

# workers' ACTION

No. 126

Nov. 26-Dec. 2, 1978

10p

## Flying pickets can beat the bread barons

AT THE BAKERS' union conference last Saturday [18th], every speaker really ripped into the leadership's poor planning of the strike and the TUC's lack of action to support us.

The conference voted unanimously to continue the strike, and drew up plans to organise flying pickets to stop supplies of flour from the mills. The two large bakers holding out against the workers' pay claim, Rank Hovis MacDougall and Allied Bakeries control (together with Spillers) 80% of flour milling.

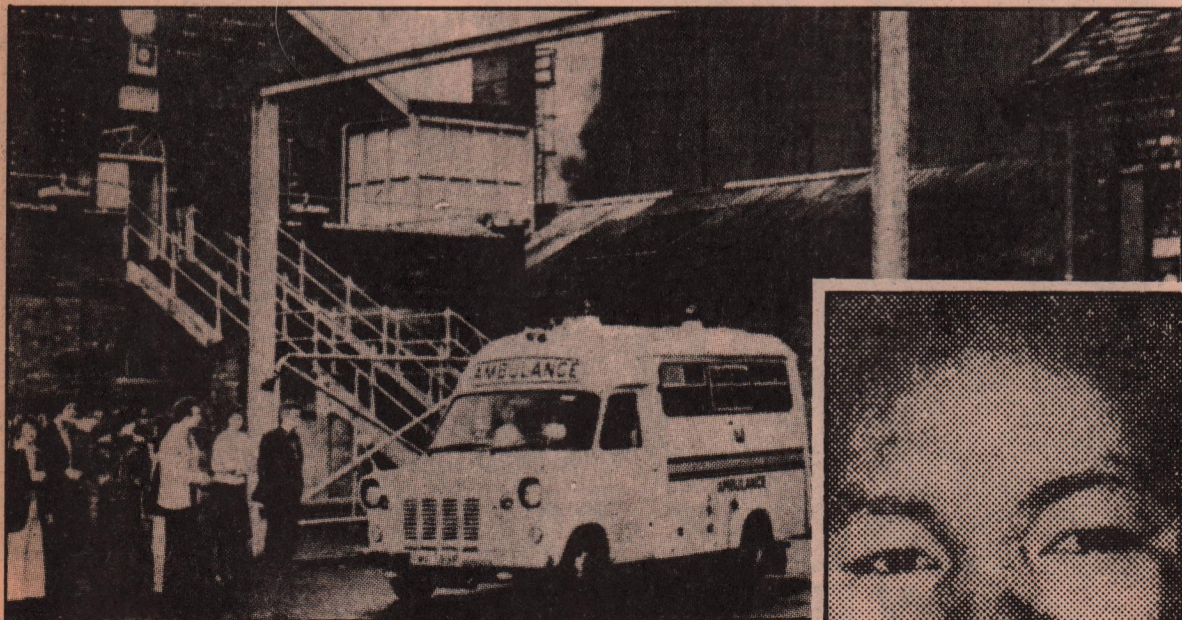
Flying pickets had already been active before the conference in a number of areas such as Manchester, Liverpool, Coventry and Cardiff, against the few big bakeries still operating with scab labour, and against the flour mills. In South Wales bakery workers from three factories in Cardiff, Swansea and Taffs Wells have jointly picketed the Tewkesbury mill that supplies the factories. On Wednesday 22nd they finally cut off all flour supplies to South Wales.

Now every region of the

union is hiring minibuses, and our determination is already winning a response from the workers in the mills. Workers in Rank Hovis and Spillers mills have agreed not to cross Bakers' Union picket lines. In the Allied Bakeries mills, where the GMWU is the major union (rather than the TGWU), the officials have been dragging their feet and have made no recommendation to support the bakers' strike.

continued back page

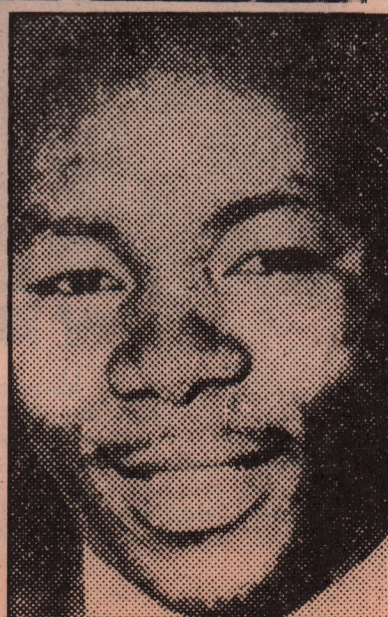
### MORE VICTIMS OF PIT PRODUCTIVITY?



Seven miners were killed and 48 injured in an accident at Bentley Colliery, south Yorkshire, on Tuesday 21st.

The cause of the accident is unknown. It may have nothing to do with the productivity bonus schemes introduced this year. Militant miners will, however, now be even more convinced that safety should not be sold for easy cash. This year's pay claim is submitted to the Coal Board this week. It must be won in full so that the productivity bonuses can be abolished.

(Right: Kenneth Green, one of the seven killed).



Inside

TWO SPECIAL FEATURES

Pages 2-3: BRITISH REPRESSION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Pages 4-5: INTERVIEW WITH AN IRANIAN MARXIST; THE ABADAN OIL WORKERS' STRIKE

Page 6: A Bangladeshi socialist describes the role of the police in Brick Lane

Page 7: Leyland; Page 8: Ford, ABC trial, more on the bakers' strike



Prayer won't help...

## TUC REBUFFS HEALEY - NOW BACK THE BAKERS

LAST WEEK the TUC General Council rejected two statements carefully concocted by 'senior TUC representatives' and the Government.

The statements were worded about as forcefully as a bowl of alphabet soup. Tom Jackson says he thought they would go through on the nod, no need for a vote. Yet, in what appears to have been a heated meeting, the General Council split 14-14.

The vote reflects the bitter resentment felt by millions of workers at the last few years of wage restraint. Even the most extreme evangelists of moderation, like Bill Sirs of the steelworkers' union, opposed the statement.

### Write off

The fourteen voting against were reported to be Ray Buckton (ASLEF), Ken Gill (TASS), Ken Thomas (CPSA), three TGWU delegates (Moss Eyans himself was on holiday), Albert Spanswick (CoHSE), Bill Sirs (ISTC), Alan Sapper (cine technicians), Doug Grieve (tobacco workers), Terry Parry (firemen), and Alan Fisher (NUPE).

Len Murray was, of course, disappointed. But, he insisted, it would be wrong to write off the TUC's

"special relationship" with the Labour Government.

"Co-operation with the Government is never as easy as confrontation, nor is skilful negotiation as easy as walking off the job". What a load of rubbish!

### Haggling

Co-operation with the Government has been precisely the easy way out for the TUC. Indeed, one of the main problems that many trade union officials saw in the repeated TUC-Government agreements was the fact that the trade union official was hardly left with a job at all... unless he was one of the few who were clinking glasses at Downing Street every couple of weeks.

The idea that the negotiator has a harder time than the striker belongs to the same school of thought as the idea that the Queen has an arduous job. Negotiation is only really complex and difficult when you are negotiating from a position of weakness. The real task of the trade union leader should be not so much negotiation as organisation.

And what the TUC should do now is set about organising support for the bakers - not start another round of haggling with the Government.



## A PRISONER DESCRIBES THE HORROR OF H-BLOCK

THE SICKENING stench in the cells is increased by the tremendous heat which rises from the heating pipes (though during the winter heat is kept to a minimum)

The stench and the heat combined leave the air in the cell heavy and barely breathable. The cell is full of great bloated flies, which thrive on the rubbish and multiply in the heat. Maggots breed in the filthy blankets.

All this combines to leave the inside of our cells resembling a jungle swamp.

Our cells are empty of all furniture, as the prison authorities removed our beds, tables, lockers and chairs several weeks ago for no other reason than purely to make life harder for us.

This means that we must sit and sleep and even set our meals upon a filthy floor, like animals.

Our cells are searched and ransacked regularly. During each search we are subjected to strip-search, even though we are almost completely naked.

This means that we must take off our blankets and turn a full circle with our arms raised in the air to allow the screws to scrutinise our naked bodies, while they make snide remarks about our nudity. The screws constantly set out to try to destroy our dignity

and self-respect.

Surely the most degrading aspect of our daily life is the carrying out of the basic human necessity of going to the toilet.

With two men in a small cell, one must retreat to a corner of the cell in full view of his cell-mate to defecate — there is no alternative. This indignity does not finish at that. Each day we are given just two sheets of toilet paper. If you have no letters to use to supplement this, you must remain as you are.

The screws think this is a great joke.

For the last eighteen weeks we have been putting body waste and urine out of the windows, as the prison authorities refused to empty the overflowing poots in our cells, and the screws came into the cells kicking the poots around, leaving the filthy contents lying all over the bedding and the floor.

To carry out this unpleasant job we must fit the lid of the poot between the concrete bars, and using it as a funnel put the urine out of the window.

With excreta, urine, the filth of our cells, our unwashed bodies and the multitude of maggots, flies and fleas, the overall danger of a massive outbreak of disease seems certain.



20,000 marched from Coalisland to Dungannon on the tenth anniversary of the first mass civil rights demon-

stration, August 24th 1968. Many wore blankets to symbolise their solidarity with the H-Block prisoners.

The prison administration's answer is to spray the cells with extremely strong disinfectant.

This is done by criminal orderlies who are dressed like spacemen in protective clothing, breathing masks, goggles and spraying apparatus attached to their backs.

The orderlies spray the cells while we stand at the back of the cell. The fumes from this very strong disinfectant have a similar effect to CS gas.

After a few minutes we scurry to the windows, gasping and

choking for air, our eyes smarting and watering. Many men have been temporarily blinded, and fits of vomiting are quite common.

The windows give no real escape from these fumes, as the ground outside our cells, is covered with lime, which sends up its own strong fumes.

The criminal orderlies and screws dressed in protective nylon overalls also hose down the outside, and occasionally the inside, of each wing with a high-powered hose.

Should we be too slow to shut

our windows the hose is inserted and we are hosed down.

The jet of water soaks our bedding and cell, leaving us to pace the floor throughout the night, unable to use our soaking wet mattresses.

There is little respite anyway at night, as bright lights are left on through the night. And at half past six in the morning, the screws perform their own reveille — an hour-long pounding and banging on the gratings, which send its booming echoes through the brain.

## ARMY MOVES BEHIND THE SCENES

ON PAPER, the British Army in Northern Ireland has a command structure of 13 infantry battalions, corresponding to a nominal strength of nearly 8,000. While this structure reassures the Loyalists and British Tories, often only small units from those battalions have actually been serving in Northern Ireland.

In line with the British long-term strategy of 'Ulsterisation', the operational troop strength is due to drop below 3,000 very soon. The main work of anti-Republican repression will fall to the Ulster Defence Regiment

(8,000 men, of whom 2,500 are full time) and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (6,000 strong).

A special role belongs to the RUC's Special Patrol Group. This elite force of 300 specially-trained personnel is more like an army unit than civilian police. It is equipped with armoured personnel carriers, pistols, shotguns, sub-machineguns and M1 carbines, has its own separate command structure, and is not usually involved in routine police work.

Supreme Command over all the police and para-military forces,

however, still belong to Lt-Gen. Sir Timothy Creasey, the British Army commander. RUC divisions, which are commanded by assistant chief constables, will be supervised, from a security point of view, by a British Army brigadier. Similar pairing is to exist down to chief superintendent level.

The aim is to move over from military occupation of Northern Ireland to a police state with a backbone of military command and supervision. Inescapably this

project means heavy concessions to the Orange bigots' demands for restored Protestant Ascendancy, for both the RUC and the UDR are notoriously Protestant sectarian forces.

The desire to court Parliamentary support at Westminster from the Ulster Unionists is driving both Labour and Tory party leaders in the same direction.

So British policy looks like neatly accomplishing a full circle, and restoring the very Protestant police-state which led to the explosion in 1968. 'Ulsterisation' will never solve anything.



British Army chief Lt-Gen. Creasey

## UNUSUAL CASE OF THE FAILED ARMY FRAME-UP

On April 17th 1973, Brian Smith was shot dead by a 4-man army sniper squad. His friend Pat Fennell was hit in the head and knee. With them were Jackie Meehan who was hit in the stomach, and Eddie McClafferty, who escaped unhurt.

The four men had been standing on a street corner in the Ardoyne area of North Belfast when the army squad opened fire. The army claimed the men had weapons; but no weapons were found.

A few days later McClafferty was arrested and charged with possession of a gun, and in May 1974 he was sentenced to 4 years on the evidence of the 4-soldier patrol that had shot up his mates. On appeal, his sentence was doubled to 8 years.

McClafferty had served nearly 3 years of his sentence when one of the soldiers who had helped to send him down, bitter at his subsequent treatment by the army, told the *Daily Mirror's* crime reporter that he lied about McClafferty having a gun; and that the three men shot by his patrol had also been unarmed.

McClafferty was freed on bail in June 1976. Four months later he was officially cleared of the charge for which he had served three years.

Meanwhile Pat Fennell, who was badly injured by the shooting, has been awarded an ex-gratia payment of £30,000 by the British authorities. But Jackie Meehan and Eddie McClafferty are still waiting for any compensation.

The army, in fact, has not admitted to anything: not to shooting down the four men, nor to organising its soldiers to lie in court as a cover-up. Ex-gratia payments are made with no admission of the Army's guilt. And no doubt the lying murderers who dealt out death, mutilation and false imprisonment are still in the army.

The unusual aspect of this case is not the trigger-happy sniper squad, nor the casual frame-up, nor the rubber-stamp appeal. The only unusual aspect is that a soldier blurted out the truth. How many other prisoners are there in Northern Ireland's jails like Eddie McClafferty?



## NOW IT'S JAIL BEFORE TRIAL

At the beginning of November N.Ireland Secretary Roy Mason announced a court order which allowed 'prisoners' to be remanded in their absence. He angered lawyers who protested against this move by stating that

the prisoners were guilty in any case!

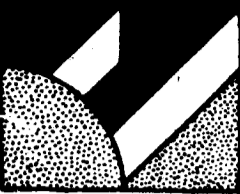
Although Mason eventually backed down, 'internment by remand' continues to be British policy in Northern Ireland. Some prisoners are held 'on remand'

for up to three years before being brought to trial.

According to the Association for Legal Justice, there are more than 600 unconvicted prisoners in jail with no prospect of an early trial.

# Ireland's prisoners of war versus Britain's criminals of war

Editorial



The Irish people have never willingly accepted British rule. And thus Britain has always used dictatorial force to keep its hold on Ireland.

In the struggle against British rule, Ireland was ripped apart. It was an untidy ripping apart, decided not by democratic plans or people's rights but by the bitter conflict of sordid material interests. The Protestant community, dominated by their landlords and their bosses, had wanted to be Britain's privileged garrison for the whole of a British-ruled Ireland. They became the rulers, under the British crown, of a new state of Northern Ireland which included a 35% Catholic minority hostile to the very basis of this partitioned state.

Northern Ireland was run as a sectarian police state, with a Special Powers Act which prompted the prime minister of South Africa to declare that he would readily swap all South Africa's repressive laws for one clause of that Act. The Catholic community had no reason to relax their bitter hostility to the state.

## A brutal response

Things began to change in the late '60s. The British bourgeoisie, and parts of the Northern Ireland bourgeoisie, began to look towards dismantling the sectarian police state apparatus and constructing a reunified bourgeois Ireland. A few gestures were made in that direction.

Northern Ireland had also moved marginally out of its seemingly permanent Great Depression economic conditions. The Catholic workers began to think that things would be changed. They started a civil rights movement.

The civil rights movement met a brutal response from Protestant reactionaries. The British army came in, to control the Protestant reaction and above all to suppress the Catholic workers' revolt.

The Catholic workers were no longer willing to be suppressed. Their movement quickly became more radical.

The old Protestant state was abandoned. Since 1972 — bar the brief period of the 'power-sharing executive' in 1974 — Northern Ireland has been under 'direct rule'; in effect, rule by the British Army.

In the whole area of Northern Ireland, the generals of the British Army are the supreme judges of law and order. They tell the British press what to report. They tell the television authorities what to censor.

When a producer manages to get an honest TV programme on Ireland through the censorship, the Army is backed up by Tory and Labour politicians who declare that such reporting only aids the 'terrorists'. Arbitrary British Army terror against the Catholic

community continues largely unchecked.

The Army's aim is to beat down the Republicans and thus get a 'return to normal'. They have not succeeded. But, to give the impression of success, and to assist their propaganda purposes, they are trying to 'criminalise' the Irish resistance.

The struggle is re-defined as a problem of crime, to be dealt with by police action — not a political conflict. It is, says the Army, a marginal disorder of a democratic state; not a political battle about the very existence and basis of the state.

Internment was ended in 1976, and at the same time the special category (political) status for the prisoners of war was abolished. The 'war' measure of internment has been replaced by the 'criminal' measures of no-jury courts (with a 92% conviction rate often based entirely on a forced 'confession') and indefinite remand in custody before trial.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary has been doubled in strength since 1968, and equipped with special squads and elaborate computer files on 'suspects'. Having helped the RUC to define at least one third of the Northern Ireland population as criminal suspects, the British Army is now trying to move into the background.

This strategy cannot possibly provide a democratic solution in Ireland. Worse, it saps and destroys what democratic rights exist in Britain.

Republicans and socialists in Ireland insist that the only way out is an independent and united Ireland.

## Margin

It is a political struggle over the very basis of the state, not a question of criminal acts on the margin of the state. That is why 300 Republican prisoners, mostly in 'H' Block in Long Kesh, are engaged in a desperate and heroic battle to win back political prisoner status. Refusing to comply with prison regulations, they are deprived of clothing, cell furniture, exercise, visits and other things prison authorities call 'privileges'.

Workers' Action supporters will be joining the demonstration of solidarity with these Irish prisoners of war this Saturday, November 26th. We call on our readers to join us on the march from Speakers Corner (2.30pm) to Clerkenwell Green, organised by the Prisoners' Aid Committee.

- Political status now!
- Immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.
- Solidarity with the Republicans and Socialists in their fight against the British Army and against the sectarian Northern Ireland state.
- For a united and independent Ireland.

# EVERYONE'S ON OUR COMPUTER, PORT POLICE TOLD ME

by Joe Edwards

Coming home from the conference in London of the United Troops Out Movement, I arrived at Stranraer at 6.30 on Monday morning. It was fairly obvious that they were waiting for me.

They asked me who I was travelling with and when I told them it was my wife, they arrested both of us and told us that we were being detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

They kept my wife till twelve o'clock on Monday morning, then released her.

They interrogated me throughout Monday night and on Tuesday, and on the Tuesday afternoon they moved me to Dumfries prison. I was held there until Thursday afternoon. After being interrogated again in Stranraer until 12 o'clock on Friday morning, I was served with an exclusion order and deported.

Most of the interrogation took the form of: "If you cooperate with us and tell us of any republicans that you know at home, or

of any republican activity that you know of, we will stop this exclusion order."

I asked them why they had picked me, and how they select people for holding at the ports. It was quite obvious from their reply that the P.T. Act is not just anti-Irish and anti-republican, but it is blatantly anti-working class.

They admitted that if you have an address in a working class area they will check your name and address and date of birth through the main computer. If the RUC have any political knowledge of you at all you are detained.

They were quite emphatic about this, and surprisingly they had quite an extensive knowledge of the Catholic working class areas. I asked them if they had served in the British army, because they knew the location of pubs, and also the political affil-

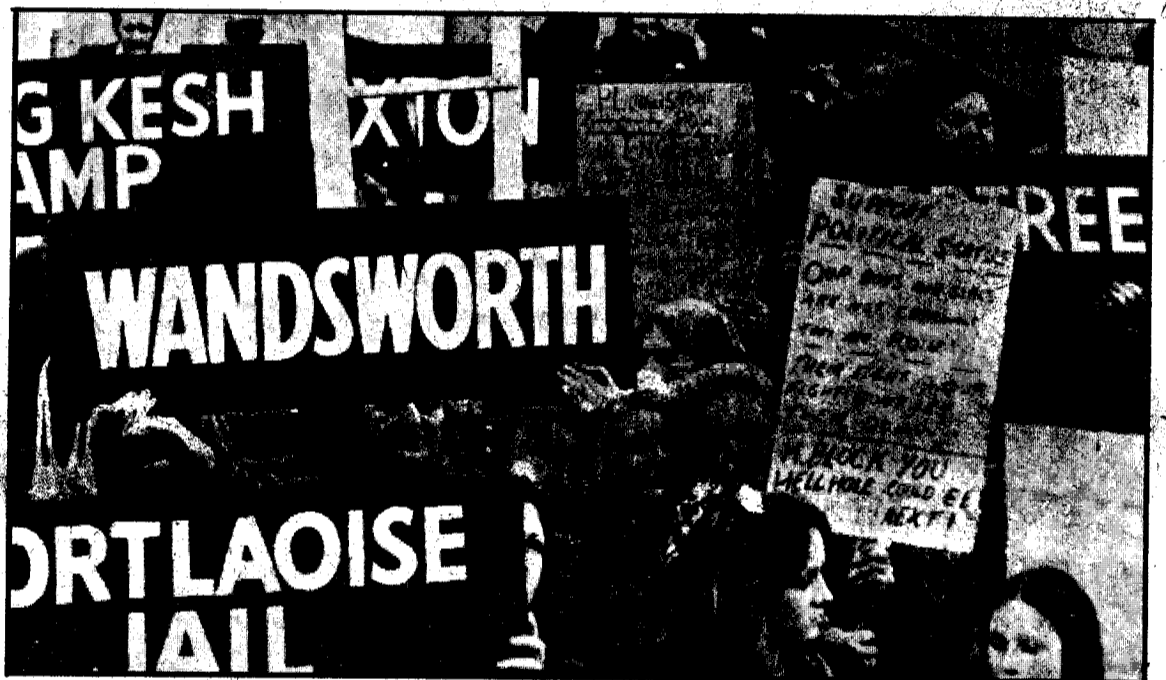
iations of the people who drank in those pubs.

Apparently they go over from time to time to work in Catholic areas with the RUC.

The interrogation was quite extensive. There was no physical violence, however. On occasions there was a slight threat of it, but it was not really serious. They stressed the fact that they do not use physical violence like the RUC!

The conditions in which I was held were not the best, although you expect that.

I asked them how long I would be excluded from Britain, and whether after the end of the PTA itself my exclusion would be automatically lifted. The PTA is supposed to be temporary, but the Special Branch said that they were convinced that the PTA was here to stay. Even if the Irish situation died down they would keep it as a threat to Arab groups and other people who they deemed politically undesirable.



# HOW BELFAST DOCKERS FREED TERROR ACT VICTIM

LAST MONTH, nine Belfast dockers, members of the ITGWU, flew into Speke airport near Liverpool. They had come to attend a government training scheme at Liverpool docks.

As soon as their plane landed, they were all arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Six were released within hours and two more the next day.

Paddy Kelly, from the New Lodge area of Belfast, was locked up in Bridewell Prison.

As soon as the news of the arrests was known, workmates back in Belfast acted. They decided on a strike, and took to the streets. Seven ships lay idle in the deep sea docks, as the dockers announced they would stay out until their workmates were freed.

The 500 dockers then marched through the city centre and demanded the immediate release of Paddy Kelly. The next day, after a mass meeting, the dockers took to the streets again. 300 went to Stormont and blocked the main entrance. This blockade caused major disruption as the civil servants could not get into their offices. Another 200 dockers held up traffic in Belfast city centre.

Then they blocked York Street, near the M2 and the key harbour estate road.

As the protest gained more publicity, backing for the dockers came from the Trade Union Cam-

paign Against Repression (TUCAR) and from the Belfast Trades Council. The tug crews at the docks took their tugs to the port entrance and blocked it.

When the protest was about to spread to Warrenpoint Harbour, the news came in that Paddy Kelly had been released. But he was to be deported back to Belfast and served with an exclusion order.

This was, then, a partial victory for the dockers and Paddy Kelly.

## SURPRISE

After his release Paddy Kelly spoke to the paper "Socialist Republic": "When I read about the protest actions it was a bit of a surprise. I didn't expect that the protests would have gone on as far as they did. I thought that it would have been a token protest but they went the full hog — they blocked Stormont, City Hall, the motorways, picketed the docks, Castlereagh RUC barracks. They really pushed it.

Farmers were coming from all over the place to get their grain and stuff from Belfast and they were being refused entry and having to go elsewhere.

Telegrams were also sent to the dockers in Liverpool asking them to come out in support. The dockers in Derry were also going to come into it.

The police had already told me that they were going to hold me for 7 days but with all the protests they had to let me go after only 4 days. I heard two policemen outside my cell talking. One of them said, 'What do you think of that, the whole of Belfast docks is closed up because of that bastard in there and we have to get rid of him.'

Up to now, as far as I am aware the dockers have backed the 'Better Life for All' campaign, but I think this is the first time they have actually come out on to the streets about repression.

I think it would be a good idea for all trade unionists to be involved in a campaign like the Trade Union Campaign Against Repression. The only platform that a working class man has to speak for him is in the trade union — it gives him the strength and solidarity of his fellow workers.

The protest action taken by my colleagues at the docks shows that it is possible to put pressure on the British government, the police and army, to have people released. If all trade unionists were to get involved in this sort of activity, you could bring the place to a standstill any time you needed to. If they are pushing the repression, torture, harassment, it's only a matter of bringing the country to a standstill until you get them to stop.

I think they would."



**GET BACK TO WORK OR YOU'LL BE KILLED**



Like his father Reza Khan [left], the Shah was put into power by imperialism

## TYRANNY BY COURTESY OF IMPERIALISM

You have to recognise that 'The whole concept of the Shahanshah is rooted in history', says Foreign Secretary David Owen, trying to justify his support for Iran's dictator.

Why tyranny is improved by being long-established, Owen didn't say. The fact, however, is that the Iranian people started a struggle for democratic rights over 70 years ago. The Shah owes his position not to ancient traditions but to the fact that his father commanded the strongest regiment of the Iranian army in the 1920s.

The ancient Empire of Iran decayed with Russian and British penetration in the late 19th century. In 1906 a movement of merchants, clerics, and intellectuals forced the Shah to grant a democratic Constitution and a Parliament. Britain backed this movement, seeing it as a counterweight to Russian domination of the Shah and of the Iranian army.

With Britain virtually controlling the south of Iran, and Tsarist Russia the north, the successes of the democratic movement were limited. The constitutionalists managed to send the Shah into exile in 1909, but the most militant (and secular-minded) centre of their movement, the northern city of Tabriz, was occupied by Russian troops.

From 1912, until 1917, Russian and British domination became absolute. It was during the First World War, too, that the oil industry, under British ownership, began to develop on a large scale.

The old Iranian empire was gone forever. When Reza Khan, the present Shah's father, made himself Shah in 1925, he was adapting old titles to a new form of dictatorship.

His rise to power was backed not by mysterious forces from the mists of Iranian history, but by British troops, arms and cash.

Before 1917 Iran had been the cockpit of rivalry between British imperialism and Russian imperialism. Between 1917 and 1921 it became a cockpit of struggle between socialist revolution and British imperialism.

Immediately on seizing power in Russia, the Bolsheviks cancelled all treaties binding Iran to Russia and withdrew Russian troops. An Iranian Communist Party was rapidly formed. A short-lived Soviet Republic was set up in Gilan, in northern Iran. Trade unionism, which had started after the 1906 revolution, expanded greatly.

The main area where repression against trade unions was too fierce for them to take root was in the oil fields and the oil refineries, which were directly and absolutely controlled by the British. Britain used Iran as a channel for counter-revolutionary intervention against the new workers' state in the USSR. It also tried to make Iran itself a virtual colony. The Curzon Agreement of 1919 provided for British control of the Iranian army and treasury.

But Britain had underestimated the political awakening in Iran. The Curzon Agreement caused uproar and Britain had to retreat. And then in 1921, the pro-British politician Seyyid Zia carried out a coup d'etat.

The main military force behind the coup was the Cossack Division — a force which until October 1920 had been commanded by Tsarist Russian officers. In 1921 it was led by Reza Khan. After

continued on page 6

The military regime has thrown all its forces into getting production re-started in the oilfields and refineries. But workers' resistance is continuing, as described in this 14th November report from Abadan by Paul Balta, which we have translated and abridged from the Paris daily *Le Monde*:

The military presence is particularly heavy in the working class estates. Tanks, armoured cars, trucks, and jeeps with machine guns trained on the streets, mount a threatening guard. The military governor has announced that 80 workers considered as trouble-makers have been arrested. The workers say 140 to 160.

To avoid a massacre, most of the

five thousand manual workers have gone back into the refinery. But they are operating a go-slow. The other employees (1500 staff and 6,000 maintenance, health and transport workers) have almost all stayed out. The two other factories in the town, National Petrochemicals and Nippon Petrochemicals, are still on strike, as are many administrative services.

The refinery workers came out on Monday 23rd October. The 25% rise they got this March was not enough to make up for inflation, and workers earning between 5,000 and 15,000 rials (£37 to £110) a month "couldn't manage". After three days the management gave in.

Work resumed, slowly. Meetings took place between workers and

teachers, which contributed to radicalisation of the movement. [The oil workers have now included "satisfaction of the teachers' demands" in their own list of demands.]

On 29th October, the workers formulated political demands: abolition of martial law, liberation of political prisoners, suppression of SAVAK, departure of American advisors, struggle against corruption, condemnation of officials who have committed crimes against the people, etc. The oil tap was practically closed.

Since the law authorises sacking of workers after six days unjustified absence, the workers returned on the fifth day, and came out again.

On Saturday 4th November

# IRAN

"Instinctive socialist demands have come out of these strikes". An Iranian Marxist talks to Workers' Action.

The people's attitudes have changed so much. They have become so enthusiastic. People who before were cynical have suddenly been shocked into a sense of pride.

Nobody is really scared of anything now. You can see that from the way people are behaving on these demonstrations. The fact that there hasn't been any mob violence is a very important indication. They feel very much in control, and very strong.

They came to the British Embassy, and cleared everybody out. They went right to the top floor to make sure there was nobody in it... cleared it out — and then burnt the place down. They did this in a situation where there were tanks outside, and troops with machine guns who might open fire any time.

You'd think that if they have gone on a demonstration and people have been killed, there'll be a certain demoralisation. But it's the reverse.

■ In the *New Statesman* this week a reporter describes talking to a demonstrator who had been shouting slogans for an Islamic Government. This demonstrator said, 'I don't believe in God, but I believe in Khomeiny'. (The leader of the militant Islamic opposition.) How typical do you think that is?

□ There are a lot of people like that, but I wouldn't say the majority of the people supporting Khomeiny are like that.

I would support Khomeiny insofar as he is struggling against the regime but I wouldn't refrain from expressing my differences.

■ During the period after 1906, and again in the early '50s, certain sections of the Muslim hierarchy played an important part in the nationalist movement, but in both cases the Muslim movement then split up, with some elements in it going right over to the side of the monarchy. Do you think this is likely to happen again this time?

□ I think so. The class differences have been papered over in the common struggle against the Shah, but there will be divisions in the Muslim movement. It's a very heterogeneous movement, both in terms of its social support and in terms of the political understanding people have within it.

I wouldn't say the hold of Islam was significantly weaker in the urban working class than in the peasantry. It's much weaker in the more westernised sections of society — professionals, intellectuals, and so on — but elsewhere I don't think you can differentiate. It does differ from one town to another; it is weaker in Tehran than in Qom or Mashhad.

But people mean very different things by an 'Islamic Government'. They don't mean something like Saudi Arabia or Pakistan, but they don't say clearly what they do mean: it just represents the opposite to the repression and the corruption and the injustices of the present regime.

At one extreme, what the young militants in the Muslim movement are talking about is something really very close to socialism (with a Muslim cloak, obviously), whereas the more conservative elements in the Muslim hierarchy emphasise the 1906 constitution, where all legisla-

tion had to be vetted by a committee of priests.

■ But in practice, historically, that provision of the 1906 Constitution never had much importance.

□ Yes. When people talk about the Constitution, what they are usually concerned with is the democratic rights it provides for — freedom of speech and freedom of the press and so on.

■ The press says that the religious minorities in Iran fear they will face discrimination if the Muslim movement gains power.

□ The majority of the population are Shi'a Muslims. There is a minority of Sunni Muslims, mainly Kurds. The other religious minorities are quite small: Armenian Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and the Bahais.

The regime has tried to start a panic among Armenians and Jews.

But I don't think they have succeeded very much. The only religious minority, which people are genuinely hostile towards is the Bahai.

The way it is presented as anti-Bahai is reactionary and dangerous; but the root of it is that Bahais have been seen as associated with the regime.

For example, the anti-bank campaign is now mostly fuelled by anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist feeling. But it started off with a campaign by the Muslim hierarchy against one bank in which a Bahai capitalist had a stake; and one of the reasons why the bazaar merchants support the campaign is that the banks have taken money-lending business away from them.

And it's absolutely wrong to say that minorities are not being oppressed under the Shah, especially Armenians. The Soviet Embassy had an office for people who wanted to emigrate to the Soviet Union. There were long queues of Armenians outside it, who would wait for days, sleeping on the streets, just to get a visa to emigrate to the Soviet Union.

There have certainly been no reports of any hostile actions against the religious minorities, even the Bahais.

■ What connections are there between the Muslim movement and the bourgeois opposition organised in the National Front?

□ The Muslim hierarchy has close ties with the National Front, but is closer to a group called the Freedom Movement of Iran. It used to be part of the National Front, but split because the National Front believed there could be a compromise with the Shah.

■ What is the political role of the merchants in the bazaar in Tehran?

□ They played a leading role in the earlier part of the upsurge.

The bazaar merchants and the petty bourgeoisie have been hit hard by the development of modern capitalism in Iran. For example, the anti-profiteering campaign (in 1976) was directly aimed at them. They arrested one or two big capitalists, but the majority of the people who were affected were small shopkeepers, bazaar merchants and so on.

Obviously, their point of departure is totally different from that of the workers; they want a share of the profits. They have been the most important financial support for the Islamic movement. People like Khomeiny constantly receive large sums of money from the bazaar merchants.

■ How far have workers been able to organise themselves independently, on a class basis?

□ There are links. For example,

the oil fields are all over the country and the fact that they all went on strike shows there must be links between them. We do know that petrochemical workers in a town near Abadan decided one day to go to Abadan to demonstrate with refinery workers there.

But we don't know about any other organisation. For example, we don't know exactly what they are doing about strike funds. There must be something, but we know very little about it.

Workers have almost spontaneously got together and decided on a strike in a very democratic fashion.

There are no really strong left organisations. For years and years political organisations had been smashed. Now thousands of groups have sprung up. People organised themselves in their localities.

■ We've seen workers' demands which go beyond what



leaders of the opposition as well. For example, the oil workers demand the expulsion of the foreign companies, and workers demanding the opening of the books of their companies. But despite the scope of the movement, no directly socialist demands seem to have been raised.

□ There is no tradition of socialism in the working class. But there are instinctive socialist demands which have come out of these strikes and instinctively anti-imperialist demands. The power workers have been moving instinctively towards direct intervention by workers' control of the economy. They said that the new power stations that were being built should be cancelled, because there was no need for them; they could provide the power necessary by using the existing facilities.

After the newspaper strike, newspaper workers effectively

there was a meeting at the refinery of 1700 representatives from all the factories on strike, with the military governor present. Delegates explained their demands and announced that a thousand people were going to spend the night in the administrative buildings.

The governor agreed to this, but at about midnight he sent in troops to evict them. Result: eleven wounded, two fatally.

## Judges strike

On Monday, the teachers marched in solidarity at Abadan and at Khorramshahr, while General Azhari's government was formed in Tehran. As from Tuesday 7th, the army went out every night

arresting workers in their homes and threatening them. On Friday, the National Iranian Oil Corporation management summoned the workers' delegates and told them: 'If you do not resume work you will be killed'.

Meanwhile the NIOC management told the Abadan refinery workers that it would give them a 10% pay rise, a 10% 'factory bonus', and other concessions. Since work did not resume, the army intervened once again that evening and the following day. There were more dead and wounded.

At Khorramshahr law courts, the magistrates, flooded with complaints from the families of the victims, decided to go on strike. They wrote a protest to the military

governor.

In Abadan, the army threatened to intervene against workers who had taken refuge in the law courts. The magistrate reacted by telling the military governor: 'Tell your soldiers to keep quiet. The law courts belong to the people'.

## Guerillas

In one of the mosques of Abadan the priest, surrounded by a group of young people, was describing the events. We asked him if he knew about the arrest of Karim Sanjabi, the leader of the National Front. He did. "Bazargan and he", said the priest, "basically want to do a deal with the Shah. They are bourgeois. We only trust Kho-

meiny, for only he really wants the Shah removed."

Which seemed to him more dangerous, the USSR or the United States? "We do not like the communists, but their materialism does not threaten us. On the other hand, the Americans have installed themselves here. They are the main danger."

The workers whom we met spoke in the same terms. Who put out the strike call? "No-one in particular. Everyone was in agreement. There isn't any organisation. It's a pity. But by shooting at us the troops are going to force us to organise ourselves, and even to arm ourselves. We are listening to Khomeiny, and we are reading the leaflets of the Mojahedeen". (The 'Marxist-Islamic' guerillas.)

[On 18th November Le Monde also reported: "At Abadan workers spoke to us of leaflets distributed by the Iranian Union of Communists. This very active group is differentiated from the others by its social composition, workers being more numerous in it than intellectuals."]

Some businessmen, too, oppose the Shah, but they speak in different terms about the solution to the crisis. "Where is the intransigence of Ayatollah Khomeiny going to lead us? The Shah is on his knees. The Ayatollah should have taken the chance to enforce respect for the Constitution on the Shah and to consolidate the things that we gained from the Sharif-Emami government and that General Azhari's cabinet is now taking away from us..."

# THE BRINK

over their papers. They set up a broad editorial committee with representatives not only from the journalists, but also from the printworkers, and they decided on what went into the papers, in a very democratic fashion. On the two main papers, the newspaper owners and their former editors, who were stooges of the newspaper owners, were kicked out.

There is another paper, which has always been believed to have been financed by the regime. The editor of that paper still retained control, and tried to impose internal censorship. The workers went on strike. They demanded the setting up of a council of workers within the paper to control the paper and determine its line.

■ ■ To what extent is the current crisis in Iran rooted in the sudden boom after 1973 and the relative slump which followed, from 1976?

□ □ The background of the present situation is the overall economic

On the political level, the oil money gave rise to very high expectations. There was a sudden rise in the standard of living, particularly of the middle classes, and then it came to a halt. It also gave rise to a very high rate of inflation, which affected the working class very badly. Although wages were going up, the real standard of living was going down.

■ ■ The rapid growth of industry in Iran dates mostly from the 'White Revolution' in 1963. Land reform was a major part of the 'White Revolution'. How has that land reform worked?

□ □ Quite a large proportion of the land was taken from the landowners. The landlords were compensated for it, on the whole very well compensated, and some of them — from the royal family, or closely connected with the royal family — managed to keep their land.

The net result was that about 40% of the peasantry received some land;

strikes and demonstrations by farmers in some parts of the country, mainly over the question of the rural cooperatives. The regime had been trying to force farmers who had been given land through the land reforms to join these cooperatives. The aim of this move was to concentrate land-holding in the hands of a few farmers.

The majority of the farmers had a very small amount of land, but while they had their own land they could survive. In the cooperatives they couldn't live off their share, and they would be forced to sell their shares to the bigger farmers. The smaller farmers were forced either to become agricultural labourers or to go and work in the cities.

There have also been strikes in the modern agro-industrial complexes.

■ ■ What solution to the crisis do you think the Iranian big bourgeoisie wants? What do you think was behind the Shah's speech admitting

will take some measures against the Shah now. They could kick him out, or perhaps they can keep him there and reach some compromise with the National Front and at least part of the Muslim movement.

But if they get rid of the Shah, it will be seen immediately as a victory by the masses.

■ ■ What are the chances of the Army splitting open and refusing to carry out the generals' policies of repression?

□ □ The Army seems to be quite solid at the moment, particularly the officer corps.

Of course there is a lot of dissent among the ordinary soldiers and more particularly among the conscripts. There have been cases of soldiers killing their officers or refusing to shoot at demonstrators.

You hear stories of groups of students, for example, coming on to the streets shouting 'Death to the Shah'. There's a soldier there, and

If the USSR see the chance of any pro-Moscow political forces becoming dominant, they will change their tune. But at the moment they are supporting the Shah.

As far as the Chinese are concerned, the Shah is the enemy of their enemy — the Soviet Union — and the enemy of their enemy is a friend.

The attitudes of the USSR and China have had an adverse effect on the whole of the left. The Muslims say: Look at what so-called Marxists are doing in the Soviet Union and China. It's a very useful weapon for them against the left.

The Maoists have been weakened very much by the position that China has taken. From what reports we hear, inside Iran they are absolutely hated, and very much isolated. Outside Iran they are stronger.

The Soviet Union's policy has been less blatant than China's, and so the Tudeh Party hasn't been affected so badly. The Tudeh Party has a much longer history and deeper roots in Iran; and in relation to the USSR you find a feeling that we must find some compromise with this powerful northern neighbour. We may not like it, but we have to live with it.

Also the Tudeh Party tends to organise itself in disguise rather than openly as the Tudeh Party. But it has had some success. It is still probably the most powerful organisation on the left in Iran.

They have recently called for the overthrow of the monarchy and the setting up of a Constituent Assembly. They call for a broad coalition government of all national forces. It is basically a bourgeois republic that they are calling for.

They have produced an underground paper in Iran which seems to have quite a wide circulation inside the factories, and has a lot of first-hand news. But it does nothing to politically educate the workers who read it.

Their aim is to tag onto the National Front and the Muslims and somehow get themselves into whatever coalition government is likely to be formed.

The major campaign in Britain organising support for the struggle in Iran is CARI (the Campaign Against Repression in Iran). A CARI spokesman told Workers' Action:

The most important question is the links between British imperialism and the Shah's regime, or any regime of generals that comes in its place. We need to a solidarity campaign based around this question, and call on the Labour Government to end this support, to break its links, to stop the sale of arms to Iran.

There's very strong feeling in the labour movement about Owen's support for the Shah. At the Labour Party conference we had a petition, and everyone wanted to sign it.

Earlier this week someone went to speak at Bethnal Green Trades Council. Immediately they decided to send a picket round to Owen's house, which they did the next evening.

CARI can be contacted c/o Box 4, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N.1



crisis. I don't think that has really got all that much to do with oil. It's more related to the limitations of capitalism in a country like Iran.

Since the early '60s there has been a period of rapid economic expansion based on an increase in oil exports. There was a partial industrialisation of the country. But it was a very one-sided industrialisation. There was a rapid development of industries producing consumer goods; almost no development of industries producing means of production.

They were importing whole factories, to assemble cars for example — and not a single component was being manufactured inside the country.

There came a crisis of overproduction. The oil money could have delayed the crisis a bit further, but because of the mismanagement of the regime it probably made it even worse.

the rest didn't receive anything. The ones who received the land were already the better-off peasants. More and more of the peasants were forced to go into the cities.

The peasants had to pay for the land they got. Credit which was promised by the government never arrived.

Irrigation is very important, almost all through Iran, because of the climate. The landlord used to take care of that before, but now the peasants found they could not afford to keep it up.

Many of the peasants who got land had to sell it or abandon it and go to the cities.

The net result is that agriculture is in total ruin. Home-grown rice in Iran costs about twice as much as imported American rice.

The peasants' involvement in the present movement has been limited. But a month or so ago there were

"unlawfulness, cruelty and corruption", and his appointment of a military government?

The big bourgeoisie has no solutions. It has no tradition of political activity. It has developed under the wing of the dictatorship, and it has never been involved in politics.

They are just packing their bags and running. Go to the big London hotels now, and you'll find the biggest Iranian capitalists there!

The Economist says the American Embassy wrote the Shah's speech, and I think it's true. With a man like the Shah you would almost literally have to have a gun pointing at the back of his head before he would say such things.

The generals are no longer mere puppets of the Shah. They are going to exercise more control over the Shah than the other way round... with American backing, of course.

I think it's very likely that the army

they look at him; he looks back and says 'Go on, carry on shouting...' That sort of thing goes on constantly. There have even been incidents of soldiers handing over arms to the people.

But it hasn't yet come to the point where we can see the army cracking.

■ ■ What effect has the support for the Shah by the USSR and China had on the Tudeh Party (pro-Moscow CP) and the Maoists in Iran?

□ □ The USSR is very worried about what is happening in Iran. It could affect them quite a lot. Half of Azerbaijan is in Iran, half in the Soviet Union. Elsewhere too it is the same people on both sides of the border: Armenians, and so on. I don't want to exaggerate this, to say that if there is a revolution in Iran then Soviet Azerbaijan will immediately rise up against Moscow; but it's a factor.



## TYRANNY BY COURTESY OF IMPERIALISM

continued from page 4

British troops withdrew in May 1921, Reza Khan became military master of Iran.

He quickly ousted Zia. In 1925 he made himself Shah. He set about 'modernising' Iran — after a fashion.

He wanted to establish a strong Iranian capitalist class, on the basis of vigorous initiative by the state. He wanted to be more than a puppet of Britain. He demanded, and got, a better percentage for the Iranian state from the huge profits which the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP) was coining in the southern oilfields. He started the industrialisation of Iran, drawing in German capital for this so as to counterbalance British power.

He also curbed the power of the priests. But he would not tolerate such features of modern life as trade unions. Political parties were also ruthlessly crushed.

In 1941, worried by Rez Khan's links with German capital, Britain and the USSR jointly invaded Iran. The present Shah came to the throne, the 'royal succession' being decided by a blunt order from the British and Russian armies.

Political life became more open. Parties and trade unions were set up again. The Tudeh Party (a continuation of the old Communist Party ... but by now converted to Stalinist politics) gained considerable influence, with some help from the Russian occupying forces. In the northern region of Azerbaijan, the Democratic Party, a front for the Tudeh Party, seized power in December 1945 and set up an 'Autonomous Republic'. After heavy diplomatic pressure was applied by Britain and the USA, the Russian army withdrew and let the Iranian army suppress the 'Autonomous Republic'.



From 1947 onwards, negotiations dragged for a new agreement on Iran's oil. Again, Britain underestimated the anger of the Iranian people. In 1951 the oil industry was nationalised and shortly afterwards the nationalist leader Mohammed Mossadeq gained power.

Britain imposed a world boycott which meant that Iran was unable to export any oil. Muslim leaders who had earlier supported Mossadeq turned against him. The USSR was unfriendly to Iranian nationalism, and so the Tudeh Party refused to back Mossadeq against the Right.

In 1953 Mossadeq was overthrown. This time the coup was engineered not by Britain but by the new imperialist influence in Iran, the USA. In the new division of the oil industry, the US grabbed 40%.

The Emperor of Iran was once again in power — though, as before, it was nothing to do with centuries-old traditions of Iranian history. Political parties and genuine trade unions were banned once again, and the SAVAK secret police was set up with US and Israeli assistance.

After 1963 the Shah made a new drive for industrialisation. He carried out a land reform. The landlords were bought out, and could shift their wealth into industry or commerce. Farming was put on a capitalist basis. Millions of peasants were driven off the land, to expand the labour force in the cities.

Agriculture was thrown into crisis. But industry boomed, with finance coming in from rising oil revenues. After the 1973 rise in oil prices, there was an extraordinary boom, which came to an abrupt halt. Gross National Product rose 34% in 1973-4, 42% in 1974-5 ... and 5% in 1975-6.

The industrial growth has almost all been concentrated in prestige projects and in luxury consumer goods production for the Iranian middle class. The workers have gained very little.

# EVENING ALL - I'M WALLIS OF THE BRICK LANE STOCKADE

Continuing his occasional series on the politics of Brick Lane, a Bangladeshi socialist writes about the role of the police.

ON MONDAY 13th November, the Metropolitan Police opened a new sub-station in the middle of Brick Lane.

Already nicknamed The Stockade, it has been completed in time for the return of the master of the house, Superintendent John Wallis, 'Police Community Liaison Officer'.

Superintendent Wallis (recently promoted) left in October on a six-week 'fact-finding tour' of the Indian subcontinent; Scotland Yard's public relations apparatus tells us that the bulk of his stay in the land of the Raj will be in Bangladesh.

There he will be paying special attention to the Bangladeshis, and in particular the Sylhetis, 'attitude to their own police force'. He will no doubt be picking up a few hints from military dictator Ziaur Rahman, too.

But why such a long journey? Can't he find out what he wants from British Bangladeshis themselves?

Such trips are nothing new. Tribune MP Sydney Bidwell, signatory of the infamous Select Committee Report on Immigration, and 'radical Tory' Keith Speed (theorist of the recent Tory offensive against Asian immigration) both visited Pakistan, India and Bangladesh in the process of compiling their reports.

Before them a civil servant by the name of Hawley conducted investigations on the subcontinent before 'leaking' his report to Enoch Powell in 1976.

So Superintendent Wallis is following a well-trodden path. Before bringing in each new repressive measure in the name of 'race relations', the British state sends its agents to the subcontinent on 'fact-finding missions'. In advance of the mission the state agency concerned expresses grave doubts about the possibility of finding out enough 'facts' on the Asians from the Asians themselves. And at the end of each such mission the state releases concocted facts gleaned from these visits in justification of further repression.

So Superintendent Wallis will be returning to his new office in Brick Lane full of new ideas. But,



The police in Brick Lane: putting a stop to militancy

to give him his due, he is already quite an 'expert' on the Bangladeshi community. He is well known to the 'Asian leaders' in the East End.

For over a year he chaired regular meetings between the police and these 'leaders' at the Leman Street police station. These meetings are not publicly advertised and only the chairperson (John Wallis) decides what is on the agenda. There is no vote and no dissent. The 'leaders' themselves (not one of them a worker) are selected on the basis of 'recommendations' which are traceable to no-one.

## QUIET

A number of ordinary Bangladeshis who attended the first few meetings said they had been 'invited' by a travel agent, who hoped they would remain quiet in the meetings. The atmosphere at the meetings, they recall, reeks of the colonial governor's bungalow in the Raj, and the 'leaders' are just like the traitors who for two

hundred years sold out the interests of the workers in the Indian subcontinent to the imperial bosses.

The leaders who still go to these meetings may have a material reason for doing so: Superintendent Wallis can see to it that they have no trouble with the police. Every good deed deserves another, and the Super is sure of a warm recommendation to the community — and to the media.

Scotland Yard are also in the habit of passing the press on to him, so Wallis has been a much-quoted man.

Following the murder of Altab Ali, he consistently repeated the same convenient (and utterly racist) justification for the attitude of the police towards the victims of racist violence. In face of the obvious fact that the Bangladeshis did not trust the police, he maintained that this was not because of their experience of police racism, but because Bangladeshis came here with 'imported' (his word) ideas about the police, because they were generally uneducated and because 50 per cent were 'illiterate in their own language'.

Wallis didn't explain what this classic racist nonsense had to do with the issue. He didn't have to — because none of the 'leaders' challenged this typical police ploy to cover up for inaction against the racist murderers.

Besides the 'community leaders', Wallis can rely on a number of official and unofficial agencies to back him up.

At one end of the spectrum is the Home Office's Immigration Intelligence Unit. The Immigration Acts allow the police unrestricted access into the homes of Bangladeshis suspected of being 'illegal'; it is no exaggeration to say that the most reliable source of inside information the police can get about the community is from the unknown number of potential deportees under the 1971 Act. They did not come to Britain with the intention of helping the police against their fellow victims of racism; but the alternative is immediate deportation.

This has meant that, of the 'youth leaders' who mushroomed during May and June this year, many advocated 'respect for law and order', urging reliance on the police. Some of these youth leaders are as 'young' as

39, and have their own dependents either here or back in Bangladesh; their choice is deportation or collaboration.

Also helpful to the police are the local council, the GLC, and their various agencies.

Next come 'sponsored' bodies such as the Community Relations Commission and the 'Spitalfields Project', supposedly an urban improvement scheme. And then there are the numerous and mysterious 'voluntary community groups' which inevitably spring up in black areas — the Toynbee Hall Resettlement Project in Spitalfields is one example.

These bodies all work in one way or another to paralyse the development of genuine political movements and to tie the Bangladeshis to the state. They, too, preach reliance on the police; and by belittling the Bangladeshis' own culture in the name of 'integration', they destroy our self-respect to assert ourselves against our enemies.

Armed with this arsenal, Superintendent Wallis and his friends have dealt with the 'problems' of Brick Lane in two waves.

First came the repression: after the death of Altab Ali and Ishaque Ali, the community was mobilised in their thousands to fight back against the fascists. In response, the SPG invaded and occupied the entire length of Brick Lane. How to justify this move — since there was no possibility of the Bangladeshis attacking themselves! The police could have argued that they were acting on information received, 'possible breach of the peace, etc. But in fact they didn't have to — they were invited into Brick Lane, by a vast array of people ranging from the 'community leaders', through the Trades Council and the Community Relations Officer to the Anti-Nazi League, all of whom called on the police to increase their presence.

## CURFEWS

Following this breakthrough, the police arrested in Brick Lane the largest number of Asians taken anywhere in Britain for political involvement, and imposed curfews on some of the most militant youths.

Those who were arrested have learnt the bitter lesson that, bad as it is being abused and insulted in the streets, it is far worse to be arrested when there is no organised campaign to defend them and go forward from there. After all, everyone has relatives and dependents — kept 6,000 miles away by the Immigration Acts — to think of.

So the police have been successful in disorientating and scattering the beginnings of organised resistance — given the assistance of the 'leaders' and the total inability (or unwillingness) of the ANL to go beyond stunts and to understand or face up to what was going on.

Now we are into phase two. Hence the new police station.

This will not be a barracks; its function will be to collect information.

In Lewisham and Islington the police used video cameras to collect the 'evidence' needed to frame West Indian youths under the conspiracy laws: the Stockade in Brick Lane serves the same general purpose even more directly. Aware that no amount of 'public relations' will hold off forever the rebellion of Brick Lane's oppressed population, the police are preparing for the explosion when it comes.

## workers' ACTION supporters' groups

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

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

- I want more information  
 I want to subscribe for 25 issues/50 issues.

Subscription rates: Britain and Ireland, 25 issues £4, 50 issues £7.50. Rest of the world: Surface mail, 25 issues £4.50, 50 issues £8.50; Air mail, 25 issues £6, 50 issues £11. Cheques etc payable to 'Workers Action'.

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

## CHEATED OUT OF ABORTION RIGHTS

A LOCAL abortion rights demonstration in Leicester two weeks ago (4th November) drew 300 people. Demanding an outpatient clinic staffed by sympathetic doctors where women can refer themselves for safe, early abortions, it was part of an ongoing campaign against lack of National Health Service abortion facilities in Leicester. Only 15% of women from

Leicester seeking abortions get them on the National Health. The majority are forced to go to the BPAS charity clinic in Birmingham, and pay £60 for the simplest operation.

Under the 1967 Abortion Act, the power to restrict abortion rights in this way lies in the hands of the senior gynaecologists, one of whom is a founder member of the anti-

abortion group SPUC.

At a big new hospital complex just opened in Leicester, there is no provision for abortion facilities.

Leicester NAC are planning to follow up the demonstration with an updated edition of their pamphlet, 'Abortion in Leicester Now'.

With a change in the abortion law — in either direction — not

on the agenda in the near future, campaigns of this sort are the most promising avenue of abortion rights activity. They will be discussed, together with other activities, at the NAC Trade Union conference this Saturday (24th).

★ Copies of Leicester NAC's pamphlet from NAC c/o 121 Cambridge St, Leicester.

## BL — THE WAY IS OPEN FOR EDWARDES' JOB CUTS

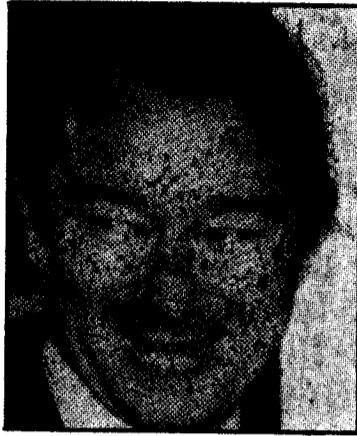
LAST FRIDAY [17th] the strikers at British Leyland's Drews Lane, Birmingham, plant were forced back to work after BL bosses threatened to close the factory down.

Now Longbridge faces drastic job cuts. BL bosses want a 25% cut in Allegro production and a 1,332 reduction in manning levels to take effect from November 27th. Workers are to be taken off the lines and put into 'the pool' as reliefs until voluntary redundancies and natural wastage eat away the required 1,332 jobs.

The Works Committee seems to have no real plan to fight these job cuts. And the union

leadership in Longbridge seems to have virtually given up on this year's pay claim. In their latest report on negotiations they say that they are simply proposing that the bosses grant Longbridge their '5% with strings' offer, merely dropping the condition that all BL car plants must agree to this offer before any plant gets it.

Militants are, however, getting organised. A meeting called by Engineers' Charter [a group led by the Socialist Workers' Party] last Saturday, 20th, in Birmingham, agree to seek joint activity with the 'Leyland Stewards for the Annual Review' group.



Edwardes gets his way

## LAST STAND OF N. ISLINGTON'S RIGHT WING 'MURPHIA'?

THE LAST General Management Committee of North Islington Labour Party ended in uproar. The trouble was about readmitting Keith Veness.

He was expelled two years ago for an interview in Islington Gutter Press (a left-wing community newspaper) about the misdeeds and corruption of local MP Michael O'Halloran.

Keith Veness appealed to the National Executive Committee, and eventually won his case. For the past couple of months the O'Halloran faction have been trying to thwart the NEC ruling by every means possible.

A Party official, Bill Jones,

has been sent in by Transport House to oversee North Islington and chair the General Management Committee meetings. When the Veness question came up, all the O'Halloran supporters jumped to their feet, shouting that under no conditions would they have Keith back into the party. Jones said they had no say in the matter, closed the meeting, and declared that Keith Veness was now once again a member of North Islington Labour Party.

But the left in the party cannot rely on the NEC. There have been rumours about the NEC closing down North Islington Labour Party and reforming it, but this is unlikely to happen with an election coming up. The left will have to organise itself at rank and file level.



Keith Veness — a member of North Islington Labour Party again?

## MIDLANDS AMBULANCE CREWS LOCKED OUT

THE AMBULANCE service in Birmingham is running as a skeleton service. Ambulance men have been regularly attacked in the Birmingham Evening Mail and on the local radio... but there is no mention of the fact that they have been locked out by the authorities, who refuse to negotiate.

Workers' Action talked to TONY HARRIS, branch chairman of Central Birmingham NUPE, who explained their dispute.

The dispute goes back four and a half years. After local government amalgamation in 1974 there were serious anomalies between the conditions of work and local agreements of ambulance drivers who had previously been in different authorities but now all came under the West Midlands.

In September this year, Central Birmingham NUPE called for sanctions to be taken to force management to negotiate. The District Committee agreed to this.

From November 2nd, sanctions such as refusing to use radios were implemented. This still brought no offer of talks from the management.

Last Thursday we refused to refuel our machines when they ran out of petrol. As ambulance men turned up for work on Friday they were presented with an ultimatum: Return to normal working or face suspension without pay.

Many ambulance drivers

asked for a union representative to be present. Management refused.

Now the TGWU have made the dispute official, though NUPE have not as yet. The officers are still working, but there is only one ambulanceman still working in the whole of the central division, and none in the eastern.

We are not as yet on strike. We have been locked out. We are prepared to provide emergency cover, but management will not let us use the ambulances.

ALL COVENTRY'S ambulance crews have been suspended, and their officers have refused to take out ambulances in solidarity. There are now only three ambulances operating in the city, run by Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Brigade amateurs.

The lock-out came last Saturday [18th], the day after the ambulancemen began non-cooperation. They want a regional agreement in the West Midlands on pay and conditions, to replace outdated local agreements made in 1974. The ambulancemen were trying to force the authorities to negotiate by refusing to re-fuel ambulances, to make written reports, or to communicate with their controllers by radio.

To try to avoid negotiations, the local government employers have put Coventry's residents in grave danger.

RMCG

## EVENTS

Saturday 25 November. "SPG Out! The Police Special Patrol Group are back in Brixton. We want them off our streets now". Demonstration called by the All Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement and Brixton Anti-Nazi League. 2.30pm, Brixton Oval.

Thursday 28 November. East London Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory supporters' meeting. 7pm at Whitechapel Library, 77 Whitechapel High Street.

Thursday 30 November. "British Troops Out of Ireland!" Film: "Home Soldier Home". Speakers: Cllr Catharine Hoey and Chris Davies (Ireland Socialist Review). 7.30pm, Labour and Trades Hall, 96 Dalston Lane, London E8. Organised by Hackney group, Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory.

Saturday 2 December. British Argentina Campaign conference. 12 to 6pm at Student Union, Brownlow Hill, Liverpool. All welcome: conference fee £1, to BAC, 52 Acre Lane, London SW2.

Sunday 2 December. Anti Nazi League trade union conference, 10am to 4pm at TUC headquarters, Congress House, Gt Russell St, London WC1. Three delegates each from trade union and workplace organisations: credentials from ANL, PO Box 151, London WC2.

Sunday 10 December. Liverpool Trades Council conference on Ireland. At AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant. Apply for credentials to the Trades Council, 70 Victoria Street, Liverpool 1.

PUBLISHED by Workers' Action, Box 1960, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

## ANL's liberal chickens leave the roost

APPEARING ON television on Monday 20th, Lord (Ted) Willis said that he had withdrawn his backing for the Anti Nazi League — and that he had been having discussions with other people on organising a new, more 'moderate', anti-fascist movement.

It was the culmination of a series on attacks on the ANL in the press. The previous day the Sunday Times had published an article claiming that six well known figures — Brian Clough, Dave Allen, Michael Parkinson, Keith Waterhouse, and Willis Hall as well as Ted Willis — had broken from the ANL. The pretext for the break was 'violent language' in SKAN magazine ['School Kids Against the Nazis']... in an issue published 2½ months ago!

Many things are murky. How did the Sunday Times get its story, when the ANL says it has had notice of withdrawal only from Willis Hall? How could the Sunday Times QUOTE Brian Clough as "dissociating" from the ANL when Clough assured the Guardian [Monday] and the Morning Star [Tuesday] that he still supported the ANL?

Willis is best known as the

author of 'Dixon of Dock Green'. But he is also an experienced political operator. In the 'thirties he led the Stalinist faction in the Labour Party youth movement.

The ANL has responded abjectly. Press officer Peter Hain said: "Modern youth uses words like fight and smash. I don't think it is anything more than their expression of a style of self-assertion. ANL aims to channel diverse elements into peaceful channels".

'Modern youth' mean what they say more often than Hain does, and they say the National Front must be 'fought' and 'smashed' because they know sweet reason will not deal with Nazi thugs. The true lesson of the affair — whatever the details — is that it does not make sense for an anti-fascist movement to offer up pleas of non-violence and absolute respectability in its fight against fascism for the sake of winning liberal celebrities' fickle support.

The movement's hands are tied politically in a real and certain way. The gains are unsure and liable to be cancelled any day by the machinations of people like Willis.



Militant kids and liberal celebrities just don't mix



# FORDS: OVER THE LIMIT BUT STILL NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH

FORD WORKERS' mass meetings on Wednesday 22nd backed the union negotiators' recommendation to accept a re-hash of the 'final offer' which was rejected two weeks ago by the negotiating team and by mass meetings.

The 9.75% increase on the basic wage remains. For Ford workers that means £6.50 extra before tax. It is £3.25 over the 5% limit, but... £13.50 short of the claim submitted by the unions. It is also less money than Ford workers won last year.

The £4 'supplementary allowance' also stands. It was the terms of this allowance which the union negotiators spent 30 hours bargaining over.

They have managed to get it agreed that workers will no longer lose the £4 for lateness or for a day's sickness without a doctor's certificate. Workers will, however, still lose the money if they go on unofficial strike or get laid off as a result of other Ford workers striking unofficially.

The negotiators conceded total defeat on the question of the 35 hour week.

The deal has the essence of what the company has been aiming at since the attempt to hold the line at 5% failed. They stated then that more money would be available, 'and we don't mean peanuts', if the union were ready to

discuss 'the company's problems'.

When it comes down to it, the company's problems are the Ford workers. Ford's first attempt was a package which covered a whole range of 'problems' like lateness and absenteeism.

Anger against those penalty clauses tended not only to obscure the minimal increase in the basic wage, but also the company's proposal for collective fines against unofficial strikes. That proposal remains in the latest deal.

Chief negotiator Ron Todd said that the negotiators had got as much as they could. On the same day Ford announced they were cutting by half production at Valencia, where all Fiesta production had been concentrated since Saarlouis closed. The strike was getting the Ford Motor Company by the throat, and more could have been won.

The Ford workers have broken the 5% limit. They have shown all other workers that Government pay limits can be broken if only we have the will to fight. But the union negotiators' stress on treating Ford as a special case, and their failure to try to organise a united struggle across industry for pay rises and the 35 hour week, means that a chance of a major advance for the working class has been missed.

# WORKERS' ACTION

## Strike committees in every bakery now!

continued from page 1

Organisation of the picketing should not be left in the hands of full time officials. It should be organised by strike committees set up at every bakery.

Organisation is also needed to collect money. (There is no strike pay). In Cardiff bakers have received support from the local Trades Council and Labour Party Young Socialists, and have plans to approach workers at Rover, Allied Breweries, and British Oxygen, and in the Seamen's Union. We should call for unions nationally to loan money to the Bakers' Union.

Strike bulletins should also become widespread, so that strikers don't become demoralised by lies in the press about how the strike is about to collapse.

The union's conference showed how solid the strike was. The real figures for scabbing prove the point. The conference voted to expel 2,000 members who were scabbing — and that led 400 workers who were scabbing

at Tooks and Betabake in Ipswich to re-join the strike. In most bakeries the number of scabs is very low indeed.

The bosses are insisting that the scabs will be 'protected'. They are declaring their intention to smash the closed shop.

If the closed shop were broken, then bakers would find our ability to fight crippled and militants would be open to victimisation. But the conference showed that we are strong enough both to win our demands and to defend the closed shop.

## COVENTRY'S FLYING PICKETS CLOSE DOWN LEICESTER BAKERY

AT SUNBLEST (ABF) in Coventry the salaried staff have walked out, leaving only management producing bread. But the management are trying to wear the pickets down by having a constant stream of small vans going in and out, supposedly carrying only hospital bread.

Asian workers at Sunblest have been much more active on the picket lines than white workers. And at Mothers Pride (RHM) in Coventry the Asian workers have also been in the forefront. As well as putting a 24 hour picket on their own bakery, they have picketed the Homepride bakery at Abbey Lane, Leicester.

Workers at Homepride were advised not to come out by their branch secretary, despite the fact that she voted for the strike resolution. The bakery's owners, RHM, had made threats of closure.

But the Coventry workers' picket has brought Homepride almost to a standstill, by cutting off the supply of flour. As a result the Homepride workers have been unable to work, and many have gone on the sick. Many of them support the strike, anyway.

The pickets have run into problems at night, with people harassing them after the pub shut. Socialists in Leicester are organising extra support for the picket line.

## One pay law for the rich...

LAST WEEK saw the publication of two reports which show that any talk of pay curbs helping the low paid is a bare-faced lie.

According to the Government's own New Earnings Survey, in April 1977 the poorest ten per cent of male workers earned 68.1% of the average. By April this year their share had dropped to 66.8%.

So who's smiling? Well, company executives ought to be. Smiling at the wage rise you didn't get and smiling at the rises they did get. According to a recent report, Stage Three — the 10% limit — brought the average executive 16.5% in cash, and it brought company secretaries an average of 20%. The average for all workers in this period was 14.2%.

Executives also benefited from tax changes and increases in perks.

But maybe they're not smiling at all. Maybe they are gnashing their teeth with jealousy, having read in the Guardian that the Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth, Lord Diamond, has a salary of £9,255 for two and a half days work a week.

# THE SECRET STATE OF COL. B

THE 'ABC' trial ended last Friday with token sentences being passed on the three defendants.

Since then there has been almost unanimous condemnation from the bourgeois press and Establishment figures of the 'Colonel Blimp' clumsiness of the security forces. Yet behind the stupidities of Colonel B is the 'State within a State' which allows him to function.

The charges against Aubrey, Berry, and Campbell arose out of the secret service's surveillance of the Defence Committee campaigning against the deportation of journalists Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball. Phones were tapped, cars were broken into, and mail was opened. When ex-soldier John Berry turned to the Agee-Hosenball Defence Committee with his story from Signals Intelligence, the secret service clamped down.

The arrests of Aubrey, Berry and Campbell, and their detention for forty hours without access to a solicitor, was carried out totally under the direction of the secret police. Neither the Home Office nor the Attorney General were told. They just added their endorsement later.

This deference to the secret police by Labour Ministers is nothing new. Rees had bowed to the "experts" knowledge (and, probably, the orders of

the CIA) in the deportation of Agee and Hosenball.

Because of the trial, Attorney General Silkin was forced to publish official guidelines for the 'security' vetting of juries which dated back to 1974. The guidelines have been used 26 times, in 'political' cases and larger criminal trials.

The Government still talks about open government and the need to repeal at least section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, as the Franks Committee recommended as long ago as 1972. But they go along with the experts at every twist and turn, and have very little effective control over their operations.

M15, for example, is not even in theory answerable to the Government, let alone to Parliament.

If there is any truth at all in Daily Expressman Chapman Pincher's recent book, many Labour ministers are probably themselves the victims of secret police surveillance.

This sinister set-up is the necessary product of a political system designed to protect the rule of a minority over the majority. From the point of view of the bosses, they have to keep their counter-revolutionary preparations secret — and that has to include keeping them secret from possibly unreliable

Government ministers. The closed-in, shut-off character of the secret police inevitably leads them into conspiratorial bungling, but that is an overhead the bosses have to pay.

Even the USA, where there is far more 'open government' than in Britain, has the FBI and the CIA operating in just as sinister a way as the British secret services. The difference is that they get exposed more easily and more thoroughly. But they don't stop their conspiracies. And they never will, until we overthrow the bosses' power that secret police prop up.

MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN



Campbell, Agee, Berry and Aubrey: against the faceless listeners