

Stop the Dublin hangings

AS WE GO to press, Noel and Marie Murray are still waiting to hear whether the Irish Supreme Court, which sat on November 1st to 3rd, will uphold the death sentences passed by the Special Criminal Court.

If the sentences are carried out, the Murrrays will become the first people to be hung by the Dublin government since 1954. Since then the death penalty has been abol-

ished for most murders and retained very clearly as a purely political deterrent.

In the last few weeks, international efforts have re-doubled to save the Murrrays. A large mobilisation in Madrid has been attacked by armed police. There have also been actions in France, Switzerland, Italy and West Germany.

Meanwhile, the response in Britain has been very slow. The Irish embassy in London has been picketed; there have been some protest occupations in the Midlands.

But now only a few weeks, or perhaps days, left until the Supreme Court announces its verdict. And it is not only the lives of two brave anti-imperialist fighters that are at stake. If the executions are carried out, it will be another step in consolidating the repression in the 26 Counties against Republicans and the left.

Send telegrams of protest to Liam Cosgrave, Government Buildings, Dublin, with a copy to the Murray Defence Committee at 155 Church Rd, Celbridge, Co. Kildare.

workers' ACTION

No. 35

Nov. 11-18

10p

AS SUPPORT builds up for the November 17th anti-cuts demonstration, several 'leaks' and government statements have revealed the chaos in Westminster. Each day's prediction of the extent of the cuts is overtaken by next day's news of yet greater cut-backs.

On Sunday, 'The Observer' reported on the government's expected public sector borrowing figure: "It almost certainly means that, just to stay in position, the Chancellor will have to increase taxation or introduce further cuts in public expenditure — despite the implications this will have for unemployment, which is now likely to rise"

The next day the 'Guardian' reported: "Higher rents for council houses, less aid to industry, and a faster phasing out of food subsidies now look like being high on the list for public spending cuts."

VAT is almost certain to go up in Healey's threatened mini-budget, further increasing prices; direct taxation is likely to be altered slightly, further cutting into real wages. Meanwhile the sinking value of the pound means rising prices for all imported goods and another twist to the inflationary spiral.

The government is counting severed heads in advance. It is already promising the IMF an orgy of public sector cuts. But the coach loads of trade unionists from the South, the train

41 TRAINING COLLEGES TO CLOSE

TWO 'CONFIDENTIAL' memos have been leaked to the press. One is from the Department of the Environment and one is from the Department of Education and Science, and both of them tell the same message: the knife of public spending cuts is to be plunged deep into working-class living standards yet again.

The first memorandum suggests where cuts could be made "to compensate for councils' overspending". The cuts it proposes are in education, transport, and social services. They include yet another huge fares rise (of 30%!) plus an estimated loss of 4000 jobs in transport and 11,000 in road maintenance.

Thousands of residential and day care places for the disabled and the aged are to be lost, and nursery and special school building programmes abandoned.

The second memo reveals that up to 30 teacher training colleges are likely to be added to the existing list of 21 scheduled for closure. This is in line with the government's policy of reducing the number of teacher training places from 114,000 in 1973 to 45,000 in 1981.

These plans are part of the preparation for the White Paper on public spending due in January, which is likely to announce even more far-reaching attacks on working class standards.

ALL OUT NOV. 17

KILL THE CUTS NOW!

loads from the North West and the bus loads from Scotland and Wales tell a different story. They are evidence of the growing organised opposition to the cuts.

The organisation, the mobilisation, the militancy, is there. What is needed is clear fighting policies:

★ Labour councils must refuse to implement the cuts.

★ United front labour movement campaigns against the cuts must be built in every area.

★ Public sector unions must say no redundancies and no cover for unfilled vacancies.

★ The funds of social services should be protected against inflation by automatic increases in line with price rises.

★ To relieve the crushing interest burden, the banks and financial institutions should be nationalised — without compensation. Labour councils should refuse to meet interest payments.

★ We oppose the capitalist standing army and the huge spending on weapons of mass destruction. For 'defence', instead of a standing army, there should be a workers' militia, based on universal military training and under trade union control.

★ Most importantly: where the government and councils push ahead with cuts, we must be prepared to respond with direct action, 'blacking' cuts, occupying threatened premises, and striking to defend services and jobs.

WE'RE ON OUR WAY

THE NOVEMBER 17 demonstration-lobby against the cuts looks like being a huge success. Originally called by the National Union of Public Employees, the demonstration is now being backed by 13 national unions.

As a sign of the anger of trade unionists against the government's policy of further and harsher cut-backs in social spending, Southampton Trades Council is sending 15 coachloads of delegates to the lobby.

NUPE in the North-West have booked two 400-seat trains to get members down to the demonstration.

The staff section of the AUEW, TASS, is supporting the action; the area council and executive of the Yorkshire miners is likely to participate; the London district of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has given its backing to the lobby.

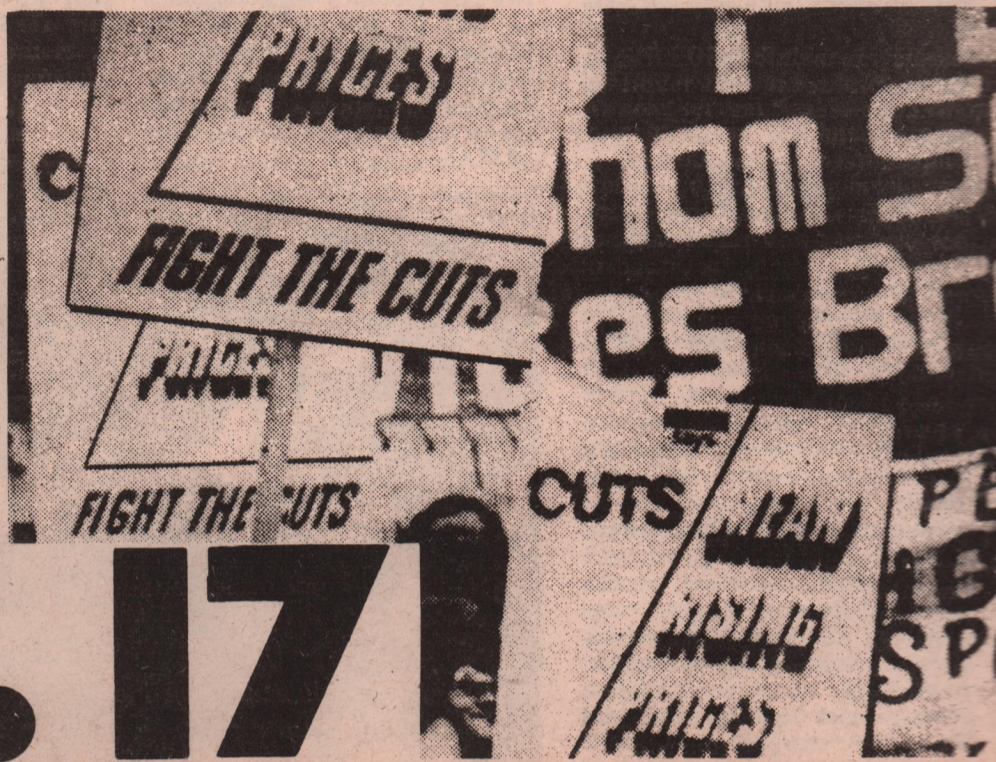
In Greater Manchester, the Confed has asked shop stewards to hold meetings to win support for the lobby, and a meeting has been called for 15 November where final details will be discussed.

The seamen's port committee in Felixstowe is organising a contingent in conjunction with Ipswich Trades Council. Waltham Forest (London) Trades Council has voted to send a delegation, as have Basildon, Rugby, Harlow, York & district, and many other trades councils.

T&GWU No. 1 Region, representing 500,000 members in the South and South East, was unanimous in support of the demonstration. Similar support has come from London Docks Royal group shop stewards, and there will also be shop stewards delegations from building sites, from the Redpath Dorman Long oil rig yard in Methil, Fife, and from Heathrow Airport.

Delegates are also coming from public sector unions in Coventry, Cardiff, Havering Hampshire, and Kent. Students are also expected from many parts of the country.

Apart from this enormous official and rank and file backing from the trade union movement, the demonstration is, of course, also backed by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.



Tory uproar over Grunwicks solidarity

The magnificent solidarity action of post office workers who 'blacked' mail to Grunwicks has been vehemently attacked by the Tories and the far right, and finally neutralised by the government's Advisory, Conciliation and Advisory Service [ACAS]. Meanwhile police have played their full part in the opposition to the strike, arresting nine pickets.

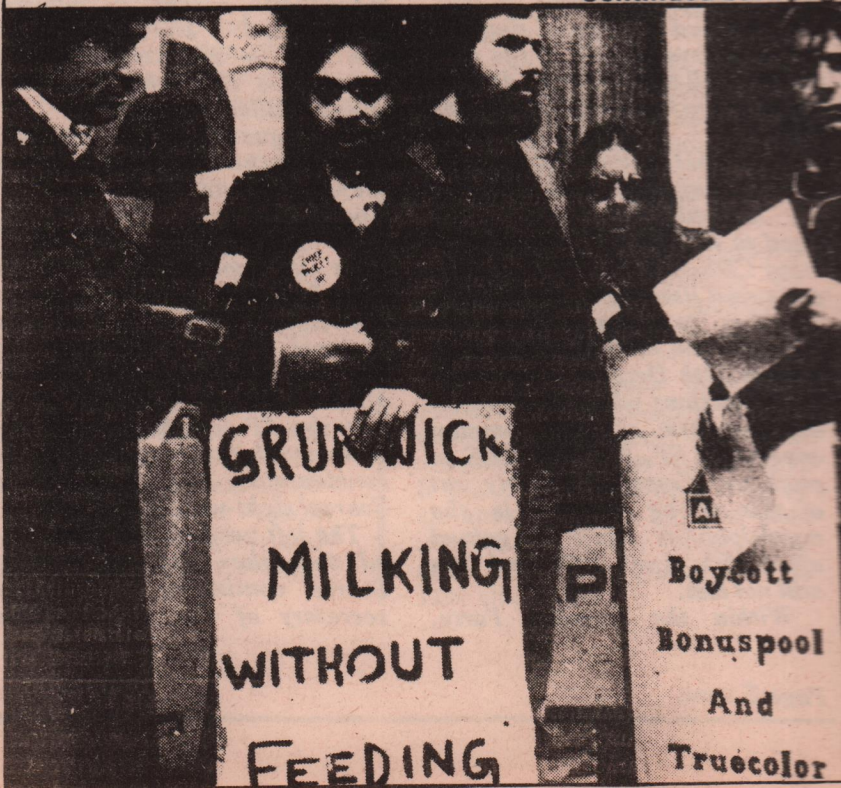
250 APEX strikers at Grunwicks Processing Laboratories, North West London, have been out for 11 weeks demanding union recognition and bargaining rights. 'Black-ing' mail was the best poss-

ible assistance for them since the company receives its work mainly by post.

The strikers appealed to local post office workers, who agreed to give solidarity. After a warning from post office management that their action was illegal, the post office workers adjourned the blacking pending an official decision by their union, the

UPW. UPW General Secretary Tom Jackson announced official support for the blacking at the TUC in September, although there was a long delay until it came into effect last Friday 28th October.

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WITH IAN Mikardo as chairman, Michael O'Leary, Dublin Minister of Labour, opening the conference, and John Forrester (Labour Party NEC) closing it, it is clear that the *Anti-Apartheid Movement* is still in the business of courting the great and influential.

In a sickening speech, Michael O'Leary brought greetings from the International Labour Organisation, of which he is president. The worst aspect of his speech was when he referred to the lessons of South Africa that could be learnt in order to bring peace in Ireland! for sheer blood-curdling hypocrisy this beats all — for in his own case this means being a member of a government ready to hang freedom fighters, to bring in savage police state laws, and to work hand in glove with British imperialism. For South Africa, he believes there is a peaceful road, through a gradual liberalisation.

POWER

Other forces and ideas in Anti-Apartheid were, however, represented at the 6th November labour movement conference in London. John Gaetsewe (general secretary of the banned South African Congress of Trade Unions), for example, made a magnificent speech explaining the events of the last four months.

He stated that the black youth of South Africa had given their opinion loud and clear on the view that gradual progress was possible. The last four months have developed a determination, a courage, and a discipline among black workers that put the class struggle on a new and higher level. Apartheid is not just a political system, it is a means of yoking black workers as oxen of labour in the service of international capital.

The real revolutionary power lies with these black workers. As a river, when it overflows, finds the shortest cut to the sea, so

REPORT

Dave Spencer describes Anti-Apartheid's conference on Southern Africa and the British Trades Union and Labour Movement

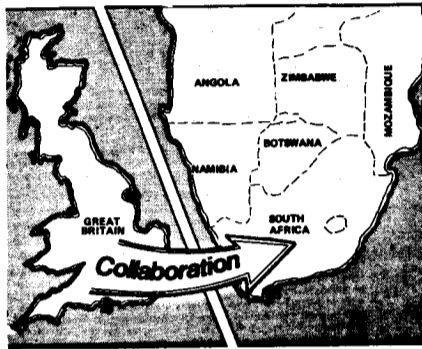
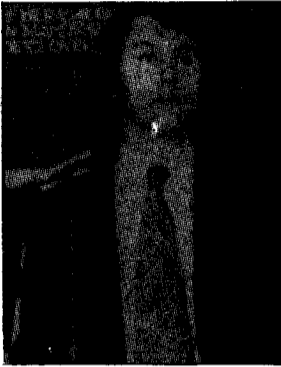
in the flood of revolution, black workers are looking for the General Strike as a means to break apartheid. International solidarity is of the utmost importance, not as a liberal gesture, but because we have a common enemy which must be defeated.

Many speakers followed the same line as John Gaetsewe. It is a line that was in the first two documents for the conference — one by Dorcus Goode and Michael Williams (reviewed in WA33) and the other by Martin Legassick and David Hempson (to be reviewed in a coming issue of WA).



In the main workshop on solidarity action, Peter Nicholas (Leyland TU committee) recalled 'the proudest day of his life', the closure of Sattley Coke Depot when Birmingham engineers came out in support of the miners in 1972. He was for a build-up of propaganda in the factories in preparation for industrial action if basic trade union rights are not given by British firms to South African workers.

BELOW: MICHAEL O'LEARY — SICKENING HYPOCRISY



An interesting contribution was made by J T Maluleke, general secretary in exile of the Southern Rhodesia TUC. He told of the repressive laws against the trade unions under Smith. He stated that the British TUC had not helped their struggle. On the contrary, it had advised them to accept repressive laws, and on his arrival in the UK had denied him assistance. It is significant that trade unionists are not represented in Geneva. Nkomo — said Maluleke — is scared of trade unions, not wanting a voice that might conflict with his own.

There was no other contribution on the struggle in Zimbabwe, nor any clear position taken on the Geneva talks and the question of British involvement in Zimbabwe.

John Forrester, summing up, reflected the confusion in the conference. He complained about British investment abroad when the money should be spent here, and called for a stop to it. He called for the labelling of all South African products and for international pressure on all civilised countries to outlaw South Africa.

FOCUS

The outcome of the conference? There were nearly 300 delegates from the labour movement. The question of solidarity with South African workers will now be taken into the Labour Party and trade unions. Several excellent suggestions were made on forms of solidarity action; but a resolution from a Coventry Trades Council delegate (and WA supporter), calling for Anti-Apartheid to campaign for a national day of industrial action around which to focus its activity, was passed to the organising committee, on the grounds that the conference was for discussion and not decision-making.

A real solidarity movement for the struggle in Southern Africa must be: with a proper united-front structure allowing labour movement delegates to take decisions, and with a clear policy against any imperialist intervention in Zimbabwe and for solidarity with black workers in South Africa.

PORTUGAL: S.P. LEFT LOSES GROUND — WITHOUT A FIGHT

THE OPEN battle between right and left at the Portuguese Socialist Party congress of 30-31 October, and the defeat of the left in that battle, has laid the basis for a further shift to the right by the Soares government, and perhaps even for a coalition with the PSD [Socialist Democratic Party — formerly PPD, Popular Democratic Party].

The PSD was holding its congress the same weekend, and its leader Sa Carneiro, seeing governmental office within his reach, issued energetic calls for President Eanes to take a more active role. A coalition formed on Eanes' demand might relieve the SP of the difficulties still existing in an explicit approach to the openly-bourgeois PSD.

A SP-PSD coalition would have a large majority in the Legislative Assembly, and would not need to include the more right-wing CDS. The PSD has already distanced itself from the CDS by refusing to form a common front for the municipal elections due on 12th December — municipal elections which are important because of the common concern of SP, PSD and CDS to push the Communist Party out of the municipalities which it gained after 25th April 1974 and has still not lost.

Within the Socialist Party,

conflict has been growing between the Soares leadership, concerned with stabilising Portuguese capitalism and consolidating the counter-revolutionary successes of 25th November 1975, and a left wing, tied within reformist limits but more responsive to rank and file workers who joined the SP as a road to socialism without Stalinist bureaucracy.

On 13th October, for example, there was a 10,000-strong demonstration in Lisbon, called by the SP-led teachers' union, against sackings and purges decreed by the SP minister of education. The minister commented: "The demonstration? Of no importance. It's a joke! It is clear that I am not going to alter my policy".

Subsequently three members of the teachers' union leadership were suspended from the Socialist Party, for "Trotskyism".

At the congress the trade unionists of the SP presented an opposition list for the party's national committee, which got 210 votes against 610 for the official, Soares-sponsored list. But the SP left have made no serious effort to mobilise their considerable support against Soares' right-wing policies.

The left even explicitly asserted that they did not oppose Soares continuing as general secretary of the party. While

Soares tries to play the conciliator in the party, his leaning is clearly towards the right. The most prominent leader of the SP left, Lopes Cardoso, did refuse to stand during the standing ovation at the congress for the re-election of Soares as general secretary; but he also refused to be put on the left list for the national committee.

As minister of agriculture, Lopes Cardoso has been responsible for carrying out the government's attacks on land reform. And, instead of resigning before the congress and leading a fight there against Soares, he made his resignation after the congress — and nothing has followed from it.

And thus another victory has been granted to the men of November 25th. At the time of the presidential elections, in June, the SP left was strong enough to cause serious problems over the official SP support for Eanes (in many areas, SP members refused to back Eanes, voting for de Azevedo or Carvalho instead) and to thwart the prospect of a coalition government of SP-PPD or SP-PPD-CDS. Neither the SP left, nor anyone else, was strong enough to pose a clear working-class alternative to Eanes. The result could only be defeat by attrition for the SP left — and, more important, defeats



SOARES: WINNING BY ATTRITION

for the Portuguese working class.

The task still remains for revolutionaries in Portugal: to weld together a united front with CP and SP workers, round defensive demands, as a first step to reversing the right-wing offensive under way since 25th November, and particularly since Eanes appointed the Soares government, in July.

'LA CLASS'

THE FIRST issue has just appeared of "La Classe", the monthly paper of the Italian revolutionary organisation, the Lega Comunista.

It defines its principles as follows: "The principles of the Lega Comunista are those of revolutionary Marxism, expressed in the Russian Revolution and in Bolshevism. In the anti-Stalinist battle of the Left Opposition and in the method of the Transitional Programme.

"Carrying forward in Italy the battle of the international Revolutionary Marxist Faction, the Lega Comunista fights for the principles of the revolutionary programme:

"For internationalism, that is in the first place the programmatic and organisational reconstruction of the Fourth International.

"For class autonomy and independence, expressed in the struggle for the workers' government, in the tactic of the united front, and in the clear refusal of all forms of class collaboration.

"For revolution, against the gradualism and electoralism of bourgeois democracy; the daily work of agitation is linked to the political perspective of insurrection.

"For democratic centralism in the construction of the party and for direct democracy, in the mass organisations.

"For the proletarian dictatorship as the highest form of democracy possible today, that is soviet democracy".

"La Classe" carries greetings from the IKL of Austria, the Spartacusbund of Germany, the I-CL of Britain, as well as from Alfonso Leonetti, a founder of the New Italian Opposition (the original nucleus of Italian Trotskyism), and one of the closest comrades of Antonio Gramsci, the foremost leader of the Italian Communist Party in the 1920s.

Copies of "La Classe" can be obtained c/o Workers Action, 49 Carnac St, London SE27.



TORY POLICIES BRING TORY VOTES

THE POLITICAL party that depends for its votes mainly on one class, but which in office must work for and serve a different class — or else break with it, its interests, and its system — finds itself in an impossible position when the system it serves is in serious crisis. That is the message from last Thursday's by-elections.

It was the votes of desperate working class people which gave the Tories victory, in Workington and Walsall North — and, if not their votes, then their abstention from voting.

And the message for the Labour 'left' is this: the desperation and disgust is born out of disillusion, falling living standards, and the complete failure of the organised labour movement in Parliament or in the

trade unions, to point convincingly to any solution or any alternative.

The Government can't heed or learn from this message, because it is tied hand and foot to the capitalist system. Militants of the Labour and trade union left had better heed it and learn from it.

Keeping the Tories out of office is seen as a goal in itself by the Labour Parliamentary left and large sections of the trade union movement. This outlook has led to obsessive juggling with the arithmetic of Parliamentary lobby fodder, by left as well as right. The supreme treason is seen as a vote against the labour government, not a

vote for cuts in working class living standards.

The short-sightedness of this approach is what comes out most forcefully from the by-election results. If the left of the Labour movement, party and trade unions, had organised the working class in those and other areas to fight back against cuts, unemployment, and erosion of wages; if the 'left' had organised the working class for a positive fight against the tepid Tory policies of the Callaghan government, arming and mobilising the working class in places like Walsall and Workington to resist the effects of capitalist crisis — then the question of a blindly desperate vote for the Tories would have been unthinkable.

The 'Scottish road to socialism'

Editorial

AT ITS FIRST Congress last week, the newly-formed Scottish Labour Party split down the middle, after a weekend of manoeuvring by the leadership of Jim Sillars, Alex Neil, and John Robertson. The bureaucratic attempts to purge the Party began on Friday night when twelve delegates were suspended. No reasons were given for the suspensions, either to the delegates themselves or to the Conference.

Despite all his prating last January about forming a democratic alternative to the Labour Party, Sillars' conception of democracy has more in common with the 'democracy' of the Salem witch trials than any genuine form of working class organisation. Informing the Congress that he wouldn't tell them why he wanted the delegates suspended, but that he had the evidence, Sillars forced the suspensions through with no discussion.

Trouble flared again on Saturday afternoon, when Kelvin and Cumbernauld branches had the temerity to propose a motion which would force the leadership to circulate within the party political material of all complexes, and forbid Sillars and Robertson to make Press statements without prior authorisation by the SLP. The leadership demanded that this resolution be dismissed without debate, but delegates voted to discuss it, whereupon Sillars and Company decided that this vote showed that the Congress was too cowardly to fight the left.

Disheartened at his partial failure to turn the Congress into a Scottish re-run of the Moscow trials, Sillars threatened to resign. On the Sunday morning the leadership threw at the Congress a motion to expel delegates who had 'disrupted' the Conference, i.e. anyone who opposed Sillars or Neil. Four branches were disbanded and the resolution shoved through by 516 votes to 271.

The expelled branches and their sympathisers walked out of the Congress and set up a new Party centre in a nearby Stirling hotel. This new meeting decided to hold a Congress within the next two weeks to discuss policy, as did the rump SLP, as Sillars was so busy stabbing the left in the back that there wasn't time to get through the agenda.

Thus the Congress ended, with Sillars putting a brave face on it, declaring 'the Party came near to breaking point, but having gone through this trauma we emerge and find it a re-birth'.

Among other things, the Conference shows the complete fraudulence of Sillars' claim to 'democracy'. If he had been serious when he formed the SLP he would have resigned the seat in South Ayrshire and fought a by-election on the basis of SLP politics. He didn't, and now presents himself as a SLP MP without having been elected as such. So much for Sillars' respect for bourgeois democracy, let alone workers' democracy.

At the Conference, the main butt of his attacks were supporters of *Red Weekly* in the SLP. Sillars refused to debate his politics with the opposition around *Red Weekly*, instead expelling them with no discussion. In fact, carried away with his new-found role, he expelled several branches which have never had anything to do with *Red Weekly*. Sillars exposed his true nature in 1974 when he scabbed on the Glasgow firemen's strike. He has not changed since.

Sillars, Neil and Co. are now faced with a party rapidly losing any electoral credibility it ever had. It is not out of the question they will drift towards the SNP to save their parliamentary seats.

It remains to be seen how large either of the two groups will be after the Congress. Although the SLP claims a membership of 2000, there are probably only about 200 active members. The main opposition to the leadership is based around the journal *Scottish Socialist*, the first issue of which was published a couple of weeks ago. The journal's politics could best be described as left reformist.

Although it was set up as a forum of debate by various oppositional currents, including *Red Weekly*, any clear argument for revolutionary positions by *Red Weekly* supporters is noticeably lacking. The aims of the journal are couched in such vague terms as to mean almost nothing — '*Scottish Socialist*' will stand squarely for democratic workers' control and for a planned economy, based on the socialist nationalisation of private property'.

The serious bourgeois daily, the *Financial Times*, commented with precise contempt on the Conference efforts of the SLP left: 'contentious motions proposed by them do not seem overtly Marxist, calling as they do for withdrawal of an independent Scotland from the EEC and an all party campaign against public expenditure cuts'.

Even more ambiguous is *Scottish Socialist's* attitude to the proposed Scottish Assembly. 'We recognise no higher authority than the Scottish people in determining the powers of the Assembly'.

While in the event of the setting up of a mini-bourgeois parliament in Edinburgh, *Workers Action* would of course defend the right of the Scottish people to elect their own representatives in it, what *Scottish Socialist* ignores is the nature of the campaign for an Assembly at present.

The Assembly is a diversion for Scottish workers, irrelevant to fighting for real solutions to the problems of cuts, unemployment, and appalling housing conditions. To fight for an Assembly now is to pander to, create, generate, and perpetuate nationalist illusions in the power of an Assembly, armed with the revenues from North Sea Oil, to begin to solve the problems of Scottish workers. The fact that a section of the Scottish working class believes in those illusions doesn't mean that socialists go along for the ride; on the contrary, it makes it all the more important to fight against them.

While arguing against campaigning for an Assembly, militants in Scotland must defend the right of *Red Weekly* and other expelled members of the SLP to fight for their politics inside Sillars' party. However, even though Sillars has made a series of monstrous blunders in carrying through the expulsions, it seems unlikely that the disbanded branches will be re-admitted.

Thus the fate of those who split from the British labour movement under the banner of a separate Scottish Labour Party seems to be, on the one hand a drift towards the SNP, on the other towards a confused smudge, with, again, no clear political banner other than the 'Scottish' tag. All the more reason to reassert the elementary necessity for unity of English and Scottish workers — coupled with a fight for clear working-class internationalist politics.

It is because the left — who have, or can have for the asking, the leadership of the masses of reformist workers in Britain — refused to do any of this, instead confining themselves to sustaining the government in Parliament, that the Labour Party cedes ground to the Tories.

And because of the irresolution and weakness of the Parliamentary lefts, the by-election results can be used to pressurise them. Already they have called forth from '*Tribune*' a declaration of unswerving opposition to divisions in the ranks of the government's supporters. If that means anything, it means a signal to Callaghan, the City of London financiers, and the IMF to buy a bigger hatchet and start swinging it more vigorously. The left in Parliament will do nothing

In Walsall the National Front got over five votes for every vote the IS candidate got. In Walsall and Newcastle the total IS vote was a derisory 755 — all the more derisory when we remember that in Walsall the vote of 574 for Jimmy McCallum was a harvest from a de-facto united front of revolutionaries, with the IMG playing footsoldiers to the IS general staff.

Keep out yesterday's devils, the Tories, is the non-answer of the Labour government and the Parliamentary left. Build IS — or the 'Socialist Workers Party' — was the non-answer of McCallum.

Militants must fight for a policy which is an answer:

★ Direct industrial action against the cuts.

★ No cover for jobs lost.

★ Fight unemployment through occupations and unilateral working-class reduction of working hours so that the working week is as long as will give work to all those needing it.

★ Oppose the pushing-down of wages by mobilising for 'zero threshold' increases, keeping pace with the cost of living.

A working class movement mobilised in opposition to the Labour government on these demands will not vote Tory. It will provide the beginning of an answer to the present policies of the Labour Government and the likely policies of a Tory alternative.

THE International Monetary Fund's team has just finished "opening the books" of the British economy, preparing the conditions for the loan which is to help solve the crisis of the British bosses.

The loan may help relieve the crisis for the bosses. But for the 4,300 workers hit by the crisis through Courtaulds' redundancy notices issued over the last couple of weeks, the IMF will be no help at all.

Indeed, part of the IMF's conditions for the loan may well be more 'rationalisations' — that is, more sackings like at Courtaulds.

Inquiry

The Labour Government's proposed inquiry into Courtaulds won't help either. When has the government ever stopped bosses from sacking workers? What reason is there to think that a government which is pressing ahead with large scale job cuts in the state sector will have a different attitude to job cuts by private capitalists?

In reality the government's concern is haggling with Courtaulds about what they have done with all the government aid they have received over the years.

In short: the problems with the government's inquiry is that it will be an inquiry into how to solve the questions for capitalism — not for the working class.

And the same is true, not only of the IMF's policy, not only of the government's policy, but also of the "alternative strategy" of the Tribune left. Measured against what the crisis means for the working class — problems like the Courtaulds sackings — it reveals itself as yet another attempt to 'deal with the major

problems Britain' (that is, British capitalism) 'faces'.

In October 29th's Tribune, Brian Sedgemore sets out the "alternative strategy" once again.

Point one, of course, is import controls. Textiles is one area where import controls have been applied. With what result? Heavy blows against the militant textile workers of Portugal as they fought for workers' control and workers' power last year — and no visible benefit for British workers.

The working class, whose power lies in combination, has ten times more reason for international cooperation than the bosses; for them competition and the pillage of poor nations by rich nations are first principles of economic life. Yet the IMF's and the British government's attempts to solve the crisis for the bosses show ten times more 'internationalism' than the British labour movement has yet achieved.

If, instead of setting themselves against textile workers in other countries by backing import controls, Courtaulds workers had assisted the Portuguese textile workers and had given solidarity to the super-exploited black workers employed by Courtaulds in South Africa, they would be in a much stronger position now.



Brian Sedgemore

COURTAULDS: What is the workers' answer?

An international combine committee of textile workers would have infinitely more power than the scattered action of dozens of groups of workers, each trying to save its 'own' factory.

It is late to start now — but not too late.

What does the Tribune "alternative strategy" propose other than import controls?

It advocates price control — sternly insisting that it must be more "effective" than previous price control policies, but not saying how that will be achieved. It recommends incomes policy. We have that already, and it is certainly no help to Courtaulds workers or any others! As real wages have fallen, unemployment has gone up.

Then the Tribune "alternative strategy" comes to the question of "planning agreements" and the National Enterprise Board. Courtaulds is really a test here. Over the last ten years, it has been one of the



most highly developed examples of state involvement in industrial strategy. Former Courtaulds boss Lord Kearton was the first chairman of the Labour government's Industrial Re-organisation Corporation in 1966.

The Skelmersdale factory, included in Courtaulds' closure list, was built with ten million pounds of state aid in 1968. Over half of Courtaulds' new investment in 1970-73 — 38 million pounds out of 75 million — was provided by state aid.

By Greg Cornell

PLAINS, Ga.—Interviewing Jimmy Carter's maids was hardly the story I had in mind when I set out to talk with Blacks in his hometown here.

But almost every other Black woman I found turned out to be a maid from Carter's childhood, or a maid he hired after he married and settled down, or a maid working for him now.

At the end of Carter Street in Plains, there's a dirt road. Along that road there are a number of Black homes. It could be Appalachia, and a million miles distant from Jimmy Carter. But it's only a few blocks.

The houses have been patched and repatched. There is a vegetable garden in front of one house, and there I meet Ruth Harvey and Emma Harvey, sisters.

Ruth Harvey, sixty-three, was a maid for Carter and is also a veteran of his peanut plant.

"I'm barely making it," she says. "The thing makes me so depressed. I used to be working, but now I'm not. I can take in sewing, but my sewing machine is broken and I can't afford to get it fixed."

"I'm hoping," she says, "they'll raise my Social Security check."

Ruth Harvey says she took care of Amy, Carter's youngest daughter, before he was elected governor. She spent several days after Carter was elected caring for Amy at the governor's mansion.

When she went to work for the Carters in 1966, she was paid twelve dollars for twenty hours' work.

"CARTER does it!", shouts a front page article in Tribune of November 5th, exulting in the victory of capitalist Tweedledum over the Ford Tweedledee. The New Statesman at least had enough self-consciousness to remember sceptically the similar jubilation with which the bone-headed section of the Labour left greeted the election of J F Kennedy, who re-started the Vietnam war.

In fact the election, with only Ford or Carter as main choice, was simply a no choice election for US workers. There are no serious political differences between them, merely differences of style. Any changes in Government policy initiated by Carter will be from within the same range of choices which Ford worked with, to serve the ruling class.

The Socialist Workers Party, an American socialist organisation which considers itself Trotskyist, offered the only candidates — Peter camejo and Willie Mae Reid — for whom socialists could

have voted, albeit critically and with great reservations. Its central slogan was for a "Bill of Rights for Working People", in substance amounting to the socialist revolution — as an amendment to the American Constitution!

The present leaders of the SWP have evidently forgotten the bitter contempt with which the great founder of American Trotskyism, J P Cannon, dismissed such a fantasy when a centrist called Budenz proposed it in the 1930s (see Cannon's "History of American Trotskyism")

Or maybe they have become drunk with illusions in US bourgeois 'democracy', whose institutions they have learned to use against the bourgeoisie in election campaigns, court cases against the FBI, and campaigning around Watergate — but the limits of whose usefulness for revolutionary purposes they seem to have forgotten.

The SWP weekly 'Militant' did, however, print this brilliant expose of "Peanut Jimmy" at home.

forty a week and paid her fifty dollars.

Emma Harvey, like her sister, is hoping for an increase in Social Security.

She also worked for the Carter family, in the 1940s and early 1950s, sorting peanuts. At that time the pay was seventeen or eighteen dollars a week.

But tough times of the past are not her main concern now. With children growing up in Plains, her worry is for jobs. "I wish they'd build some factories around here," she says. "We need work so badly."

The word out of Plains, however, is that jobs are not primary on Carter's mind. He wants to keep the town residentially zoned to preserve

media.

Knowing Jimmy Carter and having worked for him hasn't elevated Jewell Wiley's living conditions. Wiley, fifty-nine, paused by the side of the road with several other Black women to talk to this reporter.

In the 1950s and early sixties, Wiley was a maid for Carter. "I worked four hours a day," she recalls. She was paid one dollar an hour. "At least it was minimum wage," she says.

Today Wiley is unemployed. She was laid off more than a year ago and has been unable to find work since.

She says she is so poor she can't afford food stamps.

Carter's maids—all Black—seem to be everywhere. Two houses up, there's Rosie Marshall Kitchen, born in 1890

MISTER JIMMY Working for peace



Carter when he was growing up. Several blocks away, in a cluster of homes that form a dilapidated federal housing project, I knock on six doors and find two former Carter maids and one current maid, again all Black.

Mrs. Gladys Jackson, fifty-nine, comes to one door. She says she worked six years for Carter in his peanut plant in the 1950s, earning twenty-five to thirty dollars a week.

Up the street, rock music is blaring from inside one of the brick houses. There is a group of people sitting on the porch. What do they think of Carter?

"Good man," says one. "I hope he becomes president."

Says another, "I don't care who gets in. None of them are going to do any good as far as I'm concerned."

Black women are sitting on a small cement porch in front of their brick home.

"Any of you know Jimmy Carter?" I ask.

A woman looks up. "I cleaned house and ironed for him," says Oveda Jackson. She says she's twenty-nine years old. "I was eighteen then. It was my first maid's job."

"How much did you earn?" I ask.

"I don't remember," she says.

"It wasn't much, I'll tell you that," says Emma Montes, Mrs. Jackson's mother.

Montes used to work for Carter also—sorting peanuts. Two years ago she was not

was employed in her job. "That wasn't Mr. Jimmy's fault," a woman standing in the doorway says.

"Don't say Mr. Jimmy says another one. 'It's style."

Two houses down, another ex-Carter do Rachel Clark.

Mrs. Clark remembers Jimmy Carter. "When a little boy," she says the maid. I worked farm in the field peanuts, and then I came to the house when they were. I looked after the children and fed them."

Across the street, a aged Black man reads newspaper on his porch. "Do you know Jimmy Carter?" I ask. "No I don't," the man



That close cooperation between the state and Courtaulds produced better profits for the Courtaulds bosses — and sackings for the Courtaulds workers. The tail end of the **Tribune** programme includes nationalisation of financial institutions and retention of social services worthwhile demands, but neither necessarily anti-capitalist nor providing guidelines for a workers' fightback — and "defence cuts". Military spending, according to Sedgemore (who, like every other biologist for British imperialism, calls it "defence") should take a more modest share of our gross national product. But "we do not ask that we go

naked into the conference room with no muscle to back up our reason"

The word "we" sums it all up. How many workers have entered an international conference room — naked, fully clothed, or in any other state of dress? Sedgemore identifies his interests not with the international working class, but with British capitalism in its haggling with other capitalisms and with the bureaucracies of the degenerated and deformed workers' states.

Again, test Sedgemore's programme by the light of the Courtaulds sackings. Suppose the Courtaulds workers were to occupy their factories — as Skelmersdale Trades Council has rightly proposed they should — or take serious strike action, and the government sent in troops as it did against the Glasgow garbage workers? What does Sedgemore's strategy have to say about that? Simply, it seems, that the troops' job should be done more economically.

So long as the problem is seen as "Britain's crisis" and the answer is seen in terms of advice for the capitalist state, we only have a choice between more, or less, intelligent, and more, or less, well-wishing capitalist solutions. And every incident of real class struggle, like the sackings in Courtaulds, will show that up.

Evil

So far, the majority of Courtaulds workers have been willing to rest their hopes on finding a lesser evil among the capitalist solutions. As far back as 1972, the trade unions at Skelmersdale were already making "no strike" and "cooperation" pledges to forestall Courtaulds' threats to close the factory. Three months ago, they agreed

to a 30%-40% reduction in manning levels in the long term — no doubt thinking that was the way to avoid total closure.

The current redundancies should be a sharp reminder that 'lesser evil' capitalist solutions are very often not lesser evils at all: that the working class can safeguard its interests only by its own self-reliant action.

The first step should be the occupation of the threatened factories, to impose workers' control — and a thorough workers' inspection of Courtauld operations, including their relations with the state. That inspection must take as its criterion not 'viability' in capitalist terms, but defence of workers' living standards and conditions

Advice

Having organised and mobilised themselves, the Courtaulds workers could pose forceful demands to the government — not ineffectual and useless advice, like the textile workers' demonstration for import controls last year which included many Courtaulds workers. The main demand should clearly be: nationalisation of Courtaulds, without a penny compensation to the exploiters, and without the workers giving up any control they have won in struggle.

That is not a solution which will figure in the IMF's discussions with the government; or even in the columns of **Tribune**. It is an unthinkable solution in terms of capitalist government action. It is a solution on the road to a workers' government, based on workers' direct action. **And it is the only thinkable solution for the working class.**

Colin Foster

JIMMY'S MAIDS Peanuts in Plains



"But my wife does. She's his maid."
Lillian Pickett comes to the door. "I've been working there since about 1966, four years before he was governor," she says. She now works at the Carter house "whenever I'm needed," she says. During the primary campaign, it was about eight to ten hours a week.
"With them away so much, there's not much to do," she says.

Her duties included keeping the house clean, washing the clothes, vacuuming the rugs, and looking after the flowers. Mrs. Carter, she says, pays ally, Carter tells her what to do.
"He'll say, 'Lillian, what about pressing these pants for me,' or 'What about pressing this shirt,' or 'What about hanging up these pants.'"
But like everyone else who works for Carter, she gets the rock-bottom minimum wage.
When Mrs. Pickett was first hired by the Carters, she worked about a seventeen-hour week, and took home a weekly check of fifteen dollars.
Now she earns \$2.10 an hour.
She also works for Carter's mother, Lillian, who has been portrayed as a genteel person who represents the height of decency.
Lillian Carter pays Lillian

Not surprisingly, the Pickett family has few dollars to spare. "We just get by," Lillian Pickett says.

By now my surprise has worn off. Carter, it seems, is used to having Black women pick up after him. I begin to think Carter owes a lot to the Black women of Plains, Georgia. They have kept his house clean, his parents' house clean, and sorted his peanuts.

If this were the nineteenth century, Plains would be Mr. Jimmy's plantation. I'd be writing about chattel slavery.

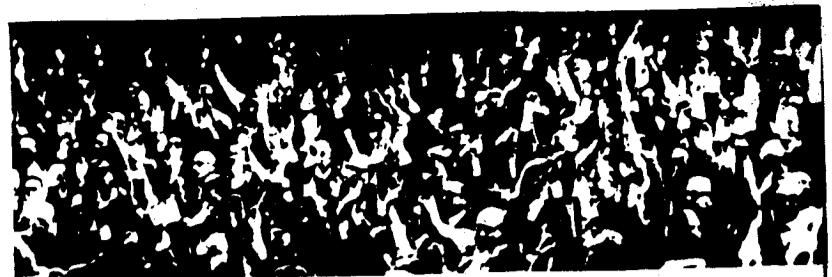
But this is the twentieth century, and Plains is Mr. Carter's company town. What we've got here is superexploitation, capitalist-style.

Plains is an "ethnic purity" town. The whites—250 of them—are clustered near Highway 280 and to the north of it. The Blacks, who number 350, live on two patches: either on Carter Street and another connecting road south of Highway 280, or in a housing project on Graham Street.

It is necessary to point out that most Blacks I interviewed like Jimmy Carter—or at least say they do. I don't know what—if anything—Carter thinks of them. In his autobiography, *Why Not the Best?*, Carter describes how he became famous. Not once does he mention the Black maids or other Black employees.

Lillian Pickett likes Jimmy Carter, she says, because he's a Christian-hearted man.

She thinks Carter will treat all Blacks the way he has



Scanlon on Participation

5 marks out of 10

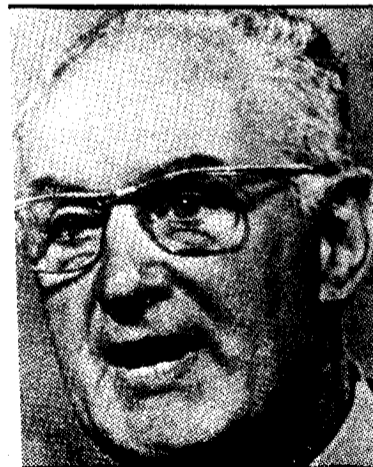
"COLLECTIVE bargaining represents advance by the unions as one body — members, shop stewards and full time officials — all acting in unity to achieve our aims. It cannot be replaced by artificial innovations such as works councils, worker-directors and supervisory boards [in other words, participation schemes — WA] and certainly not on a compulsory basis.

"Just as nothing enslaves more effectively than the illusion of freedom, the illusion of power that such proposals would create would undermine the strength that the movement has built up over the years." [Our emphasis — WA].

Hugh Scanlon wrote that, in a recent *Morning Star*. Well said, Hugh. It's good to see a trade union leader showing up participation for what it is.

Unfortunately, Scanlon goes on to say that what's a dangerous trap in private industry is a positive boon if you happen to work in the pits, in steel, for British Leyland — ie those industries that the capitalist state runs on behalf of the rest of the bosses.

Scanlon seems to be saying that these industries are little 'islands of socialism' where workers can lower their guard and safely shoulder the responsibilities of running those industries.



Participation should be rejected in all industries, be they privately run or nationalised, because nationalisation as we know it occurs in the interest of capitalism — to cope with its needs and not the needs of the working class. For that reason the conflict of interests between management and workers is just the same as the conflict between a private boss's interests and those of the workers he employs. And the problems facing workers in nationalised industries and state-run services are exactly the same as the problems facing workers in private industries and services: the problems of improving working and living conditions and warding off redundancies and speed-up and other ploys of the management.

There have been run-downs and redundancies in British Steel, British Rail and the coal industry — in fact, they are well ahead in the closures league. Why? Because capitalism is in crisis, and it intends that the working class should pay for it, in both private and 'public' participation schemes.

THE UNIONS



are just as helpful to them in achieving this in one sector as in another.

The nationalised industries are of course run on exactly the same basis as the private sector: that is, *make a profit or take the consequences* (usually thousands of sackings).

These industries were taken over for the benefit of the capitalist class, which can't allow key sections of industry or transport to go under. Steel was going bust: now it provides a basic material for other industries very cheap. The Tories (who are supposed to be against nationalisation) made sure the state took over Rolls Royce because the company was essential to the British aviation industry.

The working class only comes into the picture in its capacity of provider of labour power — and as such, of course, the aim of management, just as in the private sector, is to get as much work for as little money as it can.

Participation has been touted as a step towards workers' control. In reality it is nothing more than the bosses' attempt to block workers' control. By getting workers onto participation boards the bosses hope to pin the responsibility for sackings, closures, wage cuts, speed-up etc onto the workers' representatives.

That way, they figure, we'll be tied up in knots when it comes to a fight — or better still, so tied up that there won't be a fight.

Some have argued that participation will give us access to information which we can use against the bosses. In fact, 'confidentiality' and business secrecy remains, and rather than participating knowing all the facts, we have to "trust" the bosses blindfold. Such trust is like giving a knife to a psychopath and asking him to do a job on your corns...

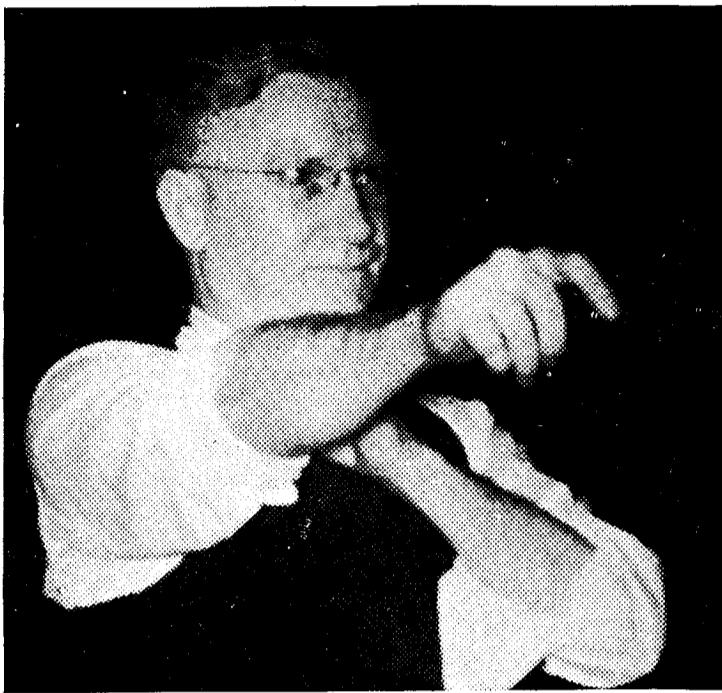
How then do we get real control? First, we say that things like the bosses' profit levels are not our concern. While the economy remains in capitalist hands, we demand the right to work, the right to inspect the books and accounts; and we fight to impose our control over safety and manning and hiring and firing — using our industrial strength to determine these things.

ORGANISING THE PROLETARIAN PARTY

The 'framework of Trotskyism' disintegrated as from the late 1940s — not ideologically, as the Trotskyists failed to analyse adequately the dependent revolutionary processes in Yugoslavia, China, etc; secondly, and in consequence, organisationally, as a series of splits. The 1952-54 split of the international movement was the biggest of those splits; but it was only the consequence of the preceding ideological disorientation. (That it was a consequence does not, of course, make less weighty the responsibility for a confused, confusing, and poorly-motivated split: a responsibility which is essentially on the shoulders of the American SWP, though their anger against centrist positions such as the 'East Berlin workers' uprising' of 1953 was entirely justified). Revolutionaries today must take as an ideological starting point the legacy of Trotskyism and the early FI. We must also take seriously the history of the would-be Trotskyist movement and the disintegration of the 'framework of Trotskyism', identifying, presenting to, and critically reworking the analyses of the political mainstream of that movement, the current presented today by the USFI. However, we have to recreate the political reality of the framework of scientific communism before we can start passing judgments as to who is that framework and who outside.



PHOTOS: above, Arlette Lagullier, presidential candidate of Lutte Ouvriere group, which views Trotskyism as an all-inclusive 'Church'; its numerous international conferences are held on a basis only a little tighter than its annual fete (below). Right: Ernest Mandel, leading light of the USFI, which is presently making a big thing of 'unity' — and opportunism. Above right: James P. Cannon, leading thinker and organiser of the American SWP; the 1953 split which he led was understandable, but ill-prepared and never properly understood.



Shirking the sharp definitions

Those who content themselves with shirking for the 'unity of all Trotskyists' are eclectically combining 'Trotskyist' faith with an antediluvian — essentially religious — party-organisational concept. They shirk the task of sharp definitions; they remain content with the bland formula, the pious phrase, the general schema. These party-organisational concepts are backward with those of the Second International: the 2nd International never all did not organise on the basis of all those claiming to be Marxists — they militant proletarians, or even-ite bourgeois scoundrels; it organised on the basis of practical attitudes to material tasks and forces, stated within what — they thought — was a scientific view of history.



Lutte Ouvriere's ideas indicate a Trotskyist movement organised not so much like a party as like a Church — a broad, 'established' Church like the Catholic church or the Church of England, rather than a narrow sect. As long as you profess reverence at the right times, in daily life you can do what you like.

The necessary regeneration of scientific communism will not take place in Britain alone. (The building of the Bolshevik party and the foundation of the Communist International was certainly not a narrowly 'Russian' achievement — the leaders of Bolshevism learned from and in European Socialism as well as in from and in Russia — and who is to say that Britain will play a role that privileged role now that Russia played then?). But the contribution we can make as activists in Britain is inseparable from our practical contribution to the class struggle.

Apply and develop programme

An organisation built as a rigid balance priding itself mostly on "not being departed from" the Transitional Programme of 1938, will be no more. As Trotsky acidly told the Bordighians, one has a programme not so as to depart from it, but in order to apply it and develop it.

However, an organisation setting its task as "original thought" will be even more worthless. To borrow a phrase from Trotsky again: if a man who values originality in others set himself to trying to be "original", the result, naturally, is "the most wretched monkeyshines" [3].

And an effort to build an organisation on the basis of doubts, reservat-

ions, and purely negative rejection of the existing 'Trotskyist' political stock-in-trade will produce nothing politically: a political organisation only exists in so far as it gives actual answers to the problems posed by the class struggle.

An organisation aiming to contribute to the regeneration of Trotskyism must, self-evidently, ensure a vigorous internal discussion. In conditions of relatively open bourgeois democracy, as in Britain, its democracy can and should be very wide and thorough.

It will recognise, however, the present-day absence of a political-ideological mainstay — like the 'Marxist Centre' in the Second International, like Lenin in the Bolshevik party, like the Russian leadership in the early CI, or like Trotsky in the Left Opposition and FI movement — which can offset the centrifugal tendencies potentially present in any internal debate. Without ever infringing on the right of the individual member to voice complaint and criticism (in a responsible way), it will therefore take special care to structure its debates. Such structuring will not harm democracy; on the contrary, it will improve it by avoiding a chaos where certainly no-one knows the answers and probably very few even know what the questions are.

The healthiest party regime is one where vigorous debates take place without formation of fixed factions and tendencies. Each dispute is argued out on the merits of the issue, without the line-ups on that question prejudging the next argument. However, that is not always possible. Differences of broader scope

arise: definite line-ups congeal. Then the question of organising tendencies and factions arises. A tendency is an internal grouping for a systematic organised ideological debate. But the dispute may be too hot for organised tendency debate. A faction is organised for a sharper, more short term fight — either to change the organisation's policy on a specific question, or to replace the leadership of the organisation.

Real political differences

When a faction is formed, then you have the conditions for discussing whether a split is justified. [☆4] Even in a Second-Internationalist party, a faction — which inevitably develops its own literature, its own meetings, its own discussions, its own discipline, its own leadership — contained the serious potential of a split. Doubly so in a Third Internationalist party, defining itself as an ideological vanguard rather than a broad workers' association. More so again in a Fourth Internationalist organisation, whose tasks are perforce mainly propagandist. And yet more so in a Fourth Internationalist organisation in our era, when an authoritative "programmatic framework of Trotskyism" no longer exists coherently.

All this is no reason to treat factions as an abomination or a plague. Bureaucratic suppression of the right to form factions and tendencies cannot suppress the real political differences inside an organisation. It leads therefore either to building, not an

embryo party, which lives and develops politically, but a permanent faction with politics defined by the leadership's self-perpetuating definition of its own positions as the only admissible ones — or to making the faction struggle covert, underhand, ill-defined and dirtier. In some conditions, indeed, it can be a crime for an opposition inside a communist organisation not to define itself as a tendency or faction.

While the Second-Internationalist concept of an "all-inclusive party" can only lead to hypocrisy and a political morass, there is no Book of Laws which lays down limits on the width of ideological differences between currents, tendencies, or factions within a revolutionary organisation. Certainly — though Marxists reject the view that theoretical errors are unimportant where there is agreement on immediate practical tasks — only a dogmatic sect will exclude people on grounds that they hold 'revisionist' views like (say) that the USSR is 'state-capitalist'.

The only law is the unremitting search for political clarity. Pierre Broue's sketch of Lenin's methods illustrates the point.

"His objective was not to be right on his own... In ideological or tactical polemic, he always seems to make it more angular, to push the contradictions to the extreme, to heighten the contrasts, often to schematise and even to caricature his opponent's point of view... He always argues, sometimes submits, but never finally gives up trying to convince, for it is thus, and thus only, that he won his victories".

THE RECENT split from the International Communist League; the fragmentation of the revolutionary left over the last few years; and the recent international drive for 'left unity' by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (in France negotiations with the PSU, in Italy an orientation to Democrazia Proletaria, in Britain the 'Faction and Party' articles in Red Weekly), have all provoked discussion among socialists on the question of party organisation.

WORKERS ACTION has carried statements and letters on the ICL split, and this week we print the third and final part of a discussion article contributed by Martin Thomas. We welcome further contributions to this debate, from socialists both inside and outside the Labour Party.

PART 3

The method of 'bending the stick', in the hands of lesser men than Lenin, can become the method of disastrous zig-zagging. But, leaving that aside: Lenin always argued to convince any worker, any socialist or militant who would listen to him — or be convinced himself.

Many people in bourgeois society don't argue that way. They argue to show themselves 'clever' or 'original' or 'independent-minded'. They argue to conserve or gain prestige, to thwart or 'do down' an opponent, to placate an associate, to hurt their enemies or to please their friends. Or they argue to justify to themselves and their friends their own activity — or lack of it — in the political arena.

Such attitudes are widespread in bourgeois society, especially in the petty bourgeoisie. And they are not at all absent within the Trotskyist movement [☆5]. They cannot be purged from a revolutionary organisation by administrative regulations (note Trotsky's opposition to expelling Landau), but only by serious political education and by proletarianising the organisation's ranks. That process, since 1930, has, however, also involved inevitable faction fights and splits — and will continue to do so until the problem of organising the proletarian party moves to a different stage. (Small petty bourgeois coteries, by definition, can never play an important role — even a negative one — in a mass workers' party).

'Liquidate the fourth period'

Lenin concludes 'What is to be Done' with an outline of three periods of the development of Social Democracy in Russia, and the slogan: Liquidate the Third Period.

The history of 'organising the proletarian party' could very schematically be divided into four periods. First, the proletarian party as general workers' association (1850-1914). Secondly, the proletarian party as decisive leader of the class in an epoch of crises and revolutions (1914-1923). Thirdly, from the Left Opposition to the Fourth International, the period of an ideological minority fighting as a splinter 'against the stream', to 'switch the points' of the mass organised workers' movement (1923-48). Fourthly, the period of post-Trotsky 'Trotskyism', of an ideological minority fighting for ideological regeneration, while revolutionary uprisings result in defeat or Stalinist mutations (from 1948 to our days).

Our task is ideological regeneration and organisational reconstruction, in order to "liquidate the fourth period" and open the road for the fifth period, of mass proletarian vanguard parties based on a programme of renovated Trotskyism, which will lead the working class to victory on a world scale.

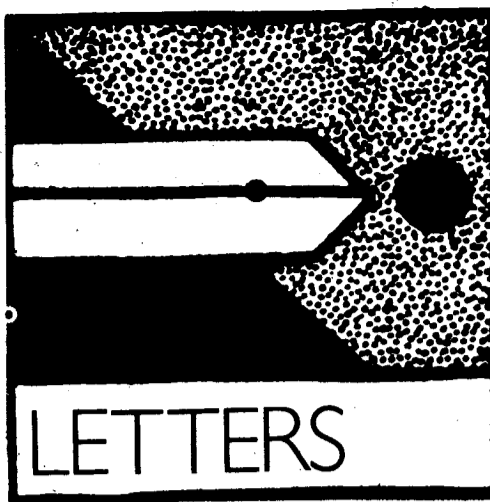
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☆3. The RCG's asinine cogitations on the question of women are one good example.

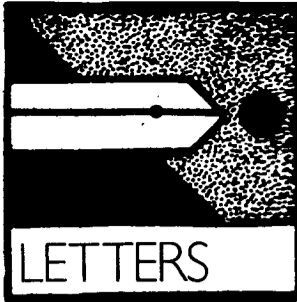
☆4. The conduct of the leaders of the new 'Workers Power' group, who considered as 'slandorous' the idea that they were maintaining a faction — and then, the next minute, formed, not a faction, but a split — shows the most extreme organisational irresponsibility.

☆5. The new 'Workers Power' group is the most topical example! When it came to their split fight, they would not argue their position at the I-CL conference (nor, usually, in the I-CL branches or even with individual I-CL comrades who are ex-WF or neither ex-WF nor ex-WP), as long as they could console themselves that they were a deserving case, that was enough.

Don't write off 'class struggle candidates'



CUT THE PARASITES



COMRADES,

I would like to raise a few points on the question of the 'class struggle candidate' discussed in the article 'Is this really a revolutionary alternative?' (WA 33).

You make what I believe to be a correct point as regards the IMG's willingness to abrogate the struggle for the revolutionary programme in the interests of 'unity' round a 'class struggle candidate'. However, from this you seem to reject the concept of a 'class struggle candidate' and say that **Workers Action** favours a vote for Labour in Stechford and the other constituencies.

I feel that **WA's** attitude here is wrong. I think that it is important to run 'class struggle candidates' in opposition to the Labour Government at this time. The key is, around what programme these candidates should run. It should not be of course a 'left reformist' or IS-type centrist programme but a revolutionary programme which offers solutions to the problems facing the working class. **Workers Action** supporters should go to the meeting called by the IMG to discuss a 'class struggle candidate' in Stechford and argue for a united left candidate to run, around the following type of demands:

★ Demands opposing state control of wages and proposing a sliding scale of wages;

★ In relation to cuts and unemployment, demands for a sliding scale of public expenditure, work-sharing on full pay, work or full pay, opening the books, and nationalisation under workers' control of firms creating redundancies.

These are the kind of demands which say that the working class will not take responsibility for the crisis of capitalism, and which encourage working class self-activity around a workers' solution to the crisis as an alternative to the pro-capitalist 'solutions' offered by the Labour Government.

Integrally linked to these demands are of course the demands for Labour Party and trade union democracy, opposition to participation schemes and import controls — all of which have been supported and fought for by **Workers Action**. These should also form part of such a programme.

In addition the programme should take up the attempts of the bosses to split the working class, and support the unity of the employed and unemployed with demands for full trade union rights, the right of women to work, support for the Working Women's Charter, and other demands which lead to the full and real equality of women. Also opposition to immigration controls, racism and fascism, and support for 'black self defence'. Finally, but by no means least, opposition to imperialism and support for such demands as Troops Out of Ireland and self-determination for oppressed people, e.g. in Zimbabwe and Ireland.

These are the types of demands which **WA** supporters should — at the meeting to discuss it — argue for the 'class struggle

candidate' to stand on. Only after the meeting has taken place can **Workers Action**, having seen the response of the IMG and other forces, take a position on the Stechford by-election. If a 'Class struggle candidate' accepts this programme he or she should be supported, as it is important to not just do industrial and campaign work but to intervene in the election arena to actually stimulate the other work.

If **Workers Action** is now opposed to running candidates in opposition to the Labour Party, this appears to contrast with the line taken earlier with regard to the Labour 'lefts'. **Workers Action** demanded, in my view quite correctly, that the Labour 'lefts' should vote against the Government's pro-capitalist measures, and if this brought the Government down, the responsibility lay with the Government's policies. Also correctly it was demanded that the 'lefts' should stand in opposition to the Government in the resulting election around the type of programme outlined earlier in this letter, and attempt to support the fight-back against the Government's policies.

JIM HOYLE
Birmingham

REPLY: Finding the best tactic

YES, **Workers Action** would like to see election candidates with REAL 'class struggle politics' — that is, a revolutionary programme. As we wrote in WA29 when first outlining our position on the by-elections, "Normally a revolutionary tendency stands candidates in elections, wherever it can... In contrast to the attitude of groupings like Militant and Socialist Charter, it would not be at all deterred by the fear of 'splitting the vote' and perhaps losing a seat for the reformists to the right wing."

Thus we are not against going along to any labour movement meeting about a 'class struggle' candidature and putting forward **WA** politics. In the unlikely event of some of the left MPs voting consistently against the Government's pro-capitalist policies, whereupon they would probably be expelled by Transport House and face right wing official Labour opposition candidates in their constituencies, we would certainly make sure we were present at meetings to discuss the programme those left MPs should stand on.

Nor have we any objection in principle to discussing with the IMG about election platforms. However, in discussing with the IMG, we are not discussing with a rank and file cross section of the British labour movement, but with an aspirant leadership for the British labour movement.

At a more-or-less representative rank and file labour movement meeting we could fight for **WA** politics, and even small victories would be real victories.

In a discussion with the IMG on a common election platform, either we win over the IMG to **WA's** politics (which would be excellent, but unlikely; the IMG's opportunism is not a sudden lapse, but part of a 25-30 year international tradition — see WA29); or we come to some agreement to blur over the contentious issues, like the IMG's attitude to 'saving' the Labour Government, their equivocation on import controls, or their refusal to argue openly for solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland (which would make the resulting 'class struggle candidate' a dishonest fake, obliged to evade difficult questions in election meetings); or we catch the IMG at the right point in one of its zig-zags and get agreement on current policies (which would still leave the 'class struggle candidate' a fake — as Lenin said, 'opportunism cannot be trapped with a sentence').

Finally, does this argument mean that **WA** thinks we could never support any candidate who didn't have exactly our programme — other than candidates of the mass party of the working class? No. It is always a concrete question of finding the best tactic to fight for our ideas. In some situations critical support for a centrist candidate may be best. But in WA29 was said we saw insufficient reason to hitch our star to IS's campaign and equally we see insufficient reason to hitch our star to the IMG, especially when they in turn are trying to hitch theirs to a hoped-for but hypothetical 'broad class-struggle left wing'.

RED WEEKLY 4 November 1976

Far Left Fight By-elections

Support for the Socialist Worker candidates in Newcastle and Walsall has been a feature of the campaign by the International Marxist Group in the last round of by-elections. Another prominent feature has been a fight to get local bottles fighting on the cuts, unemployment and racism to see an electoral platform to get over the need for a fight against Labour's policies. This is the experience so far.

Walsall

Unlike any other of the political organisations in Walsall, the IMG has been consistently active over the last year in the fight against cuts in public expenditure and racism. Prior to the by-election, that fight had already notched up some successes. In an area where for a long time the working class has had a history of passivity, a local cuts committee and an action group against racism were established. In September a meeting organised to build an anti-racist demonstration attracted over 70 militants. On 24 October Tariq Ali spoke at a meeting around the elections in Birmingham which was attended by over 90 people. IMG members and supporters canvassed heavily for Jimmy McCallum last Saturday as the election date drew close.

Newcastle

At a large Socialist Worker campaign meeting in Newcastle last Friday, IMG members reaffirmed support for the candidate Dave Hayes. Yet the local leadership of the campaign have been reluctant to accept the offers of practical help from the IMG or the Workers League.

Red Weekly on the by-elections: how far left?

COMRADES,

For all your justified criticism of IS's failure to understand the nature of transitional demands and the increasingly reformist content of their political demands in the current period, I would seriously question whether your own demands contained in the article "The Crisis: Fighting Back" (WA33) are in overall terms any better.

What are your demands in respect of the bourgeois state? In fact in your article your demands in this respect are no different from Tribune's or the CP's. "Any cuts in public spending should come from 'defence'." Are you really serious? Is all other public expenditure "reasonable" and "justified"? Like hell it is and any transitional programme worthy of the name now or in the future will necessarily have to call for cuts in some forms of government expenditure while calling for increases elsewhere. What's so revolutionary or even reformist about public expenditure anyway.

While defending the social services a distinction has to be made between the services themselves and the parasitic administrative apparatuses. May I suggest therefore that the following demands for cuts in state expenditure be included in any future demands for fighting back:

★ Reduction of the salaries of all MPs, civil servants, local authority bureaucrats and nationalised industry functionaries to the level of ordinary workers. A single workers' wage (based on the average) to be applied throughout the state and local authority sector.

★ All state sector 'perks' to be ended immediately (use of cars, chauffeurs, flats, allowances etc).

★ Staffs of all embassies overseas to be reduced by 90% immediately. All Embassy property other than minimum requirements to be sold.

★ All state lands, royal estates, buildings to be diverted to useful purposes immediately to useful purposes or tenanted out to those who can use them (productive co-operatives, tenants associations, and perhaps in the case of land even to small farmers).

★ All subsidies, direct or indirect, to private industry to cease immediately.

★ No further interest payments to be made to ex-shareholders and bondholders of the nationalised industries.

★ All snooping services, social security, ticket inspection, security etc to be closed down immediately and their staffs re-trained for productive work.

★ Bureaucratic and administrative staffs of all ministries, government institutions, educational institutions etc to be phased down drastically in the coming period and their staffs re-trained for productive work.

While, clearly, there is a tendency towards "maximalism" in these demands, it is necessary to have demands which relate to the extremely serious nature of the British crisis. While the present run-down can just continue, any solution will have to be of a drastic nature. Either a radical one based upon the working class or a reactionary one based upon an increase in state power with the aim of restructuring the whole economy in the interests of the ruling class.

Hence in the present crisis any fighting back must attack the state apparatus as much as the capitalist class in civil society, and with the same tenacity.

It seems to me that your "pissweak" demands in the area of the state arise from three factors:

■ An inability to determine the implications of the integration of the state with capitalism for the Marxist theory of the separation of society into civil and political society, and to decide whether it has any longer any meaning whatsoever.

■ An incredibly woolly definition of what constitutes the working class.

■ The seeming failure to realise or to apply the fact that all state expenditure, and not just profits, has ultimately to be paid for out of the surplus value extracted from the productive workers at the point of production.

While it perhaps doesn't show a high level of consciousness many workers are worried about the country and the collective future of the economy. It is therefore necessary to pay some attention to this, without pandering to it, for it is insufficient to base your appeal purely on their private interests. Government expenditure is not the sole cause of the present malaise, clearly, but the level of completely unproductive and useless expenditure by the state on the parasitic apparatus is a substantial factor and it's idle to pretend otherwise.

And it's the workers who have to pay for it.

NOEL TRACY

REPLY: What price cheap government?

REPLY: The traditional Marxist stance of refusing approval to any capitalist state budget indicates clearly that we do not endorse capitalist public expenditure as "reasonable" and "justified". For this reason **Workers Action** has rejected the blanket slogan of a "sliding scale of public expenditure" which the IMG, for example, uses.

But Marxists aim to smash the capitalist state, not to see that it carries out its functions more economically. Thus the demands we raise in relation to the state are of two sorts.

We raise demands directed towards the breaking up of the existing state apparatus (see, for example, the demand for the disbandment of the standing army, usually included in all our policy statements on public expenditure — eg in WA27 and the article on the police force in WA31). And we raise demands directed towards the organisation of the working class as a force capable of taking the running of society from the hands of the capitalist state. All our demands on labour movement democracy, rank and file organisation etc are of that sort.

Where IS's demands are meant to be 'reformist in form and transitional in content' many of the demands proposed by comrade Tracy tend to be 'utopian in form and reformist in content'.

Take for example the demand for a uniform wage in the public sector. As Karl Marx wrote, the demand for equality of wages is 'an insane wish, never to be realised', because inequality is built into the wages system and can only be abolished when the wages system is abolished.

Or take the idea of regulating the salaries

and 'perks' of the top state bureaucrats. When the working class is powerful enough to do that, we shall just sack those top capitalist administrators — not let them continue their work, but more frugally! Unintentionally, Comrade Tracy almost reproduces IS's notion of 'workers' control of the rich', only applying it to the rich in the state sector while IS applied it to the rich in the private sector!

Moreover, agitation for the demands proposed by Comrade Tracy would run the risk of duplicating IS in another way — that is, of creating illusions in "productive" capitalism, which would be all right if only it were cleansed of greed and parasitism. He poses a naive latter-day 'dig for victory' image of productivity (farm the grouse moors, set up workshops in the palaces) as an answer to capitalism's crisis. But "productive" capitalism is just as crisis-prone, wasteful, and anti-working class as the "unproductive" sectors. Indeed, the "unproductive" spending, on weaponry and other items, has been a major factor in softening capitalism's crises; it is a grave error to suppose that redirecting resources towards "productive" sectors would solve or even alleviate the crises.

A workers' state could organise much more cheap and efficient government than a capitalist regime. But to raise the call to economise and cut expenses now, under capitalism — even if we try to direct the call at the bosses' flunkies — can only tend to rebound, and strengthen the call for 'austerity' and productivity drives against workers, particularly in the state sector — leading to mass sackings (especially of women) and job cuts.

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Speaker from IMG
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7.30pm
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EAST END POLICE HELP NF

OVER THE past few months there has been growing opposition to the National Front selling their paper in Brick Lane, a mainly black area in the East End of London. Three weeks ago anti-fascists routed the NF contingent from Brick Lane. And on Sunday 7th November there was a 1,000-strong demonstration against racism organised by the Asians living in the East End.

The demonstration set off from Brick Lane and made its way along Bethnal Green Road. As the demonstration passed the top of Brick Lane it was attacked by members of the NF, a fight broke out, and 25 were arrested, including 6 NF members.

The police brutally attacked the demonstrators and were heard to shout things such as "get that one over there"; they came into the demonstration grabbing people and bundling them into the police coaches. NF members were seen to be helping the police arrest demonstrat-

ors, while only 6 NFers were taken.

Those arrested were taken to Bethnal Green police station, and charged under the Public Order Act and with assaulting the police. Among those arrested were several Asians, members of IS and IMG, and a Workers' action supporter.

Twenty of the anti-fascist demonstrators went to Bethnal Green police station to wait for their arrested comrades to be released. They were made to stand across the road from the police station for almost eight hours, and only the solicitors were allowed into the station. Yet the NF members, inquiring after their imprisoned fellow-thugs, could walk straight into the police yard without being stopped!

Inside the station, the arrested Front members shared a cup of tea and a smoke with Bethnal Green police. They were old friends. One policeman, number H.409, was making his

friendship with the thugs of Bethnal Green so obvious that other policemen brought him away from them! This latter incident happened in Old Street Magistrates Court.

While the 20 left-wingers were waiting outside Bethnal Green police station they were attacked by some 50 NF members who had just come out of the pubs on Bethnal Green Rd — with plenty of firewater in their bellies — raring to "have a go at the red scum".

There also happened to be only three policemen outside the gates of police yard. The only reason why they brought other policemen out was because it would have raised a few eyebrows if 10 men and 10 women could be beaten up by 50 to 60 thugs just outside the police station!

But the incident is not at all surprising if we remember that during the '30s, Bethnal Green, Leman Street, Commercial Street and Limehouse police stations were notorious for beating up Jews, and actually caused the death of some Jews in the stations.

The NF members were fined 50 pounds each and left the court — the left-wingers are being remanded on bail until 21st December.

These events underline once more the lesson that token action is rather expensive play-acting for the left and does no harm at all to the fascists. It's time we stopped playing games with the racist scum.

F.B.

SIT-IN WINS CUTS VICTORY

FOLLOWING our victory on 21st October in saving Hillcrest Hostel from closure, after six weeks' "sit-in", Bury Action Group against the cuts is planning a campaign to save the Day Centre for the elderly and handicapped at Sefton St, Whitefield.

Because of NALGO's present policy of non-cooperation with the cuts, the closure of this day centre has been delayed — but not cancelled.

The waiting is having a depressing effect on elderly residents of the Day Centre. Sefton St represents a chance to get out amongst friends for two or three days each week, to do some light work and to be with people they know. The alternatives are to stay at home in loneliness — or to be transported one day per week across town, sometimes travelling for several hours as the ambulance picks others up, to a far larger Centre where the existing residents regard them as intruders.

The staff and residents are united in their determination to resist closure to the bitter end.

The Action Group is now moving into the area with a leafletting campaign, letters to trade unionists, and a proposed demonstration in December.

★ ★ ★

The Bury anti-cuts campaign started after the Tory council

decided in July to lop off 320 thousand pounds, 11% of the Social Services budget.

The sit-in at Hillcrest (a half-way house for people who have had nervous breakdowns) has been a focus for this campaign.

Fifty-plus people sat in on a rota basis, round the clock, for six weeks, while hundreds of others visited to give support or sent donations to help the campaign. Hillcrest was saved because the Area Health Authority was pushed by us into putting up money to run the hostel, so relieving the Council of its obligation.

If the future cuts are to be reversed, stronger action will be needed to force the council to back down. SUE ARNALL

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More marches — but no more politics

"THIS is not a conference to cross the ts or dot the is of the programme", declared NUT Executive member Dick North, opening the Right to Work Campaign's delegate conference against unemployment and the cuts, on November 6th in Manchester. "It is an action conference".

In fact the speeches, and the platform resolution, were not much concerned with planning concrete action. The resolution called for support on November 17th and November 21st (the Labour Party — TUC anti-racism demo), gave a general pledge of support for strikes, and laid down plans for a picket and demonstration next year in support of the 43 arrested Right to Work marchers. Three amendments, accepted by the platform, called for further Right to Work marches.

And several speakers gave interesting accounts of their own particular disputes. But the evasion of debate on the political demands of the campaign and its perspectives for

relating to the mass labour movement meant that 705 delegates had been gathered together, not so much for a conference, as for a public rally of the International Socialists (IS).

Amendments from an Oxford ACTSS branch and from Stirling Trades Council raised the questions of 'opening the books' and the 'sliding scale of wages' (automatic cost-of-living wage increases). IS stalwart Willie Lee (AUEW, Chrysler Linwood) thought he had found a crushing argument against the sliding scale of wages when he declared that he himself had never understood it; and Gerry Jones (Chrysler, Coventry) and Billy Williams (EPTU), followed up with claims that 'opening the books' was no use in struggle. They didn't say what better alternative policy than 'opening the books' — interpreted in a class sense, as workers' inspection — they had to counterpose to the usual recipe of 'government inquiries into viability', as at Courtauld's.

Both amendments were

defeated.

The usual recipe was "fighting hard" and "building a movement". Thus Mike McGrath (CPSA Executive) declared that the Right to Work Campaign was the only body seeming to do anything about unemployment. The dangers of this approach, which counterposes to the official labour movement, not clear alternative working-class policies but simply greater militancy, were shown in a keynote speech from Clive Hartley (convenor, Balfour Darwens, Sheffield). He made a vigorous general attack on union officials, and then declared that none of what he had said applied to Ernie Roberts or Alan Fisher! The groans were audible from the hospital workers in the audience, but none of the later IS speakers took up the point.

The platform resolution includes an appeal to the organisers of the Labour Assembly and to the LCDTU for joint action. This was a limited, but real, move away from IS's

previous rejection of any united front approach.

The Right to Work campaign, however, will remain essentially an IS front, albeit one that sometimes organises positive and useful actions. The platform resolution permitted delegate control of the campaign only through the channel of the Right to Work Committees. An amendment due to be moved by a Workers' Action supporter from the CPSA (British Library), for a more democratic structure, was ruled out of order and not circulated to the delegates, on procedural grounds. The amendment would have allowed delegates to the National Right to Work Council from:

"1. Right to Work Committees and Working Womens Charter committees.

"2. Committees set up for organisation of the unemployed (e.g. Trades Council and Constituency Labour Party sub-committees.

"3. Trade union and labour movement bodies".

S.C.

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Block ads, 5 pounds per column inch; paid ads, 8p per word. Send copy to 'Events', 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

Friday 12th November. Benefit night for Holbrook cleaners on strike over the dangers of asbestos. 7pm at Newham NE Labour Party rooms, 214E High St North, E6. Admission 50p.

Saturday 13th November. Student Conference "in opposition to the repressive policies of the British Government in N. Ireland", at Kent University. Details from Pamela Holmes, 0227 65224.

Tuesday 16th November. Cardiff Workers Action readers' meeting on "Russia — Workers' State or State Capitalist?". 7.30pm at the Rhymney Hotel, Adam St.

Wednesday 17th November. Campaign against Racism in the Media public meeting, with speakers including Frank Allaun MP, Paul Foot (Socialist Worker), George Jerron (NGA), and a black journalist. 7pm at Friends House, Euston Rd, NW1.

Thursday 18th November. Public meeting — "Women in Ireland", with speakers from NUS and TOM delegations. 7.30pm at South Bank Poly Students Union, Rotary Street, London SE1.

Saturday 20th November. Open Conference of left wing teachers: 11am to 5.30pm at Sir William Collins School, Charrington St, London NW1. Further information from Dave Pictou, 221 Westcombe Hill, London SE3 (01 858 4942).

Tuesday 30th November. Cardiff Workers Action readers' meeting: "The Struggle in Southern Africa". 7.30pm at the Rhymney Hotel, Adams St.

Sunday 5th December. Manchester conference "For Freedom in Southern Africa". 10am to 5pm, at SOGAT Social Club, 4-8 Gt George St, Chapel St, Salford. Delegates credentials from Anti-Apartheid, 565 Wilmslow Rd, Manchester 20.

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Grunwicks FROM PAGE 1

The next Monday evening, 1st November, police arrived at the picket line, and arrested nine pickets for "obstruction" without warning. The zeal of the police may have outrun their intelligence: the nine arrested included one local Labour councillor, six other Labour Party members, and only two strikers! With the police obviously embarrassed, the nine have been remanded on bail of 50 pounds until February.

But the police were probably pepped up by the Tories' campaign against the "illegal

action" of the postmen. The Tories forced an emergency debate in Parliament — and met Labour replies which, instead of forthrightly applauding the post workers and condemning Grunwicks attitude (refusal of union recognition, wages of 28 pounds for 40 hours, compulsory overtime), squirmed and bleated about the bosses' unreasonableness.

Following up on the Tories' right flank, the "National Association of Freedom" sponsored an action by Grunwicks in the High Court to "safeguard further postal deliveries to the firm". The NAF, whose leading figures include

Jill Knight and Rhodes Boyson, was set up in December 1975 after the assassination of far-right activist Ross McWhirter. It has funded legal action against comprehensive education in Tameside, campaigned against closed shops, and attempted to intervene against the Automat strikers in Swinton, near Manchester.

The High Court action is still proceeding, despite Grunwicks agreement to go to ACAS and Jackson's subsequent withdrawal of the blacking which reduced the debate in Parliament to a damp squib.

Jackson was obviously embarrassed by the blacking, and

glad of the excuse to end it — although that means leaving the Grunwicks strikers absolutely dependent on the uncertain goodwill of ACAS. He declared that "If this firm would just accept the normal decencies of industrial life, this matter could be closed."

For once, Jackson was ashamed where he need not have been. The official support for the blacking was one of the few 'decent' things he has done in his career as a trade union bureaucrat. The real shame lies in the scurrying before the forces of the Tories, the far right, the Courts, and ACAS.

PETE FIRMIN