

workers' ACTION

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10p

Labour Conference

WHY IT WON'T BE ALL QUIET IN BLACKPOOL

A QUIET re-run of the Trades Union Congress: that was the original billing for this year's Labour Party conference in Blackpool.

Trade union cooperation and a pre-election "don't rock the boat" mood were to guarantee that for the Government.

But postponing the election has made it more likely that the anger over the Government's record which exists inside the labour movement will show itself. The national strike in Ford against the 5% limit gives that anger a focus.

At the conference there is not one resolution against wage control from a trade union, despite the TUC's formal opposition. There are, however, several from constituency Labour Parties.

An amendment from Bristol West CLP (to resolution 66 from Huyton CLP) puts the issue most forthrightly. It "calls for the rejection of Phase 4" and "opposes any new incomes policy or voluntary deal between the TUC leaders and the Government".

The amendment goes on to state that "trade unions can only represent their members' interests effectively by ensuring their independence from the state" and calls for a campaign in the labour movement for "an improvement in working class living standards and for safeguards to protect such improvements against inflation".

Other CLPs link their opposition to pay controls to a call for a national minimum wage. 20 CLPs raise the question of the minimum wage, some of them setting a figure of £70 a week and demanding the minimum wage be linked to the cost of living. A resolution from Colchester CLP also calls on the Government to nationalise any firm paying below a national minimum determined by the trade unions.

On this issue, there is only one trade union resolution, from NUPE. Although NUPE is currently running a public Low Pay campaign, its resolution sets no definite figure, does not mention wage controls, contains no demand for protection against inflation, and says nothing about action now.

Consistently, the trade union resolutions reflect the TUC mood of shutting up and bearing with the Government's policies until the elections. Even the TUC's proclaimed policies, against the 5% limit and for the 35 hour week, are not pushed hard.

This trade union attitude, with major block votes in the hands of right-wingers like Terry Duffy of the AUEW and David Basnett of the GMWU, is likely to block resolutions which could embarrass the Government too much.

continued on back page

FORDS: THE PAY CURBS STOP HERE

FORD UK made record profits of £246 million last year, and gave top manager Terry Beckett a rise from £30,000 to £55,000 a year. They pay their workers less than average wages for gruelling, mind-destroying work, with rotating shifts.

No wonder Ford workers struck spontaneously last Thursday, 21st, when they heard the bosses had offered no more than 5% plus a productivity deal.

The walk-out caught the union leaders off balance. On Thursday evening, they were still looking forward to a month of negotiations. On Friday the negotiators had to call for an all-out official strike.

The Ford workers' claim for £20 increase and a 35-hour week can be won. Although Ford's Europe-wide planning of their production gives them an advantage in fighting strikes, their stocks are low and Britain is their only source for some important items.

Ford can be forced to risk government sanctions. Their 25,000 sales each year to the Government — which could be cut off as a penalty for breaking the 5% limit — are only 4% of their British total.

In fact it is doubtful whether the Government would apply the sanctions if it came to

it. And rank and file opposition in the labour movement to the 5% limit is strong enough — if properly organised and mobilised — to force the Labour government to back down in an all-out confrontation with the Ford workers. Every group of workers that brings forward its own over-the-5% pay claim is helping both itself and the Ford workers.

The Ford bosses turned the 35-hour week demand down flat. But that can be won too. There is nothing fixed and natural about working 40 hours a week.

Leaders

The biggest danger for the Ford workers is treachery from their own union leaders. The union leaders' tactic will probably be to do just enough to keep at the head of the movement, but not enough to keep up the workers' confidence in their ability to win. Their friends in the Labour government will put tremendous pressure on these leaders to stamp on the struggle, supposedly for the sake of defending Labour against the Tories.

Ford workers will have to keep control of the strike in their own hands. Regular mass

meetings should take all decisions affecting the running of the strike, and vote on any proposed deals. They should demand that every Ford worker gets a copy of any deal to read the small print and discuss the implications before voting on it.

Shop stewards must liaise nationally to make sure that an organised unofficial leadership can take over if the official leadership sells out.

Ford shop stewards have already asked dockers to block all Ford imports. Contact should also be made with European Ford workers, to get their support and prevent the Ford bosses setting worker against worker.

Victory in this strike, both on the wages demand and on the 35-hour week, would be a tremendous step forward for the labour movement. It would give a lead for similar demands to be won by other workers, restoring living standards eroded since 1974-5 and drawing thousands of workers in off the dole queues.

It would be a stinging defeat for the right-wing policy of the Labour and TUC leaders, seriously weakening their hold on the labour movement and paving the way for them to be called to account and replaced.

FASCISTS WITH POLICE ESCORT INVADe THE EAST END

Tens of thousands of anti-fascists marched from Hyde Park to a Carnival in Brockwell Park on Sunday. But the National Front were still able to march in London and rampage through the East End. Report and analysis, pages 2-3.



ANOTHER HISTORIC MOVE... AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

MIDDLE EAST negotiations seem to be a stage on which the famous make "historic" gestures. While the credulous gasp and applaud at these moves — Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy, Nixon's visit to Egypt, Sadat's arrival in Jerusalem and Begin's in Ismailia, and now Carter's triumph at Camp David — the grim realities go on hardly changing.

Israel still does not recognise the Palestinians' right to self determination, and the latest agreement has gone no further than talk of the need to "recognise the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people"; it has not said what those rights are.

The same ambiguity runs through several other clauses. Both Egypt and Israel solemnly declare that they recognise UN resolution 242 (which demands Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory), yet it is well known that the two parties to the agreement interpret the resolution quite differently.

So what was the point of making the agreement?

From Egypt's point of view — or rather from the point of view of its ruling class — the territorial extension of Egypt to the whole of Sinai (captured by Israel in 1967) is important.

Trade with Israel will also open up certain economic opportunities for this class. Sadat himself seems to have bought himself at least a brief period of political stability just when pressure on him was mounting to show something in return for his sell-out trip to Jerusalem.

Begin has likewise strengthened himself. Since Sadat's visit there has been a lot of criticism of his failure to reciprocate with as grand a gesture as that of the Egyptian Premier.

Israel's capitalists will also benefit from the opening up of trade with Egypt.

The losers, again, as usual, are the Palestinians. Their rights go disregarded. Fancy plans are made to disguise the fact that Israel will still occupy the West Bank, the Golan Heights and Gaza, and that its troops and a strengthened police force will enforce that occupation.

Each new agreement — the Rogers Plan, the earlier Egypt-Israel negotiations — has brought a stepping up of Arab attacks on the Palestinians as the different regimes are tempted to "solve" the Palestinian problem themselves by annihilating or beheading the Palestinian movement.

The novel element in the Camp David agreement is the fact that the two halves of the agreement — "the search for Middle East peace" and "a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel" — are independent of each other. Only the second is of any importance anyway in the agreement, but the way the documents relate shows that the first open steps towards a bilateral rather than global agreement have been made.

Obviously Egypt, Israel and the US hope that having made this step they will be able to involve other Arab nations. So far the response has, happily, been almost entirely negative — though there can be no doubt that even the most vehemently "rejectionist" of the Arab regimes would be prepared to betray the Palestinians at the right price.

ANTI-NAZI LEAGUE BETRAYS THE

First things first: defend Brick Lane

LAST weekend the organisations of the black community in East London appealed to the labour movement for support in stopping a planned Nazi march on their area. Hundreds of socialists responded. But the leaderships of the Anti-Nazi League, the Socialist Workers' Party, and the International Marxist Group refused, in a way the SWP and IMG would have found unthinkable just a year ago.

Last week they said: "No, there's not much we can do, we've got a concert organised which mustn't be spoiled". The great battle of Lewisham last August had receded to another era.

On Sunday, the National Front celebrated its greatest triumph in years. Unchallenged and unmolested, they marched 1,500 strong through the City of London to Great Eastern Street in Shoreditch, "within spitting distance of Brick Lane", as NF leader Richard Verrall gloatingly put it.

There, opposite their new HQ, John Tyndall boasted to his followers that they had never been stronger and that there was nowhere in Britain where they could not march.

Divert

Meanwhile there were up to 100,000 at the Anti-Nazi League Carnival in Brockwell Park. But the 'anti-racist unity' there looked pretty sick with the Nazis marching through the East End.

Fortunately, Tyndall's boast was not entirely true. Mobilised by the Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee, some 1,000 anti-fascists dissuaded the police from attempting to take the Nazi march to its original destination in Redchurch Street — which leads into the top of Brick Lane itself.

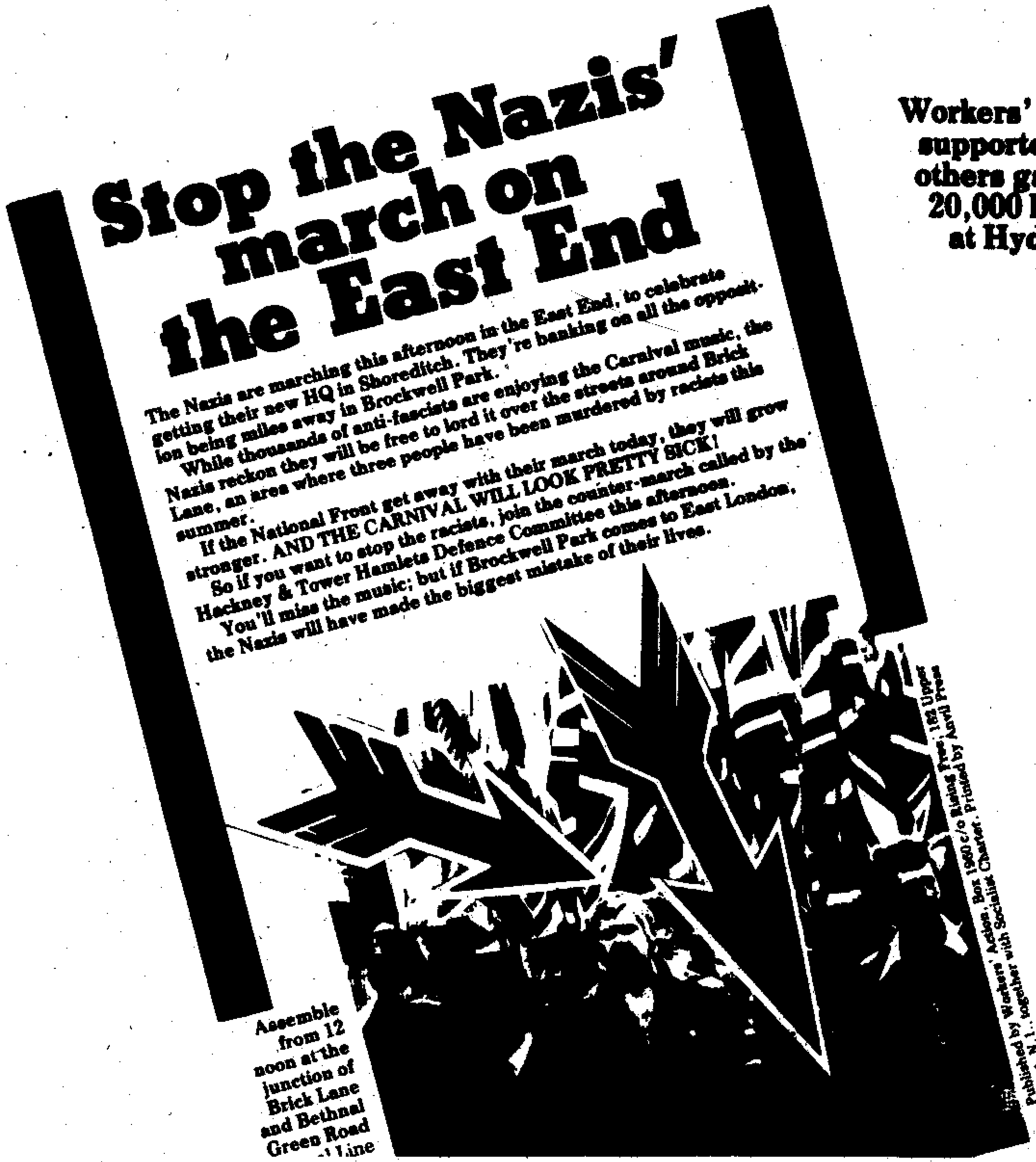
Largest among the contingents in defence of Brick Lane were Bengalis organised by the local youth movements; Workers' Action and the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory; and the Black Socialist Alliance. There were detachments from the smaller Trotskyist groups, together with the local membership of the Anti-Nazi League, the SWP, the IMG, the Communist Party and Militant.

The remainder of the Brick Lane defence was made up of groups and individuals from anti-racist committees and the socialist organisations (often without the approval of their leaders).

But these forces were not sufficiently cohesive and, crucially, *nothing like big enough to take the initiative.*

Already the Bengali community of Spitalfields is paying the price for this defeat. After the Nazi rally dispersed, groups of fascists began prowling the area. One gang of 50-60 thugs got through to Brick Lane and smashed up an Asian shop before being driven off. In several underground trains and stations, black people and anti-fascists were attacked by cock-a-hoop National Front bullies.

The hugely boosted morale of the Front will mean an escalation of racist assaults in the area and a renewed push to control the Sunday market in Brick Lane. That is the price of the fun and games in Brockwell Park.



Workers' Action supporters and others gave out 20,000 leaflets at Hyde Park

The responsibility for all this lies squarely on the shoulders of the Anti-Nazi League leadership, especially the SWP, the IMG and the Communist Party.

The ANL was given conclusive proof by *Searchlight* magazine of the NF's intended march a month ago, but chose to conceal the fact. It is not possible that the SWP leadership were ignorant of this news even then.

Less than two weeks before the event, *Workers' Action* and the *Workers' Power* group each came into possession of NF documents referring to their plans for a march.

When contacted about it, the ANL said (as late as Friday 15th) that they still had no reason to believe the documents were genuine; they were investigating, and would be meeting in the early part of the following week to 'assess the situation'.

The IMG asserted that in their view the Front march was a hoax, and that even if it were genuine, any attempt to mobilise people in defence of the East End would be a 'diversion from the Carnival'; if the ANL Steering Committee called for such a mobilisation, they would consider responding to it, but they would not argue in the ANL for such a step to be taken.

The following Tuesday, 19th, — after the ANL had promised to send its East London membership to defend Brick Lane — the IMG were still refusing to 'divert' their members.

Silent

Throughout this period the SWP was completely silent, as was the Communist Party.

The Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee reacted differently. Faced with proof of the Front's intentions and the news that Great Eastern Street was to be the site of the NF's new headquarters, the Defence Committee made three initial moves:

- * to demand of the ANL that they re-route their forces to the East End;
- * to call upon the Home Secretary to ban the NF march;
- * and to arrange for Patrick Kodikara, Chairperson of the Defence Committee, to appear on

television calling for a counter-demonstration.

The demand for a state ban was wrong, and could have been very damaging if it had been conceded. For this the Defence Committee was criticised by ourselves and others. But the crucial call for a counter-demonstration in defence of the Asians of East London had been made.

The Defence Committee immediately began organising support in and out of London.

The clear, simple and elementary duty of all socialists was to give unconditional support to that call. What happened was very different.

The SWP, the IMG and the CP all used their press to urge anti-fascists from outside the East End to stay away. According to them, the ANL's plan to send its East London supporters to Brick Lane was quite enough. In the event, the ANL's call for mobilisation by East Londoners was *worse than doing nothing*; it lulled anti-fascists from outside the area with the assurance that the NF would be adequately opposed, while actually drawing only a few hundred to Brick Lane.

In an attempt to break the wall of silence, the Defence Committee called a press conference on Wednesday afternoon to assert that, with or without the ANL, a counter-demonstration would try to stop the fascists from reaching East London. And a spokesperson from the *Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory* announced that it was organising a national mobilisation for Brick Lane.

Duped

In the following days ANL, SWP, IMG and CP members — inside and outside the Defence Committee — strained every muscle to prevent an effective response to the fascists. Facing intense hostility from Bengalis — and in some cases quite hysterically torn between following the line of their organisations and trying to retain some slight respect in the East End — they had shifted by the time of the stewards' meeting on Saturday

evening. The local SWP organiser promised that the ANL would after all divert 'many thousands' of supporters from Hyde Park to Brick Lane. It seems possible that he was himself duped by the ANL leadership.

On Sunday, *Workers' Action* and SCLV supporters leafleted coaches and trains on their way to the Carnival, sometimes (for example on the Cardiff train) threatened with physical violence by SWP members, denounced as 'wreckers' and 'agents provocateurs'. In Hyde Park we distributed 20,000 leaflets calling for the defence of the East End.

Faced with these attempts to alert the Carnival crowds to the urgent task in the East End, Paul Holborow (a member of the ANL Steering Committee and a leader of the SWP) announced from the platform that Brick Lane was in no danger and that the police had given assurances on the question. Ernie Roberts and Arthur Scargill echoed the message: don't go, we don't want the Carnival split by 'Nazi provocation'.

Only after it was far too late — after the Nazis had held their rally, after the anti-fascists had been obliged to retire to Brick Lane, and after a phalanx of Nazi bullies had been able to mount an attack on Brick Lane — did ANL demonstrators come in large numbers to the East End.

They were sent home by the Defence Committee stewards, while the Bengalis themselves organised defence squads to patrol the area.

Defiant

The ANL leadership last Sunday committed a massive act of conscious betrayal against the black people whose cause they claim to champion. The size of the Carnival does not diminish, but rather underlines their treachery. What could have been a tremendous victory for anti-fascism, with every street crossing into the East End held, was forced to be a defiant but inadequate showing at one street corner, while the fascists marched and rallied with impunity.

Militant anti-fascists in the SWP, the IMG and the Communist Party can hardly fail to draw their conclusions from these events. We urge them to enter serious discussions with us. And together with all anti-fascists, they should join with us in demanding an emergency recall conference of the ANL to condemn the lies and treachery of the ANL leadership, and to kick them out along with their bourgeois-liberal allies.

Such a conference should demand to democratically elect a new Steering Committee. And it should adopt for the ANL a principled political basis to include these points:

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

FIGHT AGAINST THE NATIONAL FRONT

THE RECORD SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

THE ANTI-NAZI League has organised tens of thousands against fascism. But September 24th proved that it has also cut the numbers actively striving to drive the Nazis off the streets from 3,000 at Lewisham last August and Haringey last April to a bare thousand last weekend.

Since Lewisham and Haringey, anti-fascist militancy in the labour movement (and especially among working-class youth, both black and white) has not stopped growing. Last weekend, the ANL diverted that militancy away from the scene of real conflict, to a set-piece Carnival.

Socialists in the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party and the International Marxist Group provided the 'justifications' for that diversion — with arguments whose wretchedness reflects the shame they must have felt.

"Don't spoil the Carnival", was the first major argument for not mobilising on a large scale for East London. "The Nazis hope this will foster confusion and disruption to the Carnival by sending us on wild goose chases all over London looking for them", said ANL Secretary and SWP member Paul Holborrow. "Any attempt to divide the march and disrupt the ANL Carnival at Hyde Park would be totally counter-productive" said the IMG.

Imagine what the SWP and the IMG would say if the Communist Party refused to mobilise for anti-fascist resistance because of some festival, concert or rally it had planned! Yet they were preaching just the same passive approach.

Logic

They argued that the logic of switching mobilisation for the 24th to East London would be that the NF could disrupt any ANL carnival or rally just by calling a march on the same day. It's an argument which makes more sense if it is turned round. Unless you are prepared to switch mobilisations, then the NF can march (and riot through East London) with minimum opposition, just by choosing the same date as an ANL gathering! And the ANL festival continues, 'unspoiled', while exultant fascists are chasing after black people and socialists just a few miles away!

The way to stop the NF spoiling carnivals — and, what is much more important, to stop it rampaging through areas like Brick Lane — is to destroy its strength.

The other argument was that the thousands on the Carnival were very new to politics, they needed to learn more politically, and they were not yet ready for confronting the Nazis on the streets. But don't people learn more quickly in struggle than from speeches and songs?

Wouldn't those people have been more ready to go to the East End if the SWP and the IMG (let alone the ANL) had energetically called on them to go, instead of telling them, misleadingly, that everything was under control and that the ANL had "assurances from the police" (as if that were anything to rely

NF = NO FUN ANL = NO FIGHT

on)? Wouldn't their political education have been advanced if the ANL had called for direct action to stop the NF instead of a police ban, or if at least the SWP and IMG had done so?

Even 5 or 10% of the Brockwell Park crowd would have made a crucial difference in East London. Was it really impossible to mobilise those numbers?

The truth is that September 24th was the day when the cut-price anti-fascism of the ANL showed its inadequacy for all to see.

The racist press campaign in the summer of 1976 gave a big boost to the NF. But the anti-fascist movement also gained new forces. At Haringey and Lewisham, and in smaller struggles, it checked and rolled back the NF's gains.

The State began to see the growing anti-fascist movement as a much more serious problem than the NF. In Hyde, on October 8th last year, the police banned all processions — and then supplied 2,000 cops to escort Martin Webster through Hyde, while another 5,000 guarded a NF march outside the ban area.

Worried by the police clampdown, and by the disgusting press campaign against them as 'red fascists', the SWP — who had been a leading force at Lewisham, and proud of it — changed tack. They helped set up the Anti-Nazi League as a more broadly-based, respectable, anti-fascist movement.

The concern to avoid isolation in ultra-militancy was legitimate. But Neil Kinnock MP's remarks, when the ANL was set up, about it being "an

alternative to street fighting", already showed the danger: the SWP was leading the anti-fascist movement into a framework confining it to what was acceptable to the State.

When (in February this year) the police again imposed a ban on marches — this time for two months, and covering the whole of London — the SWP's Paul Holborrow acted as spokesman for the ANL's approval of the ban.

The IMG at that time kept up a critical attitude to the ANL, questioning its lack of democratic structure and its role in approving and policing the February ban. After the huge Carnival on April 30th, however, all criticism vanished. Since then the IMG have been even more eager apologists for the ANL than the SWP.

The IMG were bowled over by the numbers on the Carnival. They failed to recognise that the mass support would not be an effective force to crush fascism as long as it was kept within the limits of state-licensed anti-fascism, limits which the sponsoring liberal celebrities acted as 'guarantors' for within the ANL.

Yet the fact that the NF were able to march in London, free of all opposition, on the day after the Carnival, despite the fact that the ANL had advance warning of the NF's plans, was indication enough.

The ANL has boomed with the help of the 'official' anti-fascism represented by the Daily Mirror, the News of the World, and World in Action. The problem is that socialists in the SWP and the IMG have ducked the problem of hardening out effective, class-conscious, militant anti-fascism from that vague anti-Nazi mood; and they have actively opposed those, like Workers' Action, who have tried to tackle the problem.

Policy

The ANL has no policy for denying fascists a platform, no policy on supporting black self-defence, no policy for workers' self-defence, and no policy against immigration controls. It is generally "against the Nazis", but has no definite policy on how to stop them, other than giving out leaflets, building the ANL... and calling for police bans.

In the last analysis, therefore, the ANL, with its present leadership and policy, will fail to stop the Nazis for the same reason that the Race Relations Acts and the whole 'race relations industry' will. The fascists are a class-struggle problem, which demands a class-struggle response. The fact that the ANL had the official Tory student organisation supporting it until very recently says a great deal about how the ANL measures up to that demand.

Several local ANL groups have adopted a fighting policy against the NF. Now is the time for them to be joined by others, and to link up, forming the framework of a new anti-fascist movement which will rise on the ruins of the cut-price politics of the ANL.



Lewisham, August 1977. Afterwards, the SWP wrote: "The NF are Nazis — and there's only one way to deal with them... Every successful march, every successful attack on black people, builds up the mood of exhilaration that stops their followers seeking for the real causes of their despair... To those who denounce us, we say: If you had been in Germany in 1933, and you knew then what you know now about the Nazis, would you have sat at home and waited for reason to prevail?" Or danced in Brockwell Park?

After the march, the assaults

Young thugs who had been on the National Front's march to the East End attacked Brick Lane on Sunday, as the thousand or so anti-fascists who had tried to stop their march began to disperse.

A gang of 50-60 rampaged into the predominantly Asian Chicksand Estate, just off Brick Lane, at about 5.30, and smashed up an Asian shop.

As local Asians and anti-fascists still in Brick Lane moved to stop the racists, the police sealed off the roads leading into the estate — giving the fascists a free hand to carry out their attack.

Asians came out of their houses, quickly shut their shops, and confronted the invaders, who were soon driven off in a hail of milk bottles and bricks. The racist thugs were chased all the way to Whitechapel underground station before a single policeman was seen: they were busy keeping the anti-fascists cooped up in Brick Lane!

The fascists were briefly

stopped, and then allowed to go on their way. There were no arrests. But when the people who had chased them off got back to Brick Lane, it was a different story. As we arrived back, 7 police vans were waiting. We were stopped, asked where we were going, and told to "keep off the streets if you don't like it". Many people were searched.

Some Asian youngsters were stopped, searched and questioned four times on a 200-yard walk back through the Chicksand Estate.

Anti-racists were told: "Get lost, you're not wanted here, you don't belong here".

As always, it was very clear whose side the police were on. They had let the attackers in though the area was still swarming with police, and left them to get away.

For the people who came out to defend their homes and shops, to protect young children and old men from the murderous gangs, the police had only harassment and insults.

THE ANTI-Nazi League's first big activity was opposition to the National Front candidacy in the Ilford by-election, in February.

When the NF called a march in Ilford, the police and the Home Secretary imposed a two-month ban on all marches in London. Despite the fact that this was a major blow to the democratic rights of the labour movement (and Leeds Trades Council was to have a demonstration dispersed by police in April, under a similar ban), the ANL hailed this as a victory.

It was Paul Holborrow, ANL Secretary and a member of the SWP, who declared: "There is no doubt that it [the ban] is a victory". We commented:

"March separately, strike together" is the traditional slogan of the united front. But the ANL is the opposite. The SWP march under the banner of the liberals; but when it comes to striking against the fascists, the SWP are left on their own or are held back by their liberal allies".

After the ANL Carnival at the end of April, we said:

"80,000 on the streets against the Nazis is a tremendous step forward. 80,000 on the streets, but fed with the idea that show unity with liberal celebrities, without clear aims or decisive action, is the way to stop the fascists: that's a recipe for misleading, demoralising and dissipating the thousands of young workers who are now prepared to fight the Front".

The ANL had done nothing about a NF march in London the following day.

"As they addressed Sunday's massive crowd of anti-fascists, one announcement would have wiped the Front march out of existence. But they allowed it to go ahead.

Why? Because they were afraid to blow apart the shaky alliance which has put the ANL together. Unleashing even a section of their following against the Nazis they so eloquently denounce would have sent the bishops, the celebrities, and many MPs scurrying".

In July the ANL held its first conference. Workers' Action supporters fought for the ANL to adopt policies including no platform for fascists, no immigration controls, and support for black self-defence.

"But wouldn't the ANL lose support if it accepted the sort of platform we advocate? Certainly it would lose the support of people like Syd Bidwell MP, a sponsor of the ANL and a signatory of the Commons Select Committee's racist recommendations on immigration and settlement. No doubt others would go too... But it would not deter those who really do want to fight fascism and racism; on the contrary, it would strengthen their fight".

Then: "At the conference there were many militant speeches. Yet the indications are that the ANL, while responding, in a limited way, to the needs of the struggle, will continue to try to keep its stance ambiguous enough to retain its star-studded sponsor list of bishops, professors, and young Tories".

September 24th was to provide the sad confirmation...

HANOI JOINS HANDS WITH THAI DICTATOR

International Notes

IN May 1975, after their victory over American imperialism, the Vietnamese Communist Party issued a call to the peoples of South East Asia to "seize the opportunity" to extend the struggle.

In the three years since then, their policy has changed sharply.

On 10th September the Vietnamese prime minister, Pham Van Dong, announced that Vietnam would cut off aid to the guerilla forces fighting against the military dictatorship in Thailand.

A joint communique of the Vietnamese and Thai governments committed both governments to abstain from "interference in each other's internal affairs, direct or indirect subversion of each other, or recourse to force or the threat of force against each other". Asked whether this meant that Hanoi would no longer support the guerillas, Pham Van Dong replied: "I want to make it quite clear that that is the case..."

The guerilla struggle has been carried on for 13 years by the Thai

Communist Party, with substantial Vietnamese support. But the Thai CP is firmly Maoist, and has backed China in the recent disputes between China and Vietnam.

The Vietnamese government's turn has also been expressed in its switch from condemnation to friendship with the ASEAN alliance ('Association of South-East Asian Nations', grouping the right-wing and pro-imperialist governments of Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines).

The major factor behind this turn is Vietnam's terrible economic difficulties. Large parts of the country are still devastated by American bombing and chemical warfare. Military spending still weighs heavily on the economy because of the conflicts with Cambodia and China. On top of that, weather conditions have been bad or disastrous for the rice crop — Vietnam's basic food supply — in three successive years, 1976, 1977 and now 1978.

The Vietnamese government's

response to these difficulties has been the traditional bureaucratic one of trying to curry favour with imperialism, rather than appealing to international working class solidarity.

Any advantage which the Vietnamese workers and peasants may get from Pham Van Dong's deal with the Thai government is entirely outweighed by the boost given to that bloody regime.

The present military ruler, General Kriangsak, has the reputation of being more liberal than his predecessor, Tanin Kraivixien, whom he overthrew in a coup last October. He is the chosen man of the Pentagon and the CIA, more subtle in his tactics than the extreme right-winger Tanin.

Yet the generals around Kriangsak are exactly the same people who put Tanin in power in October 1976, after an atrocious massacre of students at Thammasat University.

RHODRI EVANS



All is forgiven: Pham Van Dong arm-in-arm with Kriangsak

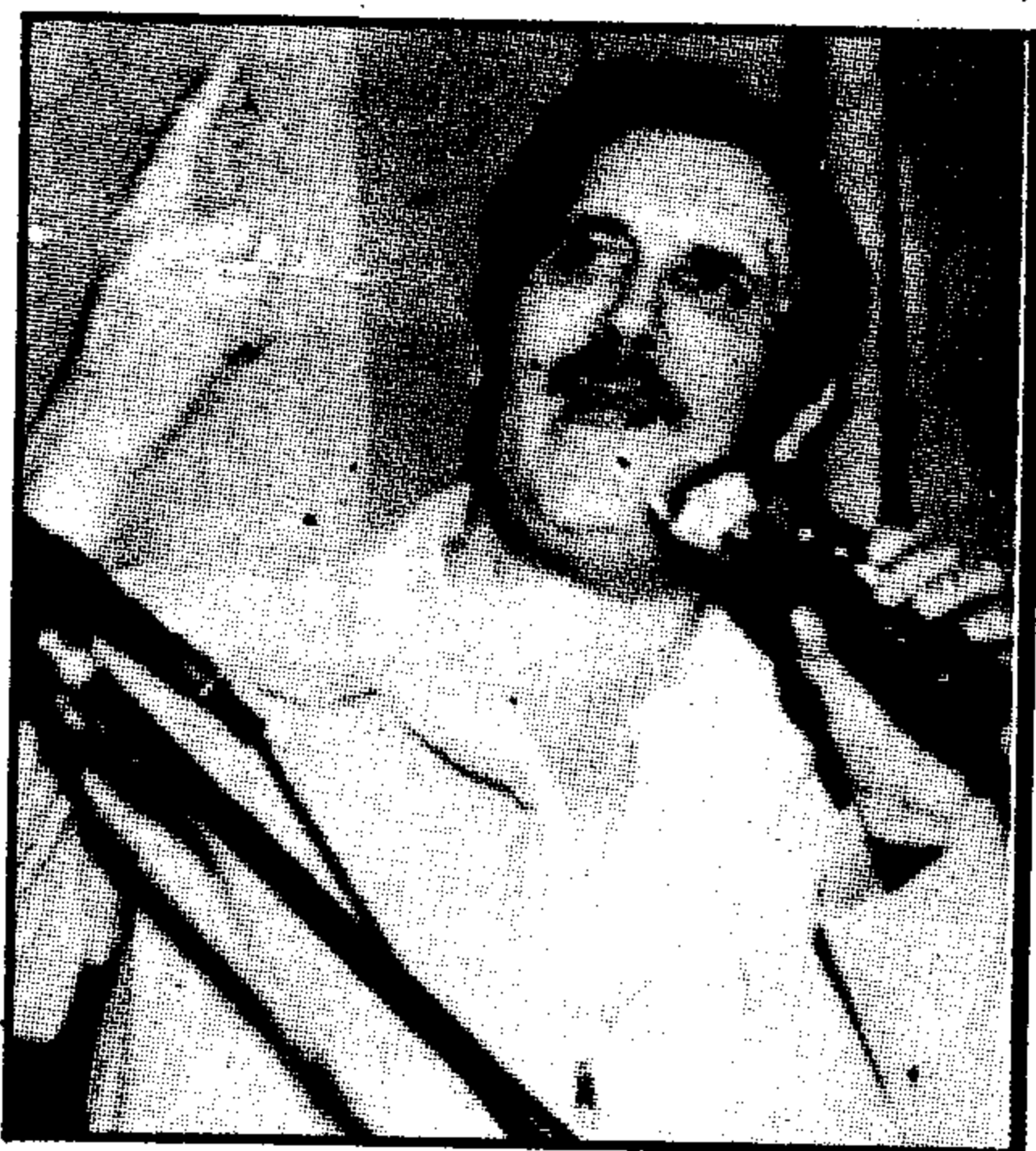
MORENO AND STRASBERG ARE FREE

After four weeks' jail in Brazil, the Argentine Trotskyists Nahuel Moreno and Rita Strasberg have been released.

After they were arrested, on 22nd August, there were grave fears that they might be deported to Argentina — where, since the military coup in 1976, thousands of left-wingers have 'disappeared' in

the hands of the police. An international campaign to save them was launched. In Britain, there was a picket on the Brazilian Embassy on Monday 18th September.

That campaign has succeeded. But eight of the Brazilian socialist students arrested together with Moreno and Strasberg are still in jail.



Nahuel Moreno — freed by an international campaign

Namibia — SWAPO says the war must go on

Last Wednesday (Sept. 20th) John Vorster resigned as South Africa's Premier 'for health reasons'.

At the same time, he announced the Apartheid government's rejection of the modified United Nations proposals for Namibia's transition to independence. The South African government will hold its own elections in Namibia — using rigged electoral registers and the presence of South African troops to ensure an outcome favourable to the national liberation movement, SWAPO.

According to Vorster the recent report on Namibia by UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim differed

from the previous plan agreed to by South Africa on two main points.

Vorster claims that in discussion no figure above 3000 troops for the UN force to supervise the transition had been mentioned. The 7,500-strong force proposed by Waldheim was too big, and Vorster claimed it would be virtually an army of occupation (though South Africa has many more troops than that in the country).

Vorster also objected to the UN introducing a civilian police force. He claimed that had never been mentioned during the discussions with the USA, Britain, West Germany, France and Canada.

He also raised objections over

the lack of consultation between the UN and the South African-appointed Administrator-General of Namibia, Mr. Justice Steyn, on these issues and on the date of elections.

Vorster claimed hypocritically that it was not for the UN "to delay the process leading to self-determination and independence", while at the same time he reaffirmed South Africa's intention to hang on to Namibia's deep sea port at Walvis Bay.

SWAPO officials in Lusaka commented that Vorster's decision "leaves us with little option but to step up the war".

RECOMMENDED for the Nobel Peace Prize by the Quakers; taken up as official policy by the TGWU and the AUEW; approved by the Government; applauded by the Fabians; hailed by some on the revolutionary left [like Socialist Challenge] as a key to the fight against unemployment; and even welcomed by the conservative management journal, 'The Engineer'.

The Lucas Aerospace shop stewards' Alternative Plan is not lacking in support.

Yet the Lucas bosses have not shifted an inch from their refusal even to negotiate with the shop stewards' committee on the Plan. In fact, they have gone on the offensive, announcing plans for 2,000 redundancies and threatening Mike Cooley, a leading member of the combine committee, with the sack. The unions which officially approve the shop stewards' plan are quietly going along with the bosses.

Why?

What is missing from the shop stewards' Alternative Plan is a strategy to enforce the "right to useful work" which it argues for. The resulting lack of bite helps to make it so widely acceptable ... and so easily squashed.

No-one should mourn too much about the damage done to the fond illusions of Quakers and Fabians who see the Lucas Aerospace Alternative Plan as pointing a peaceful way to socialism. But the Alternative Plan has been a focus for the hopes and aspirations of Lucas workers too.

In Burnley and in Luton, hundreds of workers attended open meetings on the plan organised by the Lucas Aerospace shop stewards. The stewards themselves see their plan as a major attempt to extend workers' demands into new areas: "we ... are attempting to transcend the narrow economism which has characterised trade union activity in the past and are extending our demands to the extent of questioning the products on which we work and the way in which we work upon them."

Power

At present Lucas Aerospace is the world's leading producer of aircraft components and electrical equipment. This market is, however, declining. Moreover, 50% of Lucas Aerospace production is for military purposes, and the shop stewards regard cuts in military spending as desirable.

The Plan therefore proposes a range of alternative products to partially replace Lucas Aerospace's present products. It has caught the imagination of many workers because the Plan has shown the tremendous creative power that lies in the hands of the working class, equipped with modern science and technology.

"It seemed absurd to us" writes Mike Cooley, "that we had all this skill and knowledge and facilities and that society urgently needed equipment and services which we could provide, and yet the market economy seemed incapable of linking the two."

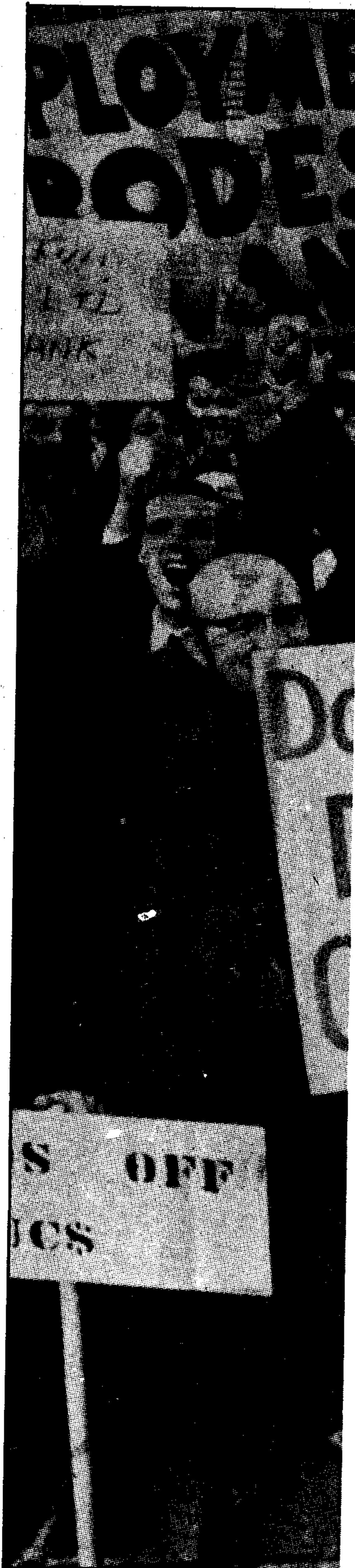
One of the ideas is to produce more kidney machines. At present, 3,000 die each year in Britain because they cannot get a kidney machine. There are not enough to go round, and the doctors and hospital administrators decide which patients should be left to die.

Another idea is a hybrid power pack, combining an internal combustion engine and an electric motor. It would be more economical, less polluting, and quieter than present car engines.

Cogs

The Lucas shop stewards have also outlined plans for a new road/rail vehicle which "could provide the basis for a truly integrated, cheap, effective public transport system" and would make railway track-laying much cheaper. Radar-linked braking systems, another element in the Plan, could significantly cut road casualties.

A whole range of new technological development proposed in the



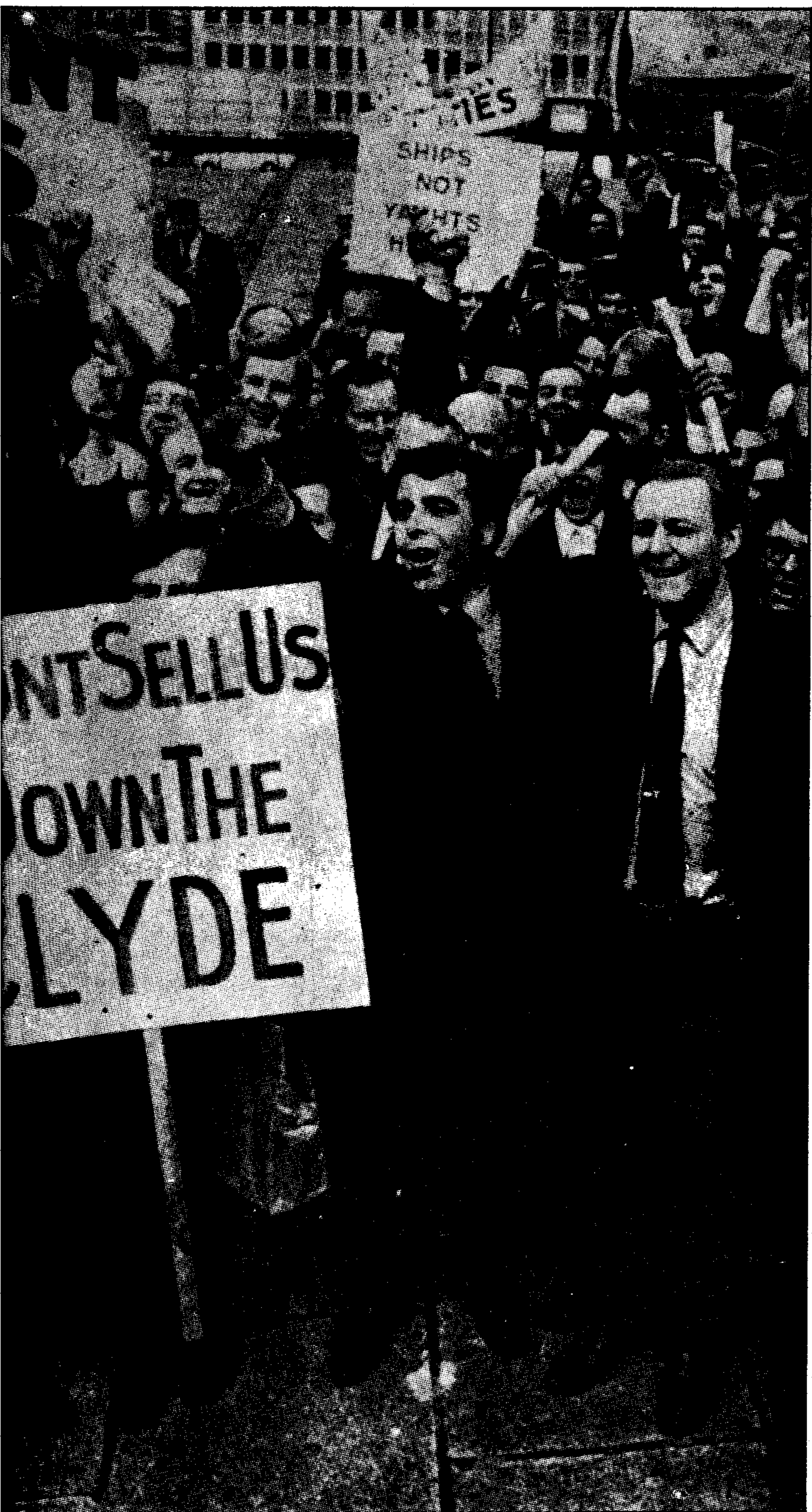
Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, 1 builds up his reputation as a

Alternative Plan is remote-control equipment which would automine or fire-fighting with wastefully pushing aside hur skill and intelligence in the that robot-type equipment does.

The Alternative Plan also poses a big expansion of re-train and part-time education for Lu workers, and a change in job organisation towards more teamwork, less hierarchical division.

The Plan gives a glimpse of workers' power could mean. I under capitalism, all cre power seems to be in the hand: capital. Ford introduces a car; Lucas produces advanced craft equipment; ICI manufacture chemicals. The workers appear as cogs in the product process; indeed, the more advanced and creative technology comes under capitalism, the more the worker's job is made a mind and oppressive routine. As M put it, "All the means for developing production are transformed i

LUCAS: WHAT'S MISSING IN THE WORKERS' PLAN



1: Wedgwood Benn supporter of workers' control. The origin of the Lucas Aerospace Plan was closely linked to Benn's idea of planning agreements.

will have to be taken to ensure that the Company does not succeed in drawing off the 'money spinners' from the Plan... whilst declining those products which would be socially useful." They argue firmly against getting involved in "worker participation" or "worker director" schemes.

In its origins, the Alternative Plan was closely linked to the Labour Party's idea of "planning agreements".

The shop stewards record that "the idea of preparing an overall Corporate Plan for Lucas Aerospace arose in the first instance at a meeting in November 1974 with Tony Benn, the then Minister of Industry... Mr. Benn suggested that there was the distinct possibility of further cut-backs in certain aerospace and military projects... He felt that the Combine Committee would be well advised to consider alternative products."

As Dr. David Elliott, a technical adviser to the shop stewards' committee, describes it the stewards' "idea was to devise a complete programme of alternative technological development which they would present to the government, hoping to attract financial support for its implementation. The plan would then be negotiated with management through the conventional collective bargaining process."

Help

However, Mike Cooley reports that "We have of course approached the Government and we have had every sympathy short of actual help". Planning agreements have come to nothing, in the same way as all other schemes for introducing socialism through gentle and gradual steps.

This has led the shop stewards to adopt a more self-reliant attitude. Indeed, they do not even call for the nationalisation of Lucas Aerospace.

The Labour Government has shown that it is unwilling or unable to interfere with the Lucas bosses' jealous insistence on their authority and their untrammelled pursuit of profit. But if the company is unyielding and the Government won't help, what then?

In the Plan there is no answer to this problem, beyond the general recognition that it is a question of class struggle. This gap leads to serious weaknesses in the Plan itself.

Although an 11-page summary has been produced, the full Plan consists of six volumes of over 200 pages each. Scientists at North East London Poly who cooperate with the combine committee are even working on "computer-based alternative plan models".

When the detailed planning has reached this scale, you have to ask: who is it meant to convince? The Lucas bosses have shown they are not interested in the Plan, except perhaps to plunder it for a few profitable ideas. The trade union leaders and the Labour ministers have shown that they will offer "every sympathy short of actual help". For the Lucas workers themselves — who surely must be seen as the driving force for the implementation of any anti-capitalist plan — multi-volumed technical reports or sophisticated computer programmes cannot very well serve as ringing appeals to battle!

Lacking a clear class struggle strategy, the Plan tends to fall into

appeals to general, classless, anonymous "social responsibility" and "social auditing". The shop stewards recognise that "social auditing" is in effect just "long-term profit-making" plus fine words, but they then go on to argue against redundancies in precisely those terms of cost/benefit for "society as a whole" — as if that were meaningful in a society divided into hostile classes.

Sometimes they talk in very vague terms about the national interest, even giving advice to Lucas on how to outdo foreign competitors.

In discussing the specific new



When Lucas Aerospace shop steward Mike Cooley [top] was threatened with the sack because of his work on the Alternative Plan, his union's general secretary, Ken Gill [above], offered no support — despite the fact that the union has endorsed the Plan.

products recommended, the shop stewards often lapse into plain market advice for the bosses.

"Process plants and equipment manufacturers are missing out to overseas companies on much of the North Sea Oil work"... "Oceanics provides a very important long term outlet for Lucas Aerospace... We are in a unique position to provide total systems for ... this field" ... "There is a vast market available to Lucas if it adopts an imaginative approach to this problem" (of braking systems).

This sort of lapse is the result of trying to formulate a "workers' plan" for a single corporation within the framework of a capitalist market economy. Capitalist market relations, based on money-making, competition, and profit, are not simply prejudices in people's minds — they are the essential linking and regulating mechanism for the division of labour in present day society.

A different mechanism is possible: socialist planning of production for need. But socialist planning presupposes centralised workers' power at least on a national scale (and on an international scale, too, for its full development) in order to get even a beginning of objective

and systematic measurement of social needs.

The shop stewards end up with an uneasy compromise, trying to persuade Lucas that it can serve both Humanity and Mammon. Half the projects proposed are recommended as profitable, the other half as socially useful if not profitable; and the combine committee concedes that "whether we like it or not" a large part of Lucas Aerospace production will continue on present lines.

The Alternative Plan constantly falls between the two stools of 'realistic' proposals to the Lucas bosses, and uncompromisingly socialist proposals which could be realised by throwing out the bosses.

It is easy to see, then, why the Alternative Plan is so popular with people who are always on the lookout for ways to improve the workers' lot without inconveniencing the bourgeoisie too much. The shop stewards' appeal for the "right to useful work" deserves, however, a better fate than radical chic patronage and bureaucratic dissipation.

Bite

To give real bite to the radical working class aspirations expressed in the Alternative Plan, it has to be linked to the question of power. In electrical component manufacture as in the building industry, the obstacle to saving jobs and making products which workers see as needed is not lack of detail in the technical specifications of the products, but the power of Capital and the capitalist market.

To carry forward the struggle against that power, the Lucas Aerospace workers must demand the nationalisation without compensation of the firm, forcing the state to finance it whether it is profitable or not, and the right of workers' control over production, manning, job organisation and training.

It is indeed a political question. The struggle for this workers' control can be begun now, without "waiting for the revolution" — but a serious victory would mean a major breach in capitalist power, which could not be sustained in a stable way without overthrowing the bosses' state power altogether. The Lucas Aerospace workers have mobilised tremendous talent and creativity in showing how technology could be redirected. That talent and creativity, if properly directed, organised, and led, would be more than sufficient to the vital task of kicking out the small super-wealthy minority that runs society today. And that would make it possible for alternative plans like the Lucas one in every industry.

That requires a reorientation. The time spent on working out the last technical details of the Alternative Plan projects needs to be spent on developing the rank and file organisation of Lucas Aerospace workers and strengthening their links with other workers. The reasoned replies to the bosses need to get real force behind them.

Fight

The Lucas shop stewards oppose the profit system. Yet in their plan they are careful to introduce a quota of profitable projects. It looks like a sensible compromise. But in return for making the stewards look 'responsible' in the eyes of bourgeois well-wishers, it blunts their appeal to the Lucas workers.

In the place of clear-cut class slogans, it substitutes a detailed argument about what is and is not viable within the limits of the capitalist market. And the more the Plan is separated from the revolutionary struggle for workers' power, the more it can actually become a consoling diversion from the fight for jobs and for workers' control.

As the Lucas shop stewards say, "There cannot be 'industrial democracy' until there is a real shift in power to the workers themselves". Nor can there be workers' planning without workers' power. The struggle for workers' control can and must be started now — but it must be armed with a clear understanding that it will be victorious only as a struggle for workers' power.

COLIN FOSTER

means of domination over and exploitation of the producer".

The profit system leads to immense waste. As Mike Cooley points out, "We have a level of technological sophistication such that we can design and produce Concorde, yet in the same society we cannot provide enough simple heating systems to protect old age pensioners from hypothermia..."

Moral

"We have senior automotive engineers who sit in front of computerised visual display units working (on) car bodies such that they are aerodynamically stable at 120 miles an hour, when the average speed of traffic through New York is 6.2 miles an hour".

The Lucas Aerospace shop stewards have challenged the notion that all this is natural and unchangeable. But they say them-

selves, "moral arguments will certainly not change the situation". They are, in fact, much more honestly aware of the limitations of the Plan than are many of their well-wishers.

"There can be no islands of responsibility and concern in the sea of irresponsibility and depravity. Our intentions are much more modest, namely to make a humble start to question these assumptions and to make a small contribution to demonstrating that workers are prepared to press for the right to work in products which actually help to solve human problems rather than create them..."

"Progress can only be minimal so long as our society is based on the assumption that profits come first and people come last. Thus the question is a political one, whether we like it or not."

And they recognise the dangers of the Plan project becoming just a cheap annexe to Lucas' design department. "The greatest care

ACCORDING TO recent reports by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], covering 24 leading capitalist countries, the world economy is now slowing down and shows signs of moving into recession sometime in 1979.

Since the recession of 1974-75, there has been an upswing. By the standards of the 1950s (where world industrial production increased by 55%) and the 1960s (where an overall 20% increase was reached) it has been extremely moderate. Although industrial production in the 24 OECD grew by 12.7% over the three years 1975-77, the 1977 production level was only 3.3% higher than the 1974 high point.

The OECD unemployment level averages 5 1/4%, the highest it has ever been in a 'boom' period since World War Two. World trade grew by only 5% in 1977 after rising 14% in 1976, and the current rate of increase is 4%.

The general economic upswing since 1975 has been kept going largely through "reflationary" measures by the US government. The US government has run up big deficits — in excess of 10% of the Gross National Product — spending far more than it received in taxes.

Slack

The artificial extra demand created in this way has stimulated increased production — but at a cost. The US economy has been on the up for nearly 3 1/2 years, growing faster than most of its advanced capitalist rivals, but at the price of rapid inflation.

The growth itself has been very limited. Most of it has been 'taking up the slack'; US industry is now running at about 84% capacity, as against 70% at the low point in 1975. Industrial production in only 6% above its previous peak, in 1973, and to date gross private fixed investment has not reached the 1973 figure again.

Unemployment stands at 5.7% of the workforce (5.76 million). Among the black workforce, 12% are unemployed; among black teenage workers, 37%.

To stop unemployment increasing beyond this level, there will have to be a real annual growth of 4% in coming years. No-one is prepared to hold out such an optimistic view.

Fundamentally, the USA's problems are the same as those of the rest of the West. OECD sources estimate that, to prevent rising unemployment, real annual economic growth for the 24 OECD countries would have to run at 4 1/2%, compared with an average annual growth of 1.9% in the 1970s. Thus the prospects for coming years, even in economic upturns, is for a generally growing reserve army of unemployed.

As the German, Japanese and French representatives made clear at the July World Economic Summit in Bonn, the major problems of the world economy are structural and cannot be solved by juggling with state financial policies. At the heart of the matter is the declining rate of profit which has reasserted itself so drastically since the late sixties.

Without significant restructuring, stepping up the increase in the rate of exploitation of the workforce and thus boosting profitability and hiking up capital accumulation, economic growth is likely to stay anaemic and precarious for the foreseeable future.

The paring down of the "welfare state", increased state underwriting of accelerated depreciation of plant together with new investment, and wage controls, have been the capitalists' responses. But they have all been woefully inadequate.

Within this general picture of stagnation, the relative disparities in economic strength and the divergences in interests between

The decline and fall of the Dollar Empire

the major capitalist powers assert themselves, adding to the general problems. The recent rapid devaluation of the US dollar epitomises this.

Capitalist world trade demands the existence of world money — a universally recognised measure of value and means of payment. Gold used to fulfill that function. Under the Bretton Woods agreement of 1944, the dollar was supposed to replace gold.

Gold has value as a product of human labour. The dollar is merely a token. For it to function as the world reserve currency, all other capitalist states have to have sufficient confidence in the US capitalist state to accept its paper money as payment for their goods.

In the late '60s the overwhelming strength and dominance of US capitalism which had made that confidence possible began to break down. In 1972 the Bretton Woods agreement collapsed. The dollar was cut adrift from a fixed gold standard, and exchange rates between currencies, relatively fixed under Bretton Woods, were allowed to 'float'.

Yet no new world monetary set-up has been established, and the dollar remains the major reserve currency. Thus there are serious tensions between the demands of managing the US economy and of managing the dollar as a world currency.

The US reflation has led to a massive hike in the US balance of payments deficit, both with the OPEC oil producing states and with the advanced capitalist countries. This, combined with the higher inflation rate, has meant a consistent devaluation of the dollar against the other leading capitalist currencies — a process that has speeded up in the last couple of months, June to August.

Currency changes

Against \$	% change in	
	12 months	2 months
Yen	+28.9	+9.8
D-mark	+14.3	+4.2
Swiss franc	+31.9	+12.0
Sterling	+9.8	+4.7

However, until very recently the US official policy has been one of "benign neglect". The Federal Reserve has allowed speculation to accelerate the dollar slide.

Changes in the parity of the dollar have a limited immediate effect on the US domestic economy — foreign trade plays a much smaller part for the US than it does in the economies of its major rivals.

At the same time, devaluation increases the competitiveness of US goods on the world market.

The USA's capitalist rivals have tolerated this situation because the US recovery has, in providing an expanded market for their goods, helped their own economies to revive. They have been slowing down the dollar slide within certain limits by their central banks buying up dollars in the currency market to prevent a catastrophic flight from the dollar (massive withdrawal of foreign investment from the US) and a



consequent descent into deep world recession.

Yet, these developments are proving increasingly costly to the US's rivals. They are effectively subsidising the dollar and undermining their own competitiveness.

In the first half of 1978, exports of the 3 strong-currency countries (Germany, Japan and Switzerland) grew less rapidly than the industrial world's average. In the April-June period the volume of Japanese exports fell for the first time since the slump of 1975, while their rise in import volumes was the fastest for 15 months. Meanwhile US export growth continued to improve.

Also, given floating currency rates, central bank support operations are not very effective, especially in conditions of wide and disparate fluctuations of leading currencies against the dollar and against each other.

Currency changes

Against D-mark	% change in	
	12 months	2 months
Yen	+17.0	+5.8
Swiss franc	+20.5	+8.1
Sterling	-5.2	+0.5

Thus, in recent months, pressures have been accumulating for the US to "put its house in

order". Without some action to stem the mounting balance of payments deficits and the US domestic inflation rate, the world currency exchange markets will become more disorderly. This could react back disastrously on trade and production.

Oil

From the recent World Economic Summit meeting came a loose agreement that the US would cut energy consumption, discourage oil imports by raising oil prices to the general world level, and "cut inflation".

Since the dollar remains the major currency for oil transactions, there will probably be a rise in oil prices in the near future to counteract the effects of a depreciated revenue. The US is already partially backtracking on its pledge at the world summit; it has been increasing its oil imports in anticipation of price rises.

For their part, the Germans and Japanese have said that they would "stimulate growth". But there were no definite commitments.

In conditions of economic and financial uncertainty, where exchange rates can fluctuate by large amounts from hour to hour, as well as sharply over weeks and months, profitability problems are compounded. The combination of rising currency parities against the dollar and wild short-term fluctuations themselves discourage investment and inhibit the expansion of world trade.

Deficit

Understandably, the German and Japanese governments are wary about initiating state measures that will fuel inflation rates and increase economic and financial instability. The measures announced so far by these governments are meagre.

The US government has successively revised downwards the annual budget deficit for 1978/79 from an earlier projected \$59.6 thousand million to \$48.5 thousand million (at the beginning of July) and then to a ceiling of \$39.8 thousand million on August 17th. In addition, Carter's tax cut proposals have been drastically revised, from \$24.5 thousand million to \$16.3 thousand

million. And clamour for a pay and prices policy has been growing louder.

On the financial side, bank rates have soared and many barriers to foreign borrowing have been removed in an effort to attract foreign currency, strengthen reserves and improve the balance of payments.

But the path to currency stability via juggling with interest rates is very limited. It is still more attractive for the dollar holder to sell his dollars and buy Deutschmarks or Swiss francs, investing in Zurich or Frankfurt rather than New York. And a recent statement by the Bank of Japan said that interest differentials between Tokyo and New York are already so large that even a 3% cut in the Japanese rate would make little difference to currency speculators.

The cuts in the budget deficit, should they be operated, may slightly ease the domestic inflation rate after a time and perhaps slow down the heady devaluation of the dollar. But there is a comeback.

The state spending cuts, combined with high interest rates (which discourage personal and corporate borrowing), tighter monetary policies and an already slowing tempo of growth, could bring on the coming recession more quickly and make it deeper. There are, accordingly, strong pressures to reduce interest rates and go easy on deflationary governmental measures.

Thus, the room for manoeuvre for capitalists and their governments, on both sides of the Atlantic, is strictly limited.

Yen

The situation of floating currencies, and an unstable main reserve currency, is a recipe for continuing economic stagnation. However, efforts to remedy this situation have so far failed.

Neither the Deutschmark nor the Yen has the overwhelming strength necessary to become the major reserve currency. In conditions of hour-by-hour speculation and heavy cross-trading between other currencies, the major reserve currency inevitably comes under massive pressure, as it is the go-between in the cross-trading.

The other major alternative being canvassed in the creation of a new Eurocurrency as a unit of account (equivalent to a fixed number of Marks, Pounds, Lira etc). While not replacing the dollar immediately as the major reserve, this would be an interim competing currency to the dollar and could provide a stable medium for European (EEC) trade. This is what was mooted at the EEC summit in Bremen at the beginning of July.

IMF

Here the central banks would have to be prepared to buy and sell their own currencies in the amounts offered them by foreign exchange markets (a Euro-Bretton Woods). It would be part of a general move towards economic and monetary union.

In spite of a proposed massive back-up in a \$50,000 million European Monetary Fund to underpin currency stability, this scheme is unlikely to be viable, because of the massive disparities in the strengths and inflation rates of the different EEC economies. Instead of floating exchange rates, there would have to be frequent official devaluations and revaluations, which would promote massive speculation on a much greater scale than at present, and a much worse monetary instability.

The decline of the dollar is part of the large scale economic and financial uncertainty besetting the capitalist world, and there is no immediate solution in sight.

PHIL SEMP



The Yen, the Lira, the Dollar, the Mark and the Franc walk out together

Sanctions-busting Impeach the collaborators

THE recently published Bingham Report tells a tale of corruption and cynicism among ministers and top civil servants which makes Watergate look like a tiny lapse.

For over 10 years the British companies Shell and BP have between them supplied just over half of Rhodesia's oil. For a while they used 'swap' arrangements with the French-owned Total oil company: Total supplied Shell and BP's outlets in Rhodesia, while they supplied Total's outlets in South Africa. But by about 1971 the oil companies decided that the British government wasn't interested in even keeping up the pretence, and they resumed their direct supplies through a company called Freight Services.

New

And the *Sunday Times* reports that they are still providing Smith with oil since Bingham, using a new 'swap' arrangement.

Even now that the cover-up is in the open, there are still cover-ups. Annex III to the Bingham Report, entitled 'Evidence of Criminal Offences', notes that "The remainder of this annex is, at the request of the Director of Public Prosecutions, not being published while matters covered in the report are under consideration by him."

But all the same, the Report gives a good picture of the cynicism that went into covering up the oil trade. "As Shell Mozambique is a British registered company", wrote the manager of Shell South Africa to the company's London office in December 1965 "the recent British Government Order in Council [imposing the sanctions] presumably makes it illegal for Shell Mozambique tankage to be

used for storing supplies destined for Britain. Product should be transported a) by sea, from Durban to Beira, and by pipeline or rail to Umtali [in Rhodesia]; b) By sea from Durban to Lourenço Marques and by rail to Rhodesia."

In January 1968 a Shell SA Director, L.C.V. Walker, wrote a bit coyly: "We have always, with our hands on our hearts, stated that no Shell company has ever *dis-patched* petroleum products to Rhodesia, but we consider we are not covered under what might be termed the 'connivance clause' of the Order in Council, in that a member of Shell Mozambique or a director thereof could not very well get up in court and swear that he was unaware that the supplies in question might find their way to Rhodesia."

Again, a BP Southern Oil report in 1974, coolly describes the transport cover-up arrangements: "BP and Shell continue to market products in Rhodesia as a consolidated venture... Devious supply arrangements have thus been made to visibly dissociate the oil companies from any first hand and identifiable part in the supply operations."

"To achieve this, Consolidated now sell the bulk of products destined for Rhodesia to Freight Services [Shell's forwarding agents] who handle matters thereon by reselling to the Rhodesian Fuels procurement Agency GENTA."

Government ministers and civil servants knew all about it and helped in the cover-up.

In 1967 a report, "The Oil Conspiracy", produced in the USA by the Centre for Social Action of the United Church of Christ (UCC) revealed the early sanctions busting. Commonwealth Secretary George Thomson met with Shell/BP

managers to discuss it. As a letter from the Chairman of Shell records "The UCC report's 'informed sources' are correct in their statement that H.M. Government knew what was happening and decided to do nothing about it."

And, as a 1967 letter from Shell to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office recalls, "Thomson ... expressed appreciation of Shell and BP's cooperation and emphasised (that) the Government's main concern was to show that the UK was 'doing its best on the matter of Rhodesia' and thus to prevent the UN escalating the argument into a full-scale confrontation with South Africa."

A note from Shell International to their South Africa subsidiary reports a meeting in 1968 with two officials from the Ministry of Power — Angus Beckett and Barry Powell. "Beckett and Powell explained that ... whenever the Foreign Office raised the subject of 'Limiting' supplies to either Mozambique or South Africa, the Ministry of Power has always advised that (it)... was not practical, and that furthermore it could not be expected that British oil companies would participate in any such scheme on a voluntary basis."

At a further meeting "Powell ... felt that the emphasis of the Commonwealth Secretary's objectives was not so much on stopping the flow of oil to Rhodesia (the practical difficulties of which were realised) but rather on the 'publicity aspects' arising from the supposed connection of British companies in Mozambique with the South African customers who might be responsible for the diversion (of oil to Rhodesia)".

For Shell and BP the issue was simple: profits. The Rhodesian market, to which BP and Shell were



Fueled by Shell and BP

supplying some 360,000 tons of oil a month through Freight Services, is still a profitable one for them.

As a 1974 BP memo records, "Shell and BP now enjoy about 50% of the Rhodesian market place. ... After a shaky start post-UDI due to extreme liquidity problems" (not, be it noted, due to the sanctions) "the company began to show improved results in 1969/70 and since then (it) has proved to be a very profitable enterprise."

In 1972, for instance, they made a profit of 2,230,000 Rhodesian dollars, a 14% rate of return on capital after tax.

The British Labour government did not want to disrupt Shell and BP's profit-making. Even more so, it shrank from any risk of disrupting the much more extensive profit-making of British capital in South Africa. It let trade with Rhodesia continue, in defiance of its own law, for fear of messing up trade

and investment in South Africa.

The veil of official secrecy and business secrecy protected this scandal for thirteen years. Even now, prosecutions could be confined to a few scapegoats.

The most elementary rules of democracy demand that the matter is fully investigated, in the way the Watergate case was in the USA. But further investigations should not be used as a let-out from immediate prosecution of the ministers, civil servants and oil company bosses who quite plainly broke the law.

And the labour movement has its own accounts to settle with the Labour politicians who were involved and the trade union leaders who served on the Board of BP. We should have our own tribunal, to drum these cynical assistants of apartheid and white supremacy out of the movement.

NIK BARSTOW

THE WRONG POLITICS OF RAPE

I WELCOME the article on rape in *Workers' Action* 116, since it is necessary for socialists not only to criticise the predominant trends in the women's movement but to take up actively and push further the pressing issues raised by that movement.

However, I am unhappy about the politics of the article.

The emphasis throughout it is on male domination as the problem. No distinction is made between the nature of rape in patriarchal, feudal and capitalist society. As a consequence, Ros Makin sees the issue of rape and the class struggle as distinct when she states that, "Both to combat rape and to take part in the struggle for socialism women need to build a strong working class based women's movement."

It is not sufficient to say that the abolition of private property will bring about a society in which rape will cease to exist. However, true Ros Makin's statement is, it encourages women in the belief that until then nothing can be done, because rape is an inevitable part of all patriarchal societies based on private property.

We must learn to distinguish between our oppression as women under capitalism and oppression under other forms of society.

Thus there is a problem with the title, 'The Male as Slave-

owner'. Under capitalism all wage labourers, unlike slaves, are formally free, though in reality subordinated to capital and its state. Similarly, women have increasingly become formally free, with limited rights to own property, marry at our will, divorce, etc. Nonetheless we are subordinate in reality to the family, the law, and our position in the labour market.

We are not slaves to men,

Whose right to compromise?

Comrades,

You suggest in WA116 that the liberation forces in Southern Africa have a right to make concessions and deals "under the pressure of their enemies", while in Britain we must pursue an uncompromising position. We cannot grant, however, that the liberation forces have such an unconditional right to deal.

The history of Southern Africa is one not only of heroic resistance but also of sell-outs, which is not surprising given the inducements which the imperialist powers grant African leaders. The guarantee against such compromises is only the mass struggle of the workers and peasants; struggle of the kind that has ditched Muzorewa in Zimbabwe after his deals

but, alongside men, slaves to capitalism, though our subordination differs from that of men. It is the position of women under capitalism, and not men, which forces the raped woman to have to prove her innocence.

The failure to work out the politics of rape means a failure to provide demands clearly capable to drawing women into fighting for socialist politics. Therefore it is not good enough

with Smith and which threatens to isolate Nkomo should he find the inducements too great.

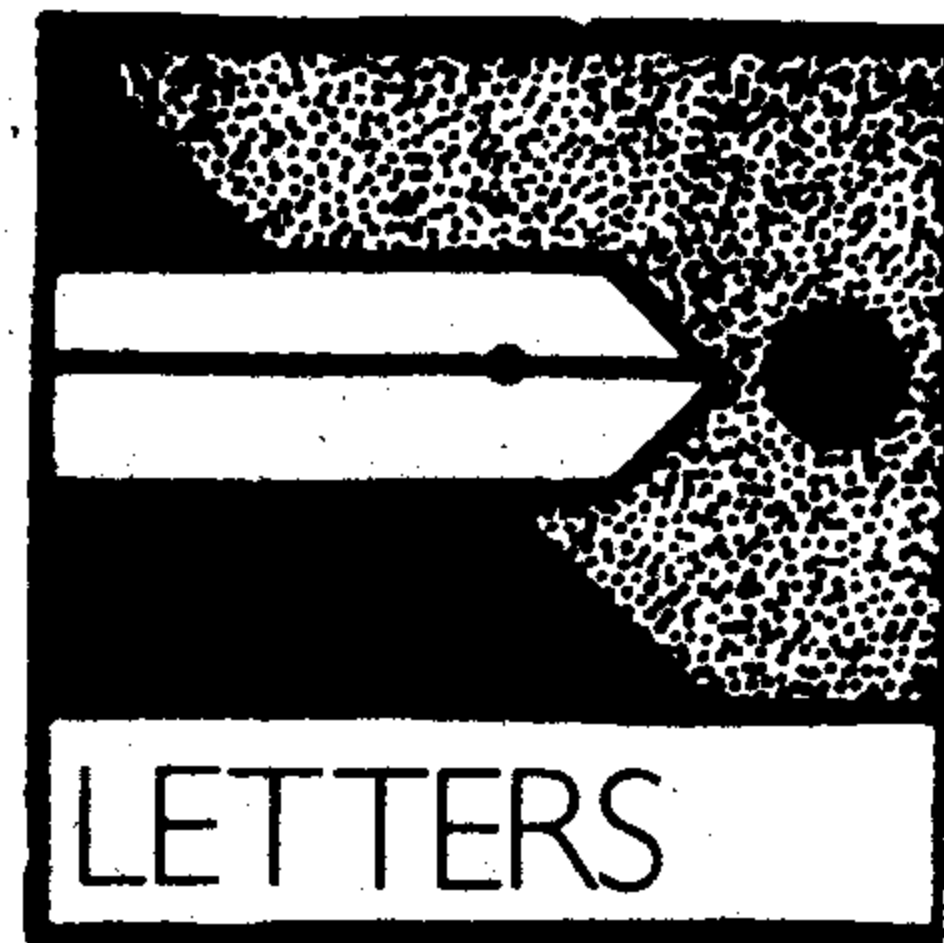
Our task is to support the liberation organisations, and their leaders, only so long as they do not betray the masses.

Meanwhile, in this country, the solidarity movement is also under pressure from its enemies but we must learn to make only those 'compromises' which can build a mass movement of solidarity and help the fight against imperialism in Southern Africa.

Specifically this means no more compromises with those who would work through the government, with their illusions that it will have a change of heart one day. But we must

to attack the radical feminists' position unless we can show a clear alternative. It is precisely this weakness within socialist women's groups which helps to ensure a continuation of the confused socialist-feminist tendency, torn between radical feminism and a socialist programme.

SARAH HARRIS



EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to Events, Box 1960, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

Monday 2 October. Coventry Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory meeting. "Ireland: Brits out!" Speaker: Richard Chessum. 7.30, Swanswell pub.

Saturday 7 October. West Midlands joint trade union conference on the 35 hour week and the 5% limit. At the Digbeth Halls, Birmingham.

Sunday 8 October. London Workers Action meeting: "Socialists and the next government". 7.45pm, 'General Picton', Wharfedale Rd/Caledonian Rd, Kings Cross.

Tuesday 10 October. Brent SCLV public meeting: "What prospect for a Labour victory?" Speakers: Ernie Roberts (PPC, Hackney North); Colin Adams (Brent East CLP delegate to Labour Party conference); and Ken Livingstone (PPC, Hampstead). Chair: Merle Amory (asst. secretary, Brent Health Area NUPE). 7.45pm, Anson Hall, Anson Rd/Chichele Rd, NW2.

Out now! Workers Power pamphlet on Marxism and the Trade Unions. Articles on the Minority Movement, the Rank and File today, RLU theses. 85p from BCM Box 7750, London WC1V 6XX or from left bookshops.

First issue! Workers' Power, revolutionary monthly newspaper, out now. 15p plus 7p p&p from BCM Box 7750, London WC1V 6XX. Subscriptions £2 for 12 issues.

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BOB FINE

The NEC vs. democracy

WHAT MANY Labour activists will want to see from this Conference is some accounting for the Government's flouting of almost every left-wing Conference decision or Manifesto pledge, and some commitment to have Conference policies — not praise of the Government's wage-freezing, job-cutting record — as the basis for the next Manifesto.

These issues hinge on the question of democracy and accountability in the labour movement. Two major items will be at the centre of Conference controversy on this question.

First, re-selection of MPs. Last year, 67 CLP resolutions demanded that there should be a new selection conference in every constituency between general elections, instead of MPs continuing automatically in office as they do at present.

The NEC got Conference to remit the issue... and has now come back with recommendations which filter down the Constituency Labour Parties' demands to almost nothing.

The National Executive Committee majority report provides that there should be a new selection conference — if the CLP, at a special meeting of the General Committee, votes to have

one. This will mean, as a rule, that members pushing for re-selection effectively have to win a motion of no confidence in the sitting MP before getting the procedure opened.

Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

Labour Party conference fringe meeting: 6.40pm, Monday 2nd October, at 'The Victory', Caunce St, Blackpool. Speakers: Ken Livingstone (PPC Hampstead), Colin Adams (delegate Brent East CLP), Pete Towey (delegate, Stockport South CLP).

Moreover, if the sitting MP wins that vote of confidence, s/he is protected against re-selection proceedings for the rest of the life of that Parliament. Under the Labour Party constitution at present there is a limited right of re-selection, used, for example, in Newham North-East. The NEC majority report would make re-selection proceedings under this clause conditional on the NEC agreeing that there are 'changed circumstances'.

An essential feature of any democratic right of recall must be speed and simplicity. Otherwise the system is always biased in favour of the sitting representative, who can manoeuvre and liti-

gate while the members' anger about his/her betrayals is finally worn down.

By this standard, the NEC majority report represents a very poor form of democracy.

Unfortunately, the opposition is split between two different proposals for more democratic re-selection. The better of the two — the NEC minority report — retains the present re-selection right and rejects the proposed 'vote of no confidence' clause. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy thinks it is tactically better to drop the present re-selection right.

On the second major issue of Party democracy to be debated at Conference, the left has again been split. The NEC has put forward three procedures for the election of the Party Leader: by the Parliamentary Party (as at present), by Conference, or by an electoral college including MPs and representatives of CLPs and affiliated organisations.

The present procedure is put forward as a resolution, the two more democratic procedures as amendments. Obviously the NEC is hoping that the left wing vote will be split between the two amendments and neither will get a majority!

Squatters' solidarity

ON THURSDAY 21st September 600 Dutch squatters demonstrated in solidarity with the 160 squatters evicted from Huntley Street in London, and in protest against the 14 arrests under that eviction, some under the new Criminal Trespass Law.

The demonstration also expressed support for 160 Swedish squatters who are at present surrounded by police and threatened with eviction.

There were two separate demonstrations. In Amsterdam 200 took part in a peaceful picket of British airline offices, the Swedish consulate, and Dutch head offices of Grand Vista Ltd, a firm of property speculators.

The biggest action, however, was in The Hague, where 400 squatters attacked the British Embassy. They boarded up the doors, smashed windows, plastered the building with posters... and showered the staff with toy bulldozers, as a reminder of the real bulldozers used in the Hunt-

ley Street eviction.

Their banners proclaimed: "British State evicts squatters, we evict them", and "Defend squatters, not profits".

The police arrived and arrested 57 demonstrators. Normally, in Holland, only two or three people would be charged in this situation, but this time all 57 were charged with offences against public order, and taken to police stations all over Holland to be interrogated separately.

A defence committee has been set up and can be contacted via the Advisory Service for squatters, 2 St Pauls Rd, London N1 (01-359 8814). Donations would be appreciated.

The evictions and arrests are part of a growing wave of state repression against squatting in Europe. If the working class does not show the same spirit of international solidarity as the Dutch squatters did, it will soon find itself facing similar attacks.

PAUL BARKER

Bakers say: no extra shift

GENERAL SECRETARY Sam Maddocks, in the Bakers' Union journal, has made the situation regarding the 5-day week quite clear. If any workers refuse to work six shifts, they will have the full support of the union.

Already many bakeries have implemented the five-day week agreement. Rank Hovis McDougall have had it for two months. But the bosses at Merritts bakery in Cardiff (part of ABF) are still holding out.

They have issued threats that anyone taking the sixth shift off regularly will be sacked. The union branch has stated that it will support anyone who just works 40 hours, and has instructed shop stewards not to accept any warning letters given to

those taking the sixth shift off.

The bosses are still determined to get people to work the extra shift. Since student casual workers have left, there is a constant shortage of labour, and many new casuals are being brought in to build up the shifts.

If the fight for a 40-hour, 5-day week is to be won, we must hit the bosses where it hurts — in their pockets. An overtime ban would force them to employ more people to keep up production.

With the annual agreement coming up in the next two months, the 40 hour week will be in the forefront of negotiations. We must demand a decent living wage for 40 hours so that we are not forced to work 50 or 60 hours to make ends meet.

GEOFF WILLIAMS

continued from page 1

But the trade union leaders themselves have some bones to pick with the Government. At the TUC Callaghan got promises of unlimited cooperation and industrial peace on the understanding that there would be an election within a few weeks. Then he announced that the election would not come for some months — and so the union leaders would have to police their members tightly for much longer than they had expected. Now the AUEW and the TGWU have been pushed into struggle by the Ford workers.

This tension may mean that some of the feeling in the constituencies against wage restraint

gets Conference endorsement. If so, it will be a boost for the Ford workers — and for the fight to keep the Tories out. Stern wage controls will not encourage any worker to vote Labour, let alone to work actively to bring out the Labour vote.

The TGWU has a resolution calling for a shorter working week, and so have many constituencies. The Government, echoing the CBI, says that the 35 hour week is impossible because it harms profits and the competitiveness of the British capitalism. The resolutions on this issue are vague and general enough not to cause much trouble to anyone if they are passed, but by approving them Conference would at

least be replying to the Government's slavish concern for profits above all else, and giving some support to the Ford workers' struggle for a 35 hour week.

If some radical resolutions are passed and it is just left at that, however, then in the end it will mean only a few more additions to the great accumulation of left-wing good intentions which the NEC and the Government between them have so efficiently shelved. It will be up to constituency Labour Parties, mounting campaigns in their own areas, and fighting the coming election on their own policies rather than on some "Jim is good for Britain" manifesto, to give the resolutions real life.

Cuts protests in Brent

BRENT Town Hall, in North West London, was besieged by two lobbies on Monday 25th September.

About 60 social workers were lobbying the Labour Councillors over their pay claim. As yet, Brent social workers are not on strike, although they plan to come out soon.

At the same time, 100 people lobbied the education committee about school closures.

The committee claims that it is necessary to close a school be-

cause of falling rolls in the borough. Although the decision on which school has been postponed for a year, South Kilburn High School is the most probable choice.

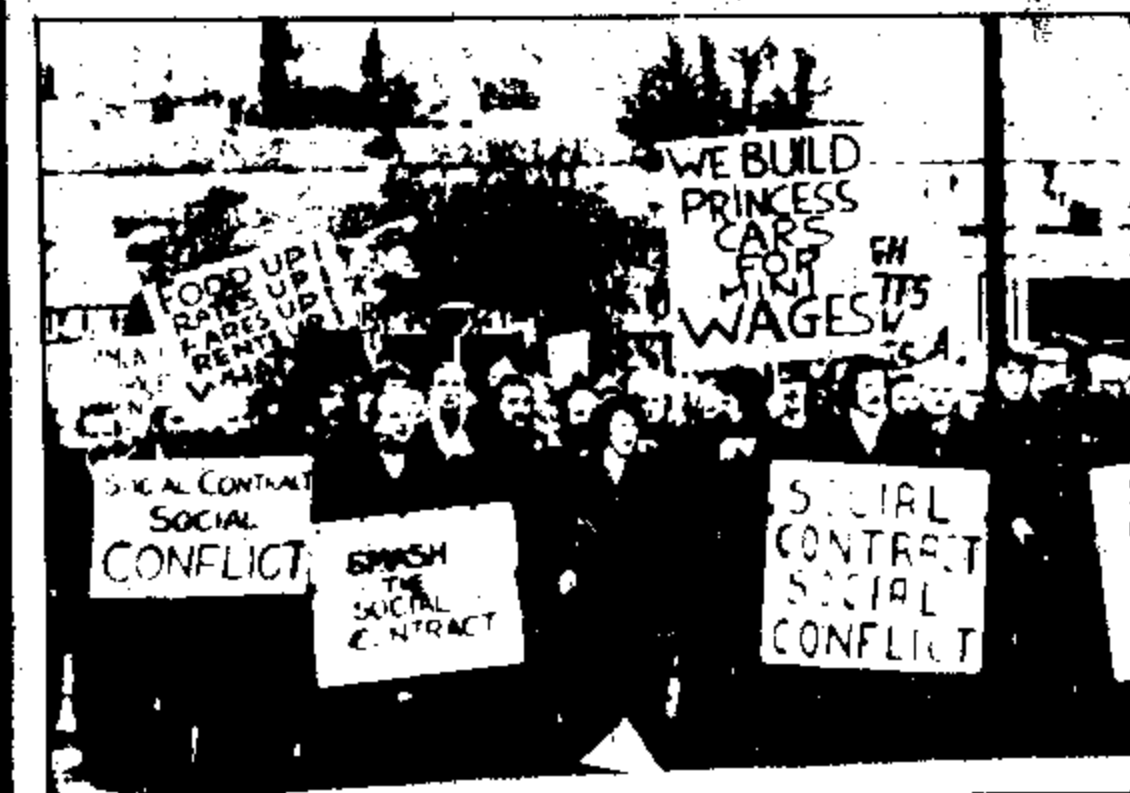
The lobby included parents, students, and teachers from South Kilburn High School, and teachers from other schools. Teachers throughout Brent have been campaigning for some time against cuts in staffing. P.F.

Socialist Organiser

Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory



Whose side are you on?



WORKERS FIGHTING for better wages and conditions in the coming months will find the Labour Government firmly on the side of the bosses. That's what Callaghan and Healey have decided, with their 5% pay limit and their hostility to the 35 hour week.

The trade union leaders have voted for the 35 hour week and against the 5% limit. But the Post Office Engineering Union leaders' refusal of their members' struggle for the 35 hour week gives the measure of their real intentions.

Every struggle will face attempts to stifle it with cries of "Don't rock the boat or you'll let the Tories in!" The Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory says there is no way to fight the

Tories. We fight to keep the Tories out but also to build and prepare a socialist fightback against the present Government's second-string Tory policies and against the next Government, Tory or Labour.

FROM CONSTITUENCY Labour Party activists' support for the Campaign for a Labour Victory has been growing. A socialist alternative is heard in many meetings and in the coming general election and in the months ahead the Campaign for a Labour Victory will be a force to be reckoned with. Contribute to our campaign fund (£1000 before the election to make leaflets, posters and pamphlets) and to our monthly magazine. Send to: SCV, Box 127, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1.

THE HIDDEN AGENDA ITEM

IRELAND IS one item on the agenda at Labour Party conferences which almost never reaches the conference floor. Year after year the Irish question gets pushed out for 'lack of time'.

But CLPs are still raising the issue and demanding a hearing. This year there is a resolution from Hackney North CLP which details the evidence of British army brutality in Northern Ireland, and notes that "while the British Labour movement has a long history of concern for human rights, and has protested about the repressive regimes of Chile and South Africa, it has remained alarmingly silent about the situation in Ireland."

"Millions of people in Britain rightly mourned Steve Biko, yet the recent death of Brian Maguire, after seven days' interrogation by the RUC in Castle-reagh interrogation centre, was greeted with frightening indifference."

Hackney North CLP calls for support to the International Tribunal on Britain's presence in Ireland.

There are two other important resolutions. East Hertfordshire CLP calls for a one-day open conference of the whole labour movement on Ireland; and Oxford CLP opposes any further renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Stop the Nazis' march on Shoreditch!



Timing is crucial. It is essential that the anti-Nazi League rally on Sunday 28th, the Nazi National Front march on Monday 29th, and the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory demonstration on Tuesday 30th, should be held in the same area. This will ensure that the anti-Nazi League rally is the largest and most visible, and that the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory demonstration is the most significant.

Patrick Kodikara

Assembly 12 noon at the junction of Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road.

Single copies 22p, bundles 10 for £1, from Box 127, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1 [postage included].

Workers' ACTION

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