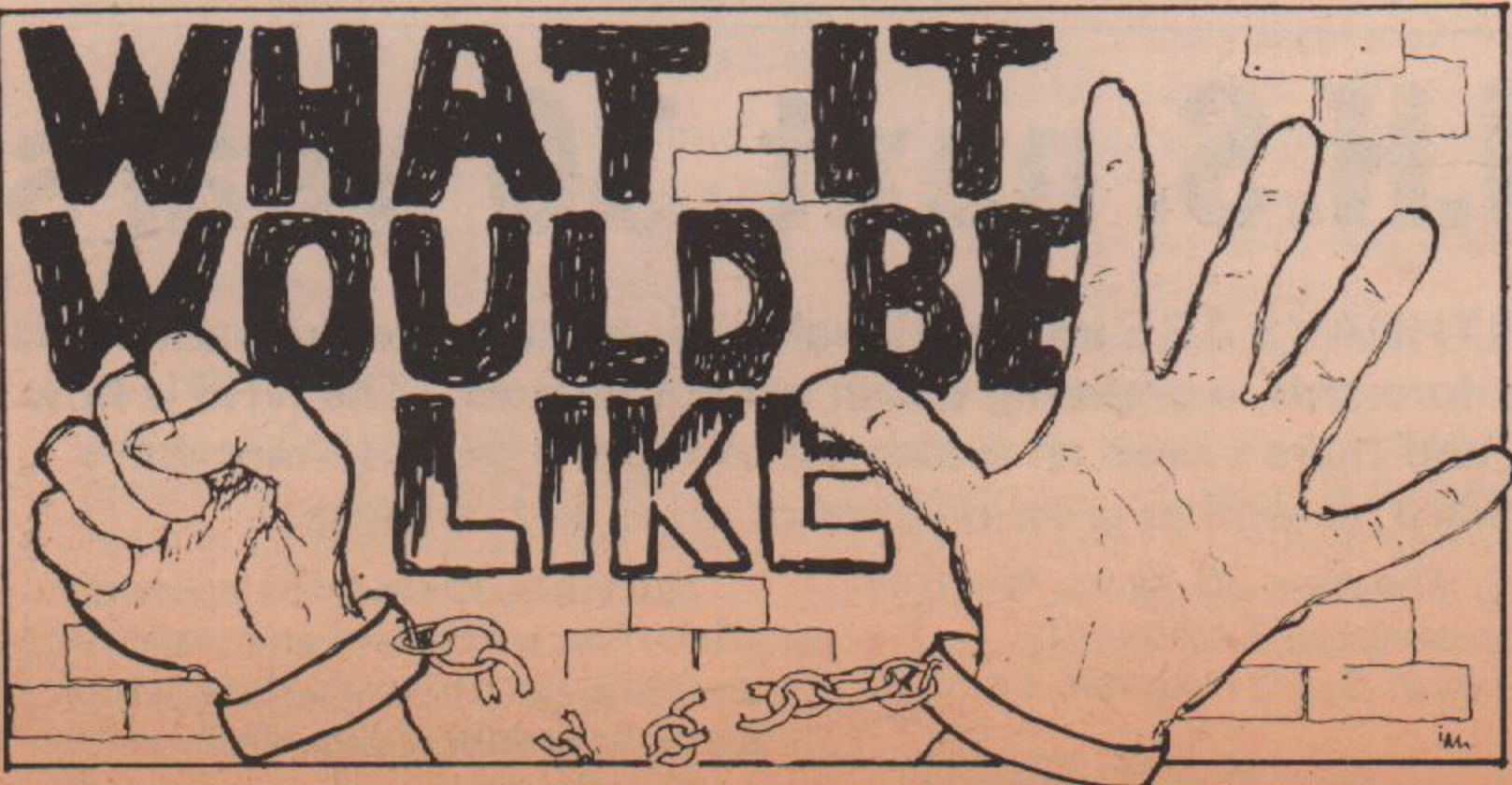
Reviewed by Roger Kline (T&GWU steward and safety rep.)

committees must be seen as very much less important than getting fighting safety reps.

ACCOUNTABLE

Secondly, there is great confusion amongst trade unionists on who the reps should be. Some unions are simply renaming shop stewards as safety reps. Other unions are saying that where possible the safety reps should not be stewards. It seems to me that the correct answer lies in between. Health and safety is more than what goes on in your own section or office. A factory-wide set-up is needed which should not be left to full-time convenors, or to the individual shop stewards. However, neither can health and safety be left to 'interested individuals'. It is whether the reps are accountable to the membership, possibly in some cases as an elected committee attached to the joint shop stewards committee etc.

Either way, the law only lays down minimum standards and rights. The killing and maiming of our class by working conditions will still only be stopped by industrial action where needed and by a society which literally puts life before profit - socialism.



mining could come under capitalism. The Coal Board would like that because machines don't answer back or go on strike and colliers do. The wealth would stay in the hands of a few and we'd get packed off to the dole queue.

But what of the shorter term? Well, if socialism is going to be worth me fighting for, it's got to mean no more getting up at 5.15 am on day shift, and certainly the end of night work. Generally it has to mean less work—a four-day week, longer holidays, earlier retirement. It's scandalous that men of 55 and 60 still have to do pit work when there's 1½ million on the dole. The money has got to be right, of course. It's no good having a four day week if you then have to work a couple of days overtime to make up your money. And early retirement's no good if the pension is too low.

throw their weight around because they'd only get told to....

And we could have an end to all the petty rules about clocking in and waiting around in pit bottom for 10 minutes whilst the officials go up first. I do my job properly because I know it could affect somebody else's safety and besides, it's more satisfying that way. I don't do it any better for somebody wheeling me into an office because I've overlaid a few times on days and telling me, 'If you don't make five days a week you're no use to us'.

Just daydreaming? It doesn't have to be. The current claim on pay and a shorter week is a step in the right direction, but we won't get it unless we're prepared to fight for it. Not with Sunny Jim talking of 5% and Maggie's Tories itching to have a go at us.



Why we are fighting: Tunnel workers picket the Employers Federation after four were killed at Littlebrook, Keant, earlier this year.

WHO'S OPENING YOUR MAIL?

FROM OUR POST BAG

A wrongly addressed letter arrived at 217 Wavertree Road, Liverpool recently. Nothing startling about that, you may say, letters get lost all the time. And so they do. But what made us wonder about this one was the address on it. Sent to Roger O'Hara, area organiser of the Communist Party at their Liverpool H.Q., it had turned up at Big Flame's Liverpool office instead. So you don't believe they tap the phones and open the mail? We won't trouble you with the inevitably non-committal replies from the Chief Constable and the Postmaster to our letter of complaint.

BE A BF SUPPORTER

WE STILL have not received many standing orders since we printed the form last month. To keep out price at 10p we need a regular flow of donations to our fighting fund. Standing orders are one way of doing this. If 35 of our supporters were to give us a regular donation of £2 per month, we will be able to break even. So cut out the form opposite, fill it in and give it to your bank. The months total is £25.50. Our thanks for donations from: £10.00 Islington Big Flame £7.75 St. Albans Member. £2.75 Dave Sutton, Bristol £5.00 Standing Orders

Standing order for periodical payments.

TO: _____ Name of your bank Date _____ 19__

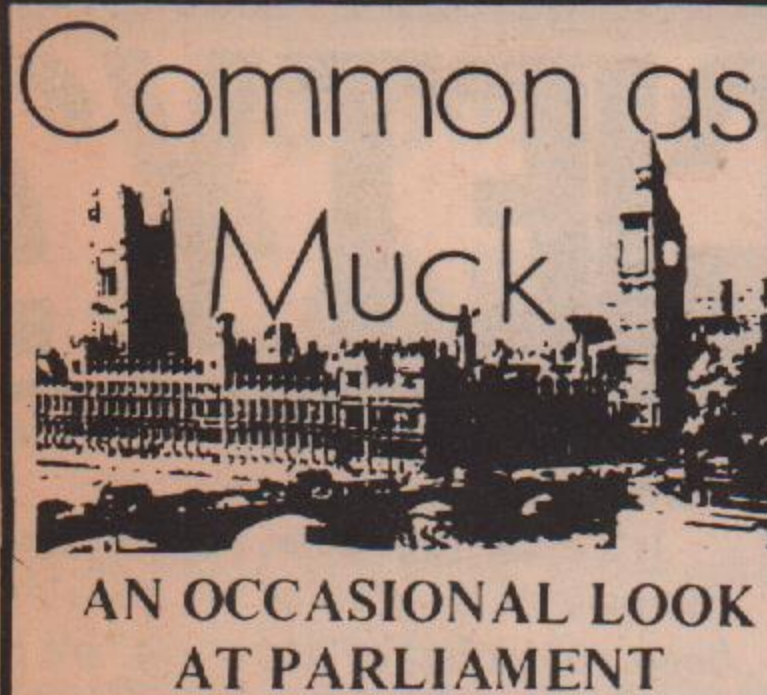
Please make the payments detailed below and debit my/our account.

TITLE OF ACCOUNT TO BE DEBITED: (Your name)		ACCOUNT NUMBER	CHECKED
		0	
AMOUNT IN FIGURES	AMOUNT IN WORDS:		
£			
DATE OF PAYMENTS	DATE & AMOUNT OF FIRST PAYMENT	DATE & AMOUNT OF FINAL PAYMENT	
	£	£	
ACCOUNT TO BE CREDITED, or Name and Address of Payee if payment is to be made direct.			ACCOUNT No. OF PAYEE IF KNOWN
BIG FLAME NEWSPAPER			0008738
BANK & BRANCH, to which payment is to be made.			SORTING CODE NUMBER IF KNOWN
LLOYDS BANK LTD., INDIA BUILDINGS, WATER STREET, LIVERPOOL L69 2BT or such Bank as the Payee may advise.			30-95-11
NAME & REFERENCE TO BE QUOTED, (if any)			
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS, (if any)			

Payments are to continue until _____ date of final payment shown above, inclusive, or until you receive further notice in writing from *me/any one of us (in the case of a Joint Account).

*Delete as necessary.

Your signature.



AN OCCASIONAL LOOK
AT PARLIAMENT

A Big Flame Interview Disturbance in Parliament

IT'S NOT often that action in solidarity with the Irish political prisoners even gets a mention in the Fleet Street rags. But three days before the Prisoners Aid Committee demonstration in London (see opposite page), John McSharry, a member of the United Troops Out Movement (UTOM), and Yana Mintoff, also a member of UTOM and of the Socialist Workers Party managed to break this silence as the papers reported their manure throwing into the House of Commons.

Gerry Roberts and Carlos Augusto speak to them about the incident and its achievements:

What do you think of the press coverage you got?

Yana: "We expected them to play on the fact that I was the daughter of the Prime Minister of Malta. But the issue came over in some papers despite this."

John: "The fact that a lot of working class people did hear about it, although they maybe didn't hear why we did it, gave socialists an opportunity to talk about the prisoners with their friends and workmates."

"I used to work at Fords. The comrades there thought it was wonderful. One of them wrote a poem about it."

Yana: "Most people thought it was great to throw shit in Parliament, the Bengalis I've talked to since thought it was terrific. And we got a letter from a prisoners relative."

So why, in particular, did you throw shit?

John: "Because of the conditions inside the cells."

Yana: "These people are political prisoners, and because they refuse to wear a criminals uniform, they have everything taken away from them, clothes, books and letters."

They are in the cells practically 24 hours a day and only let out to empty their shit. So they're refusing to do that now.

John: "So the cells are riddled with disease, particularly hepatitis, and because of all the excrement the prisoners cannot eat, some of them are down to 5 stone in weight. But the screws throw in their food on top of the shit."

Dear Yana and John,

I have a young brother in the H blocks of Long Kesh. I am writing to thank you for the brave protest in the House of Commons on behalf of Irish political prisoners.

You do not know the comfort you have given to hundreds of Irish mothers who were beginning to despair that no one but themselves cared about what is happening to their sons 'on the blanket.'

I hope that you will not experience the 'British justice' that we experience here when you appear in court.

Thank you again and may you keep up the good work in England on behalf of the young men and boys lying naked and hungry in the H blocks of Long Kesh.

MARY K. HIPHNEY
Dungiven, Co. Derry.

Who were you aiming at when you threw it?

Yana: "We would have liked to have hit Mason and Callaghan but they weren't there, but we aimed at the Labour front benches. The British government are directly responsible for the conditions of these men and women, but they hide behind a conspiracy of silence."

There's open press censorship which is condoned by Labour and Tories.

John: "Labour MP Joan Maynard was refused permission by Mason to visit the prisons."

What sort of activity, besides yours, is being carried out in order to break the silence?

Yana: "There has been a lot of 'blanket protests', where UTOM groups have leafleted high streets with comrades just wearing blankets to represent the prisoners. On March 1st we did this outside every newspaper in Fleet Street. This was the second anniversary of the withdrawal of political status (the government felt uncomfortable having political prisoners!) but none of the papers covered it."

And the UTOM organised a tour of the two women from the Relatives Action Committee in Belfast, which got a lot of interest. And the big Prisoners demo in London - there were about 5,000 people on it and not one capitalist paper reported it. The Army is killing young kids and putting men and women into concentration camps and from the papers you'd think nothing was happening."

John: "And now there's this TV programme 'Spearhead'. They're using the war as entertainment. They make out that the resistance to the Army is just from a small band of people. You'd never know there was any mass resistance. You'd never know there was any issue except religion from reading the capitalist press."

So what is the best way to let more people know?

Yana: "Either you bring Irish people over here and organise meetings or you encourage people to go over there to see for themselves."

Has there been any more interest in this recently?

Yana: "There has been an upturn amongst the left groups, the UTOM has grown and the SWP are more willing to work around the issue. But the official trade union channels block everything that's done. We need to bypass those structures and take the information into workplaces. The SWP is organising a national tour in September with the Relatives Action Committee. The Labour Government has got a lot to answer for and they won't like it being an election issue."

his job to interfere with other staff who wore badges unless complaints were made.

He warned me that I could lose my job for refusing his order to take off the badge. Most of my co-workers agree that I "should be allowed" to wear a "gay" badge, but when they witness the inflexibility of management they all back down. The union cannot see it as a human rights issue, and I think they are afraid of offending (!) management by standing up for me. "We mustn't offend the public" says the branch secretary, and "Well, it is an obscene word".

I have now been sacked for refusing to obey an order. I am appealing against this on the grounds of unfair dismissal. I am going through the internal appeals agreed between the union and management. If that fails I am going to an Industrial Tribunal. I claim that I am being discriminated against because of my sexuality.

Last month my support group and I held a picket on Burnley Bus Station. About 40 people came, including a group from Lancaster with a big "Lesbian Liberation" banner. I am being supported by local womens groups, the NCCL, and friends, and bus passengers who are signing a petition.

My contact address is c/o 23 Mason Street, Colne, Lancs, and I can be contacted (messages) via Colne (0282) 862276 or 867091. Please support by publicising my case!

Mary Winter

Home Soldier Home

'HOME SOLDIER HOME' is an important new film which shows the truth behind the glossy propaganda which the British Army churns out for the benefit of the public - especially the school-leavers it wants to recruit

Most of the film consists of interviews with ex-soldiers - what comes across clearly is the systematic way in which the army cons people into enlisting and once in they have great difficulty in getting out

'... Some kids join to learn a trade and then get out, but your terms of contract automatically alter after you learn a trade. Discharge by purchase is at the discretion of your commanding officer - so it's really not a right at all. You can only apply twice a year. I know a signaller who applied five times before they let him go.' (Chris Byrne, who joined at the age of 16)

'Home Soldier Home' makes clear that it is the conditions of unemployment and no job prospects that make people enlist - though careers officers play a very important role

'When you go into the fifth form, you have career advice and they ask you what you want to do and give you leaflets on the army, the navy and air force. That's the only careers advice we get. If people were allowed to think for themselves, they would not go around blowing people's heads off. The army turns ordinary human being into murderers.' (A 15 year old schoolboy)

The film ends with Bernadette McCalisky telling British people to 'go and learn about your own past'. One of the best ways of doing that is to organise a showing of the film

It costs £10 plus postage from 'Information on Ireland', 1 North End Rd., London W. 14

GAY BADGE WOMAN: WHY I WAS SACKED'

I HAVE been wearing a badge with the words 'Lesbian Liberation' on at work.

I have been driving 'Pay as you Enter' buses for Burnley and Pendle Joint Transport for ten months. In all I have been employed by the corporation on the buses for just under two years.

Two months ago I went into work on a late shift. Quite unexpectedly I was told by an inspector to remove this badge.

I told the inspector that I could not see any good reason to obey his order. A Union Shop Steward told me it would be advisable to remove the badge since it could be seen as offensive. I argued that other bus drivers were wearing various badges of their own choice, so why shouldn't I? "Give me a French Kiss", "I am a virgin ... this is a very old badge"; military, union, police, charity, and "club" badges, plus advertising and badges actually sewn onto jackets, are worn as well. I felt that the order to remove my badge was discriminating and unreasonable, and I have maintained this ever since.

On the next day I wore the badge knowing that I was to be interviewed by our Traffic Superintendent, (who hires and fires staff). I wanted him to have a chance to see the badge. My T&GWU Branch Secretary was ready to accompany me but in the past I have not found

him or other Shop Stewards helpful, so I said that I would see the boss alone, initially. I think I was right not to use Union backing at this stage, since the Union line has been: "take off the badge and don't risk your job" all along. I do not see this as the support to which I am entitled, being a union member and an active supporter of Trade Union activities. I have been obliged to go further afield, to Manchester, to find positive union backing. I see this also as evidence of a discriminatory attitude against me as a lesbian.

During my interview alone with the Superintendent I consistently offered to remove my badge as long as all other badges (apart from the PSV badge) were banned at work too. He replied that it was his duty under the Road Traffic Act to prevent me causing offence to passengers, that he had two written complaints about my badge, and that it was not



WANT TO OVERTHROW SOCIETY?

By a member of
"Persons Unknown"

While Asians are being murdered on the streets by NF supporters and the Anti-Nazi League and Peace News offices have been fire-bombed by right-wingers, the Anti-Terrorist Squad is hounding and persecuting anarchists, who they say are part of a 'nation-wide conspiracy to overthrow society.'

While no-one has been arrested in connection with the right-wing fire bombs, left-wing and anarchist homes have been raided by the ATS in search of evidence of just such a 'conspiracy'. So far the raids have been mainly in London (15), Huddersfield (6), and South Wales (about 10).

This comes at a time when questions have been asked in the House of Commons about the role and work of the ATS and the amount spent on national defence and the police force.

The ATS are concerned to show that they are doing work necessary for 'national security' and, with help from the national press, are trying to build up a theory of a Baader-Meinhof-type gang of 'terrorists' who are planning to cause explosions with 'persons unknown'. As we have seen, no explosions have occurred except against the left recently, and no left-wing explosions have occurred in this country for over two years.

ILLEGAL ARREST

Four people have been in Brixton prison on remand for nearly two months, charged with 'conspiracy to cause explosions'. They are Iris Mills, Ronan Bennett, Daffyd Ladd, and Stuart Carr. The only evidence against them being weedkiller and wiring found in the flat occupied by two of them. A car found in South Wales is said to be connected to the case.

This is apparently enough to warrant labelling them Category A prisoners and keeping them in the security wing of Brixton. This means that the only woman among them, Iris Mills, has been kept in solitary confinement, with no assoc-

BIG FLAME PHOTO



"Persons Unknown" Event in London, in support of those arrested, outside Paddington Green Police Station.

JOIN "PERSONS UNKNOWN"

iation with other prisoners since her arrest on May 24th.

In order to justify these arrests, and the conditions under which the prisoners are being kept, evidence had to be 'found' to fit the 'terror gang' theory.

So, on July 4th, two people who were on their way to a support group meeting for the four prisoners, were set upon by police in the street and bundled into a car and driven to Paddington Green police station. One, a delegate to the support group giving legal advice, was released after spending a night in the cells. The other, Vincent Stevenson, was kept for two days without being allowed access to a lawyer, and a further four days without being charged. Since the police claimed that he was not being kept under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, this 48 hour detention was illegal.

The plot thickened as the *Daily Mail* brought out an article on 6th July that claimed that police had 'picked up whispers of a terror gang thought to be planning attacks on establishment targets'. Remember that the only actual explosions had been by the right—but the ATS was not spending its time worrying about these.

CONVENIENT FIND

On July 7th, the police announced that they had found revolvers and automatic-pistols and ammunition in a house in North London. One man living in the house, Trevor Dawton, a young student, apparently a supporter of the Anti-Nuclear Campaign, was arrested and later charged with guess what—'conspiracy to cause explosions'.

This convenient 'find' of course was seen as justification for the earlier arrests—although there is no indication that the man later arrested even knew those already inside.

Detective Superintendent Bradbury, of the ATS, glowing with establishment pride, claims he has 'nipped' the activities of these people 'in the bud'. Pity he has been too busy to have 'nipped' the activities of the right-wing fire bombers 'in the bud'. One man, hurt as a result of the attack on Peace News is still in hospital with burns to his face and neck.

Meanwhile, members of the support group for the six—Persons Unknown—have been stopped and searched in the street, had their phones tapped, and been generally hassled. A number of them have been refused visits to the prisoners. Typewriters and other personal be-

longings have been taken from their homes.

It's clear that even supporters of the prisoners—who as yet have not been convicted of anything, are regarded as criminal by association.

In Germany at the time of the Red Army Faction arrests, the police said that the supporters were the people who 'have to be eliminated if the terrorist groups are to be neutralised'. That is, ordinary citizens that support political prisoners (and those in prison are only there because they are anarchists) can expect their civil liberties to be curbed if they oppose police action of this sort. Sounds very like the National Front leader John Tyndall, who said that if the NF came to power their opponents would be 'swept away like flies'.

MILITARISATION

Now it is only six people who have been arrested. The police say they expect to make four more arrests. Ten—a good round number. But how many more will it be? They are said to be looking for 'a group of idealistic persons who would take positive steps to overthrow society'. How many people come into this category?

It is clear that this harassment of anarchists is a justification for the growing militarisation of the police in this country (the ATS, the Special Patrol Groups, the SWAT teams, etc.).

It is part of a process to gradually strengthen the powers of the state in advanced capitalist countries at a time of economic crisis. Justification for the resources to be spent on this has to be found. What better way than to create a paranoia about 'left-wing terrorists!' Where they don't exist they have to be found.

WE APPEAL FOR MESSAGES OF SUPPORT 'DONATIONS' ETC' FROM UNION BRANCHES' ORGANISATIONS' INDIVIDUALS WHO READ 'BIG FLAME' etc. FOR NEWS OF OUR CAMPAIGN CONTACT:

PERSONS UNKNOWN
c/o Box 123
182 Upper Street
Islington, London

A LONG AND VITAL STRIKE AT GARNERS

WITH GRUNWICKS finished, the Garners Steak House strike becomes the longest running strike in London and the longest ever strike in hotel and catering in this country.

It looks set to last for some time yet. The determination of the strikers who remain has been strengthened by the gradual increase in support they are getting, particularly on the picket line from a number of Trades Councils and trade union branches.

Yet the present level of support is unlikely to be enough to bring a quick victory. Although the pickets have significantly reduced the turn-over of the most profitable restaurants and recent blacking of supplies has created difficulties and forced the company to pay more for its goods, its pre-strike profit margin was high.

The Garners strike has some peculiar features that make it a particularly difficult one to run effectively. The existence of ten restaurants which should all be picketed hinders communication between strikers and supporters. It also means that the company has a number of places to which supplies can be delivered, thus beating the picket in the central warehouse. It is also difficult to create a focus

for support and feeling for the overall situation—a problem worsened by the police limiting of the numbers of pickets to six.

Despite these difficulties, the strike could have been won by now, if the T&GWU had effectively mobilised its resources to support it. The Garners' workers were led to believe the strike would be won in a few days because the union would immediately cut-off essential supplies such as water, gas and electricity. So, they were initially unprepared for the eventual length of the struggle. The strike was quickly made official, but the T&G's £6 a week strike pay is totally inadequate and collections were not organised until much later. As a result, the strikers' own efforts at fund raising did not provide sufficient money. A number of strikers were eventually forced to find other jobs.

Regional officers, both full time and lay, have argued that the strike has already had more support than most strikes get. They also say, that in most strikes activities such as raising funds

and support for the picket line is carried out by the strikers themselves. Whilst this might be relatively easy for experienced trade unionists with a long tradition of organisation, it is clearly impossible for groups of workers who are new to trade unionism.

The Garners strike is the latest of a number of struggles which have broken out in the hotel and catering industry in various parts of the country in the last couple of years. Whilst this wave of catering strikes may create the impression that the level of militancy in the industry has increased, this is deceptive. In fact, the recent wave of strikes can be seen to result more from increased employer rather than worker militancy.

It is true, however, that whilst the relatively easy victories of the 1972/74 period may have produced workers with a fairly high level of confidence, the lack of a sharp clash meant that the majority of these workers have a lack of experience of struggle and tend to believe that it is in their interests to keep good relations with their "reasonable" employers. On the other hand those who, in the 1976/78 period, have had to wage long



London 24th June — when Garners pickets numbered just over the half dozen "permitted" by the police at the Oxford St branch. John Bruce was approached by police and asked to move as there were too many pickets there. He didn't move and was promptly arrested.

struggles for something as elementary as trade union recognition will have no such illusions. Some will also have learned that trade unions are often not the staunch defenders of workers' interests they thought them to be. Unfortunately the defeats may also have persuaded many of the less conscious that joining trade unions will bring no rewards.

After so many defeats the success of the Garners' strike is thus absolutely vital to trade union organisation in the industry. If

the strikers fail, following such a long and tough fight, it will prevent other unorganised workers from getting involved with trade unions for a long time to come.

For the moment, however, the strike is bringing some fruits to other workers who are joining the T&GWU. Employers are granting recognition easily and saying "we don't want a Garners here."

by a member of the Transport and General International branch to which the strikers belong.

Liverpool:

Comprehensives Threatened

ANTI-WOMEN, anti-black, anti-workingclass - This is what the Lib-Con pact means in Liverpool.

In yet another example of using the falling population to justify the public spending cuts, a proposed educational reorganisation plan could mean a return to the educational apartheid system of the pre-comprehensive era and the closure of schools in working class areas. Redundancies and redeployment of teachers is bound to follow. Despite strong opposition from teachers, parents, labour party councillors and anti-racist organisations, the Liberals are determined to implement their plans.

ANTI-BLACK

Paddington, Arundel and Sefton Park schools will be closed, leaving only one local community comprehensive school in the South Liverpool area.

As the Merseyside Anti-racist Alliance says:-

'The closure of Arundel and Paddington will directly affect the black and ethnic minority children of Liverpool 7 and 8. These children will be deprived of the only multi-racial secondary schools in the neighbourhood, and will be dispersed to schools throughout the city where there is little experience of teaching in a multi-racial environment. 'Bussing' has rightly earned a bad reputation in Britain as well as the USA. Not only will these children suffer the loss of security provided by a multi-racial neighbourhood school, but also a loss of identity. They will find themselves isolated in predominately white schools in areas far from home and possible hostile and prejudiced. It is highly unlikely that they will be allocated to the better comprehensives in middle class areas, but will be sent to those schools which frequently have the worst resources and staff ratios.'

ANTI-WORKING CLASS

Under the proposals, Paddington, the only purpose-built comprehen-

sive in the inner city will be handed over to the Further Education sector and out-dated buildings belonging to another school will be modernised to provide a sixth form college. This college will become a substitute for sixth forms in many comprehensives.

All schools with sixth forms will continue to operate on an 11-18 basis. This, however, is subject to the stipulation that no subject course be taught at sixth form level unless a minimum number of pupils are taking it. This will mostly effect those comprehensive schools in deprived areas, struggling to build up their sixth forms. These schools which have emerged from the amalgamation of secondary modern schools and not from existing grammar schools would lose their sixth form altogether. Pupils wishing to take 'A' levels would have to travel to other schools or the sixth form college. It will be those pupils in working class areas which will suffer most. As teachers in one school put it :-

'It will cease to be a comprehensive school, save in name only. Our intake will be radically affected as parents of a high proportion of pupils are unlikely to consider sending their children to a school that will have restricted syllabi and no Advanced level courses to offer. The absence of a sixth form will



also affect children from working-class backgrounds. Recent surveys in London by the National Union of Teachers show a very high 'drop-out' rate amongst children from less academic backgrounds once they had to leave their schools at 16. Schools which provided 11-18 facilities had a far higher percentage of such children doing 16+ courses. Thus continuity of education is essential for such children.' At the same time experienced staff would move to those schools able to provide them with 'A' level teaching. This would obviously lead to two class of comprehensive schools. Those schools without a sixth form would have larger class sizes because of the way staff requirements are calculated.

ANTI-WOMEN

The inability of most schools to provide a full sixth form provision would have important implications for the education of girls. Less popular subjects would be phased

out. In the girls comprehensive schools this means that science and technical 'A' levels would not be available because only a small number of girls opt for these subjects because of their conditioning against these 'masculine' subjects. For example:- Physics groups at 'A' level tend to be small and could therefore not be offered to the pupils, and those girls wishing to take this subject to 'A' level would have to transfer to another school or the sixth form college. This would bring down the numbers of those wishing to study chemistry and mathematics to below what is considered viable, so these girls would have to transfer schools. This would lead to the more popular biology disappearing at 'A' level and so on - bang goes the science sixth form provision and the teachers who specialise in these subjects. This obviously means that boys schools would then provide superior science facilities to those of girls schools - a classic case of sexism in education!

A wide range of organisations are determined to stop the proposals. 1,300 teachers have signed a petition against the closure of Paddington Comprehensive.

The Liverpool branch of the National Union of Teachers says, 'If any attempt is made to dismember the 11-18 comprehensives in Liverpool, this Association will ballot its membership in order to take effective action to protect this system'.

The Education Committee has been picketed by angry crowds of parents and teachers. Labour councillors have pledged themselves to do all they can to prevent the proposals being passed at the full council meeting. It is likely, however, that they will be passed because the combined forces of the Liberals and Conservatives outnumber Labour. This means that a grass-roots campaign has to be launched to prevent the Department of Education and Science approving the final proposals. Liverpool N.U.T. member.

Gay Teacher Silenced

JOHN WARBURTON IS GAY. IN 1974, John Warburton took part in a demonstration calling for an end to discriminatory laws against homosexuals, organised by the Campaign for Homosexual Equality. He was seen by one of his pupils.

The following Monday, when he went into work, he soon realised that it had spread around the school. He went to teach his first class of the morning and was greeted with chants of 'homo, homo' and other insults. In order to calm down the class and to put an end to the verbal abuse he began to explain what it means to be homosexual. Why he had been on the demonstration, some of the ways in which homosexuals suffer discrimination, and why the names which they had called him were insulting. Similar events occurred in other classes that day and John dealt with them in the same way. After this the subject wasn't brought up again. About a month later he covered a maths class for a teacher who was sick. He had never taken that class previously - the insults began, he dealt with them in the same way as before, and continued the lesson. Unknown to John this latest incident was reported to his headteacher who in turn reported it to her divisional inspector. Meanwhile John's teaching spell at St. Marylebone had ended: he went for an interview at Holland Park. Though the head was keen to offer him the job, John received the following from the Inner London Education Authority

Unless therefore, you are able to give the written assurance we asked for i.e. that you will not in future discuss homosexuality with pupils, except in the course of a completely structured programme of sex education of which the Headmaster/

Headmistress is in full agreement, the Authority will not be able to appoint you as a teacher in any of its schools.

He felt unable to sign such an undertaking. Apart from the wider issues raised by an education authority seeking to muzzle a teacher in a classroom, how could he put himself in the position of being defenceless if pupils questioned or abused him again?

John Warburton tells his story in a recently published pamphlet 'Open and Positive: an account of how John Warburton came out at school and the consequences'.

Several things emerge from reading the pamphlet - the ignorance, bigotry and cold face of the Inner London Education Authority officialdom, which even when it realised its initial mistakes, couldn't admit it. There is the gross mishandling of the matter, over-reacting to the over-reaction of a prejudiced head teacher. Sad to say, there's the predictable behaviour from the National Union of Teachers executive. Whilst local branches were actively supporting John, the executive were doing their usual, 'well, let's just sit on the fence for a bit eh, and who knows the whole thing might go away of its own accord, mime act.

This is a union which has a code of professional conduct listing actions declared to be unprofessional including:

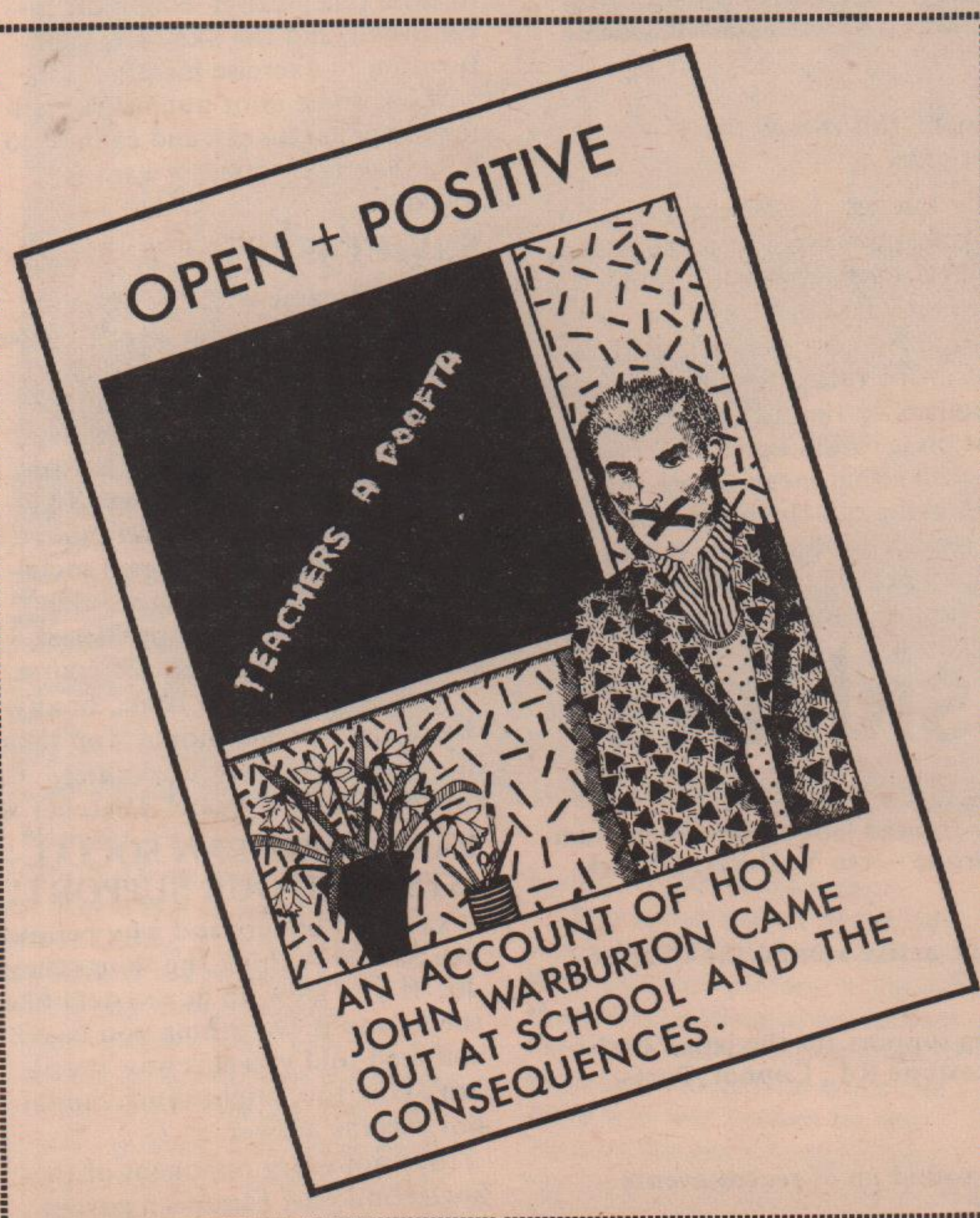
'for any teacher to make a report on the work or conduct of another

teacher without at the time acquainting the teacher concerned with the nature of it, if it be a verbal report, or without showing it, if it be written, and allowing the teacher concerned to take a copy of it' But, this same union refused to take any action arising from the breach of that rule by 2 teachers, both of whom had reported John's discussion with the maths class to their headmistress. The positive thing which emerges from this story is John's own courage and that of the other gay teachers who openly supported him, so placing their own jobs at risk.

There are many gay people in this country, most of them unable to 'come out', that is to be open about their sexual identity and preference, to strangers, friends, and often even to themselves. They are afraid, rightly so, that they will lose friends, their job, custody of their children. And everything in this wonderful, technological, advanced capitalist dream is telling them that they are, or should be, heterosexual. And the people who are being told the loudest, are those of secondary school age, like John Warburton's pupils. Day by day, minute by minute, they are bombarded by

words, sounds, images, about how to be a real super-stud man, a real sex-appeal woman. Young women and men who find that they are attracted to people of their own sex, who would rather relate to their own sex, physically or any other way, see no approving images for such relationships. Homosexuality, and lesbianism are secretive, dirty, insulting words. So many adults who have gained the strength to recognise their homosexuality and to be able to talk and write about it can testify to their adolescence. They longed to be able to tell someone about their sexual and emotional feelings, to be able to find someone who could understand and give reassurance. So many other adults have not been able to reach that stage of strength. They have repressed the homosexuality of their youth, let it be killed by guilt and shame

As John points out, it is precisely the fact that so many gay teachers are forced to hide their homosexuality, cannot be accessible to pupils who want to talk about it or find their feelings difficult to come to terms with, that reinforces pupils notions that all the people they meet, friends, parents, teachers, are heterosexual - 'straight'. So they think that she/he must be an isolated case, a sick person, or wrongly developed. I don't know what effect current psychological theories have upon young people at school now, but I know that when I went in the late fifties and early sixties homosexuality, when written or talked about at all, was considered to be a stage some people went through in growing up, and some missed it out altogether. But anyone who stayed attracted to their own sex and didn't graduate to the romantic nirvana which revolved around 'boys' was abnormal, doomed to perpetual immaturity and sexual perversion. It would have saved me a lot of shame and suffering if there had been a gay teacher with the freedom to help. I don't doubt that some must have been gay or unwillingly 'straight'.



'Open and Positive' Price 75p is available from the Gay Teachers Group (London), 112 Broxholm Rd., London SE 27.

Demonstration? You're dreaming!



photo: Carlos Augusto

This demonstration of over 3000 people did NOT take place in London recently. They are NOT protesting at the conditions of Irish prisoners in the H-blocks of Long Kesh camp. Nor are they demanding that Irish prisoners of war in English jails be allowed to serve their sentences closer to their families in Ireland. It's obvious that the march did not take place because not a single national daily paper reported it. Neither did TV or radio news. Not

a word. Completely censored. Except that we don't have censorship in this country, do we?

NOT LIKE RUSSIA, THANK GOD!

As a matter of fact, while the march was waiting to start in Hyde Park, some of the marchers noticed a small group of people in the middle of the park. Wandering across they discovered a small protest on behalf of the victimised Russian dissidents, Shcharansky and Ginzburg.

Also in evidence were hordes of journalists whose reports were front page news the next day. But not one of them had noticed the Irish prisoners march, though it was only a few yards away!

Not only that, but a demonstra-

tion in support of Chilean political prisoners came into sight as well, but that wasn't reported either! Only the *Morning Star* reported the Chile demonstration and quite rightly pointed out the two-faced attitude of the British press, which con-

demned the police state in Russia, but stayed silent on the butchery in capitalist Chile.

What a shame the *Morning Star* gave only a few lines to the thousands supporting the Irish political prisoners on the same day!

Bahro - Unmentionable Dissident

TRUE TO FORM, the Soviet government has come down hard on its most recent crop of 'human rights' dissidents. Three of them, Anatoly Shcharansky, Viktor Platkus, and Alexander Ginzburg, have all received heavy prison sentences simply for speaking out against the repressive Soviet regime. The capitalist press and capitalist politicians—from Jimmy Carter to our own Jimmy Callaghan—have been quick to cash in on the trials.

ly run things in their own interests.

WHO ARE THE DISSIDENTS?

The dissidents we hear most about—like Shcharansky and Ginzburg—are not socialists. They're liberal 'reformers' who don't want anything to do with socialism. They want

more privileges for themselves.

Take the famous Russian writer, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who was thrown out of the USSR a few years ago. He's a racist and a violent anti-socialist. He defended the Americans in Viet Nam (he thought they were 'too soft') and the Chilean junta of Pinochet. Or take Andrei Sakharov, the most famous of all Soviet 'dissidents'. He's a member of the elite in his country. When President Carter sent him a letter congratulating him on his fight for 'freedom', Sakharov had a chauffeured limousine drive him to the American Embassy in Moscow to pick it up! He has a special summer cottage, and still buys in special shops where only the upper crust of the Soviet elite can shop.

When Sakharov talks about democracy, he means the market, just like we have in the West, where there will be privileges, private enterprise (they call it 'economic incentives'), and the like. He wants freedom to exercise his privileges without some idiot bureaucrat telling him what he can and cannot do. What Sakharov doesn't want is socialism.

SOVIET JEWS

It's the same with the Jews in the Soviet Union who want to leave for Israel. No-one can possibly excuse the disgusting anti-semitism that the Soviet regime uses to win support for itself. But the Jewish dissidents in the USSR aren't fighting for equal rights for everybody. They're not fighting for real socialism, where anti-semitism wouldn't exist. No, they want a privileged solution for themselves. Of course, if they want to go to Israel, or anywhere else, no-one should stop them. But they are not our class allies, any more than Margaret Thatcher is.

EAST EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS NEED OUR SUPPORT!

It's easy to understand why people like Sakharov think the things they do. If you grew up in a system like theirs, and if everything you heard and read told you this was 'socialism', you, too, might think capitalism was the answer.

But not every opponent of the Soviet and East European governments is right-wing. The workers in Poland who rioted and went on strike in 1970 and 1976 aren't pro-

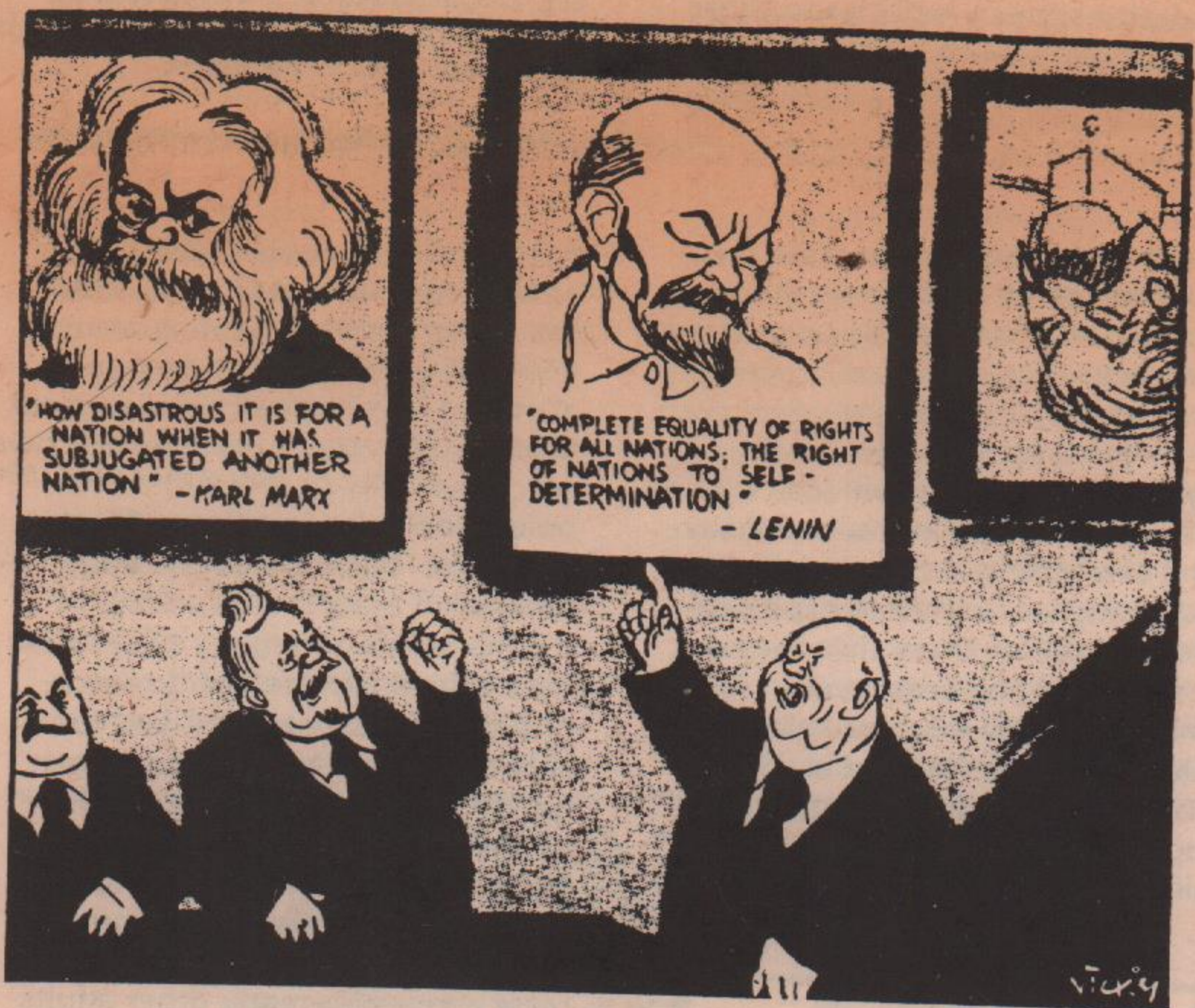
capitalist, and neither are the many students, intellectuals, and even ex-government politicians who support them. They all, in one way or another, want to see some form of democratic socialism come to their country. That means they oppose private property and exploitation. The workers in Hungary who led the revolution in 1956 weren't pro-capitalist, either. They set up workers' councils that took over complete control, not just of their factories, but of distribution, transport, and local government.

It's the same today. Last year miners went on strike in Rumania, and some Rumanian intellectuals defended them. In Czechoslovakia the famous 'Charter 77' movement started off as a liberal, reformist movement. It has since developed a strong left wing inside it, as many Czechoslovak oppositionists come

to realise that 'human rights' without working class economic power are meaningless. In East Germany there are many socialists facing attack and not just Rudolph Bahro. In the West there is an active campaign to get Bahro free.

All of these people and movements need the active support of working people in the West. One of the best weapons the capitalists have against the socialist movement is anti-communism. And the best way to fight anti-communism here is to build an international revolutionary socialist movement that clearly stands for ideals which working people the world over will fight for. That means uniting with our sisters and brothers struggling against the oppressive, anti-working class regimes in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

Vic Graham



"Bah! Counter-revolutionaries!" Surprisingly, this is how the *Mirror's* Vicky saw Khrushchev's attitude to human rights.

Just a few weeks before these trials another 'dissident'—this time in East Germany—wound up in jail for opposing an East European government. He, too, got a heavy sentence—eight years. But the capitalist press didn't give him much space, just a few lines in a couple of papers. And Jimmy Carter didn't go on show to defend him. His name is Rudolf Bahro, and he's a socialist. He wound up in prison for writing a book saying what everybody in his country al-

ready knows: East Germany is not a socialist country. It is repressive, brutal country that has nothing in common with socialism. Bahro's solution isn't for the people of Eastern Europe to ask for help from the capitalists or Jimmy Carter. His solution is to set up real socialism: something that means more than just kicking out the bosses, bankers, and landlords. Socialism means working people taking control over society and using it to democratically

Support dissidents

WHOM TO CONTACT:

East European Solidarity Campaign, a newly-formed labour movement campaign to defend oppositionists in Eastern Europe — c/o V. Derer, 10 Park Drive, London, NW 11 7SH.

Committee to Defend Czechoslovak Socialists, active around the Charter 77 Movement — 49a Tabley Rd., London N. 7.

Rudolf Bahro Defence Committee, organising support for the jailed East German socialist — c/o G. Minnerup, 14 Folkestone Rd., Copnor, Portsmouth.

WHAT TO READ:

Labour Focus on Eastern Europe gives news round up of recent events — Bottom Flat, 116 Cazenove Rd., London N. 16.

Critique provides analysis plus surveys of events — 41 Clevedon Rd., Glasgow G12 0PH.

IN THE last few weeks the Spanish Police have killed two unarmed demonstrators and wounded many more with gunfire, rubber bullets and beatings. But what really stung the centre-left newspaper *El Pais* was the "vandalism" of the police.

In the wake of the street fighting when the police broke up the Pamplona bull-fight festival in early July, a company of armed police was sent to take down the barricades in Renterja, outside San Sebastian. Led by a captain, the para-military police ran amok, breaking shop windows in the shopping centre, urinating against doors, looting and damaging

for a new liberal constitution and free local elections, the centres of Franco-fascist power are left intact, especially in the police force, the army and the banks.

The Basques want the Madrid army of occupation out of their country. ETA, the Basque national liberation movement, is waging war on the police, with evident popular support. All this is driving the fascist elements in the police into a hysteria of destruction.

The sacking of the police chiefs of Pamplona (a well-known fascist activist) and San Sebastian is a vic-

Basque Country • Police Run Amok

goods on display.

At the root of all this is the refusal of the Basque country to accept the social democrat-cum-fascist solutions to the country's crisis proposed by the bosses' party, the UCD, and accepted by the Socialist and Communist parties. In exchange

tory for the Basques, but it won't satisfy them. What terrifies the authorities is the prospect of the campaign against the police spreading to the other big working class centres of Spain — Barcelona, Madrid and Seville.



Portugal:

'Socialist' Government Gaols PRP Militants

THE EUPHORIA of the days of 1975 has disappeared from the political atmosphere in Portugal. Many of the gains won by the working class in the aftermath of the overthrow of fascism have now disappeared — even by the government's figures wages are now lower than they were in 1975. The recent arrest of 18 PRP militants has made many feel that the right-wing drift in Portugal could lead to the possibility of a right wing coup.

On the 20th June in the biggest police action since 1945, the combined police forces raided 80 houses all over Portugal, the offices of revolutionary political groups with warrants for the arrest of 60 left-wing militants. Helicopters were involved in the dawn raids of the police.

18 militants were arrested including some leaders of the PRP — they have been charged with taking part in bank robberies and having weapons. Under Portuguese law they can be held in prison for 6 months, before being tried or released. A recent press conference given by the relatives of those arrested pointed out that many had been badly beaten up, and that they have been unable to see lawyers alone. This is against the law in Portugal. For many all this is reminiscent of pre-April 25th days and it is certainly the first time since then that such a massive country wide attack has been made on the left.

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING?

Recent months have seen a growth in the power of the right as the government stumbles on, hamstrung by internal contradictions and external control of the IMF.

'The operation in which we arrested was of such magnitude that it has to be seen as a political act. We have been singled out as the main enemy of the State. At the same time those who recruit mercenaries for Angola walk about freely and are

known throughout the country. In Bissau, our government makes an agreement with Angola — whilst the recruitment of mercenaries takes place up and down the country in coffee bars and night clubs We have been accused of belonging to 'an association

of criminals' not even the PIDE (the fascist secret police) faced this accusation. Anti-fascists must not allow things to drag on. We are only the first to be arrested.'

Isabel do Carmo, Police prison of Oporto

(this letter appeared in the weekly 'O Journal' of 14th July. She sent it to 'O Journal' since it was the only paper that mentioned their anti-fascist activities. Even the publications of the Portuguese CP referred to the 18 arrested as 'Criminals')

as an organisation to build any sort of opposition or campaign around the arrested 18. But the longer term aim is to try and rebuild the militancy of '75 (under different conditions), in preparation for the 1980 elections, to try and stem the present right wing offensive in

Portugal, which is now trying to marginalise forces on the left particularly the PRP.

Once the darlings of the revolutionary left in this country (especially the SWP), the PRP were dropped like a hot potato when the situation in Portugal ceased to interest British revolu-

tionary tourists. In fact the PRP well before 1974 and ever since have been in the vanguard of the struggle in Portugal.

Throughout this period, their militants, first as the Revolutionary Brigades, then as the PRP, have behaved as exemplary revolutionary communists — to which the vain, ego-tripping sectarianism of the revolutionary left in this country is a poor reflection. These quotes from the Presidents of Angola and Mozambique are eloquent reminders of the proletarian internationalism of the PRP.

'From 1970 onwards, the Portuguese democratic forces, in the strategy of their struggle against fascism, located the colonialist war machine as the primary target of the armed struggle. It is in this context that the actions of the Revolutionary Armed Action and, later, the PRP-BR stand out' (Samora Machel 18/1/77 3rd Frelimo Congress).

'Dear Comrades,

In the name of the MPLA and in my own name, I thank you for having sent the military maps of the Portuguese high-command in Angola. These maps are an immense help in the development of our struggle.... The Revolutionary Brigades have unequivocally shown that our struggles are intimately linked...'

Augustino Neto

It is important that the Portuguese authorities are made aware of what we feel about the arrests of Isabel do Carmo, Carlos Antunes and 16 other PRP members. Their arrest is yet another example of a social-democrat government doing what a Fascist government was unable to do.

PORTUGAL A BLAZE OF FREEDOM

BIG FLAME



Isabel do Carmo on a demonstration of soldiers and sailors in 1975. The fact that the PRP has had a woman as its leader has always been a source of great aggravation to the ruling class. What has made them even more angry is that she is a doctor much loved by the working class community in which she works. ('Blaze of Freedom' is available from Big Flame at 30p + postage.)

NAMIBIA—LANCS SANCTIONS- BUSTING TRAIL

THE SUPPLY of the raw materials needed for energy lies at the heart of imperialist politics. Twenty years ago British imperialism overthrew a progressive regime in Iran which threatened to nationalise Iran's oil reserves, more recently the major oil companies, including Shell and BP have been sanction busting by importing oil into Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). Sanction busting is also being done in Namibia, where the political situation is on a knife-edge. The article that follows pieces together the ins and outs of this sanction busting which can be stopped by the vigilance and mobilisation of the labour movement and other progressive forces.

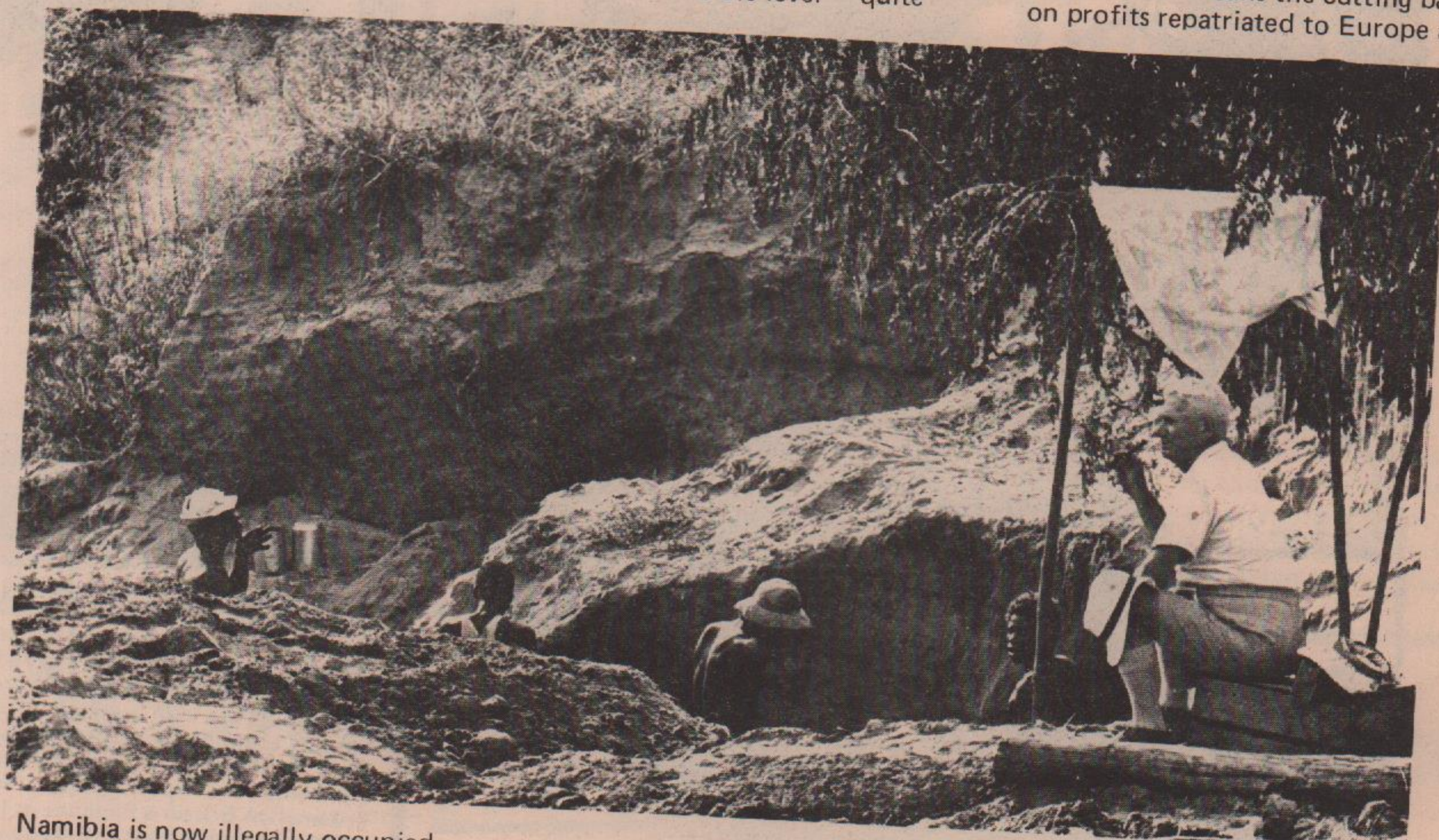
THE ILLEGAL importing of uranium oxide from Namibia to Britain has begun. The uranium, dug at the Rossing Mine near Walvis Bay, is flown to Paris (Orly) and then carried by lorry to Risley, Lancashire. Rossing is part-owned by the British multinational Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ). Risley is the headquarters for British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., and the site of the Springfields reactor, owned by Manchester University (who also invest in RTZ). The lorries are owned by Edmonson's of Morecombe.

These shipments are the first of a £120 million contract with RTZ to supply BNFL and the UK Atomic Energy Authority with 7,500 tons of uranium. The contract, signed in 1970 and authorized by Benn at the Ministry of Technology, was made public in 1971. The uranium was to be supplied by the Canadian subsidiary Rio Algom, but this was immediately switched to Rio Tinto (South Africa) and renegotiated with the South African Industrial Development Corporation, part owners in Rossing.

In 1973 the Labour Party Programme stated that Labour 'will terminate the the AEA Programme with RTZ'; Benn said the same in a letter to the Guardian that year. The South African occupation of Namibia has been condemned by the United Nations and declared illegal by the International Court of Justice. The UN Council for Namibia (the legal administrator for the territory) decreed that: "no person or entity may search for, prospect for, extract, mine, process, export or sell any natural resources of Namibia". Any transportation found carrying these resources could be seized on behalf of the UN. Val Duncan, the chairman of RTZ, said: "I will take no notice of what the UN says on uranium", because the low wages for Africans enables RTZ to sell uranium at one third the world price.

The Government's position was clarified by Ted Rowlands, writing to MP Gerald Kaufman in June '75: "We cannot agree that existing UN resolutions concerning Namibia are

strategic needs nor the long-term interests of Namibia would be served by cancelling the contract... a Chapter VII determination (at the UN) would be designed to pave the way for a whole range of economic sanctions against South Africa, which would not help the Namibian cause... we are contributing £10,000 to the UN fund for Namibia..." SWAPO (the liberation movement in Namibia) has condemned the contract repeatedly and called on the government to cancel it.



Namibia is now illegally occupied by South Africa, but before the First World War it was a German colony. Today, South Africa controls 50% of the Rossing mine, while the West German company Urangesellschaft owns 15% and has an option to buy 40% of the output. But Bonn and Pretoria aren't just comrades in theft. The uranium used in nuclear fission — whether reactors or bombs — is the isotope U235, which must be separated out from the normal U238. For reactors, the

process can be used in either case.

South Africa has reactors, and has refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (on nuclear weapons). And the technology to enrich uranium has been supplied to the South African plant at Pelindaba, developed by the West German firm STEAG and financed by the West German government. Pelindaba has about 15 times as many separators as are needed to process South Africa's supply of uranium to the 3% level — quite

the West German firm OTRAG has obtained all rights to the use of land in Zaire — as a testing ground for guided missiles. And West German companies and banks are pouring money into the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, SWAPO's main opponent in the forthcoming Namibian elections.

SWAPO, besides calling for an end to the British contract, is committed to using the natural resources in the interests of the Namibian people. This means the cutting back on profits repatriated to Europe and

South Africa, local processing of ore and an end to contract labour. In response, ASLEF, the T&G and the National Union of Seamen are considering boycotting the delivery of any further supplies. People who oppose the development of nuclear power in Britain as well as neocolonialism in Namibia, have good reasons to support the Campaign Against the Namibian Uranium Contract. Contact...

TIME OFF

What I reckoned when I went to see **Coming Home** was that any anti-war film which has been slagged off by critics of the national press must have a lot going for it - and this is certainly the case for **Coming Home** which is a film well worth seeing.

FUTILITY OF WAR

Not surprisingly, the obscene role the U.S. played in the Vietnam war continues to haunt the consciences of American liberals - including the progressive liberals involved in the making of **Coming Home**. The film is a courageous attempt to show the waste and futility of the war in Vietnam from the point of view of the U.S. soldiers sent out to fight in it. Gone are the macho fantasies of films like **Green Berets**, in **Coming Home** we are shown the grim reality of U.S. soldiers who have received all kinds of mutilation - physical and psychological.

WAR VETERANS

The plot of **Coming Home** is a three-way love affair between Captain Bob Hyde (Bruce Dern) who spends most of the film in 'Nam', his wife Sally Hyde (Jane Fonda) who decides whilst her husband is in 'Nam' to do voluntary work in the paraplegic ward of a hospital for disabled war veterans. There she meets Luke Martin (Jon Voight), an injured veteran who has seen the light. **Coming Home** is certainly not a film short of themes - the relationship between Sally Hyde and

Luke Martin is skillfully used by the film-maker to introduce the demand of women for sexual fulfilment and liberation that co-incided in the States with the anti-war move movement. By making Luke Martin, a cripple, the agency of Sally Hyde's sexual liberation, the film also takes a well-aimed swipe at traditional images of male virility - though obviously the film cannot go as far as to suggest that all men can become redundant in women's fight for a liberated sexuality: that would put too many male film stars out of a job!

DRAFT RESISTERS

One criticism that will be made of **Coming Home** is that it never goes beyond giving a personal context to what are political questions. For instance, there is no mention in the film of the anti-war movement, of the draft resisters, of the G.I.s who threw fragmentation bombs at their officers (from which 'fragging' comes) to demonstrate their refusal to fight, of the dope-smoking and desertion in 'Nam' by which soldiers expressed their revolt. And this is a weakness of the film. But it does not matter that much since what the film is concentrating on is the personal destruction of the U.S. men who fought in the war. This comes across very powerfully in the scenes where Bob Hyde comes back from the war and commits suicide because he cannot

live with the atrocities he and his men committed against the Vietnamese. And it must come as a shock to many G.I.s who will see **Coming Home** to be told that they

It's been slagged off in the national press.....It's well worth seeing



Captured Vietcong "suspects". The Americans believed that anyone who was young and not in the uniform of their ally was a Vietcong.

PHILIP JONES GRIFFITHS, MAGNUM

COMING HOME

are no better than Nazi war criminals.

CRUELTY OF IMPERIALISM

Yet, for all its many progressive aspects, **Coming Home** can be clearly identified as a product of an imperialist culture. Its main argument against the war is 'it was wrong because of what it did to our boys' and this is understandable given that

its message is to make sure that 'our boys' are never sent to war again. But its 'Troops Out,' position prevents **Coming Home** from considering the major victims of the Vietnamese war - the Vietnamese people. There is a great danger that as American liberals come to realise the full horrors of their country's involvement in South East Asia (and Africa and Latin America), they concentrate on what

it has done to the American 'psyche' and forget the limitless brutality and cruelty the imperialist system inflicts on the peoples of the 'third world'. Cultural products like **Coming Home** play an important role in forming public opinion against future military interventions. This is reason enough for us to support them - it also explains the manic hostility of the critics in the national press.

Photos for this article were taken from John Pilger's book "The Last Day".



On April 25, 1971, more than 300,000 people came to Washington to protest against the war in Vietnam. Among them were veterans like William Wyman, who lost both

ADS

Classified Ad. rates: 3p a word (pre-paid in the form of stamps)

MANCHESTER
Film: The Liberation Struggle in Namibia. Speaker Zola Zembe (SACTU) In: the Black Women's Co-op, St Mary's St., Moss Side. 7.30. Fri. July 28.

MIDLANDS CONFERENCE ON BRITAIN'S INVOLVEMENT IN IRELAND
The November 11th conference in Birmingham will attempt to break the official silence on Ireland, with panels of speakers on the history of Ireland from partition to the present 'troubles' and on the current situation in the north. Several speakers from the six counties. Also planned is a session on the effects of the war in Ireland on the British political situation and the British labour movement. Speakers are being approached from a broad range of political viewpoints who are directly involved on the Irish question, such as the NCCL, the Relatives Action Committees, the Better Life For All Campaign, the Women and Ireland Group, the Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland and the United Troops Out Movement
NEXT PLANNING MEETING - Fri. 4th August, Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. 7.30 p.m. - pooled fare system.

PUBLICATIONS

All prices include postage.

DRAFT MANIFESTO for a New Revolutionary Organisation. 35p
Sections include: Modern Capitalism, Composition of the working class, Reformism and popular power, Trade unions, Party and class, International Perspectives, Revolutionary Strategy.

THE REVOLUTION UNFINISHED
A Critique of Trotskyism 60p
Two members of Big Flame dissect Trotskyism, the dominant tendency in the British Revolutionary left.

FROM IMMIGRATION CONTROL TO 'INDUCED REPATRIATION'
A.Sivanandan 20p

RACE & CLASS

Race and Class pamphlet No.5 Available from all progressive bookshops or from The Institute of Race Relations 247, Pentonville Road, London N.1. (send 30p to cover P&P).

ANTI-FASCISM AND THE ANTI-NAZI LEAGUE: a critical bibliography. s.a.e. to News From Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool 1.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE

National Planning Meeting, Oxford Friends Meeting House, 43 St. Giles, 7:30pm Friday 15th September. Food from 6pm. Please let CAAT know (5 Caledonian Rd., Kings Cross, London, N1 9DX) if you're planning to come and if you need accommodation or a creche.

LEEDS
BIG FLAME SUMMER KNEES UP Saturday July 29th at the Gaiety 8p.m. - 1p.m.. 80p and 40p (unwaged) at the door)

LONDON
ITALY 1977-78 - Big Flame Public Forum with Italian correspondent for 'Peoples News Service' and a contributor to the Red Notes pamphlet on Italy. Mon. 31st July. 7.30. Hemingford Arms, Hemingford Rd. N1. (Tubes: Highbury/Islington)



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'WE ARE OUR OWN LIBERATORS !'

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March To Trafalgar Square SUNDAY JULY 30

Organised by ZIMBABWE AFRICAN NATIONAL UNION (ZANU) London Branch



ANL Call for Unity in Action

THE 800 militants who attended the Anti-Nazi League Conference in July had their energy and enthusiasm built up by rousing speeches, passed some useful motions, but probably didn't hear much they hadn't heard before. The emphasis on unity in action whereby people of different political views can work together in the same organisation will mean that the ANL will continue to do excellent campaigning work, but people will have to work out the answers to the increasingly difficult questions posed by racism and fascism for themselves, without much help from the ANL Steering Committee.

Peter Hain told the Conference "This is about action, not hot air. We've swept aside those who want to cross the i's and dot the t's", as though we can carry out all the action without any basic understanding of the problems, as though we all agree on the nature of racism and fascism. The Conference rightly rejected the sectarianism of the small Trotskyist cliques who regard the ANL as an unprincipled accommodation with racist social democrats. But, it would have been useful for the Conference to know more about the differences of approach on the Steering Committee, and to know about the problems posed by having people like Bidwell among our sponsors.

RACISM

Paul Holborrow made a useful contribution in rejecting the "racist poison which has increasing currency in British politics" and stating loud and clear that "black people are here, to stay in this country. We do not accept repatriation in any shape or form". But he failed to discuss how the ANL can actively take up the question of racism, as distinct from fascism, in its local activities. And Holborrow's few sentences on the role of Women Against the Nazis were appalling: "Nazis are active on

the housing estates — it is important that ANL women's groups protect the kids going to school, rub out the graffiti on the walls etc."

Arthur Scargill made a fine, rousing speech, which met with tremendous applause and made us all glad he is on our side. He even said he was proud to march with punk rockers. But he didn't refer to the rampant racism in the pits, nor did he give any practical ideas for countering this.

BLACK SPEAKERS

Very few of the speakers on the issue of racialism, even the black speakers, gave any practical ideas. But Gordon Robbins, a mature student, pointed out that there were very few black people at the Conference, "because the black community doesn't trust us", and Max Farrar, from the Leeds Coalition Against Racism and Fascism said that it was because we whites concentrated on fascism, when racism was the day to day threat to the black community, that black people weren't keen on the ANL. He referred to the guidelines for anti-racist work passed at the CARF Conference — activity around immigration controls, on curricula in schools, in trade unions — and called for support

for the autonomous black organisations.

An outstanding feature of the Conference was the fact that only one woman spoke outside the 20 minutes allotted to Women against the Nazis. The absence of any small group discussion meant that we were unable to really share ideas and experience. No effort appeared to have been made to maximise the presence or participation of women at the Conference.

WOMEN

But when they did speak, the women were far more effective than most of the men. They managed to combine their analysis with practical ideas. Yvonne Walker spoke of the many women who are isolated in the home and Peggy Eagle described how they had organised an anti-Nazi meeting for women on her estate. Another woman said she was glad that there were anti-racist trade unionists at the Conference, but reminded the men that women don't often have time for trade union meetings, and so the men should be active in the community as well. "You should make sure you're not breeding racialism in your own home by being out seven nights a week as well" she said, to loud applause.

There were excellent contributions from John Lindsay, from Gays against the Nazis, and from three school students and a sports reporter. But all this was rushed in at the end.

IMMIGRATION CONTROLS

When it came to the resolutions, the platform was obviously terrified of dissent. The Steering Committee's declaration called for further electoral activity, for increased trade union women and youth involvement and

for the building of the sectoral ANL groups among students, gays, doctors etc. It pledged a national conference to determine the future of the ANL after the Conference, and a working council elected on a regional/area basis to "implement the decisions of the Conference, discuss further initiatives, and spread the experience from one area to another". Several amendments were proposed, only three of which were controversial, and Paul Holborrow gave the Steering Committee's unanimous view that two of them, which put forward 'No Platform' and 'No immigration Controls', would alienate many of the ANL's supporters and therefore curtail the work of the League. He personally supported the third

motion which opposed all immigration controls, but was not binding on ANL supporters, though the Steering Committee opposed this motion. In an extremely confused rush of voting, this amendment was passed, and the other two rejected. The amended declaration was passed.

The ANL has clearly achieved an enormous amount in its short life, and Big Flame actively supports it. The contrast with the recent CARF Conference (see Big Flame July 1978) was stark. But at times, savage debate of the CARF Conference at least acknowledged the real difficulties in building a principled anti-racist anti-fascist movement, and the ANL is in danger of glossing over these problems in its understandable desire to get on with the action.



Good Time at Northern Carnival

THE MANCHESTER Carnival was fantastic. Not just because Manchester Big Flame ripped you all off with its drinks and kids games stall, but because it was true all that stuff about punks and blacks and old and young and gays and straights getting together and enjoying themselves and hearing good music from Steel Pulse, Buzzcocks, China Street, not to mention Agony Column and the rest of the bands who played on the lorries along the Long March through Manchester to the gapes of all the Saturday shoppers. But us ageing trendies in Big Flame can't really compete with Sharon Spike and Irate Kate and the ageing trendies who produce the excellent Rock Against Racism's mage 'Temporary Hoarding' obtainable from your local leftypunk or Box M, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1 so you better get yourself a copy if you want the fullblown punkspeak version of What It Was Really Like at the Manchester Carnival.



Asians Face Deportation

AT LEAST 8 Asians are cooped up in one cell in Armley Jail in Leeds awaiting deportation, but the Bradford Asian Youth Movement and the newly formed North East Leeds Anti Nazi League branch are actively campaigning to get them out. One has already been deported, and his case highlights the racism and injustice of the immigration laws.

Mushtaque Khan was a student at Hull Further Education College, and produced an impeccable attendance record to prove it. The Home Office said he was not a bona fide student and deported him, despite the protestations of his MP, John Prescott.

Said Rahman is said to have 'over stayed' his entry permit. The fact

in Bradford has, we are assured, nothing to do with his recent arrest. Mohammed Hannif, who lives in Chapelton, Leeds, was advised by another Pakistani posing as a lawyer to apply for an amnesty, since he entered illegally in 1969 and should therefore qualify for one. The Home Office say that since he went back to Pakistan for

There is yet more evidence that the Immigration Laws are used to intimidate and harass the black community. They are the sharpest end of the racism in British society. There can be no end to racism and the fascism which breeds from racism until these laws are abolished. It is a significant step forward for the ANL branch to be actively opposing these deportations.

There are meetings in Bradford on 25th July and Leeds on the 26th, and there will be a picket of Armley Jail on Saturday 29th from 1pm till 3pm. Massive support is needed to

N.F. Pub Picketed

MERSEYSIDE'S NEWLY formed Anti-Nazi League took to the streets in July for the first time to picket a Liverpool pub which has become a regular National Front meeting place. The picket followed an A-NL founding rally in Liverpool attended by 500 people. 80 or so A-NL members mounted a colourful two hour picket on all sides of the Shiel Park Hotel, which marked the occasion by closing down for the evening.

Taking advantage of the busy crossroads on which the pub stands, the picket distributed hundreds of leaflets to bystanders, passing drivers and a nearby bingo queue. One taxi driver stopped and announced his intention of starting a taxi drivers against the Nazis group.

T&GWU members are in touch with the draymen who deliver beer to the pub with a view to getting supplies cut off. The message is clear — A-NL members will mount pickets on any Merseyside pub which entertains fascists.

BIG FLAME

ROLLING BACK RACISM



ANDREW WIARD (Report)

COVENTRY: Black bus driver attacked-then arrested

RECENTLY A black bus driver was attacked by four white people whilst driving a late night service back to the depot in Canley. The whites left the bus and fetched the police - who proceeded to arrest the driver! He was kept in the cells overnight and then released without being

charged. The Indian Workers Association, who have a lot of members on the buses, got the T&G branch to call a meeting at which a one-day strike was decided. The one-day strike which took place on July 15th unfortunately took place on the first day of the Coventry shut-down, which enabled

the reactionary 'Evening Telegraph' to yet again attack the bus workers for being bloody-minded. A T&G shop steward made the following points to us: 'There has been a marked reluctance of the unions to take a stand on this issue. More black workers get assaulted - and the police do nothing. The assaults occur because the services are so infrequent late at night. The buses are very full and, often, the driver cannot cope with all the passengers. If we had more aids like radios, things would be better.

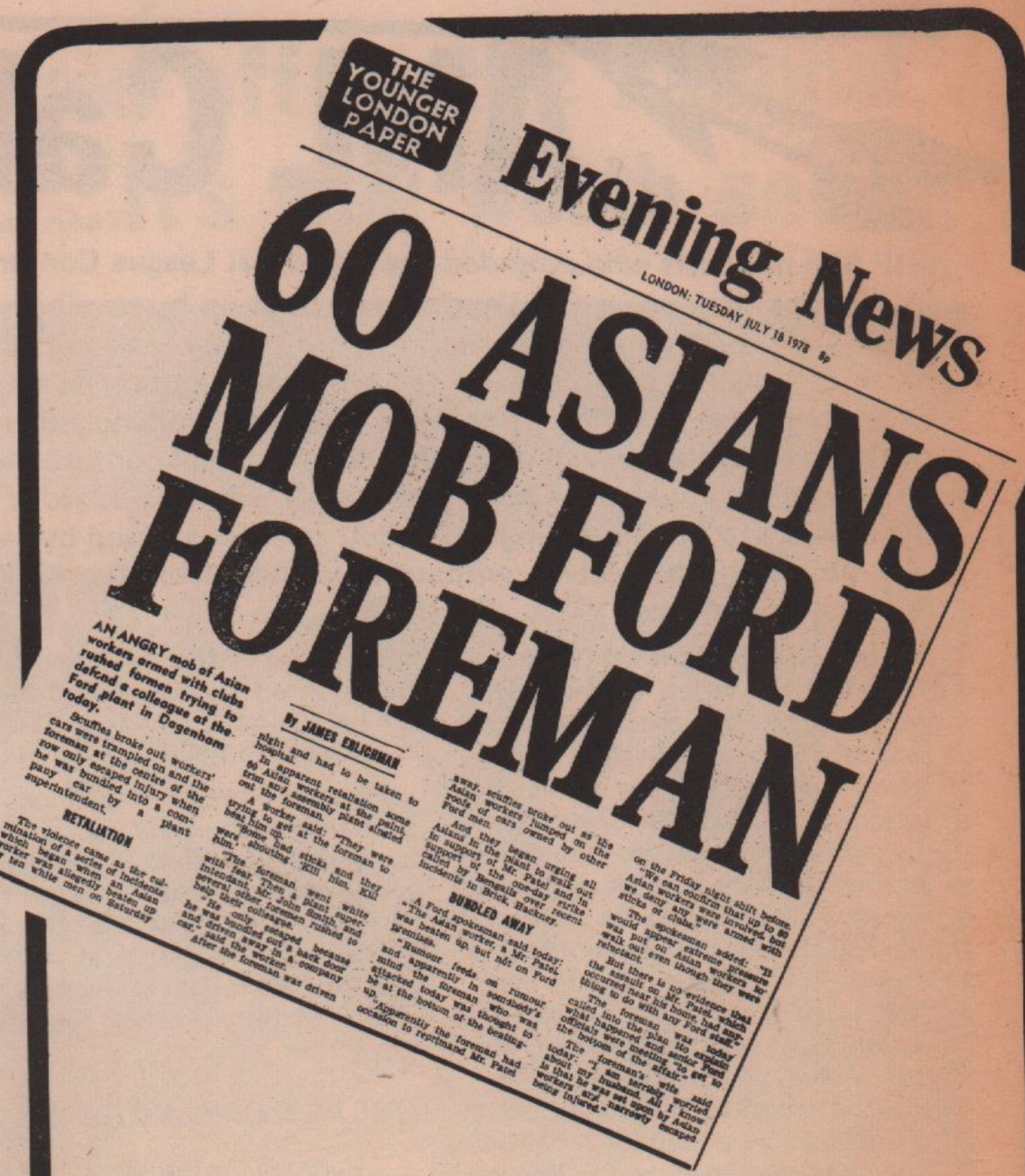
Right now we are refusing to pick up passengers on the last trip from the City Centre to the depot. This is not an ideal situation since it harms the passengers. We have been attacked in the press and by the Lord Mayor - but in fact the real culprits are management and the cuts they have introduced. We are very angry at the way the driver has been treated by the police - he still does not know whether or not they are going to press charges." This last incident is one of a series of attacks on black bus-workers. But this time, their response has made clear the

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NAME
ADDRESS



THE ONE day strike of Asian workers in the East End of London (see photo on left) was an important focus for a new wave of militancy in which black workers have begun to use their work-place muscle to force the state to do something about the everyday oppression they undergo in the community. This oppression is also experienced by black workers at work - in the form of the abuse they get from racist managers, foremen, and fellow workers. The events at Dagenham express the anger of black workers who experience constant harassment. Recently, racist slogans have been painted on lockers in the P.T.A. section of the plant and last week (see above), Asian workers threatened a foreman who they suspected of being involved in the beating up of one of their mates who works in the P.T.A. Last month, a court in Leeds had to deal with a case in which white workers had insisted in management putting a 6 foot barrier between them and an Asian worker and there are many documented cases of unions colluding with management in the discrimination of black workers. It is clear that we must fully support this new wave of militancy - even if it is likely to inflame contradictions that are within the working class and whose roots lie in working-class racism.

MANCHESTER: Racist attackers WERE police

LONGSIGHT in Manchester is seeing a tremendous increase in racist activity.

Following the march there by the National Front last October which was allowed by the police to take place in an area with a high proportion of black, mainly Asian workers and families, the police are now embarking on a campaign which involves attacking and harassing of Asian shopkeepers.

In June, an Asian family had their house firebombed - without the police feeling the need to do anything about it. More recently, on July 2nd, a house and shop in Longsight was broken into in the middle of the night and two of the occupants were attacked.

Nazir and Munir Ahmed believed their shop was being attacked by the National Front - a reasonable assumption considering the walls of the house have been daubed with fascist graffiti. They attempted to phone the police and tried to defend themselves. One of their five attackers then ripped out the telephone and informed Mr Ahmed that they were the police!

He was then dragged outside and beaten while he shouted for help

only to discover that the attackers were in fact plain-clothes CID.

Nazir and Munir Ahmed have been charged on several counts, including assault on a policeman, wounding with intent, and carrying offensive weapons. If found guilty they stand to go down for 5-7 years.

A defence campaign was immediately launched by a meeting of over 70 people the following Sunday. The atmosphere was one of real anger with calls for the police involved to be sacked, and the charges to be dropped immediately.

A petition was initiated by the Pakistan Welfare and Social Society, and sub-committees have been set up to prepare a dossier of local racist activity. Local trades union branches are being contacted in an effort to increase involvement in the campaign.

The campaign is being supported by the Longsight Group against Racism and Fascism, which has been holding regular street meetings, despite NF harassment. These meetings will go on in the hope that enough support will be forthcoming to mobilise a march and demonstration to the local cop shop.