

RED WEEKLY

Britain out of Ireland!

All out for
February 1st demo!

Assemble SHEPHERDS BUSH GREEN, 1.30 p.m.

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1.4 MILLION REASONS TO RECALL THE TUC

On Monday Len Murray emerged from the meeting of the TUC and Labour Party chiefs to announce that 'he was concerned' about the level of unemployment. But 'so were the Government'.

That same Government had six days earlier announced the worst unemployment figures for thirty years. In the year of supersonic passenger travel, nearly one and half million workers are unemployed even according to official figures.

But the fight back against the capitulation of Murray and Wilson is starting. The climb down of the Steel Corporation in the face of militant strikes shows what can be done. And the steelworkers were fighting their *own* union leaders as well! Without the union leaders' support the policies of the Wilson Government could not last for one moment.

MILLSTONE

But the decisions of the last TUC Congress are a millstone around the necks of the working class. Committed to acceptance of wage limits and no resistance to the Government's attacks on jobs, the working class finds itself hamstrung at every step.

A vital part of the fight back for jobs is to unite all those fighting for the right to work into a massive movement to reverse the



line of the TUC. This means advancing in every struggle and organisation the demand for the recall of the TUC and Labour Party conferences to break with the policies of this Government.

In the steelworkers' struggle, the demonstrations on cuts and unemployment, the local conferences for the right to work, the Labour Movement Assembly, the

Rank and File Organising Committee's Right to Work March, a class struggle fight must be waged against the policies of Wilson, Healey, Murray and Jones.

There are already 1½ million reasons for doing so. If the workers movement fails to act soon there will be two million.

*Recall the TUC — reject the Government's policies.

Another victory for Jenkins?

As we go to press Irish Republican prisoner Frank Stagg is at the point of death. He has been lying critically ill in the hospital wing of Wakefield Prison for some weeks now. Latest bulletins indicate a serious decline in his condition. In the meantime a regular picket has been held outside the home of Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins.

There was a time when the press talked enthusiastically of the 'liberal' and 'humane' qualities of Roy Jenkins. We presume that it was his humanitarian qualities that led him to introduce the Prevention of Terrorism Act and to suspend the democratic rights of the Irish people in this country. We presume that it is his humanitarian qualities which now lead him to try to solve the dispute about the political status of Irish Republican prisoners by bringing them to the point of death.

Frank Stagg's death would simply be the end point of a regime of solitary confinement, of personal abuse including being left naked in his cell, and of force feeding. The complete indifference of Jenkins and the Labour Government to the plight of Frank Stagg and to his impending death is a disgrace. Stagg and his comrades—particularly Gerry Mealey, who has also been on hunger strike since 14 December — are political prisoners. It is with that in mind that *Red Weekly* calls once more for the release of all political prisoners in British jails.



TROOPS OUT NOW

END ALL PRIVATE PRACTICE

The British Medical Association are meeting on 12 February to discuss the result of the ballot now taking place amongst the consultants. The ballot will decide whether or not consultants will resign *en masse* from the NHS, a decision which would take effect in three months time.

If the consultants decide not to resign, it will be on the basis that legislation will be put to Parliament phasing out private beds only where equivalent facilities in private hospitals already exist in the same area.

This means that for the indefinite future pay beds will continue to exist as part of the NHS in those areas where private hospitals are not financially viable.

Picket

This policy put forward by Barbara Castle clearly goes against the resolution passed at last year's Labour Party conference, and the policies of unions like the National Union of Public Employees and the National and Local Government Officers Association. These call for the immediate closure of all pay beds in the NHS.

The National Co-ordinating Committee Against Cuts in the NHS is organising a picket on 12 February from 12-2 p.m. outside BMA House, Tavistock Square, London W.C.1. We urge readers to put down resolutions in their trade union branches etc. supporting this action, which can mark the beginning of a fight back against the reactionary consultants. This fight must be taken into the whole labour movement, as part of a fight to implement the Labour Party resolution and fight for the banning of private practice outside as well as inside the NHS.

Sabotage

The moves towards a two-tier health service are a serious threat to an already ailing National Health Service. Preparations have to be made by health workers now to fight the sabotage of the consultants through private practice bans, refusal to service consultants taking action, etc.

But the fight cannot be left to health workers alone. The crisis in the NHS is the concern of the whole labour movement, which must give full support and assistance to health workers in struggle. Only this can break the reactionary offensive of the consultants.

For further details of the BMA picket, contact: Dr Paul Stern, 55 Bridge Lane, London N.W.11. (01-455 4920).

STEEL: The lull before the storm

'Our aim must still be to reduce our workforce by around 40,000 in two years.' These were the defiant words of British Steel Corporation chief executive Bob Scholey as strikers at the Trostre, Velindre, and Port Talbot steel plants returned to work last week. But through Scholey's cloud of rhetoric one fact shines through — the determined fight by rank-and-file steelworkers for the right to work and against wage-cuts has stayed the hand of the BSC and shown all workers that it is possible to fight back against 'rationalisation' plans and the unemployment policies of the Wilson Government.

Nothing, however, has been finally 'settled' in the steel industry. Instead the BSC has decided on a truce in the war. In return the leadership of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation has given up even the pretence of leading a national fight against the BSC's rationalisation

plans. The local areas will be left to take the brunt of the BSC's national offensive.

On paper BSC has partially withdrawn its threat to weekend working worth £16.50 or more in steelworkers' pay packets. In practice, as Sirs and the ISTC bureaucracy concede,



JOSEPHINE WRIGHT

Steelworkers lobbying talks between the unions and the BSC on 22 January were insisted that unless the BSC climbed down the strike action would spread and they would be demanding national strike action. Peter Burke, Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers Convenor at the Llanwern plant, told Red Weekly just what the ending of the guaranteed working week would mean for his members:

'If it was suspended unilaterally by the Corporation it would mean that the Corporation could deploy its labour on any basis that it wanted to, during any period of the working week. This would mean that you could be at work two days and off three days — it would be dictated by the Corporation itself.'

Llanwern was 'very sympathetic' to the action being taken in other South Wales plants, Burke said. 'The rebellion is there on the shop floor. All we want is the dictate from the national level where we can really get the lead.'

Josephine Wright, Senior Staff Representative of the clerical union APEx at the Clydebridge works, also wanted national strike action but explained how traditional craft divisions and backward attitudes to women workers weakened the struggle of steelworkers as a whole.

Photo: ANDREW WARD (Report)

NURSERY SCANDAL GROWS

A GROWING SCANDAL is emerging over the state of care for children under five. After a stream of government reports on battered children, the Department of Health has now thrown the responsibility for any increase in child care onto voluntary groups and 'existing resources' — which the DHSS recognises may simply mean mothers getting together.

The state only provides places in day nurseries for about seven per cent of the under fives, and now moves are under way by local authorities to strangle even this limited provision. In 1975 central government made provision for £9 million to be spent on nursery education. In response to a question in Parliament, figures were given which showed that one-third of this had not been spent by the local authorities to which it was allocated (see accompanying table).

It is clear from this that despite protestations about education cuts, some authorities have failed to take advantage of the limited finance actually provided. Some of them have hidden behind the excuse that demand for day nurseries is falling. However the DHSS itself admits that the demand amongst mothers, whether employed or not, covers a third of all under fives.

Increased charges

What the local authorities are doing, in fact, is to increase charges to such an extent that child care is placed outside the budget of working class and single parent families; demand drops, and nurseries close.

The trend is quite clear. Nursery education is being phased out in Britain. As unemployment mounts, the need to service women in the labour force becomes irrelevant. Battered children, oppressed women and all the other aspects of the crisis of the family are washed away in a flood of hypocritical tears from the media over 'the deaths of innocents'.

Authority	Allocation £	Amount not yet spent £
Avon	267,443	267,443
Bolton	107,500	74,800
Bromley	95,000	95,000
Buckinghamshire	165,000	115,000
Cambridgeshire	195,000	100,000
Coventry	120,000	50,000
Croydon	147,500	147,500
Cumbria	165,300	165,300
Derbyshire	412,500	122,500
Ealing	107,500	107,500
East Sussex	195,000	155,000
Hampshire	552,500	552,500
Havering	70,000	30,000
Isles of Scilly	2,500	2,500
Kent	665,000	485,000
Lancashire	364,910	7,910
Leicestershire	322,500	225,500
Northumberland	115,640	115,640
Oxfordshire	154,775	129,775
Redbridge	95,000	95,000
Salop	145,000	145,000
Somerset	135,890	135,890
Suffolk	255,000	218,600
Trafford	69,375	69,375
West Sussex	102,500	87,500
Wiltshire	122,000	122,000



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

COLLEGES FIGHT BACK

The fight against cuts in nursery provision has already led to action in two colleges.

At Middlesex Polytechnic, where the nursery was only established as the result of a student occupation a couple of years ago, students and staff have now taken over the nursery to protest at a massive increase in the charges for looking after the children of women working or studying at the college. One woman student, for instance, is being asked to pay charges amounting to more than her total annual grant. As we went to press, the sit-in had been extended to take in the administrative offices as well.

Meanwhile, student union policy at the University of East Anglia is that the University should be completely responsible for the nursery, including its financing. The UFA has had a nursery and play group since 1971, both of which are used by staff, students and campus workers. Both are now under threat due to alleged lack of finances. The Joint Shop Stewards committee on the site is actively involved in the Nursery Campaign Committee to prevent any cuts here.

The Inner London Education Authority is to take action against a Hackney teacher who has been involved in recent actions against the education cuts. Mike Colley was elected by teachers at Clissold Park School as a delegate to the 21 October demonstration against the cuts (above) and so took time off work to attend. The IEA now intends to punish him for his 'unauthorised absence'.

This move is a clear attempt to intimidate teachers from becoming involved in the growing campaign against Government policies on education. The

next focus for action here is the 27 February demonstration called by the National Union of Students, and already many teachers are calling on the National Union of Teachers to take strike action on that day. The defence of Mike Colley against any victimisation will be an essential part of such a campaign.

NEXT WEEK: Red Weekly interviews Mike Colley on the fight against the cuts.

IN FOCUS

Who cracks the whip?

Margaret Thatcher emerged last week clad in the bright blue armour of cold war rhetoric. Her aim is clear — to gather her disaffected middle class base around her while she gets ready for the serious business of preparing to take governmental power from Labour.

Meanwhile Yorkshire miners heard left Labour MP Norman Atkinson spell out the threat of a massive Tory electoral victory. 'More than 1,500,000 unemployed, massive cuts in social expenditure, and a six per cent drop in living standards are the three hoops through which Mrs Thatcher is going to make Harold Wilson and his cabinet jump', he said.

But the Yorkshire miners did not hear Atkinson promising to head a fight against the Labour leadership who have launched such a vicious attack on the rights of British workers. This is not surprising, since Atkinson and most of the other Tribunites voted for 8,300 Chrysler workers to be sent down the road, and voted for the budget which proposed the expenditure cuts now being implemented. He correctly voted against the pay curbs package, but has failed to lead any campaign in the base of the Labour Party and the trade unions for an open fight against the £6 limit.

The seriousness of Atkinson and his fellow lefts in their stated aim of fighting the Government's policies is to be judged not by words but by their actions, or lack of them, in leading a fight in the whole of the labour movement to support all workers going into struggle and to fight against the Wilson leadership of the Party. Instead they choose to divert this struggle by conducting a reactionary campaign for import controls — a policy designed to create a chauvinist unity between British workers and the bosses at the expense of foreign workers, diverting attention away from the scandalous role which this Government and its backers in the TUC are playing.

Militants should be putting forward policies capable of unifying the class and at the same time demanding that Atkinson and the Tribunites should place themselves firmly in the camp of such efforts to oppose the policies of this Government. It is this which will show who really intends to fight Wilson and who does not. The movement to recall the TUC to break with the Government's policies is growing in strength. Every union branch should pass resolutions to this effect for their national executives. Workers like those in the steel plants, shortly to be hurled into conflict against wage cut and productivity demands from their employers, should seek to unite their efforts into a campaign of political opposition to the course which this Government is taking.

MINORITY MOVEMENT

Local conferences are also being held right round the country. These must be coordinated with a nationally organised response. For this reason the IMG will be building support for the Right to Work March called by the Rank and File Organising Committee. We will also be pressing for delegates to the Labour Movement Assembly to be held in London on 27 March, and are supporting the IWC conference on the car industry.

At all these the IMG will be arguing for the formation of a militant minority movement in the trade unions, a class struggle left wing against the Government's policies. Unity in action is vital, but the formation of such a movement can only be achieved by a political fight against anyone who seeks to divide the movement of opposition to the Labour Government's policies, and against the Communist Party, whose policies—by placing their own unity with the left social democrats higher than the interests of the working class—lead inevitably to sell-outs and defeats.

The IMG will be fighting for policies which can unite the working class to repel the major attacks now being made on the standard of living of the majority of people in this country.

- * Opening of 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 to work.
- * 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.



Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

Steelworkers lobbying the talks between the unions and BSC last week

it will be up to local plant management to decide whether weekend working is necessary.

On paper there are no hard figures to indicate that the Corporation's £170 million worth of savings through 44,000 redundancies will be achieved. In practice the ISTC has committed itself to reductions in manning levels and greater job flexibility which would lead to large-scale redundancies. Of course the ISTC wants these to be 'voluntary' which is as voluntary as rape for the thousands of steel workers who will end up on the dole if these plans go through.

BSC assault

The carrot for the rank-and-file is the maintenance of the guaranteed working week and the continued sur-

vival of certain smaller plants — a concession won by the fighting unity of the South Wales steelworkers, not by the negotiating skills of Bill Sirs. The stick is the steel unions' promise to bring their full weight to bear on members at individual plants who are refusing to cooperate with the agreement.

Having left steelworkers to face the BSC's assault, the ISTC leadership have obligingly tied their members' hands behind their backs. The BSC no doubt calculates that if it gives one section a good battering with no threat of national action, its other proposals, plant closures and all, will go through with relatively little resistance.

To add insult to injury, after conceding massive job loss, the executive of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation made the three week-

old Port Talbot strike official. Thus the rank-and-file workers who forced BSC to 're-think' their plans through determined strike action have received token payment for leading the struggle the ISTC executive has resolutely refused to embark upon. But the concessions won by their actions have been immediately imperilled by the traitorous conditions agreed by the union leaders.

Disappointment

The defence of the right to work in the steel industry now rests squarely with the rank-and-file. Those plants that struck against the run-down of weekend working or, like Corby and Scotland, called for national strike action must lead the fight for national resistance to the BSC's plans.

Over the next few weeks the union leaders will be campaigning up and down the country to prevent any mass walk-out when the BSC starts reducing week-end working in the South Wales plants — the present deadline being 8 February. In these plants action committees involving all unions on site are needed to give leadership and policy to the thousands of rank-and-file steelworkers who have fought against mass sackings and wage cuts.

In Scotland, the Scottish Steel Action Committee has already expressed its disappointment with the deal. Along with action committees in other plants it can send out the call for a national conference of steel-plant delegates to work out a strategy to beat the BSC's plans and break the scabbing role of their own unions.

Books

The Port Talbot workers in particular have shown that this is possible. Their example must be seized upon and developed in other steel plants before the heavy hand of the ISTC bureaucracy can deaden the prospects for a fight.

In the presently existing guaranteed working week steel workers have a vital weapon around which to launch any fight back. This guarantees 80 per cent of average earnings to steelworkers. By fighting for its extension into a 100 per cent policy giving full protection to earnings

'The rebellion is there'

What will be the effect of BSC's proposals on Clydebridge?

Terrible. There will be very little steel-making left in the area. In Scotland as a whole there will be approximately 4,000 jobs lost.

In and around the Lanarkshire and Glasgow area, they are paying off Rolls Royce, they are paying off Marathon, paying off Hoover. In Cambuslang they are asking for even more redundancies.

Cambuslang is going to die. There are two main industries, Hoover and BSC. It won't just affect those two industries, it will go right down to the small shop-keeper.

On top of all this, Glasgow District Council are threatening to put 2,000 people out of work.

What has been the general attitude of people in your area to the BSC proposals?

To utterly reject them.

Are you in favour of national strike action?

Yes, definitely. But some of the workers are afraid to take strike action. If they walk out of the gate, the management will close the gates and never open them again. Occupations have not been

considered yet, but they probably will be.

Another problem is that the staff unions, APEX and ASTMS, are not represented on the National Steel Committee. The Steel Committee itself has kept us off. We have been trying to get on for three years. But we have been blocked. Somehow they don't seem to look on staff members as trade unionists.

So by cutting you out they have cut women out of representation on the national steel committee?

More or less. We have 55 per cent female membership and 2,000 members in Scotland.

Other workers have complained at the lack of information. Would you be in favour of a trade union campaign to open up all the books of the BSC?

Yes. We have called for an independent public enquiry into the management of the BSC. We have sent telegrams to Bill Sirs on this. The BSC are telling their bread and butter customers to import from abroad. One of the works is rolling Dutch slabs. What are they trying to do?

	£m
1967-68	24
1968-69	74
1969-70	71
1970-71	99
1971-72	20
1972-73	76
1973-74	252
1974-75	164
Total:	780

against any cuts in weekend working or attempts to implement short-time working at the workers' expense, steelworkers can defend both their earnings and all jobs.

Secondly, in rejecting the BSC's plans the books of both the steel plants and the relevant government departments must be thrown open to reveal the real causes of the crisis in the steel industry — ferocious competition in a shrinking world market, secret deals with the European cartels limiting production, outdated production methods, and years of providing cheap steel from a nationalised industry to private capitalist industry. Over the last eight years government pricing policies have cost the BSC £780 million — five times the figure the Corporation is now asking for in labour economies.

Pimps

Setting BSC's Whitehall-set prices against those in the European Coal and Steel Community, the *Sunday Times* (18 January) calculated the cost of the Government's price policy to the BSC as follows:

The steel industry has provided a living for years for the professional pimps of private capitalist industry and the financial institutions — at the expense of the working class's taxes. And now the workers in the industry are being told it's their crisis and they must pay for it. All these debt and interest charges should be repudiated and the capital saved used in re-equipping the industry without job loss and in the interests of the working class.

A struggle launched on this basis could turn last week's concessions into a permanent victory for steelworkers and strike a mighty blow for the right to work of the whole working class.

Mick Gosling

Chance for car workers to hammer out strategy

Militants from the motor industry will meet this Saturday in Birmingham at a conference organised by the Institute for Workers' Control. A meeting to exchange experiences and discuss a strategy for defending the jobs and living standards of car workers is long overdue.

Last year, an attempt by British Leyland Combine stewards to set up a National Motors Standing Committee fell flat on its face after a couple of meetings. At that time Derek Robinson, local leader in British Leyland, Longbridge, and a member of the Communist Party, claimed that lack of support made the venture impossible.

Far more likely reasons were the complete capitulation of the union leaders and BL convenors to the Government's Ryder plan for sackings and speed-up, and the failure so far of militants throughout the industry to fight for a clear programme to beat back the employers' and Government's attacks.

Open books

Car workers and the unions can work out a plan for production which defends jobs and produces products for social need rather than private profit. To save all jobs this requires the immediate opening of all the car bosses' and Government books by workers' committees in every plant, and a national workers' enquiry into the state of the industry.

This will allow the workers to assess the causes of the crisis, mount a campaign demonstrating the need for nationalisation, and allow them to begin to draw up plans for alternative uses of present plant and equipment. In collaboration with workers facing redundancies in all the car firms, a workers plan for the car industry must be developed.

Car workers have seen quite enough of Ryder Plans and White Papers — all prepared far from the gaze of the workers who are going to suffer their vicious job-cutting logic when implemented. What we need now is a campaign to blow wide open all the secret plans of the State and bosses to smash jobs and living standards.

Model

A model of the kind of workers' enquiry required was that carried out by stewards from the Chrysler research and administration centre at Whitley. Their conclusions dem-

anded nationalisation without compensation, including accountability to all workers for investment of state finance, disclosure of all information, and No Run-Down, No Closures, No Redundancy'.

Democracy

Of course, the demand for nationalisation and opening of the books to prepare it under workers control has to be immediately relevant to the struggles of workers in the plants.

Not only must there be the greatest possible democracy, involving mass meetings and with recall of all elected representatives (not the cretinous 'participation' deals with employers aimed at enticing workers' representatives into taking capitalist responsibility for the good 'health' [profits] of

the firms) by the workers. Real workers control such as could be planned through the opening of the companies' books will not be won by force of argument with the employers or the Labour Government, but only by the organisation of mass action by the workers themselves.

Refusal

The employers (and the Tribune lefts) may like the idea of participation, but the sort of control needed to defeat the car bosses gives Lord Ryder and Harold Wilson bad dreams. In BL Cowley recently, when the stewards' Open the Books Committee threw out a management proposal to reveal the financial state of the Assembly Plant and demanded workers' scrutiny of all company books, management wasted no time in refusing.

Saturday's conference in Birmingham could take a big step forward by adopting such a programme for nationalisation without compensation involving workers control. But then a campaign has to be mounted in the industry for these policies, which won't at all be welcomed by the union leaders or the Government, so desperately working hand in glove with the employers at present.

Fight back

Such a campaign has to break with the Labour leadership and those in the trade union leadership supporting and implementing their policies. Such a break can pave the way to a defeat of their policies if the IWC allies itself with those militants at present fighting for mass action to beat back the offensive in the plants.

Sam Boyd



Photo: ANDREW WILKINSON (Report)

Audrey Wise speaking at IWC conference last summer

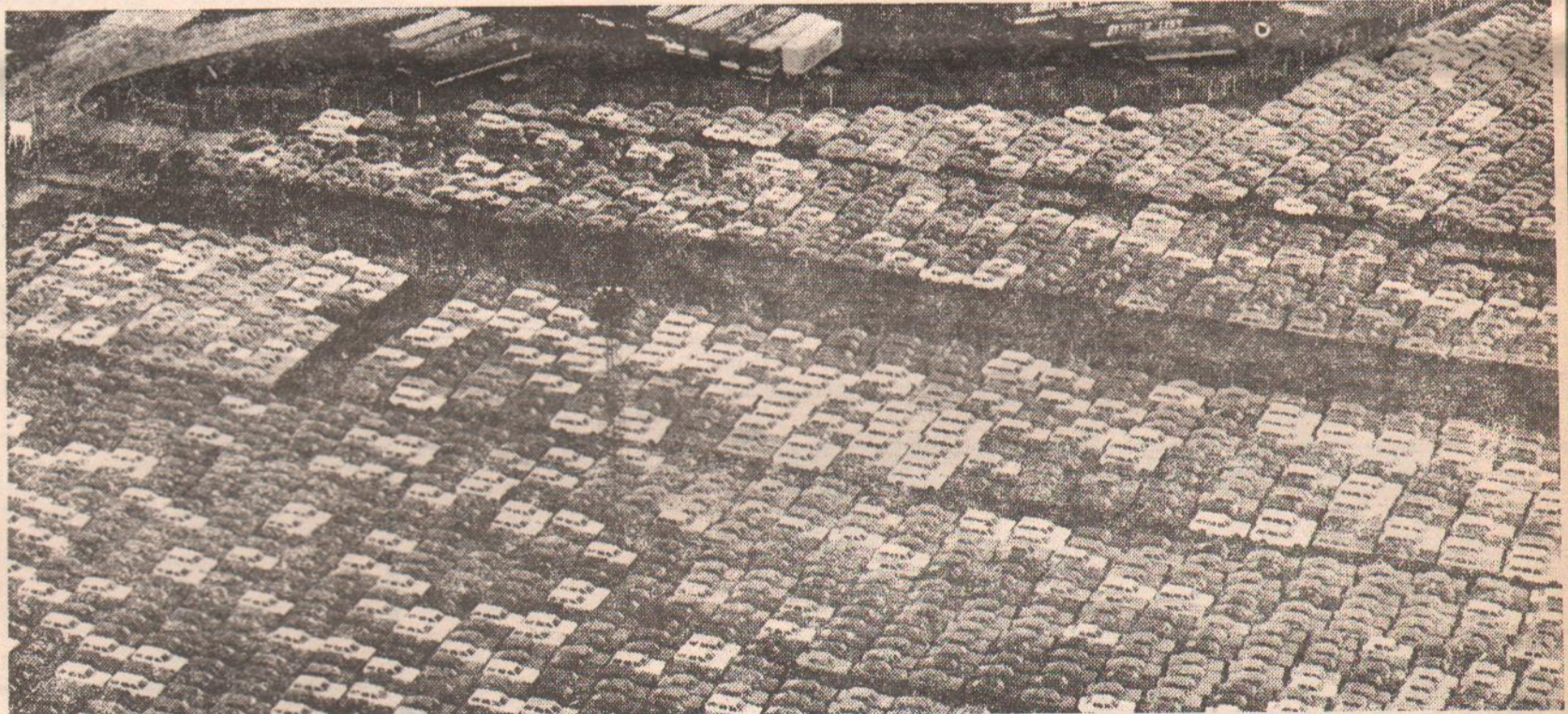
The 'left' alternative

What can we expect from the speakers at the IWC conference? First and foremost, militants should have no confidence in the policies of some of those on the platform.

Tribune MPs Brian Sedgemore and Audrey Wise, for instance, both advocate import controls as a solution for the problems of the motor industry. But neither they nor the supporters of such a policy, like the Communist Party, have ever explained why they expect workers in this country to suffer the higher prices of British cars while profits soar and no jobs are guaranteed. Nor do they explain how all this flag-waving for British industry is going to save the jobs of foreign workers endangered by the cancellation of British imports.

But this isn't all. These lefts haven't fought for even the policies they advocate on paper. After standing on platforms opposing the Government's plan to sack thousands at Chrysler, they ended up joining the rest of the Tribune group in voting for the Government's plan, including 8,000 redundancies.

Brian Sedgemore's defence of this policy in an article in the 26 December *Tribune* simply says that the alternative was to sack all the 25,000 workers — precisely the argument used by the right wing. If this is the sort of policy adopted at the IWC Conference then it will do very little to stop the rot in the car industry.



The state of the industry

Nearly 40,000 livelihoods destroyed in one year. Twenty thousand of those in British Leyland alone — and that is only the thin end of the Ryder Plan wedge cobbled up by the Labour Government and Wilson's henchman at the NEB, Lord (£4 million-a-minute land-dealer) Ryder. But the massacre of jobs in the car industry will not stop when the long-awaited signs of an end to the economic recession and slump in sales and production finally arrive on the horizon.

Last November, the *Financial Times* wrote: 'The consensus of opinion in the British industry is that if 1975 has been a bad year, 1976 will be even worse.' While this remains the story for profit and investment, the story for car workers will continue to be sackings and speed-up — as long as a programme of socialist measures to stop the rot remains at the level of pipe dreams and Sunday speeches.

This dour prospect was confirmed on 14 January with the publication of a Government White Paper on the British Motor Vehicle Industry. The report demanded more blood, to the tune of between 55,000 and 275,000 further redundancies by 1985, to put the industry back on an even capitalist keel.

Behind this prospect lies the Government 'think tank' report, which saw no future in the British industry for Vauxhall and Chrysler, leaving only Ford and British Leyland in business by the mid-1980s. In the meantime, the Labour Government, union leaders and the employers have closed ranks to impose sackings and speed-up, while refusing to nationalise the industry and plan it rationally according to social needs instead of profit.

Apart from the disgusting human cost in jobs and falling

living standards, the Labour Government's own planning criteria now look pretty sick. £1,000 million is to be pumped into British Leyland and nearly £200 million into Chrysler to save their skins for capitalism. But such a plan can only work if both companies compete successfully against each other by attacking jobs and living standards still further, and weathering the storm of the present slump in production.

There is no guarantee that BL and Chrysler can do either. So all these Government hand-outs remain straws in the wind, and promise nothing for car workers except misery and the dole queue.

The employers are well aware of this, and are now using the lack of a fight-back in the last year, the Ryder Report, and the defeat suffered by Chrysler workers to step up their offensive on productivity. In some plants the level of voluntary redundancy achieved is now reaching saturation point.

For over a year now, the bosses have preferred to cut jobs through cash bribes to individual workers, rather than risk confrontation and occupations from a workforce united against compulsory redundancy. Despite the fact that they managed to push through the latter in Chrysler, they are in general relying more and more on jacking up line speeds and breaking mutuality agreements to achieve flexibility of labour.

It's a bleak future for car workers. The anarchy of capitalism means that workers are producing commodities for a glutted market, and being forced to pay for the profitability problems of the bosses by sacrificing themselves 'for the nation's good' on the altar of the Labour Government's policies of unemployment.

CHRYSLER

'Shock blow for Chrysler workers', gasped the *Morning Star* as the small print of the Chrysler deal — no strikes, no sit-ins — was made public for the first time last week. Communist Party member Eddie McCluskey, secretary of the joint shop stewards committee at the Stoke plant in Coventry, confessed himself astounded.

The conditions of the deal amount to a fundamental attack on the rights of Chrysler workers. The Government is aiming for a massive speed up and productivity exercise. Any major disputes, any occupations or disruptions of production will almost certainly be met with the closure of Chrysler UK. The investment strike by British Leyland bosses hopes to achieve the same effect.

But the writing was on the wall when the deal was accepted. As we commented then: 'The only real commitment to continued production beyond 1977/78 is the

preparation of a new model, the C42, to replace the Avenger at Linwood. But this will only go ahead if all aspects of the plan till then are fulfilled' (*Red Weekly*, 8 January).

So much was clear from Varley's statement in Parliament on 16 December: 'The whole future of this operation depends on the fullest co-operation of the work-force in accepting redundancies and the movement of work between plants and in collaborating to improve productivity'.

Eddie McCluskey knew what the Chrysler deal was all about. But he refused to break with the 'moderate' majority on his stewards committee and the scab role of CP-backed AUEW official Bob Wright. That is why he now protests his surprise as a cover for the role which he and the Communist Party played in the Chrysler fiasco.

Labour storm over abortion committee



James White—walked out of meeting

Anti-abortion MP James White walked out of a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party last Thursday after repeated attacks had been made on Government moves to reappoint the Select Committee considering restrictions on the 1967 Abortion Act.

The meeting was attended by an unusually large number of MPs, a sign of the impact the mass campaign on this issue has had since the first protests against the James White Bill just a year ago. In that time both the TUC and the Labour Party conferences have come out for free abortion 'on request', and increasing pressure has been put on the supposed 'representatives' of the labour movement in the House of Commons to toe the line on this question.

The number of Labour MPs who argued at the meeting for the reappointment of the Select Committee could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Dr Maurice Miller spoke for a clear majority of those present when he pointed out that its reappointment would be used as a focus by the right 'for a concerted drive to make fundamental changes in the 1967 Act'.

Even Barbara Castle was forced to admit that 'after weighing this

matter very carefully' she had decided that to re-establish the Committee would be a mistake. Did this mean that the Government was now about to take its responsibilities to the working class movement on this question more seriously? Not at all.

Mrs Castle was quick to point out that this was only her 'personal view'. The Government had made certain undertakings in the House of Commons, and its responsibilities here could not (of course) be treated lightly. A motion to reappoint the Select Committee would still be tabled, and then 'we shall all be completely free to vote on this according to our judgement and consciences'.

3 APRIL

How touching — particularly for those thousands of women who face a return to the back streets if any more restrictions are imposed on the already inadequate 1967 Act. What Mrs Castle was actually doing was freeing the anti-abortion MPs from their obligations to those working class organisations which put them in Parliament, and giving them the go-ahead to indulge

their reactionary prejudices to the full.

But the stormy scenes at last Thursday's meeting indicate that these MPs face an increasingly rough ride in the future. The fate of the Select Committee is now in the balance.

If the moves to reappoint it fail, that will indeed be an important victory. Even if it is re-established, the preceding events have testified to the effectiveness of the extra-parliamentary actions of the National Abortion Campaign and around the Working Women's Charter in building up working class resistance to any restrictions on abortion.

The mobilisation for the NAC demonstration on 3 April will provide an important focus in developing still further the support for free abortion on demand — a woman's right to choose.

SLP BANS LEFT

The General Secretary of the newly formed Scottish Labour Party, Alex Neil, announced on Sunday a list of organisations whose members would be banned and proscribed from joining the SLP. The list includes members of political organisations such as the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the Scottish National Party, the Communist Party, the International Socialists, and the International Marxist Group.

This list of bans and proscriptions is a very bad omen for the SLP. It uses a deliberate smear tactic by attempting to lump together capitalist parties such as the Tories and the SNP, and organisations of the socialist movement such as the Communist Party, International Socialists and IMG. And it is made worse by the fact that it is a clear response to a witch-hunt against militant left-wingers in the SNP sponsored by *The Times* and by Harry Ewing MP, Under Secretary of State in the Scottish Office. On 23 January a centre page article in *The Times* contained an open call for Jim Sillers, Neil and the rest of the SLP leadership to deal with the influence of revolutionary socialist ideas in the new party. A statement from Ewing quickly followed to the effect that the SLP would find it difficult to contain 'extremists from the International Marxists right through the spectrum'.

'If there are any Conservatives or Liberals among you today, bless you, you are welcome'. On the other hand the two major speeches calling for a class struggle policy for the SLP came from a supporter of the IMG and a dissident member of the Communist Party, and both received much applause from the rank and file.

The satisfaction with which the capitalist class greeted Neil's move was shown clearly in Monday's *Times*, which headlined the story 'Extremists barred from SLP', and reported the statement on the CP, IS, and IMG without even bothering to mention the Tories or the SNP.

Hatchet-man

Neil's statement augurs badly for the future of the SLP. By itself introducing bans and proscriptions, the SLP cuts right across the campaign it should be fighting to establish its own right to be affiliated to the Labour Party; and by excluding people from the discussions which the SLP needs to thrash out its policies, Neil follows in the worst tradition of the Labour bureaucrats.

What does it say for the credentials of those who claim to stand for a socialist tradition and to be independent of the Labour bureaucracy when they immediately capitulate to the witch-hunt of *The Times* and Wilson's chief hatchet-man on devolution? Furthermore, it bodes ill for democracy inside the SLP that such a decision could be taken by an organising committee two-thirds of whose members have never been elected.

Alex Neil's announcement is one which must be fought by all members of the SLP and by the labour movement in Scotland.

'Bless you'

The real meaning of Neil's statement can be gauged from two incidents at the foundation meeting of the SLP. On the one hand, Danus Skene, one of the non-elected group of ex-Labour Party officials who hold a majority on the SLP organising committee, told the meeting:

The Daily Herald.

No. 1. LONDON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 1911. PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.

Reproduction of a page from 'The Daily Herald' (1911). The page contains several columns of text, including a headline 'To "ONE AND ALL."', a section titled 'STRIKING PARAGRAPHS', and a 'REPORT OF CONFERENCE'. The text discusses workers' struggles, the L.S.C. dispute, and the formation of the Daily Herald newspaper.

When British workers had their own mass paper

When the Portuguese Government closed down the worker-controlled newspaper *Republica* just before Christmas, few workers in Britain can have fully understood the loss this represented for their brothers and sisters in Portugal. But British workers once had their own paper in the same tradition — the early *Daily Herald*, founded 65 years ago this month.

The *Daily Herald* of January 1911, like the *Republica* of July 1975, was born directly out of workers' struggles.

The London Society of Compositors were locked out after demanding a 48-hour week. The capitalist press — and that hostile — to the dispute. So these printing workers hit on the idea of using their skills to put out their own strike paper giving their side of the story.

On 25 January the first issue of the *Daily Herald* appeared and sold 13,000 copies. So warmly was it received that when the LSC dispute was resolved it was decided to continue the *Herald* as a fully fledged working class paper.

Never was a paper which supported the working class so badly needed. Dock-

ers, railwaymen and miners were among the big battalions moving into bitter struggle with the employers and the Government in the years 1911-14. But they could not rely on the TUC and Labour Party leaders. Instead, as Raymond Postgate described in his *Life of George Lansbury*, they often found what they were looking for in the *Herald*:

'Its columns are full of reports, resolutions and articles which are effectively the rebels' communications with each other. The records of these years show many instances in which union executives adjure their members not to come out on strike, or to refrain from helping their fellows by refusing to handle 'black' goods, and in which the *Daily Herald* urges them to do the opposite and they often follow the paper's advice and not that of their leaders.'

'Trades Union officials (to the Boy-Who-Would-Grow-Up): "Here, I say, think of us. This Growth has got to stop." (Dedicated to the Officials at Unity House and their pathetic attempts to check this modern tendency on the part of the Rank and File to outgrow Institutions.)'

Early *Daily Herald* cartoon



Albert Hall

The *Herald* supported every strike unconditionally — its industrial reports appeared under the heading 'The War That Really Matters'. Parliament, however, got rather different treatment: 'The House of Pretence' was the title of the column in which its proceedings were reported.

The paper also highlighted other major issues facing the working class movement: a whole page was devoted in each issue to the fight for women's suffrage, while the Irish national struggle received consistent and sympathetic coverage.

Most importantly, the *Herald* threw its pages open to every tendency in the labour and socialist movement, thus acting as a vital forum for discussion of all the key questions facing the working class at that time.

The hysterical chauvinism which accompanied the outbreak of war in 1914 forced the *Herald* to go weekly for a time. It opposed the War — at first from a pacifist viewpoint, but later on a class basis under the impact of a growing rank-and-file militancy. This position was re-

inforced by the impact of the Russian Revolution, and it was decided to combine a mass solidarity meeting at the Albert Hall on 31 March 1918 with the resumption of daily publication.

Such a prospect made the capitalists most unhappy, and the Albert Hall management were persuaded to cancel the booking. The meeting only went ahead — with twelve thousand inside and another five thousand outside — when members of the Electrical Trades Union threatened to plunge the whole of Kensington into darkness.

This incident was just one sign of the capitalists' hostility to any attempt to create a real 'free press'. The paper-makers, for instance, refused to supply the *Herald* with newsprint, and only had a change of heart when the Transport Workers threatened a strike that would put them out of business. And then, of course, there was a predictable boycott of the paper by advertisers.

Even so, the paper's circulation grew to more than 329,000. But its fortunes were bound to reflect developments inside the workers' movement as a whole. The betrayals of the TUC and Labour leaders combined with the weakness of the organised revolutionary movement to

produce intolerable pressures on the independence of the *Herald*; and in September 1922 its owner, George Lansbury, was forced to hand the paper over to the TUC. For another 40 years it continued to appear — but as an organ of collaboration with capitalism, not a weapon of struggle against it.

Tradition

Why are the lessons of the early *Daily Herald* important? One need look no further than the *Scottish Daily News* for an answer. Here too were workers facing the same problem as hundreds of thousands of their brothers and sisters — the scourge of unemployment — but with the means at hand to inspire a mass struggle against it. Instead they went tip-toeing after the nearest fly-by-night capitalist — and found themselves back in the dole queue six months later.

Republica may have been closed down now; but it has revived a tradition whose burning importance is increasingly clear in the face of the anti-communist, anti-union witch-hunts now being conducted by the capitalist press.

Martin Meteyard

'Exceptional measures' become the rule

'Ireland must be kept, by persuasion if possible, if not by force', said Randolph Churchill in 1886. And that really sums up the whole story since then. If not the carrot, then the stick.

The whole sorry history of Britain in Ireland has been one of repeated sweet talking and compromise against a backdrop of brutal and vicious repression. Thus Rees ends internment in order to show that 'terrorists' are not really political people at all but criminals who can be dealt with through the courts.

Then, without so much as a pause for breath, and swallowing all his words about the effectiveness of law and order, he sends in the super-killers of the Special Air Services. They have been active in Ireland since 1971, of course, but now they are waved off ceremonially with bouquets from the tame press of Fleet Street as 'peacekeepers'.

Meanwhile, in the absence of any Government solution to the so-called Irish problem which would be acceptable to the Irish people as a whole, the debate about what to do goes on. The *Sunday Times* has now entered the fray by publishing a four page article by the Professor of Politics at the University of Strathclyde. In discussing what he saw as the options open to Britain — whether that be direct rule, independence, reunification or destruction — this learned gentleman succeeded in posing more questions than answers.

Crisis

In many ways the weird and wonderful schemes of the subsequent contributors to the *Sunday Times* reflect the dilemma of the Government itself. There is no doubt that British imperialism is in as great a crisis now in relation to Ireland as at any time since 1968. But the recent speculation by both Republicans and Loyalists that a withdrawal of British troops is on the cards is dangerously premature.

The fact that Rees is seriously considering holding a referendum on the issue of power-sharing in the Six Counties shows how deep is the crisis. Now that the Craig olive branch on tactical power-sharing has collapsed, any such referendum would most probably be greeted with contempt by the Loyalist population and boycotted by the Republican population. In such circumstances even a good result for the British Government would have little meaning, while a vote against the Government would provoke a even worse crisis.

But it will take more than this to encourage British imperialism to withdraw its troops from Ireland. Churchill's remark in the last century still holds true when the imperialists look at their investments in ICI, Chemstrand, Courtaulds, RTZ and all the other major capitalist concerns; and when they assess the impact of a complete hand-over to the Loyalists, resulting in a drawn out war involving sections of the 26 County population, such a hasty withdrawal is ruled out. The imperialists will only withdraw once the Catholic population is seen to be defeated.

Repression

So the Rees recipe remains much the same as before. Its main ingredients are the intimidation and repression of the Catholic minority in order to make them more susceptible to the influence of the sell-out artists of the collaborationist Social Democratic & Labour Party. Hence the Army and SAS operation, which also serves as a sop to the Loyalist forces.

Unfortunately for Rees, appetite comes with eating in the Six Counties as elsewhere, and one good sop merely deserves another as far as the Loyalists

are concerned. These elements are now seriously discussing the possibilities of an independent Ulster. In fact, as we reported last week, even industrialist Sir Fred Catherwood presided over a television discussion which concluded that financial considerations would not be a barrier to independence.

So the concessions come thick and fast. Rees does not talk about 'power-sharing' now, but 'participation'. Gone is the insistence on minority seats at Cabinet level — instead the talk is about Convention parties reaching temporary agreement on coalition.

'Exceptional'

The one problem in all this remains the resistance of the Catholic population, which despite some of the setbacks of recent months still prevents the swallowing of pills as bitter as 'voluntary' coalition. And if this wasn't enough to secure the failure of the Convention, then the attitude of the United Ulster Unionist Council certainly will. They have made it clear that they will use their majority to block any question of a deal with 'Republicans' (which is how Paisley describes the SDLP).

This is the situation which now faces Rees and the Labour leaders. Wilson has discovered that South Armagh is an 'exceptional area requiring exceptional measures.' These remarks and the presence of the SAS assassins are a warning to the anti-Unionist population of the Six Counties.

The British Government will attempt to serve up more of the same in other 'exceptional areas'. Ultimately, as the crisis of British imperialism unfolds, the experience gained by forces such as the SAS will be used against British workers in what will then be called 'exceptional areas' of Britain. That is, unless they are stopped now in Ireland.

TED COXHEAD

SAS: Modern Black and Tans

The Labour Government's decision to send men of the Special Air Services (SAS) into South Armagh on 7 January, far from being an immediate reaction to the deaths of Irish workers a couple of days earlier, had been taken almost a full month previously. It is now believed that the decision was in fact taken no later than 9 December, after a British Army spy post on the border with the 26 Counties had been wiped out by the Provisional IRA on 22 November.

According to the Dublin paper the *Sunday World*, officers of the 22nd SAS regiment, based at Bradbury Lines Camp in Hereford, already knew that they were going to Ireland before they went on Christmas leave. Certainly their training for some months previously was carried out in conditions very similar to those they now face in South Armagh.

Harold Wilson's claim in Parliament that this is the first occasion on which the SAS has been despatched to Ireland is of course nonsense. This modern version of the Black and Tan terror force used in Ireland in the 1920s is no stranger to the Six Counties. The SAS have been operating here in a variety of guises since 1971, often attached to regular British Army regiments.

MURDER ATTEMPT

For some time they operated here under the name of the Military Reaction Force, which concerned itself primarily with the fomenting of sectarian conflict and assassinations. *Times* correspondent Robert Fisk described in a recent interview with Irish television how the SAS had tried to murder a Protestant from the Black's Road estate at Suffolk, on the outskirts of Belfast. Fisk named the man as a former Ulster Def-

ence Regiment sergeant called Black, and explained that the murder attempt was made after Black had given information about the SAS murder campaign against Catholics which he had stumbled upon while in the UDR.

'SECURITY FORCES'

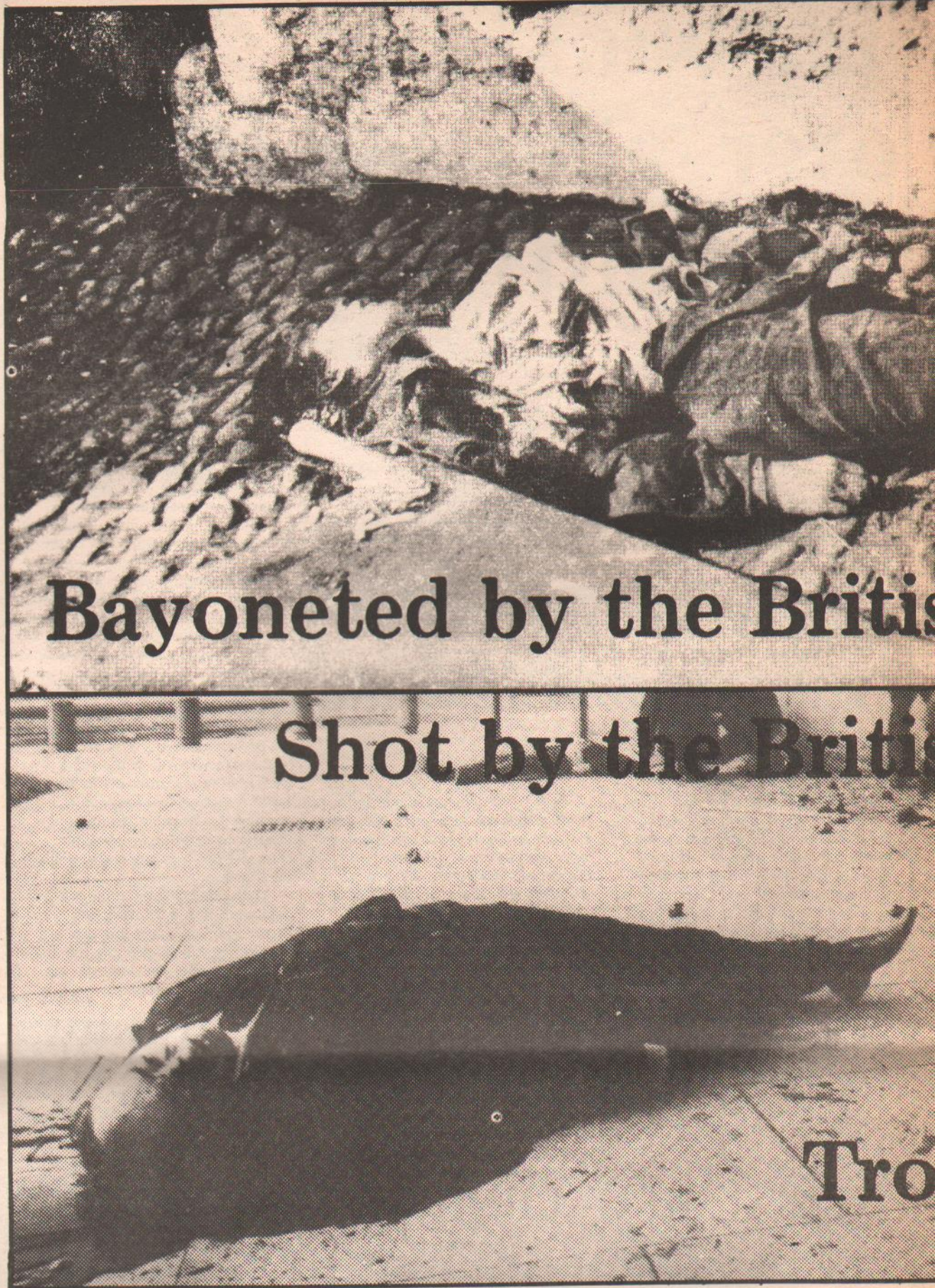
Generally speaking, the responsibility for the killing of a Protestant in such circumstances is usually attributed by the so-called 'security forces' to Republicans.

There are numerous examples of SAS involvement in an assassination campaign against Catholics. They were responsible for the murder of Paddy McVeigh, a member of the Catholic Ex-Servicemen's Association who was shot dead two years ago at Riverdale. It was also three SAS men in plain-clothes who shot and wounded three taxi-drivers and another man at a bus roundabout on the Glen Road in Belfast in June 1972. On that occasion they were caught red-handed — armed with a Thompson submachine gun. They were charged and brought to court, but needless to say they never found themselves on the other side of the prison bars.

The following year the SAS were involved in the bombing of Kelly's Bar at Whiterock Road, and in the gun battle which followed they joined forces with the Loyalist Springmartin estate. Scores of other shooting and bombing incidents in Belfast — including the massacre at McGurk's Bar, North Queen Street, in which 15 people died — and dozens of hit-and-run gun attacks from passing cars have been the work of the SAS.

The SAS have also been used to stir up the various feuds which have taken place amongst para-military organisations, both Loyalist and Republican.

Robert Fisk recounted the SAS's involvement in one



Bayoneted by the British

Shot by the British

Tro

such feud between the Ulster Volunteer Force and the Ulster Defence Association in Portadown in the early part of 1974. A young Protestant was shot dead in a Protestant pub near Portadown railway station. The men who, although they were trying to help, had earlier been heard talking in accents.

Fisk told Irish television: 'In fact, it was an SAS unit operating in plain-clothes in the very near vicinity of that pub on the night. The suggestion was made to me that these were SAS men trying deliberately to stir up the feud between the UDA and the UVF. I say that the young man, a member of the UVF, was later able to identify one of his kidnappers as a number of British soldiers who had been in plain-clothes by the police in South Armagh at the same time.'

During the recent Republican feud in the Six Counties and the Provisionals claimed responsibility for some of the deaths. It was the SAS who gunned down an Official IRA Commander in Belfast during the conflict with the Irish Republicans in early 1975.

NOT ALL SUCCESS

It would be wrong, however, to think that the SAS have been able to operate with complete impunity in the Six Counties. A number of their operations have failed, leading to action against them by the Provisionals. Perhaps the most notable incident was the shooting of a SAS man in the Twinbrook area. Here the SAS were posing as laundry van drivers and generally trying to obtain information from a snoop on their van, the IRA despatching men elsewhere in their whiter-than-white uniforms.

Duty in the Six Counties has taken on other ways as well. Last month a man who had served in Belfast was sent to a military institution when he pleaded guilty to kidnapping and torturing an Irish member of the UVF for a three day period. Captain David A

Irish freedom and British labour

Part 3

In summing up the experiences of the Irish struggle over the last seven years, two basic conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, there can be no British 'solution' to Irish liberation, since it is the British ruling class which directly gains from Ireland's oppression and perpetuates it today through military aggression, and political camouflage for the Loyalists.

Secondly, meaningful support for Irish freedom means not only demanding the immediate withdrawal of the troops but also *organising* an independent movement powerful enough actually to do this.

Outside the Labour and Communist Parties there are groups who claim to be socialist who also refuse to commit themselves to such a principled course of action. The International Socialists (IS) is one such tendency which has a shameful record on the Irish struggle.

The IS have in practice consistently opposed building a mass movement for the immediate withdrawal of the troops. They view this, like any other political questions which touch on sensitive or unexplored areas, as an interference which only upsets their routine agitation and recruitment of workers around economic issues. At best they treat such a movement as simply another pond for them to fish in for new recruits.

BIRMINGHAM

The absence of a mass troops out movement in Britain, due in part to the negligence of groups such as the IS, is one of the main features allowing the imperialists to escalate their drive against the Irish people. After more than six years of struggle against the military occupation, the beleaguered Catholics of the North have suffered greatly from the effects of a prolonged battle in which they have fought hard but have very little to show for it. It is no surprise, therefore, that sections of the nationalist movement in Ireland react bitterly to the passive support by British labour for the imperialist aggression.

While the Provisionals never claimed responsibility for the Birmingham bombings, it would be no surprise for a section of the Irish nationalist movement to

resort to such tactics in a desperate attempt to draw attention to Ireland's oppression and heighten British opinion for withdrawal. And while the IMG disagrees with such methods, we do so not as sectarian bystanders commenting on the struggle from the sidelines, but as active participants in it through our efforts to build a mass troops out movement.

SOCIALIST WORKER

The IS, on the other hand, are all too ready to 'deplore' and 'condemn' the Irish nationalists.

Furthermore, such condemnations are not made with the aim of furthering the cause of Irish freedom, but solely in order to avoid embarrassment on the factory floor. Thus on the rare occasions when the IS paper *Socialist Worker* has featured a front page calling for 'Troops Out Now' even this has appeared under headlines like 'Stop the Bombings' (30/11/74) and 'How to Stop the Bombings' (13/12/75).

LONGBRIDGE

Their resentment against the intrusion of the Irish struggle into their routinist economic agitation was further underlined in a report by John Cullinane in the 30 November 1974 issue, complaining: 'Public reaction to the bombings has meant that months of work by class conscious workers has gone by the board. Longbridge workers who were beginning to look to the International Socialists have said to me that they would rather have a police state

The response of the IS to the Birmingham bombings is typical of their general refusal to build a mass movement in defence of Ireland's right to self-determination. Against this they counterpose work on the 'factory floor' and building the IS.

OPPORTUNISM

But the whole experience of the Irish struggle testifies to the need for a separate movement specifically on

Ireland, which has sufficient power and strength in its own right to mount a meaningful challenge to imperialist rule. It cannot wait for 'working class unity', or until the IS decides it is large enough to do something. One of the reasons why the workers at Longbridge 'would rather have a police state' is exactly the absence of an independent movement which could aid the Irish struggle and remove the deep-rooted prejudice of the British worker.

If the IS had done this as part of their 'months of work by class conscious workers' then the response at Longbridge could have been qualitatively different. The sectarianism displayed by the IS towards the Troops Out Movement and their political opportunism are not separate phenomena. They complement each other in their common sacrifice of political principles on the altar of IS's own narrow interests.

INTERNATIONALIST

This group, which claims to be internationalist, has been and is today hostile to the building of a truly international socialist movement on a worldwide basis. Originating many years ago in a split from the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky, it has since lapsed into a brand of national chauvinism characterised by an adaptation to the worst prejudices of the British labour movement. There is no clearer example of this than its disgraceful record of abstention on the Irish struggle.

It is true that on certain occasions the IS will throw its weight behind actions on international issues such as Portugal - although even here, as we have shown in *Red Weekly*, its approach is basically opportunist. But when it comes to Ireland - which directly involves British imperialism, where the weight of British involvement is more decisive, and the chauvinism of British labour is more deep rooted - the IS's record is little better than that of the Labour bureaucrats. Their general abstention makes them essentially complicit in the imperialist oppression of the Irish people and, by the same token, in the oppression of British labour itself.

Brian Lyons



Troops Out NOW!

Troops Out NOW!

Troops Out NOW!

judge to have been mad since childhood.

Ah! You can find real comradeship as a servant of British imperialism!

JOHN MAGEE



An earlier version of the SAS: inspection of auxiliaries, 1921

TROOPS OUT - HOW?

The arrival of the SAS in South Armagh spells out yet again that the most important feature of the landscape in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland is the presence of British troops.

The use of thugs like the SAS is always the final resort of British imperialism, no matter how much it may juggle with 'power-sharing' and so on in the meantime. Furthermore, the presence of the soldiers is also the single biggest problem faced by the Catholic minority.

For socialists in Britain, the conclusion is simple. The biggest possible contribution we can make to the struggle of the Catholic working class in the Six Counties is to build a mass movement demanding 'Troops Out Now!'

Of course, that is not all that has to be done - there is also the defence of political prisoners like Frank Stagg, the defence of the right of free speech on Ireland in this country, etc. But the most important thing is to get the British Army off the back of the Catholic minority in the Six Counties.

Turn the tide

Most of the time this is not an easy job. The big press campaigns bashing the Republican movement, and the silence or even hostility of most of the Labour and trade union 'lefts', mean that British workers are generally confused and apathetic about Ireland. Sometimes, as with the Birmingham bombings, it has been possible for the press to whip

up a big anti-Irish campaign amongst British workers.

The Troops Out Movement (TOM) has been working for some time to turn the tide. But it has its own problems.

Bickering

For some time TOM was crippled by internal bickering, and even now it finds difficulty in attracting people from outside the revolutionary left. The situation is made worse by the sectarian attitude of some of the groups involved in TOM, who argue, for instance, that its two demands - 'Troops Out Now', and 'Self-determination for the Irish People' - should be the exclusive basis for any activity on Ireland.

The TOM demands are both excellent. They should be fought for everywhere support can be won for them. But the sectarians are wrong. They are wrong because although many people can be mobilised in opposition to the British presence in Ireland, not all - perhaps not even most - will agree with the TOM demands.

Obviously it is necessary to debate with these people, to convince them of the role of the troops and the need to pull them out right now. But you can only have that debate if the actions are already underway. It is no use and no help at all to make your principles a barrier to convincing others that those principles are right.

For the International Marxist Group, the main thing is to build a

movement demanding 'Troops Out Now' of sufficient size to force the Labour Government to back-track on Ireland or else face a massive revolt here. This means building the TOM and fighting for its demands. But it also means building actions like this week's Bloody Sunday demonstration.

From the simple basis of opposition to the British presence in Ireland, more and more workers can be won to the demands for 'Troops Out Now' and 'Self-determination'. Building the TOM and building one-off actions therefore go hand in hand. The point is to develop the understanding of the working class, not to scold like an ill-tempered teacher.

Understanding

After the Bloody Sunday demonstration there will be new initiatives from the TOM, and no doubt from other bodies. These will provide new opportunities for debate.

Getting the troops out is extremely important for the Irish revolution - and for the British revolution as well. But it will need a good understanding of where we are - the weaknesses in the British working class and the weaknesses in TOM - and where we are going, the principles we are fighting over.

Above all, the difficult task of building a mass troops out movement needs a real understanding of how we're going to get there.

Martin O'Leary

The wrong Catholic-Protestant

unity

Two weeks ago, Catholic residents in Lurgan marched through parts of the town they hadn't been able to visit for years. This time, as they marched out of their ghetto, there were no barricades manned by the RUC or the British Army to stop them reaching the town centre, and no Loyalist mobs to harass or stone them. On the contrary, Catholic and Protestant workers were marching side by side to the same destination, and listening to the same speakers at the same platform.

Have things changed in Northern Ireland? There are a lot of people, both here and in Ireland, who would like to think so. And there are a lot of people, both here and in Ireland, who have learnt very little from the experiences of the past seven years.

The Lurgan march took place soon after the massacre of ten Protestant workers in Armagh, and was held to protest at sectarian killings in Northern Ireland. Inevitably it has been used by a number of forces in the workers movement to call for 'working class unity' in Northern Ireland.

The northern committee of the Irish Confederation of Trade Unions, following rapidly on the Lurgan march, launched a petition calling for the 'right to live free from violence, sectarianism, intimidation and discrimination; security of employment and well paid work; the right to associate freely and to advocate political change by peaceful means; good housing accommodation, and equality of opportunity'. The *Morning Star* hailed this as a 'brave union role', and reported soon after that the Greater London Association of Trades Councils had backed the initiative and described its programme as 'designed to unite Protestant and Catholic workers' (*Morning Star*, 12 January).

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, influenced by the same

notions, held a conference at the weekend calling for the introduction of a Bill of Rights in Northern Ireland.

Of course, everybody on the left is in favour of 'working class unity' in Northern Ireland, including the Provisional IRA. But on what basis shall there be, can there be, unity?

More than anything else, workers in the North are divided over the partition of Ireland. However, what the ICTU, the Communist Party, etc. all fail to understand is that this issue is not a 'diversion' from some other 'class issue' (jobs, houses etc.). On this interpretation, the fight for civil rights, launched by the Catholic minority several years ago, should logically have united the working class in the North (but for the fortuitous intervention of 'sectarianism').

ACTIVE ROLE

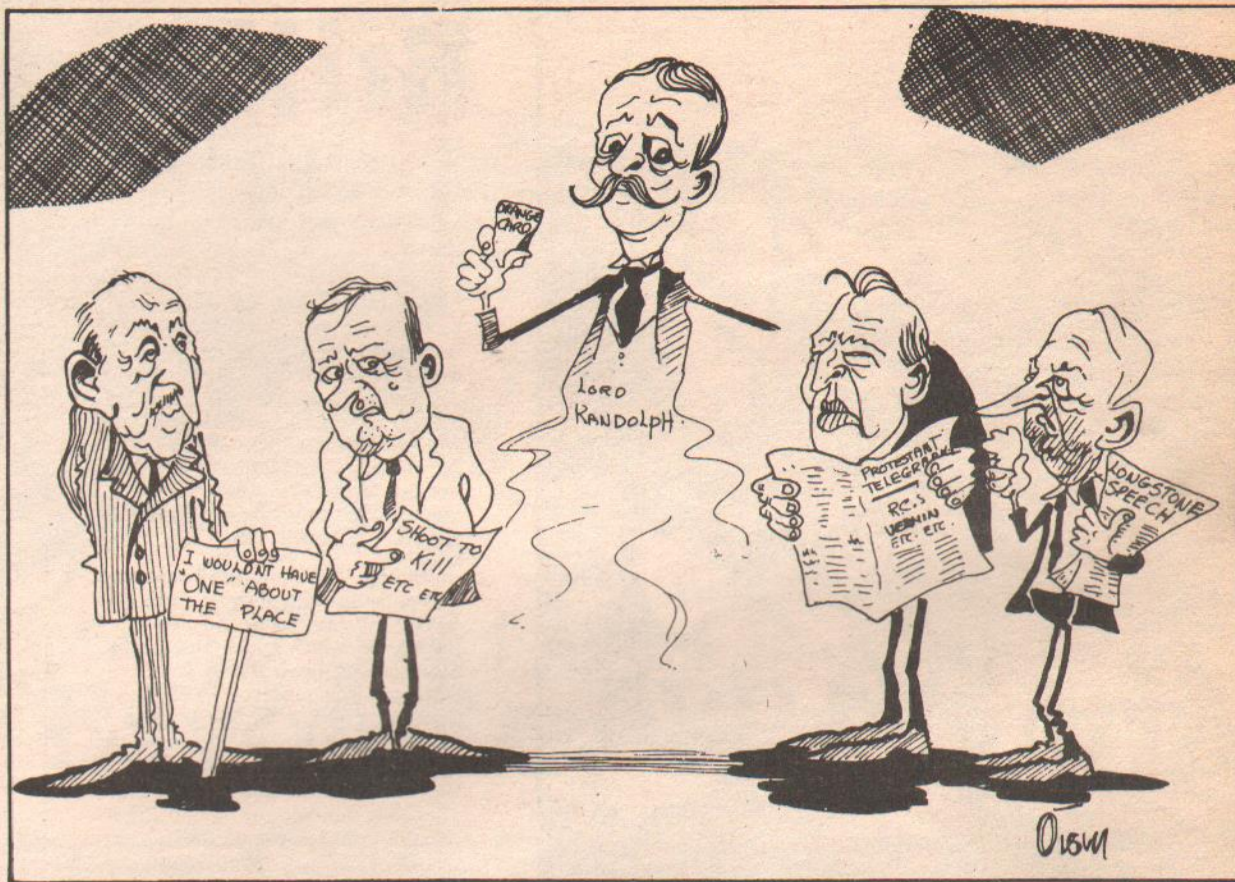
The fact is that since the partition of Ireland, the majority of Protestant workers have played an active role in maintaining the undemocratic and sectarian state—in which all the problems of unemployment, bad housing and so on are off-loaded on to the captive nationalist minority. And these same workers, these same trade unionists, have turned every institution, including the trade unions, into an instrument for applying that strategy.

This 'solution' to their problems has 'worked' in the past. It 'worked' because the British guaranteed it—with money and guns. Why shouldn't it work in the future, the Loyalist workers ask themselves?

Under only one condition might it not work in the future: if the British leave Ireland.

What will shift the Loyalists from this perspective is not moral appeals—'workers unite', 'democratic rights for all workers', etc., coupled with propaganda about how British capitalism is responsible for their problems—but rather a determined struggle by the nationalist majority in the whole of Ireland to kick the British out, and therefore to say to the Loyalists: 'You will no longer solve your problems at our expense. The time has come for you to choose another road. We will unite with you to help find that road, but not to return to your old ways. That will only lead to the unity of the graveyard.'

We should distinguish between two



'Killing Fenians is one thing—but murdering Protestants is another. Sectarianism will have to be stamped out!'

sorts of people who neglect this truth.

On the one hand, there are the nationalist people of Lurgan. We must say frankly that, no matter how justified their condemnation of the senseless killing of the Protestant workers may have been, the nationalist people of Lurgan were duped by the Royal Ulster Constabulary who looked on.

As *Republican News* put it: 'A march on Monday to protest about the murders at Ballydougan and Whitecross, in which five Catholics died at the hands of Loyalist gunmen, would (a) have had no support whatever from the Loyalist working class, many of whom refused to protest on Friday when they discovered that it might be a joint protest, (b) not have been allowed past the top of Edward Street by those friendly police on duty.'

SUPPORT RUC?

And it asks: 'Did your march against sectarianism include a protest against a sectarian police force, or did it contain a resolution of support for the RUC?'

On the other hand, there are people like those in the ICTU and in the Communist Party who believe that unity can be brought about by the bayonets of the British Army. For who else is to implement a Bill of Rights, who else to police 'democratic rights' in the North? This is the essential meaning of the CP's demand that Rees introduce 'far reaching democratic reforms' and 'face up to the right-wing Unionists', instead of getting out of Ireland altogether.

The objective role of these people is, at best, to take the edge off the resistance to the troops displayed by the nationalist minority, and facilitate a return to the majority rule of the Protestant ascendancy within a Northern Ireland statelet. At worst, it is to act as a left cover for further repression, by disguising the role of the troops and disarming the nationalist resistance. As part of this line, they are only too eager to condemn as 'terrorists' and 'sectarian murderers' the Provisional IRA.

TRAP FOR WSL

And now it seems that the Workers Socialist League is poised to fall into the same trap. An article in the latest issue of its paper, *Socialist Press*, argues that two steps are necessary: a 'Protestant-Catholic workers defence force against sectarian murders'; and a joint Protestant-Catholic campaign for the withdrawal of troops. 'Only in this way can the road to class unity be opened up', it says.

What the WSL propose is not a socialist strategy for self-determination against the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the IRA; on the contrary, they imply that the real issue in Ireland is sectarian killings on both sides. Such a view flies both in the face of the facts (many more Catholic than Protestant civilians have been murdered) and in the face of Provisional policy (which, unlike that of the UDA and UVF, is against sectarian killings).

To present this as credible (despite all the left rhetoric about workers getting arms, as against the reformist CP with its parliamentary illusions), the WSL are forced simultaneously to slander the IRA and talk nonsense about uniting Protestant and Catholic workers to get the troops withdrawn. This presumably is a principled position on the 'national question'. Presumably the RUC were forced to stand aside in Lurgan by the combined upsurge of the Protestant and Catholic workers!

It may well happen that a section of Protestant workers will also start to call for British withdrawal. But this will be because they now feel strong enough, after years of repression of the nationalist minority by the British Army, to step in and do the job themselves, re-creating the Protestant ascendancy on the bones of the nationalist minority. Will the WSL be hailing this as 'class unity'?

Alf Jennings

TO MEET OUR £15,000 TARGET WE STILL NEED TO RAISE

£9,137.02

Only £103.60 came in last week—but our thanks to: NUJ members £6; Brighton IMG £30; Bristol reader £4; Manchester IMG £5; West London IMG £3.60; Swansea IMG £25; Sheffield IMG £15; Bradford IMG £5; L. Eynon £10.

THE NORTH EAST have really shown the way forward for all comrades in raising 78 per cent of their target already—and this in one of the areas worst hit by the scourge of unemployment. Clearly they realise the necessity of raising money for the only organisation with a strategy for fighting unemployment and the attacks on workers' living standards.

If the North East can raise money for the Fund Drive, then it should be much easier for comrades in the South. So come on, comrades—we only have five weeks left to raise the money to run a Scottish Centre, build a 16-page *Red Weekly*, and develop the work of the Fourth International in Britain. Even the smallest donation will help.

The address: Jo-Ann, 97 Caledonian Rd, London N.1. (cheques/POs to 'The Week')

Area	So far	50%	Target
SCOTLAND	467	£££	2,000
N.EAST	197.07	££££££££££££££££	250
YORKS	275.00	£££££	1,000
LANCS	164.20	££££	1,000
W. MIDLANDS	111.36	££	1,000
E. MIDLANDS	20.00	£	250
WALES	35.00	££	250
E. ENGLIA	7.00	£	250
LONDON	491.00	££££££££	1,500
S.EAST	96.00	£!	1,000
S.WEST	62.00	£££	500
OTHER	3,920	££££££££££££	6,000



-WHAT'S ON-

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

MANCHESTER Angola solidarity campaign, 29 Jan: 12.45, film and speaker, Manchester Polytechnic; 8pm, film 'Angola' and speaker, Stockport UNA, Central United Reform Church, Millbrook St (behind AUEW). 2 Feb: 12.45, film 'Angola' and speaker, University of Manchester Students Union. 6 Feb: 7.30, film 'Angola' and speaker, Manchester Centre for Marxist Education, 'Star and Garter', Fairfield St.

GLASGOW SOCIALIST FORUMS: every Thursday in the Iona Community Centre, 7.30pm.

CRITIQUE SEMINAR: Chris Harman and Hillel Ticktin, 'The Soviet Union—what is it and where is it going?' Weds 4 Feb, 7.30, London School of Economics, St Clements Building, Room S421.

MOTOR INDUSTRY—Institute for Workers Control conference, Sat 31 Jan, starts 10.15am at AUEW House, Smallbrook Ringway, Birmingham.

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.

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.

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 Cttee). 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: Dodie Weppler 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.

BWNIC General Meeting starts Sat 31 Jan at noon and continues Sunday a.m. at Pax Christi Centre, Blackfriars Hall, Southampton Rd, NW5 (Chalk Farm tube).

The Healy road

to the gutter

Statement by Red Weekly

On 5 January 1975, *Workers Press*, the 'daily organ of the Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party' accused Joseph Hansen and George Novack — well-known American Trotskyists, long-standing members of the Socialist Workers Party and numbered amongst Trotsky's closest collaborators during his last exile in Mexico — of being 'accomplices of the GPU' (the Stalinist secret police).

Under most circumstances we would not even bother to deal with such ravings. When Joseph Stalin swung the resources of the Soviet State behind manufacturing a gigantic lie, Trotskyists were obliged to reply charge by charge; when Gerry Healy uses his detailed knowledge of the Moscow trials to imitate the methods of the prosecutors, we can safely leave this question not to political and factual refutation but to the medical study of mental degeneration in the epoch of capitalist decay.

This is particularly the case when the sole 'evidence' which Healy produces is that of the capitalist state, self-confessed GPU agents and similar riff raff, ex-Trotskyists who have unfortunately degenerated to the point where they place in the same breath GPU agents and Palestinian commandos and IRA fighters, and elements such as Vereecken — newly elevated by Healy to the rank of 'veteran Trotskyist' — who were described by Trotsky himself as 'placing themselves outside of reality politically' and characterised by the founding congress of the Fourth International as having 'utilised their formal membership in the movement of the Fourth International to flout its principles, sabotage its discipline, and give aid and comfort to its enemies'.

VILE METHODS

On Healy's method, of course, he is an 'accomplice' of all these elements. Fortunately for him he isn't an 'accomplice', or 'agent' — he merely illustrates the rule that if you descend into the gutter all you will come up with is filth.

Healy's record is also public for the world to see. He sits in the ruins of a smashed and wrecked organisation. The International Committee of the Fourth International has gone through the vile methods used against the Spartacists, the split with the Lambertists, the disgusting expulsion of Alan Thornett, the hounding of Tim Wohlforth, and now it is reaping the whirlwind. The explosion of its organisation in Australia and the collapse of its forces in the United States are merely the harbingers of the destruction of its cult society in Britain. As Gerry Healy looks back on his life he can truly record, 'everything I built turned to dust'.

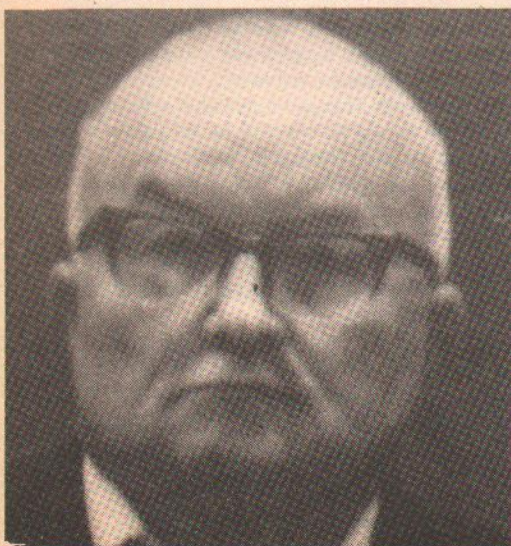
But the political decline has now led to a moral and personal degeneration as well. We no longer have merely sectarian positions, social democratic errors, and violent methods — now we have organised and conscious lying on the largest scale which Healy's resources will permit.

The historical path to this is clear. First the 'International Committee' used little lies to aid arguments a bit — after all, as the 'Pabloites' of the Fourth International are objectively agents of capitalism, then if the SLL/WRP couldn't find the evidence it could 'serve the interests of the working class' by inventing it. Then unfortunately Healy's lies were exposed and he was unable to reply. The answer was clear — just censor the membership a bit and step up the lying.

POLITICAL GUTTER

But once Healy opened the door just that inch to the lying and abandonment of principles, he embarked with iron logic on the road to the political gutter.

As for the proposal in *Workers Press* for a world investigation on this matter, it is beneath contempt even to discuss seriously whether Joe Hansen is an accomplice of the GPU. Healy learnt that trick from the textbook of any tenth rate bourgeois lawyer, from the Stalinist methods in the Comintern, and



Healy—takes his methods from Stalinists

from the arsenal of Joseph McCarthy. The technique is simple — make the most absurd charge, which no one would believe, but then if you can get a body set up to 'investigate' it the lie is given some respectability and perhaps people will think there is something to it.

We have no intention of giving respectability to a charge whose sole record will be as a dirty and sordid footnote in the annals of pathology. The only 'investigation' we suggest for any student of the byways of history is to describe in detail, if anyone has a strong enough stomach, how an organisation like the SLL/WRP, which started as an enemy of the capitalist system, prostituted the highest cause in the world to the methods of the gutter and in so doing led its leaders to utter political and moral degeneration. That is the sole interest of the *Workers Press* 'charges' for the working class movement.

IRREPROACHABLE

As for Joseph Hansen, he doesn't need anyone to vindicate him — history has already done it. Joe Hansen for four decades and more has served the only cause worth serving — the interests of the working class. For those same decades he has sought to defend the only ideas worth defending — the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. He did so as Trotsky's secretary and through the long years of repression, witch-hunt and isolation of the 1940s and 1950s.

Whether history will judge him right or wrong on any question, he sought to defend revolutionary socialism and the cause of the working class in the only way it can be defended — through scrupulous attention to the truth, through serious study

and effort, and through a consistent fight for what you believe to be true. His stature as a revolutionary and a political fighter is irreproachable.

As for Healy and his bunch of liars they were only too pleased, in saner days, to have the support of Joe Hansen during the 1950s — even quoting proudly the 'accomplice of the GPU' in praise of their organisation. And as for the other 'guilty party' George Novack, not merely was he working personally for years in day-to-day collaboration with your leadership but you, Mr Healy, put your own signature to public articles which were in reality written by this 'accomplice of the GPU'.

The publication of Healy's attack in a journal claiming to be Marxist, however, does not represent the paranoia of a single individual, no matter how powerful he or she may be within the WRP. It represents something much graver. It marks the complete and utter political degeneration of a sect which has claimed adherence to Trotskyism. It is the ultimate logic of sectarian politics, and it should be a terrible reminder to other groups on the left of what can happen when you start political debates by distorting the positions of your opponents and slandering them personally in no uncertain terms.

There were always traces of this in the WRP's predecessor, the Socialist Labour League (SLL), but in the 1950s and early '60s the slanders were milder, the distortions less outrageous, and the internal regime of the organisation marginally more flexible. The roots of the present degeneration can be traced back to the events surrounding a major schism in the Fourth International in 1953, the subsequent emergence of two currents, the International Secretariat and the International Committee, and the failure of Healy to participate in the reunification of the two currents in 1963.

Healy's explanation of these events has always been in terms of a supposed revision of Marxism — and therefore transfer to the camp of the class enemy — carried out in the early 1950s by Michel Raptis (Pablo). This was supposedly concretised in a whole series of historic betrayals carried through by the International Secretariat of the Fourth International — and, after 1963, also carried out by the SWP. A shibboleth had been established, and the SLL was subsequently to spend much time, energy and resources in explaining to the British working class the evils of 'Pabloite revisionism'.

SECTARIANISM

The fact that Pablo's views were not those of the majority of the International Secretariat, that even if they had been these *theoretical* differences did not justify a split, was of no account. The battle-lines had been drawn, the main enemy identified, and the battle had to take place. Small matter that the International Secretariat denied most of the slanders; small matter that the opponents of Healy were straw persons; and small matter that Trotskyists had been attacking these methods of debate in the workers movement for decades.

The political sectarianism became intensified when the victory of the Cuban Revolution and a common attitude towards it helped to reunify the mainstream of world Trotskyism. The SWP, barred by reactionary legislation from affiliating to the Fourth International, declared its support for the reunification. But Healy stayed away. The SWP had clearly capitulated to 'Pabloite revisionism'. At all costs the disease must not be allowed to spread. Their own ranks must be inoculated against it. And so they were.

Having embarked on a sectarian trajectory, Healy began to pay the price. In his current's total obsession with themselves they now denied that the Cuban revolution had taken place. Castro was qualitatively no different from Batista. Here we have a model example of sectarian subjectivism. Since the victory of the Cuban revolution goes against our immediate sectarian interests, let's not even admit that it's taken place. It's in Latin America in any case, and none of our members will know enough about it to seriously challenge the assumption.

'INNOVATION'

For self-proclaimed revolutionaries in an advanced capitalist country to deny the reality of a socialist revolution — albeit in a small, far away island — because to do so would weaken their factional arguments against their opponents, was certainly an innovation in the Trotskyist movement. Stalin had applied a similar criterion to Yugoslavia after Tito had refused to accept Stalinist dominance over the Yugoslav party and state apparatus. Stalin had then also resorted to calling Tito every name under the sun and had been loyally echoed by Thorez in Paris and Togliatti in Rome. Purges in the Eastern European parties had wiped out all supposed 'Titoist deviationists'.

Healy has taken his time, but now employs similar methods against his opponents within his own 'party' as well as his factional opponents in other groups. This sort of degeneration is political. If you have a sectarian political line, you have to build an organisation where it is never seriously challenged. Sectarian politics of necessity require a monolithic organisation. Sectarian training of members in verbal violence opens the way to to physical violence against your opponents.

If you tell your members that the dreaded Pabloite revisionists are the agents of the petty-bourgeoisie in the workers movement pretending to be Trotskyists, or are police agents or agents of the Soviet bureaucracy, the door is then open for physical attacks on all political opponents both inside and outside your own sect. This has also occurred in the sect now led by Gerry Healy, Mike Banda et al.

When a workers state degenerates we call for a political revolution. When a working class organisation degenerates we call on its members to wage a fight against this degeneration.

APPEAL

We therefore appeal to the members of the WRP: comrades, study the history of the movement of which you claim to be a part. Study the writings of Trotsky, the documents of the Left Opposition, the documents (all of them) related to the polemics in the Fourth International, and ask yourselves whether the methods being used by your leaders are more akin to Stalinism or Trotskyism. Ask yourselves whether or not there was something wrong with the way in which Alan Thornett and his comrades were expelled from your ranks.

Follow the advice given by Marx to his daughter — 'doubt everything'. In particular, doubt everything your leadership tells you without studying the case of your opponents. Ask yourselves why it took Healy nearly four decades to discover that Hansen and Novack were 'GPU accomplices'. We doubt whether you will be able to save your organisation, but it is certainly the only way you will be able to save yourselves as revolutionary militants!

Key Palestinian role in Lebanese conflict

The present uneasy ceasefire in Lebanon cannot hide the decisive nature of the conflict which has been raging for the last nine months — in which the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement has played a key role. Here a Trotskyist of the Revolutionary Communist Group (Lebanese section of the Fourth International) explains the background to these developments.

Q What are the roots of the crisis in Lebanon?

A The most important factor in precipitating the present crisis was the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and the establishment of its military bases in Lebanon. This had a very destabilising effect on Lebanese politics, leading to an explosive social crisis. The fighting broke out because of a Phalangist attempt to crush the Palestinian presence militarily.

Q How did the Palestinians come to set up bases in Lebanon?

A There was a massive exodus of Palestinians into Jordan, Syria and Lebanon after the creation of Israel by the Zionists in 1948. Until 1967, the Palestinians had hopes that the Arab regimes could win their country back for them. But the humiliating defeat of these regimes in the 1967 war forced the Palestinians to take their fate into their own hands. They built up their own organisations.

The relative success of their operations against Israel, and the discredit into which the Arab regimes had fallen, won the Palestinian resistance movement the enthusiastic support of the Arab masses. This allowed the movement to establish independent military bases in the two countries where it was strongest: Jordan and Lebanon.

The Palestinian movement in Jordan was crushed by the Hussein regime in 1970. Since then, the Palestinians have been unable to re-establish bases there. In Lebanon too, the army tried to liquidate the Palestinian bases — the most serious attempts being made in 1969 and 1973. In both cases the fighting ended with a political victory for the Palestinians.

In 1969 the fighting ended with the Cairo Accords, which officially recognised the right of the Palestinians to launch operations against Israel from Lebanon, to carry arms, and to control their camps and certain other areas of the country. That is, the *de facto* dual power situation was recognised by these accords. In 1973 the fighting ended with the Melkart Protocol, which basically reconfirmed the principles of the Cairo Accords.

Q Why would Arab regimes like Lebanon, which claim to support the Palestinian cause, turn against the Palestinians and try to liquidate their bases in Lebanon?

A There are two factors to consider here, one external, the other internal. First the external factor. The Palestinians used their bases at first to launch operations against Israel. The Lebanese army tried to prevent these operations. They were afraid of Israeli reprisals and did not want to run the risk of a conflict with Israel.

Like the other Arab regimes, they were unwilling to wage a consistent war against Israel because this would have required a large-scale mobilisation of the masses, something far more dangerous in their eyes than the existence of Israel. To have fought Israel would have meant fighting western imperialism indirectly too, especially the US, which the Arab regimes were unwilling to do because western imperialism is in the last resort the only guarantor of their existence.

So, to avoid a conflict with Israel, the Lebanese regime sought to crush the Palestinian liberation movement and its bases in the country at the earliest opportune moment.

There were even more compelling internal reasons for the Lebanese regime to try to repress the Palestinian movement and the Lebanese left. To understand the effect that the existence of the Palestinian bases had on internal Lebanese politics, try to imagine what the presence of 300,000 armed people in Britain outside the authority of the British government would mean for internal British politics.

In Lebanon this dual power situation caused a very explosive situation. Other oppressed groups followed the example of the Palestinians and took their fate in their own hands. This sparked an intense radicalisation of Lebanese politics, massive mobilisations of the oppressed in extra-parliamentary action, a mushrooming of leftist organisations, and an intensification of the social crisis which threatened to destroy the foundations of the bourgeois state.

The army was discredited because it did not even try to resist the Zionist aggression, the government was corrupt and inefficient, and the bourgeoisie did not have any worthwhile programme of reforms to defuse the social crisis. The consequence was an almost total loss of authority by the bourgeois state. This, I think, was the most compelling reason for the Lebanese bourgeoisie to wage such an all-out war against the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese left.



Q The conflict has often been described as a religious conflict. How does religion enter the picture?

A The Lebanese population is divided into numerous Moslem and Christian sects. Under French colonial rule from 1923 to 1943, the Christians were given privileged economic and political positions to assure their loyalty and backing to the imperialists. Before granting independence to Syria and Lebanon in 1943, France artificially carved out the present boundaries of the state of Lebanon, giving the Christians a slight majority in the new country.

Banking on the relatively privileged Christian community to protect their interests, the French imposed an unwritten 'National Pact' which ensured Christian domination in the political power structure. According to the National Pact, the Christians are guaranteed a majority in Parliament and both the President of the Republic and the Commander-in-Chief of the army have to be Christians — even though, because of a higher birth rate, the Moslems are today a majority.

The Christians feel threatened by Arab nationalism and moves towards Arab unity, which would endanger the separate existence of Lebanon and the political and economic privileges they derive from it. The Moslems, by contrast, have strong Arab nationalist feelings and have supported the anti-imperialist struggles waged in other Arab countries.

Thus, while many Christians looked upon the Palestinian resistance movement with apprehension, the Moslem community sympathised with and supported it. This is why the bourgeoisie had to rely on Christian-based parties in its onslaught against the Palestinians and the left.

Q What is the array of forces on each side, and what is their relative strength?

A On one side are the army, and the militants of the Phalangist Party, the National Liberal Party and the President of the Republic, Suleiman Frangieh. The 12,000 strong army, however, is a weapon that the bourgeoisie has to use with caution. The majority of the army officers are Christians, but most of the soldiers are Moslems.

If the army was fully used in a prolonged war, it might split. So only selected army units are used directly in the fighting. The role of the army is very important, however, in that it advises, trains and supplies the right-wing militias.

The right-wing militias have well over 15,000 fighters, of whom the largest proportion belong to the Phalangist Party — a Christian-based party founded in the 1930s and modelled on the fascist parties of Europe. Its basic slogans are 'God, Country and Family'. It was the Phalangist militia, not the army, which began the offensive against the Palestinian resistance and the left, accompanying it with a massive propaganda campaign designed to strengthen the authority of the army and the state.

On the other side are the Communist Party, the Progressive Socialist Party, the Murabitunes (a Nasserite organisation) and several other nationalist and left-wing groups, including the Lebanese Trotskyists of the RCG. Their strength is well over 15,000 fighters. The Palestinian organisations have a further 10,000 fighters.

But numbers are not the whole story. The right wing is very well organised, is united, and has been taking the initiative all along; it can also count on unlimited supplies of ammunition. The other side, however, is hopelessly divided, reacting to the attacks by the right wing but never taking the initiative in the fighting. It is dependent for its supplies on Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), making it very vulnerable to changes in their policy.

Q What are the policies of the PLO and Syria?

A The reactionary offensive in Lebanon coincided with negotiations between the PLO and Syria on the one hand and US representatives on the other. The imperialists hoped that the attacks against the Palestinians in Lebanon would force them to make sufficient concessions to arrive at a compromise agreement with Hussein and Israel whereby a Palestinian mini-state would be set up on the West Bank under Jordanian authority.

Such an agreement would certainly contain a condition that the Palestinians abandon their bases in Lebanon. If this happens, the Lebanese left will become an easy prey for the fascist militias and a strong right-wing government will emerge.

The only other solutions for the Lebanese bourgeoisie would be partition, or a Bonapartist regime supported by Syria which would simultaneously clamp down on the left and grant some reforms in a bid to defuse the social crisis. But a solution based on a negotiated settlement of the Palestinian question is much more preferable to the reactionaries.

RELEASE CARVALHO

'25 April is in prison' - this is the accurate assessment made in Portugal of the arrest last week of General Otelo de Carvalho for alleged involvement in the military events of 25 November in Lisbon. The fact that the Azevedo Government now feels confident enough, two months after the event, to arrest the man who was the most popular left-wing general shows the change which is taking place in the political situation in Portugal.

Carvalho's career in the last eighteen months exactly mirrors the rise and fall of the left wing of the Portuguese army. Renowned as a brilliant organiser, it was Carvalho who prepared and led the military operation of the 25 April 1974 coup to topple the dictator Caetano. Following that he became head of the newly created internal security force, Copcon.

Initially intended for use against rightist followers of Spínola on the one hand and strikers on the other, the troops of Copcon, through con-

tact with the workers, soon became the most left-wing soldiers of the entire army. Carvalho himself became increasingly associated with the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat (PRP), and later with the Communist Party. His followers were undoubtedly publicly involved in the 25 November events.

CONFUSED

'Otelo', as he was universally known, remained hopelessly confused to the end. He advocated at various times workers councils without parties, an alliance between the revolutionary left and the 'Group of Nine' officers led by Melo Antunes, and a whole series of similar idiotic schemes. In the early days of the revolution he was prepared to use troops against strikers to enforce the Communist Party inspired 'battle for production'.

But despite all this, Carvalho, in no matter how confused a way, saw

himself as on the side of the working class against capitalism. Furthermore, his politics were objectively not those of an aspiring capitalist dictator but a confused part of the workers movement. Of the leading circles of the Armed Forces Movement, it was Carvalho and Admiral Rosa Coutinho who refused to follow the reactionary path of Azevedo and the majority of the AFM.

Despite all political differences there is not the slightest doubt that among the tasks of the Portuguese working class is the securing of the release of Carvalho, Denis Almeida of the Lisbon Light Artillery Regiment, and the other left-wing military prisoners.



Times have changed—Carvalho (left) is now in jail, while Costa Gomes remains president

BURYING PRESS FREEDOM - IN LISBON AND LONDON

Press freedom in Lisbon and London is following a curiously similar path.

Left-wing journalists were among the first to be swept out of their jobs by Portugal's Sixth Provisional Government after the abortive military revolt in November. The mass media are now firmly back in the hands of those determined to eliminate the gains made by the Portuguese working class, and ensure that socialism does not disfigure NATO's southern flank.

Republica, the Lisbon daily run under workers control and effectively placed at the disposal of the workers movement, was closed by the Government at the end of December. The workers' paper in Setubal, *O Setubalense*, has met the same fate.

Radio Renascença, the broadcasting station wrested by its workers from the reactionary Catholic hierarchy, has now been handed back to the Church. It was the dynamiting of the Renascença transmitter - by order of the Government - which was one of the provocations leading to the 25 November revolt.

Sacked

At the same time as the strides towards real press freedom in Portugal have been aborted for the moment, the BBC has sacked two Portuguese journalists employed by its External Services for daring to challenge the Corporation's biased transmissions to Portugal. This bias is ably revealed in a dossier prepared by the journalists - Antonio Cartaxo and Jorge Ribeiro, who worked at Bush House for

twelve and seven years respectively - and reported by *The Times*.

The dossier shows that the BBC has weighted its broadcasts in favour of counter-revolutionary forces, a trend justified by Gerard Mansell, managing director of external services, in the following terms: 'There is clearly a consensus among British political and broadcasting authorities that parliamentary democracy should prevail in Portugal in preference to the revolutionary alternative.'

Pickets

The result of the final internal appeal by Cartaxo and Ribeiro for reinstatement, which is supported by the Association of Broadcasting Staffs to which the two journalists belong, as well as by a number of Labour MPs and trade union leaders (see letter), is expected shortly.

The ACTT (cine technicians) shop at the BBC TV Centre has called for industrial action if the appeal does not succeed, and pickets of the BBC have been organised by the Media Support Group of the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class. A 200-strong rally in November condemned the mass media's bias on Portugal, and a dossier on its coverage is being prepared for the Campaign's national conference on 13 March. Details from: Media Support Group, Portugal Solidarity Campaign, 12 Little Newport Street, London WC2. The next meeting is at 6.30 pm, Friday 30 January at the Pillar Box pub, 59 Mount Pleasant, WC1 (Chancery Lane tube).



Photo: DAVE EVANS (IFL)

Several hundred people took to the streets of Birmingham last Saturday to demand that the Labour Government break all links with the Chilean junta

Spaghetti House Three

From the SPAGHETTI HOUSE THREE DEFENCE COMMITTEE

No doubt you have heard of the Spaghetti House incident, and most likely you have heard of it through the established media, which has done its utmost to trivialise and demean the whole incident as only a criminal exercise.

Brother and comrade Anthony Munroe, brother and comrade Wesley Dick and brother Frank Davies can in no way be considered criminals, for they represent and symbolise the militancy of our struggle. They are true brothers!

Wesley took part in several projects - educational and cultural - and went to Tanzania as a delegate to represent the Black Movement in Britain at the Pan African Congress. Frank was involved in community projects run by the Black Liberation Front.

It is a known fact that comrade Tony was involved in the Marcus Garvey School for Black Children who had either been ESNised or neglected by the educational authorities. This year the brothers were faced with the closure of the school. It does not, therefore, need any stretch of the imagination to sum up the reasons why these brothers might have found it necessary to seize funds from a financial establishment.

A Defence Committee has been formed, firstly to take care of the interests of the brothers' welfare

inside and outside of the prisons, and secondly to publicise and politicise the whole situation.

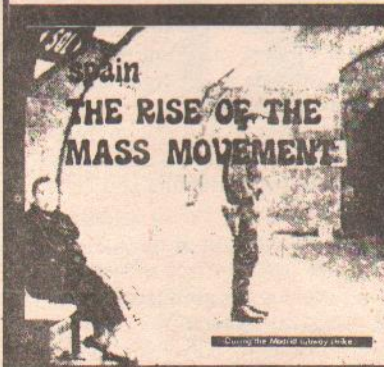
In order to carry out our stated aims, funds are of the utmost necessity, so any contribution you can make will be gratefully accepted. Please send it to: Spaghetti House Three Defence Committee, c/o 26 Hayman Point (5th Floor), Tyers Street, London S.E.11.

Lastly we would like to leave you with one of Brother Wesley's poems, 'An Apology for the failure of the Spaghetti House Farce', which sums up the three brothers' political conviction.

Sorry people, we failed,
An important mission and we failed
To all Revolutionary people across the world
You have a right
To look on us as mere jokers
Playing a game of 'How long will it last'

The Players? 400 police and 3 niggers
The Weapons? Unlimited amount of guns v one shotgun and two pistols
The Casualties? Three niggers (one shot himself)
The Victors? 400 police
The Results? For them, brilliant police propaganda which boasts their standing throughout the world and knocks our struggle back ten years
For us? Prison
But, I promise, we shall redeem ourselves.

imprescor
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Latest issue contains articles on the mass upsurge in Spain; the fight against the austerity measures in Portugal; the fall of the Italian Government; the international stakes in the Angolan war; the moves towards reunification of Vietnam; the soldiers' movement in France; the French CP and the crisis; and a statement by revolutionary anti-Zionists in Israel. All essential reading, and unbeatable value at only 30p (plus 8p p&p) from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. Or why not take out a subscription - £7 to Red Books will bring you every issue for a year, and you won't regret it.

Letter to THE TIMES

Your articles on the BBC external services broadcasts to Portugal (30 December and 9 January) have ably revealed the philosophy that lies behind the BBC's view of 'objectivity'. This evidently means biased news and commentary against left-wing views and activities.

In the case of Portugal, as your articles have illustrated, this has meant that the BBC and other mass media have generally weighted their reports against those seeking to defend and advance the interests of the working class, in favour of the right-wing and counter-revolutionary forces whose anxiety to put an end to these gains has extended to dropping bombs on Lisbon and burning offices belonging to workers' organisations.

That Mr Gerard Mansell, managing director of external services, can justify the use of the term 'moderate' for those responsible for such actions is intolerable. He says that there are views to the right of those expressed by General Spínola. There are no doubt views to the right of Pinochet, the Chilean dictator.

In practice, the BBC's objectives come uncomfortably close to the CIA's stated aim of 'defending democracy'; when the chips are down, as they were in Allende's Chile, we are only too well aware of the real attitude towards parliamentary democracy shown by the CIA and others.

The fact is that the Portuguese working class has been fighting against considerable odds - not least politically motivated opposition to key Portuguese exports such as textiles, and the running

down of plants by multi-national companies. Yet there is no indication that the BBC's broadcasts have highlighted these developments, quite apart from the gains which have been made through the establishment of workers control in many industries.

We consider that the BBC and other mass media have much to learn from the strides towards real press freedom made until recently by *Republica* and Radio Renascença in Lisbon, and that journalists here would do well to hold their managements to the National Union of Journalists Code of Conduct, which would ensure a less one-sided version of events.

The BBC should immediately reinstate Cartaxo and Ribeiro, the two Portuguese journalists sacked for occasionally deviating from the Corporation's bias. We are grateful to them for bringing to light the facts reported in your articles.

Yours faithfully,

ALAN SAPPER, General Secretary,
ACTT
ERNIE ROBERTS, Assistant General Secretary, AUEW
BOB WRIGHT, AUEW Executive
EMLYN WILLIAMS, President, South Wales NUM
JOHN SPENCER, London Co-op
RON KNOWLES, Editor, *The Journalist*
AUDREY WISE, MP
STAN NEWENS, MP
TOM LITTERICK, MP
MAX MADDEN, MP
JOAN MAYNARD, MP

Phoney reforms don't fool Spanish workers

The first round of the workers' upsurge in Spain now seems to have passed, with the return to work of the most important groups of strikers.

Some have simply been starved back, such as those at the ITT affiliate Standard Electric, who were in the vanguard of the present wave of struggle, but as a result have been out on strike for two months (and in Spain — where there are no trade union funds or social security payments for strikers — that means two months with no income at all).

Others, like the Madrid building workers, have returned to work after winning partial concessions from the employers in the form of wage rises.

Yet others have been driven back by the iron heel of the dictatorship: the postal and telephone workers were forced to end their

strike after being drafted into the army and made subject to martial law; a similar move broke the strike of aircraft workers; and the Madrid underground has only been kept running by the threat of such 'militarisation'.

NOT SATISFIED

But all these groups of workers have one thing in common — none of them have seen either their basic material needs or their deep desire for political freedom satisfied. The repression that was necessary to prevent this upsurge turning into an all-out political offensive has been extremely embarrassing for the regime, whose attempts to cultivate a 'liberal' image have been rather dented by the spectacle of hundreds of riot-equipped policemen ruthlessly tear-gassing and baton-charging

demonstrations of housewives and trade unionists.

In order to try to overcome this difficulty, the regime is starting to play up its much-vaunted plans for 'reform'. In fact these reforms would do nothing more than tart up the dictatorship which General Franco created and bequeathed to the present regime. The changes it suggests are tiny.

- Reform of the Cortes (Spanish parliament): it is proposed that all representatives (instead of the present one-third) would be elected by universal suffrage (only 'heads of households' can vote at the moment); but this body would still have almost no power over the Govern-

RED WEEKLY

Spanish Week of Action

Plans for the 'Week of Action in Solidarity with the Spanish Working Class' initiated by the Action Group Against Repression in Spain for the week 7-15 February are moving ahead. Sponsors of the Week of Action include Labour MPs Ted Fletcher and Neil Kinnock, and Emylyn Williams, President of the South Wales NUM; a broad range of groups in the Spanish community are also backing it, including the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Party), the PTE (Spanish Workers Party), FRAP (the Anti-Fascist and Patriotic Revolutionary Front), the LCR-ETA VI (Spanish sympathising organisation of the Fourth International), the Spanish Solidarity Committee, and Women Against Fascist Spain.

Committees in many parts of the country will be organising local solidarity actions during this week, and a number of events will be taking place in London. Among the more important are:

Glasgow — a picket of the Iberian Airlines offices is being organised by the Spanish Action Group for Saturday 7 February, and a public meeting for Tuesday 10 February.

Manchester — the Manchester Spanish Solidarity Committee is organising a public meeting on Thursday 12 February and a demonstration on Saturday 14 February (assemble 11.30 am Oxford Road, under Mancunian Way).

London — a public meeting on Eva Forest and the struggle of Spanish women will be held on Monday 9 February at the Dalston Library, Dalston Lane; a showing of Spanish films is to be put on by the LSE Spanish Solidarity Committee and AGARIS on Wednesday 11 February in the LSE Old Theatre at 7 pm; and on Thursday 12 February the North London Committee Against Repression in Spain is holding a public meeting in Friends Meeting House, Euston Road at which speakers will include Dave Bowman, President of the NUR, and Val Coultas of the NUS Executive.

For further information on the Week of Action contact AGARIS, c/o 49 Chippinham Road, London W9.

CIA Exclusive!

The assassination of a CIA agent in Athens over Christmas; revelations from the US Senate about how the CIA tried to buy Reuters journalists to plant stories; the exposure in Britain of the black propaganda news agency Forum World Features; and the almost daily listing of CIA agents in France, Spain, Greece and Britain—these have all thrown the hidden works of US foreign policy's secret dirty tricks department into the limelight again.

More than anyone else, PHILIP AGEE has helped to expose the activities of the CIA—an exposure doubly effective because of his own long service inside the 'Company'. If the CIA itself is to be believed, the naming of agents has had a considerable effect on the smoothness of its operations.

Next week, Red Weekly will be carrying an exclusive interview with Philip Agee. In it we will be dealing with the evolving role of the CIA from Latin America to Western



Europe and Angola, and with the CIA's involvement in British politics—including the Common Market campaign and its relation to the Labour Government.

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ment, and there would be an appointed upper-house with power to block the decisions of the elected representatives.

- Greater freedom for 'political associations': this would allow many political parties that are at present illegal to operate publicly; but the Government has made it clear that it has no intention of legalising the main workers organisation — the Communist Party — nor any of the growing organisations to its left.

- Reform of the official trade unions: this is designed to stop an influx of workers into the powerful, illegal 'workers commissions' over which the Government has no control; but it in no way represents the formation of genuine, free trade unions which would represent the interests of the workers.

Equally important are the omissions from this reform scheme:

- * No moves to free the 2,000 militants who are in prison for their leading role in the fight against the dictatorship.

- No moves to end the oppression of the national minorities in the Basque country, Catalonia and Galicia.

- No recognition of the basic democratic rights of free speech, association and assembly.

- No plans to scrap the parliamentary Francoist police forces who have ruthlessly crushed the Spanish workers' fight for freedom over the past four decades.

The Spanish ruling class has already got US imperialism to underwrite this scheme, with the signature of a five-year 'friendship and co-operation' treaty. This allows for the continued use of bases in Spain by the US military, the granting of over £500 million of military aid to Spain, and the setting up of a special joint command

Foreign Minister Areilza (right) signs agreement on military bases with Henry Kissinger, representing the dictatorship's biggest backer

to coordinate military operations in the Mediterranean area.

Now the dictatorship is seeking the same sort of support from the Western European ruling class, by applying for associate membership of the Common Market. This is the reason Spain's Foreign Minister, Areilza, is stomping the European capitals.

The plans being laid in this country to organise mass protests against the visit of Areilza next month are the sort of moves that the entire labour movement in Britain should be taking up.

STOP AREILZA

In response to a call from the International Marxist Group to all the major groups on the left, representatives from three organisations—the IMG, the International Socialists, and the International Communist League—met last Friday to discuss the forthcoming visit of the Spanish Foreign Minister.

The three groups agreed on the urgent necessity of a united left response in protest at this visit and to demonstrate solidarity with the struggles of the Spanish working class. It was decided to issue a joint appeal for a further meeting to set up a united front committee to mobilise against this visit.

It is hoped that all organisations concerned with defending the Spanish working class will attend this meeting, and specific invitations are being sent to the CP, the NUS, Tribune, Militant, the LPYS, the WRP, and the WSL.

Monthly Fund

Dear readers, do not let us down. We are planning major technical improvements for the summer which will make the paper easier to read and more attractive to look at. But improvements already made will be lost, unless the money keeps coming in. So many thanks to: a Paisley reader £20, £7.70 from a Brighton IMG member, and £1 from a Surrey reader who writes that 'your paper must continue'.

We agree, only by selling more copies of the paper and making sure that a regular contribution is made from your area to the Fighting Fund can we win the battle against increasing costs. Send your donation now to: Fighting Fund, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.



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Part of last Sunday's massive demo against the repression in India