

Red Weekly

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP (BRITISH SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL) PRICE 5p 18 JULY 1974 No 61

NATIONALISATION — BOSSSES PLAN SABOTAGE

According to both the *Sunday Telegraph* and the *Sunday Express* — both staunch Tory papers with an inside line to ruling class discussions — top businessmen are starting with a red-scare propaganda campaign (already well underway), but are prepared to extend their action to include deliberate refusal to supply the Government with vital information and to collect PAYE tax deductions.

Apparently one scheme under discussion involves a deliberate boycott of British rail freight services, to drive British Rail further into the red and offer another 'proof' of the failure of nationalised industry.

WARNING

None of this will come as any surprise to readers of *Red Weekly*. We have been warning for many months that the capitalists would take this course if their interests were anywhere near being threatened.

All the chatter about the 'national interest,' 'law and order,' the 'constitution' and the evils of 'direct action' is only served up when it is workers who are fighting to defend their interests.

But what will the leaders of the Labour Party have to say about these latest revelations?

Most of them will have a simple answer — surrender. Already the papers are full of reports that Wilson and Labour's right-wing oppose the nationalisation proposals. Even the mild threat of the present red-scare propaganda has sent them running.

As for the architect of Labour's proposals, industry minister Tony Benn, we understand that he is a reader of *Red Weekly*. But, judging by his proposals which do no more than nibble at the edges of the economic anarchy created by capitalism, he hasn't learned very much from us.

There is only one way that capitalist sabotage can be smashed and the sort of far-reaching socialist measures necessary to defend workers' interests carried out: through the organisations and direct action of the workers themselves.

NURSES

Nurses and other workers in the National Health Service have already shown with their campaign to stamp out private wards how this can be done. While Labour was floundering around suffering defeat after defeat in Parliament, and retreating on one electoral pledge after another, the health workers struck a swift and important blow for workers' interests.

And when they faced a concerted plan of sabotage by the consultants they knew how to deal with it. The pledge by the medical technicians' union ASTMS, to boycott any private medical operations sent the consultants reeling. A decision by the building unions to black work on private hospitals and nursing homes, as is being discussed, would block the consultants' little schemes totally.

Wilson and his cohorts will retreat in the face of ruling class attacks, and Benn and the Labour 'left' thrash around in confusion when faced with capitalist sabotage.

But for the workers' movement this is just a petty obstruction which it can easily clear out of the road in order to get on with the job of building a workers solution to the crisis.



Striking radiographers at Middlesborough General Hospital. Their union, ASTMS, acted swiftly and threatened to black any attempt to set up a private health service. This has dealt a powerful blow to the attempts of consultant doctors to sabotage the NHS, and is an excellent example of how the workers' movement can block such capitalist manoeuvres.

Threshold conference in Coventry

Support is growing in the Coventry labour movement for the conference to be held on 10 August on thresholds and the fight against inflation.

The failure of the trade union 'leaders' to provide any sort of coordinated leadership on these crucial questions has made initiatives like the one being taken in Coventry all the more necessary.

Over the recent weeks Coventry has seen some important battles against those employers who have tried to get out of paying even the meagre cost-of-living rises allowed under Phase 3. First of all a militant strike by workers at the engineering firm of Wickman forced the management to grant £1.20 that was then due as well as automatic increases until the end of August when the deal

will be reviewed.

Then it was the turn of the workers at the GEC plant at Stoke, Coventry, who returned to work only after their offer had been increased from a derisory £1.60 to £2.40. Also, over a thousand white collar workers at Standard Triumphs went on strike after management refused even to negotiate. They are back at work now because management have 'changed their mind' but ready to walk out again if no satisfactory offer is made.

Sponsorship for the conference has come from Dick Burdett (AUEW convenor at Wickman's) and Lil Smith (TGWU shop steward at the GEC Stoke plant) who will also be speaking on the lessons of their particular struggles. The ASTMS Divisional Officer John Fisher and the Divisional Organiser of AUEW (TASS) George Hope are also official

sponsors. The conference will be discussing the existing struggles in Coventry over thresholds but, as importantly, it will be the first step in the preparation for the end of October when the threshold agreements expire.

With inflation running at nearly 25% a year the fight for real protection against soaring prices — such as a genuine sliding scale of wages — will require a planned and coordinated struggle by rank and file militants in all localities.

The coming conference will be discussing how such a struggle can be launched in the Coventry area and should be supported by all local trade unionists. For further information write to George Hope, Divisional Organiser AUEW (TASS), Dale Buildings, Cook Street, Coventry CV1 1NN.

Keep it coming in!

A good week for the fund drive last week — the post brought in £91.50. But with last week's slow start that still only gives us a total of £121.40 so far this month — still a long way to go. So keep the contributions rolling in!

Among last week's contributors were: Anonymous — £40; Oxford IMG — £30 (a great effort!); and £15 from another anonymous supporter.

Send all money to: Red Weekly Fund Drive, 97 Caledonian Rd., London N1.

Teachers close down London schools

ON THE AFTERNOON of 11 July schools all over London were closed by an official National Union of Teachers strike.

Up to 10,000 teachers took part in a demonstration against the Pay Board's recommendations of a two-tier London Allowance and in support of the union's claim for £350 for all teachers, backdated to November 1972 when the claim was first submitted.

The Executive of the NUT were forced to call the half-day strike because of the strength of the London Teachers' Action Committee which has been leading the unofficial strikes. The Action Committee had set 11 July as the date of their next strike and the NUT Executive was forced to take notice by calling an official strike on the same day — but only for the afternoon. Nevertheless, over forty schools supported the Action Committee and came out for the whole day.

The significance of this action was not lost on Reg Prentice, Education Secretary, who deplored the

strikes (official and unofficial) and refused to meet a delegation of striking teachers. Peter Shore, another London Labour MP was also 'unavailable'. Little wonder that few of the 10,000 demonstrators remained behind to lobby 'their' MPs.

Moreover, with a shortage of 2000 teachers in London alone, and the £180 million cuts made by the Tories soon beginning to bite, it is hardly surprising that teachers have little faith in the social compact or the Labour Government's ability to solve their problems. Teachers, like health workers, are beginning to realise that a real defence of the social services will only come about when they take up the fight themselves and win the active support of other sections of the working class. Unfortunately, the impact of Thursday morning's unofficial strike was reduced by the International Socialists' unilateral decision that the morning's strike should concentrate on 'local' initiatives. The IS informed people that the central meeting called by the Action Committee was off even before the Action Committee

had met! This kind of manipulative attitude towards the strikers does nothing to further the struggle.

Nevertheless Thursday's strike was a victory, especially for the London Teachers Action Committee. Teachers should draw lessons from the positive gains made in order to prepare for September, when term starts. The task facing the Action Committee now is to draw in wider support from many more schools and thrash out plans for continuing the struggle.

ACTION

At the moment about 18 schools have decided to take indefinite strike action from 9 September. This shows the level of militancy and the self-confidence of teachers.

True, certain problems still remain. First, there is the chance of a summer holiday sell-out by the NUT Executive, or a Labour Government imposed settlement. Second, teachers could be faced in the autumn with a totally new situation with a general election on



Up to 10,000 teachers took part in the demonstration on 11 July

the way.

And, of course all the problems confronting teachers will remain — teacher shortage, the national pay claim, the education cuts and the threshold agreement due to expire in October.

The London Teachers Action Committee will have to call a mass meeting of school delegates in order to work out a plan of action for the autumn term taking into account any developments and keeping teachers informed and involved in the campaign. Such a meeting should also set about the task of mobilising teachers nationally and winning support from other sections of the

working class in a fight to defend the education system from the crisis of capitalism.

BETTY HUNTER

ERRATUM

In last week's edition of *Red Weekly* we described Bernard Regan as the 'chairman of the Action Committee'. In fact there is not a fixed chairperson: he tells us that the chairperson is elected at each meeting of the Action Committee. Our mistake arose because this description of him was used in the national and London press after he had chaired the strike meeting on 3 July, which received wide media coverage.

Our apologies to the London Teachers' Action Committee and Bernard Regan.



Photos which give the lie to 'evidence' put forward at the inquest on Kevin Gately. ABOVE: banner (arrowed) is upright, while Martin Walker (head ringed), who claimed poles were 'lowered like lances', has his back to the demonstration! BELOW: many witnesses claimed that foot police did not draw truncheons — but here they are, ready for action.



Photo: RED WEEKLY

POLICE WHITEWASH AT GATELY INQUEST

'Death by misadventure' was the jury's verdict at the inquest on Red Lion Square demonstrator Kevin Gately last week. The police — not to mention the National Front — must have been delighted by the decision.

Before the jury retired, the coroner had warned them that such a verdict would mean that Gately had deliberately entered into a hazardous situation. So now we have it spelt out — if you go on a demonstration, it's your own fault if something nasty happens to you. You can't blame those nice British policemen!

The verdict came at the end of two days of evidence in which the history of the events at Red Lion Square had been almost completely re-written — first with the help of various witnesses, and then through the selective editing of the bourgeois press.

ANTI-FASCIST FIGHTERS ON TRIAL!

Protest against the trials of the anti-fascists arrested in Red Lion Square on 15 June. Picket Bow Street Magistrates' Court at 9.30 am on Monday 22 July.

Police and magistrates protect the fascists!
Hands off Kevin Gately's comrades!
No platform for racists and fascists!

'Red Lion Square banners "lowered like lances"' ran a headline on the London *Evening News* report of the first day of the inquest on Thursday 11 July. The paper was quoting *Guardian* reporter Martin Walker, who described how 'banners were lowered by demonstrators as though they were lances' before a contingent 'charged' the police cordon.

Unfortunately for Walker and the papers who played up his story, however, all the photographic evidence shows quite clearly that nothing like this took place. Indeed, the photo we print here shows not only that the banners remained upright but also that Martin Walker had his back to the demonstration at the time!

Walker — and other witnesses — also emphasised that 'at no time did I see a foot policeman draw a truncheon'. According to the *Times*, Walker even added that 'he thought the behaviour of the foot police had been brave and admirable'. Again, our photo shows that such comments were hardly justified by the actual sequence of events.

ACUTE HEARING

Still, even if the police weren't quite as 'brave and admirable' as all that, they do at least have exceptionally acute hearing. Both PC Patrick Huran and PC Terence Collings told the jury that the 'charge' on the police cordon had been preceded by a shout of 'now' from someone in the demonstration. Fancy being able to

pick that out when hundreds of marchers were shouting 'Fascists out!' at the top of their voices!

By the end of the inquest, in fact, it seemed almost as if a veritable horde of demonstrators — armed to the teeth, and 'throwing stones and sticks' (according to Mrs Elizabeth Mandara) or 'throwing bricks' (according to PC Cyril Cleever) — had violently set upon a few defenceless policemen. No wonder the jury was led to conclude that Kevin Gately was more or less responsible for his own death.

The inquest was thus a complete farce, a whitewash of the police from beginning to end. Its outcome means that it is now all the more important to organise a labour movement enquiry into the events of 15 June. In that way we can effectively begin to smash the capitalist conspiracy which now seeks to cover up its responsibility for the death of Kevin Gately.

JOHN MARSTON

JUST OUT

newspaper of the COMMUNIST MAZDOOR DAL



Available from RED BOOKS, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1., price 5p plus postage. Orders of 10 or more past free

National conference to fight racism and fascism

A national conference to fight racism and fascism was the call from an Action Committee meeting at Warwick University this week.

The conference of workers, black people and students, organised by the Action Committee and Coventry Trades Council, is to take place on 23 November at the University.

The conference will be held at a time when the fight against fascism will have entered a new and vital stage. The deepening economic crisis and the signs of rising unemployment provide fascist organisations such as the National Front with the potential for large scale growth on a national level.

An autumn election will provide the National Front with an opportunity to campaign around issues which are real problems facing the working class. One such problem — that of unemployment — will undoubtedly centre on the NF's central slogan of 'Britons First', with the war cry of 'One million unemployed — One million immigrants' thrown in for good measure.

Such activity highlights the timely calling of this conference, which will meet against the background of a general rise in the level of workers struggles and, of course, the usual attempts by the ruling class to split and divide the fighting unity which can be achieved. For that reason the conference will provide a focus for mili-

tants involved in the ongoing fight against racism and the extreme right and in support of black workers struggles.

The mobilisation for the 23 November conference will take the form of an action programme which has been put forward by the committee: including the organisation of counter-demonstrations to the National Front's activities such as the planned joint NF-Loyalist march; supporting those black workers in struggle such as the Imperial Typewriters strike in Leicester; and campaigning for the denial of facilities to the fascists for their meetings. Full support for the conference was promised by the National Secretary of the National Union of Students, Steve Parry, who was present at the meeting.

From JACKIE STEVENS (Action Committee member and Coventry IMG).

The Action Committee at Warwick University was set up immediately after the death of Kevin Gately, who was a student there. It has played a major role in the activities around the Red Lion Square events, sending speakers to workers' and students' meetings all over the country, mobilising support for the national, silent demonstration on 22 June in London, and organising activities which have won a large base of support in the Coventry labour movement.

The calling of this conference in conjunction with the local labour movement, and with the support of the Coventry Indian Workers Association, marks the biggest step forward yet in the campaign, since the Red Lion Square demonstration.

UNION IS FORCED TO ACT

As the *Red Weekly* went to press, negotiations between the TGWU and the management at Imperial Typewriters were still dragging on.

The management have apparently climbed down on their original threat never to 're-hire' 20 to 25 unnamed strikers.

According to reports the bosses have agreed all the strikers shall be re-instated. The management have been insisting however, that not all the strikers can return to their original jobs—a move obviously designed to isolate the 'troublemakers' and put leading militants into jobs which pay badly, thereby hoping that they will leave the factory.

After weeks of evasion and claims by TGWU convenor Reg Weaver, that

there was no dispute, as all the workers had been sacked, Mathers the regional organiser stepped in and announced negotiations would take place on Tuesday 16 July.

The TGWU leaders had not suddenly discovered Imperial. The persistence and rock-solid determination of the 500 Asian strikers had forced the union bureaucrats to move. The situation at Imperial had become so hot for the TGWU leaders that they had to act.

Everybody had tried their hand at strike breaking. District Secretary of the union, Bromley, had muttered about a 'white back lash' if the strikers' demands were met. Local MP, Tom Bradley, president of the TSSA—white-collar railway workers' union—urged the workers to go back

BOB PENNINGTON reports

to work.

The Race Relations Board stuck its 'white nose' in and was rejected by the strikers. The Runnymede Trust had the effrontery to suggest Michael Foot as a mediator. The strikers' reply to this was not polite—but it was to the point. Mr. Foot was not invited.

The TGWU set up an Inquiry. They leaked to the strikers 'you have won, give us time to find a formula'. The formula included such small things as keeping quiet on the elected leaders of the strike getting their jobs back and dumping Bennie Bunsee—the outside 'subversive' who had been helping the strikers, at their request.

The strikers rejected this cajolery. No, they said, 'we do not go back without our leaders and we will work with anyone who serves the interest of our strike.' They insisted: give our strike official backing and publish the results of the Inquiry.

But still Transport House equivocated. No action was taken. The strike did not get official recognition.

The management encouraged by the union's lack of action tried their own stroke. They flew in from California their head of personnel, Doug Peters. Mr. Peters brought with him a chosen aide. This was a tame black American ex-baseball star who at the wave of a salary cheque dutifully recites the company's policies on equal employment opportunity.

But Mr. Peters and Mr. Iron did not wash. The strikers said no.

Finally the union moved. They could see the strikers were not going to be bullied, starved out, or even driven back by the union's indifference. Mathers announced that the union would be negotiating with the management on the day set for the national picket.

What will determine the outcome of these negotiations will be the continuing militancy of the strikers. Any retreat by them to let the union bureaucrats take over will result in Mathers making concessions to the management. Their continuing struggle has forced the union to act at last. It is the only way to get the settlement the strikers are demanding.

Shell workers tame the tiger

SHELL, one of the top multi-national oil companies, is a tiger in the jungle of world capitalism.

Just a few weeks ago it was laying down the law to the Prices Commission and the Government with its threat to cut off all supplies of chemicals to the British market unless it were allowed substantial price increases. Shell got its way.

But over the past few weeks the tiger has met its master—the workers in the Shell petro-chemical operations around the country, united for the first time in a combine-wide shop stewards' committee.

WEAK

For many years workers in the petro-chemical industries, divided between different plants and up against giant firms united on the international plane, have been in a weak position.

This has allowed the big petro-chemical firms to become leaders in the sphere of capitalist 'labour relations' (i.e. improving the efficiency with which they sweat profits out of the labour of their employees). For example, productivity deals, one of the key devices of the ruling class in attacking working class organisation and working conditions during the 1960s, were pioneered by Shell's fellow oil-giant, Esso, at its Fawley refinery in 1960.

Now it is the turn of the petro-chemical workers to become 'leaders' through the example of their organisation, militancy, and the big hole they are in the process of punching through the middle of the 'social contract.'

In January of this year Shell workers signed a Phase 3 agreement, giving them a pay rise of 8%. Subsequently negotiations opened up for a post-Phase 3 increase.

Through their national committee the stewards began to realise that the agreements signed by various plants were remarkably similar, despite their being reached by supposed 'local negotiations.' It became clear that these negotiations had nothing to do with specific local conditions, but were simply a case of 'divide and rule' tactics being applied by the company.

STRIKE

When negotiations at Shell's Stanlow refinery in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, ran into difficulties, the national stewards' committee stepped in and demanded national negotiations for a national settlement. They threatened to pull out all Shell's petro-chemical workers along with the Stanlow workers, whose strike had begun on Friday, 28 June.

Shell quickly came to heel and entered national negotiations. A settlement was agreed on which gave

the workers a 9% increase in basic rates as soon as Phase 3 expired (an extra 1% above what had been offered at Stanlow's), along with extra shift allowances and bonus payments, and a rise of £2.50 a week in lieu of threshold increases due up until January 1975.

This agreement was accepted by most Shell plants, but rejected by the Stanlow workers. An important factor in this rejection was a local dispute at Stanlow's over a demand that extended shift time (which is often required at short notice) should be compensated for with extra pay, rather than equivalent time-off, as happens at present.

An understanding that management would permit local bargaining on this question was broken, and on that basis the national stewards' committee has demanded renegotiation of the national offer, a demand to which Shell has agreed.

The Shell workers' victory has a significance far beyond their own industry. Millions of workers were forced to accept miserable pay settlement under the Tories' Phase 3 pay laws and Labour's subsequent enforcement of them. Now Phase 3 has gone many workers will want to make up for lost time.

BOSSSES

This is why the national bosses organisation, the Confederation of British Industry, has made such a big point against more than one pay settlement in a period of 12 months, and why the Labour Government, in accordance with the capitalists' wishes, insisted on this in their 'social contract' with the TUC.



In early 1972 the Kirkby factory of Fisher-Bendix was occupied by its workers and came to the forefront of anti-redundancy struggles. Today the workers at Fisher-Bendix — now renamed 'International Property Development Industrial' — are back in occupation again, and again the question is redundancies.

Here workers weld the gates shut to make sure that machines and stock cannot be moved out. A taste of things to come? Photo: Ron McCormick (IFL)

But the Shell struggle has shown to the working class that militant, united action has the power to sweep the 'social contract' into the dustbin (where it belongs) and win for workers the long overdue pay rises that they need to restore and improve their standard of living.

The failure of the Shell stewards to insist on a threshold agreement was a serious mistake. Not only will the £2.50 they accepted rapidly be overtaken (workers have already received £2 under existing agreements, and figures due out tomorrow may well pass the £2.50 mark), but they have set a precedent that the company will use in negotiations for the next settlement due to run from next January.

With inflation due to run at more than 20% next year, it is absolutely essential that the Shell stewards prepare for an all-out fight on this question in the autumn. Then once again they can set a pattern for the rest of the workers' movement, and unite with the millions of workers who will then be going into struggle to defend and extend the existing agreements.

Ray Alexander

'A strike for trade unionism'

Parmatma Marwha is a militant TGWU shop steward at Delta Mouldings, Leicester.

He is also chairman of his trade union branch and has been active in getting support for the strikers at Imperial Typewriters.

Parmatma is angry at suggestions that the strike is against the trade unions. He insists that the workers at Imperial are fighting for trade union rights. He explained: 'We want to build strong trade unions.'

'I have been a member of the TGWU for nine years. First I built up the union in Walkers Crisps. Then I joined this Delta Moulding. When I got there, there was no union at all. Again we built up the union in that factory.'

What has your attitude been to the TGWU in this strike?

In my branch we have put down resolutions calling on the TGWU to make the strike official.

I also got in touch with the Walkers Crisps shop stewards and their branch and those people went with us as a combined delegation to see the union district secretary to try and get the union to support the Imperial strike.

What other things have you done to support the strike?

I got collections organised in my factory. The first raised £50.60, the second collection was just over £38.

I arranged with the stewards at Walkers Crisps for collections there. They raised £100 and the second collection was over £70.

There have also been collections at Barrington Products and H. J. B. Plastics.

The workers from my factory have of course attended the demonstrations held in support of the strike.

What do you think of the way that the workers at Imperial have organised themselves?

By running and organising the strike themselves the workers at Imperial are setting an example for the whole Asian people and also for the whole trade union movement. Their way of fighting shows how to make the unions move on and do something about their members' conditions.

The role of the women in the strike has been great. You know in Section 61 — where the strike started — a majority of women came out first. When the workers go back after winning the strike a number of the women must become shop stewards. They have learned a lot in the strike and they must continue to participate in the struggles.

What actions should be taken nationally to help win the strike?

These people are in great need of money. The Social Security has played the role of strike-breaker. Many strikers have no money at all. So they need collections and donations from people who support them.



Parmatma Marwha on the picket line outside Imperial's main London sales outlet

Where possible there should be solidarity strikes. Littons is a multi-national company. Workers in other countries should organise strikes or at least put pickets up at the Litton firms and showrooms.

After this strike is over do you think the struggle stops there?

No it must not just stop there. Already we have discussed in our branch and in the branch where Walkers Crisps members work about some form of organisation.

I am convinced that we must have some form of organisation, even if it at first consists of the 'white' leftist organisations and immigrant workers. I am not in favour at all of having black trade unions.

We must work in the trade union movement. But we do need some other forms of organisation to deal with the situation, when as at Imperial Typewriters the union fails us completely.

You say it is important to work with 'white' leftist organisations but have you had much help from them in this strike?

No, we have had very little help. The Communist Party in Leicester has done nothing to help our strike. In fact many of their members have opposed the strike. What the 'white' leftist organisations have to do is demonstrate in practice their support of these struggles. That is the way to get unity.

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

Portugal THE STRIKE THE COMMUNIST PARTY SMASHED

Last month Postal workers were driven back to work practically at bayonet point, thus ending the first round of major working class struggles. The Portuguese Communist Party did everything in its power to ensure the defeat of this key struggle. The following is an interview with a member of the strike committee.

What was the atmosphere like in the postal service following the coup on 25 April?

Even before 25 April there had been a climate of constant conflict ... and already, in November 1973, there had been one small strike which showed this militant feeling.

Everything began because of the conditions of work and the wages. The average monthly wage was

2,000 to 3,000 escudos; and out of 35,000 employees, 21,000 were paid between 2,000 and 7,000 escudos a month [between £8 and £27 a week]. The cost of living had increased, but our wages stayed at the same level.

So when the Junta declared that we had the right to strike and hold meetings, and that democratic freedoms had been restored, the militan-

cy which had so far been pent-up now burst out in full flood. The first thing we did was to set about building up the trade union. On 5 May in Lisbon there was a meeting of 1,000 postal workers from all over the country, and a number of workers were nominated to serve on the first provisional trade union organising committee.

At the same time, general assemblies in each major centre elected delegates who, meeting together, elected 24 more people to be added on to the first list of organising committee members. This list was then circulated throughout the country so that it could be ratified - or not. In this way its representative nature was fully confirmed.

Having done that, we then started work on drawing up a list of demands - and the talks with the Government started. They rapidly came to a dead-end, with the workers and their delegates rejecting the counter-proposals made by the Government. Finally, we launched an ultimatum: we would go on strike if no positive response had been forthcoming by midnight

on Sunday 16 June.

And in the course of a general assembly of all the postal service delegates, the leadership was given a mandate by the workers to organise the strike as soon as the ultimatum expired. So it was that we stopped work first thing on Monday morning, in support of the following main demands:

- minimum monthly wage of 6,000 escudos (£100)
- an immediate 35-hour week
- a month's holiday paid at the full rate
- extra hours worked to be paid at double time
- grading schemes to be revised.

That is how we began the first national strike for half a century!

What kind of organisation was there to ensure that this national strike of 35,000 people could be waged as democratically as possible?

I must say first of all that, contrary to what has been written elsewhere, the strike was massively supported. Only a small section of the telecommunications staff failed to



With the continually increasing betrayals of the Portuguese workers by the Communist Party, for example in the strike detailed above, a heavy responsibility lies on the shoulders of revolutionaries. In particular, the LCI, sympathising section of the Fourth International, pictured here on a recent demonstration, will have to help lead workers to a revolutionary conclusion of the present impasse, and away from the Chile-type disaster the CP's policies are heading towards.

come out; and they were people whose sympathies lay basically with the previous regime!

Our first aim was to organise the strike democratically, to continue as we had begun.

We therefore set up a central strike committee of about seven people, made up of members of the provisional union leadership. This committee divided itself into two sub-committees: one to deal with economic problems - to work out the list of demands in more detail, to study the Government's counter-proposals, the policy of making the postal service a profitable concern, and also of course the financial problems of the strike; the other a 'political' committee whose main responsibility was in the field of propaganda - popularising the strike, maintaining relations with the press, etc.

But of course you need more than seven people to lead a strike, so we also set up a series of commissions with different responsibilities:

- for communications between different departments
- for strike committees and pickets
- a body to handle correspondence and administration
- for mobile detachments (21 routes were laid down, and each team consisted of two groups of four cars each)
- for supplies for the strike
- for medical and social assistance
- for information and propaganda (this was divided into several sub-commissions).

And so the local offices were occupied night and day by a constant rotation between the different sections.

The strike immediately took on the significance of a clash with the powers-that-be, and was immediately condemned by the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Intersyndicale [equivalent of TUC], etc. ... only the revolution-



Young or old—age is no barrier when it comes to support for loyalist reaction.

administration of Northern Ireland.' For the Republicans to accept such a proposal would mean giving up all they have fought for in the last five years. The pre-condition being laid down for talks is that they accept the continuation of the sectarian Northern Ireland state, which means also the traditional subordinate place of the Catholics within it. What the Loyalists are offering is not a rapprochement, but terms for a surrender.

The purpose of these proposals is clearer when we examine what the *Ulster Loyalist* (published by the Loyalist 'Ulster Defence Association') said on 6 June about the main electoral force amongst the Catholics, the Social Democratic and Labour Party:

'The SDLP will have to make up its mind once and for all whether it is an anti-partitionist party or a party which will support the interests of the Catholic community within the

administration of Northern Ireland.' For the Republicans to accept such a proposal would mean giving up all they have fought for in the last five years. The pre-condition being laid down for talks is that they accept the continuation of the sectarian Northern Ireland state, which means also the traditional subordinate place of the Catholics within it. What the Loyalists are offering is not a rapprochement, but terms for a surrender.

The purpose of these proposals is clearer when we examine what the *Ulster Loyalist* (published by the Loyalist 'Ulster Defence Association') said on 6 June about the main electoral force amongst the Catholics, the Social Democratic and Labour Party:

'The SDLP will have to make up its mind once and for all whether it is an anti-partitionist party or a party which will support the interests of the Catholic community within the

After the Ulster Workers' Court LOYALISM—

Union ... What is required now is a definite division between anti-partitionist politics and power-sharing politics within the Catholic community.'

Seen in this light the Loyalist initiatives appear not as steps towards reconciliation, but as an attempt to create a political split in the Catholic community.

NATIONALISM

Northern Ireland Secretary Merlyn Rees' recent talk about 'Ulster nationalism' is well founded. Today the Ulster Flag has almost supplanted the Union Jack in Belfast and the Loyalists are coming out with plentiful supplies of anti-British rhetoric, like the following quotation from the *Ulster Volunteer Force* magazine *Combat*:

'The day is fast approaching thank God when the Englishman must be told in no uncertain manner that his era of lordship is over. The Scots and Welsh are demanding the right to be free nations and the Ulsterman is demanding the return of his 'stolen' parliament. They are all demanding the right to determine their own destinies and administer their own internal affairs.'

But lest anyone think that this Ulster nationalism is compatible with the Irish nationalism of the Republicans *Combat* stresses that:

'Such nationalistic sentiments should in no way be construed as disloyal to the British Crown. The British Crown is not the exclusive property of the English people. On the contrary it is the property of the

British people throughout the world and is the symbol of the ties that bind the people of the Commonwealth together.'

'Ulster nationalism' is in fact a demand for less British interference in the North of Ireland, so that the province can return to the days before the destruction of Northern Ireland's old Stormont Parliament.

Even some of the more radical departures in Loyalist thinking come back to this starting point. Another article in the same issue of *Combat* said:

'The majority of Ulster Protestants equate Gaelic and Irish culture with Roman Catholicism ... The truth of the matter is that Ulster Protestants have as much claim, if not more in some cases, to the Gaelic culture as the Roman Catholic population ... Gaelic culture is clearly the most important strand of our Ulster culture ... Even our Orange culture is a development of our Gaelic traditions ...'

Then comes the punch line:

'There is no contradiction in being British and at the same time wishing to enjoy and preserve our own distinctive culture. Our Loyal Scottish brethren find no difficulty in enjoying their national culture and at the same time still maintaining their loyalty and their Faith and British Citizenship.'

Clearly the Loyalists are trying to grapple with new problems. Successive British Governments have attempted to force changes in the North of Ireland in order to protect British interests. This threatens the



Since the victory of the Ulster Workers' Council strike, and the collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive, three myths about the current situation in the North of Ireland have become popular.

The first is that the UWC strike was an assertion of militant, working class politics. The second is that there is a growth of anti-British Ulster nationalism which could bring Loyalists and Irish Republicans closer together. The third is that recent Loyalist statements show a willingness to negotiate a settlement with the Republicans.

The conclusion drawn from these myths is that peace is nearer follow-



Smiles on the faces of workers, soldiers and sailors during the May 25 demo against the African colonial wars. Those smiles are rapidly fading in the face of continued treachery of the Communist Party, as it licks the junta's boots.

ary groups supported your struggle. What was the significance of your struggle for the postal workers?

When it started, it was a democratic strike as far as most of the strikers were concerned, but we were conscious of its political significance. That is why we also were very clear in explaining matters: we always tied our 'economic' demands to those for a free and democratic trade unionism.

We always emphasised that the satisfaction of our demands would lead automatically to a better 'public service'... and how we thought that such demands were not exorbitant, that they didn't in any way threaten the economy of the country, that we thought the capitalists could pay... Besides, our demands were the same as those put forward by thousands of workers a few weeks ago.

I can't speak for the rest of the central strike committee in analysing the political situation, but one can say that the postal workers very quickly saw which organisations were supporting them and that they will remember it for future struggles.

As for the reaction of the rest of the population: in Lisbon, where we put in a great deal of work popularising the struggle, there were continuous discussions with the public, which were largely favourable to our cause. Elsewhere, there was a close connection between right-wing elements like the businessmen in the town of Viseu, the position of the Communist Party, and social-democratic groups — who did not hesitate to organise demonstrations against the

strike, denouncing us as 'provocateurs', 'traitors', and so on. In Oporto there was a demonstration against the strikers which occupied the union headquarters, thanks to the Communist Party who whipped up the local population against the strike.

This was a big problem. In spite of our efforts to popularise the strike, it was difficult to counter the press and the apparatus of the Communist Party, particularly as their propaganda reached out to people who genuinely believed what they were told about us. These people were rare, of course, but they certainly existed.

The sudden end of the strike overnight between Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20 June surprised every-

one; particularly as the communique announcing the intervention of the Army had not yet been made public.

When we learnt that the Army was ready to intervene, having previously taken note of the attitude of the rest of the population, and having been unable to win anything more from the negotiations other than a crumb of 80 to 100 escudos [about £1.50], then we decided to stop the strike movement but to continue the struggle.

This decision was taken democratically by an assembly of delegates which lasted the whole night: there were about 260 delegates from Lisbon and the surrounding area, as well as some from the provinces. The discussion was long and heated, and the vote which was taken at 6 o'clock in the morning only indicated a slight

majority in favour of a return to work.

We therefore had to go back, but there was immediate proof that our militancy remained unabated. The next day the postal workers started to work to rule — throughout Lisbon, and in certain services in Oporto. Besides this, in the telephone service, for example, the comrades made no charge for communications — an action which was certainly very well received by the rest of the population.

Now we are discussing how to continue the struggle, how to build and reinforce our organs of struggle, trade unions which are strong, free and democratic. This work-to-rule and other such actions are important to prevent any impression that we have been defeated.

il Strike

WHERE IS IT GOING?

Bob Purdie

businessmen and farmers, and the labour aristocracy, who have benefited most from the Protestant ascendancy.

In contrast to the anti-home rule agitation of the early part of this century no substantial section of the British ruling class, or British population supports their resistance to these changes.

This has required a re-working of Loyalist politics to find new justifications for their sectarian separation from the rest of the Irish people. *Combat* has therefore been returning to Irish history, which it has begun to interpret in its own terms.

'REVOLUTION'

Significantly they have fixed on Henry Grattan's 'revolution' of 1782, when the Anglo-Irish protestant colonial population in Ireland asserted their political independence from the British Parliament, while maintaining the disenfranchisement of the underprivileged native catholic Irish. *Combat* (Vol 1 No 11) says of this period:

'When he hailed "Ireland the Nation" Grattan hailed a nation within the United Kingdom, or British family of nations. A nationalist yes, but a Republican never... Present day Republicans look back to Wolfe Tone as the father of Republicanism... They fail to recognise that Tone was nothing more than a disgruntled and unpatriotic revolutionary. When Henry Grattan and the Volunteers fought for Irish independence they fought a bloodless war

with the full support of the Irish people. When Wolfe Tone fought for his Irish Republic he waged a bloody civil war in which only Irishmen suffered... The abortive revolution of 1798 spelled the death-knell of Ireland as a free nation and so divided the Irish people that Ireland has never been free since. When Republicanism replaced nationalism and patriotism Ireland became a divided people and lost her right to nationhood.'

Small wonder that the Loyalists balk at Wolfe Tone. He criticised the inadequacies of Grattan's revolution, and showed how its failure to win complete independence for Ireland, and to break the stranglehold of England, was the result of its failure to involve the whole people of Ireland and to emancipate the catholics.

Red Weekly has already offered evidence against the alleged 'militant, working class' character of the Loyalist strike. Still further facts can now be offered to explode this myth.

STRIKE

In Harland and Wolff's shipyard, for example, a mass meeting was called to discuss the UWC strike. Of the labour force of 10,000 (of which fewer than 500 are catholics), less than 1,000 turned up. The UWC representative called, not for a vote on the strike, but for an indication of those willing to take part in a demonstration. When only about 50 hands went up the meeting was ended. Some time later the UDA came in and enforced a shut-down.

The much publicised street committees which sprang up in protestant areas to distribute bread, milk and other necessities were in fact the outlets for the UDA distribution network. Since they used Orange Halls as distribution centres they discriminated quite deliberately against catholics.

NATIONAL FRONT

It is not surprising that the British National Front is having increased influence. The NF claims to have eight branches in the North of Ireland, and recently opened a headquarters in the Ravenhill Road, Belfast. This drew the following comment from *Combat* (21 April):

'*Combat* magazine wishes every success to the National Front in Northern Ireland and trusts that it will grow from strength to strength... We may not always agree with National Front policy, but we agree that there is room and a need for a strong loyalist patriotic party to emerge in Northern Ireland.'

There has always been an implicit contradiction in the fact that the protestant skilled workers, who have been generally militant in economic struggles, have accepted a non-sectarian trade union leadership so long as this did not challenge the sectarian distribution of jobs in Northern Irish industry. This put substantial difficulties in the way of the UWC when it tried to use the industrial strength of the protestants.

Following their victory the Loyalists have turned to tackling that problem. The second issue of *Combat*

following the strike was headlined: 'Communism the Enemy of the Working Class'. This was part of a campaign against the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (to which most Northern Irish unions are affiliated) which was opened in the previous issue with the statement:

'Thirty-two trade unionists, many of them shop-stewards, have been served with 28 day Interim Custody Orders by the pro-Communist Secretary of State Mr Merlyn Rees... The bulk of the names of the detained men were supplied to the Special Branch by officials of the Northern Committee of the Communist Irish Congress of Trade Unions... Loyalist suspicions that the present Labour Government and especially the Secretary of State Mr Rees, is ultra-left have been confirmed.'

Two issues later this had been expanded into a full-scale anti-Communist campaign, adding the charge that the names were also given to the 'Red Brigade', to be marked down for assassination. (The 'Red Brigade' is an invention of the British army).

The demolition of these three myths not only destroys the idea of a 'progressive' development in protestant politics. It also shows that the aim of the *Loyalists* is not to break with Britain, but only to modify their relationship with British imperialism. They want to resurrect the Northern Ireland that existed before the Civil Rights movement forced the British Government to introduce reforms. But they still require British subsidies, British political support, the ideology of



William Craig — one of the loyalist leaders who jumped on the UWC strike bandwagon just in time to save face.

the British link, and British arms and equipment to hold down the alienated catholics, one-third of their population.

The key to the Northern Irish problem is still the British connection. If the link is broken the Loyalists will have to come to terms with the rest of the people of Ireland. If it is not then the poisons being secreted in Loyalist politics today will create a new and more virulent danger for the beleaguered catholic minority.

CYPRUS IMPERIALIST

POT BOILS OVER

RUMOURS of a possible coup led by the Greek-officered National Guard had been circulating in Cyprus for weeks. But no-one really took them seriously.

After all, it has long been part of imperialist strategy in the area to keep the 'Cyprus problem' bubbling along nicely. Only this time the pot boiled over.

Cyprus was granted nominal 'independence' in August 1960 as a result of the armed struggle waged by the Greek Cypriot guerrillas of EOKA. But the key strategic position of the island in the eastern Mediterranean meant that imperialism could never willingly let Cyprus out of its clutches.

ANVIL

As an article sent to *Red Weekly* earlier this year by the Cyprus comrades of the Fourth International put it: 'Cyprus is the anvil on which the imperialists forge their political and military weapons for eventual attacks on the Arab peoples.'

So when Cyprus was granted 'independence' it was as the result of a deal worked out by Britain, Greece and Turkey (all NATO powers). This agreement allowed for small Greek and Turkish forces to be stationed on the island and — most important — the maintenance of two British 'Sovereign Base Areas' with a total of 8,000 troops (5,000 RAF men) and 3,000 soldiers.

But, as David Faithall explained in the *Guardian* on Tuesday: 'Any open link with NATO, and particularly with the United States, would have enraged the Cypriot Communists and further weakened President Makarios's position'. So 'nominally, none of this is there on NATO's behalf... the declared military commitment is to CENTO, not NATO, and to ill-defined British national interests in the area.' (CENTO is a smaller imperialist alliance whose members are Britain, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, although the US is also involved in an observer capacity.)

Imperialism has managed to retain its hold by fostering communal strife between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Sections of the Turkish Cypriot population fought alongside the British against EOKA in the 1950s, and since independence these tensions have been maintained as a series of unworkable constitutional schemes have collapsed one after another. In 1964 violent confrontations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots were used as a pretext for further strengthening the imperialist presence through the introduction of United Nations troops.

'ENOSIS'

More recently the leader of EOKA in the 1950s, General Grivas, arrived back in Cyprus from Greece with the aim of launching a new guerrilla campaign for 'enosis' (union of Cyprus with Greece). This campaign was backed by the Greek junta (arms were channelled through the Greek officers of the Cyprus National Guard), and tolerated by imperialism as providing a further pretext for its continued presence.

But in the last few months Greek military interests have sharply diverged from those of imperialism as a whole. The latter simply wants to keep things stirred up a bit, but the needs of the Greek junta dictated a more drastic approach. With deep splits appearing inside the Greek Army, and economic problems worsening, Cyprus became the focus for a chauvinist offensive under cover of which the regime could be temporarily patched up. Recovering rapidly from the death of Grivas in January, the junta gave the go-ahead for Monday's attempted coup.

Nothing, however, was done to prepare the Cypriot working class for such a turn of events. The Cypriot Communist Party (AKEL) and the trade union organisations it dominates have never put forward any programme with the aim of uniting the working population along class lines. They have never attempted to overcome the divisions between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot commun-

ities, but have instead fallen in at every twist and turn with the policy of President Makarios.

MAKARIOS

Indeed, as an article in the British CP paper the *Morning Star* made clear on Monday, the AKEL 'supports Makarios wholeheartedly as the symbol of unity in the fight for complete independence and demilitarisation of Cyprus', and endorses his measures 'without reservations'. Yet Makarios has never lifted a finger in the struggle for 'complete independence and demilitarisation of Cyprus'; instead, his function has been to act as a 'Bonaparte' figure, blurring class divisions and thus strengthening the hold of imperialism.

At the time of going to press the situation remains unclear as fighting on the island continues. But British socialists have to be clear that the answer does not lie in the intervention of British or UN troops against the Greek junta's stooges. On the contrary, it is these agents of imperialism who have continually stirred up the situation in Cyprus so that the coup became possible.

The only lasting solution to the 'Cyprus problem' lies in the complete withdrawal of these troops, and the establishment of an independent socialist Cyprus based on a class programme which can unite the working people of both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities on the island.

JOHN MARSTON



A section of last Tuesday's demonstration in London against the coup

WHAT'S ON

NATIONAL FRONT: Fascist Threat — public meeting organised by Greenwich IMG, Wednesday 24 July at 8 pm, with speaker Brian Heron. Greenwich Labour Party Hall, 32 Woolwich Rd., Woolwich.

IMPERIAL TYPEWRITERS—support the strikers! Public meeting sponsored by Enfield IMG and other organisations, Friday 19 July at 7.30 pm in Prince of Wales pub, 1 Finsbury Road (nr Wood Green tube). Speakers include H Khetani (strike committee), Ted Corbett (ex-convenor STC).

THE PLOUGH: New issue of paper of the Revolutionary Marxist Group (Irish section of the Fourth International) out now. Send 5p per copy plus 5p postage to RED BOOKS, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. Orders of 10 or more sent post free.

TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT: South London public meeting 'Ireland — Troops Out Now!' Speakers: Gery Lawless, Althea Jones, Thursday 25 July at 8 pm in Stockwell Hall, Stockwell Park Walk, behind the Astoria, Brixton (2 mins from Brixton tube).

CRISIS IN THE HEALTH SERVICE: public meeting in Colchester, Wednesday 24 July at 7.30 pm — speakers include nurses and radiographers from London and Colchester. Liberal Club, St Isaac's Walk, Colchester — organised by Colchester Women's Charter Group and supported by Colchester Trades Council.

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND! — Self-determination for Irish people! Leaflet and picket Colchester Tattoo, 3 August. Meet 1 pm at Liberal Club, St Isaac's Walk, Colchester.

BENGALI FRIENDS in Europe and elsewhere, for Bengali books and *Lara* (Fourth International paper), contact: Bengali, Mjilvaden, Box 3274, 10365 Stockholm, Sweden.

LIVERPOOL RED BOOKS: Revolutionary literature — Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Eastern Europe, Third World, Ireland, Women's Liberation, 81a Renshaw Street, Liverpool, Tues-Fri: 12.30 — 3. Sat: 11 — 3.

NOTTINGHAM RED CIRCLES: Wide-ranging series of discussions based on the politics of the Fourth International. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday in the month at 8 pm in the Lion Hotel, Clumber Street.

IMG GAY GROUP: Contact J. Mills, 153 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, for further information.

RED MOLES—Internationals: First twenty Red Moles for only 50p plus 30p p&p; Internationals 1969-71, ten consecutive issues, only £1 plus 25p p&p. Limited supplies only. All proceeds to Red Weekly Fund Drive. Orders, with money, to B. E. Adams, 18 Corporation Oaks, Nottingham.

SOUTHALL RED FORUMS: Every Friday evening at 8 pm in 'Featherstone Arms', Featherstone Road, Southall (near Dominion Cinema).

LONDON RED FORUMS: A comprehensive political education series, every Tuesday at 8 pm in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road, N.1. 23 July: 'Chile/Portugal — Workers' Power or Reformist Road?'; 30 July: 'The Crisis of British Imperialism in Ireland'.

INPRECOR

the fortnightly organ of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International



arab east:
new U.S.
hegemony?

in this issue...

Price 20p from IMG branches, or 25p (including postage) from RED BOOKS, 97 Caledonian Road, N.1. Issue No. 2 is also still available from RED BOOKS at the same price.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are £3 per year (25 issues) — cheques/POs payable to 'Inprecor' should be sent to: Inprecor, 97 Caledonian Road, N.1.



Dear Red Weekly,

In his very informative look at Indochina ('Puppets in Crisis') in your issue of 6 June, David Johnson makes the claim that the Paris Agreement on Vietnam is 'implicitly dead'.

I would like to know: (i) on what basis he makes this claim; and (ii) what he believes is the position of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) on this.

It has always been clear that a correct implementation of the Paris Agreement would be advantageous to the PRG and the other Vietnamese forces opposed to the US and its puppet — and that such implementation would spell the end of Thieu, and US designs on Vietnam. This is apparent not only from the Agreement text but also from the statements and actions of the two 'parties in the South'. The contrast over the past 16 months between the PRG's defence of the Agreement and Thieu's attempts to destroy it has been dramatic.

I believe it would give Thieu and his US masters the most intense satisfaction if the PRG could be provoked into doing what Thieu did on 4 January this year — that is, tear up the Agreement and proclaim the restarting of the war. It would give the right wing in the US that vital bit of ammunition they need to push through the ammunition and the US aid that Thieu needs to survive. To assert, as your writer does, that the Agreement is 'implicitly dead' is, at present, to put oneself in very bad company indeed. The Agreement exists. It was a victory for the Vietnamese struggle for indepen-

The meaning of the Accords

dence. We must press for its implementation, unless and until those Vietnamese with whom we say we are in solidarity tell us the Agreement is dead.

Yours,
PHILIP BRAITHWAITE

DAVID JOHNSON REPLIES:

There are two ways of looking at the Paris Accords. One is to see them as simply a legal document; the other way is to recognise that the Accords represented the balance of forces in Vietnam at the time of signing, and were an interim phase in the revolutionary process. This second analysis is the only one possible for revolutionary marxists.

When they were signed, the Accords formalised three trends: the shift in the balance of forces towards the PRG; the inability of the National Liberation Front to win a total victory over the puppet regime (thanks to the insufficient aid from Moscow and Peking, and the US saturation bombing of North Vietnam); and the humiliating defeat of US strategy in the area.

For these reasons, we agree completely with comrade Braithwaite that the Accords were a victory for the liberation fighters. The Fourth International has consistently made it clear that it is necessary to press for the implementation of these points of the Accords which would assist the revolutionary struggle.

We have also made it clear, however, that certain points were concessions forced on the Vietnamese by the imperialists, which could only hamper the revolutionary process. We would therefore not demand that the PRG implement them. This is why the Fourth International has never called for the total implementation of the Accords, but rather has raised demands relating to those points which would take the struggle forward: leg release of prisoners, democratic rights, withdrawal of US aid, and so on.

What has to be understood is that the implementation of the Accords could never have been automatic but was always — and still is — dependent on the balance of forces. It can only come about by struggle, not through diplomacy. One of the central reasons why Thieu's regime is crumbling is because the NLF have not sat back and waited for their problems to be solved by the Accords, but have continued to rely on their own strength.

In this sense, therefore — that a simple application of the Accords is not enough to destroy the puppet regime — the Accords are well and truly 'dead'.

Incidentally, the switch to offensive military action by the NLF (the capture of Ben Cat and numerous other ARVN bases, the attacks on Bien Hoa and on the oil depots), and the new six-point programme of the PRG suggest that the PRG too now accepts that the Accords — by themselves — are not an adequate axis for struggle.

In his last sentence, comrade Braithwaite raises an important point concerning the solidarity movement which seemingly underlines his whole approach to the question.

Solidarity action has three related functions: to aid the anti-imperialist struggle; to limit the manoeuvres of the imperialists in their own countries; and to educate the workers' vanguard in the imperialist countries.

It is our firm conviction that we cannot best serve the interests of the Vietnamese revolution by acting as an extension of their diplomatic apparatus. Only by independently presenting our positions and analyses can we educate the solidarity movement, develop tactics suitable for the imperialist heartlands, and open a political dialogue with the Vietnamese comrades which can only be of benefit to them and us.

To subordinate our activity to the diplomatic requirements of the PRG, and to follow every tactical shift they make in response to imperialism's attacks, would mean that we should fail completely in our revolutionary duty.

Why the Portuguese Government collapsed

THE FIRST PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT of Portugal, ushered into office by the military coup of 25 April, has collapsed under the weight of its own contradictions.

It came apart at the seams when some of its top members were blocked from carrying out a right-wing manoeuvre by the young officers in the Movement of the Armed Forces.

Five Government ministers, including the Prime Minister, had demanded that the power of the Prime Minister be increased, the planned general elections be put off until 1976, and instead an election for President be held immediately.

PHONY DEMOCRACY

Their aim was to avoid an election which would expose the extreme weakness of the capitalist parties, and reflect the immense popular support for the parties of the left (Socialist and Communist).

At the same time they wanted to give the new regime a phony 'democratic' image through a Presidential election. This would have out-manoeuvred the Socialist and Communist Parties, who have given total and uncritical support to President Spínola, and would therefore have been unable to put up any effective opposition.

However the young officers of the Armed Forces Movement were not yet prepared to accept such a deviation from their pledge to restore bourgeois democracy in Portugal.

Now one of their own number, Colonel Vasco Gonçalves (reported to be on the left of the Armed Forces Movement), has taken over as Prime Minister.

Underlying this elaborate game of musical Governments is a simple reality: the coalition Government was and will be firmly committed to the maintenance of a capitalist Portugal, while the country's basic problems — the colonial wars, the demands of the working class, the economic difficulties — cannot be effectively tackled within this framework.

For this reason all the efforts of the Socialist and Communist Parties

to patch up an alliance with 'left' capitalists and military men is doomed to failure.

SWING

If the Armed Forces Movement — which, after all, represents junior career officers — is still on the left flank of the Government coalition, it could rapidly swing around under the impact of the continuing political paralysis of the Government and the developing economic crisis.

It is for this reason that the recent creation of a new military unit, COPCON ('operation continental command'), is ominous. Under the direction of one of the key leaders of the 25 April coup (recently promoted from major to general and appointed military Governor of Lisbon), this body is charged with ensuring the implementation of the programme of the Armed Forces Movement and with the coordination of security operations throughout Portugal. COPCON will have its own specially selected troops and will be concerned with problems of 'civil unrest'.

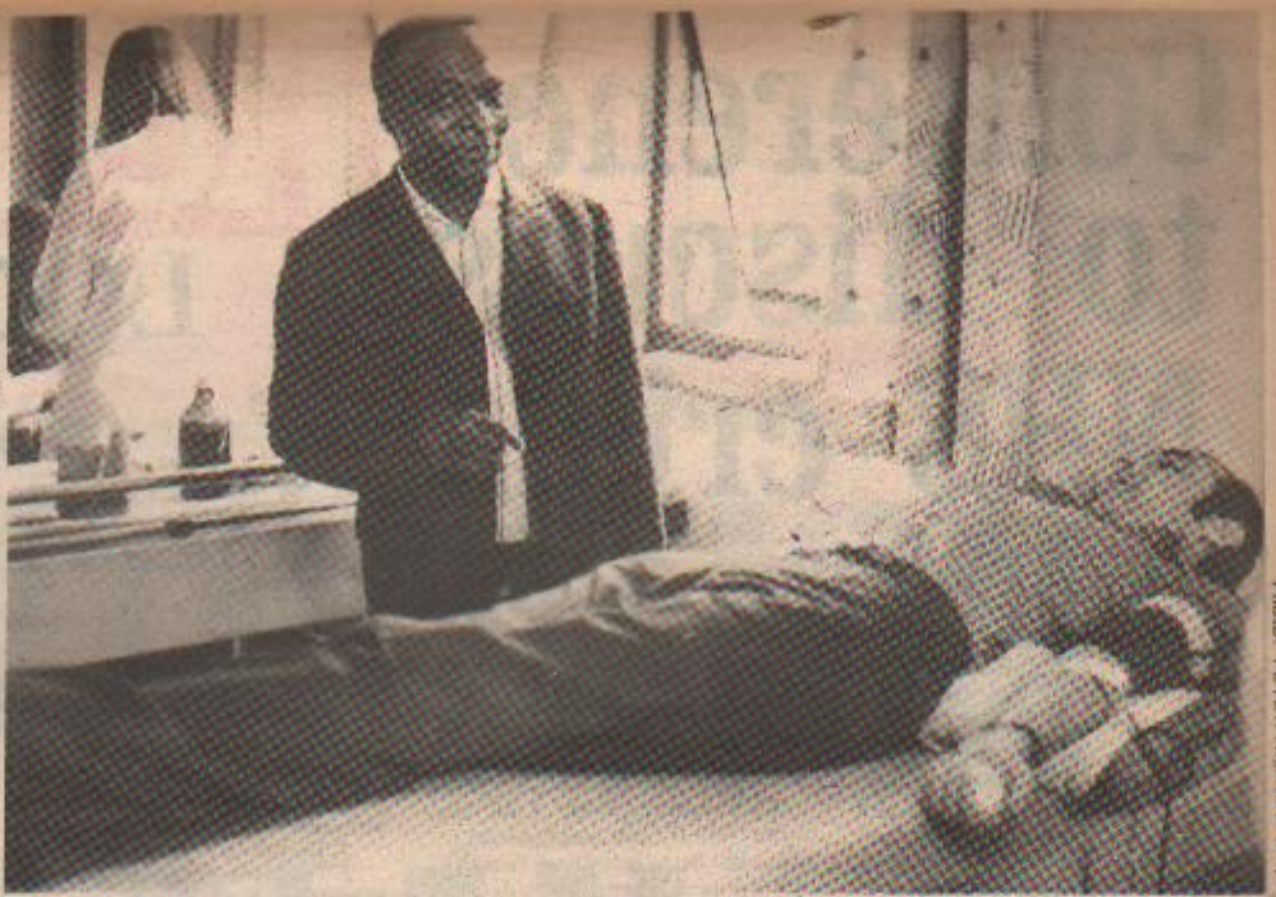
COPCON is thus both a new attempt to build up an effective repressive force at the disposal of the ruling class, and a new centre for the political activity of the armed forces. If coalition Government becomes unworkable, COPCON could become the basis for establishing direct and permanent military rule.

Such a development — which would in no way be in the interests of the Portuguese workers and peasants — can only be blocked by immediate, mass political action.

The first step to thwart the ruling class's manoeuvres with the coalition Government is by pressing forward the demand for immediate, democratic elections to a constituent assembly.

The only way to bar the road to a military take-over is through agitation and demonstrations against the colonial wars, and through the stimulation of democratically elected soldiers and sailors committees.

Once again the Communist and Socialist Parties reveal their total bankruptcy by refusing to carry out such activities, and instead placing all their faith in the 'good will' of the officers of the Armed Forces Movement.



FRELIMO spokesman Daniel Mbanze at a London blood-donor session for the liberation fighters in Portugal's African colonies. The NHS refused to make the blood into plasma, so it had to be flown specially to Poland first.

FRELIMO SPOKESMEN VISIT LONDON

Warning of dangers in new situation

'We are pleased to be able to tell you that on 1 July FRELIMO opened a new front in the province of Zambesia', two spokesmen of the Mozambique liberation movement told a meeting of representatives of left-wing organisations in London last Thursday.

Oscar Monteiro and Daniel Mbanze then went on to explain how the decision to open a new military front had only been taken after years of steady political preparation. 'As a result we now have an armed force of 2,000 men in the area. These include many who were armed by the Portuguese but have now joined FRELIMO.'

To some these claims may have seemed extravagant. But they were rapidly confirmed in action. The very next day, 12 July, the liberation forces captured the town of Morrumbala in the province, forcing the evacuation by air of the colonial administrators. This was the first such success in ten years for the guerrillas, who have hitherto been confined to the countryside.

DANGER

But Oscar Monteiro and Daniel Mbanze were not in London to proclaim victory over Portuguese colonialism. On the contrary, they were sent to Europe by the leadership of FRELIMO to warn of the danger that 'democracy in Portugal could be used as a cover to perpetuate the colonial system in Africa'.

As Mbanze explained: 'The Portuguese Government is still a colonialist Government, even if there are democratic, progressive forces in it... Unfortunately, the

fact that there are anti-colonialist forces in the Government creates the impression that the Government as a whole is anti-colonialist, and this has tended to demobilise public opinion internationally.'

One might also add that it is unfortunate — if understandable — that FRELIMO apparently fails to grasp the real nature of these 'democratic, progressive forces', and to understand that the Communist Party and Socialist Party will in the last resort always remain tied to the coat-tails of imperialism. But FRELIMO's determination to continue the armed struggle until final victory — a ceasefire before independence 'would have been a betrayal of the revolution', remarked Mbanze — holds out good prospects for revolutionary marxists in the struggle to remedy this weakness.

MANOEUVRES

Certainly FRELIMO has proved more than capable of countering recent Portuguese manoeuvres to weaken the position of the liberation forces: the attempt to build up 'third force' groups like GUMO; the use of African mercenaries disguised as FRELIMO guerrillas to attack civilian targets; the attempts to foster tribal divisions in the country; the talk of referendums and 'self-determination' to cloud the issue of independence; and finally the propaganda campaign for a ceasefire which led up to last month's abortive 'negotiations' at Lusaka in Zambia.

Oscar Monteiro also told of growing South African interference, aimed at creating a polarisation between blacks and whites and fostering a climate of racial war in which a declaration of UDI might stand some chance of success. He pointed out that most of the DGS (secret police) agents had fled to South Africa after the Portuguese coup, and were now

working in a special unit with BOSS (the South African secret police).

It was these agents, he declared, who were behind a new white terrorist group called AMA which had attacked the 'Democrats of Mozambique' — a multi-racial grouping which supports FRELIMO. AMA was an attempt to repeat the OAS experience in Algeria — even refusing in the same way to say what the initials stand for, in order to breed greater fear.

ECONOMIC FORCES

But this should not, be warned, be used as an argument in Portugal for going slow on moves towards independence for the colonies. On the contrary, he pointed out, rapid independence for the colonies was inextricably bound up with the establishment of democracy in Portugal.

'Fascism has been defeated, but it has not yet been crushed. The economic forces which used fascism are still strong; they have not been dismantled. These are the ones who want to continue colonialism, and it is they who will act as a reserve of power for the fascist forces in Portugal. There can therefore be no contradiction between the fight against these forces for independence in the colonies and the consolidation of democracy in Portugal.'

True enough; but unfortunately the 'democratic, progressive forces' of the Communist and Socialist parties see things rather differently — indeed, have chosen to work hand-in-glove with the representatives of these capitalist economic forces in the Portuguese Government. It is only the revolutionary forces in Portugal — including our comrades of the LCI — who have consistently raised the demand for Portuguese withdrawal and total independence for the African colonies.

MARTIN METEYARD

NEW SPLITS AMONG RHODESIAN WHITES

The uncertainty surrounding future developments in the Portuguese colonies — especially Mozambique — has led to new splits among the white minority in Rhodesia.

If Mozambique falls under the control of FRELIMO, and the latter continues its present policies, this will clearly have serious consequences for Rhodesia — much of whose trade is channelled through the Mozambique port of Beira. This explains the urgency with which a new rail link with South Africa is being built.

But the central problem for the Rhodesian whites is that, unlike South Africa or mineral-rich Angola, their territory is of little importance and interest to imperialism. It has comparatively few mineral resources, and its manufacturing industries serve only the very limited local market.

The most influential group politically remain the tobacco farmers, who form

the backbone of the ruling Rhodesia Front party. But imperialism has no direct interest in preserving their privileged position. The South African Government's cool reactions to their policies have several times demonstrated their isolation — for instance, at the time of UDI in 1965, or when the Zambian border was closed in 1973.

Indeed, the only thing which ensures Vorster's continued support for Ian Smith is the fear that a majority-ruled Rhodesia would bring the liberation fighters' bases that much closer to the Republic of South Africa.

Such considerations lie at the root of the foundation of the new Rhodesia Party, which hopes to put up candidates against the Rhodesia Front in all 50 of the white seats in the elections on 30 July. The new party is led by former Front Minister William Harper, who says its policy is to provide 'security of tenure for all races and ensure the country's future stability'. Betraying the fears of the more far-sighted sections of the white

population, another defector from the Front, Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Tanner, describes UDI as 'the biggest political and tactical blunder in our country's history'.

Whites like Tanner and Harper now seek to halt Smith's headlong rush towards apartheid, in favour of a policy of token concessions to the African masses. These would be designed to render more secure the dominant position of whites in Rhodesia.

Chief potential allies in this operation are the leaders of the African National Council (ANC). This body's chairman, Bishop Muzorewa, spent several months this year in discussions with Smith. Ultimately the proposals with which he returned for a marginal increase in African parliamentary representation were thrown out by the Council's executive, understandably influenced by the hostility of the mass of Africans to such a sell-out.

Nonetheless, ANC is still very much in the market for discussions. This was made clear on 2 July by Reverend Cnaan

Banana, a member of a delegation to London, who talked once again of the possibility of a 'constitutional conference on the future of Rhodesia', to be attended by British ministers as well as blacks and whites in Rhodesia.

Behind the ability of the ANC to play the leading public role in Rhodesian African politics lies the weakness of the ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union) and ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) liberation movements. In the last ten years their impact has been minimal as compared, for instance, with that of their comrades of FRELIMO in Mozambique.

The recent military alliance between the two has paid off with an increase in guerrilla effectiveness in the North East of the country. But ANC is still able to dominate African politics in the crucial urban areas.

SOLIDARITY

The possibility of success for the new Rhodesia Party's manoeuvres therefore

From TONY SOUTHALL in Zambia

rest on two factors: firstly, the extent to which they are able to convince whites of the blind alley of Smith's policies, and make a real impact in the forthcoming elections; secondly, the extent to which the new upsurge of the armed liberation movements is sustained so that it becomes an alternative pole of attraction to ANC's politics of negotiation with the white masters of Rhodesia.

The high level of struggle in the Portuguese colonies compared to that in Rhodesia has meant that they have been the focus of most recent international solidarity actions. It is time to modify this trend.

In particular, it is necessary to recognise — as do the comrades of FRELIMO and ZANU — that the two struggles are closely connected; and that an important way to combat the illusions of advance through constitutional negotiations and the nine-year farce of economic sanctions is by strengthening the international movement of solidarity with the armed struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe.

Conference to discuss NHS crisis

The National Health Service is tottering towards complete collapse.

Inflation — predicted to reach 25 per cent per annum — adding to the crisis is now biting deeply into its budget, make a sick joke of Mrs Castle's interim £40 million award.

The worst and most devastating effects of this crisis fall on the health workers, grossly underpaid and overworked, and the working class, whose health is subordinated to the cost accounting of the capitalist state.

An eighteen year old student nurse outside of London draws an annual pittance of £816 a year. The NHS waiting list is 500,000. A Department of Health study of hospitals with long waiting lists, admits that 40 per cent of those had been waiting at least a year and one-fifth of them for two years.

Last June only 32 of the 75 pay-beds in the Nuffield Wing at Guy were occupied. The rich cannot jump the queue if consultants haven't saved empty beds to hawk on the market!

The only reason that the ruling class is interested in the NHS is that they see it as a cheap way — paid

for by the working class — of getting their labour force 'repaired' and made ready once again for work. It is against an 'expensive' and preventive health service. Harley Street consultants always prefer an abortion for the rich rather than getting involved with the pregnancies of the poor.

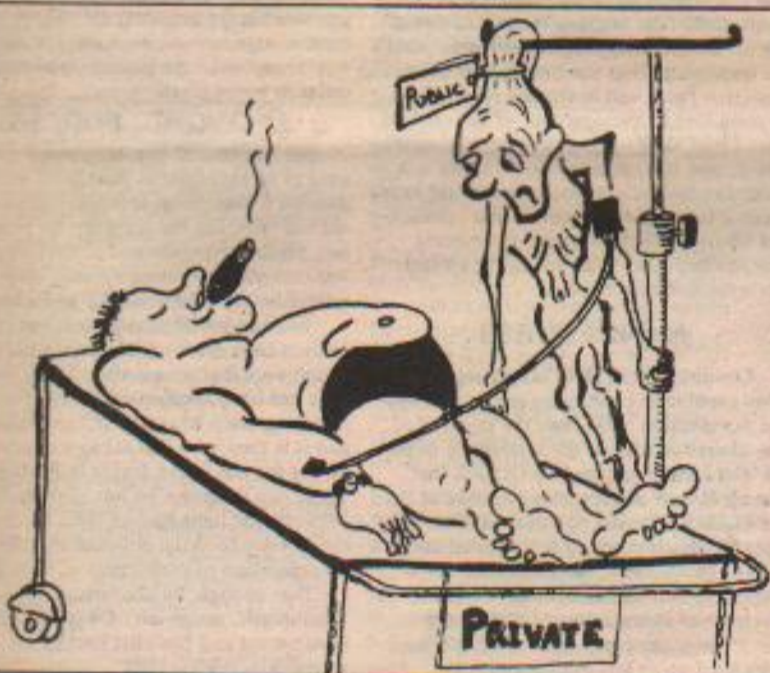
The recent eruptions of militancy in the NHS are not simply about wages but bring into sharp focus the burning question of how to develop a preventive and comprehensive health service.

The conference called by the Central London branch of ASTMS and sponsored by ten other union branches will be discussing the crisis in the NHS and how health workers and the trade union movement can unite against the capitalist attacks on the NHS.

For a complete ban on private patients — enforced by the health workers

For the blacking of all construction and supply work on private medical building by the building unions.

For a workers inquiry into the NHS, headed by health workers. The inquiry to determine what money and resources are needed to provide a fully comprehensive NHS.



one day conference CRISIS IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

Saturday — 27 July — 11 am

University of London Students' Union, Malet St., WC1.

Details from: Colin Smith, 18 Fife Street, London, N1.

Support Red Weekly - SUBSCRIBE!

Rates: £4 per year, £2 for 6 months
Foreign £6 per year, £9 airmail

Name

Address

Please send cash with order to:
Red Weekly, 97 Caledonian Road, N.1.

Red Weekly

LOCAL ACTIONS SUPPORT HEALTH WORKERS

The London region area conference of MATSA — nursing section of the General & Municipal Workers Union — has called for a TUC Inquiry into the NHS.

The resolution says that the terms of reference of the Inquiry should be:

1. Pay and conditions of all NHS personnel.
2. The standard of the health service
3. The banning of private practice in medicine. This is to include the incorporation of private hospitals into the NHS.

A second resolution carried at the conference calls on the national committee of the GMWU 'to instruct its members in the NHS to refuse to service private patients and to refuse to work with agency staff.'

MINERS SOLIDARITY STRIKE GOES AHEAD

The majority of the Yorkshire miners have supported the recommendation of the NUM Area Executive to stage a one-day solidarity strike for the nurses.

The vote has been taken in the pits and the Area Council of the NUM will decide next Monday on the exact date. This will be a major step forward in the nurses' campaign and points the way for other trade unionists to show their support.

Since their victories of 1972 and 1974 the miners have been looked to for leadership by rank and file militants in many other sections of the movement. However, this coming solidarity strike is the first step by the miners to play a *conscious* leadership role.

RECOGNISE

The miners recognise that the nurses' struggle is not only for better wages and a better health service but is a fight against the social contract — a 'contract' which only serves to keep wages tied down for the whole of the working class in a period of rampant inflation. Given, too, the difficulties that face the nurses in taking industrial action it is up to other sections of the movement, who are much better equipped, to take such action on behalf of the nurses.

As soon as the date is fixed by the NUM all trade unionists in the area should campaign to follow the lead shown by the miners and make that day a really massive show of force not only in support of the nurses but against the social contract.

Unfortunately, attempts by IMG militants to do precisely this in the large Sheffield engineering industry were sabotaged by the Communist Party. An IMG resolution to support the one-day strike was passed overwhelmingly at the shop stewards' quarterly but the CP-dominated District Committee reversed the decision on trumped-up 'technical' grounds.

BEST WAY

There would be no better way of gathering support than for the miners themselves to spend their one-day strike travelling around the district addressing workers at local factories and building sites. This way all 'technical' problems would be avoided and a widespread strike guaranteed.

WESTMINSTER

Westminster Trades Council is organising a picket of the Wellington Private Hospital in St John's Wood on Tuesday 23 July between 11 am to 2.0 pm.

This action was agreed at a public meeting attended by over 100 people. The meeting called by the Trades Council was addressed by several speakers from the health service, including Sue Spilling, a nursing member of COHSE and a member of the IMG.

One doctor made a sharp attack on consultants who, he said, 'in no way speak for the mass of doctors'. He appealed for 'continued guerrilla' action by all workers in the health service to wipe private practice off the map.

Westminster Trades Council have invited all trade unionists in London to attend.

PONTYPOOL

Last Saturday, Pontypool Industrial Trades Council held a three-hour open-air meeting in support of the nurses and other health workers' pay demands.

The solidarity meeting was held in the town centre of Cwmbran, a south-Wales new town.

Shoppers going through the town square were given leaflets about the health workers' struggle and heard speakers from the Labour Party, the Communist Party and the IMG on this subject.

The Trades Council called on the Labour Government to take measures to prevent the collapse of the NHS and to say 'no to private patients'.

The IMG speakers called for the formation of trade union support groups and for the working class to take action to defend the NHS.

'NO TREATMENT FOR YOU' NURSE TELLS COP



Police brutality is not just restricted to anti-fascists in Red Lion Square or Shrewsbury pickets.

Nurses from the Royal Free Group of Hospitals have just been given a taste of British justice and our 'kindly' coppers.

Clashes came as 150 nurses and radiographers were prevented by police from marching along main shopping streets.

At the end of Devonshire Hill, scuffles broke out as nurses broke the police cordon and made for their intended route. Sister Stacey who was

in the front line suffered injuries to her shoulder and had to leave the march.

A radiographer said: 'They kept us out of everybody's way. We were told we could not go up Haverstock Hill because there were road works. But there were no road works there at all.'

Learning quickly from this experience one nurse told Hampstead police boss, Chief Superintendent Jones: 'Don't ever come to the Royal Free for treatment after this, because you won't get it.' Let's hope the nurses took a few more numbers that day.