

workers' ACTION

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10p



THE CRISIS in Iran reached a new stage this week when the Shah's regime sent the Army into the strike-bound oil-fields. Stormy street fighting and demonstrations were still continuing in Iranian cities. Now that the focus of the struggle has moved into the oilfields, it more directly affects Iran's imperialist backers. Most of Iran's oil resources are exploited by a foreign-owned consortium, in which the British company BP has a 40% share and the Anglo-Dutch firm Shell has 14%.

SUPPORT THE FORD STRIKE

Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

Public meeting

FIGHTING RACISM
IN THE LABOUR
MOVEMENT

Speakers: Patrick Kodikara, Tassaddaq Ahmed, Fran Brodie, and a speaker from the Virk Brothers Defence Committee.

2.30pm, Sunday 5th
November, at Toynbee
Hall, Commercial St,
East London.

Vauxhall: join the struggle!

VAUXHALL workers have submitted two separate strike notices for next week. 8000 workers at Ellesmere Port are set to strike from Wednesday 8th if there is no improvement in Vauxhall's pay offer.

Craftsmen throughout Vauxhall and in the car components company AC Delco [which, like Vauxhall, is owned by General Motors] have decided to strike from Friday 10th. Represented by the GM Combine Craft Committee, they are protesting against GM bosses' failure to keep promises and erosion of differentials.

Despite the decision by Vauxhall workers in Luton and Dunstable to reject strike action against a pay offer which was little more than half the 7%-plus formula which has now been rejected at Ellesmere Port, Vauxhall could still be joining Ford workers in the fight against pay curbs. Thousands of workers in Vauxhall are obviously not convinced by the argument that they should put up with lower pay because Vauxhall is not as profitable as Ford. By taking the initiative they can bring it home to other workers how absurd that argument is.

A fight for unity is still important. The first concern of Vauxhall workers who are ready to strike should be to organise and agitate to draw in those who are still dithering or anti-strike. The restoration of living standards and the 35 hour week are demands which concern all workers. A united workers' struggle is the way to win them.

WITH THE Company saying its offer is 'final' and the Government still standing by its 5% limit, the Ford struggle is becoming harsher. Support from other workers is more essential than ever — and, most of all, support in the form of workers joining Ford in struggle, striking now for their own demands.

Ford bosses have been upping their offers, and tightening the strings. On Friday 27th, they increased their 8% offer to 12.5%, and on Tuesday 1st it was raised again to 15%. The basic increase offered rises only from 8% to 9.75%; the additional money is in the form of an 'attendance allowance'.

Fines

What that 'allowance' would really mean is a fine on workers who are late, absent, or take unofficial strike action. That fine could be over £3 a week for being a few minutes late.

Ford want to tie the offer to increased productivity and ever tighter labour discipline, to keep track speeds at the fastest possible level.

But — as strikers lobbying the talks said — "we want to be paid for the time we are at work, not fined for the time we're not there". With Ford's Amsterdam plant already shut down by the strike, and other European Ford operations likely to close soon (according to a German Ford spokesman), the strikers have the



power to reject Ford's manoeuvres and stick it out for the full claim.

Union negotiators rejected both offers, saying they were not going to accept the 'strings'. Ford have shown little willingness to bend: their offer on Tuesday 1st would allow workers to be five minutes late before they would lose the 'attendance allowance'.

Despite Ford's intransigence, the union negotia-

tors are still trying to work out a compromise rather than hold on until Ford are forced to give in. Ron Todd, the chief union negotiator, said that unions would discuss productivity with Ford on a joint sub-committee if the full details of the Ford claim — including the 35 hour week — were discussed 'in tandem'.

Who gave Todd any mandate to trade off the 35 hour week demand for productivity deals?

Ford offers show what they want to see a productivity deal as: pettifogging discipline, to be imposed by foremen who will have the right to 'fine' workers £3 a week for being a few minutes late.

The offer should be turned down flat. And the rank and file must organise to take control of the running of the strike, making sure that the union negotiators stick to the full claim and reject all productivity dealing.

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The computer war of Kitson's friend

THE British Army in the North East of Ireland has been lowering its profile under its present GOC, General Sir Timothy Creasey.

The General (formerly commander of the armed forces of the Sultan of Oman, 1972-5) is known as an expert in counter insurgency. Like Major General Frank Kitson, an old friend of his, Creasey favours the army being closely involved in politics.

So, while the Royal Ulster Constabulary has taken over a lot of the army's work on the streets, Creasey has concentrated his forces on undercover back-up for the RUC. According to the Irish weekly *Hibernia*, the Army boasts that its 'P' Section holds well over half a million personal files, containing address, age, job, habits, haunts, etc, with cross references to relatives and friends. Meanwhile the RUC is also collecting such details for its own computer files.

A second army computer file contains street records. Thanks to this and the efforts of soldiers doing a periodic door to door 'census', the army boasts that it can tell the colour of your wallpaper in under a minute.

Another computer file is known as the vehicle index. This records vehicle number, colour and make and a code number which indicates how the vehicle should be treated at checkpoints.

A fourth computer section is the VCP (Vehicle Check Point) Index. All cars passing through road checks have their numbers recorded. This is then cross referenced with other indexes.

The theory behind the use of

the computer is that a huge amount of 'low grade' intelligence can be of greater use in the long run than a small number of 'high grade' items. A pocketphone radio network links the men on patrol with the computer.

Such techniques are in use in Germany, introduced in the 'anti-terror' witch-hunt atmosphere. Units of the police in Britain are stepping up computer-based information gathering against the left and the immigrant communities. They can be extended at any time, either surreptitiously or in a fit of hysteria such as the one in November 1974 when the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act was brought in.

Henry Alleg, who highlighted the French use of torture in Algeria, once estimated that it took seven years for the methods of repression enforced in a colony to become a regular practice in the metropolitan country itself. It has been over nine years since the British Army took up its present active role in Northern Ireland.

Yet General Creasey's strategy in the north of Ireland is not going without opposition. The Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance recently crossed swords with the RUC: the civil servants' union objected to its members handing over personal details on families who received unemployment benefit or social security to the RUC.

Such actions should be taken up and stepped up. And we should demand of the Labour government: scrap all secret surveillance!

'Temporary' law claims victim no. 3375

JOE EDWARDS, a leading member of the Trade Union Campaign Against Repression (TUCAR), was arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act last Sunday (22nd) at Stranraer in Scotland, while returning to his Belfast home after addressing a Troops Out conference in London.

This arrest was an act of pure harassment by the British authorities, who know full well that Joe is a political activist and not what they choose to call a 'terrorist'.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act was introduced in November 1974, in the aftermath of the Birmingham pub bombings which killed 19 people. It was rushed onto the statute books and was supposed to be temporary.

Since then, 3375 people have been detained and there have been 132 expulsion orders.

Of those 'detained', only a tiny number have ever been charged with 'terrorist' type offences. Only recently, seven Belfast dockers were arrested by the Liverpool police as they travelled

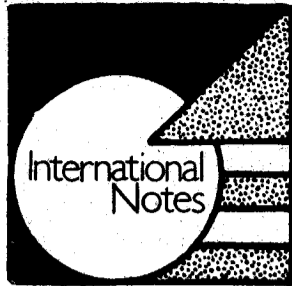
to a training course in England. Other dockers took strike action in their support and they were released uncharged.

As the Prevention of Terrorism Act stands at present, any policeman can pick up an individual and hold them for 48 hours if he 'suspects' them of terrorism. If 48 hours is claimed by the police to be not long enough, the Home Secretary can extend the detention by a further 5 days.

Additional regulations allow the Home Secretary to detain people at ports and airports for up to 12 days.

In the four years it has been law the Prevention of Terrorism Act has been a tremendous boon to the police in harassing militants connected with the struggle in Ireland and in stifling Republican political activity in Britain. The labour movement should mount a campaign to remove this extra weapon from the hands of the police.

MIKE FOLEY



Iran's oil strikers fight for political demands

RADICAL DEMANDS are gaining ground within the mass opposition to the Shah's dictatorship in Iran.

The country's crucial oil industry is crippled by a strike.

After concessions were made on their economic demands, oil workers struck again — for political demands. They want the expulsion of the western consortium which exploits Iran's oil, the replacement of foreign experts, the end of martial law, and the release of all political prisoners.

Staff at the ministry of economic affairs are also on strike, calling for an anti-imperialist economic policy. Other strikes involve bank workers and TV workers, who are denouncing the Shah's censorship and manipulation of TV.

Since the general strike on October 16th, to commemorate the hundreds killed in Tehran

on Black Friday, September 8th, there have been mass demonstrations almost daily. In five days of demonstrations after the Shah's birthday on Thursday 25th, 49 people were killed by the Shah's troops (according to a report in the *Financial Times*):

Students have made up a big part of many of the demonstrations. And on Saturday 21st — according to press reports — the beginnings of a real political differentiation in the opposition emerged, when 'Marxist' and Muslim students marched separately to demand an end to martial law, the release of all political prisoners, and the overthrow of the Shah.

FILLING THE JAILS QUEENSLAND-STYLE

Joh Bjelke-Peterson is the arch-reactionary leader of the ultra-right Australian Country Party, and also Premier of the Australian province of Queensland. He prides himself on being a 'man of the people' who left school at 14 and has never looked back.

Just over a year ago he and his Country Party cronies decreed, through the Queensland State Parliament, a ban on all street marches in the state. This ban was part of a series of measures designed to shackle the organised labour movement (other propos-

als included attempts to impose limitations on strikes which as yet have not materialised).

The response of the Queensland section of the Australian Labour Party, which gained almost 40% of the votes in the state election, was: 'Well, we can't break the law. Wait until the next election and we'll repeal the ban'.

So up until now it has been left to rank and file trade unionists, the women's movement, the anti-nuclear movement, and civil liberties groups to challenge the ban on one of the most basic

democratic rights of the working class.

Over 1,300 people have been arrested and charged with attempting to march illegally in Brisbane.

The Labour Party, it seems, has finally woken up to its responsibilities. On Sunday 29th October several ALP members of the state parliament led a march in Brisbane against the ban. 288 marchers were arrested, including two Labour members of the federal Australian legislature.

JO THWAITES



Iris Mills out on bail

IRIS MILLS was arrested on May 24th as a bomb-thrower and terrorist. Together with five other anarchists she was charged with conspiracy to cause explosions.

She has still not been tried, let alone convicted. But for five months — until she was released on bail last Thursday, October 26th — she was kept in a top security cell, in virtual solitary confinement, in Brixton prison.

During the first three weeks she was allowed no visitors at all, and later she was allowed only 15 minute visits. Eventually she was allowed to meet and talk with one other prisoner; but that other prisoner, an Arab, speaks little English, and meanwhile Iris Mills' 'privilege' of watching TV two hours a day had been withdrawn. She got only two half-hour exercise breaks a day — to be taken alone.

Four other 'innocent until proved guilty' defendants — Ronan Bennett, Dafydd Ladd, Vince Stevenson, and Stewart Carr — are still in jail. The sixth, Trevor Dawton, was granted bail on September 28th.

Iris Mills' release on bail seems to show that the police Anti Terrorist Squad are finding the going difficult.

Although they have based their charges on the catch-all conspiracy law, which enables them to cite the fact that the six are 'idealists taking positive steps to overthrow society' as damning evidence, their case looks very thin. An alleged 'bomb factory' at Iris Mills' flat consisted of two bags of sugar, 1 1/2 bags of flour, and two small tins of weed-killer.

COLIN FOSTER

LAST WEEK Turkish Cypriot students held a three-day hunger strike and picket in London to protest at the refusal of the Turkish Cypriot Government to help support its students in Britain.

As a leaflet of the Federation of Turkish Students in the UK (IKTOF) points out: "We, the Cypriot students, do not have the right to pursue our education in our country, because there is no university or any other higher education establishment..."

"The Cypriot students, therefore, have to complete their education abroad. However, this 'opportunity' is limited to only a handful of students from rich families... Students from the labouring classes, who go abroad for education, have to work in

order to maintain themselves during their studies".

Petitioned by students to improve their situation in Britain, the government of the so-called 'Turkish Federated State of Cyprus' ignored the issue.

The students are also protesting against the discriminatory fees system [whereby foreign students pay far more than British students], and discriminatory charges for accommodation and food at students' halls.

IKTOF has put forward the demand that 'every student receive a grant during his/her studies and a student hostel be provided for cheap accommodation, at least for the most needy Cypriot students'.

ANDREW HORNUNG

LAST MONDAY (23rd) charges under Section 1 of the Official Secrets Act were effectively dropped in the Aubrey-Berry-Campbell trial.

Judge Mars Jones' ruling, after 'a protracted legal argument', means that these charges, which carry a maximum sentence of 14 years, are now 'on file' and will not be proceeded with. Only relatively minor charges remain.

Pressure from the Aubrey-Berry-Campbell Defence Campaign obviously helped this decision, as did the defence cross-examination of Col. H A John-

stone ('Col. B'). Using such service magazines as *Rose and Laurel* and *Wire*, and an article in the *Guardian* naming the location of a Cyprus signals base, the defence made a nonsense of the charge that the defendants had been dealing in national secrets. Any informed researcher could piece together the information.

While the State has lost one round with the dropping of charges, the pressure has to be kept up until the remaining charges under section 2 are thrown out of court.



STOP THE EXTRADITION OF ASTRID PROLL

A NOTE in last week's *New Society* described how the British Government is helping the German Government's 'anti-terrorist' hunt in the case of Astrid Proll.

"Under the Anglo-German extradition treaty of 1960, neither state was permitted to extradite its own nationals, as opposed to those of the other country — and West Germany is still forbidden by its constitution to extradite its own nationals.

Astrid Proll was arrested in mid-September. On 2 October, an Order in Council, passed at Bal-

laid before parliament [then in recess] and came into force the following day, reversing the 1960 restriction. Astrid Proll's marriage to a British citizen entitled her to British nationality. The 'Lex Proll', as her lawyer, who has now complained to Merlyn Rees about her restrictions in Brixton, has called it, has therefore removed the protection from extradition which the 1960 treaty would have given her.

Perhaps it's a good job that Merlyn Rees didn't have the fates of Garibaldi, Kossuth, or Marx on his hands".

Part timers won't get equal pay

The Equal Pay Act is supposed to guarantee women equal pay with men doing similar work. Already test cases have shown that companies can get round the Act if women's work is even slightly different, if inequality is covered over by a grading system which puts the women workers in the lower grades, or even if the work done by the higher-paid man chosen for comparison is less responsible, highly-qualified, or demanding than the woman's work.

Now an even bigger hole has been knocked in the Act. According to a recent Employment Appeal Tribunal decision, a woman can legally be paid a lower hourly rate than a man doing exactly the same job if the woman works part-time.

Katherine Handley works as a machinist in the garment trade. She is paid £1.61 an hour. A male worker chosen for comparison gets £1.67 an hour. The employers agree that Ms. Handley does the same job as the male worker; they even agree that her work is better than his. [As Ms. Handley points out, 'you get that extra bit in' when working shorter hours]. But the employers successfully refused equal pay because Ms. Handley works 26 hours a week, and the male worker does 40 hours.

The judge said that Ms. Handley 'was really contributing overall less to ... the utilisation of the

company's equipment'. The decision makes some sense in capitalist terms: for the go-getting boss, it is vital that his machines are supplied with labour power as nearly continuously as possible. Anyone who works a shorter week is offending against the Great God Capital and deserves



Katherin Handley: £1.61 an hour for her because she is part-time, £1.67 for a male full-timer.

to be punished.

The judge talked about "special family obligations", as if Ms. Handley's situation [with two children at home] were exceptional. What the judgment means in fact is that the Equal Pay Act is a dead letter for the three million or so women who, because they have to do an extra job of child care and housework, can only work part-time.

Interim pay rise? Yes Sir, straight away, Sir

PRICE CONTROLS are designed not to work. A host of major companies have been using a carefully designed loophole in the prices legislation to avoid even the small inconveniences caused by the Price Commission.

According to a report in *Labour Weekly*, firms such as ICI, Tate & Lyle, Allied Breweries and Cadbury Schweppes have managed to simply sidestep the rules the government claims to operate.

The loophole allows companies to make 'interim increases' even when the Price Commission is investigating rises they want to make. There is no way the Price Commission can reverse an 'interim increase' in price, even if its investigations conclude it was too high.

The loophole was devised by the Confederation of British Industries. The Government incorporated it into their price control policy for one clearly stated reason, "to protect profits".

Interim rises are often the same amount as the overall rise a company wants — and the companies getting them certainly have large profits they want to protect.

Allied Breweries, who were allied an 'interim increase' of 2p a pint earlier this year, had profits which rose from £63 million in 1976 to £77 million in 1977. Cadbury Schweppes also got all the rises through that it wanted,

under the 'interim' provision: a range of foods was put up by an average 7.5%. Profits for the previous year had been £46 million.

These companies weren't the exception that proves the rule. Of 25 companies who notified price rises to the Price Commission from July 1977 to July 1978, 20 made 'interim increases'. Eight of these companies were allowed 'interim' rises of exactly the same amount as the 'main' rise they had asked for.

Actually, the Price Commission doesn't even think its job is to hold down prices anyway. Its chairman, ex-merchant banker Charles Williams, believes that it exists to make industry more efficient and competitive — and this will put everything right.

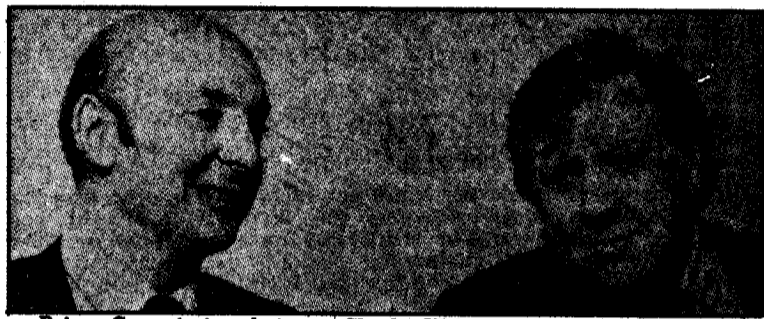
According to the *Financial*

Times, he prefers to call it the 'Commission for Market Imperfection'.

It isn't surprising they think this way. A majority of the members of the commission are bosses. They include a former managing director of Esso, the Deputy Chairman of Unilever, a director of Delta Metals Research and of Lucas Industries, Lloyds Bank and Burtons, and the chairman of the Electricity Council.

These big business figures are the majority of members on the 15-man commission.

As for the Government, when it set up the Price Commission it declared its aim was to control prices ... "so far as that appears to the Commission to be compatible with the making of adequate profits by efficient suppliers of goods and services"...



Prices Commission chairman Charles Williams (left) and Prices Minister Roy Hattersley: correcting 'market imperfections'.

A new direction for Women's Voice?

OVER 100 women attended the *Women's Voice* conference in Birmingham at the weekend. They were delegates — one per five members — from *Women's Voice* groups around the country in both workplaces and the community.

The fight over hospital closures was one of the major areas discussed, with informative and interesting reports from many struggles. Delegates told of the effects that the cutbacks are having, both on staff and on patients.

Women's Voice bulletins have been given out at a number of hospitals, and women at the conference told of the encouraging contacts and support they had gained through them.

The section on 'Women at Work' heard about the various struggles going on for adequate maternity leave, for workbased nurseries, and against the continued discrimination against women. Even in teaching, where women appear to work on equal terms to men, they are overwhelmingly concentrated in the lower-paid, primary school jobs; and in a male preserve like the print, little has changed.

One of the most interesting reports was about the 'Typists Charter'.

Local authority typists have always been extremely badly paid, and this has led to habitual understaffing. They had also been thought of as extremely unmilitant — until Camden Council typists went on strike this summer. Now, a group of women in Nalگو have drawn up a Typists' Charter.

This is an important step, as clerical work will soon be drastically affected by new technology. The introduction of word processing could remove still further any control over work conditions and lead to massive unemployment. A

word processing machine can do the work of three typists.

New technology could liberate people from large amounts of laborious work. But for it to benefit workers in that way, a struggle for shorter hours, workers' control, and re-training will be necessary.

But the conference left unanswered many questions which are vitally important if the organisation is to develop and draw in other working class women.

In many ways, the conference was like a mini-rally, with many experiences being exchanged but with very little political focus.

The fact that the politics of *Women's Voice* are so unclear apparently disturbed many delegates at the conference. One of the workshops recommended that a *Where We Stand* column be drafted and circulated to all WV groups for discussion and amendment. After a proper discussion on it at the next conference, it should be a permanent feature of *Women's Voice*.

The Fleet Street WV group also recommended that the paper should carry such a *Where We Stand* column, to make it clear on what basis women were joining the organisation, and to arm

Women's Voice to carry out national initiatives around a common programme, particularly within the trade unions.

The lack of a stated platform could soon be a handicap in any attempted action. For example, *Women's Voice* intends to start a campaign around the question of low pay. Yet there has been very little discussion within the organisation about what demands are necessary in relation to pay and conditions. Where for example does WV stand on the question of positive discrimination in favour of women, or the sliding scale of wages, or on a national minimum wage?

The feeling of unease was not helped by the fact that no time had been allowed on the agenda for motions, and no provision had been made for WV groups to write documents or resolutions for the conference. Glasgow WV group proposed that discussion papers should be circulated before the next conference.

Some delegates were also upset by the fact that there was very little information given about the women put up for the steering committee; none of those who stood gave any account of their political positions. One delegate

asked how many of the women were members of the SWP, and this was never answered.

Any questions or suggestions that came from the floor seemed to be considered as purely negative by the conference organisers.

The most sensitive question, touched on throughout the conference but never really discussed, was the relationship between *Women's Voice* and the Socialist Workers' Party. Delegates expressed dissatisfaction during the workshops about the fact that this issue has never been resolved.

Women's Voice started off explicitly as the magazine of the SWP. This conference was to launch it as an 'independent organisation'. However, right at the end of the conference a resolution was put out (though not discussed or voted on) detailing the nature of *Women's Voice*.

Although describing WV as 'independent', it states that 'because *Women's Voice* recognises that women's liberation can only ultimately come about through a joint struggle of men and women

to change society, the politics, the ideas about how to change society haven't changed, and *Women's Voice* sees the need for a revolutionary socialist party. WV sees the SWP as the beginnings of that party and in that sense is a sister organisation to the SWP'.

'To be a member of WV means being prepared to sell WV, to help build WV groups and actively support the campaigns and activities that WV initiates.'

Workers' Action believes that the building of an autonomous working class based women's movement would be a tremendous step forward. If *Women's Voice* is honest about being 'independent' and wishing to draw in broader forces then it cannot limit itself exclusively to supporters or even vague sympathisers of the SWP.

Because of its weight within the movement the SWP will obviously control the leading bodies, for now, but it has then to acknowledge the fact that WV members can disagree with various decisions that WV makes and with the general politics of the SWP. The WV leadership should allow democratic discussion to take place inside *Women's Voice* and attempt to draw in women from other socialist tendencies and from the women's movement. It should not link itself exclusively with the SWP.

The effects of the stifling of debate within WV would be seriously detrimental, both in terms of bring women into the movement, and in terms of raising the level of political understanding of those already within the movement through a healthy and lively discussion.

As a beginning, *Workers' Action* supporters suggest that *Women's Voice* initiate an internal discussion bulletin, so that there can be some discussion and debate among WV groups between the conferences.

PAT LONGMAN



FORTY YEARS AGO this Autumn, the Fourth International was founded. It was a daring act of courageous defiance, in the face of the imperialist war machines then preparing the holocaust of 1939-45 and the Stalinist and Social-Democratic leaders who acted as their lackeys.

The revolutionaries declared: the future lies not with the great state machines and bureaucratic apparatuses, but with socialism, with Marxism, with Bolshevism, with Trotskyism.

Some thought it was futile to build a revolutionary working class International with small forces and at a time of political ebb. Trotsky replied: "The working class, especially in Europe, is still in retreat, or at best, in a state of expectancy. Defeats are still too fresh, and their number far from exhausted. They have assumed their sharpest form in Spain. Such are conditions in which the Fourth International is developing. Is it any wonder that its growth proceeds more slowly than we would like?"

"Dilettantes, charlatans, or blockheads incapable of probing into the dialectic of historic ebbs and flows have more than once brought in their verdict: 'The ideas of the Bolshevik-Leninists may perhaps be correct but they are incapable of building a mass organisation.'"

"As if a mass organisation can be built under any and all conditions! As if a revolutionary programme does not render it obligatory for us to remain in the minority and swim against the stream in an epoch of reaction! That revolutionist is worthless who uses his own impatience as the measuring rod for the tempo of an epoch!"

Did not theoretical questions remain unsolved? "Just as war cannot be postponed until the discovery of the most perfected weapon, so the revolution and the Fourth International cannot be postponed until the appearance of the most perfected theoretical work. Theory is very important. But pedantic fetishism of theory is good for nothing."

Soon the new International was thrown into the turmoil of the war. Trotsky, who recognised the organisational feebleness of the Fourth International, had no illusions about the immediate impact of the war on the revolutionary movement — "If the war begins now" he said in 1939 "and it seems that it will begin, then in the first month we will lose two thirds of what we now have in France. They will be dispersed ... subjectively many will remain true to our movement. Those who will not be arrested and who will remain — there may be

Why the future still belongs to Trotsky

three or five — I do not know how many, but they will be absolutely isolated."

The Trotskyists were isolated — and, after August 1940, deprived of the guidance of Trotsky, who had been assassinated by a Stalinist agent. Yet everywhere they continued their activity, while much larger but politically weaker would-be revolutionary groupings just faded away. In occupied France, the job of editing the Trotskyist paper *La Vérité* fell to Marcell Hic... aged 23.

The inexperienced comrades made blunders, which have allowed some people to claim that the Fourth International collapsed from the beginning of the war. Yet the blunders were soon cleared up, and later formally and officially criticised. And, despite the blunders, the Trotskyists in France were the first political group to put out a 'resistance' paper, in opposition to the German occupation; the only political tendency to publish clandestine socialist pamphlets and papers for the Germany army of occupation; and the only tendency to preach revolutionary socialist opposition to the bourgeois nationalism of De Gaulle.

The work of producing pamphlets and papers for the German soldiers cost most of the militants involved their lives. But in every country there were Trotskyists who fought courageously for the basic principle: "Workers of the world unite: turn the imperialist war into a class war!"

In Ceylon, the leading Trotskyists were jailed because of their opposition to the war. They won over their jailer, and escaped with him to India, where they founded a new section of the Fourth International.

In Greece, the Trotskyist leader Pouliopoulos was brought before a firing squad by Italian occupation troops in 1943. Another Greek Trotskyist, Michel Pablo, reports: "He made a speech to the soldiers of the execution squad in their own tongue, producing a real mutiny among them so that they refused to fire. And it was finally the officers who had to fire, killing Comrade Pouliopoulos and his companions. Our comrades fell, not for the

'Fatherland', not for 'Democracy' but for the Revolution and for Socialism."

Pablo further reports that: "The only public trials attempted during the war, and the only condemnations to death or to prison of revolutionary leaders and militants accused of opposition to the imperialist war, in both camps, had Trotskyists as their victims. It was thus that in Holland the Gestapo assassinated, after a public trial on April 12th 1942, nine well known leaders of the RSAP (Revolutionary Socialist Workers' Party). Trotskyists and pro-Trotskyists, among them Comrades Sneevliet and Dolleman. In Vienna, Trotskyist militants were executed after a public trial, as well as in Germany."

In the USA and in Britain, Trotskyist leaders were hounded in the courts for leading strikes and trade union activity.

Not only the Governments hounded the Trotskyists: within the French Resistance, several Trotskyists, among them Gransci's close comrade Pietro Tresso (Blasco), were murdered by the Stalinists. The harassment continued after the war: Stalinist influence within the new French Government meant that the Trotskyist paper remained illegal for two years after the German army withdrew from France.

In 1944 the Trotskyists were able to re-establish international links, which had been difficult and fragmentary during the war. And they found a large measure of agreement on basic political perspectives among all the main Trotskyist groups.

Already there had been major working class uprisings in India, Italy and Greece. The Trotskyists saw this ferment as the beginning of a general revolutionary upsurge in Europe, of which Germany would be the main centre.

In adopting this perspective, the Trotskyists were persuaded by the reports they had received from workers of other nationalities conscripted for labour service in Germany. *La Vérité* of 10th July

1942 published such a report: "I can tell you that discontent is continually increasing in Germany, and not only in the working class, but also in the middle classes..."

"Naturally, the German workers movement, after a long illness, is still only at the beginning of its convalescence. But all indications are that it will be very rapid. I was able to see for myself — and all the French workers could see it as I did — German workers deliberately slowing down production in order to fight against the war... On the whole, the relations between French and German workers are very good. The German workers have kept the spirit of class solidarity of the world proletariat..."

Workers' councils were in fact created in many areas of Germany after the collapse of Hitler's regime. But the Trotskyists were soon forced to re-adjust their perspectives: revolutionary developments

would be slower, more complex, less dramatic, and not centred on Germany. The Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR was showing more staying-power than the FI expected.

The Fourth Internationalists were not mindless victory-shouters — they listened carefully to the more cautious comrades within their ranks who stressed the conservative power of bourgeois democracy and Stalinism. At a 1946 International Conference the majority recognised that a minority among the Trotskyists had "correctly criticised the leftist exaggerations in evaluating the tempo of events during the war and in the first phase of the period succeeding the war."

But by then that minority had mostly gone over to defeatist positions, effectively accepting the reconsolidation of bourgeois democracy as inevitable. This pessim-

The Workers' Internationals



The earliest socialist secret societies often had international links. The Communist League, for which Marx and Engels wrote the Communist Manifesto — with its conclusion, 'Workers of the world, unite!' — was an international organisation.

The Communist League was disbanded after the defeat of the 1848 Revolutions. After the American Civil War [1861-65] gave a new spur to working class action, the First International was created in 1864.

The First International was an organisation of a different sort from the old socialist secret societies. It set out to organise the growing working class on the broadest basis. Within it were found British trade unionists, French followers of the cooperative socialism of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, anarchists, and socialists of every shade.

Through experience and through the political and theoretical work of Karl Marx, the First International gradually moved towards scientific socialist ideas. Marx's fiery defence of the Paris Commune [1871] caused many of the British trade unionists to withdraw from the International; then, battered by the reactionary offensive which followed the defeat of the Commune, and torn apart by internal conflict between anarchists and Marxists, the First International was effectively wound up in 1872. It was formally dissolved in 1876.

On the basis of the educational work of the First International, mass workers' parties, more or less founded on Marxism, developed in the last quarter of the 19th century. In 1889 the Second International was formed.

From 1889 to 1914 the capitalist system grew and flourished in western Europe. The working class grew in parallel, and so did the parties and trade unions of the Second International. In 1914 the outbreak of the Second World War revealed a deep-seated rottenness in the Second International, beneath its formal Marxism.

The parties of the Second International had in practice become tied to the routines and customs of trade union bargaining and capitalist legalism — ultimately, to capitalism itself. With the trade union bureaucrats and the Parliamentary careerists calling the tune, the major parties of the Second International betrayed socialism and supported their own governments during the war.

The left-wingers of the Second International, who opposed the First World War, set about organising a new International. In March 1919 the Third, or Communist, International was formed [the Comintern].

The Third International continued the fight for the principles which the Second International had deserted in 1914. Its methods were quite different from the Second International's combin-

ation of 'Sunday Socialism' and weekday opportunist wheeling and dealing. It was a combat party of world revolution, dedicated to fighting every partial battle as part of an unrelenting war against capitalism. Breaking with the Second International's equivocal attitude towards imperialism, the Comintern declared its militant solidarity with the colonial peoples fighting for liberation.

But the third International was organised too late to gain victory in the revolutionary tumult which swept Europe after the end of the war. With defeat for the workers in Europe came isolation for the workers' state in Russia; with isolation amid poverty-stricken backwardness, came bureaucratic degeneration.

By the mid-1920s the Stalinist bureaucrats ruled the Third International; and they gradually perverted it into nothing but a diplomatic instrument for the Soviet Union's alleged building of 'socialism in one country'. The Left Opposition, led by Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev was expelled from the Russian Communist Party early in 1927.

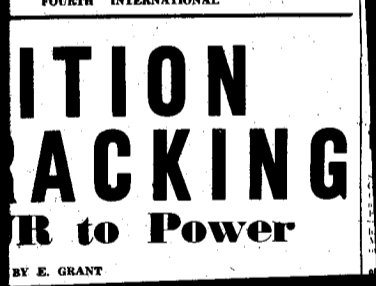
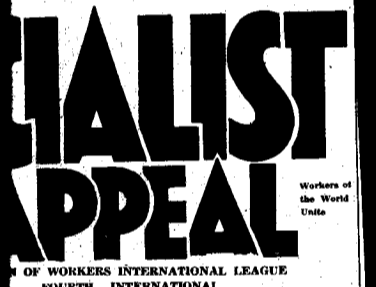
The Left Oppositionists ['Trotskyists'] fought to reform the Third International, until its blind self-justification in the face of Hitler's victory [in 1933] showed that it was dead for the revolution. [It was formally dissolved in May 1943.] Then they sought collaboration with other revolutionary tendencies, with

II YISIN

istic faction was an influential minority in the American Trotskyist party, a majority (just) within the French Trotskyist organisation from November 1946 to November 1947, and a large majority among the British Trotskyists.

These comrades over-reacted to the relative lack of growth of the Trotskyist organisations which, though stronger than during the war, were still only a few hundred or a few thousand strong. The pessimists declared that revolutionary situations would be impossible as long as the Trotskyist forces were so small: they recommended a concentration on economic demands and the struggle for 'real democracy'. (A line which was to reappear, with small changes, in the policies recommended by some Trotskyists for revolutionaries in Portugal during 1975.)

The struggle against the pessimistic faction was well fought out,



new to building a new International which would continue fight for the ideals of the Third International, supplemented by Marxist analyses of the Stalinist degeneration of the workers' state and of fascism. Some revolutionaries did ally with the Trotskyists, for shorter or longer periods; but the masses of revolutionary-minded workers remained under the control of the Stalinists. The Trotskyists led the working class to a horrible defeat in Spain and a narrow semi-victory in France. This was an epoch of reaction, fighting against the stream, the Trotskyists were isolated.

Let the class struggle continue, and demanded an international leadership. In 1938, with the world war now in their opinion inevitable, the Trotskyists joined the Fourth International. "Sceptics ask" wrote Trotsky, "what has the moment for the creation of the Fourth International yet arrived? It is impossible, they say, to create an international 'artificially'; it arises only out of great events... The Fourth International has already risen out of great events: the greatest events of the proletariat in history. The cause for these events is to be found in the operation and perfidy of the leadership. The class struggle does not tolerate an interruption. The Third International, having the Second, is dead for the cause of revolution. Long live the Fourth International!"

and resulted in no split within the revolutionary movement. The major right-wingers flaked off into political inactivity or went over to reformism; one or two, notably Ted Grant in Britain, remained with the Fourth International.

In 1948 the Fourth International held its Second Congress. In eight years of struggle since the death of Trotsky, the FI had vindicated its founding. While the Stalinists had supported the monarchy in Italy and De Gaulle in France, while the British Labour Government had maintained wartime anti-strike regulations, the Trotskyists had fought for workers' power. The fundamental ideas of 1938 had been confirmed; the necessary readjustments of perspective had been made, adequately at least for immediate action.

In France, the FI had played a major role in the mass strike movement of April-May 1947, sparked off against the bitter opposition of the Communist Party by non-FI Trotskyists in Renault, and developing into a major rebellion against living standards which were still 30 to 40% lower than they had been in 1938. In Vietnam, the Trotskyists had fought against the Stalinists' criminal collaboration with British and French imperialism — and in return had suffered a murderous assault from the Stalinists.

In Bolivia, Trotskyists had gained major influence in the miners' union, the core of that country's working class movement. In the USA, the Trotskyists' idea of the sliding scale of wages and hours had been widely taken up in the huge strike movements of 1946-7 (the biggest ever, anywhere in the world, up to that date).

Despite the onset of the Cold War, and the fact that thousands of former radicals were flocking to the side of the so-called "Free World", the Trotskyists upheld the principle of the defence of the nationalised and planned economy in the USSR against imperialism. They observed, however, that "in Russia today there are more obstacles to the victory of Socialism than at any time since 1917", and stressed that the question of the defence of the USSR could never be allowed to take priority over the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class.

A British Labour Government was starting war against revolutionary guerilla fighters in Malaya; a French Government with 'Communist' Ministers had massacred Algerians and Vietnamese. Continuing the tradition of Lenin's Comintern, the Fourth International declared its enthusiastic solidarity with the new colonial liberation struggle.

The 1948 Congress still described the East European states under Russian influence as bourgeois — but an intense discussion on the changes in those countries had already begun. It was, in many ways, a model discussion.

Some comrades came relatively early to the conclusion that the capitalist states in East Europe, shattered by the war, had been decisively smashed by Russian state intervention and by the local Stalinists, and replaced by systems essentially similar to the USSR: "deformed workers' states". Some quickly concluded that Yugoslavia, where there had been a real popular revolution, was a deformed workers' state, but hesitated to extend the argument to the rest of eastern Europe. Some defended the theory of the East European states being still bourgeois until as late as 1950. Within each trend there were many different shades of argument.

But the Fourth International dealt with the question soberly, without factionalism, on the basis of serious empirical studies, without the demagogy and schematism characteristic of many later polemics on the question (especially from the partisans of the theories that the Stalinist states are all 'state capitalist'). By 1951 the FI had arrived at a unified position on Eastern Europe.

But difficult times were coming for the Trotskyists.

With the Cold War, the victory of the Chinese Revolution, the out-



France 1968 [above] and Hungary 1956: 'Trotskyist Revolutions'. As far as the Stalinists and Social Democrats were concerned, they simply should never have happened.

break of the Korean War, and the offensive of the Vietminh against French colonialism, it seemed to almost everyone that the world was divided into two great blocs: one dominated by the USA, another dominated by the USSR, which was conquering country after country for its Stalinist system.

The Trotskyists' forces dwindled — where there had been thousands in 1947, there were hundreds in 1951; where there had been hundreds, there were dozens. Most radicals rallied to the side of one 'bloc' or another: not a few became 'State Department Socialists'.

The Trotskyists tried to keep alive the perspective of workers' revolution and at the same time not to cut themselves off from world-shaking events in which the working class had been pushed back-stage. In this journey between Scylla and Charybdis they hit the rocks again and again, suffered gross disorientation, and split into different factions, spinning off in different directions of sectarianism and chronic opportunism.

That crisis — elements of which can be traced back to 1948 and beyond — is at the root of the divisions among the Trotskyist groups today, and of the deep political differences which we have often discussed in the columns of *Workers' Action*. Among the Trotskyist currents, there are very serious political accounts to be settled, and difficult questions to be unravelled.

Yet despite everything, Trotskyism remains the banner of revolutionary socialism. A few groups — like the Workers' Revolutionary Party in Britain today — throw dirt

at that banner by pursuing utterly non-socialist politics under the self-assumed label of Trotskyism. The living stream of Trotskyism has cut a course of struggle against capitalism, against Stalinism, and against the reformist bureaucracies

When the Hungarian workers rose against Stalinism in 1956, establishing workers' councils, it was the Trotskyists who hailed the rising as a revolution which could instal direct workers' power.

The French Trotskyists suffered harassment and prosecution because of the support they gave to the Algerians fighting for independence from France. The British Trotskyists sided with the so-called 'Mau Mau' against British colonial repression in Kenya. After 1965, Trotskyists took the lead in movements in solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution in dozens of countries.

And it was the Trotskyists who kept alive the perspective of workers' revolution in the advanced capitalist countries: it was the Trotskyists who kept alive the ideas that could provide guidance to the movement of May-June 1968 in France, which so dramatically put that revolution back on the agenda.

Hungary 1956 and France 1968 were, indeed, "Trotskyist Revolutions". They simply should never have happened according to the bosses, the Stalinists, and the social democrats — the great political forces which in 1938, and again in 1948, seemed to have the world carved up between them.

Karl Marx lived his life as a penniless, persecuted refugee. After his death his ideas became the property of millions: some of them became the common-sense of many others who shied away from Marx's full revolutionary conclusions.

Likewise, Trotsky was showered with insults during his lifetime, and for many years Trotskyists suffered the same treatment. Today, Trotskyist ideas — if sometimes in diluted form — are the staple diet of anyone who wants to be a left-wing socialist.

Yesterday's hymns of praise to Stalin or Mao, or complacent social-democratic predictions of limitless progress within a mixed economy, have become nothing but a source of embarrassment and shame; the classical texts of Trotskyism are reprinted and eagerly re-read. Even the 'Euro-communists' have to turn to Trotsky as a source of ideas to filch when they try to work out a critique of the Stalinist states.

The future belongs to Trotskyism ... and it belongs because Trotskyism has such solid roots in the past. What Trotsky wrote in 1937 is still true today: "The greatest guarantee of its further success lies in the fact that it has not arisen away from the great historical road, but has organically grown out of Bolshevism... All varieties of intermediary groups [Independent Labour Party of Great Britain, POUM and their like (groups like the SWP in Britain today)] adapt every week new haphazard fragments of Marx and Lenin to their current needs. Workers can learn nothing from these people."

Four brothers were repairing their car outside their East London home when a gang of louts started abusing and threatening them. Finally, one of the louts attacked them with a spanner.

The brothers defended themselves — and called the police. When the police arrived, they arrested ... the brothers. The attackers went free.

The brothers are Asians, and their attackers were white: that is the explanation of this story. There was worse to come. After a trial in which no Asians were on the jury and no Asians were called as witnesses (though some knew something about the incident), the Virk brothers got heavy jail sentences.

Joginder Singh Virk got seven years; Mohinder, three years; Balvinder, 2 years; and the youngest brother, Sukhvinder (the one who called the police) three months.

In contrast, the white racist murderers of Gurdip Singh Chaggar (killed in Southall in 1976) were jailed for only three years, and a man found guilty of wounding a black man with intent to cause grievous bodily harm (without any provocation) got a six-month sentence — suspended.

As the Virk Brothers Defence Campaign say in their appeal, "The police and the courts seem to be telling the Asian community that it is just normal for the white racists to shout racial abuse at them and that they must not feel offended."

Judge Neil McKinnon found fascist leader John Kingsley Read not guilty of racist incitement — and wished him "good luck" — after Read had gleefully commented on Gurdip Singh Chaggar's death: "One down, one million to go". And two British Movement members were recently also found not guilty after even more vile and blatant speeches inciting racist violence.

ASSAULT

Meanwhile, "Organised attacks on Asians' life and property are treated as unnoticeable incidents and virtually no arrests are made" — as with the attacks in Brick Lane and the concerted assault on Asian workers coming out of a brewery in Bow at the end of their shift.

19-year old Sukhvinder Singh Virk's sentence has been reduced on appeal to a £15 fine. His three elder brothers are still in jail.

IAN HOLLINGWORTH of Workers' Action talked to SUKHVINDER SINGH VIRK



Left to right: Joginder Singh Virk and his brothers Mohinder, Balvinder, and Sukhvinder.

Virk brothers — in jail for defending themselves

and to Mr. H.S. DHESI of the Steering Committee of Asian Organisations against Racism

■ ■ What are the plans of the Defence Campaign for the Virk brothers?

□ □ H.S.Dhesi — We have presented a petition of 10,000 signatures to the Home Secretary. In addition we have had a series of public meetings, the last one having A. Sivanandan of the Institute of Race Relations and Jo Richardson MP as speakers.

Also we have spoken at various meetings of labour movement bodies, including the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory; we shall be addressing their meeting in Spitalfields on November 5th.

We have the support of the Anti-Nazi League, the Red-bridge Campaign Against Racism and Fascism, and members of the Labour Party in Ilford.

As you know, the sentence on Sukhvinder was quashed on appeal, but we are still waiting for appeals on the other three brothers to be heard. We shall organise around the appeals, and if they are not successful we shall consider calling for action along the lines of the

strike against racist violence of July last.

■ ■ Local anti-fascists are saying that violent attacks by white racists are on the increase around here. Is this something you have noticed?

□ □ H.S.Dhesi — It is a fact that three prominent members of the Virk Brothers Defence Campaign have each had their homes broken into in the last four or five days.

GANGS

■ ■ Sukhvinder, you were a student when you and your brothers were attacked by the racists and then by the court. How has this all affected you?

□ □ Sukhvinder — Well, I've had to abandon my studies, at least for the time being. I was studying radio, TV and electronics at college and I had one year left to go. Now that my brothers are in jail I have to help look after their families — we were living in the same house, you see.

Even at college things were never quite safe for us. You can often see gangs of white youths

hanging around outside Barking and East Ham colleges in the evenings. Black students coming out are often threatened and sometimes attacked.

■ ■ Mr. Dhesi, in the Defence Campaign leaflet you say that "the attitudes of the police and the courts must be changed by training their officers how to function in a multi-racial society". Is it realistic to rely on the police in this matter, or rather isn't it a matter for the black communities to organise their own self-defence?

□ □ H.S.Dhesi — We see unbiased functioning in a multi-racial society as a longer-term duty of the police, but you are right, at present we are not being protected by them. Now, Sir David McNee, chief of the Metropolitan Police, said only this week that "it is only common sense for people to take precautions to protect themselves and their property", so it is only logical that we should organise our own self-defence.

The police sometimes argue that they haven't got sufficient resources to protect us in the way we require, but if the will was there they would find resources. And if there aren't the resources, then the black communities have a right to defend themselves.

The police convey the impression to us that they think Asians are not under organised attack. They see it as just another aspect of local gang behaviour. They tell us we are exaggerating the problem.

Now, even if the individual members of these gangs are not all conscious organised racists, they are certainly the target of conscious organised racist propaganda of groups like the National Front and the British Movement.

In society as a whole you have varying degrees of racism. Some might be against mixed marriages, some might not like to work with black people, some won't go into the same

pub as blacks. At the other end of the scale you have those who think that buses and parks etc. should be segregated, and at the extreme there are those who are so pathologically hostile that they don't even want to see a black face.

In my experience I would say that around ten per cent of the British police force come into this last category. We think that education is one way of eradicating that percentage.

LABOUR

■ ■ The police act as an arm of the State to enforce its laws. But the State itself is surely racist in the kind of laws it adopts, in particular the laws on immigration control?

□ □ H.S.Dhesi — Yes, that is right. We also have to address ourselves to the central problem of changing the attitude of the State. It is a change in the attitude of the State that will result in a change of approach by the police, not the other way round. To change the attitude of the State we have to use our voting power.

We have to ensure that the Labour Party manifesto contains clear anti-racist policies and we have to organise to make certain that such policies are put into practice.

On the question of immigration controls, black communities face a problem here which is not always recognised. If the majority community raises the demand for an end to all immigration control, then we wholeheartedly support it. Many of us feel, however, that to raise the issue in isolation ourselves would result in suspicion of our intentions among many white people.

Having said that, I must add that we oppose the way that immigration is used as such an emotive and negative issue by the media.

IF YOU'VE GOT A FLAG YOU CAN WAVE IT BUT IF IT'S A FIG LEAF KEEP IT STILL

LAST TUESDAY, October 24th, a select band of men and women gathered in a basement room under the London headquarters of the print union SLADE. The stated purpose of the meeting was to adopt a constitution and aims for an organisation called *Printers and Media Workers Anti Nazi League*.

Since it held a first public meeting in July, little or nothing had been heard of PMWANL outside of the national executives of the various print unions, but now, it seemed, things were under way. Delegates had been invited from a number of London branches, and in addition there was an impressive array of official supporters: NATSOPA London Joint Branches were represented, as were the SOGAT London Central Branch and London District Office, SLADE and NGA London regions and the NUJ nationally. The ACTT and Equity had sent observers.

From the start there was confusion about what exactly PMWANL was all about. The July public meeting had been told of the need for 'an organisation

within the media aimed at opposing racism'. In fact such an organisation already exists — the Campaign against Racism in the Media (CARM), and it is currently cooperating with the national ANL in a 'No plugs for Nazi thugs' campaign.

There is undoubtedly plenty of scope for another group, however, since CARM has no following in the print (as opposed to journalists' and TV technicians') unions.

Next puzzle: there also exists a rank and file organisation called Fleet Street Anti Nazi League, which is active especially in NATSOPA. What was to be the connection between PMWANL and Fleet Street ANL? Despite persistent questioning, PMWANL refused to be drawn on that issue.

Next question: why were only four NUJ London branches (out of about ten) invited to attend the meeting! And were delegates to be invited in future from chapels, the workplace organisations where the fight against racism and fascism has to be waged? Once again, the meeting wasn't

up to deciding that question.

The answer is not too hard to find. Even with the restricted attendance at last week's meeting, the bureaucrats (the NGA and SOGAT above all) were very nervous about being outvoted by their own rank and file members. This nervousness prevented the meeting from taking any decisions whatever (apart from the election of a few more officers).

The chair was most reluctant to schedule a discussion on the organisation's aims and objectives. Worse, no decision could be reached on even the simplest practical proposals.

A suggestion that the committee prepare a draft leaflet explaining why fascism poses a threat to trade unionists was rejected by the organisers as being too radical; an International Marxist Group proposal for a debate on 'No plugs for Nazi thugs' between Bernard Levin and someone else was not accepted either.

Most ludicrous of all, the idea that the meeting should decide 'in principle' to hold a public meeting on something (to be decided

at the next PMWANL meeting) seemed to be going too fast for the assembled dignitaries.

The initial impetus for the formation of PMWANL came from well-meaning NUJ activists who had noted that the NGA had endorsed a joint statement with the NUJ on racism, and that SOGAT and NATSOPA heavies had been 'associating themselves' with the ANL. The intention was to use these people to start an effective campaign in the unions.

But, on current showing, nothing of the sort is going to happen. The bureaucrats have found PMWANL useful as a fig leaf for their inactivity on the evils they profess to oppose; they have no intention of doing anything if they can get away with it.

The only way this body will be of the slightest use is if the bureaucrats' fears are realised: chapels and branches must demand that meetings be open to delegates from all levels of the unions, together with representatives of the already-existing CARM and Fleet Street ANL. JAMES RYAN

Jail for NF's law and order candidate

KEITH SQUIRE, who stood as a National Front candidate in Islington this year, was jailed for six months for stirring up racial hatred.

He had been arrested while putting up a poster which shows a black youth attacking an elderly white woman and says 80% of 'muggers' are black and 85% of victims are white.

The judge told Squire "There seems to be something ironic about you, with your record of violence, being so concerned about other people's violence". Squire has six previous convictions and is currently serving a one year sentence for dishonest handling.

The other 'irony' is that the police — despite arresting Squire in this case — have time after time turned out in hundreds to protect the National Front, with its record of violence, marching with banners similar to Squire's poster.

Rochdale: stop the NF's build-up now

OVER THE past three months the National Front have grown in confidence in the Rochdale area, although it is hard to tell if they have grown in numbers.

They have been selling *NF news* and *Bulldog* every weekend in the main shopping street, Yorkshire St. Anti-fascists have combatted this open presence by a regular all-day vigil from 9am to 4pm, but numbers have been too small to do much more than picket the NF sellers and hand out leaflets against the fascists.

The anti-fascists have the official support of the Labour Party, the Council for Racial Equality and the 'Human Race' Campaign, as well as the Anti Nazi League, but so far this has failed to mobilise more than 30 on a regular basis. 100 have turned up when it was thought that the NF intended to march openly.

While the anti-fascists have taken a rather mild, peaceful approach to the problem of the fascists, the police have been far from peaceful or even impartial.

Five anti-fascists now have charges against them: two for fly-posting and three for 'obstruction' when they were simply leafletting. One of the leafletters was actually giving out literature asking for support for the John Bright's nursery campaign — along with ten others, who included an ex-mayor and the Labour parliamentary candidate. When the police realised their mistake it was too late to drop the charges!

The police are rattled by the regular confrontation scene in Yorkshire Street, and are using the heavy hand to break up potential conflict. No more than two sellers are allowed at any one place, and often the cops outnumber the demonstrators. In spite of this the Front are openly threatening anyone they consider to be opposition, forcing lone anti-nazis to remove their badges and threatening to 'mark our faces'.

The only NF arrests the police have made (after advising ANL members to take out private prosecutions for meat pies being thrown and general harassment) were three last week. They were arrested for stabbing a Rochdale man on Tuesday.

The three NF members include their recent Parliamentary candidate. The victim is still in hospital with numerous knife wounds.

But three more Rochdale anti-fascists were charged with a variety of offences following the riot during the NF's most recent football match in Tameside.

One of those charged is a Chilean refugee who speaks little English. He is charged with causing a disturbance and has received visits recently from the Rochdale police implying that he may face deportation.

He was in fact acting in self-defence when he was arrested, and the NF attacker went free. One of the other anti-Nazis was charged with 'violence in the police station' as he tried to support the Chilean.

All these eight anti-Nazis are going to need support and money over the next few months. And the anti-Nazis in Yorkshire St need strengthening and a strategy if we are to prevent the NF from gaining confidence.

SUE ARNALL

Sandersons



150 PICKET

ON FRIDAY 27th October over 150 trade unionists answered the call for a mass picket of Sandersons Fork Lift Trucks at Skegness, where a strike for recognition of the Transport and General Workers Union has been going on for the past 18 months.

Originally 40 workers, about 40% of the workforce, came out. This has now dropped to 27, but they are determined to walk back in with trade union cards or close the factory, and are encouraged by the crippling effect which blacking is having.

Scabs who tried to get in past the mass picket, through the main gate, were stopped, and had to resort to running across ploughed fields and climbing over a fence to get into work. Two of them tried twice to run their cars through the picket line, and actually knocked one picket down. The police turned a blind eye to the driver of the car, but arrested the picket who was knocked down.

Though it was impossible to stop everyone going in, the overall feeling of the pickets was not one of defeat, but of determination to win.

Speakers, including the strikers and T&G militants from all over the country, emphasised that this was only the beginning. Support for the strike must be spread and the next mass picket built for.

GEORGE MAKIN

Donations & messages of support to: Sandersons Strike Fund, 24 High St, Burgh-le-Marsh, Skegness, Lincolnshire.

Union officials help Thorns bosses push through victimisation

THE STRIKE by Transport and General Workers' Union members at Thorns, Southbury Rd, Enfield, for reinstatement of a sacked steward, Paul Green, has ended in defeat.

Initially, despite scabbing by a minority of TGWU members, support for the strike was quite strong. The meeting which called for strike action did so by a three to one margin. But a mass meeting one week later, on Friday 27th, reversed this decision by about the same majority.

Of course, Thorns bosses played a major role in this. They argued all along that Paul Green's sacking was simply because of his lateness at work and, as the week went on, it became clear that many workers had come to accept this. In reality it was a case of victimisation of a militant as a way of attacking the growing shopfloor organisation.

Thorns were also gambling on provoking an unwinnable strike and thus demoralising and splitting the workforce. This would effectively forestall any serious fight in their largest North London plant for a pay claim for 15% and an immediate move to a 35 hour week, covering all five Thorns plants in North

London.

Unfortunately this gamble paid off, as many workers were convinced by the bosses' argument. In addition, the workers' own union did not take a clear stand on the question. This lost active support for the strike.

Workers at the adjacent Thorns site in Lincoln Road (mainly AUEW members) decided to strike as soon as the TGWU made the strike official. But the TGWU bureaucrats dragged their feet. Assurances were given that the strike would be made official once it had gone through the right channels.

The union officials were obviously scared that if this strike was won, it would mean an all-out battle for the full pay claim. Instead of declaring the strike official, a mass meeting was called for Friday 27th to decide whether or not to continue the strike.

In addition the meeting was to hear the results of an enquiry into the facts of the case by a regional official. (Thus the union bureaucrats were able to insinuate that the strikers' account of what had happened was untruthful!)

Management, sensing that the tide was turning their way, dealt a further blow. Workers from the

night shift, mainly women, many not trade union members, were paid £9 to go to the mass meeting outside their working hours. Women workers who scabbed on the strike were also provided with creche facilities (which Thorns workers have fought for, unsuccessfully, for ten years).

The idea was to pack the meeting with a majority for a return to work. In addition many non-union members were given white cards to confuse the issue in case of a card vote.

At the meeting T&G district official Ron Knowles made no reference to the victimisation and attack on the union which had occurred. He had merely come, he said, to straighten out distortions from both sides and to give 'the facts' so that the meeting could decide for itself. In the end the meeting voted three to one for a return to work the following Monday. Many of the strikers were so disgusted that they tore up their union cards and threw them in Knowles' face.

Of course this makes the chances of a hard fight for the pay claim pretty slim and the chances of further attacks on union organisation high.

NEIL COBBETT

Night pay now!

FROM November 8th, residential workers at Field End House propose to withdraw night duty labour because a stalemate has been reached in the negotiations over payment of an unsocial hours allowance.

Field End House, a residential unit for multiply handicapped children, opened its doors in April this year, and was heralded as giving a new deal to one of the most neglected sections of the community.

True enough, but the council's generosity did not extend to giving a fair deal to the staff who work there. The establishment is unique amongst children's homes in Islington in that care staff work a three shift rota over seven days a week, including a working night-duty.

Residential workers are exempt from all the provisions of local government working agreements. They are therefore considered ineligible for shift allowances normally paid to other council employees who work a similar shift system... in spite of the fact that on appointment care staff were given to believe that an allowance would be paid for working a 12 hour waking night duty.

It is not just another case of broken promises by the council. More important, it highlights the archaic conditions of employment under which residential workers have to operate.

Parents of the children involved have expressed full support for our demands.

Messages of support to: Field End House, Liverpool Road, London N1.

Let the men on shipboard have their say on this claim

THE General Council of British Shipping, the employers of British seafarers, have rejected the National Union of Seamen's pay claim for £3 an hour.

The position of the employers on the 35 hour week — also included in the claim — has not been made clear, but no doubt they will reject that too.

Jim Slater, general secretary of the National Union of Seamen, has warned the membership that industrial action seems inevitable if the claim is to be won by January 6th, the settlement date.

If Slater follows the example he set last year, this will mean... no action at all.

A ballot taken last year accepted the employers' offer. Many seafarers didn't even get a vote, because there were no facilities for those employed on board foreign-going vessels to submit their vote.

If this year's claim is to be won, it will be up to union branches and those employed on board to ensure immediate circulation of the claim and the General

Council of British Shipping offer. Voting on board ship must be organised, and telegrams with instructions from shipboard members must be counted. (Last a number of BP ships, for example, took votes on board, and they were not counted).

GEOFF WILLIAMS

TGWU scabs on TASS strike

AUEW-TASS members on strike at the Newstead and Stone plants of Corning's Glass Works are facing sabotage of the strike by T&G members.

The strike began when two men were sacked for refusing to carry out duties. The sackings were the culmination of months of wrangling over the transfer of operations from the Newstead plant to Stone.

Since then another 100 workers have been sacked for supporting their workmates. Vital supplies of oxygen have been cut off thanks to

cooperation by British Oxygen drivers.

T&G stewards are asking drivers to break the picket. Fred Woodworth, senior T&G steward at the Stone plant, commented, "Drivers delivering essential oxygen supplies are members of our union. By turning back they are threatening the wages of their own union colleagues".

There have also been suggestions that drivers have been offered bribes of up to £100 to take goods into the Newstead plant.

ARTHUR BOUGH

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, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

Thursday 2 November. Manchester Workers' Action meeting: "Revolutionaries and the Labour Party". 8pm, Whalley Hotel, Brooks Bar, Whalley Range.

Friday 3 November. Memorial meeting for Neil Williamson. Speakers: Gordon Brown (Labour prospective parliamentary candidate, Edinburgh South); Mick Napier (Socialist Workers' Party); Tariq Ali (Political Committee, IMG); Pat Kane (Scottish Committee, IMG). 7.30, Assembly Rooms, George St, Edinburgh. Organised by IMG.

Saturday 4 November. Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory Wales & South West regional school. 11am, Room 109, Joint Students' Union, Cardiff.

Saturday 4 November. Leicester NAC demonstration: "Out-patient abortion now, free abortion on demand, a woman's right to choose". Assemble 2pm in Victoria Park, Leicester.

Thursday 9 November. Debate: Socialist Challenge vs. Workers' Action on "The ANL: What it is and what it must become". 7.30pm, Stanley House, Upper Parliament St, Liverpool 8.

Thursday 9 November. Manchester Workers' Action meeting. "How to fight fascism". 7.30pm, Whalley Hotel, Brooks Bar.

Saturday 11 November. Connections: Britain and Southern Africa. A one-day conference for trade unionists and youth. Sponsored by North West TUC, chaired by Colin Barnett. Workshops on: Action in the workplaces, Action in the Labour Party, an ABC of Southern Africa, Soweto and Youth, Women under Apartheid, — the Media. Venue: Abraham Moss Centre, Crumpsall, Manchester. 10am to 6pm. Creche provided. Details from Manchester Anti-Apartheid, 59 Tintern Ave, Manchester M20 8ND (061 434 7549).

Saturday 11 November. "Occupations, criminal trespass, and the use of the law" — national conference of the Campaign against the Criminal Trespass Law. At Conway Hall, London WC1. Credentials £2 from CACTL, c/o 35 Wellington St, London SC2.

Thursday 16 November. Merseyside SCLV public meeting. 7.45pm at the Feathers Hotel, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool 3.

Saturday 18 November. Manchester and Stockport Chile Solidarity Committee demonstration. 12 noon, St Peters Square, Manchester. Speakers to include: Andrew Bennett MP and Frank Allaun MP.

Thursday 23 November. London Workers' Action meeting: "Zimbabwe: After Smith's defeat, whose victory?" 8pm, 'The Metropolitan', Farringdon Rd/Clerkenwell Rd.

Saturday 25 November. Trade union conference on abortion, organised by the National Abortion Campaign and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign. At Caxton Hall, London SW1. Delegate forms from NAC, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1.

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No rise this year, says Edwardes. But Cowley gets ready for a fight

BRITISH LEYLAND boss Michael Edwardes said last week that there will be no straight increase in wage levels this year. BL carworkers could get pay rises only through the parity deal, which involves 7,000 redundancies, and an incentive scheme.

This stand has met resistance from Cowley stewards, who are pushing a claim for £27 wage increase, a 35 hour week, and automatic cost of living increases. Cowley management have refused to negotiate the claim until pay parity is resolved at national level.

Meeting

At a mass meeting last week, the Cowley workers decided to give notice that they would discuss at their next meetings (on Thursday and Friday, 2nd/3rd) what further action should be taken if management did not make an offer. Opposition to any strike action is expected from right wingers in the Body Plant.

The Communist Party-dominated Combine Committee (of senior stewards and convenors) has a recommended claim which

parallels Cowley's demands, with the exception of the cost of living clause. Now that parity talks are deadlocked, the Combine Committee has issued a statement saying that the claim should be pursued plant by plant. It remains to be seen how much support the Combine Committee will give to the Cowley workers. Mass meetings to be held at Longbridge this Friday (3rd) will give an indication of their intentions.

The sluggishness of the union leadership and the Communist Party is not so much based on a belief that a better deal can be got by such tactics, as on belief in what capitalists like Edwardes say: that there is no money. In addition they feel that BL Cars is 'socialist' because it is nationalised, and must be saved from the competition.

Their training (in the case of the union leadership) and beliefs (as well as training, in the case of the CP) lead them to be the go-betweens for capitalism and the car workers.

That means getting a deal that the capitalists can afford... sapping the militancy of the workers and making them pay for the bosses' crisis.

MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN



Cowley Assembly Plant workers discuss their 5%-limit-busting claim

workers' ACTION supporters' groups

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SEND TO WA, Box 1960, 182 Upper St, London N1.

workers' ACTION

NUPE members say: we want some action for this claim

RANK AND FILE pressure from National Union of Public Employees members is threatening to take the struggle against the 5% far beyond the levels of 'action' intended by the NUPE leadership.

In Nottingham, at the District Branch Committee meeting on 25th October, a militant resolution from the Nottingham Social Services branch was passed. The District Branch is now committed to follow the lines of this resolution when its representative goes to the Area Committee meeting on 7th November.

The resolution called for total opposition to the 5% and a concerted effort to win the £60 minimum wage and 35 hour week;

for any spontaneous walk-outs to be supported and made official immediately; for workplace meetings to take place and for the DBC to meet to consider the feelings of the membership; for a mass public meeting of all workers fighting the 5% in the locality and to discuss joint action to win the claims.

The official strategy is the limited one of 'selective strikes backed by a levy of those members not on strike'. The Social Services motion agreed to support this *only* when all other options had been rejected by the membership.

The officials locally are doing their best to control the situation. A circular, calling for emerg-

ency branch and DBC meetings before the Area Committee meeting on November 7th, was sent out on 20th October (just four days before many meetings were due to be held).

Nationally the leadership is committed to some sort of fight against what will inevitably be an offer within the 5%. They hope to utilise 'normal channels of democracy' in the union — a system which is bureaucratic, slow and mistrusted by the membership. Militants must ensure that mass meetings and rank and file discussion lead to mass action — the only way to win our demands.

TIM THORPE
(Nottingham Social Services
NUPE Branch Secretary)

AUEW right wing makes more gains

THE RIGHT wing victory in the AUEW marked by Terry Duffy's election as president looks like being consolidated.

First round results in voting for two vacant executive positions were announced on Tuesday 31st. For the Midlands seat (formerly held by Terry Duffy), Broad Left candidate John Tocher led right winger Ken Cure by 13,113 to 7,789. But Cure stands to gain on the second round from the votes of defeated right wingers Bill Jordan and Alfred Cotton.

For the London and Home Counties seat (from which Reg Birch is due to retire) right winger Jack Whyman led Broad Left candidate Len Choulerton by 10,628 to 9,898. But British Leyland toolroom leader Roy Fraser got 5,380 votes.

In other ballot results announced yesterday, right-winger Ted Hepple retained his national organiser's job with 130,214 votes against 82,583 for Ron Halverson. John Weakley, another right winger, beat George Neal by 16,557 to 12,747 for regional officer for Wales and the South West.

The cause of the right wing gains is the collapse of the leading 'left wingers' into pursuing policies little different from the Right's. Hugh Scanlon pioneered this, and Maoist Reg Birch has been following him, his latest contribution being a description of the Ford strike as 'a ghastly mess'.

NO STEEL FOR CHILE!

OVER THE past few months, there have been considerable rumours about the negotiation of a large order, believed to be in the region of £½ million, between British Steel, Stanton & Staveley Ironworks, and Chilean capitalists. The rumours came after a surprise visit by Chilean businessmen to the Stanton plants in September.

In response to these negotiations the Stanton Spun Plants Branch of the GMWU at its meeting on 29th October decided to take action to black the intend-

ed order. After listening to speakers from the Nottingham Chile Solidarity Campaign, the branch agreed to call on other trade unionists to join them in blacking this order.

An open meeting will be held in the next few weeks, to which other workers from the offices and from the transport departments will be specifically invited.

The branch also agreed to hold plant collections to help the Chile Solidarity Committee and to give aid to the Chilean Resistance. PETER RADCLIFF

Lairds: 790 jobs under threat

NINETY DAYS notice has been given of 790 redundancies at Cammel Lairds shipyard, Merseyside.

The threatened redundancies are mainly in trades organised by the Boilermakers' Amalgamation. Seacombe Branch of the Boilermakers has passed a resolution condemning the redundancies, calling for opposition, and demanding a shorter working week.

Mass meetings will be held at the yard in the next few days, but the dangerous idea of voluntary redundancies is already being put around.

from workers' ACTION bulletins

Cammel Laird bulletin, 23 Oct. RECENTLY, WHILE waiting to clock off, one of our supporters heard a shop steward talking to some other people about the 5% and our wage claim. The conversation went something like this. Shop Steward: "... well, you've heard what Vauxhall's been offered, it's even less than 5%. Look at Fords anyway, and they've got something to bargain on, we don't even make a profit.

Other bloke: "Yeah, you can't fight the Government". Shop steward: "That's right, Billy". [Names changed to protect the innocent].

This is the attitude of a supposedly 'left wing' steward. If we take this argument to its logical conclusion, then we should be prepared to take mass redundancies and low

wages because that's what the Government, through British Shipbuilders, want. It may even come to the point where we're expected to accept closure of the yard and go quietly to the dole.

The reasons that this shop steward and many other steward, along with the local and national union leaders, can't see any way, or need, to 'fight the Government', are many.

Basically, in the case of the shop stewards and workers in the yard, it is the lack of confidence in the ability of the working class to organise a united fight back against wage restraint and redundancies. If you take as your basis for struggle against the Government, Cammel Lairds yard and nowhere else, then you are doomed to failure through isolation. Also, if you place your reliance on Trade Union officials and MPs you are heading the same way.

600 workers, protesting at the closure of Westerns Ship Repairs, marched through Birkenhead on Saturday 28th October. This was the second protest march organised by the Action Committee, who have been picketing the yard since its closure was announced.

The Action Committee's campaign has been hampered by a stress on pressuring the Government to nationalise the yard, at the expense of relying on the workers' own strength. The appeals to the Government's 'good offices' have been made through right wing MPs like Edmund Dell — to no effect.

Relying on nationalisation as the way out of workers' problems has been shown up as useless by the redundancies in the nationalised shipyard next to Westerns, which was once part of the same yard: Cammel Lairds. M.C.