

# RED WEEKLY

SOLIDARITY WITH THE  
PORTUGUESE  
WORKING CLASS

National conference—13 March

Details from: SCPWC, 12 Little Newport  
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## MINERS

# RIGHT BLOCKS JOBS FIGHT

For the first time under the Labour Government, national industrial action is being taken against the destruction of jobs. The National Union of Mineworkers executive has ordered a national overtime ban in defence of 800 jobs at Langwith pit in Derbyshire.

The right wing in the trade unions is frantic with worry that the miners' action will become the focus for a real challenge to the unemployment policies of the Wilson Government. NUM President Joe Gormley has denounced the decision as a 'fiasco', and the press has opened its pages to fellow right-wingers to slander the decision and split the miners. The aim of their campaign is clear.

The miners twice thwarted the plans of the Tory Government. In 1974 it was their strike that brought the Tories down. The aim of the press campaign and right-wing bureaucracy is to prevent the miners from playing a leading role now in the fight against Wilson's anti-working class

policies. It follows the pattern shown in the press's intervention in the Engineering Union elections, and Varley and Wilson's attacks on the Chrysler strike.

### UNPREPARED

But unfortunately the left on the Miners' executive has not prepared the membership adequately for the action. Although the coal industry is facing another wave of Sixties-style pit closures as the Coal Board rationalises production in the large, high productivity fields, the details of these attacks are not widely known.

As in steel and the railways, it is vital that the executive members supporting

the overtime ban immediately launch a campaign to demand the opening of all the Coal Board's books, to expose these plans for further rationalisation and closure; Langwith can be shown to be the thin end of the wedge. By doing this the miners in the Nottingham



Above: right-wing President of the NUM, Joe Gormley.

Below: mass meeting of Leicester miners which condemned the scabbing efforts of their executive member Frank Smith during the 1974 strike



and Leicester fields can be won away from the right-wing misleaders.

Some time ago, Yorkshire miners' leader Arthur Scargill called for an integrated energy plan. A fight for such a workers' plan now against the NCB's job-cutting plans would rally support for the

overtime ban and put the miners at the head of the fight for the right to work throughout the working class.

But the demand for no loss of jobs at Langwith and to open the books is the vital one to prepare the struggle.

# RECALL THE TUC

# The supersonic dole queue

Seven hundred redundancies have been announced at the British Aircraft Corporation's 'Concorde' factory in Bristol. But the only supersonic flight these workers will be making is to Avonmouth's ever-lengthening dole queues if the union leadership at the plant maintain their present passivity.

As part of the national aerospace strike on 6 February, there was a mass meeting and walk-out at BAC. Tribune MP Ron Thomas addressed the meeting, which supported a resolution calling for 'no more sackings, no more closures until the British Aerospace Corporation is formed' (presumably life's better on the dole queue when you've been sacked by a nationalised firm).

But there is no evidence that the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers District Committee is preparing for a serious fight. No steps have been taken to reduce the 50

hour per month maximum overtime limit, linked with a campaign to raise basic rates to compensate for loss of earnings. Instead there is more talk of negotiations with management and Eric Varley. Yet Varley's side-kick Gerald Kaufmann, the man sent to the US to sell Concorde, made it clear when interviewed last Friday night that he thought it would be 'quite unprincipled of me to intervene'.

Now is the chance for the Aerospace Liaison Committee that called the impressive 100,000-strong strike on 6 February to prove its mettle. Together with the joint shop stewards committees at BAC and Rolls Royce, which is also feeling the threat of redundancies, it should prepare an occupation of the plant to defend all jobs. In doing so it could give a much-needed boost to the 600 strikers at Commonwealth Smelting Limited in Avonmouth,

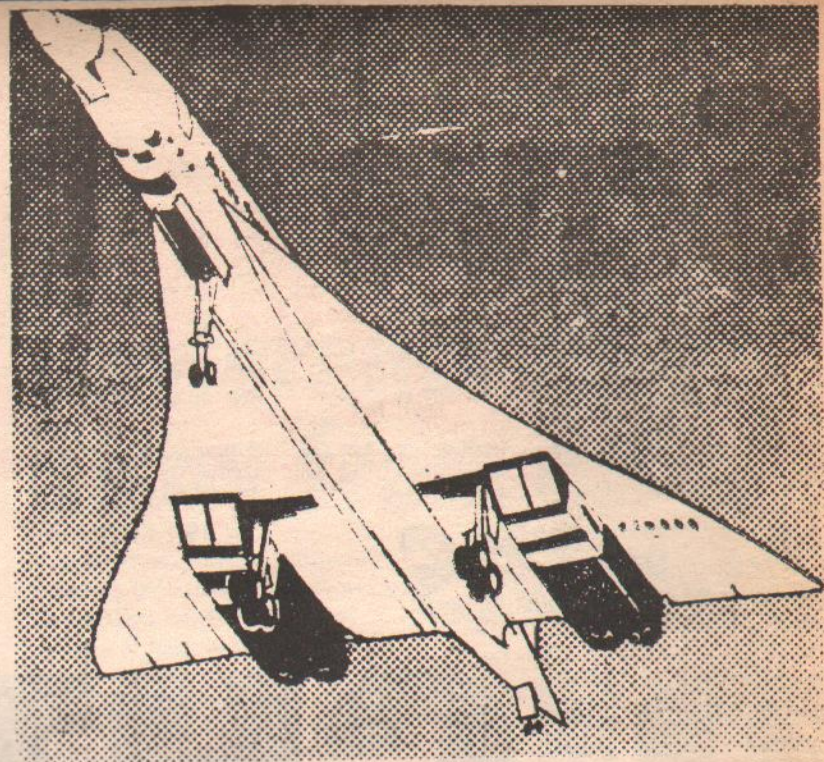
who have now been on strike for 15 weeks against redundancies and wage-cuts.

The local Right to Work Committee has been getting support from CSL and BAC for the national Right to Work March. Although this can provide an important national focus for action around unemployment, this must not be counterposed to building the broadest possible unity in Bristol around the struggle against redundancies at BAC, CSL and Rolls Royce.

## CP scabs

Ominous signs are appearing as to the character of the forthcoming Labour Movement Assembly on unemployment to be held in London on 27 March. The Communist Party newspaper, the *Morning Star*, has continued its tirade against the Right to Work March being backed by the International Socialists, while the way in which the Spanish conference at the weekend was turned into a beanfeast for bureaucrats worried many delegates present (see page 12 for a report).

The latest blast from the CP came on 10 February, when the *Star* gleefully reported that Emyl Williams, left Labour president of the South Wales miners, was withdrawing his sponsorship of the Right to Work March because his membership 'will not associate with splinter groups'. This position is a complete scandal. It reflects exactly the sentiments of Len Murray's speech against the 26 November jobs demonstration, denouncing 'extremists' for 'manipulating' the labour movement.



The best way in which the bureaucratic methods of the Communist Party and left Labour leaders can be defeated is to fight for the broadest possible unity in the workers movement and for policies which confront those of the reformists. But the failure of the International Socialists to provide and answer on either count means that the Right to Work Campaign is increasingly looked on as a stunt in the workers movement.

### I.S. CAMPAIGN

Those local Right to Work committees which were starting to develop roots in the working class are increasingly finding those roots severed as the IS insists on subordinating all activity on unemployment to a publicity campaign for its trade union front the 'Rank and File Organising Committee'. This body, whatever the pious declarations in *Socialist Worker* (the paper of the IS), is not a democratic open body but is completely dominated by the IS — as it itself dominates the Right to Work Campaign.

Equally the politics of the Right to Work Campaign do not provide a clear way forward for those whom they attempt to lead in the long march. Policies of nationalisation, however radically phrased, are useless without a fight to prepare workers in the factory to exercise control over any such nationalisation through a campaign to open the books. Equally, without a policy of work-sharing with no loss of pay, jobs cannot be guaranteed for the working class in a capitalist crisis.

None of these policies are a precondition for starting to build a broad campaign in the working class, but for any long term perspective for the militants engaged in such a campaign they are essential.

Nevertheless, whatever criticisms we have of the tactics or policies of the IS in building this march, there can be no doubt that it can act as a focus for extending and centralising the fight for jobs, and must therefore be supported against the bureaucratic opposition of the Communist Party and its 'Broad Left' allies.

## Steel sell-out

'I do not think there will be a violent reaction amongst the men. Most of them are reconciled to the fact that jobs must go, although it still has to be negotiated on a works basis.'

These were the inspiring words of leadership with which Mr Stan Biddiscombe, South Wales organiser for the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, greeted the British Steel Corporation's target of 9,300 redundancies in the South Wales mills by March 1978 — 14 per cent of the present labour force.

Details of the BSC's plans for achieving 23,000 or more redundancies over the next two years are now emerging. Although the figure of 44,000 has disappeared, and the Corporation has decided to ease off its attack on weekend working until local agreements are reached, its offensive against jobs and for speed-up remains geared to the same goals. The difference is that rank-and-file steelworkers are now firmly shackled by the agreement signed last

month between the employers and the TUC Steel Industry Consultative Committee

Last weekend the only sign of resistance to this sell-out came from the engineering workers at BSC's Appleby Frodingham plant, Scunthorpe, who walked out after management suspended premium Sunday shifts for some of their mates. It was this issue that triggered the original South Wales strikes, the momentum of which was defused by the cowardly agreement signed by the steel union leaders.

The mess left by the union leaderships can only be cleared up by action at the rank and file level. Forging the unity of steelworkers around the fight for jobs through the extension of the guaranteed working week to give 100 per cent protection to jobs and wages is the task of the hour. This will only be achieved through the building of steel action committees within and between plants to link craft and production workers in a common struggle.



Another fight back against victimisation and threatened redundancies is being waged by workers at Keith Blackman in North London, seen here picketing the offices of their giant parent company, GEC

## Tyneside stewards challenge multinationals

Shop stewards from the Tyneside plants of the major multinationals have come to the conclusion that something more than isolated shop stewards committees are needed to mount an effective challenge to a management which has multinational co-ordination and resources. It is backed by government policy, and is protected by a passive and evasive trade union leadership. As a result of their experience in fighting such managements they have taken steps to promote the formation of combine committees nationally and strengthen rank and file organisations locally.

With the support of the Institute for Workers Control and the recently formed Vickers Combine Committee, they are contacting shop stewards in all the 180 or so UK multinationals with the suggestion that regional conferences be held

as launching pads for national combine committees. This has already begun on Tyneside. For the last 18 months shop stewards from Swan Hunters, Churchills (part of Tube Investments), Thorn Industries, Vickers, Reyrolle Parsons, Richardson Westgarth, and Rolls Royce UK have been meeting as the Tyneside Shop Stewards Conference to discuss the Industry Bill, nationalisation, and workers control.

### Fighting

These regular meetings have led to the setting up of nationalisation committees in the shipyards, a combine committee in Churchills, the beginnings of a combine committee in Thorns, the strengthening of the Vickers combine, and various proposals on workers control. As a result of these experiences, stewards feel that combine committees are more likely to become sustained, fighting organisations.

The importance of a solid shop floor base for such initiatives is particularly

great at the present time, when combine committees of the sort that the Tyneside shop stewards have in mind are bound to come up against the right-wing leadership of the trade unions and Labour Party. The TUC and the AUEW executive make condescending gestures towards combine committees only so long as they remain merely a nice idea — an impotent get-together.

A small hint of the clash that is likely to come as combine committees take up the fight against Government policies came over the closure of the Vickers Crabtree plant at Water Lane, Leeds. Earlier this month, in a rather demoralised gesture of resistance, the workers at Vickers Crabtree presented their MP Merlyn Rees with a petition demanding that the firm be kept open. Two weeks before this the Vickers Combine Committee had decided to launch a major campaign against unemployment, realising that it could not be fought on a purely plant basis.

Unfortunately the initiative came too late to prepare adequate opposition

to the Water Lane closure. But by pointing to the general state of Vickers — at least four other plants are on short-time working — as proof of the need for a common struggle for a workers plan for production which defends jobs, the Combine Committee attempted to increase the workers' combativity.

Even this minimal solidarity and propaganda initiative was seen by St John Binns, the right-wing AUEW district secretary, as a threat to the smooth running of his little empire. He did all he could to diffuse and minimise the intervention of the Combine Committee Secretary in a mass meeting at Leeds.

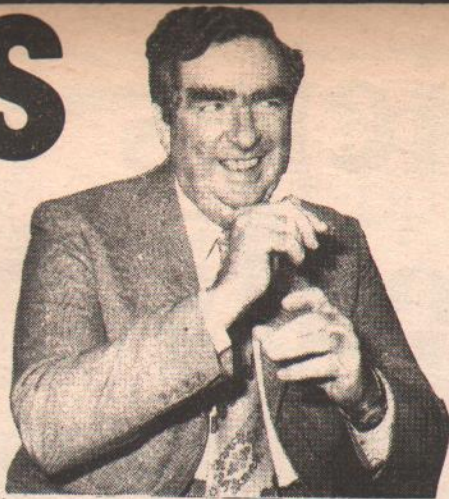
### Mass support

The stress that Mike Cooley from the Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee put in a speech to shop stewards in Newcastle was on the need for the combine committee to win mass support for its initiatives to explain its perspectives in detail (e.g. through a combine bulletin) and to create democratic forms of lead-

ership. Another aspect of preparing the fight against the right-wing is the Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee's own plan for socially useful production — the exploration of concrete projects that can be fought for as alternative plans to those of management. For example, stewards in Vickers are getting research done on the sort of socially useful products that could be substituted for armaments, regardless of management's wishes.

The Tyneside Shop Stewards Conference see the move towards setting up combine committees as more than just a better way of taking on management, although that is where it must begin; they see it as a way of creating the sinews of a wider socialist movement, able to challenge the right wing at every level and on every issue. Those who are interested in taking this initiative up in their area should contact the IWC or Jim Murray, chairman Tyneside Shop Stewards Conference, 12 St Albans Terrace, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.

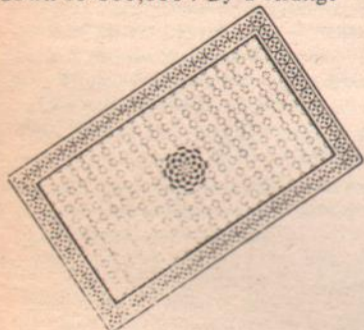
# HEALEY'S 3-CARD TRICK



Denis Healey has laid his cards on the table for the TUC leaders in his bid to gain acceptance for Phase Two of Labour's incomes policy. The cards are all marked: the first, 'unemployment down to 600,000'; the second, 'inflation is falling rapidly'; the third, 'you will get it all back in tax anyway'.

The TUC leaders are sweating, as well they might, for the cards are all face down. They refuse to call Healey's bluff. Let's see what's in his hand.

**Trick One:** 'unemployment down to 600,000'. By a strange



coincidence, this happens to be just the figure which the TUC considers to be an 'acceptable' level of unemployment. Murray now feels the Government and TUC have unity on this point. The only snag, however, is that the Chancellor has refused to give any date for this promised land of 'only' 600,000 workers on the scrap heap.

Denis Healey wrote a letter to the International Monetary Fund late last year, going down on his benders for a loan. In it he had to admit that production would continue to fall until the end of 1976. The annual rate of growth would then start to rise by about 2.5 per cent.

At this rate it will be 1981 before unemployment drops to the TUC's 'reasonable' level of 600,000. By that time most experts reckon that Britain will be in the throes of another slump - throwing even more out of work!

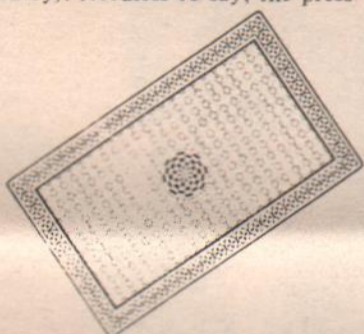
The Labour Government has done nothing to halt unemployment. The measures announced in Parliament last week were denounced by Tory Peter Walker as 'trivial and unimportant', and for once we have to agree with him. The only function of these measures is to reduce unemployment by 70,000, to prevent the dole queues from topping the one and a half million mark in early summer.

Healey is rubbing his eyes in dis-

belief at the lack of struggle against job loss, but thinks that if unemployment tops the 'magic figure' the TUC leadership could be brushed aside by the revolt from below. This is the cynicism of the Labour leaders who shed crocodile tears over unemployment but whose only answer is to set more of the youth to work at degrading and meaningless jobs like clearing beaches and counting road signs.

**Trick Two:** 'inflation is falling rapidly'. The magic figure that is being bandied around by the press for inflation is now 13.6 per cent. Most workers, taking a quick look at these papers, must think - 'well, perhaps they're not doing too badly'. After all, Healey said he would reduce the rate of inflation to single figures by autumn, and when he introduced the £6 limit inflation was running at 26.1 per cent.

This figure, however, is nothing but a con! The *Sunday Times* gave the real story: 'The index is still 23.4 per cent above the January 1975 level.' The 13.6 per cent magic figure of the press is simply 'the rate of increase over the last six months' (*Sunday Times*, 15 February). Needless to say, the press



have never found it convenient to use this method before. The true fact is that workers' wages and salaries, old age pensions, student grants and other state benefits have been eaten up by 23.4 per cent in one year.

And Healey's 'new deal' proposes to keep down wage rises to SIX PER CENT!

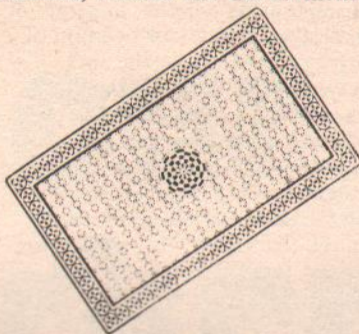
**Trick Three:** 'you will get it back in tax anyway'. This is the trump card Healey has been keeping up his sleeve. He is trying to give the impression that he will return the difference between a 6 per cent limit and the previous £6 in the form of tax allowances.

This way, he claims, costs for the bosses will be kept down and no-one will suffer. It sounds wonderful, doesn't it? It is the biggest

bluff of all!

Workers are already suffering under the present limit. Real earnings have already fallen by six per cent since the £6 limit was introduced and will continue to fall. In addition, the Government will not be allowed by the IMF to decrease its tax revenue. In fact, to meet the conditions of getting a loan, the Government will have to increase tax revenue by about 15 per cent.

So where is it going to find the money? It cannot come from big business, because the Government



is committed by its 'Chequers policy' to boost profitability, not decrease it through such measures as corporation tax. Therefore it will have to come either from taxes levied on the working class - on such things as food, tobacco and other 'luxuries' (giving inflation another boost) - or from readjusting the tax structure so that 'what you win on the swings you lose on the roundabout'.

The overall intention of the plan is crystal clear. Living standards will be chopped again.

Healey has nothing in his hand except the fact that he is playing with people who want him to win. And the TUC leaders are cynically using as chips the livelihood of the working class who place their trust in them.

Murray will not expose the game as rigged - he continuously declares the benefits that Government policy will bring, if only we will wait 'a little longer'. The truth behind Labour's lies must be exposed in every trade union branch and labour movement in the country to back up the demand that the TUC must be recalled to break with the Government's policies!

Steve Potter

# IN FOCUS

## RECALL

### LABOUR CONFERENCE

The call for a special Labour Party conference on unemployment will be on the agenda of this month's meeting of the party's National Executive Committee.

This revelation came as the Tribune Group of MPs announced that they were in favour of a recall party conference. Although their paper, *Tribune*, was silent on the question, the MPs claimed that they would be launching a nationwide campaign. They appealed to Constituency Labour Parties and trade union branches to support this demand. Later last week, the Group's chairman Arthur Latham was reported in the *Morning Star* as saying that the Tribune Group was pressing for 'controlled reflation' and that the conference should 'bring the Government into line with its Manifesto commitments'.

Red Weekly welcomes the call for this conference by the Tribune Group. The decisions at both the TUC and Labour Party conferences last year, giving support to the Government's economic policies, are used by all the bureaucrats to justify their lack of fight. By presenting these decisions as the authentic voice of the working class, the whole labour movement is tied ball and chain to the Chequers agreement putting profitability first at the expense of jobs, wages and social services.

However the Tribune Group, by calling for a return to the Manifesto commitments, will not provide any way forward for workers who want to fight against the policies of Wilson and Healey. Whether the 'lefts' like it or not, what lay at the centre of the Manifesto was the commitment to the social contract peddled so assiduously by these so-called leaders.

The call for a Labour Party conference based on such policies cannot mobilise the enthusiasm and fighting energy required to bring the Labour leadership to account. Only an independent fight by the labour movement based on unflinching opposition to present Government policies, support for every struggle against them (such as that of the miners), and centred around demands for workers control of industry can provide this perspective.

In addition the Tribunites continue to peddle the illusion that their 'pressure' can force Wilson, Healey and their co-thinkers to change course. The 'lefts' know full well that this is not the case. Wilson, Healey and Varley have made it absolutely clear that their commitment is to restoring the ailing fortunes of British capitalism. If the lefts are serious about changing the course of the Labour Government they should directly challenge the Wilson-Healey clique both in Parliament - where instead they have voted for social service cuts and the sacking of 8,300 Chrysler workers - and in the Labour Party and trade unions.

## Jones and Scanlon join jobs attack

With astonishing contempt for their membership, Hugh Scanlon of the AUEW and Jack Jones of the T & GWU have agreed to join with the car bosses and the Government in their project of running down the British car industry. Jones and Scanlon (the latter still nominally part of the 'Broad Left' in his union) will be holding hands with Industry Minister Eric Varley, Mr Terence Beckett (Ford), Mr Alex Park (British Leyland), Mr Robert Price (Vauxhall), and Mr Gilbert Hunt (Chrysler) in a group set up to implement the Chequers policy of 'profitability first' in the car industry.

Announcing the formation of the group in Parliament, Varley made it clear that its job would be to run down Chrysler in Britain and lay the basis for a car industry in the 1980s with high productivity, rationalisation of plants, and reduction of assembly capacity. This blatant collaboration with the bosses should be condemned by every section of the labour movement. AUEW and T & G members should table motions demanding that Jones and Scanlon immediately cease plotting with the bosses on the best methods of achieving redundancies in the car industry and instead start supporting their members who are fighting for jobs.

## REID'S DILEMMA

'I understand that this decision could place me in a sort of limbo ..... attacked by at least some of the left who fail to comprehend my dilemma.'

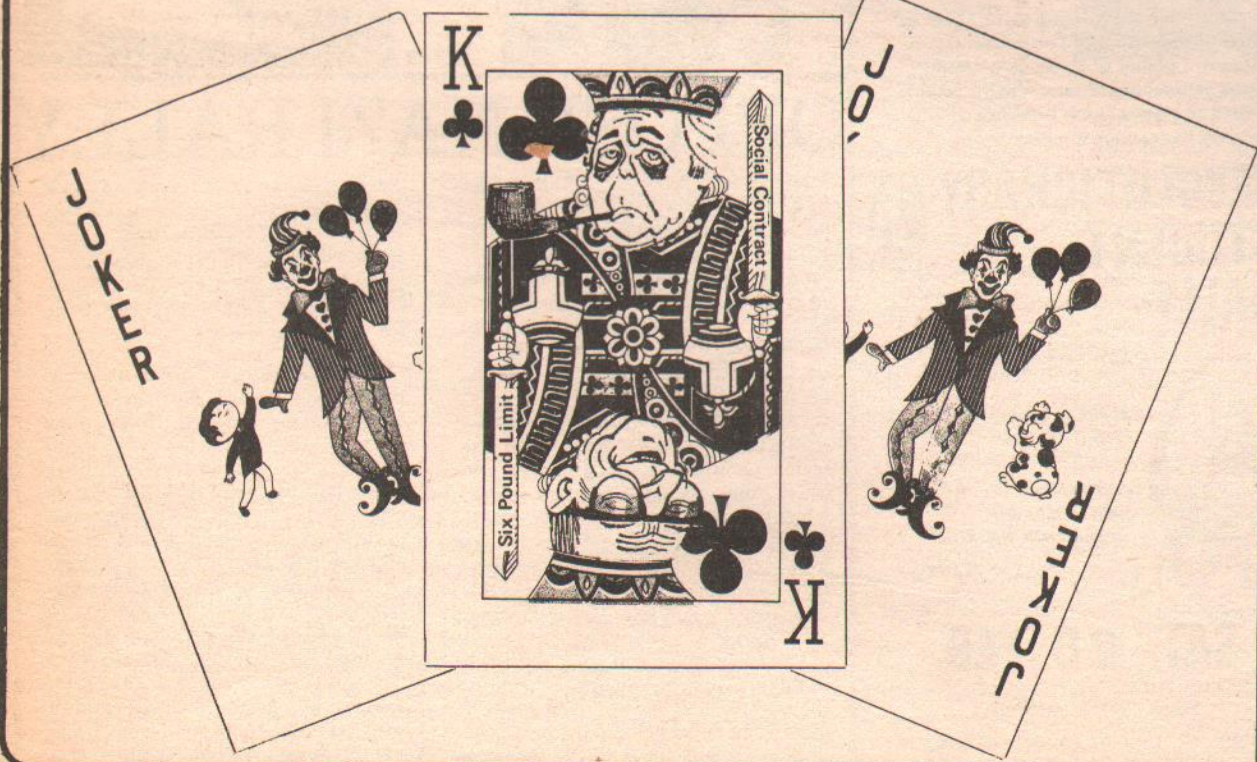
Red Weekly understands Jimmy Reid's problems only too well. He has been defeated twice as parliamentary candidate for Dumbartonshire Central, once as candidate for the Scottish seat on the Executive of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, and is heading for another defeat as Scottish secretary of the AUEW. He sees his membership of the Communist Party raises more important questions

AUEW. He sees his membership of the Communist Party hanging like an albatross round his neck in the advancement of a political career. But Reid's resignation from the Communist Party raises more important questions than the fate of one individual. Why has the 'folk hero' of the party, re-elected to the National Executive only last November, decided that there is no future for him in the CP?

His resignation occurs at a time when the Communist Party is attempting to present a new 'democratic' face to British society, and, in common with its sister parties in Western Europe put more distance between itself and the Kremlin. More and more these parties are becoming indistinguishable in programme from the social democratic parties in these countries.

Reid does not disagree with the politics of class collaboration of the 'anti-monopoly alliance' with capitalists, summed up in the CP programme *The British Road to Socialism*. However, in pursuit of the strategic alliance that it seeks with the left bureaucracy, the CP increasingly negates any reason for its separate existence from the Labour Party. Letters in *Comment*, the fortnightly journal of the CP, have suggested that the CP should in effect liquidate itself and regroup as a 'left' current in the Labour Party. Given that the CP is at present unwilling to do this, it is not surprising that individuals like Reid decide to solve this 'dilemma' in person, not even bothering to make a fight for their position in the party ranks.

Reid's resignation is part of the writing on the wall for the British Communist Party. Their strategic aim of advancing to power by capturing the labour bureaucracy via the trade unions will always be won hands down by the Labour Party. The impact on the CP's membership will be devastating as they ask: 'Why are we building a second-rate reformist party?' That in reality was the question Reid asked himself. His answer was to leave for greener pastures.



# Forging policies to beat the cuts

JAMES DRAKE looks at what local cuts committees are doing

- \* A low flat-rate system leading to a free transport system in Tyne & Wear
- \* Expansion of all welfare services and the abolition of private practice inside and outside the NHS
- \* A programme of public works, especially council housing, to meet social need and build the direct labour force.
- \* No more rent rises
- \* A national nursery school scheme
- \* Abolition of all classes of over 30 children

It was with these proposals that TYNESIDE Action Committee Against the Cuts launched its 'Constructive Alternative' to social spending cuts last week. The report was produced under the auspices of Newcastle and District Trades Council which established the committee from a Trades Council conference last November on cuts and unemployment. The Action Committee now has working groups looking at virtually every aspect of the social services.

The Tyneside Committee's document rejects any idea of expansion of one sector of the public services at the expense of other sectors. The fight to defend the social services, education, decent housing and a transport service meeting the need of the working class are clearly linked.

## REELING

Moreover, the programme puts forward demands around which the whole of the working class can be organised, not just factory workers. The needs of old people, the sick housewives, and the unemployed are taken into account, and the section on health and the social services clearly spells out how cuts reinforce the imprisonment of women within the family. All of these things are the concern of the whole workers movement. The Committee is now preparing a real drive to link up with the public service unions in the area through the distribution of 5,000 copies of the document.

Although the activities so far carried out by the Tyneside Committee are limited, the publication of this document is a real step forward for the cuts campaign nationally - something other areas could well decide to follow. Until quite recently many working people were unaware of the drastic effects that Healey's slashing of £900 million from the social expenditure budget would have. Those who did realise were sent reeling. But now the first steps to organise a fight back are being taken and the Tyne-



Picketing the BMA last week in defence of NHS against consultants' manoeuvres

side Committee's report is part of this process.

The problem facing activists is what demands should they be putting forward, particularly given that local council spending is controlled by the Government through the rate support grant.

On 13 February Hemel Hempstead Labour Party held a public meeting in protest against the cuts in the NHS. Various trade unions were represented at the meeting, which attracted over 30 people. More importantly, it voted to support a resolution put forward by the Labour Party Young Socialists to set up an ad hoc committee to mobilise for the demonstration on 25 April against the cuts in the NHS and private practice called by NALGO and the National Coordinating Com-

BIRMINGHAM Cuts Action Committee has been formulating a programme for a successful reversal of the cuts and the extension of the social services in the interests of working people. The immediate steps they are demanding are:

- A halt to all cuts
- The immediate restoration of all cuts involving NHS, housing and social services building programmes
- The exposure of all plans for proposed cuts through the opening of the books.

Arming themselves with this information, Birmingham CAC is demanding that the Labour group on Birmingham council, whether in power or not, be forced to take a position of outright opposition to the cuts.

Opening the books of the local authorities is a vital demand in the fight back against the cuts. It allows committees of local workers to reveal the extent of the planned cuts, expose the causes of the crisis, and plan the fight back. In London, for example, it is known that 90 per cent of all rents go straight back to the money-lenders in interest repayments, while 30,000 homes lie empty and thousands are homeless. Far from standing up to these par-

itytee Against the Cuts in the NHS.

This is a step towards taking the issue into all organisations of the labour movement in Hemel, to build a mighty united campaign to force the Labour Government to implement the policy of defending the NHS passed by the Labour Party's annual conference. Amongst other things this called for a sliding scale of expenditure to protect health service spending against the effects of inflation, the abolition of private practice, and abortion on request.

## 27 FEB CUTS DEMO - SUPPORT GROWS

The national demonstration against the education cuts on Friday 27 February has gained official support from two more unions in the education sector, the National Union of Teachers and ASTMS. But both have made sure that this will be merely a token gesture. Neither has called for strike action to ensure that there is a large turn-out from their membership.

This is not surprising, given the role of the trade union leadership at the present time. They excuse their inactivity on the cuts by pointing to the decisions of the last TUC conference, which endorsed Labour's economic policies and thus paved the way for the Government's present measures. No matter how these unions twist and turn, their support for

Labour's policies means that they cannot oppose the cuts in action. A fight on the cuts is impossible without breaking with the Government's policies as a whole.

For this reason the lobby of the TUC before the demonstration, demanding that the TUC be recalled to break with the Government's policies, is growing in importance. If the 27 February action is going to have any function apart from demonstrating the impact of the cuts, it must point the finger at those responsible for holding back the fight - the TUC leadership. New sponsors of the lobby are Hemel Hempstead LPYS, Manchester Area NUS, and Bath University Students Union.

The lobby is meeting at 12.15pm in Bedford Square (off Tottenham Court Road), London W.1. Student Unions, cuts action committees, tenants associations and trade union branches should pledge their support immediately.

## -WHAT'S ON-

**CRITIQUE SEMINAR:** Gunther Minnerup on 'The German National Question', Tues 24 Feb, 7.30pm, London School of Economics, St Clements Building, Room S-418.

**'TYNDALE and the Right-Wing Attack':** Socialist Teachers Conference public meeting. Speakers: Chris Searle, Dave Lister, Ken Jones, and Brian Haddow (Tyndale teacher). Thurs 26 Feb, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road.

**ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEE** in Birmingham—inaugural meeting, Sun 29 Feb, 2.30pm in Digbeth Civic Hall (Lecture Room 2).

**BIRMINGHAM CRITIQUE** meeting: Chris Goodey on 'Russia-Italy-Germany, Factory Organisation in War and Revolution (1914-20)'. Tues 24 Feb, 7pm, Mixed Lounge, B'ham University Students Union.

**'WOMEN AND THE CUTS':** a working class answer! Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting in preparation for the Women and the Cuts conference. Fri 27 Feb, 7.30pm, Small Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn tube.

**'A CRIMINAL TRESPASS LAW'**—what would it mean? Howard Levenson (INCCL) and Piers Corby (IMG) speaking at London Socialist Forum, Tues 24 Feb, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, W.C1.

**WORKERS BOOKSHELF**—a socialist mail-order book service offers a wide selection of books on Marxist theory, labour history, women and international affairs. Pamphlets our speciality—over 60 titles. S.a.e. (foolscap) for catalogue to: Workers Bookshelf, 150 Foster Road, Trumpington, Cambridge.

**FOLK FROM CHILE**—concert with Isabel Parra and Patricia Castillo, organised by Manchester CSC. Sat 28 Feb, 7.30pm, Salford University (Maxwell Hall).

**'STOP CUTS—Save Jobs':** demo organised by West Midlands TUC, Sat 21 Feb. Assemble 10am Digbeth Civic Hall, march to Birmingham Town Hall for meeting at 12. Speakers: Alan Fisher (NUPE), Ken Gill (TASS), Eric Heffer MP.

**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.

**RED BOOKS** comprehensive list of titles now available—Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Mandel, Lukacs, Novack, Cannon, Deutscher, etc. Send s.a.e. for copy to: Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

**RED WEEKLY PARTY** organised by Birmingham IMG, Sat 21 Feb, 8pm onwards. Free beer and food and 'Belt + Braces' band. Norton Hall, Ralph Road, Saltley—tickets £1. Build the Red Weekly Fund Drive!

**NEWCASTLE:** Social in aid of 'Red Weekly'. Drink, food and disco. Saturday evening, 21 Feb at 57 Sidney Grove, Fenham.

**CAMPAIGN** for Repeal of Immigration Act—ad hoc committee to organise 11 April demo meets every Friday, 7.30pm, 152 Camden High Street.

**NORTH-WEST** Regional NAC Demo—Sat 21 Feb in Liverpool. March for free abortion on demand—a woman's right to choose, and against denial of free speech on the issue. Speakers include: Maureen Colquhoun MP, Barry Williams (Pres, Liverpool TCI), Toni Gorton (NAC Steering Cttee), Dr Sheila Abdullah (Merseyside NAC). Assemble Sefton Park (Ullet Road entrance), 12.30pm.

## REVOLUTIONARY STUDENT RALLY

ORGANISED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

**TARIQ ALI—THE RISE OF THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTION**

**JOHN ROSS—THE FIGHT FOR A REVOLUTIONARY ALTERNATIVE IN BRITAIN**

+ SPEAKERS FROM LIGA COMUNISTA INTERNACIONALISTA PORTUGUESE SYMPATHISING SECTION OF F.I. REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST GROUP (IRISH SECTION OF F.I.)

**SAT. 28 FEB.**

ASSEMBLY HALL, INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, MALET ST, LONDON W.1.

TICKETS 60p from 97 Caledonian Road, N.1.

asites and demanding that the Government nationalise the building industry and financial institutions, Labour authorities continue to pay this ransom and cut back on services for local tenants and trade unionists.

ISLINGTON Campaign Against the Cuts in Social Expenditure has taken up this demand and is challenging local councillors and MPs not only to vote against the cuts, and organise support for workers struggling against them, but to organise actively with other Labour councils against the right-wing policies of the Wilson Government. Over 300 tenants packed the Council Chambers of the Town Hall last week, allegedly to hear about the Council's heroic resistance to the housing cuts.

## SACROSANCT

But as a statement from the International Marxist Group pointed out:

'Almost exactly a year ago the Council called a meeting like tonight's to 'explain' the cuts it was making in social services, recreation facilities, staff levels and other council services. Council leader Gerry Southgate pleaded in justification, "nothing except the continuance of the housing programme has been ruled out at this stage....whatever else happens, the housing programme is sacrosanct". Now with Housing Minister Freeson's savage cuts in Islington's 'Section 105' housing rehabilitation money from £26 million to £11 million, the Labour Council is reaping the bitter fruits of its failure to fight all cuts a year ago.'

The statement went on to demand of 'councillors Conway, McGaskill, Veness, Hassler and Haynes (who have offered verbal opposition to the council cuts during council

debates) that should they fail to win a vote for rejection of the planned cuts inside the Council, they should immediately publicly dissociate themselves from council policy and launch a campaign in the workers movement for the above policies and fight to build a London labour movement conference to fight these cuts and remove those responsible for them'.

With the coming White Paper on Public Expenditure due to slash a further £3,000 million off social spending, national actions are vital. The education cuts demonstration on 27 February and the national demonstration on 25 April against the cuts in the National Health Service and against private practice inside and outside the NHS will give important national focuses to all activity against the cuts. The latter in particular will give local cuts committees the opportunity to approach local NALGO branches and hospital unions for support and add some real weight to the campaigns in their areas. Speakers from the NCC can be booked through Dr Paul Stern, 55 Bridge Lane, London NW11.

If you're preparing a fight against the cuts in your area and want to know more about the Tyneside Committee's programme, you can get a copy of 'The Constructive Alternative' from: Colin Randall or John Darwin, c/o 85 Adelaide Terrace, Benwell, Newcastle 4. Details of the Islington Cuts Conference (delegate fee 50p) from ICACISE, c/o 15 Bayon House, New Orleans Walk, London N19 3ST.

Is there a cuts campaign in your area? If so Red Weekly would like to know what its policies are, what support it's got, what its doing, and how it is mobilising for the NALGO/ NCC demo against the cuts in the NHS and private practice. Write to Red Weekly, 182 Pentonville Road, London N1.



## OPPOSE NAZI RALLY

John Tyndall's National Front have made Dewsbury in Yorkshire a priority area for their fascist propaganda. Dewsbury has a large immigrant population, and the Front are attempting to blame the present crisis on this section of the Dewsbury working class. To this end they have leafleted various estates with their racist filth, and on 22 November demonstrated through the town.

An anti-fascist counter-demonstration resulted in the arrest of 25 socialists and trade unionists. Since then an Anti-Racist Committee has been set up, which is building a defence campaign for the 25 and also leafleting the estates and factories exposing the fascist nature of the NF's propaganda. The next stage in the campaign is a demonstration in Dewsbury this Saturday, 21 February.

With unemployment rising and the social services being rapidly cut back, the working class has to defend itself against the threat posed to its organisation both by the police and also by the fascist

thugs. A failure to defend the 25 would make it easier for the police to intervene in future against socialists, trade unionists and immigrants, and for the National Front to divide the labour movement between white workers and black workers.

Dewsbury is part of the area covered by the Labour-controlled Kirklees Council, but despite this a motion to prevent the NF from using council halls in Dewsbury was defeated. The campaign will be taking up the position of those Labour councillors who voted with the Tories against the interests of those whom they are supposed to represent.

A successful NF campaign in Dewsbury could have repercussions throughout West Yorkshire, a fact which underlines the importance of the 21 February demonstration. This is supported by trade union and socialist organisations from all over Yorkshire, and assembles at 1 p.m. outside Dewsbury Public Baths.



Six months ago the events in Newham North-East Labour Party were plastered across the front page of every national paper. The members of the General Management Committee had actually dared to sack their MP, notorious Labour right-winger and coalitionist Reg Prentice. The Labour Party activists had done nothing against the book—simply exercised their limited right to choose whether or not Reg Prentice would be automatically re-elected as candidate for the seat.

Even this was enough to send the Labour right wing and the Tory press into hysterics. After all, if Prentice went, who would be next to feel the hot breath of the rank and file on his collar? The ability to bring these bureaucrats to account would significantly undermine the ability of the Wilson Government to carry out its anti-working class policies with such ease.

It was around the issue of working class democracy and accountability that *Red Weekly* spoke last week to two members of the General Management Committee of Newham North-East Labour Party who have been heavily involved in the fight to remove Reg Prentice. The militants asked us not to reveal their names, as to do otherwise could lead to a renewed round of witch-hunting which would simply serve to obscure the issues. We have therefore referred to them as A and B throughout. Our own views on the struggle for workers democracy are printed below.

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A. Since Prentice was voted out there has been an organised attempt by the right wing to move into the constituency and recruit support for personalities rather than political perspectives. There has been a swamping of party meetings. There have been delegates sent to the General Management Committee who are not even members of the party.

There has been a 40 per cent increase in the size of the GMC. But at least half of that growth is in spite of the media campaign. The dialogue about Prentice's suitability as an MP has caused an increase in political awareness and encouraged people to enter into political discussion throughout Newham.

B. Prentice's support is organised purely on the basis of personality. In St. Stephen's ward, for example, a motion was passed last week unanimously calling for a recall Labour Party conference to reject the Government's present economic proposals and replace them with socialist policies. Now that is one of the wards that has been taken over by the pro-Prentice group, yet they all dutifully put up their hands and voted for the motion. But when it comes to the business of Prentice, they'll vote for him.

A. The key political issues in the Prentice affair developed long before I was a member of the party. First and foremost, when the Labour Party sends a member to the House of Commons, does that person go as a Labour Party representative bound by the structures and democratic procedures of the Labour Party, answerable to the decisions of annual conference? Or does he go with an open-ended commitment to manoeuvre on the basis of what he thinks the majority of his electorate feels at any particular point in time?

I expect every MP in the Labour Party to be totally answerable to the membership. The membership makes its views known at annual conference. It's not up to MPs to water them down in any way but to carry them out.

B. The Newham North-East situation cannot be seen purely as a question of Prentice. It's quite rightly broadened to the accountability of the Council and its function with respect to the people of Newham in general, and to the Labour Party particularly.

One thing that is increasingly going to come up is the role of local constituency parties in controlling council policy. At the moment constituency parties have local group observers on the council, but they have no entitlement to minutes or to take part in the discussion. They attend purely in an advisory capacity to do nothing.

# Newham, Labour and Workers Democracy

A. At the moment we develop our policy through the borough-wide local government committee. But then we find ourselves cut off by an autonomous Labour Group on the Council which seems to think that it's in those positions by right.

I feel that come 1978 Newham is going to see a Labour-controlled Council the likes of which has rarely been seen in this country. By then the right-wing candidates will find themselves isolated in areas where Labour candidates have never been returned. Simultaneously you'll have the disappearance of the aldermanic system, and the right-wing elements that hold the aldermanic positions on the Council are for the first time in twenty years going to have to fight to be adopted as candidates — let alone elected.

In the meantime, because of the commitment that is developing on the left, more and more people are putting themselves forward as potential candidates for Newham Council. There is a strong possibility of a group of people moving onto Newham Council and using Newham Council as a platform to demand that the Labour Government adheres to the Labour Party programme and questions the position of those who deviate.

As an elected body, as tribunals for the local people, Labour councillors should point out how central government is abdicating, how central government is restricting them and placing obstacles in the way of fulfilling policies. They should perform an agitational function to rouse the working people in the area and challenge the policies of central government. There is absolutely no other function for a local Labour council at a time like this.

The left has made the mistake recently of looking back to Clay Cross and yelling at Labour councils to do a Clay Cross when there is no way that that can be done. Clay Cross was about a comparatively small amount of money which the Council just happened to have, and they were later surcharged for it. But you can't just dig up £2 million out of your own pockets to maintain and expand services. The central government rate support grant has been cut to make sure you don't have that £2 million, and even if you did find that money by raising the rates, the Government has assured everyone that they will cut the rate support grant penny for penny if rates are put up.

Newham Council is funded daily by short-term loans. You can get Securicor driving up delivering money hot from the money markets. That gives us a choice: are we going to be dependent on the money markets, or are we going to find some totally different way of meeting the needs of the local community? And if we are, then surely it would have to be part of an overall, integrated national policy.

That means that when we are urging local people to fight the cuts, we have to fight for total and continuous disclosure of information. What we've had in the past is Labour groups on councils meeting in virtual secrecy and deciding on the positions they are going to adopt. They're answerable to no-one. The local population has no say at all in how these decisions are arrived at.

Quite often even local government committees

don't have any say in how decisions are arrived at, because the terms of the standing orders of many councils mean that if a decision is not arrived at by any particular subject committee like education or social services, then it's left to the chairman and full-time officials to arrive at answers based on the full-time officials' reports.

B. It's absolutely essential that we start establishing some real accountable socialist councils. Now, having said that, if Newham was to go it alone we would get smashed. There is no way you can take over Newham Council with the situation on interest repayments as it is at the moment. The main demand that has got to be raised before anything else is for the nationalisation of the banks and all financial institutions.

A. These 'local' questions immediately raise the central political issues. There's no way to avoid them. One can hardly put a three-foot rope round a dog's neck, tie it to a stake, and ask it to walk around in twelve-foot circles.

INTERVIEW BY MICK GOSLING

## Policies - key to workers democracy

What's the use to the working class of organisations they don't control? That is the question the militants in Newham North-East Labour Party asked themselves, and their answer was to throw out Reg Prentice. But as they realise themselves, the struggle for workers democracy spreads far beyond the bounds of one Constituency Labour Party.

At the present time the Labour Government is being allowed to slash jobs and living standards because its anti-working class policies are backed up by the trade union bureaucracy and a Parliamentary Labour Party over which the working class has virtually no control. Not only has this bureaucracy lined up the TUC to toe Wilson's line, but their block votes guaranteed the victory of Wilson's economic strategy at the Labour Party Conference.

To bring the bureaucrats to account, *Red Weekly* is campaigning for recall TUC and Labour Party conferences to break with the Government's policies. This is the essential point on which we think there is a need for absolute clarity.

We are not simply in favour of democracy in the organisations of the working class as an abstract principle — a sort of proletarian



*Red Weekly* asked the comrades if the Labour Party in Newham North East had tried in practice to go beyond being simply an electoral machine by involving people in the area in a campaign against the Government's policies — had it, for instance, affiliated to the local anti-cuts campaign?

A. We're not affiliated to any of the local action groups. The local party's maintained the position that people who feel strongly about these issues should come into the Labour Party and fight from within the Labour Party, and in doing this they would also be fighting against the reactionary leadership.

B. That's an attitude I don't agree with myself. I see the two things as something very different: there is on one level the Labour Party struggle, and on another level there is the very direct things that the East London Action Committee Against the Cuts is concerned about — and quite honestly, it's about time Newham North-East Labour Party affiliated to the ELACAC. It's the only body of any worthwhile nature which is actually doing anything about the cuts.

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art for art's sake. It is an essential part of the fight to remove Wilson, Healey, Murray, Jones etc. from their positions of leadership in the labour movement. And it will only reach fruition when the anti-working class policies of these misleaders are themselves smashed and replaced by a workers solution to the crisis.

Nor will this fight be won simply by rank-and-file versus leadership struggles inside the Labour Party and trade unions. It demands the co-ordination of struggles inside and outside the Labour Party and across union boundaries to develop the independent organisation of the working class and its experience of workers democracy in action: mass meetings, democratically elected strike committees, the formation of broad-based anti-cuts committees and other forms of independent working class organisation.

Not only will this provide the working class with its most effective means of struggle against right-wing policies, by fostering mass involvement. It will allow workers to experience in real life elements of the workers democracy that must replace the crippling noose of capitalist parliamentary democracy.

# Wilson scabs on abortion vote

One hundred and eleven Labour MPs — including Harold Wilson — flouted TUC and Labour Party conference decisions on 9 February when they voted along with most Tories to re-convene the reactionary Select Committee on abortion. Their votes have put James White's Abortion (Amendment) Bill back on the agenda. This is the same Bill that last June drew 30,000 demonstrators out in protest against its provisions, which would have driven thousands of women to backstreet abortions.

The Select Committee's job is clearly laid down: it is 'to consider the matters contained in the Abortion (Amendment) Bill'. Indeed, Labour anti-abortionist cheer-leader Leo Abse has publicly stated three areas it will deal with: first, the 'problem' of discrimination against doctors with conscientious objections to abortion; secondly, the need to tighten up on licensing advice bureaux; and finally, 'the practice of some doctors to grant abortion virtually on request under...the original Act'.

In other words, as the Catholic weekly paper *The Universe* makes explicit: 'The vote means there is a good chance of the

*'It is interesting that many who support abortion are vociferous in the support for the Soviet Union.'*  
Jill Knight

Act being amended and a tightening up on liberal grounds for abortion.' Nor has the setback this vote represents for those committed to fighting for women's rights gone unnoticed by *The Universe*. Bold headlines of 'Abortion — A Battle Won' and 'Work Must Go On' greeted *Universe* readers last week.

MPs of Abse's ilk dominate the Select Committee. In the past, they hid behind claims that they simply wanted to erad-

ate 'abuses' in the private sector. Now they're getting bolder. It's not simply taxi-touting they want to get rid of — now they make it clear that they wish to restrict the grounds on which women can have abortions.

If these MPs were so concerned about abuses in the private sector they would be in the forefront of the fight to defend and extend the NHS — for the full integration of the private sector into the NHS. This is clearly not their concern. Instead they are calling for a tightening up on private clinics — so that women who have to turn to the private sector because of the utter failure of the Labour Government to ensure the effective implementation of the 1967 Act are left without any facilities at all. Enforced motherhood is their watchword.

*'Surely if you kill a man's child that is the penultimate step to the ultimate step to the ultimate emasculation — to the castration of the male himself.'*  
Leo Abse

The supporters of the White Bill profess concern for doctors who are 'forced' to give abortions, but in the same breath try to force their backward views on women. And it is certain that one of the major problems with the 1967 Act — the sabotage by doctors who simply refuse to implement even its restricted provisions — is not up for discussion by this back-room committee.

The women Labour MPs who have in the past supported actions called by the National Abortion Campaign made clear what their opinion on this vote was. Audrey Wise pointed out that MPs who supported this reactionary Select Committee 'were flying in the face of the labour movement, all of its women's organisations, and almost unanimous professional opinion'. Jo Richardson said it was ironic that MPs had spent so much time in 1975 considering how they could extend women's rights when, on the other hand, the committee had the task of considering a restriction of these rights.

But these fine words are all too late. Women Labour MPs on the Select Committee sold out the campaign five months ago when they agreed to the first set of restrictions recommended by the Com-



IMG member Leonora Lloyd speaking at NAC rally to coincide with debate in Parliament

mittee.

This sell-out helped to disorientate some of the campaigners against White's Bill at a time when clarity was really necessary, and when any infringements on women's rights to abortion should have been taken up and opposed centrally. But the women MPs on the Select Committee, backed up by people like Audrey Wise and Jo Richardson, felt that if they let these 'few restrictions' go by then the big threat — the White Bill — would disappear.

Now the chickens have come home to roost. The White Bill is back on the agenda, and women's rights are being whittled away by these 'less important' restrictions as well as by the massive decline in abortion facilities through the Government's policy of slashing the NHS budget.

How could the vote in Parliament have gone otherwise, when these so-called leaders of the working class failed to provide any lead whatsoever? Even the fight they put up 'in their own house' was not in order — they jumped from one argument to another in explaining why the Select Committee should not be re-constituted.

They argued that 'it was a waste of money' at a time when the Government was short of funds. They agreed that it was a matter of 'individual conscience', and refused even to demand a vote in the Parliamentary Labour Party meeting called to discuss it — let alone arguing it

*'We must see that our nation is governed by men who heed God's laws.'*  
Andrew Bowden (SPUC supporter on the Select Committee).

should be treated as any other issue of vital concern to the working class, with the 3-line whip. Finally they failed to back the real struggles being launched to defend and extend abortion rights — such as the picket of the AUEW headquarters protesting against the fact that every AUEW-sponsored MP voted for the White Bill.

Lessons have been learned from this sell-out. The first is that we must step up the campaign for women's abortion rights. In building for the 3 April demonstration called by the National Abortion Campaign, every militant in the workers' movement must rally all those who are prepared to organise to implement the decision of the TUC and Labour Party conferences for free abortion on demand.

Those trade unions whose sponsored MPs voted to put the White Bill back up for discussion must call them to account for this anti-working class action — as the National Union of Public Employees has already threatened to do. Constituency Labour Parties must re-open a discussion on how to fight the White Bill — and plans for a campaign inside the Labour Party should be mapped out and debated as a central issue confronting the Labour Party Women's Conference in June.

The second lesson is that we cannot afford to rely even on the pro-abortion Labour MPs. It is up to the working class — through its own campaign — to fight to implement the TUC and Labour Party decisions.

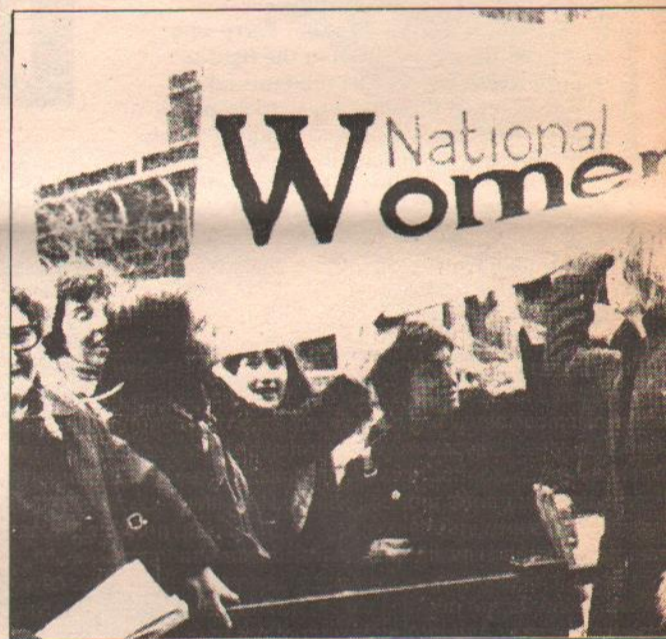
Every Labour MP on the Select Committee should be instructed to resign from it and organise a campaign to boycott its proceedings. If these MPs actually do support women's abortion rights, they should be in the forefront of the campaigns being launched to defend and extend them — organised through the independent action of the working class.

## \*\*\*\* Women and t

Cuts in health care, cuts in education, cuts in housing spending, cuts in 1½ million unemployed — this has been the message of the Labour Gov since it came to office in 1974. As the capitalist crisis deepens, it is the class which is being forced to pay. And it is women — both at home and — who are shouldering much of the burden of these attacks.

\*For an immediate injection of funds into the social services and for me of socially useful public works, including schools, hospitals and nur extend social services according to need, not profit. \*Protect social living standards through a nil-norm threshold which automatically comp for any rise in inflation. \*For national and local workers enquiries into cing and organisation of public services as the first step to prepare the social services based on the needs of the whole working class. \*For free nursery facilities; abortion and contraception, free and safe, on demand an end to all private practice inside and outside the NHS; for the nation without compensation of all drug, health and education supply industry

# WHY HITS HA



Despite this lobby, Jo Richardson's Bill to protect battered wives was 't

## A puzzle - and some answers

The Labour Party has never been famous for either consistency or principles. And how on earth do we make sense of a situation in which Labour politicians have made all sorts of noises about women's rights, guiding a Sex Discrimination Act onto the statute book, while at the same time (the quickness of the hand deceives the eye) endorsing the recommendations of a Select Committee that is hell-bent on making women's access to abortion even more restricted than it already is?

Part of the answer to this riddle appears when we look at the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts in a bit of detail. The EPA has all the hallmarks of a sop. It contains so many loopholes that writing pamphlets listing them has become a minor industry for company lawyers. Even so, a recent report in the *Department of Employment Gazette* suggested that a substantial number of companies had still failed to bring their practices into line with the EPA.

The SDA is more interesting. It makes a whole range of concessions in principle — and takes most of them back in practice. Thus on education it provides that 'no discrimination against women may operate in the terms of admission, acceptance, and access to facilities in

in any educational establishment either the public or private sector then gives a list of exceptions with 'existing single sex esta

In addition, of course, the for enforcing the SDA are draconian. The worst of any of the SDA will suffer is a fine tempt of court, in the unlikely event that they actually refuse to play the Equal Opportunities Co

But even after all the noise ped off, the SDA does have pects. For instance, the professions do make it much for medical schools to keep It won't actually stop them so, but it will at least make rassing for them — and thus take up as an issue.

But what is striking about 1 per cent of the SDA is that geared to the needs of 'prof men — higher grade white-collar journalists, etc. Of course n women are still workers. But manual workers and women secretarial jobs stand to gain from the SDA. The 'consum of the SDA deal mainly with like mortgages — and the ov



On Thursday 12 February, Barbara Castle announced in the House of Commons the closure of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital in North London. The EGA is one of only two remaining hospitals in Britain which are totally staffed by women, for the use of women. This is a choice women rarely have in the NHS, as the majority of doctors are men. At a time when women are being proclaimed 'equal', cut-backs in social expenditure and unemployment are systematically undermining their position in society — and the closure of the EGA will mean yet another death-blow to their freedom.

This announcement in the House of Commons came only 24 hours before the start of an all-night vigil outside Barbara Castle's house against threatened closure, and the running down of the facilities offered by the EGA. The vigil, called by Camden Working Women's Charter and supported by many other labour movement and women's organisations, in North London, showed the determination of working people to resist attacks on their living standards — a letter was handed in to Barbara Castle at the end of the vigil containing 670 signatures.

The fight to save the EGA is far from over, and more activities are likely to be planned very soon. For more information about the campaign, contact Camden Working Women's Charter, c/o Gloria Lazenby, Labour Centre, 8 Camden Road, London N.W.1.

KEEP THE EGA OPEN!  
EXTEND NHS FACILITIES FOR WOMEN!

# The Cuts Conference \*\*\*\*

building and the banks.

These are the kind of demands contained in the resolution being presented to the London 'Women and the Cuts' Conference on 28 February by the conference planning committee, as part of the debate on how to fight the cuts, and the ways in which the needs of women can be taken up in this campaign.

The conference has been sponsored among others by West Ham Trades Council, Hammersmith & Hounslow Trades Council, Maureen Colquhoun MP, Wandsworth NALGO, Westminster Trades Council, West London NAC, Lambeth Central Labour Party, East London NUT, Camden NALGO, and T&G ACTS 152 branch. Requests for delegate credentials are flooding in, and those wishing to attend the conference are advised to apply as soon as possible — there could well be lack of space, and those applying first will be given priority. For further information, contact Women and the Cuts Conference, c/o Michele Ryan, 39 Parkholme Road, London E.8. (tel. 01-249 3072).

# CRISIS WOMEN ORDER



out' in Parliament last week. Will Labour now introduce its own Bill?

property, even on a mortgage, is not a common practice amongst blue collar women workers.

It is obvious, in fact, that the SDA does far more for middle class women than it does for working class women. And now we're starting to solve the puzzle of the Labour Government's behaviour.

The strength of the women's movement over the last few years has made concessions on women's rights absolutely unavoidable. That was rubbed in by the massive mobilisations against James White's anti-abortion Bill. But the other side of the coin is that the economic crisis has made it impossible for anyone seriously interested in propping up capitalism to make any major concessions.

For instance, a Government that accepts (seems almost devoted to) the need for health cuts is going to have to put restrictions on the right to abortion — by the back door if need be. At the same time it will be looking for support actually inside the women's movement. And the most encouraging response will of course come from middle class professional ladies — the Marjorie Proopses of this world. Never mind that she is at best a hanger-on of the women's movement — she writes for a national daily and besides, any port in a storm.

## BREAK UP

To go a little deeper — during a capitalist crisis the family does not stay immune. Like everything around it, it starts to break up under the strain. The rising divorce rate, violence in the home and even homelessness itself are evidence of this. In the working class the material

props for family life are kicked away. It is a lot harder to play happy families when your income has been cut off.

Of course this does not inevitably lead to the death of the family. That will only happen if the burdens of domestic work and child care are taken off women's shoulders. Short of a concerted attempt by the working class to achieve precisely that — and it unquestionably cannot be done within the framework of capitalism — what emerges is a struggle to reimpose the family on the working class. For Wilson and Castle the SDA and EPA are necessary concessions, but they will not accept any real change in the situation of women — hence the restrictions on abortion, the cuts in women's health facilities, the cuts in nursery provision.

## STOP GAP

Quite probably Wilson and Castle are simply trying to plug the capitalist dam. But just by doing that, they are unable to do anything of significant use for the majority of working class women.

To bring change would mean granting free abortion on demand, would mean establishing free contraception, would mean adequate nursery provision, would mean decent health and education services rather than cuts, would mean making equal pay a reality, would mean enforcing freedom from discrimination. You cannot do all that and keep the CBI happy. The present Labour leadership has chosen to put the interests of capitalism first. The interests of the working class go in exactly the opposite direction.

JANICE MILLS

# Picking up the pieces

Sue Spilling, a shop steward of the Harrow and Northwick Branch\*, is an SRN who qualified as a health visitor seven years ago. Here she gives her account of what the crisis means for many of the families among her caseload of two hundred.

\* of COHSE

This article is reprinted from the February issue of *Health Services*, the journal of the Confederation of Health Service Employees

When politicians and the media talk about unemployment they talk about statistics. Not about the fundamental effects of life on the dole for the family. As a health visitor, I am supposed to pick up the pieces.

Every other week I visit homes where the husband has just been made redundant, with many small factories closing in my area, and this puts tremendous stresses and strains on the family — particularly on women.

Dole generally means a big drop in income, and therefore a lower standard of living. It's the woman as housewife who takes the brunt of this — and of the reduction in living standards caused by the £6 wage limit.

On all sides, the pressures on families struggling to cope in the crisis are mounting. The results are very predictable, as I find in home after home. Depression, especially among women, could well be Britain's fastest-growing product.

Most women, of course, have their own jobs outside the home, and with having to make ends meet on a shrinking budget, and attempting to hold the family together, the stresses and strains can be seen in the huge number of tranquilisers that are being prescribed (the drugs companies are doing very well), and the increased call on the services of psychiatrists.

Many of the women that I see find they can't cope with kids any more. Baby battering by both parents is only too common, as well as battery of the wife by the husband. Marriages often break-down; divorce rates have never been higher.

In these circumstances, the job of a health visitor is quite simply impossible. Our tasks, as defined by the Council for the Education and

Training of Health Visitors, involve: the prevention of mental, physical, and emotional ill-health and its consequences; and the provision of care, including support during periods of stress, and advice and guidance in cases of illness, as well as in the care and management of children.

Our team is responsible for visiting all families with children under five in Harrow and Brent AHAs, together with older people and those with handicaps or psychiatric problems.

## Scapegoats

How can you be expected to promote a healthy society with all the underlying problems of poverty and unemployment, quite apart from all the problems of bad housing and so on, imposed on so many families?

Meanwhile we are facing cuts in our own staff and sharp increases in our workload. Fewer students are being taken for training as health visitors.

The closure of local child health, family planning, and cytology clinics all mean a lowering of health care and standards in the community — and an impossible job for us.

With a young child, I work a twenty-eight-hour, part-time week. My present case load is 200 families and single people, in addition to clinic work and health education teaching in schools. Other health visitors in our department have a case load of 400 and there are already signs that this will be sharply increased with the non-replacement of staff.

On top of this we are now being told that we must pay for part of the expenses for refresher courses ourselves! Yet the management in one area is quite happy to more or less force one health visitor to resign over a case of baby battering.

So we are now being made scapegoats for all the damage that is being inflicted on working people by the deepening crisis.

I believe that all health workers should be actively supporting campaigns against the cuts in health and social services, as a number of COHSE branches are already doing. Many of the cuts that health visitors encounter can only mean an increased demand on the resources of the NHS.

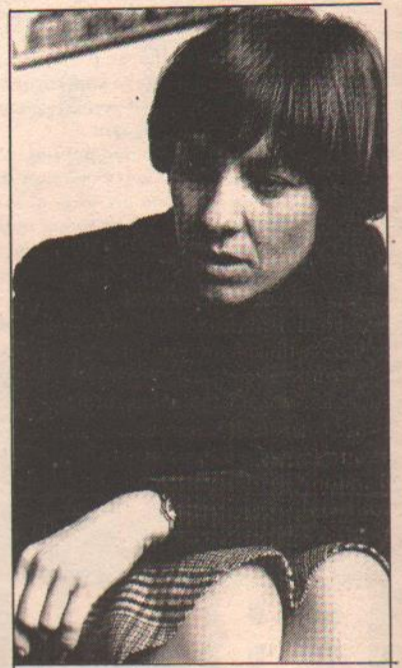


Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Cuts in home help services mean that the elderly face hospitalisation. And any further withdrawal of meals-on-wheels can only lead to malnutrition and anaemia among the elderly, so that they end up in a hospital bed.

We are all confronting an increasingly vicious circle, because although there is certain to be a bigger and bigger demand on the NHS, the NHS itself is being cut back.

## Cuts impinge directly on the family

The role of the health visitor, as well as that of the social worker, is basically to uphold and strengthen the family unit. And we are aware that increasing efforts are being made on women in the family to look after the sick and the elderly, so as to reduce the costs on the NHS and the state.

All the present cuts — in housing, education, nurseries, social services, and the NHS itself — impinge directly on the family.

One family with three children that I deal with are living in a single room in a household of thirteen. One unsupported mother I visit has insufficient money to pay her bills; her heating is utterly inadequate and she can't clothe her child properly. Is it surprising that the woman can't cope? She is on tranquilisers. The child desperately needs a nursery place. No chance.

And then there are the anti-abortionists, both inside and outside the Health Service, who are so splendidly generous in their attitude to sustaining life.

Perhaps they would care to explain their callous views to the mother of three who has already had five miscarriages, where the family is already in big financial difficulties. And the poor woman was told that there are no grounds for an abortion.

No doubt that the cut backs in the NHS will shortly mean that there aren't facilities for abortions anyway.



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

# Sectarianism kills Workers Press

*Workers Press*, the daily paper of the Workers Revolutionary Party, has ceased publication. The closing down of a working class daily is to be regretted as weakening the already inadequate resources of propaganda and reportage available to the workers movement. Unfortunately the political characteristics of *Workers Press* make its loss much less of a crippling blow than would have been the case with an authentic revolutionary daily in the Leninist tradition.

## LOGIC OF A SECT

The demise of *Workers Press* is directly attributable to the politics and practice of the WRP itself. The WRP, with the logic of a sect, has always counterposed building the party to the need to develop mass independent working class action. Its failure to understand the inter-relationship between these two essential tasks prevented the paper from ever becoming an authentic voice of revolutionary Marxism and the working class vanguard.

In its nationalist and sectarian politics, *Workers Press* failed to speak out for and champion the cause of proletarian solidarity on many of the great issues of the past years. When the forces began to mobilise in support of the Vietnamese revolution the Socialist Labour League (forerunner of the WRP) failed lamentably in its international duty.

The central task then was to win the largest possible forces internationally to support the strug-

gle of the Vietnamese people and to defeat the plans of American imperialism. But instead of allying itself with the broad movement, the WRP denounced the Vietnam Solidarity Committee, concentrated its attacks on the revolutionary left, and on the day of the 100,000 demonstration in London produced a leaflet headed 'Why we are not marching'. This policy meant that the SLL was already turning its back on the most important task facing revolutionaries on a world scale and had failed to take up the fight for anti-imperialist politics.

The issue of Vietnam was no isolated example. The coup in Chile was seen by the SLL/WRP as an excellent opportunity to denounce Stalinism and the politics of Allende. This was a not unimportant task, but the equal need to build a Chilean solidarity movement was ignored by the SLL/WRP. Indeed, on the day that the WRP was founded the mass demonstration in support of the Chilean workers was denounced by the WRP as a diversion because it cut across 'building the revolutionary party'.

## PROPAGANDISM

Later, for almost a year, the *Workers Press* restricted its opposition to the jailing of the Shrewsbury pickets to propagandism. It never campaigned for the building of Shrewsbury Defence Committees, and by failing to place itself firmly behind the campaign against the 'left' bureaucrats and the Communist Party who were acting as an obstacle to develop-



ing strike action, they objectively aided the very forces whom they were denouncing in print. *Workers Press* only 'discovered' Shrewsbury when it could initiate a campaign which was controlled by the Wigan Action Committee — a WRP-dominated body.

## OWN INTERESTS

On issues like Ireland, women's oppression and the struggle in Portugal and Spain, *Workers Press* has never deviated from its practice of putting the interests and recruiting campaigns of its own organisation above the needs of the working class. Such policies have been politically disastrous, including for building the WRP, but have also ensured that *Workers Press* could never break out of its own self-imposed isolation. Yet by placing itself as the foremost spokesperson on such issues and by opening its pages to a debate on the best way forward to win support for them, it could have rendered a real service to the class struggle as well as gaining a real base in the working class vanguard.

In contrast to their failures to fight on the issues of overwhelming importance to the working class movement, they flung enormous resources into denunciations of other revolutionary groups. Their last major effort was an expensive smear campaign against the Fourth International, culminating in a squalid attempt to portray some of its leading members as accomplices of the Stalinist secret police. To 'prove' their assertions they quoted 'impeccable' sources such as the American Federal Bureau of Investigation, the US State Department and ex-Trotskyist Grace Carlson, who left the revolutionary movement to embrace God and the Catholic Church. To the *Workers Press* the smearing of other revolutionaries was far more important than the great events of the international and British class struggle.

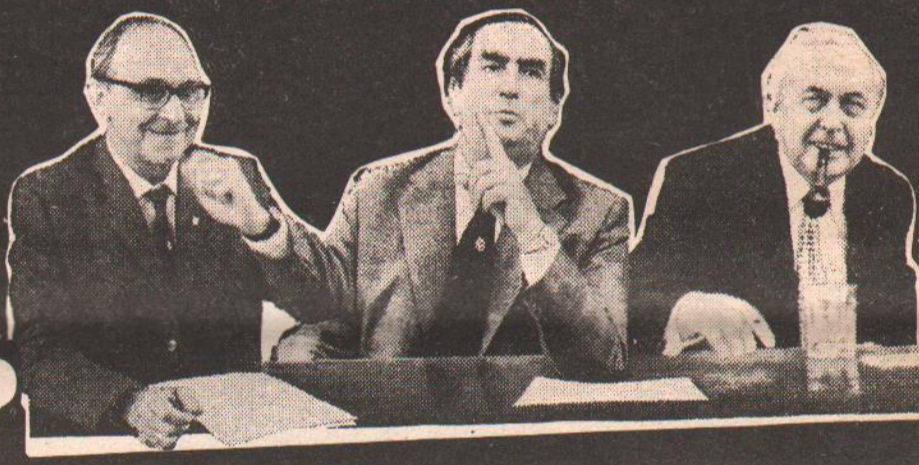
## ALTERNATIVE

In contrast to the way that the WRP tried to build *Workers Press*, the LCR (French Section of the FI) is launching its paper *Rouge* as a daily on 15 March on the basis that it will be an authentic voice of the political vanguard of the French working class. In addition to printing material from all workers in struggle, *Rouge* has invited regular contributions from members of other revolutionary groups — it has for instance, offered a space to *Lutte Ouvriere* which has welcomed the Trotskyist daily.

*Rouge* sees its task as to organise the whole vanguard in France which is breaking from reformism, and aims through intensive political struggle to build the revolutionary party. It adopts fully Lenin's advice to *Iskra*: 'We must not only hospitably throw open the columns of the party organ for exchanges of opinion, but must afford those groups — or grouplets as the author calls them — which from inconsistency support some of the dogmas of revisionism, or for one reason or another insist upon their separate and individual existence as groups, the opportunity of systematically setting forth their differences, however slight these might be.' (Letter to *Iskra*).

This, and the great traditions of proletarian struggle not the sectarian posturing of *Workers Press*, is the Leninist model of a newspaper.

# WHO ABSTAINS FROM THE FIGHT FOR LEADERSHIP?



As we showed in the last issue of *Red Weekly*, there are important political differences between the International Marxist Group on the one hand and the Workers Socialist League and 'Trotskyist Opposition' comrades (whose letter of resignation from the IMG was published in *Socialist Press*, 14 January) on the other. In particular we showed how the WSL departs from Trotsky's method of approach on the united front and unity in action.

We now turn to the accusation made by the ex-IMG comrades in their statement of resignation that the recent United Secretariat 'Theses on Britain' (to be published in *International* later this month) 'confirm the present liquidationist line of the John Ross leadership' by projecting 'other forces than Trotskyists to solve the crisis of leadership'.

They accuse the United Secretariat of telling 'the thousands of workers that have broken in action against the policies of the Wilson Government that their struggles will only be successful if Benn and other left bureaucrats replace Wilson'. 'Such positions', say the comrades, 'are the direct result of the Pabloite heritage.... These people have been saying the same thing for over twenty years.' Let us look at these accusations.

The IMG advances the slogan of 'replacing the Wilson-Healey leadership' as part of the outcome of mass struggle against the Labour Government. The working class has in the last nine months been hit by Wilson's victory in the Common Market referendum, soaring unemployment and falling living standards. But despite the decline in militant action, the working class has not suffered the sort of defeat which could nullify the gains reached in the period of heightened class struggle since 1968. The present defeats can be reversed through a new upturn of the working class struggle.

But under the present social, economic and political conditions, such an upturn will not simply involve an increase in

direct struggles, but a crisis of the labour movement at every level and on a whole range of issues — not only on defence of jobs and living standards; but on Ireland, Spain, abortion and many other issues.

The existence of a Labour Government, whose party is based on the trade unions and mass organisations of the working class, combined with an economic crisis so severe that every significant economic decision is taken at the level of the state, means that the crisis will grip not only the trade unions but also the Labour Party. Every single struggle will involve a direct clash with the leadership of the Labour Party and its supporters in the trade unions, be they shop stewards or national officials.

All the reformists and centrists will attempt to head off or divert this clash. The Tribunites, for instance, will seek to confine this movement to pressuring Wilson and his team to change their ways. This is evident from Eric Heffer's articles in *Tribune*, explaining that while he stood against Healey in the NEC elections and fellow left MP Norman Atkinson challenged Callaghan for Treasurer, nevertheless 'the issue of leadership... is not posed'.

We oppose such views. The interest of revolutionaries is not to soften and divert these conflicts, but on the contrary to give them the sharpest possible form, raising them to the political level of a demand for a challenge to the leadership of the labour movement at every level.

The slogan of 'replacing the Wilson-Healey leadership' fights to carry the struggle against them through to the end, rather than confining it to 'pressure'. This is not counterposed to the fight to mobilise the masses. In fact, only the mobilisation of the masses can defeat the offensive of the capitalists and bring about the change in the relation of forces which can defeat the Wilson leadership. This is why we demand that the lefts drop their pressure tactics and fight directly for the removal of the Wilson-Healey leadership.

Does this mean that the IMG will 'meekly stand aside for the lefts' of the Tribune Group, as the ex-IMG comrades and the WSL maintain? The United Secretariat 'Theses' state the complete oppo-

sition.

The first 'key task of the hour' the USFI propounds is the message that 'the fight against the Healey measures is possible without any specifically political precondition being solved first'. Moreover, the 'Theses' go on to make very forcefully the point of not relying on any left leadership.

'But we advise you strongly not to repeat the same mistakes of giving blind credit to any leaders — left or right — in the Labour Party.... Do not have any confidence in person or persons: concentrate on the programme of action which we propose to you — which is that section of our transitional programme which is the answer to your current needs and which brings us a step forward to a socialist Britain.' In fact nowhere in the 'Theses' is the slogan put forward of Benn (or the Labour left) to power.

## Struggle

The question of which forces should replace Wilson has to be posed dialectically. The issue will be resolved in the course of a struggle to remove the present leadership. It is no good standing around asking — will it be Bill or will it be Benn?

In fact we consider that it is the WSL which makes an error on this count. It is the one current on the far left which has seriously appeared to suggest that the lefts must take the power. It was *Socialist Press*, not *Red Weekly*, which on 17 September carried the headline 'Lefts Must Oust Wilson'. If the IMG is to be accused of 'Pabloism' on this score, then the WSL must take its place alongside us in the dock.

The line of the IMG means in practice that where large numbers of workers have illusions in the lefts we have to demand certain definite steps from them. Instead of weeping over the impact of the £6 limit and unemployment on working class living standards, we demand that they support action against these measures, and fight for the recall of the TUC and Labour Party conferences to break with the Government's policies.

This means demanding that such forces should carry through this struggle to the end: not hiding behind the lofty phrases that 'it is a question of policies not personalities', but mounting a direct challenge to the leadership. This is not 'handing over the leadership to the lefts', but as Trotsky put it, fighting to 'drag the reformists from their asylums' and place them beside us in the class struggle.

## Focus

Neither are such calls merely a 'trick' to 'expose' the fact that 'the lefts won't fight'. If the lefts take even a quarter step forward, this can be used to take the workers over whom they exercise influence a bigger step forward, leading to further demands for action from the leaders. It is in the course of these concrete struggles that the working class will be able to judge the record of the lefts against that of the Trotskyists and so provide the best conditions for building a revolutionary leadership in the class.

The problem confronting revolutionaries is how to provide a centralised focus to the fragmented struggles of the class. The USFI 'Theses' put forward the resolution to this problem as being the formation of a class struggle tendency in the labour movement, which would 'group together all those forces who not withstanding many differences on long term strategies for socialism are nevertheless prepared to fight against the betrayals of the Wilson Government and for the immediate interests of the working class....'

'Politically, we fight for such a class struggle left wing to be formed on the basis of the only platform which can provide a real solution to the crisis that confronts the masses; our programme of action... while avoiding ultra-left errors, which refuse to enter any united action unless it is established on our programme.'

By rejecting such a course of struggle, the WSL reject any practical way of approaching the problem of how to implement the slogan of 'make the lefts fight'. They recognise the necessity of struggle against the leadership of the Labour Party

only in a formal way. It is a paper battle confined to speeches, leaflets, and the pages of the *Socialist Press*.

The way in which such vital questions of political line and tactics are taken up in the resignation statement of the comrades of the 'Trotskyist Opposition' serves not to clarify differences, but merely to obscure them in the framework of phraseology such as 'revisionism versus Trotskyism', 'Pabloism versus Trotskyism', etc. Such phrases turn vital political differences into organisational splits based on so-called 'principled' questions.

This is the method of Healyism, which the comrades of the WSL are trying to break with. On some questions they have in our opinion taken a big step down that road.

We note that in their theoretical supplement, 'Trotskyism Today', the comrades write: 'In the view of the WSL one main purpose of the international discussion should be the re-opening of political discussion with the USFI and its component sections.... For this purpose the USFI leaderships and sections cannot be regarded in advance as having placed themselves outside the world Trotskyist movement.' This is a welcome change from the slander and filth that Healy impotently pours on the Fourth International.

## Healyite

On other questions, however — for example, the statement of the ex-IMG members and its positions on the united front and so-called Pabloite liquidationism — the WSL remains within Healy's framework. Most notably, in confusing the difference between a party and a faction, and in perpetuating organisational separation from the Fourth International, they reveal that they have not made a serious study of the difference between Healyism and Trotskyism on organisational questions.

We will be printing articles on these questions in future issues of *Red Weekly*. It is through open discussion of these questions that we believe the comrades can most effectively carry through their break with Healyism. THE EDITORIAL BOARD



The Internationalist Communist League (LCI—Portuguese sympathising organisation of the Fourth International), was formed in December 1973 — four months before the 25 April coup which overthrew the Caetano dictatorship.

Two years later, after tremendous class struggles, very significant progress has been achieved. The third congress of the LCI on 10-11 January recorded a twelvefold increase in membership, an expansion in new areas, and, most important of all, an expansion into the working class. After initial gains in smaller unions such as the woodworkers, the organisation has in the last three months begun for the first time to receive sizeable votes for its proposals in the big bastions of the working class. It now has the perspective of emerging as the most significant force on the extreme left outside of the very large Maoist-inclined UDP.

But such an expansion of forces in such circumstances is not carried through without errors. As Lenin put it, the test of an organisation is not whether it commits errors — they all do — but whether it seeks out the roots of these errors and corrects them.

At the second congress of the LCI last summer

a major error was made. An ultra-left position linked to an accommodation to Stalinism was taken up, which led to the signing of the 25 August declaration with the CP and other groups of the extreme left, and then to the creation of the FUR (Revolutionary United Front). The 25 August declaration went beyond a correct position of physical defence of the Goncalves Government against the reactionary attacks being mounted on it, appearing to endorse the actual political project of the Government. While the LCI verbally dissociated itself from this aspect, its signature must have spoken louder than words to the working class.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International immediately attacked this signature publicly and internally opened up a discussion within the LCI on the analysis which led to it.

The culmination of this discussion was that in October last year it was decided to have an emergency congress of the LCI. A section of the theses approved at the congress was printed in the last issue of *Red Weekly*. The following self-criticism voted by the congress deals with its line in the summer which led to its error in signing the accords of 25 August and its line in the FUR.

# Democratic centralism in action

**1** Since December 1973 the regular intervention of its revolutionary militants has permitted the construction of the LCI, the deepening of its implantation and ability to take important political initiatives (anti-colonial movement in May-September 1974, anti-militarist actions), and the participation of the LCI in the leadership of some mass struggles.

But there was difficulty in freeing this intervention, conducted by a handful of militants that has since expanded to the present nucleus, from some initial errors that marked our history and were a logical consequence of our small implantation at the outset combined with a formal sectarianism and some dogmatic conceptions.

The uneven growth and the lack of a clear central political line, which reflected the weakness of our political experience, was nonetheless counter-balanced by the implantation that was developed and by the ability of the organisation to break into new zones in which significant nuclei of workers were rapidly developed. But this development was often carried out at the cost of deepening the empiricism and regionalism of the intervention.

It is in this sense that, in spite of the errors committed, in spite of the limits of its education and of the political debates that were conducted within it, the LCI was always integrated into the dynamic of the Portuguese revolution and participated with all its strength in the important confrontations that strengthened the revolution (28 September and 11 March). Although these political errors contributed to weakening us and led us to under-utilise important political opportunities, the consolidation and strengthening of the revolutionary Marxist organisation and the commitment of its militants and sympathisers to important mass struggles in the factories, enterprises, trade unions, neighbourhoods, and barracks constitute a

point of departure for a qualitative leap that is now possible, provided we understand and correct our previous errors.

**2** The fact that the revolutionary Marxists have held two congresses in less than five months is not evidence of any arbitrary subjectivism or a desire to discuss simply for the sake of discussion, but rather corresponds to the objective and subjective requirements of the revolutionary process itself. In this respect Leninism, the Bolshevik practice to which the LCI adheres, certainly stands in contrast to the Stalinist and bureaucratic practice of holding congresses at intervals of years, congresses in which tendency differences and debates are replaced by the principle that unanimity is a virtue and differences a sin.

It was exactly five months ago, in August 1975, that the last congress of the LCI was held. But in the five months that have elapsed, the revolutionary process has developed much faster than had been expected. During this period, revolutionary Marxists found themselves facing tasks whose scope far exceeded their forces. But what made this third (extraordinary) congress necessary was the observation of the fact that the orientation approved at the second congress had not sufficiently armed the militants for carrying out the tasks required by the rapid development of the revolutionary process.

**3** While the second congress, in August 1975, marked an advance in the discussion of some important questions, it nonetheless maintained and deepened some of the errors mentioned above. The analysis of the MFA, the CP, and the SP that was adopted at the congress facilitated political hesitations and turns that logically led to the signing of the 25 August accords, the acceptance of the 10 September FUR manifesto, and the participation in this front until its effective disappearance.

Because of its importance and because of the political and organisational consequences, it is necessary to enumerate systematically the errors of the FUR:

- The unity in action that was possible and necessary was replaced by a 'frontist' policy based on an erroneous political platform, which inevitably led objectively to sectarian and divisionist actions relative to the workers movement as a whole and subjectively to confusion about the party, which facilitated the division of the workers vanguard and the development of the 'non-partyist' current within the independent organs (the workers commissions, neighbourhood commissions, soldiers commissions, etc.).

- The lack of any conception of the workers united front at a time when it was particularly important to stimulate united actions that would have permitted the development and presentation of a political outlet for the process of self-organisation, uniting the majority of the class in defence of its social and economic conquests and responding immediately to the economic and political crisis of the bourgeoisie.

- An incorrect and extremely dangerous conception of the Social Democracy, which was identified as the twin of fascism.

- The development of putschist and insurrectionist conceptions that facilitated the events of 25 November and made it difficult to put forward an alternative political solution.

The political dissolution and organisational consequences of the LCI's participation in the FUR were the product of serious errors that opened the way for a combination of sectarianism and tail-endism towards the policies of the centrist organisations and the CP. In reality, a correct comprehension of the dynamic of class struggle that led to the fall of the Fifth Government, to the mass actions of the soldiers' movement, to the new rise of generalised struggles for unifying economic demands (rural wage-earners, metalworkers, civil construction workers, bakers, etc.), and to the development of partial initiatives of centralisation of the organs of direct democracy would have prevented the LCI from signing, on 25 August, an accord that supported the MFA and the Fifth Provisional Government, giving rise to all the centrist confusion about the character of the CP and developing a sectarian policy towards the SP.

This political understanding also would have permitted a different policy, based on a break with the FUR (as soon as the FUR accepted the 25 August accords and on the recomposition of the unity in action of the revolutionary organisations to attain essential objectives like the creation of a more favourable relationship of forces with the reformists so as to stimulate the centralisation of the autonomous organs, thus addressing ourselves to all the workers and revolutionary organisations.

These political errors prevented a battle for the unity in action of the workers movement for its fundamental objectives: the deepening of the conquests and demands of the working masses for the development and centralisation of the embryonic organs of dual power in a period in which the initiatives of the workers movement could have been rapidly transformed into new steps forward.

## PORTUGAL: THIRD CONGRESS OF THE LCI



International capitalists' aid backs repression of Portuguese workers' mobilisations

## Capitalist 'aid' vs. working class solidarity

The events of 25-26 November last year gave the Portuguese ruling class the room for manoeuvre against the working class it so desperately needed. And the international capitalists have not been slow to respond in lifting their previous boycott, now that the Sixth Provisional Government, dominated by the Socialist Party, has given back *Republica*, Radio Renascença and the Manuel Goncalves textile factory to their previous owners; renegotiated the agrarian reform laws; disbanded leftist army units and imprisoned others; and imposed austerity measures.

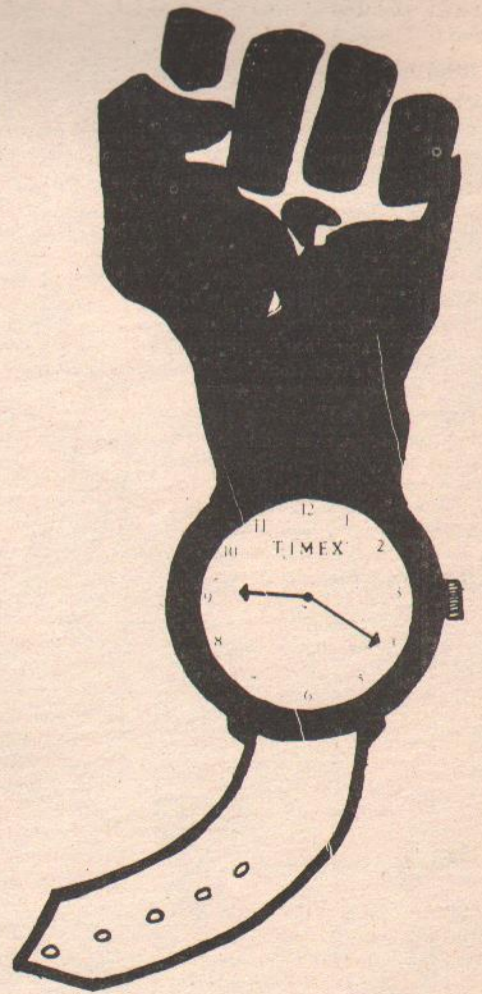
Recent loans have included: Food and Agricultural Organisation (United Nations), £1.75m; International Monetary Fund, £42.75m; European Economic Community, £60m; European Free Trade Association, £50m; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, £74m; European Investment Bank, £180m; National Bank of Switzerland, £25m; Bundesbank of West Germany, £138.5m. These total £572 million, and the motivation can be judged from the recent comments of the German Foreign Minister that, 'the rest of Europe had been pleased and impressed at the Portuguese people's rejection of a return to dictatorship' (*Financial Times*, 5 February).

### MORE ON WAY

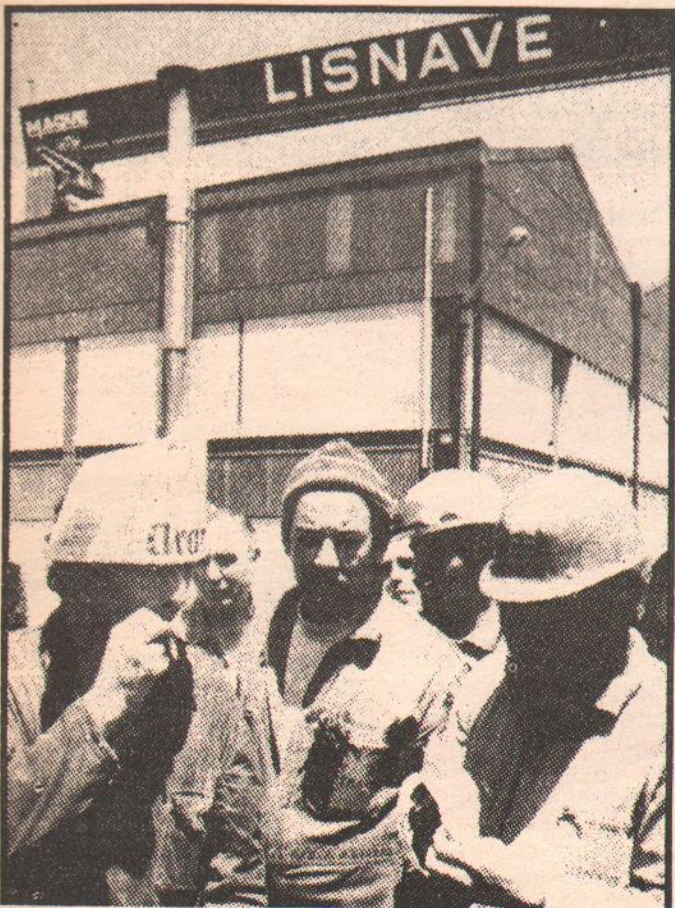
More big loans are in the pipeline. France is considering such a move, and further tentative agreements have already been reached with: European Economic Community, £100m; Bank for International Settlement, £125m; United States of America, £100m; International Monetary Fund, £115m. These four loans offer a further £440 million.

The ruling class, of course, is still not totally satisfied. The strength and combativity of the working class must be broken in order to impose the sort of austerity measures for which the IMF is calling. It is not surprising that they see the April elections as crucial to establish a government with the 'authority' to confront the workers and peasants. The Timex bosses in Portugal recognised this when they recently teleaxed America with the message to await the election results before deciding whether to pull out or not.

The depth of foreign investment in Portugal makes international working class solidarity not just an academic question. For the Portuguese workers it can make the difference between winning or losing struggles. At the present time Timex workers are locked out, while the bosses managed to get some parts out to Dundee.



The working class may not be able to match the financial support that the ruling class is giving their counterparts. But international solidarity in campaigning against the sabotage of the Portuguese revolution can far outweigh that. The 13 March conference called by the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class can be an important step in this direction. Credentials and further details from: SCPWC, 12 Little Newport Street, London W.C.2.



Workers at Lisnave—one of centres of militancy

The headlines screaming about a supposed 'Red invasion' of Angola have contrasted strangely with the press's silence over the very real invasion by imperialist-backed Indonesian troops of another former Portuguese colony, East Timor.

The all-out Indonesian assault on 7 December came only hours after US President Ford and his strategist Kissinger had apparently approved the plan during a visit to the country's capital, Jakarta. But the US is not the only backer of the military regime, which took power after slaughtering nearly a million communists in 1965, and still holds an estimated 100,000 political prisoners. The Labour Government provides more aid to Indonesia than to any other non-Commonwealth country except Pakistan; and Britain's representative at the United Nations abstained on a resolution condemning the invasion of East Timor.

Despite this powerful line-up of forces, however - and the brutal massacres carried out by the Indonesian troops - the invasion is meeting with fierce resistance from the guerrillas of Fretilin (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor). Last week the Foreign Minister of the Fretilin-established Democratic Republic of East Timor, JOSE RAMOS HORTA, was in London to urge a change in Labour policy on this question. Martin Meteyard talked to him about the development of the struggle.

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)



# TIMOR



## 'We are confident that the invasion of East Timor marks the beginning of the collapse of the Indonesian regime.'

### What was the situation in East Timor prior to the overthrow of the Caetano regime on 25 April 1974?

Portuguese colonialism in East Timor was not expressed so much in direct economic exploitation of the masses - although of course there was exploitation of the resources, sandalwood in particular - as in what you could call cultural colonialism, a brainwashing of the people.

Even this was only really felt in the urban centres, particularly in the capital, Dili. The main purpose was to produce a tiny elite - what we call *assimilados* - which could serve the colonial machine in oppressing the great majority of the people.

For instance, in school and college everything we had to learn was about Portugal. Timorese culture and language were forbidden in the schools - we were physically punished if we tried to speak Tetum (the local language).

### How did Fretilin emerge in this situation?

Well, people like myself and my other comrades in the Central Committee were originally part of this elite. But as in the African colonies, the contradictions of our situation became increasingly clear to some of us. We had two options: to forget these contradictions and go ahead playing around with colonialism; or to return to the people and find our real identity with the masses. We chose the latter.

Immediately after the coup we created a social-democratic party - for tactical reasons, a bit naively. Contradictions rapidly emerged inside this party - we could never really pretend that we would be able to liberate the people with a social-democratic programme. So, facing up to the risks of international aggression, we launched

### Fretilin in September 1974.

But we could not talk on behalf of the people while we were still living comfortably in Dili, keeping our jobs and so on. So we moved to the countryside, organising revolutionary brigades, building up schools to teach the people to read and write in their own language, setting up health centres, production cooperatives, and so on.

### On 7 December, the Indonesians invaded the country. What has happened since then?

Well, the war had been going on in fact since September. At that time there were already clashes along the border between the nationalist forces of East Timor and the Indonesian armed forces. But it was only after our declaration of independence on 28 November that Indonesia in a state of desperation launched a full-scale invasion against Dili and Baucau.

After many days of very hard struggle in which we eliminated several thousand Indonesian troops, we had to retreat from Dili and Baucau. But we had long prepared for this tactic - to retreat to the mountains rather than concentrate our forces in the towns and villages.

From the mountains we are organising a hit-and-run war against the Indonesian positions. Our guerrilla units make raids almost every night. We have a special group, the 'Black Hunters', who operate in twos and threes and are very good at shooting. Psychologically this kind of war is very damaging for the Indonesians. We're waging a war of attrition in the areas held by the Indonesians - and they control no more than 20 per cent of the territory, mainly on the north coast thanks to a heavy naval bombardment.

### Has your struggle had any impact inside Indonesia?

Well, divisions already seem to be opening up inside the regime in Jakarta. For instance, a former minister of information, B.M. Diah, has written a series of articles in the daily newspaper *Merdeka* strongly attacking the Indonesian Foreign Minister over the failure of the invasion. He must have had the backing of a section

of the army to be able to say this.

We have also had reports that some battalions in East and Central Java have refused to send their troops to East Timor. And the West Timorese soldiers have been disarmed since September. They have all been replaced by Javanese troops.

### At the public meeting last night you talked of the possibility of extending your struggle to West Timor?

Well, of course, we are always ready for a peaceful, negotiated solution. But we are determined never to surrender our independence and freedom to the Indonesian generals. And if we reach a point where we find it is necessary to cross the border into West Timor, then we will do so.

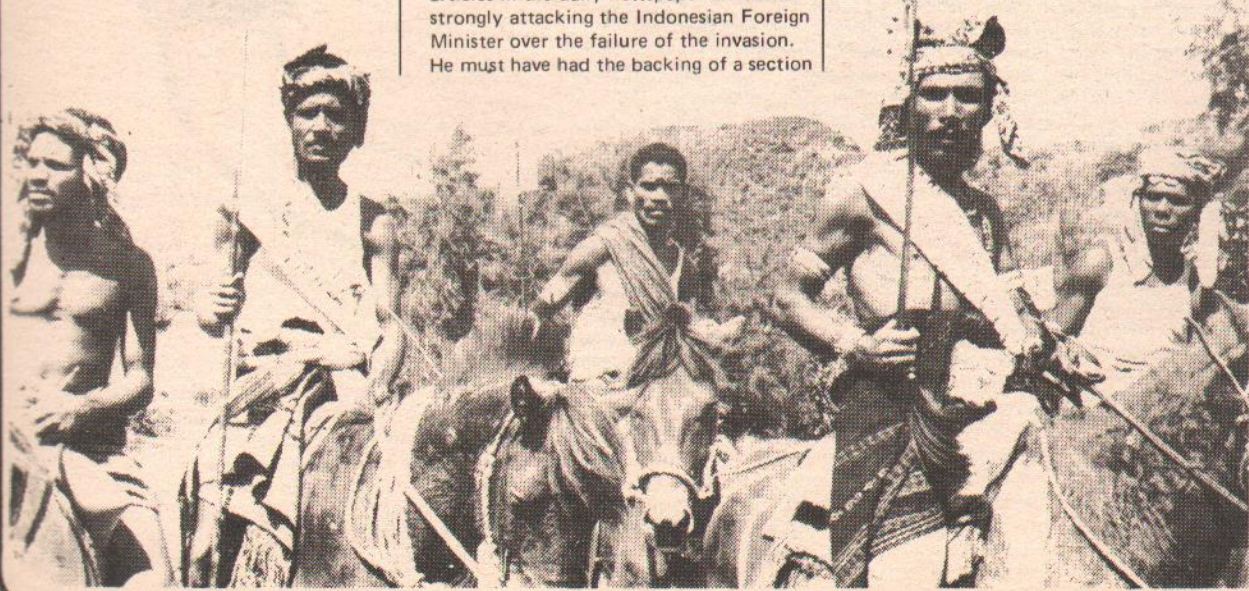
We have a lot of support among the West Timorese. Of course, we would need to do some kind of political work before moving there, because we have to have the support of the masses before launching a direct fight.

### Do you plan to make links with other forces struggling against the Indonesian regime?

Well, the movements in West Irian and the South Moluccas will undoubtedly make use of the Indonesians' preoccupation with East Timor to intensify their own struggles in 1976. We have no immediate plans to coordinate the struggle against the generals in Jakarta, but the very fact of our struggles means that we are helping each other because the Indonesians have to divert their forces to several fronts.

We are confident that the invasion of East Timor marks the beginning of the collapse of the regime in Jakarta.

The British Campaign for Independent East Timor exists to organise solidarity in this country with the struggle of Fretilin. Details of its activities, publications, etc. can be obtained from: 40 Concanon Road, London S.W.2. (01-274 9308).



# £15,000 FUND DRIVE

A magnificent response has followed our decision to extend the deadline for the £15,000 Fund Drive to 5 March, the date of our Fourth International Rally in London.

Contributors last week included:

London (North)	4.50	South Wales steelworker	30.00
Jon Taylor	2.00	Cardiff IMG	5.00
Manchester IMG	25.00	Chris Arthur	5.00
Brighton IMG	10.00	P. Purton	10.00
Watford IMG	21.75	Anonymous	1.00
Oxford IMG	100.00	Anonymous	500.00
Bath reader	1.00	Southall IMG	28.00
Anonymous	10.00	James Black	100.00
IMG Media Fraction	60.00	Anonymous	6.00
Hackney IMG	20.00	CPSA member, Manchester	5.00
Paris sympathiser	10.00	NALGO member, Manchester	1.00
NALGO member, Twickenham	5.00	Sheffield IMG	10.00
NALGO branch secretary, Cardiff	5.00		

That makes a total this week of £975.25, and a grand total (by 13 February) of £7,521. That sounds good, but with only three weeks to go we have to collect another £7,500 - in other words, £2,500 a week. So we appeal to all our readers not to let up - why not organise a special collection in your workplace or college to give us an extra boost.

- Just to remind you what we need the money for:
- \* A tour of a leading comrade from the LCI (Portuguese sympathising organisation of the Fourth International) to report to all the comrades of the IMG on the results of the recent LCI Congress and to address a series of public meetings.
  - \* Stabilising our theoretical journal *International* and transforming the magazine into the English language journal of the FI.
  - \* The immediate securing of a lease for our Scottish centre and the purchase of the necessary office material.
  - \* The production of a series of pamphlets: Pierre Frank on the history of the FI; the debate in the FI on Portugal; on the struggle in Spain; and one on unemployment and the cuts.
  - \* Taking on a further trade union organiser to meet the growing challenge to step up our work, as the introduction of a new tougher pay limit and the prospect of two million unemployed grow even closer.
  - \* Taking the first steps towards a 16 page paper, by moving to justified typesetting and strengthening the editorial staff.



### RALLY

ERNEST MANDEL Speaking on

## The European Revolution And Building the Fourth International

- Also:
- Fighting for Workers Power in Portugal - the REPUBLICA film
  - Red Star Folk Music Society singing workers songs from Co. Durham & elsewhere
  - Gaitas Gallegas - Playing traditional pipe music from Spain



7.30, Friday March 5th  
St. Pancras Assembly Rooms  
Bishopsgate St. near Kings X tube  
Admission 50p

## Extract from USFI Declaration

The struggle that has been launched promises to be a hard one, long and difficult for the population of Timor, for the invader commands material and military superiority. Only a social mobilisation of the entire peasantry and of the urban workers and popular layers can lastingly defeat the Indonesian invasion. The liquidation of the existing property relations in the countryside is a precondition for this.

The risk of being 'closed up' in the half-island of East Timor is very great. That is why extension of the struggle to the part of the island under Indonesia's domination acquires great importance, and this cannot be done without a mobilisation of the peasantry to overthrow the existing order.

In order to win victory the struggle now going on in East Timor will have to go beyond the limits of the programme currently formulated by Fretilin and fully respond to the interests of the social layers on which it is based. Born in isolation and without deep anti-imperialist political traditions, Fretilin is a movement of national liberation that can find no third road between the neo-colonial threat and the struggle for full national liberation, which can only be socialist.

The mobilisation of the masses constitutes a very important element in this struggle, which must be supported because it represents a link in the anti-imperialist struggle in the region and because it is fighting against an Indonesian military dictatorship that has not faced any opposition since it took power in 1965. The international dimension of the situation thus created in Timor must be utilised to denounce



The current issue of *Imprecor*, the fortnightly information journal of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, contains a lengthy analysis of the situation in East Timor as well as a declaration by the USFI - 'Solidarity with the Struggle of Fretilin'. This issue, which also includes articles on other struggles, can be obtained for 30p (plus 8p & p from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. For an annual subscription send £7 to Red Books.

# Street-fighting follows the death of Frank Stagg

# 7 DAYS in the 6 COUNTIES

JOHN MAGEE reports from Belfast

Street-fighting returned to the Belfast ghettos this week on a scale and with a ferocity not witnessed since the aftermath of Bloody Sunday in 1972. In all the nationalist districts of the city, hundreds of youths have been on the streets stoning the British soldiers and erecting barricades with hijacked lorries.

Over 200 incidents were logged by the Crown forces in the 24 hours following the death of Frank Stagg on hunger strike in Wakefield prison. His death has not only provoked widespread anger amongst the Catholic community; it has also prised open the lid of passivity that has been clamped over the anti-Unionist districts for the past six months.

Demonstrations have been held in all parts of the Six Counties, and that on the Falls Road in Belfast attracted 8,000 people. The surprise with which this response has taken the British administration here is written all over the panic-stricken faces of the soldiers on the streets. Fed with stories that the IRA had been isolated and was now without support within the anti-Unionist working class, the events of the past few days are proving a nightmare for the British Army.

On the constitutional front, British imperialism has fared no better. Up at Stormont, the secret inter-party talks have ground to a halt.

These were generally recognised as the only forum in which some sort of compromise could be stitched up between the Loyalist coalition and the so-called 'moderate' parties.

The latter have been frantically grasping at every wet straw in the hope that they could suck some slime off the United Ulster Unionist Council. But such was the intransigence of the Loyalist coalition that the Social Democratic & Labour Party walked out after only 1½ hours of talks. Within one week of being recalled, the Convention is all but dead.

Clearly the 'sweet air of reason' which Guardian Belfast correspondent Derek Brown had claimed prevailed at the first meeting of the recalled Convention never left the debating chamber. The failure of its latest solution leaves British imperialism with the stark choice: capitulation to the Loyalists, or withdrawal from Ireland, allowing the Irish people to exercise their right to self-determination.

## WILL TO FIGHT

The major block to the first course is the will to fight still being displayed by the Catholic working class. However, the ability of the anti-Unionist working class to respond physically to the gnawing repression and to combat politically the British manoeuvres is not unlimited. War-weariness and exhaustion

are dangers which cannot be ignored. But even more dangerous is the wasting of the mass movement through the lack of a clear political direction.

## NO DIRECTION

The leadership of the Provisional Republican Movement seem incapable of providing such a direction. Instead of using the events of the last week to bring about a generalised mobilisation of the anti-Unionist working class in opposition to the British presence and in defence of the many hundreds of political prisoners still in British hands, the advice given to the 8,000 who marched on the Falls Road by Provisional Sinn Fein vice-president Marie Drumm was: 'Go home, leave it all to Oglaiha na h'Eireann [the IRA].'

Such an attitude, rather than developing the confidence and trust of the working class in the volunteers of the IRA, severs the head of the resistance movement from its body. It encourages freelance efforts such as those by the 'Irish Volunteer Force' which we have witnessed in the last few days; so that instead of the mobilisation of the most militant sections of the working class becoming the spearhead of a mass movement in opposition to British imperialism, it becomes yet a further crack through which Britain can weaken and frustrate the movement.

Revolutionaries in the Six Counties are going to have to make a gigantic effort in the next few weeks to try to give direction to the pent-up anger of the nationalist ghettos. Frank Stagg was the third Irishman this century to die on hunger strike

in an English jail. The words of Patrick Pearse are as relevant now as when he uttered them over the graves of Irish felons in the early part of this century: 'While Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.'

## FRANK STAGG — FOURTH INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT

The meeting on 13 February 1976 of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International learns with anger of the death of Frank Stagg — Irish political prisoner in a British jail — from the effects of a prolonged hunger strike. It salutes this last heroic protest and struggle of Frank Stagg as one more episode in the struggle for Irish freedom from the domination of British imperialism.

This death was cynically and cold-bloodedly brought about by the Labour Government. Rather than release Frank Stagg from solitary confinement or grant him political prisoner status through transfer to the Six Counties, it preferred to let him die. This crime against the Irish people is yet one more confirmation of the anti-working class character of the Labour Government and its role as a servant of British imperialism against the international, Irish and British working classes.

But this death is one more sign that the spirit of resistance to British imperialism of the Irish masses continues undaunted after nine centuries of British oppression, countless martyrs and seven years of the current struggle in the North of Ireland. Despite the presence of over 15,000 troops, despite the

presence of the notorious torturers and murderers of the SAS, despite the harassment, brutalisation and repression of the masses, the struggle goes on.

Frank Stagg did not die in vain. His death will redouble the efforts of the Irish masses in the struggle against the imperialist aggressor; it will redouble the determination of all socialists and militants in Britain and of the international working class in their fight for solidarity with the struggle of the Irish masses and with all those fighting to expel British imperialism from Ireland.

The Fourth International in particular calls for full solidarity in the tasks of its British and other sections for the development of a mass struggle for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and of its Irish section — the Revolutionary Marxist Group — in its struggle for an Irish Workers Republic.

The IEC of the Fourth International expresses its complete sympathy to the relatives and Republican comrades of Frank Stagg, and its militant solidarity with all those fighting for the liberation of Ireland.

- \* Release all Irish Political Prisoners!
- \* British Troops Out of Ireland!
- \* Self Determination for the Irish People!

# What kind of democracy for Spain

Last week we looked at the ways in which the class collaborationist policies of the Communist and Socialist Parties — embodied in their respective 'democratic fronts', the Democratic Council and the Democratic Platform — were in contradiction with the realities of Spanish capitalism and the present course of the struggle in Spain. In the coming weeks we will ask: What kind of democracy for Spain? And where do the Council and Platform stand on some crucial questions that will decide this?

Is it 'democratic' that the capitalists should be able to use their immense wealth and their control over the means of production to control the operation of 'democracy' and thwart the aspirations of the exploited masses?

This is the basis of all capitalist democracies. This is what allows the capitalists to rule behind the scenes, even though the political set-up is supposed to be 'democratic'.

Under most circumstances all the working class can do about it is counterpose their capacity for self-organisation and militant struggle to the power and wealth of the capitalists. But in a country like Spain, where the capitalists have chosen to rule so long through a dictatorship, they face a big problem: when the dictatorship collapses, they find themselves without the necessary instruments to translate their economic power into effective political power — capitalist political parties with a mass base.

## Mass influence

For at least a short period after the collapse of such a dictatorship, the workers parties will be the only political groups in the country with mass influence. Moreover, if they have played a leading role in bringing down the dictatorship (as they will in Spain) they will also have immense prestige.

From the standpoint of the working class the lesson is obvious — use this advantageous situation to place the working class at the head of the country and stop the capitalists from building up

their political machinery of deceit and manipulation. For the capitalists the lesson is equally obvious — bargain for time after the collapse of the dictatorship in order to build up effective capitalist parties.

The programmes of the Democratic Council and the Platform come down clearly on the side of the capitalists on this question. Once the dictatorship collapses they are for the formation of a 'provisional government' which will represent all those currents who say they are in favour of democracy (including what the Communist Party calls the 'civilised right' — that is, reactionaries who say they will accept democracy).

Already various capitalist groups, sensing which way the wind is blowing, are carefully dipping their toes in the democratic water. By the time the dictatorship falls under the hammer blows of the working class, even the most die-hard Francoists will be waving the democratic flag and claiming their place in this provisional government.

## Breathing space

The Council and Platform programmes also allow for a long pause of 12 to 18 months after the setting up of this provisional government before elections are held — just the breathing space the capitalists need to reorganise for the change-over from capitalist dictatorship to capitalist 'democracy'. In a recent interview with the French paper *Le Monde* the leader of the Spanish Communist Party, Santiago Carillo, made it clear that this delay was a concession to the capitalists:

'The programme of the Democratic Council foresees elections at the end of a year of provisional government. But as far as we are concerned, the Communist Party would be prepared to go to the polls even two or three months after the overthrow of the dictatorship and the re-establishment of democratic freedoms... That is to say, it is not us who will be delaying consultation of the people.'

Thus, in order to try to woo the reluctant capitalists to the cause of democracy, the Communist and Socialist Parties put forward a plan which would allow the capitalists the time they need to reorganise, and thus undermine the



Last Saturday's 'Conference in Solidarity with the Spanish Working Class'—Michael Foot uttered not a word of criticism of the Labour Government's decision to send a representative to Franco's funeral. For Conference report, see page 12

struggle of the Spanish masses to take control of their own future. The only way in which a genuine democratic expression of the masses can come about in Spain is through the sort of demands that the Spanish militants of the Fourth International are fighting for — the formation of a workers government, based on the organisations of the

working class which have played the leading role in bringing down the Francoist dictatorship; and immediate organisation of elections to a Constituent Assembly based on universal suffrage.

Only a programme such as this can set Spain on the road to a genuine democracy in which the wishes of the exploited masses can be expressed and

carried into action. The policies of the Communist and Socialist Parties lead simply to the sort of capitalist 'democracy' we have in this country, which is just a smokescreen for the manoeuvres and manipulations of the capitalists.

NEXT WEEK: Is it 'democratic' for the capitalists to attack and murder workers fighting for their rights?

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

# MPLA VICTORY - NEW STRUGGLES AHEAD



In the space of the last few weeks the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) has inflicted the greatest defeat ever suffered by imperialism in southern Africa, and has potentially altered the balance of forces in the whole of central and southern Africa. Having successfully smashed the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) in the north, the MPLA has surged southwards, routing the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) from their base in Huambo, taking the entire length of the Benguela railway, and forcing a partial retreat of the South African troops who still remain over sixty miles inside Angola, however.

But the hammer that the MPLA has taken up remains poised in mid-air: while the oppressed masses of Africa wait in anticipation for this hammer to come crashing down on the imperialist skull, Agostinho Neto, present leader of the MPLA, has put out his restraining hand and declared a halt to the advancing armies, reassuring the Vorster regime that he will safeguard its interests (the Cunene river scheme, the Namibia border, etc.) and pleaded to this same regime for recognition! In return the Neto leadership has also apparently reassured Vorster that it has no intention of 'interfering in Namibia', thus *de facto* accepting the 'right' of South Africa to occupy Namibia.

Such treacherous policies play directly into the hands of both Vorster and imperialism. For the factor that both fear is precisely the spread of the dynamic of the Angolan revolution into the weak links of southern Africa - Namibia and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) - let alone its spread into South Africa itself.

The defeat that South Africa has suffered in Angola has placed it in a

weak position with respect to future intervention. The attempts to reach a 'settlement' in Zimbabwe have now been smashed with the formation of the 'Zimbabwe Military High Command', whose declaration that it intends to escalate the armed struggle has further reduced Vorster's room for manoeuvre. Thus only a 'peaceful' agreement in Angola today can provide Vorster with the breathing space he so badly needs.

In spite of Neto's wishes, fraternal links have already been established between MPLA militants and SWAPO (South West African Peoples Organisation) in Namibia, and such a factor will play a key role in determining MPLA's future relationship with the South African regime. It is not surprising that Vorster is still hesitant about accepting Neto's terms since it is by no means clear how far the Neto leadership is able to control its militants.

The presence of Cuban troops also places a seeming question mark for Vorster over the reliability of Neto's propositions; but with the imperialist camp campaigning for the withdrawal of Cuban and Soviet aid, it seems likely that Moscow (and therefore

Havana?) will support the Neto leadership's line. Certainly the Soviet bureaucracy has made no criticism of Neto's re-establishment of (capitalist) 'law-and-order' in Luanda, his assurances that foreign investment will not be harmed, and his present proposals to Vorster.

But the break up of 'settlement' talks and the confirmation of armed struggle in Zimbabwe have brought the crisis for imperialism to a point: the dynamic of the Zimbabwe struggle will itself have a reciprocal effect in Angola, making Neto's proposals even more tenuous and unreliable. Thus it is vital for imperialism to do its best to isolate each of these struggles as far as possible.

This explains Callaghan's statements last week - in no uncertain terms he made it clear that he was against the intervention of Cuba and the Soviet Union in Angola. Above all, he said, 'I want to make it clear that they have not been invited into the neighbouring countries.....southern Africa is sliding into the most dangerous situation. Time is short if we are to prevent what might develop into a terrible war, the repercussions of which are unfavourable'. To whom they would be unfavourable Mr Callaghan didn't make clear!

## RELUCTANT

Since Vorster has already burnt his fingers in the Angolan pie, he will be reluctant to intervene in Zimbabwe directly. But one can be certain, given its present involvement in South Africa and Zimbabwe, the Britain will play a decisive role in attempting to crush the struggles of the workers and peasants of Zimbabwe through some phoney peace settlement.

So in spite of the victory of the MPLA, in spite of the attitude of the Neto leadership, the struggle in Angola and in southern Africa must go on. The Angolan revolution has been directly responsible for the present potentially favourable balance of forces that exists in southern Africa. To borrow a phrase, 'what we need today is not one Angola, but two, three, many Angolas!

JULIUS KARANJA



The campaign for all charges to be dropped against the Iranian 21 - of which this demo last Saturday was part - proved to be very effective: the prosecution offered no evidence when they appeared in court on Monday

# RED WEEKLY

## Conference shies away from action

Last Saturday's 'Conference in Solidarity with the Spanish Working Class' turned out to be a typical example of fiery words being substituted for concrete actions.

The contradiction between calling a conference 'in solidarity with the working class' and inviting to it representatives of bodies (the opposition Democratic Council and Democratic Platform) that include self-designated spokesmen of the capitalists was resolved by the organisers through a systematic blocking of any attempt to discuss practical moves for solidarity.

### Spectacle

Thus we had the spectacle of Michael Foot telling the Conference about the need for the labour movement to face up to its 'international duty' and the need for the Government to concern itself with the Spanish situation, without uttering a word of criticism of the actual collaboration of the Labour Government with the dictatorship - expressed in such actions as the sending of an official representative to Franco's funeral and Juan Carlos's coronation, and plans to invite Spain's foreign minister to visit this country.

The resolutions which were adopted call for an ongoing campaign of solidarity with the struggle of the Spanish workers for trade union and democratic rights, and demand an immediate amnesty for all political prisoners and the return of all exiles. But they give no lead as to how these aims are to be fought for.

The only proposals for action were contained in amendments supported by delegates from the International Marxist Group and the International Socialists, which proposed the organisation of a campaign to boycott all Spanish trade, a fight for the Labour Government to break all diplomatic ties with the dictatorship, and the calling of a mass, national solidarity demonstration. But the platform refused to give delegates the chance to vote on these proposals - much less discuss them.

This was topped off by the Conference organisers insistence that the 'elected committee' which they had promised would come out of the Conference should simply be a perpetuation of the existing self-appointed organising Committee.

The solidarity movement in this country urgently needs a national lead for its activities. This the Conference organisers firmly refused to give.

## Successful Week of Action

While the organisers of the 14 February Conference were just talking about 'real solidarity', small handfuls of militants up and down the country were setting about the difficult job of actually building it.

Meetings and demonstrations took place across the country during the preceding week, designated a 'Week of Action' by the Action Group Against Repression in Spain (AGARIS). A number of meetings were held in the London area, and on Saturday, 100 militants responded to the call of the IMG, the ICL and IS and picketed Downing Street to protest the proposed visit of the Spanish foreign minister to this country.

In Scotland, the recently-formed Spanish Action Group organised a

successful public meeting, distributed several thousand information bulletins, and mounted a picket of the Iberian Airlines. A Solidarity Committee has also been set up in Aberdeen, and plans are underway for one in Edinburgh.

In Manchester the Spanish Solidarity Committee held a public meeting and demonstration, and in Hull a picket of the Spanish consulate was mounted, supported by the Hull Central Labour Party and Hull University Students Union. The picket appealed for support for the Hull CLP's recent decision to launch a broad based Iberian Solidarity Campaign on Humberstone, and called on trade unionists to follow the Hull dockers and show practical solidarity by blacking Spanish trade.

## No Complacency!

Last week's good start to the February Fighting Fund seems to have made our supporters a bit complacent. Only £21.54 came in this week. Our thanks to Newcastle IMG £10, Bristol IMG £5, Hull IMG £3.04, C. Pitts £2, Edinburgh IMG £1, Crewe IMG 50p.

For the Bristol and Edinburgh IMG branches that was their second contribution this month. Congratulations! But we haven't had a penny from other IMG branches - Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester, Nottingham, Oxford, Sheffield, to name but a few - for quite some weeks. Now is most certainly not the time to miss your contribution - so let's be hearing from you. The address: Red Weekly Fighting Fund, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.



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Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)