

NOTTINGHAM AGITATOR

PAPER OF
NOTTINGHAM
ANARCHIST
SOCIALIST
GROUP

November, December, and January

Issue No. 5



HEALTH THREAT

In early November the Government launched its most vicious attack yet on the NHS, one which could prove fatal.

There were two parts to this attack: to the nurses and auxiliary workers, and to all of us - the users.

A core idea of the NHS, set up 40 years ago, was that there should be 'free health care for all'. The introduction of charges for eye and dental check-ups signals the thin edge of the wedge. Thatcher's intentions are clear - pay up or die. She said in parliament that people would be 'glad' to pay for the NHS. How right she is - we all already pay through taxation - what she wants is for us to pay twice.

That the Conservatives mean to wound the NHS further is clear. Back-bench MP's were threatened that if they didn't support the Government on the introduction of charges then they would get none of the desperately needed

hospital improvements in their constituencies.

The second attack on the NHS was in the form of the imposed re-grading of health workers pay. Instead of a proper increase in pay they have been forced into acceptance of a 'divide and rule' tactic - where some will get more and others less.

But the Government is not going to get away with this lightly. Ordinary people have shown that they are prepared to take action to defend their health service. Already nurses in Manchester and elsewhere are striking or 'working to grade' i.e. just doing what they are paid for under the new system, and showing that together we CAN get the health service we want - that means more and better hospitals, well paid health workers and no more waiting lists.■

MORE PITS IN NOTTS WILL SHUT

HUNDREDS more mining jobs will be lost in the Nottinghamshire coalfield if the Tories press ahead with the threatened 'privitisation' of the industry.

Their vision is of a small, concentrated and highly profitable coal industry, built around a new generation of 'superpits', worked by a docile and 'flexible' workforce.

It goes hand in hand with their planned massive expansion of the dangerous and costly nuclear power programme.

It means that many pits in Nottinghamshire - including many controlled by the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) face certain closure.

Cotgrave is just one of several UDM pits in the Notts field running at an annual loss of millions of pounds.

A privately run coal industry won't tolerate such

Continued page 2

loss making. Cotgrave, and pits like it are certain to be axed in the run-up to the great sell-off.

That's how British Coal plans to repay scab pits for their role in undermining the 84/85 Miners Strike - by closing them down when their 'usefulness' expires.

The leaders of the scab UDM, of course, have learnt nothing from the closure of first Hucknall and then Mansfield pits - both UDM strongholds.

Their response to a closure threat is not to fight British Coal, but is to push their members to work even harder to meet higher and higher production targets, in the hope that British Coal grants a stay of execution.

British Coal play the UDM along, screwing as much work as possible from the desperate UDM workforce, before announcing closure at the last possible moment. They've done this many times

Daily Express

THURSDAY OCTOBER 13 1988

22p

Standing ovation as Parkinson gives 'historic' pledge to privatise mines



Parkinson: Darling of the conference

THE TORIES AT BRIGHTON
BIG JOBS SWITCH TO HELP SCOTLAND

By GEORGE BINNELL
THE GOVERNMENT may divert up to 5000 job service jobs out of London to Scotland and the regions of England.
Some of the worst unemployment backlogs in the West of Scotland and Northern England are being addressed to receive them.
Opposition Secretary Malcolm to receive them for the the scene of the

PITS TO GO UP FOR SALE

ENERGY Secretary Cecil Parkinson put a For Sale notice on British Coal yesterday



before, and they'll certainly do it again.

UDM leaders are too stupid to see this. Punch drunk with their success at being allowed to organise miners at the new Asfordby 'superpit' in Leicestershire, they still cling to the hope that British Coal will look after them.

If the UDM get things their way, they will preside over the final destruction of much of the Midlands coalfield.

As thousands more miners are forced to join the dole queues, as pit after pit is

shut in the privatisation drive, the UDM will point with pride to the couple of hundred jobs for 'their lads' at Asfordby - their consolation prize for agreeing to the decimation of the rest of the industry.

Before it is too late miners must take up the fight to stop the Tories plans for privatisation. Not because a 'nationalised industry' in a capitalist system is something to defend, but because privatisation means job losses, pit closures and devastated communities.

BYRON BALLOT 'COUNCIL CRISIS'

The Labour candidate, Alan Clark won the recent Byron Ward by-election. This leaves Nottingham City Council with a bizarre political structure: 27 Labour councillors, 27 Conservative, and John Peck, our one Communist councillor, now holding the balance of power.

CAN NOTTINGHAM SURVIVE COMMUNISM?

The fact that our one Communist holds the balance of power creates an unusual state of affairs: does this mean that Nottingham is about to be subject to five year plans and forced collectivization, or even a spate, long overdue, of glasnost from our City Council?

Instead of the usual Christmas decorations will we be seeing the hammer and sickle up in lights. Perhaps for once we should be thankful that little of substance can be gained from the Council. But we should not fear Nottingham turning into a 'little Russia' quite just yet! Basically life will go on much the same as before.

Assuming that John Peck votes with the Labour councillors (one can never tell with the Communist Party, they have some funny ideas) then at least it means that the Conservatives have been ousted from power, for which we should be thankful. Party politics is a choice between the lesser of two evils: and whilst we have no faith in the Labour Party, nor indeed in the Communist Party, at least they are better than the Conservatives. Aren't they?

BEESTON POOL FIGHT

After the Beeston Boiler factory - on Queens Road Beeston - was demolished some time ago, the land was left clear. The new B&Q DIY store was built on part of the site but this still left a large area out of use, and there was much debate about what the land should be used for. One suggestion was taken up by Labour Councillor Michael Warner to build a swimming pool. This idea had quite a sound base as Beeston is the most unequipped area around Nottingham for leisure facilities. When the idea was put forward to Broxtowe council the Conservatives disliked the idea strongly. It was taken up by Tory councillor Mr Owen who put three arguments against the idea. The first was that Bramcote leisure centre (the nearest to Beeston) was near enough. This is quite true if you have a car. For those without, the price of bus travel there and the admission fee for the average family in Beeston comes to well over £5 - rather more than many families, especially one-parent families, can afford. The second argument was that Mr Owen hadn't received any letters suggesting a swimming pool, but the campaign group concerned with the swimming pool have found that the great majority of Beeston

residents would love one. The third argument is that the local Labour party are electioneering, as the site has been considered as an excellent place for Barratt's to build on. But that can be said of any political party, and emphasises the need for the campaign to be a community one. The Tory councillors won't budge an inch if they think that the Labour party are going to score a win. Sadly the site has recently been sold to Barratt's and building has commenced making the compulsory purchase of the site out of the question. But there are plenty of adequate sites all over Beeston so the campaign for a swimming pool is going as strongly as ever. Recently a public meeting has been suggested but the opposing councillors have wriggled out of this by saying that it would serve no purpose. It WOULD serve a purpose as it would show exactly the kind of support that the campaign has got in Beeston, but I suppose that they are not interested in what Beeston residents want. All in all the campaign is a good opportunity for the people of Beeston to get together as a community and claim what they want without having to achieve things behind the unconstructive dirge of political bickering.

PROFIT BEFORE SAFETY

In the last few years there's been a number of tragic disasters which have deeply affected the people of Britain. For example, there was the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise, the Kings Cross disaster, and the explosion of the Piper Alpha oil rig earlier this year. Although these major catastrophes appear at first to be unconnected they all could have been avoided if the companies involved would put people's safety before profit.

SAFETY STANDARDS

Despite the obvious need for improvements in safety on cross-channel ferries since the Zeebrugge disaster, few changes have actually been made. In less than a week in May this year, two separate fires broke out on

different channel ferries which only proves that safety standards have remained dangerously low. Workers have been in dispute with P&O since February this year because the company want to further reduce the standards in its ferries by implementing new working practices. P&O wants to impose a system of 7 day working, ie 7 days on board, 7 days off. During the week on board crew are expected to work 16 'paid' hours a day. During each week therefore the crew would be onboard 56 non-paid hours where they will be on emergency standby. This, with a reduction of the number of workers on each vessel, will seriously threaten to reduce the poor levels of standards existing already. On the 6th July 1988 167 people were killed in the Piper Alpha oil rig disaster in the North

**TOWNSEND
THORESEN** 

Boarding Card
Carte d'Embarquement

Bon Voyage

FRONT AND BACK OF T/T'S
BOARDING CARD

Sea. This 'accident' appears to be the result of an unexplained gas leak which caused an explosion under the living quarters of the crew. The Norwegian government has responded to a sequence of disasters on their North Sea oil rigs by demanding a distinct distance between all living quarters and any production apparatus. If such standards had applied to Piper Alpha then the disaster could have been avoided.

The Government Department of Energy only held an inspection on the rig a week before the catastrophe. We wonder how thorough the inspection was. Crew of the rig also swore that they could smell gas a few days before the explosion - but no measures were taken.

Both Occidental (the rig's owners) and the Government 'generously' donated £1 million to a disaster fund. If both of these organisations had responded to the history of oil rig disasters earlier then this disaster could have been avoided. They are therefore responsible for it. THEIR NEGLIGENCE for improved safety standards mean't that these people died. The same could be argued about the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise. For years now experts have been arguing that such ferries were unsafe and liable to capsize and sink. Such warnings have still to be heeded.

PROFIT BEFORE SAFETY

The horrendous, but nonetheless avoidable, loss of life in both these cases was the result of basic flaws in the designs of the ship and the oil rigs and the appallingly low but 'acceptable' safety standards. P&O, Occidental, and London Regional Transport and all other companies fail to offer their customers and employees any real safety because they continue to put profit before safety.

Last month the Chilean people voted overwhelmingly for an end to dictatorship in their country.

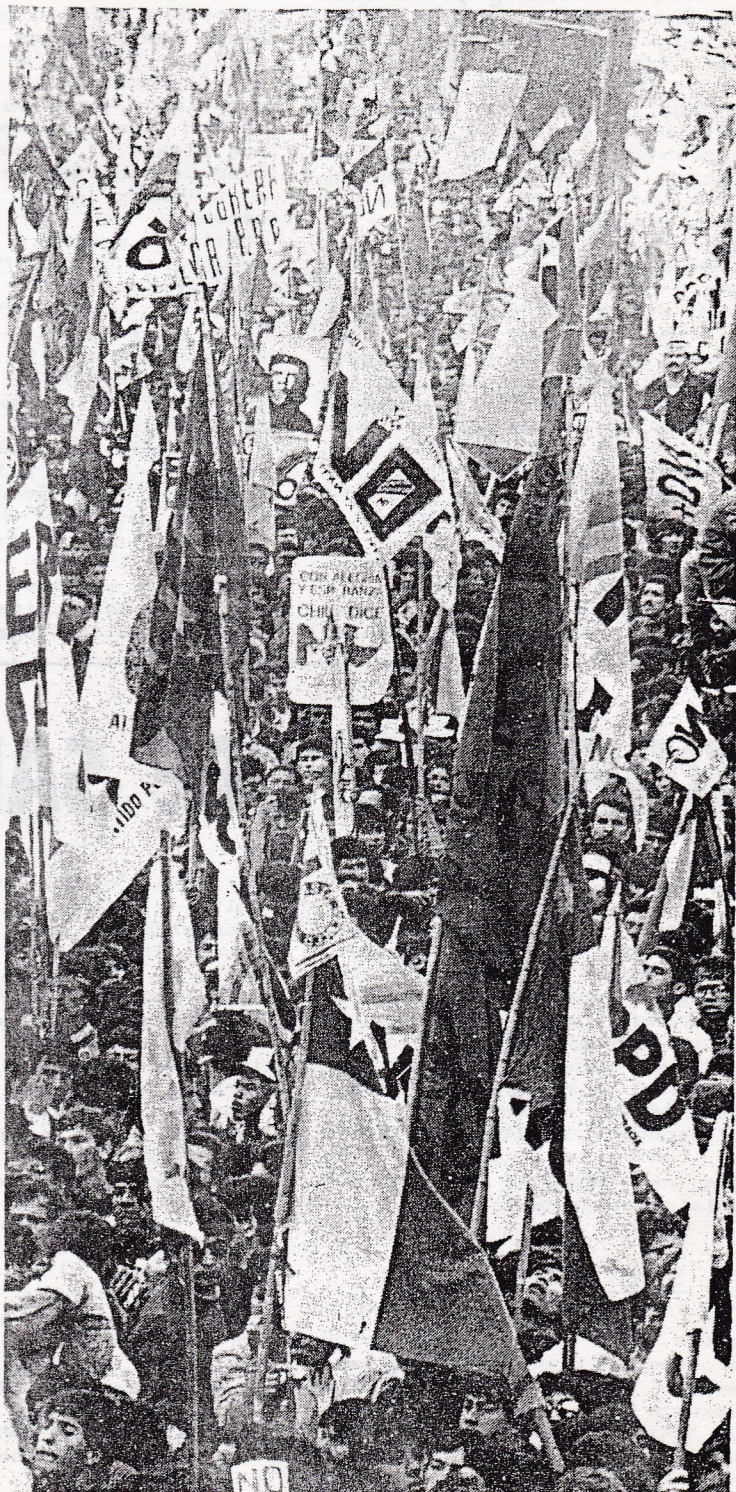
3½ million people came out to register their votes and say NO to General Pinochet who has ruled the country for 15 years. Pinochet seized power in 1973 through a military coup, and has ruled with terror and repression ever since. Thousands of people have been tortured, thousands more simply 'disappeared' or died at the hands of the notorious Death Squads.

The importance of this massive defeat for Pinochet cannot be exaggerated. This is a major victory for working class people in Chile. Within a year Pinochet should be out of office. Already there are calls for him to resign. After years of fear and repression people are out on the streets again demonstrating and taking mass action. New social and political groupings are being formed. Analysis of the voting shows that not only did male urban, industrial workers vote overwhelmingly against Pinochet, but so too did women, young people, and the lowest paid agricultural workers.

A lot still to fight for

But there is a lot still to fight for. The parties who led the call to oppose Pinochet form an uneasy coalition - they range from Communists and Greens to extreme right wing Nationalists. Now Pinochet is defeated they have far less in common than what divides them. Also the military which supported Pinochet is not going to change its allegiance quickly. America too will not be slow to support right wing causes and make sure that whoever rules the interests of big business, American multi-nationals and Profit will be served. All of these mean that ordinary people still have a major struggle on their hands. The fight of working class people in Chile is the same as the fight here - it is the struggle not for a different Government, but for us to take control of our homes, our communities, our work and our lives.

Chile: the dictatorship WILL fall



ANOTHER ELECTION ANOTHER FARCE

When someone gets elected to the most powerful position in one of the most powerful countries in the world on the basis of how cute they are then something sounds seriously wrong. For such a nation to have any faith at all in this lovable fool's abilities to run their country for them, and many other countries as well, then something is seriously wrong. But this is what's going on in the USA at the moment with their presidential election. At the time of writing this article, it appears that Ronald Reagan's vice-President, George Bush, is going to win it for the Republican's.

ARMS SCANDAL

Bush's political career is as dubious as his predecessor's. Whereas Reagan 'merely' did deals with Iran (a supposed USA enemy) to prevent the release of USA hostages there, Bush's dealings with Iran involved selling this enemy state weaponry in exchange for the release of hostages and then totally illegally diverting the money given from the sales to the right-wing contras in Central America. But the all in positions of power will be corrupted.

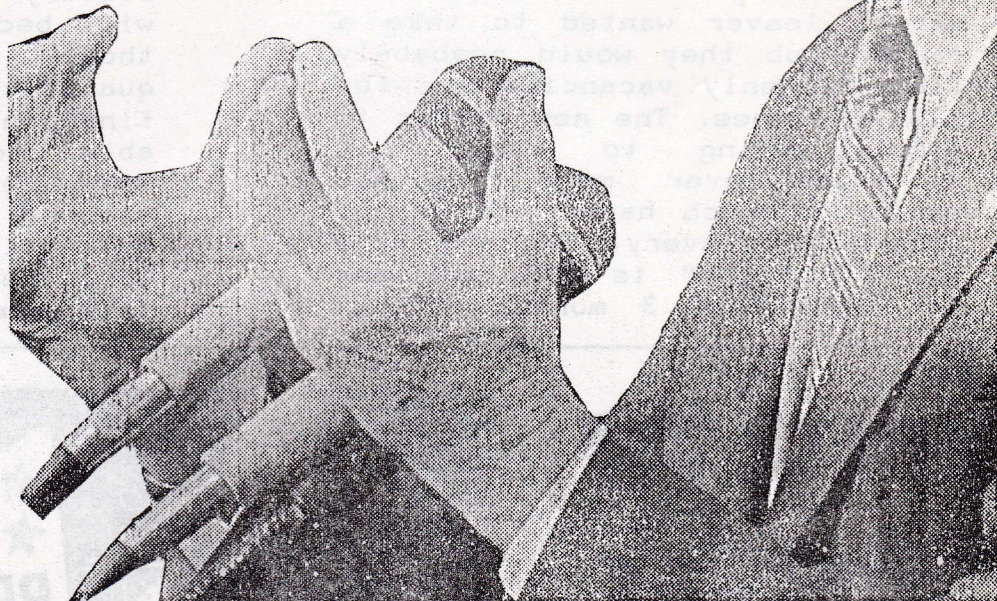
A BIG NOSE

Bush's opponent, Michael Dukakis, a Democrat, has failed to have an impact on America's voters because his suits are bought in a Department Store famous for its bargains, his trousers are too short, his shoulders slope, he has a big nose, and a funny sounding name.

RACIST VOTE

Besides the cuteness element, the other major factor in this election has been racism. Willie Horton, a long term serious offender was released from jail early by Governor Dukakis. Once released, he committed rape (and murder?). Bush has used Willie Horton's face on his TV campaign

because he is black and therefore Bush captures the racist vote. What Bush fails to point out is that Dukakis was carrying out a policy introduced by his predecessor, a Republican, and in 1980 Ronald Reagan was responsible for a similar incident in California where he was Governor. This shows the depths people will go and the treachery they will use to get power.



S·U·B·S·C·R·I·B·E!

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reach people who'd otherwise never see or read an anarchist-socialist paper.

If you support what we're doing, you could help subsidise the paper by taking out a "supporting subscription" of £5 for the year.

Payments to NASG at: Box 1, 15 Goosegate, Hockley, Nottingham. ■

Robbery, slavery and poverty

The Youth Training Scheme has, since its introduction, succeeded in providing numerous dead-end jobs for teenagers. If it isn't bad enough that a growing teenager, in awe of the giant industrial machine that he or she has to fit into, is going to be shoved into some dingy factory to make tea and sweep floors, they now haven't got much choice. After the 5th September this year Income Support was stopped for people in the 16-17 age group who chose not to go on a Youth Training Scheme (YTS). The consequences this will have on the youth in this country are terrible. If a school leaver wanted to take a proper job they would probably find the only vacancies are for YTS employees. The new ruling is simply going to make this situation ever more frequent making it much harder to escape from wage slavery. The pay rate for YTS "jobs" is £28 per week for the first 3 months - that

rises to a massive £35 for the remainder of the two years; about a third of the average factory wage that they would be getting had the scheme not been implemented.

Things look even bleaker with the new Employment Training (ET) the latest rip-off scheme devised by the Government. So when the YTS employee finishes their scheme they'll need the training from the ET which they didn't receive before, and there's not much chance that they'll get much training from that either. If the Government aren't stopped this kind of wage slavery system that is emerging will become a poverty trap that, those without good academic qualifications or a large financial back-up, will not be able to escape from. These Government schemes can be stopped but only by the collective effort of those concerned and those sympathetic to them. ■

Wreck the Poll Tax

November is the month by which the Government had hoped to have the whole of Scotland registered to pay their Poll Tax. The whole machinery was geared up to go - but it is clear that local councils have met with such resistance to their plans that the implementation will have to be put on ice - hopefully for ever.

There are estates in Scotland where 75% of the houses display posters declaring 'Can't Pay - Won't Pay', and people are tearing up their registration forms en masse causing major headaches to the authorities. Many council employees are preparing to resist implementing the legislation in England and Wales too.

Ordinary people taking action, and council employees refusing to co-operate, is the only way to stop the Poll Tax. In Scotland all the parties except the Tories are promising to abolish the Poll Tax if you vote



for them - but politicians can't be trusted any further than they can be thrown.

Start an anti-Poll Tax group in your street or in your tenants association and show the council that we won't let them get away with this daylight robbery. We need to work together to stand up to them. Nottingham councils are already setting aside

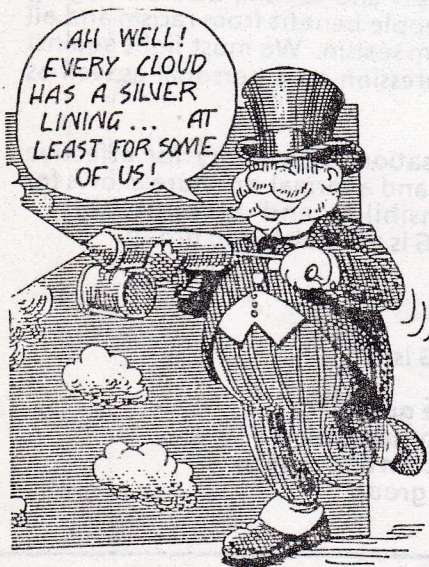
offices to begin registration, and orchestrating jobs offering "a unique opportunity to join a progressive authority and be directly involved in the introduction of new procedures". It's time to look to Scottish communities for inspiration and show them what we think of their 'new procedures'. ■

ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

DID YOU KNOW that the hurricanes and typhoons that have killed hundreds of people in the West Indies and the Philippines, the floods in Bangladesh, the recent devastating famines in Ethiopia and the Sudan, and the mysterious deaths of up to 70% of seals off the coasts of Northern Europe were all caused by rich people making money!

It may sound incredible, but if you look at the facts these people don't want us to know, it's true.

A huge number of so-called 'natural disasters' are in fact caused by the greed of multinational business tycoons. Huge businesses, operating in many different countries, are stripping the earth of its natural resources in order to make a fast buck!



Poisons and pollutants are being pumped out carelessly into the atmosphere by people whose priority is to make money quick, regardless of how waste products are affecting the environment for generations to come.

Many huge storms, for example, are not just freak weather conditions, but are caused by

'rapid changes of temperature and pressure resulting from the 'greenhouse effect'. The atmosphere is so thickly polluted that heat from cities, for example, cannot escape and so the temperature rises. This is also threatening to melt the polar ice caps. One estimate warns that by 2010 the Thames barrier will be underwater!

Companies like McDonalds are cutting down so much of the rainforests to make grazing land for cattle, that the oxygen produced by the trees

could begin to run out, (not to mention the population of the rainforests that such companies murder to get at their land more easily).

The North Sea is so polluted that huge numbers of seals are under threat, and Europe's lakes can support less and less life due to acid rain produced by British power stations.

Millions of trees, on the slopes of the Himalayas have been cut down for wood, bought of by friendly companies like 'Texas', 'Do-it-All' and 'Jewson'. So when the snows melted this summer, the forests that would normally have soaked up the water weren't there, and whole villages were wiped out in the floods that followed.

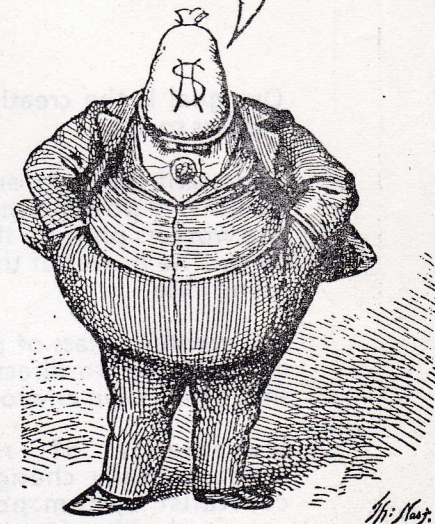
Even the Tories have recently 'shown concern' about the environment - except that they still maintain nuclear power is 'eco-cool'. But this is clearly an empty vote-catcher: they don't mean a word of it.

But we mustn't be taken in by people like the Ecology/Green Party either - all they want is 'safer exploitation'. They genuinely want a safer world - but working year in

year out at a conveyor belt making solar panels, isn't any better to you or I than spending your life slaving in the power station at Radcliffe on Soar!

It is possible to have a society where we can do use-

WHAT'S RIGHT FOR THE ECONOMY IS RIGHT FOR HUMANITY



THE "BRAINS"

ful, enjoyable, interesting and fulfilling work, and live in a safe, clean, healthy world.

If work was done for the benefit of everyone (not for the profit of rip-off murdering businesses) we wouldn't have to destroy the earth. There are easily enough resources for people to live well, but not enough for us to rip each other off and destroy the environment.

The bosses who throw us on the dole after years of ripping us off, who make us work in dangerous conditions, rather than spending money to make them safe, are the same ones ruining the earth for future generations.

Let's get rid of them - we can run things better ourselves.

Hello and welcome to this, the fifth edition of The Nottingham Agitator. If you agree with our 'aims and principles' and would like to get involved, then don't hesitate to write to us. If you have any ideas of local issues which you think we ought to be covering, or you have any comments to make about our paper then please get in contact. We are holding a public meeting on Tuesday the 29th of November on the 'Death of the LABOUR PARTY' and all are invited.

NOTTINGHAM ANARCHIST SOCIALIST GROUP

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

Our goal is the creation of a free, equal, and classless society.

At present the State and capitalism ensure that wealth and power remain in the hands of a few. The workers produce the wealth that the bosses enjoy. The power of the State is controlled by a ruling elite.

This creates a class of people who are deprived of the power to direct their own lives and to shape their own environment.

Movements of reform have never fundamentally changed the nature of the capitalist system: power has continually remained with successive elites.

Consequently, our goal can only be achieved through an anarchist social revolution. This revolution will not replace one set of rulers with another but will destroy both capitalism and the state worldwide.

Rulers and leaders have always taken power from the people they have claimed to act for. We must organise for our own liberation. No leaders can do this for us.

The system based on hierarchy and centralised power must be replaced with a society that is run by, and for, the people.

Because this is the kind of society anarchists want, we structure our group in the same way.

We actively support struggles in the work place and community (eg. against deportation, against discrimination and for better health care.). Whilst these may not be revolutionary in themselves, the common experience of struggle inspires revolutionary action.

We will participate in these struggles as anarchists.

We oppose racism and sexism, acknowledging that all white people benefit from racism and all men benefit from sexism. We must fight against all forms of oppression on a personal as well as class level.

Because organisation is necessary for effective political action, and a formal structure allows for greater responsibility and accountability Nottingham ASG is a membership group.

Nottingham ASG is:

- *A class struggle group
- *Committed to organisation
- *Opposed to racism and sexism
- *A membership group

