

workers' ACTION

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NO DISARMING NO SELL-OUT

IAN SMITH, who once said that white minority rule in Rhodesia would last 10 centuries, reluctantly admitted a fortnight ago that at most his settler regime had two years to go.

The defeat of colonialism in Angola and Mozambique did more than simply strengthen the guerilla forces fighting for majority rule in Zimbabwe. It also forced the US and South Africa to recognise that the regime in Rhodesia — based on ¼ million whites subjugating 6 million blacks — was doomed; and that a search for agreements with the black capitalist states of sub-Saharan Africa was necessary.

Even if military support for Smith had been plausible before the Angolan debacle, it was certainly ruled out after South African intervention in Angola had backfired completely. Moreover, growing military among black workers in South Africa made Vorster increasingly unwilling to take risks in supporting Smith. The repercussions of a militant overthrow of the Smith regime by the black population could be far more radical than any negotiated settlement: they would put the workers' revolution in South Africa on the order of the day.

A strange 3-cornered alliance has been constructed: of the USA,

South Africa, and certain bourgeois black regimes, particularly Kaunda's Zambia, who want the economic advantages of good relations with the US and South Africa, and who are also concerned about the possible effects of militant struggle on their own working classes.

More than anything else, Smith's capitulation to the principle of majority rule was dictated to him by his erstwhile South African ally. After the closure by the Frelimo government of Rhodesia's two rail links to the Mozambiquan ports of Beira and Maputo, the only outlet to the sea for Rhodesian goods is through South Africa; and that rail link is extremely congested. Loss of South African goodwill would mean a virtual collapse of the Rhodesian economy and would paralyse the Smith regime war effort. Already the Smith regime suffers from a severe balance of payments deficit and a shortage of white manpower, with the military call-up of the white male population and the steady exodus of whites from the country.

Plan

The only real elaboration of the Kissinger peace plan was given by Smith. It runs as follows:

1. Majority rule in 2 years for Rhodesia.
2. A conference with African leaders to determine the composition of an interim government.
3. The interim government to be composed of a council of state, 50% African, 50% white, with a white non-voting chairman, which in turn will elect a cabinet of ministers with a majority of Africans. *The important posts of ministers of defence and of law & order will remain in white hands, and an effective white veto will be established by requiring a two-thirds majority for all decisions.*

4. Upon the establishment of the transitional government, sanctions will be lifted and the guerilla war will cease.

5. The West will guarantee economic support to Rhodesia to ensure a stable economy. This fund will include payment to whites to enable them to stay in the country.

Smith assumed that the proposals had the backing of the five 'front-line' African presidents, Machel of Mozambique, Kaunda of Zambia, Nyrere of Tanzania, Neto of Angola, and Seretse Khama of Botswana. But their

'commitment to the cause of liberation in Zimbabwe and the armed struggle'.

The idea that the Rhodesian whites should retain control over the army and police force for two years, that sanctions should be lifted for that period, and that the guerillas would disband themselves, leaving the Rhodesian army intact, must have been greeted with howls of derision in Zimbabwe nationalist circles.

But it would be very foolish to suppose the Vorster-Kissinger project has collapsed or backfired. That the first proposed settlement fails does not mean that the second, third, fourth... will also fail. In any case Kissinger has won one major victory in forcing the white settlers to accept the inevitability of black majority rule.

What the African presidents say in order to keep their anti-white-supremacist credentials does not necessarily correspond to what they will do. Even the most 'left' of them — Neto and Machel — are well aware of the advantages of South African and US goodwill towards their capitalist or state-capitalist economies. Machel also knows that his movement — Frelimo — leaned heavily on US support to win power in Mozambique.

Likewise, the Zimbabwe nationalist leaders, all of whom operate within the limits of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalism, are none of them going to close their

eyes to the possibilities of getting their aims — and a good position for their own particular grouping — through participation in negotiations. None of them except the abject neo-colonialist right-winger Joshua Nkomo dare openly associate themselves with Vorster and Kissinger. But equally none of them will want to close the channels to negotiation.

None of them stands for the thorough-going programme needed by the Zimbabwean workers and peasants: immediate majority rule, expropriation of imperialist holdings, radical land reform, and a link-up with the more powerful working class of South Africa.

Whatever the political limitations of its leadership, support for that guerilla struggle, and opposition to any assistance by Britain's Labour government to Smith's attempts to gain a breathing space and favourable terms for the white supremacists, are vital.

Labour and trade union militants should demand:

◆ No support for any 'constitutional talks' on any basis except immediate majority rule.

◆ No intervention by any imperialist power — including the UN — in Rhodesia.

◆ Full support to the militant forces of Zimbabwe nationalism in their fight for unqualified majority rule.

◆ Solidarity with the black workers' struggle in South Africa.

◆ The Labour Government to break all links with the white-supremacist regimes.

POWELL WHIPS UP RACISM

ENOCH POWELL's reaction to the wave of racist violence which has already claimed several victims is not to retreat from his murderous bigotry — but to step it up!

In Croydon on Monday he called for "repatriation" of one million black people — in order to counter "the progressive occupation of [the] heartland by aliens..."

For Powell, whether someone is 'alien' or not is determined by nothing except the colour of their skin — by the most vile and backward prejudice. He gives full support to "alien" British military occupation of Ireland and to "alien" white settlers oppressing the people of Zimbabwe. He objects only to black people claiming ordinary citizenship rights in Britain.

He says: "Lay down your arms"



LABOUR MOVEMENT DELEGATION TO IRELAND EXPLODING THE MYTHS OF BRITAIN'S ROLE IN IRELAND

I.M.F. RULES O.K.?

THE NATIONAL Labour Movement Delegation, which visited Dublin and Belfast over the week-end of September 17-20th, gave a group of British trade union and Labour Party representatives a first-hand view of the situation in Ireland. Despite the limitation imposed in the way it was organised, we were able to get a very different view from that peddled by the British Press. In the course of the visit, a whole series of myths were exploded.

One of the first to go was the idea that the British Army are 'peace-keepers'. We heard numerous reports of the activities of the Army in Nationalist areas in the North. In the small South Armagh town of Crosmaglen, we were told that almost the entire population had been arrested at one time or another. In Belfast the streets were crawling with Army patrols, on foot and in vehicles. In a short tour of the city, we saw 2 lads picked up for no apparent reason by Army patrols. During our stay there, an Army patrol, doing a routine check on a Ballymurphy social club, got into a fight and responded by firing first plastic bullets and then live rounds within the crowded interior. There was no question of them coming under fire. *They just went wild.* This was confirmed by representatives of the delegation who went to the club shortly afterwards and talked to eye-witnesses.

Threat

For a force supposed to be keeping the peace between 2 communities, it would seem strange to find so many Army posts well inside the Catholic areas. They are there to suppress the local population. Despite their concentration, they have singularly failed to stop Loyalists assassins from penetrating deep inside the Catholic areas.

One practice which was both shocking and illuminating in the wake of the uproar over the tragic deaths of the Maguire children was that Army patrols keep near to groups of children in order to prevent attacks on themselves.

The idea of calling for the return of troops to barracks was effectively de-bunked. They might just as well be withdrawn altogether, unless it is proposed to bring them out again if the need arises. In Crosmaglen, we were told that the barracks are supplied exclusively by air and that, apart from occasional patrols, they are effectively confined to barracks. Yet they still constitute a threat to the lives and liberty of the local people.

Unity

Many workers in Britain, and especially the 'Militant' tendency, believe that sectarian violence in the North can be stopped by non-sectarian bodies, especially, they say, the trade unions. This too is a myth. We spoke to Billy Donnelly, an ATGWU shop steward who was chairman of the 1974 lorry drivers' strike committee which

united both Catholic and Protestant workers. He explained that trade union unity was only possible because, by common consent, religion and politics were not discussed. In any case, such unity is only partial. Catholic workers tend to be the Irish trade unions, while Protestants are in the Irish branches of British unions. Also unions in the North are generally more highly bureaucratised than in Britain. For instance, the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union (an Irish section of the British T&GWU) has its branch secretaries appointed instead of elected.

Catholic workers are also hit much harder by unemployment. In the Short Stroud area in East

Belfast (a Catholic enclave of 3,000 people) there is 70% unemployment. Yet right in the middle of the area is the Sirocco Engineering Works. *'it employs only 4 Catholics.*

Rights

If the troops were to be withdrawn, the main prop of Loyalism would be broken. This would create the potential for working class unity. If we are to end what one speaker described 'not Britain's Irish problem, but Ireland's British problem', we in Britain must fight for the immediate withdrawal of troops. Not because we want to 'let the Irish fight it out

amongst themselves', nor because Ireland is a testing-ground for techniques of repression which may be used in Britain — but on the basis of support for the struggle of Republicans and socialists against imperialism and for a 32-county Republic which will provide all possible guarantees to the Protestants compatible with the rights of the majority.

Despite all its faults, the delegation does provide an opportunity to raise the Irish issue in the labour movement.

If your organisation wants a speaker to report on the delegation, write to Workers Action, 49 Carnac St, London SE 27

SIMON TEMPLE

TROOPS OUT NOW!



A TALE OF MANOEUVRES AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

THE STORY of TOM's Labour Movement Delegation to Ireland has been a sorry tale of bureaucratic manoeuvres and missed opportunities.

The delegation was originally planned as a reply to the bureaucratically stage-managed trip to Belfast organised by the Greater London Association of Trades Councils. Delegates who insisted on seeing groups sympathetic to the Provisionals were expelled from the delegation and denied the right to make a minority report. But in essence TOM's effort was no more democratic. Instead of the delegating trade union and Labour Party bodies being drawn into the planning of the delegation, it was tightly controlled by the ruling Lawless clique in the TOM.

They decided that half the time would be spent in Dublin listening to trade union bureaucrats, and that Derry would be missed. More importantly, they decided that no attempt would be made to meet the working class Loyalist organisations. The justification for this was that, since the basis of the delegation was support for self-determination for the Irish people as a whole, there was no reason to see anyone who did not agree with this. But if the delegates were to argue effectively for self-determination, then they needed to have first-hand information on the views of its Irish opponents. In any case, this did not seem to prevent representatives of the delegation meeting officials of the 26 County government, which is as opposed to self-determination as anybody.

But this was not all. The delegation met no representatives of the grouping around the Official Republicans and the Communist Party of Ireland, whose proposals for troops back to barracks and insistent pleas for peace receive widespread support in Britain. They were, it is true, invited, and should be criticised for refusing to meet the delegation and for trying to sabotage it. But the whole affair was so closely associated with the Pro-

visionals that this was made very easy for them. So close was the link that at least one organisation received its invitation to meet the delegation on Sinn Fein note-paper, signed by a Sinn Fein official!

A meeting of the delegates was finally held in August to approve the itinerary, but by then plans were so far advanced that it was a fait accompli. The results of TOM's cliquish control are shown in the delegation's weakness. Despite being planned for nearly a year, and postponed once, it was able to muster less than 60 people, mostly from the London area.

Not satisfied with the damage their methods had caused so far, the TOM leadership planned the delegation's report in their own inimitable style. They planned to allow only 1 hour on the last day of the delegation, when as they admitted everyone would be very tired, to decide the political guidelines of the report. The delegation meeting in August insisted on 2 hours — in fact they got 20 minutes!

Delegates were presented with a lengthy resolution from Lawless and expected to vote on it, after barely having time to read it.

Workers Action supporters moved an amendment calling for the immediate withdrawal of troops and expressing support for those engaged in the anti-imperialist struggle. In a confused vote around one third of the delegates supported the amendment.

The next stage is likely to be a struggle to allow minority reports to be included with the main report. It was agreed that if a significant number of delegates wish to produce a minority report, they can. The scope for evasion in the word 'significant' is, of course, huge. It is vital that a clear struggle to allow minority reports is waged now, rather than being presented with another fait accompli when the draft of the final report is produced.

Stop the Dublin hangings

MARIE & NOEL MURRAY have been sentenced to hang by the Irish Government. The Murrays, both anarchist militants, were convicted on the basis of 'confessions' made under duress and later retracted, admitting to a bank robbery in which an off-duty policeman was killed.

They were convicted in a Special no-jury court consisting of three judges.

The Irish newspapers which criticised the court have been silenced by the Government, and the Dublin Defence Committee has been continually harassed by the police.

Urgent international action is needed to save the Murrays, who are demanding a new trial by jury.

In London the Defence Group will be holding a torchlight march on FRIDAY OCT. 8th, starting from Speakers Corner at 7pm and going to Kilburn. It should be supported by all socialists.

AT THE Labour Party Conference, several votes showed serious discontent with and opposition to government policies. But Healey and Callaghan had what they considered an unanswerable rebuttal of all dissent: the need to 'save the pound'.

What does 'saving the pound' mean?

The drop in the dollar value of the pound reflects the still-desperate state of British industry. The government has cut real wages and social services in order to restore profitability and channel investment into manufacturing. But what recovery there has been in productivity so far is mainly due to the re-stocking of plant and the taking-up of spare capacity — not to any real increase in investment.

British capitalism is still uncompetitive relative to its West European, Japanese, and US rivals. British inflation is still running at a higher rate, balance of payments deficits are a recurrent problem, and the pound continues its downward slide. Not only does that make imports dearer and so jack up the cost of living, but the pound threatens from time to time to sink much faster in the wake of a massive selling of sterling, a flight of capital abroad, mass shut-downs, and general economic collapse as capital looks for greener pastures abroad.

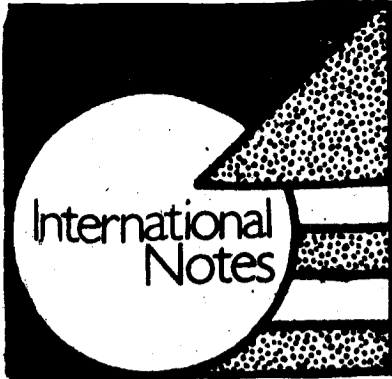
For the fifth time in 15 months we've been presented with a sterling crisis with all these possibilities on the cards. This time, as before, international big business has galloped to the rescue with a massive infusion of credit. They cannot afford to let the British economy go under with all the disastrous consequences it would have for world trade.

Healey, Callaghan, and their cohorts know this. They have used the sterling crisis for their own political ends of disciplining the working class further in the interests of the bosses. The latest crisis was in the first instance deliberately accelerated by Healey and the Bank of England. The Bank was told not to support the pound in spite of the fact that only \$1 billion of the \$5 billion stand-by credit negotiated with the OECD has been used. The purpose was to whip the seamen into line. Now that's done the IMF are playing ball and releasing more credit.

But the prospects are for a continuing downward drift of the pound, with all that implies for workers' living standards and a further offensive on social services as the price for the continuing support of the IMF. The Economist commented in its last issue that it regards the IMF as the best government that Britain could have. In their panic to prop up the pound, the Labour government have vividly demonstrated who are the real masters of Britain — the international financial magnates and industrialists and their British equivalents.

RAY SAUNDERS

SYRIANS LAUNCH NEW OFFENSIVE



Zionising the Galilee

LAST WEEK saw a major offensive by Syrian and Falangist forces against Palestinian-held positions in the mountainous area around Mount Lebanon, east of Beirut.

The area had been occupied by Palestinian forces since their offensive last April. At the time of the Syrian attack there were about 1,000 Palestinian troops in the area — most of them members of the well-equipped and highly trained Ain Jallout Brigade of the Palestinian Liberation Army.

The Syrian offensive followed closely on the attack on the Semiramis Hotel in Damascus by four Palestinian guerillas. In the raid, 4 hostages were killed and another 34 injured. One of the guerillas was killed in fighting with the Army — the other three were summarily hanged outside the hotel after they'd surrendered.

Responsibility for the raid was denied by Fatah, the main Palestinian resistance group, and it seems that it was planned with the aid of the Iraqi government, which is opposing Syria's anti-Palestinian intervention in the Lebanon.

On Wednesday, two days after the raid, a massive concerted attack was launched by the Syrians and their Falangist allies on the Palestinian positions near Mount Lebanon. Despite the fact that their Palestin-

ian opponents were well equipped to put up a fierce and protracted resistance, the Syrian forces had by Friday managed to sweep nearly all the Palestinians from the area.

Clearly the Palestinians were not putting up the sort of resistance the Syrians expected. Rather, they were withdrawing in an orderly fashion before the advancing Syrians; retreating in such good order that they claim to have suffered losses of only about 1% in men and equipment.

The retreat, then, does not mean a drastic change in the situation. Instead it is a reflection of the already changed situation in which the Palestinians are very much on the defensive. At present all they can do is to try to conserve their resources, and hope that Arab pressure on Syrian President Assad will tip things more in their favour.

Sweep

As far as Assad is concerned, the sweep of the Mount Lebanon area was a necessary precondition for any settlement in the Lebanon. In the latest round of negotiations between the PLO, the new Lebanese President, Elias Sarkis, and the Syrians, one of the conditions laid down by Syria for settlement was Palestinian withdrawal from the Mount Lebanon area.

Arafat and the rest of the PLO have refused to concede this, except as part of an overall settlement. Assad insisted this be done before a settlement could be discussed. Now he has got his way by force of arms.

Another condition for a settlement being put forward by both Assad and Sarkis was a return to the 1969 Cairo Accords governing the behaviour of the Palestinians in Lebanon. These accords restrict Palestinians carrying arms to the camps and the southern border area, and severely limit the armed operations that can be carried out by the Palestinians against Israel.



SARKIS: Lebanon's new president in league with the Syrians

Following the withdrawal from Mount Lebanon, the PLO has offered a cease-fire to Assad and promised to enter into negotiations, presumably around the shape of the new Lebanese constitution and the question of the Cairo accords.

A TWO-HOUR strike of municipal employees called by Arab councils in Galilee spilled over into the Israeli-occupied West Bank last week. The strike was almost total: shops closed, school children came out onto the streets and there were running battles with Israeli forces.

The aim of the strike was to get District Commissioner Loenig, an Israeli official, removed from his post at the Interior Ministry.

Koenig is the Israeli government's chief official for the Arab towns and villages of Galilee on all matters ranging from budget allocations to municipal master-plans. Six months ago he wrote and circulated in the Ministry a secret document on Israeli government policy toward the Arabs. A couple of weeks ago the document was splashed across the front page of a left wing Hebrew paper.

Its contents were frank, but by no means a departure in principal from Zionist policy over the past 60-odd years. That it should arouse such feeling is an indication of the new mood prevailing throughout Zionist

controlled territory.

By 1978, argued Koenig, Arabs would become the majority group in Galilee, and as a result, control of the region would be increasingly uncertain, especially in the event of military attacks on Israel's nearby northern border.

To combat this 'threat', Koenig proposes the setting up of an Arab party under the secret control of the Shin Beth (Israel's secret police); easing conditions for educated Arabs to pursue their studies abroad but make it more difficult for them to return; and setting percentage ceilings on Arabs working in local factories. In addition, there would be social security disincentives to large Arab families.

This argument for another bout of 'Zionising the Galilee' was backed up by racist observations about the 'shallow, superficial and irrational' 'Arab Levantine character'.

In response to the strike the Government announced that it had no plans to remove Koenig from his post. But before long even this incorrigibly establishment must take the point that its insults and racist Master-plans will not go unchallenged.

Pohle extradicted to Germany

THE GREEK government has succeeded in leaning hard enough on its Superior Court to bring out of it the extradition of Rolf Pohle, a West German citizen alleged to have participated in 'urban guerilla' activities.

Pohle was arrested in Germany and jailed there, but released in exchange for the kidnapped Berlin politician Peter Lorenz. After his release Pohle fled to Greece — where he was arrested and held while the German government demanded that he be extradited.

When the lower court dealing with the case dismissed the extradition demand on the grounds that Pohle was a political activist engaged in 'the anti-imperialist struggle' this judgment not only enraged the West German authorities but also embarrassed the Greek government — which had been

Greek government — which had just concluded a number of important economic treaties with Germany on the basis of

Greece's new relation to the EEC.

The incident grew in proportions as the Schmidt government sought to win the extradition as part of its 'law and order' election campaign.

At a time of rising inflation and unemployment, it suits the politicians to make a big thing of 'law and order'. This has very little to do with the (very low) crime rate, and a great deal to do with repression of the left.

The last year has seen the judicial murder of Holger Meins and Ulrike Meinhof, the 'high points' of the West German police and judiciary's feverish campaign against the Baader/Meinhof group (Red Army Faction) and Second of June Group.

This campaign has been used as the cover for a mass of less dramatic but quite systematic repressions. For instance the barring from practice of lawyers defending such activists, and the systematic raiding of left bookshops in the Federal Republic.

ANTI-RACISTS ATTACKED WITH PETROL BOMB



Workers Action supporters living in London's East End were firebombed, apparently by local fascists, on the morning of October 1st.

Just after 2.30am on Friday morning, a husband and wife squatting in a terraced house in Longfellow Road near Mile End were woken up by the crashing of glass as a firebomb was thrown through the upstairs window into the bedroom where they were sleeping. The firebomb — a bottle filled with kerosene and stoppered with a burning rag — hit the curtain and fell to the floor.

Luckily the bottle didn't smash, so that the flames didn't have a chance of spreading quickly. The couple, John and Jenny Jones, immediately threw their bedclothes over the flames and managed to put them out. Even this speedy action would not have saved them had not their fibre-glass curtains been fire resistant.

Son

At the time the couple's son Adrian, aged 8, was sleeping in the back bedroom. "If he had been in the front room" said John, an unemployed fitter who only recently moved to London "he would never have been quick enough to stop the blaze". "What we didn't realise till

later" added Jenny, a worker at the Bryant and May factory nearby, "is that another bomb had been thrown at the downstairs window. But that one missed and hit the side of the window. Obviously the idea was to get us to try to put the upstairs fire out while the downstairs fire spread to trap us."

"It is obvious that this wasn't just a warning." According to John "They were obviously out to kill us. The downstairs bomb shows that. In our opinion it was the fascists. They have been active locally for a while. Although we're new here we've participated in some anti-fascist activities already, and we had a poster up in our window advertising the Blackburn demo last month. I think that must have been it. They saw that and knew that anti-racists lived in the

house and decided to burn them out."

Ironically, the attack took place in the week marking the 40th anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street, when East Enders mobilised in thousands to prevent a march by Moseley's fascists through the area.

Abuse

Now the sentiments of most white workers in the area have changed, dramatically. Bridges and walls are daubed with National Front symbols and slogans. Black people in the East End are subject to constant attacks and abuse. This is particularly true of the many Bengali families squatting in the area (many having been driven out of council accommodation by violent attacks), who have systemat-

ically been intimidated by gangs of white racist youths. Their homes have been attacked, and many of them assaulted in the streets.

In some cases they have responded by forming defence groups for particular areas or streets.

Now John and Jenny, supporters of such black self defence groups, have also been attacked — no doubt for proclaiming that support. This emphasises the need for the immediate setting up of defence groups in the area which can defend everyone threatened by the racists and fascists. Black groups in the area have made a start — it is up to white anti-racists to take up the challenge as well.

If they do not, it is certain that last Friday's fire bombing will not be the last.

ABOVE: East end residents getting rid of fascist wall slogans. Sometimes they have had to face up to provocation and running fights with National Front supporters in the course of daubing out or washing off their slogans.

Local Sunday morning markets (Petticoat Lane and Brick Lane) have lately also been polluted with NF paper selling led by Derek Day, NF organiser in Hoxton. But local anti-fascist activists have mobilised for street meetings and leafletted the area, and last Sunday a 45-strong NF contingent was routed by Workers Action and IS militants. Derek Day had a walking stick put over his head and was later arrested.

The anti-fascists committee will be back next Sunday to keep the streets clean.

CONFERENCE DIARY

MONDAY

Conference **rejected** a move to discuss the procedure for selecting candidates which would require automatic procedure for re-selection prior to each election. On a card vote there were 3,906,000 against and 2,280,000 for. But Party democracy is clearly going to be a major issue in the future.

The Labour Party/TUC document 'The Next Three Years and the Problem of Priorities' — a completely vacuous, lowest-common-denominator effort — was **adopted**: not surprisingly, as the social contract approach went unquestioned throughout the Conference.

A motion accepting the 4 pound pay limit and demanding a return to collective bargaining in 1977 was **passed**. Maybe free collective bargaining will return in 1977. But it looks like the government will propose to peg pay rises to productivity, computed so that the net result will be to continue the present limit under a different name.

Although Conference is perfectly capable of contradicting itself within a short space of time, the passing of the above motion ensured the **defeat** of the motion opposing the 4 pound limit and calling for a 50-pound minimum wage.

There was confusion over "workers' democracy" — and little sign of clarity emerging. Conference **remitted** the call for majority representation of workers on all management boards in both public and private sectors; and the very mealy-mouthed resolution demanding one-third representation from shop floor workers, one third TUC nominees and one third government appointees was **lost**.

Monday's big victory was when NUPE's motion opposing the cuts was **passed** despite the platform's efforts — first, using the 'left' Judith Hart, to have its last paragraph **remitted**, and then to call for its rejection. Oddly this victory came only minutes after a similar motion from Richmond CLP had been **rejected**.

The sting in the tail of NUPE's resolution — the sting that Judith Hart sought to extract — was its pledge of Party support for Labour councils refusing to implement the cuts, and for trade unions opposing them, together with a national campaign by the Labour Party against the cuts.

A resolution moved by South Fylde CLP calling for an end to sterling's role as a world currency; mobilisation of the NEB's investment powers; penal taxation on private sector investment, overseas and property investment; steeper taxation on unearned income; and temporary selective import controls, was **passed**.

The AUEW's motion on the control of capital outflows from Britain and an increased income for the NEB of 1000 million pounds a year, selective import controls plus an import deposit scheme, and an extension of 'public ownership' in viable economic sectors, was **carried**.

TUESDAY

The devolution debate passed uneventfully with UCATT's motion opposing the Government's plans and calling for a referendum in Scotland on 'separation' being **defeated** on a card vote by 4,785,000 to 829,000. The Government's proposals were **passed** overwhelmingly by a show of hands.

Also **passed** was the NUR's motion demanding a fully integrated transport system, with a planning authority and workers' and consumers' participation.

Tuesday also saw the successful move to set up a working party to "consider appropriate means of widening the electorate involved in the choice of [Party] leader". And EPTU leader Frank Chapple's attempt to refer back that part of the NEC's report that ratified Newham North East and Hammersmith CLP's dumping of Reg Prentice and Frank Tomney was **defeated**.

Norman Atkinson, leading Tribuneite, finally (after six unsuccessful attempts) managed to land the job of Party treasurer. He couldn't do a worse job than Callaghan did, judging by the Financial Report...

WEDNESDAY

As the anti-Marketeters' last stand (or will they find another whetstone on which to sharpen their insularity?) their opposition to direct elections to the EEC Assembly was **carried**.

Most important, two decisions on racialism were taken that could have some impact in counteracting the growing racist feeling in Britain. A motion was **passed** calling for the repeal of the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts and of all discriminatory legislation. The motion also called on CLPs to support the formation of local anti-racist committees, and on local councils to forbid use of their property by the National Front or National Party.

Conference also **instructed** the NEC to hold a conference on racism and called for local and national meetings and for support for the black community's self defence.

The Government's policy on housing was successfully hauled over the coals when, against NEC recommendation, motions were **passed** opposing council house sales, opposing rent rises, and calling for requisitioning of empty houses and reduced subsidies in the private sector; for more housing action areas, and legislation to compel housing for the homeless.

The NEC also unsuccessfully opposed a motion condemning the Government for its failure to implement the Child Benefit Scheme in full in April 1977. That motion, which also demanded the implementation of that scheme with generous benefits was **defeated**.

passed.

Again the NEC failed to get Conference to reject a motion calling on the Party and unions to campaign to reverse cuts in health spending. The motion, which went on to call for the introduction of "health priority areas", abolition of private nursing agencies, nationalisation of the pharmaceutical industry, abolition of prescription charges and a special tax on private medical establishments, was **passed**.

THURSDAY

Wednesday had seen a series of defeats for the NEC as it tried to trim from the resolutions any hint of confrontation with the present government. But on Thursday the NEC put on its left face, with the resolution that brought the City and Fleet Street out in a rash: the NEC proposal for nationalisation of the big four banks and seven insurance companies. This was **passed** on a card vote (3,314,000 to 526,000) which indicated large scale trade union abstention.

Then, showing up the contradictions of the NEC, Conference **adopted** its statement of "full loyalty and support" to the Government in seeking the IMF loan. The motion also said the Government should not accept further cuts and increased unemployment as conditions attached to any loan — yet there's no doubt that those will be the conditions! Where that leaves the NEC is anybody's guess.

Edinburgh CLP's economic policy motion was also **passed**. Typical of the policy of the Tribune left, this called for the NEB to take a big stake in important firms; an increase in funds for the NEB; a five-year curb on export of investment funds; investigation of the City; compulsory planning agreements; compulsory scrutiny of multinationals' accounts; nationalisation of private banks and insurance companies; selective short-term import controls.

Having taken this series of very left-sounding, fight-talking resolutions, Conference then **rejected** the NOLS motion calling for a halt to education cuts, restoration of cuts already made, mandatory 2% growth in per capita spending, no increase in students' fees and a maximum class size of 30.

Educational priorities took another knocking when the Canterbury CLP motion to amend the Education Bill so that local education Authorities would be forced to end selection and 'go comprehensive' by 1977 was **lost**.

A motion from the National League for the Blind and Disabled rejecting the Government's treatment of invalid drivers and demanding suitably adapted cars rather than the useless 5 pounds mobility allowance was **passed**. The resolution also called for improvements in the status of blind people.

Two motions on Southern Africa were **passed**: the first was an emergency NEC statement which had Government support. It called for sanctions on Rhodesia to stay in force until an interim Government had been formed with general approval to transfer power to the African majority.

The second resolution called for a strict arms embargo on South Africa, a ban on the recruitment of mercenaries, an end to military collaboration, a freeze on new investment, and a withdrawal of British nationalised industries and banks.

The only resolution that might have gone some way to hardening out the sides in this debate was the AUEW TASS motion rejecting the new Smith proposals; but this was **remitted**.

As expected, the T&GWU motion on pensions proposed by Jack Jones was **carried** overwhelmingly, despite opposition from Treasury man Joel Barnett. The T&G motion calls for retirement at 60, pensions for married couples at half gross average earnings, and one third for single people; non-means tested fuel bonus; and a national scheme for concessionary travel and license costs.

FRIDAY

Labour's new Programme for 1976 was overwhelmingly approved on a card vote by 5,883,000 to 122,000.

The 'energy debate' saw a strong coal lobby and the **passing** of an instruction to the Energy Secretary to empower more use of coal for generating electricity; and for research into alternative energy resources.

A motion seeking the abolition of disconnections for non-payment for domestic electricity and gas supplies was **lost**. The motion had also sought to abolish deposits, introduce new payments methods and immediately increase heating allowances.

Despite the muddle of Composite 16 on what is euphemistically called 'defence', its strictures did imply difficulties for the Government. As with many other contentious matters this was **remitted** to be frozen, filleted or forgotten by Transport House.

The Composite had called for a reduction in the amount of GNP spent on defence in line with what Conference termed 'our European allies'; removal of US Polaris bases; halt to any further development of British strategic nuclear weapons; channeling of savings thus achieved to help the most deprived; opposition to any nuclear-threat-based defence policy and closure of British and US nuclear bases.

The Coventry South East CLP resolution calling "abolition of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and equivalent legislation in Ireland, withdrawal of troops, a trade union defence force, workers' unity on a socialist programme, an all-Ireland mass party of Labour and a Socialist United Ireland" was **defeated**.

Still no clear voice to



BANKS: WHOSE STATE SHOULD OWN THEM?

THE LABOUR Party Conference met against a background of hysteria and wild speculation about the state of Britain's financial resources, particularly the rapidly declining pound. If somehow delegates hadn't noticed that, their attention was sharply drawn to it by Healey in his speech on Thursday defending the government's economic policy. The boos and catcalls which punctuated his apologetics rose to a crescendo when he attempted to blackmail delegates into supporting the government: "An unwise resolution or statement could send the reserves plummeting by 200 million in a minute".

The following day delegates showed they hadn't taken Healey's words about the power of the financial institutions quite as he had intended: on a card vote of 3,314,000 to 526,000 conference passed a resolution calling for the nationalisation of the big four banks and the leading insurance as set out in the LP Home Policy Committee's document *Banking and Finance*.

Invest

Moving the resolution, Bill Mullins (Solihull) said that *all* financial institutions should be in state hands. He thought the acceptance of the document a positive step towards this aim.

Both he and the seconder, John Byrne (Ardwick, Manchester) pointed out that the banks and finance houses don't even operate in the long term interests of industrial capital. For instance, in the year after August 1972, bank loans to property companies jumped by over 75% while their lending to manufacturing industry rose by only 19%.

Manufacturing companies themselves often prefer to invest their money in banks rather than ploughing it back into industry. GEC, for example, finds it more profitable to put 250 million pounds into the bank at an interest rate of 13% than to invest it in industry.

The Labour Party left see this as a major obstacle to the industrial boom that they want to see — a boom which is supposed to advance not only the bosses but also the workers. Lack of state control over investment and the subsequent reduction in industrial capital make such a boom much less likely.

It is in this context that the Labour left and trade union leaders have argued for national-

POLITICAL PARTY CONFERENCES are necessarily like plays where all the important action happens off-stage. You don't need Dennis Healey rushing the rostrum, for all the world like a messenger in a Greek tragedy crying 'I have just come from the battlefield', to know that!

But the crash of the pound wasn't the only off-stage noise. Another was the closing of the TUC ranks behind the Government. This was expressed at the conference by the universal acceptance of the Social Contract. Even the NEC Lefts endorse the Contract.

However, the NEC will continue to be a focus of opposition to Government policy. This will lead Callaghan to reduce the role of the NEC by stepping up the importance of the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee. Up till now this has been the arena where the Labour right could browbeat and humiliate the Left with complete impunity.

Of course, this is a further step towards emasculating democratic processes (such as they are) within the Party. It will occur at a time when opposition to the Government is growing and when demands for internal democracy receive wide support. Together with fighting unreservedly against Government policy, socialists will have to fight against every tendency to reduce democracy in the Party.

ALAN FISHER: he moved the successful NUPE motion. The failure of the similar Richmond motion just before shows that the Union block votes against that motion were held in abstention over the NUPE motion (something that was carefully concealed by permitting the NUPE motion to get through on a show of hands). Deals like this do not bode well for the fight to implement this policy.

isation of the financial institutions.

Early in July Jack Jones made a speech in which he commented that 'finance is too important to be left to the financiers.' Within a fortnight the same theme was echoed in the document *Banking and Finance*. The basic idea: don't trust the banks to help get British capitalism out of its present mess; put your trust in the state.

Control

The document passed by conference was drafted by Tony Benn, Ian Mikardo and Judith Hart, and calls for:

1. Setting up an investment Fund whereby companies would have to deposit money with the Bank of England for investment purposes.

2 A National Bank — probably formed from the amalgamation of the National Giro, the Nat-

ional Savings Bank and the Trustee Savings Bank.

3. The big four banks — Lloyds Barclays, Midland and the National Westminster — to be publicly owned, as should the top seven insurance companies. They are to retain their separate identities but come under the overall control of the Bank of England.

4. The Bank of England itself to be reformed and placed under greater parliamentary control.

The response of the bankers and the insurance magnates to the passing of these proposals was an entirely predictable howl of outrage. Typical were the comments of Mr. Timothy Bevan — Deputy Chairman of Barclays — speaking for the central clearing banks, who declared the document to be "ill researched, irresponsible, inaccurate and illogical".

He needn't worry. Only half an hour after the vote in favour of ~~abolishing~~ Callaghan

Call on Labour to BREAK WITH THE BOSSES!

Editorial



False comfort from fake leftism

THE CALL for import controls has received a boost from two different quarters in the last week.

The Labour Party conference supported the demand for import controls. That was reckoned to be a victory for the left. Support also came from ... the Confederation of British Industry, the bosses' association.

The *Financial Times* of 28th September reported that import controls "became a talking point when leaders of the CBI and met last week for one of their routine dinners." Apparently they concluded it was possible to agree on a call for selective import controls: "great urgency", says the *Financial Times*, "is being attached to this..."

The TUC has for a long time been arguing for restrictions on the import of goods whose British manufacturers are in a weak, declining or uncompetitive condition, such as textiles, footwear etc. Until now the CBI has been sceptical. Now apparently it sees that import controls could be advantageous to some of its more backward members.

The TUC has hailed as a victory the Government's restrictions on the import of television tubes from Taiwan, though at the Labour Party conference they were dismissed as trifling. Reference to the super-exploitation and oppression of workers under Taiwan's right wing regime are often used on the left to bolster the arguments for those restrictions.

They confuse the issue. The restrictions on TV tube imports are not part of any sustained plan to force the downfall of the Taiwanese government. At 'best' import controls have the result of shifting the threat of unemployment from British workers to workers in other countries — often workers, like those in Taiwan, who lack the necessary organisation to resist that threat.

In any case import controls have the effect of raising prices and restricting the variety of goods available in this country. And the reason why the CBI is reluctant, why the more intelligent spokesmen of the capitalist class (like *The Economist*) flatly oppose import controls, and why the International Monetary Fund is making its loan to British capitalism conditional on non-introduction of import controls, is that import controls by one country provoke retaliation, a general reduction of world trade, and — eventually — economic depression world-wide.

While socialists have no interests in common with the *Economist* or the IMF, we equally have no interest in automatically saying 'yes' where they say 'no' — if the only thing to be gained from saying 'yes' to import controls is a general reduction in economic activity world-wide.

There is a more fundamental reason, however, why socialists oppose import controls. The massive development of world trade and of multi-national corporations shows very clearly that the modern capitalist economy is a world economy and that the interests of the working class are tied up on a world scale. Socialism cannot be built in one country alone, but only by the joint efforts of the workers of at least the major advanced countries. Thus import controls — trying to find an isolated, nationalist 'solution' for the workers of one country, at the expense of workers elsewhere — run entirely counter to a socialist policy which seeks to coordinate and unite in struggle workers of different nations.

★ ★ ★

THERE WAS ANOTHER false 'victory for the left' at the Labour Party conference on the question of the European Parliament. The left managed to vote down the 'principle' of direct elections to the European Parliament.

WORKERS ACTION is in favour of direct elections to the European Parliament. Elections where the various parties have to debate their policies in front of the public, and where workers have some limited opportunity to express their views, if only through the ballot box and through meetings, are better than arbitrary decision-making by an unelected bureaucracy. We would no more oppose direct elections to the European Parliament than we would propose abolition of elections to the Westminster Parliament.

Indeed, even less so: for an election held on a European — or at least EEC — scale would offer greater opportunities for political education and enlightenment than normal national elections.

Usually, Workers' Action's criticism of the mainstream Labour left is that they have too much faith in 'parliamentary democracy' — not that they under-estimate it. Why the apparent reversal of roles? Labour left-wingers arguing for a 'no' vote in the EEC referendum last year made much of the evils of the "Brussels bureaucracy". Surely they ought to welcome a chance to get a measure of parliamentary accountability for that bureaucracy.

The objections to direct elections come down to the notion that they would threaten the 'sovereignty' of the Westminster Parliament and would be a step further to a 'European super-state'. In other words, what's good about Westminster is not that it is a Parliament, but that it is British; and what's bad about the EEC is not that it is bureaucratic, but that it is foreign.

The debate over 'direct elections' has stripped away one layer of the 'socialist' rationalisations that many left wingers were using to justify the 'no' vote last year, and further-exposed the fundamentally chauvinist, anti-foreign, reactionary nature of the "no to the EEC" argument.

It confirms Workers Action in the view that the only working class answer in the EEC referendum was: "Bosses' Market — Bosses' Britain: No Choice — Don't Vote".

Witch or
Witch-
hunter
General?



Tuesday's speech to Conference by Callaghan saw the ritual diversion of red-baiting: no names, no pack-drill, but a clear pointer to the NEC to resurrect its report on "subversive Trotskyist infiltrators".

"They [the 'infiltrators'] are almost always recognisable" jeered the Prime Minister predictably "by their jargon and intolerance. They are as much the enemy of the Tribune Group as they are of the Manifesto Group — or even of the great majority of us who do not happen to belong to either, but are simply ordinary members of the party."

Target

Despite his claim that he did not "want a witch-hunt" it is quite clear that that is exactly what he does want. The only question is: who is to be the target?

This is particularly pertinent because the biggest trend to the left (marginally) of the Tribunites in the Labour Party is that supporting the paper Militant. Yet one of the leading lights of this current, Andy Bevan, has just been given the job of Labour Party Youth Officer.

It is hardly likely that if Militant is to be the 'witch' in this particular hunt, one of its leaders would be given this job. Indeed, the job is a sign of the degree of trust the Party bureaucracy has in the Militant current.

Trust

Nor is it surprising that the NEC should have this trust, as the Militant current have faithfully played the role of guardians of party discipline in the LPYS — even if this meant ditching the LPYS's own policies.

For instance, Nick Bradley, the LPYS delegate to the NEC, is a signatory to a statement carried in Tribune on September 24th endorsing the Social Contract!

the capitalists into the power of the workers. It is part of the general schema of smashing capitalism 'bit by bit'.

Revolutionaries, on the contrary, point out the impossibility of this and put forward a quite different programme: for the expropriation of the banks and finance houses to be connected with industrial and commercial expropriation — together with the overthrow by armed and mobilised workers of the capitalist state itself.

We don't expect a Labour Party conference to vote for that programme! But right now we demand that the Party launches a determined struggle for its own policy, the nationalisation of the banks. We demand it be done without compensation. We demand the opening to workers' inspection of all financial institutions. We demand the cancellation of the local authorities' interest burdens.

BENN: his key-note speech on Labour's programme amounted to nothing more solid than a plan to abolish the House of Lords and the Honours list. Prior to Conference, on the NEC, he and Foot both voted against the Left's criticisms of the Government. At the conference, he voted for the cuts against the NUPE resolution. Obviously the NEC lefts are not going to lead any movement against the government. Any real opposition will have to fight them all the way.

rushed onto TV screens to declare that the policy was an 'electoral albatross' and vow that he and his 'moderate colleagues' on the NEC and in the Cabinet would fight 'tooth and nail' to make sure that it was not included in the next LP Manifesto. He is likely to be successful.

As yet the Labour Party is not posing a serious threat to the City, but the issue does raise very important questions in the labour movement.

Secret

It highlights the enormous power of the banks and finance houses, the fundamental social irresponsibility of capitalism, and the degree to which really important economic decisions are taken outside parliament. In the case of the Bank of England, for example, its actions and decisions are often a dark secret to

parliament, even though it is nationalised.

In his July speech, Jack Jones said that nationalisation of the banks and finance houses can only serve the working class through industrial regeneration if industry itself serves the workers. Jones himself puts the most mealy-mouthed interpretation on this by arguing for nationalisation coupled with the reactionary class collaborationist idea of workers' participation.

Against this, revolutionaries need to argue our interpretation: the need to couple nationalisation with genuine rank and file control.

Even this, in the end, is not enough. Nationalisations can only serve the working class when the state itself is replaced by a state in the hands of the workers.

Banking and Finance proposes nationalisation within the utopian schema of a 'peaceful transformation' of the power of

Workers Power: 'We got a rough deal'

IN October 1975 we were expelled from IS for our refusal to dissolve the Left Faction. Holding that a process of principled fusion was the only way to regroup the fragmented forces of Trotskyism we entered into discussion with the Workers Fight grouping. The decision to open discussions with them was not a casual or a chance one. In fact we had both independently adopted positions on key points of principle which divided us from the rest of the left (the general strike, abstention on the Common Market and solidarity with all those fighting British imperialism in Ireland). After exchanges of documents and two months' discussion the fusion to create the ICL was agreed to.

Certain programmatic differences remained unsolved — the nature of 'the Stalinist states', the causes of the ideological degeneration and organisational disintegration of the Fourth International since the Second World War. These were agreed as vital scientific questions to be debated in a non-factional manner. Tactical differences remained between the two groups' attitudes to work in the major reformist party and to work within TOM.

Apparent agreement existed on the need to redevelop and re-elaborate the 1938 Transitional Programme in relation to the new period of crisis opening in the seventies and the crisis of leadership in the working class and its vanguard nationally and internationally. This was seen as central to the tasks of building the revolutionary party, of building an anti-bureaucratic rank and file movement in the trade unions and a left wing movement in the reformist party. The WF leadership claimed no differences existed on these questions [and] S. Matgamna agreed to produce a draft action programme. On production the draft was subjected to serious criticism

ism on the I-CL PC and NC.

At this point what was to become a feature of the internal life of the I-CL first manifested itself. The ex-WF PC members held a private meeting and submitted charges to us of unprincipled combinationism over the action programme, of orchestrating a "cry for perspectives" and encouraging a personal vendetta against S. Matgamna.

Rebutting the charges we proposed a political debate on our view of the action programme and the manifesto that Matgamna had produced. Such discussion was soured by new charges of 'catastrophism' and 'programme fetishism'. D. Stocking and D. Hughes produced position papers on the new period of capitalist crisis and the crisis of working class leadership. Faced with these documents the ex-WF leadership did not justify the catastrophism characterisation or withdraw it — Matgamna 'reserved his position'.

In the pre-conference perspectives discussion differences emerged principally on the orientation to the reformist party and the priority of this work relative to work in the trade unions. Hughes and Stocking produced perspectives documents arguing their position, M. Thomas produced a document weighted towards work aimed at the reformist party. Matgamna who was commissioned to write a document arguing for such a major turn failed to produce it.

The differences between the two sides were political. The compatibility, or otherwise, of the positions within one organisation depended on a serious commitment from the ex-WF leadership to honest and open debate without which no serious political fusion could be achieved. The conference itself, when held, was to mark the end of the

IN THE last WA we published a press statement from the I-CL on the recent split from their ranks. The split group, calling itself "Workers Power", has since replied with a statement of their own (also published, together with the I-CL statement, in the latest Red Weekly).

This week we publish the "WP" statement together with a reply sent to us by the I-CL.

Workers Action commented last January that the fusion of the Workers Fight and Workers Power groups, to form the I-CL, was an important development on the left. It is, therefore, important to determine whether, as the new "WP" allege, that fusion was somehow an abortion or a mistake.

We welcome further correspondence from readers on this question.

fusion process, the ironing out of common perspectives and the end of federal relations on the leading committees.

Within three weeks of the conference S. Matgamna and A. Hornung produced a slanderous document aimed at postponing conference on the grounds of the "a-political factionalism" etc of Hughes and Stocking and characterising them as wishing to turn the I-CL into 'a semi syndicalist sect'. Further charges were

made of wishing to split the I-CL and enter the IMG or the Workers League.

We agreed to postpone the conference to September on the condition that debates on the political issues took precedence over charges of the type mentioned above. This, however, did not occur. Matgamna did not produce the document on the reformist party. Thomas produced a document reproducing most of the old charges. Only after this did our PC members reply in writing to the charges and express serious doubts as to the success of the fusion.

Two of them, attending a PC meeting, were immediately confronted with the demand that they recognise the conference (two weeks distant) as the conference of a fused I-CL fully competent to take decisions. They were asked to state unconditionally their willingness to abide by these decisions. This we refused to do, saying that the refusal of the ex-WF leaders to debate political issues, the repeated slanders and the determination of the ex-WF leaders to make them the issue of their side of the debate put the fusion in question. A meeting of supporters of this position would be held within a week. However, we accepted the 'normal discipline' of the I-CL despite repeated charges that we were splitters and were planning to join the Workers League or the IMG.

Two days after this the three

ex-WP members of the PC were suspended at a PC meeting to which they were not invited. The Matgamna group thus organised a split which they hoped would only involve Hughes, Stocking and King and a few comrades in London.

They have been disappointed — despite claims of a 'desertion' of between 12 and 20 individuals some 38 comrades (80% of the Workers Power grouping, all its PC members, 12 out of 14 of its NC members) have decided to terminate what remains of the fusion. They have done this because the Matgamna leadership had hi-jacked the leading bodies, had obstructed and undermined all attempts at open and honest debate. To have gone to the conference would have been to recognise the Matgamna grouping's claim that the fusion was successful and completed.

Sect

It should be known on the left that the Matgamna leadership has shown itself politically and organisationally incapable of maintaining a democratic centralist regime, thus turning the I-CL into a hardened sect. It should be known that far from being a factor in "breaking the logjam on the left" Matgamna's organisation is one of the most obdurate though not the most significant logs in the jam.

Workers Power will fight for its own politics in Britain and internationally. We are committed to debate, polemic and discussion with other tendencies in a genuine attempt to aid the breaking of the logjam.

Workers Power Steering Ctee
25th September 1976

I-CL: 'Leninism or

circle politics'

Dear Comrades,

We write to ask you to open your columns to a brief reply to the press statement from 'Workers Power'.

Rarely in the history of the workers' movement has a would-be revolutionary organisation announced itself to the world in such a miserable way. The 'WP' statement includes not one hint of principled political positions.

All we have is a tale of how Hughes, Stocking etc were 'hard done by'. Even if that tale were true, Leninists would never use it as a basis to split. Instead Leninists would fight for the I-CL membership to call to order the alleged scoundrels. And what better opportunity than the I-CL conference due 4 days after these people split!

Split

But the split represented — fundamentally — a circle of personal associates running away from any political fight inside the I-CL. Even though Hughes and Stocking have, in the confusion, taken with them some valuable and serious comrades, this split is not a 'de-fusion'. The pre-fusion groups had ceased to exist or to function organisationally or politically as separate entities. No positions were put forward in the I-CL in the name of either group, nor did either meet to discuss political positions to be put forward in the I-CL or the 'progress of the fusion'. The I-CL has been a unitary democratic centralist organisation, as it was agreed it

should be at fusion. The alleged 'de-fusion' thus consists of part of a group that had been in political hibernation; whose leaders' current politics, having changed in the course of the year, existed on the basis of no debate in the alleged 'group' that was to 'de-fuse'; and whose remaining ties could only be personal ones.

The best traditions of the old WP/LF — represented by those comrades and leading members of the old WP who remain loyal to the I-CL — were summed up in its break from IS politics and its participation in the I-CL fusion. Hughes' and Stocking's present course represents, if anything, a reversion to the most negative aspects of the WP/LF tradition: the IS conceptions which it grew away from as it advanced politically in the period 1972-75. (And not "independently" as they now say, but very much under the influence of Workers Fight, by their own frequent admission until now.)

Those IS conceptions were revealed in the workerist bias of Hughes/Stocking's arguments inside the I-CL; their demagoguery about "industrial" or "trade union" work, their characterisation of the trade unions as "fighting organs" not steeped as far in reformism as the Labour Party, their counterposition of "agitation" as active and dynamic against "propaganda" as passive and sectarian.

Their trend is towards an IS conception of a revolutionary party as a machine for servicing trade union struggles. Hughes and Stocking are reverting to the

notions they expressed in 1973: "Revolutionaries ... seek to win the leadership ... on the clear understanding that their politics enable them to be the best shop stewards". (IS Journal no. 57).

With those conceptions, ideological clarity and honesty become secondary: the rule for revolutionaries becomes, not "to tell the truth, however bitter it may be", but to say what is organisationally advantageous.

The 'WP' press statement is grossly dishonest on many points. We take a few.

The complaint ex-WF comrades made over the Action Pro-

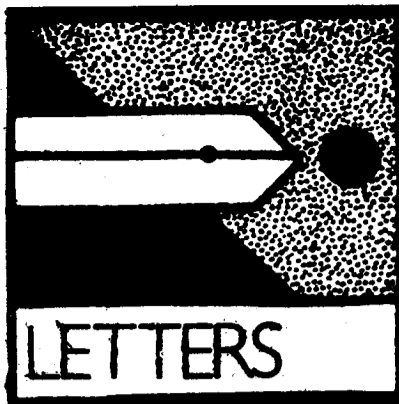
gramme debate was that Hughes & Stocking were failing to work actively to break up the old factional cohesion of WP/LF in favour of integration into the I-CL. The complaint was raised not when they criticised the draft, but later, when despite requests and promises they failed to produce any written concretisation of their criticisms or their alternative.

The statement claims that "the Matgamna leadership had hi-jacked the leading bodies". How? The only leading body modified (other than by voluntary withdrawals) since Dec-

ember 1975 was the executive sub-committee of the Political Committee — the Secretariat. (It was the Secretariat which decided on the suspensions and not, as stated, an improperly called or 'hi-jacked' PC.)

The Secretariat, starting in December with an "ex-WP majority", latterly had (by mutual agreement) an "ex-WF majority" and finally, when Cde. Stocking withdrew for personal reasons, no-one from "ex-WP". Hi-jacking? Never once, on the PC or NC, did anyone allege improper procedure or raise a call for correcting the composition of





the Secretariat.

The first I-CL conference was not scheduled to "mark the end of the fusion process". The "end of the fusion process" was last December! (See fusion resolution in International Communist No. 1). Thereafter it was agreed, as Stocking himself once said at a PC meeting (25.3.76): "Differences from pre-fusion would come up — but through being contained in comrades' heads, individually."

Hughes and Stocking still insist that it is "slanderous" to say they were conserving a factional grouping on no clear political basis. But now they have formed not merely a factional, but a split grouping, on no clear or adequate political basis, and they declare that it has existed all along!

This is the sort of "slander" which they claim "put the fusion in question". What in fact put the fusion in question was their adherence to clique methods of operation. What brought about the split was the refusal of three leading members to recognise the democratic centralist authority of the conference — just five days after attending an NC at which they raised not a single objection to the basis or agenda of that conference.

We were faced with three individuals suddenly trying to re-define the organisation as federalist.

It was to uphold the democratic centralist integrity of the organisation as agreed and defined at fusion and as it had functioned without question for 9 months that the three were suspended. They had only to revert to their positions of the previous week to automatically quash the suspensions and return as full members to the leading bodies. Alternatively, their supporters on the NC could

have called an emergency NC to challenge the suspensions. This they refused to do.

The 'WP' statement says success depended on "a commitment from the ex-WF leadership to honest and open debate." But what about a commitment from their element of the ex-WP leadership?

While the NC majority pushed the written debate as far as reducing Hughes and Stocking's differences to eight short amendments to 'theses on orientation' prepared for conference, the real obstacle to "honest, open debate" was Hughes' and Stocking's persistent political and ideological slipperiness. Their statement gives two examples of that.

At fusion, they say, one of the tasks was seen as "building a left wing movement in the reformist party". In fact, the Hughes/Stocking position at that time was for piecemeal and strictly ancillary work in the reformist party, according to local circumstances — i.e. not for building any national movement. In their statement they have simply plagiarised some ideas from the grouping (mentioned in the first I-CL press statement) which at their 19th September meeting opposed the split. Plagiarised — and backdated!

And there is another back-dating. Hughes and Stocking discover that they had at the time of fusion "programmatically differences" on the Fourth International question. Such differences would, of course, cast grave doubt on the principled character of the fusion from any but a nationalist standpoint. But in fact they are a new invention! The positions of "The I-CL and the FI" were published without a murmur of criticism or opposition from Hughes and Stocking.

Why the new invention? It could be to clear the tracks for a move toward the IMG. Or it could be part of the retreat towards IS-type positions. (Some philistine comments about "orthodox Trotskyism" from them recently give weight to the latter interpretation.)

Either course — toward the IMG, or toward an existence as a small state capitalist sect — can only confirm that the issue in the split was: Leninism or circle politics.

Political Committee, I-CL

WORKERS IN BLUE UNIFORMS?

COPS all over Britain are demanding that their phony union seek loopholes in the Social Contract similar to those used by the Government and the TUC to avert the seamen's strike.

More importantly at a packed Police Federation meeting at Westminster Hall, hundreds of policemen jeered and booed their 'moderate' leaders when they refused to consider strike action. It is said that Joe Martucci, Police Federation secretary, suggested lobbying MPs — only to hear one wit reply "mine's in jail"!

Force

If policemen were ordinary workers then the issue would be straightforward; but cops are hardly just "workers in blue uniforms".

Along with the army they form one of the central repressive cores of the capitalist whose function is to preserve and defend by physical force the rule of the capitalist class against the working class.

The attack on the Right to Work marchers is only the latest

Minister of the Interior, Jules Moch, set to work. Selected CRS squads were purged, troops and old Vichy police were brought in to 'firm up' the CRS. By October 1948 the CRS were ready to join in forcing striking coal miners down the pits at gun-point.

In the early '70s the reliability of the CRS began to waver again — as a result not of reformist efforts but of the determination and militancy of the revolutionary workers and students who fought them on the streets.

In Britain, too, the capitalist class have worked for a century and a half to consolidate the police force as a reliable instrument of class oppression.

The Police Acts of 1839 removed control of the police from local councils. The old social hierarchies were waning, and in some areas the police were considered too sympathetic to the Chartist movement.

In Oldham, for example "The police were staffed with hand-picked trade union militants. Home Office reports expressed concern about 'Jacobinical' constables. And not without reason. In 1816, for instance, the constables permitted the holding of universal suffrage meetings and one, Ashton Clegg, described as

The nucleus of a police union had been in existence since 1913 as a result of the Syme case. Syme was a young police inspector who in 1909 accused his superiors of victimisation and injustice. As a result he was dismissed and began agitating for a police union.

By 1918 the union had recruited heavily, especially in London. It received aid from the Workers Union (one of the forerunners of the TGWU) in the hope that a police union would soften the attitude of policemen to strikers.

In August 1918 a policeman was dismissed for union activity. As a result the police union threatened strike action unless pay was improved, the dismissed PC reinstated and the union recognised.

At first the government refused to budge, but was shaken out of its complacency by strike action of 6,000 Metropolitan police. After a few days they agreed to the demands of pay and reinstatement but would give no clear recognition of the union.

This proved to be a fatal condition for the future of the union. Within a year the Desborough Committee had cut away its ground on pay and outflanked it by setting up the Police Federation. The Police Act was passed

In a rearguard attempt to win union recognition a strike was called. This time the response was patchy: only 2,364 men in 7 forces responded. After bloody clashes with the troops in Liverpool the strike collapsed. All the strikers were dismissed and none ever reinstated

Loyal

The Desborough proposals had succeeded in securing a loyal police force, as was illustrated by its role in the General Strike.

In previous periods of wage restraint, the Government found it necessary to make special provision for the police. Today the last thing it wants is any further loopholes in the Social Contract. However, a loyal police force is so important to the state that the possibility of the government conceding police demands should not be ruled out.

The police force is not part of the working class movement, but part of the capitalist state. We are not in favour of strengthening it with higher pay for policemen. However, we are in favour of democratic rights for police, including the right to organise in trade unions and to go on strike.

Such rights would not turn the police into a pro-working class force; but they would seriously disrupt the use of the police as a weapon of the capitalist state. (In France, where many of the police are trade union members, the leaders of the police unions have on occasion spoken out against the use of police against demonstrations, and have objected to plans for a heavier repressive role for the police.)

At the same time we should not hesitate to expose the anti-working class and racist actions of the police, and to raise the demands for the disbandment of the Special Patrol Groups, the political police and all anti-union squads.

STEVEN ING-HALL



Striking policemen in London, 1918

of many examples of police being used against working class organisations.

Some of the functions of the police, like traffic control, are of course socially necessary. But overall, the police are trained, structured and organised to act as an anti-working class force.

In a workers' state, law enforcement — which would still be necessary, though of course the laws would be very different! — would be carried out by workers' militias and workers' tribunals, directly drawn from and accountable to local communities.

The capitalist-organised police force cannot be conciliated or neutralised or gradually won over to the workers' side. The now notorious French CRS is a clear object lesson.

The CRS was set up soon after World War 2 by a government including Communist Party ministers. The CP encouraged ex-Resistance militants to join the CRS. In its early days the CRS often took a friendly attitude to strikes and demonstrations. But then the 'Socialist'

'extremely disaffected' and 'violent' took the chair. Without cooperation from the police, persecution of the radical and unionist movement by the state was virtually impossible. (New Left Review no.90, p.40).

In the aftermath of the 1918 police strike and the revolutionary upheavals around the end of the first World War, the 1919 Police Act made it illegal for policemen to belong to a trade union, go on strike or overtime ban, and for any person to induce a policeman to enter on such a course of action. The Desborough Committee, which recommended this, also realised that the state must win the loyalty of the ordinary copper. To this end pay was massively raised and the Police Federation set up as the tamed 'democratic voice' of all policemen from the rank of constable to inspector.

Pressure for a genuine police union had been building up toward the end of the 1914-18 War Demands centred around the issue of pay, which had sunk so low that many ranks lived below the poverty line.

workers' ACTION supporters' groups

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Write for details of meetings & activities to:
WASG, 49 Carnac Street, London SE27

WIDERS IN ACTION

TRICO: WHO IS THE STRIKE FOR?

**PRA picket
successful**

THE STRIKE at Trico, Brentford, now in its 20th week, is quickly winning an unenviable place in trade union history as one of the longest-running strikes over equal pay. The management, backed by the Employers' Federation, have used every means including victimisation and intimidation to break the strike. Since the blacking of their products began, they have been finding alternative suppliers to meet their orders. Blades have been pouring in from both South Africa and the Trico factory in the United States. These are already being used at Linwood.

The employers have also been strengthened by the ruling of the government's Industrial Tribunal which decided that the men's work was substantially different from the women's. Last week the women were, however, offered a further 50p. This miserable offer was rejected — with only four voting to go back to work.

Anger

The rejection was partly fuelled by anger on the strikers' side that the negotiations which had led to this offer had taken place not between management and the strikers' own representatives, but exclusively between management and the three appropriate union officials.

This high-handedness shows an important feature of the strike: the neglect of rank and file involvement in the running of the strike. The mass meetings have been bureaucratically run, making it difficult for the women to voice their feelings. The fact that no creche has been organised by the unions further reveals their indifference to the problems of the women in the strike.

Where the running of the

strike has been most seriously at fault is in the matter of blacking and other national initiatives. It seems that the Communist Party strike leaders together with their co-thinkers on the district committee are seeing to it that the matter isn't raised sharply at national level. Not wishing to expose Scanlon to the right wing, they have tried to restrict the support activities to a local level in West London. There, certainly, many Communist Party members have taken the lead in giving aid to the strike.

But without firm, widespread blacking — something that can best be organised through the AUEW nationally — the Trico strikers are likely to be starved out. In some cases, Communist Party convenors like Derek Robinson at Longbridge are not urging that replacements for Trico goods be blacked. Participation schemes, not rocking the union boat, and fear of lay-offs are having their effect in isolating the Trico strikers.

More recently the Strike Committee and the AUEW have been trying to reassure people that this is "a normal industrial dispute" (clearly these people are easily frightened by a few wild accusations in the press!). They seem reluctant to face the backwardness that certainly exists in the labour movement over the question of women. They seem reluctant to say directly: this is a strike for women's rights, and one which is fast becoming a symbol for the need to fight for those rights.

There is plenty of evidence of widespread support for the women: messages, requests for speakers and donations. In view of this it is doubly disastrous to try to limit the strike to the West London plant.

The Working Women's Charter Campaign, realising the

importance of the strike and the possibilities of national action, advanced the idea of a national demonstration over Trico. The people who have put the block on this have been the local union officials and the Trico strike committee. There are various reasons given: the Charter campaign didn't approach the strike committee in the right way; the AUEW Southall district is organising a demonstration in any case; the Greater London Association of Trades Councils are considering a demonstration; and so on.

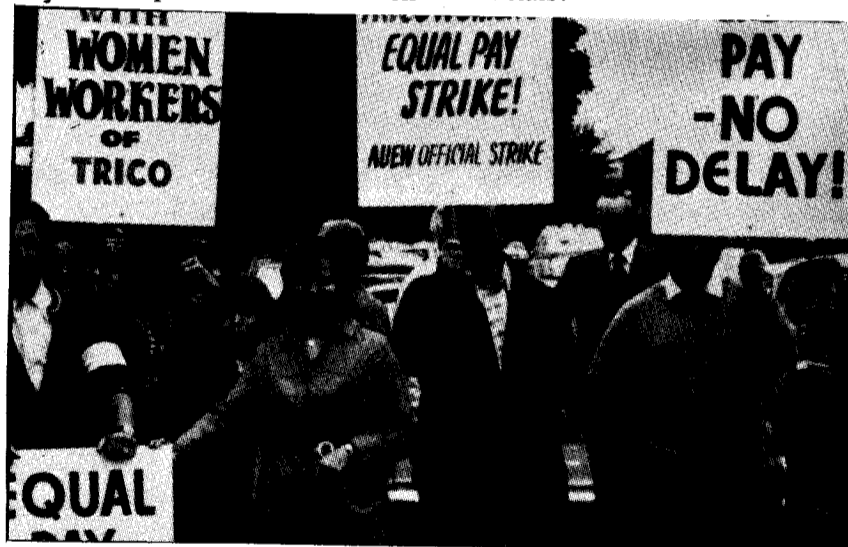
Demo

None of these reasons are valid! The AUEW Southall demonstration was only dreamt up after the date was set for the WWCC demo — and now that the AUEW Southall has been successful in getting the WWCC to call off its demo it has decided to call off its own too. As we go to press the GLATC is meeting. It is to be hoped that they will agree to a demonstration. In any case, it is clear that the WWCC were proposing a correct initiative that would help the strike as well

as further the Charter campaign. It should have been supported whether or not it had gone through all the right channels and courtesies.

It is not with any relish that we criticise a strike now in its 20th week. But we do feel that there is every danger of the isolation and demoralisation of the Trico strike unless a real unity is forged between all those who have given real support to the strike. The condemnatory attitude of the union officials and, with them, of the strike committee leaders towards the WWCC only shows the fear of those who don't want things to "get out of hand", that is, to leave the narrow framework of ordinary trade unionism complete with its compromises with the bosses and its making alibis for the inaction of the officials.

What is needed now is effective, coordinated, national blacking and solidarity. In this the AUEW must take the lead — and the rank and file is going to have to push them. We also need the maximum of unity and rank and file involvement: the strike is being run for the Trico women, not the reputations of the AUEW officials!



CAR WORKERS UNDER

SIEGE

British Leyland management are launching a major attack against the workforce at Longbridge and at Cowley.

Longbridge management have demanded that status quo be completely overthrown on working conditions, and that all existing agreements on manning, mutuality, conditions, etc be re-negotiated.

The Works Committee and the Joint Shop Stewards Committee rejected this management demand, and shop floor meetings at Longbridge yesterday endorsed that rejection. Management's reaction was a threat: unless the workers' decision is reversed by Thursday, the new ADO 88 model — scheduled for 1978-81 — will not be produced, and Leyland and Cowley works will be closed down.

Very possibly, management are bluffing: the ADO 88 is not due to be produced at Cowley anyway. But certainly they do want to secure large-scale redundancies, and a drastic threat could help them do that. The ADO 88 is scheduled to need

only 30 man-hours on the body, as opposed to 50 man-hours for the Allegro.

Militants at Longbridge are fighting for a policy of no redundancies, and work-sharing with no loss of pay when the total of man-hours required is reduced.

Dagenham

DISPUTES and their resulting lay-offs are mounting at Fords Dagenham. At the time of writing two groups of workers are in dispute over pay and conditions issues — the door-setters and the plasma welders — and several shifts including the Paint, Trim and Assembly (pta) day and night shifts, and the Body Plant day shift, are laid off.

The Body Plant night shift is on strike because of management's policy on laying them off last Tuesday (September 26th). They are demanding full payment for the time lost — management only offered them four hours payment — no victimisation, and guaranteed shift payment.

The dispute that led to their lay-off arose from 12 door-setters refusing to operate a new door-setting jig. They say it is dangerous and will involve a reduction in manning levels. It will also tie them more closely to the tyranny of the line.

In the other pay-and-conditions dispute, the plasma welders are demanding re-grading.

But the biggest single issue — and the one unifying all workers — is management's use of lay-offs to make workers pay for any production problems. The situation that sparked last Tuesday's fury was typical: the night management laid off 1,000 workers telling them, for the 5th week running, to go home for the night. Many were too late for public transport. A union meeting

was held which was followed by the workers effectively controlling the plant until the morning. They showed their justified rage by breaking up parts of the plant including the bosses' canteen.

Their decision to strike for a week brought an offer by management to move Staley, the production manager, from the body plant. That, of course, won't solve the basic problems of lay-off or anything else (and, anyway, which section will now have to put up with Staley?).

Last week's night shift is generally recognised as well organised. They have not had a full week since the summer shut down. Tuesday's lay-off coincided with the launching of the new Cortina Mark 4. It seems likely that management have been following a plan of trying to isolate, and therefore break, a militant section in the shift through a combination of potentially demoralising lay-offs and a big propaganda drive about the need for full production for the new car. The cue for such a plan could easily have come from Leyland's recent success in weakening shop floor organisation by isolating militants in their plants.

And/or the lay-off could have been to avert a lay-off due to the car delivery strike for which Fords would have to give lay-off pay.

The escalation of the lay-offs, however, has meant that the militants are not isolated. In fact, it is a visible demonstration of the need for the whole workforce, not just to support the demands of the different sections in dispute, but to unite for struggle for a guaranteed weekly payment irrespective of the number of hours or shifts worked.

JOE MACAULAY

Coventry

THE STRIKERS at the Coventry car delivery firm of Silcock and Colling have gone back now that management have conceded and agreed to withdraw redundancy notices.

This is an important victory for the fight

against redundancies, and also for the unity of the different delivery firms in Coventry.

BRS drivers returned a few days before, although there is by no means security about jobs there. Toleman James workers have forced management to take on another three drivers to cover the extra work provided by their new Ford contract.

These short-term victories have been important in establishing the men's claim and their unity, but in no way has the basic long-term insecurity been alleviated. On the contrary, the same problems that led to this strike are certain to re-emerge when Triumph Canley move.

Clearly this is why Joynson, the TGWU official acting for the strikers, would make no commitment about long term prospects. Yet exactly such a commitment is what is needed. Now that Jaguar have definitely dropped Geoffrey Robinson MP's pet plan for an expansion of the Browns Lane plant and the Coundon Wedge, workers want to know, 'What now?'

FIGHT FOR JOBS AT K SHOES

ON BEING told that 350 of the 360 workers at K shoes in Norwich were to lose their jobs, ASTMS, one of the two unions organised in the factory, convened a meeting to discuss ways of fighting back. Although officials of the footwear union NUFLAT were totally absent from the meeting and have refused to comment, NUFLAT members turned out in force and supported a call to occupy if management did not give a satisfactory reply by 5pm Thursday.

Roger Spiller, ASTMS divisional officer, addressed the mass meeting. To loud applause, he stressed the need to fight the firm if the workers wanted to keep their jobs. Afterwards, in answer to reporters' questions, he pointed out that although ASTMS accounted for only a quarter of the workforce, the majority of NUFLAT members supported the idea of occupation and had called on their own officials to act.

Messages of support and donations to: Roger Spiller, ASTMS, 21-25 High St, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 8AD (0440 2590).

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. Workers Action supporters' groups are especially welcome to advertise their meetings and activities in this column.

Friday 8 October. "Stop the Dublin hangings": march to save Noel and Marie Murray. 7pm from Speakers Corner, Hyde Park.

Friday 8 October. Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement rally, at NUFTO Hall, Jockeys Fields, London WC1. 7.30pm.

Saturday 9 October. Manchester Fight the Cuts conference. Speakers include Ernie Roberts (AUEW), Jack Sutton (NUPE). 1pm at Basement Theatre, Town Hall Extension.

Saturday 9 October. National Abortion Campaign day school, at Architectural Association, Bedford Sq, London WC1.

Saturday 9 October. Working Women's Charter campaign national coordinating group meeting: 10.30 am to 5 pm at Baptist Mills Community Centre, Harley Rd, Bristol 2.

Sunday 10 October. London WWC special general meeting: 2pm at the Old Fire Station, Mayton St, London N7.

Friday 15 October. Social organised by Working Women's Charter campaign, from 8pm at RCA, Kensington Grove, London SW7 (entrance in Jay Mews). Bar, disco, 50p entrance.

Saturday 16 October. Planning meeting for Rally on the SDA, 2pm at the Architectural Association (2nd floor), 34 Bedford Sq, WC1 "One year on from the SDA, a rally for women's rights". Last year the Labour government introduced legislation to end discrimination against women. How effective has this been? Has it been implemented? Are recent equal pay strikes an exception or the rule in the fight for equal pay? What is happening to nursery provision, rights to abortion, child benefits, and other essential foundations for women's rights in equality and independence. How are campaigns for these rights progressing?

The WWCC has issued a call for a national rally to assess the struggle for women's rights in light of government legislation. We invite all organisations campaigning for women's rights to plan and participate in this rally and make it a major event in the life of the labour and women's movement.

Already 5 Labour MPs have sponsored this rally, which we hope over 2,000 will attend in February. However, we urgently need funds. Please send donations to Jill Daniels, 16 Crookham Rd, SW6.

Saturday 30 October. National WWC day school on nursery campaigns. 10 am to 5pm at the Centre of Environmental Studies, 62 Chandos Place, WC2. Creche provided.

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