

APRIL 75  
CAMDEN TENANT  
No. 29.

# Tolmers

## EVICIONS THREATENED IN TOLMERS

STOCK CONVERSION (under the guiding hand of Joe Levy) is now trying to evict 81 people from 26 houses in the Tolmers area. The occupants of these houses received summonses to appear in court on March 21st. The company have now asked for an adjournment until April 25th following representations to them from Frank Dobson, leader of the Council.

### Stopping The Rot

The people now threatened with evictions have been squatting in these houses for up to two years. The houses had been left empty for periods of up to ten years before they were occupied. They had been deliberately neglected; it has been Stock Conversion's policy to let the area fall into a state of decay and thus pave the way for redevelopment. The work

of the squatter has made these houses habitable again. In addition to stopping the physical decay of the area the squatters have also helped to bring back some life into the community. They have started projects like a bakery and bookshop. Squatters have also contributed greatly to the activities of the Tolmers Village Association.

### Stock Hits Rock

Stock Conversion is one of the largest and most notorious speculative property companies operating in London. Its most spectacular achievement is the enormous Euston Tower development, just over the road from Tolmers Square. Stock Conversion began buying land in the Tolmers area in 1962, when the land was worth £50,000 an acre; its market value in June 1973 was estimated at nearly £1,000,000 an acre. However, their plans for redevelopment through a deal with the Council were blocked by the 'Stop the Levy Deal Campaign'. Last September Camden Council publicly committed themselves to making a CPO on the area and doing their own development (including a large proportion of rehabilitation) to include Council housing and amenities for 1,700 people. The issuing of orders on the property have been awaiting the implementation of the Community Land Bill.

### Futile Evictions

In this context the eviction of the squatters is totally pointless. Stock Conversion cannot conceivably have any use for the land in the short time available before it is acquired by the Council. The houses would only be left empty again: boarded up and probably deliberately vandalised as happened in the case of 220 Camden High Street last year.

### Tolmers Fights Back

Meanwhile, the people threatened with eviction are doing all they can to prevent themselves being made homeless. A big campaign is being mounted to gain support in this fight against evictions, which highlights the property speculators' power to create homelessness. Regular meetings have been held; they have produced leaflets, posters, banners and a press statement. A petition is being circulated. Trade Unions, tenant's associations, councillors and the Labour party in Camden have been contacted and asked to support the Campaign. There have been pickets of the Council's housing committee and of Levy's office.

The Tolmers area is clearly not an isolated case. Levy has plans for Camden High Street and Kings Cross too and already owns a considerable amount of property in these areas. It is high time the power of the property speculators to create misery in our cities was destroyed.