

RED WEEKLY

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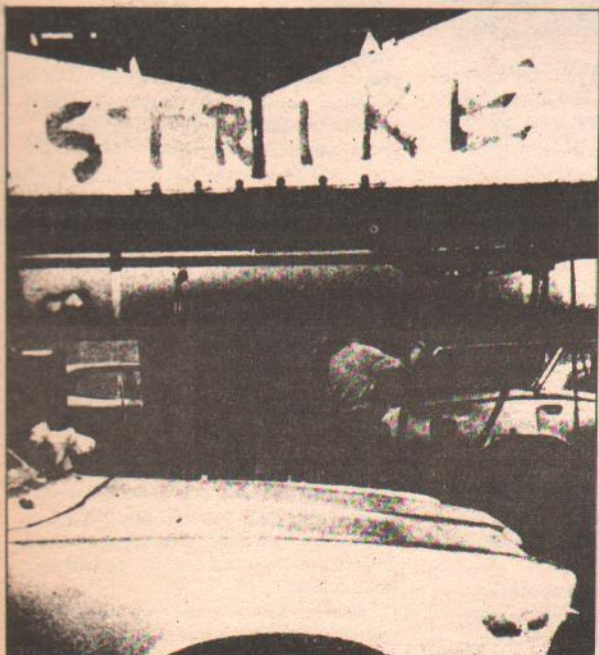
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chrysler workers:

SACK THE LOT SAYS VARLEY

With the finesse and delicacy of a nineteenth century coal owner, Industry Minister Eric Varley waded into 6,000 striking car workers at Chrysler's Linwood plant last week. 'Get back to work or join the dole queue' was the stirring socialist message from this ex-Tribunite,

Either the Linwood workers accepted Chrysler management's right to transfer 50 packers from the Johnstone works and pay them less than Linwood rates, or the Government's £162 million rescue deal could fall through. 'I do not want anyone to think, in Chrysler, or in the country, that the Government is just going to put money in if there is not going to be an improvement there', said the militant wrecker Varley.



He was simply spelling out what the small print of the Chrysler deal — no strikes, no sit-ins, no occupations — meant. But it is just this that the stewards who accepted the deal said they didn't know about! Now Chrysler workers are paying the price for their capitulation and the Labour Government's treachery.

Varley's speech reflected the Government's new-found confidence in openly attacking the right to work since the Chrysler fiasco. No such extreme speech against strikers has been made by a Labour minister since Wilson's witch-hunting of the seamen in 1966. It follows the cool ease with which the press can now announce over a million unemployed till at least 1980, while Healey speculates about Britain being past the worst of the recession after having himself predicted rising unemployment for most of this year.

Militancy was there

But the present Chrysler confrontation shows more than this. The Linwood walk-out has given the lie to the argument of senior stewards, such as Pat Fox at the Ryton works, that the mass of Chrysler workers would not have supported militant occupations to defend all jobs and that they therefore had to settle for what they could get. If 6,000 Linwood workers were willing to walk out over a £1 difference in weekly wage rates, how much more would all 25,000 Chrysler workers have been willing to fight for their jobs.

But that demands a programme and a leadership which rejects any responsibility for the capitalist crisis in the motor industry. It means fighting to:

- *Open the books of Chrysler
- *Resist implementation of the Chrysler-Government deal
- *Defend trade union rights from Labour's attacks
- *Recall the TUC to break with the Government's policies

Five thousand people crowded into the Bogside in Derry on Sunday to commemorate the thirteen gunned down by British paratroopers on Derry's Bloody Sunday of 30 January, 1972.

Even as we gathered in the Bogside, the British ruling class and its faithful servants in the Labour Government were preparing one more murder. Roy Jenkins, the so-called liberal Home Secretary, is letting Frank Stagg die in Wakefield prison.

For over 50 days Stagg has gone without food because he wants recognition as a political prisoner and a transfer to Ireland. His life is ebbing away. By the time you read this he may well be dead — 'legally' murdered.

The message from this bitter Derry Sunday is clear as ice: Save Frank Stagg.



Demand the Labour Government give the status of a political prisoner. Don't let Frank Stagg die.
JOHN MAGEE



The new 'liberal' Spain

The 'liberal' mask of the Spanish dictatorship is now starting to slip badly, with the fiasco of the Prime Minister's 'reform' speech. This contained no serious concessions and promised continuing repression of political prisoners, trade unionists, and oppressed national groups, like those of the Basque country and Catalonia.

The military authorities have followed this with an announcement that they are charging eight leaders of the recent postal workers strike with 'military rebellion'. This means that they will be tried before a kangaroo military court-martial and will face up to 12 years in prison — simply for going on strike.

Already the Spanish workers are preparing their response. Last weekend an estimated 50,000 people gathered in different parts of Barcelona in response to a call from the popular neighbourhood associations to demonstrate for the release of all political prisoners. This was the biggest popular demonstration since the Civil War.

Despite police attacks, some 15,000 demonstrators made it to the city centre, where the police used tear-gas, rubber bullets and repeated baton-charges to try and disperse them. The demonstrators, overturning cars and tearing up iron grilles from the roads to build barricades, managed to defend themselves against the police attack for four hours.

This episode should make it clear that the Spanish masses are in no mood to

wait while the ruling classes of Europe debate over their fate. They want sweeping democratic changes *now* and they are going to fight for them. The job of the European workers movement is to give them all the help they need.

STOP AREILZA VISIT



SEE PAGE 5

RECALL THE TUC

STEEL JOBS SHOWDOWN LOOMS

'The BSC has simply decided to use a longer fuse. They still want 40,000 redundancies. They still want to do away with the guaranteed working week. Whether it's our jobs and living standards that get blown to bits or the BSC's strategy depends on what we do in the next few weeks.'

That's how one South Wales militant described the situation in the steel industry to *Red Weekly* last week. The concessions that the BSC have announced — temporary lifting of the axe above older, smaller works, and maintenance of the guaranteed working week for the time being — have only postponed the threat to steelworkers' jobs.

Offensive

Next weekend will see the opening of the BSC's new offensive in the South Wales plants, when the new deadline for the run-down of weekend working comes into force. It was the determined strike action by Port Talbot workers in the teeth of opposition from their own national union 'leaders' which forced the BSC to set a longer fuse.

Now the leadership of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, having signed the deal with the BSC, propose to leave the rank-and-file at the mercy of BSC management. Through the working out of so-called 'local agreements' on manning levels, job flexibility and an end to weekend working — the issue which sparked off the South Wales strikes — steelworkers in local plants will be left to take the brunt of the BSC's national offensive. Already there is

a threat of short-time working at the giant Llanwern plant in South Wales. Time is running short.

Exploit

The danger facing steelworkers is that BSC management will use local negotiations to play off one steel plant against another — so that plants like Port Talbot, where union organisation is relatively strong, will demand that their jobs are kept at the expense of smaller plants such as BSC Whiteheads in Newport.

Management will exploit to its utmost the traditional divisions between craft and production workers within the steel industry. In this they will be aided by Sirs and the ISTC bureaucracy, who are more likely to blame the jobs crisis on the engineers and the other craft unions than fight for unity against the BSC's offensive. The only fight Sirs will lead is selling 'voluntary' redundancies to his members.

Committees

Fragmentation leading to demoralisation and defeat — that is the aim of BSC management. To overcome it and the scabbing of their own leaders, steelworker militants up and down the country must fight for the setting up of action committees in every plant.

By uniting craftsmen with production workers and plant with plant, action committees can lead the fight for the right to work. An alternative leadership to the sell-out merchants of the steel union bureaucracies must be forged around policies which demand the extension of the guaranteed working week to give 100 per cent protection to jobs and wages, and the opening of BSC's books to prepare a workers plan for the steel industry which defends jobs. In this way the steel cuts can be resisted. Build action committees! Don't let the BSC divide and rule!

Mick Gosling

CARDIFF IMG PUBLIC MEETING:

'Crisis in the Steel Industry — Fight for the Right to Work'. Speakers: Steve Vokes, ISTC Branch Official; Tim Hall IMG Industrial Organiser. 7.30, Wednesday 11 February at Four Elms Pub off Newport Road, Cardiff.



Scottish steelworkers demonstrating in London

CARS: 'LEFTS' WAR OF WORDS

FIDDLES GALORE

Brian Sedgemore revealed how the press campaign to throw workers out of jobs in the car industry was fuelled.

He is a member of the Select Committee on Public Expenditure which recently produced a two inch thick report on British Leyland. This document, Sedgemore revealed — which had been almost unanimously passed by the committee — had been published and available five hours before it was to be voted on. As an added incentive for MPs to make a clear-headed decision, the report was published at 3 am! Sedgemore claimed that if the criteria applied in the report (which made slashing attacks on the workforce in the company) were applied to the rest of British industry, it would mean closing down about 18 of the 22 major sectors of manufacturing!

Tax evasion

Sedgemore went on to explain how company revenue was transferred out of the country by the big monopolies in order to evade tax and 'prove' the need for closures.

Vauxhall, for example, fully realises that transfer pricing — selling cars below cost to foreign subsidiaries, thus making a loss for the British subsidiary but a profit for the corporation as a whole — is illegal. So it has improved its methods.

Vauxhall has to pay £12 million per annum in interest charges. Vauxhall makes a loss. The interest charges are paid to a Swiss bank. General Motors, who own Vauxhall, also own the bank. So General Motors make a profit, while workers at Vauxhall are told that their failure to increase productivity accounts for the loss being made by Vauxhall.

ANTI-RACISTS ACT

The Hackney Committee Against Racism has planned a series of anti-National Front/National Party street meetings to take place throughout February and March. The first meeting will be at Ridley Road Market (scene of many anti-fascist demos) on Saturday 7 February at 11 a.m.

There will be speakers from the HCAR, the North London West Indian Association, the Labour Party, Communist Party, and International Marxist Group.

Tribunite MPs and Communist Party convenors queued up to give their explanations for the crisis in the car industry to a badly attended conference on the motor industry in Birmingham last weekend. Despite this, the conference — which had been organised by the Institute for Workers Control — went on to make the useful decision to draw up a workers report on the industry.

Audrey Wise (Labour MP for Coventry South West) opened the conference by making a scathing attack on the Industry Minister, Eric Varley, for his intervention in the Chrysler Linwood strike. She was 'bitterly ashamed' at the blatant pro-management positions taken by a Labour minister.

No explanation

However she did not go on to explain why the Tribune group voted for the Chrysler deal in Parliament, not only condoning 8,300 sackings, and backing the Labour Government in their determination not to nationalise the firm, but also underwriting the anti-union small print that was written into the deal. It is these provisions in the deal which Varley is using in his attack on the striking workers at Linwood.

Brian Sedgemore (Labour MP for Luton West) attempted to explain why the Tribunes had not voted against the Government in the unemployment debate

the previous week. He didn't want to defeat the Government, he explained. But now that the Tories had shown they were going to support the Labour Government, back benchers like himself could and must challenge the Labour Government 'head-on'.

Amendment

In a reference to the Tribune amendment, which was not called in the Commons, he said that the time had come for 'a bit of workers control in the citadel'; if the blocking of the Tribune grouping in Parliament continued, they would give warning of sabotage in Parliamentary debates.

Sedgemore did not get too carried away by his own rhetoric, however. After roundly denouncing the capitalists of the car industry, he slipped a hint of his true feelings on the matter. To hisses from a part of the audience, he declared quickly: 'I don't say that every worker in the car industry could justify keeping his job in this situation.'

In his opinion, probably the major reason for the crisis in the car industry was the lack of participation and consultation in Government decision-taking. Sedgemore's solution seemed quite clear — let's have an end to over-manning, but let's do it politely. Let's have an increase in productivity, but let's have it democratically.

WORKERS' ENQUIRY LAUNCHED

The 50 delegates voted to produce a workers report on the car industry. John Graham, an IMG member from the Wilmot Breden components factory, motivated the proposal. He sharply attacked those members of the Communist Party at the conference who had supported participation in the car industry.

Peter Nicholas, convenor at Rover (Tysley) had tried to justify his collaboration with the joint management committees set up under the Ryder report. He said that it was only through participating on these committees that the senior stewards had discovered what the secret part of the Ryder Report was all about. Graham said that the lack of information in the car industry should not be met by collaboration with the bosses but by a trade union campaign to open

the books of the industry, to prepare a plan for nationalisation under workers control.

The committee elected to prepare the report had stewards and delegates from Wilmot Breden, Rover Solihull, Vauxhall Luton, Chrysler Coventry, and Ford Dagenham. A recall conference will be held shortly.

Graham said that the organising committee should interview MPs to make public the information given in confidential reports to the Government. The Committee will be prepared to co-opt representatives from other car plants to develop the findings of the committee.

The convenor elected was Jim Shut, who can be contacted at 85 Sir Henry Parkes Road, Canley, Coventry.

£8778.12

TO RAISE IN FOUR WEEKS

Our thanks to the following IMG branches and Red Weekly readers for their donations:

Student	2.50	Colchester IMG	30.00
Brighton IMG	60.00	S.E. London IMG	10.00
Bristol IMG	16.00	N. London IMG	4.50
Bristol teacher	10.00	Manchester IMG	20.00
Bristol teacher	5.20	Special sale of IMG	
Bristol hospital worker	5.00	material	200.00
Brighton reader	4.80	TOTAL:	359.00

Well, comrades, £359 may seem a lot of money but it really isn't anywhere near enough. If we are serious about raising £15,000 by the end of February then we need £2,200 EVERY WEEK FROM NOW UNTIL THE END OF FEBRUARY.

We appeal to all our readers and supporters: every pound sent in will be put to the best possible use — the fight against Wilson's anti-working class policies and building the Fourth International. There isn't a better way of spending £1! This is the last month in which to raise our £15,000. If every reader of *Red Weekly* sent us £1 now we could make our target this week!

Rush donations to: Jo-Ann, 97 Caledonian Road, N.1. (Cheques/POs payable to 'The Week').

CIVIL SERVANTS SAY 'RECALL THE TUC'

A carefully orchestrated campaign in the national press over the last three months culminated in the announcement on 26 January of massive redundancies in the Civil Service. The figure of 100,000 has even been suggested in the *Guardian*. It has also been made clear to the unions that these are *not* going to be made through 'natural wastage'.

Every national paper without exception has joined in the campaign against the Civil Service workers — mainly attacking their inflation-proof pensions and relative job security. 'Whitehall's Happy Laughing Boys' and 'Too Much for Too Many' were the headlines of two leaders in the *Guardian* in three days in December.

Organised

Trade unionists in the Civil Service knew that the campaign was too well organised to be spontaneous, and suspected that their employer — the Government — was behind an attempt to turn public opinion against them. The proposed job losses are the result. The Government evidently hopes that a huge loss of jobs in the Civil Service will be an 'acceptable' cut-back in social expenditure.

Inflation-proof pensions have been one of the perks of civil servants that have most angered the capitalist press. Pension funds provide around £11,000 million for investors in the City to play with on the Stock Exchange — supposedly being invested to provide security for the employees' contributions, but in reality making small fortunes for a few.

Since the civil servants' employer — the Government — theoretically cannot go bankrupt, there is no real compulsion for it to keep the kitty topped up. But the capitalists are scared stiff that their own employees might demand the same inflation-proofing, which would leave them with fewer funds for playing the Stock Exchange.

One of the most outspoken critics of inflation-proofing is Tory Shadow Minister, Sir Geoffrey Howe. Ironically it was he who actually introduced the pensions scheme in 1971, when it was considered cheaper to relate pensions to prices than to wages.

The myth of the over-paid, lazy civil servant is the image being used to justify the lay-offs. The Civil Service is in fact drastically under-



Barbara Castle surrounded by striking civil servants from the DHSS headquarters at Longbenton, Newcastle. They were protesting against the attacks on their jobs.

staffed; in a written parliamentary answer in the first week in December, it was stated that legislation already enacted by this Labour Government will require 6,500 more civil servants by 1 April 1976 and another 4,000 by 1 April 1977.

of whom will be women clerical workers — are paid on or below the level of national earnings. The proposed redundancies will provide the leaderships of these unions with the opportunity to back up their rhetoric with action.

Demand

This of course does not take into account the greater demands caused by the economic crisis: the Department of Health and Social Security needs more staff to cope with increased benefit claims and the Inland Revenue is currently being inundated with tax rebates for unemployed workers.

At the last TUC the Civil Service unions provided the core of the left-wing forces — both the Civil and Public Services Association and the Society of Civil Servants opposed the £6 limit and supported the Working Women's Charter. The Civil Service Department has admitted that 86 per cent of civil servants — most

The call by the CPSA for a recall of the TUC should be echoed by the rest of the Civil Service unions and campaigned for. The Inland Revenue Staff Association's overtime ban will achieve nothing if it is limited to preventing covering for staff shortages — it must be extended to disrupt the implementation of Healey's next budget proposals.

This must go hand in hand with opposition to voluntary redundancies, no covering for absent staff, and unity with other white-collar and manual unions in the fight for the right to work. The fight of the working class against unemployment is the fight against the Wilson Government. When that Government is also your employer, there is only one way to tackle it: head-on.

IN FOCUS

Words and Actions

'Don't take trade unionists for granted', was the stern warning delivered by TUC General Secretary Len Murray to Harold Wilson last week. There is no danger of that, Mr Murray. Harold Wilson already knows that without the support offered by you, Jack Jones and other TUC leaders his policies would meet with a massive wave of resistance in the working class.

Some union leaders are beginning to feel the hot breath of the membership down their collars. TUC leaders were last week faced with a proposal for a special congress of the TUC to debate the economic situation and the action needed to defend jobs. This was backed by the Fire Brigades Union, the Foundry Section of the AUEW, the print union SOGAT, and the Society of Civil Servants. These unions have been joined in their call for a recall of the TUC by the CPSA and NALGO, both of whom want a congress to re-discuss the TUC's support for the Government's incomes policy.

The call by these unions reflects the growing anger among trade unionists that working class rights won in years of struggle are being eaten away while the TUC leaders, both right and left, play cat's cradle with the Wilson Government. Other labour movement leaders are feeling that anger too. Last weekend in Liverpool, Eddie Loyden MP called for support for mass action to change the policies of this Government Loyden intends to do, if anything, remains unclear. But his words reflect the pressure which is mounting. The conference at which he was speaking, called by the Liverpool Trades Council, voted for a national day of action.

Many workers must feel that it is remarkable how 'clear' and 'militant' the left MPs are when confronted by 250 delegates angry at rising unemployment — yet when they return to the House of Commons their courage deserts them.

LIKE VOTING FOR a budget which slashed social services AND ABSTAINING on the Labour Government's policies of driving up unemployment.

Mr Eric Heffer, speaking at the same conference, made his suggestion on how such betrayals can be halted: 'Support for Labour MPs must be based on their support for correct policies, in particular their attitude to rising unemployment'. The Red Weekly agrees wholeheartedly with this proposal. Labour MPs must be made accountable to the labour movement organisations which put them in the House of Commons, not to the needs of the capitalist class reflected through their organised power — the state and its executive committee of Parliament.

Time is pressing. Every day the working class is undergoing fresh attacks on its standard of living. The recall of the TUC and Labour Party conferences is vital to organise action for a workers' answer to the bosses' crisis. The IMG will be fighting for policies which can set the British working class on that road.

- * Open the books of all companies threatening redundancy.
- * For a policy of work-sharing with no loss of pay.
- * For nationalisation under workers control of all firms unable to meet this basic right.
- * For a crash programme of public works — to meet social need and employ the jobless.
- * For a sliding scale of social expenditure to compensate automatically for inflation.
- * For a sliding scale of wages and a minimum wage of £40 per week.

THIRTEEN WEEK STRIKE FOR JOBS

The strike by 600 workers at Commonwealth Smelting in Avonmouth against redundancies and wage cuts is entering its thirteenth week with no immediate signs of a solution.

Management had been hoping for the men's morale to weaken in face of the hardship imposed on them and their families by the length of the strike. And indeed, some of the strikers have already had to appear in court for defaulting on hire purchase commitments, while others are being threatened with having their electricity cut off. But on Monday of last week a mass meeting voted by a margin of four to one to stay out, and on the next day a successful mass picket of the factory by 150 strikers and supporters was held.

This fighting spirit induced the management firstly refused to give a guarantee of no lay-offs for the duration of the projected 10 weeks of negotiations on manning levels, and secondly went back on their undertaking to allow all men made redundant, whether compulsorily or voluntarily, to return to work under the same conditions (i.e. either to pay back redundancy payments and return to their former positions, or else keep the money but start work as new recruits — they were no longer willing to allow the volunteers back unless they repaid the money).

Right-wing bureaucrat Ron Nethercott, T&G regional secretary and 'leader'

of the strikers' negotiating team, commented after leading his side out of the talks: 'In 25 years of negotiations I have never been so angry and frustrated. I am normally a peaceful man, bringing sides together. But I'm absolutely frustrated by the management. They are incompetent negotiators.'

It is much more likely, in fact, that the management manoeuvres stem from the ruthless determination of the multinational owners, Rio Tinto Zinc, to break the union in the best organised plant of the huge Avonmouth chemicals complex. But one thing is clear. The strikers will not be able to force a return to work on their terms — nor, more importantly, to create a favourable relation of forces to win adequate manning levels and stave off redundancies in the future — unless they can win mass support from the rest of the workers movement by turning their struggle into the focus of an area-wide campaign against unemployment.

For some weeks, leading stewards have been talking about setting up a support committee based on the union branches and stewards committees that have made collections, invited speakers etc. But this was continually put off because of their belief in an imminent successful end to the strike. Now, with a long and bitter fight in the offing, the stewards committee has at last decided to call a meeting for next week to set up a support committee.

If this committee gets off the ground, and extends its basis to ensure the maximum participation of all those prepared to take up the fight against unemployment, then the CSL strikers will not only have created the best conditions for a successful outcome to their own struggle, but will also have boosted the fight for jobs throughout the area.

Bristol IMG



Brian Sedgemore addressing the IWC car conference. On his left is Audrey Wise.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

NALGO sponsors demo against health cuts

The Labour Government is out to take more resources from the National Health Service in its imminent White Paper on expenditure. The National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO) says that the White Paper will lead to an unacceptable decline in standards as well as job cuts. NALGO is the largest white collar union in Britain, with 80,000 members in the NHS.

Geoffrey Drain, the general secretary of NALGO, stressed: 'Cutting spending on services is not going to help industry. Nurses who lose their jobs now are not going to reappear in a few months as car workers in Dagenham. The Government must be made to think again on its policy of cuts in the NHS.'

NALGO's warning came as a national demonstration against the

cuts in the NHS was being announced for 25 April in London. This followed a meeting of representatives of NALGO and the National Coordinating Committee against the Cuts in the NHS (NCC).

Full time officers of NALGO have already spoken at meetings in hospitals mobilising support for the demonstration. The NCC has seen support for action against the cuts in the NHS grow steadily since the conference called by the Medical Committee Against Private Practice last year.

Janet Maguire, National Organiser of the NCC, told *Red Weekly* that they would be calling on all trade unions, locally and nationally, trades councils, shop stewards and district committees, tenants associations and Labour

Parties to back the demonstration and build a really big mobilisation to oppose the Labour Government's attacks on the NHS.

BMA PICKET

From 12-2 pm on 12 February the NCC will also be organising a picket of the British Medical Association in Tavistock Square, London W.C.1. This coincides with a meeting of the BMA which will be discussing the result of the consultants ballot on private practice.

The threatened moves towards a two-tier health service are a serious threat to the NHS, and *Red Weekly* urges its readers to attend if possible or pass resolutions of support through their trade union and Labour Party branches. Further details of the picket can be obtained from Dr Paul Stern, 55 Bridge Lane, London N.W.11 (01-450 4920).



Students, health workers, council employees and others marching through Brighton last Saturday in a demonstration against education and social service cuts

Crucial Abortion Vote

Next Monday the day of reckoning will arrive for all those MPs who have claimed in the past to support the aims of the National Abortion Campaign.

From 7 till 10 o'clock that night, debate and voting has been scheduled in Parliament to determine whether or not the reactionary Select Committee will be reconstituted. This is the body responsible for the restrictions introduced on women's right to abortion during the summer.

Health Minister Barbara Castle stated during a heated meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party a fortnight ago that she felt it might not be the 'right time' to go ahead with the Select Committee. But even if other MPs take her advice, we can be certain that restrictions on women's right to abortion will go ahead — through the back door. Minister of State David Owen has already promised a Bill to reduce the present 28-week limit to 24 weeks, and whether charitable agencies will be able to carry out day-care abortions has yet to be decided.

If the House of Commons votes not to go ahead with the Select Committee now, this will be a great victory; but it will then be even more crucial that the fight for free abortion on demand — a woman's right to choose — be stepped up. This is the only way to ensure that it will never be the 'right time' to continue with the attacks on abortion rights.

Clear tasks

If the Select Committee is reconstituted, our tasks are clear. We must continue to rally all those forces in the Labour Party and in the trade unions who are prepared to implement the decisions of the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

We must call for the disbanding of the Select Committee — the workers' movement has already taken a firm stand in

support of women's abortion rights. And we must take the issue of abortion even further into the ranks of the workers' movement as part of the fight against all of the anti-working class policies of the Labour Government.

Every committee set up to fight the cuts must come out against the idea that abortion facilities are a 'luxury' that can go first. Every trade union school or conference on the 'great achievement' of the Labour Government — the Sex Discrimination Act — must have its attention drawn to the other side of the coin: that while the Labour Government has come up with the Sex Discrimination Act on the one hand, it is attacking a fundamental right of women on the other.

Demonstration

Every Labour Party and trade union meeting must organise to ensure that 'its' MP is not let off the hook — MPs who refuse to be held accountable to the working class should be removed. Frank Tomney in Hammersmith — an MP whose position is presently being challenged — is a case in point. His reactionary views on abortion have not gone unnoticed in the fight for his removal!

Either way, the fight for women's abortion rights must be stepped up. The 3 April demonstration will provide a chance to demonstrate that the working class is prepared to fight against the Labour Government's policies, and is prepared to organise to implement the decisions of its organisations. There will be a lobby and demonstration outside the House of Commons from 4-7 pm on 9 February. Then there will be a 'Speak Out' on abortion starting at 7 pm in Central Hall, during the debate in the Commons. Anyone with ideas on how to take the fight forward will be heard!

Education cuts - teachers can't fight alone

On 21 October 1975 more than 10,000 students, teachers and other workers marched through the streets of London to protest against the Labour Government's slashing attacks on education spending. Among them was MIKE COLLEY, the National Union of Teachers representative at Clissold Park Secondary School and a committee member of Hackney Teachers Association.

Colley had been delegated from his school to attend the demonstration, which had been called by the South Eastern Region of the TUC. Now he faces victimisation by the Inner London Education Authority. *Red Weekly* asked him about the background to his attempted victimisation and how the fight against the education cuts can be taken forward.

My victimisation by the ILEA is not an isolated case. Last year teachers from Quinton Kynaston, South Hackney, Phoenix and Garret Green schools were similarly set up for disciplinary action.

These attacks came at the time of the campaign against the Houghton report on teachers' salaries, and were obviously intended to discourage teachers from taking any action against increasing unemployment and the cuts. Houghton itself was an attempt to buy off teachers by establishing a very hierarchical 'career' pay structure to deter teachers from taking action against future attacks on the education service.

● How was the South East Region TUC demonstration raised in your school and Teachers Association?

In the context of the consistent explanation we have made about the implications and effects of the education cuts. We have repeatedly urged and attempted to build a campaign against the cuts which would involve the whole labour movement.

Teachers cannot fight the cuts alone — the fight to defend education spending is a fight for the working class as a whole. We felt that this demo was an important first step in building such a class-wide campaign.

● Why did you take strike action?

Teachers were frustrated by the NUT bureaucracy's decision not to call for action. Instead of supporting the demon-

stration the NUT asked teachers to go along after school and lobby their MPs. In the usual way they failed to provide any leadership or seriously attempt to organise a fight back against the cuts.

Our action was aimed at developing organisation and involvement at the rank and file level, to challenge the leadership and force it to build a campaign.

The NUT bureaucracy is more interested in disciplining its own militants than in leading a fight against the anti-working class policies of the Labour Government. The Executive is now recommending changes in the Union's disciplinary rules which would give them power to suspend members before any hearing.

This would apply particularly to any breaches of the notorious Rule 8 on local autonomy, which prevents any local association from taking industrial action without the authorisation of the Executive.

● How do you see the fight against the cuts being taken forward?

The fight to defend teachers is part of the fight against the cuts. The demonstration against the education cuts on 27 February and the lobby earlier the same day to demand a recall TUC to break with the Government's policy of cuts and unemployment are both vital steps in developing this campaign.

● What has been the role of the Communist Party members on the NUT Executive?

The Communist Party has no perspective for fighting the cuts. They have not projected concerted action against the cuts but have limited themselves to feeble protests. They are more concerned with launching witch-hunts against the revolutionary left in the union, and writing off important issues such as the Working Women's Charter at national conference as the concern of a lunatic fringe.



Communist Party member of the NUT executive Max Morris—supports rule-change attack on militant teachers, saying: 'It is unfortunate that the activities of a lunatic fringe have gained totally disproportionate publicity to the disadvantage of the profession.'

A massive protest against the cuts in education spending is expected on 27 February in London. A demonstration has been called by the National Union of Students, and six other national unions are discussing support for the action.

The imminence of the Labour Government's White Paper on expenditure gives urgency to the demonstration. The White Paper is generally expected to provide a further stage in the Government's economic policies, which aim to boost profitability at the expense of falling living standards, massive unemployment, and the beginning of the dismantlement of the social services. These policies were unveiled at the Chequers talks last year and supported by both the TUC and the CBI.

The TUC leaders are currently the

main obstacle holding back a fight on the cuts. Support is growing for a lobby of the TUC immediately before the demonstration to demand that the TUC is recalled and breaks with the Government's austerity measures.

The Avon Committee against the Education Cuts has already called 'on affiliated bodies and the local labour and student movement to support the national demonstration against education cuts on 27 February, by wherever possible organising strike action. Further to support the picket of the TUC preceding the demonstration, demanding that the TUC be recalled to organise a fight against the cuts.'

The lobby will meet at 12.15 pm in Bedford Square (off Tottenham Court Road), W.C1.

STOP THE VISIT OF FRANCO'S HENCHMAN



The Foreign Minister of the Spanish dictatorship, Jesus Maria de Areilza, is currently on a jaunt around the capitals of the Common Market pushing Spain's application for 'associate membership' in the Common Market. This would link the Spanish economy into that of the EEC countries, without requiring any sort of immediate changes to bring the Spanish dictatorship into line with the political set-up of capitalist democracy.

The big question in this country is when this veteran enemy of the Spanish working class will touch down in Britain. Press reports a few weeks ago, in informed capitalist journals like the *Financial Times* and the *Economist*, talked about his arrival in the middle of February. More recently the *Daily Express* (28 January) carried a story claiming that Areilza was still waiting for an invitation from the Labour Government. But reports from inside Spain persist that he will be in Britain within the next few weeks.

Part of the explanation for this confusion is to be found in the *Express* story. They point out that 'likely repercussions from Labour's left wing' and a 'fear of public demonstrations' are among the factors behind the Labour Government's hesitation.

This sums up a general problem: the Spanish capitalists are eager to join the Common Market, and the European capitalists are not ones to balk at 'little' factors like the fascist origins and dictatorial character of the present regime. But there is still the problem of how the labour movement of Europe will react.

Phoney

That is why the Spanish Government has been so busy talking about 'reform', in an effort to put on an 'acceptable face of dictatorship' for the European workers movement. This manoeuvre has met with some success. Already Areilza has been able to visit France and Germany, and get quite a warm welcome from their governments.

The next stage is a little trickier, however. The phoney 'liberal' image of the Spanish Government is badly tarnished after its repression of the recent workers' upsurge, and after the pathetic reform package put forward by the Spanish Prime Minister last week.

In a speech which even the *Times* was forced to describe as less liberal than the one made when he first became Prime Minister in 1973 (while Franco was still running the show), Arias Navarro offered only tiny concessions, and specifically ruled out any further release of political prisoners and any move towards tolerating free trade unions.

Common Market

It is in this situation that Areilza is now due to visit Italy — where there is a deep anti-fascist consciousness among the working class which has already expressed itself in massive solidarity actions with the Spanish struggle — and Britain, where there is a Labour Government in office.

Perhaps Italy might be written off as a lost cause, but Areilza must pay a call to Britain if he is to satisfy the wishes of the Spanish capitalists, for Britain is one of the key powers in the EEC, and embodies the popular notion of a 'democratic' country among the Spanish middle class.

The Labour Government is certainly ready to help out. Their social democratic counterparts in the West German Government have already given Areilza the nod, and the Labour Government laid the basis for taking the same course

when it sent a representative to the funeral of Franco and the coronation of King Juan Carlos. The only thing holding it back is fear of the response by the workers movement.

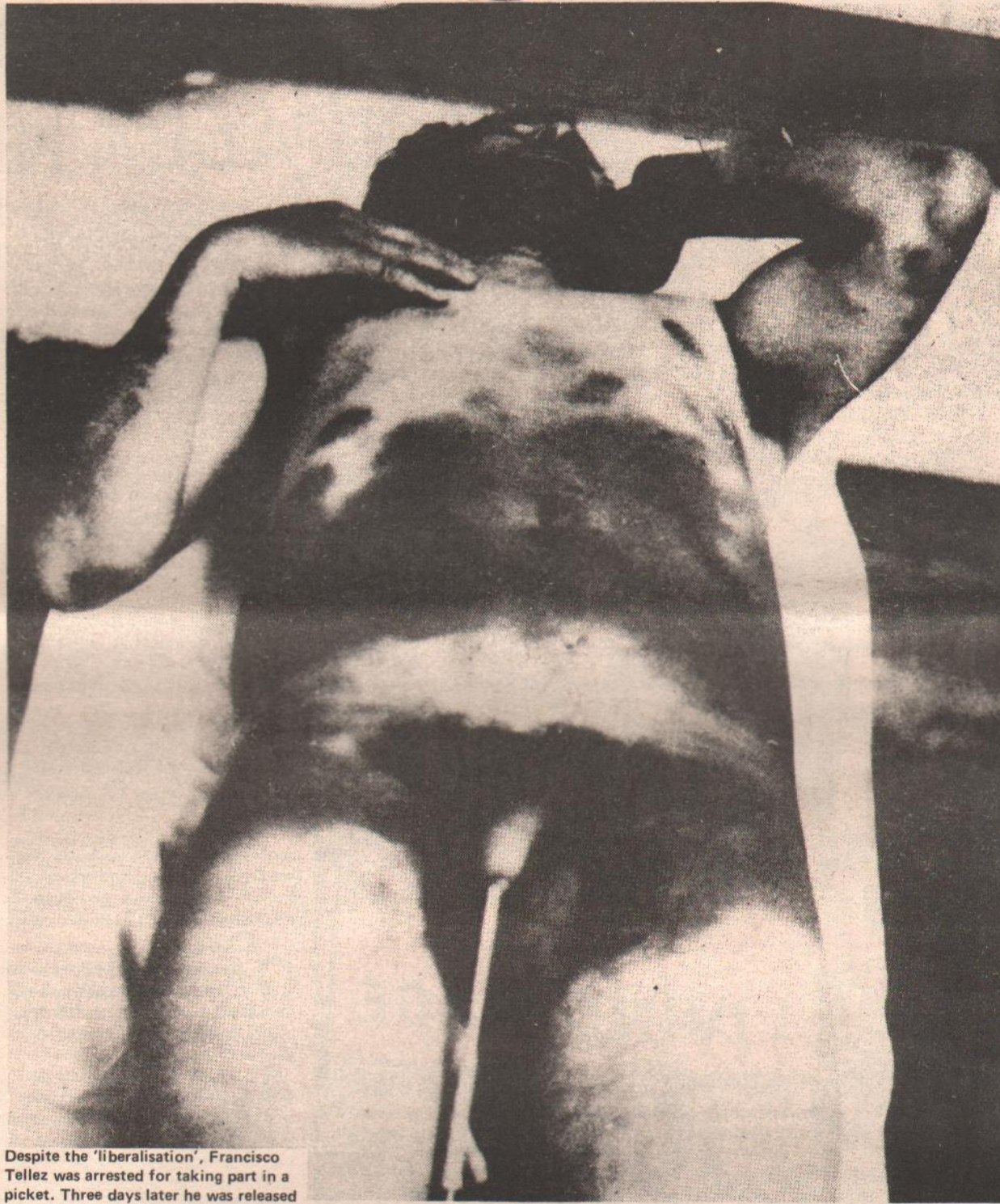
After three days in a Spanish barracks

Demonstrate to keep Franco's henchman out of Britain Saturday, 14 February

London: Mass picket of Downing Street, noon-2 pm (organised by IMG, IS and ICL)
Manchester: 'Break all Links with Francoism'. Assemble 11.30 am Oxford Road, by Mancunian Way, march past Iberian Airlines (organised by Manchester Solidarity Committee).

Glasgow: Mass picket of Iberian Airlines. 10 am onwards (organised by Spanish Action Group).

Hull: Friday 13 February. Picket of Spanish vice-consulate Mytongate, noon-2 pm (sponsored by Botanic Ward Labour Party and Hull University Students Union).



Despite the 'liberalisation', Francisco Tellez was arrested for taking part in a picket. Three days later he was released and taken to hospital—in this condition. He was covered in blood bruises from a severe beating with a rod and a rubber hose. He suffered serious internal damage and is in need of an artificial kidney. He also had a lighted candle applied to his testicles for about half an hour.

If Areilza is not able to come to Britain it will be a big defeat for the Spanish regime. It would represent a grave set-back for the Spanish capitalists' desire to get into the Common Market, and undermine their readiness to back the dictatorship to the hilt in the event of a show-down with the workers movement. It would also weaken attempts by the dictatorship to get middle class support for their phoney reforms.

The fight to keep Areilza out of Britain is thus a very direct and practical way of aiding Spanish workers in their fight to overthrow the dictatorship and conquer the democratic rights which they need to defend their class interests. We must not wait until Areilza is whipped in and out of the country in a fly-by-night political stunt, but start the fight to keep him out now.

WEEK OF ACTION

The following are some of the major events taking place during the 'Week of Action in Solidarity with the Spanish Working Class' called by the Action Group Against Repression in Spain for 8-15 February.

LONDON: Monday 9 February: 'The Case of Eva Forest and the Struggle of Spanish Women'; Dalston Library, Dalston Lane, Hackney. 7.30 pm.

Tuesday 10 February: 'Spain — Free All Political Prisoners'; South West London IMG meeting, with speakers from AGARIS and the Battersea & Wandsworth Trades Council (in individual capacity) and slide show on political prisoners. Battersea District Library, Lavender Hill, SW11. 7.30 pm.

'Which Way for Spain' — a Socialist Forum meeting with representatives of the Spanish organisations backing the week of action. The Roebuck pub, Tottenham Court Road. 8 pm.

Wednesday 11 February: Spanish film show in aid of political prisoners. Films by Carlos Saura and Bunuel. London School of Economics, New Theatre. 7 pm., admission 60p.

Thursday 12 February: 'Solidarity with the Spanish Working Class', public meeting organised by the North London Committee Against Repression in Spain. Speakers include (in personal capacity): Jock Nicholson (NUR Executive), Sid Easton (T & G Region 1 Executive), Val Coultas (NUS Executive). Friends Meeting House, Euston Road. 7.30 pm.

Saturday 14 February: Trade union delegate conference. Credentials from 'Solidarity with the Spanish Working Class', c/o NUM, 222 Euston Road, London NW1.

MANCHESTER: Thursday 12 February: 'The Continuing Struggle Against the Dictatorship'; public meeting of the Manchester Spanish Solidarity Committee. The Wheatsheaf pub, 64 High Street, Shude Hill. 7.30 pm.

GLASGOW: Saturday 7 February: picket of Iberian Airlines and distribution of information sheets. 10 pm onwards.

Tuesday 11 February: 'Spanish Workers Fight Back'; public meeting of Spanish Action Group. McLellan Galleries, 7.30 pm. Speakers include Miguel Garcia, CNT militant who spent many years in Franco's jails, and John McCann, Chairman of Cumberland Trades Council (in personal capacity). Veteran Clydeside revolutionary Harry McShane in the chair.

Behind the visit - EEC connections

The attempt to get an economic deal with the Common Market is a crucial question for Spanish capitalism.

For nearly 20 years the Spanish economy has been heavily dependent upon the world market for its growth and development. In 1971 more than one sixth of the products available in Spain were imported, and a similar proportion of Spanish products had to seek outlets in foreign markets.

At the same time the growth of Spanish industry has been heavily dependent on the inflow of foreign capital, particularly from the big, multi-national corporations.

Of the 300 biggest multinational corporations in the world, almost 60 per cent have factories in Spain. They hold stakes in 30 per cent of the 600 major Spanish firms, and in over 50 per cent of the top 25 monopolies — foreign capital controlling seven of these latter outright.

Spain's foreign trade has been increasingly dominated by its relations with the EEC: by 1973 (after Britain joined the Market), 45 per cent of total Spanish foreign trade was with EEC countries.

Despite the growing importance of investment from the EEC countries (the largest firm in Spain, the SEAT auto

works, is tied up with Italian Fiat; and the ninth largest, FASA-Renault, is totally controlled by French capital), American investment is still the most important, accounting for about 50 per cent of total foreign investment.

But this in no way undercuts the pressures on the Spanish capitalists to draw closer to the EEC — for American capital has moved into Spain, concentrating on areas like electronics and chemicals, not because of the small Spanish market, but in order to take advantage of the low wages and lack of trade union organisation to use Spain as a base for its European operations.

The American multi-nationals are thus as European-oriented as their counterparts based in Europe, and are part of the very powerful grouping of capitalist interests (including Spanish industrial and financial groups) for whom membership of the Common Market is a key question.

It is in order to serve these masters that Areilza (himself closely connected with business and banking circles) is travelling around Europe, and for them that his visit to Britain is so decisive.

Q What do you say to the charge that the formation of the Scottish Labour Party threatens to split the labour movement?

A There is almost no Labour vote to split; we want to win back that vote which, otherwise, will go to the SNP. As far as splitting the British labour movement is concerned, that is simply not true. All we want to do is to re-shape the relationship between the labour movement in Scotland and the labour movement in Britain as a whole, which devolution of government makes necessary.

Q How do you see your relationship with those left-wing activists still inside the Labour Party?

A Supporters of *Tribune* or any other group would be most welcome to join us, like any member of the Labour Party. We are open to people who accept the principles of socialism and accept our aims, policy and principles.

Q Do you envisage united action, say on unemployment, with these forces?

A We are part of the labour movement and we envisage united action with the Labour Party, the Scottish TUC, and the TUC on unemployment and poverty and the harsh realities of capitalist society.

Q Will you be applying for affiliation to the Labour Party?

A Certainly not: we regard ourselves as a sister party, not as a subservient party.

Q Would you draw any lessons from the ILP, in terms of similarity — a party which was almost a party inside a party in the 1920s, but went into rapid decline after it left the Labour Party in 1932?

A What the SLP has done is to catch the mood of the Scottish people. The ILP did catch the mood of the Scottish people for a while, but the timing was wrong. I think that this time we have the timing right, and I would say that

this is the biggest lesson we have learned from the ILP. The success of our foundation meeting proves that we have got our timing right.

Q How do you see your relations with the STUC, which has very similar policies to those of the SLP, and played a major role in forcing the change of line on devolution at the Labour Party Scottish Conference last year?

A The STUC long ago took the decision vis-a-vis the TUC that we are taking vis-a-vis the Labour Party now. Far from opposing us, we would imagine that the STUC would be very sympathetic to our position.

Q You do not envisage trade union affiliation to the SLP?

A Our structure is based on individual membership only: no block affiliations from trade unions, or any other bodies. We are trying to learn the lessons of the past, and one of the lessons is that democracy in the Labour Party has been severely damaged by the Tammany Hall deals and Head Office cabals which the block vote allows.

A classic example: the £6 policy is decided over dinner between Foot and Jones, and then forced on the Labour Party Conference. We don't envisage that kind of party.

Q How do you see the development of your policies on practical, immediate questions, such as the £6 limit, unemployment, welfare cuts, etc?

A We have already initiated a number of discussion papers, for one of the things that we want to do is to encourage debate and political discussion in a way that never happened in the old Labour Party. The most pressing problem is, of course, the high level of unemployment.

At our foundation meeting, we predicted that unemployment in Scotland could rise to 150,000 by March, and this week's statistics show that we have grossly underestimated that figure. We will be producing a statement on jobs and

industry, and how we should bring full employment to Scotland as soon as possible. That's our number one priority.

Q Will the SLP take a clear position on the £6 limit?

A I imagine that we will take a clear position against the kind of incomes policy we have had in the past. The TUC have done a deal with the Government, the TUC have kept their side of the deal vis-a-vis the £6 limit, but the Government has not kept its side vis-a-vis full employment. I think that it would be very difficult indeed to get working people to accept a repetition of that kind of deal.

Q At the SLP foundation meeting, you said that the Labour Party has traditionally been a party of all bark and no bite. How will the SLP differ in action?

A The key to that is the structure of the party. There are two elements: firstly, individual membership makes it very difficult for any cabal, right-wing or left-wing, to run it; secondly, our branches are the most important focal points of activity and policy making.

It will be the branches who will send delegates to the annual conference; and it will be the conference which will elect the whole leadership, including the General Secretary and the parliamentary leadership, every two years. I imagine that that structure would stop us from repeating the errors of the past.

Q Will the SLP play an active role in actions such as the mass meeting of Glasgow stewards against the Chrysler redundancies, supporting workers in occupation like those at Persona, etc.?

A We have already taken positions on redundancies taking place in Scotland at the moment — the redundancies at Scottish Aviation at Cumnock, the redundancies which were proposed and still might take place at Marathon, the redundancies in the mining industry

WHICH WAY FOR SCOTLAND LABOUR

ALEX NEIL General Secretary
Labour Party

and in the steel industry. We have a position on all of these, which is quite clearly to oppose all of them.

Q Amid the key points of SLP membership — essentially, a Scottish Parliament with a socialist majority, pledged to socialist policies — there is a rather surprising omission: the traditional position of Labour Party membership, Clause Four.

A One of the most exciting things we will have to do is to define what modern socialism is, and how it should be applied. Now Clause Four is part of the old Labour Party Constitution, and when we come to write our constitution, which we are in the process of doing, we will then decide to accept the wording or whatever of Clause Four, or it might be re-written.

We have a very democratically elected Organising Committee, and we didn't want to pre-determine the constitution before the committee was elected. There is no question of diluting our socialism. At the same time, we have to realise that we are living in a Western capitalist society, and you can only push the socialist boat out so far at a particular time.

Q So you see the SLP taking the traditional left Labour position of supporting nationalisation, public ownership of the means of production, etc.?

A I think that we will be in favour of public ownership in principle, but not nationalisation as we have known it. We could not persuade the mineworkers, or the steelworkers or the railworkers that it's a good principle. It's public ownership that we're talking about.

One of the best examples in this country at the moment is the Shetland Islands, where a small island of six thousand people and their County Council have taken much firmer control over the operation of the oil companies than any Labour Government has ever done.

Q What policy will the SLP adopt on the exploitation of oil?

A In many respects, we will steal the clothes of the Labour Party. In 1973 the UK Labour Party adopted, as part of its programme for Britain, the policy that the oil revenues should be used to regenerate the economies of Scotland and other areas in need of development: but it didn't stick to it.

Scotland makes up around 30-40 per cent of the development areas, therefore Scotland should get around 30-40 per cent of the oil revenues. Given the infrastructural and environmental problems that come along with the oil industry, that would be a fair bargain.

Q There have been complaints of collusion between oil companies, construction firms and the Labour Government — collusion right down to systematic lying, for example, about the manning levels at Nigg Bay. How should this be tackled?

A I don't see any collusion between any of our representatives and the multinationals, and I hope no Labour council has taken part in this sort of thing. We would take a much tougher line with the oil companies as regards the environmental aspects, as regards production policy, landing policy, etc. Shetland, in many respects, has shown the way. I think, for example, that we have to put the onus on the oil companies for an environmental protection fund to regenerate areas damaged by oil extraction.

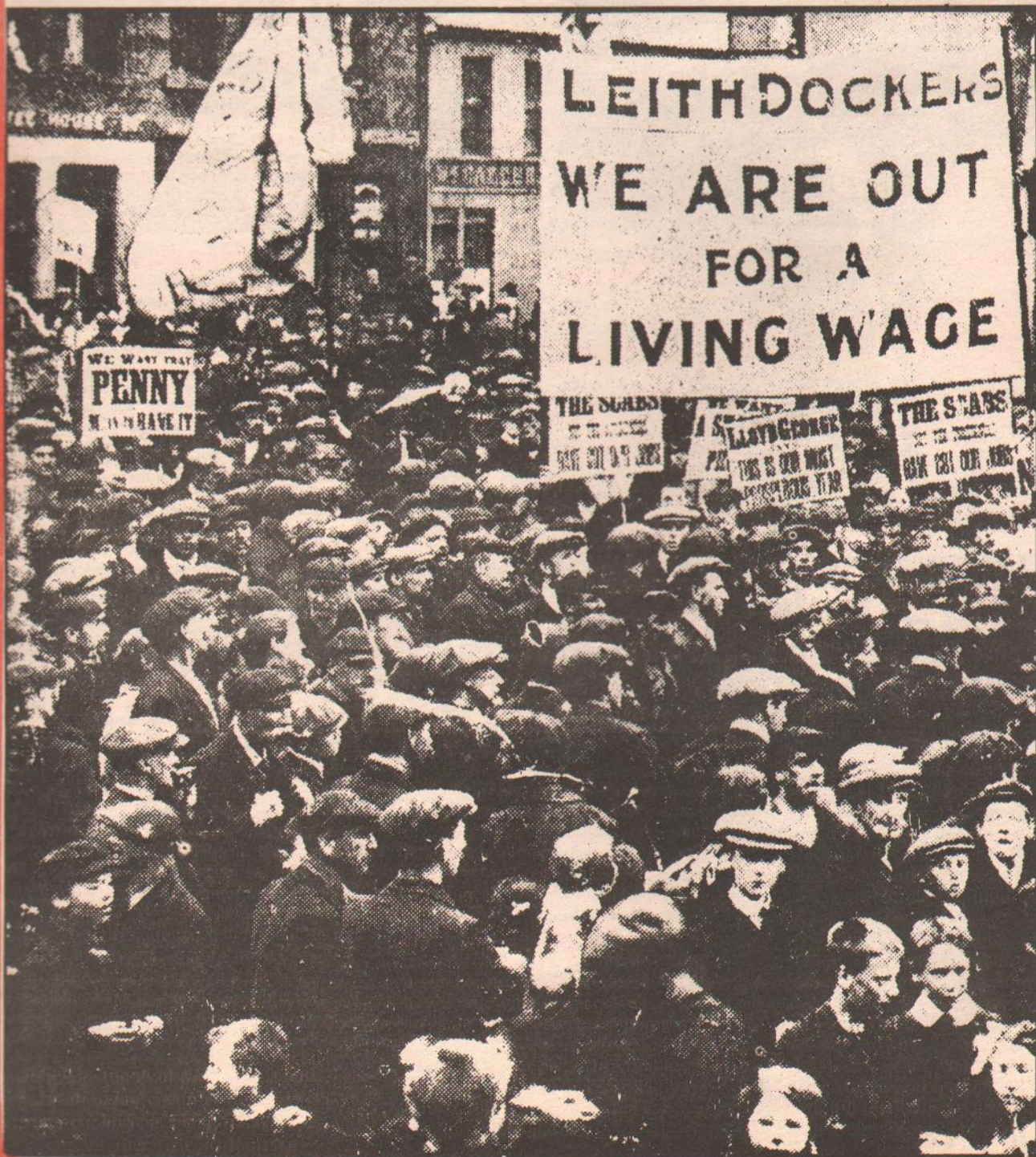
Q In many yards there is still fierce company resistance to union organisation, and living conditions are often typified by derelict liners, caravans, etc., in the midst of a so-called 'oil boom'. How does the SLP plan to link up with oil and construction workers



against this?

A Unionisation is, in many respects, a matter for the unions, not for the SLP; but I think that a Scottish Parliament with responsibility over labour and manpower would over-rule or outlaw any company, be it oil company or off-shore company, that wanted to prevent unionisation, for it is the basic right of every worker to join a union.

Q The mood of the SLP's foundation meeting was obviously rather euphoric at being freed from the anti-democratic constraints of



WAY TISH R?

... of the Scottish ... to Red Weekly.

Transport House and Keir Hardie House. Can we expect a clear position of no bans or proscriptions inside the SLP?

A I would hope that there will be no bans or proscriptions. As I said, there are no block affiliations; everyone joins as an individual member, and every individual is capable of deciding whether he or she accepts the policies and principles of the SLP — which of course are not shared, I would imagine, by the IMG or IS or others. These are matters for individuals.

But I certainly would not hope to repeat bans and proscriptions and all that sort of restriction. We want to encourage free thinking and debate, and any socialist who feels that his home is in the SLP would be made very welcome.

Q The 'Aims of Membership' of the SLP include a Parliament in Scotland with a socialist majority committed to socialist policies. Such an aim will obviously attract very broad support, and a wide divergence of socialist viewpoints were expressed at the foundation meeting. Do you hope that this will continue?



A The important thing is that we are very much a free and open party, and will encourage free debate and fresh thinking — we will, therefore, cover a wide spectrum of opinion. The Labour Party probably already covers the spectrum: the difference is that individuals are heard in our party and not shouted down because they are thinking heretic thoughts.

The SLP will be covering, vocally, a much wider spectrum; and I think that people, many for the first time, will be forced actually to think about politics and the application of socialism.

Q Do you consider the relationship with the Labour Party to be dead — is the coming NEC discussion merely a formality?

A No, it's not a formality. The NEC has prevaricated up to now and, knowing the NEC, will continue to do so. It's better to wait for their decision and then comment on it.

Q What is the position of the Organising Committee on dual membership?

A Dual membership of the Labour Party is perfectly allowable as far as we are concerned. We certainly don't encourage or allow dual membership with other organisations which compete with the SLP.

Labour Party dual membership is a particular case, because a lot of people have still to cross the mental barrier of leaving the Labour Party as well as joining us, and we should help them to get over that mental barrier as far as possible.

Q Do you concede the right of Westminster to determine the question of the Scottish Assembly, or do you see any alternative which expresses the wishes of the Scottish working class — for instance, immediate elections to the Assembly with no restriction of its powers?

A Well, the fact is that the decision on the first Assembly is going to be made in Westminster. That's just a fact of life, and will probably be the result of a few cabals and deals and so on.

My prediction, after listening to the debate in Parliament on devolution, would be that Westminster is going to make a mess of it. They are going to do with us what they have done with some of the colonies, waited too long and given too little too late. The position may, unfortunately, be that a contingent of people will have to go down after the next election, from the SNP and the SLP, to effectively negotiate the kind of Assembly that we are going to have.

Before that I would expect a referendum, which I am totally opposed to. What would be the purpose of a referendum? To reject separation? — the Scottish people have made it clear time and time again that they reject the extreme of separation. To confirm devolution? — again, that has already been done.

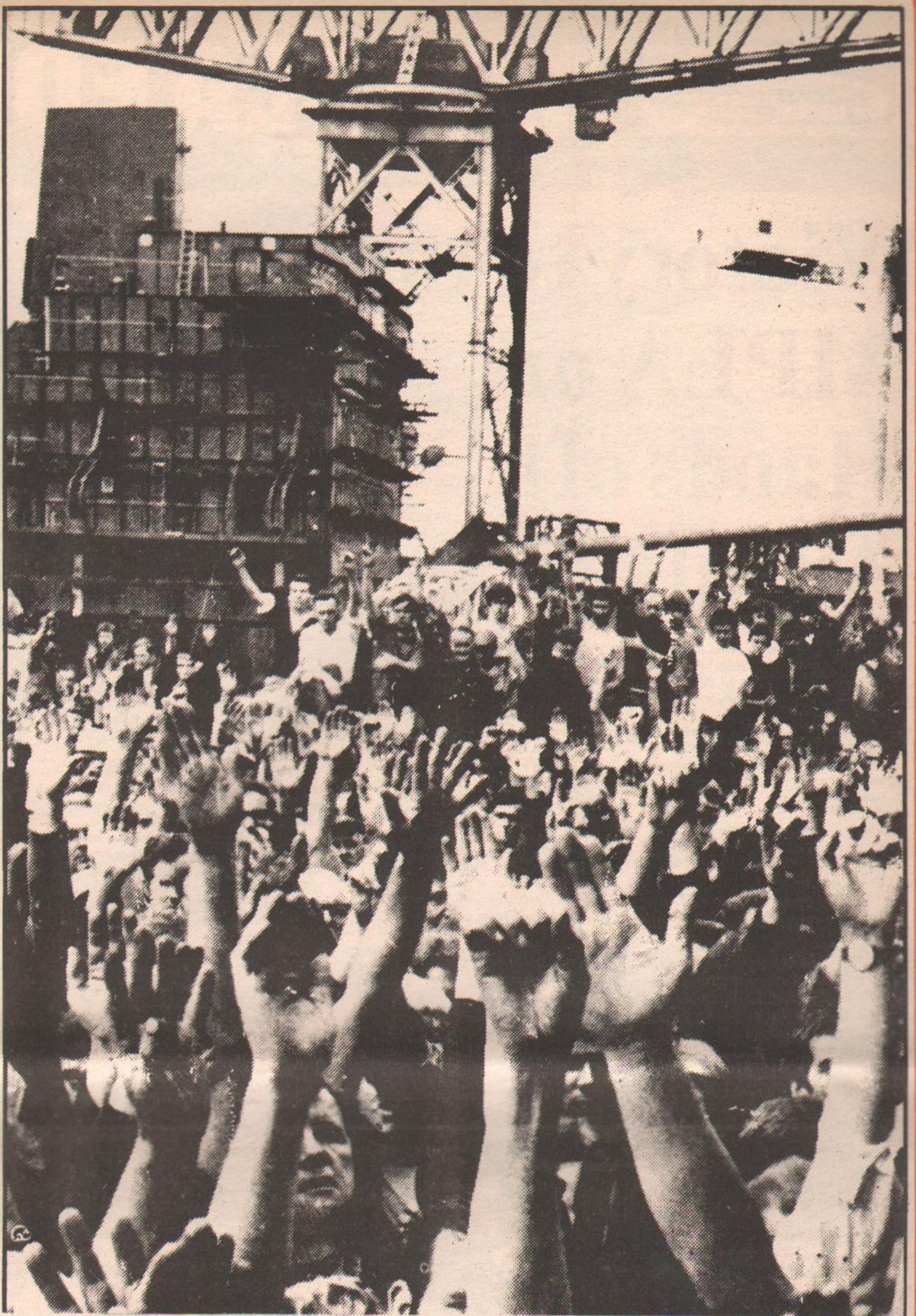
There is a consensus in Scotland that we need a very, very strong Parliament with economic powers and a share of the oil revenues: everyone in Scotland knows that. The referendum, whose questions would be written and devised by Mr Wilson, and not by the Scottish people, would be a trick deliberately devised to renege on devolution, not to promote it.

Q The SLP emerges at a time when the Labour Party as a whole is increasingly torn between the supporters of the Wilson leadership on the one hand, and the forces of the left on the other. How do you see the SLP's role in that fight?

A I hope that we can strengthen the position of socialists in England by what we are doing. One of the tragedies of the situation is that the Labour Party is declining in England almost as much as in Scotland.

My advice to Labour activists would be to try and take a grip of the situation, try to change the party from within. Unlike us, they do not have the opportunity of forming a new party: the time is just not right for that. To allow Margaret Thatcher to become Prime Minister of England and Wales would be absolutely disastrous.

They have no alternative but to fight from within — their chances of success are pretty limited, we shouldn't kid ourselves. As far as the SLP is concerned, we hope to work not only with the socialists of England and Wales, but I would envisage the day when the SLP would join the Socialist International and join with other parties throughout the world to fight for socialism.



What we say

From its 400-strong founding meeting on 18 January, the Scottish Labour Party launched a campaign to build branches throughout Scotland. Since the above interview, the SLP's campaign has opened out in two large meetings, called by Labour Clubs at Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities, addressed by Alex Neil. Neil, now General Secretary of the Scottish Labour Party, was described at the foundation meeting as 'the man who wrote Labour's 1974 Manifesto for Scotland'. His speeches indicate that the interview represents a comprehensive outline of Scottish Labour Party policy as proposed by its leaders.

The outcome of these meetings is a fair indication of the credibility of these policies. In Edinburgh, unchallenged from the platform, Neil won substantial support among the 130 present. In Glasgow, however, debating Tribune MP Robin Cook, he convinced only three of the audience of sixty.

The ease with which Cook outdistanced Neil on the left on many issues was demonstrated by their respective attitudes on bans and proscriptions. Neil avoided any reply to a clear question as to whether he would join Cook in denouncing witch-hunts in the Labour Party against the SLP by rejecting the attempt of the SLP leadership to proscribe left-wing organisations and their members. Cook, however, told the meeting: 'I am absolutely opposed to lists of proscriptions. I have a Trotskyist on my General Management Committee and I have no intention of asking him to leave.'

The outcome of this meeting was significant. The present policies of the SLP leadership do not stand up to criticism even from the viewpoint of left social democracy — let alone that of revolutionary socialism. The positions expressed by Alex Neil show clearly that the SLP leadership, caught between left social democracy and radical nationalism, is unwilling to base itself on the key issues of class struggle, and inclines increasingly towards providing a left-wing veneer for the 'solutions' of the Scottish National Party.

Of course, convincing the hundreds of activists attracted to the SLP that the policies of its leadership do not coincide with their own motivations for joining is not a task to be undertaken frivolously. Many hold the same opinion as one comrade at the Glasgow debate: 'Let's see them in action for a year, then you'll have some basis for criticism.' The IMG agrees

wholeheartedly that the policies of any working class organisation can only be criticised effectively as they are advanced and applied. But, equally, no political development takes place within a vacuum.

Without a clear socialist strategy the SLP leadership has only the options of being a 'ginger group' on the fringes of the Labour Party, counter-posing pressure politics to a real fight against the right, or a radical stalking horse for SNP policies inside the working class. Within either option the SLP can remain a large, formally independent, sect, but it is its ideological allegiance and the class forces it aligns with which will determine the real extent of such 'independence'.

The positions advanced by Alex Neil point starkly to the second option. When, for example, Neil poses the question of the first Scottish Assembly as being settled at Westminster by SNP/SLP negotiators he states that the question of how they are governed will be settled for Scottish workers in consultation with their class enemies, but without consultation with them and their organisations.

Nevertheless, the opposition expressed by Alex Neil to Wilson's policies of mass unemployment, to the cuts in social spending, and to the £6 limit implies the pressure of another course of action — the socialist course which the rank-and-file of the SLP have joined to fight for. For militants inside and outside the SLP, that course of action is a real option.

For them, the confusions and manoeuvres of the SLP leadership are a question of life or death — the life or death of their aspirations. They will decide whether the potential gain for struggle posed by the creation of the SLP is won or wasted. Those who wait for a year for their 'basis of criticism' will draw up not a balance-sheet but a post-mortem.

It is to aid such militants to fight the vacillations of their present leaders and build the vital struggles of their class that the IMG will develop in the coming weeks its critique of the positions of the leadership of the Scottish Labour Party.

We invite all militants to contribute to the important debate on the Scottish Labour Party by sending contributions to: 'Scottish Labour Party Debate', Red Weekly, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. (We reserve the right to edit contributions of over 400 words).



ANGOLA FORUM



'Victory to the MPLA or Hands off Angola?'

It is urgently necessary to take issue with the tenor of the two full-page articles published in your editions of 11 December and 1 January by Tony Hodges on the question of Angola.

Without doubt comrade Hodges is well informed factually and provides readers with much valuable material about the situation in that country, particularly about the intervention of the South African military and the US-backed Zairean forces on the side of the FNLA-UNITA alliance. But his analysis consists largely of sterile formulae such as 'MPLA is not a marxist movement', 'MPLA leaders have no intention of carrying through a socialist revolution in Angola', etc.

Of course we do not argue with these easily verifiable facts. But the point is not what is in the head of Agostinho Neto or in the paper programme of MPLA, but what is the class composition of that movement's base and the potential dynamic involved in its actions.

And it is only by examining these that one can begin to understand why it is that the USA and South Africa, along with neighbouring neo-colonialist regimes like those of Mobutu (Zaire) and Kaunda (Zambia), are working might and main to frustrate MPLA's victory. The material which comrade Hodges offers us actually makes their concern in particular quite inexplicable.

But it is when one comes to the slogan with which the article of 1 January ends that one comes face to face with the bankruptcy of his analysis and the dangerous directions in which it leads. 'Hands off Angola' is presented to us as the central line for the development of a campaign on the subject. But whose hands, comrade Hodges?

With this slogan you exactly echo the line currently being put forward by none other than Kaunda and Mobutu, the main *de facto* apologists for imperialist intervention at the Organisation of African Unity summit. These two, who equate Russian and Cuban assistance to MPLA with South African and US assistance to its opponents, merely serve to apologise and to cover up for the latter.

We should at this point in time be calling for the provision by the workers states of every possible assistance to MPLA! In fact, as Trotskyists we are for the increase of that support to whatever heights are necessary to ensure victory! By contrast comrade Hodges has, however unconsciously, been drawn into a position which implicitly equates the aid of the workers states to the objectively more progressive wing of the liberation movement with that of the imperialists to their direct agents in UNITA and FNLA!

Perhaps comrade Hodges' errors of analysis appear the more starkly to us because the two articles in *Red Weekly* bear an uncanny resemblance to the sort of material to which we have been subjected in the past three months by the Zambian media, whose 'non-aligned' stance is designed to back the totally reactionary line to which we referred earlier. Meanwhile there are, fortunately, at least some elements in Zambia and in many other African countries (eg. the students of Nigeria and Ghana, who are demanding the provision of personnel and equipment to fight on the side of MPLA) who have recognised the need to bring every possible assistance to MPLA.

Those for instance at the University of Zambia, who are currently trying to build a solidarity campaign in clear opposition to the pro-imperialist line of their government, would find material like these two articles in *Red Weekly* not just unhelpful but totally disorienting in the struggle to evolve a correct position. Of much more relevance would be the appearance of news of the activities and development of the British Angola Solidarity Committee, whose first meeting was pictured in *Red Weekly* of 18 December. Such material would make a positive contribution towards developing the necessary international support movement to ensure the victory of MPLA.

JOHN BLAIR



President Mobutu of Zaire—as US front-man in Africa, gave consistent support to FNLA

The real issues

TONY HODGES replies:

Debate among socialists about how best to work for the victory of the Angolan revolution is to be welcomed. Unfortunately, comrade Blair's letter does not help in this regard since it substitutes a string of absurd accusations for reasoned argument.

What, for example, does comrade Blair think can be achieved by making unfounded and ridiculous assertions such as that my articles in *Red Weekly* 'exactly echo the line currently being put forward by none other than Kaunda and Mobutu' (the right-wing dictators of Zambia and Zaire)?

Surely comrade Blair noticed that the articles exposed these regimes' collusion with the imperialist aggression against the Angolan people? The articles sought, in fact, to expose these neo-colonialist regimes' treacherous roles.

I reported how US military hardware was being poured into Angola under the guise of an 81 million dollar 'aid' programme for Zaire. I reported how British-made military radio equipment has been dispatched through Zambia with the Kaunda regime's connivance. In fact, both the Zairean and the Zambian governments are thought to have given the green light to South Africa's invasion of Angola.

In comrade Blair's opinion, the articles' call for 'Hands off Angola' mirrors the 'non-interventionist' stance of Mobutu and Kaunda. Quite the contrary.

The Zambian and Zairean regimes do not have a non-interventionist policy at all. They are collaborating up to their necks with the imperialist aggression. Rather than be hood-winked by these regimes' demagoguery about 'non-intervention', socialists should vigorously unmask their real record of collusion with the imperialist intervention.

Comrade Blair believes that the *Red Weekly* articles equate Soviet and Cuban assistance to the MPLA with South African and United States intervention on the side of UNITA and the FNLA. The articles never did any such thing.

The United States and South Africa are imperialist powers which have intervened in Angola to defend their ability to go on plundering the wealth of Africa. The Soviet Union and Cuba, by contrast, are not imperialist states but workers states. As I stated in the 22 January *Red Weekly*: 'The MPLA has every right to accept aid from the Soviet Union in order to defend Angola's independence from imperialist intervention'.

The key responsibility of British socialists is to mobilise opposition in this country to the British Government's involvement in the imperialist assault against the people of Angola. On 6 January, the British Government held talks with the US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, William Schaufele, and voiced support for the US's Angola policy. And on 30 January, several dozen British mercenaries were flown out to fight in the Angolan war.

The slogan 'Hands off Angola', raised in Britain today, is designed to defend the right of the Angolan people to self-determination and to stop British imperialist collaboration with the US-South African intervention. As the 1 January *Red Weekly* article stressed: 'The greatest aid that we in Britain can give the people of Angola is to demand that all the imperialist powers get out of Angola now. All British collaboration with the US and South African intervention must stop'.

Elsewhere in his letter, comrade Blair writes that it is 'sterile' to say that the MPLA is not Marxist and is opposed to making a socialist revolution. The MPLA's 'paper programme', he claims, is not important. The point, he asserts, is 'what is the class composition of that movement's base and the potential dynamic involved in its actions'.

The *Red Weekly* articles did not criticise the MPLA's 'paper programme'. They criticised the movement's programme as expressed in its *actions*: its opposition to strikes, its support for the Mobilisation Law allowing the Government to militarise labour; its opposition to democratic rights and its proclamation of a one-party state; its attempts to disarm the workers of Luanda and outlaw all self-defence bodies not under the control of the MPLA's army high command. The Angolan revolution cannot be led to victory without a Trotskyist party being built in Angola which can win the masses away from their present misleaders (of the MPLA as well as the FNLA and UNITA).

The 'class composition' of the MPLA is not enough to guarantee the victory of the Angolan revolution. The workers and peasants who support the MPLA are following a leadership whose actions constitute a roadblock to the victory of the Angolan revolution. Of course it is true that there is a *potential* dynamic in the revolutionary aspirations and struggles waged by many of the workers and peasants who today support the MPLA, but that potential will only be brought to fruition under the leadership of a mass revolutionary party.



Two agents of imperialism: FNLA leader Roberto (left) and UNITA leader Savimbi

Editorial policy

'We do not intend to make our publication a mere storehouse of various views. On the contrary, we shall conduct it in the spirit of a strictly defined tendency. But although we shall discuss all questions from our own point of view, we shall give space in our columns to polemics between comrades. Indeed, we regard one of the drawbacks of the present-day movement to be the absence of polemics between avowedly differing views' (Lenin, Statement of the Editorial Board of *Iskra*).

To judge from letters we have received, the publication in *Red Weekly* of articles with different emphases, and sometimes even different conclusions, on Angola and other questions appears to have given rise to some surprise and controversy on the left. This seems to arise from a confusion between the editorial policies developed under Stalin, and the genuine tradition of Marxism. None of the classic papers and journals of revolutionary Marxism, edited by Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Gramsci etc., ever imposed a unanimity of views on articles or their press.

Two simple rules are all that is necessary. Firstly, views which either directly support the capitalist class (reformism, racism, chauvinism, Zionism etc.) or have been shown by great historic events to be completely outside the historic political camp of the working class (revolution by stages, socialism in one country, advocating violence in the workers movement, etc.) are excluded from a revolutionary press by its very nature. Secondly, the paper must be edited in such a way both that its own line is clear — through leading articles, editorials, etc — and that it ensures that the weight of material within the paper reflects that line.

Outside of these guidelines, none of the classic papers of Marxism — *Iskra*, *Pravda*, *Ordine Nuovo*, *Inprecorr*, *Bulletin Oppozitsii* — ever sought to impose uniformity on their articles and contributors. On the contrary, most of them were notable for their controversies and range of views. *Red Weekly* cannot aspire to their eminence, but within our politically and materially limited resources we consciously seek to recreate this type of tradition against the distortions later imposed on it and unfortunately accepted as good coin by large parts of the left.

We have also received letters informing us that we show a lack of understanding of democratic centralism by printing direct polemics in our columns. This shows surprising ignorance of the history of the workers movement. The pages of the Bolshevik press, in particular, were notable for the raging debates which were carried out quite publicly in them. Indeed, every single one of Lenin's works — the polemical tone of some of which went by his own admission even beyond sensible bounds — was published quite openly.

So much for the 'tradition' that all debate is internal! All that is necessary in order to have a public polemic, even between comrades of the same organisation, is that it is conducted under the control of an appropriate leading body, making sure that there is never any confusion between what is the line defended by a publication or organisation and the views of particular individuals. This again is a small part of the Marxist tradition which we are trying to rebuild through *Red Weekly*.

THE EDITORS



White mercenary supervising tattered remains of reactionary FNLA forces

The current situation in Angola has been presented to public opinion as the direct consequence of a confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The 'detente' is said to be 'in danger'; the Angolan masses are said to have become cannon fodder for a conflict between two superpowers. Clearly, such a presentation of the 'facts' fulfills a political function for the mass media. The point is to hark back to the good old days of the Alvor accords, when there was a coalition government and 'peaceful' coexistence among the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA.

The frankest American argumentation, apart from Kissinger's, was presented by Daniel Moynihan, US ambassador to the United Nations, who asserted on 12 January that 'the Angolan conflict is a practically inevitable consequence of the detente.... You must see detente as a situation in which tensions will increase, or you have missed the point altogether.... The United States has taken a severe setback in South-east Asia and has gone into what I've called a failure of nerve. If in fact we are in a condition where we won't stand up to the ideological attacks, then we're not well advised to have detente' (*Newsweek*, 19 January).

Thus, it is under the heading of not suffering a 'failure of nerve' that the United States has been sending arms and money to the FNLA since 1962 while voting against most of the UN resolutions condemning Portuguese colonialism.

Material support

It appears that Nixon decided to ease off this support around 1969, probably under the joint effects of Portuguese and South African requests. Nevertheless, the material support shot up again after the overthrow of the Salazarist regime in Portugal on 25 April 1974. In January 1975 a meeting of the White House high-level intelligence coordinating body decided to send \$ 300,000 to FNLA leader Holden (*New York Times*, 19 December). In mid-July of the same year the CIA was authorised to send \$ 10 million in war material to the FNLA and UNITA. Since then, support has remained at a high level.

During the debate that broke out in Congress in December, some Senators complained about the secrecy surrounding US activities in Angola. But it was not only this formal aspect of things that was involved in the conflicts in Congress.

Different views

Not all American imperialists in Africa have identical interests. Some representatives of US imperialism see their policy within the overall framework of the continent and reconcile themselves to the most diverse forms of political power. For them, the United States has to preserve a certain image throughout the continent, reconciling the needs of their investments in South Africa with the needs of their investments in the independent states.

On the other hand, other imperialist factions base their attitude on unconditional support to the southern bloc and the regime in Zaire. Even

so, the American commitment in Angola is not the result of a deliberate and premeditated choice. Everything indicates that the coalition of FNLA-UNITA-MPLA in the Alvor accords represented a highly acceptable solution for the United States.

But subsequent events tore these accords to pieces. The confrontation between the MPLA and the FNLA, had it resulted in a defeat for the latter, would have left a clear field for the political and economic projects of the MPLA, with the immediate prospect of nationalisations. South Africa could not accept the American Government's allowing the establishment in Angola of a regime whose first act would be to set up a state economic sector at the expense of investors. This would have been a direct threat to South African investments in the Cunene River valley and in the Cassinga mines, for example.

Serious obstacles

Apart from the question of investments, an Angola controlled by the MPLA would be a serious obstacle to the South African perspective of splitting Namibia into weak separate 'Bantustans', and would have aided the forces struggling for immediate and total independence of the country. The South African state, taking advantage of its degree of independence of imperialist capital, decided on a direct intervention in Angola. While this blocked the advance of the MPLA, it forced the hand of the American Government, pushing Washington into unconditional alignment behind the FNLA and UNITA.

The reasons for the massive Soviet aid to the anti-imperialist fighters basically go back to a desire to break down the American support for the South African intervention. The USSR decided to bolster its aid shipments and diplomatic activities after the South African intervention and the US aid to the FNLA

had threatened the diplomatic balance in black Africa.

Zambia is increasingly close to the South African policy, which in itself represents a significant shift in the region. An FNLA victory, which would strengthen the forces among the Bakongo ethnic group, would give a second wind to the opposition of Bakongo notables to the Nguabi regime in the Congo. And this regime represents a not unimportant element in the Soviet position in central Africa.

The attempts at official dialogue between black Africa and the South African racists are becoming increasingly credible because of the concrete advantages Pretoria is dangling before the neo-colonial regimes. Finally, an FNLA victory would permit the constitution of a Zaire-Angola axis whose anti-communist weight would be quite formidable for the future of Soviet policy throughout Africa.

For the Soviet bureaucracy, the aim is to preserve its diplomatic clientele, among which must be placed the Congo, Somalia, Tanzania, Guinea, Algeria, and now Guinea-Bissau. Nevertheless, it is out of the question to equate the Soviet intervention with the American intervention. Whatever the diplomatic reasons for the Soviet military aid to the MPLA, we must consider this aid positive and reject the hypocritical attitude of those who call for 'non-interference by the great powers'.

Anti-capitalist

The consequences of this aid on the political course of the MPLA remain to be measured. In any case, the MPLA needed no Soviet pressure to oppose any overly impetuous development of the mass movement. While the MPLA had waged the national liberation struggles essentially in the rural areas, after 25 April 1974 the urban centres nurtured anti-capitalist currents that emerged from the student youth, over whom the MPLA had no direct control.

Thus, groups emerged like the Amilcar Cabral Committees (CAC), which were linked to the Portuguese UDP (Popular Democratic Union, Maoist), as well as some forces upholding a revolutionary Marxist orientation, such as the distributors of the newspaper *Revolucão Socialista*.

Decisive role

The CAC, which held a generally majority position within this far left, were able to play a decisive role in pressuring the MPLA for a whole period, particularly on the question of the neighbourhood committees and their coordination, and on the question of the self-defence militias. The militants of the CAC penetrated rather far into the ranks of the MPLA, taking on positions in military training and posts of responsibility. The MPLA leadership made a *de facto* accommodation with these currents, so as not to frontally oppose a sector of the masses that was developing a spontaneous movement during the year 1975.

When the civil war began to take a different course and it became necessary to prepare for a genuine protracted war, it became that much easier for the MPLA leadership to control the neighbourhood committees and isolate the far left.

In October the neighbourhood committee of Sao Paulo was occupied by the FAPLA (the military forces of the MPLA) and nine committee members were arrested, along with eleven militants of other neighbourhood committees. A wave of intimidation spread. In November these militants were released; some were deported to Portugal. The CAC were very much weakened, and the MPLA leadership was easily able to bring the structures of 'popular power' under control.

Lost battle

Clearly, attempting to lend these forms of self-organisation an anti-capitalist content provided an opportunity to wage a battle against the MPLA leadership. This battle was lost by the far left. The CAC developed opportunist conceptions in regard to the leadership of the MPLA, while others made mistakes in the abstract character of their propaganda. The fact that the repression against them did not bring the MPLA into conflict with the masses is proof of the mass movement's increasing reliance on the MPLA.

Nevertheless, this must in no way diminish our solidarity with these militants, especially those who oriented their work towards a socialist transformation of the Angolan revolution. Some of these militants, such as Salvador Catiao and Jose Ingumba, members of the *Revolucão Socialista* group, died fighting the FNLA and UNITA in Nova Lisboa, giving sterling proof of their anti-imperialist courage. The political battle of these militants is still not over.

A fight must be waged around the themes of freedom of expression and the right of organisation for all anti-imperialists. The broadest democracy must be demanded for those who are fighting reaction.

ANGOLA: The International Stakes

C. GABRIEL

PORTUGAL

Workers hit back at austerity plan

Five or six bombings a day, an increasingly trigger-happy police force, deepening divisions inside the Socialist Party, a series of workers' demonstrations and strikes — the ruling class and its parties still have far to go in restoring capitalist stability in Portugal, despite the advantage they gained after the abortive military revolt of 25-26 November. Nevertheless, certain aspects of their project are now becoming clear.

The hated police of the Salazar-Caetano regime, the Republican Guards, have been brought out of mothballs, re-equipped with armoured cars and heavy machine guns, and turned loose against the working

class. On New Year's Day they shot dead four people demonstrating outside Custodias prison near Oporto for the release of leftist political prisoners. Three weeks later they left one shop assistant dead and

several others injured after opening fire on a strike picket in Lisbon.

The re-arming of the police means that the authorities don't have to risk using the rank-and-file soldiers to intervene against strikes and demonstrations — which in the past often meant that the troops joined in with the workers against the authorities. They thus have a breathing space in which to attempt to restructure the army as a more effective tool of repression.

The new project for the army was outlined on 24 January by the chief-of-staff, General Ramalho Eanes. The army will be made up of an 'intervention force' of 10,800 men (more or less replacing Copcon) and a 'territorial force' of 16,100. The 'maintenance of internal security', however, features among the tasks of both forces.

The top brass of the army is also being beefed up with Spinoists and other reactionaries suspended after the abortive right-wing coup of 11 March 1975. At the same time an increasing number of fascist officials associated with the Salazar-Caetano regime are being released from jail to carry on their plotting for the reimposition of an open dictatorship.

'Strong state'

Thus the arrest of the left-wing Otelo de Carvalho coincided with the release of General Kaulza de Arriaga — the man who led the army in Mozambique at the time of the notorious Wiriyamu massacre, and later planned to oust Caetano from the right.

Arriaga is now among the names being touted for the right-wing candidate in the elections for the presidency. This post will play a key role in the project for stabilising capitalist rule in Portugal along the lines originally put forward by Spino — a 'strong state' on the model of De Gaulle's France.

This would be a regime in which the trappings of parliamentary democracy would still exist but where real power would be concentrated in the hands of a strong president who would have direct powers over the armed forces and executive organs of the state. The necessary precondition for this in the present situation is that the president be directly elected and not answerable to any parliamentary body.

But these capitalist plans are still far from being fulfilled. The working class is increasingly testing out its strength in a series of strikes and

demonstrations.

On 14 January, 3,000 people marched through the streets of Covilhã, a small industrial town near Lisbon, after a two-hour stoppage against the austerity measures. On 16 January it was the turn of the Lisbon construction workers to go on strike.

Significant

The next day saw not only the massive demonstration of 40,000 in Lisbon organised by Intersindical, but also an anti-Government demonstration of 5,000 in the northern city of Oporto — a very significant achievement in an area where the right reigns supreme, particularly since the Communist Party had called for a boycott of the demonstration to 'avoid a provocation'. Then on 21 January, 40,000 Lisbon shop assistants also mounted a two-hour stoppage — during which the police launched the attack on a strike picket mentioned above.

The shop assistants' strike was especially important in that the union is led by members of the Socialist Party. The shop assistants also decided to go on the 17 January Intersindical demonstration even while condemning it as a 'partisan manoeuvre' by the CP, and issued the following statement:

We think it necessary that the workers, whether or not they take part in the demonstration, should solidarise in a process of struggle with the following objectives: re-opening of the negotiations on the collective contracts [frozen after 25 November]; automatic adjustment of wages; recognition of the right of the workers to organise themselves into workers commissions and exercise workers control.'

Obvious split

They also demanded: 'Measures attacking at the root the corrupt commercial structures and dealing energetically with the actions of the speculators; application of the agrarian reform according to the principle of the land to whoever works it — protecting the interests of the small and medium proprietors — and support for the agricultural cooperatives; no differentiation bet-

ween the public and private sectors.'

These are hardly the policies of Mario Soares! And the split inside the SP is also very obvious at the open political level. A recent meeting of local SP leaderships openly condemned the rightward turn by the Soares leadership; one of the speakers, Socialist MP Jose Luis Nunes, warned against allowing the PPD to 'call into question the workers commissions and the other gains which have been won...social democracy, cannot be applied in our country.'

These divisions culminated in the farce of the meeting of leaders of the South European Socialist Parties: Soares took a trip to the US instead, and sent in his place one right-winger and one left-winger. The latter, the Agriculture Minister Lopes Cardoso, went out of his way to criticise the jailing of leftists after 25 November — which is supported by Soares.

Of course much of this is simply rhetoric. But it is a dramatic reflection of the tensions which are at work amongst the base of the SP. Most importantly, it provides a real possibility for revolutionaries to engage in a united front with these sections on the most burning questions of the day.

SP attacked

One of these is undoubtedly the need to combat the growing fascist offensive, which has been expressed mainly so far in the spate of bomb attacks against leftist homes and offices. Here too the SP can no longer claim immunity — its offices in Evora have been attacked, while Lopes Cardoso is now regularly reviled by the reactionary landowners as a 'communist infiltrator' and 'KGB agent'.

The organisation of workers self-defence against these attacks can be one of the key means of rebuilding a united working class offensive which can deal with all the attacks now being launched by the capitalists. The conflict is still far from being resolved. The centralisation of the present mobilisations around a clear programme of demands which avoid the ultra-leftism prior to 25 November can pave the way for the re-emergence of the workers commissions and new steps towards the achievement of workers power in Portugal.



The Media Support Group of the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class organised a picket on 27 January to coincide with the appeal of two Portuguese journalists sacked by the BBC external services. Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

Shah executes nine

Less than ten months after the murder of nine Iranian political prisoners by the Shah's regime, which led to the occupation of the Iranian Embassy in London, nine more Iranian political prisoners have been killed. This time they weren't 'shot while trying to escape' — a story which didn't go down too well last time — but were 'tried and

executed', or so the official version goes.

They belonged to a group of eleven political prisoners who were 'tried' by a military tribunal at the end of December and 'found guilty' of a long list of accusations, starting with such vague charges as 'conspiracy to overthrow the regime' and including more specific charges such as the assassination of three US military

advisors. Nine of them were eventually sentenced to death and executed on Sunday 25 January. Among them was one woman, the first woman political prisoner to be executed in Iran.

The trial took place in complete secrecy, and only the briefest official reports appeared in the Iranian press after it was over. It is possible, in fact, that there was no trial at all and the nine had already been killed before the trial — not that this would have made much difference, for the outcome of political trials in Iran is decided from the start, the defendants have no chance to defend themselves, they are forced to 'confess' under torture, and if they still refuse to 'confess' then their appointed lawyer 'confesses' for them.

While repression exemplified by such summary trials and executions is constantly increasing in Iran, the Labour Government not only refuses to take a stand against such atrocities but is continuing its very friendly relationship with the Shah's dictatorship.

The recent news that the Iranian Government may not be able to pay the last instalment of its 1,200 million dollar loan to Britain and the concern it caused among British capitalists shows quite how important this friendly relationship is to British capitalism. And after all, the Labour Government is there to protect the interests of British capitalists, not democratic rights in Iran.

DEMONSTRATION in support of Iranian 21, Sat 14 Feb—assemble 1pm at Cavendish Sq (nr Oxford Circus tube) for march to Iranian Embassy. Also picket, Mon 16 Feb, from 10am at Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey.

-WHAT'S ON-

DEMO AGAINST THE CUTS organised by West Midlands TUC in Birmingham, 21 Feb. Speakers include Alan Fisher (NUPE).

GAY WORKERS CONFERENCE: 14/15 Feb at Leeds Poly. Details from Gay Information Centre, 153A Woodhouse Lane, Leeds 2.

SHEFFIELD CAMPAIGN Against the Criminal Trespass Laws—public meeting, Thurs 12 Feb, Friends Meeting House, Sheffield. Local labour movement speakers—'defend the right to take direct action!'

CRITIQUE SEMINAR: John Quail on 'Anarchism and the British Working Class at the Turn of the Century'. Tues 10 Feb, 7.30pm, London School of Economics, St Clements Building, Room S-418.

MANCHESTER Angola solidarity campaign, Fri 6 Feb: 7.30, film 'Angola' and speaker, Manchester Centre for Marxist Education, Star and Garter, Fairfield St.

CENTRAL LONDON IMG fund-raising disco, Sat 7 Feb, 142 Drummond St, NW1. Band + events. Wine + real ale. 8pm—1am, entrance 50p o.n.o.

OXFORD IMG RED CIRCLE: 'Spain—the Crisis of the Old Order'. Mon 9 Feb, 8pm, Cape of Good Hope pub, The Plain.

AGAINST HEALTH CUTS—For a Socialist Health Service. Socialist Medical Association conference, Sat 14 Feb, 2—5pm, AEU Hall, Holloway Circus, Birmingham 1.

NAC National Planning Meeting, Sat 31 Jan, Aston University, Birmingham. Perspectives, 3 April demo and regional co-ordination to be discussed. New ALRA Bill to be presented.

WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER Campaign national conference, 10/11 April in Coventry. Open to all bodies supporting the campaign. Discussion of perspectives, amendments to Charter, structures. Credentials from 49 Lowther Hill, London SE23 1PZ.

DEMONSTRATE against Youth Unemployment! Sat 7 Feb in Birmingham, assemble 12 noon Victoria Sq. Demo to be followed by rally at AUEW Hall, Holloway Circus—speakers include Bill Jarvis (Pres, Birmingham Trades Council), Harold Marks (TC Exec), John Graham (AUEW shop steward), Brian Chambers (AUEW District Sec), Nick Bradley (LPYS). Chair: Linda Simon (Sec, TC Youth Advisory Ctee). Organised by Birmingham Trades Council.

ACCOMMODATION urgently needed by Red Weekly editorial worker. Phone Steve at 01-837 6954.

WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER—planning meeting for national conference, Thurs 5 Feb, 7.45 in the George, Liverpool Rd, N1. All Charter groups and supporting organisations invited.

HULL SOCIALIST FORUM: Dottie Wepler on 'The Women's Movement Today', Fri 6 Feb, 7.30, at the White Hart Hotel, Alfred Gelder Street, Hull.

PICKET BARBARA CASTLE: all-night vigil called by Camden Working Women's Charter to demand Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital be kept open. From mid-day Fri 13 Feb to mid-day 14 Feb—Canonbury Sq, Islington. Join the picket for as long and often as you can—all groups fighting the cuts welcome.

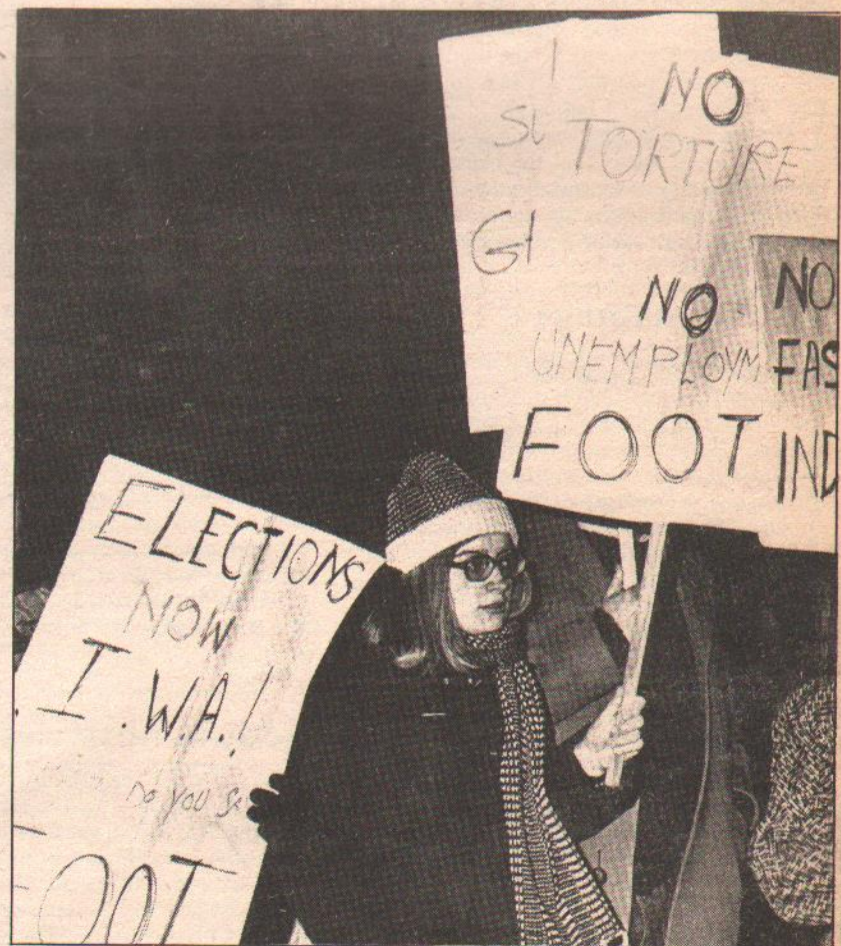


Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

Tens of thousands of political prisoners, press censorship, savage repression, torture, and the state of emergency. All these tactics of the Gandhi regime in India were politely ignored last Saturday by left Labour MPs Michael Foot and Syd Bidwell.

They were attending a Republic Day celebration organised by the executive of Southall Indian Workers Association in conjunction with the Indian High Commission. Southall is notable among the IWAs in Britain for supporting the repression — one of the reasons that the IWA executive recently postponed the elections. They were afraid that opponents would unseat them from the leadership.

The British Labour Government and its Tribune apologists are also refusing to take a stand against the repression. What's more, torturers from India's police are being trained in Britain, at Hendon and elsewhere. Indian socialists need full backing from the British labour movement — Saturday's picket was a start.

IRELAND

The plight of Republican prisoners

In Belfast alone, 704 men and women are held in prison because of their opposition to British imperialist oppression. In Ireland and Britain the total of Republican prisoners is more than 1,300, and with every day their plight becomes more gruesome. In Britain, especially, the prisoners are kept in solitary confinement and are often subjected to brutal beatings at the hands of prison screws.

They are also regularly denied visits, and when these are permitted the visitors are harassed and made to undergo degrading searches and interrogation. Republican prisoners are denied political status, and — in contrast to the VIP treatment given to multiple sectarian killer Albert Baker — are left to sit naked in their cells because of their refusal to wear prison uniforms. But then Baker is a Loyalist, and an ex-member of the SAS.

Frank Stagg, on hunger strike in Wakefield prison for more than seven weeks, is demanding repatriation to the North of Ireland. This right has in the past been freely permitted to Loyalist prisoners by the Labour Government, but similar demands from Republican prisoners have always been fiercely resisted. So Frank Stagg now faces death at the hands of the political assassins who were responsible eight months ago for the death of hunger striker Michael Gaughan — whose demand for a transfer was also refused.

book Law and State — The Case of Northern Ireland, Boyle, Hadden and Hillyard have shown that while Loyalists are generally caught in possession of pistols, Republicans get caught with rifles — naturally enough, sentences for the latter are very much steeper.

Army links

Fourteen of the North's 17 judges are Protestants. Most of these have been members of the Orange Order. Six have been Unionist MPs, three Attorneys-General, two Chief Whips of the Unionist Party, and one a Minister of Home Affairs. Their links with the Army are also very strong. Eight are former Army officers, one of whom served in the SAS.

A revealing indication of the way these judges and the Crown forces carry out their job was provided recently by the Labour Government's Attorney General, Sam Silkin. He told Parliament that out of 247 people convicted of membership of 'illegal' organisations over the last two years, only one was charged with belonging to an illegal Loyalist group — the Red Hand Commandos. All the rest were Republicans. Not one person has been charged with membership of the Ulster Volunteer Force since the organisation was banned last October.

But if placing Republicans behind bars has been relatively easy for British imperialism, the task of isolating the 'men behind the wire' has proved very difficult indeed. In 1972 Tory gauleiter Willie Whitelaw was forced to grant political status to these prisoners. Now the Labour Government is presenting Whitelaw's decision as an 'error of judgement', and has declared its intention of ending special category (political) status as from March.

Gangsterism?

Along with the ending of internment, this is a main plank in Rees's declared policy of depoliticising the conflict in the Six Counties and presenting it as gangsterism. He has announced that 'the rule of law will be imposed impartially through the courts' — but it is plain that this 'law' belongs to the capitalist class, and is administered by its loyal adherents.

The present attacks on Republican prisoners must be resisted, particularly any attempt to remove political status. In the face of increased British Army repression and threats from Loyalist para-militaries, it becomes ever more urgent to mount a campaign to secure the release of all Republican prisoners in Britain and Ireland, so that they may play a part in mobilising the anti-Unionist working class to defeat any British 'solution' and achieve the total and immediate withdrawal of British troops.

JOHN MAGEE



Irish prisoner after army beating

Many of the Republican prisoners in Britain have steadfastly protested that they were not responsible for the actions of which they were accused, and in many cases convictions were only obtained through the use of the conspiracy laws.

In the Six Counties, British imperialism has not found it necessary to make such widespread use of the conspiracy laws to put Republicans behind bars.

Since the passing of the Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Act in 1973, all of those charged with 'terrorist' offences have appeared before courts where a judge sits alone — without a jury. Furthermore, changes in the rule of evidence now permit 'confessions' obtained under duress (i.e. torture) to convict.

The so-called 'security forces' are of course infamous for sectarian discrimination in their treatment of Loyalists and Republicans. The latter are invariably charged with more serious offences even where the 'illegal' acts are identical. In their



More than 2,000 people marched through London last Sunday on the demonstration organised by the Bloody Sunday Commemoration Committee to demand British withdrawal from Ireland. The biggest single contingent, 500-strong, was marshalled by the International Marxist Group (above)—there were also big contingents under the banners of the International Socialists and the Troops Out Movement. Among other groups marching were two from Spain: the LCR-ETA(VI) and FRAP. Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

PHILIP AGEE TALKS

Continued from back page

In Western Germany after World War Two there was a need, so in addition to supporting the Christian Democrats — Adenauer's party — the CIA got going very early on with the social democrats — Willy Brandt, for example, when he went into politics in West Berlin. But in Britain it was different because Britain hadn't been occupied by the Nazis and fascists and there wasn't any strong Communist or left-wing movement.

So it may be that the CIA never felt it needed to intervene directly here. Certainly it had joint operations established with the British intelligence service, and there were a number of operations that led into Britain — the Congress for Cultural Freedom for example, *Encounter* magazine, *Forum World Features*, the Institute for the Study of Conflict. A number of activities have been undertaken by the CIA here — after all, 70 people sitting there in the Embassy are not doing nothing. But it's very difficult to say whether any of those activities were done without the knowledge of the CIA's British counterparts.

Certainly the CIA would intervene here if they thought it was necessary — they wouldn't hesitate a moment.

What would worry the CIA about the situation in Britain at the present time?

The CIA would without any doubt be monitoring the growth of the threat to American interests here as they do in every other country. What is the principal threat to American interests in Britain? The growth in the strength of left-wing political parties and the left-wing sectors of the British Labour Party.

The CIA would be collecting information on them, they would be preparing intelligence reports constantly, they would be receiving information on the same groups from their British counterparts — who are also monitoring these organisations and people — and

this intelligence would be passed back to Washington.

The CIA stays in Britain as the guest of the Labour Government. Can you explain how this works?

I think it is quite clear that it's not just the Labour Government. Whatever government is in power here, either Labour or Tory, they need the CIA. The CIA provides a considerable amount of intelligence for the British government. Remember that the British foreign presence has been diminishing, and the British intelligence operations have diminished in accordance. So where the British have withdrawn they have to rely on other intelligence services such as the CIA to fill the gap.

There is also the question of mutual security interests between the two governments — this would relate to Brazil, to Chile, to Uruguay, to Angola or to Indonesia, where the CIA has intervened quite massively to promote strong right-wing governments with great repression in those countries. This is also an area in which the British government, whichever it happens to be, would have a significant interest, although they like

others may lament the intensity of the repression.

There has been some speculation in the American press about how much demoralisation has been caused in the CIA due to your revelations. How serious do you think is the damage that you and others have been able to inflict on the CIA?

That's very difficult for me to say, because I can't follow the movements of all the people. If the people who have been named are indeed being taken out and sent back to the United States, and I hope they are, then the damage would be significant — because untimely personnel change-overs, the movement of people in and out constantly, the identification, the pressure that's brought to bear on them, the psychological pressure on them and their families has got to diminish their effectiveness.

So I think some damage has been done. Certainly they have struck back very hard at me with this campaign to identify me with the KGB. But just how strong the damage has been, I can't say.



CIA -THEY COULD

DO IT HERE TOO!

PHILIP AGEE TALKS TO RED WEEKLY

In the late 1950s the United States wanted to sour relations between President Sukarno and the Soviet Union. So the CIA produced a film purporting to show him engaging in sexual relations with a woman in Moscow. They planned to pass off this venture into the film industry as a KGB blackmail attempt.

Newspapers have not escaped the CIA's attention, either. Last year it had eleven 'journalists' working overseas, and in Britain *Forum World Features* left in a hurry after being exposed as a CIA agency for 'planting' stories. ABC correspondent Sam Jaffe claims that the CIA once drew up a list of 40 to 200 journalists who had cooperated with the agency.

But the CIA has not been getting it all its own way. The Watergate scandal brought its dirty deeds out of the murky waters of official secrecy. And two books, *The Cult of Intelligence* and *Inside the Company*, blew the lid on the CIA's covert operations. The latter was particularly damaging because the author, PHILIP AGEE, not only rejected the CIA's activities but has insisted that the CIA is an integral part of American foreign policy — a foreign policy dictated by the interests of big business.

Agee's conclusion is simple: if you want to rid the world of the CIA and its dirty tricks, you have to make the socialist revolution. In the light of recent exposures of CIA operations, *Red Weekly* spoke to him last week and asked him about the changing role in the world of 'The Company'.

Your own experience in the CIA was in Latin America in the late 1950s and 1960s — and at that time Latin America seems to have been the major field for the CIA's activities. How has the rise of the revolution in Western Europe in the past decade altered the CIA's priorities?

That's very difficult to say. Certainly the Angola situation is a high priority for the CIA right now, as would be Argentina. But it does seem that with the developments in Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece, the CIA is again having to focus on Europe.

It isn't the CIA that determines the priorities. The CIA reacts to the growth of the threat to American economic, political and strategic interests in any particular country. Usually that's the same thing as saying the growth in the strength of revolutionary and other left-wing political organisations.

If we take the case of Portugal, — how has the CIA attempted to alter the course of events since the overthrow of Caetano?

The techniques applied in Portugal would have been more or less the same as those applied in similar circumstances in many other countries. In the first place, the goal would have been to assist in the development and promotion of a political party or movement which would be an alternative to the left-wing parties which emerged so strongly after April 1974.

Of course, the CIA assisted social democratic parties in Europe for years after World War Two, and if the right

wing was discredited in Portugal then the CIA would obviously have begun to support the social democratic party. I think there is little doubt that significant financial support was given to the Socialist Party led by Mario Soares. The CIA may well also have funded certain other groups in one way or another — the PPD, for example.

In addition to the political parties, the CIA is without doubt active in promoting — through advice and probably funds — the Catholic Church's campaigns, particularly in the north of the country. Last July, August and September I felt very sure that the CIA was financing those terrorist campaigns against the left in the north of Portugal.

Additionally the CIA would have been trying to split the trade union movement, as it did in Italy and France right after World War Two. During most of 1974 following the coup a battle was waged to try to establish a Portuguese affiliate of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions — which in Europe is more or less the trade union arm of the social democratic movement.

The CIA was instrumental in the founding of the ICFTU in 1949, and the people the ICFTU sent into Portugal were people well known for their CIA connections, like Irving Brown and Michael Boggs — American trade unionists in the foreign field working for the American Federation of Labour. But the effort to establish a Portuguese affiliate of the ICFTU failed when the Intersindical, which is more or less dominated by the Communist Party in Portugal, was established as the only legitimate national trade union confederation in January 1975.

We will just have to see what happens from here on. Without doubt the ICFTU people have continued to press for an affiliate in Portugal, and now with the turn of events since 25 November I would think you can expect any day the establishment of an ICFTU affiliate in Lisbon — if it hasn't happened already.

The CIA would also have been very anxious about the development of the left, and the predominance of the left in the Armed Forces Movement during the months following the coup — especially during the Goncalves period. They would have been working to try to split the AFM, in an effort to isolate the more progressive and left officers in the movement and create cohesion among the 'moderates'. They may well have been trying to promote as well as they could the emergence of the Melo Antunes group.

I think they were very pleased with developments on 25 November and afterwards, because the threat to them has eased considerably.

It's important also in this context to understand that it probably wasn't just the CIA — probably the British service, the French service, the West German service, the Dutch service, who knows how many other services were involved. Certainly Kissinger undoubtedly encouraged the Western European powers to meddle in the matter and not leave it all up to the Americans.

Whether there was a centre or a mechanism established for co-ordinating the efforts of the different services I just can't say. I would assume it was probably established here in London.

Are American interests the same in relation to Spain, where 16 CIA agents have been named recently?

American interests in Spain would be essentially to assist in a liberalisation of the regime there. The American Government, the CIA would always certainly prefer the more moderate forms of parliamentary democracy to the sort of regime that has emerged in Chile for example.

In Spain I would think that they would be trying to promote the fortunes of the social democratic party, and possibly some more liberal elements of the right wing, in order to create political forces that could take control of the country and exclude Communist or other left-wing participation in government there.

And of course in the trade union movement, where the Communist Party is so strong, they would be seeking to discredit the party and create alternative trade union institutions — again probably through the mechanism of the ICFTU — which could compete with the trade union sectors controlled by the Spanish Communist Party.

You've already mentioned the relationship of the CIA to social democratic forces in Portugal. What form does this take in Britain?

I don't know that the British social democratic movement has ever needed assistance from the outside. The CIA wouldn't intervene unless there was a need.

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RED WEEKLY



Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

A Day in the Life....

Our main goal in Ecuador in the early 1960s, which was where I was working, was to bring about a break in diplomatic and commercial relations between Ecuador and Cuba. We formed all sorts of front organisations, we engaged in a massive propaganda effort in the country to create an atmosphere of hysteria, fear towards the growth of communism within the country, its support from Cuba, the threat to traditional values and all that sort of campaign.

At one critical point we had a number of bomb squads going around and placing bombs in the most revered churches in the different cities — and leaving behind propaganda attributing these bombings to a left-wing organisation — usually the Revolutionary Union of Ecuadorian Youth. The bombs didn't do much damage and they didn't hurt people. But they caused a lot of noise, and they were the peg on which the propaganda campaign and agitation and mass demonstrations were made, because after each bombing there would be a huge civic demonstration against the left wing which was trying to destroy the churches.

At one point one of these bomb squads — which incidentally were part of the Social Christian Movement, which was an important political party and is the christian democratic movement in Ecuador — at one point they placed a bomb at the Cardinal's house. The Cardinal was about 89 years old, and because of the influence of the Church was probably as powerful, if not more powerful, than the President himself. He was conveniently down town at the Basilica when the bomb went off at his house, but it made a lot of noise and immediately after the bombing thousands of letters and telegrams of support for the Cardinal began to pour in from all over the country.

A mass demonstration was organised in support of the Cardinal a week after the bombing, and it was the largest demonstration in the history of the city. Thousands upon thousands of people walked through the streets converging on the main plaza down town, with a whole series of hysterical anti-communist speeches given by the speakers. The Cardinal was the last speaker, and he said that following the teachings of Christ he would forgive these communist terrorists that had tried to assassinate him. A week later the Government broke diplomatic relations with Cuba.

REVOLUTIONARY STUDENTS RALLY

Speakers include: Tariq Ali, Robin Blackburn, John Ross, representatives of the Portuguese and Irish sections of the Fourth International
Discussions on *Labour Government * Spain and Portugal * Ireland * Eastern Europe*

Saturday 27 February, the Assembly Hall, Institute of Education, Malet Street, London WC1. 10.30am—6.30pm. Organised by IMG Student Commission. Tickets 60p from 97 Caledonian Road, London N1.

Not enough

A final surge to the month brought us 50p from the Basque club, North London IMG £12.40, D. Macker £1, York IMG £2, Newcastle IMG £30, Edinburgh IMG £10, A. Holmes £2, and a big thank-you for the £70 from P. Sinclair, totalling £127.90 in the week. But this boost did not overcome the after-Christmas doldrums which most of our readers have been suffering from, and last month we only received £204 in total.

Now we need a big boost to start the campaign for the 16 page paper. The massive workers demonstration in Barcelona is the type of development we have to cover even more in the paper. Already *Red Weekly* has unrivalled coverage of Portugal. We need it now to cover the whole European revolution. Only YOUR money can help us achieve it. So keep it flowing into the *Red Weekly*, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

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