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Inside: DANGER-  
MEN AT WORK!

# Workers' fight

5p

No. 113 - October 18th to 25th 1975

# SCHOOLS UNDER THE AXE

FOR KIDS in Cambridgeshire, spuds are now a twice-a-week treat in their school meals. Their county, together with Essex and Suffolk, is cutting down on potatoes because they are too costly. And Devon has joined a number of other education authorities who, in accord with instructions from Whitehall, have cut down on meat in school meals.

But, Labour will no doubt tell them, they should consider themselves lucky to be getting any dinner at all, in this pressing "economic situation". And for thousands of kids in Leicester, no dinner is precisely what they are getting.

In a statement issued by the Council for Educational Advance last week, a sad chronicle of education retreats is listed. "This will be the bitterest winter ever for education", says its Chairman, Cyril Pyle. "The reports we have been getting in show local education authorities all over the country making contingency plans which will mean more crowded classrooms, fewer teachers, skimpier resources, deteriorating conditions and a harder time all round for the children in our schools if they are put into effect as planned."

Already last year there was an outcry in Buckinghamshire at plans to close colleges, schools and libraries to "balance the books". Now the Policy and Resources Committee there has decided on a cut of 8% in real terms in the education budget. According to NUT Regional Official Ray Fox this would mean a cut in the teaching force in the county of nearly a quarter, with 1,000 out of 4,500 teaching jobs wiped out.

## HALVED

Countrywide, with 25 teacher training colleges closing down every year, it's estimated that the number of teachers being trained will be halved in the next five years!

The £86 million cut in educational spending made by Healey's last budget, coming on top of the Barber cuts of £182 million 22 months ago mean that, County by County, whole areas of the education service are being closed down.

In Croydon, the Education Committee have discussed plans for cutting £2 million off their £31 million budget. The effect will be to destroy all the advances made since 1968 in pupil teacher ratios. Whole courses will be scrapped, remedial classes cancelled — and teachers who are vitally needed, thrown on the dole.

In the County of Avon, some students have been faced with unexpected bills of £100 for courses they started a year ago on the understanding they were free. And up and down the country, working class students are being refused 'discretionary grants' for courses at Technical colleges.

## BLOW

And even as Education Committees sat round their tables trying to decide whether to cut out meat, spuds, teachers or students, the Government circulated them last month with a further instruction to bring spending to a complete standstill. On top of the £86 million that Healey lopped off, that means a cut of 15, 20 or 25% — depending on

## It's your fight too, say N. London tech. teachers

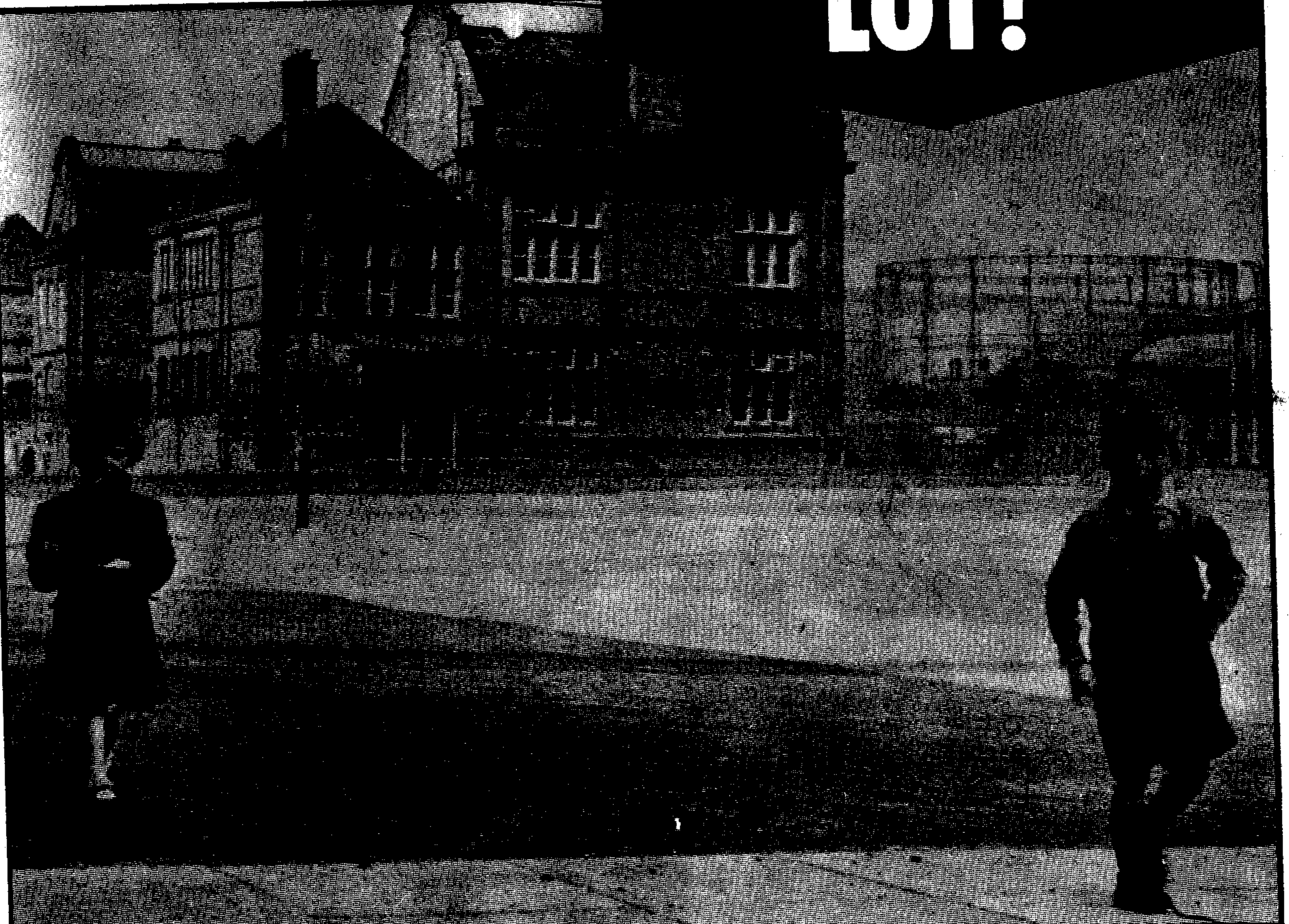
... Realising that while we have a special interest in education, the issues presented by the cuts in real educational expenditure are part of a wider programme of cuts in public expenditure which will cause a deterioration in the standard of living of the mass of the population... realising that while we have a professional and trade union interest in education, the trade union and student movement also have an interest in opposing the programme of cut-backs, this branch of the ATTI instructs the secretary immediately to circulate a statement of our intention to participate in next Tuesday's action to trade union branches, shop stewards committees of the area and students' union of the college urging their participation too.

the inflation rate for the coming year.

The blow will, as always, fall fair and square on workers' children. Middle class parents can always make up for cuts: there are still plenty of private schools, and failing that, they can try bribing an out-of-work teacher for extra coaching.

And one county at least is weighting the scales further: Surrey has cut the schools-

technical colleges "link" courses which provide a transition from secondary schools to the more advanced craft training of the technical colleges and they now plan to increase overcrowding in state school classes. At the same time they have voted an extra allocation of £17,000 on top of this year's grant of £750,000 for direct grant and independent schools in Surrey.



THAT'S THEIR LOT!

## MANY MORE NEEDED TO STOP THE FRONT

ABOUT 400 pickets assembled outside Chelsea Town Hall last Saturday morning (Oct. 11th) in an attempt to disrupt the National Front's AGM. But the pickets were too few and probably arrived too late to affect the meeting, which was able to proceed in the Town Hall. Heavily outnumbered by police, the pickets were kept safely across the side of Kings Road opposite the Town Hall. In all, 17 arrests were made — four allegedly for daubing swastikas on the Town Hall the night before — Chelsea was the only London borough willing to give the NF a meeting place. (According to the Evening Standard the arrested were 'gunmen' painting 'IRA slogans'. What a delightful fairy tale!)

The anti-fascist forces were also divided, with an 'official' protest march in the afternoon by Hammersmith and Kensington Trades Council. Just over 1,000 turned out for that, and many of these were from the original picket.

Lobby your MP  
Oct. 21  
RALLY

CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER. 7pm



# Portugal: the battle lines are being drawn – where will you stand?



The soldiers' movement – a great surge forward

PORTUGAL'S 6th Provisional Government is struggling for survival. Despite the support of international big business (including a £60 million low interest loan from the EEC) it has been quite unable to stop the rapid growth of democratic organisation in the armed forces. Its attempts to re-impose 'discipline' (that is, blind obedience) have led to the strengthening of the SUVs (United Soldiers Will Win committees of rank and file soldiers) rather than their destruction. The gulf between the army high-ups and the soldiers is now vast and widens day by day.

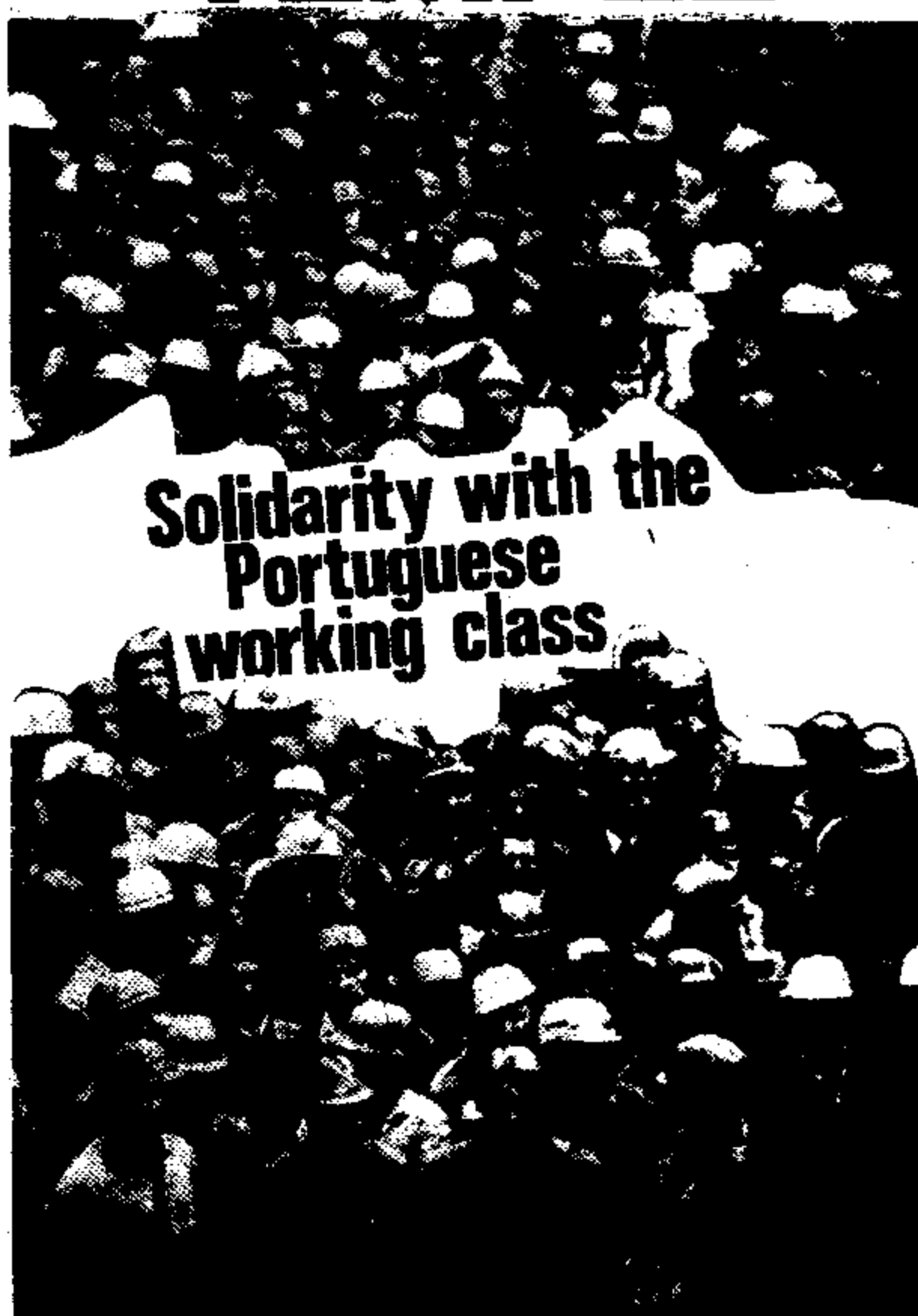
It is some weeks since the government announced the setting up of Military Intervention Units (AMIs) as an elite repressive force aimed at stopping the growth of the SUVs and at restoring government authority. But they have been largely ineffective. The government has had great difficulty in finding units which it can rely on. In the entire Lisbon military region, the most important of the three into which the country is divided, there are only two 'loyal' regiments: the Amadora commandos and the anti-aircraft artillery regiment of Cascais.

Most regiments in the Lisbon area are now controlled by the ordinary soldiers. Before orders are obeyed, they are discussed by mass meetings of soldiers who make all the decisions. The speed with which the SUVs have grown is staggering. They hardly existed 6 weeks ago; now they have at least some influence in nearly every regiment in Portugal.

## Misplaced

It is just three weeks since Admiral D'Azevedo felt confident enough to send the troops into the radio stations to ensure that they put over the government's line. This was in part a rather clumsy smokescreen for their attempt to return the worker-controlled Radio Renascenca to its former

by **SIMON TEMPLE**



owners, the Catholic Church. Their confidence was misplaced. The troops sided with the workers after initial confrontations, and then set up barricades in the streets of Lisbon to prevent further interference.

So far the Government has used the AMIs only once. A fortnight ago a unit was sent in to remove the soldiers of the army's driver training school from their Oporto barracks. Their unit had been disbanded after refusing to allow the transfer of 40 left wing soldiers to other regiments. The AMI did succeed in shifting the soldiers, but it was not much of a victory. The soldiers retreated to the nearby and more easily defended barracks of a heavy artillery regiment. They are still there and the government has little chance of getting them out.

This shows how hollow was the British press's confidence in the total and continuing conservatism of the North. In fact, while there are still quite a few regiments which are not openly hostile to the

government, it dares not use them for fear of them going over decisively to the side of socialist revolution.

The Central Military Region has until now been the most right wing, where the military commander Brigadier Charais has tried to rule his troops with an iron hand. Yet even here, on October 8th, 30,000 people marched through the city of Coimbra (that is, a number equivalent to nearly its entire population) in support of the SUVs. The demonstration was led by 5,000 soldiers, against the strong opposition of their officers.

Outside the army, the struggle has been developing less rapidly, but important developments have taken place. City-wide Popular Assemblies are being established in Lisbon and Oporto; these bodies will almost certainly develop into real centres of working class power, equivalent to the Soviets of the Russian Revolution. In the major industrial centre of Setubal, committees of struggle have been set up, uniting workers' commissions, tenants committees and the soldiers' committee of the 11th Infantry regiment stationed in the town. Similar moves are going on elsewhere and there are even moves now towards the setting up of a National Assembly of Popular Assemblies.

## Offensive

It is not just in the factories and the barracks that the working class is on the offensive. Squatting in the empty houses of the rich has reached massive proportions, especially in Lisbon where about a quarter of the city's population is forced to live in shanty towns on the outskirts.

On Friday October 10th the owner of one of these houses sought to get a possession order from the courts, to regain his property. It was the first time this had happened. The night before the case was due to be heard, all the documents disappeared. In the morning a demonstration was organised by local residents' committees, demanding that the case be heard by a People's Tribunal set up for the purpose. They also announced that they had all the documents. The magistrate was left helpless and had to agree to accept the Tribunal's findings. The landlord lost his case.

Civil war now seems almost certain. The left wing units are supplying guns to the revolutionary organisations and to the workers' organisations, and refusing them to right wing regiments. The famous 'disappearance' of 2,000 automatic rifles left 'accidentally' in a lorry parked outside a barracks overnight is only the best known of such incidents.

The speed of working class mobilisation has left the FUR (Revolutionary United Front), which a few weeks ago, despite its political inadequacies, was leading the drive for workers' power, bobbing rather incredulously in its wake.

In desperation the government is trying to form new reactionary units out of retired soldiers and returning Angolan refugees. But these will take time to organise and their military value will be limited even then. The government's attempt to restore its control, without open civil war, looks doomed to failure.

Certainly, imminent civil war in Portugal is the expectation from which we in Britain must operate. This means that the issue of solidarity with the Portuguese workers is of vital importance. We can be sure that the Labour government, judging by its past record, will rush to the defence of the Portuguese capitalists. The extent to which it is able to do this, either alone or with the NATO

allies, very largely depends on what the labour movement will let them get away with.

This is not just an academic question. A victory in Portugal will be a tremendous boost for socialism throughout Europe; a defeat would be a defeat for us all.

All trade unionists and Labour Party members should attempt to get their organisations to take up the issue of solidarity with Portugal, and fight the current economic boycott and the plans for intervention by big business and NATO on the side of counter revolution.

Individuals and organisations should affiliate now to: Campaign of Solidarity with the Portuguese Working Class, 12 Little Newport Street, London WC2.

## IN BRIEF

AN INTERVIEW in the 'Times' last week with that arch reactionary of the Labour Party, Lord Shinwell, brought forth some typical Shinwell ranting. How about this?

"One of the things that ought to stop is providing nourishment for lame ducks. This motor cycle business, they are going to sit in, a lot of damn fools, sitting in, want more money. Take the Clyde ship-builders, led by a communist, Jimmy Reid. The government has given them another £17 million. They wouldn't have got a penny from me. I'd let them sink."

Here's another. "Take this statutory incomes policy. Now, strangely enough, I've been all in favour of it. I believe in the force of law being used in connexion with wage rates and conditions of labour."

We don't think that's strange, Manny, coming from you.

ANOTHER POMPOUS politician, this time Lord Hailsham, has this week published another pompous volume of memoirs, with a suitably pompous title, "The Door Wherein I Went", which is largely devoted to ramblings about the Christian Faith. However, here is a quote taken from one of his previous weighty works, "The Case for Conservatism". "Conservatives do not believe that the political struggle is the most important thing in life... The simplest among them prefer foxhunting, the wisest, religion". Now that's from the horse's (or Hogg's) mouth.

PLANS ARE being mooted for a suggested tour of South Africa, by a cricket team of 15 MPs and Peers. Internal transport and hotel costs in South Africa would be met by unrevealed sources, who presumably feel such a tour would boost the morale of the white regime.

Meanwhile, in South Africa, demonstrating blacks were swiftly dealt with by police who fired on demonstrators and used tear gas to

disperse them. The blacks were demonstrating over rises in the fares on the 'blacks only' buses, from 3½ to 17p.

And when they resorted to cars and communal taxis, police turfed them out on grounds of "overcrowding". For those who know the overcrowding on buses provided for African workers, that's a joke!

THE UNITED STATES has shown its continuing support for the Franco regime, with Dr Kissinger's renegotiated "co-operative relations" agreement with Spain, under which the US retains its air and naval bases in Spain. Sources gave Dr Kissinger's view that whatever was thought about the Franco regime, the US gave the highest priority to retaining the Spanish bases which they see as the most important in the Western defences. Could it be that the importance the American Administration attaches to the Spanish bases has not a little to do with events in Portugal and Spain?

We shouldn't be at all surprised.

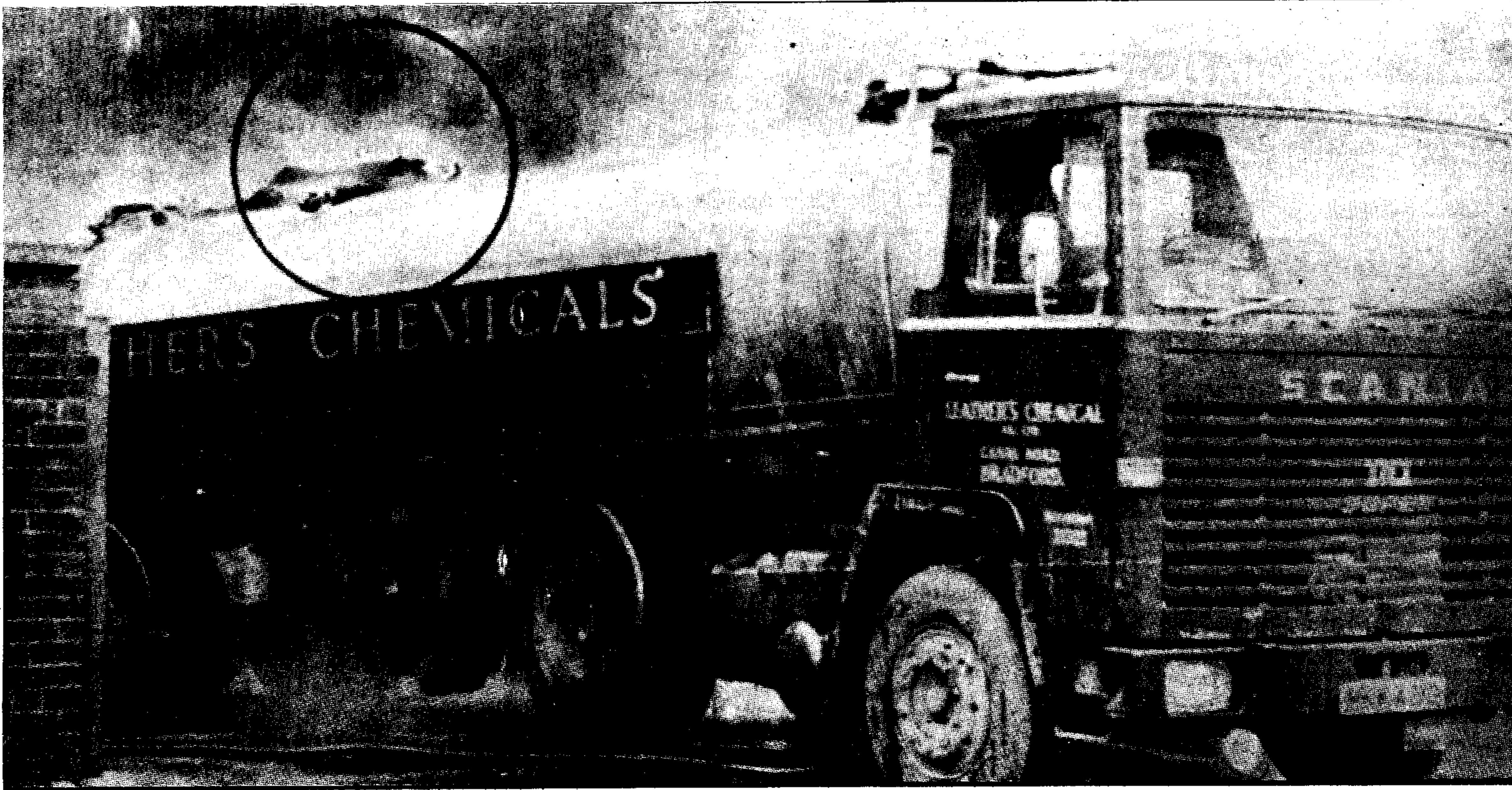
THE AMERICAN representative to the United Nations, Mr Moynihan, apparently shocked at the appearance of President Amin amidst that august body, has called Amin a 'racist murderer'. That he may be, but such words seem strange coming from the mouth of the representative of the US Administration. Remember Vietnam, Mr Moynihan.

JUDGE of the week is undoubtedly M. de la Charette, a French judge, who committed to prison a company director, accused of being responsible for a fatal industrial accident. Unfortunately the director has since been released as the decision was swiftly overruled by a superior court. The French establishment was rather put out at the thought of the company director being put in a prison 'alongside common criminals'.



Get-tough Prime Minister Azevedo with President Costa Gomes





The driver of this lorry lies dead on its roof, killed the instant he opened the cap. Another driver of a chemical-carrying lorry died sitting in the cab. And right now, 6 Shropshire men are still under intensive care, two weeks after being exposed to fumes in a metal processing plant.

# DANGER—MEN AT WORK!

**ROUGHLY** every hour of the working day throughout the year someone is killed either by accidents at work or through the effects of industrial diseases. Each year over a million workers take time off work because of the effects of an industrial accident or disease. There can be no mistake about it — work is dangerous to your health!

Some jobs, like mining, are especially hazardous, but even jobs that are regarded as completely safe can be slowly doing you some form of damage. An example of this is technicians

working with computers, who often find that they have headaches caused by the completely artificial lighting used in many computer rooms.

But who cares? Who does something about this enormous problem?

Certainly not the bosses! They only spend about £5 in every £10,000 of their annual research and development budget on research into safety at work. It is their design and equipment of factories that makes them hazardous to work in. It is their penny-pinching search for profits which

leads them to take short cuts in installing safe equipment and checking out possible hazardous processes. They have to be forced to improve conditions.

## Safety

But who is to force them? The forces employed by the Government, the Factory Inspectorate, are too small and have too little power to do anything to really solve the problem.

Even the trade union movement

spends, unfortunately, little time and money on investigating and fighting over aspects of health and safety. No union now has a national full time safety officer, and even the TUC's Medical Officer, Robert Murray, has resigned because of the lack of resources placed at his disposal.

The worker threatened by bad working conditions can only rely on himself, his brothers and sisters in the factory, and perhaps the national combine committee or the national union. But most workers find that when they come to discuss issues of health and

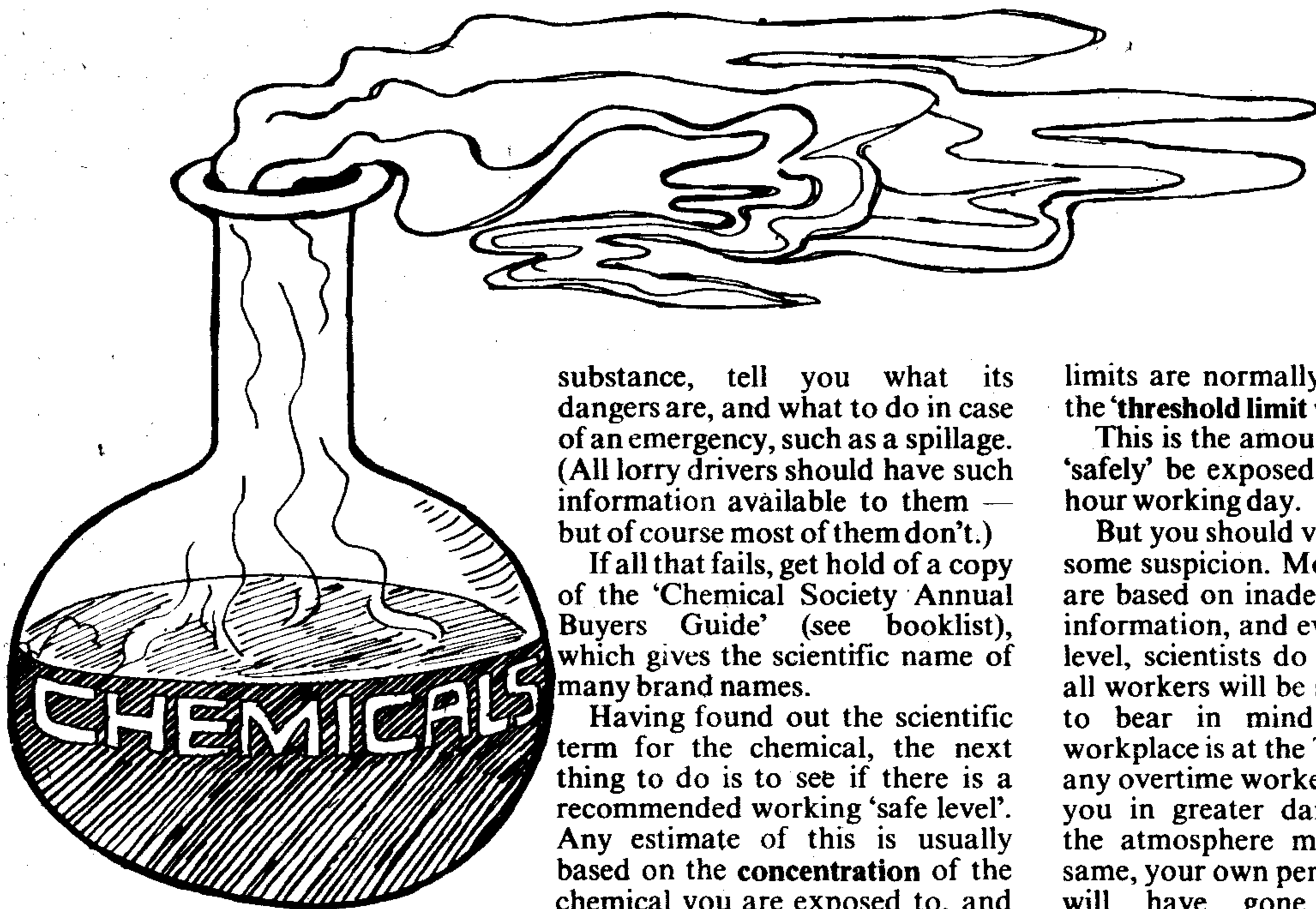
safety they run up against an immediate barrier to any form of action — that barrier is a lack of technical knowledge.

Of course, that knowledge is often there, but it's hidden away in academic papers or expensive books and cloaked in the disguise of the appropriate scientific terminology, which only 'experts' can de-code.

But workers can find things out for themselves — sometimes with a little assistance — and can then act on that knowledge.

As a general guide the following things are useful to remember.

## A SPECIAL GUIDE TO WORKERS' SURVIVAL by NEAL SMITH



A potentially harmful chemical comes on to the market roughly every 20 minutes, most of them with little testing. It's obviously impossible to list all the dangerous ones (books that do that are enormous!) but some general points should be kept in mind when assessing the risk of a chemical or worrying about the introduction of new ones.

First of all, find out the chemical name of the substance you want to investigate. Chemicals have many different trade names, designed only to keep secrets from competitors, and you need to know its chemical name before you can find out much more about it.

Ask the warehouseman if he knows what the chemical is called if management won't tell you. Try asking the lorry drivers who deliver the chemical — sometimes these drivers carry in their lorries 'TREM cards'. These cards, which give the chemical formula of the

substance, tell you what its dangers are, and what to do in case of an emergency, such as a spillage. (All lorry drivers should have such information available to them — but of course most of them don't.)

If all that fails, get hold of a copy of the 'Chemical Society Annual Buyers Guide' (see booklist), which gives the scientific name of many brand names.

Having found out the scientific term for the chemical, the next thing to do is to see if there is a recommended working 'safe level'. Any estimate of this is usually based on the concentration of the chemical you are exposed to, and this is normally reckoned as so many parts per million (ppm) of air or water. If, for example, you collected a million cubic centimetres of air (that is, one cubic metre — the amount most people breathe in during an hour of active, but not heavy, work) and found in it five cubic centimetres of xylene (a solvent in common use), then the concentration of xylene would be 5ppm. If you work in such a concentration for an eight hour day, then you're taking in about two egg cups full of xylene each day!

## Safe limit

That is the recommended so-called 'safe limit' for xylene!

Because it is expensive to keep air pure, a compromise has been adopted to keep chemicals to certain specified limits within which the concentration is not supposed to be harmful. These

limits are normally referred to as the 'threshold limit value' (TLV).

This is the amount that you can 'safely' be exposed to in an eight hour working day.

But you should view TLV's with some suspicion. Most of the levels are based on inadequate scientific information, and even at the TLV level, scientists do not claim that all workers will be safe. One thing to bear in mind is that if a workplace is at the TLV limit, then any overtime worked begins to put you in greater danger; although the atmosphere may remain the same, your own personal exposure will have gone beyond the threshold.

## Legal force

In this country TLV values have no legal force, although the Factory Inspectorate use them as a guide. So they should not be accepted uncritically, and should never be taken as guaranteeing safety. The only thing that can do that is to get rid of pollutants altogether.

Use the TLV as the maximum upper limit of the concentration of a hazardous chemical — and keep trying to get the working level reduced lower.

Here are some useful TLV's with a few notes on the danger of the chemical.

**Aniline**, in liquid form, has a TLV of 5ppm. Its major hazards to dizziness and headaches, with liver damage possible after long exposure. It penetrates rubber and skin, so rubber gloves are no protection.

## CHEMICALS

**Benzene**, also liquid, has a TLV of 25ppm, and its effects on people are similar to aniline.

**Carbon tetrachloride**, liquid, TLV of 10ppm, is an irritant to the skin; long exposure may lead to liver damage.

**Cyanogen** is a gas, its TLV is 10ppm, and it can cause dizziness and fainting, vomiting and stomach pains.

**Mercury** a liquid, is very toxic indeed; its TLV is 0.05mg per cubic metre. Its fumes attack the nervous system.

**Phenol**, liquid, TLV of 5ppm is a skin irritant; long exposure can give liver damage.

That is just a sample of the variety of chemicals and their effects. Often chemicals of particular sorts are harmful. Many organic industrial solvents like 'Trike', phenol etc are skin irritants and can cause liver damage with long exposure.

If you want to find out just what level of concentration you are exposed to, there are a number of things you can do.

## Suspicious

Call in the Factory Inspectorate and get them to run a sample (make sure it's done under normal working conditions). There's no guarantee that they'll tell you the results, but at least they'll tell you whether or not in their opinion the concentration is at a safe level. Possibly try to get the firm to do a survey and demand the results (although this is usually very

difficult to get done). Get in touch with an outside group of helpful scientists, such as the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS), who will analyse samples for you or else give you information on how to monitor chemical levels yourself.

Above all, with any chemical, if you are suspicious of it get it checked. If you can smell the chemical the chances are that it is at too high a concentration in the working atmosphere (but don't rely on this test, as your sense of smell soon gets accustomed to a chemical smell and no longer detects it). If you or your mates get headaches, feel unusually lethargic, or feel sick after working with a chemical — GET IT CHECKED.

Getting the company to run regular medical checks and give the results to the shop stewards committee is an excellent way for you to keep tabs on any long term hazards that might be developing.

## The risk

If you do find that you are working in hazardous conditions because of chemicals, then immediate action should be taken. There are three basic ways of reducing the risk to yourself.

**Elimination.** This is obviously the best way. Try to get the chemical either replaced by a safe substitute, or else demand a system of ventilation good enough to remove all traces of the chemical from the working atmosphere.

**Better ventilation.** Second best. Should be done by an outside specialist firm.

**Personal protection.** Masks and respirators. These are an unsatisfactory third form of protection. If you have to use them and the work is fairly active, make sure that the firm provides you with battery-powered respirators, which actually pump the air into the mask and take away the effort of you having to draw it through the filters.





**YOUR** lungs are a highly efficient pair of filters that exchange the poisonous carbon dioxide in your blood for the oxygen in the air you breathe in. Industrial dust clogs up the pores of this sensitive filter and reduces the efficiency of your lungs. The very fine particles of dust that do the real damage are so small that you cannot see them, but they penetrate the furthest into your lungs and do the most damage.

There are several types of dust disease, depending on what sort of dust you are exposed to. For example, some dusts simply have a physical effect by choking up the

inside of the lungs; others attack the chemicals in the body cells and may cause cancer. Many of the dusts, such as asbestos, remain permanently in the lungs, so that even a small amount will continue to affect you for the rest of your life.

## Early death

**Pneumoconiosis** This is the name given to a group of dust diseases — silicosis (silica); coal miners' pneumoconiosis (coal dust); asbestosis (asbestos); byssinosis (cotton).

In Britain, apart from accidents down the pits, about 40,000 miners and ex-miners suffer from pneumoconiosis. More than 700 new cases are still appearing every year. Modern drilling machinery in fact increases dust and accelerates the incidence of the disease.

Like many other types of pneumoconiosis the symptoms are fairly distinctive. First there appears an unusual shortness of breath, which gradually develops until even the slightest exertion produces acute shortness of breath. Weight starts to go down, and the heart begins to be affected. At this stage an early death is fairly inevitable.

If the symptoms are spotted early and exposure to the dust stopped, the disease may not progress, although life expectancy is shortened. The damage done to your lungs can never be repaired.

Asbestos dust acts in a similar fashion and produces effects similar to those of coal dust. It is taking an increasing toll of workers' lives: 64 died in 1965, 107 in 1970, 113 in 1971.

If you get only a slight exposure the disease can be mild, but heavier exposure can kill you in as little as two years.

There are two types of asbestos. **Blue asbestos** is so deadly that it should be avoided like the plague. Although no longer in extensive use in this country it is still found as insulation in old buildings and factories, lying in wait for the demolition gangs. In 1972 workers

at British Leyland, Cowley were exposed to blue asbestos when pipes were being re-lagged. The Factory Inspector who carried out the prosecution said he would have preferred an unleashed tiger to have been in the plant to the blue asbestos that was on the floor.

Blue asbestos can be recognised by its lavender colour. **Refuse to work near it unless provided with a good respirator.**

White asbestos is also dangerous, and prolonged exposure to it will produce



asbestosis. Another risk from white asbestos (and also from blue) is that of lung cancer. Over half the people who get asbestosis also get lung cancer. Asbestos is an all-round killer, and all workers who come into contact with asbestos should be on their guard.

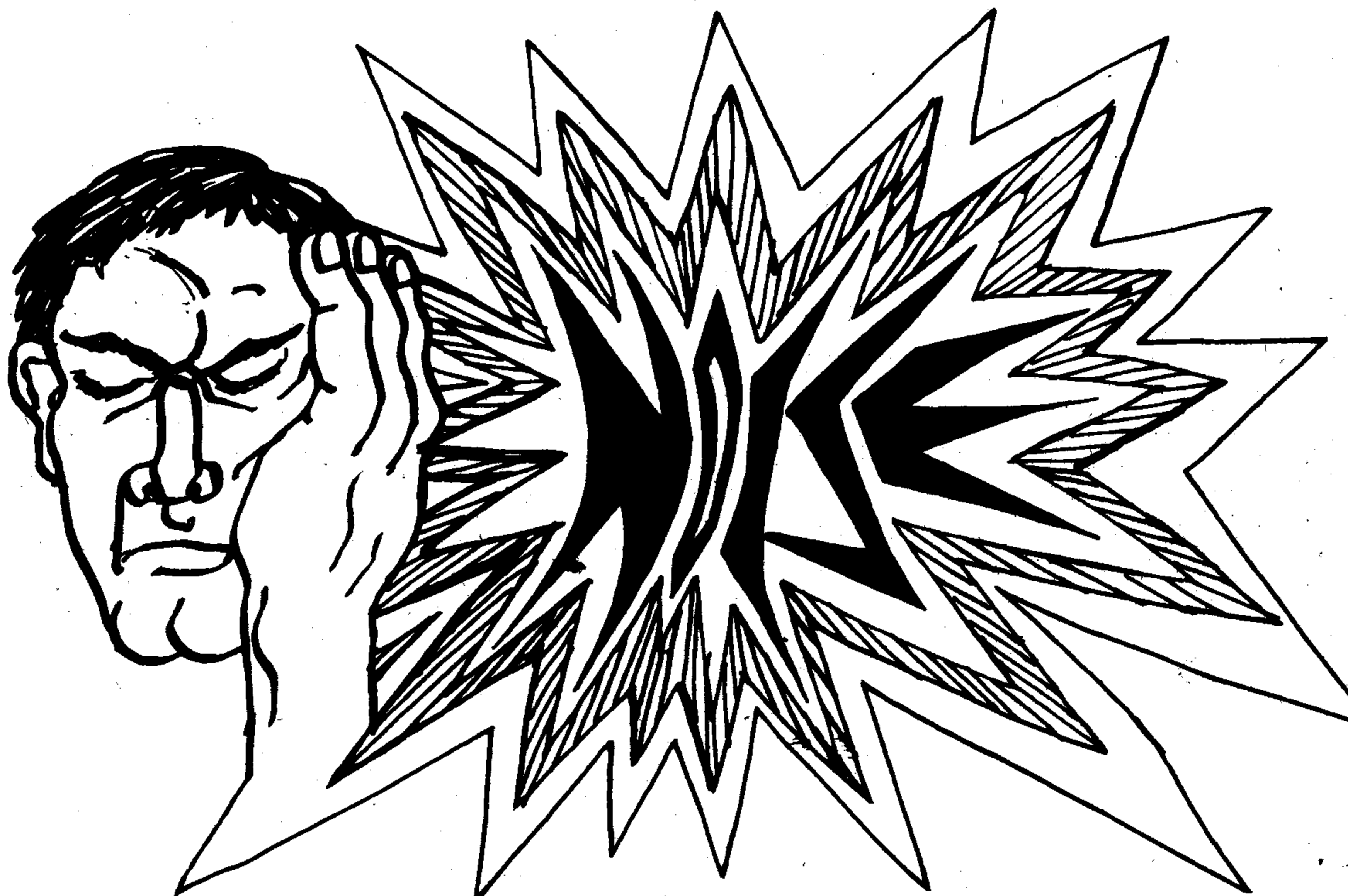
The hygiene standard recommended by the Factory Inspectorate is **two fibres per cubic centimetre of air** measured over an average period of four hours. The level for blue asbestos is a **tenth of this concentration measured over 10 minutes.**

In fact, there are no known really safe levels for exposure to asbestos, as the Chief Inspector of Factories has in the past admitted.

One of the best methods for testing the quality of the air you're breathing is to use a **personal sampler**. A battery powered pump at your waist draws in air from a point near your face for an entire shift. The total amount of pollution in the air that you are exposed to can then be calculated. One of these would set your local stewards committee back about £70, but the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science has one that it will lend out to you, and they will also help analyse the sample.

Another device for sampling air is a **hand pump**, which works rather like a breathalysar. Air is drawn into a tube by a set of hand-bellows and in the tube it reacts with a chemical which will change colour if a particular pollutant is present in the air. Over 100 pollutants can be detected in this way, and the hand pump will provide a rough and ready guide to what sort of muck you are breathing in. It is worth considering getting your local union to buy one of these — a pump and set of reactive tubes would cost about £30.

Having discovered a dangerous concentration of dust, get it removed altogether or else get a better extraction system fitted. At least, if you can't get that done, insist on respirators or masks.



**MOST** people are at least vaguely aware of the damage that can be done by chemicals and gases — yet **the most widespread danger to your health at work is noise.** Most work-people are exposed to noise — in the factory, in the shipyard, down the mines, or even sitting in a typing pool.

Hearing damage is caused by the tiny sensors inside your ear being too violently stimulated for too long. This wears them out, and the damage is irreparable.

The more intense the noise, the more damage it is doing you, so it's useful to understand a bit about how noise intensity is measured. This is done by the 'decibel scale'.

The range of intensity between the smallest sound and the loudest sound is so great that it could not easily be measured on a normal scale. Because of this, sound intensity is measured on a scale based on multiples of ten — a logarithmic scale. For example, 10dB (ten decibels) is ten times as loud as 0dB — not just 10 plus. This means that 20dB is 100 times as intense as 0dB (two increases of ten multiplied by ten; 30dB is 1,000 times as intense as 0dB, and so on).

In fact each increase of 3dB on the scale means that the sound has doubled in intensity. So, 93dB is twice as intense as 90dB.

It's very important to remember

this, because managers will argue that such and such a noise is only a few decibels over the limit. Remember that a few decibels is an enormous increase in intensity.

Here are a few examples of noise intensities:

- 10dB — leaves rustling.
- 30dB — watch ticking.
- 60dB — normal conversation at 3 feet.
- 70dB — busy street.
- 80dB — hearing damage starts at this point.
- 90dB — Factory Inspectorate recommended safe level.
- 100dB — circular saw.
- 110dB — wood work shop.
- 120dB — metal-dressing shop.

130dB — threshold of pain; riveting and pneumatic drill. Absolute limit without ear protection.

Probably the average level of intensity in most factories is between 90-110dB — enough to damage your ears if you work there for any period of time.

There are some simple checks you can make to see if the noise is damaging your hearing (remember the effects of hearing damage only appear gradually over a period of years).

- Does anyone get ringing in the ears after a day's work?
- Do you have to talk loudly while at work to people only a few feet away?
- Do a few of the older workers who have worked there for some time seem particularly hard of hearing?

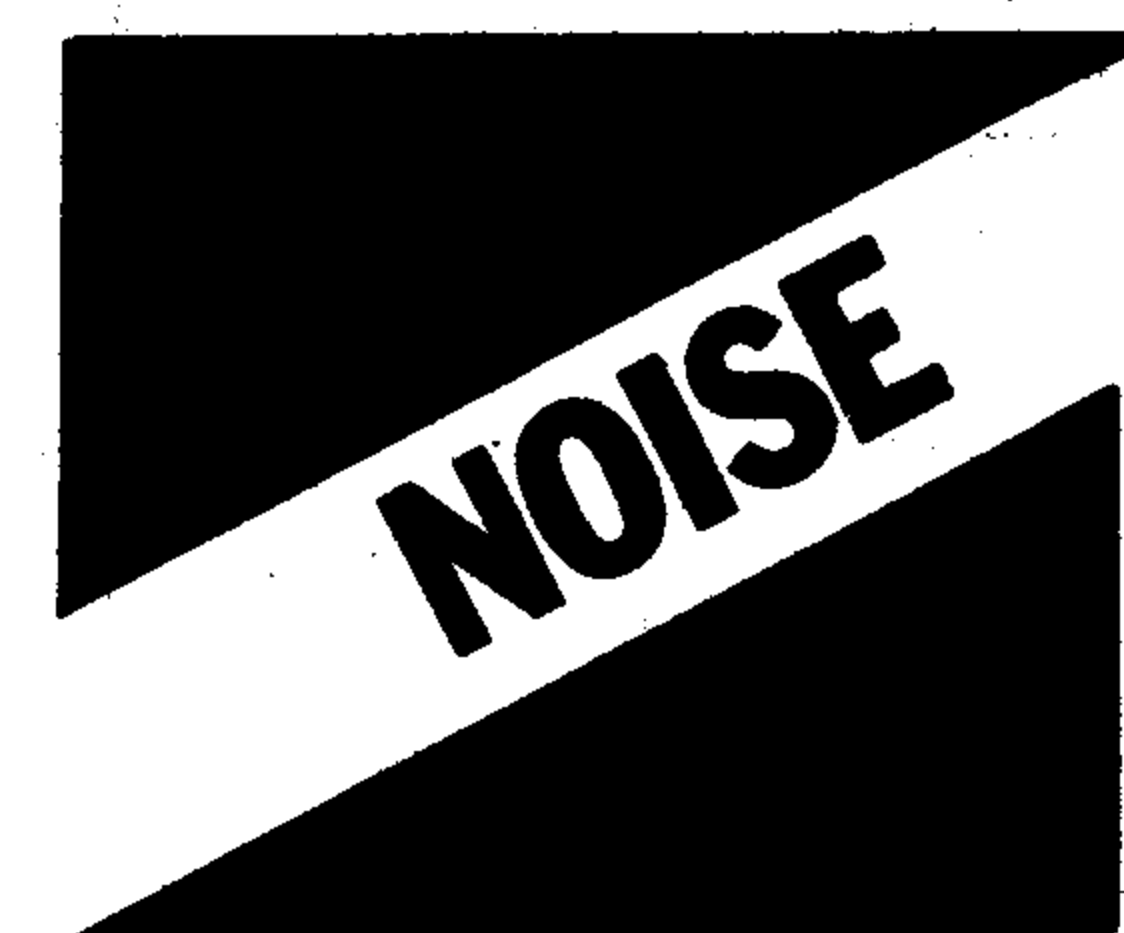
If the answer to any of these questions is YES then the chances are that the noise is too loud and is affecting your hearing. To check on this get hold of a Noise Torch (cost around £10), which is a simple noise-meter. With this you can get a rough estimate of the level, and if it is, high demand that management get in a professional survey team. Many sources and types of damaging noise are difficult to locate without the proper equipment, and your Noise Torch may miss out low intensity noises which still may be damaging.

## No joke

Obviously the best protection against excessive noise, like that against chemicals and dust, is to get the source removed. Failing that, baffles and sound deflectors should be built around the machinery to shield the worker from the noise. If management refuse to do either of these things, try to reduce the dose of noise that you are exposed to.

The Factory Inspectorate Code of Practice in relation to noise recommends a dose of no more than 90dB for an eight hour day. If the noise you are exposed to is twice that (93dB) demand that you should work half as long! Also, remember that, as with TLVs, overtime takes you past any acceptable level based on an 8-hour day.

Hearing loss is no joke. Quiet conversation becomes no longer



possible; it becomes difficult to listen to music; relationships with other people become strained as a result of your inability to follow their conversation. **The whole quality of your life is reduced.**

If none of the measures suggested above can be achieved, then at least insist on some form of ear protection. Most workers don't like using ear-muffs as the total deadening of sound that they cause isolates you from your mates and cuts you off from possible warnings of danger. The best form of personal ear protection is the **sonic ear valve** — a device which lets into the ear the sound of conversation, but which cuts out loud damaging sounds. These are a bit more expensive than normal ear-muffs, but they are already in use in some industries, so there's no reason why your boss couldn't afford them as well. Remember it's your hearing he's risking — not his own.

## WHERE TO GET

### PUBLICATIONS

**Hazards of Work** - Pat Kinnersly, Pluto Press, 90p. Absolutely vital handbook for any worker interested in doing something about improving his work conditions. Cannot be recommended too highly.

**Dangerous Properties of Industrial Materials** - Sax, Reinhold Press, £19. The book for listing every known dangerous chemical and its effects. Too pricy for all but the wealthiest, but is in all major public libraries.

**Basic Rules for Health and Safety at Work** - Health and Safety Executive, HMSO 20p. A useful

potted guide produced by the new Health and Safety Commission.

**Health and Safety at Work Booklets** - HMSO. A series of small booklets produced by the Factory Inspectorate about the hazards of a variety of processes and industries. Normal price about 20p.

**A Cause for Concern** - Newham Rights Centre, Pluto Press. 5p. Small pamphlet on the new Health and Safety Act.

**Encyclopedia of Occupational Health and Safety** - International Labour Office, £20. Again too expensive to buy, but it's in most public libraries. A complete, thorough rundown of all areas.



28 workers died at the Nypro plant at Flixborough last year



# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## INFORMATION

A FACTORY Inspector is obliged under the Health and Safety at Work Act to disclose information to workers. However, under the terms of the Act, the Inspector can act with discretion in informing workers and does not have an absolute duty to inform you of what information he has.

You will probably have to press for him to release his information, and you shouldn't rely on him as a source.

Similarly, the medical records of a firm are held under law to be the property of the firm — the workers have no legal right to access to them.

A fight for the right to have this sort of information should be linked with the right to be able to examine all aspects of a company's operations — financial, legal, technical, and so on.

## HEALTH CHECKS

IN SOME industries and for groups of workers dealing with particularly dangerous chemicals, regular health checks are a legal requirement. Examples of this are coal mining and the chemical industry. But the majority of employers are not legally obliged to provide such checks.

They should be insisted upon as a vital way of building up information about all sorts of short term and long term hazards at work — and, of course, the results should be made available to the workers.

## SAFETY COMMITTEES

UNDER the new Act most workplaces should find these joint safety committees being set up. They can be useful but only if they are used carefully. In the notes that the Factory Inspectorate have already circulated to managers they make clear their position. This is that such committees will be purely consultative, with very little powers of deciding anything. According to the tone of the circular, workers seem to be included very much on sufferance.

The danger with such committees is that they will simply degenerate into talking shops — unable to decide anything, and yet a trap for the unwary trade unionist who might think that really such a committee must be achieving something.

If the workers' representatives on the committee are delegated onto the committee from the shop floor, and treat the committee as a 'negotiating body', then such committees can become a focus for the fight for better conditions.

USE THEM WHEN IT SUITS YOU — but don't be taken in by them.

## HELP

### ORGANISATIONS

British Society for Social Responsibility in Science 9 Poland Street London W1V 3DG. (01-437-2728): can help with general information and supplying samples. Will also send out speakers on health and safety.

TUC Centenary Institute of Occupational Health Keppel Street, London WC1 (01-636-8636): TUC-financed body which will analyse samples free to unions.

International Labour Office 40 Piccadilly, London W.1. (01-734-6521): useful source of information.

HM Factory Inspectorate: Local addresses in phone book.

THE National Abortion Campaign, which was formed in March this year and held a very successful demonstration in June, is to hold its first conference next weekend (Oct. 18/19th) to discuss further action in the fight against restrictive legislation concerning abortion.

The James White Bill, which NAC was formed to stop, has fallen. But the Select Committee set up after the Bill's Second Reading published its third report some months ago, and Parliament is, in the near future, due to debate it.

This is an honour which was not accorded to the Lane Report, which came out against further restrictive legislation. By contrast, the Select Committee recommends tightening up Government control over abortions; that all foreign women be registered; and that the General Medical Council investigate doctors who they think are 'abusing' the abortion laws (i.e. doing a lot of private abortions).

The Select Committee also lays down that "termination of pregnancy after the 20th week shall only be carried out in hospitals in which there is appropriate equipment, eg resuscitation equipment". This is a massive capitulation to the anti-abortion lobby. Effectively it means banning abortions after 20 weeks in all but the best

# ABORTION Select Committee used to impose restrictions?

equipped hospitals and clinics which could then 'resuscitate' any aborted foetus that showed signs of life. As anyone trying to get an abortion under the NHS is often forced to wait well past 20 weeks, it would be a very restrictive clause indeed.

## Restrict

Clearly, although the Abortion (Amendment) Bill has fallen, it's left a good sized sting behind it in the shape of the Select Committee. This body can be re-convened at any time, and continue to come up with more recommendations for restrictions. If the composition of the Committee is the same as when it was first constituted (with an overwhelming majority of anti-abortionists) then further restrictions can be guaranteed.

Another danger is that the Government will put up its own

Bill based on the findings of the Committee. Barbara Castle has in fact welcomed its third report, and if it is approved by the Government, most of the clauses in it can be implemented by the DHSS under the powers which it already has.

SPUC (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, the main anti-abortion organisation) has also announced that it intends to introduce a Bill to restrict abortion, and has a large number of MPs willing to sponsor it in the 1976/77 session.

## Vital

Thus the fight even to stay where we are is by no means over. SPUC are still mobilised at a number of levels: they have announced a demonstration to coincide with the NAC conference as a show of strength.

There is no doubt that the National Abortion Campaign has been one of the most effective and well organised campaigns on women's rights to have emerged from the women's movement. Hundreds of women have become active in the campaign.

The need to build on these initiatives, and the likelihood of further restrictive legislation being drawn up in the New Year if not sooner, poses very crucially the necessity for building the campaign on a clear political basis and with a carefully worked out strategy.

A series of rallies, demonstrations and meetings will be proposed at the Conference, including a demonstration on March 8th (International Women's Day) to launch a Bill which NAC has drafted together with the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA). It is vital that the campaign should also use the fact that the TUC and Labour Party have both passed resolutions supporting abortion on request.

This opens up real opportunities

for the campaign to raise the question of abortion on demand inside the trade union movement and in the rank and file of the Labour Party — not only drawing these forces into the campaign, but also showing the bankruptcy of the Labour Party leadership in constantly having the question of abortion hemmed in with restrictive legislation.

One warning against relying on 'celebrities' comes from the fact that the 5 women MPs who have consistently spoken against restrictive legislation also signed the Select Committee's report.

The Working Women's Charter campaign has had some success in taking the issue of abortion into the trade union movement. By putting the question in a much broader context and seeing it as an integral part of the fight for women's rights, they have managed to get endorsement from unions that have adopted the Charter for pickets and demonstrations on the abortion issue.

## Link up

The most favourable legislation possible would still fail women if the facilities are not available. The refusal by the NHS to adopt the most up-to-date methods (a refusal which can only be motivated by the prevalent moralistic attitudes that a woman must be made to suffer, and that an abortion should be deliberately made more difficult than it needs to be) means long months of waiting, coupled with severe cutbacks in health spending; it means a very much deteriorating situation. Abortion facilities have already been severely curtailed by the closure of hospitals and wards.

Thus, for NAC to link up with the campaign against social services cuts is not a diversion, but a necessary and major dimension in the fight for abortion as a freely available service.



National Abortion Campaign Conference Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th October at Imperial College London (S.Kensington tube). Trade union branches, LPYSs etc may send delegates, but anyone who supports NAC's aims can attend, men included. Details: 30 Camden Road, NW1; 485-4303

## UNEMPLOYMENT CAMPAIGN HEARS TRIBUNE'S NO-FIGHT 'SOLUTIONS'

OVER 250 delegates from more than 40 trade union branches, shop stewards committees and other organisations crammed into Liverpool Trades Council's one-day Conference Against Unemployment last Sunday October 12th. The Conference was called as the first of a series of 60 to 70 up and down the country to mobilise support for the big lobby of Parliament against unemployment, on 29th November.

All three of the main speakers, Ken Gill, Stan Thorne MP and Eddie Loyden MP spoke in support of the Tribune Programme against the crisis and unemployment, and were strongly

in favour of import controls. No mention was made of the need for factory occupations, sliding scale of wages or independent rank and file activity — it was all to be left to the Lefts in the Trade Union and Labour Party hierarchy to provide the lead in "elevating the struggle" to the 29th November lobby and committing the Labour Government to "socialism".

Of the many speakers from the floor only one or two criticised the reactionary nature of the call for import controls, and the Tribune Programme, including import controls, was passed virtually unanimously.

## MCAPP CONFERENCE GETS HUGE SUPPORT

The Medical Committee against Private Practice held a well attended conference in London on October 11th. The 400 delegates and observers represented a broad spectrum of working class organisations, including Welsh miners and Sheffield engineers. It also managed to attract support from most political organisations of labour.

With this conference, the focus of MCAPP was extended from its original concern with private patients, to the general question of fighting the cuts in the health service.

The urgency of the situation was described by Dr. Dominic Costa, who cited the 60 newly qualified nurses in Portsmouth who were unable to get jobs, and other examples (see last week's WF). The main targets for cuts are convalescent facilities, which will be withdrawn so that people recover at home; and day care facilities for the mentally ill. Alongside these major losses, private practice grows apace. The private medicine schemes, which were mostly wound up or amalgamated when the NHS was founded, are receiving massive investment; Commercial Union, Chase Manhattan Bank and other large investors are

putting money into Allied Investments, a private health scheme.

The MCAPP resolution was passed largely unchanged. Amendments calling for no part time contracts for consultants and full participation in policy decisions (from Manchester SMA) was defeated: whatever their intention, these amendments were ambiguous, and the first would have discriminated against women. A substantial amendment from East London IS (International Socialism Group) Hospital Workers was also defeated. This called for local action committees and other concrete measures, but the IS speakers attacked the call to "Open the Books" in the main motion. They regarded this slogan too literally, and indeed if it merely meant opening up the budget of each individual hospital to its workers, it could be used, as they suggested, against those workers, by involving them in decisions about just what to cut. But the majority felt that the slogan would be extremely valuable if used to probe secret correspondence and reveal the relations between drug companies, building firms and hospital administrators in the wider context of the NHS as a whole.

E. Collins

## Gay workers meet to prepare Conference

ON OCTOBER 11th, about 40 homosexual trade unionists met at Conway Hall in London in preparation for a national conference of gay workers which is to be held in Leeds on February 15th.

Among topics discussed were individuals' experiences in "coming out" at work, and the need to set up gay groups within trade unions, both for social purposes and as pressure groups to fight discrimination and victimisation by management and fellow workers.

Such groups already exist within Nalgo and NUPE.

A Gay Workers' Charter was drawn up for discussion at the Leeds conference. It included support for the Working Women's Charter, and a call for the outlawing of aversion therapy applied to homosexuals, as well as an end to discrimination on grounds of sexual preference or style of dress.

Edward Carpenter & Christopher Street





IRO electricians on strike in 1972 — and most of the time since then too. Strike leader and steward Johnny Byrne is third from right in this photo.

## The IRO men need your help

AT the end of their victorious three and a half year strike in August 1974, the electricians of the Inland Revenue (IRO) site at Bootle had this to say: "We have fought a tremendous battle. Opposed to us have been Frank Chapple, the JIB, the employers and the government. The electrical contractors and the JIB, who seemed all powerful, have now been kicked off the site. In a war of attrition our opponents have been forced to capitulate. There are two major reasons for this. UNITY... and SOLIDARITY."

Having taken a beating in 1974, all these forces have been pulling out the stops to get their revenge.

Following a series of provocations, the electricians have been in open dispute again since June 1975, after McAlpines sacked their steward John Byrne. Having thus provoked a strike, initially by the whole site, the bosses have tried to isolate the electricians, who are now the only ones still out. On 11th July 1975 McAlpines sacked all the electricians.

That the present strike was provoked by a blatant piece of victimisation is crystal clear. McAlpines have effectively admitted that their original excuse for sacking John Byrne — that he had supposedly been off the site without their agreement — was a lie.

The IRO electricians point out that McAlpines have already made a large profit out of the job. The contract, originally for £5 million, is now worth double that sum. Their position is clear. They won't talk about re-instatement until they have a new agreement officially recognised on site by the EEPTU. In this, McAlpines are hand in glove with the EEPTU leadership, who have refused to represent the strikers until they sign a written undertaking that 'they will comply with union rules and honour union agreements'. In short, the electricians are to knuckle under to the JIB. What does that entail?

This Joint Industrial Board, the agreement between the EEPTU leadership and the bosses, is in fact central to the whole dispute. The original strike, starting in 1971, was to get parity with the other trades on the site — away from the JIB rate which was way behind all the other rates. The victory in 1974 won important wage increases. To return to the JIB now would mean the electricians taking a wage cut of £14, and the loss of fringe benefits (eg sickness and insurance schemes). It would also have wider implications: it would be a set-back in the general struggles against the JIB and as a result, would involve not only the

strengthening of the JIB elsewhere, but a strengthening of the vicious right wing gang around Chapple in the EEPTU.

Both McAlpines and the EEPTU leadership know very well what's at stake for them. So does the Government, which is keen to give support to those who are policing the unions at a time when the outcome of certain struggles could be crucial for their whole wage cutting policy. Wilson in fact personally waded in last week against the IRO electricians, accusing them of causing

## William Tyndale staff return but their fight goes on

THE unofficial action taken by the staff at William Tyndale School in Islington has wrung some major concessions out of the ILEA as they enter a run-up period to the inquiry into the school, due to start on October 27th.

As a result of pointed questioning by a representative of the National Council for Civil Liberties, who was hired by the Tyndale staff, ILEA are now agreeing to make hitherto "secret" documents available at the inquiry and are also willing to extend the terms of reference

of the inquiry to embrace the wider political aspects of the case, including the activities of the school Managers, who, say the staff, conducted a malicious campaign against the school among parents and in the neighbourhood. In addition, ILEA has agreed to pay for a barrister of the Tyndale staff's choosing to put the teachers' case.

In response to these concessions, the Tyndale staff have written to ILEA stating that they would be willing to resume work as from Thursday October 16th. They are waiting for a reply.

In the meantime the campaign to defend the Tyndale staff goes on. A 4-page Rank and File Special on the subject is now available, price 5p & post from Jeff Hurford, 18 William Street, London N.7. The defence fund is being continued for the time being to compensate for the staff's outlay in running the 'strike school' and also for their loss of salary.

The inquiry will be lobbied when it meets during half term. Sam Deedes

unemployment in the area and demanding they go back to work on the bosses' terms. And this from a government that's cutting jobs savagely.

The IRO strikers remark on the irony: if a boss throws thousands out of work, that's 'rationalising'. If workers defend their living standards and happen to delay a project which, if government cuts don't close it down, might employ a few local people — that's 'causing unemployment'. And they remain firm on their two simple demands:

re-instatement of all sacked electricians;  
no wage cuts.

Help these men to another victory! Make sure they get the kind of support that saw them through last time! Send donations and message to: K. Wallace, 214 Primrose Road, South 20

## 1200 TO BE SACKED AT ALFRED HERBERT

ALFRED Herbert, the machines tool manufacturers, have announced that 1200 workers are to be made redundant, out of a workforce of 6,000. The redundancies will mostly affect the Coventry plant, in a city which has the highest unemployment in the Midlands at 7.1%. Apparently this move is being made to meet the requirements of a Government aid programme. Some aid!

Meanwhile, a redundant 'worker' with a smile on his face: Mr. J. Anson Payne, sacked chairman of FMC Ltd., is to get an outside 'redundancy payment' or Midas handshake of £170,000 plus £35 to be paid into his pension fund.

STOP PRESS - The day before the staff were due to resume work, the Managers tried to sabotage their return by leaking details of the ILEA inspectors' vicious report on the school. These inspectors were instructed to staff the school (i.e. teach) during the first week of the unofficial strike. Obviously their long isolation from classroom teaching did not prepare them for what they

SUPPORT for breaking the £6 pay ceiling comes from a most unusual source: the Tory Party. At least, that is all we can understand from the speech by the Tories' new chairman at this year's annual imitation of a conference.

Singing the Blackpool blues, the noble Lord Thornycroft announced that the Party was, unusually, well into the red. For instance, if they raised the salaries of Tory Party employees as they intended (so dig deep, you delegates!) they would need another half a million income per year.

Work it out: half a million quid divided by six (as in £6 pay limit) comes to £8333. Can it be that the Tories employ 83,333 full time workers? Is it secretly one of the country's biggest employers?

Someone, somewhere is giving the game away.

MEANWHILE, Exeter City Council has generously offered unemployed school leavers work, at the princely pay of between £1 and £2 per week. Plus travelling expenses into the bargain!

FOR anyone who is wondering what the slogan 'Open the Books' means in practice, last week brought the answer. It came out that the Post Office had just decided to withdraw from the Confederation of British Industry (the big bosses' 'trade union'), and that while it was a member, it was paying £20,000 a year to the CBI in subscriptions. What about British Rail? BSC! The CEBG! How many other state concerns pay money to the CBI? A campaign to 'Open the Books' would expose things like that — and much more besides.

THE government may own 95% of the shares of British Leyland, but its new boss, former chairman of Bechams Sir Ronald Edwards, doesn't think this means the government should have much say in BL's affairs. Just a year ago he proclaimed: "I am convinced on stronger ground than propaganda that we should do all in our power to prevent the growth of industrial control by the government because there is every reason to believe that it would reduce not merely industrial efficiency but individual freedom"

MARGARET Thatcher thinks that "Everyone has the right to be unequal". Trouble is, some of us don't have much choice when it comes to deciding just how unequal we're going to be ..

Published by Workers' Fight, 98 Gifford Street, London N.1 Printed by voluntary labour. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.

## AFTER THE 'RED HOUSE'

RECENTLY the Workers Revolutionary Party educational centre in Derbyshire was raided by police with dogs, SPG and special branch. The raid was organised on a fairly grand scale and lasted a number of hours, by the end of which — with the WRP members refused the right to accompany the police and witness their search — the police had 'found' 9 bullets.

Judging from the politics of the WRP and their hysterical denunciation of even a scrap at a demonstration as 'adventurism', it is clear that any bullets the police took away were ones they had brought with them. Such attacks on organ-

isations of the working class must be opposed and denounced. An attack on one group should be seen as an attack on the entire labour movement. As such, it can and should only be fought by a united front of labour organisations and militant workers.

The raid on the WRP is not an isolated event. It coincides with the need of the ruling class to back up lies and propaganda about 'saving the nation' with 'force behind the fraud'. In raiding the WRP, the repressive organisations of the state are firing some opening shots and testing the opposition. If the WRP is not vigorously

defended then we could see the beginnings of more generalised repression against sections of the working class.

The WRP has of course called for a united front to take up the matter. So far so good — as long as it isn't a united front of the WRP with... itself!

But at a meeting called by the WRP in London to discuss defending itself, both Workers Fight and Workers Socialist League people were physically excluded from the meeting.

By excluding other tendencies of the working class, the WRP is clearly in danger of increasing its own isolation and making defence a more difficult job.

It is worth noting that people who the WRP have bitterly denounced as "corporatists" such as Ernie Roberts, have now been invited onto platforms to defend the WRP. Yet revolutionaries were excluded from a so-called public meeting of a so-called united front.

This is no way to defend the class against repression!

Workers' organisations must publicly condemn the raid on the WRP, and call for a trade union inquiry into the raid and the role of the Special Patrol Group.

And from the WRP, we must demand an explanation of their behaviour in excluding socialists from an advertised public meeting. We call on them to open discussions with all tendencies on the left to defend democratic rights and establish a united front for this purpose.

## MEETINGS

2nd Socialist Teachers Conference. Sat, Sun. 25/26th October. Argyle School, Tonbridge Street, W.C.1, opposite Kings Cross Station (Sat) & Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Sun.) 10.30 to 5pm (Sat.), 10.30 to 3pm (Sun.) Details & credentials (£1) from Bernie Regan, 24 St. Agnes Close, London E.9. Tel: 01-986-0570.

London WF readers meeting: 'Portugal — workers' power or counter revolution?' Speaker Simon Temple (Vauxhall LPYS), plus a speaker from PWCC. 8pm Sunday 19th Oct. at the George, Liverpool Road, N.1.

EALING Trades Council, AUEW and Ealing Women's Group meeting on Equal Pay. October 23rd at 7.30, Princes Room, Ealing Town Hall. Speaker Joan Maynard. With an International Women's Year Show by Broadside Mobile Theatre Group. Plus discussion and reports back.

IAN CALLAGHAN

## THE TRAGI-COMEDY OF T.O.M.'S CONFERENCE

Scarcely 20 miles away, in Northern Ireland, gun warfare has been a major part of politics for over six years. The situation simmers just below the brink of all-out civil war. The British Army carries out its largest operation since world war 2. And yet the response of the British left remains at the level of tragic farce.

Last weekend's Troops Out Movement conference was the sort of Alice in Wonderland event that only the TOM can produce.

The first day's discussion on political perspectives was largely incoherent. This was partly because of the chaotic organisation of the agenda, and partly because of the obscurity of the differences between most of the factions present.

Pete Radcliff Nottingham TOM delegate and a supporter of Workers Fight, argued that it was irresponsible not to face up to the possibility of civil war. The TOM should concretise its "self determination" demand into an unambiguous call for solidarity with the Republican forces. The solidarity position was further taken up in another brief contribution from Pete Firmin, a South East London TOM delegate.

All the other factions present — the present leadership of TOM, centred in an ex-IMG grouping round Gery Lawless; the International Marxist Group; the Revolutionary

Communist Group; Big Flame; and the Communist Federation of Britain — rejected this call for solidarity. They held to the position that by restricting itself to the two demands, 'Troops Out Now', and 'Self Determination', TOM can grow into a mass movement.

In reality, however, the Treasurer's report had shown a paper membership for TOM of 391, and the active membership is certainly smaller. Big talk about a 'mass movement' bears no relation at all to the real tasks of TOM.

All the factions had their particular magic recipes for TOM to end its present stagnation and grow into the promised mass movement — but the basic similarity of views made the battle over different tactical recipes all the more vehement.

The IMG bases its perspectives on the commonplace that the British Army is not in the Six Counties as a peace-keeping force. They differ with Lawless only on the question of organisational structure for TOM, favouring a totally open structure on the model of the National Abortion Campaign, where anyone can speak and vote at meetings.

The RCG counterposes a passive propagandist TOM to Lawless's mindless agitational TOM. In their insistence on the two main slogans of TOM as the holy writ on Ireland, they assume bizarre positions, such as refusing to argue for solidarity with the Republicans because this would compromise their abstract interpretation of self determination.

For the RCG as for the 'Lawlessites', the TOM forms a substitute for a 'left group', but

where the 'Lawlessites' try to graft the structure of a political party onto the concept of the 'united front', the RCG wishes this front not to be united in action but to achieve a dogmatic fervour round its two demands which will enable it to dispel British chauvinism.

The dominant issue of the conference — even during the political perspectives discussion — was the structure of TOM. At present TOM was structured like a political party, with the branches as its basic units.

Workers Fight, the IMG, the RCG, and the Chartist pushed for TOM to be restructured on the basis of national affiliation.

Those who defend the present structure — implicitly, if not explicitly — see TOM as being built as a movement of 'TOM activists', i.e. of people who give their first political allegiance to TOM. They want to shun and bypass the 'left groups'. In fact — and the history of TOM shows this — TOM can grow to something substantial only through the cooperation of the 'left groups' — i.e. of people whose first political allegiance lies elsewhere than with TOM.

TOM's present structure just doesn't correspond with the realities of TOM, still less with the need to expand TOM. Against national affiliation was the Lawless group, leading a bloc of Big Flame, CFB, and "other independents who aren't connected with IMG, RCG, or WF".

The arguments used to defend the present structure were that national affiliation would give the parasites of the left free rein in the "mass movement" that the present leadership had carefully built. 'true' TOM activists were con-