



**LETTERS to the FREE PRESS**

Send your letters to Liverpool Free Press, 48 Manchester Street, Liverpool 1.

## Threat to free speech

I WRITE in disgust of just hearing a news report on the current legal situation on the Cammell Laird pickets.

As most of us know, pickets were arrested at the shipyard for applying their democratic right to picket, the reason being that the yard at that time was in dispute. The police intervened as usual, and arrested a number of pickets and later charged them with obstruction, assault on the police and behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace.

The thing which horrifies me is what the magistrates at Birkenhead stipulated as a condition of bail, i.e. the accused should only go to work in the course of their employment and that they must not picket the yard. What right has a magistrate or for that case any person, to take away one's basic social and democratic rights, i.e. the right to picket?

Is it necessary to remind our magistrates and the courts of what is laid down in law in relation to picketing? The Trade Disputes Act 1906 categorically states that:

"It shall be lawful for one or more persons acting on their own behalf or on the behalf of a trade union, or of an individual employer, or firm in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute, to attend at, or near a house or place, where a person resides or works or carries on business, or happens to be, if they attend merely for the purpose of obtaining or communicating information, or of peacefully persuading any person to work or abstain from working."

I am afraid that this is yet another case of the British legal system using their powers, when required to suppress freedom of speech.

Something which I believe is permissible in this country? Or is it?

I am afraid it is becoming more apparent, as in the Shrewsbury pickets trial and numerous similar situations, that the 'cob-webbed' Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875 is being used as a weapon against freedom of speech. I am sorry, but the days of freedom of speech are slowly but surely sailing down the river, and this is a particularly frightening situation, one of which the trade union movement and any responsible person should look at very carefully.

-KEVIN J. EARLEY, NYPE Shop Steward, Walton Hospital, Liverpool.

**PATIENTS** suffering from chest complaints in Fazakerley Hospital look forward to the weekly visits from the British Legion.

With rare understanding, smiling Legion members dispense free Player's No. 6.

Hospital staff try to discourage smoking as a health hazard. In the chest ward it is particularly

• The story in Free Press no. 20.

## Smoke-screen

MY COMMITTEE and I are rather perturbed with reference to your remarks as stated in your paper. We here at Fazakerley Branch are fully aware of the dangers accompanying chest patients smoking, having been made fully aware of the facts by the hospital secretary some years ago when we met and had a discussion on contagious and infectious diseases, and the precautions which had to be borne in mind by visitors to this end.

Our visitors do not, repeat do not give cigarettes to any patients in the chest wards, and cigarettes are only given in the geriatric wards with the ward sisters blessing.

Having given you these facts I sincerely hope that you will clear our name in your press. I am, yours fraternally, A.E. POOLE, Branch Chairman, Royal British Legion, Cregson Hall, Longmoor Lane, Liverpool 10-

• The information about the British Legion's generosity with cigarettes in Fazakerley Hospital chest wards came directly from a patient.

He was suffering from a chest complaint and doctors saw no reason to examine either his head or his eyes.

## A great service

THANK YOU for your letter. We have looked into the matter of retailing your paper through our outlets in the Liverpool and Kirkby area but regret that we are still unable to handle your publication. We circulated our managers requesting their views, but the unanimous opinion was that your publication could not add to the service they are already offering the local community. -K.C. DUNCAN Marketing and Merchandising Director, Forbuoys Ltd (Newsagents), 82 Hampton Road, Twickenham.

• Readers may like to let Forbuoys' managers know what they think of this service to the community.

## No benefit

THIS MONTH'S increases in Social Security benefits will not make up for the 26% rate of inflation this year.

From November 17 there are increases in all rates of National Insurance benefits - so benefits such as unemployment, sickness and widow's benefits all go up. The pension for a married couple is increased from £18.50 to £20.80.

Supplementary Benefit rates go up at the same time. The basic rate for a couple will be £17.75 plus rent and rates (£10.90 for a single householder).

For low wage earners, the Family Income Supplement rates are revised. For example, a family with three children will be entitled to FIS if their GROSS income is less than £38.50, and they will now get £8.

While the poor get poorer, surveys show that many of those entitled to benefits do not get them - due to poor publicity and complicated regulations.

Age Concern reported recently that Supplementary Benefits fail to reach at least half a million pensioners whose income falls below the poverty line.

Now - as part of its public spending cuts - the Government has scrapped plans to mount a campaign to make people aware of their social security rights.

# About this issue

STARTING with this issue the Free Press will be published on the first Monday of every month.

We have increased the number of pages to include several new features:

• "Offensive". Each alternate month there will be a contributed article on a controversial topic. It should not be assumed that articles in this series represent the views of the Free Press. Nor do we necessarily expect readers to agree with them. We simply hope readers will think about the issues raised - and reply if they want. Replies will be published in the month following each article.

• News from everywhere. This is intended to broaden the outlook of the paper by reporting news from other parts of Britain and the world

-the sort of news you don't read in other papers. Where items have not been researched by ourselves, sources will be stated.

• Local action. A number of readers have said they would like to see more 'positive' news - what ordinary people are doing to sort out their problems. As time goes on, we hope this section will expand. If you're doing something interesting, give us a ring.

• Informer. Our information section is expanded to include local folk and rock news, as well as that traditional Liverpool pastime - drinking.

We would like to include more community events - please tell us about them.

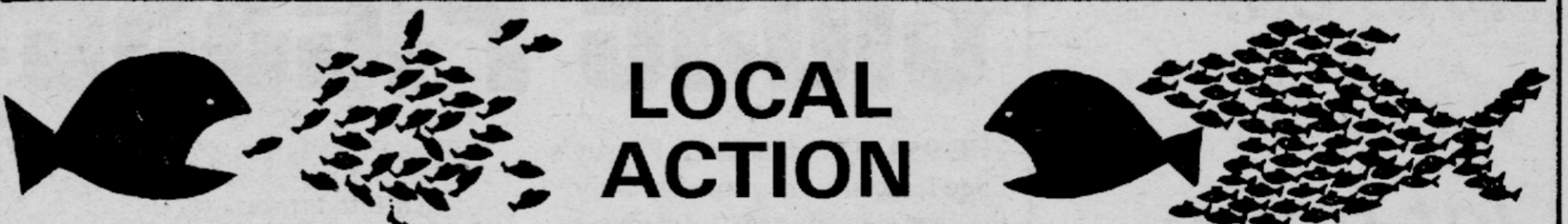
With these additions, our basic

aims stay the same: to provide a radical newspaper which is both informative and useful, and with the sort of news you can't get elsewhere.

The Free Press is not connected with any political party or organisation. It is non-profit making and is run democratically without an editor.

Note: Although the entrance to our office at 48 Manchester Street is through News from Nowhere bookshop, the Free Press and the bookshop are entirely independent.

Have you any stories or ideas for our next issue (or any comments on this one)? If so, come for an informal chat at the Vines ('The Big House'), Lime Street on Sunday November 16 at 7.30. (This is particularly for anyone who can't call at our office during the daytime).



## LOCAL ACTION

### Kids are in the saddle now

A LOT of kids on the Fazakerley housing estate, off Lower Lane, are learning to ride - free. What's more, the children run their "riding school" themselves.

The man behind the school is Bill Carroll, a bulldozer driver by trade, who lives on the estate. He bought a pony for his own children and, when he saw they interest, got two more.

Coco cost £30, Tommy Thumb £150 and Donk £35.

He put them out on a piece of waste land near the estate. The council don't know who owns it and it's no use for anything else anyway.

Now a builder from West Derby has added his three ponies. Even with hay in the winter, Bill reckons the cost is only about £2 a week.

There were about 50 kids a day taking turns in the summer. Their ages range from six to 16. Because they are short of saddles, many of them ride bare-back.

Some of them have ridden to Formby for a day on the beach and back.

Bill says it proves something: "When we first started everybody said those horses will be stabbed or stoned. I said I don't think so. If kids get the chance, they'll run a thing."

"I find it's better that kids run it themselves. They have their own laws and everything."

Maybe it's significant that there has been very little vandalism on the Fazakerley estate since Bill Carroll's school opened 18 months ago.



### Lorry petition

TWO Bootle women have organised a petition asking Sefton Council to close their street to through traffic.

Heavy lorries have been using Balfour Road as a short cut since neighbouring streets were blocked off. Parents are particularly concerned about young children who go to two schools nearby.

When they collected the petition, Kathleen Moore and Mary Hoy discovered that some people in Balfour Road were worried about an oil extraction business in the street.

This was passed on to the local councillor. And it turns out that the

firm, Lucrol Ltd, have been operating for five years without planning permission.

A Fire Prevention Officer has carried out an inspection. But - surprise, surprise - he is under no obligation to make his report public.

So far there is no action over the traffic. We asked Mrs Moore how much use she thought petitions were.

"It does bring the point to the attention of the council," she said. "Whether they take any action is another matter."

### Going to court

TWO TENANTS in Walton are taking their landlords - and Liverpool Corporation - to court.

Mr Alan Scroggie of Hampden St and Mr Foote of Ruskin St say their landlords, the Graffe Trust and the BTG Trust, have failed to do repairs.

They are taking action under the 1936 Public Health Act, which also obliges the local authority to do repairs when landlords default.

Among the repairs needed, according to an architect's report, are: damp walls and leaking roofs, obsolete wiring and bad ceilings.

This is thought to be the first case of its kind in Liverpool, and if successful, it could have important repercussions.

BTG and Graffe are among the city's largest private landlords, and other tenants are awaiting the result with interest.

## Plessey

(Continued from page one)

million pound investment and is definitely permanent.

They have a 25-year lease on the factory premises.

Now Plessey are refusing to give assurances about the location of a second new factory planned for October 1976.

But, as Dr Willetts told that meeting with council chiefs, "There are obvious attractions in re-establishing the organisation on a brand new site with good road communications and with a 'green field' setting."

Even if the new factory is sited on Merseyside there is no guarantee of jobs for the Edge Lane workforce. "TXE-4 (the new system) manufacture will require at least 40% less labour than the electro-mechanical generation," according to the Financial Times (2 Oct. 1975).

Manufacturers like Plessey had hoped for a gradual switch to the new equipment. But the cancellation of Post Office orders has made that impossible.

According to the Financial Times, 12,000 jobs in the industry will be lost over the next 18 months. (GEC have already announced the closure of three factories with 4,800 redundancies by 1978. But so far Plessey have admitted only 2,000 lost jobs.)

But there are advantages to employers: "One of the few saving graces is that the period of labour unrest may be shortened," said the Financial Times.

Recent technological advances in themselves look bad for the Edge Lane workers. The factory mainly manufactures the out-dated Strowger equipment. And orders from the Post Office - for replacements - and from abroad have been falling off anyway.

Between 3,000 and 4,000 jobs at Edge Lane have disappeared over the last five years.

At the moment, outstanding orders stretch no further than March next year. Leaders of the campaign to save the white collar jobs think shop floor redundancies will come then. They think Plessey have deliberately split the workforce by going for office cuts first.

And management have already warned them that if further cuts are necessary, there will have to be "a balancing of human and physical resources."

In other words, a factory is likely to close.

## FREE PRESS

Write to us c/o  
48 Manchester St. L1 6ER  
or phone 227 2514

### WHAT'S HAPPENING IN CHINA?

If you want to know subscribe to Peking Review, China Reconstructs, China Pictorial, Chinese Literature. - all at OCTOBER BOOKS, 4b Temple Court, Liverpool 2 (Also Chinese posters, cards, papercuts and handicrafts.)

ONE WEEK'S holiday in Wales. Organised walking and general good time. Includes New Year party. Apply: Jim Lyon, 127 Greenhill Rd., Liverpool L18 7QH.

## OCTOPUS CLUB

4 Nov. Folk evening.  
11 Nov. Armistice Day poems etc.  
25 Nov. A personal statement - Bob O'Keefe.

Meetings: Brook House Hotel 1, Smithdown Road, 8.30

## ANANDA PRINTING

6-8 KNIGHT STREET (off Berry Street)

Cheap commercial work and even cheaper rates for community groups

Tel: 051-708 8248