

CLASS FIGHTER

JOIN THE LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS

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MINERS MUST

WIN!



THE TORIES have set up a special War Cabinet to fight the miners' strike.

Against the Tories and the bosses the united force and power of the whole working class needs to be mobilised.

If we are to win then we must put ourselves on a war-footing.

Solidarity

The key to the victory of the miners is solidarity. In the coalfields with flying pickets. At the power stations, depots, ports and on the railways from other workers.

Our movement is slowly reviving. After the setbacks of the last few years the mood is beginning to change and workers with it. At last we are starting to feel our power and strength again.

As we go to press it is still not clear what the outcome of the special delegate conference of the NUM will be, but whether or not the militant areas can swing a ballot, if one is called, the next major step is to halt the movement of all coal.

General Strike

Railworkers, power workers, gas workers, water workers and others should bring forward their claims and link up their fight with that of the miners. They should strike alongside the miners.

A general strike movement can halt MacGregor's pit closure plan. It can smash the Tories' anti-union laws. The Tories would find it very difficult to continue to govern. And more. Though kicking out the Tories would be a big step forward for our movement, we must be clear that a general strike offers us possibilities that go way beyond changing the government.

The level of activity and confidence it would create amongst workers would mean a direct challenge to the bosses' right to rule.

We would need to give our movement a real political alternative. But not a government like the last Labour government. We must fight for a workers' government — a government based on and accountable to the workers' movement, prepared to take decisive action against the bosses and their state.

'A political fight'

Chris Hickling, a young, striking miner from Hucknall pit in Nottinghamshire, and his wife Kim, spoke to Class Fighter.

There are miners in support of the strike at most Notts pits now, and at Chris's pit there is a picket line of striking Notts miners.

Chris: The other men are now starting to listen to us. We've got a picket on at every shift. More and more men are joining us.

It's mainly young lads who realise that they've got to fight for their jobs.

If there's been a man at work 13 years, and he's due to £13,000 redundancy, and I've been there 3½ years and I'm entitled to nothing, the Coal Board will obviously sack me first. But there are some older blokes out too.

I don't think there will be a national ballot because Notts is slowly coming out. I don't want a national ballot. I didn't want the area ballot. It was the worst decision this area ever made. You can't vote on another man's job.

If you vote 'no' on a ballot you are voting not to help another man fight for his job.

We've had good support from the NUR. They've told us to put a sheet up over a bridge, telling them it's a picket line, and they won't cross it. So that's what we've started to do.

We've got to get the support to win. We've got to have 100% solidarity throughout the NUM. Men have got to vote with their feet.

Striking miners have seen that they've got a lot of support here in the Notts coalfield. I was working but I've never crossed a picket line. I never would. I'd rather face the sack or die than cross a picket line.

We've been out since the Kent lads came up.

I'm a bit disappointed in Neil Kinnock. I thought he'd be a good man for the job, but he said he would have voted for a national ballot. I think it's disgusting. It's nothing more than vote-catching by the Labour Party.

They're trying to protect their interests. But if they really want to protect their interests then let them come out and say they support the working class. Because this is a fight for the working class, it's not just for the NUM.

If they smash the NUM they'll smash everyone else.

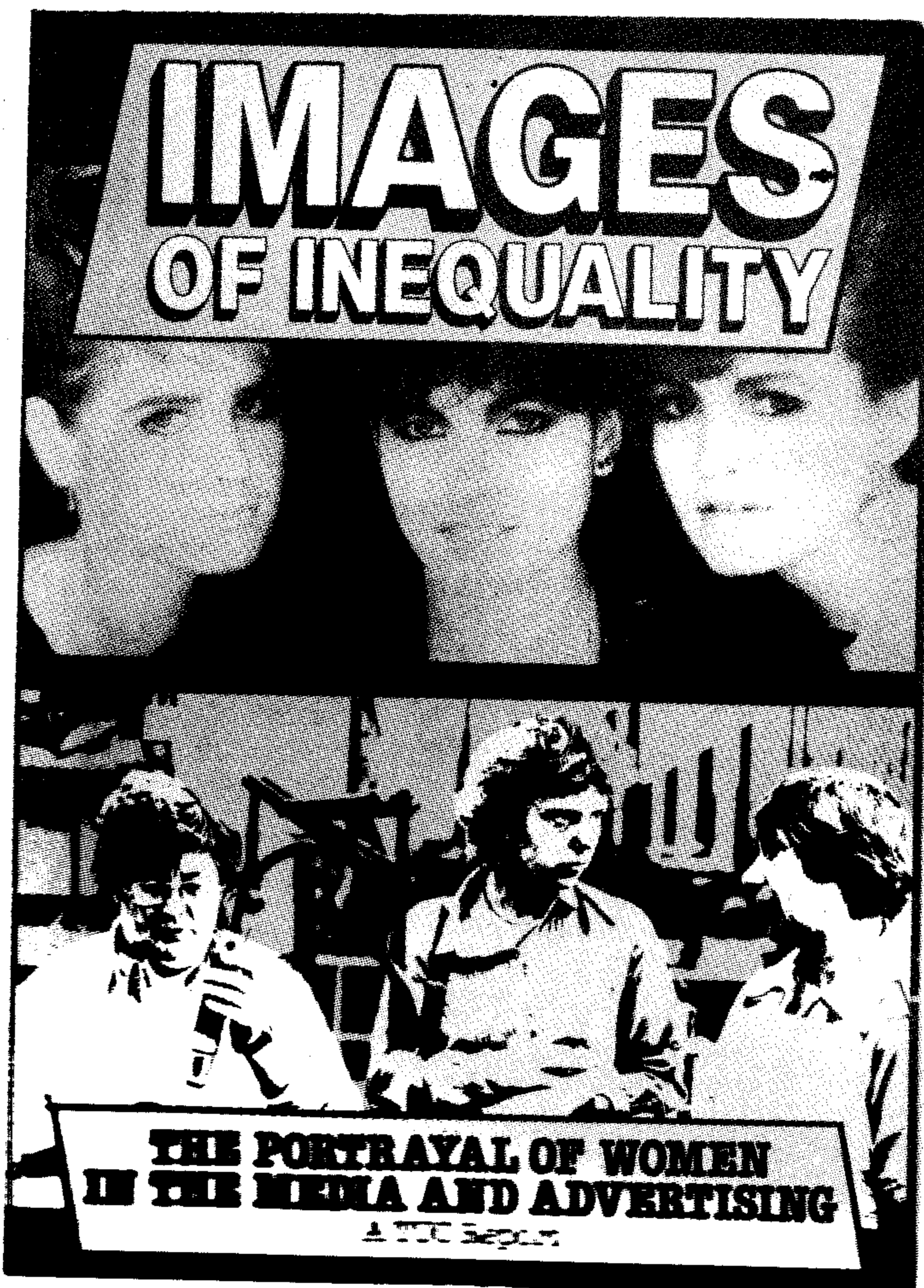
This is a political fight. Mrs Thatcher threw down the gauntlet to the NUM by employing the butcher from America. It's up to the NUM to pick up that gauntlet, fight all pit closures and win the demands we've been advancing for the last few years. So I say to the Coal Board watch out, we're prepared for a long fight and we're going to win.

If the mining community comes together and fights as one, this Tory government will be smashed. It might be a long, hard fight, but we'll beat them in the end. This Tory government has got to be got out. If we can't smash the Tory government, we cannot smash MacGregor.

The fight isn't just against MacGregor, he's just a puppet on a string. The fight is with the Tory government.

Kim: I am extremely proud that Chris has come out on strike in support of the Yorkshire men, and I'm 100% behind him. Any sacrifice is worth it because we are doing it for future generations.

Some women have said that their sons shouldn't have to go down the pit and I agree but there isn't any other work around so they should have the right to go down the pit if they want to.



THIS pamphlet is very good. It explains how the Women's Liberation movement has forced society in general and the unions in particular to take more notice of women. It shows how women are kept out of the best jobs, and out of positions of authority in the Labour movement, even when most members of a particular union are women.

The report looks at sexist cartoons, advertising, and how the press is caught, with its traditional anti-women stereotypes but a female readership which can be working bring up children solo and demanding a better deal.

It shows how the press twists stories about women, particularly in rape cases, to concentrate on women's bodies and sexuality. The part about the peace movement is very funny. The report contrasts the treatment of the Greenham women in this one and Joan Ruddock in the Mail on Sunday. Headlined "Ugly face of the Girls of Peace" the Sun article goes on to talk about the "Militant feminists and burly lesbians... the stormtroopers in the front line". But Joan Ruddock, stalwart of the CND right wing is "the epitome of classic good looks, cool restraint and articulate reason".

You can get it for £1 plus 20p post from TUC, Congress House, Great Russell St., London WC1B 3LS.

Are Tories fascists?

Richard Bayley from York LPYS continues our "What is Socialism" series with a look at fascism.

During any industrial dispute, and especially during the current Miner's strike the government gets accused of being "fascist", or using "fascist" tactics.

Faced with mass police brutality, it's hardly surprising. But because of the particular nature of Fascism, however, we have to be very careful about hurling the word "fascist" around as an insult.

Some people define fascism by talking about its most obvious characteristics, such as anti-semitism, racism in general, use of violent methods and the cult of leadership. But to really understand fascism and to work out how to right it you've got to try to find out why it comes about and how fascism comes to power.

Extreme

Quite simply, Fascism is an extreme form of capitalism that sets out to destroy the organised labour movement, crushing other sources of dissent on the way. You get fascism at times of deep capitalist crisis, when the boss-class are unable to make workers pay for the bankruptcy of their system by the 'normal' methods.

Many of the measures taken by a fascist government are against the wishes or interests of individual capitalists. In some cases, as in Italy and Germany in the 1930s, some capitalists lose their businesses. Many find the blatant smashing of democracy and use of violence offensive. The capitalists fall in line, however, because the organised working class presents a far greater threat, than the loss of some power and a few civil liberties.

The big capitalists represent a tiny minority of the population. Fascism relies on very large mobilisations and has to turn towards the smaller capitalists, the disaffected layers of society who have been crushed between

the wheels of big business and the working class to sweep the into power. It also mobilises the unemployed and most poverty-stricken people who capitalism have dumped on the scrap heap.

These groups could easily be enlisted to an active and solid workers' movement, but are attracted by the bogus clarion calls and activity of fascists.

To defeat fascist groups you need a united front of all workers parties ready to mobiliate against fascism. (In this country, this is less of a problem, as the Labour Party so completely dominates the Labour movement). It involves unity around action, not appeals to the state to "ban" fascists. And the action needed is to smash them off the streets, throw them out of the labour movement and to take on the state racism which gives the fascists racism its respectability.

Some people have described Margaret Thatcher as a "fascist". Clearly, this is wrong: Thatcher is an old fashioned right-wing Tory. In this country, Fascism would not just mean the witch-hunting and victimisation of a few left wingers. Even using troops, against strikers which this government might do has always been an option for capitalism. Fascists would be attacking, even murdering the Len Murrays and Denis Healeys of this world.

Difference

There is a qualitative difference between capitalist democracy and fascist dictatorship, and to call all capitalists "fascists" is a dangerous mistake. Labelling Thatcher a "fascist" — when she far prefers buying off the top Trade Union bureaucrats

instead of smashing them — is only disarming our movement for when the real thing comes along.

Think of what a fascist state would look like compared to Thatcher's Britain: no trade unions, with workers organised in "Labour fronts" that become an arm of the state, used to control workers, not fight for their interests. There would be no political opposition, and no opposition parties. The state would put demands on women to reproduce for the "Father/Motherland", and there would be a glorification of male dominance. For gays, racial minorities, and left wingers would be sent into forced

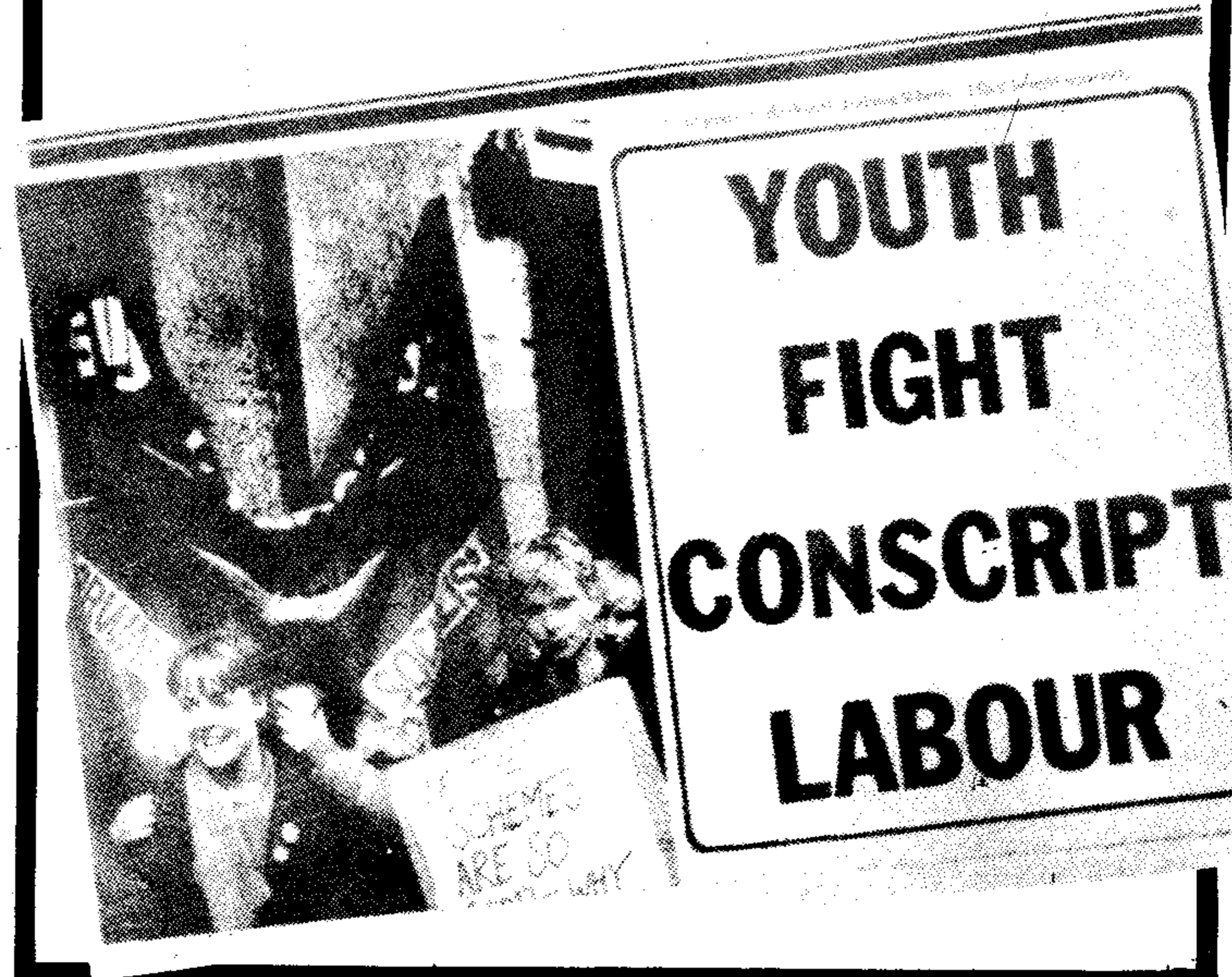
labour or concentration camps.

All right wing regimes show tendencies towards this model — but the big difference between fascism and Thatcher's Britain is that fascism is based on the complete smashing and destruction of the labour movement and other political parties

So while Thatcher is trying to weaken the unions through the government's anti-union laws and thus uses the police, to stop picketing, it's a far cry from a fascist state where trade unions would have become illegal and there would be no rights at all for working class people to organise outside of the state's machinery.

YTS Action special

Costs 10p: available from Class Fighter, 214 Sickert Court, Essex Road., London N1 2SY.



What a place to live!

By Matt Cooper

THE Tory government's housing policy reduces to one simple idea: the right and expectations of people to a place to live should be destroyed, (along with, of course, the rights to an education and a job). Increasingly if you can't afford to pay private landlords exorbitant rent, then you will join the hundreds of thousands already homeless. The facts speak for themselves

—80,000 households registered as homeless. Possibly as many again are not counted along with many single people and childless couples not even considered in official statistics.

—Over 1 million overcrowded houses

—Over 2 million households share with others since they have no home of their own.

—1¼ million on waiting lists for council houses.

While this is going on, the government is selling council houses, and cutting back public funds for Council house building. The human misery and tragedy behind these statistics must be appreciated. We must not forget the causes of the problem, the systematic attack by the Tories on the rights of working people and their obsession with profit.

The Tories' policy of council house sales in obviously disastrous for anyone looking for a home.

—Council houses are sold to tenants at up to 50% discount so that the homes sold will never be replaced.

—the best homes are being sold: less than 2% of sales are flats, the rest are houses with gardens that will never again be available to young families with children at prices they can afford.

People can hardly be blamed for taking up the offers of Council house sales, when the mortgage repayments are often less than the rent. Labour Councils must fight the Tories

—No council house sales!

—No cuts on building programmes!

—No increases in rents and rates!

—Houses for those who need them at prices they can afford!

So the Tories' arguments for trying to get rid of the



public housing stocks are not the simple money saving ones they'd have us believe. The attack is an ideological one on the very idea of council housing. The Tories don't like the state providing when there's a chance for their boss friends to make a buck out of the service. And since many people cannot afford mortgages, a large proportion of the population will become dependent on the sharks in their offices above shops who exploit those who have no option but go to their agency.

As availability of council housing decreases, more and more people, the young, the old and the unemployed, will find long waiting lists for council houses and no roof

over their head, or at best a roof that belongs to a Victorian slum.

The situation in the private sector is no better. There are a vast number of people living in properties that are 'unfit for human habitation'. It is difficult to assess the full extent of the problem as the Government is hiding it. Having realised how criminally bad the figures were in 1931, the government 'adjusted' the figures for 1976 to make it seem as if the number of unfit houses was on the decline when in reality it was increasing.

Of the 1.2 million unfit premises, c. 100,000 are owned and rented out, by private landlords.

That national bill for putting all housing above minimum standards is £25 billion, and this figure is growing every day. The Tories home improvement grants seem to be making a molehill out of this mountain. In 1981/s the planned improvement expenditure was £367 million, just 3% of the backlog, it seems like a token response to a serious problem.

The Tories have no interest in seeing people decently housed and are prepared to let those workers that they cannot employ roam the street homeless. If we don't fight the ranks of homeless could be swelled by you.



A Tory town

HARROGATE'S a Tory town. It's got lots of rich people, lots of Tory councillors, and consequently lots of homeless people. Out of a population of 60,000, 1,700 are on the housing list. This underestimates the problem.

Mark Osborn, who's on Yorkshire YS Regional Committee, interviewed Tim from Harrogate YS and Class Fighter. He is living in a bed and breakfast hostel.

Can you explain how you became homeless?

I was living with my parents, who moved. They were pissed off with me and kicked me out.

I looked around for a flat, staying odd nights with friends. On nights when I couldn't find anywhere to stay I kipped in a bus shelter. After about a week a couple of friends said I could sleep on their sofa, until I found a place to live.

I went down to the Council and put myself on the waiting list. They effectively said "get lost".

After about a month on the sofa my neck was killing me. My friend's landlord saved my head from falling off by evicting us. I went down to the Council to declare myself homeless. They were

really unhelpful, and I spent another week sleeping where I could.

The DHSS gave me a list of B&B "accommodation". I went to one of the places on the list and spent an afternoon trying to overcome the bureaucracy. The SS eventually decided that the place was too expensive, even though it was on their list. They sent me to an alternative one. I turned it down when I found it would be sharing with four other people. After I was told I could have a room to myself, I agreed to go and have a look. When I got down there and found I would be sharing, there was nothing I could do about it because the DHSS had already registered me there. At the moment I pay £22 per week for Bed and Breakfast. I share a bedroom with one other person, we've got two cooking rings between about 30 of us. The bath doesn't always work and I'm not allowed any visitors. It's a huge rip off. The landlord's making a fortune out of us. It would cost less after a while for the Government to build houses than it costs to pay B&B rates.

We need councils to start building houses, but not just for families, for young people too.

Support us!

- () I want a subscription to Class Fighter, and enclose £3 for 12 issues.
- () I would like more information about Class Fighter's policies and activities.
- () I would like a Class Fighter speaker to come and address my LPYS, YCND or other meeting. I enclose details.
- () I want to become a Class Fighter supporter and enclose £5 (waged) or £1 (unwaged). (This entitles you to Class Fighter newsletters, mailings, a supporter's card, etc.)

Tick as appropriate.

Name

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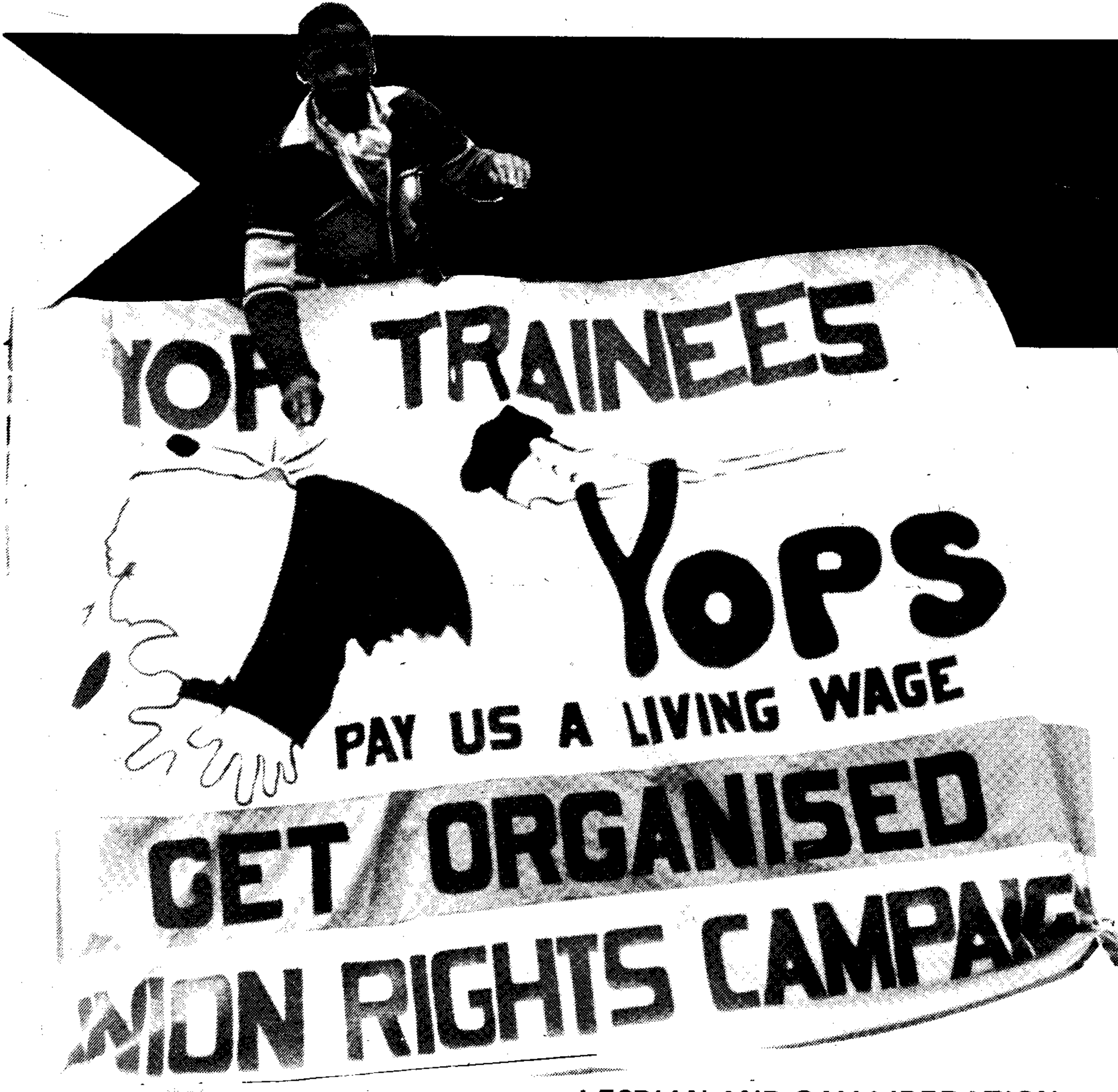
..... Age.....

LPYS branch..... Phone no.....

JOIN THE LABOUR PARTY
YOUNG SOCIALISTS!

Become
a Class
Fighter!

Return to Class Fighter, 214 Sickert Court, Essex Road, London N1



LPYS Conference

BLACK YOUTH

HERE TO ST HERE TO FIGHT!

THE labour movement doesn't really have much credibility amongst black youth.

One of the main reasons for this is that Labour has a very poor record on black rights. After all, it was the Labour Party that was responsible for the hated 1967 Immigration Act.

In order to draw black youth into our movement we will have to make it seem attrac-

tive and worthwhile to belong to.

A start can be made by purging all fascists from our ranks.

Black people need black sections within the labour movement within which they can organise autonomously.

Linked to this, positive discrimination should operate in the labour movement in favour of black people. This would

give black people the opportunity and the space to convert their direct experience of racism into political action.

Positive discrimination, though important, is not enough. The labour movement has got to fight on clearly anti-racist politics.

In the LPYS we must take up the struggle against increases in police powers, such as the Police Bill, we

LESBIAN AND GAY LIBERATION

Stop ignoring the issue!

FOR 8 years Class Fighter has been arguing for the YS Conference to debate Lesbian and Gay rights. We've been saying that Lesbian and gay liberation is an issue for all of us, and that the YS should be in the forefront of a campaign to defend and extend lesbian and gay rights.

Lesbian and gay rights and liberation is a class issue. While capitalism remains lesbians and gay men will be oppressed. But that doesn't mean we can ignore the issue and hope everything will be

okay after the revolution.

If workers don't change from being anti-gay now then why assume that after a revolution the same people won't be anti-gay and anti-gay prejudice spill over into a socialist society?

If the labour movement doesn't stop ignoring the issue then the bosses will be able to continue to use anti-gay prejudices to divide workers at their will. At the moment, gay and lesbian workers can be sacked just because of their sexuality,

and the blame for that lies with the labour movement which hasn't equipped its membership with the arguments and will to defend gay and lesbian people.

Some YS comrades think that anti-gay attitudes will disappear under socialism and good trade unionists will automatically leap to the defence of victimised gay and lesbian workers. Even if this is true, it isn't an adequate answer to give to young gays and lesbians who are oppressed now.

**NO
SOCIALISM
WITHOUT
GAY
LIBERATION**

WOMEN

WHO NEEDS THE FAMILY?

WORKING class women are oppressed as women and as workers. But women's oppression at work isn't identical to men's. Women tend to do jobs which are like the jobs we do at home, looking after people, cooking, cleaning and serving men.

These jobs are low paid, and sometimes part time because the woman has to run a family as well as go to work. The trade unions don't take women's jobs seriously enough. Most of them accept that part-time jobs go first when it comes to redundancies. Most don't even try to get these women fully involved in union branches

and union campaigns.

You can see that by looking at the number of women in leading positions in the unions - very few indeed. It's only recently that trade unions have cottoned on to the idea that sexual harassment at work is an issue they should be taking up.

Women are brought up differently to boys. We are taught to be passive, caring, quiet and to accept our lot. We are not expected to be sexually active; if we are then we're slags, if we're not then we're 'tight'. You can't win either way. And it's like that all the time. If a woman is

successful on TV, for instance, like the presenters of TV am are, then the rest of the media doesn't want to know if they're any good but go on about their bodies and private lives instead.

Very few parts of the media, very few school courses, very few employers and unfortunately a few more labour movement activists see women as anything other than sex objects or mothers and wives.

Capitalism in Britain is managed around the family. The ideas of how women should be are to do with the role we play in the family. The welfare state, along with the rest of society, don't see us as properly independent but as part of a family. So our needs, like to housing, supplementary benefit in our own right, good wages and even the right to work are neatly side-stepped: after all we are supposed to be dependent on a man.

A socialist society won't be organised around the family, everyone will be treated as equals. There would be public facilities available like cheap launderettes, cheap restaurants, and good creches which would relieve the drudgery of housework.

But you can't just tell women to wait for socialism. Women are organising now and demanding that the labour movement fights for our needs as women and as women workers. We have a special oppression in some ways its different to men's so don't ignore us, fight for women's rights!

YTS

Cheap labour

THE scrap heap - that's what the Tories are offering workers today. The scrapheap straight from school or one year on after a spell on a YTS.

While youth unemployment soars, youth wages drop. And the unions aren't doing much about it.

Some of them are sitting pretty and even going along with the Tory lie that youth have priced themselves out of a job.

The unemployed must unite with workers in trade unions to stop anymore redundancies and closures. The unemployed are an army of cheap labour for the

bosses and now we've got to become an army of activists fighting for the right to work. Arguing with workers that they must fight to keep jobs, going round picket lines giving our support.

Unemployed people should be joining trade unions and demanding that the whole union fights for us, for jobs, and for higher benefits without harassment from the press.

Unemployed people must organise. Take over the unemployed centres, stop them being run by bureaucrats as 5th rate leisure centres and start using them as places to co-ordinate the unemployed's fightback.



POLICE

WORKERS IN UN

ARE they really workers in uniform? Not a chance. A lot of coppers might come from working class backgrounds, but when they join the Police they start working for the bosses state.

When it comes down to it, the police force isn't there to stop crime, they are an army the bosses use against the working class. They've used them like that at Greenham, at Warrington, and now on the coal-fields. The police, at work, are our enemy.

Drawing the police into the labour movement won't solve the problem, in fact it would weaken the labour movement. The police force are our class enemy we don't want them in our organisations.

Organised police would campaign for better wages, better conditions, better equipment. We don't want to see better equipped coppers: we want them weakened and demoralised.

In a time of tremendous class

e 1984 THE ISSUES

AY:

By Satvinder Singh,
Peckham LPYS

must fight for the disbandment of racist outfits like the Instant Response Unit and extend police accountability and monitoring.

We need to fight against deportations and all immigration laws as well.

Black people need to defend themselves. The labour movement must rally to their support and link into struggles like that of the Newham 8.



IFORM?

struggle groups of coppers will come over to the workers camp; when they do that, when they refuse to carry out their orders we'll accept them into our movement. But right now its pie in the sky to want them, as they are, inside our movement.

We support the police organising, because it might weaken the hold of their officers, but don't kid yourselves. Coppers are not ordinary workers who wear uniforms to work.

Annual Conference is the major event of the year for the Labour Party Young Socialists. In these pages Class Fighter supporters spell out our basic politics and the kind of ideas, campaigns and issues that we think the YS should be taking up.

IRELAND

Troops Out Now!

THE election of Gerry Adams in last year's general election, destroyed the lie that the republican movement are mad terrorists with no support.

The republican movement re-emerged in its present form as a militia to defend the Catholics in Northern Ireland from the attacks of the RUC and the British Army. The troops are supposed to be there to keep law and order but within a short time of their being sent in, in 1969, their real role became clear.

The troops are there to prop up the sectarian state based on Protestant supremacy. Northern Ireland was created in 1921 when the British Tories, in alliance with the Unionist bosses, prevented all of Ireland gaining independence.

The boundaries of Northern Ireland were drawn up to guarantee a Protestant majority. From its creation it has been a sectarian state based on dis-

crimination against the Catholics and marginal privileges were given to Protestant workers to keep them loyal to Unionism.

The very existence of Northern Ireland is a denial of the right of all the Irish people to national self-determination. Socialists must be opposed to the continuing existence of the border.

The northern Protestants have a veto on any changes in Ireland — this is unjust. The only democratic solution is for all the Irish people together to decide. Class Fighter supports the fight for a united Ireland because Britain has no right to side with the minority and keep Ireland divided. The British labour movement has supported for far too long the Tory policy of partition. We must fight to get the troops out now and support the fight for a united Ireland.

By Tony Dale,
Manchester Central YS

EEC

International

By Alan Johnson

WHO dictated that the last Labour Government slashed public expenditure by 8 billion and implemented policies that resulted in 1½ million unemployed?

Not the bureaucrats in Brussels, but the IMF, the City of London, the oil monopolies and the Board rooms of companies like the Ford Motor Company of Detroit. Under capitalism this will go on whether Britain is in the EEC or not.

We have no interest in deciding what is best for British bosses — an independent capitalist Britain or Britain as part of the EEC. For British workers it doesn't make any difference because there is no such thing as the national interest in Britain today. The only thing we have in common with the British bosses are the chains between exploiter and exploited. And we'll still be lumped with them in or out of the EEC.

Our real allies are European workers. To call for withdrawal to form an independent means turning our backs on those workers and siding with British bosses

against European workers. It also means heaping another shovelfull of nationalism into the British Labour Movement. "It'd all be alright if we had our independence back".

Capitalism is organised on an international scale. To defend our interests the fight-back must be organised on an international scale too. That means building a European wide workers movement.

Nationalism stops that solidarity in its tracks. That call for import controls pits British miners against German miners. When Talbot workers struck in France recently we needed a European wide link up of car workers to defeat the bosses plan. But in Britain a leading steward in Coventry said "if they don't want the work, we'll do it here."

This is just what the bosses want. The call for withdrawal only increases these divisions, the real alternatives to the bosses EEC is not an independent capitalist Britain but a United Socialist states of Europe, and that includes linking up with the independent labour movement of Eastern Europe too — like Solidarnosc.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Solidarity against Reagan

CENTRAL America and the Caribbean are politically turbulent and violent areas.

What is the cause of all this violence? Since the end of the 1800s the countries of Central America have been dominated by a tiny elite of landowners. These landowners used the law, the police and the military to push peasants off the land so that they could grow coffee, bananas, cotton or sugar on it.

Sometimes the landowners were big American firms, for example the United Fruit Co. grew bananas in Guatemala and Honduras. This process still continues today and those peasants who organise unions or attempt to claim back their land peacefully usually end up dead in a ditch.

Many peasants have given up on peaceful means. In El Salvador, workers, peasants and student radicals started forming guerilla groups in the early 1970s. These groups came together in 1980 to form the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) which today controls one third of the national territory and is militarily active in at least another third.

U.S. imperialism is so keen to

destroy any popular movements in the area because their demands represent a threat to its interests. In 1904 the Panama Canal was completed. This canal is today controlled by U.S. soldiers and provides a vital link for sea-traffic between the East and West coasts of the U.S.A. Not only are American firms big landowners in

Central America, since the 1950s they have invested in manufacturing in the area because of its abundant supplies of cheap labour.

British Imperialism also has interests in the area. For example, the microchip for Sinclair computers are made in El Salvador. So is Lea and Perrins Worcester sauce. Thatcher provides arms to the Hondurans that would certainly be used in an invasion of revolutionary Nicaragua.

By Paul Muddle,
Manchester Gorton YS

British Imperialism also has interests in the area. For example, the microchip for Sinclair computers are made in El Salvador. So is Lea and Perrins Worcester sauce. Thatcher provides arms to the Hondurans that would certainly be used in an invasion of revolutionary Nicaragua.

"Class Fighter" supports the struggles of the people of Central America. That is why we are involved in campaigns like the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign. We believe it is an urgent ne-

cessity for comrades to build active solidarity in the labour movement with those who are fighting imperialism in Central America and the Caribbean now.

However, we also believe that the existing programme of the FMLN in El Salvador or the Sandinistas in Nicaragua is not adequate. These organisations often associate revolution with simply military struggle rather than the self-emancipation of the oppressed classes. Because they are not working class revolutionaries they often make alliances with middle class forces who are hostile to socialism. For example, in Nicaragua the Sandinistas formed an alliance with Factory owners. Now, the Sandinistas have undoubtedly done much to improve the living standards of workers and peasants but, in order to keep their bourgeois allies happy, they have also attacked independent workers organisations and outlawed strikes. The FMLN in El Salvador would possibly do something similar if it came to power.

Even though we criticise the guerillas we have to win the labour movement to support them. You can't just criticise, they need our support and we should give it them.

Vote Judith Bonner

I have been asked to write a few words about why I am standing for the Labour Party NEC.

The basic reason is obviously political.

I want to see a different kind of LPYS to the one that exists at the moment, a YS that is a real youth movement, that takes up basic issues facing working class youth like unemployment, low pay, YTS, racism, sexism and police harassment.

This must be done in a way that does not amount to lecturing or boring people.

Such a movement would have to be a lot more habitable for certain groups of youth than the YS is at the moment.

The problems with the YS don't just revolve around the fact that it is not always an inviting organisation to belong to.

A lot of what is presented as 'socialism' and 'Marxism' in the YS is a bit dodgy too.

Socialism should be about working class people liberating themselves through their own direct action, and it can't be reduced to "the election of a Labour government committed to a bold socialist programme" or whatever.

Don't get me wrong. The fight within the existing labour movement to change, transform and shake it up so that it really fights for working class interests, is central but my point is simply that the struggle cannot be reduced to a set of neat, cut and dried formulae.

The YS also needs to be a little less sectarian towards the rest of the world. In particular, the YS should try and link up with YCND. It can do that now around the big anti-Reagan demonstration on June 9.

The YS should also try and relate to the women's movement far more than it has done up till now.

Organising a young women's conference would provide an important bridge between the labour movement and the women's movement for a lot of women. The YS should take the initiative and try and do it.

I believe a mass, active, campaigning LPYS could be a great force to transform the existing labour movement and we should go out and try to build one.



Judith Bonner is Class Fighter candidate for the LPYS place on the Labour Party National Executive Committee.

Judith, who is 23, has been active in the LPYS for nearly five years. Along with other members of Coventry North East LPYS she helped organise a meeting of over 400 youth in response to fascist attacks in Coventry in 1981. That meeting helped draw forces together who organised Coventry anti-racist defence squads.

Recently, Judith has been involved in the disarmament movement, she has been a member of YCND National Committee and spoke for YCND at last year's LPYS conference. Judith is now a member of CND National Council and has been very active in trying to build links between the struggle of the Greenham women and the organised labour movement.

She is a delegate from Peckham LPYS.

We want real training not conscript labour!

Mark Osborn, Harrogate LPYS

YOU can see why the Tories need compulsion to get us on to YTS — their cheap labour scheme isn't working. In the first six months of the scheme 83,000 'trainees' nearly a quarter have dropped out. When Tebbit set up YTS last September the Government wanted 480,000 people on the scheme. Only 342,317 took it up, and by the end of January there were only 342,317 still benefiting from 'a valuable training for life' (read 'working with no rights for 25 quid a week').

Since December 4,826 unemployed youth have had their supplementary benefit cut by 40% from £16 to £9.90 a week for leaving schemes early. Registered unemployment of 16 and 17 year olds in January was one of the highest figures

in recent years: 204,300.

The Manpower Services Commission wants to expand the scheme to 400,000 'trainees' next year.

YTS schemes are just a pretence of training — they are usually boring menial jobs not a training at all. Even the end of year 'profiles' (Reports) an employer fills in doesn't concentrate on what skills have been learnt, but on how well behaved the 'trainee' has been.

The Tories argue in their propaganda that if you are better trained you will be 'more employable' and will find a job. So the problem as the Tories would have us believe, isn't that there are not enough jobs, but that we're not good enough to do

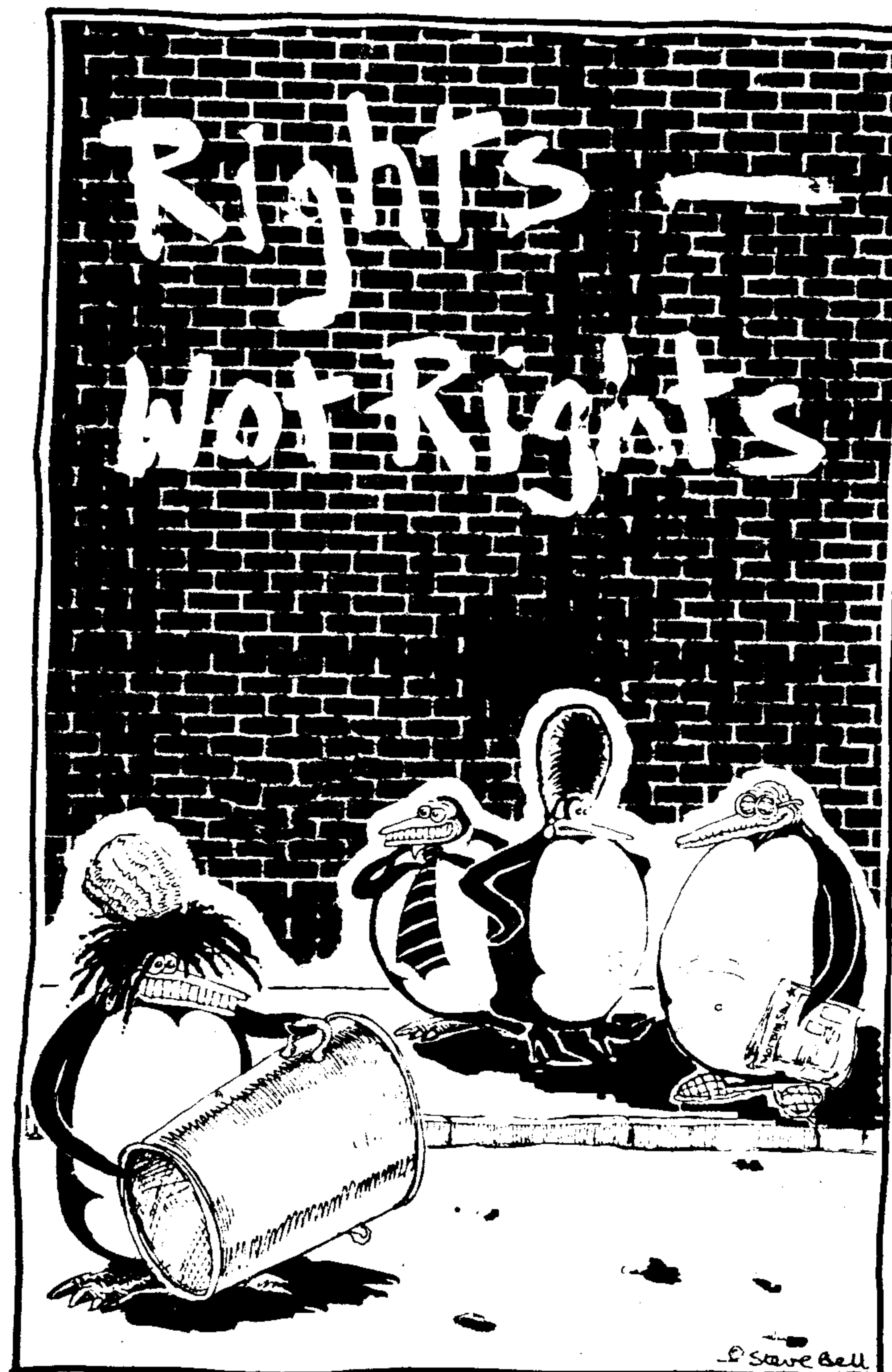
them. So the economic crisis will be solved when all school leavers have been on YTS, will it? The argument is so obviously wrong. If the jobs aren't there then no amount of "training" will create them.

So what is the real reason for YTS then? The 'Youth Training Scheme' is simply there to provide cheap (i.e. profitable) labour for employers, to disguise the employment figures, and to bring into workplaces a load of non-unionised workers to smash the basic union rights of closed-shop.

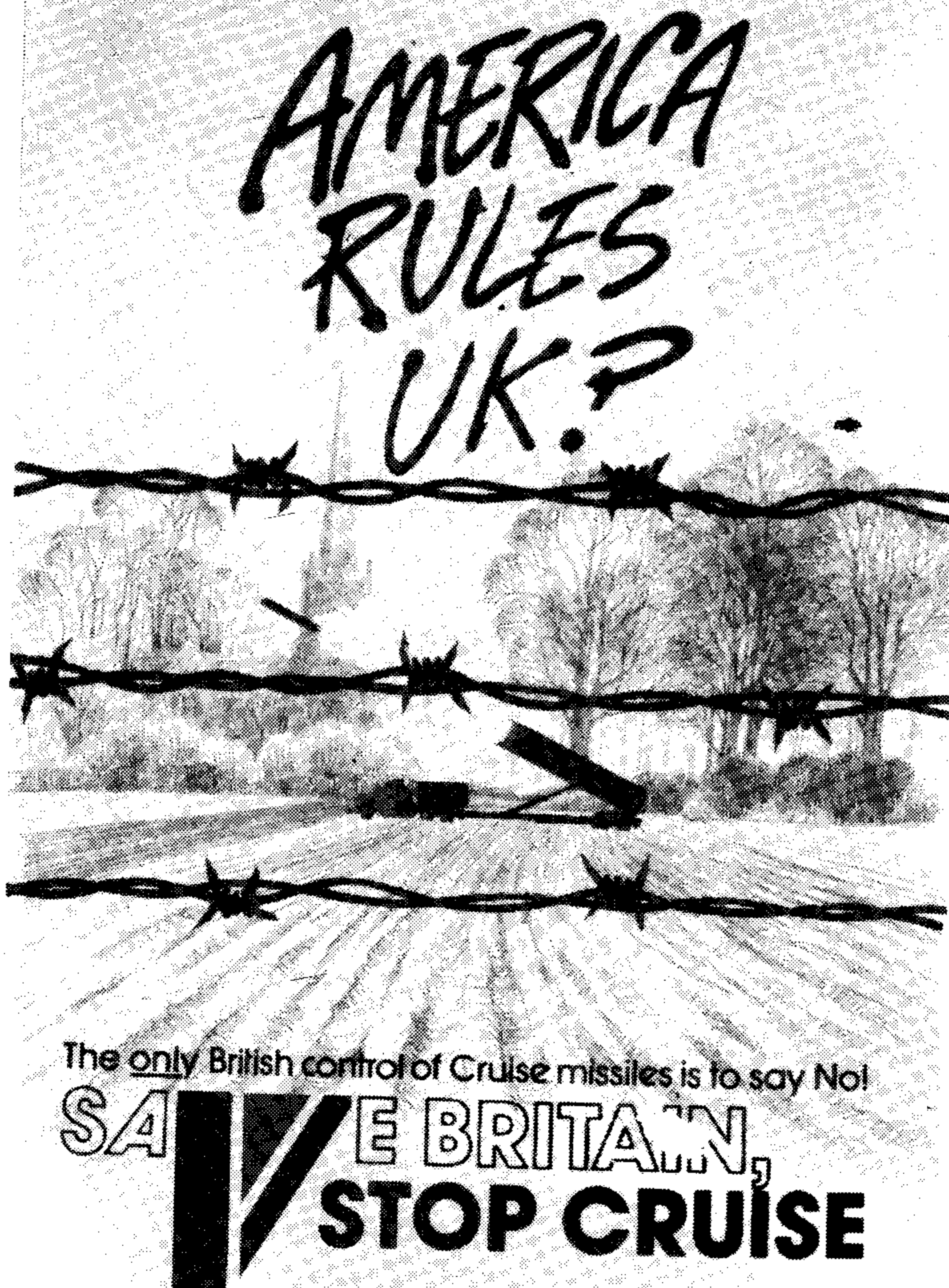
We must oppose YTS, demanding that the employers top up the £25 allowance to full union rates and guarantee a job at the end. Several Labour councils are doing this. Determined trade union struggle like at Massey

Ferguson in Coventry has won this. Where we can't win those demands, and schemes are simply being used to take workers' jobs, the trade unions should stop the schemes. The NGA, NUJ and NUM have agreed to this, they won't touch YTS at all. Above all, we must get YTSers into their trade unions. Only in the unions can YTSers fight for their rights on schemes: for legal protection, full union rates of pay, and a real job at the end.

New video about YTS. "Rights — Wot Rights?" — available from Birmingham Trades Union Resources Centre, Frederick Street, Birmingham.



Stop the Armagh strip searches



ON International Women's Day, 10-12 March, over 300 women from Ireland and Britain picketed Armagh women's prison to show their solidarity with Irish republican women prisoners and to protest against the conditions inside the prison.

Seven women went from Coventry. One of them, Kathy, spoke to Class Fighter about her experiences.

"I had supported a united Ireland, troops out and so on for ages and I felt I needed to see for myself what was actually going on in the North of Ireland and to show my support to the women who are struggling there.

"I was amazed at the response of the women in Belfast.

All weekend I felt very conscious of how I was seen by the women. Did they see me as a day tripper? I felt that they didn't. They were supportive, glad to answer what must have seemed very naive questions. All that they were asking in return was that I listen to them and that I join in their fight in whichever way I could.

There was a lot of interest from Irish women about the issues feminists were organising around in Britain. One of the speakers talked about how the men's struggle in Ireland is very clear — they're fighting British troops and for a united Ireland.

For women, while they're fighting to make Ireland free too, they're also fighting rape,

violence in marriage, sexual abuse and discrimination. The women in Sinn Féin have won significant ground on these issues but they're still fighting. The strongest feeling I had all weekend was of solidarity between women.

Women spoke about the present governor of Armagh Gaol and his personal vendetta against the women. He has really taken up the strip searches as a method of breaking them.

I spoke to a woman who had served a 12 year sentence in Armagh who said that most women were juveniles, 16 or 17, when they are taken in.

The logic is that it's easier to break them at that age.

She was 17 when she went in.

When I left, I felt sad at leaving the friends I'd made, longing to go back again. I was aware that I'd never experienced anything like this weekend before. You always draw parallels to things you've experienced in the past, but with Belfast I couldn't do that. I was thinking about the constant police presence, the women blinded by "harmless" plastic bullets, the women's strength and shrewdness.

I will talk to people here, raise issues and try to fight in whatever way I can to bring justice to Ireland and to the women of Ireland. This, at the least, is what I owe them for their warmth and understanding."



March in solidarity with women republican prisoners in Armagh Jail

INSIDE the peace movement there's a lot of anti-American feeling. US Air Force bases are singled out — the stress is on the nuclear threat. Right-wingers in the OND peddle British sovereignty and lack of British control as an argument against Cruise being sited here.

The postcard reproduced above is an example of the rank British chauvinism churned out by parts of the peace movement.

Even Labour leftists like Tony Benn complain about American dominance over Britain — he argues that Britain needs a liberation struggle! But the facts are different. The British ruling class has voluntarily gone along with NATO, collaborated with it and played a major part in developing nuclear weapons and NATO first strike strategy.

Our ruling class is not oppressed by America. We are oppressed by our own ruling class and its international allies. America doesn't oppress British workers directly. It does it hand in hand with British bosses and America certainly doesn't oppress them!

This nationalism has got to be broken down. We're on the side of workers everywhere, including America, and not on the side of British bosses against a phantom oppressor — American big business.

Coming out

MOST people take their sexuality for granted — most heterosexual people, that is. They live in a heterosexual world where it is perfectly 'normal' to fall in love with someone, eventually get married and probably have kids.

But what if you're gay? What if you love another man or another woman? You don't fit in with what's supposed to be normal. You're "different". You won't get married to your partner, you won't have kids and you certainly won't find that the world accepts your sexuality as it would if you were straight. The normal path people follow right from boyfriend comics like Jackie and smutty school boy jokes through to divorce isn't for you.

In most cases when young people first realise they're gay it's a painful, unpleasant and confusing experience. All of a sudden what most people never have to think twice about becomes an enormous problem.

And it's not so much a problem caused by gay people themselves, but by a largely prejudiced, intolerant and

By Brett Haran, Lesbian and Gay YS Group.

ignorant society. A case of "If you don't conform there must be something wrong with you".

For many gays their sexuality is a dark secret they live in fear of someone discovering. For those who come out it can be hell. All of us have felt some form of rejection from family and friends which often leads in turn to a feeling of complete isolation. Most of us have experienced some form of verbal and physical abuse, and losing your job is common. So who do you turn to for support? How do gays cope with coming out?

Class

This last question is important because it raises the question of class. Coming out is much more difficult for working class gays. If you're middle class your social pos-

sibilities are greatly increased. You probably move in so-called liberal minded circles where prejudices are less hardened. But the crucial thing is that you have the economic status and power to lead a social life with other gay people. You have the money to go out to the clubs, to enjoy the gay scene.

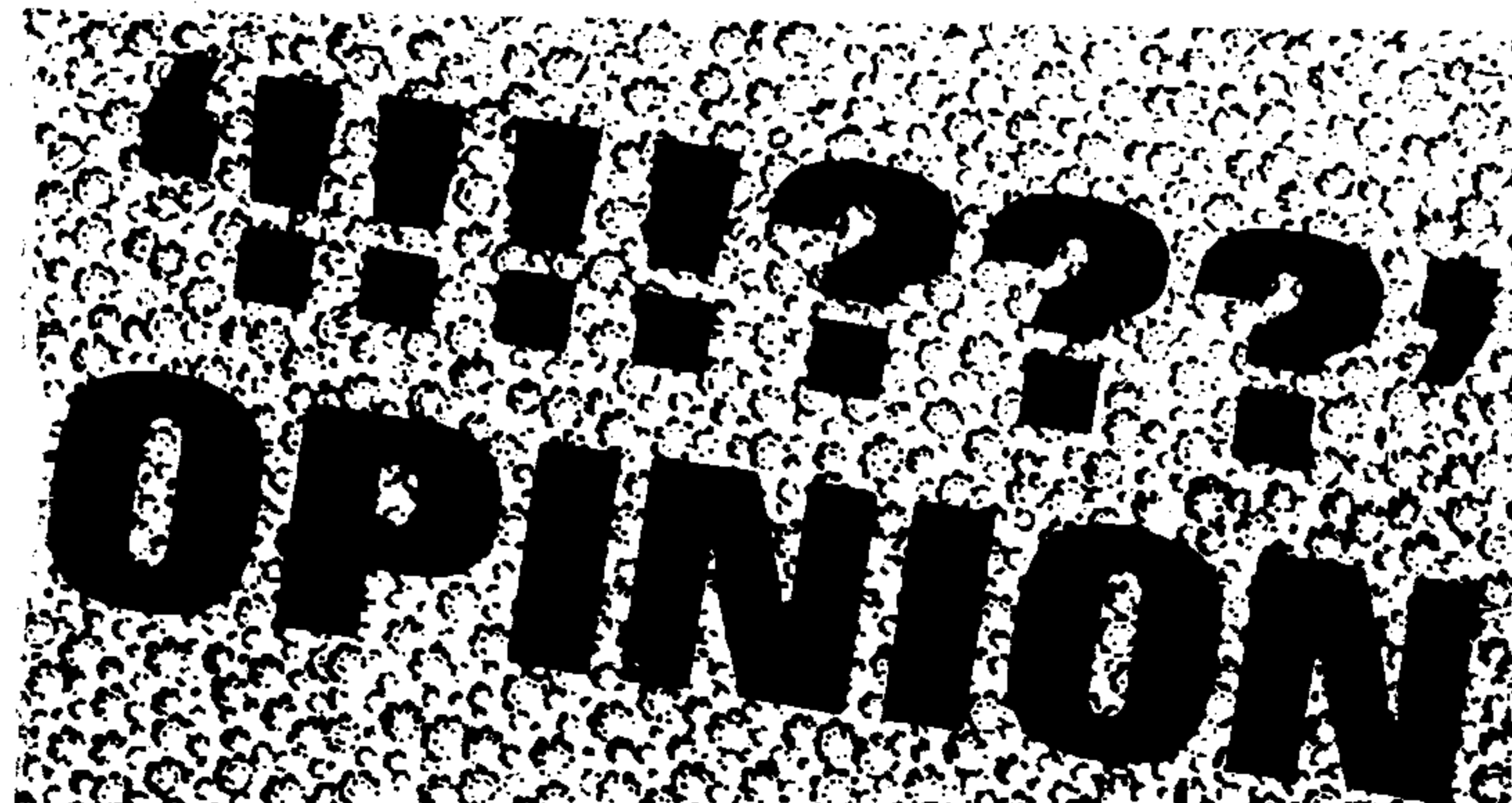
Your economic position gives you more opportunities to do more things. But what if you're working class, possibly unemployed and therefore with very little money? How easy is it then to get out and meet other gay people, especially if you don't live in one of the big cities? That's when you really feel isolated. That's when your class determines the possibilities for your life.

Sexuality should be an important issue for all socialists who are concerned to fight oppression wherever it is found. None of us are free, straight or gay, whilst the capitalist ruling-class has the power to determine for us the way we live our lives. From

being very young we are conditioned into believing that some things are acceptable, while others are not. Sexuality is a part of this process. What we want as socialists is for people to have control over their own lives and that must mean the freedom to define their sexuality as they choose.

It is vital for young working class gays and lesbians to get the help they need. The YS can take the lead here and give whatever support is necessary in the struggle to overcome oppression.

They will not win the fight without solidarity from other socialist comrades. We all have an interest in uniting in struggle and smashing the system which maintains our oppression. It's not easy persuading significant sections of the YS to support their gay comrades, but if we consistently push, and win the arguments in people's minds we'll be that much closer to a socialist perspective which seeks to end all oppression, economic, sexual, racial or otherwise.



The 'Nuclear winter'

GOVERNMENT Civil Defence propaganda says that after a nuclear war, survivors will begin to rebuild a habitable world. This idea is also present to a lesser extent in films like 'The War Game' and 'The Day After'. But just how realistic is this?

A study by a group of top US scientists on the long term biological consequences of nuclear war have been published. They calculated that if only one-third of the US and USSR nuclear arsenals were used, 30-50% of the world's population would be immediate casualties. But the group's most striking findings had to do with the sort of world survivors would be faced with when they come out of their hastily built shelters.

They showed that large numbers of nuclear explosions would release enough toxic smoke and dust into the atmosphere to form a blanketing cloud over the entire Northern Hemisphere which would reduce sunlight reaching the ground to only about 1% of normal. The dust cloud could well spread to encompass the whole Southern Hemisphere as well, plunging the earth into a period of continual darkness which would last for months. Sunlight is the primary energy source of the world. Plant growth would be drastically limited since light energy would not be available. This in itself would probably lead to mass extinctions of animal and plant species, but other effects would soon make themselves felt.

There would be a rapid drop in land temperatures to a long way below freezing point (approximately minus 23 degrees centigrade). Some inland areas would be subject to snow blizzards for months on end even if it were midsummer. Violent storms, exceeding anything we have so far experienced, would add to this picture of devastation, known as the 'nuclear winter'.

Another effect of the dust cloud would be to increase the length of time over which the earth would be exposed to lethal levels of atomic radiation.

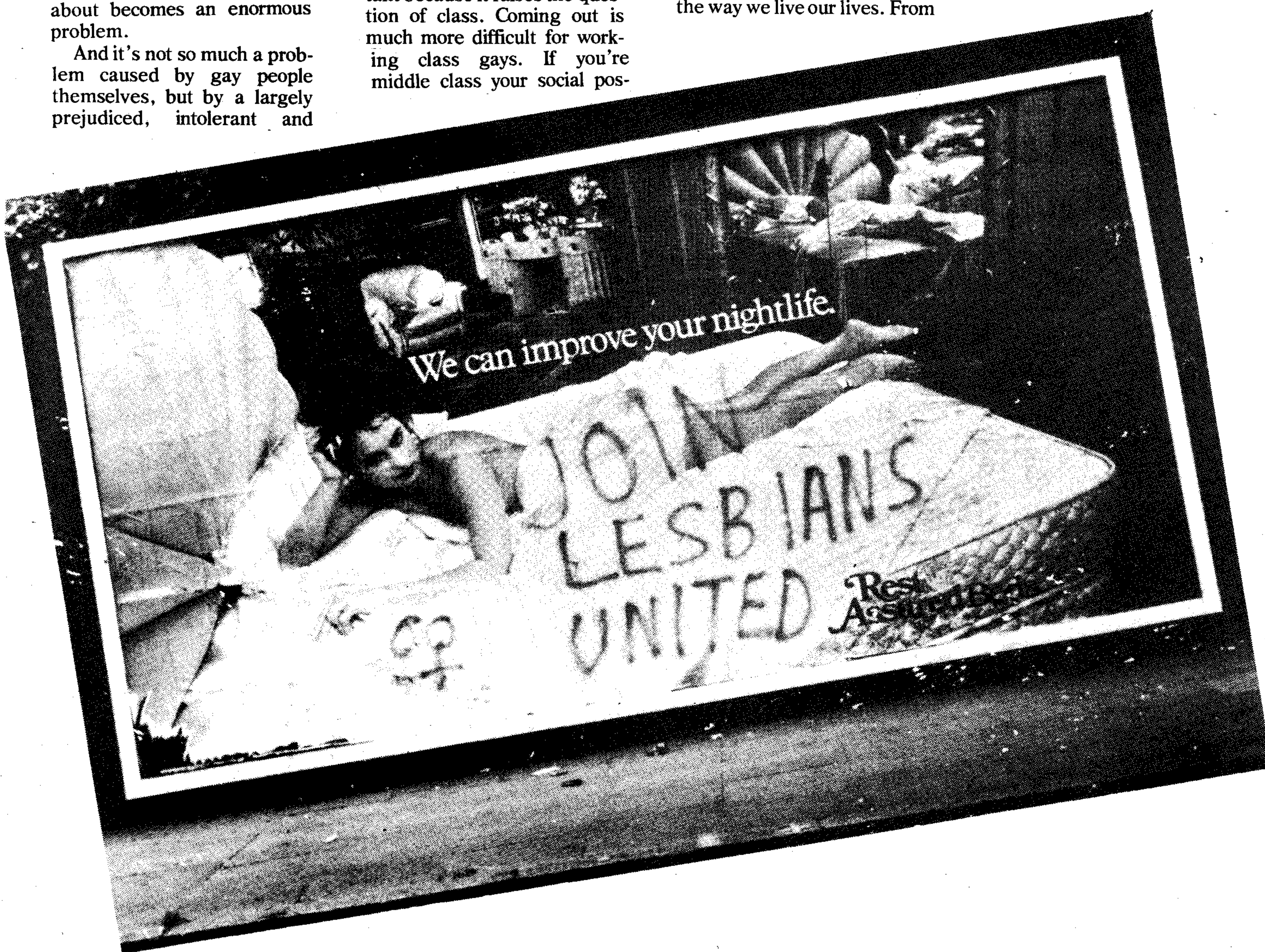
After a few months the dust and smoke would settle. But this would only lead to new dangers. Nuclear explosions deplete the ozone layer which shields the earth from ultra-violet light. The dust cloud would protect the earth's surface but once it had dispersed, the surface would be bathed in ultra-violet rays. Prolonged exposure to such high levels of ultra-violet light causes blindness, skin cancer and weakens the immune system which protects us from disease, thus increasing the likelihood of vast fatal epidemics.

With all this taken into account the scientists reported that 'the possibility of the extinction of Homo Sapiens (humans) cannot be excluded'.

But isn't this all too far fetched? The conclusions were arrived at after all from consideration of the effects of 'large scale' nuclear war. The group however also considered a situation where the war was 'limited'. Even then they were forced to predict that even a 'limited' nuclear war could lead to irreversible nuclear winter conditions.

Our knowledge of exactly how nature balances out isn't very good. So it may be argued that the actual effects of nuclear war would not be so great. Equally it can be said that factors might interact in a way we are unable to foresee (as yet) and make conditions even worse.

(Information from 'Science' and 'Scientists Against Nuclear Weapons').



LABOUR Movement Lesbians have been meeting as a group for three months now. We felt the need to organise as lesbians to support each other and to take initiatives against our own oppression.

We live in a society in which heterosexuality is presented as the "natural" norm; sexuality is seen as unchanging fixed from birth. We believe that heterosexuality is a political institution which works to keep us all

By Denise Fowler

straightjacketed within the nuclear family to serve the needs of capitalist and patriarchal society. Lesbians and gay men are subject to severe punishment for refusing to be straightjacketed like that. In addition we are oppressed as are all women within a male dominated society, but in particular as women who are obviously refusing to accept our defined roles as wives and

mothers, to be the emotional nurturers of men. Women, putting women first in this will pose a very great threat to the status quo.

Neither gay men or straight women, that within the labour movement's can fully appreciate our oppression. As activists in many campaigns within the Trade Unions, the Labour Party and elsewhere we recognise the need to make alliances with both these groups to challenge the sexism and heterosexism within the

labour Movement but this must be on our terms.

We are at present operating as a discussion and campaigning group. The next meeting is on racism at 7pm April 27th. Then there is a business meeting on 28th at 12.30pm. Both at A Women's Place, Hungerford House, Victoria Embankment, London WC2 (Disabled access). Further information contact Sarah, c/o Feminist Library address as above. Tel 01-930-0715.

Labour Movement Lesbians

Diary of a People's Marcher 50p



50p for a single copy, 40p per copy for 5 or more, and 30p per copy for 20 or more, from SUPA, 83 Peckham High Street, London SE15. Please add an amount for postage.

by Satinder Singh and Tony Purtil
Introduction by Jeremy Corbyn, MP

CLASS FIGHTER



Demonstrate
May 26th Coventry
June 9th London

DEMONSTRATE

AGAINST REAGAN!

SHOCKING as it may be, the Queen has had to move her official birthday forward a week!!! The reason? Reagan is attending an economic summit in London on June 9.

In response to Reagan's visit CND has been pressed into organising a national demonstration on June 9.

It wasn't easy getting them to call it, but the pressure built up for a demonstration within the disarmament movement over the last few months, and now there will be major mass actions over the weekend of June 9.

Clearly the event could be huge.

Council

CND's National Council have decided that the theme of the demonstration should be 'Return to sender' — meaning Reagan should take Cruise back with him.

By Judith Bonner

But in reality there are lots of reasons to demonstrate against Reagan.

Just look at the warmongering politics of the Reagan administration. Reagan is hellbent on keeping the position of power and strength enjoyed by the US bosses and their partners, the British bosses and Tories.

International

Just look around the world. You can see Reagan and Thatcher supporting and arming vicious and barbaric regimes like the one in El Salvador — where 36,000 civilians have died and a further 3,000 'disappeared' in the last five years.

In the Middle East, Reagan is holding the nuclear trigger.

NATO's strategy of "first

strike" which led to the deployment of Cruise in Europe has spread to the Middle East.

The 'Rapid Deployment Force' is nearly fully operational which means that Reagan will be able to respond to any 'threat' to the West's vital interests — whether it be oil supplies being cut off or the working class and oppressed peoples fighting for their liberation — by sending in the marines and threatening the 'go-nuclear' if he doesn't get his way.

Serious

It's about time the YS woke up to the threat posed by Reagan's and Thatcher's warmongering and started to take the movement against the missiles and war seriously.

It could start by helping organise a massive youth contingent for June 9.



Reagan supports
El Salvador death squads

Out
of
NATO
now!

"To us NATO means free societies,
To us NATO stands for freedom of speech,
To us NATO means freedom from fear,
To us NATO means freedom of information,
In sum, NATO is the world's most effective peace movement."

Who said that? Heseltine? Dr. Owen? Nope, 60 top trade unionists, including Alistair Graham (CPSA), Frank Chapple (EETPU), Syd Vincent (NUM), and the majority of the AUEW Executive, in a ¼ page advert in the papers last week, co-ordinated by the 'Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding', which, if our memory serves us right, has a place deep in the heart of Denis Healey too.

Don't these labour movement worthies know what NATO is? Don't they know that NATO is a bosses alliance which has made the running in every heat of the arms race? Don't they know that NATO's job is to back up pro-imperialist regimes in trouble and to plot right-wing coups. Which is precisely what they did in Turkey. Before the Turkish coup in '81 the Generals had meetings with NATO. Now these generals have completely smashed the Turkish unions; liquidated activists and the leaders have been on trial for 2 years. Oddly enough at least of the signatures, Alistair Graham must know all about Turkey and NATO, he must know because he spoke at a public meeting last month in defence of Turkish Trade Unions...

BUILD YCND

THE mass demonstrations against Reagan on June 9 offer a great opportunity for us to build YCND.

We need to turn the entire movement towards mobilising for this event. It will provide a badly needed focus for the energies of YCND activists and groups.

Up till now the LPYS has not really taken up the fight

By Dan Duncan, YCND
National Committee
member.

as it could have done. Instead it has stood on the sidelines.

But with Reagan the focus of action, the LPYS would be missing a huge opportunity to take up the fight against the

bosses' war drive, if it fails to participate properly.

The YS and YCND should be organising joint meetings and leafleting to publicise the demonstration. And in that way we can build both the LPYS and YCND around what has got to be a massive event with tens of thousands of young people out on the streets protesting against the warmongers.