

Workers' fight

5p

No. 102 — June 28th to July 5th 1975

Gandhi orders mass arrests in India

THE MASSIVE wave of arrests on the orders of Indira Gandhi of some 900 Indian politicians (including even opposition members of Gandhi's own Congress Party) followed a week after Mrs Gandhi had been convicted of election fraud. Its immediate background was a call from opposition politician J P Narayan for a civil disobedience campaign against Gandhi.

The conviction itself was for two very minor infringements of the electoral law. Compared with the well known nationwide election frauds involving 'black' or untaxed contributions from wealthy Congress backers, these infringements pale into insignificance. They are less crass even than the way Gandhi rigged the "demonstration of support" for her shortly after her first conviction: people were paid a day's wages to demonstrate, women were given saris if they attended, and generally the whole affair was engineered in the most corrupt way.

'Black money' fraud

And the 'black money' frauds pale into insignificance compared with the huge swindles involving hoarding, price rigging, food adulteration and the pocketing of relief funds, which accounts for hundreds of thousands of deaths every year.

What is important in the Allahabad verdict which annuls Mrs Gandhi's own election (the verdict was not to be implemented until the appeal was heard) is that it greatly strengthens the opposition — both on the right and on the left — and adds weight to the demands for electoral reform.

Police attacks

The methods of Mrs Gandhi's coup are not, as the majority of the press say, a "sudden breach of India's fragile democracy". For some time now emergency laws have been in operation and police terror has been used against movements of striking workers, peasant movements, against the 'harijans', the untouchables, and against 'food rioters'. For instance, in the rail strike which took place just one year ago 60,000 of the one million strikers were arrested, thousands were sacked and made destitute, and thousands more were injured by police attacks on the strikers and on their families.

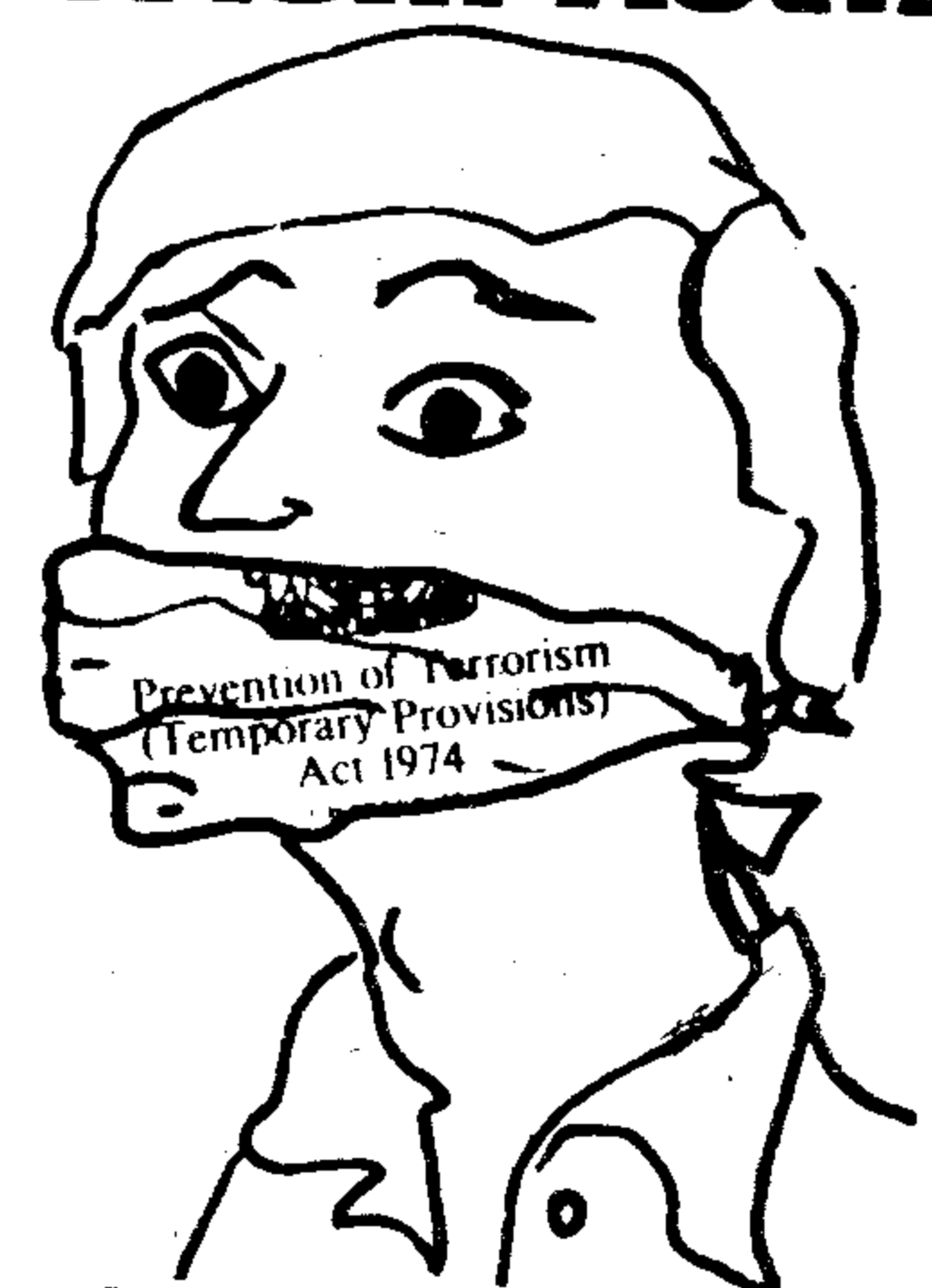
The Indian capitalist class have learnt well from their teachers of British colonialism.

REPEAL the Prevention of Terrorism Act!

44 people deported — for political beliefs

541 people arrested — for being Irish

6 months in jail — for selling a poster



TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT

DEMONSTRATION Sat. July 5th

ASSEMBLE 2.30 Kilburn Underground

THIS IS the first demonstration to resist one of the most punitive pieces of legislation in the British law book.

The state has amassed a weight of legislation against the working class and immigrant workers, with the Public Order Act, the Immigration Acts, the conspiracy laws, and now the 'Prevention of Terrorism Act', which gives even greater powers to the police to search, detain and even deport on the basis of country of origin — Ireland. Minimal civil rights do not operate, the people involved haven't been given any reason for their deportation, so no-one can challenge it. Appeals against exclusion orders are farcical.

The 'Prevention of Terrorism Act' is meant to be 'temporary'. So was the Public Order Act — which is still in operation 39 years later! Similar repressive legislation was introduced in northern Ireland in 1922 and has since then become permanent law there.

In May, the 'Prevention of Terrorism Act' was renewed for six months with only 10 MPs voting against it. Unless we mobilise on 5th July, an amended form of the Act stands a good chance of becoming permanent law in November.

"A FUNDAMENTAL and irreversible shift of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families", promised the Labour Manifesto and the TUC-Labour Party agreement that formed the basis of the so-called Social Contract. And how do they plan to bring this "shift of wealth" about? By cutting our wages!

And that's official. TUC general secretary Len Murray said himself that the General Council's "six point plan" adopted by the TUC General Council on 25th June "meant some reductions in the standard of living".

According to the "plan" everything is to be regulated by faith, not facts. Wage rises will be pegged not against real living costs, but against the price levels the Government hopes to get.

Given the rate of price rises over the past year, and the proportion taken from any wage increase in taxation, a 35% increase in gross pay is needed just to keep pace with prices.

INFLATION

This means that workers settling for 10 or 15 per cent — in line with the TUC plan — are taking a 20 to 25 per cent cut in their wages.

Even if the TUC plan 'worked', that cutback would never be made up. But in reality, any chances of the TUC plan working are remote indeed. The rate of price inflation is increasing, with monthly rises corresponding to a rate of 64 per cent per year! There is absolutely no guarantee that if the level of wage settlements goes down, then price increases will go down correspondingly. Sell less than unemployed. Next will be...
Faster than trying to...
...the private profit...

"WAGE CUT" — IT'S OFFICIAL!

system through its crisis, the labour movement needs a policy to defend living standards. That must include support for all workers in struggle for better wages and conditions, and a drive for a sliding scale of wages: automatic cost of living increases of at least 65 to 70p for each 1 per cent rise in the cost of living. And if the bosses can't afford that, then let them get out of the way.

The "six point plan" is not just anti working class, but almost certainly unworkable.

How big will the fixed flat rate increase be? The Government wants no more than £6. Clive Jenkins of ASTMS mentions £17.

What about differentials? Straight after the TUC General Council decision the conference of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions approved a plan for...
...the private profit...

increases — i.e. not flat rate.

What about the unions which have declared flat opposition to the social contract? These include the AUEW and the Scottish section of the NUM, and six members of the General Council voted against the 'six point plan'.

What about the rail settlement? Even though inadequate from the point of view of the railmen, it made nonsense of attempts to keep wage increases at 10 or 15 per cent.

GREAT DAM

How would the TUC avoid a great dam bursting effect at the end of the one year period of the flat rate, with even one trying to catch up?

And the biggest question of all is the trade union leadership strong enough to lead...
...the private profit...

increasingly urgent struggles of the rank and file.

The desperate thrashing around for a solution and the unworkability even in their own terms of that solution suggest that the answer to this question is a loud "no".

We must prepare for the Labour Government proceeding to further cuts in public spending and to massive unemployment; and for it going onto a full scale direct offensive against some section of the working class, in the hope of thrashing them in full view of the rest of the trade union movement, as a warning.

The task of the trade union movement is to unite to accept that challenge, not to knuckle under in fear now, but to organise to raise the standard of living of our class to the cost of the...
...the private profit...

MOVES TO PUSH OUT PRENTICE

REG PRENTICE now faces the third attempt in two years to remove him as the Labour MP for Newham North East. At a meeting of the constituency party executive committee on 23rd June he was asked to retire, but, not surprisingly, the new Minister of Overseas Development — who was kept in the Cabinet because Roy Jenkins threatened to resign otherwise — refused.

Commenting on the decision, he said he "regarded it as a tactical defeat for me personally. This is the beginning of the proper way for ditching a sitting member". Yes, that was the beginning — and the next stage is on 23rd July when Prentice will appear before the constituency General Management Committee. If the GMC endorses the executive committee's attitude, Prentice will have to appeal to the National Executive Committee.

The present Labour Party National Executive Committee has a majority which in Labour Party terms is left wing. But will they use this opportunity, should it come, to dump one of the Labour MPs most hated by the left wing of the party rank and file.

Prentice has, of course, received the backing of the newly set up Social Democratic Alliance, which is attempting to rally the mealy mouthed, the treacherous and the deluded into a solid phalanx of 'moderates'.

He and they have pointed to the strengthening of the left wing of Newham North East party by new activist elements over the past year or two. This, they claim, has made the difference.

The situation in Newham NE is symptomatic of what is happening a more molecular way elsewhere in the Labour Party: trade union activists are turning towards the party and strengthening its left wing, yet still the right wing, with the 'Social Democratic Alliance' are the only one to...
...the private profit...

have an organised, nationwide grass roots organisation.

The decision of the Yorkshire district of the National union of Mineworkers to withdraw sponsorship from those MPs who do not represent their policies has also raised a cry of alarm from the Social Democratic Alliance.

In widely separated places now the left, often closely connected with the trade union movement, is asserting itself. What it lacks is coordination and a clear programme. However, the principal force capable of coordinating these developments and initiating a real left wing movement within which there could be a debate on policy, is the Tribune MPs — and they show no sign as yet of taking on this task.

Unify

Indeed, they do not even show any signs of making a clear stand in Parliament on an issue close to their hearts, the Industry Bill. They all seem to agree that, as the Financial Times recognised, "it is clear that the CBI has been successful in persuading the Prime Minister to water down some of the Bill's original provisions on the disclosure of information". They have all seen the Bill transformed in many other ways — planning agreements are now voluntary, the appointment of official trustees has been dropped and the policy of extending 'public ownership' to the profitable sectors of manufacturing industry is much weakened — and yet Douglas Hoyle (MP for Nelson and Colne) says "it is highly unlikely that the Tribune group members would vote against the Government's amendments."

The left needs to organise and unify the grass roots struggles reflected now in Newham and among the Yorkshire miners into a movement strong enough to prevent a repeat of the betrayals of the past.

3,000 miles apart two men await execution

IF THE British lecturer, Denis Hills, dies under the bullets of the firing squad of President Idi Amin, it will be at a spot in Kampala known as "Execution Valley". Others know the place as "Mutineers' Gully" — a name it gained because it was the scene of an uprising in 1892 by Sudanese troops serving in the Uganda Rifles. 27 of the mutineers were killed then. In the later years of British rule in Uganda the place was known as a place of execution of Ugandans by the British authorities.

No doubt Denis Hills will have the distinction of being the first victim of state terror scheduled to die on that spot who has ever been the focus of a large body of concern outside Africa.

VICTIMS

He will certainly not be the first victim of Amin's barbarous tyranny. Amin's own ministers boast of a figure of some 100,000 people already slain during his rule. Neither were all these victims anonymous criminals or 'rebels'. Judge Benedict Kiwanuka 'disappeared' 18 months ago after daring to deliver a verdict of 'not guilty' on some defendants Amin didn't like.

Neither has the silence been confined to the areas outside Africa. There has been virtually no concern inside Africa either.

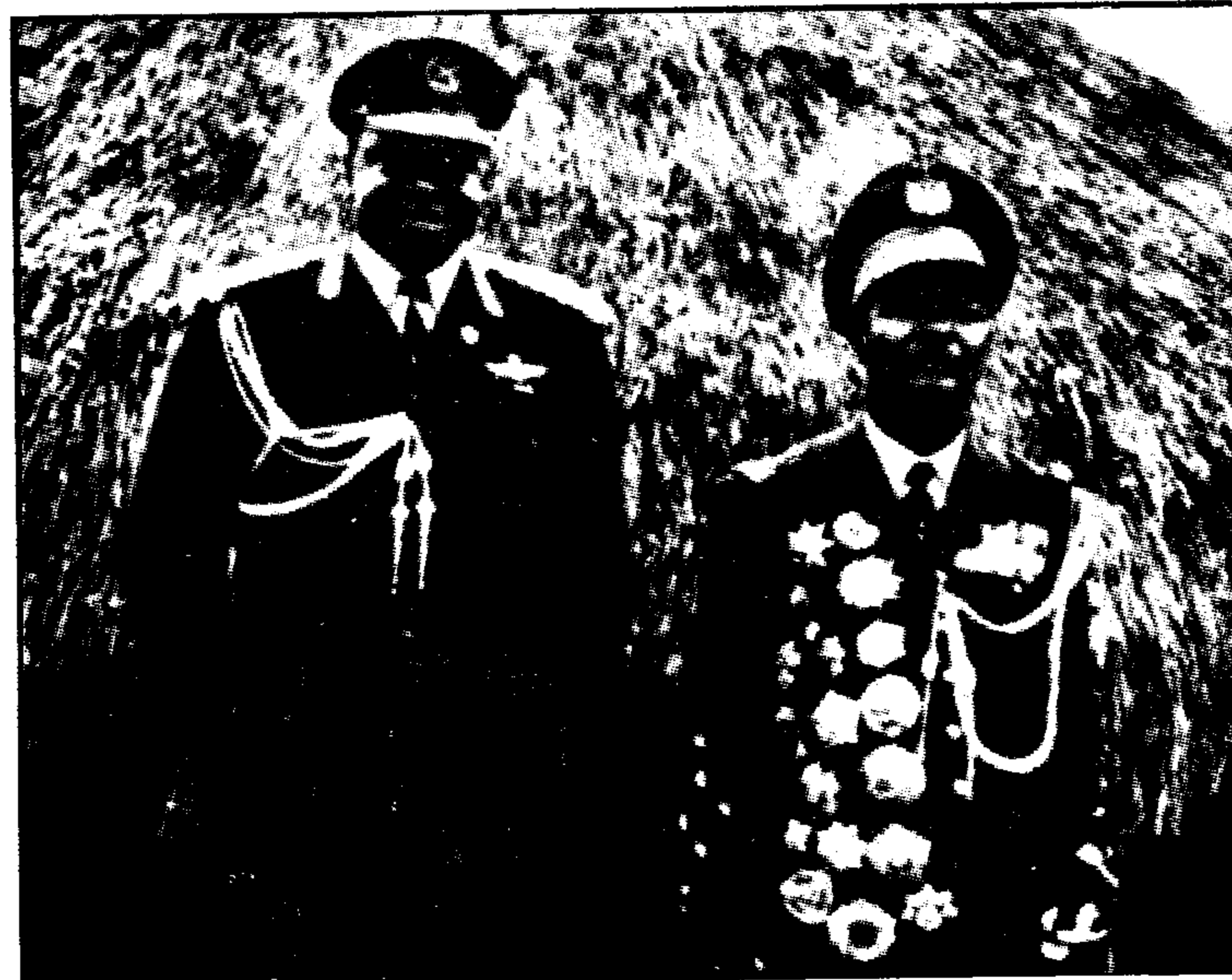
But now a powerful, white imperialist nation sounds the tocsin. One of its citizens is being threatened. Out with the headlines, send out the emissaries, the Queen will write a letter, the Foreign Secretary will stand by, pressure will be put on every African nation that depends on Britain for as much as a tractor screw to make statements...

And this nation raising the hue and cry is the Dr Frankenstein who has created this monster, Amin. It was without the slightest blush of shame, for instance, that Lieutenant General Sir Chandos Blair,

ence on President Amin". It was through the Kings African Rifles that Amin made his way to the top, gaining exceptionally rapid promotion because of his readiness and whole hearted brutality in carrying out his orders, especially against the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya.

TANKS

And Britain's encouragement of Amin did not cease with the promotion he received shortly before independence. Britain approved of his coup against Milton Obote in 1971; it rushed to be the first to recognise the new regime and send it arms — the tanks, armoured cars and airplanes used by Uganda in its incursions into Tanzania; and it continues to be a substantial economic prop for the present regime.



Amin with Bokassa of the Central African Republic — another arbitrary and brutal ruler, schooled in an imperialist army (the French one) and lifted to power by courtesy of a 'civilising', 'benevolent' 'mother country'.

Cries for the white man, silence for the black

WHILE the perfectly justified outcry at the treatment of Mr Hills rises in pitch, the young Dominican revolutionary Desmond Trotter sits in jail awaiting his death largely ignored by world press.

He was arrested and accused of the killing of an elderly white American tourist during the carnival celebrations of Dominica on February 24th last year. The 'evidence' against him amounted to the testimony of a young barmaid, Camella Francis. But Miss Francis, who was given bed and board at the police headquarters both before and during the trial, has withdrawn her statement admitting that it was part of a police frame-up. The turn of events was reported to the court by Trotter's counsel, the Antiguan lawyer and Secretary of the Caribbean Bar Association, Tim Kendall, who was then told to clear out of the island and banned from returning.

It was clear that the Trotter trial was a complete frameup

and part of the campaign by Dominica's leader, Patrick John, against what he calls 'pseudo intellectuals' and 'agents of international communism' who, he claims, are "eating through the region's organisations and institutions like cancer, sowing the wild seeds of violence, revolution, deceit, and possible usurpation."

John, the product, of the Caribbean trade union school (which has produced the most vicious reactionary leaders in the West Indies) has decided that Trotter's trial and death by execution is to be a lesson to the islanders and particularly to the MND, Movement for a New Dominica. (Trotter was editor of the MND's paper).

This movement, which has always dissociated itself from attacks on tourists despite their opposition to the dependence on tourism of the island's economy, has a very wide following in Dominica and has given support to the largely spontaneous take-overs of plantations that have

erupted there.

Despite the high level of police thuggery on Dominica and the clear nature of the frame-up of Trotter, the white press didn't feel he was a worthy recipient of their outrage

The appeal court turned down eleven grounds of appeal and upheld his conviction. A further appeal to the Privy Council has had no success; and as for the Queen... she won't be sending a letter to Mr John!

Send YOUR letters, messages and resolutions to the Government of Dominica via Minister of Home Affairs, Government Headquarters, Kennedy Avenue, Roseau, Dominica, West Indies; and statements of solidarity with Trotter and the Movement for a New Dominica to: a) Radio Dominica, Victoria Street, Roseau, Dominica, West Indies, b) Radio Antilles, Plymouth, Montserrat, West Indies, and c) Radio AKD, St. Johns, Antigua, West Indies. (Copies sent to the MND c/o Twavay, 6 Canal Lane, Goodwill, Dominica will strengthen the campaign there too.)



From Grass Roots

NATIONAL FRONT ON THE BRINK OF

A SPLIT

JOHN TYNDALL, the strutting little Nazi whose continuing presence in the leadership of the National Front was a growing obstacle to the Front's chances of passing itself off as a 'normal' party, has finally been kicked out as Vice Chairman — not long after being deposed from the overall chairmanship. And the signs are that ex Führer tyndall is putting up a fight that promises to split the Front right down the middle.

Tyndall has a firm following, especially among the activists. He personally owns the monthly paper 'Spearhead' — with its mailing list — and already in the May issue, anticipating the coup against him, he put out a call for a new constitution in which an all powerful 'leader' or 'top man' would be elected by the membership rather than by the 20-man Directorate, which, he ruefully complained, is riddled with 'struggles for power' and 'unhealthy conspiracies'. Copies of the May Spearhead sent out from the NF centre at Croydon had this last ditch appeal to the membership ripped out. Now Tyndall is stomping round the country trying to rally his supporters.

course help the Front much anyway. Its rapid recent growth has come to a halt at under 11,000 (only about 2,000, if that, active in any capacity), with many of the more deluded members demoralised by having to face constant battles with anti fascists. Nor can there be any simple 'cleansing' of the Front such as 'populists' like Roy Painter would like: a high proportion of the Front's leadership (men like Webster, Pirie, Cook, Bean, Marshall and McMenemie) come from the same stable as Tyndall and his former comrade, synagogue burner Colin Jordan, and are branded with the same Hitlerite mark (not to mention a string of criminal convictions for possessing weapons, organising paramilitary groups, etc.)

Dividing line

There is, of course, no significant dividing line. The NF is fascist through and through, down to its priority aim to dominate the streets and build up a force of thugs and scabs to threaten the workers' movement. This is why it is so important to stop them marching and meeting, and to drive out their infiltrators.

However many of the old style back street Nazis they manage to ditch, the open violent threat will remain — because that is what fascism is all about. At a Bardford march in April, a member brought his gun along. In the June 1975 'Britain First', they state that if "racialist movements (sic) like the National Front" are curbed, "all good nationalists who wish to continue the struggle will be forced to join their local gun club".

Their close links with armed Orange murder organisations make this no empty threat, and some zealous rank and file members have already proceeded to attack defenceless black families with firebombs and back street beatings. While the police very often turn a blind eye, some of these things have recently been brought to court.

Brian Hosie was sentenced to life imprisonment at the Glasgow High Court for the murder of a West Indian. In Hosie's wallet when he was arrested was found a letter from NF headquarters acknowledging receipt of his subscription. Awaiting trial, Hosie described the murder as 'an over enthusiastic programme of repatriating our Commonwealth citizens'. He also boasted that his policy was to 'boost emigration, start extermination'.

Recently an Edinburgh UDA man sentenced to seven years' jail for possession of self loading rifles was found to have his bedroom plastered with NF posters and stickers. Another Scots member of the NF is awaiting trial on charges of a serious assault on an anti fascist; one Carl Kukla, another NF

member, has been sentenced to three months on a similar charge in Preston.

Another case concerned a NF parliamentary candidate, not just a rank and file member. Keith Squires threw an amplifier into the audience at the election count in Wood Green last October. He was convicted of actual bodily harm, and found to have previous convictions of actual bodily harm, assault, and theft.

In a financial appeal for Carl Kukla in the May 'Spearhead', it says that any money left over will go to aid "for future victims". The NF are obviously planning for more of their members to go to prison for attacking people! But with any luck, the people they attack will be each other....

RON VANDY

McWHIRTER'S SCABS' ARMY

ROSS McWhirter is not a man who could be accused of unconcern for the well being of the nation. His activity on its behalf has taken many forms. He looks after its intellectual needs, for instance, by compiling the Guinness Book of Records. In 1973, he took up the cause of its moral welfare by attempting to stop an Andy Warhol film from being shown on television, and won the acclaim of Festival of Lightpatriots in all parts of the island. And last Thursday, in a large advertisement in the Guardian, this champion of all that is noble and virtuous strode armour clad into the field of

He announced the existence of an organisation that had been formed 'for the express purpose of standing up to the unions', since the 'overmightiness of the Trade Unions is the gravest of all menaces to the welfare of Great Britain'. It would plan a "car lift" operation for commuters to beat the rail strike.

The group also claimed to have a printing works within 100 miles of London, capable of producing several million copies of a daily newspaper, with generators to make it independent of any power strike, and with sufficient numbers of printers 'independent of union

English middle class have for scabs!)

It's all very genteel really. McWhirter's hoped for mass scab army of the petty bourgeois comes across a bit like a regular outing to a seaside picnic, only heading in the opposite direction: "We visualise a small fleet of coaches leaving Brighton each morning for the City and the West End filled with regular commuters".

It would be better if McWhirter confined his efforts in future to the Guinness Book of Records, where his advertisement could find a place among the nastier examples of overgrown schoolboy fantasy.

STOP PRESS: At Highgate Magistrates Court on Thursday June 26th Cliff McDaniel was given a savage one-year suspended prison sentence for being beaten up by police. The suspension of the sentence is pretty tenuous, given the ease with which they framed him and the fact that the local police will obviously have it in for Cliff now. It makes the Black Parents defence campaign all the more important. Below we print a report on their last meeting.

Haringey black student framed

Cliff McDaniel, a 17 year old black school student, was beaten up by racist Haringey policeman Ryan David as he was returning to school one lunchtime a few weeks ago — and then, predictably, charged with assaulting the cop. Full details of the case and its broader implications were discussed at a joint meeting of the Black Parents and the Black Students movements last Sunday (22nd) in Finsbury Park, London.

It was felt that the case of McDaniel was just one aspect of the overall oppression of black youth in the British education system and society in general. The high status of education in the Caribbean meant that West Indian immigrants came over here with profound respect for British schooling. Only now are Black parents becoming aware of the limitations and discrimination of the British education system.

In 1969 they became involved in a struggle against a form of streaming in Haringey schools which was clearly grouping children to the heavy disadvantage of black kids. While fighting back within the schools, they also began to set up a network of supplementary schools. These have now been in operation in parts of London for up to 5 years and rake small numbers of children at evenings and week-ends in private homes.

Rex Dunn, a teacher at Cliff's school and a member of Haringey Rank and File, proposed a joint meeting between R & F and the Black Parents and Students Movements, to discuss future action. This is a good initiative for other Rank & File groups to follow. For more information contact the Black Parents Movement, 57 Victoria Road, London N.4. 01-272-8529/4889.

ON THE night of Friday 11th October policemen invaded the Carib Club in Cricklewood Broadway and arrested 42 Black people. 12 are now on trial at the Old Bailey on charges of Affray, assaulting the police, and possession of offensive weapons.

What happened when 500 police raided Carib Club

The battle of the Carib Club began when a group of policemen forced their way into the Friday night disco to arrest a young man who they claimed had stolen a car. They pushed aside the doorman and were heard to say "let's get the rest and bust the place up". They called for 'help' which arrived right away — about 500 policemen, some with riot shields, and police dogs. The police locked most of the people at the club into the dance hall and there was a

violent confrontation with the rest who were mainly in the restaurant. Black people were beaten with batons, kicked and punched and forced to leave the club. Several were injured.

The trial at the Old Bailey which began on the 2nd of June is the public aspect of yet another battle by young Blacks to defend themselves against police harassment. Rudy Narayan, the Black barrister who has proved police perjury in several other cases, is among the team cross examining police

evidence. Already the police appear to have 'identification problems'.

The case of the Cricklewood 12, like that of the Brockwell Park 3 and of the Metro, Oval House and Waterloo 4, is an example not only of police brutality but of black resistance. These are the ighpoints of a continuing battle. Meanwhile, as young blacks fight the oppression of the capitalist state, a surprisingly large part of the white left wanders around the arena asking where the action is.



The NUT Executive has consistently refused to support the case of John Warburton, a gay teacher who was sacked by ILEA just after Christmas for answering pupils' questions about homosexuality and discussing the matter with them. Nevertheless 8 NUT Associations in London have passed resolutions condemning the action of ILEA and calling on them to retract their decision.

Petitions containing over 4,000 signatures similarly condemning the ILEA victimisation (Warburton has actually been offered a job by a school, which the Authority has refused to let him start) were handed in at their headquarters in London's County Hall last Tuesday afternoon. Over 30 people turned up to a picket, organised by the Gay Teachers Group, outside County Hall, including members of NUPE and NALGO gay groups, as well as student teachers and representatives from NUT Associations.

'BEATEN TO DEATH' while in police custody

ON THE 13th June a hospital porter from Mile End Hospital rang the offices of the East London Advertiser to say "a man was brought in here with terrible injuries yesterday. He was naked, handcuffed and chained. I have never seen such shocking injuries on a person who has been arrested. I am convinced he took a hell of a beating."

The man, who died that day, was 35 year old Fred Merry from Poplar, East London. About ten

days before, he had joined a mystical sect called "Ermin" and begun behaving strangely. On the 12th he was seen by people in an East London park dancing naked on an island in the park lake. Soon police and security guards were called.

Merry was dragged into the bushes on the island out of view for a short time and when the police brought him back to the lakeside he was handcuffed, in chains, bleeding and unconscious. His brother

commented "He had obviously taken a terrible beating. His jaw was twisted swollen lump and there were marks and bruises over most of his body. We want to know why he was arrested by police when it was plain to see he was suffering from a mental disorder. And why he was taken to hospital in chains in a police van after getting these terrible injuries — surely an ambulance should have been called."

The police have tried to focus attention — and, implicitly, responsibility, — on the "Ermin". But what is clear is that Merry was unmarked before the police and security guards got to him and beaten to death between then and being brought ashore.

An investigation is being carried out ... by the police!

from Civil Liberty

FIGURES released recently show that in 1974 there were 6,478 complaints made against Metropolitan Police Officers. This is an increase of 238.7% on the 1964 figures of 2,411 complaints. There will doubtless be widespread surprise ... that in 1974 only 311 of the complaints were substantiated. This is an increase of only 152.5% on the 1964 figure of 204 substantiated complaints.

The copper's nark who kept mum

The Irish crisis has brought into the open some unsavoury aspects of politics in Britain as well. In the Birmingham bombing case last week one of the chief Crown witnesses was Thomas Watt of Alum Road, Birmingham, who turned out to be a well known supporter of the fascist National Front. It also emerged that it was in Watt's house that Kenneth Littlejohn, British spy and agent provocateur in Ireland, had been staying in Birmingham after his 'escape' from Mountjoy Jail — establishing a strong connection between Littlejohn and the National Front.

Watt worked in the same factory as some of the defendants in the bombs trial, and had apparently been informing on his work-mates to the police for 6 months before the bombing — indicating that the Birmingham police used the National Front to spy on Republicans.

When it came to Littlejohn they weren't so observant, however. There was an Irish warrant out for Littlejohn, it was widely believed that he was in the Birmingham area, yet he had been living with a known police tout for over a month before the police managed to find him.

It isn't only the RUC who work hand in glove with fascists... from Unfree Citizen

One man's crusade for women's rights



Dr. Henry Morgentaler

"If a woman is compelled to bear all the children she potentially could bear, all women would have to bear up to 50 babies". This stark exposure of the logic of the anti-abortionists is typical of the head-on approach of the Canadian Dr Morgentaler, one of the most courageous fighters for a woman's right to choose.

He started by ignoring the repressive abortion law, opening a clinic in Quebec after a pro-abortion rights statement on television led to a flood of desperate letters from women all over Canada. After pioneering the use of the most simple and advanced vacuum extraction method, he realised that, however hard he worked, he couldn't, single handed, cope with the immensity of the demand for safe abortion. Around Canada, women were dying every day.

Dr Morgentaler proceeded to challenge the law, announcing as loudly and as publicly as he could that he was running an abortion clinic. And in a Montreal court he got the victory he wanted, when the jury acquitted him after he argued that the Abortion law contravened women's rights under the Canadian constitution.

But police continued to raid his clinic and harass his staff, and in a reversed judgement move, the Morgentaler verdict was overturned. Charges were also brought out by

jury, and again Quebec's Justice Minister announced that the state would appeal.

The Sunday Times (22nd June) now reports that Dr Morgentaler, who is 52 and a survivor of Hitler's concentration camps, was in hospital after suffering a heart attack in jail. His wife accused prison guards of denying him medicine needed for his heart condition, of putting him in solitary confinement, and stripping him naked.

And now two members of his staff are also to be charged.

A protest movement has responded to Dr Morgentaler's imprisonment with a new drive to secure the repeal of Canada's repressive abortion law, and for the protection of the rights of women.

DISCUSSION

OUR BODIES OUR OWN?

Comrades — It would be more than a pity if the mobilisation of women around the issue of the James White Amendment were to result in a mood of mutual congratulation which precluded any thought on the wider abortion campaign.

It is perhaps inevitable that slogans become closely identified with campaigns and hence quickly cease to receive the critical appraisal I would argue they merit. "Free abortion on demand" for

A reply

MAUREEN Tolman writes "What is regarded as human (at least potentially) in one situation is regarded as non-human in another" etc. No. A foetus is regarded as human, whether referred to clinically or with more sentiment — but precisely because it is only still potentially so, we must accord greater rights to the fully realised human, the mother, if there is a conflict of interest.

If our bodies are not "our own individual possessions", then whose are they? The only time when this is in question is pregnancy — when another potential human being has an interest in the same body. And it is to assert our belief that the overriding interest here should be the woman's, that the demand for the right to control our own bodies has been formulated. Control, within the limits of medical advance, is denied to no other group of people as it is denied to a woman once she has conceived. We think that right should be extended to everyone.

If the point at which a foetus is viable can be brought forward by science, that doesn't change the definition of this point — whenever it may be — as being the border beyond which a woman's right to choose should be qualified or limited. For the

example often stands by itself as if it were an absolutist demand. The point is not made that it is aimed solely at alleviating the position of women: it can do nothing to alter that position in any radical way.

"A woman's right to choose" carries the implication (hopefully unintended) that choice in itself is a panacea, if not a positive value. There is no real choice for women who get pregnant when they don't want to, since any choice exacts

considerations of the viability of the foetus or the safety of the mother, few would quarrel with the definition put forward by NAC that abortion should be an automatic right up to 12 weeks, and thereafter only refused if it's a danger to the woman's health.

Some of Maureen's arguments are particularly abstract. Choosing, she says, does nothing for our "individuality and dignity". Perhaps — though many think otherwise. But in practical terms, is it more dignified to decide what you need and obtain it as a right — or to plead your case with several doctors, be shunted in and out of waiting rooms and be given, instead of the required medical treatment, a series of moral homilies?

Again, Maureen says "there is no real choice for women who get pregnant when they don't want to, since any choice exacts its price." But it is ludicrous to say that the choice between a minor 5-minute operation and a 9-month pregnancy, probably followed by a 15-year personal childcare project, is not a real choice!

Of course, it's not an ideal choice — but it is a very real one. The demand for the right to make that choice for ourselves is again not one that was hastily cobbled together for last week's demonstration, but a deeply felt and long considered and fought for cornerstone of the fight for beyond the narrow limits of the law to be able to control our own bodies.

its price. To argue otherwise is to succumb to the supermarket mentality, which tells people (and women in particular) that to choose one brand of goods rather than another is an act which somehow affirms their individuality and dignity.

Again, "control over our own bodies" expresses a dualism, in which "I" am not my body, and proposes a mechanistic relationship in which "I" master my biology and make it conform to what "I" want. By the use of the word "own" it further implies that our bodies are our own individual possessions to do with as we please: an understandable defensive position since women have consistently experienced themselves as bodies being taken over by others. But for women to demand "control" is to succumb to the very values they are defending themselves against.

Definitions also need thought and clarification. To argue that a foetus becomes a child when it has passed down the birth canal and become visible seems naive. And a rapidly developing technology renders the current position relating to viability outside the womb merely a temporary one. This suggests that the distinction between foetus and child must be made on social and not medical or physiological grounds. What is regarded as human (at least potentially) in one situation is regarded as non-human in another. So an accidental miscarriage is termed "losing a baby"; a deliberate abortion involves a foetus. Current definitions of what is human and what is not are built into the class society of which we are a part and are an expression of its corrupting

AS THE CBI, the TUC and the Labour Government set down to talks the biggest chemical works in Europe shut down. For over two weeks, the Wilton and Billingham ICI plants have been effectively closed as maintenance workers in the AUEW have picketed the gates. In Wilton the TGWU process workers have been out on strike against an attempt to victimise four lorry drivers for not crossing AUEW picket lines.

The Teesside ICI men are out for a national 55 per cent wage demand, restoration of differentials for skilled workers, and introduction of a threshold type system to meet rising inflation.

From Friday 27th all Teesside ICI plants could be closed down, if the Billingham process workers in the TGWU vote to strike after the rejection by the national negotiators of the ICI bosses' offer of 26 per cent increase. This 26 per cent increase would give £10 to process men, and up to £13 for craftsmen. The 57,000 workers involved want up to

£21.50.

Already craftsmen in ICI plants in Huddersfield and Doncaster are out, and some process workers are laid off. But the ICI bosses are not that immediately worried by the closures, even though Wilton's closure means that many other ICI plants in Britain will be affected. ICI often operates on a stockpiled margin of three weeks, and this stockpiling will put pressure on the Teesside strikes.

ICI do not intend to allow themselves to be beaten easily. As they are losing up to £1½ million per day, a three weeks strike at the minimum will cost them over £35 million. A longer strike will cost the bosses over £100 million, as more and more ICI plants close down. But ICI with its £450 million profits for 1974 does not intend to give in, and at present the Labour Government is supporting ICI.

One thing the full time officials are worried about is the possibility of the infant ICI combine committee getting off the ground.

PLANTS SHUT DOWN

Already the GMWU have argued for plant productivity bargaining to get around the problems the 55 per cent pay demand is posing for the trade union leaders and the bosses. On May 25th, the small and medium sized chemical firms had their pay offer of 23 per cent rejected, because of the Teesside strikes against the ICI offer of 26 per cent!

The Teesside strikes have not, unfortunately, gained much support from other factories. For years the right wing which controlled the Teesside AUEW District Committee came from the ICI plants, and failed to call for support when other AUEW members appealed for it. For example, the Lackenby British Steel Corporation strike in 1974 was

However, militants must fight to win support for the ICI struggle — particularly at the AUEW shop stewards' quarterly coming up next week — and thus show in practice why the right wing must be removed from control of the district committee.

The Labour Government's plans for a 10 or 15 per cent wage norm, voluntary or compulsory, make it vital for them to line up with the bosses in this struggle. Out duty is clear — support the ICI workers in their fight for a 55 per cent wage increase, and smash all attempts at wage curbs under capitalism!

ON THURSDAY June 26th 12 plumbers at the Longview direct works depot (Knowsley, Lancs.) returned to work after a two weeks' strike. The strike had originally started over an attempt by management to transfer, without consultation, two of the plumbers (including the deputy steward) out of the depot. The men only went back after management had withdrawn these particular transfer demands. This had been done largely because the 12 strikers had been joined by all other Knowsley council plumbers — who had struck on Tuesday June 24th in sympathy. The situation is now back to "status quo". The issue that formed the background to the strike still, however, remains. Management attempts to weaken the organisation of the plumbers of the depot come from the fact that the plumbers had been to the forefront in demanding that more labourers should be taken on. (There is a deficiency of 59 labourers from the required level in the direct works). Management's reply to this was both to attack the plumbers and to say that they had 80 tradesmen too many! In a period of growing unemployment and cutbacks, the demand that proper manning levels should be both obtained (by recruiting more workers) and defended (if achieved) is not only essential, but is one that will have to be fought for by direct rank and file action.

Naomi Wimborne & John Bloxam

The article lacks the rabid tone of the previous one, by Max Morris, and concedes: "this group is within its rights simply using intelligently and with foresight procedures laid down by the Union". However, there is the persistent assumption of sinister, not to say pathological motives: demoralising people, causing splits, acting as a front for political manipulations. There is the bizarre notion that 'Rank and File' supporters seeking election of union officials are not doing anything so simple as pressing for greater democracy, but are plotting to control the union.

In fact, it is those who do control the union who use and benefit by methods of bureaucracy and manipulation. Smith is trying the old trick of attempting to conceal one's own motives by accusing other people of the same thing.

Ivan Wels

NUT 'Rank and File' slandered again

FOR THE second time in the past few months the official organ of the National Union of Teachers, *The Teacher*, has opened its pages to a large article attacking 'Rank and File Teachers'. Basically, this latest article, by Tony Smith, submits two propositions — that Rank and File Teachers is merely a front for a political organisation, the International Socialists, and that it manipulates "thousands of members who are too busy or disinterested to attend meetings".

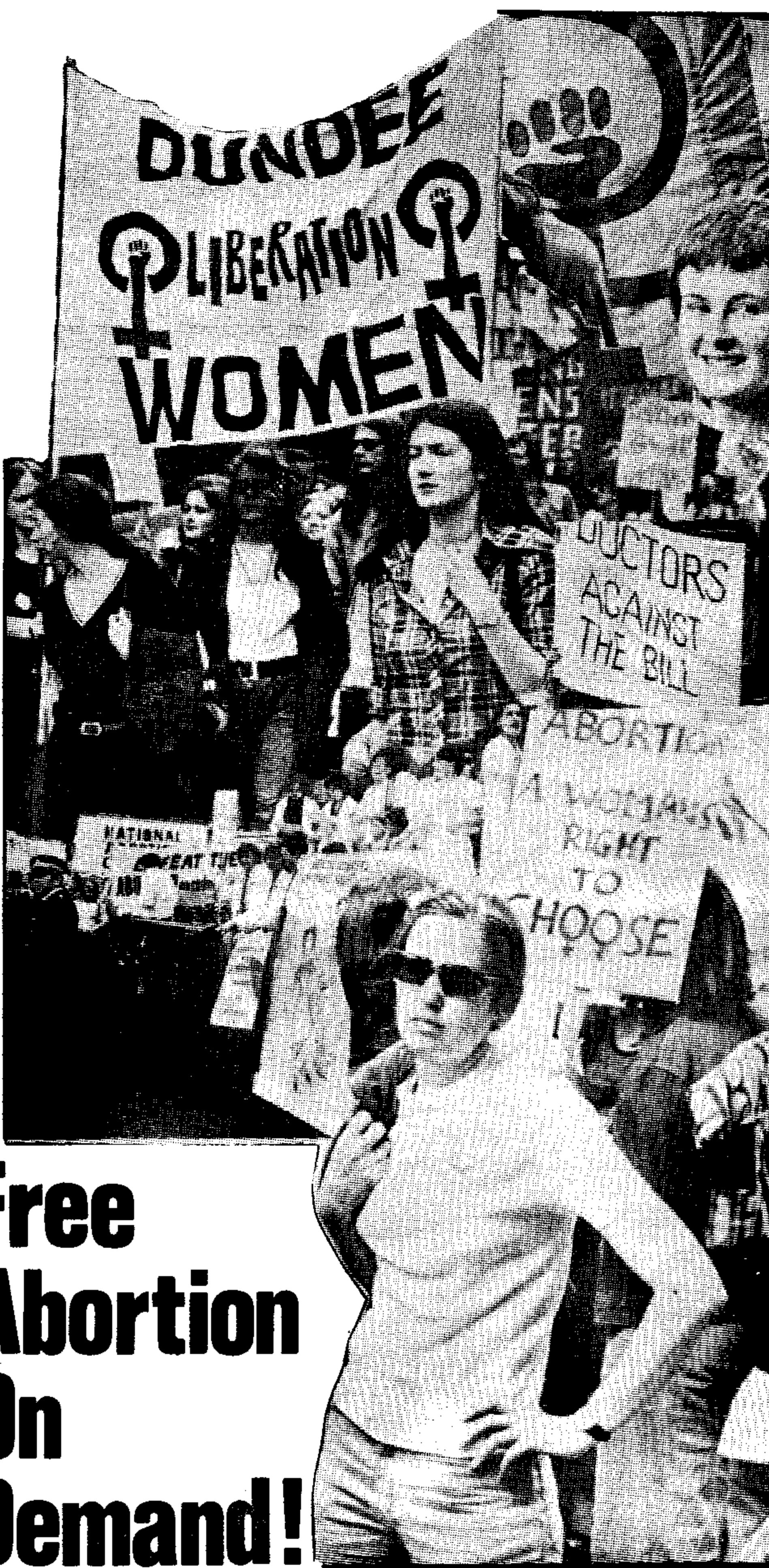
Rank and File operates, according to Tony Smith, a two pronged attack. First of all it forces major splits causing 'influential and hostile people to leave. Secondly, it commits the union to 'impossible policies' in order to aid this and demoralise the membership.

As 'evidence' for all this he makes a little table showing categories of motions put forward by Rank and File supporters and often prioritised for conference. The motions on class size and salaries and classed as 'impossible targets'. The one on local association autonomy and the Social Contract are classed as 'causing splits'. The one on election of union officials is classed as 'gaining control of the union'!

Rabid

Of course, Smith never discusses the issues involved, because he knows that publicity would only help to encourage support for 'Rank and File' policies. Hence he never mentions the fact that the motion on class size is similar to one passed at the 1969 conference, which condemned the NUT Executive for doing nothing about it (as usual!).

40,000 marchers say...



Free Abortion On Demand!

Lackenby 5 branch called a meeting on 20th June to work out what should be done. At this meeting, addressed by the local full time official of ISTC, it was decided to ban all overtime. Because the men have banned overtime, those in undermanned areas could be forced out of the gate. This is because if they refuse to work the first shift overtime (which is compulsory overtime) and if manningup is not done, the mills won't be able to produce, therefore they will be taken off pay. But how will this solve the problem of reduced wages and undermanning? It won't!

What the meeting should have demanded was that the leaders of the ISTC and the trade unions conduct a national struggle for 'work or full pay. We should demand the union leadership do what it was put there for and defend our standards of living, or get out. Mind you, the ISTC has the excuse that it was originally created to keep the peace by the iron masters and is still successfully carrying out this task for the BSC bosses. While demanding that the union leaders do these things we should not lose sight of the fact that they have sold us out before and will do it again. Thus it is important that the rank and file organise, with or without their help, for work or full pay. Lol Duffy & Tony Duffy

'Work or full pay'—key to the steel fightback

PRODUCTION in the mills at South Teesside works of the British Steel Corporation is at its lowest for years and, luckily for the management, so is Trade Union activity. When members of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation were put onto a 15 shift system not a murmur was heard from any area except the beam and rod mills at Lackenby (no. 5 branch) who staged a 24 hour protest strike.

The 15 shift system means up to 35 per cent reduction in wages and a loss of 25 per cent of the shift jobs, since only three groups work at 15 shift system as opposed to 4 in the 17 shift system. Moreover those taken off the 17 shift system will not want to go onto a job with less pay and will leave the industry. The same happened last year when the shift system changed from 21 to 17.

APOLOGY: In our article (WF 101) on the ban on the LPYS Irish campaign, we incorrectly stated that Keith Bennett was the secretary of Carlton LPYS. In fact, Keith Bennett is an ordinary member of Carlton LPYS, and the secretary is Mick Teece. But as regards Carlton LPYS's planned meeting on Ireland, which could be liable to a prohibition under the new ban, both the comrades concerned are determined that it should go ahead.

Cutting back the Weighell way

TWO DAYS after the final rail pay deal was signed, Sidney Weighell, general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, visited British Rail headquarters. His object was not to tidy up loose ends from the deal, or begin negotiations for the 1976 claim, but to discuss how British Rail were going to pay for the new rates.

Michael Foot's solution, and British Rail Board chairman Richard Marsh's, was: jobs must be lost.

The *Observer* of 22nd June indicates that British Rail bosses expect "a substantial number of redundancies, a 'trimming' of the present rail network, and a reorganisation of middle management." The *Observer* continues: "Privately, they (BR) fear

they will be pushed (?) into going much further, — sacking as many as 100,000 railwaymen, making substantial cuts in rolling stock replacement programmes, axing many evening and late night services, and reducing weekend traffic to a minimum".

And what is this all for? The deal was cleverly contrived to prevent any percentage increase being more than the magic number of 30 per cent, and to forestall any demand from the drivers' union, ASLEF, for a massive up-rating of their increase. In the end the lowest paid railman has ended with a two stage wage increase.

The first stage is back-dated to April 28th, and runs until August 4th. This first stage gives a minimum earnings guarantee of £36.70, and is made up of the old basic rate (£25.65), threshold money consolidated (£4.40), the new money increase (£2.65), plus a £4.00 supplement.

The new basic will be £32.70. The second stage, running from August 4th, gives a minimum earnings guarantee of £34.65 — £2.65 less than the first stage, and less than the guarantee offered by the Rail Tribunal arbitration offer — but raises the basic to £33.35. At no stage is the NUR demand for £34.65 basic met.

SHEFFIELD - 500 LAY OFFS SPARK SUCCESSFUL SIT-IN

ON MONDAY June 9th, workers at Batchelors Foods of Sheffield arrived at the Wadley Bridge factory to find a notice informing them that 500 process workers were to be laid off at the weekend. Accordingly, 1,000 of them staged a 'sit-down' strike.

This ended the next day when the management removed the notice and informed TGWU organiser Jim Holmes of the situation by letter. Holmes was quoted as saying: "The lay-

NALGO local government workers were offered the lowest public sector deal on Friday 20th: 25 per cent on the basic inclusive of the consolidation of thresholds.

This 25 per cent offer was provisionally accepted by the NALGO NEC, but was put out to the membership to get a final acceptance.

The NALGO local government demand was for 35 per cent increase backdated to May 1st, and the NALGO conference had threatened strike action if the demand

was not agreed to. Over 490,000 white collar workers in local government are involved, and the Labour Government is backing the employers' offer which is no more in percentage terms than the rise in the Government controlled Retail Price Index. For low paid staff the 'new money' is 10 per cent, i.e. £96; for the top brass of local government, it is 20 per cent or £1205.

So far the report back shows the offer is being rejected, and the special local government group meeting on Friday could

vote for rejection of the deal and for a ballot on industrial action. Many local government NALGO members are fully aware of the Electricity supply 33 per cent settlement, the GLC London Transport clerical staff 30 per cent deal, and the NALGO NHS deal of between 27 and 30 per cent.

In the universities, NALGO have put forward a £10 per week plus 17 per cent claim, together with renewal of the threshold scheme and a minimum wage of £2040 at age 18. This claim had the declared objective of restoring living standards to the July 1974 level. However, at a meeting on 24th June the Universities made an offer even lower than the Local Government employers' offer. If the local government group fight back for a better deal, it will make it easier to mobilise clerical staff in the Universities to win their claim.

It is important that any such mobilisation should be linked with the general fight against the cuts in public spending on education, the health service, welfare services, etc.

Kevin Feintuck (Imperial College NALGO)

At a meeting of the Liverpool Trades Council on the 19th June a speaker from the Merseyside Anti Fascist Committee addressed about 70 trade unionists. The speaker received a very interested and attentive hearing. Invitations for speakers from the Anti Fascist Committee came in there and then from IPD, Kirkby, and Dunlop, Speke. The meeting represents an important step in building links between the Committee and the local Labour movement. Stan Clare (UCATT)

STEVE HOWLETT

Published by Workers Fight, 98 Gifford Street, London N.1. Printed by voluntary labour. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.