

# workers' ACTION

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10p

# AUGUST 20th BRICK LANE

ON SUNDAY 20th August the major organisations of the Asian community and of the Left are calling a demonstration in Brick Lane, East London. It is a protest against the rampages and thuggery of the Nazi National Front in the area.

The need for this mobilisation was underlined last Saturday, 12th. Representatives of the Tower Hamlets and Hackney Defence Committee were approached by the police, who told them that they couldn't hold their regular all-night vigil at the top of Brick Lane. "We're going to move you on this Sunday, however early you arrive, and we'll see to it that the Front get their pitch".

Bitterly, the Defence Committee decided to call off the vigil.

After a meeting later in the evening, eight young Bengalis, leaders of the local youth movement, were dropped off at the top of Brick Lane to walk home. Along the way they saw a gang of about a dozen fascists approaching them. As they turned to avoid a fight, they found their retreat cut off by another fascist group.

They were attacked and severely mauled.

When the police arrived they arrested one of the Bengalis for defending himself with a chair leg. The other seven were

so badly beaten they had to be taken to hospital. The fascists left satisfied.

Brick Lane is an area where many Asian immigrants live. It is not far from some of the NF's strongest areas. The Nazis have chosen to make Brick Lane the scene for a trial of strength.

A big labour movement turn-out on Sunday will show that we are prepared to play our part in stopping sordid racist violence like last Saturday's and the murders and rampages that went before it. It will show that we are willing to defend the equal right of all working people to live in peace, regardless of the colour of their skin — and that we're not so blindly complacent as to think that the police, who have shown racist bias time and time again, will stop the fascists.

Unfortunately one body which encourages that complacency is the Trades Union Congress. In a statement produced after Len Murray visited Brick Lane, the TUC comes out against active self-defence, and against a policy of driving the fascists off the streets. "The police", it laments, "have a difficult job".

But the statement is not the product of blindness. The TUC is acting deliberately, in concert with the Government,

police and state agencies, to keep the situation in Brick Lane "under control".

Having declared it will do nothing to help defend the Asian community, the TUC ends its statement by reading a patronising lesson to Asian workers on the need to join the unions.

Asian workers have shown often enough that they know the need for trade union organisation. What they ask from the TUC is not lectures on that theme, but help in getting their trade union organisation recognised. And in the Grunwicks dispute, the TUC showed that its main aim was not defending Asian workers' rights, nor helping them organise ... but, as in Brick Lane, keeping the struggle under control.

The TUC's statement should be sharply condemned by trade unionists throughout the country — and, most importantly, replied to *in action* by mass mobilisation on Sunday.

Of course one demonstration won't crush the NF for good. They will try to come back. But a big turn-out on Sunday can give a powerful impulse to the building of defence groups.

Be there on Sunday, 9am at the corner of Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road. Drive the NF Nazis off the streets. Help to build defence squads.

# ERITREA'S STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION

**AFTER TAKING** the town of Agordat, the Ethiopian army seems poised to inflict a decisive defeat on the Eritrean national liberation movement.

Eritrean spokesmen have claimed that their retreat is primarily tactical. According to a representative of the Eritrean Popular Liberation Front (EPLF), "The Egyptian Army has taken all it can take: its advance has reached its limit. The military position has been stabilised and we are in a position to renew our attacks on the enemy".

But the Ethiopian advance, part of a major offensive begun in early July, seems too powerful in terms of numbers and arms for any counter-attack at present. More likely, the Eritrean forces will play a waiting game, engage in hit and run raids, and hope to counterattack only if — in the event of a Cuban withdrawal — the balance of forces radically alters in their favour.

## Italy colonises

Eritrea has a long history of struggle for independence.

Eritrea comprises two distinct regions: a high plateau area and a long lowland coastal strip running south from Sudan almost to Somalia. The upland area is predominantly Christian and its population speaks Tigrinya like the adjoining area of Ethiopia, while the coastal strip is largely Muslim and Arabic-speaking.

Foreign interest in the area in modern times was aroused with the opening of the Suez Canal. Egyptian forces took the important towns of Massawa and Keren and occupied south central Eritrea, but were held back by British intervention. Seizing their opportunity to engage in the 'scramble for Africa', the Italians moved into Massawa in 1885 and prepared to drive further inland.

Their larger plans were defeated by Ethiopian resistance, but the Emperor permitted them to colonise Eritrea, which he still regarded as notionally part of his historic empire. In 1935 Mussolini's army succeeded in conquering the whole of Ethiopia.

By this time Eritrea had already undergone a certain industrialisation. Eritreans also participated in the Italian administration of the area. Abolition of feudal dues by the colonisers, confiscation of big estates and their transfer to Italian ownership, and the creation of a modern communications network further ensured the capitalist development of the region, while feudalism still reigned in the interior.

## Autonomy or independence

After the conquest of Ethiopia, the Italians administered Eritrea along with part of the neighbouring province of Tigre and several other areas. This complicated the question of the national identity particularly of the Christian Tigrinya-speaking Eritreans: were they Eritreans, Tigreans, or Ethiopians?

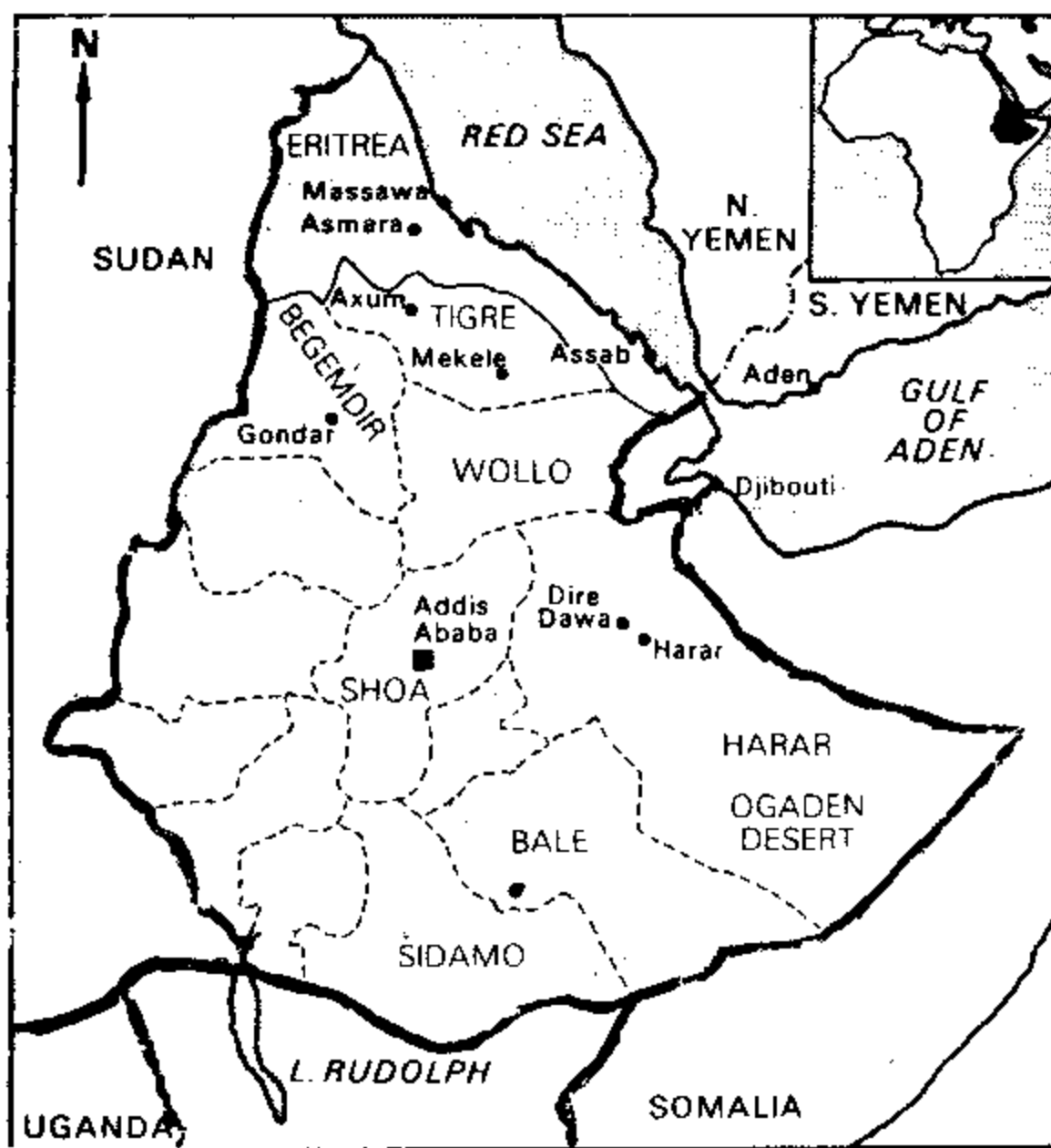
After the defeat of the Italian army during World War II, the British administered Eritrea. This period, from 1941 to 1952, saw the development in Eritrea of the first lowers of political and trade



Young Eritreans train for the struggle for national liberation. Eritrea, colonised by Italy, despoiled by Britain, and swallowed up by Ethiopia, now faces renewed oppression at the hands of the Dergue.

union organisation. At the same time, the British brutally suppressed any attempts by Eritreans to regain lands lost to Italian settlers and supported the colons in increasing their share of the lands.

In 1946 Ibrahim Sultan founded the Muslim League, which was based mainly on



the urban petty bourgeois who stood to lose if Eritrea were reincorporated into feudal Ethiopia. Economic, religious, linguistic and cultural differences all reinforced the League's claim for independence. At the same time a Christian party, the Liberal Progressives, was formed: this had a more ambivalent attitude towards independence.

These two parties, together with a pro-Italian grouping, formed an Independence Bloc in 1949, hoping to receive UNSupport. They were opposed by all the force available to the Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie: the Orthodox Church, physical violence, restrictions on movement, and a puppet party, the Unionists. The Bloc soon fragmented.

The UN decided in 1950 that Eritrea should "constitute an autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Crown". It further demanded that Eritreans be represented in the federal

legislature according to their numbers in the population — a vain suggestion as there was no legislature in Ethiopia, federal or otherwise.

Eritrea did establish an assembly after elections in 1952. But over the next ten years, through bribery, terror, and intrigue, the Emperor undermined the substance of Eritrean autonomy. The final farcical act came in 1962 when, after a rigged parliamentary vote, the assembly abolished itself and Eritrea was swallowed up by Ethiopia again.

A national liberation organisation was set up in exile in the late '50s, and in 1961, after changing its name to the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), it began guerilla activity. One of the leaders of this movement was Woldeab Woldemariam, a Christian separatist and former leader of the Eritrean General Union of Labour Syndicates, founded in 1952 and savagely repressed after the crushing of its 1952 general strike.

## Liberation movements

From this early point on, the fortunes of the liberation movement were much influenced by events in the Arab world. The movement turned towards the Arab League states for aid and almost entirely lost Christian support. With the introduction in 1963 of Israeli military and civilian technicians into Ethiopia, the movement became connected to the Muslim world by a fierce anti-Zionism.

There was a trickle of aid from Arab states in those years, and the ELF was able to progress from mere hit-and-run tactics to administering liberated areas.

In the wake of the 1967 June War in the Middle East, however, the Arab League states lost interest in Eri-

rea. Haile Selassie also managed to strike an alliance with Sudan which further isolated the guerillas and deprived them of a safe base. Taking advantage of the ELF's difficulties, the central government went on the offensive, destroying hundreds of Eritrean villages and killing thousands of villagers in its attempt to root out all opposition.

Soon a new source of aid came from the new Ghadaffi regime in Libya and a year later from the new regime in Sudan. Both influences confirmed the pan-Islamic, anti-communist trend of the ELF. This period also saw the first of many sharp divisions between those at the front and those 'sitting pretty' in the Arab capitals.

By the end of 1970 the ELF had split and the embryo EPLF was formed. Despite substantial programmatic similarities — both groups were (and remain) petty bourgeois and extremely confused — it was clear that the EPLF was the more radical of the two and it accordingly gradually lost the support of the Arab states. Over the next years, up to the February 1974 revolution, there was a series of alliances between the ELF, the EPLF, and other splits from the ELF. But these were never durable and fighting soon broke out between the guerilla organisations.

In one such period of agreement a joint ELF-EPLF force raided Asmara at the time of a military parade killing sixty Ethiopian troops of the Second Division. Ironically, within months it was this division, charged with keeping 'order' in Eritrea, that led the February revolution in Ethiopia.

## February revolution

At first the Eritrean movements did not know how to judge the revolution. When an Eritrean was appointed governor of the region they were hopeful that their claims might be met by the new government. And when General Andom, the new military commander there, spoke warmly of full autonomy (though not independence!), the less militant elements thought an agreement might be reached.

But changes in the Ethiopian junta, the Dergue, altered all that. Mengistu ordered Andom's arrest, and Andom was killed resisting. Now the mood in Eritrea shifted sharply. Internecine fighting between the ELF and the EPLF stopped — neither was now going to be the spokesman for Eritrea in negotiations with Ethiopia — and a temporary alliance was formed. The Eritrean population swung massively behind these groups — in particular behind the EPLF, which also benefited from defections from the ELF and from the general radicalisation influenced by the revolution.

At first the Dergue was in

no position to defeat the Eritreans. The central government could barely hold the empire together. But it did manage to isolate the guerillas through diplomatic manoeuvres. The 'radical' regimes of Sudan, Libya, South Yemen and Algeria all dropped support for the liberation fighters and were friendly towards the Dergue.

Internally the Dergue was losing ground. A 38-man committee it had set up to mediate in Eritrea went over to the EPLF, which even recruited a police general, complete with his forces. The ELF's reaction to the radicalisation was to back off: it dissolved the General Union of Eritrean Students when it became too militant. The EPLF, on the other hand, emphasised close links with the civilian population and the need to set up mass organisations. The EPLF also had ties with the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party, which operated in the rest of the former empire.

## Enter Russia and Cuba

In April 1977 the Mengistu regime broke its ties with the US (who in any case no longer needed its once important base at Kagnew) and switched to an alliance with the Soviet Union and Cuba. This new source of support was decisive in turning the tide of the war with Somalia in the west in Ethiopia's favour, and in so doing it put the Dergue in a position to concentrate its forces against the Eritreans.

With the consolidation of its power throughout Ethiopia, with new troops trained and reinforced by Cuba and armed and guided by the Soviet Union, the government soon gained the upper hand. Once again the Soviet bureaucracy, despite its recognition at one point of the national rights of the Eritrean people, allies with those who aim to crush a movement for national independence.

JAMES DAVIES

## Stand-in PM for Portugal

President Eanes has named a new Prime Minister for Portugal, but the crisis opened by the Centre Democrats' split from Mario Soares' government is still not over.

Eanes' nominee, a little-known businessman called Alfredo Nobre da Costa, so far only has support from the right wing PSD. The SP says it is opposed to any government which does not reflect the fact that the SP is the strongest party. The Centre Democrats — the leading party of the Portuguese bourgeoisie — wants new elections. The Communist Party says someone less right wing than Nobre da Costa should be prime minister.

Even if Nobre da Costa manages to dole out enough ministerial salaries in the right places to patch together a government majority, Portugal's ruling class is still in for a period of instability.

## BAKERY WORKER DEPORTED

MOHAMMED SHARIF, an Asian bakery worker at Memory Lane cakes, Cardiff, has been deported as an illegal immigrant despite a campaign to defend him.

When Sharif was picked up on July 6th, a defence campaign was formed at once. Through the help of Neil Kinnock MP it managed to get the deportation delayed. The campaign organised nightly pickets outside Cardiff jail, where Sharif was held.

Gloria Martin, the Bakers' Union area full-timer, was dragged in. In collaboration with a local left-wing solicitor, she secured Sharif's release pending a Home Office inquiry.

A petition was organised, and over 500 signatures were collected in workplaces, at the Cardiff carnival against racism, and in the local shopping centre. The response was good, considering that Sharif admitted to being an illegal immigrant, and the campaign did not hide it, but fought for his right to stay on the basis of opposition to all immigration controls.

The campaign went on another picket outside the prison after Sharif's release when it was learnt that four more Asians were being held as illegal immigrants.

However, the immigration authorities got Sharif picked up again, thrown in prison, and deported, before the Home Office had held its inquiry.

Chris Short, Sharif's solicitor, is now taking up the case and trying to get Sharif back into the country. Bakery workers at Merritts Bakery have decided to support this effort.

The campaign has received support from local Anti Nazi League activists, as well as Workers' Action, the SWP, and the IMG, four Labour councillors, and Joan Maynard MP.

The most notable absentees were the Communist Party. They argued that raising the

issue at the anti-racist carnival was 'divisive'

There will be a vigil on September 23, outside Cardiff jail, where four people are still held under the immigration laws

CARL JOHNSTON, a black community worker in Cardiff, has been jailed for ten days for calling a judge a racist.

Johnston was in court when the judge sentenced a black youth to three years' detention for a crime which, according to both the victim and the youth's co-defendant [sentenced to 3 years' prison], he never committed.

Johnston's denunciation of the judge was applauded by the other people — black and white — in the public gallery, but the judge found him guilty of contempt of court.

That's how the law works. Insulting black people in a racist way is 'free speech'. Condemning racists gets you jailed.

THE WEST Indian Standing Conference has asked the Commission for Racial Equality to carry out an investigation at St Leonard's Hospital in Hackney.

According to Standing Conference secretary William Trant, there have been instances where West Indians have been the victims of police brutality while in custody, only to find that details of their injuries have not been kept on hospital records, and so any complaints they make to the police fall down.

A MOTORIST in Slough, Berkshire, recently, stopped to ask Asian passers-by for directions... and then threw acid in their faces. Two men were taken to hospital after separate attacks.

## Terror Squad finds some victims

LAMBETH magistrates' court saw a touch of theatre when six anarchists charged with conspiracy to cause explosions were brought from Brixton for the remand hearing.

Armed police patrolled the court precincts. Police with flak jackets and others with binoculars guarded against attacks by land, sea and air. Supporters of the six attending the hearing were later followed.

This would all be pure farce if it weren't that six comrades are facing serious charges and have been held now for over two months as 'Category A' prisoners. This means that visiting has been restricted [and visitors' houses have been raided], and the one woman prisoner, Iris Mills, is being kept in a men's prison in solitary confinement.

The evidence against them is ludicrously flimsy, and it seems that the charges have only been made because the Anti-Terrorist Squad is trying to save itself from redundancy. Of course they have tried to do that by charging leftists for explosions which have not occurred, rather than go after the Right for explosions and arson which have occurred at Peace News, the Morning Star, and the Anti Nazi League headquarters.

For news of the defence campaign or for messages of support and donations, contacts:

Persons Unknown,  
c/o Box 123,  
182 Upper Street,  
London N1.

## BRICK LANE NEEDS TRADE UNION SUPPORT

NIK BARSTOW talked to PATRICK KODIKARA in Brick Lane last Sunday about the continuing battle there with the National Front. Kodikara is a member of the Tower Hamlets and Hackney Defence Committee and also of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory steering committee.

□□ As someone who has been centrally involved in the events round Brick Lane, what do you think are the main lessons?

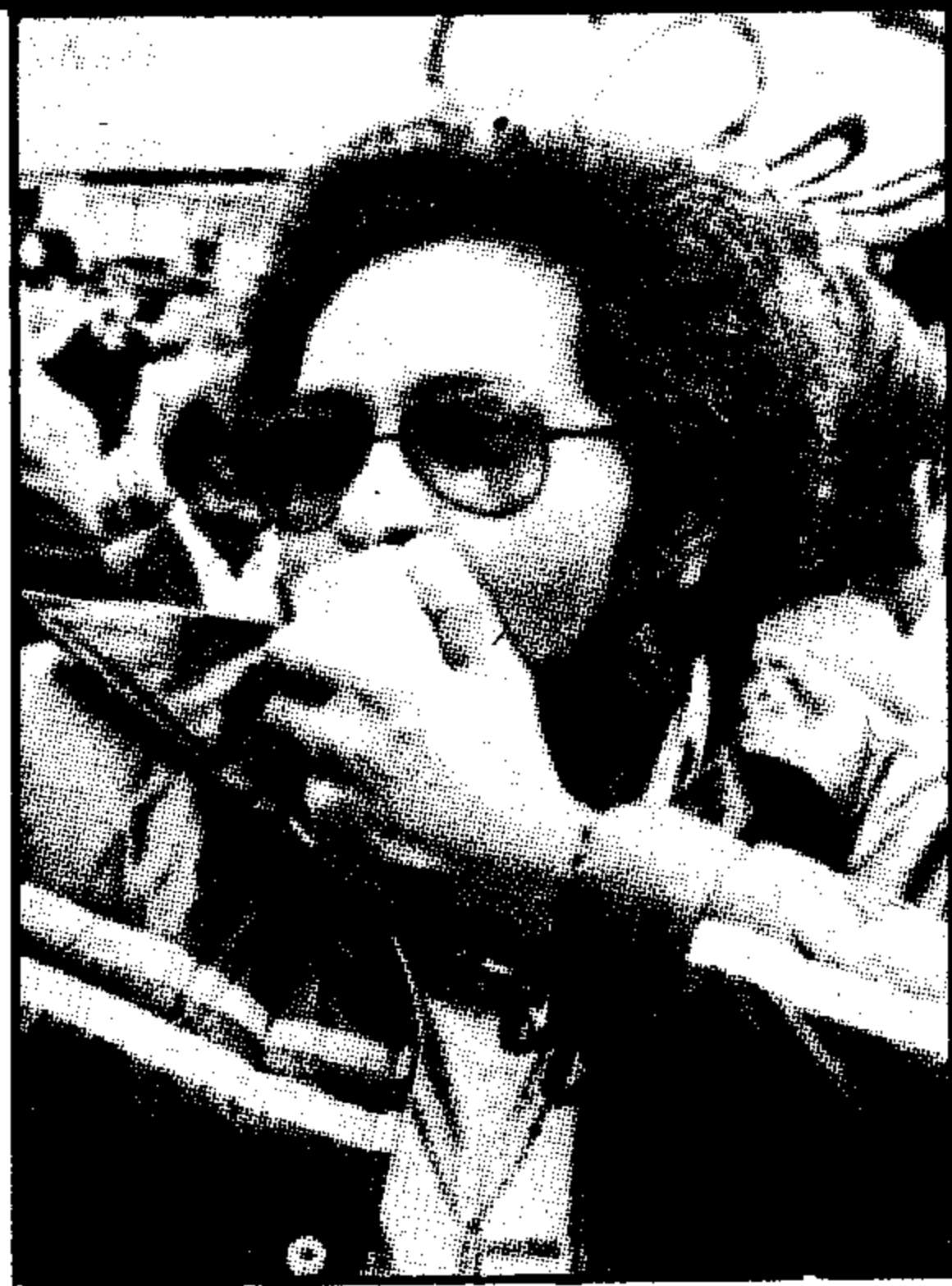
■ ■ One is about the police. Eight Bengali youths were attacked in Brick Lane last night by about 20 racist youths. They were badly beaten up and had to be taken to hospital. The police arrested one of the attacked Bengalis and charged him with possessing an offensive weapon. None of the racists were arrested.

The cops are not impartial. Last night's incident shows it. Four cops arrived at the hospital. They walked past the Bengali youths waiting to be treated, and one started murmuring "nice, nice" as he looked at their injuries.

The charge that the police are racists is not diminishing, it's increasing with everything they do in the situation.

□□ What has been the general role of the police in the demonstrations in Brick Lane?

■ ■ The police change their tactics very rapidly to try and make it difficult for us to get a well-disciplined activity going in Brick Lane. At first they said that the pitch at the top end of



Patrick Kodikara

Brick Lane would be allowed to one side on a first come, first served basis. Since the anti-racists used that to our advantage, they have changed their tactic.

What the cops are saying now is that the National Front can have one half of Brick Lane and we can have the other half. We don't want the National Front there at all, and we're certainly not going to have any sort of deal with them. As far as the defence committee is concerned, we're not going to accept the Front being here, and we need trade union and labour movement support to help get rid of them.

□□ What do you think of the response from the labour movement, from the Labour Party for example?

■ ■ It's very sad that the Labour Party has not mobilised in a big way. Comrades in the Labour Party who pass resolutions and express their intention to fight racism should be playing a direct role in Brick Lane. On the 20th we want them there, and we want them to be seen to be there.

Last week Len Murray from the TUC came down to Brick Lane but we got nothing tangible from him. Frankly, we were disappointed.

Many Asians see the Labour Party and even the trade unions as part of the establishment.

The answer to that is not so much black people being urged to join the movement, as the labour movement going out to them and showing its sincerity in the fight against racism and fascism.

We want next Sunday's demonstration to be seen as an expression of solidarity with the anti-racist forces that have been here — and we particularly want the labour movement to show solidarity.

□□ What is the role of the defence committee?

■ ■ Its role is opposing the Front and the attitude of the police. I think we have succeeded in making it a real question whether or not the Front should be allowed to sell papers in Brick Lane. Our role is also helping build self-defence groups and helping comrades who get arrested. Last night, for example, we did show that we were able to get lots of people together at three in the morning after the racist attack.

Editorial

# YES!

## TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND NOW!

"WHEN OUR General Election comes, Northern Ireland will not be an issue". But this week the 'Daily Mirror' has condemned both Tory and Labour lack of perspective on the Irish question, and called for the withdrawal of British troops.

Much of what the 'Mirror' says is right. "For more than three centuries Britain and Ireland have been united — but united in a history stained with blood, studded with violence, and pitted with oppression.

"The time has come for a new start. One that would allow the Irish people to rule themselves".

But the 'Mirror' 's call for withdrawal is linked to conditions: a five year delay, a 'stable government' to take over [and "to that end the troops should be the last to withdraw"], and a transfer of sovereignty to Northern Ireland rather than to Ireland as a whole.

## The Irish should decide

There is the question of whether these conditions can in fact be met — and that is the question that has held British governments back from the 'Mirror' 's conclusion. But leaving that aside, a withdrawal in those conditions would leave a very real residue of British interference in Ireland: an artificial Partition engineered by Britain, and a sectarian state in the North East whose forces have been armed and built up by Britain.

The 'Mirror' says that the Irish should decide whether their island should be united or partitioned. But it contradicts itself by saying the future of Northern Ireland should be decided by the population of Northern Ireland.

Any testing of the opinion of the population of Northern Ireland will give the same answer. About 65% want Partition, Protestant Ascendancy, and union with Britain [though they might settle for dropping the union if they reckon they can still maintain Protestant ascendancy securely]. About 35% want a united, independent Ireland, and equal civil rights for all.

Northern Ireland is an artificial unit, and a vote within that unit solves nothing. Why not 'self-determination' for the counties of Fermanagh and Tyrone, which have anti-Unionist majorities? Why not 'self-determination' for the historic province of Ulster [comprising three counties in addition to the six of Northern Ireland] which also has an anti-Unionist majority?

The only democratic unit for deciding the future of the Irish

people is the whole country.

The Protestants of North East Ireland were originally an Anglo-Scottish settler caste, which seized the land of the native Irish after they had been driven off by English troops. For centuries they have been both a [relatively] privileged community and England's garrison against Irish rebels. With the growth of industry in Ireland, the division continued, as the Protestants got first choice of the best jobs.

When the Irish national struggle forced Britain to start talking about loosening its grip on the island, the Protestants reacted fiercely against the threat to their privileges. Together with their allies in Britain's Tory party, they forced through Partition. The Partition was not an expression of democratic self-determination for the Protestant community. With borders drawn arbitrarily so as to be large enough for viability but small enough to keep a solid Protestant majority, Northern Ireland enclosed a large and bitterly discriminated against Catholic minority.

The Protestants have a right to live without state-imposed Catholicism of the type that exists in Southern Ireland — and the militant Republicans recognise that right. The Protestants do not have the right to deny the democratic rights of the Irish people as a whole. Sectarian conflict in Ireland can only be ended within a framework of national unity, as the most democratic-minded of the Protestant community have often recognised.

## Solidarity with the Republicans

Even a bourgeois reunification of Ireland, by agreement between Dublin and London — which is not likely at present, though in the longer term it would be the British bourgeoisie's preferred solution, if only it could be carried through quietly — would be a step forward. True freedom and peace for Ireland depends on the Irish workers, Catholic and Protestant, uniting to take control of the country, ending the centuries-long sectarian squabbles by reorganising and reallocating the country's resources at the expense of imperialism and Irish capitalism.

For that reason, Workers' Action says: yes, get the troops out. Get them out without delay, and unconditionally. But also organise solidarity with the Republicans who are fighting for a democratic unification in Ireland, and more especially with the socialists fighting for an Irish Workers' Republic.

# British bosses buy time for Apartheid

**TWO YEARS AGO**, the morale of the white supremacist regime in South Africa had sunk to an all-time low.

It faced a massive black rebellion with uprisings in the city of Soweto. White supremacy had collapsed in Angola and Mozambique, and was clearly on the way out in Zimbabwe and Namibia. The economy had been hard hit by the world recession, and South Africa was getting \$130 an ounce for its gold as compared to \$200 in 1974.

A recent Counter Information Services report, *Buying Time in South Africa* (95p from CIS, 9 Poland Street, London W1) shows how support from the major capitalist powers has been crucial in enabling the apartheid regime to ride its crisis and to try to suppress rebellion by hardening its racist system.

## Sinking

In January 1976, with its trade rapidly sinking into the red, the SA government made its first request to the IMF for help. The IMF executive, led by British and US members, agreed.

The British representative, Peter J. Bull, declared himself "pleased that South Africa had requested a stand-by arrangement which would give the authorities some additional room for manoeuvre and some feeling of international support, which they deserved".

In the first quarter of 1976, South Africa drew \$93 million from the IMF loan facility. In the third quarter of 1976, in the midst of the uprisings, this was increased to \$179 million, and in November of the same year Pretoria asked for and received further facilities. By the end of 1977 South Africa had been lent a total of \$464 million.

Swiss bankers helped, too. In March 1976, a "gold swap" was arranged with a consortium of Swiss banks. They agreed to buy 155 tons of South Africa's gold reserves at just below market prices on condition that it would be bought back later at a higher price.

This was a crucial act of assistance. It allowed South Africa to boost its foreign currency reserves and to effectively revalue its gold reserves from the official price of \$42 an ounce, without open market sales which would have depressed the price further.

From August 1976 the gold price began to rise, thus increasing the value of South Africa's gold exports and helping pull the trade balance back into the black.

This aid to apartheid is usually excused on the grounds that it



South Africa's gold exports — an essential link in the world capitalist set-up

can provide leverage to press for more liberal policies in South Africa. But the 'pressure' is non-existent, while the strengthening of the apartheid state is very real.

British companies in South Africa are supposed to keep to an EEC Code of Conduct. In 1977 the Department of Trade and Industry (in this country) reported that, out of about 300 companies covered by the Code, only 189 had made the necessary reports; and only 43 of those had given all the information requested. Reporting is still voluntary!

## Poverty

49 of the firms which reported were still paying wages below official poverty levels. As for those which didn't report — no one knows.

The South African manager of the Dutch firm Phillips described the EEC Code as a 'paper tiger'. And when the Chase Manhattan bank said they would in future bar loans that tended to support apartheid, the bank's South African boss declared 'we're just

carrying on as before".

Meanwhile the Bantustan policy has been pushed through. Under this policy, all blacks will cease to be South African citizens — all those living and working outside the Bantustans will be classed as 'immigrants', with minimal rights. In summer 1977, the police and army started clearing the shanty-towns in which many black workers live. In three days, bulldozers destroyed the homes of nearly 15,000 people. 250,000 black South Africans have now been made homeless.

In October 1977, 20 black organisations were banned and 40 black leaders put in detention. Pass laws have been tightened up, using British-made ICL computers.

## Police

Police action has been stepped up.

In June 1978, in the days preceding the second anniversary of the Soweto uprising, the police mounted a nationwide security

operation. Roadblocks were set up all around the country, cars stopped and searched, and police task forces conducted wholesale round-ups in the black townships. The object was to nip in the bud any expression of rebellion or solidarity with the spirit of Soweto. To stop people attending memorial meetings, 6,000 blacks were arrested and temporarily detained — 2,000 in Soweto alone.

Economically, while IMF aid plus special help from Iran (oil) and Israel (steel, military assistance) enables South Africa's rulers to keep afloat, the black workers are suffering from the effects of the world capitalist crisis. South African arms spending has increased three-fold since 1973 — on the backs of those it is intended to keep down.

Over two million blacks are unemployed. Jobless rates in Soweto went up by 65% in the first three months of 1977. Most of the unemployed get no state unemployment benefit.

Health facilities for blacks, already scanty, are being cut back.

Thus in one area in the Ciskei 'Bantustan', 68% of all children under five were found to be suffering from malnutrition. Blacks are eleven times more likely than whites to get TB or Typhoid.

Despite all the repression, the regime's position is still precarious. The authors believe "It can never offer a political solution which will satisfy the aspirations of the Blacks. Its current policies which are designed to integrate the township dwellers into the grand scheme of apartheid are opposed by even the most moderate leaders in the townships.

## Solution

That opposition will increase the more the policies are implemented." The black resistance is still strong, as has been shown this year by continued school strikes and the effective boycott of government-organised elections for a local council in Soweto.

The CIS report estimates that there is no chance of a black bourgeois solution in South Africa.

If there is any chance of such an outcome, the big capitalist powers will seize it with both hands. Their police at present is to prop up the white regime. But they know that they need a fall-back solution. Their present efforts to build up a black bourgeois alternative leadership in Zimbabwe show that.

For imperialism, any regime will do, so long as it allows them to continue to draw their profits from the exploitation of South Africa's black workers.

AS A TORY journalist put it in this little rhyme [right], the Tory party has always been cynical about political ideas. Today they are also unsure of their footing after the resounding defeats they suffered in 1972 and 1974. But to stake out ground for themselves they are taking up more and more right wing stands on issues like immigration, Ireland, and the police. COLIN FOSTER analyses Thatcher's programme.

THE LAST LABOUR Manifesto promised a 'fundamental shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families'. Between the lines of this year's Tory manifesto there will be the exact opposite message: a fundamental shift in favour of the capitalist class.

The Tories will be serious about their 'fundamental shift' where the Labour leaders weren't. But the Tory Party is still wracked by two unresolved problems: how to achieve their economic aims, and how to put them across as a vote-winning policy.

## MORE PROFIT

For the Tories the key problem of British society is lack of profits. "The fundamental problem has been the erosion of the cornerstone of the whole edifice of industrial enterprise — profits and profitability" says their policy pamphlet *The Right Approach*.

Keith Joseph puts it more strongly: "Over the past 17 years or so ... profits have suffered a catastrophic decline".

In 1970, too, they saw the problem that way. Since 1965 when Edward Heath took over the Tory leadership, they had preached sharper competition and a more ruthless drive for profits. "It is the job of the Government" said Heath "to help industry to overcome its problems and to help capitalism to work... Our task is to remove the obstructions which exist wherever they may be, to enterprise and competition in our business world."

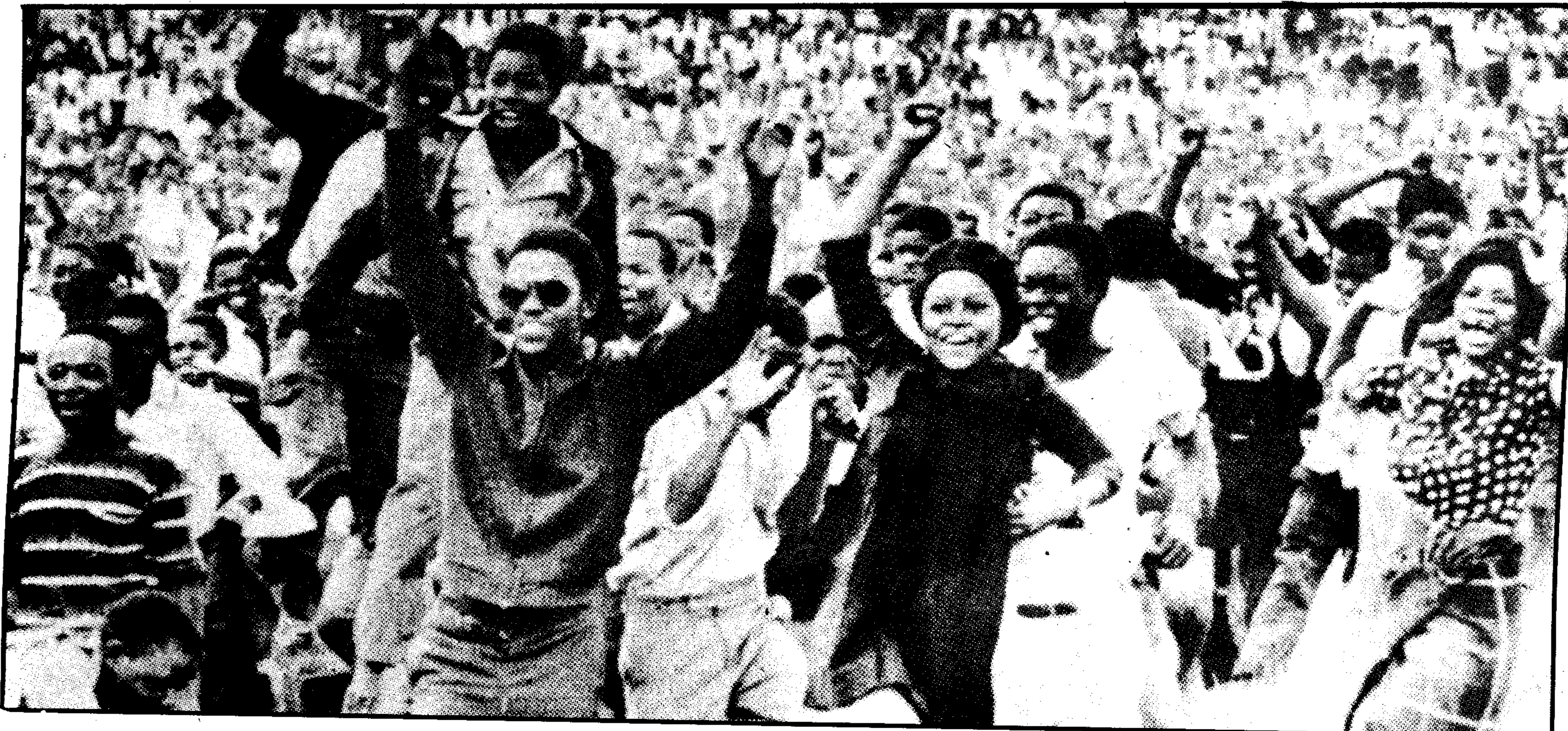
From 1965, they had planned for an Industrial Relations Bill to tackle the unions. Their policies had a frankly militant tone which had been absent from the welfare-state Toryism of the previous 20 years. "We should regard the Conservative Party in the economic context as the management party", declared one Tory pamphlet, "prepared to take the initiative in achieving efficiency and tackling abuses on the union side (and elsewhere) with a determination which we have not hitherto shown..."

It argued openly for class struggle Toryism and an 'anti union bias'.

## ANTI UNION

If that meant more industrial conflict, it was not all bad. "Strikes do at least indicate that toughness of being shown on the management side in face of unreasonable demands. The absence of strikes may well be evidence of a tacit conspiracy between management and work people to do nothing new and disturbing..."

After winning the 1970 election, Heath tried to put the policy into practice. He was defeated by working class resistance. The Industrial Relations Act was made practically usable only months after



# “I find it very hard to state What principles we follow The old are mostly out of date The new too tough to swallow”



## THE TORIES' DILEMMA



Heath's 1970-74 Tory government set out to tame the unions. But mobilisations like the mass picket at Salfley gates, in 1972, tamed Heath.

coming law. The Government was forced to reverse its policy of letting 'lame ducks' sink beneath the waves of the market. Throwing aside all the free-enterprise economics he had preached before the election, Heath then introduced statutory wage controls — only to have the government brought to its knees by the 1974 miners' strike.

### CLOSED SHOP

The Tory Party is still shell-shocked. In the debate at last year's Tory Conference on the closed shop, speaker after speaker stressed the need for caution. "I am a hawk and not a kamikaze pilot" said right-winger Norman Tebbit. "We are right to disavow any heavy-handed legislation". "Our major political problem", said Jim Prior, was "how, after the miners strike in 1974, would we get on with the union".

Other speakers thought that "history has, shown that we cannot ban the closed shop" and that "We do not believe, as Conservatives, that the law should conflict with industry and industrial relations. We do not want to return to the hostility and bitterness which was seen in the 1970-74 period. We do not want to go through the humiliation of an Official Solicitor..."

The Tories don't believe their 1965-72 policy is workable; and, on top of that, they know that policy would lose them the election.

To win elections, the Tory party has to get votes from workers and even from trade unionists. It can only do that if it can appear as the party of national unity — of 'One Nation', as the Tory catchphrase has it. To be branded the party that wants ruinous confrontations with the unions, while Labour organises harmonious class collaboration, would be disastrous for the Tories.

So their policy pamphlets state that "We do not intend to introduce a major round of new industrial relations legislation" and emphasise that 'lame ducks' will not be left to sink. But where does that leave them, either in terms of policies to achieve the increased profits which they want, or in terms of gathering votes?

### WAGE CURBS

Wage controls? But Wilson and Callaghan have implemented those better than the Tories could ever manage. Margaret Thatcher has even promised the "withdrawal of government from interference in wage bargaining".

More cautiously, the official policy statement said about wage controls: "Experience does not suggest that this is the best way of finding a long-term solution to the problem. That same experience demonstrates the unwisdom of flatly and permanently rejecting the idea". But there are "almost

insoluble problems of sanctions and enforcement..."

There is little in that to win either workers' votes or the confidence of the ruling class. The *Economist*, which is consistently contemptuous of the present Tory leadership, comments: "A huge swathe of big business in fact finds some of Mrs. Thatcher's and Sir Keith Joseph's pronouncements on wage bargaining increasingly chilling".

To a large extent the Tories, never much inclined to theory, are simply at sea, with no perspective except screwing the workers as and when they can without provoking uncontrollable conflict. Keith Joseph declares that it's not really possible to know what is good

economically, except that you can be sure that greed and ruthlessness helps:

"Growth should occur, and normally has occurred, spontaneously. We do not really know the secret of economic growth or how to generate it... Economic growth began thousands of years ago, as a result of people following self-interest".

Ruefully, he comments "The intellectual climate has been against us. Why, I am not sure... In this age, one can hardly look for embourgeoisement, indeed we shall be fortunate if we can stem the tide".

But "we don't know" is not a convincing policy to place before voters. Nor is it very useful for the Tories themselves.

### TORY WORRY

Keith Joseph expresses the Tories' worries: "When you go round and see factories working and boards meeting, you find it hard to believe there is a crisis just round the corner. But do not be deceived. The liquidity crisis is on us... Once some companies begin to falter, the effects could be incalculable".

British industry, he says, is "so debilitated ... that large sections of it could soon come near to collapse". "A crisis ... rather like an avalanche ... will happen unless we change course".

Joseph provides the new Tory answer. Cut taxes, reduce public spending, above all halt public borrowing and excessive money supply. This will enable profits to rise and stem the corrosive effects of inflation. [For Joseph, as for many Tories, state wage controls are irrelevant to inflation.] This will mean "apparently high levels of unemployment"; but it is a necessary purging in order to restore health to Britain's capitalism.

Lower taxes and less state 'featherbedding' are good rallying cries for the Tory middle classes. When right-wing Labour leaders attack the Tories for being 'doctrinaire', however, they are quite wrong (apart from the fact that the purpose of these attacks is to praise the Labour Right's "common sense" handling of capitalism and to rebuff 'doctrinaire' Socialism). Joseph's programme will certainly not be upheld dogmatically.

In official Tory publications, there are only the vaguest hints reflecting Joseph's ideas. *The Right Approach* even says a Tory government would not be able to cut taxes in the short term. Joseph himself is far from uncompromising, saying the policy must be introduced in a 'gradualist' way.

Many leading Tories are flatly opposed to Joseph's trend. Peter Walker, writing in *The Guardian*, declared that the free market is just as bad as socialism: it "becomes a power-

ful source for social disorder". In fact, any thoroughgoing application of Joseph's policy would raise grave problems from the capitalist point of view.

State-financed stimulation of demand is a central technique of modern capitalist administration. It is true that it tends to drive the economy into stagnation by blocking the 'purging' effects of capitalist recession and lumbering the national economy with large sectors of uncompetitive, propped-up capital. But without it, crises would be sharper and the 'purging' could reach catastrophic proportions.

Small businessmen would be the first to go — but they form an important part of the Tories' social base. As for the uncompetitive big firms — in shipbuilding, cars and so on — no government could afford to let them go bust without risking a snowball into dramatic slump.

On top of that, a 'sound money' policy by the state would not stem inflation unless private credit were also cut back: a measure which would be vigorously opposed by the Tories' capitalist and middle class supporters.

The Tories' true, fumbling, policy was better expressed in a report on the nationalised industries, drafted in May by Nicholas Ridley. The Tories would demand that the nationalised industries run at a profit — but some uneconomic activities would be subsidised. Anti-picket police squads would be strengthened and "good non-union drivers" recruited to cross picket lines — but with workers who 'have the nation by the jugular vein the only feasible option is to pay up'.

Bits of nationalised industry would be sold off, but not whole corporations.

### EXTRA CUTS

But if the Tories are not 'doctrinaire', it does not at all follow that they are harmless. If their tactical rule is "we'll make it up as we go along", their strategic principle is crystal-clear: boost profits by increasing exploitation.

There will be stronger anti-picket squads. There will be union-bashing. Despite all the Saatchi & Saatchi ads, there will be increased unemployment. And the Tories themselves say there will be "reductions in the scale of some public services".

A further run-down of the NHS and the schools; increased prescription charges; even longer waits for buses; drastic cuts in public spending on housing; increased council

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



TORY 'THINKERS': JOSEPH [left] AND PRIOR

## ► TORIES' DILEMMA

Continued from page 5

rents and higher rents and less security for private tenants, while the existing stock of council housing is sold off: that's what the Tories' economic policy promises for sure, even according to their own statements. On top of that there will be a drive for increased exploitation; but the Tories are not going to give hostages to fortune by laying down in advance the ways and means of that drive.

To back up their anti-working class economic programme, and to rally support, the Tories are making a pronounced right wing drive on social issues such as 'law and order': more money spent on the police and higher pay for policemen (one of their few firm election promises).

On Northern Ireland, too, they have made a fairly firm promise to "establish one or more directly elected regional councils. These would have a wide range of powers, such as other local authorities have".

This could mean anything up to a virtual restoration of 'home rule' in Northern Ireland, bringing back a 'Protestant state for a Protestant people'. The special aim of this policy is to enable the Tories to renew their alliance with the ultra-reactionary Ulster Unionists. It would mean a big stepping-up in repression against the Catholic minority, possibly the reintroduction of internment. (The Tories regard the scrapping of internment as a mistake.)

## RACIST

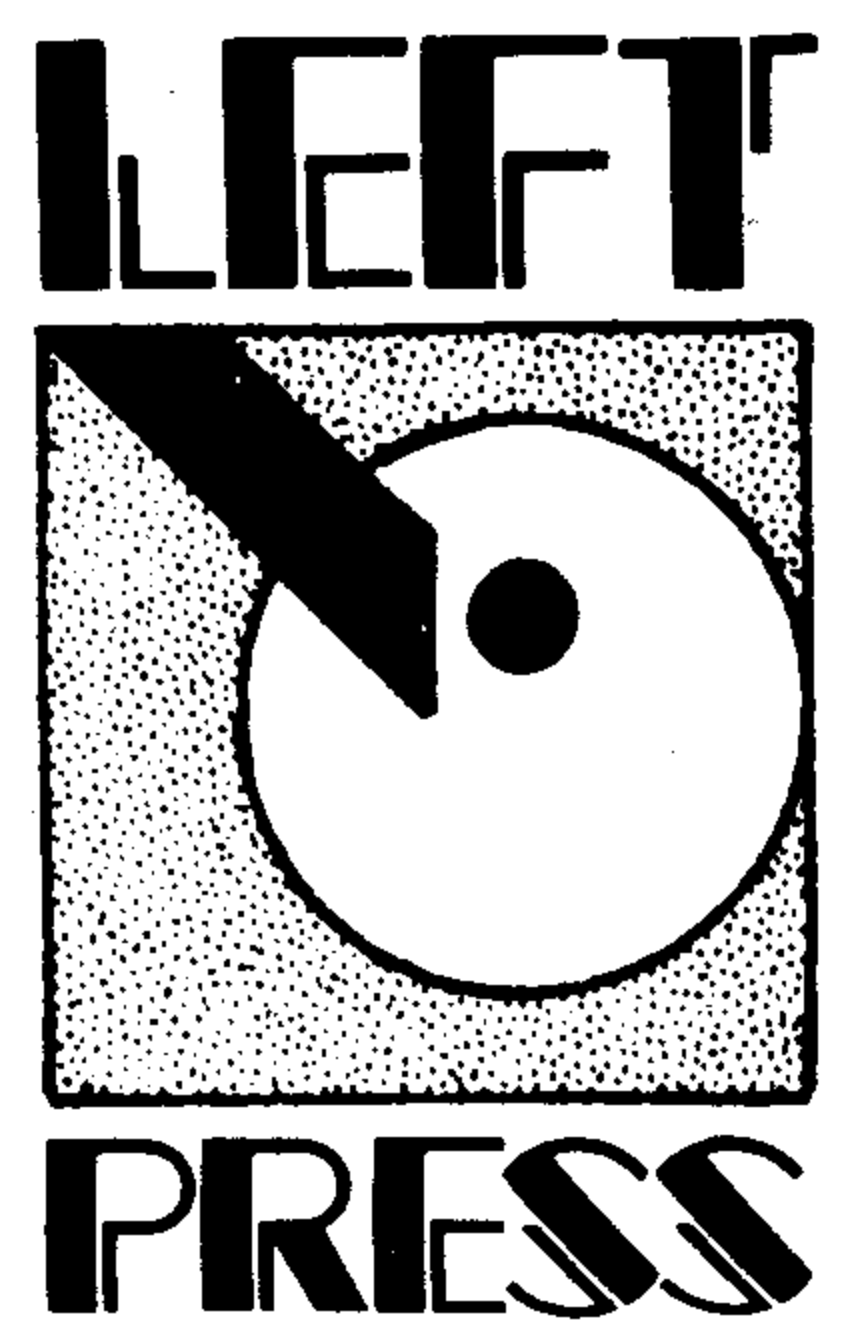
The Tories' other main election promise is vaguer but just as menacing: a big cut in immigration. Tory spokesman Keith Speed has talked of ending automatic entry rights for 'any category of immigrant'. The Tories know very well, of course, that it out of the question for them to block the entry of EEC immigrants; but then what Speed means is black immigrants. Margaret Thatcher jacked Speed with talk of "the danger that the British character might be swamped".

The Tory policy here is an open incitement to racist hostility and violence against black people. For the Tories, his encouragement to racism is the function of dividing the working class; and diverting workers' anger to scapegoats, thus aiding the fundamental policy of increasing exploitation.

During the election campaign the Labour leadership will be making great play of the Tories' 'doctrinaire' approach, the vagueness of their promises, and their extreme right-wing drift. What they won't say — and what socialists in the labour movement will have to point out — is that in every area, from economic policy through the social services and the police to Ireland, the common-sense, middle-of-the-road policies of Wilson and Callaghan have gone a long way indeed in the Tories' right wing direction, and in fact have forced the Tories themselves rightwards by stealing the Tories' political ground.

For the working class, there is little interest in a policy which may be not quite as racist, not quite as repressive in Ireland, and not quite as worker-bashing, as the Tories. A socialist campaign in the elections has to be both a denunciation of the Tory danger and a condemnation of the Government's record.

# See no programme, hear no struggle, speak no truth



REPORTING on the SCLV's July 15th Conference, **Socialist Press** (19th July) complains: "A conference entitled 'Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory' which excludes any discussion of programme, any examination of the role of the 'lefts' within the Labour Party and any reference to the actual struggles within the trade union and labour movement, obviously does not have much to offer".

Indeed: but the 200 Labour Party and trade union activists who were there would scarcely recognise it as the same confer-

ence that **Socialist Press** reports!

Pete Rowlands, the secretary of Hounslow Trades Council, spoke about the Hounslow Hospital occupation; John Douglas, chairman of a tenants association in Hulme, talked about the fight against both government policies and the National Front in the recent Moss Side by-election; and Jim Denham, a militant at British Leyland, Longbridge, took up the record of the government and the Labour Left MPs on the car industry.

The conference endorsed a wide-ranging political platform

and a major political resolution.

The role of the Left Labour MPs was taken up at some length by Gordon Brewer of Edinburgh North LPYS, speaking for the SCLV Steering Committee. He pointed out that they could not be relied on to fight, much less lead a fight. He argued that it was up to the SCLV to organise in the election period for a real fight-back against whichever government is elected.

Was the **Socialist Press** reporter asleep? No: his trouble seems to be selective deafness. SP means that the conference

"steered well clear of any analysis of the record of Tribunal betrayals carried out by Tribune MPs", but what they actually mean is that it 'steered well clear of **Socialist Press's** pet ideas.

According to **Socialist Press**, the SCLV is a 'tame' left-wing movement like the Militant. So what is SP's idea of a real fighting intervention for the elections?

SP isn't putting up its own left-wing candidates. It doesn't support the SCLV, the campaign which says vote Labour but fight Labour's leaders. So is the answer to sit back in splendid indifference, lambasting Callaghan and the SCLV with equal force, and then troop out to vote for Callaghan on the day?

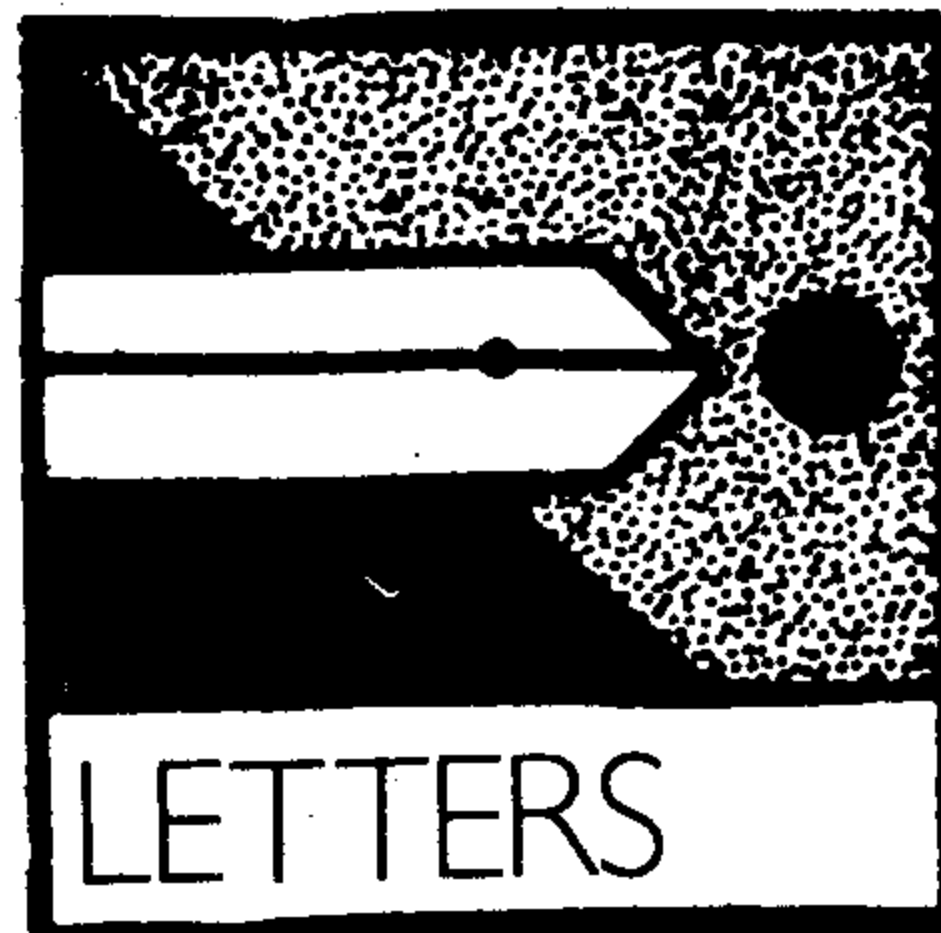
SP disclaims this passive approach: "By challenging the 'lefts' to kick out Callaghan and Healey the fight could be taken up simultaneously against both the right wing and 'left' fakers".

This is no more than bluster. The loyal SP supporter can propose a motion in his ward or branch calling for Callaghan to be replaced (by whom? Benn? Or Alan Thornett for prime minister?) — and then what? Is s/he going to take up the issues raised by the SCLV: wages, jobs, racism Ireland etc; or are those just 'abstract', 'tame' issues? The SCLV fully agrees with SP's hostility to Callaghan, but "sack Callaghan" isn't an adequate platform.

By making an arbitrary fetish of one demand, and one that is not very clear politically at that, SP risks reducing its supporters to sectarian spouters, counterposing their not-very-advanced demands to real activity. Its other recommendation for action shows even more clearly how nonsensical its wild denunciation of the SCLV is: "If the forces of the SCLV ... struggled to end the union sponsorship for right-wing MPs they could play a real role".

Accountability for MPs is a major plank of the SCLV's platform; and SCLV supporters in constituencies like Islington North are already involved in fights against right wing MPs. So why doesn't SP join us? And why do they need to invent such ridiculous reports to justify themselves?

NIK BARSTOW



## And after that, let's have 'test tube' pregnancy

Dear comrades,

I WAS disappointed that you didn't have an article last week about the birth of the first 'test tube baby'.

In my view, the arrival of 'test tube babies' is something to be welcomed — and the reasons go beyond the new hope given to sterile would-be parents. Indeed, fundamentally that is a small aspect. If society were less imbued with the idea that parents own their children, sterile couples would probably in general have few worries about adopting a child instead of wishing for one of "their own".

In the longer view, the 'test tube baby' was another step — although only a small one — on the road to conscious human control over the reproduction of our species. After 'test tube' conceptions, like Louise Brown's, the next step is 'test tube' incubation. But precisely that aspect frightens many people.

It makes us think of the Nazis' racist 'breeding' policies or Sir Keith Joseph's declarations that the poor should have fewer children. And it is a fact that in a vicious society, social control over reproduction as over anything else will take a vicious turn.

But society need not be vicious. And in a rational society the present methods of reproducing the species would seem far from ideal.

The progressive role of conscious human control is clear enough in relation to the process which leads from the new-born baby to the adult member of society.

Today, the early upbringing of the child — crucial for its emotional and mental development — is entrusted to the family. Natural though the family seems, it is a

method of social control, tied to this society and this period in history, as much as any other: and very often it is a peculiarly vicious and destructive method. Battered babies are only the most extreme example. Socialists advocate a more consciously social way of bringing up young children.

In today's society, education is public. It is the one phase of the reproduction of the species over which at least some relatively conscious control is exercised. And, despite all the repressive features of bourgeois education, that phase of the reproduction of the species, far from imposing a grey 'Brave New World' uniformity, is the one that gives the widest field to individual development.

Today, in addition, there is a whole system of hospital care and ante-natal clinics to make sure that nature is 'tampered with' in pregnancy and childbirth. And if in thirty or fifty years' time, the afflictions, hindrances, pain and danger of pregnancy and childbirth — for the mother and for the child — can be not just minimised, but avoided, by 'test tube pregnancy' and childbirth, that will be progress too. It will be a broadening of the area of conscious human choice — and surely only those who think that the viciousness of class society will continue forever can be afraid of that broader choice.

Today even the most hide-bound Tory finds it difficult to imagine that people were once horrified at the idea of education being public rather than within the family. Perhaps in a hundred years' time our descendants will find it equally difficult to imagine that people were once

horrified at the idea of systematic 'test tube' incubation, 'test tube' childbirth, or even 'test tube' conception.

In the human species of the future, as Leon Trotsky once wrote, we will be able to ensure that the average individual is at the level of a Marx, an Aristotle, or a Goethe, and the exceptional individual far above them in his or her talents. What the doctors have done in Oldham is another small step towards making that possible.

COLIN FOSTER

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

**THE PEUGEOT-Citroen takeover of Chrysler's European operations is a major move in the international car production race.**

Its first main consequence will be a further break-down of the national boundaries of Europe's car industry. Within these national boundaries, intense competition has already led to monopoly, with one or two giant national car firms dominating in each country — Volkswagen, Fiat, Renault, Leyland, and the firms run by the three American corporations, General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler.

The main purpose of the Common Market was to force national monopolies to link up on a European scale in order to face international competition from Japan and the USA. A lot of rationalisation has already taken place, particularly in the field of component parts. Certain models of Renault and Peugeot, for instance, have exactly the same engines and gear boxes — only the facade is different.

Only a few amalgamations have taken place, however: Peugeot with Citroen, Volvo with Daf, and Renault with Berliet. Firms have also tried to cushion the effects of poor results in the car and truck field by diversifying their interests. Renault, for example, now manages several large sugar cane plantations on the Ivory Coast.



But it has long been clear that something bigger is necessary. The Peugeot-Citroen-Chrysler deal is the first real breakthrough sprint for the finish. Others are bound to follow.

The deal puts the new firm easily on top of the European production league, but it is still only sixth in the world table, behind General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, Toyota, and Nissan (Datsun). And it will have tremendous problems rationalising production.

For example, Ford, who have successfully Europeanised their operations, have only four basic models and four engines produced in the region. Fords import 30% of all their sales in the UK from Europe.

The new Peugeot-Citroen outfit, on the other hand, will be producing 14 separate engin-

# NOW FOR A MERGER OF CHRYSLER & PEUGEOT WORKERS

es and will have at least four similar, overlapping models in the medium car range alone.

Even more extensive links may follow from the deal — between Peugeot-Citroen in Europe, Chrysler in the USA, and Mitsubishi (Colt) in Japan. This would make sound commercial sense, and give the new conglomerate a chance of competing with GM and Ford internationally.

GM already has links with Isuzu trucks (Japan) and Ford has links with Honda. In the USA Chrysler is very much the weakest of the big three car firms and is losing ground rapidly.

The *Financial Times* commented after Chrysler's last annual report, "Chrysler is on the ropes but some way yet from the final count". Chrysler claims to need \$7.5 billion investment over the next five years to stay in the volume car league in the USA. The aim of their deal with Peugeot is to get that cash.

What will the effect be on British car workers?

For trade unionists one of the worst aspects of the deal is the dominant position of the CSL scab union at Peugeot-Citroen. This union derives from one set up in the 1940s under the pro-Nazi Vichy government. Its main aim is the smashing of militancy and close collabor-

ation with the bosses. Chrysler France (Simca) is another stronghold of the CSL.

The CSL enforces near-compulsory membership, terrorises immigrant workers, and has trained thugs — so-called 'union delegates' — patrolling the factories. Only last year CSL officials were found guilty of shooting dead a picket during a strike in Reims.

Although Peugeot cannot import these conditions into Coventry or Clydeside at will, there is no doubt that a drive for speed-up and greater managerial control will follow from the deal.



Chrysler UK has been making a steady loss, and has only been kept going by money from the government. Peugeot-Citroen will, however, probably use the British firm as a base for aggressive competition in the British market, with local assembly of their own products.

In particular they will want to cash in on company car sales, which account for 70% of new car sales in the UK. The Dunstable truck plant also fills a gap in the Peugeot-Citroen output.

Although this is likely to mean job security for most Chrysler workers, including at

Linwood, there will be less work for workers in the components industry and in the machine tool industry. At the same time, it will put tremendous pressure on British Leyland, to say nothing of Ford and Vauxhall (GM).

As the *Financial Times* says (August 11th), "On today's figures Peugeot-Citroen's share of the European car market will emerge a good 5% ahead of anyone else — and that is about the size of British Leyland's total sales in the region".

The only real hope for Leyland now is a link with another major car firm. Talks have been going on with Renault and Nissan (Datsun), but it is doubtful if any car firm would take on such a liability as Leyland.

The other European firms will also be under pressure to combine. Naturally, the two world leaders, GM and Ford, as well as the Japanese firms, will be watching developments carefully. A Ford spokesman said: "We were number one in Europe this morning. If this deal comes off, we will be swamped".

The six serious car groups in Europe — Ford, Renault, VW, Fiat/Seat, Peugeot-Citroen, and General Motors, in that order — have been neck and neck so far. Now Peugeot-Citroen have put on a sprint. The question is, will the others be able to stand the pace?

The implications of the deal

go far beyond the immediate problems of job security. The Government's unconvincing efforts to be 'firm' with Peugeot Citroen and Chrysler only show how much the Labour administration just acts as a generous soup-kitchen for profiteers in trouble. Eric Varley calmly admits that £51 million doled out to the Chrysler bosses is gone forever. (Imagine the furore if even £51 disappeared into the pockets of an unemployed worker...)



For car workers the deal underlines the need for links across companies and across national borders. An international car workers' committee is not an abstract ideal, but the only practical way of having any working class strategy in face of the international manoeuvres of the car giants.

Immediately, Chrysler workers should denounce the Government's policy of subsidising the international car bosses and demand nationalisation without compensation of the whole car and car components industry. Nationalisation would not eliminate the danger of rationalisation, speed-up and job loss, as Leyland shows, but it could be the starting point for a concerted struggle to safeguard conditions and impose workers' control.

DAVE SPENCER



Chrysler stewards lobby T&G leader Moss Evans for action

## HUSH HUSH, SLUSH SLUSH

BELIEVE IT or not, there are still people around to argue that British Leyland, being state-owned, is somehow a gain for socialism, and that workers should therefore make 'certain sacrifices' to ensure its viability.

A good example of this line of thought is Jon Bloomfield's Communist Party pamphlet, 'Leyland — Save It!'. In the foreword, Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson even describes nationalised firms like Leyland as the instrument to create a social-

ist Britain.

The Bloomfields and Robinsons are clearly beyond hope, but a couple of recent events ought to be enough finally to kill off the 'progressive Leyland' myth for anyone with eyes to see.

Last month a Middlesbrough court awarded 'substantial damages' to the occupants of an Austin Allegro whose rear wheels had come off on the M1. One of the passengers, a 67 year old woman, has been totally paralysed ever since.

It was the judge's remarks which really upset Leyland. Mr Justice Willis talked of the company having ignored 'mounting and horrifying evidence' of wheels coming adrift. He referred to 'over a hundred similar incidents, any one of which could have been fatal'. He accused Leyland of 'commercial camouflage' to avoid having to recall the cars and fit an additional safety washer. 'They knew the full facts. They made sure no-one else did'. And that's from a beak, remem-

ber, not some lefty consumers' right nut!

And then, of course, there came the Great Slush Fund scandal. Whether a malcontent Leyland executive called Graham Barton did or did not forge two letters to 'dishonestly obtain' £5,000 from the *Daily Mail* is really neither here nor there.

The important fact to emerge from the trial is that Leyland has, indeed, been paying 'slush money' — with the full knowledge of the top Leyland bosses and the NEB.

Barton's lawyer produced a Leyland internal memo headed, "Strictly Confidential. Commissions and Retentions". This was one of the documents that Leyland had got the police to prevent *Socialist Challenge* from publishing in January. The document's authenticity was confirmed in court by Leyland treasury manager J.A. Champion. Among those to whom the memo was addressed is Alex Park, Leyland's former chief executive.

The memo describes "Special Accounts... enabling a customer to accumulate funds outside his own country". Later on, the memo refers to "Special payments... made to persons who have been particularly helpful in obtaining particular contracts".

Under cross-examination, Lord Ryder, head of the National Enterprise Board, admitted that he knew about these payments (sometimes as much as £700,000 each) but called them 'trivial'.

And in a sense, of course,

Ryder was right. Such payments are perfectly normal practice for any capitalist outfit. So is suppressing information about potentially lethal design faults.

When the workers, the engineers, and the designers who actually make Leyland vehicles control the production, they will certainly make the odd mistake. But no Leyland worker would dream of hushing up information about a dangerous fault. And as for slush funds, when production is determined by need and not profit, the idea of greasing palms to win contracts will be laughable.

But until then, any Leyland worker who accepts sacrifices to 'make nationalisation work' is crazy.

JIM DENHAM

## from workers ACTION bulletins

THE NEW computerised body welding 'robots' being brought in for the LCB could cause massive redundancies, particularly in the West Works. And that's obviously how the management want to use them.

The estimate is that the robots will cut the number of workers making car bodies from 4,000 to 600.

But that's not the way it need be. Instead of letting them use the robots to throw us on the dole, let's demand a cut in hours, so that the work is shared out between all of us. Then we'll be able to live like human beings instead of like robots.

From 'Workers Action' Longbridge bulletin.

## ROVERS RETURN

AFTER SIX months of short time working and lay-offs, workers at Rovers Cardiff returned from their holidays on August 7th to find things a bit different. Stocks of components for Rovers Solihull plant had become depleted, and management offered extra overtime to build them up.

With many workers still struggling to pay off last winter's gas and electricity bills, it would have been very easy to say yes to the management's offer. Instead shop stewards called a factory meeting and recommended an overtime ban.

The stewards' proposal was carried overwhelmingly, with an amendment proposed by Cardiff AUEW No.3 President John Williams. The amendment said no overtime was to be worked until management guaranteed a full 40 hours a week for the next six months, and that if overtime was to be worked again it must be under

shop stewards' control.

The result of the demand from the workforce is that shop stewards will aim to monitor production in collaboration with Solihull stewards to ensure that component stocks don't rise above those needed for seven days' production. John Williams told *Workers' Action*: "We are no longer willing to accept management's production figures and allow them to build up stocks so they can lay us off again".

John Williams added: "In the coming months talks will start about renegotiating our yearly agreement. It seems to me what we should be going for is: Full staff status including full, indefinite lay-off pay. A 35 hour week. And £100 a week minimum wage, protected by a sliding scale, to get rid of the financial need to work overtime and thus help in creating more jobs".



Park — guilty

# WORKERS IN ACTION

## BACK TO WORK ON POLARIS

INDUSTRIAL civil servants employed by the Ministry of Defence have accepted the latest government pay offer, made at national negotiations last Friday, 11th. The deal gives a rise of 9% in wages after consolidation of Phase 1 and 2 rises, and an extra £1.50 on production bonuses for some of the workers.

Since rejecting a government offer of 10% on the old basic, in late July, shop stewards in naval bases in Scotland have led a series of blackings and strike actions.

On Thursday August 10th, 2,000 workers at the Faslane base on the Clyde struck in support of 400 workmates suspended for blacking the Polaris submarine HMS Reso-

lution. But on Monday 15th the stewards proposed acceptance of the new offer to a mass meeting and the 2,000 men returned to work. A similar vote on the offer was carried by a mass meeting of the 6,000 workers at the large Rosyth base on the Firth of Forth.

The government's additional promise of a work study aimed at giving the workers parity with those employed in private industry also appears to have played a big part in getting support for the deal.

The action has resulted in a marginally improved offer but the workers will not readily forget their bitterness at the Labour government's use of the Navy as strikebreakers in the interests of NATO.

## Exec abandons 35hr claim as POEU members fight on

THE NATIONAL Executive of the Post Office Engineering Union has voted to propose acceptance of the offer made by the Post Office and the Government through the 'good offices' of Lord McCarthy.

The McCarthy report does not concede the demand made by the POEU conference in January, for a 35 hour week. It proposes instead a reduction in the working week from the present 40 hours to 37½ in two stages, tied to self-financing productivity deals.

The productivity deal clause means that the shorter work week will lose its value in terms of creating new jobs, and probably even in terms of maintaining existing manning levels as new technology is brought in.

The Post Office bosses backed McCarthy, and in a letter sent to

their managers, they declared: "... if despite our initiative the union does not respond... we have a duty to our customers to react firmly and properly to any continuation of industrial action".

On Monday August 15th the threats were carried out. 574 engineers around the country were sent home, almost quadrupling at one go the number of engineers suspended. This attack sparked off action by many branches, especially in London, bringing over 5,000 engineers out in sympathy with the suspended workers.

The Executive's attitude is a stark contrast to the rank and file's — widening a divide that emerged in early August. On August 2nd the executive announced it was intensifying action by ordering a national work-to-rule, but at the

same time it called off the increasingly successful overtime ban. This decision angered many branches which were already operating a work to rule in addition to the ban, and many branches have carried on the ban on their own initiative.

That local pressure has been having a real effect on the Post Office, particularly affecting the international exchanges where by Monday 15th an average of less than one in ten calls dialled was getting through.

Given the Post Office's record profits of £367 million last year, the POEU leadership's capitulation can scarcely be sold to the members on the usual grounds that "there's no money in the kitty".

The POEU executive is mandated to submit any deal giving less than the full claim to a recall union conference. At that conference branches will have to press for rejection of the deal and renewed action.

NIK BARSTOW

## Rochdale textile workers say 'save our nursery'

ROCHDALE C.L.P.'s motion to Party conference this year is on Day Nursery provision. But the Women's Section is doing more than simply passing resolutions.

Last week the Women's Section convened a public meeting to inaugurate an urgent campaign to save the 30 year old day nursery run up till now by John Bright's textile works.

The day nursery was set up in the early '50s to cater for the children of women working at the factory. At the time textiles were booming, so anything to encourage women to come to work was good economic sense.

Now textiles were booming, so anything to encourage women to come to work was good economic sense.

Now textiles are slumping, workers are two a penny, and Brights no

longer need to assist women workers by caring for their kids. So they propose to shut the nursery, making those women workers redundant who can't find alternative care for their children, and sacking the nursery staff.

Over the years this 80-place nursery, which cares for school-age children too during the holidays, and buses them to school in term time, has changed its clientele. Only about 30 places are used now by the children of Brights workers, the rest being filled by 40 Social Service clients and about 10 children of working women who pay the full rate of £13 a week.

So the effect of closure would be far-reaching.

The campaign got off to a good start, with nearly 200 people at the meeting, mainly parents of the children concerned, workers at the nursery, and other interested local people.

The issue is complicated in that to force the Local Authority to take over Brights' nursery — the most obvious solution — would be to lose the places for working women, since the Local Authority operates a 'social priority' system of place-allocation.

So the campaign is going to have to raise the issue of the importance to parents of having nursery provision for all children who need it because their parents work outside the home. In addition, the workers at Brights are going to raise forcefully the issue of the employers' irresponsible cynicism in using nurseries to lure women when it suits them and then dismissing them in favour of higher profits.

SUE ARNALL



SEVERAL HUNDRED people marched through London last Sunday, 15th. The demonstration, called by Sinn Fein, demanded the restoration of political prisoner status and the end of Britain's efforts to crush Republican prisoners into submission by leaving them with no clothing, no books or newspapers, no cell furniture, no visits, no exercise, and no fresh air. It also marked the seventh anniversary of the introduction of internment in August 1971.

## 'No blacks here' says DHSS boss

A RECENT survey by the Tavistock Institute showed that black people consistently have smaller chances of getting civil service jobs than equally-qualified whites. If you're wondering how that can happen, a recent incident in Basingstoke should give some idea.

Mr Grainger, a Higher Executive Officer in the local DHSS office, approached a clerical officer on Friday 11th, and asked her if she knew any people who would like a temporary job in that office as a typist. He stated that the typist "should be English" and white, as well as having RSA qualifications.

The clerical officer said that, besides the fact that this was illegal under the Race Relations Act, she would not be prepared to ask anyone to take the job under those conditions. When he was asked what would happen if a black person turned up for the job, Grainger said that they would then have to find some excuse to get rid of him or her.

Action is being taken through the civil service union, the CPSSA, and formal complaints are being made to both the DHSS and the Race Relations Board.

## Tory council attacks direct labour

MAINTENANCE workers employed by the Basingstoke Borough Council struck on Monday 7th August against a council move to extend contract labour to housing maintenance in the town. The Tory council's action, carried out in line with a directive from Tory central office, aims to end direct labour, in a move which would mean mass redundancies among Borough Council workers.

The strikers were joined by Parks department workers the following day. On Wednesday 9th, Basingstoke's dustmen, who had supported the strike from the start, joined in after police harassment of a maintenance workers' picket at the council's Wade Rd depot.

80 police, drafted from as far away as Southampton and Portsmouth, were used to remove six pickets from the depot gates. As far as the pickets could see, the police action was under the direction of the council's Director of Technical Services, Mr Capollin.

The next day, Thursday, the rural dustmen in nearby Whitechurch came out too. In addition NALGO members have committed themselves to block the administration of work allocated to contract workers.

The strikers' morale is high. They are determined to break the veil of secrecy and deception shrouding the issue of why people have to wait years to have leaking roofs and collapsing walls repaired in houses only ten years old.

The whole struggle is taking place against the background of the Tory council aiming to sell, privately, a whole estate of new council houses (Popley 6), and keeping hundreds of council houses empty rather than housing the people on the council's waiting list.

## EVENTS

WEDNESDAY 30 AUGUST. Islington Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory public meeting on 'Labour and Ireland'. 7.30pm, Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19.

THURSDAY 31 AUGUST. Planning meeting for SCLV supporters in outer East London. 7.30pm at Newham North East Labour Party offices, 241 High Street North. Nearest tube station East Ham.

FRIDAY 1 SEPTEMBER. SCLV social. From 8pm at Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19.

THURSDAY 14 SEPTEMBER [Note changed date]: Haringey SCLV public meeting on Racism. 7.30pm, Tottenham Community Project.

PICKET GARNERS: Main pickets every day, noon to 3pm and 5.30 to 11 pm at 399 Oxford St, 243 Oxford St, 40-41 Haymarket, and 56 Whitcombe St. Mass picket every Saturday at noon, 399 Oxford St. Donations to Garners Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, room 84, 12-13 Henrietta St, WC2.

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