

workers' ACTION

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Justice in the music room,
but not in Moscow

IN THE MUSIC room of the Institute of Physics in London the 'shadow trial' of Yuri Orlov is taking place. Orlov, a Russian physicist, is, of course, not there. He is in Moscow where he faces charges of 'slandering the Soviet Union'.

The 'shadow trial' heard testimony from human rights campaigners like Andrei Amalrik and Major General Grigorenko. Keanwhile the trial in Moscow will certainly find Orlov guilty — and after him, Ginsburg and Shcharansky, two other civil rights campaigners.

Meanwhile further arrests and repressions have taken place, aimed against the Helsinki Monitoring Groups in the different regions of the USSR. In Armenia, a worker named Arutyunyan was sentenced to three years in jail for 'resisting a representative of the authorities' — presumably a KGB official. Members of the Georgian group, Gamsakhurdia and Kostava, have been held since April 1977, and Viktoras Petkus from the Lithuanian group has been in jail awaiting trial since August 1977.

The harshest repression, however, has been in the Ukraine. According to **Labour Focus on Eastern Europe**, 'Mykola Rudenko and Oleksa Tykhy were given very long sentences of seven and ten years imprisonment to be followed by five years in exile...'

Every member of the TUC has been asked by Amnesty International to press for immediate action to defend the 200 members of the Association of Free Trade Unions of Workers in the USSR, whose leader Vladimir Klebanov is still interned. The Amnesty letter asks them to demand an explanation from the Soviet authorities if Len Murray does not receive a reply to his request for information.

Thirty British trade unions have already decided to support the campaign to defend these workers. Foremost among them is the AUEW, which has written directly to the president of the USSR.

Still, the British unions are lagging far behind the French unions who have sponsored big meetings calling for the defence of both civil rights campaigners and the workers of the Association of Free Trade Unions. The British union leaders must be pushed to play their part in a public campaign of defence of these people.

PHASE 4 FAKERS AT WORK

TWO YEARS' pay controls have raised trade union leaders' bureaucratic contempt for the rank and file to the point of open insult.

One union conference after another says: No Phase Four wage limits! The union leaders piously join in the chorus. They say they're not standing for another year of limitations on pay bargaining.

But the echoes have hardly died away from their militant speeches, and the trade union leaders are assuring the government and the bosses that they should not worry. The union leaders have no intention of confronting and breaking the pay limits.

At the Conference this week of the local government manual workers' union NUPE, union president Alan Yates proposed a claim for £17.50 and five hours off the basic working week, to bring NUPE members up to a minimum of £60 for a 35 hour week.

"In his Budget speech", said Yates, "Denis Healey made it clear that he wants to do another deal with the TUC on pay restraint. And he has given off more than a hint that the figure he has in mind is a limit of pay increases of about half the current rate — this could leave public service workers with the prospect of a 5% rise in the negotiations which will begin this autumn.

"I believe that this conference is going to tell Denis Healey, in no uncertain terms, that he is not on".

On the same day, delegates representing the 440,000 members of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs overwhelmingly rejected the idea of pay restraint.

Yet at the same conference ASTMS general secretary Clive Jenkins describ-

ed any confrontation with the government over pay as 'kamikaze' tactics.

As far as the public sector is concerned, in fact, Jenkins was already admitting defeat — just as his members were demanding action. "Governments", he claims, "know they can win in the public sector and are willing to take on workers there".

The record of the NUPE leadership is no better than that of the ASTMS.

Last year there was no fight against government policy, or the TUC's tacit sell-out to that policy, by either union. In fact, as one NUPE militant pointed out in a motion calling for a £65 minimum and criticising the union leadership for its lack of fight, NUPE was well placed to help both itself and the firemen by striking at the same time as the FBU.

Instead the union leaders let the firemen remain isolated and go down to defeat — and now they point to the firemen's strike as an example of rashness to avoid.

The demands we need on wages are:

■ Flat rate increases at least sufficient to restore 1974-75 living standards;

■ Clauses guaranteeing that wages are increased in line with inflation: £1 increase for every 1% rise in wages.

■ An adequate national minimum wage.

A fighting united front by major unions on this basis would be undefeatable. The union leaders don't want it because it would disturb their cosy relations with the government and the bosses. But a strong rank and file campaign for these demands and against the two-faced swindlers at the head of the unions can make sure that we win despite the bureaucrats.



7,000 MARCH AGAINST MURDER



'Who killed Altab Ali?' 'The racists and fascists!', replied the 7,000 people who marched last Sunday, 14th, from the East End of London to Downing Street.

The demonstration was triggered off by the murder of Altab Ali, a Bengali machinist, in Whitechapel on May 4th. Following shortly after 10-year Kenneth Singh was beaten to death in the same area, it was one of the latest incidents in a gradual escalation of racist violence in the East End.

The marchers were also calling for a public inquiry into the local police. As one speaker sarcastically pointed out at the end of the march, "The police in the area have an unparalleled record in detection."

Shakawat Hossein, a barrister, insisted in his speech that while the National Front, the Ku Klux Klan, and such groups can be fought physically, the biggest danger comes from the leaders of the 'respectable' political parties, like Margaret Thatcher.

He also pointed to the need to face the political questions squarely, noting that it was significant that the support for the Bengali community in the East End came from the revolutionary and radical left.

There were many signs that the youth of the Asian communities of the area want to take up the fight against racism with a seriousness that is embarrassing the middle class community leaders.

Support for the demonstration also came from outside London.

Republican militant dies after RUC interrogation

REPUBLICANS AND TRADE UNIONISTS DENOUNCE CASTLEREAGH TORTURE CHAMBER

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE took to the streets in Belfast on May 10th when the Provisional Sinn Fein organised a march protesting against the murder of Bryan Maguire.

The day before, the Royal Ulster Constabulary investigating the shooting of constable Miller McAlister in Lisburn pulled Bryan Maguire in for questioning. 25 hours after his arrest the young Republican, an electronics engineer, was found hanged in his cell at the Castlereagh interrogation centre.

The centre is described by the Provisionals as a 'torture chamber', and the Republican press has carried scores of reports of the inhuman and degrading treatment meted out to prisoners there.

Even the milk-and-water Social Democratic and Labour Party has been very vocal in criticising interrogation methods at Castlereagh. As reported in 'The Guardian' recently, 'Mr Michael Canavan, the party's law and order spokesman said that on three occasions in the past month Belfast courts had refused statements taken in Castlereagh as inadmissible after claims that they were made under duress.'

the young Republican's death.

Police refused to let the demonstrators march to Transport House.

Last week also saw the reappearance of Republican News, whose printer and editorial staff were arrested at the end of April (April 26th). One of the particular motives for the raid on Republican News at that time was the paper's central role in organising support for the 'No Wash, No Slop' campaign in North of Ireland jails to back

the demand for Prisoner of War status for Republican prisoners. The raid came just before a planned demonstration.

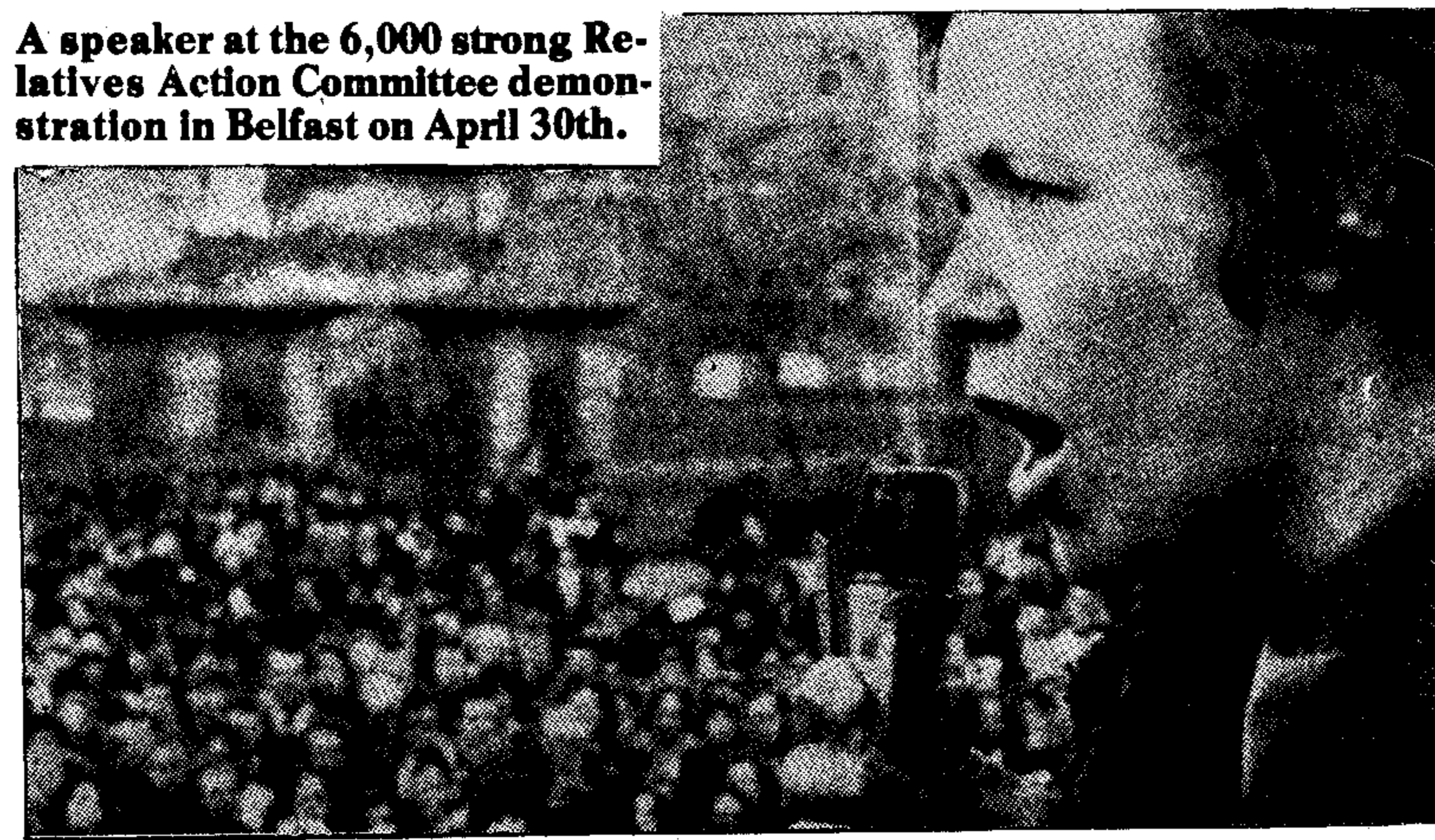


The police action failed, however, to bring about the disorganisation the authorities hoped for, and some 8,000 people marched in Belfast.

Republican News is being produced by a new staff - those arrested on April 26th have now been charged with

various offences. These include membership of the IRA as well as conspiracy. The conspiracy charges are that those held attempted to subvert the course of justice by setting up their own system of courts and encouraging people to report crimes to them rather than to the police. One of those being charged with membership of the IRA is - according to the Belfast-based Irish Free Press News Service - a French journalist from the left-wing newspaper 'Liberation'.

A speaker at the 6,000 strong Relatives Action Committee demonstration in Belfast on April 30th.



END THE SILENCE ON THE TORTURE OF IRISH PRISONERS!

Two demonstrations organised by the Prisoners' Aid Committee

Saturday 27 May
3.30pm at 'Bookmarks' bookshop, 265 Seven Sisters Road.

Tuesday 30th May.
4.30pm at Amnesty International, 8-14 Southampton St, WC2.

How women organise in the Irish resistance

THREE WOMEN, one member of the Relatives' Action Committee, two members of the recently established Women Against Imperialism Group, toured Scotland last week to publicise the torture and repression that Catholics and Republicans are suffering at the hands of the British Army in Ireland. They spoke at a public meeting organised by the Irish Solidarity Committee, an Edinburgh organisation, and also at a meeting supported by Edinburgh University Women's Group, the Women's Liberation Movement, and the Edinburgh College of Art Women's Group.

Workers' Action interviewed them in Edinburgh...

■ What is the structure of the Relatives Action Committee?

□ In Belfast we have district committees, from which two people are delegated to a central committee. In rural areas there is one R.A.C. in most places and they keep in contact through the central committee. Major decisions are taken at the central committee, for example whether or when to hold a big demonstration. We also send visitors from the R.A.C.s in Belfast into the rural areas and vice versa. We have held conferences in Belfast and in the rural areas.

■ What does your work involve?

□ Our main fight is to win political prisoner status, and finally amnesty for all political prisoners. The work reaffirms that there is a war of liberation

going on. We organise marches, stage pickets outside police stations and interrogation centres, and occupations - for example, the American Embassy. Most members of the R.A.C. are known by the Brits - so therefore they get continual hassles in the form of screening, raids, and being taken to Castlereagh.

■ How did you evolve? What are your aims?

□ Some of us from the Belfast Women's Collective felt that 1] we wanted to take a political stand against the war that is going on, and 2] go out and relate to and have discussions with women in working class areas. Our intention was not to split away from the collective, but this unfortunately happened. This only took place a few weeks ago, so we are still very small in numbers. Since then we have got a place which we are going to use as a womens' centre, donated by the Provisional Sinn Fein. We will also produce a paper. Our basic aim is to build a working class based womens' movement.

■ Do you relate to Protestant women at all?

□ It is possible for Protestant and Catholic women to unite around a specific issue, like Noreen Winchester, which they have done. But unfortunately there is no political basis for Catholic and Protestant working class women as yet to unite.

■ What are nursery provisions like in the six counties?

□ There are only four state nurseries - some church play groups, and a few

private, very expensive ones. But with public expenditure cut-backs there's obviously no chance of getting anything from the state, so a while ago, some women set up their own nursery and approached the local parish priest who donated them a hall. After a few weeks a Brit officer went along to see the priest and asked him if he knew the nursery was being run by R.A.C. activists, and that the only reason they were doing it was to win people over to their struggle. The follow-up from that was that they got the hall taken away.

■ Are there any campaigns or conferences you want to tell us about?

□ At the last all-Ireland womens' conference, which 300 women attended we decided to have another conference, particularly about brutality against women in Ireland. There is one battered womens' refuge in Belfast which hardly anyone knows about, mainly because it's in a Protestant area. So we're trying to publicise its existence. The first issue of an all Ireland womens' paper will come out in about a month organised by some women in the South, with contributions from the North.

There is a massive contraception campaign in the South as contraception is still illegal there, and what happened was that 80,000 women were on the pill, as a 'cycle regulator'! In the North the main campaigns at the moment are around divorce and homosexuality, to bring the laws into line with the English.

Italy's Holy Alliance: CP, bosses, police, and... fascists

Standing in chains in the courthouse of Turin, Renato Curcio, leader of the Red Brigades, stated his attitude to the news of Aldo Moro's death. "The 16 March" he said referring to the day of Moro's abduction and of the entry of the Communist Party into a formal pact with the ruling Christian Democrat Party, "stands in the minds of the imperialist bourgeoisie for the beginning of a regime of national reconciliation under the leadership of the Christian Democracy and the Communist Party. Its aim is to deal with the economic crisis with capitalist methods which harshly attack the working class ..."

Curcio was quite right. Yet it was the Red Brigades' kidnapping, and the killing of Moro, that has strengthened that mood of anti-working class national reconciliation.

At present the bourgeois parties and the Communist Party are doing their utmost to whip up an atmosphere of witchhunt against the left

Our solidarity at this moment is with the increasingly isolated and oppressed class conscious militants of Italy, with those who have taken a stand against the terror of the state, against the anti-working class policies of the government and, without giving an inch to the right, have criticised the terrorism of the Red Brigades from the standpoint of the need for militant, working class, mass action.

Below we reprint a letter written a little over a year ago to the Italian far-left paper Lotta Continua, after the whipping up of an anti-left hysteria in Bologna of the sort that has been created throughout Italy today.

Dear Comrades,

I work as a shop assistant in a high-class shop in Bologna's historic city centre. I didn't want to go on the demonstration on March 16th in Bologna. Why not? Because all the parties and the trade union organisations were united together on the platform in the Piazza Maggiore, "against the violence of hooligans and provocateurs who break shop windows" and "to show the deepest solidarity with the forces of law and order."

I felt sick when Francesco was killed. But afterwards I felt even worse. My bosses are self-avowed Fascists [they go and have dinner with Almirante, the fascist party national secretary, when he's passing through Bologna], and recently they sacked a girl because she had taken part in a strike ... Well, on Wednesday afternoon my bosses closed the shop and went on the demonstration!

When I suggested timidly that the students would beat them up if they recognised them, they replied: We've got nothing to worry about, the trade union stewards will look after us!

The letter is reprinted from 'Living with an Earthquake - Italy 1977-8, a Red Notes pamphlet.



A protester wrapped in a blanket to symbolise his solidarity with the Republican prisoners who have only blankets to cover them because they demand political prisoner status and therefore refuse to wear prison clothing.

WILL NEW AFGHAN REGIME ACT AGAINST LANDLORDS ?

NUR MOHAMMED Terakki the new president of Afghanistan, was only weeks ago a wanted man. After a series of demonstrations against the increasing repressions of the regime of President Daud, Terakki and six other leading members of the People's Democratic Party were jailed. The next day they were freed in a coup which had clearly been planned some time earlier.

Terakki, a founder of the PDP, Afghanistan's Communist Party, split

that party over Russia's support for Daud's coup in 1973. He then led the Khalq, or Party of the Masses; the opposing faction formed the Parcham or Flag Party. Recently the two factions reunited, possibly under the pressure of Daud's increasing campaign against his critics.

For all this, the new regime does not describe itself as 'Communist' or 'Marxists'. And it is not clear whether the lightning-fast recognition granted to the Terakki regime by

the Soviet Union implies anything more than the latter's desire to maintain good relations with Afghanistan irrespective of who is in charge.

The coup, which was in fact led by Moscow trained Abdul Kader, seems to enjoy a measure of popular support, at least in the cities. Crowds swarmed through the streets after tanks burst into the presidential palace and went to the place where Daud and his family were killed to express their



hatred of the old regime.

Immediately after the coup, Kader himself announced that 'for the first time in the history of Afghanistan the last remnants of the cruel and oppressive dynasty of Nadir Khan have been overthrown.'

Daud had come to power through a coup against King Mohammed Zahir Khan in July 1973. But this did not mean the end of the Nadir dynasty, for Daud himself was a member of the royal family. Thus, apart from referring to himself as 'president', and not 'King', he left the old political forms intact. Even after the promulgation of a new constitution in 1977 nothing changed.

The new regime has announced that it will eliminate the rule of the aristocracy. To do this it will have to carry out the agrarian reform that Daud promised but never carried out.

Le Monde (May 11th) reports the announcement of a 30-point plan but no details have been given, apart from the declaration that 'the armed forces will be reinforced to defend the revolution, that there will be an agrarian reform in order to eliminate feudalism in the isolated mountainous regions, that primary school education will be extended to the whole population, and that the equality of the sexes will be strictly observed in all spheres.'

WOMEN

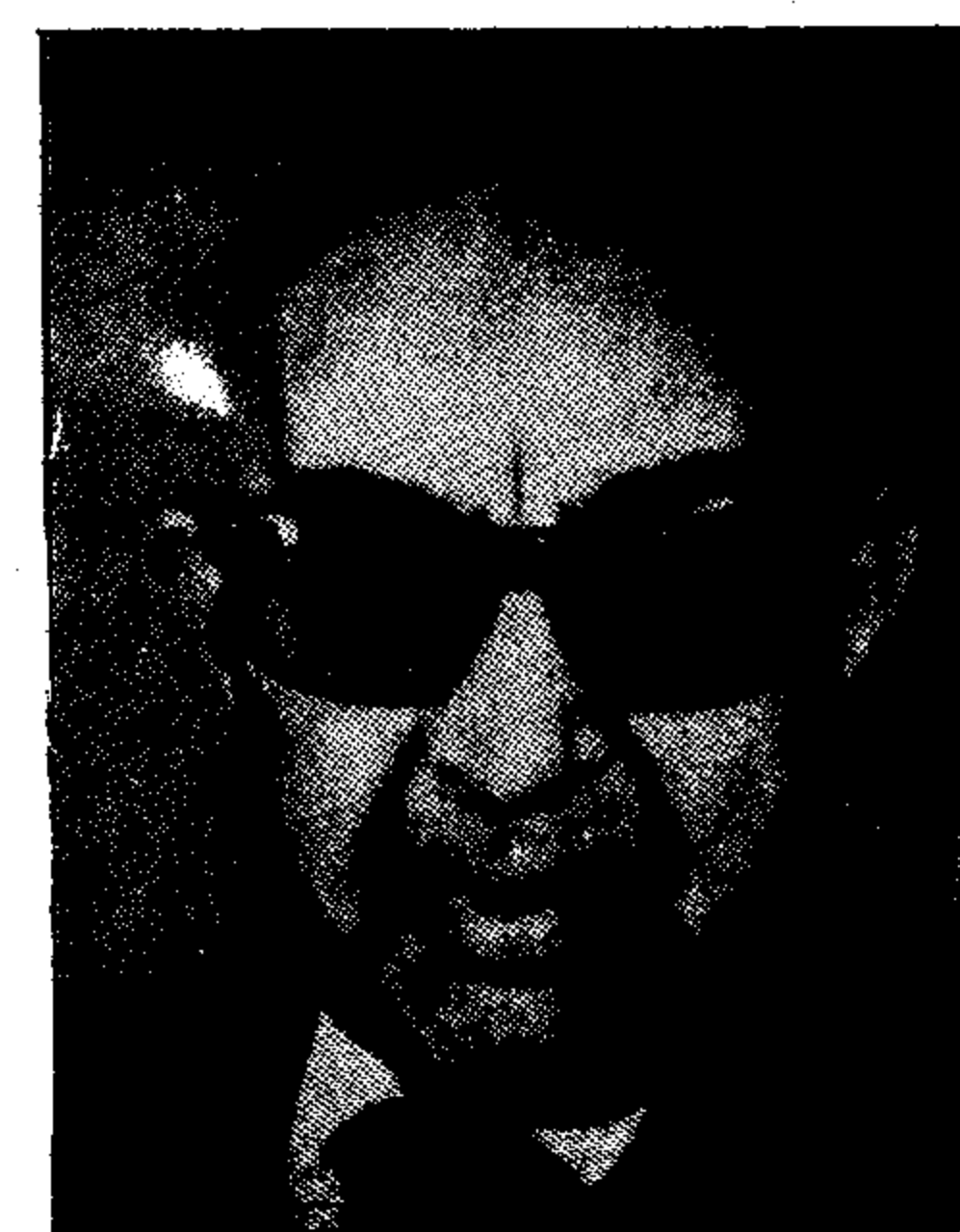
While this last point would be a huge step forward, it may be that it is a measure designed to help the Afghan capitalists who are prevented at present by Moslem law from employing women. The labour shortage is aggravated by there being 1,000,000 Afghans (out of a total population of 14,000,000) who are working in Iran because of the

higher wages there.

The promises held out in this statement are not very different from those offered by Daud four years ago when, with much the same group of officers trained in the Soviet Union, he overthrew Nadir Khan. These officers were alienated by Daud's failure to implement any of his programme and Daud himself acted against them as soon as he felt his position was secure.

FAMILIES

The chief guarantors of Daud's security were those countries he received aid from - notably China, Russia, and Iran. Internally the guarantors were the leading aristocratic families that controlled the state machine and whom he refused to confront although they stood in the way of any agrarian reform.



Deposed dictator Daud

Agriculture in Afghanistan is extremely backward. The dominant form of land tenure is share cropping, with individual tenants farming tiny plots and giving up to four fifths of their product to the landlord. The sharecroppers are also heavily indebted to money lenders who provide cash for seeds and tools. Daud originally spoke of limiting the size of landlords' holdings and developing agricultural co-operatives.

It is difficult to see what the Terakki government can do to radically solve this problem, for it will not only meet with the landlords' resistance but opposition from right-wing Muslims and elements acting as agents of the Iranian government. The force able to lead a radical solution is the Afghan working class who are now, it is reported, lining up with a series of wage demands.

GORDON BREWER

LET'S STOP PRETENDING WE'RE REVOLUTIONARIES SAY FRENCH CP CRITICS

'THE PEOPLE have lost confidence in their leaders? Then dissolve the people and elect a new one!'

This comment by Bertold Brecht on Stalinist repression has recently become the refrain of a growing opposition in the French Communist Party. After its failure in the March elections to gain power in alliance with the Socialists, the Communist Party is suffering from disappointment and disorientation.

The last time a prominent figure - Roger Garaudy - openly denounced the CP leadership was in the 1960s, and he was quickly expelled.

But since 1968, and especially since it formed the 'Union of the Left' with the Socialist Party in 1972, the CP has been trying to give itself a more democratic image.

At the 22nd Party Congress in 1976 the CP made major steps towards 'social-democratising' itself. There was little dissent.

There were hard-line Stalinists who objected to the Party becoming more critical of the USSR. The philosopher Louis Althusser led a loose grouping who opposed the CP dropping its reference to the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

Squalid

On the other hand, others, such as the historian Jean Elleinstein, were arguing that the party should go further and drop the name 'Communist'. But it was all mild stuff.

Problems began in earnest in the autumn of last year, when discussions on the updating of the Common Programme with the Socialists broke down. For some time fears had been growing in the CP that the Socialists, having used the Union of the Left to increase their electoral strength, would dump the CP after an election victory in favour of a pact with parties of the centre.

The CP engineered a split and denounced the Socialists in the sharpest terms, laying the whole blame for the breakdown on them. This attitude was undoubtedly shared by many CP militants who had a healthy distrust of Socialist Party leader François Mitterand.

But after a squalid patching-up of the left alliance for the second round of the elections in March, and, crucially, the defeat at the polls, the conflicts within the Party started coming out.

The opposition statements - printed mainly in non-Communist papers such as *Le Monde*, since the party refused to print them in its own press - are diverse, but all agree on two things: that the blame for the failure of the Union of the Left lies with the CP leadership as well as the Socialist Party, and that the party ought to be opened up to allow democratic

discussion of critical viewpoints.

The voices of the opposition are almost exclusively intellectuals such as Althusser and Elleinstein, but there are some signs of support for them. A large number of white-collar workers, teachers and ex-students have joined the CP over recent years; among them a fair number have had experience of Maoist or other groups of the far left. A feminist current has been growing which is also relatively open to influence from the far left.

There is dissent among CP students. In Bordeaux, for example, 'Althusserian' students have recently launched an independent magazine, *Positions*.

Quite how widespread the opposition is, it is difficult to tell. But in Paris and the surrounding region, party meetings have often



Jean Elleinstein

been stormy affairs; in at least two areas the oppositionists are reported to have found themselves in the majority. Overwhelmingly it seems to be a matter of white-collar and professional members, though there are also rumblings among party officials. Most spectacular has been the resignation of Jacques Frémontier as editor of the party's million-selling industrial weekly *Action*.

More important would be evidence of a reaction among the party's industrial base, but of that there is little sign so far. (Frémontier came to his job from bourgeois journalism, not from the trade unions).

The CP leadership began by denouncing their opponents as a bunch of petty bourgeois layabouts who know nothing of the class struggle and only want to turn the CP into a debating club. But they have refrained from expelling the dissidents, and recently they have said they are pleased at the wide scope of the debate, which (they say) shows what a democratic party the CP is.

Elleinstein has acted before now as an advance guard for the Central Committee, a man definitely on the right of the party who can pioneer a road the leadership themselves will soon be treading.

His drift is clear. He writes:

'Between Socialists and Communists a real debate must take place on the major strategic options, on the conception of socialism, on the stages of transformation through which a left wing government should advance, on the ways and means of victory. In France, genuine historical compromise means a genuine rapprochement between Socialists and Communists'. For him all vestiges of 'Leninism' must be rooted out: he would like a complete transformation of the CP into a social-democratic party, with the middle-class membership dominant as it is in the Socialist Party. Frémontier's ideas are similar.

There are also some Moscow loyalists, for whom the party's adaptation to the Socialists has been a hard pill to swallow, and who want to see the clock turned back.

Althusser, though, is more of an enigma. He has a more left wing reputation, and denounces the Union of the Left as being an electoralist bloc, engineered at the top without any attempt to win the adherence of Socialist Party members at rank and file level.

At the same time, he makes no criticism of the political content of the Common Programme, nor does he call into question its fundamental assumption - that socialism can be achieved through Parliament. The model of how the Union of the Left should have worked, according to him, is the Popular Front of the 1930s.

In other words, he is by no stretch of the imagination a revolutionary Marxist.

But that does not exhaust the question of the impact of his criticisms and the possibility of break-aways from the CP.

Launch

One straw in the wind: the editors of the magazine *Politique Hebdo*, themselves former members of the CP, have taken the decision to launch a new magazine later this year, with the aim of attracting contributions from the CP, the Socialist Party, the Parti Socialiste Unifié (something like the Institute for Workers' Control in Britain), the LCR (sister-group of the IMG), and other left-wing figures as well as Althusser.

What might emerge would be something like the centrist *Manifesto* group in Italy. Whether this project will succeed, it is difficult to say; but it is significant that *Politique Hebdo* thinks it can.

And the greater the agitation and controversy, the more numerous will be the revolutionary-minded CP militants who come to realise that Elleinstein's call for the CP to clearly renounce revolutionary communism would at least have the merit of suiting the words to the CP's reformist and treacherous actions.

JAMES RYAN

THEY SHALL NOT PASS!

British Fascism between the wars

Fascism is not a new disease in Britain. And the fight against it by the working class is not a new thing either. In the period between the two world wars several fascist and semi-fascist organisations grew up, and it is important that the experience of the struggle against them should enter into the consciousness of the anti-fascist militants of today.

The fascist and semi-fascist organisations of that period were very different from the National Front and National Party today. They were - particularly in the twenties - far more closely intertwined with the aristocracy and the military top brass.

For instance, the first-born of these squalid coteries, the British Fascists, boasted a Grand Council bristling with aristocratic and military riff-raff. From its founding in 1923 until January 1924, the British Fascists' president was Lord Garvagh, while its local leaders included several Admirals, Rear Admirals, Brigadier and Major Generals, Earls, Counts, Dukes and Viscounts.

Youth

According to the Communist Party's leading theoretician of fascism, R. Palme Dutt, the British Fascists (the name was anglicised in 1924) 'originated in 1923 from the circles around the Duke of Northumberland's journal "The Patriot" ... Brigadier General R.B.D. Blakeney, its (second) president, had been general manager of the Egyptian State Railways. Its Commander for the London area was Brigadier General Sir Ormonde Winter, KBE, and its Vice-president was Rear-Admiral J.C. Armstrong ... These earlier would-be fascist organisations had no understanding of the necessary labour connections and social-demagogic technique of fascism. The British Fascists proclaimed in all simplicity the objective "to render practical, and, if necessary, militant defence of His Majesty the King and his Empire..."

Its political programme was clearly neither designed to attract the misguided plebian victims of capitalist crisis, nor to appeal to youth: it advocated a strengthened House of Lords, raising the voting age to 25, and the disenfranchisement of those convicted of sedition, or who had been receiving poor law relief for more than six months.

The British Fascists' crisis came with the approach of the General Strike in 1926. The Government began forming the Organisation for the Maintenance of Services (OMS) as an official strike-breaking force, but would not accept the affiliation of openly 'political' organisations. This stricture led to the proposal to change the organisation's name to the Loyalists.

This proposal split the Fascists and Blakeney and Armstrong set up the Loyalists, which was incorporated into the OMS and used in the General Strike, while the Earl of Glasgow reorganised the Scottish Units under the title of the Scottish Loyalists.

The British Fascists were not really a fascist organisation; rather they were an extreme conservative pro-empire ruling class group. The organisation grew out of the anti-Communist fears of conservatives after the Russian Revolution and mixed ultra-nationalism with some anti-semitism.

The Middle Classes' Union and the National Citizens' Union also flourished in this period, likewise having no rounded political programme and focussing on anti-Communism and anti-trade unionism. Their ultra-nationalism, however, was intermingled with strains of racism, and anti-semitism in particular.

The defeat of the General Strike, and with it the disappearance of any immediate threat to the ruling class, stole the thunder from these ultra-nationalist groupings.

Mosley

The dominant figure of British fascism of the thirties was Oswald Ernald Mosley, the scion of a famous Lancashire landed family, and, in 1928, the sixth baronet Mosley.

Mosley's parliamentary career began as a Tory. He soon crossed the floor and in 1924 became Labour MP for Smethwick. Within three years he was elected to the Party Executive and in 1929 was appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the MacDonald Cabinet. The following year Mosley resigned, accusing the Government of inactivity in its handling of the unemployment crisis. One of his last acts as a Minister was the submission to the Cabinet of a series of proposals - worked out in agreement with George Lansbury and Tom Johnston - later known as the 'Mosley Memorandum'.

The proposals of the 'Memorandum' - abandonment of Free Trade and orthodox banking policies, increase in government expenditure and the development of wide-scale public works - were put to the Labour Party Conference that year and received enthusiastic support from the left-wing.

According to Fenner Brockway, 'As Mosley ended, the delegates rose en masse cheering for minutes on end. I have never seen or heard such an ovation at a Labour Party Conference...' but the resolution was narrowly defeated.

Votes

Soon after, Mosley broke with the Labour Party and founded the New Party. That party was not fascist, but a mixture of radical Labourism and populism. At the end of the year the New Party stood in the Ashton-under-Lyme by-election, where it polled 4,472 votes.

Disappointed with this performance, feeling betrayed by the voters of Ashton and smarting under the humiliation of being hissed and booed by the crowd there, Mosley, according to his collaborator for a brief period, John Strachey, commented: 'That is the crowd that has prevented anyone from doing anything in England since the



PICTURES: Top left, Mosleyites picket a Union food convoy for Republican Spain. Top right, a supporter of Arnold Leese's Imperial Fascist League. Above, police clear a way for fascists in the East End. Right: Cable Street

war'.

While it is too simplistic to talk of Mosley's turn to fascism at that moment, it is clear that at that period Mosley's ideas were undergoing a radical change. Elements that had been present in his earlier thinking, his talk of a 'young men's crusade', his corporatism and statism now congealed into a more clearly fascist form.

Even after changing the name of the New Party to the British Union of Fascists - organised on the basis of Mosley's undisputed leadership on all matters - the BUF was not stridently anti-semitic. Indeed, one of its competitors, Arnold

Leese's Imperial Fascist League, attacked the BUF for its lack of a consistent theory of racial fascism and even accused it - nonsensically - of being pro-Jewish!

With the Nazi victory in Germany in 1933 the BUF attracted more recruits. Anti-semitism, already part of the practice and demagoguery of the Party, now became a major policy. Mosley was honest about his dishonesty: 'a dynamic creed such as fascism, he said, cannot flourish unless it has a scapegoat to hit out at, such as Jewry'.

In 1933 the BUF's journal 'The Blackshirt' summed up the idiot-collection that passes

In his book 'Fascism in Britain' Mosley outlined his concept of the Corporate State:

'Our policy is the establishment of the Corporate State. As the name implies, this means a State organised like the human body. Every member of that body acts in harmony with the purpose of the whole under the guidance and driving brain of the Fascist Government. This does not mean that industry will be conducted or interfered with from Whitehall, as in Socialist organisation. But it does mean that the limits within which interests may operate will be laid down by Government, and that those limits will be the welfare of the nation as a whole. To that interest of the nation as a whole, all lesser interests are subordinate, whether of Right or of Left, whether they be employers' federation, trade union, banking or professional interests.'

Class-war will give place to national co-operation. All who pursue a sectional and anti-national policy will be opposed by the might of the organised State. Profit can be made provided that the activity enriches the nation as well as the individual. Profit may not be made at the expense of the nation and of the working class. The Corporate State will secure that the nation, and the workers who are part of the nation will share fully in the benefits and rewards of industry.'

To this clap-trap (which Mosley arrogantly referred to as 'the greatest constructive conception yet devised by the mind of man') Mosley added the usual elements of fascism: its emphasis on masculinity ('Fascism is the creed and morality of British manhood'), modernism and, soon, anti-semitism.

for fascist ideas: 'We believe in the co-operation of all classes, in the solidarity of all units of a nation, and in justice. And in the mystery of patriotism.'

At the beginning of 1933 the BUF held a big meeting in Manchester's Free Trade Hall. The meeting ended in uproar with fighting taking place in every part of the hall until the police dispersed the audience. Mosley was sure, however, that this kind of big meeting would impress people.

In the same year, the BUF took part in an anti-tithe struggle in Suffolk. With such actions the BUF tried to appear as the defender of the downtrodden.

The BUF and its youth section grew throughout 1933 and they modelled themselves ever more closely on the triumphant continental butchers with whom they solidarised. At the beginning of 1934, the Mosleyites won the open support of Lord Rothermere.

While the German Nazis and the Italian fascists were plebian movements who attracted the support of the big bourgeoisie, the BUF, although much more plebian than its forebears on the British Right, never gained that support.

The nearest to it that it came was when it got Rothermere's backing. The January 15th 1934 edition of the Daily Mail trumpeted Rothermere's new slogan, 'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!' In an article written by (or for) the Viscount himself, we read, 'In the vital matter of air-defence this country has been allowed to sink from the foremost to the lowest position among the Great Powers. While the leaders of other states are reorganising their national resources to break the crushing grip of the world-



Lord Beaverbrook - as an instrument not of fascism but of Empire loyalty and armament programmes.

What else can explain leader comments like, 'Sir Oswald Mosley at his meetings has only expressed with one or two exceptions - views that are identical with those of the robust minds in the Conservative Party. Like them he stands for law and order, free speech, and English methods.' Indeed The Daily Mail never referred to the Mosleyites as Fascists - always as Blackshirts!

Rothermere withdrew his generous support of Mosley after the Olympia rally of June 1934. Probably the bad publicity the fascists got for their thuggery on that occasion was not the reason for the break, but Rothermere's conclusion that the Mosleyites were not to be tamed by alliance with the Tory right-wing. From that point on the BUF began its decline.

With the slow and hesitant steps of capitalist revival and the victory of the Tory-National government of Baldwin in 1935, the basis for a mass fascist growth and backing from the capitalists slipped away. Still, the force of British fascism was not entirely played out.

Base

The East End of London had for a long time been a base for the fascists and their predecessors. The East End had been the haunt of the British Brothers League (which was founded in 1902) and Stepney the constituency of the League's respectable face, the Conservative MP Major W Evans-Gordon. They waged an 'England for the English campaign' directed against Jewish immigration.

In the 1930s the boroughs of Stepney, Bethnal Green, and Shoreditch were almost the poorest in London - there one could find the worst overcrowding and the highest unemployment. Stepney and Bethnal Green were also areas of high Jewish concentration.

It was therefore these areas that were selected by the Blackshirts for the bid to rule the streets and recapture the interest of the bourgeoisie. The first big East End Fascist rally took place in June 1936 in Victoria Park.

Increasingly Jews in the area were subject to night-time attacks as well as abuse on the streets and in the markets. The population of the East End responded with the formation of the Jewish People's Council Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism, an Ex-Servicemen's Movement Against Fascism and increased activity through the Communist Party and the ILP.

Then as now the police showed their partiality: Fascist assaults never resulted in arrests. Complaints to the police were met with indifference and obstruction.

Cable St

Against this background the BUF - which by this time had changed its name to the British Union of Fascists and National Socialists - decided to march through the East End on October 4th, 1936. It was important to them that they should be able to strut through these streets as if they owned them.

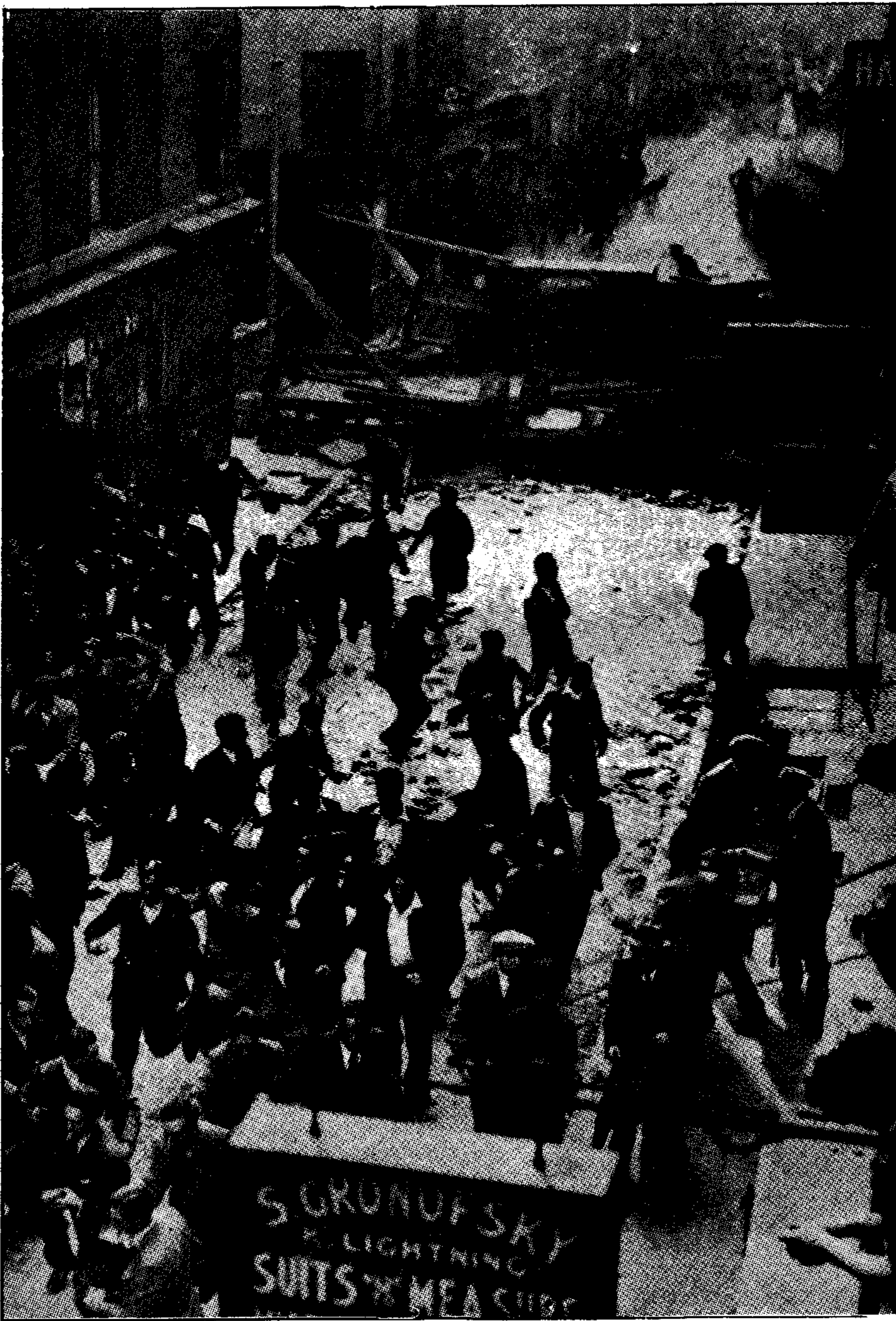
BUF contingents were to assemble near Tower Bridge and then march in four columns to meetings in Shoreditch, Limehouse, Bow, and Bethnal Green. As soon as these plans were known there was a great effort by local mayors and organisations to get the march banned. George Lansbury, who had been mayor of Poplar advised all anti-fascists to stay away. The same rotten advice

came from the columns of the Daily Herald and The News Chronicle. As late as the day before the march several East End mayors and rabbis repeated the appeal.

But their advice was not heeded. And the working class scored an important victory. On the morning of October 4, the East End was decked out in red flags and banners declaring 'They Shall Not Pass', 'Mosley Shall Not Pass', and 'Bar the Road to Fascism'. The Communist Party, the ILP, the Jewish People's Council, the Ex-Servicemen's Movement Against Fascism, the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, the Jewish Ex-Servicemen's Movement were all out in the loudspeaker vans, handing out leaflets or organising their members for the fight.

By noon the streets were packed. About 100,000 people had gathered to see that fascism would not pass. About 7,000 police were drafted into the area to help the Blackshirts march.

In Cable Street, the famous



'Battle' began when a lorry was dragged from a nearby yard and overturned to form the base of a barricade. Police charged the barricade but were driven off with bricks and stones.

Several times the police tried to force a way through so that the fascists could carry out their march. But finally they gave up and, after inspecting his 2-3,000 Blackshirts Mosley had them disperse on the Embankment.

But if the victory of the Battle of Cable Street stung the fascists, it also worried the government and the Labour leaders. The possibility of further victories was to be denied the working class by the passing of the Public Order Act of 1936.

A week after Cable Street the fascists hit back with the 'Mile End Road Pogrom', in which a number of Jewish shops were smashed and a number of people (including a four year old girl) beaten up.

Venom

But this kind of thuggery wasn't enough to keep the BUF together after its defeat on October 4th and some months later, smarting under yet another electoral humiliation, the BUF split. Its supporters could see that it was unable to impose its solutions.

As the credibility of the BUF declined Mosley added a certain hysteria to his customary venom. Impetuously he boasted, '... to the jackals of a putrescent system the British Union will be relentless and merciless'. One can almost hear the shrill boasts of National Front chairman John Tyndall...

Virtually the last political act of the BUF in the pre-war period was to carry out anti-war propaganda in support of Nazi Germany. That activity soon led to the activists of the BUF being interned under Regulation 18B in May 1940. By that time, however, with the ulcer of unemployment 'cured' by the hot knife of war, with official jingoism vying successfully with the ultranationalism of the Empire Loyalists and the fascists, the BUF was a spent force.

This defeat, however, did not lead to the liquidation of fascism in Britain. That is all too obvious today. Some of its leaders and activists survived through the war period and the decades after that in small groups dedicated to keeping the poison of fascism alive. And with the crisis of British capitalism in the late sixties, these coalesced to form the National Front... Now let's stamp that gang of fascists out!

ALASTAIR JAMISON
RAY SAUNDERS

...is, our own are content to sit and dawdle. They are resistant only in preparing British abdication in India and Ceylon by the same methods as lost Southern Ireland to the Empire.
It soon became clear that Rothermere saw the BUF in much the same light as the United Empire Party which he had sponsored in 1930 with that great newspaper magnate

Sensing the false notes

available in Penguin editions, the first and last both dealing with people and events in the Caribbean after the French Revolution. Carpentier has also been Director of the Cuban State Publishing House, and, since 1966, Cuban cultural attaché in Paris. The publication in paperback of *Reasons of state* (written in 1974) is a good opportunity to think about the impact of revolution on a writer whose distinctive voice made itself heard long ago.

The striking thing about *Reasons of state* is that, by the standards of bourgeois literary criticism, it seems, at first, much less experimental than the earlier books. A Central American dictator, who spends most of his time in Paris, describes how he has to go home to put down an army rebellion; no sooner has he returned to Paris than a second rebellion, this time led by a liberal academic,

drags him back again. The First World War helps him by bringing prosperity, but, as soon as it ends, a Marxist revolution begins. Eventually the USA intervenes to protect American investments, and he is deposed. He escapes to Paris and dies not long afterwards.

Private

Ever since Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719, novels have tended, more often than not, to be about individual members of the bourgeoisie. The device of first-person narration makes the reader see everything through the eyes of this individual, drawing him/her into a private world which is often very cosy. We don't ask ourselves what Man Friday thinks about working for Crusoe. And in *Reasons of State* Carpentier

does everything he can to get us to identify completely with the dictator. The wit, culture, and human warmth the dictator reveals as he describes his life in Paris makes it impossible for us not to like him. The result is that when he is back in his country massacring his opponents you find yourself, like him, revelling in his ruthlessness. When he returns to Paris to find that newspaper atrocity revelations have turned people against him, you feel he has been misunderstood. And when he dies you feel sad.

But as soon as you finish the book, as soon as this nice person has stopped talking to you, it suddenly strikes you that something is wrong. How can you have been made to enjoy the company of someone who, in real life, would be your enemy? You find yourself reading from the beginning again, more

critically. This time you begin to sense certain false notes. Is the dictator's love of music sensitivity or just snobbery? Is his sexual behaviour refreshing and un hypocritical or just crudely sexist? Is his knowledge of human nature anything more than contempt for those who get in his way?

In theory

In the end, you are left with at least two insights. First, that a dictator can easily be a nice person. Secondly, that someone who uses language skilfully can get you to accept almost anything, at least for a time. Of course, everyone knows these things in theory. But what Carpentier has done here, by very cunning means, is to help us, in practice, to see why.

COLIN WAUGH



Alejo Carpentier, *Reasons of State*, (trans. Francis Partridge), Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, 1977. £1.75.

ALTHOUGH LITTLE KNOWN IN THIS COUNTRY, Alejo Carpentier, now seventy-four, is a great writer by any of the usual standards. Three of his novels, *The Kingdom of this World* [1949], *The Lost Steps* [1953], and *Explosion in a Cathedral* [1963] are

How revolutionaries fight the fascists

Two excerpts from Leon Trotsky on Fascism

Bourgeois democracy and the fight against fascism

THE QUESTION of our attitude toward governmental measures ostensibly aimed against fascism is highly important.

Since bourgeois democracy is historically bankrupt, it is no longer in a position to defend itself on its own ground against its enemies on the right and the left. That is, in order to 'maintain' itself, the democratic regime must progressively liquidate itself through emergency laws and administrative arbitrariness. This self-liquidation of democracy in the struggle against right and left brings to the fore the Bonapartism of degeneration, which needs both the left and the right danger for its uncertain existence in order to play them off against one another and to progressively raise itself above society and its parliamentarism. The Colijn regime has seemed to me for a long time to be a potentially Bonapartist regime.

In this highly critical period, the main enemy of Bonapartism remains, of course, the revolutionary wing of the proletariat. Thus, we can say with absolute assurance that as the class struggle deepens all emergency laws, extraordinary powers etc will be used against the proletariat.

Scoundrel

After the French Stalinists and Socialists voted for the administrative disbanding of paramilitary organizations, that old scoundrel Marcel Cachin wrote in *L'Humanité* approximately as follows: 'A great victory... Naturally, we know that in capitalist society all laws can be used against the proletariat. But we will strive to prevent this, etc.' The lie here is in the word 'can'. What should have been said was: 'We know that as the social crisis deepens, all these measures will be used against the proletariat with tenfold intensity.' There is a simple conclusion to be drawn from this: We cannot help build up the Bonapartism of degeneration with our own hands and supply it with the chains it will inevitably use to bind the proletarian vanguard.

This is not to say that for the immediate future Colijn will not want to free his right elbow from the excessive presumptuousness of the fascists. The social revolution in Holland does not seem to be an immediate threat. Big capital hopes to allay the threatening dangers by using the strong, concentrated (ie, Bonapartist, or semi-Bonapartist) state. But to keep the real enemy, the revolutionary proletariat, within bounds, Colijn will never completely eliminate or even sidetrack fascism. At most he will simply keep it in check. That is why the slogan for the disbanding and disarming of the fascist gangs by the state (and voting for similar measures) is reactionary through and through (the German Social Democrats cry: 'The state must act!') This would mean making a whip out of the proletariat's hide, one which the Bonapartist arbiters might use to softly caress the fascist rear ends here and there. But it is our inescapable responsibility and duty to protect the hide of the working class, not to hand over the whip to fascism.

There is another aspect of the

same situation which seems even more important. Bourgeois democracy is a sham by its very essence. The more it flowers, the less it can be utilized by the proletariat (see the history of England and the United States). But the dialectic of history commands that bourgeois democracy can become a powerful reality for the proletariat at the very time when it is falling apart. Fascism is the outward sign of this degeneration.

The struggle against fascism, the defense of the positions the working class has won within the framework of degenerating democracy can become a powerful reality since it gives the working class the opportunity to prepare itself for the sharpest struggles and partially to arm itself. The last two years in France, since February 6, 1934, have given the workers' organizations an excellent opportunity (and perhaps one that will not so soon be repeated) to mobilize the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie on the side of the revolution, to create a workers' militia, etc. This precious opportunity is supplied by the decay of democracy, by its clear inability to maintain 'order' by the old means, and by the equally clear danger which threatens the working masses. Anyone who does not take advantage of this situation, who calls on the 'state', i.e. the class enemy, to 'act', in effect sells the proletariat's hide to the Bonapartist reaction.

Therefore, we must vote against all measures that strengthen the capitalist-Bonapartist state, even those measures which may for the moment cause temporary unpleasantness for the fascists. Naturally, the Social Democrats and the Stalinists will say that we are defending the fascists against Father Colijn, who, after all, is better than the evil Mussert. We can say with assurance that we are more farsighted than the others and that future developments will completely confirm our perceptions and our demands. We can, however, formulate certain amendments which, when they are rejected, will make it clear to every worker that what is at stake is not the fascists' rear ends but the proletariat's hide. For example: [1] Workers' pickets are not to be affected by this law under any circumstances, even when they are obliged to take action against strikebreakers, fascists, and other lumpen elements;

[2] the trade unions and the political organizations of the working class reserve the right to construct and arm their self-defense organizations in the face of the fascist danger. The state is committed to aid these organizations with weapons, ammunition, and financial support on demand.

In parliament, these motions sound rather strange and Messrs. Statesmen (and the Stalinist posturers) will regard them as 'shocking.' But the average worker, not only in the NAS, but in the reformist trade unions as well, will find them quite justified. Naturally, I offer these amendments only as an example. One could, perhaps, find better, more exact formulations. Will Messrs. Social Democrats and Stalinists deny their support or even vote against them? Even if they vote for them, the motions will fail nevertheless, and then it will be absolutely clear why we vote against the government motion as a whole - and we must do this without any second thoughts whatsoever for the reasons given above (even if the Colijn parliamentarianism rules these amendments out of order on the grounds that they apply only to propaganda technique and not to the essence of the matter).

Anti-fascist

We have to take strong measures against the abstract 'anti-fascist' mode of thinking that finds entry even into our own ranks at times. 'Antifascism' is nothing, an empty concept used to cover up Stalinist skulduggery. In the name of 'anti-fascism' they instituted class collaboration with the Radicals. Many of our comrades wanted to give the 'People's Front,' ie, class collaboration, positive support in the same way that we are ready to support the united front, ie, the separation of the proletariat from the other classes. Starting from the thoroughly false slogan 'People's Front to power,' in the name of 'antifascism' they go still further and declare that they are inclined to support Bonapartism - for voting for Colijn's 'antifascist' bill would mean nothing less than direct support for Bonapartism.

SOURCES:

Writings 1935-6, p.242-4.
'The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution', p.139-41.



Leeds Trades Council secretary Beryl Huffingley was arrested when 2,000 police broke up the Trades Council's May Day demonstration. The Trades Council was breaking a ban on marches imposed after the NF announced plans for a demonstration.

THE GROWTH of the National Front faces the Labour movement with the need to strike hard and effectively at an organisation which feeds on the sewage of racism today and will destroy the Labour movement tomorrow if it is allowed to get strong enough. The cadre of a serious fascist movement is being selected and tempered in a vicious race war against the black and Asian communities. The Labour movement needs to bring to the fight against the N.F. the lessons of the anti-fascist struggles of the 20s and 30s. Many of the defeats inflicted then on the working class by the fascists on behalf of the bosses were avoidable.

Trotsky is here writing against a background where fascism is a rising wave spreading across Europe. It has engulfed and destroyed the Italian and German Labour movements. In Austria a military-police dictatorship has defeated the very powerful labour movement and after a brief civil war in Vienna (Feb 1934) suppressed it. In February 1934 an armed fascist demonstration clashes with the police and brings down the Daladier government in France. A general strike huris fascism back, but it continues to gather strength.

The powerful Italian, German, and Austrian labour movements were defeated because of the treachery or ineptitude of their leaderships. The Stalinists of the German Communist Party had refused to unite the working class, and had regarded the Social Democracy as a more dangerous enemy than the fascists anyway. After Hitler's victory (which the German CP surrendered without a struggle), they swung to the other side and put their faith in bourgeois democracy to protect the Labour movement, opposing even workers' defence squads.

The first passage, a letter to Henricus Sneevliet, leader of the Revolutionary Socialist

Workers Party of Holland and a deputy in the Dutch parliament, deals with the cardinal question of the attitude the workers' movement should take to bans on Fascist organisations by the bourgeois state. The German and Austrian social democrats had relied on the police and military of the bosses' state to protect them against the irregular fascist storm troopers of the self same bosses. They had allowed the state to strengthen itself, and had lulled the socialist workers to reliance on it. Hitler's stormtroopers had been 'banned' - only to gather strength and re-emerge with greater strength in attacking the Labour movement. The accumulation of power in the hands of the bourgeois state, agreed to by the social democrats, in fact made a fascist takeover smoother and easier when the President, von Hindenburg, called Hitler to power in January 1933.

Belief and trust in the neutrality, democracy, and anti-fascism of the capitalist state helped lull and disorientate the socialist workers, whose leaders surrendered peacefully to Hitler.

To the extent that the state was strengthened, the enemies of the working class were strengthened, and experience showed that this strength would ally itself with the fascist forces against the working class in any serious class confrontation. To the degree that the workers movement placed any reliance on the bourgeois state it was placing its head in a noose - which the bosses could pull tight. In Britain, the Public Order Act, ostensibly to deal with the Mosleyite blackshirts, has been mainly used against the left, against tenants' movements - and in the recent 2 months' ban in London, against anti-fascist campaigners.

The second passage shows graphically how the Labour movement and the black communities must organise to defeat the fascists.

Discussions on the Transitional Programme

IN THE LAST few days I read a French book written by an Italian worker about the rise of fascism in Italy. The writer is opportunistic. He was a Socialist, but it is not his conclusions which are interesting but the facts which he presents. He gives the picture of the Italian proletariat in 1920-21 especially. It was a powerful organization. They had 160 Socialist parliamentary deputies. They had more than one-third of the communities in their hands, the most important sections of Italy were in the hands of the Socialists, the centre of the power of the workers. No capitalist could hire or fire without union consent and this applied to agricultural workers as well as industrial. It seemed to be 49 percent of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the reaction of the small bourgeoisie, the demobilized officers was terrible against this situation. Then the author tells how they organized small bands under the guidance of officers and sent them in buses in every direction. In cities of ten thousand in the hands of the Socialists thirty organized men came into the town, burned up the municipality, burned the houses, shot the leaders, imposed on them the conditions of working for capitalists, then they went elsewhere and repeated the same in hundreds and hundreds of towns, on after the other. With terrible terror and these systematic acts they totally destroyed the trade unions and thus became bosses of Italy. They were a tiny minority.

The workers declared a general strike. The fascists sent their buses and destroyed every local strike and with a small organized minority wiped out the workers' organizations. After this came elections and the workers under the terror elected the same number of deputies. They pro-

tested in parliament until it was dissolved. That is the difference between formal and actual power. All the deputies were sure that they would have power, yet this tremendous movement with its spirit of sacrifice was smashed, crushed, abolished by some ten thousand fascists, well-organized, with a spirit of sacrifice, and good military leaders. [...]

The slogans of the party must be placed in quarters where we have sympathizers and workers who will defend us. But a party cannot create an independent defence organisation. The task is to create such a body in the trade unions. We must have these groups of comrades with very good discipline, with good cautious leaders not easily provoked because such groups can be provoked easily. The main task for the next year would be to avoid conflicts and bloody clashes. We must reduce them to a minimum with a minority organization during strikes, during peaceful times. In order to prevent fascist meetings it is a question of the relationship of forces. We alone are not strong, but we propose a united front.

Hitler explains his success in his book. The Social Democracy was extremely powerful. To a meeting of the Social Democracy he sent a band with Rudolf Hess. He says that at the end of the meeting his thirty boys evicted all the workers and they were incapable of opposing them. Then he knew he would be victorious. The workers were only organized to pay dues. No preparation at all for other tasks. Now we must do what Hitler did except in reverse. Send forty to fifty men to dissolve the meeting. This has tremendous importance. The workers become steeled, fighting elements. They become trumpets. The petty bourgeoisie think these are serious people. Such a success! This is why, I repeat, it is a very important question.

CPSA: the NEC went left, but conference didn't

THE ELECTION results for the new National Executive Committee [NEC] of the civil service union CPSA must have made many Ministers' and TUC bureaucrats' hearts jump.

Out of 28 voting seats, the 'Left' has 22. The 22 include four Militant supporters, 5 Communist Party members, three supporters of the militant left caucus Redder Tape, one IMG member and one SWP member.

The remaining eight declare themselves 'Labour left wingers' — most only as a cover for careerism.

This smashing of the 'Moderates' does not, however, necessarily reflect a shift to

the left by the majority of the CPSA rank and file.

The greater efficiency of the Broad Left voting machine, the disgust of many members about the right wing attack on Militant supporter Terry Adams (who is a CPSA full-time official), and above all the last-minute revelations about the financial backing from TRUMID (an extreme right wing, employer-backed outfit) for the right wing, all helped swing the NEC voting to the left. But on major policy issues there was not such a swing to the left.

Despite the unanimous opposition to a Phase Four, civil service workers (excluding CPSA members in the post

office) are still stuck to the 'PRU' system of fixing civil service wages by comparison with wages elsewhere. The left also failed to win delegates to a policy of electing full time officials instead of them being appointed.

The union is, however, now committed to a fight against redundancies inside the Ministry of Defence, not on the basis of restoring arms spending cuts, but on the basis of industrial action to defend jobs. Conference also voted full support for any action that the Department of Employment Section Executive decides against the likely threat to 1,000 jobs if fortnightly signing-on is introduced for the jobless.

Both these decisions were pushed through against the fierce opposition of the leading full time officials, who fear a confrontation with the Government.

After a bitter debate the CPSA affiliated to the Anti Nazi League with a majority of over 44,000 votes.

Conference also decided — in principle, at least — to campaign against cuts in public sector spending and against overtime that causes loss of jobs or prevents new hirings. These calls need to be taken up and translated into action.

The imposing Left majority on the NEC could prove fragile. The Broad Left could easily be split by the new 'left' Labour group, led by the very ambitious Reg Williams, who is planning to run for President next year.

The big business magazine, *The Economist* (November 26, 1977) spelt out the failure of the Right "to root out the union's powerful Marxist activists", and some of the shrewder employers and full time officials will look to the 'left' Labourites to do the job more skilfully.

The revolutionary socialists in the CPSA, particularly those grouped around Redder Tape, found their policies on jobs, wages, women's rights, trade union democracy, and Ireland either never debated or soundly defeated at the conference. For them it is crucial to assess the results of the conference coldly and work out the necessary political response.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

Grunwick strikers indict union leaders

AT THE GRUNWICKS solidarity conference in London on May 14th, no resolutions were taken.

With only two or three hundred delegates, and the TUC and the strikers' union APEX resolutely hostile to any militant continuation of the struggle, the defeat of the strike was clear to the conference.

However, strike committee secretary Mahmood Ahmed insisted: "As far as the Grunwick strikers are concerned, the strike is not finished and will never be finished by us". The strike committee has resolved to put the responsibility for ending the strike clearly, for all to see, on the APEX leadership.

Statements by APEX leaders at the union conference recently indicated that they would probably call the strike off within a few weeks.

The bitterness of defeat was smothered at the conference by sugary words from Tom Durkin

and Jack Dromey. Durkin is a member of the Communist Party and Dromey is politically close to the CP.

Long ago, when victory was still possible, Dromey was talking about the strike was 'a great chapter in working-class history' — as if it were really not a fight to win, but just a courageous gesture for the benefit for future historians.

He offered the same argument at the conference.

Brave and militant battles do always leave some positive legacy, even when they are defeated. But the fact remains that the right wing of the trade union movement betrayed and sabotaged the Grunwick strike; that the 'official' left wing of the movement let them get away with it; and that the revolutionaries were not strong enough to prevent the sell-out.

It is up to us to make sure that balance of forces is changed so that future Grunwicks can end in victory.



Strike committee member Kamlesh Gandhi at APEX conference



Photo: Newsline

Last Saturday [May 13th] about 2,000 people gathered in London at Speakers' Corner for a demonstration called by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, in solidarity with the victims of Zionist colonisation and oppression.

In particular the demonstration was called to protest against the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, carried out with exceptional brutality and with the intention of destroying the base of the Palestinian organisations.

Before the demonstration moved off to march to the L.S.E., there were speakers from a platform at Speakers' Corner.

However, both the Socialist Workers' Party and the International Marxist Group were denied speaking rights, and in addition the demonstration suffered from the actions of the so-called Workers' Revolutionary Party.

As the demo moved off contingents of the WRP took over the head of the demo, armed with posters of Kamil Jumblatt and Yasser Arafat. The WRP also brought along a van with loud-speakers attached and swapped the demo with its mindless adulation of the petit-bourgeois nationalist leadership of the PLO, and plugs for Vanessa Redgrave's film 'The Palestinian'

Tribunal says women deserve boring jobs

WOMEN, we're always told, are weaker, more impulsive, and less rational than men. According to a recent industrial tribunal decision, they are also better suited to put up with boredom.

Coventry Turned Parts got away with advertising a job for women only, evading the Sex Discrimination Act by saying that the job was so boring that only older women would take it and a young woman would be turned down in the same way as 17 year old Timothy Veasey [who took the case to the tribunal] was.

The worst of it is that there was a grain of truth in what the firm said. After twenty years of indoctrination with the idea that the serious creative work of society is men's job, and twenty years' confinement to the treadmill of housework and childcare, many middle-aged women might well endure a boring job more readily than a young man.

The sort of attitudes which help to pressurise women were sharply illustrated by Timothy

Veasey's comment: "It was wrong to refuse me the chance and give it to a woman earning pin money to help her husband's wages". Even when a woman gets a chance to go out to work, she's only a second-class worker, "helping her husband's wages"!

Capitalism always strives to reduce workers as much as possible to the status of robots, mere servants of the machine, mere cogs in the profit-producing process. All the better for the bosses if half the working class can be defined as specially suitable for this servitude — and if the alternative to going out to work is the even more dismal servitude of housework.

"I don't know why there are more women than men who are secretaries", said the firm's managing director, "but there are". Speed the day when women workers show him that there is no tolerable reason why that is so, and that they are not going to put up with it any longer.

Trades Council makes appeal for fined anti-fascists

THE LAST of the 19 people arrested outside Bolton Town Hall in February, during a demonstration against a National Front meeting, were tried this week.

All but one have been refused legal aid, with no reason given, even though some are unemployed. Fortunately, Robert Lizar, a local lawyer who does work for the NCCL, agreed to defend them without charge.

The fines have ranged from £60 to £100 plus costs for minor charges such as obstruction and breach of the peace. A glaring example of rigged police evidence occurred when the case against Robert Whittington was dismissed because the arresting officer pointed to the wrong person in court!

Bolton Trades Council called for a picket for Monday when the most serious case was tried. Brian Clements from Newton-le-Willows Trades Council was charged with assaulting a policeman.

In fact, said Lizar, it wasn't Clements who assaulted the police but they who assaulted him at the police station. A doctor who examined him after his release confirmed that he had groin injuries and bruising — obviously not self-inflicted!

But Lizar's allegations were disallowed by the magistrates. They fined Brian Clements £123 for assault, £25 for threatening behaviour, bound him over for 12 months, and ordered him to pay £20 costs.

After the heavy fines for much less serious charges, the sentence was lower than expected. The Trades Council leaflet pointed out that he might have got 3 months.

That was a minor victory, although the picket was only 15 strong, despite mass leafletting in Bolton, with a leaflet that emphasised the political nature of the trials and the bias of the police.

There was a lot of anger in the

local labour movement when the Conservative Council agreed to let the NF meeting go ahead. This was increased when a massive police operation was organised [under Manchester's notorious police chief, Anderton] to protect the 150 fascists against the 5,000 demonstrators. And as usual it was not the fascists who were arrested.

The campaign has not ended with the trials. Money is now needed to help pay the fines. Also, on Thursday a meeting called by the Trades Council with representation from local labour movement organisations and political bodies voted to constitute itself as the basis of Bolton Campaign Against Racism and Fascism.

Cheques and Postal Orders for the Defence Fund should be made payable to: Bolton Trades Council [Defence Fund], and sent to Benny Topp, AUEW Spinners Hall, St. George's Rd. Bolton. ROS MAKIN

WORKERS IN ACTION

FORDS:

LET'S HAVE A CLAIM WORTH FIGHTING FOR

NEWS OF THE 80% wage rise for Terry Beckett, chairman and managing director of Ford UK, is a good start for Ford workers to talk about their own wages and conditions. The new claim will be drawn up in the next few weeks, for an agreement to start in 5 months' time.

A national shop stewards meeting has been called for June 4th in Coventry to finalise the claim.

The convenors and full-time officials will be putting forward their ideas, with possible amendments through shop stewards committees.

MONEY

One thing is certain. If this year's claim is to represent what the shop floor want, then there will have to be adequate time to discuss

and decide on the different ideas. Section meetings must be called over the next 3 weeks to do this.

What should the main points be? Money. Last year's deal gave 11% to most line workers. It has not even maintained British Ford workers' standards of living. It brought them no nearer parity with Ford workers on the Continent doing the same work. The only thing it did do was to help Ford

make massive profits this year! In terms of what their wages can buy, Ford workers are now about 30% down on their position 4 years ago. That means roughly a £20 increase just to get back to where they were.

And there's still inflation. When prices go up, so should our wages — automatically. Right from the start of the claim, Ford workers need to say that wages should rise by £1 for every 1% rise in the cost of living.

Hours 2 years ago the unions demanded a 35 hour week. Last year there was a retreat on that to 37½, but even that was sold out in the final deal. There should be a return to the demand of 2 years ago — a 35 hour week, with no loss of pay. Most unions are committed to this demand, at least in words. Last week 55 ladders on the Isle of Grain power station site got fed up with just fine words and no action, and started working a 35 hour week themselves. For Fords, too, it needs to be won this year.

5 hours less than the present basic 40 hour week would be a big gain in conditions, and one that inflation couldn't take away. It would also create 3,300 more jobs.

LAY-OFF

Lay-off pay Like on hours, the demand for improved lay-off pay last year was sold out in the final deal. After the fright Dagenham workers gave management last summer when they closed the whole estate down and occupied the Body Plant over the lay-off pay issue, and after the bosses retaliated by having a go at the militant stewards in the Dagenham Body Plant in January, management have not used lay-offs so much this year so far.

But their ability to send workers home without pay when they like is still there. This year's claim needs to be the one where workers win 100% pay for any layoffs.

A decent claim, drawn up with full shop floor involvement and democratic discussion, representing a real step forward in wages and conditions, will give Ford workers something worth fighting for. It will be a first step. After that will come the need to organise the fight. (adapted from the Fords' Dagenham Workers' Action bulletin)



Militant lobby by Ford workers during last year's pay battle.

ANTI-ABORTION propaganda always centres round the tiny number of late abortions, and the idea that 'pro-abortionists' want to murder innocent and helpless 'unborn children'.

Yet in Tameside anti-abortion campaigners have recently succeeded in blocking the use of the earliest, safest, and least distressing method of abortion developed to date, the menstrual aspiration technique.

The method had been used in Tameside General Hospital providing terminations of suspected pregnancies on the NHS between 10 and 18 days after a missed period.

Other methods usually require a positive pregnancy test, which can only be obtained 6 weeks after the last period. At Tameside

Demonstration called to save day-care abortion clinic

OPPOSE THE CLOSURE OF THE TAMESIDE DAY-CARE ABORTION CLINIC!
DEMONSTRATE at 10 O'CLOCK, WEST END COMMUNITY CENTRE, JOHN STREET, ASHTON under LYNE.
SATURDAY MAY 20th

no pregnancy test needed to be done.

The contents of the uterus are simply extracted by suction: this can be the treatment for heavy period pains, as well as for an unwanted pregnancy. The

woman need never know if she was in fact pregnant. The operation is over in 10 minutes, with no anaesthetic to recover from, no absence from work to explain, no traumatic decision to cope with.

There is no way in which you could describe the contents of the womb at this stage as a 'baby', and it apparently takes an expert to tell whether there was a fertilised egg there at all.

The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) forced the closure of the clinic on a technicality. The clinic asked every woman treated there to sign a form consenting to an abortion. The Home Office ruled that it was illegal to have those women who turned out not to be pregnant at all signing these forms!

The result, of course, will be more late abortions.

In Bury over 70% of abortions are performed after the 12th week, not because women go to their doctors late, but because of the delay once the hospital gets their referral.

No woman decides to terminate her pregnancy lightly, but the Tameside clinic offered women who had made that decision, a service which was safe and un-traumatic. Thanks to SPUC this service is withdrawn and women will have to go elsewhere, either backstreet, or hospital waiting list.

Sue Arnall, Bury Women's Group

workers' ACTION supporters' groups

exist in most major towns. For more information, or to subscribe to Workers Action, complete this form and send to the address below:

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Send to WA, Box 1960, 182 Upper St, London N1.

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to *Events*, Box 1960, 182 Upper Street, London N1, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

SATURDAY 13 MAY. Palestine Solidarity Campaign demonstration against the Israeli occupation of the Lebanon. 12.30pm from Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park.

SATURDAY 20 MAY. All-London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism: conference on racism and education. 9.30 to 4.30 at Robert Montefiore School, Vallance Rd, London E1.

MONDAY 22 MAY. Coventry Workers Action readers meeting: Rob McGonigle on Ireland. Room F128, Lanchester Polytechnic.

THURSDAY 25 MAY. Newham Teachers' Group meeting: Leila Berg on 'Literature of Working Class Children'. 7pm at Forest Gate School, Forest Lane, E15.

THURSDAY 25 MAY. 'Immigration Controls: Should they all be ended?' Public meeting organised by All-Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement; 7.30pm at Lambeth Town Hall, corner of Acre Lane and Brixton Hill.

FRIDAY 26 MAY. Revolutionary Communist Tendency public meeting: 'Ireland: its revolutionary significance'. Speaker: Phil Murphy. 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. Holborn Tube. Admission 20p.

FRIDAY 16 JUNE. Anti-Apartheid rally on the 2nd anniversary of the Soweto events. 7.30pm at Westminster Central Hall: adm. 20p.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 17-18 JUNE. National conference of the Working Women's Charter campaign, at Manchester Poly, All Saints, Cavendish House. Further information: Pat Cross, Flat 2, 49 Spring Bank, Hull. (Telephone Hull 443 243).

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— Advertisement — "INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST"

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TGWU STEWARDS REJECT BUILDING PAY DEAL

Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) shop stewards in the building industry, meeting last Wednesday (10th) rejected the sell-out pay deal negotiated by their officials. There does not appear to be strong outright opposition to the 10% guideline. The main bone of contention is insufficient consolidation of supplements to the basic rate. The guaranteed minimum bonus which is still considered to be too low, and the dropping of the 35 hour week demand, were the issues on which feelings ran high. The 7-man executive of

the other major union in the industry, UCATT, will be meeting on Tuesday to reconsider the situation. Earlier they accepted the deal, but now with both the TGWU and the smaller G&MWU against it, the situation has become fluid.

Although the Morning Star has generally backed the UCATT leaders over this claim and has said very little about the latest developments, the London Joint Sites Committee, dominated by CP militants, has called a meeting for the 25th May at Conway Hall.

Cheung Siu Ming