

workers' ACTION

Inside

Palestine
p4&5
Ireland
p2
Miners
p7

No. 24 July 15th - 21st 1976 8p

"JIM'S THE BOSSES' MAN", whooped an ecstatic Daily Express as Callaghan pressed ahead with plans to cut 'public expenditure' by £1,000 million. No wonder CBI chief Lord Watkinson offered the gleeful assurance, "You can rely on our full cooperation"! Watkinson knows that the element of 'public spending' that goes to aiding private industry will actually grow; he knows too that the element of 'public spending' that goes in loan repayments will soar.

What will be cut in social service spending: spending on hospitals, education, housing, and transport. What will be cut is the working class's standing of living and what will increase is unemployment.

Backing up the demand for cuts are arguments about "overspending" and "living beyond our means". In this case, however, it is not just the principle that is wrong: the Government is actually falsifying the figures!

The Tribune group has exposed part of the fraud: "Estimates from the EEC commission have confirmed the suggestion in the Times last week that the Treasury figures are out by as much as 25 per cent. All the new evidence points to the Treasury having exaggerated by a cool £2,000 or £3,000 million".

But allegations of deception are not limited to the Labour left. "Accountancy Age" - not habitually a help to the workers' movement - says the Government's figures are "largely based on unsubstantiated and unaudited figures".

The last time the Government put a motion on the cuts before Parliament it was defeated by the abstention of the Tribune group's left wing. This time it wants no revolt. It doesn't want to have to get by on Tory votes. To avoid a repetition the Callaghan-Healey axis have been blowing hot and cold with the Tribune left - smiling agreement and threatening thunder in turns.

But the situation has been complicated by two factors: the opposition to the cuts of Benn's Home Policy Committee and the opposi-

tion in milder terms of Mr Jack Jones.

The Home Policy Committee and the official Tribune position (supported by Jones in principle) is to raise funds by imposing import levies, and to direct investment through the National Enterprise Board. But, smile as he might, Healey can't conceal his own policy, which he spelt out in a recent memorandum. It reportedly "commits the Government to promoting a profitable private sector and to giving greater priority to industry over personal consumption or even the Government's social objectives"; and he added, "there is no question of giving more money to the National Enterprise Board".

Given this position only the threats stand a chance of working. But a week ago, according to the Guardian, "Senior Tribunites insisted that the luxury of abstention was no longer available, as the Government and sterling were under critical and mounting pressure".

When the 37 Tribunites abstained over the cuts debate on March 10th the Government was temporarily shaken. Unfortunately the 37 capitulated the following day when they voted "confidence" in the government's social and economic policies. This time when the cuts are debated in Parliament these MPs that claim to pursue the interests of the working class should vote against the Government... whether or not that means voting with the Tories!

And if it comes to a vote of "confidence"... so be it. Again they should vote against!

THE BILLION POUND CUTS SWINDLE



ABOVE: part of the campaign to stop closure of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Women's Hospital

UNITED FIGHT BACK NEEDED

THE MAJOR public sector unions, NUPE, NALGO, NUT and NUR are all committed to opposing cuts. They each have a separate campaign.

NUPE, for instance, will be producing 250,000 leaflets and 35,000 posters to put its case; it will be organising parliamentary lobbies and will put forward what the union calls a "constructive and radical alternative to the policies at present being pursued by the Government".

At the NUR Conference at Paignton, its President, Dave Bowman, threatened strike action against the Government's Green Paper railway closure programme. But all he could put forward as a "constructive and radical alternative" was an end to investment abroad and to spending

on the arts!

But it is no good juggling with advice to the Government on just how they should make workers pay for the bosses' problems. What we need is fighting unity. The public sector unions should join forces in an Alliance against the cuts. And their policy should be to defend ALL public services and ALL jobs - not just their own "special cases".

Anti-cuts campaigning must be based on direct action, asserting that the working class will not take the burden of the bosses' crisis.

Despite the flabbiness of the official campaigns, there are many such

struggles getting underway now, as the cuts become a central issue of struggle, not just of talk.

CPSA members in Swansea are taking one-day strike action on Friday 14th July against the threat that 3000 jobs will be lost with the scrapping of the road tax.

Callaghan, in Swansea last week, told the workers not to listen to 'misleading' rumours about cuts. But the workers, quite correctly, said that they would not call off their action without firm commitments from the Government as to the security of their jobs.

University College Hospital workers have voted to strike for 24 hours on Wednesday 21st July, to support the campaign against closure

of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (EGA) hospital for women in Camden, London. St Pancras Hospital is also committed to a one-day stoppage, and action has been promised from other hospitals in Camden.

On the same day EGA workers will be organising a picket and a demonstration from the EGA to Whitehall to lobby Parliament from 4.15pm. They are also campaigning for support from other trade unionists to spread their campaign throughout the labour movement.

In Australia the Council of Trade Unions (equivalent to our TUC) has called a general strike against the Liberal government's plans to rob them of certain health facilities and

to shift the burden of payment onto the workers.

We are a long way off that now. But even if we can't yet get fighting unity between different unions at national level, that unity must be built now in workplaces (all-union hospital, school, college and council committees) and on a geographical basis.

And these local "cuts committees" should include representatives of community and tenants' organisations, and of Labour Parties.

That way the network of solidarity and struggle can be developed which alone can give the working class enough strength to break the back of the Government's policy as a whole.

HEALTH SERVICE CUT? UNIONS REPLY WITH A GENERAL STRIKE

TWO MILLION workers have taken part in the General Strike in Australia. Almost all the big factories are closed, and in the power, transport, heavy engineering, mining and building industries the strike is solid. The only big pockets of scabbing are in the white collar and commercial sectors: many shops and offices have stayed open.

The strike has been called by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) over the Government's breaking off talks on the 'Medibank' scheme. It is a clear challenge to the Liberal Government of Malcolm Fraser by the pro-ALP (Australian Labour Party) unions.

Before the dismissal by the Governor-General of the Labour Government headed by Gough Whitlam, the workers of Australia looked forward to an improvement in medical insurance. The big insurance companies would be forced to direct funds towards the state controlled Medibank. At the same time, the Government intended to ensure that the Medibank scheme would not suffer overmuch from competition from private medical schemes.

Although Whitlam's proposals were half-hearted and meagre, they held out a promise of improved health insurance. Many workers saw a real class fight involved in confronting the opposition of the powerful Australian Medical Association and the big insurance companies.

The Liberal Government, buckling before these forces, has proposed a Medibank scheme funded by a 2.5% income tax levy: a clear wage-cutting device.

The last time Australia saw anything approaching a General Strike was in 1969, when Clarrie O'Shea, treasurer of the Victoria tramways union, refused to pay a fine under an Australian version of the Industrial Relations Act, and was jailed. Strike action quickly forced his release.

A victim of fascist violence

A PUBLIC Prosecutor, Vittorio Occorsio, lies dead; there are 29 bullet holes in his car. It is the work of the Italian fascist organisation "Ordine Nuovo".

Meanwhile the Public Prosecutor of Latina, south of Rome, has demanded that parliamentary immunity against criminal charges be lifted from Sandro Saccucci, the fascist deputy who is a member of the MSI, the largest fascist party in Italy.

Saccucci was recently held in custody in Britain, in connection with the murder of a young Communist after a meeting Saccucci was addressing. He had fled Italy in case he lost his seat — and with it his immunity — in the elections last month. But his re-election (with an increased majority!) restored his immunity for the time being, and he has been released.

The leader of the MSI, Almirante, is coming under pressure from the "moderates" in his party who don't want any open connection with the gunmen and arsonists in the party. But the agreement to hold a Congress in October will have the effect of letting him off the hook for some months.



Change in government sparks riots in Spain

"SQUADS of police mounted in pairs roared along pavements, the man at the rear, baton in hand and sub-machine gun slung on his back, thumping anyone within reach". Thus reported the Times correspondent in Madrid, observing the unsuccessful attempts by Spanish police and civil guards to break up a massive demonstration in Madrid last weekend. The demonstration was one amongst many taking place all over Spain, demanding political amnesty and release of strike leaders. In Madrid and Barcelona they were prohibited, while in Malaga and Seville the authorities were forced to allow them because of lack of police reinforcements.

The latest round of demonstrations was sparked off by the change of government announced by Juan Carlos last week. The Prime Minister was unceremoniously sacked by the King last Thursday and replaced by Adolfo Suarez, a Falangist, and secretary-general of the National Movement, the only legal political movement in Spain. Arias' indecisiveness and lack of enthusiasm for reform, even within the Francoist system, had made his removal imperative.

Sections of the Spanish bourgeoisie, desperate to reform an anachronistic system of government in the face of a deteriorating economic situation and rising working class movement, had been pushing for a more liberal government and compromise with the more responsible elements of the Spanish opposition. At the same time, the extreme right wing of the regime, the "Bunker", remained intransigently hostile to those like Areilza and Iribarne who had argued for some liberalisation as the best way of retaining control of the situation.

Faced with these conflicting pressures, Carlos attempted to gain a Prime Minister acceptable to both sides who could form a government stretching from the "liberal" Falangists to the more responsible Christian Democrats or even Social Democrats. The manoeuvre was a failure. Leading members of Opus Dei, the lay Catholic organisation closely connected to financial interests, had moved closer to the "bunker" and were unacceptable, while both "liberals", Areilza and Iribarne, refused to serve in the new government.

Suarez is left on his own. A Falangist for career opportunities rather than by commitment to the old guard ideas. Suarez is a member of a group, the Union Democratica Espanola, nominally sympathetic to legalising "responsible" political parties and to limited regional autonomy.

However, this latest Government of the regime faces the same problems as before: how to carry out a programme of limited reform demanded by the economy while maintaining the Francoist regime for a transitional period until a stable parliamentary regime is seen as a possibility. To do this without the pressure for change from the working class getting out of hand, is the task that faces Suarez.

The regime has already had to concede to striking postal workers, giving wage rises of £24 a month and releasing strike leaders. The demonstrations and protests this week have brought to the fore the question of amnesty and political freedom, and highlight the political impasse of the present regime.

STUART KING

As Irish unions reject National Wage Agreement BANK STAFF STRIKE FOR 21pc

SINCE THE Irish working class notched up the highest strike rate in Europe in the '60s, the government, employers and union bureaucrats in the 26 Counties have engaged in centralised wage negotiations. The National Wage Agreements (NWAs) have, according to papers like the Guardian, "worked well". That is, they have, to some extent, contained union militancy, and have successfully reduced workers' living standards in favour of profits.

This year, however, the Irish Government will have to find new ways of achieving these goals, for on 3rd July the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) at a special delegate conference rejected the draft NWA agreed between the ICTU negotiating team and the employers' organisations. The bureaucrats had been trying to reach agreement for three months, but there was increasing pressure from the rank and file, suffering even more than in Britain from unemployment and inflation.

A significant number of speeches at the conference referred to the clauses in the draft which would have limited the right to strike. The rejected draft, as in earlier wage agreements, enabled employers to plead inability to pay. It has been made obvious that the major employer considering such pleas is the government itself! Employers in the textile and footwear trades have already dissociated themselves from the draft agreement.

Profits

The rejection of the NWA will have an immediate effect on the members of a union that is, ironically, not affiliated to the ICTU. This is the Irish Bank Officials' Union, which, on the 28th June, called out its 10,000 members in the four principal Irish banks.

Bank workers are claiming an immediate increase of 21%. With inflation in the 26 Counties at around 30% their claim is modest. The two biggest commercial banks — the Bank of Ireland and the Allied Irish Banks — both made large profits last year.

The IBOA has, despite its right-wing leadership, a good record of militancy. In 1970 they were on strike for six months with, as now, no strike pay.

After the signing of past wage agreements, the government has passed special acts to limit bank workers' pay to the "norm" under the NWA. A similar act was recently rushed through the Dail (parliament). But with no NWA there is no "norm". The government is now in a position of controlling by law the

wages of one union while the rest are theoretically free to negotiate the best deal they can.

The Banks' negotiating team and the IBOA managed, before the strike deadline expired, to agree on rises that could be classed as productivity payments, and hence be allowable under the Bank Act. But Prime Minister Cosgrave rejected this and imposed a freeze on bank workers' pay until the end of July. (This was a clause in the draft NWA which had not then been rejected). This has

caused great bitterness, and the general secretary of the IBOA has predicted that the strike will last at least another month.

Vital

The Irish economy is in appalling shape. The Irish economy is in appalling workers for a showdown. Their victory is therefore vital, not only for the protection of their own living standards, but for the prospects for the whole Irish working class.

shape. If the government is to make it safe once again for international capitalism to flourish in, the workers must be brought to heel. For this reason Cosgrave has chosen the bank

As bank workers have no strike fund, collections in England would be very much appreciated. Collections and messages of solidarity can be sent to Joe Stott, National Secretary IBOA, 93 St Stephens Green, Dublin 2 (phone 752543).
JAMES TANDY

The Army in the North of Ireland and The whitewash war

THE PRESS AND MEDIA never tire of telling us about the peace-keeping role of the British troops in Ireland. This idea is repeated in a new reader produced by Heinemann Educational Books to teach English to foreigners.

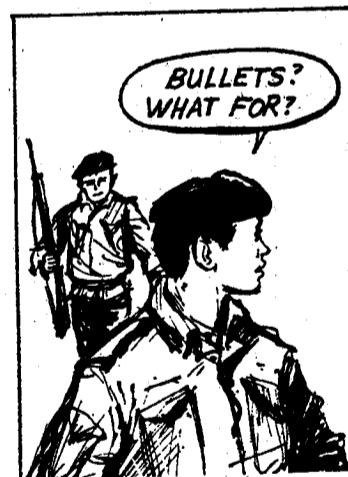
The book 'Death of a Soldier' tells a simple tale. A 'poor' British soldier is posted to Belfast. "Catholic gunmen were shooting. Protestant gunmen were shooting. And the army was in the middle". He is ambushed and shot by a hard and callous gunman and a woman who hides a gun in her pram. "The soldiers' job is to stop the fighting"... and the fighting is the work of savages and barbarians.

Such accounts are commonplace in the British press. It is the line of the employers, the government, and the media.

The citizens of English in Dungannon, Northern Ireland, don't see it that way. On the night of 5th-6th June 1976 their town was invaded by the peacekeepers, so anxious to stop the fighting.

We reprint here some of the statements of those dragged from their beds by the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards.

"ON SUNDAY 6th June, at 3.30am, the soldiers burst in the door, six inside and six outside. They pulled me out of bed and trailed me up the hall by the hair. They let us (my brother and I) dress and took us out to a van on the street. They blindfolded us, taped our mouths with sticky stuff and sat on our backs. We went for a mile or so in the van. They pulled us out and dragged us over the fields. They threw me in a heap of cow's manure. They put a hood over my head: I think it was a plastic bag. They burned me on both sides of the chin with cigarette lighters and burned me on the back. They threatened to shoot us and fired a shot in between us — a sharp shot from a small gun. They said we're after shooting your brother. They kept punching and kicking me and lifting the head up and thumping the ground with the hair of the head. They took me by helicopter to Dungannon. They threatened to throw us out of the helicopter. They put a cable round my neck — kept both doors open — it was very cold. Two military intelligence men took batons and poked



us. They shouted at us for an hour or two. There was no medical examination".

"ON 5th JUNE at five the soldiers dragged me from my house and down the field, my pregnant wife following me screaming. They drove her back to the house. They threw me on my mouth and nose and put a bag on my head and tied my hands. They took me near the river. They had a gun to my head and punched me many times in the stomach

Illustrations from "Death of a Soldier," Heinemann Educational Books, London.

and threatened to throw me in the river. They said I had 20 seconds. I was punched on the stomach quite often. They mentioned Peter Cleary and said I was covered by the man who shot Cleary. They tried to get my fingerprints on a gun. I was made to do press-ups. When the helicopter came they checked my stomach for marks".



Eddie McClafferty spent 13 months in Long Kesh awaiting a mockery of a trial: rigged evidence, no jury and an anti-Catholic judge. After the trial he was duly sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment on an arms charge. It was claimed he drew a pistol on some paratroopers. According to some British Army press releases he even opened fire.

Now Eddie McClafferty is out on bail awaiting a re-trial. Because two weeks ago a soldier, Christopher Hendley, admitted that he had lied at McClafferty's trial. Hendley told how under the command of one Captain Burke of the Third Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, a group of paras set up an observation post in Belfast's Ardoyne district one night.

In the morning Burke gave the order to shoot at a group of about 9 men standing on a street corner. One of the men, Brian Smith, a 26-year old Catholic, was killed. And McClafferty was arrested a little while later. McClafferty had been Burke's target on that morning of 17th April 1973, and obviously Burke was very sore at having missed.

The Army's white-washing service gave out a convenient and totally false cover-up story, and later Burke was promoted to Major.

Unless Hendley had spilled the beans over 3 years later, that would have been the end of that. In fact, it might still be, for as yet no British soldier has served so much as a single day in jail for an offence against the population of the North of Ireland.

They know that in the Ardoyne. It's time every British worker knew it too...
GET THE BRITISH ARMY OUT OF IRELAND!

GEARING UP FOR NEW TIGHTER ANTI-IMMIGRATION LAWS

THE LATEST of the high-placed rabble to jump on the anti-immigration band-wagon is His Disgrace the Archbishop of Canterbury, Donald Coggan. In a statement which has delighted the racist press Coggan began with the customary diversion: "The force of law and order must be supported in their resistance to every kind of illegal immigration".

He then insisted that: "There must be a clearly defined limit to the numbers of those allowed into this country.... recognising that the presence of immigrants often makes for very real difficulties".

The statement was supposed to be in support of the principles of "tolerance", he said. But "tolerance" suggests that there is something distasteful about immigration. Certainly Coggan thinks so, and he proposes tighter restrictions: "There are signs that our present legislation needs a careful look at this point".

by Lawrence Evans

Coggan's statement topped off another week of race-baiting in the press, in Parliament and elsewhere. The Parliamentary debate at the beginning of the week was marked by the insistence by MPs — both Tory and Labour — that there should be "stricter limits on immigration". The Tory William Whitelaw — an appropriate name — wanted to avoid "stretching the tolerance of the British people too far" while his colleague Winston Churchill felt any further immigration was "trespassing too far on tolerance and generosity".

What "tolerance"? What "generosity"? The history of the treatment of the black population of the world by Britain is a history of blind bigotry occasionally tempered by self-interested hypocrisy. Anyone who is not a racist doesn't need tolerance



Jenkins — soft words and generosity to get on with black immigrants. Only the bigot feels the strain.

The most ominous note in the Parliamentary debate was struck by the Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, who said that "MPs should acc-

ept the inevitability of occasionally apparently harsh decisions in particular cases". Jenkins' threat — and it is no less than a threat to increase the savagery of immigration procedures — ties in with Coggan's request for tighter controls. Whether the voices are the softer tones of "tolerance" or the harsh racist abuse of people like Tory MP John Stokes who does "not agree with a multi-racial society" or Labour racists like Bob Mellish, in the end it all comes to the same thing: "Keep the blacks out".

Whether or not the press's racist campaign has been stirred up consciously by the government, it is quite clear what the whole thing is heading towards: a new harsher racist immigration law — an iron curtain of racism.

Opposition to racism means nothing unless it includes a categorical stand against any immigration controls.



The killers mourn their own kind

THE VOICES that were silent after Soweto and that never veered from supporting US imperialism's aggression in Vietnam are now raised against Angola's execution of four convicted mercenaries.

After doing their level best to crush Angola's struggle for freedom and independence, the vampires of imperialism now tell us that the very sight of blood appals them.

The Queen pleads. The Prime Minister sends a message. President Ford sends a communique. The Angolan government rightly consigns these notes from its enemies to the waste bin. Has Angola fought so long for its freedom that its government should, now that victory has been won, snap their heels at the request of their former oppressors and shout "Yes, sir!"

Despite the rightful disgust and hatred the Angolan people must have felt towards the killers for cash, the mercenaries were given a proper trial. They were submitted to no humiliation except the humiliation of listening to the unspeakable charges against them. Nine of the mercenaries were let off with their lives.

Now, according to reports claiming to quote "one senior Western diplomat" in Brussels: "Angola will be treated as a leper".

The imperialist powers supported the Portuguese against the Angolans. They backed stooge movements to crush the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). And now — after their aggression, their criminal intervention and butchery — perhaps they will decide not to help Angola!

Fury

What limitless hypocrisy it takes to present these war-mongers as "the friends of Angola"! The Governments of these countries have shown where their solidarity lies — with the murderers and the mercenaries. The working class of these countries must organise our solidarity — to demand that as long as Angola wants it there should be no let up in aid or trade.

According to the 'Daily Mail', "The widespread revulsion over death sentences for being a mercenary... is likely to provoke worldwide fury". We think not. But if the 'Mail', and others like them, can stoke up a "fury", they will be delighted. It suits them so well to rant against President Neto, against General Ghaddafi — because they are black; to present General Amin's brutality as a result of black rule; and to remain silent over Smith and over Vorster, the heroes of white racism in Africa. And it suits them to link their fantastic allegations of "savagery" and "uncivilised behaviour" by the Angolan regime with their racist attacks on black immigrants into Britain.



LIFE AT THE TOP



by Chris Fletcher

THE Lonrho inquiry declares that the company's leading Board members were frauds, tax-dodgers, sanctions-busters, accomplices in corruption and swindlers on a grand scale.

► **The frauds:** When former minister and ex-Tory Party chairman Lord Duncan-Sandys ceased to be paid over £50,000 a year as a "consultancy fee" by Lonrho, he was given a "compensation" payment of over £150,000 and made chairman of the Board. The shareholders weren't told, of course.

► **The tax-dodgers:** Sandys' payments were all made out to an address in the Cayman Islands, so that no tax would be paid out on them.

Sanctions

► **The sanctions-busters:** Lonrho chief executive 'Tiny' Rowland claims sanctions-busting is a cinch. "It is clear to everyone in Africa" he says "that British sanctions (against Rhodesia) are and always have been meaningless formulae". According to Rowland, Shell, BP and British Leyland are all also sanctions-busting in Rhodesia.

Lonrho's own sanctions busting shows just how easy it is. Lonrho acquired a South African company which in turn owned a mining company which in its turn owned the Nyaschere copper mine in Rhodesia itself. The acquisition of the South African company was stalled when the directors of Lonrho were told that sanctions legislation made it impossible to buy the company with funds from Britain — so the directors borrowed the money from a Canadian bank and a Swiss account and the deal went ahead.

Cousin

► **The corrupters:** Angus Ogilvy (married to the Queen's cousin, who was a director of the Midland Bank, the Rank Organisation, Guardian Royal Exchange Assurance and the MEFC property group until he resigned last week was one of the directors of Lonrho.



Ogilvy — Lonrho spent £21,000 on his flat

"I was not against the principle of bribery" he admits "it is part of doing business like paying a merchant an underwriting fee."

According to an undisclosed part of the inquiry, both individuals and political parties received bribes. Lonrho itself has admitted that payments went to "political parties in Africa."

► **The swindlers:** The biggest bribes appear to have been the ones the main directors, Rowland, Ogilvy and one Alan Ball paid to each other out of the company's funds so that each could blackmail the other to keep silent. Rowland, for instance, paid Ogilvy £60,000 and the shares in the Nyaschere copper mine were held not by Lonrho but by the family trust funds of Rowland, Ball and Ogilvy.

The report tells of apartments and country mansions being transferred from the company to Rowland and Ball, and of the way Sandys and the company's auditors connived to cover up a huge 'gift' to Rowland of £307,471. The "gift" was paid out under the guise of an expense account which "was prepared on a basis inconsistent with the facts" and was used to cover Rowlands' overdraft with the company of £306,627.

Who cares?
Do the shareholders care?

According to the Financial Times, "There is no reason to suppose that this loyalty (to Rowland who has boosted the company's profits) will be undermined by the report from the Department of Trade's Inspectors."

Loan

Does the Government care? Two days after the newspapers carried reports of the DTI inquiry they were able to report that the Government — through the DTI! — is giving Lonrho an interest free loan of £4.9 million to buy up Brentford Nylons. Some punishment for fraud!

So why did Edward Heath institute the inquiry back in 1973 after his famous "unacceptable face of capitalism" speech? Possibly he was concerned to apply a cosmetic to capitalism's odious appearance? Perhaps he thought that a Government inquiry would cover up what a searching press (such as it is in this country...) might reveal? Or perhaps it was a way of getting at Heath's political opponents, Sandys and more importantly du Cann, the man who plotted Heath's downfall and a leading Lonrho director.

What is certain is that no-one



(Above) Rowland — his mansion cost Lonrho £325,000
(Below) Sandys — he got £15,000 'compensation' for becoming chairman of the Board



cared about the company's 100,000 workers. The inquiry didn't go into how these profit-hungry pirates treated these workers — into the toll taken of their lives by poverty, industrial diseases and accidents. The directors are criticised for not telling the shareholders of deals which the shareholders couldn't care less about unless they entailed financial loss. They are not criticised for keeping their employees in the dark. (In fact if they hadn't, they would no doubt have brought down much more disapproval on their own heads.)

Life at the top, the report says, is sometimes "improper". Life at the bottom, it concludes, is just as it should be!

Where are they now

Just before the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, there were about 1½ million Palestinian Arabs living in Palestine under British rule. By 1949, half of them had been driven from the cities and villages by the Zionist armies and terror gangs like the Irgun. Though some integrated into their country of exile, most still languished in overcrowded, impoverished camps. In an essentially agricultural economy, those who have no land have nothing.

In 1967 Israel's armies overran the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai and the Golan Heights, creating yet more refugees.

In 1973, the total Palestinian Arab population numbered 3,321,000, living in the following areas:

Arabs living in Israel since 1948 and their descendants: 370,000.

West Bank Arabs: 705,000.

Palestinian Arabs living in the Gaza Strip: 370,000.

Exiles living in Jordan: 956,000.

Exiles living in Lebanon: 250,000.

Exiles living in Europe: 150,000.

Exiles living in S. America: 105,000.

The numbers and distribution are probably much the same today.

IN 1948 the new Israeli state set about clearing out the Palestinians from their homeland. By a policy of deliberate terror ¼ of a million Palestinians were driven from their homes as refugees. And by secret negotiation with King Abdulla of Transjordan, the small area of Palestine designated by the UN to be an independent Palestinian state was carved up between Israel and Transjordan, with the Hashemite regime there acquiring the West Bank and the new name, Jordan.

Most of the refugees sought shelter in Jordan, and waited for a solution to be found for them by the United Nations. But all that 'solution' amounted to was an invitation to them to return to their homes — an offer rendered meaningless by the hostility of the Israeli government to the idea.

A real Palestinian national movement did not begin to appear until the time of the Suez crisis in 1956. Among Palestinian students and intellectuals a small nucleus of militant nationalists began to emerge, mainly among the exiles in the Gulf states and Egypt. It was from this nucleus that the oldest, and still the most powerful, of the resistance groups — Al Fatah — was formed.

The politics of the Fatah group were the same as they are today, bourgeois nationalism; their central aim, a "democratic secular state of Palestine".

In its early period, Fatah was almost completely isolated from any support among the Palestinian masses, most of them looking for help to the newly emerging Arab nationalist regimes, primarily that of Nasser's Egypt. And the independent organisation of Palestinians

to fight for the liberation of their country was generally denounced as splitting the unity of the anti-imperialist Arab camp. In Arab countries such as Jordan, Palestinian activists found themselves in jail.

But during the early '60s, Fatah began to grow, helped by the collapse of Pan-Arab aspirations when the United Arab Republic (a union of Egypt and Syria) was dissolved, and inspired by the successful struggle for Algerian independence. Drawing some lessons from Algeria, Fatah found a military wing Al Assifa (The Thunderbolt), and mounted its first commando operation in 1965. But the small band of guerillas operating from Jordan was vehemently denounced by the Arab regimes, which feared they'd be drawn into a conflict with Israel.

Meanwhile, a new resistance group was being formed, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), when a number of small groups came together in November 1966. Led by George Habash, it adopted a confused socialist outlook, heavily influenced by Maoism.

Critical

Unlike Fatah, the PFLP was very critical of the Arab nationalist regimes in their relation to the Palestine question.

The isolation of Fatah and the PFLP was changed by the 1967 war. The massive defeat suffered by the Arab armies shattered the faith of the Palestinians in the ability of the Arab regimes to liberate Palestine. And Israel occupied whole new Arab areas, creating many more refugees (some for the second time). In the swollen camps of Jordan, the resistance movement rapidly gained converts.

Fatah stepped up its military operations, especially inside the newly occupied West Bank. Israel responded with savage and indiscriminate collective reprisals. On March 21st 1968 a large Israeli force, headed by tanks and with air support, entered Jordan in pursuit of some guerillas — who stood firm

Losses

at Karameh for 12 hours and fought off the Israelis, inflicting substantial losses on them.

This was a crucial turning point for the resistance. By showing that it could stand up to the Israeli army, albeit in a limited operation, it assumed the role of leadership in the Palestinian movement. Support began to flood in from Arab countries (even Hussein of Jordan declared after Karameh "we are all fedayeen [freedom fighters] now") and both Fatah and the PFLP established secure guerilla bases, mainly inside Jordan. Soon the bases were being overwhelmed with volunteers.

The vast majority of the refugees were in Jordan, and it was there that the resistance was focussed. The regime of King Hussein vacillated between supporting the resistance movement and repressing it as a threat to the stability of his rule. But increasingly he saw the presence of a powerful resistance movement as a threat and set out to smash its power: armed and autonomously organised, the Palestinians had begun to constitute a separate power within Jordan. Hussein responded by strengthening his army (he introduced compulsory military service) and getting more arms from the USA and France.

At that time the major forces

The hi-jacking of an France airliners by su ers of the Palestinian ance and the continu in Lebanon show that issue of Palestine is st central to the Middle In this article, NEAL STATHAM traces the elopment of the resist movement: from its as an isolated group o militants, through its efforts to establish its the face of the hostile imperialism and the the Arab regimes, to possibilities that lie before it.

in the Palestinian resistance w habitually zig-zagging between leaning on the various Arab r and seeking to realise their o independence. But in 1969 a ion of the PFLP put forward more radical programme, call for a simultaneous fight again Zionism and Arab reaction. T they won a formal majority a

Split

PFLP conference that year, t leadership refused to implem the new line, and the 'majori split to form a new group. U the leadership of Nayef Haw this was called the Popular D ratic Front for the Liberation Palestine (PDFLP). It began t up bases in northern Jordan i in the capital Amman.

The PDFLP warned that t Hussein regime was preparing liquidate the resistance move



MUNA was born in Israel; she is a Palestinian Arab. She has several brothers and sisters, and until 1970 her parents received child benefits from the Government. Then a new law was passed which effectively ensured that while children of Jewish parents received the grants, Arab children would not. The law was opposed by a few progressive Jews in Israel, but today Muna goes hungry—the victim of Israel's racism.



LEILA WAS born in Palestine. In 1948 as Zionist terrorists struck Jerusalem, she fled with her family. For twenty eight years she has lived in exile, while Israel rejects her right to return to her homeland. 400,000 Palestinians fled from the threat of death before May 15th, 1948, the day that Israel was established. By mid 1949 the total of Palestinian refugees had almost doubled.



BASSAM is a young Palestinian. In 1948. After twenty eight years resistance movement to fight f he is termed 'a terrorist', but if by foreign settlers what would

TREACHERY THAT TURNED THE TIDE

WHEN REPORTS of the death of President Assad of Syria reached Palestinians and their Lebanese supporters in the streets of Beirut last Saturday night, wild celebrations began. For over half an hour the streets echoed to the sound of every kind of gun being fired into the air in jubilation. People embraced in the streets.

Then the festivities came to a sudden close. It was found that the report wasn't true.

The incident dramatically illustrates the unpopularity of the Syrian president among the Palestinians in the Lebanon. Since the invasion of the country by the Syrian army, the balance in the military struggle has tipped away from the Palestinians and Moslem left and into the hands of the right wing Christian militias. At first, these militias were actually aided in the fighting by Syrian troops and the commandoes of the Syrian-controlled 'Palestinian' group Saïqa.

In the weeks before the invasion the Maronite Christian forces had been rapidly retreating and seemed about to lose the war altogether. The intervention of the heavily armoured Syrian forces on their side enabled them to win back the initiative and drive back the Palestinians and their allies.

Despite all the protests of the Lebanese, of the Palestinians, and of the heads of various Arab governments, the Syrian troops remain. Forces of the Arab League, sent as 'peacekeepers', have made no impact on the situation, and the Syrians are refusing to cooperate with them.

right wing Falangist militias are driving Lebanese left wing and Palestinian units back towards their base in the port of Tripoli. Syrian troops have prevented any other Palestinian units from coming to the aid of their beleaguered comrades, and the town is now virtually cut off from support except by sea.

In the Beirut area the Falangists have kept up their attack on the important Palestinian refugee camp, Tel Al-Zataar. This lies in a mainly Christian area and has been under fierce attack for over 3 weeks. So far the Palestinians have resisted, but it seems only a matter of time before the camp falls, unless the whole course of the war begins to change.

The only group that can really be pleased with the situation as it now stands is the Syrian government. Its intervention has made Lebanon into a fiefdom of Syria, and they seem unlikely to pull out in the near future. Last week the Syrian Defence Minister, General Mustafa Tlass, announced that Syria was prepared to stay in the Lebanon indefinitely until the situation conforms to what the Syrians want. That seems to be a Lebanese government subservient to Syria, that does not lean towards the Palestinians and the Moslem leftists.

As far as the Lebanese parties to the conflict are concerned, both look like being the losers in the end. Despite the advantage that the Christians have now got it is unlikely that the Syrians will let them carry out what seems to be their newest ambition — a partition of the country. Such a partition would have dangerous implications for the Syrian regime itself — Syria is also divided into hostile religious camps.



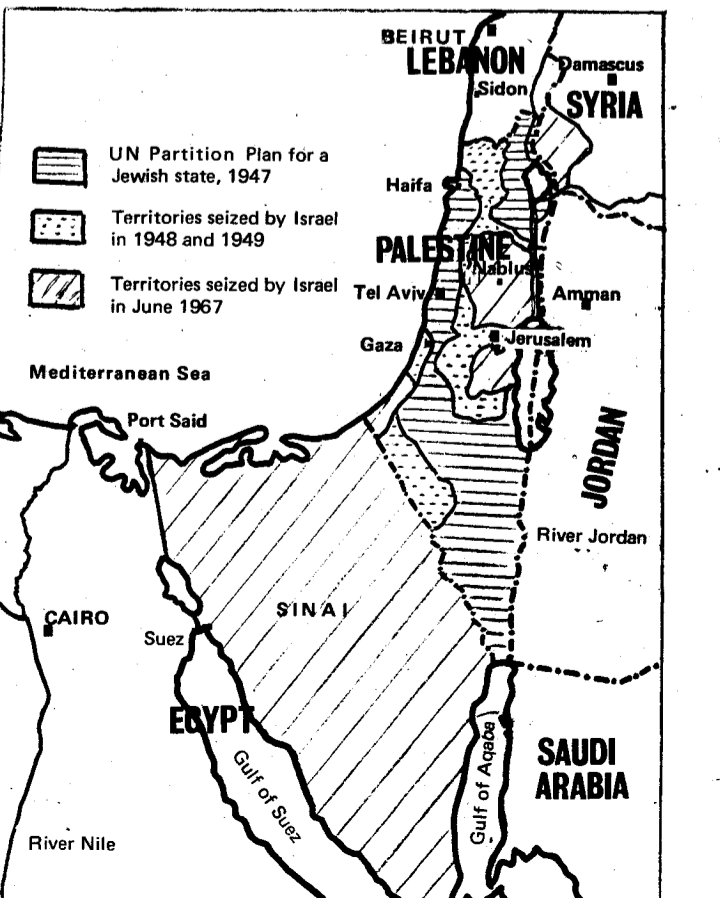
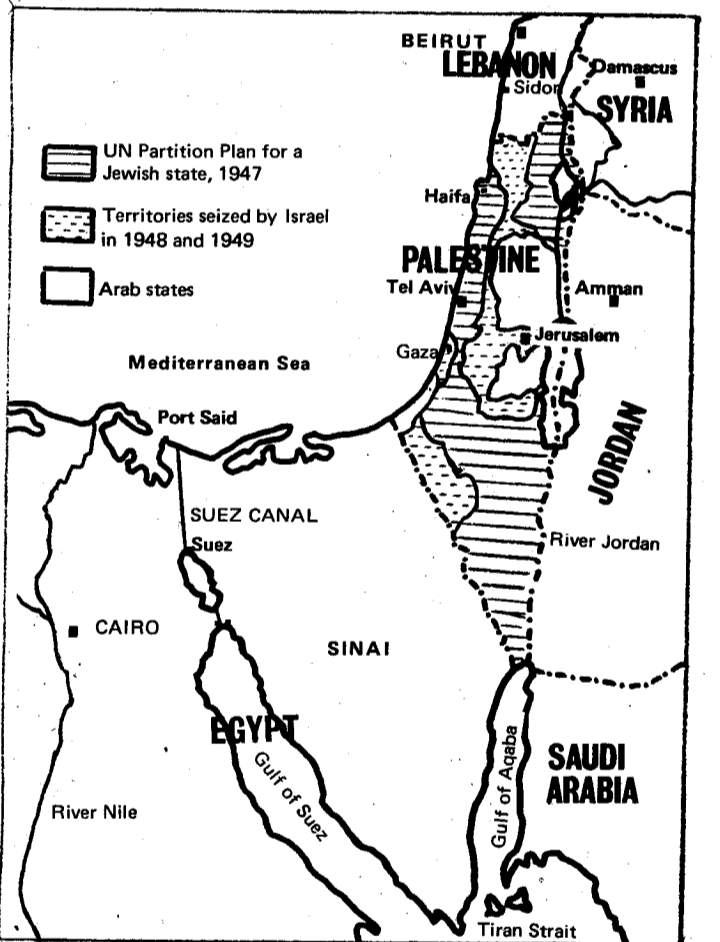
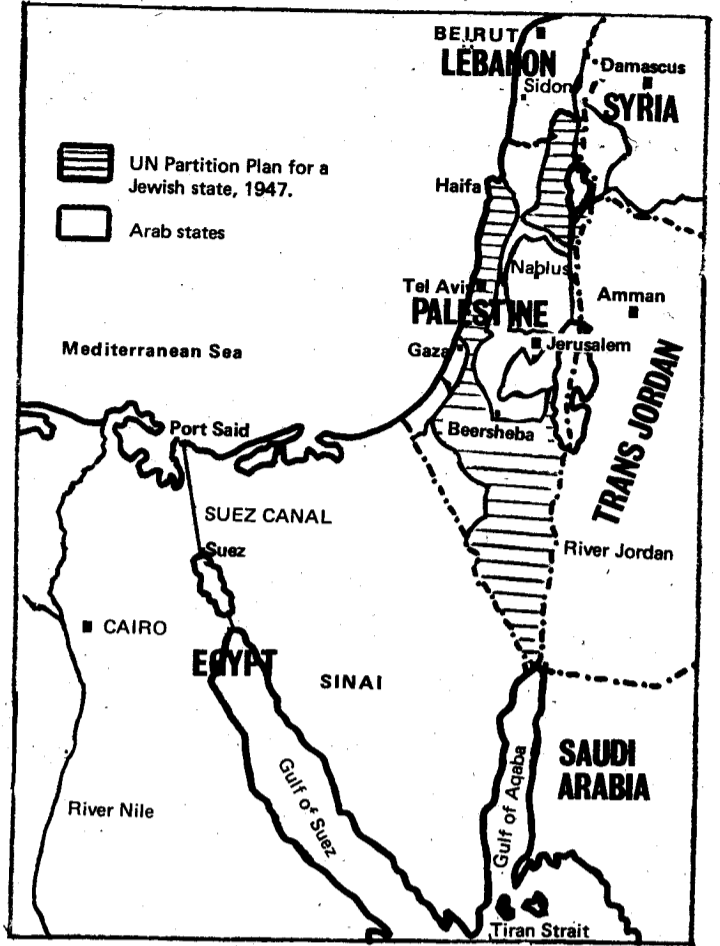
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FROM BLACK

SEPTEMBER

TO BREAK JULY

How Israel expanded



and it advocated the overthrow of Hussein and his replacement by a pro-resistance government. But the warnings went unheeded. In 1970 Hussein, along with other Arab leaders such as Nasser, accepted the Rogers Plan put forward by the USA, which called for the creation of a West Bank Palestinian state under the control of Jordan. The resistance movement saw the Plan as a proposed sell-out, and in response the PFLP organised the hi-jacking of 3 airliners to a deserted airstrip in east Jordan. Hussein responded by enforcing virtual military rule in Jordan, an action which provoked a general strike called by the resistance. By the middle of September heavy fighting had broken out between the Palestinian resistance and the Jordanian army, with the Palestinians encircled in Amman.

Although the worst fighting was over by the end of September, it carried on sporadically until well into the following year. By the summer of 1971 nearly all the guerilla bases in Jordan had been wiped out, and thousands of Palestinians driven into neighbouring Syria and Lebanon.

Black September was an enormous blow to the Palestine resistance. In Lebanon, they had to set about re-building their organisations. But within a year they were in a position to conduct raids into Israel — which brought reprisals in the form of raids deep into Lebanon and the aerial bombing of the refugee camps.

Despite Black September, the initiative was still in the hands of the resistance. But today, two other factors have intervened to change this situation: the 1973 October war, and the recent events in the Lebanon.

any means a Palestinian independent national authority on liberated Palestinian soil. This, they say, would create an autonomous base from which to escalate the struggle to regain the whole of Palestine. Most of Fatah and the entire PDFLP see a West Bank state as a stepping stone to their final goal. But undoubtedly there are some elements that see the West Bank state as being sufficient in itself, and if such a state were established, their sway would probably be very much increased.

The Rejection Front argue that any such state would defuse the struggle and allow the consolidation of Israel. They say that any such state achieved by negotiations could only be a puppet with no real independence from regimes such as Jordan.

Instead they argue for the continuation of the armed struggle and the undermining of reactionary Arab regimes such as Jordan.

The position of the PFLP is certainly correct in that the establishment of a West Bank state will defuse the Palestinian struggle and strengthen those within the Palestinian camp favouring accommodation to the status quo of Israeli domination. It means recognition of the right of Israel to exist as an exclusivist, racist state. It means an acknowledgement of its right to dispose as it pleases with the land it has plundered from the Palestinians, giving automatic citizenship to Jews from all over the world while excluding Palestinians born there. And it means an acceptance of the partition of Palestine into an Arab state and a Zionist state.

Pressure

But the Rejection Front is under great pressure. The 'second round Black September' we are witnessing in Lebanon, with the Rejection Front's most powerful Arab patron, Syria, turning on the Palestine resistance there, has virtually destroyed the Rejection Front, and there has been a reconciliation in Lebanon between the leaders of the different wings of the resistance.

Meanwhile, there are fears that if the PLO does not before long settle for some form of West Bank state (should this be offered by Israel) then Hussein could step in and convert the West Bank back into part of Jordan.

The dramatic rise of the Palestinian resistance during the late '60s gave hope to many Palestinians that their country would one day be completely liberated from the Zionists. That is a goal that all socialists must support. The Zionist state has no right to existence: it is racist, it is aggressive and expansionist, and it has allied itself to imperialism and stood against the aspirations of the Arab masses throughout the Middle East. Every inch of the way it has built itself up at the expense and to the exclusion of the Palestinians.

Blame

If the Palestinian resistance cannot achieve the destruction of Zionism and is forced into compromise, the blame will lie on its supposed friends, the Arab regimes which have consistently treated the issue of Palestine as a ploy in their bargaining with Israel and the USA; and which, when the Palestinians have got in the way of their schemes, have turned on them and their organisations with a savagery that would not disgrace Israel itself.

1970, Black September; 1976, the onslaught in Lebanon. The history of the resistance shows that the Palestinians can only win

Limited

In '73, the limited success of the armies of Syria and Egypt opened up the possibility of a negotiated settlement with Israel. One, moreover, which took no account of the resistance movement.

With the Sinai accords, the movement split into two broad camps. The majority of the PLO (Fatah, PDFLP and the PNF, an umbrella group operating inside the West Bank) argued that the PLO must take part in a negotiated settlement if one looked like being on the cards; and, if necessary, agree to some form of a West Bank state as a first step towards the total liberation of Palestine. (The PDFLP had in fact always been in favour of a West Bank state, while stressing that it had to be clearly independent).

A smaller grouping within the PLO — the PFLP along with two smaller groups, the Popular Front — General Command, and the Iraqi-based Arab Liberation Front — formed the Rejection Front. They opposed any negotiated settlement and insisted on the continuation of the struggle for the full liberation of Palestine, as a democratic and secular state for Jews and Arabs.

The one point of agreement of these two tendencies was that none of the Arab regimes should lay claim to negotiate for the Palestinians. Hussein, for instance, has always claimed that he represents the Palestinian people, and after 1973 has again floated the idea of a West Bank mini-'state' under Jordanian control. And Egypt seemed prepared to negotiate a settlement for the whole area without the participation of the PLO.

So the PLO decided to stake out its legitimate claim to be the sole representative of the Palestinians. They managed to get this recognition from the majority of Arab states at the Arab summit in Algiers in November 1973, and capped this with the successful appearance of Yasser Arafat (leader of Fatah and the PLO) at the UN.

Issue

But these diplomatic successes, though probably ensuring that the PLO will have to be represented in any future negotiations, have not resolved the question at issue: that is, whether to accept some variant of the West Bank state idea; or whether to fight on, necessarily relying on the possibility of using territory which they do not control as a base, but keeping intact the aim of clearing out the Zionist regime and transforming the area into an integrated society with equal rights for all its citizens.

The majority argues that the

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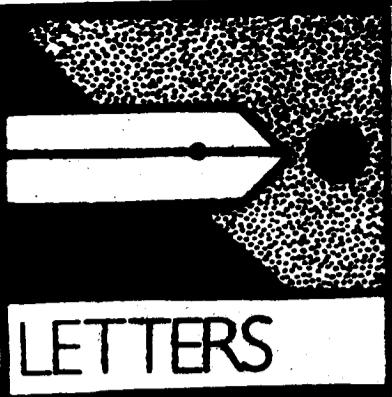
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He was a child when his family fled in exile he joined the Palestine liberation of his land. In the West you had been driven from your homeland you do?



ty-eight years he has lived in the state 70,000 stateless Arabs in Israel. Jews, but not to Arabs. Under Israeli working on 'land of the nation' — a. A recent survey in Israel showed the wages paid to Jewish labourers



'SOCIALIST WORKER' STILL SILENT OVER R&F TEACHER

Worken has still not published a report of the conference. The newly-elected IS-dominated R&F EC has abolished the Rank and File Internal Bulletin and appointed an EB of 23 (it was an elected EB of 12 before), most of whom are IS members.

The conference did not literally decide that "only IS motions on the order paper would be moved". The procedure adopted was this. There were 14 motions on the order paper dealing with the cuts. It was decided to move only the one voted top priority (the IS one, of course, since IS had just over 50% of the delegates) and then to throw open the debate. The whole 'debate' was thus centred around the IS motion, and ended up with the absurd situation of delegates voting on motions some of which had never been mentioned in the debate!

The December R&F NC did indeed adopt automatic cost-of-living increases to fight inflation, but only in relation to social expenditure, not wages.

Some additional points. At most there were 100 delegates at conference. On a ratio of one delegate to 5 members, this means that only 500 out of 722 current R&F members were represented.

John Deason spoke from the Right to Work council, but failed to answer our questions about the structure of this Council. As far as we can make out no one — least of all Dick North, the teacher who does sit on the Council — has been directly elected by teachers onto the Council. We thus have no say in its policy: but Deason called for unqualified support to the latest initiatives of the Right to Work council.

Shabby

The Workers League were particularly shabby at this conference. Their reluctance to translate their verbal protest into action by walking out on Sunday rested

on the mistaken belief that they still retained enough credibility to be returned to the EC even at this charade.

The I-CL delegates left the Conference on Sunday morning, not as a protest at not being able to speak on the re-opener motion on National Committees, but in protest against the Conference's reaffirmation of abolishing NCs. (Obviously, though, we would have preferred to speak rather than the Workers League having both speakers on this. Leni Solinger of the WL argued that NCs were necessary... so that comrades in isolated areas could get together regularly. They might as well have proposed regular rallies!)

We shall be working over the summer to make the Autumn open conference called by the minority caucus at R&F conference a success.

International-Communist League Teachers.

NF incite tenants to beat up Asian

Dear comrades, You reported recently on the National Front attacks on Bengalis in East London. The National Front are again active in Stepney. On Sunday 11th they were responsible for inciting racist violence against Mr Ali, a Bengali who was trying to move into a GLC flat in Westport St. On the Sunday morning there were racist slogans such as "No wogs", "Paks out", written over the empty flat, and NF Barking organiser Derek Newport was heard shouting to local squatters, "We're moving in".

In the afternoon, NF members incited local tenants to beat up Mr Ali and break up some of his furniture while the police looked the other way. The squatters see this as the beginnings of an offensive against blacks and squatters in the area, and are organising against these attacks. The local labour movement must support their action and mobilise to defend Blacks in the East End.

MICK WALTERS. E.London.

Will the conference discuss it this year?

Dear comrades, Ealing-Southall Constituency Labour Party has submitted the following resolution to Annual Conference: "This Conference recognises that racialism, by exploiting the concern of working people over the deteriorating jobs, housing and education situation resulting from the present economic crisis, seeks to put the blame on black and immigrant workers in order to divide and weaken the Labour and Trade Union movement."

"Conference asserts the basic unity of interest between all sections of the working class and declares that the way to combat racialism is for the Labour Movement to fight for the end of the system that breeds racial hatred."

"Conference further believes that the workers of all countries should have the freedom to move from one country to another without restrictions, and should be able to take part in political activity. To this end we call upon the Labour Government to repeal the 1971 Immigration Act, the 1948 Nationality Act, and all other anti-immigration laws."

Last year we submitted a similar resolution, it was not discussed. This year we seek the help of you and your paper to make this the most widely known resolution on the Conference Agenda.

This year we want our and any similar resolution to form the basis of one of the major debates at the 1976 Conference, to make sure of this we ask you to pass resolutions of support, organise a 'post in' to Transport House; publicise the resolution in your publication.

This year we cannot allow Conference to ignore racialism.

EALING-SOUTHALL CLP
58a South Rd, Southall.

LETTER FROM PARIS

Rotting fruit or rotten wages

It's a hot summer and the drought is the worst in living memory. It's a good excuse for all prices to shoot up, even for those fruit and vegetables quite unaffected by it. Tens of thousands of peasants see ruin ahead. Thousands of others are already faced with ruin, even without any help from the sun. In the Midi, for example, the cherries are rotting on the trees — because it costs more to pick them than dealers will pay for them. Meanwhile the dealers can get them cheaper in Italy (where fruit-picking wages are barely at subsistence level) and they then re-sell them at eight or ten times what they paid.

THE GOVERNMENT, itself threatened with splits by Gaullists of left and right — some worried by its attempts at a capital gains tax, others by its closeness to America and NATO — is afraid of a war on all fronts.

Having surrounded the Corsican separatists with armoured cars and machine guns, when they occupied a racketeering big wine producers farm last summer, and having set up a special 'Court of the Security of the State' to try their leaders, they have now put on kid gloves. The prosecutor agreed that they were men of honour and even that Corsican separatism was a serious cause, and asked for sentences ranging from 1 to 5 years.

The court decided that as it could not definitely be proved that the shots that killed two policemen had come from the occupied farmhouse (though some shots had certainly come from there) the part of the accusation charging complicity in voluntary homicide couldn't stand up. They imposed sentences of one and two years, and one of 5 years on Simeoni, the leader of the revolt, all with possibilities of remission.

In the Corbieres district the winegrower Tesseyre (accused of shooting at the police during a riot in which a policeman was killed) has been released on bail after a hunger strike.

IF THE GOVERNMENT is trying to cover its rear, it's because storm clouds are visible ahead. During the crisis, the main strategy of the government and the bosses, faced with militancy and occupations, was to sit them out, to wait patiently for their progressive collapse. Struggles here this year have broken all records for duration and yet have got nowhere in isolation from each other. But now, with the revival of economic activity, such tactics may not serve the bosses so well.

Meanwhile, what may have been a flash in the pan, or may have been the first step to a historic breakthrough has occurred at occupied LIP, where over 100 representatives of enterprises in struggle met together this month. It was the first gathering of its kind, representing struggles led by both CGT and CFDT militants (in sharp contrast to the competitive hostility of their bureaucrats) and extending beyond regional limits — a horizontal link-up quite exceptional in a country where rank and file structures have always been weak and where rival vertical hierarchies have been so strong.

They were very careful to be modest, to seek first practicable and real steps rather than dramatic publicity, to bind continuing regional contacts before seeking nation-wide unity, and to go no further than general agreement would allow.

A central secretariat was elected, based in Besancon (where LIP is) and each enterprise agreed to circulate information coming from the secretariat, and to keep the secretariat informed. Specific plans were made to coordinate the defence of the Ideal Standard occupiers, threatened with imminent evictions, and to organise demonstrations in different parts of the country.

The central concern of those who came was the struggle against closures and redundancies. Working closely with them are the 40 CGT workers occupying the IMRO printworks in Rouen for 10 months now, who have been turning out superb posters, leaflets and broadsheets to publicise their own and other workers' struggles.

LOUISE MICHEL

Dear comrades, Although we agreed very largely with your report of the Rank and File Teachers Conference (July 1st), there are one or two factual errors that need clearing up.

The National Committee of Rank and File used to meet twice a year, during those terms other than the one of the annual conference. But to abolish national committees, and restrict R&F to one national policy-making meeting a year, just shows to what lengths our blinkered IS comrades will go in order to maintain control. And they are obviously not proud of their efforts, because Socialist

Tribune gloats over the murder of Vietnamese Trotskyists

Dear comrades, In 'Tribune' of 2nd July, Malcolm Caldwell reviews 'Party, Army and Masses in China', a book by the Italian Trotskyist Livio Maitan.

After condemning Maitan for criticising the Chinese regime, Caldwell concludes: "It is hardly surprising that Asia enjoys the singular political-good fortune of lacking indigenous Trotskyists. Ho Chi Minh's outstanding contributions to revolutionary theory and practice in this respect should never be forgotten — it was by no means least of his many outstanding achievements".



Vietnamese with Americans in 1945. Ho Chi Minh — far left.

Force

The Vietnamese Trotskyists were in fact a considerable force. In 1939, when the Stalinists (under Ho Chi Minh) and the right wing joined their voices in favour of taxes for the 'national defence' of France, two Trotskyists, who of course opposed this policy — Ta Thu Thau and Tran Van Trach — were elected to the Colonial Council of Cochinchina (southern Vietnam) with 80% of the vote.

But the Trotskyists were decimated by a murderous onslaught by the Stalinists after world war 2. Ta Thu Thau was assassinated in February 1946. Ho Chi Minh

took responsibility for this murder, though, unlike his admirer Caldwell, he had the decency to refer to it with regret rather than as an 'outstanding achievement'.

In China, too, Trotskyists existed before 1949, though they were not as

strong as in Vietnam. After Mao's victory, those who did not escape were imprisoned, and have not been heard of since.

And for whom was the murder and imprisonment of the Trotskyists 'good fortune'? In Vietnam, the attack on the Trotskyists cleared the way for the Accords with the French of March 1946, which ratified the reimposition of the French colonial regime, and thereafter for the sufferings of the Vietnamese people in almost 30 years of war. The Trotskyists had of course opposed the entry of the British troops whom Ho Chi Minh and the Stalinists welcomed into Vietnam in 1945. With imperialism weaker after world war 2 than at any time since, the Stalinists' tactics led to the loss of an opportunity for securing the liberation of Vietnam from imperialism at minimum cost.

Both in China and in Vietnam, bureaucratic regimes have been consolidated, in opposition to the programme of Soviet democracy which the Trotskyists fought for.

Stance

Caldwell's attitude is a reproduction of the stance of the petty-bourgeois Friends of the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Like them, he substitutes for class struggle a vicarious identification with the 'struggle' of the Stalinist bureaucracies — including their struggle against genuine communists.

Fortunately there still are Trotskyists in Asia, fighting to overthrow those bureaucratic regimes (even though Maitan's United Secretariat of the Fourth International refuses to recognise or assist the Vietnamese Trotskyists). And there are also Trotskyists in Britain, who will fight to strip from men like Caldwell their pretence of being 'socialist'. It is shameful that 'Tribune' should allow its pages to be polluted by his disgusting gloating at the murder of working class militants.

MARTIN THOMAS,

A copy of this letter has been sent to 'Tribune'.

workers' ACTION supporters' groups

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Write for details of meetings & activities to:
WASG, 49 Carnac Street, London SE27

Name

Address

"Retirement at 55"

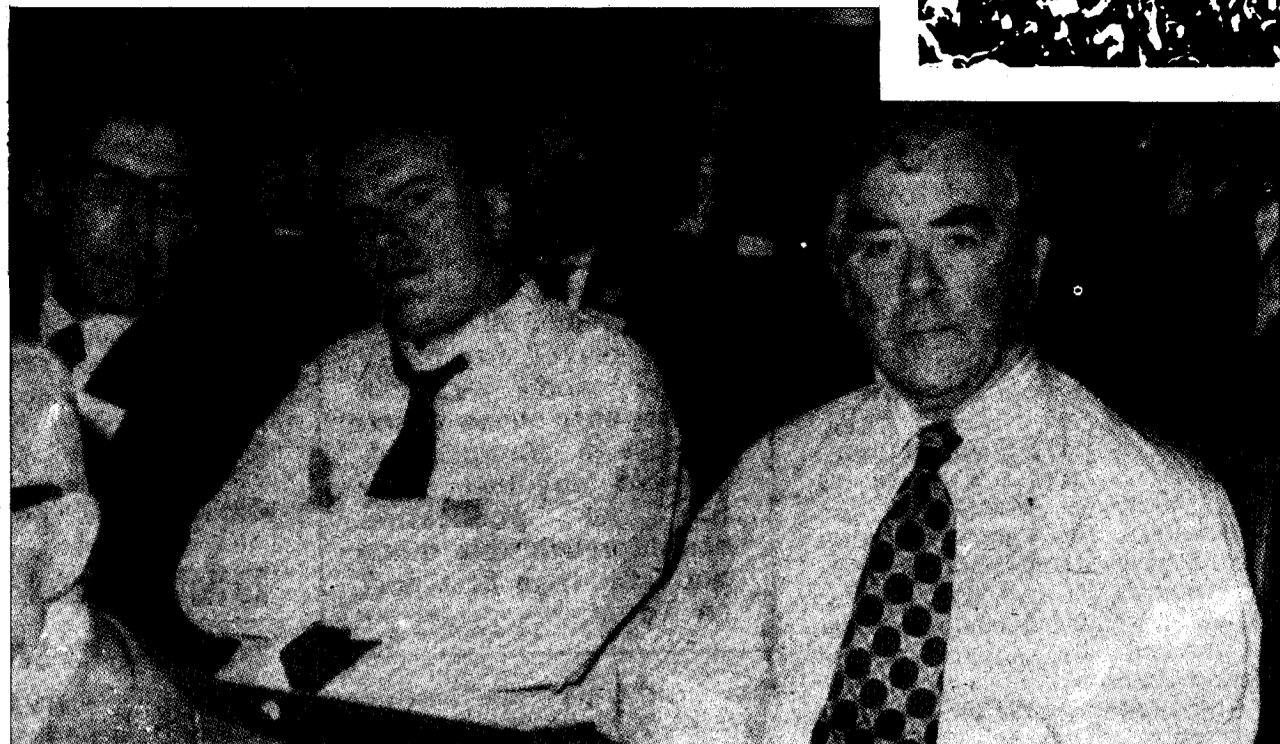
say miners

THE NUM Executive, dominated by Joe Gormley and Lawrence Daly, effectively upstaged the NUM Conference last week. The Executive ruled that resolutions on pay, calling for a break with Labour's 4 1/4% pay policy were out of order. No discussion was allowed on resolutions coming from Scotland, South Wales and Yorkshire calling for major wage increases for all and £100 for face workers.

The NUM Executive argued that in the light of the majority supporting the pay policy in last month's pit-head ballot and of the vote for it at the re-call TUC, the NUM had no right to discuss and decide on pay policy. The conference was deprived of its power to give a lead to the Union.

With the continuing rise in prices miners are increasingly realising that to accept the 4 1/4% pay limit will mean a considerable cut in living standards. It has been estimated that it will put the miners back to the position they were in before the 1972 strike.

Militant resolutions put forward at the conference could have focused the growing anger. That's why Gormley and Daly used every manoeuvre to prevent the Confer-



Miners' leaders — (left to right) McGahey, Daly, Gormley

ence discussing pay, and therefore opening up the discussion again in the Union.

The Executive's ruling was challenged. Hayden Williams from South Wales warned that there would be a revolt "once it percolated back to the coalfields that we didn't have the democratic right to discuss." Kent area secretary Jack Dunn called the "shabby manoeuvre" "an absolute disgrace to this Union". McGahey and Scargill, however,

who had opposed the ruling on the Executive, did not put their position to the Conference. Eventually the ruling was upheld by a narrow majority, and the question of pay was thrown off the agenda.

On one major issue the Conference did defeat Gormley and put the Union on a course for a potential blow-up with the Labour Government. On a resolution from the Nottingham area the Executive was instructed to reach agreement

with the NCB for retirement at the age of 60 by next year and 55 by 1980. In the event of a failure by the NCB to comply then the Executive are instructed to ballot the members as to appropriate forms of industrial action.

Gormley, who said the demand for early retirement was like "asking for the moon", urged the Conference to remit the question of industrial action to the Executive — to give him the maximum freedom to squash all action! The Conference refused.

It is certain that the question of early retirement will not simply be settled between the miners and the Coal Board. Callaghan has already stated that early retirement "would probably conflict with the existing pay policy". He has no intention of granting the miners' demand at present. Likewise the NCB and the Labour Government will fight against the Conference's call for the immediate implementation of a fourth holiday week.

Little wonder that Gormley wants no industrial action back-up for the demand.

Certain sections of the left see the campaign for early retirement as an alternative to a fight on the wages front — a consolation for their defeat on wages. McGahey, speaking for the Executive on the question of retirement, also seized on the issue: "This National Executive Committee has got its marching orders."

Early

In fact, the demand adopted asks for nothing like the moon! We think miners should retire early on full pay. The Nottingham resolution only seeks for a gradual phasing in of the 55-year maximum by 1980. But with unemployment figures nearing the 1 1/2 million mark, we think the trade union movement, not just the NUM, should take action to cut the retirement age to 55 and the working week to 35 hours — with no loss of earnings.

Despite the importance of cutting hours, and the Government's probable resistance, the question

THE UNIONS



as it is raised at the moment can be a major diversion, and one on which the Executive can much more easily play down action than it can on wages.

Leaders like Jack Jones have a long record of verbal militancy and fierce resolutions on pensions and 'fringe benefits', while avoiding all the central problems posed to the trade union movement.

Last week's NUM conference heard reports of declining manning levels, of NCB plans to drive up productivity, of no decrease in the accident rate. Feeling in the areas is mounting as the implications of the 4 1/4% pay policy became clearer.

In that situation a campaign on retirement and holidays ALONE will be a diversion. It will not stop the attacks being made on the wages and conditions of miners. It will not mobilise the real force that the miners can deliver.

Alone

That's why NUM militants must reject any attempt to divert the forces of the NUM into a fight on retirement and holidays alone. That is why they must step up their campaign for the Union to break with Labour's pay policy. And that is why they must step up their campaign to maintain manning levels and to resist the NCB's drive for productivity.

This conference showed as well that the fight to maintain and improve miners' wages and conditions must go hand in hand with a fight for democracy in the NUM. The Gormley leadership will do all it can to sabotage all pressure for action coming from rank and file members. McGahey and Scargill, while opposing Gormley on the Executive, were not prepared to take that fight openly onto the conference floor and appeal to all areas.

Their pressure for action on retirement can divert the NUM if it is seen in isolation from a battle on all fronts.

D. JONES

Victory at Chatfields

THE management of A.E. Chatfields (Ford Main Dealers) provoked a strike in Stoke after attempts had been made to unionise both staff and shopfloor workers.

Becoming dissatisfied with negotiating all grievances on an individual basis, the workers were well on the way to full unionisation. Following the recruitment of 75% of shopfloor workers and 30% of staff workers, negotiations took place over a period of three months between management and AUEW (TASS and engineering section) officials over the question of recognition. Management were prepared to recognise the engineering section because of their majority membership, but refused to recognise TASS, as only 30% (25 people) were members.

In this management had an ally in the person of the AUEW engineering section Divisional Organiser, who happens to be against the amalgamation of the four AUEW sections.

On one occasion, without the knowledge of the TASS Divisional Organiser, he entered into negotiating recognition rights for his own section, which was explicitly against the site committee's wishes, who had passed a resolution saying that recognition must be done on a joint basis in order to maintain the solidarity of both sections.

An informal recognition had been agreed upon for the engineering section, which was to be formalised at the next meeting. But because of the actions of the engineering section Divisional Organiser, management was able to refuse to have a joint meeting with both sections of the AUEW.

It was at about that time that a woman member of the TASS section at Chatfields was given two weeks in which to improve on the amount of errors which she was supposed to have made on her computer data inputs, otherwise she would be dismissed. And immediately following this warning she was removed from her job and given other work, so she had no opportunity of complying with the management's demand. The management, for its part, refused a union request to prove the alleged errors.

On returning from her holidays 4 weeks after the first warning, she was given 28 days' dismissal notice and was asked to leave the premises immediately.

A meeting of both sections of the AUEW members the next day decided to send three demands into management: withdrawal of the dismissal notice, reinstatement of the TASS member

and facilities for union representation if disciplinary action on this member was to be continued.

An hour later the workers' representatives reported back that management had refused to accept the demands. It was decided to stay out for the afternoon and hold a full meeting outside the gates at 8.30am on the following day.

In the absence of the whole of the engineering section's District Committee, the Divisional Organiser for TASS, who had been given the authority to declare the strike official, was contacted.

In the morning, with no change in the management's stance, it was decided to strike, and pickets were organised at the gates. Parts delivery vans were turned away, customers were handed leaflets and asked not to cross the picket line. At one point a whole consignment of new cars was turned away and after the driver had informed his convenor at Halewood, it was agreed that all further deliveries of cars would be suspended.

Now management began to 'insist' on negotiations for a settlement! But they still had one card to play: they called on the Divisional Organiser of the Engineering Section, who had already shown his apathy towards TASS, to declare the strike unofficial and request his members to return to work.

But in spite of his efforts, the members on the site decided to stay out in support of the TASS member. The management couldn't argue with that!

That day, management not only conceded the three initial demands, but also conceded on demands concerning broader issues, including recognition of an engineering and TASS joint shop stewards committee and a promise to get on with the formal recognition talks in the presence of the joint committee.

However, the members were still not satisfied. Although the management agreed to withdraw the dismissal notice against the TASS member and suspend her with full pay pending an inquiry involving ACAS, the members demanded that she be allowed into work and given another suitable job. After another short adjournment, the management also conceded on this point.

These newly unionised workers have gone back in the full knowledge that it was their own organised strength that won the day. They have seen the manoeuvrings of union officialdom and will go into future struggles with their eyes open.

ASH GANGARAM

Teachers to act on jobs

DIRE WARNINGS of part-time education for thousands of school children greeted the NUT's announcement that it was "stepping up action" against unemployment.

Although the marginally more militant approach by the NUT is to be welcomed, what precisely does it entail?

First, the Union will support its members who do not cover for staff absent for more than one day (instead of three as at present), or for unappointed staff (about time!). They will also be asked to refuse to teach classes of over 35 (or 30 in reception or infant classes).

If teachers all over the country carried out this policy, it would make quite a dent in Healey's programme of education cuts. But the NUT is in fact restricting it to a few "action areas", and if you're not in one of them, it threatens to come down like a ton of bricks on militant members.

The policy itself is a scandalous retreat. In 1969 the Union decided that by 1970 no class should be over 35, and this should be reduced to 30 by 1975. This policy has been quietly forgotten over the years, and only now at the height of the crisis over teacher unemployment has a pale imitation been revived.

According to the Guardian, nearly one class in 5 is over 35 — indeed, class size has hardly been brought down since the 1944 Education Act!

If all classes were reduced to 30, this would create jobs for 50,000 extra teachers, more than twice the projected figures for teacher unemployment this September.

6 MONTHS after the start of a strike at AUTOMAT, Swinton (Manchester), the boss Chamberlain is still able to claim "business as usual". Though some of the products are blacked, production goes on as if nothing has happened. The scabs are now on flexitime and can go in and come out when they please as long as they do 40 hours. Right now they are going in very early in the morning to avoid the pickets — especially on a Thursday when the weekly mass picket is mounted.

8 new scabs have recently been recruited, two of whom seem to be students doing summer jobs.

Despite the mass pickets bringing support from Gardners, or the electricians

at the Arndale Centre, the experience of failing to get to grips with the job of stopping production has been deeply depressing, and they accuse local AUEW officials of caring little for the strike and using the strikers in their election games around the position of District Secretary. And now the District is threatening to cut down the levy money 'because the strike has dragged on so long!'

The strike, of course, would be over in no time at all if even a fraction of the strength of Manchester's engineers was deployed on its behalf. Mass daily pickets, an occupation with union support (not hindrance, as when it was attempted some weeks ago) to stop the scabbing, or better

still, solidarity strikes to get local EEF employers to put pressure on Chamberlain — these sort of actions, would bring the strike to a quick conclusion.

The strikers say that local AUEW officials, in particular Mather, have done more for strikers at nearby ICL in one week than for Automat in 6 months. The petty snobbery of favouring a dispute at a bigger and bigger organised works over a weak and small one shows an idiot short-sightedness. Any local boss (not to mention the EEF, which is far from myopic) will see these pathetic attitudes of the local union leadership as a heaven-sent chance to mount an offensive on wage rates, going for the weaker sections first.

'Business as usual'

WIDRICKERS IN

ACTION

NEW GROUND BROKEN IN NEWHAM

by Ian Hollingworth

NEW GROUND was broken in the fight against racialism in Newham last Thursday when Newham Rank and File Teacher and East London Platform (rank & file busworkers) held a joint meeting. This was the first joint rank and file public meeting in Newham for some time, and the 50 people present expressed the desire that such meetings should be a regular feature from now on, especially to organise defence against racist attacks.

Opening the meeting, Paul Singh of the CPSA explained the historical reasons for immigrants doing mainly 'dirty jobs', the low paid jobs that white workers are reluctant to take, and he linked the present outbreak of racialism to the economic crisis in Britain.

Pointing out that the police were incapable of protecting the black community, he related an incident that took place between 40 young National Front supporters and 6 Asians: the police arrested two of the white bullies and ... 4 of their Asian victims!

Kids

Two speakers described the difficulties of combating racialism among young white kids in schools. One of them, Steve Goldstone, a Newham school student, said that the fascists appealed to a lot of students at his school — not on any real political basis, but through the glamour of a 'tough guy' image.

When the National Party organised their march through Newham, Steve and other students had put out a leaflet which had persuaded some students not to go on the march and had laid the basis for an anti-fascist committee in his school.

The final speaker, Steve Cushion of East London Platform, said that racism was not necessarily being deliberately whipped up by the ruling class but it was 'like money in the bank for them'.

He related how, when he used to work in Fulham, he didn't pay much attention to the relatively mild racist jokes that were a part of daily life at work. Then when it came to red-

undancies there was no opposition to moves from the management to get rid of black workers first.

He said he had learnt his lesson then — you have to confront racialism head on, in all its forms. And he ended by tying up the fight against racialism with the fight for better living conditions for all workers. 'Racism finds fertile ground in the minds of those in poor housing and on the dole. Unless socialists can put forward for these workers a socialist answer, then they become easy converts to the fascist myths.'

After the main speakers had finished there was a lively discussion from the floor. Two particularly important points were raised by people in the audience.

Pete Goodwin of the NUT said that there was a real danger of

A FOURTEEN year old Asian boy was dragged by police off the back of a small truck leading an anti-racism demonstration in London on Sunday. The boy, the son of an activist in the Indian Workers Association, is in Westminster Hospital in a serious condition; it is feared he may be partially paralysed.

This incident occurred as police attacked the 10,000 strong demonstration, tearing the driver of the truck out of his cabin and driving the truck through the crowd of marchers.

The demonstration, which consisted mainly of Asians — many bringing children with them — marched from London's Speakers Corner to Westminster, handing in on the way a letter at Downing Street. The letter said that the Race Relations Act should be repealed as 'racist and ineffective'.

The demonstration demanded the right to organise black self defence and repeal of the immigration laws, and it denounced the racism of the Labour Government and the reformist leaders of the black communities and the Government's 'pacification' programme.

This programme is coming under severe strain as the Government shows itself to be increasingly racist and as deep splits appear in

ACTION AGAINST RACISM

people thinking that the present wave of racialism would recede automatically, and he warned of the danger of complacency that this could lead to.

Stephen Corbishley of the CPSA took up the issue of immigration control. Opposition to this, he said, was an acid test in the fight against racialism. And he argued for people to go back to their unions and call for an East London delegate conference of the labour movement and black organisations to lay the basis for effective defence squads against the fascists.

the communities.

The extent of the splits can be gauged by comparing the demonstration on July 11th with that on July 4th organised by the Asian Action Committee ('white man's niggers', in the words of one of the speakers on the 11th).

This demonstration had referred to the Government as 'non-committal on the growth of racialism', called for action merely against the 'illegal activities' of the fascists, called for more police in

BOY HURT AS POLICE ATTACK ANTI-RACIST DEMO

the immigrant areas and for more 'social absorption schemes'. All it could say against the racist immigration Acts was that 'The procedural mechanism of enforcing immigration legislation needs to be reviewed and put on a less intimidating and more humane basis' and it endorsed their basic purpose, saying 'Illegal immigration is to be strongly condemned.'

So deep are the animosities that, according to one of the speakers on the 11th demonstration, there was evidence that a militant Asian youth in Blackburn had been beaten up by thugs hired by the Asian reformist leaders.

Right from the start the demonstrators were harassed by the police, who seemed particularly to pick on the Southall section of the march. Shouting slogans of 'Labour Movement must support black self-defence' and 'Smash the National Front' the march moved towards Piccadilly Circus. As it moved round the Circus, police snatch squads waded in and arrested two Asian youths who had been marching in the Southall section.

Sat down

Immediately the whole section sat down in the street, followed by those coming up behind. The marchers refused to move until their comrades were returned. And after about half an hour of chanting 'Let our friends go' the marchers won their demand and the two arrested youths were released without being charged.

The sit-down created a division in the demonstration, and runners were sent ahead to contact the forward group, which by now had got to Whitehall, and ask them to wait.

As the demonstration was joining up again in Whitehall the police — some on horses and some on foot —

waded in again. They succeeded in dividing the march into three sections, each of which they began to push until almost all the people were dispersed.

But those marching behind the International Communist League banner managed to regroup after having been dispersed, and the regrouped section marched behind this banner over Westminster Bridge to finish the march the other side of the Thames.

All along the route marchers were dragged out of the demonstration by the police and beaten up behind the waiting police coaches. Two army vehicles followed up behind.

Arrests

There were six arrests altogether — three Asians and three whites — on the charge of possessing an offensive weapon: a banner pole!

Bob Churchill, a Workers Action supporter, was dragged from the march at Westminster, kicked and punched and dragged into a police coach where he was beaten again before being taken with the others arrested to Rochester Row Police Station.

The Organising Committee of the demonstration and other organisations are demanding an inquiry from the Home Office into the police behaviour after the delegation had left Downing Street.

The Morning Star, the paper of the Communist Party, virtually ignored this march. Instead, under a headline which talks of a 'call for a united drive' the Morning Star gives front page coverage to a 'demonstration of hundreds' which marched through the London boroughs of Redbridge and Barking. This demonstration of 10,000 was relegated to an inside page and a tiny report.

Trico strikers seek support

by Jill Daniels

THE EQUAL Pay strike at Trico car components factory in Brentford (West London), now in its 8th week, has now involved workers in a local march and in all-night pickets.

Two weeks ago the 400 strikers and their supporters marched through the factory area of Brentford and along the Great West Road. Supporters included workers from Magnatex (another car components factory), London Transport Acton Works, Glacier Metals, British Airways and Edham Rubber Company. Representatives from Ealing and Hounslow Trades Councils and Hammersmith Working Women's Charter Group also carried their banners on the march in solidarity with the strike.

The dispute started because 6 men all doing the same job on the assembly line as the 400 women were getting £5 a week more pay.

Originally, about 200 men had been doing night work, and getting a special allowance. The men were taken off night work, and after the Equal Pay Act became law the management began to move the men onto other jobs in the factory — trying, as so many other managements have done, to create an all-woman grade of workers who would receive lower pay than the men in other grades.

But 6 men were overlooked. After lengthy negotiations, the man-

agement finally made an offer in May: the 6 men were offered a wage cut!

At the time of the walk-out, about 75% of the women were in the AUEW. Now they've all joined. But the Union, though it's declared the strike official, has done little about it. It took them 4 weeks to produce any strike pay, while Social Security refused benefit. 17 of the women went back in at that stage. And the strike is immensely hampered by the fact that the men, also members of the AUEW, cross the picket line every day. All the Union has done about that is to ask the scabs, as members of the District, to pay a levy for the strikers!

Management has twice organised picket busting convoys to get parts out of the factory. After the first incident, when lorries drove at high speed through the small all-night picket line, the women strengthened the pickets. Last Saturday night at 1.30 am, several lorries and five car-loads of scabs escorted by the police broke through the picket line again. The police made sure that the only car available to the pickets to follow the lorries was blocked in by police cars as the organised scab force left.

The blocking of Trico products is still not effective, despite assurances from the Union. At Fords Langley in Slough

workers are still fitting Trico products 'from existing stock', while AEC has gone back on its promise of blacking.

A member of Trico's strike committee attempted to contact the workers at the Northampton subsidiary of Trico, a non-union plant, to black any transferred production. Management responded by locking the workers in to make sure they had no contact with the deputation from Brentford.

The morale of the strike is still high. A couple of weeks ago 70 men working in the toolroom joined them, though about a dozen have now gone back in.

But the crucial test of the strength of the strike will come when the case goes to arbitration on July 14th. If the management win, the women will come under strong pressure to buckle.

But if the Equal Pay Act is inadequate to the point of backing up a management like Trico's when it comes down to it, that's not an argument for giving in. On the contrary, it argues for strengthening the direct trade union action. And a victory achieved by such strength will open the way for further gains, going beyond the limited-confines of the Equal Pay Act.

Published by Workers Action, 49 Carnac Street, London SE27. Printed by Prestagate (TU) of Reading. Registered with the GPO as a newspaper.

'Major fascist groups are growing fast'

A CONFERENCE of southern region anti-fascist groups two weeks ago in Oxford was a useful event in the process of linking up anti-fascist activist committees into a nationally coordinated movement.

The aims it set itself were, however, somewhat cautious and low key.

These included the collection of local reports of experiences over the last two to three years, discussion of current racist/fascist operations and objections, discussion and coordination of anti-fascist perspectives, and the setting up of a regional coordinating committee for quick mobilisation.

The major report on fascist activities was given by Maurice Ludmer of 'Searchlight'. Ludmer states that all the major fascist groups — NF, NP, British Movement etc — are growing fast on the current racist tide whipped up by the scapegoating efforts of Powell and sections of the mass media. The case of Robert Relf, he said, illustrates the importance of the Race Relations Act: Relf's victory is currently being exploited by veteran fascist Lady Birdwood who is organising a countryside display of Relf-type house-sale signs. And the Race Relations Board had done nothing about Kingsley Read's incitement to racist violence when he declared, commenting on the racist murder in Southall, 'One down, one million to go'.

Fascist electoral advances in the May

council elections indicated a combined fascist vote of something like a million at a general election if they maintained the present level of support.

Finally, a grave cause for concern is that much new support for fascism has come from trade unionists (Mr. Relf had received £1400 from factory committees).

The conference agreed that, as the labour movement must be the foundation of a future mass anti-racist movement, it was vital that in all areas a fight be launched to combat racism and fascism in the trade unions.

But this was not the limit of the Conference's horizons: on the credit side, the growth of self-defence was noted among the black population, particularly among the youth. It was agreed that anti-fascist forces must forge links with this current and offer all aid and support possible.

It was also noted that the two lowest polls the NF got in England in the 1974 General Election both occurred in places (Oxford and Basingstoke) where militant campaigns had been mounted against the fascists.

A regional co-ordinating committee was set up and its preparatory work begun. One of its major tasks will be to prepare the region to take part in the Autumn National Anti-fascist Conference, in conjunction with the Northern Regional Committee.