

Nottingham Voice

Censored!

THE SCENE THAT ATV REFUSED TO SHOW

ALL CRITICISM of the police was cut out of a film featuring Nottingham Voice shown on ATV's "Left, Right and Centre" on June 26th.

The programme gave a good report of the Voice. We can't complain about that. And they hammered the Evening Post for ignoring Anti-Nazi League events.

The problem came when they showed us interviewing some black people who were complaining about the way police had behaved at an incident last year in Tennyson Street.

It was ATV themselves who had chosen this story out of several we suggested to them.

EDITED OUT

But - surprise, surprise - when it came to black people criticising the police, it was all edited out. Instead, a commentator cut in over the film to say "the police told us that fighting broke out among 75 to 100 people" - so they had to send in reinforcements.

NOT TRUE. We checked with the police. They didn't say this to ATV. What they said was that when a police officer was called to an incident "a large crowd of some 70 people gathered" - and two other officers were called initially. There was no record of fighting before these reinforcements arrived. And there was no record of fighting in the crowd.

The only fighting we know about was between police and black people - a fact which

ATV obviously wanted to hide. It was only after police tried to arrest an innocent black youth that the fighting started and more police reinforcements were called.

Peter Shand was the youth they went for. He agreed to be interviewed by the Voice for the ATV film.

The film director agreed with Peter to cover four points:

WINDOW

1) It all started when a window was broken while Peter and some friends were playing cricket. Peter wanted the film to show that such a small hole led to such a large incident. (No-one was ever charged over the window - Peter was wrongly accused by police at the time without any evidence.)

2) He wanted to show the fence opposite his home where his father was handcuffed by police. Mr Shand was dragged over the road to the fence after trying to pull police off his son.

3) He wanted to show how police had received injuries from some wire mesh which was lying around.

4) He wanted to comment on the harsh sentence handed out to another youth - John Sealy - who got six months for picking up a stick in the heat of the moment and hitting

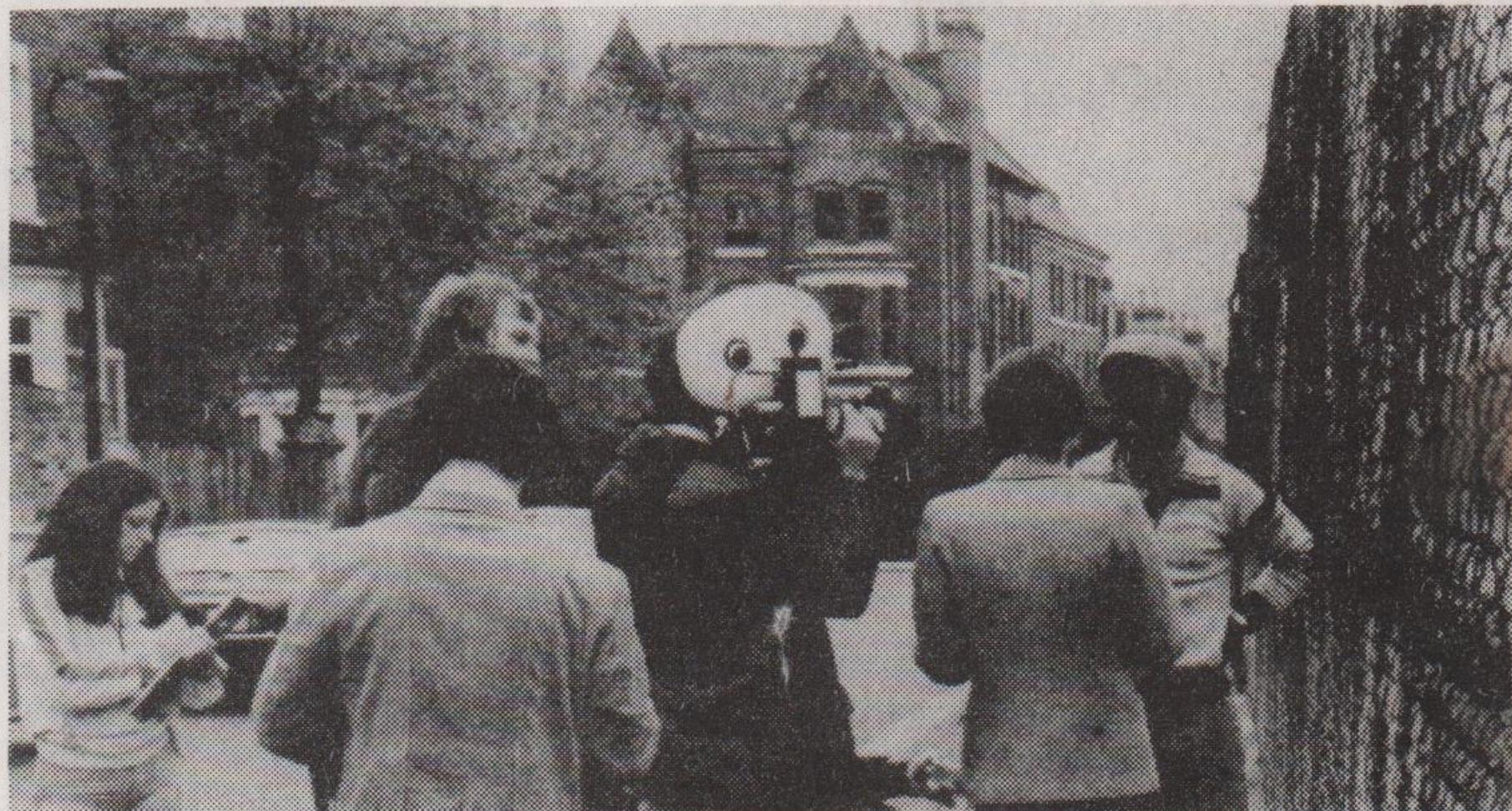


PHOTO: TRAVIS TOWNSON

ATV films the fence where a West Indian was handcuffed by police. "Too contentious", said Reg Harcourt.

a police officer with it.

All these points were filmed. Very good, we thought. But we reckoned without the programme editor, Reg Harcourt. He cut out almost everything after Peter's first point.

CONTENTIOUS

The scene showing where Mr Shand was handcuffed was "too contentious", he told us. (Eds - We fail to see why. It is standard police practice to handcuff people to immovable objects where necessary.)

ATV would have had to give the police the right to reply, said Mr Harcourt. (Eds - They didn't give the Evening Post the right to reply when they were criticised. And why was the film crew allowed to waste so much time filming scenes that were going to be cut out?)

The Voice wrote to ATV's

Board of Directors suggesting they apologise to Peter - for wasting his time by filming his statements while knowing they would be edited out.

We got an answer from a Mr Lucas who accused us of making "casual allegations of falsehood". He said that introducing the issue of criticism of the police would have altered the whole basis of the story! ATV's purpose was to demonstrate that the Voice operates as an alternative to the Post, he said. (Eds - And to show that you cut out all the points that the Post would cut out?)

The Voice will be writing to the Independent Broadcasting Authority asking them to investigate and say whether Reg Harcourt's treatment of Peter Shand was entirely in keeping with the traditions of British television.

We expect them to reply that it was.

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HOMELESS WOMEN SPEND NIGHT IN JAIL

HIGHWOOD homeless hostel has strict rules. And the rules are kept - even if it means that children are forced into care.

One such rule is that everyone has to be in by 10.30. On 25th May two women fell foul of this rule. Lesley Ellis and Marilyn White made the mistake of going out for a drink. They were celebrating the fact that Marilyn had been found a house to go to. They ended up in the police cells for the night. And Marilyn's baby Gary ended up in care.

Lesley left her four children at Highwood with her husband. But Marilyn couldn't leave Gary - there is a rule that children can't be left with other families. So she left him with a friend who

lived near the hostel.

Just after 10.30 they arrived back after Marilyn had collected Gary. As they walked up the steps the warden Mr Middup closed the door on them. So Marilyn asked to be let in. Middup said no - even though Gary needed feeding and a nappy change. Middup said he couldn't care what happened to the baby, Marilyn told the magistrates when she appeared in court.

POLICE

Marilyn lost her temper and kicked a glass panel on the door which was already cracked. It broke. So Middup called the police.

The police kindly allowed Marilyn, Gary and Lesley to

stay in the cells overnight.

Gary had to do without a feed until the following day. He contracted bronchitis.

The next day Marilyn was hauled before the Homeless Families Officer and told to get out immediately. This was even though there had been no time to sort out the house she was to go into.

She had no cooker, no furniture and no bedding. Electricity and water weren't turned on. Being a condemned house, it was infested with rats and mice.

Marilyn had to agree to Gary being taken into care until she could get a cooker.

She had to go without money for three weeks because social security took that long

to sort out her claim.

And she was fined £5 for breaking the window and £10 costs. The magistrate said he was being very lenient because of the "exceptional circumstances". And he dismissed a claim by the city council for £20 compensation for the window - because it was already cracked.

Middup won't be too keen to call the police next time. The court case drew attention to what the women had to say about conditions inside Highwood. The Evening Post, Daily Mirror and Nottingham Voice all phoned up to check the amazing story that was told.

So Middup is not the most popular person in the Housing Department at the moment.

MOTHERS COMPLAIN OF VICTORIAN ATTITUDES IN CITY'S NEW HOMELESS HOSTEL

"They pulled your covers off at 7.30"

HIGHWOOD - Nottingham's new hostel for the homeless - is getting a name for itself. The inmates call it "Colditz". And the warden is affectionately known as "Little Hitler".

Voice readers will remember that in the last issue we looked at serious criticisms made by the Architects Journal.

For this issue we spoke to three young mothers who have had to suffer living there - Marilyn White, Lesley Ellis and Wendy Beard. They painted a picture close to the standards of a workhouse in the last century.

The warden, Mr Middup, and his wife don't call people by names. They call them by room numbers. "Are you going out 17?", they would say, recalled Lesley. And she said when Mr M found three of them talking late one night he threatened to hit them. But his wife told him not to bother with them. "They're nothing but dirt", she said.

DIRT

Mrs M was very keen about dirt. If there were ever any marks on the floor, she would hand out brillo pads and force people to scrub them off. On one occasion she even made a woman eight months pregnant get down on her knees to scrub marks off the floor. While people were out she would take their cookers apart and tell them to clean them.

And she had no respect for people's privacy, said the women.

She had master keys for all the rooms and would walk in at any time. She often came in while Mr and Mrs Ellis were in bed together. And she would walk around the room while Mr Ellis, who worked nights, was in bed.

There was a rule that everyone had to be up by 7.30 in the morning. Mrs M would often come in and take the covers off people to get them up. On one occasion, said Marilyn, Mr M pulled the covers off her at 7am.

BUMS

Mrs M was an expert on babies. She always wanted to look at their bums, said Wendy.

But though she was ready to criticise, she wasn't so ready to help. When Wendy's baby was sick, she wouldn't even allow Wendy to wash the sheets in the launderette.

In fact no-one was allowed to use the launderette - except Mrs M, of course. People were expected to do their washing in the sinks. "It's not a five star hotel", Mrs M would tell people.

There were no fridges in

the upstairs rooms - which is where the largest families are put. And people were not allowed to bring their own in, said Lesley who had four children. That meant great problems with food in the hot weather. And doors leading onto the balconies were kept locked (as reported in the Architects Journal - the "architecture of delusion", they called it) so the rooms became very stuffy.

People couldn't even control the heating in their own rooms - they had to ask Mrs M to do that.

Rules and regulations were very strict. No-one was allowed out after 10.30 without a pass - and they were only given "if your face fits", said Lesley. Her husband Derek wasn't allowed out until 11pm one Sunday after working a seven day week.

And when he went to work at 5am in the morning, all the doors were locked so he had to knock the Middups up to let him out. One time he had to climb out through a window.

PROBLEMS

Wendy had problems because her mother looked after her baby at weekends. That meant she wasn't a "family" from Friday to Sunday.

Only homeless families with children are allowed into Highwood. So Wendy was thrown out at weekends. She

had to find places to sleep around. But she still had to pay her full rent, of course.

REFUSED TO SPEAK

Mr Middup refused to speak to the Voice. So we spoke to the Homeless Families Officer in charge, Geoff Chapman.

He told us that he and the Middups could go into any room at any time. In fact "any council employee has access to the rooms", he said.

He also claimed that he gave families "privacy and security".

People may have had covers taken off them in the morning, he said - where "standards" were needed.

"Ordinary families" would be allowed to have their own fridges, he said. When asked which families wouldn't be ordinary, he explained: "Some of the types who come in your centre" (he was referring to the People's Centre, an independent advice centre which has crossed swords with Chapman many times over the inhuman way he has treated some homeless people).

He confirmed that people who didn't have their children over the weekend would not be allowed to stay - but they would still have to pay full rent because they would expect their room to be kept, he said.

He claimed that shiftworkers and people who wished to stay out late would be allowed keys.

Since the hostel had opened Mr Chapman said he had been surprised "how easily people have kept the normal standards of cleanliness".

NO TO PHASE 4

NOTTINGHAM Trades Council voted to reject Phase Four of the government's incomes policy at their meeting in August. No-one voted against the motion.

Instead, they called for higher wages, a reduced working week, and an immediate return to free collective bargaining.

Derek Wignall (SOGAT), proposing the motion on behalf of the executive, said the government was aiming to shackle trade unions and solve the crisis of capitalism at the expense of the working class. They were slashing social services and had put 1½ million on the dole, he said.

Ray Coward (sheet metal workers union) said the unions had played their part in curbing inflation over the last three years and getting the country back on its feet. Now they should have their just reward - free collective bargaining.

Michael English (MP for West Nottingham) also spoke in support of the motion. A permanent incomes policy wasn't on, he said. The only way it could be done was by controlling every aspect of policy as in Soviet Russia. He pointed out that you can always get around incomes policies if you happen to be the employer. And he complained that unearned income often escapes all incomes policies and taxation.

WE DID HAVE an article prepared about Socialist Unity standing a candidate against our favourite property millionaire Labour MP Jack Dunnett.

But it seems as though we won't have the pleasure of seeing that happen for some months.

Coming SU events include:

A Ceilidh on Thurs 14th Sep at the Irish Social Centre, Wilford Rd, 8pm-1am, 75p.

A rock theatre group ("Belt and Braces") plus disco on Fri 29th Sep at the International Centre, 61B Mansfield Rd, 7.30-1.30. Late bar to 1.30. Admission £1.25, or 75p for the disco after 9.30.

Socialist Unity can be contacted at 86126.

GOOD black and white photography done fairly cheaply. Also b&w developing and printing. E.g. 20"x16" print from your own b&w negative - £2. John Birdsall 77194.

From the lounge bar

tiresome

SPARE A THOUGHT if you will for dear old Ted Culham, the well intentioned Director of Nottinghamshire's Social Services. A good and honest man trying his best to match his principles with those of the rather more hard nosed Tories on the County Council.

I was particularly struck by one of his latest memos, which instructed his loyal and dedicated teams of social workers not to make any recommendations about clients in future, on the grounds that magistrates find them tiresome and anyway putting them into practice costs money.

It would, of course, be unfair to suggest that social workers are delighted by this latest directive . . . which leaves them all the time in the world to discuss this interface situation . . .

flexibility

TALKING of doing nothing brings me on to the Nottingham Areas Project - a theme I know we all find of the utmost tedium.

Just how far their sad little campaign to save their jobs has progressed I know not and care less. But one who does care is my close friend Ted Hickey. Over a nineteenth hole snifter the other day he could hardly restrain himself. He claimed that "We've got the bastards at last" . . . a reference I understand to the acrimonious dispute which arose earlier this year between himself and the NAP infiltrated Basford tenants. What really annoyed him was that none of the monosyllabic oiks who bombarded his mansion with ordure and insults could be bothered to wear a collar and tie.

However, I do know that the hub of the present campaign to save the jobs is their claim to employment by the County Council. There has been talk of Industrial Tribunals and the like. For those who have followed the progress of the project over the years this claim is somewhat drole.

Ever since it was set up NAP has zealously guarded its independence and has always maintained that the workers were employed by the management committee - a committee not entirely divorced from the community workers themselves. By this device the project sought to keep the County Council (who were footing the bill) at arms length.

But speaking of Industrial Tribunals I recall a recent

case where an ex-employee of NAP claimed unfair dismissal from the project. On that occasion there was no talk of the County Council being the employer, in fact the management committee fought the case tooth and nail - even to the extent of producing fellow community workers to give evidence on behalf of management. Funny, now they're all employed by the Council.

Still, I suppose that's what community work is all about - flexibility.

given the Bird

RED FACES all round when local builders launched their campaign against Labour Party plans to nationalise the building industry. The brick and mortar barons held a public meeting to explain their cause . . . and being polite chaps they invited the leaders of local councils.

Also on the guest list was dear old Herbert Bird, deputy leader of Nottinghamshire County Council and leader of Gedling Borough Council. He is also well known as a local builder.

Herbert insisted he should be given a seat on the platform and allowed to speak. "Not an earthly old chap", came the reply, "We're non-political you see."

Instead a very miffed Bird was offered a seat among the also-rans on the floor. An offer he felt he could decline - after all the ratepayers of Carlton and Arnold are already doing him very nicely thank you . . . nationalisation or no.

Still on the building industry - I'm sure it's just coincidence that the builders' campaign received massive local coverage after leading media executives were seen with builders enjoying the convivial atmosphere of the Victoria gaming club.

harangued

I REPORTED in the last issue of the Voice - an event rapidly receding into legend - that silly old Michael Cowan (ex-County Council know-all) had taken over as organiser at the Ollerton Citizen's Advice Bureau. Then I hazarded a guess that all would not be sweetness and light. Reliable sources in-

NOTTINGHAM VOICE is printed and published at 33 Mansfield Road (tel 411676). Please contact us with any information you would like to see in the next issue which should appear on 21st October.

We apologise for putting our price up to 12p. This is due to a number of factors including a reduction in advertising and an increase in the number of photographs used.

Subscriptions remain at £2 for 12 issues including postage.

form me that such is the case. Not only has there been an unprecedented turnover of staff since, but customers seeking advice are frequently harangued at length.

city clean up

CITIZENS of Nottingham may be wondering why they are no longer allowed to sit on the Council House steps in Slab Square. I have reliable reports that the pompous and overbearing guardians of the doors at the Council House have taken to shifting people off the steps in a particularly brusque manner.

It could be that this order emanates from the same quarter as another concerning the hallowed steps. City Council supremo Jack Green has given personal instructions that the steps are to be washed and brushed daily. This task consumes the labour of between four and six men. Indeed, so anxious are they to perform correctly that they were seen hosing down the steps while it was raining.

I expect these men have been redeployed from the section that used to tidy up pensioners gardens. The City Council decided a while ago it could no longer afford such frivolous luxuries.

fun at the Post

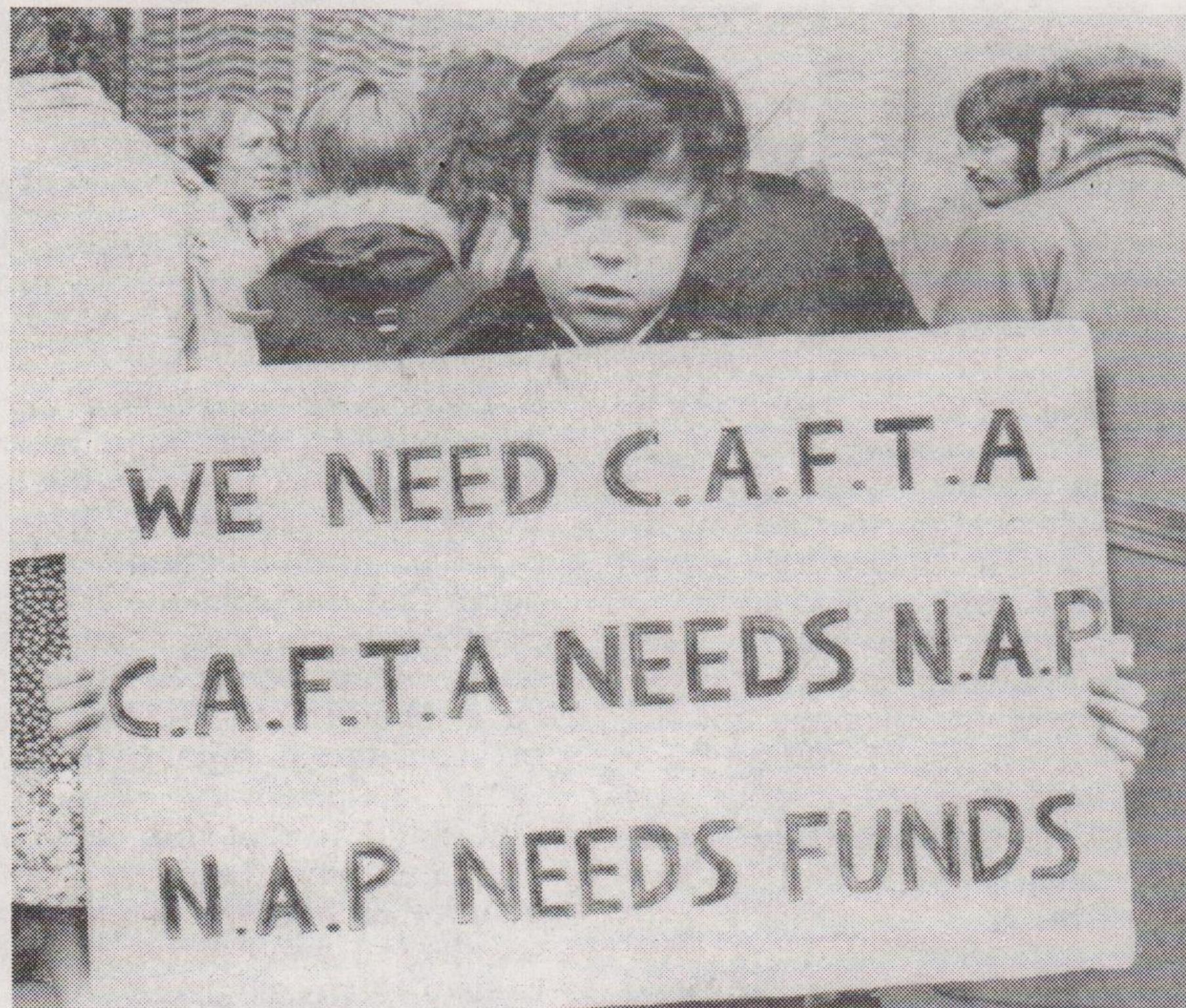
AS THE STATE of labour relations at the Evening Post reaches a new low - see page 7 for full and gruesome details - the spirits of the management continue to be buoyant. The latest brainwave of the chief hack himself is to have a competition involving darts, cribbage and dominoes. As Pole-Carew says in his circular to the staff, "The time to start such a competition would be after holidays of course, when the evenings close in. It should be quite fun."

This initiative is thought to be entirely unconnected with Carew's inflated opinion of himself as a card player.

waste of money

AND SPEAKING of the Evening Post - never a pleasant task - I must pass on to readers the cost of the abortive visit of Brenda's old man, the Duke of Edinburgh. It is estimated that the Post had spent some £100,000 in smartening the place up before news of the cancellation of the visit came through.

INKY



A young member of Caunton Avenue Flats Tenants Association supporting NAP at a lobby at County Hall.

Project out of control

NOTTINGHAM Areas Project was set up four years ago as a community work project. The idea was to tackle delinquency in its widest sense through community development.

Projects included adventure playgrounds and community centres as well as campaigns to improve housing conditions and community facilities. There were five workers in different "deprived" areas of the city, and a part time secretary. A year ago a resource centre for the use of any community groups was added with another worker.

Finance came from "urban aid" with the government paying $\frac{3}{4}$ and Social Services $\frac{1}{4}$.

To begin with the project was managed by a motley crew of council officers and councillors. Social Services, Leisure Services, Housing, Education and the Police were all represented.

But the officers and councillors had little interest in the project. When the workers started to bring up specific issues like housing or the role of schools in the community, they met a blank wall.

CHANGED

So the management was changed. All the officers except the city director of Social Services, Norman Caudell, agreed to vote themselves out. In their place ordinary people from the five

NAP areas were brought in - so the working class had a majority.

Not surprisingly, much of the literature produced by NAP groups and by other groups at the resource centre was highly critical of Tory policy, especially over council housing in the city.

When the Tories came to look at NAP, they threw their hands up in horror. They refused to approve funding for this year - without any warning - until NAP had been brought under control.

More councillors must be allowed on the management, they said. NAP agreed, even though only one out of the two councillors already on the committee had ever been to meetings!

Caudell had to step up his role, they said. NAP agreed.

The main sticking point was a demand that all money raised voluntarily by groups in the areas should be accounted for by NAP. That is not for us to do, said NAP.

So the Tories closed NAP down. Failure to submit proper accounts, they shouted.

That wasn't true. NAP's accounts were prepared by the County Probation Department and audited by the County Treasurer!

Coun Howard Noble summed up the Tory attitude when he seconded the motion to close NAP down. "I don't know anything about these people", he said.

ILLUSTRATION CARTOONS
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PHONE 411676

WHO WILL BE NEXT?

CUTTING public expenditure is one thing. But the way local Tories go about it makes Jack the Ripper look like Little Jack Horner.

They lack finesse. The way they chopped Nottingham Areas Project sums it up. You can't help feeling they could have gone about it a lot more quietly and professionally.

Admittedly in this case it wasn't public expenditure they were worried about. It was control. County Deputy Leader Herbert Bird summed it up when he said "we support voluntary groups as long as they know their place".

And NAP obviously didn't know their place. So they had to be put down. But what a lot of noise the Tories caused.

They could have said that in their manifesto they promised to withdraw resources from community work. But it seems none of the Tories could remember what they promised a year ago.

They could have waited until next year. NAP was only approved for five years and officially ends next summer. They could have let NAP die and defused all opposition by publicly praising what it had achieved. That is the truly professional way to wield the axe.

Or they could have played at statistics. NAP was an anti-delinquency project. Yet the figures show that delinquency has continued to rise in the city. So it wasn't doing its job, they could have said.

But they didn't. In fact they didn't say anything at all about what NAP was doing - or wasn't doing.

The report recommending NAP's closure was described by one of the unions involved, NUPE, as one of the worst they had ever seen.

IMPLICATIONS

Not only did it not look at what NAP was doing, it didn't look at the implications of closing it down. In particular it forgot about the seven workers who suddenly had their wages cut off without being dismissed.

At first the Tories claimed NAP was the employer - so it was NAP's problem. That sounds like a subtle way of getting round the Employment Protection Act - set up an "independent" project then cut its money off and wash your hands of the whole affair.

But it didn't work. The unions were not at all happy

about the way their members were being treated. They forced the council to agree a lump sum payment to cover three months pay plus redundancy pay.

It will cost the County Council around £10,000 on top of £12,000 already paid this year before NAP's money was finally cut off. That compares to a cost of £42,000 for the whole year. So the saving is £20,000. But three quarters of the money comes from the government. So the Tories actually saved the ratepayers £5,000 by ending the project now instead of next year.

HORNETS NEST

They also stirred up a hornets nest. Letters have been flooding into the Post, The Guardian, New Statesman and the People all carried articles. (In the case of the People it was a mistake. They went to interview Herbert Bird about something entirely different. But he just ranted and raved at them. They'd never heard of NAP until Bird went on about it. And even a journalist from the People could reason that if Bird was against NAP then it must be doing a good job.)

Community groups even descended on County Hall to protest. But all they achieved was to find out what a prat Deputy Chief Executive Hayes is.

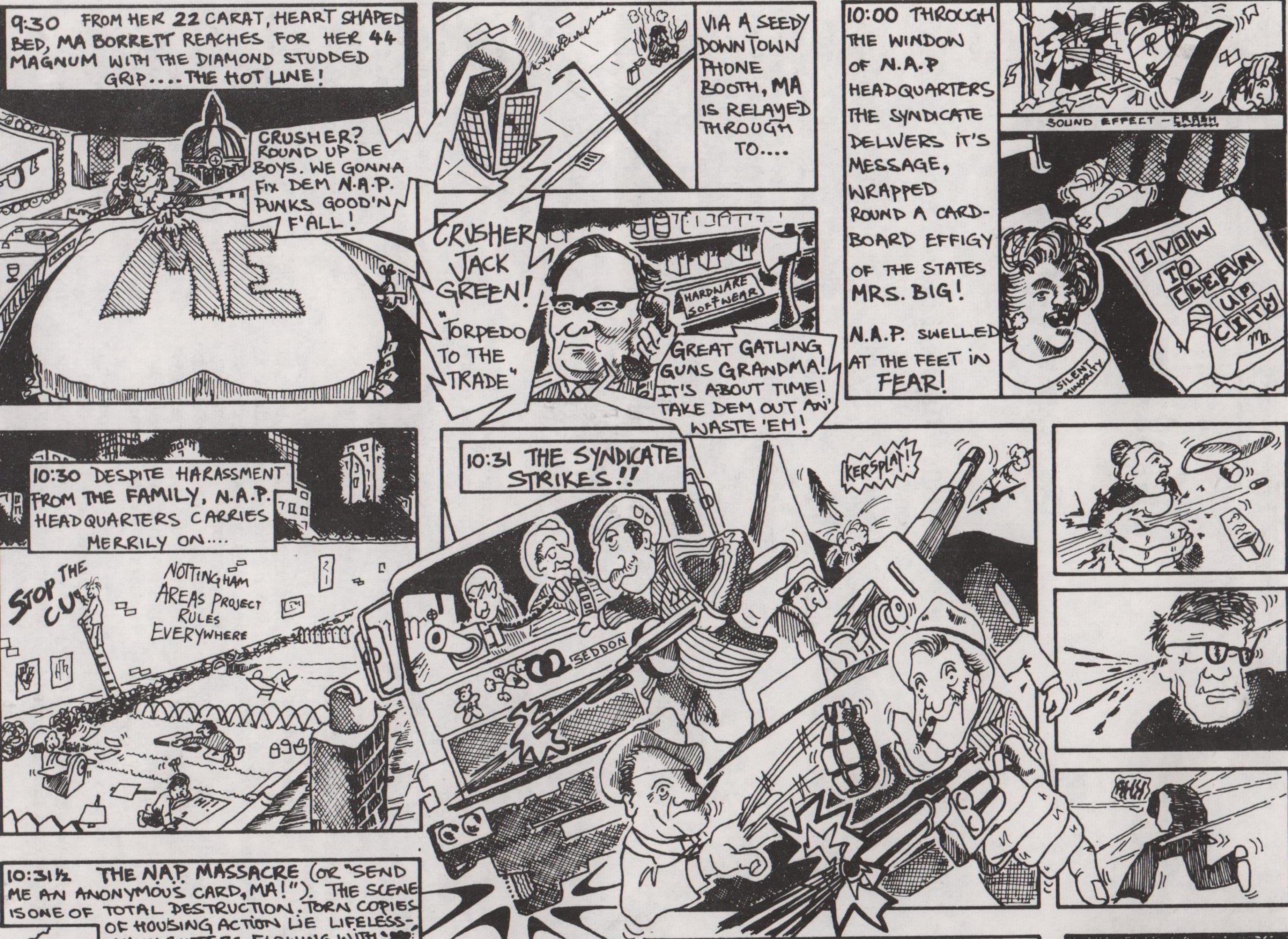
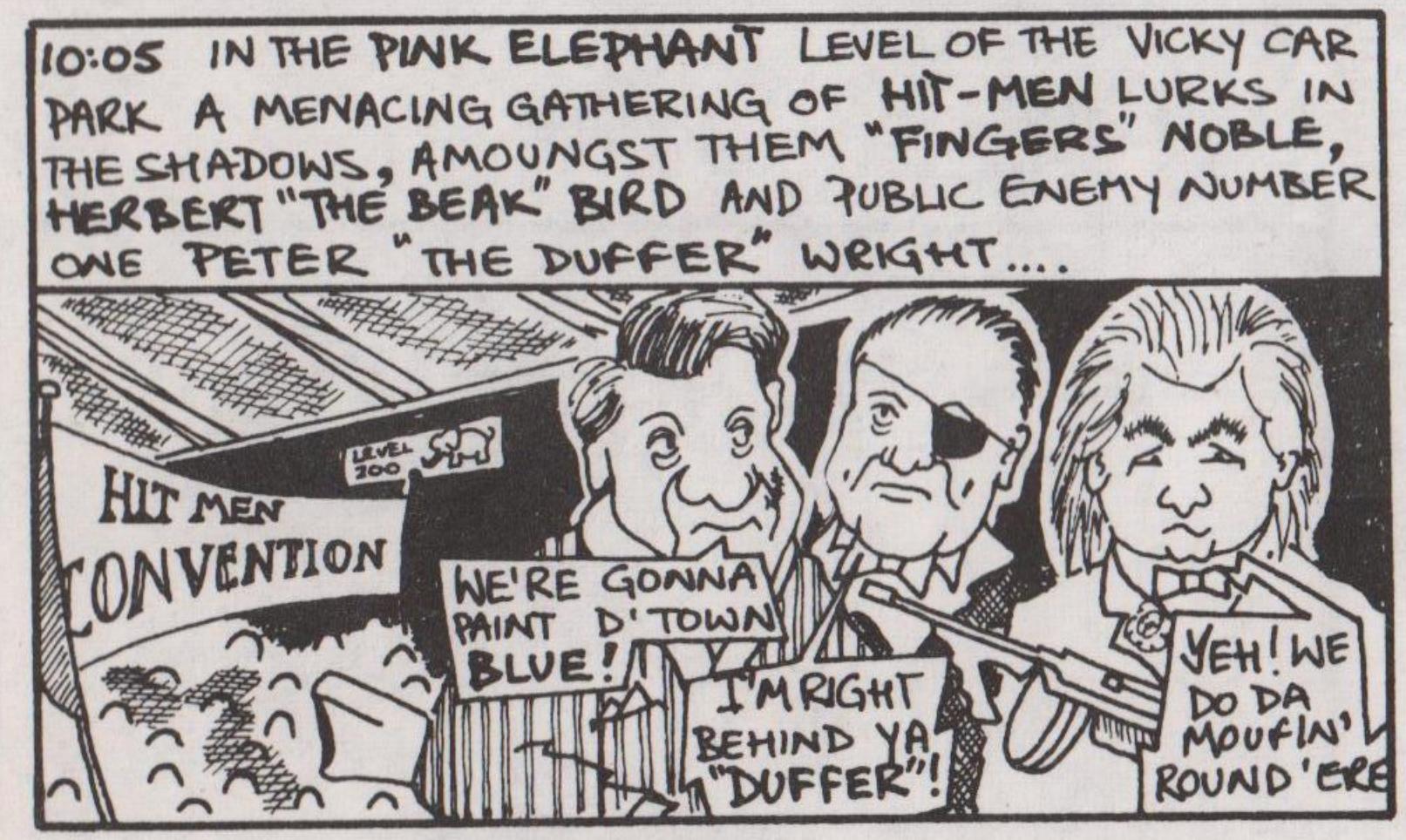
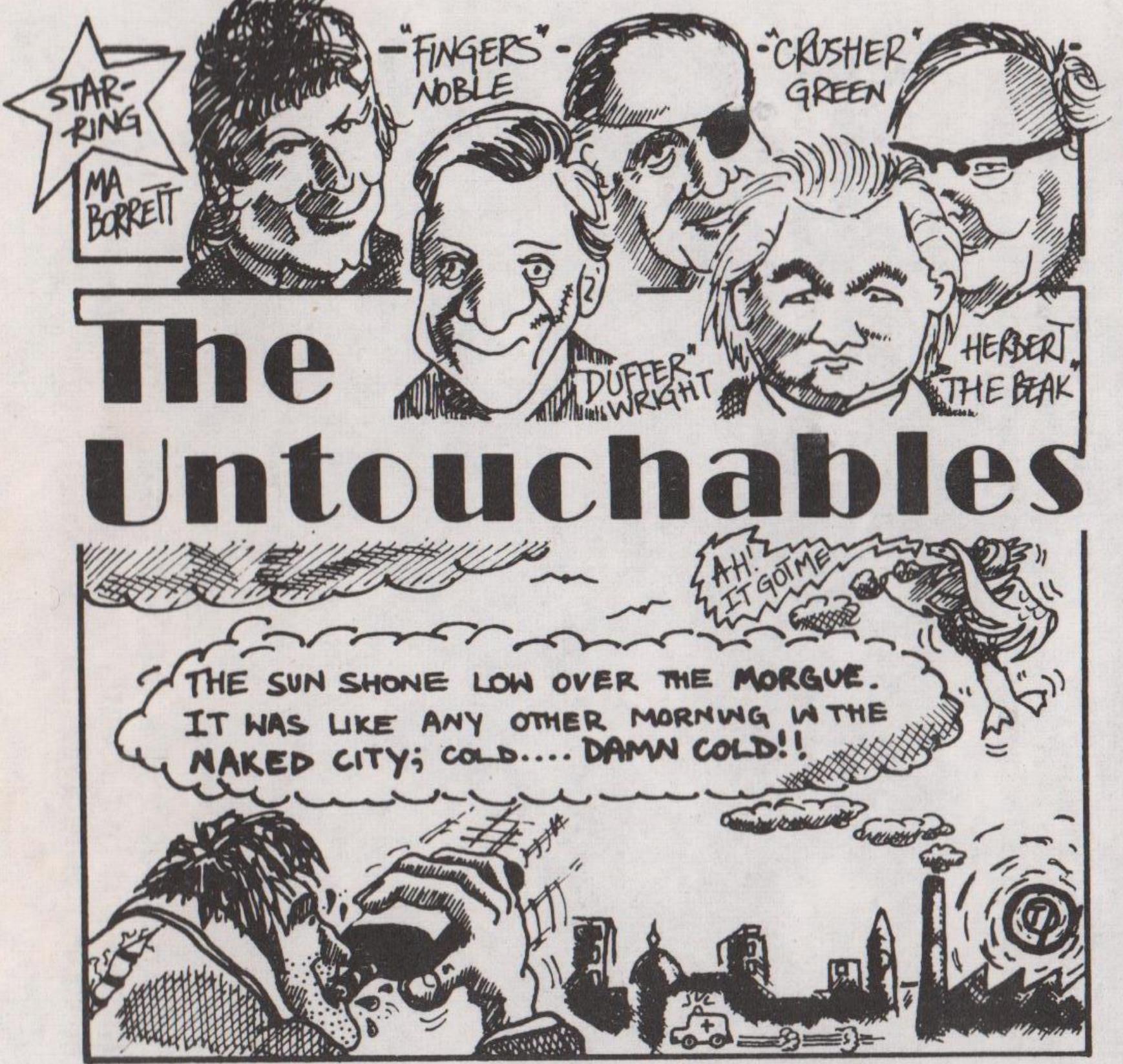
Hayes must have been taking lessons from the Tories. He has no finesse either. He pretended to be noting people's questions - but he couldn't remember what had been said just a couple of minutes afterwards. Then he ordered a photographer out - without success. So he called the police - to deal with a perfectly peaceful gathering.

Still, the police were friendly - they must have realised what a prat Hayes is as well.

Now the real work begins for Save Nottingham Areas Project.

They are applying to just about every fund in the country for finance. And they have started a rota to keep the resource centre at 118 Mansfield Road open.

Anyone wanting to help should phone 582369.

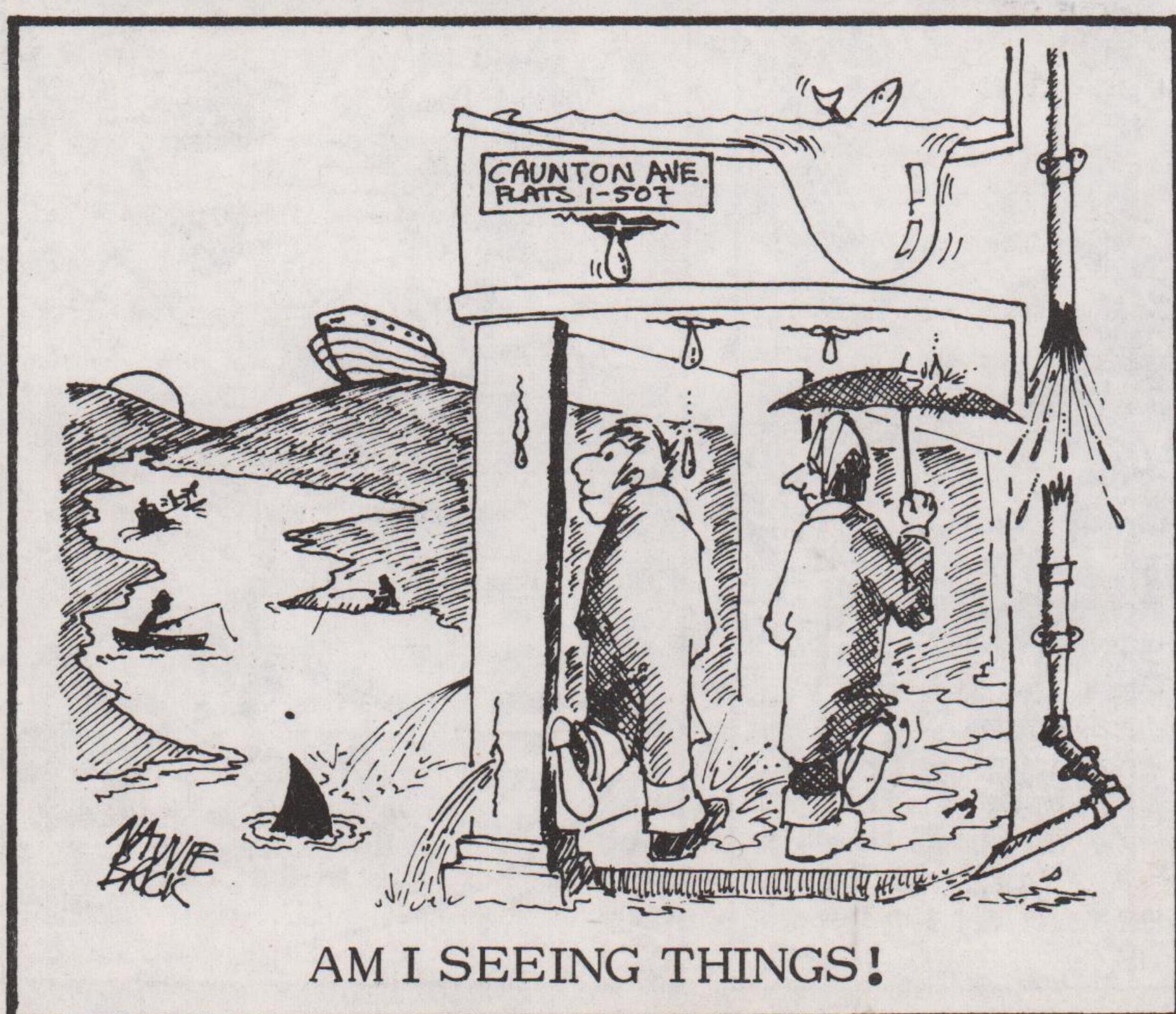




Two children show the Voice the most interesting part of their play area - a pool of water caused by a blocked drain. Mud on the kitchen window is a frequent hazard. A number of other points can be seen in the picture:

- 1) Note the air bricks. They lead directly into a food cupboard. Water splashes in and causes condensation.
- 2) To the left is a six foot drop down to a walk way. "Incompatible with a play area in any reasonable terms", said a health inspector.
- 3) Note the lower concrete beam which supports the kitchen floor and a bedroom floor. Because it is directly over the walkway and is not insulated it causes "structurally induced condensation" on the floors.
- 4) The concrete beam above the window is a "cold bridge" which means more condensation which can cause fungus growth inside.

"They build places like this to teach health inspectors their job", said the health inspector called in by the tenants.



TENANTS ASSOCIATION DEMANDS MAJOR OVERHAUL OF CAUNTON AVENUE FLATS

Water, water, everywhere

JERRY BUILT flats complexes are in the news at the moment.

Hyson Green, Basford and Balloon Wood have all been allowed tens of thousands of pounds for face lifts to hide the real problems which would take hundreds of thousands to put right.

Only Kildare Road flats have had a serious overhaul - at a cost of £ $\frac{1}{4}$ million.

Another ten year old block which hasn't attracted as much attention is Caunton Avenue flats (off Ransom Road in Mapperley). But they are as much in need of rebuilding as the others.

Housing management officer Mr Agass has admitted to the Caunton Avenue Flats Tenants Association (CAFTA) that there are problems of rain penetration and condensation.

INVESTIGATING

He told the Voice they were investigating all problems of water penetration in the complex. And he couldn't rule out the possibility that a major investigation might be needed. He pointed out that they are co-operating with the tenants association over repairs.

This is true - but only bits and pieces are being done like putting in damp courses and drains where they were missed out originally. It looks as though the flats will not get the major overhaul that CAFTA is demanding.

The need for this is backed

up by two studies they have had done, one by a civil engineer and one by an environmental health inspector.

Bryan Moore, principal lecturer at Trent Poly, found:

"There is no doubt that the majority of units suffer damp conditions due to a variety of causes, condensation, rising damp, water penetration into walls, defective roofs and balcony waterproofing."

"Some of the units are so damp . . . as to pose a threat to the health of the occupants."

STANDARDS

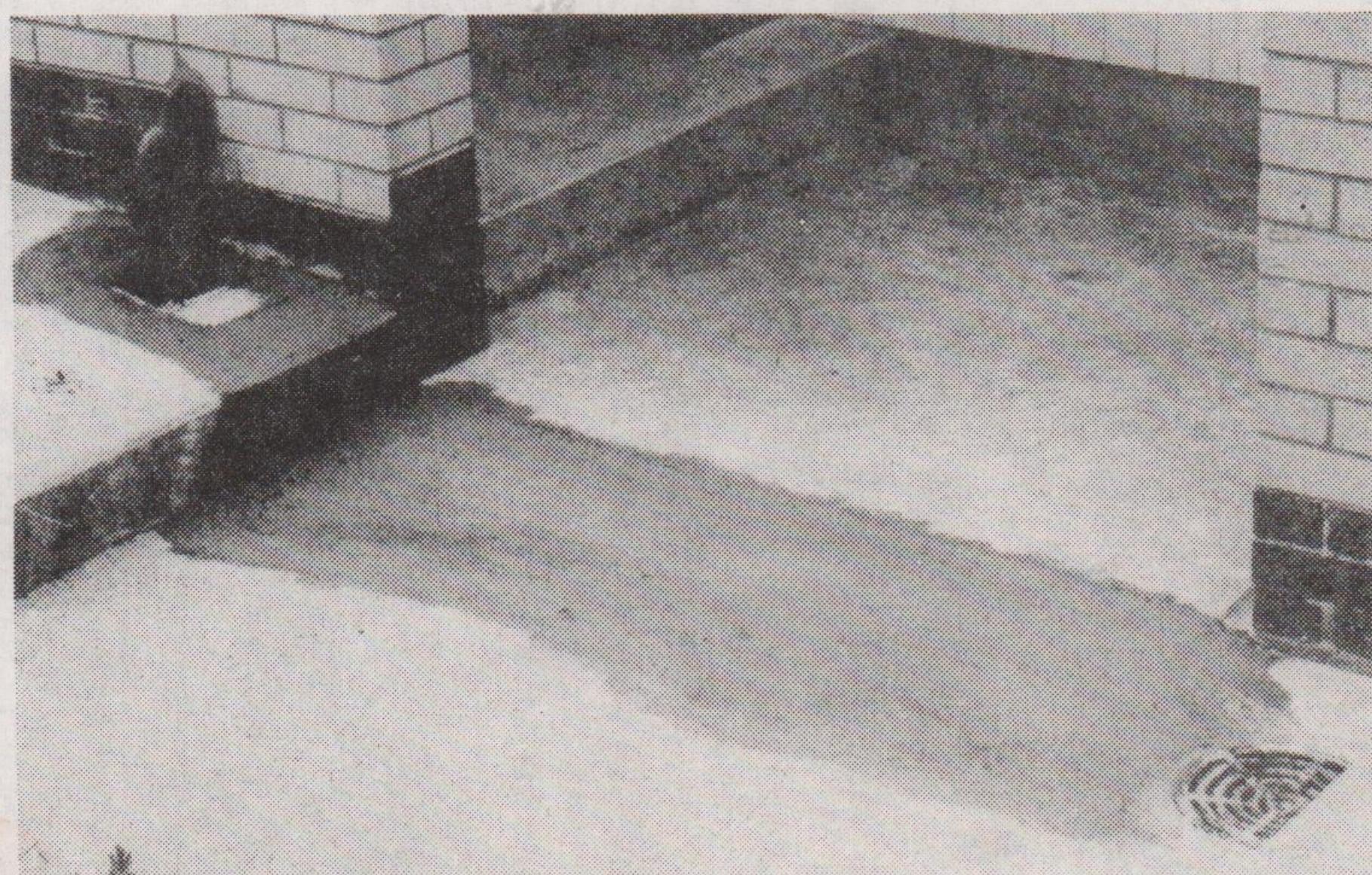
"The structural elements within appear not to meet the performance standards of the Building Regulations."

"The general condition of the drainage is very poor, many gulleys are blocked, gratings missing and pools of water lying around."

"The paintwork condition is so delapidated as to present a threat to the effective protection to the softwood timber used."

"The causes of dampness are due to the lack of traditional building construction knowledge, combined probably with applications of novel forms of construction."

Put bluntly, it means the people who designed the flats didn't know what they were



Note the down spout on the left and the drain on the right. A new drain was put in recently to connect the two - after a complaint from the tenants association.

PHOTOS: JOHN BIRDSALL

doing, the people who built it didn't know what they were doing and the inspectors who checked it must have walked around with their eyes closed.

As a result there is enough water for Noah to float his Ark.

REGULATIONS

Just by walking around you can see that no-one involved in building the place knew anything about building regulations.

For example, there are damp courses of blue brick at the base of the walls - but in many cases they have been covered by concrete paths so they don't work. In some cases recently some of the ordinary bricks have had to be removed so that extra blue bricks could be put in.

Many down spouts from the roofs don't end in gulleys. So several new drains have had to be put in.

The balconies slope towards the flats instead of away - so water which collects finds its way through the walls and damages the plaster inside.

Many of the flat roofs leak. One couple have had water come through their lounge ceiling three times - even though repair work had been done. They have redecorated twice at a cost to themselves of £120. In what seems like a token gesture the council has been going round putting extra pitch on the gutters in the roofs.

DRAIN

There are many other defects. One drain on a concrete bridge is just a hole which pours out over the road below. The concrete around the hole has worn down to the steel reinforcement which is starting to rust away.

On the edge of the play areas there are six foot drops. "incompatible with a play area in any reasonable terms", said the health inspector's report.

Meanwhile, an overgrown area round the back would make an ideal play area - but the council say they can't afford to cut the weeds down.

Caunton Avenue's local councillor is Jack Green who is leader of the City Council. Perhaps he might help, thought the tenants. No chance! He wrote to them: "You must agree that it would be most improper for me to press for preferential treatment in my own Ward".

He wouldn't even press for a coat of paint to be put on the window frames to prevent the city's assets rotting away!

Post may be blacked

ALL NATIONAL ADVERTISING in the Evening Post may be blacked from October onwards.

The decision depends on two print unions, NGA and SLADE, who are in dispute with Post management over union recognition. Management refuse to allow union officials into the building and have broken a number of national newspaper agreements.

It was this dispute which caused the Duke of Edinburgh to cancel his planned visit to the Post when he came to Nottingham in July.

The government conciliation body ACAS has been called in and the unions are giving them a couple more weeks to see if they can come to any agreement with management.

UNLIKELY

On the past record that is unlikely. After smashing the unions in a lock-out in 1973 management were able to introduce new computer technology and drastically cut the number of print workers without any agreements. They are unlikely to want the unions back now.

The Post is highly profitable with a turnover of £6½ million shown in their last return for 1976. Nearly £5 million of that came from adverts. That will be the next target for union action if it proves necessary.

NOTICE TO ALL TRADE UNION MEMBERS

WHY YOU SHOULD NOT BUY THE NOTTINGHAM EVENING POST

WHY YOU SHOULD NOT BUY THE NOTTS FREE PRESS (Mansfield and Sutton area)

WHY YOU SHOULD NOT ADVERTISE IN EITHER OF THESE PAPERS

- 1 Large numbers of print workers have been made redundant without any union consultation.
- 2 Full-time union officials are not allowed access to company premises in order to represent workers.
- 3 The company is in breach of National Newspaper Agreements and has clearly indicated its policy not to honour these agreements in the future.
- 4 The management is anti trade union and this is reflected in the biased reporting of any trade union matters in their papers.
- 5 Print unions are involved in dispute actions officially endorsed by the Printing Industry Committee of the TUC.

WE NEED YOUR ACTIVE SUPPORT. THIS MANAGEMENT HAS A VIRTUAL MONOPOLY IN NOTTINGHAM. IT IS A DISGRACE THAT NOTTINGHAM'S ONLY POPULAR NEWSPAPER CAN APPLY VICTORIAN ATTITUDES TO ITS WORKERS AND STILL EXPECT WORKERS TO SUPPORT IT AS A NEWSPAPER.

GIVE YOUR HELP AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME

NGA and SLADE have already successfully blacked commercial printing work at the Post premises on Forman Street and at the allied Huthwaite Printing Company at Huthwaite.

Commercial work at Forman Street was completely closed down. Huthwaite tried to get an injunction to stop the union blacking - claiming damages of £900,000. But the judge made it quite clear that the unions were acting within the law.

The unions have circulated all unions locally asking workers not to buy the Post or advertise in it. They have also asked workers to put pressure on the companies they work for to stop them advertising with the Post.

But the main pressure will come from the print unions nationally. If they decide to black advertising in the Post, large national firms will be forced to drop the Post immediately - or lose all other advertising handled by union shops.

That would leave the Post with only local companies and small ads.

It has taken the unions a long time to get around to dealing with the Post. But it looks as though at last they mean business.

NEW WOMEN'S CENTRE OPENS

NOTTINGHAM WOMEN'S GROUP has a new centre in Shakespeare Street. The group has given us this report:

At last - after months and months of searching - we've finally found a new centre for women's activities in Nottingham! No more of our tatty little leaking-roofed one room - we've now got a whole building with three floors and eight rooms.

Which means a lot of space for women to do things together, but also - first - a lot of work on making it how we want it. It's not exactly a pile of bricks and rubble but it does need all sorts of things doing to make it into a place where lots of women can come with their kids and get involved in the different activities we're hoping to set up.

So far we've got some structural repairs done, cleaned the whole place out and decorated and furnished two of the rooms. We're also working on rewiring it, thinking of knocking out some walls, and looking for artistic inspiration for a big mural to show that we're here.

All this of course takes a

lot of time and energy, and also skills which we're all learning as we go on. It means that as well as being really good fun it's great experience for finding out how to do things.

The other big problem of course is money. We're aiming to be self-financing and therefore totally independent of any ties and restrictions or the threat of having funding cut off as has been happening to other groups active in the city.

DONATIONS

Because we're putting most of our energy into the centre we haven't got much left for fundraising so we're trying to get as many standing orders and voluntary donations as possible - every little helps!

So what are we going to do with this magnificent new centre when it's finally done up? We've got all sorts of ideas, like as well as using it for all our usual meetings and activities, we're hoping it's going to be the base for a lot more, such as a free pregnancy testing service, advice sessions for women with domestic problems, a bookstall, library and general drop-in

centre.

One of the most important things we're planning is a playroom/creche for women to bring their children, either to spend time with other people, or leave the kids while they can get involved in the centre's activities, go shopping (50 yards to the Victoria Centre!), or whatever they want.

These are just some of the ideas we've been thinking about so far but we really would like to hear about any others - it is a centre for all women in Nottingham to use how they want (within reason!).

So if you have any suggestions/criticisms or would just like to slap on some bright coloured paint, come along any Thursday evening from 7pm to 32A Shakespeare St. If you can't make this, the telephone number is 46490, or you can ring 860558 or 222890 any time for information about other workdays, meetings, etc, or if you would like to receive the monthly women's newsletter.

Any offers of money, furniture, skills, etc are of course especially welcome, but most of all woman power!

HEAT METERS VERY INACCURATE, says National Consumer Council

HEAT METERS used in district heating schemes in this country are so inaccurate that some people may be overpaying (or underpaying) for their heat by as much as £50 a year. This is the verdict of a National Consumer Council report.

It will come as no surprise to people in St Ann's and

other parts of the city who have had to suffer very inaccurate meters for several years.

The NCC wants a legal standard of 10% accuracy for all meters used. At the moment people don't even have the right to have meters checked.

The report says that meter-

ing can encourage more economical fuel use. But it says that without good insulation and heating controls people can't control waste properly and may opt for colder homes to cut costs.

"All consumers need high standards of insulation and adequate heating controls", says the NCC.

Clorius mistakes common

CLORIUS METERS' annual heating bills have been hitting tenants in St Ann's and the Victoria Centre again recently.

Clorius use some of the most inaccurate heat meters in the world to "measure" the heat used by people on the city's district heating scheme.

But not only do Clorius measure the heat used inaccurately, they also work some people's bills out wrongly.

One example came to the attention of the Voice recently. A family on Hungerhill Road was overcharged by over £60. And they could only prove this because they had kept their meter reading from the previous year!

Clorius charged for 2,104

units when only 437 had been used. But you couldn't check it on the bill because Clorius doesn't include the meter readings.

They demanded an extra £7 on top of £215 paid weekly through the year. It was only when the family showed proof of the previous year's reading that Clorius sent a rebate of £58.

OVERBILLING

Former St Ann's community worker Anne Littler told the Voice that she and other members of the tenants association had dealt with many examples of overbilling by Clorius. Mistakes on bills were quite common, she said.

She recalled another of

Clorius' tricks which hit old people particularly hard. Many were so afraid of the cost of using the hot water system that they didn't use it at all - they boiled kettles instead.

When Clorius read the meter it showed no heat had been used. So they used to estimate what they thought people should have used and charge them for that instead!

Many just paid up. People who contested it had to wait months for Clorius to come and read the meters again. Often old people were overcharged by £30 or £40.

Most cases probably never come to light. The total amount wrongly screwed out of people on the estate must run to thousands of pounds.

More needed for mentally handicapped

THERE IS INADEQUATE provision for the mentally handicapped in Nottinghamshire, says a report from Nottingham Workshop, the local information unit for trade unionists.

The Workshop was asked by the public employees union NUPE to look into exploitation of mentally handicapped working in training centres at very low rates of pay.

But they found that the lack of provision was far more serious than any exploitation.

There are 990 Adult Training Centres in the county. But that falls short of national

guidelines by 510, says the report.

There is also a lack of special care units. Five are needed according to the County Council Handicapped sub-committee. But only three are planned and the first will not be completed for over a year.

MISPLACED

Many mentally handicapped have to live with aging or sick parents because of lack of accommodation in hostels. Some elderly mentally handicapped are misplaced in old

people's homes, says the report, where the need for social training is not recognised.

It criticises some of the jobs done at Adult Training Centres. Most jobs are routine contract work - like packing things into boxes. This is boring for the mildly handicapped and useless for the severely handicapped, says the report.

Very few get jobs as a result of this work training, partly because of the lack of social and educational training - which gets a low priority.

The mentally handicapped need more education in the community, says the report. And that means more provision.

There is need for more staff. The government recommends a ratio of 1 to 10. In the centres visited locally it was as low as 1 to 40.

There is also a need for more specialised staff like speech therapists, physiotherapists, chiropodists, dentists, qualified teachers and psychologists.

The report stresses that it is not aimed at criticising Adult Training Centres or the people working in them.

It is aimed at those responsible for cuts in public expenditure.

CENTRE IN DEBT

THE ENVIRONMENTAL Information Centre on Goosegate has been very active over the last year. But it needs to raise over £1,000 to survive. Tony Marson from the centre gave us this report:

It is now about fourteen months since the Environmental Information Centre first flung open its doors, and it has been changing its shape ever since.

We have had a variety of exhibitions - for tree week, on vegetarianism, from a wholefood shop, on Nottingham's wildlife, the Vale of Belvoir, waste land in Nottingham and so on.

Enquiries have been increasing progressively over the year and gradually the standard of reply has also improved.

Our newsletter, "Notts Network", published bimonthly now sells more than 500 copies of each issue and includes various councils and planning authorities in its readership.

RECYCLING

As a recycling centre the shop is starting to become quite well used - recycling all forms of paper, cardboard, toys, books, foil, scrap metal and wine bottles.

Sales have also increased both in volume and variety including many recycled paper products - duplicating and printing papers, toilet rolls, stationery and envelopes, beauty without cruelty cosmetics, organic vegetable seeds and fertilizer, T-shirts, badges, posters, books, etc.

All this of course has cost a lot of money, and at one point a few months ago the shop (which receives no council, government, industrial or charitable trust grants) reached a disquieting £1,700 of debts! Fortunately we have now reduced this to about £1,250 - although our debtors are closing in all the time.

In particular we need to reduce our debt by £500 by the end of September to avoid the bailiffs. To this end three of the shop's workers are going on a sponsored stagger of the Pennine Way, starting on September 6th.

We would be most grateful for sponsorship for this - if we can clear this debt then the future of the Information Centre looks rosy.

If you would like to help please contact us at 15 Goosegate, Nottingham. Either come in and look around or phone us at 51405.

JUMBLE WANTED

Clothes, toys, bric a brac, etc., needed by independent organisation to raise funds. Guaranteed not supported by governments, monopoly capitalism, Gulbenkian, etc.

PEOPLE'S CENTRE SHOP

33 Mansfield Road

Election will be focus for ANL

THE LOCAL Anti-Nazi League Carnival was a considerable feat of organisation by a group which came into existence only three months previously. It followed the 1,000 strong picket of the opening of the NF headquarters on High Pavement in June (which prevented half the NF supporters from attending).

Nottingham ANL are now concentrating on building an organisation with the flexibility and the will to oppose the racist policies of the National Front wherever they appear.

The General Election will be a specific focus for this. The NF are expected to stand at least one candidate in Nottingham and around 300 candidates nationally.

RACIST LAWS

Other candidates are to be approached by the Anti-Nazi League to confirm their opposition to all that the NF stands for. In particular they will be asked to make their own positions clear on the racist immigration laws which both main parties support - which help to give a "legitimacy" to racial discrimination.

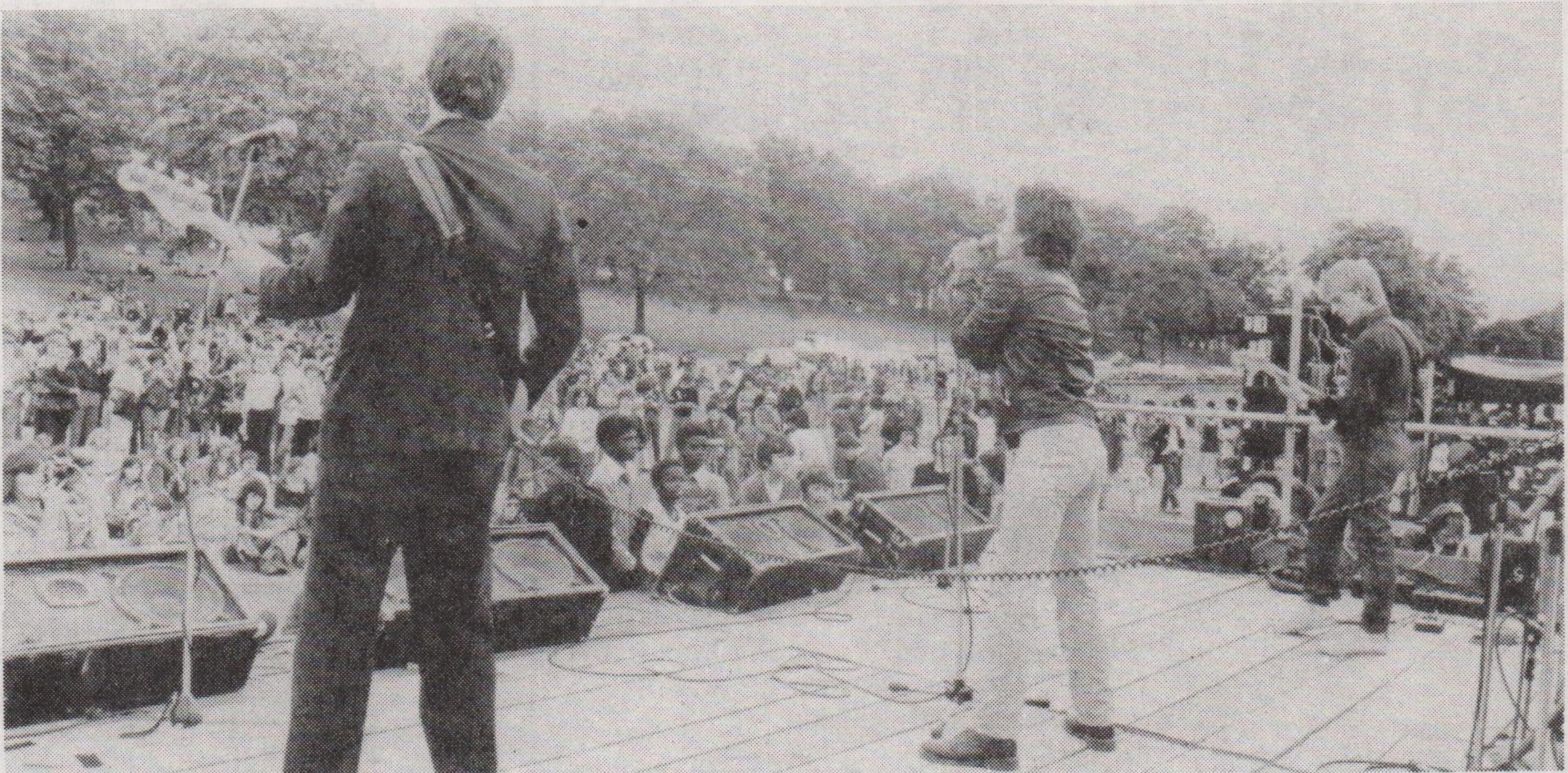
The local ANL has already started a School Kids Against the Nazis group. They are developing trade unionists and football fans groups and are trying to decentralise into regional groups within the city.

The direction for the next year will be determined at the first AGM which is being held in November.

Apart from all this Nottingham ANL have found time to organise coaches to the London and Northern Carnivals. And on August 20th they took a 50 strong group down to London for a day of solidarity with the Asian community in Brick Lane - the scene of violent racial attacks and a focal point for the NF in the East End until local anti-racist groups and the Anti-Nazi League mobilised. The NF didn't show up on that Sunday.

There will be a second national ANL Carnival in London on Sunday 24th September - aimed to be just before the general election. Coach tickets from Ouroboros, Selectadisc, and Virgin Records.

Further details of the Anti-Nazi League can be obtained by writing to them at PO Box 1, Western PDO, Nottingham.



Anti Nazi Carnival success

OVER 2,000 people attended the march and Carnival that the Anti-Nazi League organised in July.

A steel band played in the Market Square and there were short speeches from the Anti-Nazi League, School Kids Against the Nazis and M. Aslam from the asian community.

The march then moved off up Alfreton Road, through the busy Radford Road shopping area and onto the Goose Fair site. There was a beer tent, stalls from various groups,

and bands and a disco throughout the afternoon.

Sigma Sounds lent a magnificent 5,000 watt system which was used by Gaffa, Some Chicken and the Favourites. Between bands, the Quantro Sound System ran a disco.

All the music was provided free by the groups as their contribution to what the Anti-Nazi League stands for. There was a good atmosphere as

people sat around on the grassy slopes of the Forest or danced on the tarmac.

Gaffa in particular gave an outstanding performance which even their close followers said was one of their best.

The Evening Post managed to give only three inches of a single column to reporting one of the biggest political demonstrations in Nottingham in recent years. They devoted most of this report to details of the brief interruptions to the traffic!

NOT SURPRISINGLY, the National Front stayed away from such a massive show of opposition to their racist policies.

Although, under cover of darkness the previous night, the windows of Ouroboros and the People's Centre (who were displaying Carnival posters) were smashed.

NF and racist graffiti also appeared on the Forest overnight. These were quickly obliterated by Anti-Nazi League arrows by Carnival workers preparing the site.

coples



One of the windows smashed by the Nazis.

Birds killed in public

IMAGINE the surprise of residents in Lilac Grove, Beeston, one day in June, when large numbers of starlings fell dying out of the sky.

They were followed by a man with a sack who came round to sweep them up - before some had died, we are told.

What was going on? We asked the Ministry of Agriculture.

They told us that a pest control firm had put down poisoned bait for sparrows at a local food factory. It was all done under licence from the Ministry.

They refused to tell us which firms were involved. But the two food firms in that area are Parrs and Pork Farms.

The Ministry explained that

many firms' buildings are not "bird proof". So there is a risk of contaminating food. The Ministry has no powers to require that firms have buildings which prevent this, said their spokesperson.

So if you find some bird shit in your pork pie, you know the reason why.

In order to cut down the amount of bird shit in your food, pest control firms are brought in now and again to poison the birds.

It appears that sparrows die very quickly and don't normally get out of the factory walls. The problem with starlings is that they take longer to die. In this case they got out and were able to die in public.

And that is something which all involved in the trade try hard to prevent.

youth unemployment

A BRANCH of the Campaign Against Youth Unemployment has been formed in Nottingham recently. The group gave us this report:

The most recent figures show that unemployment in Nottingham has increased from 10,034 people in May to 11,227 in July and no fall is expected for some time.

Roughly 35% of these people are between the ages of 16-24, with black youth especially suffering.

The Campaign Against Youth Unemployment is a national body supported by several organisations and putting forward certain demands, which are:

1. An emergency training programme, at the appropriate trade union rate, open to all young people.
2. A full grant for all 16-19 year olds in full-time education.
3. A 35 hour week, an end to unnecessary overtime, and a return to free collective bargaining.
4. Expansion of municipal enterprise and public ownership.

We're hoping that the group in Nottingham can provide a broad base for a large number of organisations to come together to put pressure on the council to create more jobs (Eds - some hope - the city council has just been boasting that it has chopped 1,000 jobs), and to help obtain and provide more facilities for young unemploy-

eds.

So far, we have taken ten young unemployeds to the TUC conference where CAYU groups from all over the country lobbied delegates and asked them to press for CAYU's demands at the Congress.

We have printed and distributed two sets of leaflets, and we have affiliated to the Community Relations Council.

Future events include a disco at the International Community Centre on Friday 22nd September from 10pm to 1.30am (bar until 1am, 20p unemployeds, 60p employeds).

We are having a public meeting on the Market Square on unemployment in Nottingham at 11.30am on Saturday 23rd September with speakers from several organisations.

We are also hoping in the near future to set up a drop-in centre where young unemployeds can play table tennis and records, and can get cheap coffee and advice on employment and benefit rights.

We will be drawing up proposals to present to the council on the allocation, regarding jobs, of the inner cities programme grant for 1980.

Affiliated bodies to Nottingham CAYU are, at present, the Trades Council, the Community Relations Council, the Young Communist League and the Young Liberals.

If you would like to know more about CAYU's activities write to Diane Lunzer, 6A Gertrude Road, West Bridgford (864975).

Craft centre opens

A LOW COST crafts centre has opened in Nottingham. The first courses should start during September at "The Building" on Gregory Boulevard. The Voice has been given this report:

What's it all about? In what is commonly called "The Building" on Gregory Boulevard, feverish work, periods of calm, depression, elation and several hundred cups of tea have all been responsible for the birth of Nottingham Community Arts and Crafts Centre.

What is it? What does it do? Why do we have such a mouthful of a name? The last question remains a mystery, but it is a centre containing workshops available for craft work. So far we have a darkroom, a pottery room, a woodwork room and two other rooms available for a wide range of activities. The Centre will have some craftspeople working there earning a livelihood for themselves, and teaching others their skills. There are also other people who have offered to share what knowledge and skills they have.

What are we offering? We are now in the process of compiling a list of sessions or classes in photography, pottery, art, drawing, printing, weaving, macrame, woodwork, wood turning, jewellery making, leatherwork and bobbin lace.

So you see it's not a question of what does it do? but what do you want to do?

Each session (morning, afternoon or evening) will cost 15p plus any materials used. There's no membership fee. There is also room still available for anyone who would like to work in any of the workshops.

What we need

a. We would welcome anyone who feels they have some ability that they are prepared to share with others free (we don't look for diplomas - just willingness).

b. We desperately need someone to help out with admin/secretarial work, even if only for a few hours a week.

c. We need any craft tools and materials, and building materials (for a toilet extension).

d. Ideas, suggestions, criticisms, visits, donations, tea bags, enthusiasm, are always assured of a welcome.

We are near the junction of Noel Street and Gregory Boulevard, so come along anytime - there is nearly always someone there during the day or early evening seven days a week. (Catch any bus from just below the Bell and get off at the traffic lights at Radford Road/Gregory Boulevard - 9p fare.) See you.

NURSERY SHORTAGE

THERE IS a great shortage of day care facilities for children under five both nationally and locally.

Nottingham Workshop has just completed a preliminary report on nurseries in the area. They hope the report will help trade unionists bargaining for nursery places to be provided by firms.

So far, there are only five nurseries in the whole county provided by firms. One is at Meridian, the Courtaulds owned textile firm in the city. But it only has ten places. The firm pays half the cost and charges £6 a week for each child.

A national survey has shown that only 26% of mothers with children under five are at work. Many more would work if child care was available. By the time children reach two years old 72% of mothers want some sort of day care. This rises to 91% at the age of four.

In a local study, at Balloon Wood flats, 67 out of 92 households with children under five said they would

look for work if day care was available.

In Nottingham, day nurseries only take "social priority" cases - and there aren't enough places for this category. There are more nursery school places - but these keep school hours and school holidays so they are not suitable for working mothers. That leaves private nurseries and childminders.

A recent TUC report, "Under Fives", came out very heavily against childminders. They are a cheap option and don't provide an adequate level of care, it says. Also of concern is the high level of unregistered childminders.

The TUC wants a national debate on child care. The local Workshop report hopes to stimulate discussion locally.

They have an uphill battle. Last year the Tories on the County Council chopped 400 new nursery school places planned by the previous Labour council.

Council hands over £58

A SCARRINGTON FAMILY hounded by Rushcliffe Borough Council for rate arrears had their car taken away by bailiffs in February this year. For the next six months they heard nothing. So they sought help from the Voice. And, after a single phone call, the council admitted they had wrongly kept £58 and returned it.

(Eds - we can reassure the Evening Post that this is not an attempt to go into compet-

ition with their Action Desk.) Admittedly, Mr Abblitt hadn't paid any rates since moving into his house in 1975. He agreed that he owed £163 including court costs by the beginning of this year.

He was withholding his rates because of all sorts of problems he had with officials. His theory was that police, social security officers and council officers were all conspiring to make life difficult for him and were all

covering up for each other.

He probably wasn't far wrong. But the mistake he made was in believing that he could do anything about it.

He thought that if he didn't pay his rates he would get things sorted out. He was wrong.

The bailiffs came to clear his house out in February. He managed to persuade them only to take the car which he valued at £400.

Then he heard nothing else.

Not even a rate demand for this year.

Mr Harper from Rushcliffe Council explained to the Voice what happened. The bailiffs made £276 on selling the car after taking their expenses. That left a balance of £113.

Instead of returning this to Mr Abblitt like the law says they should, the council used it to pay this year's rates - £55. But that still left £58 - what happened to that? Mr Harper explained that once they had got their hands on Mr Abblitt's money they didn't want to let it go. Wasn't that just a little bit like stealing? we asked.

Mr Abblitt received a cheque a couple of days later. Without even an apology or explanation!

Mr Abblitt had better luck over arrears with his water rates. The water authority came to cut him off last October. But they made a mistake - they cut off the building next door instead. Undeterred, they demanded an £8 "reconnection" fee when Mr Abblitt went to pay. Needless to say, they didn't get away with that one!



Children enjoying themselves at the Hyson Green Festival.

Centre continues

THE PEOPLE'S CENTRE on Mansfield Road has provided advice and help for many years to some of the poorest and most badly abused people in society. Like everyone else, they have been through serious financial difficulties with the bailiffs being sent in recently to collect the rates. The Centre wrote this report:

Nottingham People's Centre has failed to fulfil the hopes of the Establishment (local and national) by continuing to provide the facilities so sorely needed by everyone when beset by problems and injustices, suffered mainly under the name of the various authorities.

Over the past year the People's Centre has had to weather increasing storms blowing from various quarters. The City Council clapped their hands when this year's rates weren't paid on time and sent in the Bailiffs. Sorry, the rates are now paid.

Some mindless morons smashed the front window the night before the Anti-Nazi League Carnival in July - causing £250 damage.

Karnival Committee (the local students charities appeal) granted the Centre £1,000 from last year's fund, but owing to political chicanery by the University student president John Taylor and his cohorts the Centre is still awaiting this grant.

Meanwhile the People's Centre carries on giving advice daily on matters like housing and welfare rights and representing people at various "quango" courts - like Supplementary Benefit and National Insurance Tribunals - which so many people have to use to try and gain some semblance of justice.

The Centre also houses various groups like a solicitors group giving legal advice and Off the Record which does youth counselling.

Like Nottingham Areas Project, the People's Centre has functioned for the last four years. Unlike NAP it has not been funded through the local authorities.

When NAP's paymasters found that NAP was 1) effective and 2) not willing to be controlled they pulled the purse strings tight and are trying to close it down. The People's Centre has guarded against this possibility by remaining strictly independent, by taking charitable status, and by depending on voluntary help and voluntary funding to continue the very effective work that it does.

But the People's Centre, to survive, still needs your support - financial and practical. It is, as the name says, your Centre. Don't let yourselves down.

(The People's Centre is at 33 Mansfield Road, tel 412269)

LOW PAY STUDY

LOW PAY is a serious problem for many people in Nottingham.

A report is being prepared on the subject by Nottingham Workshop. So far they have published some government figures for 1977. They show that Nottinghamshire fares worse than the average, especially where women are concerned. This is probably due to the concentration of textiles in the area - an industry noted for low pay and a large number of women workers.

The national figures show that women suffer much more than men. And the young and old also suffer.

Amongst full time manual workers in 1977, 34% of women were earning below £1 an hour compared to 3.2%

of men.

87% of workers under 18 earned below £1 an hour. This fell to 1.6% for the 30 to 39 age group and rose to 22% for those over 65.

Some industries can be picked out as bad payers - eg hairdressing, catering, agriculture, wholesale and retail distribution, and clothing and textile trades.

The Workshop also looked at low paid jobs advertised in local job centres. They found a large number below £1 an hour, some as low as £18 a week. The list includes sales assistants, catering, office work and textile manufacture.

Now they are asking trade unions for more detailed information about low pay in the area.

DOWN TO EARTH WHOLEFOODS

20 Hockley Tel: 584322

for cheap wholesome foods with a personal service

raisins/sultanas/currants	40p/lb
walnuts/cashews/hazelnuts	22p/qr
brazils	26p/qr mixed peel
figs	40p/lb apricots from 60p/lb

Open: 9.30-6pm six days a week

FEARGUS O'CONNOR

CHARTIST CHAMPION OR POLITICAL OPPORTUNIST?

IN AN OBSCURE shady corner of the Arboretum stands a statue of the controversial 19th century Chartist leader, Feargus O'Connor.

To his opponents at the time and to subsequent historians O'Connor was an arrogant political opportunist but to his millions of supporters he was a hero and deserved the name Chartist champion.

By the time of his election as MP for Nottingham in 1847 his career was almost at an end and his sanity declining. Yet he was a powerful force in 19th century politics and almost led an English revolution.

He was born in County Cork in 1796. As a young man he farmed his own estates on model principles. His reputation as an affable landlord as well as his political speeches and intrigues meant that he was twice returned as MP for County Cork.

In his first political pamphlet published in 1822 he called for repeal of the hated union with England and pledged his support to the United Ireland movement. A United Ireland always remained his greatest ambition and is crucial to an understanding of his career.

chartists

O'CONNOR'S support for the Chartists began in 1837 when he left Ireland.

He hoped that the Chartists' demands for universal suffrage would change society. Universal suffrage would mean the end of the monopoly the landed gentry had in Parliament. If the working classes could elect their own MPs then society would be changed and Ireland could rid itself of parasitic landlords.

Almost unknown upon his arrival in this country, two years later he was undisputed Chartist leader.

Why was O'Connor so popular? He was always a good orator and this was important in swaying large crowds. On his tours with O'Neill Daunt in Ireland the two were known as "Thunder and Lightning".

He started a newspaper to publish the Chartist cause called "The Northern Star". It had a circulation which rivalled that of the Times.

But it was his appeal to the hand loom weavers of Lancashire and the frame work knitters of the Midlands that gave him most support. These people experienced a very steep decline in their wages with the rise of the factory system. They lived in

appalling conditions and the People's Charter promised them a better future.

O'Connor addressed many large meetings on the Chartist cause. In 1842 he arrived in Nottingham to an enthusiastic reception:

"The Market Place was thronged with people, whilst from the different villages around processions kept coming in. It was not until twelve o'clock that the whole of the numerous flags, devices, etc were got in order to form a procession, and they then proceeded down Wheelergate to the railway station where Mr O'Connor was received from the Birmingham train amidst immense cheering . . ."

It was the largest meeting Nottingham had ever seen.

Three times the Chartists presented petitions to Parliament and three times they were rejected. O'Connor began to think of other ways to transform society. He launched his Land Plan.

O'connors landscheme

NAIVE in conception the Land Plan was nevertheless a grand vision. He published his plans in The Northern Star and formed a land company.

It was proposed that 5,000 heads of families from industrial towns be settled onto twenty thousand acres of land on some forty estates giving each family four acres each. The estates were to have their own schools and community centres.

The scheme was seen to be self perpetuating so that the rent accrued from the first estates could be used to buy more land for more estates, etc. In this way the working classes were to be freed from the gloom of the dark satanic mills into the fresh air of the countryside.

The first estate was opened on May Day 1847 and two more followed. But by the next year it was clear that the scheme was a failure.

1848

1848, the year of European revolutions when gunpowder was being sold on the streets and pikes were being sharpened, saw the collapse of the Chartist movement.

Despite a large crowd gathering on Kensal Green in London to present the third National Petition the revolution did not come.

The Chartists were prevented from crossing the Thames to the House of Commons and O'Connor bid them to disperse on orders from the government.

He did not stand firm, but a bloody massacre was avoided.

Disillusioned he returned to the House of Commons, a place which he hated. Here his outrageous behaviour - he mimicked the speaker and punched a couple of MPs - caused him to be removed to a mental hospital.

His death in 1856 revived his memory. Over 40,000 attended his funeral at Kensal Green in London, where William Lovett said that O'Connor had sacrificed



Statue of Feargus O'Connor

money and prospects and finally his sanity in the service of the people.

michael brown

the silly bit

Irish Stoop*
Did you hiver go across the sea to Ireland? Eye did, to seed the homes of my auntors, uncles of longago and timetravelers. Camping now.

The country was marvellous. It reigned supreme. It reigned everyday infact; reigned + reigned; sopping and glorious, longed to reign over us.... Gobs of godpit spattering batdroppings blackly on the nightflysheet. Warming to hear, warm here, wrapt in sleeping bag and eachother, listening to the spotspotspot spit dripplat of drip.

And the morning. Pizzling rain-eg, condensing mist to dripdrippppp Flysheet soggy draining mistdrops into screejewels coursing to the waiting dew. We wait, damply, wellies sogging, clothes damp to moist. Wellies cling to socks, clam to ankles. Inevitably out - bat only to dank airswill everywhere. So...

having a damp time.... be grateful you're not here.... P. J. O'Griothfa.

* Like Irish stew, but much wetter - more like soup.

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Reviews

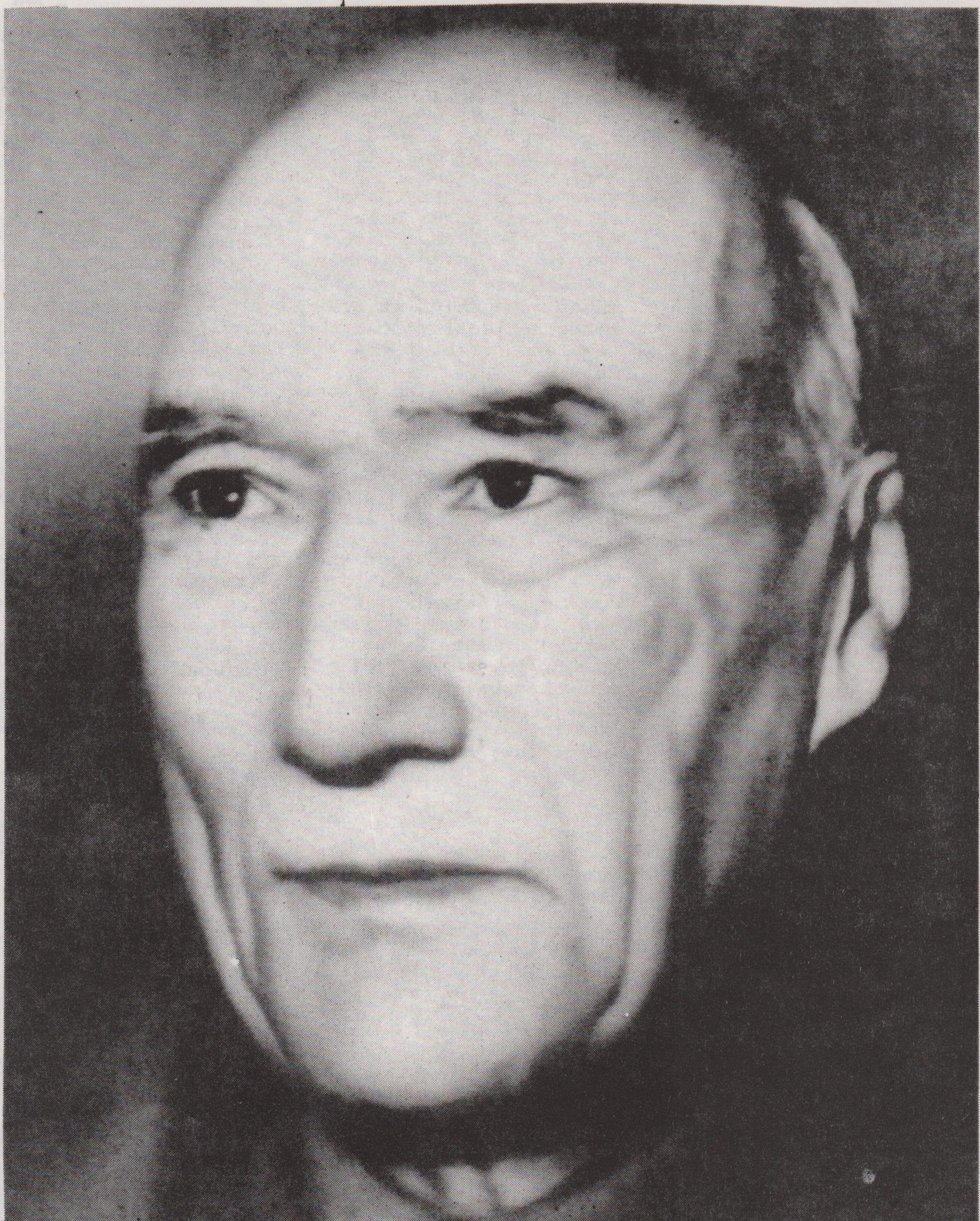
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Playhouse

After an indifferent summer season which has left many people disappointed with the regime of Geoffrey Reeve's, the new season at Nottingham Playhouse at least offers some hope of redemption. The programme, although mildly unexciting, at least balances the thin tightrope between those awful stereotypes, 'popular' and 'serious' theatre.

The curtain rises on Wed, Sept. 13th to Henry V, one of the more underestimated Shakespeare plays. Most Shakespeare stands or falls by the quality of the acting, so with a more or less successful track record at the Playhouse in this area, it should be worth seeing. In lighter vein is that old perennial, Tom Stoppard's "Jumpers", commencing on Tues, Sept. 27th. Personally, I find his plays too self-consciously mannered, but his popularity shows that to be a strictly minority opinion. Also worth watching out for are performances by the Roger Woodward and Philip Jones Brass Ensemble (Sun. Oct. 1st) and the Nottingham Music Theatre (Sun. Oct. 8th).

david smith



André Gide, by Gerhard Richter.

Midland Group

OPENING AT the Midland Group Gallery on Sept 16th are four exhibitions. The most interesting promises to be "The Faithful Images", a collection of photographs and films by René Magritte, the Belgian surrealist. Extra spice is added by the presence of one of his paintings: "The Lovers", owned by none other than George Melly. "48 Portraits" by German painter, Gerhard Richter, is a series of paintings from photographs of men who, he believes, helped form the modern world. The other exhibitions are "Oil paintings and watercolours" 1970-78" by Steve McKenna, and "Photography 1976-78", a first showing of portraits by Maria Gilissen.

john maxwell

Films

ONE EXCELLENT film coming up at the Nottingham Film Theatre is the Oscar-winning "Harlan County" (Sep 22nd-24th).

Harlan County is a traditionally militant mining area in Kentucky, USA. This film, made by Barbara Hopple and a largely female film crew, is the story of the bitter 1973 strike which ended in several miners being murdered by hired thugs, whose guns can be clearly seen on the screen. It also touches on the long history of corruption within the miners union.

One particularly interesting feature is the crucial role which women played in the strike, with wives and daughters taking the lead when the chips were down. Highly recommended.

david smith

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Real Ale

Pulling a Fast One,
Roger Protz
Pluto, £1.20

For all its success in revitalising the cause of good beer, and persuading more brewers to make it and pubs to sell it, the Campaign for Real Ale seems to have reached a point of stagnation. On the one hand it frittered away resources on opening up its own pubs, whilst on the other it seemed to be heading more and more for a middle-class cul-de-sac by its membership composition and political activities, especially the campaign against the Capital Transfer Tax.

It's therefore good news that Roger Protz, CAMRA editor of publications and socialist, has produced not only a highly readable critique of the present brewing industry but also the makings of an excellent manifesto to make real beer a real issue in the 1980's.

The tale which Protz unfolds is horrible indeed. The brewing industry is completely monopolised by 7 firms - Bass Allied Breweries; Whitbread; Watneys; Scottish & Newcastle; Guiness and Courage - who control 89% of the market. This is despite a string of Government reports, the latest from the Price Commission last year, which have found the situation "to be against the public interest".

The result of this has been a continued decline in the strength and quality of the beer they produce. Grains such as millet or maize are used instead of barley, hop essence instead of real hops and chemicals are added by the ton. The end product is sold largely through the millions of pounds spent on advertising, and because most pubs offer no other choice. Of course, the latter assumes that the pubs remain open anyway - one of the more scandalous aspects of brewers' monopolies is the way they have closed down village pubs, and effectively killed village social life, in areas such as East Anglia.

At present, the big

brewers are slightly battered but, as Protz warns their power remains. So long as it does the many small breweries which have kept the flag of real ale flying will remain in danger.. The takeover of Shipstones shows that other breweries, also, aspire to join them. In Nottingham, especially, the good and cheap beer which is available can easily lead to complacency about the future.

Hence the value of the suggestions which the author makes to improve the situation. The most important of these is the need to break up the big breweries into smaller units, and encourage the development of publicity or co-operatively (on the lines of the present Northern Clubs Federation) owned breweries. Until that happens, the dangers of the monopoly extending remain. Grotney's aren't dead: they're merely sleeping.

john maxwell

Journey through Love

Journey through Love,
John Hillaby
Paladin £1.25

Those who, like myself, have enjoyed other books by John Hillaby will look forward to reading this. Hillaby is a determined, almost fanatical walker: a modern horseless cowboy striding off into the sunset, a man who thinks nothing of undertaking all-night hikes in the worst of weather conditions.

Unlike the clear lines of his other expeditions - walking from Lands End to John o' Groats ("Journey Through Britain"), walking from the North Sea to the Mediterranean ("Journey through Europe") on a camel expedition through East Africa ("Journey to the Jade Sea") - this is much more a random set of essays. Most of them are descriptions of walking in his favourite bits of Britain - Hampstead Heath, the North York Moors, Sussex

and the Gower Peninsula. Only in an attempt to cast off the despondency caused by his wife's death - the "Journey through Love" of the title - does he fall into his old pattern, and strides off over the length of the Appalachian mountains in America.

However, John Hillaby is much more of a walker, being a knowledgeable botanist, zoologist, etc. Ernest Callenbach

Ecotopia
botanist, zoologist, etc. Ernest Callenbach

This makes his books much

Pluto £1.20

more than travelogues,

but explorations of local ecologies, including human communities and the characters who inhabit them. For all his occasional opinionated prickliness, and self-righteous elitism, he renders all these with exceptional verve and clarity. I enjoy his work immensely: and so do most of the people I know who've read his books.

robert mulholland

Life in Ecotopia

Imagine a world based on ecological principles: where, and how, would it be most likely to develop? This book answers these questions by sketching a 1990-style society in "Ecotopia", the country formerly known as the North-West USA until its independence in 1981.

The book works - with great effect - by juxtaposing the private diaries and public dispatches of Will Weston, the first American reporter to enter Ecopian territory.

Weston begins his mission as a cynic, but ends it as a believer in the Ecopian lifestyle - though helped by the ministrations of a typically liberated local lass. En route, he explores the whole basis of Ecopian life - its respect for nature, decentralisation, humane working conditions (a 20 hour week and interesting jobs for all) and acceptance of only the most beneficial of technologies (cars are almost unknown).

Many criticisms of this novel can be made. Some aspects affect present sensibilities, such as the continued acceptance of nuclear power, or the ritualised war ceremonies, which Callenbach defends on the grounds that they channel latent aggression. More fundamental is a characteristically American unconcern for politics - what's happened to the working class and their unions, or to dissidents?

For all these faults, the book remains of great interest. Apart from being a real good read, it's already something of a bible to "eco-freaks" in the States. The two together make this an book a worthwhile investment.

david smith

Worth watching out for is the visit of the Prospect Theatre Company to Nottingham in the week beginning Oct 9th. They perform "King Lear" and "The Rivals" at the Theatre Royal.

john maxwell