

# workers' ACTION

No.122

Oct.28-Nov.4, 1978

10p

Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

Public meeting

FIGHTING RACISM IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Speakers: Patrick Kodikara (Labour councillor, Hackney); Tassaddaq Ahmed (editor, 'The Asian'); Fran Brodie; and a speaker from the Virk Brothers Defence Committee.

2.30pm, SUNDAY 5th NOVEMBER

TOYNBEE HALL, WHITECHAPEL RD., EAST LONDON.

THE FORD workers' strike is still solid. Workers at British Oxygen have received and rejected an offer over 5%. And several public sector unions have sworn that they will not accept the pittance the government is offering.

Meanwhile Vauxhall workers at the Luton and Dunstable plants have voted not to strike. It looks as if these workers — already among the lowest paid in the car industry — are ready to accept a deal within the 5%, a deal which according to Dunstable's AUEW convenor will mean only an extra £2.99 for a production worker.

The Luton and Dunstable votes are votes to desert the fight being spearheaded by the Ford workers. But it is not a big enough set-back to sabotage the Ford workers' chances.

Why did these Vauxhall workers vote against their union leaders' recommendations, against their stewards' advice, and against their fellow workers at Ellesmere Port?

Like millions of other workers, they have been dosed up on the narcotic explanations of capitalism's crisis: it's the fault of the greedy workers, the country can't afford it, an incomes policy is for the common good. They have been told by the press, and by the trade union leaders, that a rigid incomes policy is the only thing that stands between us and ruinous inflation.

Even now, after three years in which the Government's arguments have been shown up again and again, millions of workers throughout the country see an incomes policy as the only safeguard against chaos and irresponsibility. Ironically, the instinct towards responsibility and planning — the very opposite of the barbarous jungle of capitalist

competition and plunder — has been mobilised to support an anti-working-class line.

The only ones who will gain are those who thrive on that chaos, the profiteers who run Vauxhall, Ford, and the other great empires of exploitation.

Wages are curbed — so that profits can rise without restraint. For the bosses,

there is no 5% or 10% limit. Ford boss Terry Beckett got an 80% rise last year. Top civil service chiefs, judges, nationalised industry bosses, and armed forces commanders got limit-busting 30% rises. What top managers don't get by wriggling round the pay limits, they get in the form of 'perks'.

Planning and social respon-

sibility must start by putting the wealth at present monopolised by a tiny minority of millionaires and exploiters under social ownership and control. Until we overthrow the power of those millionaires, a fight against all forms of incomes policy, and for shorter working hours, is the only way to protect ourselves against this chaos and plunder.

## WE'LL FIGHT THE 5pc TOO SAYS HACKNEY MEETING

AT LEAST 150 people packed into Hackney Town Hall on Monday 23rd for a meeting called by Hackney Trades Council in support of the Ford workers.

Ray Barnes, a speaker from the local National Union of Public Employees, pointed out the way forward in clear terms. He called for "the setting up for Pay Action Groups within the trade unions to organise a fight-back against wage curbs". The way to express solidarity, he said, was with strike action now — not waiting to see how the Ford strikers get on.

John Walsh, from British Oxygen, reported that BOC negotiations have been suspended until November 1st

"to await the outcome at Ford", but he went on to say that "Solidarity is what Ford is all about".

Gordon Davie spoke from the Ford UK Workers Combine, a group which is trying to build a rank and file organisation among Ford workers. He pointed to the lack of trade union democracy. The officials, he said, feel threatened by the Combine group, and have tried to knock any attempt at rank and file involvement in the strike on the head.

There was some evidence at the meeting to support what Gordon Davie said. The Communist Party members on Hackney Trades

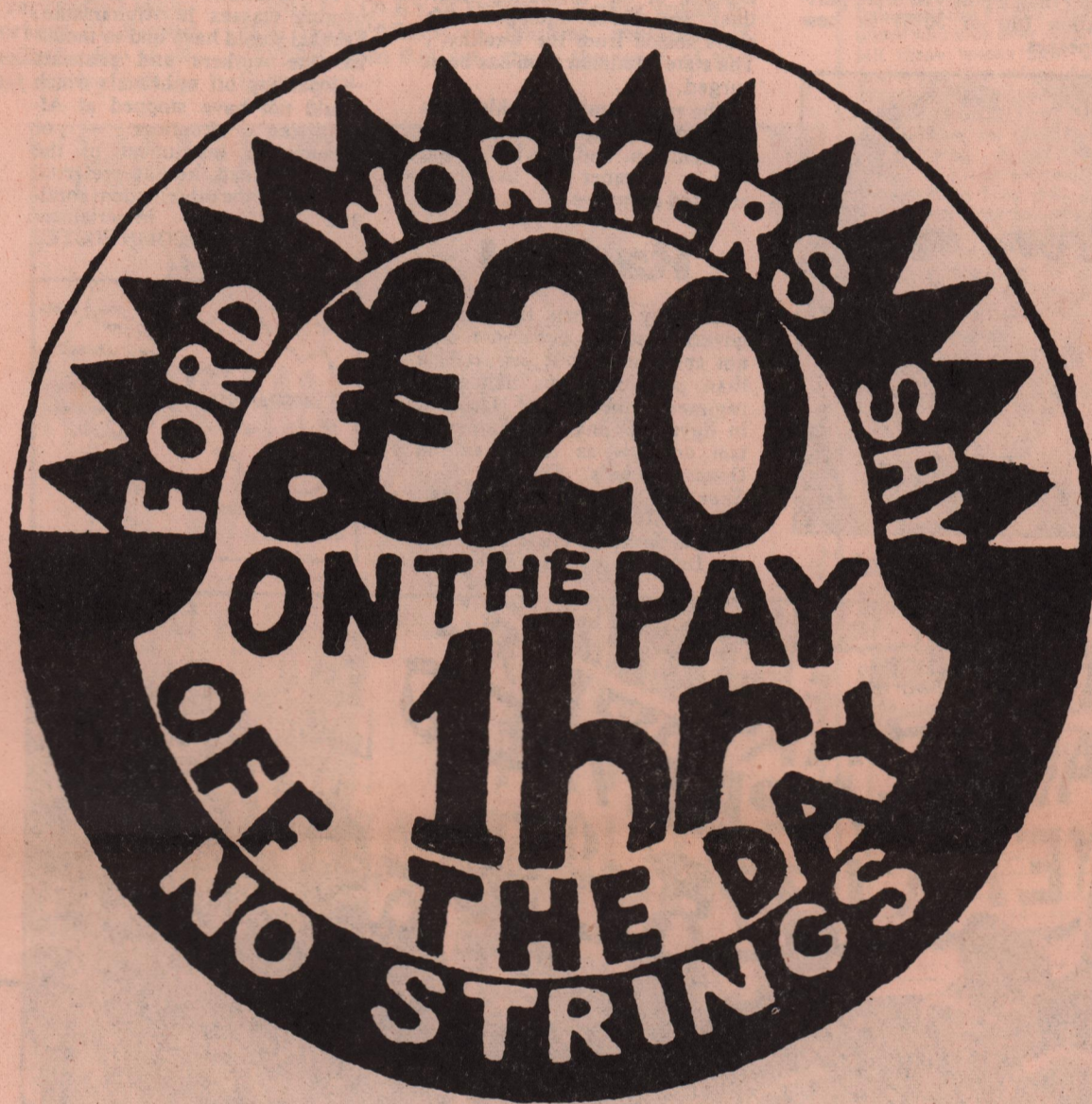
Council had tried to have the meeting cancelled because the Combine had helped the Trades Council organise it. And one of the officials from Ford stood up in the meeting and attacked the Combine as an "organisation within an organisation". The union officials at Ford, he said, had done a good job.

But the officials have 'done a good job'... in keeping the workers isolated at home instead of trying to get them involved on the picket lines, as the Combine have done. The Combine have put out a bulletin every Thursday at the Ford plants, to let workers who come in to collect their tax rebates know what is happening.

The Ford UK Workers Combine have also organised strike benefits and other events. The fight-back against the anti-strike agitation in Southampton was organised by the Combine.

Davie pointed out that Ford workers are not a special case. All workers need a living wage. The Ford workers are not on strike because Ford made a big profit, but because they wanted a living wage. The firemen, Davie said, were a 'special case', and that did not stop Callaghan kicking them in the face.

The other Ford worker speaking at the meeting was



## NF strikes again: 64 stitches for passer-by

A GROUP of National Front thugs went roaming the streets of London's East End on the night of Thursday October 19th, armed with pick-axe handles. They were looking for Asians to beat up, and they weren't disappointed.

Elated from their successful spree of race-terror, they then attacked a cyclist riding near the Front headquarters in Great Eastern Street.

The cyclist, who was returning from an evening in an East End pub, was so badly beaten about the head that his wounds needed 64 stitches.

That night, police found four Asians behind the flats in nearby Pittfield Street. They had been beaten up by the same thugs.

Kicking down the door of the Front headquarters, the police found a number of weapons — iron bars, pitchforks, and pick-axe handles with instructions on them as to where to hit to make it hurt. They took in ten members, but let six go. Later they charged the other four.

National Front leader Webster, of course, wasn't a bit disturbed. This full-time liar and race-baiter claimed, "Some of our youngsters got a bit overexcited". According to him they had merely been trying to defend the new headquarters against "gangs of Asians" and "local Communists"

## Terror

Once again we have evidence that the National Front is guilty of organised terror in the East End.

Only a week before, a group of youths were found guilty of the indescribably sadistic murder of a tramp. They had mutilated and crushed him. The murderers' final act was to daub nearby walls with the tramp's blood, writing the words, "National Front".

These same monsters confessed to having taken part in nearly three hundred attacks on Asians and tramps in the East End in the last couple of years.

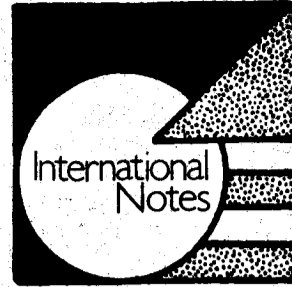
What of the police? They have shown almost complete indifference to the situation of the Asians of the East End. Their racism and their friendly links with the National Front mean that many police approve of what the NF thugs are doing.

The fact that they have acted on this occasion is not the result of a new-found social conscience. Rather it stems from the fear that if the NF go 'too far', things in the East End will get out of control. The police want to be the sole arbiters of 'law and order' in the area.

What the police want least of all is exactly what is most needed: militant self-defence by the Asian community. And if the Front are going to arm themselves, then that self-defence will have to be adequately armed to beat off the attacks.

continued back page

# AFGHANISTAN: Flying the Red Flag but still friends with the Shah



AS FROM last week, the Red Flag is the new national banner of Afghanistan. Six months ago, in April, the corrupt dictatorship of Mohammed Daud was overthrown, after mass street protests, by Afghanistan's Communist Party (the PDP). But the results so far have been far less radical than the reactionary dictators in the neighbouring states — Iran and Pakistan — feared.

Probably it is because of those dictators' fears that the new Afghan regime has been so cautious. One million Afghans work in Iran; yet throughout the mass uprisings and bloody repression of recent months, Afghanistan's President Terakki has stressed his "desire to achieve friendly relations with Iran".

Shying away from the prospect of throwing this whole sector of Asia into revolutionary turmoil, Terakki has continued collaboration with the Iranian government on a highway connecting Iran and Kabul (the Afghan capital), jointly financed by Iran and by the USA.

## Regime

The Terakki regime has close links with the USSR, its neighbour on the northern border — but there were close links before, under the Daud regime. Indeed, Terakki's *Khalq* (People's) faction split the PDP in 1973 in protest against the USSR's orders to support Daud, carried out by the more strictly pro-Russian *Parcham* (Flag) faction.

The PDP was reunited in 1976, but since the April coup *Parcham* supporters have been systematically eliminated from almost all leading positions, in a series of purges.

Terakki insists that his revolution is "national-democratic", not communist. No sweeping land reform has been carried through yet; the new regime has only cancelled debts and mortgages for small and landless peasants.

A crash education and literacy programme has been launched. Trade unions have been legalised

for the first time ever, but on taking power the new Government announced that "banking activity will be carried out within the framework of the law in conditions of complete secrecy and inviolability of deposits and property". In relation to industry, Terakki's programme goes no further than a policy of State participation (up to 50%) in new businesses.



Terakki: "I'm no communist"

The Terakki Government's most drastic measures have been those designed to ensure its political power. 800 top military commanders have been sacked and replaced, mostly, by *Khalq* supporters. The Paris daily *Le Monde* notes "here and there... the appearance of groups for the defence of the revolution (militias), sometimes equipped with arms seized from the wealthy". The state administration has been purged.

The royal family — which was the core of the old regime in Afghanistan, and of which Daud was a member — has been arrested *en masse*.

## Radical

In many respects the Terakki government has been, not only not communist, but less radical than petty-bourgeois nationalist regimes of the type of Nasser's, in Egypt; its links with imperialism are just as strong as the Daud regime's. The *Far East Economic Review* reports that: "Saudi Arabia has indicated it will continue the credits given to the Daud regime. An agreement

has been signed with the US for the purchase of wheat and other foodstuffs... [Local US agency officials] have expressed a desire for US participation in expanding Afghan agriculture and land reform cooperatives".

The police force is partly equipped by West Germany.

To overthrow the property-owning classes in Afghanistan, Terakki would have had to mobilise the workers and peasants — sparking off upheavals which would not have stopped at Afghanistan's frontiers — or become an instrument of the USSR. Instead, he has preferred to take the other option: continued ties with imperialism.

COLIN FOSTER



3000 demonstrators marched against apartheid in London last Saturday. The same day [21st Oct.] Rhodesian forces attacked guerilla camps in Zambia, killing — according to their account — 1500 people. Nationalist leader Joshua Nkomo said victims included many unarmed civilians.

# The hell that waits for Astrid Proll

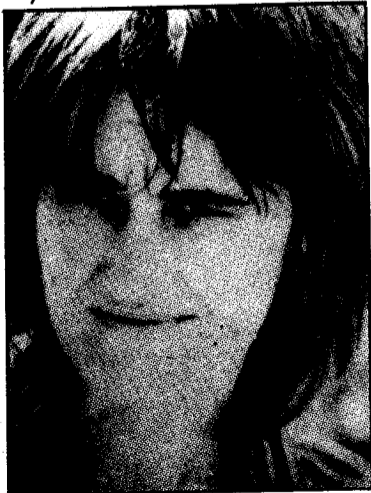
ASTRID PROLL is currently sitting in the top security wing of Brixton Prison, awaiting extradition to West Germany. If she is returned there, to answer charges of attempted murder, she faces solitary confinement under conditions of sensory deprivation, a rigged trial and, almost certainly, death in prison.

The *Friends of Astrid Proll* are campaigning to prevent her extradition and have produced a short pamphlet putting their case. (Available from 109 Backchurch Lane, E1, for 10p).

First, the pamphlet deals with her reasons for fleeing Germany and with what happened to her in prison there. She was subjected to 4½ months of sensory deprivation (no sounds, no natural light, no human contact) which still affects her physically and psychologically. At the end of it she was too ill to go on trial, and managed to escape from hospital.

The British press has dubbed Astrid "Terror Girl". But in fact the major charges against her were extremely flimsy. The pamphlet quotes a recent issue of *Der Spiegel*: "...the most severe accusation, that Astrid Proll shot at two policemen, couldn't even be proved convincingly at the time because the enquiring

by Bruce Robinson



Astrid Proll

authorities were holding back witnesses present at the scene... they (the plainclothes police) were only allowed to give restricted evidence... the prosecution curtailed the hearing of witnesses and therefore the possibilities of legal judgment, in an unconstitutional way.

Nevertheless, since her arrest in 1971, the battery of repressive

legislation has grown so as to exclude the possibility of Astrid getting a fair trial. Such trials now take place in special courts, with handpicked judges, with built-in judicial advantages for the prosecution and the risk of prison sentences for the defence lawyers if they really try to defend their clients.

As the pamphlet points out, there is a witchhunting atmosphere — anyone who tried to defend Astrid Proll would be described as a 'sympathiser' of the Baader-Meinhof 'gang' and thus would themselves become liable to loss of their job or legal proceedings against them.

## Active

Astrid Proll has very little chance of escaping a long prison term if she is extradited from Britain. She is almost certain to be given a long prison sentence in the most barbaric conditions.

Finally, the pamphlet tells what Astrid has been doing since she came to Britain.

She trained to become a mechanic, and then worked as a fitter's mate in a toy factory (the only woman in this traditionally male job in the whole factory).

Later she took a job as an instructor in motor mechanics, working with unemployed school leavers.

She was also active in the women's movement, and the pamphlet quotes from many of her personal friends who speak of how she worked with them and helped them.

## Victims

A weakness of the pamphlet is its emphasis on the fact that Astrid Proll has "spent the last four years in Britain leading a legal and constructive life", rather than stressing the need for political opposition to repression by the West German state. The danger in this approach is that it tries to avoid the issue of whether Astrid Proll had ever been involved in the activities of the Red Army Fraction, and allows people to argue for the extradition on the basis that she may have committed criminal acts.

We must stand in solidarity with all victims of state repression in Germany, whether classed as 'terrorists' or not. The British left must take up the case of Astrid Proll as an example of that repression and Britain's complicity in it.

# BP's blood - money swap

B.P. has now admitted that it was indirectly supplying Rhodesia with oil until last month.

In a statement issued on October 22nd, BP admitted that a 'swap' arrangement existed with the South African government owned oil company Sasol until September 19th.

It worked like this. Part of the South African oil market is reserved for Sasol. If Sasol cannot, or chooses not to, take up its reserved share of the market, then the major oil companies operating in South Africa — including BP — are pledged to fill the gap.

This agreement (dating from 1971) was used to enable Sasol to supply Rhodesia while BP, Shell, and other companies supplied Sasol's share of the South African market.

The swap was first discussed in 1974, at a meeting between oil company bosses and a South African government official. Although BP now admits to the swap as something which went on without them knowing about, a Shell executive's notes on that 1974 meeting record the oil men suggesting that "consideration should be given to Sasol directly handling all these (Rhodesian) supplies and balancing through inter-company exchanges".

That was done as from 1976. BP says "the quantities of oil involved were so small as not to be detectable in the normal course of business". It appears, however, that 15,000 to 20,000 barrels a day were involved. Sasol's share of the South African market is 17,000 barrels a day, and Rhodesia's present consumption is about the same.

The total South African market has declined slightly over the recent period, and BP's share of that market has remained roughly the same. Yet the output of the joint Shell/BP refinery at Durban increased by 20,000 barrels a day — from 106,000 to 126,000 — during 1977.

BP has pulled back now — partly to avoid further political embarrassment, and to give them a chance of doing business with a future independent Zimbabwe, but most immediately because Sasol now has increased capacity and can cover Rhodesia's needs as well as its share of the South African market. The 1971 agreement still stands.

# France— teachers and students in school strikes

IN France as in Britain there have been severe cutbacks in education spending. And in France the response has been more militant.

Since the beginning of the new school year, there has been a wave of strikes and occupations in the secondary schools, both in Lycées [grammar schools] and CETs [technical schools]. Parents and teachers are taking part in the occupations in some schools.

The school students, the parents and the teachers are demanding more teachers and more resources. There are classes of up to 40, no teachers for some subjects, shortage of space in science laboratories... and in one school, no electricity supply in the laboratories!

National strike action has been taken by the physical education teachers, who are especially affected by the cutbacks. Since 1967 PE has been cut from 5 hours a week for each class to two.

50,000 students and teachers demonstrated in Paris on Friday 13th October. The event was marked by a number of conflicts between the trade unions and students' organisations involved — including one attack, with cries of "death to the Pabloties", by stewards of a students' union controlled by the OCI [an organisation formerly connected with the WRP in Britain].

# TUCAR - fighting repression on both sides of the border

The TRADE UNION CAMPAIGN AGAINST REPRESSION is an all-Ireland organisation, formally established in July 1977, which campaigns for the repeal of repressive legislation and in support of workers dismissed in connection with it. It also calls for the abolition of the special courts set up by Britain

in which those whom the TUC and the British Army wish to lock up for political reasons are tried without a jury.

MIKE FOLEY of Workers Action spoke to JOE EDWARDS, a leading member of TUCAR from Belfast, about the work of the Campaign.

## Why was TUCAR set up?

TUCAR is primarily a trade union rank and file organisation. It was set up because of the failure of the trade union bureaucracy to give a clear lead in the fight against repression. They shamefully hid behind the "Better Life for All" campaign.

Repression in Ireland is becoming a vital issue affecting more and more militants. It is not only republicans who are affected. The Northern Ireland Special Branch is moving against trade union political activists also.

For example, I was held in detention for five days at Castlereagh in August. It was the anniversary of internment and the police feared that there would be big demonstrations. The Special Branch informed me that it was a preemptive scoop to prevent any possibility of organisation on the streets against repression.

Initially TUCAR was set up to deal with repression in the South. We argued that it should be an all-Ireland body since the repressive legislation of the North and the South is similar, and some legislation straddles the border.

## Hanged

It is a specifically trade union campaign, to force the trade union bureaucracy to act against repression. If necessary we will act independently of the trade union bureaucracy.

What support has TUCAR got? We are a new organisation, but our support is growing. On a number of occasions we have seen the potential strength of TUCAR. When Brian Maguire, a AUEW/TASS branch secretary and a leading member of TUCAR, was found hanged in his cell in May 1978, 3000 people marched in protest. Many more would have marched, but were afraid of the repressive measures.

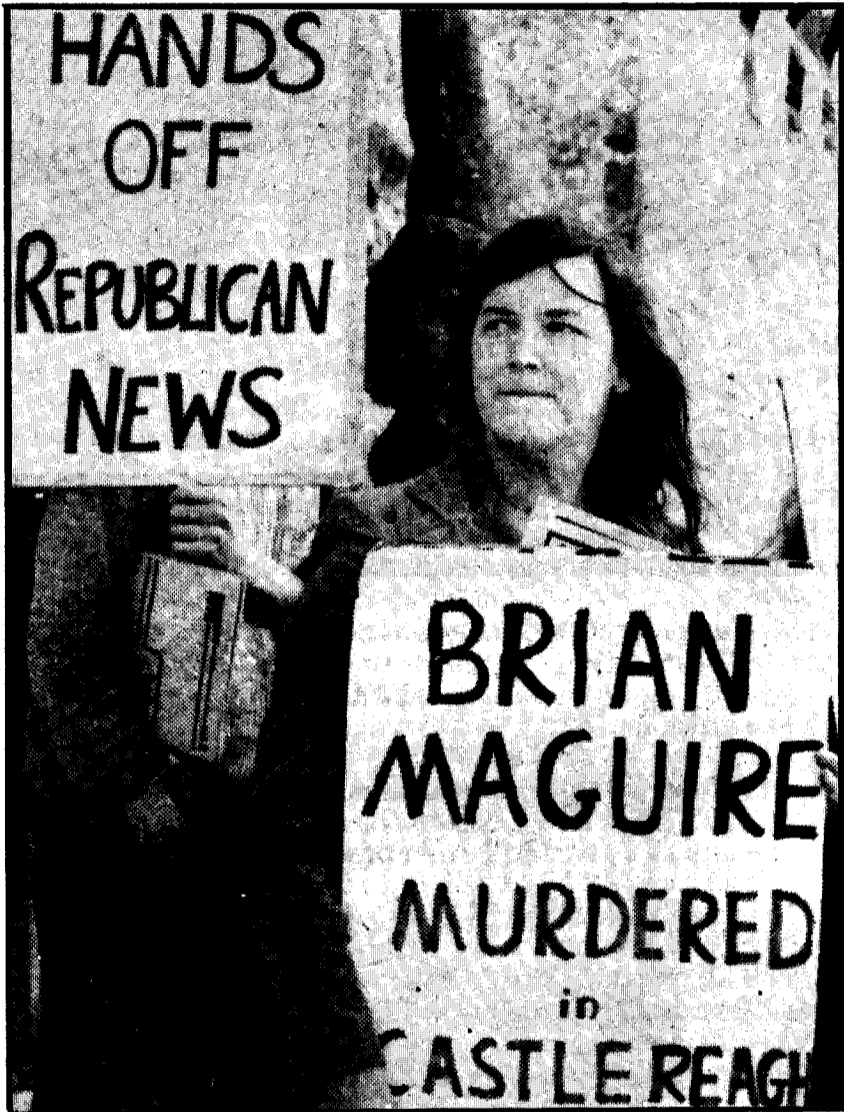
There was a complete and spontaneous stoppage of work in West Belfast. The dock workers who approached us later were angry that they had not been circulated about the stoppage: they would have joined the strike if they had known about it.

We have had other marches which proved our ability to mobilise, and we have carried out other activities such as a picket of the Special Criminal Court in Dublin.

We have the support of a number of trades council delegates; and Phil Flynn, the Assistant General Secretary of the Local Government and Public Services Union, is a member of TUCAR.

You mentioned the "Better Life for All" Campaign. What is TUCAR's attitude to this campaign?

The trade union bureaucrats support the "Better Life" campaign, arguing that it reflects



In May, shop steward Brian Maguire was found hanged in a cell in the Royal Ulster Constabulary's Castlereagh Barracks. Workers struck in West Belfast and 3,000 marched in protest.

the labour movement ideology. It is, however, a non-existent campaign.

There has been no activity for 18 months in Belfast. It is a campaign which has no credibility. The trade union bureaucrats resurrect it from time to time as a cover for their non-activity. These bureaucrats often work hand in hand with the Northern Ireland Office.

## Death

For example, the Northern Ireland Office sent the Northern Ireland TUC a letter of congratulation for the way in which the Strabane Trades Council diffused the spontaneous anger of workers about the death of Brian Maguire by keeping people at work.

What can we do in Britain?

One of our members, John Major, is preparing a detailed set of proposals for the British labour movement. Among other things we will call for trade union and constituency party affiliation to TUCAR. There is also a proposal that the United Troops Out Movement sponsor a speaking tour of TUCAR in Britain.

★ ★ For more information con-

tact TUCAR via; Secretary, Belfast Branch TUCAR, c/o 52 Broadway, Belfast 12.



A speaking tour in Britain for the Trade Union Campaign Against Repression is to be organised in the near future by the United Troops Out Movement [UTOM].

That was one of the plans for activity discussed at the UTOM's third national conference last weekend [21-22 Oct]. UTOM is still a small movement — there were 80 people at its conference — but its paper, TROOPS OUT, now has a circulation of nearly 2,500.

The conference also decided to publish a new pamphlet on the case for getting British troops out of Ireland.

The conference reaffirmed UTOM's support for the International Tribunal on Britain's presence in Ireland: but the future of the Tribunal is seriously in doubt. Its opening has been postponed yet again, and the chief organisers have resigned, in protest against manoeuvres and sabotage by the "Gery Lawless clique" and by members of the Socialist Workers Party involved in the preparation of the Tribunal.

# PSYCHOPATHS IN WHITE COATS

"DRUG TREATMENT [by a combination of Mogadon and Valium] is useful as a short term. Tolerance to these drugs rapidly develops and huge doses become necessary which reduce the patient to a 'cabbage existence'."

This statement by a former prison doctor in Parkhurst is made in an article — from the highly secret 'Prison Medical Journal' — leaked last week by the Sunday Times.

The article gives evidence which backs up the claims made by prisoners who took over most of Gartree jail three weeks ago. They were protesting that prison doctors used drugs as a 'liquid cosh'.

The article, by Dr C H McCleery, details how he conducted experiments with strong tranquilliser drugs as a replacement for sedatives such as Mogadon. His experiments were carried out at Albany jail with a drug called 'Depixol'. Six prisoners who were treated with the drug needed 'a lot of persuasion', according to McCleery, and their reluctance is hardly surprising. Depixol's effects last from one to three weeks; known side-effects include insomnia, muscular tension, and involuntary facial spasm (known as dyskinesias).

McCleery did not disguise the fact that the drugs were being administered for disciplinary, not medical purposes. His article says, "For some years we have had the problem of containment of psychopaths [sic] who... have presented the discipline staff with control problems for which there has been

no satisfactory solution... from a medical angle these men show no evidence of formal illness but... are potentially either very dangerous, or, in the case of the more inadequate, an unmitigated nuisance". He goes on to point out that these 'symptoms' disappeared as soon as the men left Albany prison.

The use of Depixol in prisons is not new. Together with a similar drug, Modecate, it has been reported in a number of prisons. The prisoners' organisation, PROP, recently reported that in the Cornton Vale women's prison, in Scotland, which holds 140 to 150 prisoners, 10 injections of Depixol and six of Modecate were ordered every week.

Prisoners are defined as 'psychopaths' or 'inadequates' by prison doctors not for medical reasons but because they are a 'nuisance' to the prison authorities. Prisoners live in fear of being subjected to drugs which can have dangerous side-effects, such as personality disorders and addiction, and can reduce them to a zombie-like state. That is enough to make anyone a 'nuisance'... the logic of the 'liquid cosh' is a vicious circle of 'control', revolt, and harsher controls.

Prisoners should have the right to genuine medical treatment by the National Health Service — carried out by NHS doctors free from the pressure to 'control' prisoners regardless of the medical consequences. The present system simply goes to prove that the prison system defies and creates its own 'psychopaths' and 'inadequates'... the real ones, however, wear white coats.

## TREATMENT OF PSYCHOPATHS WITH DEPIXOL

by

C H McCleery  
Medical Officer, HM P Parkhurst

Drug treatment is useful as a short term containment. Tolerance to these drugs rapidly develops and huge doses become necessary which reduce the patient to a 'cabbage existence' during which his tolerance level increases but his powers of constructive cerebration are so diminished that he cannot begin to concentrate or rationalise the situation. It was



## Neutrality takes a knock

The theory of the political neutrality of the British civil service took another knock last week, when a group of top businessmen set up a new committee to campaign against nationalisation.

Leading the group were Lord Plowden — formerly chief planner at the treasury, now chairman of Tube Investments — and Lord Armstrong — formerly head of the home civil service, now chairman of Midland Bank.

When Jack Jones made a speech earlier this year on the way that the top civil servants dominate the Government, he named Lord Armstrong as the man who "was at one time virtually running the country".

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A judge has declared that "only a moron in a hurry" could confuse the Daily Star — the new paper being launched by the owners of the Daily Express — and the Communist Party's Morning Star. The Morning Star had asked for an injunction to stop the use of the name Star, contending that it would cause confusion and lead to loss of sales.

The judge felt that the Daily Star's different politics, as well as its different format and presentation, would disqualify it from taking custom from the Morning Star. What he didn't say, though, is how readers are going to tell the two

Stars apart if and when the Common Market is in the news again...

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If an executive is conducting a company's negotiations with someone from another company who's better dressed than himself, he will feel psychologically disadvantaged and his company will suffer. That is the justification for a new growth area in company tax-free perks: hand-made shirts and suits. One company director reckons this perk as worth about £1600 a year; rather more than the Ford workers' claim.

According to an ITV 'Inside Business' exposé last Thursday, the number of 'Perks advisors' in London has risen from three to around 30 in the last couple of years. Their film showed one of these at work, helping a client to draw up a list of tax-free perks to take to his employers.

Where workers are lucky to get a subsidised canteen or 30p Luncheon Vouchers, the fifty-quid expense account dinner is for managers a very minor perk. Of rather more substance are the very common company cars (in some cases, flashy Italian models costing £15000 which after a few months are sold at 'knock-down prices' to the user; and now very often a second car comes free with the job. Then there are interest-free mortgages, private medical schemes, private school fees, holidays abroad or on company yachts, furniture ('for company entertaining') and, in one case cited, provision of a domestic servant.

Many of these perks are worth more than a Ford worker earns in a whole year...

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In the United States, President Carter has just got tough with company perks, which he once called "welfare for the rich". Tax deductions on company yachts have been scrapped... but country-club dues are still tax deductible. The rich, it seems, can never lose out!

THE HOSTILITY and harassment which the Asian community of Brick Lane faces from the police is part of a wider pattern.

For the British bosses, Asian and West Indian workers represent part of the peoples who were plundered, super-exploited, and sold into slavery in order to build up the wealth of the British Empire. When they needed an expanding labour force, after World War 2, the British capitalists encouraged these workers to come to Britain.

As long as the black workers stick to the role which the bosses have billed them for — low-paid labour on the worst, hardest, dirtiest jobs — the British state is ready to pass laws and spend money on 'improving race relations'. But once black workers start standing up for themselves — once they start challenging the racism which flourished with the triumph of the British Empire and which is still encouraged today in order to keep black workers super-exploited and to divert white workers from class unity with black workers — the bosses and their state try to clamp down.

White racists are treated with great sympathy by the police and the courts. Black people who defend themselves are treated with the utmost racist harshness.

The most appalling recent example is the case of the Virk brothers. Four Sikhs, brothers living in East London, were attacked by racists. They defended themselves, and called the police. When the police arrived, they ignored the white attackers and arrested the Virk brothers — who have now received jail sentences of up to seven years.

A recent press statement by the Institute of Race Relations documents other cases of police and court bias in racial clashes.

# GUILTY! OF THE CRIME OF ANTI-RACIST SELF-DEFENCE



Arrested for arguing with fascists in Brick Lane [above] and welcomed back by a crowd of Bengalis who besieged Bethnal Green police station to get them released.

to pay £15 costs after an incident in which he had been racially abused and pushed in a public house. Despite the Defence evidence that the white was responsible, the white went unapprehended. (Newbury Weekly News, 12.1.78).

January 1978. Plainclothes men harassed a 19 year old black youth in Dalston, who (having been attacked three weeks earlier by National Front members, and suspecting the policemen to be NF members) produced a penknife from his pocket. He states that he was verbally abused and punched by the police — sustaining a hand injury. He was charged with possessing an offensive weapon. (Islington Gazette).

April 1978. A Nigerian businessman, Issa Ahmodu, who "lived in fear of mugging", was pounced on by plain clothes men and pursued. Mr Ahmodu pulled a penknife in fear and ran to his hotel. He was later charged and fined £40. (South Kensington News, 14.4.78).

June 11th, 1978. 150 white racists rampaged through the Brick Lane area of East London, assaulting people and property.

When Manikur Rahman and Sherajul Haque joined other Asians and white anti-racists in demonstrating against the National Front in their area, they were charged with threatening behaviour (and Haque, with possessing an offensive weapon).



The magistrate imposed a bail curfew banning them from their own community in Brick Lane, whereby they had to stay indoors every Sunday from 7am to 7pm. (Hackney Gazette, 27.6.78).

July 3rd, 1978. At 12.15 in the morning, seven plain clothes men broke into the home of an Asian family in Longsight, Manchester. They terrified the entire family, broke up the house and pulled out the telephone. All the family thought they were members of the National Front; one son, Munir, had even tried to call the police for help!

Nazir, the father, was beaten up and had to go to hospital. Both Nazir and Munir Ahmed have now been arrested and charged with 'wounding with intent' — a charge which carries a life sentence. (Ahmed Defence Committee).

August 1978. Mustapha Bourkis of Stepney appeared in court charged with having an offensive weapon. PC Hey stopped him because he "noticed something bulging in the back of his trousers". Bourkis said, "I'm not going to walk the streets unprotected. If someone tried to attack me, I would do whatever I could to keep them away". (Hackney Gazette, 11.8.78).

August 1978. In Bradford, Mohammed Saeed Bhatti was fined £200 for maliciously wounding a white man. The white claimed that Asian children had abused him and his wife, whilst Mr Bhatti, the children's uncle, claimed that he was abused and

attacked first. (Evening Post, 23.8.78).

White racists are treated very differently:

The murderers of Gurdip Singh Chagger had the murder charge commuted to manslaughter and got a sentence of four years. Of the 150 white racists who rampaged through Brick Lane on June 11th, 20 were arrested and only three were actually charged. Mr John James Bogle of Sale, a member of the National Front charged with firearm offences and theft of ammunition, had two revolvers and a rifle kept loaded in his home — and was fined a total of £110 by the courts (Sale Guardian, 1.12.78).

Two Norwich men involved in repeated assaults on black university students at East Anglia University convinced the judge that they victims were chosen because of their colour. But the judge did not want to "deprive them of their liberty" and "affect their employment" prospects, so he fined them a mere £100 each. (Eastern Daily Press, 13.12.77).

Compare the sentences on the Virk brothers with that on two white racists in Wolverhampton who pleaded guilty to wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and possessing an offensive weapon. One was jailed for 2½ years for a "deliberate and unprovoked" racial attack on a West Indian, the other had a six-months suspended sentence. (Belfast Telegraph, 9.8.78).

December 1977. An 18 year old black youth who accidentally stabbed to death a white attacker was jailed for 18 months.

He carried a knife for self-protection. A gang of youths (who had been put off a bus for insulting a black conductor) attacked him and he defended himself.

The Judge, Melford Stevenson, accepted that the whites had been responsible for the incident, but went on to say: "I have got to make it clear that people of any race and colour who carry the kind of horrible weapon that you used must learn that the consequences must be grave". (South London Press, 9.12.77).

January 1978. At Kintbury, 20 year old Gary Wheeler was fined £25 for assault and ordered

## FROM LEICESTER

Dear Brothers/Sisters,

We are writing to you to put the position of the Steering Committee of the Leicester ANL branch.

We condemn the failure of the ANL leadership to mobilise to stop the fascist march and defend Brick Lane on Sunday 24th September, and their misleadership and deliberate deception of the people gathered at the Carnival.

We refer specifically to:

1. The announcement by Paul Holborow at Hyde Park that there were several thousand already assembled at Brick Lane and that assurances had been given by the police that the NF would not be allowed to march through central London or anywhere near Brick Lane.

2. When the Carnival procession led by the Ruts proceeded to leave the Park by an exit that would have led them to the Embankment where the fascists were assembling the procession was turned back — not by the police but by your own stewards.

Also, the general confusion was added to by the fact that the departure point for coaches was not announced.

Had there been a serious mobilisation organised on a national level, the fiasco of the Nazis marching unchallenged to within a few streets of Brick Lane would not have happened.

We believe that what happened is due in large part to cooperation with the police and a desire to appear respectable. We further believe that the ANL National Steering Committee's main concern was with getting more people to Carnival 2 than to the first one, rather than with eliminating fascism from the streets. The Carnival should be a side-show, not the main event. We also believe that this points to the need for the ANL to take a clear position on *No Platform for Fascists* and

*Support for Black Self-Defence*.

Therefore, since the present leadership is not accountable in any way, we call for an emergency ANL conference to be convened, to elect a democratic and accountable Steering Committee and draw the lessons from the events of September 24th.

We feel it is our right to have this letter circulated to all ANL branches and would be grateful if you would do so.

Fraternally,  
Leicester ANL Steering Cttee.

## FROM MOSS SIDE

"This meeting condemns the decision of the leadership of the ANL not to direct the numbers mobilised by the Carnival to Brick Lane on September 24th. We consider this decision to have been a severe blow in the fight against the National Front. We demand an emergency conference of the ANL to call the leadership to account and to formulate an adequate platform in the fight against racism and fascism.

This should include

- No to immigration controls.
- No platform for fascists.
- No to state bans; the fascists must be crushed through direct mass action.
- Active support for black self-defence groups; build workers' defence squads.
- Fascists out of the labour movement; open racists to be removed from all positions in the trade unions, Labour Parties and all working class organisations.

The emergency conference should also decide on a democratic structure for the ANL

THE NATIONAL Front is letting its swastika show more and more.

Rattled by the Anti-Nazi League's exposures, it has now confirmed everything the ANL has said about the NF being a fascist organisation. Its new pamphlet screams about the ANL being a Jewish conspiracy.

But the fascist hard-core of the NF does not necessarily become less dangerous as it is shown up for what it is. Last week in East London, they beat up four Asians and then severely wounded a passing white cyclist.

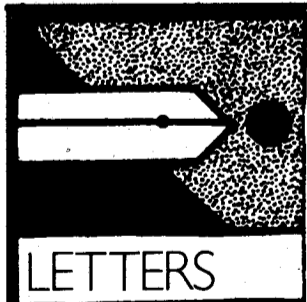
Many ANL branches feel that the ANL does not face up adequately to the NF's threat of racist violence. In the wake of September 24th, they have sent resolutions and letters to the ANL calling for a more militant policy.

FROM BASINGSTOKE A.N.L.:

"This meeting notes the serious shortcomings of the leadership of the ANL in the fight against fascism which were most clearly expressed in their failure to adequately build the counter-demonstration against the fascists in Brick Lane on September 24th.

This meeting calls for an emergency conference at which affiliated organisations of the ANL will have the opportunity to correct the lack of clear political aims which has caused this situation.

The emergency conference is also to decide on, and set up, a democratic structure for the ANL."



LETTERS

# TO THE ANTI NAZI LEAGUE

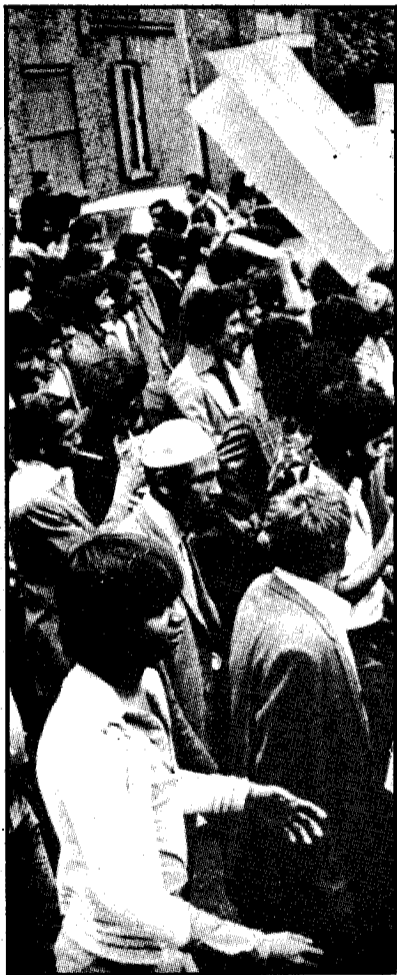
# FROM BANGLADESH TO BRICK LANE

THROUGHOUT THE summer and autumn of this year, the defence of Brick Lane, in East London, has been a major focus of anti-racist and anti-fascist activity in Britain.

But who are the inhabitants of Brick Lane? How do they live, and in what conditions? And how can socialists do more than occasionally turn up for demonstrations against the National Front, and help develop a movement against the oppression and exploitation of Asians in the East End?

In the first of a series of discussion articles, a Bangladeshi socialist explains the origins and composition of the community in Brick Lane.

ALTAB ALI and Ishaque Ali were two of the victims of fascist murder gangs in the East



End of London this summer.

Like the vast majority of the 100,000 of more Bangladeshi workers in Britain, they both came from the north-eastern region of Sylhet and spoke the regional dialect, Sylheti. (A minority of Bangladeshis in Britain speaks Bengali).

Before the British withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent, Sylhet was larger than it is now, and formed part of a wider administrative region, Assam. The rest of today's Bangladesh was called East Bengal.

When, as a result of elections in 1946, East Bengal was declared part of Pakistan (on the basis that it was Muslim), the future of Muslim Sylhet remained uncertain. Accordingly, a referendum was held in 1947 and the Sylhetis voted to join Pakistan.

Despite this amalgamation, the Sylhetis retained their distinctive religious and cultural customs, as well as a higher standard of living. These continue even today.

Sylhet is the richest region in Bangladesh, endowed with a unique combination of natural resources, including natural gas, limestone, cement, citrus fruits, tea gardens, and an extremely fertile soil enriched by the two main rivers, Surma and Kushiara, which flow through a landscape varying from densely forested hills to wide stretches of green paddy fields.

Throughout the British Raj the bulk of these resources remained concentrated in the hands of a few feudal landowners who gave solid support to the imperialists. The majority of skilled and peasant workers had to spend time working away from their region to supplement their meagre income at home.

The masses of workers who had voted for Pakistan in the hope of a better future found themselves bitterly disappointed during the following 25 years of Pakistan. Even after the formation of an independent Bangladesh the economic realities have hardly changed: for example, even today British planters extract from tea plantations in Sylhet an annual income of £76 million — far more than the savings sent to Sylhet each year by Sylheti workers in Britain.

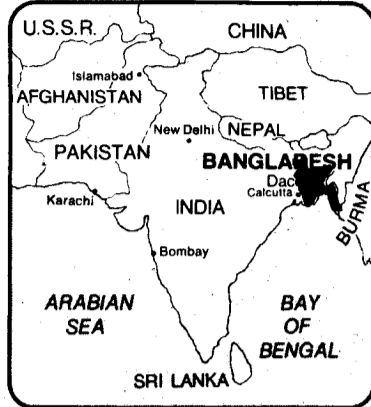
In order to avoid the British

Government's increasingly repressive immigration laws, Sylhetis came to Britain in large numbers in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Until then there were in Britain less than 10,000 Sylhetis and other Bangladeshis, many of whom had settled — after leaving the British Army and the Merchant Navy at the end of the Second World War.

Repulsed by racist employers and appalling working conditions and harassed by rampant racism on the streets and elsewhere, many of the early settlers sought safety and survival in their own enterprise. They saved to set up small shops and eating-places — 'Indian' restaurants.

Before arriving here in a rush, many of the new workers had to sell all they had in order to pay the air fare. They arrived at a time when the catering trade was expanding, and many accepted work in the restaurants which, apart from giving them a much-needed job, also offered them a familiar culture in a foreign environment. Restaurants began opening up in the main cities and suburbs, though London was the main centre.

But the catering trade could only absorb so many; and the low pay and archaic working conditions for which the trade is notorious encouraged many to seek employment elsewhere. Bangladeshis took up factory jobs in the Midlands and Yorkshire, while many started work as machinists in the predominantly Jewish-owned clothing trade in London's East End. These East End clothing workers, and catering workers in the West End, chose the cheapest accommodation in the East



End, where a few hundred Asian Muslims already lived with the East London Mosque in Commercial Road as a focal point.

Apart from the mosque, however, there was nothing in the area with which the new workers could readily identify. Accustomed to taking their recreation in open spaces and in unrestricting tea-shops and cafes — as opposed to bingo-halls and pubs — the teetotal Sylhetis soon felt the need for their own shopping facilities, selling tropical food and spices.

Gradually the area around Brick Lane, in the centre of the Spitalfields ward of the borough of Tower Hamlets, began to change its character to suit the needs of the new population.

But Brick Lane also lies close to the National Front's breeding-grounds of Shoreditch and Hoxton. For years the NF have used the northern end of Brick Lane as a selling-pitch for their paper and a launching-pad for their daily attacks on the Asian inhabitants. As it happens, this spot is only a couple of minutes' walk from Bethnal Green police station, but this has had no effect on the fascists' activities.

Of the Bangladeshis working in the East End itself, the majority now are machinists in the garment trade, the ownership of which has gradually been transferring from the original Jewish owners into Asian hands. Most of the machinists are under 25; many of them had been half-way through their school careers in Bangladesh when they finally got permission to come here with their mothers to join their long-separated fathers.

On arrival here they typically experienced cramped, unhygienic living conditions; at school they faced virulent racism, not only in the form of beatings at the hands of white kids, but in the thoroughly racist educational system itself. From school they went straight into the garment trade — the alternatives being as scarce then as they are now.

For entertainment these youths have the choice of trying to get into the racially hostile social clubs in the area or in the West End, or they can turn to the fantasy world of films produced in Bombay and shown in Asian-run cinemas. There is no community centre, no sports facilities, practically nowhere to meet.

It is these youths who are experiencing the full thrust of police harassment and fascist attack, and these youths who must develop a political understanding of the overall situation in which they find themselves.

## 500 march against Immigration Laws

ABOUT 500 people demonstrated in Bradford last Saturday, 21st October, against the immigration laws and their use by the police to harass the black community.

The demonstration, organised by Black People Against State Harassment (BASH), had banners from the Bradford Asian Youth, Bangladesh Youth, BSA, Bradford Trades Council, and various anti-racist and left wing groups.

Conspicuous by its poor showing was the Anti Nazi League, with just two banners. The failure of the ANL to adopt and fight for a platform of clear anti-racist demands, including opposition to all immigration controls, came out starkly in Bradford, where among the people standing on the pavement watching the march go by were several sporting ANL badges.

At the rally after the march, one of the speakers from the Bradford Asian Youth declared that black organisations would have to take the lead in the fight against immigration laws. This may well be true, but should not be taken to mean that this fight can just be left to the black groups.

With the ANL if possible, without it if necessary, a campaign must be started to win real support in the labour movement for opposition to all immigration laws.

## FROM WIRRAL

Dear Mr. Holborow,

We, the Wirral Branch of the ANL, view with extreme concern the handling of the National ANL Carnival as it related to Brick Lane and the NF march on the East End.

We believe that the start and finish of events which took place on the 24th can only be described as a fiasco. The political implications were quite clear: the fascists were marching in East London and should have been adequately opposed at all costs.

What however transpired?

On arrival at the Carnival we were told through a PA system that we were all to join the Carnival. No mention of Brick Lane or the NF march.

Our Committee is in no way suggesting that the Carnival should have been cancelled, but we are saying that the people on it should have been given the choice whether to listen to pop music, or to defend the East End from fascists.

How did the ANL leadership respond to the NF march in East London? Firstly, no leaflet was issued at the Carnival calling for a defence of East London; this had to be left to other organisations to do.

Secondly, we were given a clear understanding that at some point during the day coaches would be laid on from the Carnival to take volunteers through to the East End. This did not happen.

Further to this, at the finish of the Carnival you announced that Brick Lane was in no danger. In fact the police were harassing and arresting a great many anti-Nazis and the NF were marching in triumph through the East End ... with far from sufficient opposition being shown.

The consequence of all this is that the ANL has lost credibility with the black community and made a mockery of past defences of the Brick Lane area. Whilst we appreciate the value of Carnivals we must not lose sight of the fact that we are an Anti-Nazi League — dedicated to opposing Nazis whenever they march or meet. We are not in existence just to come together as a social group, listen to pop music and mouth a few slogans.

In the anti-fascist struggle the ANL is losing the initiative in a desire to gain political 'respectability'.

We as a branch must therefore register our disgust at the ANL leadership's handling of events on the 24th and ask that a National Conference be convened as soon as possible to rectify such shortcomings and to put the ANL on a proper democratic footing.

Yours fraternally,  
Alf Cottrell,  
Branch Sec., Wirral ANL



A big turnout for Bradford's anti-Nazi carnival on October 14th; but the ANL made less effort against immigration laws the next week.

## Arrested for Anti Nazi leafletting

TWO weeks ago, 15 National Front members held a paper sale in Liverpool Town Centre. So last Saturday (October 21st) Merseyside ANL responded with a vigorous leafletting by 30 members on the same spot.

When the fascists turned up the police were notable only for their absence. But the anti-fascists received very different treatment

from a large turnout of police.

First, the ANL was warned by a high-ranking police officer that they couldn't use a megaphone whilst leafletting. Then the police tried to prevent people from leafletting or selling papers at all.

Finally, the police arrested a local black militant, in the IMG, and charged him with obstruction. The case is due to come up on November

17th.

When he was released on bail, the police refused to return copies of an ANL leaflet, a copy of Workers Action, and a WA leaflet; they told him "You'll have to get these back off the Special Branch".

The Merseyside ANL is going to keep on with its leaflettings. The next has been called for Saturday 28th Oct., 2pm, Church Street.

THE Government is still not admitting defeat on the 5% limit. Still less are they admitting defeat on the general principle of pay controls: if they have to give way on the 5% figure, they will go for a new, more flexible wage-curb agreement with the TUC.

The ideology underlying Wilson's, Callaghan's, and Healey's strategy over the last three years still has widespread credibility in the labour movement, even among the rank and file.

The main argument has been based on the idea of the 'British people' having a 'national interest' in helping to regenerate British capitalism to compete more effectively on the world capitalist market, and especially to cut inflation.

The idea that workers and bosses can live side by side, ignoring class divisions in order to allow the economy to expand for the benefit of both, does seem to have something going for it. In the post war boom of the 1950s and 1960s, pay bargaining was often a relatively smooth process, with capitalism able to afford a steadily increasing standard of living for the working class.

But British capitalism, indeed world capitalism, could only afford such relative prosperity for its workers after prolonged blood-letting in the crises of the 1930s and the mass destruction resulting from the Second World War. The boom of the 1950s was only possible after the massive and bloody defeats inflicted upon workers in the previous period.

Capitalism can recover from its worst slumps, eventually — but only at the expense of the working class. The choice in a crisis is very simple: either capitalism recovers at the expense of the workers, or workers move forward to destroy capitalism. There is, and can be, no 'middle way' and no 'common interest' which binds bosses and workers.

And we are now in the midst of another capitalist crisis. To improve their faltering rate of profit, the bosses are trying to reduce wage costs. They are trying to restructure and renew their capital, discarding declining lines of industry and introducing faster and more efficient machines — at the cost of speed-up and unemployment for the workers.

Some supporters of incomes policy admit that this is what it means. But, they say, it is only when capitalism is prosperous that the working class can make any gains. It is worthwhile for workers to make short-term sacrifices for the sake of the high-wage, high-productivity economy that will be possible as soon as prosperity is restored.

But they can offer no set limit to those 'short-term' sacrifices. The bosses, greedy for profit, will meet each concession by clamouring for more concessions. They will, if they can, drive the working class down into misery and poverty. Even if the prosperity eventually comes, it may be a long time before the working class recovers sufficiently to take advantage of it.

And the prosperity can be a very long time coming. The internal tensions and the trend to stagnation in world capitalism are still getting worse rather than better, and there is no serious improvement in sight.

Also, capitalist prosperity is not the boon for the working class which the defenders of incomes policy make it out to be. Karl Marx proved this in his first articles on wage labour and capital.

"The interests of the capitalist and those of the worker are...

# All incomes policies are a swindle

the same, assert the bourgeois and their economists. Indeed! The worker perishes if capital does not employ him. Capital perishes if it does not exploit labour power, and in order to exploit it, it must buy it. The faster capital intended for production, productive capital, increases, the more, therefore, industry prospers, the more the bourgeoisie enriches itself and the better business is, the more workers does the capitalist need, the more dearly does the worker sell himself...

"But what is the growth of productive capital? Growth of the power of accumulated labour over living labour. Growth of the domination of the bourgeoisie over the working class..."

"To say that the worker has an interest in the rapid growth of capital is only to say that the more rapidly the worker increases the wealth of others, the richer will be the crumbs that fall to him, the greater is the number of workers that can be employed and called into existence, the more can the mass of slaves dependent on capital be increased".

Moreover, declares Marx, "We must not believe them (the bourgeois economists) when they

The cry for workers to support the 'national interest' in Britain was often a cry for us to join with the bosses in plundering Asia and Africa. The bosses got the bulk of the plunder, the working class (especially a few privileged sections) got the crumbs. And today the 'national interest' slogan is an appeal for the working class to come to the aid of British capitalists who are suffering from the disappearance of their Empire.

The bosses, always anxious to use any trick they can, put it this way: Britain is poor now, and the nation can't afford wage increases.

But when Ford can notch up £300 million profits, or William Stern can run up personal debts to a total of £104 million, it is clear that there are still 'two nations' and that their 'nation' can afford all sorts of luxuries.

Wages are based on a lopsided exchange. Each week, workers receive an amount roughly sufficient to keep them and their families at the established minimum

not invest, because they cannot count on sufficient gain.

The mark of the capitalist crisis is not lack of wealth or lack of resources; there are masses of idle wealth and idle resources, but the economic system of capitalism is not capable of setting them to work.

In Britain today, the simplest measures of planning — just setting all the existing industrial capacity to work, and putting all the unemployed in jobs — would cover all the current pay demands and a great deal more. But the only capitalist way to surmount the crisis is to discard masses of productive resources (whole new factories are scrapped, sometimes even before construction is completed), to go through a period of high unemployment, and to cut wages... by incomes policies and by other means.

The idea of a 'national interest' is in fact nonsensical. It simply can't exist in a society which revolves around the exploitation of workers by capital. The issue of incomes policy is one of class against class. All those who accept the argument in favour of incomes policy cross to the other side of the class barrier and line up with the bosses.



TEN PER CENT..... 30 PER CENT

say the fatter capital is, the better will its slave be fed".

"The productive power of labour is raised, above all, by a greater division of labour, by a more universal and continual improvement of machinery..." And the effects are: speed-up, the reduction of more and more jobs to a laborious, mindless routine, and unemployment.

"Finally, as the capitalists are compelled, by the movement described above, to exploit the already existing gigantic means of production on a larger scale and to set in motion all the main-springs of credit to this end, there is a corresponding increase in industrial earthquakes, in which the trading world can only maintain itself by sacrificing a part of wealth, of products, and even of productive forces, to the gods of the nether world — in a word, crises increase". Even if capitalist prosperity emerges out of crisis, it only leads to... new crises.

Prosperity in Western Europe and the USA in the 20th century is doubly a sham: because it is prosperity on the backs of a 'third world' where hundreds of millions of people live in extreme poverty, without enough to eat, and without the most minimal protection against disease and famine.

standard of living (which is fixed by historic tradition and by the class struggle). That is, wages are the price of labour-power, determined by the value of the goods necessary to reproduce that labour power.

In exchange, the capitalists get the use of that labour power for a week. And they gain from the fact that the labour-power, put into action for a week, creates new value in excess of the amount paid out in wages. That excess is the source of profits... and of rent, interest, perks, government subsidies, and all the other income of the property-owning classes.

A crisis does not mean that this excess (or surplus) value has been reduced to vanishing point. It means that the productive capacity of industry has run far ahead of the corresponding market demand — as it constantly tends to do, with the capitalists striving to increase their operations while at the same time holding down workers' wages.

Then the full effects of the wasteful anarchy of capitalist competition are felt. The capitalists' profits do not amount to the full total of the surplus value created, because they cannot sell their products (or can sell them only slowly and at reduced prices). The working classes do



wage controls an appearance of class impartiality!

The class character of incomes policy is also partly papered over by the slogan of 'fighting against inflation'. But no number of spurious arguments about the causes of inflation can conceal the fact that wage increases could — if inflation were the real enemy — take place just as well at the expense of profits, without any price rise at all. The main effect, and purpose, of incomes policies is to reduce wages in relation to profits.

Opposition to all incomes policies and support for struggles for higher wages is a fundamental starting point for the defence of workers' interests. But in itself it is an inadequate response to the current attacks of capital. A crucial factor in reducing workers' living standards has been the impact of inflation in cutting into the small money gains made in annual settlements. Although the inflation rate has now gone down for the time being to under 10%, this remains high in comparison with British capitalism's competitors and it still means large price rises, affecting workers' buying power from week to week. The response of the TUC bureaucrats to the collapse of the 5% limit has been to suggest that workers should restrict their wage claims in return for stricter government controls over prices.

But under capitalism, for the most part, prices are regulated by market mechanisms outside the control of not only the government, not only workers, but even the bosses themselves. Even where a company has a monopoly of a particular product and can change its prices with some ease, it is hardly realistic to imagine them giving in to government pressure without finding a thousand loopholes to escape through. Effective price controls within capitalism — outside exceptional situations like a war economy — could only result in the clogging-up of all the essential workings of the system and a dramatic slump. That is why it is a utopian policy, and price controls are always shams.

The one item over which the working class does have the possibility of control in this situation is wages. The way to defend living standards against inflation is to demand the inclusion of cost-of-living clauses in wage settlements, based for the moment on the demand for a £1 rise for every 1% rise in the Government's cost of living index, but wherever possible on an index drawn up by committees of trade unionists and working-class housewives. In this way living standards are effectively protected without the constant and often demoralising need for fragmented struggles for new wage settlements to catch up on what inflation has eroded from the pay packet; and the way is cleared to fight for increases in basic rates.

Beyond this, because of the general class nature of incomes policies, it is clear that any struggle for higher wages and against incomes policies is important to the struggle of the whole class. Struggles must be linked together through the initiative of the rank and file in building strike committees and organising deputations — the bureaucrats, despite their show of militancy at the TUC and Labour Party conferences, have already shown their hand in the call for a new 'more flexible' agreement and for price controls. Unemployed workers too must be drawn into struggle through the taking up of demands such as for the 35 hour week without loss of pay.

We can never gain from backing the 'national interest' of the existing system; for it is a system, based on profit-making, whose basic life-process is the exploitation of the working class.

RICHARD PAINE

# CPSA Junta meets growing resistance



## THE UNIONS



MILITANTS in the CPSA are already organising in response to the ruling by union President Len Lever which gave right-winger Kate Losinska the position of Vice-President and sacked the union's elected NEC.

A call is going out for a Special Delegate Conference on pay — against the 5% norm and any attempt by the Government to impose tight wage controls on the public sector workers. At the same time a rank and file campaign is being launched to fight for internal union democracy and to strip the President of his absolute power.

Part of this campaign is to have a motion of no confidence in Lever taken at the Special Delegate Conference. The president is virtually unchallengeable in constitutional terms, unless through the High Court. And such court action would be opposed by the rank and file of

CPSA, who know how much the courts have helped Losinska in her right-wing campaign.

Lever was stripped of any possible fig-leaf when the sacked NEC refused to act in a caretaker capacity. The real power in the union now lies in the hands of the four senior full-time officials, plus Lever and the two Vice Presidents, Losinska and Reg Williams.

### Disavow

Williams, a failed contender for the Broad Left 1979 Presidential nomination, has agreed to participate in this clique rule of the CPSA. The *Tribunite* and *Militant* factions, previously his two most powerful backers, have thus been forced to disavow him for his acceptance of Lever's ruling on Losinska and the sacking of the NEC.

Despite the fact that the tactics of the right are a near carbon copy of those used by pro-employer forces in the EEUPTU and the AUEW to get postal balloting, the CPSA right wing (the Moderates) have failed to cover up their own involvement in the so-called "fiddling" of ballots. Out of the 20 branches directly involved in "vote-switching" in the elections that have been overturned by Lever, at least seven have branch officers closely linked to the Moderates group, 11 others are supporters of the Moderates, and only two are identified with the Broad Left.

In the face of opposition from the right, the full details and names of branches involved are to be published to the CPSA membership as a whole.

Already one Area Committee in Scotland has organised a meeting to hear the sacked Vice President, Peter Coltman, on the

issues of the right wing offensive and pay.

This move, especially if repeated by other Area Committees, will be an effective challenge to the 7-man junta now running CPSA. But it will only be successful if every attack by this junta is met with a campaign to mobilise the rank and file to back the authority and decisions of the Area Committees to fight on pay and internal union democracy.

### Campaign

If the Area Committees are suspended, they must be replaced by a campaign committee of branch delegates to fight for an adequate pay rise and for CPSA union affairs to be controlled by the rank and file — not by the High Court or by Presidents with absolute powers.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

## Teachers: 60,000 jobless but still in short supply

LAST weekend (21-22 October) the National Union of Teachers Executive called on its Divisions to negotiate with local authorities for an adequate pool of supply teachers ('spare' teachers who fill in for absences.)

It stated that supply teachers should be available for all absences longer than one day or known in advance.

Having to cover for absent colleagues has always been a running sore among teachers. In the past, only some authorities employed a small pool of supply teachers, and the excuse was that there simply weren't any more teachers available.

Today there are 60,000 qualified teachers unemployed, many of them straight out of college. Furthermore, unfilled vacancies are now increasingly filled by supply teachers (who can be sacked at a day's notice) and posts are advertised as late as possible or not at all.

This has meant that the supply pool for occasional and short-term absences becomes even smaller, and those vacant posts "disappear" at the end of each year.

### Sick

In a Barking comprehensive last week, for example, a combination of unfilled posts and sick teachers resulted in one unfortunate teacher being told to take 90 children for a lesson in the school hall.

Militantly organised schools in inner London, on the other hand, have been able to get supply teachers from their local author-

ity by refusing to cover for absent colleagues. But at present this type of unofficial action breaks union rules, and members could in theory be disciplined by the National Executive.

All forms of action have to get the approval of the Executive's Action Committee, and this usually takes months. So far, the NUT Executive has chosen to fight only the most backward local authorities, and have avoided leading national action.

### Support

The response of militants must be to fight along both official and unofficial channels. Resolutions to local Associations and Divisions should:

- Press for local authorities to employ an adequate pool of supply teachers and to drop the practice of filling vacancies with supply teachers;

- demand that the National Executive support any school NUT group which decides by majority vote not to cover for all absences known in advance and all other absences of more than one day.

Militant schools should co-ordinate their unofficial action, and draw in less well organised schools, to combat possible victimisation.

IAN HOLLINGWORTH  
SM CHEUNG

## Danger! School



For years, schools have remained outside the scope of industrial safety legislation. Now the Health and Safety at Work Act is in force, it should be used as a basis to improve conditions in schools.

Stories are rife about inadequate chemical storage facilities, asbestos used in school buildings, ceilings falling down, etc. One lab assistant in a Newham comprehensive broke an arm when she fell 20 feet through the floor of a chemical storage room.

The NUT Executive have issued a booklet for Safety Representatives in schools, listing 121 points which they say should be checked in each school. They also advocate special training and quarterly inspections of the whole school.

Now, although it is a statutory requirement that safety reps. should have time off to fulfill their duties, the NUT Executive are not pushing for this, and are leaving it up to local negotiations. These may well be successful in militant areas like Inner London; but in other areas, where facility time for NUT

branch officers in schools has still not been negotiated two years after formal national agreement, it is a different matter.

Recognising this, Newham NUT last week passed a resolution along the following lines:

"Safety representatives should be elected by their school NUT groups and they should preferably not be NUT branch officers.

Safety reps. require, as a minimum, in order to carry out their functions satisfactorily, [a] One quarter of a day each week for day-to-day safety matters, written into their timetable; [b] adequate time off for training and for quarterly inspections."

Militants should press for the election of safety reps. now that they are a statutory requirement, even if in the short term extra time off is not available. This is an issue which can help teachers forge links with other workers in school such as cleaners, kitchen and caretaking staff, and lab assistants.

IH

## EVENTS

**Saturday 27 October.** Argentina: 'Resistance leads to Victory'. 6pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. Speakers include Christopher Roper, Douglas Grieve, Dennis McShane.

**Sunday 29 October.** London Workers' Action meeting: 'Fighting racism and fascism'. 7.45pm, 'General Picton', Wharfedale Rd/Caledonian Rd, N1.

**Sunday 29 October.** Merseyside Workers' Action education series on 'Trotskyism, War, and Revolution, 1939-56'. 7.45pm, Stanley House, Upper Parliament St, Liverpool 8: 'The Trotskyist Movement on the Eve of World War 2'.

**Tuesday 31 October.** "Brick Lane and the Fight against Fascism". Speaker: Patrick Kodikara. 7.30pm, Roebuck Hotel, Mansfield Rd. Nottingham. Organised by the anti-fascist caucus of Nottingham ANL and sponsored by Nottingham SCLV.

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

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

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

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

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

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## Neil Williamson

NEIL WILLIAMSON, a member of the Scottish Committee of the International Marxist Group, was fatally injured in a car accident on October 13th. He died after a few days in hospital, on Tuesday October 17th.

Neil had been involved in working class politics for many years. He became a member of the Labour Party Young Socialists in 1968, and joined the IMG in 1969. Within the IMG he played a leading role as a member of their National and Political Committees, and was their Scottish Organiser for several years.

Neil was probably best known for his work on the national question, particularly on Scottish nationalism. Last year he wrote the major statement of his organisation's position, and spoke on the subject at the recent IMG symposium in London.

The tragedy of Neil's death is compounded by the fact that it came in an accident, not in the direct

service of the cause to which he dedicated virtually all the years of his adult life. He left unfinished a paper on Scottish nationalism. It is hoped to bring out, in about a year's time, a volume on the subject dedicated to Neil's memory.

Workers' Action had with Neil, and has with the IMG, profound differences on the question of nationalism in Scotland. We will continue to debate them. Neil himself always had an exemplary attitude to political debate and clarification within the workers' movement. To continue the search for clarity, as part of the fight for working class power, is the best tribute we can pay him.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Neil's relatives and friends and to the comrades of the IMG in Scotland.

G.B.

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

# How Ford speed up their treadmill

MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN talked to a member of the Ford UK Workers' Combine from the Dagenham Engine Plant.

You're expected to be on the line from the moment you clock on. Changing and putting on your overalls is supposed to be done in your own time.

Once on the line, you're on a treadmill. With overtime, some workers can be doing the same job 200 times a day, 1000 times a week.

The only break we have is a ten-minute tea break, when the line stops, and two relief breaks. This goes on and on, day in, day out. The only break is through stoppages, often through accidents.

There are always a lot of accidents on the line. For example, you get mechanical failure on the hoist, causing parts to crash to the floor. Where I am, whole engines sometimes jump off the line.

There is also the problem of oil, which is everywhere, with people slipping on it. People who have worked there a long time can also get cancer from it.

The other thing is the fumes: most people leave work feeling groggy and with a headache. Even the foremen complain, let alone the blokes.

And there is the noise. The company have measured the noise made by the machines, but not with the tractors and lorries going past which of course add to the racket.

Ford are constantly attempting to impose discipline.

They have problems of absenteeism, because of the nature of the work, and of lateness. The company want to get an agreement for a bonus system for good time-keeping.

They are also going for a no-strike bonus, to prevent unofficial stoppages. If there is a grievance in one part of the factory, then workers in another part would lose out by that section going on strike. This is potentially very dangerous.

There are other areas where the company want to challenge the workers.

At present, for instance, if there is an accident on the line, it stops until the stewards sort it out. They now want to keep the line going while things are sorted out.

They want increased mobility of labour. Part of the present agreement is complete mobility within the plant. However, the custom and practice has meant that the last person on a job is the first to be moved out. That makes it difficult for the company to move militants from some jobs.

Also, Ford want penalty clauses for those who don't follow procedure. At present, not only are the foremen more than likely ignorant of the procedure, but the men go straight to the steward or simply stop work.

There are other ways in which the workers have to a very limited extent pushed back the company's control of the line, which Ford want to stop.

If you are on a sub-assembly job, you can actually get ahead

of your job and take longer tea or dinner breaks. This tends to break down discipline and affects the control on the line.

They also don't like doubling up, which means one man can do two men's jobs for say half an hour. That gives you a bit more time, and they don't like it, especially the foremen, because it means the blokes are organising the line as they want it.

Ford also have the sneaking

suspicion that if one man can do two men's jobs for a short period, they can do it for the whole day — which isn't true. Doing the two jobs is like holding your arms out straight: you can do it for a short period of time, but not all day.

At HALEWOOD, similar speed-up tactics are expected, including in particular the abolition

of relief workers, who cover for other workers during breaks or absences.

But already the work rate at Halewood has been pushed to the maximum by Ford. In the trim shop the line runs at one car a minute, three times as fast as the British Leyland plant at Speke.

All the jobs are timed and re-timed frequently, and rates can be changed unilaterally by the management.

## WORKERS' ACTION

### Ford continued from page 1

Alex Gungi, a supporter of the Black Socialist Alliance and also a member of the Ford UK Workers Combine. He said that black workers stay at Ford doing a depressing job for low wages because of the racist society we live in. Black workers don't have

a 'choice'; they are forced to work on the assembly lines.

Joan Maynard, MP for Sheffield Brightside, said she was "proud to be identified with the fightback against the 5%, and the myth perpetuated by the Callaghan Government that wage controls help the low paid. If the Ford workers get smashed, then we all get smashed". Ernie Rob-

erts, the Labour prospective parliamentary candidate for Hackney North, said that "We should unite behind every wage claim".

Hackney has set an example. Trades Councils and Labour Parties all across the country should also be organising meetings like this, in support of the Ford workers  
FRAN BRODIE

## INDUSTRY LINES

Firemen: 42 hours due on Nov. 7th, but bosses plan cuts

THE 42 hour week for firemen looks no closer to being introduced now than at the end of the strike.

The lack of activity from Fire Brigades Union officials, nationally and locally, is the main reason for this. Many local authorities, especially large metropolitan brigades such as West Midlands and Merseyside, are using the introduction of the 42 hour week as an excuse for wide-ranging cuts and attacks on firemen's work conditions.

On Merseyside, two stations are threatened with total closure, and in the West Midlands a total of 20 appliances are to be taken 'off the run'. In addition, the remaining appliances are to be 'alternate-manned' — which means that the same crew is supposed to cover two machines, one ordinary appliance and a special one. If one machine goes out, then the other is useless!

If the situation in the West Midlands is repeated on a national scale, it will also mean the large scale reintroduction of 'retained' (part-time) firemen into city brigades.

The lack of response from the union leadership means that many of the employers' threats have already been effectively implemented. Although no existing jobs are (as yet) at risk, an establishment already short for the 48 hour week is expected to cope with the 42 hour week. This will obviously mean an

increased workload and reduced services.

The fight to reverse this situation has first of all to be organised at a station level. The fight against cuts and for a decent standard of fire cover must be taken to shop stewards' committees and to factory safety committees where they exist. But there has been no attempt by the union leadership to do this.

The recent annual conference of the Fire Brigades Union did nothing to improve the situation. The national officials were given another blank cheque to continue negotiations which have got nowhere since last February.

The 42 hour week, due for implementation on November 7th, looks like being held off even further. The 42 hour week was one of the main gains of the strike. It must not be lost by the membership's failure to call our own leaders to account.

DOUG MACKAY  
FBU, Acocks Green, Birmingham



Hospital strikers hit back against blackmail

THE NEWSPAPERS have been full of an outcry against striking hospital works supervisors. And the less the newspapers have had to say about the cuts in hospital services over recent years, the louder they shout now.

For the people who denounce the strikers, it was quite in order that the bosses and bankers should have their 'demands' — for severe cuts in NHS spending — granted promptly... and that hospital staff should be blackmailed year after year by the Government.

Since 1974 hospital works supervisors have been demanding changes in the NHS wages structure, to prevent their wages

falling behind those of other workers. Because of the Government's pay policies their demands have been ignored. They are now taking official industrial action.

Their main demand is for the restoration of their differentials over the craftsmen they supervise. David Ennals, the Health Minister, has rejected their claim on the grounds that it would alter the differentials structure in the whole of the Health Service — and wreck the Government's efforts to impose a strict pay limit on public sector workers.

The 3,500 supervisors are now in the sixth week of action, refusing to repair some hospital machinery. The action has mainly affected hospital laundries and sterilising equipment. It has meant that 9,000 beds are not being used because there is no clean linen, over 100 hospitals are only admitting emergency patients, and five hospitals have closed altogether.

The supervisors are dealing with equipment needed for emergency and life or death cases. Ennals has tried to whip up feeling against them by claiming that their action is causing deaths: "Every day and week that goes by, the danger to patients increases". And the *Sunday Mirror* declared: "Hurting the sick through industrial action is at the same moral level as exploiting child labour in dark satanic mills".

Hospital workers hardly need newspaper editors or Ministers to lecture them about the importance of caring for the sick. The union has accused Ennals of hypocrisy and challenged him to prove his claim; and neither Ennals nor the press has found one single case to back up their barrage of accusations.

Ennals' hypocrisy was made crystal clear in a later part of his statement, when he said that "It is simply not good enough to suggest that the management side and the Government should take the easy way out and give way. This would cause major problems in the NHS because it would upset differentials".

The Government's concern is simply about how much money

they will have to pay out — and nothing more.

It is the Government who are 'hurting the sick', and they are doing it in order to help the same class that achieved its domination through 'child labour in dark, satanic mills' — the bosses.

Strike to defend sacked steward

LAST FRIDAY (20th), Transport and General Workers' Union members at Thorns, Southbury Rd, Enfield, voted overwhelmingly, by a three-to-one majority, in favour of strike action for reinstatement of a militant steward, Paul Green, who has been sacked, according to the management, for 'persistent lateness'.

For the workers, it is clear that this is a case of victimisation.

About a week before Paul Green was sacked, stewards were told, at a meeting with manufacturing manager Philip Hart, that the management would oppose the introduction of any new stewards and there were "half a dozen of the present ones we [i.e. the bosses] would like to get rid of". Paul Green is obviously the first, if the bosses are allowed to have their way, and his timekeeping is an excuse.

There is an additional reason for this offensive against shop-floor organisation. Three weeks ago workers at all five North London Thorns plants submitted, via their stewards, a claim for a 15% pay rise coupled with an immediate move towards a 35 hour week. Strikers at the Southbury Road picket told *Workers' Action* that the sacking was an attempt to forestall a serious fight for the pay claim by provoking a strike against victimisation.

It is therefore vitally important for Thorns workers in all the North London plants that this strike is won, and won quickly. Over 1000 of the 1300 TGWU members are now out on strike. Already messages of support have come from Bellings workers, Enfield Fire Station, the Execu-

tive Committee of Enfield/Edmonton Trades Council, and North London Post Office Engineers. A 24 hour picket has been organised against scabbing and to prevent Thorns from moving parts to other plants. Strikers from Ford Ponders End plant have already been down to give their support on the picket lines.

Messages of support and donations to: *Strike Committee, 75a St Marks Rd, Bush Hill Park, Enfield.*

NEIL COBBETT

We want 20pc say clerks

A special branch meeting of Westminster Council clerical workers voted last week to mandate their Executive to fight for a "restoration of pay levels to 1974 levels" in the coming NALGO annual negotiations. In effect this would mean about an extra 15-20%.

After a 5-minute speech in favour of the Executive's motion, the packed Caxton Hall meeting moved straight to a vote, since no-one offered to speak against the motion. Only about 20 people out of 500 voted against.

This motion, originating from the CP-Left Labour caucus [the Nalگو Progressive Alliance] is a significant departure from their past policy. Scenting serious opposition to the ludicrous 5% limit, they have evidently decided to up the stakes.

ANL picket

A PICKET organised by the Anti Nazi League thwarted the NF's attempt to hold a public launching in Stockport for their new pamphlet against the ANL, last week.

NF leader Martin Webster tried to organise a meeting in the 'Bulls Head', in the market place in Stockport. The latest piece of fascist pornography, alleging that the Anti Nazi League is a "Jewish conspiracy" was the big attraction.

But there were only 20 NFers inside when about 100 ANL demonstrators turned up. The NF closed the doors, stayed put, and called the police — who allowed the ordinary customers to leave, but the NF stayed.