

BIG BLAME

merseysides socialist newspaper

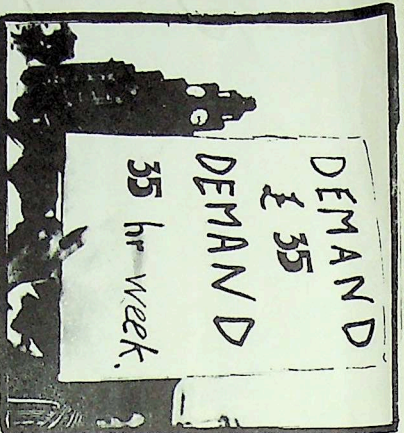
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£35 FOR BUILDING WORKERS DEMAND

On Merseyside and throughout the rest of the country, building and construction workers have brought the industry to a halt. This is the latest stage of a three month campaign to win a national demand for a better guaranteed basic and a shorter working week.

The TGWU and UCATT negotiators are — under pressure — asking for £30 for 35 hours. The Charter group, on the other hand, started the demand for £35 for 35 hours and this has been taken up by many of the rank and file. As one building worker pointed out, 'For a brief honeymoon with us, we really believed we had convinced them (the union officials) that we were serious in our demands for £35 for 35 hours and we were quite pleased when they had the courage to ask for £30.'

On 2-3rd August the UCATT executive recommended acceptance of the latest building employers federations offer of £23 for 40hrs.



However the rank and file began mass unofficial stoppages, replacing the official selective strikes, and this led to an almost total shut-down on Merseyside by late last week. The mass unofficial stoppages were made to show their total rejection of the employers offer and the union's provisional acceptance. When the TGWU section rejected the offer UCATT had little option but to reverse its earlier decision and reject it as well.

The employers latest offer is almost laughable: the flat rate increase is 7½p per hour but the equivalent of 6p per hour (£2.40 per week) will be lost to the increased costs of social benefits like school meals, the 'stamp' and school milk.

The national press has talked about a £9 increase on a basic of £20 but the fact is building workers won't get all this till May 1974. The way inflation is going, how much will that £9 be worth then?

Considering the problems facing workers in the industry, the unions' demand for £30 for 35 hours isn't all that not either. £35 is not a decent guaranteed income so bonus and incentive schemes will still contribute a lot to total income. The fact is that the workers have to make the bosses' bonus schemes work because the basic rate is so low and this means working their guts out.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

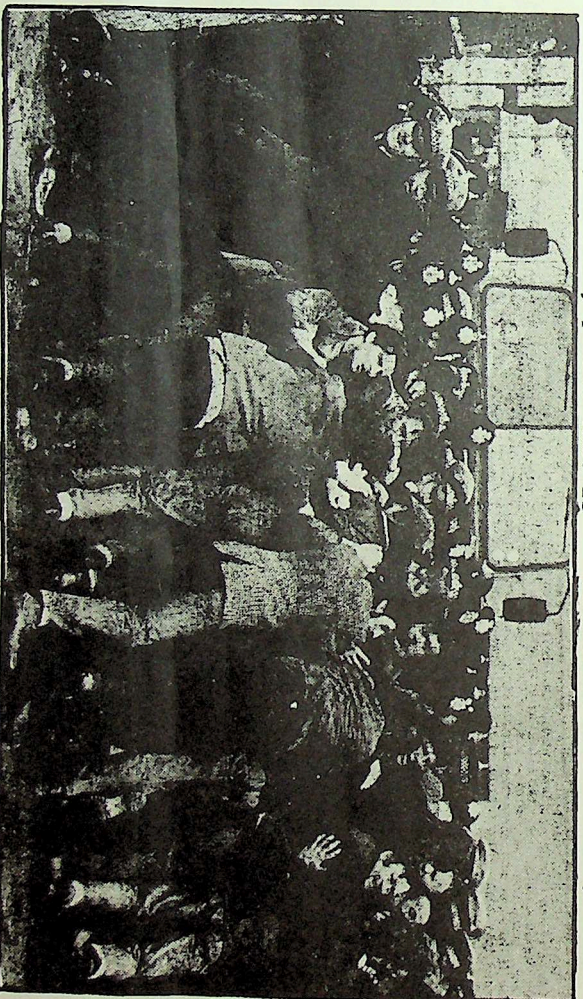
FROM THE DOCKS - TO THE SITES - TO THE FACTORIES - TO THE COMMUNITIES - IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG HOT AUTUMN

Dockers meet SS

The present struggle in the docks is now going into its 4th week. The dockers are determined not to go back to work until guarantees of 1 job Security' are established. One docker stated at a meeting in Liverpool Stadium on Sunday 13th that if the bosses thought that once the Jones-Aldington report was completed things would settle down they had better think again. The fight will still go on.

In the meantime mass picketing continues at the small unregistered ports, which are still being operated.

Like the Miners a few months ago, the dockers are experiencing the same opposition from the police on the picket-line which has led to more violent confrontations. Whenever the bosses feel threatened, they use every weapon available to try to stop us. The police at the picket-lines are not neutral; it is obvious whose side they are on. In their terms, the only picket that is



legal is an ineffective one. In our terms the only picket that is effective is one where violence is used if necessary to stop scabbing. Near Scunthorpe and Heysham, pickets are developing new tactics to stop scab lorries and fight back the police. In Kent two ships which had docked had their mooring ropes cut which set them afloat in the harbour colliding with several private yachts.

All over the country dockers have experienced the lies and violence of another arm of the capitalist state - the Social Security office. In Liverpool, as elsewhere, Claimants Unions have been fighting together with the dockers and building workers to get the full benefits. The full benefit married strikers are entitled to (that's if they get it) is only a pittance and single strikers get nothing. In order to cripple the strikers financially the government has ordered the suspension of Section 13 of the Social Security Act. This deals with emergency payments in cases of hardship - single strikers could have benefitted under this.

mass claiming

Since individual claiming has proved to be useless, mass claiming and sit-ins in the Social Security offices should be organised to demand full pay-outs for everyone. There have already been several demonstrations outside Social Security Headquarters in London and on Merseyside.

Steel workers near Scunthorpe are threatening to black trucks that go through the picket-lines in support of the dockers. Any moment the situation can change. The bosses and their Government are in a position of weakness.....lets all join together and outlaw them.

The government tried to play the tune of National Interest being held to ransom, and they will try to call in the troops to scab the ports. As a docker said, "If that happens we'll fight the army too".

MORE ON THE DOCKERS STRUGGLE ON PAGE 5

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THE 'SMASHING' OF THE 'NO-GO' AREAS

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FREE COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

IN THE EARLY HOURS OF 31 JULY TANKS WERE USED AGAINST PART OF THE BRITISH WORKING CLASS, THE NORTHERN IRELAND CATHOLICS.

As the massive display of tanks, armoured cars and trucks of the British Army smashed their way into the No-Go areas of Northern Ireland the people stayed in their homes — not because they welcomed the tanks, but because they knew that to venture outside would be to risk being shot to death.

This is exactly what did happen to two people in Derry as the tanks rolled in. Even the Army callously admitted that the two men they killed there were in no way attacking, or about to attack, them.

One of those who died was 15 year old Daniel Hegarty, who was shot at close range near the Grogan Heights. His father, Mr Alexander Hegarty, said that his son had been watching the troops from a garden about 400 yards from his home.

'A soldier called out to him as he turned around,' he said. 'He was shot from about 6 feet away. It was murder I call them animals.' Daniel Hegarty's cousin was also shot and badly wounded in the head. Mr Hegarty said that the second youth was going to Daniel's aid and was shot by the same soldier.

Mr. Hegarty's version of his son's death is denied by the army, but it is corroborated by neighbours and believed by virtually everyone in Free Derry.

STATE KEPT OUT

One of the most important features of the no-go areas is that they involved the whole of the people living there and were not just I.R.A. centres, whether Official or Provisional.

To understand what the no-go areas were, we have to look at the background to what is happening in Ulster.

The working class in Northern Ireland has been divided by religion with the Catholic minority kept on the bottom. This does not mean that the struggle in the North is ABOUT religion. Rather, that the most oppressed people are struggling to free themselves and these people are put into that group because of their religion.

That is a big difference between Northern Ireland and Liverpool. Here we are all in the same social position, whether Catholic or Protestant. So there isn't the same danger of the working class being split on a religious basis.

Following the growth of what was initially a 'civil rights' movement in 1967/8, demanding an end to discrimination against Catholics in employment, pay, education etc, the Catholic working class began to organize itself and demonstrate for what it wanted.

The Orange Order which had ruled Ulster for 50 years counter-attacked. It rightly saw that it could only maintain its position of power on the backs of the Catholics. The Orange Order was only kept in power by the Protestant working class, and if their position of privilege as compared with the Catholics was eaten away they would no longer have any interest in supporting the Orange ruling class.

So wholesale blatant and brutal attacks were made on the Catholic communities by the R.U.C. and backed up Orange fascist mobs. In Derry, in the battle of the Bogside in August 1969, and in Belfast at the same time, many unarmed Catholics died. The British government was forced to send in troops, and it soon became obvious that their job was to keep the Catholics down and bolster up Stormont.

So the no-go areas were born. In Derry the Bogside and the Grogan were totally sealed off from the Army and the police. In Belfast, Andersonstown and the Ardoyne were barricaded so that the Army could only make occasional large-scale (and often bloody) forays into them. The no-go areas were initially seen as acts of defence; the inhabitants saw that to survive they had to keep the British gunmen out.

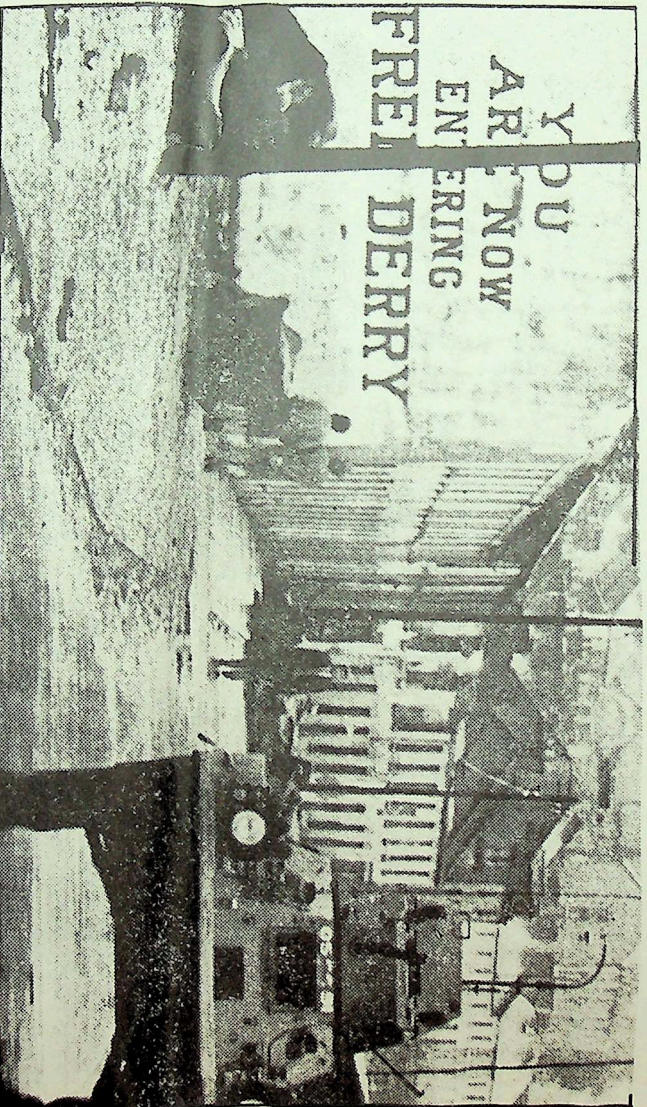
But not only the armed mercenaries of the State but also nearly all the tentacles of the State apparatus were kept out of these areas. Coupled with the 100%

rent and rates strike which began in August 1971, following the introduction of internment, this has meant that to a very large extent these areas have become autonomous and independent of both the N. Irish and British governments.

The people in these communities have been able to decide for themselves how these communities are run.

PEOPLE'S LAW — PEOPLE'S ORDER

Instead of the 'law and order' of the British government, the 'law and order' which they are now trying to reimpose and which means intimidation and violence by the troops, the searching of people's homes, the taking over of schools and other community buildings, the shooting of the occasional unarmed civilian, the no-go areas had their own law — the peoples' law — their own order — the people's order.



No police have been into these areas for three years, but crime has been virtually non-existent. This is because the people have seen who their real enemies are, the British state and the British and N. Irish ruling class, and have attacked them: they have disorganized their friends and neighbours as comrades.

Recently, people's tribunals made up of democratically elected delegates from the community had begun to deal with the occasional offender against the community and the 'punishments' handed out were in the form of constructive tasks like working on street cleaning or house repair. For the worst offenders, like spies banishment from the community was carried out. These are the positive elements of the no-go areas which got scant coverage in the press.

People's order, organized through democratically controlled street committees and the women's committees meant keeping the area clean, the houses in good repair, running food co-operatives, the barricades manned and maintained, operating cheap transport to replace the buses, nurseries and play centres, dealing with grievances amongst the people and so on.

The people were able to control a large part of their lives for themselves, and this control could now have been smashed by the troops moving in.

WE MUST FIGHT BACK

Defiance of the state's 'law' in N. Ireland cannot help but be violent. If the workers in Ulster had attempted to take the sort of action that dockers and other workers took in this country to defy the Industrial Relations Act and secure the release of the five dockers, they would have met with violence.

We know that the government in this country would not dare to use this level of violence against our demonstrations and violence, although the violence used by the police in the miners' strike was serious enough. But to an extent the State is restrained because the strength and level of the solidarity we have.

In Ireland this is not the case. Because the working class is split the Catholics as the most oppressed and ex ploted group are in a minority. To resist the State's violence they to have to use violence, and the I.R.A. is the armed wing of the Catholic people in the struggle. The I.R.A.'s presence was what ultimately preserved the no-go areas from attack: now they have been forced to leave, at least for the time being, the social and political organisations of those places by the people for the people may well collapse.

Armoured Cars move into the Bogside

The British State is turning the thumb-screws on the Catholics. This pressure could be relieved if the working class in this country saw that the Catholic working class in N. Ireland is fighting the same enemy as we are fighting here — British capitalism. It is not just a question of solidarity — a defeat for their struggle in Ulster would make the government stronger to hit us here.

A massive protest in this country against the destruction of the self-governed communities would have a great effect on the British state. It is still suffering under the effects of the working class strength which secured the release of the five dockers.

Unless we begin to see that the suppression of the Catholic working class in Ireland will mean a setback for the working class struggle here. We could see the Catholics defeated and a strengthened government turning on us. We have begun to defy their 'law' and their 'order' in the form of the Industrial Relations Act, they have plenty more weapons they can use yet, up to and including tanks and troops in our communities.

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HOUSE OCCUPATIONS a home is a right.

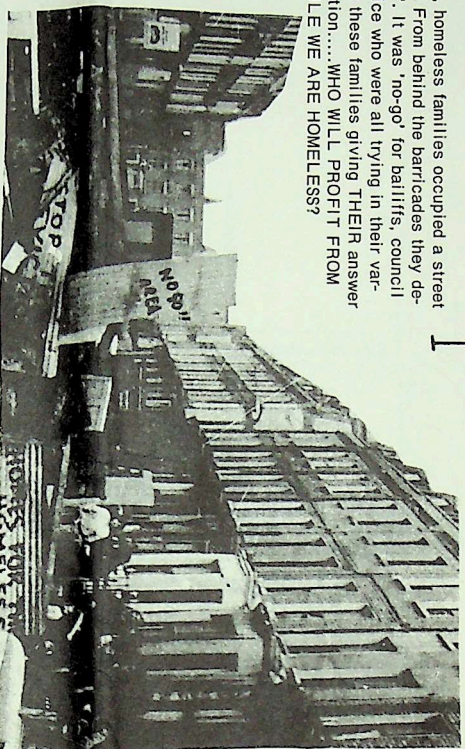
...not a privilege

It is true to say now that where ever we live, all of us are either ignored or harassed, whether we live in a Corgy house or suffer from a private landlord. When we want more facilities like nurseries, playgrounds or basic repairs and maintenance, we are ignored. When THEY want more money, those of us who have a home of some kind are harassed by rising rates, rents and prices. RECENT EVENTS IN PARTS OF LONDON HAVE SHOWN HOW WE CAN BEGIN TO BREAK THIS VICIOUS CIRCLE.

families in the Islington and Hackney boroughs of London have begun squatting in some of the thousands of empty houses which remain empty while many working class people live in overcrowded conditions waiting for their 'turn' to be housed. These houses are empty usually because either they are to be demolished at some time convenient to the Council, or because they are to be developed by property speculators as hotels or houses for middle class families. After the understrables have been shifted out, of course, EITHER WAY THE HOUSES ARE EMPTY. WHILE MANY PEOPLE NEED HOMES. THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE....OCCUPY!

In Islington recently, homeless families occupied a street full of empty houses. From behind the barricades they declared a 'no-go area'. It was 'no-go' for bailiffs, council officials and the police who were all trying in their various ways to prevent these families giving THEIR answer to the important question....WHO WILL PROFIT FROM THESE HOUSES WHILE WE ARE HOMELESS?

BARRICADES GUARD OCCUPIED HOUSES IN ISLINGTON



BUILDING SITES - 35 for 35 (cont.)

You can't stop for a breather when you're on bonus. You are responsible for every aspect of the job. If supplies on a job run out you've got to rush around like a maniac to get some more so you can get the bonus you rely on. Stewards also have to make the bosses' bonus schemes work and this means becoming bonus clerks and efficiency experts.

The other major problem facing workers in the industry is casual labour. This means there is no job security. When a job ends you get your cards and fit's back to the dole. You lose all your benefits. Year after year you are done out of holiday and sick pay. It also means that when you are working you've got to work really hard, including overtime, so you earn enough to tide you over until the next job arrives. Bonus schemes become even more important. Whether you're working or not your needs are the same, so any building worker who 'registers himself for employment' should get the basic wage that he would get if he were working. This should also apply in winter when you are laid off or when you can't work, fast and get your bonus because of the weather. In winter you're lucky if you take home £16 per week. It's also worth remembering that working out in the open in winter is quite likely to give you a bad chest condition which you may be stuck with for the rest of your life - and it doesn't count as an industrial sickness.

guaranteed income.

The rank and file's demand for £35 for 35 hours is an essential first step to overcome the two main problems in the industry, the bonus and incentive schemes and casual labour. A guaranteed basic wage of £35 would make it possible to start fighting the bonus schemes which whether individual or collective divide the workers into individuals and gangs competing against each other.

Just as the bonus schemes work against the development of a rank and file organisation among building and construction workers, so casual labour helps keep down militancy. In one way because the boss can sack or transfer a militant anytime he wants, and also because of the temporary existence of any site, whether six months or six years - it often doesn't seem worth building up a rank and file organisation which will be destroyed when the job finishes and everybody goes to different doles and sites. In fact, what is needed is an organisation which links up all building workers and overcomes the isolation of all the different sites.

Instead of being distracted by the official procedure of the waiting list for houses, which is all about waiting and in no way about houses, they went right back to their simple need - WE WANT A HOME - and they got one. Now, as squatting spreads in London, their actions state the fact that A HOME IS A RIGHT AND NOT A PRIVILEGE.

Housing authorities and local councils don't want us to ask these questions. As long as we grumble about conditions and problems where we live without asking WHY these problems are always around, we are playing their game. When we all realise that their policies are always in the interest of the middle class and those who have money, and never in our own, we can take the appropriate action and break through their official lies.

We can begin to realise the great power that we have together when we take the actions which are to OUR advantage - whether they are rent strikes, squatting or no-go areas.

SINCE THE BOSS AND THE LANDLORD IS NOT PREPARED TO GIVE US WHAT WE NEED, WE MUST LEARN TO TAKE IT FOR OURSELVES.

If building workers can win the '35 for 35' demand like the miners since their strike, they will have more confidence to continue the struggle. Also there will be a better basis for militant action because of more time for talking and organising among themselves, no longer tied to the bosses' big bonus scheme.

The building workers' demand is important because it isn't linked to productivity, isn't linked to bonus schemes and isn't linked to flogging your guts out. 35 hours is important because it helps break down the myth that any leisure we have is just a breathing space to recover for the next days' work. Also that we have to work long hours and mess up ours and our families lives to get a decent wage.

FACT * Building workers have not had a rise for ages.

FACT * 100,000 building workers nationally are on the dole.

FACT * The price of houses has doubled in 8 years.

The point is that house prices go up because there is an acute shortage so that speculators like the one who owns Concourse House can just wait for 'market prices' to rise at absolutely no cost to themselves, while the workers who build the houses can't afford to buy them.

WOMENS LIBERATION . 2, Rutland Avenue L'pool 17.

*Free Confidential Pregnancy Meeting. Every Saturday 10 a.m till 12 noon.

*Newcomer's Meetings Every Tuesday 8 p.m.

Mid Side Pregnancy Advisory Service

5th Floor, Harley Buildings, Old Hall St. L'pool.

Mons. - Fri. 9 a.m-3 p.m.

*For advice & help on abortion
*Free confidential pregnancy testing.

READS Ltd

Unions Divide and Bosses Rule

Recently at Reads Ltd Tin works, Bull Lane, Walton the fitters, following the AUEW policy of local negotiations, demanded and received an increase of £6 on their basic rate. This basic increase created a differential of £2 on the day shift rate and £10 on the night shift rate between the skilled workers (AUEW) and the unskilled workers (GMWU).

The difference in shift rates is one of the best examples of the ways in which the employers divide us so that we don't unite against the bosses.

The night shift rate isn't the basic pay for the job, but is extra money paid to us for the inconvenience of working at night, which messes up the lives of us and our families. This shift rate shouldn't depend on the job we do. It's ridiculous to say it's more inconvenient for a skilled worker to work nights than for an unskilled worker.

So the 200 unskilled process workers involved went on strike for the ending of the differential. Nearly all the other unskilled workers came out in support - about 400 altogether. In the 3rd week of the strike the fitters, who'd continued working all this time, held meetings. One section of them, the production and maintenance fitters who worked alongside the now striking men on the assembly line, passed a resolution pledging support to management and saying that if the strikers stayed out they'd do their jobs as well.

Faced with the combined opposition of management and their scabbing fellow workers, the men had to accept the unions recommendation to return to work. About a month later they got an increase of £3 on their night shift rate, leaving a differential of £7 instead of £10.



What happened at Reads was a result of workers from one union, AUEW, putting forward demands and acting in complete isolation from the other workers there. The way unions work, pushing for the 'interests' of their own members, often means conflict between members of different unions in the same workplace, as in Reads. The GMWU workers have been in touch with officials of both their own union and the AUEW. Both unions seem prepared to tolerate this situation where workers of one union support the boss against the workers of another union. Neither union wants to know.

In fact the unions help the employers in this way. Constantly making divisions between us so that it's even harder for us to see our different situations as part of the same struggle against our common enemy.

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WELFARE?

The press, the bosses and the Government talk about inflation, we know what it means - chasing after rents, prices, fares and housing. They try and pin the blame on us, saying our demands for a guaranteed standard of living have caused the crisis. But if everything we fight for our needs this system goes into crisis, then we can't take the responsibility. It's their business to solve their problems. But since they will always try to make us pay the cost of their crisis, we say that the only solution is to get rid of their system.

"Hold back your wage demands and everything will be alright," they say. What a con! Lousy wages in the building industry and agriculture haven't stopped food and house prices rocketing. What causes inflation is their system, a system that demands the maintenance of profit above all else. Without profits their companies go bust, so if profits are to increase then prices must increase faster than wages, yet wages are only 60% of the cost of producing the goods. This means we're always behind, because they've got so many other ways of screwing us not only prices, but taxes, rents and national insurance.

WHO GAINS ?

They try to split us up and make us feel guilty about inflation, so they can bring in repressive legislation like the Industrial Relations Act etc. But if we're to blame for the crisis, you'd think we'd have got something out of it. In fact we haven't :- Here are just a few of the things we've lost.

US

- *In the whole period 1959-69 our real wages (after inflation that is) rose only by 3%. Some even stayed the same or fell eg. council manual & electricity workers.
- *During the period of the Labour Government, those below the poverty line, of the Supplementary Benefits level increased from 1 million to 3 1/2m.
- *Under the Tories we've lost £500m. in Social Services as well as agricultural price guarantees, free school milk etc.
- *We've paid an even greater proportion of taxes and national insurance.

them

- *Share prices have risen by 80% from 1964-72.
- *Discrimination against dividends was ended in the last budget.
- *Tax on large incomes was cut by £35m. Capital gains tax at death was abolished.
- Distribution of effects of government economic measures affecting incomes since June 1970.

£1000 & under--gain of	£62m	million.
£1000 - 2000 - "	£37	"
£2000 - 5000 - "	£332	"
£5000 & over - "	£1890	m.

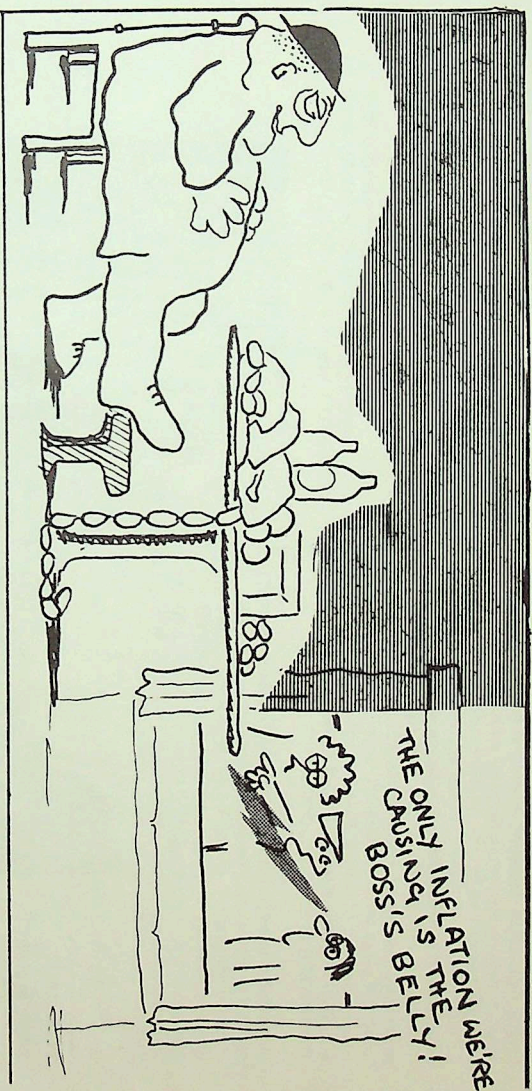
SOLUTIONS?

Holding back our wage demands is not the only solution they offer us. Another is the idea of built in cost of living increases or 'threshold' agreements, replacing normal wage demands. This sounds nice, never having to fight for wage increases any more, but as always there are catches. For a start the threshold, that is the level prices have to rise to before wages go up, is high enough to allow lots of small continuous price rises. Secondly the cost of living index does not include a lot of the things that go in our budget. So our wages will fall ever further behind.

The T.U.C. and the C.B.I. have a similar plan in store for us, price restraint in return for wage restraint. But the bosses will always find ways to pass on their costs in prices and even if they don't they can re-invest the profits for higher dividends next time. If we hold back our wage demands we lose our only power, we can't re-invest our hours of sweat, boredom and exhaustion.

factories

But even if the impossible were true, that wage rises could be tied to price rises, is this what we want?



Forever to be satisfied with our pre-sent few crumbs of the cake. Their system has proved its' uselessness, lets take the rest of the cake and the bakery too. We can start by demanding a guaranteed income for all whether working or not.

LET'S LIVE ON OUR TERMS NOT THEIRS!

We want a guaranteed income which will arrive in our wage packets regardless of lay-offs or short time. Our needs don't change neither should our wages.

communities

For some of us like those who don't work or those of us who are stuck in poorly paid and badly organised jobs, it is difficult to meet our needs through struggle in the factories alone. Even where we are well organised, what we win in the factories is being taken off us the next day in prices and rents.

We are beginning to realise the necessity of fighting back against this system in the communities too - in our homes, in the shops and at the Social Security offices. Many people are beginning to organise themselves to fight the October rent rises. But why stop here? The kind of co-ordinated street by street, block by block organisation we have to build to fight the Fair Rents Act should be used for fighting all community issues.

Many of us live in communities owned by private landlords who put the rents up when they feel like it.

Some of us have managed to buy our own homes only to be clobbered by the mortgage companies. Whose wage rises have caused rents and mortgages to rise? Certainly not the building workers themselves, who can seldom afford to live in the houses they build.

Already on Merseyside and elsewhere housewives have picketed supermarkets for raising their prices, or put up noticeboards saying where to get the cheapest food. If the supermarkets and stores don't respond, they soon will if we occupy the shops or start to take the things we need. Using the organised strength of the community we could also help the shop-workers, usually our own sons and daughters to fight for decent wages and conditions. After all it is not the shop-girls miserable nine or ten pounds a week that causes the prices of food to rocket.

Empty office blocks, newly built luxury hotels or property the building racketeers are letting stand so the value goes up, could be occupied and not handed back unless they are converted into homes for us. As for our homes, we have to start seriously thinking about the idea that a home is a right not a privilege and that the only fair rent for the rubbish they give us is no rent.

Many of us have to exist on the lousy hand outs of the Social Security. We need to support each other in our claiming by forming our own local claimants groups; and make the communities as no-go areas for all their snoopers and spies creeping around and checking up on us.

Those of us that go to work and shop together could stop paying high fares. Also we can force the councils to give us better social facilities controlled by the community themselves like nurseries.

When we organise like this we begin to take decisions affecting how we live. Lets carry on extending our areas of control in the communities and factories until we can break the power of this system and replace it with a socialist society managed by the mass of the people that provides for our needs and not just the needs of a few.

The Chicken and the Egg

The press has been weeping and wailing about the deaths of a few chickens due to the dock strike. Chickens get killed all the time for food, but apparently its 'murder' of defenceless animals during strikes.

They say that prices rise because of strikes and they mean about the waste of produce, but weeks before the dock strike, manufacturers destroyed 18 million eggs and £8 million worth of potatoes. And why? So the market didn't get flooded causing prices to drop.

DOCKERS! MECHANISATION FOR WORKERS OR BOSSES?

The Dockers' struggle over containerisation is a fight against the insecurity and redundancies brought about by 'automation' in the ports. This struggle came to a head last week in a National Dock Strike which took place despite the distractions of the Jones-Aldington interim report and the government's attempt through the Industrial Relations Act to prevent the rank and file of the dockers pursuing a daily struggle through picketing.

Jones meets Aldington

To describe the Jones-Aldington report as a distraction is not to say that it will not play an important part in the development of this present dispute. Its suggestions are being fought over at present. But it holds no great comfort for dockers. It says that full employment is its main aim, chiefly through the ending of the Temporary Unattached Register. This is virtually the industry's private Dole queue, where men wait for jobs on half-pay.

The pathetic increase in severance pay which the J.A. report suggests merely tries to encourage older dockers, and those handicapped or injured by one of the most hazardous jobs in Britain, to leave the industry altogether. What is their future, particularly here on Merseyside?

In an industry where the labour force has been slashed by a third in the last five years, to complete the job by weeding out the old and unfit as they were doing in Smith Coggins before it closed and stabilising the fittest possible dock force is merely to get the best deal out of containerisation FOR THE BOSSES. It is significant that the average age of the dock force is quite old — and the strength of their struggle reflects the memories among older men of the time when they daily waited in pens like cattle on the whim of the employer. And this was happening only six years ago.



Confrontation at Heyham

The J.A. report says that they will try to find new job opportunities for registered dockers in the container bases. But they suggest no steps to prevent large firms like Lord Vestey's (of Midland Cold Store fame) from moving their container bases out of the normal 'port zones' to escape observing dockers' rates and conditions.

They have also till now ignored the problems of unregistered ports which the dockers are currently demanding action on — ports which during the strike have used unregistered labour to

In this way the J.A. Report acts in the interests of the employers.

The dockers are determined not to accept the terms for the settlement of their dispute contained in the J.A. report. The Shop Stewards committee is determined to hold out for real guarantees. They have nothing but contempt for Jones. As one of the stewards, Colin Ross, said 'If the five imprisoned dockers had waited for Vic Feather to take action they would have done a three year stretch. If they had waited for Jack Jones they would have done forty'.



Union bosses are losing control over their members through continual sell-outs e.g. postal workers and Fords and also the obvious integration of the union bureaucracy into the system.

Working class people are becoming more aware of their own strength. When they unite they can defeat the laws of the ruling class and gain benefits for themselves.

Containers are fine: but WHO benefits?

It should be the dockers, and this is what the struggle is all about. Any partial solution which ignores the wider problems of profitable mergers, inland container bases and the wider situation of employment outside the industry can only serve the bosses.

We in fact should be able to welcome the arrival of containerisation and those advanced methods of technology which can make work easier for us and remove a lot of the dangers and needless exhaustion which dominates the lives of working class people.

However, in reality, through these new methods the employers increase their profits. We cannot get any real benefits from technology in a society where the profits are directed to the few.

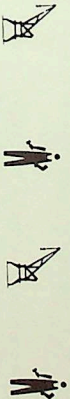
It's time for us to loosen our belts, not to tighten them. We can benefit from the process of automation if we fight for its use in the interests of everyone and not merely the ruling class. That is what the fight is about.

The bosses and the government, helped by their old mates the press, have tried to isolate both the dockers' problems and the way they have been fighting. The introduction of the Act — a desperate attempt to curb the rising rank and file militancy among the working class — is proving to be meaningless. Strikes for better wages and conditions continue with workers ignoring the so-called law of the Industrial Relations Act.

Mass struggle has put the Act into perspective, as a piece of legislation so obviously created in the interests of the bosses that the cry of 'respect for the law' can only mean respect for the bosses' 'interest'.

And this is the case with the Housing Finance Act with its so-called fair rents. And similarly with the recent Social Security Act aimed at strikers. And the Inning-raton Act designed to divide sections of the working class and make them easier to be manipulated. The industrial struggles over the past few weeks have made it clear that divide and rule won't be so easily put into effect.

THE LAWS THAT KEEP THEM UP KEEP US DOWN
This was made an even more blatantly strike breaking weapon of the bosses by a recent amendment



Bernie Steer after his release

to the Social Security Act — this cuts the amount of strike pay 'disregarded' from £4.35 to £1 (and soon to be nothing, we heard) and makes benefit paid after return to work recoverable.

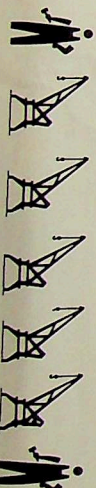


Fight Isolation

The Jones Aldington Report tries to isolate the dockers' redundancies from the national high unemployment situation. Yet both types of joblessness clearly stem from the employers' need for more productivity and automation — needs which are used solely in the interests of profit.

This is a situation which affects all industries which are not profitable enough in the bosses' eyes, like the mines and the railways. But the fantastic support for the five dockers jailed by the National Industrial Relations Court from all sections of the working class shows that the tactic of isolation has not worked.

A united fight is important as a defence against the bosses' law. And it is also necessary as an attack on the way that productivity and automation are used only to increase the profits of the few at OUR expense.



CLAIMANTS V. SOCIAL SECURITY

People in Claimants Unions spend most of their time fighting the Social Security just to get the miserable money we're supposed to exist on but don't even always get, and the basic grants we're not told about. Why is it always taken for granted that millions of people suddenly cease to count the minute they're out of a job or don't have a husband to support them? Our needs haven't changed just because we're not employed?

But we no longer have any rights when we're no longer 'useful members of society'. When society is controlled by the rich people who own it, then to be a useful member of society we have to work for them when and how they choose. So we're brought up and conditioned to take orders and work for the people who have the power, and by the time we're finished we don't know how to do anything else. Not many people work because they enjoy sweating it out eight hours a day in a factory but because it's been smashed into us that to be a decent person you have to work for the profit of others.

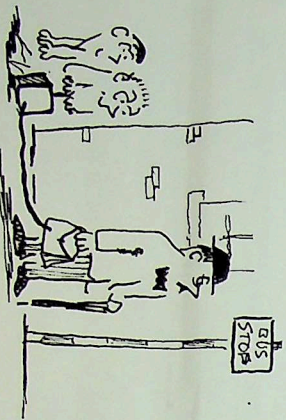
The minute the employers don't need us to work, or we can't be of use to them we don't have a place in the scheme any more. That's where the Social Security comes in and does its bit for the system. They put us in categories according to how useful we might be and treat us like different kinds of dirt.

Some of us just don't fit in. If you're too old to be useful, you're called a Pensioner, given an order book and forgotten. 80,000 pensioners died of cold last winter. Women are being cut off by the S.S. all the time because of the S.S. Cohabitation Rule. The S.S. try to make out that if you are sleeping with a man he should keep you. About 5000 women were cut off last year as a result of being spied upon by the S.S. Sex Snooters. The government say that they have saved the taxpayer a whole lot of money, this way - but they haven't. The salaries of these Master Spies cost them much more, a cool £600,000 a year.

WE SAY

Last week in Liverpool and other parts of the country important links were created between dockers and building workers, and Claimants Unions. The links with the Claimants Unions are especially important. As not only is this making links between unemployed, permanent claimants and workers, but because it enabled common interests to be brought to the fore. That is, not only should dockers and other workers have a guaranteed income whether working or not; but so should the people who this system labels 'useless' just because they've been thrown out of work, or are not involved in the process of factory exploitation.

Dockers and building workers are coming together because it is becoming increasingly clear that rank and file unity between different struggles is the way to beat the employers and the government. The miners were the first to benefit from the upsurge in working class solidarity that the ruling class offensive has brought about. Then the mass strike that brought the five dockers from jail showed our power again, as we made the government retreat. As many workers realise, the docks and building struggles are only the latest to show the collaboration of the official unions, and the need for independent action.



But there are limitations to the solidarity and the types of link-ups that have been created. One is that, it is still thought of too much as just 'helping each other's struggles', such as getting the five dockers out of jail. So when the object is achieved the unity fragments and disappears. Instead of being consciously used to carry on achieve our real objectives like the smashing of the act, or the winning of the universal 35 hour week.

Also there is still too much delegation of the struggle. Too much reliance on other people and organizations to win things that only the mass of workers can. An example of this was the resolutions adopted at the Liverpool Trades Council meeting of 600 workers over the jail-

The Claimants Unions are having a long-term campaign to put an end to the Cohabitation Rule, which makes us into kept women and forces men to support us.

Some can be more useful as workers but the bosses don't happen to need us at the moment. They'll try to keep us in work as long as it suits them, but if you have the cheek to leave a lousy job or get the sack because you're not a good enough worker, your first six weeks' benefit will be cut. But if they want to bring in new machines or move the plant abroad, they'll throw you on the dole queue and make you sign on so they can keep tabs on you.

If you dare to go on strike, you're a positive threat and you don't have the right to exist at all. You'll only get money for dependants, so single men don't get a penny unless they get together and at sea hell. That's how people are forced back to work.



So when Claimants Unions fight the Social Security we are fighting against the whole work system. We are refusing to let them humiliate us and make us feel sub-human just because we don't or can't work for the bosses. We're not asking for the right to work when work means being used to make cars that will fall apart, build offices for businessmen and waste our lives working for shit wages. We think everyone has the right to a decent life so we fight together to get as much as we can from the Social Security.

...

ing of the dockers. They emphasized that the TUC and the Labour Party should, and can, solve the crisis over the Act. This meant that the Trades Council and more important the Merseyside working class should do nothing. But instead, rely on organizations that time and time again have shown that their interests are different from the mass of workers.

Another example is the events of this week at the Social Security offices in Liverpool. Everyone was really angry that they weren't getting paid out, and felt the need to take direct action. But many of the people, like some of the docks' stewards, who were supposed to be leading the struggle against the SS, were too willing to act as representatives for the rest; and the rest were too willing to let them. The representatives went in to see the officials on their own to 'negotiate' which got precisely nowhere.

At this stage the need has never been clearer for the types of action and organization that allows for maximum involvement and participation in struggle. These groups of people have to act independently of such organizations as the unions, whose role it is to mediate and slow down such developments. At the moment this will probably mean small groups of militants who attempt to act together in their own factory or neighbourhood situations, not pretending to represent them around them. And from that position work with similar groups who see the needs for common link-ups and united action.

Big Flame fights for such link-ups and tries to be involved in the process of their development. We also try to draw out the political implications of the struggles. In an attempt to put forward strategies that best express the complete separation of the interests of the working class from this system, and the need to overthrow it. For us the most important thing at the moment is the struggle of workers and non-workers against the nature, conditions and ideology of work under capitalism. And the movement towards demanding the right to live not to just exist and work for the bosses.

At the moment we have groups which are controlled by the participants from that situation, in factories like Fords and the community etc. We realise the limitations of these groups and our present activity; and do not wish to substitute ourselves for the building of real autonomous organizations of the class. But we refuse to cut ourselves off from this process.

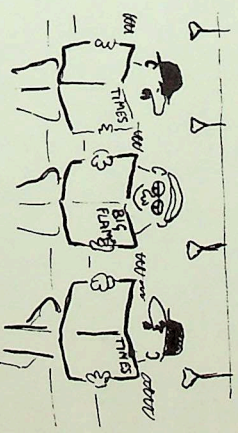
We see our role as creating some of the conditions for these types of organizations and struggles to develop. If our present groups help to accelerate this process, they will have fulfilled one of their purposes.

The Social Security expects us to feed our kids on baked beans, but we can start our own food-coops with bulk buying because we ALL need good food. If we organise properly amongst ourselves, there's plenty of work for skilled and unskilled. We've been divided up into employed, unemployed, skilled and unskilled, useful wives and scrambling widows, and treated as the system tells us we deserve to be treated.

But now we're beginning to think and act as people who all have the same needs and rights. Claimants Unions are also working with people who are striking for shorter working hours and more money to compensate them for the hours they have to spend producing things we don't even want. London dockers are thinking of unloading food from containers and handing it over to Claimants Unions.

Printers occupying a factory are printing things that people want them to publish. Maybe soon workers will be striking to support tenants on rent strike against the October rent rises because we're all workers and tenants one way or another.

Our demand is for a guaranteed income for every man woman and child. We ALL have the right to a good life and there's enough wealth in the country for us to have it.



IN LIVERPOOL 7 & 8 the violence of recent battles and the erection of barricades have attracted the attention of Press, T.V., and worried councilors to make their various statements about a situation of conflict and disaffection which has been in existence for a long time. When the media have finished making instant dramatic news out of the racial conflict aggravated by frustrating conditions, and when councilors have satisfied their political egos, the facts of police harassment and racial discrimination in employment, and a situation where few young people are able to get a job at all, will remain.

Liverpool 8

THIS SITUATION HAS EXISTED FOR A LONG TIME. Black and white kids have been controlled and held down so consistently that to isolate recent events as a freak occurrence by ignoring the conditions which caused them is merely to reinforce the problem. Black and white kids are harassed by the police - the former in particular. Black and white kids live in bad housing conditions: black and white kids have no jobs and little future if they sit and wait for them. The fact that they fight each other is a tragic distraction from the real causes of their frustration. THE KIDS AND THE COMMON-ITWORKER WHO WERE ARRESTED ARE PAYING THE PRICE FOR CRIMES WHICH ARE NOT THEIRS.

Inside Story

Inside Story - New Revolutionary Journal. Latest issue, articles on repression in France, Italy, Germany, Ireland, Britain. - Price 25p. Send to:- 3, Belmont Road, London S.W.4

BIG BLAME

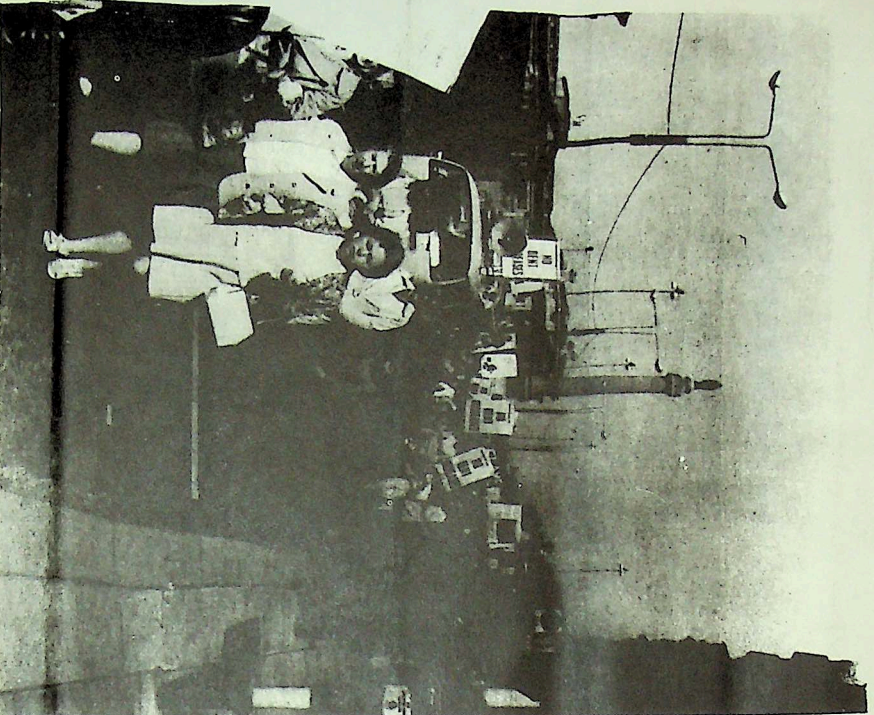
MERSEYSIDE SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER

no.3

September 72

4p

IT'S A GOOD THING
WE HAVE A FIVE
YEAR CONTRACT -
IT GIVES A GUY
TIME TO LEARN
WHAT'S IN IT ...



● Tenants march through Lime Street.

L'pool Tenants Say ...

RENT RISE - RENT STRIKE

RENT RISE - RENT STRIKE, this slogan was shouted by hundreds of Liverpool tenants and their kids, who marched through the city centre on August 23rd. Other slogans that we all shouted were 'Fair rent is bent - don't pay the rent' and 'Ee-aye-addio - we won't pay no more'. At the end of the march we demonstrated outside the Town Hall in protest at the Labour Council's decision to implement the Tory Fair Rent Act and so put our rents up by between 75p and £1 this October AND MORE EACH YEAR AFTER THAT

More than 100 of us crowded around the Town Hall entrance and demanded to know of the councillors who were going in, which way they were going to vote. It didn't matter if they were Labour or Tory, if they were going to vote for implementation they got some rough handling from the crowd. They had to call in their boys in blue to rescue them from our anger.

KIRKBY STRIKE

SINCE THE DEMONSTRATION TENANTS ALL OVER MERSEYSIDE HAVE BEEN ORGANISING. In KIRKBY on the Tower Hill Estate the tenants are well organised. An Action Group has been formed to fight for a total rent and rate strike. It is supported by the majority of the people on the estate. The estate has been organised into 11 areas, with each area represented on the Action Committee. Each of these areas has been sub divided into blocks, with Action Committee people in each block. Each member has the addresses of the other members, so that at the first sign of bailiffs they can quickly contact each other and drive them off the estate. Groups of people have also been organised to follow the rent collectors round the estate and the rent office will be picketed. At a meeting of 450 tenants the policy of a total rent and rates strike and the non-payment of any arrears incurred during the strike was decided upon unanimously.

The Action Group is pressing for industrial support by all workers in the area. Workers at Messing Farm and any Bamberghs have already said that they will strike and any evictions take place. A Co-ordinating committee has been formed for the whole of Kirkby, to spread the struggle in Southdene, Northwood, Westvale, Huyton and Fazakerly.

ON THE MOVE!

IN THE BRONTE AREA over a thousand tenants have signed a petition saying that they will not pay any increases in CANTRILL FARM tenants are organising themselves together to withhold the increase. In BOOTLE a Rents Action Committee has been formed to fight the rent rises. They have given out leaflets door to door, toured the area with a loudspeaker van and held many meetings. A MASS DEMONSTRATION WILL TAKE PLACE ON SUNDAY OCT 1st (3p.m.) at Marsh Lane by Stanley Road to burn the forms. In BIRKENHEAD an action committee has been formed to spread and organise the fight. In SCOTLAND ROAD every area is meeting to organise their response to the Act. A mass meeting is to take place. And in many other areas like Everton, Halewood etc. leaflets are being distributed calling the people to action.

STRIKERS' VICTORY AT S.S.

The Social Security were finally forced to start paying out to some single strikers after 20 of us went into Everton Brow office one afternoon and compelled them to pay by supporting the claims altogether. Our mass claim was supported by single strikers and members of both the Claimants Unions and S.S. Flans.

We were in the office for four hours. We went up to the interview desk together, got the supervisor out of his little office and finally had a mass interview with the deputy manager and forced him to admit that the clerks at the desk were wrong to refuse the strikers' claims forms and knock them back... He also admitted that he had been given instructions under section 13 of the 1966 Social Security Act that he could pay single strikers £4 a week in cases of hardship.

And that clearly means all single strikers once the tax rebates have disappeared.

It was clear to us from the start that this is THE ONLY WAY to claim this benefit, since claiming as an individual or relying on a social worker or so-called union official experts has NOT succeeded.

When we sent up an account of our successful action and suggestions that others should do it to the union platform at Tuesday's mass meeting, they did not read it out. Instead they talked about meetings with the Social Security managers. There are many single strikers who, through the lack of any basic self-organisation to claim their rights, are really suffering hardship while union officials on £40 a week talk about chatting to the managers, just as they chat to the bosses on the sites out of our sight.

Mass claims should be organised immediately the strike begins, as happened with the Birmingham builders. Other successes took place in Glasgow and Manchester, where single strikers were receiving £3 regardless of their living situation. ■

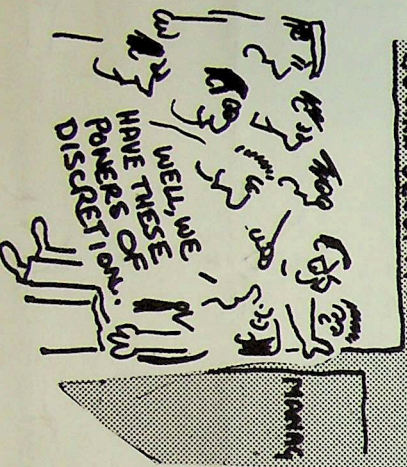
STOP PRESS:

Tower Hill tenants who are organising a rent and rates strike have had a mass meeting with tenants from West Vale, Northwood, and Fazakerly who are organising similar actions. In Fazakerly there are now well organised street committees and eviction squads planned to beat the rent increases

contents

- * SOCIAL SECURITY ARRESTS.
- * NEW FRAUD CONTRACT
- * BIRMINGHAM BUILDERS ORGANISE
- * I'M NO RACIALIST, BUT....
- * FIGHT AGAINST THE UNFAIR RENTS

SOCIAL SECURITY



WELL, WE
HAVE THESE
POWERS OF
DISCRETION...



FOR MORE INFORMATION
SEE PAGE FOUR

SHOW TRIAL

AT THE OLD BAILEY IN LONDON 8 MEN AND WOMEN ARE ON TRIAL FOR THE 'ANGRY BRIGADE'S' BOMBINGS. With the homes of their political representatives threatened (Robert Carr, whose front door caved in the day of the first one day strike against the IRB: John Davis etc) the ruling class were forced to find scapegoats for events that were getting out of their control. The 'Angry Brigade' had dared to use violence against a violent state and something had to be done. So the police came up with the Stoke Newington 8.

Information about the trial has recently appeared in the press after several months of complete silence. The state needed to avoid creating martyrs among its opponents so the trial's been kept quiet. Facts have been suppressed.

We haven't been told, for example, that the defence has been systematically destroying the police case, despite the fact that the trial takes place in a Court of Law i.e the ruling class' home ground.

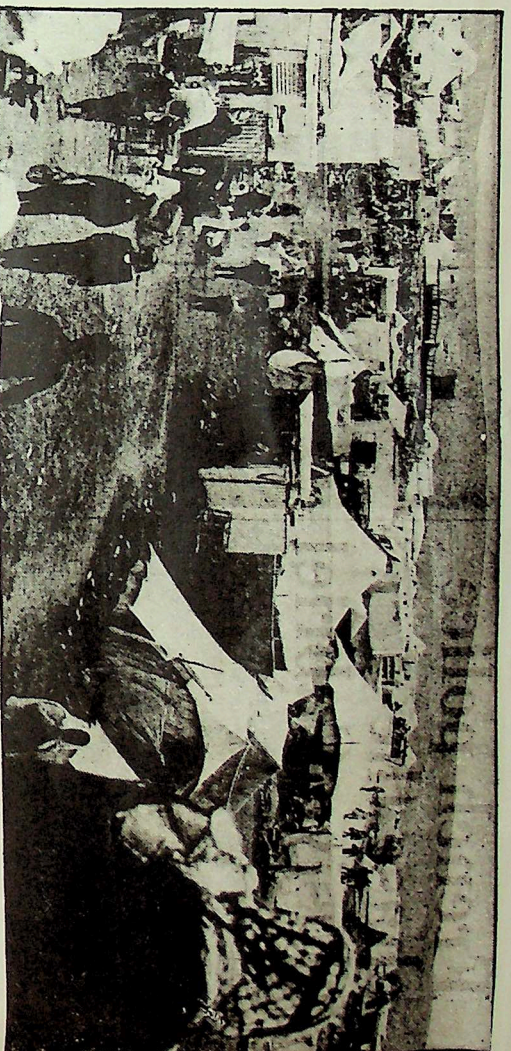
Even the cops' main piece of evidence, the guns and ammunition 'found' in a police raid, was proved to have been planted. Under cross examination the police had to admit the arms were found only after the arrested comrades had been conveniently taken out of the house.

It seems highly unlikely that the 8 militants on trial had anything to do with the Angry Brigade. But the bosses had to prove that resistance to their rule is useless. So they selected 8 people who were involved in Claimants Unions, Womens Liberation - people so well known they could hardly have been secret bombers working underground. The trial is a warning to all who seek change in this society. The ruling class will use every weapon it has to maintain its control.

IT'S A COMMON SAYING THAT UNLESS WE KNOCK CAPITALISM OFF PRETTY SOON, WE ARE GOING TO DROWN IN ALL THE MUCK IT HAS PRODUCED.

That's why it is good to see Liverpool's first electric buses on the street. No more exhaust fumes and greatly reduced engine noise must be welcomed, and we should work for the time when they will be used beyond the city centre.

In terms of pollution, Liverpool probably has as much poisonous lead in the air as any city in Britain, if not more than any other city. A large proportion comes from the 'anti-knock' ingredient in petrol. Despite a long overdue restriction by the Government on the amount of such lead in fuel, the problem will not be significantly reduced until the problem of cumulative lead poisoning is tackled by attacking all the sources of it - from industry to lead water pipes to petrol engines.



a Palestinian refugee camp

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Thirteen Israeli athletes are killed by Palestinian guerrillas during the Olympics and the employers' Press condemn the young men who died carrying out the operation.

A few days later Israeli planes bomb Palestinian refugee camps (usually referred to as "guerrilla bases") and kill nearly 300 civilians, men, women and children. But this time the Press reports are subdued and even attempt to justify what they had condemned a few days before at the Olympics.

Why these double standards from the Press?

The British Press has consistently obscured the real background to the Middle East struggles. There is scarcely any mention of over a million Palestinians expelled at gun-point from their homes and jobs and herded into camps when Jews from all over the world returned to their "home" in Palestine and renamed it Israel in 1948.



The response of the Palestinians (whether living in Israel in areas occupied by Israelis or in Arab countries) has been the growth of the Palestinian guerrilla movements. Their plight has been deliberately obscured by the world Press in order to defend the profits made by American and European businessmen. So the Palestinians are forced to bring their situation before the eyes of the world, like at Munich.

It goes without saying that the fact that a large sector of British industry depends on the manufacture of petrol driven cars will mean that those who profit will continue to sabotage any attempt to develop a mass substitute such as electric public transport and electric cars, for a start.

This sabotage is reflected everywhere particularly on Merseyside, where the problem of pollution is constantly ignored by the bosses' in their hunt for profit - whether they are putting sewage into the Mersey, or setting it alight with leaking Naptha, or allowing workers to labour in poisonous working conditions in a thousand factories.

Pollution is the excrement of capitalism and we must fight against it, and those who cause it by first recognising that it is largely the product of the same system which keeps us down.

The Press dismisses the guerrillas as being too isolated. But they are the only political voice the refugees have. The Arab rulers (Sadat, Hussein etc.) are opposed to the guerrillas who threaten their own privileged positions. So the Palestinian refugees have been increasingly suppressed by the Arab regimes, culminating in the massacres of refugees in Jordan by Hussein's army in 1970.



Despite the mass expulsions of Palestinian and the now-declining immigration of world Jewry into the area, 40% of the population of Israel are still Arabs. They are an oppressed group, used as cheap labour by Israeli bosses. They are concentrated in the lousy jobs that European-born Jews (Ashkenazys) will not accept, particularly in the building trade which is expanding to cope with the influx of American big-business, attracted to the area by cheap labour and the protection given to their profits by the Israeli army and airforce.

Only the upper layers of Israeli society have benefited from the exploitation of the Arabs. Even Jewish society is divided and is certainly not the united group portrayed by the press. Nearly half of them are Sephardim, Jews from the Middle Eastern countries who because they had neither the education, skills or money of European and American Jews, became as exploited as the Palestinians. Recently, leaders of the Sephardim (Black Jews) organisations have declared solidarity with their fellow Arab workers.



Israel has one of the highest strike records in the world. But Israelis who came from Europe or America have had more experience of traditional trade union organisation and parliamentary politics, so their struggles have rarely questioned the exploitation at the root of Israeli society.

On the other hand both Palestinians and Black Jews have never been held back by reformist organisations and so, at present, these oppressed groups are organised in movements (e.g. El Fatah, the Israeli Black Panthers) that are determined to change their society for the better.

Dear Daily Excess,
 "I'm no racist, but..."



THE SPECTRE OF RACIALISM IS ONCE AGAIN HAUNTING BRITAIN. The expulsion of thousands of Asians from Uganda has given the fascists and racists like Powell and the National Front (incorporating Collin Jordan's British Nazi party) a chance to spread their poisonous myths, diverting working class militancy from the employers and the state onto immigrants

the real blame

The British ruling class is responsible for the expulsion of the Asians. They brought the Asians from India and made them a commercial middle class to prevent the growth of an African middle class which could challenge the colonialists for power. Amin has thrown them out so he can put his supporters in their place.

But no matter what we think of Amin and his vicious action, the Asians will be coming to Britain and like everyone else they have the right to a decent standard of living.

It is irrelevant whether they are skilled or unskilled, 'educated' or 'uneducated'. In fact, given the plunder and exploitation of Asia and Africa over the past 100 years by Britain and other imperialist powers they have more than the right!

Anyone who says that blacks are responsible for unemployment and bad housing is either lying or has a short memory. Unemployment has been created by the employers and the state to weaken working class power and organisation. We have always been short of houses and always suffered bad housing conditions. Why? Because the building speculators create a shortage to keep prices up - and landlords, private or corp'y, are not interested in building homes fit to live in. In the 1930s there was mass unemployment and slums from one end of the country to the other and there wasn't an immigrant in sight. And more people LEAVE Britain every year than come in!

The European middle class has always used the issue of immigrants or national minorities (like the Jews in Germany or the Irish in Britain at the turn of the century). The attempt to divide the working class by racism has never been clearer

contempt

The policies of governments in countries like Germany, Italy, and France have been to import the unemployed of backward areas like Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia and South Italy as cheap labour. They divide the immigrants from the native-born workers by putting the immigrants in the roughest jobs and offering better conditions and higher status to the native-born workers. Immigrants become a mobile, fluctuating work-force to be disposed of as employers and governments think fit. In West Germany, for example, thousands of immigrants were packed off home during the 1967 recession.

Britain

In the 1950's in Britain labour was short. The employers advertised in the Commonwealth countries for black people to come here. They promised good jobs and houses and encouraged them to regard Britain as their second home.

When the immigrants arrived they were herded into slums, given lousy jobs and conditions that no one else would do and were forced to endure the prejudice and abuse of bigots. They were, and still are, discriminated against in schools and jobs. Now, when the bosses have created mass unemployment for black and white alike, they accuse immigrants of milking the welfare state and being parasites. Then they talk of repatriating black people to their so-called 'home countries' where the same bosses starve them, and keep them in shanty towns with no hope of jobs.

racist institutions

In Europe, hostels, forced segregation and legal bars on political activity are used to keep a 24 hour watch over immigrants. The Tories have just brought in their own version, the 1971 Immigration Act, which gives the state and the police fascist-like powers of arrest, harassment and employment control.

Despite these controls, immigrants in Europe and Britain have managed to organise and, in many places, have led the struggle against the system. They have had to organise independently of existing institutions like the unions (just as racist as the employers) and white-dominated political parties. In Britain, unions like the AEF, TGMU and GMMU have shown they are not interested in black workers, and even encourage white workers (usually the more skilled) to scab.

For instance, the union encouraged such scabbing at a strike of black workers at Courtaulds in Preston. The local Trades Council said 'if they don't like it here, there are plenty of trains, boats and planes to take them back.' A fine example of class solidarity and international brotherhood. Similar things have happened at Qualitex, Birmid Qualicast and Stannore Engineering.

The Labour Party has always supported imperialism and the suppression of colonised peoples. They've always put the needs of maintaining the system first, like when they sent in troops to murder independence fighters in Kenya during the 1945-50 government. During the Wilson government, when they passed the vicious Kenyan Asians Act - supporting the American massacres in Vietnam and sending troops to Ireland to put down the revolt by the oppressed minority. In their own party they discriminate against black people. The Bradford Party refused to let a Pakistani to stand for the local council; the National Executive did nothing.

the appeal of racism

So it is clear that class-conscious militants in the factories, communities and schools have to fight the poison of racism. But that's not easy. Although we know that racialism splits the working class it doesn't give us much help in understanding why many of our mates hold racist illusions. To say it is just ruling class propaganda is to assume that people are stupid enough to be switched on and off to racism when the bosses feel like it.

Racism is not part of human nature. But class societies like ours encourage the type of personality which easily turns to racialism. The dominant class in any society have a view of the world which presents themselves as the natural rulers, superior, better equipped, more intelligent etc. The capitalist class think themselves superior to us; many men think that way of women, many whites that way of blacks.

Some of these oppressed groups end up believing this view of themselves as inferior. So we hear one group of workers blame their problems on another group of 'greedy workers'. Or women accepting a passive role in the home. Or black people trying to copy white standards of behaviour and culture, instead of keeping their own.

This process is now beginning to change with the advent of Black Power ideas, a movement built on self-respect and in confidence in the ability of black people to solve their own problems. Similarly, the Women's Liberation movement attempts to counter existing myths 'The woman's place is in the home' and only there.

easy way out

But, for centuries it has been possible for one oppressed group to think of others as below them, in the same way as their oppressors. In turn, view them. So white workers, called lazy, greedy, insolent, unintelligent by the ruling class, respond by giving black people the same label.

Thus, the real problems of unemployment, boring work, sexual exploitation etc. are explained by the existence of scapegoat figures such as blacks, Jews, Irish etc. After all, it is much easier to blame blacks for the world's problems than it is to understand the real causes and struggle to change them.

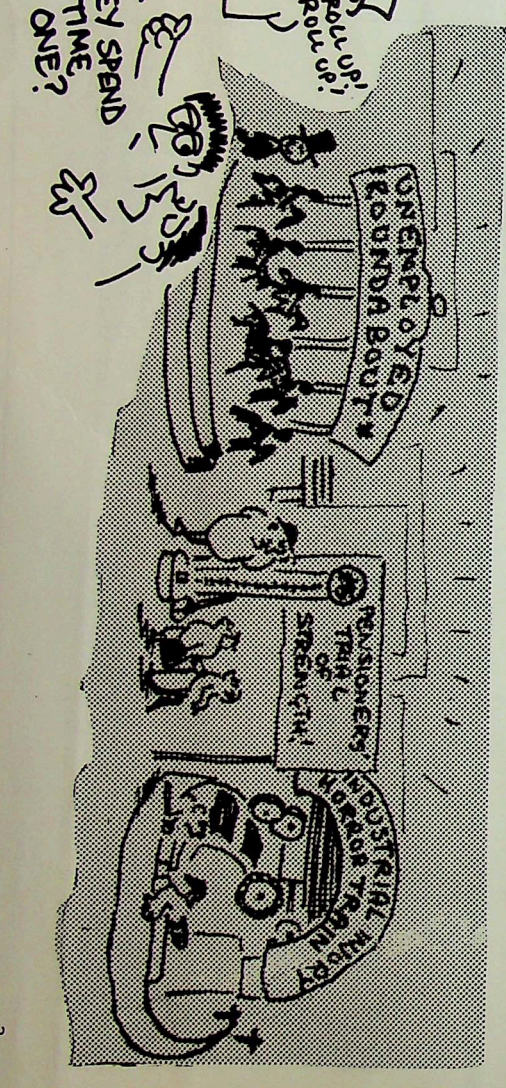
self organisation

Black people now say that only their own self organisation can destroy these myths amongst whites and amongst themselves. While they rely on white people and their organisations, no matter how sympathetic and radical, they remain dependent on them and their own specific oppression as blacks and not just as working class goes untouched. They will link and integrate with other sections of the working class only on a basis of mutual respect and understanding and equality. This understanding does not exist at the moment and can only come when white working class people see and respect the collective strength and power of black people.

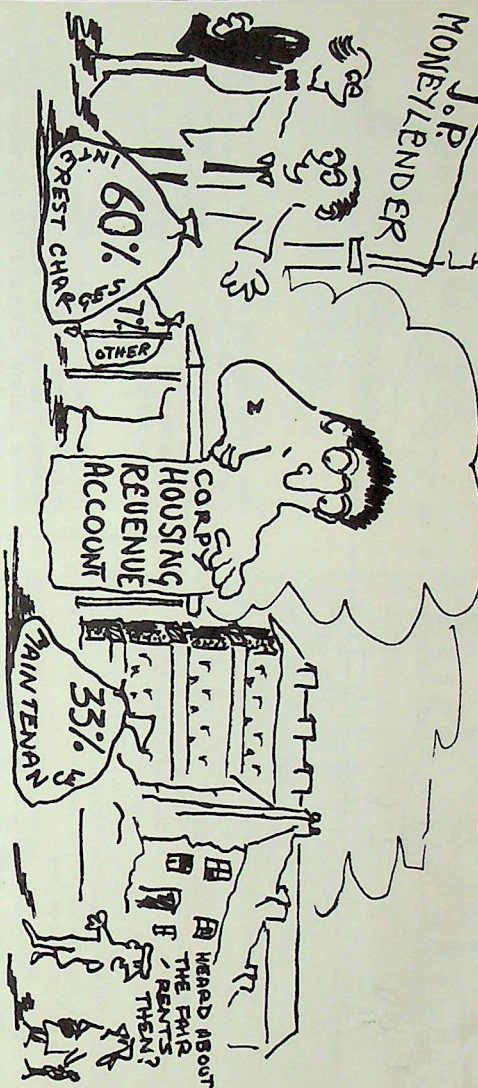
let's support

We have to support such organisations and help defend them from racist attacks whether physical, by the police or fascist thugs, or ideological from Tory trash like Powell.

All of us have the same right to live well; we have to force the bosses and the government to meet our needs, and those needs are the same whether black or white.



rents: where it all goes !!!



THE LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING SYSTEM IN LIVERPOOL, AS IN OTHER CITIES, HAS ALWAYS RUN ON HUGE SUBSIDIES FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND LOANS FROM BIG TIME MONEY LENDERS. Some of these loans have been repayable over periods of up to 60 years.

The situation seems to be one of permanent debt, with the result that a huge proportion of the money we pay in rent has immediately been used to pay interest rates on these loans and debt charges.

In 1969-70 Liverpool's total expenditure from their Housing Revenue account was £17,074,994. Of this, a staggering £11,745,067 comes under the heading of DEBT CHARGES. Over two thirds of the money paid into the Corp's housing account has gone straight into the hands of big financiers.

Most tenants know that they have paid many times over for their houses. IN THIS SITUATION, WHAT IS A FAIR RENT? Some will say, rightly, no rent at all. A home is a right, like a free health service. It should not be a privilege for those with money.

Others may argue that a fair rent is a third of what we pay at the moment, since that is all that is allegedly spent on 'running expenses' - i.e. put back into housing maintenance etc.

But the Corporation's Works Department is so inefficiently run that it is a lucky tenant whose housing repairs are carried out in any thing near the promised time. Some tenants have lived so long with faulty fittings or damaged premises that they just laugh when they hear about housing maintenance - particularly in the inner city areas.

NOW THE GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES TO LIVERPOOL WILL BE WITHDRAWN OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS. And who makes up the money? The tenants, of course. That is why the rents are going up.

Tenants in inner city areas have for a long time been subsidising new buildings in outer areas with their rents. Now they must help to make up the huge gaps left by the withdrawal of Government subsidies.

The Labour Party were the architects of the 'Fair Rents' system which they began to develop while in power, just as their 'in place of Strife' routine was the test run for the Industrial Relations Act.

To imagine that they could resist the Housing Finance Act with its 'Fair Rents' was an illusion which has now been shattered. In Liverpool, where fine promises to resist the rent rises won local elections... now a pathetic note comes through the door with the increase saying "We will try to persuade the Government to keep the rent rises as low as possible."

That is another lie, since Local Authority housing must now become profitable and able to 'stand on its own two feet'. That is what the 'rationalisation' of local housing means. That is why tenants all over the country are taking action NOW.

Are traditional Tenants' Associations adequate?

Perhaps not surprisingly, it has been the traditional style Tenants Associations who have really failed to respond to the needs of the situation. They have proved themselves inadequate to fight a planned government attack on the mass of the tenants.

To fight a determined Tory Government, more than just a dedicated tenants' committee is needed - all the tenants must be involved in the struggle at every stage. Action groups need to be formed in every street, in every area and estate through out Merseyside. Mass pickets need to be organised at the Rent Offices, and anti- eviction squads need to be formed so that people feel safe and confident against eviction. WE MUST NOT ALLOW EVEN ONE FAMILY TO BE EVICTED. At the first sight of bailiffs the signal must be raised, perhaps by the banging of bin lids, and all the people come out of their homes to chase the bailiffs. In Glasgow, the bailiffs used to have their trousers torn off before being driven out, to the amusement of all!

ON THE FRONT PAGE WE DESCRIBED SOME OF THE THINGS THAT WERE HAPPENING ON MERSEYSIDE IN OPPOSITION TO THE RENT RISES....

ROUND THE COUNTRY

IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY TOO, TENANTS ARE PREPARING TO FIGHT. In MANCHESTER, the Hattersley Estate tenants have already said that they won't pay any increases, and many other estates are likely to declare likewise soon. In BOLTON on some estates the tenants have publically burnt their rent rebate forms in disgust. In PRESTON when rents were increased in March of this year, tenants withheld the increase and picketed the rent offices. Estate committees were set up to spread information.

In GREENWICH some tenants have already begun their own rent strike, regardless of the Council's decision about implementation. In SOUTH YORKSHIRE a large scale rent strike will begin on October 1st. The Athersley Estate tenants Association is prepared to set up a No-Go area to protect rent strikers from evictions.

In CHELTENHAM tenants have been on rent strike since April and the Tory Council are not putting on the next rise. And in many parts of the other large cities, like Glasgow Edinburgh, Sheffield and Birmingham and London, tenants are organising rent strikes and non payment of increase.

ARRESTS AT SOCIAL SECURITY

4 PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED AT LINACRE HOUSE SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE IN BOOTLE LAST WEEK WHILE TRYING TO CLAIM. A building worker on strike and his wife asked to see their assessment form (A124A) after it was clear that what they were being paid was well below what they were entitled to.

RIDICULOUS ARREST Legally represented by members of the Claimants Union and Big Flame, they said that they would not leave until their request was met. The Supervisor called the police who proceeded to throw out everyone concerned, arresting the man, his wife and a member of the Bottle Claimants' Union. Outside, another Claimants Union member was arrested for asking the policewoman to let the woman's little girl get into the police van with her mother.

The charges of obstruction and assault are a fantastic example of how the police can become a law unto themselves, and can do no wrong as long as they help keep down working class people in this way. Just as they do on the picket lines.

JUST GOOD FRIENDS The police supported the supervisor's action without question by totally denying the peoples' right to claim and see their assessment forms. Two parts of the state machine thus proved once again that, whenever working class people try to get enough to live on, not only the boss but the police and the social security officials are working to keep them down and deny them what they need.

IT ALL FITS TOGETHER It is significant that Sir Keith Joseph, Minister in charge of Health and Social Security is also on the board of BOVIS, the building firm which is currently underpaying men to build the Marks and Spencers extension by Williamson Square CLAIM TOGETHER!

This incident was the last episode in an attempt by Bottle strikers to claim money in a group at the S.S. that day. An attempt that was partially frustrated by the union Action Committee chairman going to see the manager with only one other instead of working with the entire group who went to claim.

DELEGATION AND INDIVIDUAL ACTION WILL ALWAYS FAIL. ONLY BY CLAIMING AS A GROUP IN EVERY SITUATION WILL WE GET WHAT WE NEED.

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BIRKENHEAD TENANTS ORGANISE

TENANTS FROM BIRKENHEAD'S THREE LARGEST COUNCIL HOUSING ESTATES ARE ORGANISING TOGETHER TO BOYCOTT RENT INCREASES. A committee has been set up to coordinate this.

The decision to implement the Fair Rents, which will mean increases of 90p for 14,000 households, was taken at a SPECIAL CLOSED MEETING of the town's Housing Committee during the summer holiday. So, when tenants and pickets came to the committee meeting before October 1st, when they thought the decision would be taken, they found that the issue had already been settled. They were dismayed at the decision, for the Labour Party had promised not to implement the Bill. The Labour scabs worked out of that one by saying that the Bill was not an Act.

FRAUD CONTRACT

fords -

the fight for the contract

THIS WEEK, CONVENORS AND FULL TIME OFFICIALS REPRESENTING 50,000 FORD WORKERS MET TO AGREE ON THE DEMANDS THEY WILL BE PUTTING TO THE COMPANY DURING THIS WINTER'S NEGOTIATIONS. BUT WHEN THE PRESENT TWO YEAR CONTRACT RUNS OUT IN FEBRUARY 73 IT DOESN'T LOOK AS IF IT WILL BE REPLACED WITH ANYTHING BETTER.

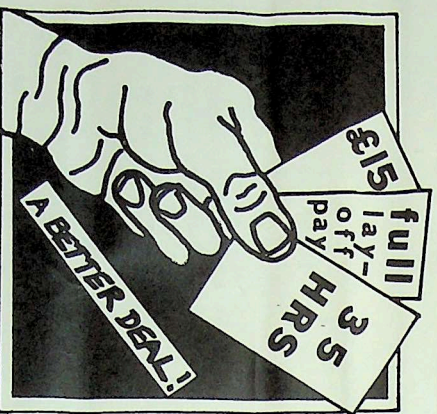
THE NATIONAL OFFICIALS DEMANDS ARE FAR TOO VAGUE

What does a 'shorter' working week, or a 'substantial' pay rise or an 'improved' pensions scheme mean? Nothing - except letting the negotiator off the hook. The only good sign is that the convenors have said they don't want another two year contract. Just as well. This one has been a disaster for the workers. Fords have easily made up the losses of the 71 ten week strike through speed ups and higher car prices.

ON THE OTHER HAND, INFLATION HAS MADE MINCE MEAT of the last pay deal. Speed ups have made Fords Infamous: line speeds even tougher and there have been creeping redundancies, especially in the Halewood Transmission plant.



WORST OF ALL AT HALEWOOD, SHOP FLOOR ORGANISATION HAS BEEN HARDLY HIT. The convenors may have resisted the contract in the first place, but in the last two years have helped the Company keep the peace. When Fords sacked two militants from the well organised trim lines in July, stewards went around preventing other workers striking in solidarity. The convenors accepted the secret deal in July '71 to take way John Dillon's steward's credentials for good.



NOW THE WORD IS GETTING AROUND HALEWOOD THAT if you want to get something done you've got to do it for yourself with your mates. In July men on the wet deck asked for an extra man to make up for higher line speeds. They refused the convenor's offer to negotiate - they said they wanted to win this one. And, in fact, they did win it, ending up with two extra men.

HARDLY A DAY GOES BY WITHOUT A STRIKE SOMEWHERE on the estate. But there are few really strong sections and almost no links between them. Workers know that when they get that strong they have to take on the company and the convenors. That's what happened on the trim line which got too big for its boots.

SO, IT LOOKS AS IF FORD WORKERS HAVE A HARD FIGHT

the dockers struggle 1972
BIG FLAME PAMPHLET 2p

ahead to win a worthwhile pay rise, full lay off pay and a 35 hour week. There's no doubt, that the negotiators want the rank and file to keep clear while they talk to Ramsey. And it will be surprising if Ford workers don't find themselves in the same position as the builders next February - landed by the officials with a deal worth nothing

OBVIOUSLY, THERE'S AN INCREASING NEED FOR A national rank and file organisation, independent of officials and convenors, which can give a lead when the negotiators go soft. A start has been made this week with the distribution of an open letter to Ford workers on the next contract. The leaflet, produced by Big Flame and a group of Ford workers, will be read in Dagenham, Learnington, Swanssea and Halewood. Meanwhile in Halewood, workers will have to press for regular, frequent section meetings to make sure they're kept in the picture all the time.

35hrs -

fords and the car industry

The dockers have already won it, building workers are fighting for it - the 35 hour week is a real step forward for all workers. The unions have never won it - only workers can by their own efforts and organisation. It's a gain Fords can't snatch back through inflation. It means more time for us, less time for them. Fords aren't going to give it away. In a two shift factory it means the bosses lose ten hours of machine use per man per week, or they have to pay out more in overtime penulms. But if Ford workers win it, the demand can't fall to be taken up in British Leyland and Vauxhall where they'll be fighting for new contracts after the Ford workers.

factory environment

EIGHT HOURS IN A FACTORY IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST HEALTH RISKS, WHATEVER IS DONE ABOUT POLLUTION IN THE CITIES AND IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. We're compiling a dossier on the ways Henry Ford and other employers pollute the health of their workers. Please send us in your story.

Meanwhile, here's one example of health pollution from the Press Shop at Halewood. The effects on workers' hearing of the gigantic presses we'll leave for another time.

The Gripflow is a simple electric truck used for stacking pallets. But such is the shortage of them that men have got used to strapping the pallets on to the engine, which the worker strained his back doing this the company refused any compensation. Fords claim they ordered more Gripflows in April. They still haven't arrived and men go on moving the pallets themselves with no chance of compensation if they get hurt.



One phase of the dockers struggle is over. It has been one of the most important ones not only for the dockers them-



CLASHES AT FORDS

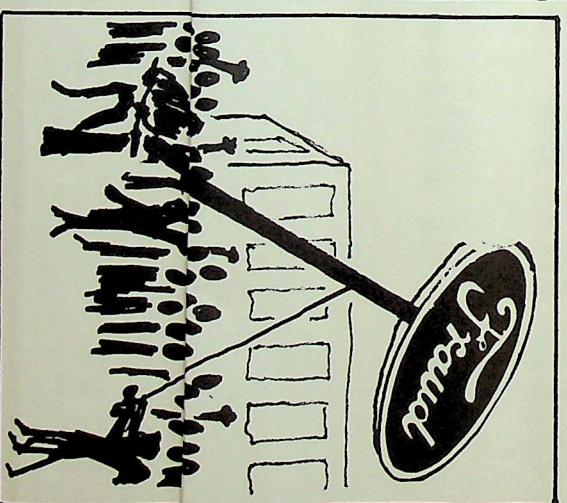
OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS there have been disputes in different parts of Halewood nearly every day. For example:

- ★ In the week before Fords workers went on holiday, management tried to rearrange work schedules on the wet deck (where cars are washed down before being painted) This would have meant more work for the men. So they went on strike for a night, forcing management to back down.
- ★ When the cars on the trim line started jerking about dangerously because the line was poorly lubricated, the workers went out twice on different days. This caused 2,000 people to be laid off in the PTA and Body. And the management had the line made safe.

IT'S WORTH WORKING ON THESE ONES!
FULL LAY-OFF PAY

- ★ In another part of the factory, where the cars are painted, the men went out for half a day over excessive noise there. Again PTA and Body were laid off, and got lay off pay - a right the company is usually too tight to concede. The company tried to do something about the noise, but it's still bad.

- ★ The men in the transmission plant had a token strike for a day against the threat of work being transferred to Europe.



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selves, but for the whole working class movement, which has shown a high degree of unity and solidarity. The Government, the bosses, the institutions of the Capitalist state were all shaken by this wave of militancy. As one shop steward said at the last mass meeting in Liverpool before the return to work, the struggle will continue. But we must be clear about the fact that this phase has ended with a partial defeat for the dockers. We think then that it is very important now to reflect about it, to try to learn the lessons that have to be learnt, to draw some conclusions, so that the same mistakes won't be made again.

SUCCESS: Rank & File Builders at Work!

WHATEVER THE FINAL SETTLEMENT REACHED IN THE BUILDING WORKERS STRIKE, ONE THING IS ALREADY CLEAR. THE STRIKE, THE FIRST NATIONAL STOPPAGE IN THE INDUSTRY SINCE 1926, IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE FIGHT AGAINST LOW WAGES, LONG HOURS AND HIGH RISKS ON THE SITES.

WHEN IT'S ALL OVER, MEN WILL STILL BE ON THE LUMP, militants still blacklisted and the industry will continue to have one of the highest accident rates of any trade. Furthermore, as the strike has progressed it's become obvious it's not enough to organise against the bosses alone.

THE STRIKE - SUPPOSEDLY A NATIONAL ACTION - HAS often seemed like a national stoppage in name only. The unions have proved incredibly reluctant to call a national stoppage. Behind our backs they've sanctioned secret deals with individual companies. And given half a chance, they'd have caved in long ago. (In fact, some of them nearly did.)

ONE OF THE AREAS WHERE MEN HAVE BEEN CAMPAIGNING for sometime against both the bosses and the union bureaucrats has been Birmingham, which has become a centre of organised and militant struggle by building workers. The battles they have started will have to be fought elsewhere too.

NEARLY 12 MONTHS' AGO BIRMINGHAM BUILDING workers held a mass demonstration in the city centre to protest against lump labour. Four months' later, in February of this year, they held a second 'kill the lump' demonstration.

This time it was outside the offices of a Birmingham builder and property speculator, Bryants. Bryants backed down and threw lumpers off all their Birmingham sites. Between the demonstrations two important things happened -

- militants on the dozen or so Bryants sites throughout the area formed a rank and file combine committee to fight the lump. For the first time there was a fully organised attempt to smash it.
- In fighting the lump, men also learnt how to fight the bosses blacklist.

LOSE NOW - PROFIT - LATER!

AT BRITISH-LEYLAND

All the signs are that after the Autumn holiday the real effects of MDV in Standards will be seen. This is when the re-timings come into effect. At the same time many men will be coming off shift work onto permanent days and others will be moved around the factory.

Obviously, these major changes give management the chance to re-time jobs to their advantage and raise line speeds. While this is going on any talk of status quo will be meaningless because, for example, men on new jobs will not know what the old conditions were like. All past agreements will become irrelevant because of the new manning levels.

This is the beginning of Leyland's plan to win back control from its workers over wages and conditions. For a long time to come, Standards profits will be small, but the management are prepared for this. They are ready to forego short term gains to smash the position of strength workers have built up over several decades using piecework bargaining.

British Leyland is not looking to the next one or two years, but to five or ten years' time when, with MDV firmly established in every plant, they will be able to control wage levels as effectively as Fords and Vauxhall. They could then be one of the most powerful car firms in the Common Market.

THE BLACKLIST

THE BLACKLIST HAS BEEN THE BUILDING EMPLOYERS' traditional response to militants. They've always used it to intimidate and isolate men. In Birmingham this is changing. On several occasions contractors have been forced to take on marked militants. On one site the men decided to employ a blacklisted man themselves. Within a week he had called a site meeting and was elected steward. This was too much for the company who took out a court injunction to prevent him from entering the site. During the court hearing over 600 building workers picketed the court. A month later the man was back on the site.

NEW TACTICS

ON A SECOND OCCASION MEN HOISTED EIGHT RED FLAGS over a site after the contractor had attempted to get rid of a steward. And when the company called in security guards to throw the men off, three workmates occupied three cranes on a site in the city centre. The men stayed up the cranes for 3 1/2 days and for a week work on the site was interrupted. They lost this fight, but actions like this have meant that this site - once backward - is now one of the most militant in the area.

THE UNIONS

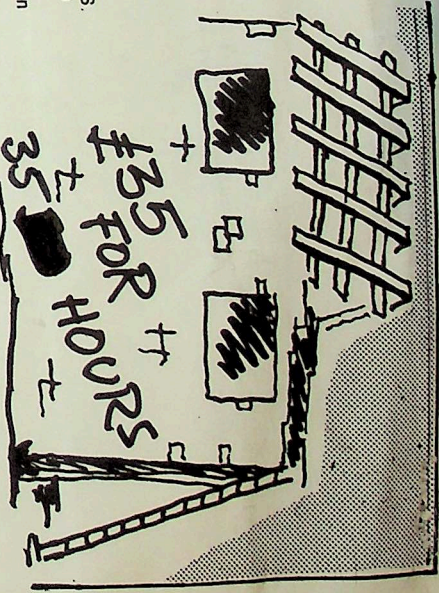
THE RANK AND FILE COMMITTEE TO FIGHT THE LUMP had a second advantage. It has meant that the men have been able to put pressure and on some occasions over run the local union bureaucracy. Pressure from the rank and file forced the UCATT regional secretary to call an all out stoppage when the union nationally was still supporting selective strikes. It was also rank and file pressure which forced the union to take seriously the business of claiming from the Social Security. Little things show the change in the relationship between the local union leaders and the men. Six months' ago the men had to ask permission to go into the local UCATT offices and they were very seldom allowed to use the duplicator. Now they have the run of the offices and use the duplicator when they want.

Because the company are ready to lose money now, workers in the individual companies may be placed in a very weak position unless there is a strong combine-wide organisation. British Leyland could go on picking off company after company until MDV had totally replaced piecework.

Management's determination to smash piecework has meant for them fairly expensive pay settlements for the sake of the long term, as at Standards. Or, long damaging strikes like the recent one at Jaguars.

Here British Leyland lost millions of pounds and delayed the introduction of a new prestige model in their determination not to concede a straight piecework deal. Despite the strength of the Jaguar workers, who stayed out for 12 weeks even when the unions were trying to get them back, the MDV ball has been set rolling.

Can anything be done against? The Standards contract is due for renewal in the Spring. That could be the opportunity for putting forward a strategy that could spread to the rest of the combine and maybe provide the basis for a national rank and file organisation.



LOCAL ACTION

RANK AND FILE ORGANISATION IN BIRMINGHAM IS STILL far from perfect. The strike committee - open to all building workers in the area - failed to put out leaflets or broadsheets during the strike. In recent weeks it has grown increasingly distant from many of the men it represents. But the organisational basis is there.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE PRESENT STRIKE IF IT OFFERS offers a sufficiently high wage deal may go some way to lancing the lump. But such a system, which offers so many many advantages to the employers, won't lie down easily. It will still need to be fought. And the fight against the lump is only the first step in the struggle of the building workers against their bosses.

MERSEYSIDE

ON MERSEYSIDE, AS WE GO TO PRESS, BUILDING WORKERS ARE PREPARING FOR THEIR SECOND MASS MEETING IN TWO WEEKS. At the last one, union officials talked emphatically about the need for £30 for 35 hours.

In the general speeches, the great importance of a breakthrough on reduction of hours was stressed. But, when Clifton, UCATT regional organiser, described the 80 or so company agreements made already, it was obvious that 35 hours was not in them. Cries of 'What about the 35?' were ignored.

IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW THE UNION officials justify this double face at the next meeting, particularly as Merseyside has been all out, with picketing sewn up throughout the North West.

The campaign for a 35 hour week would be a good starting point. As MDV begins to bite it becomes more and more obvious that pay increases can be whittled away by inflation, and work conditions and line speeds, can always be changed to suit the management in a thousand ways. But a 35 hour week, once conceded is very difficult to snatch back.

For Standards workers, a lot will depend on how the builders and the Ford workers will make out in the next few months with their demands for 35 hours. If they're successful, the present limited support at Speke could grow to such a size that the demand for 35 hours would have to be put forward by the convenors.

WOMENS LIBERATION

- 2, Rutland Avenue, Liverpool 17.
- Free Confidential Pregnancy Meeting, Every Saturday 10 a.m. till 12 noon.
- Newcomer's Meetings Every Tuesday 8 p.m.
- Mid Side Pregnancy Advisory Service 5th Floor, Haxley Buildings, Old Hall St., Liverpool.
- Mon. - Fri. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- For advice & help on abortion
- Free confidential pregnancy testing.

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BIG BLAME

Merseyside
socialist
newspaper

no.4 October 72 4p

WHO PAYS FOR THE CRISIS? No to any Tory - TUC deal

*On the 25th the Tories the CBI and the TUC will meet again at Chequers to agree on a set of proposals to tackle inflation. This 'inflation package' is the biggest con-trick this century. The union leaders with few exceptions, are arguing only about the details, they agree on the basis of the Tory plan - that the working class action to consolidate and improve any gains they've made in wage struggles since the war must be stopped at all costs.

docks strike

*All three 'sides' at the talks agree that they must work together to get 'Britain moving again'. Joint management of the economy with the Tories and the bosses, this is what the TUC wants. This can only mean one thing - more smashing of the activity of their own rank and file like we saw during the docks, building and railway strikes.

expanding profits

The attitude of the TUC, and their parliamentary allies, the Labour Party was best expressed in Labour's 'Programme for Britain', revealed at their conference,

'Labour believes there is scope in an expanding economy for rising money wages, and that rising money wages and profits can co-exist. But stagnation and low productivity are not the problems for the employers. It's simply that the interest of the working class and the employers just don't go together. Any gain for the working class is a loss for the bosses. This has thrown the system into crisis in a period when British capitalism must compete internationally or go under. Expansion! In this sense refers only to profits, prices and rents, not our wages!

We won't suffer

*The TUC and the Labour Party can't answer the question that if high profits and high wages are compatible, why are we witnessing the biggest attack on working class gains for decades? An attack that's coming not just in industry with unemployment, speed-ups and MDW, but in the communities and every aspect of working class life, with the Fair Rents Act, Immigration Bill, and social service and education cuts.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer says that the question is 'prosperity or suicide'. We say that prosperity for them equals suicide for us. And we answer with a question of our own: WHO PAYS FOR THE CRISIS? - THE BOSSES OR THE WORKING CLASS? As resistance to the Industrial Relations and Fair Rents Act grows, working people are giving a clear answer. If the system's in crisis we're not going to be the ones to suffer..

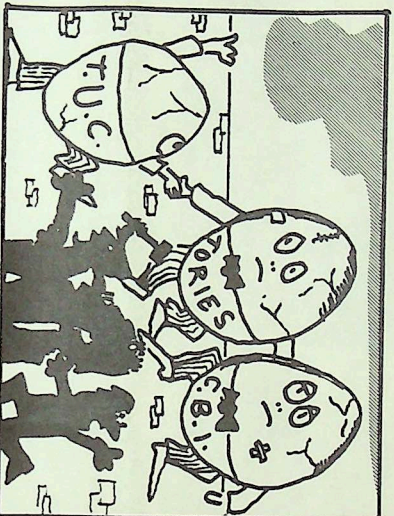
*Let's look at the package the Tories are offering, because it's a pretty good laugh....

MYTH It will help the lower paid, the unemployed and the pensioners.

REALITY Every pound not won in wage rises will go straight into the bosses' pockets. The Tories have never done a thing for any of these people. They've created more unemployment, let pensioners fall even further behind the cost of living and blocked any attempts by the low paid to win what they deserve. Welfare organisations have already estimated that the proposed £2 rise will not benefit the low paid in any way. Because anything they win in wages will be taken off them in benefits.

Prices will be controlled.

MYTH The 5% limit on prices only covers manufacturing prices, not those in the shops. The employers and shopkeepers will find ways of getting round any so-called limitations. How effective the price controls will be can be seen by the effect of the 'voluntary restraint' by the CBI of 5% on prices that's been going on for a year. The effect was nothing, in fact runaway price rises! Or how about the housing minister, Mr Amey's answer that he would do nothing to stop land speculation and housing profiteering.



MYTH

A threshold agreement will cover unexpected increases in living costs (threshold agreements state that for every percentage rise in prices - measured by the cost of living index - there will be a wage increase of a certain amount provided the price rise is over a minimum threshold of so many per cent, for example over 5% rise in prices, there will be a wage rise).

spitting

*Heath's package is a clear attempt to split the working class, setting each section at each other's throats. Especially the lower paid and pensioners against the paid and organised workers. The Tories have started a massive propaganda and action campaign to convince people that only if working class demands are stopped can prosperity for everyone be reached.

guaranteed income

*While the Labour Party and the TUC haggle over the details of our exploitation, we have to take further the self-organisation that's been built up in recent strikes over wages and rents in the factories and communities. With this strength we can base our politics on an understanding, that if the working class is going to advance it's going to have to separate its own needs from the development of the system.

*We have to say that everyone has a right to a guaranteed income, in work or out. Only this way can class unity be achieved through common action to fight for what we need.

LET THE BOSSES PAY FOR THEIR OWN CRISIS. WE WANT TO LIVE WELL, HOW WE CHOOSE. NOT CONTINUALLY SUFFER BECAUSE THEIR SYSTEM CAN'T PROVIDE FOR OUR NEEDS.

On June 23 workers at Manesty Machines in Earsay Rd Stoke came out on strike in support of a pay claim. Soon afterwards the strike was integrated into the National Engineering Dispute for higher wages, shorter working week and longer holidays. The management at Manesty have refused to settle over these demands. They have been prepared only to offer a laughable £2 increase. The workers continue to reject this offer.

Meanwhile, the management have increased their pressure on the workers. They are now saying that a settlement will be conditional upon the workers accepting a 'group system' of payment (Measured Day Work) to replace the present piecework system. The workers at Manesty are aware of the dangers of accepting any immediate large gain in pay which goes with this type of MDW deal. They realise that the management only want to do away with piece work because the workforce has now to use the system

strike to sit-in at manesty

to gain an element of control over their working conditions and pay. The introduction of an MDW type system will take this degree of control away from the workers and give it back to the bosses, unless very stringent guarantees can be built into the agreement. With this in mind the workers are prepared to accept a trial period under the new system only if they can reserve their right to refuse when the trial period is over. The management have threatened to close the plant unless the 'group system' is accepted.

In response to this increased management pressure the workers skillfully arranged a mass meeting in the works canteen, and after nearly four months out of the gate, the workers occupied their factory and asked the management to leave. Promises of support have come so far from other plants in the Reynolds Group, from the miners, the dockers and Ford workers.

RENT FIGHT! Halewood Tenants Join The Strike!

HALEWOOD TENANTS PARTIAL RENT STRIKE CONTINUES TO DEVELOP AFTER A FOURTH PUBLIC MEETING. There tenants from Leathers Lane and New Huttle estates have made detailed arrangements for picketing the local rent office and rent collectors. Funds have been raised and a weekly news leaflet is being distributed. More and more addresses are being added to the list of the Halewood Tenants Action Group

It is estimated that 60% of tenants are now refusing to pay the increase, like in nearby Markets Lane, following daily pickets by local people on the rent office.

The Tenants Action Group became active following a mass meeting called by Big Flame at which 150 people were present. A 'wall newspaper' on a boarded up shop in the shopping precinct has been the means to keep people regularly informed about the progress of the strike on the estate and all over Merseyside.

Social Security problems have been raised and we are trying to find the best ways of preventing the S.S. strike breakers from doing their dirty work. Tenants on Social Security are supporting the strike in every way, since this is their problem too.

Now tenants are attempting to get more involvement on their streets and blocks by door to door visits and collections. AS ONE HALEWOOD TENANT SAID "EVEN IF WE DON'T WIN THIS TIME, WE HAVE MADE A START IN HALEWOOD. WE HAVE BEEN HELD DOWN TOO LONG. WE CAN START TO DO SOMETHING TOGETHER ABOUT SOME OF THE OTHER PROBLEMS ON THE ESTATE NOW."



STOP PRESS!

800 BIRKENHEAD TENANTS MET IN B'HEAD PARK ON SUNDAY ABOUT THE RENTS. Time was wasted by Labour and Communist Party attempts to use the platform to make electoral speeches, instead of getting on with the business in hand.

But there were calls for industrial support and help in picketing the rent office despite allegations by the Birkenhead News, the majority of tenants are withholding the increase. A further demonstration is planned.

FASCISM

MINERS, DOCKERS, BUILDERS, POSTMEN, RAILWAYMEN STUDENTS AND now council tenants. It seems sometimes that the whole population is ready to take on the ruling class. We sometimes forget that millions of people like the lower middle classes and workers with little experience of struggle, are unable to participate in the fight to control their own lives.

Many of these people resent both the power and solidarity of organised workers and tenants but also the absolute control exercised by the big businessmen. They will ally themselves with one or other of the two classes according to the relative strengths of the workers and the bosses.

The small businessman who finds himself unable to compete with the big companies, or the white-collar worker who sees his salary being overtaken by the hard-won wage rises on the shop-floor may well tend towards the realms of fantasy to explain his predicament. So we hear him blaming racial minorities strikers or 'outsider agitators' for the crisis in the capitalist system. Mary Whitehouse and Lord Longford blame a decline in morals and a 'flood of pornography' and yearn for the good old days of stern Victorian morality. The Festival of Light and the recent 40,000 strong anti-abortion march through Liverpool, were expressions of feeling from the frightened puritanical middle classes.

Mary Whitehouse or Malcolm Muggeridge are not fascists (they are too respect able for that) but their ideas and fantasies form much of the basis of fascist ideas. The Second World War did not destroy fascism because it did not put an end to class-divided societies, and especially the middle section of society where fascism originates.

Why is this subject being brought up now in 1972? Because as the class struggle develops in this country there will be increasing polarisation towards the Right and Left. Many people will turn to fascist and semi-fascist organisations if there is no strong working-class alternative to the present system. This does not just mean developing alternative political groups. It means also uniting in everyday struggle with all sections of society with the potential to fight the ruling class and not dismissing as useless and non-militant, others just because they are women, white-collar workers or unemployed.

The arrival of the Ugandan Asians has given a chance to the extreme Right in Britain (notably the National Front and Colin Jordan's British Movement) to concentrate propaganda around imagined 'enemies of the nation' (black people) like Hitler did with the Jews. But the danger of the National Front lies not only in its efforts to divert workers' anger away from the real causes of bad housing and unemployment. They obscure the fact that these social evils have always been, and always will, be a part of this social system, regardless of whether there are black people living here.

Fascists are themselves violently anti-working class and this attitude stems from the middle class origins of the movement. In Germany, in the 1930's the Nazis physically liquidated all working-organisations: trades unions, political parties, tenant's groups - even workmen's clubs and sport teams. Modern historians forget to mention that thousands of workers went to the concentration camps before the Jews. Fascists try to physically suppress any sign of the class struggles that inevitably exist in our unequal society. They say that the interests of the 'Nation and State' ought to be highest and God help anybody who takes a stand for the rights of the working class.

Ugandan asians : PLAYTHINGS FOR POWELL AND SCAPEGOATS FOR AMIN

At Blackpool recently, the Tories held their annual get-together. We've seen them split into two camps - Heath, Carr Barber and company setting themselves up as the voices of moderation, and Powell and his Monday Club friends baying for a return to the old Toryism.

And the issue they chose to do battle over? Unemployment? The rising cost of living? No. Immigration. Their arguments centred on whether the government should "honour their obligations" to the Ugandan Asians. Or so they would have us believe.

But this hides what was really going on. In the eyes of the Powellites, Heath and his friends have missed a golden opportunity to lay the blame for all the problems of the working class on the immigration issue.

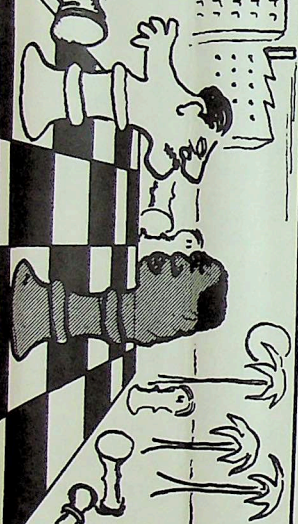
In the same way Amin's victimisation of the Ugandan Asians is a last-ditch attempt to divert attention from his own regime's failure to solve Uganda's disparate economic problems.

The press and successive Labour and Tory governments have claimed that British

interference in the affairs of its former African colonies has stopped since they became independent.

PRESS LIES AND DISTORTIONS

This is a lie. Uganda was not given independence until the British government had chosen a man to rule in their interests. That man was Obote, who ruled as President until January 1971.



For many years the plan worked. Obote protected British interests in two ways. He allowed British and other foreign firms to continue business as usual - that is by making more profit than usual. And he remained neutral in the developing struggle between the white rulers of South Africa, backed by Britain, and the black liberation movements. But towards the end of the 60's Obote found himself unable to maintain these

Of course, these are the aspects of fascism that have made it attractive to the bosses. Our present rulers are too 'respectable' to support the National Front at the moment but recent history shows that in times of crisis, European ruling classes have helped fascists to power when it appeared that the working class was growing stronger. The German experience of the 1930's springs to mind.

In Italy today, the head of Fiat, Agnelli, pays money to the neo-Fascists, the M.S.I., holding them in reserve for times of crisis and using them to break strikes and attack pickets in his factories.

The extreme Right in Britain is much weaker than it is in Italy. It is not numerically strong and is divided on a whole range of issues including whether they want 'Fuerner' Colin Jordan or 'Fuerner' Martin Webster as leader. They are a mixture of blatant fascists, cranks who like wearing Nazi uniforms, crusty old colonials yearning for the lost Empire and Mary Whitehouse-type puritans.

The real fascists among them want an all-powerful state that incorporates within it the various class interests and their 'representatives', the trades unions and the employers' federations. They want to guide the economy, 'in the national interest', using the police state to deny the right of the working class to organise and act outside of the wishes of the fascist, corporate state.

But others have hang-ups about preserving the monarchy, about appearing 'respectable' for the middle class. Some want Powell to detach himself from the Tories, to be their leader. Others argue - correctly - that Powell, with his utopian vision of a return to free trade and real competitive capitalism, has little to do with an economy strictly controlled by a fascist state.

Despite these divisions, they know they could be successful on

some issues. Racism, nationalism and a belief in the 'national interest' are so widespread that the National Front can mobilise several hundred people to march about immigration, for example. (See the article on page 3 about the recent Blackburn demonstration)

How should the fascist problem be dealt with? Fascism is weak in Britain at the moment and it must stay that way. So far the National Front has no real presence in the working class. Even their allies in TRU-AIM (Trade Unionists Against Immigration) are a trade union organisation in name only. But fascism grows alongside working class militancy, to counter it. But the reply to right wing criticism of militancy is not to apologise for it but to increase it and show that it contains an alternative to the present society.

In Italy, Fascism is strong again precisely because workers now threaten the existence of the State and fight for alternatives to capitalism. Before this stage is reached here and before the employers begin to employ fascist goon squads in the factories, as FIAT does, we must be prepared to confront them in the streets every time they march, to give them no room to spread their ideas or win support among workers.

It would be a mistake to see them as just a more extreme version of the Tory Party - the Conservatives want to cripple and hinder workers organisations, while the fascists would try to smash the working class, ending its ability to defend itself completely.

policies. Independence had led the Ugandan people to expect a better standard of living. But Obote's rule had failed to provide it. It was then that Obote changed course.

He made overtures to neighbouring Tanzania. He announced plans to nationalise many of the country's businesses - the majority still in British hands. Perhaps even more of a blow for Whitehall was his support for Tanzania's policy of aiding the Southern African freedom fighters, and his opposition to the selling of arms to South Africa.

AMIN TO POWER

All this was too much for the British government, who backed Amin's takeover last year. Obote found no support in Uganda because his change of heart had come too late. And Amin was welcomed as the country's saviour from economic disaster and increasing tribal rivalries for over a year. Amin, the blue-eyed boy of the British government, attempted to rule Uganda as before. But as with Obote, his support rapidly faded as he failed to cure the country's ills.

A solution had to be found. Obote's policy of nationalisation and mildly "socialist" reforms were rejected. The only alternative was to lay the blame for Uganda's problems on the Asians,

"We'll Go On Fighting Because We Have To"

KIRKBY WOMEN SPEAK...

Below we reprint an interview with two young married women, both with kids, in Tower Hill, Kirkby. We've called them Mary and Connie - not their real names. They are active in the tenants' fight against the 'unfair' Rents Act, and helped to organize and participated in the picket at 'Birdseye' (for full report, see back page). Two women from Big Flame, Di and Kathy, went to talk to them.....

KATHY.. Many women from Tower Hill, including ourselves, played a leading role in the successful picket at the local Birdseye factory. Also, in the fight against the Fair Rents, many women are becoming politically active for the first time. Do you think that this is having an over all effect on the way women see themselves?

CONNIE. I was saying to Pat (who was on the Birdseye picket) that what we did last Wednesday at Birdseye shows that you'll never be able to open a paper without reading between the lines. You'll never be able to watch television and say that everything's fine and the garden's green. Because now you'll have got a taste and a sense, and you'll never see the environment or anything like you have seen it before. I think that's all it takes. That was the first time Pat had ever been involved in anything like this. There was a lot of them like that. We had to have a go at Pat, because her man didn't want her to get involved, but she's quite militant now.

MARY. In India the cow's more sacred than the woman. We're no different in this country. A woman's supposed to be stuck in her back kitchen all her life, with a ball and chain on her ankle. And she daren't step out that door and speak her own opinions. She's just not allowed her own opinion, and that's the fallacy that most men have. They don't bother to talk to their wives, they don't discuss anything that's outside.

CONNIE. That's why I'd like to try and get some kind of women's group started up here. I mentioned Women's Lib and got shouted at, even by those women who felt we needed somewhere to go and someone to talk to. But we'll just have to get women together to talk on an informal basis.

MARY. There are some women who won't approach the men because they know they'll just turn round and say, "what do you know about it? You're awful easy influenced. Who have you been talking to?" They don't give you credit for your own intelligence. So I say, "I do think sometimes you know, I'm not a vegetable." Sometimes I hear take a brainstorm with thinking.

If a woman stands up and starts talking about women and what we should be doing then you're a part of 'women's lib'. If you start talking about politics and you don't agree with this government, you're a 'communist' then. But people have got to start talking about these things.



CONNIE. I've been talking to a woman called Joan, who's about 40. She said that if people who're going on the rent strike just spend their rent, she's not strike to help them when they get evicted. But I said to her: "I'm going to spend my rent, Joan, and you know where it'll go. I'm going round to the shop to buy all the food I've not been able to buy over the last six months for my kids. I said I could go out and pay off my gas and leccy, or I could buy the kids new shoes. I can't buy the best of but

ter, or a good piece of beef. I've done my shopping in half an hour, because I'm terrified of getting to the till and not being able to pay for it. So I get the same thing week after week. When I'm on this rent strike, instead of standing outside the butchers shop and just looking at the prices, I'll go in and I'll say "I'll have that and I'll have that" and I'll come out without a bleeding hapenny. But it will go in the kids bellies next week".



MARY. It says in the paper this is the first time the unfair rent act has actually gone onto the shop floor in the factory. A lot of people got their backs up over it. But it's not as though we're not one of these people. The majority of people in Birdseye live on Tower Hill. When the time comes and they need help we'll come running, regardless of the stick we've taken. You can't divorce one

the N.A.B." But I don't give a damn about that. And you get the rent man saying, "you want to see some of the houses love, they are as far as I'm concerned a house is an amenity. You shouldn't have to pay for it. No matter what people are like they're entitled to a home. You get some people being so bloody puritanical and so bloody smart and saying, they don't deserve to have their kids, because they are unclean, they drink. But who are these people who say that? Society doesn't look at it that way. They don't go into these ever-so-nice homes and pick out the skeletons in their cupboard. But they're the first to stand up and point the finger.



CONNIE.. You look at the way people talk about the people who are on N.A.B. and the degradation they put up with in that place, it's like a cattle board I've been a few times and I've created merry hell in that place. You've got to sit there and these people are grateful for the few bob they are getting. The kids aren't allowed to go to the toilet. They have got to go sodden miles to the other end.

MARY. But people say, when our kids grow up it'll be different and we'll have another government and let's just wait 20 years and see what happens. What they don't realise is if everybody fights then we'll get something now.

Working class people are brought up to be factory fodder. If you turn round to anyone on any estate, and say you're producing factory fodder, they'd give you a belt on the lip. But you can work all your life and when you're finished and done with they'll throw you on one side and pension you off, and they'll go



from the other. The people on the shop floor are council tenants. No-one's got the right to tell a man or woman you can't go on a demonstration. This man from London said leave politics at the factory gate, but you can't. They're frightened of the people in the factory and the people outside the factory getting together because of the loss of money in production. KATHY. They're worried about people getting together at all. They'd rather things were kept separate. But at Birdseye you had the workers doing something about the rents, and tenants doing something about the factory.

Di: Do you find people here are split between employed and unemployed?

MARY: But who points all this out to them? Only the government. People wouldn't think of it only the government points it out that you're keeping these people, they're living off you.

CONNIE.. Joan said to me this morning "I know people who go to the pub every night who spend their rent, who are on

on to one of your kids and they're a carbon copy - they're taking off exactly where you started and when they're no good they'll go onto their children. And we'll never get any better unless we kick against it.

CONNIE. I was talking to this woman, she's about 50. She said, "I've waited 16 years for my house and I'm not about to jeopardise that because I've got kids to think about." She thinks I don't know what it's like to live in a one room flat or have a toilet down the garden, just because I'm young. But I know what it's like from my mother and father.



And another argument is, "Well you're young." Everybody's not like you". I say, when I'm 40 I might be dead with the fight but I'll keep on fighting because I have to. I've been fighting myself for 10 years, trying to find out where I

cont. page 6

Who'd been settled there by the British government to act as a professional and commercial class.

British plans for Amin had misfired. The response was the same as in 1971 - find a replacement for Amin. But this time it wasn't so easy, because the army that had helped him to power was still under his control. The only organised resistance to Amin - Obote's followers - were sheltering in Tanzania.

Now the government's attitude seems to be to accept the deported Asians with as little fuss as possible, and await developments in Uganda.

It shouldn't be long before the people of Uganda realise their problems were not caused by the presence of a few thousand people of a different race.

UNEMPLOYMENT

It doesn't matter whether the Asian immigrants are skilled or unskilled, or educated or uneducated. Furthermore, anyone who says that they cause unemployment etc. is fooling themselves. Unemployment has been created by the employers to undermine working class strength and organisation; it was with us long before immigration started.

We must support immigrants' organisations in their fight against the racist politics of Powell and other Tory trash as it is the immigrants themselves who can best counter the racists' propaganda attacks.

IF WE'RE GOING TO WIN.....

The present situation in Britain is very interesting and complicated. And we need to examine it carefully. There have been some important developments that if understood, can give us a lot of help in the future, whether we are Ford or Vauxhall workers preparing for the next contract struggle; or council tenants already fighting it out with the council and the government.

A good way to start is by comparing two separate struggles that have taken place over the last few months: the miners strike and the UCS sit-in. Both the miners and the UCS shipbuilders found themselves in a run down and declining industry. At UCS the government and the bosses said that they couldn't afford to keep the yards open any more. And in the mines, they said they couldn't afford the pay claim because the industry wasn't also in a bad way. So what did the workers say? Well the miners said simply 'we don't care. We want the money because we need it.' They said that if the mines closed they'd fight that too, but they were not interested in a give and take settlement. They were not interested in even talking about the bosses problems in the same breath as their own.

But what about the UCS workers? They reacted differently. They showed a great deal of militancy and strength but allowed it to be channelled in the wrong direction. The stewards kept on saying: "give us good managers, and we'll show you we can run the yards at a profit." The militancy of the men was smothered with long negotiations for the liquidator. What was the outcome of the two struggles? At UCS the workers did get most of their jobs back. But at what cost? Today they are tied to clauses about no-strikes, reasonable wage settlements etc. They will continually have to work harder to prove what they said about how much sweat they could give the bosses. Not a great victory!

But for the miners it was different. They won clearly and forcefully. They got their money, but at the same time they made no agreements about co-operating with management - they don't need to - they have confidence in their ability to smash them. This year, unlike the UCS brothers, they will be able to combat inflation with a huge wage rise. They will be able to start fighting for shorter hours.

Why was there this difference? The key reason is that miners began to express a sense of *worker autonomy*. That is to say a realisation that the needs of the bosses and those of the working class have nothing in common - but are in fact opposed.

HOW THEY SCREW US

The ruling class always tries, and often succeeds in curbing working class struggles to their own interests. For example, they can use wage increases to stimulate demand for more goods - more production - more profit. Or the bigger companies can let its workers take large wage rises because if this encourages all workers to push up wages, the smaller companies in the profit competition are put out of business. But they can only do these sorts of things when the struggle



Scenes from the September National Front march in Blackburn. As in Leeds, Bradford and Reading, the issue was the Ugandan Asians. 200 fascists, assembling in a side street near the station for a march through town, had to change their plans when they were faced with nearly 900 socialists blocking the route to the town centre. As usual, the police desperately and violently tried to protect the march, but were forced to lead it away on a roundabout route to the Front's meeting place.*

is contained within the boundaries set by the bosses profits. But when it overflows these, then it becomes a direct threat to the whole of capitalist development.

This is the situation now - today these boundaries are threatened. In the '50's and early '60's profits were relatively large and healthy, but with their system and the bosses have caught up with their system and the bosses have their backs right to the wall if the working class carries on getting so much of what it wants. Today, more than ever, the news of the working class contradicts the needs of the bosses. The two are incompatible.

But what do the TUC and local TU leaders do? They say "O.K. in the 'national interest' we must allow British capitalism to build itself up again so that maybe one day we'll get back to the time when the crumbs for us were quite big." They go to Chequers to wrangle over the exact terms for this compromise (see article on p.1). For the working class this outlook means in practice, wage freezes, rent increases, productivity deals, speed ups, poorer health and welfare facilities, cut backs in public spending like transport.....the list is endless.

So this is how much the TU's understand the need for *worker autonomy* the only way for furthering working class needs. But as we said earlier there have been some other developments that have been very good. And as with the miners, they have come from the rank and file, when they have begun to reject the traditional union structures and politics. We can look more closely at these developments. Working class autonomy has been expressed in recent struggles!

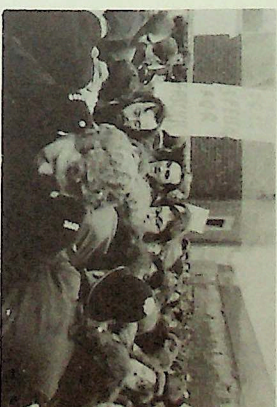
How we screw them

*First of all in the development of new tactics and the militant use of old ones that show a new determination in the struggle against the bosses and the government. From UCS pickets to fisher-bendts, to the Engineering factories in Manchester, to CAV Lucas and Manesty now in Liverpool: occupations have become a permanent gain for the working class. They have been pushed for by the rank and file and showed the need of men and women on the shop floor, to start taking more positive control of their own lives. However, though this has often been an efficient tactic, it has so far, unfortunately, not gone beyond this step. We haven't succeeded in beginning to transform the relationship inside those factories. The flying pickets of the rank and file miners and builders, the tough pickets of the dockers all of these show the potential for a real working class offensive.

*The new tactics have been paralleled by the beginnings of a change in outlook. No longer are working class militants automatically prepared to delegate their power to union bureaucrats. The days of mass apathy and official activity are numbered as more and more people realise that to win they must control their own struggle. For instance it was only the threat of wide spread rank and file revolt which



Later, socialists chasing the retreating fascists began to get divided, and then the police, supported by horses, moved in for the arrests - altogether 14, including 5 from Merseyside, one of them from Big Flame. Some of the socialists face charges under the Race Relations Act of inciting racial hatred. Only one Front marcher was arrested.*



prevented Smith and the UCATT leadership from giving up the fight in the early weeks of the builders strike. This is a very important development as it is obvious that *worker autonomy* can never develop as long as workers are not fully involved in their struggle. But the organisations of the rank and file that have emerged during particular struggles often collapse soon after the struggle. The bosses never stop attacking the workers, so it's important that workers continue to build rank and file organisations to fight the bosses.

*No longer are workers satisfied to plead for wage increases or to rely on the good nature of the bosses to hand increases over. Like the miners - they are starting to demand things AS A RIGHT in many cases its not a question of negotiating compromise - they want the lot. Like the Ford workers who at the moment are demanding £15 wage increase and a 35 hour week for the next contract. They demand this because they need and want it. They are not concerned if Henry Ford wants or can afford to pay it.

*No longer are they happy to accept that their struggles have nothing to do with politics. The dockers realised it when they saw that fighting against the Industrial Relations Act meant fighting against the government and the State. Workers saw in that instance how the State and institutions (police, courts) are not neutral. And they found the same thing with the organs of this 'free' society like the press and T.V.

*No longer are people so prepared to accept the traditional trade union sectionalism, or divisions, between factory and community, men and women, employed and unemployed, or between different industries or even trades within the same industry. The Tower Hill women, the dockers and the builders who picketed Bids Eye have given just one example of how to take initiatives in the right direction and to break down sectionalism. But sectionalism is still one of the main weaknesses of British workers. It's not enough just to have motions of solidarity, pledges of support and donations to the struggle against the system which divides us in order to rule us.

FRESH IDEAS

Sectionalism cuts us off from sharing and generalising experience of struggle. For example, take Ireland. Here the ways that the Catholic communities developed and controlled the no-go areas was never really shared with the British working class. It couldn't be shared as long as British workers refused to respond to the oppression of those Irish communities, and in fact even supported what the ruling class was doing to them.

It is important to notice how the best initiatives in overcoming sectionalism have recently been taken by sectors outside the industrial working class. Employed, women, clainants, immigrants, blacks, students, schoolchildren; who express their anger and rebellion against this crisis, the government, and the state. Because they haven't a tradition of struggle, they are often ready to fight and organise, in complete new and more efficient ways, coming at times the forefront of the struggle. They are all part of the new working class. The industrial working class has a lot to learn, as well as to teach them.

The rent rises for 5 1/2 million council and 1.3 million private tenants are just the most obvious teeth in the Housing Finance Act. There are others aimed at our wages and at our unity as tenants.

The Act says it's aimed at 'reforming' the housing situation. But that doesn't mean more, cheaper houses for people who need them. In fact, the State is going to withdraw the subsidies to council tenants and eventually all council housing will have to be self-supporting. That is, tenants themselves will have to pay the total 'economic' cost of their housing. At present in Liverpool, and this city isn't unusual, two-thirds of council rents go straight to the money lenders and the finance companies in loan re-payments and interest charges. So, tenants will be paying far more than just the cost of building a house or flat.

How will council housing become self-supporting once the subsidies are removed? The better off tenants - who will pay higher rents - will subsidise the poorer tenants. Without state subsidies, councils will be unable to raise enough money to build the homes that millions will need. Slum clearance will slow down, waiting lists will get longer and rates will also rise. There will be less money for repairs and maintenance too.

The aim, as the Act admits, is to force working class people off the council estates onto the open housing market to expand the 'property-owning democracy' the Tories, the land speculators, the building firms and the finance houses are so fond of. It will mean more demand for private housing, more profits for the people who rent or sell it. The Tories firmly believe that the more people they can saddle with big, weekly mortgage re-payments, the more docile we'll all be.

SCOTLAND ROAD - EVERESTON COMMITTEE VOTE TO WITHOLD THE INCREASE; PARTS OF EVERESTON TOO POWER THE BRIDGE AREA ON TOTAL RENT STRIKE

BOOTLE - LITHERLAND 75% OF BOOTLE NOT PAYING INCREASE LITHERLAND NOW ORGANISING TOO.

CANNY FARM WITHOLS INCREASE

ST HELENS - PORTICO GRANDE PARK'S PARK ESTATES VOTE TO WITHOLD THE RISE

WARRINGTON - 100% TENANTS PAY NO INCREASE RENT OFFICE PICKET

HAULWOOD - LATE STREET ACTION GROUPS & PICKETS 60% NOT PAYING THE INCREASE

SPEKE - LATE STREET MASS MEETING LAST WEEK. ORGANISATION FORMED TO FIGHT FOR TENANTS COMMITTEE NEWSHEET DISTRIBUTED

WHARFSEY - CARE STREET IN MORETON. TENANTS ACTION GROUP FORMED

KIRKBY + GILMOSSE - GILMOSSE & ALL PARTS OF KIRKBY ON PARTRIAL RENT STRIKE. ERECT TOWER HILL ON TOTAL RENT STRIKE; PART-BIRCHTON SQUADS SUPPORT FOR OTHER AREAS.

HUYTON - ON PART RENT STRIKE. INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT IS PROMISED.

WIDNES - COUNCIL CHAMBER INVADIED. MASS MEETING - NOW PARTRIAL STRIKE GROWING.

RENT STRIKE MAP

It's clear now that good communication will play a major part in the success of the current rent strike campaign. We cannot rely at all on either the newspapers or the television. From the streets to the areas to Merseyside area and throughout the country, we must build up trustworthy communication.

The information in this paper cannot hope to be 100% coverage of local fights or 100% up to date - but we hope it is useful.

Nor could the councillors expect support from the Labour Party. This is clear after the Labour Party conference where there was no promise of support for any principalsd Labour Councils who might defy the law.

Labour will not resist this law because to them laws are laws because they are made by a Parliamentary government which the Labour Party would dearly like to be again.

This is made clear by Bootle Labour MP, Simon Mahon, the other week. Refusing support to the local tenants rent strike, he said that he would never defy the law. And that goes for the Labour Party as a whole since it accepts that every law must be obeyed.

the law of the land

That is a basic rule of the Parliamentary game. After all what would happen if the Tories, when Labour was in power had told their supporters not to take any notice of the Steel Nationalisation law?

For the Labour Party respect for the 'Law' and Parliament is stronger than respect for working class interests. That is why Labour is losing its grass roots - and that is why the councillors knew that they could get support neither from the working class communities nor from their own party.

They will try and confuse us by talking up our time in meetings trying to justify their pathetic about face. Don't let them waste our time. They may try to take over the fight, We know we cannot rely on them.

It is important for us not to be confused back into relying on Labour because they say they will 'repeal' the act.

MORE THAN A RENT RISE

But the Act is also an attack on the strength and solidarity of the housing estates. Next door neighbours will be paying different rents - this won't make it easier to organise rent strikes. But the Act will also create ghettos, splitting working class people into the poor and the poorest in different areas. How will this happen? First, local authorities will be tempted to save on the rebates bill by funnelling off poor families into the cheapest accommodation in doing this, they will be backed up by the Social Security which will refuse to pay 100% rent allowances to claimants if they think they could be housed in cheaper housing. Second, the Act states that tenants are only entitled to a full rebate when they are in accommodation of a suitable size and location. This gives the Housing Department the lever for, say, moving pensioners into smaller, worse flats or houses when their children leave home.

ONLY 'FAIR' FOR

SPECULATORS

The Act will delight anybody in the property business. Not that these are lean years for the land speculators but for twenty five years there has been a drop in the percentage of people in private housing. Now, over half of all families live in council housing. The Act will change the balance so that eventually millions of people will be forced into the direct grasp of the property profiteers.

Those aren't the only people who will benefit. The ending of housing subsidies will mean less money to be raised in taxes, especially in corporation tax. Businesses aren't prepared to pay high taxes at the expense of their profits to support the social services. The result is that Labour and Tory Governments have brought in over the years 'selectivity' in the social services. This means that instead of everyone getting free medical care, prescriptions, education etc., only the poorest will receive them. In theory, this is supposed to mean that resources previously 'squandered' on people who didn't really need them, will be increasingly concentrated on those who need them most. In practice, of course, this doesn't happen. As claimants know only too well, means tests are used to prevent us finding out what we're entitled to. And even when we do find out, we still have to fight for what is ours by right. This will happen more and more with housing too because anyone claiming a rent rebate has to go through a means test.

STRIKE BREAKING

Finally, the Housing Finance Act has a built-in disincentive to workers who want to be better paid. This is the strike-breaking clause. The size of the rent rebate is tied to your income. If you win a wage rise, you'll find it disappears because the rebate is lowered. This will hit the lower paid workers worst. So much for the Government's claims to be helping the lower paid workers.

Council housing, like the rest of the social services is being run down because the State and employers are no longer prepared to provide decent housing, hospitals or schools for the people who build and run them and need them most. While owner-occupiers go on getting their subsidies - the mortgage tax allowance - council tenants will have to pay more and more for a housing system that gets worse and worse. That's what they mean by 'reforming housing'!

Council housing has got to be paid for somehow. The question is where does the money come from? Out of the workers pockets, or out of taxation. But the bosses aren't prepared to take higher taxes without a big fight. That is the situation regardless of whose in power. And it shows exactly how much power parliament has, when it is easier to make legislation against working class people in this matter than against the bosses.

THE THOUGHTS OF ALDEMAN SEFTON after sweeping victory at election, 5 May, 1972

"Our policy is still non-implementation."

In September, 26,635 tenants received notice of rent increases of 21, 40, 60% of 89p, and 6,395 of 49p.

"I knew the Labour Party had sport-cottings when I joined in 1940."

Labour was involved in the Housing Finance Act from the beginning. It was a Labour Government that in 1968 tenants received notice of rent increases on the basis of many of the provisions in the present act. It is clear that another Labour Government would end up implementing a similar law, since they started the ball rolling in this direction.

It must be said clearly that we must forget about councillors in this fight. If as individual tenants, they wish to join the fight, let them. But they have no power or authority which can be a substitute for tenants own self organisation, now and in the future.

We have to make up lost time and lost ground - time and ground lost largely because the Labour council distracted and confused us from what we should have been doing for months past - organising ourselves in our own interests. Don't let any Labour councillor's, whichever way they voted get in the way again. A so-called representative is nothing compared with the organised power of the people in their own communities. And that is the power that will change things.

IN SKELMERSDALE, THE LABOUR COUNCIL INITIALLY voted against implementing the Fair Rents, thus adding itself to the tiny proportion of Labour councils who did this. It is also true that a number of Labour councillors voted against the act and have a lot of support and respect as a result. Clearly those councillors who will be paralysed by the Tories must be supported, just as we support any action against the rent rises.

But this must not distract us from realising that although individual councillors or a few small councils may vote against this Act, they have in no way questioned their closed and 'expert' style of politics which excludes the majority of tenants from being involved and has up till now checked and contained the militant energy of tenants who are now realising the only way to fight is by themselves for themselves.

Who trusts Labour?

IN APRIL, LIVERPOOL LABOUR COUNCIL LORS SAID at the Elections that if they were returned to power they would not implement the Fair Rents. In August, they did implement them. They treated the people of Liverpool like fools with short memories.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT

A few weeks ago there was the spectacle of Bill Sefton, Labour Leader of the Council, justifying his change of mind on resisting the rent rises since the election. Faced with 200 angry tenants, he didn't do very well. And how could he? One of the reasons for Labour's success in the local elections all over the country was surely their opposition to this Housing Finance Act.

The councillors will tell us with tears in their eyes that they were forced into implementing it by the penalties and fines which the Tories would impose on them. In April we wrote that no handful of people, particularly councillors could defeat this piece of class legislation on their own. One of the reasons why the Labour Councilors neatly forgot any principles they might have had was because they knew they would get little support if the Tory penalties were imposed.

They did not expect support from the 'voters', the people who they have continually deceived and disappointed. Many of them have told us so at meetings since. This is because the Labour Party are losing their support in working class communities because they have never done anything for these communities.

RENT DEMO. FACTORY SUPPORT

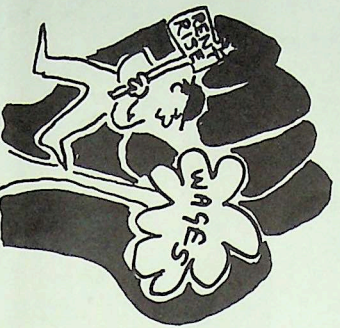
FORDS

On Monday 2nd October 31 Ford workers were sacked for joining the 'anti-fair rents' demonstration. The next day they were re-employed, but on Ford's terms. Most of them were forced to move to different sections and different shifts.

On that day a mass meeting of the paint, Trim and Assembly plant was called to decide on the march.

Until then the shop stewards had never brought the rents issue into the open. At the meeting they failed to recommend a total walk out. So anyone who did choose to walk out would therefore be easily isolated and with -out the support of the stewards. Before the meeting they made no attempt to spread information on the rents through leaflets or section meetings.

At the meeting the vote was split. So the convenor, showing no interest in the fight against the 'fair rents' ordered a return to work. The several hundred people who'd voted to go on the march were then threatened with the sack by Ford's.



Finally 31 men walked out; despite the threats, because they knew their place on Monday wasn't sweating it out for Henry. It was on the march with the other men, women and children fighting for the right to a home and a good standard of living.

Ford accused the men of bringing politics onto the shop floor. Because they want us to be unthinking machines to make their cars, they said the walk out was nothing to do with what happens in the factory.

But we know better. Because it's us, the men and women who keep their production lines going and their fat pockets full, who have to put up with higher rents - as well as dearer food, clothes, medicine and transport.

It's clear that winning a wage rise in the next Ford contract is not enough. We can't let it be lost in rent.

Although the men are back at work Ford can claim a victory.

By intimidating other workers and isolating the 31 they kept a 'political' issue out of the factory as a whole. The fate of these men can be used as an example to other workers who might take similar action in the future. And they seized the opportunity to spread a militant section round the factory.

As we come up to the next contract fight over wages and conditions Ford is already preparing to take us on.

Kirkby Women Speak

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

was going. And it's not been easy because I've been frightened. But I feel now that I know where I'm going and I'll just keep going harder and harder but it's not an easy thing.

DI. But what you need to do is talk to other people who feel the same as you, so you don't feel on your own.

MARY. But sometimes you end up preaching to the converted. But if you come up against someone like Joan, the first argument they use is, 'I'm 40, ... if we were all in the same age group and the same frame of mind, who's going to stand up and bloody well fight.'

CONNIE.

Every opportunity we get we have a go at the council. This woman went up to the maintenance department and gave them a list of things needed doing to her house.

BIRD'S EYE

THERE WAS NO OFFICIAL Birdseye CONTINGENT ON THE RECENT UNFAIR RENTS DEMONSTRATION THROUGH LIVERPOOL, BUT 70 MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE KIRKBY FACTORY STILL TOOK THE DAY OFF TO JOIN THE MARCH.

The same day, 22 of those workers got letters suspending them, and their two shop stewards were sacked. All 24 worked in the cold store, one of the factory's most militant sections. The fact that nothing happened to the other Birdseye demonstrators suggests that the management were more interested in taking on one of their big trouble spots than with loss of production.

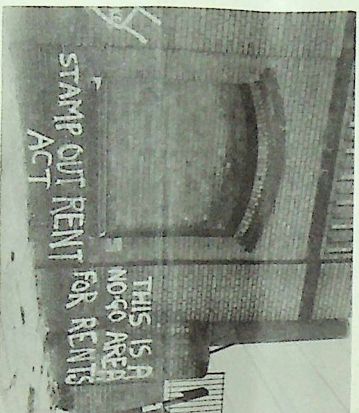
PICKET LINE FORMED
Next morning, the 24, plus men and women from Tower Hill Action Group, Kirkby dockers and builders all formed a picket outside the factory.

All three groups had already at previous meetings pledged support to anyone victimised for fighting the Rents Act, whether it happened in a factory or on a housing estate. Here a motion of solidarity was already put into effect.

The Tower Hill women, some with kids in prams, formed up across the gate and stopped lorries going in or out. At the same time, they called on workers going into the factory to come out in support of the suspended men.

MANAGEMENT AGREE TO TALKS.

Finally management agreed to talks with one of the sacked stewards if the picket line was lifted. Everyone outside agreed to this, but still hung around to hear the results of the negotiations.



national leaflet

Big Flame distributed a leaflet about the coming contract at 5 Ford Plants last month. It invited Dagenham workers to a meeting in a local pub on Friday 22nd September. There Halewood and Dagenham workers exchanged recent experiences and talked about the ways rank and file workers and stewards could take control of the struggle for the next wage deal.

This is the first of a series of national meetings between Ford workers which should go some way to breaking down the separation of the different plants at a rank and file level.

They wouldn't let her see the falla. So what she did was, there was this long corridor with all these offices coming off it. So she banged on every door and they all came out and she said "which one's Mr W?" And he eventually had to see her. She caused ructions in that council.

I've heard people say they'd have a go at the council but the rents act is the government - they've got a thing about the government - and yet let's face it, they're only a minority, they're just ordinary men. Even Ted Heath has to use the toilet at some time or other.

When you talk about it with some of the women they say, "I wish I could be like that, I haven't got the nerve". But it only takes once to do it and you get a taste for something like that and you do it agin. You can really upset them in something like that because the simple reason they can't retaliate, you've done nothing wrong and you always win.

When the day shift came out there were heated discussions with the people out side. Management had confused the workers by claiming that no-one had been sacked. It was an obvious attempt to confuse and discourage those outside the gate, but one which did not work.

They stayed strong and determined to stick it out till they won. The women in particular refused to be put off. They saw it as much their fight as the Birdseye workers.

VICTORY - AND THE BOSSES BLEAT.

Later, the night shift was sent home early and the factory closed down because production was impossible with the Cold Store out of operation. Then the talks ended with complete victory - all 24 men were to be reinstated.

Annoyed at this defeat at the hands of the picket and the Key Cold Store workers management made a familiar attack on 'outside agitators' and 'political' strikes.

What management mean by 'political' is any attempt to show that what happens inside the factory has got something to do with what happens outside. THAT is why the picket was supported by tenants, building workers and dockers. The Rents Act is aimed at our pockets and is not going to be defeated by tenants alone or dockers alone.

The women there from Kirkby who picketed the factory made that clear when they said - 'we're housewives and working women. For us, the fight over the rent increases and the bosses' attack on the workers in the factories is all one fight. The fight is simply against the system that continually exploits the people.

ALL THE COMMUNITY.

If management carry out their threat to close down the factory unless it settles down, they can be sure that they'll be taking on the whole community from the word go.

LUCAS SIT-IN

Workers at CAV Lucas took over the factory this morning, the management announced that the whole plant was to be closed down in April next year. 1200 people are employed at Lucas, and every one was to be made redundant.

But the workers have refused to accept this, and have seized the factory in an attempt to save their jobs.

The reasons for the factory closure are familiar. Lucas used the advantage of government development grants to set up in Fazakerly and make quick profits. Now they want more out again, with complete disregard for what happens to their workforces. Lucas claim that the bottom has fallen out of the market for fuel injection pumps that the Liverpool factory concentrates its production upon.

What they don't tell us is that they are manufacturing these pumps in fascist Spain, where labour is cheap because of the repressive regime. The pumps made at 'Condiest' of Barcelona are sold in this country stamped 'Made in England'.

This is a familiar story to anyone who knows about what happened at Plessers in Alexandria. Plessers moved in with the aid of government grants and moved out again when it suited them.

Here too they were met with a sit-in by the workers, and eventually many of them got new jobs in the factory.

MARY. The Housing Finance Act says if a worker earns £1 over a certain limit 17p of that is going to go on his rent. This is one way of trying to curb the strikes on the estate, on the docks, in the factories and the car works. You get a man going on strike for 6 weeks for £1 rise, he'll end up with about 4 bob. He's got to pay more tax, more graduated pension, then he gets 17p extra on his rent. This is where the Industrial Relations Act and the Housing Finance Act merge. But people try to keep them separate.

The people who own the factories, the profit making people, are a minority. They're frightened of this threat of everybody getting together and just riding up and kicking them back. They're going to do everything they can to keep us separate.

BIG BRIAN

merseyside
socialist
newspaper

no. 5 4p

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BARRICADES UP IN KIRKBY

Seven families in Tower Hill, Kirkby were threatened with eviction on Friday 10th November after eight weeks of total rent strike. One family was told that the bailiffs could arrive any time after 4.30pm on the 13th November.

Roads Blocked

As the Council's deadline ran out, almost 900 people - some tenants from Tower Hill others from Action groups in Liverpool and some workers from a building site nearby - converged on the Tower Hill Estate. They made Tower Hill a virtual no-go area for any bailiff foolish enough to attempt to evict anyone on rent strike, and were a warning to Kirkby Council that any threats of eviction would be met with resistance - violent if necessary.

The human barricades sealed off the estate from all traffic while 50 other tenants picketed the house. The pickets on the house have been maintained ever since - ready for any bailiffs...

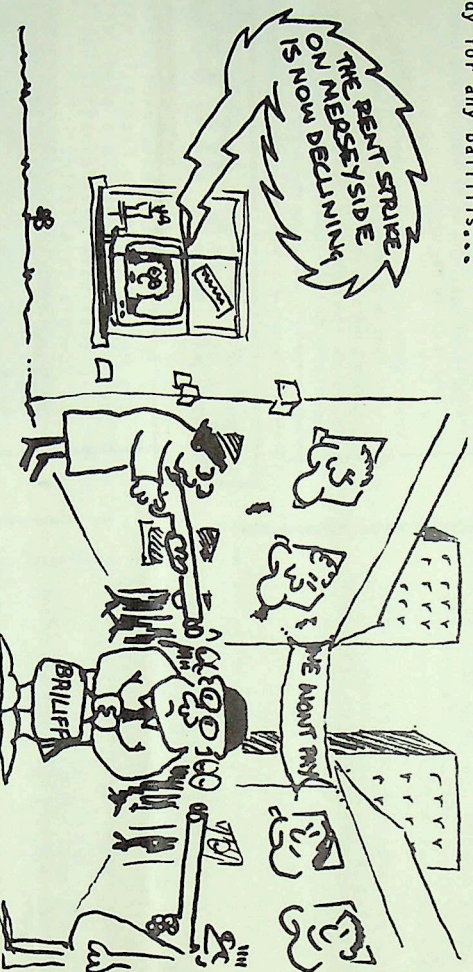
any threat of evictions the Kirkby Industrial Estate would shut down. Kirkby tenants have also received pledges of support from the Dockers' Shop Stewards Committee and Standard Triumph.

Council's Reaction

A Labour councillor has pathetically tried to deny that the Council had any knowledge of the eviction orders. He tried to suggest that the decision was taken by some high ranking civil servant at the Town Hall. Nevertheless the Tower Hill action group is demanding that the Council sends out letters of apology to all under eviction orders and officially withdraws all eviction notices. - Until this has been done pickets will be maintained IN FORCE.

False Alarm

On the Tuesday night a false alarm was raised over an eviction when a family on the estate moved out. Within minutes of the alarm being raised, between 75



Many factories in the Merseyside area were continually phoning up the action group asking how the situation was developing, and if more help was needed on pickets.

Building workers from a nearby site have said that if the bailiffs come they will stop work and give their active support. A meeting of the Unofficial Committee of Shop Stewards decided that if there was

Stoke Newington 8

In London a major political trial - the longest ever at the Old Bailey - is coming to an end. Eight young men and women are accused of the "Angry Brigade" bombings, a series of explosions which hit the property of well known ruling class figures, from 1968 to 1971.

The virtual press blackout is only lifting now that the defence is being summed up, only now is the political nature of the case filtering through. Three of the eight are defending themselves. Instead of sitting silently in court they influence the proceedings and personally confront police witnesses and personally present as 'mad bombers'. Instead of being presented as ordinary men and women whose lives are at stake and they make sure that the jury is aware of the political nature of the trial.

Robert Carr's front door was blown off by the 'Angry Brigade' on the day

BLACK WORKERS FIGHT ALONE

At Mansfield Hosiery, Loughborough, 200 Asian workers have been sacked after striking for £5 extra a week. The strike shows how racial divisions are created among workers, used by management and ignored by union officials.

The sacked workers are "bar-loaders" - unskilled and low paid. The better paid skilled "knitters" are scabbing. It is management policy to train only white workers for these better jobs.

No Evictions on Merseyside

Tenants all over Merseyside realise that if the Gorry get away with any evictions on any estate, including Kirkby, each one of us could be the next one thrown on the streets. From the way things are going in Kirkby, it looks like the united action of tenants and workers is going to



Stop these evictions from the very start.

.....
for more information on rent strikes see page two

STUDENT RENT STRIKE

At the start of the university term, students in Liverpool Halls of Residence voted in favour of withholding the £6 increase in Hall fees this year. This is in protest against the continuing yearly increases over the last 5 years. Liverpool university is joining the rent strike in company with most other universities throughout the country who are either on total or partial rent strike.

Lucas sit-in

WHAT WE WERE NOT TOLD ABOUT THE COMMON MARKET.

At last weeks meeting of Merseyside shop stewards, called to discuss the GAV situation, Jack Spriggs, a worker from Fisher Bendix, pointed out that one of the main effects of Britain joining the Common Market will be that industry will gravitate from areas like Merseyside and Scotland to London and the East coast to facilitate trade with Europe. After entry British capitalists will concentrate much more on selling abroad rather than supplying the home market. But it is not just that jobs will be shifted to one area or another, for jobs will be lost as production is concentrated into larger, more efficient factories. What has happened to the workers at GAV is going to keep on happening..... and it is places like Merseyside that are most threatened by this capitalist rationalisation which entry into the Common Market will accelerate.... unless the working class effectively challenges the power of firms to close down and move away. GAV is not an isolated case. What is happening there could happen to almost any group of workers.

The sit-in by workers at GAV Lucas is into its seventh week, and as usual the Merseyside Press has long ago shut down and the 1200 workers sent to join the 60000 unemployed on Merseyside because of industrial relation troubles, and because the fuel injection pump produced there could no longer be sold. The GAV workers quickly exposed these lies. They found out that far from killing off the product Lucas are expanding their production of diesel pumps.... BUT NOT AT FAZAKERLY. They intend to transfer the work to other plants in the South East of England in Spain.

THE NEED FOR OCCUPATIONS.

When a factory is faced with closure an occupation is the only tactic which has any hope, or success. The weapon available to the workers is to keep control over the valuable machinery. Lucas must be given no chance to move the plant, worth millions of pounds and bought with government money, out of Fazakerly.

But more difficult is to force Lucas to re-open the factory, or to keep up full pay for the workers if no longer needs. GAV Fazakerly is just a small cog in the vast Lucas machine. Whats more they can easily switch production of diesel pumps to other plants. SO, IF THE GAV WORKERS STRUGGLE IS TO BE WON, IT WILL HAVE TO BE EXTENDED TO THE WHOLE OF THE LUCAS COMBINE.

LUCAS STORY CONTINUED
PAGE TWO.....

RENT STRIKE - UNITY NEEDED

Events in Kirkby have shown that if tenants and workers support each other they will be stronger in their fight against any attacks on the working class (like the Rent Act and the Industrial Relations Act). Eviction notices have been received already in areas where tenants are on total rent strike - Tower Hill, Kirkby and Over the Bridge, Scotland Road. In Kirkby these threats have been met with the united strength of Merseyside action groups and large sections of industry - (see front page) So far there have been no evictions and no sign of any bailiffs, but the pace has been set for action against evictions in other areas on Merseyside....

The Rent Strikes which hit Britain when the 'Unfair Rent Act' was introduced are now entering their eighth week in the Merseyside area.. Eviction notices have been received already in areas where tenants are on total rent strike - Tower Hill, Kirkby and Over the Bridge, Scotland Road. In Kirkby these threats have been met with the united strength of Merseyside action groups and large sections of industry - (see front page) So far there have been no evictions and no sign of any bailiffs, but the pace has been set for action against evictions in other areas on Merseyside....

If we are going to win this fight and any future fight we need to break down barriers between what happens in the community and what happens in the factory. Whether we are fighting line-speeds, low wages, rising rents or bad housing conditions - we're attacking the same system.

Men find it too easy to divorce their daily struggles in the factory from the daily struggles of the women in the community. The Rent Act affects the women first and foremost because they feel the pinch when they have to cut down on food to find the extra rent - but in the end it will affect the whole family because it amounts to a cut in wages.

A lot of husbands might expect their wives to pay the extra rent out of the same amount of housekeeping money, which means that some other necessity has to be cut down on. BUT the answer to this is not that the husbands give their wives the increase (perhaps clocking in more overtime to get it) and tell her she's got to pay it. They should both fight together to keep the rents down..

Some husbands are actively discouraging their wives from taking part in the rent strike. They say, " Stop making a fool of yourself!" and often won't let them go to meetings or picket the rent office. Husbands like this are acting like their own bosses at work - telling their wives what to do like the boss tries to tell them.

Encouraging their wives to pay the rent like the boss encourages them to scab during a strike. The attitude of militant women to this should be the same as any military man's attitude to his boss - And we know what that is.....

Husbands of women involved in the rent strike who put pressure on their wives to drop out and pay the increase are acting like scabs and strike breakers. They should be giving active support to them in their fight against rising rents and rising prices. In the same way families of workers should be able to get involved when the men take industrial action - like the miners' wives did in the last strike.

THAT'S WHAT REAL SUPPORT IS ALL ABOUT.

around the country - rent news ..

MANCHESTER AREA *

There are at least 20,000 tenants on partial rent strike. Tenants Associations and Action Groups have been set up in numerous areas including Colshaw Farm, Hattersley, Altrincham, Salford, Ardwick, Beswick, Moss Side, Hulme, Oldham and Bolton.

Bolton Council have said there will be no evictions over non payment of increase.

A demonstration to Oldham Town Hall was attended by 2,500 tenants despite heavy rain. A weekly leaflet "Rent Struggle" has been produced by MANCHESTER TENANTS ACTION GROUP which is made up of over 30 groups in the area.

"RENT STRUGGLE" Conference - Manchester-University Students Union - 11 am, Sunday 26th November - all tenants invited.

BIRMINGHAM *

Tenants on many estates are preparing to resist the increase due on December 1st.

Newly established Action Groups are organised on a street and block committee basis with a view to involving everyone.

WALSALL *

Tenants here face their increase in January and the Council face the strong Walsall Tenants Association which successfully fought a rent strike a couple of years ago.....

SOUTH YORKSHIRE *

In Donfield (Near Sheffield) tenants went on a six week total rent strike to recoup increases paid since the Act was implemented last April. They are now on partial rent strike. Many estates in Barnsley are on partial rent strike - Hoyland is on total rent strike.

Doncaster - 11,000 council tenants face their increase on 4th of December.

Wales *

Miners in South Wales have promised to back tenants threatened with eviction, with industrial action. "The response will be as solid as that in support of the five dockers" said a delegate of the South Wales NUM.

Motorcade
At an emergency meeting of the Trades Council Tenants Co-ordinating

Committee it was unanimously decided to have a motorcade of vehicles displaying anti-rent placards, flags, etc. through the streets of Liverpool.

MERYSIDE NEWS *

"Over the Bridge" - Scotland Road
Several families on total rent strike have received eviction notices and their names being displayed on a notice board outside the rent office with a caption underneath: "JOIN OUR CLUB".

Tenants in 'Over the Bridge' are well prepared to resist.

NETHERLEY *
The solid partial rent strike is being maintained with good pickets on the rents offices everyday. The Netherley Tenants Association has already started to broaden its activities to include other aspects of community life such as bad housing conditions and low pensions....

HALEWOOD *

The Tenants Action Group is beginning to intensify activities - to get more of the people who are not paying to involve themselves in the Action Group.

There is still a lot of support for the rent strike - most tenants are still withholding the increase. But we need to work out more concrete plans to prepare for any eviction notices that might come....

CANTRIL FARM *

The partial rent strike is still solid - the Action Committee feels that the ball is now in the Council's court - they are well prepared for any eviction orders.

The Action Committee is being prevented from holding meetings at the Labour Club. Although officials and Councilors have been asked why this is happening no-one is prepared to accept responsibility for this attempt to disrupt the rent strike activity in Cantril Farm....

Assault Charge

A tenant who was arrested in the Public Gallery when Liverpool Council voted to implement the act for voicing his opposition to two-faced councilors is coming up for trial on December 8th on a far fetched "assault charge" - we are once again reminded that there is one law for those who run this country and another for tenants and workers...

LUCAS cont :

Already this has begun to happen. For three weeks Lucas workers at Birmingham have been blacking supplies of certain products to Merseyside car factories. Lucas Industrial Relations, which shares the Fazakerly site with CAV, at first remained working while the occupation went on next door, but they soon realised that the threat of closure against CAV would sooner or later be leveled against them too. Rather than give Lucas management the chance to pick CAV off first they joined the occupation.

Other Lucas plants in the area, however, (Girlington, Vitor and Rolax)... seem not to have grasped this basic lesson. Judging by the low level of their support for the one-day token strike of all Merseyside Lucas plants which took place on November 19th.

SUPPORT FROM OTHER FACTORIES.

Groups of workers all over Merseyside have been giving financial support to CAV and LIE. This is vital, but as one LIE worker explained to other shop stewards last week "We don't want to become the highest paid sitters-in of all time". "What we need is industrial action".

A limited amount of blacking of Lucas products has already been applied in Fords and Standards, but the time has come when all Lucas products will have to be blacked. The Standard Triumph shop stewards who said that this would mean stopping the car factories were right, but they drew the wrong conclusions when they said that blacking is therefore impossible. It is the only line of action which will bring enough pressure to bear on Lucas. It is all very well for the Trade Council and the shop stewards to agree to support blacking and strike action in principle, but principles alone won't win. They are a cop-out for actually doing anything. They are like the argument that until all workers in the Lucas combine show their solidarity, workers in other industries should not do anything. This was used recently in Fords. Some men on 'A' shift blacked a Lucas lorry, but the senior steward lifted it, saying that the lorry must have been loaded by Lucas men, so it wasn't right that Ford workers should black it.

But the Lucas occupation effects all workers and it is no good waiting around arguing that someone else should take the initiatives. While we do this, the Lucas bosses are laughing all the way to Spain.

A bad mistake was made on November 7th when no firm date was fixed for a one-day strike by the whole of Merseysides industry, and no definite offers to black Lucas goods were given. It has been left to the workers themselves in the car factories and the docks to make sure that the CAV workers get the support they need.

LETS SEE ACTION

For the last four years ever since the May 68 events in France, in which school students played a prominent role, there have been constant battles in schools in Britain.



Nowhere is this society more visibly repressive than in schools. One man, the Head, can make any decision and all the rules. There is not one school in the city (apart from the Free School) where the situation is controlled by students themselves, and in a lot of schools the Head and the teachers rule by the cane and brain-wash us with religion. But the time has come for us to start fighting to change things - to get schools which are controlled by us.

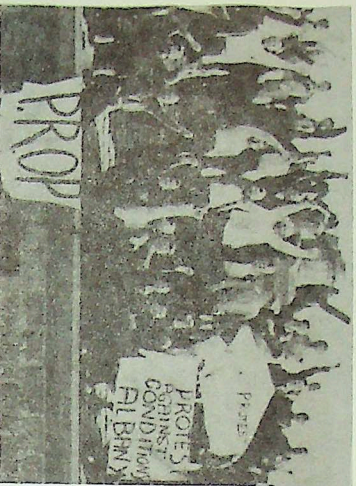
At the moment most militants are organised inside the National Union of School Students. This body was set up by The National Union of Students and inherits all its faults--like believing that change can only come through negotiation and compromise, particularly with the heads of schools, thus failing to see the need for direct and collective action involving all school kids in the struggle.

Despite this we in Rebel are working within it to make it fight. REBEL is a group of militant socialists, who are determined to transform the present educational system as part of the revolutionary struggle against the whole of this rotten society. JOIN US. Its going to be a long hot year for the heads, so help us make it even hotter.

CONTACT REBEL AT
1, KELVIN GROVE LIVERPOOL 8
tel...727-1564 (ask for Tony)

PRISON SYSTEM ON THE RUN!

Recently there were nationwide prison strikes about the nature and conditions of prison life, including locally at Watton where conditions are amongst the worse in the country. An organising member of PROP (Preservation of the rights of prisoners) with a rich experience of 12 years inside British jails and a long spell as an ETU shop steward, gave the following account:-



Prison demo at Peterhead Jail Aberdeenshire.

prison conditions

Of course there has been unrest in prisons for years over the appalling conditions and overcrowding. What is new is the industrialisation of prison labour, where prisoners are used by outside contractors. Men from Pantonville are being used at the Brookside Metal Co. on the Watford bypass (it won a Queen's Award for industry last year.) They're paid a penny an hour for a 40 hour week. When a couple of them protested the management called in the police, who handcuffed them and took them back to jail, where they lost 2 weeks' remission each.

Then you've got this new thing coming up in October, the Community Service Order, where a JP can sentence someone to 'community work' instead of prison. If the JP is linked with an unscrupulous local authority (and let's face it, there's enough of them about) he can sentence someone to work as slave labour on a particular project.

As far as internal prison conditions are concerned, the government are making more frequent use of Rule 49 (solitary confinement for an indefinite period), and especially for prisoners who protest about conditions. A special wing is being reserved at Handsworth for militant protesters from jails all over the place, and some of the hardest old bastard screws in the business are being put there.

what prop does

The present events snowballed so quickly because it all went through on the wives-relatives grapevine, and there have been unreported demonstrations at the smallest prisons.

Basically, the repression and the point of indignation had been reached where the men said "That's it mate, we've had enough. Where PROP came in was that we were able to undertake a well-coordinated and planned action, like the prisoners strike on 4th August. The authorities had 8 weeks notice of it, but they laughed at us. In the event from six to nine thousand men all over the country took part.

Then after the strike, things blew up spontaneously beyond our wildest dreams. There's a man named Arthur Stanley serving 8 years in Gartree. The last Sunday in August he was recuperating in the prison hospital, which meant he was allowed to exercise with the fit prisoners. But they left him inside, and so he started ringing his bell continuously. When the screw eventually turned up, Stanley naturally started abusing him and the screw - a man named Wright - took out his stick and done him bad, busted his head and cut his face and that. As soon as everyone knew they were up on the roof, and it all snowballed from there. The only violence has been instigated by the screws.

It shows something else too - the prisons are run on the "goodwill" of the prisoners, just as the factories are run on the "goodwill" of the workers and the schools on the "goodwill" of the students. It applies to the whole of society. Ultimately though, the strikes and demonstrations are not the only important things...with a view to abolishing the prison system completely in the end.

Generally speaking, the miners strike had a tremendous influence, when the police had to contact the Home Office and say "look, this things out of control". Especially at Hull and Gartree, there are men in for small misdemeanours who have had experience of trade union work (they are virtually not criminals at all, but have been driven inside by unemployment) and they involve themselves in organising in the nick, even if it was just because there was fuck all else to do.

attica

Speaking more personally, I was tremendously affected by the Attica thing in America. Someone said the convicts at Attica sold themselves cheap. I always felt that if we could have had even one prison protesting in support over here we would have established an international tie-up. He could have caused so much trouble that the government would have been forced to say to the Americans, "For Christ's sake do something about over there because it's upsetting our lot over here". This is the end we're working for - we've already got contact with prisoners and their unions in America, Australia, South Africa and various European countries. We want joint international solidarity. If Karl Schmidt gets done over in Germany because he upset some screw or other, we want people on the roof here and in France and Scandinavia.

news of whose world?

People who believe every word they read in the News of the World must be convinced by now that all the industrial struggles this year were the work of about a dozen men.

In their present series of articles called the STRIKE MAKERS the News of the World have tried to isolate militants from their work mates and other working class people by pretending that all strikes and disputes are caused by a handful of 'communists' or 'left wing agitators' who only want to cause trouble.

Their other tactic is to lump militant workers together with so-called football hooligans and muggers, who they love to write about, and make out that our wonderful society is threatened by anyone who uses violence. Or should we say anyone who uses violence, but doesn't wear a uniform. They never ask WHY workers get angry.

Maybe the News of the World thinks that we should be happy with our lot, and get our simple pleasures looking at nude pictures every Sunday in their pages, after reading the horror stories and garbage scandals. Maybe they reckon this sensational rubbish will distract us from looking at the real horror stories in this country.

IF THE NEWS OF THE WORLD SPENT AS MUCH TIME CAMPAINING ON PENSIONERS WHO DIE OF COLD IN THE WINTER, OR THE THOUSANDS OF WORKERS POISONED AND MAIMED IN OUR FACTORIES EVERY YEAR, AS THEY DO WRITING ABOUT SEX STARVED VICARS, OR MILLIONAIRE DIVORCE CASES IT MIGHT BE WORTH READING.

WHAT IS THE REAL STORY, WHO ARE THE REAL MINORITY THAT ARE WRECKING OUR LIVES?

The News of the World and the Sun are part of a big company run by Mr. Rupert Murdoch. Like the few other big capitalist newspaper companies left, and the so-called independent T.V. companies, his company is out to make a profit out of all of us. Last year he made £4,190,000 profit before tax.

He is a ruthless boss, so he helps other ruthless bosses through his paper. He is a capitalist, but a very dangerous one because he runs two of the largest circulation papers in the country.

HE IS ONE OF THE REAL DANGEROUS MINORITY. Maybe he thinks that everyone is like him and his nasty friends. So when he looks at working class organisation he thinks that we are organised by a minority who manipulates the rest.

THAT'S THE WAY HE WORKS. IT'S NOT THE WAY WE WORK TOGETHER.

link-ups

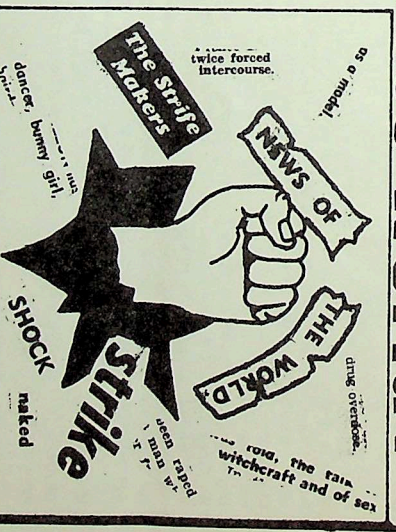
The most important thing is to get links outside. Prisons are only one part of it, otherwise we can still be contained - the very thing we're fighting is so big. There are wives action groups being formed for each prison, and we're trying to link this with Claimants Union work on people's entitlements. Then there are the international links which I've mentioned.

But we've had some big disappointments. We asked the TUC for support but Feather was completely uncomprehending.

It was even more disappointing when PROP took its banners outside Pentonville while the dockers stewards were being held. The stewards outside were hostile and demanded to know what we were doing there. I told them we were supporting them. I got the impression that the men were fed up with their own rank and file leadership. If it had been up to the men those 5 stewards wouldn't have spent even one night in prison.

collective action

One encouraging thing is the number of people who are taking on responsibilities they would never have dreamed of, organising things and so on. I've belonged to different political groups but I believe that as people in a community, a region or a country, and in the world, we ourselves have to say "this is our problem, this is going to be our life to run, let's act together collectively". You've got to show people what they themselves can do, then once it's got going, for Christ's sake let them get on with it. Meanwhile, right at this moment, there are men lying battered in Parkhurst.



how the real minority works

*They print and televise so many lies about any activity which threatens their interests, that many people end up believing the bosses side of the story and thinking that it's 'impartial truth'.

*Any newspaper that does not make a profit will soon go out of business, so it is almost impossible to provide a mass reply to their lies except at local level, as is now developing for instance on Merseyside.

*They don't report any working class struggle which is succeeding, like our rent strike on Merseyside and in Britain. The result is that many people do not know what is going on and begin to feel isolated. For example they virtually blacked out all news of a national rent strike in which hundreds of thousands of people are involved.

*When people are isolated from all information except these lies and distortions, they more easily believe the only source of information to them.

*They help the state, government and bosses by never straying to far out of line. Did any of the big dailies say that the Industrial Relations Act is a law aimed at smashing shop floor organisation. Did any of them encourage people to oppose it. No. Why is this always their case? Whose side are they really on?

There is no impartial reporting on T.V. or in the press. Whoever controls the press or TV controls what they say. AS LONG AS THE BOSSES CONTROL THEM IT WILL BE THE BOSSES VOICE WHO SPEAKS THROUGH THEM.....

VIETNAM



THE VIETNAM WAR HAS GONE ON FOR OVER 30 YEARS AND DESPITE PEACE TALKS WILL PROBABLY GO ON.

To control their country, free from foreign occupation, the Vietnamese peasants and workers have fought Japanese, British, French and American troops.

A wartime revolt under Ho Chi Minh attacked the Japanese forces and, after they left, a real Vietnamese government was set up, led by Ho, in Saigon. But British troops aided by rearmd Japanese prisoners of war ousted this government and held tort for the returning French who'd occupied Indochina before the Japanese. So it was a British decision which ensured that the Vietnamese would have to struggle again and again for national liberation.

The Indochinese peasants and workers have struggled in the face of the most intense bombardment in history. This is only possible because it is a CLASS struggle, against the landowners and employers who were aided by the French, and since the French left, by the Americans.

No Go Areas?

The 'liberated zones' of Indochina, which include two thirds of Laos and most of Cambodia, aren't just areas where US or allied troops aren't go. They are areas where the landlords have been kicked out. Previously, much of the food production was taken as rent. Any attempt to end this exploitation was suppressed by the French colonial police. Private ownership of the means of production meant near starvation for the majority of the population.

The liberated zones are the product of the revolt by these oppressed sectors. The revolutionary movements - Vietcong Pathet Lao and Khmer Rouge (in Cambodia) - are armed peasants and workers determined to change their society.

The American government pretends they are just extensions of Russia and China. But if they are just puppets of distant powers, how have they been able to go on fighting against the most powerful state in the world?

Class Struggle

The US doesn't really believe that the Indochinese revolution has been imported from abroad. They know that the liberated areas set an example to the rest of Asia. By showing that the poverty experienced by the majority of mankind need not exist if people are prepared to destroy the class system they live in.

In the liberated areas land is divided equally between all families. Even men conscripted into government forces are allocated land until they return. This has played a large part in the high desertion rate in the Saigon army. Villages are run by elected bodies and not by headmen set up by the government. Schools, clinics and small industries are built for the first time, not only by the revolutionary governments but by the people themselves.

If the example of the Indochinese revolution spreads to the rest of South East Asia the local resources of oil, rubber and minerals will be out of the reach of the US corporations which have been moving in since the French left. There are big profits for the US businessman who push the US government into suppressing the revolt and establishing the 'American way of life'.

To safeguard these potential profits and to keep these areas under their influence the Americans have systematically bombed the liberated areas, napalmed the villages and, when the inhabitants move into surrounding forest, killed the crops with defoliants to starve them out.

Isn't Technology a Wonderful Thing?

The withdrawal of US troops simply means that they rely more on bombing than on soldiers. The kind of massacre that happened at My Lai would not have been reported but for the consciences of some US soldiers. (Some of these have been busy blowing up their pro-war officers' hand grenades.) But it only takes one plane loaded with napalm to do the same thing and the pilot doesn't see the results.

The war has become more 'scientific'. Huge areas of Indochina are scattered with small 'sensors' that detect the movement of human beings or animals. They send a radio beam to circling planes which beam the message to US computers in Thailand. These send up bombers to blast the area. Whether the movement detected is a guerilla, a peasant, a water-buffalo or a child is unknown. The result has been the virtual destruction of normal rural life in Indochina. Everyone becomes refugees - 200,000 in Laos, one million in Cambodia - forced into slums and towns or army bases where they are controlled



ROBINSON-WILLEY

an interview with four shop stewards

For over a month now, workers at Robinson Willey, Liverpool, have been on strike. The strike is apparently about the arbitrary dismissal of three shop stewards for misconduct, but in fact it is about the right of the workers in that plant to organise themselves in a union. Management tried to withhold this right, and to sack the stewards in the forefront of the campaign. There was an immediate mass walk out. The Robinson Willey workers have received no help from the official union involved.

Big Flame interviewed four of the five shop stewards involved in the dispute, Graham Whitfield, David Soo, John Roland and David Parkinson. The views they express in the interview are, of course, their own. Inevitably there are things they say which we might not totally agree with, but in general we support the views expressed here, and feel that the Robinson Willey struggle has great relevance to all workers pitted in the struggle against employers government and all too often, the official unions too.

BIG FLAME Did the level of support for the stewards surprise you?

GRAHAM In view of Robinson Willey yes, but not in view of the political development of the working class.

DAVID S. The workers at Robinson Willey have never been militant before, but I think the mood was right for them to take some action.

BIG FLAME What part has the official union played in this dispute?

DAVID S. The biggest part they have played is in trying to destroy the dispute.

GRAHAM The trade union officials are the middle class of the trade union movement, and as such they have been hanging around the board rooms and personnel departments of the management so long that they have started to think like them.

JOHN Their policy is one of peaceful co-existence with the management.

DAVID S. In fact, they have gone further than compromise, they have taken upon themselves the role of strike breakers. For instance the transport drivers, we depend on them very heavily, this is our trump card, control of the gates. But under authority from the union, who issued letters to transport firms, scab firms, they have been crossing the picket lines with these letters stating the strike is unofficial and that the union have recommended a return to work.

BIG FLAME Some people might ask in view of what the union did, and what you think of the union, why try and organise a union inside?

GRAHAM Because it is the only actual body we have to work in. We work with it as rank and file trade unionists, the only alternative to us is to stay within the rank and file to try to build an alternative leadership. Any disputes we say should be settled by the rank and file.

BIG FLAME What about the picket line, has it stayed very solid?

GRAHAM Yes, it is involvement on a mass level. We have had some harsh criticism from the police, who we know are also members of the establishment, who will protect establishment property and rights. They have been most obstructive to ordinary peaceful picketing. When the scab drivers have driven into the plant they have been driving very dangerously, and the police seem to be prepared to turn a blind eye to this. We think this is co-operation between management and police, as we have seen in many other disputes before this, like Burma Oil and the miners strike.

Deprived of their normal means of living - agriculture - they become the underpaid servants of the Government and US troops, pimps, prostitutes and thieves. But even here they organise themselves politically. So the US forces frequently break up refugee camps and move people on to stop them getting together.

U.S. Defeat

But they still can't win. Even these methods couldn't stop the huge revolt in Vietnam in 1968, when the Vietcong captured large parts of Saigon, including the US Embassy! And US planes actually bombed Cholon, a suburb of the capital in open revolt. Only last year, the American CIA leaked that 30,000 members of the Saigon state apparatus are also members of the NLF. The few they caught included members of the government, a servant of a minister and two majors in a police unit formed to counter Vietcong infiltration!

The extent of the US defeat is shown by the terms of the recent peace agreement. US planes in Indochina must stop bombing and after a time they must stop supplying arms to their representatives in Vietnam. President Thieu. If they agree, then US, and increasingly Japanese big business will be prevented from expanding. Local resources will then go to benefit the people of Indochina and not the bank balances of foreign capitalists. It is this the US will try to avoid in the coming period.

Though American agreement to withdraw planes and troops would be a great victory for the revolutionaries, they have been forced to compromise on some points.

In particular, President Thieu will be allowed into the new government of the country. This means the Saigon ruling class would remain in control of those areas still held by its army.

They will obviously be a struggle between the Saigon army and the Vietcong/ North Vietnamese army to decide the future of Vietnam. There are signs that Thieu's police have begun killing the thousands of prisoners in the camps in the South rather than release them.

If the revolutionary armed forces keep to their side of the peace proposals, they will be allowing the South Vietnamese ruling class to survive and fight back. But it is more likely that once the US has gone they will increase their attacks on the remaining Saigon-held areas and hopefully finish the job once and for all.

BIG FLAME R W's have got about 85% female labour, have they played a particular part in the struggle?

GRAHAM Yes, I think we were surprised at the militancy of the women. They were very angry that the chance of a union, and the chance to better conditions for themselves, was taken away from them.

BIG FLAME So do you think the old picture of women being non-political is changing.

DAVID S. Yes, I think we are all becoming more politically educated through struggle.

BIG FLAME What are the working conditions in the factory like?

JOHN The bonus system is a disgrace, one line could be earning \$8 another \$4. For instance, a married man with a couple of kids is paid £19. 50.

DAVID P. They exploit young girls of 15yrs of age, paying them £5 a week, and honestly they do as much work as the men.

BIG FLAME What kind of support have you had from other workers on Merseyside?

GRAHAM We have had very good support. We have had tremendous financial aid. Every place we have approached so far has been a 100%.

BIG FLAME Do you think anything has been learnt through the struggle?

GRAHAM Of course it has. People will go back more politically educated than before. They realise not only the treachery of the management, but also of their own trade union officials. They realise what path they have got to tread. The path of rank and file militancy, to achieve any ends which are worth while.

BIG FLAME Is it going to be easier to organise inside the plant in the future?

DAVID S. Now that the breakthrough has been made, we feel it will be easier. Now the people see that, stewards will stand up to the management. I think that is the change of attitude that people have had.

Big Flame Let's look at things in a wider sense, you can't really talk about any strike now without talking about what the government and the employers are doing nationally. We have a wage freeze, we have the Industrial Relations Act, widespread unemployment. We see this as an attack on the working class. So what can we do about it?

GRAHAM As far as we are concerned, what our officials are doing at R W's is only part of a national trend. The only way that we can combat this is as a strong working class and with a rank and file movement. We must move forward and push for an alternative leadership. We must push for the end of the capitalist system. We see this as a working class struggle, with the working class developing its own ideas through struggle.

DAVID S. The potential of the working class is enormous, but it has been misused by the so-called leaders of the working class - the trade unions and the rest of them. It has been misused because they are not willing to make a stand against the Tory government, or any other government.

GRAHAM. So we recognise the traitors in our midst. We know who our enemies are.

BIG FLAME Is there anything any of you want to add?

GRAHAM Just this. What's happening now at R W's is reflecting a national trend. The rank and file are standing firm. It's the leadership that is backing off. The leadership is leading us nowhere. It'd leading us back down the road from where we came.

We are not prepared to accept this.

IRELAND THE WAR GOES ON

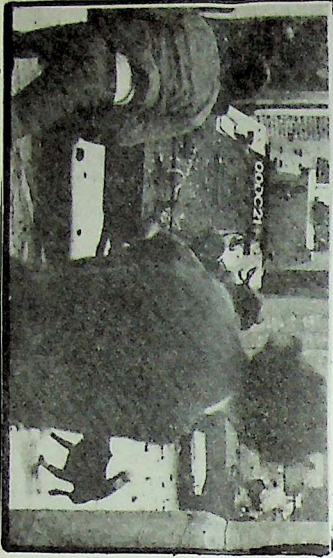
In March of this year, the British Government abolished Stormont and sent over William Whitelaw to operate direct rule. Since then, they have tried out various policies to contain the catholic struggle and regain control over the situation in general, but they have not succeeded. This article looks at the present British strategy and the response of the different groups in Ireland. We then go on to discuss the need for a movement in this country, in solidarity with those socialist and republican forces who are fighting British imperialism.

Two recent events in Ireland - the publication of the Government's Green Paper on Northern Ireland outlining the their attitude to the "available" options, omitting of course the option of a United Socialist Republic free of British capitalism - and the arrest of Sean MacStiofan illustrate the policy of the British Government (or its allies in the South) towards the catholic community at the moment. On the one hand the army is occupying the catholic areas in order to smash the Provisional IRA, but at the same time Whitelaw is trying to give concessions to the catholics. The Green Paper is an attempt to woo the SDLP and the moderates into new-style "representative government". He hopes they can become the leading force among the catholics and draw off support from the IRA. In this way he wants to normalise the situation so that the respectable men can get on with working out how the Irish people can most profitably be exploited in the interests of capitalism.

For a long time now, Britain has wanted to reorganise and streamline its economic relations with both the North and South of Ireland, in preparation for the Common Market. But for all this time, it has had to deal with the catholic communities who didn't want to co-operate with British imperialism, but wanted it out of Ireland completely. Today this resistance is still the main obstacle in Britain's way.

the catholics

For a start, despite the claims of the British Army in capturing top Provisional IRA men, the provos are still strong. There's a joke in the North, that the fastest way to get promoted in the IRA is to be captured, then the British Army are sure to put you up at least two ranks in the statements to the press. Even the arrest of MacStiofan will not seriously affect the provos fighting capacity

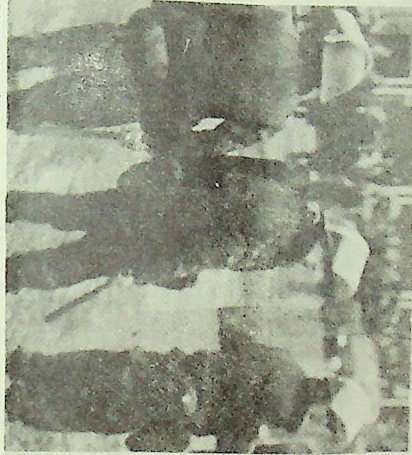


The Majority of catholics have still not been fooled by moves like the "Green Paper". Nor have they been split off from supporting the IRA. In Derry as soon as they heard of MacStiofan's arrest a huge crowd attacked the British Army. In Belfast, on Sunday November 19th there was a 500 strong march organised by the people's Democracy in protest against the setting up of Special Courts (to make internment nice and 'legal'), Whitelaw and the SDLP have not much chance of conciliating the catholics until the remaining 300 internees have been released. But it is these 300 that Whitelaw is afraid to release because most of them will go straight back to the ranks of the provos... Either way, Whitelaw is stuck. On top of this, as long as the protesters are getting angry and threatening, the catholics need the IRA. They can't trust the Army to protect them, as they found out recently when the UDA attacked some catholic families in Andersonstown - and the army took 4hour to come to their 'rescue'. The emergence of the Catholics ex-servicemen's

Association, a further Catholic defence association specifically to counter the growth of the UDA, is a further thorn in Whitelaw's side.

the loyalists

Traditionally the Protestant community has been fanatically loyalist and pro-British. However Whitelaw's present policy has undermined this because it shows clearly that Britain wants to reform the Northern state. As we said earlier, British imperialism wants to make Ireland a more profitable economic unit and this means drawing together in some way North and South. The Green Paper, for example, acknowledges the right of the Southern government to be involved in working out future plans for the North. Such a policy demands that the Northern Catholics are treated better than they have been in the past but this threatens the social and economic superiority that the protestants



are used to enjoying. They don't want their state tampered with. But what do they do - UDI? But many of them realise that their previous economic superiority over the Catholics, depended on protection by British imperialism (e.g. Harland and Wolff that gave jobs to thousands of Protestant workers, was run entirely on British subsidies)

So there are conflicting strategies coming out from the Protestants, and they are organising in a variety of organisations. The Protestants are in confusion at the moment but Whitelaw is a long way off placating them. At least now there is a possibility of the Protestant workers seeing the true colours of British Imperialism and its own middle classes, and seeing its future with that of the Catholic working class.

the need for solidarity

British capitalism's attempts to reorganise its production and profits in view of the Common Market goes on in this country as well as in Ireland. Over here the Government and the bosses are trying to make the British workers suffer in this process through redundancies, speed-ups, wage freezes etc. But here too they face fierce opposition. The outcome of the two struggles is therefore very much connected. If Whitelaw can sort out their Irish problem, the bosses will gain economic and political strength to fight against their British strength (the British working class). So it is in the interests of British revolutionaries and militants to support all forces in Ireland who are actively engaged in struggle against Whitelaw and the British government - at the moment this means the socialist and republican forces. Unfortunately most workers in this country either ignore the Irish struggle or side with the bosses against IRA violence.

Of course it is not necessary to think that every single act of violence committed by the IRA is good. We can often disagree with a particular tactic. (We must however remember that all wars are bloody things) However to disagree in principle that oppressed people are not justified in using violence against the bosses and their state, is quite ludicrous. Only this year picket lines have found that violence may be necessary, so that pickets can be successful and struggles can be won.

ruling class violence

The ruling class is never afraid to use violence when it needs - it keeps a regular army ready and waiting (During the Docks Strike of 1919, it sent

battle ships up the Mersey) - and if we are afraid to reply, we will be beaten every single time. There are people in this country prepared to support the struggle of the Irish against British imperialism, despite the silence in the press about their activities. On Monday Nov 20th the Provisional Sinn Fein in Britain picketed the Irish Embassy in London.

anti-internment league

And on Sunday Nov. 12th about 2,000 people from Irish and Socialist organisations took part in an Anti-Internment League march in London. They called for the release of all Irish political prisoners, and the withdrawal of all British troops, and supported the right of the Irish people to determine their own future without outside interference, declaring their solidarity with all those Republican and socialist forces fighting British imperialism.

There is a branch of the Anti-Internment League on Merseyside. For further details please contact Big Flame or Alan Lenton, 10 Pinfold Close, Bootle, Lanes.

COURTAULDS SPIN A YARN!

Lord Kearton, boss of Courtaulds and self-styled Labour peer, announced this month that the Skelmersdale plant was to close - with only a six month run down period. The closure bombshell would have pushed the unemployment figure from 8% to an astronomical 18% for the new town - with over 1,000 Courtaulds workers redundant.

The same day as the closure announcement every boss in Skelmersdale put up the notice "NO VACANCIES".

The day after, the Courtaulds bosses started sending the workers home - but always keeping enough labour to have the plant running for a return to work. The "final decision" to close started to stink.

For the next five days the trade union officials were falling over each other to offer the best sell-out terms to the package to the rank and file.

Within five days the "irrevocable" and "final" decision to close the plant had been reversed - the factory had a "reprieve".

scare tactic

The bosses scare tactic worked. The union officials offered them 6 months peace in the factory and pressured the workers into accepting the sell-out package, negotiated in the comfort of various five star hotels.

For the 1,000 workers - no economic demands for six months and massive speed ups. The Courtaulds bosses keep the machinery running 24 hours a day anyway, and the workers have to work four shifts in conditions of terrible heat, noise and boredom.

tame work force

The bosses now hope to have a tame work-force that will jump to every crack of the whip. Courtaulds can shout closure every time the workers give them a pain in the arse.

The flames of resistance to the bosses weren't completely smothered by the scare, despite the union sell-out. A minority of workers voted against the six month package at the mass meeting and many have already collected their speed-ups and reduction in living standards. They preferred life on the dole to life in a capitalist factory.

The same scare tactic was used by Courtaulds a few years ago at the Leigh factory. Capitalism will use every way they can to maintain and increase profit levels. The day of the so-called Reprieve Courtaulds own Lord Kearton announced that profits were up by a third and should reach well over £50 million.

Big Flame would welcome letters as a regular feature. Also information and articles about whats going on in Liverpool, big or small. Subscriptions now 50p. for 10 issues. P&P Big Flame, 22 Woburn Hill, Old Swan, Liverpool - Tel - 220 5223.

29/80
28/54

FORDS & VAUXHALLS

Letters

Dear Big Flame,

As a worker in Ford Halewood, I would like to say something about the shop stewards at Fords. As our wages agreement comes to an end soon, myself and other workers are concerned about the way it may go. It is obvious to us that the convenor and Joint Works Committee shop stewards are operating a policy of non-participation of the rank and file, and conditioning them to it. Here is a few reasons why.

The convenor says that we should keep politics out of work. This was illustrated by the handling of the mass meeting called for the fair rents one day token strike, which followed the pattern of previous mass meetings in the way it was conducted, and was one of the most undemocratic meetings I have ever witnessed. And everyone just more or less accepted it.

When the convenor opened up his speech, the first thing he said was, "Well personally I am against it lads". That was enough, he never gave it a chance. When the vote was taken HE said it was 50 - 50. So he had another vote. It was then decided that the vote was against and everyone went back into the plant... everyone except 29 men off the sealer, and later in a deal between the convenor and the company, these men were scattered around the plant.

Other mass meetings have been carried out in the same un-democratic manner. The two lads sacked off the trim line nine months ago, were sacked because of their political beliefs. This is common knowledge, but the mass meeting about this was a disgrace. The convenor, the man who was elected to defend workers rights, was doing everything in his power to turn the meeting against the sacked men, which he succeeded in doing. And these men have been on the dole ever since. As one lad said, leaving the meeting "Maguire (P.T.A. convenor) sounded like the personal manager".

Then just recently the company asked for overtime working. FIRSI Maguire and the Joint Works Committee agreed to work it. This was published on a leaflet put out by the management. THEN it was decided to have a mass meeting to decide whether to work overtime or not. This is democracy Halewood style. That mass meeting went the usual way....both sides were never put....just one mans opinion and that is it. Needless to say we are working overtime today.

So I don't think this next wage agreement is going to be half what we expected, because the management in Halewood know as well as we do that the shop stewards organisation is completely dominated by right wing opportunists and careerists whose only aim in life is personal advancement, and as for anything as democratic as shop floor participation is concerned well they just won't wear it. The Ford motor company must be laughing all the way to the bank.

A Ford P.T.A. Worker
(name and address supplied)

At the end of February 1973 the contract of Ford and Vauxhall workers expires. Most probably one of the most important sections of the working class will be engaged in a hard struggle which might mark another open confrontation between workers and bosses/government.

What it means:

for the working class

The car workers are a large and militant section of the British working class and because of their strength, they could do to the present freeze what the miners did to the 7% norm last year - smash it. By inflicting one major defeat on the common enemy, they could put the whole of the working class in a better position to take on the bosses and the government.



putting the screws on Henry Ford

But if there is a major confrontation in the car industry next year, a very important test will be set before the working class movement: that of solidarity. This will be a particularly important test because the present government offensive keeps plugging the idea that it is the higher paid workers who keep down the lower paid, and people like pensioners. This argument is implicitly accepted by the TUC and the Trade Union Leaders. It is completely false; it's ridiculous to think that if the car workers don't win their increase this will somehow persuade the government to give that money to the pensioner or the lower paid.

for the bosses & heath

In the past year the ruling class and their government has had two major confrontations with sections of the working class: the miners and the dockers. They lost the first one, they suffered a partial defeat in the second one, they need to smash in the car workers. They need it politically to be able to enter the Common Market in a period of stable social peace at home with the working class under control. They need it economically, because they are in crisis and can't afford another set back. This is one of the main reasons behind Heath's freeze; to be able to sign a settlement of £3 or £4 with the car workers in March without even one day strike.

for the unions

Jones, Scanlon, Feather and Co, are in trouble. The miners, dockers and builders have shown many instances of rebellion against the directives of the Union leaders. It was the rank and file who won in the mines, not the NUM. It was the dockers who defeated the Act, not the T & G. It was a spontaneous upsurge of solidarity among workers who freed the five jailed dockers, not Feather and the TUC. The Union bureaucracyes need to conduct major struggles all their own way. They need to show all the other workers that they can't retain control over the rank and file and the best occasion to do this is the coming car workers struggle.

ARE FORDS WORKERS STRONGER OR WEAKER THAN IN 1971? This is a very difficult question. One thing is sure; the shop stewards organ-

isation is weaker. Not only in the sense that the convenors and most of the stewards have taken a consistently right wing line since April 1971, but also in the sense that because of this, they've lost a lot of credibility on the shop floor. They have never really involved the rank and file. Their deals and compromises have only crushed the initiatives from the shop floor.

A few weeks ago when the Vauxhall convenors asked their Fords counterparts to organise a joint mass meeting of carworkers on Merseyside, the Halewood PTA convenor rejected the idea because it would be "too dangerous".

Two years ago the Halewood workers had several meetings to discuss their coming claim. This time there have been none.

But it would be wrong to say that the workers are weaker now because the shop stewards are. The two things are related but not the same. There are a number of things which show our potential - the high number of disputes before the holidays, mostly through the direct action of the workers (and the number in Vauxhall was even higher): the initiatives taken by small groups against the advice of the convenor: the fact that despite no information from the stewards many workers are talking about and preparing for the next claim.

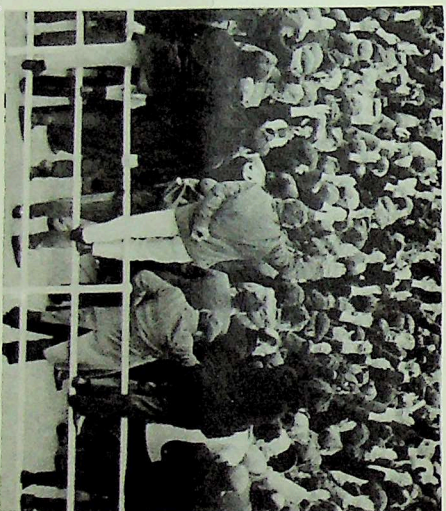
At the same time a few negative things have happened. Before the holidays about 8 workers were sacked - at least 2 of them for political victimisation - and the reaction of the shop floor was weak. Many militants seem to have lost any illusions in convenors and shop stewards, but don't seem to have understood the need for starting alternative forms of organisation.

THE DEMANDS

Against the vague wishy-washiness of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (no-body knows exactly what we're going for) Big Flame has put forward a series of demands in all British Ford plants which are both clear and meet the needs of the majority of Ford workers.

The most important of them are:

- **£15 across the board in one go.** Management says it's a dream - it's too much. So let's have a few facts. The last increase was eaten up by prices before we even got it. We lost that much in the 8 week strike! In the past 2 years the cost of living has gone up by about 20% and 20% of £30 is £6. On top of that we have to count the new tax system, increased rates and rents if we don't smash the Fair Rent Act and general price rises. (We leave it to fools to trust Heath's



Dagenham. February 1971

price freeze). With all this nobody can say that £15 is an unreasonable demand) - that's to say, unreasonable from the workers point of view. We don't care if this fits in with Henry Fords profit schedule.

■ 35 hour week, paid 40, with no speed-ups

The job is unbearable, and we want to work less. We also show our concrete solidarity with the unemployed, giving them a chance of being hired.

Bryants Visit

Workers from Bryant Colour, the London print firm, who are currently holding a work-in, visited Merseyside at the end of October.

They talked with workers occupying CAV Lucas and Manesty Machines and obtained good financial support and pledges of solidarity from Merseyside print unions and the Dockers Shop Stewards Committee.

They also received some contracts up here.

After a series of closures in the London print industry, Bryant Colour workers have said, "This is where it stops!" They blame managerial incompetence and directors personal abuse of company money for the lack of cash flow which was the alleged reason for closure. Unlike at UGS, when the liquidator arrived at Bryant Colour, he was barred out of the premises. The lads are confident that they can negotiate terms to continue working under one of the companies interested in taking over Bryants.

■ No time limit agreement

Whatever settlement is made at Fords this time will reflect the relative strength of both sides at that time. But if our needs change as they're bound to, or if our shop-floor organisations become stronger, then we'd be fools to recognise the legality of a settlement with the bosses. We must learn to take from Fords whenever we can or want to. They exploit us every day of the week.

■ Full pay off pay

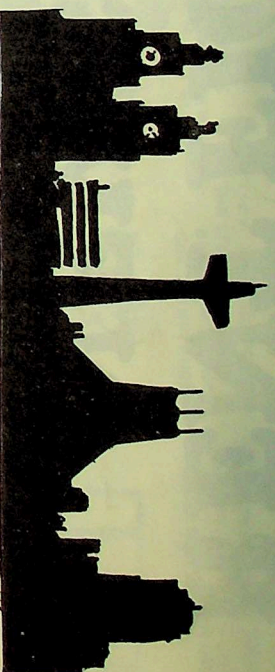
If for some reason Fords dont need us at any time thats O.K. as it means less work. But we are not interested in taking a wage cut into the bargain.

BIG BLAME

Jan-feb

MERSEYSIDE
SOCIALIST
NEWSPAPER

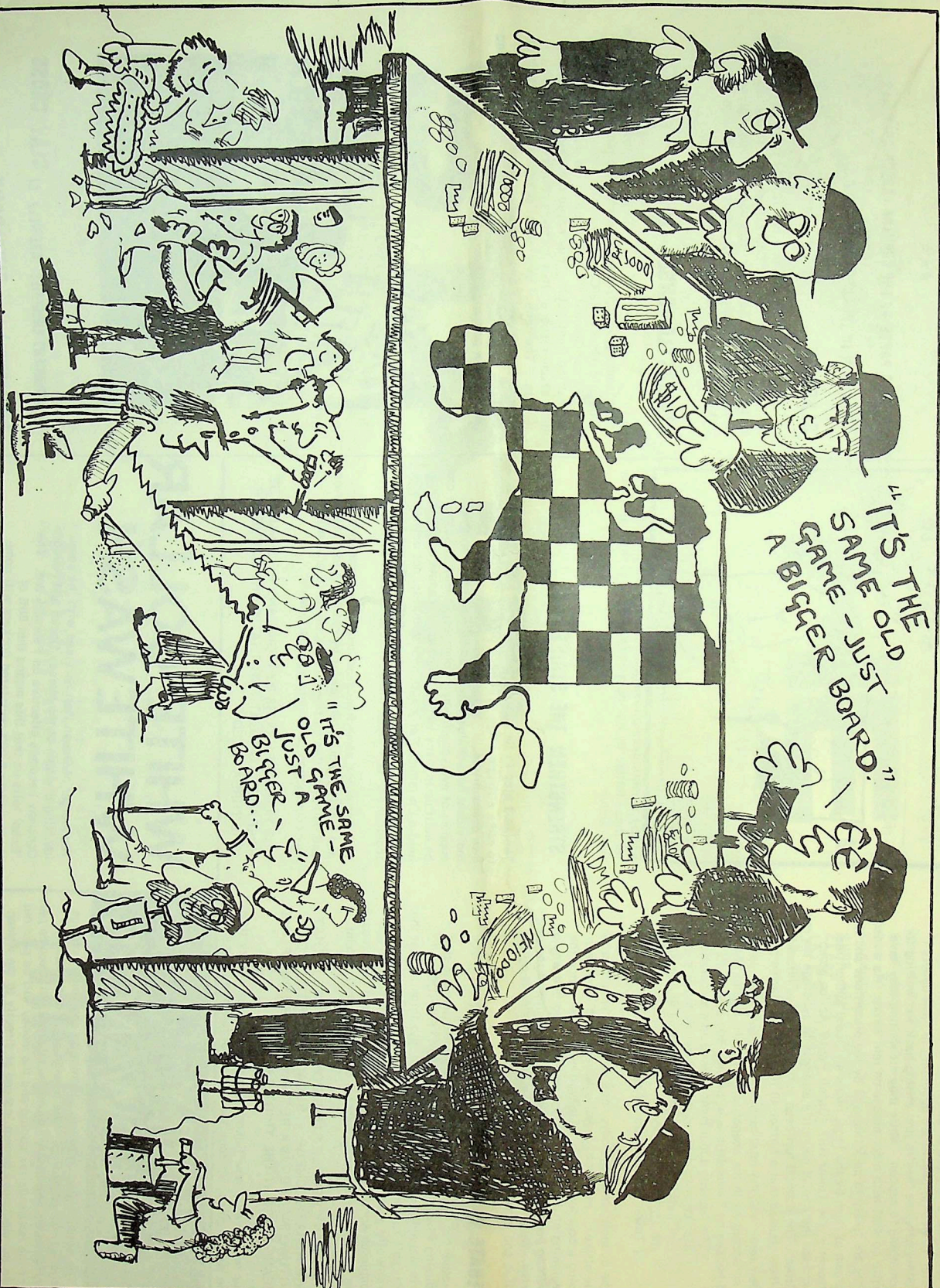
NO.6



NOTHING IN COMMON WITH THE

BOSSSES' MARKET

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In or out of the Common Market Merseyside is a depressed area. The present system is marked by inequalities between sexes, races, classes and regions. Regions like Merseyside, South Wales, Scotland Tyneside, Northern Ireland and the South West have relatively high unemployment and low investment. Capitalists only invest where profits are high and no amount of reforms, like giving tax concessions to firms moving into the 'regions' can alter this. Workers are forced to migrate to areas of relatively high employment (the South East and the Midlands) to find work. In the EEC both labour and capital can move freely across borders. Now the few people who control the wealth of the nine countries have areas of potential profit to choose from. Investment will go on concentrating in areas like South East England, the Paris region, Germany and northern Italy. Other areas are being deliberately run down or artificially maintained. In a state of under-development.

Migrants

Thousands of workers will migrate to work in prosperous areas of England. But equally, British workers will go to work over there. Emigration has always been a feature of the Irish or Welsh working class, now it becomes multinational.

The advantages to the employers are obvious. They often mix up workers of different nationalities to place language problems in the way of organisation, and they rely on the racialism and nationalism of native workers to divide the workforce.

Closures

So the recent closures and threats of closures in this area are not just the result of 'low profits' or 'labour troubles'. In big companies any plant can be made to show a loss just by adjusting the books. Courtaulds want to close the Skem factory to concentrate and thereby save labour costs in order to compete effectively in the EEC. Similarly Lucas CAV will move their factory (if the workers let them) to Spain where wages are much lower. That way Lucas can undersell foreign competitors. The sharper competition that comes with entry into Europe means that capitalists will try to discard their less viable plants in marginal areas and that means places like Merseyside.

The Common Market represents the uniting of the ruling classes of nine countries, for their own benefit and for the more efficient exploitation of the European working classes. But the workers of the world are not united themselves. The answer to the EEC is not the demand to keep British Capitalism out - or maybe

we prefer to be exploited by British bosses rather than any others. To prevent one country being played off against another we must unite. The links between stewards in Durlup and Pirelli is a start. Dockers in several continental countries blacked ships intended for British ports drying the dock strike. Recently port workers at Avonmouth held up a Greek ship until the owners paid back pay to the crew who are prevented from having unions by the fascist Greek regime. And a link up between Ford workers in Britain and the continent is on the cards. Either at shop steward or rank and file level.

Two Struggles

In the coming period there will probably be two major areas of struggle - one to co-operate with foreign workers, and secondly to resist the deliberate running down of certain areas like Merseyside to serve as pools of labour for the European market. The threatened steel plant closures in already depressed areas like Shotton, Ebbw Vale, and central Scotland are part of the fanfare for Europe. You can't fight such moves with the 'we will work harder' attitude at present employed by the action group at Shotton. They can only be resisted by the same tactics used by French workers resisting steel closures in Lorraine - mass strikes and plant occupations. WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE. THE BOSSES ARE ALREADY UNITED.

RENT FIGHT NEWS

RENT STRIKE STILL STRONG

The rent strike on Merseyside has now entered its fourth month

..... the rent arrears in Tower Hill, Kirkby now amount to over £53,000.

..... since the 9th Oct. - we are reliably informed that 50% of people in Scotland Road area are still either on total rent strike or are withholding the increase.

..... 75% of tenants in Bootle on partial rent strike, have built up a £150,000 debt to the Corp. Bootle tenants also refused to pay any rent at all for one week over Christmas, when the Corp refused to give them the usual 'free week' because they were in arrears.

Although the rent strike is still numerically strong, it is beginning to stagnate because of the lack of activity by a lot of those who are on strike.

After 12 weeks, people are beginning to have doubts - mainly because they're just sitting back and waiting for something to happen. While they sit waiting they have little contact with other people on rent strike. As a result they are likely to be influenced by the distortions and lies thrown at them by the local press and local authorities. Recently, the Tower Hill, 'Unfair Rents' Action group exposed their local council's attempts to sabotage the rent strike. The council had been putting out false information - they claimed that a further 49 tenants had started paying their rent. Yet the total rent collected only went up by £28 - so according to the council's 'official' figures the rents of houses on Tower Hill must be only 80p a week !!!

' The housing department have been manipulating statistics in order to demoralise the tenants on rent strike - make them feel isolated and break the strike in this way. '

(Tower Hill Rent Strike bulletin no. 7)

The council aren't the only ones who are trying to break the strike ... Halewood tenants action group have been using a boarded up shop as a wall newspaper since the beginning of the strike. It has been an important way of keeping people in touch with what's happening in the rent strike. We are now being prevented from using it by the police and local property-owners.

REBATE IS A CON

Another big threat to the rent strike is written into the Housing Finance Act itself - the REBATE 'FIDDLE'. It's managing to fool a lot of people into thinking that the Act isn't so bad after all - especially the few who are eventually getting their rebates through. Pensioners and people on Social Security who still haven't got their rebate are too frightened to do anything but pay the full amount.

WHAT MANY PEOPLE STILL DON'T REALISE IS THAT THE REBATE SCHEME - BECAUSE IT IS TIED TO ACTUAL INCOME - IS A RETURN TO THE ERA OF THE MEANS TESTS IN THE THIRTIES.

Our rent level is now linked to our wage level - every time the wages go up, so does the amount of rent they say we

FAMILY ALLOWANCES

The present government is planning to completely change the way we pay taxes. One change will be that family allowances and family income supplement will become part of the husbands tax coding and the money will be paid out in the man's pay packet instead of directly to the woman by the Post Office or Social Security Office.

For many women, the Family Allowance is their only reliable source of income. In a recent survey over half the women said that on occasions the Family Allowance had been their sole income for a week. It is usually cashed on Tuesdays for food to tide the family over until the end of the week, but some women save it for children's clothing or shoes or to pay bills.

A certain amount of a man's pay packet will be allowances for his wife and children - but there is no guarantee that she will actually receive this. She will be even more dependant on her husband for money and yet still feel she is the one responsible for feeding and clothing the children.

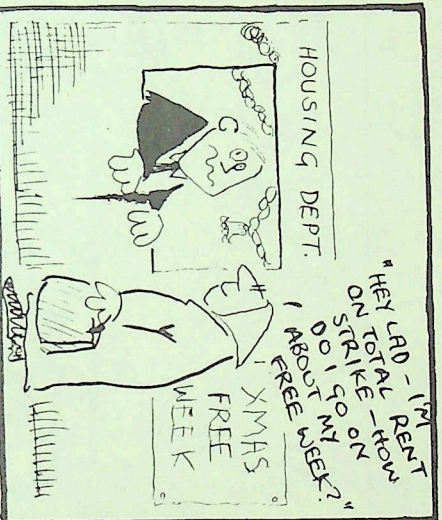
The Merseyside Women's Liberation Group and some other women's organisations are campaigning to force the government to continue to pay child allowances direct to the mother. If you are interested, please contact them at 2, Rutland Avenue, Liverpool 17, or go to an open meeting there at 8 o'clock, Thursday 18th January.

can afford. A vicious spiral. The only thing that doesn't change is the bad state of our homes and the non-existent maintenance services.

COUNCILS NEW TACTICS

In November, by united action in Kirkby, tenants and workers from local factories beat the council's attempts to evict rent strikers. Now that the council is using more devious methods we have to be prepared for different action

While a lot of people are sitting out the strike and hoping for the best, Labour councillors in Kirkby voted on the 27th December to send warning letters to every tenant on rent strike - threatening court action. They intend to establish rent arrears as a 'civil debt' which allows them to get orders for 'attachment of earnings' the rent will be taken out of your wage packet before you even see it !! This is already happening to people on Social Security - whose rent is being withheld from their weekly allowance.



Kirkby tenants have already decided to show their contempt for these letters by having a mass burning of them all when they arrive.

STRENGTHEN THE STRIKE

The next step is for tenants organisations on Merseyside to make stronger links with each other and within their own communities.

Individual households should be able to count on the support of everyone in their community. Mutual support can be built up in many ways... Halewood tenants action group held a Christmas Party with over 200 kids, not only was it fun for the kids but it gave the adults a chance to get together and talk about things that affected their community

We must at the same time move out of the communities and build up industrial support by picketing local factories and building sites getting pledges of strike action if any court action is brought against tenants.

OUR HOMES ARE OURS BY RIGHT AND WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO FIGHT FOR THAT RIGHT WHENEVER IT IS THREATENED.

WHITE COLLAR WHITEWASH

The merger of Ocean Port Services with the cargo handling division of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company becomes effective on February 3rd. The 'Echo' tells us that this means that 80% of Merseyside's 8,000 registered dockers will come under the Harbortown Company. The 'Echo' also tells us that 82 people will lose their jobs because of the merger. But adds that 'it's all right, because they are only clerical workers'. It's right that a paper like the 'Echo' should feel frightened at the prospect that actual dockers could be sacked - but isn't it about time that clerical workers were given some support. After all on Merseyside in 1973 it makes no difference if you are a sacked clerical worker or a sacked docker - you can't get any work. The only way to stop redundancies is by fighting together.

DOCKS PAMPHLET

COMING SOON FROM BIG FLAME AND FACTFINDER. A NEW PAMPHLET ON THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DOCK INDUSTRY AND THE RECENT DOCKERS STRUGGLES.

Coming soon - a pamphlet on how to handle law, how to struggle the law, and how to defeat class justice.

A PEOPLES GUIDE TO
THE LAW - ISSUE 2
Address - 1 Elgin Avenue, London W 1.
Or from Big Flame.
Price: 15p.

What the Labour Councils are up to

LIVERPOOL

While Kirkby Council openly threatens Tower Hill tenants, the 21 so-called 'rebel' councillors from Liverpool have now returned to the Labour Group. These 21 Labour councillors were supposed to have resigned when the Act was first implemented. They have returned to the council on a programme which states:-

- (1) The Labour Group should be committed to link up with the Trades Council, tenants associations and any sections of the Labour Party which are actively opposing the Housing Finance Act.
- (2) The special committee given powers to implement the Act in Liverpool, be dismantled immediately. In future any such powers should be in the hands of the Housing Committee and City Council as they had been before.
- (3) A 'pledge' shall be given that tenants on rent strike will not be evicted.

WE CANNOT TRUST THESE COUNCILLORS TO LOOK AFTER ANYBODIES INTERESTS EXCEPT THEIR OWN. They only left the council to save face. The programme they have set out is so much a token gesture as was the dramatic way in which they left the council in the first place. They have now said that their action in leaving the Labour Group for a short time has 'given some credibility' to the Labour Party on this issue. THEY SAY YOU CAN'T HAVE IT BOTH WAYS - BUT THEY'RE HAVING A GOOD TRY. Tenants on rent strike will need more than vague assurances before they ever again put their faith in Liverpool's Labour Councillors.

IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY LABOUR COUNCILS'

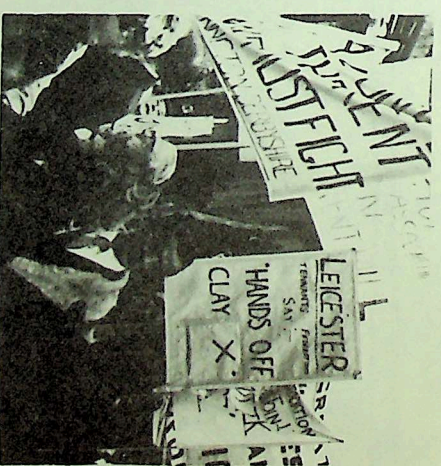
OPPOSITION TO THE ACT IS CRUMBLING

GLASGOW

The City council has finally voted to implement the Act. 14 more Labour Councillors have joined the side of the Tories. The councillors had previously given assurances to Glasgow tenants that they would go to jail before they'd implement the Act.

NEWCASTLE - UNDER - LYME

Reg Lane, the Labour Party's local leader gave a personal assurance to tenants associations after Newcastle Council voted to implement the Act - 'The Labour Council will not stand in the way of protest against the Rent Act.' They hoped that this would relieve them of any responsibility for the actions of Newcastle tenants. The central government demanded the eviction of tenants on rent strike and threatened to surcharge the Council. The Labour Councillors immediately about-faced and are now preparing to evict 500 tenants.



GOVERNMENT ENQUIRIES ARE HELD AT CLAY CROSS

(DERBYSHIRE) AND CLYDEBANK TWO OF THE LABOUR COUNCILS THAT ARE STILL HOLDING OUT

A large demonstration heckled the Tory investigators at CLAY CROSS Town Hall. The 11 Labour councillors who are still refusing to implement the act face the possibility of personally paying off the £7,985 rent arrears. The Council have unfortunately tried to fight the government, by searching for legal loop holes. This can only end in defeat. The strength of the CLAY CROSS fight against the Rent Act lies with the tenants and not with legal quibbles.

CLYDEBANK: The tenants have shown their council that they are not prepared to sit around and wait for the Tory hatchet-men. A government enquiry was abandoned after a few minutes when demonstrators marched on the hall where the investigators were sitting.

The success of the rent strikes is in the hands of the tenants. It's not enough to sit around and hope that any Labour Councillor can carry on the fight for us.

THE FIGHT CANNOT REMAIN IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS - IT MUST COME FROM THE STREETS.



THEY CAME TO TAKE AWAY THE ROCKETS BUT I DID NOTHING 'COS I'M NOT STRIKE



THEY CAME TO TAKE AWAY THE CLERKANTS BUT I DID NOTHING 'COS I'VE GOT R JOB.



THEY CAME TO EVICT THE SQUATTERS BUT I DID NOTHING 'COS I'VE GOT A HOME



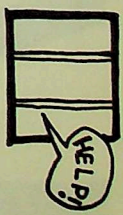
THEY CAME FOR THE GRANBY ST KIDS BUT I DID NOTHING 'COS I'M NOT BLACK



THEY CAME TO TAKE AWAY THE STOKES NEWINGTONS BUT I DID NOTHING 'COS I'M NOT ANGRY.



THEN THEY CAME TO TAKE ME AWAY AND THERE WAS NO ONE TO HELP



FRANKIFIED

Eight people were charged with "conspiracy to charge explosions" between 1968 and 1971 involving 25 separate bombings. All 8 pleaded not guilty to all charges. They all denied using bombs.

John Barker, Hilary Creek, Jim Greenfield and Anna Mendelson were found guilty and sentenced to ten years. The jury had been deadlocked for three days and initially split 7 for a conviction and 5 for an acquittal. Finally, the judge demanded a majority verdict of 10 to 2 and the Prosecution ended up with its quota of victims.

Several Socialist newspapers.

First Jake Prescott and Ian Purdie - Jake got 15 years, and Ian was acquitted after spending 6 months in jail. When the Stoke Newington Eight were finally brought to trial they were described by Habershon, the Chief Inspector on the trial, as "likely candidates for an outrage". In other words, somebody has got to be convicted and it might as well be them. The popular press especially after the verdict has been prepared to spread the most vicious lies making our eight

brothers and sisters seem like dangerous perverted maniacs, completely isolated from everything else that's going on. They haven't said that the eight were picked off because, like thousands of other people they were involved in open political activity.

Nor have they reported what happened in the trial when much of the police evidence was destroyed.

Anna, Hilary, Jim & John were NOT found guilty of committing any

BY THE

In this trial, four people were acquitted and two others had charges dropped because of the lack of evidence. In a previous related trial one person was acquitted and one convicted. Out of a total of thirteen people charged with the Angry Brigade conspiracy the police have got only five convictions. All the bombings claimed by the Angry Brigade tried to draw attention to various working class struggles going on at the time. They were all attacks on the property of the bosses and MPs etc., and never against people.

STATE

On January 12th 1971 the day of mass opposition to the Industrial Relations Bill, Robert Carr's front door blew up. The papers never mentioned that this and all the other bombings were just one part of massive opposition to government and employers. Nor did they mention that the Angry Brigade bombings accounted for a small proportion of the 123 political bomb attacks against property between 1968 and 1971. From that time it was vital for the police to find scapegoats - to direct attention away from the thousands on strike to a tiny minority of "madmen" and to show that the ruling class still rules. A Special Branch Bomb Squad was given the green light by the government to "get results at all costs" so they did. A massive witchunt started including over sixty raids on the homes of militants, shop stewards at work and

bombings - the evidence collapsed. But they will now spend ten years in prison because they were found guilty of the vaguely defined offence of "conspiracy" to bomb.

The police claim that documents found in their home were plans for further bombings. In fact they research into ruling-class racketeers like property speculation and Securicor. This kind of research is done by many militants to get a better understanding of the way employers and government work. Much of this information has already been used by workers on strike, tenants and Claimants Unions.

Police also claim they found guns and explosives in the house. The eight defendants said these were planted. Only a few weeks before the police

THE FOLLOWING WORD TESTS TO GAUGE YOUR EMOTIONAL STABILITY.



BOOMBING DIKES.



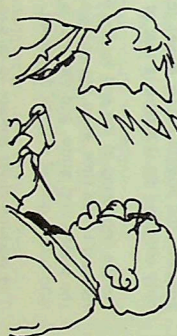
THE PENTAGON PAPERS.



DROPPING MORE BOMBS ON VIETNAM THAN WERE DROPPED IN WORLD WAR TWO AND KOREA COMBINED



MY LAL.



HOW AM I DOCTOR? PERFECTLY NORMAL.



The Freeze

The massive increase in prices, rising 12p in the pound since the freeze began, just confirms what we said from the start - this is a wage freeze, designed to restore profit levels at our expense. We are being made to pay for the bosses's crisis. The concession to the lower-paid this week, which lets them negotiate a minor increase, is just a diversion. No-one, not even the Tories, can deny that prices have continued to rise. Wages have remained static, while the so-called 'statutory' controls on prices have been totally ineffective. Worse is to come - substantial rises in the price of bread and eggs are on the way and no doubt others, now we are in the Common Market.

Meanwhile the working-class response has been very weak. The unions have knuckled under and only raised feeble croaks of protest as the Tories kick them around. There has been no fight for wage increases. All the unions have protested about has been to be allowed to negotiate now for increases AFTER THE FREEZE. Health Service and Gas-workers and Civil Service clerks have pressed for action over their pay claims, but their union leaders have tried to cool them down.

The miners, railwaymen and car workers, whose pay claims are to be negotiated during Phase 2 of the freeze, must learn from these failures. What happens after phase 1 ends on Feb. 27th could be one of two things...either a 60-day extension, or the re-introduction of Prices and Incomes Boards. Neither will change anything. Wages will be CONTROLLED while the government...relies on adverse publicity to control rising prices...



Michelle O'Callaghan, from Speke, is the sixth person to be successfully framed by the State. She was accused of possessing explosives. At the Old Bailey on December 19th, she was sentenced to 18 months: the books she read, the posters she had on her wall, and the friends she kept were the evidence against her. On this kind of "evidence" anyone in the socialist movement would be convicted.

LASH OUT

The ancillary hospital workers - porters, cleaners, telephonists drivers and laundry workers - have been on the move. There have been local strikes and on Dec. 13th a national token stoppage.

At present N.U.P.E., the main union involved, is holding a secret ballot of all its members to decide on future action in support of their demands for a £4 rise and a 35 hour week. The hospital workers are being asked to choose between 3 alternative courses of action.

What is needed is effective action, not a repeat of the token strike last month. The hospital workers are up against a government attacking on two fronts - by introducing the wage freeze and by beginning to dismantle the National Health Service (NHS).

Wage Freezes Spread Diseases.

The wage freeze imposed by the government from Nov. to Feb. applies equally to every worker in the country. But its effects have been felt particularly severely by the LOW-PAID WORKERS

Firstly, because all the increases in prices which slip through the freeze, most severely effect those with the least money to spend. Secondly, the timing of the 90 day freeze was designed to avoid conflict with the big claims from powerful sectors like the car workers and the miners.

But this has meant it hitting many of the low paid sectors - hospital workers, farm workers, civil servants - whose claims come up at this time of year.

So much for the government propaganda about the freeze being designed to help the low paid catch up!

The freeze is designed to do one thing only - to hit the working class and try and get back some of the gains it has won over the past few years.

For too long the government has used the low paid, and especially the public sector workers, as an excuse for dividing the working class. The hospital workers, and others like the gas supply workers, are beginning to show they are no longer prepared to put with this.

After the 90 freeze there will a period of wage restraint. It is important that the working class is able to smash through any norms that the government may attempt to impose. The miners showed the way last winter by knocking a hole in the previous norm. Now many groups of workers will be queuing up to do the same.

Govt. kills N.H.S.

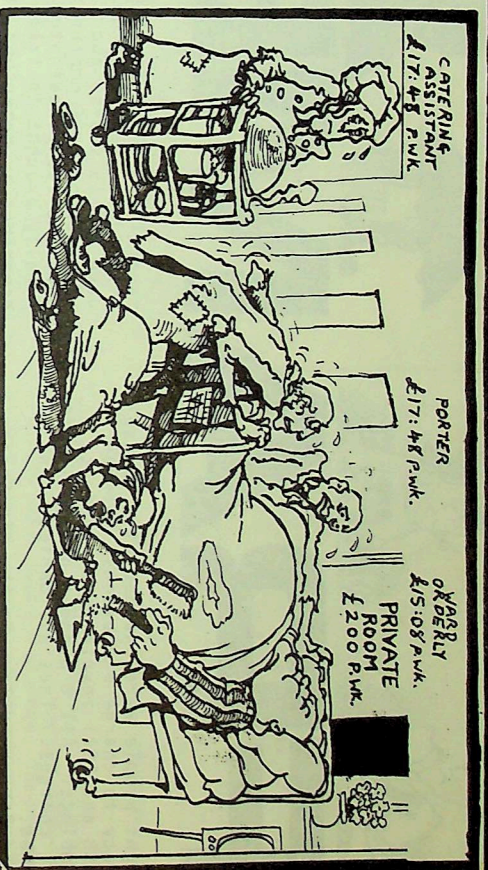
But there's another reason why hospital workers are in for a tough fight. They work in an industry which is being RUN-DOWN, RATIONALISED AND CUT-BACK.

RUN-DOWN: Britain spends a smaller proportion of the national wealth on health now than it did in 1950, and less than almost every other country in W. Europe. By 1970 there was a waiting list of 530,000 people for hospital beds in Britain. Services which were previously free are now means tested.....prescription charges, dental charges, surgical appliances, spectacles.....

RATIONALISED: A government White Paper on the Health Service makes the following proposals:-

1) To change the administrative structure of hospitals, giving even more control to the government and local businessmen, rather than to those who use and work in the hospitals.

2) These measures will probably mean "rationalisation", i.e. the closing of small hospitals and the amalgamation of others into massive "super hospitals". The effect of this will be to make access to local services even more difficult especially for people outside the big towns.

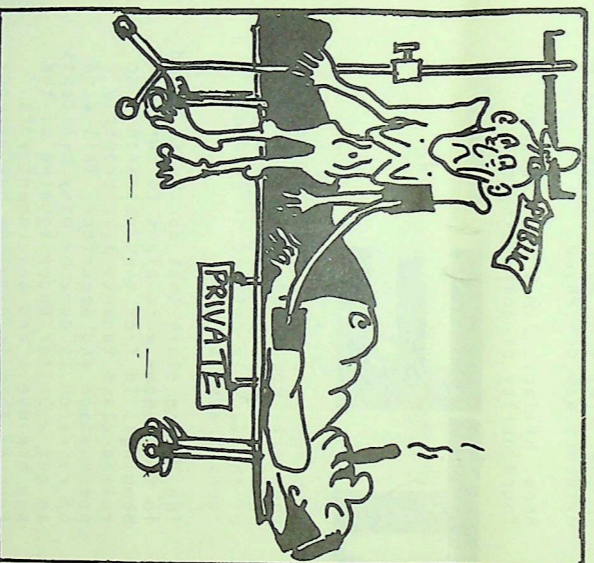


3) The introduction of scientific management into the hospitals. This will mean productivity deals for workers - more work extracted for the same labour costs - and consequently less individual treatment for patients.

4) The consolidation of the policy of making people pay more for health services through charges, and encouraging private facilities.

Side by side with change in the nature of the NHS, has developed a growing private sector in the health service. BUPA, the largest of these schemes, now has 2.1 million members, most of whom are paid by their employers.

Of course, it's the management, not the workers, that get these perks. Private beds now account for 2% of all hospital beds, and the number is growing all the time. Often this has developed at the expense of the public health services. Although the majority of GPs and hospital doctors have contracts with the NHS, many spend most of their time treating private patients, using NHS equipment and facilities.



Means Test State

All this means that the hospital workers work in an industry which generally rates very low in the government's list of priorities for expenditure. For the moment they seem content just to encourage the growth of the private sector, in line with their attempts to replace the National Insurance scheme with private pensions. They talk about "the contribution the private sector makes to the NHS" - but the only contribution it makes is that of the thief.

It's the beginning of the end for the NHS. We can look forward to the time when the welfare state is replaced by the means test state, and the NHS will only exist for those who 'can't afford' private treatment.

The working class answer to this is seen in the health workers strike, who by proposing to withdraw all facilities from private patients, have opened the first round in the battle to create a ready free welfare state.

While it remains a low priority industry, hospital workers are not just fighting the present freeze. They're fighting a policy that public health is not something worth spending money on, which means that those who work in it aren't worth paying much either..

Unions : incapable.

The Unions have shown themselves to be completely incapable of dealing with either the wage freeze or the run-down of the health service. Partly this is because of the sectional nature of tradeunions - they represent their members, not the working class as a whole. NUPE, COHSE, TGWU and GMMW are to some extent in competition for membership.

But a more important reason is that the unions always run away from 'politics'. They say their purpose is to defend the economic conditions of the workers, but when the government attacks you politically you have to fight back politically. The unions seem to expect the government's offensives to fade away without a fight.

The behaviour of the Union officials in the hospitals dispute has been to hold back the workers whenever they've tried to develop their counter-attack, and generally to take over the struggle.

In everything they've done, they've just been playing for time. A token stoppage with no follow-up planned, a ballot with so many alternatives that it can only be confusing, a meaningless resolution passed here in Liverpool at the Pienhead addressed to Ted Heath.

Token strikes can sometimes help to boost morale, but not when they are used to head off rising militancy. At the rally after the Liverpool march the only contribution to receive a cheer came from a worker from the Liverpool United Hospitals when he attacked "the rubbish the unions have been handing us". But he had to force his way onto the platform to say it!

Rank and File Organization

The current wave of militancy among hospital workers began earlier in the year with massive walkouts from hospitals in Bristol, Gloucester and London. Out of these actions workers from 50 London hospitals set up LASH (The London Alliance of Stewards for Health Workers). This is a rank and file organization which has now spread to other areas. Branches are established in Bristol and Manchester, and one is being set up in Liverpool. A national organization (NASH) has also been created.

While the unions ask for £4 the militants say that this would only bring them back to the standard of living they had 2 years ago - a wage below the national average for semi-skilled workers, and even below the TUC's recommended minimum. The real demands have come from the rank and file for an £8 rise and a 35 hour week.

Coupled with this has been the call for ACTION (not just protest) against the freeze, and a discussion of the ways in which the government is planning to dismantle the NHS.

NASH's policy is to kick the private sector out of the health service, and they've been boycotting work done with private patients.

NASH's strength comes not just from the increasing militancy of the workers in the hospitals, but also in their increasing awareness of the political forces that oppose them. The militants have opposed the union's ballot - they say that the workers in each hospital should hold meetings to discuss what to do next, so that the workers themselves can control what happens.

CONTACT NASH AT
157 WESTMINSTER RD,
LIVERPOOL 4.

WORK

"tired after work ? we're tired before bloody work!"

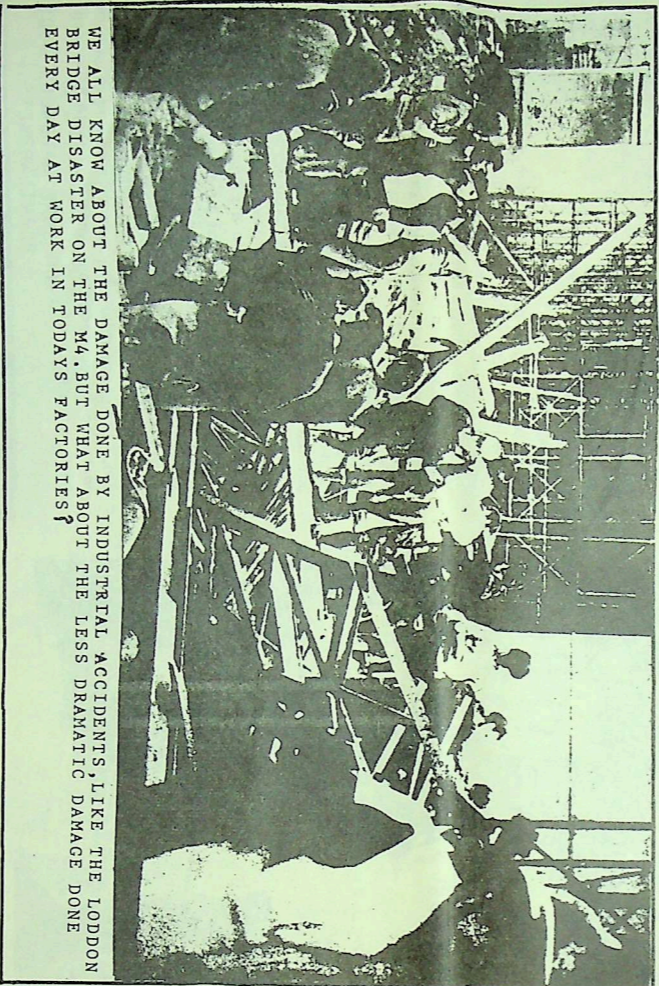
The modern production line was invented for one thing only - to screw workers into a military machine that makes profits for the boss. Work is never enjoyed by the workers who have to put the bosses plans into action. There's no benefit in it for us, and working in factories causes some of the worst health hazards.

Of course, the bosses dont give a damn. They just go on trying to screw the workers for more money by phoney timing methods, to be retrained on a job and have them say you can do more work, is an insult. But on occasions when it's proved you've been overworked all you get is a kind apology.

But we still have to continue with bloody work, which gets at everyone. When a days work is finished we are gooseland shattered, but when we start again in the morning we are still knackered. We know what is planned for us and we just have to get on with it. Our life is like a prison sentence of work for the capitalist system.

mental illness

Even for the bosses this kind of system has drawbacks. - the men crack up and they lose production- but they are ready for it. They just pack them off to the mental hospital for electric shock treatment to get them 'fit' for work again. There was even a Ford foreman recently who got drunk and went along the line smashing up the cars with an hammer. But most workers dont need Dutch courage - it just happens - they just crack up and leave.



WE ALL KNOW ABOUT THE DAMAGE DONE BY INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS, LIKE THE LODDON BRIDGE DISASTER ON THE N4, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE LESS DRAAMATIC DAMAGE DONE EVERY DAY AT WORK IN TODAY'S FACTORIES?

cancer

Of course, no-one gets a medical examination when they leave, like when they start work in a factory. That would show what effect the work had had on our health. . . And you cant expect compensation. There's the example of Thomas Cassidy, who caught cancer when he was working with one of their products.

Thomas Cassidy, is still trying to get money out of I.C.I. for the cancer he caught working with one of their products at Dunlops of Speke...20 years ago. I.C.I. were making something called Nonox S. In 1943 they found out that it could cause cancer - BUT THEY DIDN'T STOP SELLING IT UNTIL 1949. By this time thousands of chemical and rubber workers had been needlessly exposed to it. About 500 workers are believed to have developed cancer including 30 from Speke.

sabotage

Many people have ways of fighting work. Industrial sabotage is one way that really scares the bosses. We have to be careful that we dont injure ourselves or our mates in this - only the bosses production. But sabotage is one way that we can often escape the boredom for a bit. On the Fords trim-line once, a bloke **went put-**ting water in the petrol tank and petrol in the radiator.

Everyone (except the foreman) had a laugh and it gave everyone a chance for a blow. A lot of people just stay away from work on a Doctor's note. . . A day off work means a day of freedom from the factory. So we dont need to apologise for either of these things. Why be sorry that you cant stand the way the bosses force you to live.

unions no help

Recently at Fords a man was sacked for so-called sabotage. There was no proof and it looked like victimisation. But even if he did sabotage the line, it was just as defensible as fighting for more money or refusing speed-ups. Unfortunately a lot of people still dont see it like that, and the Trade Unions are no help. Their role is to get us a bit more money for working in the bosses factory, so its no wonder that they never question the fact that we are forced to waste our lives like that

But we've got to act in a different way. We must support all people who are accused of sabotage. Even if it is proved that they HAVE sabotaged the job. Perhaps they were having a laugh at the company's expense or perhaps they were simply cracking up under the strain. But although the bosses don't like any of this, they do allow for it (especially absenteeism) in their production plans. They have to. But a day off work also helps us to work the other days for them, so in a way they gain things from it. They still keep the right to implement their own policy on the days we're there.

So we have got to take the struggle about work to them. At the moment the key demand is 35 hours pay 40. This will bring 5 more hours of sanity into our lives. We have got to resist all speed-ups and manning reductions. They attack us in all these ways - we have got to say NO in all these ways.

Its not as if Society doesn't produce enough for itself unless it works at ever increasing line speeds. We get these line speeds because at the moment production is based on profit and competition. For instance, why is it that perfectly useable equipment is out of date within four or five years?not because it doesn't work- and can't produce USEFUL things, but because it can't produce PROFITABLE THINGS. The waste in money and people's energy and health is fantastic. For instance, in 1966, I.C.I. spent seven million pounds on a giant 200,000 ton ethylene cracker. But the next year, they had to close it down because it had already been made obsolete by a new 450,000 ton model. This is mad, the thing is, how long is it before we become as mad as them, working in their factories ?

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THE LOCAL PRESS IN KIRKBY RECENTLY GAVE A FRONT PAGE STORY TO THE FACT THAT THE HUNDRETH BRITISH SOLDIER TO BE KILLED IN NORTHERN IRELAND WAS A YOUNG LOCAL LAD CALLED JIMMY JONES; WHO'D ONLY JOINED UP FOUR WEEKS BEFORE. THE SAD SEQUEL TO THIS WAS THAT HIS FATHER HUNG HIMSELF A SHORT TIME AFTERWARDS IN THE BEDROOM OF HIS HOME.

SOLDIER BLUES

Jimmy was one of the many young people in Kirkby and all over the country who are forced to join the army because of the desperately high unemployment. Many probably thought the army would provide a little excitement to contrast the dull routine of a life trudging after jobs.

The army's advertisements portray a great life of sport, seeing the world and learning a skill. For many who are sent to Ulster this picture soon clashes with the harsh reality of the situation of protecting the interests of British big business in Ireland.

frightened

Today there are many frightened and confused young soldiers fighting in a war they know nothing about. All they have been fed is the racist myths that its just a sectarian war between two bunches of religious maniacs. The army's so-called peace-keeping role looks sick when one finds that they're spending their time shooting at, beating up, and kicking down the doors of ordinary working-class people's homes - people not so different from their own families and neighbours at home.

They find out that the Irish struggle is a lot more complex than a religious struggle. They find the history of the fight to free all of Ireland from the domination of British imperialism has been a long one. And that the role of the British army has been consistently repressive.

Excitement also wears off when soldiers find themselves up against the highly mobile and sophisticated guerrilla army of the I.R.A. Which, contrary to army propaganda is not falling apart.

In fact, it is the British army that is beginning to crack up, although it doesn't get much publicity. HERE ARE SOME RECENT INCIDENTS:

- 200 British soldiers due to return to the North have bought themselves out of the army. There was a near mutiny in their regiment, the 2nd Battalion Light Infantry of the Royal Fusiliers, when they refused point blank to go back to Ireland.
- 135 soldiers of the notorious Parachute regiment who were involved in the Bloody Sunday killings, have requested to buy themselves out or to be given indefinite leave.
- Figures of soldiers re-enlisting have dropped by 34%.

● The Daily Mirror mentioned recently that British troops from Colchester had opened fire on the Admin block.

● A small number of soldiers like Kevin Gadowaller and Michael Harkin have actually deserted, and handed over their guns to the I.R.A.

● In Kirkby after Jimmy Jones' death recruitment has not surprisingly fallen to next to nothing.

When the army in Operation Motorman smashed the No Go Areas, morale was high, and it was expected that the I.R.A. would offer only token resistance before fading away. But the army, the government and the British press have always misunderstood and underestimated the I.R.A.'s links with the Catholic people.

press

The army's attempts to whip up enthusiasm for an increasingly unpopular war are getting more and more ridiculous. The worst example is the scare story about Russian rocket launchers and the News of the World allegations of Russian manipulation of the I.R.A. Very few arms the I.R.A. uses are Russian - and when it uses American, Egyptian, or Japanese arms, no one says a thing. The stories of daily captures of I.R.A. leaders have also got to be taken with a pinch of salt. How come they never catch any Privates ?

But despite the fall in morale, unemployment will still force some young people to join the army, unless the working class movement provides them with an alternative. . . Not the phoney schemes of clearing up derelict areas for a pittance, or other forms of community work. But real community involvement in rents action groups and in fights for amenities for tenants. Or in Campaigns Unions fighting for a decent guaranteed income so they don't have to join the army just to get some money.



Ford's - our fight to live

WORKERS MILITANCY AT FORDS REACHES ITS PEAK SINCE JULY 1971 - A WEEK OF STRUGGLE AT THE HALEWOOD PLANTS - SIT INS, WALK OUTS AND A MARCH THROUGH THE PRESS SHOP - A LOT OF ANGER AND DETERMINATION.

Friday 29th December.

Management announces they will have to move a lot of men around the plant. No precise number is given but rumours say between 120 and 600.

Tuesday 2nd January.

Night shift - 7 men are taken off the Escort Trim lines. The men stop working and while the stewards try to convince them to rely on negotiations, they decide to sit in. In another part of the factory, on the white lines, later on in the night, a similar thing happens. This time, the workers first decide to sit in and then to start a march through the Press Shop. At 4.0 am 120 men march through the Press Shop chanting 'out, out'. It's the first time since 1962, before the sacking of the 17 stewards in Dagenham that the Ford workers use the most powerful tactic inside an assembly line factory: THE SNAKE. And the Press Shop comes out in solidarity.

Wednesday 3rd January.

Night shift - Against the attempts by convenors and senior stewards to confuse and manipulate a meeting called outside the gates, the workers of the Paint Trim and Assembly Plant decide to stay out until the following Friday - when a mass meeting will be held. The militants describe the feelings inside in terms of anger and determination.

Thursday 4th January.

Day shift - Another section of the Body Plant decides to sit in all day following management attempts to move more men. Night shift - The whole Body Plant decides to walk out in sympathy. Management tries to offer a line speed of 18 (the normal one is 67) but the men answer they'd rather go home. A militant of the white lines: 'We walked out. Few people knew exactly what it was all about, but the feeling was so high, that by 10.30 the plant was empty.'

Friday 5th January.

Mass meeting in the Liverpool stadium of both shifts of the PTA plant. Big Flame distributes the third leaflet in 3 days and the reception is really good. Inside, the Convenor, Billy McGuire, some senior stewards, and a TU official, play one shift off against the other and recommend a return to work under the unchanged conditions. The motion is carried by a 60 to 40 majority but certain things stand out about the meeting - The night shift unanimously vote against the motion - the questions from the floor are angry and militant - the platform is booed and heckled continuously. At the end, most people from the shift say: 'It's a sell out, but on Monday night it's going to start all over again.'

Monday 8th January.

Night shift - at the gates the feeling is fantastic. People want more leaflets. They want to know, they are determined to continue the struggle.

Night shift - engine compartment work to rule - general unrest.

Tuesday 9th January.

Continuation in engine compartments to get a man moved back. Work to rule in the afternoon. (written 00.15 Wednesday morning)

what does this mean?

Last week's events in Fords don't need a long explanation. They speak for themselves. According to everybody, nothing like this had happened in Halewood since the strike which forced management to reinstate the sacked steward John Dillon in July 1971. The feeling of the men is really high. Management are panicking. A trade union official has been walking round the plant trying to cool things down (he usually is seen inside 2 or 3 times a year) TU officials and most of the stewards agree on one thing (and management goes along) there are too many stoppages; it must be all a Big Flame conspiracy. This is the usual idiotic nonsense. It just shows how little these people understand about the working class and how struggles and consciousness develop.

The reality is best expressed by the White Lines militant: 'few people really knew what was going on, but the feeling was so high....' What does this mean? It means that the workers are ready and strong to engage in the fight for the 35 hour week, £15 rise and full lay off pay

It means that the workers might not understand fully the technicalities of the latest Ford management move, but they understand the policy behind it: to smash the shop floor organisation before the claim. The same policy which was pursued in the summer through the sackings of militants, in autumn and winter through the splitting up militant sections, and overtime which allowed them to stockpile. It means that, confronted with the collaborationism and incompetence of their so-called representatives the workers have taken the initiative. The tie of the small group of outside agitators stirring up etc. etc. is smashed by the thousand Ford workers voting against a return to work on Friday.

Initiative

It means that now and again, spontaneously, the workers can take the initiative and keep it, that they can have a relationship with revolutionary organisations like Big Flame, that their consciousness grows immensely in one day of struggle. But all this cannot be understood by those who always talk of negotiations and never of fighting, who see everything in terms of their petty plans, and when things go beyond their plans, well, some conspirators must be to blame.



Snake - Italian style

In Fiat, Turin...most days... when the workers start a strike, they do it by surprise, marching through the factory ringing a bell. For the managers this bell is the sign that it's time for them to leave. But they can never tell in advance just when the bell is going to ring...

....Some of the foremen have been forced to walk at the head of the internal marches, carrying red flags, and some times they are forced to stand up and make revolutionary speeches....

....The Fiat staff, at the mere mention that there were 5,000 workers in boiler suits approaching the offices, could be seen running like rabbits, scotching down the slope and out of the gates....

....The managers sometimes have been forced to run the gauntlet between two lines of furious workers....

....This is the main meaning of the snake, as the situation in which workers use their number as a source of strength, to communicate and spread information, to isolate the foremen, to overcome any fear....

....So there we were and the two of us got together with 5 or 6 more mates then we set off. Just the 7 of us. And by the time we got to the head offices, there were 7,000 of us. Bloody beautiful it was!....



Dear Big Flame,
I am writing to you on behalf of myself and some of the lads I work with. We read your leaflets and find them interesting and fruitful and they are often printed only a couple of hours after the incident. This we cannot get from trade union or management.

Example: last Tuesday night shift, Fords sent the white lines home at 3.15 in the morning which involved about 180 men. As a rule that plant would have emptied in 10 minutes, but 120 of these men snaked to the Press Shop and got support from the men. You had a leaflet out that same morning with all the true facts, yet the national press and radio gave nothing. Perhaps Fords did not want it to go to the press because they caused the incident. But that same night the men, sooner than be sent home in the early hours of the morning, decided not to work. So the national papers and radio said 'a lightning strike by Ford workers'. It proves that Fords only want the public to believe their side of the story. My mates and I were part of that snake. It made us proud to think that so many men were willing to do something about their conditions when they could have been home in a warm bed. FROM SOME HALEWOOD BODY PLANT WORKERS.

AUEW Fine

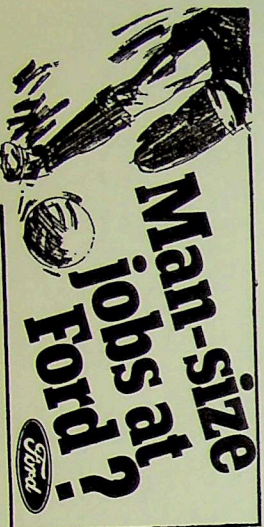
The last month has shown that the Industrial Relations Act is what militants have always said it was: a scabs charter. Joseph Langston has now joined James Good in using the court to legalise his scab ideas. The AUEW faces massive fines.

It's not particularly the union or even the closed shop we're worried about. There's plenty of scabs left inside the AUEW and alot of closed shops are deals between unions (after exclusive membership) and management (after an easy and peaceful time). Similarly union funds are rarely used in the way that militants want.

BUT it is us, the workers, who will deal with this, the way WE decide. The state, in this case the courts, is every time an organisation for the bosses and can keep its nose away from anything to do with working class organisation.

Unfortunately there's been no real fight over these fines. Taken one day stoppages never stopped the IR Act becoming law, and they won't stop it taking effect. Unless engineering workers backed up by all of the working class don't mobilise in a more determined and large scale way, then the state will win this one.

If it beats the AUEW over the fines, it will be in a better position to beat us all - whether we're tenants on rent strike, or workers putting in a wage claim or any-one involved in a fight against the bosses and the state.

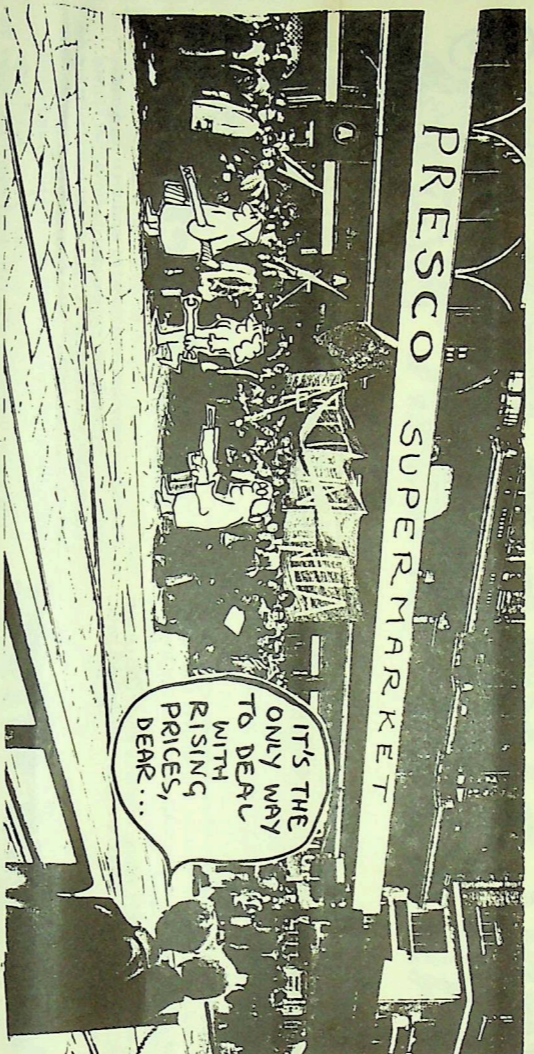


BIG BLAME

Merseyside
SOCIALIST
Newspaper
4p no.7 feb-mar

18731

LIFE ON THE FREEZE



AS THE SECOND PART OF THE TORIES WAGE FREEZE gets into full swing, we are being hit by continual price increases. They may juggle their figures and try to tell us that prices have only gone up so many per cent, but we are not impressed.

MOST OF OUR WEEKLY MONEY IS SPENT ON FOOD, FUEL AND RENT - IT IS THE PRICES OF THESE ESSENTIAL ITEMS THAT HAVE BEEN ROCKETING.

Almost all important foods have gone up in the last few months, during the Government's so called 'price freeze'. Beef is now beyond the pocket of most of us - lamb, pork and now chicken prices are climbing steadily. As soon as the Common Market agricultural policy comes into force around April, bacon, sugar, butter, cheese and ham will go up. Bread is also to go up because of the price of imported wheat. When VAT comes in April, shoes and clothes, especially kids' clothes, will rocket up.

WE'LL SOON BE LIVING ON CUPS OF TEA, BAKED BEANZ AND POTATOES! But that's not so funny because as the price of decent food goes up, working class people are forced to eat food with a lower protein level, which will weaken the health of ourselves and our children. Meanwhile we have to watch Fanny Craddock on the telly telling us how to get by on a few eggs and a bit of milk.

Profits Kept Up -- Wages Held Down
The ruling class is no longer content to use the workers' strength for its own ends. In the 50s and 60s, wages were allowed to rise so that the working class had enough money to buy the new consumer goods which the capitalists were producing.

But now the working class threatens the future of the bosses' profits. With declining investment in new factories and increasing international competition in the Common Market, the bosses can no longer afford ANY real increase in wages.

They have to stop the rises in wages which the working class have got used to, and smash the shop floor power which won those rises. They attack the working class at work in two ways. With the Industrial Relations Act, and with a Wage Freeze.

**united fight to break the freeze:
p.1. the communities: p.4. gasmen
p.6. fordworkers.**

cont. page 2



WOMEN FIGHT...

In Liverpool, on 27th/28th January the Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign held their first national conference. Women from all over the country met to discuss how we are fighting for a free contraceptive service, free abortion on demand and an end to forced sterilisation.

It's a myth that these things are now easy to get. Women's groups have to fight backward Health Service, private abortion racketeers, and the 'moralists' who condemn us for wanting the right to say what happens to our bodies.

In Liverpool a free pregnancy testing service has been set up by the WAAC group to cut out the cost of private testing and the worry of visiting disapproving GPs. The group has helped spread information about the contraceptives and services available and it has also supported the setting up of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service which provides free pregnancy testing, contraceptive advice and advice and help on abortion. This clinic is forced to charge £51 for an abortion to those women who can afford it because of the cost of providing such a service - debts to moneylenders, salaries to doctors performing abortion - in a situation where the Health Service refuses to provide it free for all who want it. But the WAAC has supported it because of its unique attempt in Liverpool to provide a sympathetic and efficient service that women need. Since it opened last year it has already reduced the charge from £65 and hopes to cut it further in the future.

Of course this isn't the only fight we have. If we are to control what happens to our bodies we must have the right to have children. The need for abortion might be much less if we all had the time, the money, the social conditions that allowed us to have children when we wanted them. We know that our fight is also part of a much wider struggle for change in our society.

But we must also fight for the right to choose not to have children. This article has been written by a group of women to explain why that fight is so important.

'FORCED LABOUR'

EVERY WOMAN SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE WHETHER OR NOT TO HAVE A CHILD!

It is us who suffer the risks of pregnancy and childbirth and then it is us who have the responsibility of bringing up the kids. It's not an accident that we have to do this... It's part of the way society is run - FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE AT THE TOP. They make us feel that it's our duty to do all the domestic chores for men and look after their kids - so that men can be 'free' to be exploited by them in the factory.

So we're forced into isolation and loneliness in our homes, doing unpaid work, denied proper nursery facilities, forced to do without so that we can feed our kids. If we work at home as housewives our husbands wage covers the work of two - it's cheap at the price. A woman on Social Security or whose husband's on the dole is expected to feed and clothe a one-year old on £1.90 a week - BUT if the same child was in care it would cost the State £25 a week. It's as if we have to suffer for having children - no-one would think we were doing useful and necessary work by bringing them up.

It things were different maybe more of us could choose to have children. But it's not just a question of needing better housing, more money, more nurseries. We need that anyway. We're not going to be just reproducing machines. We've a right to decide what happens to our bodies.

The situation at the moment is that many of us are virtually forced to have children. The State refuses to provide us with what we need - widely available, safe, reliable and free contraceptive advice and supplies, and free abortion for those who want it.

stop press

cont. on page 3

CLAY CROSS COUNCIL has called for a total rent and rate strike in support of its campaign against the HOUSING FINANCE ACT.

CDP. 25.339

Freeze cont..

There will be several consequences of higher prices. When there is no organised response, people will attempt individual solutions. When the rents go up in an area where no rent strike is organised, people will go into bigger and bigger arrears. As all prices go up, people will tend to incur more HP and other debts. As food prices go up, people will be driven to eat less and worse food, or they will turn more and more to nicking dear but necessary food from the supermarkets.

From childhood, most of us have been taught that it is bad to be in debt or arrears, that it is bad to steal. But many working class people are forced into this situation, feel guilty about it or worry that people will 'talk'. Thousands of people are now in this situation - thousands more soon will be so if it is not something to be ashamed about in a society which is based on the theft of the country's wealth from the people who produce it.

When Mr. Ferranti, millionaire electronics boss and super-thief, defrauded the Government of more than £5m. a few years' ago, he was politely asked to give it back, and a few years' later promoted to job as adviser to the Government. When a pensioner or housewife is driven to steal a pack of biscuits from a supermarket, if they are caught they are humiliated in the courts and lectured by a magistrate to whom rising prices are just a statistic in The Financial Times.

Organised community action

That all prices, rents and rates keep going up is an inevitable process of capitalism, and for the lack of an organised challenge to the system by the working class, people are forced to seek individual solutions.

But in an organised community, all sorts of collective projects would be possible. Pressure could be put on local factories by the WHOLE community to help the workers force wages up. Pressure could be put on local shops to bring down prices by boycotting them. Food co-ops could be organised among the people so as to by-pass the retailers altogether...

The Government are using the big stick, but this is also a sign of their weakness. They have their backs to the wall and are lashing out in desperation. If we can smash the Freeze, by combining our strength in the communities and in the factories and offices, we can show that we will not be pushed back and beaten into submission to the profit system, and we will emerge even stronger and better organised than before.

Halewood Road Block

On Friday 2nd February up to 400 people formed human barricades and blocked Higher Rd, Halewood in protest against the road they call a death trap. A girl aged 9 was killed there earlier that week.

For months people have been calling for better safety measures on this stretch of road - including the reduction of the speed limit to 30 mph, a 'Pelican' crossing at the Wood Rd junction and diversion of heavy traffic onto Speke Boulevard. They have been ignored by the authorities.

Gordon Oakes M.P. for Widnes visited the barricades and promised to hand a letter in to the government. Local councillors Mrs. Annes Burke and Jack Bohanna have also made vague assurances that they will try to do something about this death trap.

The people who are blocking the road, however, are not convinced. They intend to continue blocking the roads until their demands are met!

Mutiny Against Injustice.

TWO WEEKS AGO 190 CREW MEMBERS WALKED OFF the luxury liner Ocean Monarch, in Australia. They complained of poor pay and conditions.

Now back in England, the crew - 35 of them from Mersey-side - are waiting to see what action will be taken against them. Penalties for industrial action at sea are high. It's called mutiny and penalties range from a small fine to imprisonment or life-long suspension.

Already they've been automatically struck off the seamen's register, and until they're back on it, they are unable to get alternative work at sea. The majority of the crew expect to be registered again within the next few weeks, but there are fears that militants may be victimised. Even if they're not kicked out at this stage, the employers get a second bite.

For once back on the register, the crew face immediate disciplinary action for breaching their contracts with the Ocean Monarch, and again possible life-long suspension.

The register is joint run by the management and union and employs all seamen not under contract to a shipping line. It's the same principal as the dockers register. But while the dockers have turned it to their advantage, the seamen

Scotland Road elections:

CAN TENANTS' CANDIDATES SUCCEED?

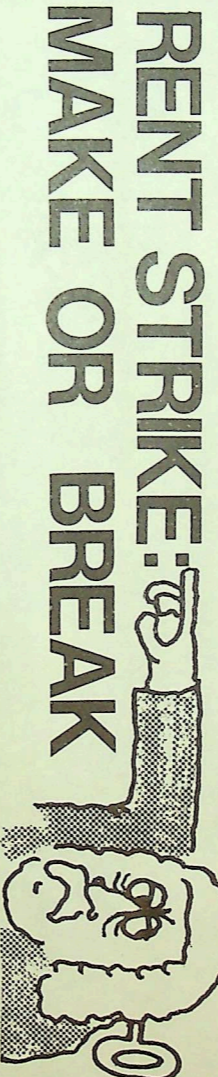
Tenants in the Scotland Road Area and "over the bridge" have decided to put up their own candidates to fight the county and district elections for the new councils in April and May.

Scotland Road area has always been regarded as a safe Labour seat: in fact it is said that if you put up a donkey with a Labour rosette, it would get voted in. This reputation has led the Labour Party to engineer the nominations of Bill Setton and Joe Morgan (Housing Committee Chairman) as Labour candidates for the area. It is clear that they felt that the chief Labour traitors who implemented the "Fair Rents" have less chance of being defeated there.

tenants candidates

Party in response to these manipulations, four local tenants, one woman and three men, have been nominated from, and are supported by the network of tenants associations and action groups which exist in the area. The tenants campaign apart from challenging those who implemented the Fair Rents, is drawing strength from the fact that the tenants candidates, unlike the Labour hacks, live in the area they represent and therefore have real experience and commitment.

The tenants also rightly claim that Labour councillors have done little or nothing for this 'safe' seat which is still one of the most devastated areas in the city. Finally, the candidates say they will not be subject to a "Party Line", and so can directly express the views of the tenants.



The rent strike on Merseyside is now in its 5th month. And although it is still going on, it is much less active now than it was when it began in October. In Tower Hill, Kirkby, the number on total strike has dropped from 90% at the peak to about 50% now, but this is still hundreds of tenants.

This pattern is reflected all over Merseyside, especially in areas like Halewood and Old Swan where thousands of tenants are still refusing to pay any rent increase, yet where very few are active any more on the picket line and at meetings. In Bootle, which was originally very strong, now only about 500 tenants are still on strike, but those 500 are dead solid and will hold out come what may.

renewed effort

At a recent coordinating meeting of tenants from all over Merseyside, we discussed how to give the rent strike a boost, and now it is likely that a big campaign will be launched before April when the rent and rates will go up again. We can expect thousands more tenants to join the strike then.

The meeting also declared itself in complete opposition to all evictions, whether for normal rent arrears or for rent strike arrears. This means physically preventing evictions. The links which enabled us to put a cordon round Tower Hill last year still exist. In this society we have to fight for the right to a home and the principle of no evictions. But we are willing to,

haven't. The right-wing National Union of Seamen - still registered under the Industrial Relations Act - have never challenged management's prerogatives, and effectively police their own membership. The isolation of seamen has made it difficult to fight this.

The position of the crew is made still more ridiculous because they have already been punished once for their "crime". Under a particularly vicious piece of legislation called the Marine Shipping Act 1970, the captain of a ship is allowed to impose fines of up to £200 or imprisonment on his crew. The act gives him absolute powers, and the captain usually acts as prosecutor, judge and jury.

Ocean Monarch's captain has slapped £50 fines on his crew and deducted the equivalent of three days pay - equal to about £10 - from each member.

The three days deduction was intended to make up for the days when the crew were virtually locked out of the ship after they'd walked off. During that period they were not given any food at all, and were only allowed back on board during the second day for clean clothes. Most of the crew slept out on the quay during the first night.

The Ocean Monarch is scheduled to cruise for a season off the shores of sunny Australia. She was completing her first cruise when the crew walked off at Sydney. They had two complaints:

It is also argued that to defeat Setton and Morgan would be a victory in the campaign against the Fair Rents Act, and would be encouraging proof to Merseyside of the development of tenants organisations.

where our real power lies

Previous experience of tenants candidates being elected to councils as in Kirkby, have shown the difficulties of this line of action. To take the struggle from the streets (where the power of Scotland Road people is really developing) into the council chamber can distract people from building up the power of their mass action. It can be argued that to participate in elections gives credibility to a so-called representative council system which in fact represents no one but the political party, and that anyway, in a council where decisions are made by parties and not by individuals.

As for the defeat of Setton, this would certainly show dramatically how people are disillusioned with the Labour Party. But we cannot forget that the "Fair Rents" is a national issue, made law by the state, so local defeats in council elections will not in the end be the way in which rent rises are defeated. Our real power must lie in street organisation and struggle within our communities.

court action

Five summonses have been issued to tenants on total rent strike in Scotland Road, and they are due to appear at the County Court on February 14. The summonses are not for the collection of arrears but for the 'possession of property'. This means that the Corp'y wants the rent strikers evicted.

The decision taken at tenants mass meetings is not to ignore the summonses, but to go to Court and to denounce the Housing Finance Act and the Corporation. Whatever the Court's decision, the whole community down in Scollie is prepared to support the five and face the bailiffs.

One of the five says he hopes that the Burgess Detective Agency will send its thugs to evict him, because we're ready for them... The Agency, which does the Corporations evictions, recently evicted a woman in Huyton. Information is being collected about Burgess.

Tenants in Scotland Road are waiting for the visit. They will be backed up by workers and tenants from all over Merseyside.

One: Their pay wasn't worth as much as it should be because of the high cost of living in Australia. They asked for a £17.50 monthly cost of living bonus. The company refused.

Two: Conditions for the crew on the ship were bad. While the passengers enjoyed a swimming pool, bar, cum lido and paddling pool, the crew had to put up with dirty, overcrowded and badly ventilated quarters. There were not enough staff to man the ship adequately.

It's not the first time Shaw Saville - owners of the Ocean Monarch - have been caught out trying to save money. In 1971, when the ship was being refitted at the Carmel faird shiprepair yard in Birkenhead, completion was delayed for nearly six months after the then Board of Trade demanded that extra emergency staircases and fire bulkheads should be fitted. Because of the delay Shaw Saville lost almost a complete season's cruising.

The Liverpool branch of the NUS is backing the Liverpool crew members. The branch is asking the union to support a campaign to get rid of the Marine Shipping Act, and as part of this campaign to call for a national one-day strike. But it's going to be an up-hill fight. The NUS is not noted for either its militancy or its internal democracy. For years it has been content to allow shipping companies' diagnostic powers for dealing with "trouble makers". Striking on board ship isn't, after all, withdrawing labour, it's mutiny on the high seas.

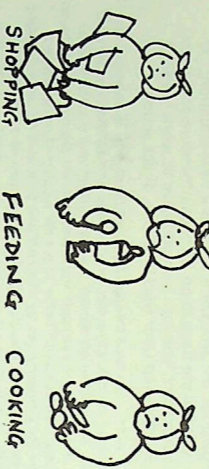
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FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND NO FORCED STERILIZATION

There are lots of moral arguments against both contraception and abortion - but they ignore what most women feel and need. We don't want to be forced to have abortions or sterilisations by their doctors, husbands, boyfriends, parents or the State. But nor do we want women to be forced to have children that they don't want. **IT MUST BE OUR CHOICE.**

At the moment we have no control over the services we get. Nor is it a financial priority. The result is that they're totally inadequate. A few cities provide free contraceptive services. Most like Liverpool, don't, and so the little money we have usually gets spent on food rather than contraceptives.

Vasectomy (male sterilisation) is another form of contraception which is very difficult to get on the National Health even though it's easy, quick and can be done in out-patient clinics. On the other hand, the sterilisation operation on a woman is much more complicated and takes a lot longer to recover from - yet this is available on the National Health and women are sometimes pressurised into having it.

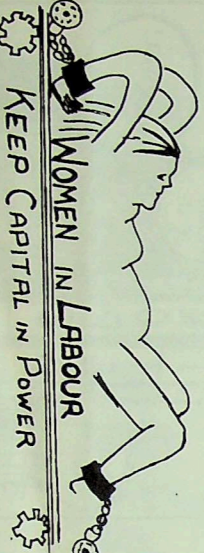


Family Planning Clinics are supposed to provide free contraceptives and advice to those of us who can't afford to pay. But they don't advertise this because as a charity they couldn't afford to offer a free service very widely. And anyway 'means tests' always put off a lot of people from applying anything.

The contraceptives we get at these clinics aren't perfect. The pill is probably the most reliable but that doesn't suit every woman because some suffer side-effects. Why has research been so slow and out of touch with our needs? Lots of things have been mentioned: pills for men, 'once a month pills'... but the research is controlled by drug companies so it gets done when they need it not us. Drug companies take out patents on any pill they produce to prevent rival companies competing - this means they can keep the price up. Very soon the patients on most pills will be running out and that's why research is only now being taken seriously. But it's still not the right sort of research because it's not based on what's good for us - but as usual, what's good for profits. So for example we are more likely to get the once a day pill than a once a month pill.

If we have children it's often difficult to get around. Many of us need to travel fairly long distances to reach the nearest Family Planning Clinic. (Hints if you know where they are). Often they're open at the worst times - in the early evening when we're cooking tea and getting the children to bed.

Even if the right contraceptive and the right sort of service existed they would be no use to many of us who are still embarrassed to talk about it and afraid to use the services. If we were able to control the kind of service we get then perhaps less women would feel frightened of using it. We all need information to understand how our bodies work, how contraceptives work and how we become pregnant. It's still hard for us all, especially young people to get this kind of information. We grow up in fear and ignorance of our own bodies. If health centres, under our control, existed we could begin to learn together.



WOMEN IN LABOUR KEEP CAPITAL IN POWER

As long as contraceptives are in any way unreliable and as long as some women feel that they don't want to use them **abortion on demand is necessary. The 1967 Abortion Act which legalised abortion in some circumstances hasn't given women any real choice. It is a MYTH that it's now easy to get an abortion.**

Look at some of the experiences that people have had since the Act:

* A married woman of 22 with two children. Her husband has been unable to get work for a year and they were living in a council house on £15 per week dole. She went to her GP and found she was 4 weeks pregnant. Her reaction was 'extreme anxiety and depression, suicidal in fact'. She told the doctor she needed an abortion because she was 'unable to cope mentally and financially'. 'My husband would leave if I had another child'. The doctor referred her but they kept referring me to someone else... they said they could do it only if I had some physical thing wrong with me which would be endangering my health'. Then she 'tried to get rid of it myself in several ways'. She was unsuccessful and finally ended up at the Pregnancy Advisory Service at 24 weeks - it was far too advanced. They could not help her...

* Married woman, 25 - two children, 5 months and 3½ years, 4-8 weeks' pregnant - visited GP. He ignored her request for abortion and wrote a letter introducing her to a maternity hospital. 8-10 weeks' went to Maternity Hospital, asked for abortion. The doctor didn't help her. 'He told me I would regret abortion...'. She had the baby and for years after on nerve pills.

* Single woman - six weeks' pregnant, went to family doctor, asked for abortion on grounds that she was mentally unstable (two attempted suicides; two periods in mental institutions). Doctor referred her to NHS gynaecologists. He was unsympathetic and referred her to NHS psychiatrist at 10-11 weeks. He refused to help, 'having this baby will help you to re-adjust to society'.

(Taken from information given by W.A.C.C. to the Lane Commission set up to investigate the workings of the 1967 Abortion Act.)

We should not have to go through such humiliations. We should be able to decide what happens to our bodies without pleading insanity to unsympathetic GPs and gynaecologists. There is a desperate need for free, safe abortion for all who want it. Before the Act there were an estimated 250,000 illegal abortions a year. Throughout history women have aborted themselves because they had to. Women will risk serious illness and death through back-street abortion and self-inflicted wounds to avoid pregnancy - law or no law.

We are still driven to it because if we apply for an NHS abortion under the Act we are likely to be humiliated and insulted by gynaecologists and doctors who are morally opposed to it and who sit in judgment over us. At the same time we are often given abortions only on condition that we are sterilised.



Of course, it is in many doctors' interests to keep the need for private abortions - they can make up to £200,000 a year out of it. The vast profits that are made out of our need for abortions would stop if they were made available to ALL on the NHS.

Organisations like SPUC (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) have spread lies and myths about abortion. They try to terrify us by describing it as a dangerous, horrifying operation and by deliberately distorting the facts.

They aren't really interested in the well-being of babies born to near-suicidal mothers. It's better to be a battered baby than not to have had the chance to exist at all (quote from SPUC member). Even less are they concerned about the women who have these babies. Their main interest is in putting forward their own moral views on how we should live our lives and trying to impose them on all of us.

We have the right to know the truth about abortion - it can be safe, simple and cheap.

At the moment the most common method used in hospital is the D & C (a scrape) and involves a general anaesthetic.

But often the operation is carried out much later than necessary with increased risks. Doctors by delaying tactics to put us off and the lack of facilities mean waiting lists are long. Sometimes abortions are done so late that it involves an operation like a caesarian, or induced labour. **This wouldn't be necessary if abortion was freely available.**

Now there is a simple, safe method which could be used but is being refused - us. This is the Karmen technique and is used up to 10 weeks' pregnancy. A very small, flexible plastic tube is used to draw out the lining of the womb. The foetus isn't formed - it's like having a period, no more than that.

The tube is so small it doesn't stretch the mouth of the womb and so doesn't damage it. No anaesthetic, or only a local one is needed, and it can be done in out-patient clinics.

At least two London hospitals use this method and because the nurses and doctors are sympathetic, women aren't made to feel guilty or frightened. This means after-effects on mental and physical health are rare.

Liverpool has some family planning clinics, open to both unmarried and married women, which provide contraceptive advice and supplies. Advice is free to those on low incomes.

Two clinics are:

Carnegie Clinic next to Oxford Street Maternity Hospital. Open Tuesdays 5.30 to 6.30 pm and Wednesday afternoons
tel. 709.6931. Both supplies and advice are free to women with low incomes.

Family Planning Clinic,
9 Gamber Terrace, Liverpool 1. tel. 709.3968.

You could find out the address of your local clinic from the above.

If you need an abortion you should go and see your doctor if he is unable to help you he should send you to another doctor who might help.

If you still cannot get an abortion, or if you'd rather not visit your doctor, there is a service which will help you. Phone for an appointment:-

British Pregnancy Advisory Service,
Fifth floor,
11 Old Hall Street,
Liverpool 1. tel. 227.3721

You can get a free pregnancy test here between 9 a.m and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday or you can go to:-

Women's Liberation,
2 Rutland Avenue,
Liverpool 17. tel. 793.2100

on Saturday mornings between 10 a.m. and 12 midday.

DOCK DEBRIS

The months old dispute over the opening of the £12 m. grain terminal at Liverpool's Seaforth dock complex is still continuing. The grain terminal, which is one of the largest in Europe, is fully automated and only needs a few men to push the buttons in order to start working - the issue is over who should push those buttons - management in their continuing attack on the registered dockers, trained white collar workers to do the job - the dockers blocked the terminal

The whole issue has been put across by the Press as "reasonable" management being obstructed by "unreasonable" dockers - but why should the dockers give up another part of dock work when they've already lost so much to the inland container depots and the unregistered ports? And why should they cooperate with management when it is part of a system that imposes a freeze on dockers' demands for more pay and shorter hours?

Every day for the last couple of months there have been reports of the number of men short on the docks and the number of ships not being worked or being undermanned. With ships being diverted to other ports, one of the oldest of management's lies has been yet again revealed for the con it's always been.

Seaforth grain terminal

Lying idle

Whenever trade has been "lost" by a particular port, management always starts a big hullabaloo saying that it's the "over paid" and "underworked" dockers who are the cause of all their troubles. Good, that's how it should be - but they are not the cause of the loss of trade. At Hays Wharf in London just before management closed it down, they pointed out that they couldn't continue in business due to the exorbitant demands of their workforce, and so all their trade was going to other ports. It did go to other port - but not because of the demands of the dockers, but because Hays Wharf management asked them to leave -

the area that was Hays Wharf dock is now the basis of a huge exercise in property speculation worth over £500m Mersey Dock and Harbour Boards refused to take on more dockers when at the same time ships are having to go to other ports, shows once again that it is management's inefficiency and rubbish planning that has led to the loss of trade suffered by the old ports.

Big Flame No. 7 Feb/March Page 3.

DEATH OF A FREEDOM FIGHTER

The U.S. army in Indochina has not been defeated by just a few leaders. Like Ho Chi Minh or General Giap but by a mass movement of peasants and workers organised in the National Liberation Front and in the D.R.V. (Vietnam North). The death of a single, if inspiring leader, Ho Chi Minh, did not halt the revolutionary process in S.E. Asia.

It is important to recognise this as, in late January, one of the most important revolutionary leaders in Africa, Amílcar Cabral, was assassinated in Conakry, capital of independent Guinea. West Africa. Cabral led the liberation movement in neighbouring "Portuguese" Guinea which, like Mozambique and Angola, are partially occupied by Portuguese troops and the colonial administration they defend. Under the colonial system the wealth of 3 African nations is extracted for the benefit of Portuguese capitalists (like cheap Mozambique cotton) or for international corporations (like the Gulf oilfields in Angola). This is changing. The liberation movements are based on the needs of the mass of the people, not on those of foreign exploiters. Over 2/3 of "Portuguese" Guinea has been freed by the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) of which Cabral was the president.

Now he has been murdered in a similar way to the murder of Eduardo Mondlane, leader of the Mozambique Liberation Front, Frelimo, in 1969. Despite this Frelimo has liberated even more of their country and transformed the lives of the people in the same revolutionary process. And they have opened up the eastern borders of Rhodesia for guerrillas to attack the Smith regime.

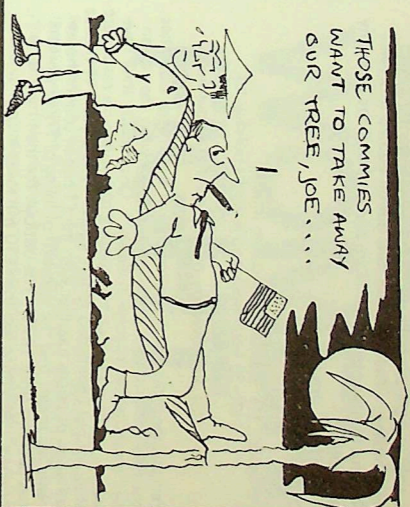
The struggle will go on in Guinea despite the loss of a leader. And it will achieve the kind of victory soon to come to Indochina once the U.S. army is gone and the Saigon ruling class is left to defend itself alone.

Vietnam: no looking back....

The struggle in Vietnam has reached a stage similar to that of 1954 when the French colonialists were forced to leave the country by the armed struggle of the Vietnamese. But in that year the revolutionaries allowed victory to escape them. They were persuaded to withdraw North of the Demilitarized Zone, an artificial division of the country and to await elections in the South. Hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese were forced to leave home and move north. They waited for 2 bitter years, seeing the Saigon capitalists and their U.S. backers become firmly entrenched, seeing the plight of the mass of peasants and workers worsen and seeing their political militants arrested and murdered. And President Eisenhower called off the 1956 elections, admitting that the Vietnamese would take 80% of the vote.

The war, inevitably, began again. And now we have another cease fire and another colonial army, this time American, leaving, completely defeated. But this time the victory of the N.L.F. on the battlefield must not be taken from them by promises of "peaceful elections" to be cancelled by the Americans at will.

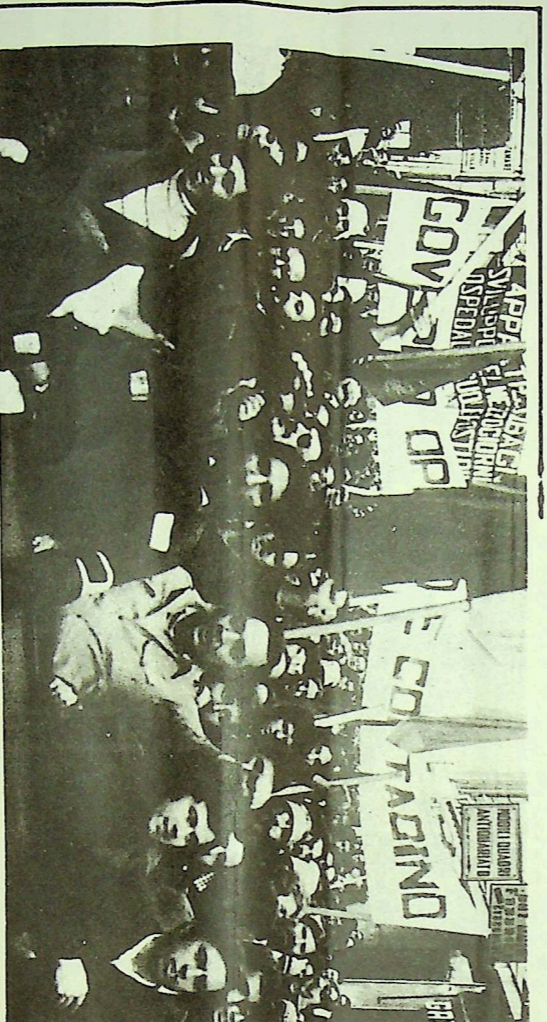
There is a situation of dual power in the Vietnamese country-side. Two armies, one revolutionary and based on the desire of the people for a new life, the other reactionary and based on the needs of a small business clique in Saigon, face each other across an endless battlefield that covers the whole country. Two totally different societies and two different sets of attitudes cannot coexist peacefully or be settled by "free" elections. President Thieu of Saigon has already threatened death on any of the thousands of peasant refugees trying to escape the city slums and refugee camps under his control. If they leave, they will be out of his control and his election would be jeopardized.



In a situation like this, "peace" is totally unrealistic. The Paris agreement may have given Lyndon Johnson a much-needed fatal heart-attack but Nixon is still backing Thieu in Saigon. The priest at Nixon's Florida Church service praised him as a man not accepting peace "at any price." In this case the "price" was 1,300 dead civilians in bomb-ravaged Hanoi and Haiphong.

The war will continue, peace or no peace, till the Saigon administration, Nixon's last allies, are defeated and are either dead or living on the farms many of them have bought to await them in Australia.

ITALY: 1969-73



ITALY AUTUMN 1969. The northern cities of Milan, Turin, Venice and the surrounding towns erupted into some of the most fierce industrial struggle the country has seen since the war. The wage contracts of car, steel engineering and metal workers all came up for renewal at the same time. As these workers struck in support of their claims, others were drawn into the fight, including white collar workers, teachers, and above all school and university students. This was Italy's **HOT AUTUMN.**

Immigrants from the south of Italy were and still are in the forefront of these struggles. Every year thousands of them trek north to escape the high unemployment and the low paid seasonal agricultural work in the south. They travel - packed like cattle in trains - to the industrial cities of Italy, Germany, Belgium and France, to find work on the assembly lines of Fiat, Alfa Romeo, Pirelli, Ford, Opel or Renault.

They arrive to find an acute shortage of accommodation, and are forced to live in rundown shanty towns or barracks, run by their employers. Frequently they live three to a room.

The immigrants bring with them a different tradition of militancy. They are used to the mass involvement of Italy's frequent peasant revolts. The wheelings and dealings of the Communist Party - dominated trade union movement seem far removed.

As the industrial struggles developed from 1969, the trade union leaders were swept aside by the new militancy of the immigrants. What started as a straightforward strike wave, has developed into a major revolt against the Italian government and the big capitalists. The struggles spread from the factories, to the schools, to the communities. There has been violent fighting with the riot police, the situation becoming a direct threat to the bosses' power.

rent strikes and squatters

While the factories were in turmoil, during the hot autumn, whole communities went on rent strike. In Milan these rent strikes still continue. Between 50,000 and 100,000 families in Milan have paid **NO RENT SINCE 1969** and nobody dares to evict them.

The housing situation is much worse than in Liverpool. The number of southern immigrants has added to the pressure on an already very limited supply of houses. Rents for the equivalent of a copy flat take about 33% of the average wage. On top of rent a special tax to pay for housing is deducted from all wages.

These facts help explain why the struggle over housing has continually increased in strength. **'A HOME IS A RIGHT. DON'T PAY THE RENT'** has been the slogan of those on rent strike. At the same time the homeless and those living in shanty towns and hostels have started to organise mass squatting in empty houses. In June 1971 in Milan 80 families occupied a block of luxury flats built by the corporation - which were to have been let to the rich.

The squatters held daily meetings, and ran a collective cafe, surgery, and nursery. Eventually the 80 families were evicted, but after 36,000 strong demonstration organised by the Italian revolutionary organisations in particular Lotta Continua, and violent clashes with the police, the corporation had to give in. They gave each family a rent-free flat, and offered a further 400 flats for other homeless families.

In the face of these struggles the Italian ruling class began to hitback. In late 1969 bombs were planted in a Milan bank; the explosion killed 13 bystanders. The bombs were clearly designed to scare people into thinking that the violence had gone too far, and to provide an excuse for a witch hunt against left wing organisations.



TURIN: FASCIST ARMED WITH MACHINE-GUN HELPS POLICE ATTACK WORKERS & STUDENTS

4 Anarchists were arrested and accused of planting the bombs. One of them, a railway worker, called Pirelli was killed when he was thrown out of the window of police headquarters during 'interrogation', by a police chief called Calabresi. Workers mounted massive demonstrations in protest against this murder. The three others were held in prison for three years without being brought to trial, and have only just been let out. Charges are still hanging over their heads although everybody in Italy now admits their innocence.

fascist rebirth

Since the hot autumn, Italian governments have gone from crisis to crisis - and after every crisis, the government shifts further to the right. The moderate, reformist, Socialist Party was thrown out of the coalition government. Andretti, the present Prime Minister, makes little attempt to hide his preference for Italy's new Fascist Party, the MSI. These fascists are the heirs of Mussolini - they march beneath banners carrying the symbol of flames rising from a coffin - Mussolini's coffin. The MSI receive financial support from many of Italy's big capitalists, including Agnelli, the boss of Fiat. The fascists are being used to break up workers demonstrations, smash strikes and beat up left wing militants. Though the MSI is meant to be an illegal organisation, in January this year, they held a national conference in Rome and were given full police protection from left wing demonstrators.

Fascism is not the tiny isolated movement it is in this country, (at the last general election the MSI got 7% of the vote.) Their most recent activity was the destruction of the Socialist Party (equivalent to Britain's Labour Party) headquarters in Milan.

The Italian ruling class now faces the worst economic and political crisis of any European country. To try to solve it they have put into power the most right wing and repressive government since Mussolini. To make matters worse for them workers contracts in all the major industries are up for renewal again this spring. The demands of the workers are clear: abolition of all differentials, everybody on the same grading; a guaranteed income for all, working or not; and the reduction of food and clothing prices. Demonstrations and strikes have become more and more openly political: against the fascist MSI, the government, and all its repressive laws.

On December 12th in Rome 30,000 people fought for hours against the riot police on the third anniversary of the death of Pirelli. On January 12th this year, during a one day general strike, 200,000 workers marched through Naples. Similar demonstrations occurred in Milan and Rome in November. Two weeks ago Lancia workers occupied their factory. Police fired tear gas at the picket lines, badly injuring a picket. The following day police fired on a student demonstration, killing one student. In retaliation, two days later, fascist headquarters and police patrols were attacked by demonstrators in Milan and Turin. Every other day Fiat factories are stopped by snakes of 5,000 to 10,000 workers.

'The crisis of Italian capitalism is near a point of no return,' admitted Agnelli, the boss of Fiat, some months ago.

The industrial struggles, rent strikes and squatting began as spontaneous working class movements but out of them have grown new revolutionary organisations. The old style working class political parties - the Socialist parties and the Communist Party are still convinced that the only way forward is through parliament. At worst they're ignored, and at best followed behind this recent outburst of working class struggle. As in the early 1960's, the Communist and Socialist parties have proved incapable of meeting the challenge of a growing fascist movement, today they are struggling to retain their old influence as revolutionary organisations like Lotta Continua grow stronger.

The revolutionary organisations are now capable of influencing the daily struggle of the workers, of mobilising large numbers of people, and of leading the fight against fascism.

THEY FORBID CITIZENS

What's wrong with the Union's case ?

In 1971 the Unions at Fords signed a 2 year contract with the company. That contract runs out on Feb.28 this year. The unions have made their claim and on Feb.9 the company will reply.

THE UNIONS CLAIM

- Demands:
- (1) Substantial increase in pay
 - (2) 35 hour week and 4 weeks holiday on average pay.
 - (3) Improved lay off pay and better pensions.

Perhaps the most glaring inadequacy of the official claim has been the Unions' total unwillingness to say what they mean by "a substantial increase in wages." Unofficially they have leaked to the press that they mean £10 but they've made sure they are not committed to this figure. The 2 years of vicious inflation of prices together with the £1 rise in council house rents has meant that the standard of living of Fords workers has declined since 1971. The outlook for the future is no brighter. Anything less than £10 will mean a wage cut. But when the unions presented their claim to management they said nothing about *why* the workers needed a big increase - the whole of the document they drew up in support of the claim consists of trying to prove that Fords can pay. It's clear that they want to handle these negotiations the way they handled them in 1971 - the unions say "you can afford more" - Ramsey (Ford's negotiator) says "no we can't."

Instead of arguing for the workers' interests against those of the bosses' the unions end up squabbling about Fords economic situation.

Last year Fords had record production and sales - the Unions estimate they will make £60m profit and argue that the workers should have "a bigger share". But what if Fords had made a loss last year? Would the Unions have argued for a wage cut? Perhaps this approach could be justified if it was just seen as a way of putting the onus on Fords, but that doesn't seem to be the case. The last issue of the Ford Workers Bulletin, written for Ford workers, consisted almost entirely of technical information about Fords production and profit levels. During the 1971 Parity Campaign, there was a constant stream of leaflets and meetings so that everyone knew what they were fighting for and why - this time - nothing. In 1971, Fords were pushing for an American style method of wage-bargaining, and the union leaders fell for it. The negotiations are no more than a prize fight between the unions' experts and the bosses. So far the workers haven't appeared in the ring.

DON'T EXPECT ANY HELP FROM JACK AND HUGHIE WE DON'T GO MUCH ON THE CONVENORS EITHER

THAT WAS OUR MISTAKE IN 1971

If Ford workers refuse management's offer of a big wage cut for 1973, they will almost certainly have to take on the company alone. The days have passed when Moss Evans could be carried out of a meeting on the shoulders of strikers singing "For he's a jolly good fellow."

Some people still believe that they can expect help from Jones and Scanlon. We don't think so. We don't even think Fords workers should rely on the support of the plant convenors and many stewards. How can we say this? We need to go back to the 1971 Parity Strike to see why.

Never had the Ford workers been more united. After 8 weeks on strike, there wasn't a crack - except the ones con-jured up daily in the Echo - even though tax rebates had just ended. Even the smallest, least militant plants like Basildon, Thurrock and Dunton - had voted to stay out indefinitely. The Trade union side of the NUNCG had no plans for meeting for another fortnight. And that's when Jones and Scanlon came in, on March 30, 1971.

Going over the heads of their officials and convenors, they agreed in a secret meeting with Gillen, chairman of Ford Europe, to a two year deal worth £8m. In return, Gillen insisted they *personally* recommend its acceptance. Together, they agreed that a secret ballot was the most likely way of getting a 'yes' vote.

The timing of the ballot left no time for mass meetings to discuss the deal which was obviously their intention anyway. In the end, the decision to go back was taken by the 18000 out of 50,000 workers - who voted 'yes'. Half the workers at Halewood, Langley and Dagenham boycotted the ballot. Why were Jones and Scanlon, the white hopes of the Trade union left, so eager to end the strike? The fact that their strike funds had already paid out £2m were nearly empty has something to do with it. So has their annoyance at not being able to control their officials and convenors on the NUNCG. But that's not the complete story.

Whatever Jones and Scanlon say about rank and file democracy, and they rarely miss a chance to rabbit on about it

To argue just in terms of Fords ability to pay is dangerous, not just because Fords can reply that they aren't profitable, but also it implies acceptance of the idea that if any group of workers don't produce profits for their bosses, they are not entitled to an improvement in their living standards. But many workers work in industries where very small profits are made - like the mines and gas or in public service like the hospitals which make no profits at all. But that doesn't mean that the wage rises these people are fighting for at the moment are not justified.

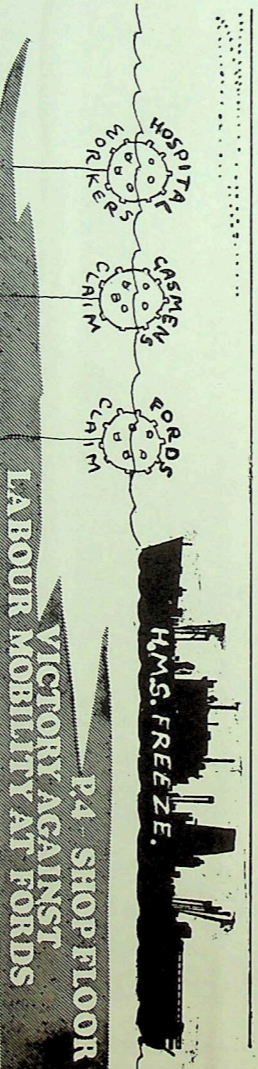
And what about the unemployed, the pensioners and all those people who have to live off social security. To argue for a wage rise in terms of profitability, as the Ford Unions do, is just to provide ammunition for the Government to say that the highly paid car workers don't care what happens to the lower-paid. We have to fight for wage increases because we need them not because one particular employer can afford it.

1971 CONTRACT - PROTOTYPE OF THE FREEZE

There is no doubt that Fords have been pioneers in the art of extracting profit from their workers. They perfected the assembly line and re-constructed a whole generation of British workers to lose skills and work more productively. And they introduced Measured Day Work which undermined the steward's bargaining position in piece work. In 1969 they tried to impose penalty clauses for unofficial strikes, and even led the Labour Government in this direction (but when this failed at Fords Wilson had to drop 'in Place of Strike'). In 1971 they got the Unions to agree to a two year wage freeze which also meant signing away a fight for better conditions for that period. Although Jones and Scanlon insisted the 1971 deal shouldn't be legally binding, in effect they had agreed to the introduction of the Industrial Relations Act months before it became law. The two year contract, so popular with employers and Unions in America, not only gives a period of freedom from wage and grading disputes - if the shop floor doesn't rebel - but it also gives Fords plenty of time to prepare themselves for the next claim: they can pile on overtime and stockpile against the possibility of a strike. We fight when it suits them.

Through the Freeze, the Government is trying to force the long term contract on everyone. No-one will be able to negotiate more than one wage claim a year. But there are other similarities between the 1971 deal and the Freeze.

Under the terms of the agreement, Ford workers can't press for higher wages but there is no restriction on Fords increasing the cost of the cars they sell to us or increasing their profits. By the end of 1971, Fords had increased the price of cars by 10%.



to an audience of admiring supporters, they will always refuse to mobilise their unions to attack employers and the state. The job they did on the dockers strike last year is another proof of this. We think that this is because the unions have joined in a partnership with the employers and the State that supports them, not because Jones, Scanlon or any other official is bent, bribed or mad.

The basis of that partnership is that the unions will only demand what capitalism can afford. They aren't interested in putting the bosses out of business. As soon as there's any danger or, that happening, they back down. Some people call this selling out. We don't because we don't expect them to do anything else. That's why we say that workers must rely only on their own efforts and their own organisation.

Spring Blitz

This doesn't explain why convenors and stewards at Halewood have taken over the supervisors job of keeping the men and women working.

As soon as the 1971 Parity strike ended management launched a blitz on the Halewood shop floor. Lines were speeded up, supervisors distributed like confetti and stewards freedom of movement cut back. The unions didn't interfere with the attack. They couldn't. In return for the £8m they had promised Fords that for two years:

- *there would be no strikes or other action on economic claims
- *there would be no claims leading to higher wage costs
- *there would be no grading changes.

Maybe if the convenors and stewards weren't so used to relying on the union's help and moral support, they would have fought the spring blitz alone. On the whole they didn't.

One exception was John Dillon. When he fought against men being taken out of his section in the P1A he was

Fords will offer £2.50, at the most, and blame the Freeze for not allowing a bigger rise. If inflation stays at the level of the last two years, that clearly means the offer of a wage cut. What can we do? First of all, we have to recognise that the battle at Fords will be followed with keen interest by the Government, and by workers and bosses in all those firms where a pay settlement is pending. That's a lot of potential opposition and support. But what is crucial is whether we can gain the support of other workers as the miners did (and the power workers didn't).



Scanlon and Jones - scheming the night away

NO SPECIAL CASES

To gain that support it's no good arguing that Ford workers are a special case because the firm is making big profits. That argument will set us apart from gas and hospital workers. Instead, we need to say that

- *the needs of Ford workers are no different from the needs of the rest of the working class. Even if Henry Ford and the Gas Board are bankrupt, we've still got to eat and to live.
- *a victory for Ford workers is an encouragement to workers less confident and less organised to fight for what they need too.
- *the best way to make sure that we don't all get a wage cut is to fight together, we mustn't give them the chance to pick us off one by one - this is the strategy of the Unions.

With days to go before we decide what we can do about the Freeze and Fords' offer, we need to make sure that nobody is ignorant of what the Freeze means:

- 1 no more than one rise a year
- 2 a tougher phase 3 starting in the Autumn
- 3 no decrease in hours worked for those already on 40
- 4 no increase in paid holidays beyond three weeks
- 5 together with inflation, higher rents and rates and VAT, a potential wage cut for us all on a scale unknown since 1926.

sacked. The strike began on Monday and by the weekend, it was sold at Halewood and likely to spread to the rest of the combine. The deal to re-instate Dillon without his stewards credentials and in another section, was worked out by the Company and the TRG and on Sunday afternoon, rubberstamped by the Halewood convenors.

After this the number of stewards prepared to take on Fords dwindled. When men were sacked, suspended or moved, from now onwards, for 18 months, the convenors policy was to be the same: "Get back to work and we'll negotiate". The results have been several militants sacked, key militant sections broken up, faster line speeds for us, and a production record for Fords.

We disagree with people who say that the remedy is to replace the right-wingers by undependable left stewards. On the other hand we agree with those who argue that through their obsession with negotiations stewards play a game whose rules Fords drew up, and in doing so separate themselves from their shop floor workmates. Once upon a time, Fords fought hard against shop stewards, but now management understands that in a Measured Day Work factory they can use stewards to their own advantage. There's no danger, especially under the 1971-73 contract, of stewards fighting for higher pay as there is in a piecework factory.

Blue Book

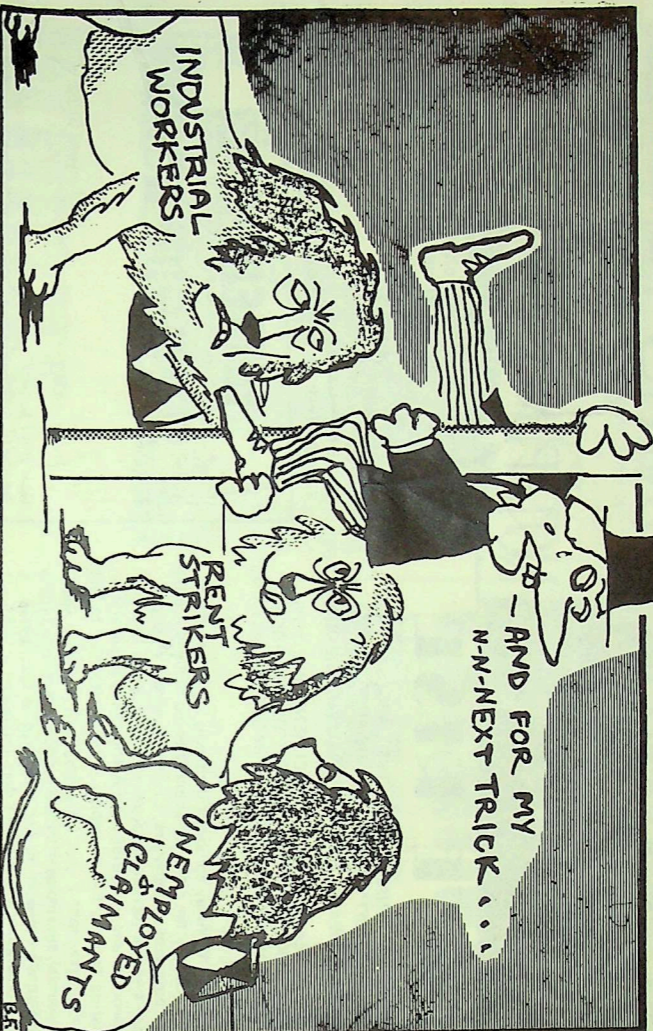
Fords don't ask much of their workers: all they want is train loads of cheaply produced, sellable cars. From the Unions they get a guarantee that wage costs will be the same for 2 years at a time. From the stewards, they get an assurance that stoppages and sabotage will be kept under control and that we will go on working while they go on negotiating by the terms of the Ford Blue Book, a record of procedure built on every time the Company has defeated the shop floor.

Maybe if the shop stewards committee decided tomorrow to ignore the procedure, they would become again a fighting force. But who believes that's possible.

BIG BLAME

MERSEYSIDE
SOCIALIST
NEWSPAPER

no. 8 March ~ April '73 4p



FIGHT! AGAINST THE FREEZE AGAINST RENT RISES FOR A GENERAL STRIKE

Whatever their other differences, the response of trade union leaders to the Government's Freeze has been uniformly the same. They have argued their special case.

Of course they're all right. They are special cases. But so is everybody else. And nobody will win if everyone argues against each other's claims.

Those unions representing higher paid workers have argued on the grounds of increased productivity, or profitability. That's the way the Ford union negotiators backed their claim. So have the train drivers, who want more money for extra responsibilities and efficiency. And now the miners' leaders are pressing their claim because of their increased output.

On the other hand, negotiators representing lower paid workers argue they are special cases because their current pay is well below the national average. This is the argument used by the hospital workers, civil servants, and gasmen.

When the National Union of Railwaymen, representing the lower-paid rail workers, attacks the train drivers actions, they are sabotaging the claims of all rail workers.

When the Ford's unions say they are a special case because Ford have made huge profits, they're dividing Ford workers from workers in public service and other low paid industries which make lower or no profits.

When the hospital unions base their claims on comparisons with workers in other industries, they divide themselves from higher paid workers by appearing to blame them, instead of the bosses, for their poor wages.

But no amount of special pleading will break the freeze. Any attempt to fight as a special case weakens the total fight.

token strikes

It is true of course, that some attempt has been made to force the union leaders to present a united front against the government. Amidst much back-room lobbying and public recrimination, the TUC has called a one-day national day of action. But as Tom Jackson, the postmen's leader said: "It will be like having one more Good Friday a year."

Miners' leader Jo Gornley, put it in a nutshell when he told the TUC: "Nothing will be changed by pussy-footing one-day strikes and demonstrations. Only going the whole hog with all out action will alter the situation."

He is right. An all-out general strike is the only way to break the freeze.

general -strike

It is also clear the TUC is not prepared to go this far. It's only just been able to stand the strain of calling for a token stoppage.

SMASH THE WAGE FREEZE!

WE ARE ALL SPECIAL CASES!

This is not to say the token strike must not be supported. We can make it the start of a united fight against the freeze, by organising on the day joint demonstrations, and pickets with those workers who are currently fighting and with tenants groups opposing the unfair rents act.

Experience has shown, it's no good relying on trade union officials and labour party councillors to do this for us. They never have done yet.

But if the fight is to last more than a day we need organisations which permanently link together militants in different areas. This is the importance of action groups. Groups of militants who come together to fight a particular issue. It may be the Industrial Relations Act, the changing of six building workers with conspiracy, or the freeze.

These groups would co-ordinate the activities of the different areas - flying pickets, joint demonstrations, or stoppages. They would become a focus for action for all those fighting the freeze.

bring down the govt

Wide spread opposition to the freeze is clearly a direct threat to the Government. Heath and the Tories have thrown their full weight behind it and backed it to the hilt. Therefore if it is broken - it's very likely the Government will also fall. This is what many people want - and certainly very few of us would be sorry to see the back of it. To bring down the most reactionary and anti-working class government since the war is a victory in any bodily terms.

But there are limits to the victory. Because the end of the Tory Government doesn't necessarily mean the end of the ruling class. And it certainly doesn't mean that another government can be put in it's place to carry out exactly the same actions but in a different guise.

In fact, if the Tory Government is brought down, it's most likely successor is a Labour Government. And as we know from Labour's record it has also been known to introduce freezes, and it's not opposed to legislation such as the Industrial Relations Act.

Labour can be more subtle, of course. It will more than likely agree to drop the compulsory wage freeze, and replace it with a voluntary one. It could negotiate a freeze with the TUC which would appear more acceptable. But the effect would be the same. Our wages are frozen.

'national interest'

The papers and TV try to tell us the freeze is in the "national interest". But price increases make it obvious it's only in the bosses interest.

The wage freeze shows that the ruling class are worried about our power to threaten their profits.

WE ARE ALL SPECIAL CASES!

BATTLE WITH POLICE AS KIRKBY TENANTS FIGHT EVICTIONS

Kirkby March 11 Monday

Two hundred tenants from Tower Hill estate, Kirkby, demonstrated their anger over the Council's eviction threat.

Kirkby Council's Housing Committee was in the process of rubber stamping evictions and court orders on tenants who are still on total rent strike. When members of Tower Hill Unfair Rents Action Committee tried to speak to councillors the police brutally threw them out of Kirkby's Civic Buildings.

Police grabbed the tenants and then dragged them down four flights of stairs - some by their hair, others by their clothing. One policeman drew his baton and hit a tenant several times on his head and shoulders. As the crowd saw the hearing, it surged towards the doors to try to storm the building to rescue the man.

Several police on guard duty drew their batons and began to threaten the crowd. Afterwards, the Liverpool Echo reporter was overheard saying to the police inspector, 'I'll report there was a scuffle, shall I?'

Meanwhile, in the inner sanctum these proposals had been decided to be put before the full Council meeting on March 26

* a number of court orders already in existence will be put into action during the next few weeks.

* court orders will be obtained during the coming weeks on other tenants, beginning with those with the highest arrears.

Kirkby Council meeting next Monday 26 - tenants and workers from Merseyside meet outside the Civic Buildings at 7pm.

BOOTLE

Tenants on rent strike in Bootle held a demonstration on Thursday March 8 outside the Town Hall where the Unfair rents were being discussed.

While Labour scab councillors argued in the Council about the assessment of the Unfair Rents, Bootle tenants, supported by others from Merseyside, showed their determination to carry on after the first six months of the rent strike.

BOLTON

POLICE SCUFFLED WITH TENANTS SITTING IN THE road when 150 tenants marched through Bolton on Saturday March 17.

They were there to show their solidarity with six Bolton tenants whose furniture had already been marked up by the bailiffs for possession because of rent arrears. Though there was little support from Bolton people, tenants and their children from Merseyside, Manchester and Cheshire all arrived to show their militancy and mobility to the Borough Treasurer, who has ordered the evictions for arrears of only £23.

This demonstration was the first practical test of rank and file coordination since last Sunday's North West Regional Rent Strike Conference, and it showed that scab Councils have more than their own tenants to fear when it comes to a confrontation.

anti-eviction squads

Anti-eviction squads are already in existence on many estates on Merseyside, ready to come to the aid of tenants as soon as the bailiffs approach, as in Kirkby last November.

Delaying tactics, such as legal proceedings, the intervention of social workers or friendly councillors pledging no evictions are not enough. When we go in rent strike we must be prepared to face eviction and that means setting up anti-eviction squads as a priority.

The confrontation between the tenants and the bailiffs with their cronies the police is inevitable, and only the united force of all tenants to prevent evictions and establish that a home is a right, will safeguard the rent strike.

Past experience has shown that eviction attempts are certain to happen if a rent strike is the serious challenge to the authorities. It should be. A campaign that does not recognise this deceives the tenants taking part and can only result in their fears being justified, leading to the collapse of the rent strike, when the reality of eviction appears..

RENTS CONFERENCE

The North West Regional Rent Strike Conference was attended by 200 people from Merseyside and the Greater Manchester Area. It provided the opportunity for tenants who have been involved in rent strikes to call on everyone to REBUILD THE ESTATE ORGANISATIONS, EXTEND THE RENT STRIKES AND SEEK INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT.

This opportunity, however wasn't given to every tenant - a woman from Netherley was prevented from speaking by the chairman, because she wasn't a 'duly elected representative'. This incident (along with others) pinpoints the limitations of such conferences - they are dominated by Trades Council personalities who try to contain any discussion of the political direction of the rent strike by always stressing the necessity for supporting the Labour Party. But they continually ignore the practical reality that on rent strike estates the Labour councillors have given no support to the struggle of the tenants.

Dave Skinner, councillor for Clay Cross (the Derbyshire council that is refusing to implement the Act) had pointed out earlier the dangers of putting any trust in the 'duly elected representatives', on most councils and in parliament they become tied up in power games and bureaucracy, tending to forget the people they are supposed to represent. Similar dangers exist with tenants' representatives - there can be no substitute for the participation of the tenants themselves.

RESOLUTION

The resolution passed by the conference called for the setting up of a Lancashire and Cheshire Tenants and Labour Organisations Co-ordinating Committee - to co-ordinate and organise support for rent strikes and for councils still refusing to implement the Act or refusing to take action against striking tenants. It also called for the convening of a National Conference "with the perspective" of a Lobby of Parliament along with rent strikes to get the Act repealed.

REGIONAL & NATIONAL ORGANISATION

Tenants recognise the need for a regional and national organisation which can co-ordinate the actions of tenants and industrial workers. There is a danger that such a body would CONTROL the struggle rather than co-ordinate it.

The regional committee will probably consist of Trades Council and Trades Union officials, but perhaps only one tenants 'representative' from each town. It will in this case be superfluous to the real fight against the Rent Act and will have little to do with the actual strikes taking place on the estates.

LOBBIES NO ANSWER

A lobby of Parliament is only useful in terms of national publicity. To talk about it as a perspective for the rents struggle (as the resolution does) diverts tenants activities once again into parliamentary petitioning. Our needs and interests and those of the careerist big-gobs in Parliament will never coincide.

WE ORGANISE - THEY TALK

The successes of the rent strikes since October have come from the tenants organisations themselves and we have received very little help from the Trades Unions institutions, who claim to support us. Evictions were prevented in Kirby last November because tenants organisations and workers from nearby sites and factories got together and blocked off Tower Hill estate. At this conference in response to the news of eviction threats in Bolton, people gathered at the back of the hall to organise anti-eviction squads, while the platform was still dominated by those Trades Council officials who believe that repetitive speeches delivered in loud voices will sustain flagging rent strikes in distant estates.

While Trades Council officials suggest that we should approach shop-stewards committees and ask for donations - tenants on Tower Hill are touring local sites and enlisting the support of building workers to fight coming evictions. Tenants are calling on all of their organisations to leaflet factories and hold factory gate meetings. Rather than just talking about it in conferences, they are doing the practical work involved in making clear to the whole working class that the fight against the Rent and the Industrial Relations Act is the same as that against the Housing Finance Act.

RENTING NEWS



Tenants demonstrate in Bolton against evictions

RATE RISE

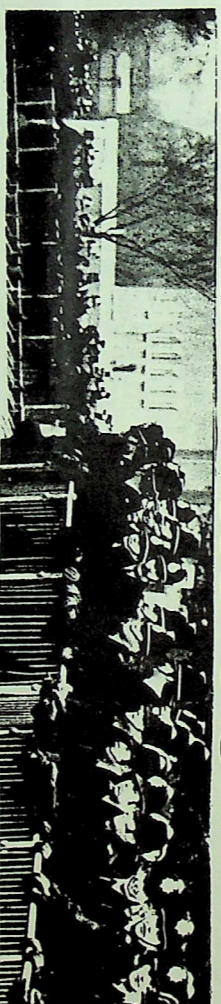
LIVERPOOL TENANTS FACE THE LARGEST RATES RISE IN THE CITY'S HISTORY THIS APRIL. A 25% INCREASE MEANS AN ADDITIONAL 24% ON OUR RATES THIS INCREASE, ADDED TO A £1 RENT RISE THIS YEAR, MAKES A TOTAL MOCKERY OF THE FREEZE WHICH IS NOW FREEZING ONLY WAGES AND NOTHING ELSE.

Meanwhile in sunny Southport, there will be no rate rises, and in Crosby the rates are actually being reduced! Unlike their prosperous neighbours, Liverpool tenants must pay these massive increases because that happen to live in a commercial and industrial centre. They have to subsidise prestige projects like Liverpool Airport (expected to lose £1,734,000 by 1977); they must subsidise industrial and commercial development for the fat commuters from Crosby and Southport to work in. And they have to subsidise a City Corporation which seems more interested in producing glossy public relations newspapers than dealing with debts that this year reached a total of £29,500,000!

The Government are withdrawing housing subsidies - so the tenants have to make local housing pay. Now the Government are refusing to subsidise the debts of national commercial centres like Liverpool and Manchester - so the tenants foot the bill. Its a case of dog eat dog. The Government passes the bills to the local councils. The councils pass the bill onto the tenants.

FIGHT BACK

Tenants on rent and rates strike expect their ranks to grow when these latest increases are added to this year's £1 rent rise. Tower Hill Rent Action Group at a conference last Sunday called for tenants on rent strike to link up with private householders to withhold the rate increases.



"They're not stopping, sir. What shall I do?" the sergeant roared back from the head of the march. "Play it by ear," he was told.

It was the only moment when the police operation broke down on Thursday March 15th.

The court in Shrewsbury, where 24 building workers faced charges of conspiracy, and intimidation was surrounded by 5000 police lined up behind crash barriers. Guards bringing dockets, builders, and steel workers from Merseyside and North Wales were halted outside Shrewsbury and escorted into town by police motor cyclists. Altogether about 800 police were mobilised to make sure that the court wasn't interrupted.



Why the panic? As Peter Carter, a Birmingham building worker, said at the meeting opposite the court "Gross police action shows that the ruling class is beginning to fear the organised working class".

Many of the 24 workers were on the North Wales Action Committee organised during last year's building strike to bring about a shut down of local sites. Whilst 65,000 men came out on Merseyside, 90% of the North Wales builders are on the lump and site organisation was almost non-existent.

LETTER FROM

SCOTLAND ROAD

11 Shadwell Street,
Liverpool, 5.

Dear Big Flame,
As one of the prospective tenants candidates in the Scotland Road elections, I read with interest your article discussing the pros and cons of tenants standing for the council, and whether in fact any credibility at all should be given to the council structure.

As you probably know, Sandhills and Vauxhall wards have been regarded both nationally and at the local level as a Labour stronghold. Many of the tenants are increasingly disillusioned with this so-called Labour representation, which has reached a head in the implementation of the Tory Rent Act, when the Labour Party had specifically promised not to implement it.

Now our ward is to be 'represented' by Bill Sefton and J.Morgan, both implementors of the Tory law, at the next elections in March and April. As a result, I and three other tenants are standing as tenants candidates because we, the tenants, do not intend to hand this ward to them on a plate.

Yours, B.Rutter
(over the Bridge Tenants Association)

PICKETS IN COURT

The tactic the Action Committee used to get the site closed down was flying pickets, used with such devastating success a year ago by the miners. Now the State and the employers have decided to stamp on flying pickets before their use spreads.

Rather than use the Industrial Relations Court which has been a disaster for the Government especially since they had to release the dockers from Penrhyvill, the State is now bringing criminal charges against picketing building workers.

Of the 24 men before the court, 6 appeared on remand accused of conspiring to intimidate building workers in Shropshire and elsewhere with a view to compelling them to abstain from their lawful work. All 24 were charged with intimidating people to abstain from work and with fighting and making an affray.

These charges have been brought after a six month investigation by the police and building employers. In the next few weeks the Government will be introducing legislation to deal with flying pickets. By then the employers hope that public opinion will be receptive to a new law.

As a docks steward said at the demonstration outside the court: "If they are criminals, we should all be proud to be criminals with them".

Other speakers called for a one day general strike on April 25th when the 24 will be in court in Shrewsbury again. It is important that this call is taken up everywhere. Last Thursday, solidarity was restricted to the dock's one day strike, and a few building sites.

Big Flame is running a coach to Shrewsbury on April 25th. It will leave Liverpool at 7.30 am. Book a seat now. Please send donations towards trial costs to: Building Workers Social Fund, c/o The Treasurer, W.R. Williams, Iford Centre, Ocean View, Carmel, Holywell, Flintshire.

DOCKERS NEWWITCHES!

The employers attempts to screw more profits out of the dockers moves from threats to pleas. Last week they waded in with the big stick and tried to introduce time and motion experts on the quay sides. But these were hastily withdrawn when dockers threatened to stop in protest against them. So on Friday, the employers tried the soft approach. Every docker working for the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company received the following pleas in his wage packet:..

"The future of the Port of Liverpool is as good as we all choose to make it.....There is much we can do to help ourselves and I am writing on one important matter: lost time and unauthorised absence..... Lost time causes serious delays and a consequent loss both of production and of piecework earnings, and unauthorised absence can cause delays in finishing a job....."

"Allegations that the Port give an unsatisfactory performance and members of gangs are missing when work is required are damaging to us all. It is for this reason that we must ensure that all members of a gang are available during working periods....."

Yours faithfully, G.W. Brimyard
(Managing Director)

What Mr Brimyard forgot to mention is such little problems as, for example, tea breaks, when canteens get so full it's impossible to get a drink within the half-hour allotted. The dockers answer has been to stagger the break. It means work is interrupted. But the solution lies with the bosses - build bigger and better canteens.

Mr Brimyard also forgot to mention that in the past the employers often turned a blind eye to the 'wet', because it suited them. In return dockers have sometimes turned a blind eye to possibly dangerous working conditions - rotten hatchets etc. - now the bosses want bell to bell working, with nothing in exchange.

But the most important thing about Mr. Brimyard's letter is what he doesn't say. Which is that the employers' real aim is to speed up work, reduce the number of jobs, and smash job organisation. Once this is done, the way is open for real productivity in dockland. Which means bigger profits for the bosses, no job at all for many dockers, and factory working conditions for those that remain.

If this is to be stopped, it's vital dockers fight any attempt to introduce productivity deals.

* * * *

Last week, Sammy Madox, a porter at the Seaforth dock, was walking along a narrow alley between containers when he was crushed to death by a giant straddle crane used for lifting containers. As the huge wheels of the crane approached him, he was trapped by rows of containers and couldn't get out of the way.

Sammy's was the second death at Seaforth within five months. Last autumn, a checker called Jo Smith was killed there.

It's obvious that if the employers had spent more time thinking about the safety hazards of container work, and less on how to make money from them, Sammy Madox and Jo Smith might still be alive.

Fight productivity deals

Defend job organisation



UNIONS - ALL GAS - NO ACTION

It's now nearly two months since the gasmen began their industrial action against the Freeze. With some labourers on only £119 per week, the £1 plus 4% (£2.25 maximum) offer will not bring them any way nearer to the cost of living increase. The gas board even wants them to stay on their old overtime rate if they return to normal working.

This offer is so pally that most militants are certain that the result of the secret ballot, on March 22nd, will be an overwhelming rejection. "Even the scabs can't accept this" were told by production workers at the Linacre plant.

But the militants are not happy. The unions (the G.M.W.U is the main one) have made their action official but that is about all. Last year the NUR had to have a secret ballot imposed on them by the NIRC; this year, the G.M.W.U organises one itself. Even if the ballot is successful, it has meant that the union could spend two weeks stalling and waiting instead of getting down to the fight.

And fighting is what the union is scared of. At Linacre Lane plant, Bootle, since the dispute began, militant production workers have argued that the best weapon is an all out strike. The unions have always tried to keep production workers in, on work to rules and overtime bans. There have been three meetings on this issue, and on the first two, the unions won. At times this has meant that Linacre was producing more gas than usual.

But at the third meeting, the militants got the vote. So for the past two weeks, Linacre production has stopped and the men have been free to organise flying pickets to spread the strike to other production workers. But the G.M.W.U doesn't give up easily.

For instance, the Linacre men went over to Warrington and got the men out there. They got assurances that the plant would be completely run down starting the very next day. But the next day, in stepped the union and got the decision reversed!

It became clear that the people who had to be picketed were the union. This was organised on March 16th, but as could be expected, all they got was vague promises or dishonest excuses. The local official insisted that they were on the side of the men, but were hindered by the national executive. After what happened at Warrington, this got laughed out of court.

Gasworkers know they can't rely on their so-called leaders. Real support can only come from those people who also find themselves on the receiving end of Tory policies - the freeze, the unfair Rents Act - and who are committed to fighting. This inevitably means the rank and file, and it is up to us to organise the Action groups that can make this support real, through united action against a common problem!

CLEANERS GET DIRTY DEAL

CLEANING CONTRACTORS ARE MAKING HUGE PROFITS OUT OF WOMEN CLEANERS IN LIVERPOOL.

Contract cleaning means that a cleaning company promises in a contract to provide a certain number of women to clean so many inches of office space. Because the contract is only between the owner of the office and the cleaning contractor - the women who do all the work don't know what it says - so their's nothing to stop the cleaning contractor from providing much fewer cleaners than he promised.....

For the last few years, large offices all over the country have found it more convenient to contract work out to cleaning companies instead of employing cleaners directly. They've found it convenient because it costs less money.

Government cleaners who are still employed directly and are in the civil service union get higher wages and have to clean less space (1,000 square feet per cleaner compared with 15,000 in contract cleaning). In Liverpool - cleaners in the Municipal Council Offices employed directly by the local authority earn £16 a week - while cleaners in Mersey House employed by Industrial contract cleaners earn £7.50 per week for the same hours.

In other words contract cleaners costs are a lot less than direct cleaning costs - which means that government offices are gradually going over to contract cleaning - but the saving is at the expense of the women cleaners.

BUSINESS BOOMING

The Contract Cleaning business has grown by leaps and bounds since 1965. Firms like 'Industrial Cleaners', 'City cleaners', 'S.O.S. Cleaners' make huge profits and operate in most large towns on a vast scale. IT'S A VERY PROFITABLE BUSINESS.

Very little capital goes on equipment. The main cost for them is wages so it's in their interests to keep them as low as possible. Women working in Mersey House, a government building in Liverpool, get as little as 26p per hour and for that meagre amount they work so hard that, we're drinking our own sweat! Many of the women in this particular building work a split-duty 6 to 8 in the morning and 5 to 7.30 in the evening for 7 days a week - and only earn £7.50 per week. In other words they get no split-duty money and no extra for Saturday and Sunday.

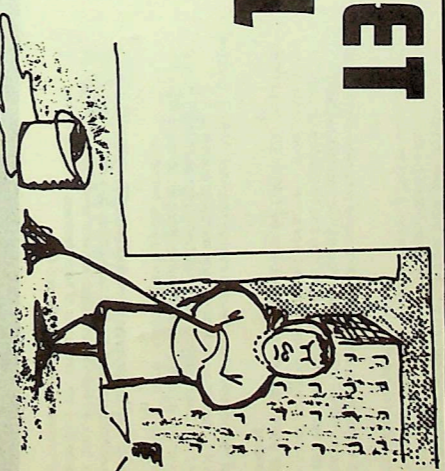
The rest of the women work evenings 5 days a week for a mere £3.20. Most of us have had to go out to work to pay the rent - now it's gone up - but by the time we've paid our bus fares there's not even enough left to pay the increase.....

There are 32 offices on each floor of Mersey House and two women have to do a floor between them for these low wages and often without adequate equipment. If one of the

PICKET VICTORY!

It's very common for advertising companies to use women's bodies and all our sexual fantasies to sell their products. On March 15th, the Social and Arts Society at the University tried to do exactly the same. They are broke, they need to raise money, so they hired a group for a dance called the Ladybirds, whose main attraction is that they appear topless, since from all accounts their music is pretty bad.

The dance was picketed by about 80 women and men from Big Flame, Mersey-side, Women's Liberation, the M.G. and from the University. We went there because we're proud, or against sex, or against people showing their bodies. But we are against our sexuality being bought and sold. That kind of spectacle has nothing to do with satisfying happy sexual relationships. Those women are put on the stage to be gawped at and laughed at - to exploit the frustrations and repression of our sexuality by changing 6th a look at what should be a perfectly free and normal part of our lives - our own bodies. The Ladybirds might claim it is 'natural' to go naked but they can charge £950 for 40 minutes, because for most of us it is not 'natural'.



is all her male has to take over her job and DO TWICE AS MUCH WORK! but she only gets PART of the other woman's wages - and the other woman gets NOTHING - WHERE DOES THE EXTRA MONEY GO? INTO THE POCKET OF THE CONTRACTORS!! The last boss of 'Industrial Cleaners' retired at 45 recently with £400,000 money that he'd made out of women cleaners. We found out that Industrial Cleaners are paid £320 a week by the government - for the 20 women that work at Mersey House - and only £120 of that goes on the cleaners wages - SO THE REST IS PROFIT FOR THE CONTRACTORS!!

DOWN TOOLS

Cleaning is one of the most vital jobs to keep the system running smoothly - and no-one seems to realise it. If all us cleaners downed tools then all the government buildings, factories, shops, offices would have to close down because they wouldn't fulfill the health regulations. Your cleaning woman's vital!

Although cleaners have a lot of potential power they are very vulnerable. Cleaning contractors are strongly opposed to union labour - IT'S NO WONDER WHEN THEY GET AWAY WITH SUCH BLATANT EXPLOITATION OF THEIR WOMEN WORKERS! They threaten women with the sack if they mention unions - and they know there's always plenty more women willing to take the job because they can't find anything better. The cleaners work in small units of 10 to 20 so they have got much of a sense of unity with all the thousands of cleaners in Britain. It also makes it very hard for them to organise and put up any show of strength against their employers - without support from other workers cleaners cannot get very far.....

Night cleaners in London joined the T.G.W.U. (window cleaners branch) but it was a long struggle - they had to fight the victimisation of their own employers and also fight for recognition and support within their own union. Cleaners have been organising at Birmingham, Norwich, Lancaster and Manchester - It's about time we saw the beginning of this in Liverpool. Cleaners should start getting together and finding ways to fight the contract cleaners because as long as conditions are prepared to put up with such bad pay and conditions, contract cleaners will continue to make huge profits out of them. PROFITS WHICH ARE MADE WITH THE SWEAT OF WOMEN CLEANERS!

But more than that. People say, well they choose to do it, why should you stop them, and why shouldn't I look if I want. But it affects all women because it perpetuates the idea of women as nothing more than sexual objects, bodies to be looked at, judged and used after from afar, or rejected if we don't come up to standards. This society glorifies women only as sex symbols/mothers and wives. But look around you - when we work, we're paid slave wages (over 4 million working women earn less than 25p an hour!), as housewives, we earn nothing. Unsupported mothers struggle to survive on social security - we're criticised because they don't have a man to support them. Women are in prison for prostitution - selling their bodies to individual men instead of standing on a stage to be looked at for stealing the food and clothing that this society doesn't think they deserve, for fraud - usually adding the substance-level social security they are dependent on. Look at the women and girls kept ignorant and afraid of their own bodies and sexuality, denied free contraception and advice, denied the right to choose about abortion, women still dying at the hand of back street abortionists. That is the reality for most women in this society.

And when people shout about the freedom to choose to go into this society, Ladybirds, how much do they think of the freedom of choice available to the women who really suffer because of society's attitude to women, and assumptions about men.

HOMELINESS IN LIVERPOOL

A recent night survey in Liverpool discovered 35 people sleeping rough, 14 in night shelters like the Simon Community, and 51 who were one stage removed from the street. In Casuality Wards, the police Bride well and the DHSS Reception Centre at Fazakerley. This is just the tip of the homelessness iceberg in Liverpool, an iceberg that is growing all the time.

The 1948 National Assistance Act says that local authorities have to provide accommodation for homeless people - but the news hasn't reached Liverpool yet, even after 25 years.

There is one unit for homeless families, Langtree House - but there is no local authority accommodation whatsoever for the single homeless. It is worth mentioning that if Langtree House is full, the family is split up and the man usually told to find his own accommodation. Nationally, only 20% of applications for temporary accommodation to the local authority are dealt with. To make it easier for the local authority to hide the true figures they define homelessness in a way that excludes all those who are in temporary accommodation, such as hostels, common lodgings or the shelter provided by voluntary organisations.

Thrown on the street

At the present time about 500 or 600 men or women in Liverpool are in such accommodation. Because most facilities are provided by various Church organisations which have their own moral codes, socially undesirable behaviour is often punished by throwing the person back into the street. There is always a 'better behaved' homeless person to fill the bed.

Some of the homeless are ex-offenders, some very recently released from prison. Why? Because the Home Office prefers to spend £3,000 per year maintaining a guard dog and its handler (it costs twice as much to feed a dog as it does a prisoner.) Then increase the discharge grant from the miserable £4 to the £40 or £50 that PROP is demanding.

Many of the homeless have been in mental hospitals. Why? Because Liverpool Corporation fails to provide adequate hostels as it is supposed to. Liverpool has two small hostels for discharged mental patients which is hardly adequate when there are about 300 people in Rainhill for no better reason than they are homeless.

The Mental Health Service is so inadequately financed and staffed that it provides no more than a taxi-service to get ex-mental patients back to Rainhill after subsequent 'breakdowns'. These are often caused by the pressures of homelessness or living in overcrowded hostels. So back to Square One.

LUCAS

With the failure of the Lucas occupation, the Merseyside working class, whether it realises it or not has suffered its biggest defeat for many years.

If one good thing comes out of such a disaster, it is the end of a well known myth - militant Merseyside and the solidarity of the 'labour movement'. We see it's a good thing because the working class can't develop its struggles on the basis of myths of a great historical tradition in the past. An honest and critical assessment of the real strengths and weaknesses of working class organisation on Merseyside is necessary.

For us, this involves asking questions about the nature of the 'labour movement', the role of unions and stewards, the way their forces organise and the politics they operate with.

RATIONALISATION

The importance of the Lucas struggle cannot be underestimated, as Big Flame and others were guilty of doing. It was one of the first crucial battles concerning 'rationalisations' to be carried out by British firms in preparation for entry into the Common Market. If this had been stopped, other employers might have had to think twice before they did the same to their workers. At the same time, the Lucas workers faced difficult problems. There was no possibility of the state stepping in to bail the factory out as in the case of U.C.S. The factory was not a lame duck, it simply wasn't part of Lucas' plans. Nor was it a question of another firm coming in and taking over the factory because the plant was part of a network and was useless on its own. Also Lucas wanted the plant and machinery for their own purposes.

The only successful strategy could be to confront Lucas directly to force them to change their plans. Right from the start, Lucas workers realised that if they did not get support in defeating Lucas, their battle was lost - and they've been proved right. Of course the Occupation Committee and the stewards made mistakes and there was the usual problem of activists in the occupation not involving the other men and women in the running of the struggle. But the lack of support of other workers was the key factor (despite support from transport drivers and workers from Lucas plants in the south east) in the failure of the occupation.

LUCAS COMBINE

Neither the Lucas Industrial Equipment factory sharing the same estate with CAV, nor the rest of the combine on Mersey-side and elsewhere backed them. Girlings, racked by internal union divisions didn't. Victor Works was picketed heavily for months. Most of the stewards didn't take too kindly to this and appeared with posters saying "This factory is not in dispute, drivers please come in."

This lack of support was crucial in the failure to get help from other places like Fords Standards and the Docks. As Frank and file worker, Bill Wild explained in the Free Press: "We never got the support we wanted. If we had done, we'd have got untold support from other factories. Because our own company wasn't supporting us, the likes of Fords and all them turned round and said: "Why should we support you if your own company won't?"

Some of the homeless are single unsupported mothers. Why? Because their Social Security payment is so small that they fall behind with the rent and get evicted. Or because the landlord sells his properties to developers or bigger landlords like Realmodel who get housing improvement grants and charge much higher rents when the houses have been improved.

short-sighted policies

In essence the problem has been created by the inept and blinkered policies of the Housing and Social Services Departments. Under its Urban Redevelopment project the Planning Department has cleared much of the cheap multi-occupied housing from the older inner city areas where many single people used to live.

At the same time as this is happening new housing is supplied (very slowly) according to the Housing Department's housing list, which fall miles short of actual need. Single people get lowest priority and when they finally get a Corporation flat they usually find the rents are too high - the get evicted and the homelessness cycle begins again.

Over the last three years or so this particular aspect of the problem has been worsened by the high rate of unemployment which increases poverty and the whole cycle starts again.

And all the time, Dr Meredith Davies, the Director of Social Service has closed his eyes and said "I see no problem" or eased his conscience by mouthing empty, Liberal platitudes about "allocation of resources" or "10 year social policy structure".

The most important question is why can't the problem of single homelessness be solved? The hard-core comprises of habitual rough sleepers alcoholics, the socially undesirable tramps and dossers and those who exhibit aggressive behaviour.

Little is visible except the decline in their physical standards and appearances and bourgeois values then depict them as shiftless and work shy individuals, grasping at the coat tails of the hard working, respectable, conscientious majority, as parasites on society simply because they can not or will not conform to the competitive self-interest of

WHY THE DEFEAT

If this was the reason why car factories and Docks stewards failed to back them, it's a bloody disgrace to any idea of working class solidarity. Since when have the most militant and organised sectors taken their lead from a bunch of scabs like the rest of the Lucas group? Their lack of support made it even more crucial to get help from outside the combine. To refuse it signed the death warrant of the occupation.

DISUNITY

But it is doubtful whether this put your own house in order first stuff was the real reason for lack of support. For this we have to look at what the labour movement means in practice. And it isn't a unified working class. Instead, it's many different sections of workers, whose leadership judges whether to give solidarity to others or to take part in actions against government measure like the Industrial Relations Act. To some degree, of course, this is inevitable, but if each situation is looked at in isolation like this, the working class is going to lose a lot more battles. To black one set of products and not black others for another set of workers - to bring some workers out on one day strikes against the government and not others makes it impossible to develop working class consciousness and organisation. These issues like blackings and political strikes have to involve the rank and file in full discussion of their aims. To impose them from above whether blackings etc. are refused or not can only be manipulative and create distrust and apathy on the shop floor. In addition, it's worthwhile remembering that on one occasion some sections in Fords started blacking some Lucas products on their own initiative and were told to stop it by the deputy convenor.



bourgeois respectability. They are few in number and there fore shunned by horse-trading local government politicians, or whatever party, concerned solely with vote-catching posturings.

on our terms

More money could make life a lot easier and more comfortable but wouldn't actually solve the problem. That can only come when we take back our right to organise our lives and communities in our interests, on our terms and under our control.

News in brief

- ★ **Prices rocket**
Since the freeze has started, the price of fresh food has risen by an equivalent of 40% a year.
- ★ **Prison psychiatrist beaten up**
Hamburg, Germany - A prison psychiatrist who had certified three convicts over the past five years as 'good for torture' was severely beaten in front of his home here on February 22nd by a group which denounced him as a 'murderer'. The group said in a statement "We beat him up until he was only fit for hospital. At least for a while he'll have to give up his dirty job."
- ★ **Fine Tubes: national picket - March 19th**
Picketers clashed violently when police tried to assist scabs through the picket lines of this Plymouth firm where over 30 workers have been on strike for 3 years over redundancies.
- ★ **Women fight to save family allowance**
During a march in London to celebrate International Women's Day (March 8th) about 200 out of the 5,000 women and men occupied the Trafalgar Square Post Office.
- ★ They were protesting against the governments proposals to take the family allowance away from the mother and instead pay tax credits to the man through his pay packet. 6 women and one man were arrested when police battled with the demonstrators inside the post office.

The Trades Council, which to many is the embodiment of the more militant tradition of the 'labour movement' on Merseyside, could have done a lot more. It called a couple of meetings of Merseyside shop stewards which turned out to be a little more than talking shops and it did organise one sparsely attended demonstration. But its limitation is that it has little means of mobilising grass roots support for more positive action. It is dependant on the better organised sections of stewards and when they decide not to take an active stand in support of something like Lucas, then the Trades Council is impotent to do anything about it.

The leadership of the Lucas occupation chose to work through the channels of the labour movement and to become dependant on the tactical consideration of stewards and convenors from other places. This was not an unnatural choice. It is safer, easier and sometimes more successful, and money if not active support can usually be raised. But because of the political weaknesses and bureaucracy of the labour movement as it stands, it is also a dangerous thing to do, and in this case was fatal.



Rally in support of CAV workers

It became obvious after some time that these channels were closed, only a mass approach to key sectors of the working class on Merseyside could have raised the needed support for blacking etc. It mightn't have worked and might have antagonised some of the stewards but it was the only way forward.

* * *

We know some people will say quite rightly that it's easy for a group like Big Flame to criticise and we know we didn't do anywhere near enough to help the Lucas struggle. But we don't work the way the labour movement works through union branches, stewards committees and bureaucratic tenants associations, passing resolutions and collecting token amounts of money. We try to organise on the mass level, teaching and involving rank and file workers, tenants and housewives in struggles which involve everybody in action and political discussion. The way raising support for Lucas was carried out, made it difficult for us to intervene. Late on in the occupation, we offered to do a mass leaflet for Fords, where we have some influence, to raise the question of blacking and other support. But after at first agreeing, one of the Lucas convenors changed his mind and decided to approach the stewards at Fords again.

THE UNIONS

The other side of the 'labour movement', the official unions, did next to nothing either to help or to stop their own members from scabbing and crossing picket lines.

A WAR COMES HOME ?



Two bombs explode in London and the war in Ireland has finally reached its real source, here in England. One man died of a heart attack afterwards, though this was unconnected with his cut head. The Press has slammed the 'terrorists' and 'mad bombers' but fails to point out that the British Army has already killed over 200 civilians in Northern Ireland. Recently they shot dead a 12-year boy, Kevin Healey, on the Derrybeg estate, Newry. He was unarmed. Since then they have beaten up local M.P. Paddy O'Hanlon, for protesting about it. Yet this isn't 'terrorism' or murder.'

The London bombs were a protest against the British-organised poll on the Irish border and the continued occupation of Ireland by foreign British troops. The main task of Irish revolutionaries is to force those troops out.

A major reason for the Army's withdrawal would be opposition to its role and the state that controls it, in its home country

anti-war feeling

Nixon pulled the G.I.'s out of Vietnam in the face, not only of military defeat by the Vietnamese, but also the massive opposition to the war at home.

There is growing war weariness in Britain. Over 50% of British people want the troops withdrawn. This is generally for the wrong reasons, such as not wanting soldiers killed or regretting 'the cost of the war to the taxpayer.'

But, preferably we should build an anti-war movement that recognises that we have common interests with those fighting our own enemies, the Tories, the British state and British employers. There have been several marches in London in solidarity with the IRA with over 10,000 people (all unreported by the press). But a consistent movement with a wide influence in the British working-class has yet to be built.

And it is the failure of the socialists in this country which indirectly led to the bombings in London. Because to an Irish militant, threatened with imminent arrest, beating, detention or death at the hands of a brutalised army, it does not matter much WHY that army leaves, whether due to war weariness in Britain or to a principled solidarity movement.

Lacking the solidarity, they felt they extend and deepen the frustration in this country by bombing selected targets in London.

This has made it more difficult to build support in Britain for the Irish revolution. The targets were civilian and not military targets such as Aldershot, which are perfectly legitimate for an army at war. Civilian casualties could not be ruled out, assuming the unpreparedness of the police.

IF it really WAS a unit of the Andersonstown battalion, Provisional IRA (as yet unproven), then they made a mistake in choosing those targets and attacking in day light when people would be about.

But we can't oppose the PRINCIPLE of bombing in this country as it is this country's state and army which is occupying Ireland. It is up to us to explain WHY the bombing occurs and to defend the people whom the police and press choose as being responsible.

The ten people charged with conspiracy to cause explosions have, up to the time of writing, been denied visitors. Perhaps because their physical condition might reveal something of police interrogation methods. There is probably no proof that they planted the bombs so they are charged with 'conspiracy' to do so as this is easier to prove.

Basically, they have only got to have to met each other. Which is why the six building workers on trial in Shrewsbury have also been charged with 'conspiracy' rather than an actual 'crime'. The same police force and the same state use the same methods against its opponents whether British or Irish.

IRELAND

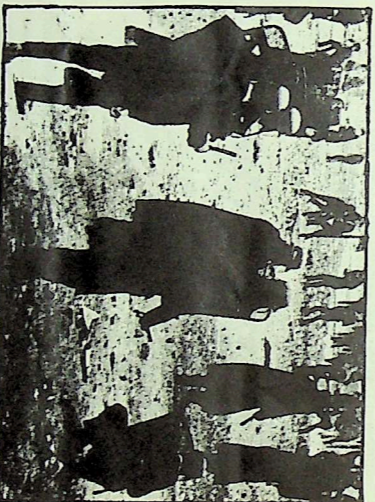
The most consistent myth spread by the government and press is that the Irish war is just 'religious', like a tribal war in the colonies. They fail (for obvious reasons) to point out that British control remains in Ireland precisely because the state has always discriminated in favour of one religion, Protestantism, giving its adherents advantages in terms of housing and jobs in a chronically deprived area.

Because of these relative favours the Orange working class has consistently regarded itself as 'British' and has defended the rule of British capital (as in the recent Border poll) under the guise of 'God, Queen, Country and Religion'. In return for these benefits derived from the Unionist Party and Orange Lodges, they form the vast bulk of membership in the Ulster Defence Regiment (locally raised unit of the British Army) and in the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Believing their best interests to lie in breaking any resistance to the British state many loyalists have now taken to 'unofficial sectarian murders of Catholics, trying to frighten the Republican community, especially in Belfast, into submission.

Though the British press tries to suggest that the 'motiveless murders' are used by Catholics and Protestants alike a cold look at the statistics rejects this. Since Feb. 1972 there have been about 160 'mystery killings' in the North. Nearly 120 of the dead were Catholics and only 40 were Protestants. Even some of these 40 were murdered by loyalist gunmen, such as Mrs. Sandra Mell, a Protestant married to a Catholic. Two Protestants were killed when sectarian killers fired into the 'Top of the hill' bar, intending to kill only Catholics. Others were killed in disputes among extreme loyalist groups. The fact is that the resistance of the IRA is against the British State and its representatives (the army, police etc.) and its economy (compensation from the state for bomb damage reaches millions of pounds each year). In contrast, any armed Loyalist group has no target except ordinary working-class Catholics, often the ones who live or work in Protestant areas.

army

These sectarian killings will not be stopped by the British army. For a start, many members of the Ulster Defence Regiment are also in extremist Protestant organisations such as the UDA or UVF. Recent cases of guns being 'stolen' from sentries, after they were 'overpowered', seem to suggest more than just collusion but the actual arming of Loyalist gunmen by local units of the army. While in Fermanagh, Sgt. Maj. B. Anderson, one of the few Catholics in the UDR, was 'accidentally' shot by one of his fellow-soldiers on a rifle range.



Clearly, the army command realise that sectarian killings increase the polarisation between the two religious communities and forces working-class Protestants on to their side. Usually, army checkpoints fail to stop the Orange gunmen entering Republican areas, killing selected victims and then leaving.

Two Catholic postmen were recently shot dead within 20 yards of an army post. These sectarian killings never occurred when the barricades were up and the Republicans were able to protect their own 'no-go areas'. Then the Army entered in 'Operation Motorman' and the barricades were destroyed.

The British army is not 'our' army. Though it is made up of working-class people it is leddy, and serves the interests of the employers' state. When William Whitelaw recently compared Republican militants to the gasman and the hospital workers he was partially correct as both groups are fighting the same enemy—the British employers and state.

The state that interns nearly 800 men and now, an 18 year old woman, in Ireland is the same one that imprisoned 5 dockers, is fighting now changing 24 building workers with 'offences' arising from last years strike and is now freezing our pay rises while allowing prices to mushroom.

So our support not only goes to the workers at present fighting the employers' freeze but also to those fighting to free Ireland from the grip of the same ruling class.

VOTES CHANGE NOTHING

Like the eleven explosions in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland, the London bombs were a protest coinciding with the 'Border Poll' in Ulster. This poll, to decide if the border between the North and the South was to go, was a fore conclusion, considering that the only part involved was the North.

The most significant result was the almost total boycott of it by the Republican population, only 6,000 bothering to vote. Of 14,000 possible voters on the Creggan estate in Derry, only 72 turned up. After all, unification with the South would not change the position of economic underdevelopment and dependence on Britain of the whole of Ireland.

Even the Loyalist community was unimpressed. Though most voted for continuing British control and the retention of the border, they were well aware that their agreement to this would be an open invitation for the Tories to decide what they liked, irrespective of the wishes of either the Catholic or Protestant working-classes.

Which is what Whitelaw wanted! With the poll deciding in favour of British control, he can draft his White Paper, outlining his future plans for the exploitation of Ireland and insist that he has a mandate in the Border poll for him to do this.

Similarly, Jack Lynch called the recent election in the South so that he could be elected on a platform of better economic policies etc (little mention of the North). Once back in office he would have used his power to crush the growing support in the South for both the Northern resistance fighters and for radical alternatives to a bankrupt Irish capitalism. But it backfired.

His opponents, a coalition of Super-Tories (Fine Gael under Cosgrave) and the right-wing Labour Party, benefited from the people's desire for change, any change.

Two MP's, Blaney and Haughey, known for their active support of Northern Republicans, got increased majorities. 'Union Jack' Lynch had virtually been the Tory agent for Dublin. Heath must now ensure that Liam Cosgrave continues Lynch's dirty work of protecting British, European and American profits in the South. (No problem, as Liam Cosgrave is even more reactionary than his predecessor).

white paper

So the Border poll and the Irish general elections were the preliminaries to the long-awaited White Paper. This is being written in London by British Tories, in the interests of British employers and for the more rational exploitation of Irish workers within the Common Market. Ireland will play the same role in the EEC as Southern Italy and N.W. France — a source of cheap mobile labour, escaping the PLANNED unemployment of their own regions in search of jobs. Any jobs, elsewhere.

At the same time, their own regions become havens for fly-by-night investors who take the government incentives to build factories and then pay the lowest wages possible in an area of high unemployment. This has long been a problem for workers on Merseyside (look at the attitude of Courtaulds in Skew, Fisher-Bendix or Lucas CAV, 'get in quick, rake in the money, then ditch the labour force as quick as possible!')

cheap labour

This has always been the problem for Irish workers. For example, a US firm, NeoData Inc, got an 82% grant from the government to build a factory in Dingle, Co. Kerry, FOR A 42HOUR WEEK! Ford and Dunlop reap the same benefits.

This is the situation, in both parts of Ireland, that the British army, together with the S. Irish police, defends increasingly membership of the EEC will the North-East and Merseyside. And it is the situation most fiercely resisted in the North by the Catholics.

As an oppressed minority within an artificially-created statelet of Ulster, they are the vanguard against British and European capitalism and its plans for Ireland.

fords

WHAT'S HAPPENING

It's over a month since Ford stewards, meeting in Coventry, called for an all out strike to fight for our pay claim against the Freeze.

Instead we had 3 day strikes in Halewood, Swansea, Belfast, and parts of Dagenham ; one day strikes in Dagenham Body and Paint Trim & Assembly plants.; and 17 plants on work to rules and overtime bans.

How did th's come about and what's to be gained from it?

When the unions published their claim , we said in Big Flame that it was ridiculous to leave out any mention of the Pay Freeze when you're demanding maybe £10. At no point before or after that did the union officials show that they wanted to fight the Freeze, or to prepare their members for it. This has been the case with the gas and hospital workers leaders and the teachers union officials. The only reason that the gas and hospital workers' unions declared official action was because of the pressure put on the officials by the rank and file.

Turning to Fords , we can see how that pressure failed to build up for an all out strike, but it means going back to the 1971 strike.

1971 STRIKE

The 1971 strike was a setback for shop floor organisation in Fords. Jones and Scanlon's secret ballot led to a demoralising defeat. The terms of the return to work , banning strikes, meant that most shop floor action taken was opposed by officials and many of the stewards who wanted to stick to the agreement, signed over the heads of the shop floor.

For nearly two years now Ford workers who wanted to carry on the struggle against the management have found themselves alone with the union machine against them. Several militants were sacked with the active help of the convenor and some stewards.

Not surprisingly last year was a record year for Fords production. With three cars in the top ten they couldn't produce fast enough. With the assistance of the unions they knew that strikes and overtime bans would be few and far between.

Many of the stewards refused to put up a fight. When the struggle against labour mobility came along in January in Halewood, all the resentment against the stewards came to the surface. Some of the men on the shop floor decided they were better off doing their own talking to management. Stewards ended up refusing to go into some sections of the PTA and Body plants.

So when the time came to fight for the '73 claim some militants were prepared to organise themselves and take the leadership in that fight. But many other shop floor workers - who also wanted £10 and a 35 hour week - still looked to the stewards for leadership. When the stewards showed no sign of organising an all-out strike for the claim and against the Freeze those workers lost their confidence.

DEMORALISING

The previous two years had been demoralising enough anyway. Ford workers had watched the value of their '71 gain disappear and conditions on the shop floor get worse. It seemed that Fords could get away with anything, usually supported by the stewards. When in February the same stewards pledged themselves to an all-out strike, many workers felt cynical and suspicious about this sudden bout of militancy.

Unlike the '71 strike there was no big build-up to this one. No label badges, leaflets, constant report-backs. Most workers had little idea what was going on. They were told by the TV and press everyday that the government wouldn't back down on the Freeze, for Ford workers or anyone else. Meanwhile , from the union and the stewards, almost total silence.

Until the shop stewards conference on Feb 20th in Coventry. Maybe the stewards who made their speeches there thought it was enough to convince THEMSELVES that along with gas, hospital railway workers and others, Ford workers could defeat the Freeze.

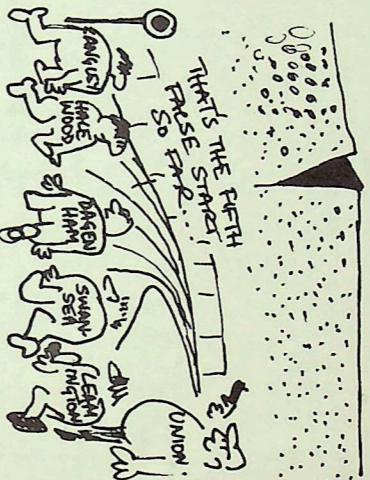
There was a lot of arguing and discussing needed on the shop-floor and it was never done. Typically, when a worker asked the convenor at a Halewood mass meeting whether he could guarantee a victory if there was a strike - there was a stunned silence.

At Halewood the stewards seem to have a theory that men don't change their minds so there's no need to try with discussions, meetings, leaflets. At Dagenham the theory is even more disastrous - don't try to change their minds, just fix the meetings.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

For example, there was a Body plant meeting at Dagenham on Feb 28th. With little discussion, the motion for an all-out strike was put - and rejected. The convenor then put a motion for a three day strike, got a 40% vote and said it was carried without asking for the noes. There was uproar and no strike.

Compare that with the Dagenham PTA meeting at the same time. Every one was there, questions were put and honestly answered, and in the end, the vote for a three day strike was carried 100%.



Saying there has to be enough discussion and information isn't just hindsight. Big Flame leaflets were the only propaganda given out at Fords supporting the claim, especially the 35 hour week. Big Flame called for sectional and mass meetings to DISCUSS the claim; said Ford workers couldn't defeat the Freeze alone and called for links with gas and hospital workers; arranged meetings between Ford and Vauxhall workers to organise flying pickets; distributed information on strike claiming. These things had to be done if militant speeches in Coventry were to mean anything.

There were also tactical mistakes. The worst one was on Feb 12th. That was the day of the walk-outs in Halewood Swansea and Dagenham, after Fords announced their offer. Halewood stewards contacted their counterparts to find out whether there would be support in Dagenham for turning the walk-out into a strike. Dagenham said definitely not and so the Halewood convenors got everyone back to work.

And yet in every important action since 1969, the rest of the combline has taken its lead from Halewood. On Feb 12th the momentum was there. If we'd stayed out, so would Swansea, and Dagenham workers would have stopped dithering. Once that opportunity was lost, the all-out strike started to look like the beginning of a bike race - everybody hanging back for the others.

WHAT NOW?

The first thing to be said about the new strategy of fighting Fords from the inside is that for the moment it's hitting them hard. But lay-offs and day-strikes are hitting our wage packets as well.

How long it can go on for is uncertain. One of the main problems is that all our anger and militancy is uncoordinated. No-one knows exactly how the fight is going on overall, who is being laid off, what the situation is in another section, or shift. There's a danger of men feeling they're getting nowhere and so wanting to get back to normal. If this feeling spread it wouldn't take the unions long to jump in and kill the fight completely.

This doesn't mean that we give up. Instead we need to step it up. First of all we need to make sure that the work to rule is interpreted so that it hits the management and not us - that is, to make it a general go slow. Secondly we need to make sure we all have regular section meetings so that all of us can find out what the overall position is, and can be involved in arguing and deciding how the fight can be continued. These should obviously prepare for mass meetings, although as long as they are ten minute affairs dominated by the leading stewards they don't really help anyone. Thirdly, in the case of victimisations or lay-offs, the whole plant must be informed. The best tactic for this is the Snake. This was used with great success in January during the manning disputes.

Work to rules and overtime bans can be effective if we guard against demoralisation. This is the way the docks are going to fight after April 1st. They are saddled with a £1 plus 4% deal, but they've made it clear at rank and file level that the employers can expect an attack on productivity that will cripple the docks.

We can cripple Fords. Since the work to rule started at Fords it's become clear just how much we have given away to them over the years, through speed-ups and automation. Now's the time to win back the lost ground. We'll produce less, take better care of our health, and show them that £1 plus 4% is only a fifth of what Ford workers need and are going to get.



LETTER FROM CANADA.

TORONTO, March 8th.

Dear sisters and brothers,
A group of us from work, were talking the other day about how to organise a rank and file run wildcat strike at our place (we're truck drivers working for Canadian National Railways). We all agreed we needed a militant organisation and funny thing, one of the guys suggested 'what we need is Big Flame' - I almost fell out of my chair!

This guy used to work at Ford Halewood plant and previously several of us, who used to work in auto plants, were talking about the type of struggle going on in auto plants all over the world - sabotage, occupations etc.

The bosses might have the media to skate their ideas all over the world, but when workers move from country to country we take our experience with us too - and the experience coming from Europe right now is very valuable for us here in Canada.

One other thing - don't ever let the bosses hang the contract system on you. It's nothing more than slavery. You've got to smash the Industrial Relations Act.

Solidarity, Dave.

FIGHTING THE S.S.

Mrs. Cahill lives alone in a cold, damp, tenement flat in the Bronx. For several years she has been totally dependent on an invalidity pension after suffering a serious heart condition - so severe that she finds difficulty in doing her housework. She did have a home-help but that faded out.

Because of her heart condition she is frequently admitted to hospital. Recently, the Social Security impounded her allowance book because they thought she was in hospital. But she wasn't!

The SS realised their mistake and apologised for it. But they were still very reluctant to issue a new book or send any Gross in the meantime. It couldn't have happened because Mrs. Cahill has a very low opinion of the SS and has made it clear to the occasional SS visitors could it?

At about the same time, Mrs. Cahill got a letter from the Housing Department - an eviction notice!

Last year, Mrs. Cahill, after weeks of trying, had got the SS to pay her rent direct to the Housing Department as her health prevents her from getting to the local rent office. Due to another error, the SS had not paid her rent for 19 weeks - hence the eviction notice. This was duly cancelled, but not until Mrs. Cahill and the Bronx Community Centre had whispered a few polite words of encouragement to the silly little bureaucrats involved.

Keep shouting, Mrs. Cahill, they may be stupid but they can't be so deaf!



**WOMENS LIBERATION • 2, Rutland Avenue
L'pool 17.**

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Every Saturday 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

★Mammogram's, Heating
Every Tuesday 8 p.m.

★Mild Pregnancy Advisory Service
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MERSEYSIDE SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER
No. 9 May 4p

1872?

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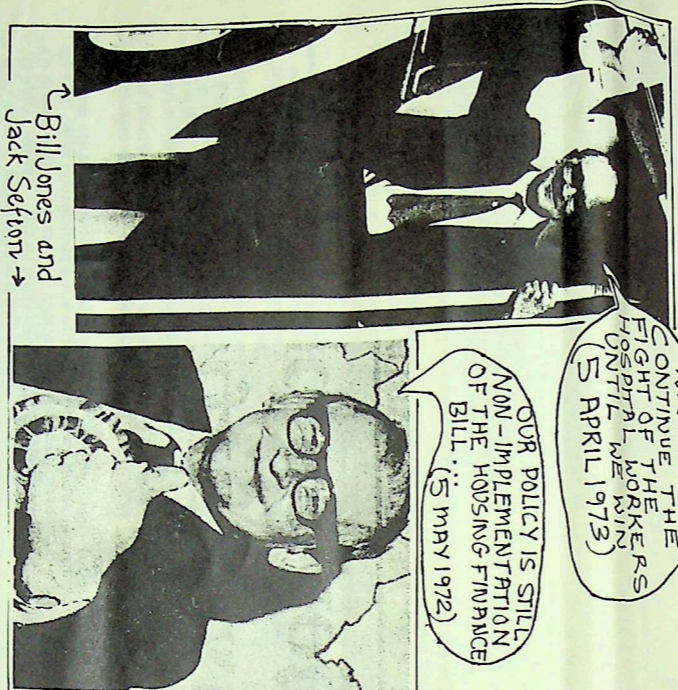
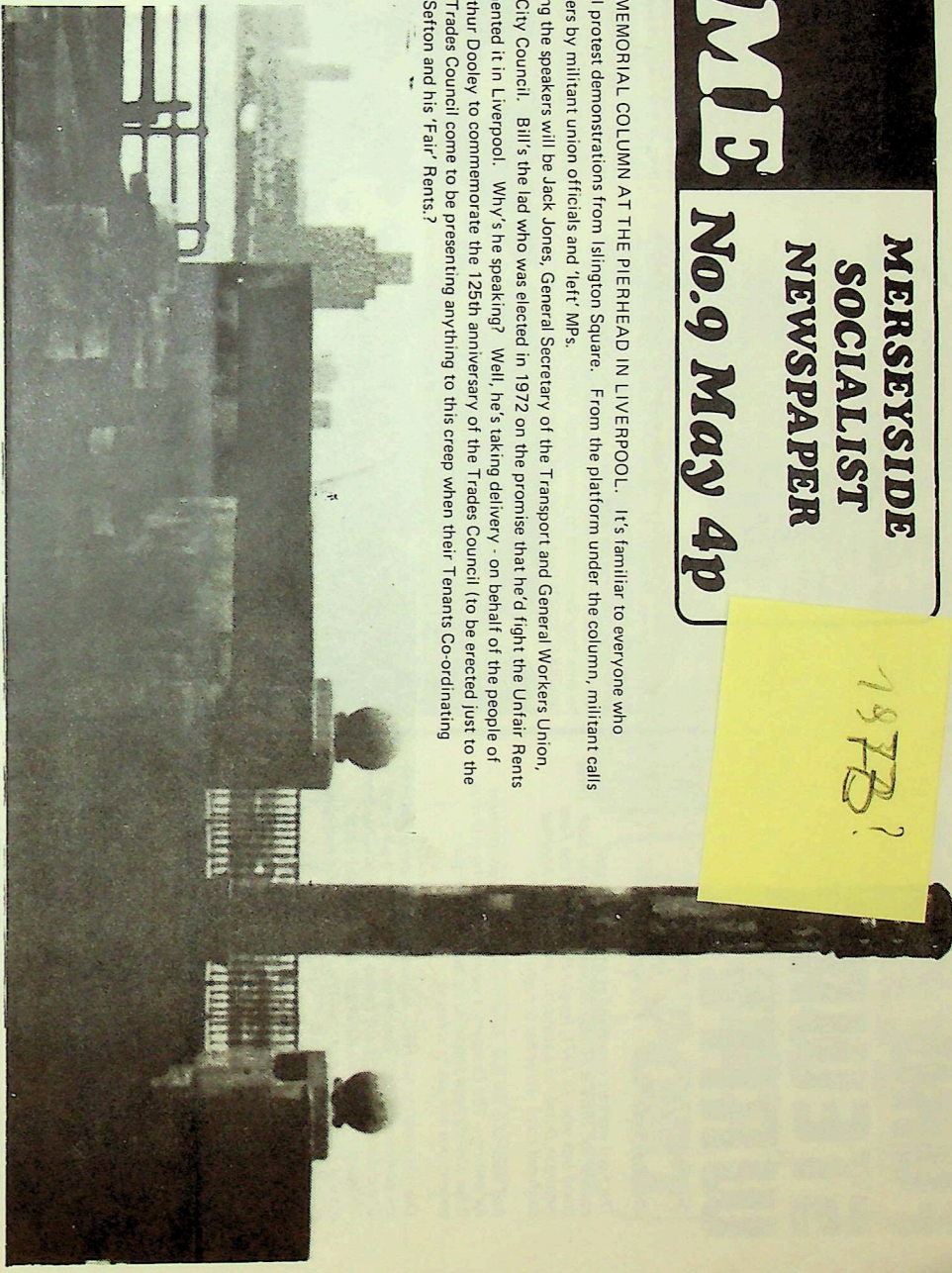
MWRna

ON YOUR RIGHT THE SEAMEN'S MEMORIAL COLUMN AT THE PIERHEAD IN LIVERPOOL. It's familiar to everyone who marches on the regular Trades Council protest demonstrations from Islington Square. From the platform under the column, militant calls to action are blasted out at the marchers by militant union officials and 'left' MPs.

This May Day is no exception. Among the speakers will be Jack Jones, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, and Bill Sefton, Labour leader of the City Council. Bill's the lad who was elected in 1972 on the promise that he'd fight the Unfair Rents Bill, and who, 5 months later, implemented it in Liverpool. Why's he speaking? Well, he's taking delivery - on behalf of the people of Liverpool - of a plinth designed by Arthur Dooley to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Trades Council (to be erected just to the right of the plinth). How does the Trades Council come to be presenting anything to this creep when their Tenants Co-ordinating Committee is supposed to be fighting Sefton and his 'Fair' Rents?

Another apt choice for speaker is Jack Jones. He's the man who tours the country making militant speeches about how he's going to support the Hospital Workers, but never seems to get around to doing anything. No doubt he'll work himself into a frenzy on the platform on May Day.

But isn't the Merseyside air polluted enough without these two opening up as well? In the last 125 years the Trades Council has had its moments. This will be one of the worst of them.



WHAT A WAY TO CELEBRATE YOUR BIRTHDAY!

TILLOTSONS-ST-IN WEEKS

WHY THE OCCUPATION?

Tillotsons is part of the multinational St Regis Paper Group and is a major supplier of cardboard cartons to the food and cigarette industries. Between 1967 and 1972, the management reduced the workforce from 700 to 400 at the same time as doubling productivity. This was in preparation for a move to Netherton (Merseyside), probably in 1975, where they intend to invest £4m in new advanced equipment which will only need about 100 people working there.

Last September, when management tried to make 103 workers redundant, SOGAT, which is the union for unskilled and semi-skilled print workers, negotiated for 26 women to be made redundant. The workers rejected this proposal and applied a work to rule. Then management tried to sack the father of the chapel (the convenor) and 3 stewards for 'unfair industrial practice' and 'inciting employees to break their contracts of employment.'

When this happened, the SOGAT workers occupied the factory. They kicked out bosses and clerical workers, and the skilled printers (in the NGA) were laid off on full pay. The gates were barricaded and they wrote up slogans all round the factory, which is on a busy road. A week later, the workers were supposed to be paid, but management, after promising to do this, said they hadn't enough money! Velled threats were made about damaging property and so the workers were paid.

CAN REDUNDANCIES AND SACKINGS BE FOUGHT BY OCCUPYING?

The situation at Tillotsons, where they're fighting redundancies rather than total closure, is different from UCS or Bryants. There the workers chose to "work-in" to fight the closures and look for another capitalist to take over.

The Printworkers Occupation Goes on Until Management Agrees to Re-instate 4 sacked Stewards and Lift Redundancies on 26 Women.

They need cash to carry on the struggle. Send it to Tillotsons SOGAT Chapel, 254 County Road L 4.

And it's different from CAV Lucas (the recent Liverpool occupation against closure and transfer of work out of Liverpool) where they had to have the support of the whole Lucas combine to win. At Tillotsons, the issue is much simpler: the company plans to transfer work to Netherton at some point, but they still need production from the Commercial Road factory. The workers always knew they were in a strong position.

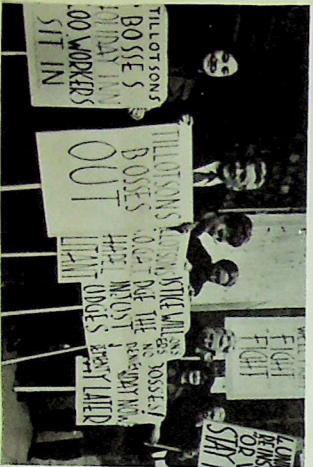
Our work demands a high standard of quality and efficiency and in its performance we wish to maintain an atmosphere in which all may work happily together.

GEOFFREY L. TILLOTSON
 Chairman, Tillotsons (Liverpool) Limited

Throughout the occupation, nearly everyone has taken their turn to come in regularly on 4 hour shifts. This has meant that workers can be involved in decision taking about what's going on and they have the time to talk and get to know each other. Before the shift system was started, there were daily mass meetings. Since then, every day's a meeting, it's clear that people are determined to go back only on their own terms, however long this may be.

HOW MUCH LONGER?

Now the management needs to get production going again as most firms they supply usually have 5 or 6 weeks stocks in hand. The Thursday before Easter, management called a meeting with the union side and proposed that there should be a return to work with the 4 stewards but without the 26 women. At a mass meeting on Easter Saturday, this was overwhelmingly rejected. After all, what would be the point of losing 5 weeks money and 26 more people?



TILLOTSONS, THE PACKAGING FACTORY ON Commercial Road, near the docks, has been occupied for 5 weeks because of redundancies and sackings.

After 5 weeks of occupying the factory, optimism and determination to win are still running high. NOT least among the women, who are over half the work force. As one woman said to us:

"If you look at other places, it's usually the women who cause the falling away, some drop out and it usually just disintegrates. But here, the majority have stuck together because the men's jobs aren't at stake you see. The management won't come in and start saying to Jimmy 'fall right, you go on there then.' They're going to walk in and it's going to be the women they're going to shuffle round from room to room because it's the women's jobs that have gone."

FORD STEWARD WRITES...

Dear Big Flame

The Ford workers now stand at an impasse - now, apparently, there is no way forward and no way back. Those grand facts won, in 1971, fought the might of the Ford empire in Britain to a standstill, are now in a hopeless confused state. What has brought this about?

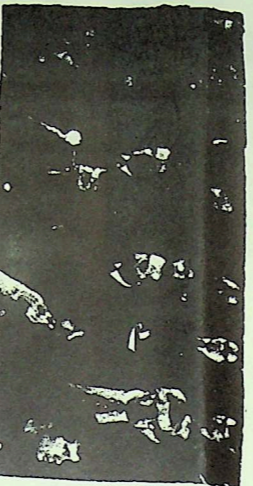
Bad leadership for one, an anti-working class government for another. The Company's views do not enter into it as it has already been shown to be base, reactionary, treacherous and easily defeated.

The real problem has been, as already stated, the unions and the government, each circling each other with a wary eye. One determined to destroy forever the power that has been laboriously fought for for almost a century, the other equally determined that it will not be destroyed and hanging onto its funds for dear life.

The result, a government with no policy except that of confrontation, a trade union movement with a policy of fight, but let someone else do it, in the middle, the salt of the earth, the working class. They are watching the currents and eddies of this battle, and they will not be fooled for much longer. The belief is growing that the enemy are one and the same, both government and unions.

This belief is growing within the ranks of the embattled Ford workers. At the outset the unions had Ruskin College draw up the plan of battle in a very commendable document. The Company's reply to this was that it should have been taken over a two year period, rather than over a three year period. In other words, they had no reply to it because every damned word was the gospel truth.

With this low level of negotiation the unions should have realised that the Company were going to hide behind the Tory government and phase two, and at that stage should have started to hit the Company on the production front. But no, in some sort of gentleman Jim attitude, the unions acceded to a Company request that an almost total censorship of details of meetings be maintained. The result, a lack of a two way interchange of information, and an



Ford stewards at Coventry

uninformed shop floor. Except that the Company broke the agreement and started pushing out their own propaganda internally. So it went on, meeting after dreary meeting, the unions gained nothing.

Then, like a ray of sunshine, the convensors finally woke up and called a meeting of all Ford shop stewards; the venue was Coventry. This was called under the gentle care of Bro. Sid Harraway, secretary of the national convensors committee and governor of the Dagenham Body plant. I wish you could have been there, brothers and sisters, the words flowed, the resolutions flew. No to the Company's offer, no cooperation with government pay boards, all out on March 11

To the layman's ear, the second coming was imminent. Except that it didn't come. This meeting was the usual Communist Party propaganda machine in motion, and as such went the way that all CP front go, out of the window. Not that what the CP was calling for was wrong - it was very correct, and had it been implemented would have been a splendid victory.

But Bro Sid Harraway was wrong to suppose that his enemy was the government and the Company, although they are traditional enemies. The enemy was much nearer home in the form of the union executives and the FNUC. Without their support, the whole thing was doomed to failure. But not one word from Harraway about the disgusting handling of the situation by our so called leaders, not even at a combined Ford Joint Works Committees meeting at Transport House in London.

To Bro Harraway I say, if you are slipping in your evaluation of the situation, then you should slip a little further and slip out of sight. That goes for the entire FNUC who graciously endorse the action we are taking, or will take, but will do nothing to support us. If you can't fight for us brothers, then get out and let someone in who will.

The Ford workers are some of the best in the country, they must be to produce £120m profit in two years, 10% up on anything previously achieved.

As Ford workers, they know all about the government and its foul anti-working class union-bashing ways, they know all about the Company and its under-paid sweet shops. Now they are beginning to know another self-evident truth. They are being betrayed by those that they pay to look after their interests, and that is something higher than treason.

The NUNC must get up off its fat, well-paid backside, and start taking an interest in what is going on around them, or the powder keg they are sitting on could well be their last official position.

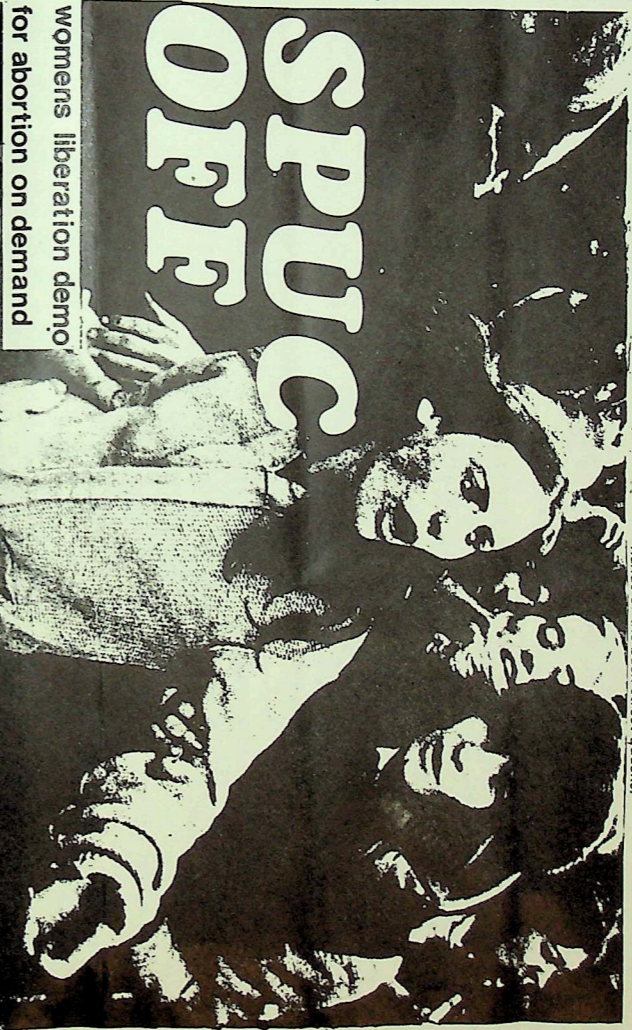
Tony Barrow
Shop Steward and JWC member, Leamington

On Sunday 25th March about 50,000 joined a SPUC (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) march through Manchester for the repeal of the 1967 Abortion Act.

SPUC claims that abortion is now freely available. In fact the Act made abortion only a little more easily available to women who can 'prove' they desperately need it according to the rules laid down.

A counter-demonstration (including Big Flame) lined the route of the march in support of "A Woman's Right to Choose". Some of us invited the march to reply to taunts or to confiscate some of the horrifically distorted propaganda put out by SPUC. We were then treated roughly by the police and some SPUC marchers who spat, tossed cigarette ends and threw punches.

SPUC gets support from a wide cross-section of people. Heading the march were Malcolm Muggeridge, Leo Abse MP and Jill Knight MP. Behind them whole families, youth groups, schools and church congregations had been mobilised, especially by the Catholic Church. Some middle class supporters were there because they can afford to be moralistic - they can afford the families to match their homes and incomes. But many people threw punches.



SPUC OFFER for abortion on demand

There were concerned about abortion because they've been kept ignorant about what abortion actually is and why women choose it. SPUC claims to provide facts but instead whips up hysteria.

SPUC's propaganda, summed up in the 'Abortion Kills' placards, persuades people that abortion is always an horrific operation accepted only by the cruel and immoral. They deliberately hide the fact that it can be safe and simple; that if done early enough it's like having a period; that it gets complicated only when it's delayed - and that it's often delayed because in this society women haven't the right to decide what happens to their bodies but are left to the mercies of the law, doctors' morals and a run-down Health Service.

Some also gets support from people who see some women driven to abortion by social conditions. But instead of fighting with the working class to change those conditions



This letter probably says what many Ford workers feel at the moment, but we think it doesn't always draw the right conclusions about the strike's failure.

It's true that the Ford claim once more exposes the bankruptcy of the Unions. There has not been any leadership, at local or national level, worth mentioning. But is Tony Barrow right when he says to the NUNC - 'If you can't fight for us, brothers, then get out and let someone in who will. After all, the NUNC could say that they are still rejecting the claim but they've been knocked back by the men. And, for instance, at the Halewood Body Plant when the convensor and full time official recommended rejection of the offer a few weeks' ago, they were outvoted at a mass meeting. So what do we mean when we say these leaders are bankrupt?

The point is that whatever the NUNC or convensors may say about rejecting the offer - and they usually are a bit more militant sounding than normal when it comes to a pay claim - it's irrelevant unless the shop floor is feeling strong and confident. And for the last two years the union has consistently undermined this shop floor confidence and organisation. No wonder that a lot of Ford workers don't fancy their chances against the Government. They have a good reason for ignoring calls to action coming from leaders of this sort.

For the last two years the unions have sat back and watched productivity soar, militants victimised, sections split up. The only victories in this time at Halewood - over John Dillon and the January 73 manning dispute - have occurred despite the local officials, and against the recommendations of many of the stewards.

There has been almost no preparation for this claim: no section meetings to discuss every stage of the fight, no information (as the letter says, the unions agreed to total censorship of details), nothing to involve the shop floor in its own battle. Of course you can't guarantee victory, but there is a fair chance if everyone knows what's going on, what they are fighting for, and HAVE CONTROL OF THAT FIGHT!

As it was, all the shop floor initiatives that were taken, like the February 9 walk-out, were squashed by the bosses rather than seized on and developed into an offensive.

the Spuc organisers just provide a few sops - like mother and baby homes for unmarried women. What they really want is to make abortion impossible - at whatever cost to women.

Spuc also condemns the profiteering of quacks and private abortionists but again, their solution is - no abortion. If Health there'd be no room for the money-makers.

And it was left to the counter-demonstrators to talk about other ways of cutting down the need for abortion - it was us who shouted for free, safe, effective contraception and sex education so that women needn't get pregnant through ignorance, fear or simply because there are no good enough contraceptives available to them.

Women have NEVER been prevented from getting abortions because they were illegal. Throughout history, we've always been driven in desperation to get abortion by any means and at whatever risk. SPUC will not stop abortion, - it will try to by making it illegal but it can only succeed in driving it underground. If that happens Spuc will be responsible for the injury and death of thousands of women at the hands of the back-street quacks.

But more than that, Spuc is one tip of an iceberg that threatens the whole working class. It's part of a wide movement embracing the Whitehouse/Festival of Blight/Back to the Good Old Days/Hang 'em and Flap 'em brigades. They all believe in repression as a solution to problems created by the class society we live in. They can provide the fodder for extreme right-wing anti-working class groups who'll try to convince us that the mess this society's in is due to moral decay, breakdown of tradition and immigration etc. etc. They'll produce scapegoats to divert our attention from the real economic and political changes we must make.

Women aren't prepared to sit back and let Spuc shove their morals down our throats when it's our lives and our own sexual freedom that's threatened. We're fighting for the right to choose NOT to have children and for the time, money and conditions to HAVE them.

But given all this, the real answer is not to elect alternative faces to the NUNC. A committee whose whole existence is based on joint negotiations, which works above and on behalf of Ford workers can never become a vital leadership. It makes little difference to the shop floor whether it is a socialist or a conservative telling them what to do, doing all the thinking and making all the policy decisions. The priority is to develop the militancy and organisation at the base. We should be thinking about how shop floor militants, who lead the day to day struggles, can link up into an organisation.

Only here are we going to find a leadership that can draw the mass of Ford workers into active participation in the fight for workers power in the factory - a first step without which it's pointless talking about Socialism on this planet. Only in this way are we going to find a body that will have a real interest in smashing the Freeza and linking up with other sections of the working class.

Related to this is our second disagreement with Tony's letter. He writes that The Ford workers are some of the best workers in the country, they must be to produce £120m profit in two years, 10% up on anything previously achieved.

This sounds too much like the thinking of the unions. We think that most Ford workers couldn't care less about the quality and quantity of their products and don't take any pride in producing record profits - especially when they know that these profits are brought about by continuous speed-ups and an increase in their exploitation. This also leads directly to the disastrous 'special cases' argument, that Ford workers deserve a rise because Ford's profits and production are up.

Well, what about those workers who make little or no profit for their boss. Should they take wage cuts?

We aren't interested in special cases or Ford's profits. Ford workers are like every other - they need to live. That's why their problem because it's they, not us, who are interested in keeping alive this system based on profits.

Finally, no matter how critical we are of Sid Harraway and Communist Party politics, it's no good making a scapegoat out of an individual. And it's no better criticising his organisation if all you have to offer is another one which will perform exactly the same role. Also, any criticism of the CP's role in the Ford struggle can't ignore the fact that rank and file CPers were among the most active in the walk outs and on the picket lines.

Yours,
Ford base group, Big Flame
ps. A much fuller discussion of these ideas, and the Ford claim, will be published shortly in a BF pamphlet.

WHITE-COLLAR MILITANTS

OUR SECTION WAS DOING HIGHER GRADE WORK WITHOUT BEING PAID FOR IT. WE REFUSED TO DO THE JOB UNLESS PAID THE CORRECT RATE. THEY SAID - THAT'S NOT GOING ACCORDING TO THE RULES. SO WE SAID - CHANGE THE RULES.

AS ANY RESIDENT OF BOOTLE WILL TELL YOU OFFICE WORKERS ARE A RAPIDLY EXPANDING SECTOR OF THE LABOUR FORCE.

The massive programme of office building that has taken place in Bootle in the last few years has made office jobs the biggest source of employment in the area — bigger than factory work, bigger even than the docks.

Many of these workers are Government employees — at the purpose-built National Giro Centre at Anfield, or in the tax and social security office complexes that stretch between the Strand and Balliol Road.

On Merseyside generally we can expect the numbers of office workers especially civil servants to increase with the current policy of moving Government Departments out of London.

In the recent spate of strikes against the Governments Freeze, new sectors were seen on the picket lines for the first time. Amongst these were the civil servants, not least on Merseyside, which saw many selective strikes and go-slows amongst these workers.

To most people, the civil servant conjures up an image of bowler hat and pin-stripes. But the reality - of a growing proportion of young and increasingly militant workers, with pay packets amongst the lowest in the country - is very different.

This article based on a discussion between 'Big Flame' and several young civil servants from the Giro Centre and the Bootle Tax Office, attempts to establish the true picture of the new civil servant.

NEAR FACTORY CONDITIONS

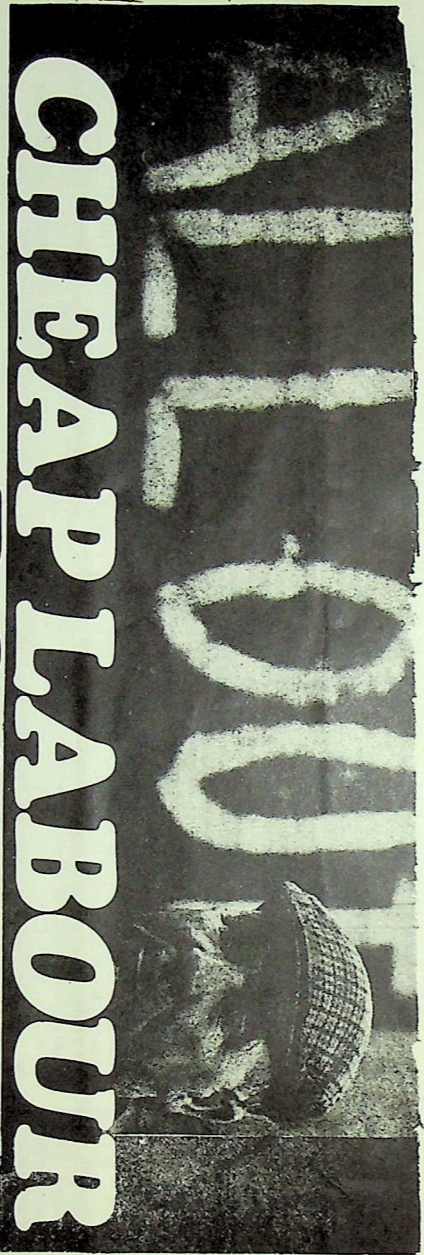
"It's really meaningless. You just wouldn't believe the things you do. You just sit there with a great pile of forms. Really it's like a production line".

This is a typical reaction to civil service work, 1973 style. For the vast majority the work is tedious, monotonous, alienating. Just as in the factories, many jobs which used to exist which required skill are being broken up into small parts for the purposes of efficiency.

The modern office often resembles a factory floor. Large rooms contain scores of workers at their 'stations', doing small repetitive tasks. In parts of the Giro, they have even tried piped music!

Time and Motion, for years the scourge of factories, has now come to office work. A Giro worker told us:

EXTEND THE NATIONAL DOCK LABOUR SCHEME * NO INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY IN THE BOSSES' INTERESTS
NO CHEAP LABOUR ON THE DOCKS



CHEAP LABOUR on the DOCKS

*Two weeks ago a Clan Line ship crossed from Birkenhead to Liverpool. With it came a gang of "dockers" to unload it. When it arrived the "dockers" turned out to be office staff.

The strike sparked off by this clumsy attempt to office up for the well-known temporary shortage of dockers in Liverpool lasted four days before the employers backed down.

Why did management risk such a provocative trick? They're around 1000 men short in Liverpool. It's the same in other ports. London wants another 1000 men. Bristol are short. It's this temporary shortage that the Clan Line office staff were filling.

But why the office staff? The employers have rejected the obvious solution - hire more men. Why? Here's their reasoning:-

"In the final analysis it's the shippers who pay for the size of the dock labour force. What we have to do is organise the existing labour so that it's better deployed."

GREATER PRODUCTIVITY

So says Mr J.B Fitzpatrick, deputy managing director of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, which employs 80% of Liverpool dockers. Put another way, his solution is greater productivity.

Mr Fitzpatrick and his fellow bosses have new plant and machinery which can handle cargo more efficiently (containers LASH, roll-on/roll-off etc). What they need in the long run to get maximum benefit from it (from their point of view) is reduced manning and less traditional job organisation.

"They said they could time how long it takes for you to make a little movement with your ruler or pen, or to remember and dial a phone number".

TAKE HOME PAY — £12 A WEEK

This kind of work study, usually called Measured Day Work, at least results in some reward in the form of higher wages when imposed in the factory. Compare the situation in the civil service.

John is a Clerical Officer-by no means the lowest grade. He needed 5 o/levels to get the job. He takes home £12 a week. Many young clerical assistants - who make up a large proportion of the Giro work force - take home no more than £8 or £9 a week. Many of these start work at 7 a.m. or work shifts.

The civil service operates a system of cheap labour, where no-one gets maximum wages until age 25. It is this section - the young workers - who are in the forefront of the changing nature of the civil service.

IT'S REALLY MEANINGLESS. YOU JUST WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE THINGS YOU DO-YOU JUST SIT THERE WITH A GREAT PILE OF FORMS. REALLY IT'S LIKE

The older workers, still the majority, mostly see themselves as "middle class", and resisted militant action in the recent pay claim. Considering their pay, this is ironic! "They are in allegedly middle class jobs, yet some of them are getting Family Incomes Supplement."

But many of the young clerks leave - for factory jobs. They see no real difference.

So in terms of job conditions and pay, many civil servants are as badly off as factory workers. Many of the younger workers now consider themselves "working class".

Despite this split amongst civil servants in class feeling, one thing is clear. The division between middle class and working class is not based on the distinction between manual and non-manual workers.

Rank and file civil service workers, like many other non-managerial white collar workers, are on the same side of the class barrier as factory workers. Not simply because of their similar pay and conditions, but because of their

place in the way production and society are organised. Their labour is exploited by the state and they do not perform managerial functions for the system.

Of course, they will only be fully part of the working class when the majority are conscious that their interests lie with other members of that class. That will depend on the course and objectives of future struggles. Are there many day to day struggles with management in the civil service?

On a large and continuous scale the answer must be, as yet, no. But there are signs that this is changing - and the management will not continue to have things all their own way. The young workers are just beginning to discover power they never thought they had. An incident in the Giro illustrates this:

"On one job the management said they would bring in staff from outside, and we said: 'Well, we are not going to work them, and the management gave in... This was not done with the union but by the workers themselves.'"

BOSSSES' UNIONS

Despite venturing into the first industrial action in the history of the civil service, the unions by and large do not reflect this new militancy.

"They go in with the view that anything that management says is right and that they're just there to get information" is a typical reaction to the unions' Role as negotiators. The main union, the Civil and Public Services Association, caved in to Phase 1 two just when many workers felt they had a chance of winning.

There are few illusions about the role of the unions.

"In future, people are going to have to organise much more independently to push the union into doing things."

Everyone sees that it will be a painfully slow process. Militancy in the civil service is in its infancy. But the recent strikes were a great step forward. Workers in key areas - especially the docks and airports - began to discover their power.

With the pace of de-skilling, time and motion study and greater mechanisation of tasks, the process will accelerate. An isolated incident described by a Giro worker may become much more the rule in the future,

"Our section was doing higher grade work without being paid for it. We refused to do the job unless paid the correct rate. They said, 'That's not going according to the rules'. So we said, 'Change the rules'."

Port employers in Liverpool would dearly love to see Clause 12 introduced here. But so far it's been thrown back in their faces. However, they're using a number of tactics to twist dockers' arms.

*They're taking on the stewards. For example, Hector, chairman of the National Port Employers Association has said he wants a more representative way of selecting shop stewards and to encourage stewards to become more involved in the industry and promotion to management positions where appropriate.

In short, tame stewards. It may sound too outrageous to be true. But his ideas are already being tried out by employers in subtle ways. For instance, stewards in Liverpool are being encouraged to talk first and act later. Good sense? Perhaps. But it's a well tried way of taking the steam out of a situation - of taking a dispute out of the hands of the rank and file and pushing it into the higher reaches of a negotiating committee - while at the same time time goes on as normal.

*They're switching trade to unregistered ports. Sometimes it's just bluff, sometimes it's for real. In London, it's already paid off. Employers at the Royal Docks threatened to increase in productivity. Under threats like this, London dockers accepted Clause 12 of Devilin II. They're now working harder for very little more money. (That's what the recent London dock strike was all about.) The final sting came when the Royals still lost the meat trade.

Unregistered ports are a constant threat to all registered ports. They have very little tradition of militancy. In some, the men are employed on a casual basis. The money may not be bad at the bigger ones - £1 an hour at Felixstowe - but the hours are diabolical. There's an average 60 hour week at Felixstowe. As long as unregistered ports exist on cheap labour, the employers will continue to play them off against the big registered ones.

*Temporary labour. In many ports, employers have tried to introduce this to make up the present shortage of dockers. At first glance it might seem OK. But it's most serious effect is as a threat to existing job organisation. It would allow employers to play the casuals off against permanent dockers. Already they've won this advantage at small ports like Preston. They'll be able to slowly undermine the benefits of the National Dock Labour Scheme.

Many dockers pinned their hopes for a solution to the problem of unregistered ports on the recent National Ports Committee report. But when it was published at the end of March it offered very little for the registered docker.

None of the unregistered ports are to be registered. In fact all it does is to "invite" the government to look at the problem of casual labour in unregistered ports.

It goes no way to meeting militant dockers' demands to extend the National Dock Labour Scheme to cover all ports.

Now is the time for well-organised registered dockers to start emphasising that their interests are the same as men in the weak unregistered ports. For too long they've met each other from opposite sides of the picket line.

They're already half way towards cutting manning, though in the long term they want to get rid of still more men. Smashing existing job organisation is proving more difficult. Ideally they'd like to completely re-organise working practices so they have complete control over who works where, and when. This is just what Clause 12 of the Devilin Report, section 2 is all about. It says:-

GET MOBILE

"The parties recognise that the objective of all Agreement on manning arrangements must be to establish optimum efficiency in the manpower required for a particular operation. Manning arrangements within companies will therefore be decided in the light of the amount and nature of work to be done and the number of men available. The observance of the following work practices is a condition of this Agreement

*Movement of employees or gangs to other work on either ship or quay, at any time within a shift, including ship to quay and quay to ship.

*movement of employees or gangs from discharging to loading and vice versa at any time within a shift.

*commencement and continuation of work irrespective of the number of men employed unless the employer deems this impracticable, in which case men will be re-deployed.

*adjustment in the shed/area crews when required by the employer with employees being transferred to sheds as required within a shed/area and between other shed/areas.

*acceptance of any duties which the man is competent to perform."

RENTS

OVER-THE-BRIDGE

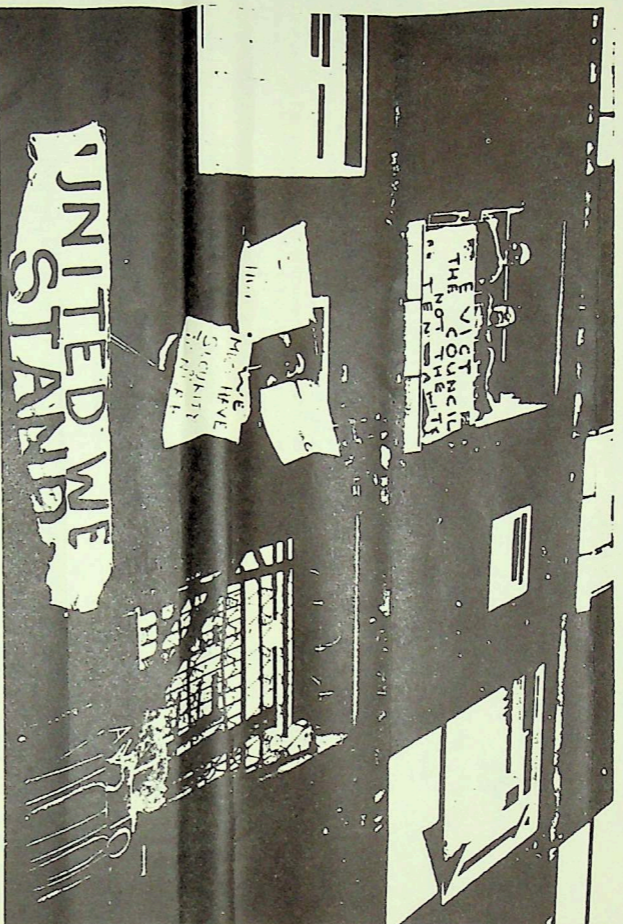
On Wednesday 28th March members of the Over-the-Bridge Tenants Association reappeared in the County Court. They were facing eviction proceedings for refusing to pay rent since oct. 9th 1972 in protest against the Housing Finance Act. One of the tenants told the judge that he'd been on total rent strike for six months and would stay on total rent strike as long as the Housing Finance Act remained on the statute book. The tenants then said that the notices to quit had not been given to them personally (they got lost in the post!). Because of some legal technicality this made the whole proceedings so far void. The Court will have to begin the 3 month long proceedings over again if they want to apply for possession of rent strikers homes. Since then Over-the-Bridge tenants have received notices to quit by 7th May. So the whole lengthy proceedings starts again, and with it the danger that people will drop out of the rent strike because it's just become a 'waiting game' for many.

BOLTON

After the demonstration in Bolton on Saturday March 17th (reported in last Big Flame) Bolton Council called off the bailiffs, and furniture that had been marked for repossession was given back to the tenants. Bolton tenants were so encouraged by the show of strength at the demonstration and by the support they got from tenants groups outside their own area that 300 of them rejoined the partial rent strike. Before then the number still on partial rent strike had fallen to six.

ROYTON

A recent Council meeting in Royton (near Manchester) called to discuss action against rent strikers had to be postponed because of the noise of demonstrators outside the building. Tenants from Tower Hill went along to give their support and were later escorted out of the town by police. Two people from Manchester area were arrested during a fight with the police when tenants attempted to block the road in front of the council.



CLAY CROSS DEMO

In Clay Cross on Sat. 14th April a demonstration was held in support of the 11 councillors who're still refusing to implement the Housing Finance Act. It was attended by people from all over the country and everyone gathered afterwards in the Welfare ground for a rally.

Very few people on the march actually came from Clay Cross. Perhaps they didn't know about it. In any case, if the fight heats up in Clay Cross it's the tenants themselves who'll have to pay the increased rent -- they can't rely on the council to fight for them.

Among the people on the rostrum was John Evans, chairman of the National Association of Tenants and Residents. He

expressed the hope that the newly elected Labour County council would quickly stand side by side with Clay Cross in refusing to increase council rents. He urged every tenants association to organise deputations to councils urging them to have second thoughts!

Who's this bloke trying to kid? The tenants on the march know through bitter experience that the Labour Party have got nothing whatsoever to offer them. They also realise that staging demonstrations in support of Labour councillors will not in the end bring about the defeat of the Housing Finance Act. The only way to stop rent rises as Ethel Singleton (Old Swan Tenants Assn) and Tony Boyle (Tower Hill Unfair Rents Action Group) pointed out, is to organise total rent strikes backed up by rank and file industrial support.

FRANKFURT - POLICE EVICT SQUATTERS

Over 80 demonstrators were arrested in massive clashes with police in Frankfurt at the end of March. The demonstrators were arrested during police attempts to evict squatters from 51 Kettenhofweg, one of the five buildings occupied in Frankfurt.



BATTLE SCENE IN FRANKFURT

Property speculators buy off whole streets, and before they are demolished, they are left empty or rented room by room to immigrant workers at extremely high prices.

At the first attempt on Wednesday March 28, 500 police armed with sub-machine guns, batons and water cannon, managed to break through the hastily erected barricades, but were unable to gain access to the house - 32 were arrested. Saturday saw renewed street fighting at a mass demonstration in the police of the squatters - seven more were arrested.

The final police offensive, 700 strong, came the following Wednesday April 4 at 3.30 am backed up by Frankfurt Fire Brigade. Local hospitals who had been put on alert in advance informed the squatters of the intended assault. They could see that resistance was suicidal, and within two hours the police had gained control of the house.

Mass public meetings in different centres of the town, before and after the eviction ensured the squatters of public support. City wide protest demonstrations were held against the evictions and the police action.

A student militant said:

There are obvious indications that the German Social Democrats stand on the side of the speculators. Daily raids and terror gangs are organised by the speculators to intimidate people on rent strikes. They operate without police interference bailiffs knock daily houses occupied or on rent strike are under constant police surveillance.

The squats are one of the campaigns of the Housing Council which consists of 1,000 families, rent strikers, immigrant workers and students who are fighting to improve their living conditions in West German cities.

'ATTACHMENT OF EARNINGS'

On March 26 Kirkby Council announced its latest tactic in the fight against the Tower Hill tenants who are on total rent strike. Tenants from Merseside as well as the Greater Manchester area demonstrated outside the Council buildings to protest against Winstanley's (housing manager) attempts to get eviction orders served on tenants who are on rent strike. But the 40 tenants from Tower Hill who finally managed to get in to the Council chamber heard that the decision of the Council was:

'that no notices to quit or eviction notices will be served on any of the Tower Hill tenants who are on rent strike against the Housing Finance Act.'

What they intended to serve on these tenants were court orders of a different kind - and some had already been delivered to tenants that morning. They are known as 'attachment of earnings' orders and they were introduced in the 'Attachment of Earnings Act 1971'. This Act authorises the court to direct an attachment of earnings order to the employer of anyone who has any sort of 'civil debt'. In other words, if the court decides that rent arrears are in fact a 'civil debt' it can order the employer of a tenant to deduct certain amounts each week from that tenants wage packet and pay it over to the Council.

STRIKE ACTION

This latest tactic means that all tenants groups will have to think more vaguely talking about for so long. We've fought evictions and are still fighting them (Bolton, Scottle Road, Tower Hill etc.) by setting up road blocks and pickets on threatened houses as well as organising demonstrations of support. We've always had vague promises of support from the Trades Council and Union Officials but now it has to be much more concrete. The only way to fight the attachment of earnings directly seems to be through mass strike action. But that is going to be very difficult to organise especially since tenants will be hit in different workplaces and won't necessarily get support from their workmates. We should have been keeping in touch with people in industry throughout the rent strike so that we were in a stronger position now.

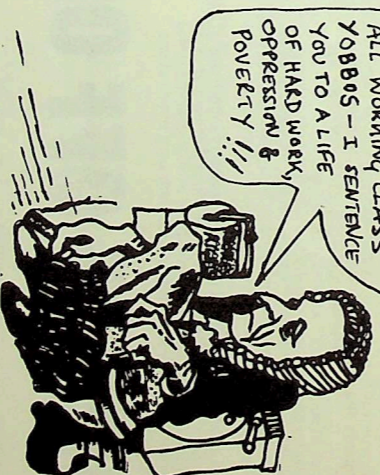
'LEGAL' TRAPS

So far the Tower Hill 'Unfair Rents' action group have decided to collect all the court orders in - write ON RENT STRIKE across each one and send them back to the County Court. This has been done and several tenants have already received them back with a request from the County Court that they fill in the form and sign them. The Action Group as far as we know, has not yet decided what further steps to take though one suggestion has been: To appear in Court but state 'We don't intend to pay any money as we've come here on rent strike and we are leaving on rent strike.....'

Tower Hill tenants are determined not to fall into the trap of fighting the rent strike in the courts. Once the battle is taken out by isolated individuals then the rent strike will get lost in legal technicalities and confusing terminology. The court can put pressure on individuals to pay their arrears at 50p per week and once this starts then the rent strike may slowly disintegrate as more and more people drop out through demoralisation and intimidation.

If we go to court at all over arrears then we should go in a gang and refuse to be dealt with individually. Alternatively, we

...AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT THAT YOU ARE ALL WORKING CLASS YOBBOES - I SENTENCE YOU TO A LIFE OF HARD WORK & POVERTY !!!



should ALL 'refuse to go' because we don't believe there's such a thing as 'impartial justice'. The 'justice' of the courts works in the interests of the State and once we start to rely solely on the courts, the State takes over and we're bound to lose in the end.....

CONCRETE SUPPORT

Every tenants group needs to start organising concrete industrial support and publicity about the rent strike. A lot of people still don't know anything about the rent strike even if they know that it exists. Instead of talking about approaching convenors and union branch officials for support we should find ways of explaining to people at work what the strike is about, why we're doing it and what the problems are. We can start by leafletting factories, holdings meetings at the gates at dinner-time and trying to get meetings in the canteens.

The 'attachment of earnings' doesn't just concern the tenants on Tower Hill. It can be used against every working class person at some stage if we don't find a way to fight and beat it now. It's possible for instance, that 'attachment of earnings' can be used to extract debts for fines etc. imposed by the Industrial Relations Act, so its in the interests of workers to help rent strikers fight it now - SO IT CAN'T BE USED AGAINST ANYONE SUCCESSFULLY

LEARNING THE HARD WAY

with Phase Two

Ever since the successful use of the flying picket in last year's miners and builders strikes, the Government has been considering how to prevent a repeat of these victories. Yet in April, Robert Carr, the Home Secretary, announced that a draft picketing law was being dropped because the police had sufficient powers as it was.

It hasn't taken the Tories nearly a year to read their law books to reach this conclusion. Rather, in the last few months they have discovered that a new picketing law is unnecessary for the time being because the unions have proved their willingness and ability to control their members.

What's happened since the miners strike to take the heat out of the situation? How come the Fordworkers, the gasmen and all the others failed to demolish Heath's Phase Two?

Our main answer is the legalisation of the Freeze, coupled with the Special Cases argument.

* UNIONS DON'T WANT TO FIGHT THE STATE *

Throughout their history, the British trade unions and the TUC have always shrunk from challenging the State. They have always avoided giving any government the excuse to call a Who Rules? General Election.

This is because the leaders of the unions know well that their interests cannot be strengthened by a trial of strength with the State. Trade Unions exist in a capitalist society because the price of organised labour has to be bargained about with the employers. That's the basis of the union leaders' power — as the go-between for the buyers and sellers of labour. If the working class suddenly refuses to go on selling its labour, what is the point of the unions' existence?

That's why the union leaders will never lead an attack on the State which could result in the end of the employing class. For them, it's a simple matter of self-preservation.

The unions failed to lead and win not because of their leaders, who were bad enough, but because they are unions and the unions cannot win the kinds of struggle we face today. As for the stewards committees, most showed that they too were unprepared and out of touch with their own rank and file and too closely tied to the unions' ways of thinking and doing, even if a bit more militant.

But this is more or less what Heath knew when he made Phase Two law. Last year the Government pretended not to interfere in the miners strike. The miners' union leaders flinched, but finally, pressured from below, they were forced to take on the Coal Board.

This year everything's different. The Government made it clear that there was no such thing any longer as the private fight between workers and boss. Any struggle for higher wages or better conditions in future automatically threw the State in to the battle on behalf of all the employers. In the past few years, the working class has shown that it can take on a single employer, like the Coal Board, and win.

Any struggle for higher wages was now a struggle against the State. And which union was ready for that. As teachers, gas men, hospital workers, car workers, civil servants and railwaymen formed an uppercut at their bosses, the Government came up behind with a massive karate chop which made mincemeat of all comers.

* WAS IT A DEFEAT? *

So was it a defeat? Yes and no.

Compare it with the postmen's strike two years' ago when the Government managed to stave the post workers back to work. That was a defeat like nothing that's happened since Phase Two. In most cases, the union ended their action whilst the members still wanted to go on. The result is a bitter but wisser rank and file, which in some cases had the valuable experience of organising its own struggle, usually because the local official impeded them or did nothing. At the Lincoln depot in Bootle, gas workers organised their own flying pickets to other depots and to their own union HQ.

So it was a defeat in the obvious sense that nobody got more than the £1+4½ limit, and a gain in the sense that up and down the country there are now small groups of men and women who are determined to take the struggle into their own hands at the next opportunity.

HANDS OFF OUR FAMILY ALLOWANCES

Amongst recent Government proposals to change over its taxation system to a new form of "Tax Credits", is a plan to end the present system of "Family Allowances".

Family Allowances since their introduction have always been paid to women through a token book cashable at the Post Office. This has meant that no matter what happens to alter the family income, or the income of unmarried mothers or widows, women have been able to rely on it being paid to them weekly *AS OF RIGHT*. In many cases it is the only *INDEPENDENT* source of income a woman has.

Now with the Governments proposals to pay it as a credit through the husbands wage packet, many women feel that this right is being taken away from them.

INDEPENDENT INCOME.

At the moment Family Allowance is the only independent income that women have — we don't have to ask our husbands for it. It is not taxed, and it is up to us how we spend it. Quite often this money is used to save for more expensive items such as new clothes for the children and extras for the house.

Family Allowance being paid to us on a Tuesday, when often housekeeping money is running low, can keep us going until the next pay day. And in the situation of someone in the family who is on strike, it can be a life-saver, when strike pay either does not exist, or is delayed, and when Social Security payments are held back and are in any case inadequate.

Because women are given the role of bringing up the children

And yet it was a defeat because it gave the Government vital breathing space, in two ways...

* MORE MAN/GEMBLE CRISIS *

First, their crisis is a bit more manageable now, although by no means solved. For a time at least the employers will be able to stop real wages rising faster than productivity. It was this, added to the difficulty of passing on their higher costs abroad because of sterner foreign competition, which made the crisis so sharp for them. But all they have done with Phase Two is to buy time. What they must do, for the long term health of profits, is to carry through more sweeping changes.

This is the second point. With some of the heat taken out of the struggle, the Government will try to carry on strengthening itself and the employers against the working class. The changes they need to carry through are made necessary by our strength. That's why, for example, they had to introduce the Freeze and the Industrial Relations Act in the first place — not because the Tories are naturally wicked and malicious. So, for the moment, while the working class licks its wounds and tries to work out what happened, the Government will press ahead relatively unhindered.

It may try to end family allowances, cut health and education spending and speed up the transition to Common Market food prices. It can also be more daring in its use of police repression against revolutionaries and Irish republicans. It will probably move in to finish off the rent strikes, guessing that there may not be industrial support for people being evicted. This doesn't mean we should lay back and let it happen. These are some of the possible consequences of the Phase Two set back. In this way we can truly say that a defeat for one is likely to be a defeat for all. Unlike our union leaders, the State tends to see the whole picture.

* INDIRECT WAGE CUTS *

One result is that our enemies are often more aware of our weaknesses than we are. In the past few months the Government has shown up one of the weakest points in our organisation and understanding, by attacking us outside the workp- ace.

For example, whilst food prices have rocketed, the working class has just tightened its belt and reacted passively. Are we going to accept that beer is now a luxury, and that we can expect to eat less meat than on wartime rations. Instead, we must consider ways of preventing food prices rising, of boycotting the shops that go on putting up their prices, and maybe of forcing some of them out of business.

Rising food prices are one part of a long term plan to shift the costs of the Welfare State onto workers and their families. For the employers, this is a necessity. Another example of this plan in action is the Housing Finance Act which sparked off maybe the most widespread rent strike ever in Britain, especially strong in Liverpool. This case illustrates some of our weaknesses very clearly.

* TENANTS STRUGGLE *

The first is the failure by many tenants to realise that the Unfair Rents forced them into a direct confrontation with the State. Many refused to accept this was the case and looked to their landlord, often a Labour council, to get them off the hook - to fight the battle for them. The first rent strike collapses occurred when tenants lost their nerve once their own council caved in to Government, and Labour Party, pressure.

The main cause of the withering away of the rent strikes has been because workers have failed to see that the rent rises were as blatant a wage cut as if the employer had done it himself. Of course, for the trade unionists leaders, the rent issue was outside the workplace and therefore *political*. Exactly! The trouble is that it is in only the most exceptional cases that rent strikes can survive without industrial support.

There is a variation on this problem in Kirkby where the working class faces another test. Rather than evict the hard core total rent strikers, the council has applied for Attachment of Earnings orders — another disguised wage cut. Will there be any reaction on the nearby industrial estate to this latest move? Kirkby has one advantage over most other rent strikers: many tenants work nearby on the estate. This link has already been useful in the opposite direction, when the rents forced a local boss to reinstate workers who had joined in a rents demonstration. Now that link must be used to support the rent strike.

We've looked at the way the legalisation of the Freeze and the use of indirect wage cuts have taken traditional trade union ideas unawares. We need to look at the Special Cases argument to complete the picture.

and running the home, men often have very little understanding of the problems involved in making ends meet. So with the possibility of Family Allowances being paid as a credit through the mans wage, many women feel that they wont get this extra money from their husbands.

THE NEW SYSTEM: IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN

Therefore if Family Allowance becomes payable through the mans wage and women may have to ask for it, it is likely that it could disappear altogether and she would become completely dependent on her husband.

The Tax Credit system will not apply to the unemployed or to those earning less than £8 a week, unmarried mothers are completely ignored. Many women who already work in the home are forced to take part-time jobs outside the home, some for less than £8 a week (4 million women in this country work for less than 25p. an hour). Thus this system disfavors those women who are in need of most support. If this system is put into practise, because of the structure of it, it is very easy for the Government to change the emphasis by a % here and a few pence there which sounds insignificant but can in fact end up with them whittling the benefits away.

WE ARE FIGHTING

SO WHAT ARE WOMEN DOING ABOUT IT.....

Already there is a National Campaign in opposition to the governments proposals, largely consisting of Womens Liberation groups and others in all parts of the country. The campaign aims to publicise and explain what the Governments plans will mean to us all. It takes the form of leafletting areas, sticking up posters, drawing up petitions, making surveys of information and holding meetings to organise action.

One Sunday morning early in February, gas workers and Ford stewards found themselves sitting in the same Liverpool hotel room. The mistake discovered — they were meeting separately — the gasmen got up and moved into another room. Did it occur to anyone that the most useful meeting that morning would have been to set up a fighting alliance against the common enemy? Instead, both groups got picked off, one by one in a classic ambush.

This may have been because they saw two enemies to be faced separately, rather than one together. More likely it was because the unions traditionally fight alone. Generally their leaders prefer to wait and see before committing themselves. In the past, when the State did stay out of most struggles, this is just about understandable. But no longer. Yet what was the alternative. A united front by the unions against the State. We have already shown how improbable that was.

* SPECIAL CASES *

Instead the unions looked after their own, disastrously, as they have always done. But they had a new justification for doing this which they used for keeping off the pressure from their rank and file for a joint fight — Special Cases.

On the one hand, there were the hospital workers, on the other, the Ford workers: two different special cases. The hospital workers were a special case because they were so badly paid. That's why, it was said, they should be an exception to the Freeze. In the end, Vic Feather was promising the Government that if they conceded on this one no other unions would take advantage and demand their bit too. It didn't work, the Tories didn't want to know.

The Ford workers leaders argued that their members deserved more because of their productivity record and the state of the Company's balance sheet. This didn't work either.

In both cases, the claim for special treatment from the Government had the effect of excluding every other group of workers, of saying that *We are the only deserving cases*. This argument destroyed any common basis for a united struggle against the Freeze.

Many workers were not prepared to accept their leaders' way of dealing with the Freeze. After all, gas workers all over the country were taking unofficial action long before the union agreed to back it. Hundreds of hospital workers pushed the struggle much harder than their union wanted. But it was never enough.

* NEW WAYS *

Now we need ways of linking rank and file workers, including shop stewards, inside the work places and with the struggles in the communities. It's easy to propose such things and a lot harder to put them into effect. That's why we think it is wrong to talk in this situation of creating mass rank and file organisation, either within the unions or as alternatives to them. Now, while most workers and many militants feel defeated and demoralised, the conditions for a rank and file organisation which really means something are not there. If they sprung up, most would be pressure groups on the unions or talking shops for various left wing groups.

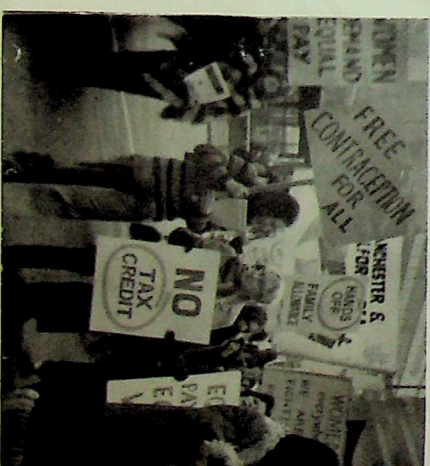
Mass organisations with different politics and set ups to the unions are created when the struggle reaches its highest point and when large numbers of people see the need for them. Revolutionary organisation has to be built from below, not handed handed down on a plate from above.

We would like to see such organisations but we have to be realistic about how they will be built. The first step in this situation is for the small groups of militants who've learnt the lessons of the Phase Two defeat to get together in their own workplaces to organise independently of the unions.

They have to give up the idea that salvation will come from electing another set of leaders, and realise that anything worthwhile has to be created now by ourselves. They must make sure that they become the political and organisational focus where ever they are for other workers. They must make their voice heard in the day to day struggles by putting forward to others alternative ways of fighting and seeing the issues. It means that the questions which are important to the whole working class but which go beyond the confines of the factory gate, are raised and acted on — the conspiracy changes against North Wales builders, the eviction of tenants, the forthcoming engineers' battle, the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland, for example. This is not just a token gesture. It matters because only a broader understanding of a broader struggle is going to enable us to defeat and reverse the total attack that the employers' State is making against every aspect of our lives.

* WE CAN'T SIT AROUND *

Link-ups between autonomous groups in industry and similar ones in the community is never easy and can only really be made through a common struggle. But we can't sit around waiting for that to happen. Big Flame will be in the forefront of every situation. The need for revolutionary organisation and an alternative to this lousy system and the people who keep it going has never been clearer.



For example in London, on March the 10th, on International Womens Day, 200 people occupied the Post Office in Trafalga Square as a protest against the Governments proposals for amending Family Allowances. There were 7 people arrested, 6 of whom are now awaiting trial. It is absolutely essential for women to come together and organise their resistance to smash the Governments plans. We must demand not only that the Family Allowance system remains the same (paid directly to the woman) but that it is increased and made payable for every child and paid on top of all Social Security payments.

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BIG BLAME

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1973

NETHERLEY:
WOMEN

FIGHT

CASUAL
LABOUR

In St. John's Market in town you might find queenies. Little shell fish, selling for £1.20 a pound. In Netherley, women employed in Croft Seafoods as casual labour, sent home at the drop of a hat, are being paid 6p a pound to open and shell queenies. But now they've had enough of lousy conditions, low pay and casual labour. For five weeks all the sixty women have been on strike for a guaranteed working week, and are picketing everyday.

Small factories making a mint out of cheap labour are all over the place. But in somewhere like Netherley it's a bit more obvious what it's all about. These new estates get built as badly and quickly as possible to get people out of slums, but then they get forgotten about. Shops, schools, playgrounds come a long time after. But the estates do provide a vast supply of cheap labour (usually women) and that doesn't get forgotten about. People like Croft move in on an ideal situation. With the rising cost of living and alot of men on the dole, most women need work. There's only one other firm on the estate and it's easier to work close to home instead of bussing down to Edge Lane for work, especially when you're coping with house-work, and kids as well. So Croft thought he could have it all his own way.

..no work today..

Within days of opening in September, he'd taken on 160 and the waiting list had grown to 300. But after only two weeks of getting £14 a week, the women found they were to be treated as casual labour.

The pay was 10p a lb for small queenies and 6p a lb for big ones. They were laid off for up to a week at a time. Sometimes they'd get to work and find notices up saying, 'No work today, come back tomorrow'. Or they'd be sent home and have to phone in three or four times a day to see if there was work. No work meant no money. There was no lay-off pay. Now the women are getting £4 a week strike pay - at work they were getting as little as £2 a week. And there were problems getting dole when they were classified as employed.

On top of all this, with Xmas coming up, prices rising and some husbands on the dole, the night shift was closed down. Conditions were bad - wet, smelly and cold. Some of the women are extra bitter because they left regular jobs in town so they could work near home.

sitting pretty

Croft, meanwhile, was sitting pretty. Liverpool is an ideal place for expansion of his Isle of Man industry. To set up the Netherley factory he got 40 to 50 per cent of the building costs through Government development grants. And as a development area, he could claim £150 a week for each person employed, and get £12 a week for each woman while they were trained. All the seafood is caught within hours of sailing off Liverpool, and once shelled the queenies can go straight from the docks and Speke airport to America and Spain where they go for fantastic sums.

If the women complained, Croft could always remind them of all the other women waiting for jobs.

There was a battle to get union recognition. Up to 80 women met in Netherley school to get organised and eventually a ballot vote decided overwhelmingly for unionisation. But the fight had only started. The women weren't prepared to let Croft use them any longer. So they came out and they're still out on the picket, and determined to win, despite problems like the single women are facing - trailing to Garston for Social Security, and a third of it goes on the bus fare anyway.

goods blacked

The company has now gone off to the Industrial Relations Court. When they last met union officials they said they'd negotiate when the blacking is lifted. But the women know they'll never win if they give up this weapon.

Alot of small strikes have collapsed through isolation, but this one has a good chance. The docks and airport are blacking roads, and there's a halt on mail, milk and packaging for the factory. There's union support - this must be the only strike for years when the GMWU has done anything at all for the people it's meant to represent. Also there's some solidarity on the estate - the women in the mobile van deliver to the picket, and other people help out with food and stuff. Money is coming in from the dockers, the 66 bus route, and Mecano.

Money to: W. Holding, 1 Crabtree Close, Netherley, Liverpool 27.



BLIND MOVE IN ON MILITANTS!

COURTS UP AND DOWN THE COUNTRY HAVE BEEN DOING BRISK BUSINESS IN RECENT WEEKS. POLICE RAIDS ON SOCIALISTS AND VICTIMISATION OF MILITANTS HAVE DRAMATICALLY INCREASED. PICKETS, TENANTS, BLACK GROUPS, WOMEN ACTIVISTS, IRISH MILITANTS IN THIS COUNTRY HAVE ALL COME IN FOR ATTENTION FROM AN INCREASINGLY ACTIVE POLICE FORCE. ARE WE EXAGGERATING? HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:-

- Hospital workers in London and dockers in Hull have been arrested and harassed for picketing.
- Building workers in Wales and Birmingham have been charged with conspiracy.
- Irish militants in Liverpool, Manchester, Coventry, London and elsewhere have been raided and arrested.
- Over 2,000 immigrants - who came to England before the Immigration Act became law - now find themselves faced with deportation at any time.
- Home Secretary Robert Carr has examined the laws on picketing and reminded employers that the police have powers to limit the size of pickets.
- Arrested "suspects" have been held on remand for ever-increasing periods and denied "normal" legal rights e.g the Belfast 10

On Merseyside tenants on Rent Strike are being dragged in front of courts (see page 3) and Irish militants are being harassed (see page 2).

- In Lancaster and London 16 women have been arrested for taking action in the Family Allowance Campaign. (See page 3).

This increasingly direct and blatant repression has been accompanied by new moves to increase the State's power.

Most City police forces now have the equivalent of London's Special Patrol Group - small groups of hand-picked policemen trained in the use of guns, riot control and unarmed combat. These are the groups called in to deal with pickets and demonstrations.

All this is part of the ruling class's drive to gain control over working class activity. Three months ago when thousands of workers were mobilised and fighting Phase 2 of the wage freeze, the bosses wouldn't have dared to be so blatant.

But now things have changed. Today, with the help of the union leaders, the ruling class faces a temporarily silenced working class. And in these conditions of temporary defeat the bosses are making up all the ground they can. State repression is the order of the day.

Our answer must be to organise and defeat it. Already there have been demos in support of the N.Wales building workers, the Belfast 10 and the Coventry 6. The ruling class is using its temporary advantage to organise its forces. So must we.

NEW IMAGE FOR LABOUR?

It's party manifesto writing time again - time for printing glossy pamphlets and making promises to bribe us to the polling booths. The Labour Party is building its image early this time. It's going to be a left wing face for the next general election.

We are promised nationalisation of the top twenty five companies - even though Harold Wilson thinks it's going a bit far. It remains to be seen whether this is a serious attempt to campaign on a programme of nationalisation, or whether it's just a gambit to win back some of the left wing supporters who have fled from the Labour Party since seeing it in action over the past ten years.

State owned industries are a large and important part of the British economy - the mines, railways, the gas and electricity services, and now part of Rolls Royce. All these industries had things in common when they were taken over. They were in deep financial troubles. In other words they were no longer profitable to their private owners. But none could be allowed to die, without threatening the existence of the rest of the economy. The mines and the railways had been making losses for years before being taken over, but British industry and the capitalist who own it needed coal to produce their goods and transport them. So in steps the Labour Government to solve the problem. No capitalist will run an industry at a loss so the taxpayer (and that means the working class) must be made to bear the burden. When steel was nationalised it was no

different. The British steel industry was inefficient and losing out to foreign competition. So the Labour Government came to the rescue. Of course none of the firms that were making a profit mainly the specialised companies around Sheffield) were nationalised - just the inefficient ones. The same with the mines. Whenever any section becomes profitable, it's hived off to private ownership.

When the post-war Labour Government nationalised the railways it took over road transport at the same time. The Tories were up in arms, talking about creeping socialism but when they came back into power they were careful to denationalise only road transport, which was making a profit, and not the railways. No later labour government has renationalised the road services. They saw the error of their ways.

Nowadays nationalisation is as much a Tory policy as a Labour one. When Rolls Royce collapsed they nationalised it, but only the bits in trouble.

The latest Labour Party plans have been kept deliberately vague, but the most likely contender seems to be the docks. They fill the bill of being both in a financial crisis, but so vital to the economy that they can't be allowed to fold. No doubt Eric Heffer and his friends are whispering promises in the ears of dockers leaders. But what does nationalisation really do to benefit the workers in the industries taken over?

1973 10 JUN 4p

We print below an interview with Eddie Collins, North West regional organiser for Clann na hEirann, the Official Republican Organisation in Britain. He was one of two people arrested on Merseyside, following police raids throughout Britain on the homes of Irish militants. He was charged and held for five weeks on the basis of possession of a sketch map of the perimeter of Catterick Army Camp - and then released when the case looked like revealing details about British army torture methods in Northern Ireland. His views don't necessarily represent those of Big Flame.

Why did the police pick you up in the first place?

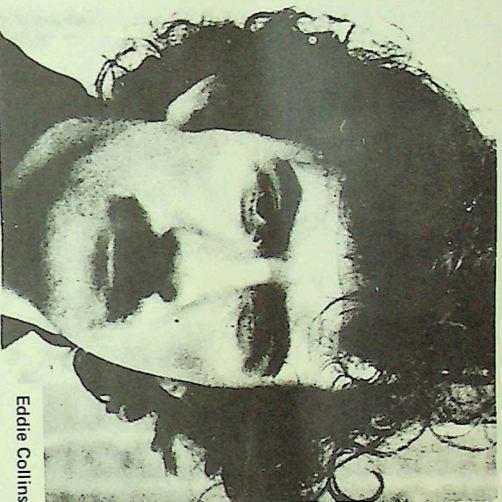
The reason for the raids and subsequent arrests, was part of a campaign of harassment. They came to my house with a warrant to search for explosive substances. I let them in and let them search. As far as I was concerned there was nothing incriminating in my possession. During the search they found this sketch of the perimeter of Catterick army camp. They questioned me from 7.00 am till 5.00 pm in the crime squad office at police headquarters Hardman St. Then they charged me at the breidwell in Dale St. I then appeared before the court the following morning and was remanded in custody for one week. This went on every week until the 5th visit to court when they dropped the charge. There was continual harassment in Risleigh Remand Centre. I was subjected to strip searches in front of other prisoners.

Why did they drop the charges?

The note on the back of the sketch gave details of training given to a regiment, now in Derry, in interrogation techniques using electric torture. The reason they let me go was that in order to expose the sketch in court, they would have also publicly exposed the details of the note. There is no doubt about that. J. Walker of the Dept. of Public Prosecutions, who was in court, was asked by the stipendiary magistrate (Mr. Pugh) if the charges were being dropped because of lack of evidence, to which he replied that it wasn't, it was because of certain facts pertaining to the case.

What is your organisation trying to do in Britain?

As far as we are concerned, being an Irish Organisation, we are recruiting from the Irish in this country to gain support for the policies of the Official Republican Movement in doing so, we must also look to the British Left for support for our cause, and in exposing the corruption of British Imperialism in Ireland and of course the same corruption in Britain.



Eddie Collins

How successful have you been so far on Merseyside?

The Liverpool Branch is still a young Branch, and as such is in the process of building itself into a position of strength on Merseyside. A task which it is winning. It was very notable how many organisations have failed on Merseyside in the past. Clann na hEirann will not go the same way. We have a specific job to do, but at the same time we will aid in any way possible the struggle of the British Left. As socialists we are by definition internationalists, but if you sacrifice your national identity you are only defeating your own end in regard to your struggle in your home country. (In our case Ireland) There have been some Irish people in this city who wrung their hands over

Yeinam and rightly so, but these same people ignored the fact that their own people were being butchered on the streets of Ireland.

DIVIDED WE FALL

century when Ulster was being industrialised, the first workers to fill the new jobs were Protestant small farmers. They inevitably came to see the influx from the countryside as competition for jobs and houses.

Its no good calling for unity between two sections of the community when they neither live nor work together. True, up until 1969 there were mixed working class areas in factories where both Catholics and Protestants worked. But the sectarian riots of that year led to massive evacuations from the mixed areas, while the few Catholics employed in for example, Harland and Wolfe, were driven out by their Protestant class brothers in 1971.

The situation at Harland and Wolfe where, out of a workforce of 9,000 only 500 were Catholic, is typical of the job discrimination operating in the major Belfast industries of shipbuilding and engineering. 1500 people work at the major Sirocco engineering works. None a Catholic. Mackerels engineering works employs hardly any Catholics in a labour force of 46,000. One of these few Catholics was recently shot dead as he left work in his car. On the Belfast docks all workers are Protestants except for the deep sea docks which are all Catholic. This kind of discrimination extends into local government. In the rural county of Fermanagh, the Unionist dominated Council gives temporary seasonal jobs, like snow clearing, only to Protestants. Similarly the sectarian police unit, the B specials, acted as both a source of supplementary income to Protestants and a militia to keep down Catholics. This role has now been taken over by the Ulster Defence Regiment.

craft conflict

Even where both Catholics and Protestants work for the same firm, there is a tendency for skilled jobs to go to Protestants. Most apprenticeships to go to Protestant boys. It's easy enough to distinguish a persons religion either from their home address or the name and therefore denomination of their school. Conflict between skilled and unskilled workers at a factory can often (unfortunately) arise regardless of whether there is also a religious divide. Employers rarely miss a chance to add problems. Just as last year at Mansfield Hosley Nottingham, where a strike of unskilled bar loaders broke out over low pay and managements refusal ever to promote bar loaders to skilled jobs. The skilled workers actively attempted to break the strike. Their scab ideas were reinforced by racism, all the skilled workers were white, all the unskilled Asian. In the six counties similar divisions

RELEASED

WHEN IT GOT TOO 'HOT'

What do you think of the rumours of Army morale cracking up? (see article on A.I.L.) Do you think British revolutionaries could aim their propaganda at the Army in the light of this?

I think that as well as exposing what the British Army is doing in Ireland, you should also turn your attention to what Brigadier Kitson has up his sleeve for the working class of this country. It is no coincidence that the British Empire is coloured blood red on the map of the world, (at least was coloured blood red) and that included Britain.

You know there is a growing Bring back the Boys feeling in Britain?

I think we should cultivate this. The American Anti-War Movement helped to get the troops withdrawn from Vietnam. If we went onto the streets shouting 'Up the I.R.A.' we would only give credibility to the gunslinger image which the British Press has built up so successfully. That would be defeating our own ends. If however we go on the streets calling for the withdrawal of the Army, pointing out that the majority of British soldiers are in the Army via unemployment, then the man on the street who possibly has a son in the Army in Ireland can identify with the point being made.

But dont you think we have to distinguish ourselves from those reactionary Labour MPs who are saying 'Bring the Boys back home and let them fight it out'

Sure we have to encourage this anti-war feeling, but at the same time point out that we are not doing it only to save the lives of soldiers, and nothing else. It is only the first step along the walk towards peace with justice. You see if the British people would realise the fruitlessness of the soldier fighting for a weeks wage (trying to win against a risen people who are fighting for their very existence, then we are well on the way to riding the streets of the Kitsons, Tuozos and Whitelaws. Thus we can begin the real work of the revolutionary party to achieve a political solution and go forward to establish a socialist worker's and small farmer's republic... At the moment, the Official Movement is maintaining a cease fire, except for defensive and retaliatory purposes. This in my opinion is the only part the gun has to play.

contribute considerably to the present violence and of course, unemployment is markedly higher amongst Catholics than Protestants. In strongly Protestant areas there is an unemployment rate of 7.03 per cent, in Catholic areas it is 16.4 per cent and sometimes higher. And apart from 'public relations' factories such as the promised Courtaulds factory near Derry, most new investment is located in Protestant areas, east of the River Bann. The result of job discrimination is that the all-too common superiority felt by employed workers towards the unemployed gets a religious element. To employed Protestants the Catholics are 'lazy, spongers, never doing a good days work' and the other insults aimed at those on the dole.

Clearly the policies of the employers and of the Unionist Party are partly responsible for such a divided working class. But Irish workers themselves have joined organisations designed precisely to maintain the situation. The Orange Lodges have become organisations which defend the exclusive jobs and skills of a superior caste of workers. And they therefore link as far as possible the interests of Protestant workers and the employers against the Catholic workers.

civil rights

The agitation for civil rights did not really change the elitist ideology of the loyalist workers. It only entrenched their desire to maintain their few privileges. The Civil Rights movement never questioned the system in Ireland. It only demanded a more equal slice of the cake for Catholics, rather than demanding the cake and the bakery too for all workers. So it was natural for the Orange working class to see this as a possible reduction in their own standard of living. The result was the series of attacks by Orange mobs on Civil Rights marches and the Catholic ghettos and the emergence of the IRA as a defence against them.

So religion is not the issue. Catholics and Protestants with no link with Ireland, do not clash in Britain because religious differences have not been used to divide them. But the divisions within the British working class (between black and white, skilled and unskilled, employed and unemployed) reappear in the six counties on both sides of the religious divide. Religious labels are used for different political views.

The split working class in Ireland is the result of British domination and of the attempts by British Capitalism to retain its profitable hold on the country. The Irish workers will therefore only be united and a socialist Ireland possible when the grip of British Imperialism and its Irish organisations such as the Orange Lodges is broken. The puppet parliament of Stormont is already gone, swept away by the mass surge of the Catholic population and the military action of the IRA. For that process to continue we must support both wings of the IRA not only as the defenders of the Catholic ghettos but also as fighters for Irish independence and ultimately despite the limitations of the present political leadership of the Republicans, a united socialist Ireland.

Night-time in Derry.

Is the struggle in Ireland really just about religion? The Press wants us to think so, and certainly many people just switch off when the subject crops up. Others hope for working class unity without recognising the real divisions within the Irish working class.

We have often pointed previously to the deliberate policy of British employers and the Stormont administration of giving better jobs to Protestants and therefore linking them closely to the interests of British capital. Even in the late 19th



WHEN IS A REBEL NOT A REBEL?

Trades Council cowboys run out of bullets

A PERSONAL NOTE TO YOU
 We the undersigned commend **BILL SEFTON** for your support and vote
EDDIE LOYDEN, SIMON FRASER Liverpool Trades Council
HERSESIDE METROPOLITAN
ELECTIONS, 1973

When is a rebel not a rebel? At the last meeting of the Tenants' Coordinating Committee, the body which is attempting to coordinate Liverpool tenants fight against the rent rises, this question was once again in the air.

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

When Sefton and the Labour hacks decided to implement the rent rises last September, the Trades Council called together Liverpool Tenants to form a committee to coordinate the rent strike. There were loud cries of approval for the 26 Labour Councillors who voted against the Act. The fight was on. For many tenants, involved in a mass political fight outside the factory gates for the first time, Trades Council support seemed the answer to their prayers. Trades Council speakers were eloquent on the possibilities of industrial support, and this inspired many tenants to join the struggle.

CRACKS APPEAR

Six months later, despite the rhetoric, cracks appeared. Councillor Eddie Loyden, prospective Labour M.P. for Garston and leader of the 'rebels', trotted back to the Labour Party corral at the head of his men. In the document prepared by the Labour Rebels to explain their about turn, Loyden clearly explained that this action was the only way that the Labour Party had retained any 'credibility' throughout the whole sorry affair.

CREDIBILITY FOR SALE

This showed two things:
 a) That in the eyes of Mr. Loyden, Trades Council chairman, the credibility of the Labour Party who implemented the Act was more important than the tenants' struggle against the Act.

b) That Trades Council 'leadership' believes that the actions of individual 'socialist' representatives carries more weight in fighting ruling-class laws than the mass struggle of the tenants.

Events showed that their actions achieved nothing. Their claim that they achieved a pledge of 'no evictions' means nothing when the Labour Councils favourite game looks like being attachment of earnings instead, as in Kirkby;

FRIGHTENED MEN

More cracks appeared this April. While Simon Fraser, T.C. secretary, was filling more and more time at tenants' meeting discussing the 125th birthday celebrations of the Trade Council, the Labour Party, frightened by Sefton's justified unpopularity among working class tenants, put him up for the safest seat in the city, Sandhills Vauxhall, when the Metropolitan elections arrived.

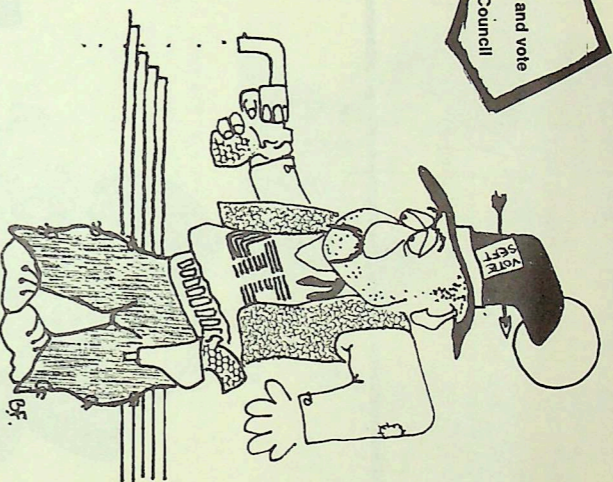
FORKED TONGUE

On his election propaganda, first on the list of supporters urging people to vote for Sefton were, you guessed it, Messrs Loyden and Fraser, Trades Council. In this case it looked like the cowboys were definitely speaking with forked tongue.

Challenged over this endorsement at the last Tenants Committee meeting by 'Over the Bridge' representative Mickie Keating, Fraser replied that his endorsement was as an individual member of the Labour Party, "in his personal capacity". **SO WHY DID THE WORDS 'TRADES COUNCIL APPEAR AFTER HIS NAME?** Fraser further added that he would endorse any Labour candidate, "irrespective of record". Heroes of the working class like Harold Wilson, and even unscrupulousmen like Labour candidate Harold Lee, who failed to win elections in LowHill-Smithdown ward on a thinly disguised racialist platform, should be glad of such loyal support.

INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT

The key issue which had brought tenants under the tattered wing of the Trades Council at the start of the rent strike, was the vague but reassuring promise of industrial support. As the strike progressed it became clear as Fraser's own admission that the T.C. couldn't 'guarantee' this support, but could only 'request' it. Fair enough.



But it is a measure of the Trades Council's lack of credibility that at no stage did any union representatives consistently attend our meetings in their official capacity. And that the only effective support from industrial workers, both in fact and in pledge, came through the efforts of tenants committees in their localities like Tower Hill and Netherley, *et.*

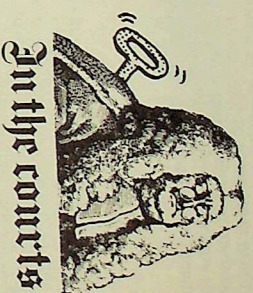
PARASITES

The situation is clearly reversed. Instead of tenants gaining strength and support from the T.C., it can be seen that the T.C. with its six-gun rhetoric, by assuming 'leadership' of the tenants struggle, tried to gain credibility for itself, and worse, for the very Labour Party who had implemented the Tory Law.

CONNED

So we have all been conned. It appears clear now that real coordination must come from the tenants groups themselves, and not the phony 'rebels' of the Labour Party. As for them, the answer lies in the hands of the thousands who over the last nine months have chanted 'What shall we do with the Labour Traitors?.....'

TENANTS



FACE FINES

It was just after 10 a.m. - only minutes after the court had started, when it was announced that the morning's business had hit problems. 70 defendants, due to appear in Lancashire County Court that morning, had failed to turn up. Summonses against the 70 had been returned with the words "Rent Strike" written on some of them. So started Kirkby Council's latest attempt to break the 7 month old total rent strike on Tower Hill.

After a brief conference the court held in May 24 decided to proceed without the 70. In rapid succession the cases were heard. In each case Kirkby council pressed for full repayment of arrears. By the end of the session it had swept the floor.

22 tenants received judgement orders demanding payments of between £27 and £34 a month. ABOUT £7 - £9 A WEEK. This represents the newly assessed 'fair rent' plus £1 a week to meet arrears. The remaining 48 are still waiting to hear. Similar orders are expected.

The 70 are still refusing to pay - but now they face the full might of the state.

THE COURT CASES WERE MORE THAN JUST A MATTER OF MONEY. THEY ARE PART OF AN INCREASING WILLINGNESS BY THE AUTHORITIES TO USE THE POWER OF THE COURTS AND THE STATE MACHINARY TO BREAK WORKING CLASS ORGANISATION AND RESISTANCE.

OVER-THE -BRIDGE

Tenants from 'Over the Bridge' (Scotland Road) have been summoned to court this month for arrears incurred during their total rent strike. As the provisional 'fair rent' is being fixed on their homes, the courts are being used to eliminate such opposition to the Tory's anti-working class policies - in this case the Housing Finance Act. The few tenants who remain on rent strike in this area are unimpressed by this intimidation.

At their last visit to the court over rent arrears, some 'Over the Bridge' tenants said they had never received their notices to quit. Because of this technicality, the corporation were forced to start the whole procedure again. Now they are back where they started.

CASES WILL BE HEARD ON JUNE 20 and JUNE 27. Whether the tenants will be there or not is uncertain since they have yet to decide at their meeting what their course of action will be.

WE WONT PAY

A woman on rent strike in Tower Hill wrote this for the Tower Hill Rent Strike Bulletin.....

We are on rent strike because we feel we cannot just sit back accept rise after rise in our rents when our husbands wages remain the same.

Everyone who feels strongly about the rise in every thing you can think of, should be on rent strike. We paid our rents before the strike. We don't want something for nothing, but we have to make a stand on the rents issue because it won't stop at a £. we are in for alot more increases before this government is through with us.

What working person can go on paying through the nose? Not us or our husbands. After all how much more can a person take? Why should officials tell us how much money we can spend, what food to buy, or how to cloth our kids? If we can afford it.....Why should we struggle to try and cloth, and feed our kids as best we can on the same wage each week while the government and big fat property men get fatter and fatter on our hard earned money?

The gas, lecy, and bus fares have gone up so what do we do?? Starve? Let our kids go without? No thanks. Our rent money goes on food and to keep our kids in decent cloths while we can afford it.

We are not prepared to go back to the way we were before the rent strike. That is, means and not does. We want to keep up the fight for a decent standard of living for ourselves and our kids.

RISING FREE

Information service and mail order for left pamphlets, books and newspapers. s.a.e. for literature list.

197 Kings Cross Road,
London, W.1
tel. 01-837 0182

FAMILY ALLOWANCE CAMPAIGN women arrested

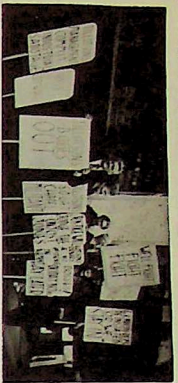
Several women have been arrested recently, because of their involvement in the National Family Allowance Campaign; a fight against the government's proposal to do away with Family Allowances and replace them with Tax Credits, paid through the husband's wages.

In Lancaster on the National Day of Action for the camp sign 9 women were arrested and 8 of these have so far been brought to trial. Their total fines amount to £350 with one woman being fined as much as £60 for sticking up family allowance posters!

In London on International Women's Day in March, 7 women were arrested at a protest sit-in in the Central Post Office. 6 of these are now awaiting trial at the end of June on charges of assault, obstruction, disturbing the peace. It's likely that their sentences will be equally heavy.

A Defence Fund has been set up to help pay these fines and others that any women might have to face in the fight against the withdrawal of Family allowances.

Please send donations to:
Family Allowance Defence Fund
c/o South London Women's Centre
14 Radnor Terrace, London s.w.8.



TILLOTSONS - Union stops sit-in

The dispute at Tillotsons' Commercial Road packaging firm, is for the moment at a low ebb. Workers occupied the factory for six weeks demanding the reinstatement of four sacked stewards and twenty-six women made redundant. But management by finding 29 voluntary redundancies instead, were able to meet the demands while keeping to their original plans.

UNION STOPS SIT-IN

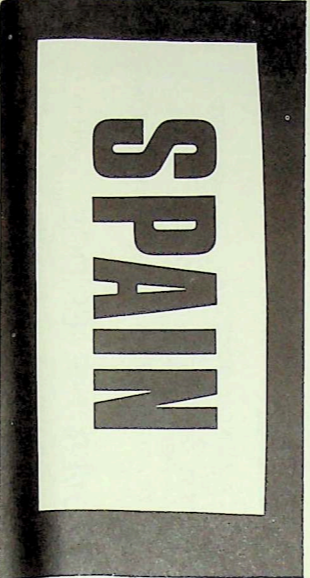
Union officials from London HQ of SOGAT, whose members organised the sit in effectively stopped further action after six weeks by announcing that no more union funds would be available to those carrying out the sit-in. Local members of the chapel believe this is because they were worried by management threats that further action would lead to total closure of Tillotsons, a badly-equipped subsidiary of giant American packaging firm St. Regis.

CHARITY

Documents taken from the office during the sit-in show that any plans for Tillotsons' future would involve redundancies, and at best, the introduction of modern Champblain machines

There's no mystery about why Henry Ford decided to build one of his biggest car plants in Spain. Like Fiat, Citroen, British Leyland, Renault and Chrysler, he's attracted by the massive tax incentives and the promise of a cheap, docile labour force. Franco's gift to foreign capitalism.

But he knows he's taking a gamble on how long the police and the fascist trade union system can go on keeping in check the working class, especially the car workers. As in the other major car producing countries, the Spanish car workers are becoming the hardest, most militant. In particular, FIAT, already taking a bashing in Italy, must be wondering whether its investment in its Spanish subsidiary, SEAT, is going to pay off.



It's a year and a half since the occupation of the SEAT factory in Barcelona ended with the killing of a worker, Ruiz Villalba, when the police rampaged through the plant. Since then SEAT has been fairly quiet and the initiative has shifted to other sections of the working class, like the shipyard workers of El Ferrol, on the north coast, who fought the police hand to hand through the streets after two men had been shot dead in March 72; and Michelin workers, who last year stuck out on strike for six weeks, supported by their families and working class people; and the medical students who put up so hard a fight against new university regulations that the Government had to withdraw them, even though it could mobilise thousands of police to patrol the classrooms and break up meetings.

Recently SEAT workers have begun to recover from the defeat of the 1971 sit-in. We are reprinting an interview with a SEAT worker involved in last month's strike. It's translated from the bulletin of the French revolutionary news service, 'Agence Presse 'Liberation' for May 12.

Before you read on, we think it would be useful to say something about the Workers Commissions referred to in the interview.

WORKERS COMMISSIONS

Strikes in Spain are punishable by beatings, torture, imprisonment or death, depending on the relative strengths of the workers and the State on each occasion. All dealings between workers and their employers are supposed to take place within the state-controlled trade unions. Since the early 60's, workers in the larger factories have forced the bosses to deal with the illegal Workers Commissions, which sprang up all over Spain in 1962 when a miners strike in the north spread throughout the country, the first nearly national strike since the Civil War.

Sometimes the Commissions were elected on a similar basis to shop stewards committees. More often, they would come to the surface at a time of crisis, bringing together all the most militant workers in a factory. For some years, there was an attempt to set up a national organisation of Commissions which was seen by some as the way to force Franco to allow the working class to set up free trade unions. But in 1969, the police demolished the regional and national organisations, easily picking off the militants who had openly negotiated with management.

FLYING PICKETS

Since then, many workers have realised that the regime is not going to disarm itself, its fascist unions as easily as that, and it's now clear that open negotiation with the bosses was mainly to their advantage. Now, the Commissions work differently. When an issue arises which the workers will fight on, the small, secret nucleus of the Commission grows and tries to encourage the development of mass meetings where the decisions are made, any negotiations are on a mass basis so it isn't so easy to pick off individuals. Out of this kind of organisation has come the tactic of the flying picket to keep in touch with other factories and the communities. If you've read the Big Flame pamphlet on the FIAT workers struggles, (July 69-70, you'll notice the similarities with the organisation and tactics developed there under different circumstances.

would further reduce the work force in the interests of productivity. For in a letter to employees during the sit-in management stated, "...at present we are wiring on St. Regis charity and if this stops, this plant will be closed. However it was confirmed two weeks ago that these new machines would not after all be installed in the old fashioned works.

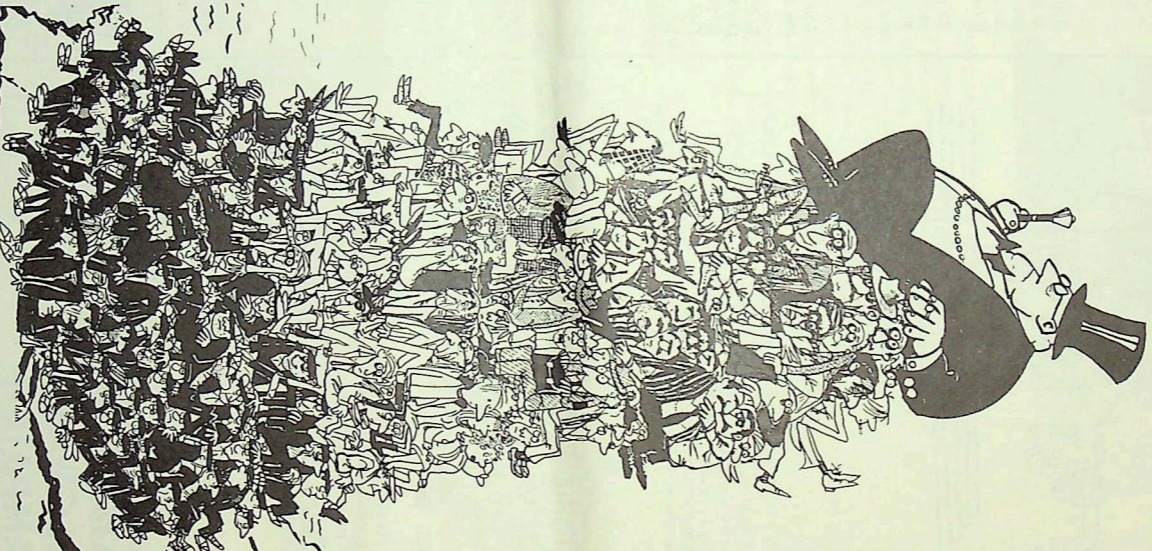
OBSTACLE COURSE

The struggle is expected to continue, but rank and file workers face a massive obstacle course which includes:

- Management who are dependent on the decisions of their American bosses.
- A two union work force, split between NGA and SOGAT, where highest grade workers of either union are divided by pay differentials of £24.
- Union officials who fear a real struggle against redundancies because such a struggle may cause more redundancies.

BEND OVER BACKWARDS

Following the refusal of management to instal the new Champblain machines in the Commercial Road plant,



**ALWAYS
KEEP
FRAGILE
UPRIGHT**

Friday April 27, pay day, was the start of what was to turn into a total shut down at SEAT involving 24,000 workers. A worker explains what sparked it off.

During the morning shift, management put up a notice saying that from the start of next month, they would be making a new deduction for Social Security payments. They also put out the complete version of the agreement. On page 105 it said that the maximum bonus on company profits of 5,700 pesetas (about £33) would be tied to the complete absence of labour disputes and to a minimum 10% return for share holders.

The first reaction comes from shop no. 7 - about 800 workers - where there is the first, Daddy attended meeting. They decide to contact the other sections and at the same time to form a Commission to demand an explanation from management.

Finally, about 40 workers, delegated by their mates, meet outside the main offices where the whole management committee is in session. This is the bosses' excuse for not meeting the delegation. Nevertheless, the workers make their way into the boardroom and demand an immediate reply.

The Production Manager, del Arco, starts off with the usual bullshit. This question is out of our hands. It's a government measure we can't do anything about. We'll check to see if any mistakes have been made. If they have we'll put them right in next month's pay.

Our position is straightforward, the Company should pay for the Social Security.

It would seem that the unions' defensive policy is merely to bend over backwards to help management to squeeze the last drop of profit out of Tillotsons; meanwhile letting them decide either to keep the plant open with a passive union controlled work force, till it falls apart, or else close it down in the next year or so.

At the end of the sit-in the militant work force voted against the unions' recommendation to end the struggle since they knew that such a decision is no real answer. It's time to start thinking about extending the fight against redundancies. To fight for guaranteed adequate money, whether employed or unemployed. Not the starvation rates of the dole, productivity means profits for the bosses. If it puts us out of work, they should pay for it by paying us.

In November 1972 Tillotsons became St. Regis (UK), a total subsidiary of St. Regis International Ltd, a packaging company with over 100 plants and mills in the USA and other countries. At the end of last year, with assets of £1,915,694 the British company registered a profit before tax of £1,215,824, a significant increase on previous years when it was under the declining star of Tillotsons.

A few hours later, the strike has spread to the other shops, the Commission has grown and del Arco confirms that he won't shift. When they hear this, the delegates go back to hold section meetings. The first to call for action is shop no. 2 which goes on strike. Shop 8 follows.

The afternoon shift quickly joins in. Meetings are going on everywhere, placards are being made out and in shop 7 everybody sings the Italian revolutionary song, Bella Ciao. Most of the shops decide on a four hour stoppage, starting at the dinner break.

Right from the start no 8 was out solid. In the other shops, especially 7, where there are 3,000 workers, the stoppage was complete by dinner time. The atmosphere is fantastic.



The fighting spirit and the unity is amazing. Still, when the militants suggest a march to the other sections, most of the workers stay behind. Obviously, everybody is thinking of Ruiz Villalba, who was killed here two years' ago.

On Saturday morning two workers are sacked. Later, in the afternoon, three more are taken off the payroll, indefinitely. The news strengthens the feeling inside, and soon all the afternoon and night shifts have stopped working, held meetings and gone on marches around the plant.

On Sunday the SEAT Workers Commissions meet and decide to call for the reinstatement of the sacked and suspended workers the removal of the penalty clauses on the bonus payment payment by SEAT of workers' Social Security dues. The next day, Monday 30 April, the Commissions distribute a leaflet calling for a total stoppage, especially since it's May Day on Tuesday.

The men's fighting spirit was so good the leaflet was almost unnecessary. In the main sections, 7 and 8, people are beginning to get together, to sing together, to hold meetings and to discuss ways of spreading the strike. No 7 has shut down altogether. Marches have started to hot up the sections where men are still working.

COMPLETE STANDSTILL

Finally, about 150 workers from no 7 go off towards shop 8 where after a short meeting, a hundred or so others join in and they set off from shop to shop. Everyone still working stops and joins in the demo.

The whole factory is at a complete standstill and several thousand workers about to begin a mass meeting when the police begin to seal off the plant. A helicopter patrol overruled. Over the public address, being used for the first time, the Plant Manager warns that if the factory isn't cleared immediately, the Company will be compelled to call on the police. There's total confusion and most of the workers drift away from the meeting, and leave the plant.

I think that what's happened is really positive because it shows a really high level of struggle and combativity, even higher than we, the leaders, expected. On top of that, the degree of unity among militants holding different positions has been great, and could be very important for the future.

In a way, it's worth pointing out that the masses of papers and leaflets circulating around the factory in the days before calling for action on May Day never actually mentioned the issue which was to set off the whole thing, the Social Security payments. And yet, a few weeks before there was a strike by about 2000 workers at a factory in Terrassa, near Barcelona.

After the morning shift left the factory on Monday, the management locked the gates against the afternoon shift and announced that the factory was closed until further notice.

Cars are coming out of SEAT in Barcelona again, but the spill has been broken now.

ARMY MORALE GRACKS



Yet another British soldier, Nigel Cullen, 18, of the 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment, has been reported as Absent without Leave while on duty in the Ardoyne, Belfast. He has asked in Dublin to buy himself out of the army. Gunner George Williams refused to fire on children in Belfast. A group mutinied in Germany when they heard they were being sent to Northern Ireland. Recruitment figures for the Army have fallen massively over the last 2 years.

These and other examples of a growing disintegration of army morale were recounted at the conference of the Anti-Internment League, held on the 19th of May.

HOME FRONT BLUES

Also there are signs of a growing "Bring the Boys back Home" feeling in Britain, in response to the mounting army

casualties. Richard Mitchell, Labour M.P., said in Parliament on the 23rd of May, "British people are getting fed-up with troops being shot at from both sides. When is the government going to wake up from a dream world and face reality. How much longer must they remain there?" Of course, this weakening of the agreement between the Labour and Tory Parties to maintain a wall of silence on Ireland, is not based on any understanding or support for the oppressed population of Northern Ireland, by these reactionary Labour M.P.'s. However the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland will be a big step forward for the Irish people even if they are withdrawn after pressure from people with reactionary motives.

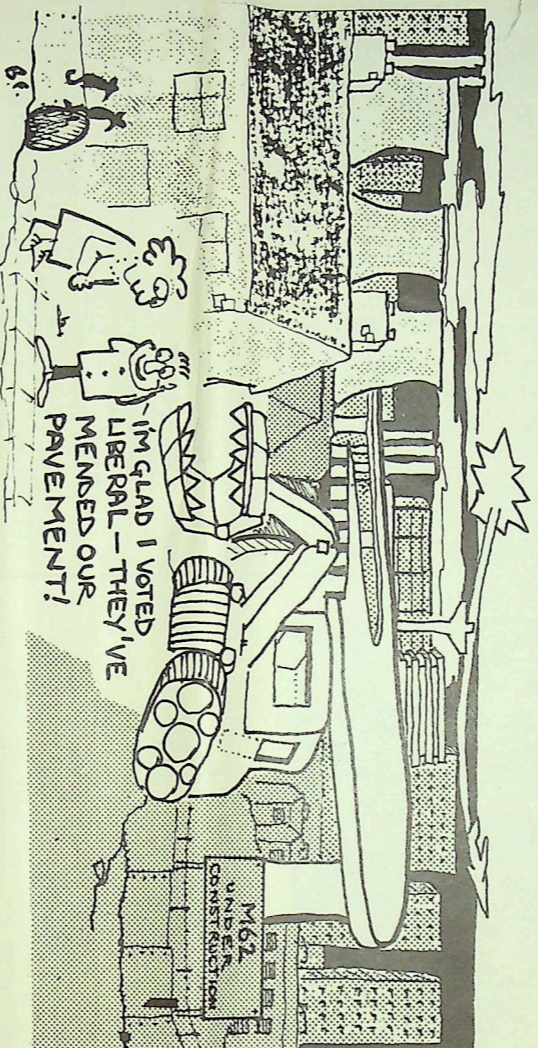
Even Tories are getting restless. In Parliament, Evelyn King,

WHOEVER YOU VOTED FOR THE COUNCIL GOT IN (HURRAY!)

IN THE RECENT ELECTIONS IN LIVERPOOL THE LIBERALS SWEEP TO VICTORY ON A WAVE OF DISENCHANTMENT FOR THE LABOUR AND TORY PARTIES.

After years of rule by Labour and Tory, after years of lies, distortions and broken promises, after years of failure to make any significant changes in the living conditions of the people, and as the Labour and Tory

The Liberals talk a lot about 'participation' and 'controlling our own affairs' but in practice this means very little. If we really controlled our own affairs we wouldn't need the likes of councillors, politicians and bosses to do it for us. The Liberals do not want to fundamentally alter the way this society is run, therefore the 'participation' they offer us is only within a very limited framework. They do not want to put an end to the bosses and landlords making a profit out



parties become more and more indistinguishable, it is not surprising that people have looked for some kind of alternative.

In fact, the alternative chosen by 75% of the people was to totally ignore the whole election fiasco, because only 25% of the people thought the elections important enough to them to bother to vote at all. Most of us realised that there was very little difference between all the three parties, and we know all too well by now that our lives will not be bettered by placing a cross on a ballot sheet once every few years. It is not the fine promises given by the politicians at election time that worries us, it's the rest of the time in between.

But to get back to the Liberals. More people voted for them than for any other party. So what did they vote for? They voted for an image, an illusion of something different. If you wrap up the old goods in a new package, many people will be fooled and think it's different. The big label on the Liberal package was COMMUNITY POLITICS - this is supposed to mean sorting out the things that affect people locally. Maybe they will get the streets cleaned up and more street lighting and the pavements mended, but they won't put our rents down. THE LIBERALS VOTED IN FAVOUR OF THE HOUSING FINANCE ACT WHICH HAS PUT ALL OUR RENTS UP SO MUCH.

NEW IMAGE FOR LABOUR? cont. from page 1.

In terms of wages, the workers in the nationalised industries are some of the lowest paid - the state is not a generous employer, and it's a difficult one to fight. Over the past five years or so the biggest and most bitter strikes have been in the public-owned industries. (with the exception of the car industry).

In terms of conditions too, there has been little improvement since nationalisation, in an effort to cut back on costs, redundancies in the nationalised industries have been increasing - the 6000 due to be sacked from Shorton in the near future are just the latest group of workers to suffer from the State's insistence that it is the workers who must pay for 'rationalisation'.

One of the main causes of the miners strike in 1972 was the Power Loading Agreement, which came into effect in the 1960's, and is the productivity deal to end all productivity deals. In return for the usual token wage rise, new machinery and methods were introduced which made the job tougher and nearly doubled the number of supervisors. It also increased the number of industrial accidents. During the recent inquiry into

of us, but rather they want us to participate in our own exploitation. Whether or not they realise it, they are merely trying to mask our exploitation in a cloud of liberalism. For if we really controlled our own lives in our own interests, we would not bother to go on paying rent to profit-hungry councils and landlords or working all our lives in meaningless boring jobs.

But when we do that the Liberals won't be on our side. They may put on a radical face but the majority of them, like the labour and Tory councillors are businessmen, lawyers, doctors, schoolteachers and other middle class people. For instance, Cyril

Garr, the local Liberal leader, is a prominent city lawyer and Trevor Jones his deputy is a business man while Jeremy Thorpe the national Liberal leader, has thousands of shares in firms involved in property speculation.

So lets not be fooled by the new Liberal package, the goods are fundamentally the same. Our power does not lie with the parliamentary charade or the Town Hall musical chairs. Our power lies with us, when we organise together where we live and where we work, where we are taught and where they try to entertain us. LET US ORGANISE OUR POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD.

the deaths at Lofthouse Colliery, a mine manager was forced to admit that they had had advanced warning of the danger of flooding, but were more concerned about continuing working than the possibility of a disaster. Nationalisation of the mines has not changed managements attitude of sacrificing every-thing to the God of profit.

Of course the taking over of privately owned industry is going to be a vital part of change for socialism, but it doesn't follow that all nationalisation necessarily leads towards socialism.

There are two priors for the products of nationalised industry, cheap for industry, dear for the rest of us. If anybody had any doubts about the real purpose of nationalisation and the Labour Party's motives, they should have been cleared up a few weeks ago when Wedgewood Benn threatened to nationalise Rolls Royce cars without paying compensation to the owners. Only to be howled down by Labour and Tory parties alike. The owners of the railways, the mines, and the steel works made far more in compensation than they ever would have if they still owned them

Tory M.P., said that the demands for withdrawal were certain to grow, and urged the government to 'make the uttermost use of Ulstermen in the provision of their own security'.

The conference was called to discuss the importance of Army repression in Northern Ireland for the working class in Britain, and how we can organise to build a movement forcing the government to withdraw the troops.

It was attended by delegates from Trades Councils, Trade Unions, left-wing organisations and Irish Exile organisations.

REPRESSION OF IRISH IN BRITAIN.

The first session discussed the trials which are taking place of Irish people in Britain and their supporters - like the Belfast Ten, charged with conspiring to cause explosions, 6 people in Coventry, and trials in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Blackburn and Liverpool.

It was pointed out by speakers that these trials represent the inevitable spilling over of repression from Ireland, and were a deliberate attempt by the government to intimidate Irish people in Britain and stop them doing anything to help their brothers and sisters in Ireland.

The second session of the conference discussed the new government proposals for replacing the notorious Special Powers Act, which has maintained Unionist Rule in Ireland since 1922.

Known as the Diplock Proposals, they in fact merely change the name of the repressive machinery used against the anti-imperialist population. Some of the individual proposals are far worse than those contained in the Special Powers Act.

For instance, it is intended to abolish trial with jury for "scheduled" offences (that is, those which involve conflict between the Orange State and British Army, and the Anti-Imperialist population). The army will be allowed to arrest people without telling them why. The right of the accused to hear all the evidence against him, and to cross-examine prosecution witnesses, will be removed.

TRIAL-RUN FOR BRITAIN?

It was emphasised that the experience which is being gained by the British Army and Government in Ireland will be used against us, here, when necessary.

Already top army experts like Brigadiers Kitson and Chittieruck, recommending that the army prepare for its future role of oppression of British working class militancy.

If we want to stop this from happening we have to exploit those splits within the ruling class over Ireland, and build an anti-war movement which will force them to retreat from Ireland, so helping the Irish working class, and ourselves at the same time.



New Dockgate Bulletin

In recent weeks, a group of dockgatemmen have got together and started to publish a regular bulletin. This unprecedented move has been brought about by the dock authority's latest pay proposals to the gatemmen.

They have offered a package deal, under the guise of a 35 hour week. It offers £47 for a 35 hour week on a 48 hour rota. It may look good on paper, but when one considers it involves a three shift scheme, including Saturday and Sunday, Bank Holidays etc, all at the same basic rate, it is not so good. To add insult to injury, they offer overtime at a rate of £1 an hour for weekdays and £1.50 for weekends. Not that overtime is or should be the main beet, but nevertheless this works out at less than the basic rate at £47 per hour.

For too long dockgatemmen have been the split workforce of the port. Being on different shifts and systems, they are even split amongst themselves. The object of the bulletin is to try and rectify this, and to keep in touch with other port workers.

Any port worker can contribute an article for publication. We hope within the next few weeks to arrange a meeting of all port workers and interested parties to discuss the gatemmen situation, and the Bulletin. The time and place will be advertised in a future bulletin.

Articles and letters to: Editorial Committee, 11 Shadwell St., Liverpool 5. Phone 207 2073.

WOMENS LIBERATION · 2, Rutland Avenue
L'pool 17.

★Free Confidential Pregnancy Testing.
Every Saturday 10 a.m till 12 noon.

★Newcomer's Meetings
Every Tuesday 8 p.m.

★Mid Side Pregnancy Advisory Service
5th floor, Harley Buildings, Old Hall
St., L'pool.

★Mons. - Fri's 9 a.m-3 p.m.
★For advice & help on abortion
★Free confidential pregnancy testing.

THE STORY SO FAR

Three weeks ago stewards recommended acceptance of temporary labour to a mass meeting of Liverpool dockers. From the start it was a stormy meeting. Only three stewards were allowed to use the microphone. They brushed aside fears that temporary men because of their lack of job security, would be easily manipulated by the employers and used to break traditional job organisation.

Each time temporary labour was mentioned there were loud hoots and boos. Only after the meeting had quieted down was a vote taken. To most it clearly went against temp. men. About 60% against. But the stewards saw it differently. They declared the vote in favour of taking temporary labour..... and promptly closed the meeting.

....NOW READ ON

fascists banned

In recent months many parts of Liverpool have been covered in fascist propaganda. The stickers and posters belong to the *National Front* and the *British Movement* - both fascist groups. OPPOSITION

The *Liverpool Anti-Fascist Committee* has recently been set up with the aim of combatting fascism on Merseyside, and to work with similar groups around the country.

At present the committee has delegates from *Big Flame*, the *International Marxist Group*, *International Socialism*, *Workers Fight* and *The Communist Federation of Britain*.

The Committee is to hold its first public meeting this Friday 8th June in the Strand Hotel (see enclosed leaflet for details). Everyone who is interested in fighting fascism should attend this meeting.

ST. GEORGES HALL

The National Front and the British Movement have been threatening to hold a public meeting themselves in Liverpool in June. Well known Nazi Colin Jordan was to be the main attraction.

They tried to get St. Georges Hall but were banned by the City Council. This is why their posters scream: "Lift the Liverpool Ban"

RUMOUR

Last week there was an unconfirmed rumour that the Ban had been lifted. This will be discussed at the Anti-Fascist meeting.

We cannot sit back and allow the fascists to gather strength COME TO THE MEETING: FIGHT FASCISM NOW.

TEMPS ON THE DOCKS

HOW WERE THE STEWARDS PERSUADED?

Recently the Sunday Times wrote: "....the dock unions, much to everybody's surprise, agreed to 500 men being employed temporarily."

Surprise is the right word. Given the obvious danger that the employers will play off tempmen against the rest, how did the bosses persuade the stewards to recommend? The following two examples give a hint.

(1) Writing in the stewards bulletin "The Merseysider," Mr. G. Kearns says:

"The industry needs time to find the cure for its illness, and the docker, for his part, should give his industry a breathing space, free from strife..... Both employer and employee should realise that to some extent they need each other..... In the final analysis, we are all our brothers keepers."

Tell that to the thousands of men who have been made redundant from the docks - many of whom now face life on the dole. Is the boss still keeping his "brother," in fact it's the old idea of team spirit - 'we're all in the same boat brothers'.

(2) Here's another example. On Monday three stewards went on a three day trip to Holland and Germany. All expenses paid by the MDHC. Why? In the words of one boss:

"We thought it would be a good opportunity for a team from our port to talk with our counter-parts across the channel." Very good idea! But what's this talk of a team again? It's a pretty strange team when some members have all the loot, and the power to make or break a man's livelihood.

But it's precisely this idea of team spirit which has led some people into voting for temporary labour. It's the idea that with a little co-operation on both sides everything will be fine.

LABOUR PARTY

The Labour Party also played an interesting role. While the port stewards committee was still considering temp labour, a group of local labour MPs met a group of stewards. We'll never know exactly what happened at that meeting. But three things seem likely:

(1) The MPs argued that any national dock fight to reopen the register could damage the Labour Party's chances. The Tories could take a strong law and order line and win useful support.

(2) If and when the Labour Party is returned to power it will make the tempman permanent.

(3) Alternatively and in addition, if and when labour is returned it will carry out its last election pledge to nationalise the docks. Most dockers will doubtless draw their own conclusions about labour (or any political party's) election pledges. And if you've got ideas about nationalisation, slip over and talk to the steelfmen at Shotton.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

The employers have been trying to increase productivity on the docks for some time.

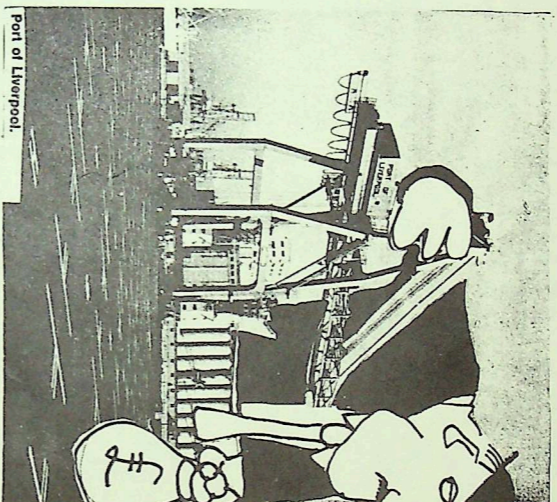
Early last month Mr. G. C. Bazeley, retiring chairman of the Liverpool Steam Ship Owners Association said of the labour shortage on Merseyside:

"Our answer is of course greater productivity with the labour we've got."

In other words - speed ups, new working practices, flexibility.

Their most recent attempt to get this was in March when they introduced time and motion men on the quay. These men were thrown off. But, now, when the employers try again, they've got a trump card - the supplementary registers.

The bosses will use them as the thin end of the productivity wedge. And it's no good saying the sons of dockers wouldn't be used in this way. They'll have to - or be replaced.



The way this will work has already been shown in Southampton, where temporary dockers carried out work in Liverpool now. They'll try the same

THOSE WHO VOTED TO ACCEPT TEMPORARY LABOUR HAVE HANDED THE EMPLOYERS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO INTRODUCE GREATER PRODUCTIVITY ON THE DOCKS.

It's not that we're against progress, or against making dock work easier or more efficient. But because, as things stand, the only person who benefits from it is the boss.

There's also going to be a tough fight in 12 months when quarantined work for the temps runs out. The stewards have said they'll fight to stop the men being kicked off.

Easily said. But they'll need to put up more of a fight than they did against phase II of the wage freeze. Because once again we'll be up against the government.

STATE

At the end of March John Peyton, Minister of Transport Industries (which includes the docks) said in a speech:

".....a readiness to resort to permanent recruitment could simply recreate the same situation all over again.....The fact that some ports have been ready enough to recruit to a supplementary register is, I think, greatly to be welcomed."

He was only emphasising what Maurice Macmillan, Tory Employment Secretary, had already said. In January this year, Macmillan commented:

"Assuming the process of technological change in cargo handling has not come to an end, it would seem to me sensible that the National Dock Labour Board should guide local Boards towards dealing with any proved labour shortages by recruitment to supplementary registers."

And since the government stake in the MDHC is about £34m it's likely to keep a particularly close eye on the Liverpool dockers.

ACTION

Our answer must be to:

CONTINUE THE FIGHT AGAINST PRODUCTIVITY DEALS

BEGIN ORGANISING A CAMPAIGN NOW, BOTH LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY TO MAKE ALL TEMP MEN (INCLUDING THOSE IN OTHER PORTS) PERMANENT.

We must be wary of leaving this to the stewards. On the two most important issues this year - wages and temporary labour they have completely failed to start or organise any campaign at all.

Rank and file organisation and solidarity have won in the past - it's the only force that will win in the future.

FORD - NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS

There are ways of extracting money from the Ford Motor Company. Last week Argentinian guerrillas persuaded the firm to hand over £400,000 worth of ambulances, food and equipment for hospitals in poor working class areas. In return, Fords were promised the safety of their executives. This was worth something, because a few days before the guerrillas had bumped off a manager and supervisor in the Buenos Aires plant.

Despite the thousands of Scousers who've served time there, there are two widespread myths about Fords on Merseyside. The first is about the pay - in fact, Fordworkers are the worst paid in the British car industry - and the second is about the strength of the shop floor organisation. Yet for the past 18 months, management has sacked workers and increased line speeds, almost at will. The stewards have exchanged their own security for a guarantee of peace on the shop floor.

Recently, two sections in the Paint, Trim and Assembly plant succeeded in re-instating two sacked men who expected to be dead ducks because their cases were 'in procedure.' If Fords had any intention of launching a blitz on the shop floor last month, as they did after the 10 week strike in 1971 these events must have discouraged them. We've re-printed below part of the leaflet Big Flame gave out at Halewood some days after the re-instatements.

Two men in the Paint, trim and assembly plant have been reinstated after Fords had tried hard to get them sacked. It's the first time since John Dillon was sacked in 1971 that we've managed to stop them picking off and sacking people when they feel like it.

It's an important victory, coming at a time when the press is saying Ford workers have had all the stuffing knocked out of them because the unions scheme for an all-out strike has been back heeled. How did it happen?

When the brother from the Hi Line was sacked just before Easter, he was at least the third man from the PTA to be victimised since the 3 day strike. But this time HIS WHOLE SECTION STOOD BY HIM and refused to let the case get lost in procedure. The Hi Line took into account what had happened to the two previous cases.

Once a grievance goes to procedure, no matter how many officials and convenors are making representations on your behalf, YOU'VE HAD IT.

People from the Hi Line made it clear they were TAKING ACTION THEMSELVES to prevent the sacking even if it did mean losing the Easter holiday pay.

The company got frightened- the workers were showing their strength and Fords could see power slipping away from the union and onto the shop floor. So they gave in and reinstated the sacked man. After the Easter break the Hi Line demanded full holiday pay. Rather than stop production Fords gave in on this one as well.

And while the Hi Lines were fighting, men from the Trim decided to take the same sort of action to reinstate one of their section who'd been sacked earlier.

At the time this case was lost in procedure, but as soon as action was threatened procedure was stopped and he too was reinstated. For the first time in nearly two years Halewood workers stopped a victimisation once they cases were in procedure.

So next time Fords send round a supervisor's bulletin saying that someone has been sacked, we'll know what we have to do. FOLLOW THE HI-LINE'S PROCEDURE NOT THE UNION-COMPANY ONE.

SUBSCRIBE TO BIG FLAME.

PLEASE SEND ME THE NEXT 10/20 ISSUES
I ENCLOSE 50p/£1

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to: **BIG FLAME, 22 WOLVERN HILL, L'POOL 13.**
220 5223

BIG BLAME

**Merseyside
SOCIALIST
Newspaper**
NO. 11. JULY. 4p.

1973

SLDB. 25378

THE MYTH OF WORKERS PARTICIPATION page 4
OPPOSITION TO ARMY RECRUITMENT page 5
WORKERS' RIOT AT FORD, AUSTRALIA page 6

13 arrested but: FASCISTS DRIVEN OFF

A proposed meeting at the Pier Head Liverpool, of the fascist 'British Movement' group to be addressed by their fuhrer Colin Jordan, was broken up by a 500 strong anti-fascist demonstration.

The police were there in numbers and clearly seemed intent on allowing Jordan to speak. Although they were unsuccessful in this aim, due to the strength of the counter-demonstration, the police arrested 13 of the demonstrators opposing Jordan.

After the incidents at the Pierhead there was a march to the Main Bridewell in Cheapside where those arrested had been taken. Many of the marchers stayed outside the police station until all 13 were released, bailed to appear in court the following Wednesday.

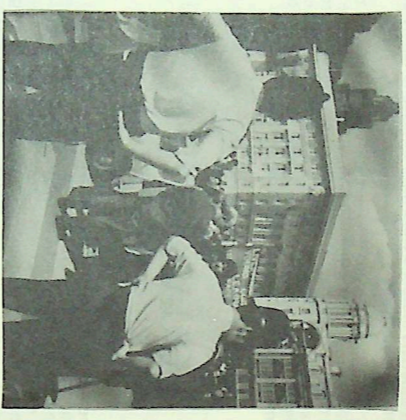


Swift Response

There had been little time to organize against the fascists, since they had kept their plans secret until the very last moment. However, largely due to the efforts of the Liverpool Anti-Fascist Committee, left-wing groups, organizations and black people from Liverpool & workers and tenants turned out to face the fascist threat.

Jordan was scheduled to speak at the Pierhead at 3 p.m., but by 2 p.m. it was clear that the counter-demonstrators had scored an important victory.

Instead of holding another march away from the fascists as has happened all too often in similar situations in other towns, they had literally taken the fascist's ground away.



Jordan (centre) protected by the long arm of the law.

Offensive Taken

There was not a fascist in sight. The counter-demonstrators filled the meeting area. They took the offensive, and held their own meeting.

Around 2.30 the first fascists were spotted. A group of half a dozen openly wearing brown-shirt uniforms.

The crowd spontaneously surge over. A brief scuffle. The fascists ran. A huge Union Jack was torn to bits. Then the rumour went round that Colin Jordan had gone to nearby Derby Square. The crowd ran through the streets to the Square. Jordan was not in sight.

The loudspeaker van heading the march announced that they would pursue Jordan wherever he went. He would not speak in Liverpool.

Jordan Appears

Then the march returned to the Pierhead. And there was Jordan, just setting up his rostrum.

His entire audience consisted of 5 of his followers - and a ring of 50 police.

The counter-demonstration surrounded him. He tried once to begin his speech, but his words were drowned by the chants and jeers.

He stood there, not sure what to do, visibly shaken by the strength and power of the opposition, trying to hide behind his sunglasses.

"You know why he wears sunglasses?" remarked a black demonstrator, "it's because he cant stand colour."

Those sunglasses were soon lying smashed on the ground. Some of the demonstrators broke through the police cordon. The police reacted with ferocious brutality. Night-sticks were swung, demonstrators felled, and several arrested.

Continued on Page 2

COURT VICTORY so far

With 11 of the 13 cases arising from the Pierhead arrests dealt with as we go to press, there has been an almost complete victory for the anti-fascist case so far.

But the two most serious cases have been adjourned until until later this month, these two men both face charges of assault on the police, and heavy sentences cannot be ruled out.

Of the eleven who have already appeared, one (charged with threatening behaviour) was acquitted, and seven had the cases against them dropped, but were bound over to keep the peace for a year. This is not legally speaking a conviction.

All but one of these were charged with threatening behaviour, and the cases were dropped when it was shown that the police were wrong in not preventing what constituted an illegal meeting by Jordan.

The three others appearing before the court on charges of obstruction were each fined £10.

All attention now falls on the two men facing the more serious charges. One of them, Tony Boyle from Kirkby, continuing his case on Friday 20th July, charged with assault, possession of an offensive weapon and threatening behaviour.

A defence Committee has been formed to pay the fines that arise from all these cases.
Donations are urgently required
Send money to:
Defence Fund,
c/o Progressive Books,
Upper, Duke Street,
LIVERPOOL 1.

CROXTETH TENANTS FIGHT BACK



Two families of squatters are "law abiding people driven by desperation to do what they did".

The Observation comes from Liverpool Judge, T. H. Pigot, who nevertheless went on to grant eviction orders against two Croxteth families who have been squatting in empty corporation houses for a month.

During the hearing, at Liverpool County Court, the city's Housing Department came in for some hard words from the good judge. "With a little more humanity these families might never have been in court," he said, concluding that the treatment of the families was a "bad breach of public relations."

The families have said that they will not return to their old flats in Croxteth under any conditions. One family has won a stay of execution and forced Liverpool's town clerk to warn them before taking further action.

(cont. page 2)

Who are the British Movement?

The British Movement are an extreme right wing fascist political organisation, which split off from the National Front, the other main fascist group in Britain.

Small in size, the British Movement has recently attempted to revive itself through the campaign for repatriating non-white immigrants.

Their activities in Liverpool have consisted of sticking up racist posters. Partly due to the efforts of the Liverpool Trades Council, they were banned from using public buildings for their meetings in the city.

This prevented them holding a proposed meeting in St. Georges Hall starring their leader, Colin Jordan. The Pierhead meeting was supposed to replace this.

Jordan has been photographed in nazi regalia and is an open admirer of Hitler. In 1962 he was jailed for organising a para-military organisation that bombed several synagogues in London.

The British Movement have attempted to extend their racist policies by claiming to be against capitalism and for the "common man".

But their true aim is to replace the present form of capitalism with a nazi-style dictatorship where all working class organisations and militants would be smashed, as they were in pre-war Germany.

UP



AGAINST THE LAW

The lead story in the last issue of Big Flame was on the ruling class repression of working class militants, usually through the courts.

The position this month is no different. In Liverpool we have the eviction proceedings going on against tenants in Croxteth and Kirkby, as well as the proceedings against those arrested on the anti-fascist demonstration (reported elsewhere in the paper).

But outside of Merseyside, there are at least 5 important political trials going on at present. Below we summarize the latest developments in these and other examples of socialist and militants finding themselves "up against the law".

There may be other cases we haven't heard about. (If you know of any, send us the information).

BUILDING WORKERS

SHREWSBURY 24 certainly the most serious political trial is the one concerning the 24 building workers charged with conspiracy arising out of last summer's building strike.

Shrewsbury magistrates decided last month that the trial of the 24 should go to the Crown Court. This will probably take place in Shrewsbury some time in October.

Meanwhile, five of these 24 men, plus 3 other building workers, are appearing at MOLD Crown Court, charged with causing an affray when picketing the Granby Bay dam site in Wales during the building strike. 200 police stood shoulder to shoulder outside the court, but 600 demonstrators turned up on the first day of the trial to support the eight men in the dock.

They voted for a march from London to Shrewsbury over the 10 days before the main case opens in October.

On 12th July, the eight building workers were acquitted of the serious charges of causing an affray and intimidation, but were fined a total of £195 on other charges.

This represents a great victory, to be carried to the Shrewsbury trial in October. Meanwhile the trial of three more building workers on similar charges opens at Mold.

BIRMINGHAM: On Monday, June 25th five building workers and 3 members of an ATV news team appeared in court accused of conspiracy to trespass and unlawful assembly. They were remanded on bail until July 23.

This arises out of the occupation of a leading 'lump labour' agency, SOS Employment Bureau, in Birmingham in February. At the hearing were 300 demonstrators, including building workers and car workers, and many extra police were on duty.

COVENTRY: Five of the seven men awaiting trial on bomb conspiracy charges have been refused bail, and are being remanded in custody.

Two face further charges of taking part in the control and management of the Coventry Irish Republican Army unit. They will appear in Birmingham, probably in September.

LONDON: The ten Irish people seven men and three women arrested after the car bomb explosions in London in March, are still being held in jail awaiting trial. There are reports of ill-treatment and withdrawal of privileges in the jails where they are being held.

Following the turning down of 4 of the 5 appeals, all five people convicted in the 'Angry Brigade' trials now face sentences of 10 years for conspiracy.

Hilary Creek, one of the five, is seriously ill with 'anorexia nervosa' - inability to eat due to nervous stress. Due to pressure brought by the Defence Committee, it now seems that she will at last be moved to a hospital.

Campaigns are being fought to defend all the comrades in these trials. We do not have the room to print the addresses of all the defence funds, but will gladly supply any on request.

THE CROXTETH STORY

cont. from page 1.

Meanwhile long-standing dissatisfaction with housing conditions in Croxteth is forcing other flat dwellers to consider direct action. Many of the three story blocks of flats are over-run with rats, and others are damp. Repairs to the buildings are seldom, if ever, carried out. Several families have threatened to join the squatters unless something is done, and a general campaign to demand that the Corporation re-house families from the flats in empty council houses on the estate, is spreading. Residents in at least 12 blocks of flats are interested.

When two families of squatters appeared in court they were backed by about 30 to 40 friends and supporters who packed the court room and the corridor outside.

THEIR CASE

The squatters case was simple. On the one hand Croxteth had large numbers of empty and boarded up houses. These, said the Corp'y, were for slum clearance families from the inner city. But in many cases houses have been empty for months, and sometimes years, on end. While they are empty many are wrecked by local kids looking for something to do. The local residents have concluded that frequently the Corp'y uses slum clearance as an excuse for bureaucratic incompetence.

On the other hand both families of squatters desperately wanted houses. They were living in flats in the Falmouth Road area. The flats were too small. The kids had no where to play. One of the families had seen one of it's kids fall over a third floor balcony 5½ years ago, and only days before the squatters moved, a child from the second family also went over a balcony.

So on Friday June 8th they moved. The Ivines with three children to Redruth Road, and the Abbotts, with five kids, to Cubert Road. Almost as soon as the Abbotts moved in they were visited by the police, and then kept under close watch by passing patrols. Finally after several weeks the families received summonses from the County Court.

LOCAL SUPPORT

The future of the families now depends on how much local support they can get. It has nothing to do with how quickly the Housing Department can restore it's public relations image. Nor is it basically to do with bureaucratic incompetence, it's money. Homes stay empty because there aren't enough corporation workmen to repair and restore them. The Corp'y says it can't afford to employ more. But more important, not enough new homes are built. (And when they are they're built on the cheap and become slums within ten years or so) Again ... money.

Yet while thousands of Liverpool families live in "slums", two large brand new Luxury Hotels have opened in the city centre. There's more profit in hotels, so that's where the money goes.

While this system of priorities continues families will always be living in stinking, damp, rat infested homes.

A Croxteth Action Committee has been set up to support the squatters, but so far it has adopted a wait and see attitude before doing anything. This is not an attitude likely to whip up much of a following. In the meantime spontaneous action is growing.

A similar situation has developed on the Northwood Estate in Kirkby, where flat dwellers are demanding out. A Northwood flat dwellers association has been formed to organise the campaign.

POLICE SUPPORT FOR FASCISTS

cont. from page 1.

Many people saw one arrested man being beaten up by a sergeant in a police jeep.

Now the crowd was angry. Jordan said he would stay until he could make his speech. The crowd assured him he would not. Still the police protected him.

At last the police admitted defeat and saw they must get Jordan away before he was thrown in the Mersey. He was led to waiting police jeep, and showered with tomatoes for his trouble.

The fascist's equipment van was driven away and attacked, it's back windows were smashed. The police moved in. More arrests.

MARCH ON POLICE STATION

13 demonstrators had been taken by the police. The rest at once marched on the police station to show solidarity with the 13 and to show that they did not see the police's role as neutral.

Outside the cells they sang and chanted, and waited for their friends to be bailed out.

Two families decided they couldn't wait, however about a month ago they squatted, one in a house in Thistley Hey Road, the other in a masonette in Cherryfield Cres.

So far no move has been made against them, they have been promised backing by local tenants groups, in particular the Tower Hill Estate Action Group.

The family in Cherryfield Cres, have fooled the rent man into allowing them to pay a weeks rent and despite threats that they would be evicted a week ago, are still there.

In Thistley Hey Road there was complete confusion when the family moved in. They turned out to have squatted in a police house - with a bevy of bussy's living next door - but the police were reluctant to take responsibility. They were in the process of handing the house over to the corporation, and they also wanted to hand over the head-ache of the squatters. The Corp'y has been equally reluctant to take responsibility. So the family remain, and no housing authority has even been in touch with them.

RENTS TO DOUBLE?

The first decision of the new North West Rent Scrutiny Board is to double council house rents in the Manchester and Oldham area. This board, set up by the government as part of the Housing Finance Act has decided the 'fair rent' for council tenants in Lees (near Oldham) should be £2 more per week than it is. In other estates in the Manchester area 2 - bedroomed houses will cost £2,25p more to rent per week. Rents on some houses are expected to be more than trebled.

So, in case it hasn't sunk in - the £1 increase last October was just the beginning. When the Rent Scrutiny Board turns its beady eyes on Merseyside we're going to be hit by similar increases.

But before the scrutiny board makes any decisions about rents on Merseyside they want the rent strikes and uproar after the last increases to fade a little more from peoples' memories. Liverpool Corporation have done their best to keep every thing quiet over the past few months. When the Labour controlled Council were trying to win votes for the elections in the spring they postponed the April rent rises. Then they sent out letters saying everything was OK. The rent went up again - the 'fair rent' is fixed.

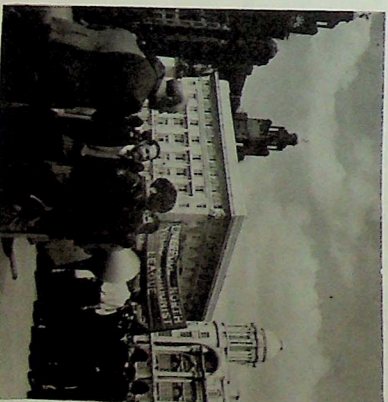
But the final decision lies with the Rent Scrutiny Board.

With only Tower Hill and a few isolated people still on rent strike who's going to stop the government putting up the rents like they intend to in Oldham - it certainly wont be the Corporation.

Tower Hill tenants haven't paid any rent or rates since October. Their answer to the so-called 'fair rent' increases.

Granby Summer Festival

July 28 ... Sept 1
opening event
Carnival parade through the streets of Granby.
Saturday, 28th July ... 1.30 p.m. ... from the Falkner Place Adventure Playground.
Festival Office
1 a Baconsfeld Street,
Liverpool 8
728 7262



Jordan with massed supporters!

FIGHT GOES ON

The fight against fascism on Merseyside goes on.

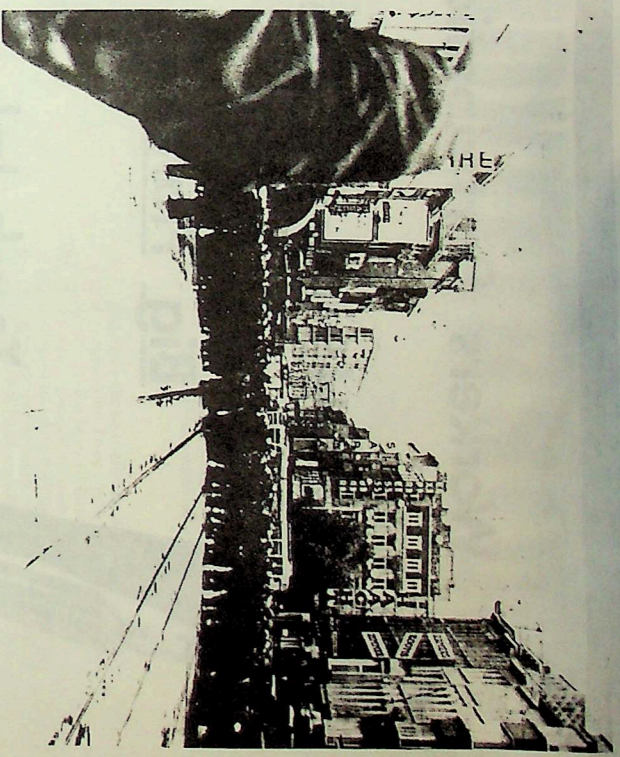
It is rumoured that the National Front plan to hold a demonstration in Kirkby in August.

The Liverpool Anti-Fascist Committee is organising against this.

BELGIUM:

DOCK STRIKE

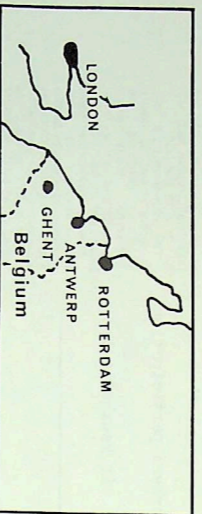
THE ONE THEY WOULDN'T TELL US ABOUT



The afternoon of May 15th was the same as any afternoon along Liverpool's Dock Road. The Dockers were sipping their ale, whilst the bosses worried about their profits.

But, that same afternoon in Belgium a Docker was shot during one of the many demonstrations in the Belgian dock strike. The strike lasted for two months and was notable for many things not the least of which was a total international press blackout.

Antwerp and Ghent, employing 13,500 dockers, have an international reputation for efficiency - or as one Antwerp docker put it: "We often talk with foreign sailors and they are always surprised by the amount of work which is squeezed out of the Port. Antwerp has a turnaround time for ships that is almost three times as fast as that in Rotterdam, Europe's biggest Port.



Liverpool does not have to worry about a world wide reputation for quick turnaround, but the similarities between Antwerp and Liverpool are many. Liverpool's bosses are constantly pushing for higher productivity and faster turnaround. And whilst 50% of Antwerp's dockers are casual, all those in Liverpool are permanent; trade in Britain is increasingly moving to the unregistered ports which employ casual labour, and, in Liverpool, there are now temporary dockers - even if they are dockers sons. Above all the two situations are similar because the Belgian dock strike was not just about a set of demands; it was also about a fear - the fear of men losing their jobs through productivity deals and containerisation.

On a broader level the similarities between Antwerp and Liverpool, Belgium and Britain, are many. Similarly to the British Unions the Belgians have just signed a 2 year agreement with the Government guaranteeing 'social peace' in exchange for a meagre pay rise which after 6 months had disappeared with inflation. As in Britain the Belgian bosses are increasingly using repressive legislation such as the banning of unofficial strikes. This legislation is backed up by an obvious willingness to use the police and the paramilitary special police to smash any attempts by the working class to organise itself. Again, as in Britain the Belgian communist party is the only politically organised section of the dockers. Making militant noises the communist party only served to divert the struggle away from the true interests of the men, by wasting a lot of valuable energy in trying to get union recognition for the strike - recognition by a union that had consistently tried to sabotage the dockers struggle - but let the story speak for itself.

April 6th The 1,500 Ghent dockers suddenly strike, the unions and local communist party call for a token 24 hour strike. This is rejected by the men.

April 9th The 12,000 Antwerp dockers come out on strike. The unions start rumours of 'professional agitators'

April 10th 4 demands are made:

1. £1 a day wage rise.
 2. Monthly payment.
 3. A three man increase in gang size.
 4. Permanent contracts for all.
- The Union immediately responds by declaring the strike illegal (by not making it official) and withholding strike pay.

April 13th The mayor of Antwerp forbids any gathering of more than 5 in the dock area where the union offices are. The whole area is ringed by the police and the army, only schools being allowed free access. People describe it as a repeat of the Nazi occupation during the war.

April 14th The employers start re-routing ships.
April 18th 3,000 demonstrate in Antwerp demanding strike pay and the right to strike.

May 5th The employers make a pathetic offer in exchange for an immediate return to work. The offer and the Judds Union leaders who put the offer to the men, are rejected.

May 10th 3,500 dockers demanding strike pay demonstrate at the Union offices. The demonstration led by 200 women and kids is attacked by the Police. The women march on the town hall and demand to see the mayor; he says he will receive a delegation of 3 - the women reply "You come out, you've got to talk with us all. We all have to feed our kids".

May 15th The dockers hold another demonstration, despite them being banned. The police open fire and Franz Wuytack, a member of the strike committee is shot and taken under guard to hospital. The same evening Wuytack addresses 2000 students in Brussels, having been smuggled out of hospital by dockers dressed as Policemen and Orderlies.



May 16th The Army, using scabs and young kids, start unloading the ships.

May 18th A big solidarity meeting is held attended by housewives, students, miners, and Ford workers. A docker from Amsterdam stresses the need for organising on an international scale in order to combat the increasingly international nature of Capitalism. Over 2000 of Antwerp's dockers are non-Belgian, mostly Moroccan. By their solidarity with their workmates throughout the dock strike, they are no longer seen as cheap immigrant labour - they are part of the Belgian working class.

May 20th The union says it will expel any members taking part in solidarity action with the dockers.

May 24th The dockers wives demonstrate again. One of the women injured in the last demonstration insists on coming along - in her wheelchair.

May 28th 500 police and firemen demonstrate demanding overtime pay. The dockers say they will support them if they put down their truncheons.

June 4th The communist party hold a secret hall in Antwerp. Only those who have been on strike from the very beginning are allowed to vote i.e. only the poorest and most hungry. The police prevent many militants from getting to the voting area in time - despite this 52% vote to stay out. The strike leaders say that sabotage is the next step.

June 9th However, five days late, after over 2 months of of living on next to nothing, the dockers are starved back to work.

Victory in defeat

The Belgian dockers won nothing, they went back to work having achieved none of their demands, but they still won. They won because in two months they had learnt who their friends were and where there real interests lay. The strike was a success because it proved to them that they could organise themselves and that it could be done democratically. It was a success because many dockers wives got really involved in the strike and added another dimension to the struggle. It was a success because of the support that came pouring in from individuals and organisations; money like the women who donated her national lottery winnings to the strike fund - and solidarity like the farmer who drove a flock of sheep into a factory bringing production to a standstill.

Women act

Every day, during the strike, there were 2 mass assemblies where the strike committee reported back and received fresh instructions, there were also several sub-committees e.g. finance propaganda, women, and even a special committee to organise the persecution of scabs. Much of the propaganda and agitation was done by the women, the women had a leading role in the strike, because they had never had any contact with unions or 'institutions'. The women were often doing things the men wouldn't dream of doing, for instance instead of just leafeting outside a factory they would walk right in and hold a meeting on the shop floor. The women demanded the right to vote at dockers meetings - whether they are striking or not it is our affair as well. We have to keep the house and bring up the kids..... We must get active as women and fight for our rights. Sitting home and waiting, watching T.V. gets us nowhere.....we women have to get out on the street. Despite prejudice - if the wife got injured in a demonstration who would look after the kids?!! The women organised themselves and became part of the struggle.

Nationally, much propaganda and agitation was done by the 'workers committees' these are groups of workers organised democratically and working outside of the unions, they grew out of the miners strikes of 1966 and 70. These committees saw the docks strike as part of the general struggle against capitalism. In other words, the docks struggle was their struggle. Perhaps it was the workers committees that the union official was referring to when he said "choose now, either the adventurers and agitators with no solution, or your own interests which are defended by your union". The dockers chose!

The dockers were not the only ones to make that choice, for the dock strike signalled a reawakening of the Belgian working class. At the huge Cokeville engineering complex near Liege, the workers who are on strike for a pay rise, have shown that they have learnt from the dock strike, rejecting union offers of token stoppages, they are dustily organising themselves and the rest of Lieges 40,000 engineering workers, for an all out strike.

- SOURCES:
1. Peoples News Service (Britain)
 2. Lotta Continua (the struggle goes on) Italian Left-wing Newspaper
 3. Wir Wollen Alles (We want everything) German Left-wing Newspaper
 4. A.P.L. Left-wing News Service (France)

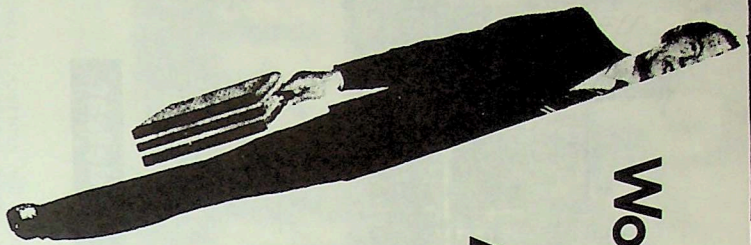


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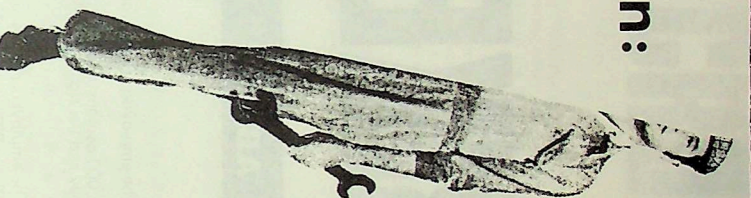


Workers Participation:

And Now For The

Big Flame

Teach-In!



It went on for four days. It was the Daily Mirror's teach-in on worker participation. We never knew they cared. And it seems they're not the only ones concerned about how bored and frustrated we get at work. The TUC and the Confederation of British Industry have both written reports on participation, The Labour Party and the Government are still working theirs out. What have we done to deserve all this attention? Are our masters going soft in their old age?

More likely they're scared. The Mirror explained why -

"The gulf between US and THEM, which snarks up productivity, must be banished for the good of all."

And "What we are talking about is the future of the industrial system as we know it today...."

How can the future of capitalism be assured then? Through a new spirit of cooperation between workers and bosses and by "giving the people who do the work a greater say and greater responsibility in how that work is done."

Although, as the Mirror points out, there are dangers that this can go too far. "Participation should not mean that workers can DICTATE to management any more than it should mean that management can forever DICTATE to workers."

It's Spreading

To be fair to the Daily Mirror, the obsession with worker participation is a madness shared by many in Europe. The Common Market is suggesting that in every company with more than 500 employees, there should be a supervisory board over the management board, one third of whose members would be workers' representatives. That's been the set up in Volkswagen and many other big West German firms for over twenty years. Similar schemes are on the way in Sweden and Denmark.

May 1968

It's a striking fact that the enthusiasm for worker participation is exclusively on the part of some of the employers union leaders and politicians. Workers don't seem very interested in the idea. It's not a new idea - employers have always been disturbed by their workers' disloyalty - but it got a new start in France in May 1968.

One day the employers awoke to a general strike involving over 10 millions, hundreds of factories and offices and schools occupied, the police embroiled in street battles all over France, and the politicians and trade union leaders seemingly incapable of controlling the upsurge. The more far-sighted members of the ruling class suddenly realised that cars, fridges and wage rises were no longer enough to guarantee the workers' loyalties. While the barricades were still being dismantled and the settlement negotiated by the trade unions Pompidou, the Prime Minister, dawningly suggested that the way to avoid a more dangerous repeat of the May Events was by giving workers more say in the enterprise.

1968 was a warning to the employers everywhere. Their more intelligent representatives can see clearly that in the long term they must either win the cooperation of the working class, or else they will have to impose a solution, by force - as in Germany under Hitler, or the Greece of the Colonels.

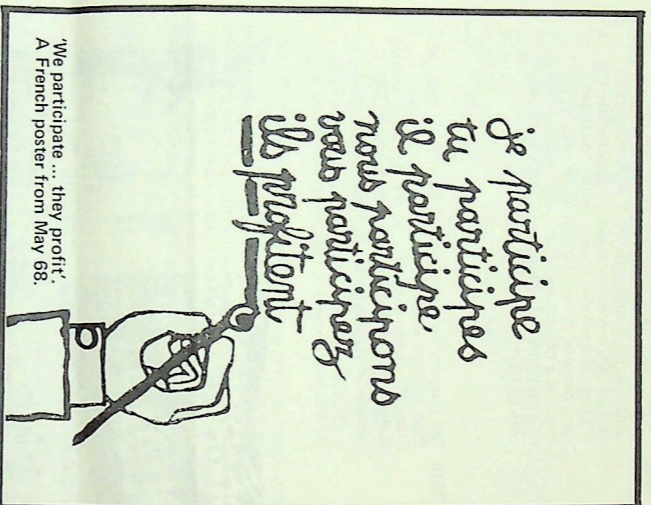
Under the pressure of the profits squeeze, Labour and Tory governments in this country have tried and found unsatisfactory.

• *Legal action against workers organisations*

• *Inflation to destroy wage gains*

• *Planned unemployment to undermine militancy*

Now the Tories are compelled to put their hopes in the next round of talks with the TUC. Both sides are eager to defuse the situation and avoid a confrontation. Maybe the focus of discussion can be shifted away from inflation and wage increases to ... worker participation. It makes sense. Government, Opposition (Labour and Liberal), TUC and CBI are all committed to it in principle. It's biggest advantage is that it costs nothing.



"We participate ... they profit", A French poster from May 68.

Worker Participation in Britain

The trouble is that participation schemes tend to sound empty. In fact, a close search of the Mirror's Teach-In reveals a tremendous vagueness about specific proposals. There are good reasons for this.

Participation schemes in Britain have tended to be introduced where the workers are badly organised, usually by paternalist employers like Gadbury and Pilkington who were wise enough to anticipate trouble. But the real pressure on the bosses comes from the most militant work forces, where worker participation is just a joke or where the rank and file have shown their disgust with their union officials or stewards involvement in it. These are the places where participation schemes aren't likely to cut any ice. A brief look at some of the types of participation shows that there is nothing in them for us.

Take profit dividing, for example. The author of a book on the John Lewis Partnership - the national chain of department stores that includes George Henry Lee in Liverpool - found that virtually the only people who took the partnership idea seriously were the management. The shop workers were unimpressed by profit sharing, wanting better wages than the usual retail trade low.ICI runs a similar scheme but gives the proceeds in the form of shares. As a way of ensuring the loyalty of the older workers especially, it has two major advantages. First, it's cheap. Second, there is absolutely no possibility that the workers could ever accumulate enough shares to win control of the Company.

Less common in Britain is the Worker Director. There are a few on the board of the British Steel Corporation. We don't know whether they agree with the thousands of redundancies in the industry, but it doesn't really matter because they are powerless to do anything even if they did. Or, as the Sunday Times put it:

"And if there are British managers who think that workers on the board is some devilish foreign idea foisted on them in order to bring to an end the world as they know it, they might reflect on the calm way in which it is being accepted by their counterparts in Sweden and the Netherlands. For in these countries they have begun to realise that board decisions taken with the implicit support of the workers' own representatives will carry more weight with the workers themselves."

There is another older tradition in Britain, of participation: the joint committee which has given many a shop steward or union official what Edward Heath calls "a wider understanding, and a sense of responsibility". To put it another way, membership of a committee with responsibility for running

some unimportant aspect of a firm is one of the best ways of teaching a worker to see things management's way. This doesn't fit in with the popular view in the press of the steward as an agitator, but it is borne out by studies of labour relations in the British car industry which concluded that:

"There have been few well documented situations where stewards might justly be accused of manufacturing grievances rather than managing them."

and "The senior stewards, like the full-time union officials before them, are forced to assume something of the role of buffer between the employer and the operatives...."

Participation or Power

Maybe, after all, that's what worker participation is all about - finding a means for controlling the shop floor which won't be rejected by them. Unfortunately for the participation prophets, the last few years has seen a long series of bitter struggles all over Europe in which the workers anger has been directed as much against the Union as the boss.

The message from those conflicts must be worrying for the employers. The workers seem to be saying they want more money for working less. They want things which are outside the power of the boss - decent homes and schools and an environment free from industrial pollution. How can such demands be satisfied as long as the manspining of the bosses' economy is the constant thirst for profit?

They can't. These are impossible demands - for capitalism. Participation for the workers is only the workers' best slogan - from the point of view of the bosses. It's a cheap way of winning peace in industry. Rather like the vote. After a century of polls and ballot boxes, the working class is no nearer to winning power, although our representatives in the Labour Party certainly participate.

Incidentally, nowhere in the Mirror series was there any mention of participation in the production of the Mirror by its own print workers. Can anyone think why?!

A CAR PLANT'S TROUBLE-TEAM

A TROUBLE-SHOOTING TEAMWARDS boss has formed in a bid to bring a new era of peace to a strike-torn car plant. The plant is at the slightest hint of industrial trouble and try to nip it in the bud. To the plant to bring a halt to the strike. The 290,000,000 plant was thrashed out at a four-hour meeting last night. The team consists of 6,000 engineering workers at the giant Vauxhall factory at Ellesmere Port, Cheshire.

The team is headed by American Bob Walker, fed up with the constant stoppages, and wanted that would be artificially shortened.

A TIMELY OCCUPATION

Workers at France's largest watch-making factory near Besancon have taken it over and are selling its stocks cheaply to pay their wages.

All too often in the past militant factory occupations have been turned into passive and self-defeating work-ins.

But in this case, the workers realized that, since they made them, they had more right to the watches than the management.

Now they are selling off the watches, and waiting for the management to give in.

The occupation began on June 10th when management announced that wages would not be paid. Immediately the workers took over, and plans for mass dismissals were discovered in the company offices.

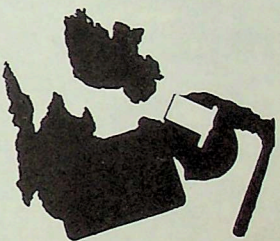
After riot police smashed up a 10,000 strong solidarity demonstration on June 18th the workers decided to sell the watches, but only to individuals or known organizations.

Cutting out the middleman, the watches sell for half the price.

Local peasants have been taking free food to the occupation and the workers have demonstrated at the Tour de France cycle race when it passed nearby the factory.

MERSEYSIDE ISSUE
LIBERTARIAN WOMEN'S
NETWORK NEWSHEET JULY '73
available from
22, Woburn Hill,
Liverpool 13. 4p

Opposition To Recruitment



Marseyside is to be a major target for the Army's new recruitment drive. Areas like this with high unemployment are cynically exploited as sources of cannon fodder. They are already parking their recruiting vans on the forecourts of Texaco garages, where you get free "Regimental Badges". The schools in particular, are due for military visits as term ends soon and the jobless leavers will begin to despair. Just the chance to sell the old line about "good pay, good times" etc and promise you can use the boot first and gun, as much as you like, and all legally!

They don't tell about over 200 dead soldiers and hundreds wounded in Northern Ireland. Or about 17 years old Jimmy Jones from Kirkby, killed after only 4 weeks in uniform! Ever wondered why so few officers and NCO's are killed while so many casualties are really young. Could it be that they always put the most inexperienced "squaddies" up front on patrol?

trades councils act

There's little wonder that recruitment figures have recently dropped by half. Or that a soldiers' mother, Mrs Peggy Chaston, took only a few weeks to collect 42,000 names on a "bring the boys home" petition, significantly in the Reading-Aldershot area. Meanwhile Werrityr Tydfil town council has banned recruiting teams from their area. In the North-East, south Shields Trades Council has started to campaign about them. Its President stated "Young working class lads are being exploited before they really know what it's all about. They are being used in situations like N. Ireland to suppress members of their own working class. We will ask young potential recruits the question 'when your officers order you to fire on your own people - in what direction will you point your rifle?' Recently the banner of the Oxford Trades Council, led a march in Reading protesting at the march past of a local regiment, off to the Six Counties.

But the widespread feeling against the Army's use of young people in Ireland won't have much practical effect unless it is organised and active. Petitions can't do much. The State has got its own reasons for suppressing the revolt in the Six Counties and they are nothing to do with saving the lives of soldiers in either the British or the Irish Republican Army. Recently several local left-wing groups formed the Marseyside Irish Solidarity



CAR WORKERS IN EURO LINK-UP

In April of this year the first planned series of conferences of car workers from all the major car factories of Europe was held in Paris.

Represented were workers from Ford, Alfa-Romeo, Fiat, Renault, Citroen, Volkswagen, Opel, BMW and Sauber, as well as members of various political groups - Revolutionarer Kampf, Proletarisches Front and Arbeiterstache from Germany Klassen Kampf from Switzerland, Potere Operaio from Italy, Gaulle Proletarisme from France and Big Flame from Britain. The attempts of the bosses to create a single European Capitalist State which have been speeded up with Britains entry into the Common Market was a major talking point.

As one worker from Fiat said " what the bosses do against us we must naturally do against them." So if European Capitalists are coming together, European workers must do the same.

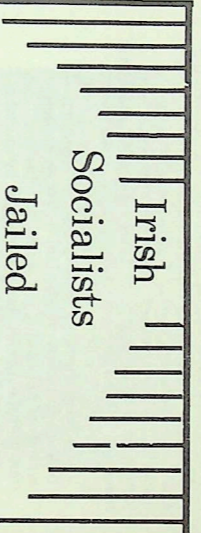
The bosses of the car firms were amongst those pushing hardest for British entry into the Common Market. For many years the American multi-nationals - General Motors, Ford and Chrysler - have been unifying their European operations, to play off the workers of one country against another.

Halewood Blackmail

Henry Ford has been a master at this. His threats to switch investment away from Britain to other parts of Europe (announced a few weeks before ever Ford pay claim) have become a standing joke. But someone the threats are serious, like the way in which Halewood's transmission plant has been blackmailed into accepting speed-ups and under-manning because of continuing rumours that Ford intend to transfer transmission production to Germany.

When Henry Ford announced the opening of a new plant in Spain every British Ford worker began to have doubts for

Committee to campaign for an end to recruiting in this area, the release of all Irish political prisoners and for the withdrawal of troops from Ireland. It recognises the practical value of such a campaign to the troops in terms of their own safety. But that is not the only reason. If we are seriously prepared to fight Tory control in this country we must be prepared to prevent them controlling another. Make no mistake! Army occupation and martial law are established weapons of British capitalism. The sooner the State finds it cannot get away with it the better, for the Irish working-class, and ourselves!



Two leading Irish socialists, Michael Farrell and Tony Conahan have been jailed for 8 months and 5 months and their appeal turned down. Their "crime" was causing a breach of the peace on a demonstration which Farrell addressed in Belfast last February. The sentences are heavy, but not heavy enough to get them political prisoner status, as then they would be placed among Republican prisoners. Instead both soon expect to be jailed alongside the short-term loyalist prisoners, men violently opposed to left-wing ideas and who have openly threatened them.

Such treatment by the authorities is no surprise. It is well known in the North that the Royal Ulster Constabulary had promised to get Farrell. Both men were singled out for punishment as they are member of People's Democracy, a socialist organisation based in Belfast but with other branches in the six counties, Dublin and London. The case shows two things. First, that a left-wing march, called to protest against sectarian killings was harassed, halted and members arrested by the Army and police- while many marches by armed, uniformed Loyalists are allowed free passage through the city. Second, that the State is determined to crush ANY opposition to its plans in Ireland, not just from armed groups like the Provisionals but from other socialist organisations that offer a left-wing solution.

the future of Ford in Britain. British Leyland, too, is intensifying its operations in low wage areas as one of its attempts to secure its uncertain future, but in the long term the last British car firm will probably only survive by amalgamating with other European producers.

Senior Shop Stewards from the British Ford plants have been meeting with their opposite numbers from Germany and Belgium for some time now and have recently decided to set up a permanent European Committee. They say they will press for joint demands on hours; holidays and conditions, but not on pay.

Its all very well to talk of fighting for parity inside the British car industry, but the fight has to be carried on all over Europe. When Ford moved to Liverpool they tried to pay Halewood workers less than Dagenham workers - that move was smashed, but in opening up a new plant in Spain Ford are aiding the Fascist oppression in that country to get cheap labour.

Multi-Nationals

To stop the multi-national car firms playing one country's workers off against another, the workers have to work towards unity themselves. The Joint Shop Stewards Committee looks like a small step in the right direction, but it is difficult to have faith in the convenors who ran away from the fight against the Feeze.

It became clear during the car workers conference in Paris that the bosses throughout Europe were pursuing the same strategies and imposing the same conditions of work.

The assembly line is the same slave driver where ever it operates and workers throughout Europe have been fighting it in similar ways - sabotage is common in every European

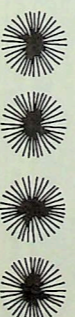
FRENCH SOCIALISTS BANNED

The Ligue Communiste, an organisation of revolutionary socialists have been banned by the French government. This follows massive clashes in Paris between heavily-armed riot-police and left-wing demonstrators.

The Ligue Communiste helped organise the demonstration, on 22 June, against a mass meeting held by the Ordre Nouveau, the main French fascist group.

Police moved in to protect the meeting, but in unusually small numbers - it seems that the government wanted some police martyrs before acting against the left-wing. Many police feel they were set up for sacrifice to justify the banning. Seventy policemen ended up in hospital. Seven hours later the Ligue offices were raided and 25 members arrested. Alain Krivine, the Ligue's presidential candidate in 1969 was charged under the 'anti rioters law'.

The fascist Ordre Nouveau has recently increased its propaganda and armed attacks on strike pickets (such as at Peugeot in April) and immigrant workers. Their main role is to stir up race hatred and try to benefit from it. They have also been banned and a leader arrested but they have not been subject to the same police raids and harassment as the Ligue Communiste. The Ordre Nouveau (while called "Occident") was banned in 1969 following its grenade attack on Paris students. But it just changed its name and re-emerged.



car plant and absenteeism, as a "protest" against work, is at a high level every where. Workers from Turin explained that on a 'normal' day 14% of Fiat workers signed on for Company sick pay, and after the recent occupation there this has risen to 28%.

German workers reported similar levels of absenteeism at BMW and VW. In some factories notably Fiat, the workers have fought successfully for a high level of Company sick pay and now use it against the bosses quite openly.

Bandwagon

Many European firms are now jumping on the trendy band wagon of 'job enlargement' and 'job enrichment' - last ditch attempts to provide 'satisfaction at work.' The Ford Euro Stewards seem to have fallen for this con-trick, they put the demand for job enlargement high on their list, but assembly line production deskills the workers and has pushed the car worker to the forefront of the fight against the Capitalist system of production, is vital to the car bosses.

Ford, Chrysler, Renault and all the rest will never abandon assembly line production because they cant mass produce cars any other way. If we cant make the work more satisfying we have to fight in other ways - for more money obviously, for shorter hours and longer holidays, but on the day to day level speed ups and manning reductions have to be challenged. At Fiat the workers have challenged the grading system and have demanded equal wages for all - to fight against job evaluation and M/D.W.

It is around demands like these that the unity between European car workers can be built. The Paris conference was a small start.



FORD AUSTRALIA ON STRIKE



On June 13 the Ford Motor Company closed its car assembly plant at Broadmeadows, Melbourne, after 1000 workers rioted and caused damage estimated at 10000 Australian dollars. And, after over five weeks, the plant has stayed shut.

The violence came at the end of a three week strike over a pay claim. The workers are demanding the abolition of bonus and a 45% increase on the basic wage. The Company's offer, 'You can't refuse' was a 5% increase on the bonus.

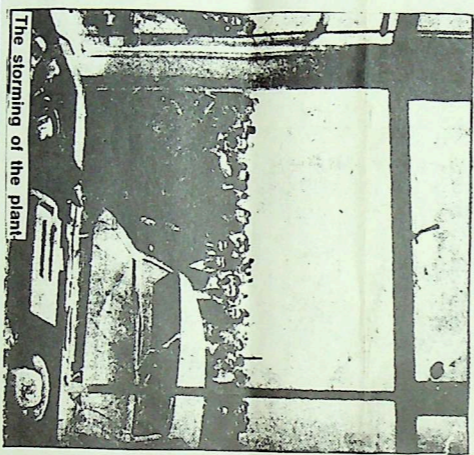
A few days before, the unions had called a mass meeting to accept Ford's offer. The vote on a return to work was passed, by a slim majority, mainly because many of the workers didn't know what they were voting for. The officials had played on the fact that many of the Broadmeadows workers are immigrants - Greeks, Italians, Turks and Yugoslavs - with a poor understanding of English.



Mounted police in use against pickets.

After the vote, those opposed to going back stormed the platform, yelling abuse and wrestling with union officials. Laurie Carmichael, a kind of Australian Scanlon, and leader of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union, was jostled and had his coat torn. There were calls for another meeting.

"At 7.30 in the morning (of 13 June, according to a report in The Australian) hundreds of men who were opposed to the return to work and felt that the meeting had been rigged by union officials, gathered outside the main gates of the factory to picket workers who had decided to report for work. When they found that some men were already inside, working (Ford had telegraphed key production workers, telling them to start at 6 a.m. instead of 7.20) they



The storming of the plant

CONFEDERATION IN STRIKE-BREAKING ATTEMPT AT CAMMELL LAIRD'S

In a dispute at Cammell Laird Shipbuilders in Birkenhead last month, the Merseyside Confederation of Shipbuilders and Engineering Unions joined forces with Laird's management in an attempt to smash the strike.

The strike involved 72 staggers, the men who erect the scaffolding around ships under construction. Ironically the dispute was over union recognition.

A year ago, most of the staggers had left the GMWU because of the union's failure, from the Pilkington strike, to the recent gas workers' dispute, to back its members in militant action. The staggers joined the Amal. Society of Boilermakers and all was well until, last month, the management refused to recognise their two shop stewards.

The staggers therefore called a three-day strike, and their picket successfully prevented vehicles from entering or leaving the yard.

Laird's retaliated by sacking the staggers the next day, and closing the yard on the Friday night. This was a clear attempt to set the firm's 5000 workers against the staggers.

The shop stewards' sub-committee of the Confed, issued a hysterical joint statement with the management. They accused the staggers of striking "without warning". Presumably workers should inform the bosses of their plans well in advance, to give them a chance to prepare.

They accused the staggers of "blockading" the Yard gates. Someone should have told them that is the point of a picket. They were very upset that the majority of workers were being penalised because of the activities of a small sector of employees. Did they mean the staggers, or the management? They alleged that the situation was "approaching anarchy", i.e. the staggers had dared to disregard their officials.

Finally despite the fact that the picket was only stopping delivery vehicles, the shop stewards sub-committee made ridiculous allegations of "the risk of intimidation and incidents involving other employees".

Despite this fine gesture of working class solidarity from the shop stewards committee, the staggers agreed to return to work after the weekend.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS?

But when they heard what the Merseyside Confed. had said about them, they promptly came out on strike again. Bill Crichton, chairman of the Confed. and his secretary had said "As responsible officials, we condemn the action by 70 odd staggers, which is not directed against the management but against the rest of the workers at the yard. No responsible official should support that action".

hurled rocks and stones from the rocky gardens at the administration building. Windows of the foyer were shattered, the foyer was littered with broken glass, and vegetables were taken from a delivery truck. Cabbages and carrots were hurled about the car park, plants were ripped up, and steel signs bent over.

About 1000 assembly line workers went on the rampage, knocking down a brick wall, smashing windows and wrecking a guardhouse. It was several hours before about 40 police, some on horse-



back, brought the rioters under control. Finally stewards who spoke the immigrants' languages were able to address the strikers with megaphones, but were howled down when they urged them to disperse.

As a result, Ford began laying off workers. The men who had started this action were determined that there should not be a return to work before another mass meeting had been held... and Ford knew that to keep workers working in the factory would only cause more trouble. In the words of their Labour Relations Manager, Mr Eric Wirts: "Further talks with Union officials on this dispute would be fruitless at this stage, because they obviously have little or no control over violent elements among their members" (all 1000 of them!).

A shop steward who has been with Ford for 14 years tried to explain why the trouble had started:

"We've had violence here, and it could happen again unless we let the men sort this dispute out for themselves. They feel they have been sold out by their Union officials. They don't trust them. We are telling Federal and State union officials to keep out of it."

The Union should let the shop stewards run the mass meeting of the men to be held in the plant tomorrow. A lot of the trouble has been caused by communications. There was a misunderstanding at the mass meeting on Monday when the return to work decision was taken. 40 languages are spoken at this plant."

A misunderstanding! All sorts of reasons have been given by the Company and the Unions to explain why this outbreak should have happened. But there is little doubt that the real reasons lie in the pressure of work on the assembly line workers - 3000 out of the 4000 workers at Broadmeadows. As one worker said: "Ford have been speeding up the line. If people are missing then it goes at the same speed. In 1967 the line used to run at 32 cars an hour, in 1969 at 40 and now at 70. At present we only get six minutes for tea break". The line workers at Broadmeadows exploded in 1963, again in 1969 and now in 1973. Ten years ago it was because they were not allowed reliefs to go to the toilet. As another Broadmeadows worker said: "The way the line workers are spoken to, and the speed at which the production line moves, are intolerable. The workers in this area say that they go through a daily nightmare".

The outbreak has come as a shock not only to Fords, but to Australian bosses and the newly elected Labour Government. With inflation running at 9 or 10% and the State planning a Heath-type incomes policy, the situation in Australia is very familiar, even down to the activities of 'left' union leaders like Carmichael. The strike at Ford could become a new focus of wage struggles in Australia, with the Broadmeadows line workers at the centre of the storm, as they have been at Chrysler in Coventry recently.



The staggers renewed their picket, and finally won recognition by their own shop stewards and the right to be in the ASOB by the following Friday.

Despite the efforts of the union officials, support from the other men at Lairds had always been good.

SHOP-FLOOR SUPPORT

Pat Marney, one of the staggers' stewards, told us:

"At one point the police informed us that a lorry with a very large load of important raw materials would be arriving, and that they would see it go through. We called a meeting of the 600 men in the welding dept, and they voted to come out on strike if the police forced the picket to let the lorry in. That's the last we heard of that important load of raw materials".

Presumably the Confed. officials would call this yet another example of "industrial anarchy".



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It was then that the union officials and the shop stewards stepped in firmly - on the side of the management.

UNIONS V WORKERS

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BIG FLAME

Merseyside No.12
Socialist September '73
Newspaper 4p



OUR REPLY TO THEIR PHASE III

**NO WAGE CONTROL
NO PRICE RISES
NO RENT INCREASES**

ALL WE NEED IS
LV

6W BCHEN
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KIRKBY RIVER OF FIRE

One night in June a small stream running through the heart of Kirby suddenly ignited. Within minutes sheets of flame were leaping 30 ft. in the air.

The incident confirmed what local people already knew
The Streams running through Kirby are dangerously polluted.

Just how polluted is revealed in a recent Department of the Environment report which found that the Mersey and Weaver River systems - of which the Kirby streams are a part - are among the most polluted in the country.

This confirmed by the Mersey and Weaver authority itself which described the Kirby streams in the following terms:

River Alt.....grossly polluted
Mill Brook.....grossly polluted
Bank Brook.....dangerously polluted

Yet all three streams run openly through the town in parts, giving off a foul smell. In particular, the Mill Brook winds its way openly through landscaped playing fields and the Bank Brook is used to supply water to an artificial pond at a childrens' adventure play ground. Only slightly higher up, a pig farm sewer runs directly into it.

Small wonder that local kids frequently suffer from mysterious diseases, like the recent outbreak of "Stomatitis", which produces blisters in the mouth and throat. Several local doctors have attributed this to the stream.

Protests from parents forced Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Frederick Bunting to order the lake at the play ground to be drained. Further protests have so far failed to get the job finished. More seriously, there are no plans at all for dealing with the seriously polluted Mill Brook and Alt.

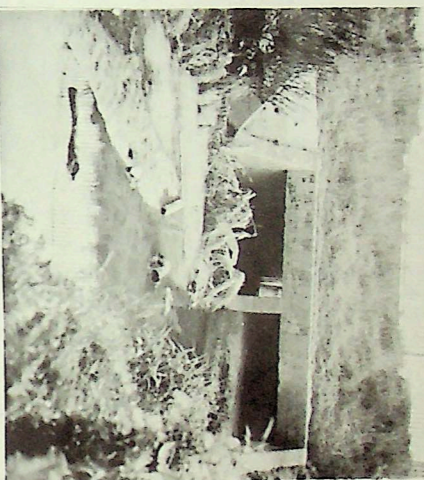
OPEN SEWER

The Kirby Industrial Estate was built in record-breaking 12 months during the last war as an armaments manufacturing centre. It was built quickly, badly, and above all cheaply. Among the many things skimped was the sewage system, and industrial waste from factories poured more or less directly into the surrounding streams. Individual firms were expected to install their own effluent plants but then as now, control was lax. The streams soon became open sewers.

Housing for the workers in the factories followed in the same pattern. The emphasis was on speed and cheapness little or no thought was given to the streams running through the area. As a result Kirby was built around what amounts to a system of open sewers.

For years these were ignored. Children fell ill from mysterious infections, but nothing serious enough to cause alarm. Now however, the years of bad planning and penny pinching housing policies have caught up. Whole areas of Kirby have become modern slums. And the open sewers have become health hazards with a vengeance.

An analysts report, last year, found, among others, the following chemicals in the River Alt: Arsenic, Cyanide, manganese, mercury and cadmium.



And here's what even small quantities of these chemicals can do to a human being :
Arsenic death or permanent injury after a very short exposure. Highly dangerous when heated, and emits highly toxic fumes, which can result in Liver damage or jaundice.

Cyanide Exposure to small quantities over a long period cause loss of appetite, headaches, and dizziness. Dangerous on contact with water when it produces toxic and flammable vapour.

Cadmium Fumes can affect respiratory tracts, causing dryness of throat, coughing and vomiting.

Manganese Emits toxic fumes when heated.

Mercury Emits highly dangerous fumes when heated. Main effect is upon central nervous system, mouth and gums. Symptoms of industrial mercury poisoning are stomatitis.

The report concludes : "The waters are grossly polluted. It is imperative that these waters should be banned to all animals and man".

The report also explains that because of the danger of a build up of inflammable chemicals.

FLARE—UP

In January this hazard came true when a mile long stretch of the Mill Stream, running in an open culvert at Tower Hill, caught fire. A "low-flash-point" chemical possibly naphthalene - was blamed. The source of this highly dangerous chemical, was of course, never traced. The effect of the heat on some of the chemicals above must have been nearly lethal.

Three months later in April the whole incident was repeated, this time on a slightly smaller scale. Again the source and nature of the chemical involved was never cleared up. The Mersey and Weaver River Authority did, however, admit they were still deciding on whether or not to prosecute a Kirby firm who they thought could have been responsible for the first incident.

June saw another major flare up. In all six such incidents have been recorded since the beginning of the year.

It was about one o'clock when two van-loads of police reinforcements arrived, and kicked down the doors. They then went upstairs, broke down the bedrooms doors, and dragged the kids out into the street. Owing to a lack of preparation it had been agreed there should be no violent resistance to the police attack. Later, the Burgess detective threw the furniture into the front garden.

The action of the police was totally illegal. They have no right to evict tenants in this way. The excuse they gave for breaking down the doors was that the two County Court bailiffs were held captive in the house. This was rubbish, as on a number of occasions we had told the bailiffs to get out, but, heroes to their cause, they refused.

Nat and June Abbott and their kids returned to their original flat - the one they had left because it was dangerous for their kids. As June said to the TV: "We did this for all the Liverpool tenants in unfit housing, who the Corporation refuse to re-house. We will do it again because we have tried all the 'proper' procedures, and they have not worked."

Throughout this period the Mersey and Weaver River Board were stoutly maintaining that although the streams were polluted in the words of a spokesman: "My opinion is that the risk is not great at all." Local doctors, however, continue to treat children for various infections which they believe are picked up from the streams.

Finally in August a firm was prosecuted for polluting the Alt. Kodak was fined £50 for allowing waste solvent to enter the river.

The exact nature of the solvent was never made public. But there is a strong possibility that it was precisely this solvent which caused the Mill Brook to spontaneously ignite. For instance in July a small story in the local Kirby Reporter reported an unexplained explosion in Kodak's effluent plant, was the explosion caused by the same low "flash-point" chemical which has also set the brook on fire ?

This, of course, didn't come out during Kodak's court appearance. And small wonder, for the magistrate - a Mr. L. H. Russell, who presided over the Kodak Hearing, is a fellow industrialist with a factory a little way up the road from Kodak.

During the hearing, the Mersey and Weaver River Board made it clear they were unhappy about prosecuting Kodak. "The authority were loath to prosecute because Kodak have such a good record". Perhaps it's because they're so loath to prosecute that the streams are among the dirtiest in Britain!

RATS

The same River Alt is the home of thousands of rats. lower down its course where it flows through the Croxteth Estate. Pressure to cover it over has been resisted because of the danger of an explosive build up of inflammable gas.

But now local tenants are taking matters into their own hands. They are starting a campaign to get Kirby's filthy rivers cleaned up. They're demanding that local firms should be compelled to plough back some of their profits into efficient effluent plant. And apart from an obvious campaign to put pressure on the various authorities concerned to do their job, there's talk of leafleting factories suspected of polluting the rivers, telling workers what their firm is doing, and asking for support.

THE RIVERS AND LAKES ARE AMMENITIES. ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS. EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO ENSURE THIS HAPPENS.

A Mothers Letter.....four year Anthony Bebbington spent eight days in hospital after playing in the Adventure playground lake. Anthony had put a piece of rubber tubing in his mouth, which he'd picked up at the lake. The next day he had ulcer like sores in his mouth and throat, and his face, eyes and neck were swollen. A local doctor, said he had recorded seven instances of the same infection.

A few tenants in Croxteth have criticised the Abbotts for 'jumping the queue'. They say everyone should wait their turn, if they want to get out of lousy dwellings like the flats in Croxteth.

But the corporation is lying when it says 'behave yourself, pay your rent on time, and we'll give you a better house'. There are hundreds of empty council houses all over Merseyside which the corporation don't do anything about. (The fact that they've quickly filled the house squatted in by the Abbotts, is simply an attempt to cover up in this much publicised case.)

For many people in Liverpool the fight of the Abbotts has opened a new avenue of struggle, and demonstrated a tactic that has been widely and successfully used elsewhere especially in London.

And their act of resistance has called attention to housing conditions in Croxteth and is one of the main reasons behind the new campaign against the October rent rises in Croxteth.

CROXTETH POLICE EVICT SQUATTERS

On Monday the third of September police smashed down the doors of a house on the Croxteth Estate and evicted the Abbott family.

They had been squatting there for three months as a protest against disgusting and dangerous housing conditions. Big Flame members arrived in Croxteth early in the day to find County Court bailiffs already in the house. Lurking outside was a bailiff from the Burgess Detective Agency, the usual hatcher men hired to evict by Liverpool Corporation. Across the road four policemen sat in their car.

no notice

The Abbott family received no notice of eviction from the detective agency. Confronted by this departure from stated procedure they were not expecting the bailiffs that morning. But within two hours tenants from all over Liverpool were inside the house. Big Flame and the Tower Hill Rent Action group had notified as many people as possible, and then toured the estate calling for support from local tenants.

PHASE III our fight to live

You don't need figures any more to convince anyone that phase two of the Tory freeze was straight down the line anti-working class. Taken together with the Housing Finance Act, the Immigration Laws and the trial of the 24 building workers in Shrewsbury, we can all see that the bosses and the state are mounting a massive effort to slash our living standards and destroy our organisation.

But we shouldn't be surprised. If they are to succeed in restoring the profitability of British capitalism, especially when international competition is so fierce, they have to take wealth away from the working class in order to make it available for investment and therefore profits. They are in crisis and they want us to pay for it.

So we needn't worry ourselves trying to predict the exact regulations of phase three. Whatever the details the outlines are inevitable - a low ceiling on wages, token pledges on prices and profits. What should interest us is how they are going to sell it to us this time? What tricks will they use to put it across?

thresholds

The idea of thresholds is one of the biggest carrots that Heath has been dangling in front of the TUC. Threshold agreements are held up as the only 'fair way' to keep up with inflation. So we've got to be very clear on why they are a con. In theory thresholds work so that rises in the cost of living index above a certain level automatically trigger off wage increases to compensate. But right from the start, we lose out because the retail price index does not represent the real cost of living for working-class families. We spend proportionately more of our incomes on food and housing than the index allows for.

go beyond 'respectable limits' and seriously challenge the state. They have to preserve their role as middlemen between workers and boss, and workers and state. They are scared of any action that might cut them out.

And any sign that the rank and file may be taking the struggle into its own hands is usually discouraged by the union organisation. For example, last March, we had the demoralising spectacle of rank and file gasworkers from Bootle, going round picketing other plants one day, getting the men out. Followed the next day by a union official telling the men to get back in.

The demand to break off the talks between the TUC and the Government, if successful, would be a victory. It would mean that a strong rank and file had pushed one of the most backward sections of the workers movement in a leftward direction. This would have a good effect on those people who still look to the TUC as their guide. It would also destroy the Tories cover and bring them more into the open.

But this demand on the TUC is only one tactic. Any strategy to break phase three cannot be based on what the union leaders and representatives are doing. Scanlon's call for a special TUC meeting to discuss a united fight against phase three should be supported, but we know from experience that the leadership and initiative of the fight has to be kept with the rank and file. We are the ones with a real interest in winning this battle.

labour party

The main change in the situation since phase two started is the Labour Party. It has made a so called shift to the 'left'. Calls for nationalisation, workers control, repeal of the Fair Rents and Industrial Relations Acts, etc. We're not fooled into believing that this is any more than a ver-



bal move, designed to get the Labour Party back into office. The Labour left leaders may be sincere, but they don't offer much. They introduce a new perspective into the struggle that is disastrous. That is: return a Labour Government pledged to socialist policies on wages and prices (or something like this).

If this sort of idea gets taken up it will be the bosses who benefit. It will have the effect of demobilising and diverting the existing struggle and putting it off to some future date. And it will mean trying to substitute a bourgeois form of political power - parliament - for the working class form of political power - our own direct self-organisations and struggles.

Labour's 1973 programme for Britain should fool no one. They talk about rigid price control. (We shall build upon the machinery of price control set up by the Tory Government) without even discussing that this means they will have to bring capitalism to an end.

They talk about repealing the Industrial Relations Act, and in its place put talks with the TUC to hammer out an agreement for the orderly growth of incomes. But they don't explain what the mean by 'orderly'. They are possibly referring to the wage freeze under the last Labour Government...three and a half per cent, from April 68 to December 69, or the no per cent norm, July 67 to March 68, take your choice.

If the Labour Party is returned to power it will be faced with the same economic crisis that is facing the Tories. It will have a clear choice between solving that crisis - at our expense, or protecting us at the expense of capitalism. The Labour Party has and always will choose the way of the bosses.

first step

The first step is to be prepared to back any group of workers who go into struggle against the Government. The great working class upsurges of the last three years have all been around focuses provided by a central powerful struggle, eg the miners and the dockers. At first, the scale of any class-wide mobilisation will probably depend on the militancy of a central struggle. But that does not mean we wait for the 'big ones'. Fights are going on at the moment - Wilnot Brexton, Dunlop, Chrysler - against the freeze, and support must be mounted for these now.

But we must not keep to a limited view of which struggles are relevant. The rent strikes, all the struggles inside the factory against lay-offs or productivity, are just other fronts of the same battle. And so is the defense of the 24 building workers in Shrewsbury, which must be one of our priorities at the moment.

Exactly how these links can be made cannot be discussed in detail, but if they are to be real they must be based on our own actions and not controlled by the union structure and leaders. In the past the flying picket has been the best tactic of extending direct rank and file unity (as the miners discovered in 1973). This could lead on to factory gate meetings, joint demonstrations and in strike situations, joint social security claiming.

solidarity

We must realise that solidarity is the only practical way. We have a common enemy and a defeat for one section makes that enemy stronger to take on another one. The question of solidarity actions and linking struggle in the coming months has been met by many on the 'left' by the idea of solidarity committees, to start now. These are positive moves and could be useful wherever ever they are set up. For instance Liverpool Trades Council has taken a useful step in organising a national conference to discuss the Shrewsbury 24.

But there is a danger. At the moment the organisations that are likely to take part in such committees - trades councils or trade union branches - reflect the existing level of class struggle. The real organisations of solidarity and link-ups will have to be formed out of the new developments in struggle, and the militants who are at the head of them. Like with the rent strike on Merseyside. The old Trades Council and Tenants Co-ordinating Committee is beginning to be overtaken by a new organisation, formed by militants on rent strike, who found the Trades Council inadequate.

The possibilities of the coming period are open. But with all the different struggles we've mentioned coming up, what could be developed is a situation of widespread and generalised confrontation. Fights on many fronts. If this did develop we should be pushing for a co-ordinated general strike led from below.

The potential of any general strike is unlimited. It could mean more than kicking out this or that government, and can even pose the whole question of power. These things cannot be predicted, but neither can they be discounted. Class struggle is not orderly, like a game of chess. It is unpredictable, ebbs and flows. We were beaten in phase two, but if we take it up seriously, we can come back and smash phase three.

lay-off at vauxhall

Assembly line workers at Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port factory were recently laid-off for a week. The official reason was a dispute in the engine shop. But when the men returned to work, they discovered the engine shop dispute had only lasted a day, when they'd been out for five.

They'd been conned. The real reason for the lay-offs they found-out, was a shortage of components for remaining 1973 models. The company had simply wanted them off the pay-roll.

In protest the assembly plant stopped work immediately, saying the company was trying to solve its problems, by cutting wages.

The men were also angry because of continual lay-offs at the plant. The factory is divided between AEU and TRG members, and the company have used this to play one section off against another.

At a mass meeting two days after the walk-out, militants were pushing for immediate 70 per cent lay-off pay. They proposed an over-time ban, and work to rule to get this. But the recommendation from the stewards committee was a return to normal working. They said the claim for lay-off pay should go through procedure, which meant waiting until November the first, the next JNC meeting.

This was accepted. By then of course the steam will have gone out of this issue, and there's a good chance the whole thing will have been forgotten.

But anyway, the best threshold agreements limit us to keeping up with prices. If we accept one, then we agree not to increase our standards of living for a whole year or even two years. And by putting the state in charge of our incomes - and surrendering the only way that has worked in that past: our own militancy and strength - we start a very dangerous rot. We agree to become quiet and passive, trusting in figures compiled by a government department while the bosses and the state are given the confidence to go on and attack us in other ways: increased productivity, victimisation of militants, tougher action through the police and courts.

past lessons

If we are to be prepared for phase three, we have to understand the mistakes and lessons of phase two. The first question here is the unions:

The recent TUC congress changes nothing. The TUC has failed to measure up to any of the issues facing the working class. The talks between them and the government are going ahead, the pay-board is still to be respected, and not a single word about what happens when a group of workers does take on the government. In fact, while the TUC were sounding off about the freeze, workers were actually fighting it - totally ignored by the TUC. 450 maintenance men at Wilnot Brexton in Birmingham are striking against the management's £1 plus 4% offer of £3.30 per week. And at Chrysler, Jones and Scanlon were even advocating a scab strategy against the striking electricians.

The faults in the union strategy have not changed. Their recognition of the Government Pay Board mean another series of 'special case' arguments. They argue that the lower paid are special cases because they are lower paid, that people like Ford workers are special cases because their company made a £60 million profit last year. This is sectionalism gone mad, and destroys the possibility of working class unity. If we accept that the Ford workers are entitled to a rise because the company is profitable, what are we saying to workers in unprofitable industries - should they take a wage cut.

As with phase two, the unions are making no attempts to prepare the rank and file for the inevitable confrontation with the government. The union leaders are afraid of any full scale mobilisation by the rank and file that could

50p WAGE CUT IN OCTOBER

IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN THE HOUSING FINANCE ACT CAME INTO OPERATION LAST OCTOBER WITH A £1 RENT RISE. THAT WAS JUST THE START - THERE'LL BE A 50p (AVERAGE) INCREASE THIS OCTOBER AND FURTHER RISES NEXT YEAR AND THE YEAR AFTER.

- The entire cost of housing is going to fall on the backs of tenants.
- Millions of tenants are being subjected to a means tested rebate scheme.
- Every time tenants get a wage rise their rents will go up.
- The Tories hope to price tenants out of their council houses into owner-occupation - and yet the mortgage rate now stands at 11%.
- Families on low incomes are being forced into ghetto areas.

The Housing Finance Act is an attempt to rationalise government spending on housing, and introduce more control over the working class.

Rents under this Act are intended to meet the original cost of a tenants house, interest paid on the money borrowed to build it, the cost of buying new land, the cost of building new houses, the interest paid to moneylenders on money to build them, rent rebate and allowances and the cost of running the Act itself. In other words the State is no longer prepared to subsidise council housing - it has to be



RENT RISES ARE

MORE RENT INCREASES ARE DUE NEXT MONTH AND WITH THEM A RENEWED FIGHT AGAINST THE HOUSING FINANCE ACT.

If this fight is going to continue with even more strength than before, we need to look back and see what lessons can be learnt from the last year.

The rebate system was written into the Housing Finance Act mainly as a means of weakening any organised opposition to it. The Government hope to buy people off with promises of rent reductions based on individual circumstances - means tests.

They hope to smash the unity of the rent strike by dividing people and treating them as individual special cases. In areas on partial rent strike especially the Government's plan worked. There people were already divided to some extent, because they were paying different rents according to what type of house they were in. The rebates came along and tenants who were withholding the increase were conned into leaving the rent strikes.

Knowing this can happen we should be ready. First of all to remind people that the increases are going to go on and on, and will always be more than the rebates you can get. And also to make sure we fight against everything the Housing Finance Act stands for and not just the increases.

evictions

Over the last year we have learned that the only way to stop evictions and the fear of them, is to organise and show we have the strength to stop them ourselves, without relying on dodgy promises from local councils, or relying on court procedures.

run on a profit-making basis. This means for the tenant over increasing rents to meet the "fair" or market rent. rebates

So that the millions of tenants who have no hope of paying those high rents don't actually starve, a means tested rebate system has been introduced.

Like all means tested benefits it involves stigma and humiliation, besides making tenants dependent on State hand-outs and eating away their power to resist.

Because the rebates are tied to income they are another way the ruling class can keep control of the living standards of the working class. Every time you get a wage rise your rebate is cut - that means your rent goes up - so you're no better off! Rebates can be withdrawn if the authority decides you are "living above your means" - that is if you have a spare room or if you live in a better off, well-kept area. This forces people on low incomes to move out into areas of worse and cheaper housing.

It's not just that the State wants to save money - it wants to get the working class more under its thumb. The Housing Finance Act is an attempt to encourage better paid workers into buying their own houses. With the mortgage rate now standing at 11% this means committing themselves to a lifetime's hard labour just to repay their mortgages!

If there are more workers paying off mortgages there'll be more workers who want to work harder and not rock the boat by militancy - it's difficult to pay off a mortgage on strike pay. The rebate system has a similar effect - the Tories hope that people won't bother fighting for higher wages when pay rises are automatically taken away by a rent increase.

class divisions

Because the Housing Finance Act creates a lot of divisions within the working class the Tories hope that opposition to it will be less effective.

Some tenants will be receiving rebates while others will be encouraged to feel they are paying for these rebates with the higher rents. Some tenants will be living in slim ghetto areas while others will live on better housing estates. Everyone will be set against each other and there will be no united fight against the Act - that's what the government wants. But we have to realise that it's in all our interests to fight the Act together no matter what sort of tenant we are. Divisions are created by the State to keep us forever fighting amongst ourselves instead of against them!

Most places on partial rent strike didn't come up against evictions so the fear of them stayed in peoples heads for a long time. Tenants from Over The Bridge, Liverpool, (on total rent strike) tried to fight evictions through the court. While battles about legal technicalities and procedures were going off in the court room, many tenants on the estate were getting demoralised and confused and drifting away from the strike. At first the only place where the question of evictions was honestly faced was on Tower Hill, Kirby, through direct action by the tenants in forming large anti-eviction squads. Later the same sort of mass support by tenants prevented an eviction in Bolton, and hopefully similar tactics will prevent threatened evictions in Bootle on October 12.

co-ordination

The official body of communication and co-ordination between the rent strikes on Merseyside was the Trades Council Tenants Co-ordinating Committee. This was initially dominated by members of the Labour Party who were anxious to save face after the 'colleagues' had voted to implement the Act. As far as co-ordinating activity and support between tenants is concerned, it was largely ineffective.

It was the threatened evictions that really forged the links and communication between tenants. When the eviction threat in Bolton was announced by a tenant at a North West Tenants Co-ordination conference (run by the Trades Council) people were forced to gather at the back of the hall to organise anti-eviction squads, while the Trades Council and their 'guests' made empty speeches at the front.



A WHOLE BLOCK OF TENANTS IN RAVENSCROFT AREA OF TOWER HILL WENT BACK ON TOTAL RENT STRIKE THIS WEEK - WHEN THEY GOT NOTIFICATION OF THE LATEST 50p INCREASE.

On September 1st there was a demonstration in Kirby in support of Tower Hill tenants who have been on total rent and rates strike now for 11 months.

Throughout those 11 months they proved that they made the right decision - when they decided to fight the Housing Finance act by refusing to pay any rent at all. Kirby Council has been on the defensive since last October - and the arrears are going up at a rate of £2,300 each week.

So at the first mention of an eviction by the Council the main road through Tower Hill was blocked and all traffic stopped for a couple of hours. The tenants won that round and the Council backed down on evictions the council are now on record that they will not evict anyone.

Last October Tower Hill tenants took control of their estate - they stopped paying the Council for their houses and took them as a right. It was their answer to the increases imposed by the Housing Finance Act - and increases to follow - but it was also their answer to the continual rising prices and frozen wages. Nobody is saving the rent. It's being used to buy food

These links between estates need to be developed in the next year so that supportive action can be taken even more quickly and efficiently. A useful move in this direction has been taken by tenants from Old Swan and Tower Hill who have set up an independent tenants co-ordinating committee controlled by militant tenants themselves.

sharing out

If each estate is going to have to defend itself against attacks from the council and the State then it needs to be strong within itself. That means organising in such a way no tenant feels out of touch with what's going on. It's necessary to have regular meetings and weekly bulletins as well as people in each street block or area having meetings together regularly.

But during much of the rent strike so far, HALF THE POTENTIAL MILITANTS ON THE ESTATES HAVE OFTEN BEEN PREVENTED FROM TAKING A REALLY ACTIVE PART IN THE FIGHT. Not by the copy or the State, but by the way we have organised ourselves. Many women who are the first to feel the weight of the rent rise and price increases, are prevented from participating and gaining experience in meetings and demonstrations, because few, if any areas, have tackled the problem of sharing out what is called 'womens' work' - the daily round of looking after kids and husbands, shopping and cleaning.

For instance, it should not be each women's individual responsibility to find a baby-sitter if she needs to get to

LESSONS OF A YEAR'S STRIKE



and other necessities. There comes a time when you have to stop asking for things - you have to take them.

The total rent strike wasn't just a bargaining tactic - it was a direct attack on Kirkby Council and a direct defiance of the government's Housing Finance Act. Because the tenants knew that the Council would be forced into acting quickly - because the arrears were building up at a fantastic rate - they started to organise themselves for evictions immediately. They had area meetings so everyone was kept in touch and they planned anti-eviction squads right from the start - with the help of people from all over Liverpool.

Later on, when the rebates started to come through and tenants on partial rent strike were being brought off by promises of reduced rents after means tests, Tower Hill tenants were still refusing to have anything to do with any part of the H.F. Act - including the rebate scheme. In any case - it's not so easy to be bought off by a 50p-£1 rebate when you're not paying any rent at all.

Now the "attachment of earnings" (rent arrears to be paid directly out of tenants' wage packets to the Council) is being used against tenants on total rent strike. This move by the Council is an indication of how strong Tower Hill has been up to now. The Council realise that it's useless to try any attacks on the estate like evictions or harassment - where the tenants are collectively strong. So they move into the workplaces and the tenants are split up and weaker.

It's only a defensive move to "ask" the Trades Council and Trade Union officials for what in the end could only be verbal support. The way to attack is by taking the struggle out of the estates where it began and spreading it in the factories - and that means we have to learn a few lessons from dockers wives in Belgium, for instance, who during a recent dock strike marched into local factories and held meetings on the shop floor to demand support for the strike.

There has been little or no coverage of rent strikes in the national press over the last year and the total rent strike in Tower Hill, especially has been ignored. If we want the word spreading, we'll have to do it ourselves. Now that the second phase of the Act is about to come in, it's important to let people know how it can be fought and has been fought so far. Some people have said that Tower Hill tenants have been on rent strike for nothing for the last year because they haven't beaten the Housing Finance Act - and they haven't stopped the new increases. Maybe they haven't beaten the Act yet - but they've managed to hold out for 11 months without paying any rent - and they won't be paying these latest increases either. Of course Tower Hill can't fight the Housing Finance Act alone - we all have to join them - not sit back and wait for them to do it for us.

LABOUR..

The two immediate things in the Housing Finance Act that hit people most - the rent rises and the means test - have happened before in Liverpool under both Labour and Tory councils.

THEM..

In 1961, when the Tories raised the rents and first brought in rebates in Liverpool, the Labour councillors called it "an inhuman means test" and fought it furiously for weeks. Yet by 1965 in the Labour government's white Paper on Housing, Richard Crossman was praising councils who "have had the courage to adopt thorough-going rent rebate schemes."

In January 1966, the Labour controlled council put the rents up by an average of 11%. This time it was the left wing of the Party and the Trades Council who objected to the rises. But only a month later the Guardian newspaper reported "Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party has decided to support the policy of differential rents for council houses. This represents a change of view by the council and party which had until recently supported the rebellion against the Labour controlled councils decision to increase rents in 50,000 houses by an average of 11% to offset the city's housing deficit of £2m."

A Labour councillor said in 1961 that the local authorities were becoming "the plaything of the money-lenders." The situation is still the same now, 2/3 of the rent we pay the council goes to pay back the private businessmen and financiers. Whether Labour or Tories (or Liberals) are in power, the rents will still go up.

& NOW..

At the moment the Labour Party is beginning to show some "active" opposition to the Housing Finance Act on Merseyside. Kirkby Labour Party is now supposedly controlled by the "left-wing" who are encouraging Kirkby tenants through the new Rent Action Alliance Committee not to pay the increases "introduced by Phase 2 of the Housing Finance Act." They are calling for a "Day of action" for October 1st. It must be stressed, however, that it is only individuals in the ward/labour party who are doing this - it was the Labour Councillors who voted to implement the Act and it is they who are carrying out the implementation - regardless of the pathetic antics of their Labour Party pals.

The reason the ward Labour Party is doing this is that they think the increases should be fought as propaganda for the return of a Labour Government which they tell us will repeal the Act. As we have said earlier in the article the Tory Housing policy (including the Housing Finance Act) is much the same as Labour's. All the Labour Party really object to in the new Act is their loss of power at local level over policy making. So it's hardly likely that a Labour Government would make many changes to the Act.

It seems likely that the strength of the Tower Hill tenants is a worrying threat to Labour (or anyone else in search of power over Kirkby tenants). It would obviously suit the Labour Party better if they can get control of the strike and divert it into an electioneering campaign against the Tory Government. All they want the tenants to do is wait at home, put their saved increases in the P.O. book and leave it to the "politicians". Kirkby tenants have shown that they have little faith in "politicians" - only 18% bothered to vote at the last local elections.

The latest attempt by Kirkby Labour Party to warn their way into the fight against the Rent Act should be seen for what it is - an attempt to win votes. People should be wary of being used in this way - the real struggle has to be carried out by the tenants organising rent strikes themselves!

CONFERENCE

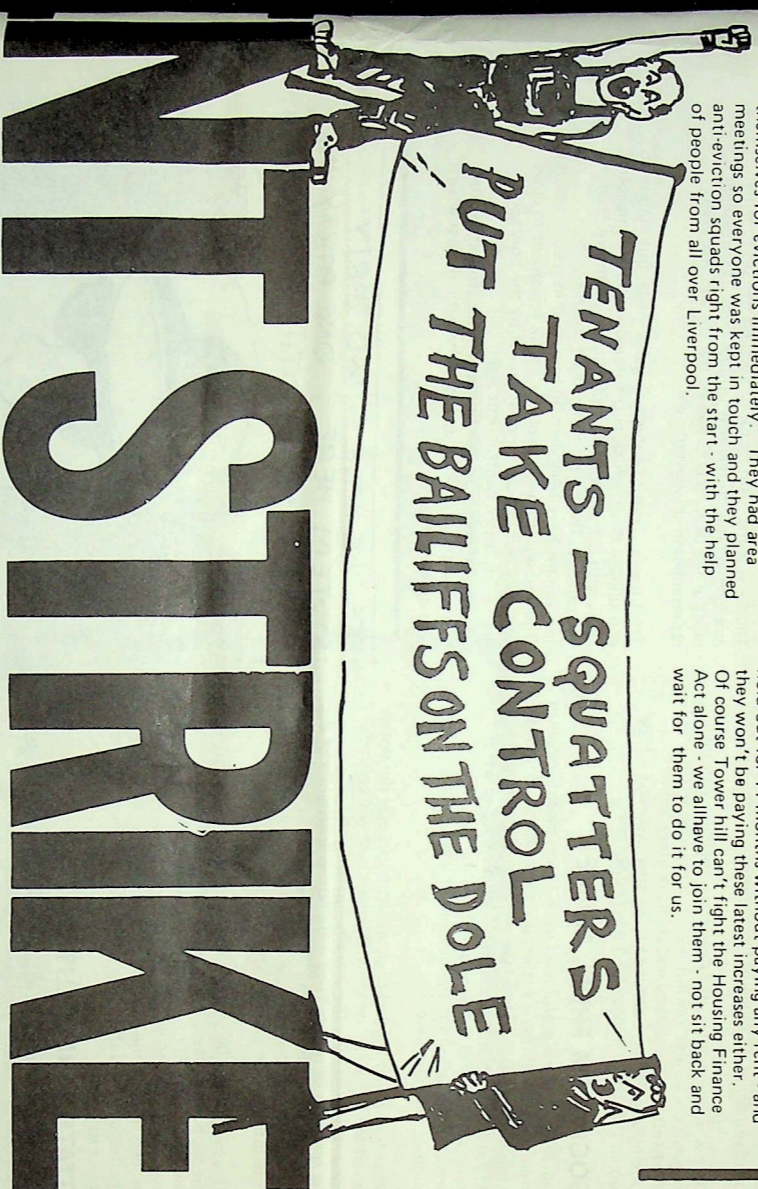
A national tenants conference is to be held on Sunday 23rd September at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology from 2pm to 6pm.

"We have to show that the united efforts of millions of council tenants backed up by trade union action can make the Housing Finance Act unworkable - just as the Industrial Relations Act has been."

This is why a national conference for tenants and trade unionists is necessary - an action conference, not a talking shop. We need to formulate a strategy for fighting the Housing Finance Act and the annual rent rises that are a part of it. A strategy that can unite the tenants on the estates with the militants in the factories. ("Taken from conference notification leaflet.")

Send to: Conference Organising Committee
61 Tylnvy Croft
Harlow
Essex.

For delegates or visitors credentials - 10p each.



NO EVICTIONS

Its now 11 months since the Rent Strikes began AS YET NOBODY HAS BEEN EVICTED. Councils haven't dared evict because the rent strikes have been so strong.....

But now Bootle Council has decided to try to evict a man, the possession of the eviction's due on October 10th.

It's very important that tenants from all over make sure this eviction does not take place. If Bootle Council succeeds now it'll be the go-ahead for other councils like Liverpool to evict rent strikers. Tenants groups have to start organising now to get large numbers of people at this man's house on the 10th.

There are rumours that Forde's, the Docks and Triumphs are coming out. But unless tenants put out propaganda to workers at these places and let them know how necessary their support is it could stay just a rumour.

DEFEND RENT STRIKER BILLY CAVANAGH'S HOME
50 JOSEPH LISTER CLOSE
NETHERTON.

OCTOBER 10TH KEEP THE BAILIFFS OUT!

"Many councils like Kirkby Oldham and Bolton have given up the idea of evictions after various shows of strength by tenants. They are now going for "attachment of earnings" threats - one in Kirkby, one in Oldham. There is another demonstration in Bolton on October 12th in support of tenants appearing in court for rent arrears.

a meeting. This is the collective responsibility of each action group, if we are serious about wanting to give more and more people a chance to 'have a go'.

One thing we know by now is that the battle against the Act won't be won simply on the housing estates. We need industrial action too. Wages from work mean nothing, if prices and rents go up and up.

Industrial support means more than getting promises and pledges from trade union officials or trades councils. When a tenant on Tower Hill was threatened with eviction the real support came from local building workers and rank and file workers from surrounding factories.

Birds Eye cold store workers promised strike action (which would have closed down the whole factory) in the event of an eviction. This came after women and kids from the estate helped picket the factory, when 24 workers were attacked for attending a rents demo in October last year. This unity between factories and estates becomes even more vital now that Attachment of Earnings orders are being used against more and more rent strikers. (Tower Hill, Oldham, Bolton).

Tenants are now trying to get more people to join the rent strikes in October. One of the important questions to be faced is whether we go on partial or total rent strike. As we point out elsewhere on this page the Act is only a single part of an attempt to change the housing situation in this country, and to cut out our living standards. Going on total rent strike leaves more money. This is one way of fighting back against price increases and the wage freeze.

RUGGLE

UP AGAINST THE LAW



Repression by the ruling class takes many forms: wages and conditions at work, the prices we pay, and the quality of products we get. But the power of the state through the 'rule of the law' is being increasingly used to crack down on working class militants whenever they are in struggle.

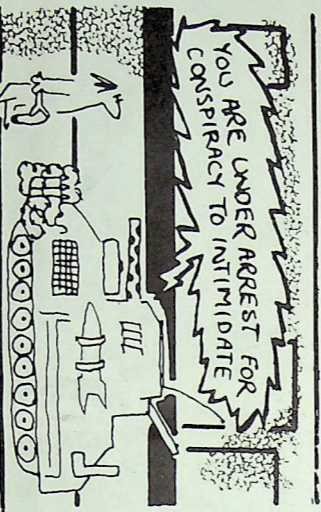
Elsewhere in the paper we report on an illegal eviction in Coxweth and attempts by the court to break the rent strikes. But there are more examples of socialists and militants finding themselves 'up against the law'.

The anti-fascist demonstration which defeated the British Movement in Liverpool in July (see Big Flame, July) paid a high price for its success. Fines totalling £60 were handed out to four of the 13 demonstrators arrested. A fifth was sent to Walton for four months. A defence committee raised around £120 to meet the costs. The extra money has been passed onto the Liverpool Anti-Fascist Committee.

LONDON Three members of the Anti-Interment League are at present on trial in London on conspiracy charges. The seriousness of these charges cannot be underestimated. They carry heavy penalties.

The charges arise out of a 2000 strong demonstration last year held in London to protest against the interment without trial in N. Ireland. Fighting broke out between the police and demonstrators, and the police later alleged that signals had been given by the three arrested to tell the crowd to attack the police.

This is obviously ludicrous. Anyone who has ever been on a demonstration knows that no one could direct a crowd to do anything, even if they wanted to. But the police's aim was to smash the opposition to internment, no matter how far-fetched the charge.



SHREWSBURY 24 PICKETS ON TRIAL

ON OCTOBER 3rd one of the most important political trials for years opens in Shrewsbury.

If the prosecution is successful it will mean that militant picketing will be virtually outlawed.

The trial is of the 24 building workers arrested as a result of the national strike a year ago. They are charged with "intimidating" workers, with a view "to compelling them to abstain from their lawful work", and with unlawful assembly.

The 24 were not arrested until 6 months after the picket at took place in Shrewsbury. They are guinea pigs for the Government's arms of outlawing picketing, and North Wales was chosen as an area of scattered population where it was thought the organisation of support and solidarity would be difficult to mount.

The two unions concerned - U.C.A.A.T. and T. & G.W.U. - have washed their hands of the affair, because, they say, this is a "criminal" matter.

These two factors make it vital that rank and file militants mount support for the 24 building workers.

On Saturday 22nd September the Liverpool Trades Council is holding a national meeting in Central Hall on this issue. On the following Saturday they will be holding a demonstration of solidarity in the city.

The Building Workers Charter Defence Committee (backed by the Communist Party) have called for a one day national strike on the first day of the trial.

They have also called for strikes at the 24 are gaoled but appear to have no strategy prepared for fans or other forms of sentence.

Donations urgently required to Defence Committee Treasurer, M. R. Williams, 1 Florida Pentre, Ocean View, Carmel, Holywell, Flintshire.

CHILE end of the parliamentary road

THE RECENT RIGHT WING MILITARY COUP IN CHILE IS A MAJOR SET BACK FOR THE WORKING CLASS THROUGH OUT THE WORLD.

There can be no effort spared in this country to express our support for Chilean workers and peasants. There have already been solidarity demonstrations in large British cities, including Liverpool, and solidarity committees have been set up.

We must create a climate which makes it impossible for the Tory Government to recognise and aid the new Junta. And where possible, we must take our own more direct action. For example, ship builders on Tyneside are considering blacking two Chilean ships undergoing repairs.

But if the Chilean working class is to successfully gain power and resist the Junta, it will need more than support from abroad. It will have to learn the lessons of Allende's so-called 'constitutional revolution', to find a strategy that can really take and keep state power. Chile was the testing ground for the strategy of the peaceful road to socialism. We must all learn the lessons.

Chile is unlike many Latin American republics with their frequent coups and 'revolutions'. It has a long tradition of constitutional democracy and parliamentary politics. In looking at what has happened there now, we must not be fooled that these things could not happen here.

SOCIALISM FROM ABOVE

For Allende the peaceful road to socialism meant socialism from above. And it was little more than a series of radical reforms. His Popular Unity Government (UP) based mainly on the Communist and Socialist parties, tried to wrest control of parts of the economy from the power of American imperialism, and attempted a minor redistribution of land and income.

What frightened US and Chilean capitalists was the potential of the situation, whether the masses of workers and peasants would take the struggle further and really pose the question of power. They were not so frightened of the UP government itself, who were concerned to keep within the constitution, and to use the existing bourgeois state institutions to implement its programme.

This meant that throughout their period of government the UP had to play a delicate balancing act between all the class forces in Chile. This prevented it mobilising its massive working class support to begin a real revolutionary process, extend the gains made, and institute control of the factories, and the whole society by the workers and peasants.

STATE & REVOLUTION

The fundamental lesson to be learnt here was made clear long ago by Lenin in his 'State and Revolution'. *'Revolution consists not in a new class commanding, governing with the aid of the old state machine, but in this class smashing this machine, and commanding and governing with the aid of a new machine.'*

Chile shows why this is so true. Because of the peaceful road to socialism, because of the balancing act between classes, the UP government were actually forced to act against the workers and peasants. They consistently used the armed forces and police to prevent the seizure of the big estates by the peasants. And consistently discouraged the setting up of effective workers councils or working class armed militias.

CIVIL WAR

The main justification by UP was their insistence on avoiding civil war. As Luis Corvalan, General Secretary of the Chilean Communist Party said in a speech in July: *'We communists must stand now with more determination than ever, with more energy and more resolution to fight. The patriotic and revolutionary slogan must be: no to civil war, no to fascism.'*

Of course, revolutionaries don't want civil war for its own sake, but the ruling class leaves no option as Chile has shown. If you say no to civil war from the start, you throw in your cards before the game has even started.

The last three years of Chilean politics has been three years of 'civil war' in a sense. From the very beginning of Allende's rule, the Chilean and foreign bourgeoisie have been operating a strategy of boycott and economic harassment. Frei, the leader of the Christian Democrats (The main right wing party) made a successful world touring capitalist's stop trade with Chile. The British Government cut off all credit to the country. The CIA has continuously sponsored Chilean fascist movements, including a right wing guerrilla movement based in the Andes. The huge American ITT corporation spent millions in anti Allende propaganda. For nine weeks up to the recent coup, the lorry owners have been on strike and

brought the country's transport to a virtual standstill. The CIA even admits that it knew about the coup two days before hand.

The question is not yes or no to civil war. The question is how to win the inevitable civil war. The ruling class will abandon 'democracy' everytime their power is threatened.

M.I.R

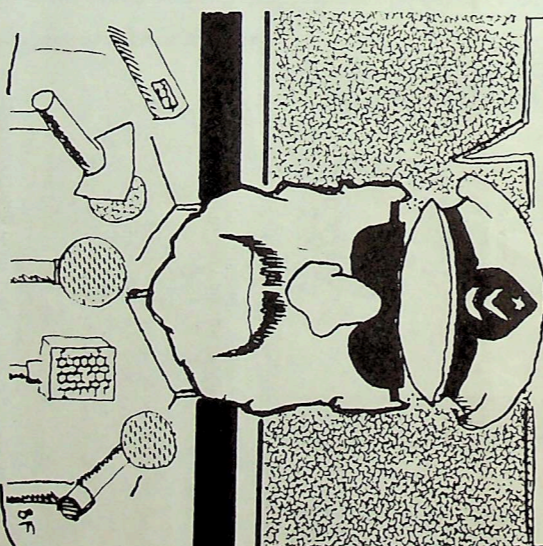
The movement of the revolutionary left (MIR) which has a strong following among slum dwellers and peasants, continued to organise in support of direct actions, in contrast to the law-and-order approach of the UP.

In Concepcion large sections of Allende's own socialist party and even the Christian Marxists became very critical of the UP. They joined with the MIR in popular assembly to build a practical armed revolutionary alternative to parliamentarism. But the UP government tried to prohibit the assembly and the Communist Party refused to participate.

The CP was the main factor in keeping the UP together, and keeping it within constitutional lines. It controlled most of the base committees of the UP and was well represented in the government.

Their line was not to extend to gains made, but merely to consolidate them, which necessitated supporting negotiations with the opposition, and including military men in the cabinet. The problems brought about by this programme have been coming to a head in recent months. The anti-government revolt by a tank regiment in June was only one indication of attempts by the bourgeois parties to regain control. But again this was met by a strategy of compromise - bringing more army men into the cabinet, and taking up more energetic dialogue with the opposition.

YES.. WE HAVE A TWO PARTY SYSTEM HERE... ONE PARTY IN POWER - THE OTHER IN GAOL!



The UP came more and more to rely on the armed forces. But the situation was rapidly approaching a final crisis. A stable cabinet could not be found from among the military, and with the lorry owners strike, a general unrest among the middle classes, Allende had to postpone all his foreign visits. Last week he finally paid the price for turning away from the only classes that had an interest in Chilean socialism - the working class and peasants.

The Chilean events show more clearly than ever the political bankruptcy of the peaceful road to socialism. For members of the British Communist Party it must provoke disturbing questions about the strategy of the British Road to Socialism, based on similar premises. In our solidarity actions in this country our slogans cannot stay at the level of defending democracy and restoring constitutional normality.

Of course we defend the UP against the forces of political and military reaction, but the only way to defend anything is to extend the revolution in Chile and prepare for a long period of protracted armed struggle. Only then can socialism become a practical reality.

Solidarity with the Chilean Working Class

ROBBERS BY APPOINTMENT



Kenneth Littlejohn

BANK ROBBERS AND BOMBERS BY APPOINTMENT TO H.M. GOVERNMENT.

Two Irish police stations petrol-bombed and the armed robbery of the Grafton Street bank in Dublin.

This is the proud record of the two Littlejohn brothers whilst in the pay of the British Government, the government pledged to end "terrorism and violence" in Ireland. Tory minister Geoffrey Johnstone admits he met the brothers and arranged their operations in Ireland. But he denies that bank-robbery was part of their orders. So why hire two men with records for bank-robbery?

Johnstone-Smith claims they were only sent to infiltrate the I.R.A. But surely two Englishmen, just arrived in Dublin, would have no hope of being trusted by ordinary I.R.A. Volunteers, let alone the leadership.

The purpose of the bombs and robbery was, of course, to discredit the I.R.A. in the South. Since the 1950's, both I.R.A.'s have shifted to the Left and are fighting for their own versions of socialism. So both Lynch's Fianna Fail Party and the present Coalition government of Fine Gael and Labour have a new challenge to themselves and their Parliamentary games. They have as much at stake in discrediting the Republicans as the British state. So it's no surprise to hear Lynch insist that, while in office, he knew nothing of the Littlejohns. Except that now, when everything looks like coming out, he says he had a loss of memory and that maybe, after all, he did know of their mission and would please forgive him, please? Like President Nixon at his best!

This, of course, poses the question of what other British agents have done in Ireland to give Republicanism a bad name, thereby bolstering up the regimes in U Dublin, Belfast and London.

DUBLIN BOMBS

Take the case of the Dublin car bombs. Last year, Lynch then Irish Prime Minister, needed to pass even more repressive legislation against the I.R.A. But it looked like opposition in Parliament was too strong. So, just before the vote, Dublin was obligingly blasted by two car-bombs, killing two and wounding seventy more.

The I.R.A. was duly blamed and the new law easily passed. Now Lynch admits no-one in Dublin thinks Republicans were responsible. But the law remains and nearly fifty men have been jailed for up to two years just on the say-so of a senior police officer.

But the violent reality of the British presence in Ireland is nowhere as obvious as in the North 20,000 troops occupy the six counties in order the government says to keep two religious groups apart. Without sectarianism this pretext would disappear so its understandable that it religious murders fail to occur the Army feels obliged to provide their own. Admittedly dozens of Catholics have been murdered by extreme loyalists like the Ulster Volunteer Force, as outlined in an earlier Big Flame article. These are part of reactionary campaign to terrorise the insurgent population into surrender and, as such, is kept going by British forces.

S.A.S.

For instance, during Operation Motor Man, the invasion of Free Derry and Free Belfast, an apparently new British unit appeared on the streets. They were instantly recognisable from their deep sunlans and desert-camouflage vehicles. They were the men of the S.A.S. (Special Air Services) just back from British imperialisms less well known war in Dhofar, Southern Arabia.

Soon after the arrival of the S.A.S. there was a sudden increase in "mysterious sectarian" killings, hooded bodies dumped, and shots from passing cars. Republicans began to look more closely at the origin and role of the S.A.S. It was formed in the Second World War for undercover work, mainly planting bombs and the covert assassination of people known to oppose British government policy. It has maintained the role ever since but recently it has also adopted the role of providing "pseudo-gangs", "pseudo-gang" discredits the "other side" with bombings and shootings that appear to be the work of "the enemy". They reached perfection in Kenya during the Mau-Mau uprising where British guerillas burnt down villages, disguised as nationalists guerillas burnt down villages to alienate the population from the real insurgents. The activities of the Littlejohns and the Dublin bombs fit into the same category.

DISGUSTED

In fact the S.A.S. had been in Northern Ireland long before their Southern Arabian units arrived during Motorman. Their activities so disgusted one of their members Private Donald Seaman, that he deserted and made strenuous efforts to contact British journalists in the Armagh area, to expose them. Needless to say the pressmen wanted nothing

to do with such revelations, soon after Seaman was found shot dead. With his death the S.A.S. had killed two birds with one stone. The I.R.A. were blamed for another "murder" and one of the few S.A.S. members with guilt feelings and the will to act had been disposed of.

There were many incidents Seaman could have exposed, had he lived. Light still needs to be shed on bomb explosions automatically blamed on Republicans but bearing none of their hallmarks, like the explosion at McGurk's Bar in 1971, fifteen people were killed in the bar, one used exclusively by Catholics and Republicans. Unlike I.R.A. bombs there was no warning and the I.R.A. definitely denied bombing what was in reality, one of their own pubs. Yet the British Press plastered it on the front page as an I.R.A. "atrocious", just as they were supposed to.

But the S.A.S. is at its most obvious in the numerous shooting incidents in Belfast involving, apparently armed "civilians". For example, on May 13th last year Patrick McVeigh, a Catholic, was shot dead at Rwerdale Park, Andersonstown by "men in plain clothes".

The Army later admitted they were soldiers. A fortnight later four people on the strongly loyalist Shankhill Road were fired on by a group of "civilians". These were assumed to be I.R.A. members and are attacked by a hostile crowd. An army patrol drew up and, also assuring they were I.R.A. stood by as the "terrorists" were beat up. But suddenly following a radio call they leapt in and pulled the men to safety. By this time the locals has caught on. The "civilians" with guns were true-blue English and definitely not Irish Republicans. But the most bizarre incident occurred in September 1972 in the New Lodge area when a Royal Marine patrol opened fire on a group

The recent spate of bombings in London and elsewhere has been linked, by the press and television, to the struggle in Ireland.

At the time of writing, we do not know who is responsible for these bombs and neither does the bourgeois press. The accusations by papers like the Sun against the Provisional I.R.A. are stammerous and totally unfounded. The Dublin command of the Provisionals has denied all involvement and has repudiated the actions. No other section of the I.R.A. has claimed responsibility (their usual practice - even if things "go wrong"). But one thing is clear: the bombings have done nothing but damage the struggle of the Irish workers against British Imperialism. Whoever planted the bombs, it is the Government and the British bosses who have benefited. This is true whether it was special branch agents - like in Dublin last December or a breakaway group of sympathisers with the republican movement, or even a third force completely unconnected with Ireland.

BOMBS IN BRITAIN..... WHO GAINS?

The bombs have been planted in places where the outcome could often only be injuring or killing working people. This contrasts with the I.R.A. bombing campaign in Ireland which has been aimed at military targets or at harassment of the military.

But the recent bombs have had no such military or political usefulness. From the start they could only fall into the trap which gave Tory politicians and the press chance for another hysterical witch hunt against the I.R.A. and all those who oppose the British role in Northern Ireland. This comes at a convenient moment for the Tories and the British State. It confuses the British working class and stirs up anti-Irish feelings and organisations, at a time when the Littlejohn affair was becoming an acute embarrassment to them. The revelations that British Agents had been involved in the Dublin bombs last December (see elsewhere in the paper) were making people in this country think again about the so-called peace keeping role of the British Army in Northern Ireland.

The outcry over the bombs has also given a good cover for the growing evidence of army atrocities in Ireland. Only recently Granada's 'World in Action' reported instances of army harassment and blackmail of young men in Belfast and Derry. Also this month the National Council of Civil Liberties, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association and the Association of Legal Justice listed more than 100 reckless killings of Irish men, women and children by British troops. And just recently, the coroner investigating the 'Bloody Sunday' massacre in Derry found the army guilty of unadulterated murder of 13 people.

of armed men in civilian clothes. The "civilians" returned fire and killed a Marine called Cutting. It was only later discovered that BOTH patrols consisted of British soldiers

LAUNDRY VAN

One of the few cases of the S.A.S. plain clothes soldiers being brought to real justice happened last year when an I.R.A. patrol stopped an S.A.S. unit in Belfast. The soldiers two men and a woman, had been spying on people in a Republican area, for weeks, driving a laundry van. Both soldiers were killed in the exchange of fire.

'DIRTY TRICKS'

These are only a few of the incidents occurring in a constant state of under-ground war between the Army's "Dirty Tricks" department and the Irish Resistance. These incidents have been known to the British and Irish Left for a long time but have been little publicised as most British people simply would not believe them.

The Capitalist Press treats the whole British Army as long suffering heroes and they have a virtual monopoly of information to working class people. Any facts that reveal the true nature of British military occupation could be dismissed as I.R.A. propaganda. But since the revelations of the Littlejohn brothers a small part of the real Tory strategy on Ireland has been exposed. As the Republican paper "An Proibacht" puts it "Littlejohn is the Irish name for Watergate but Littlejohn is merely the tip of the iceberg".

But militants in this country must not be taken in. We must fight against all attempts to forge a patriotic unity between British workers and bosses against the Irish working class

Recently Tory ministers and the press have been talking about passports for Irish people, and how we must stop doing "favours" to the Irish. The Sun was raving that it is time to stop featherbedding Eire: and insisted that Heath should say to the Southern government.

'that we will no longer go on supporting the economy of that country, by harbouring the Irish we are giving our enemies sticks with which to beat us.....'

Anyone who is even vaguely interested in the truth knows this for the disgusting rubbish it is. Lets all just remember that British capitalism makes over £20 Million profit from "supporting the economy of that country".

And "Harbouring the Irish" probably refers to the million Irish born workers in this country, who were forced to emigrate through poverty, and who are now central to the exploitation and profits of the bosses in the car and the building industries.

The recent bombings and the outcry against them should remind all socialists and militants how important it is to consistently defend and explain the struggle in Ireland to the British working class. Even if the recent bombs are the work of Republicans - however much we disagree with particular tactics - our central position has to be clear. We oppose the bombings because they do not successfully challenge the British state, and the role of British Imperialism in Ireland. This does not mean that we oppose violence or bombings in principle. We do however see no use in armed struggle that takes place in a vacuum has indiscriminate targets and is not understood by or part of, a developing mass movement.

But we must translate our criticisms into action by building that mass solidarity movement in this country, to fight for:

- † Complete withdrawal of British Troops from Northern Ireland.
- † Self-determination for the Irish people
- + Solidarity with all those republican and socialist forces, including both wings of the I.R.A. fighting British Imperialism.

BIG FLAME

Merseyside
Socialist September '73
Newspaper 4p
No.12

Cologne: unions help break ford strike.

FOR OVER A WEEK - AUGUST 24-31 - 16,000 WORKERS AT FORD'S COLOGNE PLANT WENT ON STRIKE AND OCCUPIED THE FACTORY.

The unofficial strike began in protest at the sacking of 500 Turkish workers who had arrived back late after the summer shutdown. But it quickly broadened into demands for higher wages and against the working conditions at Ford.

While the union dithered and tried to get the men back to work, the machinery of the state moved in on the strikers and finally the strike was crushed after police moved in and arrested 35 men.

For some time, the management at Ford Cologne have been in difficulties. Sales of the Consul/Guaradia are tumbling. The top manager was sacked for incompetence, and then management started to speed up production. They wanted to prune the workforce and latched onto the late return of the workers from holiday as an excuse. But they got more than they bargained for.

Of the 34,000 workers at Ford, the vast majority are immigrants, mostly from Turkey. Almost all of them work on the production line; the worst paid jobs. The rest of German industry is the same - immigrants or guest workers as the German bosses call them, are used as a reserve army, brought in when there is a boom, kicked out of the country when the market declines. A situation which the recent British Immigration Act was designed to create over here. In Germany no pretence is made to allow immigrants to settle. They enter the country on temporary work permits, leaving their families behind, and are forced to live in barracks, four or five to a room, often miles from the nearest town.

'Strike ~ Free'

German industry has a reputation for being strike free. The reputation is changing this year as a wave of illegal unofficial strikes have spread through many major factories. Much of this has been driven by a 13 per cent inflation in food prices in the last five months. Two weeks ago 50,000 were on strike, including General Motors Opel Plant. Immigrant workers have been in the lead in many of the strikes. The wildcats have forced the German Social Democratic Government into crisis. Chancellor Willy Brandt has attacked the strikers and the employers who have given in to demands for higher wages. The unions in Germany long ago accepted the local version of the Industrial Relations Act.



SCABS TRY TO STORM

THE OCCUPATION

We from the Y shop formed a demonstration. We marched through the final assembly, the press shop and most of the factory. In the Engine Plant most the German workers joined the demonstration. It was here that the demand for one mark (1G) an hour was first put forward. We marched to the Personnel Department. From the start the Works Council/the official trade union body which consists of full timers paid by Ford) tried to stop the strike and told us to get back to work.

Once upon a time the government and the press blamed greedily, nasty worker's wage rises for causing prices to go up. But then came the pay freeze and prices still continued to go up. A new monster, even more horrible than before had emerged for the government to blame - world commodity prices. With crocodile tears they tell us that they can do nothing in the face of these 'uncontrollable forces.'

Translated into real terms this means that in a competitive market system any attempt to really interfere with prices and profits, destroy business confidence and puts off the investment the government needs for expansion. The government is not an innocent bystander, it only refuses to interfere because the bosses pull the strings. The C.B.I.'s message to the government is clear: "No profits or price rises means no investment or expansion." If they don't like what the government is doing, they can sabotage it. When Nixon put a price freeze on in America, producers just held back supplies and forced prices up even further when the 'price freeze' was lifted, and the same happens here.

OUR EXPENSE

But this so-called "expansion" is not for everybody. In fact, it's at the expense of the working class. It's not just "the economy" but the capitalist economy that's expanding and that means we pay for "growth". Even bourgeois economists are agreed that "growth" relies on keeping personal incomes, in the form of wages and salaries, down to an absolute minimum.

Or, if you can't eat the meat eat the rich

This leaves more capital to boost expansion and profits, and gives them the opportunity of screwing the maximum amount of exploitation (sorry, "productivity") out of us.

All the Western capitalist states are fighting to "expand" faster than each other. This means too much demand on scarce resources and therefore a price boom and runaway inflation. The Tories, like Labour before them, accept this because their job is to make capitalism work through the State. Far from being helpless, they're trying very hard to use the boom in world commodity prices against the working class. For instance, to boost exports, they are encouraging meat to be sold abroad, pushing the prices up at home. The "great expansion race" requires that the exports of British capitalism are cheap enough to compete abroad.

Therefore, the government encourages devaluations in the value of the pound which is good for business competition, but bad for us because our money will buy even less than before. One economist estimates that the pound will be worth only 25p in 4 years.

- * They squeeze credit and push interest rates up, making it impossible to get a mortgage.
- * They put the rents up - 30% increase under the Tories.
- * They tax us more through VAT 2% on the price index.
- * They make us pay more for the rates and shift payment away from industry to encourage investment.

The strike grew over the next few days and the marches inside the factory continued. An unofficial strike committee of Turks and Germans was elected by the workers and the following demands agreed on:

- 16p an hour increase.
- Six weeks paid holiday.
- Reinstatement of the 500 sacked workers.
- Full pay for the period of the strike to be met by the company.
- A yearly bonus of a months pay.
- That the union - IG Metal - and the Works Council, should support the strike.

* That the union - IG Metal - and the works council should support the strike.

Unions

The union refused to recognise the strike or to fight for these demands, but was forced to negotiate with the strike committee. Before one of the meetings between the works council and the strike committee the workers were afraid to let the strike committee go. They demanded that two members of the union works council be handed over to the strikers as hostages to make sure the strike committee was safe.

After several days the union and management came up with an offer:

- A lump sum of £50 to 'counteract' inflation.
- Full pay for the strike.

The workers refused. But the end came soon. On Wednesday night 1,500 workers slept in Y shop. Next morning we formed a huge demonstration. The morning shift arrived and immediately joined the strike again. When we went back to the main gate, we were met by a counter-demonstration, shouting 'we want work'. Later we found that they were mainly foremen, supervisors, security men in plain cloths and a group of thugs brought in from Belgium, who had got in by saying they were in solidarity with the strikers. From Ford Gent. The counter-demonstrators started to fight with the strikers, and gave the police, who had been waiting for three days, an excuse to break into the factory and club the strikers. 35 workers were arrested. Some were injured. The strike was broken.

The leading German militants in the strike have been sacked and are waiting for Ford to decide whether to prosecute them for backing an illegal strike. The Turks are to be deported to Turkey where they must face the Fascist regime there.

In this context the "price freeze" is nothing but a big con. The Price Commission have not stopped retail prices going up as fast as they were before. The "counter-inflation Act" which set it up, allows for all "unavoidable" cost increases to be passed on in price rises. Yet only 40% of the rise in prices can be traced to that businessmen are driving horses and carts through it daily! The Price Commission doesn't stop price rises - it organises them! Meanwhile profits in some sectors reach record and "unbearable" levels. The freeze was a con-trick from the start. Talk about controlling prices was so much bullshit. Even the bosses mouthpiece, the Financial Times recently said so:

"Almost every official and economist concerned with the freeze, irrespective of his politics, is primarily concerned to primarily as bargaining counters and public relations gestures."

The Financial Times

The working class movement has got to start seriously considering ways of combatting price rises. Either in directly affected - housewives. Wage rises and rent strikes are ways of fighting price increases. But they alone are inadequate because they don't confront the reality of prices directly in the shops. There have been few effective ways found of doing this. Boycotts of products and shops have had limited success in the past, but have never been able to tackle prices of all commodities on a broad front. Discovering ways of economising these problems is an important task.

The re-appearance of our bulletin in changed form marks the keeping of a long standing commitment to comrades who came to our conference in Liverpool some months back. There we all promised to keep each other informed of our activities and political development; well this is our contribution for other groups and individuals we see our growth being linked to and to other comrades who we think would be interested to see how we are getting on. Contained in the bulletin will be :- i) All Base group leaflets.

ii) Base group reports and analyses.

iii) Internal and theoretical documents.

iv) Other documents we think are of use to a political development of the struggle.

These will be linked together by an introduction explaining the total work of the group and we hope an honest appraisal of our development or lack of it. We hope this will encourage other groups and comrades to begin to circulate more systematically their own material. The main emphasis in this bulletin is on leaflets, we're sorry there isn't more analytical stuff; this is at the moment in preparation by the car and community groups - (there is a document produced by the now defunct and transcended Standard Triumph group analysing the successes and failures of its work; comrades interested should send for a copy) - The material in here covers the last three months. Also in this bulletin is an internal document produced individually some time ago and at present being circulated in the group which we hope will balance the more 'practical' nature of the rest of the bulletin.

INTRODUCTION

In the last 3-6 months the structure of the group has changed considerably. there has been the emergence of a unified car group based on some people from the old Fords and Standards' groups - a large community group active mainly on rents in a community at Halewood - most recently a Group exploring new areas of intervention (known as Group 3) and an active womens' group that came out of long term discussions.

The womens' group is an autonomous unit in which the majority of women are active. They want the relationship to the rest of the group to work itself out in practice. Some women work in the other BG'S mostly in the Community group as that offers political work closer to what most women want. Recently ~~all~~ 3 out of the four women in the car group left it, feeling they'd rather put their energies into primarily working with women.

The group has started work in an estate in Kirkby outside L'pool called Tower Hill. At the moment this estate is the centre of the rents strike in L'pool - being on total strike. Housewives on the estate are a very active component of the struggle and some of them asked the BF women to help form a womens' group there - which could get women together to talk and organise and take action over facilities etc, which like on many such estates are totally lacking. There is no other group of women on the estate although in general IS is the leading influence in the Rents Action Group. But these women feel that IS can't provide for the political needs of the women of the estate so a separate womens' group is needed.

At the moment they are leafleting every house (3,000) on the estate to try to get a representative cross-section of women along. The initial activists have already had a number of smaller meetings. The first leaflet is contained in here. NB. The womens group as a whole does not work inside Merseyside Womens' Liberation Group, although some attend occasional meetings. This group has worked mostly around the issue of abortion and contraception and is soon to hold an important international conference.

The BF womens' group also hopes to develop something with the wives of Fords' militants, around the coming claim, especially over social security questions etc. Many of the wives of workers in the Ford group live in a similar area and we have also got to know more through our community work in Halewood. The initiative for the action came for one of the workers wives and from the Fords group generally: normally very little is done by the stewards to inform and involve the wives or tackle claiming issues. Claiming in general will be a major factor of our intervention in the strike if it comes off.

37, LUCERNE ST. 639 5448
LIVERPOOL 17 * 220 or 5223

11 = 11 WOVN
FALL!

2) The community group as mentioned before grew from a study group on the community, which investigated areas of intervention. But with the influx of new comrades the composition and orientation of the group changed. On the basis of previous investigation they had chosen for strategic reasons, Halewood an estate near Fords. Research had been done on the nature of the Fair Rent Act and it was around this issue that initial work began. A daily wall newspaper was put up which rapidly became a reference point, door to door leafleting was also carried out. No organisation existed in the community, not even an orthodox tenants association. Ours was the only initiative, so when we called a meeting 250 people turned up, other mass meetings were held and it became clear that 2 lines were emerging. One with us for a base-orientated action group, the other from labourist stewards and tenants for the old non-political, bureaucratic tenants association. The majority of tenants called for and supported the action group tendency, and there emerged a group of tenants, both housewives and workers who became with the community group the Halewood Tenants Action Group. Previously most of the tenants had firmly rejected an attempt by the other tendency to label us 'troublemakers' and 'outsiders,' etc. Because it was us with tenants who had taken the initiatives and done the work, we had become integrated and difficult to dislodge with the usual smear tactics.

A partial rents strike was instituted, which after some time, like most others lost some of its effectiveness. When it was in full swing tenants leafleted Fords saying any men who were telling their wives to pay were scabs, money was also collected at the gates. The Action Group has now settled down as an organisation of the advanced activists, and sees its role as a continuous one in the community, expanding from rents to social security and other issues. As an important part of political activity a successful kids party for 200+ was recently held.

Full-time involvement in Halewood has enabled the community group to begin to develop a political understanding of community politics, its importance and its relation to other areas of revolutionary struggle. This conscious reflection is seen as an important part of activity. The fact that we had a base in Halewood has enabled us to be very active in the general rents struggle in L'pool; organising demos, supporting other areas, anti-eviction squads etc. It would be fair to say we are regarded by tenant activists as an essential component of any action and organisation. Our work in Halewood has also pointed to the fact that meeting workers, to say nothing of housewives, in the community is perhaps a lot easier than meeting and working politically on the factory level, at least initially.

The car group works almost entirely around Fords. The situation at Standards deteriorated rapidly for us for three reasons 1) internal organisational problems which meant a crucial gap in our presence there. 2) related to this lack of a real strategy, after the acceptance of MDW. 3) Inside the factory, MDW did not 'bite' as we predicted, conditions altered very slowly and subtly so that MDW seemed to be a good thing, especially with the increased money. All the things we'd said about MDW must have seemed a load of rubbish to most workers, although we'd stressed the long term nature of the process. As we were the only opposition to MDW we got the brunt of rejection afterwards. IS, who refused to fight MDW, then started activity but the difficulty of political conditions is indicated by the fact that they've also given up, even paper selling. Our decline can be measured by the number of papers we used to sell (120+) out of 3,000, now we are lucky if we sell 20.

At Fords, since the summer the number of disputes has gone down compared to the previous high rate. This has to be set in the context of management-convenor deals to keep the peace and most stewards acceptance of this. Leaflets were circulated by one of the convenors saying there was too much disputes. The management has carried out a consistent policy of sacking militants, breaking up strong sections etc. The convenors and most of the stewards never fought this and the shop floor response was fragmented and sectional. Our leaflets reflect these incidents and our attempts to create a response to the management's 'disciplining' strategy. The latest incidents over the moving of men around show that the response from the rank and file is becoming stronger at least on some shifts. The earlier sackings included 2 militants who had been associated with us, and the management and convenors spread it round that it was because they were in Big Flame. This obviously made it very difficult for us and militants in the Base group, but fortunately the sackings stopped for a while and the heat was taken off.

The response to the leaflets and paper has been consistently good on the mass level (220-300 papers sold). But we have had many problems on an internal organisational level, there was a general fall in contacts with militants because of

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There was a general lack of clear purpose and strategy, made worse by the women being unhappy in the group. But recently we've emerged strongly again and our political influence in the group has never been higher, we've been making contacts with more militants and investigation has pointed to an untapped strength on many sections which we hope will emerge during the coming claim. The convenors and the Stewards organisation have done next to nothing for the claim. The only thing was our nationally distributed leaflet, followed by a meeting at Dagenham. At Halewood the dissatisfaction with this lack of action is growing (see the letter from Transmission workers.). We are calling a public meeting in the near future on the claim, meanwhile we are expanding the meetings of the base group and the militants we know are preparing with us a clear strategy for the claim. More national meetings are planned as well, by the way, as an international car conference in Paris.

Any predictions about whether there will be a strike and its outcome are very hazy at the moment. Most militants think the unions nationally and locally will try and do nothing, whether the rank & file have the capability of by-passing them at least at Halewood is a source of argument amongst militants. But shop floor strength is higher than the convenors inaction and pessimism suggests.

Group 3 is at the moment exploring the possibilities of expansion of our activity. These include another community group, youth work and the building industry. One area we have already decided to try to intervene in is the docks. We are going round making contacts and trying to get to know the situation at the moment. We are also bringing out a docks pamphlet based on the piece in Factfolder, with introductions depending on the place of ~~int~~ distribution.

The newspaper is still a source of dissatisfaction to us. Some of the issues we think have been good, but we are still not using it properly to explore new areas - this is partially related to a healthy tendency/desire for the paper not to become substitutive of other activity. But it is not doing this and we have tended to sell almost entirely in the places we our active (which is to some extent inevitable). But without extending ourselves we feel that we must make the paper relevant to more situations, although size is a problem. Sales in the places we sell (Fords, community, Plesseys, Docks, some building sites & general) have remained steady but is still far too small at around 500+ (the rest go nationally to make 1,000). There has also been worries about the content of the paper, not its political line but whether we are local enough and have enough well-researched articles - there is a feeling that some issues have been too 'ideological' in the sense that they have come too much from our needs and not understanding of the needs of the struggle.

In conclusion there is a growing feeling in the group that the links between areas of intervention is at last beginning to happen eg. the links between Car and community. But our problem remains how to translate this into a transformation of our general organisation, in terms of our meetings and activity - to break down the division between centre and base, beyond the simple integration of a few militants into total activity. This is what is dominating our discussions on organisation at the moment: various ideas and viewpoints are being put forward which we hope we can represent in future bulletins.

NB - There are a number of general leaflets included which we put out on Trades Council demos, or to all places of intervention. Another example is the Stoke Newington 8 leaflet which we gave out on a demo, then took over a square in the middle of the city and gave more out, talked to people and plastered posters all over shop windows.

TENANTS - WE CAN WIN

WE KNOW ALL ABOUT THE 'UNFAIR RENTS' NOW. WE KNOW THAT OUR RENTS ARE GOING UP BY A POUND THIS MONTH. AND WE ALL KNOW THAT THEY'LL GO UP AGAIN NEXT YEAR - AND THE YEAR AFTER. NOW IS THE TIME FOR SOME ACTION.

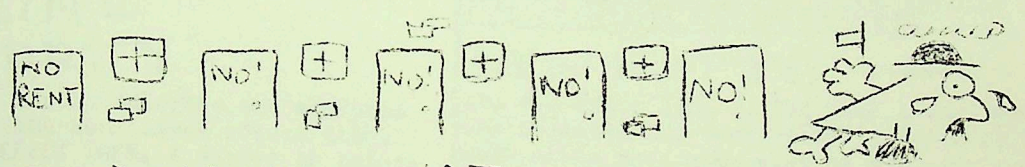
All over Merseyside, tenants are organising against the rent rises - some are withholding the increase like a 'rent freeze' - others are out on total rent strike.

ON MERSEYSIDE, tenants are taking action in Kirkby, Cantril Farm, Scotland Road area, Birkenhead, Halewood, Widnes, Fazakerly, the Bronte, Bootle, Lodge Lane, Falkner Place, Skelmersdale

NATIONALLY, tenants in Manchester, Oldham, Preston, Bolton, South Yorkshire, Birmingham, Glasgow, Newcastle, London, Bristol, Coventry, Sheffield, Cheltenham and other cities are ready to fight the rent rises in the biggest display of united tenant action that Britain has seen.....

WE ARE NOT ALONE!

FOR THE FIRST TIME THOUSANDS OF TENANTS ARE ORGANISING AMONG THEMSELVES - ONLY this fact could have produced such massive opposition to the rent rises. Others still wait for a lead, wait for someone to 'tell them what to do', NO ONE CAN DO THIS FOR US. The marches, the lobbies and expert speakers cannot on their own beat the rents. Only people organising themselves on their streets and blocks with their neighbours and mates. DO IT YOURSELF - DO IT NOW.



EIGHT IDEAS ON WHAT WE CAN DO NOW!

1. Don't pay the rent - Fair rent is bent.
2. Form action groups with your friends and neighbours in your block or street. It's not too late to carry out the fight.
3. Keep each other informed and talk to your neighbours about what's going on by going around with petitions etc.
4. Form groups who can picket the Rent Offices regularly with leaflets throughout October to explain to other tenants what is going on and to keep our solidarity.
5. If there are rent collectors, follow them around and make sure that people are not isolated and subjected to the pressure of our landlords.
6. Form 'anti-eviction' squads, as they are doing all over the country to support each other in case the bailiffs try to pick us off individually. This can be done in every street and block so that we feel safe from eviction.
7. If you are not working, talk about the rents in the Social Security, in the shops, the launderette, the pub, the bingo hall - everywhere where people meet together.
8. If you are working, discuss the rents at work. Organise for INDUSTRIAL STOP - PAGE in case of evictions, as they are doing in Kirkby and Skelmersdale.

NO RENT RISES! NO EVICTIONS!

The Rent Act is a political law. It is part of an attempt to keep the working class DIVIDED and DOWN where they live. It must be resisted by the only political power which can beat this attempt - the united power of working class people at work and at home, organising among themselves and breaking down the divisions that keep them apart.

THIS LEAFLET WAS PRODUCED BY TENANTS ON MERSEYSIDE AND BIG FLAME.....

37, LUCERNE ST. 639 5448
WIDNES, MERSEYSIDE * or

IF YOU DON'T HIT IT - IT WON'T FALL!

RENT FIGHT NEWS*

PRODUCED BY - HALEWOOD TENANTS ACTION GROUP

Halewood Tenants Action Group is a growing group of people who are active now in withholding the rent increase and organising their streets and blocks to do the same. We are also picketing the rent office every day - doing it ourselves. We are producing this newsheet to keep everyone on the estate informed. Our addresses are at the end of this sheet. JOIN IN NOW. We have had to organise quickly because things are moving fast and we can't wait for anyone to do things for us any more.

WE ARE HAVING OUR NEXT MEETING NEXT TUESDAY 17th OCTOBER AT 8.00 in THE HOLLIES ROAD SOCIAL CENTRE. COME ALONG.

IF YOU ARE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

People on Social Security are confused about how the rent rises affect them. THEY DO AFFECT THEM. A number of things need to be said about this.

1. If you're on the S.S. you have probably received a COST OF LIVING rise in your payments recently. THIS IS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE RENT. Don't let any of it go over the counter.

2. If you have not received money in your rent allowance to pay for the rent rise, you do not have to pay the rise until they give you the money - this may take a month or so till this comes through. Only when they give you this additional money, need you decide whether to pay the increase or not. If you don't pay then, they will probably not give you the rent money, but pay it themselves straight to the housing.

3. On Social Security when the rent of your house reaches a certain level in the future - about £6.50 - the Social Security will start to harass you and say they wont give you any more rent allowance. This means either that you will have to pay some of your living allowance on rent, or that they will try to move you to cheaper accomodation. THIS IS HOW IT WILL AFFECT YOU. SO JOIN IN AND FIGHT THE RENTS NOW WITH ALL THE SUPPORT YOU CAN GIVE.

PICKETS

As from Tuesday tenants have been picketing the Rent Office in Blakacre Rod. We are realising that no one can do it for us. Anyone can do it, the more the merrier! We are not forcing people to do anything, just letting people know as they go in to pay their rent without the increase and that they are not alone. A great many of the tenants are not paying the increase and are passing around information to their neighbours about what is happening. Many tenants have been showing their rent books to show that they are not paying, and if a tenant feels a bit doubtful about going in to pay on their own, someone will be there to go in with them and give them support so that they don't feel on their own.

IF THE RENT MAN TELLS YOU THAT EVERYONE ELSE IS PAYING, THEN HE IS LYING!

NEW HUTTE

The New Hutte lane estate have a rent man who collects the rent every Tuesday. This week women have been meeting the rent man in groups from their block or street to support each other. When the rent man comes to your home, it is easy for him to kid you that everyone else is paying. DON'T LET HIM. Some tenants have paid because they are isolated, but many tenants are solid and are not paying.

Next Tuesday the rent man comes to New Hutte Lane again. We must organise people to follow him around. He'll feel like the Pied Piper and we can tell people that they are not alone.

YOU DON'T HAVE
TO PAY THE
RENT INCREASE

WE ARE NOT
ALONE!

ITS HAPPENING IN MANY OTHER PLACES TOO!

All over Mersey side tenants are organising against the rents. Near us tenants on Mackets Lane estate are not paying the increase. Spoke tenants are now organising to do the same. The same applies in Netherley, Cantril Farm, Gillmoss, Huyton, Everton, Scotland Road, Bootle and parts of Kirkby. Also in Birkenhead. In Tower Hill estate, Kirkby, no one is now paying rent or rates. Like other people Kirkby tenants have organised 'ANTI EVICTION SQUADS' of neighbours who will not allow anyone to be evicted. If the bailiffs come, the word will go around quickly and the house in question will quickly be surrounded by tenants from the estate.

One Halewood Tenant said 'They can't put hardboard on all the houses.' Another housewife with six children was saying 'As soon as they try to put us out, we'll be right back in again!'

It is important for us to know how strong we are because the newspapers and the television will be lying about the state of our fight, if they bother to mention it at all. Don't believe their lies. Don't let rumours start. Keep in touch with the neighbours and get first hand information from the pickets at the rent office.

NATIONALLY

In fact it may not come to evictions since not only on Merseyside but ALL OVER THE COUNTRY tenants are organising just like us. In Bolton, Preston, Sheffield, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Parts of London, Chatham, Widnes, Bristol, Southampton, Birmingham and many other cities throughout Britain pressure is being put on the Government, and our so-called rulers. IF WE DON'T PAY THE INCREASE, REMEMBER THAT THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF TENANTS DOING EXACTLY THE SAME THING...MANY OF THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME JUST LIKE US.

WE NEED FUNDS

We are giving out Rent Fight News free of charge in every home, because it is important that everyone gets one. But the paper and the stencils cost money. Money is also needed to hire halls, get paper for posters and glue for sticking them up (until people stop pulling them down.) Contributions will be welcome and you can give them to anyone on the picket, or to Mrs Gibbon at meetings, or direct to Mrs Gibbon who is the treasurer at the moment who lives at 190 Baileys Lane.

The important thing about any tenants organisation we make in Halewood is that we let each other know what is happening as quickly as possible. Committees that exclude the majority from taking part are useless. Every block and every street must have its own action group which meets regularly in each others homes if possible. NO CLOSED COMMITTEES X+X+X Every meeting should be open to all involved.

EVERY COMMITTEE
AN OPEN
COMMITTEE

MEETINGS

There have been two meetings so far on the rents. One last Tuesday 3rd Oct in Hollies Road Centre at which 150 people were present. And one last Sunday in the car park of the shopping precinct at which there were at one stage about 200 people. There will be a meeting this Friday at 7.30 in the Labour Club. But in between the meetings is when the real work will take place to ensure whether we win or not.

ADDRESSES

Mr Bowler 60 Blakacre Road
Mr and Mrs Neilon 77a Penmann Crescent
Mr J Halewood 43 Antons Road
Mr and Mrs Evans 12 Romford Way
Mr D Bryan 254 Elsinore Heights
Mrs K Gregory 178 Baileys Lane
Mrs J Connor 200 Baileys Lane
Mrs P Cave 143 Blakacre Road
Mrs L Gibbon 190 Baileys Lane.
Mr C Thomas 3 Maldon Close
Mr W Garnett 3 Maldon Close
Mrs G Kerfoot 6 Penmann Close
Mrs Mc Mullen 47 Dunacre Walk.

We hope to have many more names for the next newsheet - we welcome any suggestions for what we ought to put in. And are sorry if we have missed things out which you think ought to have gone in, XXX XX

RENT FIGHT NEWS

Nº 3

PRODUCED BY HALEWOOD
TENANTS ACTION GROUP

AT THE PICKETS EVICTIONS?

If you see men and women with prams and cups of tea standing outside the Rent Office in Blakeacre Road, these are the pickets of the Halewood Rent Action Committee. We are spending time there to show all tenants who are withholding the rent increase that they are not on their own. Also we have information regarding Social Security problems, other matters and local meetings. And we have the names of people in every street and block who are actively fighting the rent increases. COME AND JOIN US IF ONLY FOR AN HOUR OR SO AND HELP KEEP YOUR FIGHT GOING.

PENSIONERS

IF YOUR RENT HAS GONE UP BUT YOU HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED THE FULL AMOUNT FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY TO COVER IT, YOU DO NOT HAVE TO MAKE UP THE DIFFERENCE UNTIL THE SOCIAL SECURITY HAVE MADE UP THE WHOLE OF YOUR RISE. THE REASON FOR THIS IS BECAUSE YOU MUST HAVE A FIXED AMOUNT TO LIVE ON SO YOU ARE NOT LEGALLY OBLIGED TO PAY ANY OF YOUR LIVING ALLOWANCE TO MAKE UP ANY DIFFERENCE CAUSED BY THE RENT RISES. LEAVE THAT TO THE SOCIAL SECURITY.

IF YOU HAVE ANY IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS OR ARE THREATENED WITH EVICTION, CALL THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE SAID THEY ARE PREPARED TO KEEP US ALL INFORMED

486 5411
486 6831
486 5666

It is possible that over the next two months Liverpool Corporation may try and evict a few people in each area of Liverpool to try and break our rent strike. They will either try to pick on the most militant ones or else some one who is weak who they think they can evict without a fight. TENANTS ALL OVER MERSEYSIDE ARE PREPARED FOR THIS.

SOME FACTS —

1. The Corporation need to go to court to get a Court Order before they can evict someone now. They can't just come and throw you out like they used to.
2. Anybody who they plan to try and evict must have ONE MONTH'S NOTICE to quit. This gives us plenty of time to prepare for the bailiffs.
3. The Trades Council Coordinating Committee which is made up of tenants' organisations from all over Merseyside who are on rent strike, and also trade union representatives, has pledged full support to any tenant threatened with eviction. THAT MEANS A LARGE NUMBER OF TENANTS ORGANISATIONS AND TRADE UNION BRANCHES WILL COME TO OUR SUPPORT IN CASE OF EVICTION.

WE BELIEVE THAT NO ONE SHOULD BE EVICTED FOR ANY REASON DURING THE RENT STRIKE. WE WILL NOT PAY BACK ANY ARREARS INCURRED DURING THE STRIKE AND WILL STICK TOGETHER WITH ALL OTHER LIVERPOOL TENANTS TO SEE THAT THIS IS SO.

THAT'S WHY WE SAY.....

OPEN MEETING — 8.00 p.m.
* THURSDAY 26th OCT *
HOLLIES ROAD SOCIAL CENTRE

RENT FIGHT NEWS N° 4

We're Going GREAT!

Last week the response to the picket at Blakeacre Rd. Rent Office was really good. Different people were on the picket, and if anything fewer people were paying the increase than before, as pensioners and people on Social Security realise they don't have to pay the extra, especially if they haven't been given it yet. it was

T.V. Was there

Granada T.V. came down Friday morning to make a film of the picket and interview people as they came out of the rent office....everybody had a laugh and only one person said they had paid the increase.

We think we got problems

In Runcorn Development Corporation's Haltonbrook Estate, when they put the rents up a few months ago they sent every tenant a new lease with the higher rents written in....and a notice to quit, just to make sure everyone paid up! A lot of people on Social Security have had the gas and leccy cut off, so some tenants have formed a "People's Manweb" which comes round and turns it straight on again. They've also formed

PRODUCED BY:
HALEWOOD TENANTS ACTION GROUP

their own Claimants Union and at the moment are campaigning for £2 a week for Winter heating.

TUCKED AWAY ON PAGE 13...

In the Liverpool Echo last week just before the ads for the houses for sale was a tiny paragraph saying that I estimated that 80% of Corpy tenants were on some kind of rent strikewe didn't realise ourselves it was so solid!

They're getting worried

A lady who is working with the Action Group says that her Mum, who also lives on the estate, has just got a letter from the Corpy thanking her for paying the increase....incredible but true....we must be winning!

Scottie Rd

There was a march from Scottie Rd. to the Town Hall on Monday. A couple of hundred adults and kids went along and handed in a petition.



RENTS
MARCH

starting 3pm
SUNDAY
Shopping Centre
Car Park

Money

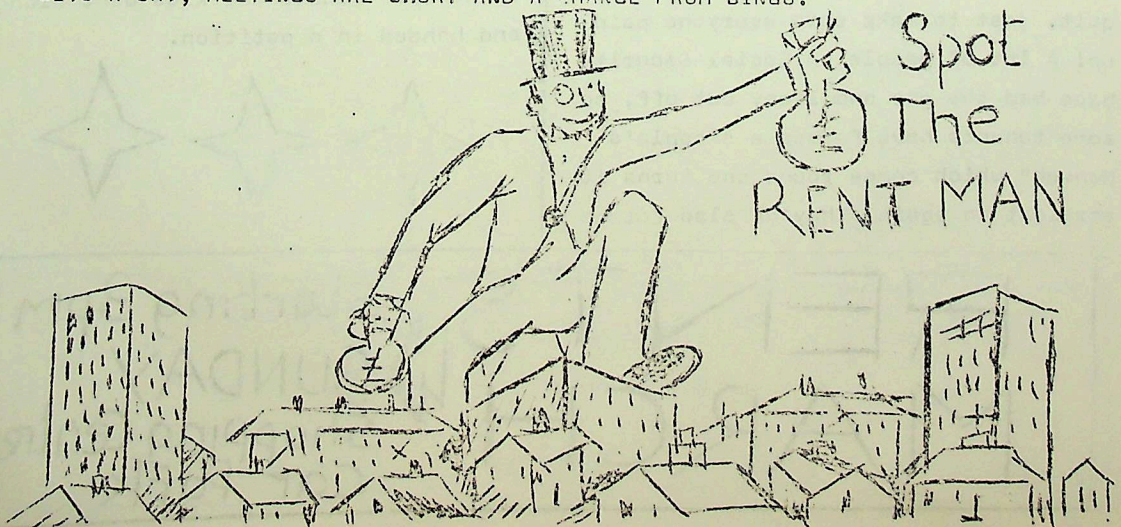
Its been a good week....£3 was raised from the collection at the picket on Friday....thanks everyone who gave.... Will the lady who wanted 9p change from 10p please see the treasurer;

Then on Monday about a dozen women and children went down to Fords in the evening and collected for the funds. The men were working overtime so only a couple of hundred came out, but they were very friendly and we collected thirty bob in about five minutes. We told them we'd be backing them up when they come out on strike next year so they could back us up now.. So with the £3 collected at the last meeting at Hollies Rd. we've got a total of £7.50. The paper for the Rent Fight News costs £4.20 for three thousand copies, and the meeting hall costs £3 a night to hireso we are self-supporting at the moment.



Next Tenants Action Group Meeting Tues 9pm. Hollies Rd Community Centre

.....THERE IS NO COMMITTEE, ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN, EVERYONE GETS A SAY, MEETINGS ARE SHORT AND A CHANGE FROM BINGO!



RENT FIGHT NEWS 5

PRODUCED BY HALEWOOD TENANTS ACTION GROUP.

SOME OF THE QUESTIONS PEOPLE ARE ASKING

"WHY ARE YOU WASTING YOUR TIME? YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY IN THE END...."

The obvious answer is that if we fight these increases together, we have a good chance of winning. But if we sit back and take it, WE'VE ALREADY LOST. And remember that this is only the FIRST INCREASE, and if we don't show that we aren't going to pay this one, the rents will continue to go up and up and up....We're not wasting our time; this is where we start to say "we've had enough!"

"WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE CONY START EVICTING PEOPLE?...."

The first point is that if and when they try evictions, they simply cannot evict everyone. And its going to be twice as hard for them because every tenant on rent strike is supported by every other tenant doing the same thing, not only in Halewood or on Merseyside but throughout Britain. Apart from the dockers who have pledged strike action in case of evictions, other factories all round the country have pledged similar support. WE ARE MANY AND THEY ARE FEW. WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THEY TRIED TO JAIL THE FIVE DOCKERS EARLIER THIS YEAR?

To be given an eviction notice you have to be a FULL THREE WEEKS in arrears. That means for us at least ten weeks on partial rent strike before we receive any notice to quit. And then we have to have one month's notice which gives us plenty of time to inform the other tenants' groups and prepare the anti-eviction squads. IF THEY TRY AND EVICT SOMEONE? THEY JUST WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO IT. WE WON'T LET THEM.

ARREARS?.... By going on rent strike, we go into arrears, but is this so bad when paying the extra pound means we don't have enough food or clothing for the kids...and certainly not enough money to enjoy ourselves with. If we stick together during the strike, we stick together when it's over. WE WILL NOT PAY ARREARS INCURRED DURING THE STRIKE. The Trades Council tenants Merseyside Committee are looking into any threatened eviction immediately it occurs WHATEVER THE REASON FOR IT.

DO WE HAVE TO PAY THE POUND IF WE'RE ON SOCIAL SECURITY?.....

A large number of people on rent strike at the moment are living on Social Security, but are still active in the strike. You get so little on the S.S. that no one can really afford to pay the rent anyway. WHAT YOU PAY ON RENT YOUR KIDS MISS IN FOOD. Even though the S.S. may pay your rent at the moment, the strike still concerns you. THE INCREASES DUE OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS WILL TAKE RENTS HIGHER THAN THE £6 CEILING THE S.S. ARE PREPARED TO PAY AT THE MOMENT. After that you will probably be forced to find cheaper accomodation, as they will not continue to pay your full rent.

RENT FIGHT NEWS

N°5

PRODUCED BY HALEWOOD
TENANTS ACTION GROUP

WHO TO CONTACT

CONTACTS OF THE WEEK....If you have any problems, questions, or want to know more about the rent strike contact either...Mr and Mrs Bowler, 60 Blakeacre Rd,

S.S. INFO

or Dave Brian, 254 Elsinore Heights.

Watch the Wall Newspaper in the shopping centre. It will soon be having information on what you are supposed to get from the Social Security and, MORE IMPORTANT, HOW TO GET IT.

WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

The Liverpool Echo printed a load of lies about our strike on Tuesday 14th Nov. They reckon its nearly over. We know that's garbage because its growing. BUT WE CAN'T EXPECT MUCH ELSE FROM THE ECHO. (or any other big time paper) THE LIVERPOOL CORPORATION PAY ALOT OF MONEY FOR ADVERTISING ALL THOSE BORING CORPY ADS AND NOTICES THAT APPEAR EVERY DAY IN THE POST AND ECHO. THEY DON'T WANT TO LOSE THAT MONEY, SO THEY ALWAYS SIDE WITH THE CORPY. They distort our struggle or just don't report it at all. The Post and Echo is a business out to make a proffit (and makes millions every year) like every business it doesn't like workers getting militant. So who's surprised when it distorts our struggles.

NO EVICTIONS IN KIRKBY

KIRKBY: After an eviction notice was th served on a militant tenant in Tower Hill, 400 tenants from Kirkby and other areas of Merseyside blocked off all the roads leading to the estate within three hours. The Council didn't dare attempt an eviction then, WE WERE TOO STRONG AND TOO QUICK!! Since then, a rota of tenants have kept a day and night guard on the house, and Merseyside Action Groups are ready to mobilise at a ffw hours notice. Later that evening there was a false alarm that an eviction was taking place.... WITHIN TEN MINUTES THERE WERE 70 PEOPLE AT THE HOUSE.

The show of strenght at Kirkby is fantastic. They can't possibly ^{evict} anyone. And when they tryan eviction in Liverpool (if they do) we will be better prepared through our experience in Kirkby to stop once and for all any possibility of eviction.

Factories all over Merseyside are being mobilised - promises of immediate stoppage from dockers and building workers, and many local firms are only the start of a process that will mean a Merseyside industrial strike , if they try to evict any of us. Standards ahave also offered support.

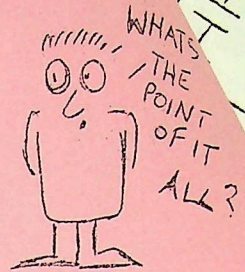
WE ARE NOT ALONE AND WE WILL WIN!!

OTHER PLACES...OTHER PARTS

20,000 tenants are on rent strike in Greater Manchester area...10,000 in South Yorkshire... Old Swan is still strong and well organised... Netherley women on rent strike have been touring the building sites to get support, and they got plenty... In Scotland Road eviction notices received have been pinned to a notice board outside the Rent Office by the pickets, with a big notice saying "JOIN OUR CLUB" ALL OVER THE STRIKE IS GROWING... AND NEW AREAS ARE GETTING ORGANISED.

UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE PAY

WHY IS THE BIGGEST RENT STRIKE EVER GOING ON IN BRITAIN? WHY ARE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF COUNCIL TENANTS IN 80 TOWNS AND CITIES NOT PAYING THE NEW RENT RISES.

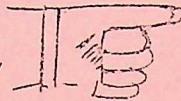


WELL.....



BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT ARE NOT GOING TO GIVE OUT ANY MONEY TO HELP LOCAL COUNCILS AND CORPORATIONS WITH THEIR HOUSING COSTS.

SO SOMEONE HAS GOT TO FORK OUT TO STOP THE CORPY HOUSING DEPARTMENT GOING INTO DEBT...



AND THATS US !!!

WHY IS IT ALWAYS WORKING CLASS PEOPLE WHO HAVE TO PAY OUT? In the factories and where we live, it's always the same. When the bosses and the government need more profit, we are the ones who have to work faster, sweat harder and go on the dole when a company is not 'profitable'. Some life. And now they want us to pay double the rent over the next three years. WHY ALL THIS?

BECAUSE OUR INTERESTS AND THEIRS CAN NEVER BE THE SAME. They want to use us to increase their profits; they want to divide us to maintain their position of power; they want to maintain their position of power so they can use us to increase their profits...AND SO THE PROCESS GOES ON. AND EVERY TIME THEY HAVE A CRISIS LIKE 'INFLATION' THEY BLAME IT ON US, AND OFF IT GOES AGAIN.

WHEN YOU LOOK AT HALEWOOD, YOU CAN SEE HOW THEY TRY TO DIVIDE US. Families who formerly lived in close communities for generations in the cities, have been divided up and shoved out on to barren estates, (conveniently close to factories like Fords and Standards) with no facilities, lousy housing conditions and few places to get together, except at the Bingo or the pub.

WITH THE PRESENT LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT, THEY ARE TRYING TO MAKE ANOTHER DIVISION BETWEEN THOSE WHO WORK, AND THOSE WHO EITHER CAN'T GET A JOB, OR ARE NOT PREPARED TO WORK FOR A LOW WAGE IN DANGEROUS AND BORING CONDITIONS. When the bosses want us to work, they make us work; and when they don't want us, they put us on the dole or S.S. But we don't work for the love of it, but only to get money, SO WHETHER WE ARE WORKING OR NOT, WE HAVE THE SAME NEEDS TO LIVE.

The so-called 'Fair Rents' will, if we allow it, divide us further. Since, as the rents go up, those who can't afford them will gradually be moved into 'cheaper accomodation'. Roll on the ghettos!!



IF YOU DON'T HIT IT, IT WON'T FALL.

The reason why the biggest rent strike in our history is going on is because working class people are starting to fight back, at this latest attempt to divide us and screw more money out of us, only to keep the bosses and the government in profits and power.

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF TENANTS ARE SAYING "YOU'RE NOT ON!".....JOIN THEM!!

WHAT'S THE POINT OF IT?

HALEWOOD TENANTS ACTION GROUP.

RENT FIGHT NEWS NO 7

WALL NEWSPAPER... SOCIAL SECURITY.....

Last Thursday, people involved in Halewood Tenants Action Group were told by the police that they could no longer use the boarded - up shop at the corner of the shopping centre as a wall-newspaper. We were threatened with a number of vague charges and told we would be hearing from them again. The police and Ravenseft, the local property owner, may or may not bring charges against individuals in the Action Group.... What is important is that the police and the property owners are making it as difficult as possible for Halewood tenants to get together and organise around such things as the Rent Strike. If more people became involved in the Wall-newspaper, the police would find it more difficult to pick off individuals. Halewood tenants should be able to run their community as they want it without being mucked around by the police. It is curious that this incident occurred over TWO MONTHS after the Wall Newspaper has been running very successfully and attracting a lot of interest. Maybe its because we're trying to brighten and tidy up the wall by giving it a coat of paint.

Since we've been putting information on the Wall Newspaper about Social Security rates more and more people have been coming up to us there and telling us about their various problems..

Everyone has problems with the Social Security - Nobody seems to be getting the right amount...

Everyone has realised by now just what a con. the rebate system is..Not one person has come up to the Wall Newspaper and said that they're getting the rebate...

IN FACT most people on Social Security have found that it is being used against them as an excuse to cut down their money...


..Take John, a pensioner who lives in Halewood: They've recently cut £1.77 off his allowance and are trying to say that the reduction in money is because of his rebate ... BUT HE IS'NT GETTING A REBATE....THE REBATE SYSTEM ISN'T WORKING... AND THE SOCIAL SECURITY ARE USING THE REBATE AS AN EXCUSE TO CUT DOWN ON RENT ALLOWANCE - When the rebate system does work its a con.- but they can't even take it work.

As we all know the way they assess th the rebate is totally unfair.. If a son is earning more than his parents who he is staying with, even though he is not the householder his wage is being used to assess the rebate they get....

As we've been telling everyone at the Wall Newspaper - Its no good going down to Garston on your own if your being fiddled....And its no good having a few experts doing it for you The only way is for EVERYONE whose got problems to go down in a gang and sort it out together

We need a meeting very soon for every one whose on SocialSecurity- so we can talk about these things.....

DON'T PAY THE INCREASE
YOU ARE NOT ALONE!



CLAY CROSS DEMO...

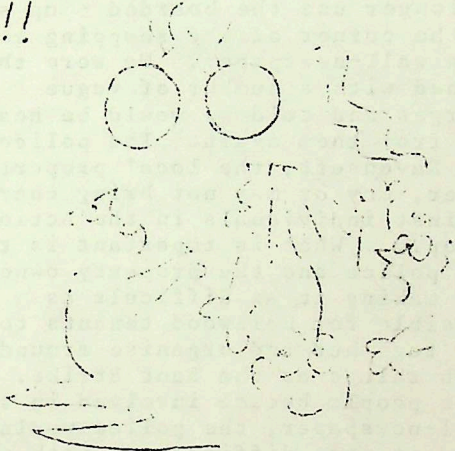
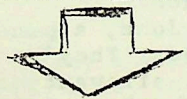
"GREAT SUCCESS!!"

Last Sunday, over 2,000 tenants representing Rent Strike Action Groups from all over the North of England marched through Clay Cross in Derbyshire on a demonstration in support of the Labour Councillors who have refused to implement the Fair Rent Act. Unlike the cowardly Labour Council in Liverpool, the Clay Cross lads are refusing to help the government, they are not co-operating with them.. If the Rent fight is organised in the streets as well as in the Council Chamber, Clay Cross will be another of the many towns and cities defying the Fair Rent Act.

Tenants from Leathers Lane and Macketts Lane were on the march with posters and placards, together with three coachloads of tenants from Merseyside...

WE ARE NOT ALONE!!!

CHILDREN'S
CHRISTMAS
PARTY
Jan 4th



Halewood Tenants Action Group have decided to try and organise a party for the kids in Halewood. Obviously we won't be able to have every kid at this first party but its a start.. We thought that if this one was for 3 to 8 yr olds, we could see how it goes and then start talking about having other parties for the rest of the kids... We need lots of help to organise this party so if anyone wants to join us Give your name to anyone at the picket or at the Rummage Stall. We hope to have a meeting some time next week to talk mainly about the party..... Details of this will be on the wall.....

RUMMAGE STALL
IN AID OF KIDS CHRISTMAS PARTY
FRIDAY 8th DEC AT THE
MARKET NR CAR PARK.

The stall that we had planned for last Friday was rained off.. BUT we hope the one this Friday will be a success. Please come and buy and also bring any jumble that you have.....

"SEE ALSO HALEWOOD TENANTS LEAGUE ON SOCIAL SECURITY"

Action
day

HALEWOOD TENANTS ACTION GROUP

RENT FIGHT NEWS 8

HALEWOOD TENANTS RUMMAGE STALL HAS BEEN HELD FOR THE LAST TWO WEEKS IN THE MARKET ON FRIDAY MORNINGS. MORE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CLOTHES HAVE BEEN RECEIVED AND THE STALL WILL BE THERE THIS FRIDAY. ALL FUNDS (£10) SO FAR ARE IN AID OF THE XMAS CHILDRENS PARTY FOR HALEWOOD KIDS TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 4th AT HOLLIES ROAD CENTRE.

IT'S WORTH YOUR WHILE TO TAKE A LOOK...THERE ARE MANY NEW BARGAINS.

CHILDRENS' XMAS PARTY SOON!

ON THURSDAY 04th JANUARY THERE IS TO BE A PARTY FOR HALEWOOD KIDS AT HOLLIES ROAD CENTRE. FOR CHILDREN BETWEEN 7/3 and 6 it is taking place between 3.30 and 6.00 p.m.

We hope to have games, films and other entertainments..and of course food and drink. This party is being organised by tenants of Halewood and all help will be welcomed, and contributions of food for the party, however small. Also we would welcome anyone who would like to give a hand. THE MORE THE MERRIER, AND IF THIS ONE IS SUCCESSFUL, WE HOPE IT WILL BE THE FIRST OF MANY.

TICKETS FROM THE JUMBLE STALL OR FROM THE PICKETS ON THE RENT OFFICE (THURSDAY AND FRIDAY MORNING). Each family who has children going is asked to make a donation of 10p for their tickets that they need.

EVICCTIONS? THEY HAVE GIVEN UP!

On Monday night in Kirkby, Tower Hill tenants on total rent strike heard the news that Kirkby Council have given up trying to evict people any more. Merseyside tenants have shown such solidarity when any eviction attempts were made that Kirkby Council are now going to try and take them to court instead and get the money taken from their wages.

However, the tenants are sticking together and will fight the council on this on the shop floor. Meetings are being held and plans being laid.

We beat the council on evictions - NOW WE MUST STAND TOGETHER AND BEAT THEM IF THEY TRY TO TAKE OUR MONEY FROM US IN OTHER WAYS.

CONTACTS -

IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE RENTS OR SOCIAL SECURITY PROBLEMS, OR IF YOU ARE WITHOLDING THE RENT INCREASE AND WISH TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW THE STRIKE IS GOING, CONTACT THE FOLLOWING.....

Mr and Mrs Anson 71a Penmann Cres
Dave Brian 254 Elsinore Heights

DON'T PAY THE INCREASE YOU ARE NOT ALONE

HAPPY XMAS TO ALL OUR READERS!

FORD

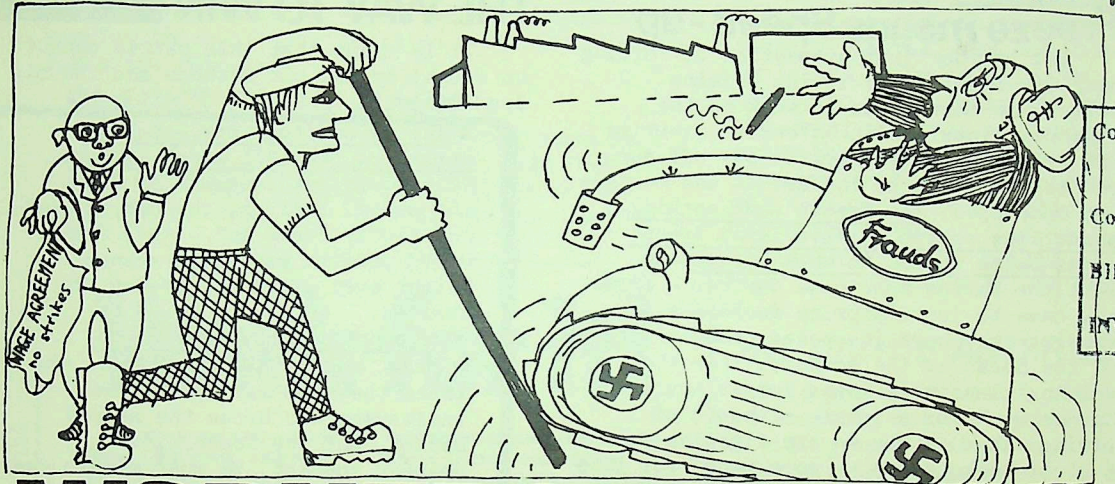
a Big Flame newspaper
produced in London
and Liverpool, with and
for Ford workers.

SPECIAL

No.1

Feb.1973

Price 1p



Comune di
Bibliot
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BIDRU
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WORKERS BEWARE!

The battle over the '73 Fords contract has begun, but this time it is obvious that the workers are not just fighting Fords - we are taking on the government wage freeze as well.

What is the freeze and what does it mean for Ford workers ?

THE FREEZE - FORD LEADS THE WAY

We know the freeze only too well - unlike most British workers we've had our own Ford freeze for the past two years. It was forced on us by the Union-Company deal, signed over our heads, which brought the 9-week strike of '71 to its untimely end.

Fords in fact invented the Tory freeze, by their American-style contract agreements with the unions in '69 and '71, backed by penal sanctions, secret ballots, and no-strike clauses for the 2-year period. All this was agreed upon by our Union representatives. While the Unions opposed the Industrial Relations Bill by political "protests", "Non-cooperation" etc, they seem to have been willing to have it enforced on Ford workers, including a company ballot.

Where Fords showed the way, the Tories

have followed. When we look at the policies for Phase 2 and Phase 3 we see all these methods applied at the national level, backed by the Industrial Relations Act. Fords has become the chief testing-ground for Tory "wage restraint" just as it was for Labour's "incomes policy" in '69. The company has been able to dictate to us when we can make a clam - now the state has extended this to the national level, dictating to us how much we can claim as well.

In other words, the Ford freeze has now been forced on the whole of the working class- all increases are to be reduced to 4% : workers must work harder while the buying power of their wages falls. We are all to tighten our belts

THE PRICE THAT WE'LL PAY...

in the 'national interest', until 'later' - ie indefinitely. In the meantime our standard of living is to be cut, to divert capital and goods from home markets to export markets. It is vital for the State to attack working class wages now, to safeguard Ford's and British exporters trading profits with the EEC.

CONT. ON P2 →

● THE CONTRACT IS A FREEZE!

CONT. FROM P.1

What this means for the working class can be shown by our experience at Fords. After 2 years and three so-called pay rises we are now no better off than we were in Feb. '71 while Fords profits and export figures have soared. The cost of living has gone up by more than 20% since then, entrance to the Common Market will bump up food prices even more, as will VAT, while rents, mortgages and rates are all scheduled to have big rises. All this means that we need at least £10 extra basic now, just to keep standing still -and still at the bottom of the carworkers' league.

Freeze means Speed-up

But its not just a question of forcing down our standard of living -rising prices tie more of us to work on the assembly lines - with extensive overtime and gruelling shift work to pay off our rents and debts to the credit and mortgage companies. The freeze says nothing about line speeds - there is no freeze on us being forced to work harder. In fact the Tories have gone further - firms now have to justify price increases by showing they have increased productivity on the backs of the workers. For the working class this means longer hours and harder work for a lower standard of living :that is why we are fighting for a 35 hr week paid 40 - more money for less work.

HOW TO BEAT IT

The Ford workers defeated the Labour incomes policy in '69 - we can defeat the Tory freeze in '73.

How? We cannot fight this struggle by leaving it to the trade- union leadership and gentlemanly sparring around the negotiating table. The freeze has reduced union wage-bargaining to a farce - a set-piece confrontation where the result is decided in advance by the state. What can the unions do? They are so scared of a battle with the state that the official Ford claim doesn't even mention the freeze. The unions can only hope for an agreement with the company pretending that the government freeze isn't there!

Against the State

Yet Fords will not give in and break the Freeze without a battle royal. After all, Ford are committed to the Freeze. Not only did they invent, THEY HAVE ALSO INVESTED £132m IN IT, as a vote of confidence in the power of the British State to hold 'their' workers down - forcing productivity increases up and wage increases down for the foreseeable future.

Any move we make against Fords is a move against the state. The bosses and the state will stand united when it comes to teaching the workers a lesson, because the political stakes are too high.

Let there be no mistake - Fords and Heath will be hand in glove and any move we make against Fords is a move against the state. The Tories and Fleet Street have prepared the ground with a campaign of lies about the 'selfishness' of 'highly-paid' workers who hold the country to ransom. They have also cleverly left a loop-hole in the freeze for the lower-paid, a hypocritical gesture to show how 'socially responsible' they are, to divide the workers, and to allow the unions at least some semblance of bargaining power to keep them in business.

THE WAY TO WIN

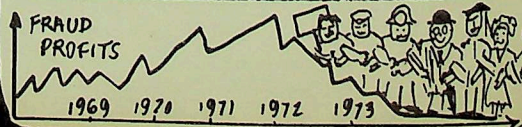
It is clear that this battle cannot be fought by the old methods and the old leadership.

● The Union-style stay-at-home strike on the 1971 model is out. It is just not adequate to the situation. Besides, the company will not simply 'cave in' - 1971 Fords world profits were at a record height even after the 65-day UK strike.

● We cannot fight Fords alone. We must learn from the Miners, who broke the norm last year, the railwaymen who broke the secret ballot, and the Dockers, who smashed the Act. We must spread the struggle by direct action to link up with the gasworkers' action against the freeze, the health-workers' action, the miners' action, and the low-paid civil servants, besides bringing out the Vauxhall workers whose present claim depends on the outcome of the Ford struggle. Last but not least, we must close Fords and all its outlets 100%.

We are not alone!

● Above all our struggle does not begin and end with the '73 contract. The contract is a freeze, a way of timing our struggle according to the bosses interest. The Unions not only accept this stage-managed timing, they are part and parcel of the deal, and make it binding. We can only break Fords and win our demands in the longer run by continuous struggle to impose our own timing on the bosses. This means, now and in the future, the organisation of our own action at rank & file level, linking our struggle against the organisation of work at Fords with that of other workers and with the struggles in the estates and communities where we live.



KILL YOUR WORK RECORD— get a job with Henry Ford

FORDS DAGENHAM - a big recruitment drive is going on, in the press and on TV. They have been recruiting outside football grounds, with Labour exchanges all over the South-East, and even as far away as Liverpool - wherever factory closures have filled the double queues.

Why? Fords' assembly-lines are a violent place to work. Fords need robots who can be used and then kicked aside - most workers would avoid working there if they could do better. No wonder Fords are desperate.

BLACKS FIGHT BACK

Henry Ford was a pioneer in the techniques of using black labour in Detroit - But 'Motown' blacks are today fucking up Fords, GM and the rest. At Dagenham, as line speeds increased so

immigrants were sucked in - Fords expected a docile, passive black work force which would say "Yes, Boss!" But today we are showing the whitey boss-pigs.

We are showing the bosses that we intend to get a good wage - if he wants to make bread off our backs. Formerly, in the days of slavery, Whitey used the whip, ganja and opium to drive us tamely to work. Today the wage is the whip, not only at Fords but everywhere where Black men work. The wage is backed by the whip of the police, local councils, and the state with its immigration controls. They are trying to turn us into boss-men all the fucking time.

NO DIVIDE AND RULE

Ford policy of divide and rule is breaking down everywhere. Dividing West Indians from Indian and Pakistanis has proved a dead loss. Indian workers showed what they felt in October when they walked out of the Engine Plant at Dagenham - they showed that when we want something, we don't go through procedures - and they won their 20 minutes relief time.

Now the immigration flow has been stopped Fords are trying to recruit workers displaced from closed factories. They are trying to profit from unemployment. They want sheep - with a "good work record". But what they are going to get, given the mind-bending conditions of work

Work for it!

Whatever you want—it takes money. But if you really want it—it's worth working for. Ford men work hard. And play hard. But every week they take home the sort of pay packet that brings a smile to the toughest face.

£35.93 is the average earnings to start—that includes shift premium. Overtime and service rate increases make it worth more. There are other benefits too!

You should preferably have experience of a paced moving assembly line. Plus a first class

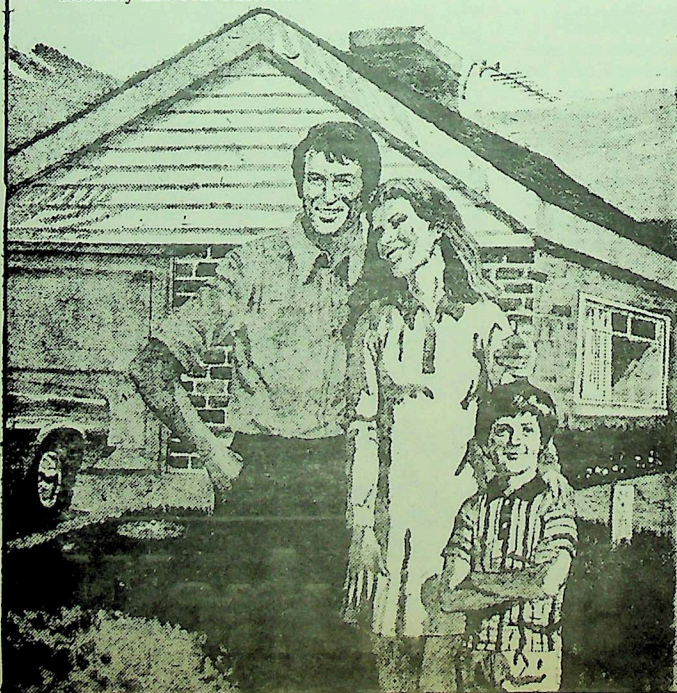
work record to prove your staying power. Over 18, really fit and willing to work shifts. If you live within easy travelling distance of Dagenham, come and talk it over and see whether you have the makings of a Ford man.

Apply now to your nearest Employment Exchange or in writing to the Employment Centre, Room 6/1205, Ford Motor Co. Ltd., Dagenham.

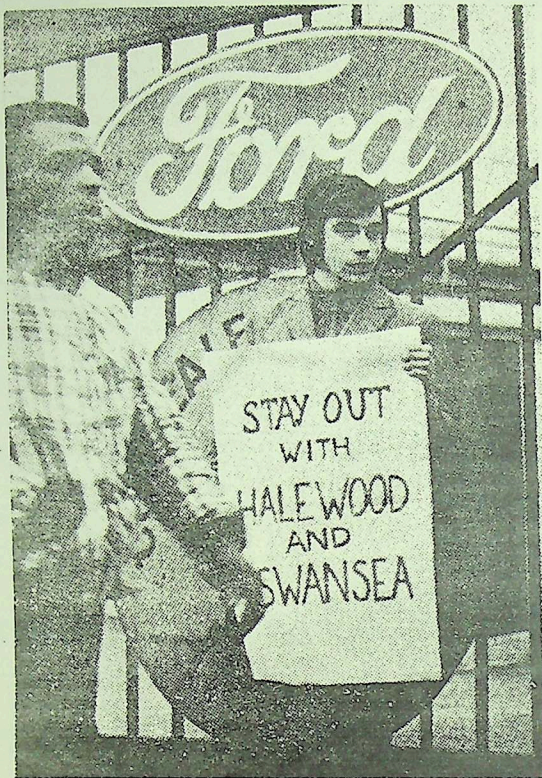


they force on us - is wolves up their asses. A good work record means nothing on the line. No wonder that many raw recruits take their cards and clear off. Because the violence that we experience in our ghetto-like neighbourhoods plus the violence of Fords is more than we can take

A Black Worker



A LETTER FROM FORDS



Our strength vs. Ford & the Unions

The events of the past month at Halewood reflect exactly what's been happening here since the end of the 9 week strike in 1971. And at the same time they help to clarify the position of management, the shop floor and the stewards' organisation during this period.

HALEWOOD - Henry's Headache

In recent years the Halewood plant has been the one which has created the biggest problems for Ford Europe. By the end of the big strike it was clear to Fords that they had to deal somehow with the situation at the 3 Merseyside plants. Their purpose was to smash completely the shop floor organisation, as they had succeeded in doing at Dagenham in 1962, when they sacked 17 stewards. So, for 6 weeks after the return to work, management kept on provoking dispute after dispute in order to test the strength of the shop floor - to see if the workers could be crushed without having to resort to open war. But for 6 weeks the response of the Halewood workers was fantastic determination and militancy... they resisted Ford and said: "We shall not be provoked." This period is generally known as the "Aftermath". Then, when this policy failed, management had to turn to open confrontation.

JOHN DILLON

John Dillon, a militant socialist shop steward in the Paint Shop, was sacked. If Halewood workers had sat back and let this happen, Dagenham '62 would have been repeated all over again: there were rumours that Ford had a list of another 7 men to be victimised.

But again, between the 9th and 22nd of June '71 the shop floor displayed an immense strength. And at this point Ford management realised that the best way to deal with the situation was to try and have

TUESDAY 2nd JANUARY - A Shift - 10.30pm

The Escort Trim lines sit in, in response to management's decision to take 4 men off the lines. The same night, the White Lines in the Body Plant stage a march thro' the Press Shop, chanting: "Out! Out!" The Press Shop joins in the action, out of solidarity.

The issue is mobility of labour - ie the Management's right to move men around and split up sections. The response, the tactics and the feeling of the men are unprecedented: "A lot of anger and determination," says a militant from the Capri Trim lines... "I've never seen anything like this since the John Dillon strike," says another from the White Lines.

The events of the 2 following weeks confirm what both men say. The militancy and rebellion of workers at Halewood has shown itself in many ways, but the message is single and clear: the Rank and File at Halewood is ready to start a new phase of the struggle against Ford: - the fight for at least a £10 increase; the 35-hour week; and full lay-off pay, against the Freeze and against the Government.

WEDNESDAY 3rd JANUARY - A Shift - 9.45pm

The PTA holds a meeting at the start of the Shift. The men are clear: no return to work until everybody is reinstated. The Convener doesn't want to put any vote to the floor, but also he doesn't dare recommend a return to work. The men want to bring out the Transmission Plant, and want to organise a picket of the B Shift for the following morning.

the stewards on their side - as well as the Trade Union bureaucracies, who they've already got!

TGWU - Tricky Tactics!

There was one new factor that helped them immensely in this new policy - THE FACT THAT JACK JONES WAS STARTING TO PUT A LOT OF PRESSURE ON STEWARDS TO CARRY OUT THE DECISIONS EVEN IF THEY WERE AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE MEN.

The TGWU was in fact starting to operate a policy of discipline and control over their members, which was to become clear in the scab way they handled the dockers' strike in the summer of '72.

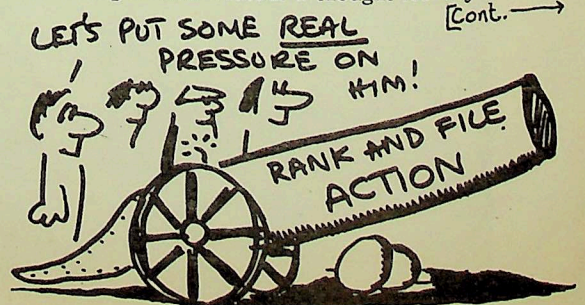
The negotiations for the reinstatement of John Dillon gave Ford management a chance to use their new policy of softening up the stewards. They wanted cooperation. And finally John Dillon was reinstated... but not in his old section, and his credentials as steward were taken away from him.

Since that time, Management have sacked many militants (but no stewards!), and have always had the backing of the Convener and most stewards in this policy.

THE ROLE OF STEWARDS

From then on, History has repeated itself continuously at Halewood: -

Management, trying to make up the lost production at any cost; impossible line speeds; safety hazards; the tightest supervision; a Company policy of continued moving of men without a thought for any



HALEWOOD

We ask all Ford workers to read the account printed here about recent events at Halewood. We have written this letter so that workers in other parts of the Ford combine know exactly what has been happening here.

The Convener and the senior stewards pretend they never heard the suggestions.

The Body Plant works on, but management is forced to offer a line-speed of 35 in place of the normal 67!

THURSDAY 4th JANUARY - B Shift

The Convener of the PTA only informs the stewards of what's been going on at midday, and no recommendation for any action is discussed. In the Body Plant, the Engine Compartment roundabout is working to rule because management moved 1 man.

THURSDAY 4th JANUARY - A Shift

Nobody from the PTA turns up to work. At 10.15 pm, the Body Plant walks out in solidarity with the Engine Compartment B Shift, despite the fact that the management had offered a line speed of 19.

FRIDAY 5th JANUARY

Mass meeting at Liverpool Stadium of both Shifts of the PTA plant. The Body Plant doesn't attend the meeting, but nobody turns up to work. The platform moves a recommendation that the men go back to work on unchanged conditions. The meeting is conducted by the Convener with the sole purpose of settling at any cost, by playing one Shift against the other.

Maguire, the PTA Convener, later said at a Union branch meeting that in his opinion the lines were overmanned anyway, and the Company should have had the right to move men 12 months ago!

Anyway, at the mass meeting a lot of people heckle and boo all the way through. In the end the motion is carried by a slight majority of 60%-40%. Most militants are disgusted. They call it a sellout. Everybody agrees that the action will start again the following Monday.

MONDAY 8th JANUARY - Night Shift

The Trim lines decide not to work one car out of every 4. Another section starts to work to rule. The Engine Compartment start doing a speed of 19.

Tuesd

TUESDAY 9th JANUARY - Night Shift

The women on the Soft Trim walk out. The issue is not clear, because it's very difficult to get inside that section.

WEDNESDAY 10th JANUARY

In the Body Plant one bloke is harassed by the Foreman. He puts the Foreman on the floor and thumps him in the face. The GF comes around, but runs away when he's offered the same treatment. By now, management are so worried that they only give the man 2 days suspension for this act!

In the Engine Compartment, the Deputy Convener asks the men to go back to the normal speed (67 instead of 19) and is told politely to Fuck Off out of the Section. The story does not end here. We could go on and on.....

Cont.

regulation; sacking of militants. The Shopfloor, trying to resist, often showing its strength, sometimes going onto the offensive, and, like at the beginning of January, showing more and more how the struggle on the shop floor is directly political, and how the inter-



ests of bosses and those of the workers are directly opposed. The Stewards' Organisation, usually trailing behind the men for a while, waiting for the right moment to sell them out, to reach an agreement, to make sure that PRODUCTION KEEPS GOING AT ALL COSTS.

POLICE?

We must not be misunderstood here: we are not saying that all stewards are bent. In Halewood there are some militant stewards, some socialist ones, even some revolutionaries. But we are saying that the structure and the organisation of the stewards do not represent the interests of the workers; that they act as Policemen over the rank and file; and that the few good ones have no room for manoeuvre at all inside the Committees.

We are saying that the structure of Negotiations and Procedure ties the steward to the point where his function becomes almost exclusively to CHANNEL THE STRUGGLES

OF THE SHOP FLOOR TOWARDS MEETING THE PRODUCTION NEEDS OF THE BOSS.

When workers on the Trim Line have a stoppage against speed-up, or against safety hazards, or for any other reason, it usually means that they can't keep up with the pace...that they are fed up...that they reject the organisation of work. But what do we see then?

THE WET BLANKET

The steward goes down the line which has stopped, and says: "What's the problem lads? I'll settle this one", and then goes up to the office to negotiate with management (under the condition that the men start working again!). He puts himself as a go-between...and takes the real pressure - ie the workers' anger - off the boss's back. His function is to prevent stoppages and keep the line moving at all costs. And while he's NEGOTIATING, the workers carry on SWEATING as before!

This is true even if the steward has as the best intentions in the world, if he is a good trade unionist, or even a revolutionary.

WE HAVE DESCRIBED THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY WORKERS AT HALEWOOD OVER FORD'S ATTEMPTS TO RE-ALLOCATE MEN. WE HAVE WON BACK FOR OURSELVES THE STRENGTH THAT WE LOST IN 1971. NOW WE'VE GOT 2 CHOICES - EITHER WE CONFRONT FORD & THE FREEZE, OR WE ACCEPT A REAL WAGE-CUT. AND EITHER WE TRAIL ALONG BEHIND THE UNIONS OR WE TAKE OUR OWN FIGHT INTO OUR OWN HANDS!!

Remember this.....?

AS FORD'S Halewood workers straggled back to work on Merseyside last week, Mr Tim Fortescue, Conservative M.P. for Garston, captured newspaper headlines with charges of "regular and organised drunkenness at work, and theft and resale of company property." Are the charges true?

Idleness: Mr Fortescue has suggested that Halewood is so slackly run that the men can take time off to play football. It is true they sometimes kick a football around the plant grounds and if you pass the main gate at 10.30 am you are likely to see this. But that is the time when the morning shift takes its break; and who doesn't play football on Merseyside when he gets half-an-hour free?

Anything more than that would be virtually impossible. Under Ford's measured day-work system, every man's job is timed so he knows exactly how much he must do each hour—say the number of wheels he has to bolt into place. The men are closely supervised and their work is interdependent. If one man idles the next man down the line soon complains.

It was also claimed that time-clocks had been deliberately damaged. (Ford says it is difficult to tell whether these clocks have been broken down, worn out or been smashed on purpose.) Mr Fortescue was worried, too, that some shop stewards do not have to work at their trades. (It is normal Ford practice to allow conveners—Halewood has three—to devote themselves full-time to union activities.) Ha Ha!!

APRIL 11th 1971



Since the 1971 strike all the increases we have won have been eroded by inflation and the increased cost of living. It has been impossible for even the most organised sections of workers to keep pace with the price of food, transport, rent, rates and mortgages. The bosses have organised, with the help of the State, an attack on two fronts: in the factories where we work and in the communities where we live. **INFLATION IS ORGANISED TO EAT UP EVERY WAGE INCREASE WE WIN IN THE FACTORIES.**

● OUR FIGHT IS ON 2 FRONTS: FACTORY AND COMMUNITY

All council rents are increased by a £1 initially. This will be followed by 3 yearly increases of £1 to bring these rents up to what the government and property speculators regard as a "fair" rent. Attached to this is a rebate scheme. This means that the 'lower paid' (people with an income lower than £20) can collect rebates on the new increased rent. This has meant that the 'higher' paid are split from the 'lower' paid, because the State is trying to make 'higher' paid workers - who don't receive rebates; - subsidise the cost of housing of lower paid workers - who do get the rebates. We'd be naive to think that the Tories aren't well aware that this is a way of dividing the working class. Let alone the drastic effect this has in reducing the value of our wages. The response has been partial or total rent strikes throughout the country, particularly in traditional working class areas like Manchester, Merseyside, Clydebanks, S. Wales and parts of London.

Unfortunately it is now apparent that rent strikes are collapsing except in the most militant areas. But it is a great step when we start organising in our communities. This means that we are fighting the total way in which the bosses and the state try to control our material needs, the spending of our wage packets in the communities and the earning of them in the factories. The failure of many rent strikes occurs when the link up between struggles in the factory and the community, between the work that we put in and the spending of our wages, hasn't been made forcibly enough. Successful rent strikes have always been backed by action in the factories. The 1915 rent strike organised by the women of Clydeside was backed by a threat of a general strike in the munitions factories. The government caved in immediately and reduced the rents.

Halewood Walkout

On Monday 6 October 1972 31 men walked out of the PTA plant at Ford Halewood to join a demonstration of Liverpool families against the "Fair Rents Act". Fords were scared of this kind of action. The men got the sack on Monday afternoon and were scattered over

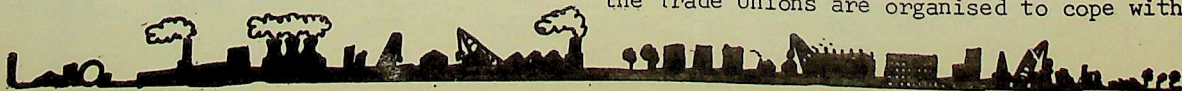
the plant when they were re-employed on Tuesday. Ford prevented many other workers from joining the march by threatening wholesale sackings at the PTA mass meeting. Fords wants people to think that the question of rents is a quite separate 'political' issue that has nothing to do with workers lives in the factory. Fords realises that actions that take the workers struggle into the community present a direct political threat. They are scared of these connections being made by us.

Halewood and Rents

The 31 were isolated because they turned work-time into support against rent rises. They understand where their interests are, but other Ford workers didn't. The women on the estate organised the rent strike at Halewood, because it's they who have to cope with the struggle to get enough. They understand the meaning of inflation. They know what is happening to the prices of food in the shops. The men often said: "Oh pay it, here's another pound". But what's the use of fighting for wage increases if you don't fight the hands that pluck them back. Into one pocket and out of another! The workers who walked out to join the march understood that the rent struggle IS A DIFFERENT FRONT OF THE WAGE STRUGGLE. RENTS ARE AN ATTACK ON OUR WAGE! Rents, mortgages and rates are all different ways of making us pay for the same commodity. Even if you don't face the Rent Act you are tied to the assembly line, and gruelling hours of overtime to pay off interest to the bosses in HP and other forms of credit.

END THE DIVISIONS!

THE ONLY FAIR RENT IS NO RENT! The battle over rising rents is a never ending one. A trap that we've got to break out of. Accepting we only have a right to what we earn will prevent us having what we produce. This will weaken our fight because it will split the working class into producers and consumers, separating the women in the communities from the men in the factories AND KEEPING US WORKING AND PAYING FOR WHAT WE SHOULD HAVE FREE. But this already moves the struggle far beyond what the Trade Unions are organised to cope with.



Social Security & Strikers

By now most workers know that when we're on strike, we are entitled to claim SOCIAL SECURITY money. Your steward should have informed you of the full details of the full amount that you're entitled to claim, and how to go about getting it. HOWEVER, IN RECENT STRIKES IT'S A KNOWN FACT THAT FORD WORKERS HAVE NEVER WON THE FULL AMOUNT THEY'RE ENTITLED TO!

Union Strike Pay

One reason for this is that many workers still see the Union strike fund as the only source of money during a strike. This was the case as recently as 1966, when strikers only claimed a few £ thousands off the SS. But since 1971 the situation has changed a lot, because in 1971 the Government brought in a new law - the Social Security Act - WHICH DEDUCTS ALL UNION STRIKE PAY AND TAX REBATES ABOVE £1 FROM OUR SOCIAL SECURITY. From that time, whenever a Union pays out strike pay, it's been knocked off our SS money. So we end up paying the State! The clear answer to this is that the Unions should never pay out strike pay, except in cases of hardship.



For instance, in the 1972 Miners Strike, the Mineworkers' Union paid no strike pay. Instead they used the strike fund to pay the expenses of pickets, and to make payments to strikers in hardship. The building workers did the same ... but during the Dock strike, last summer, the TGWU said that by its rules it was forced to pay out strike pay - to the Government. But Liverpool dockers had a better idea. They demanded that no strike pay be paid until after the strike, and this enabled them to claim SS money. THIS IS WHAT FORD WORKERS SHOULD DEMAND OFF THE TGWU. This way

it can't be deduced from Social Security money. Union strike funds are not unlimited, and should only be paid to those who can't get social security.

Claimants Unions..

At the same time as strikers have been hitting back at the Government's strike-breaking rules, other sections of people claiming Social Security - unemployed people, OAPs, sick people, single parents and all those who depend on State benefits to live - have been organising themselves into CLAIMANTS UNIONS all over the country, getting together to fight for their rights, and demanding a decent GUARANTEED MINIMUM INCOME for all people whether working or not. THE IDEA OF ORGANISING IN ORDER TO FIGHT THE SS HAS SPREAD AND IN MANY PLACES WORKERS ON STRIKE HAVE ORGANISED THEIR OWN STRIKE CLAIMANTS UNIONS.

...and Strike CU's

The lesson is that if we want to get our money off the SS when we strike, we've got to ORGANISE. If we don't it means that we go down to the SS offices one by one, to be confused by the Bureaucrats and fobbed off with pennies. The answer is that we've got to act together. We've got to learn what we're entitled to claim, and go down with our workmates in strength, to support each other and make sure that we get it.

We haven't got space here to deal with everything that can be claimed off the SS by strikers. However this week people from the London Claimants Unions have been giving out leaflets at the gates, explaining what Ford workers are entitled to.

There's also a book called CLAIMANTS HANDBOOK FOR STRIKERS which is a clear straightforward account of the Social Security and how to organise to get it. It will be on sale at the gates, or can be obtained from East London Claimants Union at Bame Colet House, Ben Johnson St. E.1. TEL. 790-3867

We know how Ford management try to divide workers up - section against section, shift against shift. The Social Security likes to treat strikers in the same way - insisting that they only deal with claims individually. They know that on our own we are weak. No striker should ever be interviewed on their own. NEVER MEET THE SS ALONE. Everyone is entitled to be represented at the SS OFFICE - so take a mate along .. or even better, a lot of mates.



Mass Tactics!

This is the old story. Ford and the SS are the same - when they're forced to face a mass of angry workers, they're scared shitless and quite often they will give in. The way they prefer it is to have individual stewards NEGOTIATING for individual workers. If Ford and the Government set up special strike claiming centres near the Plant, for this strike, there's a danger that the Union Bureaucrats will step in and try to negotiate everything by SWEET REASON. BUT SWEET REASON DOESN'T WORK WITH THE SS!! This happened in recent strikes - the SS management tries to pick out a couple of people and deals with them, negotiating over the heads of the other strikers - the same way that Ford does. They con them with sweet talking, and the strikers fail to get what they want. MASS TACTICS ARE THE ONLY WAY!

ANSWER: An SS Manager faced with 200 angry Ford workers determined to get their money.

THE 1973 FORD WAGE CLAIM

what's in it for Ford workers?

All are agreed, from Jack Jones down, that the Trade Unions have not always acted "in the best interests of the workers"- the secret ballot that ended the Ford '71 strike was just rather an extreme case! From this point of view, it's worth taking a closer look at some of the points in the Union 1973 Ford Wage Claim...whose side are they really on?

●They welcome Ford investment in the UK - but every worker knows that new investment INCREASES THE INTENSITY OF WORK, with machinery that forces more effort and output per worker.

●What investment has meant for Dagenham in recent years can be seen in the Engine Plant, with line speeds of one engine every 28 seconds.

●They guarantee "high levels of plant utilisation" thro' shift work, putting the production needs of Ford before our need for a social life.

●They would like to make line-work "more creative", by bringing the "human factor" into management techniques, COOPERATING with the Company on work-study, quality control, reducing absenteeism and labour turnover....Ignoring the fact that Fords didn't even ought to exist!

●They call for "mutuality". What this means in practice is shown by recent Ford moves to form a Committee with the Unions on line speeds. As one General Foreman said:

"Once we get mutuality of line-speeds agreed, people will have to do work standards. Ford likes mutuality, and the GF from Woolwich said it!

●It's all very well for the Unions to claim that the Co. can. afford" to pay the wage increases we want without going bust. Of course they can...and many times over! Anyway, who cares about Ford's profits - that's THEIR concern!

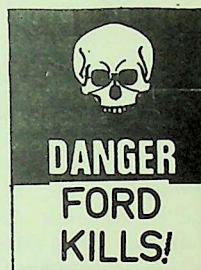
●They accept that Ford is entitled to a "fair" profit - provided Ford workers are given some. reward" for effort. Never a word about a multi-million, multi-national Ford that ought to be hit for every penny it has! But when all's said and done, the main thing wrong with the TUs' Claim is that THEY'RE NOT ANGRY..AND WE ARE!

WHAT IS BIG FLAME ?

Big Flame is a group of revolutionary workers and students, independent of traditional socialist Left organisations. We publish a paper and we are active in several Merseyside factories. We are actively involved in rent strikes and in womens' action groups in the communities.

We believe that the rank and file has to initiate and organise its own actions, creating direct links between factory and community struggles. The needs of the struggle today mean that it cannot be left to Trade Unions and their shop-floor representatives, however "democratic". We believe that

contacts between rank and file workers in Ford plants is essential. As a part of this development we have produced this newspaper.



For the immediate future, we plan to do 2 things : 1) meetings will be arranged between people from Halewood, Dagenham and other Ford plants. 2) We hope that a regular paper will be produced from Halewood with contributions from other plants.

Contact us if you want to be kept informed of meetings or wish to help with the paper, provide information or want further copies. If you want to make sure of receiving this information etc, write to us, or speak to the people distributing this paper.

London: c/o 79c, Anerley Rd.
S.E. 20.

Liverpool: 22 Woburn Hill
051-220-5223.



A FULL ANALYSIS OF FORD AND THE UNIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM US IN THE NEAR FUTURE. A COPY WILL BE SENT FREE TO ANYONE WHO WANTS IT.

They talk - We Fight. a

Scanlon's at it again. After joining the TUC/CBI talks he side-stepped critics last week by complaining he couldn't do a thing right. That's true - but not the way he meant it. He said he'd have been criticised by some people for joining the talks and by others for not joining. But he's just neatly avoiding the issue. He's shown by his actions which side he's on and which critics he listens to.

AND SO HAS THE TUC.

They're NOT on the side of Ford workers coming up for the next contract - because they're not on the side of the miners, dockers and builders who've been fighting for a living wage. They're NOT on the side of the women and men fighting the 'Fair Rent' Act.

More of us are learning that the employers and their governments aren't running a charity. Wage rises and improvements in working conditions have to be fought for. And we have to stop them taking back in the shops and the rent offices what we win in work.

If Henry Ford and other employers want higher profits that's their problem. We need money to live on and homes fit to live in. We get nothing going cap in hand and begging for it like the TUC.

BUT THE TUC DOESN'T SEE IT THAT WAY. WHILE WE'RE FIGHTING THEY'RE TALKING. The jailed dockers were in contempt of court but they didn't care. They weren't going to be in contempt of thousands of workers. But the TUC are more interested in helping the employers sort out their profit problems than in fighting with us.

WHY DID THEY AGREE TO NEGOTIATE? It wasn't negotiations that got the 5 dockers freed. But it was negotiations that got Ford workers a sell-out contract after the last Parity strike.

WHAT IS THERE TO TALK ABOUT WITH THE BOSSES? We can see what they want - speed-ups, redundancies, higher prices and cuts in the social services. They're squeezing more work out of fewer people for as little money as possible and throwing the rest of us on the scrap-heap.

THEY GIVE NOTHING AWAY. THE ONLY TIME WE GET WHAT WE NEED IS WHEN WE'RE STRONG AND FIGHTING FOR IT.

Meanwhile, the Press has been trying very hard to divide us.

By now, a lot of Ford workers will have seen the 'News of the World's' brainstorm on Big Flame, other left-wing groups and its vicious attack on the militant builders pickets.

This is a campaign to turn feeling against anyone who fights for what they need. They're trying to blame militant sections of the working class for unemployment and price rises hoping we'll turn a blind eye to the real problem - their friends in the government and the bosses.

We all know whose side the press was on in the dockers and the builders strikes. We all know whose side they were on in the Ford Parity strike.

AND WE KNOW WHOSE SIDE THEY'LL BE ON WHEN OUR NEW AGREEMENT COMES UP. WE'LL BE HEARING A LOT ABOUT GREEDY FORD WORKERS ROBBING THE LOWER PAID WORKERS AND CAUSING INFLATION. SO WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The TUC, CBI, and government all tell us that wage control will improve the living standards of the lower paid workers. They claim a settlement will give the lower paid automatic increases of £2/£3.

That's a lie. The amount they agree on will be a maximum increase. We won't get it for the asking. We'll still have to fight for it.

It'll be the same old story. The weaker sections of the working class will go by the board.

Why didn't they give £2 a week to those who can't work - pensioners, the sick, single-parent families - and those who've been thrown out of work? Why did they give only a miserable 75p?

MPs were slightly more generous with themselves. They got a nice £24 a week rise and awarded Heath an extra £115 a week.

ONLY ACTION BY THE LOWER PAID AND THE WHOLE WORKING CLASS CAN WIN THIS FIGHT. Before their strike this year miners were 'lower paid'. Now they're 'higher paid'.

THE DAILY MIRROR TELLS US (AND THE TUC SEEMS TO AGREE) THAT THE HIGHER PAID WORKERS ARE ROBBING THE LOWER PAID. But its the better organised workers who give strength to others to fight. The success of the miners gave confidence to the builders and weakened the government and employers. If we at Fords are beaten down into accepting one or two pounds next January, what chance will the farmworkers have?

IF WE DON'T FIGHT WAGE CONTROL WE'LL BE GIVING INTO THE BLACKMAIL. AND THEN ALL WORKERS WILL BE 'LOWER PAID'.

The Tories, bosses, press and TUC have another favourite s.r.g - inflation is caused by workers winning better wages and conditions.

Was it the workers who introduced the 'Fair Rent' Act? Was it the working class who decided to join the Common Market or impose Value Added Tax?

These things will mean that any £2/£3 rise will be grabbed back in rent rises this year and next year and in across-the-board price rises from Value Added Tax.

The TUC talks of gaining concessions - perhaps the rents will go up next year by 50p instead of £1....but they'll still go up. Scanlon Jones and Feather say they'll try to get controls over prices in the shops. But the government has refused this. They only allow the voluntary price freeze that the CBI has supposedly been operating over the last year. AND WHAT'S HAPPENED? THEY AGREED TO HOLD PRICE RISES TO 5%. BUT PRICES HAVE ROCKETED BY 11%.

ONLY THROUGH A BIG BIG WAGE INCREASE CAN WE EVEN KEEP UP WITH THE RISE IN THE COST OF LIVING.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR FORD WORKERS?

If we want to win in the next contract fight we have to be prepared -

- *We must be clear what we want and how we're going to get it.
- *We must be prepared for attacks from the press designed to turn other people and even our own families against us.
- *We must be prepared for Fords attempts to weed out militants, because they want to make out that Ford workers want to win nothing and are just being led up the garden path by troublemakers.

WHAT WE WANT

Before the last Parity fight we knew what we were fighting for. The shop stewards produced leaflets on the claim. But what's happening now? The unions vague demands mean that nobody has a clear idea what we're going for. That way we can become divided and weak. And it leaves room for sell-out and compromise round the negotiating table.

THAT'S WHY BIG FLAME PUT FORWARD DEFINITE DEMANDS. WE DIDN'T DREAM THEM UP OUT OF THIN AIR. THEY'RE BASED ON WHAT WE AS FORD WORKERS NEED AND CAN WIN.

HOW TO GET IT

Our strength is with each other on the shop floor. It is our actions together that will win. Now is the time to start thinking - what kind of action will unite us and win our demands?

We can start, section by section, by discussing our demands, making sure everyone has a say and knows what's going on.

And we must be clear that if we hang around waiting for the union officials to call the tune they can sell us out. If we ask them to fight FOR us they won't. If we're organised on the shop floor they may be forced to fight WITH us. If they don't we'll be strong and fighting BY OURSELVES.

PRODUCED BY A GROUP OF FORD WORKERS WITH BIG FLAME 22 WOBURN HILL L'POOL 13
TELEPHONE 220 5223.

1st November 1972.

WE MAN SACKED.....HIS SECTION WALKS OUT.....THE PLANT IS LAID OFF

WE DEMAND FULL LAY-OFF PAY

On Friday Dec. I an operator on the Sealer Deck, Paint Shop, B shift, was sacked. His crime, so the management said, was sabotage. Off course they yook the word of the foreman, and never took the word of the man.

WE SAY THEY HAVE NO PROOF. (IT'S well knpwn that there is a machine between where the man was working and where the foreman said he saw him from.)

WE SAY ITS CLEAR VICTIMISATION.

ANYWAY WHO ARE THE REAL SABOTEURS.

Is it Henry Ford II, with his fumes, safety hazards, noise in the Press Shop, the high speeds of the lines, with long boring hours, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ with two lousy short tea breaks, who SABOTAGES OUR LIVES; or is it some men who get browned off, who go to the medical with phoney reasons, who sabotage the huge profits they are making off our backs.

They victimised one man for the safety of continuous nerve-breaking production. Anyway, dont let's forget the foreman who went down the line belting every car with a hammer, and was sent for treatment, not to the dole queue.

We say agin.....THE SACKED MAN IS BEING VICTIMISED,... AND THE MEN ON HIS SHIFT ON HIS SECTION KNOW THIS AND WALKED OUT ON FRIDAY AND MONDAY. THEY SAY THEY ARE NOT GOING TO RESUME WORK UNTIL HE IS REINSTATED.

FORDS TRIED TO ISOLATE THE STRUGGLE BY LAYING OFF THE WHOLE OF PTA AND BODY, HUNTING US ~~OR~~ WHERE IT HURTS MOST;....IN THE POCKET.SAME OLD CON TRICK...DIVIDE AND RULE.

The best way to fight this is to bring forward one of the 1973 demands; WE DEMAND FULL LAY-OFF PAY NOW, no matter where the ~~xx~~ strike is. We say the lay-off fund is OURS and we want the money.

WE WANT A MASS MEETING SO WE CAN ALL FIND OUT THE TRUTH AND NOT THE PACK OF LIES PRINTED IN LAST NIGHTS ECHO. WE NEED A MASS MEETING SO THAT WE CAN DECIDE TOGETHER WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO FOR THE SUSPENDED MAN.

FORDS ARE TESTING OUR SHOP FLOOR STRENGTH. THEY WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT WE WILL BE LIKE IN THE NEW YEAR. O.K., LET THEM KNOW, WE ARE STRONG AND WE ARE NOT BEING PUSHED AROUND.

THE SACKED MAN MUST BE REINSTATED

BIG FLAME...4.12.72.
22 Woburn Hill, L.I3...220-5223.

BIG FLAME BIG FLAME BIG FLAME BIG FLAME BIG FLAME BIG FLAME
LAST NIGHT PRODUCTION STOP

PTA. BODY & PRESS, BECAUSE

NOBODY MUST BE MOVED AROUND

LAST WEEK, in the same breath, Fords boasted about record car production and warned us they were going to move labour right across the Estate. Well, now they've started.

We don't know how many workers will be moved off their present jobs. There are rumours of from 120 to 600. Here's what happened when they tried it on last night in the PTA and MS&B.

120 MARCH TO PRESS

Last night Barbanks - the night shift manager - moved 3 men off the White Lines and sent in 2 from another section. Of course, according to the Blue Book, Fords can't move anybody on nights, but they've never taken the procedure seriously when it goes against them.

From midnight til 3, the stewards were in the office, but Barbanks wouldn't budge. The 2 White Lines stewards reported back and the men decided to sit-in. Minutes later, at 3.15, Fords took them all off the pay roll. So the White Lines changed their mind. They decided to pull the Press Shop.

120 men marched to the Press Shop chanting, "Out. Out. Out". The Press stewards called a shop meeting and they all went out. Seeing the White Lines and Press Shop heading for bed, the rest of the plant followed.

SIT-IN ON THE TRIM

The Escort Trim Lines weren't as lucky as the White Lines. They lost seven men last night. The rest of the men started a work to rule and the jobs were going by half finished.

Then the stewards started going down the line telling the lads to work properly. So the Escort Trim decided on a sit-in when Fords stopped the line. The men were taken off the pay roll and, as usual, the whole plant was laid off a couple of hours later.

Today our convenors - and ex-convenors - are in London to hear Fords reply to the Unions pay claim. We can guess what it will be. But last night's actions in the PTA and MS&B have shown Fords that the next wage deal won't be a push-over after all.

They've been preparing for it all year - putting up line speeds, moving men around and sacking militants off the sealer deck and the Capri trim, laying on the overtime when it suited them. They've tried to butter us up and split us up. We won't take it any more. If they want to start the battle for the next wage claim now, we're ready: 35 HOURS * £15 RISE * GUARANTEED LAY OFF PAY ALWAYS

We don't know what's going to happen to all the men Fords want to move. And we don't want to find out. WE WON'T LET THEM MOVE ANYONE.

9.45 tonight pta and ms&b mass meeting on Porkchop Hill

WE NEED A MASS MEETING TONIGHT TO DECIDE WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO
BIG FLAME 22 WOBURN HILL LPOOL 220 5223 3jan73

BIG FLAME BIG FLAME BIG FLAME BIG FLAME BIG FLAME BIG FLAME

Friday January 5 1973

* NO MORE MOVES
* PUT THEM BACK

LAST NIGHT AFTER EIGHTEEN MONTHS OF CONTINUAL SPEED UPS FORDS OFFERED THE WHITE LINES A SPEED OF 18 AN HOUR IF THEY WOULD STAY ON THE JOB. NORMALLY THE SPEED IS 67. THEY KNOCKED IT BACK AND WENT HOME. MANAGEMENT'S HAVING KITTENS.

All this started when Fords began moving people around - 7 off the Escort Trim, 1 off the White Lines and more off the Framing and in Transmission. The men's response has been the same everywhere. NOBODY GETS MOVED. The Escort Trim sat in, so did the Framing section all day yesterday, and on Tuesday night 120 men snaked their way from the White Lines to the Press Shop and pulled them all out. On Wednesday night, the PTA A shift went home because the management refused to put the 7 men back on the Escort Trim. A couple of hours later, the White Lines held a meeting and decided to go home as well. Then Rattigan, the new convenor, came along, hot from negotiations, and told them that management would put the speed down to 35 if they stayed in. They did stay in.

But last night, after Fords had moved men off the Framing section on the other shift, even 18 an hour, wasn't good enough to keep them there.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

IT'S SIMPLE - WE DON'T WANT ANYONE ELSE MOVED ANYWHERE AND THE MEN WHO HAVE BEEN MOVED HAVE GOT TO BE PUT BACK.

HOW NOT TO FIGHT IT

The Convenors have shown how not to fight it. While we've marched and sat in they've tried to negotiate and when McGuire was forced to call a mass meeting on Wednesday night, instead of recommending a complete shut down of the whole Estate, he went on about negotiations and refused to put anything to the vote. But everybody went home disgusted just the same. We still need a mass meeting of all three plants. The letter from the Transmission workers on the other side of this leaflet and the fact that men are being moved there too shows that they are ready too. This isn't just a PTA affair. When Transmission stops, Ford Britain stops.

LET'S PICKET TRANSMISSION

Nobody should leave today's meeting before we're sure that no more men will be moved and the ones who have been moved will be put back.

AND IF THE STEWARDS WON'T SAY THIS WE'VE GOT TO SHOUT IT OUT TO THEM UNTIL THEY HEAR IT.

The management have been testing the strength of the shop floor for 18 months. They are even more interested now that the contract is on us, but the sit ins on the Escort Trim and in Framing and the march to the Press Shop have shown they won't get away with moving people about as they have with the speed ups and sackings. But for the marches and sit ins, more men would have been moved. We've discovered the power to stop them moving any more men. And from this position of strength we're ready for the contract - THE FIGHT FOR THE CONTRACT HAS STARTED AND IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THIS THE CONVENORS HAVE BEEN TO LONDON NEGOTIATING. WE'RE READY TO START TALKING ABOUT THE CONTRACT RIGHT NOW - 35 hours * £15 * GUARANTEED LAY OFF PAY. LET'S TALK ABOUT WINNING THESE DEMANDS THIS MORNING

AN OPEN LETTER TO BIG FLAME FROM A
GROUP OF FORD'S WORKERS

HERE IS A LETTER WE RECEIVED LAST MONTH FROM A GROUP OF TRANSMISSION WORKERS. WE ARE PLEASED TO REPRINT IT, AS THEY ASKED US TO, BECAUSE IT RAISES SOME IMPORTANT ISSUES. IT TALKS ABOUT THE WAY THAT A RECENT DAILY MAIL ARTICLE DISTORTED THE PAY AND CONDITIONS OF FORD WORKERS. (WE'VE REPRODUCED SOME OF THAT ARTICLE IN THIS LEAFLET BELOW). THE LETTER ALSO TALKS ABOUT THE COMING CLAIM AND WHAT WE NEED TO DO TO PREPARE FOR IT.

Dear Big Flame,

1st December 1972

I am writing on behalf of my workmates. We feel disgusted and frustrated after reading last Tuesday's Daily Mail article on Fords. In our area most of us do not know what kind of deal the unions have submitted for the next pay claim.

When we approach our stewards about it, they give us the impression we shouldn't put our noses in. With them it's a case of pay up and shut up. It's been like that since the last pay deal, when we were sold out.

Most of us have very short memories. Each time before a pay deal comes up, Ford management put back the overtime. AFTER each settlement for the past eight years they have cut back on it. In the past two years the only overtime offered us has been in the last two months. Very few line workers here could get £45 (despite what the Daily Mail says) even working a fifty hour week.

As for subsidised free meals they must be pipe dreams. The cheapest 'dish' from our canteen is fish and chips for 17½p, which could be bought cheaper from a fish and chip shop, and better cooked. But Fords have no competition like that at Halewood. The only cup of tea you could get free would be from some faulty vending machine and that's very unlikely.

We feel that if you could point some of these capitalist lies, as in the daily Mail article--our so called free press--it could bring home some truth to all of us to fight for.... LIKE DECIDING AT A GENERAL MASS MEETING FOR £15 ACROSS THE BOARD, 35 HOUR WEEK (A MUST), NO MORE PENALTY CLAUSES OVER BONUS AND LAY OFF PAY, AND A BETTER PENSION DEAL.

I know that we all go home dog tired after a hard shift, but we must make an effort to attend a mass meeting to fight for a just claim. Just look at what the dockers achieved by standing together. Lets hope that Ford workers at Halewood will have the sense to follow their lead.

A GROUP OF HALEWOOD TRANSMISSION WORKERS.

HERE IS THE MOST RELEVANT SECTION OF THAT DAILY MAIL ARTICLE.....

In Britain Fords of Dagenham, no longer strike bound, is booming. Ernie Harris a typical worker there is on good times. He takes home £45 a week, often more, and wants perhaps £10 more. He and his mates haven't been on strike now for just one year, and the continuity of production is delighting the bosses. They are even offering free cups of tea as an incentive.

Fords are making a new car every fifty seconds at Dagenham where Ernie and his chums are working a two shift system coining in the cash.

* * * * *

There must be many more militants in Fords who agree with the ideas in this letter. But if we are all isolated and split up we can't DO anything about it. WE need to get together to discuss the coming claim. As a step in this direction Big Flame militants will be holding an open meeting later this month. We'll announce details in later leaflets and papers, but if you want to get in touch with us before that, or if you have suggestions for the open meeting we can be contacted via

22 WOBURN HILL, L'POOL 13

TEL... 220 5223

JAN/2/73

BACK TO WORK — BUT NOTHING CHANGED

PTA are back at work. The mass meeting on Friday, dominated by McGuire, voted by 60% to 40% to return on Monday Night. Of course the the problems about moving men still hasn't been solved. The reason for the return is simpler than that.....the convenor once again has phased out our fight. At the mass meeting he or the other stewards said

** "Negotiations are the way to get things done"...BUT WE KNOW THAT THIS IS A LIE. Only recently when a man was sacked for Sabotage, some sections walked out, but the convenors took over and negotiated--and the man remained sacked. The bosses aren't afraid of a few men in their office. Its only our mass strenght that scares them.

** "That this is only A Shifts problem"...IN THIS WAY THEY PLAY OFF THE TWO SHIFTS AGAINST EACH OTHER. But its not one shifts problem. Men are being moved all over the estate--including Transmission. Anyway we'll never win anything if we let ourselves be split up.

**"That manning changes can be expected in a capitalist factory". BUT THEY CAN ONLY BE EXPECTED IF WE ALLOW IT. We must challenge the managements right to make decisions controlling work WE do all the boring work and get a pittance for it. They have no rights beyond the ones the convenor hands them on a plate.

SHOUTS AND BOOS

But not everyone accepted what McGuire had to offer. There was a lot of booing and shouting. Men from the trip said afterwards that they wouldn't work anyway if the 7 men weren't put back on the line. AND THEY ARE RIGHT.

READY FOR THE CLAIM

This is an important one to win. THE BOSSES ARE FEELING OUR STRENGTH FOR THE CLAIM..they've been preparing all year...sacking militants.... i splitting up militant sections....giving us overtime so that they can stockpile, like in their yards in Widnes.

OUR ANSWER MUST BE LOUD AND CLEAR--WE ARE STRONG. So if, or when the trip stop work again, they must inform all the other sactions so that we can stop in support and hold a meeting to decide how this time we going to make our action effective. (Like picketing the other shifts)

FULL LAY OFF PAY

THE DISPUTE HAS SHOWN US ONCE AGAIN THE NEED FOR FUULL LAY OFF PAY.

This is one of the key demands for the coring claim. It will be an important way that Ford workers will be able to act in complete unity. If we get this then McGuire will have much less chance to split off A shift from B shift, or PTA and BODY from Transmission.

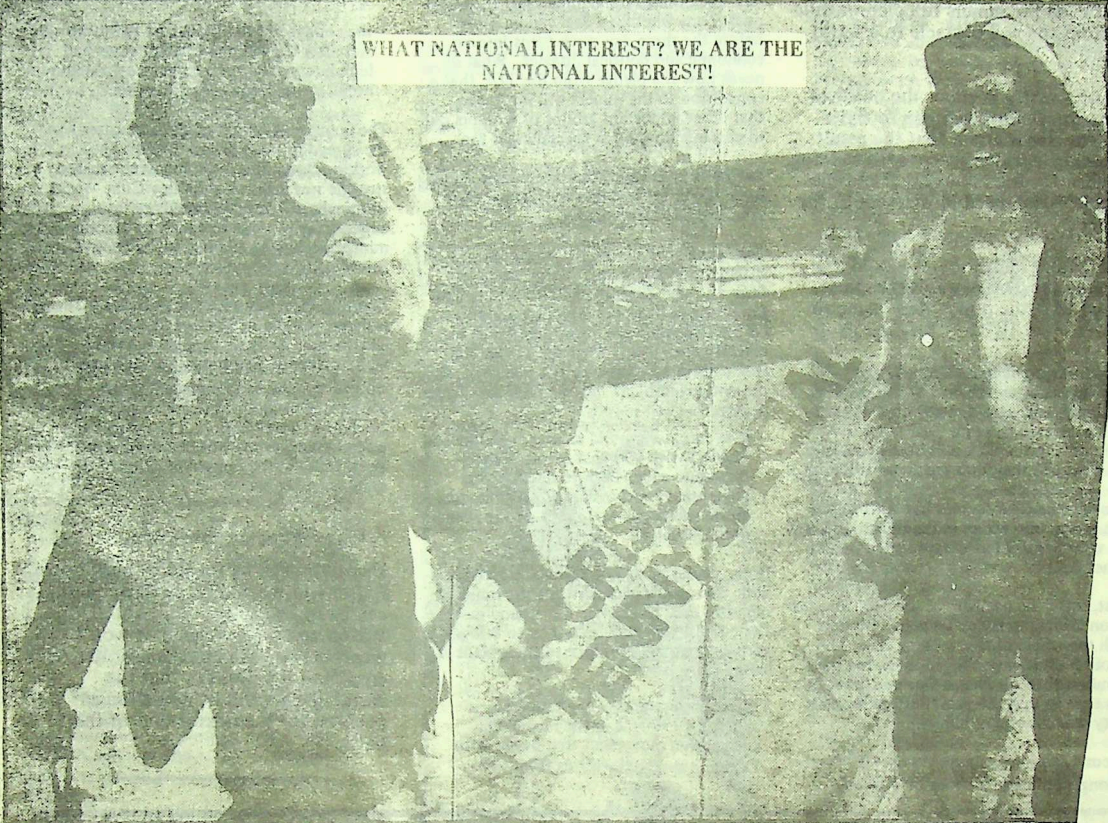
+ MEN MUST NOT BE MOVED

+ NO DIVIDE AND RULE

+ FULL LAY-OFF PAY

BIG FLAME

JANUARY 1974



WHAT NATIONAL INTEREST? WE ARE THE
NATIONAL INTEREST!

- * SUPPORT THE MINERS
- * FIVE DAYS' PAY - WORK
OR NO WORK
- * NO REDUNDANCIES
- * SMASH THE TORIES
AND THE BOSSES' PLANS

HEATH MEETS THE MINERS

This week nearly every employer in the country is praying for an end to the costly three day week. Nobody can believe that the measly few pounds that even the miners full claim would mean is the real obstacle to a settlement.

Heath's worry is about the political consequences of giving in to the miners. He is afraid that the result would be a widening crack in the wage freeze as the railwaymen and the engineers followed in the path of the miners.

And if that happened, it would weaken the Tories' ability to press ahead with the policy they came to power on in 1970.

That policy is simple. To make the working class pay the cost of the employers' crisis, especially low investment and the uncertain future for profits. (For a more detailed explanation of the causes of the crisis, see the other article on this page.)

The way the Government has tried to put that policy into effect in the last three years has varied, but it has always rested on two principles.

First, using the pacifism of the TUC and the union leaders to prevent a confrontation with the whole of the working class. The labour leaders have obliged by easing their members through Phases One and Two, one at a time so that the possibility of workers' unity was cut to a minimum.

Second, avoiding a confrontation with strong, confident sections of workers

until there's a good chance that the Tory Government will come out on top.

If what we say here is true, then the three day week must be a gamble. For Heath the question is whether a deal can be made before the three day week turns into an economic and political disaster. What he needs now is a pledge from the TUC that a concession to the miners will not mean that other important groups of workers put themselves forward as special cases too.

But there is a chance that the miners could force Heath to the brink by turning their overtime ban into a strike.

That's the gamble. As the economic situation has got worse, Heath has been forced to take bigger risks. And now, with the prospect of world recession and more oil price rises, he has been forced into his biggest gamble yet. What the Tories are staking is more than even the future of the present government. As *The Sunday Times* pointed out last month -

It is common ground among ministers and Conservative MPs that revolutionary militancy which aims to destroy this government and with it, if possible, the entire political system, is a strong element in the situation.

Every reader of this broadsheet will agree with that assessment. But for the moment our aims may need to be less dramatic. Certainly, we should be aiming to inflict on the Government a setback to their plans at least as serious

* the abandonment of the Lame Duck policy of 1970-71 in the face of the occupation movement that began with UCS and spread outwards from Clyde-side.

* the miners victory of 1972 which punched an unpluggable hole in the Tories wages freeze and opened up a year of high wage rises and declining profit rates

* the collapse of the Industrial Relations Act after the jailing of five dockers had led uncontrollably to a showdown with hundreds of thousands of workers.

The common element in all three cases was the spread of mass action through the working class. The outcome of the miners struggle was decided at Saltley Coke Works, Birmingham, when thousands of local engineering workers marched to join the miners' picket, so tipping the balance of forces against the police.

Looking abroad, we have seen how a massive wave of strikes and factory occupations last year toppled the right-wing Andreotti government in Italy and forced the bosses to replace it with something more soft-centred. The result has been a modification of the wages and prices policy which will hit workers less, and a blow to the long-term plans of the employers.

Heath too can be forced to back down. Better still, he and his Government can be forced to get out. And if Wilson comes back again, it won't mean the end of capitalism or its crisis, but it will mean that the working class will be in a stronger position for the next round of the battle.

the end, a weak economic system like this is caught in a fatal trap - it needs to pay its working class enough money to buy the products they make and satisfy their demands for a decent standard of living - but it also needs that money to expand. At the moment British capitalism is in that trap.

THE SYSTEM CONTRADICTS ITSELF

This system makes profits for itself - not for the working class whose labour it uses. This is clear from the fact that even in the 1970's 7% of the population still own 84% of the country's wealth. True, the capitalists have to throw a few bones to their workers to keep the peace. But since the war, it has been clear that British capitalism cannot do both things - that is satisfy the needs of the workers and expand its rate of profit.

OUR WAGE BILL

There are a number of reasons for this. Over the last 25 years, the British working class has been a strong one. Not strong enough yet to change the system, but strong enough to create a situation where

THE ROOTS of the CRISIS

EVERY DAY when we open our newspaper, we read about "The crisis." And if we believe what we read everyday, then it seems that the crisis started two months ago because of the "oil shortage" and the "miners." **THIS IS WRONG**

This crisis did not start two months ago, it has been developing and threatening to happen for several years.

And so instead of causing the crisis, the so-called oil shortage and the miners work to rule have brought it INEVITABLY to a head.

The question is - who will take the blame?

THE FATAL TRAP

The crisis has been developing because what British capitalism needs is a growing rate of profit - but what it's been getting is a declining rate of profit. This is bad news for the bosses because they need a growing rate of profit for their companies.

If they don't get it, they can't invest. If they can't invest money back into the system, it cannot grow and compete with other countries in the world markets. In

ROOTS OF THE CRISIS - cont.

the proportion of our Gross National Income taken up by wages is now 70% - 20% higher than any other European country. This steady progress has been at capitalism's expense.

THEY MUST COMPETE

What gives the bosses ulcers is the fact that they have been unable to get this money back by simply raising the prices of their products because of world competition. For example, Japan or Germany can sell cars cheaper than Britain while still making a profit on them, because less of their production expenses goes in wages.

Also most of their factory machinery is more modern and economical - partly because their defeat in the last war meant that they could reconstruct their machinery and economy - partly because the workforce in those countries was weakened after ten years of fascist control. So less of their production expenses now go into modernising production than in Britain.

THEY WON'T INVEST

Underlying this is the problem of investment. Capitalists are unwilling to invest in a weak economy with a strong working class because they can't guarantee their profits, Britain is now such a country. But a more important reason why people won't invest in the British economy is because Britain's share of the world market has declined in the last 20 years. In short, Britain is bad news as an investment prospect.

THE TORIES ARRIVE

When the Tories came to power in 1970, they set about trying to rescue capitalism from these problems in a planned way. The 'crisis' is here because so far they have failed for national and international reasons.

THE UNACCEPTABLE PHASES OF CAPITALISM

Since 1972, they have tried with phases 1, 2 and 3 to build economic growth, partly by making the amount of profits which go in wages to the workers a predictable amount. They have tried to juggle with the demands of workers and the demands of international competition and modernising industry. This requires a lot of skill at the best of times since when one ball is up in the air, the other one is heading for the ground fast. And when the oil crisis happened, it threw the juggler right off balance.

PRICES SHOOT UP

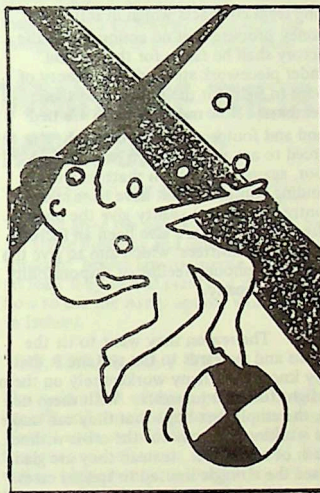
From our shopping bills and wage packets, we all know that phases 1, 2, and 3 have been planned literary at the expense of the working class. There have been some wage rises, though tied to more work, but the bosses wanted them so that more goods could be sold to help (the economy) growth. But prices and therefore profits have risen much faster than wages, to create more money for investment.

But phases haven't gone smoothly - the miners broke up the wage norm in 1972 by getting a wage rise which satisfied their needs rather than what the bosses needed. And their fight paved the way for other sections of the working class to get the wage gains they needed.

THE PHONY JUGGLER

Phase two wasn't seriously challenged. But when phase three was introduced, prices had risen so much that it was clear that the juggler was trying to keep only one ball in the air the whole time - Phase 3 talked about controlled growth - which really meant **control the working class and let the profits grow**. But the fight back started immediately. At present both miners and railwaymen are once again demanding wage rises which inevitably break Phase three rules if they are to satisfy their needs in the least bit.

The Tories plans were tottering - they had a political challenge and a political crisis on their hands which we can see began and developed long before Phase 3. Then came the oil crisis.



OIL CRISIS

Briefly the "oil crisis" is an international affair and has political and economic origins. Not only British capitalism, but also the USA and European countries are in various degrees of crisis. So expansion and competition are fierce, and there has not been an effective international monetary agreement since 1970. The last one lasted precisely two weeks! This means that the strength of a country's currency depends on the strength of its economy. So money like dollars and sterling are no longer on a fixed rate. Their value goes up and down - mainly down - like a yo-yo.

OIL GAMES

So the countries which produce oil like the Arab states and Venezuela have realised that worthless currency is no substitute for their real wealth - oil - and have quadrupled

the price of this vital raw material. Actually this move is the long deserved reward for countries like Britain and the USA who until recently totally exploited these countries by robbing their resources and giving them a pittance in return. But the fact that the people of these countries are now exploited by their own rulers can offer them little consolation.

In addition the Arab States have been using oil as a political weapon in the Arab-Israeli conflict. And on top of it all, the international oil companies have been holding onto stocks to take advantage of inevitable price rises.

GROWTH PLANS A FAILURE

For a weak economy like Britain the oil crisis is a disaster. In October, weeks before the miners overtime ban, the government ordered a 10% cutback in industrial energy consumption as a result of the oil shortage. This reduced the by then 3½% growth rate to almost nil. And the fact that they needed a 15% increase in energy consumption meant that their plans for growth were finished.

But these so-called plans, according even to the bosses' economists, were already heading for the rocks, because they were based on credit, phony investment and an increasing money supply. The "boom" had already become a whimper. The "oil crisis" turned the failure of growth plans into a disaster. And in turn transformed the miners challenge to Phase 3 into a crucial political confrontation. More drastic measures became necessary to preserve the capitalist economy.

THE POLITICAL PROBLEM

But the political problem is how the Tories can take these measures without losing all credibility for themselves as a government, and all credibility for capitalism as a system. They are trying to kill two birds with one stone. Make the cut backs which the chaotic national and international situation has forced on them and blame the chaos on the miners. This is what the crisis is about.

THE CRISIS IS A GAMBLE

The 3 day week is obviously a disaster for their growth plans under phase 3 - but the Tories gamble is if they can blame it on the miners and so turn public opinion against them and beat them, they will have taken a big step towards beating working class resistance to their plans. Then they will return to trying to control the growth of capitalism at our expense.

But if they didn't use the 3 day week, they would have to use other means to create the economic deflation which has been a growing necessity over the past two months due to their total failure. This means redundancies and higher taxation - in other words, suicide for the government and clear proof that their system is rotten, inefficient and chaotic.

The crisis has been brewing for years. Now it has reached a crunch. The question is a political one - can the Tories make the miners, and therefore the working class, pay the cost of their crisis? Or will we lay the blame at the bosses' door - where it belongs?

As we've shown the system was in crisis before the fuel shortages and the Tories and the bosses already had their ways of dealing with it at our expense.

IN INDUSTRY

PHASE THREE

This was a package like the others - designed to keep wages down, but with the addition this time of measure to screw the maximum amount of work, without payment.

HOW:

(1) Wage rises continue to be made, rigidly controlled within percentage increases. They make our wages **predictable** - so they can plan for bigger investments, profits and price rises.

(2) Any small rises above this to be tied to productivity deals. This means massive increases in the speed of work because Phase 3 only allows half the wage increases to be passed on in higher prices. Therefore firms must increase work-speed beyond what they've paid for just to maintain **profits**.

(3) The package encourages the use of 'unsocial hours' deals. Small payments are to be given in return for workers agreeing to longer hours, more overtime and shift work. The aim, much more work for a pittance. The result, we're too nackered to enjoy any of our time outside work.

(4) Linked to this is the attempt to attract new workers, mostly housewives and pensioners into industry. They hope they'll accept awkward hours, part-time work, bad conditions and low pay, therefore **undermining** the things other workers have won.

WHY?

Phase 3 is in the form of attacks on shop-floor organisation through productivity drives and longer hours. Screwing more work out of existing industrial resources - that's us and the present lot of machinery - is the employers' alternative to investing to create new industrial resources. Before they do that they want us on our knees, so they're waiting to see what happens in the battles going on now and in the near future.

UNIONS AND SHOP STEWARDS

The Trade Unions are also being used to hold back the struggle.

HOW? - UNIONS - The unions have been getting more and more involved in the machinery of the state. So much so, that they've inevitably become detached from our interests. The Tories have been trying to accelerate this recently by involving the TUC in talks with them and the CBI - the 'Tripartite talks'. Even when Scanlon got told by the AUEW conference to stop attending the talks, the government

THEIR SOLUTIONS - OUR PROBLEMS

got him out of it by arranging the talks under the auspices of the National Economic Development Corporation instead. By doing this they've got the Unions in the position that they feel responsible for running the capitalist economy in the so-called 'National (i.e. bosses) Interest', rather than acting in the general interests of the working class.

Consequently the TUC and individual unions have not been able to give any direction to the struggle against Tory policies. Instead they try to pretend that the crisis doesn't exist. It would be alright, they say, if everything could return to 'normal free collective' bargaining and 'economic growth.' But a return to normal **exploitation** and growth at our expense offers nothing to working people. Only a clear political understanding, a series of relevant demands and a determined struggle against the bosses plans can fill that gap.

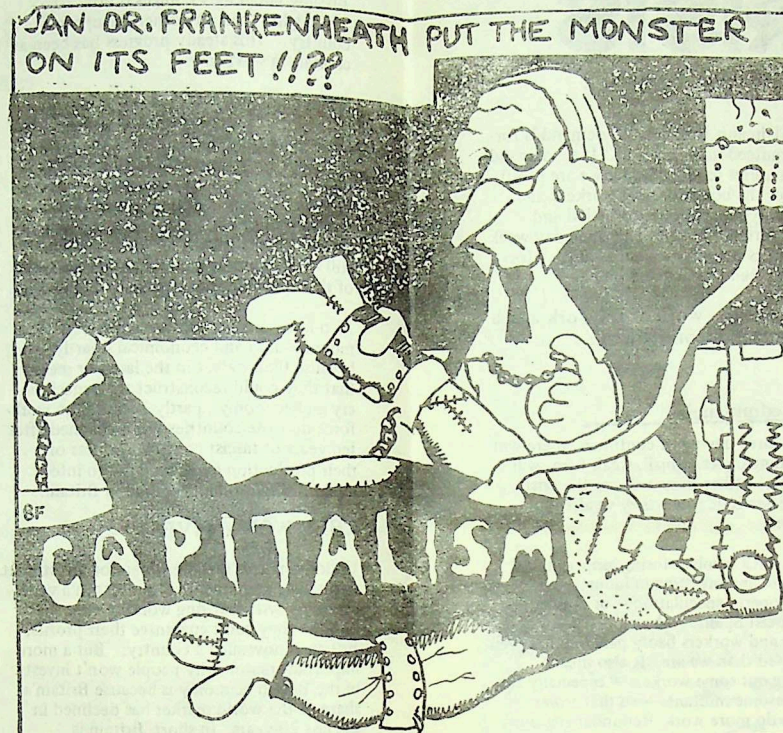
STEWARDS - We've seen a great increase in the last couple of years in the signing of long term contracts which in return for money promise that no action inside the factory shall be taken for that period. Under piecework stewards had plenty of room to fight for the interests of their members. Now many of them are tied hand and foot by procedures, so they're forced to act as 'policemen' of the shop floor, against any action that breaks the 'binding contracts' that have been signed. Contracts which in reality give the bosses a free hand. There's also been an increase in 'joint committees' which aim to give the stewards a phoney feeling of responsibility for the company.

WHY: The reason they want to tie the unions and stewards to the system, is that they know that many workers rely on them to fight for their interests. With them tied up, the employers hope that they can make the working class pay for the crisis without much of a struggle. Instead they are glad to see the struggle limited to special cases. A generalised fight against their plans would be the death knell of the Tories. Now they can label any set of workers with the guts to go against the government 'greedy and irresponsible.'

IN THE COMMUNITY

PRICES

If we ever manage to win anything inside the workplace, the bosses have a simple answer - **turn on the inflation machine**. Already the rate of inflation is running at 10%, well above our ability to pay. And all this has been going on when there's a price freeze, which of course has been made worse by our entry into the bosses' club - the Common Market. The Price Commission's a joke, it doesn't stop price rises, it organises them!



As the Financial Times put it in a moment of honesty:

"Almost every official and economist concerned with the freeze, irrespective of his politics is primarily concerned to limit money wages. The price control aspects are put in primarily as bargaining counters and public relations gestures."

RENTS AND MORTGAGES

The Housing Finance Act has used the idea of 'Fair Rents', Fair, that is, to the biggest landlord of them all - the state. The aim is twofold:-

- (1) It takes an increasing amount of money as rent. Those on rent rebates automatically lose 17p in every £ of a wage rise. Successive increases and ending subsidies means that Corpy housing makes the same profits for moneylenders as the private housing market does.
- (2) It pushes more tenants onto the private market, where profits are plentiful for the Tories' friends. The Tories believe in a property-owning democracy, that's why many of them own at least 3 houses.

It's no co-incidence that as more people get forced on to the open market that the government has helped push up mortgage rates to an all time high. The effect is to make more and more families committed to paying impossible interest rates, so they daren't go on strike or take other action which might jeopardise their payments.

the last 'I'm backing Britain' campaign by working overtime for nothing - they were sacked the year after, because the firm 'couldn't afford to keep them on.' It's a question of 'you scratch my back - I'll stab yours.'

Colt bosses tried to start another 'backing Britain' campaign, but this time the Colt workers told them where to get off.

If this doesn't work there's always the age-old trick of 'red scares.' That's when they say that ordinary people are too thick to demand or organise anything themselves. Instead groups like Big Flame or other communists dream them up 'for their own political ends.' They're afraid that people will start to connect revolutionary politics with solutions to their own needs.

(3) To destroy shop-floor organisation. The employers hope that during the 3-day week, workers will accept all kinds of crazy conditions and work procedures, especially as they try to fit 5 days work into 3. And then keep on that way when they get back to normal, so undermining things that have been won in the past.

WHAT ARE THEIR MEASURES?

THE STATE OF EMERGENCY

This act gives the government a 'legal' basis for strike breaking and using troops and the forces of bosses law to impose their order. At least they've had plenty of practice on how to use the Army against working people in Ireland.

THE THREE DAY WEEK

The main effect of this is going to be massive lay-offs and then redundancies. But even when it ends, their deflationary policies will have the same effect on a lesser scale. There will be a big attempt to abolish lay-off and guaranteed pay and salary agreements as the bosses say they can't afford them. The Tories will encourage them as they don't want any extra money floating round at a time of squeeze. This is already in progress the CBI has asked the government to suspend the guaranteed working week. And already many unions are short-sightedly de-negotiating agreements, some out of stupidity, some in the belief that their members can get more in state benefit. But the government is going to do all it can to restrict benefit.

Already Earning Related Benefit has been suspended. And under the 3-day rule, they say you can't get benefit in the first week, only 1 day in the second and 2 in the third. But you can also claim Social Security, e.g. on the Emergency Payments rule. 7 million workers are even worse off because they're not even covered by lay-off agreements.

THE BUDGET

This was mainly concerned with cuts in public expenditure. This might not hit us directly but it means less and worse schools, hospitals, roads, and other things we need. In Skelmersdale the plans to build a hospital has already been put back, so they won't even start until they have a population of 90,000. These cuts in public expenditure are only a continuation of the long line of cuts in health, education and social welfare instituted by successive Labour and Tory governments for the sake of saving profits. The fact that the budget didn't increase direct taxation means one thing - an election is a good possibility.

AN ELECTION

The tactic of an election can be used two ways by the Tories:- Firstly, they are trying to put the working class on the defensive by posing the question of "who rules the country?" Because the unions are unwilling to launch a general political struggle against the Tories and the bosses' plans to give a positive answer, they're caught in a trap. They oppose the measures but won't take action 'against the law'. Laws which were made by the ruling class with the very aim of controlling and smashing working class action.

Secondly, they hope that they can use the Labour Party as a way of diverting any working class struggle into 'constitutional channels' Hoping that the working class will be diverted from smashing the bosses' plans into the 'safe illusion' of calling for an election and a return of a Labour government as the solution to the crisis. The ruling class doesn't regard the Labour Party as the way out of the crisis. It needs a Tory government, moving more to the right. But the Labour Party can play the valuable role of de-mobilising the struggle.

Shop Stewards and the Class Struggle

A Big Flame pamphlet focussing on the role of shop stewards in the car industry and on the docks.

5p PLUS POSTAGE - POSTAGE FREE ON ORDERS OVER TEN

Five Months' of Struggle - Ford Wage Claim, 1973

Out in February, an account of the struggle over Phase Two in Halewood and Dagenham.

20p PLUS POSTAGE - POSTAGE FREE ON ORDERS OVER TEN

Big Flame Dock Bulletin

1p MONTHLY PLUS POSTAGE

Big Flame Newspaper

MONTHLY, 21p FOR A YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION INCLUDING POSTAGE

HOW TO MAKE THEM PAY FOR THEIR OWN CRISIS

The bosses' crisis exists because the working class won't lie down. The ruling class can only rescue itself by following through the plans we've described.

So their crisis will continue *or* they will succeed in defeating the resistance and organisation of the working class. Their crisis will get worse *or* they'll make us surrender our right to a good standard of living.

The choice is ours. To tighten our belts so the bosses' profits can grow; to allow attacks on our organisations and our militants to be jailed; to lose what we've won and give up hopes of a better and fuller life. OR to say, it's their crisis and we won't pay.

Despite their blab about 'One Nation', the Tories know that the crisis exists because of this conflict of interests. They know the ruling class and the working class are fighting each other for power.

So in their fight to save the bosses' plans, the Tories are likely to call for an election about 'Who Rules Britain?'

The ruling class would see a Tory re-election as a victory for their plans. But the working class' priority isn't what happens in the polling booths, but what happens to the ruling class' plans. **Our priority must be to increase our strength and defeat those plans whichever government is carrying them out.**

So, our priority cannot be a campaign aimed at returning a Labour Government, though that would be one result of a successful struggle against the bosses. If we are strong enough to prevent the bosses doing what they want in the present situation, the Tory government is likely to fall too.

Any concessions made by Labour or Tory governments will only be forced by the strength and readiness of the working class. Because in the end, power does not lie in Parliament.

The power of the ruling class lies in its control of the country's and the world's wealth. And in its control of Parliament, the media, the law, courts, police and army to protect its interests.

In the end the working class must challenge that power. We have begun to already. Developing working class organisation and political ideas to challenge the very existence of capitalism.

It's time we imposed *our* interests and *our* plans. We must be clear what we need to fight for and how we must organise to win. We must learn from past struggles.

Five Days' Pay, Work or No Work

The bosses and the Government are hoping to turn us against the miners with the three day week. The layoffs are also another attempt to make us pay for their crisis. Our demand is for a guaranteed week's pay, work or no work.

Whether there's work for us or not, we still need money to live. We're not capitalists, living off income from investments. Without full pay we don't eat properly, have to go without necessities, go into debt.

Months before the three day week, car workers had already been fighting for guaranteed pay.

A layoff was the cause of the strike last November at Vauxhall, Ellesmere Port. Traditionally, management had laid off workers with no pay and no warning. At first, the workers were asking for a guarantee of a shift's work whenever they came in. But, they began to realise that this was a trap. When layoffs are due to struggles in other sections or other firms, the effect of the demand for *work* is to put pressure on the workers in dispute to go back to work.

If layoffs are due to shortages of supplies, or because at any time, it's just not profitable for an employer to produce, that's their hard luck. We still have to go on eating. The demand at Vauxhall was starting to become 'a full week's pay - work or no work'.

Where there are layoff or guaranteed pay agreements, we mustn't allow them to be suspended, re-negotiated or abolished by management or government. There is no guarantee that they will ever return.

Nor should we accept overtime work without overtime rates, for Saturdays or beyond the normal working day. But in many places, especially where there are few workers there are no guaranteed pay agreements and then there's a hard battle to force the boss to pay for five days.

The alternative, when this isn't possible, is Social Security. And it is an alternative whatever the government has been saying about it being possible to claim more than Dole.

The experience of the Claimants Unions is that the Social Security will do their best to split up people in the offices, confuse them and underpay. So, don't go to the office alone. There is the best chance of claiming what we're entitled to when a lot of us go in together and insist on being dealt with together. Although the officials won't tell you this, you can always make a claim for an Emergency Payment.

The Claimants Unions main demand is for a guaranteed income for all. It's a demand which unites us all, whether we are profitable for the bosses or not: workers, sick, unemployed, pensioners, disabled and unsupported mothers. The three day week underlines the importance of uniting for a guaranteed adequate income.

5 days' pay - work or no work and a guaranteed income for all.

No Redundancies

If the three day week continues, there will be redundancies. Small, weak firms will collapse. Other firms will use the crisis to bring in redundancies they've already planned.

Their plans involve closing 'unprofitable' factories and investing in industries - like property speculation - or countries - like fascist Spain - where profits are higher and workers badly paid and less well organised than we are. It also means shaking out some workers - especially the troublesome militants - so that fewer people do more work. Redundancies are another way of making workers bear the cost of the bosses' problems.

We must refuse to pay for their crisis. And we must avoid the situation - as in UCS - where we manage to keep our jobs, in return for no-strike agreements and speed ups. Our answer to redundancies is full pay and no sackings. Let them sort it out.

Workers at the LIP watch factory in France replied to a threatened closure by selling the watches they made to pay their wages and to finance their struggle. They have shown that the workers' needs and the bosses' profits are completely opposed.

Factory to Community - making it one struggle

Capitalism is attacking us inside and outside the factory gates. The working class will not improve its living standards or defend its interests unless we are prepared to fight that attack everywhere.

It's easiest to see how capitalism tries to organise our working lives. What we do, how long it takes, what we earn, our working conditions - it's always arranged to get the biggest profit for the boss.

But it doesn't stop at the factory gates.

Capitalism *wants* us to see our home life as private and isolated, because it has problems when we get together. At work, we come together in large numbers, often sharing the same jobs and conditions so

that we can support each other against the boss. They couldn't stand it if we came together outside as well.

We can't go on seeing the workplace as the only place of struggle, and the only place where we have power. We can't go on fighting for wage rises that become wage cuts with rising prices and rents. The bosses don't respect our privacy at home.

At work, we're robbed of the things we make and given the lowest possible wage while the boss carts off the profit. In the shops the boss takes back what we've earned when we pay him for the food and clothes we've made.

The State is trying to save capitalism's profits by cutting down spending — which is the tax we pay — on hospitals, social services, transport, maintenance of housing estates. So the workers in these services suffer redundancies, low pay and productivity deals meaning more work. And the working class people who use these services suffer worse living conditions. Rents and rates soar and our housing estates fall apart.

Our need for health services increases with harder work, poorer food and the pollution caused by capitalism gobbling up resources. But hospitals are closed, prescription charges go up, and health and welfare services get worse.



Since last year's hospital strike, workers in some hospitals in London have been fighting against the run-down of health services and the attack on their working conditions. These workers need to unite with the people who use the hospitals. The working class has much more than a trade union history. But too often struggles in the community are left isolated.

In December, after 14 months of struggle, the tenants of Tower Hill, Kirkby, ended their rent strike against the Housing Finance Act.

They rediscovered and organised their power on the estate. Early on they created an action group and area organisation on each section of the estate. This meant as many people as possible could be involved in the organisation of the rent strike. They sealed off the estate with road blocks when evictions were threatened. They invaded "closed" council meetings when their futures and well-being were being discussed. They boycotted the court because they saw it was the stronghold of the ruling class — that law under capitalism is law to protect the ruling class.

But Tower Hill couldn't win on its own. Especially now, no single factory, industry, community can win on its own. They ended the rent strike after 2 men were jailed and

were left isolated. This needn't have happened. In 1915 the Glasgow working class faced rising rents and housing shortages. They won a return to pre-war rents by rent strike, organising against bailiffs and rent collectors, refusing to accept the court's decision, and getting industrial support. Other struggles also show the way forward.

During the 1972 miners strike, miners wives took the struggle into the communities, organising food co-ops and fighting in the Social Security offices.

They showed that any struggle by any section of the working class is a struggle of the whole class.

We cannot rely on the trade union leadership to organise the fight outside work. They divide us even at work — skilled against unskilled, men against women, industry against industry. In the middle of the crisis, they can only talk about 'special cases'. They see the working class as their members and 'the rest', not as one class, in or out of work. Capitalism doesn't care which union we belong to — it organises our time, energy and income in every aspect of all our lives.

Support the Miners — Smash Phase 3

We've talked about the miners fight on page two. The point we made there is simple — support the miners.

Now we must use every possible opportunity — mass meetings, branch meetings, tenants' meetings — to get pledges of support for them and to plan demonstrations and acts of solidarity. If the miners go over to an all out strike, their pickets should be swelled with the support of every single section of the working class movement.

But the other main way of supporting the miners is by taking up their fight against Phase 3 ourselves.

Workers with Phase 3 claims in the pipeline should organise to win them in full, and prevent any backtracking by the union leaders. Where possible we should be looking for joint claims.

Last year a Vauxhalls convenor suggested to his counterparts in Ford and Standards an all Merseyside mass meeting of car workers to discuss joint action. He was knocked back, but it's this sort of suggestion which needs taking up this year.

Prepare to Win

Heath's gamble on the three day week could easily turn into a class confrontation if the miners decide on strike action. We shouldn't be scared of this confrontation.

In fact, we should make sure it happens and make sure we win it.

In that situation, the job of the militants must be to push it forward and unify the different struggles into one movement that will defeat the plans of the bosses and the Government which carries them out.

We have to think in terms of a general strike situation and the kinds of organisation we will need if that comes about. Like Councils of Action, grouping together in every area the workers, tenants, housewives, students and political organisations. In May 1968 in France it was the Action Committees which organised the factory occupations, internal marches and picketing.

But it's no good talking about strategies without talking about who will carry them out. The organisations which are closest to the rank and file and most likely to lead and coordinate a developing struggle are all tied to the unions and their policies. These organisations — shop stewards committees, tenants associations, trades councils — may act if they are pushed. (Liverpool Trades Council has been pushed into calling a one day strike in support of the Shrewsbury 3.)

But victory will depend on how well militants manage to turn the struggle into a mass confrontation, with the rank and file in control of organisation. Mass, active involvement will be the driving force. And at the same time, this strength and initiative will compel many of our leaders' to stay with us.

But none of this will happen unless the militants — the people who are prepared to fight and take initiatives — organise to make it happen. Big Flame puts itself forward as a way of bringing together militants to fight for the policies and actions we've outlined. Of course, this must happen whether or not Big Flame is present. At the same time, we invite everyone who is in broad agreement with what we've said here to contact us.

We have to make sure we win this one. We can't afford to lose.

Although it's obvious that a general strike is more possible now than ever, it would be worthless and demoralising to issue calls for one. More important is to carry out the groundwork that could lead to a general strike. The slogans for this period are

- *Support the Miners
- *Five days' pay, work or no work
- *No Redundancies
- *Free the Three

"I look forward to the day when the real culprits, the McAlpines, Wimpeys, Laings and Bovises, and all their political puppets are in the dock. Facing charges of conspiracy and intimidating the workers from doing what is their lawful right - picketing..."
Eric Tomlinson

"The conspiracy was one between the Home Secretary, the employers and the police. It was conceived after pressure from Tory M.P.s who demanded changed in the picketing laws..."
Dennis Warren

FREE THE THREE

Dennis Warren and Eric Tomlinson are two of the 6 North Wales building workers who have already been sentenced for picketing. Dennis is in prison for three years, Eric for two. A third man, John Jones got nine months and three men, John Carpenter Ken O'Shea and John Llywarch each got nine months suspended for two years. The trial of the other 18 begins on Jan 15th.

The trial in Shrewsbury is not an isolated incident - it is at the heart of the conflict between workers and bosses. And not just in Britain.

There are similarities between these savage sentences and the 20 year terms imposed on 10 Spanish workers' leaders last month

THE STATE CLAMPS DOWN

The extent to which the bosses will use their laws and police against us depends on us. On our strength and political awareness. On our ability to prevent the State's jailings and beatings.

The bosses' favourite way of dealing with our rebellion is to soak it up, to turn it into something they can manage. In the factories they have tried to turn shop stewards committees into a way of holding back workers' struggles. They have trapped the stewards in a web of committees, rules and regulations and given them privileges over ordinary workers. Yet originally, shop stewards organisation was a real blow to the bosses. Similarly, on the housing estates, they employ community workers to take the sting out of our anger about rubbish living conditions.

But as conditions get worse, at work and at home, the stewards, the social workers and the TUC are losing their grip. Working class people are fighting for the things we need, in the ways that we can. We are forcing the bosses into the corner.

The businessmen's paper, *The Financial Times*, sees the situation clearly...

"The trade unions will have to be drawn into managing the economy, particularly as regards wages and prices. The only alternative would be to smash them..."

30 Nov '73

They are preparing for just that, if it becomes necessary. More and more police being armed in the Special Patrol Groups

A special anti-riot army corps, 60,000 strong, is being built. And in early November, the army reserve was placed on a 2 day alert, to coincide with the start of Phase 3.

And meanwhile, the mailed fist is being used when it can be without uniting the whole working class against the bosses and their state. A main target has been picketing and picketers. The miners, dockers and building workers have proved in the last 2 years how effective the flying picket can be. As Des Warren put it at his trial:

"Was there a conspiracy? Yes there was, but not by the pickets. The conspiracy began when the miners gave the government a good hiding last year, and I hope they do the same again this year."

"It developed when the government was forced to perform legal gymnastics to get five dockers out of prison after having just put them there."

After the strike movement that forced the government to release 5 dockers from Pentonville, the Tories had learnt that the Industrial Relations Act was too hot to handle. After searching the law books, they found a better solution, the 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act: they could jail pickets for up to 15 years and pretend the case was a criminal one. And the loose meaning of conspiracy was that the accused had to prove themselves innocent. That's what they used against Warren, Tomlinson and Jones in Shrewsbury.

CLASS LAW

Sometimes the law works in favour of the working class. But its main aim is to protect the rich and powerful. Again as Des Warren summed it up:

"I have heard the judge say this was not a political trial but just an ordinary criminal case. I refute that with every fibre of my body. How can anyone say this was just an ordinary trial when 1,000 police were on duty outside this building because buildingworkers were due to appear before the court..."

A look at the background to the trial bears him out:

** No charges were laid for 4 months after the picketing took place. Police escorting the pickets to many of the sites took no action at the time and even complimented some of the workers on their behaviour.

** The key incident in the trial occurred on a McAlpine site in Telford. The High Sheriff of Denbighshire and controller of the police force which brought the charges is Peter Bell. Bell is also a director of McAlpines and son-in-law of Sir Alfred McAlpine, himself a past High Sheriff of the County, like many of his forefathers.

** George Richards, a chief inspector in the police force which brought the charges, recently stood for election as a councillor. His expenses were paid by his life long friend, Sir Alfred McAlpine.

OUTLAWED

The aim of the Shrewsbury trial was to outlaw picketing. As long as Warren, Jones and Tomlinson stay inside prison, it has been successful in outlawing the weapon the miners used so well in 1972 to win their wage rise, and indirectly ours too. How long can it be before it will be seen as a challenge to the law of the land when, as Warren said, "men decide not to work beyond the agreed number of hours in the working week and ban overtime!"

FREE THE 3 DROP THE CHARGES

* Mass meetings in all areas and work places to prepare for an all-out stoppage on the 11th Jan - the day of the Merseyside wide stoppage called by the TUC. To invite speakers from Shrewsbury defence committee to address the meeting.

* Make Jan 11th the first day of continued action. We must press the Liverpool Trades Council to organise flying pickets to spread the strike action so that it can build up to a general strike to free the three.

* Call on the Trades Council to organise a mass meeting to include all sections of the Merseyside working class - rank and file workers, Shop stewards, tenants, students, housewives, political groups. We need all round support to fight the Shrewsbury trial

* Give full support to the conference on the Shrewsbury 24 on the 19th Jan in Manchester.

By building up our independent initiative of the rank and file, we can give ourselves the strength to make sure the TU and labour leaders do not sabotage the struggle. We will be in a position to demand that they officially recognise and support every action taken by the working class to free the 3 and get all charges dropped.

SCDB 25329

BIG FULAME

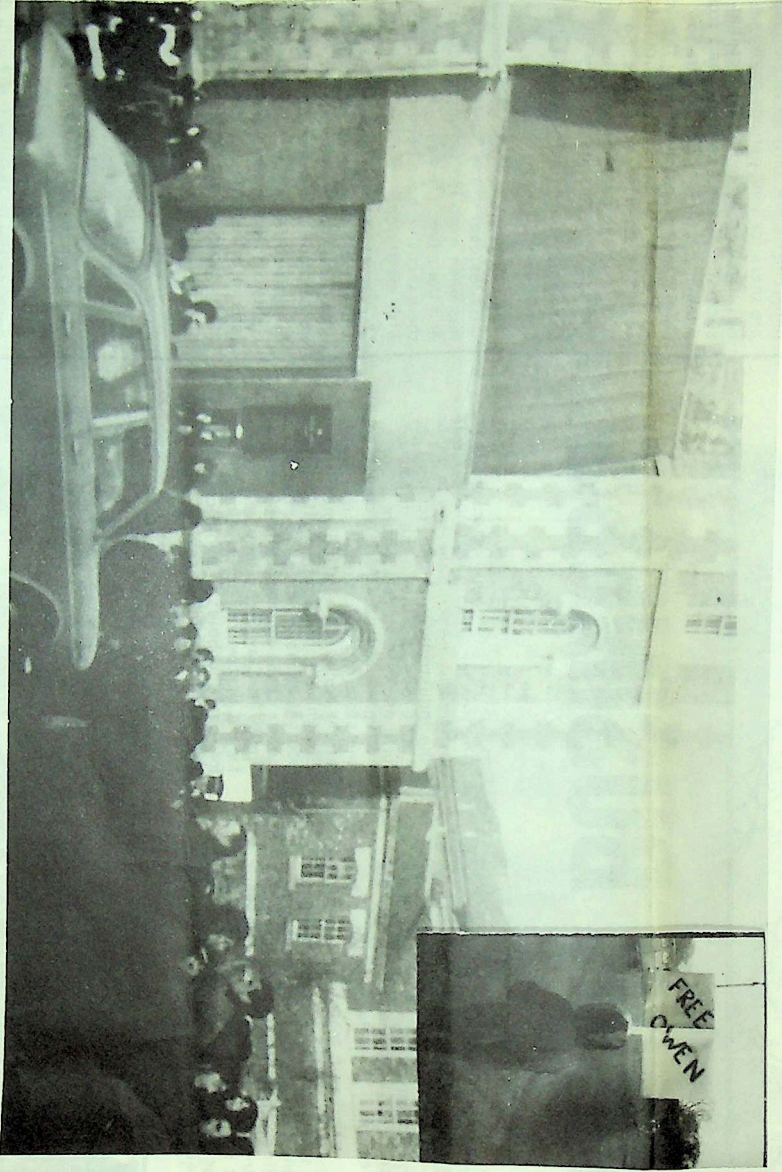
Merseyside Revolutionary Socialist Newspaper 5p

number 14

December 1973

RENT STRIKER JAILED

HUNDREDS DEMONSTRATE OUTSIDE WALTON



Two Tower Hill tenants were arrested early on Thursday 6th December for refusing to appear in court. The court orders were intended by Kirkby council to break the 14 month total rent strike of the Tower Hill tenants against the Housing Finance Act. It's always been the Action Group policy to boycott the courts. The 2 men spent the first day in solitary confinement and one agreed to go to the court, but Brian Owen is still inside.

try anything again, but another cowboy - this time a plain clothes police man - drove into the demonstration, slightly hurting a few people. His car was kicked and thumped, but of course he wasn't arrested. The action of the police frightened the kids so much that people on the demonstration decided to take them back to Tower Hill where they spent the rest of the afternoon in the special playground in the community centre.

men with special "anti-riot gear" - to be used either against the demonstration outside or against the prisoners who, since Brian Owen's arrest, have been rioting inside in support of the tenant's stand. While leaflets were being handed out to passers-by, others were circulating inside Walton prison. One prisoner sent a message out via a visitor to move the meeting 100 yards along the road so people inside could hear it. As songs were chanted in support of the rent strike and the prisoners waved their hands out of the cell windows.

It was decided to hold a meeting on the forecourt of the prison - to avoid any more trouble on the road - but again the police decided not to cooperate and started scuffling, so the meeting had to be held in the middle of the dual carriageway. Throughout the demonstration the police seemed a little overawed by the strength of the demonstration. Brian Owen's persistence, despite threats from the prison warders, and the presence of 2 coachloads of tenants from Brynôn, Manchester and Widham plus smaller contingents of tenants and political groups from Merseyside and elsewhere clearly embarrassed the police, who are not used to organised defiance. It was reported that inside the prison that the police had reserve

The demonstration was completely successful in it's purpose of showing solidarity for Brian Owen's refusal to be forced into ending his part in the action against the Housing Finance Act. Despite Kirkby Council's drastic resort to the courts and jailings.

TOWER HILL DIARY

22nd October 36 Tower Hill tenants refuse to appear in court to hand over personal information for attachment of earnings orders. (Treats taken from wage packet and paid direct to Council. Registrar gives them final chance to appear at a later date.

6th November Tenants who refused to appear on 22nd receive invitations to attend court on November 21st to purge their contempt after refusing to attend the last hearing and refusing to give the court the information they requested. They have to go to court and show cause why they should not be committed to prison.

21st November Wednesday All but three of the tenants fail to appear at county court to 'purge' their contempt

27th November Tuesday 15 tenants receive letters from Liverpool County Court stating that unless they attend the following Friday Nov. 30th, they would be jailed for contempt of court. Women to Risley Remand Centre and men to Walton Jail.

30th November Friday The 15 tenants fail to appear and go into hiding over the weekend so that no arrests can be made until Monday at least when there is more chance of contacting industrial workers. Various factories on the industrial estate Kirkby are leafleted.

3rd December Monday Picket at council offices. Tenants force their way into a housing meeting and confront councillors but are brutally removed by police.

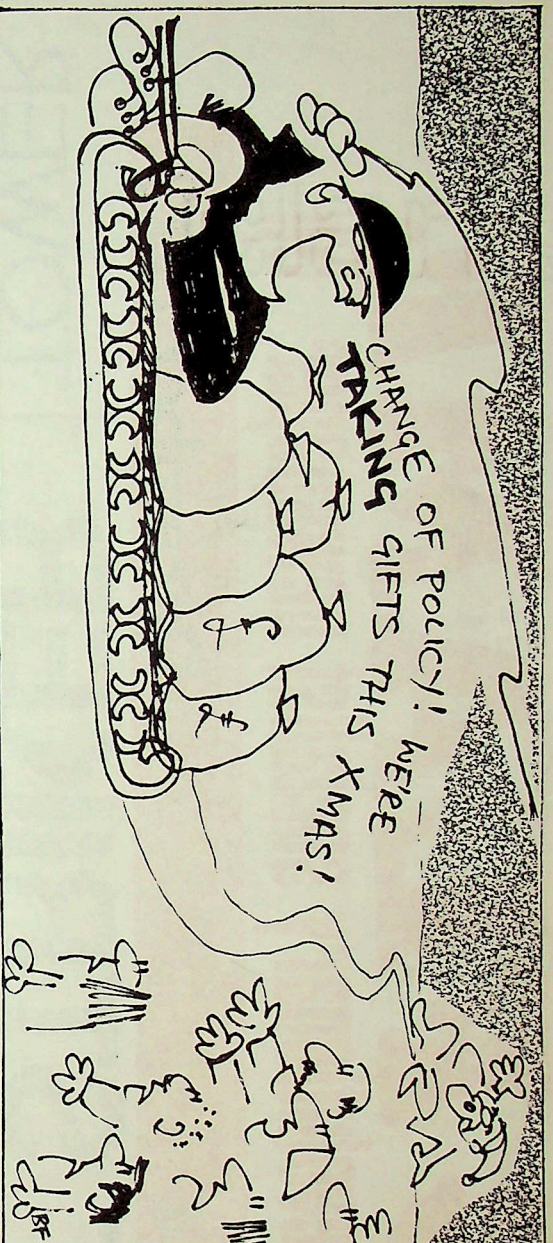
4th December Tuesday At Action Group meeting people discuss tactics in the event of any arrests. Everyone realises that the Council are playing a 'waiting game' to try and break people's nerves. There is talk of tactics to prevent arrests if nothing has happened by the next meeting because the Christmas holidays are drawing near and the possibilities of industrial action are lessening.

(CONTINUED MIDDLE PAGES)

more on rent strike centre pages

**DEMO
2PM
SUN DEC 16
outside
walton jail**

On Sunday afternoon, 9th December 400 men, women and kids, with banners, placards, loud speakers, song sheets and a trumpet demonstrated outside Walton jail in support of Brian Owen who was held inside. Demonstrators chanted "Free Brian Owen, Jail Heath" and handed out leaflets to passing cars - until one driver refused to stop and knocked one of the leafleters over. Immediately people surrounded the car, thumping it and demanding the arrest of the well-heeled-looking driver. The police refused and got nasty, trying to arrest a demonstrator. A group of tenants prevented the police arresting him. The police didn't



Our Christmas song; sung to the tune of Jingle Bells.



Ring of tills, Ping of tills,
Jingle all the day
Come to the city centre
And give us all your pay.

Check your bills, check your bills
Check them right away
For in these stores you will find
They're extra every day.

The goods you buy, the goods you buy
Wrapped up really nice
But wait until you realise
They've doubled up the price.

Santa's here, Santa's here
Santa's here to stay
If you want to see him
You'll have to bloody pay.

Christy clubs, Christy clubs
Going all the year
When you add up what you got
You won't join up next year.

We've got goods, we've got goods
Which we couldn't sell
But when it comes to Xmas time
We'll make sure you can't tell.

Plastic toys, plastic toys
Which break on Xmas day
When little Jill and Johnny
Get them out to play.

Think about the shop girls
Standing up all day
Double work and double time
But never double pay!

Turkey's ducks and chickens
The price of them's a farce
But when it comes to stuffing—
Up the butcher's arse!

LABOUR MEAN BUSINESS

While Labour councillors worry in their council seats, the Poulson affair drags on. Even though the leadership have squashed all attempts to set up an enquiry, it's obvious that dozens of Labour councillors and many MPs are involved. And not just in the North East. Wandsworth, Glasgow, Swansea and Birmingham are a few of the towns where Labour councillors' activities in land and building speculation have recently come to light.

As usual, the cries of corruption have distracted our attention from a more deep seated problem. Labour administrations all over Britain are busy lining their pockets, legally and illegally, by using their power to buy and sell land and to make deals with property developers. What lies behind all this is the collapse of the Labour Party as a working class organisation.

Take Liverpool Labour Party, for example. Local councillors are now so far from what's left of the rank and file in the Party that most of them showed no hesitation in voting for the Housing Finance Act despite being elected on a non-implementation platform. Last May, some of the Party's traditionally most solid supporters, in Scotland Road and Sandhills, showed how they feel about the Party by putting up their own tenants' candidates—and nearly beating Bill Setton, the leader of the Council.

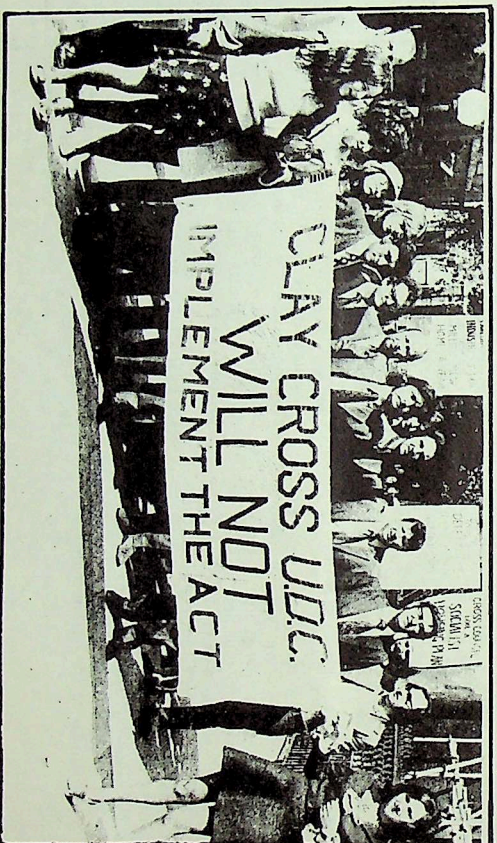
You can count on one hand the number of councils who stood out against the Housing Finance Act and stood by its election pledges. Clay Cross, the most determined in its opposition, has a group of very unusual Labour councillors. They believe that their first responsibility is to their working class electors. And to their employees, the council workers. They have deliberately been trying to give them wage rises well above the limit of the Freeze.

But Clay Cross is very unusual. It's a small town and the councillors are close to the people. The dozen or so councillors represent about 10,000 people altogether.

Another factor is that the Clay Cross councillors share the living standard of the people who elect them. They are all working class people doing very ordinary jobs. This isn't the case in Liverpool and the other big cities.

An increasing number of Liverpool councillors are businessmen, including Setton himself who owns a petrol station. Some of them have got into business since they were elected. Then there are the others, the growing number of Labour

The Party's left wing attacked Reg Penrice for arguing that nobody was justified in breaking the law to oppose the Industrial Relations Act. But Clay Cross has shown the dilemma for these left wingers who want to actively and legally challenge the state of the bosses. Either you retreat back into legality when the Government threatens penalties, or you set about building the state power of the workers. Not surprisingly in Clay Cross they've opted for the first way. They are looking for legal loopholes to avoid collecting the rent increases.



councillors who are drawn from the ranks of small business and the professionals like lawyers and teachers. There is a widening divide between the councillors and the people who vote for them. It's only in a few places like Clay Cross now that the councillors themselves stand to lose as much as the working class by measures like the Housing Finance Act.

Let this can be taken too far. It's at least as important as the class of the councillors is their politics and the position they hold in the governmental system. This has been shown to be true by the Labour Party's attitude to anti-working class measures like the Industrial Relations Act and the Housing Finance Act.

TICK, TOC, TECH, BANG!

Further education colleges are at the bottom of the education hierarchy with universities at the top. Many end up with poor facilities, lack of class room space and books, few resources for recreation and eating. One of the colleges in Liverpool is housed in buildings built during the industrial revolution.

Many students are on day release from work. It's a break from the office or assembly line but college is usually just as boring. To make it worse they're usually not even allowed the same bad facilities as full time students.

The minority of full-time students, most from working class homes, don't do much better. 'Education' in these colleges is like being in an 'exam factory' with everything done as cheaply as possible.

ORGANISATION

But the level of student organisation and militant action against these conditions has not been high. This is mainly because students in different departments are split up and not many are there for long periods anyway. But it's also linked to the fact that such students get no grant apart from a token pittance of £25 a year. So unless they organise strongly they're at the mercy of the college authorities and dependant on parents. So many have to take low-paid evening and weekend jobs just to carry on.

Examples of what college authorities get away with are:-

** In St Helens College of Technology the president of the Student Union has been expelled for union activity and their funds frozen. The rest of the executive have been threatened with expulsion.

** A few years ago 60 students at Kirkby were suspended for going on a May Day march in support of workers and university students. In most colleges students have no right to hold meetings on the premises in college time. Often apprentices have to agree not to strike.

But students are not taking this lying down. Many are involved in the grant campaign of the National Union of Students and in fighting for their needs inside the colleges. Both fights will be very tough. The government will have to be pushed very hard before it gives grants to FE students because it will then be faced with the legitimate demands of students who stay on at school for grants. Also the NUS isn't really interested in fighting for FE students; many of who haven't got proper unions. Their campaigns are mainly based on grant increases for the most powerful and organised university and polytechnic students.

"STUDENT STRUGGLE"

Because of this situation students and teachers in BIG FLAME started an organisation called Student Struggle. It aims to link the struggles in all aspects of education with a revolutionary understanding of the situation—especially the need to build links with other sections of the working class. Without such an organised political force anything that happens will stay isolated and the weak-kneed politics of the NUS will fail students once again. Although we've only been active for a couple of months, students from 5 colleges are already involved in meetings, planning common initiatives and producing a monthly 'Student Struggle' Newsletter. For a copy of the Newsletter and more info on Student Struggle ring or write to the 91g Flame address.

LIFE UNDER THE CHILE

It took the British government a matter of days to formally recognise the military junta in Chile, and it hasn't taken them much longer to resume arms sales to the country. The American banks are now falling over backwards to offer good credit terms to the regime. The only doubts have been over whether BLMC should go as far as making a present of sports cars to the junta. Why such a welcome to the Chilean dictatorship? The answer is simple. The Chilean junta is pledged to 'restore normality and national reconstruction' - the reconstruction of Chilean capitalism and the fuller exploitation of the working people.

For the Chilean working class this means one thing - drastic reductions in living standards. In a broadcast on October 27th, General Pinochet himself announced that the cost of living would be allowed to rise by a fantastic 1600% by the end of this year. Times were not easy under Allende. But he did fix the prices of essential food items and had planned an 150% wage increase for this October.

The generals have well and truly put paid to that. The price of basic foodstuffs has become ridiculous. A Chilean exile writing in Peru reports that milk is up by 500% coffee by 700% and bread by 400%. The paper 'Alimentacion', the *Journal of the Chilean National Agricultural Society*, gives figures that show that the average Chilean worker has to spend 88% of his or her income just to FEED themselves (never mind their families). So there is no point commenting on the glorious 40% wage increase just announced. And on top of all this, there is now a compulsory 4 hours overtime on Saturdays for all workers.

These soaring prices are no accident. They are part of a deliberate government policy to increase profits and encourage investment. For instance a major cause of the price rises is the recent devaluation of the Chilean currency. The amount that Chileans



Prisoners in Santiago Stadium

can buy is sacrificed to make it cheaper for the foreign capitalists to dive in and buy Chilean raw materials, plant and machinery, and of course, worker's labour power.

And for those who don't like the new package, the slaughter goes on. All trade-union and left political parties have been banned, but that is not enough. The militants have to be liquidated. For instance, the paper Socialist Worker reports that

"The inhabitants of the town of Traiguen were called into the streets on 13 October in response to what they thought was a call to support

the army unit that had risen against the regime. When they left their houses they were gunned down in the streets."

Even the Swedish ambassador has been beaten up for taking in political refugees. (The gates of the British Embassy are locked to everyone.)

But the resistance to the junta goes on. An estimated 100,000 people are missing from their homes. 15,000 can be accounted for as dead or in prison, but that leaves 85,000. This includes the large number of militants who have gone underground or into

Front (ELAM) and its military wing the Peoples' Army of Liberation (ELAS). By 1944 the EAM had 2 million members out of a population of 7 million and it controlled nearly the whole of Greece. But after the withdrawal of the German occupation forces, this dominance by the Left wing was steadily eroded.

unthinkable

This was a result of several factors. Churchill made a deal with Stalin at Yalta which divided Eastern Europe into 'spheres of influence between Britain and Russia, giving Britain a free hand to intervene militarily in Greece to fight ELAS. Also the Greek Communist Party, betrayed by Stalin, still operated within the framework of the Popular Front politics and did not aim at capturing state power, but only at securing a 'democratic constitution'. It also failed to understand the different tactics which necessarily followed from the creation of ELAS, a mass peasant guerrilla army.

The intervention of the British Army against ELAS made a civil war inevitable which lasted from 1945 to the defeat of ELAS in 1949. The civil war was used as an excuse by the USA to formulate the 'Trueman Doctrine' which divided the world into two competing economic and ideological camps. In March 1946 the USA stepped into the vacuum left in Greece by Britain's post-war decline. The American Marshall Aid Plan enabled the US to completely control Greek politics, and ever since then it has pumped military aid into Greece as one of the 'democratic' countries of the N.A.T.O. alliance. Not much of Britain's or the US aid has helped the Greek people: when T'said aris was PM from 1946 onwards, 50% of government expenditure was on the Army and police, and only 6% on economic reconstruction.

The Army has always had a special status in Greece since it was created in 1944 by the British as the real power behind the democratic facade of the 'political cliques. It was untouchable and was not responsible to any government, besides the nominal authority of the King. It contained members of the former security battalions and General Arivas' X Organisation - German collaborators and openly fascist - whose main aim

ARMY

It is important for militants and socialists throughout the world to support this resistance, in the most practical way possible. In Italy the revolutionary organisation, Lotta Continua, has raised around £56,000 under the slogan 'guns to the MIR'. Italian workers clearly see that they have to support the armed struggle against Chilean capitalism, as the only practical struggle. In this country the same fund has been launched by the organisation 'Fight On' which raised over £100 alone on the recent Chile demonstration in London.

In Scotland, moves are being made to black the two ships being built at Yarrow Shipyard for the Chilean Navy. Although the ban on Chilean goods has been lifted on Liverpool docks, the stewards say that they will try to re-impose it on a national basis. A ban in Liverpool is no good if the trade can be switched to Hull or Southampton.

The two slogans 'Guns to the MIR and the Armed Resistance' and 'Black all Chilean goods' are the main pivots around which solidarity action in this country can become useful and practical. The British working class has to act itself, it cannot see itself as just a pressure group on the British government to get it not to recognise the junta. The Chilean workers, peasants and students have a long drawn-out war in front of them and we must do what we can to ensure they win that war.

Donations to 'Guns to the MIR' to 'Fight On', 154 Ladbroke Grove, London, W.10.

after the Nazi defeat was the physical elimination of ELAS/EAM. These fascist groups were given a free hand by the British Army and the 'B' Specialists (imported from Northern Ireland to police Athens) to carry out terror attacks on former members of the resistance.

So, the Greek Army has a long tradition of political action and its views always tend towards fascism. It sees itself as the Guardian and Salvation of the 'Greek Nation'.

The coup of November this year is merely one clique of officers replacing another. However it shows how worried the Greek ruling class were by the student and working class revolt which preceded it. The military government intervened against Papadopoulos because they thought he was too clumsy in his handling of the revolt. To cool down the situation they have released some of the students and workers imprisoned after the demonstrations. But they have made it clear that they have no intentions of restoring a Parliamentary system. In fact, they have said they want to return to the principles of the 1967 Revolution. They have criticised Papadopoulos for fostering 'electoral illusions' in the population!

GREECE

The recent 'coup within a coup' by the Greek Army is only the latest attempt of the Greek ruling class to maintain itself in power by physical force when faced by growing popular pressure for revolutionary change. British, and later American, imperialism have consistently backed up the Greek right wing by supplying military and economic help. It is virtually certain that the CIA was involved in the 1967 Colonels coup, and the coup which threw out Papadopoulos this November. Why have the British and now the US government shown such a close interest in Greece?

After the Second World War, countries like Greece, Italy and France were seen by Britain and the USA as threats to the international capitalist system because of strong left wing resistance movements which had organised the fight against Fascism in those countries.

In Greece the resistance was largely organised by the Communist Party into the National Liberation

ITS GOT TO BE TOTAL

A lot of people have been saying recently that they'd support the Tower Hill tenants if they weren't on total rent strike: that you ought to pay rent - you can't just live for free.

We'd like to say again why we think Tower Hill tenants are right in going on *total* rent strike.

The Housing Finance Act isn't just a matter of rent rises. It forms part of a pattern with the Industrial Relations Act, Phases 1, 2 and 3, cuts in the Health Services and Social Services spending all measures aimed at controlling the working class ability to fight and to force us to pay for the employers' problems (see *Mr Heath's Coal & Christmas Crisis*, pages 6 and 7).

On the shop floor, the Government is trying to organise wage agreements by using the contract system. The aim is to

tie wage rises to no-strike clauses for 2 or 3 years. And when strikes do occur, the Government tries to crack down on picketing, as we've seen clearly in the case of the Shrewsbury 24.

At home, they are now making us responsible for the *whole* cost of Council housing by withdrawing grant subsidies. With 80p in the £ of rent collected going to the moneylenders, we still have to bear the brunt of soaring land prices caused by the hand and property speculators. Those who fall behind with their rent face Attachment of Earnings orders, which remove the arrears from the wage packet.



Then, we're offered means tested rent rebates. These open up a future of less well off people being shoved into cheaper accommodation to create overcrowded ghettos for the poor, and dividing the working class. In any case, since they will assess rents on the income of the whole family, a wage rise could easily mean that the rebate disappears, and the rent will automatically rise 17p for every £1 won. This will hit the lower paid especially.

FRONT DOOR.. SHOP FLOOR

As the struggle on Tower Hill has gone on the Action Group has felt more and more that Tower Hill can only go so far by itself—and that to be able to carry on their fight against the Housing Finance Act they would need the active support of other parts of the working class especially in industry. They rightly think that if production in the factories is stopped in support of the Tower Hill Rent Strike then they will be in a much stronger position.

Since the arrest on Thursday, workers on the Kirkby industrial estate have been leafleted at the factory gates, & shop-stewards committees all over Merseyside have been contacted to try and get strike action to ensure the release of Brian Owen. So far no factories or building sites have come out (two factories in Kirkby came out for a day on Thursday) and we need to try and work out why and what can be done about it.

The Council knew what they were doing when they arrested Larry Doyle and Brian Owen on December 6th. This (7th-14th) is Christmas Day week for many workers, and apart from the possibility of losing Christmas bonuses, nobody feels they can afford to lose any money before Christmas. But even disregarding Christmas the chances of industrial workers coming out in support of Brian Owen are very slim. Given the Trade Unions' apparent inability to fight their own battles against the freeze and phases 1&2 it's unlikely that they would want to take on the Government over the Tower Hill Rent Strike & the H.F. Act.

That isn't to say that there aren't a lot of rank and file workers who do see the importance of the Tower Hill Rent Strike and who are actively prepared to support it.

But in most factories the convenors and many shop-stewards spend most of their time trying to keep the men in work and keep production running smoothly. It's very difficult to organise any action against the wishes of the convenor and chief stewards so these rank and file supporters have not been able to organise effective action so far. In a lot of cases the stewards haven't even called a mass meeting to talk about it. In Fords for instance, as soon as the tenants contacted the stewards committee they held a meeting and said that they had already pledged industrial action at the beginning of the rent strike but only in the event of an eviction - and since no-one had technically been evicted they were not prepared to act. Several workers

The rebate scheme tries to divide neighbour from neighbour. The better paid face over-increasing rents while the lower paid are forced to submit to means tests for pathetic rebates.

This is what the Tower Hill rent strike is against. It is as much concerned with the Housing Finance Act and Phase 3, as the stringencies of the train drivers, the miners or the engineers. It is **anti-Government, not anti-increase.** This is why they are on **total rent strike.** But, tactically as well it makes more sense to go on total rent strike. They can't be bought off by the rebate schemes or get pressured by rent collectors telling them that everyone else is paying the full amount.

And it certainly hurts the Council more. In 14 months they have failed to collect nearly £3m. worth of rents which they claim could have been spent on Tower Hill estate. But the fact is that things have got done under pressure from the tenants in this period which never happened before.

When tenants have blocked dangerous roads, safety barriers have been erected by the Council. And people say that more repairs and renovations have been done since the rent strike began than before.

Besides, that uncollected money hasn't gone to waste. Tenants have used it to buy the things they need - to pay for **dearer food, clothes and transport, newer mind luxuries.**

tried to point out that imprisonment and eviction announced to the same thing - but presumably even if Brian had been put before a 'firing squad' they'd still have insisted that it wasn't technically speaking an eviction.

All out strike action then seems less possible given the amount of manipulation of the workers that goes off inside the unions themselves

Perhaps there's a need to look at alternative types of action both in and out of the factories. Workers could be considering work-to-rules and go-slows and joining in demonstrations and pickets even if they can't get all their factories out on strike.

It needn't just be industrial workers doing supportive action. Other tenants groups could try and organise rent strikes again and have mass road blocks in support of the arrested tenant. Students could organise strikes, rent strikes and general indiscipline.

If Tower Hill doesn't get the support it needs then it's a reflection on every section of the working class that fails to give it or is unable to. Tower Hill tenants have made a strong and united attack on the Housing Finance Act but they need the support of other tenants and workers to take the attack even further. Tower Hill tenants didn't make a mistake when they organised a total rent strike - but if the rest of the working class don't or can't join the fight then that's a mistake. A defeat for Tower Hill is a defeat for the whole working class.

things like human bodies, and naughty words, pictures and noises. The public they're safeguarding is us, of course - Lord Lambton was only in danger when he got found out.

In case you're wondering, 'indecent' is something that offends the ordinary modesty of the average man. This legal definition was dreamed up by that average man, Lord Chief Justice Parker in 1965. And it's used in the courts by other average men - judges and magistrates.

POLITICS OF PORN

CARR'S CRUSADE TO CLEAN UP BRITAIN

A new Bill is being put through Parliament by Home Secretary, Robert Carr. It's called the Cinema-tograph and Indecent Displays Bill.

They're off again. The Government has decided we need protection against 'indecent displays'. No, they're not sending Powell back where he came from. They're launching a new clean up campaign to safeguard the 'public' against open display of indecent

TOWER

After over a year of total rent strike two of the Tower Hill tenants have been arrested and thrown into Walton Jail.

Their long battle against the Housing Finance Act is reaching a crucial stage. But no matter what happens in the next few days or weeks, the tenants of Tower Hill will have taught us all a lot of lessons.

They have shown how possible it is for us to say No! to the introduction of anti-working class laws - The Housing Finance Act has increased rents three times since it was passed, and all in the interests of the bosses, the politicians and the money lenders. All along the line Tower Hill



against sections of the working class who've threatened the State but who can't be nailed with more definite charges.

In the same way, this Indecent Bill could be useful to the State. It increases the State's powers of censorship, supposedly in the 'public's' interests. The Bill also gives huge powers to the police to raid premises, seize material without a warrant and arrest without a warrant. Already they are moving in on newsgroups and porn dealers before the Bill's even law.

It's not worth crying over the suffering profits of the porn merchants. But this extension of police powers is one more sign of what's been happening in the last

TOWER HILL DIARY

(Continued from page 1...)

GET THE MORTIS

tenants have opposed this Act even when other tenants backed down. They've organised together and shown the strength of their numbers. From the first week of the strike, news bulletins have been distributed around the estate every week, regular meetings open to all have been held every week. At the beginning the estate was divided into areas with a representative for each. People went round with the rent man, and still do, to prevent him from frightening anybody into paying, and to get more people to join the strike.

The Council's latest and most vicious move — imprisonment — is a last resort. They've

tried everything over the last 14 months to beat the tenants' united strength: eviction, attachment of earnings and court orders. All without success and, in fact, more people had recently begun to join the rent strike. All the time the arrears were building up and now stand at £4m.

Finally, the Council was forced to carry out its threat and drag two tenants off to prison, as an example to the rest. The fact that the Council has had to go this far says a lot about the strength and staying power of the tenants in Tower Hill. Whatever happens now, it will be very hard for any of them to forget the experiences of the last 14 months. The lessons they have learnt can be used to make future struggles even stronger.



two years. We've seen the growth of police state methods of raid, arrest, seizure of property and interrogation in several cases — including the Stoke Newington 8, the Belfast 10 and the Shrewsbury 24. To say nothing of police swoops on immigrant communities and large scale arrests under the latest Immigration Act. But why sex? And why at this moment?

The Tories seem to think that the Act would win them votes, especially from women, for showing concern for the nation's mental health and well-being. No doubt the Tory fancy-hat brigade welcomes the Bill. Dear old Mary Whitehouse and Lord Longford, who've got nothing better to do than plod around investigating porn shops, are probably made up. Because upper and middle class people like that are very upset. At times of economic crisis, when the working class is struggling hard for a

[6 December, Thursday] Brian Owen and Larry Doyle are arrested and taken to Walton Jail. Eileen Owen and Josie Doyle — who have also got Court orders — are prepared to go to Risley Remand Centre, but the bailiffs are not prepared to take them. A third man is wanted but they are unable to find him.

A few minutes after the arrests an air-raid siren is sounded to let everyone on the estate know what's happening, and within an hour a road block is put up to draw attention and support. Later, 100 tenants march to the Industrial Estate to canvass support. They march straight onto the shop floor at Fisher Bendix/Clothurists and Plesseys where they are promised meetings at lunchtime over the arrests. At A C Delco and Otis Elevator the gates have been locked. Two spokeswomen go to a stewards meeting at Fisher Bendix at 12.30.

Meanwhile, men and women at Anglia Paper and Frigoscandia have walked out in support of the jailed tenants.

Later, in the afternoon, tenants report back to a meeting in the Tower Hill Community Centre on the response to the call for industrial support. They decide to picket Walton Jail from 7pm.

At the jail people sing and chant. The noise from outside causes a near riot inside the jail. Prisoners join in the singing and bang their mugs against the bars. Prison visiting is suspended and extra staff are kept on duty in the prison because of the disorder inside. At 11.30 everyone has left.

[7 December, Friday] Meeting in a house in Tower Hill at 10.00. Decision to canvass the Industrial Estate again and to try to get the Community Centre opened for use as a playgroup. By 12.30, the women have managed to get the Centre opened and several tenants start to organise a playgroup and inform other rent strikers of its existence. And now that the place has been opened, it can be used for large meetings every night if necessary. Later, tenants decide to stay all night in the Centre to keep it open, so that it can be used as an information point.

The two jailed men have been visited during the day. Brian is being kept in solitary confinement. Larry has 'poured his contempt'. That night, another picket at the Jail, attended by tenants from Everton, Over the Bridge, Norris Green and Croxteth.

[8 December Saturday] Liverpool v Everton match leafletted to get support for the tenants and about the mass demonstration at the Jail on Sunday. At the same time, 1.00 - 3.00, visiting hours, the Jail is being picketed. Last night we were told that Brian would be allowed no visitors over the weekend. Eileen tries to get in and eventually she succeeds. Picketers leaflet visitors as they are going in.

Later, we hear that Brian is out of solitary.

such dirty minds that they think any naked human body is diseased.

Capitalist society runs on sexual repression. And that's linked to the subjection of women. But you don't legislate it under the carpet. Working class men and women have to fight for the time and energy and living conditions to be sexually happy.

Women have to fight against their own subjection, wherever they find it — as cheap labour at work, as unpaid labour at home or as sex object.

Capitalism organises our time, energy and money in its own interests. The bosses need men working night shift. They aren't interested in your sex life. If you're tired, bored, fed up with an 8 or 10 hour factory day or a day with the kids and the housework, you're less likely to start cavorting around like James Bond or Raquel Welch. If the roof leaks or the bills pile up, you're more likely to be a nervous wreck than be sexually satisfied.

[9 December Sunday] Mass demonstration at the Jail at 2.00 (see page 1)

At 7.00 in the Community Centre a meeting arranges delegates to factory mass meetings on Monday, and arranges a companion for every rent collector who will get people to join the rent strike again. The meeting decides to mount nightly pickets at the Jail, from 8 till 10, to organise another demonstration on December 16, and to have a meeting of all the rent strikers the next Thursday.

[10 December Monday] Rent collectors picketed all day. Meeting at 7 in the Centre: report back from factory meetings shows there's little mass industrial support. Need now to step up activity on the estate, get more people on rent strike.

[11 December Tuesday] Rent Office and collectors picketed.

Community Centre Takeover 8 Dec

By Saturday, the tenants had been given permission to use the Community centre all day and every day. This was a victory they gained once they had taken matters into their own hands and shown that they were prepared to occupy to get the use of it if necessary.

When you think that until this happened no-one could get into the Centre even to make a phone call (even if you had a letter from the Holy Ghost' as one tenant put it), it's been quite an achievement.

For the first time, the tenants are making it into a Centre which really is based on the needs of the Community. It's needed for a playgroup so that everyone can be involved in the pickets, demonstrations and other activities, and take turns minding the kids. It's also needed as a focal point for the Action Groups activities, an information point where people can go and find out what's happening and what has to be done.

Held in Solitary

Brian Owen was arrested in an early morning raid on December 6 and taken to Walton. From then until Saturday he was kept in solitary confinement, deprived of cigarettes and newspapers, refused permission to speak to a lawyer and denied any exercise.

The Governor and assorted priests and vicars have visited him in the cell to try to persuade him to 'punge his contempt', and tried to divide him from the other prisoners by telling him 'you're not the type to be in here'. This tactic was useless because Brian was getting support from his fellow prisoners who were finding out why he was in.

On Saturday we heard that he was being allowed out of solitary confinement to scrub floors and was in much better spirits because of the support he was getting from other prisoners. Although none of his visitors had been allowed to give him packets of cigarettes, other prisoners were managing to get some to him.

If you can't afford contraceptives, or don't know where to get them, and you're scared of getting pregnant, you're not going to feel like a Goddess of Love. And if you've been brought up on a diet of playground gossip and porno fantasies, never getting it except all of a dither, because there's nowhere to go or it's not allowed, you might not really know your arse from your elbow.

So the 'good life' stays in films, books, adverts — a fantasy, dangling just out of reach. It's what the admin use to buy us off. Dreams sell everything from cars to lavatory cleaners. And pornography.

But you never reach the dream.

That's our fight — for the living and working conditions, for the time and energy and money to become more satisfied human beings. Then, maybe we'll all stop arguing about porn. We might have better things to do.

MR. HEATH'S GOT A

the common enemy - bosses and state - THE MINERS WAGE CLAIM REPRESENTS THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS.

unity + solidarity

The oldest lesson in the book is that a section of the working class can't win without the support of the whole class. Even more when the ruling class is determined to win. Unity and solidarity are the key in present struggles.

In the coming months we could see a series of generalised confrontations - many different struggles in different areas at different stages. But all will have a common base - the maintenance and development of working class living standards.

The task of militants and revolutionaries is clear. We have to try to bring the struggles together. At first through concrete acts of solidarity

But the rate of economic growth fell, the balance of payments was in a bad way and then the fuel crisis blew up. So the steam had to be taken out of the economy. This meant a credit squeeze and cuts in state expenditure on social services and education to make room for investment in industry.

Investment is the key to healthy profits and the increased exploitation of the rest of us. But it's the TYPE of investment that counts. So far it's mostly been put into 'finding work' for the machines and people that weren't used when growth was slower. The economy needs a 20% rise in capital investment just to make up for the previous year! There still isn't enough put into new machines and factories, which is what counts in the long run.

The reason is simple. Businessmen won't invest in long term plans when the working class is strong at the point of production. They're only interested when we're too weak to fight their plans to boost profits.

For workers in the car industry the prospects are even gloomier. For as long as the oil shortages last no one is going to want new cars. The six month waiting lists for Fords and Vauxhalls will disappear overnight.

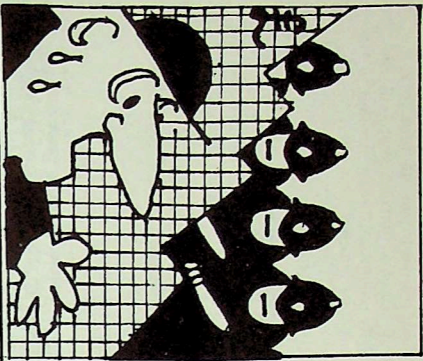
Already foreign motor bosses have announced cut backs and layoffs in the US and France. Already British Leyland have announced the introduction of a ten-hour day week for the New Year. They've got nothing to lose from a few weeks' shut down - it gives them the time to re-tool. At Halewood it may give Ford the opportunity to get the new Diana model up to schedule. But in one sense the car workers have the edge over other workers: they at least have experience of fighting the bosses' lay off tactics. Other workers have much to learn from the recent fights for lay off pay at Fords and Vauxhalls. The real

(so-called Republicans), the Unionists and the Alliance around the table knowing full well that none of them had sufficient support in either Catholic or Protestant communities to form a workable parliament. Whitelaw has stepped down before this latest imperialist strategy collapses leaving the expendable Francis Pym in the hot seat.

On every major issue the SDLP has betrayed those they claim to represent. They once refused to join in elections till interment ended. Today 600 men and women (and now 4 schoolboys) are interned, but the SDLP are the greatest supporters of participation in Whitelaws Assembly.

They once demanded reforms in the violently sectarian Royal Ulster Constabulary, but this is now forgotten. In fact the SDLP may even demand the end of the rent and rates strike, which they originally called for 2 years ago in protest

FREEZE



Miners, railwaymen, engineers, and ambulance-men... the page could be filled listing workers whose wage claims defy Phasé 3. Add to these the tenants still on rent strike, the students' grants campaign and the anger of thousands of workers' faced with lay-offs and unemployment in the coming months and you have what the bosses call 'a state of emergency'.

The bosses are faced with an emergency when the working-class fights for a decent standard of liv-

ing. It's all about the struggle between two classes over who gets the wealth. Heath and the press try to tell us otherwise. They say the 'national interest' is threatened by greedy strikers. This is a con. They drag out the 'national interest' when THEIR profits, THEIR expansion is threatened. When inflation and profits were soaring and our living standards held down where was this 'national interest'?

In the coming months power cuts and petrol rationing will be blamed on the miners and railwaymen etc. Many of us will face temporary hardships, and Heath will do his best to use this to turn us against strikers. But in the long run the whole working class will benefit if the miners and all other struggles win. They'll weaken

and intensified.

WHY?

Lets look at what the so-called 'economic boom' is all about. The Tories have been going on about 'economic growth' - but this growth is always at OUR expense. Frozen wages and rising prices and rents. Now their phoney boom has burst and they are busy working out ways of making the working-class pay the cost.

The 'boom' was financed by credit, an ever-increasing money supply and phoney investment. The aim was to do anything to get profits growing again and put off worrying about the more serious defects of British capitalism.

When 70 large manufacturing firms were asked recently what the effects of a 10% cut back in oil supply would be - it may be nearer 17% now - they replied they would have to cut back production by an average of 3 1/2%. That will mean layoffs, and it may mean unemployment. But it will also run a hole right through the Tory Phase 3 which is based on the assumption that the economy will expand by 3% this year. This could mean that Heath will try to make Phase Three even tougher on wage earners. As always, for as long as the present system survives, our rulers will try to make the working class bear all the costs of the system & disasters.

CAR CRISIS

The boss may have to drive a Consul for a while instead of a Jaguar, but he won't have to live on six quid on the dole.

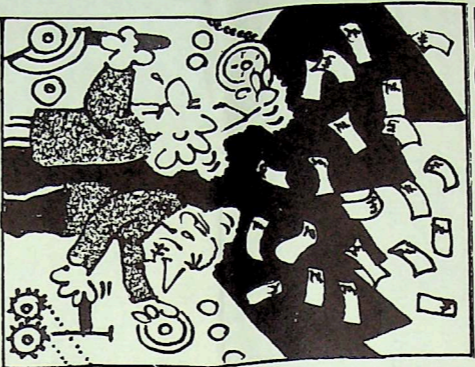
mont. British strategy has been to try to defeat the Irish resistance by sheer military force, while simultaneously portraying the SDLP as the party best able to represent 'the Catholic, nationalist population'. But things didn't work out... Though weakened by arrests, the IRA is undefeated, capable of launching coordinated hijackings and road blocks across all Six counties.

Second, in general the Republican population has not been coned by SDLP promises of 'representing' them in the new Assembly - any more than we could believe that our problems would be solved by the British Labour Party in Parliament.

The 'Expendable' Pym

So, the Government has been forced to cut corners to form this Assembly. They brought the middle-class parties, SDLP

ECONOMY

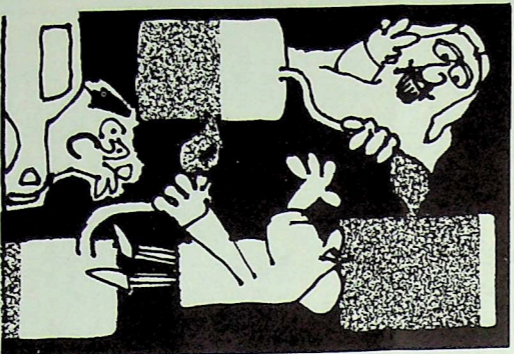


"The size of the labour force can be increased. Politically, more immigration may be unacceptable, so the other alternative is women and pensioners" (Economist, Nov. 1973)

**Ford tries to introduce a 3-shift system at Dagenham.

**Everywhere work is speeded up

OIL



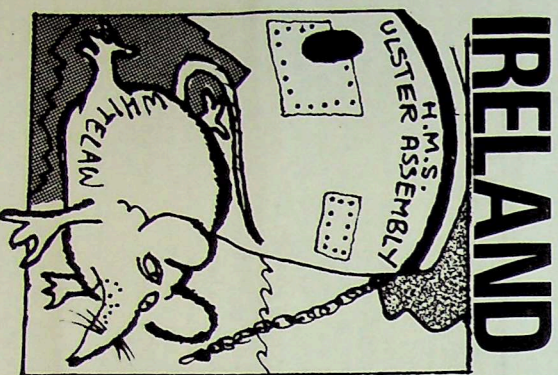
The 'oil crisis' means queues of cars rushing around searching for 50p worth of four star petrol (how was it the shortage hit the cheap grades first) but when it affects industry the impact will be a lot worse. We're almost certainly in for a big slump in the New Year. The Government and the press will naturally blame the miners - perhaps even the ambulance drivers can be made to bear the responsibility for the economic crisis.

Why has William Whitelaw left his post as Secretary for Northern Ireland so soon after 'triumphantly' forming the new Ulster Executive? The main power-sharing parties can't understand it. 'Amazing', said the Social Democratic Party. 'Astounding', said the Unionists.

Direct Rule

As parliamentary parties, both the Social Democratic and Labour Party and the Unionists are clearly worried by the turn of events. Before Whitelaw formed the New Ulster Assembly, there was no parliament for them to enter. The old Stormont parliament was abolished by Westminster when, after 50 years of Tory-Orange domination, it proved incapable of controlling the Republican rebellion.

The answer was direct rule from Britain under Whitelaw. Since the fall of Stor-



CHRISTMAS CRISIS



SHREWSBURY 24.

The first part of the trial of the 24 building workers in Shrewsbury is nearing its close. In the course of the trial, the prosecution has called around 24 witnesses to prove the 210 charges against the defendants. The charges arise out of incidents during last year's building workers strike. The most serious charges, brought against 6 of the men, is 'conspiracy to connell people to abstain from their lawful work.'

Conspiracy carries an unlimited sentence. It is one of the most repressive tools the courts have. The prosecution don't have to prove that the men did anything.... just that they intended to.

The trial itself once more brought out the real conspiracy. The conspiracy between the Home Office, the police and the building millionaires... against the 24 builders. One of the prosecution witnesses, a journalist, told how he and other journalists were invited to a meeting with heads of the local police after the strike. They were asked to supply any information they had about the actions of the pickets.

He later admitted, under questioning, that he knew that local building employers had compiled a secret dossier on picketing, and were pressuring the government to take action. That would explain why the police themselves did nothing against the N. Wales builders until a full 6 months after the end of the strike.

The real crime or the 24 is that they are part of the growing movement among building workers that is fighting the lump, and which last year held the first ever national strike in the industry.

Everyone in the working class movement is affected by the Shrewsbury trial. We will all be weakened if the state is allowed to punish any of the 24.

Speakers from the Defence Committee can still be invited to meetings to prepare the interest and solidarity if any of the men are found guilty, whether its a fine or imprisonment. If any punishment is given out, we must all act in the fullest way possible... strikers, rent strikes, pickets on courts, demonstrations etc.. All the state wants is to get away with it once. We have got to stop it.

stop them.

Unfortunately for Whiteleaw, the killings didn't stop, even after his token ban on the UFF and after UDA leader Tommy Herron was shot. His killers were thought to be British soldiers, carrying a warning from Whiteleaw.

Once the UFF Christmas truce ends, the killing will continue. And it will go on until British capitalism is expelled from Ireland. Because the Tories are determined to crush the Irish rebellion, using either the army of occupation or fascist groups like the UDA or UFF, who are right now organising among the Irish Protestant communities in Liverpool, Glasgow as well as Belfast.

Whiteleaw left Belfast as one of the most hated men in Ireland. In his new job as Minister of Employment he could produce the same reaction over here.

idea was to discuss a united claim. He was turned down. This year such suggestions should be taken up. This year, more than ever, the working class needs to win.

'We can't rely on unity being built by union leaders or the official union machine. We can't totally ignore these people but the rank and file has to put itself at the head of the struggle. The firemen won because they refused to let the union dictate the fight. In Glasgow they elected a strike committee that just ignored the union call to get back to work.'

The unions try to find a compromise between the interests of the ruling class and the working class. Even at their most militant they always threaten to drag back the rank and file. Even the left wing of the miners executive tried to restrain the work to rule in some Yorkshire collieries.

forced to accept jobs that fit in with the timetable at home - jobs that other workers wouldn't touch with a bargepole.

So the struggle against Phase 3 isn't just about fighting for wage rises that break the government norms. It MUST also include:-

**Wage rises based on our need to live and not on their profits.
**Against all productivity drives - fight the way they organise us and screw us at work.

**No more extensions of hours, no to 'work flexibility' and shift work. 'We want cuts in hours with no loss of pay. All increases on the basic rate.

**Support all struggles to organise workers. All new workers to be paid the existing full rate for the job. Back the struggle of women for equal pay and not equal exploitation - against shift working which benefits only the bosses.

run down and our reliance on oil increased to ensure the rising profits of the oil giants. Vast reserves of coal lie unused, and miners' working conditions get worse because there's relatively simple plans for automating face-working are starved of State investment.

FREE TRANSPORT

Meanwhile the insistence that public transport must run at a profit has led to a situation where it is cheaper to travel one in a car than 50 in a bus. But at what cost to the world's resources, or to the lungs of the city dwellers. The oil companies do, of course, make a penny or two out of this absurd situation. Even now the Government refuses (and Labour keeps quiet) to make buses and trains free which would solve the oil 'shortage' overnight. They dare not do so because it would threaten their religion of free enterprise and their bank balances.

were usually UDA men, and despite the fact that UDA members have killed at least two soldiers as well as Constable Arbuckle, the first policeman to die in the present revolt. In fact the UDA held a meeting recently in Kirkby, on premises lent by the Tory party.

HYPOCRISY

Whiteleaw's manipulation of such right-wing groups exposes his hypocrisy. He claimed to hate "violence from whichever quarter", but in fact he used it to stay in power, with no sympathy for the victims.

But recently he wanted the killings stopped before they became a scandal. New Protestant sectarian groups like the "Ulster Freedom Fighters" began to bomb Catholic bars without warning in the heart of Republican communities. Yet the army patrols seemed "unable" to

The working class doesn't have to prove it's a special case. It's a special class. It provides all the wealth, all the goods and services that maintain capitalist society. It has the right to demand as much as it wants.

action

Unity has to be made real through action. It can be set in motion now in various ways. Inviting speakers from sections in struggle to tenants meetings, branch and especially mass meetings. In this way press lies and distortions can be attacked directly. Supporting picket lines and demos.

When wage claims come up together there should be immediate steps towards joint action. Last year, a Vauxhall convenor proposed to convenors at Ford and Standard Triumph that they have a joint mass meeting for all car workers on Merseyside. The

to our own advantage - even though their aim is to screw the maximum amount of work out of us for as little cash as possible. Phase 3 tries to stop this. The 3% flexibility clause for extra payments gives some room for productivity bargaining. The government says it allows only part of this increase to be passed on in price rises. So firms MUST increase productivity by increasing the speed of work and the hours worked beyond what they paid for - just to maintain their profits, and then extend them.

They're also forcing up overtime, by keeping basic rates low and introducing more shift work schemes so they can get more work out of us.

Linked to this is the attempt to attract housewives and pensioners into industry. They hope they'll accept awkward hours, part-time work, bad conditions and low pay and undermine the pay and conditions that other workers have won. The fact that housewives have another job at home means they are

counties and they have exploited us. Now the Arabs are fighting back not just by reducing exports, but also by nationalising the oil companies. And we must fight our own battle against the oil moguls.

Even the Tories are embarrassed by the way the oil companies flaunt their power. All Alec Douglas-Home's attempts to gain favour with the Sheiks have come to nothing. The oil companies have simply switched supplies away from Britain themselves.

The Oil Lobby in Britain which operates by buying MPs to vote their way in Parliament has successfully resisted any attempt to produce a rational fuel plan - despite their hypocritical squawks at the moment, the Labour party did no better than the Tories. The coal industry has been

like joint demos. But these can build up to more lasting forms of unity - councils of action involving every-one in struggle - workers, students, housewives, tenants, pensioners - that can organise a general confrontation against the ruling class. To win higher living standards for all and to destroy the policies of the Tory government which is trying to keep them down.

Last year the unions successfully split us up, worker from tenant, worker from worker. They argued for the special case - their members deserved a rise because they were low-paid (like the gasmen's union) or good workers (like the Fordworkers union). Union leaders scrambled round like rats in a race, competing for the crumbs. So there were no joint actions meetings or demonstrations organised between different sectors in struggle. One by one each sector got picked off.

Now it's more profitable for them to invest in land speculation and food where the working class doesn't fight back - yet!

The bosses are waiting to see the result of Phase 3 and other aspects of the class struggle before making long-term plans. Meanwhile they're planning short-term ways of making more money out of us.

**Productivity deals and increasing the speed of work.
**Longer working hours and more shift work.

**Attracting other sections of the working class into production - more jobs for housewives and pensioners.

All these measures are outlined in Phase 3. They mean using existing resources rather than making new ones with new investment. They also mean a big attack on shop-floor organisation and work practices we've used to our benefit in the past.

We've often used productivity deals battle will be the fight against managements attempts to provoke walkouts so that lay offs can be blamed on the workers- this gives them the chance not to give lay off pay.

OIL BLACKMAIL

It is true that the Arab states are blackmailing the European states at the moment. BUT THE RULERS OF THE WESTERN IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN BLACKMAILING THE SO-CALLED 'UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES' FOR CENTURIES. AND SENDING IN GUNBOATS AND ARMIES WHEN THE BLACKMAIL FAILED. The oil companies are richer than, and more powerful than, most governments - Standard Oil of America has an income greater than any of the Arab States. They have exploited the oil producing

against internment. They stand no chance! Over 13,000 families pay no rent, rates, electricity or gas. Bailiffs are warned off, rent collectors are robbed (they soon stopped coming) and policemen shot. Would YOU come off rent strike if your estate was still a no-go area for the council and the law?

In other words the opportunist SDLP prefers Whiteleaws hastily patched up talking shop to the mass anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle of the Catholic working class.

Whiteleaw knew it couldn't last. There's been fighting in the Assembly already. He got out before his reputation suffered.

ASSASSINATIONS

Ironically, the Assembly is threatened by the sectarian assassination campaign - something Whiteleaws administration once used to its advantage.

BIG FLAME

ORMSKIRK STRIKE INTERVIEW

“The Equal Pay Act became law in 1970. The intention of the Act was to introduce equal pay for men and women doing the same or broadly similar work by December 1975. Originally the Act was meant to be 90% implemented by the end of 1974.

But then came the Freeze and Phase 2. In a time of crisis the Government began to control wages in a more rigorous way. Hence the £1 plus 4% increases. The Equal Pay Act was modified in an attempt to contain the struggles of women towards equal pay.

In addition to the £1 plus 4% women were to be allowed one third of the difference between men's and women's rates. Employers were not legally bound to pay this progression towards equal pay under Phase 2. Hattersley, Newman and Hender, an industrial valve manufacturer in Ormskirk took advantage of this loophole and refused to pay up... The clerical workers of this firm have been on strike for equal pay since November 12.

Some members of Big Flame, themselves white-collar workers, went out to the picket line and recorded this interview with two of the women there.

Since this interview was recorded Hattersley's management agreed to meet a National Official of APEX. The meeting took place on Dec 5th. No new offer was forthcoming. At the mass meeting the next day the decision was taken to stay on strike.

DOCK BOSSES TRY TO SABOTAGE STRIKE

Liverpool dock board bosses tried their best to disrupt the first national one day stoppage by dockworkers. Four days before the stoppage, they totally broke procedure by sacking Alan English, a shop steward, without letting him state his case. As a result, 5,000 dockers at a mass meeting gave all their attention to English's sacking, and heard nothing about their own wage claim.

MAJORITY OUT

Every dock worker knows that it's almost impossible to get sacked off the

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22 Woburn Hill Liverpool 13.

How many people work in Hattersleys, and what proportion of these work in the offices?

Altogether 400 to 450 and 150 of them work in the offices.

How many of the 150 are on strike now?

Approximately 50, all of them are in the union Apex.

Could you tell us what the strike is about?

Equal pay. You see, when the union first came in they said they wanted to negotiate over equal pay and a grading scheme. The same day that they came in they were talking to management. That afternoon the management put up a notice saying that the female workers would be told how much they were getting towards equal pay in their pay packets that day. Well, this wasn't accepted by the union. They were offering 30p to £1, sorry £1.50 - I think two women got that. So then we had meetings in the offices, and no compromise was come to, and we gave seven days' notice to go on strike.

Exactly how much are you asking for?

We are asking for £1.68 across the board. That's one-third the difference allowed under Phase 2. Can I explain what this difference is? Under Phase 2 the Government has allowed a rise of £1 + 4%. Now Ted Heath went on to say that as progress towards equal pay - which is supposed to come in by the end of December 75, he would allow one-third of the differential between the lowest paid adult male and female workers, and that

dock, and it's no coincidence that the bosses tried this amazing provocation when they were faced with the threat of united action by the dockers. In fact, more than half the country's dockers came out on strike together. The Royals in London, Hull, Grimsby, Glasgow, Southampton and Preston were all out as well as Merseyside. It was due mainly to the manipulations of local shop stewards and committees that docks like Tilbury and Manchester did not join in.

BEYOND PHASE THREE

The Merseyside dockers' claim is for 20% on the basic rate average plus an increase in fall back pay. If this claim is successful, it will break a hole in Phase 3, and will add force to the united struggle of the working class to smash the Tories' desperate attempt to hold down wages.

DIVISIONS

However, dockers' unity is threatened not only by the bosses' provocations, but also by the fact that many ports work a different system of payment, and so are making different claims. Where London docks have long abandoned arbitration and payments for tonnage, Liverpool still rely heavily on these payments to boost their wages.

UNITED CLAIM

However, at the last national port shop stewards meeting, it was agreed that national action would continue until every port's claim was met. And this is confirmed by the fact that Hull - the port which jumped the gun and reached a settlement on its own within Phase Three, came out on the national stoppage after all to extend its claim. Another national one day stoppage is planned for the New Year.

would be on top of the £1 +4%, and this company, Hattersleys, has decided not to do that. They have given what appears to be a percentage increase, which gives the lower paid people coppers, and the higher paid people somewhere near £1.68, and that's what the dispute is basically about.

Are the 100 or so still working the offices still getting their increases?

Yes. And so are the union members. The company also refused to meet a national official, after it had gone to the regional conference at Preston.

Is this because the company don't recognise the union?

Well, they put up a notice saying they do recognise Apex and that Apex was the appropriate union for their employees to join. I don't think they want a union, anyway.

So, is the feeling that if they do break the strike, they will have broken union organisation in the offices at Hattersleys?

I would imagine so, yes. That's why it's so important for us to win, you see.

The union hasn't been going here long, has it?

No. It's been going since about September. The firm agreed to deduction of union fees at source straightaway. We tried to have a union in here before - TASS - there were a few members, but the management wouldn't recognise it.

What sort of support do you have?

We are getting financial support from Apex members in Plesseys, Vauxhall, Lockheed

and Triumph. TASS members at Hattersleys and a section of the Foundry. Also

all Hattersleys material is being blacked by dockers at Liverpool, at the container base and at Manchester Airport and docks. On Tuesday night about 50 or 60 AUEW members in the factory threatened to walk out over working conditions - they were objecting to the lack of heating because the picket stopped the oil heating tanker getting in. Some people in the factory think this is an unofficial strike. There's a bloke coming to the gates where lorries come in and drivers don't know whether to go in or not, because there are other blokes waving them on, telling them to come in, it's unofficial.

How is the picket organised?

It's a 24 hour picket with shifts. We have a brazier brought by one of the union members, and wood, coal and coffee are brought to us every night by different people from surrounding houses, and potatoes dropped off by vegetable men.

How much of the stuff that gets through the pickets is being blacked inside?

Well, anything that gets through the picket line isn't being blacked - they unload it and use it. The workers in the factory have been told by their union official not to get involved in the strike. Although we were told today that they were having a meeting, to decide what to do. It was two men - they went around the factory trying to get support to black stuff inside - they got five men to join an unofficial committee - but at the meeting they were outvoted and it was quashed.

TATE'S



At Tate and Lyle's Love Lane refinery, Liverpool, the employees' fight against threatened redundancies continues. The issue is still in the balance while Tate's management negotiate with the Government, and the Government negotiates with the Common Market.

Government Interest

Jobs in Liverpool are threatened because the Love Lane refinery depends mainly on cane sugar. In Britain and the EEC, the future of the industry is tied up with the production of beet sugar by British and French farmers. The Government have a 36% interest in the British Sugar Corporation which has a monopoly of the British sugar beet industry.

Tate's workers rightly feel that the Government is therefore not representing their interests in Brussels where the talks are taking place.

Tate's Interest

This is one reason why a lobby of Tate's workers went to Brussels last month to put their case. Meanwhile Tate's directors are also looking after their own interests. A multi-national firm, they have been right out front in supporting entry into the Common Market. They are even currently negotiating for a share in beet refining in this country.

Negotiate now Occupy later?

Whatever the results, they will be looking after the interests of themselves and their shareholders.

Occupation?

So, what about the Tate's workers? So far the policy of the Employees' Action Committee has been one of peaceful lobbying and massive propaganda. But Gerry Hughes, chairman of the Action Committee, says that they are prepared to occupy the plant if their demands for jobs aren't met.

Rigged Prices

Up to now, reorganisation of the sugar industry has brought nothing but rigged price increases for our shopping bills. It is fair to assume that neither Tate's management nor the Government have the interests of the workers in mind, as they negotiate their own financial interests.

Moreover, the changeover from cane to beet provides the firm with a useful opportunity for rationalising their labour force, if they need it.

But in the face of these manoeuvres by the company and the Government, every effort must be made to support the Tate's workers' struggle to preserve their living standards.

SDD 25328

BIG FILLAME

Merseyside revolutionary socialist newspaper 5p

number 15

Jan/Feb 1974

FREE THE 3

Every militant socialist and revolutionary by now understands the meaning of the vicious sentences imposed on the Shrewsbury 3 and the significance of the present trial of their 8 brothers. Now that the miners seem determined to strike, the purpose of the trial is even clearer. It's a powerful way of intimidating the miners and every

other worker against using the most efficient tactic of all: the picket. And nobody forgets it was the miners who rediscovered the importance of militant picketing in 1972, soon followed by dockers and builders.

21. After all, as the class struggle heats up this sort of sentence is going to happen more often. The use of the 1875 conspiracy law in this trial, the sentences passed on Irish Republicans, the friendly relationship with the "Butcher Junta" who took over Chile, are clear examples of the reactionary and repressive tendency chosen by the Tories and the ruling class.

cont. page 2

START THE FIGHT BACK NOW!

Support

the Miners

A miners strike is almost certain. It's the first major challenge to present government plans which have so far successfully forced the working class to pay for the crisis.

As we said in our 'Penny Special on the Crisis', the present energy shortage puts the lid on an economic crisis which has been brewing for several years.

A crisis based on: the rate of profit declining so the bosses can't invest enough in Britain's economy to make it grow and compete with other countries; on there being too much credit and banking agreements not backed by real money; on Britain being unable to export as much as it imports. This created a phoney boom which looked good, but which had to be controlled.

But the CONTROLLED GROWTH plans that they needed to get out of this situation was then hit last October by the oil shortage. The miners overtime ban added to the problem of the energy shortage.....and so the government brought in the 3 DAY WEEK.

This was both a political gamble by the Tories to turn public opinion against the miners so they'd capitulate; and, if that failed and there was a strike, there'd be higher coal stocks to enable the government to sit out the strike longer than the miners and their families. In short, they wanted to confront the miners and win.

It's important to the ruling class that the government beats the miners because they must be able to implement plans to get them out of their crisis. It's worth the relatively short term effects on production and profits so in the long term their economy can recover.

THE TORY PLAN TO RECOVER FROM THE CRISIS MEANS FOR THE WORKING CLASS.....

that things must get worse. Already the lay-off money of many firms is running out, so we're on short pay while prices continue to soar. Already, the number of temporarily unemployed is 1 1/2 million. Already thousands have been made redundant as small firms close down and others cut their labour force.

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WHAT THE MINERS DO NOW IS VITAL TO THE WHOLE WORKING CLASS.

So far the TUC has attempted a deal with the government - to recognise phase 3 by making the miners a special case and promising that other sections wouldn't use the miners as an example. All the union leaders agree on this - Scanlon has said "our problem is to get an offer to the limit of Phase 3, not to break it". But though some sections have already settled within the phase 3 limits - postmen, nurses, gasmen, teachers, journalists, dockers in Hull and London - with very little fight -- other claims have gone in which exceed the phase 3 limits - ASLEF train drivers, Fordworkers.

The government have already refused to accept the 'Special Case' argument. They're very unlikely to reverse their decision since more phase 3-busting claims have gone in.

The government will confront the miners, and the working class, most directly in the picket and at the PICKET LINE.

Continued

GENERAL STRIKE NOW?

At the moment, to expect a spontaneous general strike every time the ruling class fails workers for political reasons has proved unrealistic. That would require a much higher level of understanding and class consciousness among the mass of the working class. The reaction to the Pentonville 5 jailing can't be repeated every time. But we are not saying that we can sit back and allow the state a free hand. Nor do we agree with the way the organisations of the labour movement have been trying to avoid leading a response to the jailing of the 3.

First, the main weaknesses in the working class are sectionalism (seeing the interests of one section e.g. the building workers, as separate from those of other sections) and a reliance on the trade unions.

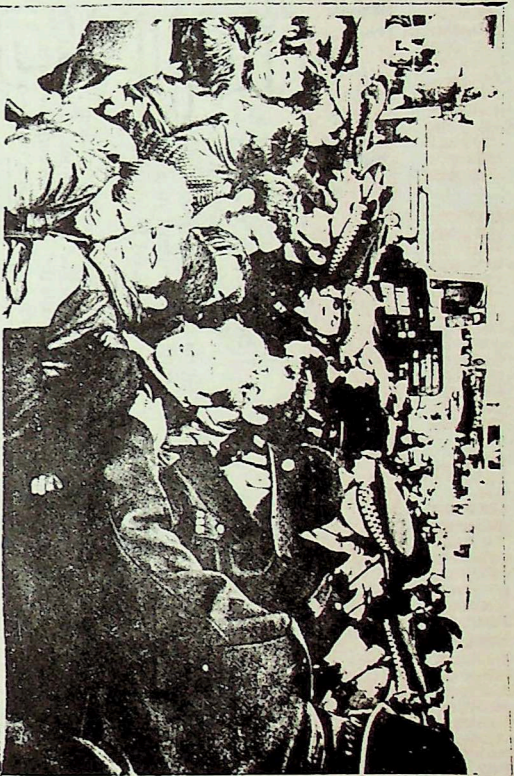
The 2 things are obviously linked and are very clear in the case of the Shrewsbury 3. Heath and Co. picked on the building workers because of the weakness and fragmentation of this sector, and their poor bargaining power in winter.

But most other workers are saying the lead must come from the building industry, when this is clearly very difficult. One of the aims of the campaign should be to explain that we see ourselves, not as the sum total of various unions, but as a whole CLASS with the same needs regardless of union, job etc. It's wrong to see the fight for the Shrewsbury 3 just as a fight in *solidarity* with the builders. This fight has to be seen as part of a total fight between the working class and capital.

During the 1972 building strike, the leadership of the building workers union, UCATT consistently compromised, held back and ignored their members. Our main emphasis must be on building our own autonomous rank and file movement and not just relying on the TU leaders to take action. They will only act, once we have taken the lead.

The main problem the working class faces today is the attack on our standard of living by the Tory freeze and 3 day week. People won't strike unless they see the

FREE THE 3



links between the Shrewsbury trial and the reasons for the higher cost of living. Any action for the 3 must be part of the general struggle against Phase 3, the 3 day week and, finally the Tory government.

** To support the miners, not as a "special case", but by demanding wage rises which break the Phase 3 limit because we need more money.

** To demand 5 days pay, work or not. These are the bases through which to get people involved in the fight to free the 3. NATIONAL CONFERENCE

On Saturday, 2nd February, there is a National Conference organised by the Liverpool Trades Council. Another conference of this sort last October voted a resolution for all out strike. Saturday's conference will be crucial in deciding whether or not the resolution is carried out. At last, delegates from all parts of industry will come together to discuss a plan of action. A co-ordinated series of meetings in hundreds of workplaces can be launched, to discuss the general fight and the importance of the Shrews-

bury 24. This can realistically prepare the ground for all out strike action, particularly as the fight against the 3 day week and phase 3 grows bigger.

In the past weeks, no group of workers have felt able to give a decisive lead. Most workers have felt isolated and too weak to get a real fight off the ground. The Saturday conference can at last give the sense of unity and strength on this.

If there is a decision for all-out strike action, this must be firmly agreed on and organisation for it talked about concretely. The key to this is to make sure that the mass of the working class is involved in the struggle. All the delegates should be pushing for mass meeting at work to give a full report back on the conference, and have a full discus-

Secondly, all parts of the movement - tenants, students and housewives - should be approached to join the campaign for 'ALL OUT ACTION - FREE THE 3 DROP ALL CHARGES'

THE THREE DAY WEEK AND CLAIMING

Men and women working overtime at basic rates, and a ban on earnings related benefit are two results of the three day week on Merseyside and elsewhere.

As predicted, bosses all over the place have taken advantage of the three day week to cut wages and increase productivity, particularly at the expense of young workers.

YOUNG WORKERS' WAGE CUT

At the British-American Tobacco Co. in the North End of Liverpool, young workers with less than three years' service have been forced to accept a 10% cut in wages, and in some cases a 20% cut. In addition, workers are expected to turn in all Saturday, though not at the usual overtime rate, to clean the factory under 'emergency' lighting.

Despite the fact that rank and file workers in the factory have been trying to fight these measures, the Tame Tobacco Workers Union have offered no fight. Their attitude seems to be that "you have to work under these conditions because there's a crisis". In the first half of last year, the BA's profits before tax from tobacco trading alone were £82½million.

TORRIES CUT LIVING WAGE

For those workers with no layoff agreement or fallback pay, the position on getting enough money to live on outside the factory is equally bad.

The government has deliberately prevented 3-day workers from getting Family Income Supplement to make up their wages. They have also banned the payment of Earnings Related benefit to make up wages lost owing to their political blackmail, despite the fact that this is a benefit which all workers have already paid for.

2.

In an effort to fight these measures, tenants associations in the North End of the city have issued leaflets on how to claim if you're on a three day week on the basis of "Five days pay - work or no work". They also plan to leaflet factories with this information in the near future.

EXTRACT FROM A TENANTS ASSOCIATION LEAFLET ABOUT CLAIMING DURING THE 3 DAY WEEK PUT OUT IN THE NORTH END

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT

For the two days a week that you are not working, you can claim flat rate Unemployment benefit. Sign at the Employment Exchange as soon as possible. Flat rate payment for a single person is £1 per day.

WEEKLY RATES

Single person.....	£7.35
Married woman.....	£5.15
Person under 16.....	£4.05
Wife or dependant.....	£4.55
1st dependant child.....	£2.30
2nd dependant child.....	£1.40
3rd child and others.....	£1.30

SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFIT

If you don't qualify for the above benefit (say, if you have not got enough stamps), you can claim supplementary benefit. In addition to the basic £7.15 per week, you should get rent and rates paid, HP payments already started should be paid for also. If you have any outstanding needs (fuel bills, bedding, clothing) you can apply for an "Exceptional Needs Grant" to pay for these items.

WEEKLY RATES

Husband and wife.....	£11.65
Person living alone.....	7.15
Person over 18.....	5.70
Between 18 and 16.....	4.40
Between 16 and 13.....	3.70
Between 13 and 11.....	3.00
Between 11 and 5.....	2.45
Less than 5.....	2.05

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Children of many people working a 3 day week will be entitled to free school meals. For example if you are now earning £25 a week and have 3 kids, you can get them.

OTHER BENEFITS

Other benefits if you're income is low include dental and optical treatment plus prescription charges. Remember you have paid stamps for these benefits so they are your right, not charity. Get a claim form from doctor, dentist or optician for the Social Security.

WHAT WE CAN'T CLAIM

If your wage is reduced by the 3 day week, you aren't allowed to get Earnings Related Benefit to bring your money up to the level it should be. Even though you're still paying the National Insurance stamps which on title you do this benefit.

Nor can you claim Family Income Supplement which is the other way we could make up our wages. Because despite the 3 day week, the government won't change the rule that says you have to work 30 hours before you can claim it.

STUDENT GRANTS

We wrote in the last issue of the newspaper how Big Flame is organising with students, especially at Further Education colleges.

During the next few months there will be yet another national campaign by students to try and get higher grants. Some people will disagree with an increase in grants because of the fact that they consider students as lazy layabouts living on the taxpayers money. What is the real situation?

A single student with no children, if he is studying for a degree can get a maximum of £485 per annum outside London. But if his parents are working in full-time jobs, slaving away in the factory as most working class people have to do, then he will receive about half this amount and his parents will have to give him the rest. This is known as the means test. They assess how much income is being brought into the house a week *before* tax, and deduct a certain amount from the maximum the student could receive.

The Local Authorities argue that you can claim for certain expenses like mortgages but if you are living in a council house then not one penny is allowed for the cost of your rent. Therefore we see that this is a bias against a working class child ever getting to university or polytech. in the first place. It is all very well for the middle class parents who can afford to hire an accountant to fiddle the books, but the working class parents don't even know what things they can claim for. If this isn't bad enough we have the situation where anyone who wants to go to a college of further education doesn't even get this grant.

These students are considered to be 2nd class, and it is up to the local authority whether or not they give a grant at all, and if they do, how much it will be. Most students studying for 'O' levels and A levels at technical colleges do not get any grant at all, and those that do, a measly £25 a year. This means that any working class person has little chance of even getting a couple of 'O' levels, never mind a degree. Most of the students at Tech. colleges, therefore, have to work in the evenings to try and get money to live on and so we find a situation where the poor working class student cannot afford the books he needs and is too tired to study after earning this money.

Married women students get just over half the grant of married men students - they are expected to be supported by their husbands whether he is a student or not.

Like everyone else, students are victims of the present level of inflation and Tory cut backs in spending. The Tories have announced that the education budget is going to lose £182 million over the next year. This means that no new staff will be taken on and all new building projects have been stopped until July at the earliest. Because of this, there will be no increase in places available for students in any higher education establishments and so the staff/student ratio will have to remain at its present pathetic level.

Therefore, we can see that the old idea of "education for all" is a myth, and should be replphased as "education for all who can afford it."

The demands of the students are based on the simple idea of fair grants for all students. They are:

- ** Every full-time student should receive £655 per year and part-time students, a percentage of this depending on the time spent at higher education establishments.
- ** The end of discrimination against married women.
- ** The end of discretionary awards to further education students.
- ** A yearly review of grants based on a student cost of living index.

CARRERO'S LAST RIDE

FRANCO'S SETBACK



The death of the Spanish Prime Minister, Admiral Carrero Blanco, in a bomb explosion in Madrid on December 20th was a devastating blow to the regime. NOT coincidentally, the bomb which caused Carrero Blanco's sudden departure exploded minutes before the start of the trial of ten so-called leaders of the Workers Commissions. The trial had been delayed for months and then timed for the week before Christmas for the same reason as the trial of the Shrewsbury 24 ended at about the same time in Britain. Under cover of the death of the Prime Minister, the ten were given massive sentences of between 12 and 20 years.

The leader of the Spanish Communist Party drew the conclusion that the bombing was a right-wing provocation. Certainly, the repression which followed the Prime Minister's death ruled out the possibility of a militant response by workers to the trial. But there can be no doubt that the loss of the Admiral has caused more long-term damage to the Government.

The responsibility for the Admiral's assassination is claimed by ETA, the Basque guerilla organisation, and now nobody can seriously doubt this. In an interview with the French revolutionary paper, *Liberation*, an ETA militant explained why Carrero Blanco was killed:

We have struck so that the murders and tortures carried out against our people stop... We have struck at the top. We have preferred to punish the man who is really responsible....

For over thirty years Carrero Blanco was head of Spain's political and secret police. He carried direct responsibility, as head of the Tribunal for the Repression of Masonry and Communism, for the deaths of hundreds and thousands of workers and revolutionaries during and after the Civil War. In addition, he controlled the Secret State Security Police which from 1960 onward were trained by and in close co-operation with the CIA.

FASCISTS TO FIGHT ELECTION IN LIVERPOOL

Michael McLaughlin, Merseyside organiser of the right wing group, the British Movement, is likely to contest the Edge Hill seat in the next Parliamentary election.

The last time this bloke showed his face in public in Liverpool, it was along with Fisher Colin Jordan and a small group of followers at the Pier Head. As we reported in Big Flame 11, this meeting was broken up by a large demonstration organised by Merseyside Anti-fascist Committee. All he got for his trouble that time was a black eye and a bill for £29.20 from the firm who hired them their wrecked public address system (the British Movement launched an appeal for poor Michael - any contributions can be sent to his home in Bebbington.)

There can be no doubt when we read their documents that this group are out and out fascists in the mould of Hitler. Here's how they reported the Liverpool demonstration in their monthly journal *British Crusade*:

"SURROUNDED BRITONS DEFIANT"
"On June 30th, 1973, Colin Jordan, the National Secretary of British Movement and Michael McLaughlin, Merseyside Organiser arrived at Liverpool's premier open air meeting forum, the Pier Head to

UNIQUE POSITION

But although the Admiral was almost unknown until, in 1973, he was appointed the first Spanish Prime Minister since the end of the Civil War, he had already established himself in a position of unrivalled power after Franco himself. His record of unwavering loyalty to the General coupled with his devotion to the fascist police state put him in a unique position. He was able to press for the opening up of the economy to massive foreign takeover and for entry into the Common Market and still be trusted by the ultra-right which controls much of the State machine and the armed forces.

Carrero Blanco's importance was his ability to hold together an uneasy coalition of generals, fascist bureaucrats and common Market-inclined businessmen, all with the blessing of Franco and the US government. At first sight, the Admiral's successor, Carlos Arias Navarro, boasts two similar qualities. His loyalty to Franco is no less great and his record of repression over nearly forty years is at least as spectacular. His last job, at the Ministry of the Interior put him in charge of the public police and day to day law and order. But Robert Mark of the Yards not Churchill, and Arias has nothing to offer the Spanish ruling class in a time of crisis apart from a reputation as a butcher of the Reds.

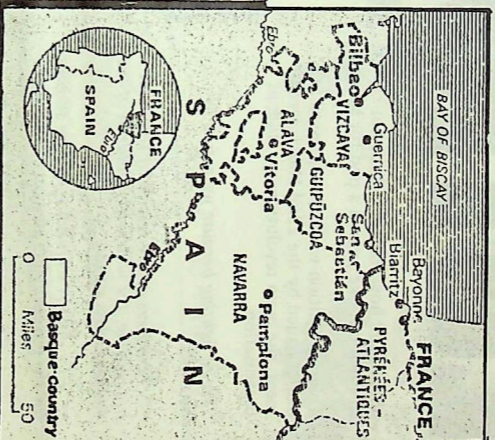
ETA is a nationalist underground movement dedicated to the re-unification of the Basque country under socialism. ETA (the initials stand for Basque Nation and Freedom in the Basque language) split from the Basque National Party which had been part of the Basque government fighting France during the Civil War. Its strategy is based on armed struggle aimed at encouraging an uprising of the whole working class in the Basque territories which extend into South-western France. Since August 1970 ETA has been split into two groups. The second group has supported the assassination of the Admiral but sees no future in a Basques-only revolution based on purely military leadership.

Arias will be hard put to resolve the crisis the regime was thrown into within minutes of Carrero Blanco's limousine touching down on December 20th. The first move came from the fascist head of the Civil Guard who gave orders for the encirclement of Madrid, the prelude to a once and for all repression

of the left. This would, of course, have set back Spain's chances of entering the Common Market for another ten years and revived memories of the Hitler-Franco axis.

ARIAS' PROBLEM

This was understood well by a group of politicians and officers around the commander of the armed forces, Diaz Alegria, who managed to persuade Franco to freeze the situation. The far right had to content themselves with the sight of thousands of armed police pursuing spectres along the streets of the capital, while the ETA men who had planned the bomb escaped across the Portuguese border and took a boat to France. The arrival of the US Vice-President, Gerald Ford, the next day, swung the balance against the fascists' blood lust: US investors are keen to see Spain in the Common Market and the Pentagon has hopes of Spain's entry into NATO as a loyal partner.



Arias' problem now is to maintain the constant flow of foreign capital, the main basis of Spain's rapid economic expansion, which can only be done by ensuring that investment will continue to be a profitable venture for the foreseeable future. This in turn requires that industry is strong enough to face entry into the Common Market. An indication of how unready the economy is for this is the inefficient scale of business: over 90% of Spanish firms employ under 50 workers.

This is the kind of racial hatred and bigotry that McLaughlin will be trying to stir up in Edge Hill if he gets the chance. Of course "jungle bunnies," "third World vomit" and "maggoty brained Reds," but his main platform will be primarily immigration and Reds under the bed.

The British Movement have been repeatedly prevented from making their presence felt in public by the successful actions of anti-fascist organisations. To combat this they have formed "The defence" - according to *British Crusade*:

"The defence will be an experienced body drawn from the British Movement membership and their object will be to protect British Movement personnel, supporters, speakers, equipment, transport etc. where and when required."

They concluded their report on the failed Liverpool meeting:

"Next time, British Movement will be prepared. The attackers were acquitted in the courts of law (deliberately declared innocent) but the penalty they will face is more severe. Furthermore, British Movement will smash and destroy every anti-British facet of Left-wingsdom on

The transformation of the economy so that it can withstand open foreign competition is causing tremendous political pressures on the regime from the working class. In the last few years a younger generation of Spanish workers, who have no direct experience of the Civil War, has been growing in strength and confidence as they have fought against productivity drives and redundancies. Faced with the State-controlled trade unions, run by fascists working hand in hand with the political police, workers have built their own organisations, the Workers Commissions.

WORKERS COMMISSIONS

In the last few years the Commissions have shown their ability to spread the struggle of workers in one factory and turn it into a regional general strike. This happened on a spectacular scale in September 1972 when the strike of Citroen workers at Vigo on the country's north Atlantic coast rapidly spread throughout the town. Again last June, Pamplona, another newly industrialised town, was almost completely closed down by a general strike which spread from the Motor Iberica plant, a vehicle component factory owned by Perkins Diesel's bosses. Shopkeepers and bar-owners shut down in solidarity and the struggle was eventually settled on the Workers Commission's terms.

THE FIRE NEXT TIME

Arias knows that the next Vigo or Pamplona could very easily ignite the whole working class and bring the regime to its knees. The easy way out would be a Chilean solution which would destroy the Workers Commissions, but it would also exclude Spain from the Common Market and thus make investment less attractive.

With Franco now more or less incapable of public appearances, Arias is almost alone but for the Army. The assassination of Carrero Blanco has brought Franco's 34 year old regime to a serious testing point. A lot now depends on the Spanish working class.

L'pool UDA bomb arrest

A leading organiser, by the name of Wilkes, of the right wing Protestant Ulster Defence Association, was arrested last week in Liverpool for possessing explosives. The explosives were found stored in his flat on Netherfield Brow.

Wilkes' father, who died last year, was an important Grand Master of the Orange Lodge. Wilkes himself, who has been making frequent trips to Belfast over the last few years, is a hatch boss on the docks and a well known scab. Police have strongly resisted attempts to bail him out, and for once we agree with them.

It is unclear whether the explosives were intended for use here or in Northern Ireland. But the incident tends to support the strong rumours that right wing paramilitary groups like the UDA and the UVF have been out "training" in Lancashire and North Wales. Meanwhile, their British mates, the fascist National Front, are reported to be training in Northern Ireland.



McLaughlin at the Pierhead.

Merseyside who maintain a stronghold on the areas industrial and educational establishments. Liverpool will be ours as some day Britain will be when it will be handed back to the sovereign British people."

Even though to some people McLaughlin Jordan, etc. may seem just cranks, we cannot afford to ignore them. It's likely that McLaughlin will be back and next time with trained henchmen. If this fascist does try to put forward his racist and anti-working class views by contesting the Edge Hill seat, we have to be prepared to stop him!

In May 1968 a revolution swept across France involving 10 million workers on strike, students, teachers and many other sections of French society. It confirmed what was becoming apparent in the 1960's - that the dream of social stability was an illusion. It started a chain of events throughout Europe in the late 1960's and early 70's that shattered the myth, spread by politicians, sociologists and journalists alike - that the working class had been integrated into the values and structures of modern capitalism. This myth was also accepted by many on the left. The Communist and "Socialist" parties in France like elsewhere in Europe saw their role as trying to advance workers' interests within the

system. But the French Communist Party (PCF) couldn't even do that, because their first objective was getting into positions of influence in parliament and the government.

We are making an analysis of the "May events" not only because they still need to be drawn to the attention of the British working class. But because as British capitalism heads for deeper crises and social confrontations, some of the dramatic events of May '68 may be repeated here.

THE BACKGROUND

The way French businessmen, politicians and civil servants were running France

was held to be a model of an efficiently planned, modern capitalism. France had become an industrial country, very quickly since the war. The main force to push economic expansion and technological planning was the political movement of the French middle and ruling classes - *(cadillacs)*.

To make French capitalism strong, it was necessary for DeGaulle to adopt a firm anti-American stance. Both in terms of an independent foreign policy e.g. keeping out of Western alliances like NATO, and at home where they resisted American investment. The European Common Market was to be the bulwark against American business, with France at the centre of operations.

But this policy required the rapid modernisation of French industry. Gaullism had to keep things tight at home. The demands of the working class had to be kept within manageable limits, and

occasionally the state was forced to act more directly. Like in 1967 when it cut social welfare benefits.

But two more effects were more important. Firstly the re-structuring of industry meant that workers, especially the young and technicians were required to adapt themselves to new and more oppressive techniques of production. With rationalisation, unemployment amongst these workers increased to a large proportion of the 500,000 unemployed in 1968. Resentment was also becoming widespread in education, where schools and universities were being increasingly subordinated to the needs of business. A new generation of students were being turned out, no longer the privileged, but the servants of the system.

REVOLUTION... FRANCE '68

HOW IT STARTED

The left made considerable gains in the 1967 elections. And the phoney anti-American foreign policy of Gaullism was crumbling in the face of a growing anti Vietnam war movement amongst students and young workers. The political scene was still, however, relatively stable. A spark was to be provided by the actions of the university students.

There had been a developing movement against the way education was being organised to serve the needs of business and not the students. They wanted to

understand how society ticked, not be churned out like peas in a pod for business.

Their opposition was best expressed in a leaflet issued by the 22nd March Movement, the main revolutionary student organisation.

"We're fighting because we refuse to become."

**** Lecturers at the service of selection in teaching, for which the children of the working class suffer.**

**** sociologists who manufacture slogans for the governments electoral campaigns.**

**** psychologists charged with making "operational" the teams of workers according to the best interests of the bosses.**

**** scientists whose research work will be used exclusively in the interests of profit.**

The real action started at Nanterre University, just outside Paris. It emphasised the difference between the myth and reality of French capitalism. A new university, right next to the worst slums and immigrant shanty-towns in France. The students demands and actions for changes in the education system provoked a vicious reaction from the ruling class. They sent in the political gendarmes, the CRS "to restore order."

With the repression growing daily, a demonstration of 60,000 spread the struggle to the Sorbonne University in central Paris. The struggles and street fighting intensified winning the support and active participation of many young workers. The campuses began to be closed by the authorities. The established left - the PCF and the Confederation of Unions (the CGT) refused to support their demands and actions - instead it calls them:

"the acts of pampered adventurists"

But they couldn't stop the movement growing, especially as it received support from the other more radical union federations, based largely among technicians, the CFDT.

WHAT HAPPENED

The spark started by the students rapidly turned into a forest fire.

**** Soon most of the lycée (grammar/secondary) students and teachers, go on strike or occupy. They are joined by the rest of the universities and later the technical institutions and art colleges.**

**** In places like Clémant-Ferrand, Lyons and Dijon, the first joint meetings and demonstrations between students and workers began.**

Meanwhile the repression and the fighting continue. People are torn from their cars and cabs and beaten by the CRS, who also rape several women.

This forces the unions to call a one-day General Strike which is climaxed by a march of one million workers and students through Paris.

**** After this manual and white-collar workers spontaneously start a wave of strikes and occupations as their anger against the system is given a focus. First the large factories, then many of the small ones. The railways, post-offices and shipyards become paralysed. In the Sud-Aviation plant, the workers occupy and lock the directors in the boardroom.**

**** They all start to formulate their own demands, as one participant said: "You go on strike first of all against something and then for something."**

The demands and perspectives slowly begin to go beyond the usual TU ones. Workers in many places discuss how to take over the factories and run them themselves. At one occupied shipyard at Negre, the workers refused to submit a list of demands for 10 days, much to the consternation of the unions who had nothing to negotiate!

The nuclear power plants are also shut down, the workers call for:

"an end to nuclear experiments designed for war and destruction."

Posters of the time:

LEFT

"The Struggle goes On!"

TOP

"Reform - Chloroform"



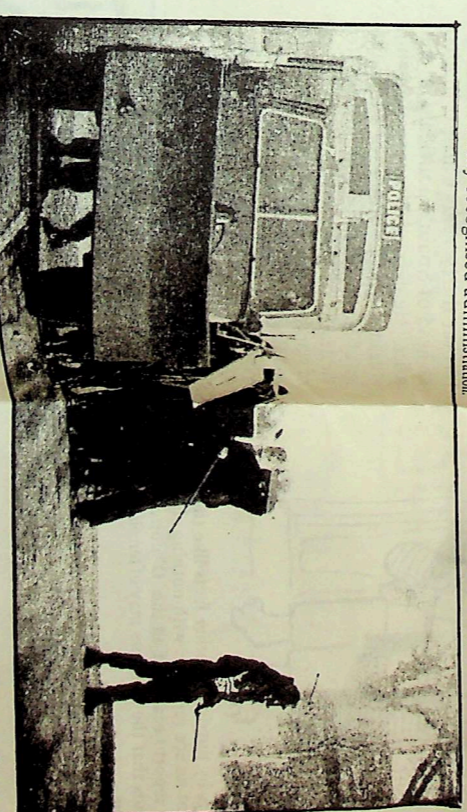
REFORMES

CHLOROFORME

Our objectives are similar to those of the students. They want to take the fundamental decisions themselves. So should we. We should decide the purpose of production, and at whose cost it will be carried out."

These growing links were being given a concrete form by the spread of Action Committees in the factories, colleges and communities. Bringing people together outside existing unions and political parties. Some groups to the left of the PCF were also gaining influence.

These developments were also forcing a counter-reaction from the right. The Gaullists began to form Committees for the Defence of the Republic, mobilising



**** ORTF (like the BBC) technicians and many reporters protest at the bias and censorship the government is forcing on them, later they come out on strike.**

**** In the hospitals, groups of doctors, students and patients occupy and begin managing them themselves.**

**** Footballers and supporters occupy the football management headquarters.**

**** Even the Young Magistrates organise a trade union and start to discuss how to establish a really independent legal system.**

THE MOVEMENT REACHES THE CROSSROADS

By mid May a crossroads had been reached. The movement was growing... more demanding every day. The struggles of students and workers were growing together. Workers were going to the universities, discussing, giving lectures, students were going to the factory gates, despite the opposition of union officials. Joint leaflets were being written, like this one for the Rhone-Poulenc factory:

"Up till now we tried to solve our problems through petitions, partial struggles, the election of better leaders. This has led us nowhere. The action of the students has shown us that only rank and file action can compel the authorities to retreat."

"The young workers must be told that the students are in the service of the bourgeoisie"

(CGT leaflet at Renault)

For the CGT, quick deals with the bosses, and the PCF, a deal with the government, with them given responsible ministerial positions - became the order of the day. Seguy, the Communist head of the CGT declared that he was not concerned with

"vicious ideas like workers' control, reform of society and other inventions."



VALUITE CONTINUE

REFORMES



CHLOROFORME

'68

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These developments were also forcing a counter-reaction from the right. The Gaullists began to form **Committees for the Defence of the Republic**, mobilising



the reactionary forces of France. Fascist groups like **Occident** also began to organise and attack left-wing meetings. The question of whether the working class could take power was rapidly coming to the fore. The PCF and the CGT had to act to stop the movement growing any further. They put their massive resources into channelling the struggle into the safe confines of Trade Union demands and electioneering. Right through the struggle, they had bitterly attacked the students and 'leftist' workers outside the established left. They had tried to drive wedges between the organised workers in the CGT and the millions of workers not in unions, who were regarded as 'irresponsible' - and between students and young workers

"The young workers must be told that the students are in the service of the bourgeoisie." (CGT leaflet at Renault)

For the CGT, quick deals with the bosses, and the PCF, a deal with the government, with them given responsible ministerial positions - became the order of the day. Seguy, the Communist head of the CGT declared that he was not concerned with

"vacuous ideas like workers' control, reform of society and other inventions."

In an interview on the radio he was asked:

"Mr. Seguy, the workers on strike are everywhere saying that they will go the whole hog - what are your objectives?"

He replied: *"The whole hog for us, as trade unionists, means winning the demands for which we have always fought, a general rise in wages, guaranteed employment, an earlier retirement age and defence and extension of Trade Union rights in the factory."*

* THE DECLINE OF THE MOVEMENT

Many workplaces refuse the deals negotiated by the unions. They want the TU bread and butter demands, but they want more. At Renault, long at the centre of the struggle, Seguy is booted. Workers at Sud-Aviation, in Marseilles, declare that the strike is part of the general movement to get rid of the government and establish socialism. At the CSF Electrical factory in Brest, they go a step further by transforming the strike committee into a management committee to run the factory.

But no force has emerged with enough political clarity and credibility to take the struggle further. A conference held by many of the revolutionary left, teachers, students and sections of the CFDT unions attracts 80,000, but despite issuing a call for workers and students' power, no real strategy for advancement emerges. With no follow-up and impasse is reached and a "return to order" on the terms agreed by the bosses, the government and the CGT seems the only logical possibility.

Negotiations resume everywhere and slowly many workplaces drift back to work. The refusal of the PCF to take the struggle any further, unleashes a counter-revolution from the right. Many foreign workers and students are deported. But the main point was the elections at the end of June in which the left was defeated. This was not surprising. Elections no longer had the slightest meaning in terms of what was experienced in May. Old political loyalties re-emerged, where new ones had been forged, also many abstained.

But the struggle did not simply disappear in June. There are still 450 Action Committees. Students refused the new reality and set up **'Peoples Universities'**. On the 11th, 2 workers are killed at the Peugeot plant in Sochaux and a student at Melun by the CRS. The government starts banning left wing groups and 1,500 are arrested in violent battles in Paris. The victory of the right is clinched when the CRS occupy the workers' stronghold at Renault and expel the occupying workers. Even on the 23rd, 1 million workers are still on strike, but the chance had gone and slowly they drift back.

* THE LESSONS

The clearest lesson from the May events is how quickly the relative passivity of the working class can turn into active, conscious struggle. Immense amounts were learnt in a process of struggle. This process in itself can teach us something. There are some left wing groups whose answer to any situation is to call for a General Strike, not taking into account how the working class is prepared for it, who would lead it, whether the consciousness of the necessity for it is sufficiently widespread. In May strikes and struggles became **generalised**, as the movement developed. They showed us that by starting from the real possibilities and going beyond the usual demands and forms of organisation that a real General Strike can be built from below, not called from above.

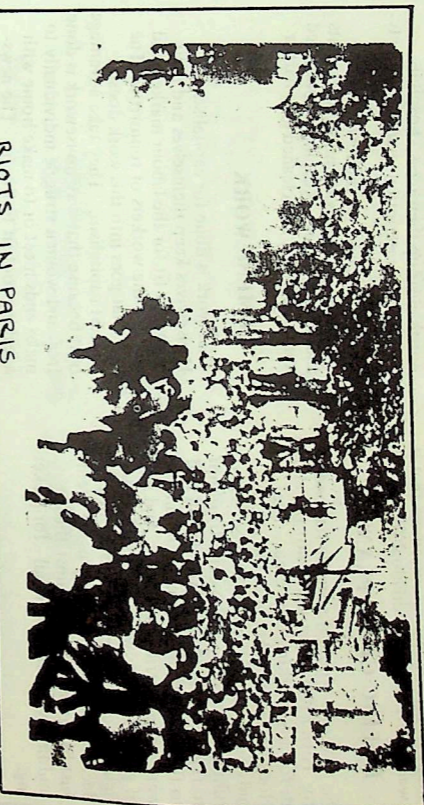
The PCF and the CGT could not see these developments in the working class. They saw only the rigid framework of Parliament and trade-unions. It proved how totally Trade Unions and Communist Parties have become integrated into the system. Not just political integration. Their structures have also become just like the organisation of capitalist society - bureaucratic and hierarchical. But we leave the judgement of the PCF to 5 workers in a PCF factory cell who collectively resigned. They said in their letter:

"We wish to inform you of our collective decision to resign from the CP. We refused after an analysis of the position of the

Party, its inability to reflect positively the opinions of its base, its desire to oppose the union of workers and students and their aim to be adults and masters of their own destiny. To make ourselves clear we reproach the Party leaders for not having exploited the great movement attacking bourgeois society which swept across the country....."

"The actions of the Party have therefore consisted of channelling the action of workers away from their deep aspiration by a desire to negotiate at any cost with all levels of management by passing all these aspirations to achieve an illusory parliamentary success."

The PCF didn't grasp the essentially different nature of the new politics. In fact it was not just a conflict between two types of politics, but types of consciousness and society. The key elements of this new movement were an emphasis on direct democracy and leadership from below, rather than relying on electing representatives to organise and fight the struggle. Secondly a stress on a new type of socialism, based on self-management of the schools, factories and communities. The



RIOTS IN PARIS

new activists were no longer interested in replacing one party or leadership with another, which ruled in the name of the working class, like in Russia. Neither were they interested in political education that was merely indoctrination of a submissive rank and file. Thirdly, the new politics challenged the division of the struggle into separate components - economic, political and cultural. Revolutionary politics in future has to challenge all aspects of life under capitalism, not some - eg wages - at the expense of others. This politics challenged not just the PCF, but all the left who took this as their political framework for action. They continue to do so today and the necessity of putting into practice the politics of things like May 68, lies at the root of Big Flame's existence as a separate political organisation.

For most of the left, especially the Trotskyist groups, one lesson is drawn from the events - if there had been a revolutionary party, or if the PCF had been revolutionary, there would have been a victory. Unfortunately, things aren't that simple.

For a start to say there was no revolutionary party is begging the question. It isn't just the PCF which was left behind by the May events. It was the whole of the left. So a revolutionary party would have had to emerge from the new struggle, based on the practical and theoretical lessons to be learnt. Unfortunately, there wasn't time for such a process to begin, for such an organisation to emerge. The struggle rose and fell so quickly that such developments were impossible, especially as the struggle remained confined to France.

It is true that no real co-ordination and new type of leadership emerged from the struggle. There were the **action committees** which represented a real development but they were too scattered confused and immature. The only established Party to emerge with credit was the PSU (United Socialist Party), but they and their allies in the CFDT, failed because they tried to harness the new forces into themselves and their parliamentary strategies, instead of becoming part of the new forces. The need for a new type of political organisation was not helped by the attitude of many of the best new activists. Spellbound by the level the spontaneous action reached, they came to believe they should not organise the spontaneity, only interpret it. Hence their organisation remained only at the level of propaganda, not intervention. Such organisation was necessary to overcome the fragmentation and differing political levels of the movement. Conscious

revolutionaries were only a small minority in every sector. Many sectors were concerned only with themselves and how they could participate better in the system. This confusion was made worse by the stress on 'workers and students control, and self-management' by the ISL/C/CFDT, without the necessary understanding that this was impossible without the working class taking power.

It is to this question of taking power that we turn for the final conclusion. The question of power was raised by the struggle, but the question of taking power remained confused. There were many who stuck to the Bolshevik model of seizing state power. Through a short insurrectory battle. They failed to realise that too many things have changed since Russia 1917, for such a strategy to succeed now. The state is far more complex and sophisticated thing, too rooted in the whole of society, to be seized like the Winter Palace or the Constituent Assembly in Russia. It no longer exists as a political structure above the economy, above the family and the schools, instead it tries to organise them for the benefit of capital.

To seize state power it is necessary to challenge the rule of capital in every area of society - not by a single or even a series of insurrectory acts, but by a long and protracted struggle which will inevitably become an armed struggle. Slowly but surely the power of the working class will spread as we win control of the institutions of society and replace them with our own political organisations to lead and control the struggle; so that the dual-power that exists at the highest levels of struggle, like May 68, eventually becomes working class power; then the revolution will have begun.

PUBLICATIONS

shop Stewards and the Class Struggle
A Big Flame pamphlet focussing on the role of shop stewards in the car industry and on the docks.

5p PLUS POSTAGE - POSTAGE FREE ON ORDERS OVER TEN

Five Months of Struggle - Ford Wage Claim, 1973

Out Now: an account of the struggle over Phase Two in Haleswood and Dagenham.

70p PLUS POSTAGE - POSTAGE FREE ON ORDERS OVER TEN

Big Flame Dock Bulletin

1p MONTHLY PLUS POSTAGE "STUDENT STRUGGLE"

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END OF A RENT STRIKE . . . THE STRUGGLE GOES ON

The 16 month old Tower Hill Rent Strike was finally called off by the Action Group on January 8th.

This decision took weeks of discussion after the failing of a tenant and the lack of industrial support for his release.

The Action Group will continue to organise against victimisation and also to carry on the fight for decent living conditions on the estate. At recent meetings, payment of arrears was discussed, so that it wasn't left to each individual to sort it out.

RULING CLASS PLANS

So now one phase of struggle has ended for Tower Hill. But that's not the end of it, for any working class area. The Housing Finance Act goes on, and it's only one part of the Government's and ruling class' plans. Who can afford not to fight those plans? Tower Hill had to fight, like thousands more tenants who went on rent strike in 1972. And instead of giving up they went on - and had to fight the courts. Because the ruling class decided to protect itself by using them. Just like it used them against the 3 building workers now in jail - for picketing.

More and more working class people are being forced to fight for their standard of living. And especially now, no factory industry or community can win on its own.

Tower Hill included. In 1915, the Glasgow working class fought soaring rents, anti-strike, militant demos, to the courts, anti-bailiff squads. And with industrial support. They won a return to pre-war rent levels.

This unity is vital. Factory and community are one fight. No struggle can be left isolated. The bosses and government plan to make each one of us pay for their crisis. In every aspect of our lives. With harder work, wage freeze, price rises, worse living conditions.

One way they're protecting profits is by cutting state spending (the tax we pay) on hospitals, social services, transport.

maintenance of houses and estates - and subsidies to rents.

That means the working class is hit both ways. The workers who keep these services running suffer redundancies, low pay and productivity deals, which means more work. And the workers who use the services suffer worse living conditions, just when we need more health services - what with harder work, poorer, dearer food, pollution caused by capitalism gobbling up resources and never paying out to clear up their mess - hospitals are closed, prescription charges go up etc.

Housewives, who do their work in the community are directly hit by these cuts and by price rises. Keeping a family fed nursed, clothed and cleaned gets harder.

WOMEN'S WORK

That work is done for capitalism. Housewives keep themselves and their husbands fit for the labour market, and care for the workers of tomorrow. The love that goes into this work doesn't interest capitalism. They take advantage of it because that way housework is done free, and women struggle individually to make ends meet or to make home with a leaking roof fit to live in. The newspapers encourage us to "shop around for cheap buys hoping we won't bother to fight price rises.

That's why it's so vital to class struggle when women start organising round the work they do, to break their isolation, and challenge the way capitalism tries to run our lives in the community. One thing that Tower Hill, and other tenants groups, have gained is the experience of organising themselves at home. It suits capitalism for everybody to see our home lives as private and isolated. That's one reason they don't worry about destroying old working class communities and transporting people onto different estates.

At work we're together, often in large numbers, sharing the same jobs and conditions. That's been vital in the creation of working class solidarity.

But it suits the bosses when we don't build that solidarity at home. When we get wage rises at work, they can turn them into wage cuts with rising prices and rents. And it doesn't bother them if we fight with each other - each family forced to squabble over the weekly income, safely inside four walls.

OUR FIGHT

So, in the communities our fight is going to have to be:-

** Against ruling class plans to make us pay for their crisis. To organise against cuts in our living standards in the shops, around amenities on estates.

** To demand for ourselves, the working class, what we need and not what the ruling class wants to give. Before Christmas, housewives on Tower Hill said this clearly in their fight which won safety barriers on a main road. If safety barriers are needed to keep kids off the roads so we don't have to lock them up to keep them alive, then we demand them when and how we need them, not when the council claims it can afford them.

** To fight against ruling class attempts to make us pay for what we win - against rent and rate rises which take back more than we ever get. To make them give us the facilities the working class has paid for millions of times over with its labour.

** To develop organisation and solidarity in the communities that can defend our gains and begin to take control of how our lives at home are organised. To help create the unity that makes factory and community one struggle. Capitalism is one system - it organises us everywhere in its own interests.

** To link the struggles of the working class who provides services - buses, hospitals, etc. - with the struggles of the working class who uses them.

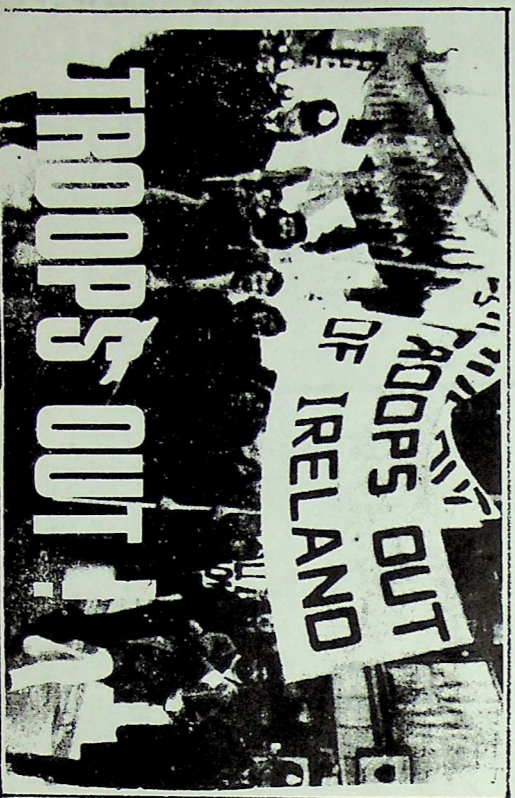
In fact, Marlon and Dolores Price have each lost over two stone while Hugh Feeney has had a heart attack as a result of his hunger strike. All four are forced. A wooden clamp forces open their jaws as they are held down. A greasy tube is then pushed down the throat and scalding liquid is pumped into their stomachs. All of them vomit each time it happens.

They are being tortured although their demands are easy to grant. They ask to be transferred to jails in Northern Ireland to be with fellow political prisoners. Nothing could be more normal. In recent years, 18 'loyalist' prisoners, including convicted murderers, have been moved from Ulster to English jails at their own request.

RULING CLASS REVENGE

But the Prices and Feeney and the seven others in this case are the victims of ruling class revenge. After all, British intelligence agents have planted bombs in Eire in incriminate republicans (see article in Big Flame 1.2) without being imprisoned miles from home - and relatives - and force fed.

It's this kind of treatment which is reflected in the steady growth of the only movement in Britain opposing Government policy in the north. The Troops Out Movement is campaigning for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and the release of political prisoners.



TROOPS OUT

The size of recent marches and meetings of the Troops Out Movement shows the growing frustration in this country with Tory policy on Ireland. A packed public meeting in Camden, north London, has been followed by a march of more than 1000 people through west London to BBC offices to protest at the tv and radio black-out of the real situation in Ireland.

While much has been heard about power-sharing in Whitelaw's new Ulster Assembly and the momentous concession to the republican population of changing internment to 'detention' whilst re-naming

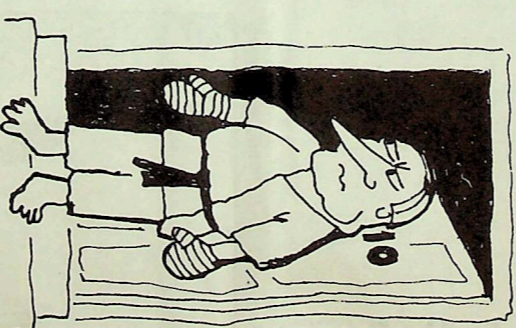
HEATH: KUNGFU SHOCK

Rumours that Edward Heath has taken up the deadaly Oriental fighting art of Kung Fu were strongly denied in a statement by the Prime Minister's Press Officer last week. Bread, 'The Prime Minister wishes it to be known that it is ridiculous to assume he has any time on his hands to learn anything new. Besides, it's a Chinese sport.

But several facts indicate that the rumour may have some foundation.

Senior civil servants were kept waiting for an hour last Saturday night when the Premier gave strict orders not to be disturbed while watching a certain tv programme with his mates in the Cabinet.

Later, the expensive sound of breaking furniture was heard, and pensioners searching the dustbins behind Downing Street the following morning found the remains of an antique Chippendale chair. There is the added mystery of the heavy bandage on the PM's right hand which was revealed to all on tv when he gave his 'Spirit of Dresden' speech at the annual dinner of the directors of BP.



It is by putting together facts like these that an ace reporter, with nothing else to report because of all the 'D' notices, finds that the rumours may after all be true.

The obvious question is how is this likely to affect the Cabinet's handling of the Crisis?

Could this be at the back of the confrontation-style politics which are winning in the Cabinet? Is the Cabinet split between the Kung Fu enthusiasts and those who are too old and sick and stupid to understand the necessity for such extreme measures?

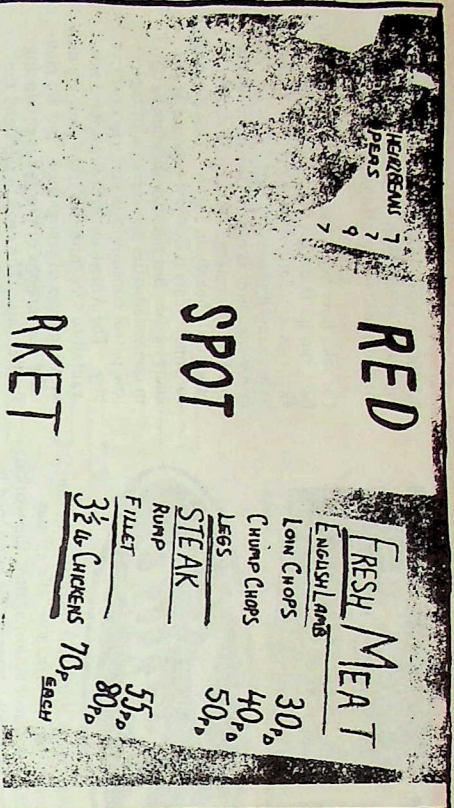
Hardliner Anthony Barber has been quoted by his close friend as saying, 'Who needs an election? We can wipe the bastards out when they drop in for the next round of talks', which shows a fine understanding of the relationship between the rank and file and the leaders of the Unions.

But the fact that Joe Gormley is never without an empty Guinness bottle when he disappears behind the policeman into Number Ten shows that he at least is taking the whole business seriously.

Finally, we must look for evidence to recent speeches by the Prime Minister which make him sound suspiciously like Bruce Lee warning up for the final battle in 'Fists of Fury'. We will resist all attempts to blackmail us. We will never surrender to attempts by political desperadoes to weck our profit system. If they throw down the challenge we will not hesitate to take it up.'

(A later statement from the Press Officer revealed that Mr Heath had been misquoted: 'profit system' should have read 'National Interest'.)

WHO MAKES FROM RISING PRICES



Red Spot Market was set up in West London on 2 Saturdays in December, selling food at wholesale prices. It's organised by a group of women from Trellick Tower, a block of flats on the estate Kensal New Town. Together with women from "Nell Gate", a West London community newspaper, and "Fight On" a revolutionary group.

Here's a part of their report in "Nell Gate".

"We borrowed a van and sold fresh meat and other food like tins of beans - all at wholesale prices. None of us got any money for doing it, but we had to add on a bit to cover costs of petrol, plastic bags etc. We gave out a leaflet all over the estate two days before arriving...

"We're not a charity. We know we won't solve the problems of rising prices by setting up a cheap shop. But if we're isolated we won't get far. We want to organise and fight together, taking action around what we need against what the bosses say we can have - which is what's left over after they've taken the profit."

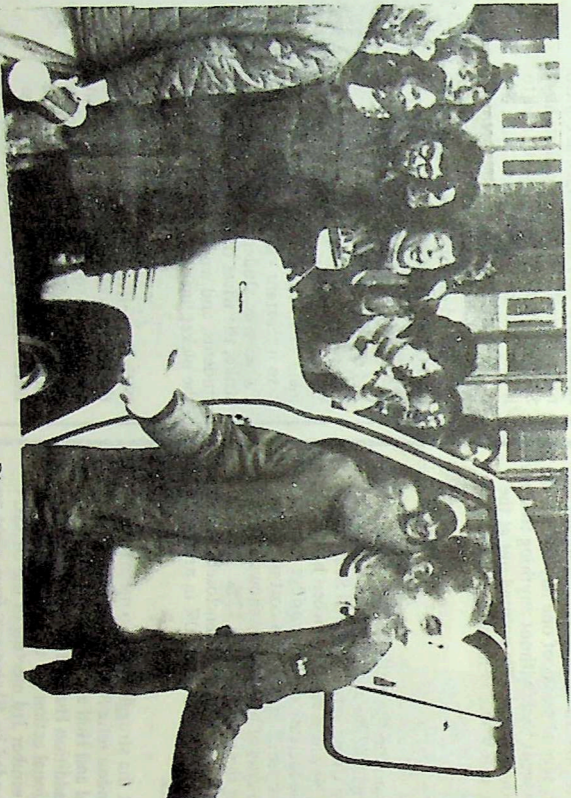
"At 9.30 on Saturday there was already lots of women waiting. There was a lot of talk about rising prices and how we can organise against it. Lots of people from the estate started talking to each other for the first time! This was really important. Many people were really isolated, and there were few places they could come together. The communal rooms in Trellick have never been opened since the building was finished 2 years ago and the cost of them is in with the rent!

"The Red Market brought people together. It's only this way that people are strong enough to fight for what they want.

"We also wanted to expose the profits made between wholesalers and the final sellers. We got the groceries bulk from the Cash n Carry. The meat we got from Smithfield Market early morning - 5 o'clock. One woman's husband, who was a butcher, cut up the carcass. We weighed and packaged it and stored it in different fridges and hallways in the flats.

"We can't do it every week on our own. We need more people to help out. We don't want to be a service. We believe in people organising and controlling their lives for themselves."

MASS PICKETS DURING JOURNALISTS STRIKE



Mass picketing by journalists...it sounds like make believe. But for two months, November and December 1973, weekly and provincial journalists hit back against the press barons.

It was the first time for many of the 4,000 Newspaper Society Chapels (union branches) that they had taken disruptive and strike action. The demands were an across the board £1.5 claim, freedom to negotiate local agreements and a new wage structure for juniors (who are often tied to one boss under a binding three year apprenticeship.)

Discontent among young reporters, photographers and sub-editors had been growing for two years - undermining long apprenticeships on poverty line wages, long hours and sweat-shop conditions fanned the flames of revolt.

They felt left out in the cold by their own union - the National Union of Journalists - who seemed to be more interested in "professional training" than nationally co-ordinating wage struggles over the contract or encouraging job organisation at the base.

The campaign kicked off on November 14 - the day of Princess Anne's wedding - with disruptive meetings in work time to hit the production of Royal wedding specials.

live on compounds away from their villages and families for 11 months of the year. Where all demos, and strikes are illegal and one step over the line means a bullet in the back.

Last year, Associated British Foods made £728 million on sales. £52 million is pure profit. In the first 6 months of '73 profits rose 22%.

Recently Weston accused housewives of spending too much on holidays abroad while they moaned about rising prices! Leading supermarkets, chain stores, banks and practically all manufacturers have made all time record profits this year. Company profits as a whole have increased by more than 27%. Some have gone up more.

RANKS, HOVIS, McDUGALL made £27.89 million. A RECORD. Big supermarkets, like TESCO buy in huge quantities which makes wholesale prices cheaper for them and allows them to sell cheaper than the corner shop.

Special offers in supermarkets mean no cut in profits. They're not doing US a favour. They buy the "special offer" item in greater amounts than usual, so they're buying at lower rates and can afford to sell for less. And they use special offers to attract people into the stores and make them buy the dearer foods as well.

Where the Food Goes

The government claims there's a price freeze as well as a wage freeze. They blame price rises on world shortages, as well as still trying to pin it on wage rises.

But food that should be feeding the world's population is hoarded to create artificial shortages to keep up prices. Thousands of tons of beef have been put in cold storage in Common Market countries - to maintain prices farmers get for cattle. In France, tomatoes have been dumped by

farmers for the same reason.

Recently, instead of cheap butter being made available at lower prices to people here, it was sold at higher prices abroad.

The bosses say there's world shortages of animal foodstuffs (which puts up meat prices) and wheat shortages (which puts up bread prices) But they stockpile wheat and make sure agriculture is planned to protect profits. In US, farmers are paid not to farm land when the bosses want to cut down production to keep up prices.

"EQUAL PAY" STRIKE ENDS

After a strike lasting nine weeks, clerical workers from the Ormskirk firm Hattersleys, Newman and Hender, returned to work on Monday 7th Jan.

48 women and men, members of APEX, had been on strike over a £1.68 claim for women as progression towards equal pay. A strong 24 hour picket line had been maintained throughout the strike.

The first to break the strike was Andrew Poole, chairman and founder of the Hattersley's branch of APEX, who returned to work after 6 weeks. In the new year 6 more strikers returned to work, and 3 found other jobs.

Many of the women, angry at Poole's return to work, were threatening to black his work after the strike.

The strike ended with an acceptance of the company's original offer - 30p - evaluation scheme.

(see Big Flame 14 for article on Hattersley's)

£1 for 4hours!

Meanwhile normal exploitation continues. WOMEN CLEANERS employed by Industrial City Cleaners of Garston in clean city offices were offered four hours work on both Saturday and Sunday at the fabulous rate of £1 for four hours work. Needless to say the generous offer was knocked back by all concerned.



BIG BLAME

20,000 workers unemployed, from the Fiat plant at Mirafiori, who have been at the spearhead of the struggle since 1919.

U.S.A.

Car sales have been dropping quite noticeably here and quite drastically in the USA, Germany and Japan. In USA, the markets have changed to smaller cars. The demand in America now is not for the large limousine, but for smaller cars such as those produced cheaply in Japan. This demand for smaller cars is not just because of the energy crisis, but because they are better in congested cities and because of their low petrol consumption and low cost to buy. The American auto firms have not wanted to recognise this trend, but are now showing signs of recognition, and are planning conversions of plants for producing smaller cars. The drop in sales and the conversion of plants has meant lay-offs for thousands of car workers. General Motors was reported to have laid off 35,000 workers in December, and Chrysler about 38,000 workers in the first 2 weeks of January, while conversions took place. Ford of course wouldn't miss out on a chance to lay off workers!

"Ford Motor Co. confirmed it is cutting production of certain auto parts in seven plants and laying off more than 2,400 workers because it has been assembling fewer cars recently than originally planned."

"Fords car production has been slowed by some local plant strikes and materials shortages, rather than planned cutbacks. As a result, a spokesman explained, stocks of outside produced parts have built up more rapidly than planned."

Planned? What was planned, the strikes? So no lay-off may need be handed out while conversions could cheaply take place?

"Ford also said some of its own parts plant cutbacks are in anticipation of the previously announced closedown of two assembly plants after New Year, for conversion to smaller models."



meant moving a lot of men around the plant and putting them on unfamiliar jobs and expecting them to work at top speed right away.

At Fords Dagenham, the Granada line has been stopped and the Cortina line has been speeded up. This means that the men are being moved around in the same manner as in Halewood. Fords Dagenham is even recruiting men at an average of 20 a week during the 3 day week, while men are being laid-off, this is against the unions wishes. To add to the above tactics, Fords and Vauxhalls have picked on some workers to work the full week. This means for Vauxhall workers that they are only working for 30% more than their laid-off brothers who are on 70% lay-off pay. The Ford lay-off fund ran out after 6 days and Vauxhalls will run out after the lay-off money has been paid for Thursday and Friday, the 31st Jan & 1st Feb.

WHO KEEPS WARM?

Here we have one of the blatant contradictions of capitalism - while we are asked to clean our teeth in the dark, use less heat and have our TV cut off at 10.30 (early to bed, early to rise makes WHO healthy, wealthy and wise!) the capitalists are allowed to carry out production 5

THREE DAY

The present "energy crisis" is directly affecting the car industry in 2 ways: the production of cars and the sale of cars. The car tycoons are having troubles in maintaining their normal high production rates because of the shortage of parts and production time, both brought about by the 3 day week. Naturally not wanting any loss (only of profit) to come out of their pockets, they are (in the normal capitalistic manner) trying to make the shop floor pay for it. This comes over to the car workers in two ways:

FORD USES CRISIS

Firstly, by receiving no lay-off pay for the two days not worked, and ironically having to work faster so that the boss gets 5 days work done in 3! The Escort line speed in Ford's Halewood has been increased from 40 to 49 cars per hour. Fords, of course, will try to maintain this speed when people go back to the normal 5 day week. They have been able to use the 3 day week to their advantage in another way as well, by stopping the production of Capris and changing over the machines to produce their new model the Diana. Stopping the Capri line

conspiracy of silence: DOCKERS

"Pay claims affecting almost 50,000 dockers around the country are now nearing a critical stage. The Ports involved are Glasgow, Southampton, Bristol and Hull."

So writes the latest edition of the bosses Liverpool Port newspaper. But what about Liverpool? From the Port, you'd never guess Liverpool docks are also negotiating a wage claim.

And there appears to be the same kind of silence from the dock stewards. At two recent mass meetings, they have refused to discuss the claim, or give any details of the negotiations.

At a meeting called to discuss the sacking of shop steward Alan English and the wage claim, the claim was never mentioned. And at a second meeting about the Shrewsbury 3, the stewards again ducked the issue. They ignored calls of "what about our claim" and closed the meeting without discussing the claim or action to free the Shrewsbury 3.

What's going on? One explanation of this total silence, from both the bosses and stewards, is that they're negotiating a phase 3 productivity deal they don't want made public until they're ready.

At the very least the stewards should be criticised for failing to rally support for a wage fight, at a time when organised support has never been so necessary.

To some extent the situation has been made more difficult by recent settlements in Hull and London, both within Phase 3. There's a danger of demoralisation setting in. But Hull has had problems since it called off its series of wage strikes last

year, for the sake of national unity, at the request of other ports. It meant that after several weeks of one day strikes, the men went back without anything to show for their effort. We pointed out at the time this would demoralise the fight in Hull.

In London the settlement is similar: a straight £3.86 a week phase 3 increase. Blue Union acting General Secretary Les Newman said it all when he explained "The increase does not bridge the gap that has opened up with the cost of living. The cost of living index shows an increase over the past month of 12%. Yet the pay of the men in the enclosed docks has gone up by less than 20% in nearly 3 1/2 years."

But the struggle is by no means over. London refused to accept a productivity deal and Hull are still in dispute over one. In addition Hull has promised to back any national action for the full 20%. And the November 3rd meeting of the NPSSC - attended by 40 stewards from eight ports - pledged that no port represented at the meeting would return to normal working until all claims in every port had been met. This pledge should be honoured.

And the dockers struggle must be linked with others - miners, railwaymen, engineers. No individual group of workers will win alone against a government determined to hold down working class living standards and break its militancy.

For instance if the miners go on strike, dockers should back all coal movement on the docks. In turn dockers will need support for such actions as pickets of container bases and scab ports.

SUPPORT THE MINERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

They've set up special police anti-picket squads and they have a special control room to deal with dying pickets at Scotland Yard. And they've tried to intimidate the working class with the prison sentences laid on the 3 North Wales building workers. The movement of coal and oil into power stations, and into the country, is so vital to the economy that the government will go to any lengths to smash pickets which try and stop deliveries.

This is where active support and involvement of all sections of the working class is so important - industrial workers, housewives, students. In the 1972 miners strike, the wives of miners students, and workers were all on the picket lines.

With the active support of the rest of the working class the miners can smash phase 3 and so challenge ruling class plans.....it should be impossible for the Tories to introduce a total wage freeze which they so desperately need now.

LABOUR AND TORY -

And so with this possibility ahead, the Tories' right to govern is challenged. If there's a miners strike, there's little doubt that the Tories will call a snap general election on 'who rules the country'. Whether 'Tory or Labour win, the ruling class offensive will go on. But we think there should be a vote for Labour not because Labour represents working class interests (remember Wilson's last government) - but because the Labour Party relies on working class support and is less able to impose the bosses plans than the Tories. A Tory defeat would give the working class space to move and intensify the struggle.

At the same time, though, there's a danger which we must be aware of and fight, of the union leadership and TUC taking the struggle further out of our control by working more closely with the government than they've already done with the Tories.

But the working class' priority isn't what happens in the polling booths, but what happens to the ruling class plans. Our priority must be to increase our strength and defeat those plans whichever government is carrying them out.

So, our priority cannot be a campaign aimed at returning a Labour Government, though that would be one result of a successful struggle against the bosses. If we are strong enough to prevent the bosses doing what they want in the present situation, the Tory government is likely to fall too.

Any concessions made by Labour or Tory governments will only be forced by the strength and readiness of the working class, because in the end power does not lie in Parliament. We must act now to support the miners, to smash the bosses plans.

We now face a choice: either to bow down to ruling class measures, or to unite with the miners. THE MINERS CAN'T WIN ALONE

SUPPORT THE MINERS - EXTEND THE STRUGGLE TO SMASH PHASE 3

FIVE DAYS PAY - WORK OR NO WORK

NO REDUNDANCIES

SMASH THE TORIES' AND THE BOSSES' PLANS