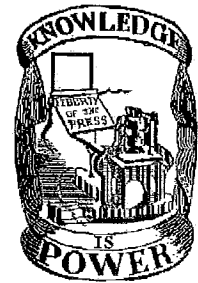


Shelf Life

The Newsletter of the Working Class Movement Library

Registered Charity No.1115731



Issue No. 14 Spring 2007

International Women's Day Celebrated



The library celebrated International Women's Day on Saturday 10 March. IWD was first celebrated in Europe in March 1911 following a resolution at the Socialist International the previous year. In the years since, it has grown into a major international event and the library has been holding an event for several years taking as its starting point the history of working class women's struggle for social and political justice. This year we were pleased to welcome three speakers and a singer.

By 2pm the meeting room was packed with more than 40 women and men. Ruth Frow welcomed the audience and spoke about the importance of the library and the history it holds.

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Subscriptions Due

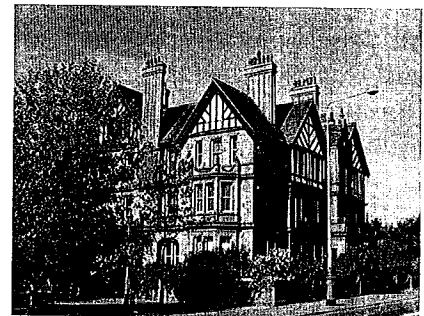
All friends of the library who do not have a standing order with us are reminded that subscriptions for 2007 are now due. The rates are the same as always £5 waged and £2 unwaged. *Where could you support a better cause for less?*

Please make cheques payable to the WCML and send them to the Treasurer c/o The library.

Have you considered joining the growing number of supporters who have taken out a standing order to avoid forgetfulness and hassle?

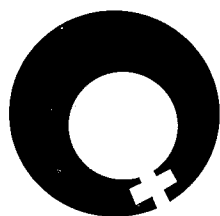
If you would like to, then you can download a form from our website or we'll send one in the post on request.

LIBRARY ANNUAL MEETING



This years annual meeting of the library will be held on Sunday 15th April at the library, commencing at 2.0pm

All Friend and Supporters of the library are invited to attend



International Women's Day 2007 Cont.

Claire Mooney, a wonderful singer song writer from Manchester, set a positive mood with her first song. She was followed by Bernadette Hyland who spoke about her experiences growing up in a working class Irish family in East Manchester, how she had politically become active at university fighting to retain abortion rights and how she has become active in an Irish community organisation, the Irish in Britain Representation Group. Nes Brierley took as her theme the damaging images relentlessly peddled to young women by the cosmetics industry intent on selling its products.

Our final speaker Imra Shoaib, President of Oldham Trades Union Council, spoke about the sexism she had encountered within engineering which is still largely male dominated. She had become active in her trade union but discovered that less enlightened attitudes could be found there as well! There was a good discussion from the audience about the topics raised. Finally Claire rounded off the afternoon with two more songs persuading the audience to join in.

All present agreed that it had been, as Claire said, "a top event".

The audience then enjoyed light refreshments and spent the remainder of the afternoon admiring the various displays and several parties were given tours of the library.

Historical Directory of Trade Unions Vol. 5 Arthur Marsh & John Smethurst

The trade union scene is rapidly changing as technology develops and our manufacturing base is removed to cheaper sources of labour abroad. The work done in the library reflects increasing interest in the history of trade unionism both from the point of view of workers in this country who are having to alter accepted concepts to fit the situation where the workforce is mainly in service industries with a majority of women, and the relatively more recent trade unionists in other countries who are discovering that their struggles follow similar paths trodden by the pioneers in this country.

The five volumes now published of the Trade Union Directory are invaluable tools for research. From the Library's point of view, Volume 5 is of great significance. Professor Arthur Marsh died in 1999 and left his collaborator, and one of our trustees, John Smethurst (with much help from our secretary Peter Carter) to organise and prepare Volume 5 for publication. Apart from the importance of the volume as an addition to the library assets, we can be proud of having contributed a small part of a valuable piece of research and publication.

John is now looking to compile Volume 6. It is needed and we hope he will get the support and assistance that he deserves. Meanwhile, orders for Vol. 5 for use in academic and local libraries will help to grease the rails. The library is proud of John's work and congratulates him on the publication.



FINALLY MADE IT!

Twelve months ago the front page headline read 'April Looms' as we neared what should have been hand over day as control of the library passed back into the Trustees' hands from the City Council. As those with a back copy will note, whilst April was approaching fast many things still had to be ironed out. It's now history that things took a little longer to put in place than had been anticipated. The transfer didn't happen last year but the 'go' sign is definitely on green for this April 1st. The lease has been agreed and, at the time of writing, is in the process of being signed by both parties and an annual grant figure has also been agreed. In the words of the song 'nothing's gonna stop us now'.

Don't You Know There's a War On!

There is always something of great interest arriving in the library and a five minute browse is in danger of becoming a lot longer. We were well aware that food, drink and tobacco were

2nd October 1943

Mr. G. McNamara
Weavers' Office,
WIGAN.

Dear Mr. McNamara,

Vouchers - Alarm Clocks.

I have your letter of the 30th September, asking that the Central Committee should make representations to the appropriate Government Department for the release of vouchers to enable textile workers to purchase alarm clocks.

This matter has now been considered by the Central Committee, and they are unanimous, based upon their knowledge of this subject, in deciding not to pursue the matter along the lines you desire.

It would appear that a limited number of alarm clocks is being imported to this country from America, saleable at 16/9. The intention is to dispose of them amongst railway and transport workers, through the appropriate trade unions. Already, I know that the Transport Workers are complaining bitterly about the number of vouchers that have been received. For instance, in Blackburn, four vouchers have been received for 762 members. In Accrington and Nelson a similar position is obtaining; and the cold facts are that there are not supplies available in this country for a free disposal of these alarm clocks.

In all the circumstances the Central Committee decided not to make application on behalf of our members.

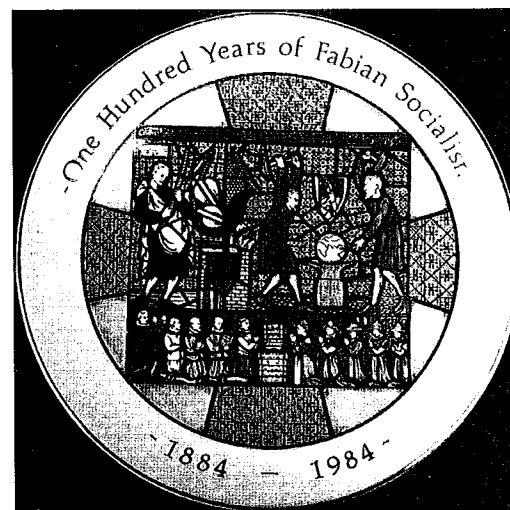
Yours faithfully

General Secretary



heavily rationed for civilians, during the 1939-45 War. This letter from the general secretary of the Amalgamated Weavers Union adds a new dimension.

This, not old but rather lovely, plate commemorating the centenary of the Fabian Society has been donated by Irene Orme. The image is a 1940 window featuring Shaw, Pease, Webb and the Executive. In the bottom left is H.G. Wells and bottom right Caroline Townsend, the designer.



librarian's lines

Did you see views of the Library on BBC1 on 27 March? In a programme about the 1972 building workers' strike, which led to the imprisonment of three workers for 'conspiracy to intimidate' whilst picketing, there was a filmed interview with Ricky Tomlinson in the Reading Room. The Library holds a great deal of archival material relating to this event, including the transcript of the first Shrewsbury Crown Court trial and the partial transcript of the Mold

Crown Court trials. The production company made extensive use of this material in the course of their research.

We are delighted to say that David Gerard's handwritten indexes, compiled by him ten years ago, to Plebs 1909-1969, Social Democrat 1897-1911, The British Socialist 1912-1913, and Labour Monthly 1921-1933, have been painstakingly typed up by volunteers Irene Orme and Barry Johnson. This means the indexes are now available to our readers in a searchable form. They give author and article title (author only, in the case of Plebs). Ultimately they will appear on our Web site.

Trade Union Support

Our trade union supporters continue to grow with 15 new branches and regions joining the growing list of our supporters. During the last quarter a grand total of £2,810 was received from the following unions; Amicus, Association of Educational Psychologists, CWU, FBU, GMB, NASUWT, NUJ, NUT, PCS, T&GWU, UCU, UNISON and four Trades Councils.

The library also sent a speaker along to the March meeting of UNISON's North West Regional Council in Preston and will be sending somebody to the June meeting of the North West Region of Amicus. If any branch, region or national body of a union want us to come along and tell you about the library we would be only too willing to oblige.

Henry Suss

We were very sorry indeed to hear of the death of Henry Suss, a comrade and longstanding supporter of the library. Henry, together with Ann who pre-deceased him by a number of years, belonged to those who recognised the importance and value of the library from very early days and gave it every support along the way.

His experience in the trade union and political movements over sixty years made him appreciate that a knowledge of the past is essential if we hope to build a more secure and better future.

Brought up in a Jewish family, he worked in the clothing industry as a skilled machinist. He played a part at all levels in the Tailor and Garment Workers' Union - but keeping his feet firmly on the ground as a shop steward.

He learnt politics the hard way during the 1930's when over thirty of his extended family lost their lives in concentration camps. To combat fascism, he joined the Communist Party and became active in the Theatre of Action.

After five years in the army in World War 2, he returned to civilian life to campaign against the housing situation in the slums of Salford. He served on the old Swinton & Pendlebury Council as a Communist Councillor from 1964 until boundary changes deprived him of his seat in 1967.


Following Ann's death he moved to Somerset to be closer to his eldest daughter Sali, but even with Iraq diminishing sight and hearing he continued campaigning to stop the war in Iraq and establish a peace and anti-war movement. He will be greatly missed. Our condolences to his family.

SWINTON and PENDLEBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL
ELECTIONS

MARKET WARD

THURSDAY, 10th MAY, 1962

Polling Hours - 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.



HENRY SUSS

TORY POLICY MEANS—
Higher Rents - Increased Rates
Fewer Council Houses - Few Schools
Overcrowded Classes - Insufficient Teachers

EVERY WORKING CLASS FAMILY IS FEELING
THE STING OF TORY ATTACKS

IT IS TIME FOR A CHANGE!

Where Henry Left Off

One of the ways that Henry used his skills to help the library was to make cotton (calico) covers to go over the banners when they are rolled onto tubes and stored. As part of our efforts to meet the conservation needs of our banner collection we are looking for someone with a sewing machine who could cut up and hem the pieces of calico, to take up the good work. If you are interested please contact us.

Shelf Life

Working Class Movement Library
51 The Crescent, Salford, M5 4WX