

workers' ACTION

Inside

No.36

Nov.18th-25th

10p

CHILE p.2
FIGHTING RACISM pp4/5
SPAIN p.6
DOCKS p.8

2 MILLION WORKERS STRIKE IN SPAIN

AROUND TWO million workers joined the general strike in Spain on 12th November. The industrial belt of Madrid was paralysed; so was engineering and the docks in Barcelona. All the major industrial areas of the Basque country were stopped. The building industry in Madrid, the naval shipyards in Galicia, and engineering in Valencia and the Asturias, were 100% solid.

The strike had been called by the COS, the coordinating committee of the Workers' Commissions, of the UFT (the Socialist-controlled trade union federation), and the USO (a trade union federation whose closest links are with the French CFDT), in response to the economic austerity plan of the Suarez government.

The main political forces in the leadership of the strike, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party (PSOE) took great care to keep it strictly controlled. The demands were limited to trade union questions: though a 'labour amnesty' (reinstatement of workers sacked for political or trade union activity) was included, the general demand for amnesty for political prisoners was not.

Far from outlining a path of independent working class action, the CP restricted itself to a joint statement of support for the strike from the Democratic Coordination, the broad popular-front opposition coalition.

However, the working class character of a general strike does not depend on proclamations or exhortations; it is evident in the action itself. The general strike cannot fail to be an important rehearsal in independent class action for the Spanish workers.

One-day general strikes can be entirely tame affairs. In France and Italy the trade union federation have perfected the art of using them as routine safety-valves for militancy. That is evidently the model the CP and the PSOE want to follow.

But they are far from assured of success. For the Spanish working class, flexing the muscles of its class power as the rigid Francoist police state (with its legal bans on strike action) weakens, a one-day general strike is not a routine observance. It can — if the revolutionaries in Spain are able to seize their opportunities — be a preparation for more advanced, more serious, and more revolutionary use of the general strike weapon.

"The Bunker faces the Masses"
— see page 6.

PLATFORM OF DEMANDS FOR 12TH NOVEMBER

- 6000 pesetas [about £50] increase in wages. [The government has declared a wage freeze until 30 June 1977].
- Three months' price freeze.
- Free collective bargaining.
- The right to strike.
- An 8-hour day.
- A 40-hour week.
- One month of paid holidays.
- Free trade unions.
- Total labour amnesty [reinstatement of workers sacked for trade union or political activity].
- Full pay for lock-out periods.

2,070,000 LIVE BELOW POVERTY LINE

UP WITH THE WAGES — NOT DOWN WITH THE DOLE



flation.

The Tories turn these feelings against the unemployed, to divide the working class. Such tactics helped the Tories win in Workington and Walsall. And the Labour politicians have no answer except to join in the attacks on the unemployed.

Unity of employed and unemployed is essential if rampant demoralisation and suicidal division of the working class is not to occur. That the dole can be more 'rewarding' than many wage packets and provides more protection against inflat-



ion is the measure of the massive decline in working class living standards. Child Poverty Action has just published figures showing that in 1974-5 the number of families with incomes below the Supplementary Benefit level increased by 750,000 to 1,170,000, and that the number of people below the official poverty line is now 2,070,000.

It also proves, graphically, the value for the working class of fighting for trade union bargains that tie wages to rises in prices and taxes, to be reviewed monthly, with all increases due on the month to be paid in a lump sum.

The labour movement must say: **no levelling down of unemployment benefit, but**

been built into the wages system.

Tory spokesmen insist, probably truly, that a man with two young children would need to earn £55 a week before he would have a take-home pay of £37.16, which is what he would get on the S.S.

BURDEN

Denis Healey has told MPs: "I am concerned that the burden of sacrifice now facing the nation falls disproportionately on those who are working rather than those who, for various reasons, are not in work and whose benefits rise automatically in relation either to prices or earnings gross of tax". Naturally, it doesn't occur to this Labour Chancellor that the burden should fall on no working class people, employed or unemployed, but should be borne entirely by the owning capitalist parasites whose system this is.

A "Daily Express" editorial in support of King Parasite Philip comments: "One of the effects of the (16%) increase is that millions of men might find it financially more worthwhile to be on the dole than at work... A social system which pays any significant number of people more to be idle than at work is simply mad..." (15.11.76).

A system that forces over a million into unemployment and poverty is indeed mad. But that is not what the "Express" means. Nor, naturally, does it mean that those who work should have their wages raised.

IRONY

The great irony is that unemployment benefit (which lasts a year) is related, readjusted annually, to price rises, while wages are not. With inflation and wage restraint pushing down wages, social service payments are both costly and inflammatory, creating resentment among wage-earners with no protection against in-

Any tax on unemployment benefit is a straight cut in the dole. Yet David Ennals, Labour Minister for Social Services, publicly accepts the idea and is examining its practicalities. Chancellor of the Exchequer Healey also thinks it is a good idea.

The victims of the capitalist system's inability to give them work, their living standards already slashed by loss of their jobs, are to be penalised even more. The "tax the dole" advocates range from spiteful hard-faced Tory politicians to spineless Labour Ministers. Even one Philip Mountbatten, a prince among the great parasites of our society, a creature of neither use nor ornament, who can't keep his pampered upper-class mouth shut, has dared publicly to attack the whole Welfare State. It is a sign of the times.

The furore has erupted because unemployment benefit has risen by 16% to come into line with the rise in the cost of living over the last year. There are now 1,300,000 unemployed, inflation is again heading towards a rate of 20% per annum, wage rises are confined between 2½ and 4½%, and the real income of the working population continues its downward turn.

BETTER

Anyone who earns less than £35 a week is better off on the dole! A major crisis faces the whole welfare state because the social services system, including the link of unemployment benefit with price levels, was designed for the post-war situation when there were not all that many unemployed nor massive inflation.

The limited protection against price rises built into the social services system now creates tremendous and explosive contradictions, especially since no such protection has

WHEN THE CHICAGO BOYS hit Chile, they were given a free hand by the Pinochet dictatorship. Within a couple of years the effects of their actions were evident everywhere: malnutrition had increased, infant mortality, which had been reduced significantly during the years of the Allende governments, jumped a dramatic 18% in one year...

The Chicago Boys referred to in the title of Orlando Letelier's article, "The Chicago Boys in Chile", are not a gang of mobsters, but the group of economists round Professor Milton Friedman of the University of Chicago. Letelier was assassinated at the end of September this year by agents of DINA (Direccion de Inteligencia Nacional), Chile's security police.

The article, which is reprinted in the "New Statesman", was written a fortnight before his death.

IMF & CIA

Orlando Letelier was an economist who, under the Allende regime, was Ambassador to the USA, and later Foreign Minister, Minister of the Interior and Defence. He understood perhaps better than any other person what the international financial institutions like the World Bank and the IMF were up to when they set about first trying to rock the Chilean economy, then to run it for themselves.

Letelier reveals that the Chicago Boys all trained by Milton Friedman and by another Chicago professor, Arnold Harberger, descended on Chile with CIA support well before the putsch that overthrew the elected government of

CHILE 2½ million depend on soup kitchens

Salvador Allende. They "sold" their economic plan to the Chilean plutocracy and military leaders.

Not long after the coup, which installed a regime of open terror directed against all organised opposition and most of all against the workers' parties and organisations, the Chicago Boys set about testing out their economic theories in the laboratory of Chilean society.

Friedman, who was at that time in Chile himself to supervise operations, made it clear that "shock treatment" was the "only medicine. Absolutely. There is no other. There is no other long-term solution". Chile's biggest problem, he claimed, was inflation. And, as the leading 'monetarist', he believed that the answer was simple: inflation is the result of too great a money supply, therefore the solution is drastically to hold down that supply whatever the political and social consequences.

According to Friedman, this only works within one economic model: total free enterprise. "I am against economic intervention by the Government, in my own country, as well as in Chile or anywhere else".

Of course, Friedman did not object to "Government intervention" to suppress all opposition to the now official economic policies...

The Chicago Boys' first moves were therefore to set up the economic framework they needed for their experiment. As the International Monetary Fund Report of May 1976 points out, "The process of returning to the private sector the vast majority of the enterprises which over the previous 15 years, but especially in 1971-73, had become part of the public sector continued [during 1975]... At the end of 1973 the Public Development Corporation had a total of 492 enterprises, including eighteen commercial banks....

SOLD

"Of this total, 253 enterprises ... have been returned to their former owners. Among the other 239 enterprises... 104 (among them 10 banks) have been sold." Naturally a great many of the buyers were US-based firms like Firestone tyres and Parsons and Whittmore.

As part of the process of removing government controls from the economy, the Chicago Boys got the Pinochet government to remove controls from the price of milk. The result? "The price to the consumer rose 40% and the price paid to the producer dropped 22%..." Thus the masses of consumers were hard hit as were the many — mainly small-scale — producers, of whom there are 10,000 in Chile. The profiteers, of course, were the two milk processing companies which dominate the Chilean market.

Of course, the Chicago Boys did not insist on Pinochet implementing everything that their economic model assumes. For instance, Friedman's monetarist 'free market' includes the possibility of wage contracts being negotiated freely...

DEFICITS

Harberger, Friedman's chief hit-man, announced his policy against inflation in no uncertain terms in April 1975: "I can see no excuses for not stopping inflation; its origins are well-known; government deficits and monetary expansion have to be stopped. I know you are going to ask me about unemployment; if the government deficits were reduced by half, still the rate of unemployment would not increase by more than 1%".

As Letelier notes, "According to the junta's official figures, between April and December 1975, the government deficit was reduced by approximately 50% as Harberger recommended. In the same period, unemployment increased six times as

Church soup kitchen in Santiago.

much as he had predicted."

And the results of the policy? Letelier sums it up: "By the end of 1975 Chile's annual rate of inflation had reached 341% — that is, the highest rate of inflation in the world". And, quoting a more recent IMF report, he points out, "The cutback in government spending, with its adverse effects on unemployment, in housing and public works, went significantly further than programmed in order to accommodate the large credit demands of the private sector".

NOBEL

The benefits to the private sector are summed up most clearly in one stunning set of statistics Letelier quotes: "In 1972, under the Allende government, employees and workers received 62.9% of the total national income; 37.1% went to the propertied sector. By 1974 the share of the wage earners had been reduced to 38.2%, while the participation of property had increased to 61.8%".

It was reported recently in "Le Monde" that in a letter to Pinochet's minister of Labour, ten conservative trade union leaders have complained that half of Chile's workers receive

a monthly wage of about 450 pesos, when minimum expenditure on food calculated by WHO (World Health Organisation) needs to be 900 pesos — excluding meat and milk!

The employment figures, however, reveal that an increasing number of Chileans receive no income at all. As Letelier put it: "In July 1976 approximately 2.5 million Chileans had no income at all; they survive thanks to the food and clothing distributed by the church and humanitarian organisations."

Friedman, a Nobel Prize winner for economics, has many disciples — not all of them studied under him in Chicago and not all of them are giving "technical advice" to the Chilean torturers. Some, like Sir Keith Joseph, are active elsewhere...



Orlando Letelier



Letelier's car after the explosion which killed him.

CLODOMIRO ALMEYDA, one-time Foreign Minister in the Allende government, and the Secretary of the Popular Unity in exile, reported on a change of methods on the part of the Pinochet dictatorship. In an interview with *Le Monde's* Marcel Niedergang he said, "The repressions are just as brutal as ever but the methods have changed. For some months "disappearances" have been on the increase, sometimes the corpses of those who disappear are found later in the Mapocho River or elsewhere. We know of over a hundred definite disappearances this year so far.

Other estimates put the figure of "disappearances" at nearly twice that number. August seems to have been a record month. Among those who have "disappeared" there are 17 well-known trade unionists and several notable members of the Communist Party.

Almeyda commented on Letelier's assassination and on his article on the "Chicago boys" and went on to say, "The dictatorship does not hesitate to attack international officials. For instance, Carmen Soria, an official of Spanish nationality working for CEPAL, the UN economic commission for Latin America, was "lifted" and later on 16th July his corpse was found in Santiago. The regime's press tried to present

the incident as a mere "misadventure". Actually Soria had been worried on a number of occasions by the political police. One of his associates, Enrique Pemjean, had been arrested several months earlier, tortured and interrogated about Soria..."

Repression in Chile seems to be stepping up now against both the Christian Democrats (who thought they might benefit from the putsch against Allende) and the church. The Chilean Minister of Education recently said that the Christian Democracy is now the chief enemy and that he expects soon to see their complete exclusion from public life.

Almeyda himself gave the example of the dismissal from the faculty of law in Santiago of the elderly professor Maximo Pacheco. He was sacked in mid-August. "All his students accompanied him silently up to the moment of his departure from the faculty. This is one sign among others of the widespread resistance. Three quarters of the population are without question opposed to the junta — passively, yes, but nevertheless irreversibly. The middle classes (who had been the spearhead of the anti-Allende movement) are now the ruined victims of the junta's economic plan, and have ceased to support it".

Letter from Australia

Unions press for cost of living increases

International
Notes

LAST WEEK we had the Fox Report on uranium mining, which could have global significance, as Australia has 20% of the world's known uranium resources (though figures for the USSR and China are not known).

The report is basically in favour of mining and export of uranium, although it tries to hedge it with "safeguards". A uranium mining company's shares increased \$2 after the report was published.

According to the polls, public opinion is very divided. Powerful sections of the Australian Labour Party and trade unions are opposed to uranium mining; when in office the ALP banned all exports of uranium and set up the Fox Inquiry. Uren, deputy ALP leader, has called for a 'national' debate on the issue, and he is at present a vociferous opponent of uranium mining. However, the ALP and trade union leaders are essentially 'men of straw'.

My attitude is to leave the uranium where it is until we have really safe methods of waste disposal and no production for nuclear weapons, and, above all, no production until the overthrow of capitalist property relationships and only then with the first two provisos. Of course there are alternative energy sources which under a rational economy could be speedily developed as well.

ACSPA, which represents 400,000 white-collar workers, adopted the following policy at its recent conference: automatic quarterly wage increases based on movements in the price index; a yearly national wage case to examine overall productivity increases; the right of unions to pursue claims based on any other grounds they think fit, either by arbitration or through direct collective bargaining.

Next week we have the first anniversary of the 'coup' in which the Governor-General overturned the elected Labour government. In Melbourne there is a meeting at the Town Hall on the 10th which will end up calling for a republic (i.e. the removal of the status of the British monarchy in relation to Australia and thus of the Governor-General). A similar meeting in Sydney received a big response. On the 11th there will be rallies and probably some stop-work meetings.

Last year's events have definitely speeded up Australia's advance towards republicanism, although neither the CL (Communist League, Socialist Workers Party, nor IS seem to be able to put propaganda of their own forward in this context.

The 'republic' issue is a powerful one here, and has few chauvinist overtones despite the efforts of the Maoists to make it a question of 'national independence', and the traditional attitude of the ALP as champions of "Australia" against the British connection (and often also against Asian and other immigrants). Whitlam has just come out in favour of a republic; it is hard to judge his motives, although the working-class base of the ALP certainly favours such a position.

Tony Bidgood (1.11.76)

COURTAULDS: A THREAT BECOMES A PROMISE

BY BAS HARDY

COURTAULDS chairman Arthur Knight took the unprecedented step of postponing his holiday last August, in order to solve a problem troubling him: the problem of how to raise the pre-tax profits from £48 million in 1975 to £120 million in 1976. The answer has been revealed over the last few weeks, with Courtaulds announcing the closure of six of its plants — in Skelmersdale, Flint, Aintree, Rochdale, Merthyr Tydfil and Carnmoney. Now 4300 Courtaulds workers have a problem too: what to do about their impending redundancies.

When Sir Arthur was doing his sums he calculated that even the best Courtaulds subsidiaries would only earn 10% profit this year, at a time when interest rates on new loans are at 16%. The best method to cut costs was to axe "unprofitable" plants in the Courtaulds empire.

MONOPOLY

Such a technique was not new to Courtaulds board of directors. One of Courtaulds methods for achieving a monopoly in large areas of British textiles was to buy up small textile firms, and rationalise them in an attempt to streamline the industry and safeguard it against foreign competition. What is new about the present situation is that rationalisations will occur in factories which the Government have substantially subsidised to maintain employment or provide new jobs.

A few days before the announcement of the Skelmersdale closure, Industry Minister Eric Varley had been given a personal assurance by Courtaulds that the showdown would not take place. Varley told the press that he was not to be drawn into a slanging match with Knight, but Varley and the rest of the Labour Government are extremely annoyed with Courtaulds. Courtaulds had just bitten the hand which fed them extremely generously over the last ten years and allowed them to achieve their highest profits ever in 1974.

"I could disclose the amount but I am not going to", said Varley when questioned about the extent of Government aid to the company. "It has been standard practice by this and other governments never to disclose the amount of assistance given to a particular company. I can tell you that over the years the amount has been considerable, millions, in fact".

MILKED

We do know that in the period 1966-72, when Courtaulds launched their big factory-building projects, £62 million was given by the government to finance Courtaulds investment programme. Their Skelmersdale plant, for example, cost £10 million to build and equip, £3 million of which was paid by the state.

Government grants for investment in "development areas", which Courtaulds took full advantage of during the first Wilson administration, were not the only means by which Courtaulds milked the Treasury. Government training schemes were another source, and the recent Temporary Employment

Subsidy [TES] has been utilised by Courtaulds to the full. Since May this year the Government has been paying Courtaulds £20 per worker per week under the TES for its Skelmersdale factory. Since take-home pay is £35-£39 on average, that means that the Government has footed a large part of the Courtaulds Skelmersdale wages bill.

Courtaulds had the nerve to ask the Government for a fresh TES to cover 600 textile workers at the Deeside Mill in Flint only days after they announced that 1500 would be sacked from the Castle Mill nearby.

But there is more behind the recent Courtaulds redundancy decisions than a simple desire to give unprofitable firms the chop. Indeed, Courtaulds might rescind the redundancy notices (for a time) if the Government gave way to them on import controls and/or provided more cash hand-outs; and if workers at some of the factories entered into fresh productivity agreements. The growing threat of foreign competition, particularly in the garment trade, is what upsets Courtaulds directors the most.

Courtaulds reckon that foreign goods account for 68% of the

redundancy threat hung over Skelmersdale, management obtained a guarantee that workers would not strike for six months. Similarly, at Aintree recently Courtaulds withdrew redundancies on condition that a joint working party of unions and management was set up to discuss increasing productivity. (Courtaulds are also asking for a TES for the 660 Aintree workers.)

Courtaulds seem set on the Flint closure, though, whatever concessions they get. The mills are too old to be profitable. That is the reward that Flint — a company town where Courtaulds controls 52% of the jobs — gets for its 'loyalty' to Courtaulds. The closure of Castle Mill promises to put up the unemployment rate to 32%; if Deeside Mill is closed, the rate will rise to 42%.

The workers at Skelmersdale are beginning to take up the lesson that loyalty to your employers doesn't pay. There have only ever been two strikes at Skelmersdale — one last month, and one in 1968. But now shop steward Billy Jones declares: "It's no good making any more productivity deals. And it's no good just letting them close it down like they did at Thorns earlier this year. We're not prepared to piss around with a lot



Welsh TUC delegates protesting against closure of the Flint plant.

British garment market. Although Courtaulds has made up for this in the past by exporting to the more advanced capitalist countries — its exports for 1976 are 30% up on last year — it is frightened that foreign competition will erode that, too; hence their drive to safeguard the home market. Courtaulds is indeed envious of textile companies in the USA which have managed to get the US government to introduce protective tariffs against Far Eastern textiles.

Increased government aid is another aspect of the new deal Courtaulds hopes to get from the Government. It has been made clear in the press by Courtaulds that the 90-days notice before the redundancies take effect is the time in which Courtaulds hope that fresh cash will be made available.

But more important than Courtaulds' jockeying with the government is the reaction of the Courtaulds workers. In the past, redundancy threats have been so commonly used by management to force through speed-ups and concessions from the workforce at Skelmersdale. One shop steward said: "I've lost count of the number of times they've threatened us. They just use it as a lever to get what they want".

In 1972, when the last major

of high-up union officials telling us to keep calm".

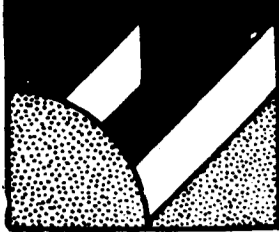
The resistance to the redundancies at Thorns — another major Skelmersdale employer — included slogans like "keep the yellow peril out", directed against Japanese TV tubes. But some, at least, of the Courtaulds workers are beginning to see that they can gain nothing from siding with their bosses against the workers of other countries by pushing the demand for import controls.

The demand for "opening the books" to workers' inspection has been put very much on the agenda by Varley's stubborn refusal to give any information on what has been done with taxpayers' money — and also by Courtaulds management's actions. On the evening of Wednesday 3rd November, management were seen removing files from the Skelmersdale factory and bundling them into cars to be taken away. Skelmersdale Trades Council, meeting that evening, adjourned and went round to picket the factory.

The demand for workers' inspection, used as a weapon in the fight for workers' control and for nationalisation without compensation — that is the way forward for the Courtaulds workers' fight-back.

Kick out Walden and Mackintosh!

Editorial



ARTHUR LEWIS, Roy Jenkins, Brian Walden, and John Mackintosh all failed to vote with the Government over one matter or another last week. While the Labour 'left' managed to scoop 105 signatures for what it called "an alternative economic strategy" and still go unnoticed, a couple of right-wingers who differed with the Government on only a single amendment captured the limelight.

Arthur Lewis's failure to vote was justified by the incredibly silly reason that it was a protest at having had to wait a long time for a reply to a letter to the Minister of Health. Roy Jenkins blamed his failure on a misunderstanding over 'pairing arrangements' — he was out to dinner and thought someone was covering him.

But Walden's and Mackintosh's vote with the Tories over the Docks Bill managed to defeat a Government amendment. The Tory gutter press has been so loud in praise for these two that Fleet Street seemed on the point of striking a medal to commemorate what it saw as an act of great integrity and bravery.

The *Sunday Times* and the *Observer* were more cautious. The *Sunday Times* thought the whole thing could be put down to peculiarities of the two MPs — and not very pretty peculiarities they are. Walden is right-wing, more interested in his various money-making interests like his £5,000 a year from the Bookmakers' Association (he once turned down a top Government job to concentrate on his consultancies). Mackintosh is a malcontent — a right-winger and semi-coalitionist (see WA 34) who, probably on the basis of a speculation on career prospects, supported Foot for the Labour leadership; a man of ability who finds himself always passed over by the mediocrities who lead the Party.

The *Observer* saw the whole affair as a conspiracy which had the backing of Callaghan and the Party whips. The point of the conspiracy, in their view, was to make it unnecessary for the Government to have a confrontation with the Lords. Certainly, though this is not conclusive, Foot's rebuke of the two dissidents was extremely mild; it was a penny-whistle ticking-off compared with the orchestra of abuse that is hurled at the 'left' for lesser acts than this.

We say: chuck them out of the Labour Party. The main drift of Government action has been against the working class. Walden and Mackintosh went along with all of that. Now that the Government supports a miserly concession to the dockers, Walden and Mackintosh vote with the Tories. They vote along with the Government on all the directly anti-working-class issues and fully support the anti-working-class Social Contract, yet when it comes to the most miserable quid pro quo on the part of the Government, they vote against it.

To vote against Labour in order to support the interests of the working class is 100% right. But to vote against the Government put in by the workers in order to support the enemies of the workers is to put yourself outside the labour movement.

Expelling these two right-wingers might seriously affect the chances of the Government's survival; it might even make the Government fall. But better to fall defending the interests of the working class — even in a small way — than to stand by flouting them. Walden and Mackintosh reckon that what is good about Labour is that it is a broad-based party, stretching as far to the right as need be. The working class would be a thousand times better served by the Labour Party being 'narrow', in the sense of being based on the interests of one class only, the working class, and being proudly intolerant of the interests of the capitalists and their hangers-on.

We do not believe for a moment that the NEC of the Labour Party, in the present Parliamentary situation, will expel Walden and Mackintosh. But their defection should spark off some revolt within their constituencies. Every socialist in those constituency parties should act now to make these scoundrels walk the plank after Reg Prentice.

And more generally the defection should make Labour Party members take an urgent look at their sitting MP and ask themselves: is he or she on the workers' side? And if they're not: Get rid of them!

THE IDIOTCY of the House of Lords is a favourite topic for Labour hot air. But the Labour MPs that bust a gut in reviling the Lords don't lift a finger to get rid of this aristocratic rabble.

If there were no Lords, anyone proposing such a House would be simply laughed out of court, labelled a reactionary, as obscurantist, or just plain loony.

In France, in Germany, in the United States, monarchists belong only to the most grotesque outer fringes of the extreme right. Yet in Britain the three major political parties are all officially monarchist!

If the Lords are lunatic, a proposal to reform the Lords is even worse. Anybody reading Crossman's account of his proposed Lords reform, for instance, must conclude this. The only thing is to get rid of the Lords altogether.

UNITED AGAINST RACISM

JOINT TUC/LABOUR PARTY MARCH AND RALLY

SUNDAY 21st NOVEMBER

ASSEMBLE SPEAKERS' CORNER 11am TO 12

RALLY TRAFALGAR SQUARE 2.30pm

LABOUR AND RACISM: STICK TO CONFERENCE

ON NOVEMBER 21st, for the first time, the cart-horse of the TUC is stirring itself to unite with the Labour Party to come out in public, on the streets, against racialism.

It is an important demonstration. Through the tremendous mobilising power of the TUC and Labour Party — sluggishly though they have conducted the campaign for November 21st — it can make more people think than any other campaign against racialism.

However, workers who do begin to think seriously about the racism question will have to think further than the Labour Party's official anti-racist propaganda.

Transport House has produced two leaflets — 'Work together with Labour' and 'Racists divide, work together with Labour', and a pamphlet, 'Labour against racism'.

The terms of reference of the Labour Party's anti-racist campaign were set by motion 41, passed at the last Labour Party conference. That motion called "upon the Labour Government to

repeal the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts and all legislation that discriminates against immigrants"; and "calls on the National Executive Committee to launch a campaign for the following:

- "a) a conference on racialism;
- "b) full support to the black community in defending themselves against racist attack — while recognising the responsibility of the labour movement to defend the livelihoods and lives of all workers;
- "c) public meeting locally and nationally;
- "d) propaganda and recruitment leaflets to be published in all immigrant languages;
- "e) support for the stamping out of any discrimination in the labour and trade union movement, including the expulsion of members of racist organisations;
- "f) an appeal to all sections of the labour movement for finance for the campaign."

Though there are weaknesses in that resolution — for example, the failure to come out for "no platform for fascists" —

it is more obvious that the campaign material issued by the Labour Party NEC comes nowhere near the requirements and spirit of motion 41.

The pamphlet, 'Labour against racism', does not argue for 'no immigration controls' or even for the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act. On the contrary, it goes to great pains to stress how tough the restrictions are on immigration of black people. Likewise Michael Foot, launching the anti-racist campaign on TV, devoted most of his speech to saying how tight the present immigration controls are.

In direct contradiction to the Conference decision, the Transport House campaign accepts that black immigrants are the problem. That it then argues for tolerance and humanity in dealing with the problem can make little impact on workers hit by unemployment and falling living standards, who feel an urgent need to hit out against the cause of their difficulties. Transport

Wallasey and Northampton LPYS branches have taken a major initiative for a different approach to fighting racialism in the labour movement. Circulating an **Open Letter** throughout the LPYS, they suggest the adoption of a 4-point programme which cuts through the racist attitudes that pervade Labour's travesty of an anti-racist campaign.

The adoption of this programme by a wide spread of labour movement organisations will be a big step towards a real campaign to cut out the racist cancer in the working class.

Workers' Action will be following the progress of this **Open Letter** and the campaign around it. We welcome letters, news and views on this initiative.

A 4-point battle plan against racism

1. No to Immigration Controls. Immigration controls implicitly accept the false assertion that too many people are the problem. In Britain immigrant is another word for Black. Immigration controls are a colour bar. They give an official buttress and respectability to racism. By identifying foreign and black workers who are supposed to be seeking entry into Britain as a problem, immigration controls imply that the foreign and black workers already in Britain are also a problem. To attack the racist myths about black people being responsible for unemployment is impossible without rejecting the idea of immigration controls.

2. No open racists to hold official positions in the labour movement. Expel all fascists from the labour movement. We would have to be blind not to see that racism has infected the British working class and the British labour movement. No amount of bleating about how racism is a bosses' weapon can get over the problem that the divisive weapon can only be wielded because racism in the working class is already there. We must make it a priority to purge our own ranks of racism. Those who use racism as a means to promote fascism, e.g. the National Front, ultimately seek to destroy the labour movement itself. There should be no

such as the Labour MP Mellish and the Labour councillor Jarvis. These people, who are outspoken racists, divide and confuse our ranks and pave the way for fascist infiltration.

3. No platform for fascists. We must deny the fascists not just a platform in the labour movement but a platform anywhere. Their rallies and marches, their speeches and publications, appeal not to reason but to emotion, to blind hatred. Capitalism oppresses and alienates people, it provides the basis for frustration and irrational behaviour. Fascism bases itself on those frustrated feelings, encourages irrational behaviour, and, by focusing on a scapegoat by use of lies and myths, channels this frustration into a political movement whose aim is the corporatisation of the whole of society. The arguments it deploys, the myths it perpetuates, can and must be challenged. But fascism itself cannot be argued with. TV unions refusing them air time, councils refusing to let them halls, counter-demonstrations driving them off the streets, these are the ways to deny the fascists a platform to stop their irrational appeal and progress.

4. Labour Movement support for black self-defence. In the course of their development, fascists have engaged in attacks against black people and will

also suffer continual harassment by the police, often leading to false arrests, physical assaults and indiscriminate raids on black areas, black clubs, etc.

Black people have resisted all forms of attack, and with the increase in the number of attacks they are putting their defences onto a more permanent footing. The black self-defence groups which are being set up are to be welcomed and should be supported.

White workers and the predominantly white labour movement have done little or nothing to defend black people. Though it is the responsibility of the labour movement to ensure that fascists and police attacks are repulsed and opposed, to date no serious attempt has been made to fulfill this responsibility. It is therefore necessary to argue support for black self-defence groups seeking labour movement support.

Even if it was desirable otherwise to make the support conditional on, say, the formation of a labour movement defence group — and it is not — the neglect of black people by the labour movement makes it necessary to fight for support unconditionally.

As a first step to fighting for a principled campaign, we call on YS branches and groups and individuals within the YS to sign this letter. Please argue for this



HOW WE PUT POWELL OFF THE AIR

Any Questions forced off the air as fighting breaks out in a church

ENOCH D SILENCES

BASINGSTOKE Anti-Fascist Committee scored a spectacular success last Friday [November 13th], when they put Enoch Powell "off the air" for 20 minutes. Powell was appearing on the BBC radio show "Any Questions", when the demonstrators, shouting "Powell is a murderer" disrupted the programme.

Carla Jamieson, secretary of Basingstoke anti-fascist committee and a supporter of Workers Action, said:

"The national press have attempted to portray this action as the work of outsiders, or a stone-throwing mob — and Judith Hart, who was on the 'Any Questions' panel, even suggest-



CONFERENCE DECISIONS!

House assures them that black immigrants are not really such a big "problem" as some think, and calls for goodwill; but all that is offset by acceptance of the basic racist axiom that black people are the problem.

Throughout the Transport House material, black immigrants are referred to as "they" 1 1/4 pages out of 4 1/2 in the pamphlet are given over to discussion on immigration and how it is and should be restricted.

Both the 1962 and 1971 Acts are mentioned. There is, however, no mention of Labour opposition at the time they were passed or now. The outlook is summed up in the leaflet 'Work together with Labour': "Of course we can't have unlimited immigration any more. It is strictly controlled, as it must be" ... "Those who call for further restrictions are often reluctant to say how they would do this" ... "The laws against illegal immigrants are tough and toughly enforced" ... "Britain doesn't have unlimited immigration or anything like it" ... "Britain

keeps a tight check on those people coming into the country". Such statements belong more to a Tory outlook than to any socialist outlook believing in the worldwide solidarity of working people.

This bias in the campaign propaganda is, unfortunately, very much in line with the general record of the TUC and Labour Party bureaucrats. The TUC, besides sporadic declaration since 1955, have done next to nothing to combat racialism. They have set up this year a special committee for 'race relations', but it is little more than an outpost of the state race relations industry, which is primarily concerned to 'manage' racial discrimination rather than fight racialism. The TUC is 'officially' opposed to the 1971 Immigration Act, but does nothing about it.

In fact, the TUC has sought further tightening of the work permit regulations. Some months back they campaigned, success-

fully, to cut work permits in the catering industry; more recently they have pressed for the government to cut them to zero.

In 1962 the Parliamentary Labour Party rightly denounced the Commonwealth Immigration Act of that year as a colour bar. Subsequent Labour governments have implemented it — and introduced the 1968 Immigration Act. The 1971 Act, again, was opposed by the Labour Party in opposition and implemented by it in government.

Starting from November 21st, rank and file Labour and trade union activists must carry the campaign forward. CLPs should demand from the NEC:

1) implementation of the anti-racist campaign as laid down in motion 41;

2) a report on the implementation plans so far;

3) a withdrawal of the existing campaign material as a violation of conference instructions and as implicitly accepting racist positions on the question of immigration controls.

**FASCISTS
OUT OF
BRIXTON!**

UNTIL RECENTLY the fascists have not dared to show their faces in the Brixton area of South London. They presumably felt that the large black community there was too much to take on.

Both the National Front, and, to a lesser extent, the National Party, have now plucked up courage to come out openly. Each is standing a candidate in the council by-election in the Angell ward on November 18th.

On November 10th, the NF organised a public meeting in a local school. It was picketed by local trade unionists and members of the Labour Party, left groups, and local community groups (including a large contingent from the South London Gay Centre). The picket, organised by Lambeth Trades Council and the All-Lambeth Anti-Racism Movement (ALARM) attracted nearly 400 people. Despite massive police protection, and the import of thugs from all over London, the fascists were so nervous that they restricted entry to their members and known supporters.

Ken Livingstone (GLC councillor for Norwood, which includes part of Brixton) managed to call an emergency meeting of the Inner London Education Authority's ruling Labour group to discuss banning the NF from using the school. This motion was rejected by 15 votes to 8, because the Representation of the People Act guarantees election candidates the right to use schools for meetings. The left councillors are arguing that this should be ignored whatever the consequences.

On the following Saturday morning (13th), 8 fascists turned out to distribute leaflets outside Brixton underground station. This is a well-known pitch for left-wing paper sellers.

Other anti-fascists were contacted and a sizable group quickly assembled. After an interchange of abuse, a NF member hit one of the anti-fascists.

In the fight that followed, the National Front were routed, despite one left-winger being thrown through a plate-glass window and another having his car tyres punctured.

After chasing the fascists out of the area, the leftists were returning to the tube station when a vanload of police, accompanied by two National Front members, turned up. After a scuffle, 4 people were arrest-



Confronting the racists in the media (left, picketing the offices of the Tottenham Herald) and the fascists on the streets (above, challenging the National Front in its East London

The fiasco of the Scottish Labour Party

JENNY FRASER REPORTING ON THE CONFERENCE OF THE REBEL S.L.P.

THE CONFERENCE last weekend (13-14 November) of the left split-off from the Scottish Labour Party gave no grounds for confidence in its political future.

The SLP, founded by breakaway Labour MPs Jim Sillars and John Robertson, held its first conference two weeks ago. About 80 delegates walked out after Sillars pushed through a purge of the left wing.

40 of those 80 delegates gathered last weekend for what they defined as the reconvened SLP conference. They took up the agenda of the main SLP conference from the point at which Sillars put through the purges.

Two main motions were passed: one from Kelvin SLP on the 'socialist aims' of the SLP, and a Stirling Trades Council resolution on the economy.

The Kelvin resolution committed the conference to a left-reformist outlook — and to nationalism. It included a call for withdrawal from the EEC, and thus, at least implicitly, for national independence for Scotland. (The national question as such was not discussed).

Most of the conference speakers defined their aim as "socialism in Scotland", which would be achieved through nationalisations and other measures carried out by a Scottish Assembly. They reproduced the old fallacy of the "parliamentary road to socialism", so tragically disproved in Chile — but with the added twist that it had to be a special Scottish parliament through which the Scottish working class would realise Scottish socialism.

Bit by bit

The Stirling Trades Council resolution did commit the conference to oppose incomes policies and to adopt the demand for a 35-hour week. But in "Scottish Socialist" (organ of the SLP left) we find these demands presented in the same reformist perspective as that of the Kelvin resolution — "The demands ... were benchmark progressions to a planned socialist economy" — as if capitalism can be replaced by socialism little by little, bit by bit.

Accordingly the resolution leaves all its demands as "good ideas" without taking up the question of direct action as the cornerstone of any working-class reply to the economic crisis. The questions of occupations to defend jobs and of work-sharing under workers' control — central to the fight on unemployment — are not included.

The partisans of "Red Weekly", who bore the main brunt of Sillars' witchhunt and make up a sizable fraction of the breakaway group, made no effort to distinguish themselves from the dominant left-reformist trends during the policy debates. They voted for the Kelvin resolution, and even during a debate on "Workers' participation" they made no intervention to declare themselves against participation schemes.

Apparently, having decided that the SLP split-off is the 'class struggle left wing' in Scotland, the Red Weekly supporters are taking care not to disrupt its evolution by any sharp fight for revolutionary politics.

They may find they have put their faith in forces which are fragile both politically and organisationally. Only 40 out of the 80 delegates who walked out in protest against Sillars were present last weekend, and only about 110 SLP members altogether attended.

Political Range

Before the policy debate, decisions had been passed to hold another conference in January (which, again, will be billed as a conference open to all SLP members, down to and including Sillars) and to say that they would go back into Sillars' organisation only on condition of a lifting of the witchhunt. But the breakaway still considers itself as representing the true spirit of the SLP.

Certainly it has not managed to distinguish itself politically in a clear way from the Sillars group.

Both the breakaway and the Sillars group (which retains a certain left-intellectual following, with people

like Tom Nairn, Bob Tait, Neal Acherson, and various ex-Trotskyists) lean towards the left of the spectrum of the British labour movement on issues such as the cuts. But the basis of their separation from the British labour movement is not their relatively left-wing inclinations, but Scottish particularism.

So far as their attitudes on issues like the cuts are concerned, both wings of the SLP are comfortably within the range of opinion of an average Labour Party conference. What takes them outside the range of the British labour movement is their wish for a separate Scottish movement.



Sillars

Division is not always bad. The great Marxist James Connolly argued emphatically, and quite correctly, for the Irish labour movement to build its own organisations separate from (though fraternally linked with) the British organisations.

Why? Because Ireland was (and is) a nation oppressed by Britain. The Irish working class must take the lead in the struggle to overthrow that national oppression — and until that struggle is victorious, a mechanical unity of British and Irish labour organisations can only tend to mean reproducing national oppression within the ranks of the labour movement. Division is a precondition for unity at a later stage, on a sound basis.

But Scotland has not been a victim of British imperialism as Ireland has been. On the contrary, Scotland shared fully in the flowering of British capitalism and imperialism in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Many areas of Scotland are specially hard hit by the economic crisis today — in exactly the same way as some areas of England (the North East, for example) are also hard hit. To disrupt the unity of English and Scottish workers — which has been and is a reality, and not any sort of mechanical imposition — is certainly no part of a working class answer to these problems.

Middle class

In fact, it reflects the spirit, not of the working class, but of the middle class; not the spirit of solidarity, but the spirit of grab what you can. The essence of Scottish nationalism is best shown by its covetous desire to grab North Sea Oil for Scotland.

The logic of a separate Scottish Labour Party — a logic which, fortunately, does not look like developing very far — is separate Scottish trade unions. Such a division in no way paves the way for later progress. It is entirely reactionary.

For revolutionaries to join in such an enterprise is shameful, and doubly so when they make no noticeable effort to fight for their own distinct politics within it. One can orient to the Scottish Labour Party rather than the British Labour Party and the trade unions connected with it only on the basis of some sort of endorsement — however critical, however reserved — of Scottish nationalism.

The fiasco of the Scottish Labour Party has been an expensive one in terms of misleading several hundred working-class militants. We should, at least, draw the conclusions from it: that Scottish nationalism and working-class politics can no more be blended together than can oil and water.



ed that we were National Front provocateurs. She knows very well that that's a lie. We wrote to her beforehand, informing her of the demonstration, and begging her to come off the platform.

Basingstoke Labour Party fully supports the anti-fascist committee. It has voted us money and sent official delegates to the committee. Many of the committee's supporters are Labour Party activists.

The tactics we used at the demonstration went absolutely according to the decisions we had reached at previous planning meetings — our stewarding turned out to be very efficient".

Lord Robens, who was once for Labour, was quoted in the press calling us a rabble, and he spoke of a threat to liberty and free speech from our action. In fact, every obstacle was placed in the way of us getting our point of view over — from a witchhunt by Transport House into our Labour Party, to a row of plain clothes police in the church hall where the broadcast was being made. So if 'free speech' just means freedom for the type of hatred and incitement that Powell puts across, who wants free speech'?

We got help from Oxford, Reading and Maidenhead, and we're all encouraged by this success, and determined not to

LAST WEEK'S general strike in Spain was a clear warning that the working class will not tolerate any further big delays in the introduction of democratic reforms. Even before the installation of the Arias government, there had been vague promises that, very soon, there would be reforms. Arias repeated the promises more distinctly at the beginning of his term of office. And Suarez has repeated them all over again since he took over from Arias.

The Suarez Government wants to buy still more time. But, ironically, the very organisations that have enabled Suarez to drag things out to this length already — the various social democratic and Stalinist apparatuses — have now been forced to call the general strike.

This is by no means the first big explosion by the masses. Each move by the government towards concessions (however weak the concessions may be) has called up a militant response from the working class.

For instance, during the 'week of amnesty' organised by the Cordinacion Democratica from 5th to 12 July, Spain saw its largest demonstrations for over 40 years. Altogether about a million people took to the streets in the struggle for (the promised amnesty: 20,000 in Bilbao on 8th July, several tens of thousands in Madrid on 11th July despite a ban; 15,000 on the same day in Seville, and 20,000 in Crijon...

Everywhere in the country there are innumerable mobilisations for the amnesty and democratic rights; against pollution, high rents, the rise in the cost of living, the suppression of women and against victimisations and for the re-instatement of sacked colleagues.

The government's problems are compounded by the economic situation. There has been a rocketing increase in the cost of living, there are a million unemployed, there is a \$3,500 million balance of payments deficit; the rate of investment doesn't look to be any higher than last year's, which was the lowest in many years.

Thus the different issues, the political and the economic struggles, look like transforming themselves into one great wave that threatens to come crashing down on the Suarez government.

The cleverest representatives of the Spanish bourgeoisie have already recognised the failure of

The Bunker faces the masses



Concluding our 2-part article adapted from the German paper Spartacus.

the concept of "continuity in change". This is exemplified by Fraga and Areilza, the two "reformers" in Arias' cabinet.

Areilza is seen as the most likely candidate for the position of Prime Minister in a broad coalition government. In line with this possibility, he has already begun to contact the representatives of the opposition. Thus, as the German paper *Frankfurter Allgemeine* reported in August, he has already had comprehensive discussions with Santiago Carillo, the General Secretary of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE).

Fraga, the ex-Home Secretary, on the other hand, is putting all his efforts into building a national broad-based conservative party. To this end he has travelled the length and breadth of Spain to build his "Reforma Democratica" Party. According to his own figures this party has already gained 12,000 members, plus another 170,000 sympathisers. If the figures are not greatly exaggerated, they mean that almost overnight 'Reforma

Democratica has grown to be Spain's biggest party after the PCE.

It was announced last Friday that Areilza, together with another ex-minister — Pio Cabanillas — has formed a party called the Popular Party. Two other well known figures, Ricardo de la Cierva and Ignacio Aguirre, will also be involved in this party.

These moves reveal that the



Fraga, interviewed recently by the American magazine *Newsweek*, illustrated well the predicament of the conservative 'centre'. While Suarez wants to buy time and while the liberal and left organisations will go to any lengths to keep in with the government, the reformist bourgeois politicians want a quick election in order to isolate both the left and the more conservative right: "What the country needs" he said "is to vote — and the sooner the better. The country needs and election, deserves it, should have it. The only reason for not going to the polls would be if the economic and political situation became so grave that some other solution would be advanced. That could be a coup from the right or from the left. The building of our conservative force [now called 'Alianza Popular'] is the best deterrent to that temptation."

more astute bourgeois politicians have learned a lot from the example of Portugal. They have recognised the importance of mass bourgeois parties with direct organisational influence in the masses, in order to bring about an orderly transition to a more effective form of bourgeois rule. But unlike in Portugal, they are not waiting until the old regime falls before they set out to build these parties ... with the help of the big West European parties. Thus the representative of Reforma Democratica participated in the last congress of the West German conservative CSU.

The "Democratic Opposition" will go to any lengths to muzzle the mass movement. This gives Francoism the breathing space to establish a provisional government of "national unity" which could bring about big reforms in the methods of bourgeois domination — but form a bulwark against the overthrow of the bourgeoisie itself.

Revolutionaries must try to make sure that Francoism does not get that breathing space. The prime task of revolutionaries is to oppose the Cordinacion Democratica with an alternative class programme, and to seek to arm the vanguard of the working class with it.

The central points of this programme are the struggles against the effects of the economic crisis and the winning of democratic freedoms. The task of revolutionaries is to unite the struggle for bread, freedom and work and to lead these struggles to the only possible outcome that is unconditionally progressive: the seizure of power by the proletariat.

The leading slogan right now must be the general strike to bring down the dictatorship. Revolutionaries must call for the traditional organisations of the

working class to really organise the general strike, to break with the bourgeoisie and to set up a workers' government.†

The building of a revolutionary party, armed with such a programme, is the only guarantee that the politics of class collaboration can be broken, and that the dissipation of the will to struggle and the demoralisation of the working class can be prevented. And finally, that bourgeois rule in Spain will end for good with the fall of Francoism.



† This formulation seems unclear. Revolutionaries in Spain must fight to build the nuclei of workers' councils — and therefore of a proletarian regime — and at the same time give the struggle for democracy within the present economic order its most radical and popular expression.

This may require coordinating the slogans of "General Strike", of a *Constituent Assembly* (as the focus of a whole series of democratic demands), and transitional demands so as neither to allow the Constituent Assembly demand to limit the general strike to bourgeois-democratic perspectives, nor to pose the general strike in ultimatum terms of 'general strike for the proletarian revolution'.

Certainly a CP-PSOE government could emerge from a general strike or another great upheaval of the class struggle in Spain. Certainly, also, revolutionaries must raise demands for the CP and PSOE to break from the bourgeoisie and engage themselves on the path of independent working class mobilisation. But the role of such a CP-PSOE government would — according to all present trends — be similar to that of Soares and Cunha in Portugal: to suppress and dissipate the mobilisation of the working class.

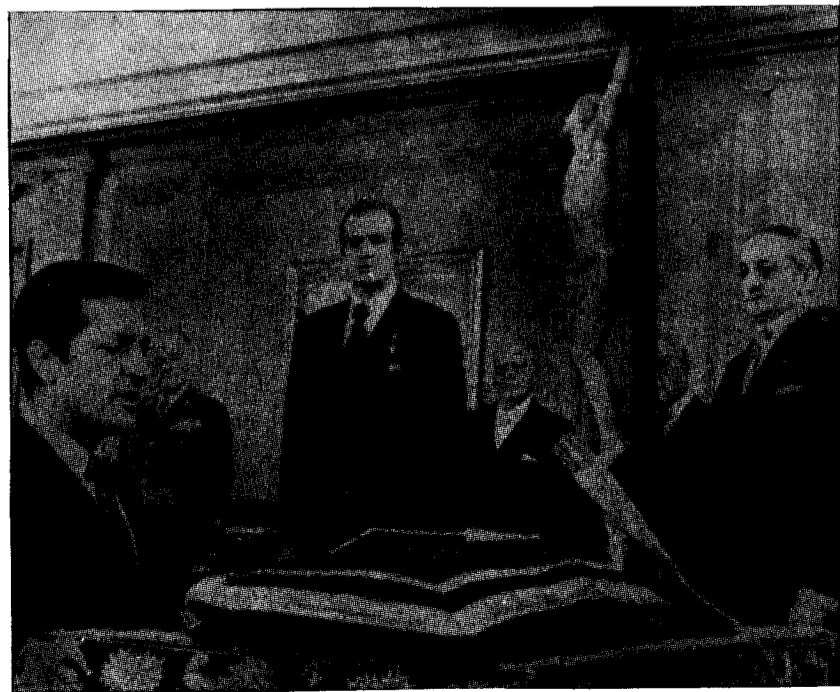
To demand that such a government can only aid that process of dissipation. It is no better in principle than the demand that the Labour government elected in Britain in February 1974 "adopt a socialist programme" — a demand obscuring the nature of the socialist programme, of a genuine anti-capitalist workers' government, and of the actual reformist government.

Further, a CP-PSOE government certainly would not be the best outcome from a general strike movement, nor should revolutionaries suggest that it would be. Such a general strike, once underway, would engender workers' councils — and revolutionaries would fight for the power of those workers' councils, against the perspective of a government of the counter-revolutionary parties of the working class.

In some situations, the demand for the mass parties based on the working class to form a government can have real value as a weapon to mobilise workers against the counter-revolutionary politics of those parties. But neither the present situation in Spain, nor a possible general strike situation, appear to be such situations.

— COLIN FOSTER (WA EB)

Suarez [left] takes the oath, watched by Juan Carlos. Above: amnesty rally in Madrid.



workers' ACTION supporters' groups

BASINGSTOKE, BIRMINGHAM, BRISTOL
CAMBRIDGE, CARDIFF, CHELMSFORD,
CHESTER, COVENTRY, EDINBURGH,
HUDDERSFIELD, LEICESTER, LIVERPOOL
LONDON, MANCHESTER, MIDDLESBROUGH
NEWCASTLE, NEWTOWN, NORTHAMPTON,
NORWICH, NOTTINGHAM, READING,
ROCHDALE, SHEFFIELD, STAFFORD, STOKE

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

Little Ilford teachers Suspended for refusing scab's charter

35 members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) at Little Ilford School, Newham, remain suspended from their union pending appeal.

The reason? Refusing to sign the NUT "scab's charter" which would bind them never to take any form of unofficial action in the future. The "crime" which put them in this plight? Unofficial withdrawal of labour for one hour in solidarity with a teacher in the school threatened with breach of contract after he had refused to cover for another teacher away on maternity leave.

Originally the Little Ilford 30 were charged with disobeying the instructions

of the Executive. Then it was discovered that the Executive had not issued the instructions they had come from the General secretary. He had not told the Executive until it was too late, and the story was out.

But when the teachers received the results of the disciplinary hearings, held on November 6th, they found that the infamous "Rule 8" had been wheeled out to nail them, even though breaking that rule was not what they had originally been charged with.

Documents have been circulating in NUT HQ pointing the finger at

those members of Newham NUT who organised the emergency resolution at the October meeting in solidarity with the Little Ilford teachers, who by then had just been suspended.

There is every possibility that the NUT will mount an investigation into Newham NUT, with proposals for a restructuring of the branch, as a way of feeling the ground for new and harsher disciplinary measures to be introduced at the 1977 Conference.

Meanwhile the Little Ilford Defence Campaign is producing a mass leaflet for distribution on the anti-cuts demonstration of November 17th. It calls for support for a lobby of the Appeals Committee (8.30am, Saturday 27th November, outside NUT HQ, Hamilton House).

Labour Party GMCs should send resolution to Newham GMC calling on them to oppose any Newham Labour councillors being involved in any moves by the local authority against the Little Ilford teachers, who will inevitably be in a weak position vis-a-vis the authority if the NUT goes through with expelling them.

Resolutions condemning the victimisation should be sent to NUT, Hamilton House, with copies to Birendra Singh, NUT Representative, Little Ilford School, Browning Road, London E12. I.H.



THE UNIONS



LPYS branch demands that Bradley retract

JUST OVER a month ago, "Tribune" carried a statement by the 'left' of the Labour Party National Executive Committee — a statement which, in the course of its argument, explicitly supported the Social Contract.

Among the signatories to that statement was Nick Bradley, Labour Party Young Socialists representative on the NEC.

The LPYS, however, has an official position of opposing the Social Contract. In Workers' Action 32 we condemned Bradley's action. Likewise Birmingham, Selly Oak branch of the LPYS passed the following resolution at its meeting on 6th November.

"This branch deplores the fact that Nick Bradley, LPYS representative on the NEC, signed his name in support of a statement in the September 28th "Tribune" which stated that our policy was not to smash the social contract.

This position is in contradiction to the position democratically decided by the membership of the YS at the last conference, which opposed the Social Contract.

Therefore we demand:

1. That Nick Bradley makes a public withdrawal of his support for the statement in "Tribune".
2. That the LPYS NC publicly reaffirms the position of the LPYS on this question and rejects Bradley's stance as contained in "Tribune".

TEACHERS' OPEN CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 20th will see the biggest open conference of left-wing teachers for some time. Such an initiative is timely. The cuts, Little Ilford, William Tyndale, Callaghan's speech on education, all raise the need for a rank-and-file fight-back.

The origins of this conference are as follows. The inadequate politics of the IS group which dominates "Rank and File Teacher" were compounded at the last "Rank and File" Conference by organisational manoeuvres which virtually killed free debate. As a result a dissident group at that conference decided to plan the Open Conference as a step towards building a genuine rank and file movement.

Open debate among those prepared to build for the Conference has produced agreement on a set of areas of work. When these areas have been ratified by Conference the next step will be towards building a programme of action which can unite the left in education. A journal is to be proposed, and a committee elected to coordinate local work.

The conference is not necessarily counterposed to "Rank and File", and all "Rank and File" members are invited.

Open conference of left-wing teachers. Saturday November 20th. 11am to 5.30pm at Sir William Collins School, Charrington St, London NW1.

Analysis and the murder of Maire Drumm

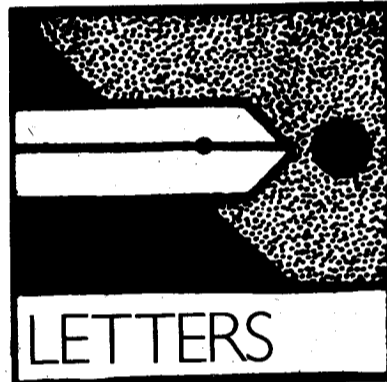


I ENTIRELY AGREE that British socialists must support the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland. But I have become increasingly concerned at Workers' Action's failure to carry any analysis of the Irish situation and the role of the various political and military organisations involved in the struggle there. All we have had is articles answering the slanders of the British press against the Provisionals, and attacking repression. This is fair, enough in itself, but not sufficient.

Last week's front page article ("Death of a Soldier", WA34) on the murder of Maire Drumm was one example of this. It did not make the slightest reservation about her politics (even though she was on the Right of the Provisionals' leadership). The article says: "the victory of the cause she served — an end to Partition and British occupation — is the only road to peace in Ireland"; but this begs more questions than it answers. The united Ireland she sought was a capitalist Ireland; which would inevitably be under the dominance of imperialism. Its independence would be nearly as much a sham as that of the present 26 County state.

I would certainly condemn those who use their "socialist principles" as an excuse to dodge out of the main task of supporting the Provisionals in their struggle against imperialism. But we must be wary of becoming merely cheer-leaders for what is after all a petty bourgeois nationalist movement.

Alan Cherrett



Put-down politics

I have enjoyed Martin Thomas's series "Organising the Proletarian Party". But while I understand the need to keep things short if one is to avoid writing a book instead of an article, I don't think you should make accusation without any indication of proof.

In part three of the series, Thomas wrote, "The RCG's asinine cogitations on the question of women are one good example". So they may be. But without telling your readers what these "cogitations" are, and without indicating what is "asinine" about them, you will educate your readers, not in the politics of Marxism, but in the politics of the sharp put-down and nothing more.

Clare Russell, North London.

REPLY: Point taken. What I was referring to was the fact that the RCG, after a great show of 'profound' theoretical work on the question of women's oppression, have come up with two principal ideas. One, that any fight-back against the cuts is conditional on a prior study of the economics of state expenditure. This is just old-fashioned passive propagandism. Two, that "positive discrimination" in favour of women runs counter to the unity of the working class. This idea merely takes the RCG back to the position of the more backward wing in the debates on the question in the Second International. M.T.

REPLY: No doubt our coverage and analysis of the Irish situation has been inadequate, and we must try to improve it. But the policy of countering the anti-Republican slanders, of attacking Britain's presence in Ireland and supporting the Republican movement as priority no. 1, is a deliberate choice.

We shout our active support for those now fighting for a united independent Ireland, into a howling wind of imperialist hypocrisy and anti-Republican hysteria.

We are in full solidarity with the Republicans. We are not cheer-leaders. We are hardly under any illusions that the Republicans are other than petty-bourgeois nation-

A REPUBLICAN VIEW OF TROOPS OUT

IN YOUR EDITION of 22nd-28th October you printed a letter of mine which criticised the 'debate' in the Labour Party conference on the situation in the 6 Counties and in which I called for a "phased withdrawal over a negotiable period of time".

The editor in his reply made a number of points which I would be grateful if you would grant me the space to answer. Firstly, calling for a phased withdrawal does not concede any right to the British Army to be in Ireland, and secondly negotiated withdrawal does not, as you seem to believe, mean that the withdrawal itself is negotiable.

The Republican Movement has long argued both politically and militarily that Britain has no right to be in Ireland. However, by calling for phased withdrawal we are recognising the realities of the situation here. In the Six Counties there are one million Irish people who because of imperialist indoctrination over the years believe implicitly that this part of Ireland belongs to the U.K. For British troops to withdraw immediately could, as I said in my previous letter, panic certain groups into a violent reaction which quite easily could escalate into a full scale bloody civil war, a situation we would prefer to avoid as it would only benefit imperialist and capitalist interests.

As for withdrawal itself, the editor in his reply to my first letter says: "They [the British] can use the negotiations to impose conditions on the Irish people". In my letter I specifically mention "negotiable period of time", for it is only that which is negotiable, nothing else. To perhaps understand that point better I should mention that the second demand of the Republican Movement is that the Irish people without foreign interference sit down and work out a solution to our own problems.

The Republican Movement has

no intention of precipitating a civil war which would only benefit the capitalists in our country and in which many people might die needlessly, neither do we intend to allow Britain to "impose conditions on the Irish people". Our demands are simple, straightforward, and realistic:

1. Declaration of intent to withdraw — period of time negotiable.
2. The right of the Irish people to determine their own future.
3. Release of all Political Prisoners.

With the ending of Partition, the sectarian politics which British imperialists and their Irish counterparts have used for so long will quickly disappear and the Irish working class, long divided by an artificial boundary and sectarianism, will unite to demand its rightful control of Irish affairs.

Naturally we also realise, as your editor pointed out, that in calling for a phased withdrawal the British government might try and use the period of withdrawal to defeat once and for all the Republican Movement and thus ensure the easy transfer of power to a 32-county neo-colonial government. This is a possibility. However, after 7 years in which they have failed to defeat us despite all the repressive legislation they have had at their disposal, it is most unlikely that in the limited time available to them before complete withdrawal they would seriously contemplate one last offensive against the Republican Movement. The Republican Movement is determined to establish in Ireland a Socialist Republic, our demands against the British government are the first stage of achieving that state.

R.G. McAuley, Long Kesh.

Reply next week — Ed.

ists — though of course many Republican militants are socialists and believe that the Provisional programme, "Eire Nua", is socialist. We don't agree with that assessment. Though Workers' Action doesn't reach many people in Ireland, articles analysing such questions would be valuable.

But our main readership is likely to be British workers who think the Republicans are a gang of murderers, not that they are socialists! Marxists in an imperialist country do not have the right to insist that those fighting for national liberation be socialists — and if we do, then we merely express a 'left' variant of British chauvinism and

imperialist arrogance, in which British socialists assume that they, in parallel with British imperialism, have the right to lay down the law to the Irish — a 'socialist' law! Our first responsibility is to help those leading the fight to defeat 'our own' government.

To tell people that Maire Drumm was on the Right of the Provisionals would be irrelevant in most situations. To deal with the political nuances of this revolutionary Irish nationalist in a protest against her murder would be not merely an irrelevance, but an obscenity.

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Block ads, £5 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.

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

Thursday 18th November. Haringey campaign against racism public meeting. 7.30pm at West Green Library, Vincent Rd, London N15.

Saturday 20th November. Open Conference of left wing teachers. 11am to 5.30pm at Sir William Collins School, Charrington St, London NW1.

Wednesday 24th November. "Peace through Freedom" meeting, to mobilise against the "peace march" scheduled for 27th November in London. Speakers invited include Pat Arrowsmith, Maureen Colquhoun, & Bernadette McAliskey. 7pm at NUFTO Hall, Jockeys Fields, Theobalds Rd, London WC1.

Saturday 27th November. Picket of NUT Appeals Committee on the case of the 30 teachers from Little Ilford School. 8.30am, Hamilton House, Mableton Place, WC1.

Sunday 28th November. Birmingham Workers' Action readers' meeting — Marxist education series. "The Transitional Programme". 3pm at 102 Teignmouth Rd, Selly Oak.

Tuesday 30th November. Cardiff Workers' Action readers' meeting on "Russia — Workers' State or State Capitalist?". 7.30pm at the Rhymer Hotel, Adams St.

Sunday 5th December. Birmingham Workers' Action readers' meeting — Marxist education series. "The capitalist State and the revolutionary party". 3pm at 102 Teignmouth Rd, Selly Oak.

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

Friday-Saturday-Sunday 18-19-20 February. "Portugal-Chile-Britain" 3-day festival & conference. Organised by PWCC. Details: John Hoyland, 6 Southcote Rd, London N19 (01-607 4845).

WORKERS IN ACTION

ACAS TRICKS AT GRUNWICKS

THE STRIKERS at Grunwicks (Film Processing) in North West London, now in their 13th week on strike, are facing a new problem in their fight for union recognition and a decent wage.

Last week, after the Union of Post Office Workers (UPW) had refused to handle all mail for Grunwicks, the management reluctantly agreed to go to ACAS, the government's conciliation service.

The problem is that ACAS have decided to ballot everybody in the factory (including the Directors!) on whether they wish to be represented by APEX, the strikers' union, even though this includes people whom APEX do not want to organise. ACAS originally intended to hold the ballot last week; they have postponed it to this week; and it is now uncertain whether it will even take place this week. ACAS have said that the result won't be announced until three weeks after the ballot.

All this time management are recruiting workers who will possibly be included in the ACAS ballot, thus increasing the vote in opposition to union representation by APEX.

Meanwhile, however, despite UPW general secretary Tom Jackson's back-tracking over the blacking, the local postmen are still refusing to deliver Grunwicks mail.

The High Court action brought by the National Association for Freedom against the UPW blacking went ahead despite Jackson dropping his support for the blacking. It was "successfully" concluded last week with a writ being issued to prevent the UPW taking such action in the future.

Meanwhile Brent East Labour Party has issued a call for support for the pickets arrested at Grunwicks P.F.

THE DOCKS BILL, establishing guarantees that 'container' work within a corridor would be dockers' work, subject to the employment security safeguards of the National Dock Labour Scheme, has been gutted — not, finally, in the House of Lords, but in the House of Commons. And not by the Tories, but by two right-wing Labour scabs, who have supported the government in its every attack on the working class, and only feel their consciences pricked when the government makes a tiny concession to the interests of a section of workers.

In fact the Bill was a tiny concession; indeed, largely a con-trick. It arose out of the defeat of the dockers in 1972, by deception and trickery.

In 1972 the industrial action of the dockers brought the Tory government to the brink of collapse. But they were side-tracked by a series of proposals put forward by the Jones-Aldington committee: the joint effort of TGWU general secretary Jack Jones and Lord Aldington.



In July 1972 dockers defied the Industrial Relations Act [and were jailed for it] to picket the "cowboy" container depots.

Lesson for dockworkers from defeat in Parliament is: FIGHT NOW!

The effect was to divert the dockers into bargaining away their jobs and interests without a fight. It removed the dockers decisively from the militant front ranks of the working class.

The Bill, if the Government had succeeded in reversing the wrecking amendment passed in the House of Lords, would have created a 5-mile corridor around the coast and major river ports, within which jobs at cold storage and container depots would be registered dockworkers' jobs. But it missed the central problem.

The docks, once an industry manned by an army of coolies, is increasingly a highly mechanised industry. Dockers have gained some protection against this process by the National Dock Labour Scheme, set up in 1947. The Scheme effectively guarantees work or a fall-back wage to a fixed number of registered dockers.

In 1956 there were 79,000 dockers in Britain. In 1975 there were 31,000. But still the employers sought ways round the restrictions imposed by the National Dock Labour Scheme — and they have found them in 'containerisation', which moves a large part of what was previously docks work to inland container depots. Meanwhile the Jones-Aldington report allowed for large severance payments, which encouraged many dockers to take the money and leave the industry.

The Bristow report proposed a five-mile corridor for London. The Dock Work Bill, part of Jack Jones' price for the Social Contract, was to apply that 5-mile corridor nationwide.

But much of the work of load-

ing or unloading from containers can be done anywhere. Only the smallest container depots would be trapped by the 5-mile corridor. Already the biggest container depot in the country is in the Midlands, far from any five-mile limit!

The 5-mile provision was only a tiny gain for dockers. What is needed is unity of dockers, transport workers and packers to fight for the job security guarantees and wage guarantees that the dockers have won. And, within the ports, for a reduction in the working week according to the work available, without

loss of pay.

In 1972 dockers were persuaded to call off direct action by promises from the union leaders. The slap in the face from Walden and Mackintosh shows that they cannot rely on even sops when Jack Jones promises them.

It proves that dockers should have relied on direct action in 1972 — and should rely on direct action now. Dockers should strike in response to the outrageous treachery which even the best-willed Labour Parliamentarian could not prevent. S.C.

SHEFFIELD: 12% JOBLESS, MORE TO COME

JOBS IN SHEFFIELD and Rotherham have been taking a few knocks lately. As reported in *Workers' Action* no. 29, the British Steel Corporation Stocksbridge Bar and Rod Mill is to close, losing approximately 250 jobs. 25 jobs are also to go in the Light Springs department.

Two firms outside Rotherham, Croda International (a tar distiller) and the GEC factory at Swinton, have also announced their intentions of laying off workers. In this part of South Yorkshire, unemployment is already 12%.

Canning Town Glass, Swinton, a subsidiary of the Distillers group, has also announced its intention to cut jobs, probably through 'natur-

al wastage'. A small specialised steel firm, Willan Co., has called in the official receiver, and over a hundred jobs are likely to go down the line there.

And the biggest blow: Edgar Allen Balfour, a steel and engineering group formed by the merger of Edgar Allen and Balfour Darwin in the early '70s, have announced their intention of closing their 'Capital' works in Sheffield, cutting 400 jobs there and 80 others at the Holme Lane and Shepcote Lane works.

EAB say that the works are not profitable and that production will be transferred to their plant in Openshaw, Manchester. The shop stewards' committee have replied by saying that the unprofitability of the plant is due to a deliberate policy of running down by management. Investment has declined steadily from £130,524 in 1970 to £23,027 in 1976, sales staff have been reduced, and other cutbacks have been made. The net result of all this is a £600,000 projected loss and the entire workforce are being made to take the cost.

This amounts to no more than a case of 'asset-stripping' by EAB, whose probable intention is to concentrate small tools production (work done in the past by the Capital plant) at Manchester and leave the Sheffield plant for specialised steel. If this is the case, then more jobs will go in Sheffield.

The workers responded by holding a mass meeting of those involved on Monday 8th November. A meeting of the Confed through Sheffield was held the following day, under the auspices of the AUEW District Committee. From this meeting came a call to 'black' products of the EAB Tools Division and a request for talks with the group executive in a bid to alter the plan.

While the call for blacking is a positive step and no-one could be opposed to further talks, it must be said that the response so far is inadequate. The division's chief executive, Mr G Hunt, has so far been absolutely adamant that the plant will close regardless.

In response to Mr Hunt's threats the EAB workers should issue a few threats of their own, such as occupation of the plant if the closure goes ahead, with the demand for the work to be shared out with no loss of pay and that management open the books so that the real financial situation is revealed.

The leadership of the AUEW in Sheffield should organise support for the EAB workers and other workers involved in redundancy fights. Redundancy is the big issue in the Sheffield area at the moment — it needs an equally big response from all in the trade union and labour movement. John Cunningham

STUDENTS FIGHT CUTS AND RACIALISM

AT MIDDLESEX POLY students have occupied the administration buildings in Edmonton during the National Union of Students week of action to highlight the effect of education cuts on overseas students.

Their demands are:
1. No more education cuts.
2. End the quota system.
3. A hardship fund for overseas students.
4. No increase in fees.

After a union meeting voted overwhelmingly to support the motion to occupy, proposed by overseas students, over 100 people took over

the Church St complex. The administration of the Poly was effectively stopped, with students manning pickets, telephones, canteen facilities and organising the growing support from the seven other sites.

Poly admin officer Julian Ayres declared that the occupation 'would affect the placement of overseas students'. Similar threatening tactics were used earlier this term when engineering students took action against being moved to an inadequate and isolated site. Engineering lecturers singled out overseas students and warned them that "if they

didn't behave they'd get them thrown out the course".

The Poly branch of NATFHE (the lecturers' union) is investigating those incidents, and has also given support to the current occupation.

The education cuts proposed in the Poly budget for the coming year are in the region of 4%. Already estimates submitted for library facilities and for part-time staff accept this cut. There has been a hidden cut of 20 in the Social Science

department through non-replacement of staff, and the student intake from the humanities course is scheduled to go down from 130 to 70 or 80.

But if the government's plans to tighten up entry restrictions are implemented, they will reduce the total number of overseas students by 60%.

Moreover, the Labour Government, encouraged by the lack of resistance over their last measures, when students' fees were increased to £420 per year, are now going for a fee of around £800 a year. For home students, this fee is paid by their local education authorities; but overseas students are expected to pay it themselves.

KENT STUDENT CONFERENCE NO WAR IN IRELAND?

"TO CALL for solidarity with the Provos would prevent an Irish solidarity campaign being able to draw in hundreds of thousands of people, who could take on the government and win". That was how an IMG (International Marxist Group) speaker summed up his speech at the student conference on "British Repression in Ireland" held at Kent University last weekend. How this enormous campaign was to be created was never explained.

The conference of 60 - 80 people, dominated by IMG, was drawn into this strange political dream-world for most of its two-day length. "We're not here to support socialists or any other political tendency in Ireland", declared one speaker; "it's just government propaganda that says it's a war between the army and the IRA", said another.

"We support the popular move-

ment over the whole political field, not just a small section". It could all be summed up as 'popular' campaigning versus fighting, where necessary, for 'unpopular' positions; unclear and opportunist politics versus a clear principled fight.

The only opposition to the IMG's confusionist arguments (which were supported in the voting by *Socialist Charter* and WSL members) came from students of the I-CL (International-Communist League), who argued for building a campaign of solidarity with those forces fighting British imperialism in Ireland, with its main thrust around the demand for "Troops Out Now".

The IMG's opposition to that position rested on the demagogic argument that because I-CL had not proposed as many specific initiatives as they had, they were just 'passive propagandists'. In fact there was little dispute about the schedule for future activities; it was the political framework for those activities that was the area of debate.

The fact is that any serious campaigning effort on the Irish issue

has to be able to offer blunt and clear answers to the question: what side are you on? Any broader mobilisation for "Troops Out Now" is dependent on socialists taking up the task of explaining the justice of the struggle for Irish freedom. IMG's evasive approach reached its low point with an accusation from them that by calling for solidarity, I-CL was "selling out the Irish struggle". Such wild accusations represent opportunism turned frantic in an effort to cover up its own evasions.

The conference decided to support several practical initiatives: the "Peace through freedom" counter-demonstration to the November 27 "peace march"; a week of action around the anniversary of Bloody Sunday; and a Bloody Sunday Commemoration demonstration. All these deserve to get maximum backing from the labour movement. But within that mobilisation it will still be necessary to argue the case for solidarity with the Republican and socialist forces fighting British imperialism in Ireland. Nik Barstow

Seven colleges are protesting at, or refusing to implement, the draft Department of Education and Home Office circular asking colleges to use immigration officers to test prospective students for academic ability to undertake the course for which they have already gained admission. Meanwhile at Teesside Polytechnic, 30 students have been threatened with deportation because they owe tuition fees.

Last summer's occupations were allowed to die without the Broad Left-dominated NUS executive linking them together in a coordinated and ongoing campaign. The sizable Broad Left at Middlesex Poly was significantly not involved in the early stages of the occupation there.

A resolution passed by a mass meeting in the Middlesex Poly occupation on Friday 12th November outlined the necessary next steps, calling on NUS to spread the action and to mount an effective campaign to combat racist legislation affecting overseas students. S.C.