

# workers' ACTION

No.77

Oct.29-Nov.5, 1977

10p

**FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND! A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE!**

Demonstrate in Birmingham  
Saturday 30 October, 1.30pm  
from Victoria Square

## PROD. DEAL THREAT TO MINERS' UNITY

ON THE EVE of the pit-head ballot in which miners will decide for or against a proposed productivity scheme, Anthony Wedgwood Benn has lined up against the militants.

The press, radio and television gleefully carry the report of this "left wing" opinion along with the other attacks on the militants from people like Sid Vincent, the Lancashire miners' area secretary.

The resources of the mass media who unwaveringly support the right wing are massively greater than those of the militants, the Kent, Scottish, Yorkshire miners. For many miners, as well as the public, it is the arguments of the mass media that they will have heard and no others.

The productivity deal being balloted would have three effects if accepted: it increases the rate of exploitation of every worker, increases redundancies, and imposes a tighter work discipline.

In an industry in which 54 miners were killed, 586 seriously injured and 52,946 injured last year in accidents which needed at least 3 days' absence, the productivity scheme would ensure a huge increase in this bloody toll.

The arguments against the deal are no secret. One of them is put perfectly well by the *Financial Times*... as a reason for encouraging acceptance: "The Government and the Coal Board both calculate that as well as increasing output and justifying a huge invest-

ment in the industry, acceptance of pit-based incentives will defuse the claim for a 90% pay rise from November 1, which is about to be submitted by the union".

Another was put by NUM Secretary Lawrence Daly, back in 1972 when he was giving evidence to the Wilberforce inquiry. "It is impossible", he said then, "to negotiate a productivity agreement that operates in the interests of the miners". Yet Daly, once thought of as a left-winger, is now backing the proposed scheme.

The fact that the ballot is taking place is a mockery of democracy. The union conference took a decision against such a scheme, and the job of the executive was to get down to working out a way of fighting for the £135 claim.

Nevertheless it was wrong when the Kent area took the NEC to court. That is not the way to do things. We are opposed to court interference in the unions altogether, as the courts can be guaranteed to serve the interests of the ruling class, not the rank and file.

In this case their way of serving their masters was to uphold the decision to go to ballot. Thus the Kent area got no further than setting a dangerous precedent.

It would have been better to use every moment, every penny and every ounce of strength to wage the campaign against the scheme.

Now, whatever the result of the ballot, left wing miners must be ready to fight a full scale sell-out on the pay claim.

**'I work a 48 hour week for £2.10**

**I am not allowed to join a trade union**

**I work for the same firm as you'**

**Solidarity with S.African workers!**  
See p2

## Leyland's hush deal for speed-up

VOTING on the Leyland "Corporate bargaining" package began on Tuesday 25th amidst a huge campaign by press, management and union leaders.

Fresh from the 23-plants-to-nil victory for the Fords pay offer, and with their wallets filled out by rising share prices, the bosses are counting on a new triumph in their campaign against 'greedy' and 'strike-happy' carworkers. And already they're planning how to push through cutbacks and speed-ups if the package is accepted.

It's still possible to upset

their plans. It depends on what militants in Leyland can do to put forward an alternative to management's proposals, and to explain what management's proposals mean.

Because no-one has even explained clearly and precisely, yet, what the management proposals are! And throughout the several months' negotiations on the proposals, the trade union side have never yet reported back to the shop floor.

The essence of what management proposes is that Leyland workers should

Continued back page

Meet the new baas

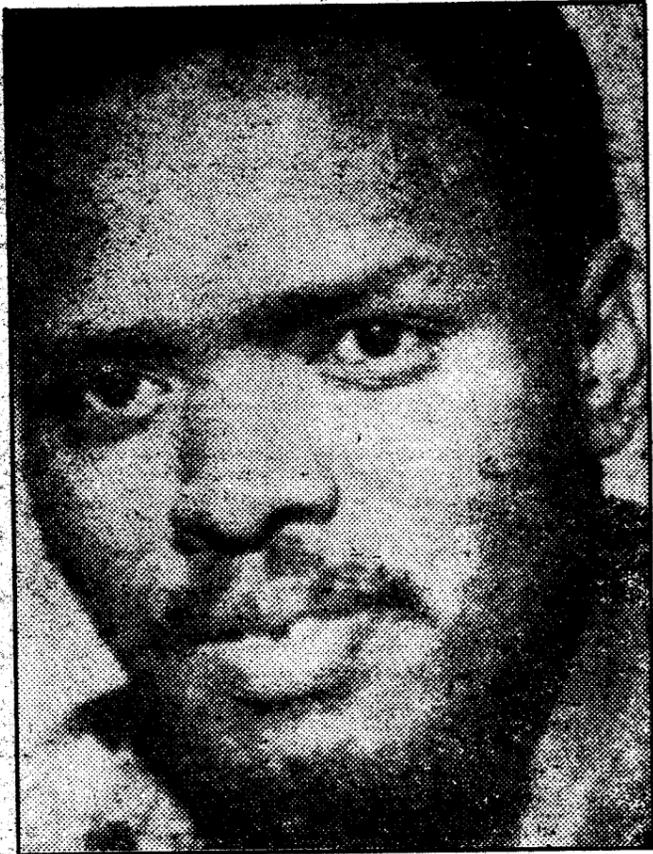


Last week Sir Richard Dobson had to resign as chairman of British Leyland after his racist and anti-trade union remarks were revealed. He has now been replaced by MICHAEL EDWARDES — a businessman who hates unions and has close links with racist South Africa.

Not only did Edwardes begin his career with his present company, Chloride, in S.Africa; in "Who's Who", he lists his club as the 'Rand' in Johannesburg.

Should come in useful when he pops over to visit Leyland's South Africa works...

## Steve Biko was beaten to death



The post-mortem report on Steve Biko, who died in detention on 13th September, has confirmed that he had extensive brain injuries and other signs of being severely beaten. So far the South African authorities haven't found any alternative to their now-abandoned story that Biko died from a hunger strike ...

## Czech trial: CPs evasive

Last week's trial of 'Charter 77' dissidents in Czechoslovakia was disposed of quickly. On October 18th they were sentenced on charges to do with getting articles and books published abroad.

Frantisek Pavlicek and Vaclav Havel got suspended sentences; Jiri Lederer was jailed for three years and Ota Ornest (not a Charter 77 activist) was jailed for 3½ years.

The British Communist Party has declared that "We cannot agree with such methods of dealing with political differences, and we urge that those sentenced to imprisonment should be released." The French Communist Party has also protested about the fact that the correspondent of its paper *Humanité* was not admitted to the courtroom. But neither the French CP, nor the Italian CP, has yet criticised the trial itself.

The people of Panama voted on October 23rd by a two-thirds majority to endorse the new US-



Panama treaty on the Panama Canal. Panama's President Omar Torrijos has said that the only alternative to the treaty — signed by him and by President Carter on September 7th — was a bloody war.

Since 1903 the US has held the Canal and the surrounding Canal Zone. Currently there are 14 military bases and over 9,000 troops in the Zone. The treaty cedes the Zone to Panama immediately, and the Canal from the year 2000 — but the US will retain the right to keep troops on Panama's territory and to intervene militarily (even after the year 2000) if it considers that the satisfactory running of the Canal is prejudiced.

The treaty has yet to be approved by the US Congress.

The "historic compromise" is well and truly in operation in Spain. Last week all the major parties — Suarez' "Democratic Centre", Fraga's right wing "Popular Alliance", and the Socialist and Communist Parties — concluded an agreement on an austerity programme. Wage increases will be held to 20% while the rate of inflation is still over 30%.

## SOUTH AFRICA

# REPRESSION IS ON NAZI SCALE

HISTORY cannot be beaten by a policeman's truncheon. A whole people in revolt cannot be stopped by detention orders and bans. But it is up to US to help bring those truths home NOW to the bosses of apartheid.

Naively or lyingly, many had argued that South Africa would gradually evolve away from apartheid under international pressure. Labour Foreign Secretary David Owen has even been collaborating with racist Prime Minister Vorster about a settlement in Rhodesia.

Vorster has been willing to try to fix up a deal in Rhodesia only in order to safeguard the greater bastion of white supremacy, South Africa itself.

What made Vorster ditch Smith was not diplomacy but the victorious liberation wars of Angola and Mozambique, and the rise of black working class struggle in South Africa after the Durban strikes of 1973.

But inside South Africa his answer is simple repression: segregating off the black population into 'Bantustans', depriving them of the slightest civil rights when they come to work outside the Bantustans, and trying to subdue them with a hail of beatings, arrests, jailings and murders.

The latest swoop, on October 19th, included the banning of practically all the organisations of the urban Blacks, the detention of most of their known leaders still operating openly, and the closing down of the second-largest circulation paper in South Africa.

This is repression of a scope unequalled except in dictatorships like Chile or Nazi Germany.

But it can't and it won't have the same crushing effect as Pinochet's or Hitler's repression. Time after time again the apartheid state arrests the leaders of the black community — but every time new leaders rise in their place. And the racists don't have, and can't have, the network of repression inside the black community that would enable them to break the underground struggle.

The bannings will not abolish these black organisations — they will simply change their methods from legal to illegal struggle. They will still have the allegiance of the black masses, as has the African National Congress, which has been banned for nearly 20 years.

October 19th's swoop was prompted, it seems, by fear of the growing protests about Steve Biko's unexplained death in detention.

In face of the growing certainty that Biko was cold-bloodedly murdered, the regime is now lashing out wildly. 65 to 70 white students at Witwatersrand University were arrested when trying to send a telegram protesting the October 19th clampdown. Seven black clergymen were arrested in Johannesburg while they were trying to make a protest. Police opened fire on crowds in Queenstown and used tear gas and baton charges in King Williamstown.

But the schools boycott is still on — involving 27,000 secondary school students in Soweto, and now spreading to

primary schools and to Pretoria, the Eastern Cape, and the Venda 'homeland'. The Government has named a new governing council for Soweto and decreed 80% site rent increases (an increase they tried to impose earlier this year, but had to withdraw after protests).

But even if they manage to enforce such decrees, they merely build up the pressure for a further upsurge of struggle at a later stage.

Between now and the inevitable doom of apartheid, however, the white supremacists can murder dozens, hundreds and thousands of Steve Bikos. They can make the end of apartheid long and bloody. It's up to us to make sure that the 18 million blacks of South Africa win their victory as soon as possible.

Whatever their manoeuvres and protests (in the interests of a free hand to make profits in the rest of Africa), the US and British capitalist classes — who are the main investors in, props of and profiteers from apartheid — will not and cannot be converted to support for the struggle of the black working people. The necessary support must come from workers in Britain, exploited by the same exploiters who make millions from apartheid.

British Leyland, ICI, British Steel, Shell-BP, GEC: these are both the giants of British industry and the giants of the apartheid economy. Anti-apartheid activists and militants in those companies have to start planning and organising now for industrial direct action in solidarity with the struggle in South Africa.

## AAM Conference calls for trade union action

THE A.G.M. of the Anti Apartheid Movement (held last Sunday 23rd October) showed the continuing ambivalence of this movement against the background of the new wave of repression unleashed last week in South Africa.

AAM committed itself to support the African National Congress and the liberation struggle. It condemned the Anglo-American proposals on Zimbabwe, the Turnhalle talks on Namibia, the involvement of RTZ in Namibia, the intensified repression in South Africa, sports contacts with apartheid, and the massive involvement of British companies and banks in propping up apartheid.

But these resolutions are not translated into adequate political action. There was a lot of talk of redoubling efforts to put pressure on the Labour Government, of collecting vests and writewatches for the liberation fighters, and individual consumer boycotts of SA oranges and pilchards.

Yet this is several Labour Governments after Sharpsville, 1960! It should be clear by now that just pressuring the authorities doesn't work. As Warren Mitchell, leader of the Black Caucus of 16 Congressmen in the USA, said last week: "The Administration has said the right things about the right things, but when you get down to the bottom line they haven't done anything."

And AAM constantly has to report ministerial rebuffs — yet never draws the lessons.

The only thing that will help

smash apartheid is effective solidarity with the freedom fighters and with the working class in South Africa.

Such an approach was reflected in a resolution from Martin Legassick, David Henson and others, calling for a focus on work in the trade union movement and resolving "to work towards achieving a significant level of industrial blacking of goods bound for or coming from South Africa during the week of solidarity action" next March.

Although it would be foolish to think that official trade union declarations against apartheid can be transformed quickly or immediately into mass action, this resolution does provide a basis for consistent work by local groups drawing in both student activists and trade union militants.

Reports were given of moves among Leyland workers in Solihull to ban Range Rover exports to South Africa. NUS representatives from Aberdeen University announced that 300 students are currently occupying the admin. block in opposition to university investment in companies involved in SA (especially Shell and BP).

Unfortunately, discussion on these items, which had been placed at the bottom of the agenda, was cut short for lack of time. However, there were well over 200 delegates at this A.G.M. and a significant minority seemed ready for real action.

[Telegrams of support for the Aberdeen occupation to: SRC offices, 151 King Street, Aberdeen.]



# VICTIMS OF THE ANTI-COMMUNIST STATE AT WORK



DESPITE what the RAF and some of their impatient sympathisers say, Germany is not a fascist state.

Certainly there are ex-Nazis in high positions there. Hanns-Martin Schleyer himself was a Nazi, a member of the SS and no mere Hitler-

ite small fry. The German state is, like the rest of Western Europe, an armed democracy. A bourgeois-democratic state armed against its own working class.

The repression in Germany is not something specially German, as the chauvin-

ist-tinged comments of the Communist Party imply. Indeed, the West German political system of today, in its principal features, is not a German creation, but rather the creation of the British-French-US military occupation at the end of world war 2.

Its special features relate less to the high number of ex-Nazis in the state apparatus than to the role that West Germany plays on behalf of imperialism as a bulwark against the workers' states and against revolution in southern Europe.

Until quite recently the German Communist Party was illegal. Since 1972 the West German state has had on its statute books laws forbidding radicals employment in many areas of the public sector. These laws, the 'Berufsverbote', are made effective through a vast apparatus of police surveillance, spying and information gathering.

Officially the government recognises that between April 1st, 1973, and June 30, 1975, the so-called Office for the Protection of the Constitution had carried out 438,723 inquiries into the 'loyalty' of citizens.

The period of the Socialist Party government has seen a big increase in repression in West Germany. It was they who introduced the Berufsverbote. Now they rush to agree to the demands of the Right for yet another enlargement of the police force and yet harsher laws against the Left. The Left can now expect even more raids on their bookshops, confiscations of printed matter, exclusion from employment, banning of demonstrations, and outlawing of political groupings.



Meanwhile the mass of the population, including the working class, is being drawn closer to the state. The ordinary worker's hostility to the RAF's actions at Mogadishu expresses itself — thanks to the role of the mass media and the trade union and Socialist Party bureaucracy — in tributes to Hanns-Martin Schleyer, head of the West German employers' organisation.

Vetter, the leader of the DGB (West German TUC) wrote on behalf of the DGB to Schleyer's family. The letter includes the opinion that Schleyer, though a tough opponent, was 'a

very fair man'. The Frankfurter Allgemeine, one of West Germany's leading papers, carries several pages of messages of condolence.

One, from the Daimler-Benz company, says, "He [Schleyer] was always proud of being a part of our firm, to which he felt the closest ties. We owe him our deepest gratitude. Hanns-Martin Schleyer gave and found trust. His thoughts and actions were inspired by a sense of social responsibility..." Among the signatories we find the works council and the workforce.

In numerous factories and institutions in Germany there have been memorial silences for Schleyer. Of Schumann, the pilot killed by the hi-jackers, someone who was really a co-worker of the trade unionists at Daimler Benz, there is no word.

A hysteria is being whipped up in Germany now that will certainly have the effect of isolating further all the left and even all critical thinking. There will for a time be little hearing for the themes that the left and the RAF both see as central: the role of the West German state in Europe as well as 'at home': the need for inter-

Views from the European left press — page 4

national solidarity; the growth in the technology of repression.

In place of critical thinking on these subjects, there is the blood lust of the regime and the stammering apologies of the opportunists trying to put as much distance between themselves and the RAF as possible.

In this atmosphere Baader, Ensslin and Raspe could die without the public registering the slightest shock — let alone remorse. Instead there is the widespread feeling that "whether the regime ordered the deaths or not, that is the only way to deal with terrorists". In Britain the echoes of this are heard in the demands by the Tory Party for the death penalty for terrorists.

The attitude of revolutionaries is clear: we can give not the slightest support to the acts of the RAF. At the same time we condemn without reserve the inhumanity of the German regime, which probably murdered Ensslin, Raspe, and Baader. We condemn it, however, not merely for that particular act of brutality, but for the whole system of repression, brutalisation and death that it incorporates like any other capitalist regime.

Baader, Ensslin and Raspe were not only in their deaths but also in their actions the victims of the regime — victims whose self-sacrifice, whose courage and moral purpose no more survived the prison-house of the West German constitutional state with its anti-communism than their bodies survived the terror of Stammheim.

## RAF THE VOICE OF DESPAIR

ANDREAS BAADER was first arrested for setting fire to a department store. He wanted to wake up the German workers of the 'wirtschaftswunder' years to say to them: look at this rubbish you are worshipping, this commercial-cultural idiocy, this philistinism...

Baader's message was a frustrated confusion of love and contempt. It was an attempt to reach out towards the proletariat who were the heirs of the heroes of the Rote Front (the militia of the German Communist Party) and the stalwarts of the Reichsbanner (the anti-fascist militia of the German Socialist Party). But this proletariat had been beheaded by fascism and seemed crazed by con-

sumerism.

The answer that Andreas Baader got — and what other answer could he have got? — was incomprehension, hatred and ridicule. For Baader and the other members of the Rote Armee Fraktion, the working class thus became beyond redemption. They were, it seemed to the RAF, so integrated into the system that they could hardly be said to be the oppressed any more. Rather the workers seemed increasingly to appear as the accomplices — not only in their own enslavement (that was their dubious privilege) but in the enslavement of others, the millions of the third world and of southern Europe.

With this, the proletariat of Germany became less the subject for emancipation than the co-author of colonial oppression.

By the time of the events at Mogadishu, the RAF had almost totally lost contact with the political cause they had set out to promote. Here the terrorists, the self-proclaimed 'emancipators of the people', tried to outface a state they accused of being fascist.

Yet they based their desperate gamble on their, the "emancipators", announced indifference to the lives of the scores of innocent passengers — and their confidence that the state they accused of being fascist would care about those passengers!



ABOVE: passers-by in Nuremberg are given leaflets encouraging them to take part in the man hunt going on to find 16 terrorists named by the state as those guilty of killing Hanns-Martin Schleyer.

## The survivor accuses

IRMGARD MÖLLER, the survivor from the four alleged suicides in Stammheim prison, has recovered sufficiently to give a statement to her lawyer.

Möller — so her lawyer reports — insists that she definitely did not attempt suicide, nor was there any suicide pact between her and Baader, Raspe and Ensslin. About the night of the alleg-

ed suicides, all Möller can remember is that she was reading until 3am — and then the next thing she knew she was lying on a stretcher covered in blood.

Möller's statement should add double weight to the call for an independent and public inquiry into the circumstances of her injuries and the deaths of Baader, Raspe, and Ensslin.



From the Internationale Kommunistische Liga (Austria).

Are the actions of the RAF, the 2nd June group and all the other courageous avengers, the cause of the arming, of the state terror? A serious answer to this question, one that has the slightest claim to being a Marxist answer, must firstly shed light on two factors.

Firstly, the division of Germany and the situation of permanent anti-communism that resulted from this [aided of course by the concrete experiences of Stalinism of the Germany working class], and secondly, the role of the Federal Republic in the strategy of imperialism against the workers' states and against the revolutionary developments in imperialist Europe [Portugal, Spain, Italy]...

And that is where we come to the banning of the German Communist Party [1956], the emergency laws, the Berufsverbote, the censorship laws, the climate of fear and spying, the torture of solitary confinement and the massive internal and external arming. It is this that forms the context of the RAF...

From the French revolutionary daily 'Rouge'.

Under the heading 'Crocodile humanism', Alain Brossat notes the offer by people like the Catholic bishop of Fulda to be a hostage in place of the hijacked passengers:

And further: can you remember the Pope or some prelate or other offering to exchange his life for the liberty of some political prisoners in Pinochet's jails! UN secretary-general Waldheim, unequivocally condemning the inhuman oppression that British colonialism subjects the people of Ulster to? The western governments unanimously proclaiming their jubilation when at last Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea were free from the yoke of Portugal?

Such is the chief characteristic of crocodile humanism: it is selective...

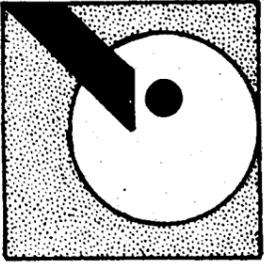
This is part of ROLF POHLE's speech before the Athens court where he faced an extradition demand by the German government. Pohle was accused of participation in the kidnapping of a West German politician.

Whatever the content of many of the actions of the RAF, the 2nd June group, and others, Pohle's speech makes clear that what essentially motivated him and his comrades was a deep-seated hatred of oppression, and dedication to the struggle against imperialism.

This passage is translated from the German paper 'Spartacus'.

We are living in the Third World War. It is the war of US imperialism against humanity. It is the war of a tiny radical minority and their soldiers against the peoples of the world. It is the war of a growing international bourgeoisie — of Kennedy-Onassis or whatever they are called — against the world's working class, the world proletariat. The goal of imperialism is the conquest of the world to continue living off the backs of the rest of humanity...

Imperialism has declared total war. Anything goes, so long as it serves to maintain its rule. Where individuals or whole populations are not prepared to let someone oppress them, they are destroyed. Indians and Aztecs, the people of Indochina, the Arabs in Lebanon; Ulrike Meinhof, Wilfried Böse, Alexander Panagoulis, when imperialism sees its domination threatened it does not distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, between men, women and children, old and young, friends and enemies...

**LEFT**  
  
**PRESS**

## What they said about the RAF

West Germany stands right in the front line when it comes to defending the imperialist system. West Germany not only co-financed the US's genocidal war in Indochina with annual payments of billions of marks [cover name: exchange of securities], West Germany was also used as a military-technological base of operations for this war; it was here, for instance, that the computer was located that calculated the bomb damage in Indochina.

West Germany has been financing Zionism in occupied Palestine to the tune of 30,000 million marks since 1948. Among other things it gave the Zionists a present of an entire arms factory [Artur Weiner in Berlin]...

'Rationalisation of work'. That means tremendous speed up of the tempo of work, forcing up the frenzied pace of piecework. Today workers must often produce ten times what was produced 10 years ago in the same work period. Result: over 3,000 people die every year at the workplace itself [linguistic convention: industrial accident], 250,000 are injured, 250,000 retire prematurely, i.e. some are made useless for work for the rest of their lives in a shorter time. The existence of one million unemployed is supposed to see to it that the West German workers cooperate. And apart from this the West German ['specialist'] workers, or rather overseers, are tied to the will of imperialism by receiving better pay and other privileges over the 3 million foreign conscript workers [official name: 'guest workers'].

The conscript workers themselves — unlike conscript labour in racist South Africa for instance — have since the end of 1974 not been permitted to bring their families with them to their ghettos in West Germany. The work that the individual worker is forced to do is so fragmented that the individual in any case has no idea what he produces; the result: 20 million people are mentally ill in West Germany, of which six million are in immediate need of treatment. Every year 15,000 'suicides', not counting those of the 16,000 who die and the 250,000 who are injured in traffic accidents who decide to end their lives in this way.

# Cuba — exception

by FRAI

TEN YEARS AGO — on October 8th or 9th — Che Guevara was killed by the Bolivian Army in Eastern Bolivia.

He had spent the previous year preparing a small band of revolutionaries to launch a guerilla war against the Bolivian state. He hoped thus to begin a war of liberation which would spread from Bolivia to Peru and across Latin America.

His objective was to create 'another Vietnam' in Latin America.

As the guerilla war against the Latin American states — formally independent, but in reality often more or less puppets of American imperialism — gained the support of the rural masses, the US would be forced to intervene directly, as in Indochina. It would have to stop screening its economic and political dominance behind the formal independence of its local agents.

Against this open imperialist presence, it would be possible for the guerilla 'foco' to create a revolutionary front which would mobilise the vast masses of the oppressed in the countryside and the swollen cities of Latin America.

## Vietnam

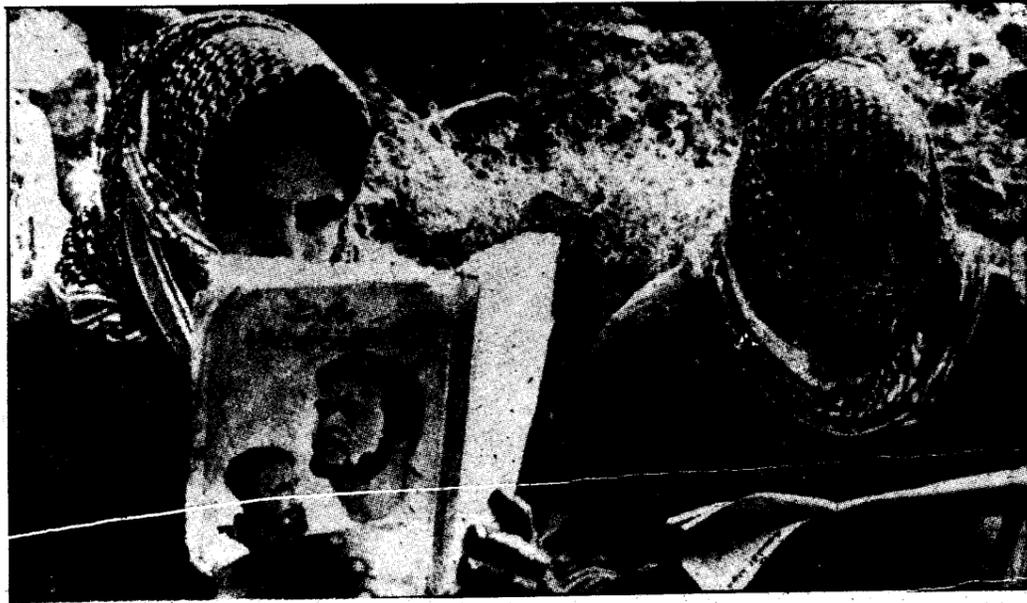
The crucial thing was to establish and develop the armed striking force whose activities would begin to counterbalance, and then to destroy, the bourgeois state power. Revolution on the model of Cuba, anti-imperialist, would be the outcome of this struggle. In this way Guevara tried to apply what he understood as the lessons of the Cuban Revolution, in which a small group of guerillas, by launching an armed struggle, had broken through the decades-long stalemate of would-be radical politics in Cuba, and had eventually toppled the Batista dictatorship.

By creating 'another Vietnam' Guevara hoped also to come to the aid of the Viet-

namese people, who were then fighting their tremendous battle to free themselves from US imperialism. For Guevara — in contrast to both the Moscow and Peking currents of "communism" — thought in terms of a world struggle to finish off imperialism, and not merely to contain or limit it. In a message to the OLAS conference of revolutionaries, which met in Havana in January 1967, he wrote: "How close we should look into a bright future should two or

three or many vietnam flourish throughout the world, with their shared deaths and their immense tragedies, their every heroism and their repeated blows against imperialism impelled to disperse themselves under the sudden attacks and increasing hatreds of all peoples of the world!"

In the event, however, the guerilla group which Guevara founded and which never even reached the stage of being a serious challenge to the Bolivian government



# ... or vanguard?

**... HIGGINS**



take arms and establish a guerilla front.

Today the guerilla groups inspired by the Cuban revolution have been defeated. Cuba is integrated into the camp of the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy. But it would be facile sectarian pedantry to suppose that this cold ending, with the Cuban state solidly bureaucratised, with bloodthirsty dictatorships firmly in control across most of Latin America, with many of the guerilla fighters either dead or rallied to reformism, and with Guevara's name appearing as just a rather faded romantic image, was all rigidly determined in advance.

For a time in the 1960s Fidel Castro and Che Guevara represented a distinct and revolutionary current that became part of the 'communist' movement dominated by the Russian and Chinese bureaucracies, without originating in that movement and without for some time fully merging into it. 'Castroism' or 'Guevarism' shared with Trotskyism a belief in 'uninterrupted' revolution in the third world and rejection of the view that these countries were not 'ripe' for the overthrow of capitalism. It differed from Trotskyism, however, in its assessment of which class would have to lead the socialist revolution, looking to the rural poor, peasants, and landless people instead of to the industrial proletariat.

It was a unique political tendency: in the half-dozen years after the fall of the Batista government in 1959, the group around Fidel Castro traversed the terrain from radical petty bourgeois democratic politics to a variant of communism — that is, to an honest concern to 'make the revolution' against capitalism.

## Detour

In response to the problem posed to the Cuban people by the existence of US imperialism, a fully developed and parasitic capitalist power which blocked the road of Cuban development, the petty bourgeois radical democrats around Castro travelled an ideological distance — consciously and deliberately and by a quite new route — that had taken decades to unwind in 19th century Europe. The 'Castroites' lived through the different stages, and succeeded in carrying the Cuban people with them in their journey towards the conviction that world capitalism should be overthrown.

If the 'Cubans' seemed to parachute into the 'communist movement', that was because to make their revolution they had to detour round it, rejecting the quietism of the Communist Parties of Latin America and disproving in practice the Stalinist

theory that socialist transformation was not 'on the agenda' in Latin America.

They re-lived the historic stages from radical democracy to communism after they took power, and under the pressure and influence of the Stalinist states. It was not, however, inevitable that the Cuban state would become bureaucratised. Its leadership had proved themselves to be genuine — and truly great — revolutionaries. They had no baggage or 'heritage' of Stalinist practices and precepts: on the contrary, they held to a belief in those human rights and democratic practices which bourgeois radicalism proclaimed in its revolutionary era, which imperialism progressively abandons, and which the Stalinists deny more or less entirely.

Spurning the neo-reformism of Moscow and the hollow phrasemongering of Peking, their evolution was an open-ended one. Their relationship to the working class in Cuba was not that of oppressors or jealously privileged bureaucrats, nor did their leading position in the revolution depend on repression of proletarian internationalists: in that they differed sharply from the Stalinist leaders of the great popular revolutions in China and in Vietnam.

## Trend

But the 'Castroites' never reached the revolutionary Marxist understanding of the necessary historical role of the international working class in making — or, in Cuba, consolidating — the proletarian revolution. Effective working-class self-rule was never established in Cuba. Though the workers were armed, the most open, popular, flexible plebiscitary democracy, such as the Castroites practised in the first years after the revolution, was decisively different from the proletarian-democratic rule of workers' councils. From the beginning 'Castroism' was not just an ideological trend, but had also a state and social dimension.

Guevara came to personify this attempt at a renovated revolutionary politics — which, as it were, went back and began at the beginning with a simple Jacobin revolutionary integrity and seriousness. That attempt, its achievements and limitations, has left a major mark in the history of the struggle for socialist revolution in the period since world war 2. It needs and deserves a serious analysis it never got from the self-proclaimed theoreticians of Guevarism, like Régis Debray. In forthcoming issues, Workers' Action will be publishing a series of articles covering the Cuban revolution and the revolutionary currents it gave rise to in Latin America.

# SHOULD ZIONISTS BE BANNED?

**THE National Union of Students Executive is to consider taking action against certain Student Unions in response to bans on college Israel Societies and/or Jewish Societies.**

Those who want to proscribe the Zionists from exercising free speech within student unions argue as follows:

The Zionist state of Israel is based on racial criteria. It is a racist state in its constitution and its definitions of citizenship. Zionism established itself in Palestine in a racist manner (eg boycotts of Arab produce and labour by the Zionists) and with racist goals. The practice of the state of Israel since its inception has been racist.

Therefore pro-Israel propaganda is racist through and through. Any and every apologist for the existence of the state of Israel must take as a starting-point the denial of any rights to the Palestinian Arabs.

By logic Zionists, like other racists, should be denied the right to organise, recruit, and justify the crimes of the state of Israel.

But to establish the fact that Zionism is racist, a form of racism, does not completely describe the problem. For who are the Zionists in Britain?

The hard core Zionists with a firm commitment to Israel are the Jewish community.

In Britain in general, there is widespread sympathy with Israel and acceptance of the Zionist state. But in the Jewish community this amounts to complete identification. Apart from revolutionary socialists whose origins are in the Jewish community, there are very few Jewish non-Zionists.

This identification with Israel has its roots and motive force not in anti-Arab racism, nor in a thought-out programme of displacing the Palestinians, but in the fact that the Jewish masses in Europe have themselves been the victims of racist persecution. It was only during and after the Third Reich's "Final Solution", the terrible paroxysm of anti-semitism that slaughtered six million Jews, that Zionism gained general acceptance among the European and US Jewish communities. Before that, the Zionist project to colonise Palestine had been a minority creed among Jews.

The identification with the Zionist colony and later the state established with US imperialist support was largely identification by those who escaped the Nazi holocaust with a Jewish state that claimed to be a guarantee that the ages-old persecution of Jews would cease as a Jewish "homeland" was acquired.

That this state was European and not Middle Eastern, that it was exclusively Jewish, no doubt made it easier for western Jews to identify with it; but these were not the essential starting points for them. Far from being conscious racists, most Jews in Britain are not even conscious of the racist basis of the state of Israel.

Zionism is inescapably racist. But to say that Zionists are racists who should be treated like the National Front is to

miss the point that the hardcore Zionists are Jews not motivated by fascist-type race hatred but by a wrong and misguided response to anti-Jewish racism.

The Jewish community which is the bedrock of Zionist support is not organised and kept together by this Zionism even. Still less is it a racist selection of people. Its collusion with Zionism is not the essential characteristic of the Jewish community.

Of course Zionist Jews are responsible for themselves. Those who support the state of Israel are supporters of a racist state even if they have evaded the less acceptable facts about Israel's origins and its mode of operation in the Middle East in the past thirty years. As Zionists, they are still our political and ideological enemies.

That is quite a long way, however, from being the same as the National Front or other groups formed around fascist programmes and fuelled by race hatred.

Most members of the Jewish community can be reasoned with. The self-same consciousness of their own history that is manipulated by Zionism and imperialism leads many Jews to oppose those who are the organised racists in this country, such as the National Front. Even the conservative Jewish Chronicle said after Lewisham: "Not even the Mirror made the (to me) obvious point that, whatever their defects, the Trotskyists have the right attitude to the National Front and should not be left alone to stop its provocations". (Article by Philip Kleinman, cited in the anti-fascist paper CARF).

These Jews should be welcomed as allies in the anti-fascist struggle, even while they give support to racist Israel.

The abstract logical chain — Zionism is racism and since racism must be denied free speech so must Zionism — leads to the suppression of the rights of a community which is itself still potentially threatened with racism. As the NF has grown it has felt more confident to express its anti-semitism more and more openly. It cannot at all be excluded that the constant outpourings against "Finance" capital (by which they mean Jews) will lead before long to violent attacks on the Jewish community.

With extreme Zionist organisations such as Herut, which are overtly and aggressively racist against Arabs, direct action rather than debate may be needed. But ordinary college Jewish Societies cannot be treated the same way. A general proscription of Zionist meetings is an unnecessarily blunt instrument. Their pro-Israel propaganda should not pass unchallenged, but there are many other ways to intervene and oppose it. Such interventions may well lead to violent incidents, as there are certainly thuggish Zionists who try to silence anti-Israel views. We should be prepared for that; but it is preferable to a blanket ban on any student society or group that is explicitly (Israel Societies) or implicitly (Jewish societies) Zionist.

IT'S NOW nearly ten years since the world-shaking events of 1968. Portugal in 1975 has confirmed that the prospect of socialist revolution opened up by the French workers in May 1968 was no mirage; but with the partial reconsolidation of reformism over the last few years, many revolutionaries are having to come to terms with the fact that the path to workers' power promises to be more difficult and tortuous than we thought in the brave days of 1968 or 1972.

Some of our difficulties echo problems discussed in the latest volume of Pathfinder Press's publications of Trotsky's writings.

From its foundation in 1930 the French section was central to the Trotskyist movement. But it found itself constantly thwarted in its efforts to take the lead in mass struggles. Either reformists and Stalinists would flatly oppose and isolate the Trotskyists' slogans; or, from time to time, they would take up the slogans of the Trotskyists (the united front, in 1934; the general strike, in 1936) while robbing them of their revolutionary content — and thus isolate the Trotskyists even more effectively.

### Fascist threat

In 1934 the Socialist Party and Communist Party formed a united front against the fascist threat in France. The workers' united front was soon to be transformed into a Popular Front, with an explicitly pro-capitalist programme and an alliance with the bourgeois Radical Party.

But in the meantime, so Trotsky argued, the revolutionary Marxists had to get involved in the mainstream of the united front — and the best way to do that was to enter the Socialist Party, which was then moving to the left.

A heated debate the Trotskyists did join the Socialist Party as a faction, in mid-1934. By mid-1935 the SP, under pressure from the CP, was beginning to move decisively to the right. In May 1935 the Laval-Stalin pact was concluded, committing the Stalinists to support the "national defence" of French imperialism. At the end of July the SP leadership expelled 13 Trotskyists and other left wingers from their youth section.

Trotsky proposed an immediate and aggressive response: indict the Stalinists and reformists for preparing to tie the masses to the slaughter machine of imperialism in the coming world war. Launch a campaign for a new revolutionary party and the Fourth International.

The French Trotskyist leaders dithered. And that is where the "crisis" of the book's title began.

### Uphill struggle

Demoralised by the uphill character of the revolutionary struggle, a section of the French Trotskyists, with Raymond Molinier and Pierre Frank, started looking for ways to get "mass action" and "mass support" without a head-on struggle against the reformists and (more especially) against the semi-revolutionary allies of the reformists.

In September Marceau Pivert formed a new grouping inside the Socialist Party, called the "Revolutionary Left". Pivert was all for "revolutionary action", all for opposing French imperialism — but at all costs, he insisted, "unity" had to be maintained with the "comrades" of the reformist leadership of the Socialist Party.

Molinier and Frank wanted



Trotsky [right] with Erwin Wolf

# Your political passports, please, gentlemen

"THE CRISIS OF THE FRENCH SECTION [1935-36]"  
by LEON TROTSKY  
£2.50 from Pathfinder Press, 47 The Cut, London SE1

to avoid any sharp polemic that would "isolate" them from Pivert and his followers. They came up with the idea of a "mass paper", *La Commune*, to be produced jointly by Trotskyists, Pivertists, and various other "revolutionary tendencies" on the basis of a platform of four or five slogans.

The other leading French Trotskyists, Jean Rous and Pierre Naville, opposed Molinier's project. But Rous and Naville were irresolute, passive, and all the while quarrelling bitterly between themselves.

### 'Broad' paper

In December 1935 it reached the point of a split between the Molinier faction and the Rous-Naville group.

By now both the Molinierists and the main Trotskyist organisation had been effectively evicted from the Socialist Party. *La Commune* got only condemnations from Pivert himself, but Molinier managed to put together a short-lived "united" editorial board with a few strays from Pivertism and elsewhere, and some ill-defined "Revolutionary Action Groups".

Very soon *La Commune* had to give up the pretence of being a "broad" paper, which "is not going to add itself to the multiplicity of tendencies in the workers' movement". There was a reunification in May 1936: but it was a false unity which succeeded in nothing except paralysing the Trotskyists during the general strike movement of June 1936, and there was a new split in July-August 1936.

All the time Trotsky kept up a stream of letters and articles advising, remonstrating, and criticising.

Some of the articles contained in this volume have been available and well-known for some time ("On 'labels' and 'numbers'", "For Commit-

tees of Action, not the People's Front", "What is a 'Mass Paper'?", "Lessons of the SFIO Entry", etc); but the book enables us for the first time to follow in all its detail Trotsky's approach in dealing with this crisis in the revolutionary ranks.

Nearly one-third of the book, too, is given over to an otherwise unobtainable pamphlet on the affair: "The Mass Paper", by the German Trotskyist Erwin Wolf.

The volume is one to be set alongside "In Defence of Marxism" and "The Struggle for a Proletarian Party", texts by Trotsky and Cannon dealing with a crisis in the American Trotskyist movement in 1939-40. (It is, however, less self-contained than they are, and is not really comprehensible politically unless read together with Trotsky's articles on France available in "Writings" 1933-34 and 1934-35 and in "Whither France".)

Trotsky incisively condemns both dead-end factionalism and shallow unity-mongering. His consistent theme is that manoeuvres, tactics and initiatives only make sense in the context of granite firmness of political principle.

### Reaching the ranks

"Programme first! 'Mass paper'? Revolutionary action? Regroupment? Communes everywhere?... Very well, very well... But, programme first! Your political passports, please, gentlemen..." (p.119)

"...the results of Bolshevik-Leninist work within reformist-centrist organisations do not really depend upon statutory clauses, but rather upon the spirit that animates our own friends, their resoluteness, their inner cohesion, their capacity to relentlessly oppose the demoralising centrist influences."

Revolutionary intransigence "does not at all exclude the



TROTSKY ON FRANCE,  
reviewed by  
COLIN FOSTER

task of 'adapting' to workers who are in the reformist parties, by teaching them new ideas in the language they understand. On the contrary, this art must be learned as quickly as possible. But one must not, under the pretext of reaching the ranks, make principled concessions to the top centrists and left centrists [like the SAP, which, in the name of the 'masses', prostrates itself before the reformists]" (p.126).

To the Pivertists who complained about the Trotskyists' inflexible insistence on the revolutionary programme, Trotsky replies: "The Fourth International will not tolerate mechanical 'monolithism' in its ranks. On the contrary, one of its most important tasks is to regenerate on a new, higher historical plane the 'revolutionary democracy of the proletarian vanguard'. The Bolshevik-Leninists consider themselves a faction of the International which is being built. They are completely ready to work hand in hand with other truly revolutionary factions. But they categorically refuse to adapt their policy to the psychology of opportunist cliques and to renounce their own banner." (p.47).

And to the Molinierists who were capitulating to the Pivertists, he replies: "Let us suppose for a moment that the GBL [the Trotskyists] consented to 'simplify' our programme, to renounce the slogans for the new party and for the Fourth International, to renounce implacable criticism of the social patriots [naming them by name], to renounce systematic criticism of the Revolutionary Left and of Pivert personally. I do not know if this newspaper would become, with the help of a

magic wand, a mass paper. I doubt it. But it would in any event become a SAPist [centrist] or Pivertist paper" (p.98).

The road to the masses cannot take a short-cut round the laborious process of recruiting and educating dedicated revolutionaries: "It is the elementary duty of a revolutionary organisation to make its political newspaper as accessible as possible to the masses. This task cannot be effectively solved except as a function of the growth of the organisation and its cadres, who must pave the way to the masses for the newspaper..." (p.97)

### Sectarian bluster

The problems debated in 1935-36 were to be recurring ones in the French section. The founding conference of the Fourth International, in 1938, reproached the French Trotskyists in the following terms: "First of all, it is necessary to fight against the stupid and primitive ideology which has crept in under the borrowed label of 'mass newspaper'... [The aim of the paper] is above all interrelated with the aim of the party itself: to forge cadres, provide the explanation of the situation, and not to stop at merely agitational slogans which, lacking explanation and political generalisation, are powerless to make the best workers understand the Fourth International's reason for existence..."

Similar problems came up in the greater crisis of the French section in 1947-48. And unquestionably the ideas in this book have a great relevance today in Britain, as the Socialist Workers Party tries to gain mass support by shallow and inconsistent agitation, as tendencies like the Workers' Socialist League retreat into sectarian bluster, as the International Marxist Group preaches a 'revolutionary unity' with scarcely any programmatic content.

Indeed, it seems that the publishers of the book had the IMG very much in mind. "The current theory and practice of some sections of the Fourth International" they say "suggest that not all of their leaders have absorbed the lessons Trotsky tried to teach in 1935-36 about 'broad' newspapers, the revolutionary attitude to centrist groups, etc."

### Lasting unity

The parallel between Molinier's *La Commune* and Socialist Challenge is not exact. But many of Trotsky's condemnations of *La Commune* as a would-be expression of a would-be movement towards revolutionary unity, without a clear identity, and with four or five slogans in place of a programme, could serve also for Socialist Challenge (except that SC does not even have a real Marceau Pivert): "Unity is an excellent thing. But demarcation on the question of the Marxist programme must precede unity... in order for that unity to be honest and long lasting..." (p.127).

"When the time comes, it will be necessary to merge with the opposition Stalinists and with all the other revolutionary groupings, but not on the basis of... equal representation on the editorial board — without principles, without a banner [the Molinier method]; rather on the basis of a particular programme..." (p.103).

It is only by debating, formulating, applying and developing such a revolutionary programme that we can make progress out of the confused state of the revolutionary left today.

# CDLM Conference is silent — on labour movement democracy!

**MORE than 200 people got together in Birmingham on Sunday 23rd October for a conference of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement.**

The conference was called mainly to discuss the wages struggle, and most of the time was given over to militants reporting on current or recent disputes, or on what they were doing in their trade union branches.

Many of the reports were valuable and interesting — but as the conference wore on there was an air of pretence about it: that this conference attended overwhelmingly by adherents or close supporters of the Workers Socialist League and the International Marxist Group was just a gathering of militant trade unionists.

Thus, paradoxically, there was less political debate than there would have been in a meeting of 220 trade unionists without political connections. The WSL stage-management of the affair left very little time for debating controversial issues.

Although the IMG said they agreed with the political res-

olution put forward, there were issues to be debated between the IMG and WSL. The IMG were trying confusedly to give a more open orientation to the CDLM, in place of it being simply the WSL's trade union front. Unfortunately the IMG's main practical proposal was for a bigger intervention by the CDLM, as the CDLM, in the 'Rank and File conference' called under the influence of the Socialist Workers' Party for 26th November.

Far from making the CDLM more of a campaigning body in the labour movement, this proposal merely makes it a cover-name for joint propaganda by the IMG and WSL against the SWP. Moreover, the issue was not clear, since the WSL also agreed to a CDLM intervention in the 'rank and file' conference.

Nevertheless, the fact that the debate was almost squeezed out by the rows of stage-managed reports led to some ugly scenes, with IMG members and others protesting against suppression of opposing viewpoints in the choice of speakers by the WSL-domin-

ated platform.

Workers' Action supporter Jim Denham spoke briefly. After reporting from British Leyland Longbridge, he declared: "My criticism of the motion that is put before you is that it doesn't say anything on democracy on the shop-floor and in the trade unions".

Despite the name, "Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement", it was not an accidental omission. At the first CDLM conference, in October 1976, WSL comrades opposed Workers' Action supporters who said that union officials should be made answerable to mass meetings, saying the emphasis should instead be put on trade union branches. And recently the WSL has been very reluctant to take up our call for a democratically-elected and accountable combine committee in Leyland.

The main problem for the CDLM, though, is to decide what it wants to be. Otherwise it will soon end up as the WSL's equivalent of the Socialist Labour League's "All Trades Union Alliance".

C.F.



## THE UNIONS



# Coventry NALGO calls for special conference

COVENTRY NALGO branch now supports the call for a national £15 a week claim from 1st January 1978.

A special branch meeting on Wednesday 19th October decided to support other branches in their request for a NALGO special conference to commit the union to a claim for £15 a week increase and a 35-hour week.

But to get a national conference will be quite a feat, since rank and file members have to organise 50 branches passing a similar motion within six weeks of one another.

Between 100 and 150 members attended the Coventry meeting, and voted about two to one in favour of the £15 after heavily defeating a motion calling for a 10% rise from 1st August 1977.

In following this up, our fight has to have two main themes. Firstly, propaganda to counter the 'tighten your belts, give a year for Britain' philosophy of the Labour government. Secondly we have to raise the political consciousness of the mass of the membership by directly involving them through grass roots shop steward type organisation in the day to day struggles within the union.

If we can bring our members to have the confidence to struggle, they will develop the determination to win.

ALAN SPRUNG,  
Coventry NALGO

# INVISIBLE SISTERS, INDIFFERENT BROTHERS

**AT A FIRE Brigades Union week school recently, a big treat had been laid on for the brothers on the evening off. A coach had been organised — at great expense, a Union official boasted — to take them to a nearby strip club...**

As it happened, the announcement was greeted with anger, and the coach was cancelled. But in Britain's male dominated trade union movement such a response is probably rare. Nearly two years after the Sex Discrimination Act, many trade union gatherings can still safely rely on their 'brotherhood' not being spoilt by the presence of trade unionist 'sisters'.

Many unions themselves discriminate, openly and less openly, against their women members. Many unions having a substantial proportion of women members have no women at all on their national leading bodies and few at local level. Conferences are likely to be overwhelmingly male even if membership is overwhelmingly female.

Last weekend a conference in London on Women and the Trade Unions had been called by angry ASTMS women at Guys Hospital, after a long tussle there over union positions. And next month an the Working Women's Charter Campaign is holding a school on the same theme.

Last Saturday's meeting brought together about 60 people, but was it not organised to achieve any concrete results. Many people spoke about their experiences and struggles — cases of discrimination at work, fights for nursery provision, the discrete discrimination in the teaching profession against women, the solidarity of the women at Trico (who won a long equal pay strike last year) for the Hounslow Hospital work-in.

There was evidence on male preserves like the print industry, and on health service union conferences where men outnumbered women by eight to one, though one in three

union members is a woman.

The meeting was interesting — but it remains for the WWC Trade Union School on November 26th (see Events for details) to get down to the job of organising women's fractions at grass-roots level in the

unions, to organise and ensure that women are properly represented and that their unions put up a real fight for their rights and don't regard the 'sisters' as intruders on the jobs and prerogatives of the 'brothers'.

## THE CREDIBILITY OF MAUREEN COLQUHOUN

**IN LAST week's New Statesman, Maureen Colquhoun, MP for Northampton North, has written an article in which she says that the principal reason for her local Labour Party's decision to seek a new Labour candidate for the next election was the fact that she is gay.**

"Behind my back the real accusation was made: 'She's a Lesbian. She's an electoral liability'".

Hostility to homosexuality is rife in our society. The chance to condemn homosexuality through attacking people in the public eye is avidly seized on [witness the recent witch-hunt against Jeremy Thorpe in the bourgeois press]. Undoubtedly anti-gay prejudice may have coloured some people's reactions to Maureen Colquhoun.

From this point of view, her statement is credible.

But credibility ends when we see that her article includes not one single reference to the major attack levelled against her, opening the effort to have her replaced: criticism of the racist stance she took by openly supporting Enoch Powell. The article also avoids giving any account of another big factor in her replacement: her threat to take her opponents in Northampton North Labour Party to the High Court.

The day after one of Enoch Powell's most vile rabble-raising speeches against

black people, made in January of this year, Maureen Colquhoun declared that she was becoming increasingly convinced that Powell "is not a racist". She added: "All my life I have worked for a multi-racial society, but I am now living in one and my attitude has changed". By helping to promote Powell's ideas and make them respectable in the labour movement, she put herself in his camp.

At that time some people said that Colquhoun was just being 'naive'. But there was nothing naive in the effect her statement had. National Front leader Martin Webster wrote: "Even more valuable than the speech which Enoch Powell made on 21st January on the subject of the coming racial civil war in Britain, was the reaction to it from Ms Maureen Colquhoun, Tribune Labour MP for Northampton North... The effect would be to make racism more respectable and assist the ordinary folk of Britain to feel less guilty about their racist instincts..."

But Maureen Colquhoun is quite unrepentant.

Only a clear repudiation of her statement supporting Enoch Powell could have made Maureen Colquhoun's article worth taking seriously. Without that it remains merely the plaintive cry of an unseated Member of Parliament.

MARY CORBISHLEY

*At a recent Fire Brigades Union week school, general secretary Terry Parry was speaking on the union's wage claim. Parry is a well-known TUC left-winger.*

*One member asked a question: 'The claim is 30%. What will you do if the employers only offer 20%'?*

*Replied militant left-winger Parry: 'I'll get out of the room as quickly as I can, before they change their mind'.*

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# WORKERS IN ACTION

## NOV. 7th - GRUNWICKS DAY OF RECKONING

### All-out bus strike against service cuts

A MASS MEETING of 850 North Staffordshire bus workers voted on Monday 24th October for an all-out strike against cuts in services. PMT buses throughout the area have been brought to a halt.

The strikers hope the dispute will be made official within the next few days by the TGWU.

The strike call followed a walk-out on Friday 21st; after a blackleg crew took a bus out on a disputed route. There had been a two week campaign of selective strikes against the attempts of management to implement further cuts in services by reorganising timetables.

Traffic manager Will Inskip warned of the threat to jobs of a long drawn-out strike. It is a long drawn-out series of cuts which is worrying PMT workers at the moment! Notices has now been given that all future cuts in services and jobs will be resisted by direct action.

PAUL COOPER

### Cardiff bus crews want £1 for 1%

PLATFORM STAFF on Cardiff city Transport were given the chance to participate in the forthcoming national wage negotiations at our last branch meeting, on October 12th.

Under an item of correspondence, we were presented with the details of the claim prepared by the national negotiating committee.

A member observed that the claim made no provision for increases in the cost of living over the next twelve months, and should be amended; but he got the reply that, although there will be a conference in a few months' time which will discuss amendments to the claim, the branch couldn't really do anything. We were told that our only chance was to 'nibble one of the delegates'.

Nevertheless, the branch adopted the following resolution:

"This branch resolves to instruct our wage negotiators to include in any future wage agreements a cost of living clause, in which there is a £1 increase for every 1% increase, based on the national union's cost of living index."

It will be interesting to see whether this resolution ever finds its way to the conference or the negotiating committee, but militants in the branches should be arguing for claims to be prepared more democratically, to give the rank and file the power to decide.

PAUL BYERS

## WHY FORD WORKERS VOTED YES 23-0

WORKERS at all 23 Ford plants voted last week to accept management's 'final' offer.

Majorities varied from overwhelming to roughly two-to-one, but there was generally no large opposition to the deal. This acceptance has now to be formalised by the union side of the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee.

### Pay rise? You've had it, say Alcan

OVER 200 workers at the Skelmersdale plant of Alcan Booth Industries (the tin foil makes) have been in occupation since the end of August. They are sitting in because the management are refusing to pay them a 10% wages rise. Management say they have already paid the workers the 10% in their last pay deal!

A £4 increase was negotiated under a 'flexibility deal' two years ago — but payment was postponed. The £4 increase was finally paid (with backdating) earlier this year — and now, when the workers demand 10%, they have been told "you've already had it!"

Meanwhile it appears that the workers have received no support from any of the other Alcan plants. One of the main reasons for this is that most of the other plants are already on better wages and a plant in Banbury doing the same type of work is on £15 to £18 a week more.

Although the unions in the Skelmersdale factory have played into the hands of management with flexibility deals and productivity deals (there is talk of a self-financing productivity deal) when they start back they need your support urgently. One way of showing this support is to go to Alcan factories in your area to get them to refuse to handle extra work. Resolutions, messages of support, and money should be sent to: Les Wick, Convenor, Alcan Booth Industries, Pimbo Industrial Estate, Skelmersdale, Lancashire.

ABOUT 70 lift engineers in Merseyside have been laid off because they were implementing a work to rule.

The 'work to rule' started on Monday 3rd October, after a national recommendation from EPTU stewards. The Merseyside engineers had met on Friday 23rd September and decided unanimously to support the work to rule call, for a 130% wages rise.

So far Hammond and Chapman have laid off 24 engineers, and Express Lifts, 30. Otis Elevators have laid off none so far, but management say there will be lay-offs next week.

LOL DUFFY

NOVEMBER 7th, say the Grunwick strike committee, will be 'the day of reckoning'. "A defeat for us would be a defeat for the whole working class". They are calling for maximum support on the mass picket scheduled for that day.

As part of the build-up, the strikers have also called for a big turn-out every Monday. A show of strength on the picket line is vital if there is to be a chance of blacking of services

to Grunwicks. The workers enforcing the blacking will need the massive and visible support of thousands of other workers to protect them against victimisation by their employers and their union leaders.

On Monday 24th, there were, disappointingly, only a few hundred on the picket. The police still turned out in force, and attacked a group of pickets

one hundred yards from the gates (where the scab bus had already gone in). Five pickets were arrested.

The strikers have also called for a lobby of TUC headquarters this Wednesday, October 24th. But the TUC is unlikely to reverse its present policy of 'full support in words, no support in action'. It is the rank and file turn-out for November 7th that will decide.

PETE FIRMIN

### Leyland's hush deal for speed-up

continued from p. 1

"sell" all shop-floor control over conditions, manning levels, track speeds, and negotiations... in return for nothing! Management have made no promise that they will go beyond the Government's 10% ceiling — but there's little doubt that every plant could have got 10% anyway.

The proposals do include a "self financing incentive scheme". There are no promises on what money Leyland workers will get from this scheme. What is clear is what management wants from it: "freedom for the application of industrial engineering techniques (ie work study) and results."

That means the end of 'mutuality' and complete management control over manning and work speeds.

Equally clear is management's statement that they will withdraw the incentive payments at will.

There is no earthly reason why Leyland workers should submit to all this and thereby lose all shopfloor control over negotiations.

As an alternative policy, Workers' Action Longbridge Bulletin has argued for the following:

- Straight wage increases of at least £30 to restore 1974 living standards.
- Cost-of-living protection for wages: £1 increase for every 1% rise in the cost of living in any month.
- A minimum wage of £75.
- Defence of mutuality.
- A drive for democracy and accountability in the trade union structure in Leyland — and for withdrawal from the 'participation' committees.

The Longbridge Action Group, in which WA supporters are active, has also produced a leaflet calling for a "no" vote on the management package.

Whether the vote goes for the "deal" or not, there will still be a fight to be carried on, against the bosses' "get tough" policy — a policy that will continue, unfortunately, with or without Sir Richard Dobson! It's good to see him booted out, but the day-to-day job of organising against his whole tribe will have to go on just the same.

The 12% overall deal is certainly above the Government's attempted 10% wage ceiling. However, more significant is what it didn't achieve. There was a back-down on the 15% plus cost-of-living safeguard claim; demands for a shorter working week (37½ hours) and for 80% pay for lay-offs arising out of any dispute were both abandoned.

The acceptance by the shop floor was not really surprising. Over the last week, workers were faced with a voting system that gave equal votes to plants of widely differing sizes. This meant that the early votes (mostly at small plants) were bound to build up a momen-

tum in favour of the deal.

And, as Workers' Action has said before, there was no effective leadership from the union officials who had formally rejected Fords' offer.

Instead of organising and fighting for a way to win the full claim, the official leadership (including the Communist Party) just said: "You can accept the offer, or you can take the risk of strike action" — just two months before Christmas and before any other group of workers has challenged the Government.

On top of this, the AUEW executive council voted last Tuesday — just as the plants were starting to vote — to approve Fords' offer.

JOHN BLOXAM



## 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*, 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER. Birmingham Workers' Action readers' meeting on the Labour Party. 4pm at 721A Pershore Road, Selly Oak.

TUESDAY 1 NOVEMBER. Cardiff Workers' Action readers' meeting: 'The quest for left unity'. 7.30pm, at VCS, St Mary St.

SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER. Midlands conference on Ireland. Details from 7 College Street, Leicester.

SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER. Sheffield National Abortion Campaign conference on 'Abortion and the Law'. From 10.30 at Graves Cinema, Sheffield University. Registration and papers, 50p from 20 Newington Rd, Sheffield 11.

SUNDAY 13 NOVEMBER. Manchester City Labour Party half day school on racism. From 2.15pm at Hulme Labour Club.

SUNDAY 13 NOVEMBER. International-Communist League public meeting: "How to fight the fasc-

ists". 7.45pm at the 'Prince Albert', Wharfedale Rd, London N1.

FRIDAY 25 NOVEMBER. 'British trade unionists and the fight against apartheid'. 7pm, Friends House, Euston Rd. Speakers include John Gaetsewe of SACTU. Organised by AAM and SACTU.

SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER. Working Women's Charter day school on women and the trade unions. From 10.30am at Friends Meeting House, Church St, Reading. Details from Anita Turnbull, Flat 2, 3 Coleridge Road, London N8.

SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER. 'Rank and File' delegate conference. 11.30am at the New Century Hall, Corporation Street, Manchester. Credentials for delegates from trade union bodies, 50p from the Rank and File Centre, 265a Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

CARF: Campaign Against Racism and Fascism. No. 2 now out, with articles on Richard Verrall, Marriner, Lewisham and the press, Notting Hill Carnival 1977, plus many reports. From Flat 3, 5 Huntley St, London WC1.

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