

libertarian struggle



P.R.O.P. — THE FUTURE?

- STATE KILLS TOWN
- WELFARE STATE ABOLISHED

NF = Nazi Front • Student Grants • Travellers Tales • Watered beer exposed • thf • Football militants?

TRAVELLERS TALES

EVICTED IN HULL

The recent events in Orchard Park Hull, are a case of the conflict between travellers and the authorities. The 1972 Act gives the local residents in any area the power to stop the creation of a site for travellers in their area, and this power has been used frequently by right-wing groups to stir up anti-minority feeling.

The travellers in Hull have historically been a winter community, moving to the agricultural areas of Yorkshire in the summer for work. Hull City Council used this seasonal movement on 7th August 1972 to move the two families of travellers who were staying the summer, from a long established site in Kathleen Street, Hull, even though these families had paid rent promptly for four years. The site was allocated for industrial development. Another group were thrown off a site in Chamberlain Road and then off West Carr Lane, which was again allocated for industrial development. This left the travellers with no official site, and the Authorities managed to put off any action by a wrangle between Hull Council and East Riding Council about whose responsibility they were. Hull has claimed that 'there are no gypsies in the city' (there are roughly two hundred at present) and that the travellers 'really belonged to the agricultural areas'. This delaying manoeuvre is failing with the formation of the Humberside County which will include East Kingston, the main centre of summer employment for the travellers.

The case for a temporary official site at Middledyke Lane, Orchard Park is obvious, for it is a long established site, the travellers are sending their children to the local school, and are tending not to travel in families to their summer jobs, and instead are going daily to work on the farms. The inevitable campaign has received the usual publicity, and been over emphasised by the local politicians, vociferously led by Patrick Wall, Monday Club MP. In fact as few as fifty people turned up at the Orchard Park meeting, of whom many were not opposed to the travellers. Instead of improving the sites for the travellers, the politicians see them as a means of increasing their local popularity by organising an emotional campaign.

An example of this was at Dunswell Lane, a proposed official site, where as a result of such a campaign the proposal was referred to the government and after being delayed for eighteen months was turned down.

An argument used against the Middledyke Lane site has been that there are only two or three authentic traveller families, the rest being scrap dealers operating illegally (Registration of Scrap Metal Dealers 1954 Act). As it happens they are all one family group - a fact which the local authority is only prepared to recognise when they want to prosecute.

Patrick Wall in fact does not mind 'the two or three REAL 'gypsy' families', but he does not like 'the drop-outs from society who are unwilling to live by conventional values'. Actually at Middledyke the scrap is only relatively minor work.

An illustration of Patrick Wall's viciousness was his proposal for a permanent site for all travellers, on either derelict Hull docks, presumably so that the ponies could enjoy the concrete pastures; or on the banks of the Humber at Hessle foreshore where they could contract swamp fever.

What the Hull travellers demand are:

- (1) Legally protected sites.
- (2) Retention of kinship groups on their traditional sites, Middledyke, Woodhill.
- (3) Improvement of site facilities, ie. stables sanitation, electricity site centres, tarmac areas for caravans and work.
- (4) Land allocation for grazing.
- (5) End to restrictions on scrap dealing.



NO SANITATION, NO RUNNING WATER, BIGOTS LIKE PATRICK WALL REFUSE THE TRAVELLERS ALL FACILITIES AND THEN ATTACK THEIR LIFESTYLE.

ABOUT 'LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE'

This paper is written and produced by people all over the country, who are active in their trade unions, tenants' associations, claimants' unions, women's liberation groups, schools and universities.

We are united by our membership of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists - a democratically organised group which believes in a socialist revolution, but a revolution brought about, and firmly controlled, by the majority of the working people. We work to encourage contacts and understanding between the different aspects of working class struggle.

We oppose all groups and parties who take the initiative and control of their struggle from ordinary people. We think that the way forward to a better society is not through any kind of 'new' leadership, but through working people discovering their own history, their own ability to organise themselves, their confidence in themselves and their mates.

As part of our attempt to put this kind of politics into practice, we have rotating editorship of each issue. This issue was edited by Hull. Numbers 1 and 2 were edited by Leeds and North London respectively.

We are producing this paper (none of us are professional journalists) to provide one means of spreading some hidden facts, of publicising what workers are thinking and doing, to workers in other industries and other parts of the country, to talk about what claimants, women, immigrants, pensioners and schoolkids are doing, and how these battles can't be separated.

We won't give you the familiar crap of 'this is your paper', 'without this paper the working class is leaderless' etc. What we do say is that if you want to USE this paper - to pass on things you've learnt, to ask for help from other people, or just to make contact with others in a similar situation, then please do so. We know that lots of people have no practice at writing articles - but who needs literary genius? We promise to improve its appearance as we get more practised. The contents are up to you so please write to us, whether its an article or a letter.

KICK 'EM OUT!

At Everton Football Club there are the beginnings of a revolt. Not the usual boardroom revolt or mutterings among the players, but an almost unheard of event - a supporters revolt. On March 3rd Everton were at home to local rivals Liverpool, and lost: after the game supporters handed round leaflets complaining about Everton's failure to score even one goal in their last eight games, criticising the aloofness of tight-lipped Harry Catterick, the manager, and demanding that he be removed. The leaflet was spurious signed 'B.Clough'. The supporters who produced the leaflet have broken one of the best-kept rules in British soccer - that soccer fans should behave as if they were completely powerless, and should do no more than pay and applaud.

Soccer, for years, has been one of the slums of the British entertainment world. The rich (directors and managers) have had an almost unchallenged dictatorship. Players have usually been forced to behave as well-paid puppets. And the supporter is treated even more patronisingly than a politician treats the electorate. The manager of Derby County, Brian Clough, stated publicly earlier this season that a spectators job was to cheer and not to be critical! Can you imagine someone elsewhere in the entertainment racket, for example a theatre manager, claiming that the audience should just clap and not be critical? But, theatre audiences are largely from the vocal middle-classes who know their rights, whereas football spectators are mostly

working class people. What supporters say they want is largely ignored: the Arsenal fans can stand and chant for as long as they like for Marinello and Charlie George to be brought into the team - it's usually in vain. No player is brought into the team except by command of the manager, Bertie Mee, he of the cultured voice and authoritative tone. And if a supporter wakes up to find that his favourite player is about to be, or has been, transferred, the traditional reaction has been that there's absolutely nothing the supporter can do about it.



A BIG MONEY GAME - BUT WHO PAYS?

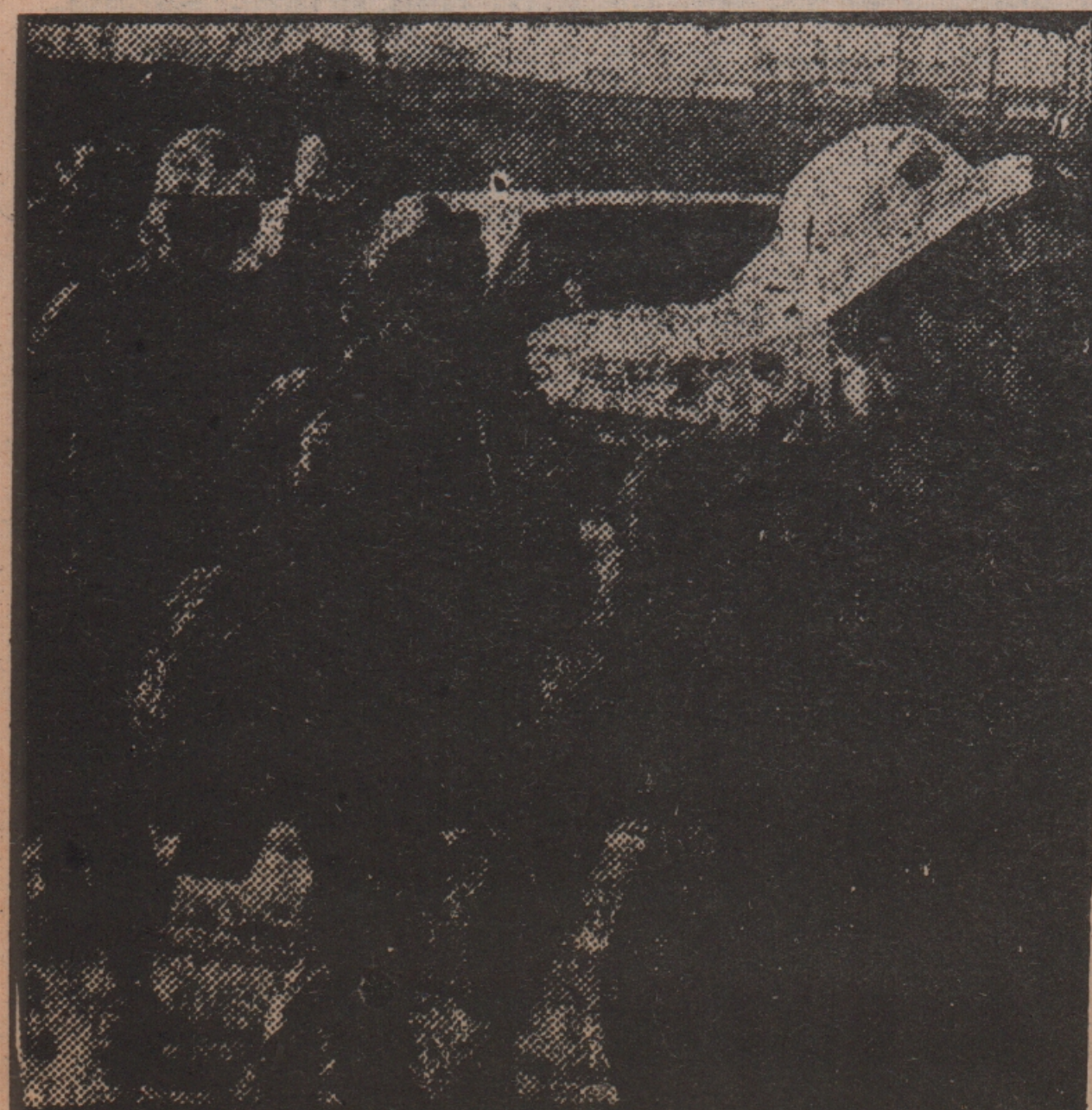
The lack of influence of soccer spectators is very surprising and could easily be ended - because the spectator provides almost the entire income of every large football club. For example when Arsenal did the double in 1970/71 almost all their income - £604,083 of it, according to the annual report of Arsenal F.C.Ltd - came from gate receipts. (Arsenal seem to have made a profit of £161,518 that year: whatever became of it?) Most football clubs make a far smaller profit; for instance in 1970 Spurs after paying a low dividend (5%) on a few shares had only £14,120 left from the year's takings, and in 1972 Everton's profit was so low - £7,155 - that no dividend was declared at all. This in spite of Spurs and Everton having large crowds even by First Division standards. The profit after tax of most clubs is so small that if spectators were ever to organise a boycott on even two matches running they could bring most managements to their knees. (The average takings from one First Division match are between £10,000 and £15,000). And if many supporters showed signs of demanding control over their clubs - as is now beginning to happen at Everton - managers and directors, who have nearly always been in unquestioned control, might be shocked into some very fruitfull and interesting overreactions.

'Radicalise the soccer fans? Ludicrous.' says the Marxist computer: 'Soccer divides the working class.' Well, soccer does that to some extent: but at the moment the soccer bosses are in effect teaching the (usually working class) spectators that over an important area of their lives they cannot and should not have any control. And the habit of putting up with that sort of domination is always worth breaking.

The group editing this edition of the paper would like to thank this contributor, who has raised some interesting points. Any further letters on this subject will be welcomed.

STATE KILLS TOWN

Hartlepool is a typical medium sized north-eastern town. Historically, the main sources of employment have been the steel works, the docks and the coal mines. Along with the rest of the North it was hit by the inter-war depression. Frequently 30% and more of the male workforce were out of work in that period. This has created an attitude which the State calls 'work shy'. When unemployment drops below 5% (which isn't often) the local employers start bemoaning the shortage of labour. Long periods of unemployment are an excellent antidote for the Protestant work ethic, and there are many examples of local men in their fifties and sixties whose only period of employment since leaving school was during the Second World War. The so-called boom of the 1950's came to Hartlepool only in terms of higher profits for the local firms. Unemployment remained high and wages remained low. As late as 1965, the basic forty hour wage for a labourer at Expanded Metal, one of the large local employers was £9 5s 10d.



THE MURDER OF THE MINES

The North Eastern coalfield had a history of militancy. It was a group of miners from neighbouring Northumberland who derailed the Flying Scotsman during the 1926 General Strike, and were then hidden by the local villagers from the Special Branch for over six months. The annual 'Big Meet' of miners in Durham City attracted crowds of over a quarter

of a million well into the 1960's. Alf Robens recognition of the workers' solidarity came in the shape of closure notices for more than half the pits in Durham. Fifty thousand men were 'made available for other employment.' Result: unemployment up, wages down.



THE DEATH OF THE DOCKS

Sir William Gray was the first mayor of Hartlepool, and his family had run the docks ever since. During the Second World War a 'cost plus' system was operated by the State, under which shipbuilding firms were paid the cost of materials and labour plus 10% 'to cover overheads'. William Gray's, as their contribution to the war effort, used this opportunity to build up a huge stockpile of surplus materials paid for by the State. (Of course, every other firm was doing the same while the workers, as usual, were doing the fighting.) In the post-war boom in shipping, Gray's were able to use these supplies to reap huge profits without any of the nonsense about new plant or machinery. By the 1960's, the modernised yards of Japan and West Germany were building ships quicker and cheaper. By the winter of 1962, the present Sir William Gray decided things had gone far enough. No, he didn't invest his profits in a big improvement programme. Virtually overnight he put his company into liquidation, bought a country mansion near Richmond, and retired there with his family. Three thousand Hartlepool men were made available for other employment. Result: unemployment up (to 14%), wages down.



THE STRANGLING OF THE STEELWORKS

In the 1960's, new hope came to Hartlepool. A huge new steel plant was to be built on the south side of the town. Of course it would be out of date before it was completed, but it seemed that the job future was assured. The main union in the steel works, the grandly titled 'British Iron, Steel, And Kindred Trades Association' (BISAKTA) is notoriously weak and allowed incredible differentials to build up. While a few men were highly paid, these were the men who were working over sixty hours a week. (The local saying was that they 'put more hours in than the Town Hall clock.') In 1970, the local International Socialists circulated a report which said that the Steelworks was to be closed down. The leader of the local Tory Council, Councillor Tommy Andrews, said that the steelworks was secure for 'many decades to come'. In 1971, five hundred men were paid off. In 1972 the Labour MP for the town, Ted Leadbitter, said that negotiations were under way which would make Hartlepool 'the largest steel centre in the North East.' In 1973, the head of the British Steel Corporation Lord Melchitt, announced that he'd chosen Redcar instead of Hartlepool, and that no more steel would be made in Hartlepool after 1975. Over the country, the new plans mean that 30,000 men, 15% of the labour force will lose their jobs, Sir David Davies, head of the steel unions, said, 'the unions do not feel they can logically oppose modernisation of the industry.' Meanwhile the union bosses felt they should cooperate with the governments 'task forces'. Sir David was forced by demonstrating steelworkers to leave the union conference by the back door. (Is that how to get a knighthood?) For Hartlepool this means that over three thousand men will be available for other employment. Result???

Hartlepool last year won the 'Britain in Bloom' competition. If you can't grow jobs, grow flowers?

Hartlepool is one of the leading towns for recruitment to the armed forces.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

According to a survey conducted by 'Which' on the different methods of contraception used in Britain, 1% reported that they used contraception but described the methods used as 'other'. As these methods were not included under sections on the pill, condoms, withdrawal, use of safe period, cap, suppositories, douches, creams, pastes, jellies, foams or even prolonged lactation, one wonders what 'other' methods of contraception are available!!

A little research turns up such delights as 'American Tips' and 'Crecian Caps' - both types of glans condom which are considered very unsafe as they are liable to slip off or be too constricting. Not for you? Then how about using a 'Gamic Appliance' - obtainable by post only. This turns out to be a male internal contraceptive and consists of a short stiff rubber stem 1½ inches long attached to a small thin rubber bag about 2 inches long. One is instructed to smear the rubber stem with contraceptive paste and then insert down the urethra of the penis. When the climax occurs the rubber bag is said to unfold 'rather like a parachute'. Happy landings! (NOT recommended as the method can cause infection and damage.)

Still not sure which method to try? How about the 'Poor Man's Friend'? This has an appearance similar to a washable sheath but is of thicker rubber and can be used either as a sheath or as a cervical cap. Whose turn is it tonight?

The piece of resistance, however, must surely be the 'Capote Anglaise' - described in the catalogue as 'Ladies Own Sheath'. This is in fact, a rubber lining for the vagina and is held in place by an air-filled rim. It is described as VERY safe - but surely not much fun!

Seriously, though, why is it that people use these unusual and sometimes dangerous methods of contraception? Why are there no truly safe, completely reliable, widely publicised, and easy to use methods of contraception available? Quite simply, the drug companies do not waste money on researching new methods where the product has no future potential for producing massive profits - hence research on such developments as the once-a-month pill suffers from lack of financial backing. Another line of research currently being examined is that of immunising women against humansperm, making it possible for them to be pregnancy proof until they take a positive decision to have a child, and not vice versa. This too lacks any major financial support.

Even our sex lives are ultimately controlled by the Government and Big Business in the cause of fat profits

ORA

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There are also contacts in Birmingham, Edinburgh, Huddersfield, Leicester, London Universities Federation, East London, South London, West London, Norwich, Oakham, Oxford, Plymouth, Poole, Southampton, Southend, Swansea and Wellington. If you want to be put in touch, write to the National Secretary, c/o North London group to whom all enquiries about ORA should be addressed.



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PROP: PAST & PRESENT

This article was written by a member of PROP who is not a member of the ORA. 'Libertarian Struggle' exists to be used by members of any community or working class rank and file group. If you want to comment on this article, on PROP or anything else in this or past issues, Or if you want to use the paper to tell about and get some help for any struggle you are involved in - send an article or a letter to the address on the back page.

PROP (Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners), as you are almost certain to know, was officially announced to the public on May 11th 1972 at a press meeting opposite Pentonville Prison. The aims of PROP then were to campaign for a better deal than prisoners were getting at that time.

There were five ex-prisoners on the executive, Dick Pooley, national organiser, Doug Curtis press officer, Ted Ward London organiser, and two women Mona and Pauline. Everything went fine for a while as members of PROP started spreading the word and the true facts about the conditions in Prison. When word got back inside prison through the radio, television and newspapers, more and more prisoners started to send out information of what was actually happening to them. Small sit-ins started in different prisons and wherever possible and practicable, members from PROP were outside with banners to support them. The authorities were informed that unless something was done pretty quickly there would be a prison strike on a large scale and, of course, they laughed at PROP. Nothing at all was done. Instead things were getting worse; the weather was getting warmer, the prisons more overcrowded, and the men more irritable.

The date for the prison strike was given as August 4th 1972. PROP called for support from the so-called left wing groups to be outside Gartree, the top security prison near Leicester, the inmates of which we knew for certain were going to be behind us on August 4th. On the morning about twenty PROP members turned up; other groups who profess to be concerned with change inside prison, didn't think it important enough to turn out in support. While we were outside Gartree with our banners the Assistant Governor saw fit to come out and talk to the television interviewers saying that there was no unrest and that all the men were working as usual. While he was making his statement a big cheer went up in the prison and out of the windows of the wing came banners reading 'we support PROP' and '24 hour shut down', all day long we heard over the radio that more and more prisons were taking part. It went beyond all our wildest dreams because as other prisoners heard over the radio what was happening they were spontaneously joining the strike. At the end of the day the Home Office admitted that 27 prisons and 4,000 prisoners had taken part in the demonstration. We bought the papers the next day and compared what the Home Office admitted and what different papers actually saw for themselves. By going over

prisons in helicopters and other means they counted 33 prisons and over 10,000 prisoners taking part.

We must make clear that during the strike demonstration there was not one act of violence and Mark Carlisle, Under Secretary at the Home Office, made a public statement saying that where there were passive demonstrations no disciplinary action was to be taken. But of course this was not so; whole prisons were put on rule forty three - where men are locked up for twenty three hours a day. Prisoners could not understand it. In Wandsworth Prison men were brutally beaten. One woman visiting her husband there happened to mention PROP in the hearing of a prison officer, and her husband was dragged out in front of her and other witnesses and severely beaten. When she saw him again a few days later he also had a rope burn mark round his neck which the prison officers had made. She tried to get her own doctor in to see him but of course was told that this could not be allowed, so a few of the wives got together to decide what they could do to help their husbands who could do nothing for themselves. They came along to PROP in London for advice. As a result five women started a demonstration outside the prison and PROP went along to support them. In five weeks the wives got 900 signatures, addresses and telephone numbers on a petition to end the brutality in Wandsworth.

By this time the group had grown in number to about thirty wives and more members of PROP were helping, but still not one representative from the so-called left wing groups was involved. When it looked as though the wives had the signature of every visiting wife and relative of Wandsworth, they presented a copy to the Governor and then they and PROP members marched to the Home Office and 10 Downing Street to hand in other copies. They were told that the matter would be looked into. Though the media had printed a story about the brutal treatment the prisoner had sustained, the Prison Officers Association and the Home Office never denied that the incident had taken place. When after three months we inquired why the Home Office had not answered, the reply was that they did not have a name and address to write to. We pointed out that there were 900 names and addresses on the petition and the Home Office reply was - 'Oh!'

In late August Albany had a violent demonstration and other prisons took to the roof tops in support of them as far north as Aberdeen and South as Wales, where one man was due for release that day but refused to come down off the roof top.

These demonstrations went on for many days during which time Mike Fitzgerald a young Cambridge student took over the job of press officer from Doug Curtis who was away on holiday abroad. When Doug eventually returned to find PROP coping successfully with the situation without him, he called a press conference to announce his resignation as Press Officer and withdrew his membership from PROP. He sold out 40,000 prisoners by attempt-

ing to break PROP through the media.

The Home Secretary, who returned from Corfu over the problems of Asian immigration and prison unrest, realised that although PROP had a lot of support inside prison, it was very thin on the outside because of the apathy of the left who prefer talk to action except where it doesn't directly involve them. Mention Vietnam, N.Ireland, South Africa and there are thousands on the march, but when people in their own back yard are being repressed as they are in prison it doesn't seem to have the same glamour. So the prisoners were sold out by the left too, and Robert Carr was able to discipline nearly 2,000, some losing up to 300 days remission.



In London we saw our mistakes and the group decided that we would have to do something about them. We had long discussions and came to the conclusion we were doing what we had accused other groups of doing and that was working too intensely in our own little field.

So we went out into the community of North London and now have people working in community projects. A few of us work with old age

pensioners and even formed a pensioners support group with Task Force, Claimants Unions, two Social Service teams and a tenants association, to get better treatment for the old. We have been pressurising the Social Services Committee to throw open public buildings to the old. North London and Enfield Polytechnics have agreed to open their facilities to the pensioners. We have people working in youth clubs with the young kids who are working their way towards prison. The club leaders didn't want to know these kids and in some cases were turning the kids out of the club back onto the street where they were originally getting into trouble. So who could be better than the ex-con who has been through the system and found it is no good to anybody, to try and straighten the kids out? These youngsters seem to be responding to this PROP member.

I believe PROP groups all over the country should try working with people in the community, ie. prisoners wives; one parent families; old age pensioners and in particular the people on supplementary benefit. We must improve conditions outside before we can improve conditions inside otherwise what we do is make prisons so acceptable that people might prefer to be in prison. We must always keep in mind that no matter how bad prison conditions are, a man has a roof over his head and three meals a day and no responsibility. No one can be sure that his wife and children have the same, as most wives are placed in a social prison far worse than that of her husband when she hasn't committed any so-called crime against society. We all exist in some kind of prison whether it be physical or psychological, financial or social. It's no use breaking down concrete walls if we cannot break down the other kind built by attitudes. This must be of prime importance to PROP if we are going to be effective in the future.

ARMLEY CENTRE

After several months of careful background work by various local people, including members of Women's Lib and ex-members and sympathisers of an abortive Leeds branch of PROP, as well as several other interested people, a fully furnished house next to the jail wall has just opened in Armley, Leeds. This house serves as a local centre for visitors to inmates of the prison to use, either when waiting before or after visiting hours (1.30pm to 3.30pm each day) or as a creche during the actual visit.

The house is being rented from Leeds City Council for 50p a week, and is situated in a clearance area. Many of the houses in the street are already empty and boarded up, and the few remaining inhabitants are waiting to leave as soon as possible. Although at first unsure of what was happening at the house, they are now in full support and have been very helpful during the preliminary stages, even going so far as to bring the volunteers meeting there cups of coffee until the cooker was fixed up in the house. The house was furnished by volunteers and by the local people giving stuff they no longer wanted to take to the new places they got under the clearance scheme.

The house was set up to provide a local centre and help to relieve some of the many problems faced by the families of prisoners - the people the State ignores when it serves its 'just' punishment. The house opened for the first time on Sat. 10th March. Reaction to it was very favourable, and about 40-50 people used the place on its opening day. It was publicised by handing out leaflets to every one going up the private road that leads to the prison gate. One woman said that if she won the pools she would give it all to the house as it was such a marvellous thing and one which the community was very glad of.

It had been hoped that the prison officer at the gate would distribute the leaflets but, for the time being, the prison authorities are playing a waiting game to see how the house is received and what tactics its organisers indulge in. Sunday visiting is very quiet, as only convicted prisoners are allowed visitors, but

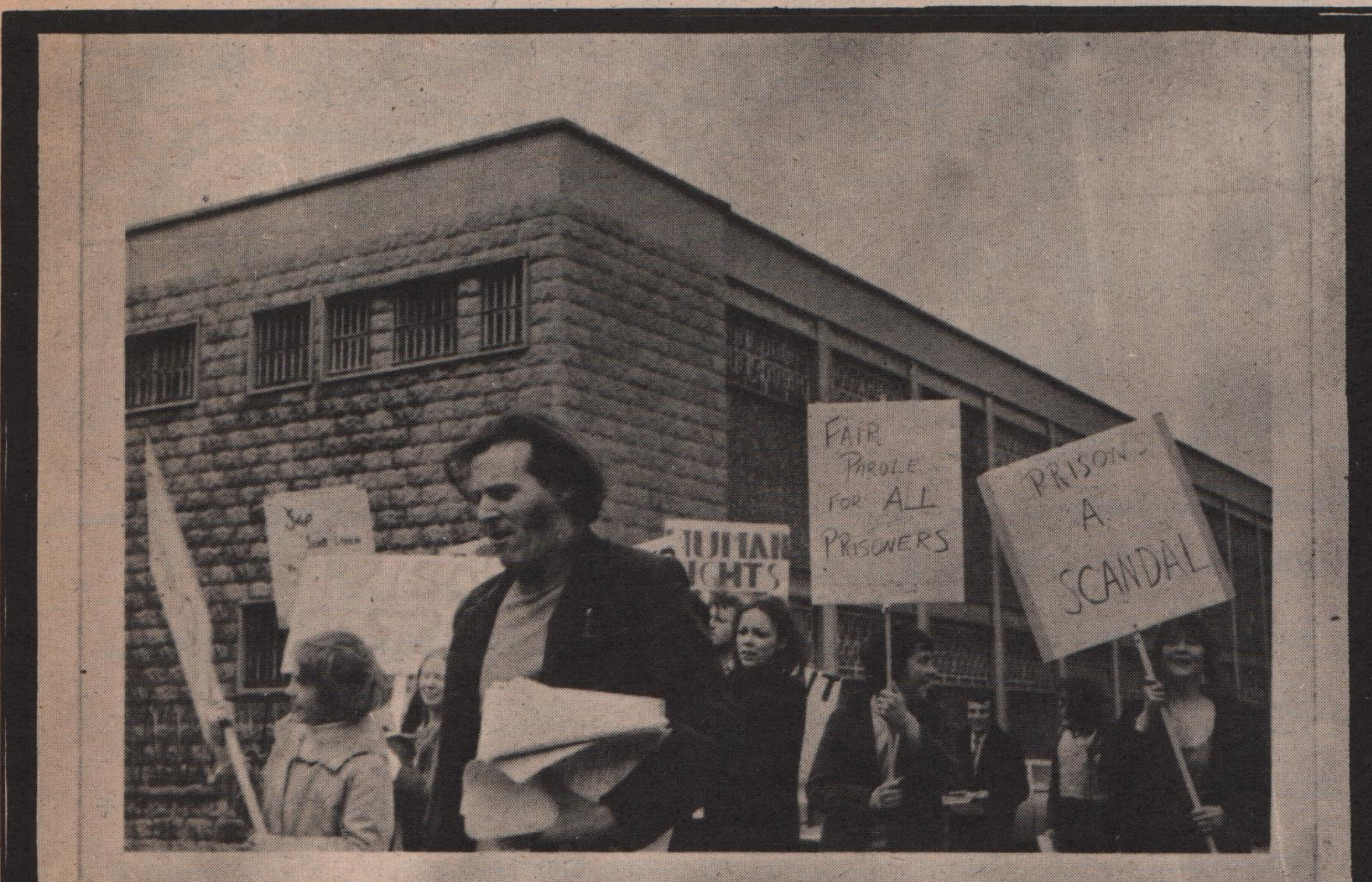
this may change as news of the facilities of the house spreads through the community.

At present, the house is only open on Saturdays and Sundays, from 10.30am until 4.00pm. The intention is to have a person living on the premises as soon as possible so that the place can be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. At the moment the local community - containing quite a few prisoners wives, past and present - is tacitly supporting the idea. They are a little cautious about working with middle class 'do gooders' - a very understandable reaction.

If the house is successful, it is planned to open other houses. Its hoped that these will be furnished and used for creches/coffee bars/chat centres/advice centres/ dormitories for overnight and other visitors or even homeless prisoners.

Unfortunately, the volunteers organising the house have recently split into two camps. Most of us have the intention of setting up the place, and then withdrawing so that the prisoners/wives can take over control of their own centre. We have no intention of retaining any kind of formal committee but merely aiding a self-help project to get well and truly off the ground. However, some of the liberal 'do-good' types one usually finds associated with this kind of community action have gerrymandered the election of a committee, and voted in, at a poorly attended (and almost secret) meeting, a constitution that precludes any control whatsoever by the people for whom the place is intended. They seem to be intent on becoming permanent 'committee members' with a vastly inflated sense of self-importance. They have even organised a joint meeting with the WVS, the probation service and the prison authorities! Yet another social work agency imposed on the people for their own good.

This committee and constitution are a complete opposite of the beliefs held by many of the volunteers, and are a strategy that must be fought in the next few meetings. The self-interested clique were able to carry out their plan because of the informal and structureless nature of the meetings that were held. This is a failing of many libertarian groups. We must be aware of the danger.



PROP demonstration outside Leeds prison.
(Mr. Dick Pooley is in the foreground.)

WOULD YOU CREDIT IT? — LOSS OF THE FAMILY ALLOWANCE

I get it out every Tuesday, regularly as clock-work', says a mother when talking of Family Allowances. She continues, 'I rely on my Family Allowance. I'd be right down the pan without it, wouldn't I? I'd be right short of money.' Another mother comments, 'if Family Allowance was in the pay packet, that'd be a different story - half the husbands wouldn't give it up.'

Just two comments on the discussion at present centring on the Government's Green Paper 'Proposals for a Tax Credit System', published in October 1972. This puts forward a proposal for a radical change in the tax system, but, beneath layers of bureaucratic jargon, has several dangerous implications for the working class and especially women.

Many different groups are campaigning on aspects of the Green Paper, although most concentrate on only one issue and hence call themselves Family Allowance Campaign groups. Activities such as the collection of signatures on petitions, local leafletting, producing local surveys of information, street theatre, even a play, have all been undertaken to bring to people's attention the issue of the abolishing of the Family Allowance as presented in the Green Paper.



Although there are many other minor points contained in it which hit the hardest the same sector of society - the lowest: the main features of the Green Paper are as follows:

(1) The system of 'tax credits' would replace the main income tax personal allowance and family allowances (thus combining what you gain on the roundabout with what you lose heavily on the swings.)

(2) Such tax credits would be available only to 9 out of 10 people, such as people in regular work, people getting regular national insurance (sick pay) or unemployment pay, and to retirement pensioners. The 1 in 19 not covered by the scheme include some of the most vulnerable groups in society - the temporarily unemployed, the self-employed, people earning less than £8 per week, students, people dependent on supplementary benefits. These people have to have alternative inconvenient arrangements made for them.

(3) Income would be taxed at 30% and against this a credit rating would be set. If your credit due is greater than your tax payable, you are given the difference by your employer; and if the tax comes to more than the credit the difference is paid in tax.

(4) Credits are proposed at £4 for a single person, £6(!) for a married couple, and £2 for each child. The child credit includes the present tax allowance for children, plus the Family Allowance.

(5) National Insurance benefits which are tax free at the moment - unemployment, sickness and injury benefits, maternity allowances and invalid pensions - become taxable at the rate of 30%. Although supplementary benefit would not be taxed, it wouldn't give any entitlement to a credit either!

(6) **EMPLOYERS** should be responsible for for paying credits to all employees whose credit cards they hold, **CREDITS COULD NOT BE CUMULATIVE**, so if you miss a payment for any reason, such as being on strike, you would lose that week's credit for ever.

(7) Last, but not least, the Government assumes throughout the paper that child credits (child's tax allowance and family allowance) would be paid to the **FATHER** in his wage packet, and not the mother at the Post Office as at present.

Arguments such as 'administrative expense' and the problems of fathers finding their take-home pay reduced are put forward as reasons for not paying child credits to mothers. The Paper accepts that child credits paid to the father 'may not reach the wife' but say that women in this situation are 'relatively few in number'. A survey carried out by Birmingham Womens' Liberation Group found that nearly 40% of women at present receiving Family Allowance felt they would not see this money if paid to the husband, and 50% of those who would be eligible for child credits under the

new scheme felt they would not receive the money. Relatively few in number indeed!

The implications of these proposals, however, are more sinister. The Government is proposing to abolish Family Allowance altogether and this is, in quite a lot of cases, **THE ONLY MONEY A WOMAN RECEIVES AS OF RIGHT REGULARLY EACH WEEK**. It can often be the only source of income that is completely reliable, and it can be saved up until there is sufficient for some major expenditure - new shoes or clothes for the children. The Government is proposing to take away this statutory right and replace it with 'grace and favour' money which involves means testing in order to get it. The present Family Allowance is already woefully inadequate (90p for the second child and £1 for the third and subsequent children) so how many people are going to be willing to submit to grovelling for it??? As with the Family Income Supplement, the Government will then announce, with great surprise, that many 'poor' people are failing to take up rightful money, and can therefore manage without it. The truth is, of course, that the people most intimidated by Government officials, forms, and offices are precisely those who most need such pittances.

A Child Poverty Action Group survey found that most low income families spend the Family Allowance on food, so that failure by the husband to qualify for, or hand over, the child credit would result in a lower standard of living for many poorer families. This proposal also weights the balance of power in the household even more heavily in favour of the man - he will control **EVERY SINGLE PENNY** of the family's income.

All families on supplementary benefit and all outside the categories of those in work or getting National Insurance payments would

have no right to child credits. Unsupported mothers, wives of students, and all those who don't fit into the Government's arbitrarily designed categories of those 'worthy' of automatic payment would lose the only statutory income they have.

Another implication of these proposals is that all those on supplementary benefit would become **TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON THE DEPT. OF SOCIAL SECURITY** - what a thought! If there are delays in getting payments or supplementary benefit is stopped (eg. for cohabiting) there would be **ABSOLUTELY NO MONEY COMING IN AT ALL**. At the present the Family Allowance is a small, but independent, statutory payment that cannot be denied by bumptious officials and can form a small sum to fall back on.

Another hidden feature of these proposals is that the credits are tied irrevocably to work, so the families of strikers would have, in the absence of strike pay, no income whatsoever. Until/unless they get supplementary benefit. With the present attitude of the Tories hardening every week against strikers, how much longer are they going to keep paying supplementary benefit to strikers' families? This proposal would thus have a very large part to play in breaking strikes, and this is one aspect of the Green Paper that has not been well-publicised at all.

What is needed is not merely campaigns to fight for 'fair deals for women'. What is needed is a campaign coordinating an attack on all the vicious proposals put forward by the Tory Government to hit hardest at the poorest families, the low wage earners, those unable to support themselves, the so-called 'lame ducks' of our society. This attack is intended to put more pressure on the lower paid, to drive the others to greater effort and greater docility by showing them the threat of **WORKHOUSE** treatment for the poor and unemployed. The Tories want to make all benefits payable by means test. In 1945 we won all the rights known together as the Welfare State. In the last 20yrs. large parts have been dismantled and junked - the Tories want to finish this job. Our only means of defense is to attack them. Isolated protests by strikers, claimants, mothers, OAPs etc against the particular cruelties that effect each of them will achieve nothing.

The abolition of family allowances will effect mothers -and therefore the womens' and neighbourhood groups should be involved. It will effect claimants and the unemployed - so, the Claimants Unions must be involved. The proposals will directly hurt the families of workers on strike - so every Union branch must add its weight and every factory organise itself to fight the implementation of the proposals.

There is a good chance that **YOU**, the reader, are a member of one of the groups mentioned above. Raise the matter at your group/branch meeting. Get your organisation to contact all the others to organise together. If you need any help with printing, speakers etc. write to the paper and we'll help as much as we can.

TORIES CRIPPLE CHILDREN



THE LEGS OF A CHILD WITH RICKETS

Not very many people got really angry when Thatcher announced 'no more school milk', two years ago. This was probably because most of us thought that even the poorest were no longer so badly off that their kids needed the third of a pint of milk a day. Rickets, malnutrition, deficiency diseases, are all things of the past, the bad old days of the depression, thankfully eradicated by the Welfare State and the general increase in the standard of living.

In 1972 a survey of 600 Birmingham school children, aged between 14 and 17, showed that 25% of them had signs that they had rickets. A report in the British Medical Journal, on 10th February 1973 of 570 kids in a similar survey, revealed that 41% (nearly half) showed signs of rickets..

WHAT IS RICKETS??

'Rickets' is a condition caused by lack of vitamin D in the diet. The vitamin is necessary for healthy bone formation. If a child does not get enough, the bones do not contain enough mineral salts, and are weak. The leg bones tend to bow apart under the weight of the body in severe cases. In less extreme cases, the results are less obvious, the children are simply stunted in growth, have weak muscles, aches and pains and general tiredness.

PRIESTS DON'T GET PREGNANT

On Sunday 25th of March the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) had a 'day of mourning' for abortions. An estimated 50,000 of them marched through Manchester waving 'Abortion Kills' placards and wearing white flowers, which they dropped into dustbins as they finished their march. This was supposed to represent all the 'unborn babies' (for which read fetuses) killed in abortions. This collective hysteria prevailed throughout the march and had been scientifically whipped up by the speakers at the rally beforehand. Leo Abse, MP and alleged liberal, equated Harley Street surgeons with muggers and 'bombs exploding in Whitehall'. Jill Knight MP and Muggerridge did their usual 'Abortion leads to Auschwitz' bit.

Some of the marchers carried pictures of fetuses - the psychology of which ought to be explained to them. Their hysteria nearly boiled over when they ran the gauntlet from a 400-strong counter demonstration organised by Manchester Womens Lib. Several of them spat, threw fag-ends and even punches at the counter-demonstrators, who were from political groups, womens lib groups and gay lib groups all over the North.

Counter demonstrators continually disrupted the march by walking into it carrying 'Abortion on Demand and Free Contraception' posters. Either the police or large heavies disguised as priests jostled them away each time.

As the SPUC march was a silent one (except for some kids out for a laugh) the impact of the slogans of the counter-demo was tremendous. A barrage of noise greeted each contingent - 'Women Should Decide Their Fate - Not the Church, not the State', 'Priests don't get Pregnant', etc.

The sad thing about the march was not the closed minds of the elderly religious fanatics or the insane Muggerridge and Knight, or even the woman who pointed to the counter-demonstrators and told her son 'They hate you because they hate children', but the numbers of young people whose idealism and concern for life had been used for reactionary ends by this crowd of bigots.

For an expose of SPUC and the right-wing forces behind it, see the previous issue of Libertarian Struggle.

25p AN HOUR!!

FIGHT AT FORTE'S

The catering industry is noted for two characteristics: high profits (up 35% in 1971) and lack of unionised labour and consequently low wages. Trust Houses Forte Ltd. is no exception.

At Gatwick Airport as at most other British airports, THF Ltd hold a complete monopoly. Apart from actual airline tickets, they control every retail outlet, duty free shops, restaurants, bars, newspapers & stationery, snack bars. Most of the staff are young blokes at or just having left school, women and semi-retired people. There is the inevitable high staff turnover. THF are able to, and do, pay very low wages - as low as 25p for some kitchen porters working in temperatures of up to 120 degrees.

Only last summer, mutterings were made by some of the staff about the appalling working conditions and low wages.

There was no union representation so the T.G.W.U. were contacted and agreed to come down for a meeting. However the management tried to thwart the workers plan and called in the G.M.W.U. At a general meeting of the workers, a GMWU representative said that the GMWU had reached agreement with the T&G, and that the GMWU would be the sole union representing catering staff (most airport workers are members of the TGWU).

HEALTH HAZARD

Fortunately this trick by the management and the GMWU failed and the TGWU moved in.

Since then, membership has been steadily growing. But not without casualties. Although the stores is manned most-

ly by young people (average age 19), it is the most militant section in THF at Gatwick. Early in January this year during a brief period when Heathrow was closed, due to fog, air traffic was transferred to Gatwick. Gatwick is considered by many to be the best designed airport in Europe with air, road and rail all neatly linked. But no mention is made of the poor working conditions. The stores (THF) are located in the perimeter tunnel which runs under the main terminal building. No extractor fans are provided. Consequently during periods of heavy congestion (as happened during Heathrow shutdown) the tunnel is blocked with buses, coaches and service lorries. Engines are left running and the health hazards to the workers are tremendous.

WALKOUT

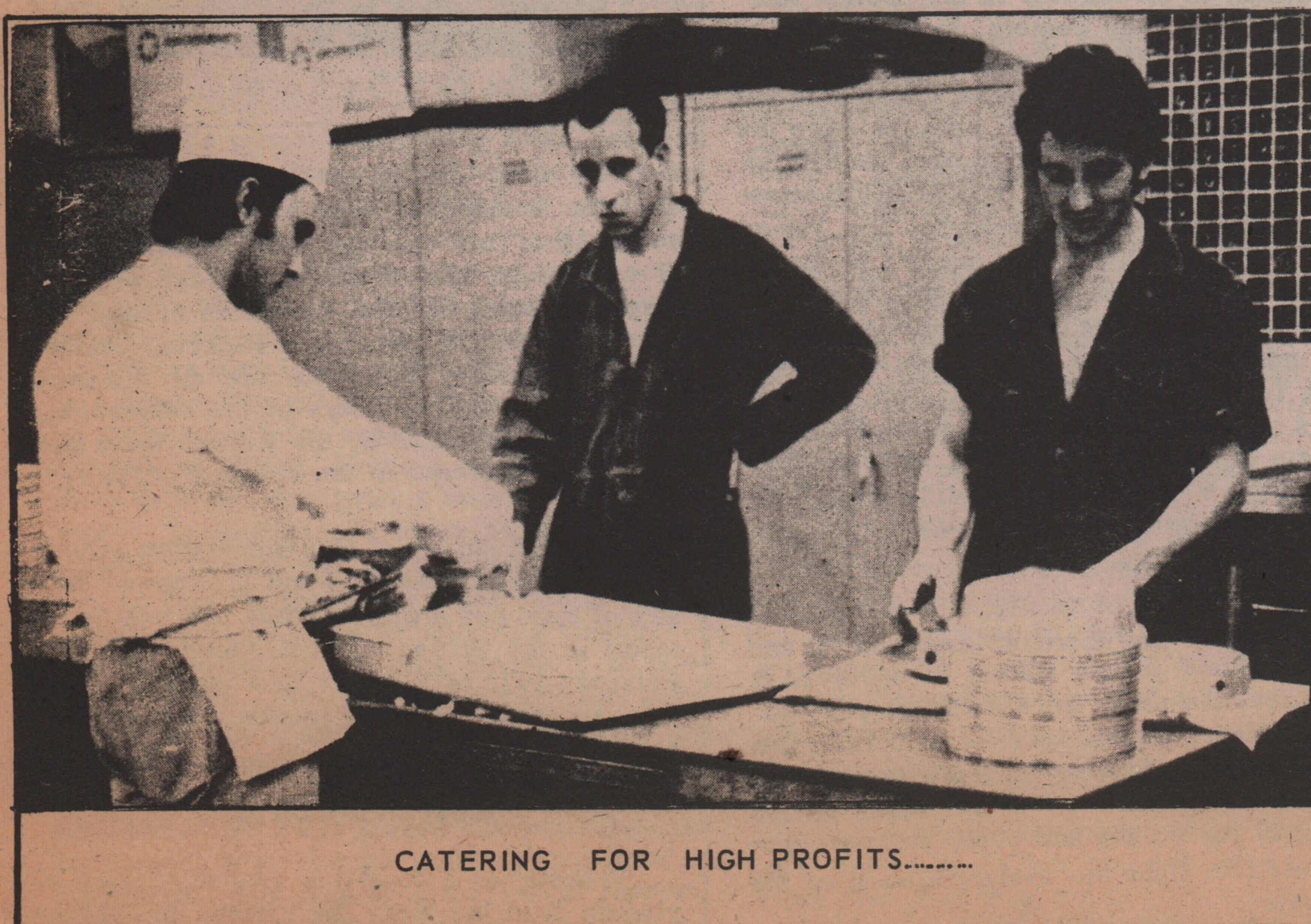
Despite three days of constant demands for action, neither THF Ltd or the British Airports Authority were prepared to do anything. Things came to a head when two stores porters complained of dizziness, running eyes, & tightening of the chest. Still nothing was done and five of the seven porters walked off the job. Only then did the management act.

HEAVY MOB

Since then there has been a 'shake-out' in the stores. An ex-army adjutant has been appointed assistant manager and life was made so unbearable that two porters have since left.

Coupled with this, there has been increased police harassment of workers, not only at the airport, but at the B.A.A. (British Airports Authority) run disco, where plain clothes police can be seen every Friday having what they describe as a 'quiet drink'.

The situation to date is that although union representation is still very weak, it is growing and it is hoped that the time will soon come when it will be strong enough to successfully challenge the big guns of Charlie Forte.



CATERING FOR HIGH PROFITS.....

REVIEW The Tyranny of Structurelessness by Jo Freeman. This is part of a pamphlet being produced by women in Leeds ORA. Obtainable soon from 29 Cardigan Road, Leeds 6. Please send 10p & 3p postage.

This pamphlet was originally produced by Jo Freeman in the debate on organisation within the American Women's Movement. First reprinted by the Berkely Journal of Sociology and then by Agitprop in London. A new edition has just been produced by the Leeds ORA group.

It might seem strange that a pamphlet first produced in 1971 has been reprinted so often. The reason for its rapid reproduction is that its message applies to all struggles and its critique should not be assumed for the women's movement alone. The organisational conditions described in the pamphlet should be very familiar to many a structureless anarchist, claimant or student.

The pamphlet lucidly maps out the typical informal organisations that plague many of the 'new' movements and spells out clearly the only route by which they can travel. The path of political impotence. Jo Freeman rapidly debunks the myth that structurelessness is desirable or can even

be obtained. She shows that so-called structureless groups quickly develop an implicit structure of a tyrannical nature - the structure of social cliques. She describes how these cliques control and guide informal groupings in a covert manner. Formal democracy being ignored with the grouping, the informal clique sets up its own 'membership qualification' according to 'friendship' or 'vibes' or 'tastes', etc. The pamphlet goes on to describe that dictatorship of informal elites is the only result of 'structurelessness'. The charismatic leadership comes into its own which is neatly labelled in the

pamphlet as the 'star' system of spokesmanship.

Only when EXPLICIT procedures are set down by a group for decision-taking doing work, group entry, etc, can a REAL libertarian structure come about. When all these procedures are widely known and practised, in a group can real democracy and equality be said to exist. These procedures are listed in the pamphlet under the heading 'Principles of Democratic Structuring'. The list reads like the procedures that organised libertarians have stood by for years - delegation, rotation, allocation, diffusion of information, equal access to resources are a few of the principles listed.

Libertarians in all movements should study this pamphlet because it contains the core of the argument that ORGANISED libertarians have stated.

REVIEW The pill on trial by Paul Vaughan (Pelican 45p)

How safe are you ? Does the Pill give you complete emancipation ? Are you part of a mass experiment ?

In this book, Paul Vaughan examines thoroughly the evidence for and against the Pill. He says in his preface that he has 'tried to set out, for the record, the nature of the medical argument over the Pill and its possible hazards'. No drug in history has caused so much controversy - it has enabled women to have some sexual freedom and to reconsider their ideas about marriage.

But at the same time, no-one really knows why it works. Also there are many side effects which can occur; and therefore it is as well to be forewarned.

This book is a helpful guide to those of us who like to know what we are swallowing.

ORA Publications

- ORA 1. Towards a History and Critique of the Anarchist Movement in Recent Times 5p plus post.
- ORA 2. Theory and Praxis in Anarchist Organisation. 3p plus post.
- ORA 3. The Bombthrowers: a study of terrorism. 10p plus post.
- ORA 4. Neither Washington nor Hanoi but Libertarian Socialism. 2p plus post.
- ORA 5. Introduction to Revolutionary Anarchism. 10p plus post.
- ORA 6. 1plus1equals10: Computer Ethics. 5p plus post.
- ORA 7. Bakunin - Essays on Revolution. 5p plus post.
- ORA 8. Free Speech and Social Revolution 5p plus post.

Available from 68a Chingford Road, London E.17.

LOCAL GROUP PUBLICATIONS

Suppressed Report on the Derry Massacre 2p from North London group.
Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists. 10p from N.London group.
Anarchism and Ecology. 10p from Lancaster Revolution : Past and Present. 10p from Leeds group.

PUBLIC MEETINGS & EVENTS

ORA CONFERENCE, GLASGOW, EASTER 1973. If you wish to attend as an observer, write to Glasgow group.



EUROPE'S LARGEST
HOTEL, CATERING
AND
LEISURE GROUP

REVIEWS

SNAKE



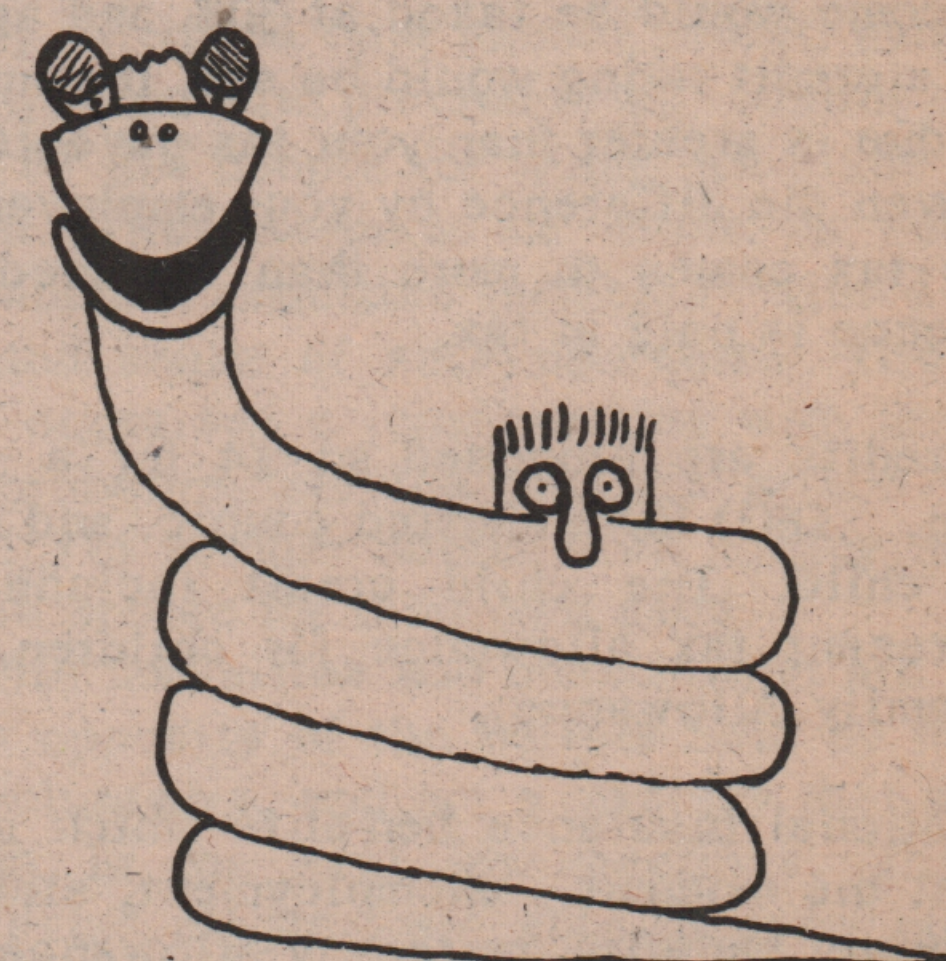
ALL THIS LOOSE CHAT
ABOUT WORKERS CONTROL!



ALL MY WORKERS
ARE SENSIBLE MEN...



...THEY REJECT THE
IDEA! I KNOW BECAUSE
I'M IN CLOSE CONTACT..



...WITH MY WORKERS.

WAGE FREEZE IN EDU- CATION

The NUS (National Union of Students) called for a National Day of Protest on March 14th. This was the end of their campaign to increase student grants.

PRESENT GRANTS

The maximum present grant is £445 a year, but many students get less. Food, lodgings, and personal expenses have to be paid for out of this, as well as books. Grants for students at Polytechs and Tech colleges are discretionary - ie. depend on the local authority feeling generous. The grant for married women is £275 a year, whether or not the husband is working. A married man is given an allowance for a wife and any kids. This obviously discourages married women from further education.

The grant awarded is worked out by a mean test of the parents' joint income so the grant paid by the local authority is added to what they reckon parents must contribute, to make the total eg. £445. The level at which parents contribute is so low that working class parents earning between them £35 a wk. are supposed to pay £120 a year for their children's education. Many students do without this rather than let the family struggle to pay it all. Even middle class parents can find it difficult to pay, although they benefit from allowances for mortgage repayments, life insurances and other exemptions for property owners. It is not surprising that working class students are still few and far between; under the guise of providing grants for all, the education system still tends to favour the sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie.

PROTEST ACTIONS

Although students in certain universities and colleges have shown militancy over issues concerning them - such as the sit-ins over the finding that Warwick University was keeping secret political and personal files on its students, involving local business interests in



deciding the policy of the University etc - no single issue has made so many students so militant. It is, after all, simply impossible to live on the grants as they are now.

Pressure from students has been increasing for some time. At the Nov. NUS conference last year, after initial opposition from the executive, a motion from University of Surrey Union calling for national coordinated rent strikes, catering boycotts, and demonstrations was passed unanimously. Since then there have been rent strikes at 46 Universities and Polytechs, with catering boycotts and demonstrations at many others.

GOVERNMENT REPLY

The NUS exec. met Norman St John Stevas (the Parliamentary Under Secretary in charge of fobbing off students), at the beginning of March, with the following demands:-

- (1) Abolition of discretionary awards so that all further education (A-level, HND, RNC etc) will get the same.
- (2) Full grants for all - married women to receive the same as others.
- (3) No means test contributions. Abolition of parental contributions so that all students get the same.
- (4) Restoration of grant to 1968 value (increase of £100 a year), with an annual review, (at present every 3yrs), and future increases tied to the cost of living.

St John Stevas appealed to their sense of patriotism - the Dunkirk spirit etc) mentioned that there was a wage freeze on, and turned down their demands.

THE NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

All but eight of all the Universities, Polys, tech colleges and other institutions of higher education in the country came out in protest.

WHAT NEXT?

The students do not realise that they have to fight for a lot more than an increase in the grants. And many of them do not realise that their grants fight is in itself part of the fight against the freeze - another aspect of the constant war between the rich and privileged, and the millions who make the wealth. The battle for a decent income and the battle for free access to all the knowledge that society has, can and must, be linked

New and welcome signs of militancy did appear on the Grants Day protest in Leeds, when students at an annexe of Park Lane College of Further Education had an occupation for the day. They were protesting not only at discretionary grants, but also about the Dickensian conditions in which they are forced to work, the right for an autonomous student union and against the victimisation of militant students at the college.

The occupation was highly successful and fully supported by the students there. Pickets manned every door and turned away lecturers who tried to get in, although most lecturers seemed sympathetic.

These signs of militancy among the section of the student population which has, up to now, been the most quiet, is very encouraging. The student 'revolution' has for a long time been the prerogative of the university elite. As the lower-paid have come to realise the necessity to match the militancy of highly-organised workers, so the 'lower student orders' have understood the need to organise (autonomy for student unions) and take militant action.

LAPDOG LIES LOW

The Bradford University authorities are still trying to ban the distribution of the newsheet of the Bradford Black Anarchist group. The complicity of Bradford Students Union Executive (as reported in Libertarian Struggle-March) still continues. Pressure from students general meetings had forced the Union to unfreeze the funds of the anarchist group but the Executive of the Union now restricts the amount of cheap wholesale printing material for the publication of Bradford Black. The President of the Bradford Union has so far taken no action against the University authorities in order to fight the ban on Bradford Black which has now lasted two months.

The Anarchist group is still publishing its newsheet but is under continual harassment from the authorities. Representatives of the University seize copies whenever they are distributed. Members of the Bradford Anarchist Group have been intimidated and threatened when distribution occurs. A typical case of harassment happened in the Wardley Library where the University authorities pursued a distributor trying to force him out of the building, while attempting to collect all of the copies that had been handed out. University personnel have quizzed bar staff for the names of people who have distributed the newsheet in the bar. Incidents of this nature occur every time the newsheet is published! And are a result of the University edict in January which forbade the production and distribution of Bradford Black on campus.

The President of the Union, Jeff Robinson, claims that unfreezing the Anarchist Group's funds (originally frozen by the Union Treasurer) and lending the free advice of the Union solicitor as 'adequate' support for one of the Union's societies. When asked to condemn the action of the University authority he said and did nothing.

Pressure is mounting to force the backward Bradford Union Executive into action. Letters from Leeds Student Union and Reading Area N.U.S. condemning the Executive and asking for an explanation of the reticence of the Exec to act have been sent to the Bradford President.

THE BRADFORD UNION EXEC MUST FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT OF THE ANARCHIST GROUP TO PUBLISH ITS NEWSHEET OR MAKE WAY FOR AN EXECUTIVE THAT WILL.

If you are a student, put down a motion at your next general meeting, calling for a telegram of condemnation of the failure of the present Bradford Executive to defend the rights of its members.

All enquiries for help and information contact **Bradford Black**, 30, Elbor Mount, Leeds 6

FASCISTS ALLOWED TO MARCH

On March 10th the National Front, a British neo-fascist organisation had an opportunity to present their ideas to the people of Huddersfield. Their march was held as a protest against the breakdown of law and order, and especially against terrorism. For this the Front was to have imported members of the Vanguard movement, but the only presence of these Northern Irish bigots on the weakly-attended march (150 demonstrators well spaced out) was one individual whistling 'Battle of the Boyne'.

The banners from far-flung NF branches nearly outnumbered the marchers carrying them. Yet again the NF had failed to organise a mass march. But they were allowed to make an effective presence on the anti-immigration platform they had to use, instead of the law and order one originally intended. The Front strolled through the centre of Huddersfield without meeting any protest from the left on the streets or on the pavement. The Front with their Union Jacks seemed to give the people of Huddersfield the illusion that they were respectable ex-servicemen concerned about immigration.

Despite the fact that the left far outnumbered the fascists, nothing was done by the Communist Party or the International Socialists to stop them handing out propaganda or to counter it with their own.



HEAVILY PROTECTED BY POLICE - A HANDFUL OF FASCISTS MARCH IN HUDDERSFIELD

In their usual bid for respectability, the CP (Communist Party) refused to counter the fascists, except for a demonstration (160 people) one hour after the NF march. They refused to march with IS, not wanting to cause trouble and their demonstration attracted little attention, as it went out of its way to avoid any clash with the NF. The IS march was 400-strong was intent on 'fascist bashing' but without considering any of the tactics that would make it possible; considerations such as the presence of 500 foot police, 30 mounted police and the route of the NF march were ignored.

There was a short and futile scuffle with the police in an attempt to get to the NF, then the demonstration joined up with the CP had a short meeting and then dispersed.

At the present time when consensus poli-

tics are breaking down, the right tactic for dealing with fascist groups is to stop them meeting and giving out propaganda. But this doesn't just happen, it has to be planned and organised. Fascists were driven off the streets by mass working class mobilisation in the thirties and again in the sixties. But we have to recognise that we may not always be successful and we must have good propaganda to show that we are defending attacks on the organised working class. The extreme right is still small and can be countered physically but if this changes, mindless fascist bashing could play into the hands of the law and order brigade.

The trouble with Huddersfield was that a ritual display of mock militancy against the Front allowed them to march through the town unchallenged. This fell between two footstools and achieved very little.

WE KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE.....

An interesting thing happened to two Lancaster claimants on their way home from the recent claimants conference in Newcastle. They were hitching on the road from Penrith in Cumberland, when a police car drew up. A porcine gentleman at the driving wheel asked them if they were anarchists. On receiving an affirmation, he told them that they'd have to hitch somewhere other than this particular stretch of the Queen's Highway. Apparently a local dignitary with the unlikely name of William White-law owned a farm nearby, and for the sake of his peace and quiet, 'anarchists and suchlike' were not allowed within a radius of three miles of his pad.



CASTLES IN THE AIR

The last issue of *Libertarian Struggle* carried some of the criticisms which libertarian revolutionaries put forward of Lenin's ideas, and of the aims and methods of his followers. That article gave some idea why we oppose dictatorial organisations claiming to 'lead' the working class. The picture is unclear if we just leave it understood that we reject the queue of 'NEW leaderships' without explaining our attitude to the current political leadership of the working class. Which means explaining our attitude to parliamentary politics and the Labour Party.

For over 50 years the majority of class-conscious workers have looked to the Labour Party as their Party. An explanation of why the Labour Party has consistently betrayed their hopes can best be done by concentrating on two factors - first, the influences and limitations imposed on both British parliamentary democracy and the British Labour Party by the circumstances of their origins - second, the straitjacket imposed by the general principles of parliamentary democracy and parliamentary socialism.

The first assumption of parliamentary democracy, and those socialists who want to use Parliament for change, is that Parliament itself is a neutral institution, above the class struggle which takes place every day in society. By this light, if the working class can capture parliament it can use the powers of parliament in its interests as easily as the Tories use it in the interests of the ruling class. (This view is held by both the Labour Party and the Communist Party.) Why then have successive Labour governments (and in the past Communist MPs) made so little impression on the basic inequality and injustice of our society?

Parliaments do not descend from on high but have their roots in particular historical experience. As every schoolkid knows (although the political significance is, naturally, ignored), Parliament arose as the instrument of the rising capitalist class in its battles with the old

feudal aristocracy and the supreme power of the Crown. It rules in the name of the 'nation' (which seems normal to us but which was revolutionary when the most sacred myth of the time was the 'Divine Right of the King appointed by God'). It is not an institution designed to express the conflict in society but designed to absorb it and unify everyone around this myth 'the nation'. But while it does this it still maintains the rule of the capitalist class. It does this not only by diverting working class interests in the name of the sacred national cow, but also because, as an institution created by and staffed by the privileged classes over the past 300 years, it has all the checks and balances inbuilt to prevent the machinery being used for new purposes. (History is full of examples of Labour Chancellors being prisoners of the Treasury, Labour Foreign Secretaries stuck with reactionary Foreign Office staff who (a) advise the same course as always and (b) can smother anything else.)

So we can see by this brief description that, far from being a neutral weapon, Parliament is a fortress of the ruling class - putting out and reinforcing ideas that are in their interests, staffed by them or their servants. It is intricately built and a newcomer will not find the difficult and tortuous paths around it. If he asks the occupants to guide him he is their prisoner.

Let's now look at those who intend to take this castle on our behalf. The Labour Party is not a socialist party - it has never stood for Socialism in any programme but the one drafted in 1918. At its birth it was made up of trade union leaders - who wanted parliamentary representatives to defend them against the more reactionary elements of the ruling class, and give them legal rights to carry on getting the best they could under capitalism; Fabian (ie. gradualist) socialists and other reformists (not revolutionaries); and some very small genuinely socialist groups. This pattern has been very important for the Party - the bulk of the strength has always come from the union bur-

eaucracy (money and nominal membership); the leadership has always been largely provided by the middleclass reformers - if going to Eton helps one become a Tory MP or Minister, then going to Oxford or Cambridge is equally necessary for most Labour MPs or Ministers; and the small number of 'lefts' remain to do any local donkey work and remain as powerless to affect Labour leaders as ever they have been.



So, the weight of the Party is always towards changing things within the context of capitalist society. To this extent it often plays the role of mouthpiece for the more modernising sections of the ruling class eg. the Wilson govts pioneering of wages control, 'Fair' rents etc. Its most progressive measures have been in line with modernising capitalism in its own long term interests - even the great reforms of 1945 carried on in the tradition of forward-looking capitalism, represented best by the 1906 Liberal Governments introduction of pensions and unemployment benefits. The union bureaucracy and the middle class reformers are not interested in using parliament for working class interests. Their place in Parliament and in the Party expresses two things: first their having 'made it' as part of the privileged elite of the country. In this they are not representatives of the working class (we certainly have not 'made it') but they are representatives of their social strata - the TU bureaucracy and the middle class intelligentsia.

The second thing that the Labour Party represents is a genuine desire to modernise the economy and to improve the general welfare BUT within the context of 'the nation's needs' NOT those of the working class - who are the first to be attacked when the 'nation' (ie. the needs of British capitalism) needs it.

While the capitalist system is in sufficient health - that is when its screwing enough profit out of every working class family - its able to grant a few reforms and the Labour Party is the tool which introduces them. When capitalism is gripped by crisis, as at present, and the glaring inequalities become such that many people become open to socialist ideas for a complete change THEN the Labour Party, far from taking the lead in the fight, sides with the established order, starts dishing out the 'national interest' muck. The only thing the Labour Party has got really upset about during this reactionary Tory government has been the 'loss of Sovereignty of our Queen(!)' because 'we' joined the Common Market. The Labour Party betrayed the tenants over the Tory Rent Act, attacked the jailed dockers, and denounced the gasmen. One thing it won't do is fight the Tories.

We have already said that Parliament exists to smother rather than to voice working class interests. And this is true of the whole process of elections. If you compete in elections you must accept the rules. (And we know who made the rules.) If you accept that you must change society through Parliament you must first accept the defence of the whole election game, so that when you win (this year, next year, sometime, never) its all in a fit state to be used. So the 'lefts' act to divert all working class activity into the game. Don't strike or occupy - lobby your MPs. Don't refuse rent rises and organise your estate - trust your local Labour/Communist Councillor (or elect one). The game wants people only active enough to vote for the 'good guys' so that they have enough counters to play the game. Progress to socialism needs people organising and acting for themselves, so that day by day we get closer to the working class DIRECTLY exercising ITS OWN power over the whole of society.

Those of us in the socialist movement have been taught from birth or learnt through experience to hate the Tories. There is a strong emotional pull when the Labour Party thrashes them in an election. But our role in the game then is just that of spectators. We've got to

play a whole new game, with our rules not theirs.

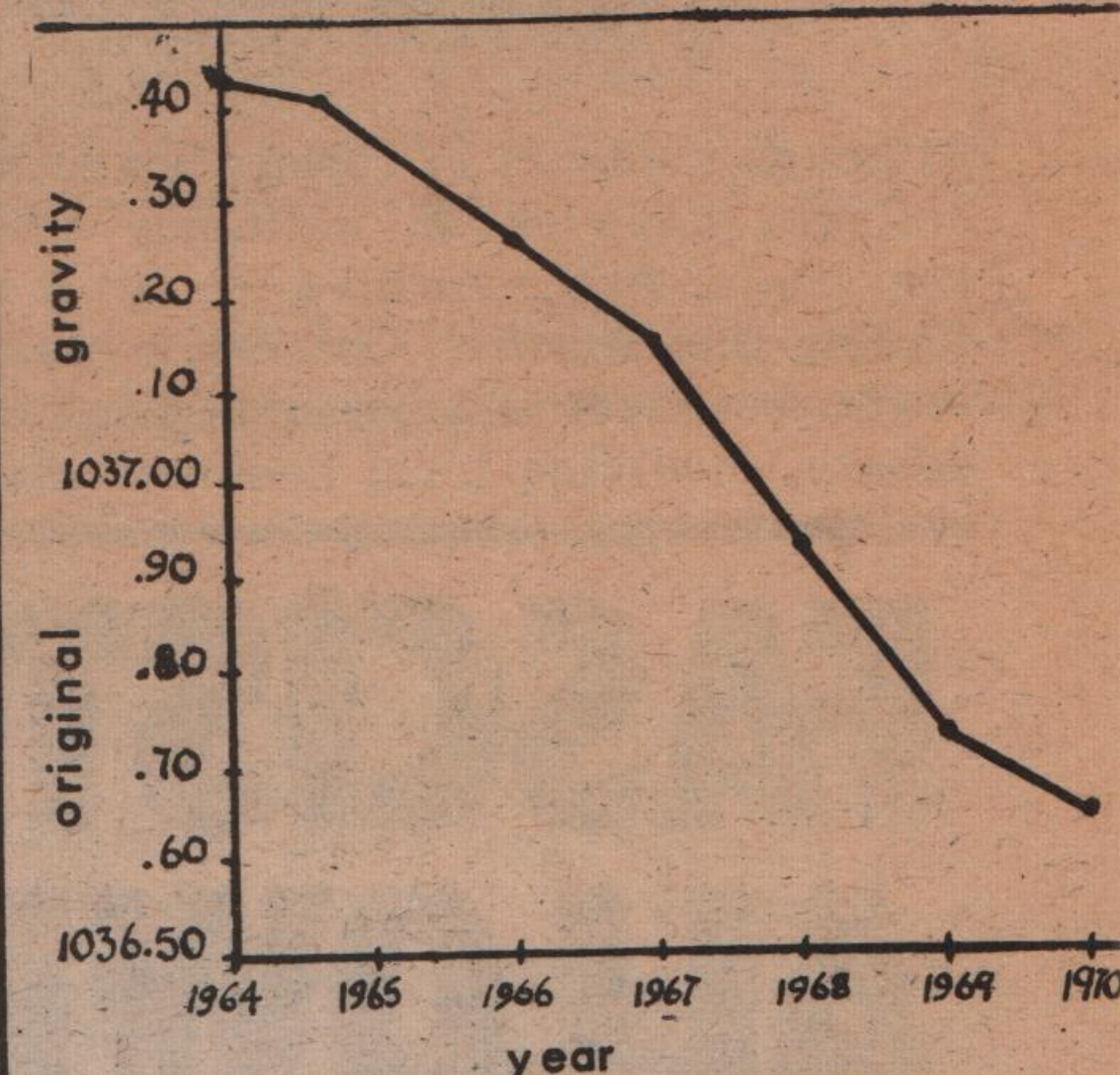
Those who want to divert us are at best mistaken, more usually they are self-seeking charlatans and renegades. Our job is to organise ourselves to destroy the ruling class and with it all its myths, all its servants and friends. Through our day to day direct action to make its fortress irrelevant. Its game obsolete. To cut off its sources of supply - our belief in it. To isolate it - by creating our own institutions REALLY under our control. When we're strong enough, to smash it to pieces.

PLASTERED

Unscrupulous landlords have often watered down beer and prosecutions are still brought from time to time. The watering down of beers is, however, a method of adulteration that has become more sophisticated in recent years. Today it happens in the brewery rather than in the pub cellar.

For years the beer we drink has been getting weaker and most breweries do it - with one or two notable exceptions like Marstons of Burton and Youngs of Wandsworth. The duty payable on beer is calculated on Original Gravity. This is a measurement of the quantities of materials used in a brew and taken before fermentation. Most British beers have an OG of between 1030 and 1050. Basically OG measures the amount of sugar in a brew and therefore its alcoholic strength.

According to the official statistics from the Customs and Excise Department it has sunk every year since 1964.



These reductions may not look very big but the financial implications for the big breweries are staggering. If the beer consumed in 1970 had been brewed in 1964, the additional cost to the industry in excise duty would have been about £11 million.

That £11 million is really a hidden price increase because the breweries don't reduce their price when they weaken the brew. It is often the biggest breweries that are to blame and often the biggest reductions of OG are made in those beers which are most popular - therefore maximising profits.

For example Watneys Special Bitter had an OG of 1043.1 in 1960. This was reduced to 1036 by 1972 - a savings on excise duty of £3.08 a barrel (36 gallons). Worthington E has come down in strength to save £2.20 a barrel. Sales of one of the top brands can exceed 500,000 barrels a year.

Reduced beer strength has helped to boost brewery profits. Last year profits for Allied Breweries leapt £12m to £53.6m. The other giant Watney Mann had profits of £17.1m in 1971 with a forecast of £28.5 last year.

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