

workers' ACTION

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DEMONSTRATE!
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ASSEMBLE: 1.30PM SPEAKERS CORNER
MARCH TO TRAFALGAR SQUARE

5% IN RUINS NOW TO WIN THE FULL CLAIM

THE FIVE per cent limit is dying. Bosses at Ford and at British Oxygen have agreed to negotiate without reference to it.

The bosses' association, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), is reconsidering its support for the limit. Its president has said that a rigid 5% ceiling is "unrealistic"; according to the *Financial Times* he reckoned that "There had to be more flexibility within an overall target of holding inflation to 7½% for another year".

Papers like the *Financial Times* and the *Times* repeat the same message in their editorials.

The Government is still nominally holding to the 5% figure. But ministers like William Rodgers and Denis Healey have hinted — or said in so many words — that the Government is ready to budge.

This shows very clearly that **struggle brings results**. For the first time since 1972, a Government pay policy has been cracked: and the decisive

blow that cracked it was the Ford strike, like the miners' strike in 1972.

But we have only won an opening skirmish. Victory in the main battle — let alone in the whole war — remains to be gained.

Ford have yet to make a firm offer above 5%. When they do make an offer, it will probably be no more than something like 7% and a productivity deal: an offer which will leave Ford workers' living standards still way down compared with 1974-5



levels.

The Government and the TUC are having talks and they will be trying to patch up a new set of pay curbs, perhaps in the form of "guidelines for responsible wage bargaining".

Struggle for better wages is the A of the alphabet of working class action. Without that struggle, as Karl Marx pointed out a hundred years ago, the working class "would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation... By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement".

But to spell out a full answer to the bosses' efforts to make us pay the cost of their crisis, and to take advantage of the breach opened by the Ford strike, we need more than the A of the alphabet.

We must seize the time. The approach of "waiting to see what happens at Fords" may result in some pay increases over 5%. It certainly will not be enough to win any of the broader demands, nor to get real **improvements** in living standards.

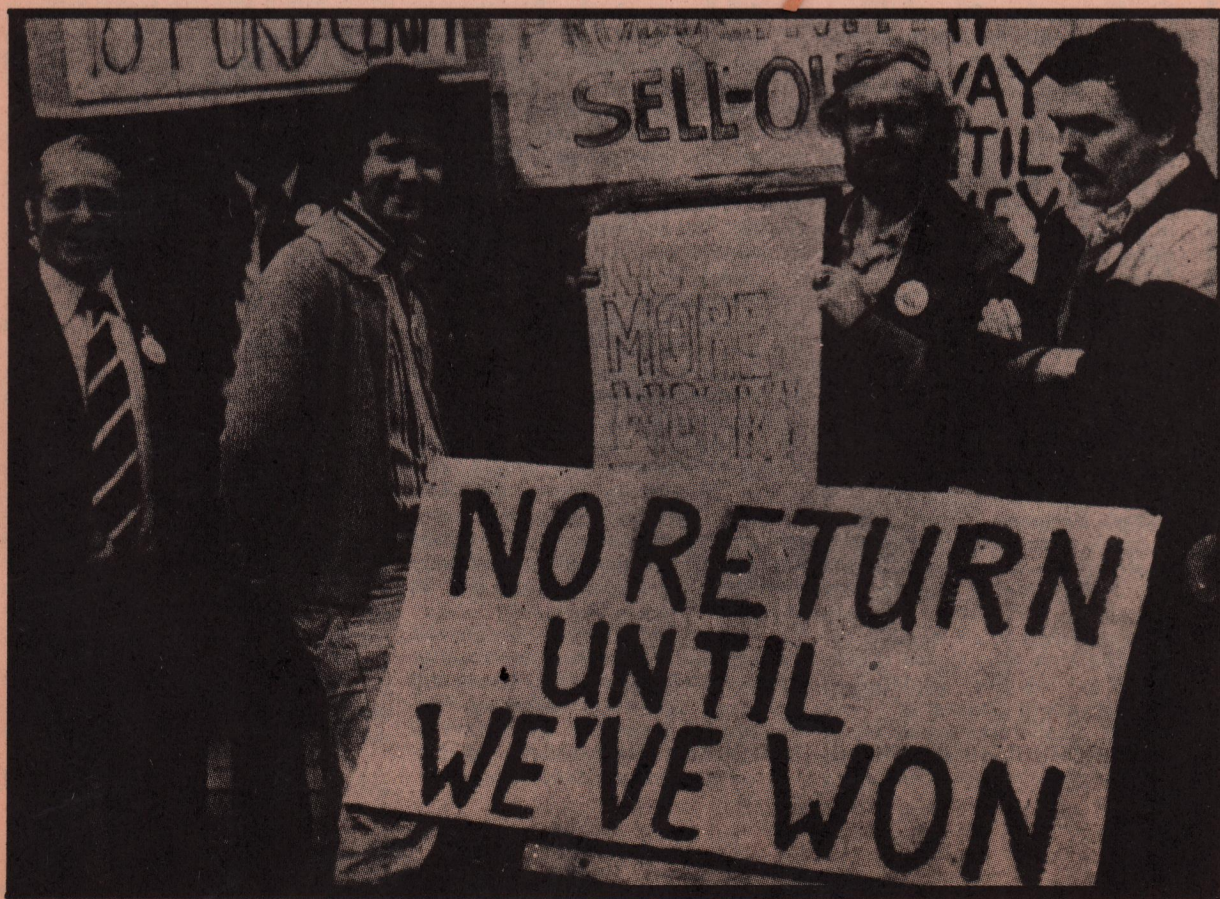
If other workers with claims in join the Ford workers in their struggle, then **demands like the 35 hour week can be won**. And the 35 hour week is a vital necessity, to reduce the 1½-million-long dole queues and to respond to the speed-up and job-cutting which will be the bosses' inevitable response to significant wage gains.

United struggle, working-class solidarity in action, will also be necessary if we are to build a strong movement for the demands which will answer the bosses' and the Government's attempts to strike back at us through State financial manoeuvres: automatic cost-of-living increases to be written into pay agreements, work-sharing under workers' control with no loss of pay, and nationalisation of the monopolies without compensation and under workers' control.

A determined effort to take advantage of the breach made by the Ford strikers requires that the rank and file takes control of the struggle into its own hands. The union officials have kicked back against the Government over the 5% limit. But they want nothing more than a new, more flexible agreement to make us pay the cost of the bosses' crisis. And that is all we will get as long as we leave things in their hands.

The Ford workers need to organise proper strike committees, with new elected members drawn in alongside the shop stewards. They need to make sure that every worker on strike is fully informed and fully involved. They need to organise mass deputations to every factory and union branch, explaining their cause and building solidarity.

Socialists in the labour movement must organise the broadest support for the Ford strike, and try to link it up with the organisation of an active socialist opposition within the movement to the Labour lieutenants of Capital.



Prisoners protest at drug abuse

PRISONERS AT Gartree maximum security prison took control of the jail for almost 16 hours on the 5th and 6th of October. They were protesting against one prisoner, Michael Blake, being dosed with drugs against his will.

As PROP, the prisoners' rights movement, explains: "The Gartree riot was not just about the abuse of one prisoner ... (it) was the result of accumulated frustration at seeing the drug-happy activities of the prison medical services go unchecked".

The Home Office denies the claims, and says Blake was given "a mild dose of a widely used sleeping draught". But prisoners' organisations have amassed a mountain of evidence that shows how the authorities can't be trusted.

From 1975 the Home Office was denying that it was building a new 'control unit' at Gartree to contain 'difficult' prisoners. Officially they claimed that such units had been closed down. In 1977, however, evidence from prisoners in Gartree, publicised by PROP, forced the Home Office to admit that they were opening a new unit — which they now rechristened as a 'segregation unit'.

Isolator

A prison officer at Gartree recently admitted that "It is a control unit but we are not allowed to call it that".

The existence of this unit is one of the main reasons for the Gartree prisoners' fears. The new methods of control, using isolation cells, have become closely associated over the last few years with the use of massive doses of tranquillisers.

Gartree has a reputation for having one of the worst prison medical services in the country, with drugs forced on many prisoners. Perhaps the 'widely used sleeping draught' Michael Blake got was the little mixture administered to one Gartree prisoner who wrote to PROP: "700 Lygthactal a day, 200 in the morning, 200 dinnertime, 200 teatime, and a night-time 100, also a tot of sodium amyto".

Messages coming out of the jail describe the crippling effect of

the drugs. One drug "causes the head and arms to be kept as stationary as possible at all times. Thus, wishing to look left or right, these men turn their entire bodies rather than just the head.

"Have been unable to find out the name of the drug they've been given but it terrifies me. The lack of head and arm movements literally makes them look like zombies".

Another prisoner described his own experiences in a letter received by PROP a month later. "Whilst I've been taking the prescribed drugs I've found my memory has suffered greatly, at times I've literally felt completely disoriented and my whole character reduced... Each time I've complained, nothing has been done, except the dosage has been raised".

That prisoner also recorded the terrible effect of drugs combined with being kept in a segregated cell. "I sat for days staring at the wall or pacing the cell, not being able to concentrate or think at all on anything, seeming as though I was suspended in space.

"When being spoke to I was only able to answer yes or no. as my mind was all the time muddled and confused".

Another letter described the man as he appeared in the middle of his ordeal. "I spoke to him today in the exercise yard... His speech lacks any emphasis and is mainly incoherent. His face is dull and almost expressionless. He has developed a sort of 'stiffness' in his neck and shoulders. His hands shake badly".

Again: "Jimmy Dunn... was like all of us, I suppose, finding his time a bit hard to pull. Dr Smith, with his usual cure-all, put him on tranquillisers which were so powerful that on several occasions Jim collapsed shortly after taking them and had to be put to bed by staff".

Many of the prisoners who took part in the Gartree protest now find themselves in the Gartree 'segregation unit', suffering from the same misuse of drugs that they were protesting against.

This practice — amounting to torture — proves clearly what the role of the prison system is: to beat down and contain people who don't fit into society, regardless of the effects it has on their minds or bodies.

NIK BARSTOW



First fruits of Camp David: more carnage in Lebanon

BEIRUT is a city of carnage. For a week now there has been little let-up in the shelling, the mortar bombardment and the sniper fire.

This time the combatants are the Christian militias and the Syrian occupation troops — not long ago, allies in the war between the Christian Right and the Muslim Left. While the Palestinians supported the Left, the Syrians weighed in with the Right.

Now the Syrians are trying to cut off the Christian quarters and starve out anyone that the shelling is unable to gouge out. The Christian militias still have a considerable arsenal at their disposal — some of the heavier equipment have been supplied previously by Israel — and are reportedly prepared to continue fighting, despite the devastation, the deaths and starvation.

This latest phase of the tortuous course of the Syrian intervention in Lebanon coincides with the conclusion of the Camp David agreements. And that is no accident.

The Christian militias had refused to be dictated to by the Syrian forces and continued to move towards

a policy of de facto partition of Lebanon.

Their previous attempts had always been given military cover (as well as direct assistance) by the Israel armed forces. Now with the conclusion of the Camp David agreements, Syria's President Assad has rightly calculated that Israel is in a very delicate position.

Previously Israel has not hesitated to launch big and bloody sorties into Lebanon to help its Christian allies. This time, not wishing to sacrifice the Camp David deals by involving itself in a major way in the Lebanese war, Israel could do no more than send some gun-boats north on a token operation.

The Camp David deals have thus, it would seem, given Syria the opportunity to settle accounts with the Christians, without fear of intervention.

But why should they want to do this?

Syria's invasion of the Lebanon, which was directed against the Palestinians and the Left (and which saved the Christians from defeat at the

hands of these forces) was occasioned by the first of the Israel-Egypt agreements. Syria, apart from wanting to prevent the emergence of a radical regime in neighbouring Lebanon, wanted to force Israel to count it as a bargaining partner. To do this Syria had to show that it would and could bring the Palestinian movement to heel.

At this point, the Syrians hoped to form a stable alliance with the Christians. This proved impossible because of the Christians' own ambitions to dominate in Lebanon. In any case, the Israelis still refused to make any concessions to Syria.

Gradually, therefore, the Syrians stepped up their activities against the Christians.

There have been some reports of Palestinian troops supporting the Syrian actions against the Rightist militias. If these reports are correct it would be evidence of another fatal concession by the Palestinian leadership to the Arab regimes. The Syrian troops have brought nothing but repression and carnage to Lebanon. The sooner they are withdrawn, the better.

Now mass strikes challenge the Shah

MILLIONS OF pounds have poured out of Iran over recent weeks as nervous capitalists flee the country. Two ministers from the new Government resigned last week.

The Shah's National Reurgence Party — formerly the backbone of a one-party state — has had to be wound up in disarray. Most seriously, the loyalty of the army, to the Shah is in question now that the opposition has launched a campaign of fraternisation with the soldiers.

In a situation like this, the Shah must be grateful for the few absolutely reliable friends he has — among whom Britain's Labour Government stands, shamefully, in the front rank. The Financial Times reported (10th October): "A British Embassy official denied a local Press report that the contract to supply Iran with about 2,200 Chieftain tanks was threatened. Privately, Britain is understood to have been reassured that there is no question of cutting down or delaying the delivery of Chieftains".

The Shah claims to have 'modernised' Iran, and now he claims to be putting through a

'liberalisation'. His reform efforts, however, have been confined to token gestures like an "anti-corruption" campaign in which he has instructed his relatives to get their fingers out of the till... while appointing as Prime Minister Jaafar Sharif-Emami, who is widely known as "Mr Five Per Cent".

The 'liberalisation' is a fake, but the repression against the opposition is very real. Hundreds, if not thousands, of demonstrators were killed when troops fired on a Teheran crowd on "Black Friday", September 8th. Since then there have been smaller atrocities in several other towns.

Martial law — imposed shortly before "Black Friday" — is still in force. SAVAK, the Shah's notorious secret police, rounded up hundreds of dissidents after "Bloody Friday", and they are still in jail.

Despite all this, the revolt against the Shah is continuing, and it is becoming more and more clearly a working-class revolt. Since the beginning of October, Iran has been paralysed by a mass strike movement.

Steelworkers, miners, oil workers, textile and other factory workers, and bank employees have been on strike, as well as large groups from the public sector: the post office, TV and radio, hospitals and civil aviation.

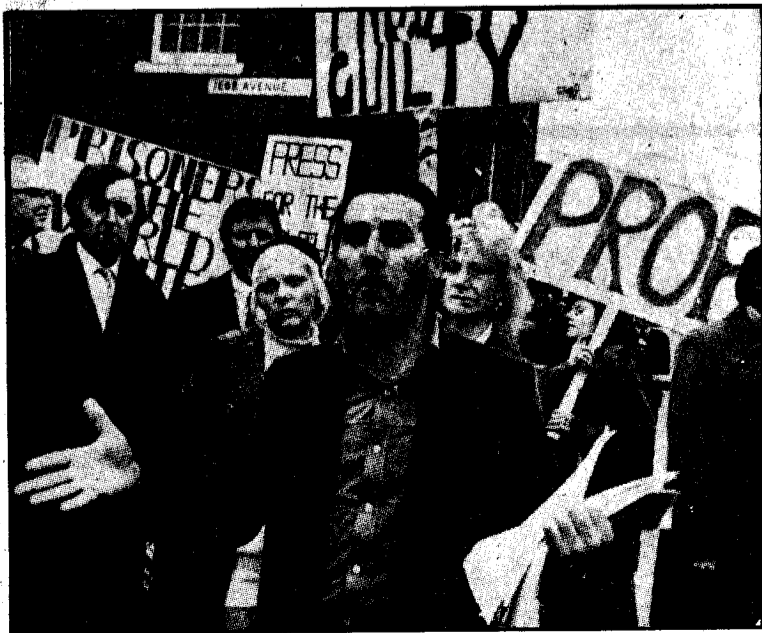
A major demand is a doubling of wages, to compensate for the steep rise in the cost of living, estimated officially at 71% over the last three years.

The oppositional Muslim clergy still have a strong influence on the movement. But a recent declaration from the Ayatollah Khomeini shows that he is aware of the Iranian workers' drive towards more radical aims.

He tries to warn people against communists by saying they are agents provocateurs, calling on people "to be vigilant in relation to provocations and diversions organised by pro-government elements who want to frighten the people by putting out communist slogans".

But it could soon turn out that it is the clerics, and not the Iranian people, who are scared by communist slogans.

COLIN FOSTER



'Venomous contempt and snarling hatred' Yes, that's what we think of Labour's racists!

"A SCREAMING, bawling, raging figure with a pounding fist and gleaming eyes... For those Labour MPs on the Select Committee for Race Relations, which calls for a quota for immigrants dependents, he had venomous contempt. For those who dared even to discuss the number of immigrants in Britain, he had snarling hatred..."

That is how the Daily Mail described SCLV supporter Ted Knight's speech in its report of the debate on racialism at the Labour Party Conference. The debate was certainly one of the most lively at the conference: one where, for once, the real world intruded and made it impossible for the platform to cover things over with moralistic platitudes.

The Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory made a big impact in the debate with a composite resolution from two Constituency Labour Parties which sponsor the Campaign, Brent East and Norwood. Their resolution called for the labour movement to stop the fascists on the streets, to place no reliance in the Public Order Act, to support black self-defence and to oppose all immigration laws and the 'sus' law.

SCLV supporters dominated the discussion, and forced their opponents out into the open with racist arguments like: 'to support defence squads would be to support the law of the jungle'.

Colin Adams, moving the resolution from Brent East, stressed

how the tide of racism had been turned with the smashing of the National Front at Lewisham in 1977... and added that "Black self-defence is not a matter of political debate. For those in Brick Lane it is a matter of physical survival".

Ted Knight attacked the National Executive Committee's attempts at 'bi-partisan' anti-racialism in concert with the Tories. "If as socialists we believe racialism is aided by bad housing, unemployment, and rotten social conditions, how can we have anything in common with Thatcher and her gang?", he said, referring to Michael Foot's appearance on a common platform with the Tories in

Trafalgar Square.

Replying to the attacks on Labour MPs' support for the racist Select Committee report, Tom Torney (MP for Bradford South) really let the mask slip. Arguing that they couldn't be called racists for signing it, he said that Syd Bidwell's concern for black people was so great that he was known as the 'MP for the Punjab'. This sick little joke fell rather flat.

Kate Hoey, from Hackney North (which also supports the SCLV) supported the Brent resolution. She said that for the Asians in the borough of Hackney, which includes both Brick Lane and the National Front's new headquarters, self-defence

was paramount, because they knew that the police weren't going to lift a finger to help them. They had set up the Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee, and whatever the Conference decided, she said, such groups would have to be set up in the coming months and her CLP would support them.

Trying to rescue the National Executive from disgrace, Alex Lyon MP was put up, with his reputation as an opponent of the Government's immigration policy, to argue against the repeal of all immigration laws. His arguments were not much different from Tom Torney's. He said: "When I visited a village in Bangladesh and asked how many

would like to come to Britain, they said, 'everyone'". This attempt at scaring the conference sounded more like the racists of the NF than a 'progressive opponent of Government policy'!

The National Executive called on conference to reject the Brent resolution, and won. They went on to urge remission of the other motion on racialism, from Cardiff West, which criticised the Select Committee report in a mild mannered way. They got their way on that, too.

They may have been able to win the vote and leave Labour with no policy on racism, but they didn't manage to stifle the debate... and in that it was clear who the real anti-racists were.

The Tribune left is still dead

THE LABOUR Conference voted down the 5% limit, was narrowly robbed of the automatic re-selection of MPs, and had its most thorough debate on racialism to date — but the Conference was not a major swing to the left.

For the leaders of the T&GWU and AUEW who cast their votes against incomes policy it was an act of self-preservation as they looked nervously over their shoulders at the Ford strikers. For the Conference as a whole, the vote on wages policy was not, however, greeted with tremendous enthusiasm. The 'traditional left' of Tribune saw the vote as a problem to be patched up, not as a launching pad for working class action against wage limits.

The conference was not a re-run of the last 'left wing victory' in 1973 when the Tribunes were riding high and winning almost every vote. Today Tribune has shown itself to be chronically divided, bought off by its domination of the NEC and incapable of organising the grass-roots militancy that exists in the party.

The votes that were taken will only mean anything if there is

action around them; and the mood at many of the conference fringe meetings showed that rank and file delegates wanted to fight.

The Tribune leaders will not organise them, and will actually organise against them if they step out of line. And this leaves a massive job to be carried out by rank and file activists in the Labour Party — a job which provides massive opportunities to build a very different left wing from the one which has died since 1973.

The Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory was the only grouping at the party conference seriously trying to do that, and breaking out of the old routines of sectarian preaching of tendencies like the Militant.

On issues like racialism and re-selection, the SCLV was able to make itself heard loud and clear, despite the short time it has been organising. Fresh supporters willing to commit themselves to action with the SCLV will allow that voice to be carried further into the labour movement.

BLACKPOOL NOTEBOOK by Nik Barstow

Benn for PM in 25 years?

TONY BENN, Moss Evans, Alan Fisher and Peter Shore spoke at the launching meeting in Blackpool of the new 'Labour Coordinating Committee'.

The title of the meeting, 'Socialism in the next 25 years', allowed them to spend a lot of time avoiding the question of what to do this year. Benn rambled on about 'Libertarian Socialism', Fisher pontificated on the need for more 'vitality' and 'enthusiasm' on the Labour Left, and Peter Shore apologised for the Government.

Because hardly anyone in the audience of 300 had a clue what this new grouping was supposed to represent, the meeting turned into a shambles when discussion was thrown open to the floor. The comrades at the meeting could hardly be blamed for that — both the speakers and the Committee's paper, 'Labour Activist', appear to have conspired to avoid mentioning one single policy which they stand for.

The fact that the leading figures in the LCC are Michael Meacher and Frances Morrell, two of Benn's closest advisers, points to only one clear policy in the whole set-up: getting a power base for Benn outside the fragmented and inactive Tribune group.

It can hardly be expected to appeal to any genuine Labour activists, who are more interested in what policies to fight for now than musing over what will happen to Benn's ambitions in the Labour Party in the next 25 years. The LCC's only real support to date has come in the way of an £8,000 gift from the Rowntree Trust to help it set up a newspaper.

The SCLV has no such big



Fords Dagenham workers picket the Conference

backers. By contrast to the LCC, however, it does have the vitality, enthusiasm, and backing of real Labour activists.

We were robbed!

THE ROW over the bureaucratic manoeuvres which defeated resolutions on mandatory re-selection of MPs on the Tuesday of the Labour Party conference (reported in last week's Workers' Action) rumbled on through the rest of the week.

On the Wednesday the Conference Arrangements Committee met and ruled that there could not be a re-vote, despite Hugh Scanlon breaking his mandate and then covering up by claiming that he got confused. The Financial Times reports what happened then:

"Unaware of this ruling a constituency delegate got up after lunch and demanded another vote on the subject, but Miss Lestor [in the chair] launched instead into the scheduled debate on race. Members of the left-wing Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory jumped up, shouting decidedly uncomradely remarks about Miss Lestor, and demanding another vote.

"Miss Lestor was unmoved. Ordering the rebels back to their seats, she threatened to adjourn the conference if they did not behave".

It was not just SCLV supporters who were incensed by the ruling. There were daily leaflets explaining what was happening on the issue from the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, and the SCLV had distributed a leaflet to every delegate, explaining what had happened in the AUEW delegation and calling on delegates to press for a re-vote.

Workers Control

THE SCLV's daily briefing at the Labour conference, as well as carrying up to the minute reports of resolutions, platform manoeuvres, and fringe meetings, also put the background to issues coming up at the conference. PETER TEBBUT [Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Falmouth and Camborne, and a sponsor of the SCLV] explained the need for workers' control in the nationalised shipbuilding industry.

AFTER MONTHS of opposition manoeuvring by capitalist vested interests in the House of Lords,

the Government's Bill to nationalise the British shipbuilding industry finally became law.

The first reaction was that a number of those capitalists who had opposed nationalisation turned round and asked British Shipbuilders, the organisation set up under the Bill to run the industry: 'Please take us over'.

This was because firms like P&O, who owned Falmouth Docks and had allowed it to be run down through lack of investment, wanted some 'easy cash compensation' to spend either on more lucrative schemes or to give to the shareholders as a bigger hand-out.

British Shipbuilders, entrusted with the job of running British shipbuilding and ship repair, has embarked on a course of 'cut-backs' and redundancy with no regard to the workers. In the case of Falmouth Docks, the workers, members of the AUEW, TGWU, EETPU, UCATT and the Boilermakers' Society, still have to suffer the capitalist attitudes of the old P&O bosses, who still form the 'management side' at Falmouth, and who were the ones responsible for the yard's decline over the past years.

No wonder the workers say: "We can see no difference between public ownership and the regime of the old bosses". There is no change in management, attitudes or policy. Immediate profit is the yardstick. But how can the workers make a profit with

Immediate profit is the yardstick. But how can the workers make a profit with old antiquated equipment? How much has the Government given in compensation to P&O and the rest of the rundown yards?

British Shipbuilders, run by retired admirals nationally, and retired captains locally, plus former directors of P&O and Vosper Thornycroft, is not what the workers want. They demand that a Labour Government instructs British Shipbuilders to introduce forthwith full control of the industry by the workers

whose future depends on the industry's success, and not leave it to the old bosses who have driven the industry into the ground by their neglect and their dismal record in the past.

Eric is a vandal

THE "HANG 'em and flog 'em" brigade made an appearance at this year's Labour conference, with a resolution stating that "bold and resolute action is now urgently needed to combat the menace of vandalism, wanton destruction, and needless violence".

They weren't talking about the vandals who smashed up wards in Hounslow Hospital to try to stop staff blocking its closure, the needless violence of the eviction of 160 squatters at Huntley Street in Camden by 500 police with bulldozers, or the thuggery of the Special Patrol Groups against demonstrators and young black kids — but about working class kids.

This backward nonsense was strongly attacked by Jeremy Corbyn (delegate from Hornsey CLP — which sponsors the SCLV) who said: "Is it any wonder that some kids turn to vandalism when they have no jobs to go to and live on appalling council estates?". He put the blame where it belongs, on the Government's cuts in social spending. Like other delegates attacking the resolution, he was loudly cheered.

The National Executive Committee decided to back the resolution and got Eric Heffer to move support for it. It was passed by a two-to-one margin. If Eric crawls long enough and hard enough to get the job as 'Minister for Merseyside' which he so desperately wants, then perhaps he'll be allowed to set up public executions to eliminate the problem of unemployment...

THE FORD DYNASTY

How black can lead

THE FORD WORKERS are confronting one of the great empires of the capitalist world, ruled by a dynasty more powerful than any of the ancient monarchies.

Henry Ford I was a small-time bigot who made the big time by revolutionising car production.

He made no mechanical inventions or discoveries. Only his concept of human organisation for work was new — the assembly line.

This concept of organisation meshed well with his attitude to the working class: "It is evident that a majority of the people in the world are not mentally, even if they are physically, capable of making a good living". His assembly line system was the last word in making workers mere beasts of burden for capitalist production.



The current boss, Henry II

In the early years of the company in Detroit, Ford went even further in trying to control the lives of the 'lower orders'. The IWW (a radical movement for industrial unionism) and immigrant Socialist groups were having some success among Ford workers, and there was a high labour turnover. In 1914, Ford responded by giving the workforce a massive pay rise, to \$5 a day, security of employment, and a shorter working week — conditional on good behaviour.

Labour costs increased by one third, but production of engines rose 17% and of radiators by 70%, while Ford got massive free publicity. The \$5 windfall was limited to mature men who had served a period of probation, and whose personal habits were satisfactory.

Gambling, smoking, and taking in lodgers were out. 30 investigators were hired to make sure that standards were maintained, and that the money earned was spent in a suitable fashion. If workers were found spending their money on the wrong things, then they could have the bonus suspended for six months.

Despite Ford's 'enlightened despotism', Ford workers eventually began to organise in the 1930s. Ford thought 'Labour unions are the worst things that ever struck the earth, because they take away a man's independence' — and he responded with open class war.

He hired a 3,500-strong private police force — the Ford Service Department. These gangsters (and many of them were literally that) shot, beat up, and killed workers and union officials. Inside the factory, they created a situation where there "was a feeling in the mind of everyone that he was an individual with no connection during working hours with any other man".

Over 4000 workers were sacked over the years for suspected union activity. Ford always had a short way with his employees — even the top managers. Yet he never had the courage to sack a man face to face — he always used a hatchet man.

These class struggles drew Ford

by
**Michael
O'Sullivan**

close to fascism. From the 1920s he had used his paper, the *Dearborn Independent*, to push anti-semitism. The leader of the US fascists was on the Ford payroll. As late as 1938, Henry Ford I accepted the German Eagle, First Class, from Hitler's government.

Finally Henry Ford was forced to accept the union, in 1941. (Ford negotiators were still liable 'accidentally' to swat union officials' noses in pursuit of a fly at talks). By then he was 78 years old. Appreciating Ford's (grudging) contribution to the war effort, Stalin cabled: "One of the great industrialists ... may God preserve him" But in '47 he died. His life had been spent attempting to impose, in one way or another, the reactionary values of the 19th century.

He was a lifelong semi-literate who despised education and announced that reading merely 'mussed up his mind'.

But those values — like any other bourgeois values — are all right only up to the point where they get in the way of profits. In 1945 the senile Henry I was finally forced — by strong pressure from his wife and daughter-in-law — to hand over to his grandson, Henry II. By then, the company was in chaos, lagging far behind General Motors.

Henry II did not look like a promising boss. He had flunked his college course after presenting another student's paper on Thomas Hardy as his own, and needed to carry a gun to give himself enough courage to sack his grandfather's right-hand man, Harry Bennett. But he did know enough to bring in some talented managers.

Ford now tries to use the unions to control the workers, rather than confronting them. New marketing methods have been introduced, and the autocratic system of management imposed by Henry Ford I has been discarded.

Lawyers

Yet Henry Ford II is still very powerful, probably more powerful than his grandfather ever was. Like his predecessor, "he still wants to control everything that has his name on it".

Henry Ford I had hired 1,000 lawyers to work out ways of evading death duties imposed under the New Deal — and they succeeded in cutting the duties payable to just 1% of his fortune.

In 1950 Ford affiliates in Spain,



Henry I at 80: a small-time bigot who made the big-time

Holland, Italy, Denmark, Sweden and Finland were bought out by the parent company, and in 1961 Ford UK went the same way.

All the final decisions rest with one man, Henry Ford II. "If anything happens and there is no way to work it out on a consensus basis then I've, uh, got an extra vote".

To underline the point, Henry Ford II recently sacked the company's president, Lee Iacocca, from his \$1 million a year job.

Henry Ford II himself gets an income of just under \$4 million a year from the company, while the Ford family as a whole receives \$20 million a year in dividends.

Ford has enormous power, not only as against the workers, but also in dealing with governments.

In 1966, for example, Spanish law was changed, relaxing restrictions on foreign investments in order to allow Ford to build a factory in Valencia. In 1966, the Arab League put Ford on their boycott list, but Ford has still penetrated the Arab East, through Egypt's 'open door' policy. When the Egyptian industry minister attempted to hold out for a 10% per year return on the investment he was dismissed — "Ford will maintain its right to take profits according to normal practice".



The heir apparent, Edsel II

The siting of the new European engine plant in South Wales is another example. Nearly two months before the decision was announced, Ford Europe had recommended Bridgend. But they allowed all the different governments to step up their pleas and financial offers, until the final deal saw the British government paying £70 million out of a total investment programme of £185 million.

Ford is a Great Power, with a weight comparable to all but the mightiest capitalist states. But 'the great are great only because we are on our knees' — and Ford will remain a Great Power only as long as the Ford workers allow themselves to be exploited in the cause of increasing the wealth and power of a dynasty of small-minded profiteers.

AFTER a time out of print, "Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination" has been re-issued by Pathfinder Press.

This short but important book has had bigger sales in the United States than any other Trotsky compilation in the last decade.

JAMES DAVIES reviews the edition, which consists in the main of three discussions between Trotsky and his American co-thinkers, plus documents drafted for the American SWP by CLR James

"We have nothing special to offer the Negro" declared Eugene V. Debs, the great revolutionary propagandist of early American socialism. "And we cannot make separate appeals to all races. The Socialist Party is the party of the whole working class, regardless of colour — the whole working class of the whole world."

For all its limitations, Debs' outlook represented the most advanced attitude within pre-First World War American socialism on the Negro question. Socialist Party leader Victor Berger, for instance, was an unashamed racist: "There can be no doubt", he wrote in his paper the *Social Democratic Herald* "that the Negroes and mulattoes constitute a lower race."

Under the impact of the Russian Revolution a Communist Party was formed in America in 1919. It followed the line championed by Debs and that other great American socialist, Daniel De Leon.

But soon the impact of the Bolsheviks' thinking on the 'national and colonial question' changed all that. As early as 1913 Lenin had written: "In the United States, 11.1 per cent of the population consists of Negroes (and also Mulattoes and Indians), who must be considered an oppressed nationality", rather than simply workers like any other workers.

Republic

The Bolsheviks insisted that the CP must be the boldest champions of the Negroes' rights. And in 1928 this policy was extended to include support for black self-determination — the right of Blacks to take a part of the territory of the USA as their own and set up a Black Republic.

The Negroes were recognised as having national rights; the slogan of a Negro Republic in the South was advanced; at the same time the Party campaigned for complete 'equal rights' for Blacks outside that area and (so long as no Negro Republic was established) within it.

However, the 'Black Republic' slogan was put forward in a very utopian way.

The CPUSA was the first "white" organisation to consider the blacks to be an oppressed nation, but a whole series of Black organisations and initiatives had shown that there was a national consciousness among American blacks.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the American Blacks notably debated the question of a "national home for the Negro". In this period there were numerous schemes to

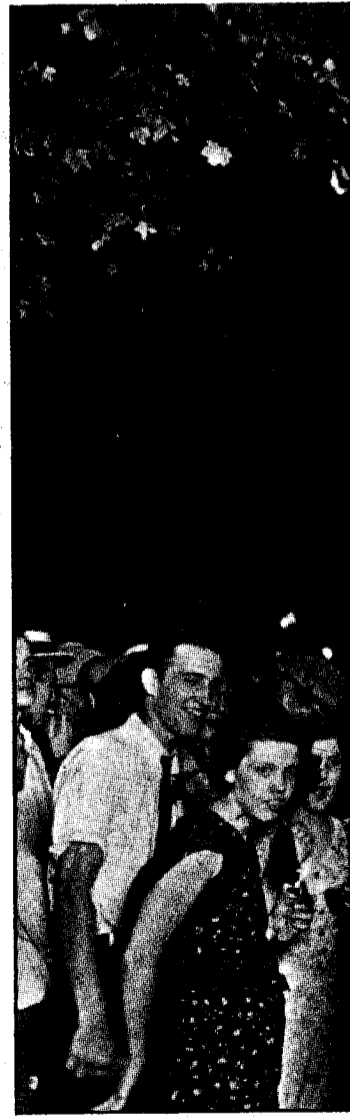
'Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination'. Pathfinder Press £1. Obtainable from Pathfinder Press, 47 The Cut, London SE1.

settle Liberia, California, Ha Canada, parts of South America and Africa.

After the Civil War, Blacks were robbed of the rights they had hoped to win, as northern industry dealt with the Southern plantocracy. Nor did their situation improve gradually after that: the turn of the century saw Blacks in several states disenfranchised.

Throughout this period, the leaders of the Negro movement above all Booker T. Washington and those around him at the Negro College at Tuskegee, Alabama, preached patience and industry. These Black petty-bourgeois and their organisations, the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) and the Urban League, were indifferent to hostile to trade unionism. The slogan was integration, not nationhood. The NAACP leader Du Bois became one of the fiercest opponents of Black nationalism.

The drift to the North around the time of the First World War changed all that, just as it shifted the locus of the militant Negro struggle



from the Southern fields to Northern ghettos and factories.

This new struggle took on a clearly nationalist flavour. In 1915 Noble Drew Ali formed the Nation of Islam, the forerunner of the Black Muslims, in Newark. The next year Marcus Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in Jamaica, but shifted its centre two years later to Harlem. The Garveyites' slogan "Back to Africa" expressed — in a confused way — the desire of black people to have their own state rather than being ruled by white people.

1915 saw the beginning of the nationalist-religious movement of Father Divine.

After 1928 the CPUSA, under the guidance of Bolshevik ideology, learned to recognise the significance of this tradition. Around the same time the CPUSA's dominant faction — loyal to the Stalin faction

Black workers the revolution

in the Soviet Union — expelled the Trotskyist Left Opposition led by James P. Cannon.

The Trotskyists formed the Communist League of America in 1929, but at their founding conference decided to delete the passages in a draft resolution which referred to the Negroes as a nation. They decided to discuss the matter later, but did not. So it was with a view to clarifying this question, with the guidance of one of the Bolshevik leaders, that CLA militant Arne Swabeck raised the matter in a discussion with Trotsky, early in 1933.

Swabeck thought in terms of the "the unity of the workers, black and white, ... proceeding from a class basis. ... It is our opinion that in this respect the main slogan should be 'social, political and economic equality for the Negroes'..." His approach was abstract and academic: the Negroes are not a majority in any one state; their language and religion are the same as that of the whites...

In reply, Trotsky pointed out: "Abstract criteria are not decisive

unconditional duty of the Marxist to support that struggle actively.

As for the slogan of a Black Republic, Trotsky could see "no reason why we should not advance the demand" — just as the Communist Party (of which the CLA still considered itself a faction) was doing. Whether it could have any real agitational force was another question, but certainly, Trotsky thought, it should be part of the party's programme.

On one significant point Trotsky did distinguish himself from the CPUSA's version of the self-determination slogan. The CPUSA ultimately pointed to the slogan of a Black Republic in the South as the only solution to the Negro question. The Party press even carried maps and tables stipulating just where this Black Republic should be situated.

"We do not compel them to separate from the state" he said, criticising this Stalinist decree, "but they have the full right to self-determination when they so desire and we will support and defend them with all the means at

our disposal in the winning of this right."

It did not matter that the blacks were not a majority in any one state: "It is not a question of the authority of the states but of the Negroes." Nor was it true, as Swabeck had claimed, that the slogan of self-determination would rally the petty-bourgeoisie and deliver the workers to them. It was the slogan of 'integration' that the petty-bourgeois Black leaders supported: *the nationalist movements had almost always been predominantly proletarian.*

Nor was it decisive that the Negroes did not then call for a separate state. Firstly, it was a question of programme and not necessarily of immediate agitation. And secondly, "The Negroes have not yet got it into their heads that they dare to carve out a piece of the great and mighty States for themselves." In part, the idea of raising the slogan was precisely to educate the Negroes into that degree of daring while educating the racist whites as to their duties as workers.

At the time this discussion was taking place, America was in the grip of a deep depression. There were about 15 million unemployed and racism was sharper than ever: there were eight lynchings in 1932, and twenty-eight in 1933.

The South was still the home of 79% of American Blacks, but racism was by no means confined there. During the twenties the Ku Klux Klan had become a major factor in a number of northern cities. Its extreme wing, the Black Legion, was a real force in cities like Chicago and Detroit. In the period 1931 to 1936 the Black Legion was credited with executing over fifty people in Detroit alone.

Unions

The majority of unions did not accept black workers as members. "Before World War One" says historian Northrup "80% of the firemen of the Southern Railway were coloured; by 1929 this number was reduced to 33 per cent. On the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line the percentages were reduced from 90 and 50, to 50 and 25 respectively."

And William Z. Foster, the CPUSA leader, writes that "At the 1926 convention of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers, President Robertson informed the delegates that he hoped to be able to tell the next convention that 'not a single Negro remained on the left side of an engine cab'."

By the time the other two discussions in the *Pathfinder* volume took place, things looked very different.

In Europe fascism was at its Zenith, but in America the most terrible years of the depression were over. Unemployment had fallen somewhat and a mood of militancy rapidly gained ground within the working class. This development was stimulated by the "New Deal" policies introduced by the Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The New Deal brought few tangible reforms for the Blacks but there were a number of token acts. The number of Negro workers on the Federal payroll was increased from 50,000 in 1933 — a year after Roosevelt's election — to over 200,000 during the war; most, of course, in the poorest-paid, least skilled categories.

The most important New Deal labour measure directly affecting blacks was the setting up of the Fair Employment Practices Committees. This was only done in

1941, and even then the American Federation of Labour was against it. It wasn't until 1944 that the AFL endorsed it with the rider that no action would be taken against union members not operating the "fair practices".

In the mid-thirties, basing itself on the new boldness of the working class in the mass production industries like steel, motors, rubber and mining, the Congress of Industrial Organisations tore itself free of the hidebound labour-aristocrats of the AFL and founded a great new militant trade union movement. This movement, at least on paper, welcomed blacks.

Meanwhile in the South the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union had been formed to wage a united struggle against poverty and landlordism. A quite different mood reigned from that of 1933. In 1938 there were "only" six lynchings, and in 1939 "only" three.

Chance

The situation provided the Trotskyists with big possibilities in every field, and the decline of the Communist Party's black membership opened up the chance of a breakthrough. The CPUSA had won a very big Negro following in the early thirties, but when the Soviet Union supplied Italy with oil for its Ethiopian campaign and turned to support for Roosevelt in 1936, most of these black CP members flooded out of the Party. 79% of the black CP members in New York left the Party.

In addition, some of the blacks the CP now picked up (and they included the now somewhat more radical Du Bois) were less militant and more "integrationist" than those who had left. In practice the CP dropped its self-determination slogan.

How did the Trotskyists, who had done very little on the Negro question between 1933 and 1939 (when the two further discussions took place) face up to these opportunities?

Leading the Negro work of the American Trotskyists (the Socialist Workers Party) was CLR James (called Johnson in the discussions) — a Trinidadian intellectual who while in Britain had joined the Trotskyists in the ILP. James had also played a leading part in the organisation of the Pan-African Congress Movement.

James' view was that self-determination should remain a part of the party's programme, but that it had no mobilising power. On this issue the difference with Trotsky was not great: but it is significant that Trotsky would not allow James to label Black nationalism as reactionary.

Trotsky insists that as a party the SWP can remain absolutely neutral on the question of secession, of an independent Black state. But he also insists "We cannot say it will be reactionary. It is not reactionary."

This issue was, however, not the central one this time. James posed the issue: he believed it was time for the Trotskyists to take the initiative in the creation of a Black party. In this way Blacks would be brought into, and even give leadership to, the class struggles of the American workers. And the way this could best be brought about was to build a broad, mass Black party fighting for a programme that concerned itself with the con-

dition of the black workers and sharecroppers.

It is worth emphasising that just when the US was beginning to see joint black-white struggles, Trotsky and James advocated the setting up of an all-black Party.

"We must say" Trotsky argues "to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historic developments to become a vanguard of the working class. What serves as a brake on the higher strata? It is the privileges, the comforts which hinder them from becoming revolutionists. It does not exist for the Negroes. What can transform a certain stratum, make it more capable of courage and sacrifice? It is concentrated in the Negroes. If it happens that we in the SWP are not able to reach this stratum, then we are not worthy at all. The permanent revolution and all the rest would be only a lie."

James expressed his position perhaps best in a later document (not included in this compilation), drafted in 1948. He pointed out that the more the Negroes were incorporated into the unions the stronger became the independence movement.

"Now Lenin has handled this problem... He says that the dialectic of history is such that small independent nations, small nationalities, which are powerless — get the word, please — powerless, in the struggle against imperialism, nevertheless can act as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli, which can bring onto the scene the real power against imperialism — the socialist proletariat..."

"They, by their agitation, resistance and the political developments that they can initiate, can be the means whereby the proletariat is brought onto the scene."

The task of the SWP, James concluded, was to establish a black party capable of drawing in the masses rapidly. This party would have a working class programme adapted to the realities of Negro life. It would not be a black version of the SWP, but a black version of the idea of the Labour Party.

Party

The American Trotskyists argued for the trade unions to launch a workers' party independent from the Republicans and the Democrats. They reckoned that this new Labour Party could be a fluid, open political formation, through which millions of workers would enter political action and within which revolutionaries could play a leading role — a Labour Party far removed from a bureaucratised, conservative party such as the British LP had become.

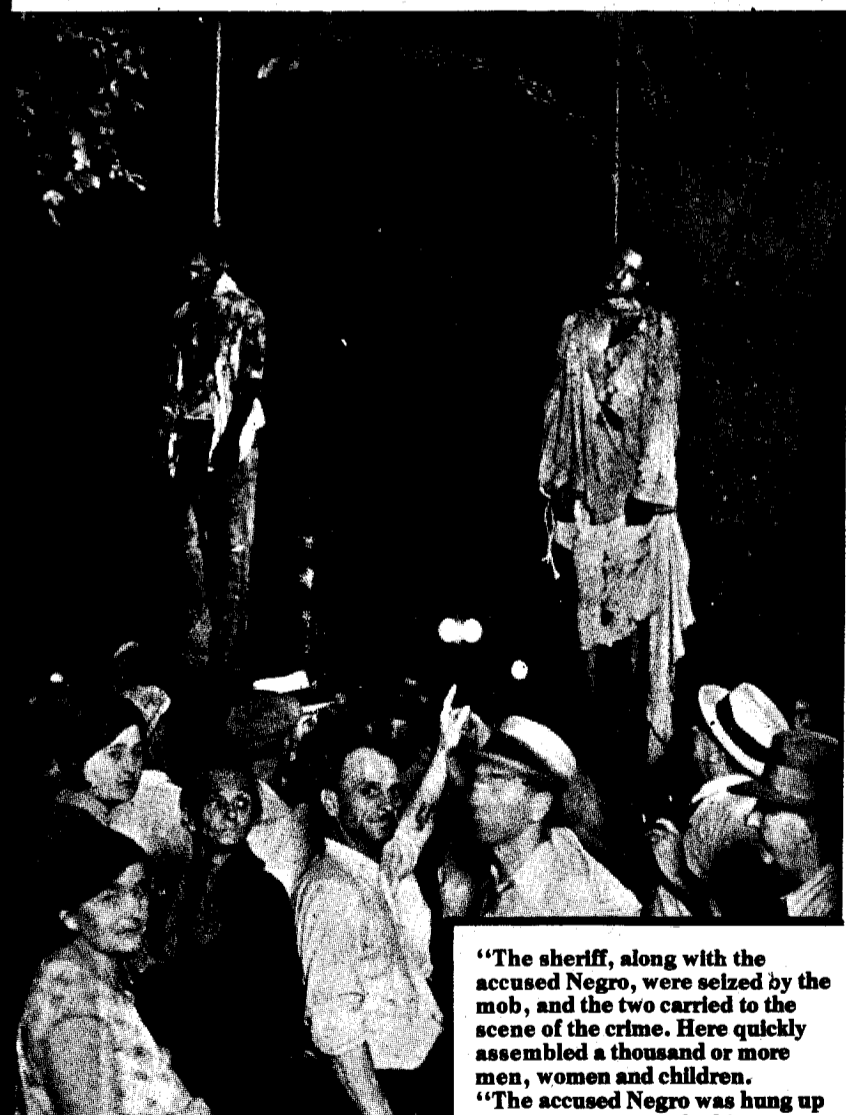
As with the Labour Party, the emphasis of the black party was to be on two things: independence and a mass proletarian base.

Trotsky was far more attuned than the majority of American revolutionaries to the need for blacks to gain confidence through their own organisation. "They were enslaved by the whites. They were liberated by the whites (so-called liberation). They are led and misled by the whites, and they did not have their political independence. They were in need of pre-political activity as Negroes."

He and James had slightly different estimates as to the role of black intellectuals within this party. But they were agreed on the need for a mass base.

Trotsky still insisted on the need for self-determination in the party's programme but he attacked the Stalinists' way of posing this issue with their customary ultimatism. "We cannot tell them to set up a state because that will weaken imperialism and so be good for us, the white workers. That would be against internationalism itself... We can say: 'It is for you to decide'."

This short compilation is an extremely rich example of the Marxist method in action. It demonstrates admirably the ways Marxists approach the question of nationalism and self-determination. From the vantage point of the Seventies, however, even this rich and flexible approach seems to have failed to give adequate attention to the form of expression of black nationalism in the North-ern ghettos.



"The sheriff, along with the accused Negro, were seized by the mob, and the two carried to the scene of the crime. Here quickly assembled a thousand or more men, women and children. The accused Negro was hung up in a sweet gum tree by his arms — just high enough to keep his feet off the ground. Members of the mob tortured him for more than an hour.

"A pole was jabbed in his mouth, his toes were cut off joint by joint; his fingers were similarly removed and members of the mob extracted his teeth with wire pliers.

"After further unmentionable mutilations the Negro's still living body was saturated with gasoline and a lighted match was applied.

"As the flames leapt up hundreds of shots were fired into the dying victim. During the day thousands of people from miles around rode out to see the sight. Not till nightfall did the officers remove the body and bury it."

From 'Lynchings and what they mean', published in 1931 by the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching.



CLR James, who proposed the idea of a Black Party in 1939

in this question; far more decisive is the historical consciousness of the group, their feelings, their impulses."

Trotsky rejected static categories — "The Negroes are a race and not a nation. Nations grow out of racial material under definite conditions. The Negroes in Africa are not yet a nation but they are in the process of forming a nation."

He stressed that the question is a matter of their consciousness, otherwise it would not be self-determination: "We of course do not obligate the Negroes to become a nation; whether they are is a question of their consciousness, that is, what they desire and what they strive for."

And should the Negroes desire and strive for their own nation, their own state — however they determine the matter of their nationhood — it is the absolute and

"CAN you see that kind of dialogue coming from the Conservative Party? Where else would you get such a depth of debate without personal denigration? It was a lesson in democracy" said Jim Callaghan, describing the Labour conference debate on the 5% pay limit.

If that was a "lesson in democracy", then "2x2=5" is a lesson in arithmetic. The conference decided... and Callaghan blandly declared he would ignore the decision.

Shirley Williams — who made a big speech not so long back about the need to defend democracy against Marxism — thought it was a "tragedy of procedure"... As the *Guardian* reported it, she blamed "the system under which, if a motion is not 'remitted', delegates have to vote for it or against it".

Shirley Williams did not expand on what votes she, as an expert in democracy, thought should be taken. Maybe we should be given the choice of voting for the Right or against the Left? Or the choice of applauding the government or staying at home?

The newspapers which regularly condemn Marxists and militant socialists as a menace to democracy had a similar line: they denounced Moss Evans for "following" rather than "leading" the members of the TGWU, meaning that he had voted in accordance with TGWU conference decisions rather than ignoring them.



Tribune and *Labour Weekly* — both of which usually stand on the Left of the Party — were just as bad as Shirley Williams. Both reported the Conference vote not as a decision to be carried out but as a problem to be smoothed over. Their answer to a vote against all pay curbs under capitalism was that the Government and the TUC should have talks to fix up new pay curbs, more flexible than the 5%!

The strangest twist to this "lesson in democracy" was that the trade union delegates who voted down the 5% were mostly not very eager to see the decision carried out. When Callaghan spoke, telling them he would ignore their vote, they did not shout him down, or demand "Resign!". They gave him a standing ovation!

Lesson in Democracy?



Democracy means majority rule — and here you have a majority slavishly applauding the minority which flouts its decisions...

In a negative way, the procedure was a "lesson in democracy". It showed up the limited and largely sham character of the democracy that exists in the Labour Party, like the Parliamentary democracy in British society.

The executive power — the actual decision-making centre, the Parliamentary leadership in the Labour Party, or the top civil service and armed forces chiefs — is almost entirely insulated from the conferences and elections. Whichever way the votes go, the men and women at the top can always defy the majority — and there is scarcely any way to bring them to account.

Thus the democracy is largely for show. The Party Conferences or the Parliamentary elections give the rulers a valuable barometer of the way people feel, and the ruled an impression of being involved in the political process.



Champions of 'democracy against Marxism' — they're about as democratic as Genghis Khan

They help to fool people. But a double-banked armory of safeguards exists to stop democratic decisions ever seriously tying the rulers' hands.

In the Labour Party, there is the block vote — placing the major voting power in the hands of top trade union officials; the NEC's weeding-out of problem resolutions; and the virtual immunity of MPs and the parliamentary Party leaders from any accountability.

In the Parliamentary system, the first 'safeguard' is the undemocratic voting procedure. Elections are called only once every five years, or when the Government likes. Instead of voting at a meeting, after collective discussion, each individual votes separately after a barrage of mostly right-wing press and TV coverage. Once elected, the MP is free to betray every single promise he or she has ever made.

In case these barriers fail to prevent a left-wing parliamentary majority, there are further obstacles. Faced with the triple sabotage of Army and Civil Service chiefs, the House of Lords, and the monarchy, any anti-capitalist decision has little chance of getting through the system.

Responsibility, realism and the national interest are the words used to justify all these barriers and safeguards. They make sense in capitalist terms: for it is true that you cannot run the capitalist system 'responsibly' without accepting definite limitations. Capitalism needs high profits, but high profits are not a popular democratic cause. So the defenders of the capitalist system need to protect profits from democracy.



It is not an accident that there is so much similarity between Parliamentary undemocracy and Labour Party undemocracy.

In the 18th and 19th centuries the British Parliament had real power — restrained, though to a decreasing degree, by the power of the monarch, who protected the interests of the old aristocracy. Parliament represented a rough-and-ready democracy of the property-owning classes, who in most areas were the only people with the right to vote.

Under-rising pressure, the ruling class eventually (after 1867)

for the bourgeoisie. The nationalisation of the major means of production has been in the Labour Party constitution since 1918; it has been repeatedly reaffirmed as policy at conferences since then; and everyone knows the Labour leaders will never do anything about it!

With the extra filter of Labour undemocracy added to the filter of Parliamentary undemocracy, working class aspirations are filtered down into stolid conservatism.

The weak point of this swindle is that it depends on the great majority of the working class remaining passive, confused, and largely apathetic: satisfied with 'spectator democracy'. It depends of workers' instinctive socialist consciousness being harnessed to a concept of socialism as a series of welfare measures introduced gradually by the existing state — so that popular pressure for socialist planning, for example, can be transformed into the promise of 'planning agreements' and the practice of propping up big business and 'planning' (i.e. keeping down) wages.



Every time workers organise to take affairs into their own hands and to elect and control their own leaders, they are beginning to go beyond that vague 'state socialism'. If we can link up that drive with a socialist programme which is a precise guide to working class action (rather than a vague dream of salvation), then the game will be over for the Labour bureaucrats and the Parliamentary swindle.

For the working class, once it becomes organised and aware of itself as a collective force, with a loyal and democratically controlled leadership, can 'storm heaven'.

The "dictatorship of the proletariat" means that the working class takes control of the running of society directly, instead of having its aspirations filtered down, transformed, and negated by Parliamentary politics. It means abolishing the filters: having the legislative and executive power united in directly accountable workers' councils; making every delegate subject to the right of recall; basing democracy on the organised workers in the factories and the offices, rather than the individual citizen in the polling station.

That is Marxism. That is the threat to Shirley Williams' democracy.

had to concede the vote to the working class. The functioning of Parliament changed. More and more, Parliament became a place for show debates — while the real decisions were taken behind the scenes.

The emergence of the Labour Party as an organisationally independent workers' party was a threat.

The bourgeoisie set out to win over the Labour and trade union leaders, and make them reliable bourgeois agents in the labour movement. They succeeded — indeed, in most cases, the task was not very difficult. And, to protect the "Labour lieutenants of Capital", labour movement conferences came more and more to take the form of Parliamentary-type debate which the real decisions were taken behind the scenes.

It has been a brilliant success

Socialist Organiser
Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

OCTOBER 1976 10 pence

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' sell-out 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 that is no way to fight the

Tories. We fight to keep the Tories out but also to build our own socialist fightback against the present Conservative Government's second-term Tory policies and against the next Government, Tory or Labour.

WE NEED CONSTITUENCY Labour already supports our Campaign. We need your support to make sure that a socialist alternative is based on many more constituencies at the coming general election. Write to: Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, Box 127, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1. Contribute to our campaign fund.

We need £2,000 before the election, to cover leaflets, posters, and postage. Let 400 supporters get us there. Send us to: SLV, Box 127, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

THE NAZIS must be stopped. Defend Brick Lane! Stop the Nazi march! Assemble 12 noon at the junction of Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road.

PATRIK KODIKARA

Stop the Nazis' march on Shoreditch!

IT is to coincide with the Anti-Nazi League march on Sunday. The Nazis have planned a march into Shoreditch in London.

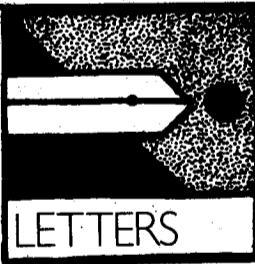
The organisers are the British National Party, Brick Lane, and the British League of Women's Voters. They are to march from Brick Lane to Shoreditch.

The organisers have been that the Anti-Nazi League and the British League of Women's Voters are the only organisations which would prevent the march.

But the problem of the march is not the Nazis. It is the British National Party and the British League of Women's Voters. They are the ones who are organising the march.

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

RAPED BY CLASS SOCIETY



Comrades, I want to answer some of the points raised by Sarah Harris in her letter in WA118 in reply to my article on the politics of Rape in WA116.

Firstly, she says she is unhappy with the politics of the article because it emphasises male domination as the cause of rape — rape being the extreme expression of male superiority. However, unlike the radical feminists I regard male domination in class terms.

Class society developed along with monogamy, as possession of private property (including women) became paramount. Class societies have always been patriarchal, so the two are very much inter-related.

But I do not, as a socialist, regard men as a class. Class society reinforces male domination. Within capitalist society working class women have objectively more in common with working class men than with ruling class women — their interests are in terms of their class, not their sex.

Of course abolition of capitalism will not automatically bring about the cessation of rape; neither will it automatically bring about the liberation of women. But as my article pointed out, in distinction from the

radical feminists, I see the struggle against rape and against the ideology that breeds rape as part of the struggle to overthrow capitalist society — not, as Sarah Harris seems to think, as distinct from the class struggle.

I don't believe that the act of rape can be abolished within capitalist society — and it would be wrong to suggest that it could. Asking for stiffer laws against rapists does not alter the conditions that lead to rape being committed.

As socialists, we should not see the fight against rape in isolation — as Sarah suggests by asking for demands on rape to organise around.

Our 'clear alternative' to the radical feminists is to see the struggle against rape in the context of challenging the ruling class ideas that perpetuate the existence of rape, and of building a working class based women's movement as part of that struggle.

Working class women, as part of the working class, are the only group that can ultimately destroy the social, class conditions that encourage rapes to take place. Unless we see rape clearly in such terms, our struggle will be weakened.

ROS MAKIN

ABOUT 1000 supporters of the Garners Steak Houses strike gathered at Speakers' Corner last Saturday to march to Trafalgar Square.

There were representatives from a number of London Trades Councils, branches of the TGWU, CPSA, NALGO, and others; from the ANL and at least two East London Defence Committees and various left groups — even a division of London Young Liberals, and of Leicester Anarchists.

Les Shorter, Regional Organiser of the T&G, addressed the meeting, advising against mass pickets — no surprise, as the regional committee agreed with the police to keep picket numbers to six. Instead he offered to help 'control' pickets if branch membership organised their distribution.

Speakers from Grunwicks, Sandersons, and Garners strike committees called for more support from union members at pickets: if only those who turned up at the rally picketed one lunch-time or evening each week, there could be 6 pickets at every restaurant where there are often only 2 or 3 at present.

To the slogans of *Victory to the Garners strikers, No more Grunwicks sell-outs, No more union secret deals* and *End police harassment*, the march passed the two Oxford Street branches and the Haymarket branch (each guarded by a line of police), but was stopped before it reached Cockspur Street (Trafalgar Square), at which point organisers had intended to disperse the marchers to picket the 10 West End branches.

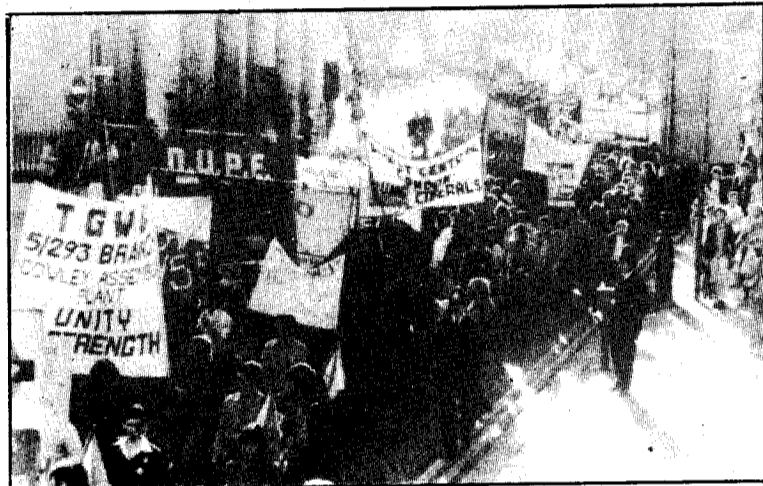
As the march broke up in confusion at finding police blocking the route to the end of the rally, about 200 marchers followed the call for a mass picket at Whitcomb Street. Chanting *"Scabs out — Union in"* they gathered on the pavement outside the restaurant, but were unable to resist the violent police attack, and when they collected at the Haymarket branch were again divided and roughly driven back by the police.

The confusion engendered by police intervention at Trafalgar Square frightened many of the supporters away from staying on to picket: many could have been introduced to picketing at its strongest and most effective in large pickets at all branches, encouraging them to adopt a branch and picket regularly.

Instead, the large number of police in attendance converged on the single mass picket, and in order to "protect" Garners boss Margolis' business and scab labour from peaceful picketing in an official strike they cleared a length of Haymarket and even shut off the tube entrance adjacent to Garners.

At a time when the end of the tourist season means falling trade

Not a Grunwick sell-out, but a Garners victory



for Garners, effective picketing, including well organised mass pickets, could bring victory to the strikers within weeks.

In the last month Margolis has twice met members of the strike committee. Although he has discussed reinstatement of those he sacked, and compensation, he still refuses to recognise the union, which his son apparently urges him to do.

The strikers, however, are not weakening: the turnout for the rally was much better than on May 20th, and more supporters went on to picket afterwards. But it is still only regular commitment to picketing which will reduce trade to less than the present level, and only regular support the struggle of the sacked

workers.

Some of these workers have picketed from midday to midnight almost every day since the strike began eight months ago, frequently subject to racist abuse and to threats and violence from scabs and management, while the police stand by and watch.

Pickets needed every day 12-3pm and 5.30-11pm at: 399 Oxford Street; 243 Oxford Street; 40 Haymarket; 29 Cockspur Street; 3 Charing Cross Road; 28 Berkeley Street; 56 Whitcomb Street; 16 Jermyn Street; 11 Lower Regent Street; 179 Brompton Rd.

Donations to strike fund and offers to picket to: Garners Steak Houses Strike Committee, Room 84, 12/13 Henrietta Street, WC2. Phone 01-240-1056.

An over-crowded country?

"They are nothing but trouble-makers... They have made a complete mess of their own country and now they have come here — many of them on assisted passages — to try to do the same thing..."

"They are the ones who foment all the trouble."

Two right-wing politicians were attacking immigrant workers. The twist to the tale is that these weren't British politicians denouncing Asians or West Indians, but Australian politicians condemning British immigrants.

The Local Government Minister and the Prime Minister of the state of Queensland were blaming British-born trade unionists for a brewery strike. (Though the secretary of the brewery union is in fact of Irish origin...)

Perhaps some of the people who like to scapegoat immigrants for problems in Britain should be sent on a trip to Queensland to find out what bigotry is like from the receiving end.

Against the thugs in blue

ALONGSIDE the National Front's attacks — and on a far bigger scale — black people are subjected to daily police harassment. And if the strengthened police powers demanded by Police Commissioner Sir David McNee are granted, then racist repression will become even harsher.

In response, a number of militant black groups have come together to launch an umbrella campaign, Black People Against State Harassment (BASH). In its initial press release, BASH says:

"In the last seven years the black community — and in particular young blacks — have been subjected to several brutal attacks. Remember these: the murder of David Oluwale [1971]; the Portnal Road police attack [1972]; the Mangrove police raid and trial [1972]; the Carib club police attack and the Cricklewood 12 trial [1974-5]; the police attack on Carnival [1976]; the police revenge attack on the Islington 18 for Carnival 1977; the police revenge attack on the Mangrove for Carnival 1977; the police dragnet in Brixton station on the two days of Carnival 1978... the SPG attack on the Mangrove, September 1978.

"And we could add to this list many more 'sus' cases which go unreported."

BASH aims to submit written evidence to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, documenting police harassment of the black communities and arguing against McNee's proposals. It will also be organising public meetings, pickets outside prisons where 'illegal immigrants' are held, a legal aid fund and a list of lawyers, and a newsletter.

Among supporters of BASH are the 'Sus' Campaign, Bradford Asian Youth, the Black Liberator, the Black Socialist Alliance, and Mukhti. For further information, contact Ricky Cambridge [671-3459] or Cecil Gutzmore [969 4123/9825] or write to BASH, 121 Railton Road, SE24.

CALL FOR A NEW ANL CONFERENCE

AFTER a discussion of the Anti Nazi League Carnival and the fascists' march into the East End on September 24th, the North Staffordshire Campaign against Racism and Fascism has passed a hard-hitting indictment of the way the ANL leadership acted.

At a meeting of 40 delegates to the campaign, which brings together a dozen Labour Party wards and trade union branches in the Stoke area, as well as socialist groups, the following resolution was passed by a three-to-one majority.

"This meeting notes the betrayal of the leaders of the Anti-Nazi League in the fight against fascism, which was most clearly expressed in the deliberate sabotage of the counter-demonstration against the fascists in Brick Lane on September 24th. This meeting demands an emergency conference at which affiliated organisations of the ANL can hold the ANL leadership to account.

"We demand also a minimum platform of... No to all immigration controls, support for black self-defence, no platform for fascists, for known fascists to be expelled from the unions, opposition to state bans... The emergency conference also to decide on a democratic structure for the Anti-Nazi League."

The resolution was moved by Workers' Action supporters and was opposed by the Communist Party. All but one of the SWP members at the meeting supported the resolution.

The resolution will be circulated to other ANL and anti-fascist/anti-racist committees with the intention of building up a movement to get a recall ANL conference.

PAUL COOPER

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 16 October. "State security: a threat to us all". Speakers: Robin Cook MP, Brian Whittaker, John Davis ('Persons Unknown'). 8pm, Everyman Bistro, Hope St, Liverpool 1.

Wednesday 18 October. Workers' Power public meeting: "The Labour Government and the Trade Unions". Speaker: Stuart King. 7.30pm, Lawrence Hall, 2 Cumberland Rd, Plaistow, London E13.

Saturday 21 October. Anti-Apartheid demonstration. Assemble 1.30 at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park.

Sunday 29 October. London Workers' Action meeting: "Fighting racism and fascism". 7.45pm, "General Picton", Wharfdale Rd/Caledonian Rd, London N1.

Saturday 4 November. Leicester NAC demonstration: "Out-patient abortion now, free abortion on demand, a woman's right to choose". Assemble 2pm in Victoria Park, Leicester.

Saturday 11 November. "Occupations, criminal trespass, and the use of the law" — national conference of the Campaign against the Criminal Trespass Law. At Conway Hall, London WC1. Credentials £2 from CACTL c/o 35 Wellington St, London WC2.

Saturday 25 November. Trade union conference on abortion, organised by the National Abortion Campaign and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign. At Caxton Hall, London SW1. Delegate forms from NAC, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1.

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How trade unionists can fight for abortion rights

A Trade Union Conference on Abortion will be held on November 25th at Caxton Hall, London. The aim of the conference, which already has national backing from 4 unions (NUPE, AUEW/TASS, ACTT and the Tobacco Workers) is to look at the role of the Trade Union movement in the fight for a woman's right to choose.

It will be looking at how trade unionists can campaign for 'pro-choice' policies within the unions, mobilise to defend the 1967 Abortion Act against fresh attempts to restrict abortion, and support campaigns for decent NHS abortion facilities.

The TUC already has policies of supporting "the right of all women to adequate services of contraception, and abortion on request available free of charge on the National Health Service". This conference will discuss how that policy can be put into practice.

Credentials for delegates to the conference from Trades Councils, Union branches etc. can be obtained from the Conference Organising Committee c/o NAC, 30 Camden Road, London NW1.

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

WORKERS' ACTION

Pay: a united fight is the way to win

LEYLAND: ACT WHILE FORDS ARE FIGHTING

AS the 5% limit collapsed under the impact of the Ford strike, the British Leyland Cars combine committee last week put in its claim for 1978-79.

According to the 1977 agreement, "Corporate Bargaining" for the whole of BL Cars — as opposed to plant bargaining — is not supposed to come into force until November 1979. The combine committee is, however, pushing for parity throughout BL Cars as from November 1978, and it is calling on negotiating committees in each plant to submit the combine claim.

The Government has already agreed to relax the 12-month limit on pay settlements so that all BL plants will be brought onto a common settlement date, November 1st.

The claim is a good one. It includes:

- A 35-hour week without loss of pay;

- A pay rise to bring production workers up to £100 a week. This will mean at least £15, and £27 for some workers.

- Full parity from November 1978.

- Consolidation of supplements; full sick pay without the three-day clause; elimination of penalty clauses on lay-off pay; 24-hour notice of lay-offs on the night shift; and other items.

At Longbridge, the claim was endorsed at mass meetings on Monday and Tuesday (9th & 10th), and it will go to management on Friday (15th). Longbridge Joint Shop Stewards' Committee are calling for

a mass meeting to discuss further action on November 3rd.

These demands go as far as the militant claim already decided by the Cowley Assembly Plant, except on the issue of a cost-of-living clause to protect wages against future inflation. The problem is: what will the combine committee, made up of convenors and senior stewards, do about it?

In August this year the Works Committee at Longbridge — headed by Derek Robinson, who also leads the combine committee — pushed a policy through mass meetings which included pressing for pay rises ... and major speed-ups.

The Works Committee scheme included increased labour mobility; a 'team working' system where each team of workers has to 'cover' for any absences within the 'team'; changed shift patterns (probably meaning a third shift); and an agreement that work-study people should have the final say on manning levels and job layouts.

Addressing a mass meeting, Works Committee spokesman Jack Adams explained that the scheme was necessary because (in the opinion of the Works Committee) Longbridge workers were not prepared to fight. The best that could be done was to sell the workers' conditions dearly.

Nothing came of that. But the officials, the convenors, and the senior stewards will probably still be prepared to sell out BL workers' conditions — if only

they can get away with it.

£15 increases and a 35-hour week are certainly not going to be won without a fight from BL workers! But if talks get going on "buying out" workers' conditions and jobs, the BL bosses may be ready to offer relatively large sums of money. They have already proposed an incentive scheme with payments of up to £15 a week.

A serious danger for BL workers, therefore, is that they may be faced with a deal which promises seemingly good wage increases ... together with speed-up clauses which will make life in BL plants hell and chop thousands of jobs.

BL boss Michael Edwardes wants 7,000 jobs cut over the next year. In Longbridge, as the WA bulletin describes it:

"The bosses are planning to get rid of 1,000 more jobs at Longbridge by Christmas. Nationally the workforce in the power and train division is to be cut by 30%."

"Units 3, 4 and 5 here are to be de-manned in the next couple of months. 300 jobs are to go from unit 5, and more than 200 from Cofton Hackett. But the worst hit is likely to be the East Works, as work runs down on the A Series engines."

"This is only the start of the jobs massacre. The Allegro will be gone by the end of 1979, and the Mini won't last long after the LCB goes into production."

"When that happens management want to have only 600 of us working in the new West body shop; instead of 4,000 now. Overall, we could be down to 10,000 in Longbridge by 1982."

BL workers will have to challenge the senior stewards' idea of the inevitability of job loss and speed-up, and link the wages fight with a battle for the nationalisation without compensation of the whole car and components industry, with the re-organisation of production under workers' control.

To stop the senior stewards and union officials getting away with a sell-out, the shop floor must insist on full democratic control over every stage of the negotiations.

And if the claim is really going to be won, there can be no question of waiting until next month for action. A united strike movement, alongside workers at Ford and in other industries with claims now in, is the only sort of struggle likely to win claims like the 35 hour week in full. Now is the time to move, joining BL workers' forces with those of the Ford workers instead of letting the bosses deal with each group one at a time.

WE'LL BREAK 5% TOO

LAST SATURDAY (Oct. 7th) in Birmingham, a packed conference hall of 1000 trade unionists eagerly applauded militant speeches against the 5% limit and for the 35 hour week.

Local union officials were unmistakably giving notice to the Government that it had gone too far with its plans for Phase 4. Yet the conference ended without having discussed beyond a general 'declaration of intent' proposed from the

platform.

Patrick Sikorski, from the regional council of the health service union CoHSE, demanded a debate on a motion submitted by his union and setting out a programme for action — but the platform said they had never received it!

The conference had been called by Roger Poole, assistant Divisional Officer of NUPE, and was sponsored by eleven other unions at regional level. The speakers included Bob Wright of the AUEW, Bob Edwards MP, and Ford convenor Bernie Passingham. They all had a similar message.

We must learn the lessons from the struggles of Grunwick and the firemen: their failure was our failure, and the same must not happen with the Ford strike. Their success will be our success.

Again and again it was said: the fight to break the 5% limit must not be left to Fords alone — it was a fight that must unite all workers both in the private and in the public sectors.

It was emphasised: The Ford strikers mustn't be isolated to be betrayed by union bureaucrats.

The TUC and the Labour Party conferences had both declared their opposition to further incomes policy, but the passing of resolutions was not enough: we had to make sure these resolutions were carried into action, and such action must go beyond just smashing the 5% limit.

Other issues, like the 35-hour week, were no less important.

But at the end of this militant two-hour conference, all we were left with was speeches of good intent, with no plans on how to turn these words into action, how to organise and mount a fight.

It will be up to militants in the workplaces to organise the struggle — and to remember that the union officials and MPs who have so suddenly switched from preaching 'responsibility' to talking militant can easily switch back again.

SUE CROSS

ELLESMERE PORT

Vauxhall workers decide to wait and see

WORKERS AT Vauxhall have rejected the company's derisory pay offer, which would amount to as little as 2½% for some grades and would certainly be within the Government's 5% limit for all Vauxhall workers.

Unlike at Fords, the news of the company's offer did not provoke spontaneous walk-outs, nor does a Vauxhall strike seem likely in the near future, as there is a feeling of "wait and see what happens at Ford". Negotiations are continuing.



The biggest union at Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant, the AUEW, held a mass meeting at Tranmere Rovers football ground over the summer and the workers voted to accept the 5% limit in principle if the company would concede a 35 hour week.

Vauxhall workers see the outcome of the Ford strike as crucial. If the Ford workers smash through the 5% ceiling, Vauxhall workers will probably fight for a similar settlement.

This 'wait and see' attitude of course makes it more difficult for Ford workers to win their demands. But the union officials argue that, unlike Ford, Vauxhall cannot afford to pay, as they are not profitable enough. In fact General Motors — the owners of Vauxhall — can well afford to pay, and are not likely to cut themselves out of the English market by closing Vauxhall. But — not surprisingly in an area of high unemployment like Merseyside — the workers at Ellesmere Port take such arguments seriously.



Now Ford are giving way on the 5%, the Vauxhall workers can win a decent increase if they join the Ford workers in struggle. Otherwise the most likely outcome is that the union negotiators and Vauxhall will settle within Government guidelines (with some form of 'self-financing productivity deal') and the 35 hour week will be conveniently forgotten.

JOHN COSBY

HALEWOOD

No prod deals for Fords' fastest track

AT a mass meeting on Wednesday 4th October, over 3,000 Ford Halewood workers voted unanimously to continue the strike. The dockers in Liverpool are blocking Ford exports and lorry drivers in the TGWU to not going to move any Ford products either.

After Ford bosses announced they would negotiate without regard to the 5% limit, a worker in the press shop at Halewood told Workers' Action: "I think the management are going to offer 7% plus a productivity deal. The productivity deal would normally mean increased track speeds, but we already work the fastest track in Fords. So they may try to lower the target set and then allow the new 'extra' production as part of bonus."

"The union leaders, now the strike is official, will be trying to sell this sort of deal."

But workers are Halewood remain determined to fight for the full claim.

I SPY

Spying is all right ... as long as you don't spy on us. That is the Tory line, it seems.

In September Socialist Worker broke the story that the Trades Union Congress had been spied on by police sitting behind a two-way mirror in the foyer of the Brighton Conference Centre. The major daily papers shrugged it off as something of no importance. Only the Sunday Times gave it a small report, on an inside page.

Now the Tories are holding their conference in Brighton — and they are taking notice of what Socialist Worker reported! Conference organisers have insisted that if the two-way mirror is being used, then the light in the little room behind it [which was packed with police during the TUC] should be turned on, so the Tories know when they are being watched.

DAGENHAM

The stewards are going to control this strike

FORD DAGENHAM shop stewards are out to make sure the union bureaucrats don't run negotiations their own way. A stewards' meeting held on Tuesday 10th, before union officials met with Ford managers, unanimously passed a resolution which said: "We, the Dagenham Estate shop stewards, agree that no mass meetings be held until the Dagenham Estate shop stewards agree when and how it should be done".

The aim is to stop the union officials going over the stewards' heads; the problem with the decision, however, is that it leaves the mass of the members passive, dependent on the shop stewards to represent their interests and stop the union officials selling out.

A lobby of the negotiations was held in the afternoon by thirty or forty Ford workers, chanting "£20 on pay, an hour off the day. Productivity: no way". One union negotiator, Ken Baker of the GMWU, missed this, however, driving straight past in a large white Austin Princess... amid shouts of "Is it Henry Ford?"

The outcome of the meeting was that Ford made no new offer and asked for a return to work on the basis that they would negotiate outside the 5% limit. The union negotiators did not agree to a return to work, obviously feeling too much pressure from their members. There will be another meeting on Friday.

FRAN BRODIE