

RED WEEKLY

**Britain out
of Ireland!**

All out for
February 1st demo!

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CHRYSLER- OCCUPY NOW! NATIONALISE!

The jobs of 25,000 Chrysler workers and thousands more in subsidiary industries still hang in the balance. As we went to press, talks between Chrysler stewards and management — which is still demanding thousands of compulsory redundancies — had produced no deal.

The Government's 'rescue' deal has been exposed for what it is worth — a £162 million handout to the American multinational and the sack for at least 8,300 Chrysler workers. At a time when the British Steel Corporation is threatening 40,000 redundancies, when savage rail cuts are planned and unemployment is still soaring, the Chrysler workers now have the opportunity to strike a mighty blow for the right to work of all workers.

SPEARHEAD

Stewards at the Linwood plant have demanded nationalisation. Up till now they have rejected all redundancies. And, if things go according to plan, the Scottish plant will be occupied from 5 January — the largest factory occupation for jobs since 1971, when the Upper Clyde Shipyards struggle spearheaded the fight against the unemployment policies of the Heath Government.

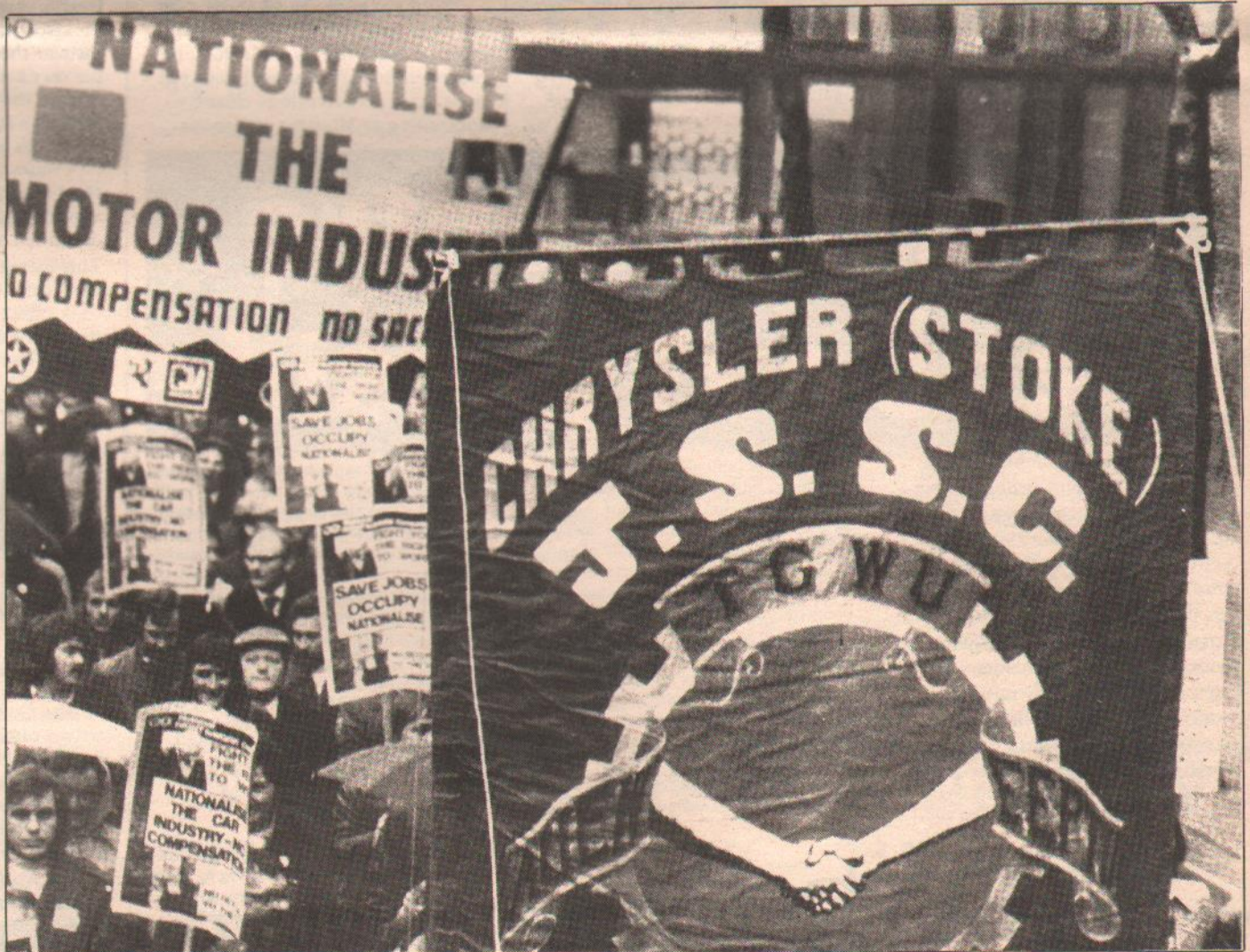
An occupation to save all jobs at Linwood could also transform the situation inside the Coventry plants, where the senior stewards' campaign for 'voluntary' as against compulsory redundancies has confused the workers' fight for jobs.

But the vital thing is for Chrysler workers themselves to act, and to act now with occupations of all three plants. Over the past weeks the press has spent thousand of column inches proving that Chrysler is not simply a lame-duck but a dead duck. Capitalist Chrysler may well be dead, but neither 8,000 workers nor 25,000 workers should let their jobs die with it.

RESISTANCE

The press's campaign has been aimed as much against any resistance to first the threatened shut down and now the Government's rescue scheme, as against the track record of the US multinational. This same press took opinion polls on the eve of both the 1972 and 1974 miners' strikes to 'prove' that the majority of the population were against the miners — yet after a few weeks of struggle even the opinion polls showed that the miners had won the vast majority of working people to their cause. Chrysler workers can now do the same in leading the fight for the right to work by occupying their plants and demanding nationalisation to save all jobs.

As for the 'left' Labour MPs, who miserably failed even to



vote against the Government's 'rescue' package, let alone demand nationalisation, they must be held to their earlier pledges to mobilise a campaign in support of Chrysler workers' jobs. Tony Benn, who is said to have argued for nationalisation in the Cabinet, should resign and help lead the fight for nationalisation if he is serious about defending jobs.

Chrysler workers can boost the fight for the right to work by acting now, but national leadership is also needed. The 'left' MPs and trade union leaders must be forced to add their voices to the demand for a recall TUC Conference to break with the unemployment policies of the Wilson Government. The 70,000 strong Metropolitan district of the National and

Local Government Officers' Association and Birmingham Trades Council are among those bodies already demanding this. The campaign for a recall TUC should be extended across the country, and right to work committees built in every area to fight unemployment and build solidarity with every struggle against sackings.

RECALL THE TUC!
OCCUPY TO DEFEND JOBS!
NATIONALISE CHRYSLER NOW!

MICK GOSLING

RECALL THE TUC

Fighting unemployment

In his third article on the unemployed struggles of the 1920s and '30s, **BOB PENNINGTON** looks at what happened after the defeat of the General Strike, when the Labour and trade union leaders tried to save capitalism at the expense of the working class.

The defeat of the General Strike had a devastating effect on the workers' movement.

The confidence of the ruling class rose. On every front they went on the offensive. Unemployment benefits were cut by one shilling. The Boards of Guardians — too likely, especially where governed by Labour majorities, to give into the unemployed's demands — were stripped of their powers.

A war was waged against applications for unemployment benefits. From March 1927 until March 1928, 441,387 people were refused dole. The number of people applying for Poor Law relief soared to over 1½ million. To get benefit the unemployed had to prove that they had been seeking work — although how a Welsh miner living in an area dependent on the coal industry and with no other jobs on offer could do this was never explained. The jobless had to trek miles each day, often on empty stomachs, to search for work they knew did not exist.

NO WORK

Everywhere work was getting harder and harder to find. Between April and September 1927 the number of miners at work fell from 1,280,687 to 982,555. Even those at work were only averaging 4.6 shifts a week compared to 5.4 shifts twelve months before.

The working class, so confident and militant in the early days of May 1926, were bewildered and felt crushed. The right wing Labour and trade union leaders, frightened of the power of the working class upsurge that May 1926 had unleash-

ed, scurried back to the ruling class panting 'never again'. When the National Unemployed Workers' Movement asked for a meeting of the Joint Advisory Council they had established with the TUC, they were told that 'no useful purpose can be served by continuing (it) in existence'.

BETRAYAL

This rebuff came on the eve of the report of the Blanesburgh Unemployment Insurance Committee, which had been set up in 1925 by the Baldwin Government to consider the insolvency of the Government's Unemployment Insurance Fund. Mainly consisting of company directors and titled persons, it also had three members from the labour movement: the ex-miners' leader Frank Hodges, A.E. Holmes, and Margaret Bondfield. These so-called 'representatives' of the working class revealed their true colours by signing the Committee's final report, which recommended cuts in benefits, reductions in contributions to the scheme — which favoured the employers — and non-payment to claimants involved in 'trade disputes'.

This was not an isolated act of betrayal by the trade union and Labour bureaucrats. When more than a thousand unemployed men and women marched from the West Wales coalfield to the Swansea TUC in 1928, they were met by what the *Daily Express* described as an 'armed camp' of police. This was the result of arrangements made by the TUC Secretary Walter Citrine and Labour Party Secretary Arthur Henderson, together with the Chief Constable of Swansea.



Marching miners take to the buses of London during a 1927 unemployment demonstration.

The unemployed never got near the TUC. Others did, however. The first business of the Congress was 'to welcome the mayor and corporation, the high sheriff and the lord lieutenant of the county'!

In 1929 the second Labour Government took office. The world crisis of capitalism was reaching unprecedented dimensions. Labour at once made its intentions clear by appointing as Minister of Labour

one of the three labour movement signatories to the Blanesburgh Report, Margaret Bondfield.

In the summer of 1929 the NUWM sent a deputation to see Bondfield and the Minister for Health, Arthur Greenwood. These two worthies refused to see them. Instead they once again called on the services of a squad of police, who evicted the unemployed deputation from the Ministry of Labour using arm-locks and half-nelsons.

Committed to saving capitalism, the Labour Government pursued what Premier Ramsey MacDonald described as 'a policy of continuity'. This meant that he carried on where the Tories had left off. When Labour took office in May 1929, unemployment stood at 1,127,000. A year later it had risen to 1,770,000.

J.H. Thomas, the Minister for Employment boasted on 5 June 1930: 'I have deliberately, and will continue deliberately, to proceed on the basis of rationalisation in industry, which must for weeks increase unemployment figures. I have got to do this in the interests of the country'. 'Weeks' turned into months. By December 1930 the figure had reached 2,643,127.

MARCH

The Government's attacks did not go unchallenged, however. In February 1930 the NUWM decided to march on London. On 30 March contingents set off from all over Britain. For the first time there was a special women's contingent of textile workers from Lancashire and Yorkshire.



Thomas smugly watched the jobless total pass the 2½ million mark.

Arthur Greenwood told the workhouse authorities to treat the marchers as casuals. As the marchers pushed towards London, Labour had a 'change of heart' and raised the scale of adult benefit from seven shillings to nine shillings. When the marchers reached London they were greeted by nearly 50,000 people.



MacDonald — suitably dressed in lackey's uniform.

As the unemployment scheme dipped into further insolvency, the Government appointed a Royal Committee to look into the situation. Headed by Justice Holman Gregory, a noted reactionary, this body recommended cuts in Unemployment Insurance, education, roads, pensions and Health Insurance.

DRACONIAN

The official mouthpiece of Labour, the *Daily Herald*, explained that the 'Labour Government will not shirk its responsibilities'. The measures were so draconian that even inside the Cabinet eight ministers stood out against the measures.

But this 'resistance' was too late. MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas and Lord Sankey broke with Labour and went off to form a National Government with the Tories and the Liberals. And the 'lefts', who had placed all their hopes in parliamentary manoeuvres — viewing the unemployed movement as a pressure group rather than as a means of organising the independent anti-capitalist struggle of the working class — were powerless to do anything about it.

Socialist Centre opens on Tyneside

Socialists on Tyneside have taken an important step in strengthening and unifying the challenge to the right wing in the labour movement. Activists from the well-organised shop stewards' committees at Vickers, from the left of the Labour Party, from the Trades Council, from the women's movement and from the revolutionary left have worked together over the autumn to establish a Socialist Centre, and a left-wing bookshop in Newcastle.

The Socialist Centre is organising courses and open forums with the aim

of helping militants to develop alternative policies and strategies to those that are presently leading the labour movement to defeat. The courses so far established provide a deeper analysis of aspects of the present crisis than can be discussed solely in the context of bodies like action committees; they will also include an introduction to Marxist theory, a series of discussions on the formation and lessons of the workers' movement in Britain, and an examination of the different strategies being put forward by the left today.

A second important function of the Centre will be to provide material resources and means of communication to

generalise and support struggles and campaigns which might otherwise become isolated, either because the official leadership refuses to give adequate support (as with the Eldon Square scaffolders), or because their position in capitalist society has pushed them to the margins of the labour movement (as with the young unemployed in the North-East).

Finally (so far), the Centre will provide a base for socialist cultural activity such as that organised on Tyneside by a new organisation, Trade Unionists for Socialist Art, which will hopefully spread to the workingmen's clubs.

UNITY

The need for unity of the kind which the Socialist Centre is beginning to represent — and which complements united action developing around specific issues — was shown by the massive response (for a Saturday night in Newcastle) to the opening of the Centre on 13 December. Over 250 packed in to hear former 'Red Clydeside' leader Harry McShane, the socialist rock music of the Belt-and-Braces Flying Squad, and the traditional Irish music of the Beggarmen.

The task now is to build on this response and ensure that the Centre is able to strengthen initiatives such as the Action Committee Against the Cuts and the more embryonic Right to Work Committee (both established from the Trades Council conference on 22 November), the Tyne shop stewards working group on nationalisation and workers control, the North Tyneside Housing Action Committee, and — together with the Women's Centre — the women's groups and campaigns around the Working Women's Charter, National Abortion Campaign

—WHAT'S ON—

DEFEND THE RIGHT TO WORK badges—17p inc postage from: Jo-Ann, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. Bulk rates on enquiry (01-278 9526).

UNEMPLOYED TEACHERS in London meet every Wednesday at 7pm in Room 61, Northern Boly, Holloway Road, N.7.

BRITISH WITHDRAWAL from Northern Ireland Campaign (BNWIC) London Group meets 7.30, Tues 6 Jan at 6 Endsleigh St, WC1. All interested welcome to meetings on first Tuesday of every month.

HARINGEY STREET THEATRE have a play about the Working Women's Charter available evenings and weekends, expenses only. Phone 888 2610 (evenings).

FOR CHEAP, reliable IBM typesetting with fast turnaround, phone Stephanie on 837 6954.

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

FIRST MOBILISING Committee meeting for the 3 April abortion demo, Monday 5 Jan, University of London Union (Room 3A), Malet St, WC1, 8-10pm.

RED LADDER THEATRE requires an administrator. She/he should have organising experience, and knowledge of the trade union and labour movement. Also an interest and willingness to participate in all other areas of the company's work (except performing). To begin by end January: salary £35-45 per week. Applications in writing as soon as possible, stating: 1. Theatrical/political/administrative experience; 2. Reasons for interest in this work; 3. When you can start; 4. Tel. no. The company will be based in LEEDS, but applications to: 58 Wray Crescent, London N4 (263 1053).

YORK RAIL UNIONS: Anti-cuts meeting, 6 Jan, Guildhall, York. Speakers include Ray Buckton, Sid Weighell.

SOUTH WEST LONDON IMG meeting. Film 'To Die in Madrid' and speaker from LCR-ETA(VI). Fri 9 Jan, 7.30pm, Battersea District Library, Lavender Hill, SW11.

CHRYSLER -OCCUPY FOR JOBS

The £162 million Chrysler deal is the Wilson Government's latest attack on the right to work of all workers. Wilson's Detroit contract is simple – and deadly:

1. Riccardo and the Chrysler Corporation agree to take on the British trade unions with a massive programme of 8,000 redundancies and speed-up within Chrysler UK.
2. In return for public money, Wilson gets the continued co-operation of the trade union 'leaders', as policemen for the £6 limit and worse to come. Labour Government backing is given to a programme of sackings that Chrysler could never pull off alone – and at the same time the Government does not appear to take direct responsibility for the sackings, as the firm remains in private hands.

Wilson gets a new 'hit-man' in Riccardo – the workers get the sack. The whole working class faces a terrible blow against the right to work.

NO DEAL

The Chrysler deal must be rejected. But it is still only the Linwood plant which has come out in clear opposition to all sackings and demanded nationalisation without compensation to defend jobs. According to present plans, Linwood will be occupied from 5 January to enforce these demands. Although both the Stoke and

Ryton plants have rejected the deal and threatened occupation, the senior stewards seem willing to drop the fight for all jobs if voluntary redundancies, short-time working and improved severance payments are agreed to. Resolutions along these lines were put to and accepted by mass meetings at both the Stoke and Ryton plants in Coventry just before Christmas.

WEDGE

But voluntary redundancies split the workforce now and give Chrysler a free hand later. This is precisely what has happened in British Leyland, where the collaboration of the senior stewards with Ryder has meant that thousands accepted voluntary redundancies both before and after the introduction of the Ryder plan.

It has been the determined and consistent opposition of the Linwood stewards to redundancies and their plans for occupation which have produced the fighting spirit and unity of the Scottish workers. This can still be spread to all Chrysler plants by firm opposition to all redundancies – otherwise Chrysler management will seize on the 'voluntary' redundancies loop-hole to drive a wedge between different sections of Chrysler workers and inside Chrysler plants.

Follow Linwood – occupy to nationalise! The revamping of Chrysler UK to compete with other state-backed car firms is crazy. Support can be won from

all car workers on the basis of nationalisation of the whole industry.

The document on the Chrysler crisis produced by TASS members at the Whitley research and administration centre has already shown the crazy mismanagement and waste of capitalist car production and proved the need for nationalisation. Now in place of phoney participation schemes, workers in every car plant should elect committees to fight for the opening of the company's books in order to prepare a workers' plan for nationalisation and production which defends jobs.

Happiness is a Chrysler car.



Workers expose the real Chrysler crisis

Chrysler's Crisis: The Workers Answer, submitted to the Government by a joint union delegation of shop stewards and staff representatives in mid-December, provides a very different analysis of Chrysler's problems from that put forward by management, the Government and the press.

Far from strikes being the cause of the crisis, about half of all lost production is due to breakdowns, supply difficulties, repair and maintenance. At the same time the average wage in 1974 of employees in Chrysler UK was lower than in any other major car manufacturer in Europe – £2,600 a year compared with £2,700 for Vauxhall, £3,300 for Ford UK, and £3,600 for Chrysler France.

The report argues that the failure of the company in the UK is a result of:

1. **The company's failure to invest.** The Stoke plant is a positive museum: over 80 per cent of the machinery used in the production of the Arrow (Hunter, Sceptre) range power-train (engine, gear-box, rear axle) and 30 per cent of that used in production of the Avenger engine is over 14 years old – 3 per cent is over 33 years old. In 1974 investment reached the ludicrous level of £15 per worker, compared with £430 per worker at Ford and £258 per worker at British Leyland. This cannot even have covered the cost of depreciation and repair.
2. **The deliberate run-down of Chrysler UK.** Between 1970 and 1973 the fixed capital employed in Chrysler UK fell from £53m to £46m. In 1973 the total book value of British plant and machinery was just £19 million – a bare fifth of what Ford or Leyland were employing. Fixed capital assets per man were just £1,550 in 1972, compared with £2,274 in France and £3,377 in the USA. In 1974 they were

£1,600 compared with £3,400 in France.

Machinery valued at nearly a million pounds has been transferred to South America and Spain. Other machines, like those introduced (with a 25 per cent government investment grant) for the notorious 'C' car (transferred to France) have been abandoned as scrap. Shop floor estimates of this wastage range from £17 million to as much as £35 million.

3. **Design and development work.** Since the Chrysler Corporation took majority control of the UK company there has not been a single all-new Chrysler car made in the UK. Yet many cars have been designed by the Whitley research centre for eventual production abroad or have been scrapped. At the same time sales hand-outs worth between £100 and £200 a vehicle have been offered to dealers on French models – and this has been costed against the UK budget.

At the same time Chrysler has been involved in the usual juggling of profits, taxes and interests – low export prices to other Chrysler subsidiaries, particularly to Switzerland where taxes are lower than in the UK. The Labour Research Department has calculated that this process of profit transferring may have cost Chrysler UK £93m in the last three years. Thanks to this and similar book-cooking Chrysler has managed in the fourteen years 1960–1973 to gain more from tax and depreciation allowances (£2.45m) than it has paid in total to the British Exchequer (2.3m)!

The Workers Answer is a graphic demonstration of the need to open all Chrysler's books to expose the wheeling and dealing of capitalist business and show the need for nationalisation. On the basis of such a workers' plan all jobs can still be successfully defended.

SMELTERS- MAKE LABOUR FIGHT



Christmas brought no gifts from management for the strikers at Commonwealth Smelting Limited, Avonmouth. With management insisting that 114 sackings and wage-cuts for a further 400 are not negotiable, and threatening a permanent close-down of the site, the ten week-old struggle is becoming increasingly bitter. This was reflected in the 'seasonal greetings' to management in a Xmas card issued by the strikers:

'Keep your presents Aussie,
Keep your cuts in pay,
Keep your undermanning,
Keep your fumes away.
We've had enough pollution,
We're sick of SO₂
We'd rather have Christmas pudding
Than lungs full of lead from you.'

Bitter though the strike is, the strikers have remained solid over the last fortnight. Delegates from CSL have addressed workers in South Wales, where appeals have gone out to 300 miners' lodges. A commitment of support from Cardiff dockers has been gained and tours of other areas are being considered. Strikers also took part in a hospital workers' demo against the cuts on 19 December (see page 8) and have spoken to Ashley Down ward Labour Party.

A setback came, however, when a resolution from Bath University ASTMS

Branch to the union's Divisional Council, urging support for the strike and an inquiry into scabbing by ASTMS members on the CSL site, was voted down. Management could not run the site if ASTMS members were not doing TGWU members' jobs. ASTMS workers up and down the country must demand an end to this scabbing and so remove management's last prop.

Recently attempts have been made to involve local left MPs Ron Thomas and Tony Benn in setting up a meeting with management so talks may continue. While the support of Labour leaders for the strikers is useful, a more pertinent way to help the workers' demands would be to demand that these leaders mobilise support in the labour movement for the strikers.

In particular Ron Thomas, a member of ASTMS, should be 'doing everything in his power to get the Divisional Council's decision reversed. Both he and Benn carry a lot of weight, particularly in the local labour movement. They must be forced to throw this behind the ten week-old struggle of the CSL workers for the right to work and against wage-cuts.

For messages of support, donations, information, speakers etc., contact Mike O'Dea, 10 Eldon Terrace, Bedminster, Bristol.

INVEST YOUR MONEY IN THE ONLY GROWTH INDUSTRY – THE IMG AND ITS £15,000 FUND DRIVE!

We can guarantee that every £1 donated will go towards the fight against capitalism and Wilson's anti-working class policies. With more capitalists going bankrupt every day, fewer and fewer people believe in the ability of capitalism to provide a decent house and job – yet alone a decent life. Socialism is needed to meet even the most elementary needs of existence.

But how can we get it? The IMG has set itself the task of building a credible revolutionary organisation: strengthening and expanding our publications, and developing the facilities and resources with which to build campaigns and organise effectively inside the labour movement.

You can help us in this vital task with money. Help us to win more people to socialism by contributing to the £15,000 Fund Drive. The money you donate will go to:

- * Building a Scottish Centre
- * A 16-page Red Weekly
- * Strengthening and improving our publications and central apparatus
- * Allocating more full-timers to our campaigns.

We have raised £5,000 so far – including an encouraging £864.92 last week alone. Now we need another £10,000 by the end of February. Send donations to Jo-Ann, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. (cheques/POs payable to 'The Week').

New attacks by Azevedo government



Republica workers played key role in workers' mobilisations—now Government has moved to close the paper down

'The false idea that unemployment is an ill to be avoided at all costs is a myth that must be destroyed.' This was part of Portuguese premier Azevedo's austerity message on television two days before Christmas. Also included in the package were massive price rises and an extension until March at least of the wage freeze imposed in the aftermath of 25 November.

This broadcast was the clearest indication yet of the Sixth Provisional Government's determination to extend the advantage it won inside the armed forces with the collapse of the military rebellion to the rest of Portuguese society. The aim is to make the working class pay the cost of restoring capitalism to good health, while at the same time avoiding any premature confrontation by too blatant a crack-down.

REPUBLICA

The regime has therefore concentrated its open attacks so far on those sections of the workers' movement which it regards as the most vulnerable. A sign of its growing confidence in this respect was its decision on 24 December to order the closure of the worker-controlled paper *Republica*, which had taken on an increasingly important role as an organiser of the vanguard of the workers' movement. At the time of writing it was still unclear as to what the response of the *Republica*



workers and their supporters would be.

Another example of the Government's attempts to crush the vanguard of the workers' movement has been the struggle over the land reform. But an additional aspect here has been the open mobilisation of extreme right-wing forces encouraged by the Government's repression against the left. Indeed, the struggle for the land illustrates in a nutshell the dilemma which still faces the regime — and its Socialist Party members in particular.

FARMERS

The most dramatic expression of this conflict came with a mass demonstration of farmers on 14 December at the town of Rio Maior, 50 miles north of Lisbon. This was hailed rapturously by most of the British press as a demonstration by small peasants against Communist thugs who were trying to seize their tiny plots and leave them destitute. It was left to a *Le Monde* correspondent on the spot, Dominique Pouchin, to point out that the gathering was actually dominated by large and medium sized proprietors, many of them from the south.

The effect of their presence was clearly seen in the drift of the meeting, which started out by calling for a halt in the agrarian reform and ended up by demanding the restoration of all lands expropriated — even if they were legally taken over, and even if they hadn't then been under cultivation.

Speakers also demanded the resignation of the Agriculture Minister, Lopes Cardoso; when it was pointed out that he was a member of the Socialist Party there were shouts of 'obviously a Communist infiltrator'. The vicious anti-Communist campaign conducted by SP leader Mario Soares is thus already beginning to rebound on his party.

CO-OPERATIVE

The Government, however, is still far from being in a position to go along with these reactionary demands. Indeed, the very day after the Rio Maior demonstration the official journal of the Government published a decree ratifying the expropriation of a further 50,000 hectares in the southern Alentejo. This is a sign not of the Government's good intentions but of the strength built up by the agricultural workers' movement, which cannot just be turned aside at will.

But the north is a different question. One incident which curiously enough went unreported in the British press was the forcible suppression of the Torre-Bela agricultural co-operative less than 20 miles from Rio Maior. At the beginning of December it was surrounded by seven tanks on the pretext of a search for a big arms dump. But

all they found were three hunting rifles, a pistol, two carving knives, and a 17th century lance.

Nevertheless, the regime was fully aware that the continuation of such an experiment — small peasants successfully overcoming their problems by pooling their resources and organising their work collectively — could have highly undesirable consequences in opening up an alternative in the agricultural north, whose population presently provides the only mass base of any importance for the right wing. Torre-Bela must be crushed without any delay. And so, on the night of 11–12 December, the Santarem cavalry regiment moved in and arrested not only the co-operative workers but also members of the neighbourhood commission in the village of Aveiras.

SELF-DEFENCE

This illustrates one of the major problems facing the vanguard of the workers' movement in Portugal today. Although the workers' struggles developed at a very rapid pace over the summer and autumn, they were dependent on one thing: the sympathy or active support of the soldiers. If a strike, housing occupation or land seizure was threatened, the response was simply to call on the friendly troops at the local barracks. This led to a potentially dangerous division of labour which masked the essential problem of workers' self-defence.

The failure to deal with this question is now a real problem in the struggle to defend and extend the workers' and neighbourhood commissions. The latter, in particular, are in many cases beginning to break down now that the only soldiers around are more likely to attack them than defend them.

The question of self-defence — the establishment of vigilance committees, picket squads, etc — is only one of the aspects of 'popular power' which will have to be clarified if the workers' movement is to take the offensive once more. The Communist Party, for instance, sees these organs as merely pressure groups for its own manoeuvres inside the Government and State apparatus; while the weeks preceding 25 November showed that many revolutionary groups had conceptions which were confused at best and downright dangerous at worst.

DISCUSSION

Such a debate is already beginning to take place. In a statement on 12 December formally announcing its departure from the Revolutionary United Front (FUR), the Internationalist Communist League (LCI—Portuguese group of the Fourth International) called for a public discussion 'on the balance sheet of the FUR and on the ways of bringing about unity in action of the different workers' and revolutionary forces'.

Another group, the League of Revolutionary Unity and Action (LUAR), has also left the FUR. In a public self-criticism, LUAR considers that the FUR's 'triumphalism' was partly responsible for the adventure of 25 November, but declares itself 'ready more than ever to engage in unity of action with all the revolutionary forces if it is based on clear principles'. It also makes an important distinction — one still not grasped by groups like the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat (PRP) and the Movement of the Socialist Left

PORTUGUESE READERS SAY 'THANKS':

Thank you for your article, 'The Revolution in a State of Siege'. A small group of Portuguese left students has formed at my University since 25 April. We were very varied a group, spanning most of the revolutionary parties of our homeland.

We have, though, been continually surprised and impressed by the articles that appear in *Red Weekly*. Not only do they represent events as they happen — many papers, notably those of the Communist Party, the capitalist press, and to a lesser extent those of groups like IS seem incapable of reporting the facts — but we have been more and more swayed by the logic of the analysis that *Red Weekly* places on events. M.B. (Birmingham).

(MES) — between the Socialist Party and 'those parties which carry fascism in their belly, like the PPD [Popular Democrats], CDS [Centre Democrats] and the PDC [Christian Democrats]'.

In the next two months the LCI, the LUAR, the MES and the Maoist UDP will all be holding national congresses. The opportunity thus exists for the development of a real discussion around the fundamental questions facing the Portuguese revolution — most notably, the need for a united front policy aimed at the members of the Communist and Socialist parties. It is an opportunity which, if it is grasped, can make a decisive contribution towards reorienting the workers' movement against the attacks of the Azevedo Government and the fascists which hide behind it.

Martin Meteyard



In the last issue of *Red Weekly* we spent a considerable amount of space establishing the facts on the Lisbon events of 25–26 November. This was necessary both to avoid any charge that we wanted to avoid certain questions, and to get rid of the pseudo explanation of the PRP and the IS that the Communist Party started a rebellion and then sold it out.

The real development of events is clear. The Azevedo Government staged a provocation which at least militarily had been prepared beforehand. A section of the extreme left of the army, unfortunately operating at least partially to a pre-decided plan, fell into this provocation and staged a disastrous adventure. But the PRP, while it had been politically supporting and projecting officers indisputably involved in the events right up to the eve of 25 November, did not organisationally initiate their action.

Class Forces

However all this is relatively unimportant, and we dealt with it at such length in our last issue only because it is here that comrade Harman starts the debate. Historic events are not a function of who starts them — fires the first shot or seizes the first air base — but of the class forces and political line involved. The Lisbon events, like all important turning points, reveal with sharp clarity the real relations and alignments of forces between the classes. They provide a litmus test, therefore, of the various political lines in the situation. The question to which we addressed ourselves in our *Open Letter to IS on Portugal*, and to which we return here, is not whether the PRP organisationally initiated events, but whether its political line was such that even if the events of 25 November hadn't happened the disaster would merely have had another starting point.

Ultra-dangerous

A first starting point for an examination of the line of the PRP is the question of social democracy and fascism. Comrade Harman claims that we attack the PRP for ultra-dangerous confusions on social democracy and fascism when in fact all they do is remind people of the fact that social democracy prepares the way for fascism — something which Trotsky pointed out in his writings on Germany.

Here, unfortunately, comrade Harman is simply playing games on a deadly serious question. As comrade Harman must know, Trotsky was concerned to emphasise not merely the historical truth that social democracy prepares the way for fascism, but the absolutely crucial qualitative difference between social democracy and fascism. Furthermore, we attacked the PRP not for asserting historic truths about social democracy paving the way for fascism but for its

Portugal Con

The first national conference of the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class has been called for 13 March at Conway Hall in London. The function of the conference will be to continue the building of a massive campaign in solidarity with the Portuguese working class.

The need for such a campaign has never been greater. The present economic crisis in Portugal becomes weekly more pronounced. The Sixth Provisional Government, heartened by the defeat of 25 November, is attempting to make the workers and peasants pay a heavy price in solving the crisis. A package of austerity measures is on the way. The Azevedo Government is attempting to snatch back the gains the working class has made over the past eighteen months.

The Portuguese ruling class has not been short of international support. The multinationals have played a prominent role in the efforts of the United States, Britain and the EEC to destabilise the Portuguese economy by refusing credit, transferring production abroad, and blocking the despatch of spare parts.

However, those with the most to lose in Portugal are the British firms who have been maintaining the centuries old Anglo-Portuguese alliance of exploitation — firms like Plessey, GEC, ICI, British Leyland, Courtaulds, Sandeman-Allen

PORTUGAL FORUM



Social Democracy & Fascism

ALAN JONES continues his reply to the International Socialists on the politics of the PRP

systematic and disastrous confusion and lumping together of fascism and social democracy. We can demonstrate this in some detail.

First, however, we must stress that this point is not merely semantic but of crucial importance for the practical activity of revolutionaries. Certainly social democrats are capable of quite extraordinary violence – in 1918–19 the leadership of the German SPD organised the killing of tens of thousands of German workers. But the social democrats carried out this violence to defend the bourgeois democratic state against a workers' revolution, and with the state they preserved the organisations of the working class: the same SPD leadership which killed Luxemburg and Liebknecht presided over a threefold increase in the membership of the German unions.

In comparison with this level of violence, Hitler actually killed less people in the first period of his power but the difference was that Hitler

Conference called

another 200. The working class movement in Britain has a greater responsibility than most in building a campaign in solidarity with the revolutionary struggle of the Portuguese workers and peasants.

One person we can be certain will not be at this conference is Harold Wilson. He and the other leaders of social democracy internationally have been doing all they can to help Mario Soares fight the challenge to capitalist rule in Portugal. These so-called leaders of the workers' movement have been 'assisting' the Portuguese working class by imposing import quotas and tariffs on Portuguese textiles, which can only make the 17 per cent rate of unemployment there even worse.

The Solidarity Campaign conference open to all bodies of the trade union movement, Constituency Labour Parties, student unions, national political organisations, etc. It must become a massive display of our determination to continue the campaign against the multinationals and the treacherous role of the Wilson-Brandt coalition, because a defeat of the Portuguese working class would be a defeat for the working class all over Europe. For further details contact the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class, 12 Little Newport Street, London, W.C.2.

the fascist smashed the very bourgeois democratic state form and organisations of the working class on which the SPD had based itself.

To deal with these different types of reaction very different responses are required by revolutionaries. If we are confronted with a move to a fascist coup, a coup aimed to crush the organisation of the masses, then certain things follow. Firstly, armed resistance must be prepared without fail. Mere general strikes etc will not achieve anything against a fascist coup, and at all costs the proletariat must not be defeated without a struggle – as Trotsky said, a dozen defeated bloody proletarian insurrections would not be such a terrible blow to the masses as a surrender to fascism without struggle.

Resistance

Secondly, however, because the offensive of the fascists is against the masses and their organisations, the masses will rapidly be able to understand the necessity for resistance – while the vanguard can of course commit tactical errors of ultra-leftism, the essential dynamic is to push the vanguard and masses together and in any case, as already noted, the danger of premature acts is a thousand times less than the danger of passivity.

Faced with social democratic repression, which aims not to smash the masses but to crush the vanguard, entirely different tasks flow. The danger is precisely of isolation from the masses. Because the repression is against the vanguard and not the masses, there is no constant pressure for the masses themselves to feel threatened and therefore support the vanguard. Under such circumstances the classic tactic of the bourgeoisie is to carry out a provocation which separates the vanguard decisively from the masses, and therefore allows it to be crushed separately.

Provocations

The task of that vanguard is evidently to avoid this – to avoid walking into provocations and isolated adventures, and to implant itself more firmly in the masses and on this basis lead the struggle against the social democrats. Unfortunately, however, the PRP took exactly the opposite course. It completely confused the question of repression aimed against the vanguard by the social democrats, which was a very real threat, and that of a fascist reaction – which

with the existing relation of forces in Portugal was absolutely not a threat. In consequence the PRP headed full tilt for an adventure.

The disastrously wrong line of the PRP began to take its concrete form in August with sections of the Manifesto of the Revolutionary United Front (FUR) – which the PRP, unlike other groups in the FUR, never criticised. This Manifesto analysed the existence of 'social democratic putschists' in the army – which might not have been too bad if it had been clearly understood as a reference to elements aiming to use violence to crush the vanguard. However, instead of distinguishing between these elements, who clearly dominate the Antunes group, the SP and the Azevedo Government, the PRP confused them with the fascists – referring in the Manifesto, for example, to 'the entire right, both fascists and social democrats'.

From then on the PRP consistently confused the social democrats' attempts to destroy the vanguard with the fascists' attempts to destroy the mass organisations. It forecast the development of 'an authoritarian regime that will assume fascist forms and that will rapidly resort to blood bath and terror

in order that "peace and discipline" may reign' (*Revolução*, 7 November).

It concluded: 'What separates the "socialism" of the social democrats from the fascists is only a question of form. And as the two have need of each other to avoid that which is allergic to both of them – the dictatorship of the proletariat – they ally. Who is the enemy? The holy alliance and fascism. Yes, it is the holy alliance between social democracy and fascism. It is this which permits them both to allow the maintenance of capitalism' ('The Danger comes from the Social Democracy' in *Revolução*, 7 November).

Continued

This line was then fully continued even after 25 November. As Isabel Do Carmo explained clearly: 'We believe that the social democratic power which is hegemonic at this moment, that is to say the SP and the PPD, will convert itself rapidly into fascism' (Interview in *Jornal Novo*, 12 December).

With such perspectives the PRP oriented logically towards a violent clash and insurrection. It announced: 'The PRP-BR, which did not let itself be disarmed by Caetano or Spínola, is not afraid of the flabby and veiled violence of the Social Democrats' (PRP article in *Jornal de Notícias*, 25 September).

This ridiculous bravado was coupled with a clear line on how to deal with the situation. As Isabel Do Carmo put it in a press conference on 10 November: 'For us, at this moment, there is no solution except armed insurrection.' This line was made exceedingly concrete. In the article in *Jornal de Notícias* already cited, the PRP hailed the diversion of weapons to the workers not as a means of developing self-defence but because: 'The opposition group, specifically Captain Clemente, said that it was necessary to seek new forms of struggle to keep the country from being dominated by social democrats.'

Escalation

From this point onwards the PRP systematically featured the material of the Clemente group without in any way differentiating itself politically from their central line. This culminated on 21 November with the printing on the front page of *Revolução* of the Manifesto of Clemente and other officers, which stated: 'We are now seeing a desperate reactionary escalation; the parties and officers of the Sixth Government are joining in attempts to crush the powerful popular offensive.' It advanced as the solution the PRP's slogan of a 'regime of revolutionary unity'. Four days later it was Clemente who was faded off the TV screens by the Government when he appeared to announce the insurrection.

Did the PRP organisationally initiate what took place on 25 November? We accept their word, comrade Harman's word, and the obvious evidence that they didn't. But is that the really significant thing on which we must

concentrate?

Wasn't it really that the whole political line – correctly summarised in *Socialist Worker* on 6 December: 'The revolutionary left groups, the PRP and the MES, had been arguing that an armed insurrection was necessary to avoid the danger of another Chile' – was false from beginning to end? That there was no danger of a Chile type coup to crush the mass organisations but a deadly danger of a 'social democratic coup' to provoke, isolate and crush the vanguard? That the PRP totally confused the relation of social democracy and fascism? That the line of the PRP walked right into the trap, and to the degree that it influenced Clemente et al it contributed to their disastrous orientation?

Finally, of course, we could deal with how the PRP intends to combat the danger of 'social democratic hegemony converting itself rapidly into fascism'. Its response so far has been to establish, with the MES, the 'Commando of Revolutionary Anti-Fascist Unity'.

Guidelines

This, as we reported in our last issue, has a basis which states: 'The CURAF will accomplish its mission by providing guidelines for the soldiers and workers, co-ordinating the action of the patriotic forces at a national level.' We could ask comrade Harman what he thinks of the need for 'unity of the patriotic forces', but we feel that even he won't go so far as to support that. Unfortunately, however, this is merely a culminating point, the flip side of its ultra-leftism, of the line of the PRP.

In our next issue we will deal with the other aspect of the PRP's insurrectionist line – its analysis of the CP and of the relation of forces in Portugal.



Foreign Minister Melo Antunes—now heads 'left' grouping which wants a continued role for the military in government. The CP is turning all its efforts to building an alliance with him.

Demonstration by PPD rightists



'The Angola operation', wrote Anthony Lewis in the 16 December *International Herald Tribune*, 'is already one of the largest covert actions ever mounted by the United States outside Indochina'.

The United States has already funnelled millions of dollars worth of military hardware to the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Meanwhile the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, has been making a series of increasingly bellicose speeches attacking the Soviet Union for its assistance to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

On 23 December Kissinger warned that 'an extremely dangerous situation' was developing. 'We will without question resist military expansion', he said. 'Unless the Soviet Union shows restraint in its foreign policy actions, our relations are bound to become more tense'. These threats are designed to draw attention away from South Africa's invasion of Angola and to act as a cover and justification for escalated US involvement.

FAR GREATER

The extent of US intervention may well be far greater than that so far admitted in Washington. Many observers believe that so far only the 'tip of the iceberg' has been revealed. What is known is that on 24 October the Ford administration unveiled an 81 million dollar aid package for Zaire, one of the US's closest allies in Africa and a known arms supplier for the FNLA and UNITA.

Then, on 14 December, the *New York Times* revealed that the Forty Committee, the intelligence committee chaired by Kissinger, had decided last July to send 50 million dollars of secret aid to the FNLA and UNITA. 300,000 dollars had already been given to UNITA in April. A closed session of the US Senate was later told, on 17 December, that aid to the FNLA and UNITA totalled 60 million dollars.

American mercenaries are also operating in Angola. During a visit to UNITA-held areas of Angola in November, I was told that 15 US advisers were instructing new UNITA recruits in weapons use at the UNITA training camp at Capola near Silva Porto. I also met an ex-Green Beret who told me he had offered UNITA his services as a pilot.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements have been placed in American newspapers by a certain David Bufkin who claims to have sent over 300 Americans to Angola in recent months. Though it is illegal under federal law to recruit American civilians to fight in foreign wars, not a single prosecution has been made.



In addition, the Ford administration has persuaded Gulf Oil, which produces over 90 per cent of Angola's oil, to halt all tax and royalty payments to the MPLA regime in Luanda. The company announced on 22 December that it would now pay the 100 million dollars due on 31 December into a blocked account. In the present war conditions, Gulf's royalty and tax payments amount to almost all the Luanda Government's revenue.

South Africa, too, has been deeply involved in Angola for months. On the one hand, it is taking advantage of the war situation in the country to embark on 'punitive missions' across the border from Namibia against freedom fighters of the South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO). The South African Defence Ministry boasted, for example, on 15 December that its troops had massacred 61 guerrillas in one such action



Angola: why U.S. digs in its claws

by TONY HODGES

in what it calls the 'border operational area'.

The Vorster regime also admits to having occupied installations of the Ruacana Falls hydro-electric scheme and the Calueque pumping station on the Cunene River just north of the Namibian border. These projects, in which South Africa has sunk £108 million, are crucial for the development of Namibia's still largely untapped agricultural and mineral wealth.

But the South African Government has done its best to hide the third and most serious

aspect of its aggression — the full-scale involvement of its army on the side of UNITA and the FNLA in the Angolan war, up to 500 miles north of the Namibian border. A South African column, supplied from bases in northern Namibia, entered Angola in August and helped UNITA and the FNLA eject the MPLA from a series of cities in southern Angola: from Sa da Bandeira and Mocamedes in October, and from Benguela, Lobito and Novo Redondo in November. The column has since been stalled by the MPLA on the Queve river, north of Novo Redondo.

SOUTH AFRICANS

According to Lopo do Nascimento, MPLA prime minister of the Peoples Republic of Angola — speaking at a press conference

on 18 December at which two captured South African soldiers were displayed — there are 1,000 South African troops in Angola.

Why have the imperialist powers intervened, trampling underfoot the Angolan people's struggle for self-determination?

The South African, US and other imperialists want to continue with their plunder of the country's vast mineral wealth. Angola is Africa's fourth largest oil producer, 90 per cent of the oil coming from Gulf's oil-fields in Cabinda. Texaco say that they have discovered an oil-field even bigger than Gulf's — in North West Angola.

Krupp's of West Germany own the huge iron mines at Cassinga in southern Angola. And British and South African capital have a predominant stake in Diamang, which mines 95 per cent of Angola's diamonds (Angola produces ten per cent of the world's gem diamonds).

DIAMONDS

But are these interests really threatened by the MPLA? 'The MPLA', wrote Jane Bergerol in the *Financial Times* on 3 December, 'is anxious to prove that it can get along with foreign investors'.

The MPLA is not, as is often claimed, a Marxist movement. In an interview published by the Nigerian magazine *Afriscope* in August, MPLA president Agostinho Neto emphasised that 'the MPLA is not a Marxist-Leninist organisation. Also our leadership is not Marxist-Leninist'. In the previous Transitional Government, the MPLA joined its coalition partners from UNITA, the FNLA and the Portuguese Government in outlawing strikes, disarming civilians, and approving an economic plan drawn up by the Portuguese minister of economic affairs, Vasco Vieira de Almeida.

Nor is it true that Soviet support for the MPLA indicates a rupture by the Kremlin bureaucracy with detente policies. The USSR knows that the MPLA leaders have no intention of carrying through a socialist revolution in Angola.

RUPTURE

Kissinger knows this full well. Addressing a NATO Council meeting in Brussels on 11 December, he said that detente was not threatened in the long run 'because the Russians have an economic interest in accommodation

with the West'.

The Kremlin's aid programme is designed to win diplomatic favours from the neo-colonial regimes. To this end, arms have been sent to such reactionary dictators as Idi Amin of Uganda and Indira Gandhi of India. Aid to the MPLA is no different in purpose. It is intended to win the Kremlin influence in a strategic part of Africa, to manoeuvre within the context of detente.

It is this attempt of the Soviet Union to pick up what US Under-Secretary of State Joseph Sisco has called 'bargaining chips' that Kissinger and Ford want to stop.

Kissinger is also worried that a defeat for the FNLA would help undermine the movement's chief long-term backer, President Mobutu of Zaire. The Zaire regime, hit by a massive drop in the price of copper — on which it depends for over 70 per cent of its exports — and reportedly threatened last June by a coup attempt, is in serious trouble. The regime, which has received 430 million dollars of US aid in the past 12 years (more than any other African country), is perhaps the US's staunchest ally on the continent.

HAUNTED

Officials in both Washington and Pretoria also fear that an MPLA victory could upset Vorster's drive for 'detente' and 'dialogue' with the neo-colonial African regimes — in particular, by allowing SWAPO to use Angolan territory to reach Namibia. Certainly this is the greatest fear haunting the Afrikaans paper *Die Burger*. 'Our involvement', the editors wrote on 18 December, 'will stop as soon as a government is established in Angola that can be trusted to respect our interests on the border: in brief, one that will ensure that Ovamboland gets her water from the Cunene River, that the Ruacana project will continue peacefully, and that Angola ceases to be a base for terrorism and insurgency against the peoples of South West Africa'.

But a broad section of the US ruling class has opposed the initiatives taken by Ford and Kissinger for tactical reasons. The US Senate has voted by 54 to 22 to cut off US aid to the anti-MPLA coalition.

HOSTILITY

Anti-war feeling in the United States, some ruling class circles fear, is too deep to allow the US to engage in an operation that strongly resembles the early days of the Vietnam war. Public hostility to covert operations, in the wake of the CIA revelations, is another constraint acting on the US rulers' freedom of action.

Socialists, whatever differences they may have with the MPLA, must stand alongside the MPLA in the struggle to defeat the imperialist aggression.

The greatest aid that we in Britain can give the people of Angola is to demand that all the imperialist powers get out of Angola now. All British collaboration with the US and South African intervention must stop. Britain too may be assisting the FNLA and UNITA forces — certainly it is a British company, Racal, which is providing UNITA with its radio equipment. A movement must be built to demand: Hands off Angola!



That was International Women's Year - that was

Last Monday, 29 December, saw the passing into law of the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) and the deadline for full implementation of the Equal Pay Action (EPA). Much is claimed for these Acts as steps to women's equality. But what is their real importance?

Fair and impartial, effective remedies - well, are they? A great deal has been written about the EPA recently. The most striking thing to emerge is the way the employers have worked at finding ways to get round it.

In *The Times* (1 December 1975), Ross Davies listed six major methods of evasion [see box on right]. The series of strikes over equal pay are a reflection of these problems, and show that organised working class action, not legislation, is the means by which struggles have been won.

Mortgages

But what about the SDA? It is supposed to give women equal rights in the spheres of work, education and general social situation (mortgages, tenancies, hire purchase, etc). But this Act is largely irrelevant to working class women. It fails to tackle any of the major problems they face.

Consider what the SDA fails to deal with:

The family. The greatest area of women's oppression is categorically excluded from the SDA. It contains nothing on such vital matters as freely available contraception, free abortion on demand, free 24-hour local authority nurseries, and increased family allowances. Without these the SDA is a joke to most women.

Social situation. Whilst the Act establishes equal rights to mortgages (for the working class?), tenancies, HP, etc, it does nothing to promote the equality of income necessary for

this. At best only middle class women stand to benefit, and the implication of the SDA is to co-opt middle class liberals from the women's movement. The practices of Government departments (social security, pensions, national insurance, taxation - all very discriminatory towards women) are excluded from the Act.

Employment. In this area the SDA is supposed to have made the greatest advances. It demands equal pay, equal employment, equal conditions. But it is one thing to say

are not envisaged in this Act. Furthermore, domestic work and firms with less than five employees (a considerable proportion of women's employment) are excluded from the Act.

No remedy

There remain a few areas where women might consider making a complaint under the SDA. Will this give a quick remedy? No, on the contrary, the process will neither be quick nor a remedy.

Employment complaints will go to Industrial Tribunals, others to the Civil Courts, but the process will be roughly similar in both

● They have been loading the job evaluation exercises so as to regrade jobs to the degree that they are "light" or "heavy", so as to discriminate against women in the rate payable.

● They have been refusing to introduce or delay job evaluation, thus discouraging equal pay claims.

● The numbers of jobs done by both men and women have been reduced so as to avoid direct comparisons.

● They have been reclassifying jobs done only by women at women's rates, so that the work is theoretically open both to

women and to men, but fixing it so that the minimum rate applying to both sexes will be lower than any existing minimum rate for men.

● Varying the terms and conditions of employment between plants to discourage direct comparisons.

● Sacking or refusing to hire women, - saying - rightly or wrongly - that women's absenteeism and rate of turnover is higher than that of men and only acceptable when the law permitted discrimination against women in pay and other conditions to take this into account.

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that a woman with, for example, engineering qualifications has an equal right to a job at the same rate as a similarly qualified man. It is quite another to include provisions requiring women to be given the training and skills that they normally lack.

Only if day release facilities already exist can women demand access to them. Changes in the structure of women's education, apprenticeships and job allocation

The initial complaint must be made to the Industrial Tribunal. Here, although she cannot get legal aid, the woman will have to prove discrimination against her by the employer, who will usually have a lawyer.

If she succeeds, the Tribunal can (but does not have to) either award compensation or recommend (but not compel) the firm to change its practice, or both. Only if many women take the same complaint to the Tribunal will it issue a 'general



finding' of discrimination. But this is useless because it doesn't have any compulsory power.

Having done this, and probably achieved little, there is nothing more a woman can do. Any further steps can only be taken by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). If notified, the EOC can issue a non-discrimination notice, telling the firm to alter its practice. Within a year it can investigate whether this has been complied with. If not, it takes the case to an Industrial Tribunal - back to square one!

If the Tribunal agrees that there is continuing discrimination, then the EOC can go to the Civil Court and obtain an injunction. If this is not complied with, after investigation, the firm is taken to court. At this stage the offence is - contempt of court! The penalty - a fine of a few hundred pounds at most!

£400 fine

This process will probably have taken 18 months or so. Meanwhile discrimination has thrived, lawyers have profited, and the employer has lost little or nothing. A final point: there is one sanction in the SDA - a £400 fine facing anyone disclosing information given by employers to EOC investigations. The bourgeoisie looks after its

own!

So despite Labour's trumpeting about these two Acts, working women will continue to be discriminated against in almost all spheres. The Acts will do little to alleviate the worsening lot of women as a result of rising unemployment and cuts in social expenditure. The need for women to organise and take an active part in the fight against these attacks has by no means been diminished. The 'Women and the Cuts' Conference called by the Working Women's Charter on 28 February is an important step in this fight.

Rhetoric

The rhetoric in the press about the SDA is misleading and dangerous. It was the rise of the women's movement and the increased activity of women in trade unions and political life - especially campaigns like the Working Women's Charter and the National Abortion Campaign - which forced Labour to come up with the sops of the EPA and the SDA. And if women's equality is to become a reality, these methods of struggle must continue to be developed.

KATE FIELD



TROOPS OUT - THAT'S THE JOB!

It is said that the dole is a good recruiting sergeant. Well, there are now more than 1.2 million unemployed in Britain. Significantly one of the biggest increases has been amongst school leavers. Some of these youngsters will undoubtedly be enticed into the army. As things stand, that means they will go to Northern Ireland at some point in their military career.

But this does not just mean that yet more working class kids from Britain will learn how to hate the Irish and be a thug. There is also the danger that the deaths of sons and brothers will become another big weapon in persuading English workers to blame the Irish for the crimes of British imperialism.

Red Weekly recently talked to a woman from an Irish family in Winsford in Cheshire. Winsford is an overspill town for both Manchester and Liverpool. Unemployment is high. Army recruitment is energetic:

'They're on the main street just as you get to the pedestrian precinct, the main shopping centre sometimes they even have a tank with them there are young kids of six or seven or eight playing with the guns why come here when there's so many Irish immigrants? And why hasn't someone retaliated? And why doesn't someone out our point of view?'

Red Weekly was told that the army is not very successful in Winsford. And it's true that there are still comparatively few people keen to get mixed up in a shooting match. Over the last few years army recruitment has declined. But not for lack of trying.

The TV adverts and street displays still do a good job in putting over that soldiers are OK people doing an OK job. Army recruiting drives still help to divide Irish from English in British towns.

Mistaken

The labour movement in Britain has traditionally separated off 'trade union' questions from 'political' questions. Unemployment is a trade union question, but Ireland is politics. In reality that point of view is badly mistaken.

The British capitalist class will use the misery of British workers to supply

them with cannon fodder for their war against the Irish people. Even more important, in the fight against unemployment we must be alert to all the dangers that lay-offs present. Not least is the political danger that in their wake will come further splits in the working class over Ireland, and the whipping up of anti-

Irish hysteria to justify yet more attacks on democratic rights.

'Why doesn't someone put our point of view?', we were asked. And it is clear not only that the oppressed people of Ireland need the support of the British labour movement, but that the British workers will themselves suffer if they

do not respond to this need.

Above all, the dole must cease to be a recruiting sergeant. This means that in simple self interest the British labour movement must start demanding: Troops Out of Ireland - Now!

MARTIN O'LEARY

Letter:

The IRSP and Political Prisoners

I wish to refer to an appeal for financial support for IRSP prisoners from the Derry area, which was published in your issue of 18 December.

This appeal was from B. McAliskey, a former member of the IRSP, and it gave the false impression that the IRSP have left the families of these prisoners without financial support. This is untrue, as we have spent in the region of £100 per week financing a prisoners fund and also to pay travelling expenses for the families' weekly visits to Long Kesh.

As regards the report that the resigned IRSP members are taking personal responsibility for the financial situation of the prisoners, it is worth mentioning that the

representatives of these former members failed to attend a meeting of the parents of the prisoners and the remaining IRSP members, which was called by these people to resolve the question of a prisoners fund.

This fund is being organised from our head office (1a Essex Gate, Parliament Street, Dublin 8), and also from 20 Lislane Drive, Creggan, Derry City. To date we have not received any financial contributions from the former members who reside in Derry.

For confirmation of the above points you may if you wish write to the IRSP prisoners, c/o Cage 6, Maze Prison, Long Kesh, Lisburn, Co. Antrim.

ernatively we can supply you with the addresses of the families concerned in this case.

In conclusion we wish to state that we recognise that you printed the appeal with the well-being of the prisoners in mind, and to ensure that the wrong conclusions are not drawn from the appeal by B. McAliskey we request that you print this letter.

MICK PLUNKETT (General Secretary, IRSP).

We publish the above letter in the same spirit as we published the appeal by Bernadette McAliskey in our last issue; clearly we have insufficient information to take a position on these apparently conflicting statements. Naturally we support all efforts to aid the Irish Republican prisoners.

RED WEEKLY

Call for week of solidarity with Spanish workers

At the end of last year a group of 19 members of the TUC General Council and nine Labour MPs announced plans to hold a national delegate conference in solidarity with the Spanish working class in London on 14 February. We have received the following statement from the Action Group Against Repression in Spain, a group of militants from the Spanish emigré community who were the principal organisers of last November's national solidarity demonstration, supporting the conference and appealing for a national 'week of action':

The Action Group Against Repression in Spain welcomes the decision of a group of members of the TUC General Council and Labour MPs to organise a conference in solidarity with the Spanish working class on 14 February.

Over the past several months we have been working to develop solidarity with the Spanish struggle within the British labour movement, and have stressed in particular the need for a national solidarity body that can stimulate, strengthen and coordinate solidarity action. It is from this viewpoint that we greet the 14 February conference as potentially a step of great importance towards the building of a mass solidarity movement firmly rooted in the British workers' movement.

Such solidarity is urgently required at the present moment. The Spanish regime is today trying to build itself an image of seeking 'democratic' reforms. But nothing could be further from the truth. For what is the reality in Spain today? The vast majority of imprisoned political opponents of the Franco regime remain behind bars; all forms of independent working class organisation remain illegal; and in recent weeks the regime's police have continued to arrest many left-wing and revolutionary militants.

But this totally phony nature of the regime's 'democratic' rhetoric has not prevented the ruling classes of Western Europe from falling over themselves to back up this regime of Franco's heirs. Every working class militant and supporter of the Spanish working class in this country was disgusted by the spectacle of the Labour Government becoming a party to these manoeuvres. The presence of a Labour Government representative at the funeral of Franco (where he rubbed shoulders with the Chilean butcher Pinochet) and the coronation of Franco's appointed heir Juan Carlos is a blotch on the British workers' movement that we must all work to erase.

Support 14 February Conference

We hope that the forthcoming conference will give birth to the sort of movement that can prevent a repeat of such treacherous actions against the fight of the Spanish working class, and mobilise the might of the British workers' movement to support the struggles of our Spanish brothers and sisters. It is in this light that we have decided to call off the meeting we had proposed for 10 January to set up a national solidarity body, and urge all working class militants and supporters of the Spanish struggle to give their full support to the 14 February conference and work to build such a national body and a mass solidarity movement through that conference.

As a means of assisting in the building of this conference we would propose that the week during which the conference will take place - the 8 to 15 February - be declared a National Week of Action in Solidarity with the Spanish Working Class. We would urge all those individuals and organisations supporting the conference also to support this call for such a week of action. We would particularly urge local solidarity committees, labour movement bodies, etc. to mount a campaign of local activities (pickets, rallies, meetings, film shows, displays, etc.) during this week as a concrete means of displaying our solidarity with our Spanish brothers and sisters, and as a way of effectively building the 14 February conference throughout the entire workers' movement.

A New Year's Resolution

Your first resolution for the New Year presents no problem. Send a donation to the Red Weekly Fighting Fund and make sure that each month throughout the year you increase the amount you send. And your second resolution is just as simple. Get a reader to top up your donation and get the contribution doubled.

Red Weekly will always be in debt. As soon as the sales reach a high enough figure to cover the cost of a 12-page paper then we will go to 16 pages. The best thing to do is recognise that your paper will always need more money and more sales, because we are involved in the most serious job of all - fighting to overthrow capitalism. That demands time and money - in fact everything you've got. But then it's the only worthwhile job to be done.

This is why we have no hesitation in asking you to pledge your full support to building Red Weekly, and to show that you are serious, send in as quickly as possible that financial donation. The address: Fighting Fund, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.



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Back NALGO call

NO TO ANY PRIVATE PRACTICE

Another row is brewing inside the Labour Party and the trade unions over Barbara Castle's proposals to divide health care into a private and a public sector. The National and Local Government Officers Association and the National Union of Public Employees have both emphatically come out against any private medicine, and want all private practice nationalised and incorporated into the NHS. Meanwhile, the TUC is at one with the Labour Government in supporting the continuation of private health schemes.

Among these is Manor House, the TUC-sponsored private health sanctuary which deals mainly with industrial accident cases and is financed by 10p a week contributions from 500,000 individual union members. A report by the TUC Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare Committee recommends 'continuing our support for Manor House'. It justifies this on the grounds that the 'Government has not proposed to scrap private medicine altogether'.

Instead of taking up a fight against the creation of a two-tier health system - the logical and iniquitous outcome of Castle's proposals - the TUC contents itself by calling for 'adequate standards of care' in the private sector'. This is no more than a cop-out.

Second-rate

In such a situation the NHS will inevitably suffer a drain of resources, as the Government implements its cuts and staff leave to work in the better-paid private sector. For the great majority of the working class, the NHS will only offer a second-rate service - ill-equipped, under-financed and understaffed.

There can be no 'freedom of choice' if the health and care of the working class is to be the first priority. That can only be achieved if private medicine is destroyed and all the resources and talent of the medical profession are turned from the sordid business of making money out of illness into performing a real service for humanity.

The stand of NALGO and NUPE deserves the support of all militants. The TUC are scabbing on the struggle to defend the health of working people. By legitimising institutions like Manor House and other private schemes, they show that they are incapable of representing the interests of the working class.

Demonstration

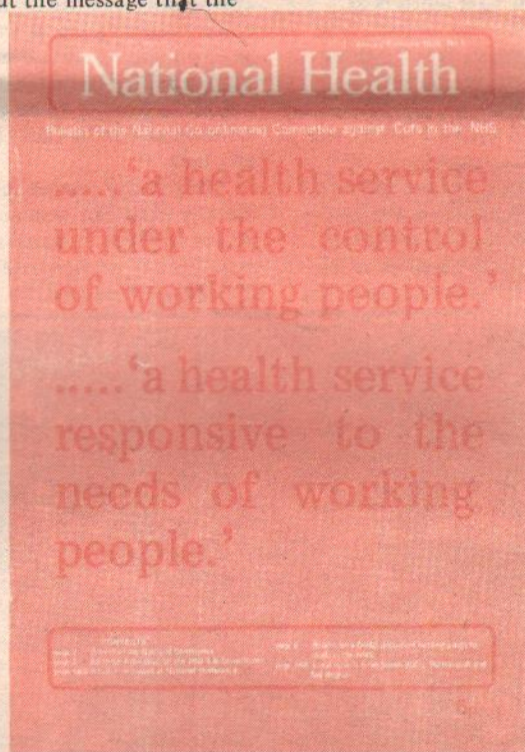
The Spring demonstration called by NALGO and the National Co-ordinating Committee Against Cuts in the NHS can be a really important step in building a massive movement against these betrayals. It affords us the chance to mobilise really powerful forces that can stop

the carve-up of the health service.

In every area, in every locality, the fight must begin now to turn that demonstration into a mighty show of working class strength. It must spell out the message that the

working class will not allow either the Labour Government or the TUC to sacrifice workers' health to the interests of capitalism.

Janet Maguire



Out now, 1st edition of National Health bulletin of the National Co-ordinating Committee Against Cuts in the NHS. Copies can be obtained from P. Stern (Secretary), 55 Bridge Lane, London N.W.11. Single copies - 12p (including postage); bulk orders - 25 for £1 (plus postage), 50 for £2 (plus postage). Cheques and POs made out to: 'National Co-ordinating Committee NHS'.

'No cuts' say Bristol campaigners

Five hundred health workers from Bristol's central hospitals marched through the town on 19 December to protest against the cuts in health spending. Demonstrators came mainly from the ancillary unions, but there was small but significant support from nurses, as well as from doctors in the Medical Practitioners Union.

The demonstration was an important step forward in the fight against drastic 'ten per cent across the board' cuts. The next step is a meeting to be convened early in the New Year of all union stewards in all Bristol hospitals.

Local IMG health workers will be arguing for a campaign to defeat rather than just protest against the cuts, pointing out that the health authority is mer-

ely acting as the Wilson Government's agent in implementing the cuts. This means above all a fight to carry out the recent decision of the Confederation of Health Service Employees regional conference to take industrial action against the cuts.

They will also be calling for a picket of the Area Health Authority's next meeting as well as urging full support for the 31 January conference against the cuts called by the South West Region of the TUC in conjunction with the Avon Co-ordinating Committee Against the Cuts. A successful conference will give the committee a real basis from which to centralise the campaign.