

THE BEST efforts of Grunwicks' "company" police force in three days of mass arrests produced a stunning result last Wednesday: members of the Post Office Workers' Union refused to handle the factory's mail order work.

A High Court injunction, obtained by the right wing National Association For Freedom, had ordered them to handle the scab work. UPW leader Tom Jackson had told them to obey that order.

And so they had, until last week. And then the sight of more than 100 strikers, socialists and fellow trade unionists being arrested and beaten by strike-breaking police was just too much. On Wednesday afternoon they declared that, court or no court, they were blacking Grunwicks' work. This time, a telegram from Tom Jackson was of no avail.

This was the biggest victory yet for the mass pickets who had come from all over the country in a bid to bring to a victorious end the 44-week old strike for union recognition.

After 84 pickets had been arrested on Monday, over 100 phone calls came in to the strike committee headquarters giving pledges of physical support.

Pickets were promised by London Transport Works at Acton; from the Trico factory where last year a long-running battle for equal pay was won; from Kent and South Wales miners.

Kemlesh, one young Asian striker, told **Workers Action**: "The next four weeks will be crucial. Industrial action, not the law, is the decisive thing. It is now make or break time."

There is clearly massive support and sympathy for the Grunwick strikers, and the action of the sorters at Willesden and Cricklewood Post Office depots is translating this into action to win the strike. The example of these UPW members should now be followed by other local trade unionists, who have the opportunity to cut off all other supplies to the factory, including its water and power. **The labour movement as a whole must back them up against legal intimidation.**

And the mass picket must be strengthened. No-one should hesitate about joining the picket: the gates can be closed by a wall of pickets that no amount of police can shift, as happened at Saltley during the 1972 miners' strike.

workers' ACTION

No.60

June 16th to 23rd 1977

10p

AFTER GRUNWICK ARRESTS

POSTAL WORKERS DEFY THE LAW

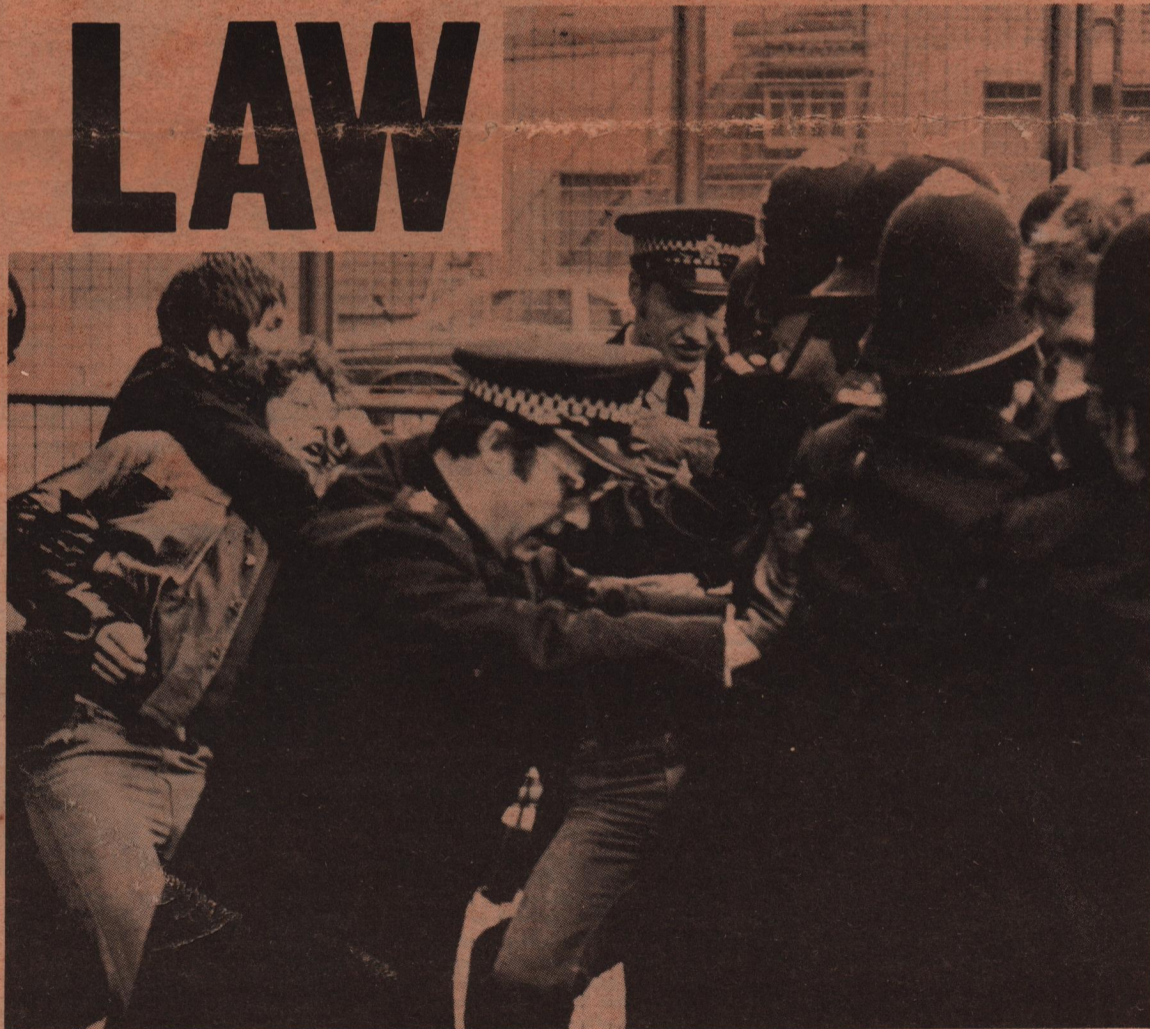


Photo: Minda

The anti-union company force at work

"DON'T PUSH THEM, ARREST THEM" was the order given by one inspector as police moved to arrest 50 pickets outside Grunwicks in West London last Monday morning.

By lunchtime on Monday 84 people had been arrested — including a BBC cameraman and a Labour councillor — amid scenes of violence in which protesting pickets were dragged and kicked all the way to police buses.

Strike leader Mahmood Ahmad was badly beaten by the police. Then on Wednesday he was arrested again.

On the second day of mass picketing the Special Patrol Group took over the snatch work. The SPG piled out of their vans and broke into the picket line on Grunwicks' back gate to form an aisle for scabs.

In a second such attack the SPG arrested strike committee member Johnny Patel, took him to a nearby wagon and started hitting him. As Johnny screamed, pickets started running to his aid and some were arrested in turn.

All but one of the twelve arrested were charged with "assaulting the police".

Johnny Patel, who was punched by a policeman in full view of the pickets outside the gates, told **Workers' Action** after his release: "They want ringleaders and they've seen me delivering picket posters. I was acquitted of obstruction some months ago and they want to get me again. Yesterday it was Mahmood, today me."

Union leaders were aghast at the mass arrests and the brutality they saw from the police. So they proceeded to ... make a deal with them! APEX leader fixed up that the pickets could stand across the main gate — as long as they stood aside to let vehicles through!

As one of the strikers observed, "The union has been saying that we need mass pickets and 'hard' action, but what do we find? Len Gristey, a senior APEX organiser, telling pickets to make room for a scab lorry and waving that lorry through himself!"

And when police obligingly arrested a picket who told Gristey not to be such an idiot, Gristey obligingly made no fuss.

JOIN THE PICKET!
Every day this week
from 7am
at Chapter Road
by Dollis Hill Tube

SOWETO IS STILL FIGHTING

As the apartheid regime in South Africa braced itself for the strikes and demonstrations to mark the year since the Soweto uprising began, something happened which sent tremors of terror through white South Africa. Three black youths walked into a warehouse next door to the Johannesburg police HQ in John Vorster Square and shot dead two white men.

With the President and 19 members of the Soweto Student Representative Council held by the police in readiness for the June 16th anniversary, the shootings were generally interpreted as an out-

right act of defiance of the regime and its police.

Defiance is the word that sums up the past year in South Africa. The June 16th Soweto demonstration was itself a defiant protest by school children against having to learn Afrikaans. When police began to shoot them down, thousands more joined in the demonstrations.

What followed was an uprising that affected dozens of townships throughout South Africa. The young leaders, many of them in their teens, organised the township workers to strike against the regime, demanding the release of their imprisoned

comrades.

The regime resorted to gunfire. In all, perhaps as many as 1,000 people, many of them school children were shot down. But inspired by the victories of the black liberation armies in Angola and Mozambique and the armed struggles in Namibia and Zimbabwe and continued, in the knowledge that it was on the winning side.

Unlike the Sharpeville massacre, that of

Continued on back page

Democracy: the new weapon of Spain's ruling class

On June 15th the Spanish people go to the polls for the first time since the victory of Franco fascism forty years ago. But the significance of these elections is less in their likely outcome than in the fact that they could take place at all.

The transformation of the heirs of Francoism into conservative bourgeois democrats has been the modern miracle of transubstantiation. It was a miracle that could not have been performed if the Spanish bourgeoisie and their imperialist backers had not learned the lesson of the Portuguese events and of the developments in Greece. But most of all, it would not have been possible without the treachery of the traditional workers' parties of Spain: the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and the Communist Party of Spain (PCE).

The transformation of Spain into a right wing bourgeois democracy with severe limitations on civil and political rights occurred with very little reaction either on the right or the left. For instance the advisory "parliament" of the Franco regime, the Cortes, legislated its own abolition with hardly a murmur.

The Francoist political movement, the National Movement — the sole legal party for forty years, which had a government portfolio and extensive powers in the media — was abolished on April 1st this year. Even the legalisation of the PCE provoked only a handful of resignations from members of the Cortes and the Supreme Army Council.

Lastly, the trade unions were legalised on April 28th. The bosses who reacted to this by setting up tame house-unions rather than encouraging membership of the national unions were criticised by Minister for Social Affairs de la Mata, who said, "In my opinion the employers are making a big mistake multiplying the number of unions. The whole country needs trade unions which are responsible, representative and capable of creating organisational discipline."

Throughout the period of the loosening of the grip of Francoism the traditional workers' parties have blocked the road to a revolutionary development of the workers' movement by their support of the course of the government of Adolfo Suarez. Santiago Carrillo, general secretary of the PCE, for instance, said that he is "not only not anti-Suarez, but pro-Suarez"

But perhaps the clearest evidence of the treachery of these parties lies in the political limitations of the workers' struggles — at a time when the largely economic class struggles have reached tremendous heights. If these struggles had been given socialist aims, the Suarez regime could never have achieved its present relative stability.

The only place where the workers' struggles have had a clear political emphasis is

in the Basque country. Here too the sellouts of the PCE have been the clearest.

Had the death of Franco and the state reforms which followed it unleashed gigantic political struggles, some serious thought might have to be given to an abstentionist stand in these elections (a position adopted by some Spanish organisations and in Britain by the Workers' Socialist League). In the present situation, however, such a position is nonsense.

Proponents of this position point to the large number of parties (67) that are still illegal; to the obstacles placed in the way of those wishing to stand candidates; to the fact that the upper house, the Senate, will have 41 members not elected but appointed by the King; and to the electoral boundaries which give proportionally more representation to the conservative rural areas than to the urban, proletarian ones. These facts, they say, spotlight the huge imperfections in the system even in terms of bourgeois democracy. They also point to the large scale abstentions in last year's referendum — about 25% overall and over 50% in the Basque country.

All this is true. But it misses the point: that is that the Franco regime (with the aid of foreign, in particular German, capitalism) did transform itself into a bourgeois democracy without unleashing a revolutionary upheaval or breaking up internally.

The parties standing in the election are arranged in several big electoral blocs: the Democratic Centre (led by Areilza, Pio Cabanillas and others from King Juan

Carlos's first Cabinet); the Popular Alliance (led by Fraga Iribarne); and the Social Democratic Alliance (composed of a number of small groups on the extreme right of the social-democracy); as well as Suarez' Centre Democratic Union.

In addition there is the PSOE and the Communist Party; and a number of far left blocs.

The American socialist paper *Militant* gave this account of the problems of the far left groups in an article on the campaign of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR):

"The larger of the two Trotskyist groups, the LCR, is running in a bloc of independent candidates that includes some members of two smaller left groups. Although the legal parties need not do so, these independent slates must submit thousands of signatures on petitions in order to get on the ballot.

"In numerous provinces it was necessary to submit not only signatures, but notarised

[legally sworn] photocopies of all signers' identity cards [which are compulsory in Spain]. Leaving a margin to cover the required number, the LCR felt it necessary to gather 7,000 signatures in Barcelona, 5,500 in the Basque country, 4,000 in Madrid, 1,500 in Valencia and 1,000 in Sevilla, to list only the largest numbers.

"An LCR leader estimated that it cost them at least one million pesetas [about £9,000] simply to get all the signatures sworn.

"The LCR leaders are still unsure whether their candidates will be granted any radio and TV time whatsoever, because of legal technicalities. All parties are theoretically supposed to have equal access to the media. However, campaign radio statements of the PSOE have been censored for mentioning the oppression of women and the problem of unemployment.

"All legal newspapers are still subject to censorship. Non-legal newspapers, such as those of the LCR and LC, do not submit to censorship but are subject



By a burning barricade, a Basque militant stands draped in his national flag, which bears the slogan "Amnesty"

Abortion rights setback

While the battle against the *Beynon Bill* continues in Britain, in Italy the fight for abortion rights has taken a turn for the worse.

With the strength of the Catholic Church and reverence for the family wrapped firmly around them, the Christian Democrats in the Senate voted down the liberalising abortion law which had previously been passed by the lower House.

The debate had little to do with the plight of Italian women. In fact they weren't even mentioned in the first two hours. Stating that the law was unconstitutional, the Christian Democrats managed to end its existence by a margin of two votes; supported of course by the fascist MSI and other right-wing rabble.

The quashing of the Bill means that no other Bill to legalise abortion [in however limited a way] can be introduced for another 6 months.

Abortion is a major issue in Italian party politics, and this vote was a significant victory for the Christian Democrats. But the Communist Party [PCI], whose parliamentary support for the Christian Democrats effectively keeps that party in power, have said that the killing of the Abortion law will

not affect their "over-riding aim" to come to a programmatic agreement with the CDs.

Undoubtedly the Christian Democrats only went ahead with their anti-abortion project in the knowledge that they could still count on PCI support.

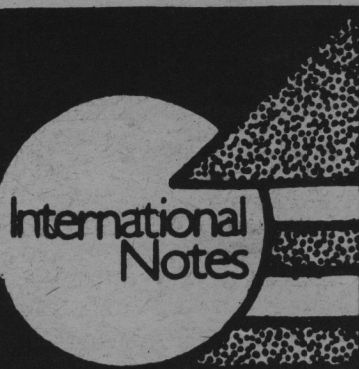
For the PCI, a setback in the fight for abortion rights is just a small price to pay for the privilege of acting as lapdog and guard dog to Italy's ruling Tories — the "historic compromise". For millions of Italian women the price will be a bigger one: the terrors and dangers of backstreet abortions and the burdens of unwanted children.

If the Italian Senate had little to say about women, they had plenty to say for themselves. Thousands demonstrated angrily outside the Senate.

Meanwhile, the PCI is mainly concerned to cool the issue. Its committee of Senators quickly put out a statement aimed not against the Christian Democrats' action but against their own ranks. They "unanimously affirmed the necessity of rejecting all manoeuvres [sic] which use the question of abortion in an attempt to block the necessary positive conclusion of an agreement between the democratic forces."



Women's demonstration for abortion rights



to police harassment of sellers or confiscation. And they can't be placed on newsstands.

"Although recent government decrees have claimed to grant the right of assembly and the right to form trade unions, in the months before the election period more meetings were banned than approved, and the vast majority of strikes are still illegal.

"Workers' demonstrations and strikes — such as on May Day or the mid-May actions in the Basque country — are met with police rampages of repression, right wing gang terror, and killings of demonstrators.

"By government admission there are still 110 people rotting in Spanish prisons for their political beliefs. This figure does not include the many women jailed for "crimes" such as having an abortion, or the many political oppositionists still in exile because they fear prison if they return."

BASQUE ACTION DEFEATS SUAREZ

THE elections in the Basque country will not follow the pattern elsewhere in Spain. Here the nationalist movement ETA will receive huge support.

It is in the Basque country that the biggest political demonstrations have taken place, fuelled not only by the general repression but also by the specific repression of the Basque nationalists.

Suarez had hoped to appear conciliatory toward ETA by his decision to permit the flying of the Basque national flag and allow a ceremony of commemoration of the Civil War bombing of Guernica.

But alarmed at the size of the demonstrations, which also demanded a complete amnesty for political prisoners, the police and Guardia Civil units unleashed a wave of terror throughout the Basque country in the middle of May, in which five demonstrators were killed, scores injured and hundreds arrested.

This was met by the Basque people with more demonstrations, street barricades and, on May 12th, by a general strike in which half a million workers took part.

On May 14th the workers' unions except the CP-controlled Workers' Commissions issued a call for a general strike in the Basque country to begin on May 16th. The response of the unions was slow, but that of the CP was openly treacherous.

With the general strike under way and solidarity actions in Madrid, Barcelona and Granada Suarez realised that his attempt to buy credit in the Basque country while still imposing police terror had failed. He therefor conceded an amnesty to many Basque political prisoners — so long as they agreed to go into exile.



The funeral of Pierre Maitre, murdered on a picket line

'Union' thugs murder strike picket

DURING the night of 4th-5th June a worker on picket duty outside the Verreries Mecaniques Champenoises glassworks in Reims, France, was shot dead.

The workers at VMC had struck on Tuesday 31st May against the sacking of two trade union representatives in the works. On Wednesday 1st June, eight people were injured in a clash between strikers and police. Then just after midnight on 5th June, four men in a car arrived at the picket line and tried to seize the union banner.

They were driven off by the 20 men on picket duty. But fifteen minutes later the car returned and shots were fired from it at the pickets. Pierre Maitre was fatally wounded. Serge Vermeulen and Raymond Richard were also injured.

A group of members of the CFT (French Labour Confederation, a notoriously pro-boss "union") at a local Citroen car factory were quickly arrested and charged with the shooting. The leader of the group, Claude Le Comte, was also a member of the SAC (Service d'Action Civique) a Gaullist strong-arm squad.

ASSASSINS

The CFT condemned the shooting and expelled those arrested. It is probable, in fact, that the assassins were not acting on CFT orders. But it is certain that the CFT was responsible for training them as professional anti-working class thugs.

The CFT has a long history of attacks on strikers and militant workers. This seems now to have spilled over into murder. In the Citroen and Simca car factories, the CFT is virtually a bosses' militia.

In April 1976, for instance, two militants of the CGT (the Communist Party-led union federation) at Citroen Levallois were attacked by CFT thugs and one of them was seriously hurt. In April 1973, the CFT broke a strike at Peugeot's Saint-Etienne works; a month before that at Citroen, Reims, truncheons and tear gas were the weapons of the CFT strike-breaking squad.

A protest demonstration on Monday June 6th called by the local unions gathered 15,000 people in Reims. On Tuesday 7th June the unions called a national strike — of five minutes duration! The only national demon-

stration was one called for Wednesday 8th June by two revolutionary left organisations, the LCR (Revolutionary Communist League) and the OCT (Communist Workers' Organisation).

The CGT (and also the LCR and OCT) call for the "dissolution of the CFT" — apparently by the government. But how can workers allow the government to decide what is a legitimate trade union and what is not? The task of the unions is to mobilise their members to drive the thug squads out of Citroen and Simca.

The French unions have ducked the job. But it is not only their responsibility. Chrysler in Britain is part of the same combine as Simca. The existence of murderous strike-breaking thug squads in Simca strengthens the combine bosses, and weakens all the workers in the combine.

COLIN FOSTER

The French revolutionary daily *Rouge* is being prosecuted for "defaming the police". And the way the prosecution is being conducted is as clear a proof of the infamy of the police as any article in a revolutionary paper could ever be.

The article complained about was signed with a pseudonym. The police demanded that the editor of *Rouge* reveal the real name of the writer. He refused. The police then dragged out a 1944 decree on the press to declare that such a refusal was illegal.

But the same decree forbids any one person to run more than one national daily paper. The millionaire Robert Hersant has recently bought a whole string of French papers. Any prosecution? No!

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A HOTBED of drug trafficking and of Communist influence — that is the indictment laid by the French government against the University of Vincennes to justify its closure. The students and campus workers are fighting the closure, all the more so because Vincennes is the only university in France open to adult students without the normal qualifications, and particularly for part time courses.

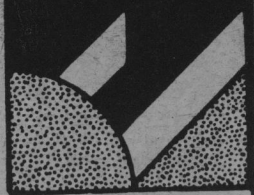
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On Wednesday 1st June production was restarted by 500 workers at the Lip watch factory. They are going to produce one particularly cheap watch and sell it themselves.

The Lip struggle began with a work-in in 1973. Since the first settlement broke down, the Lip workers have for one year once again been in occupation. On 15th June most of them will stop getting the unemployment benefit (90% of full pay) that they were receiving for the past year.

Socialist unity or a rotten bloc

Editorial



THE International Marxist Group has started a new paper called **SOCIALIST CHALLENGE**. The paper claims to be "something different". It is devoted, according to its first editorial, to the theme of creating "a unified revolutionary organisation".

This editorial tells us what everybody knows — that the profusion of far-left groups deters many militants who are breaking with Stalinism and social democracy; and that the existence of a single revolutionary organisation would constitute a powerful magnet of attraction. From these observations the editorial concludes that revolutionaries should "place the question of socialist unity at the centre of our political tasks today."

What does this conclusion mean concretely? Either that revolutionaries should subordinate their activities to the task of uniting the left — a recipe for creating not a united and active revolutionary organisation but a diffuse discussion circle. Or it means that revolutionaries should subordinate and forget their political differences in the cause of a unity which will inevitably be based on the most vague and general idea of politics.



A revolutionary organisation can only be unified on the basis of clear agreement on a defined programme and a well understood tactical line.

Because it is an organisation that only exists to give actual answers to the problems posed by the class struggle a revolutionary party can only unify on the basis of agreement on those answers.

To the IMG, however, the basis of unity will come out of the quest for unity. According to Tariq Ali (the editor of *Socialist Challenge*) "by campaigning for a unified revolutionary organisation we will be trying to establish a correct and principled basis for the building of a revolutionary party." (*Red Weekly* 198).

Such an approach has more to do with bourgeois diplomacy than Marxism. Its firmest connection to the politics of Léon Trotsky is that it is a repeat of the mistakes of Trotsky on the question of party-building between the time of his break with Lenin in 1903 and his joining the Bolsheviks in 1917. Trotsky later often warned against repeating his mistakes of trying to unify the Bolshevik and Menshevik trends along the axis of some abstract middle ground.



Trotsky was only too ready to remind his followers that it was in the end not he who built a revolutionary party in Russia with his welcome-one-and-all approach, but the "narrow" intransigent Lenin. Lenin's approach was superior because it did not rely on organisational project-mongering but instead stuck unswervingly to the fight for the slogans of the Bolsheviks among the masses — and to the fight to ensure that these slogans were the right ones.

Ignoring this experience and the many experiences of the Trotskyist movement since, the IMG have opted to a concept of party building by brokerage and by debate. For *Socialist Challenge* is not the product of any successful drive for unity; neither, unless it were taken up entirely with debate (a sort of open internal bulletin) can it be an instrument for reaching unity by thrashing out differences. All it can be is an organ for adapting to those it hopes to attract.

By doing this the IMG have undertaken in effect to sacrifice the possibility of having a means of intervening week by week in the class struggle with their own line (be it right or wrong), testing it in practice.

And they have done this purely in order to allay the "cynicism and suspicions which exist on the left"

While the IMG talks of relating to workers' desire for a united organisation, and while it talks a great deal of the importance of the so-called "class struggle tendency", the IMG is actually turning its back on the concerns and struggles of the workers. It is giving rise to a paper which is a journalistic expression of indifference to the necessarily precise answers that workers need to take the struggle forward.

Much of the cynicism and suspicion that exist on the left is in any case based on the idea that the fight for correct politics is a mere "sectarian" squabble. Trotsky attacked this view as centrist. Instead of fighting to educate people on the left on the value of clarity of ideas, the IMG is pandering to this contempt for ideas and even glorifying it.

A paper that sets merely to show how nice it can be to everyone will be useless as a tool for the class struggle or an aid to clarity. It will be no more than a wind-break for tired and demoralised lefts.

The IMG claims that *Socialist Challenge* is the culmination of their line "for a class struggle tendency". In reality it is the tacit announcement of the liquidation of that line. For it is precisely because the "class struggle tendency" failed to materialise in any even roughly organised form that the IMG has now decided to substitute for it.

The second major mistake that *Socialist Challenge* makes is in its analysis of the obstacles that stand in the way of a unified revolutionary organisation.



The editorial of *Socialist Challenge* suggests two reasons for the disunity. One is psychological — "the cynicism and suspicions which exist on the left"; the other is that "the left (does not) understand that internal democracy and open discussions are not a luxury, but a necessity in today's conditions."

Of course there can be psychological blocks to revolutionary unity — cases of excessive party-pride and organisational inertia. But the real obstacles to unity are more substantial: they are the very real political differences between various organisations — differences that go far beyond the question of democracy.

And these differences are not going to be dissolved away by participation in *Socialist Challenge*.

Therefore *Socialist Challenge* will inevitably become the journalistic expression of a rotten bloc, not a unified revolutionary organisation. The one common factor binding the participants will be a commitment to "democracy" — which in the circumstances is a euphemism for doing one's own thing underneath the umbrella. And in the first issue, the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party are criticised not for their wrong politics but for their lack of democracy. After all, that is uncontroversial, and unlikely to arouse anyone's "cynicism and suspicions".

It is worth pointing out, too, that *Socialist Challenge* is not yet even the umbrella it proclaims itself to be for other organisations. It has done little more than attract a few individuals to its literary fold.

Workers Action has a different attitude to revolutionary unity. We are happy to see a paper give up part of its space to important debates within the left (we would do it if we have the space). We will use that space ourselves. We are certainly ready to discuss any concrete initiatives the IMG proposes for unity in action (as we have, with positive results, in the past). But we will not be drawn into a rotten bloc.

'...that is when they will kill us'

TUESDAY 3rd MAY: About 11 o'clock my dad was coming from the pub. He was near the office in our street when four NF kids started a fight with him. But my dad shouted a lot and hit one of them on the leg with a piece of wood, while he went to kick my dad. They all ran away like scared cats.

THURSDAY 5th MAY: About 10 o'clock there were about 30 NF kids came like hooligans. They threw empty milk bottles at the next door neighbours. The next door neighbours are bangladesh people. There was a lot of shouting going on and the flat near us was full of people watching. So the bangladesh people came out with sticks and empty bottles and so did we. The bottles were thrown at each other like rain, but no one got hurt, only my friend got a cut on his hand. Any one of us could of got hurt badly or even killed. We called the police and about seven cars came [25 minutes later], but they never done nothing at all. Even some of them were laughing, they thought that this was funny. It is very bad that this party has come out called the NATIONAL FRONT. It is bad and it is cruel and soon it is going to get badder.

FRIDAY 6th MAY: They came again making trouble. This time they broke three of our windows and I think that this should of not of happened. There were about 50 this time.

From the diary of Sukdave (Stevie) Singh, who lives in Mile End, East London.

The incidents we have described in this week's Workers Action are only the tip of the iceberg. Violent attacks — by fascists or by the police — are once again the daily experience of blacks in London. In the Edmonton area of North London a West Indian woman and a four-year-old Asian child were shot by a fascist on 19th April. In South London last week 60 blacks were rounded up in a dawn raid by the police.

As the Commission for Racial Equality sets up shop this week, their message is trumpeted abroad: Blacks must rely on the police to protect them against racist attack. And equally clearly the black youth of London have rejected this hypocritical advice. CRE chief David Lane, former Tory MP and keen advocate of strict immigration

Stevie's neighbours had their door smashed in later last month. A few doors away an Asian family have completely boarded up the front of their house, and they are afraid to venture out after dark. The crowds of white youths congregate in the street — sometimes as many as 100 of them — almost every night, shouting abuse at the three Asian families who live there.

The last time the police were called (by white neighbours, who were afraid their windows would go in too) they threatened to arrest the Asians for defending their houses with sticks and bottles; they declined to arrest whites identified to them as responsible for breaking their windows.

Two of the Bengali men who live next door to Stevie told Workers' Action that "When they come for us it will be when we are coming home from work alone. That is when they will beat us up and that is when they will kill us."

And they went on, bitterly: "When we go out with sticks to defend ourselves the police say that they will arrest us. But we have to use sticks to save our lives"

Youths

Stevie knows who many of the white youths are. "Three years ago we used to play football together". They live in the flats opposite and in the surrounding streets. He thinks their parents encourage them to bait "Pakis" — they wouldn't otherwise be allowed out on the streets so late in the night.

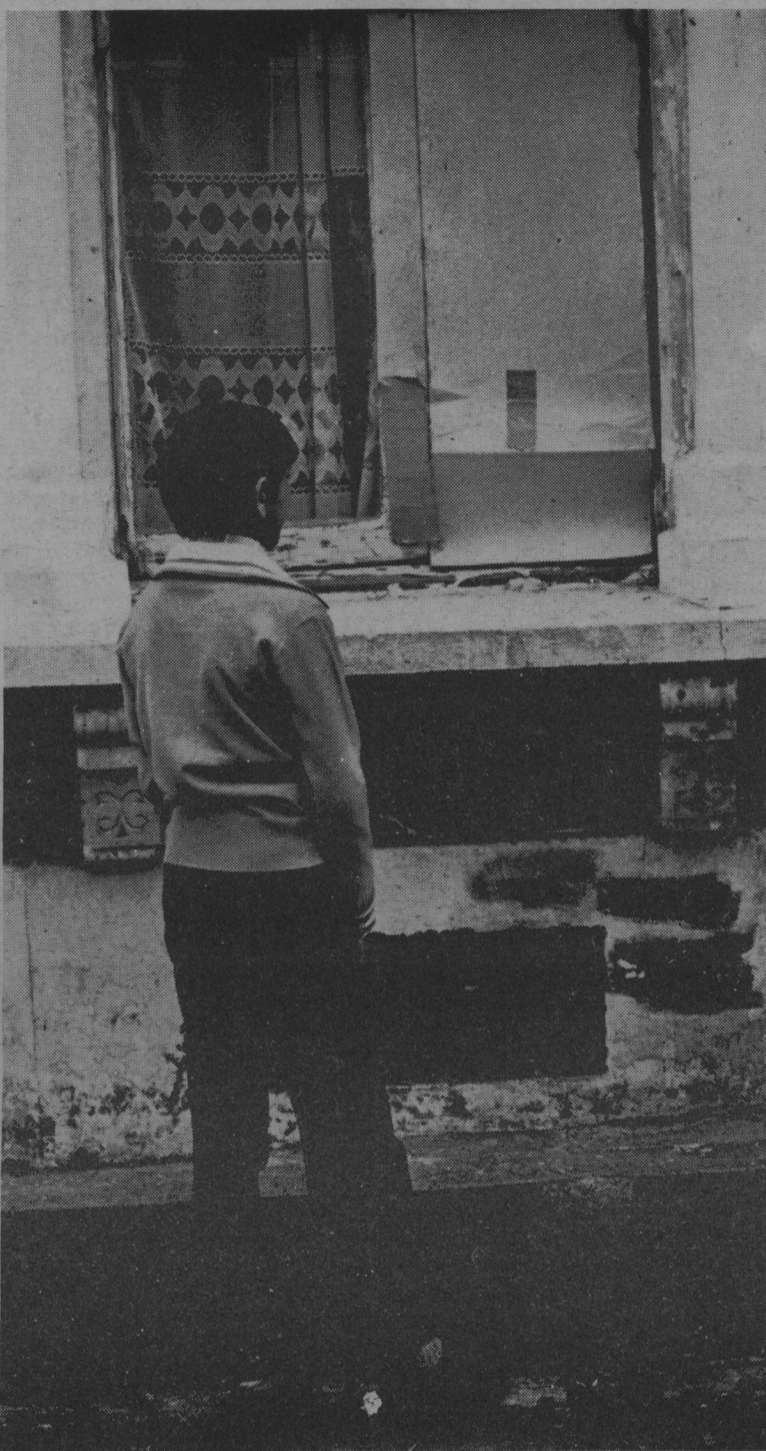
Every Asian family has a relative or friend who has been attacked. Stevie's uncle has been stabbed twice. It is widely believed by the Bangladeshi families that two Asians have been killed within the last month in the Cable Street area (about a mile away), but that the police are covering it up. It is said that an Asian man in Cable Street heard a knock at his door late at night and that when he opened it he was struck on the head with a hammer and killed.

controls, is in business for one thing only — to keep the lid on the black revolt. He and his helpers are nothing but the velvet glove on the fist of Britain's racist Labour Government.

For the Asians of East London there is only one real force to sustain them: their own communal solidarity. The urgent need now is to create organisations capable of defending black workers coming to and from their factories, their temples and cinemas, capable of identifying and striking back at the National Front vermin who lurk behind the assaults,

The street

The racists in uniform



Stevie Singh in front of the broken windows of his home

Photo: Minda

AT 7am on Thursday 19th May, ten policemen burst into a house in Longfellow Road, East London. They refused to produce warrants to either of the men — brothers from Bangladesh — but claimed they had come to arrest everyone in the house. Each of the two was taken aside and interrogated in turn by every one of the policemen.

They all asked the same questions, over and over again. How long have you lived here? How do you send money back to Bangladesh? Through which bank? Prove it ... and so on. They were there for three hours altogether, having searched the whole house. They took away British citizenship papers, marriage certificates, P45s, work references and passports. And they refused to give receipts for these things.

As they left, they forbade one of the men to leave the house all day, saying they would be back later to ask more questions. They did not in fact return, but the man lost a day's pay anyway.

Compared with a neighbour, he was lucky. A few doors down the road, Sujon Miah was arrested on suspicion of being an illegal immigrant. He was taken off to Pentonville prison, and police took both his passport and that of his wife Rongful Bibi. Without it she could get no Social Security. To get it back, she was told she'd have to contact Police Sergeant 27 West, in charge of Immigration at Lemn Street police station.

Trying to see PS27 West

SUPPORT BLACK SELF-DEF

the stabbings and the juvenile mobs.

Already there are moves to build such organisations. The families in Stevie Singh's street and the people of Longfellow Road will be attending a meeting later this month to establish how many of their community have been arrested and harassed by the police, and how many have had their passports and other papers stolen by the boys in blue. They will also be discussing how to organise in their own defence.

Such organisations began to develop last year. It is vital that the while left does not repeat the mistakes it made then. In particular,

Workers Action says to the Socialist Workers Party: No more party-building stunts. No more smash-and-grab raids for members. And to the Communist Party, the Militant tendency in the Labour Party and others who claim to oppose racism: You have a clear duty to support the attempts of blacks to defend themselves.

Your talk of blacks 'splitting the workers' movement' by forming their own organisations is nothing but an excuse for your own inactivity.

The overwhelmingly white left faces the task of estab-

lishing its own credibility in the eyes of Britain's black communities. And for this, one decisive, united action is worth a hundred resolutions or lobbies of parliament.

A coordinating committee of anti-racist committees has been established in London, born around the time of the NF march through Wood Green. It now claims the affiliation of 15 or more local campaigns, as well as black organisations such as the Indian Workers Association (Southall) and Samaj. A newspaper has been launched, planned to appear roughly once every two months in eight pages, and

of fear



East End Asians who demonstrated against last year's wave of violent attacks

proved to be quite difficult. On 25th May PS27 West had signed off for 3 days. Come back on Friday. On Friday PS27 West had signed off for another 3 days and was now at Scotland Yard. But try tomorrow. The next day ... PS27 West had signed off for a whole week.

Eventually the elusive PS27 West was located, and gave a receipt for the passport. The receipt gave Sujon Miah's name, and the numbers of the two passports — which was still no use as proof of identity for Rongful Bibi.

Sexist

The passport itself was with the governor of Pentonville, and in order to get it back, Rongful was told she'd have to send in a written application!

Meanwhile at the Social Security office Rongful was subjected to constant petty harassment, sexist comments and humiliation. Only after a white neighbour went with her and created a row did she get one payment of £7.50 "hardship allowance" — to keep her and her year-old baby since 19th May.

At the other end of the

street, No. 70, another Bengali was arrested and charged with harbouring an illegal immigrant living at ... No.38!

He was also charged with fraudulently handling insurance cards. He tells how he was beaten up until he signed a 'confession' on which the charge was based. The police, he says, would ask him a question and no matter what he answered would write down their version. He said to them "Why do you ask me these questions? If I say that is wrong, you say that is right; if I say that is right you say that is wrong."

He was arrested on Thursday May 19th, but his family only found out where he was on the Friday. His son flew down from Scotland and on Saturday stood bail (together with a friend) for £3,000.

The police called on other families in the street that Thursday morning. All the Asians in the neighbourhood know of the beatings they gave the men they arrested. One of them said, speaking for a whole community: "All of us round here are praying."

J Ryan, F Brodie

movement. We must make it a priority to purge our own ranks of racists, who divide and confuse the movement and pave the way for fascist infiltration.

No platform for fascists. Fascism needs to march and rally, to rant and rave and whip up the frustrations of its potential audience. Driven off the streets, out of public halls and out of the media, it will have less opportunity to grow.

The labour movement must support black self defence. We must support the black community in their fight to say: Here we are and here we stay. Support for black self defence must be unconditional, and certainly cannot wait for such time as the labour movement itself is prepared to offer physical protection to its beleaguered black members — desirable though this is.

NCE

In addition there is to be a monthly news bulletin.

In our view, the four key points in the coming fight are these:

-
-

No to immigration controls. These laws are necessarily discriminatory, and their existence means continual harassment of black people in Britain, who are deprived of many civil rights. There would be an outcry, for instance, if whites disappeared into jail for days or weeks without charge.

No open racists to hold official positions in the labour movement. Expel all fascists from the labour

Ireland faces the green scare election

LOOKING at the election campaign in the 26 Counties of the "Republic of Ireland" one would never guess that just four weeks ago Orange bigots had come near to forcing the British occupation forces in Ireland's six northern counties to launch an all-out "seek and destroy" offensive against the Catholic 40% of the northern counties.

It is more than five years since strikes, mass demonstrations and a burnt-out British Embassy in Dublin were an unsurprising southern response to the Bloody Sunday shootings in the northern city of Derry. But

Since then fiercely repressive measures have proliferated in the South; and Republican views have been excluded from the media, by both explicit censorship and a general trend towards revising the previously accepted view of Irish history. The establishment once claimed the republican tradition for itself in order to empty it of any revolutionary content. Now it has abandoned the habit of Easter Rising commemorations — even an emasculated Republican tradition is not to be trusted and best done away with.

CIVIL WAR

These measures are both evidence of the decreasing sense of involvement in the troubled north, and an effective damper on such involvement.

In this week's elections it is issues like unemployment, prices and taxation that have been at the centre of the speeches and campaigns. Opinion polls showed that few felt the situation in the North to be an important issue. As such, this election seems to be putting the seal on the disengagement of 26-County politics from republican pretensions.

Despite a large showing of independents, the election is dominated by three parties, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour.

Fianna Fail and Fine Gael both originate as factions of the petit bourgeois nationalist forces that led the final stage (1918-21) of the Irish independence struggle. Fine Gael is the party of the big landowners and those sections of the business community that were dominant in the early 1920s. Fianna Fail is a party with a populist and nationalist past, traditionally able to compete with the Labour Party for the working class and agrarian poor vote.

THREE PARTIES

This section lost the civil war of the early 1920s but dominated Irish politics for 40 years after the first government it formed in 1932.

This meant that the only viable governmental alternative was a coalition of Fine Gael (a party of privilege and

by John O'Mahony

reaction) and Labour — a party which adopted the role of satellite of the bourgeoisie as far back as 60 years ago.

Such a coalition has ruled since the last election and shown little sign of strain at its seams. Labour has retained the allegiance of the



From top: McGiolla of Sinn Fein, Conor Cruise O'Brien and Fianna Fail leader Jack Lynch

unions, but hardly their enthusiasm. Union leaders warn would-be defectors from Labour that all they will achieve is a stronger Fine Gael and a returned Fianna Fail government.

On the left there are a couple of Independent Labour candidates (Matt Merrigan of the ATGWU and Noel Browne, a long-standing free-lance leftist); a few Communist Party candidates (one standing against Noel Browne) and 16 candidates of "Sinn Fein the Workers Party", as the Official Sinn Fein now styles itself.

All these share a demand

for an end to international capitalist exploitation of Irish resources (e.g. lead and zinc which are mined, but not processed, in Ireland) and demands for a "planned economy". None of them offers a radical alternative to the fear of and lack of interest in the counties beyond the border.

Thomas McGiolla, chairman of "Sinn Fein the Workers Party" insists that it is a vigorous new party. But despite the recent change of name from just plain Sinn Fein (Official), it focuses on such decisive issues as revival of the Irish language.

OUTBID EACH OTHER

Symptomatic of the whole campaign is the fact that while the coalition and Fianna Fail try to outbid each other with tax reductions and not entirely convincing projects to bring down unemployment (officially 100,000, but unofficially estimated as high as 160,000, in a 2.1 million workforce), it has been left to Conor Cruise O'Brien (Labour Minister of Posts and Telegraph) to raise the question that has dominated modern Irish history — that of the artificial border across the country imposed by Britain in 1922.

To O'Brien, it is a tragedy that the course of Irish history ever forced this question back into the centre of political affairs.

Until recently official 26-County state history glorified and romanticised the national liberation struggle started in 1916. O'Brien, however, sees it not as a period of resurgence of the Irish people but of the perversion of the course of Irish history. And concludes from this the need to wage war not only on the republican movement but even on Fianna Fail, which he says can't be trusted because some sections of it are still 'soft on the IRA'.

LOCKED AWAY

In fact Fianna Fail enacted the very legislation under which the coalition government has declared a state of Emergency, and under which hundreds of republicans have been locked away on the say-so of a senior policeman and no jury.

But O'Brien's "green scare" is more than just electioneering. He is trying to force those politicians who indulge in nationalist rhetoric to either abandon their pretensions or take them seriously.

Whatever O'Brien's motives, it will be a good day for the Irish working class when the charades, the parades and the pretences which dominated Irish politics are finally buried and abandoned.

AMID guarded praise from Tories and Orange Unionists, Roy Mason introduced his new 'package' of state security measures for British occupied Ireland. Gerry Fitt, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, described them as a "public relations job to please the Unionists". But while the timing of the announcement was no doubt aimed to keep the Paisleyites at bay, the policies themselves (or many of them) were probably already being implemented.

In the wake of the failure of the Paisleyite revolt of last month, the British authorities will be trying to reconcile the rebellious Catholic communities to life with the non-Paisleyite Unionists and those like the SDLP who are willing to make deals with them. Thus one of Mason's measures will be more attention to "community ventures" in the Catholic areas, to create support for establishment politics and isolate the armed republicans.

At the same time, Mason said he would be using "SAS type operations" much more — presumably to replace the blunt and overall brutality of the Army with the more skillful, more selective techniques of the undercover SAS unit.

Military intelligence is now clearly said to be the key to the battle — an admission that the Catholic communities are still solidly behind the Republicans and aren't giving much away.

When the SAS were being used to stir up sectarian conflict, their very presence in the north of Ireland was kept secret. It didn't fit in with the line that the British were there to keep the peace between the communities. Now Mason can be more frank about the SAS.

In addition to the Dirty Tricks of the SAS, the RUC (police) are to have a greater role. The RUC has its own "anti-terrorist" unit, the Ants. This will be strengthened, while the RUC as a whole is to be boosted from 5,300 to 6,500, while extra civilian staff

Mason 'promises' more

SAS terror in Northern Ireland

will be taken on to free more police for active duties.

The overwhelmingly Protestant Ulster Defence Regiment (many of whose members are also members or supporters of Orange murder outfits like the UVF) is to be strengthened and enlarged from 1800 to 2500.



All this points to a further firming up of the old Stormont repressive forces. It is widely believed in the Catholic areas that the RUC are poised to re-enter the Catholic ghettos with the help of the British army.

Increased legal penalties are part of the package too: the penalty for conspiracy to murder (at present 10 years) will now be life imprisonment. Illegal activity under Section 3 of the Explosive Substances Act will carry a penalty of life imprisonment (up from 20 years). There are two new offences relating to bomb hoaxes, carrying a maximum of 5 years. And the maximum for membership — just membership! — of an illegal organisation goes up from five to ten years.

Although all the repressive

laws in Northern Ireland are used very selectively against the Catholic militia, leaving Protestant terror outfits virtually untouched, those laws relating to illegal organisations are themselves discriminatory, as most of the Orange paramilitary gangs haven't been banned.

Meanwhile fresh evidence of what "counter insurgency" measures mean continues to come in. Recently a Belfast judge refused to accept a series

of charges against a young Catholic, Terry MacGill of Turf Lodge, after evidence was given that MacGill had been burnt with cigarettes, slapped and threatened with electric shock while under army interrogation.

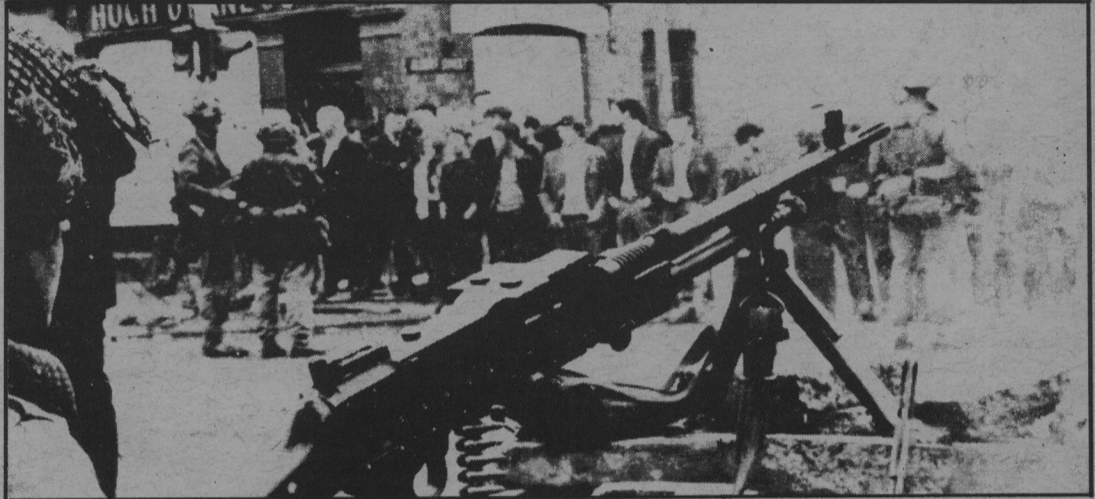
He had also been told he would be handed over to the loyalist murder gang, the UVF, if he didn't sign a statement admitting attempted murder of three soldiers. He duly signed the 'confession', but denied the

charge in court.

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association have asked the Commonwealth Conference to consider the case and similar evidence.

Coming on top of evidence submitted to the European Commission on Human Rights, this strengthens the case for a labour movement inquiry into British Army activities in the north Ireland.

CHRIS GRAY



Anti-PTA group formed after victory

Following the release of Ronan Bennett, the first person appealing against deportation under the Prevention of Terrorism Act to be able to have a solicitor with him when he made representations to the Home Office, a permanent committee against the PTA has been formed in Huddersfield. Its aim is to publicise the anti-working class and repressive nature of the PTA in the local labour movement and to provide a network of contacts for rapid mobilisation if anyone else is picked up under the Act.

Already there are members of the Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, IMG and LPYS on the committee, plus sponsorships by shop stewards committees and individual shop stewards and convenors.

But such committees cannot take the place of the necessary solidarity movement to back up the struggle against the British occupation of Ireland. At the meeting to set up the anti-PTA committee, members of the CP were implicitly blaming the Provisional IRA for the repression of Irish political activists in this country. And during the campaign to free Ronan Bennett some members of the SWP responded to questions about the IRA by saying they were just thugs and murderers.

Committees against the PTA are fine, but they are no substitute for a solidarity movement which knows what side it is on and fights for a clear solidarity stance in support of the Irish struggle.

TIM RILEY
Huddersfield

Wanted, a demand to unite us all

Dear Comrades,

It now seems fairly clear that the fate of the government's incomes policy is very much in the balance.

Rank and file discontent, union pressure like the AUEW national executive's vote have forced chancellor Denis Healy to admit that the chances of further wage restraint are slim. Yet despite the beginnings of what could be a significant movement against the social contract, the working class has so far failed to take up those demands and slogans that can unite it in a serious fight for a working class answer in relation to wages and living standards in general.

For example motions calling for a return to free collective bargaining were passed unanimously at the Cardiff branch of the Seamen's Union and the Treforest GMWU No 4 branch. Yet at both meetings amendments to the main motions (calling for a minimum wage of £50 to be safeguarded against inflation by a sliding scale of wages, based on a cost of living index drawn up by committees of housewives and trade unionists) were turned down.

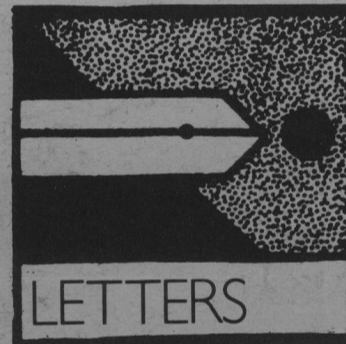
In the NUS branch the argument was put forward that the fight against wage restraint should take place in stages. Stage 1 is the fight for a return to free collective bargaining.

Stage 2 is the fight for the 'trimmings' like a national minimum wage.

What the argument fails to see is that while the demand for a return to free collective bargaining can unify the workers opposition to phase 111 it is no way a demand that can unify workers on a class wide basis in their struggle for wage rises in the future. And as such it doesn't pose a serious threat to wage restraint. In fact the demand only means anything when a wage claim outside the social contract is being fought for and this in most cases means a wage claim fought at an individual plant level and not on a class wide basis.

The demand for a minimum wage and a sliding scale of wages on the other hand needs unified working class action. And the demands if fought for seriously by the trade unions can draw into struggle those workers like the shop workers, members of the GMWU and low paid workers in general who see no gains for themselves in a mere fight for free collective bargaining. As such these demands pose a very serious threat to the future of any form of wage restraint.

Another argument against the amendments was that a sliding scale of wages smacked too much of thresholds. A good



point; but where the indexing in this case differs from previous indexes is that we demand that all wage increases be based on a working class cost of living index. In fact this component of the fight against wage restraint is the most important because what we would be effectively fighting for is automatic endorsement of all wage rises demanded by workers. The working class in such a situation would be exercising positive control.

The final argument against the amendments and probably the most dangerous was that we call for a return to free collective bargaining but in the meantime we fight at plant level for perks — loopholes in and around the social contract. But perks are very transient things, here today and gone tomorrow. And the fight for perks ducks even a fight at an individual plant level for any sort of consolidated wage claim and certainly does nothing in unifying the working class against wage restraint.

Fraternally, Geoff Williams

Britain backs Iran torture regime

While it makes high-sounding noises about terror in Uganda, the British government continues its active collaboration with the Iranian torture regime by harassing its opponents in this country.

It tried to frame 21 Iranian students for conspiracy. When this failed and they were acquitted in February 1976, it continued its pressure in other ways.

In May 1976 one of our members was imprisoned for 6 months for demonstrating in solidarity with Spanish antifascists. Last September 3 of our members were jailed for a month after demonstrating against the Shah's wife when she visited London. One of these three wasn't allowed back into Britain later, although when he had left to visit his sick mother in Germany he had been assured that he could come back.



In October 1976, one of our members was summoned to the Home Office and told to leave "within 24 hours" — which he did for fear of being deported to Iran.

Now, one of our members (who was among the 21 and the 3) has been held at Canterbury prison by immigration officers since June 3rd (when he was returning from France) without being charged at all. When he asked under what charge he was being held he was told "You make too much trouble".

But for this "trouble" he has already been tried and served his time. It is quite illegal to penalise him again for the same "trouble".

IRANIAN STUDENTS SOCIETY IN GB

Stop those racist remarks

Fighting racism at work is as vital as anywhere else. And here, too, direct action often counts for much more than words.

At the factory where I work there is a young man who kept on making racist remarks. The women who worked on the same line tried to argue with him logically, and to explain how racism came about.

It came to a crunch when one day he said that "if me and my mates had my way" all blacks would be shot.

At this point the women had

had enough of him. One is due to marry a Jamaican boy soon. They were all furious. They began to threaten him, then refused to speak to him and completely ignored him when he tried to talk to them.

Then they demanded that he should be moved so they would not have to listen to him, and someone even suggested that he should be surrounded by cardboard boxes so that they would not have to look at him either.

The next week he saw some of the women after work and came

up and apologised for all he had said. He told them he now felt he understood their attitude to him, and that he wanted to support a local Rock Against Racism concert that was being given that week.

How far his 'conversion' goes remains to be seen (and worked on). But it was action that made our arguments stick. Such action isn't just limited to set-piece demonstrations or pickets.

JENNIE BRERETON
GMWU, Cardiff

THE CPSA Gibraltar branch held out for 6½ months after being locked out by the Ministry of Defence. Only an all out effort by the union leadership finally broke the strike this month.

At the beginning of May the CPSA conference overwhelmingly voted for a one-day national strike if no new management initiative was forthcoming. But from the outset the Union leadership tried to sabotage the strike. Though May 26th was fixed on immediately after the Conference, circulars announcing it were held back until a week before the planned strike. It took another 4 days to tell the branches. Yet the support was snowballing as militants fought for the strike.

Then on Tuesday 24th May the Ministry of Defence just happened to come up with a new offer: a Board of Inquiry into the dispute, £300 for Clerical Officers, and £120 for Clerical Assistants.

Virtually the same offer had been rejected by the branch once before. But because the packaging had changed ("a new management initiative") the leadership found the chance they needed to call off the 1-day strike. The National Disputes Committee met, finished the negotiations, and in 4 hours got telegrams to all branches calling off the strike!

Alastair Graham, the deputy General Secretary, and senior

CPSA leaders break the strike on the Rock

officers flew to Gibraltar and at a rapidly called meeting got the offer accepted by 122 votes to 109 on a secret ballot.

Cut off

How? Reportedly by claiming that there was no support in the UK for the Gibraltar dispute and by threatening to cut off financial support for the strike if the offer was not accepted.

But it was they who had contrived to call off the 1-day strike; and even so, a number of branches have taken other action for their Gibraltar comrades — the Dept. of National Savings in Glasgow was hit by a week-long strike, for instance.

And hadn't the Conference delegates voted to strike?

On Thursday May 26, the day of the aborted strike, 30 supporters of Redder Tape, the SWP-led rank and file group in the CPSA, occupied the Union's HQ in Nightingale Lane in protest against the sellout. They had gone there to ask the General Secretary, Ken Thomas, to explain what had happened. When he refused to see them, they occupied their own union offices.

Thomas called the police to evict them. But when the police found they were CPSA members in their own union HQ they refused to intervene.

On Wednesday June 1st a delegation of 13 members mainly from Manchester but also from Bristol, London and Leeds went to ask the officials to explain themselves. This time the reception was different — we even got coffee. But the culprits had fled.

Thomas was at a meeting in Geneva. The others just happened to be elsewhere.

We demanded answers as to how the strike had been so poorly organised, how come the strike was so suddenly called off, who decided the offer was acceptable, and why the full-time officer responsible for Gibraltar had been excluded from the last vital negotiations.

Inquiry

We received no answers. The membership must now press for a full inquiry into what happened, and for a full explanation to go out to the branches.

What can we learn from the sellout?

First, no matter whether it is

Broad Left or the Right who control the union, our only strength is rank and file support and organisation. Under the Left (ousted in May) the CPSA capitulated to the Government's threats of dismissal and called off the most effective action that had taken place so far — the Statistics ban at the Dept. of Employment. And under the Right, just 19 days after their election, Gibraltar was sold out.

Second, we must ensure that only elected lay members sit on policy-making bodies. A majority of the National Disputes Committee are full time officials who had been given a vote by the NEC just in time to sell out Gibraltar.

Thirdly, we must ensure the election and recall of full-time officials is won at the Rules Revision Conference later this year. After Thomas's and Graham's behaviour over the sellout they must be brought to account.

Finally, and most important, we must build a rank and file organisation in the CPSA to provide an alternative to the present leaders. At present Redder Tape is the only focus for revolutionary socialists and militants in CPSA. And it is Redder Tape that must take the responsibility for organising the fight for socialist action. Together with the Broad Left where possible. Without them where necessary.

CHRIS WHYTEHEAD
CPSA, Bristol

COMPLETE VICTORY STILL NOT CERTAIN AT LAIRD PORTCH

The 400 women on strike for equal pay at the Laird Portch textile factory in East Kilbride voted last week to return to work. The return followed an offer by management to implement job grading at a national level for all hourly paid employees.

At present the skilled women at the plant are being paid £10 a week less than the unskilled men. Without job evaluation which can prove the women are at least as skilled as the men, the women's case could not even be brought to an industrial tribunal.

The offer of job grading was made to the national officials of the strikers' union, the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers. Yet for six weeks the bureaucrats of the NUTGW refused to make the strike official, insisting that under union rules the women had to go back to work, hold a ballot and win a two thirds majority. This result then had to be sent to the executive board of the union, who would decide to make it official — and qualify the strikers for all of £2.50 a week strike pay!

It would be blindness to claim that the granting of job evaluation makes a total victory for the strikers. Without a £10 increase, they are effectively going back with nothing concrete gained out of their struggle, and will be subject to all the manoeuvres and tricks the management pull to make sure that in reality they will not get equal pay.

Management still refuse to concede that the wage system at Laird Portch is discriminatory, although they admit that there are "small anomalies". Their future intentions are anything but trustworthy.

The women are aware of the dangers in the situation. All details of negotiations will be referred back to the workforce, and according to strike convenor Ellen Nicklin any attempts by management to delay or undercut equal pay will meet immediate strike action.

Support for the strike came from all over Britain. Jaegers at Kilmarnock (part of Coates Paton, the Laird Portch parent company) came out in support, and workers at Collins in Springburn and Ladybird at Finnieston refused to do work normally done by the East Kilbride factory.

Jaegers shops were picketed as far off as London and at Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. This solidarity action was certainly one of the reasons management climbed down from their previously intransigent refusal to grant even the demand of job grading.

What has come out of the strike is better organisation among textile workers. Links are being made with workers who came out in support, and a national meeting of Jaegers stewards has been called.

Despite the concessions by management, the women still only have their strength to rely on.

GORDON BREWER



Greenwich steel plant occupation goes into fifth week

Militant steelworkers are now in their 5th week of occupation at the Greenwich Reinforcements plant of British Steel Corporation. They are demanding the reinstatement of 6 sacked men, and the lifting of suspension on 7 others, who include the local branch chairman of their union, ISTC [Iron and Steel Trades Confederation].

The event that sparked off the dispute was the decision of the workers to close the factory in support of the May 11th day of action against the cuts. Proposals to close hospitals and cut back services have met with fierce resistance in this area of London. The one-day strike was ratified by a mass meeting, after management had threatened disciplinary action in the event of a stoppage.

As soon as the sackings were announced, a factory meeting was held, which voted for immediate occupation.

They certainly took management by surprise, because some rather confidential files were left behind in the office. These were files which had been kept

on individual employees. From these records it was clear that the Economic League (a right-wing anti-union organisation) and the Special Branch had been involved in surveillance of the BSC workers.

They had two workers down as saboteurs, though without a shred of evidence. One of them was suspect as a member of the Socialist Workers Party (though the files had ignorantly attached him instead to the "National Socialist Front"...). The other had once been a London docker — enough to damn anyone as a contagious red.

The occupation has attracted wide support, both on account of the strike's origins in a decision to join in NUPE's cuts protest (the NUPE conference asked its Executive to send a £6,500 donation, though the Executive crossed out a nought and sent £650 instead); and because of the discoveries made by the occupying workers.

Officials of ISTC, however, have more or less openly sided with management — they both had plans for 'phasing out' the Greenwich plant anyway. Discussion of the occupation was

ruled out of order at the ISTC National Conference, and in a document put out by R.L. Evans, the union's Asst. General Secretary, the "sabotage" slander was related without comment and an exaggerated estimate was given of the numbers opposed to the occupation. And no mention of the files, the Special Branch or the Economic League.

The fact that 20 members picketed the union HQ, and subsequently went inside the building so as to talk to the officials who had hitherto ignored them, was picked out as an "occupation"!

According to Peter Suret, ISTC branch chairman and a leader of the occupation, support among the workers remains solid. They are now waiting for management to show its hand, and will not leave without being forced out.

Donations and messages of support from trade union branches, Labour Parties, YS etc are needed to keep the fight going strong, and should be sent to: **Ron Mitchell, ISTC Branch Secretary, 24 Kentmere Road, London E18.**

THE FASCISTS ventured up to Scotland last week — and got a bloody nose for their pains. National Front fuhrer John Tyndall spent the afternoon being stitched up in hospital, and his entourage was dogged by up to 150 hostile demonstrators everywhere they went.

Tyndall, along with local fascist Michael Corfield, were making an attempt to establish a Front "Scottish Office". They had fixed up to do an interview with Radio Forth in the morning, but were met at the door by 150 pickets organised by the Edinburgh Anti-Racist Committee (EARC). Later, Tyndall and Corfield had to be escorted out of the radio station by a heavy contingent of police who had to escort him to the only safe place — the police station.

Another angry demonstration met Tyndall outside a press conference he had called to advertise the activities of his fellow Nazis in Scotland. Here, police protection didn't save Tyndall, and he got a black eye and cut face. And at the hospital where he was treated, 50 people kept up a picket until he had gone.

The day was something of

TYNDALL HOSPITALISED BY EDINBURGH ANTI-FASCISTS

a triumph for Edinburgh anti-fascists. But it also showed up the complete unwillingness of left reformist leaders to confront the fascists in any way.

and instead made hostile references to the morning picket. Benn's only acknowledgement of what was going on was to make a few meaningless references to the

fight against racism being linked to his "left alternative strategy" — whose politics are thoroughly nationalistic and if anything play into the racists' hands.

While the police station was being picketed in support of four arrested demonstrators, the annual miners' gala procession came past, led by Tony Benn and Ray Buckton. They were approached and asked to support the anti-fascist actions en masse or at least to send a delegation. These leaders refused point blank.

Later, at the Gala meeting, Mick McGahey, Scottish miners' leader, refused to announce the afternoon anti-fascist demonstration,

ASIAN SHOPS FIRE-BOMBED

THE demonstrations of June 11th were a big gain in the fight against the National Front in Scotland. So far the Front have simply been physically prevented from peddling their filth in Edinburgh, and Saturday's events should give Tyndall second thought about coming back. The previous attempt by the Front to hold a meeting was disrupted by 150 demonstrators, organised at only 24 hours' notice.

But fascists haven't been inactive. The Front's press conference follows a month of racist violence in Edinburgh. Four Asian shops have been fire-bombed, and an Asian shop-

keeper in the Tolcross area was beaten up and told to "go back to Pakistan". Racist slogans have been daubed on the walls of the Sikh temple in Leith and its windows broken several times.

Edinburgh Anti-Racist Committee has organised leafletting of the areas where the attacks took place. And there will be public meetings, to take the arguments against racism into the working class areas.

There can be no excuse for complacency. A year ago people around the left would say "It could never happen here". Now it's clear that it can.

'POOR JOHN' REFUSES A PACKED MEETING

WHEN the National Front organiser arrived at the Newcastle Arms in Sutton-in-Ashfield for the NF's public meeting there on May 31st, he was told by the landlady: "You've done very well, John. The room is packed"

Poor John must have had a shock, however, when he saw that the 40-50 people who had filled the room were local anti-fascists.

When the landlady realised that the meeting taking place in the packed lounge bar was on "How to fight Fascism" she refused to serve drinks, threatened a number of the comrades with a cosh and finally assaulted the speaker as he addressed the meeting.

Meanwhile the half-dozen fascists crept away and locked themselves in the pub's private quarters to hold their meeting.

When the management of a pub is willing to open its doors to fascism, we must do everything possible to ensure that the pub is blacked by trade unionists both on the patronage side and on the delivery and service side.

FORDS STRIKE FOR 80% LAY-OFF PAY

Workers from the assembly plant at Fords Dagenham factory are on strike and demanding 80% of full pay for when Ford management decided to lay them off. The workers are insisting that Fords should stop treating them as casual labour.

To back up and spread their action the strikers have leafletted workers in the body plant, and organised pickets to prevent material going into the factory.

The strike was provoked by a lay-off on Friday June 10th. 70 men had walked out in the body plant in protest against a 3-day suspension being handed out to a worker. Management then laid off the A-shift in the body plant and the B-shift in the Paint, Trim and Assembly plant.

In line with previous policy, the assembly plant then demanded 80% for the lay-off, and quickly organised the picketing and leafletting. The demand has however still to be taken up by the laid-off shift in the body plant. If this is not done quickly, the assembly plant will be left isolated.

The fight against management's attempt to deal with the workers as casual labour has been central for a long time, and not least over the last year. In one action, workers who arrived for a night shift to be told they were laid off showed their feelings by wrecking company offices.

The way to turn the tide on Fords in this long-running battle is for all Fords workers to respond directly and give full support to the present strike.

JOHN BLOXAM

CP BARS SOWETO SPEAKER

Tsletsli Mashinini, the Soweto student leader, has been banned from speaking at the London rally to commemorate the Soweto rising of a year ago. The Communist Party-dominated NUS Executive have 'justified' their ban by insinuating that Mashinini supports aspects of the US government's South Africa policy and by claiming that he has no right to speak because he doesn't support the CP-led African National Congress.

The charge that Mashinini is some kind of US agent is an absolute fabrication reminiscent of the worst 1930s Stalinist slanders. The only reason for the ban is the CP's sectarian exclusion of critics of the ANC. Mashinini has antagonised the "Broad Left" NUS leaders by giving interviews to the far left press in Britain and elsewhere, and "Broad" in this case means nothing other than "Narrow".

Socialists attending next Saturday's demonstration should support the counter-rally organised in response to the ban, and demand an apology from the NUS Executive for their scandalous behaviour towards Mashinini.

Britain-apartheid's biggest partner

FROM PAGE 1

"Soweto" (the name is now a shorthand for a nationwide revolt) was no one-off affair. It was a massacre that went on and on at demonstration after demonstration throughout last summer. It would seem that the only card Vorster can play is violence and more violence.

To meet the threats on South Africa's border and in its black townships, Vorster depends on support from the big capitalist powers, especially Britain and the USA. They are primarily concerned to secure the vast profits South Africa's cheap black labour provides them.

Britain is South Africa's biggest trading partner; the two biggest SA banks are British registered. Military communications equipment, transport and weaponry used against the Soweto kids, together with a large part of the regime's armoury, come from British firms.

After a year of bitter struggle, the township blacks battle on. The British labour movement must act now by taking effective solidarity action.

DEMONSTRATE this Saturday, June 18th, to commemorate the dead of Soweto and to celebrate the continuing, unquenchable revolt. And support that struggle by blacking all contact with the South African regime.

London Hospital starts NUPE ban

Ancillary workers at the London Hospital in Whitechapel are enforcing an overtime ban over a national claim for back overtime pay. Patients are being sent home, linen has not been changed for two weeks, and now management say that they will have to burn the dirty linen and buy new sheets.

Hospital ancillary workers put in around 10 hours of compulsory overtime per week. But their

holiday pay was always made up on the basis of the flat week's pay. Since 1964, NUPE have been claiming holidays at the rate for a 50-hour week.

18 months ago management agreed the claim, but would only concede the back holiday pay at the 1964 rates. Since then they have refused to negotiate on this claim.

Two weeks ago NUPE instituted an overtime ban, claiming the back pay at 1977 rates. Health Minister Ennals is backing the Health Authorities' refusal to pay out, saying the NUPE demand breaks the Social Contract pay limits.

The London Hospital is the first to take action on the claim. If it is followed nationally, the Health Authorities will be facing a serious crisis.

Chloride strikers still in control

THE 4,000 workers occupying the plants and depots of the Chloride Battery Company are still in control.

The fight to defend trade union organisation and negotiating rights over jobs and work speeds, and against the breaking of an agreement on quotas of imported batteries, started five weeks ago.

Most of the unions involved, (except the AUEW and EEUPTU) have made the workers' action official. And despite a widespread press blackout, support is being widely organised within the trade union movement.

Liverpool and Manchester dockers are blacking Chloride products, especially batteries. And successful picketing by the Clifton Chloride workers halted another Chloride owned company, Lorivals of Bolton, from distributing finished battery containers.

In response, management have suspended a large number of workers, and may suspend them all before the end of this week.

But the blacking is going to be repeated with other Chloride companies as part of a campaign to 'strangle' Chloride, and force management to back down.

Workers in occupation have no illusions that the dispute will be a short one. Messages of support and financial help will be needed, and should be sent c/o S. Mackinder, 59 Buckingham Road, Clifton, Manchester.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY