

RED WEEKLY

15 JANUARY 1976

No. 133

PRICE 10p

SAS OUT

A state of siege in South Armagh was declared by Harold Wilson in the House of Commons on Monday. There is no other way to describe the invasion of the area by 600 extra troops and the Special Air Services.

Ireland has seen the operations of the SAS since 1970. Aden and Dhofar, in the Middle East, have also suffered the attention of these cold blooded killers, whose speciality is the secret assassination and torture of those fighting against imperialism. Gerry Fitt of the Social Democratic & Labour Party, scab though he is, rightly compared their role with that of the CIA. The crack force of the British Army has never acted to keep the peace, but only to bring a hail of blood and terror to long-suffering populations.

Cooperation between Wilson and the Southern Irish Government, to coordinate action north and south of the border, has now been achieved. A curtain of steel has been lowered around South Armagh. The institution of computer-coordinated screening, house to house searches and interrogation (i.e. torture), means that the truce has now been broken off by the Labour Govern-

ment. The 'truce' was meant to soften anti-imperialist resistance. Its calling off indicates the next stage of the Government's strategy.

Wilson was followed by Merlyn Rees, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who rejected the open hand-over to Orangeism proposed by the Loyalist dominated Conven-



tion. Instead he put forward the involvement of the treacherous SDLP in a fake 'power-sharing' exercise. The Labour Government aims to achieve political stabilisation as the back drop to naked repression of the anti-Unionist population, whom Fitt and his kind claim to represent.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that the full responsibility for the repression in Ireland lies with the British Government, there is no doubt that the actions of the 'South Armagh Republican Action Force'—which culminated in the assassination of ten Protestant workers in retaliation for the murder of five Catholics—have aided Rees in his campaign to smear Republicans and all those fighting against imperialism as 'gangsters'.

Rees's slander aims to conceal the real facts of the situation. The murders in South Armagh have been blown up by the media, blurring the fact that for every one Protestant death, three Catholics have died. The Labour Government is using the latest deaths to justify the sending of the SAS which, in its turn, is a sop to the Loyalists. These are the bankrupt policies of the Labour Government.

The continued involvement of Britain in Ireland will never be a solution but simply the cause of more problems for the Irish people. That is why every militant must campaign for the immediate withdrawal of the SAS and of all British troops from Ireland.

STEVE CANNON

Britain out of Ireland!

All out for
February 1st demo!



TROOPS OUT



BECAUSE British troops are only in Ireland to protect British imperialist interests. This is the source of all Ireland's problems. The Six County statelet was artificially established to protect these interests.

BECAUSE in pursuit of these interests, British troops have for the past six years terrorised and brutalised the nationalist minority in the Six Counties. Hundreds have been interned in concentration camps, thousands put behind bars, and still others shot down. The only peace that the troops can bring to Ireland is the peace of the graveyard.

BECAUSE the troops prop up a sectarian system which keeps Catholic workers as second class citizens. Protestant workers are won to the sectarian system by caste privileges granted through Loyalist control of the sectarian statelet in jobs, houses and welfare benefits. The rate of unemployment amongst Catholics in Derry and parts of Belfast is over 20 per cent.

BECAUSE the propping up of the artificial Six County statelet by the troops only serves to reinforce the idea that Loyalist Protestant workers can best resolve their problems at the expense of the Catholic workers. The troops give confidence to the Loyalist workers that the most backward demands of the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) for the restoration of all their privileges can be won. The presence of the troops perpetuates the divisions of the Irish working class.

BECAUSE in pursuit of their reactionary attempts to subdue the Catholic working class, the British army gives cover to the Loyalist terror gangs who openly boast of murdering Catholics. The British army does its best to smash up the attempts by the Catholics to defend them-

selves, leaving Catholic workers prey to sectarian attacks.

BECAUSE Ireland is a laboratory for the development of repressive techniques (counter-insurgency methods, torture, 'riot' control, rubber bullets, gas, joint army-police actions). These techniques are being developed for use against the British working class itself. Joint army-police manoeuvres at Heathrow, the invasion of small towns by the army 'practising', and the intervention of troops in the Glasgow dustcart drivers' strike are small indications of what is in store for British workers based on the experience gained in Ireland.

BECAUSE the toleration of this situation in the Six Counties by British workers makes them vulnerable to the attacks of the ruling class in this country. The Prevention of Terrorism Action introduced by Jenkins last year shows how police state laws can be introduced in this country for later use against British workers. As the strength of the trade unions prevents them from defeating the working class at the level of the economic struggle, the capitalist class will turn more and more to using issues like Ireland to split the labour movement and prepare the ground for future defeats.

BECAUSE a victory for the army will be a massive boost for the worst enemies of the working class in this country. The success of the struggle of the nationalist population so far in the Six Counties has divided the ruling class and prevented them from single-mindedly concentrating their attention on defeating British workers. The defeat for the ruling class which the removal of British troops from Ireland would signify would be a big boost for workers' struggles in this country. The nationalist struggle in Ireland and the struggle to defend living standards in this country are inextricably intertwined.

TROOPS OUT NOW

The Battle in Steel



BSC boss Sir Monty Finniston lays down the line to union 'leader' Bill Sirs

It isn't often that the bosses demand that their workers sacrifice everything in one go. But that's what happened in the steel industry last week. The British Steel Corporation demanded that the steel unions give up weekend working, give up their guaranteed weekly wage agreement (which gives half of the 220,000 steel workers 80 per cent of earnings when there is short-time working), pledge to accept 44,000 redundancies in two years, pledge to end unofficial strikes, and agree to the 'temporary' closure of old and inefficient plants!

When the bosses demand total surrender, they usually expect to finish up with a partial surrender. And this is what the leadership of the steel workers is prepared to negotiate right now. The BSC has been forced, as a result of 'unofficial' strikes and occupations of steel plants in Corby, Port Talbot and elsewhere, to back-off on the weekly wage agreement — if the leadership of the Iron & Steel Trades Confederation will give away everything else. The question which steel workers must consider carefully is: what are the real plans of the British Steel Corporation?

'Temporary'

The ISTC leadership likes to create the impression that the problem with BSC is merely a cash crisis and high imports of foreign steel. Of course, if you're trying to tell your membership that the 'temporary' closure of old steel plants is no cause for alarm, you've got to create some pretty big illusions!

A cash crisis does exist in BSC, and British steel is being undercut by imports. But these are only symptoms, not the disease. The crisis in the steel industry is a structural one. Notice of this was first given in 1967 with the Benson Report, and warnings since then have included one by the IMG in its 1972 pamphlet, *Steel, The Coming Redundancies and How to Fight Them*.

The IMG pamphlet was based on a BSC internal document which fell into the hands of rank and file steel workers. The conclusion which emerged from this was that: 'Of the 30 or so major steelmaking plants in England and Scotland, the British Steel Corporation intends to concentrate production on five.'

Integrated

The big five — Scunthorpe, Lackenby/Redcar (Teesside), Ravenscraig (Glasgow), Port Talbot (Swansea) and Llanwern (Newport) — are fully integrated steelmaking and steel-rolling plants, built adjacent to modern iron-ore ports, and using the modern 'oxygen' rather than the outdated coal-burning 'open hearth' methods of producing steel from pig iron.

by DAVE BAILEY

'These big five will account for some 27 or 28 million tons of common steel by 1977, with the closure of the last big open hearth plants at Corby and Shotton By this date it is intended that virtually all other steelmaking plants will cease production.' The pamphlet also calculated that between 1972 and 1977, the closures (e.g. Ebbw Vale, West Hartlepool, Clydeside, Clydebridge, Dalzell, Glengarnock, Shotton and Corby) and associated cutbacks could involve the loss of as many as 80,000 jobs.

Although the timing may change, there is no reason to assume that the strategy has changed. Eleven thousand jobs went last year alone, and now Bob Scholey, BSC chief executive, is insisting on a further 40,000 redundancies in the next two years 'for starters'.

The strategy of concentrating production on the big five was advised by Benson ten years ago, and it was with this in mind that Wilson nationalised the steel industry in 1967. The aim was to prepare a big productivity offensive — while the average American steel plant produced 210 tons per man year in 1967, and the average Japanese plant 250 tons p.m.y, the average British plant produced only a measly 90 tons p.m.y.

Astonishing

The reason for this astonishing discrepancy had nothing to do with British workers 'working less hard' or unofficial strikes. It lay in the fact that the British steel industry failed to adopt the oxygen steel-making methods after the last War. Instead the private owners clung to the outdated open hearth. To change would have cost them as much as £4,000 million. And with collapsing profits, only the State could spend this kind of money. So this is the step the BSC was born to take.

When BSC demand a redundancy target based on 'an annual output per man of the Corporation's most modern plants' (*Financial Times*, 9 January), that is 500 tons per man

year; and when they speak of using the current economies only to close down the old plants 'temporarily', put sections of them 'in mothballs'

PORT TALBOT

Port Talbot steel works closed at 2 p.m. last Saturday laying off 9,000 workers. In a series of mass meetings ISTC members overwhelmingly rejected appeals to return to work from the local executive, backed up by area officials and national executive members.

The strike involves 1,200 workers, 500 staff members of the Abbey Mill branch and 700 from Abbey No. 4 branch. They are fighting against BSC's attempts to cut Sunday premium time working and chop the guaranteed working week. These two measures would involve big wage cuts for steel workers.

Bill Sirs has now been given two weeks off from negotiations with BSC to regain control of the situation in South Wales and the rest of the country. The two week break follows a statement from Sirs saying, 'BSC have come a considerable way to meeting our position'.

But BSC chief executive Scholey has no such illusions. 'We have withdrawn nothing on the question of redundancies. We have simply restated our objectives in different terms.'

and so on, steel workers have every cause for alarm. The current offensive by BSC is designed to lay the basis for a massive attack on steel workers. For the same reason, the present struggles must lay the basis for a fight back which will allow steel workers to weather the storm of technical change without loss of earnings, conditions and organisational strength.

The IMG pamphlet argues that there is an effective way of doing this: 'This is that when the workload contracts (whether by recession or technical change), the contracted workload should be shared by the same number of men with no loss of pay — resulting of course in a shorter working week. The most effective way to present this idea is the demand for a sliding scale of hours with no loss of pay.'

Work-sharing

In other words, the work should be shared without any loss of average earnings. A fight for this demand would unite all steelworkers, overcome sectional conflicts, and avoid tying up the struggle in secondary wrangles about whether this or that plant closes down.

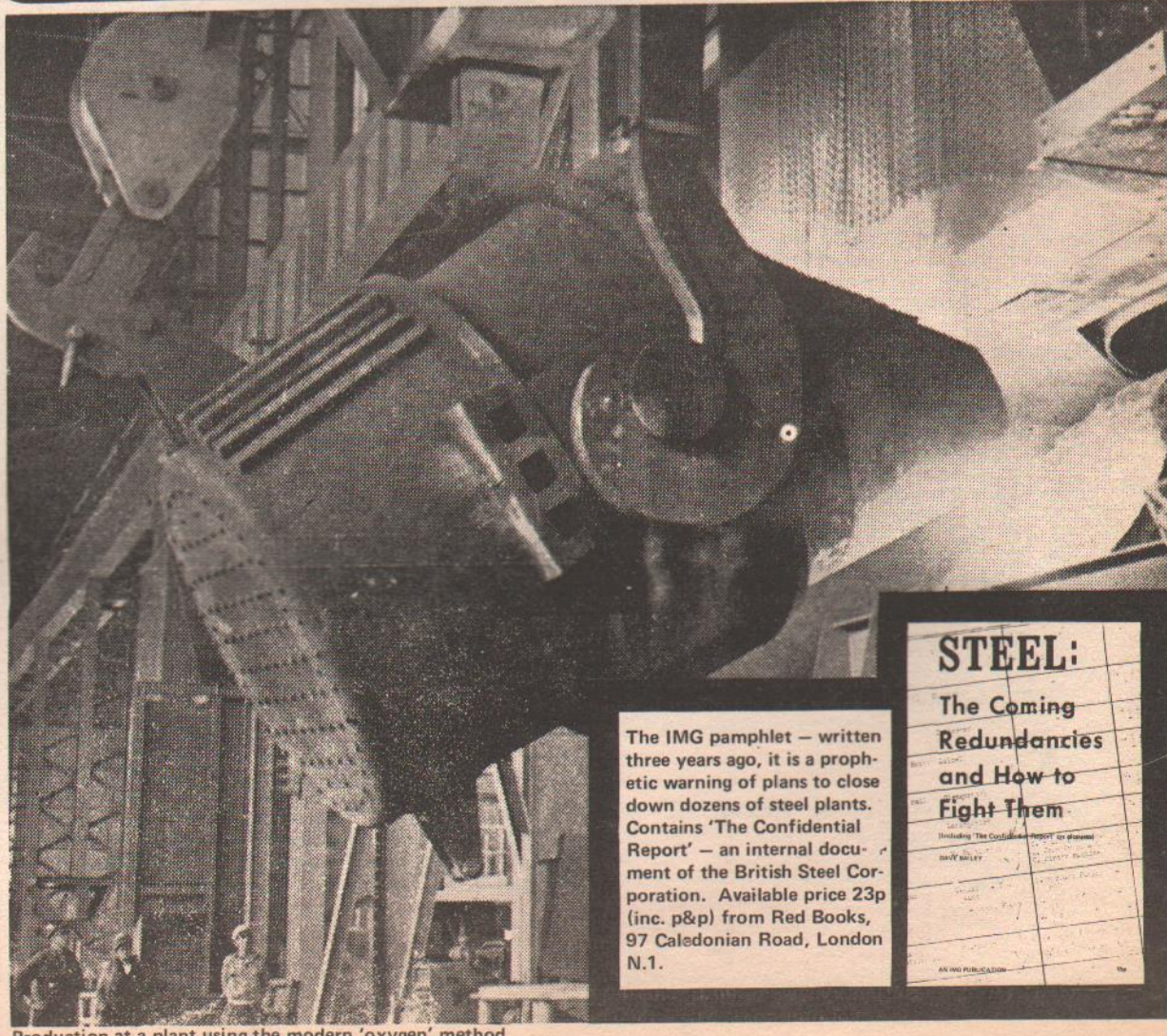
Of course, the IMG has put forward this policy in almost every section of industry facing wide-

spread lay-offs. In steel, however, workers have already partly established the basic principle of work-sharing without loss of pay. This is embodied in the guaranteed working week agreement — precisely the agreement that the BSC wants to scrap in order to make run-downs of plants easier.

No redundancies

Although this agreement only covers half the workers, and gives only 80 per cent protection to earnings, nonetheless it is a step towards the idea that when production falls the workers should not suffer, because it is not they who are to blame for the crisis in the steel industry. This agreement must be defended tooth and nail against attacks by BSC. But instead of defending it at the price of tying the workers' hands behind their backs, it must be combined with a fight to extend this agreement into a means of protecting all steel workers against redundancy.

Such a fight would not only be an alternative to redundancies in steel, it would be an example to all other workers who are faced with similar problems right across the grim landscape of the decaying and crumbling shells of British industry.



Production at a plant using the modern 'oxygen' method

STEEL:

The Coming Redundancies and How to Fight Them

The IMG pamphlet — written three years ago, it is a prophetic warning of plans to close down dozens of steel plants. Contains 'The Confidential Report' — an internal document of the British Steel Corporation. Available price 23p (inc. p&p) from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

including 'The Confidential Report' to general

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ISTC - the bureaucrats' union

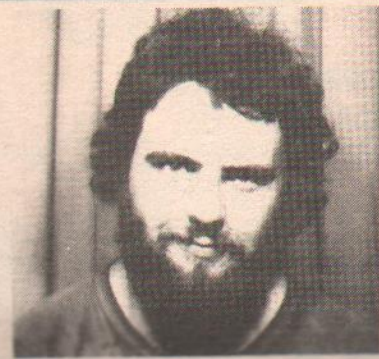
The explosive situation in the steel industry has once again highlighted the scabbing role of the leaders of the Iron & Steel Trades Confederation. STEVE VOKES, a militant of the International Marxist Group and Chairman of the Bar/Strip Mill Branch of the ISTC at GKN Cardiff, told *Red Weekly* how the major steel union came to play this role.

The British Iron and Steel and Kindred Trades Association, as the ISTC was formerly known, was formed through the fusion of 14 or so craft unions in 1919. Until last year there was never an official strike, the only exception being the General Strike and even this was opposed by a section of the bureaucracy. Throughout the 1920s branches of BISAFTA were dissolved and militants expelled in South Wales for supporting the Minority Movement.

The General Secretary of the union until April last year was Sir Dai Davies a 'distinction' bestowed on him in 1973 'for services to trade unionism' by that well known labour leader Edward Heath. The ISTC has always been on the extreme right wing of the Labour Party. One of their two sponsored MPs was right-winger Eddie Griffiths, MP for Sheffield Brightside until he was thrown out by his constituency party and replaced by Joan Maynard.

The reasons for the backwardness of the ISTC lie in the nature of the steel industry itself particularly in the seniority system. There is no common rate of pay in the steel industry. Workers rise to more responsible jobs through experience, and every job has its 'own' rate.

Through this a system of differentials has built up, with every worker getting a different rate of pay. This encourages the men at the top of the ladder to take more of an interest in the union as they have most to lose, hence the union officials are nearly always senior men deter-



mined to protect their relatively privileged position.

The rule book of the union is incredibly autocratic. Under Rule 4, Clause 3 'no member, branch or official except the Executive Council shall have power to order or sanction any strike or stoppage of work or any act which might be deemed unfair industrial practice'. And just in case anyone tries, Rule 4, Clause 15 empowers the Executive Council to 'suspend, terminate or close down any branch or branches where it shall in its absolute discretion consider that such transfer, suspension or closing down shall be necessary or expedient in the interests of the Confederation'.

Finally, the whole disputes machinery in the industry leads to collaboration with management. If a dispute arises on the shop-floor, first the branch officials are involved. If it looks explosive, then the full-time officials quickly come in and the branch - which is the basic unit of union organisation in the steel industry - has to accept their decision.

If no settlement is reached the whole dispute is referred to a 'National Committee' made up of three employers' nominees and three trade union nominees. Not surprisingly these 'neutral' committees always reach a compromise based on the belief that bosses and workers have a common interest at heart. So the ISTC is incapable of fighting for its members.



'Any fight back is a fight back against Wilson and his policies'

1. ROY MORGAN, EPTU Convenor, Whiteheads Works, Newport.

Q. How did Whiteheads workers respond to the attempted cuts in weekend working?

A. BSC said we wouldn't get paid for Sunday. All the lads turned up for work. Production workers and craftsmen, we were solid - one hundred per cent. We had discussions on the cuts and that sort of thing, as there was no work.

Q. What about the union leadership's attitude to the cuts?

A. They are generals up at the top. They forget that they are supposed to represent our interests. Instead they represent the interests of Wilson and the capitalists. They act as referees whose job is to get BSC off the hook.

Q. Could you be a bit more specific?

A. On Sunday all the lads, and I'm not talking only of the stewards now, felt that there had to be national action. The National Craftsmen's Coordinating Committee hasn't said a word. It could have called for a national conference as a springboard to action, bringing the executive to account. Also there is no district leadership with fighting policies.

Q. Why is a national response necessary?

A. Because it's the only way to combat BSC's divide-and-rule tactics. They always play off one plant against another, one group of workers against each other. One week it's Ebbw Vale for the chop, then Shotton, threats to Port Talbot, and so it goes on.

A real leadership would offer a national response. The TUC and the Trade Union Steel Committee should be recalled. The problem is that the leadership is

tied to the social contract and the Labour Government.

Q. What policies have these leaders put forward, and what is the Government trying to do?

A. The Government wants increased productivity from a massively reduced workforce. Hence the massive redundancies. The ISTC leadership offer voluntary redundancies and the policing of the BSC's strategy.

I'm completely opposed to voluntary redundancies. It's a job gone and it splits the workers. They divide the stronger plants like Llanwern from the weaker plants like Whiteheads.

Q. What do you think of the policy put forward in the Morning Star by the Communist Party?

A. They argue that BSC can be made 'profitable'. This is claptrap. Anyone can see that East Moors (Cardiff) is old and 'unprofitable'. The real question is defence of jobs, not doing the capitalists' job for them.

Q. What do you think of the demand for work-sharing with no loss of pay?

A. This has been tried by the union leadership - but their version was work-sharing with pay cuts. Work-sharing yes, but with no loss of pay. I've no opposition to a shorter working week - have you? Any fight back is a fight back against Wilson and his policies.

2. NOEL DAVIES, T&GWU crane driver, Ebbw Vale.

Q. What happened last Sunday (4 January) over the cuts in weekend working?

A. The management tried to send the

lads home. But they staged a sit-in. We stand to lose £20 if weekend working goes. If the guaranteed working week goes we will be on short time.

Q. Were there any mass meetings on the Sunday?

A. There's never any mass meetings here. The rank and file are always in the dark. There should be mass meetings of all workers here to thrash out a real policy. People should be involved, otherwise they get fed up.

Q. What do you think of the BSC proposals?

A. In the end they will clobber the steel workers, and this will particularly affect Ebbw Vale. Redundancies are the main thing.

Q. How will this affect Ebbw?

A. Well, it's the bottom end which will go. The tinplate will stay. In the hot mill they're already working week on, week off.

Q. What do you think of the union leadership's role?

A. As soon as the lads at Port Talbot came out, Sirs should have called a national strike. There should have been a national conference of shop stewards to work out action in detail. But the union leadership won't do this. They are tied to the Government.

That's the problem. They won't take on the Government - instead they carry out its policies. Everyone here is waiting for a lead, but it's not come. That's why the TUC should be recalled.

Q. What do you think of Michael Foot's attitude?

A. Foot is carrying out redundancies in his own constituency. He is a disgusting sell-out merchant. He should be forced to go. Any fight against redundancies is a fight against Foot.

IN FOCUS

Fighting Unemployment

The fight for the right to work received a hard knock with the recent events at Chrysler. But the workers at Port Talbot, by defying the sell-out line of their national executive, have taken up the gauntlet thrown down by the British Steel Corporation on behalf of the Labour Government.

In this grave situation the working class movement must support every fight back which takes a clear stand against the unemployment policies of the Wilson Government - no matter what differences exist on the policies, they have to be fought for. For this reason the International Marxist Group will be organising support for two activities in the coming months.

1. RIGHT TO WORK MARCH

The first of these is the Right to Work March organised by the Rank and File Co-ordinating Committee, an organisation dominated by the International Socialists. While supporting the march, the IMG will be organising not on the basis of the policy of the march organisers, which merely protests about growing unemployment, but on the basis of the measures necessary to smash unemployment: work-sharing with no loss of pay, nationalisation without compensation of firms creating redundancies, and workers control over production.

This means campaigning for a recall TUC to break with the policies of the Labour Government and fight for the removal of the Wilson/Healey leadership of the Labour Party. In this respect we welcome the decision of the 200,000 strong Civil and Public Services Association to organise 30 rallies of their members to demand a recall TUC to discuss the 'anti-inflationary policy' of the Government. The IMG will also be demanding that Labour MPs support the Right to Work March if they intend their words about 'the tragedy of unemployment' to be translated into even the most minimal action against the policies of this Government.

2. LABOUR MOVEMENT ASSEMBLY

The IMG will be fighting for the same policy at the Labour Movement Assembly on unemployment at Central Hall, Westminster, on Saturday 27 March. This has been called by the No. 8 District of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (which represents more than 200,000 workers in the London region), and is being campaigned for in the pages of the Communist Party's paper the Morning Star. Southall AUEW district committee has already called for factory meetings to elect delegates to the Assembly - a call which should be extended to every area so that all workers can debate the policies necessary to crush unemployment.

At the Assembly the IMG will also fight against the kind of policies which turned the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, originally set up to combat the last Labour Government's anti-union proposals, into a pressure group on the trade union bureaucracy. This will mean combatting any conceptions that the interests of the working class can be subordinated to the Communist Party's reformist and sectarian schemes of forging alliance with the trade union and Labour 'lefts'.

The address of the Right to Work Campaign is: 46 Prince George Road, London N16. Credentials for the Labour Movement Assembly can be obtained from Mr Bill McLaughlin, No. 8 District CSEU, 28 Denmark Street, London WC2.

Labour and Scotland

The 13-11 vote of the executive of the Labour Party in Scotland to reject a meeting with the supporters of the newly formed Scottish Labour Party is yet another example of the bureaucratic and suicidal policies being pursued by the leaders of the labour movement in Scotland.

Already the right-wing policies of the Labour Government and of the Labour Party in Scotland threaten to throw politically confused workers into supporting the reactionary Scottish Nationalist Party. The bureaucratic threats to exclude supporters of the Scottish Labour Party from the national Labour Party now open the way to even greater losses. Instead of this wretched bureaucracy, the Labour Party in Scotland should be defending the right of every socialist who pays the political levy to the Labour Party, including the supporters of the Scottish Labour Party and the Communist Party and revolutionary left, to be in the Labour Party.

As for the SLP itself, revolutionary socialists should be clear on its character. There is no doubt that its founding circle, Jim Sillars and his supporters, are hardened social democrats. The SLP has no programme qualitatively distinct from that of the left of the Labour Party. Nor does 'nationalism' provide any solution for the working class in Scotland. It is quite possible that some of its founders will eventually end up in the SNP.

At the same time, however, the right-wing policies of the Labour Government and of the Labour Party in Scotland mean that the SLP will probably attract a number of militants genuinely seeking an alternative to the rotten policies of Wilson. It is the task of revolutionary socialists to approach these workers both to be in a position to influence those seeking class struggle alternatives, and to show them a path to tackle in practice the problems confronting the working class.

This means fighting for the militants in the SLP to adopt three steps forward:

- to demand not a programme of generalities or nationalism but a clear programme of action capable of tackling the problems confronting the working class;
- for full democracy inside the SLP so that all views of the workers movement - reformist and revolutionary - can be put forward;
- that the SLP should not at present leave the Labour Party but should fight for the right to organise as an open part of the Labour Party and for the right of other trends in the workers movement to be affiliated to the Labour Party.

These positions have to be fought for both at the SLP founding conference and in its development.

COWLEY: Behind the witch-hunt

'Beware of the Mole', screamed the *Mirror*. 'Stop the Mole and his mates!' urged the *Daily Express*. What is this mole — some new threat to everyone's back garden?

The truth is rather more simple. It's union election time at British Leyland's Cowley plant again. And senior steward Reg Parsons, chief stooge for BL management in its attempts to slash the workforce and introduce savage speed-up, is worried lest the militants win a majority of the full-time deputy senior stewards posts (which are being voted on as *Red Weekly* goes to press).

Parsons has reason to be worried. The recent Transport & General Workers Union 5/293 Branch elections virtually wiped out Parsons' puppets and replaced them with militants prepared to defend workers' interests. In particular Alan Thornett (the so-called 'Mole'), a member of the Workers Socialist League and steward in the transport department, won the Branch Chairmanship.

The *Organiser*, the Cowley bulletin of the International Marxist Group (the other organisation Parsons hates most) pointed out that this was 'a big step forward' for the workers in the plant. It went on:

- Leyland are upset, because they know they will face a fighting branch determined to oppose the Ryder attacks at every turn;
 - The trade union officials are upset — they know they will no longer have faithful servants to assist them in their sell-out plans over Ryder;
 - The press is upset — screaming headlines as they try once again to start a witch-hunt;
 - Parsons is upset — the very branch he created in order to make his betrayals easier has been won by the militants.
- With all these well-known enemies of the workers upset, the branch elections can only be seen as a success!

So where did Parsons turn for support? Not to his alleged hundreds of supporters in the factory, but to the management — which says it will refuse to recognise Thornett if he is elected as a deputy senior steward — and to the capitalist press. Without even consulting his own stewards he called in the press and television to his front room and painted a lurid picture of Cowley as 'a beehive of extremist activity'. Such is the belief of this 'moderate' in 'democracy'.

Alan Thornett was singled out for special treatment. Eighteen months ago, Thornett lost his deputy senior stewards' post following an orchestrated victimisation campaign by management, the TGWU leadership, and a press witch-hunt. This campaign was initiated by Parsons and led to a weakening of trade union organisation at Cowley.

Following a stage-managed enquiry which formally cleared Thornett of all charges against him, the TGWU bureaucracy ordered new shop floor ballots for deputy senior and senior stewards, replacing the previous method of election by the stewards committee. This led to the defeat of Bob Fryer, the left-wing senior steward, and Parsons' arrival in his present position.



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Witch-hunter and hunted: (below) Reg Parsons, (above) Alan Thornett

The TGWU also split the old 5/55 branch and set up a separate branch for the Assembly Plant, 5/293, in an effort to crush the power and unity formerly involved in a single branch covering three of the Cowley factories.

This neatly prepared the way for Leyland's sackings and productivity drive, embodied in the Ryder Report, and for management's attempts to incorporate the plant union leadership by implementing Ryder's proposals through a system of class collaborationist 'Joint Management Committees'. As a result of speed-up, BL management are now claiming that the Marina assembly line at Cowley is as efficient as any in Europe.

LOSING

But despite the efforts of BL and the Labour Government, BL is still losing £6 million a week. Recently new capital investment (which we were told Ryder was all about) was suspended and BL announced that the first dollop of lolly from the Government had all gone to pay current bills rather than re-equip the plant. In other words, as IMG and WSL militants in Cow-

ley have consistently pointed out, even more savage attacks on jobs, living standards and hard won trade union rights are coming.

Increasing number of workers at Cowley have come to agree with their alternative solution to Leyland's problems: opening BL's books — a concept popularised by the activity of the Open the Books Committee at Cowley — so that complete nationalisation of the concern can be carried out under workers control.

And the fight back against Ryder has been developing. The elections for the vaunted 'worker participation' committees were greeted by mass abstentions. Three separate attempts to force massive speed-up on the Princess line — including a threat to close the North works if a ridiculous target of 28½ cars an hour was not achieved — have been beaten back. Now the militants have won the 5/293 Branch elections.

TEST CASE

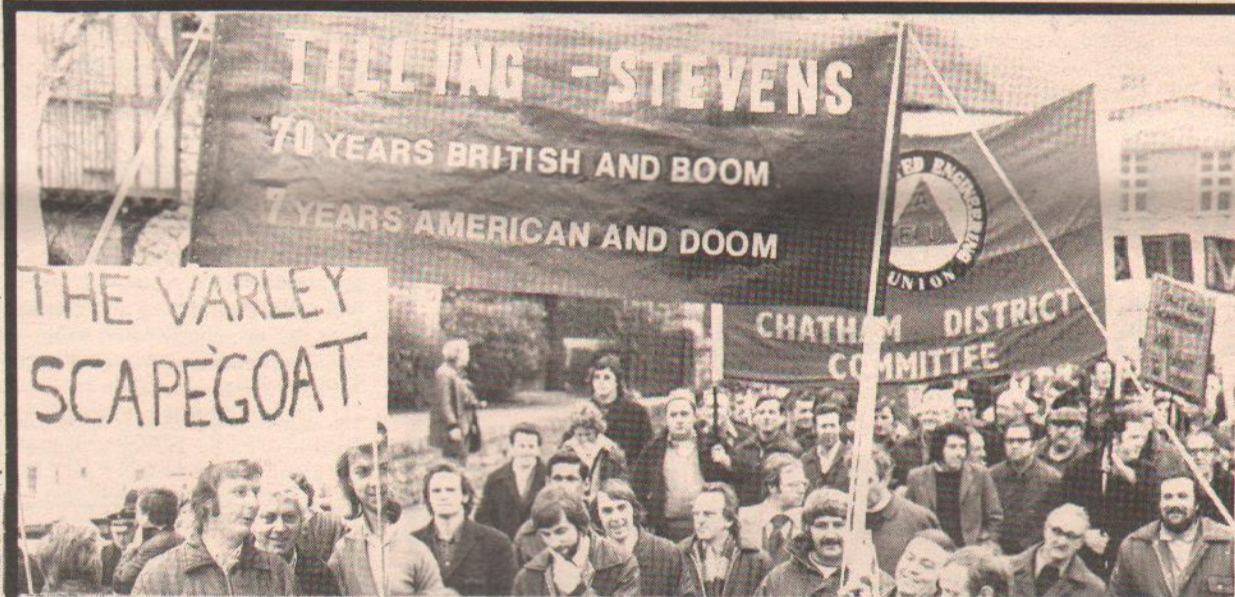
Behind the red scare tactics of the right-wing leaders in Cowley lies the fear of the ruling class that the Government's efforts to save British Leyland for capitalism will fall apart. BL, along with Chrysler and the steel industry, are test cases for the future success of the Wilson Government in its attacks on the working class.

If Ryder's appellation is upset and car workers at BL reverse the recent defeat suffered at Chrysler, then a dent will have been made in Wilson's abilities to serve the employers so well. This is why the ruling class is so concerned that the Parsons regime should continue at Cowley — and why the capitalist press was so keen to splash it all over its pages last week.

COWLEY IMG

The main banner of the demo, instead of urging a fight against the anti-working class policies of the Wilson Government, simply said 'Tilling-Stevens — 70 years British and Boom; — 7 years American and Doom'. As if British workers' problems stop this side of the Atlantic. No real links have yet been made with workers facing redundancy in other Chrysler plants to build some common campaign against redundancy.

Photos: ANDREW WIARD (Report)



Chrysler workers demonstrating in Maidstone. Inset: Jim Hayter — 'Wilson should have thrown out Chrysler from the start'.

CHRYSLER - For whom the bell tolls

this factory existed in the past is because of cheap labour. It paid them to bring all the castings and raw materials down from the Midlands, have it machined and assembled here, and then sent back to Dunstable.

What did he think of the Government's scheme? 'It's going to divide the workers and plants. It's going to break the union — they are trying the same tactic in the British Steel Corporation now. I don't think we've got much hope, but you just can't sit back and take it. Even if you go down fighting it has made somebody sit up and take notice'.

His view was shared by Frances Stephenson, one of twelve women AUEW members in the factory, which makes air-conditioning units and reconditions engines. Unemployment has doubled to more than 2,000 in Maidstone in the past year, and there have been large redundancies in nearby paper and cement works.

Little hope

Mrs Stephenson is herself facing redundancy for the second time in two years. 'Why should we lose our jobs in Maidstone? The jobs aren't redundant — we are! It's a bit late, but we have to do what we can. My 16-year old son had a job to get work, so how do they expect us to get work again?'

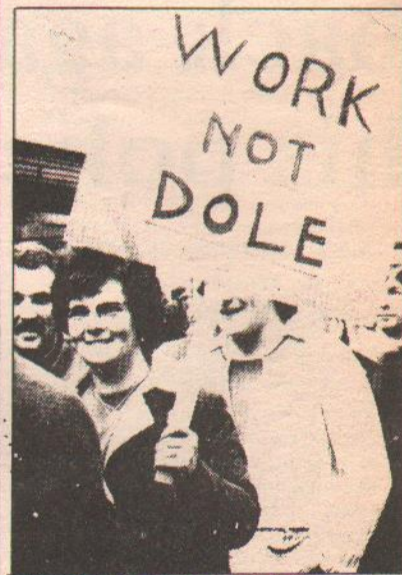
Unfortunately there is little hope that leadership for any struggle will come from the local union and plant leadership. The only leaflet distributed came from the local Tory MP, and the purpose of the march was to back up a delegation from the unions' Action Committee to the Tory mayor. The local industrial chaplain trailed along too — no doubt offering spiritual consolation for the coming material deprivation.

The tolling of the town's church bell may well have rung the knell on the jobs of 600 Chrysler workers demonstrating through the Kent town of Maidstone last Thursday.

Due to be axed in June as part of the Government's £170 million 'rescue' plan for Chrysler, the workers at the Tilling-Stevens plant — which has been in the town for nearly 80 years and is the largest employer — are bitter at their treatment. 'The Labour Government should support us. We're the workers, we're the people who put the Labour Government in. Wilson should have thrown Chrysler out from the start', AUEW member Jim Hayter told me.

Although the local union leaders are stressing the profitability of the plant and its few strikes in the past as reasons for keeping it open, some workers pointed out that it has been this very passivity which has made it 'easy meat'.

'We've always been the scapegoats — the poor relations', said Jim Ashlee, another member of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. 'The money has always been low until last year when we fought to try and improve our standard of living. The only reason



MRS FRANCES STEPHENSON

Any hope of launching a national struggle now seems to rest with the white-collar workers of ASTMS, which is the only union to have rejected the deal on a national scale. Local Divisional Officer Hugh Glass told me that the possibility of moving towards linking Chrysler and Leyland had been looked at in a paper produced by the union.

'British Leyland was having a lot of trouble in the truck and land-rover divisions, which cannot keep up with the demand, and we were looking into the possibility of using spare capacity at Chrysler to help British Leyland in this particular export market'.

Red Weekly has long campaigned for a single integrated nationalised car industry operating under workers control. The implementation of the Ryder Report and 20,000 redundancies in British Leyland over the past year and now the Chrysler fiasco have shown only too painfully the need for a new strategy to defend jobs and living standards. In next week's *Red Weekly* we will be looking at the forthcoming Institute of Workers' Control conference on the car industry and explaining just what our strategy of nationalisation under workers control means for car workers.

MICK GOSLING

-WHAT'S ON-

- ANGOLA** — an eyewitness report by Tony Hodges at London Socialist Forum, Tuesday 20 January, 7.30pm, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Holborn tube).
- FOR CHEAP**, reliable IBM typesetting with fast turnaround, phone Stephanie on 837 6954.
- BENGALI FRIENDS** in Europe and elsewhere, for Bengali books and 'Sriani-Dal-Biplab' (Fourth International paper) contact: Bengali, c/o Internationalen, Box 3274, 10365 Stockholm, Sweden.
- DEFEND THE RIGHT TO WORK** badges — 17p inc. postage from: Jo-Ann, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. Bulk rates on enquiry 101-278 9526).
- BIRMINGHAM** Campaign Against the Cuts — open forum, Saturday 17 Jan, 10.30 at Aston University.
- BREAK ALL LINKS** with Chief Demonstration, Sat 24 Jan, assemble Victoria Square, 11.30am. Speakers include Tom Litterick MP, Joan Jara, Wendy Tyndall. Organised by Birmingham CSC.
- AD HOC COMMITTEE** to mobilise for 25 Jan demo in solidarity with Indian political prisoners meets every Friday at 7pm at 22 Boundary Road, London NW8.
- MOTOR INDUSTRY** — Institute for Workers Control conference, Sat 31 Jan, starts 10.15am at AUEW House, Smallbrook Ringway, Birmingham.
- 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.

- INTERNATIONAL Women's Conference** has been called for by two tendencies in the French women's movement, on 'Women in the class struggle and the revolutionary struggle'. Projected date: end of Feb. Details from: Sylvie Richard, 44 rue des Prairies, 75020-Paris.
- ABORTION DEMO** — second mobilising meeting for 3 April demo, Tues 20 Jan, 8-10pm at University of London Union, Malet St, WC1 (Room 3E). All invited. TU/sponsorship letters from NAC, 30 Camden Road, London N.1. (485 4303).
- 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.
- FANTASTIC NIGHT OUT** for Scottish readers, Tues 20 Jan at Joanna's Discotheque, Bath Street, Glasgow, 9pm-2am (late bar). Tickets from *Red Weekly* sellers.
- CRITIQUE** public seminar: Mon 19 Jan, 7.30pm. Robert Black on 'German fascism and the response of the Comintern'. Room S117, St Clements Building, London School of Economics, Houghton St.
- INTERNATIONAL Communist League**, Birmingham branch (fusion of Workers Fight and Workers Power, ex-Left Faction of IS), public meeting, 'What we stand for'. Thurs 22 Jan, 7.30pm, Australian Bar (Davenport), Hurst St.

Women, Education, and the Cuts.

Education is one of the areas which is suffering most from the Labour Government's cuts in public spending. *Red Weekly* asked HILDA KEAN, a teacher at Quinton Kynaston School, Westminster, and a candidate in the elections for General Secretary of the Inner London Teachers Association, to explain the effects of these, particularly on women.

● How badly are the cuts in education being felt?

There are now around 2,000 teachers unemployed in Greater London. The cuts are also beginning to affect things like books (some of which have gone up from 75p to £1.50 in a very short period), the number of courses available are being restricted, and less practical work is allowed in lessons in order to cut back on expenses. Generally, conditions are deteriorating for both teachers and pupils.

The Inner London Education Authority is tending not to replace staff who have left, giving the excuse that there is a drop in the role. But they could be using this drop to improve teaching conditions by reducing the teacher/pupil ratio - which is still very high.

London's 10,346 primary teachers (overwhelmingly women) are to be reduced by 500. And in secondary schools teachers are losing 'free' time (i.e. time set aside to prepare classes) because the lack of teachers means that they have to cover other classes. Fighting this can be difficult, because the National Union of Teachers will not ratify any action taken on non-covering in the London area.

● Are these cuts having a particular effect on women?

The majority of teachers are women, who in fact make up two-thirds of the NUT membership. But many of them are part-time, and they're the ones most affected. To get around the Employment Protection Act, part-time hours have been reduced to less than 20, which means that there is no security.

It used to be automatic that if you had a kid, your job would be kept open for you. But this is happening less frequently now, and it is very rare that nursery facilities are provided for teachers.

● What action is being taken against the cuts in education?

So far there is very little co-ordinated action. The 21 October demonstration supported by the South East Region TUC and the NUT was a success, but the NUT has done little to build on that initiative.

Several local teachers' associations have set up joint bodies with other trade unions to fight the cuts in the public sector. Westminster NUT is calling a meeting supported by the Trades Council against cuts and unemployment. My school, Quinton Kynaston, is taking action on cover, and is calling an all London meeting of teachers to discuss the question.

This is the kind of action we need, but I would stress that it must be seen as part of the general fight against the cuts in social expenditure and unemployment which are being enforced by the Labour Government.

● What is the NUT's policy on women?

Last year's NUT conference rejected the Working Women's Charter, and Sam Fisher, a Communist Party member of the NUT executive, said that 'the Charter is only supported by a lunatic fringe in the trade union movement! This is untrue - after all, it got more than 3 million votes at last year's TUC - and many NUT branches have adopted and are doing work around the Charter.'

At the Socialist Teachers conference, it was decided to try to prioritise a motion on the Working Women's Charter at the next NUT conference, especially given that last year's motion got quite a lot of support.

The NUT has set up a working party to prepare a report on 'Women in the Teaching Profession'. This working party has been badly financed, and the report has not yet appeared. With the increasing attacks on women, which the inadequate Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts in no way combat, we need a Charter which can unite all working class women.

● Will you be fighting for the NUT to support the 'Women and the Cuts' conference called by the Working Women's Charter?

My teachers' association has already supported the conference. Many women are employed in the public sector, and are being particularly hard hit by cuts and unemployment both at home and at work. It is important that we launch a campaign against these attacks of the Labour Government, and women must play a large part in this campaign if it is to be successful. I think the 'Women and the Cuts' conference is a big step in that direction.

WOMEN AND THE CUTS

LONDON CONFERENCE ON SAT 28 FEBRUARY

Sponsorship and donations are being sought from all labour movement and women's organisations. For further information contact 39 Parkholme Road, London E.8. 01-249-3072.

CONFERENCE CALLED BY THE WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER

What a swell party it wasn't!

MICHAEL FOOT claimed he supported the 1967 Abortion Act. However, he did not think that a woman's right to choose mattered as much as having a united government. He explained: 'If the press caught any hint of difference between Barbara Castle and myself they would seize on it - so unless Barbara signs I cannot sign.'

In the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall, Mr and Mrs Foot threw a lavish reception on 5 January to celebrate the introduction of 'Equal Pay'.

They even sent an invitation to Dr Berry Beaumont and 'one friend'. Her friend, Bob Pennington, was announced as a member of the IMG to the embarrassment of Mr Foot.

When Pennington, sporting a 'Right To Work' badge, commented that 'you can't be too keen on that as you are busy keeping over one and a quarter million people unemployed', Foot quickly disentangled himself from his polite handshake. One flunkey muttered, 'how impolite these people are!'

Foot was even more taken aback when Pennington asked: 'Who is paying for this lot?' 'This lot' was tables loaded with campari, gin, rum, whisky, dubonnet, wine, and the odd delicacy like smoked salmon sandwiches. All no doubt part of the regular diet of the unemployed.

Berry went hunting signatures for the National Abortion Campaign demonstration. But the ladies in their sequined evening dresses and the gentlemen in their smart suits were not only not too keen, they were even rather hostile.

The portraits of Charles I and II gazed down on the approach to the hall. Neither would have disapproved of the behaviour of Labour's bureaucrats.

By the way, despite all the celebrations about equal pay, none of the waitresses had been told how much they were getting!



MRS CASTLE did not like her 'social' life being interrupted. She moaned: 'Oh, do not ask me to do that. I am just enjoying my evening off!'

LORD LONGFORD - what he was doing at a reception allegedly celebrating a 'victory' for women's rights no-one will ever know - was blunt and to the point. He called Berry 'a very wicked person', and said 'you must be joking' when asked to sponsor the National Abortion Campaign demonstration.

abortion rights? Or will they - in particular the women Labour MPs, who have publicly committed themselves to a fight on this question - come out against this proposal when the crunch comes?

In the past, the women Labour MPs - who verbally support the aims of the National Abortion Campaign - have in practice done an about-turn. The very restrictions that are now being carried out - which impose quotas on foreign women using abortion facilities, and make it almost impossible for women with late pregnancies to get abortions - come from proposals in a Select Committee Report signed by several of these women MPs!

The women MPs have repeatedly assured NAC that they will take up a fight in the PLP against the Select Committee. But on what basis should this fight be launched?

The working class has given a clear mandate to these so-called 'representatives'. The TUC and Labour Party conferences put the workers' movement on record for the defence of women's rights to abortion, and further, for the extension of these rights so that free abortion is available 'on request'. Yet now we hear that the women MPs are basing their argument on the grounds that 'Select Committees cost money'.

MISLEADS

This kind of argument simply misleads the working class. Economic considerations in no way enter into the debate on the Select Committee. In fact, such arguments can readily backfire because they are often used by anti-abortionists to explain the run-down of the NHS, thus appealing to the concern of the working class over the declining social services.

As socialists, we oppose the Select Committee because it represents an attack on women's rights. Abuses in the 1967 Act - and their correction - will not be solved by means of Select Committees. They will be solved through the actions of the working class around such demands as the nationalisation of all private clinics, for a National Health Service in the interests of the working class, and for 'A Woman's Right to Choose/Free Abortion on Demand'.

Dodie Weppler

More attacks on abortion rights

The speculation about the next stage in the Labour Government's attack on the right of women to abortion will all come to an end in the next few weeks. Its plans for the future of the anti-abortionist Select Committee will soon be settled.

On Monday the order paper calling for the reconstitution of this body to consider the James White Bill 'and other evidence' will be put before the House of Commons. Once the Parliamentary Labour Party has met on Wednesday, the stage will be set for the vote in Parliament.

MPs will then be confronted with a clear choice. Will they agree to the same Select Committee being reconstituted, thus ensuring more restrictions on

£15,000

Our thanks to the following recent contributors to the IMG's £15,000 Fund Drive. May there be many more of you - the address is: Jo-Ann, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

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Rover car worker	2.00	Newcastle IMG	3.50	Brighton IMG	45.00

Photos: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

7 DAYS in the 6 COUNTIES

JOHN MAGEE reports from Belfast

Break the isolation of South Armagh

The New Year in the Six Counties has seen all attention directed into the South Armagh area, where 15 people died in a period of 24 hours as the result of sectarian assassinations and reprisals. Inevitably there has been a chorus of denunciations of the 'mindless violence', and appeals for 'peace' from churchmen, politicians and journalists. But all these statements contain not one suggestion of how the anti-Unionist population is to defend itself against the Loyalist assassination squads that have already claimed scores of victims in County Armagh.

The response of the British Labour Government has been even more predictable. Along with an extra 600 troops and hundreds of Royal Ulster Constabulary and Ulster Defence Regiment men (Loyalists in Crown uniform), the Government has sent in British imperialism's own specialist murder gang, the Special Air Services (SAS). The reason for this is clear: it is not the assassinations which concern the British ruling class and its Loyalist allies, but rather the dogged resistance of the nationalist community in South Armagh.

BLOCK

Since the collapse of the Sunningdale power-sharing Executive, the Labour Government has pursued a policy of breaking the resistance of the nationalist minority in the North of Ireland, which remains the major block to imperialism's plans. The truce with the Provisionals; the strengthening of the RUC and UDR; the ending of internment and the removal of special category (political prisoner) status; the limited reduction in the number of troops; and the dropping of the 'Irish dimension' — all these formed part of imperialism's plans to disorientate the Catholic population, isolate the armed vanguard, and thus allow the Social Democratic & Labour Party to reach an accommodation acceptable to a section of the Loyalists.

Whether Britain can succeed with this policy depends on its ability to depoliticise the conflict, and it is to this end especially that Rees has directed his energies over the last few months. The Government's

decision to abolish political prisoner status was accompanied by the launching of a major propaganda campaign in the press, radio and television aimed at presenting the resistance fighters as gangsters and their objectives as criminal.

FEUD

The feud between the Provisional and Official IRA was of immense assistance to the Labour Government in this respect. While the anti-Unionist population was faced with increased repression by the security forces and the threat of Loyalist pogroms, its defence forces were seen to be pre-occupied with internal squabbling. They were apparently intent on each other's annihilation. The collaborationist politicians were thus able to insinuate that the RUC in the ghettos was perhaps preferable to this.

The actions of the South Armagh Republican Action Force are of a similar though even more dangerous character. While on the one hand they represent the desperation of militants under threat and bereft of any clear leadership, they are also a clear indication of the petty bourgeois nature of Irish Republicanism, which insists on the primacy of an armed elite and relegates the mass of workers to the role of passive witnesses in the struggle.

This has always been particularly evident in South Armagh, where the conspiratorial tradition is strong and the legend of daring exploits by IRA Active Service Units has a clear basis in fact.

Such a situation could not be tolerated by the Loyalists, and they

have been fierce in their demands for draconian measures to be used to subdue South Armagh. They have proposed everything from martial law to mining the border.

The assassinations by the SARAF opened the way for the British Government to meet these demands. The response of the Republican movement has done nothing to combat government policy. The Officials have trotted out their usual call for talks between the Loyalists who have backed the murder squads and the Republican groups as the way to end sectarian murders. The Provisionals' answer has been to try and get talks with the Feakle churchmen, an approach snubbed by the clergymen and thrown back in the Provisionals' faces.

Neither wing of the Republican movement is providing any leadership for the nationalists in South Armagh, presently suffering under the scourge of the SAS. This is a critical time for the anti-Unionist forces in the Six Counties.

SUCCESS

The nature of this border territory, along with the total disaffection of the local population from the Northern Ireland statelet, has permitted the waging of a guerilla struggle in South Armagh over the last three years with a great deal of success. Such success not only served to boost the morale of anti-Unionists in other parts of the North; it also made the isolation and defeat of the militants in South Armagh crucial for the British Government.

Up until now the British Army has made little headway in attaining this objective. Every attempt the Army has made to assert its strength was beaten back. Some months ago it had to retreat with its tail between its legs when the sending out of patrols into the area became an unacceptable risk.

DECISIVE

With every passing day, the SDLP comes closer to blanket surrender on the issue of support for the RUC. The para-military Ulster Defence Association have warned that there is little time left before they launch a 'vicious war' against the Catholic minority. If British imperialism succeeds in establishing some form of coalition based on an anti-Republican pact, it will represent a major defeat for the struggle that has been waged over the last seven years. Events in South Armagh may decide what happens throughout the North this year.

The isolation of South Armagh must be broken! Any pretence that a truce still exists must be dropped. Anti-Unionists must be brought back onto the streets in Derry, Belfast and Newry and throughout the Six Counties, to protest against any British imposed solution and to resist any concessions being made to the Loyalists or any Loyalist offensive.

PRISONERS

Key to such mobilisations will be a clear recognition of the need for solidarity with the 1,200 political prisoners 'behind the wire', firm opposition to any return of the RUC to nationalist districts, and a grim determination to secure the immediate withdrawal of the SAS and the rest of the British Army from Ireland.

At the present time this would be the most effective way of identifying with the anti-Unionists in South Armagh, the best barrier to assassinations, and a real step forward on the road to getting rid of British imperialism so that the Irish people as a whole can begin to determine their own future. Unfortunately, whether such a course will be taken in 1976 still has a very big question mark hanging over it.

JOHN MAGEE

BRITAIN'S DEADLIEST SO



The ass

The SAS (Special Air Service) is the Army's crack counter-insurgency squad. They are trained in intelligence, surveillance and torture. Their specialities include electric shock torture and the use of drugs. During the Second World War, SAS duties included sabotaging enemy installations and assassinating leaders. Since then it has operated in Kenya, Malaya, Aden and many other counter-insurgency campaigns waged by the British Army. It still operates secretly in various parts of the world — above all, against the revolutionary forces in the Dhofar province of Oman.

SAS members are hand-picked officers from other regiments, and are directly under the control of Whitehall. They generally move about alone or in pairs, and rarely wear Army uniform. Some members have voluntarily undergone torture during their training period. The Army claims that this makes them more resistant — but it is known that such 'training' has a brutalising effect, making it easier for them to torture their victims without suffering any pangs of conscience.

It is not surprising that the British Government's announcement last week provoked an outcry not only from the anti-Unionist community of South Armagh but also from the collaborationist Social Democratic & Labour Party. As one of its leaders, Seamus Mallon, pointed out: 'The unconventional and often dubious methods used by this unit implies punitive action against the ordinary people of South Armagh.'

Dirty tricks well known

The dirty tricks of the SAS are well known in Northern Ireland. Its involvement there goes back to 1970, and both Republican and Loyalist organisations have blamed it for numerous unexplained bombing and shooting incidents. In May 1972, for example, three men in a car shot and killed Patrick McVeigh of Andersonstown. The car then drove straight through a military checkpoint without being stopped. In 1974, 45 SAS men were sent to Northern Ireland attached to regular army units. Posing as civilians, they operated in hardline Republican and Loyalist areas.



One setback for the Army on the road to Green...



DIERS GO INTO ACTION



SASsins

The British Government and the Army are, of course, very secretive about the SAS. The Army Land Operations Manual, however, does not mince words. Its volume on 'Counter-Revolutionary Operations' (classified 'Restricted' by the Ministry of Defence) outlines the functions of this secret squad.

'Hearts and minds'

Apparently it is noted for 'assassination parties' and 'limited community relations'. Its duties include: 'Liaison with, and organisation, training and control of, friendly guerrilla forces operating against the common enemy.' In other words, playing off 'friendly' paramilitary groups against 'hostile' ones — and promoting sectarian assassinations.

So it is nothing new that SAS troops are being sent to Northern Ireland. The British Army has long regarded this campaign as a 'war of hearts and minds' in which the aim is to win the population from support for the 'insurgents' — and this is exactly what the SAS specialises in.

But there is another reason why the SAS is involved in Northern Ireland. They are gaining experience in the only counter-insurgency war in Western Europe. SAS men who returned to Britain from Ireland in 1974 ran training programmes for other regiments based on the knowledge they had gained there. And recent contingency plans formulated at Whitehall for anti-revolutionary operations in Britain give a leading role to the SAS. They have also been involved in some of the airport manoeuvres, working side by side with the Special Patrol Group and the Special Branch.

In the event of an emergency, SAS men will be called out from their training depot at Bradbury Lines Camp in Hereford. The experience of Northern Ireland is preparing them for their role against revolutionary developments in the working class in Britain. We thus have a double reason for stepping up our efforts to bring the troops out of Northern Ireland without delay. And we must demand that the Labour Government not only withdraws the troops but also disbands the SAS so putting a stop for ever to the brutal tactics of this secret killer squad.

Karen Margolis

Irish freedom and British labour

part one

With this article we are beginning a three-part series on the Irish revolution and its importance in the struggle for a socialist Britain. Although we intend to deal with the broader issues raised by this and the errors of other tendencies in the labour movement, our purpose is not to cut across the broadest unity in action for the 1 February demonstration. On the contrary, we believe that this can only increase the participation of all class conscious workers and heighten our understanding of the issues involved.

Since the Labour Government poured thousands of troops into Ireland in 1969 the true origins and nature of the Irish struggle have been lost in a constant barrage of lies, distortions and anti-Irish prejudice. To the British population at large, and even to many socialist minded workers, the Irish struggle is often seen as irrelevant to their everyday problems and even in some cases as an obstacle to building a socialist Britain.

Yet throughout history the Irish struggle has involved major political questions of vital concern to the international labour movement and the British working class in particular.

The deepening rift between Loyalism and the national community of Northern Ireland is not caused by a religious conflict in which the British Army is a neutral or rational force. The gathering confrontation is a product of the same imperialist oppression which has led to the emergence of movements all over the world.

But in Ireland the struggle for national freedom has taken a different form because of the peculiar way in which Britain finally subjected Ireland to its military might, economic domination and also colonisation. However, the immense pressure of popular struggle which led to the 1916 rebellion and the War of Independence in 1919-21 forced the British imperialists to modify the form of their domination.

This occurred in 1921 in a deal with the native Irish capitalists which eventually gave formal independence to the 26 Counties, while carving out an exclusively British enclave in the north Six Counties. The British hold on this was guaranteed by the existence of the Protestant caste system, which systematically denied democracy and equality to the Catholic minority in all spheres of life. And the Six County statelet in fact acted as a bridgehead for British domination of Ireland as a whole.

Spearhead

The struggle which re-opened with the rise of the civil rights movement in the late 1960s was a product of this changeover to a different form of national oppression of the Irish people as a whole. The Catholic minority in the North, who had been handed over to the mercy of Unionist terror and oppression, became the new spearhead of the age-old struggle for national freedom.

At almost every level — in defence of

democratic rights and civil liberties, in mass resistance to the armed might of imperialist rule, through its general intolerance of all oppression and desire to create a more just social system — the Irish freedom movement has been one of the sharpest points of the struggle against imperialist decay and oppression in Europe. The outcome of this struggle could in many respects determine the fate of the struggle for a socialist Britain — in one direction or another.

Class issue

The national oppression of the Irish is not merely an injustice which should be opposed by all concerned with democratic rights and national and cultural freedom — it is also a class issue. While the native Irish capitalists feed on the crumbs of British and other foreign economic control, it is the workers and small farmers who are forced to underwrite the costs of imperialist oppression. Through chronic unemployment, a soaring rate of inflation, mass emigration to Britain and ghetto housing conditions the national oppression of Ireland reinforces the exploitation of Irish workers as a class.

From all angles the British labour movement has no interest in suppressing the Irish freedom struggle. In fact, every shot fired against a Catholic in South Armagh is a shot too against British labour. Similarly, every piece of repressive legislation enacted in Ireland is a blow to the hard won democratic rights which the working class of this country have fought for and gained through a century of struggle.

The aftermath of the Birmingham bombings in November 1974 is the clearest confirmation of this. Although there was never any proof of Provisional IRA responsibility, the Labour Government and its Tory allies whipped up a campaign of British nationalist hysteria against the Irish in justification of the so-called Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Directed in the first instance against Irish workers in Britain, the PTA was directly modelled on repressive legislation used in Ireland and is a basic assault on the democratic rights and liberties of every worker in Britain.

The lynch-mob atmosphere around the Birmingham bombings itself prompted the first right-wing strikes seen in this country since the 1968 march by London dockers in support of Enoch Powell. It is no coincidence either that the objective effect of these strikes was to encourage the Loyalist forces in Ireland. Both actions were stimulated by the same ideology of Great British nationalism,

which fosters unity between the workers and their capitalist exploiters in a common identification and makes national minorities the scapegoat for capitalism's crisis.

It is this same 'national unity' which is being invoked today by the Wilson Government to justify 1½ million unemployed and the imposition of the £6 wage limit.

Nevertheless, the development of the world recession — and of the British economic crisis in particular — is opening up a deep split between British workers and the imperialist system. This by necessity must also involve a break with the ideology of Great British nationalism. British workers will never take any lasting political step forward if they remain blinded by this ideology in the case of Ireland.

It is the most right-wing forces who gain most from such a situation. The Tory party, for instance, has taken the PTA a step forward by proposing police registration of all Irish people in Britain. This would make it compulsory by law for all landlords to report on Irish tenants. Similarly, it was the lynch-mob atmosphere of British nationalism which allowed the Tories to launch their campaign for the return of hanging.

This is not to say that we are on the verge of fascism in Britain. But it does mean that unless British labour makes the cause of Irish freedom its own, not only will the Irish revolution itself be postponed for many years, but the prospects for a socialist Britain will be extremely remote.

Same role

April this year will mark the 60th anniversary of the Easter 1916 Irish rebellion, which was ruthlessly crushed by the British Army. Doubtless there will be many public meetings and fine words spoken about the martyrs for the Irish cause. But 60 years later, the British Army is still playing exactly the same role — this time in Derry, Belfast and South Armagh, and wherever there is a sign of discontent and rebellion against British rule.

The time and place have changed but the story remains the same: the Irish people have fought and struggled against successive waves of imperialist onslaughts, but in practice the voice of British labour has remained silent. We believe that the best way to honour the memory of 1916 and those who died is to honour the cause for which they fought.

Today that cause lives on in the struggle by the oppressed minority of the North against 16,000 British troops; and any contribution which is meaningful cannot be judged by words alone but by effective action to get the Army out of Ireland. Concretely that means building for the 1 February demonstration. Let all those who proclaim support for Irish freedom in Britain be judged around this key test.

statement by Revolutionary Marxist Group Belfast branch

The South Armagh Republican Action Force has admitted that it shot the ten Protestants killed on Monday 5 January near Whitecross. But irrespective of who actually pulled the triggers, responsibility for these deaths and all the assassinations, violence and torture that have taken place in the last seven years of Occupation rests firmly on the shoulders of British imperialism.

The tears shed by politicians, churchmen and journalists cannot mask the hypocrisy of their appeals for 'peace' and 'justice'. These same people have either supported or condoned the hundreds of 'legal' murders committed by the British security forces, the torture of Republicans, the imprisonment of thousands for their political beliefs, and the general policy of repression and harassment pursued against the nationalist minority in the North of Ireland.

The Revolutionary Marxist Group repudiates all action of a sectarian character not because it holds any illusions in the power of conversation as an instrument for winning Protestant workers to the struggle for a Socialist Republic, but because it recognises that sectarianism is a product of British imperialism, and any adoption of a sectarian policy can only further the interests of that imperialism.

The anti-Unionist people of South Armagh have waged a valiant fight over the last years against both the British Army and its Loyalist para-military allies. When the struggle elsewhere appeared to be ebbing, South Armagh has come to the fore and raised our morale. Imperialism was not blind to this, and has pursued a policy of isolating South Armagh to defeat the struggle there and thus heighten the effectiveness

of repression elsewhere.

The South Armagh Republican Action Force is aiding British imperialism to succeed with that policy. It offers no defence for the nationalist people in South Armagh against either the British Army or the Loyalist para-military squads. It must cease its policy of assassination.

The Revolutionary Marxist Group has time and again stressed the necessity to build united mobilisations of the anti-Unionist population on the streets as the most effective means of defence. Such mobilisations are particularly urgent now, for it is on the performance of the anti-Unionist population on the streets of Belfast, Newry and Derry that the struggle in South Armagh as in the rest of the Six Counties will be decided.

G. Lavery (Press Officer), 7 January.

Test of strength for Portuguese workers

The first major test of strength in Portugal since the abortive military rebellion of 25 November is likely to come this Saturday. A mass demonstration is planned in Lisbon against the Sixth Provisional Government's imposition of a wage freeze while allowing huge price increases and mass unemployment.

The demonstration has been called by a 'committee of struggle' set up by 13 trade unions mostly dominated by the Communist Party. In a statement they denounced the 'capitalist offensive which is trying to rob us of the wage increase we got after months of struggle', and called for the capitalists to bear the cost of the economic crisis instead.

This response to the Government's austerity measures shows that the working class movement in Portugal is still far from being defeated. It bears out what we have said in previous issues of *Red Weekly* against those who spoke of an imminent return to fascism: while the *vanguard* suffered a severe defeat as a result of the events of 25-26 November, the effect on the working class as a whole has been much less decisive.

CAUTIOUS

This is borne out by developments in other areas of the working class movement since 25 November. While there has been a general retreat from open militancy to a more cautious wait-and-see attitude, the response has varied widely from place to place.

A clear downturn, for instance, could be seen in the elections for a programme of workers control in the Setenave shipyard in Setubal. The list put forward by the Communist Party won an overall majority with 850 votes; that put forward by the far left — Popular Democratic Union (UDP), Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat (PRP), and Internationalist Communist League (LCI) — won 410 votes; while the Socialist Party got 250 votes.

With 402 blank votes, that made only 1,911 workers voting as against 2,093 who didn't take any part in the proceedings.

DESERVED

Of course, such a turn out would be quite respectable in most circumstances. But Setenave has the justly deserved reputation of being the 'red bastion' of the industrial belt around Lisbon, and before 25 November it was the various tendencies of the revolutionary left which made most of the running there.

The 'secretariat of struggle' in Setubal, made up of delegates from more than twenty workers' and neighbourhood commissions in the area, has been affected in much the

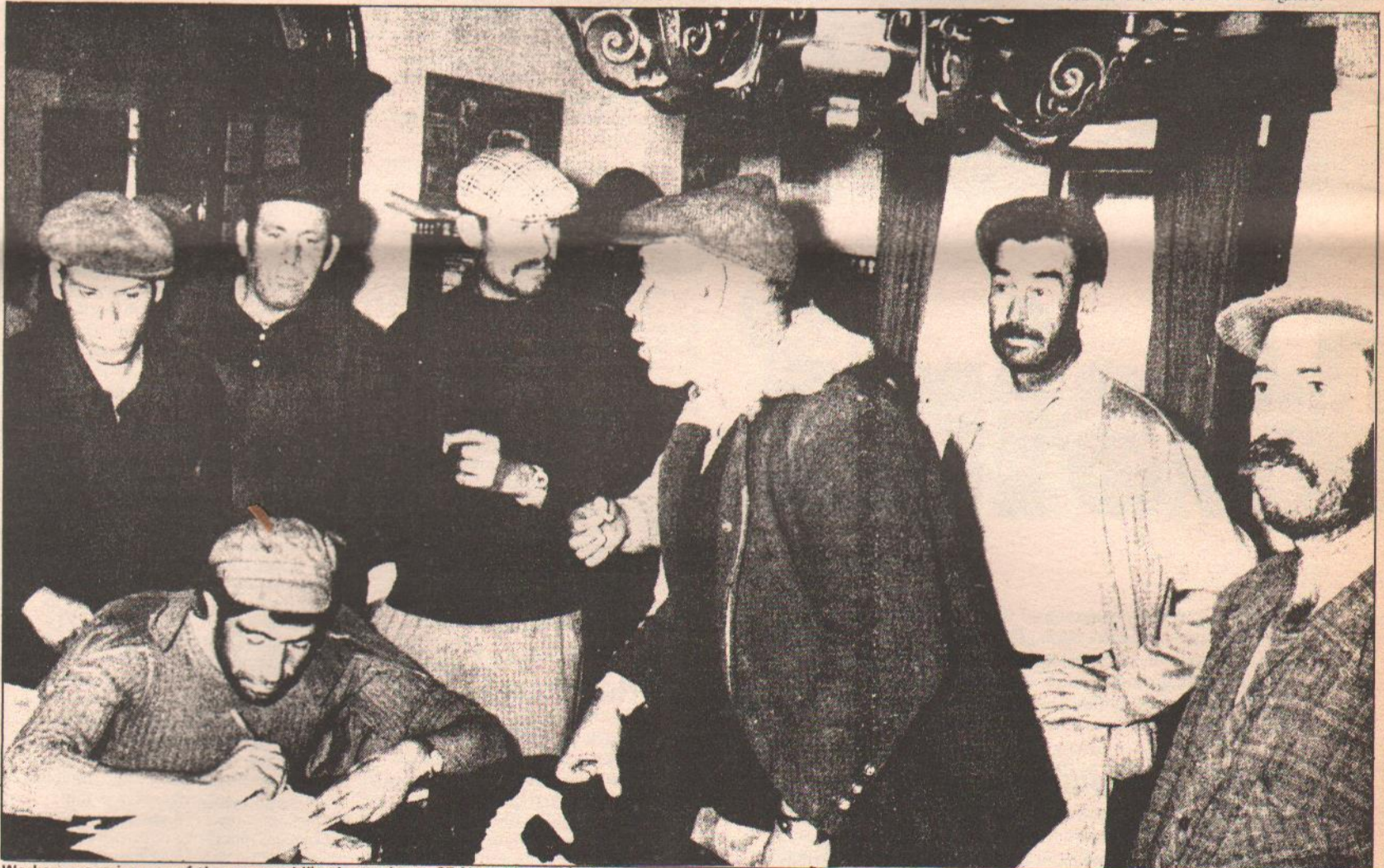
same way. Prior to 25 November it represented a real embryo of co-ordination of struggles at the level of the third biggest town in Portugal. Now it is on the verge of collapsing altogether as fewer and fewer delegates bother to turn up.

ALIVE

But the workers' commissions as a whole are far from being dead and buried. On 14 December, for instance,

the CP has by contrast kept a firm hold over its base and the organisations which it dominates.

The Setenave election also underlines another point whose importance has been discounted by much of the far left in the past: that even in this 'red bastion' it is possible for the Socialist Party to pick up a significant number of votes. This gives some indication of how big its audience must be among workers in the more backward north of the country.



Workers preparing one of the mass mobilisations prior to 25 November. This time the movement must be built around a clearer long-term perspective

a meeting took place of representatives from more than 300 workers' commissions in various factories of the giant CUF monopoly. This was probably the largest and most representative meeting of CUF workers ever held.

What explains the extraordinary difference between these developments? After all, most of the CUF factories are also situated in the industrial belt around Lisbon. But in contrast to Setenave and the Setubal 'secretariat of struggle', where the revolutionaries tended to play the leading role, the majority of the CUF workers' commissions have always been dominated by the CP.

DISARRAY

In other words, while the events of 25-26 November have thrown the workers' vanguard into disarray — the political defeat suffered by certain groups has inevitably rebounded on the whole revolutionary left —

Indeed, there have already been a few signs of resistance to the repression inside the barracks. A committee of struggle against the repression and for the liberation of the imprisoned soldiers has recently started to function inside the Military Police; and 15 soldiers of the Santarem Practical School of Cavalry (EPC) successfully carried out an on-the-spot strike against attempts to brow-beat them.

POTENTIAL

Such examples are naturally still few and far between; but they show the potential support that exists for organising a united campaign in defence of the democratic rights of free expression, assembly and organisation inside the barracks, as well as in defence of the soldiers' standard of living.

Such a campaign, however, will only be successful to the extent that it is able to draw on the independent mobilisations of the working class outside the barracks. The demonstration of 17 January represents a very important first step in this direction. But it is also necessary to put forward a strategy which can consolidate and point the way forward for such actions.

COMMUNISTS

No such perspective is provided by the Communist Party, which still looks for a reconciliation inside the Armed Forces Movement 'so that it may continue as the military guarantee of our young democracy'. It is as if Chile had never happened. Street demonstrations become

merely a means of putting pressure on particular groups inside the military; and the revolutionaries are attacked for seeing bodies like the workers' commissions as 'future organs of State power'.

But nor is it sufficient to call abstractly for the 'building of popular power'. Moves to develop and centralise such independent organs will not find a mass response unless they have a concrete function: to draw up a plan of struggle which can resolve the crisis in accordance with the needs and aspirations of the working class.

Such a plan is needed more than ever today. The capitalists are pushing prices through the roof, and the Government's demagoguery about 'controls' will do nothing to stop them. Behind the increasingly widespread food shortages lies the open sabotage of the big farmers and distributors.

CONGRESS

Only by exerting its own control over all aspects of economic life can the working class beat back this capitalist offensive. Only by centralising its own organs towards a national assembly of workers' commissions, neighbourhood commissions, and agricultural labourers' organisations can it find the means to do so.

Such questions lay at the heart of the discussions at last weekend's national congress of the Internationalist Communist League (Portuguese sympathising organisation of the Fourth International). And they must be taken up by the whole workers' vanguard if a successful offensive is to be rebuilt against the attacks of the Azevedo regime.

CONFERENCE

The International Monetary Fund is refusing any further credits to Portugal until the Government has come up with a satisfactory economic plan. That means a plan which will defend the interests of international capitalism against the aspirations of the Portuguese working class.

Meanwhile Wilson and Callaghan will be joining their social democratic colleagues from the rest of Europe for a meeting in Denmark on 17-19 January at which Portugal will be high on the

agenda. The outcome will no doubt be further plaudits for Mario Soares for his attacks on the Portuguese workers and soldiers.

Against this capitalist solidarity we must build another kind of solidarity — that of the international working class movement. The Campaign for Solidarity with the Portuguese Working Class has called a conference for Saturday 13 March which can be an important step in this direction. Credentials from: 12 Little Newport Street, London WC2.

'Fighting for Workers Power' is a 20 minute film on Portugal produced by the Newsreal Collective. It deals particularly with the role played by the worker-controlled newspaper *Republica* in bringing together the struggles of workers and agricultural labourers. A copy of the film can be hired for meetings etc. from the IMG, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. (01-278 9526).

IN MEMORIAM

Karl Liebknecht

and

Rosa Luxemburg

Murdered in Berlin 15 Jan. 1919



PORTUGAL FORUM



The PRP, the Communist Party, and the AFM

ALAN JONES concludes his reply to the International Socialists on the politics of the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat (PRP)

In the last issue of *Red Weekly* we showed that the line of the PRP was incapable of uniting the working class or waging a serious struggle for workers councils; that it could not win over the sections of the working class which support the Socialist Party or deal with the intermediate strata, above all the peasants of the north, who must be at least neutralised for the working class to take power in Portugal. We will conclude our analysis of the line of the PRP by looking at its equally wrong line in relation to the workers who follow the Communist Party and the relation of forces between the revolutionaries and the CP.

The first point which has to be grasped is the PRP's extraordinary illusions in the Communist Party. Its practice completely contradicts IS's claim – for example, by Cliff in his pamphlet – that: 'The PRP is very clear in grasping the nature of the Communist Party it recognises that although the Communist Party has a base in the class it is a reformist party that cannot be pressurised into revolutionary actions' (p.19).

The nonsense of this claim was shown very clearly in the PRP's governmental slogan – for a Government of Revolutionary Unity. Such a slogan evidently implied more than a government of the PRP or of the revolutionary left, which would have been little more than a joke.

Equally, however, it clearly did not refer to a government of the parties of the working class – because the participation of the Socialist Party was specifically excluded by the whole line of the PRP. In reality it was a formula for a revolutionary left-Communist Party government.

Francisco Temudo, a leader of the Internationalist Communist League (LCI) – Portuguese sympathising organisation of the Fourth International – explained the meaning of this line very clearly in an interview conducted before the events of 25 November: 'These illusions about the possibility of an immediate insurrection – which predominate in the PRP and the MES (Left Socialist Movement) – flow from the extreme decomposition of the state apparatus, especially in the military field. This creates the illusion that it is possible to take power now – and not only to take power, but to apply a revolutionary programme, to win broad sections of the population to the revolutionary process, and so maintain the revolutionary forces in power.'

Contradiction

'There is of course an amazing contradiction here. No-one believes that the IUR (Revolutionary United Front) by itself could constitute a government of revolutionary unity, so these groups agree on the necessity of what they call a 'reformist component' – that is the Communist Party. In other words, incredible as it may seem, they expect a reformist party to go along with them to take power, and form a government applying a revolutionary programme' (*Red Weekly*, 27 November).

So the PRP, far from 'being very clear in grasping the nature of the Communist Party', had the worst of all illusions – that the Communist Party would be capable of, or could be forced (no doubt by insurrection) into being part of a revolutionary government! No wonder that when they were visited by members of the Fifth Division the PRP could have thought that the CP was involved in an insurrection!

But if we turn to the position of the IS we find a rather different situation. The IS, to its credit, has not entertained such illusions on the Portuguese Communist Party, and has not suggested that it could be forced into being part of a

revolutionary government. Unfortunately, however, this doesn't mean that the IS were any clearer on the relation of forces in Portugal; on the contrary, they were even more confused.

We can see this most clearly by looking at comrade Harman's one justified complaint against *Red Weekly*'s initial article on the PRP (4 December). It is unfortunately true that in editing this article two lines of comrade Harman's article in the November *International Socialism*, which were in fact separated by a considerable portion of text, got put together. This was done unintentionally; but a scrupulously accurate presentation of opponents' positions should be a hallmark of polemics, so comrade Harman is quite justified in complaining and we take the opportunity to apologise for the error.

However, if we turn from the editorial point to the one of substance we find that, far from distorting the IS's position, we were actually too kind to it. No editing error can obscure the fact that Harman did write of the CP as having 'some influence in the workers movement' and having 'understood that it can use its hold over certain workers committees as a Trojan horse for regaining some of the initiative in the armed forces' – phrases which clearly suggest that the CP was on the verge of losing control of the working class. And this is consistent with his bizarre statement that: 'With the SUV the revolutionary left has emerged as a major contender in the national struggle for power'.

Even after 25 November, *Socialist Worker* spelt out quite clearly what its analysis of the relation of forces was: 'The revolutionary left groups, the PRP and the MES, had been arguing that an insurrection was necessary to avoid the danger of another Chile. But they expected it only after some weeks of building support for it in the factories' (*Socialist Worker*, 6 December).

You couldn't have a clearer statement of the IS's understanding of the relation of forces than that! Apparently the revolutionaries were in such a position that



CP leader Alvaro Cunhal – had no intention of going along with the PRP to form a Government of Revolutionary Unity they were only weeks away from winning the workers from reformism and launching the insurrection! It is clear that we didn't distort the IS analysis at all – we were, if anything, too kind to it.

But just let us suppose for a moment that Harman was right in his letter – that we did slander the IS and that they really did understand that the revolutionaries enjoyed the support only of the vanguard of the working class. What would follow then?

What would follow is that the PRP and the IS were proposing an insurrection in the short term, in 'some weeks' under conditions where the revolutionaries only enjoyed the support of the vanguard and the masses continued to be dominated by reformism!

A more substitutionist putschist scheme is hard to imagine.

So we suggest, comrade Harman, that you admit what is the truth – that you and the PRP made a disastrous error on the relation of forces. To adopt the alternative line will only get you into even deeper water.

The PRP's errors on the relation of forces were further compounded, however, by its extraordinary illusions in the left army officers in general, and Otelo de Carvalho in particular. The Manifesto

of the PRP of 10 March spelt out their view clearly: 'The proletariat will have to count, apart from the revolutionary organisations and the soldiers and sailors, on these progressive officers (and it is they who have the weapons) in their struggle against the bourgeoisie and reactionaries for the Socialist Revolution in Portugal'.

First and foremost amongst those 'who had the weapons' and whom the working class had to rely on was of course Otelo de Carvalho. Indeed, the PRP went out of its way to state: 'We underline the courage of this soldier who is always ready to advance without fear' (*Revolucao*, 8 May).

This line on Carvalho was carried right into the autumn. Thus the 12 September issue of *Revolucao* carried an 'Open Letter to Comrade Otelo'. This announced: 'Comrade Otelo, it is necessary to struggle for the formation of a revolutionary army and that we progressives must make the true socialist revolution. With the true progressives of the MFA. We must understand that the working class must take power and it must do it as rapidly as possible because tomorrow it will be too late'.

The line of the PRP in relation to other 'true progressives of the MFA', notably the Clemente group, has already been dealt with.

The result of these illusions – both in the officers and in the general relation of forces in Portugal – was that by the beginning of November the line of the PRP on the army was virtually insane. On 10 November, PRP leader Isabel do Carmo stated at a press conference: 'As all history shows, the bourgeoisie unleashes a civil war every time it wants to defend its interests. Fortunately the forces of the right possess no army in Portugal. To get one they must resort to mercenaries based in Spain or to the armies of the United States or NATO'.

The PRP Manifesto 'Against Civil War, Armed Insurrection', issued on 14 November, similarly claimed: 'The Social

Democrats and the right in general have no army in Portugal. If they want to stage a confrontation with the proletariat, they will have to resort to mercenaries hired in Spain or simply invaders from NATO and the USA'. Try telling that to the Military Police, or the RALIS or the paratroopers today!

With this final conclusion on the army, together with its confusion of social democracy and fascism, and its wrong conclusion on the relation of forces in the country, the PRP clearly adopted a short-term orientation to insurrection. We will quote only a few statements bearing this out:

– 'It is now time for the revolutionary forces and the workers to pose the problem of an insurrection' (declaration of the PRP, 30 September).

– 'Armed insurrection is the sole way by which popular power can continue to advance the organisation of the masses has already attained a level sufficient to inherit power' (press conference given by Francisco Marquez, a leading member of the PRP, 7 November).

– 'The insurrection is not an unrealisable project. Far from being a utopia it is the only practical possibility to avoid fascism and to finish once and for all with reaction organised and infiltrated at the level of political and military power. It is the only way to avoid a prolonged civil war. It is the only way to avoid the intervention of imperialism. It is the only way to avoid the future degradation of the economy and of the social, political and military situation' (*Revolucao*, 7 November).

Anyone influenced by such a line was bound to get caught up in an adventure. Even if the PRP did not itself draw the appropriate organisational conclusions, it was likely that someone else would try it. This was doubly inevitable when not merely the PRP but a whole ultra-left current, based primarily in the lower sections of the officers, was on this line.

Finally, on 25 November, someone made the experiment and the real relation of forces in Portuguese society reasserted itself with a bang.

Aberrant

The PRP unfortunately didn't recognise the reality of the situation even then. In what must surely be one of the most tragically aberrant communiqués of all time, it announced: 'Thousands of soldiers in liaison with the organisations of the revolutionary left, among them the Revolutionary Brigades, still resist the right wing coup. In particular the entire region to the south of Tagus remains a free zone'.

This statement was put out at 10 p.m. on 26 November – after all significant resistance had been crushed and the Amadora commandos were merely carrying out mopping up operations.

The lessons of this are clear. The errors of the PRP were not warts on an otherwise correct line, but were products of a disastrously wrong analysis of the situation in Portugal. The events of 25–26 November revealed that with bitter clarity. Unfortunately since then neither the PRP nor the IS has drawn the appropriate conclusions.

This ends our series on the politics of the PRP. But because of the importance of the issues raised in Portugal, future issues of *Red Weekly* will carry articles on the line of the LCI on the struggle in the army leading up to 25 November, and a discussion of the significance of the issues raised in Portugal for the debate amongst the revolutionary left.



A PRP Manifesto claimed: 'The Social Democrats and the right in general have no army in Portugal. If they want to stage a confrontation with the proletariat, they will have to resort to mercenaries hired in Spain or simply invaders from NATO and the USA.' Try telling that to the Military Police or the RALIS or the paratroopers today!

ITT workers lead the way

In the current wave of industrial struggles that is rocking the Juan Carlos regime in Spain, a leading part has been played by the workers of Standard Electric. Fighting both the machinery set up by the Franco dictatorship and their multi-national bosses (Standard is part of the great ITT empire), the Standard workers were among the first to go into struggle for economic and political demands after the death of the old dictator.

In struggle now for two months, the Standard workers were in the forefront of the big wave of solidarity that unfolded around the strike of the underground workers in Madrid. They, along with the striking Chrysler workers, mounted mass demonstrations that were brutally attacked by the police (thus breaking the regime's attempt to cultivate a phoney image of 'tolerance' for consumption abroad) and stimulated other Madrid workers to launch massive solidarity strikes at the end of last week.

The following is an article written by a militant from one of the Standard factories in Spain. It is reprinted from *Combate*, paper of the LCR-ETA VI, (a sympathising organisation of the Fourth International in Spain). As it makes clear, Standard will be in the forefront of the coming battles of the Spanish working class, and solidarity with the Standard workers is therefore an important task for the British workers movement to take up.

During the last few months the Standard plant has shown an outstanding level of militancy.

The mobilisations against the death penalties on 11-12 of September, with a massive factory assembly at the Ramirez de Prado plant, were the first symptoms of the 'hot autumn' which the factory was to experience.

The preparation for the struggle, centring around the negotiations for the new collective agreement, already showed that the workers were determined to wrench substantial gains from the management and were prepared to fight for them.

The first activity of the militants was to carry out an inquiry to consult all the workers as to their demands. This poll was recognised by the state trade union representatives and the vast majority of workers took part in it. The results of the poll and a series of assemblies made it possible to draw up a programme of demands, the most important of which were: 25,000 pesetas a month minimum salary [i.e. £45 a week]; 11,621 pesetas increase for everybody (this would put the salary of the lowest paid up to 25,000 pesetas); a 40-hour week; 30 days holiday a year; re-instatement of all those previously sacked; amnesty for all those in prison for trade union or political activity; freedom of association, speech, to demonstrate and to meet.

DEMANDS

This programme of demands was immediately adopted by all the workers, and is at the centre of the struggle which has been going on for the

past month. The response of the management only replied to the first two points of the programme: a wage increase of 19 per cent (meaning a 15,600 peseta [£30 a week] salary for the lowest paid), and a bonus of 19,600 [£160] pesetas on the anniversary of the firm. This served only to stimulate the workers' determination.

Then, when Juan Carlos announced a wage freeze, the response was overwhelming. The day after the freeze was announced the Standard factory held a mass meeting. This meeting stated that the freeze was an insult to those who have to negotiate collective agreements, and decided to hold a half-hour stoppage on 17 November to demonstrate their determination to struggle for the demands of their programme. This half hour stoppage was total.

PRISONERS

Then came the death of Franco and the days of waiting for the coronation of Juan Carlos. On the day of the coronation hundreds of workers from Standard, who had gathered in an assembly the previous day, mobilised not to greet the new 'puppet King' but to demand the release of the political prisoners, at the gates of Carabanchel prison.

During the opening days of Juan Carlos's reign negotiations were held with the management. For the first two weeks the workers at Standard continued to hold assemblies, stoppages and 'go-slows' to support their just demands. At the end of the first week in December, the struggle extended itself to all the Standard factories (Madrid, Tor-

'We support the fight for amnesty, but not as a step towards 'national reconciliation'.

Interview with Carlos, a leading militant of the Liga Comunista (a sympathising organisation of the Fourth International in Spain)

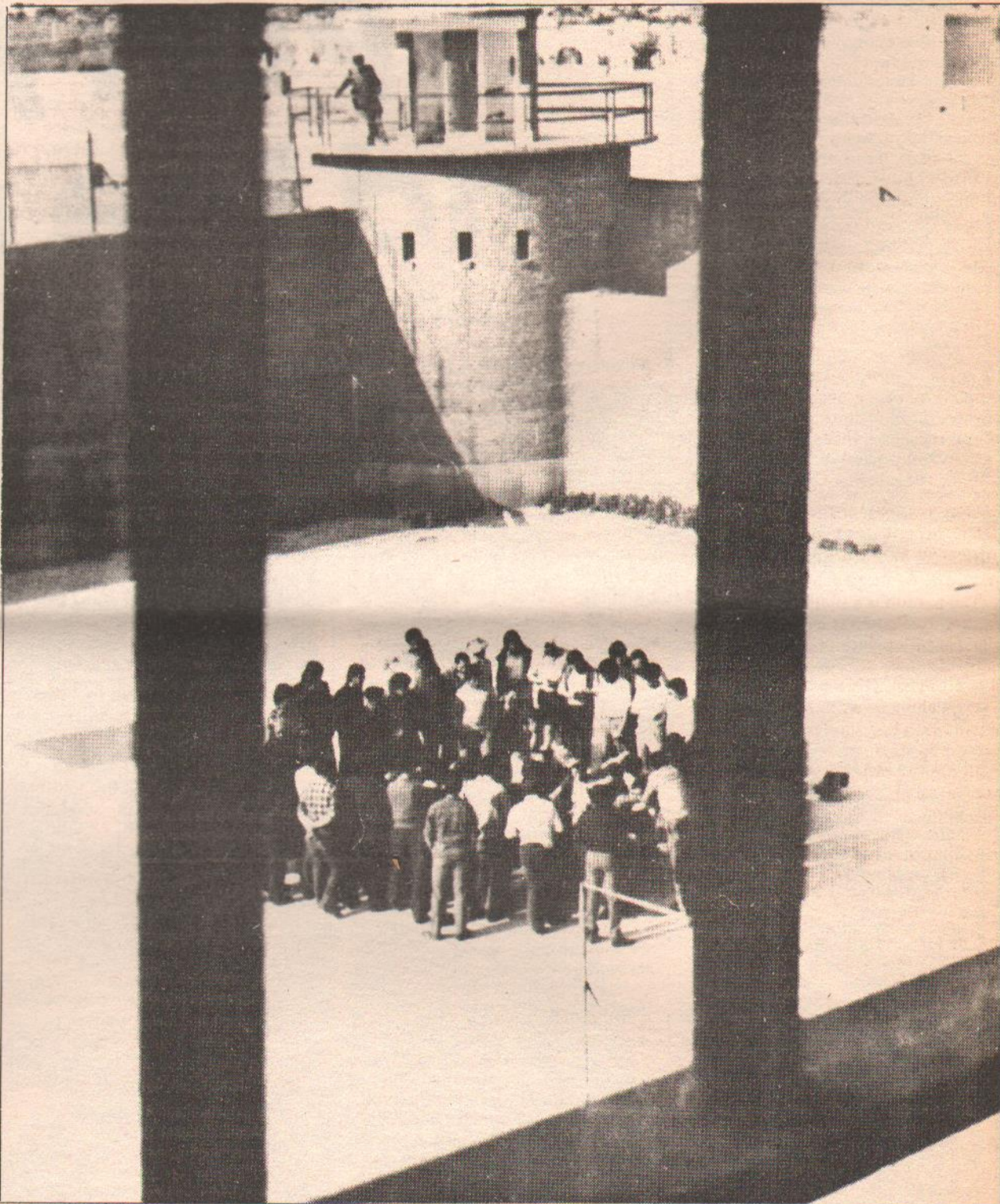
Q What is the attitude of the Liga Comunista to the new regime?

A The new Government is a continuation of Franco. The jails are still filling up and so on — there is no

substantial change at the governmental level.

However, there is a changed relationship of forces. This past year has seen millions of workers on strike. Their whole thrust has been against

the dictatorship. All kinds of forces have entered into the struggle — students, petty bourgeoisie, peasants. And when the dictator died an institution died. So they had to change their tactics. They began to



Gathering inside the Carabanchel prison on the outskirts of Madrid

relavega, Toledo).

The continuation of this mobilisation on 9, 10, and 11 December was projected as part of the struggles organised and called for by the workers' commissions and political organisations throughout Spain on those days. On the 13 December an assembly decided to strike on the 16th in support of the call for a general strike by the delegates of all the branches.

What have been the main weapons of the workers of Standard up to now? In the first place, their programme of demands. This is an excellent example, because it unites all the aspirations of the workers, not only on the level of economic demands, but also on the question of political freedom.

Secondly, the continuing round of mass assemblies where the unity of the workers has been forged and the most important decisions have been taken. This rhythm of assem-

bly must be maintained in order to retain the position of strength which will allow us to win our demands.

What are the next steps forward? We must demand that the union representatives [elected by the workers but formally part of the state-run trade union structure] carry out their work as faithful spokesmen of the assembly; and if the workers believe that some particular comrade should sit on the negotiating committee alongside the official representatives then we must demand his presence there.

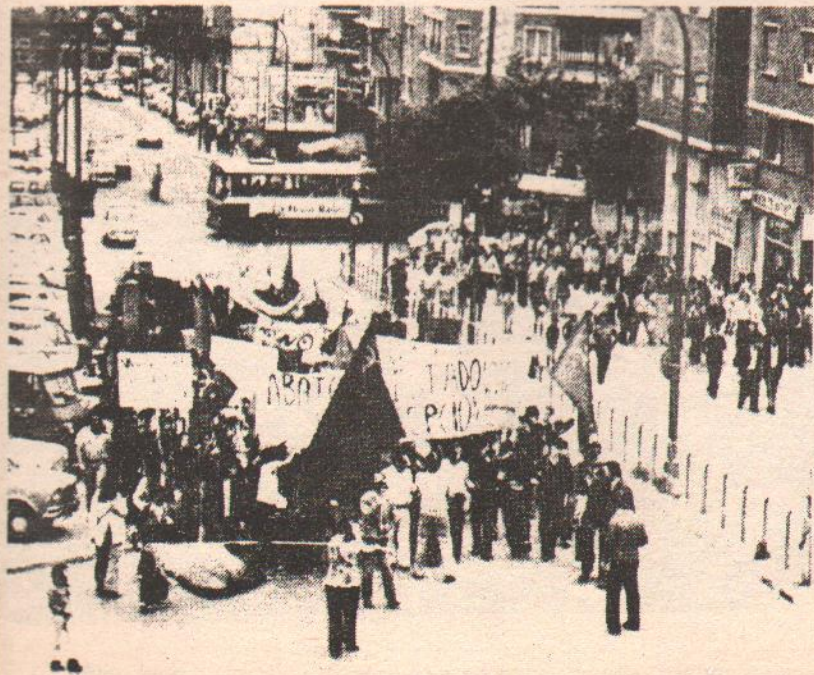
ASSEMBLY

Only the assembly should decide; not only on the course of the struggle, but also the final decision on acceptance or rejection of any offer from the management. To take the struggle of the Standard workers forward and to stop any aggression from the

management (victimisation or shut down of the factory), it will be necessary to popularise the struggle in other firms in the same area and industry, and into the working class neighbourhoods.

The first task is to attempt to unify our programme of demands with those of other factories, and also prepare solidarity in the neighbourhoods, explaining the development of the struggle and in collaboration with neighbourhood commissions start to create islands of resistance if this should become necessary.

Standard can be the spearhead of attack for all the engineering workers of Madrid. But if this is to be so it does not depend only on the workers of the firm, but also in a very important way on the solidarity which it receives. To organise this on a united basis is the urgent task of all the militants in the struggle.



Illegal workers' demonstration in Barcelona



Amnesty doesn't mean leaving the Francoist criminals to do what they like.'

Slogans for amnesty on wall in Madrid talk about democratic changes.

Of course this is only talk: they don't call for free elections, and for this reason we demand universal suffrage for all those over 16, a free vote for a constituent assembly, and the right of all political parties to operate freely.

Q So things haven't really changed?

A No, apart from the talk. The amnesty that many people thought Juan Carlos would announce at Christmas never came. The persecution of political parties continues. One worker, Ricardo Tellez in Barcelona, is near death after his torture by the DGS (Direccion General de Seguridad).

Still, it is a two-sided picture because the Government has been too weak to stop the mobilisations after the death of Franco. During the past two months activists of the Workers' Commissions have been able to speak openly as members without being arrested — radicals as well as people like Camacho.

Q Can you say something about the recent demonstrations for amnesty? What about the indulto (pardon) of Juan Carlos?

A The pardon is a sham, a reaffirmation of Francoist legislation. The jails still fill up with people charged under the 'anti-terrorist' legislation of last August. (Under this, anyone even speaking or writing about an organisation like the Basque nationalist group ETA can be imprisoned.) In December alone, 1,000 people were arrested for violating this legislation.

About the demonstrations: the most important was at Carabanchel, a district of Madrid where upwards of 50,000 people demonstrated for amnesty. The police had cordoned off the area around the prison, so it is difficult to get exact figures. Thousands of workers have gone on strikes and demonstrations in practically every Spanish city.

Q What is the exact position of the Liga Comunista on the question of amnesty?

A Our party supports the fight for amnesty. We have led actions for it. But we don't view amnesty as a step towards 'national reconciliation' for all Spaniards, as the Democratic Junta (Communist Party-dominated bloc) does.

Although we fight for amnesty, we cannot pardon the crimes of Francoism. We call for the formation of democratic workers' tribunals to judge the criminals. When the reformists speak of 'reconciliation' they mean they don't want to fight against the Francoist apparatus. Amnesty doesn't mean leaving the criminals free to do what they like.

We call for the disbanding of all the repressive bodies, like the Brigadas Politico-Social, the Guardia Civil, and the armed police. We call for the dissolution of Franco's courts. For the abolition of not just the 'anti-terrorist' legislation, but also of the undemocratic laws that have been on the books for 40 years now.

Q What is the position of the Democratic Junta on this point?

A The Junta is for leaving the Francoist apparatus intact, apart

from one or two slight modifications. This is important, especially in view of the situation in Portugal. One of the first actions taken by the people after the overthrow of Caetano was to demand that the PIDE (secret police) be brought to trial. The Junta simply cannot recognise this democratic impulse.

Q How does your position on democratic rights differ from that of the Democratic Junta and the Democratic Convergence (the other main class collaborationist bloc, dominated by the Socialist Party — PSOE)?

A Well, the working class needs democratic rights. The bourgeoisie only needs to talk about them. And the Junta may say it's for democratic rights, but that is not true.

Q For example?

A Take the national question. In Catalonia they call for the return to the Statute of 1932 which was set up by the Republic; this Statute recognises the legitimacy of the central Madrid Government, and its right to legislate in crucial areas like the Army and foreign affairs.

We say that the peoples of Euzkadi (the Basque country), Catalonia and Galicia should be able to decide for themselves through national constituent assemblies what relationship they want to have with Madrid. Anything else would be undemocratic.

Furthermore, the Junta and the Convergence view the Army as part of the 'democratic process', and believe that it can be called upon to support democracy. We say that it is intrinsically undemocratic. We are for democratic rights inside the Army for all soldiers; we favour setting up soldiers' assemblies.

Q What is the difference between the Junta and the Convergence? Could there be a coalition?

A They are both cross-class forces; but by calling for the 'democratic break' the Junta appears to offer a democratic alternative. The Convergence has the same programme, but is viewed by some sections of the bourgeoisie as a potential threat to the CP. The big capitalists who do not support the dictatorship belong to the Convergence.

Faced with the recent mass struggles, however, the Junta and the Convergence have combined to try to suppress them. The 'Democratic Council', which includes them both, gives the King some critical support.

Q Isn't the CP supporting the Democratic Military Union (a recent formation involving about 200 officers, nine of whom are on trial for sedition)?

A Yes, and they also tend to support their programme — which doesn't even call for democratic rights for soldiers. They are demanding a more professional army. They want to keep their official privileges and they want more money. The CP says that they are 'friends of the people'.

Of course we call for the dropping of charges against the nine officers. The Government isn't even allowing them to be defended by civilian lawyers.

Q What has been the effect of recent events in Portugal?

A In general the mass movement has grown in strength since the overthrow of Caetano on 25 April 1974. There were demonstrations in every major city, especially in Seville. But the events of 25 November have caused great confusion in the vanguard here.

We are trying to resolve this. But if the struggle in Portugal continues it will serve as a stimulus here, thus it is still very important.

Q What about the American presence in Spain?

A Spain has had ties with Yankee imperialism for a long time. The Americans supported Franco and they hope to remain in Spain, especially in view of what is happening in Portugal. On 25 April, when 2,000 US marines landed in Seville, a local journalist who happened to write about their arrival was put in prison for I don't know how many months.

The Americans intend to help the counter-revolution in Portugal. The last time Franco spoke, I think in October, he expressed the wish for a 'return to law and order' in Portugal. And despite their lack of public support, the ELP (fascist Portuguese Liberation Army) and the Spinoists maintain bases here.

Q Hasn't the situation in Portugal provoked some differences inside the Spanish CP about Intersindical (the centralised trade union federation in Portugal) and the role of the Workers' Commissions?

A There is a tendency in the Spanish CP which opposes the almost total support given to the Fifth Provisional Government. Nuestra Bandera (the CP's theoretical organ) has run a public debate between Carillo (the CP Secretary in exile) and Camacho (CP leader of the Workers' Commissions). Carillo says that the workers should continue to work through the state-controlled unions, the CNS; Camacho thinks that the Workers' Commissions should be reconstituted.

Q What about the recent events in Madrid?

A There was an important strike on 11 December in the construction industry, over 80,000 on the outskirts of Madrid. The Liga Comunista led some of the workers' commissions in calls for a general strike in construction. The strikes had a dual purpose: on the economic front they were against the wage freeze (one of the King's first moves) and against shutdowns. But the central issue was amnesty.

The metal workers' unions voted unanimously in favour of the 7 December demonstration at Carabanchel. But because of limited legal tactics available to the CNS, and because slogans like 'Strike and everyone go home' were used, the strikes were not centralised.

There were meetings in each individual factory, but the CP refused to support the call for a general day of action. The LC called for a general strike in the metal industry and for demonstrations, stoppages, meetings and elections of strike committees.

Q Where are the LC's forces concentrated?

A We do a lot of work among the youth, university and secondary school students as well as young workers. We are beginning work among the soldiers (not with officers but with young draftees). But we have not got very far with this yet.

In the working class our priority is the metal industry, where we have workers in all of our branches. Next in importance is the construction industry, then textiles. Many of our members are bank workers and

teachers.

Q Are you considering more work among the youth?

A We are discussing the formation of a Trotskyist youth group, in sympathy with the Fourth International. We are planning a conference soon, and other points we shall discuss will be tactics for building our party as part of the International. The debate taking place in the International now is very important to us; we have recognised the need for the Fourth International since our formation in 1971.



Workers' Commissions leader Camacho on his release from jail

This is the first printed edition of a paper in Spanish put out by comrades of the LCR-ETA (VI) in London. It is available price 10p plus postage from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. There will be a fund-raising party (with disco) to launch the paper on Saturday 17 January at 7.30 in the Bank, Tolmers Square, NW1.



RED WEEKLY

For a CP-SP Government in Italy

The fall of the Moro Government in Italy is a direct result of the Communist Party's huge gains in the regional elections in June. The CP increased its vote by nearly 6 per cent to well over 33 per cent and the Socialist Party also increased its vote to 12 per cent.

The two major parties of the Italian working class thus took a massive 46 per cent of the vote, while the main party of the Italian capitalists, the Christian Democrats, saw their poll fall to 35½ per cent. The attempt of the Italian ruling class to intimidate the workers through the 1972 'Centre-Right' government, increased support for the fascists, and the reactionary divorce referendum in 1974 has dramatically failed.

Faced with the prospect of the CP coming to office, the capitalists, the CP leadership, the Social Democrats and international imperialism are making their preparations. For the Italian capitalists it is a question of 'social democratising' the CP to the maximum possible extent - seeking to complete definitively the transformation of the CP from a party whose primary allegiance is to the Soviet bureaucracy, to one whose first loyalty is directly to the Italian capitalist state and its ruling class.

Hypocritical

This is the meaning of the continuing offensive against the CP on 'liberty', 'pluralism' and all the other hypocritical phrases which the capitalists ignore in practice but use to attack the workers' parties.

For the leaders of the Italian CP the problem is posed differently. The Communist Party is deeply rooted in Italian society. If it ever came to a direct clash between the needs of the Italian bourgeoisie and the needs of the Soviet bureaucracy, then a majority of the Party and its leadership would undoubtedly choose the Italian ruling class with only a Stalinist minority opposing this social democratic majority.

At the present time, however, the Party does not have to make such a choice. The main problem for the CP leadership is how to assume office in a way which both guarantees the Italian ruling class against the CP's supporters, without the majority of the working class getting out of control of the Party bureaucracy.

The CP leadership's solution to this problem is the 'historic compromise' - a coalition between the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats. By a formal alliance with the main capitalist party the CP guarantees to the

Italian ruling class its good behaviour: by threatening its membership that a 'Chile style massacre' will occur if this alliance is broken, the CP hopes to keep its own base under control.

Outside this framework there are two other actors. First is the United States. Despite what the Italian ruling class probably now believes, the Americans do not agree that Italian Communists have changed their spots.

They don't entertain the ridiculous idea that the CP will seize power, but they do believe it will act as an arm of the Soviet bureaucracy - which is why the CIA sent 6 million dollars last month to 'anti-communist forces' following the 12 million dollars it allocated to 'anti-communist unions' in Western Europe in the late 1940s, and the 19 million dollars given over a period of years by the Standard Oil company to 'anti-communist parties'.

Socialist Party

Second is the Italian Socialist Party. Since 1946 this party, crushed between Stalinism and the anti-communist policies of the ruling class, has seen itself decisively replaced as the main party of the Italian working class - even in 1946 the SP gained 21 per cent of the vote compared to 19 per cent of the CP, and gained 400,000 more votes than the CP in the union elections.

Now this party, having lost even further support through 12 years of participation in 'Centre-Left' coalitions with the Christian Democrats, is seeking to revive its base in the working class through attempting to combine support of the 'historic compromise' with a 'leftist' policy - hence its move to bring down the latest Government, its support for abortion, and so on.

Tasks clear

But one thing all the contestants in Italy are agreed on. When the Communist Party enters the government it must not do so in a government only of parties of the working class, but only with the cover of an alliance with the Christian Democrats.

The task of the working class is equally clear - to break up the bourgeois coalitionist manoeuvres and force the parties of the working class to take government into their own hands. Let the workers see whether the Communist and Socialist leaders will act in the interests of the workers! For a CP-SP Government!

JOHN MARSHALL



Workers gather in the industrial suburb of Villaverde

STRIKERS STOP MADRID

Once again the jails of the Spanish dictatorship are starting to fill up with working class militants as the regime of King Juan Carlos tries to halt the current wave of working class struggle sweeping the country. In a series of dawn raids on Saturday, the dictatorship's police rounded up more than thirty militants involved in leading the industrial struggles that have rocked the capital city of Madrid over the past week.

That evening and the following day mass demonstrations took place all across the city. 5,000 marched from the Chrysler car plant in the industrial suburb of Villaverde, thousands of engineering workers demonstrated in the city centre, 3,000 demonstrated in the industrial suburb of Getafe, 1,000 mobilised in the street-market, and 4,000 workers and students demonstrated after a football match attended by 100,000. Each of these demonstrations was brutally attacked by the dictatorship's police, using tear-gas grenades and baton-charges.

This wave of struggles began just after the death of Franco when workers from a number of multi-nationals, including Chrysler and the ITT subsidiary Standard Electric, started strikes protesting against the wage freeze declared by Juan Carlos and demanding a total amnesty for all political prisoners.

Last week they were joined by 4,000 workers on the Madrid underground, who struck for a 50 per cent rise in their miserable £28 weekly wage. Workers from

Standard and Chrysler mounted big solidarity demonstrations with the underground workers, inspiring thousands of other Madrid workers to come out in solidarity. Many employers responded by locking-out their workers.

Altogether some 50,000 engineering workers are either on strike or locked out in Madrid, and bank, construction, textile, and chemical workers are also fighting for wage demands and threatening to take strike action. The underground workers have resumed work, but have announced they will come out again if their demands are not met by the beginning of next week.

Nor is the movement confined to the capital: important strikes and demonstrations have taken place in Barcelona, Seville, the northern Basque country, and among agricultural workers in the southern province of Andalusia.

As the dictatorship fights back against this growing movement with its traditional weapon - repression rising mass indignation will strengthen the upsurge and deepen the political demands of the masses. The reformist leaders of the Communist and Socialist Parties, and their competing class-collaborationist 'fronts' (the Democratic Junta and the Democratic Convergence) will seek to restrain this movement in order to avoid frightening the Spanish capitalists, and place their faith in cautious 'pressuring' of the cap-

italists to secure a few limited material and political concessions.

But revolutionary militants in Spain, particularly the militants of the Fourth International, will be fighting for a *united front of all workers organisations* to coordinate and strengthen the present upsurge into a *general strike* which can bring the dictatorship down, break the power of its brutal police forces once and for all, and enable the Spanish working class to win all their material and political demands.

Such a resounding victory would immensely strengthen the power of the Spanish working class, and represent the first step towards a Socialist Spain.

● All branches of the International Marxist Group must place on the agenda of their next meeting the steps they can take in solidarity with the beginning of the Spanish revolution.

Concrete plans should be drawn up for getting messages of solidarity from the labour movement to Spain, building local solidarity movements, circulating the AGARIS statement, holding local solidarity meetings, and preparing for the week of action. All details of IMG and united labour movement meetings, pickets, demonstrations, solidarity messages, etc. must be sent to Red Weekly.

WHAT TO DO ON SPAIN

1. Messages of solidarity from workers' organisations in Britain are needed above all. Branches of the railworkers must support the Madrid Metro workers, car workers' shop stewards committees the workers in struggle at Chrysler, and so on.

2. Many of the factories in struggle in Spain - Chrysler, Standard Electric, Kelvinator etc. - are part of multinational companies. Messages of solidarity, and if possible concrete solidarity action, is particularly important within these companies.

3. The Action Group Against Repression in Spain (AGARIS) is circulating a statement throughout the labour movement condemning the repression of the dictatorship. Copies of the statement can be obtained from AGARIS c/o 49 Chippenham Road, London W.9. AGARIS is calling for a week of action for 9-15 February.

4. Get delegated from your labour movement organisation to the solidarity conference called by a number of members of the TUC General Council for 14 February.

DEMONSTRATE IN SOLIDARITY WITH INDIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

Join the Campaign for the Release of Indian Political Prisoners (CRIPP) contingent in the demo on Sunday 25 Jan - assemble 1pm Speakers Corner - release all political prisoners - end the prison killings - halt the torture of prisoners and detainees.

* demo organised by Alliance Against Dictatorship in India
CRIPP address: 22 Boundary Road, London NW8 (328 2332).



Huge working class mobilisations recently threaten CP's 'historic compromise'

We can't go on like this!

We can't go on like this, you know. Only £20 came in for the Red Weekly Fighting Fund last week - none of it from IMG branches. Comrades don't seem to have recovered from the Christmas festivities yet; but already the New Year has seen important developments in the class struggle with the Chrysler defeat, widespread strike action in steel, a new British offensive in Ireland, and now the mass upsurge in Spain.

The New Year has also brought us another round of price increases. The £20 which came in for the Fighting Fund last week isn't even enough to pay the additional printing costs. British Rail have put up their freight charges by 15 per cent...and so it goes on.

Dig deep this week. We aren't joking when we say that your paper is in serious danger of going under if things don't improve. If you can't send us money then send your cigarette coupons, Green Shield stamps and the like. Every little bit helps. So rush your donations to: Fighting Fund, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.



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