# IF YOU DON'T HIT IT.... IT WON'T FALL

NEWSLETTER AND INFORMATION SHEET no 4. phone 71756 or 600337 c/o 41 Cope St., Hyson Green. OPEN LETTER



1st - 22nd January 1976

This newsletter came together about two months ago because some people new to Nottingham and some not-so-new, felt it was hard to find out about local political activity.

How much resistance is there to clearance schemes or to rent increases? How effectively are people pressing for more and better nursury provision or abortion on demand? What's going on in the conflict in the Victoria Centre between the management and the (mainly black) youths who find it a good, warm place to meet their friends? How easily can someone contact a gay liberation group? What are the effects of redundancies at Plessey and in the hosiery trade? How do the various active groups and individuals link up with what's happening?

The newsletter has been fairly well received with donations and kind words coming easily. This seems to show the need for better channels of communication. (Why do people communicate so 1 ittle at the moment?) However, we're not at all sure that it should continue in its present form - or even at all. In the last few issues we've tried to do at least two things:-

> A <u>news summary</u> has been written using the <u>Evening Post</u>. This is obviously very limited because the Post is a reactionary paper and because the summary isn't based on direct contact with those in the item. However, it tries to present what's happening locally in general - which otherwise might be totally ignored.

We've tried to encourage active groups and individuals to use it as a way of explaining their aims and their problems to a wider audience. Exploring the problems of activity, collectively and honestly (without presenting a false front) is vital to finding out how to move forward.

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### PICKET OF THE COUNTY HOTEL Saturday 13th December 1975

Two residents associations and Nottingham students' union decided to stage a picket of the condemned County Hotel to protect at the Council's priorities. With an increase in the Council waiting list of 13% last year to 12,217 it was felt that money should be spent on more, and improved housing, rather than a 25m prestige Festival Hall complex which is proposed for the site of the County Hotel.

Seventy people turned up on the Saturday morning with placards and banners displaying slogans such as 'Housing before Prestige Projects' and 'Use the County Hotel as a refuge for battered wives and homeless families'.

Amazingly, the front door was open. Building contractors were ripping out the interior. The protestors hurriedly conferred and decided not to take the opportunity to walk in the front door and occupy the building. The reason was it was felt there had not been sufficient preperation for a squat.

The Evening Post sent along a photographer who duly posed the pickets in a photogenic group around the entrance. It was a waste of time because no picture appeared in the paper. In fact, the total publicity was a couple of column inches and a brief mention on local radio.

This raises the whole question of the method of campaigning on local, political issues such as housing and social rights. The exercise makes one ask whether these seventy committed persons who attended the picket might have been better employed working in a slum clearance area knocking on doors to explain to people their housing rights and encourage them to form their own independent resident's organisation.

The purpose of the picket was to gain publicity in the local (pro-establish -ment) media. The results of the 70 person-hours activity were pathetic.

Meanwhile, the Council is preparing to move in with the bulldozers and press on with the Festival Hall complex from which private contractors will make a fixed 12% profit whatever the cost. Consultant architects have already been paid £119,400 for three months work. Yet the Council have just axed Community Centres at Top Valley and Queen's Drive. Whose interests are the Council representing? Big Business or the working people of Nottingham?

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300 or 400 copies have been distributed free each fortnight through Down to Earth, Pathfinder and Mushroom Shops as well as meetings and friends. A small number of people havingdone the typing and duplicating.

WHAT NOW?

The most important issue seems to be what activity and ideas lead to worth while and effective change? If this newsletter remains 'worthwhile' it should continue. However, there is no God Given reason why it should; other changes such as more direct contact between activists, or a Nottm-based paper, or a political discussion group could make it redundant.

We're not at all sure what the next step should be? So we've produced this issue for three weeks and arranged a meeting to discuss the next step. It's unlikely that the newsletter will continue if it's left to us.

So:- PLEASE DO COME TO THE MEETING STATE YOUR VIEWS Do you find it useful? Is there something else you'd like to see happen? Instead? As well?

NEWSLETTER MEETING WEDNESDAY 21st January 10 Milner Rd., Sherwood, Nottm. 8.00 (catch any Arnold bus up Mansfield Rd)

p.s. One way it might develop is to carry more critical information, for example, reviews, letters and articles which take a political position. At the same time, interviews with Hosiery workers, tenants etc might be useful

A QUOTE FROM DESPERATE CRY: "It must be the revolutionaries and not the fascists who bring to the level of political consciousness, the questions that are usually considered personal, and begin to fight for a new self identity, the identity of the class for itself"

#### EAST MIDIARISS ALTERNATIVE GROUP

RESOURCE LIST : Peeple, Skille, and Tools. Taff Themas, 6a Chestnut Greve, Mapperley Greve, Nettingham. Asserted small teols, electric drill, access to duplicators for small amounts.

West Midlands A.T. Group, c/e Peoples Contre, 761, Bristel Avenue, Selly Oak, Birm'n. Are welding equipment, occasional access to bench drill, small tools, electronice expertise, windmill experiments.

Colin Huggins, 8, Ferhall Read, Nettingham.

Small tools, small amounts of photocopying, gas analysys, chesical analysis, engineering exportise.

John Merdus, flat 2, 37, Viverten Read, Sherwood Rise, Nettingham.

Spanners, anall teols, Reliant 3 wheeler for transport, small space for working in, small emounts of photocopying, building expertise.

Jill Harksr, 12, Cranmer Grove, Nottingham.

Small tools, Mini with roof rack for transport, possible contact for alternative modecize.

Chris Martin, 65, Exter Read, Nettingham.

Small teels, planning regulations expertise. John Gatheeel, 25, Creamell Street, Nettingham. Phil Mahar, 22/2 Lassen Street, Nettingham. Bieyele parts and teels, hepen to grew into a bike workshop. Jan Bang, Dave Wilde, Grange Farm Cottage, Oxten, NOtta. Manafield 882001 Cars for transport, small teels, spanners, electrical drill space for construction projects, arrangements can be made to use extensive workshops through Jan. Andy Brews, Old Hall Farm, Crepwell Hishep, Netts. Nett'm 892237 Lots of AB contasts throughout the country, also know on recycling schemes. Manuel Morene, 10, Milmer Read, Sherwood, Nettingham Nett'm 600537 Small teels, large was, use of large space, various skills, carpentry, car mechanics, house wiring, gardening ste.

SMALL VAN FOR TRANSPORT, LELDING EWUPMENT.

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#### MIDIANDS AITERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIT SAST CHOTP

There is ze reason why technology can not be used to help people, rather than easlave them. With this is mind I thought it might be useful to try to get people teacther who share this view, and are prepared to act upon it. This having been dane, it's now up to the people annearmed, next of when are listed overlasf, to get things going in their own way. The first project we undertook was the building of an ocological toilet, to digests shit into a safe and useful fortilizor. This has run into difficultion, and requires some modification.

r,

I had a letter from Pat Stephens in the Shetlands. S/he wasta any werea interested in instabling wind generators, and ecological teilets (that work!), te came up and give a hand. Intersted in hearing from mon tee. Address to write to: Unifirth, Bridge of Walls, Shetland Isles.

There is a small patch of land, loss than ous acro, available for projects. it contains several fruit trees, the seil is quite good, but it's very avergroup. It is at Bagtherpe, near junction 27 on the MI. Details from me if you farey doing semething there. Quite legal.

Manuel is getting tegether a segmentity centre at Hysen Green. Building a wind rotor to generate electricity for the place, other AT schemes might be useful too. This could be a good space to have meetings, work days, teaching and discussion groups, Anyone with anything to get off the ground, see Manuel about this.

I now have sens good literature in recycling, and other contacts with recycling plants. There seems to be maney in this, so it sould provide a wothshile livelikeod, eccupation ar supplement he the dele. Andy Breve is very keen to get seasthing going, so get in touch with him.

I have managed to get a list of tipe, it's all very illegal, but I'm still quite into it. Some time I'll try to sot aside a couple of days and treek round to see them all. If anyone has eay good info, please mass it wa , and I'll try te premare a guide to good rubbiak.

Ailish D'arey is thinking about constructing a dama greenhouse, so if aryone is into dames, or fancies getting into thes, contact her, 2 Wiverton Grove, Hinghen Binden, Mette. Bingham 37277.

These she are burning wood this wister, the Ferestry Coaminsies let you take it say for £4.50 a tex, cheap if you live north of the aity.

> Reep it geing JER



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#### GAY WORKING PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

The Gay Working People's Campaign has been set up by gay women and men active in trade union and union gay caucuses to work out a policy and strategy which will enable gay people to take a more active part in the labour movement, and at the same time to encourage (through joint discussion and action) trade unionists to take up a position of defense of gay people which goes beyond tolerance, well-intentioned liberalism or 'gay rights'. We see our contribution as a more positive one that simply joining the end of a demonstration and providing the eyeshadow. Coming out for us is a process of political education, not only for ourselves, but for our comrades in TUs etc., and it will be by stating our position on many issues (not solely 'gay' ones) that can contribute to the strength of our movement.

We have organised a national conference, which will take place in Leeds on February 14th/15th at the Polytechnic, and which has been supported by resolutions from local branches and from recognised TU gay groupings.

We are holding a National Conf. Planning meeting here in Nottingham at the International Community Centre on Jan 10th from 10 to 6 pm where we will be deciding on the structure and content of the Feb Conf.

We welcome the growing support of gay working people.and their trade unions with their personal contributions and also (which is very important) their union backing.

If you would like to contact us for more information on our campaign etc please do so via the People's Centre and we will send you a copy of our newsletter. There is still time perhaps for further resolutions to be gotten through at branch level and at Trades Council etc., and we feel that support of an actual event with positive feedback to the membership is much more likely to raise the issue in a meaningful way than something negotiated at 'high levels of union management'.

It is also important to remember that the campaign is not yet fully worked out, and don't yet plan to relate only to one section of the gay community. So if you are wageless workers, we still welcome your support criticism and involvement. We intend to get together leaflets on 'How to work in TUs' 'Sexism in the workplace' 'Lesbians and Work' and a host of other captivating subjects. All these, and related subjects will be discussed at the Nottingham and Leeds meetings, so please come along and join us.

GAY POWER TO THE STRUGGLE. GAY WORKERS UNITE !! Roneo (GWPC)

NATIONAL CONFERENCE in LEEDS FEB 14th/15th Polytechnic

PLANNING MEETING International Comm Centre Jan 10th Nottingham GWPC c/o People's Centre 33 Mansfield Rd Nottingham

#### THE BUILDING

"What building?" Well, a large building consisting of a large hall and 6 rooms is available in Nottingham, of all places, for left/alternative people and Jor groups. A meeting has been arranged at the <u>PEOPLE'S CENTRE</u> on Wed 14th Jan. JANUARY at 8p.m.

If you're interested in using it or working to get it together come to the meeting or phone either 600337 or 71756. If anyone has any usuable knowledge/ skills - e.g. heating, etc. we'd love to hear from you. Some ideas for the building that have been talked about are: meetings, for different groups, social centre, workshops- printi ng, pottery, painting,

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page 4 alternative energy, kids, folk club, discos, films, soup kitchen, library, jumbles, etc. It needs getting together, using and organising. Let's do it in Nottingham ! Come to the meeting! 

#### CAMPAIGN AGAINST A CRIMINAL TRESPASS LAW

In June 1974 the Law Commission published a Working Paper in which they proposed to make TRESPASS a CRIMIMNAL OFFENCE. They will shortly produce a Final Report on the subject to the Government which will contain a draft Bill to set before Parliament.

A Criminal Trespass Law would make actions which were previously only civil offences into criminal offences, with sentences of up to 2 years imprisonment. People who take part in the following actions will therefore become criminals: Occupations of factories; student sit-ins; demonstrations and pickets of private or State propetty (e.g. Council or D.H.S.S. offices); Squatting; Land Trespass (htis would affect gypsies and ramblers). More people in Nottinghan are having to squat to get a roof over their heads. This proposed Act would make their homelessness a crime, since the only alternative to sqautting - vagrancy - is already a crime. It is important to oppose these proposals. There is a national demonstration in London on February 28th, but we are hoping to organise something locally before then. If you are interested, or would like to help in any way, please phone Colin or Julie, Nott'm 602510.

#### SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN WITH THE PORTUGESE WORKING CLASS

The Solidarity Campaign with the Portugese Working Class was initiated by the Portugese Workers' Co-ordinating Committee after the attempted rightwing coup in Portugal on March 11th. 1975. In Nottingham we are attemptting to set up a support group of the campaign and held a successful public meeting attended by about fifty people before Christmas.

Since the fall of fascism on April 25th. 1974 the Portugese Working Class has made enormous gains. Factories have been seized, land occupied and newspaper and rodio stations taken over and used to provide a workers' news service. Democratic organs of workers' power have sprung up in the form of workers' neighbourhood and soldiers commissions, and occupied estates have been turned into co-operative farms. In order to do this two attempted right wing coups had to be repelled by mass mobilisations of workers. However the struggle is far from over.

Victory of the socialist revolution in Portugal would give strength to the working class movement all over Europe. For this reason western capitalism is determined to do all it can to prevent such a victory. The CIA is carrying out an operation of destabilisation in Portugal and the Azores and in the last 18 months there have been four large scale NATO navah exercises off the Portugese coast. However as well as the threat of military intervention there has been systematic sabotage of the economy by big business.

The multi-national companies have fallen over themselves in the rush to withdraw from Portugal. They have refused credit to their Portugese subsidiaries and transferred whole production sectors to other countries. Factories have been entirely abandoned and funds and supplies of compenents frozen. Foreing banks are refusing loans to Portugese industry and the EEC has imposed import controls against Portugese textiles.

Portugal may seem a long way off and the media here has given us a distorted picture of military machinations and coup d'etat. However it is essential that the Portugese people are not isolated in their struggle. A defeat for them would be a defeat for us all.

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The Solidarity Campaign provides information and publicises developments in Portugal. Exchange visits between British and Portugese workers have been arranged. An important aspect of the campaign is to forge links between workers of subsidiaries of multi-national companies here with their brothers and sisters in similar subsidiaries in Portugal. In Nottingham this involves the Plesseys factories in Beeston and the hosiery industry. Brian Crossland the convenor at Plesseys is one of the many sponsors of the National Delegate Conference of the campaign to be held in March.

The first meeting of the Nottingham support group will be at the International Community Centre on Tuesday 13th. January at 7.30pm. We urge anyone interested to come along to discuss future activities in the Nottingham area.

#### SOME FRIENDLY COMMENTS ON GAY WORKERS AND NALGAY

Some friendly comments about the Nalgay article (in the 2nd issue of this newsletter \*) and Gay Working People's Collective (in this issue) written by a (not altogether) straight guy, presently a member of NALGO and soon to joyfully join the ranks of the unemployed/wageless. Please don't take this as a putdown and please do exercise your 'right of reply'.

Both articles seem to suggest that the way to make contact with 'people at work' is through 'Trade Unions'. I want to ask if this really is the best way - either through 'high levels of union management' or through the rank and file - or whether the issue is a more complicated one.

There's a world of difference between the National Union of Mineworkers (often backed by mining communities of men and women, in an industry that the Govt. needs) the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers (in a fragmented, declining industry) and NALGO( White Collar Workers). The question then is how do the workers relate to the union in each industry? Do they use it to get what they need or something else like unofficial action or job mobility. Ford workers, for example, don't use the unions as the main thing, although they tail along behind.

Just to take one example, let's look at NALGO. Around  $\frac{2}{3}$  of NALGO's <u>members</u> earn less than £55 per week yet the majority of the <u>union officials</u> earn more than £55p.w. The union is dominated by the interests of these top people. A recent example of this is the 1975 pay award which abandoned the threshold payment which had previously given everyone an <u>equal</u> cost of living rise. The award the NALGO officials recommended brought back bigger wage gaps between grades. The employers want this because is reduces unity among employees.

Important too, is the fact that the majority of women employees are in the lower pay levels. At the same time, NALGO in Nottingham (and elsewhere?) has only a few branch meetings each year which members can go to.

All this means that many local govt, employees just don't look to NALGO. If this is true, then raising the issue of gay oppression in this workplace might be better done through widely circulated office bulletins, discussions etc backed up by union motions.

There are many more issues to discuss, including : what will make employees give support to gay people? Is the 'working class' just to be found at the place of work? What is the relationship between the family and gay oppression? ... but I suspect I'm not the only person who would like to get together with a few people and discuss subjects like work, the family, sexuality and class struggle.

love

Keith

\* The Nalgay article - about the gay group in National Association of Local Government Officers - described the aims and activities of the group.

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#### INFOMATION PAGE

#### WOMEN'S GROUPS

The Women's Liberation Group meets every Thursday, at 8 p.m., at the Women's Centre, 26 Newcastle Chambers, Angel Row, Nottm. We try and have discussions every week. Next meeting is Jan 8th. All Thursday meetings are for women only. For more details phone Women's Newsletter Collective : 75985. National Abortion Campaign's next meeting is on Tuesday January 6th at 8pm at the Women's Centre. Discussion on perspectives for action around NAC in the New Year, building up to the national demo on 3rd April. Meetings fortnightly after that. Phone 45689 (daytime) or 42808 (evenings) for more details. Sex Discrimination Campaign. The bill is soon to become an act. This campaign wants to work around the act - bringing cases before the tribunals - and agitate for all the things the act has left out. Meeting to discuss all this on Wednesday, 7th January at the Women's Centre. Refuge for Battered Women Campaign now has a hostel!!! However, the Council are selling it to a Housing Association to own. The campaign will only be tenants and the Council shirk responsibilities. At present the house is being improved. Hope to be ready in 3 months. An attempt is now on to get District Councils to offer accomodation to women leaving the hostel. An important meeting will be held at the People's Centre (33 Mansfield Rd) on Monday 5th January at 8 p.m. with the Housing Association. Nursery Campaign are holding a stall on the Victoria Centre on Saturday 3rd January to explain about the activities of the campaign. Although Nottm haven't cut back on provision for the under 5s, it's still not good enough. Radio

Trent had a Phone In programme on Dec 31st on this subject. For more details of the campaign phone Margaret 865894.

Write On Sissters! A group of women in Nottingham are hoping to start a magasine of women's writing, called Write On Sisters. At the moment we're trying to raise money for the first issue before we produce it. Any women interested in this project - or anyone wanting to give money towards it contact 7.34 Victoria Centre or phone 43081.

#### GAY GROUPS

Lesbian Group meets wery Monday from January 5th. For details: Char, Maggie, Helen 75985.

Gay Liberation Front meets Wednesday January 14th. (phone 75985) Gay Workers Conference planning meeting. January 10th. Internation Community Centre. (Mansfield Rd) All day. details c/o People's Centre. Nalgay can be contacted c/o Howard, 108 Foxhall Rd., Forest Fields, Nottingham. Gay Shop please bring useful items for a money-raising 'Nearly New' Shop to 36 Kenilworth Terrace, Portland Rd., Nottingham.

Defend the 14 meetings - THE 14 HAVE ALL BEEN ACQUITED :: - phone Jules74963 Solidarity Campaign with Portugese Working Class. First meeting on Tuesday January 13th at 7.30 at International Community Centre. Campaign against Criminal Trespass Law details phone602510. The new Squatters Handbook has just come out (10p) from People's Centre, Mushroom and Pathfinder Bookshops.. The Building as mentioned later (page 3) and it's possible use will be discussed on Wednesday 14th January at 8 p.m. at the People's Centre. IF YOU DON'T HIT IT ... IT WON'T FALL MEETING - please everyone come - at 8 p.m. at 10 Milner Rd, Sherwood on Wednesday 21st January. phone 600337 Can anyone write a leaflet on squatting? or the McKenzie legal system? This issue of 250 cost £2.50 for paper, £1 electrostencil, 50p stencils. CONTENTS

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