

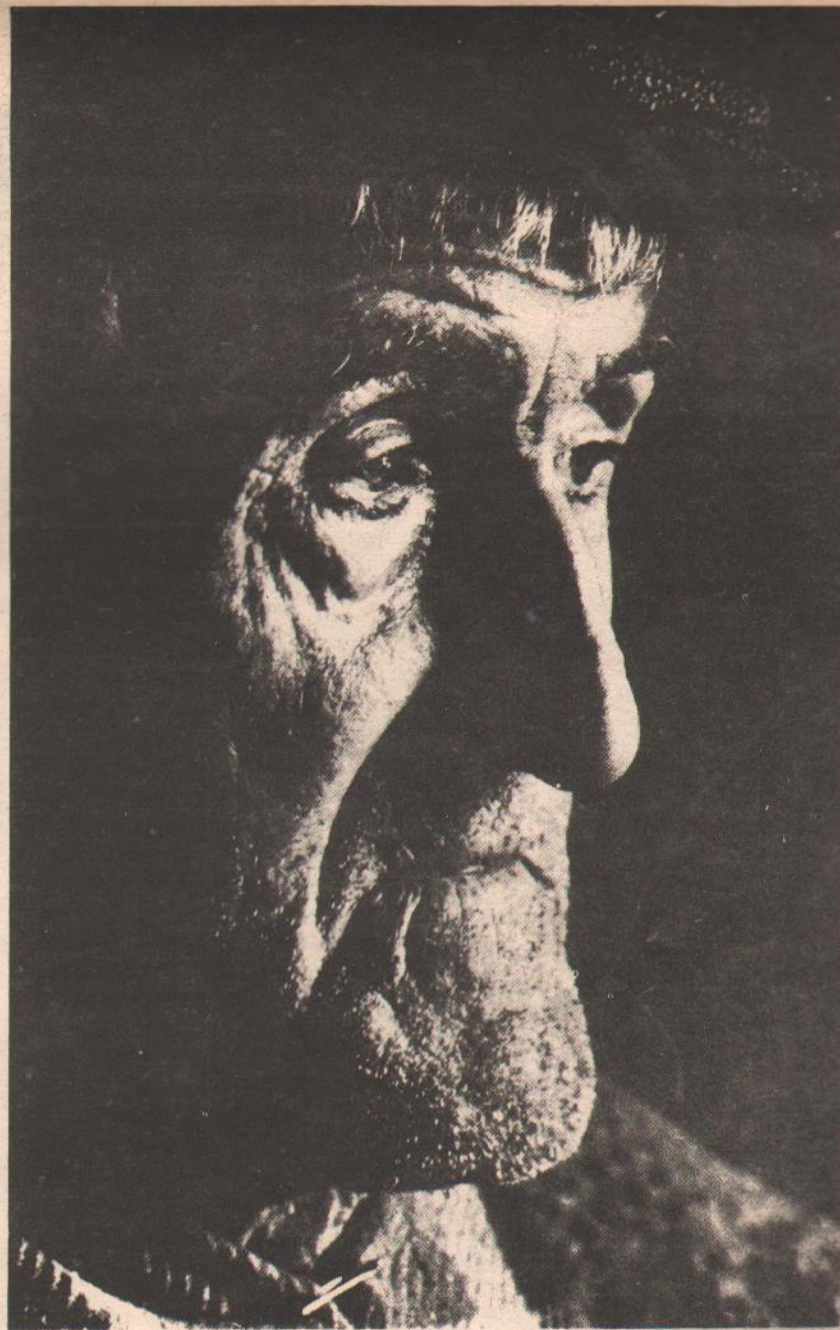
RED WEEKLY

3 JULY 1975

No. 108

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SOCIAL CONTRACT



= SOCIAL POVERTY

While the City of London bleated over the falling value of the pound, and called for the TUC to accept still more vicious attacks on the working class, a shock new report shows clearly how the year of the Social Contract has already meant increasing poverty and misery for the poor. According to the most recent survey by the Child Poverty Action Group, 700,000 parents go to bed hungry once a fortnight so that their children can be fed.

Britain's 5 million poor are being forced to exist on a worsening sub-standard diet. They buy 70 per cent less milk, 59 per cent less butter, 48 per cent less meat and 36 per cent less fish than the average family.

Instead of eating the necessary body-building foods, the poor buy 260 per cent more baked beans, 180 per cent more margarine, 130 per cent more potatoes and 106 per cent more cheap cheese. No wonder Frank Field, director of the CPAG stated: 'They eat less than the safety level for good health. It makes them open to illness. It is why the poor children are smaller than the others. It's why rickets, the bowing of legs due to lack of milk and calcium is coming back.'

INADEQUATE

British families on average spend £3.48 per head each week on food — a woefully inadequate sum — but

by Bob Pennington

the poor spend only half that amount. Even more desperate is the plight of a mother with a child under five getting Supplementary Benefit. She gets a penny-pinching 39p a day — £2.73p a week — for food, heating and clothing. She never got to that party that the well-heeled Minister Tony Crosland callously declared 'is over now'.

Under the Social Contract the lot of the poor will get even worse. The latest forecasts for unemployment are 1 3/4 million in a year. By Christmas 20,000 of this summer's school leavers will still be on the dole. In areas like Gateshead 25 per cent of this year's school leavers will still not be working. Manchester has only 337 vacant jobs for its 5,000 school leavers.

It is the poor who have the worst

housing. It is the poor who are most dependent on the social services. It is the poor whose children go to the most overcrowded schools. It is the poor who have the worst health and the greatest need of a viable, efficient health service. But Labour is cutting house building. The social services are being slashed. School building programmes are being cut. The NHS has lengthening waiting lists and is being subject to further cut-backs.

SACRIFICING

What is occurring is that the Labour Government is sacrificing the very health and living standards of the working class to the defence of the profit system. The Social Contract is the bond by which Labour binds the working class to the sinking ship of capitalism.

Not only does the Social Contract

depress the living standards of the poor, but its cuts in real wages accompanied by reductions in public expenditure actually swell the growing number of people living below the poverty line.

When the TUC talk about a Social Contract under capitalism they are condemning ever-growing numbers of people to poverty and ill health.

TO THE RESCUE

Instead of coming to the rescue of capitalism the labour movement has to develop a programme of action that meets the need of the working class. This means a £40 minimum wage for the employed, the unemployed, the pensioners, and the sick. It means that all wage increases should be tied to a sliding scale ensuring that for every single one point increase in the cost of living there is an automatic 70p rise.

A vast increase, not a decrease in public expenditure is needed so that the houses, hospitals, schools etc. which are so urgently needed can be built. This must be a step to the nationalisation of all basic industry. The labour movement should in-

struct the TUC to break off all negotiations about Social Contract Mark II. They should be told that their responsibility is to the working class and that responsibility demands an end to collaboration with capitalism and a fight for improved wages and for a socialist alternative to capitalism's death agonies.



INSIDE -

INTERVIEW WITH ERIC HEFFER - page 2

ernest mandel on portugal - centre pages - ernest mc

WHICH ROAD FOR THE LEFT?

RED WEEKLY INTERVIEWS
ERIC HEFFER, SACKED BY
WILSON FOR OPPOSING
THE EEC, ON HIS VIEWS ON
THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE

LABOUR MOVEMENT

● Crosland and other leading figures in the Government have called for big cuts in social expenditure. Will you oppose such cuts? *

Undoubtedly I will not support cuts — although I would not of course oppose cuts in defence. But all cuts that lead to unemployment or a decrease in living standards have to be opposed.

The Tribune group will meet to discuss its attitude but there is not much doubt that we would vote against. As sometimes you are not given the chance of a vote on these questions, we would if necessary have to force a debate in the House of Commons on this issue. If the Group so decides, I for one will be involved and will be in the division lobbies against the cuts, if the opportunity arises.

● What is your attitude to any Government imposition of incomes policy?

We are completely against any statutory incomes policy. It is against the decisions of the Party. We would obviously vote against it.

● What is your attitude to the Industry Bill?

We will oppose any trimming down of the Industry Bill and any concessions to the Confederation of British Industry. If there are concessions to the CBI then we will have to organise the biggest opposition that we can. If need be we will have to take our forces into the voting lobbies.

But we should be clear that the Industry Bill is merely an instrument that can be used to extend public ownership provided that the Government shows a willingness for this. To suggest that the Industry Bill will ever be the means of effecting the socialist transformation of British society is going too far. It can be used to advance socialism, but it is not in itself adequate and it has already been weakened from what was envisaged in the Labour Programme. I personally am a believer in the good old fashioned policies of the nationalisation of basic industries and that does not necessarily need a National Enterprise Board.

● Wilson denounced demands for the nationalisation of Chrysler during the recent strike. Do you not think that it is necessary to nationalise all firms introducing redundancies?

I am only sorry that the workers at Chrysler were not demanding nationalisation. I would have been much happier if the workers had been calling for public ownership.

Although in the past nationalised industries have not always been the best protectors of workers' jobs, obviously in a planned economy jobs would only be cut when alternative employment was available. Here the National Enterprise Board could be useful in building up publicly owned industry in areas where there is a shortage of jobs, such as Merseyside, Glasgow, the North East, etc.

● What measures are needed to combat unemployment — which is clearly going to rise massively even without cuts?

TRIBUNE'S ECONOMIC PROPOSALS

Last week the Tribune group of MPs put forward their proposals for economic policies to deal with the capitalist crisis. These centre on penal taxation of all incomes over £10,000 a year; no social expenditure cuts but a gaining of £2,000 million through defence and road building cuts and changes in corporation tax; a temporary price freeze on essential items of working class expenditure; an 'on average' maintenance of working class living standards over the next two years with an increase in living standards for the worst off; decreases in the level of wage settlements to be carried out only with the consent of the trade unions; selective import controls; planning agreements with the largest firms; a doubling of investment in manufacturing industry through oil bonds, recycling of pension funds, and control over banks and financial institutions pending their nationalisation through emergency legislation; and a central economic planning unit in which the whole labour movement, including the trade unions, would participate. As the latest policy of the Labour left on the economy these Tribune proposals are worth looking at in some detail.

Firstly it must be said that on one of these proposals, selective import controls, Tribune line themselves up with completely anti-working class forces. This demand is completely reactionary because what it implies is that we must stop the competition of foreign firms so that German or Pakistani workers are made unemployed instead of British ones. Furthermore these proposals are completely utopian as a way of saving jobs — it is the crisis of capitalism, not 'foreign competition' which is responsible for unemployment. Import controls by all countries — and why should these 'foreign competitors' not retaliate? — would just lead to an even more rapid collapse of production.

DANGEROUSLY VAGUE

It would, however, be a gigantic slander to call the programme as a whole reactionary. On most points it is well intentioned — but dangerously vague and unworkable. For example, it includes a call to improve the income of the worst off, but contains no proposal for the minimum guaranteed wage and income necessary to achieve it. But Tribune also says that real incomes should only be maintained 'on average'. As the income of the lowest paid is supposed to go up does that mean, to maintain the average, that Tribune advocates wage cuts for the rest of the working class?

If we assume that Tribune is in fact opposed to wage cuts, how are real incomes to be maintained? The one policy which would guarantee this — monthly cost of living increases worked out on a working class cost of living index — doesn't figure in the Tribune statement. This is all the more serious as any application of the Tribune plan would produce massive inflation.

EXPENDITURE CUTS

Tribune is of course right to oppose any cuts in social expenditure. But that is not enough. If expenditure is merely kept at the same level in money terms then with 25 per cent inflation massive real cuts will take place. In order to maintain the level of social expenditure — a vital part of working class living standards — it is necessary to have automatic increases to compensate for inflation, ie. a sliding scale of public expenditure.

Even worse, there are no serious proposals from Tribune to deal with unemployment. It is true that stopping expenditure cuts will do something to prevent unemployment from rising even more than it is at present. But do Tribune really think that the key question is whether we should have 1¼ million unemployed — which is what will develop on present projections — rather than the 2 million we will have with expenditure cuts? The real question is how to stop either 1¼ million or 2 million unemployed, but Tribune propose none of the policies — an emergency programme of public works, work sharing with no loss of pay, nationalisation of all firms creating redundancy — which are necessary really to get to grips with the crisis.

taxation on incomes over £10,000 a year, and nationalisation of the financial institutions — there can be no disagreement. Others, particularly the demand for a centralised planning organisation, contain the germ of a good idea which should be extended — in this case not so as to include 'participation' of the labour movement, but so that the whole process will be under the control of the working class organisations. But these best parts of the Tribune proposals are quite clearly unenforceable by the means they propose.

Take first the nationalisation of the banks. In 1950-51 the ruling class showed in the case of steel that it will resort to sabotage when it is opposed to nationalisation. The banks and finance system of the City of London are the most powerful in the entire capitalist world outside the United States. Any attempt to take over these institutions will be fought tooth and nail by the ruling class. But Tribune put forward none of the proposals for opening the books and for workers control which are necessary to break such capitalist resistance.

CAPITALIST SABOTAGE

Take also the question of planning agreements. This is itself a hopelessly confused demand — real planning of the economy can't be achieved without its nationalisation. But the experience of every country where there has been a 'left-wing' government, most obviously in Chile and Portugal, shows that firms, far from participating in 'planning agreements', systematically sabotage the economy. The steps necessary to break that sabotage are again the opening of all the books of the capitalist firms and the establishment of workers control of industry. Without such radical measures Tribunes' planning agreements, let alone steps to a real planned economy, would simply melt like snow before the manoeuvres of the capitalist monopolies.

As for a price freeze, this would be easily evaded unless working class price committees — another form of workers control — existed to supervise it.

But the one thing which really rules the Tribune proposals out of court is their complete silence on the Social Contract. To read their plan you would never imagine for one moment that at the present time wage-cutting proposals put forward by Jack Jones are being prepared by the TUC. What is Tribune's attitude to this scheme? Whom will they support if the AUEW, NUM or other workers go into struggle against it — the TUC or the militant workers?

TRIBUNE'S CHOICE

Tribune isn't going to be able to avoid a choice on this. Anyone supporting their proposals should think through the implications carefully. If the miners went on strike, for example, anyone supporting the Tribune plan but not taking a position against the Jones plan could well end up supporting wage cuts against the very group of workers who defeated Heath and put the Labour Government in



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



The power of the workers' movement - must be organised against Wilson and his policies

crisis of world capitalism. The Labour Party has to adopt policies that meet the situation here. This means a totally new economic strategy. I would suggest the following measures are needed:

- A series of selective import controls.
- Measures to be taken that ensure a rigid control over the outflow of capital.
- The taking over of the portfolio of firms' foreign assets by the Government.
- The taking into public ownership of the banks, insurance companies and the finance houses as soon as possible - and in the meantime an Act for control of them.

This latter step would provide the means to extend public ownership and enable us to plan the economy.

We would also need a crash programme to deal with unemployment. This would mean extending and increasing expenditure in the public sector, in construction, and in other fields, rather than cutting expenditure.

A socialist policy now, not in 20 years time, is the only way to deal with the crisis.

● **What is your attitude to any incomes policy and to the Jack Jones proposals to the TUC?**

I take the view that workers fighting for higher wages to defend and improve their living standards under capitalism have every right to do so. The Jack Jones proposal is one of many under discussion in the TUC.

I would not presume to tell trade unionists to stop fighting for higher wages. If I was still on the shop floor I would be helping in that fight.

● **What is your attitude to the Social Contract?**

I believe in a Socialist Contract, not just a Social Contract. Until we have really extended public ownership, introduced higher taxes for the rich, and made society much more egalitarian - in other words, until we have changed the class nature of our society - you cannot talk seriously about planning wages.

● **What do you think will happen at the Labour Party conference this year?**

The rank and file of the Labour Party will have some forthright statements to make. There is a deep feeling of having been cheated and even betrayed by what happened over the FEC and

brought in economic policies involving severe cuts in public expenditure then the bitterness of the rank and file will have grown even more.

So I think that this could be both a momentous and possibly a very stormy conference.

● **Do you think that the left could stay in the Government in view of its policies?**

I personally could not stay in the Government - although that is a decision for each individual to take. My disillusionment started on the question of Chile. I realised some people spoke one way in Opposition but it was another matter altogether to have those policies in Government.

I have absolutely no regrets about being sacked from the Government. Inside the Government if you are a left-wing member you are muted and become little else but an office boy.

● **Do you think the left should organise, and if so how?**

The campaign for socialist policies has to be taken up not just as Tribune does in Parliament but also throughout the entire country. We need a series of great meetings in the cities and the towns and in all the constituencies.

It means that we in the Tribune Group have to strengthen our ties with the trade union members at national, local, district and at shop floor level.

As MPs we are only as strong as the mass movement outside, and we need their support and backing.

I think that the Tribune Group must not simply react to issues - important as that may be - but it also has to develop policies which can win wide support. That is why the Tribune Group has now issued its second policy statement on the measures which it believes are necessary to deal with the economic situation.

● **What do you think Marxists outside the Labour Party should do?**

They should join the Labour Party without hesitation. I have always paid the political levy to the Labour Party, but at one time I worked outside the Labour Party and tried to build a new revolutionary socialist party. I believe this was wrong. Groups cannot join the Labour Party as such, but individuals can join and there is no reason why they cannot

**RED
WEEKLY**

WHAT

WE THINK

The views of Eric Heffer are important in showing both how far, and within what limits, at least some members of the Tribune group are prepared to go in opposition to Wilson's policies. On the question of public expenditure cuts and incomes policy, Tribune does now more or less say that it would vote against any such legislation. Naturally any such vote would be a step forward for the workers' movement - although the fact that the Tribune members voted for a Budget which already contained swingeing public expenditure cuts makes us sceptical that when it comes to the crunch Tribune will match their words with votes.

But if we assume for the moment that Tribune will actually vote against such moves, would that constitute an adequate reply to the crisis? The answer to this is obviously NO. Firstly the Labour left is placed on the opposite side to the interests of the working class by its refusal to condemn the Social Contract and the Jack Jones wage cutting plan. Without a campaign against this, which is just as dangerous as any social expenditure cuts, the Labour left is not merely paralysed in the struggle against Wilson but is actually refusing to oppose a policy which means drastic cuts in the standard of living of the working class.

Secondly, the economic proposals Tribune itself puts forward are not an answer to the problems confronting the working class.

NO PLAN

Thirdly, Tribune has no adequate plan for defeating the moves Wilson is preparing. On the basis even of simple arithmetic we can see that while all 80 members of the Tribune group may vote against Wilson in the House of Commons, he can still pass anything on the basis of the Tory votes which Thatcher has already promised. A purely Parliamentary strategy is completely doomed to defeat.

But if a Parliamentary strategy cannot defeat Wilson's policies it is quite clear that an extra-Parliamentary struggle, supported of course by votes in Parlia-

ment, is the only way to deal with the crisis. The views of Eric Heffer are important in showing both how far, and within what limits, at least some members of the Tribune group are prepared to go in opposition to Wilson's policies. On the question of public expenditure cuts and incomes policy, Tribune does now more or less say that it would vote against any such legislation. Naturally any such vote would be a step forward for the workers' movement - although the fact that the Tribune members voted for a Budget which already contained swingeing public expenditure cuts makes us sceptical that when it comes to the crunch Tribune will match their words with votes.

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ORGANISE OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT

This is the real choice facing the Labour left. If they do not organise openly outside Parliament against Wilson, then they will not play a real role in the most crucial fight against Wilson's policies. If, on the other hand, the Tribune left started to organise outside Parliament against Wilson's policies it would be playing a real role in the class struggle - but it can do so only by clear opposition to the Social Contract, fighting for alternative socialist policies, and struggling to remove the Wilson leadership of the Labour Party.

Unfortunately nothing in Tribune's record to date shows a willingness to undertake such a policy. A clear resignation from the Government, from any support for Wilson's policies or leadership, and a call for organising mass action by the workers' movement is what is required by the present situation. We are for united action with the Tribune left on all ques-

REGINALD PRENTICE..... THIS IS YOUR LIFE

(or how I learned to stop worrying and love the bosses)

by MICK GOSLING

Just before the 1970 General Election a troubled Labour MP accused Harold Wilson of 'falling short of our socialist standards'. From Vietnam to immigration and public spending, continued the article in the *Political Quarterly*, the Government had made 'too many concessions to middle-of-the-road opinion'. The penal clauses against trade unionists contained in *In Place of Strife* were also attacked.

A year earlier the MP, Reg Prentice, had resigned his post under Benn at the Ministry of Technology just three days after being 'reshuffled' from his position as Minister of Overseas Development. A stand had to be made for the 'more aid' lobby.

Reg Prentice has been on something of a 'spiritual' journey since then, and if the majority of Labour Party members in his Newham North East constituency are successful in their present attempts to ditch him as their MP, his travels may come to an abrupt end.

UNION-BASHING

But Prentice's present position as a right-wing union-bashing Labourite was the result of no sudden conversion. For seven years prior to his election to Parliament in 1957 he was an assistant legal secretary employed by the Transport and General Workers Union — then under the stranglehold of Arthur Deakin. There was no election of officers, Communists were proscribed from office, and the T&GWU was the central prop of the dominant right-wing bloc inside the TUC and the Labour Party, along with the Miners and the General and Municipal Workers.

As early as 1954 Prentice made an anti-Left speech at the Scarborough Labour Party Conference on German rearmament. Again in 1961, after Gaitskell's defeat on unilateral disarmament, he spoke of the left in the Labour Party as 'a little group of people' who have become 'swollen with conceit', and derided the 'moderates' for being 'too patient for too long'.

By then Prentice had left his full-time post in the T&GWU bureaucracy, which was moving 'left' following the none too soon demise of Deakin and Tiffin, and the delayed impact of the desertion in 1954 and 1955 of 18,000 dockers to the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers. Although Prentice likes to present himself as a 'no-nonsense' T&GWU sponsored MP from a dockland constituency, his experience of trade union struggle is in fact negligible. He is the political creature of the bureaucracy that ruled the T&GWU in the early fifties.

Prentice's position in the bureaucratic apparatus and his job in the legal department helped to shape both his career and his political attitudes. From the bureaucracy he acquired his contempt for the working class and a disdain for the democratic rights of the members. His

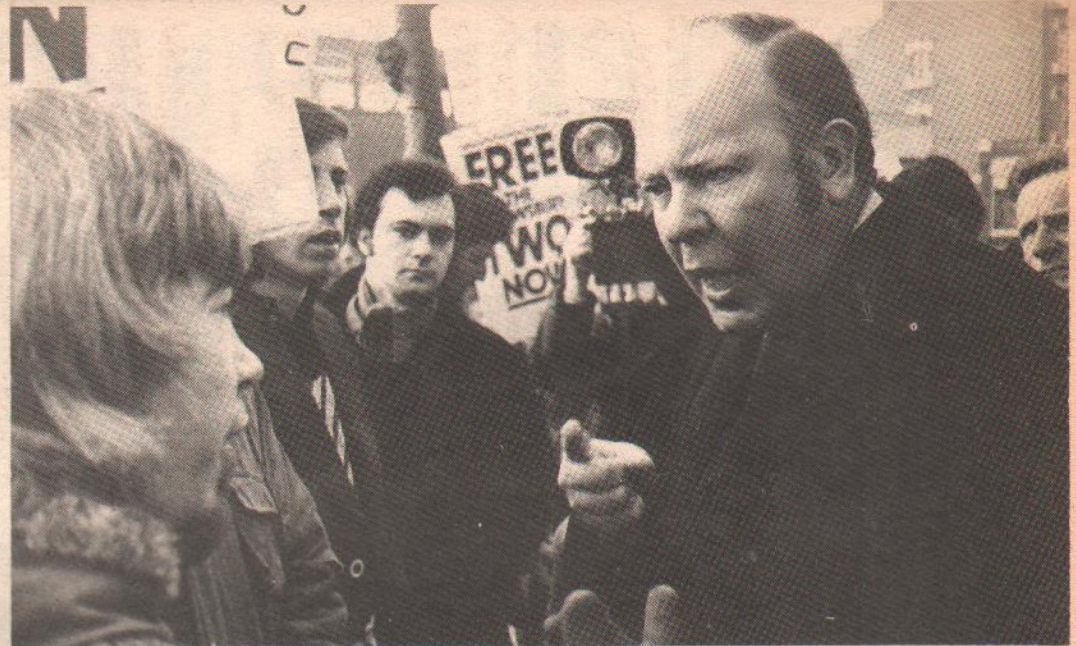


Photo: MICHAEL SHERIDAN (IFL)

Prentice forced to debate with supporters of Shrewsbury pickets in February

job in the legal department taught him reverence for bourgeois law — preferring the 'legal' solution to mass action.

Prentice's refusal to defend the Pentonville Five, jailed under the Industrial Relations Act, his onslaught on the Clay Cross councillors for refusing to implement the Tory Housing Finance Act, and his vicious attacks on the imprisoned Shrewsbury pickets were all completely predictable. So is his staunch defence of the Labour Government's decision to send frigates to the blood-soaked military dictators of Chile — after all, there was a business contract to 'honour'.

TOP OF POLL

Ironically, it was the Labour 'lefts' in the Tribune group of MPs who helped bring Prentice to prominence. In 1972 Prentice, who had never previously come in the first twelve topped the Parliamentary Labour Party poll in the Shadow Cabinet elections. Despite his attacks earlier in the year on the rail workers' go-slow and the Pentonville Five, he had been put on the Tribune slate on the bizarre basis that he was thought to be a committed anti-Marketeer. For Tribune any old anti-Market alliance was preferable to fighting the right wing of the Party for positions on clear class issues.

Never has the bankruptcy of the left reformists been so quickly rewarded. As soon as Prentice was convinced there was no future for a capitalist Britain except in the Common Market, he became one of its most fervent supporters, sharing platforms with Heath and advocating a continuing coalition of 'moderates' of all parties. Prentice knows that defending capitalism at the present time means curbing

wages, cutting social expenditure and slashing the living standards of the working class — the reforms he may have favoured in 1970 are now too expensive.

In his politics Prentice is simply more consistent than the Labour 'lefts' — who want 'socialist measures' but refuse to face up to the task of overthrowing capitalism as the only way to achieve them — and more outspoken than the Labour right — who fear the power of the trade union movement to wreck the best laid plans to salvage capitalism.

The demand for the expulsion of Prentice and the Labour right is a vital one for the working class. But getting rid of the Prentices of the Labour Party will not be decided by a simple constituency expulsion process or a fight restricted to the Parliamentary Labour Party. It requires all socialists — both inside and outside the Labour Party — to organise and engage in mass united action against Wilson's capitalist policies.

AUSTERITY PACKAGE

The first step is to defeat the economic austerity package which Wilson is preparing and any version of the Social Contract. But it is also necessary to offer a positive socialist solution to the crisis based on demands such as a sliding scale of wages and increasing public expenditure to compensate for inflation. It means nationalisation without compensation under workers' control of all firms creating redundancies. Without these measures there will be, as so often before, words but no action — and the Wilson leadership will remain at the head of the Labour Party.

MCAPP CONF-

ERENGE GROWS

The conference called by the Medical Committee Against Private Practice (MCAPP) for 11 October takes on added importance as the Government prepares further savage cuts in public expenditure.

Former deputy premier Lord George Brown, free from the constraints of office, spoke up for the right wing of the Labour Party on ITV last week. He urged his old colleagues to 'announce cuts in Government expenditure' which will 'hold up hospitals, schools, roads and the things we would like to have dearly.'

Meanwhile, Denis Healey has made it clear that the Government intends to slash public expenditure by immediate and severe cuts in the supply of finance to government departments, nationalised industries and local authorities. He is full of talk about 'real sacrifices all round for a short period', which has a sinister ring with the National Health Service tottering on the brink of collapse and education and the social services falling into disrepair.

What Healey means is that the working class should pay the price while the rich maintain their privileges. Private health schemes are booming, with organisations like BUPA busily expanding, buying up new hospitals and leeching badly-needed staff from the NHS.

Money needed for the social services is being hived off to finance British Leyland and the other ailing giants of British capitalism, as lavish sums are doled out to the bosses of these bankrupt firms.

The drive to impose cuts is also being accompanied by attempts to victimise militants. Len Price, secretary of the NUPE branch at the Morrision Hospital in South Wales was refused pay-

Len claims that the West Glamorgan Health Authority have him 'lined up for dismissal'. His prominent role in the strike against pay-beds earlier this year marked him down in the eyes of the authorities as a militant who would be in the forefront of any fight against the cuts. But support for Len Price is growing and 800 hospital workers at the Morrision and Neath General Hospital have come out on strike in support of him.

Unless the working class organises to fight the cuts the NHS and the other social services — once the pride and joy of social democracy — will be dealt further crippling blows. But the urgent task is not simply to defend the *status quo*. The need is to use the enormous strength and power of the labour movement both to defeat the cuts and to advance towards socialist solutions.

The MCAPP conference can play an important role in mobilising the forces for such a struggle. This is why the *Red Weekly* urges its readers to launch a campaign for delegates and sponsors in every area. Although the conference is built around the NHS, it can by its success demonstrate the way to fight the cuts in all sectors and provide a basis for building real working class unity against Labour's right-wing policies.

The MCAPP Committee inform us that the following individuals and organisations have already agreed to sponsor the Conference: Brightside Constituency Labour Party, Battersea & Wandsworth Trades Council, ASTMS—North London Medical Branch, Hammersmith Hospital Joint Shop Stewards Committee, Mike Taylor (Area Officer, NUPE), Ron Pearson (NUPE convenor), John Forrester, (Deputy General Secretary of the AUEW-TASS, and member of

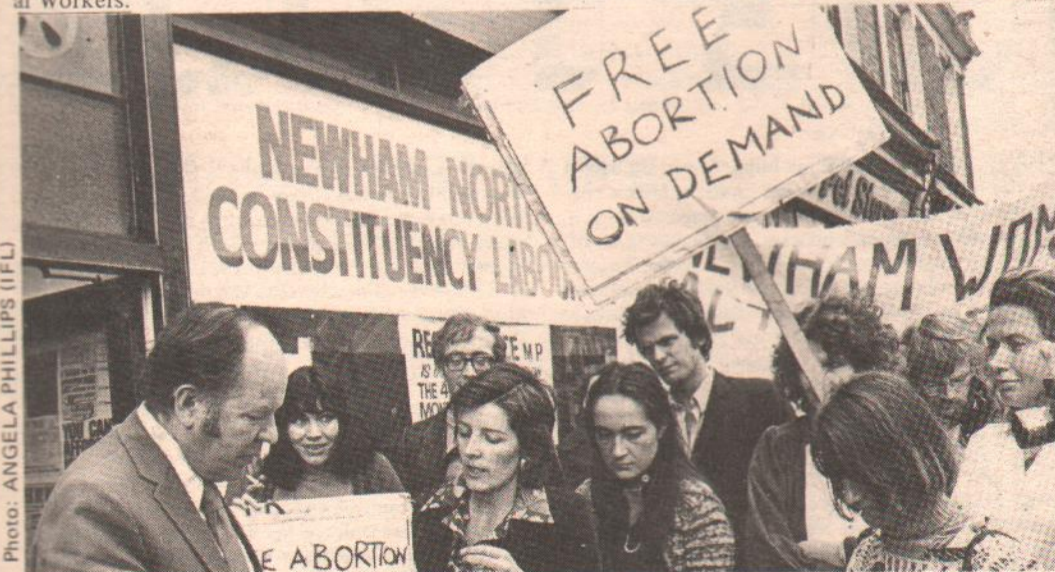


Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)

Prentice being lobbied by supporters of the National Abortion Campaign last weekend. He told them he couldn't promise to vote against the James White Bill as he 'might have something more important to do that day'. He added that he couldn't agree to 'Abortion on Demand' because it would be too costly for the NHS.

WHAT'S ON

FOR CHEAP reliable IBM typesetting with fast turn-around phone Carl or Martin on 01-837 9987.

BENGALI FRIENDS in Europe and elsewhere, for Bengali books and 'Srani-Dai-Biplab' (Fourth International paper) contact: Bengali, c/o Internationalen, Box 3274, 10365 Stockholm, Sweden.

CRISIS IN EDUCATION: public meeting organised by IMG teachers. Mon 7 July, 7.30pm, in the Prince Albert pub, 37 Wharfedale Rd, London N.1. (Kings X tube).

FREE DESMOND TROTTER Campaign: Picket every Friday, 4.30-6pm outside E. Caribbean High Commission, Haymarket, SW1.

GLASGOW MARXIST DISCUSSION GROUP meets every Wednesday in Iona Community House, 7.30pm.

OPEN CONFERENCE OF SOCIALIST TEACHERS: Saturday 11 July, 11am-6pm in NUFTO Hall, Jockey's Fields (Holborn tube). Discussion around the central issues facing teachers: salaries, education cuts, Social Contract, equality of women, teachers and the labour movement. Tickets 50p from Bernard Regan, 24 St Agnes Close, London E.9. Supported by teachers in Radical Education; International Marxist Group; Workers Fight; Anarchist Workers Association; Manchester Rank & File.

NGA member from Sharman's, and Chris Wright (London Region SLADE).

MCAPP PUBLIC MEETING: First in a series under the title of 'Socialist Health Service—pie-in-the-sky or the only solution?' Speakers on the Soviet and Chinese health services. Thurs 10 July, 7.30pm in the Duke of York pub, York Way, London N.1.

REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST CURRENT: Reply to Workers Fight's 'Open Letter for Revolutionary Regroupment' is now publicly available. Copies from Red Books (Liverpool), 81a Renshaw St, Liverpool 1. Send stamp with order.

LONDON SOCIALIST FORUM: 'Spain—The Growing Crisis'. Speaker Sue Fox (Sec, Spanish Solidarity Cttee). Tues 8 July, 7.30pm in Metropolitan pub, 95 Farringdon Rd.

BIRMINGHAM TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT public meeting, Sun 20 July, 7.30pm in Digbeth Civic Hall. Speakers include Jeff Rooker MP and national TOM speakers.

TOM COACHES LEAVE BIRMINGHAM for London demo against Prevention of Terrorism Act, Sat 5 July, 9.30am, from Cambridge St (near Hall of Memory).

PICKET 'MOTHER' MAGAZINE over reactionary anti-abortion article. Sat 11 July, 12 noon at

PORTUGUESE WOMEN FIGHT FOR 'RIGHT TO CHOOSE'

Madelena Barbosa is a member of the Portuguese 'Movement for Free Contraception and Abortion on Demand' (MCALG). A featured speaker at the 25,000 strong National Abortion Campaign demonstration on 21 June, she gave the following interview to *Red Weekly* during her stay in London.

● What are the laws on abortion in Portugal?

There has not been any change in the laws about abortion. The same laws that existed under the fascist regime are still on the statute book. Abortion is illegal. Even if the woman's life is in danger it is not allowed. The penalty is two to eight years in jail. There are people even now in prison who were sentenced under the Caetano regime.

● What about contraception?

It is forbidden by law to advocate contraception publicly, and pharmacists are not allowed to display contraceptive aids.

If a woman uses contraceptive aids against her husband's will then this constitutes grounds for divorce.

You can only get contraceptive aids with the permission of the doctor.

Then you have to pay — which means that it is almost impossible for the poorer people. The doctor always asks, 'why do you want contraception?'. The decision rests solely with them. As most of them come from better-off families with strong Catholic traditions, they are often not very sympathetic.

● What is the attitude of the Government?

They have not even talked about it. They have not given any financial aid to the Family Planning Association — which is a private body that distributes contraceptives. They have not given it any practical support, nor have they provided any facilities of their own.

● What help does MCALG get from the political parties?

With the exception of the Trotskyist LCI, none. There was a meeting of all the parties of the left to discuss this issue. The Communist Party and the Socialist Party talk about 'liberalising the law' but they are not really interested and play no part in the campaign. Nor have they organised any activity in support of abortion and contraception on demand.

The Maoists say that they support these demands but they are bitterly opposed to the existence of women's groups. They therefore do not do any work in the campaign.

● What does MCALG do?

It started only a short time ago when we had this meeting of the left parties and the women's liberation movement — MLM. We go to the factories and the communities and organise meetings amongst the women.

We explain that abortion and contraception are not private matters but are social and political issues.

A number of houses have been occupied and turned into clinics and medical centres. The French organisation MLAC (Movement for Free

Abortion and Contraception) came to Lisbon. They taught people the Karmen method and used an occupied clinic near Lisbon for this purpose.

● What response are you getting amongst working class women?

When we have spoken to meetings of women they have been shocked at first. They have said: 'We know all this. But it is not proper to talk about it.'

Many of these women are more afraid of using contraception methods such as the pill than they are of abortion. We have spoken to women who have had as many as 35 abortions. Working class women often resort to all sorts of methods when they are pregnant. There is one hospital in Lisbon which admits 30 women every day from abortions that have gone wrong.

Women are very oppressed in Portuguese society. We meet single women of 22 or 23 years old who want to come to meetings of MLM and other women's groups. They are unable to do so because their fathers will not allow them to go out in the evenings.

Many women who work have to shop in their lunch break and then go home and do the housework at night. This means they have very little time to attend meetings.



MADALENA BARBOSA

Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)

● What aid can the international workers' movement give to your struggle?

We need literature, films, and photographic displays on issues like contraception and abortion. We are holding an International Week of Action — probably in the last week of July — on women's oppression.

People should send material for this. It would also be excellent if contingents could come from other countries to participate and help with this campaign.

INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF ACTION PLANNED

'A week of action in Portugal — beginning on 28 July — can be supported by people from abroad who are spending their holidays in Portugal. That will help the campaign here. It will also give us the opportunity to plan the Italian demonstration being held in the autumn.' These were the words of Portuguese representative Madalena Barbosa at a meeting of international delegates following the 21 June pro-abortion demonstration.

The building of international links was the major item of discussion at the meeting, attended by delegates from Britain, France, Switzerland, Portugal and Holland. To strengthen these, the 'Woman's Right To Choose Campaign' agreed to put out an international news bulletin regularly over the next year. The pages of the bulletin will be open to any group wishing to distribute information on the abortion issue. Future international meetings will also be organised through the bulletin.

The first international initiative will be the Portuguese week of action. People from all the different countries will be asked to bring displays of contraceptive devices, reports of the campaign in their own countries, films, pamphlets, posters etc. as well as street theatre groups.

This week of action will have two aims. Firstly, it will try to use the impact of the campaign in the press and the media to boost the fight of the Portuguese Movement for Free Contraception and Abortion on demand. Secondly, it will give a practical demonstration of the need for active international co-ordination and activity. This should prepare the way for the Italian demonstration this autumn.

The events during the week will be open to men and women — although women may decide to hold some meetings of their own. Camping facilities will be provided. People wishing to go should contact Madalena Barbosa, Avenue Sidonia Pais 28 (5th Floor, E), Lisbon, Portugal (tel. Lisbon 49859).

The National Abortion Campaign also has an international committee which can give up-to-date information on this event. Contact NAC, 80 Railton Road, London S.E.24.



IRISH WOMEN FIGHT FOR THEIR LIBERATION

Last week 25,000 people marched through the streets of London. They were all — women and men — insisting that women must have the right to choose whether or not to have an abortion.

All over the world women are fighting to throw off the chains of capitalism and demanding the right to control their own lives. The message is clear and simple.

The fight for the emancipation of women is a burning issue for the working class. It can either take it up as its own struggle or it can consign it to some far-distant future. If it adopts the latter course it will fail ignominiously to unite all the forces which can tear down capitalism.

In the priest-ridden 26 counties of the south of Ireland the tocsin of women's liberation is sounding out its message. In Limerick — one of Ireland's biggest industrial and housing estates — residents are

set up.

The local Limerick Tenants' Association, representing 1,200 houses, say: 'It is a matter of immediate urgency that a family-planning clinic be opened in the city.' Jack Cantillon, a well-known local trade unionist, endorses this, arguing: 'Our society encourages women to have large families on moral grounds (but) does not explain how women are going to feed and clothe their children.'

Such support from trade union members is welcome. But it is not just a matter of ensuring that women can 'clothe and feed their children.' The women of Limerick are demanding the right to be more than just 'good mothers'. They are insisting on the right to exercise their own sexuality. They are insisting that freedom is something more than being chained to the home.

In the British concentration camps of the Six Counties Irish women are incarcerated

and fought valiantly against British imperialism. These women are the vanguard of the struggle. The task of the Republican movement is to fight for a social programme that can offer women a way out of their exploitation. But that can only be done if the Republican movement listens to the voice of the women and learns from their needs.

Capitalism can offer women nothing but degradation and humiliation. The women in Limerick are flashing a warning signal to the Republican movement. The fight against Catholicism, reaction and backwardness means the mobilisation of the entire working class.

By taking up that struggle the Republican movement can show that the fight for a united Ireland offers a social and socialist solution for all the working class. It can harness the creativity and energy of Irish working class women — a powerful force for Irish liberation.



Women on Limerick estate—demanding family planning centre

One of the main aspects of the revolutionary process which has unfolded in Portugal since the downfall of the Caetano dictatorship is the continuous advance and deepening of that process. This stands in striking opposition to most of the incipient proletarian revolutions we have witnessed in Europe since the Russian revolution. Both in the German revolution of 1918-1923 or in the Spanish revolution of 1936-37, just to take these two examples, the culminating point of the revolution seems to come a couple of weeks or even days right after its start. The revolution then loses ground nearly immediately, and while new upturns and rebounds occur, the initial culminating gains are never again recovered.

In Portugal the opposite has occurred. In the beginning the process started rather slowly and on a low key. It gathered momentum in a contradictory and often confusing way. But since December 1974, and especially since March 1975, the revolutionary mass movement has made tremendous steps forward, generally in response to provocations and attacks by the class enemy. It has now reached the point where the question of the struggle for power by the working class is put on the agenda. In their own biased and indirect way, the results of the election for the Constituent Assembly confirm this. The parties claiming to speak for the working class, and presenting the aim of building a socialist Portugal as an immediate or short-term perspective, polled nearly 60 percent of the popular vote. This is the highest percentage ever attained in Europe under universal franchise, outside of the elections for the Russian constituent assembly, which coincided with the conquest of power by the soviets.

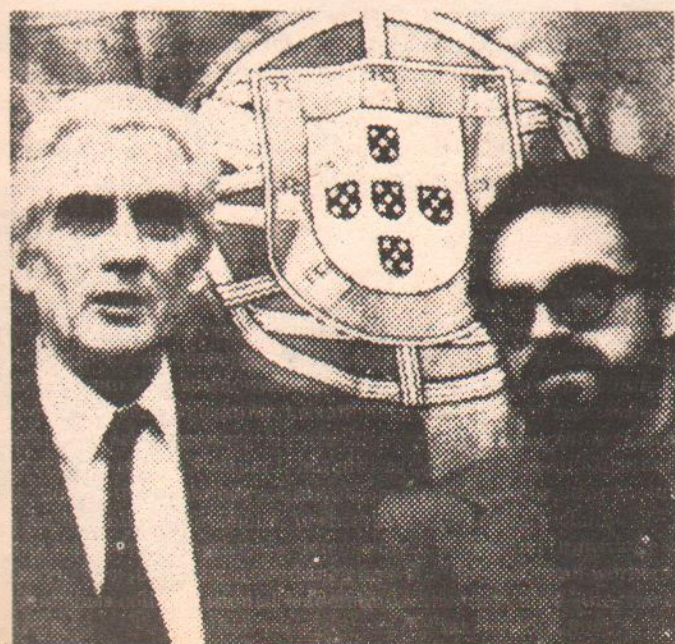
• ADVANCE FALTERING •

Since the beginning of May 1975, however, signs that this continuous progress of the revolutionary process is coming to an end have begun to multiply. If we want to avoid impressionistic interpretations of this threatening turning point, we have to try to understand it as a function of the basic social and political forces at play in Portugal today.

In the first place, the economic situation has seriously deteriorated. Capitalists have reacted to the massive conquests of the working class, which threaten the very basis of their system, with a massive investment strike and capital flight. They are sabotaging production as they did during the Russian revolution, as they always do when the workers challenge their "right" to gear production and distribution to the search for profit and the accumulation of capital. As a result, the cost of living is skyrocketing. Unemployment is rapidly spreading. All the material gains the workers made after the downfall of the dictatorship are being wiped out. Several sectors of the working class are even worse off than under the dictatorship. This cannot but have a demoralizing effect on parts of the proletariat.

In the second place, the powerful unity in action of the toiling masses, which was decisive in beating back the putschist attempts of the would-be bonaparte, Spínola (and the would-be Pinochets hiding behind his back), is now seriously threatened. Both in the incidents around the May 1 demonstration in Lisbon, and in the incidents around the *República* newspaper, large sectors of the masses were set against each other. A rapidly widening split inside the working class would endanger all the gains of the revolution, and open a breach through which a successful counteroffensive of reaction and counterrevolution could make serious headway.

In the third place, the next step forward is unclear to the mass of the proletariat. The revolutionary process unfolded up to now according to an internal logic of its own. It went from the conquest of immediate material and democratic demands and the ending of the colonial war to the purge of the most hated representatives of the dictatorship from the state apparatus and the enterprises, to the nationalization of banks, finance groups, and key industries, and to the spread of workers control. Now, however, this spontaneous process has run into an impasse. Big confusion reigns as to what should be done next. Should it be the "battle for production," as most of the leaders of the MFA [Movimento das Forças Armadas—Armed Forces Movement] and the Communist party propose? Should it be "the battle for freedom," as the Social Democrats and their bourgeois allies suggest? Should it be "the fight against indiscipline and anarchy," as nearly all political parties and officers claim? Should it be the "struggle against social fascism," as the irresponsible Maoists contend? Confronted with this cacophony of conflicting proposals—which all have little mass appeal given the appalling economic situation, and which all seem to imply that the revolutionary process should somehow be halted—confusion, disunity, and disarray could rapidly throw the mass movement back.



CP leader Alvaro Cunhal (left)



The Portuguese and the Dangers

ERNEST MANDEL EXAMINES THE CURRENT

It is in the light of these developments that the incidents occurring at the newspaper *República* should be analyzed and understood. We are very skeptical, to say the least, whether what was really involved in that incident was a serious attempt to prevent the Socialist party from having its own newspaper, i. e., a serious attempt to destroy the freedom of action of the largest political party in Portugal today.

If this was really the case, only two interpretations would be possible.

Either one would have to assume that in Portugal we are on the eve of a power grab by the Soviet bureaucracy and its Portuguese satellites, i. e., on the eve of a *Prague coup* like the one of February 1948. This was the way in which the Social Democratic leader Soares himself, and practically the whole Portuguese and international bourgeois press, not without active support from the Maoists, interpreted the *República* incident. Needless to say, this implies the grotesque thesis that Portugal's bourgeois officer corps has become a tool of the Soviet bureaucracy, for some mysterious reasons of an essentially ideological nature (the "power of attraction" of the Kremlin's ideas, one would presume, being really unlimited).

• NOT EVE OF COUP •

Or one would have to assume that in Portugal we are on the eve of the establishment of a bloody bourgeois-military dictatorship, which is ready to crush the strongest political party of the country, having just polled 38 percent of the popular vote and captured nearly half the seats of the Constituent Assembly. Apart from the fact that such a move would imply the elimination of the CP too, and that it isn't obvious why the CP leadership would actively (not only as an objective long-term result of its policies, but actively) support such a move for its own dissolution, such interpretation conflicts with the whole objective analysis of the present relationship of forces in Portugal.

The army is divided not only between pro- and anti-MFA forces, and between a pro- and an anti-Spínola wing inside the MFA, but also between different warring factions inside the "pro-socialist" wing of the MFA as well. The soldiers are politically awakened and are becoming active, departing independently from army discipline. Working-class political currents are beginning to capture influence inside a wing of the MFA itself the mass movement is powerful and in ascendance. Under such circumstances the capitalists are in no position to immediately crush the proletariat. They don't have either the strength or an adequate instrument to do this. Their immediate aim is not to strangle all democratic liberties for the masses as a whole, not to speak of their most moderate reformist party strongly in favor of class collaboration. Their immediate aim is to divide and confuse the mass movement, in order to stop the revolutionary process at a level compatible with the survival of capitalist production relations, and prudently start repression against small isolated sectors. Only after they have achieved these goals could they—more quickly than some optimists believe, of course—plan to take a more general counteroffensive and crush the anticapitalist potential of the Portuguese working class.

• 'REPUBLICA' EXPLAINED •

Now when we study what really happened at the *República* printing plant, we understand how these incidents dovetail with the fundamental plans of Portuguese and international capital. For, contrary to the version of these incidents spread by the bourgeois press, the initiative did not come from the CP, and even

less from the MFA officers, but from the workers of that plant themselves among whom CP supporters are actually in a minority. They are faced with a rapidly decreasing circulation of the newspaper, and heavy financial losses at the printshop. They are threatened with layoffs and redundancies. And they reacted exactly in the same way in which workers have been reacting in hundreds of other factories and offices throughout Portugal to such threats—by removing the manager and requesting a new administrative structure under workers control, whatever may be the exact scheme proposed, which differs from case to case.

• INTRIGUES •

That these motivations became intertwined with all kinds of political intrigues is obvious. That the CP bureaucrats tried to use the workers' initiative in order to strike a blow against their Social Democratic rivals and associates, who had just given them such a beating in the elections, is undoubted. That the strongest left-wing workers group inside the printing plant, the Maoist UDP [União Democrática do Povo—Democratic People's Union], tried to utilize its influence in order to bar publicity for a rival Maoist grouping "critically supported" by the Social Democratic editor, also played a role. That some military leaders of the MFA, confronted with this confusing picture, tried to whip up hostility against "warring political parties," which has been one of their main propaganda themes for many months, is likewise undisputed. But the outcome of the whole intrigue never was in doubt. The whole logic of the bourgeois class pressure, both nationally and internationally, plays today in favor of the Socialist party recuperating its newspaper. The bourgeois leadership of the MFA cannot but go along with that pressure. The losers will be the workers of the *República* printing plant.

We are staunch and principled supporters of freedom of the press. We are convinced that this should be a basic principle not only under bourgeois democracy but in a workers state as well. We are absolutely in favor of the Portuguese Socialist party having at its disposal a daily paper of its own. We believe that the workers of the *República* printing plant made a serious error by creating the impression that they wanted to challenge that right.

• WORKERS AS WHOLE •

Workers control does not mean and cannot mean that a small sector of the working class—the typographical workers of one plant, or even the typographical workers of the whole country—have the right to decide what political currents should have access to mass media and what currents shouldn't. In a workers state that decision should be taken democratically by a national congress of workers councils, i. e., by the working class as a whole. And we Trotskyists will strongly fight in such a congress for the right to such access to mass media for all those currents which, irrespective of their political program and ideology, in practice respect the socialist constitution and socialist legality, i. e., are not engaged in armed actions against workers power.

As we do not yet have a workers state in Portugal, but still a bourgeois state, with strong power in the hands of an officer corps, which, whatever may be its political divisions, is socially tied in its majority to defending the bourgeois order, the defense of freedom of the press for the Socialist party as a working-class party (be it with a reformist and class-collaborationist leadership) is all the more important for us.

But we are consistent and not partial defenders of the principle of freedom of the press. We do not accept any limitations on



se Revolution That Threaten It

STATE OF THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION

any monopoly of the right of access to the mass media, a monopoly neither for the proprietors of printshops, nor for the owners of large sums of money, nor for political parties. Real and generalized freedom of the press means that every group of workers, including the typographical workers of the República plant, have the right to make their opinions known in print, regardless of whether they "own" a printing press or not. Whether this should be done in a special newspaper, published precisely for such a purpose, or whether it should be in the columns of each individual newspaper, is a secondary technical question.

Finally, we would strongly oppose any attempt to play the correct principle of freedom of the press against the no less correct principle of workers control, in the sense of control over the livelihood and the working conditions of the working class. The Socialist party has the right to have its own newspaper. But it has no right to lay off printing workers, or to reduce their wages, or to make their working conditions harsher, under the pretext that they are "undisciplined" and in disagreement with the political line of that Party. All printshops should become collective property with wages and working conditions nationally guaran-



Soldier guards República offices

ted by agreement between the government and the printers union (tomorrow: between national workers power and the printing workers councils, together with the printers union). Only under condition that all questions of material pressure, privileges, threats of reprisals, and fear of losing one's job will be eliminated from the realm of expressing opinions and fighting for them will there be real, substantial, and not only formal and partial freedom of the press for the toiling masses. And this goes for the printing workers too!

So, far from there being any contradiction between freedom of the press and workers control, the two principles complement each other once they are interpreted in the correct way we just sketched.

The ominous implications of the República incident are

sought them. They could open the beginning of a concerted attack against the manifold attempts at workers control that have dominated the revolutionary process in Portugal during the last months.

That the pressure of Portuguese and international capital goes in that direction is self-evident. The European capitalists are called upon to bail out the Portuguese economy from its greatest crisis. They are ready to make a gesture, provided they can wring the maximum concessions from the Portuguese government. And the No. 1 concession they call for is reestablishment of discipline in the plants! Otherwise, they indicate, they would be just throwing money into a bottomless pit.

That an important sector of the MFA leadership wants to act in the same direction is no less obvious. "Restore discipline" has been one of its main propaganda slogans for a long time. Some of them believe it to be particularly clever to cover such a move by a proposal to create some kind of plant committees, but under military control and geared essentially to "increasing production."

That the CP bureaucracy would be willing to go along with this demand, although its "left turn" implies now some propaganda in favor of workers control too, is made possible by the fact that Cunhal's line of "promoting production" has trapped him into a position in which he finds it very difficult to oppose the bourgeois campaign along the above lines.

•SOARES' MANOEUVRES•

A new element in the situation is the turn of the SP leadership on this question. Before the elections, Soares cleverly tried to exploit the growing resentment of the workers against the bureaucratic practices of the CP leadership by appearing to support shop-level workers democracy and workers control (e.g., on its May 1 posters). While the CP violently opposed wildcat strikes, the SP gave some occasional cover to them, and was accused by Cunhal of "left opportunism." During the election campaign and even on May 1, 1975, the SP had posters in favor of "workers control."

As a matter of fact, the electoral victory of the SP expressed a combination of two phenomena: On the one hand, the less politicized and radicalized workers voted for that party as the best-known proponent of "socialism" in a general way, exactly as they voted for the Mensheviks in Russia immediately after the February 1917 Revolution. On the other hand, sectors of more radicalized workers voted for the SP out of disgust with the strikebreaking and bureaucratic practices of the CP.

•'RULE OF LAW'•

Now, however, the situation is changing. The CP is talking about "workers control" and playing down its attacks on militant workers' initiatives. And it is the Social Democrats who now shout for "an end to anarchy," a "restoration of order," "the rule of law," a "digesting period" for nationalizations (i.e., a stop to the extension of nationalized enterprises), and other slogans of a clearly counterrevolutionary content. They now try to oppose the process of consolidating bourgeois-democratic state institutions and bourgeois law against a further unfolding of the revolution, centering their attacks upon initiatives of workers control, under the demagogic cloak of "defending freedom." This risks being the main objective result of the República incident. It is obviously the main threat to further progress of the Portuguese revolution.

If we analyze this threat; if we understand the objective social, economic, and political pressures which support that threat; then we can also understand the essential countermove that Portuguese revolutionists should propose today: *The democratic election, on a united-front basis, of workers, peasants, and soldiers councils in all factories, city neighborhoods, villages, and barracks, and their coordination and centralization on a local, regional, and national scale in a Toilers Assembly.*

Such a countermove would be an effective answer to, all the dangers that threaten the way forward for the Portuguese revolution.

•GENERALIZED CONTROL•

Against the incipient economic catastrophe and the growing sabotage of the economy, a system of haphazard workers control, on a factory-by-factory basis, becomes increasingly futile. The moment has come for a *generalized* system of workers councils in the factories, which can not only stop layoffs, halt removals of machinery and funds, uncover stocks of raw materials, and prevent current output from being hoarded, but which can also start drawing up an emergency economic plan for guaranteeing full employment and satisfying the masses' most burning needs, by taking over the whole of industry without compensation and running it in the interest of the toilers, by the toilers themselves.

Against the threat of division and disarray inside the working class, agreements among the top leaders of the working-class parties, although necessary, are absolutely insufficient. After all, however much Cunhal and Soares insult each other in public, we should never forget that they have been sitting in the same coalition government with the bourgeoisie for more than a year, that they have together supported and voted censorship laws and laws restricting the right to strike, that they share equal responsibility for the present dangerous divisions inside the working class. In order to reestablish the full and enthusiastic unity in action of the working class, it is necessary to guarantee to the Social Democratic workers full political freedom for their party, and an end to bureaucratic maneuvers in the unions and the mass media. It is likewise necessary to guarantee to the communist and revolutionary workers full unfolding of the revolutionary process going beyond the bonds of bourgeois democracy and capitalist relations of production. And what organs would be more adequate to achieve these guarantees than democratically elected workers councils which would be more clearly united-front organs from top to bottom than ever before in any country?

The Constituent Assembly is impotent from the start, tied as it is by the "pact" between the political parties and the MFA. The MFA leaders assert that they want these ties in order to further the revolutionary process. Some even say that they want direct power organs of the people. Let us take their assertions at face value, and call for a *democratic election of workers councils which wouldn't be tied by any preliminary pact with the military, which would be wholly sovereign.* Even those who believe that to destroy the illusions in the MFA among the masses is an important task today would have to admit that there is no better way to reach that goal than to agitate for democratically elected and sovereign workers councils today.



All those who fear the unfolding proletarian revolution in Portugal talk about "restoring discipline," attack "anarchy" and "grass roots direct democracy." But no revolutionary process is possible in a capitalist country without an explosion of such "anarchy," "indiscipline," and "grass roots direct democracy." All revolutions of the twentieth century have taught us that basic truth. What is threatening the revolution is not "anarchy," but repression against direct mass initiatives. A generalized system of workers councils would be the best protection of the masses against such repression, the best weapon for consolidating and spreading workers control, the best way for linking up the workers with the soldiers and the sailors, for protecting and extending the forms of democratic self-organization in the army and navy, which are the first targets for repression if the bourgeoisie wants to restore some effective power instrument. Such councils will also be the best guarantee for workers-soldiers common action, against any attempt at a new reactionary *putsch*, the natural framework for the armament of the toilers linked to the democratically organized soldiers and sailors.

The struggle for democratically elected and centralized workers, peasants, tenants, and soldiers committees is today the decisive campaign which can turn the situation in Portugal again in favor of the revolution. It is the main means for restoring the unity in action of the toiling masses, which was their essential source of strength in the last nine months. We are convinced that the comrades of the LCI [Liga Comunista Internacionalista—Internationalist Communist League, the Portuguese sympathizing group of the Fourth International] will be the audacious initiators of that campaign and that they will constantly remain in its forefront. Thereby they will show that they fight in a principled way both for the immediate and the historical interests of the working class, and for a victorious breakthrough towards a socialist revolution in their country.

CHILE:

AN EYEWITNESS REPORT



Jean-Pierre Beauvais, who has been to Chile at regular intervals since the coup, returned from his latest visit in April. Below we print the first of a four-part series on his assessment of the situation. Future articles will deal with the bourgeois opposition, the parties of Popular Unity, and the MIR. Santiago, April....

Nineteen months of military dictatorship, of misery, of terror. Nineteen months of counter-revolution which have transformed the hopes of an entire people into powerlessness. Nineteen months which for all those whose main problem is just to survive — in other words, the vast majority — seem like an eternity.

What changes there have been during this period...so many comrades dead or missing, in the camps or in exile, while the faces one still recognises are drawn and aged. Then there is the silence: the silence of the crowds in the street, the silence of the army of beggars which has taken over the town centres, the silence of the walls, all meticulously repainted to remove all traces of past demonstrations.

527% INFLATION

April 1975. Twenty per cent of the active population is completely unemployed, and they do not get any benefits. Sixty per cent of the workers who have escaped unemployment are on the minimum wage (80,000 escudos a month — about £9) for a 40-hour working week. The rate of inflation over the last year has reached 527 per cent. The manufacturing sector — producing durable consumer goods — is operating at only 45 per cent of capacity. And to arrive at this state of affairs — for the two questions can't be separated — more than 30,000 have been killed, 25,000 imprisoned or transported to remote parts of the country, and nearly 200,000 exiled.

It is a balance sheet from which there is no appeal for Pinochet, the Chilean military, and the North American advisers whose numbers in Santiago are daily multiplying.

MISERY

But what do these figures, these percentages mean for the Chilean people? What is it like to live on 80,000 escudos a month?

At the end of March, after a new 'readjustment', a litre of milk cost 900 escudos, a kilo-



gramme of bread 850 escudos, and a kilogramme of meat nearly 5,000 escudos. Since the vast majority of working class women have lost or have had to give up their jobs because of the closure of most of the creches and nurseries in working class areas — or because of their prohibitive cost — the monthly 80,000 escudos is in nearly all cases the sole source of revenue for a whole family.

On top of all this, anyone who has the 'good fortune' to keep their job will often have to help support parents, or friends without resources, or old people whose pensions have lost up to 90 per cent of their purchasing power because of inflation.

Few indeed are the Chilean workers and their families who are able to eat their fill after the 10th of each month. How many of the hundreds and thousands of women who, sad and humbled, come to the centre of town to beg outside the hotels reserved for foreigners — how many of them lived, worked and demonstrated for a better world before 11 September 1973?

To work or not, to eat one's fill or not — even these are not the sole worries of the Chilean people. Every aspect of daily life is a problem. How is one to get around Santiago, for instance — one of the most dispersed cities of the world. A bus ride cost half an escudo at the time of the coup. Today one has to shell out 350! To hop on a bus has become a luxury restricted to a minority.

PAPERS A LUXURY

For a worker, the daily return fare to the factory often comes to a fifth of the monthly wage. So each morning and each evening one can see crowds of walkers in the suburbs. Frequently it's a two-hour walk to the factory to get to work, and then two hours to get back afterwards after having put in ten hours there.

To read a newspaper has also become a luxury. The cheapest daily costs 500 escudos, and a weekly costs 2,000 escudos. It isn't difficult to work out the cost over a month. So there

to read the front pages.

The response of the military, in fact their policy, can be summed up in two words: *terror* and *cynicism*.

To take the terror first. Although no organised force constitutes a serious short-term threat to the regime, the repression — widespread and at the same time selective — continues with the same intensity. There is a curfew each night throughout the country; areas are sealed off and systematically searched while helicopters circle above, enormous publicity is given to police operations and to arrests.

TERRORISE

The aim of all this activity is very clear. Beyond their immediate effectiveness, such operations carried out systematically and daily are designed to bring home concretely to the mass of the population the weight and the reality of the repressive apparatus. By maintaining such an atmosphere of terror the junta hopes to scare off all forms of opposition, no matter how modest or limited politically.

As to the cynicism, the forms it takes in official propaganda have to be seen to be believed.

At the beginning of April the Chilean junta alarmed at the disasters which had overtaken its North American protectors in Vietnam and Cambodia, decided on a counter-offensive. A big campaign was launched for the adoption of Vietnamese orphans, 'victims of Communist barbarity'. The press, the radio, the TV reported daily how the 'reds' were living off abandoned children during their offensive. In a television speech a member of the junta, extolling the humanist and Christian traditions of the Chilean people, drew these conclusions: we must save the children from this barbarity, every Chilean must consider it their duty to adopt or pay for the journey of one of these unfortunate Vietnamese!

The campaign to assist the unemployed falls into the same category. To 'help' the hundreds of thousands of unemployed, the junta has decreed that each township should take on in turn and for a period of two months — in order to let others benefit — several dozen (!) unemployed, particularly to sweep the streets.

DROP IN THE OCEAN

Here too a big propaganda campaign has been carried out around this drop in the ocean. At the highest levels the military have explained that it is not so much a question of providing money for those temporarily employed, but that the main objective is to 'ensure that they don't lose the habit of working, for the habit of working is essential for a healthy social structure'.

But this brutal terror and sickly cynicism cannot make the Chileans forget the total failure of the military in both their economic and political policies.

In a situation of crisis and unprecedented economic chaos in Chile, the regime now faces near-total isolation. The move into open opposition of the *whole* of what remains of the Christian Democrats, along with a large majority of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, is there to prove it.

POLITICAL VACUUM

But to draw from this the conclusion that the dictatorship will collapse of itself — a victim of its own excesses, its incompetence and its isolation — would be to encourage new and tragic illusions. Paradoxically, one of the junta's strengths today is still that — by totally repressing the workers' movement, and gagging the bourgeois sectors opposed to its orientation — it has created a fantastic political vacuum. The aim of the terror is to maintain this vacuum. In these conditions, there exists *in the short term* hardly any credible alternative — either from the bourgeois opposition sectors or from the workers' movement.

However, the outlines of certain forms of political recomposition and regroupment are already appearing. It is on the development of these embryos, as on the international and South American situation, that the fate of the regime will finally depend.



Red Books News!

SPECIAL OFFER

Women's Evolution by Evelyn Reed, normal price £2.05, will be available for a limited period for £1.75. This work, nearly 800 pages long, is a monumental study of women's position in the historical development of humanity. Add 24p for post.

NEW 'TOM-TOM' AVAILABLE

The latest issue of **Tom-Tom** — bulletin of the **Troops Out Movement** is available, costing 5p (post 5p), bulk rates on application. In addition to the editorial, the bulletin contains a Mike Cooley speech on 'why the British labour movement should campaign for Troops Out', a poster centre-spread, and information about TOM and its activities.

BACKGROUND TO INDIAN CRISIS

Recent events in India have brought out sharply the unstable and extremely repressive nature of the crisis-racked regime in that country. For really substantial background material, the well-named **Explosion in a subcontinent**, 95p (post 13p), takes some beating. Edited by Robin Blackburn, it consists of a series of marxist essays covering the four countries of the subcontinent by such authors as Tariq Ali, M. Desai, P. Addy and R. Nations, together with material such as Wijeweera's court speech, messages by Chou En-lai supporting reaction against revolution, and secret US documents on the Indo-Pakistan war.

TRADE UNION STUDIES

Arrow have published a series of four trade union handbooks designed by members of the Society of Industrial Tutors with the intention of meeting the needs of active trade unionists who want to equip themselves to be more effective. The books are thus heavily weighted towards servicing those engaged in workplace negotiations, day-to-day trade union activities, etc. They all cost 75p each (post 9p). Titles are **The Activists' Handbook**, **Calculating Statistics for Bargainers** and **The Organised Worker**. The latter is by Tony Topham of the IWC.

MAMMOTH GUIDE TO CAPITALISM

Prentice-Hall have published a mammoth study of American society under the title **The Capitalist System**. The book is big in scope and big in size, consisting of some 540 quarto-size pages. It has four parts: **Problems of Capitalism**, **Structure of Capitalism**, **Functioning of Capitalism**, and **Towards an Alternative**, covering 12 chapters, which in turn are divided into a total of nearly 70 essays. The authors of these essays reads like a 'who's who' of left writers — among them are Blackburn, Beran, Hobsbawm, Dobb, Genovese, Polanyi, Sweezy, Weisskopf, Weinstein, O'Connor, Framm, Carmichael, Mitchell, Garz, Magdoff, Therborn. The book also has a giant price: £4.40 (post 46p).

CYPRUS—BROKEN, BLEEDING TOY OF U.S. POLICY



It is now almost a year since the military coup in Cyprus, which in rapid succession sparked off the Turkish invasion of the island and the fall of the Greek junta in Athens. On the eve of the anniversary of these events, which is likely to be marked by big demonstrations in the area, we look below at recent developments in the light of imperialist strategy for the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean. In future issues of *Red Weekly* we also hope to look at the role of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party in this arena, and at the revolutionary alternative for taking the struggle forward in Cyprus.

It was the October 1973 Middle East war and the ensuing oil crisis that forced US imperialism to step up its direct intervention in the area.

Its immediate reaction was to mount a massive offensive to gain the ground it had lost in the Middle East since the 1967 war and to try to 'pacify' this potentially explosive area. One sign of this was the moves to establish close links with Egypt. \$250 million of US aid was offered for the reconstruction of cities around the Suez Canal. The Canal itself was re-opened recently thanks to massive economic and technical aid from the US. Egypt has lifted restrictions on foreign investment, and a programme to provide Egypt with nuclear reactors will be completed by the 1980s.

Developments

All these developments have opened the way for long term ties as Egypt becomes increasingly dependent on US investment 'aid' and technical assistance. A similar relationship is also being opened up in Syria, while US imperialism's already close ties with Saudi Arabia and Iran have been further strengthened.

Nor has US rapprochement with the Arabs meant the ditching of Israel — the other strong arm of imperialism in the area. If anything, Israel is more dependent on US arms and aid since the October war.

However, impressive as all these successes of US imperialism may appear, they must not be allowed to obscure the fact that the situation in the Middle East is still essentially very precarious indeed. The possibility of a new war is not that remote, and the assent of the Palestinian masses or indeed the viability of

by

E. Medcom

It is in this light that the necessity for an imperialist 'solution' to the Cyprus problem acquired so much importance.

The strategic importance of Cyprus in the area as a staging post has been well understood by imperialism since the late 19th Century, when the island became a British colony. Under British rule a systematic policy of 'divide and rule' was followed whereby the Turkish Cypriot ruling class were encouraged to become the allies of British imperialism against the aspirations of the Greek Cypriots for national liberation.

When the right-wing Greek Cypriot EOKA began its campaign of armed struggle against British rule and for unification with Greece (*enosis*), British forces co-operated closely with the ultra-right Turkish Resistance Movement (TMT). It was the failure of AKEL, the Communist Party massively supported by the Greek Cypriot working class, to take an active part in the anti-colonial struggle and lead the masses on a clear platform for independence, drawing the Turkish workers into the struggle, that enabled EOKA to play a divisive role and maintain the struggle within the bounds of imperialism.

'Independent'

Cyprus finally became an 'independent' republic in 1960. Its so-called independence was to be guaranteed by Turkey, Greece and Britain — all three were allowed to keep troops on the island, with the British retaining the large Sovereign Base Areas at Dhekelia and Akrotiri. Cyprus was thus kept firmly within the orbit of NATO

by the Americans, owing to the pressure of the masses on Makarios to maintain a policy of non-alignment, and the presence of a numerically strong reformist Communist Party. With the economic crisis and the critical situation in the Middle East this uncertainty became intolerable. The consolidation and defence of the imperialist gains made in the Middle East would become even more problematic in the event of the creation of a new *Cuba in the Mediterranean*.

Sampson coup

The Sampson coup on 15 July 1974, engineered by the Greek junta together with the CIA, was mainly directed against the Greek Cypriot working class organisations, but it provided the pretext for the Tur-

kish invasion of the island. Events since then have proved a grave setback for the Cypriot people.

The Turkish Cypriot population have become completely dependent on Turkey because of the chronic weakness of the native capitalists and the lack of any independent working class organisation. There is large scale unemployment and poverty, aggravated by speculative hoarding and a rampant black market for basic goods. The resentment against the repressive Denktash clique has yet to find any channels of political expression.

Stalemate

Prolongation of the present stalemate is also having catastrophic consequences for the Greek Cypriot capitalists, who have seen at least half their economic resources lost or destroyed by the invasion. On top of this is the burden of the vast refugee problem. The political impasse only emphasises the depth of the crisis. Makarios, the figurehead supposedly 'above classes', can only resort to platitudes about United Nations resolutions and International Courts in a desperate attempt to rally the masses around him while at the same time dampening down their growing militancy.

Greece, despite its supposed withdrawal from the military wing of the NATO, has refused to internationalise the Cyprus issue and is trying

to find a solution within the fold of NATO. Turkey, meanwhile, is willing to sit back and wait, knowing that that it is of greater military and strategic importance to US imperialism. The critical situation in Cyprus also provides it with the excuse to maintain emergency measures and suppress working class struggles at home.

Thus US imperialism appears to have stabilised the situation at least temporarily in this area. On a world scale, however, it is clearly in retreat — particularly after the crushing blows it has suffered in Indochina. It is also becoming increasingly clear to the working people of Cyprus that that they will have to rely on their own organisations rather than the capitalist armies, police, special police etc., which far from defending them from imperialism have objectively collaborated with it.

Cannon fodder

Never again must the Cypriot workers be smashed, jailed and tortured by local reaction and then cynically sent virtually unarmed to become cannon fodder for imperialist armies. Only the effective independent arming of the working class and peasantry can achieve that, and start tilting the balance against imperialism. The organisation of this armed defence should be one of the main tasks of socialists in Cyprus today.

'REPRESSION CONTINUES'

- Spanish Prime Minister

Last week Spain's Prime Minister, Arias Navarro, made it clear that the regime has no intention of giving up its dictatorial power even after the dictator, Franco, has left the scene.

In a tough speech to Spain's phony Parliament, Arias warned that it was necessary to prepare for the departure of Franco as head of state. But he insisted that Franco would be followed by the successor the dictator has himself appointed — Prince Juan Carlos, who would take over as King. Arias also spelled out exactly what this would mean: 'Let no one be deceived. Let no one think that we are going to ease up on the reins of the principle of authority. There will be no truce with subversion. We will not vacillate in applying the remedies, whatever those remedies may be, to guarantee fully the order which the Spanish people have been enjoying for nearly four decades'.

Meanwhile Arias' police are continuing their wave of terror in the Basque country in order to ensure this continued rule of fascist 'order'. Arrests are occurring daily, and preparations are still being made for the trial and legal murder of Basque militants Garmendia and Otaegui. In response to this continued repression the workers' commissions of the Basque country have called for a boycott of the state-controlled trade union elections, and a call has been issued for a hunger strike of political prisoners.

ago is about to open, with the prosecution asking for sentences totalling more than 100 years for some of those charged!

Clearly the Spanish dictatorship — whether it is being headed up by an ancient General or a shiny new King — can only maintain itself by the most brutal repression. But increasingly all sorts of different layers of the Spanish people are showing their determination to resist the regime and its repression. The latest struggle to hit the country is a strike of over 3,000 junior doctors employed in hospitals run by the Ministry of Labour. They are demanding the right to free and independent negotiations over their wages and working conditions.

The latest news is that the Government has given the doctors an ultimatum that those who do not immediately return to work will be sacked. In a number of the hospitals a movement of solidarity with the striking doctors is being organised by other workers.

PICKET

the visiting Spanish National Dance Company to protest at the trial of the El Ferrol workers, the trial of Garmendia and Otaegui, and the repression in the Basque country — organised by Spanish Solidarity Committee



INDIA~ THE FACADE CRUMBLES

by TARIQ ALI

When I was in Delhi a few weeks back there was considerable speculation as to what particular rabbit Mrs Gandhi would pull out of her hat in order to win the next elections, which are due in 1976. There was talk of a brief war with Pakistan, more nuclear explosions, more annexations a la Sikkim, etc. Not even the most violent opponents of the Congress Party imagined that press censorship would be imposed, the constitution virtually suspended and the bourgeois oppositionists imprisoned.

The determination of Mrs Gandhi to stay in power has impelled her to undertake measures which are both unprecedented and mark a turning point in Indian politics. This is the first time since the withdrawal of the British that the parliamentary opponents of the regime in power have been subjected to mass arrests.

CROCODILE TEARS

We should, however, not be swept along by the hysteria of the bourgeois press in Britain. The same newspapers which shed so many crocodile tears at the impending demise of 'Indian democracy' quite happily support dictatorships such as Indonesia, Singapore and Brazil.

Furthermore, while the arrest of 900 largely right-wing oppositionists creates a flurry in Fleet Street and on the TV, there has been very little mention of the 30,000 political prisoners who have been crowding Indian jails since 1967-68. Many of the latter have been tortured and subjected to humiliating treatment at the hands of the police.

The reason? All these prisoners belonged to, or were sympathisers of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) — in other words, they were committed, in their own confused and naive fashion, to the replacement of capitalism in India by socialism. Two of these prisoners, Gowd and Bhomia, are due to be hanged in a few weeks (the first official political hanging in India since the execution of Gandhi's assassin) unless the sentence is commuted.

Clearly the declaration of the state of emergency was brought about by a combination of factors, of which the defeat suffered by Mrs Gandhi in Gujarat at the hands of the



right-wing opposition was more significant than her own defeat in a court case. The main leader of the People's Front, JP Narayan subsequently called for open defiance of the law, thus giving the Government its opportunity to declare a state of emergency and arrest the opposition.

BANKRUPT 'COMMUNISTS'

The growth of the opposition to Congress which has mushroomed over the last few years was captured by the right-wing because of the failure and bankruptcy of the major communist parties, the CPI (pro-Moscow) and the CPI(M), which were both characterised by their commitment to parliamentary methods. While the CPI backed Mrs Gandhi, the CPI(M) decided to throw in its lot with the bourgeois opposition. As a result the latter's leader has also been arrested.

Given the fact that there is a continuous social crisis in India (45 per cent of the population — 380 million people — live below subsistence level), and that the CPI and CPI(M) failed to make an impact, it is hardly surprising that JP and his supporters made advances. Despite the image of JP presented in the British press ('pacifist', 'honest', 'democrat', etc) he is an effective if slightly senile right-wing demagogue. An old admirer of the former Pakistani military dictator Ayub Khan, JP once stated quite seriously in private that India too would be better off under a military regime. In this context his constant appeals to the Indian army to intervene and 'defend the constitution' have a slightly familiar and nasty ring to them.

FASCIST INVOLVEMENT

The second major right-wing politician is Morarji Desai, who is staunchly pro-American and a firm believer in free enterprise as opposed to state intervention in industry. He split from the Congress after Mrs Gandhi became leader of the party because he regarded her as too left-wing! But the major organised force is the fascist Jana Sangh: It has been fascist organisers who have given some semblance of organisation to JP's movement, provided JP himself with a guard, and stewarded his demonstrations.

The odd person out in the alliance is the CPI(M). This party, which split from the CPI in the 1960s, is now distinguished from its parent organisation mainly by the fact that the latter has the franchise from Moscow with all the political and financial benefits that that entails. Concentrating exclusively within the parliamentary arena, the CPI(M) decided to align itself with the forces opposing Mrs Gandhi in order to win the elections in Kerala and possibly even West Bengal.

Despite the growth of support for JP it would be foolish to assume that the Indian capitalist class, which is the most stable and most experienced of all colonial bourgeoisies, has decided to stop backing the Congress Party. The Indian Congress has loyally served the interests of its class, and provided the best possible form for preserving the rule of capital in India. The Indian capitalists are aware of this, and to switch horses suddenly is not something that they are prepared to do, particularly when the alternative would be less stable. Certainly small sections of the capitalist class — particularly the rich farmers — are backing JP, but even they do so more as a warning to Mrs Gandhi than anything else.

STRENGTHENING OF STATE

Given the lack of meaningful communist opposition it is extremely unlikely that the state of emergency will be maintained indefinitely. For if parliamentary democracy and its institutions were to be disbanded totally, then the only alternative form of bourgeois rule would be the Indian army, and a military dictatorship in India would sound the death-knell of the Indian federation and give rise to all sorts of national movements.

What we are seeing in India is the continued strengthening of the powers of the existing state and its institutions in order to prepare for future struggles. Naturally we are opposed to all such anti-democratic measures — not for the sake of Mr JP Narayan and his fascist friends, but out of solidarity with the tens of thousands of political prisoners already rotting in Indian prisons, and the hundreds of railway workers and their families living in miserable conditions after the vicious repression of their strike last year.

THE BATTLE OF LONG KESH: AN EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT

One month ago we printed pictures of the bloodied faces of inmates of Long Kesh after they had been 'pacified' by the British Army during the burning of the camp last October. Below, we print extracts from an eye-witness account of the burning of the camp, and the 'pacification' which followed, smuggled out of Long Kesh by a Provisional Republican internee, 'Paul'.

About a week before the actual fire we warned the authorities that if the Brits invaded the Cages and beat us again, the Kesh would be razed to the ground.

On the evening of Tuesday 15 October we got some news that there was a bit of trouble at the top end of the Camp.

It was a quarter past nine in the evening when the final word reached our Cage. The Brits had assembled outside Cage 13 for a raid. All the prisoners then set fire to their huts.

Pieces of bedding and a mattress were thrown up against the fence, followed by a team who quickly sprang over the barbed wire to taste the freedom of rebellion. From the ransacked stores we obtained gas cylinders which were thrown onto the

feet. The gas explosions also blew the hut structures apart.

At about 9.50 p.m. we began our journey to the football pitches. On the way up we caught a glimpse of the English Army. They fired gas and rubber bullets but the heat had produced a whirlwind which sucked the gas into the sky. For the same reasons they couldn't use the helicopters; the atmosphere above the Camp was unstable.

Once at the pitch we assembled under our own leaders. I then separated from the men of my own cage and mixed until I found my brother, a sentenced Republican prisoner, with a twelve year sentence to serve. We shook hands and clasped each other. I met all my comrades, some



was brilliant and I cannot describe the feeling. The tears ran out of my eyes at this reunion.

During the night men had been assigned to guard gates and give advance warning of the Brits' approach. Around dawn two choppers flew in low. I thought — here they come now. The Brits fired gas and bullets and close range fighting took place.

In the hand to hand fighting we repeatedly pushed them back. We were able to overcome the fumes of the CS gas in the open, but the CR gas completely paralysed us.

If courage had been the decisive factor in that battle we were easily the winners. I fell with the gas and went into asphyxiation. About 1,000 rebelling prisoners were on the pitch outnumbered by soldiers, well-equipped with all the paraphernalia of modern riot control. It was hell.

When I woke up my head was bouncing off the ground and my feet were three feet in the air and the same distance apart underneath the arms of two nasty Brits who were trailing me away. At the fence we were made spread-eagle. Then the systematic beating and abuse began. Dogs were yelping and would occasionally take

everyone was beaten.

Then they began picking out individuals and giving them hidings. One brave man was selected, beaten and subjected to continual interrogation behind our backs. He turned round and I could hear him, diction cool and calm: 'Fuck you,' he said. 'We've burnt Long Kesh and there's fuck all you can do about it!' The shock almost killed me. They laid into this rebel and nearly killed him. I heard skin deflate under punches and bones crack under blows.

Hours later we were taken back to our burnt-out Cages. We were trailed and dragged down to the lower end of the Camp after our identities had been established. I saw my brother limp back along his line to serve his twelve years. This march from

the top of the Camp to the bottom was brilliant. The destruction was complete. The charred shells of the huts symbolised to me the demise of the Concentration Camp system.

We were out in the open with no covering at all and the weather of October is cold and damp. We hung charred timber over pieces of twisted bed-ends and underneath this we lay down to try and sleep. In the rubble I could see my mate Gerard's face as black as a boot and we both started to laugh. The soldiers beyond the fence couldn't understand our laughter.

The air still smelt of the burning, our mood was still defiant. We had realised power. And as I lay my head down to rest I thought to myself that I would do it all over again for ten times the price.

DEMONSTRATE
AGAINST THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT

SATURDAY 5 JULY
Assemble 2.30 pm, Kilburn Underground Stn.

ORGANISED BY AD HOC COMMITTEE SUPPORTED BY IS.

SOCIALIST TEACHERS BEGIN IMPORTANT DEBATE

When Reg Prentice received warm applause for his vigorous defence of the Social Contract and education cuts at the Easter 1975 annual conference of the National Union of Teachers, it was the last straw for many socialist militants in the audience. They decided to call a conference for socialist teachers to discuss how to fight both the Government's plans for education and the feeble 'leadership' within the NUT.

The NUT is led by right-wing Labourites intent on maintaining the 'professional' image of teachers. Improvements in the education system were won by the working class during the long economic boom following the last war. The NUT leadership played the role of brokers in this process: a body offering 'professional' advice to both Tory and Labour Governments.

PROMOTION

Promotion up the union ladder often went hand in hand with job promotion. Little 'shop floor' organisation and still less a militant tradition was built up. In a union 250,000 strong, two thirds of whom are women, the vast majority of the national executive is composed of head teachers and men.

But the basis for the cosy relationship between the leadership of the NUT and the State has been destroyed by the growing economic crisis and the education cuts. In 1973 Tory Chancellor Barber lopped £182 million off the education budget, this year Healey took another £86 million. As the axe fell, and fell again, the NUT made ritual protests but did nothing to mobilise the membership.

The pattern was well established. They had already accepted Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the Tory Government's incomes policy — as had Max Morris, Communist Party member and then President of the NUT. The CP saved its 'militancy' for attacking militants fighting incomes policy. It has continued to lead witch-hunts against revolutionary teachers while never speaking out against the Social Con-

by **Bernard Regan**

tract despite its leading positions on the union executive.

The International Socialists, once the dominant force on the far left inside the NUT, has failed to confront these bankrupt policies with politics. The latest issue of *Rank and File* reduces the fight against the right wing and stalinist bureaucracy to abolishing the postal ballot in union elections.

Far from posing class-wide demands uniting the whole of the labour and trade union movement in the defence and extension of the education system, IS see the fight against the cuts simply as a sectoral struggle against the Government's policies on public sector financing. But a simple policy of 'saving our own bacon' not only splits teachers from the rest of the working class, it does not even solve the problems teachers face.

REBELLIOUSNESS

Unfortunately many teachers, even socialists, are confused as to the source of their 'problems'. Solutions to truancy, rebelliousness, violence and so on are seen in terms of developing better personal relationships with children, creating interesting lessons, and instilling a certain amount of non-physical discipline. All these things can and should be discussed. But the fundamental problem is the education system itself. It is built not to educate but to act as a giant selection and rejection sieve for capitalism in its search for the appropriate number

of technicians, managers, and supervisors — the rest become workers.

Thus the problems which confront teachers and youth within the schools — and the increasing unemployment which confronts them when they get out — are the concern of the whole working class. And only the working class has the capacity to transform the education system. The

task facing socialist teachers is to take the whole debate on education into the workers movement, developing a campaign not simply to fight the cuts but to effectively isolate the reactionary Black Paperites and their far-right hangers on.

DIALOGUE

The Open Conference of Socialist Teachers on 12 July aims to begin this process by opening a long overdue dialogue on the left about the way forward in education. As such it represents a modest but extremely

important event in the life of militant teachers. The fact that a wide spectrum of the left as well as Labour Party members will be attending shows the opportunities that exist both to break out of the right-wing stranglehold of the union leadership and to turn away from the Rank and File cul-de-sac of the IS.

Next week *Red Weekly* will be carrying material by teacher members of the International Marxist Group explaining the tasks to which we think the conference must direct its attention and what socialist teachers must do in the coming period.



Teachers lobbied the Inner London Education Authority on 24 June to present a petition in support of a gay teacher, John Warburton, victimised for answering his pupils' questions on homosexuality. He has since been offered a job at another school, but because he refused to sign a declaration pledging that he would not discuss homosexuality with his pupils the ILEA has stopped him from taking up the job.

Over 2,000 teachers signed the petition, saying that they too would refuse to sign such a declaration, despite pressure on Warburton from the NUT Executive to agree to the ILEA's demand. The Warburton case highlights not only the way sexuality is treated in schools, but also the fundamental question of who should control the curriculum and in whose interests: the administrators, or the teachers, pupils and their parents.

IMG TEACHERS & SOCIAL WORKERS REPORT FROM CITY REELING FROM SAVAGE CUTBACKS

First it was the health service. A £12 million plan to build a desperately needed extension to the Leeds General Infirmary was scrapped. Now it's education and the social services on the chopping-block.

Last week 103 Leeds social workers — more than one third of all the field-workers in the Leeds Metro district — published a dossier on the social services in Leeds, revealing that they are collapsing and, in some cases, non-existent. The social workers themselves are suffering

staggering workloads, a shortage of staff, and long hours of unpaid overtime. Meanwhile the Tories on the Council, the largest party, put forward a plan to cut social spending by £4,800,000.

- * £1.7 million of this will come from education —
- * adult education students cut from 24,000 to 6,000;
- * youth services cut by 50 per cent, and part-time staff's salaries halved;
- * 37 fewer teachers this year and a massive 346 fewer next year;

- * nursery schemes and in-service teacher training abandoned;
- * bigger classes in schools — 2½ more children in every primary class, and 1½ more in every school-leaving class;
- * heating, lighting and cleaning levels drastically reduced;
- * money for books and equipment in schools cut by 7½ per cent — and Leeds already spends less than any other city in the country. With inflation running at over 25 per cent, this

Picket of Leeds Council, 25 June



means a cut in real buying power of one quarter.

When the Leeds City Council met to discuss this plan on 25 June, every Further Education College in Leeds was on strike, and 400 teachers demonstrated outside the Civic Hall. The Tory plan was defeated by the combined Labour and Liberal votes. But this is only a postponement of execution, not a reprieve. The Leeds Labour Party, a bastion of the right wing, agrees that cuts are needed. They are now putting their heads together in private with the Tories to work out how to do it more discreetly, to avoid embarrassment at the next elections.

WELFARE STATE

If the Labour Party were really serious about defending what's left of the Welfare State they would

- * demand central Government take over responsibility for the crippling interest repayments to the banks — £36 million this year, nearly half the total amount of money raised in rates,

- * open the Council's books to show us where the money's going;
- * raise the rate on industrial and commercial property (we haven't noticed any austerity measures in the lavish new company offices in Leeds) to pay for the social services;
- * sack Denis Healey, the author of the Labour Government's austerity budget, as Labour candidate for East Leeds at the next election;
- * organise public meetings in every area to explain the effects of the cuts and what the Labour Party intends to do about them — just as they organised meetings to explain the plan to go comprehensive in Leeds.

It isn't possible to fight the cuts piecemeal, or they will simply take away with one hand what they give with the other. A comprehensive action programme is needed against the cuts — after all, that's what they've got for the cuts!

Teachers should refuse to cover extra classes, and refuse to teach classes larger than the present size. Strikes should be

equipment must be ended and last year's level in real money terms restored, taking account of inflation, as a first step towards increasing this woefully inadequate sum. The only way to protect buying power is to automatically jack up the allowance every time the price of books and equipment rises.

There must also be no reduction in standards. The Shops and Factories Act standards must be applied to school and college heating levels — teachers must refuse to teach if these are reduced. All lighting, heating and cleaning levels must be monitored. Only a few weeks ago, teachers and students walked out of the long-condemned slum buildings of St. Peters, an annexe of Park Lane College of F.E. in Leeds, and simply refused to work in such conditions.

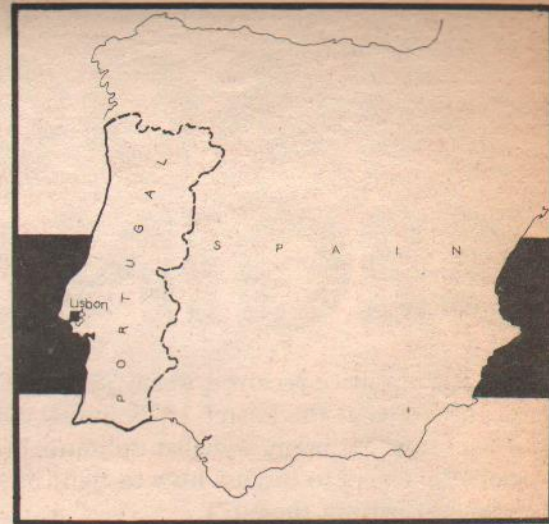
So far the ATTI in Leeds have organised a half-day strike. This is a good beginning, but it has to be built on and extended. The Leeds NUT voted overwhelmingly for a half-day strike along with the ATTI to picket the Council meeting, but when the resolution went to the divisional council of the Leeds Metro district half the Leeds delegates voted against their own members' resolution and the strike vote was lost. Clearly an important part of an effective fight against the cuts is the fight for union democracy.

A fighting alliance with other public sector unions is also essential to ensure that the Council doesn't rob Peter to pay Paul, with an elected Joint Union Action Committee based on the workplaces. Support must be won — and is there for the asking, as the Leeds conference against the cuts showed earlier this year — from the wider trade union movement.

These are the sorts of ways we shall be taking up the fight against cuts that hit above all at working class families, and are as much a cut in their standard of living as a hefty rise in the price of bread or meat. Every local council in the country will be watching the struggle in Leeds in the coming months, watching for the weak spots where their own cuts can be made. Every militant should also be watching what happens in Leeds: it's

Photo: ANDREW WILKINSON (Report)

PORTUGAL TODAY SPAIN TOMORROW



Since the military coup which brought down the fascist regime the Portuguese working class has taken gigantic strides. Despite the determined opposition of the capitalists — who have resorted to every method from economic sabotage to a military coup — the Portuguese workers have forced the nationalisation of the banks and key sections of industry. In many cases they have established workers control to fight for these industries to be run as 'part of an economy which serves the working class', and have created the greatest democratic rights for soldiers in any capitalist country.

RUTHLESS

Now the Portuguese working class finds itself faced by two new dangers. Ruthless capitalist sabotage of the economy and control of production for profit has led to inflation in May reaching a level equivalent to an annual rate of 90 per cent. Unemployment is at over 300,000 in a country far smaller than Britain. Behind this economic threat the forces of capitalist reaction are beginning once again to come out from under their stones. In the town of Santa Marta in

the north of the country, rightists broke up a meeting held as part of a campaign by the Armed Forces Movement. At Viseu an office supporting the MPLA, the Angolan liberation organisation, was attacked by fascists. At Braganca an office of the Portuguese Democratic Movement was bombed.

SABOTAGE

The fascists and rightists are also given powerful support and 'respectability' by the increasing intervention of the imperialist powers of the EEC, of NATO, and through the sabotage carried out by the multi-national capitalist firms.

As yet the fascist threat in Portugal is still small. However, the power of the working class is dangerously undermined by the policies of the reformist workers' parties. The Soares leadership of the Socialist Party functions as a clear agent of European and United States imperialism. The Communist Party, through its reformist policies and bureaucratic manipulation of the Intersindical trade union federation, prevents the breaking of many Socialist Party workers from the Soares leadership.

Neither the Communist Party nor the Socialist Party calls for socialist revolution in Portugal. Neither will demand a government of workers organisations. Both refuse to withdraw Portugal from NATO. Both support the Armed Forces Movement's new ban on political activity in the army. Neither calls for the workers, soldiers and peasants councils which are necessary to take forward the revolution in Portugal.

Instead of moving towards socialist revolution the Communist Party and Socialist Party leaders demand the 'struggle for production' — sacrifices by the workers in absurd attempts to prop up the crisis-ridden capitalist economy. *But what is posed in Portugal today is not the struggle for production but the struggle for power.* The Communist Party and the Socialist Party are pursuing in Portugal today the same disastrous policies carried out before the coup in Chile.

DISCREDITED

Today Portugal is still far from a Chilean disaster. The working class is too militant, the bourgeoisie too discredited, and the officers too divided for a right wing military coup.

But the Portuguese ruling class and the international capitalists are stepping up their sabotage and threats.

But above all the imperialists on a world scale fear the joining of the struggle in Portugal with the rising tide of revolution in Spain. Already the Franco dictatorship is in open decomposition. 100,000 workers in the Basque country struck on June 11th despite the police terror.

The downfall of the dictatorship in Spain will see the beginnings of the most advanced revolutionary struggle in Europe since 1937. To break the struggle in Portugal before the workers there are joined in open revolutionary struggle by their Spanish comrades. This is the urgent task of reaction. The world working-class has as its number one international duty the task of defeating the imperialist manoeuvres.

- * Imperialist hands off Portugal !
- * Smash the international capitalist sabotage!
- * Solidarity with the Iberian revolution !

RED WEEKLY

Campaign for solidarity with the Portuguese working class !

PUBLIC MEETING: 'Portugal; the struggle in Republica'.
SPEAKER: A delegate from the Republica works committee speaks on press freedom in Portugal.
PLACE: St. Bride's Institute, Bride Lane (off Fleet St.) EC1
TIME: Tuesday 8th July, 7.00pm
 Organised by the Portuguese Workers Co-ordinating Committee.

ANTICIPATING DENNIS

Healey is planning cuts. We also suspect that some of our readers have been planning cuts. After a good start the monthly Fund Drive has slowed to a trickle. With two days left it stands at a modest and absolutely inadequate £301.56p.

We just have to make a real appeal to you to rush in without any delay these Fund Drive quotas. A number of the bigger IMG branches have not yet sent in their June money. If we do not get your cash then the paper is in danger.

The address is 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. The need is urgent, the cause — the fight for international socialism — the best one you could possibly contribute to.

CIVIL WAR BREWS IN LEBANON

On one day last week a hundred people died in the Lebanese capital of Beirut — the culmination of five weeks of bitter fighting between right-wing goon squads and the guerrilla fighters of the Palestinian resistance. The fighting follows the attempts by the right-wing Christian-dominated Phalangist party — an agent of American imperialism — to bring about the establishment of a military government.

In early April 27 Palestinians were slaughtered in cold blood by the Phalangist militia — a deliberate provocation aimed at touching off a confrontation that would necessitate the intervention of the army and the proclamation of a state of emergency. The Phalangists know that only a military government would be capable of guaranteeing the capitalist order in Lebanon and imposing the necessary straightjacket on the Palestinian resistance prior to the opening of the Geneva conference on the Middle East.

The provocation was crushed by the Palestinian fighters. All the Phalangist headquarters were attacked with machine guns and mortars; factories and stores belonging to the Phalangists were dynamited. At the same time the reformist left warned against any army intervention and the Prime Minister Solh, himself a bourgeois reformist, refused to proclaim a state of emergency.

show of force

Under these conditions a show of force by the army would have been clearly exposed as an action to support the Christian far right; the Muslim majority of the population opposed it. The Phalangists lost the first round; the strong state was blocked.

They then prepared for the second round. The first step was to provoke the resignation of the Solh Government. The Phalangist ministers withdrew, followed by their allies and the representatives of other capitalist factions. On 15 May, Solh was compelled to resign, but not before publicly denouncing the Phalangist plot. Days later the Phalangist

militia recommenced battle, with the tacit support of President Franjeh. On 23 May a new government was announced: seven generals...and a banker! The mixture was well thought out: several generals capable of pleasing the Muslim population had been chosen. But the plot backfired.

Far from frightening the people, the announcement of the military government provoked a general insurrection in all the Muslim regions of Lebanon — an insurrection that fused with the Palestinian resistance already in place. Barricades went up everywhere, sandbags were laid out, armed blockades were formed, and advance posts clashed with the Phalangists, who had been joined by all the reactionaries of the Christian neighbourhoods of Beirut.

religious leaders

This extraordinary religious insurrection overthrew the military government in just three days. A general assembly of religious leaders, notables and bourgeois Muslims were forced to repeat in words the demand which the insurgent masses were affirming in action. On 26 May the military government presented its resignation: the Phalangist plot had failed, the capitalist order was shaken, and American imperialism received a new slap in the face after the blows that had been dealt it by the people of Indochina.

The bitter fighting in Beirut today is the continuation of this fierce struggle. Its successful conclusion will depend on the ability of revolutionaries to bring out the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist character of the conflict and prevent the co-option of the movement by the Muslim capitalists. For the Stalinists, the struggle against the capitalist far right is carried out in alliance with the moderate and reformist bourgeoisie. For the revolutionaries, the struggle against the far right is only a springboard for the struggle against the bourgeoisie as a whole!

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SQUATTERS DEMAND: HOUSING FOR ALL

On Thursday June 26th, over 50 squatters picketed the offices of the Sunday People, to protest at the series of scurrilous articles the newspaper had run in preceding weeks against the squatting movement. Management refused to see them or comment on their demand for the right of reply. As an IMG member of the National Union Journalists commented in his speech to the picket — 'This is the real nature of the 'freedom of the press'.