

May 9th support could be crucial for Speke

# workers' ACTION

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10p

TUESDAY May 9th is the date set by Liverpool Trades Council for a demonstration and lobby of Parliament in protest against the proposed closure of Leyland's Speke no.2 plant and the other sackings on Merseyside.

It could be crucial for the success or failure of the Speke workers' decision to fight the closure. In recent weeks they have had two blows with the AUEW and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions refusing to join the TGWU in backing their decision. On May 2nd they were due to

face a major crisis with management proposing to close one section of the plant, as the first stage of the total shutdown. It was postponed; but management are still working on a schedule of complete closure by May 26th.

The Speke workers' plans on how to fight back are still vague and undefined. A big mobilisation on May 9th can give them the confidence to go for:

- Occupation of the plant;
- An appeal for combine-wide solidarity to impose worker-controlled work schedules across Leyland, with hours cut rather than jobs, and with no loss of pay.

# RED SUNDAY

80,000 at anti fascist carnival

# Black Monday

FASCISTS MARCH UNOPPOSED IN LONDON

THE BIGGEST anti-fascist demonstration for 40 years. Eighty thousand people marching through the East End of London, the strongest base the National Front possess.

And following that, a huge carnival of music and politics dedicated to the fight against racism and fascism. For the miserable handful of fascists huddled around the Blade Bone pub in Bethnal Green, watching impotently for two hours as the huge march rolled past, Sunday was not a good day.

The march and the carnival proved that the Anti-Nazi League can mobilise tens of thousands of youth, drawn now for the first time into political activity.

Yet on the same weekend the police and the fascists were each allowed to score a victory.

The day before the carnival police broke up a May Day march in Leeds, arresting two of its leaders, because it broke a ban on marches imposed after the NF announced a demonstration. Yet the ANL has made no protest about the suppression of the Leeds workers' march.

The reason is clear to see. Hardly a month ago the ANL hailed a similar banning order imposed by police in London as a 'victory'. So they could hardly object to it in Leeds!

They want to straddle the argument between mobilising the labour movement to drive the fascists off the streets, and relying on the State to deal with the fascists. The day after the carnival

the National Front held a 1,000-strong march from Portland Place in the centre of London, through Oxford Street and into Hoxton in the East End. A contingent from the French Front National took part.

The main slogan of the demonstration was 'The National Front is a fascist front. Join the National Front'.

This outrage went completely unopposed, and that was as much a record as the ANL festival the day before. Not since the '30s have fascists been allowed to march in the centre of London without meeting resistance.

Obviously the Front took some care to keep their march plans secret. But, astonishingly, the ANL knew that the Front march was to take place two days before it happened, and they chose to keep the information to themselves. As they addressed Sunday's massive crowd of anti-fascists, one announcement would have wiped the Front march out of existence. But they allowed it to go ahead.

Why? Because they were afraid to blow apart the shaky alliance which has put the ANL together. Unleashing even a section of their following against the Nazis they so eloquently denounce would have sent the bishops, the celebrities and many MPs scurrying. And the government might have imposed the Public Order Act again — banning future ANL rallies.

Instead — and this is the responsibility of the Socialist Workers Party, who in

words recognise the need to sweep the fascists off the streets — they chose the path of maximum show unity on a liberal basis, even where it conflicts with the needs of anti-fascist and anti-racist action.

This is no way to build an anti-fascist movement. This shaky alliance will soon shatter on the rocks of reality. Nothing can substitute for a fight for a genuine united front against racism and fascism. That does not mean pretending to be as 'reasonable' as the reformists, spouting their position in public while privately explaining that you don't really agree with it. It means always arguing against them and for revolutionary ideas, at the same time proposing joint action where possible to achieve aims which are in the interests of the working class.

80,000 on the streets against the Nazis is a tremendous step forward. 80,000 on the streets, but fed with the idea that show unity with liberal celebrities, without clear aims or decisive action, is the way to stop the fascists: that's a recipe for misleading, demoralising, and dissipating the thousands of young workers who are now prepared to fight the Front.

A working-class based united front campaign against fascism, with a democratic structure and a clear determination to drive the fascists off the streets and end all immigration controls, must be built. The ANL will be judged by its contribution to doing that.





ON JULY 31st Phase 3 comes to an end. Already the TUC are scurrying to Downing Street to sort out with the Labour Government another package which will successfully harness the working class to another year of wage curbs.

The reports in the press are all depressingly familiar. The TUC have a new vocabulary now when they talk about the role of the trade unions.

A 'Times' report said that Len Murray stonewalled when questioned at a press conference on the content of the talks, but "left observers in no doubt that the unions' new vogue concept of 'voluntary collective bargaining' means a continuing measure of restraint... The word 'respons-

# MURRAY URGES UNITY OF THE WRONG KIND

ible' employed as an elaboration of TUC policy on voluntary collective bargaining, Mr Murray argued, was an 'appropriate' term to use because unionists were now acting responsibly by taking into account long-term interests, in-

cluding considerations such as prices and jobs".

After listening to words like this, workers must be tempted to ask, whose interests? The 'social contract', forerunner of phases 1, 2, and 3, was indeed supposed to be a contract. Workers would

curb their pay demands, and prices and unemployment would be kept down and social welfare improved.

Over the years, of course, the exact opposite has happened. Workers have taken a massive cut in their living standards; but prices and unemployment have soared, and social services have crumbled. And something else has taken a giant leap forward, too — profits.

Just what percentage 'norm' the working class will have to swallow this time isn't clear. However, Mr Murray did have a few words to say about the 12 month period.

## Limit

He felt quite confident that the 10% limit on pay increases had won a wide response among trade unionists, and negotiators had accepted the value of keeping a 12-month gap between large settlements. "That practice is likely to persist, and it would be valuable to persist", he said.

The confident statement by Murray conflicts with the fact that unions' annual conference agendas are full of motions demanding an end to wage restraint and a return to free collective bargaining. It is just one reflection of the growing resentment and frustration of millions of rank and file trade unionists over what they know to be a con-trick at their expense.

Both the Scottish and the Welsh TUCs have endorsed this call.

Phase 3 has not been, and Phase 4 will not be; legally binding. The Government does not dare go that far. Yet the subservience of the TUC to the Labour government in the name of 'unity' has meant that a **united fightback** to defend the interests of the working class has been severely hampered.

Each section which has attempted to break through the 10% limit has been isolated and fobbed off by their leadership with promises of more to come tomorrow.

The only exception has been the armed forces! Without properly staffed armed forces, who would be able to organise scabbing if the workers went on strike?

## Kick out

Working people cannot afford another year of wage restraint. For us it means not only a further cut in wages, but more overtime, longer dole queues, and cuts in public services.

**The Stage 4 wheeling-and-dealing must be rejected. We need to call to order or kick out leaders who make militant speeches to our faces and then organise sell-outs behind our backs.**

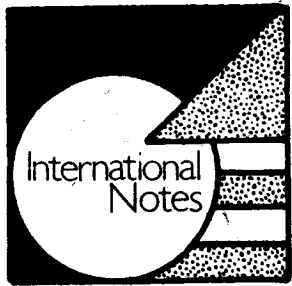
**We need a united fight-back for wage increases which at least make up the losses since 1974-75, plus clauses to guarantee automatic wage increases in line with the cost of living.**

CLARE RUSSELL



TUC: will it be public applause for free collective bargaining, and behind-closed-doors applause for wage controls?

# No wash, no slop! Jail strike rattles the government



BELFAST POLICE have raided the offices in the Lower Falls Road of the Provisional Sinn Fein. Fifteen people have been arrested and a lot of equipment and material removed. At the same time all police leave has been cancelled.

The reason for these measures is easy to see: April 30th was designated as a day of protest by Republicans, against the removal of Political Status from their imprisoned comrades, and the police were trying to stop the demonstrations that were planned.

The day before the raid the Northern Ireland Office produced a statement attacking 'propagandists' for organising these protests and raged: "Those who murder, burn and wreck will get caught. Anyone who is convicted of a crime carried out after March 1st 1976 will not get special category status. This is and remains the Government's firm policy".

The protests within the prison hell-holes have obviously rattled the Government. For six weeks now, three hundred Republican prisoners have been refusing to

wash and slop out. This is the latest tactic to add bite to the already 19-month long 'blanket protest' in support of Political Status.

"The Blanket protest started", says a special supplement to the Sinn Fein paper - Republican News, 2000 copies of which have been confiscated by police, "in September 1976 when the first Republican Prisoners of War to be sentenced after March 1st were refused political status..."

"They would not wear prison garb or do prison work, for they were PoWs not criminals. So they were stripped naked and put into an empty cell where they have remained in solitary confinement. They were clad only in a blanket. They ate their meals in their cell, they washed and went to the toilet in their cell, they never left their cell..."

It is not surprising that this situation came to the attention of Parliament not through the protests of Labour MPs but through the protests of the arch-bigot Ian Paisley and other Loyalists.

They were indifferent, of course, to the condition of the Republicans, but they were alarmed at the danger of disease to the Loyalist prisoners. They were also angered by the fact that some Loyalist prisoners were on strike against being given extra cleaning and slop-out duties because of the Republicans' protest. Some of the strikers have been punished.

They were demanding complete segregation of Republican and Loyalist prisoners.

Our demand, however, must be the same as the prisoners': **Political Status Now for Republican Prisoners of War!**

PAUL ADAMS

# ANTI-LEFT DRAGNET USED AGAINST GERMAN TROTSKYISTS

THE PROVINCIAL court in Frankfurt-am-Main has summonsed the editor of the German Trotskyist paper 'Spartacus' for publishing the so-called 'Buback Appeal'.

The 'appeal' was a leaflet distributed in Göttingen soon after the assassination of Buback, the Chief Public Prosecutor, by the Red Army Fraction. Its author describes his feelings on hearing of Buback's death as follows:

"In a nutshell, I could not, would not (and will not) conceal a secret joy. I often heard this character whipping up feelings, I know the role he played persecuting, criminalising and torturing left wingers."

"Anyone who in the past few days took a good look at his picture will have recognised in his face the

chief features of the Rechtsstaat ['constitutional state', the usual self-description of the West German state]."

This appeal was reprinted as an act of solidarity by 'Spartacus' in a special issue last June. Now it looks as if 'Spartacus' could be burdened by a big fine as a result of it.

Publishing that appeal was part of 'Spartacus's consistently principled stand against the anti-terrorist hysteria that is being used as a general anti-left dragnet in West Germany.

Contributions towards the fund that 'Spartacus' have set up should be sent to: Buback Nachruf, Konto 1106 49-603 PschA, Frankfurt-am-Main 1 Stibor.

# COVENTRY TRADES COUNCIL COLD — SHOULDERS LABOUR RACISTS

THE COVENTRY labour movement is being forced to take sides on the immigration controls issue after the Trades Council's cancellation of its invitation to Bill Wilson MP to speak at its May Day rally.

The decision was taken because Wilson signed the Commons Select Committee Report on Immigration, with its call for Powellite controls and its suggestion of identity cards for immigrants once here.

Geoffrey Robinson MP and George Park MP refused to speak at the rally, and City Labour Party chairman Cllr John Hughes also boycotted it. Audrey Wise, the city's other Labour MP, was otherwise engaged.

But the Trades Council's principled stand against racism has received support from the local Indian Workers' Association (GB) and from Coventry and Leamington Campaigns against Racism and Fascism. There were about 300 people at the rally.

The main opposition on the Trades Council to cancelling Wilson's invitation came from the Communist Party. We must keep the movement 'broad', they said — as if offending MPs were a worse blow to unity than the open insult to black workers offered by having a supporter of extreme racist immigration controls speaking on a labour movement platform! They also pointed to Wilson's 'excellent record' as a left wing MP (after all, he does open the local Morning Star bazaar).

After the CP was defeated on the Trades Council, the Coventry Inter-Racial Solidarity Committee, which they control, had Wilson to speak and gave it good coverage in the local press.

Militant supporter Dave Nellist, who is the secretary of the LPYS in Wilson's constituency, spoke at the May Day rally — but opposed the ban on Wilson as 'undemocratic' and isolating the Trades Council from the labour movement.

## BATTLES

But over recent years the Trades Council has already fought and won two battles against racism. The colour bar at Barras Green Working Men's Club was defeated, and a completely new club committee elected. And another colour bar was broken in the hotels run by notorious racist and anti-trade unionist Fred Kilpatrick.

On April 28th the Trades Council followed up its fight against Kilpatrick by organising a picket at his Allesley Hotel, where the TGWU district committee were holding their annual dinner-dance. Eddie McCluskey, TGWU district committee chairperson, TGWU convenor at Chrysler, and a CP member, crossed the picket line.

The Trades Council also considered a proposal to ask Wilson's constituency Labour Party to press for his removal, but decided to postpone a decision on it until its May meeting.

DAVE SPENCER

# ANOTHER VICTIM FOR THE MASTER RACE

A £500 reward has been put up by Newham's immigrant community leaders for information leading to the arrest of Kenneth Singh's killer.

The offer was made at a meeting of West Indian and Asian communities in Canning Town. The secretary of Newham Community Relations Council, Eddie Warner, said: "There is a strong feeling in the community that this may have been a racist attack. It certainly had racial undertones... The area where the body was found had racial slogans daubed on the fences".

The brutal and senseless slaying of this 10-year old boy, on April 20th in East London, must be laid directly at the door of the fascist NF, Kingsley Read, Enoch Powell, Judge McKinnon, Margaret Thatcher, and racist MPs.

The immigrant-bashing of the Tories and the NF has been given respectable cover by the five Labour MPs who willingly put their

names to the racist Select Committee report on Immigration. These MPs have given credence to racist ideas which have found their true expression in a little boy being beaten to death.

The sadistic slaying of Kenneth Singh is the logical expression of racist jokes and support for immigration controls. And Judge McKinnon gave a mandate to racists by wishing fascist Kingsley Read 'the best of luck' after he had referred to the racist slaughter of a young Asian as "one down, a million to go".

These intruders from the Middle Ages, 'interlopers from a medieval grave-yard', such as the fascist NF and their ilk, lie prostrate before the bosses, the real enemy, and declare war against black people as the real villains of the piece, 'the ones who take all the best jobs', and 'own the best houses'. All the evils of capitalist society, unemployment, housing shortages, etc, are laid at the door of the one who hasn't got two pennies in

his pocket to rub together, the black worker!

Man now travels to the moon and into outer space; everyone has electricity (unless it has been turned off because you can't afford it); and this civilised society can still produce such beliefs in the powers of darkness, it can still vomit forth undigested barbarism, ignorance, and savagery. Such is the NF, such is racialism!

As members of the working class we have far more in common with the black family next door than we could ever have with the Margaret Thatchers and Keith Josephs of this world. These people are helping the fascists to peddle their bag of poverty filled with ignorance, barbarity, despair and demoralisation.

And racist attacks such as the slaying of a little boy, with a packet of polo mints and a jelly snake in his pocket, become the supreme evidence of racial superiority.

FRAN BRODIE



350 attend Newham ANL meeting

NEWHAM Anti-Nazi League attracted 350 people to Stratford Town Hall last Thursday. It was a 'big event' with Jonathan Dimbleby, Johnny Speight, and Tariq Ali among the speakers.

Jonathan Dimbleby told us about the BBC employee who, because the BBC is supposed to be politically neutral, got carpeted for being seen in public with a placard saying "decent people deplore racialism". But we had to wait for Tariq Ali before we got any political analysis of the rise of fascism.

Paul Holborrow, secretary of the ANL, mentioned the Select Committee Report on Immigration. He found its Powellite conclusions "astonishing". But, as a sign of the ANL's lack of clarity and quest for bourgeois respectability, Syd Bidwell, Labour MP and signatory to the Select Committee report, is still a prominent sponsor of the League!

Andy Bevan, Labour Party Youth Organiser, made a crucial point from the floor when he called for the ANL to adopt a democratic structure bringing in organisations of the labour movement. He was one of only a few speakers called from the floor, and many people still had their hands up when the meeting was smartly brought to an end after just over an hour.

I.H.

## 'Sus' - a law for racist coppers

A REPORT just published [★] shows how each year in Britain, thousands of people - mostly young blacks - are tried in the magistrates' courts on the charge of being a 'suspected person'.

"The Vagrancy Act of 1824 is one of a series of statutes dating back to the 15th century designed to control, and where necessary, penalise, the country's 'wandering poor'.

"By the 1820s these laws had become excessively complex. They were unpopular because the system put the cost of returned vagrants onto their supposed place of settlement, and their unpopularity was aggravated by the number of ex-servicemen who had returned as vagrants from the Napoleonic wars.

"In 1824 all the old laws were repealed, and a new statute passed which simplified and codified the existing regulations and gave more responsibility to the magistrates for the punishment and imprisonment of vagrants".

This Act covered a range of activities seen as threatening the morals, stability, and property of bourgeois society: fortune telling, sleeping rough, exposing wounds to beg, collecting alms under false pretences, indecent exposure, taking part in an indecent exhibition, carrying an offensive weapon with intent to commit an arrestable offence, being found on enclosed premises for an unlawful purpose - and being a suspected person.

This last clause is the 'SUS' law.

As Clare Demuth, author of the report, says, "Outside the black community few people other than those who are concerned with the law professionally or have come up against it as victims have ever heard of 'sus' or know that 'being a suspected person loitering with intent to commit a felonious offence' is in itself a criminal offence".

Section 4 of the Act includes as offenders "every suspected person or reputed thief, frequenting any river, canal or navigable stream, dock, or basin, or any quay, wharf or warehouse near or adjoining thereto, or any street, highway, or avenue leading thereto, or any street (or any highway or any place adjacent to a street or highway) with intent to commit [an arrestable offence]".

To haul you in under this law, the police need only show that you are 'suspected' and 'intend' to commit

an offence - not that you have actually done anything!

"In law, being a suspected person is not just a matter of hanging around street corners looking suspicious.

"For a charge to be brought the defendant must actually have been observed acting in a suspicious manner on at least two separate and distinct occasions. The first establishes the person as a suspected person, the second constitutes the offence. Although separate, the two incidents need be only minutes apart".

Suspected persons are defined by the Act as "rogues and vagabonds" and may be liable to three months imprisonment with hard labour.

After two such convictions they fall into the category of "incorrigible rogues" and may be sent to the Crown Court for a sentence of one year in prison.

This last clause is rarely invoked, but a lot of the rest of the Act is still enforced daily in the major cities.

'Sus' cases can only be tried in magistrates' courts. There is no right to choose trial by jury, although there is a right of appeal to a judge at the Crown Court.

In 1976, 2,112 people were arrested in the Metropolitan Police area on 'sus' charges. 887 of them were black. In contrast, only 12% of all arrests in the Met. area were of black people, and 11% of arrests for



An average of two or three black people are arrested every day in London on vague charges of being 'suspected persons'. At the Nottingham Hill Carnival last year this running war by the police on the black community erupted into the open - with black youth lashing out in response.



theft and handling (1975 figures). Clearly the 'sus' law are a channel for police racism.

The conviction rate is very high "Of 144 people charged with being suspected persons whose cases were decided at six London magistrates' courts in the last four months of 1977, 129 were proven and 15 had their cases dismissed. This gives a conviction rate on not-guilty pleas of 90%..."

As the mother of one 12-year old boy convicted of 'sus' said: "It would have been better if we could have elected to go to jury trial. There would have been some benefit of doubt. What do you expect the magistrate to do? Tell four Flying Squad officers they're lying?"

It is mainly in London, Liverpool, and Manchester that the police use 'sus' heavily. The Metropolitan Police district accounted for 55% of the 'sus' cases proceeded against in 1976.

The report discusses the 'sus' law within the assumption that ultimately the State is quite impartial. Although certain laws may be unjust or the police may operate certain laws unjustly, the situation can be redressed by reforming the laws or the methods of the police.

But for the 'sus' laws it is clear that they are not used as criminal laws in the usual sense, but as a method of social control, together with blanket arrests, observation and falsification of evidence.

Such things exist because of the racist nature of the state, not because of slackness in revising outdated laws. Along with the campaign to scrap the 'sus' laws, a fight needs to be waged against the whole system of capitalism and racism.

NEIL COBBETT



★ 'Sus': a report on the 1824 Vagrancy Act, by Clare Demuth. £1 from the Runnymede Trust, 62 Chandos Place, London WC2.

A campaign against the 'sus' laws is being coordinated by the West Indian and African Community Association, c/o 206 Evelyn Street, London SE8.



Cardiff anti-fascists picket Front meeting

AROUND 150 people turned out for an anti-NF picket at Birch Grove pub, in Cardiff, on Wednesday 26th April.

The fascist meeting - organised as part of their local election campaign - had originally been billed to take place in a local school. No NF members turned up at the pub, though it was reported that three drove up in a car and left quickly on seeing the picket.

Local anti-fascists are approaching the T&GWU at Brains Brewery to ask them to boycott the pub if the NF continues to book it for meetings.

In the by-election itself, the Front polled 91 votes, Labour over 2000. However, the Labour campaign was an abysmal affair.

David Sellman, the candidate, campaigned on the Government's record, and refused to campaign against racism and the fascists. In fact the ward party threatened to take action against the LPYS if they took action on racism and fascism in the election campaign.

But it was the militant anti-fascists, and not the "pretend it doesn't exist" attitude of the local Labour bureaucrats that kept the Front in a derisory position.

STEVE LEHARNE



# The people rise against the Shah

An activist in the Campaign Against Repression in Iran talked to **WORKERS ACTION** about his views of the recent upsurge there

■ ■ There's been a very big upsurge in Iran in the past few months. Can you say what led up to it?

□ □ It would be best if we look first at the historical background, going back to 1953 when the present regime was put in power by a CIA-organised coup. That coup was a major historical defeat for the Iranian working class and the working masses as a whole. Before that coup there was a period of several years, from the end of the World War, of relative democratic freedom. There were trade unions organised, political parties organised, there was a mass anti-imperialist movement which focused mainly on the demand to nationalise oil.

The oil was nationalised in 1951. But this movement was crushed when Dr. Mossadeq's government was overthrown by military coup in August 1953. After the coup the political parties, which had considerable strength — for example the Tudeh Party (Communist Party) was very well organised, with around 100,000 members — were repressed. The Tudeh Party was completely smashed. The trade union movement, which again was very powerful, particularly in sectors like the oil industry, was also completely smashed.

The political parties were taken completely by surprise. They were not prepared for it in any way at all. So the regime was able to establish itself more and more, even though in the years immediately after the coup it was not yet as powerful or well entrenched as it later became.

To this day the Iranian working class has still not recovered from this defeat.

There was a brief re-emergence of opposition in the early 1960s, when the regime was economically and politically in a crisis. But this movement did not have a clear leadership; and with an upturn in the world economy the regime began its recent partial industrialisation, its oil revenues were constantly going up, and it was able to overcome this opposition.

Now, since the beginning of the seventies there has been again a gradual re-emergence of opposition and radicalisation, particularly of the younger generation who had not experienced the defeat of 1953.

This showed itself in the development of urban guerilla struggle in the early '70s; in the student mobilisations which took place; and also there was again a re-emergence of the workers' movement — there were strikes here and there, although they weren't coordinated. So there was a gradual upturn in opposition to the regime.

But in the last year I think we have begun to see mass opposition to the regime and the whole atmosphere is completely changing.

■ ■ To what extent was the new opposition a response to rapid industrialisation and social changes?

□ □ It's difficult to say. The social structure of the country has undergone a great deal of change in these 25 years. The working class has grown considerably. And also there are far larger numbers of big units. These still form a fairly small fraction of the country's total industry. But obviously workers in that situation are going to have a totally different outlook from those that are scattered in small workshops. But also very important was the age of these workers — young



The Shah's party buildings were attacked in every city.

ed by earlier defeats. And the student movement was important

■ ■ Was this influenced by the student radicalisation in Europe?

□ □ Not so much Europe, because they would tend to identify far more with the Vietnamese struggle or with the Palestinian struggle, or with Cuba.

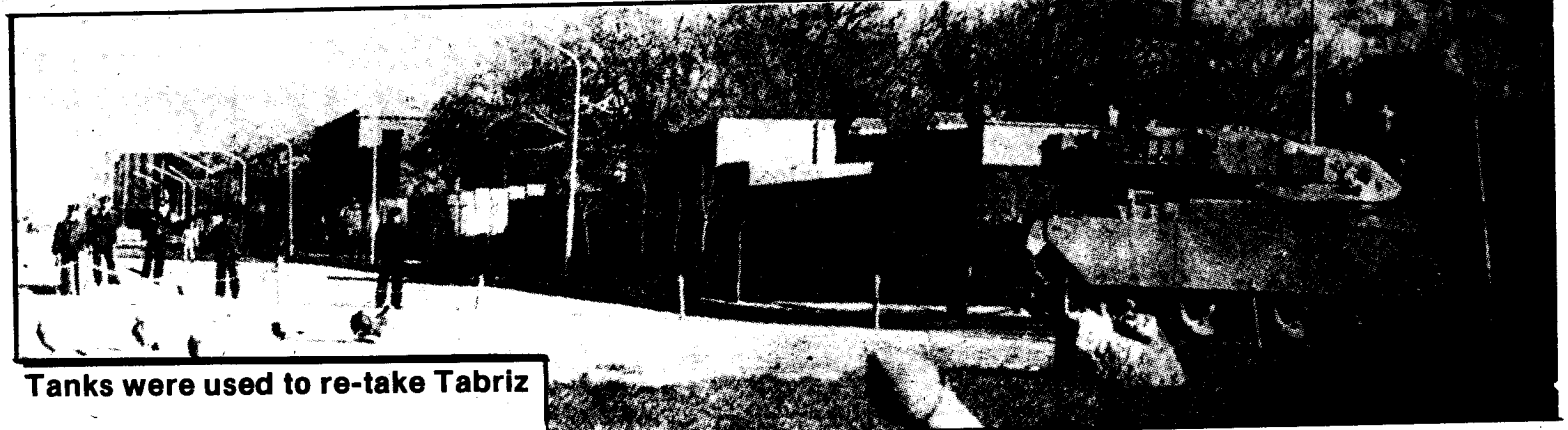
■ ■ What part did the urban guerillas play at that time?

□ □ They were mainly young people, students, intellectuals. They believed there was no way to overthrow the regime except armed struggle. They were very

think if they did at all, it was a minor effect. The workers' struggles at that time were mainly about simple economic demands: higher wages, bonuses and so on.

There were in some cases political demands too — over, for instance, the question of expelling SAVAK (secret police) agents from the factory; against puppet workers' representatives who had been put there by the regime. But they were mainly wage struggles.

■ ■ How were these struggles organised? Were they spontan-



Tanks were used to re-take Tabriz

influenced by the total demoralisation of the earlier generation, the depressing feeling of the sixties. They believed that by taking up arms they could break this silence and bring the masses into struggle.

They carried out actions against individual people who were associated with the regime — chiefs of police, and that type of people. They also did propaganda work in factories to some extent. They obviously had a lot of influence among the students and the youth, and on (Iranian) students abroad. But it's very difficult to say whether they had any influence on workers' struggles. I

ous, or is there a structure of underground unions, such as the Workers' Commissions in Spain?

□ □ It's very fragmented, and to some extent spontaneous. But some of the strikes which have been organised can't be totally spontaneous.

When suddenly one day several thousand workers in one factory occupy that factory, there must be some kind of organisation behind it. But you can't compare it with the Workers' Commissions in Spain. That may arise later.

■ ■ Have there in fact been many factory occupations?



□ □ Oh yes, quite a lot. Because of the situation, these struggles take a very militant form. Workers have learnt that if they strike, they have to occupy the factory as a safety measure. Otherwise two things will happen — many will just be picked up by the police, and if they can the bosses will bring in new workers and sack them all. You have to attack in order to defend yourself. And these occupations were very militant: they would imprison the managers, things like that.

The outcome of these strikes varied a lot. There were cases where the police or the army would come in and attack the workers; in some cases workers were killed and usually if that happens, many arrested. But there have been cases, some very recently, where workers have won their demands: because the authorities have been taken by surprise, because they were worried that the struggle would spread, due to the general discontent. Particularly where a factory is situated in a working class area. Also, because a lot of industry is new, there is a scarcity of skilled workers, and these workers have a strong bargaining position. Actually, there have been a surprising number of concessions won.

There must have been good underground organisation.

■ ■ Is this still going on?

□ □ Yes. There have been a number of strikes in recent months where workers have won up to 30% wage increases,



government.

■ ■ This Writers' Association — is that an independent body or an official, stooge set-up?

□ □ No, it's not that, it was a banned organisation, though it was legal to begin with. In 1969 it was forced underground and it's still not legally recognised.

Their main demand in these letters to the Government was in fact for legal recognition. And of course they complained about censorship.

At that time the regime was trying to put over a more liberal image internationally, because they didn't want to embarrass Jimmy Carter in the middle of his Human Rights 'Crusade'. So it didn't take any action against the Writers' Association. Other groups were formed, for example a group of judges and lawyers — you'd think, the most reactionary people about. But they wrote letters complaining about the fact that SAVAK interferes in legal proceedings.

despite the regime's attempts to impose wage controls. Given the fact that Iran is entering an economic recession, I think it's likely that these struggles will increase.

■ ■ What was the cause of the big upsurge since the New Year?

□ □ Well, last summer opposition to the regime came out in the open for the first time. For example the Writers' Association of Iran, which is an organisation formed in the Sixties when censorship was tightened, started circulating Open Letters signed by well known writers, putting certain demands on the

■ ■ You mean in civil cases?

□ □ Yes, that's right.

A couple of years back, the regime would have thrown these people into jail. This time it did not take any action, and the thing gradually escalated. In the Autumn the Writers' Association were allowed to hold public meetings. And these attracted enormous numbers of people. There were ten thousand people at one of these meetings — just to hear a poet recite his censored poetry, and speeches against censorship.

The meetings spread around the Universities. There was one

# up h



## Fighting on the streets in Tabriz

uch meeting, in Teheran, there were about 7,000 people. In one all five thousand, and the rest were left outside.

The police attacked these people — this was while the Shah was visiting Washington. The students immediately occupied that hall — a gymnasium — that they were in. And the next day they organised a march of ten thousand students into the centre of the city. It was attacked by the police — we have heard that there were sixteen people killed. A lot of others were arrested, or injured.

After that there was a whole series of student strikes. Then the universities were all closed down.

And then in January there was a demonstration in Qom, which is a religious centre near Teheran. And I think this time the regime reckoned "we'd better teach these people a lesson". And there was a really organised massacre. They surrounded the whole place and they just machine-gunned the demonstrators.

Again nobody knows how many people were killed, because the bodies were just collected and dumped in a salt lake nearby. It has been said that several hundred people were killed that day.

After that, there has been a continuous cycle of demonstrations in opposition every 40 days, since that's the traditional mourning period. And 40 days after Qom, there were demonstrations in a number of cities in protest against the Qom massacre, particularly in Tabriz where the biggest demonstration took place.

From the reports we have, the demonstration in Tabriz was really massive: several hundred thousand people. Villagers even came from outside the city.

### ■ ■ What sort of a place is Tabriz?

□ □ It's one of the four largest cities in the country. It's a big industrial centre. Also, Tabriz has a long tradition of struggle. It goes way back to the Constitutional Revolution at the beginning of this century. In fact it was the centre of the Constitutional Revolution. It's also the capital of Azerbaijan, one of the national minorities' regions.

What happened is that effectively the police were forced out of the city. The city was taken over completely by the people, who held it for two or three hours, until they sent the army in with tanks. Even then, there were a couple of days of fighting, with

### ■ ■ What work has CARI been doing in this country?

□ □ CARI was formed about two years ago with the aim of organising a broad-based campaign around the particular question of political prisoners — to try to reach the labour movement, and the student movement, in this country. The present upsurge in Iran adds importance to this work. It's very important that the movement in Iran should get support from outside, particularly from the labour movement in this country.

At the present time the regime in Iran is very sensitive to criticism from outside. It's trying to maintain the image that it's there to stay, whereas the imperialist bourgeoisie are rapidly losing confidence in it. The Shah is very eager to win back their confidence: he claims every day that he is liberalising, that the reason for these 'disturbances' is the increased freedom. It's vital to help those people who are struggling, and expose these lies of the Shah.

What we've been doing mainly is to inform people of what is happening. Most people in this country don't even know where Iran is, never mind what's been happening there.

We publish pamphlets, and our bulletin, and speak at many meetings — in colleges, and also we have had many invitations recently to speak to trades councils, trade unions, Labour Parties and so on. We've managed to generate a good deal of interest and support.

### ■ ■ What would you ask of people in the labour movement?

□ □ There are some very simple things that people can do, like get a speaker invited from CARI to your trades council, or union branch. Get a resolution passed — that's a way to involve people and inform them. Sell our literature. Organise a meeting on Iran.

Membership of an opposition party carries a penalty of life imprisonment. Little wonder there are up to 100,000 political prisoners in Iran. Torture, political executions, severe censorship, suppression of all parties but the Shah's ruling party, and of all trade unions, mark the bloody CIA-backed regime that has ruled Iran for 25 years. The CAMPAIGN AGAINST REPRESSION IN IRAN was formed to make the truth known and raise support in Britain for Iran's oppositionists.

# TELL WORKERS WHAT IS HAPPENING IN IRAN

Then we have to move towards more direct action in the labour movement.

There are many firms in this country involved in Iran. For instance the biggest car assembly plant in Iran gets its parts from Chrysler. British Leyland — there are three concerns in Iran; there's a truck assembly factory, there's a diesel engine plant, in Tabriz I believe, and also a Land Rover plant.

Then there are firms which build arms for Iran — Yarrow Shipyards, BAC are building missiles, there's Vickers with their Chieftain Tanks. And lots of smaller firms.

## Secret

### ■ ■ What about the demand for trade union rights for Iranian employees of a company here?

□ □ Yes, that should be done — and the more general demand for improved conditions and pay for Iranian fellow workers. There are other possible actions, for example Iranian firms with

connections here often get their training done in Britain. This can be blacked — especially where it has a military or police connection.

Another thing which can put a lot of pressure is for shop stewards committees to simply demand to know what is happening in Iranian factories of a company. A lot of this information is kept very secret — even things like wage rates, what struggles there have been. They can demand that workers' representatives, trade union representatives, from factories in this country get a chance to visit the factory in Iran. At the same time they must be very careful, because they put on a very special show for these people — and there have been cases like that. Shop stewards from Chrysler in Coventry went and were completely fooled, and came back and gave a very favourable report. So they have to be very careful.

But if shop stewards committees do send people over, it would be a major event for those workers. Everybody would know about it — if for no other reason, because the management would suddenly start to clean up the

place and get anyone they didn't trust out of the way. And they would feel that this is something that is happening, this is for us. Even the whitewash jobs would backfire, especially in the present atmosphere.

### ■ ■ What about blacking arms production or supply?

□ □ This is very important, but also very difficult. I would be reluctant at the moment to call for a blacking of manufacturing, or movement, of arms for Iran. Because you can only do that on the basis of a lot of knowledge about the situation. It would be a paper demand at the moment. For example, I have met some workers from Yarrows who say that they are very annoyed, that there's a lot of feeling, in the shipyard about the fact that they are building ships for Iran. Particularly with their record on Chile, I'm sure this is a real feeling. But they say "look, there's so much unemployment on Clydeside, what can we do?"

## Owen

So it's a question of organising a more national campaign against the sale of arms, to put pressure on the Labour government on this question. Because this government, and Dr. Owen in particular, has got the most appalling policy on Iran. Owen talks about human rights and so on, but when it comes to Iran he shuts his mouth completely.

I think there is already a lot of feeling within the rank and file of the Labour Party about this issue, and a fight can be organised in there to pressure the government to stop the sale of arms to Iran, to stop military training for the Iranian army, and things like this.

Also, the TUC and national unions should be pressured to adopt a position on Iran. If it did that, if it organised its own investigation into the situation of workers in Iran, then that will be a big factor in getting workers in this country to feel involved.



A CARI picket in London

barricades built against the tanks and so on, until they eventually managed to regain control.

This was in the middle of February.

And then after that, at the end of March, there were protests about the events in Tabriz! And there were demonstrations, and various anti-regime activities, in almost every corner of the country. It was just incredible, some of the places, we'd never even heard of, never mind having any record of previous political activity. Small, very small towns, almost villages, all over the country — people just spontaneously, it seems, just went out and for example burnt down the headquarters of the Shah's National Resurgence Party, or government buildings; banks were another target — they're seen as a symbol of the regime.

All over the place. And again there were quite a lot of people killed in these events.

But what happened shows that the whole movement has spread throughout the country, in a very spontaneous way.

### ■ ■ There was also the big prison hunger strike at this time.

□ □ This was very significant indeed. It went on for over a month and there were more than 500, possibly as many as a thousand, prisoners involved. It was mainly at one prison, though I'm not absolutely certain. I've heard reports that there were also hunger strikes at the same time at one or two other prisons. But



Iran's dictator, the Shah

it was mainly in the biggest prison in Teheran, Qasr Prison. They carried on for a month despite all kinds of threats: prisoners on hunger strike were beaten up; the families started to demonstrate outside — they were beaten up and a lot of them were arrested.

And eventually it seems that they won their demands. And you

can see from some of their demands the appalling conditions in the prisons. One of the demands they won was the right to have needle and thread to mend their clothes!

This was another important event. There were a number of demonstrations in the universities in connection with that. And of course the hunger strike itself has to be seen as an integral part of the recent events, not just something that happened to start at the same time.

### ■ ■ What's happening now?

□ □ These events have really changed the whole atmosphere in Iran. Before, the regime could pretend that it was there to stay, that it was strong and stable. Now there's a question mark over it. Even for the regime itself and for its imperialist backers. You see that quite clearly in the press, in papers like the *Economist*, or the *Financial Times*.

The most important thing that has happened — the turning point, if you like — is that people are no longer afraid. The only real weapon the regime had was fear: to keep people afraid, to stop them even talking to each other because they were so afraid. They're just not afraid any more. People were massacred in Qom — more people came out and demonstrated in Tabriz. People were massacred in Tabriz — more people came out after that. From reports we've had, the atmosphere is completely changed. People who were afraid

to say anything even in their own homes are now freely talking on the streets. Writers go and publish their books without permission from the censors. Religious leaders who were banned from speaking just get up and speak, and no-one can do anything about it. The regime has lost control in that sense.

Repression hasn't stopped. In fact it's increased. There are checks all over the place, people stopped in the streets, searched, and so on. The police and soldiers are on the streets all the time. More and more people are being arrested. But it's having less and less effect against mass opposition. And people have become very radical, very interested in politics. They're no longer demoralised. That is the important change that has taken place.

### ■ ■ Has this movement any political leadership?

□ □ That is the main problem. What's clear is that there is a very large spontaneous factor in what's been happening. What's also clear is that there is no very definable political leadership at the moment. If there is no clear leadership, no clear demands or direction to the movement, it's likely to subside after a while.

At the moment there's a lot of excitement, people getting involved in various events, but then they just don't know where they are going. The movement could subside. I hope not, but that's a big risk.



**COLIN FOSTER CONTINUES HIS ANALYSIS OF WORLD WAR 2, ARGUING THAT IT WAS NOT A WAR OF DEMOCRACY AGAINST FASCISM BUT AN INTER-IMPERIALIST POWER STRUGGLE.**

# THE BIG LIE OF WORLD WAR TWO

IN SEVERAL countries, at the end of the war, the Anglo-American armies clashed with working-class anti-fascists. In Italy the CP helped to subdue the Resistance, in the name of 'anti-fascist' — or anti-German — unity.

In Greece the CP was less directly under Moscow control — and the clash between the armed anti-fascist workers and peasants and the Allied armies reached the point of open war, despite all Stalin's efforts to sabotage the Resistance.

In October 1944 23,000 British troops entered Greece. They came not to fight the German army, which was rapidly leaving Greece, but to suppress the ELAS Resistance militias which had effective control of the country. The British ordered ELAS to disarm. Under CP influence, ELAS said it would disarm — if only right-wing groups, like the 'Mountain Brigade', were also disarmed.

The British were unyielding. In December 1944 they killed 24 and wounded 150 when they shot on a demonstration in Athens protesting against the disarmament order. Open war then broke out.

ELAS asked for a truce — but after it was agreed, in January 1945, the British launched a terror campaign against the left. Resistance tax collectors were charged with looting; Resistance militants who had executed pro-fascists were charged with murder.

Martial law was proclaimed, trade unions were suppressed, 50,000 leftists were imprisoned, and meanwhile pro-fascists were assigned to leading positions.

The result was renewed war.

## FRANCE

In France, when the people of Paris launched a general strike and uprising in August 1944 against the German occupation, the Allied armies' main concern was to prevent any revolutionary outcome. The French CP suppressed any revolutionary stirrings by all-out insistence on 'anti-fascist' unity and support for de Gaulle.

Then, in 1947, when under the pressure of a Trotskyist-led strike at Renault and the developing Cold War the CP turned left, de Gaulle, the hero of 'democracy', became ... the leader of a fascist movement! His 'Rassemblement du Peuple Français' had 16,000 armed thugs, who made it their business to break up CP and other left-wing meetings.

The RPF did not seize power; France did not go fascist. And parliamentary democracies were set up in Germany and Italy. The wartime restrictions on strikes and other democratic rights in Britain and the US were eventually removed — though the US banning strikes in Britain was not lifted until 1964 under pressure of a miners' strike.

But this setback for fascism was nothing to the democratic great mistakes of Churchill, Roosevelt and Truman. Its causes were the partial re-

fusal by the working class to be duped into 'anti-fascist' or anti-German unity with their bosses — and the economic recovery of capitalism, on the basis of the tremendous destruction of capital, forcing-up of the rate of exploitation, and development of new techniques during the war, together with the defeat of the revolutionary working-class movements after the war.

That economic recovery made it possible for the capitalists to respond to strike movements with economic concessions, and to national liberation movements by granting independence, instead of resorting to overt fascism and colonialism. But direct and bloody repression of the workers and the colonial peoples always remained a weapon in their armoury — as the people of Vietnam learned in the course of 30 years' attempts to put them down by British, French, and then American troops, from 1945 to 1975.

The war policy of Britain and the US interacted with that of the conservative bureaucracy in the USSR. For the degenerated workers' state in the USSR, the war was not one of imperialists competition, but of self-defence against the efforts of the German capitalists to overthrow the nationalised and planned economy and turn Russia into a new field for their profit-grabbing. The British-US-USSR alliance was held together only by a common interest in preserving the world status quo.

Britain and the US were al-

ways uneasy in the alliance, despite Stalin's dissolution of the Communist International in 1943 and his repeated sincere assurances that he did not seek the overthrow of capitalism anywhere outside the USSR.

Stalin provided vital aid to Britain and the US in stifling all social revolutionary movements throughout Europe after 1943. But in Yugoslavia the CP escaped from Moscow control even more than the Greeks had; and by the late 1940s the Russian occupying power found itself forced to destroy capitalism in the other East European states, on pain of seeing them transformed into outposts of US capital. Thus began the Cold War — which led in 1950 to the American invasion of Korea. A great victory for democracy!

## CLASS

Some British socialists still say that it was, for all that, a better outcome than the victory of Hitler would have been.

But the victory of Hitler over the Anglo-American armies would not necessarily mean his assured victory over the working class. Hitler was no more able to suppress the laws of class conflict than anyone else, and the more he expanded his conquests, the greater the threat to him became from the real anti-fascist fighters: the working-class resistance movements in the occupied territories.

British workers would have taken up arms — and rightly so — against a German army

invading England. But they would not need to support Churchill and the Tories for that; on the contrary, they would have found most of the Tories and the officer caste collaborating with the Nazis.

The view that the British-US victory was a 'lesser evil' is also narrowly nationalist: it's not at all evident that Britain's defeat would be a worse outcome from the viewpoint of the people of Ireland, India, or the other British colonies.

Most fundamentally, though, it is a cravenly servile attitude.

Hitler's regime was more brutal than Roosevelt. If you can see no options beyond Hitler's domination of the world or Roosevelt's domination of the world, then maybe it makes sense to opt for Roosevelt. But the revolutionary socialists active during the war — the Trotskyists — did see another option: the revolutionary overthrow of all the imperialist robbers.

They fought for the overthrow of Roosevelt by the American workers, of Churchill by the British workers, and of Hitler by the German workers. They pointed out that those who opt for the apparent 'lesser evils' within capitalism usually end up enduring not only those 'lesser evils', but also the 'greater evils' — as the French workers suffered first

the betrayals of the Popular Front, then the repression of the Nazis and Pétain.

The Trotskyists earned themselves the hatred of all the imperialist powers, and of the Stalinists too. But they were the only people who fought for a policy which could have saved humanity from the 35 years of wars, poverty for two-thirds of the world, and the threat of nuclear annihilation, which we have faced since then.

Their policy was simple: willingness to join any real fight against reaction, but complete political independence of the working class, and resolute insistence on workers power as the only way out from the crises of capitalism. It is the same policy as we need against fascism and racism today.

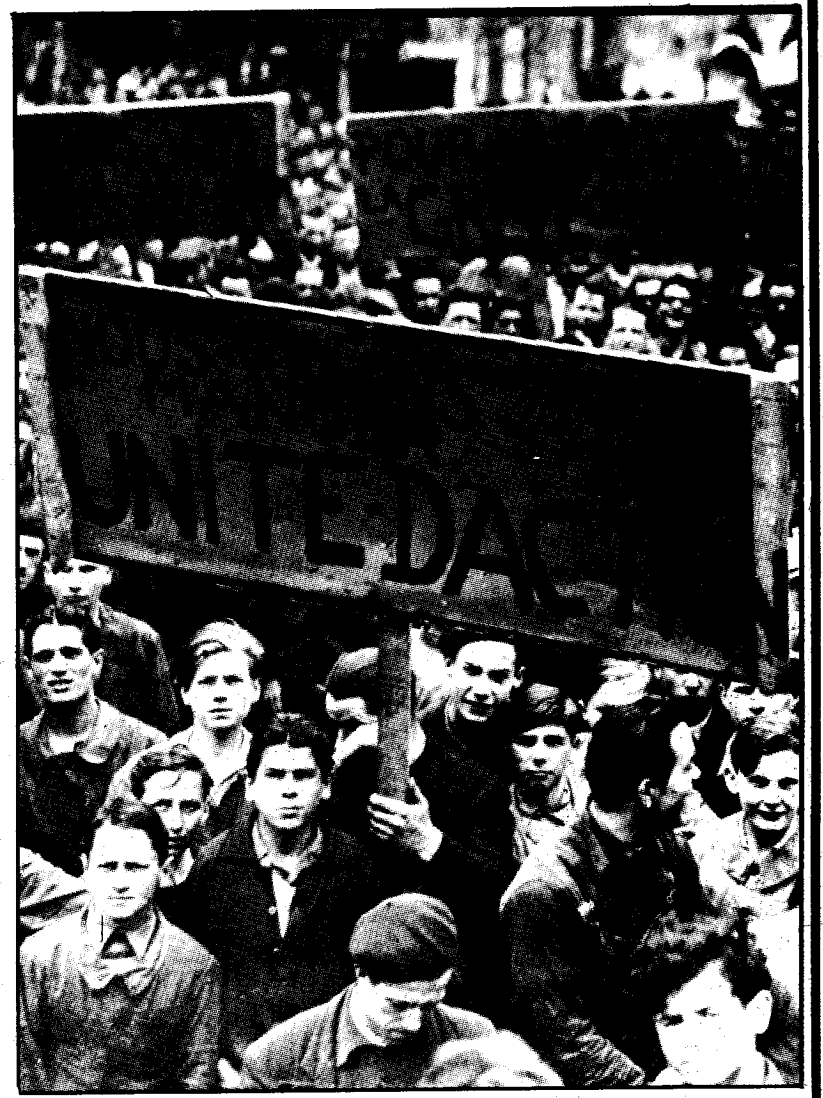
## HATED

Joseph Heller's book 'Catch 22' describes an American soldier facing his officers:

"These three men who hated him spoke his language and wore his uniform, but he saw their loveless faces set immutably into cramped, mean lines of hostility and understood instantly that nowhere in the world, not in all the fascist tanks or planes or submarines, not in the bunkers behind the machine guns or mortars or behind the blowing flame throwers, not even among all the expert gunners of the crack Hermann Goering Anti-aircraft Division or among the grisly connivers in all the beer halls in Munich and everywhere else, were there men who hated him more".

And that's true for us all. Our 'own' ruling class is our deadly enemy, just as much so as British fascists, and more so than fascists of other nationalities. Every form of nationalist poison — including anti-German nationalism masquerading as anti-Nazism — only diverts us from the fight against that class and helps the growth of racism and fascism.

Below: the ruins of Murmansk. The USSR bore the brunt of the Nazis' offensive. Right: Renault car workers in France on strike, April 1947.

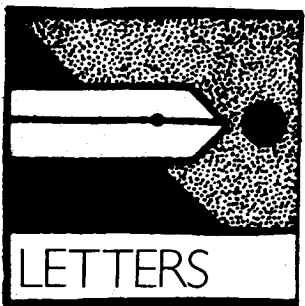


# The Nazi Menace



'Socialist Worker' last week: German Gothic script for their feature on the fascist threat. But the idea that fascism is something specially German rests on nationalist myths from World War 2.

## The myths of German fascism



Dear comrades,  
It was unfortunate that last week, alongside an article pointing out what is wrong with simply calling the NF Nazis, you published a completely misleading piece on fascists in

Germany. It has long been a myth on the British left that Germany is still riddled with fascists. You reported that there are nearly 150 groups with a total membership of 23,000. That may be true; but, as with the NF, NP, etc in Britain, paper membership does not necessarily reflect real strength.

You go on to say that they "... have complete freedom to organise. They strut through the streets... daub Jewish cemeteries and break up left meetings". Freedom from harassment by the police, yes; but the German fascists are not "free" from resistance by the German left. Two examples from February of this year illustrate this. In

Göttingen the fascist NPD organised a regional election meeting in the market place. 60 fascists and 1000 anti-fascists turned up, and when the fascist speakers rose they were greeted with a hail of eggs, tomatoes, and paint. Their platform, loudspeakers, and float were all destroyed, and their papers and leaflets were torn up. It was 20 minutes before the police turned up, and then they could only advise the fascists to disperse!

In Hanow, when the NPD held their conference, 600 demonstrators marched in protest. The fascists had a stall in the town centre, but despite massive police violence against the anti-fascists, with water cannon and dogs, they were surrounded and unable to distribute their literature.

### WAR

One thing was missing from your article on World War 2. You mentioned that at the end of the war workers' councils arose in Germany and then were suppressed by the occupying British, American and French armies, as were trade unions and all political activity. There were also demands from workers' organisations for throwing fascists out of all positions, and it was again the British, American and French forces which blocked this — only a few of the most prominent fascists were ever brought to trial.

Many ex-Nazis still hold prominent positions in West Germany. Yesterday's Nazi can be today's "democratic" boss; and today's "democratic" boss can be tomorrow's Nazi. But the idea of fascism as something specially German has no support in the facts.

PETE FIRMIN

### NAC conference plans

## ACTION FOR DAY-CARE ABORTION AND A TRADE UNION CONFERENCE

AT ITS CONFERENCE in Sheffield on 29-30 April the National Abortion Campaign voted to make agitation for day-care abortion facilities central over the next year. The conference decided to support the Tameside Day-Care Abortion Campaign and its demonstration on May 20th.

A NAC trade union conference will be held in November as a focus for raising active support for abortion rights in the trade union movement.

Other issues discussed were positive legislation (on Saturday) and a draft NAC 'Charter/Manifesto/Declaration' (on Sunday).

The 'Manifesto' is a declaration of women's right to choose together with a programme to make that right a reality, including such demands as freely available child-care facilities. It shows a recognition that although NAC is a single issue campaign it does raise other issues, and the way these relate to abortion rights must be clearly explained.

Conference passed a motion against all NHS cuts. However, a proposal stating that women will only have a real 'right to choose' in the context of a socialist economy was defeated.

It was argued that it would put women off from joining the campaign,

although socialists within NAC should not be prevented from arguing their views.

Due to lack of time, the conference couldn't discuss fully the different ideas on how to formulate a charter.

It voted to support the principles behind the 'Charter' and leave the details to the National Planning Meeting on June 3rd in Leicester. The meeting will have a full agenda, as similar decisions were taken on other issues!



The main debate on Saturday was whether NAC should support the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA)'s draft Bill, which provides for a woman's right to choose subject to certain limitations like a ban on abortions after 28 weeks' pregnancy.

Three different views were put forward. The majority felt that NAC should not endorse a 'time limit' set by the State, although if the present delays and waiting lists were done away with there would be very little demand for late abortions. NAC should put forward its own positive legislation for a woman's right to choose while critically supporting ALRA's bill as a step forward.

A minority argued that NAC should support ALRA's Bill as the only proposal with any chance of being won in the foreseeable future, and a smaller minority fully supported ALRA.

There was a mood — perhaps an exaggerated one — of pessimism on the chances of any gains for abortion rights soon, and general agreement that positive legislation could not be the main focus for campaigning in the coming months.

GERRY BYRNE/ ROS MAKIN

## SOCIALIST TEACHERS DISCUSS 'FALLING STANDARDS'

500 at the beginning, 150 at the end, was the attendance at the Socialist Teachers' Alliance 'Politics of Education' conference last weekend [29th-30th].

A lot of people went off to the Anti-Nazi League Carnival, but others drifted off because of a level of discussion which didn't come to grips with their problems in facing the right wing chorus about 'falling standards'.

Most of the speakers were left-wing academics — with the emphasis on the 'academic'. They devoted themselves to showing how schools and their educational standards are linked into capitalist needs. To the 'falling standards' campaigners they replied: but these are standards set by capitalism.

This argument seems very revolutionary, but in fact it is just the

middle-class attitude that occupies itself 'from above' with lamenting the suffering of the working class under capitalism [as if educational standards could be set by anything other than present-day society].

It leads directly to such pompous clap-trap as this: "Once the state is understood as form, and not just as apparatus, it is clear that 'smashing the state' is not to be postponed until the ultimate revolutionary orgasm, but is a task for everyday practice" [John Holloway and Sol Picciotto].

In fact the skills, training, discipline and organisation imposed on the working class by capitalism are profoundly progressive and revolutionary factors — even though they are imposed in capitalism's own way, mixed with obscurantism and the preaching of servility.

Impotent schemes for 'socialist education' are a hindrance to the task of defending actual educational provision, fighting against tighter state control, and organising the working class on the basis of present-day realities.

To brush aside concern with illiteracy among school leavers with the comment that educational standards are capitalist-dictated is irresponsible cant, and a stupid diversion from the struggle against the cuts in education. In the meantime, militant socialist teachers could probably learn more from serious and conscientious bourgeois radical educational theorists than from 'socialists' whose socialism doesn't extend to leaving their university niches for any active personal commitment to the workers' movement.

# Thomson Press takes on the NUJ

387 MEMBERS of the National Union of Journalists in Hemel Hempstead, Cardiff, Middlesbrough and Reading, have been sacked by Thomson Regional Newspapers.

77 journalists in Hemel Hempstead were the first to be sacked, after working to rule over a pay claim. There was a 24 hour strike by journalists throughout Thomson newspapers last Thursday, 27th, in solidarity with Hemel Hempstead — and then the Cardiff, Middlesbrough, and Reading members were sacked.

The NUJ executive has ordered further Thomson employees to start an all-out strike in retaliation.

On the Western Mail and South Wales Echo in Cardiff, 165 members have been dismissed. Two of them, Derek Hooper and James Stewart, told Workers' Action that they were "all pissed off with Thomson management's Draconian attitudes".

### T&G support

The Cardiff journalists had been imposing a work to rule against management plans to reduce staffing levels: the action stopped NUJ members working overtime for no pay, allowed them to take proper meal breaks, and stopped them covering more than one story.

Friday's lock-out, with management escorting NUJ members to collect personal belongings from their desks and threatening that police would be called if there were any attempt to occupy the offices, was seen as a childish attempt to break union solidarity.

Support for the Cardiff journalists came immediately from the TGWU; a letter was given to the journalists for presentation to drivers, telling them not to cross the picket line to make deliveries.

The NGA voted narrowly against an overtime ban in solidarity. NAT-SOPA members still have to meet to discuss support.

The strikers are putting out a daily news-sheet. James Stewart said that:

"The Victorian attitude of Thomson management was typical. The Western Mail is the most profitable regional paper... Yet our wage levels are below national agreement standards.

Management are determined to cut the number of jobs and introduce unacceptable flexibility to cut the cost of wage claims. We are calling for people to boycott the

Western Mail and South Wales Echo. Don't submit articles or advertisements.

"Support from other trade unions must be forthcoming... We are determined to win this dispute, however long it takes".

Messages of support and donations can be sent to Bruce Kennedy and the Chapel Committee c/o the Queen's Vaults, Westgate St, Cardiff.

GEOFF WILLIAMS

### BUSWORKERS SAY NO TO NEW SCHEDULES

LONDON busmen are continuing their guerilla strike that has been in operation for the last week.

The action, which has official union backing, has taken the form of lightning one-hour strikes. The busmen are fighting the introduction of a new schedule which would mean speed-up and an intensification of work.

The re-scheduling will also mean a reduction of the time for meal and rest breaks. For the travelling public things will be worse, too: longer journeys will have to be interrupted, and passengers will have to wait for another bus to complete the route.

STEVE GOLDSTONE

### SUPPORT GARNERS: JOIN MAY 20 RALLY

THE GARNERS strikers are calling for a solidarity demonstration on May 20th (2pm from Speakers' Corner). They joined the Anti-Nazi League Carnival and the May Day marches, asking for support.

There is an urgent need to break the bureaucratic stifling of the Garners strike by the T&G No. 1 Regional Committee and its innumerable sub-committees, who at present are blocking strikers' demands for a regional 1p per head levy and are not acting on the blacking of supplies to Garners although it has been agreed in principle.

Donations to Garners Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, room 84, 12-13 Henrietta St, London WC2. And help is still needed on the picket lines.

# workers' ACTION

## supporters' groups

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

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



# WORKERS IN ACTION

## 'ANYTHING'S BETTER THAN A FIGHT' - building union leaders

AFTER THE TALKS on April 20th with the employers, the building union negotiators have agreed to recommend acceptance of a sell-out deal.

The unions have dropped all three key elements of their claim: a consolidated basic rate of £80 for craftsmen and £68 for labourers, a 35 hour week, and a fourth week's holiday pay per year.

Management's original cash offer of £60.20 for craftsmen and £52 for labourers (minimum rates) was accepted, after some consolidation of previous supplements into the basic rate on which overtime and other payments are based. Sick pay has been increased from £1.50 to £2.50 a day; and death benefit from £2500 to £3000. There will be discussions on introducing the fourth week's paid holiday by 1980, subject to future incomes policy, as well as discussions over cutting hours.

George Henderson, the TGWU negotiator, who earlier threatened to reject the deal totally over the 35 hour week issue, described management's agreement to discussions on it as a 'moral victory'.

However, the key feature of the wage negotiations was argument over what actually was the present average pay packet, on which a 10% increase could be calculated.

The basic rate, on which overtime pay is based, bears little relationship to average pay. This is the result of the

unions' failure to consolidate supplements into the basic rate.

Added to this are variations between regions, between big and small employers, and the result is a very complex wage structure which allows the employers to diffuse militancy and avoid a united national fight for a decent basic rate.

### STRUCK

The union negotiators' estimate of the present average pay is £80 (UCATT) or £82 (T&GWU); but in the end management stuck to their guns, and their lower estimate of £75.25 was accepted. The employers reckon that the offer will increase the average pay packet by £7.35 to £82.60, which they describe as a 9.75% increase.

The attitudes of George Henderson (T&GWU) and George Smith (UCATT) were aptly summed up in 'Contract

Journal':

"... however the percentages are worked out, the offer represented about as much as they were likely to secure from the employers short of threatening industrial action".

The G&MWU negotiator, Frank Earl, has since withdrawn his support for the deal. His view is that the increase in the basic rate does not benefit higher paid civil engineering workers much. The offer, he reckons, amounts to "less than 2% for some, and nobody is going to get more than 10%".

However, the prospect of the G&MWU, a minority union in the industry, reopening the basic issues of holiday pay, the 35 hour week, and a full consolidated rate of £80, is slight. The three union negotiators only have limited pressure put on them by the rank and file over the 10%, and so they are unlikely to mobilise any industrial action to secure a better offer.

The union leaders instead have been under pressure to

tackle unemployment, growing subcontracting and the complex wage structure. Many big firms have increasingly used sub-contracting and the hiring of men on a daily basis.

Militants in UCATT hope to tie their Executive at the June biannual conference to a 35 hour week, a £2 per hour craft rate, and consolidation of supplements to simplify the wage structure.

Resolutions for action on decasualisation and subcontracting have also been submitted.

Two years ago, George Smith and the EC were defeated at conference when a resolution rejecting wage restraint was passed overwhelmingly. The EC then sought to reverse the decision by a branch ballot which was worded in such a confusing way (implying that members would not get the £8 phase 1 supplement) that conference decision was overturned.

Smith actually admitted that "the [executive] council would carefully choose its own wording on the ballot to prevent a further defeat of the union's ruling body".

No doubt the words will again be 'chosen carefully' on the ballot form for this present sell-out deal. Rank and file militants must argue in the branches for rejection, and for mandating conference delegates to support militant resolutions on the 35 hour week and decasualisation.

CHEUNG SIU MING

## Oxford TGWU officials back another attack on steward

LAST WEEK the workers at Cartransport Ltd in Oxford struck to defend the job of Brian Preston, their senior steward and chairman of the Oxford Car Delivery Branch of the TGWU.

Preston was dismissed on charges of dishonesty regarding his expenses while on union business. Neither the company nor Thames Valley Police were willing to test the charges in court; but the employers were strengthened by the support of David Buckle, the local T&G official, who has led the witch-hunt against the Cowley 9.

Buckle asked the company to sack Preston, and did nothing to support him except seeing the boss under pressure from workers there.

Cartransport deliver the cars produced at British Leyland's Cowley plant, and it was only by shuffling cars around the car park last week that BL were able to continue assembly work after an initial stoppage.

Brian Preston's victimisation by the combined forces of the local union officials and management is only one of several such cases in BL or firms associated with it in the Oxford area.

Apart from the notorious case of the Cowley 9, a militant at Export Packing, Banbury, was sacked on a drummed-up charge of assault against the convenor. The incident was supposed to have taken place during the election of the stewards, and the case was brought by the full-time officials.

Emboldened by the collusion of the officials, BL themselves took action against John Power, AUEW Convenor at BL's spares and service depot and himself a leading witch-hunter of the Cowley 9 - also on trumped-up charges about expenses.

A strike forced withdrawal of the sacking, but without the support of the local T&G officials BL would not have dared go so far as to pick on convenors and stewards.

BRUCE ROBINSON

## AUEW Left takes a hammering

THE LEFT in the AUEW has just been hit by a number of shattering right crosses.

The Presidency has been won by Terry Duffy, against the Left's candidate Bob Wright; the East Midlands seat on the union Executive has been won by Edmund Scrivens, pushing out the sitting representative, Communist Party member Les Dixon; and Gavin Laird successfully held off Left-winger Calum Mackay.

In addition, militant Ron Halverston failed by a very big margin to win a National Organiser's post from Edwin Hepple. Perhaps most surprising and disappointing of all, Laurie Smith lost his National Organiser's post to Will Pritchard by a towering 85,000 margin.

Duffy's victory is not just a big setback, it comes as some surprise. In the first round, his margin was very narrow and it looked as if Wright might win with the transferred votes of militant and revolutionary candidates who were eliminated for the second round.

But Duffy's majority is a thumping 46,917.

There have been protests from members in some areas, notably the North West where Wright would have expected to gain substantially more votes than Duffy, about missing ballot papers. When the result of the election was declared, however, Wright made no excuses.

"It is a very clear-cut decision. The result indicates a rejection of the Left Socialist alternative to present policies", he said.

"I think that it is the clear indication from our membership. I accept the democratic process that it represents. Whatever the pressures brought to bear on the members, at the end of the road, their X on a piece of paper decides".

One thing is sure: Wright's policies were by no means "the Left Socialist alternative" he claims. It was Wright who negotiated the loss of thousands of jobs at Chrysler.

However, Wright came out against incomes policies and demanded a return to free collective bargaining in his election address. Duffy, on the other hand, is happy to continue holding hands with the government while the government in turn holds hands with the bosses.

Does the result indicate a sudden dramatic shift to the right in the AUEW? The union has for some time, under Scanlon's leadership, been drifting to the right in practice. Although the Broad Left occasionally made their opposition to Scanlon clear - as at the last TUC Conference - they have generally been identified with him.

Scanlon offered a 'Left' leadership which pursued a right-wing policy. So no wonder many left-wing AUEW members must have got disheartened, and failed to campaign, or maybe even to vote. And politically uncommitted AUEW members, seeing that the left was going to give no leadership in fighting the system, opted for the people who frankly promised to 'work the system'.

But it could be a long-lasting setback. Duffy and the Right favour the idea of breaking up the amalgamation and getting rid of the technical and supervisory section (TASS), and instead merging with the EETPU.

If that happens, the engineering industry, central to British capitalism and central to the working class struggle, could for some time be dominated by a single, huge, very right-wing union.

PAUL ADAMS

## EVENTS

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

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

SUNDAY 14 MAY. Grunwick solidarity conference: 11am to 5pm at Wembley Conference Centre, Empire Way, Wembley. Trade Union and Labour Party branches can send two delegates: fee £1 per delegate, to the Strike Committee, Trades & Labour Hall, 375 High Road, Willesden, London NW10.

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

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

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

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

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— Advertisement —  
Spartacist League/Britain International-Communist League  
Debate: "What Programme for the Socialist Revolution?"  
7pm at Essex Road Library, 115-117 Essex Rd, London N1 (Tube: Angel). Adm. 20p.

— Advertisement —  
"INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST"  
No. 8 now out •• The treachery of Lib-Lab anti-racism •• West Germany: the end of social peace •• Revolutionaries in the French elections •• What is 'Western Marxism'? •• IMG-I-CL debate on revolutionary unity •• Clara Zetkin on the social-democratic women's movement •• and reviews. 35p plus 15p postage from 98 Gifford St, London N1

## A fund drive for

# workers' ACTION

After our flying start — £1100 in two weeks — it was a very quiet week for our fund, as might be expected: only £7 came in. We have taken £50 out of the fund to send as a contribution to the appeal by the German revolutionary paper 'Spartacus' for help in

defending themselves against prosecution as a result of their stand against the anti-'terrorist' hysteria in West Germany [see page 2]. That leaves our total so far at £1057.

Please send contributions to Fund, Box 1960, 182 Upper St, London N1.